

Chris Butler MIFA Archaeological Services



A Standing Building survey of September Cottage Edburton, West Sussex

by
Chris Butler MIFA & Keith Butler AIFA

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Rosedale
Berwick, Polegate,
East Sussex
BN26 6TB
Tel & fax: 01323 871021
e mail: chris@reltub.fsbusiness.co.uk

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services has been commissioned by Mr & Mrs Wilson (the Clients) to carry out a Building Recording survey of September Cottage, Edburton, West Sussex.
- 1.2 As a result of a proposed planning application Horsham District Council (HDC) have requested that an archaeological buildings survey be carried out on September Cottage to help inform the decision making process.
- 1.3 September Cottage is situated at TQ 2310 1146 (Fig. 1), at the west end of Edburton village, and is located on the south side of the road at a height of 43m OD. September Cottage is a Grade II Listed Building (LBS Number: 298875; Date Listed: 15/03/1955), and is described as a C16 timber-framed building with painted brick infilling and curved braces on the first floor, with a hipped slate roof, casement windows, two storeys and four windows¹.
- 1.4 Edburton is situated just off the northern escarpment of the South Downs, and comprises a hamlet of a church, rectory and manor house, together with a small number of house and cottages. Edburton was split between the Hundred of Burbeach in Bramber Rape, and the Hundred of Poynings in Lewes Rape, and today falls within the Parish of Upper Beeding..
- 1.5 The survey undertaken approximates to an English Heritage Level 2 survey², and was carried out by the author and Keith Butler on the 22nd October 2009. The brief was to establish, if possible the history of the Cottage, and to specifically investigate the areas which may be subject to the planning application, to establish what effect any alterations may have on the fabric of the building. A measured survey of the building was not undertaken.
- 1.6 Keith Butler returned to the site on the 26th October and excavated a small hole in the north-east corner of the Kitchen to investigate the make-up of the raised floor area.
- 1.7 This survey is an archaeological survey of the standing building, and has been carried out using non-intrusive techniques. It is not a structural survey, and it is recommended that the advice of a structural engineer is sought before undertaking any work based on the archaeological interpretation of this survey.

¹ <http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk/BuildingDetailsForm.aspx?id=298875>

² *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* – English Heritage 2006.

2.0 Archaeological & Historical background

- 2.1 The hamlet at Edburton was dominated by the Motte and Bailey castle on Edburton Hill³, which must have been built shortly after the Norman invasion in 1066. The Church of St. Andrew is mostly 13th century, but there is some evidence for an earlier church⁴.
- 2.2 There are a number of cottages at Edburton that have 16th century or earlier origins, including September Cottage. Others include Michaelmas Cottage and Truleigh Cottage, which both appear to have 16th century origins, although modified in the 17th century⁵.
- 2.3 September Cottage is described as being a small 16th-century timber-framed house formerly with an open hall, some of the smoke-blackened rafters of which survived in 1984. A chimneystack and an upper floor were added later, and the west end was extended or rebuilt in the 17th century⁶.
- 2.4 Edburton is not shown on Speed's map of 1610, but is present on Morden's map of 1695, although the scale of the map is too small to show any detail. Other later maps do not show Edburton, until the Yeakell & Gardiner map of 1778-1783, which shows the hamlet of Edburton with a number of buildings, including one on the location of September Cottage, clustered on the south-west corner of the crossroads. Five cottages with small plots of land can be seen heading north from the crossroads, and may be those demolished between 1780 and 1813⁷.
- 2.5 The Ordnance Survey one inch maps of 1813-19 show sufficient detail to determine a building present on the site of September Cottage. The 1st Edition OS map (1879) shows September Cottage within a garden plot, and there is little change through the later OS Editions.
- 2.6 A recent publication claims that September Cottage was first built in 1638, apparently due to a carved date found on a beam in the loft. It states that a second cottage was added to the west end in 1725 (date on north elevation). The two cottages were at one time numbered 78 and 79. In the 1960's they were taken into single ownership and converted into one dwelling⁸.

³ Jones, R. 2003 'Hastings to Herstmonceux: The Castles of Sussex', in Rudling, D. (Ed) *The Archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Kings Lynn, Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd,

⁴ Whiteman, K & J. 1994 *Ancient Churches of Sussex*, S.B. Publications.

⁵ Victoria County History of Sussex, Vol. 6 Part 3: Bramber Rape.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Brooks, A.R. 2007 *The Changing Times of Fulking and Edburton 1900-2007*, Chichester, RPM Print & Design.

