University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

Hill Farm, Fenn Lanes, Fenny Drayton, Leicestershire (SP 3585 9775): Historic Building Assessment

By Sophie Clarke

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ULAS Report No 2011-084
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Hill Farm, Fenn Lanes,

Fenny Drayton

Leicestershire:

Historic Building Assessment

NGR: SP 3585 9775

Sophie Clarke

For: Mr B Williams

Checked by

Signed:

Date: 13.05.2011.

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Sophie Clarke

Summary

Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton is an isolated farmstead, dating to the post-enclosure period. The Grade II listed, 18th century farmhouse is an imposing three-storey brick structure, which has been much altered from its original form, during the 20th century. The present planning proposals are for the conversion of the second floor attic store-rooms to provide domestic accommodation. The attic rooms are largely bare, with the exception of the 18th century doors that communicate between them. All 18th century fixtures and fittings, including the staircase, doors, frames and iron-work are to be retained. It is therefore felt that the conversion will have a minimal impact on historic building fabric and will not detract from the significance of the building as a heritage asset. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service under the accession number X.A74.2011.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a historic building assessment at Hill Farm, Fenn Lanes, Fenny Drayton, Leicestershire. It has been prepared by Sophie Clarke of University of Leicester Archaeological Services' Historic Buildings Team, on behalf of Mr B. Williams and Hayward Architects.

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Plate 1. Hill Farmhouse, front elevation, looking east.

Hill Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building which is thought to date to the late 18th century and forms part of a farm complex that is illustrated on early Ordnance Survey maps.

The current owners are proposing the redevelopment of the second storey of the building, including works that will alter the structure and it was felt by the Conservation Officer at Hinckley and Bosworth District Council, that these may affect the significance of the farmhouse as a heritage asset.

In consequence, the Conservation Officer, in conjunction with the Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team (HNET), has recommended the need for a historic building assessment in order to ascertain the significance of the structure and to determine what impact the proposed works will have on the historic fabric.

2. Site location

Hill Farm is located at National Grid Reference SP 3585 9775, at a height of *c.* 100m above Ordnance Datum. The site is located in an isolated position, approximately 1km to the north-east of Fenny Drayton village, in Witherley parish.

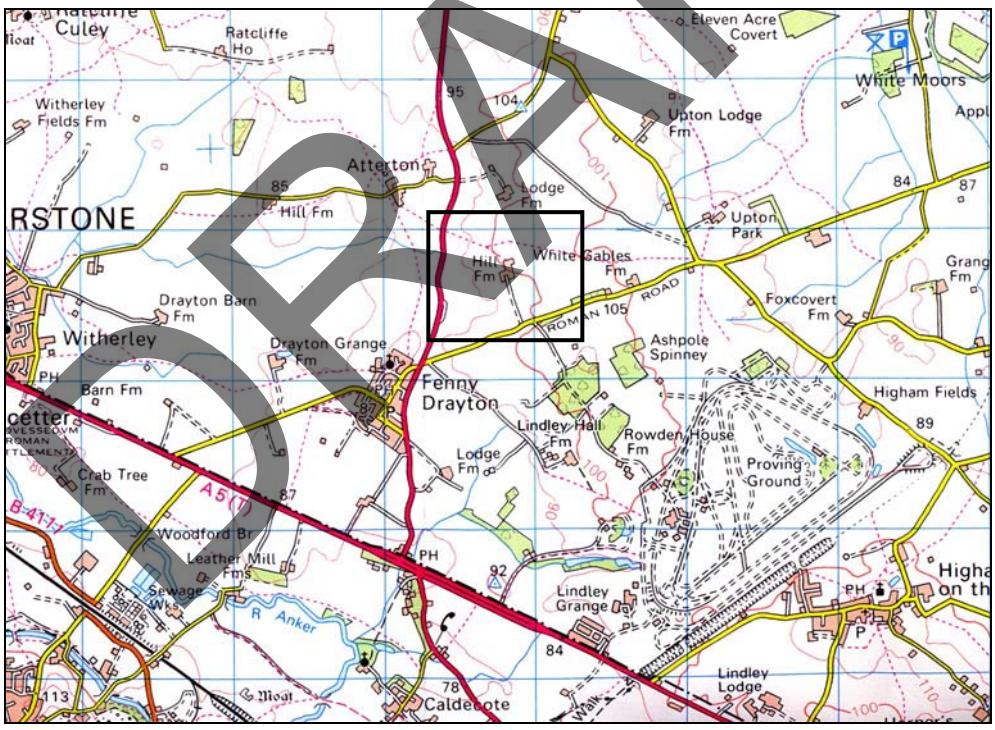


Figure 1. Location of Hill Farm. Scale 1:50,000

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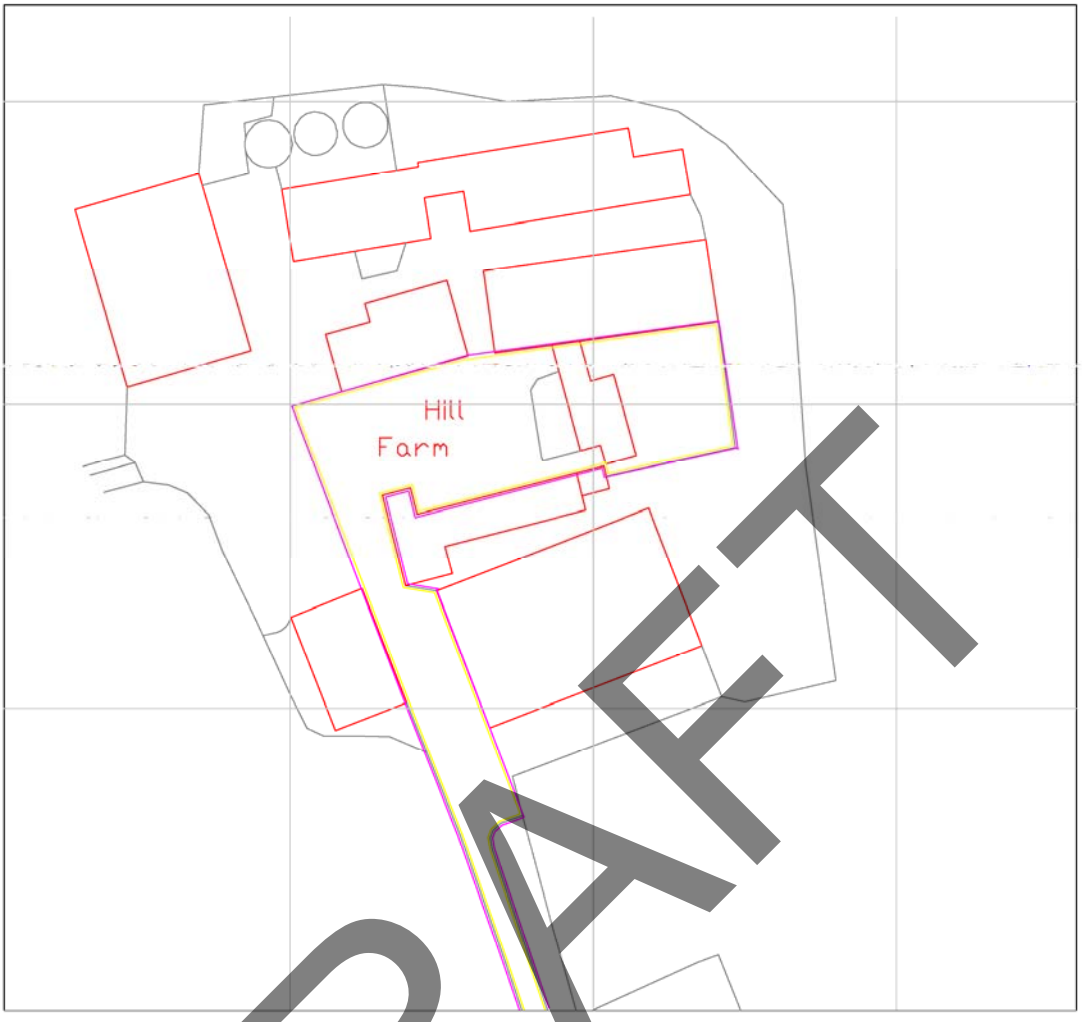


