

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**BUILDING RECORDING**  
**AT**  
**HILLSIDE COTTAGE,**  
**CHURCH HILL, FOREST HILL**  
**NGR SP 58202 07451**



*On behalf of*

*Edwin Lloyd*

**AUGUST 2010**

**REPORT FOR** Edwin Lloyd

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## Hillside Cottage, Church Hill, Forest Hill

### *Building Recording*

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

##### **1.1 Location**

1.1.1 Hillside Cottage (SP 58202 07451) is located at Church Hill on the southern approaches to the village of Forest Hill in South Oxfordshire District.

##### **1.2 Commission**

1.2.1 Edwin Lloyd commissioned John Moore Heritage Services to carry out the building recording at Hillside Cottage, in August 2010, prior to the purchase of the Grade II listed property.

1.2.2 The report is a record on a heritage asset and is for architectural, historic and general interest.

#### 2 BACKGROUND

##### **2.1 Designations**

2.1.1 Hillside Cottage, a limestone building with a thatched roof, is a Grade II Listed building. It was given this designation in 1985 although at this visit only the outside of the building was seen (and from the description viewed from the road). The account given (Listed Buildings Website) is of a cottage of c. 1830 built of squared limestone rubble with ashlar dressing, and a thatched roof with a stone ridge stack. The plan is described as a 2 unit, with 1 storey plus an attic. The front of the building is described as a 2 window front with a gabled projection to the left, both of which have renewed casements under stone flat arches. To the left of the gable is a stone porch with a round-arched doorway containing a four-panel door with over light. The porch and main roof have half hipped gables. The single story projecting north has 2 adjacent hipped rooves. It should be worth highlighting that the interior was not seen at the time of listing.

##### **2.2 History of Development**

2.2.1 The parish of Forest Hill is believed to have originated as parts of the parishes of Stanton Saint John and Cuddesdon (VCH 1957, 122-134). The church originated as a chapel to one of these churches and it only gained parochial status in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The parish had its boundaries altered a number of times in the 1800s, with the modern parish being formed in 1881.

2.2.2 On the development of the village VCH (1957, 122-134) suggests that the stone buildings are generally of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the brick ones are of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This contradicts the evidence for the construction date attributed to the cottage as a Grade II listed building by English Heritage.

### **2.3 Hillside Cottage**

- 2.3.1. A date of *c.* 1830 was attributed to this cottage, when it was given a Grade II List status. No maps or historical texts were viewed for this initial assessment.

## **3 DESCRIPTION OF HILLSIDE COTTAGE**

### **3.1 General description (Exterior, see figure 1)**

- 3.1.1 The building faces west and is constructed of squared limestone blocks with ashlar dressing. The rooves are thatched.
- 3.1.2 The north façade (see plate 1) shows a single storey structure with an attic to the west with a single window on the ground floor with a stone lintel and sill. The whole south part of this façade stands on a plinth or stylobate. To the right is a porch with a round arch. This has a round-arched doorway containing a 4-panel door with an over light. There is a window in the south side of the porch. The roof is thatched with a half hipped design above the door. A window is located in the south side of the porch. None of these have been described as being re-cased.
- 3.1.3 The west elevation (see plate 2) contains a gable end on its west side with half hipped roof and two windows that have (according to English Heritage) been re-cased under original flat stone lintels and stone sills. The upper is certainly re-cased the bottom is less certain without further research. The plinth or stylobate continues around this part of the building. The wall on the east side of the south elevation has a patio door inserted on the ground floor with a side attic wall above. The patio doors are PVC with a concrete lintel, the walls either side are re-pointed, and some parts re-built.
- 3.1.4 The rear of the building (south façade) has a two window half hipped gable created by the single storey and attic on the right (south) side and a single storey on the left (north) side. Both windows have been re-cased, the lintels and sills are of stone and original.
- 3.1.5 The east façade (see plates 3, 5, and 6) of the building is single story. The window on the west side (kitchen) has been enlarged and reset and is not original. The door is in an original location as is the window to its east (both may be original but the window is ether re-pointed around or reset). The door is a planked door with ledge or batten. The roof on the single storey is constructed of two hipped gables. The wall behind the drainage has either been rebuilt or more likely re-pointed.

### **3.2 General description (Interior, see figure 1)**

- 3.2.1 The porch window and door if not original are early. The plaster where this has been knocked off is of a light colour comparable to other places in the house where it can definitely be identified as old or original.
- 3.2.2 The porch is joined to a hall through a round archway. A passageway to the right leads to the front sitting room, adjacent to this is the stairwell. The main hall passage continues towards the rear of the house, past the stairwell, before turning left opposite a door to the back sitting room, and on to the back door. The walls either side of the bank door are of limestone (18" thick/457mm), the wall above the back door is plaster (probably original) it is non-load bearing. The bathroom door faces down the main axis of the hall, between it and the back sitting room door plaster has come of the wall, which is pink and modern. This indicates that some of the walls in the hall have been re-plastered, but it is apparent elsewhere not all of them. The hall ceiling alongside the stair well extends up into the attic space, the plaster curves here as though using old lath work.

plasterwork as if two plasterboards are separating. The ceiling here may have been replaced.

