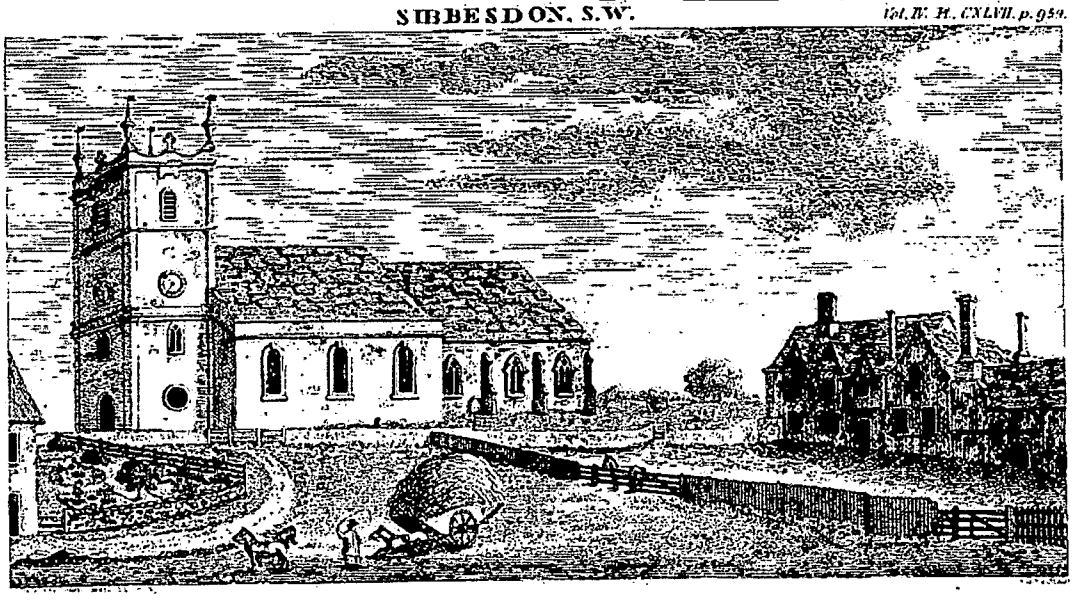
University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of Rooms and an Outbuilding at The Old Rectory, Sibson, Leicestershire (NGR SK 35437 00845)

Gerwyn Richards

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An Archaeological Standing Building Survey Of Rooms and an Outbuilding at The Old Rectory, Sheepy Road, Sibson Leicestershire (NGR SK 3543 0084)

Gerwyn Richards

For: Stoneacre Properties Ltd

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Stoneacre Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological standing building survey (to English Heritage Level 2) of a number of rooms and an outbuilding at The Old Rectory, Sibson. Planning permission has been granted to demolish the outbuilding and extend the other rooms. The Rectory is not listed but is located within the Sibson conservation area.

The Old Rectory is a large Georgian style two storey property which has been enlarged over time, the elements recorded by this work represents the earliest and most likely latest parts of the building. Building A, the office is a 17th century brick-built structure, with evidence that it was originally a larger domestic building, possibly of 2 stories. Building B is part of the Old Rectory itself and consists of a multi-period building amalgamated into a single coach house or garage in the late 19th or early 20th century but retaining earlier structural elements.

The archive for the archaeological work will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the museums accession number X.A144.2011.

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1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Stoneacre Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of a number of rooms and an outbuilding at The Old Rectory, Sheepy Road, Sibson, Leicestershire (SK 35437 00845, *Figures 1 & 2*). Planning permission has been granted to demolish the outbuilding and to extend and alter the other rooms. The Old Rectory lies on the north side of Sheepy Road and is within the Sibson Conservation Area. The dwelling is a large Georgian style two-storey property which has been enlarged over time and has various features such as corbel detail, a tower and remains of a previous building within its fabric. As a result, the Senior Planning Archaeologist, as advisor to planning authority, Hinckley and Bosworth District Council, has recommended that an historic-building recording programme be undertaken prior to the demolition, to English Heritage Level 2 as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).

The project was completed in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures (2008).* In addition,

Leicester City Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicester* was followed.



Figure 1. Site location (1:50000).