Figure 2. Site plan. Scale 1:1250.

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3. Aims and methods

In accordance with PPS 5 'Planning and the Historic Environment' Policy HE12.3, the purpose of the work was to record and advance understanding of the significance of the affected heritage asset prior to its loss or truncation due to the impact of the proposed development. Following the *Brief* issued by LCC HNET, the historic building assessment was undertaken prior to the commencement of the proposed alterations, with specific attention given to those elements of the scheme where demolition, conversion and/or alteration are proposed.

All work followed 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.*

The methodology followed procedure outlined within the project design specification (ULAS 11-346), to produce a record of the building equivalent to a Level 2 survey, as defined by English Heritage guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006) . The work incorporated the following specific elements:

The Written Account

- The precise location of the building, by name or street number, civil parish, town etc and national Grid Reference
- A note on any statutory or non-statutory designations
- The date the record was made, the names of the recorders, and the location of project archive
- A statement describing the building's type or purpose, materials and possible dates of construction and alteration. This account should outline the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence. The names of builders and owners should be given if this information can be established.
- A summary of the buildings type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and possible date.
- An assessment of the building's significance and the impact of the proposals on the historic fabric of the structure. This should include a justification for the proposed works/impact and any proposed mitigation schemes.
- Where appropriate, either as a result of the development proposal or due to the character of the building, the account shall include a note of the building's past and present relationship to its setting: for example, its relationship to local settlement patterns, to a field system, to a park, garden, farmyard and farm buildings, moat, graveyard, or other man-made landscape; its part in a larger architectural or functional group of buildings; its visual importance as a landmark etc. The landscape plan should ensure that the setting of the heritage asset is preserved and/or enhanced.
- A gazetteer of photographs taken (this should list the photographs by format and subject). This may usefully include thumbnail images.

The Survey Drawings

A measured survey of the buildings including floor plans and external elevations has been undertaken by Savage Hayward Architects for the purposes of this project. The floor plans were verified for accuracy on site and amended as necessary with the addition of historic architectural detail. These were transferred to a CAD package and revised to conform to the architectural drawing conventions set out in the English Heritage guidelines.

The drawn record comprised:

- Site location plans at suitable scales.
- Plans of all main floors as existing.

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- Plans to indicate the position and orientation of photographs included in the report.

The Photographic Record

Photographs were taken using a 35mm format SLR camera with black and white print film and high quality digital photographs in .tiff format, where appropriate. The photographic record comprised:

- General views of the building in its setting or landscape.
- The building's exterior appearance.
- The overall appearance of the principal internal areas.
- Any exterior details which are relevant to the building's design, development and use, and which do not show adequately on the general photographic record.
- Internal details structural or decorative relevant to the building's design, development and use.
- Any machinery or plant or evidence for its former existence.
- The buildings contents or ephemera which have a significant bearing on the building's history.

The fieldwork was carried out on the 23rd of May 2011, by Sophie Clarke of ULAS.

4. Description and chronology of the buildings

Hill Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, with the following listing description, taken from the Images of England website

http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/Details/Default.aspx?id=188270&mode=quick

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© Mr Peter J Ellis

IoE Number: 188270
Location: HILL FARMHOUSE, FENN LANES (north side)
WITHERLEY, HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH, LEICESTERSHIRE
Photographer: Mr Peter J Ellis
Date Photographed: 08 September 2004
Date listed: 10 August 1989
Date of last amendment: 10 August 1989
Grade II

SP 39 NEWITHERLEYFENN LANES (north side) Fenny Drayton9/129Hill Farmhouse

SP 39 NE WITHERLEY FENN LANES (north side) Fenny Drayton 9/129 Hill Farmhouse II Farmhouse. Late C18. Red brick, slate roof and brick ridge stack to right of centre and end stack to left. 3 storeys with toothed eaves course; reduced proportions to second floor. Regular 3-window front; 3-light casements with segmental heads to ground and first floors. On the second floor the 2 outer windows are blind but painted in imitation of glazing bar casements. Door to right of centre with rectangular overlight and bracketed hood.

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The farmhouse is an imposing brick-built structure of three storeys, dating to the late 18th century and as such is a typical example of its type, standing ‘isolated in its own post-Enclosure landscape (Smith 1992, 64)’, approximately one mile to the north-east of Fenny Drayton village, on the eastern side of the parish of Witherley. The farmhouse is the earliest surviving unit of a working farmstead, recently turned over to arable farming, having been a mixed-use farm before this. Other early buildings on the site include a range of single-storey cattle sheds and a threshing barn, with the date 1858 and the initials V.A.B. picked out in decorative brickwork on the west-facing gable end.



Plate 2. Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton. Looking east towards 1858 barn.



Plate 3. Hill Farm, looking east towards C19th cowsheds.

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The size of the farmhouse reflects the prosperity of farming in the Midlands during the late 18th century. The present structure stands at three bays in length, with modern, single storey extensions to each gable end. Evidence from the building survey however, indicates that the building was originally much larger, with at least one further full-height bay of building to the present northern gable end and a second range projecting at right angles from the rear of the main house, at the southern end, forming an L-shaped structure. The date for the demolition of these ranges is unclear: a skin of brick-work applied to the northern gable end of the building has been covered with concrete render to the external face, but is visible

through a doorway on the second floor of the existing building, which would have provided access through to the demolished bay. The brick-work skin appears late and it would seem likely that the demolition occurred in the second half of the 20th century, but prior to the listing of the building in 1989.

