

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING:  
LITTLE CASSIOBURY  
31 HEMPSTEAD ROAD  
WATFORD  
HERTFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TQ 10343 96961

*on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council*



Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA

February 2008

ASC: 1038/WLC/1

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	WLC	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1038
<i>County:</i>	Hertfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Watford		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Watford		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TQ 10343 96961		
<i>Present use:</i>	Disused offices		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Repairs and remedial work		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	N/A		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Watford Borough Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	14 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2008		
<i>Client:</i>	Hertfordshire County Council Hertfordshire Property County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DE		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Bob Chapman		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Karin Semmelmann	<i>Date:</i>	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2008
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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## CONTENTS

Summary .....	6
1. Introduction .....	6
2. General Background .....	9
3. Ground Floor .....	10
4. First Floor .....	25
5. Second Floor .....	34
6. Acknowledgements .....	39

### Figures:

1. General location .....	5
2. Site location .....	8
3. Ground floor plan.....	10
4. First floor plan.....	25
5. Second floor plan .....	34

### Plates:

#### *Cover: Front entrance to Little Cassiobury House*

1. Room G1: SW corner.....	11
2. Room G1: NE corner .....	11
3. Room G2: west wall.....	12
4. Room G2: north wall.....	12
5. Room G2: south wall .....	12
6. Room G2: east window.....	12
7. Room G3: two layers of floorboards.....	13
8. Room G3: east wall.....	13
9. Room G3: west wall.....	13
10. Room G3: south wall .....	13
11. Room G3: north wall.....	14
12. Room G3: French door .....	14
13. Room G4 looking east.....	15
14. Room G4 showing hatch and 1930s arch.....	15
15. Room G5 looking south .....	16
16. Room G5 looking north .....	16
17. Room G5 looking northeast.....	16
18. Room G6, west wall.....	17
19. Room G6, east wall.....	17
20. Room G6, south wall .....	17
21. Room G6, north wall.....	17
22. Room G6: stairs .....	18
23. Room G6: stair detail.....	18
24. Room G7 looking north .....	19
25. Room G7 looking south .....	19
26. Room G7: south door detail.....	19
27. Room G8: SE corner .....	20
28. Room G8: northeast corner .....	20
29. Room G8: west wall undergoing restoration .....	20

30. Room G8: fireplace in east wall.....	20
31. Room G9: northwest corner.....	21
32. Room G9: northeast corner.....	21
33. Room G9: interior of door to passage.....	21
34. Room G9: door to passage.....	21
35. Room G9: door to western cupboard.....	21
36. Room G10: south wall.....	22
37. Room G10: north wall.....	22
38. Room G11: east wall.....	23
39. Room G11: north wall.....	23
40. Room G11: west wall.....	23
41. Room G11: south wall.....	23
42. Room G11: northwest recess during restoration.....	24
43. Room F1 looking north.....	26
44. Staircase from Room F1.....	26
45. Room F1: bannister.....	26
46. Room F2 looking east.....	27
47. Room F2 looking west.....	27
48. Room F3: SW corner.....	27
49. Room F3: NE corner.....	27
50. Room F4: SW corner.....	28
51. Room F4: NE corner.....	28
52. Room F4: original shutter.....	28
53. Room F4: replacement shutter.....	28
54. Room F4: south window.....	29
55. Room F4: dado detail.....	29
56. Room F5: north door.....	29
57. Room F5: window.....	29
58. Room F6: west wall.....	30
59. Room F6: south wall.....	30
60. Room F7: SE corner.....	30
61. Room F7: NE corner showing modern north wall and sliding door.....	30
62. Room F8: early 20 <sup>th</sup> century cupboards.....	31
63. Room F11: north wall.....	32
64. Room F11: east wall showing modern shelving & 1930s door.....	32
65. Room F11: west wall.....	32
66. Room F11: northwest corner.....	32
67. Room F12 showing cupboard, shutters & tiles.....	33
68. Room F12: south door.....	33
69. Room F13: north wall.....	33
70. Room F13: east wall.....	33
71. Room S1 looking south.....	35
72. Room S1 looking north.....	35
73. Room S2: northwest corner showing modern racks and replacement dormer window.....	35
74. Room S2; door detail.....	35
75. Room S3: northeast corner.....	36
76. Room S4: east wall.....	36
77. Room S4: west wall.....	36
78. Room S5: south wall.....	37
79. Room S6: west wall & 1930s cupboards.....	37

80. Room S6: east window .....	37
81. Room S7: south wall .....	38
82. Room S7: west wall .....	38
83. Room S8 looking west .....	38
84. Room S8 looking east .....	38