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The Old Rectory appears to be a largely late 18th- or early 19th-century brick-built house, but includes numerous alterations and extensions, including possibly earlier elements. The manor was advertised for sale in 1810, the sales particulars include a mention of the rectory and describes it thus:

> *...consisting of newly-erected Rectory House, coach house, stables, replete with attached and detached offices, gardens, yard and 265 acres, 3 roods and 18 perches of inclosed lands.* (Leicester Journal February, 1810)

The actual date of the re-building of Sibson Rectory referred to here is unknown but the Enclosure Award Map for Sibson, which bears the date 1803, shows the present rectory building. The Parish was enclosed by the Lord of the Manor, Pendock Neale, leaving a

proportion to the rector, Thomas Neale 'equal to the value of his uninclosed glebe and right of common'. The Reverend Thomas Neale was still listed as Rector in the sales particulars in 1810. It is almost certain that the Lord of the Manor and the Rector were of the same family.



Figure 2
Sibson village core showing proposed development area.
(1:25000).

2. Aims and Methodology

The specific objectives of the standing building survey were as follows:

- To provide a written, drawn and photographic record of the buildings prior to their demolition.
- To ensure the long-term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.
- The site-based element of the Historic Building Recording programme involved the production of measured survey drawings and the compilation of photographic and written records.
- Desk-based research included the analysis of readily available documentary and cartographic sources.

Addressing the requirements stipulated in *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Recording. The Old Rectory, Sheepy Road, Sibson, Nuneaton CV13 6LE* (ULAS 2011).

Orientation: There are two separate elements covered by this building survey (*Figure 3*); both adjacent to the eastern end of the main body of the building (which is not

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included within the proposed works). The largest element comprises the two rooms which form the easternmost wing of the Old Rectory, the second is a small square outbuilding which abuts the easternmost wall of the Rectory, known as the office, both are aligned north to south, with the principal elevation of each being south-facing, fronting Sheepy Road. Letter identification has been issued for the purpose of this report and a number prefix added for significant partitions if required.

An Historic Fabric Survey (Smith, D & Hayward, R 2009) is known to have been carried out for the building as a whole, but as far as is known, no previous historic building recording has been undertaken of the buildings covered by this phase of work.

The site visit was undertaken by Gerwyn Richards on October 13th 2011.

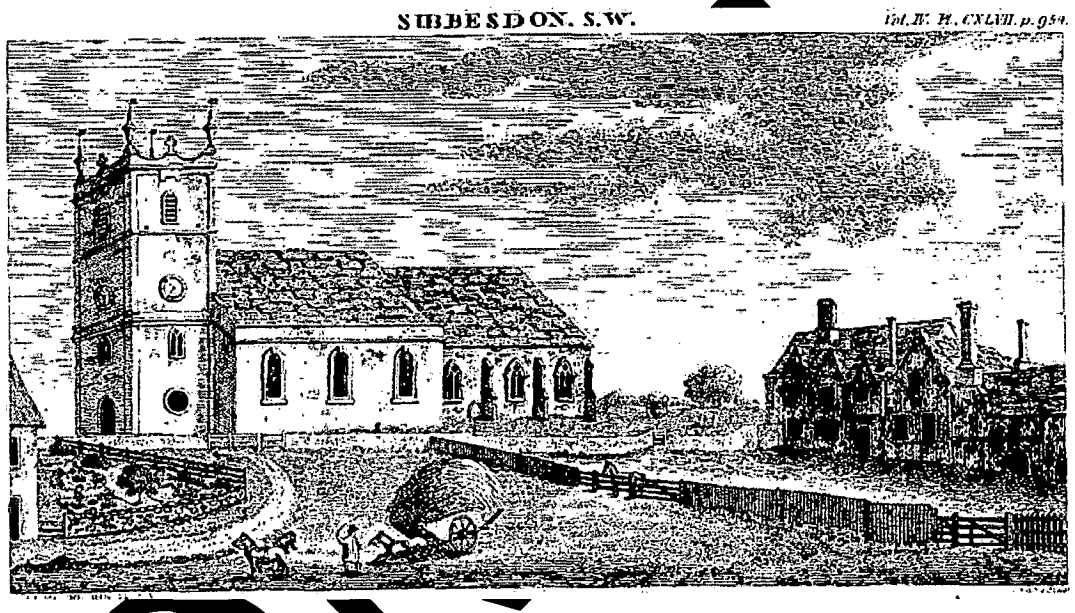


Figure 3
Engraving, dated 1793, of Sibson Church and showing the 17th century Rectory situated to the right (south-east) of the Church. (Nichols, 1811, Vol IV, pt.ii. p.954)

3. Description of the Buildings

3.1 Building A *'The Office'*

Building A is a single-storey red-brick building with a flat roof occupying the northernmost part of the easternmost courtyard. The building faces Sheepy Road to the south, but is slightly out of alignment with the remainder of the Rectory (*Figure 4*), there is a central door on the southern elevation as well as a small high level window (*Figure 5*), and on the eastern elevation is a large central arched window (*Figure 6*). Both windows and the door are modern replacements in timber. On the western end of the south-facing elevation there is a substantial mixed sandstone and granite-built plinth, or footing visible (*Figure 5*). It is possible that this plinth/footing continues below the remainder of the building, but is not currently visible.

