

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS were appointed on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2006 by the Building Design Services of Doncaster Borough Council. Detailed instructions were given regarding the nature and scope of the project by Mr Ian K. Caveen of Byrom Clark Roberts, appointed project architects to Doncaster MBC. A written Scheme of Investigation has been produced by Archaeological Services WYAS (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 Nether Hall is situated in the town of Doncaster (National Grid Ref. SE 578 036) on land bordered by Netherhall Road to the south-east, Christ Church Road to the north-east and Copley Road to the north-west (Figs 1 and 2). The original building has a portico on its south-east façade (Photograph 1) and a two storey bay window on its north-east façade (Photographs 2 and 3). The building has been altered over a number of years with substantial additions being made in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Photographs 5 and 5a).
- 1.3 It is believed that a hall has stood on or near the site, in the ownership of the Sewer family, since the early 15<sup>th</sup> century (*Yesterday Today*, 1992). Nether Hall passed into the ownership of the Copley family who built the present building. The Copley estates were sold in 1855 and the house underwent a number of changes. In the early 1930s it was purchased by Doncaster Town Council who added new wings in 1933 and 1962. In the 1980s further alterations were made by the Metropolitan Borough Council.

## **2. Methodology**

- 2.1 Weather conditions on the survey days varied between dry and bright to overcast and raining. All external photographs were taken in natural light. Interior photographs were taken with the aid of artificial flood and flash lighting.
- 2.2 A risk assessment had been prepared in advance. This highlighted the need to take care when working at height and to wear the appropriate safety equipment. Particular care was needed to avoid collisions with low beams. In the area of the west wing where the roof timbers were damaged and in part supported with props, note was taken to be aware of the possibility of collapse.
- 2.3 An initial meeting had established the need to respond to set deadlines and to produce an interim report at an early stage. Inspection and recording work were only fully possible once the ceilings had been removed.

- 2.4 A drawn survey was undertaken that aimed to produce a reflected plan of the roof timbers and a number of sections across trusses. Sketch drawings were made and dimensions added using a combination of hand tapes and an EDM. Drawings were produced at 1:20 scale off-site and checked by returning to site.
- 2.5 A comprehensive photographic record of the timbers was undertaken. A 35mm (Nikon F-601) camera was used to provide some detailed records and to photograph areas that were difficult to access. The majority of the photographs were taken with a Mamiya 645 medium format camera. Silver-based black and white film was used throughout although a number of colour transparencies were also taken. Artificial flash lighting was used in most of the internal roof spaces.
- 2.6 An archival study was undertaken. This involved a visit to the Doncaster Local History Library and Archives. Additional information was located on the internet.
- 2.7 Initial data were processed in the last week of November and an interim report produced on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006. Further work was undertaken and a final report produced at the end of December 2006.

### **3. Historical Data**

- 3.1 A visit was made to the South Yorkshire Archive Service at Doncaster and to the Doncaster Local History Library in early November 2006 to undertake a rapid search of available documents relating to Nether Hall. A small collection of maps and plans, and journal and newspaper articles was inspected.

#### **3.2 Maps and Plans:**

Fig. 3 Enclosure map of the Doncaster Carr, 1771, RD/DON/2/284. The map indicates a plot of land in the ownership of Robert Copley, thought to be in the area of the present hall. Interestingly, no buildings are shown.

Fig. 4 Jeffreys, T., 1775, Survey of Yorkshire. Nether Hall is indicated on the south-east side of the river with the name 'G Seaton Esq.' closely associated.

Fig. 5 Tithe map – Plan of the township of Doncaster in the West Riding of the County of York, 1821, DX.BAX 10/15. The map indicates a large estate with

Nether Hall at its centre. The estate lies to the east of Laith Gate and Back Lane on the south side of the river.

Fig. 6 Hunter, J., 1828, Map of the town of Doncaster. Similar detail to the last map. The estate is shown in slightly greater detail.

Fig. 7 Ordnance Survey, 1854, County Series 6 inch map sheet Yorkshire (West Riding) 277 (Surveyed 1849-50). By this date the town has expanded to the edge of the estate and further development to the east is indicated. The plan of Nether Hall is clearly shown.