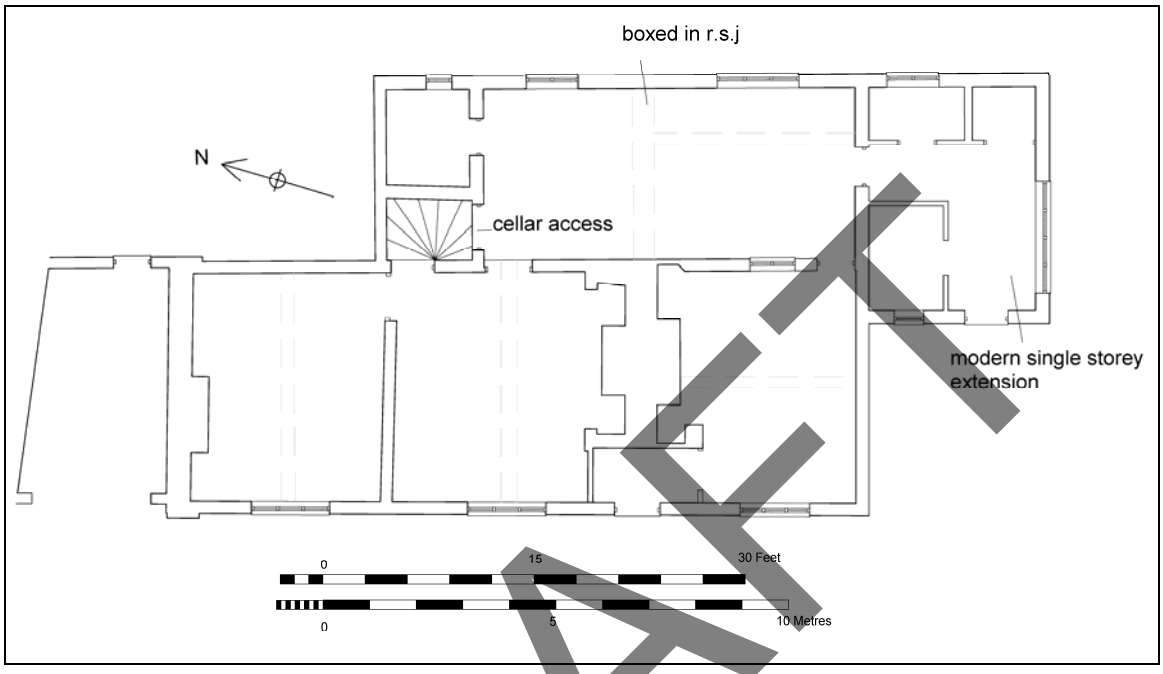


Figure 3. Hill Farmhouse, ground floor plan (derived from survey drawings supplied by Hayward Architects).

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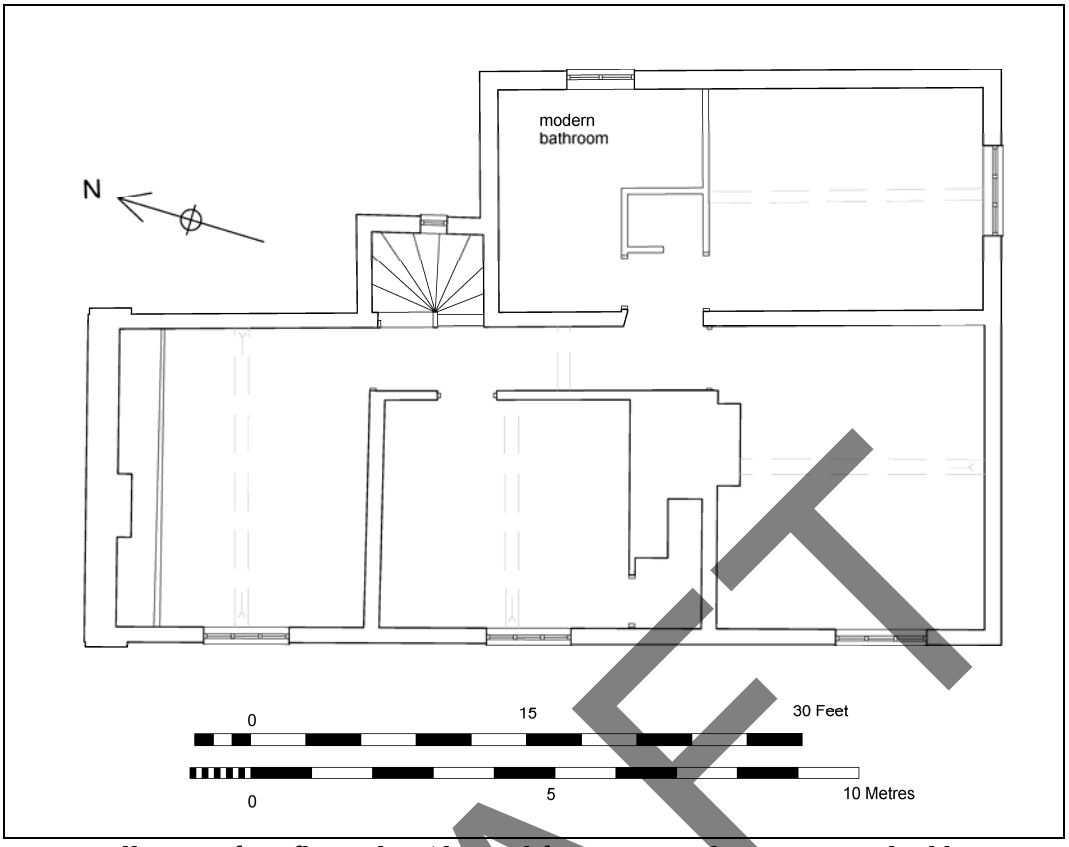


Figure 4. Hill Farm, first floor plan (derived from survey drawings supplied by Hayward Architects).