3. The Survey

3.1 General external description

The north elevation of the Cottage provides the best view, as it has hardly been affected by the more recent changes and additions, and thus can give an insight to the construction and development of the building.

In its original form September Cottage appears to have been a two- or three-bay box frame-construction house of possible 16th century date. Externally two bays of the original house currently survive at the eastern end of the Cottage; with four downward braces and central vertical studs showing on the upper storey of the north elevation. Vertical studs with horizontal midrails in the central panel can be seen on the lower storey of the north elevation. The panels have been infilled with regular courses of brick at a later date

The soleplate is visible externally on the eastern bay, with the principal posts sitting on the top of the soleplate, which has been covered with concrete. A door has been inserted in the wall of the western bay. The windows are all later, although some, especially those in the upper storey, are probably in their original location.

At some stage in the 17th century either the 3rd (western bay) has been demolished and replaced, or a new bay has been added to the west end. This comprises a flint constructed dwarf wall upon which is placed a timber framed structure comprising six panels divided by horizontal midrails and vertical studs. A small window is located in the lower left panel, and may be in its original location; however the window in the bottom right panel has been inserted at a later date. The panels appear to be infilled with regular courses of bricks and some small stone blocks.

A large fireplace was also inserted on the ground floor at the west end of the original two-bay structure, and within this new extension. The brick-built chimney stack rises through the first floor with no fireplaces situated on this floor, and continues through the loft to emerge from the roof. The fabric and form of the bricks used in this fireplace and chimney construction is typical of those found in the 17th century.

A second extension has been added to the west end of the Cottage, probably in the 18th century. This is built with a wall to first storey height, of regular coursed brick construction, above which there is a timber framing of vertical studs and horizontal midrails. The upper panels are infilled with regular coursed bricks. A window has been located in each storey, and although the windows themselves are more recent, they appear to be situated in original locations.

At the west end there is a large chimney stack to serve the fireplace on the ground floor at that end of the Cottage, and this appears to be an original feature added with the 18th century extension. The upper parts of both chimneys are identical, suggesting the earlier chimney was altered to provide a matching pair at this time.

A ground floor window at the west end is a recent addition and may have replaced an earlier entrance at this point. A small brick built structure is attached to the west end of the Cottage, and has a ceramic tiled roof, and is used to store gas cylinders. This is probably a later 20th century addition.

On the east end of the building is a lean-to addition, constructed from rough coursed flint and brick, and has a small number of timbers partly exposed within it, however these do not appear to be structural. This extension appears to date to the 17th century or later.

The final extension was added in the later 20th century, and comprises a narrow ground floor addition along the south side of the Cottage, and a two storey extension on the south side at the west end. The extension has been built from regular coursed bricks. A small brick-built addition has been added on to the extension at the east end to house the boiler.

The roof is of slate construction with ceramic tiled ridges. The east end is a hipped roof which extends into a cat slide roof over the eastern extension. The western end of the roof has been squared-off to form a gable end. It appears that the entire roof was rebuilt during the 20th century rebuilding and entirely roofed in slate at that time.

3.2 Internal description

3.2.1 East Extension

The house is entered through a stable door at the east end, in to a lean-to extension. It is constructed from rough coursed flint and bricks, and has a small number of timbers partly exposed within it, however these do not appear to be structural. This extension appears to date to the 17th century or later. It has been extended to the south to conform with the 20th century extension here, and a further small extension to this has been added on the south side for the boiler.

3.2.2 Kitchen

This divides into two parts, on the south side there are modern kitchen units extending around a modern extension along the south side of the building. Few original timbers can be seen, and the two southernmost ceiling beams appear to be more recent and un-weathered than all the others in this room.

On the north side the floor level is some 250mm higher, and the partly exposed soleplate and posts also appear to be at a higher level here. There is no change in the ceiling height across the room, which would suggest that at the time that the ceiling was inserted the floor level was at the same height across the whole room, which suggests that either this part of the floor has been raised, or the other part has been reduced in height.

The raised floor here is currently covered with a herringbone pattern wooden tile floor (tiles are 220mm x 110mm x 20mm deep), above a layer of ceramic tiles (*c.*230mm square & 3mm deep). Below this was a 90mm deep layer of concrete, and below this was a 10mm thick layer of sand. The sand was sitting on a layer of bricks, however the hole was too small to be able to determine the dimensions of the bricks or their relationship to one another. Samples of the tile and brick were taken for analysis.