Fig. 8 Ordnance Survey, 1906, County Series 25 inch map sheet Yorkshire (West Riding) 277.13 (Surveyed 1888-90). This map shows Nether Hall following the sale of the estate and the development of all the surrounding land. A new road scheme has been introduced and the hall is hemmed in on all sides with terraced housing.

### 3.3 Newspaper articles:

Doncaster gazette, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 1920. This article was published at a time when Nether Hall was being considered for purchase by Doncaster Rural District Council. It makes reference to a hall in the possession of the Copley family in 1487 and gives a brief history of the Copley family. Further reference is made to the hall in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and how, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it changed hands on a number of occasions.

Doncaster Gazette and Chronicle, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1966. A short article, number 27 in the 'Country House' series. In addition to providing a short history, a 19<sup>th</sup> - century drawing of the hall is reproduced. This shows the south face of the hall from the edge of the estate. There is a central portico with tripartite window above and two windows to either side on two floors. The steeply pitched roof has three dormer windows. The detail is largely unchanged today. The article goes on to describe the hall as a late 17<sup>th</sup>-century house.

Doncaster Free Press, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1984. A short article in the 'Forgotten Mansions' series. The article adds little new information. It talks about changes to the hall in the mid-1930s when parts of the old building were being converted to provide offices for the Rural Council.

The Star, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1996. A lengthy article in the 'Looking Back' series. It usefully publishes three photographs from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century together with three etchings. One of these shows accurately a view of the hall with the front portico, corner quoins and dormer windows as today. The other two etchings are less plausible. The best shows a near-square two-storey building

with a seven bay front and possibly five dormer windows in a steeply pitched roof. At the front of the house is a narrow portico and a steeply sloping garden. The second shows a very fanciful three-storey building of seven bays with a balustraded parapet. Both may be nothing more than architect's designs. The article cites a note written by John Goodchild in 1973 which states that the hall was probably built between 1671 and 1723 and that the shape and style of the windows suggest that it was built about 1690. This is contradicted by the Gazette of 1935 which states that the original building was erected in 1461 with further alterations about 1760. Further information is given about the later history of the hall.

Past Times, January, 2000. The article reproduces the etching of the parapeted three-storey building published earlier in the Star. It states that the present hall is a late 17<sup>th</sup>-century building. An account of the Copley family history is given together with the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century history of the hall.

### 3.4 Publications:

Miller, E., c. 1804 *The History and Antiquities of Doncaster*. Miller gives an account of 18<sup>th</sup>-century life at Nether Hall during the time of Robert Copley. Nether Hall was noted as a centre of arts and music with regular recitals and philosophical conversations.

Hunter, J., 1828, *South Yorkshire*, Vol. 1., Pedigree of the Copley family of Nether Hall.

Hatfield, C. W., *Historical Notices of Doncaster*, 1870. Traces the early history of the Copley family from the 11<sup>th</sup> century through to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.5 Unpublished articles:

Goodchild, J.), *Yesterday Today*, Issue 8, October 1992. Possibly the work of John Goodchild, written in 1973, when he was curator of Cusworth Hall. The article starts by lamenting the lack of estate papers relating to the hall and goes on to trace the history of its owners from the Sewer family through the Haringtons and the Copleys. Regarding the present building it states that the house was built of brick and dates from between 1680 and 1700.

### 3.6 Listing:

Location: Doncaster, South Yorkshire

IoE number: 335069

Date listed: 18<sup>th</sup> April 1969

Date of last amendment: 18<sup>th</sup> April 1969

Town of Doncaster, Nether Hall Road (North Side)