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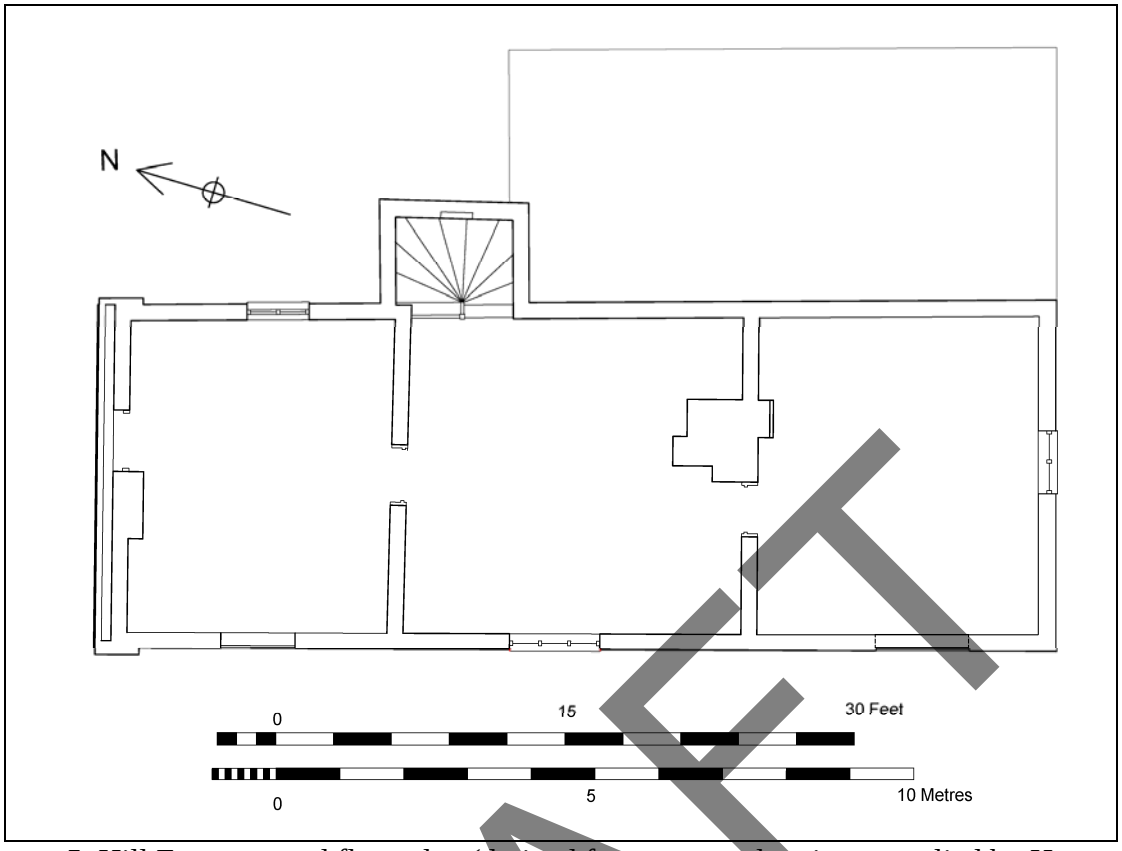


Figure 5. Hill Farm, second floor plan (derived from survey drawings supplied by Hayward Architects)

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At the rear of the house, is a two-storey range, of two bays with a flat roof. The exterior is coated in render, masking the building sequence. Axial and transverse ceiling beams located in the ground floor kitchen and the bedroom above, which has a segmental arch-headed window opening, indicate that these rooms may represent the remains of the original projecting rear range, with repaired plasterwork in the attic room above indicating repairs to the wall following the demolition of the upper storey.

The size of the r.s.j inserted into the ceiling above the kitchen would indicate that an external wall was broken through to create an opening into what appears to be a modern extension. Above the extended kitchen, on the second floor is a bathroom, with an absence of overhead ceiling timbers indicating that this is also a modern addition.

There are few early fixtures or fittings surviving within the building. Window frames throughout have been replaced with modern double-glazed units and fire-places are absent. At ground floor level, only the door to the cellar is 18th century. The cellar is located beneath the southern end bay sitting-room, and is accessed via brick steps which lead down from the kitchen. Doors to the sitting rooms are divided into four, flat panels and appear to date to the 19th century. Doors leading into the kitchen and dining room are modern.

At first floor level, a matching set of internal doors are hung on L- hinges and have four, raised panels, in an unusual arrangement which may date to the late 18th or early 19th century. Exposed transverse and axial ceiling beams over the bedrooms are chamfered with scroll stops.

The attic rooms at second floor level are currently used for storage and appear to be largely in their original form. At the top of the timber staircase, which is uncarpeted beyond the first floor, is a plain timber balustrade, with stick balusters, which dates to the 18th century. Flooring throughout is lime ash on reed. Doors housed in openings between the upper floor rooms are 18th century, two of simple plank and batten type, hung on hand wrought iron strap hinges, with early latches and handles. A third door matches doors of the first floor, possibly relocated here from the ground floor. At the northern end of the range, an 18th century doorway opens onto the modern brick skin over the rebuilt gable end. The outer face of the early wall, beyond the doorway, but visible in a void located before the brick skin, is coated with plaster and white-washed to match the surviving rooms. On the external face of the redundant door, is an applied decorative timber fascia panel.

5. Photographic Survey

The following plates have been taken from the photographic archive and are used here to illustrate the written report. These have been located on the floor plans reproduced below. Location plans for all digital colour photographs, which correspond with the black and white photographs taken and held in the archive are given in Appendix I.

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Plate 4. Rear elevation, looking west.

