

The structural development
of
THE OLD RECTORY
BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN
OXFORDSHIRE



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for
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THE STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD RECTORY, BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN OXFORDSHIRE

Introduction

The Old Rectory is a grade II listed building in the village of Brightwell Baldwin, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 6560 9503). This report describes the history and structural development of the house and was commissioned to inform future proposals for alterations and extensions to the building. The drawings used as a basis for the survey (Figs 2-3) are those supplied by the architects, The Anderson Orr Partnership.

History

The rectory was moved to its present site (Fig 1) from an older location on the north side of the village street in 1802. The exchange of plots between the lord of the manor and patron of the living, William Lowndes Stone and the rector, Samuel White is recorded in the Enclosure Act of that year and the accompanying map shows the new site as an empty plot labelled 'Given in exchange to the rectory' (ORO QSD/A vol B facing p278). The new house had been built by 1805 when it was described as 'newly built of stone, brick and tiles – surrounded by garden and glebe within a ring fence' (Fraser 1981, 14).

Samuel White, who succeeded to the living in 1801, was rector until his death in 1841 but he was not resident after 1807 when he was also appointed perpetual curate of Hampstead. This carried a much higher stipend and a succession of badly paid curates carried out his duties in Brightwell Baldwin. White's successor George Day was rector for 49 years until 1890. Census returns from 1851 to 1881 show that he lived at the rectory with his wife, children and three servants (Fraser 1986). He was followed by Hilgrove Coxe (1890-1914), Thomas Hainsworth (1914-31) and then a sequence of rectors with shorter tenure; in 1955 £753 was spent on improving the rectory (Fraser 1986).

In 1979 the living was combined with Ewelme, the rector, Ieuan Williams, moved to Ewelme rectory and Brightwell Baldwin rectory was sold. Notes in the possession of the present owners state that the house was refurbished in 1980 by Francis Pollen

ARIBA. Works included the removal of a two-storey projection on the east elevation (Fig 1; said to house a service stair), alterations to the hall and cellars, additional bathrooms and central heating. Pollen (1926-87) was notable as a designer of Catholic churches but also undertook domestic commissions in Oxfordshire and elsewhere; the RIBA library holds a number of his design drawings but not including Brightwell Baldwin. Further works, mainly to the kitchen and rear garden were carried out for the next owners in 1989.

Description

The house is situated on the south side of the street at the east end of the village and is set back from the road in extensive grounds. The principal elevation faces slightly north-west but for ease of description is assumed to be north.

Exterior (Figs 2-4)

The house has a square double-pile plan of two principal storeys, basement and attics. It is rendered throughout and has a slated mansard roof. The principal elevation is symmetrical and three bays wide with the central front door and flanking windows framed by tall shallow rebated arches. There are light-wells to the basement windows and a short flight of steps to the front door, which is six-panelled and has a tall arched fanlight. The twelve-pane sash windows to either side are square-headed with thin glazing bars and original glass. There are three uniform six-light sash windows at first floor level set well below the roof parapet and two modern casement dormers in the attic.

The gabled end walls have coped parapets and paired projecting stacks. There are no windows in the west wall which has a 20th century single-storey outbuilding butted against it; this has external access only. The rear south elevation has raised rendered quoins, string bands and window architraves. The upper floors mirror the front but the ground floor is asymmetric with a nine-light sash window at the east end and original French windows to the principal west reception room. These have a lead canopy (probably a 20th century replacement) and a balcony leading to garden stairs. This has a cast iron balustrade incorporating panels with anthemion decoration but the extent to which this was altered in the 20th century is unclear. The substructure is brick and forms a segmentally arched recess over French windows at basement level; this work

is 20th century. The garden in front of the basement has been landscaped to form a sunken courtyard accessed by the balcony stairs. There is a central door at this level and an inset east window.

The east gable wall was remodelled in 1979 when the ground floor lean-to extension and upper floor windows between the stacks were added. Before this (Fig 1) there was a projecting two-storey porch with a shallow hipped roof, a twelve-pane sash window at first floor level and a door with a top-light below. Adjoining this elevation is a service yard bounded to north and south by high brick walls with ramped ends built in English garden wall bond on a rubble base. There is a range of narrow single story outbuildings along the south side which has a lean-to slate roof. The walls are rubble and brick with a central rendered section that the 1978 photograph shows to be blockwork. There are two boarded doors and an original window with small panes. The square brick garage with a pyramidal roof at the east end of the yard is modern.