With the exception of a number of clearly later additions and alterations, the bulk of the brickwork consists of 9inch x 2inch x 4 ½ inch handmade red bricks laid in English Garden Wall Bond (one course of headers to three courses of stretchers). There is however areas of patching with no discernable bond. There has also been extensive re-pointing with cement mortar; there are limited remains of earlier lime mortar pointing. Towards the roof line there was a course of saw tooth corbelling; these bricks were clearly later than the body of the building, suggesting the roofline has been altered. On the eastern wall there is a central arched window, set within what was originally a larger opening. The blocked opening, interestingly does not reach the external ground level, so its original function is unclear. The infill bricks are 9inch x 3inch x 4 ¼ inch reds, rather soft in both colour and strength, suggesting an early to mid 19th century date for this phase of work. It is unclear what purpose this opening originally served.

The northern wall of the office is largely obscured by a modern timber building; there is however a limited view of a blocked entrance on the west side of the wall. There is a flat arch head in brick above the blocked opening. The infill bricks are 8 inch by 2 ½inch by 4 inch handmade red bricks, these brick dimensions suggest an early 19th century date, it is possible, however that these bricks have been re-used from elsewhere and therefore dating the infill is uncertain.

A detailed examination of the main body of brickwork reveals a number of interesting features about the bricks themselves, most notably the size of the pebble inclusions which suggests the clay was passed through an early wooden pug mill and therefore not as clearly sorted as later clay would have been in a largely iron pug mill. There was also a wide variety of colours to the fired bricks, again suggesting an early date. The numerous examples of flaring and shrinking observed within these bricks suggest that they were clamp-fired, where such distortions are common. All of which strongly suggests a 17th Century date from this part of the building and is therefore, likely to pre-date the remainder of the Rectory which is largely 18th century in date.

Internally the building has undergone significant recent decoration, limited removal of this decoration, did, however reveal some significant architectural and historical features. The most significant of which was the brick-built fireplace on the west wall (*Figure 7*), indicating that the building was originally heated and therefore, likely to have been a domestic structure rather than an outbuilding. Further removal of the dry lining over the chimney breast indicated that the chimney had been rather crudely cut down to an arbitrary point, only concealed by the newly under-boarded ceiling. This suggests that the chimney was originally taller and the building was originally two storied. Which is supported by the later brickwork, including the saw tooth corbelling recorded on the external walls.

The under-boarded ceiling also appeared to conceal two axial beams, removal of this cladding confirmed this (*Figures 4, 8 & 9*). There were two large oak beams, apparently re-used. Both had joist holes on each face. These joist holes did not line up, suggesting that the beams were not in their original positions, further evidence of which was the 'birds mouth' openings on the east face of the east beam, indicating that this beam was originally a wall plate. Some of these openings had been filled with plaster (*Figure 9*) suggesting that they were at some point in their history exposed and merited

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this additional, and somewhat un-necessary re-finishing, evidence again that the building was originally domestic.

Both the size and the location of these beams are interesting; both beams are large, 300mm by 300mm in comparison to the weight they carry as well as the use of two beams in a room only 4.4metres wide. A single central beam of the above dimensions would have been more than adequate. It is possible, therefore, that these beams are evidence that the building as well as being originally two storied was originally longer also. The joists carrying the roof are modern replacements.

3.2 Building B '*The Play Room, Larder & Kitchen*'

The proposed works will also have an impact upon the easternmost rooms of the Rectory itself (*Figure 4*). At the time of the site visit all of these rooms were occupied and furnished, but it was possible to carry a cursory examination of these rooms.

