

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

A BUILDING ASSESSMENT
OF
GRANGE FARM
SHIPTON LEE, QUANTON
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NGR SP 735 208



JUNE 2012

REPORT FOR Romark Estates Ltd
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Grange Farm, Shipton Lee

Building Assessment

SUMMARY

A building assessment was carried out on Grange Farm, Shipton Lee, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 735 208) by JMHS in 2006 for Corpus Christi College, Oxford (Rodwell 2006). This was part of a larger assessment that also contained a Desk-Based Assessment (Raymond 2006) and an evaluation (Parsons 2006). The present study is produced as a supplement to clarify certain aspects concerning the date and nature of certain parts of the building assessment after the removal of an internal partition in Building 2 (the farmhouse) and the adjacent Building 6.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location

Grange Farm (NGR SP 735 208) is located at Shipton Lee in the parish of Quainton, in the county of Buckinghamshire. The location has already been dealt with (Parsons 2006, Rodwell 2006, Raymond 2006), and will not be further expanded here (Fig. 1). The local geology consists of West Walton Formation mudstone (BGS sheet 219).

1.2 Commission

This additional supplement was commissioned by Barry Tyrrel, Romark Estates Ltd.

1.3 Aims of Investigation

The additional supplement to the building recording was requested after a the removal of a 19th century wall in Building 6 and a 20th century partition in Building 2. This uncovered the remains of a fireplace and oven complex that had previously been boarded up and were not previously discussed in the earlier building report. The evidence provided at the time failed to note that there was a void or space on the plan, which subsequently required an explanation.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Designations

The farmhouse (Building 2) along with the Main Barn and Dovecote are listed as Grade II listed buildings. The Farmhouse's listing (EHIDN 42240; SP 73511 20826) is as followed.

House. C17, much altered C18 and early C19. Some timber framing with brick infill, mostly rebuilt in brick, the S. front with dentil eaves. Old tile roof, large external chimney-stack of C18 chequer brick at W. end. 2 storeys. 3 original bays with large early C19 and C20 extensions projecting to right and outbuildings attached to rear. S. front has irregular wooden casements, central C20 door, and another similar door in projection in angle to right. N. front has one original lay exposed, with half-hipped gable and moulded bargeboards. Interior: one room has chamfered cross beams; winder stair.

Accounts of this building occur in the RCHME (1913, 248), and also in the Building of England series (Pevsner and Williamson 1994, 609-10).

