

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

The history and structural development

of

EASTINGTON MANOR

NORTHLEACH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE



K A Rodwell

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for

FPD Savills

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PREPARED BY

K A Rodwell

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ENQUIRES TO

John Moore Heritage Services
Long White Cloud
Waterperry Road
Holton
Oxfordshire OX33 1PW

*Telephone/Fax 01865 876637
Email: jmhs99@hotmail.com*

JMHS Project No:

1551

**The History and Structural Development
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EASTINGTON MANOR, NORTHLEACH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

Introduction

Eastington Manor is a small Cotswold manor house in a hamlet, Upper End, one and a half miles south-east of Northleach, Glos. The house faces south over a formal garden laid out in the 1920s, with views to the east over the River Leach. At the south-west corner of the garden there is a circular medieval dovecote and beyond it a barn and other outbuildings of 18th-19th century date. The house and dovecote are listed Grade II*.

The house is currently for sale with Savills and this report on the history and structural development of the buildings has been compiled to inform prospective buyers and future alterations to the fabric.

Sources

The principal source for the history of the house is the recent Victoria County History volume covering Northleach and Eastington (VCH 2001, 120-22). The architecture is described in the *Statutory List, The Buildings of England* (Verey & Brooks 1999, 348), *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire 3*, (Kingsley & Hill 2001, 277) and *Some Cotswold Country Houses* (Lees-Milne 1987, 89-91) but the principal source for the structural sequence proposed here has been an examination of the fabric of the building. The plans used to illustrate the phasing are those included with the sale particulars and the section was compiled for this report. The National Monuments Record, The Gloucestershire Record Office and various online sources were also consulted.

History

The house has been known since the 1920s as Eastington Manor (Kelly's Directory) but it was not historically the principal manor in the parish; that was next to Northleach church and was owned first by St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, then by the Crown, and from 1600 by the Dutton family (VCH 2001, 121). They were the major

landowners in Northleach and Eastington from the mid 16th to the late 20th century and their estates were based in the neighbouring parish of Sherborne.

The renaming has caused some historical confusion with the principal manor, but the house appears to have been the centre of a small freehold estate which can probably be traced back to the late 13th century (VCH 2001, 122). In 1504 it was owned by a Northleach wool merchant Thomas Bush and by 1580 it had passed to the Midwinter family where it remained for several generations; the dovehouse is mentioned in a document of 1692. In 1753 after the death of the Revd Stephen Midwinter it became part of the Dutton estates, but by 1783 it had passed to the Revd Richard Rice and was retained by his son of the same name who died in 1835. At this period it appears to have been a tenanted farm and the buildings are shown at a small scale in a volume of Sherborne estate maps of c.1820 (GRO D678/1 E4/1S).

The house was restored and extended in 1921 by the architect William Weir (Kingsley 2001, 277). The 1884 first edition of the 25" Ordnance Survey map shows the farm before restoration with a porch on the south elevation and a number of additional outbuildings to the south. The 1922 OS map shows a transitional stage with the porch and an outbuilding close to the house demolished but another still attached to the dovecote, which is now freestanding. The surviving outbuildings had all been built by 1884 and the barn is recognisable on the map of c.1820. In the early 1950s the house was acquired with other properties in Eastington as part of the Farmington Lodge estate of the Hon Robert Wills, who was at one time resident.

Description

Exterior

The house is built of limestone rubble with ashlar dressings and a stone-tiled roof. The principal elevation faces south and has three unequally spaced gables; the middle has blocked pigeon holes and the east an attic light. All but one of the windows have chamfered mullions with hood moulds of 17th century type; some have been restored in the 1920s and the leaded glazing dates to this time. The front door is at the west end of the elevation and has an ashlar surround with a flat arched head; the door dates to the 1920s. The adjoining quoin marks a change in the build between the 17th century work to the east and the older west gable. This has a 2m long vertical joint, visible to

the east of the existing windows, which indicates the position of an earlier window opening at an intermediate level, suggesting that this range was originally open through two storeys.