Building B consisted of a single range; perpendicular to Sheepy Road, the southern gable is parallel with the road and on the same alignment as the remainder of the Rectory, the reminder of the walls, however is on the same alignment as building A. The range is brick built with a pitched roof of Welsh Slate, the southern elevation is rendered, and the northern and eastern elevations are exposed brickwork. The exposed brickwork appears to be mixed and possible multiple phased. The northern wall (*Figure 11*) consists of 9 inch by 2 ½ inch by 4 inch handmade red bricks laid in an uneven English Garden Wall Bond (one course of headers to three or five courses of stretchers, but in this example the stretcher courses vary between three and five). At eaves level there is a course of bricks on end, reminiscent of coping bricks, above which is clearly later brickwork. It is almost certain, therefore, that the pitched roof is a later addition and the coping bricks suggest that this wall may have originally been garden wall. Both the door and the window on this elevation have the appearance of having been inserted; below the window there is a straight joint in the brickwork indicating an in-filled opening, the infill bricks appear to be early to mid 19th century in date.

The brickwork on the eastern elevation is rather more complicated and consists of at least three phases (*Figure 12*). There is one obvious blocked opening towards the southern end of the elevation with clearly 20th century cement mortar pointing. The remainder of the elevation consists of mixed brickwork of similar dimensions but visually different laid largely in a Flemish Garden Wall bond (three or five stretchers to one header in each course). There is a straight joint between this elevation and building A, suggesting the two are not contemporary.

Although rendered, the southern elevation (*Figure 10*) still contains significant information relating to the Old Rectory and its evolution. Most significantly, its alignment follows that of the 18th-century Rectory so is likely to post-date building A and the northernmost parts of building B. There is also the outline of a large blocked garage or carriage door visible within the elevation, suggesting the range may have originally been built as a coach house or even as a garage in the early years of the 20th century.

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Internally, there is very little of architectural or historical interest visible. The range has been sub-divided with apparently modern stud walls creating two large rooms and a single small room (the larder). There is no clear evidence of a fireplace or chimney, which along with the lack of any original partitions suggests the range, was originally a single large, unheated space. The only significant feature which is visible is the exposed roof truss in the frontage room (*Figure 13*). The truss itself is a bolted king post truss with a raised head and raking struts. Interestingly, the struts are at a very steep angle.

A detailed examination was not possible, however the visible dimensions of the timber suggest the truss is softwood and is likely to be late 19th or more likely early 20th century in date.

All the visible evidence suggests that building B was b[illegible] early years of the 20th century but retained elements of an earlier building to t[illegible] north. [illegible] almost certain that the building was either a coach house or an early garage. [illegible]

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4. Conclusion

It appears that the two elements affected by these proposed works represent both the earliest and most likely the latest phases of the Old Rectory. Building A is almost certainly 17th century in date and is likely to relate to the earlier Rectory which was mostly demolished and rebuilt in the early 18th Century. The discovery of a fireplace and the re-finished timbers suggest that the building was originally a domestic building rather than an outbuilding, possibly one of the attached or detached offices mentioned in the 1810 sales particulars. Early cartographic sources seem to suggest that the Office was detached from the main body of the Rectory until the early years of the 20th century.

Building B was part of the main body of the Rectory and is likely to be the latest significant element of the building. Modern decoration largely obscured any significant architectural or historical features, leaving only the exposed roof truss and evidence of a blocked carriage opening on the front elevation. This opening along with the lack of any original heating suggests that the building was originally a coach house or more interestingly an early 20th century garage. Cartographic evidence suggests that this part of the Rectory was enlarged and extended during the early years of the 20th century, most likely extending and amalgamating earlier structural elements.

5. Bibliography & Sources

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PPS 5 2010 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2010).

6. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

1 A2 permagraph sheet containing plans & site notes
DVD containing 56 digital images
2 A4 contact sheets
56 Black & White negatives and contact prints
2 A4 photo record sheets
7 A3 paper drawings showing existing plans, elev[illegible]& ropose[illegible]ns, elevations
Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report Nu[illegible]er 2011-167)

The archive will be held at Leicestershire [illegible]ty [illegible]cil Museu[illegible] under the Accession Number X.A144.2011.

A version of the summary (above) [illegible] submitted to [illegible] editor of the local journal *Transactions of Leicestershire Archa[illegible]nd Histor[illegible]ociety* for inclusion in the next edition.