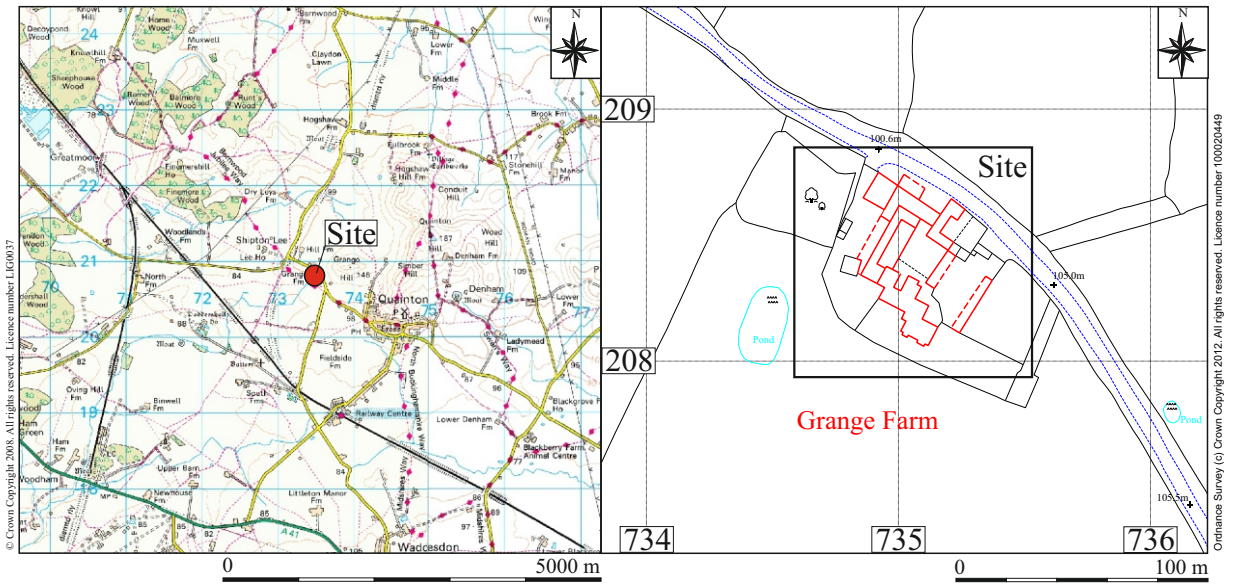


Figure 1. Site location

2.2 History of Development

Historical studies of Shipton Lee and Grange Farm have previously been made for this proposal (Parsons 2006, Rodwell 2006, Raymond 2006) and it is not necessary to reiterate what has already been presented a brief paragraph is suffice. The village of Shipton Lee was the location of an early medieval manor and estate and a subsequent Domesday Holding. The land was granted to the Cistercians of Thame and the manor remained with them until the dissolution of the monasteries. Grange Farm was known to have been run by the Cramford Family, and from the mid-13th century was being run by Thame Abbey. The monastic grange is believed to have been located in the vicinity of Grange farm, near the fish ponds. However, the evaluation failed to date any deposits prior to the early post-medieval period. The farm is also believed to be the location of the Dormer Mansion, which was destroyed or demolished.

3 DESCRIPTION OF GRANGE FARM FARMHOUSE

3.1 Building 2

The following description of the farmhouse was provided by Kirsty Rodwell (2006).

The farmhouse has three distinct building phases (Fig. 2); the service range to the west which is the oldest part of the house (2a); a taller wing at right angles projecting southwards to form an L-plan (2b) and a square block built onto the east side of this range to create a symmetrical three bay south elevation (2c).

Exterior (Fig. 3)

A *The west end of the old house is largely taken up by a brick stack (capped) of chequered Flemish bond brickwork in a similar style to buildings 3 and 4, with a moulded basal plinth and a string course at eaves level (Fig. 3, E2). This was built before the roof was raised (2b) and there is a straight joint between the two pitches. The south front is also brick, faced in Flemish bond but with less pronounced chequerwork. There is a plain plinth, an eaves dentil course, an off-centre door (now 20th) and a mixed collection of casement windows, some with low arched heads. All the woodwork is 19th or 20th century. There is a large stack at the junction with the later wing to the east; this is otherwise masked by an added two storey lean-to in the angle of the ranges.*

The rear of this wing has a brick-nogged timber frame partially obscured by outbuildings; there is a braced post at the north-west corner and a bay is visible between B6 and a 19th century dairy extension; this has further braced posts and a mid-rail with studs above and an inserted door below (Fig. 3 E3). A large half-hipped dormer has been added to the roof; this has moulded barge boards with dentil ornament but a 20th century Crittall-type window. The east end of the frame, beyond the dairy has a braced post, mid-rail and studs with a smaller blocked dormer in the roof. This framing is separated by a panel of chequered brickwork the depth of the stack from range 2b to the east. The gabled two-storey dairy wing has Flemish bond brick walls and a tiled roof. Single storey lean-to outshots have been added to the north end and the east side.

B & C *The newer range (2b) is built of brick in Flemish bond with a plain plinth, projecting string and dentilled eaves course and is half a storey taller than the old wing. The roof is hipped and tiled. The west elevation is plain except for a chimney stack in low relief. The south elevation has a large ground floor canted bay window with plate glass and a tiled roof which is a replacement for one or more sash windows; these survive on the first floor and have nine-light unequal sashes (Fig. 3 E2). This build ends in a straight joint west of the front door and the remainder of the elevation is a mid 19th century addition creating a near symmetrical three bay façade. The central front door is inset behind an internal porch with a segmental outer arch and there is a two storey canted bay to the east. Where exposed the bricks are a lighter mottled yellow-red and although they continue the string and dentil courses they do not seem to be of facing brick quality. The wall east of the bay and the whole of the east elevation are tile-hung and there is another end stack (Fig. 3 E1). The two-bay northern return is exposed brick with sash windows*

matching those in the older wing to the west. This projects northwards to finish in a blind return wall.