**Figure 1:** General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*In February 2008 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) recorded the fittings and fixtures of Little Cassiobury House, Hempstead Road, Watford, Hertfordshire in order to inform the next stage of restoration programme.*

*The building, which is Grade II listed, is likely to have been built between 1698 and 1700 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Essex. The residence originally consisted of the neo-classical frontage, a kitchen and an outhouse built in the vernacular style to the rear as well as other subsidiary buildings. The kitchen appears to have been incorporated into the main body of the building by 1700 and the other outhouse, which was presumably a scullery, was joined on later. The classical building was given a single storey extension to the south-east in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a fair amount of rebuilding also took place on the south elevation. This extension was raised to provide a first floor and attics in 1930, when the house was renovated by Clough Williams-Ellis. The house was sold under a compulsory purchase order to Hertfordshire County Council and was used as offices until fairly recently.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In February 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) recorded the fittings and fixtures of Little Cassiobury House, Hempstead Road, Watford, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council, and was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation Officer (Christian Brady).

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This particular building recording project is ASC's third involvement with Little Cassiobury House, which was subject to a Historic Building Recording in 2005 followed by a watching brief of the initial restoration work. This report has been required in order to inform the next stage of restoration programme.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

*Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

### 1.4 *Management*

The project was carried out under the overall direction of **Bob Zeepvat** BA MIFA. Bob is an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects, of a wide range of fieldwork in both rural and urban environments, of post-excavation, publication and presentation projects, and of work on a wide range of historic buildings and structures. He holds a first degree from the University of Leicester, and has been a validated Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists

since 1986. He has been involved in the management of archaeological projects since the late 1970s, formerly as Senior Field Archaeologist for the *Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit*, and as Project Manager for the *Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust*.

