

DODDERHILL BUILDING
RECORDING:
MILL COTTAGE,
MILL LANE,
WYCHBOLD

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Illustrations by Shona Robson-Glyde and Carolyn Hunt

3rd November 2005

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Project P2746
Report 1347
WSM 34371

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Dodderhill Building Recording: Mill Cottage, Mill Lane, Wychbold

Shona Robson-Glyde

Part 1 Project summary

Building recording was undertaken at Mill Cottage, Mill Lane, Wychbold (NGR SO 92217 66437). It was undertaken on behalf of the Dodderhill Research Group. The project aimed to establish the character and history of the building.

Mill Cottage is a small 16th century timber frame house that originally consisted of an open hall and crosswing. Surviving inside are a cruck, wind braces and a large amount of elm square panel framework. It was probably the home of a merchant or yeoman.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

Building recording was undertaken at Mill Cottage, (NGR SO 92217 66437) Mill Lane, Wychbold, Worcestershire (Fig 1) on behalf of the Dodderhill Research Group.

1.1 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (IFA 2001) and *Recording historic buildings: a descriptive specification (3rd edition)* (RCHME 1996).

1.2 Aims

The aims of the recording were to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of the building.

2. Historical context

Mill Cottage lies to the west of the Worcester Road through Wychbold village (Fig1). The building is included on the Historic Environment Record as WSM 23865, which states that the house is a 'black and white timber framed post-medieval building'. It is located close to the site of a medieval Wychbold mill and adjacent to the site of a later medieval mill (WSM 2103; Stewart 2002, 15). This later medieval mill was still in existence in the 1940s when it was finally abandoned. The only surviving part is the undershot waterwheel still in existence in Mill Cottage garden.

3. Results

Mill Cottage was recorded in June and July 2005. This survey has allowed a basic chronology to be created for the house.

3.1 Structural analysis

The results of the structural analysis are presented below and the basic phasing can be seen on Figure 2.

3.1.1 Phase 1 – 16th century

In the 16th century, a small cottage was constructed close to the site of a medieval mill in Wychbold. The building was constructed of elm and had stone foundations. The timber frame had square panels and tension braces (Fig 3). The interior of the cottage shows smoke blackening in some places in the roof and includes wind braces (Fig 4) and a cruck truss.

It is possible that the house dates to earlier than the 16th century, as architectural features like these are indicative of an early building. It was laid out on an open hall and crosswing plan with the cruck frame marking the position of the high end of the hall. There may have been more cruck frames along the building but as the east and west walls of the hall have been replaced, their position cannot be discerned. A cross, or screens, passage may have run from the present front door. Small buildings with open halls were not unusual and tended to be residences of a merchant or a yeoman. The crosswing housed the buttery and pantry on the ground floor and the solar rooms on the first floor that had wind braces in the roof. Wind braces show that the roof space was open and were a decoration only seen in houses of higher status such as that owned by a yeoman.

3.1.2 **Phase 2 – By 18th century**

By the 18th century the hall had been floored and a fireplace had been inserted. This fireplace was in the position of the current fireplace in the dining room. The addition of the chimney would have created a smoke room on the first floor between the outer wall and the cruck frame and allowed the rest of the first floor to be used for accommodation.

3.1.3 **Phase 3 – 18th to 19th centuries**

During the 18th to 19th centuries an extension was added to the south elevation of the cottage (Fig 6). The brick sizes indicate that this took place before the middle of the 19th century. The extension was probably needed due to an increase in family size or business.

The tithe map of 1843 (Fig 7) shows the cottage in place adjacent to the mill standing within its own garden. By 1854, when a sale schedule of Wychbold Court was drawn up (Fig 8), the cottage had been divided into 2 separate dwellings, one consisting of the hall and the other the cross wing. However there appears to be no evidence of this still surviving within the present building but the replacing of the outer walls of the hall may have led to this evidence being removed.

3.1.4 **Phase 4 – Late 20th century**

The late 20th century development of the house stemmed from the current owners' needs. The ground floor study (Fig 9) was added against the west elevation adjacent to the Phase 3 extension.

3.1.5 **Phase 5 – End of 20th century**

By the end of the 20th century the owners required a new kitchen (Fig 10) for the building and the former kitchen with a low ceiling and window, was left for use as a utility room.