The gable wall at the east end is plain rubble in bond with the adjoining south elevation and has windows with early 20th century wooden frames. The terrace on which the house stands extends some way further east and there is the possibility that a medieval range has been lost from this end. The low two-storeyed outbuilding on the north-east corner is a later addition and has stone mullioned windows in its end elevation. With the exception of the west gable the back of the house consists mainly of later additions to the older ranges, rationalised in the 1920s by the addition of a triple-gabled link range containing the stair hall. All the window frames are of this period; they are made of oak with good quality internal fittings and large leaded lights; some have older lintels. A door into the breakfast room has been recently blocked. The west end of the house is built into the hill slope.

Interior

The house is composed of three main units; the west wing and the hall range which are both medieval in origin, and a series of later additions to the north of the hall. The west wing is the oldest part of the house and has stone walls 1m thick.

West wing

The front door opens into the corner of this range which has two rooms on the ground floor; a kitchen and a reception hall. The partition between them consists of a thin panel, formerly part-glazed, below a lintel carried on a pier by the kitchen door (a window is still visible in the hall cupboard). On the ceiling there is the scar of a second partition enclosing a former staircase, indicated by a recessed hatch in the ceiling. This arrangement appears to date to the 19th century. The kitchen is lit only from the north and the east wall is of variable thickness; there may once have been a chimney stack at the south end where there is now an early 20th century hatch.

On the first floor a single large room (master bedroom) occupies the whole of the range. Its principal feature is an open roof of three bays which is of raised cruck type with the feet of the two trusses (T1, 2) built into the walls; this has had the effect of

deflecting the west wall outwards over time. The trusses, of pegged oak construction, have arched braces with open spandrels and steeply cranked (angled) collars; the apex of the roof is hidden by the ceiling. One tier of purlins is visible on each roof slope, a mixture of replaced and original timbers, and two bays on the west side retain their original thin curved windbraces forming pointed arches; carpenter's assembly marks can be seen on these timbers (including Φ and ∞). Both trusses have early 20th century repairs. There is a blocked fireplace between the windows in the north wall which have early 20th century frames. The south window is mullioned and an irregular rebate in the eastern splay is probably part of the jamb to an earlier window, also visible externally. A splayed cupboard in the west wall may be the remnant of another earlier window.

Hall range

The hall range is four bays long but is divided on the ground floor into just two large rooms which are separated by a double chimney stack inserted in the 17th century. To the west the dining room has a flagged floor and an exposed ceiling of 15th century date; all the timbers are moulded. The restored fireplace has ashlar jambs and an oak lintel, both chamfered, with inglenook seats and a cast iron fireback. This bears a coat of arms and a date of 1687 and is probably an introduction. To the north is a contemporary doorway and to the south an early 20th century winder stair in an older position. The drawing room has a similar fireplace also with a fireback bearing the date 1663 and the initials I, T and S. It has a plain exposed oak ceiling with the main beams forming a T; this was inserted in the 17th century when the open hall was floored.

On the upper floors the position of the roof trusses has determined the room sizes and all four trusses (T3-6) are partially visible. Truss 3, set against the wall of the west wing, is visible in bedroom 5 and the adjoining dressing room. It has a chamfered tie beam at former wall head level, and a straight collar with a central post and raking struts; one purlin with mortices for a windbrace is visible below the ceiling. Truss 4 which forms the partition between this room and the adjoining passage is of slightly different construction; it was originally open and the principals are of raised cruck type, dying into the wall without a tie beam. The original collar and an arched brace, indicated by a row of four peg holes, have been removed and replaced with a new

collar at a lower level and short struts; the style of the door suggests that this was done in the 1920s. The original arrangement allowed headroom at first floor level and indicates that this part of the range was storeyed from the outset.