## **Nether Hall II**

House, now offices. Early to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, with early 19<sup>th</sup>-century alterations and large 20<sup>th</sup>-century additions. Stucco with painted ashlar dressings and graduated Westmorland slate roof. Originally L-plan, main range with central hallway entrance. Two storey with attics, five bays 2:1:2, with nine bay right return, 20<sup>th</sup>-century block to left of main façade of no special interest. Main façade has plinth and rusticated quoins. Steps to wide four coloured Doric portico with Tuscan triglyphed frieze with guttae and modillioned cornice; entrance behind, has original doorcase in raised surround with ovolo moulded inner edge double panelled doors and plain overlight, flanked by narrow small pane windows with projecting sills, and Ionic pilasters. To either side there are two unequally hung fifteen pane sashes in raised surrounds with ovolo moulded inner edges. Above four similar windows and centre tripartite window with twenty and ten pane sashes in similar surround. All windows with inserted stone sills. Substantial moulded stone cornice, slightly projecting over the quoins. Ripped roof. Three roof dormers with sashes. Brick ridge stack and side all stack to left. Right return has projecting two storey canted bay window to left, three central bays and projecting early to mid 18<sup>th</sup>-century three bay wing to right, with rusticated quoins. Canted bay has unequally hung fifteen pane sashes with projecting sills to each face and floor. Central bays have three 20<sup>th</sup>-century casements to ground floor and one ten pane and two different sized fifteen pane sashes to first floor. Earlier wing has 20<sup>th</sup> century casement and door to ground floor and above three 20<sup>th</sup>-century windows in early 18<sup>th</sup>-century raised surrounds with keystone bead-moulded inner edges and moulded sills. Rear elevation of this early wing has rusticated quoins and a moulded cornice which slightly projects over the quoins. No original openings. Interior has fine hall with dado panelling, screen of Ionic column in antis, raised and fielded panelled doors in architraves with pulvinated friezes to cornices above. To rear is a magnificent imperial staircase with barley twist on vase balusters, ramped moulded handrail, panelled cheekpieces and panelled dado to opposite wall. Landing has Ionic columned screens to sides of staircase, possibly early 20<sup>th</sup> century, also pedimented doorcase to front room. Council chamber to rear wing has good early 20<sup>th</sup>-century panelling and domed ceiling light.

## **4. Historical Summary**

- 4.1 Documentary evidence for the owners of Nether Hall, the Sewers, Copleys and Harringtons is good. What remains sparse is early evidence for the hall itself. What is available is contradictory.

- 4.2 A consensus of evidence firmly suggests that a ‘Nether Hall’ stood in the vicinity of the present building from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, but nothing remains above ground.
- 4.3 Amongst the published articles are three views of buildings all purporting to be Nether Hall. One published in the *Doncaster Gazette and Chronicle* dated April 28<sup>th</sup> 1966 is a print of Nether Hall in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, clearly the building we know today. The other two views, both published in the *Doncaster Star* on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1996 show entirely different buildings. The earlier looking of the two has a seven bay frontage with two storeys and a half storey above topped with what could be a balustraded palisade; a grand style not out of place in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The other view shows, again, a seven bay frontage with two storeys surmounted by a hipped roof with dormer windows, possibly five to the front. This is nearer to the present building, but clearly of different design.
- 4.3 Map evidence contributes little to the story of the Hall. The earliest available map of 1771 only indicates the estate. Those of 1821, 1828 and 1854 show the house in its grounds. A northern extension to the original historic core is indicated on all three. The map of 1906 shows an extension to the east. The main 20<sup>th</sup> century additions are not indicated.

## **5. Description of Roof Structure**

- 5.1 In the early part of January 2003 a structural report was undertaken on behalf of Doncaster MBC (Strange 2003). At that time exposed timbers were limited to those on part of the south facing roof and the northern part of the eastern wing. In addition, inspection holes had been cut through a number of the ceilings. At the time of this report a great deal more of the timbers had been uncovered. The visible roof of Nether Hall is in three parts; that facing the front and two side wings. The front-facing roof is aligned south-west to north-east. For the purpose of the report this roof will be said to face south with west and east wings. In summary, the roof over Nether Hall appears to be a conventional pitched and hipped roof; it has a small open courtyard at the rear and a flat lead covered roof over the central east-west section. The east wing terminates in a more recent gable wall. The northern end of the west wing turns towards the courtyard. The ceiling frame will be described separately at the end of this section.

### **South-facing roof (Photographs 22-44)**

- 5.2 At the west and east corners are hip rafters. The south-facing roof timbers are those which lie within the area defined by the hip rafters. The roof was observed in three rooms with (from the east) the first room separated from the second by a wall c. 0.3m wide, and the second room separated from the third by a wall c.