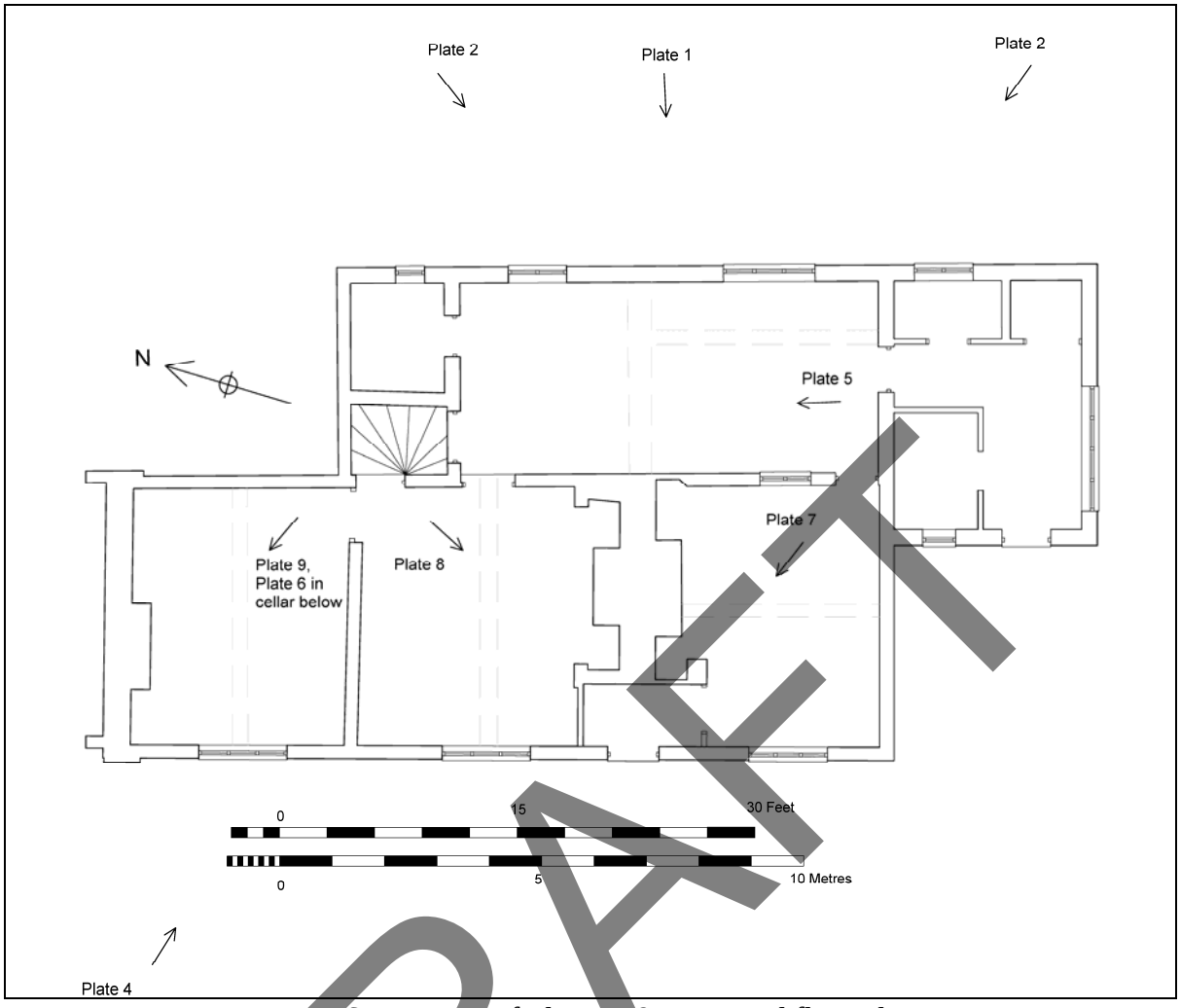


Figure 6. Location of Plates 1-9 on ground floor plan.

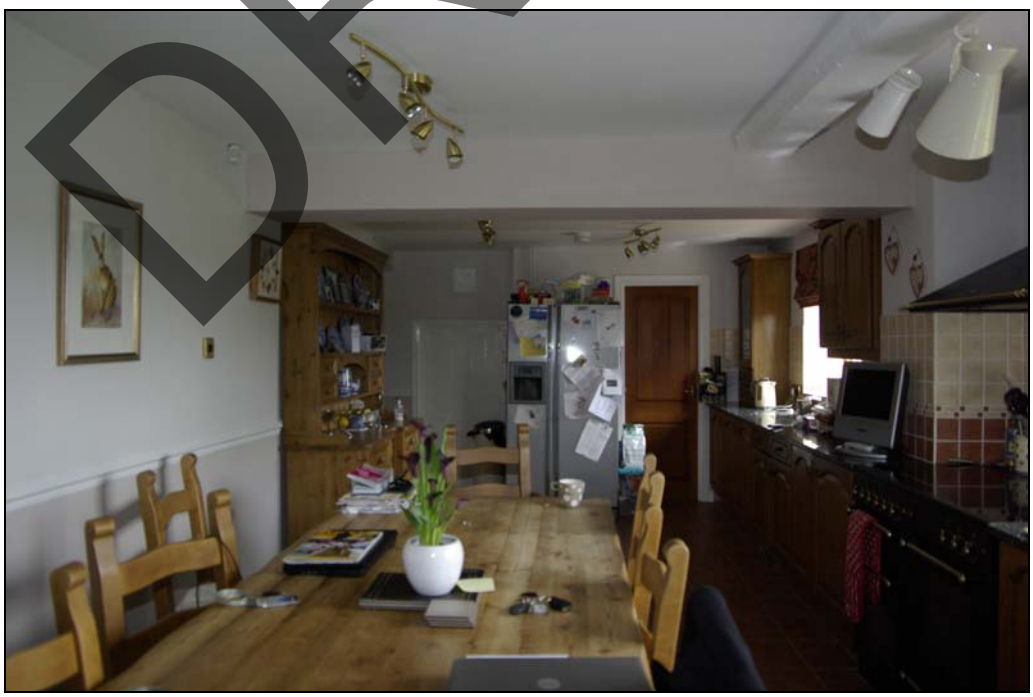


Plate 5. Kitchen, looking north towards modern extension

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Plate 6. Cellar beneath sitting room, looking west.



Plate 7. Dining room, looking north-west.

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Plate 8. Living room, looking south-west



Plate 9. Sitting room, looking north-west.

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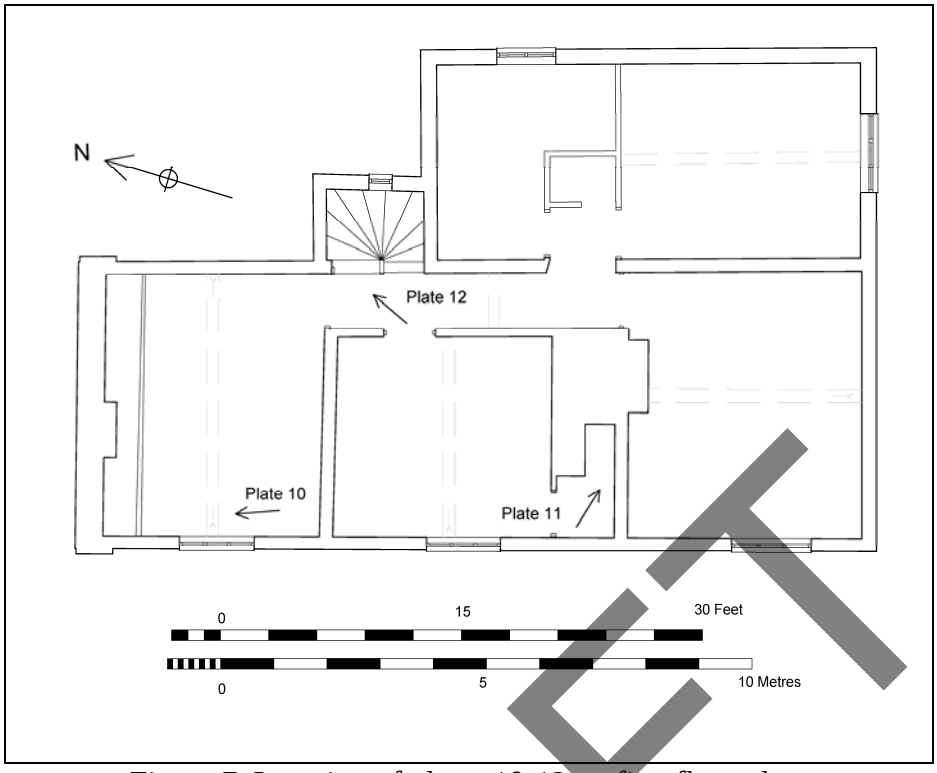


Figure 7. Location of plates 10-12 on first floor plan.



Plate 10. Chamfered and stopped transverse ceiling beam above northern bedroom. Looking north.