Interior (Figs 2, 5-6)

Ground floor – the front door opens into a large rectangular hall divided from an inner staircase hall by a triple arcade of Doric columns. These appear to be inserted; the skirting board runs behind the base of the western pilaster and the two mouldings are not in register; at the other end of the arcade the skirting has been cut. A fireplace has been removed from the east wall of the outer hall and both compartments have separate rib-moulded cornices.

The two principal reception rooms are at the west end of the house and open off the stair hall. They are similarly detailed with six-panelled doors in moulded architraves, full-height shuttered windows, original dado rails, wall plaster battened out on laths and reeded ceiling cornices. They are connected by a pair of room-height mahogany doors in a reeded architrave. The north-west room has an imported 18th century stripped pine fireplace. The south-west room has a reproduction Adam-style fireplace which is narrower than the original; vertical battens fill the gaps with the dado mouldings.

The third reception room is at a higher level (over the basement kitchen) and is accessed from the staircase. It is plainer than the other rooms but retains an original

wooden fireplace surround with reeded pilasters. The staircase occupies an inner hall and is of dog-leg type with open strings, stick balusters, turned newel posts and a ramped mahogany handrail; it is lit by a window on the half landing. A plainer lower flight with square newel posts descends to the basement and there is a door to the service yard on the half landing.

Basement – this housed the service rooms and is plainly finished with exposed ceiling beams in most rooms; some of these are reused timbers with redundant mortices. On the north side there is an original wine cellar with arched brick bins; the south-east room, which has a higher ceiling than elsewhere is the kitchen and there is a garden room to the west.

First floor – there are four bedrooms and two bathrooms opening off a central landing which has a full suite of original six-panelled doors. Most rooms have no historic features apart from the window architraves; the two bedrooms at the west end have been knocked together and given modern cornices but the south-west room has an original fireplace with reeded pilasters and an arched cast iron grate.

Second floor – the staircase rises to attic level but the upper flight has a closed string and a pine handrail (formerly stained). There are four bedrooms which have two-panelled doors hung on L-hinges and simple original fireplaces. The roof is in two sections with a central valley gutter and is of pegged construction with braced king post trusses.

Development of the building

1 The house was built for the rector Samuel White on a new site between 1802 and 1805. It was planned as a symmetrical villa with blank end walls and had a small walled service yard on the east side. The architect is unknown but the arched recesses on the principal elevation are a common feature of late 18th and early 19th century speculative London housing (Byrne 1986, 103, cf. 90-3) and the house has the appearance of a terrace built in isolation. Internally the accommodation was on four floors with the kitchen and associated service rooms in the basement and the reception rooms at raised ground floor level. The rooms at this level retain the majority of their original fixtures and fittings and the staircase is also original. The hall plan was

radically altered in the late 20th century and appears originally to have consisted of a central passage from the front door to the inner stair hall and a separate room on the north-east corner, which would have had a fireplace in the east wall. This would have been the only reception room to open off the outer hall and was probably intended as a study for parochial business. The bedrooms on the upper floors are simply detailed and the basic layout is unchanged. The double-pile mansard roof with king post trusses is original.

2 No significant structural modifications appear to have been made to the building during its subsequent life as a rectory and the next phase of alterations are consequent on its sale in 1979. These were to designs by the architect Francis Pollen; further works were carried out by subsequent owners in 1989.

Externally the front of the house was unaltered but at the back a sunken garden was created and the basement elevation altered, with modifications to the French window balcony. A single-storey lean-to with external access only was built at the west end and the projection (Fig 1) at the east end demolished. This was replaced by new staircase windows and the existing single-storey porch. A double garage was built at the east end of the service yard.

Internally the principal alterations took place in the hall, which was enlarged to its present size by incorporating a room on the north-east corner and opened out into the stair hall through an arcade. Basement rooms were modernised; on the first floor bathrooms were added and the two west bedrooms combined.