Truss 5 is on the east side of the main chimney stack and truss 6 forms the partition between bedrooms 2 and 3. Both have tie beams visible in the bedroom walls and principals partially exposed in the attic, where the collars have been removed and the struts probably replaced to create two rooms (bedrooms 6 & 7) in the 17th century; the attic floor is lodged on the tie beams. They are lit by gable windows and have four-panelled elm doors of 18th century type. Access is by means of an early 20th century oak staircase alongside the stack which replaces an older stair in the same position. Bedrooms 2 and 3 both have floors lower than the general first floor level, indicating that they were created from a former open hall; the outline of a former connecting door is visible in the plaster of the dividing partition. Bedroom 2 has exposed ceiling joists and in a cupboard, a bolection-moulded fireplace of early 18th century type with a late 19th century tiled hearth. Bedroom 3 has no fireplace and the top section of an 18th century hanging corner cupboard is built in at floor level.

Back range

The layout of the rooms along the north side of the house dates to the 1920s when Weir appears to have built a new link containing the main stair between pre-existing service rooms at either end. This work has good quality detailing in polished oak; the doors are boarded and braced with iron latches and strap hinges and the staircase has turned balusters with ball finials to the newels. The fabric of the once external back wall of the older house is visible in these rooms (the rubble has been painted); the eastern half of the range, corresponding to the drawing room, has a chamfered plinth course, further west the foundation courses are visible, indicating that ground level has been lowered to build the rear extensions.

At the west end, attached to the kitchen and linked by an old doorway with a pegged frame is the breakfast room; it was originally a scullery or dairy with a larder attached. On the north-east corner and now connected to the drawing room is a low two-storied wing with one room on each floor (Study/bedroom 4). This has a corner

fireplace, probably once for a copper, which suggests that it was formerly a wash-house or brew-house.

Outbuildings

The gardens were laid out at the time the house was restored in Arts and Crafts style and consist of a series of formal yew-hedged enclosures with a central oval pond and cross-vistas taking advantage of the view over the river valley to the east. This post-dates the 1922 Ordnance Survey map which shows a transitional layout with farm buildings in process of demolition. The 1884 map shows the full extent of these; the dovecote, a barn and a range of buildings to the south were retained.

Dovecote

At the south-west corner of the garden there is a circular dovecote listed Grade II* built of limestone rubble with a conical stone slated roof. It is c.6.5m in diameter with a sloped string course below eaves level and a doorway with an old boarded door in the east side. This is not the original opening, which is indicated by an internal recess in the south-west side and an area of external patching. The roof timbers have been renewed together with the louvre at the apex, which provides access for the doves (still resident). The interior has continuous tiers of nest holes formed from small ashlar blocks with projecting ledges at intervals and individual perching blocks. The building is thought to date to the 15th century; medieval dovecotes are an indicator of manorial status (McCann 2003, 27).

Barn

To the south of the dovecote is a barn with slit windows and opposed cart doors; the smaller east door has a later porch with a lean-to roof. It is constructed of coursed rubble set in loam and is little altered except for the insertion of a large Venetian-style window with an oak frame into the north gable; this appears to be relatively recent and lights a mezzanine level studio. The interior is divided into 7 bays with a roof of six A-framed trusses; these have tie beams at wall plate level and two tiers of purlins with diminished ends. The timbers are largely elm and some are reused. The studio has modern boarding but the mezzanine floor and stairs appear to be early 20th century. The barn dates to the 18th century and appears on the earliest map of the farm.

Butted in line against the south end of the barn are a two-bay stable and two open-fronted cowsheds with circular tapered piers. There is a ruinous building of the same type on the opposite side of the yard. They date to the early 19th century.