0.6m wide. A central east-west ridge runs the length of the roof. At the eastern end, the ridge, principal rafter, hip rafter and the north-south ridge all meet. At the western end the same arrangement was observed.

- 5.3 Along the length of the roof are four principal rafters; one at either end joining at the hip apex, and two to either side of a central inserted dormer window (Photograph 33). A late softwood truss is positioned above the first dividing wall. From the east, the first truss (S.1) has an oak principal rafter with a birdsmouthed foot (probably) pegged into an oak wall-plate rising to join a truncated principal rafter in a halved joint at the apex. At two observed points along its length the wall-plate has stop-splayed and bridled scarf joints (Photograph 43). Below the wall-plate is a floor beam with joist mortices. The truncated principal rafter is tenoned into an angled mortice in the upper face of a collar beam. The southern end of the collar forms a pegged mortice and tenon joint with the full principal rafter. The collar beam is of reused oak, having a series of similar-sized joist mortices. Extending horizontally from the apex is a diamond-set oak ridge purlin with notches to take common rafters. The northern ends of the ridge and the collar extend beyond the exposed area and are supported as they pass over a structural east-west wall. The main principal rafter supports two tenoned purlins with a pseudo wall-plate (supporting short common rafters) morticed into the collar beam at the base of the truncated principal rafter. The second truss (S.2) is evidently of a similar type, although less is visible due to the construction of a later dividing wall. The wall-plate (resting on the top of the outer south facing masonry wall) may have been turned or reused. The original floor beam is not evident. An inserted angle piece over the short principal rafter adjusts the pitch on that side. A collar beam continues to the north with a beam above supporting the flat roof. All timbers are of oak with some later repairs and elements of the flat roof in softwood. The third truss (S.3) was again only partly observed due to the later northern partition wall. Most details are the same as those in truss S.2. The pseudo wall-plate continues to the west. Purlins are tenoned into the principal rafter. The short principal has an additional piece to adjust the pitch angle. The flat roof is evident to the north. At the western end of the roof the fourth truss (S.4) is one end of a major structural element supporting the western roof. At the southern end the truss is similar to the first three except the collar beam extends to become part of the other roof. A hip rafter joins the apex of the principal rafters.
- 5.4 Between the trusses, supported by the line of two purlins on the southern side and by the pseudo wall plate on the northern side, are common rafters. There is no ridge piece and each rafter joins its partner at the apex in a pegged halved

joint to form a common rafter roof (Photographs 29 and 30). The majority of the rafters are of oak (except where repaired or replaced in softwood). Many are of reused timber with a number of studs present, indicative of timber framing. The southern side of the roof is interrupted at three points by the later insertion of dormer windows. These lie between the first and second purlins and above each in the second purlin the soffitt angle has been removed to improve head room. In addition, where observed, mortices for removed common rafters were noted (Photograph 26). The window framing, sides and top are all of softwood. The southern side of the flat roof, primarily of broad softwood boarding, was observed between the first and fourth truss.

### **West-facing roof (south)** (Photographs 11-23)

- 5.5 This part of the roof is defined by the hip rafter common with the southern roof (Photograph 21), and the east-west cross-wall. A key element of the roof is a supporting lateral truss on the ridge line (S.4). In addition there is a cross truss. Common rafters join at a ridge purlin, with two supporting side purlins on the west side and a pseudo wall-plate on the east side. The flat roof continues to the east.
- 5.6 The lateral truss (S.4) has at its southern end a principal rafter with birdsmouthed foot pegged into an oak wall-plate. An oak hip rafter joins at the apex (Photograph 23). A truncated principal rafter is halved jointed at the apex and tenoned into a collar beam. From the southern principal the collar beam extends along the length of the roof to join a principal rafter at the western end. The two ends of the truss are similar with the exception that the western principal has been truncated (Photograph 14). Between the apex of each end is a diamond set oak ridge purlin. Of great interest is the fact that the collar beam is a single piece of unjoined softwood over 7m in length (Photograph 19). As shipping marks were located on a timber of similar section to the west it is likely that both had a Baltic origin. The western most truncated principal rafter may originally have reflected that on the eastern side. When cut the rafter had to be supported on a crossbeam with iron straps and has lost much of its structural integrity although some support will be taken from the hip rafter which joins the apex (Photograph 12). An arrangement of beams and joists (including that with shipping marks) support the flat roof at this point.
- 5.7 The crossing truss (S.5) is different to Trusses 1-3 in several ways. The west-facing principal rafter is of oak but the purlins on this side are trenched (Photograph 16). The ridge purlin appears to be tenoned and the slender-section truncated east principal rafter rests directly on a beam acting as a wall-plate. An