References

Byrne, A, 1986 *London's Georgian Houses*, The Georgian Press

Fraser, A C, 1981 *The Church of St Bartholomew, Brightwell Baldwin*, Church guide book.

Fraser, A C, 1986 *Notes on the history of Brightwell Baldwin*.

ORO – Oxfordshire Record Office

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Fig 1 Historic map and photograph

Fig 2 Phased plans

Fig 3 Phased elevations

Fig 4 External photographs

Fig 5 Internal photographs

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Appendix: Statutory list

BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN SU69NE 4/23 The Old Rectory 18/07/63 (Formerly listed as The Rectory) GV II Rectory, now house. c.1800. Rendered; M-shaped mansard Welsh slate roof; rendered end stacks. Double-depth plan. Late Georgian style. 2 storeys and attic; 3-window range. 6-panelled door with large decorative overlight flanked by 6-pane sashes: all set in tall round-arched reveals. 3-pane first-floor sashes. Parapet: 2 roof dormers. Interior: panelled doors and shutters. Moulded reeded cornices and fireplaces. Large double-leaf doors set in moulded architrave between front and rear rooms to right. Shown on 1802 Enclosure Map. (Buildings of England: Oxfordshire, p.485; Oxfordshire Record Office, QSD/A, vol.B, facing p.278).

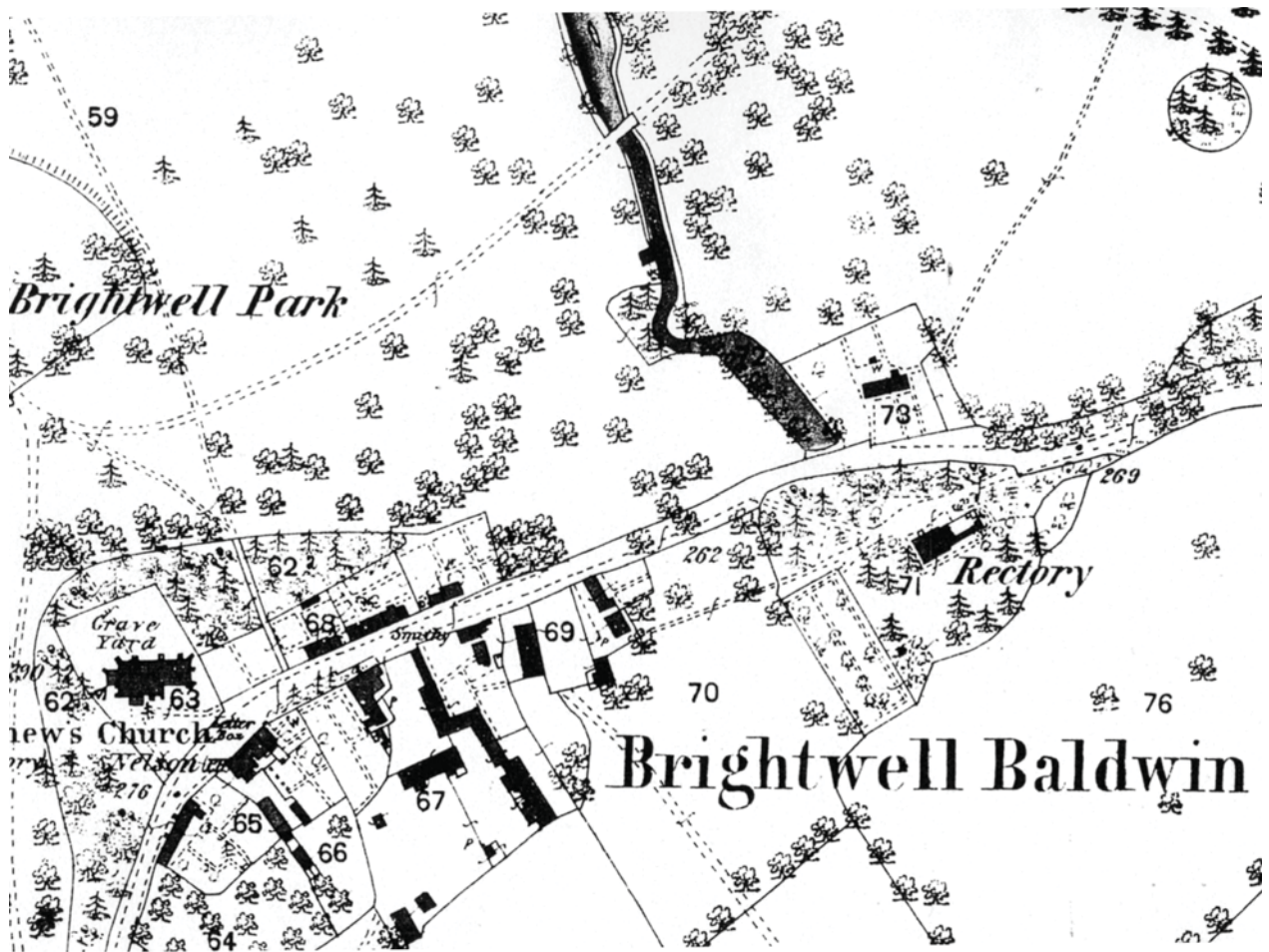
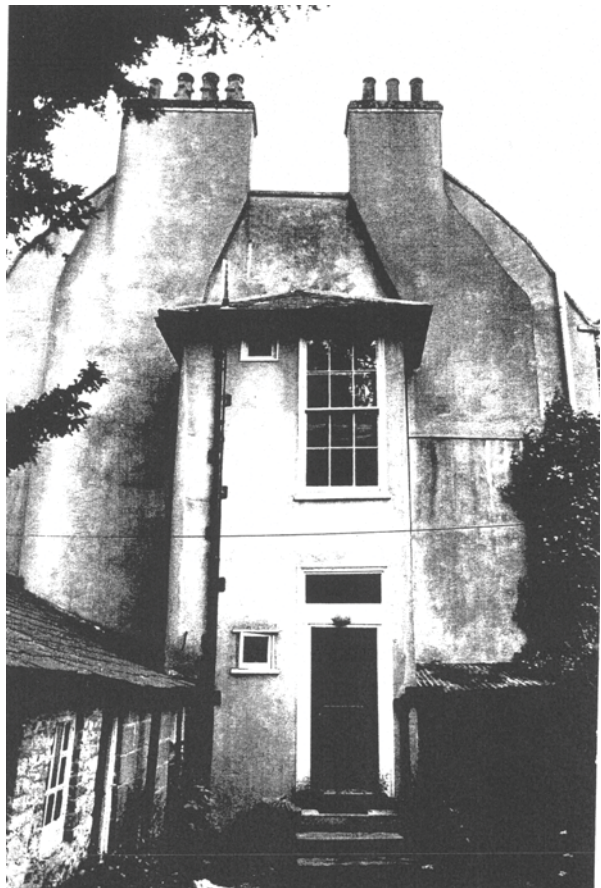