The development of the house

The house has a complex development and not enough of the basic fabric is visible to resolve its structural sequence in detail. However it is essentially a medieval building of two phases which are distinguished principally by their different roof structures. The house was substantially modernised in the 17th century and miscellaneous additions were made at the back in the 18th and 19th centuries. The house was restored in the early 1920s by William Weir and converted from a working farm to a small country house

1 Medieval: 14th century

The oldest part of the house is the wing at the west end. This has the outline of an early window opening in the south wall which is positioned between floors, suggesting that the range was originally open from ground floor to roof. It has a raised-cruck roof which probably dates to the 14th century as it has structural features in common with roofs known to be of this date (eg Winterbourne Barn, S Glos: tree ring date of 1342).

2 Medieval: 15th century

The main part of the house dates to this period and has a substantial typically 15th century four-bay roof. In the eastern half of the range there was an open hall of two bays (drawing room/bedrooms 2,3/6,7) and the western half was storied. This is clear from the form of truss 4 which differs from the others in having a raised cruck with arch-braces rather than a tie beam to allow headroom at first floor level. This upper room (bedroom 5 and passage) had an open roof with windbraces. The ground floor room (dining room) retains its moulded ceiling beams, suggesting that it was the parlour at this time with a solar above. There were probably service rooms at the other end of the hall which have been demolished. It is not clear how these rooms were heated but the west wall of the present dining room may have contained a fireplace. Externally the dovecote dates to this period.

3 17th century

At this period the house was extensively remodelled by introducing a new central chimney stack and flooring over the open hall to create a first floor and an attic. The south wall was rebuilt with new gables and mullioned windows reflecting these internal changes. The east wall was also rebuilt and a wing may have been demolished at this end of the house. The west wing was floored and given new windows, although the gable was not rebuilt and the front door was moved to a new position at the junction of the two ranges. The west wing became the service range at this time and the kitchen chimney stack probably dates to this period. These alterations were probably carried out in the first half of the 17th century but have no closely dateable features.

4 18th – 19th centuries

During this period outbuildings were added to the back of the house, including a larder, a brewhouse and probably a dairy. The oldest on the north-east corner has mullioned windows and probably dates to c.1700. The wing adjoining the kitchen dates to the late 18th or early 19th century. Externally the barn dates to the 18th century and the outbuildings to the south to the early 19th century.

5 Early 1920s

At this time the house was converted from a working farm to a small country house by the architect William Weir. He rationalised the back of the house, installing new windows throughout, and repaired the main elevation, apparently removing a porch. Internally he installed new oak staircases and probably did a good deal of opening up to expose historic features in the main rooms. Externally he pulled down a number of farm outbuildings and laid out the gardens. There have been limited later alterations.