Interior

A This range no longer forms part of the main accommodation of the house and much of the historic fabric is hidden behind later finishes; doors are generally of plain four-panelled 19th century type. On the ground floor a central lobby has 19th century winder stairs to the west rising over the former kitchen; these form part of a studwork partition nogged with edge-set bricks. A modern partition at the west end of the room conceals a large fireplace which is said to include an oven at the north end. The north wall has framing exposed above kitchen fittings, including a jowled post which carries a deeply chamfered transverse ceiling beam. A chamfered axial beam divides this ceiling into quadrants and runs across the lobby to the partition on the east side where it has plain chamfer stops. The adjoining transverse beam is also chamfered and an axial beam across the east room is cased. To the north of the lobby is a pantry with a 19th century door but a partition formed of 17th century panelling; this has a guilloche fillet forming the architrave and perforated foliate top panels. It is said to have come from Hogshaw church (demolished; Pevsner & Williamson, 1994, 610). The east room has a large end stack with a blocked fireplace; doors to either side connect with the modern kitchen and a 19th century entrance lobby to the later house. On the north side of this range with external access only at this level is a large dairy with a chequered Minton tile floor; benches and lead-lined troughs survive in an outshot to the east which has a sliding six-light window.

There are three bedrooms on the first floor, one to the west and two to the east of the landing; there is also a room to the north over the dairy added in the 19th century. The end room connects via a lobby alongside a deep stack with a half landing on the main stair in the later house. The fireplace is infilled and there is a panelled cupboard door alongside with knot decoration of 17th century type (not fully visible). The partition to the middle room (fitted as a bathroom) is an old closed truss; the framing is largely hidden. The partition forming the east side of the landing is 19th century but the west side is a second closed truss with exposed framing, including an earlier doorway to the south of the present one. There are two reused doors, both of boarded type with applied moulded fillets. In the west room the end truss is exposed; it has a cambered beam at wall plate level and a straight collar linked by studs. Eaves level has been raised and the principals are plastered over; the original square-section waney purlins are notched over the collar and carry the ceiling joists; the ceiling in this room is a modern replacement. In the roof space both trusses have queen-struts; the diminished principals are steeply-pitched and lapped at the ridge. The timbers are light-coloured and show no signs of smoke-blackening. The edge-set purlins to the raised roof slope are bracketed off their upper face. On the rear slope there are base boards for the gable to an earlier rear wing.

B This range has two rooms divided by a staircase hall; to the north is the modern kitchen with two east windows and a fireplace backing onto the deep stack at the end of the older range. To the south is the dining room which has mid 19th century fittings; a bay window matching the sitting room (2c), a black, figured marble fireplace surround and Jacobean-style panelling to two walls; this has a low relief frieze of roundels and lozenges and there is a former door position in the north wall. At the west end of the hall the dog-leg winder stair is of closed string type with turned vase-shaped balusters, a rounded T-shaped handrail and square newels with turned pendants and pyramidal caps. This is of mid 18th century type. On the first floor the two bedrooms have doors of two large fielded panels and cupboards have H-shaped hinges of 18th century type. Fireplaces where visible are early 19th century.

C The entrance hall runs north from a recessed front door; to the east is a large sitting room with a shuttered bay window, plain marble fireplace surround and four-panelled door all of mid 19th century type. North of this room is a butler's pantry. On the first floor there is a large south bedroom with a plain 19th century fireplace and a bathroom, formerly a dressing room to the north.

3.2 New Observations (Building 2)

The removal of a late 20th century stud wall in the west room of the west end of unit A of the farmhouse has revealed the remains of a large inglenook fireplace (Fig. 4, Plate 2), which has lost its original lintel and has also been bricked up. The lintel has been replaced by RSJs, which have rusted. Above the lintel are the remains of a timber, indicative that the wall maintains component parts of an early date. Through a hole placed in the modern bricking up of the fireplace it is possible to see the remains of two brick arches with iron doors, which presumably lead into attached ovens (Plate 5).

To the right of the fireplace is an iron washing tub, with a brick surround, which was presumably heated from the fireplace. Such a tub is probably of a later Victorian insertion. To the left of the fireplace is a recess, with a brick wall being built inside but only partially extending up the wall (Plate 3). On the chimneybreast side of this alcove it is possible to see the remains of two supports which would have held steps of a spiral staircase alongside the chimney and that there is also indication of an earlier floor level.

Rodwell indicated this chimney to be of the early 18th century in date (Plate 1), presumably from the pitch of the roof and the chequered brick pattern. The bricks in this wall measure 242mm x 108mm x 63mm. It is interesting to note that the floor level is lower than that which survives in the timber framework of the pre-18th century structure, and that the timber framed structure actually blocks the passage of the stairs, blocking its access to the upper story (Plate 4). This has serious implications for dating this part of the farmhouse and may indicate that parts of the structure are of a very early date.

