



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

OF

AWBERRY FARMHOUSE, BEENHAM,

BERKSHIRE

NGR SU 58702 69072

MARCH 2024

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Summary

West Berkshire District Council granted planning permission and listed building consent for demolition of an existing extension to Awberry Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building. A condition relating to the recording of the extension was attached to the permission; this report details the historic building record made prior to and during its demolition.

The extension was a 19th century addition to the building that had been subject to later alteration and further extension in the 20th century. Numerous extant features of the 19th century structure were recorded, including the structural elements of the timber framed first floor and brick walling of the ground floor. Decorative details of 19th century date included interior mouldings, fireplace surround and panelling.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origins of the Report

West Berkshire Council granted planning permission and listed building consent for **Two storey extension to rear of farmhouse, following the demolition of twentieth century additions (22/02965/LBC; 22/02963/HOUSE)**. A condition relating to the recording of the extension was attached to the permission:

4 No demolition/development shall take place within the application site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of building recording, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall incorporate and be undertaken in accordance with the approved statement. This work will provide a record of the building fabric that is to be demolished as part of this application. A copy of the results of the building recording shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within three months of the completion of the works.

Reason: To ensure that an adequate record is made of the building. This condition is applied in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

This report forms a documentary record of those parts of the building that are being demolished.

1.2 Location and Description

Awberry Farm is situated in countryside to the north of Beenham village (NGR SU 58700 69072). The building is a grade II listed farmhouse with detached workshop and machinery store. To the south west is a courtyard around which sit a barn and further workshop buildings.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To undertake a historic building recording survey to Level 2, as outlined in Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (Historic England 2016) so that the significance of the listed building is conserved and recorded
- Annotate existing plans and elevations, and photographically identify and record any structural and architectural features or relationships within the fabric of the building that is proposed for demolition.
- To produce a written account of the fabric to be demolished.