- 3.2.8 Upstairs, the landing, like the stairwell probably has original plaster wall. The small window light onto the top of the landing is probably original.
- 3.2.9 The front bedroom has a re-cased window probably dating to the 1960s or 1970s. The splay probably once had shutters that have been removed. The doors are four-panel doors. The floor is probably original as it has wide floorboards, and has a stone set into the floor in front of the chimneybreast. This is part of the grate for a blocked up fireplace. Thus the chimneybreast has been re-plastered or reworked. The curve of the ceiling, carrying up into the roof space is suggestive of surviving plaster on lath work.
- 3.2.10 The back bedroom floor is of wide floorboards, probably original, with a stone set in the floor in front of the chimneybreast. This again is part of a grate and is indicative of a blocked fireplace. The chimneybreast has thus been re-plastered. The cupboard to the left of the fireplace is new, while to the right is the door a plank door with Suffolk latch alongside a four-panel door into a cupboard. The contrast of doors here is perhaps indicative of some of the doors being replaced. It should perhaps be noted that all of the odd shaped doors (front, attic cupboards are all four-panel doors). The architrave here, quirk ogee, matches the rest of the house. The window in the east gable was replaced in the 1960s or 1970s. The loft entrance is modern. The curves in the plaster in the ceiling are probably obtained by lath and plaster, thus original.
- 3.2.11 The main roof trusses are simple in that they contain principal rafters and a collar beam to brace them. At either hipped gable end there are hip rafters and jack rafters. The chimney in the loft space is of brick and may well have been rebuilt or reworked in some way. Thus the external part of the chimney may also have been rebuilt. The chimney has seen alterations in all the rooms through which it runs. The pots could date to either the Victorian or Edwardian period, they may be original but could have been reset.
- 3.2.12 The hipped rooves on the north side of the building have principal rafters and tie beams, besides hip rafters and jack rafters, probably original.

## 4 ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Date and Phasing

- 4.1.1 The building has one major phase with numerous sub-phases (see figure 1). The recognisable sub-phases are principally two, which probably took place in the 1960s-1970s, and the other in the 1990s-2000s. There were probably some alterations prior to this but they are more in keeping with the original building.
- 4.1.2 Phase 1 has been dated to *c.* 1830 by the interpretation of English Heritage's Listing Body. Externally there are no indications that any of the major structure is of a different phase (no butt joints visible). Internally much of the building is covered in plaster so it is difficult to be definitive about all or indeed any internal structural alterations. That the upper storey is built into the attic is important as this design was becoming unfashionable after the 1840s (McCann 1995, 3). The panelling style in the bathroom window can be noted in other buildings of the 1930s (McCann 1995, 26), it is probably best to consider this as a template for the original window designs.
- 4.1.3 Phase 1a saw the insertion of windows in the 1960s-70s, which included the bedroom windows, the kitchen window, and presumably the concrete flooring in the kitchen bathroom and hall. The bathroom and kitchen were probably refurbished at this time.

- 4.1.4 Phase 1b covers the alterations from the 1990s-2000s, which saw the insertion of the PVC windows in the back sitting room and the general refurbishment of this room including the fireplace and lighting, presumably the concrete floor at this time.

#### 4.2 Historic and Architectural Assessment

- 4.2.1 The building is a Grade II Listed building with the structure being built in one phase, believed to be in the early 1800s.

### 5 THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 5.1.1 The current proposal is to purchase the property and to make alterations to the Grade II Listed building.

### 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Hillside Cottage is a structure of 1 major phase. The size of the cottage and the uniformity of design are suggestive that the property may have been constructed for a tenant or worker on the manorial estates. Estate owners in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are known to have demolished older properties and built new ones in an attempt to improve the quality of life of their workers, for example Daylesford, Gloucestershire, an estate village of c. 1860 (Verey and Brooks 1999, 311). This is only a suggestion as no research has been carried out.