In the south wall of this end unit externally there are indications of a blocked window, and also on the west wall another blocked feature low down. Both of which would have accessed the stairwell.

Externally to the chimney there is a small rectangular structure butted up to the wall, which must contain part of an oven (Plate 1). The lower part of this structure contains bricks that measure 215mm x 100mm x 55mm. The depth of the bricks is indicative of the lower part of the structure at an early date, possibly as early as the 17th century. The bricks in the upper part of the feature are far larger, and are likely to be of a later date, probably 19th century.

3.3 Building 6

Rodwell's (2006) description of Building 6 is as followed.

Linking the dovecote to the north-west corner of the old house is a range of single-storey brick outbuildings with slate roofs. The unit at the west end is accessed from the dovecote. Butted against this but with a common roofline is a shed with a wide south door; this has a small railway track passing through it which terminates in the garden to the south and is lost under B13 to the north. The north elevation was originally open but has been infilled with weatherboarding; it has a low-pitched roof of machine-sawn pine with struts to the purlins. The whole encompasses a smaller brick outbuilding to the west of the door; this has a separate entrance. Its front roof slope is incorporated into the larger range but the rear is void. To the east the building changes alignment and roof pitch and incorporates a privy on the south side, built against the west wall of the house. In the angle there is a buttress-like section of walling 0.8m wide and 2.3m high with a sloped top incorporating some stone blocks towards the base. The northern room has a chimney and is also butted against the brick stack at the west end of the house. The rear elevations use the same light bricks as the east end of the house (2c).

3.4 New Observation

The removal of a 19th century wall in the eastern part of Building 6 has uncovered the remains of a large brick oven, which is attached to the back of the fire-place (Fig. 4, Plate 6). The upper part of the structure is rectangular, but this covers a circular brick feature that has to be the bread oven proper. The dimensions of the bricks used for the semi-circular oven are 230mm x 120mm x

63mm. The oven is likely to be of an 18th century. The upper rectangular structure could be a 19th century rebuild.

4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 Phasing of the Farmhouse

Uncovering the fire-place and oven complex is of interest and provides indications for re-dating part of the structure. There is also a possible discussion about how old chequered patterned brickwork can be considered in Buckinghamshire architecture.

Rodwell dated the timber-framing of the western part of farmhouse in area A to the pre-18th century. This is because it certainly predates identifiable early 18th century parts in the farm complex. This presumably means that a 17th or tentatively a 16th century date could have been accepted for the building. This would suit various features in the building, the pitch of the roof, which is extremely steep, and the dormer gables surviving on the north side of the structure. The roof line has at sometime had its pitch reduced, but even the second angle is still steep.

The opening up of the 20th century panelling has determined a number of factors. The most important that there is a large inglenook fireplace and that there was an accompanying stairwell with a probable timber spiral staircase (the staircase does not survive itself but has left an imprint in the form of supports). This component is adjoined to the end of the timber framed structure; the butt joints are located at the west end of the timber framing. We thus have to consider if the chimney and stairs were butted to the timber frame or vice versa.

There are various reasons for considering both as possibilities. The one in favour of the chimney being attached is that these are of a chequered brick pattern. However, there is more compelling evidence that indicates that the chimney and stairwell at the west end pre-date the timber-framed part of the building. The indications for this are that the supports for two treads are to be found in the wall of the chimneystack and that an earlier and lower floor line is evident. This means that the stairs in this stairwell must have led to a door or opening that was blocked by the construction of the 16th-17th century frame. This part is undisputable on the evidence surviving, but leaves us with a number of points of discussion.

It is likely that if we take a later dating for the timber framing as being of a 17th century date, then the chimneystack at the west end must pre-date this and be of a possible 16th century date. If of a 16th century date then it may contain parts of the Dormer Mansion or a contemporary building.

The lower part of the square oven on the west side of the chimney has narrow bricks; we must consider this to be early in date or possibly to have reused early bricks. The bricks may be indicative of a 17th century date. The wall of the gable may have been rebuilt in the later part of the 17th century or early part of the 18th century. The semi-circular bread ovens may be an 18th century addition, brick depths are 60mm. There are probably a number of 19th century alterations in this area also, the rebuilding of the upper part of the western oven, and the upper part of the semi-circular oven. The heated wash tub in a brick surround is probably a 19th century addition.