Fig 1

1881 Ordnance Survey 1:2500

1978 photograph of east elevation showing demolished projection (Oxfordshire County Libraries Local History Collection 86/41)



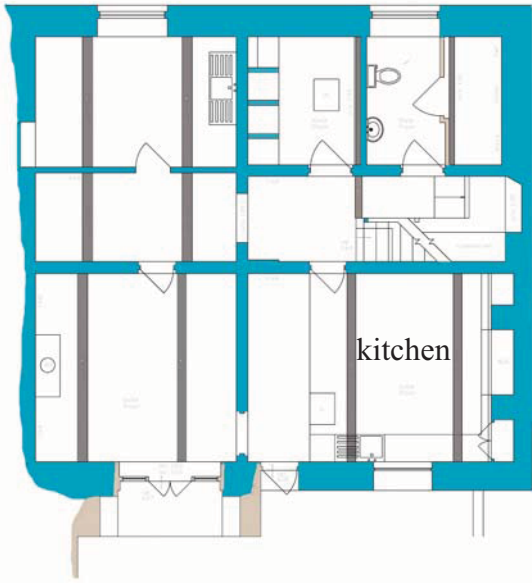


Fig 2 Plans

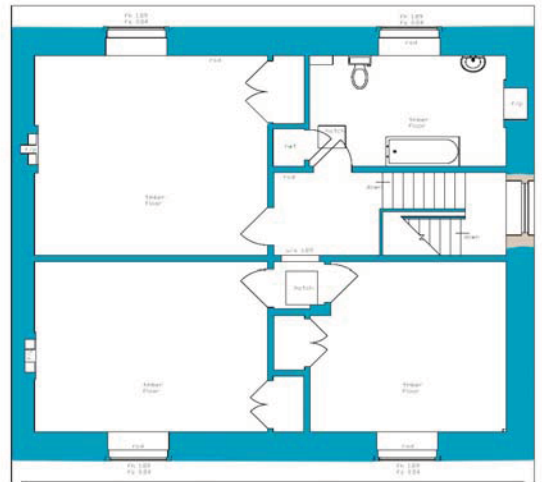
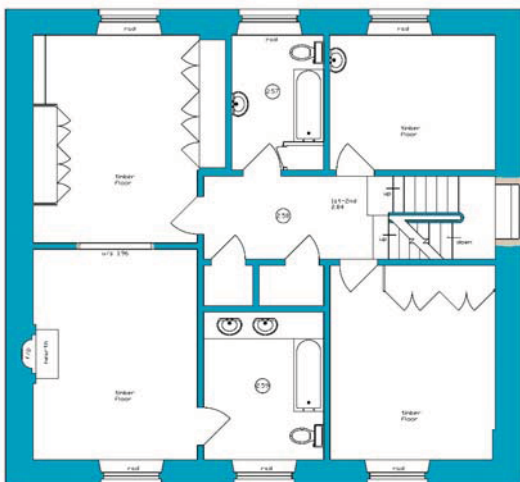
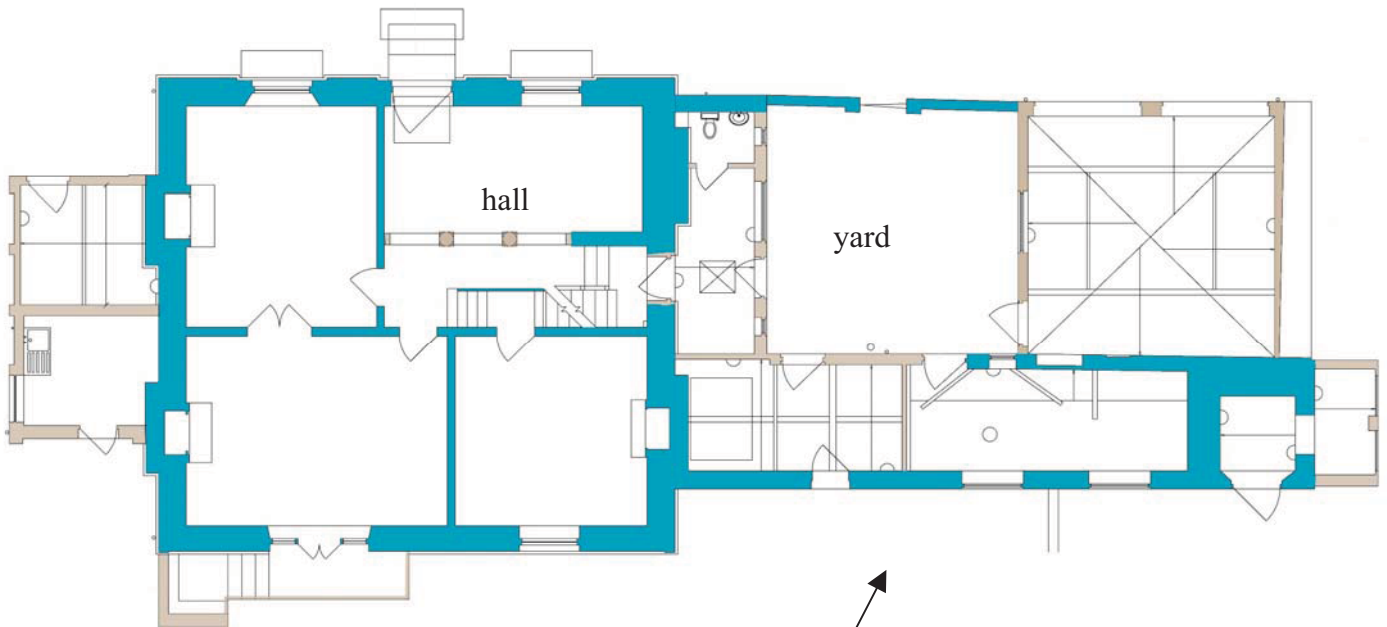
Basement