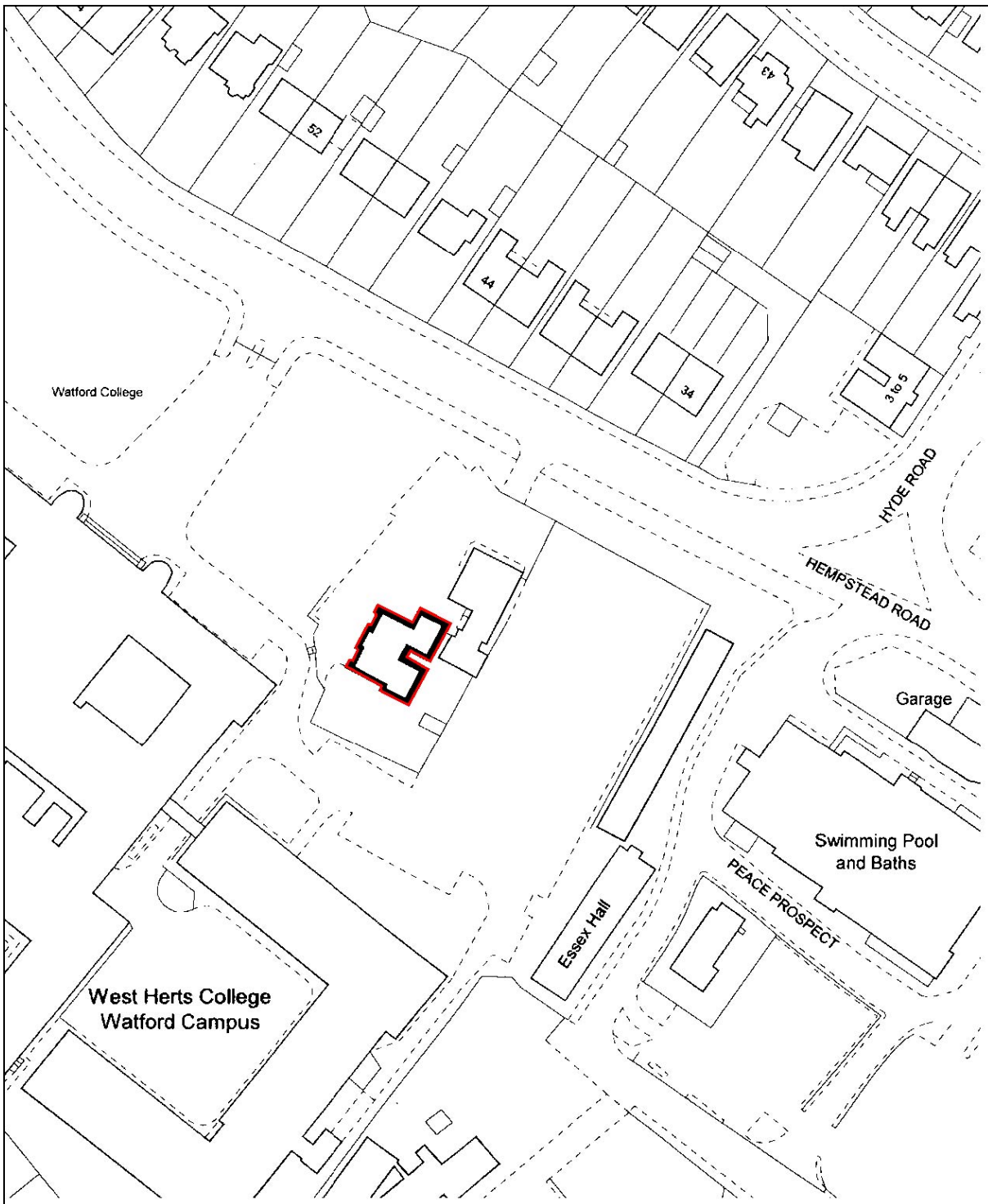
## 1.5 ***The Site***

### 1.5.1 *Location & Description*

Little Cassiobury is located close to the centre of Watford, at NGR TQ 10343 96961 (Fig. 1). It lies within the Watford Campus of the West Herts College, and was formerly used as an administration building by the college. Access to the house is from Hempstead Road, which lies to the north.

Little Cassiobury is a two-storey brick-built house, with a plain tile roof, which dates from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and was formerly associated with Cassiobury Mansion, built by the Earls of Essex. The mansion was demolished in 1927. Little Cassiobury is listed Grade II\*. In 1930 the house was 'rehabilitated' by the architect Clough Williams Ellis, and has been in the ownership of Herts County Council since 1939.





**Figure 2:** Site location (*scale 1:2,500*)

## 2 General Background

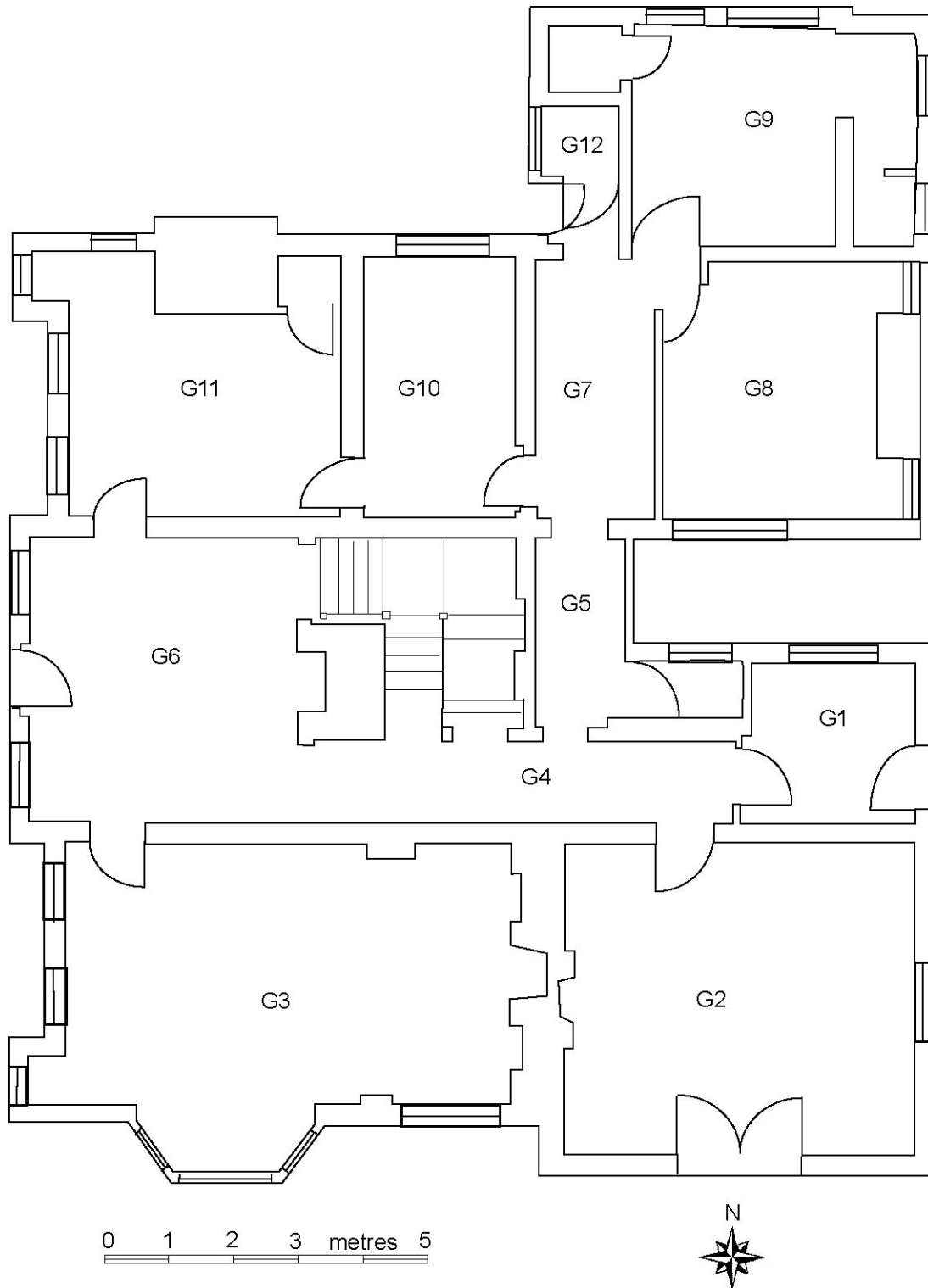
The building, which is Grade II listed, is likely to have been built between 1698 and 1700 by the Earl of Essex. The residence originally consisted of the neo-classical frontage, a kitchen and an outhouse built in the vernacular style to the rear as well as other subsidiary buildings. The kitchen appears to have been incorporated into the main body of the building by 1700 and the other outhouse, which was presumably a scullery, was joined on later. The classical building was given a single storey extension to the south-east in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a fair amount of rebuilding also took place on the south elevation. This extension was raised to provide a first floor and attics in 1930, when the house was renovated by Clough Williams-Ellis. The house was sold under a compulsory purchase order to Hertfordshire County Council and was used as offices until fairly recently.