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List of figures

Fig 1 Ordnance Survey maps; 1884 and 1922

Fig 2 Plans coloured by phase

Fig 3 Section coloured by phase

Fig 4 Photographs; exteriors

Fig 5 Photographs; interiors

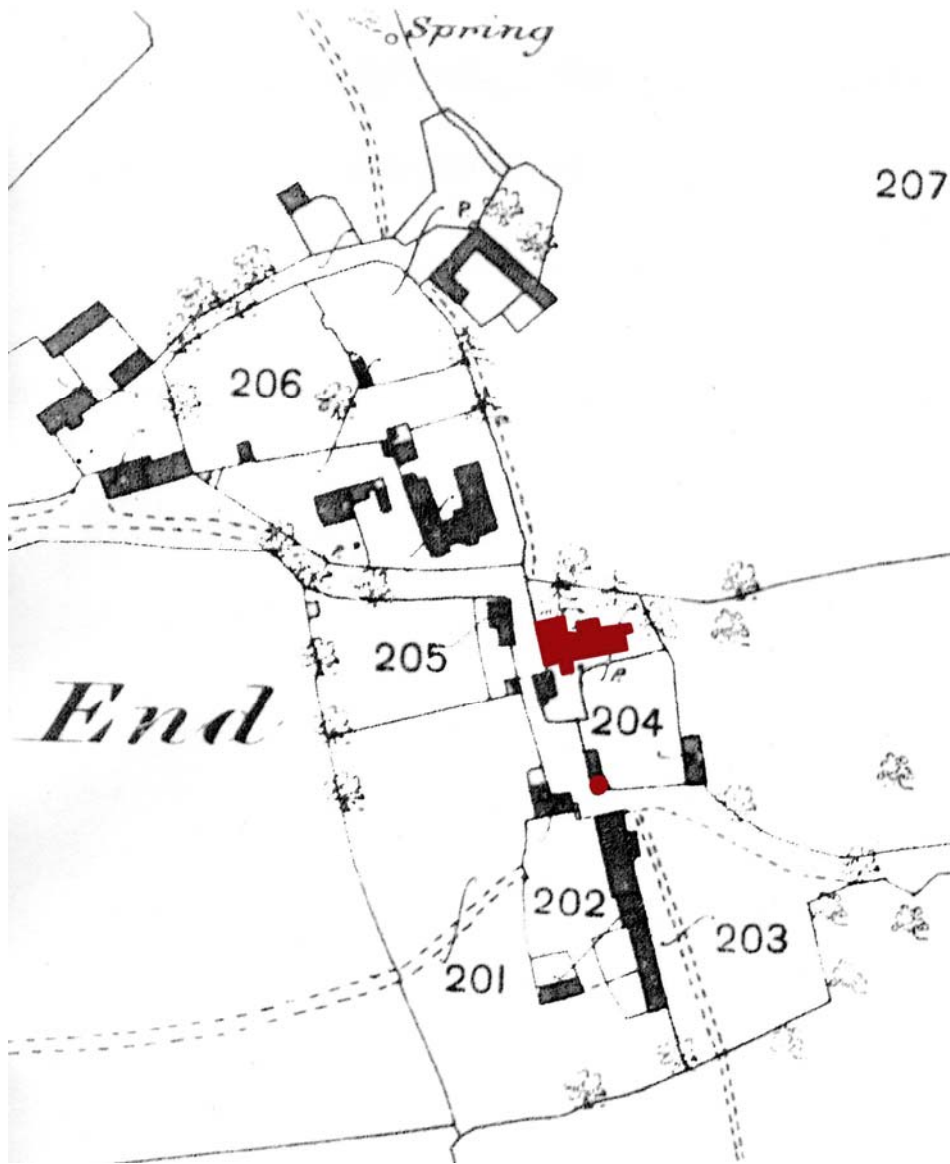
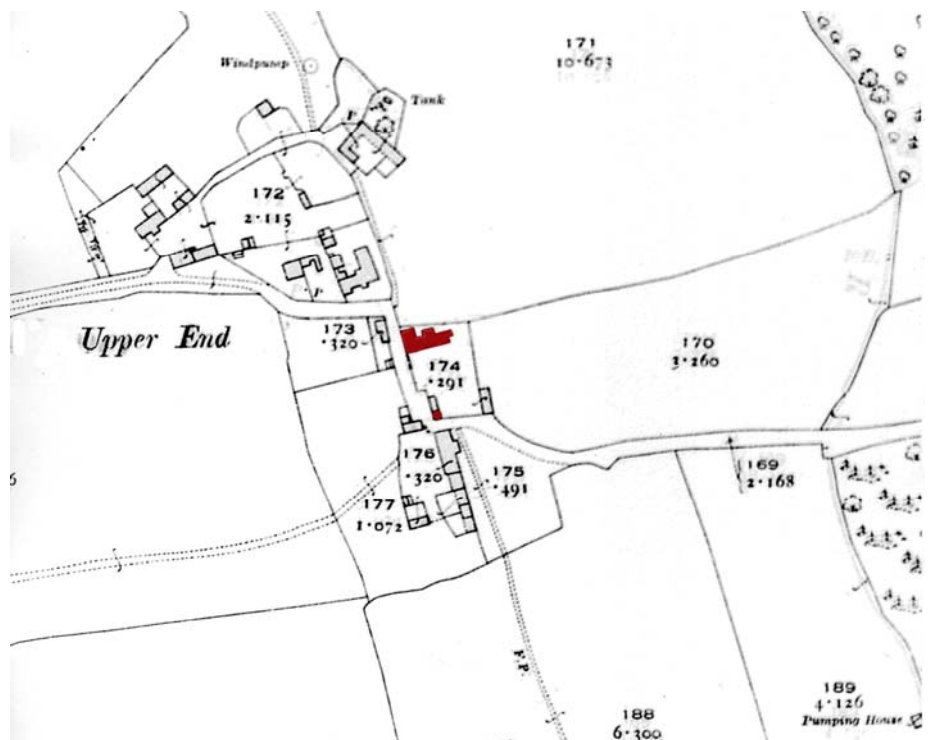