intermediate diagonal strut supporting the principal rafter rests upon the softwood collar beam. To the east the boards of the flat roof lie over a series of joists supported on cross beams.

- 5.8 Along the length of the roof common rafters of oak (some showing indications of reuse) are jointed to the ridge purlin and extend down to the side purlins (Photograph 15). Some are tenoned and some re-trenched. Most are in two or three sections. All rafters appear to have scotched feet (Photograph 18). A few softwood replacements were noted. In the north-east corner of the room below the roof, a small area is partitioned off to form an enclosed stair which formerly led to a door over the flat roof (Photograph 14). To the north of Truss 5 a later opening has been formed to allow access to the flat roof of a later building. Cutting the western side of the roof is a later dormer window similar to those in the southern roof (Photograph 22).

**West-facing roof (north)/north-west roof (Photographs 56-67)**

- 5.9 The roof is defined by the east-west cross wall and terminates in a northern hip. Although divided by the cross wall, purlins on the west side pass through. Beyond the wall the roof has three sides and a single supporting truss.
- 5.10 The truss (S.6) runs east-west across the full width of the roof. Both masonry side walls support oak wall-plates, possibly turned. Both principal rafters are of oak and have birdsmouthed feet. Upper detail of the truss is obscured. Above the tenoned side purlins is a collar beam (Photograph 68) tenoned into both principal rafters (Photograph 65). An arrangement of beams and joists above support the timbers of a flat roof (Photograph 56). As with all the other roofs, timber uprights are evident that formerly supported the lath and plaster partition walls down from the line of the first side purlins.
- 5.11 To the north of the truss line, between two corner hip rafters, are approximately fourteen common rafters of reused oak. From the wall-plate they rise to join (in the centre) the collar beam and at the sides are jointed into the hip rafters. A single oak purlin provides support. On the west side of the roof similar common rafters are supported on two purlins and are interrupted by the insertion of a later dormer window. The layout of timbers on the east side is similar but the window is wider, later and is glazed on the line of the roof pitch. It is interesting to note that several of the common rafters on both sides have angled, halved joints indicative of the former presence of collars (Photograph 58). In the central area, to the south of the truss line, five joists, tied into a cross beam above the collar, and into the wall on the south side, provide a support for the

boards of the flat roof. A higher collar was observed but was not recorded in detail.

#### **North-east corner roof** (Photographs 45-55)

- 5.12 This roof stands in some isolation and can be accessed through a small oak panel side-hinged hatch. This arrangement is clearly quite late and provides a way across a walkway to a door to the much later flat roof addition. The presence of oak panelling, though reused, is interesting. The roof has a single pitch with a slightly off-centre ridge. At its southern end the roof slopes upwards (Photograph 45) to join an unobserved roof running east-west.
- 5.13 One east-west truss (S.7) provides support. This is of simple 'A' frame type and comprises two oak principal rafters with a halved jointed apex (Photograph 52). A collar beam is tenoned into the two principal rafters (Photograph 50). A secondary beam, nailed in position, supports a water tank platform. Both principal rafters have been reused. They support one substantial purlin to either side. Both have birdsmouthed feet; that to the east rests on a wall-plate sitting on the masonry wall (Photograph 51); that to the west rests on a wall-plate set over a wedge beam over a former tie beam. The end of the tie beam rests on the wall, but the line of the wall-plate is set forward. This seems to indicate an adjustment of an existing roof.
- 5.14 To the northern side of the truss a thin ridge piece extends out to join a brick gable wall. The brick (late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup>-century) rests upon earlier handmade brick, which in turn rests upon the masonry wall (Photograph 54). The later wall was clearly constructed for access to the flat roof and has been provided with a doorway. From the north-east and north-west corners diagonal timbers extend to the truss apex (Photograph 52). It is probable that they were originally the hip rafters for a northern hip, removed following the insertion of the gable wall. This would explain the rather haphazard use of timbers to infill the space between the two hip rafters. On either side purlins extend out from the hip rafters to the truss and beyond. The first four common rafters after the purlin have no ridge and are peg-jointed at the apex. The roof continues to the south with a diamond-set ridge purlin supporting a number of common rafters. On the eastern side a second purlin was introduced; a blocked dormer window was noted between the first and second purlin. The ridge purlin joins with two valley rafters for a union with the unobserved east-west roof. A number of timbers are reused, notably the beam supporting the east-west stub wall with the access hatch (Photograph 48).