4. **Synthesis**

This small cottage has proved to be a wealth of information much of which has only been briefly glimpsed by the work detailed here. A more in depth study will be required to sort out anomalies such as the strange diagonal timber repair on the north wall of the dining room that may relate to a previous staircase position.

Although this cottage appears to date from the 16th century it is possible that it is earlier but due to the fact it is not listed much work has been carried out in the past that has masked or removed valuable evidence. The current owners are obviously proud of their home and have kept as much of the original fabric showing as possible while still enabling them to have a living house.

5. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

Building recording was undertaken on behalf of the Dodderhill Research Group at Mill Cottage, Mill Lane, Wychbold, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 92217 66437; SMR ref WSM 34371). Mill Cottage is a small 16th century timber frame house that originally consisted of an open hall and crosswing. Surviving inside are a cruck, wind braces and a large amount of elm square panel framework. It was probably the home of a merchant or yeoman.

6. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 3 Photographic records AS3
- 92 Digital photographs
- 3 Black and white photographic films
- 1 Building record forms AS43a
- 1 Building record phase forms AS43b

7. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr and Mrs Stewart, Chris Bowers and Dodderhill Research Group.

8. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Shona Robson-Glyde. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Derek Hurst. Fieldwork was undertaken by Shona Robson-Glyde and illustration by Shona Robson-Glyde and Carolyn Hunt.