4.2 Listed status

The building is listed as a grade II structure, but its history has become more complicated, though this does not necessarily mean that it has become structurally more important.

4.3 Historic and Architectural Assessment

The discovery of the chimney behind the partition has indicated two significant things, one in respect to the plans of the building and the other into the assumptions of the date of chequered brickwork.

Rodwell (2006) suggested that there were 18th century chimney stacks at the end of a pre-18th century (16th-17th century) timber framed structure. However, it can now be determined that part of

the western chimney is older and may be 16th or 17th century in origin. The general length of the building is indicative of this structure originating as a probable three cell unit, with a gable chimney at each end of the building (Mercer 1975). There was a staircase located in the west end (parts of which were recently uncovered). There may have been a further stairwell at the east end, which is now indistinguishable. The timber framing between these two chimneys had to have been replaced due to the stairs leading into a blank wall, the reason for this we are unaware at present. Some of the examples that Mercer produces for the more elaborate three celled structures use the name manor, being located in Surrey and other southeast counties.

Rodwell (2006) considered that certain buildings with chequered brickwork must date to the early part of the 18th century. The basis for this was that a date stone of 1724 was located in the stables, which was of a chequered brickwork design. Thus four buildings were considered to have had a construction date *c.* 1720. This with the knowledge at hand would be a logical suggestion; however, the structural remains indicate that there could be some problems with this interpretation.

In the case of Buckinghamshire it is apparent that bricks were being manufactured from the 15th century (Pevsner and Williams 1994, 82). Eton College of 1517-20 contains diamond shapes in a two brick colour design (Pevsner and Williams 1994, plate 31). A diamond design can also be found on Beckley Park in Oxfordshire dated *c.* 1540 (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, plate 52). Brick production is known to have commenced in Berkshire in the 17th century (Hammond 1998, 4), an example of this is the Jesus Hospital at Bray, 1623-8, by Thomas Baldwin, which uses a chequered design of blue and red brick. Buildings of the earlier 17th century, however, use English bond predominantly not Flemish, for example West Woodhay House of 1635 (Tyack, Bradley et al. 2010, plates 43, 44). The information that we have concerning chequered brickwork is that it was potentially in use in the early 17th century, but that it may contain an English bond.

At present it is possibly better to consider the outer cladding in chequered brick pattern as being of a refronting or encasing of at least the early 18th century, as it is recognised that brick cladding often replaced timber especially in Buckinghamshire (Pevsner and Williamson 1994, 79). The recorded depth of the bricks is probably more in keeping with that of an 18th century brick rather than a 17th century one, though a date late in that century could not be entirely ruled out. It is apparent that the south side of the timber framed structure was replaced in the mid-18th century (Rodwell 2006) and that this affect around the gable is earlier. Chequered patterns are often associated with the early and middle 18th century, but examples of this pattern have been noted elsewhere, eg. Berkshire, from the early 17th century, and the initial steep pitch preserved would support such a date. Perhaps a further refinement and clarification will come when the blocked window is removed.

5 THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

The previous proposal was to renovate the building and turn the structure into three dwellings. This is still the current plan, for which planning was granted in 2007 (07/00464/APP & 07/00465/ALB), what is being sought is an extension to that agreement (10/02008/APP & 10/02009/ALB). This report was sought to clarify the date and nature of the newly uncovered features in the structure so that the planning process could be fully informed. The current condition of the building means that refurbishment is essential, or the building could be permanently lost.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Uncovering the chimney at the west end of the Farmhouse, which was previously referred to as component A, has demonstrated that the original chimney stacks must predate the currently surviving timber-framing, which is almost certainly of a 17th century date or earlier. This is indicated by the surviving stair supports and floor line that would necessitate an entrance through the timber framing that currently survives, which is not there. The external wall may have been rebuilt or encased by the early 18th century, although it should also be recognised that such

chequered designs do occur on buildings as early as the early 17th century. If the chequered design is of the early 17th century then there is no need to envisage a rebuild or encasement, hence this could be one of the earliest chequered brick designs in Buckinghamshire and the Home Counties. If a rebuild or encasing, then this is not the case, but this process of rebuild or encasement could have occurred even in the latter part of the 17th century.