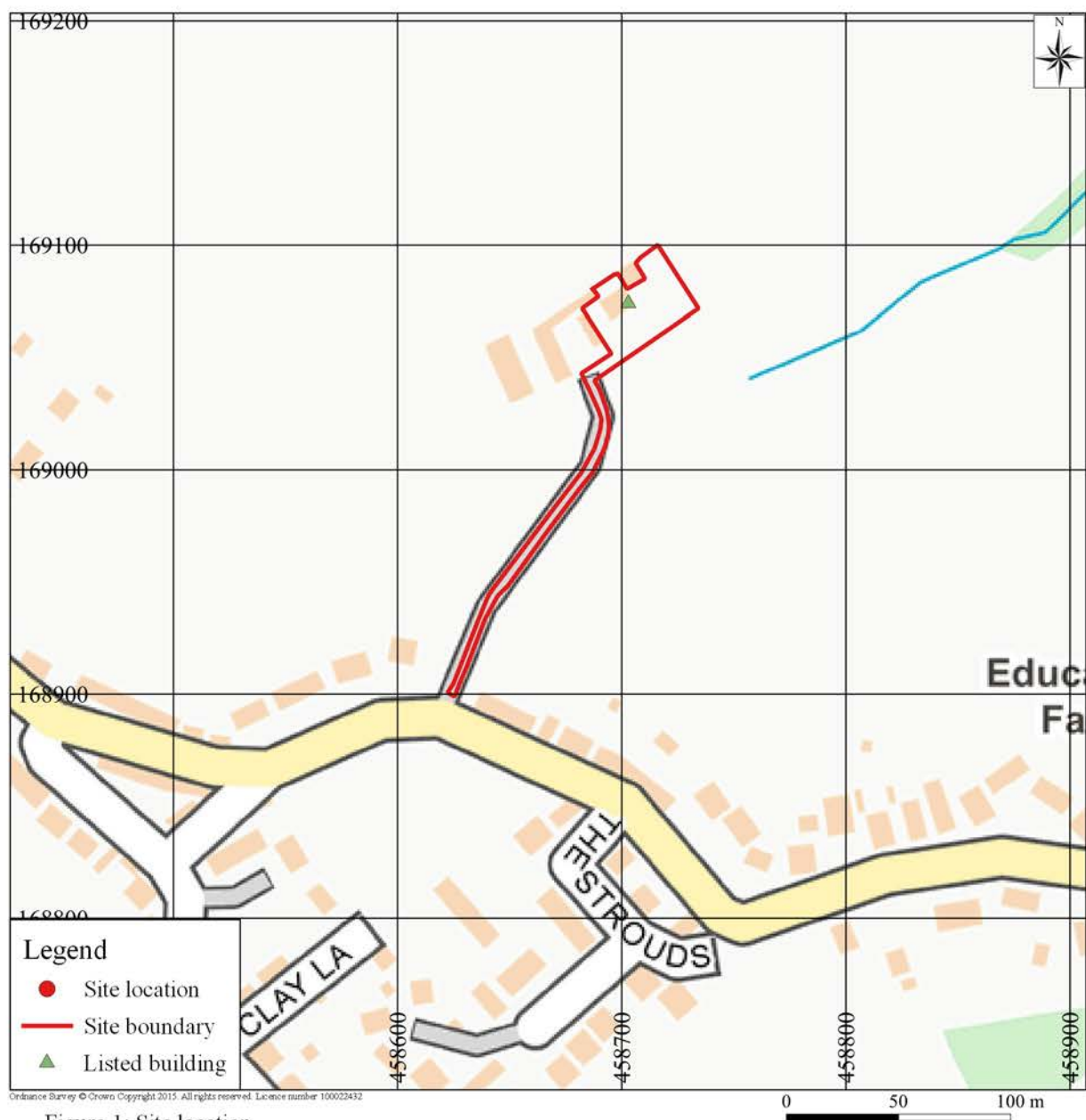
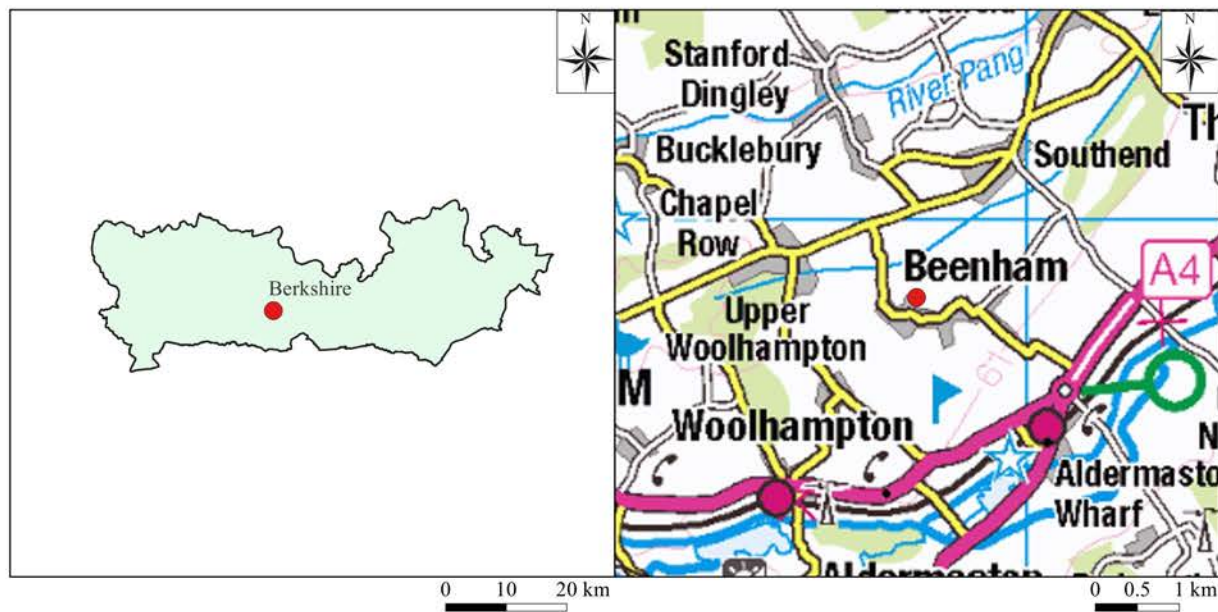


Figure 1: Site location

3 METHODOLOGY

The building recording was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with West Berkshire Council (JMHS 2023)

Records were made following the conventions outlined in Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (Lane 2016) and in accordance JMHS Field Manual (2021). Details concerning subject and direction of view were be maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

In summary the work consisted of the following components:

- A photographic record, with suitable scales, that includes all external elevations, all internal room spaces, and roof structures (where safely accessible) and details of any architectural or functional fixtures, fittings and features of the extensions proposed for demolition.
- An investigation, analysis and description of the fabric of these structures, to elucidate its history, and an analysis of the evidence for this history using archaeological methods.
- The creation of a record of the existing structure in its present condition and its setting, employing photography, scale drawings, or with the use of existing scale drawings supplied by the client or their agent.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 Listing and Historic Background

The property is a Grade II listed building located to the north of Beenham (Figure 1). The structure was listed on 10th November 1983 (List Entry Number: 1117295; SU 58703 69074); the list entry is as follows:

Farmhouse. Early C19. Red brick, old tile roof, 2 gabled dormers with casements, and end stacks to right and left. 2 storeys and attic; 3 bays, glazing bar sashes with one. C20 casement on first floor to left. Central panelled door with plain surround and flat hood on brackets. Fire Insurance plaque on first floor between centre and left hand bays.