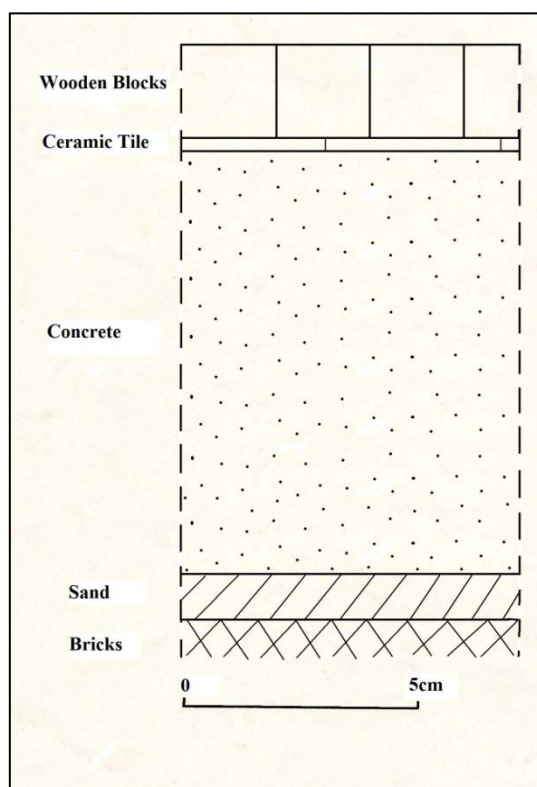


Fig. 1: Schematic section through Kitchen Floor

The ceramic tile can be dated to the mid 20th century, and was covered with a thin layer of bitumen. The brick fabric is typical of bricks made between the mid 18th century and into the 19th century. This would appear to suggest there is an in-situ brick floor of 18th/19th century date, which then been covered over and raised in height with the concrete, which in turn has been covered by the ceramic tiles and wooden blocks, perhaps during the 1960's work.

The ceiling beams appear to be original, with the beam above the change in floor level having a series of mortice holes facing down, suggesting the presence of a former wall. Another beam had a number of triangular sockets along one face, of unknown purpose. At least one carpentry mark was noted.

3.2.3 Dining room

The large brick constructed fireplace appears to have been added during the 17th century conversion. It comprises typically 16th – 17th century type bricks, although there appears to have been some repairs or modification carried out more recently. The right hand side of the fireplace has been constructed from 18th-19th century bricks, perhaps to form a passageway to the door into the western end of the house. An iron stove currently sits in the fireplace and has an eagle design with the date 1776.

A row of mortice holes in the bottom of the ceiling beam along the east wall of the dining room, may indicate the presence of an earlier wall. A soleplate is partly visible in the same wall against the raised floor in the kitchen. A door enters the room from outside in the north wall, and from the outside, can be seen to be a later addition cut into the wall, as there is a mortice hole in the beam above suggesting the presence of an earlier wall here.

3.2.4 Living Room

This is entirely within the 18th century extension. It has a brick built fireplace in the west wall with an external chimney stack. There are two bread ovens on the left side of the fireplace; suggesting this may have been a kitchen fireplace originally. An iron fireback in the fireplace has a date of 1635.

A photograph of the fireback was sent to Jeremy Hodgkinson of the Wealden Iron Research Group who commented "Thanks for the picture of the fireback, examples of which I have seen elsewhere. Some versions also have the initials I T at the top. All I can say about this one is that it is a copy.

One of the same type in the V and A is 680mm wide, and I suspect this one will be a bit smaller (successive copies are always smaller than their originals due to the shrinkage of iron when cooling). Unfortunately I cannot say who made it or where it was made, except that the date makes it likely that it was originally cast in the Weald”.

There is no obvious door into this room from the outside, although an arch-shaped window in the west wall beside the fireplace could be disguising the former presence of a doorway. This is further suggested by the presence of a number of closely-spaced ceiling beams above this area.

A hole has been cut into the south wall of the room to provide access into the 20th century extension. The side girt is still present, and has been strengthened by the addition of another parallel beam on its inner face, which may have been installed at the time of the 18th century extension, to which the ceiling beams are attached by mortice and tennon, supported by later iron strapping. It was noted that a number of the joints here and elsewhere in the Cottage had been strengthened using cement and in other cases metal straps.

The wall between the gap and the west end of the house is predominantly made of rough coursed flint. However, the part of this wall closest to the gap had been infilled with regular coursed brick, and a weathered wooden upright post has been inserted against the wall facing the gap as decorative feature. A similar post has also been placed against the left side of the fireplace. Neither of these are thought to be structural or original features.