Ground floor

First floor (left)

Attic (right)

blue 1802
buff 20th century
brown ceiling beams (1802)



The Old Rectory, Brightwell Baldwin

*blue
buff*

1802
20th century

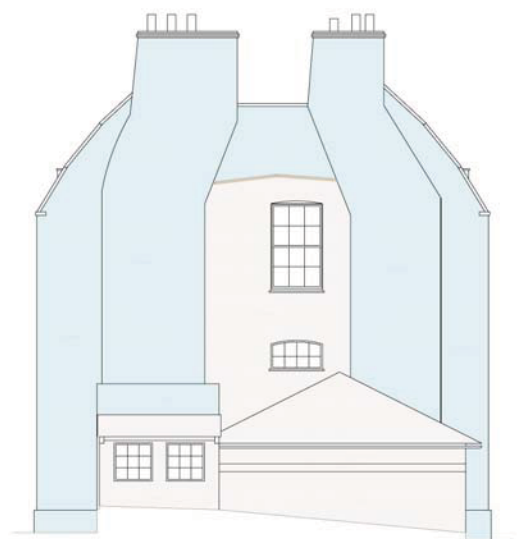
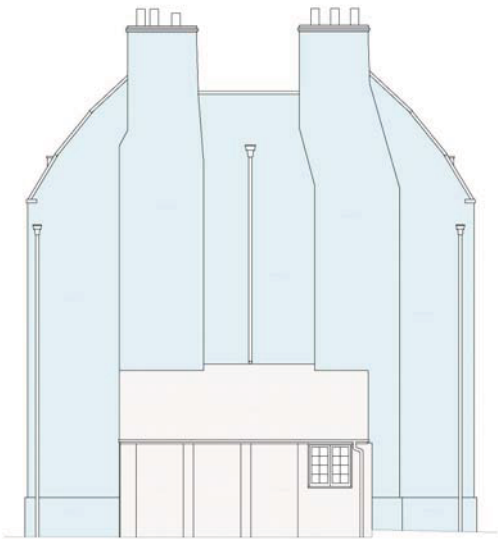
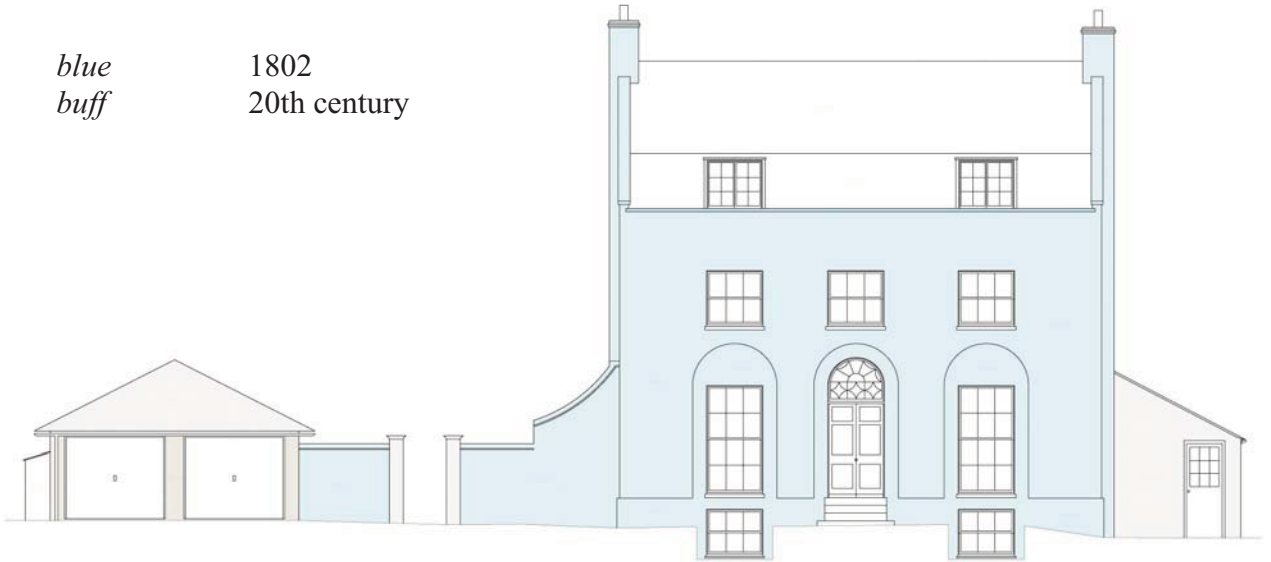