The ovens are difficult to date, but on their brick size they may be constructions of the early 18th century, and could, considering the date of the chimney, be replacements for earlier ovens attached to the back of the chimney.

The dating of the chimney, or parts of the chimney, to the early 17th century or perhaps 16th century (albeit with suspected later encasement) implies that part A of the structure probably started life as a three celled structure with two gable-ended chimneys (Mercer 1975). This basic plan was maintained, probably into the 19th century when the two western cells were joined together. Mercer (1975) noted that this plan was widespread in the southeast of England, and that some of the examples which he gives contained the title manor. It is feasible that this three celled structure could be or have been part of the Dormer Mansion. If this is so then the outline of the three celled unit, and the features on the internal wall against the chimney, step supports, floor support and corner timber could be of a date of *c.*1540.

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Maps

BGS sheet 253 1971 Abingdon

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28th June 2012

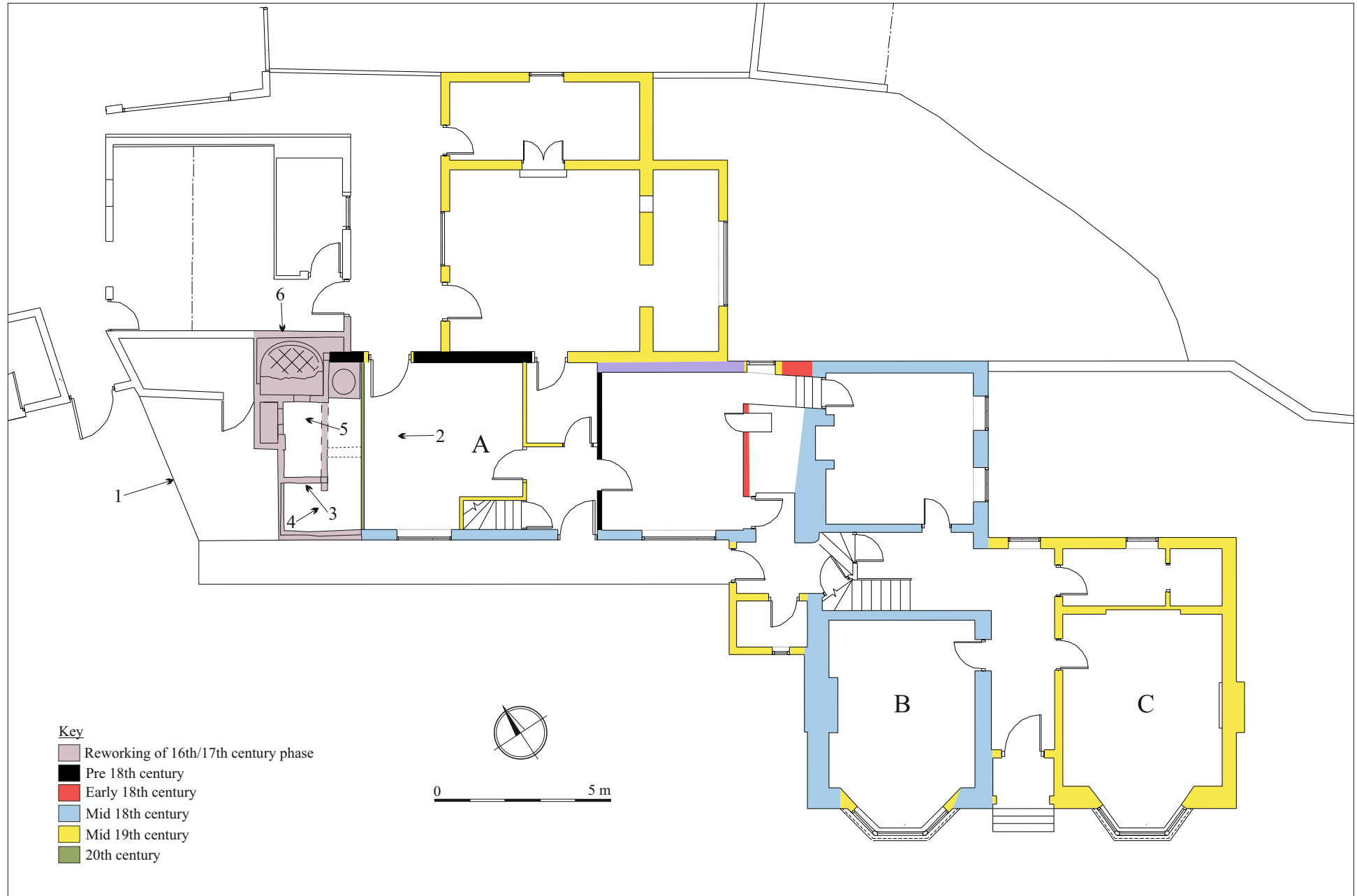


Figure 2. Phased plan of building B2

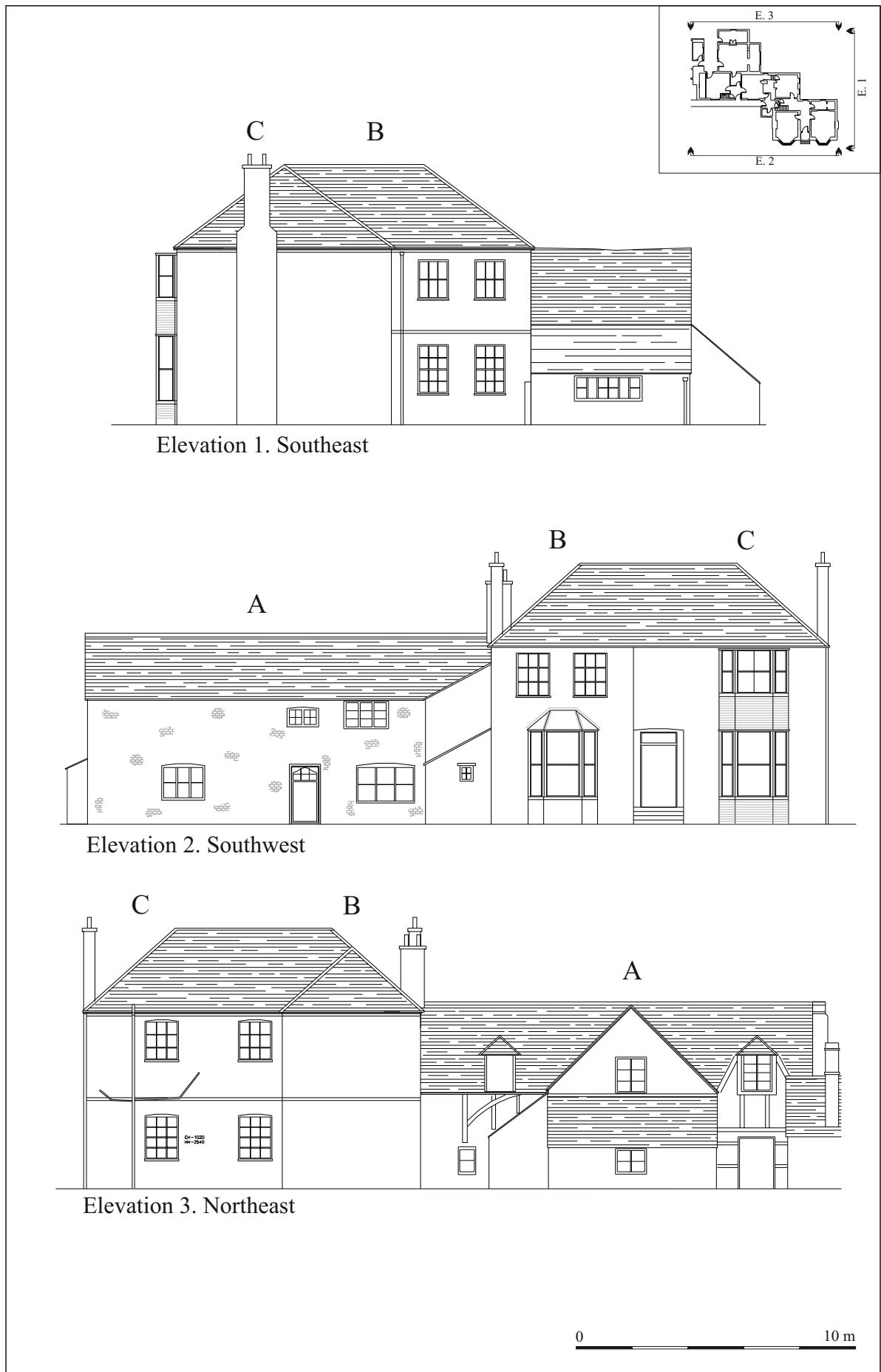


Figure 3. Elevations of Building B2

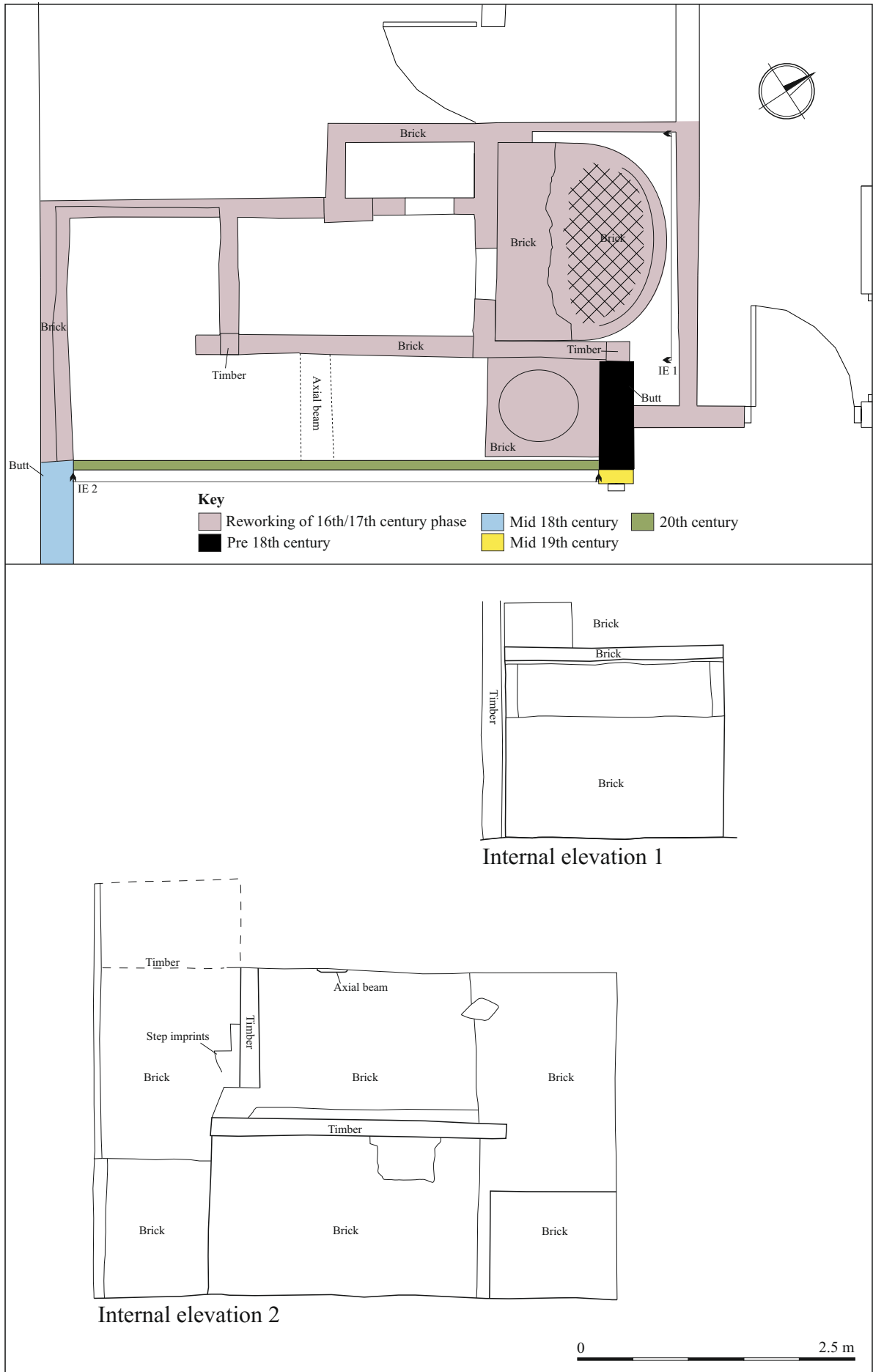


Figure 4. Detail plan and internal elevations of chimney stack, west end of structure A



Plate 1. Gable End, west.



Plate 2. Uncovered chimney breast.



Plate 3. Remains of floor and step lines,
indication of earlier stairwell.



Plate 4. Wall through which staircase
would lead.



Plate 5. Oven doors inside fireplace.



Plate 6. Partially uncovered oven.