Recent analysis by Historic England, undertaken during the planning application process, has cast doubt on the listing description (HE correspondence); visits to the property by HE and a more detailed analysis of its fabric has resulted in an earlier proposed date for the construction of the building. The new analysis suggests a 17th century date for the core of the building, with a high quality re-facing and reorganisation carried out in the 18th century. This included the insertion of a new staircase, among other internal alterations. Unusual decorative carvings on the beams in the principal rooms of the ground floor, and the high quality of the 18th century re-facing, indicates that the building was the home of relatively wealthy occupants during the 17th and 18th centuries. In regards to the rear extension that is the subject of this report Historic England suggest a 19th century date based on panelling in the first floor bedroom; however, they do not rule out an earlier 18th century date, with

remodelling in the 19th century. The following is also noted in a Heritage Statement prepared by MP Architecture:

It is understood that when the farm was purchased in 1938 by the Brown family there was a small scullery/store where the current kitchen is located. During the Brown's ownership, the kitchen was formed, the roof was replaced with the current slate tiles, the weather boarding was installed and subsequently replaced due to rot, the kitchen was extended to the east and a new window installed - modern brick construction is clearly evident, a wooden porch was added around 1983 and the wooden porch was rebuilt in brick (with the insert of a re-used beam) in 2000.

5 DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

5.1 Introduction and General Description

The part of the building consented for demolition comprises a small multi-phase extension at the rear of the building. The extension is located centrally on the rear elevation and comprises three rooms: two ground floor rooms comprising a porch and kitchen; a first floor room in use as an office or store room at the time the survey.

The lower part of the elevation is brick built while the first storey is timber framed and weatherboarded with a central bay window. The north west and north eastern first floor elevations project from the timber framed structure above; both projections have a shallow single-pitch roof clad in metal sheeting. The roof of the timber framed first storey extension is hipped and clad in slate, with lead flashing.

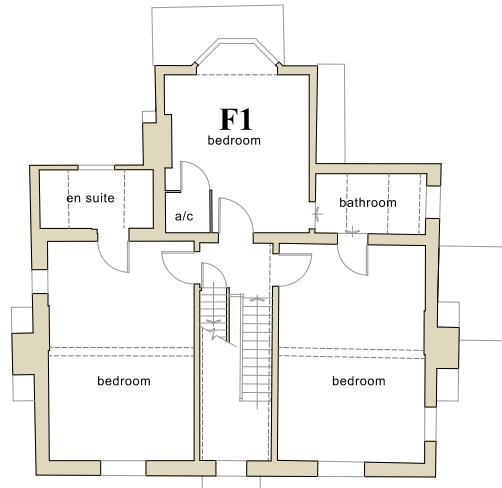


Plate 1. The study building (Scale: 1m)

Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor

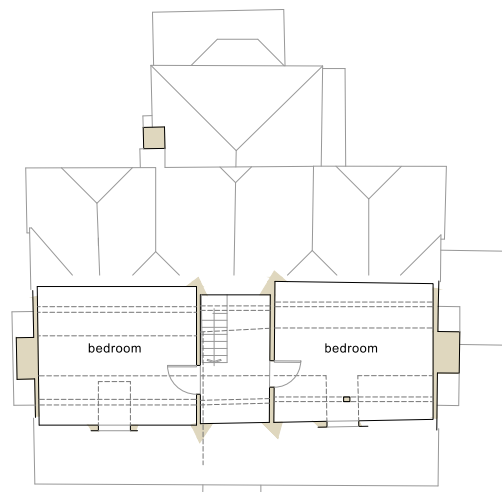


Figure 2: Plans

0 10 m

1:200



North west elevation

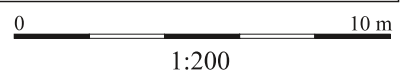


South west elevation



North east elevation

Figure 3:Elevations



5.2 Pre-demolition Exterior Elevations

South West Elevation

The south eastern end of the north west elevation is occupied by a brick-built chimney breast that butts against the north western elevation. To the north east the lower part of the elevation is brick built; two phases of construction are evident due to a variation in brick and brick bond.



Plate 2. South west facing elevation

Immediately north of the chimney is a small section of wall set in an English bond; the brick used in this section of the wall appears to correspond with that used in the chimney breast. A fixed single light wooden window of four panes is situated within this section of brickwork. Above this section of brickwork is the south west facing elevation of the first storey timber framed extension; here the elevation is blank and clad in treated weatherboarding.