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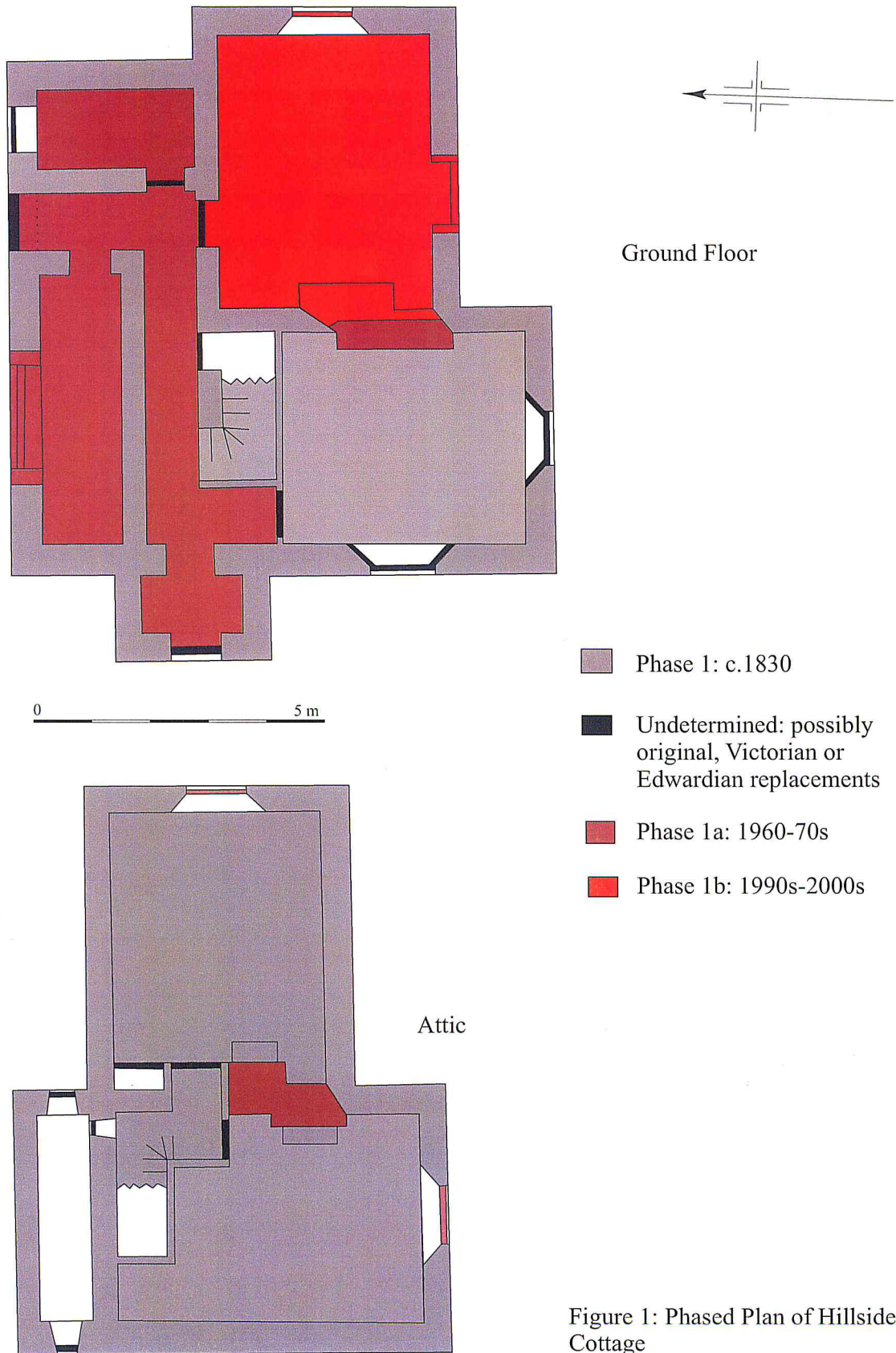


Figure 1: Phased Plan of Hillside Cottage





Plate 1: The north elevation of Hillside Cottage.



Plate 2: The west elevation of Hillside Cottage.



Plate 3: The east elevation of Hillside Cottage.



Plate 4: The north window, front sitting room, showing wooden shutters.

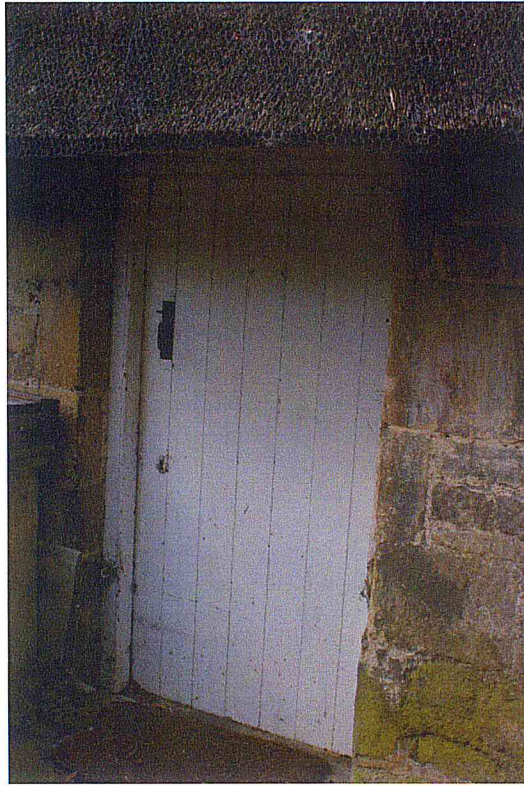


Plate 5: The plank and batten back door with Suffolk Latch



Plate 6: The bathroom window which has possibly been reset.