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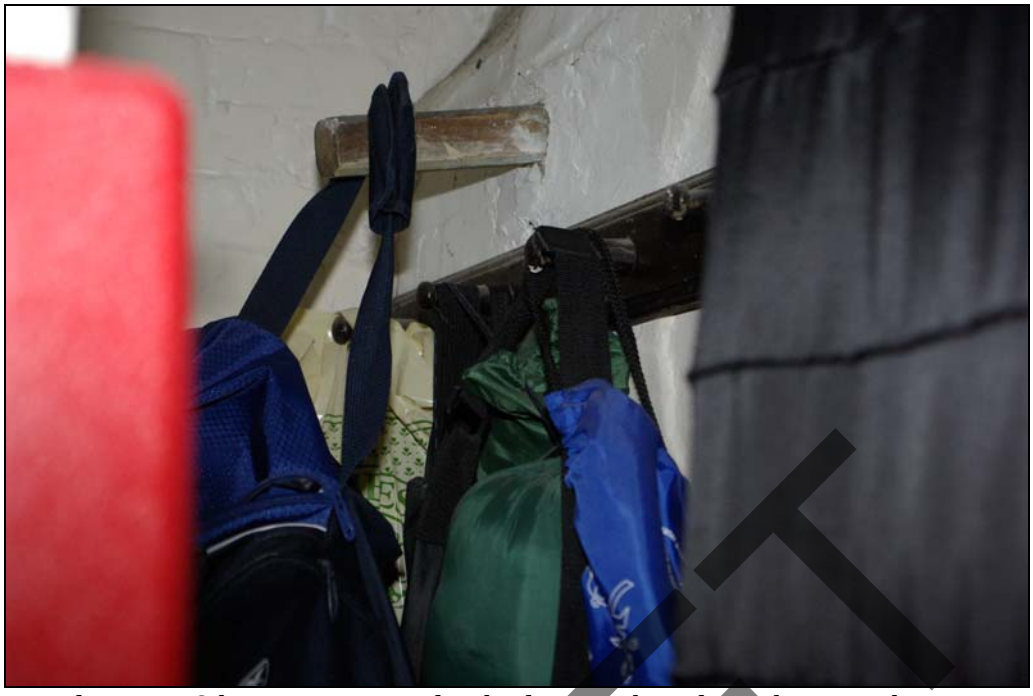


Plate 11. 18th century peg rail in built-in cupboard. Looking south-east.



Plate 12. 18th century four-panel door, 1st floor. Looking east.



Plate 13. 18th century balustrade, 2nd floor. Looking west.

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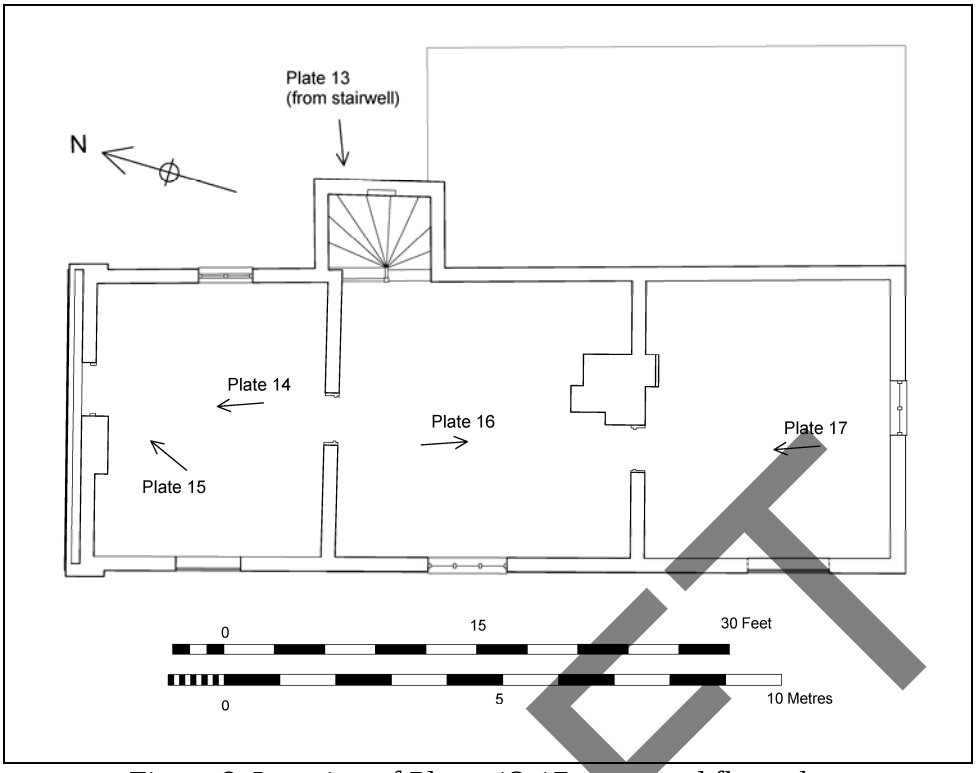


Figure 8. Location of Plates 13-17 on second floor plan.



Plate 14. Northern attic room, looking north.

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Plate 15. 18th century plank and batten door with decorative fascia board. 20th century brickwork skin to exterior of northern gable end visible through doorway. Looking east.



Plate 16. Central attic room, looking south.

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Plate 17. Southern attic room, with brick buttress to stack. Looking north.

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5. Outline Development Proposals and Assessment of the Development Impact

The planning proposals submitted by the applicant will involve the conversion of two of the attic rooms to provide more bedroom and living accommodation, incorporating an en-suite bathroom within the northern-most room. This will involve the insertion of stud partition walls to create an enclosed space, encompassing the existing window opening. In order to light the smaller bedroom space, the architects propose to create a window opening in the position of the former doorway, which will involve breaking through the modern brick skin over the northern gable end wall.

The lime ash floors are to be over-boarded, using timber filets to level as necessary. Waste from the en-suite bathroom will be taken out via pipe-work broken through the external, east-facing wall.