Plate 3. Lower part of the south west facing elevation,

To the north the lower part of the elevation is brick, set in a stretcher bond; this change in brickwork denotes the modern porch extension, built in *c.*2000. A modern panelled and glazed door is located centrally within this panel. On the first floor the bay window projects over the single-pitch roof of the extension.

North West Elevation

The larger part of the west facing elevation comprises the modern porch extension. This is built of brick set in a stretcher bond; a timber plate is set into the wall below a modern timber framed window. The window, which is set off-centre within the elevation, comprises two top-hung casements of three panes over two fixed lights of six panes. A plastic gutter runs the length of the extension, discharging into a downpipe on its northern side. To the north west, stepped back from the principal part of the elevation, is the brick-built side wall of kitchen, Room G1 (partially obscured by a plant in Plate 4).



Plate 4. North west facing elevation

The upper storey is timber framed and clad in weatherboarding. Located centrally within the elevation is a canted bay window; The roof of the bay is clad in metal sheeting and a plastic gutter runs around the bay, leading into a downpipe on the north eastern side of the elevation. The bay is lit by three double hung sash windows; each light has six square panes and the frames have horns.



Plate 5. Bay window on the north west facing elevation

North East Elevation

The north western end of the elevation comprises the north east side elevations of the modern porch extension, kitchen and overlying timber framed extension (Plate 6). A modern wooden framed window sits centrally within the side elevation of the modern porch extension; this is a top-hung casement of three panes over a fixed light of six panes (Plate 7).



Plate 6. North east facing elevation



Plate 7. Window into G2 on the north east facing elevation

To the south east the lower part of the elevation is brick built, with brick set in an English bond; the available evidence indicates that this wall forms a small eastern extension of room G1 (Section 4.1). Set into the wall is a modern four light window comprising two top-hung casements of three panes over two fixed lights of six panes; this is the same as the window on the north west elevation. The side wall of the timber framed extension is situated above; this is clad in weatherboarding but is otherwise devoid of features.



Plate 8. North east facing elevation

5.3 Pre-demolition Interiors

Room G1 - Kitchen

This room, accessed either from porch G2 or a hallway to the south east, is currently in use as a kitchen. The floor is finished with quarry tiles; transverse joists are exposed within the ceiling. The room is fitted with a range of modern kitchen cabinets and utilities, reflecting its current use.

The north western wall contains a section of timber framed wall, visible in this room due to a difference in thickness compared to the brick walling that flanks it (the timber construction is more apparent in G2, where timber panelling remains extant). Situated within this part of the wall is the doorway to G2; this has a simple frame and contains a plank and batten door of probable 18th or 19th century date. The door exhibits a range of historic fittings, including round-end strap hinges, two iron latches, a lock case and a draw bolt.



Plate 9. Historic plank door within Room G1

The south western wall contains a brick-built fireplace with modern timber lintel that contains a modern stove. A small fixed window is located to the north of the fireplace; this has ovolo-moulded glazing bars and a simple moulded surround. The south east wall would formerly have been the north western external wall of the building. The wall has an entrance into the main part of the house; this is partly framed by historic timbers, though these may be re-used from elsewhere as the entrance must have been created when the kitchen extension was added. On the western side of the entrance the brick-built plinth of the main building remains extant, though this has been removed along the rest of the wall. The north eastern wall contains a modern window, previously described above.



Plate 10. South west wall of Room G1 and ceiling/floor joists of F1

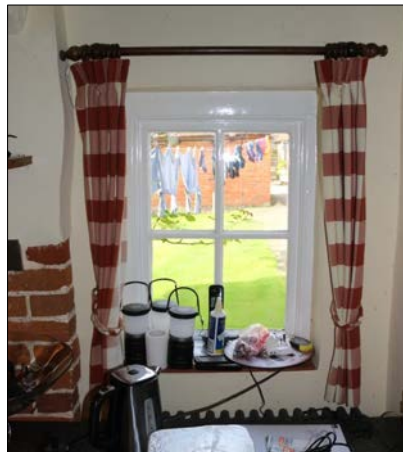


Plate 11. Fixed light window in south western wall



Plate 12. South eastern wall of Room G1; the scale bar is resting on the plinth



Plate 13. North eastern wall of Room G1

Room G2 - Porch

Room G2 is a modern porch extension. The room can be accessed from outside through a modern panel door located on the north west wall and from G1 through a historic plank and batten door on the south east wall.



Plate 14. Room G2, as seen from outside the building

Both the north west and north east walls contain modern windows, previously described above. The south eastern wall is of timber framed construction, clad with simple timber panelling or weatherboarding set horizontally.