3.2.5 Staircase & landing

The staircase rises from the 20th century extension on the south side ground floor, to the first floor landing. At the top of the stairs, the principal post that formed the south-west corner of the original house is extant, with the wallplate of the original house joined to it with mortice and tennon and supported by a wooden bracket. The wallplate may have been cut at a later date, as it extends slightly beyond the principal post, suggesting that there may have been a further original bay at the west end.

The west tiebeam is connected to the principal post by mortice and tennon and dowelled. The wallplate for the 17th century extension is butted against the original wallplate and is held in place against the principal post with a wooden bracket. The wallplate for the 17th century extension has been cut to provide an access to the bedroom (Bed2) of the 20th century extension, the sawn end of which is visible in the bedroom wall.

3.2.6 Bathroom

This room has partially exposed timbers comprising a wallplate on the south side of the house from the 17th century extension joined by mortice and tennon to the south west corner principal post, upon which is the tiebeam forming the west end of the house, held in place with a mortice and tennon joint and dowelled (dowel is absent). There are possible carpentry marks at the joint.

The fact that the wallplate extends almost to the west end of the current building, would suggest that a hipped roof of the 17th century extension extended out this far to match the roof at the east end.

Although it was not possible to see how the wallplate had been supported at the time of the most recent extension, it would be unwise to cut through this wallplate to connect the bathroom to the ensuite as this appears to be the major structural horizontal beam in this part of the house.

3.2.7 Bedrooms

Bedrooms 1 and 3 are in the original part of the house, and have partly exposed original timbers visible in the walls. The doorway into Bedroom 1 has cut through a horizontal rail and has then been strengthened by the addition of two horizontal re-used timbers to form a lintel above the door. The entrance to the loft is in Bedroom 3.

Bedroom 4 is within the 17th century extension, and has partly exposed timbers in the wall. A large cupboard is built round the central chimney stack.

3.2.8 Loft

The eastern end of the loft appears to contain some earlier timbers, however access to this part of the roof was not possible. The brickwork of the central chimney stack is exposed and appears to be built from the same type of 17th century brick as the fireplace in the dining room below. The majority of the roof timbers appear to be quite recent, and together with some re-used roof timbers may have been installed during the re-roofing of the house in the 20th century. The brickwork at the west end and around the chimney stack at the west end also appears to be of 20th century date. There was no trace of a carved date or any smoke-blackened timbers in the roof.

4. **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank Mr & Mrs Wilson for commissioning the survey, and Mark Folkes of Folkes Architects who made the arrangements for the survey.

We would also like to thank Jeremy Hodgkinson for his comments on the fireback, and Luke Barber who identified the ceramic tile and brick.