### **Ceiling frame**

- 5.15 In general the ceiling frame is unremarkable. In the south-east corner of the south and east roofs, joists span between the second purlins and cross beams (Photograph 41). To the north the frame is more haphazard. Whilst many timbers are of oak, much reused, a significant number are of softwood, implying either repair or a later construction date. Across the central part of the south roof two cross beams support three bays of joists, again a mixture of oak and softwood. In the central bay is an inspection hatch (Photograph 32). In the western roof the collar beam of Truss 4 is used to support joists running off at right-angles to the second line of purlins and to the east wall. Timbers are of oak and softwood. The ceiling frame in the north-east roof comprises oak joists either side of a central north-south beam.
- 5.16 The only ceiling frame that demonstrates signs of relative antiquity is that within the southern part of the north-east roof. It extends down from the roof apex to join the stub wall crossing beam, following the plan of the roof at this point. There is a central crossing beam with joists to either side (Photographs 45-47). The facing of the ceiling comprises lath and plaster which, possibly, is original.

### **Unobserved parts of the roof**

- 5.17 The main part of the roof that was not directly inspected was the central part of the northern roof, parts of the flat roof over the present corridor and the central part of the eastern roof. The central part of the northern roof is of common rafter type with truncated southern principal rafters, similar to the southern roof. Between the two is a flat roof. Were Trusses 2 and 3 to be fully revealed they would appear similar to Truss 4. The central part of the eastern roof may have a hip rafter extending from the apex of the north-east roof to join the wall-plate at the south-east. From the same apex ridges may extend to the south and to the west.

## **6. Analysis and phasing**

### **Analysis**

- 6.1 The roof over the historic core of Nether Hall essentially comprises reused oak. It has been altered, adapted and repaired over a period in excess of 300 years. The masonry walls on which the roof stands are possibly older than the roof.
- 6.2 The dormer windows to all four sides are secondary to the roof construction. In most inspected examples mortice holes for missing rafters were located in both

upper and lower purlins. The forward edge of the upper purlins had been trimmed to improve head room.

- 6.3 Considering the arrangement of the main east-west aligned roofs (north and south), it is possible that originally they had principal rafters of equal length that formed a valley over the central masonry wall. This type of roof would have been easier to construct and infinitely stronger. If this was the case, the flat roof over the central area has to be later. The purpose behind introducing a flat roof is to maximise available space in a roof cavity that originally may not have been utilised. If fully uncovered, it is likely that the trusses crossing both north and south roofs replicate Truss 4.
- 6.4 The style of the house exterior suggests a date around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; it is known to be earlier, but is it possible that the roof dates from this period? This is very unlikely. A new mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century roof would almost certainly have been constructed of imported softwood. As domestic supplies of structural oak timber diminished, replacement building materials had to be found. Although imported softwoods had been used in buildings of earlier date it was only with the expansion of the canal network at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, allowing the cheap transportation of constructional timber from the Baltic forests through the North Sea ports that the use became widespread. Baltic timber had a number of advantages over oak; it was lighter, straighter and much longer; consequently roof designs underwent change. Local examples of roofs from this period suggest that the most likely form would be queen-post truss roofs with staggered tusked purlins (Swann 2000;2006).
- 6.5 In the long north-west truss (S.4) two Baltic timbers have been identified (a shipping mark was noted on the face of the timber nearest to the northern crossing wall). This therefore implies that the mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century date for the external restyling could also have been the date at which an existing double-pitched roof was converted to a pitched and flat roof.
- 6.6 There is some interest in the truncated end of the long truss (S.4). It is likely that the truncated principal rafter originally extended to join a former wall-plate over the northern crossing wall. A former hip rafter is still in place. The implication is that the roof at this point turned to the east to join the northern east-west roof. If this was the case then the north-west roof has to be of a later date.
- 6.7 The north-west roof appears to be a three-sided roof with a truncated apex replaced with a flat roof. In some of the rafters on both sides, to the south of the