Plate 15. Room G2, timber clad south east wall

Room F1 – Bedroom

Room F1 is accessed from the first floor landing. Decorative details include a moulded plaster cornice, painted wainscot panelling with beaded decoration, dado rail and simple skirting board. The floor was carpeted during the initial survey, though subsequent work revealed that it was boarded.

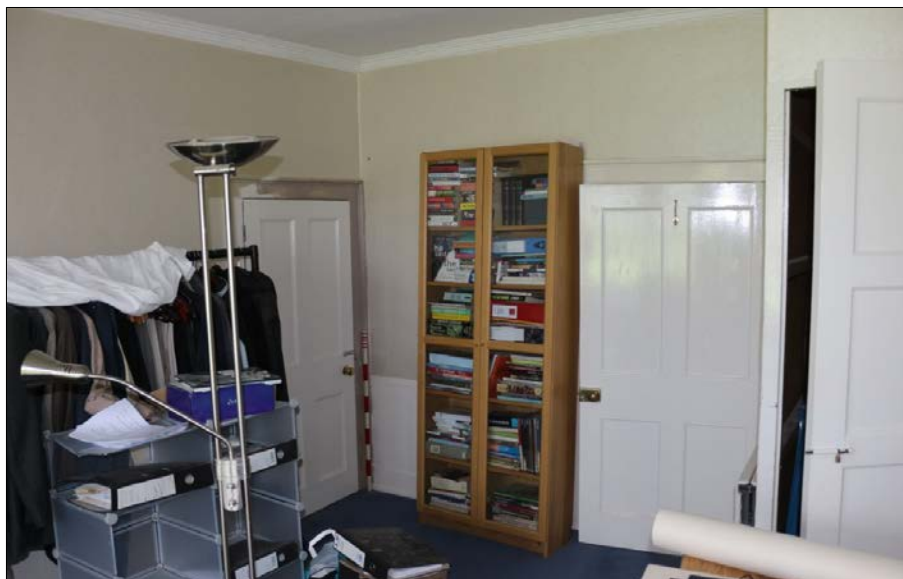


Plate 16. Room F1, historic panel doors

The room is accessed through a historic four panelled door of probable late 18th or early 19th century date (Hall 2007, p.44). The door sits within a moulded architrave. A matching door is present on the north eastern wall, providing access into a bathroom. In the south corner of the room a later stud partition forms a small cupboard; this is accessed through a modern (20th century) three panel door.



Plate 17. Room F1, four panel door to the bathroom

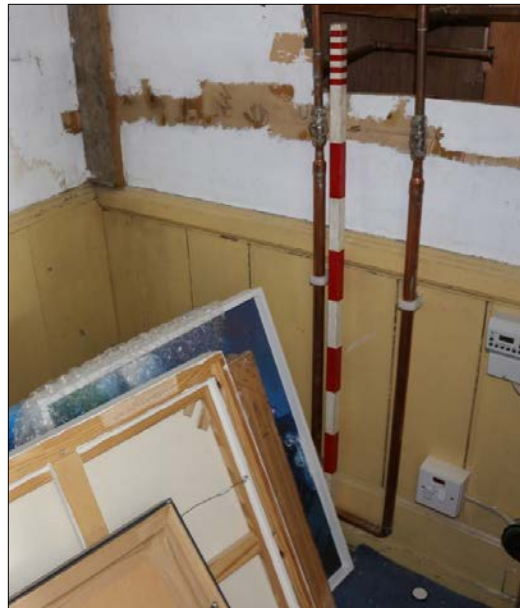


Plate 18. Room F1, cupboard and simple wainscot panel and dado rail within cupboard

The north west wall contains the bay window. The sash windows themselves are of probable 20th century date. They have ovolo moulded glazing bars and brass fittings. The wooden panelling is present around the bay, but is different in form to that seen elsewhere in the room, being comprised of smaller planks.



Plate 19. Room F1, bay window on north west wall

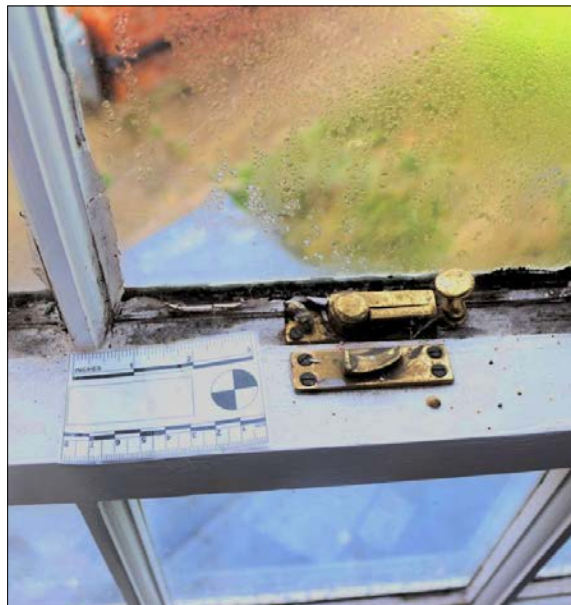


Plate 20. Room F1, sash window

The south west wall contains a chimney breast and blocked fireplace; the fireplace surround has a low relief, with reeded decoration and simple mouldings. Based on the decoration this has a probable late 18th or 19th century date (Hall 2007, p.183).