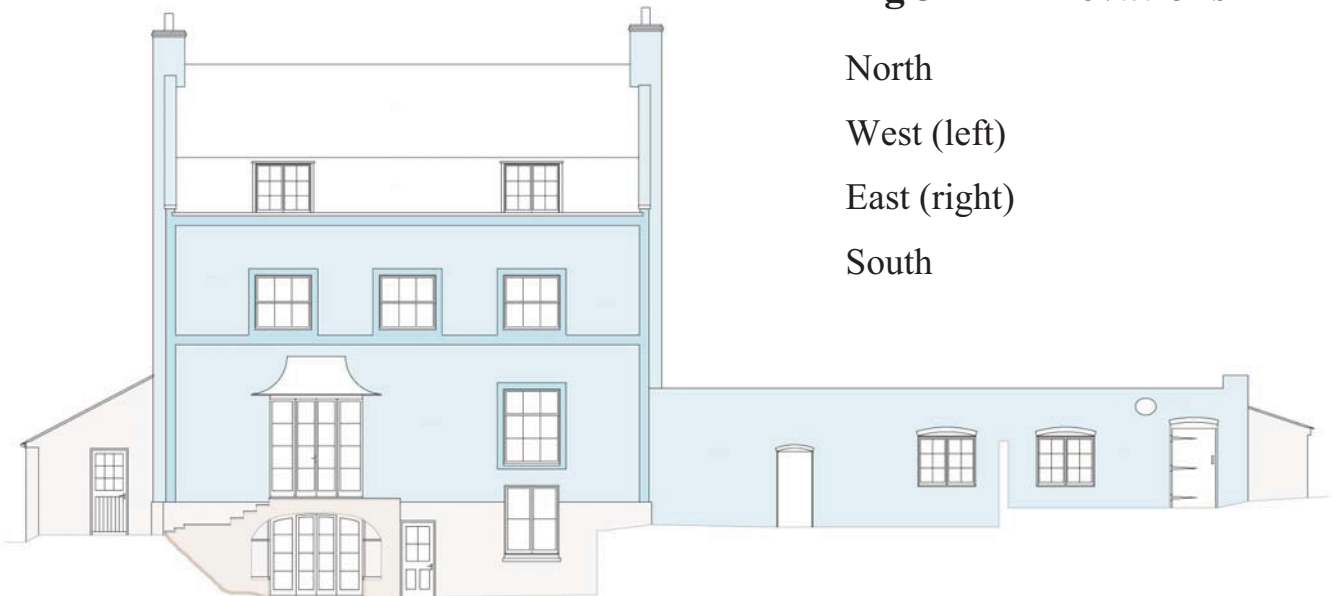
Fig 3 Elevations

North

West (left)

East (right)

South



The Old Rectory, Brightwell Baldwin



Fig 4 Exteriors

(clockwise from top left)

East elevation

North elevation

South elevation, balcony

Yard, south-east corner, garage on left

Yard, outbuildings on south side

South elevation





Fig 5 Interiors

(clockwise from above)

Hall arcade and staircase

Hall looking towards front door

Staircase hall looking east

South-west reception room

North-west reception room

with connecting double doors

Bins in wine cellar





Fig 6 Interiors

(clockwise from top left)

First floor landing and stairs to attic

Detail of attic staircase; pine handrail

Kingpost roof truss

Main bedroom (SW) with original fireplace and modern cornice

Original fireplace in SE reception room