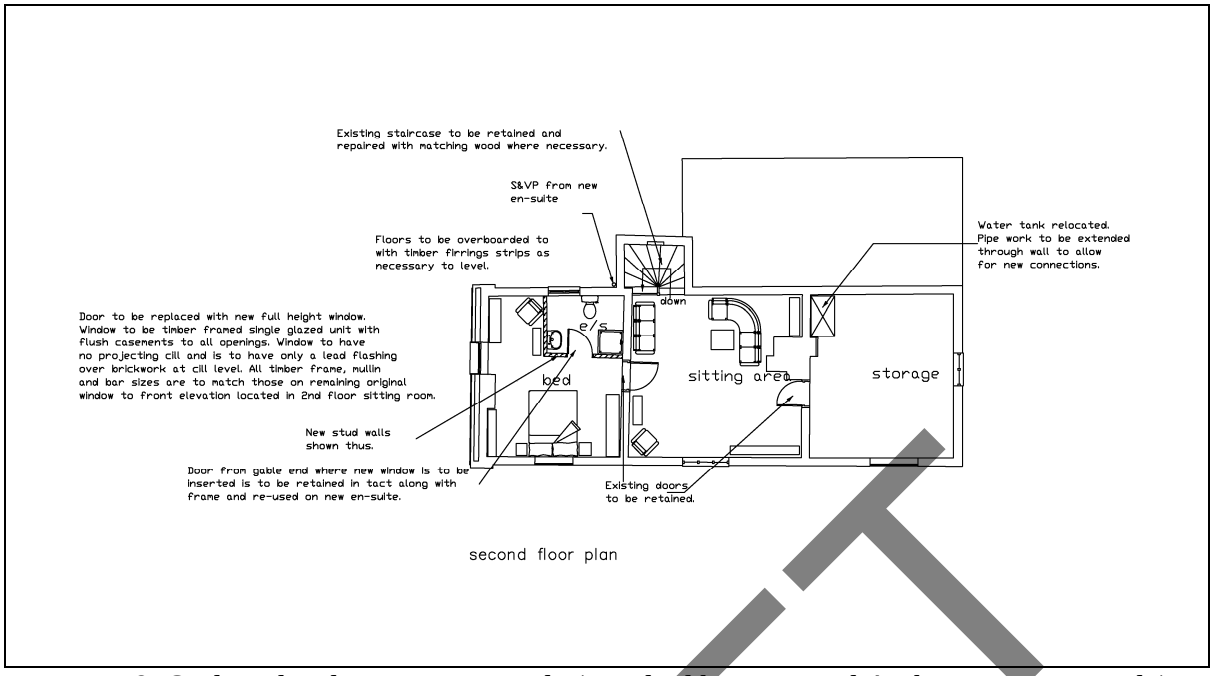


Figure 9. Outline development proposals (supplied by Hayward Architects, not to scale)

The planning proposals are generally thought to be sympathetic and in keeping with the character of the listed building, and will present a minimal impact on historic building fabric. The plans show that all existing 18th century fixtures and fittings to the second floor, including staircase, doors, frames and iron-work are to be retained, *in situ* wherever this is possible. The 18th century wooden door, with the unusual decorative fascia board will become redundant in its present position: this is to be re-used elsewhere within the conversion, to form the doorway opening to the new en-suite bathroom.

6. Archive

The site archive consists of:

This report
Contact sheets of digital photographs
1cd of digital photographs in .jpg and .tif format
1 contact sheet of black and white 35 mm photographs
35 mm negatives
Index and location plans of archived photographs
Full set of plan and elevation drawings supplied by Savage Hayward Architects, plus copies annotated on site during survey

The archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council Museums Service under the Accession Number X.A74.2011.

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7. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. Oasis is an online index to archaeological grey literature reports.

8. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by Sophie Clarke and the project was managed by Dr. Patrick Clay. The author would like to thank Hayward Architects for the provision of their survey drawings and data for this project.

9. Bibliography

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice.* London: English Heritage

Hall, L. 2005 *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900* Newbury: Countryside Books

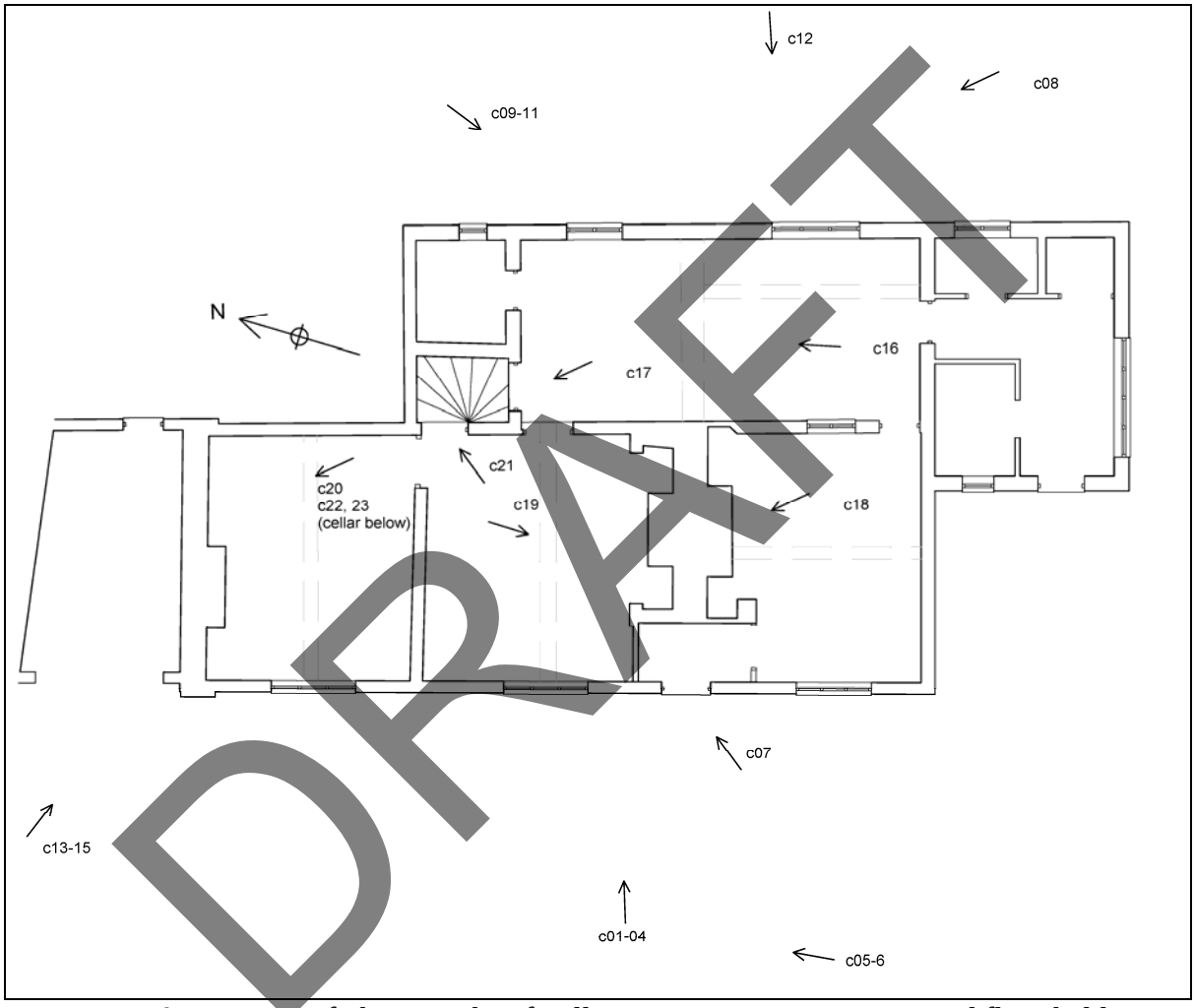
LCC 2011 *Brief for Historic Building inspection and Recording at 15 Main Street Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire.* Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Team

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Appendix I : Location of the colour digital photographs held in the site archive
(to correspond with locations of black and white photographs)



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Figure 10. Location of photographs of Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton, ground floor held in archive