Plate 21. Room F1, fireplace surround

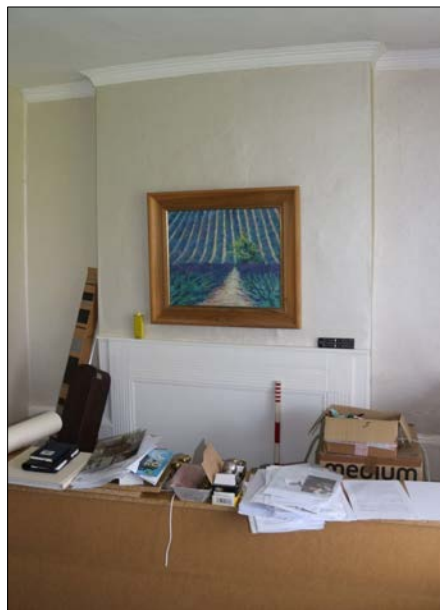


Plate 22. Room F1, fireplace, chimney breast and cornice

5.4 Watching Brief

Monitoring during demolition of the structures allowed further details of their construction and phasing to be recorded.

Rooms G1 and G2

Three or potentially four phases of construction were evident during demolition of the building. The earliest phase comprised the brickwork of the south west and north west walls; as previously noted this was set in an English bond and appeared to be of the same brick as the chimney on the south west wall. The timber framed panel on the north west wall may be contemporary with this phase, or may be a later insertion

associated with a reworking of the overlying bay window, the position of which corresponded exactly with the panel. Demolition of the panel revealed a timber framed construction with lath and plaster on the interior side; the construction of the panel suggests a 19th century date. Later phases comprise the north east wall of G1 and porch G2, both of which date to the 20th century.



Plate 23. Rooms G1 and G2, timber panel



Plate 24. Demolition of lower floor structures

Room F1

The principal construction of the first floor extension comprised studwork framing with occasional diagonal-braces. The studs were saw cut softwood, joined with nails

and set into wall plates. Evidence of recent refurbishment to the exterior of the structure was clear, with modern fibre insulation fitted between the studs, on top of which the weatherboarding, also modern, was fixed. Internally the walls were finished in lath and plaster. The lightweight construction of the structure is consistent with a 19th century date.



Plate 25. Removal of weatherboarding, membrane and fibre insulation



Plate 26. Framework of the north east wall, showing junction with the earlier structure



Plate 27. Intersection of the extension with the earlier building, as seen internally



Plate 28. Room F1, Internal lath and plaster

Demolition revealed that the structure of the bay window was a modern addition. The bay was built from softwood studs, joined with nails and cross-head screws; internally the walls of the bay were finished in timber panelling that was also of a modern date, explaining the variation in panelling between the bay and the rest of the room.

Evidence for an earlier bay window did however survive in the form of a moulded architrave; this was located externally at the top of the bay and had previously been covered by flashing.



Plate 29. Modern framework of the bay window



Plate 30. Modern timber panelling within the bay



Plate 31. Earlier painted architrave at the top of the bay

The hipped roof structure of the timber framed extension was of common rafter construction, with clasped purlins and a single king post truss located at the join between the half-hipped roof of the earlier building and the extension. The rafters of the hipped roof were secured using dragon beams and cross ties. Both the king post truss and corner and dragon tie beams are typical of late 18th or 19th century construction (Harris 1999, p.85-86).



Plate 32. Roof structure of the timber framed extension



Plate 33. King post truss inserted within the gable of the earlier building's half-hipped roof



Plate 34. Corner and dragon tie-beam assembly supporting a hip rafter

6 ASSESSMENT

6.1 Phases

Based on the available information and that gained during the historic building recording the following approximate phases of development can be established. This phasing predominantly concerns the extension of the building and as such detailed phasing of the larger structure has not been established beyond that already identified in previous assessments.

Phase 1 - 17th century

Awberry Farmhouse was constructed in the 17th century. The structure had a double pile plan and was timber framed, with brick infill panels.