9. **Bibliography**

IFA, 2001 *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

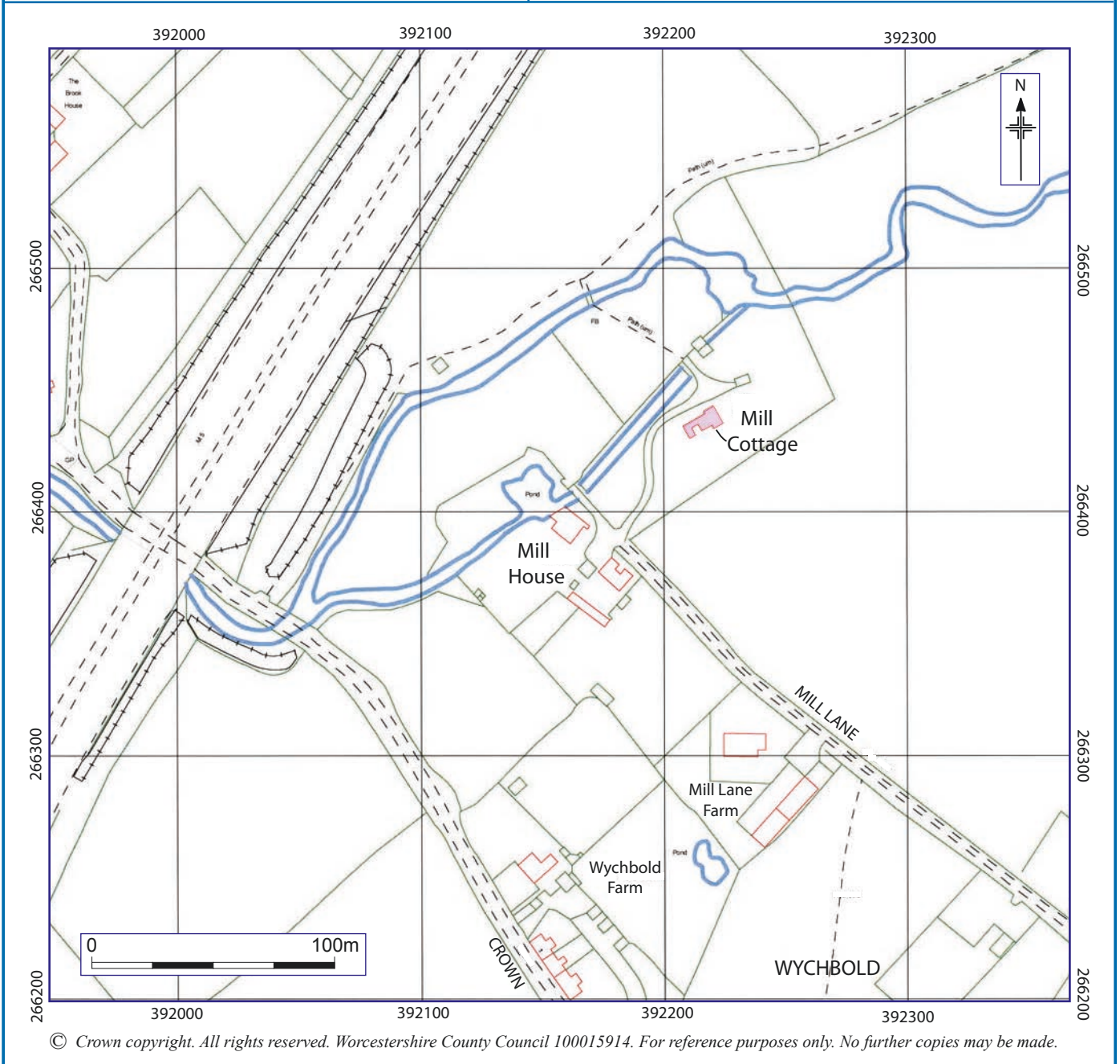
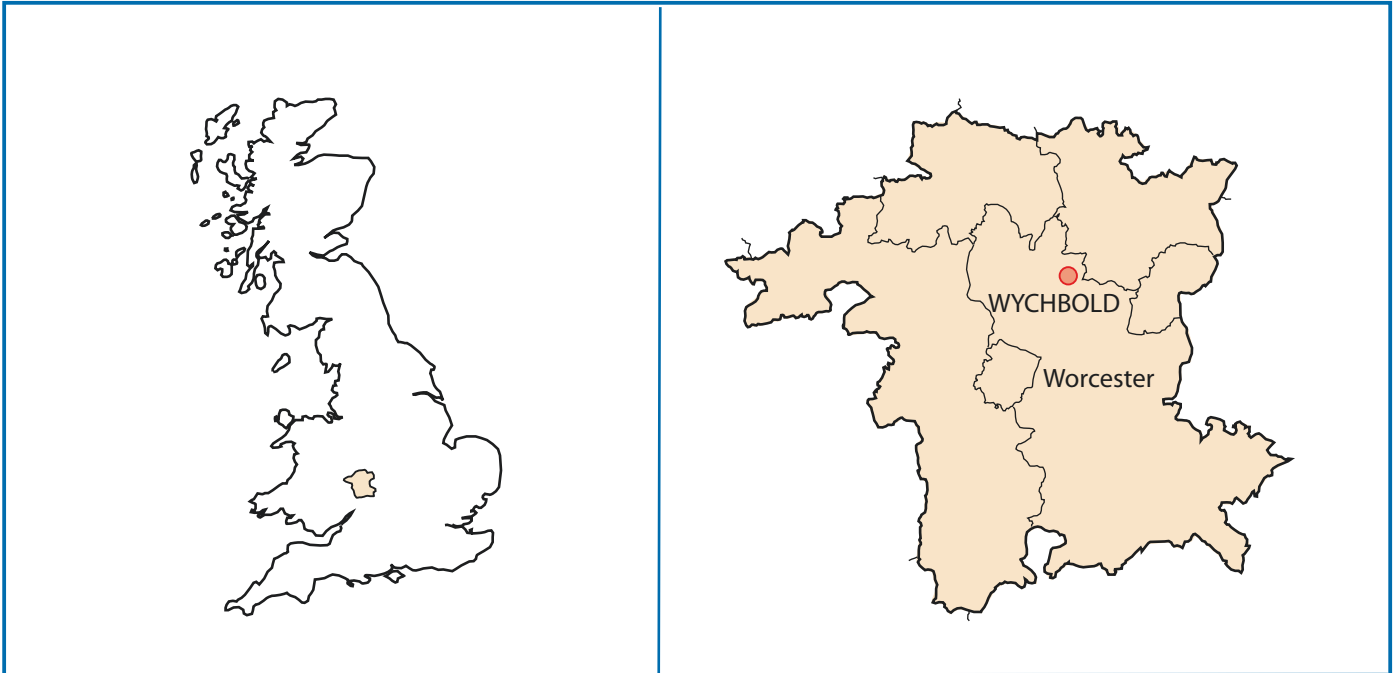
RCHME, 1996 *Recording historic buildings: a descriptive specification (3rd edition)*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

Stewart, C, 2002 'The Watermills of Dodderhill', *Dodderhill Parish Notes*, Discovering Dodderhill's Past Project