Fig 1

1884 OS map

1922 OS map

(house and dovecote shown in red)



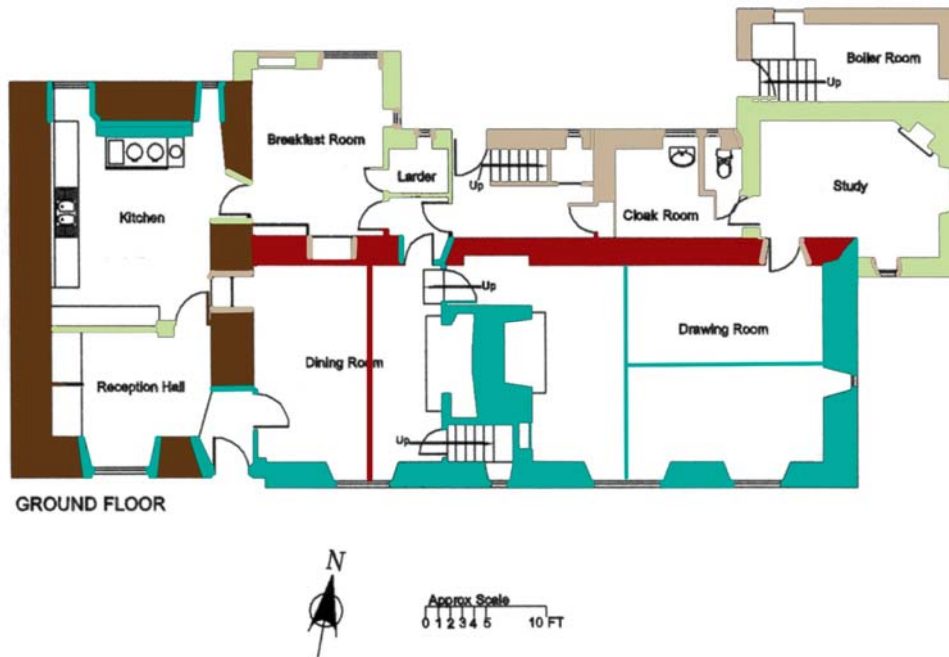
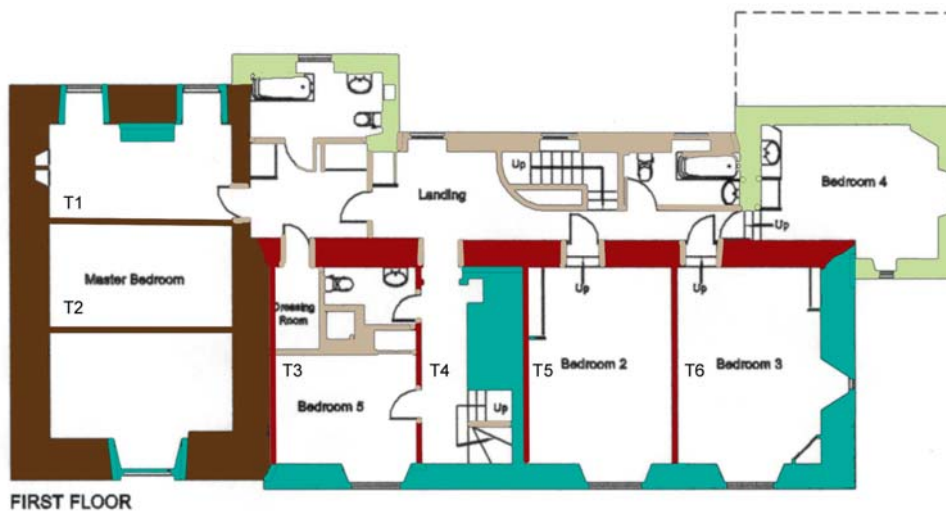
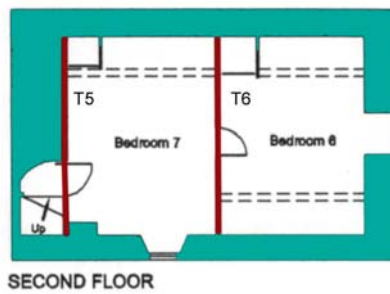