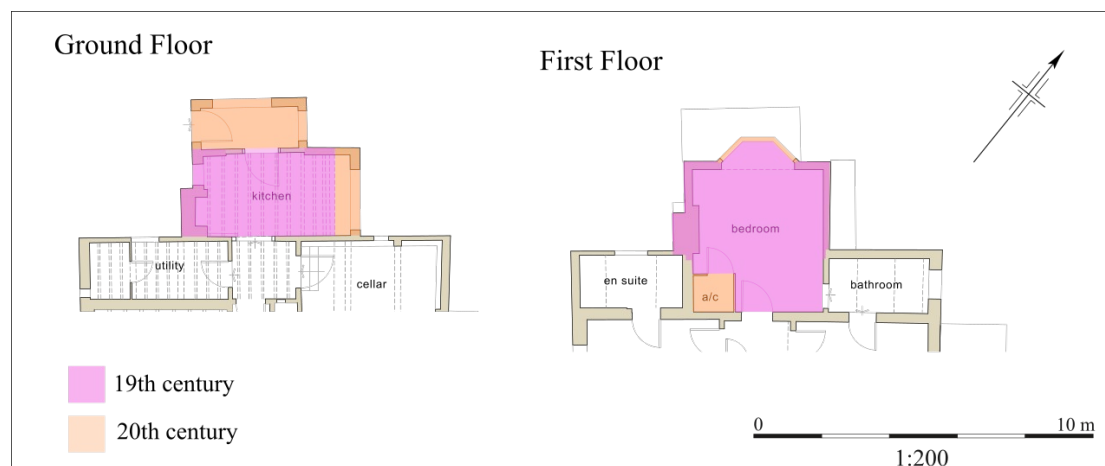


Figure 4: Phases of development

Phase 2 - 18th century

The farmhouse was subject to relatively extensive remodelling, including external refacing and internal reorganisations comprising the relocation of the staircase.

Phase 3 - 19th century

A two-storey extension was added to the rear of the building. This was brick built with a timber framed first storey and was accompanied by a brick chimney breast which provided heat to both rooms. The upper room had a canted bay or oriel window. A timber framed panel, present in the location of the bay on the ground floor, perhaps indicates that the bay originally extended the height of the extension. Otherwise, the bay would have taken the form of an oriel, projecting out from the lower floor.

The first floor room was partly formed from an earlier room, presumably of similar size to the extant rooms to the north east and south west. However, the decorative features of the room appear consistent with a 19th century date, indicating that any earlier features were removed during the reworking of the room.

Extant features associated with this phase included: the timber framed first floor structure and roof structure (though the bay framing had been replaced); the first floor fireplace, doors, panelling and cornice in F1; the south west and north west brick walls of the kitchen, Room G1.

Phase 4 - 20th century

The kitchen, Room G1, was extended to the north east, as demonstrated by a difference in brickwork externally and the lack of overlying ceiling joists internally.

A timber porch was added on to the northern side of the kitchen; no physical evidence of this survives. At the turn of the millennium the wooden porch was replaced with a brick and block-built porch, Room G2.

A small airing cupboard was inserted into the southern corner of Room F1. Externally the weatherboarding and bay window of the first storey structure were replaced, with modern insulation fitted.

7 CONCLUSIONS

A historic building record was made of a rear extension to the Grade II listed Awberry Farmhouse prior to and during its demolition.

The extension was a 19th century addition to the building that had been subject to later alteration and further extension in the 20th century. Numerous extant features of the 19th century structure were recorded, including the structural elements of the timber framed first floor and brick walling of the ground floor. Decorative details of 19th century date included interior mouldings, fireplace surround and panelling.