The restoration programme under Williams-Ellis in 1930 is as interesting as the earlier building works, in that his additions match the craftsmanship of the earlier part of the house to the highest degree. There is little change in the brickwork itself to indicate a later stage of construction; the architectural clues are largely the lack of queen closures, the use of soldier arches rather than flat or cambered ones and the density of the glazing bars. The refenestration of the buildings to the northeast however, is less sympathetic, is likely to have been undertaken after the building was taken over by the county council.

The restoration work of 2006 revealed evidence for late 20<sup>th</sup> century repair in the form of Fletton brickwork in Room G11 and modern battens behind the panelling in the northwest corner of the hall (G6). The light fittings throughout the building, as well as the central heating system and fire escape, are modern.

The information presented below is based on what was evident during the survey undertaken in February 2008. This cannot be taken as definitive as restoration will reveal aspects of the construction that require a re-interpretation of the material. An example of this is the ceiling in Room G11 where the laths that were revealed in 2006 were clearly sawn, and, as such, suggest that this ceiling was rebuilt in the 1930s rather than being an original feature.

### 3 Ground Floor



**Figure 3:** Ground floor plan(scale 1:100)

**Room G1**

*Floor:* Quarry tiles

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Painted brick

*Doors:* Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Windows:* Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* Late 20<sup>th</sup> century kitchen cupboards and shelving



**Plate 1:** Room G1: SW corner



**Plate 2:** Room G1: NE corner

**Room G2**

*Floor:* 19<sup>th</sup> century floorboards

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Brick walls, painted

*Doors:* 19<sup>th</sup> century door to passage; French door – 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Windows:* 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* 19<sup>th</sup> century moulding; modern fireplace, hatch, cupboards and lights



**Plate 3:** Room G2: west wall



**Plate 4:** Room G2: north wall



**Plate 5:** Room G2: south wall



**Plate 6:** Room G2: east window

### Room G3

*Floor:* Thin veneer of possible 1930s date over 19cm wide timber boards, probably 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Brick walls all around except to the west of the pillar in the north wall, which is lath and plaster. Lath and plaster was revealed beneath the windows in the west wall during previous remedial work with sawn laths, which would indicate a 19<sup>th</sup> century or possibly early 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

*Doors:* The two sets of French doors in the south wall are likely to be early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The shutters associated with the eastern door are also 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is a blocked door (?19<sup>th</sup> century) in the north wall to the east of the pillar.

*Windows:* The windows and shutters in the west wall are 17<sup>th</sup> century.

*Fittings:* The cornice and skirting boards appear to be 19<sup>th</sup> century; the shelves in the western bay window in the south wall are 1930s, as are the fireplace and shelves on either side.