truss, are angled mortices for halved joints to take collars. This could imply the possibility of an original common rafter roof, or it may just be the coincidental reuse of timbers from such a roof.

- 6.8 The north-east roof appears to have been constructed at the same time as the north and south roofs, but it has been altered. In its original form it had a northern hip. This had to be altered when the northern gable wall was constructed. On inspection it can be seen that the replacement timbers for the altered section lack symmetry and have been replaced in a haphazard fashion.

### **Phasing**

- 6.9 The following phasing is not absolute and should be seen more as a sequence of possible events. Were it possible to obtain dendrochronological dates for some of the timbers (most appear unsuitable) then the events could be given context. The danger would be that if the timber had been reused (as most are) then a felling date could be almost irrelevant.
- 6.10 Phase 1. A double-pitched roof is constructed over the existing masonry core of Nether Hall, outward sloping on four sides with a small projecting hipped roof to the north-east. A date of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century is assumed, with an earlier date for the building below. The reused timbers may have belonged to an earlier roof on the building, or could have been brought to the site.
- 6.11 Phase 2. Around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century all roofs, with the exception of that to the north-east, are altered. The central parts of both roofs are removed and beams inserted to span between the truncated trusses. These new timbers may have a Baltic origin. The central area is boarded over and covered in lead to form a flat roof. It is possible that dormers were introduced at this time, but the present frames and sides are later. It is possibly around this time that the union between the main roof and the north-west roof was made, resulting in the truncated principal rafter. The north-west roof may have already existed in a different form, or it could have been newly built; it is not clear. The ceiling frame was introduced and the walls and ceiling plastered.
- 6.12 Phase 3. Around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the dormer windows were either inserted new, or replacement frames were set into existing openings.
- 6.13 Phase 4. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A new flat-roofed building was constructed to the north and a brick gable wall erected between it and the north-east roof. The former hipped roof was, at the gable end, converted to a pitched roof. At a

similar date (or later) an access door was set into the outer face of the west roof to give access to the flat roof of a newly constructed building.

## **7. Bibliography**

Alcock, N.W., Barley, M.W., Dixon, P.W. and Meeson, R.A.,1996, *Recording Timber-Framed Buildings: an illustrated glossary*, Council for British Archaeology, York

Strange, J., 2003, *Structural appraisal Report on the roof over Nether Hall*, Byrom Clark Roberts

Swann, A.C., 2000, *Archaeological Building Survey and Analysis, Cusworth Hall, Cusworth, Nr Doncaster*, Archaeological Services WYAS

Swann, A.C., 2006, *Archaeological Recording and Analysis at Wentworth House, Stainland, South Yorkshire*, Archaeological Services WYAS

## **8 Acknowledgements**

### **Project Management**

Andy Swann, MAAIS

### **Building Survey**

Andy Swann,MAAIS

### **Photographic Survey**

P Gwilliam, BA (Hons)

### **Building Analysis**

Andy Swann, MAAIS

### **Illustrations**

Andy Swann, MAAIS

Mark Chisnall, BA

### **Historical Research**

Louise Ford, BA, MA, PhD

### **Report**

Andy Swann, MAAIS

***Appendix 1***  
***ASWYAS Written Scheme of Investigation***

***Appendix 2:***  
***Photographic Register***