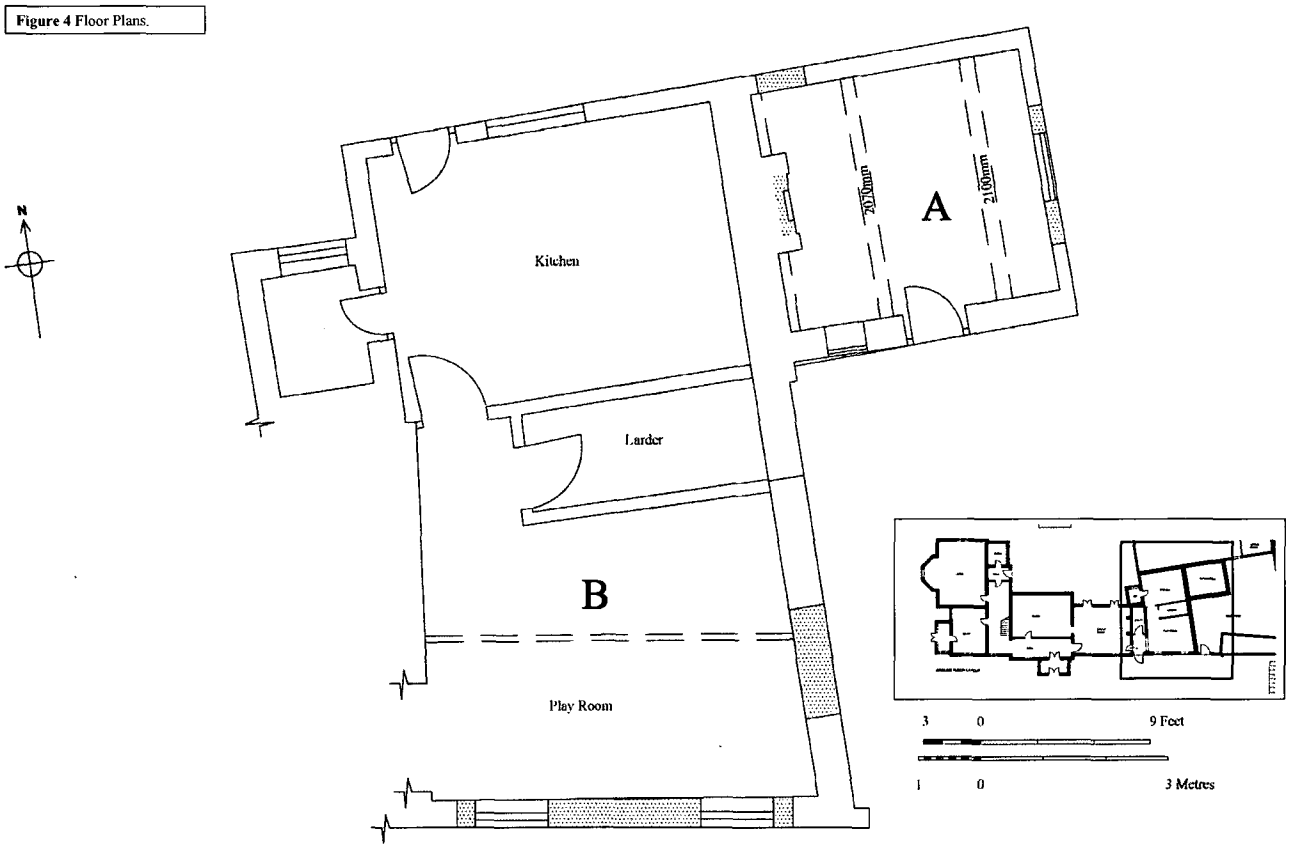
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Figure 4 Floor Plans.



7 Colour Plates



Figure 5 Building A (Outbuilding) south facing elevation.



Figure 6 Building A (Outbuilding) east facing elevation.



Figure 7 Exposed fireplace and chimney breast (Building A).



Figure 8 Westernmost beam (Building A).



Figure 9 "Birds mouth openings" in easternmost beam (Building A).



Figure 10 Building B (The Old Rectory), south facing elevation.



Figure 11 Building B (The Old Rectory), north facing elevation.



Figure 12 Building B (The Old Rectory), east facing elevation.



Figure 13 Exposed roof truss, building B (Play Room).

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Appendix OASIS Record

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	The Old Rectory, Sibson
Project Type	Building Recording
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Gerwyn Richards
Previous/Future work	Previous: Historic Fabric Appraisal. Future: Not Known
Current Land Use	Residential
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Not Known
Site Co ordinates	SK 35437 00845
Start/end dates of field work	Oct 2011
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Height min/max	Not Known
Study Area	N/A
Finds	None

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