**Plate 7:** Room G3: two layers of floorboards



**Plate 8:** Room G3: east wall



**Plate 9:** Room G3: west wall



**Plate 10:** Room G3: south wall



**Plate 11:** Room G3: north wall



**Plate 12:** Room G3: French door

### **Room G4**

*Floor:* Quarry tiles

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Painted brick

*Doors:* See individual room entries for details

*Windows:* None

*Fittings:* The eastern arch one by the cellar door appears to be a 1930s addition but the western one is liable to be 17<sup>th</sup> century.



**Plate 13:** Room G4 looking east



**Plate 14:** Room G4 showing hatch and 1930s arch



**Room G5**

*Floor:* Yorkstone

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* East wall – brick. West wall- Lath & plaster/timber

*Doors:* Door to G5 - 1930s

*Windows:* 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* Cupboard likely to be 19<sup>th</sup> century



**Plate 15:** Room G5 looking south



**Plate 16:** Room G5 looking north



**Plate 17:** Room G5 looking northeast

## Room G6

*Floor:* Quarry tiles

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Panelled – 17<sup>th</sup> century with some later repair

*Doors:* Front door – 20<sup>th</sup> century. See individual room entries for details of other doors

*Windows:* West wall – 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* Fireplace – possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century. Staircase – largely rebuilt in the 1930s but may have used some of the original timbers. The window in the half landing has been reglazed but the frame and shutters may date from 17<sup>th</sup> century.



**Plate 18:** Room G6, west wall



**Plate 19:** Room G6, east wall



**Plate 20:** Room G6, south wall



**Plate 21:** Room G6, north wall



**Plate 22:** Room G6: stairs



**Plate 23:** Room G6: stair detail

**Room G7**

*Floor:* Yorkstone

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* South, north & west – painted brick; east – partition wall (latterly replaced)

*Doors:* Pintles, bolt bars and Suffolk latch survive in the south door opening. North door-modern

*Windows:* None

*Fittings:* Moulded dado along west wall - ?20<sup>th</sup> century



**Plate 24:** Room G7 looking north



**Plate 25:** Room G7 looking south



**Plate 26:** Room G7: south door detail

### Room G8

*Floor:* Relaid

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* North, south & east – brick, west wall- plasterboard

*Doors:* 1930s door

*Windows:* East – 1930/40s Crittal type, south - modern

*Fittings:* Panelling replaced, fireplace within inglenook, 19<sup>th</sup> century



**Plate 27:** Room G8: SE corner



**Plate 28:** Room G8: northeast corner



**Plate 29:** Room G8: west wall undergoing restoration



**Plate 30:** Room G8: fireplace in east wall

### Room G9

*Floor:* Quarry tiles, and carpet tiles over Marley Tiles over the quarry tiles in the main body of the room

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster with plasterboard repair in the northeast corner

*Walls:* All painted brick

*Doors:* Late 18<sup>th</sup> century plank & batten in SW corner, 19<sup>th</sup> century panel door to pantry

*Windows:* All 1930/40s

*Fittings:* None



**Plate 31:** Room G9: northwest corner



**Plate 32:** Room G9: northeast corner



**Plate 33:** Room G9: interior of door to passage



**Plate 34:** Room G9: door to passage



**Plate 35:** Room G9: door to western cupboard

**Room G10**

*Floor:* Timber

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster at southern end; panelled beyond prob. 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Walls:* All painted brick

*Doors:* East – modern, west – 19<sup>th</sup> /early 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Windows:* Composite, 1940s?

*Fittings:* Post 1930s cupboards



**Plate 36:** Room G10: south wall



**Plate 37:** Room G10: north wall

**Room G11**

*Floor:* 19<sup>th</sup> century timber floor

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* 17<sup>th</sup> century panelling

*Doors:* South – modern , east – 19<sup>th</sup> /early 20<sup>th</sup> century but with 17<sup>th</sup> /18<sup>th</sup> century hinges

*Windows:* West wall – 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* Fireplace – 17<sup>th</sup> century, door panel used a panel infill in north wall – early 19<sup>th</sup> century