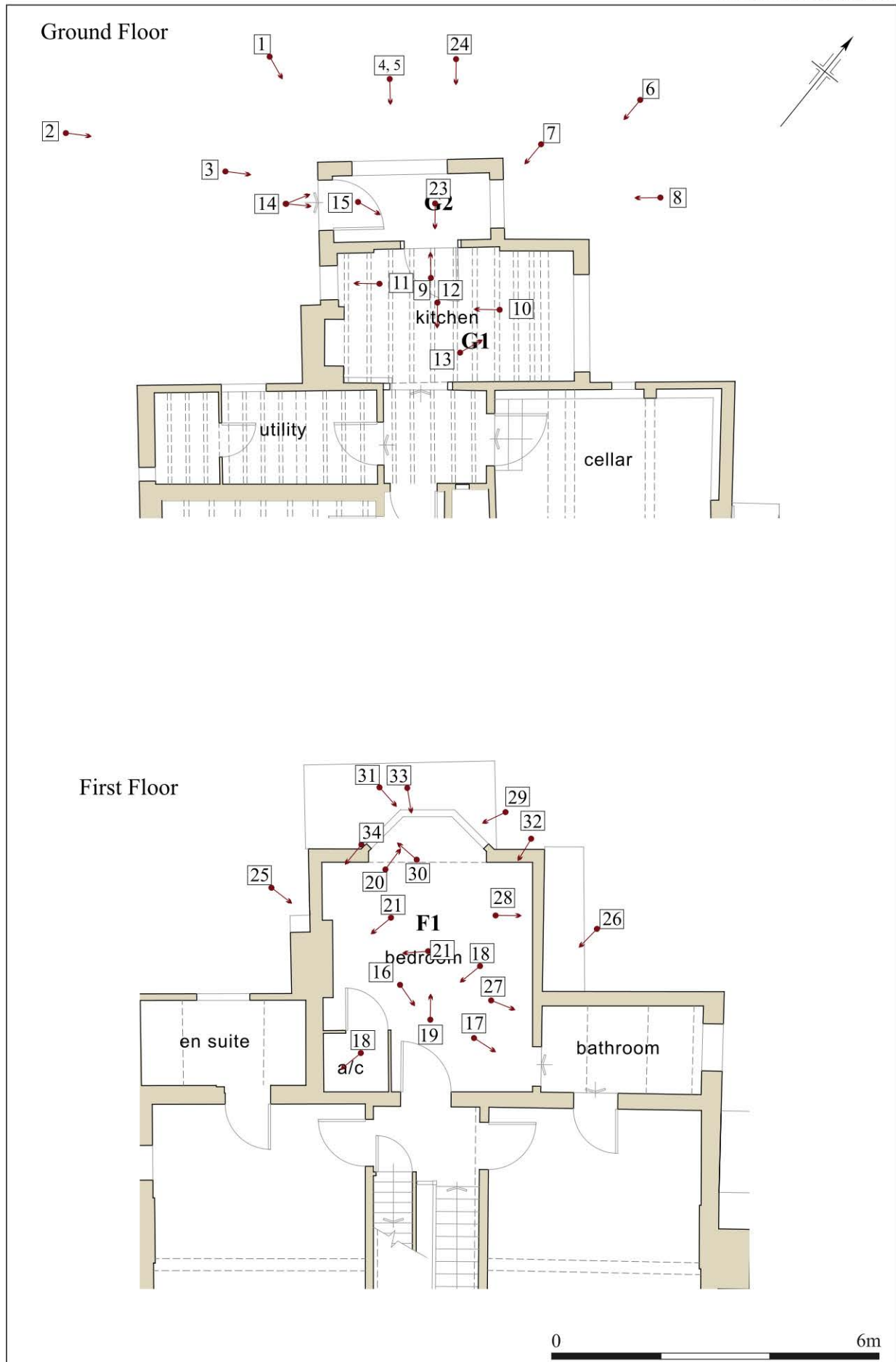
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Appendix 1: Photo locations

OASIS Summary for johnmoor1-523431

OASIS ID (UID)	johnmoor1-523431
Project Name	Historic Building Record of Awberry Farmhouse
Sitename	Awberry Farm
Sitecode	
Project Identifier(s)	4930
Activity type	Descriptive Buildings Record (Level 2)
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	John Moore Heritage Services
Project Dates	04-Oct-2023 - 24-Oct-2023
Location	Awberry Farm NGR : SU 58703 69074 LL : 51.417650819065365, -1.157218296220832 12 Fig : 458703,169074
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : West Berkshire Local Authority District : West Berkshire Parish : Beenham
Project Methodology	<p>The building recording was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with West Berkshire District Council (JMHS 2023)</p> <p>Records were made following the conventions outlined in Historic England's Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice (Lane 2016) and in accordance JMHS Field Manual (2021). Details concerning subject and direction of view were be maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.</p> <p>In summary the work consisted of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A photographic record, with suitable scales, that includes all external elevations, all internal room spaces, and roof structures (where safely accessible) and details of any architectural or functional fixtures, fittings and features of the extensions proposed for demolition. • An investigation, analysis and description of the fabric of these structures, to elucidate its history, and an analysis of the evidence for this history using archaeological methods. • The creation of a record of the existing structure in its present condition and its setting, employing photography, scale drawings, or with the use of existing scale drawings supplied by the client or their agent.
Project Results	A historic building record was made of a rear extension to the Grade II listed Awberry Farmhouse prior to and during its demolition. The extension was a 19th century addition to the building that had been subject to later alteration and further extension in the 20th century. Numerous extant features of the 19th century structure were recorded, including the structural elements of the timber framed first floor and brick walling of the ground floor. Decorative details of 19th century date included interior mouldings, fireplace surround and panelling.
Keywords	Farmhouse - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private individual

HER	
Person Responsible for work	J Moore
HER Identifiers	
Archives	

Report generated on: 08 Mar 2024, 13:51