10. **Abbreviations**

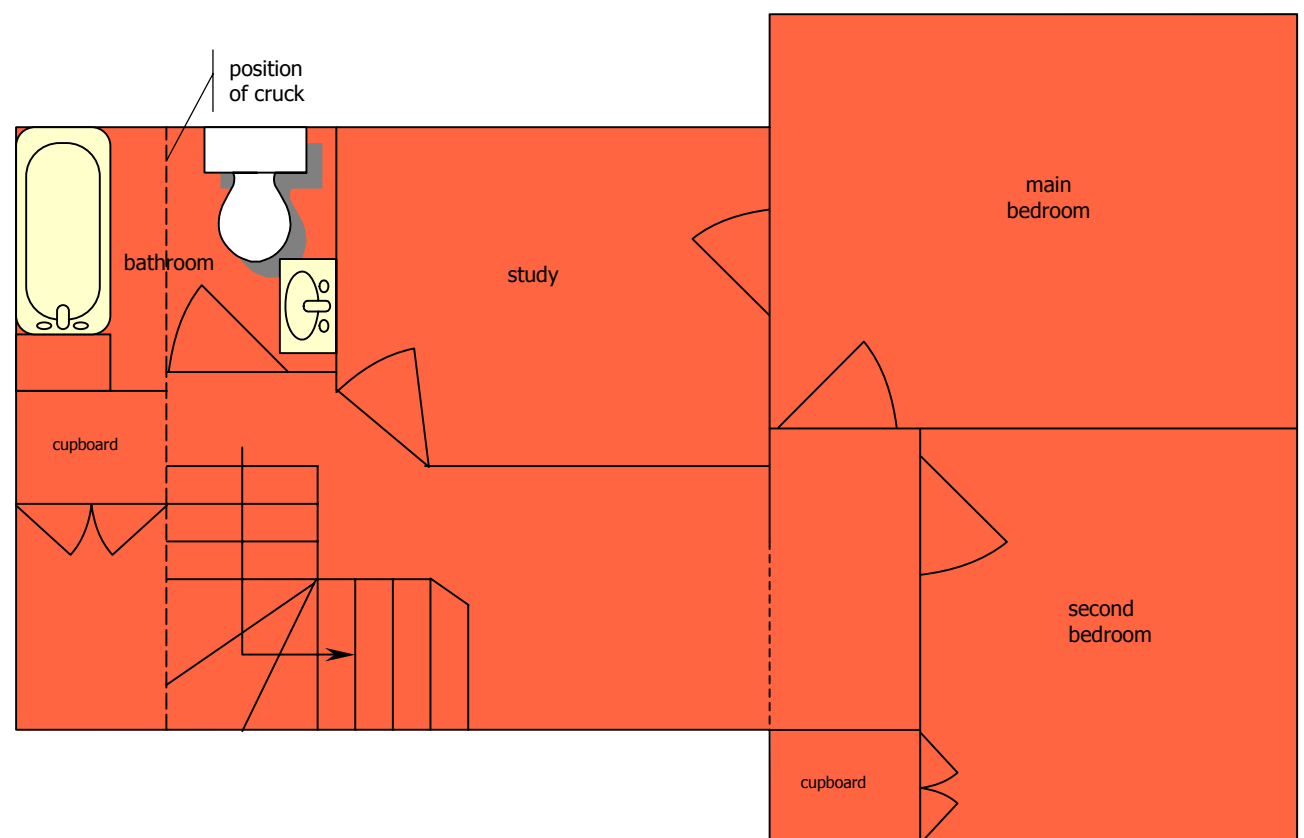
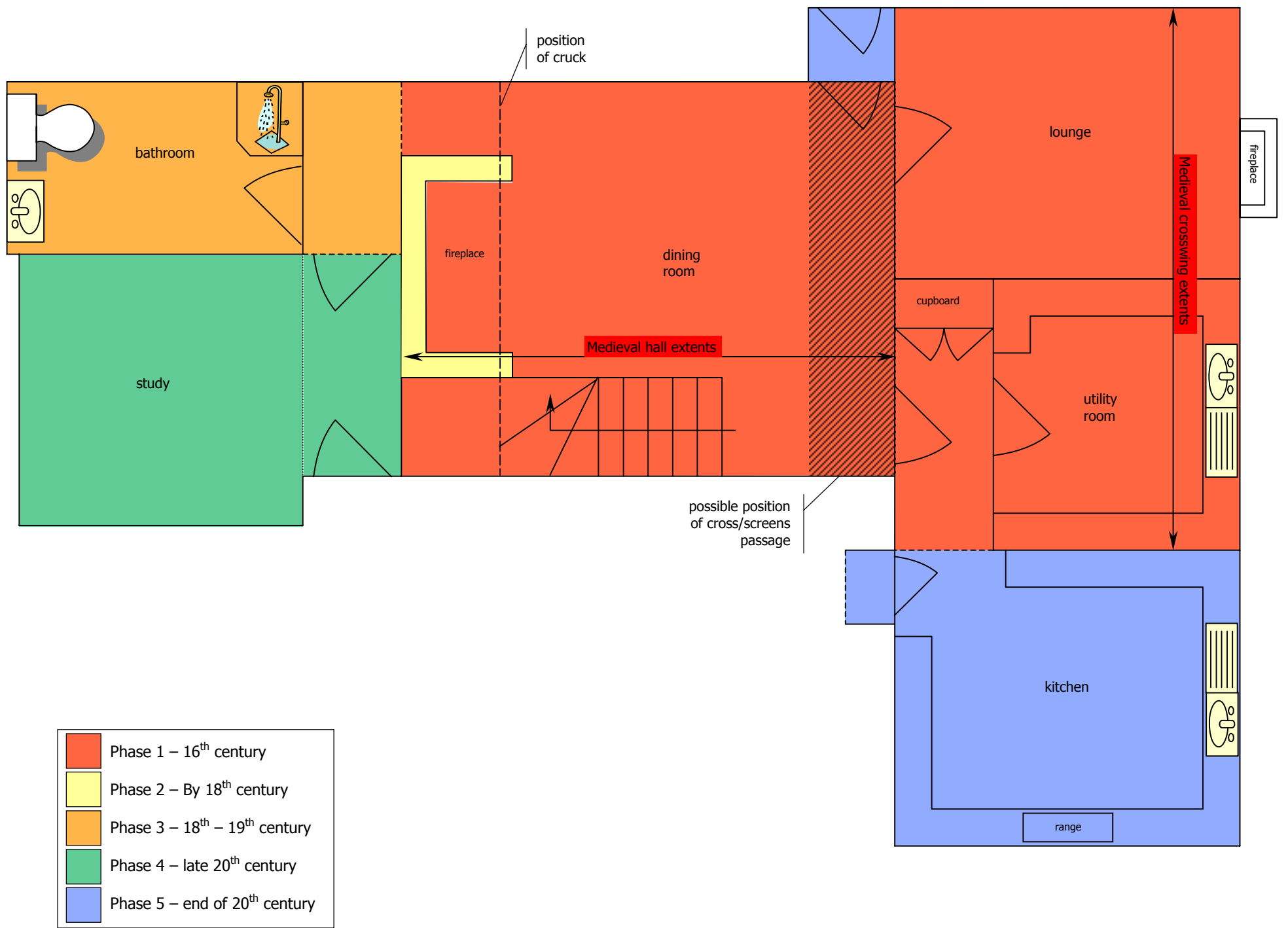
- NMR National Monuments Record.
- HER Historic Environment Record.
- WCRO Worcestershire County Records Office.
- WSM Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Historic Environment Record.