**Plate 38:** Room G11: east wall



**Plate 39:** Room G11: north wall



**Plate 40:** Room G11: west wall



**Plate 41:** Room G11: south wall





**Plate 42:** Room G11: northwest recess during restoration

**Room G12**

*Floor:* Quarry tiles

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

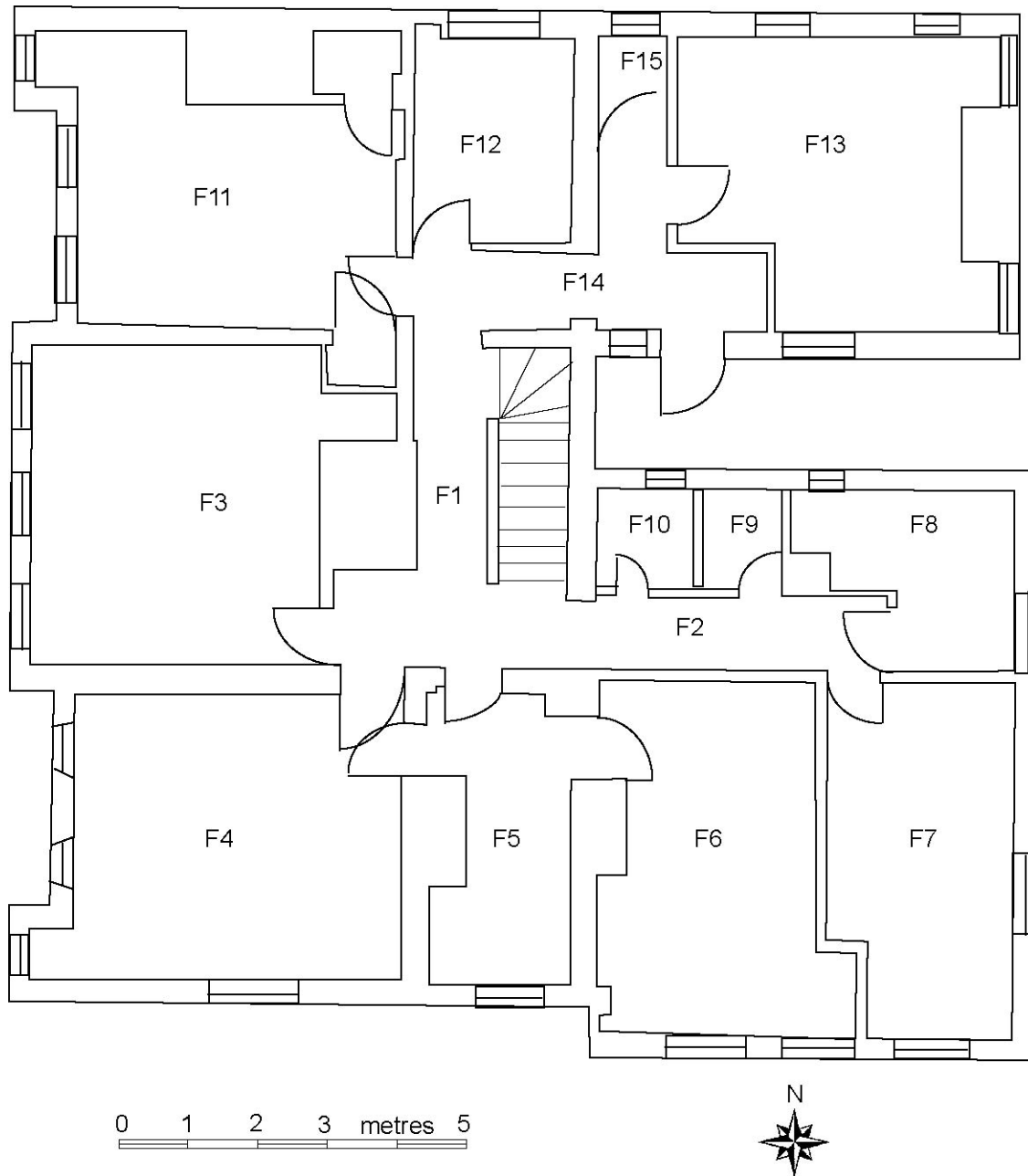
*Walls:* Painted

*Doors:* Modern

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:* Modern sanitary ware

## 4 First Floor



**Figure 4:** First floor plan (*scale 1:100*)

**Rooms F1 & F2**

*Floor:* Vinyl over timber

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* West wall north of chimney breast – fibreboard, east wall- panelled

*Doors:* See individual room entries for details

*Windows:* None

*Fittings:* 1930s century balustrade, modern skirting boards and dado rail



**Plate 43:** Room F1 looking north



**Plate 44:** Staircase from Room F1



**Plate 45:** Room F1: bannister



**Plate 46:** Room F2 looking east



**Plate 47:** Room F2 looking west

### **Room F3**

*Floor:* Assorted timber boards – ? early 20<sup>th</sup> restoration

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Painted brick

*Doors:* Modern door

*Windows:* 17<sup>th</sup> century.