Fig 2 Plans

- 14th century
- 15th century
- 17th century
- 18th/19th century
- 20th century



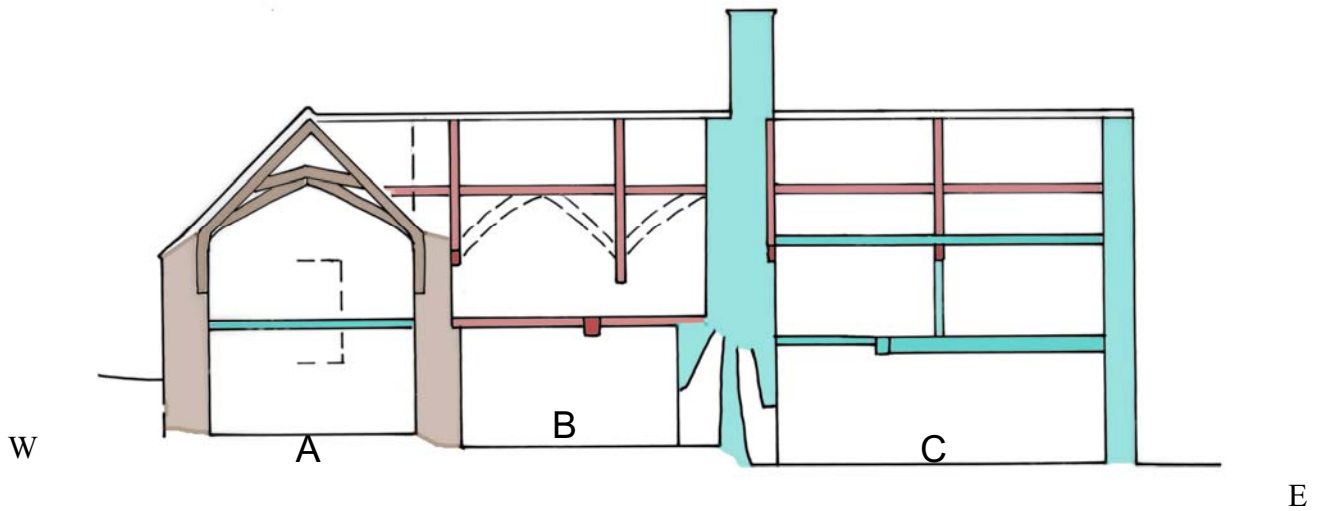


Fig 3

Diagrammatic section of house:

- A West range with raised cruck trusses and inserted floor
- B Chamber end of 15th century range with original floor
- C 15th century open hall with inserted 17th century floors and chimney stack

West range roof showing windbraces

West range roof looking south





Fig 4

The south front

The interior of the dovecote showing a blocked door

The dovecote and barn

The west range showing line of earlier window



Fig 5 (clockwise)

The attic looking east with T6

Truss 3 in bedroom 5

Dining room: the fireplace and moulded ceiling beams

The stair hall