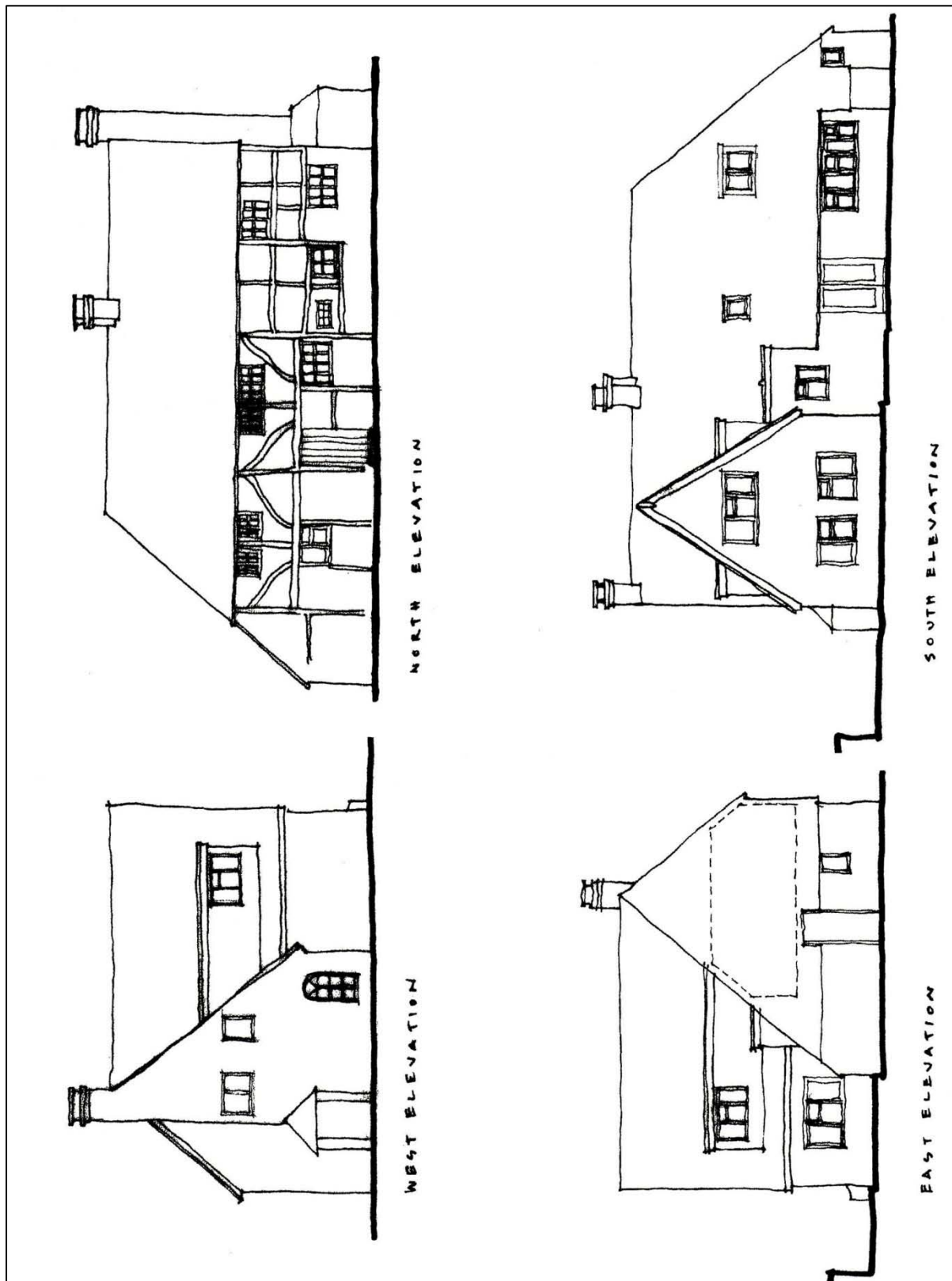


Fig. 2. September Cottage: Sketches of the existing elevations by Folkes Architects

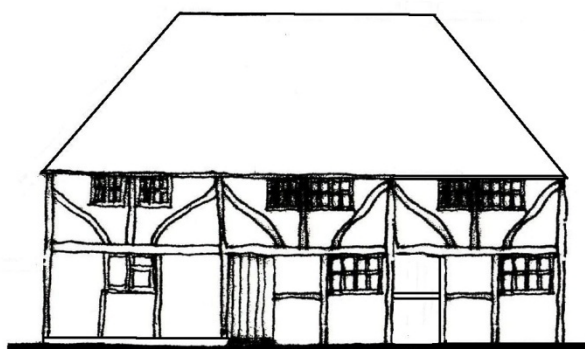


Fig. 3: September Cottage: Conjectural representations of the earlier cottage:
Top: two bay original; Centre: three bay original; bottom: after 17th century addition

Terms used

- Bay:** A structural unit in a framed building, delineated by the position of the main cross frames and bay posts.
- Beam:** Horizontal structural member.
- Buttress:** Narrow masonry projection supporting a wall.
- Carpenter's Marks:** Numerical assembly marks on timber structures.
- Close Studding:** Form of timber framing using closely set verticals
- Gable:** The end of a roof, usually triangular.
- Hipped roof:** Roof in which the ends are sloped instead of gabled
- Joist:** Horizontal 'common' timber supporting a floor or ceiling structure.
- Lintel:** Horizontal beam spanning the top of an opening.
- Mid-rail:** A rail between floor levels in timber framed structures
- Mortice & tennon:** Woodworking joint for joining two timbers
- Panels:** The spaces between the timbers in a timber framed building.
- Plate:** General term for any main horizontal timber, such as a sole plate or wall plate.
- Principal Post:** The main vertical timbers in timber framing; at the corners and the bay posts at the ends of the cross frames.
- Rafter:** Timber following the line of the slope of the roof; principal rafters belong to trusses, the rest being common rafters.
- Sole plate:** The main horizontal timber of a timber framed building at ground level.
- Stud:** Secondary vertical member in a timber framed building.
- Tie beam:** Horizontal cross beam at roof height connecting together the wall plates.
- Wall plate:** The main horizontal timber of a timber framed building at roof height.