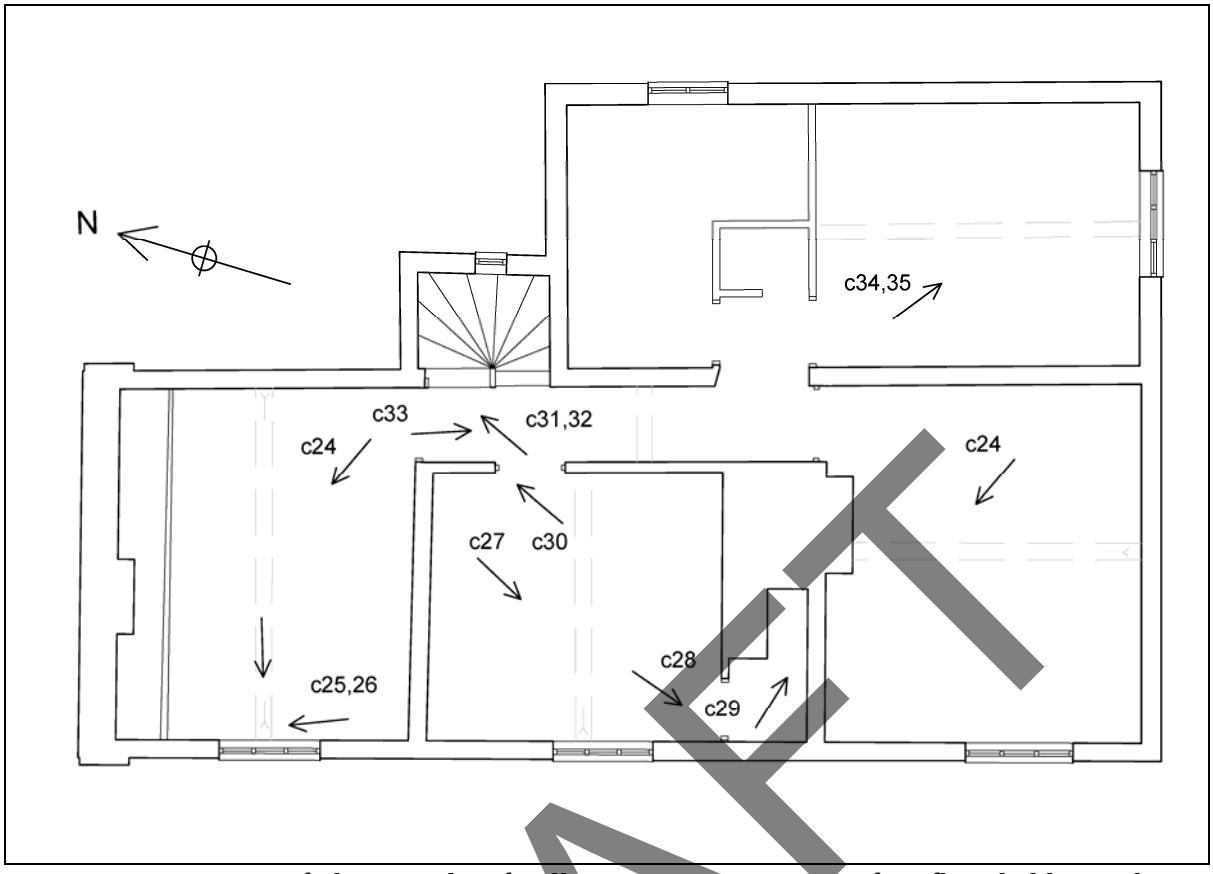


Figure 11. Location of photographs of Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton, first floor held in archive

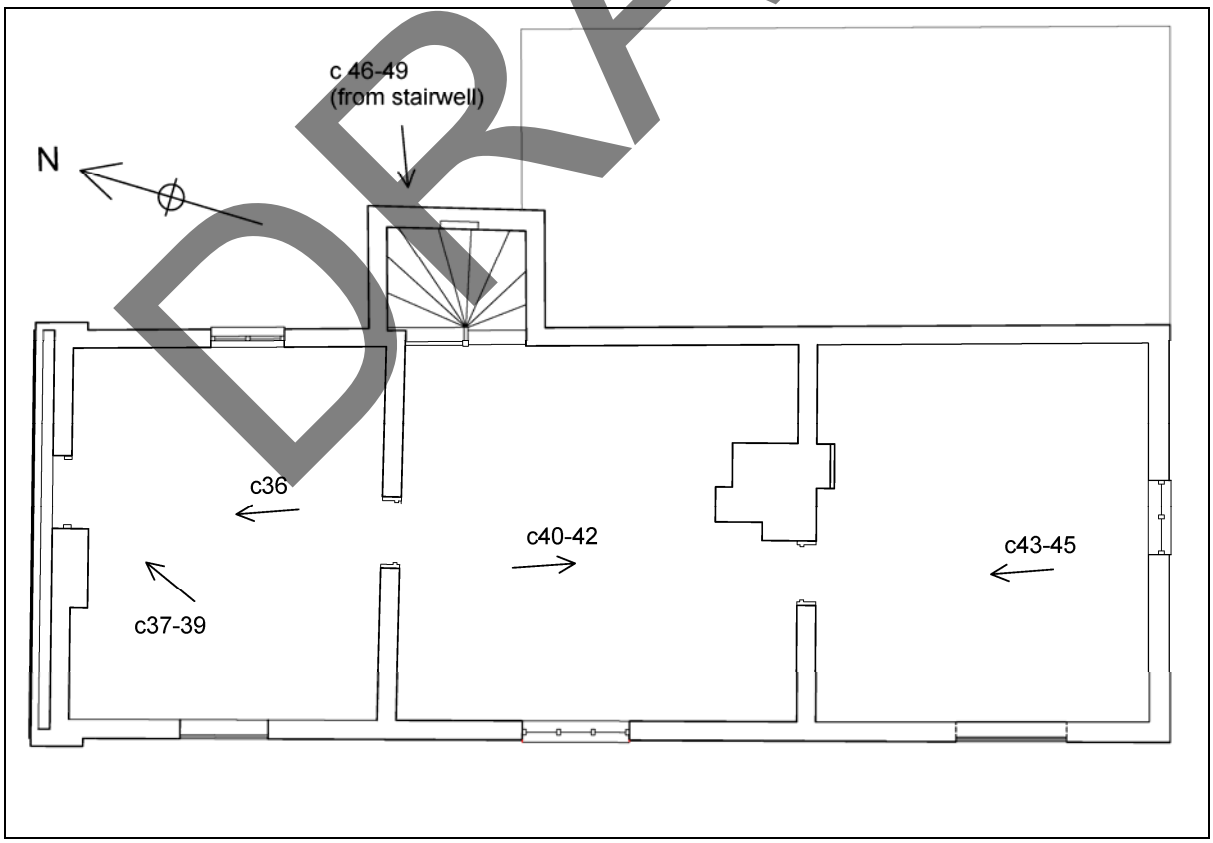


Figure 12. Location of photographs of Hill Farm, Fenny Drayton, second floor held in archive

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