*Fittings:* 20<sup>th</sup> century cornice, cupboard (probably original entrance) – fibreboard, blocked fireplace



**Plate 48:** Room F3: SW corner



**Plate 49:** Room F3: NE corner

**Room F4**

*Floor:* Mainly original with some later repairs

*Ceiling:* Plasterboard

*Walls:* Painted brick above 17<sup>th</sup> panelling with some modern capping

*Doors:* East- 1930s, North- 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Windows:* West – 17<sup>th</sup> century, South – 19<sup>th</sup> century. Shutters to northern window in west wall are modern replacements but with original hinges

*Fittings:* Fireplace and surrounding panelling rebuilt in 1930s, coving – 17<sup>th</sup> century



**Plate 50:** Room F4: SW corner



**Plate 51:** Room F4: NE corner



**Plate 52:** Room F4: original shutter



**Plate 53:** Room F4: replacement shutter



**Plate 54:** Room F4: south window



**Plate 55:** Room F4: dado detail

### **Room F5**

*Floor:* Assorted timber boards – ? early 20<sup>th</sup> restoration

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Painted brick

*Doors:* All early 20<sup>th</sup> century. North door (probably post 1930s) set into an earlier frame

*Windows:* 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Fittings:* Cornice & skirting - late 20<sup>th</sup> century



**Plate 56:** Room F5: north door



**Plate 57:** Room F5: window

### Room F6

*Floor:* 1930s timber

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* East – post 1930s inserted fibreboard, others- brick. All painted

*Doors:* East – post 1930s sliding door, West – 1930s

*Windows:* 1930s with some later replacement in the western window

*Fittings:* Modern skirting. Fireplace and associated cornice and panelling – 1930s. Hatch and shelving – post 1930s



**Plate 58:** Room F6: west wall



**Plate 59:** Room F6: south wall

### Room F7

*Floor:* 1930s timber

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* West – post 1930s fibreboard, others brick. All painted

*Doors:* 1930s

*Windows:* Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* Probably post 1930s coving, skirting



**Plate 60:** Room F7: SE corner



**Plate 61:** Room F7: NE corner showing modern north wall and sliding door

**Room F8**

*Floor:* 1930s timber

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Painted brick

*Doors:* 1930s

*Windows:* Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* Early 20<sup>th</sup> century skirting and cupboards



**Plate 62:** Room F8: early 20<sup>th</sup> century cupboards

**Room F9 & F10**

1930s doors & windows



**Room F11**

*Floor:* ?1930s timber

*Ceiling:* ? Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Brick

*Doors:* East – 1930s, South- 19<sup>th</sup> century in older frame

*Windows:* 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Fittings:* Shelving in former doorway – modern. Panelling in recess to east of fireplace – possibly 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fireplace – 1930s



**Plate 63:** Room F11: north wall



**Plate 64:** Room F11: east wall showing modern shelving & 1930s door



**Plate 65:** Room F11: west wall



**Plate 66:** Room F11: northwest corner

### Room F12

*Floor:* Various – some 17<sup>th</sup> century timbers remain

*Ceiling:* Plasterboard

*Walls:* South – partition wall. Eastern part - half tiled (19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century tiles)

*Doors:* Blocked door in south wall, 19<sup>th</sup> century door in 17<sup>th</sup> century frame in east wall

*Windows:* 19<sup>th</sup> century and shutters with round holes

*Fittings:* 17<sup>th</sup> century cornice. 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century cupboard below window



**Plate 67:** Room F12 showing cupboard, shutters & tiles



**Plate 68:** Room F12: south door

### Room F13

*Floor:* ?17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century timbers

*Ceiling:* Plasterboard

*Walls:* West and southwest corner- fibreboard. Others - brick

*Doors:* 1930s

*Windows:* North replacement. South – 19<sup>th</sup> century but reglazed. East – 1930s