11. **Appendix 1 Figures**



Location of Mill Cottage

Figure 1



DRAWING NOT TO SCALE. BASED ON SKETCH PLAN PRODUCED ON SITE.

Figure 2: Mill Cottage sketch ground plan and phasing



Figure 3: Mill Cottage from the south west



Figure 4: Wind braces in main bedroom



Figure 5: Cruck truss on first floor



Figure 6: Phase 3 extension to cottage

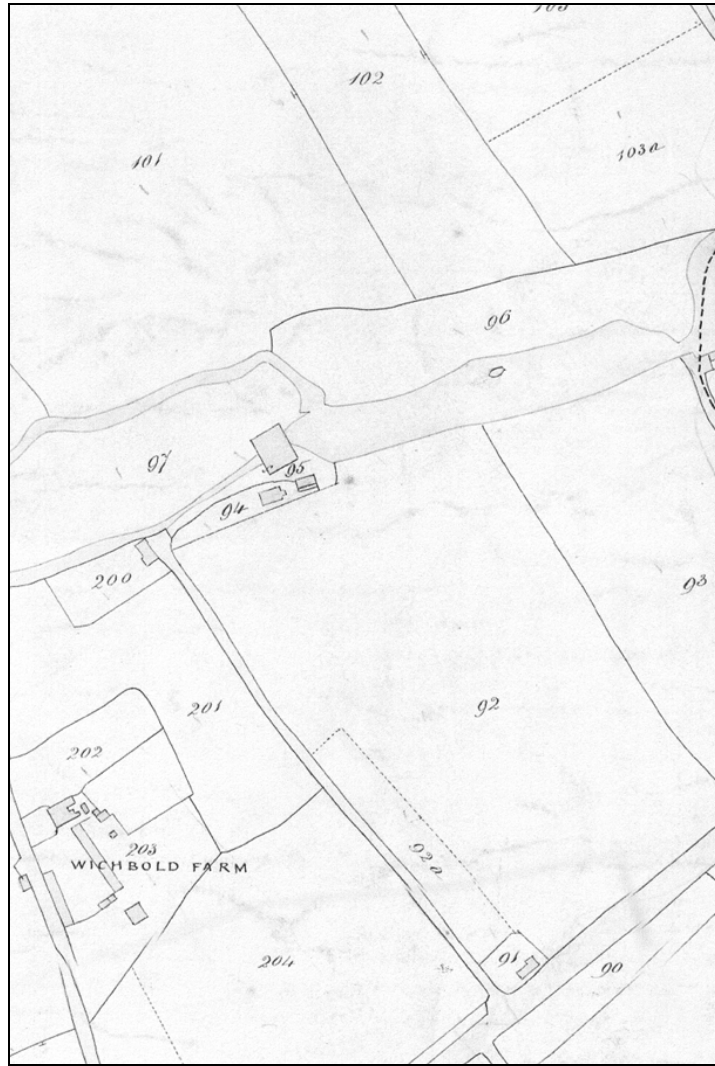


Figure 7: Part of Dodderhill tithe map showing Mill Cottage (94)

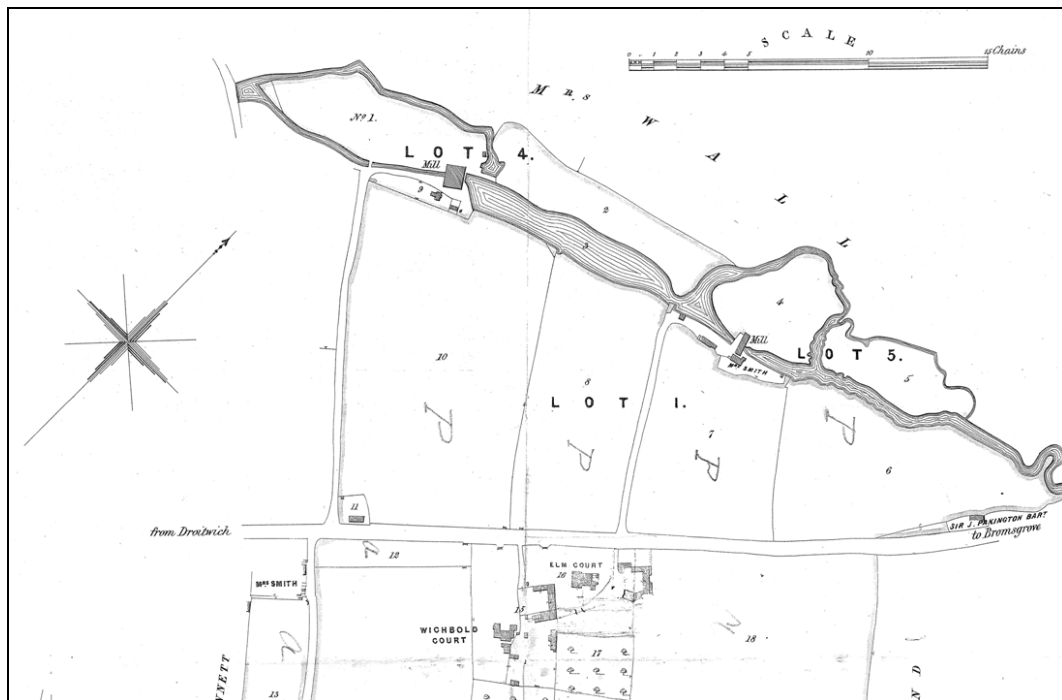


Figure 8: Part of 1854 sale particulars showing Mill Cottage



Figure 9: Phase 4 extension