*Fittings:* 19<sup>th</sup> century fireplace and cupboard

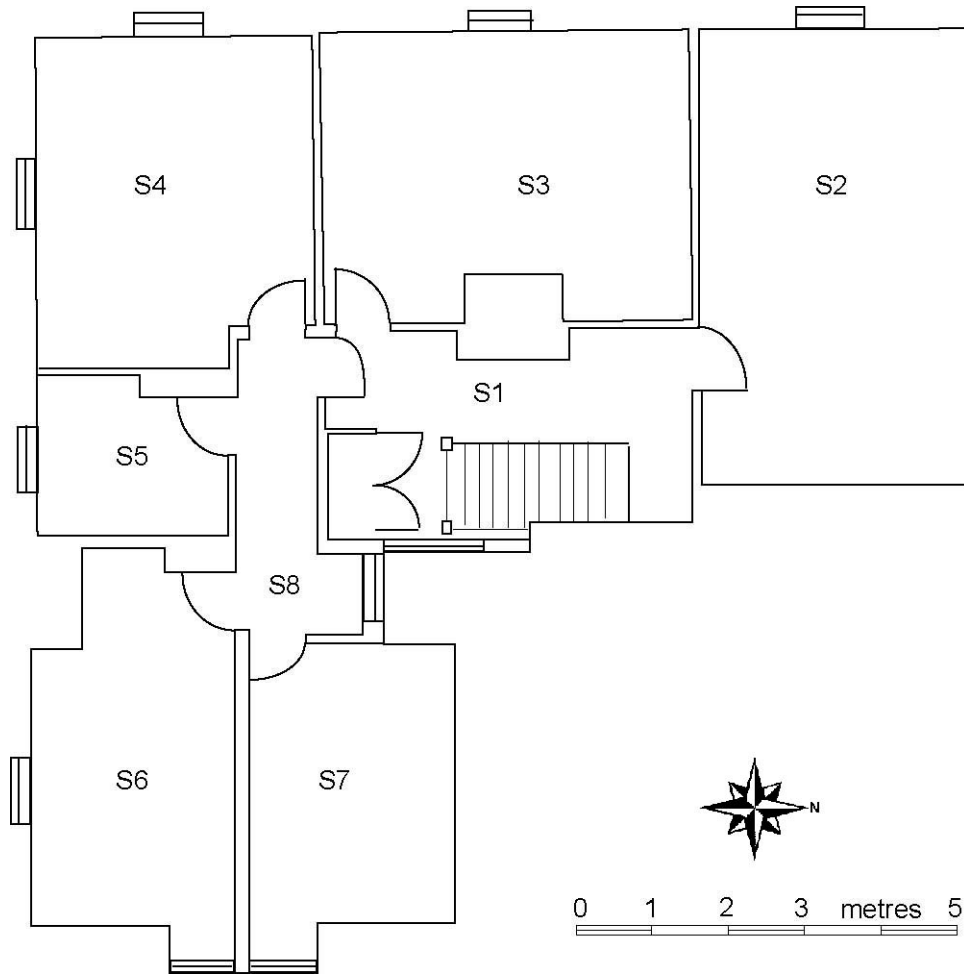


**Plate 69:** Room F13: north wall



**Plate 70:** Room F13: east wall

## 5 Second Floor



**Figure 5:** Second floor plan (*scale 1:100*)

**Room S1**

*Floor:* 19<sup>th</sup> century boards

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* East & north– brick. West & south - fibreboard

*Doors:* To S8 - modern

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:* Staircase – 1930s



**Plate 71:** Room S1 looking south



**Plate 72:** Room S1 looking north

**Room S2**

*Floor:* 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Brick

*Doors:* 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Windows:* New

*Fittings:* Modern racks



**Plate 73:** Room S2: northwest corner showing modern racks and replacement dormer window



**Plate 74:** Room S2; door detail

**Room S3**

*Floor:* Probably 19<sup>th</sup> century below present boards

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Brick

*Doors:* 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:* Fireplace obscured. Cupboard – modern



**Plate 75:** Room S3: northeast corner

**Room S4**

*Floor:* 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster beneath tiles

*Walls:* Brick

*Doors:* 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:* Modern tiles and kitchen unit



**Plate 76:** Room S4: east wall



**Plate 77:** Room S4: west wall

**Room S5**

*Floor:* Timber

*Ceiling:* Unclear

*Walls:* South –fibreboard. Others - brick

*Doors:* 1930s

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:* Modern bathroom suite



**Plate 78:** Room S5: south wall

**Room S6**

*Floor:* 1930s

*Ceiling:* Fibreboard?

*Walls:* South – fibreboard next to chimney breast. Others - brick

*Doors:* 1930s

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:* 1930s cupboards



**Plate 79:** Room S6: west wall & 1930s cupboards



**Plate 80:** Room S6: east window

**Room S7**

*Floor:* 1930s

*Ceiling:* Fibreboard?

*Walls:* Post 1930s wallpaper

*Doors:* 1930s

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:* 1930s coving



**Plate 81:** Room S7: south wall



**Plate 82:** Room S7: west wall

**Room S8**

*Floor:* Timber

*Ceiling:* Lath & plaster

*Walls:* Brick except to west of bathroom door

*Doors:* See individual room entries for details

*Windows:* 1930s

*Fittings:*



**Plate 83:** Room S8 looking west



**Plate 84:** Room S8 looking east

## **6 Acknowledgements**

The project was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council. The writer is grateful to Christian Brady for his assistance.

The project was managed for ASC by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Bob Zeepvat, Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA and Calli Rouse BA PIFA. The report was prepared by Karin Semmelmann, and edited by Bob Zeepvat.