



specialist independent advisers in the historic built environment

conservation & listed buildings | heritage planning matters | expert witness | audits | research

listed buildings | conservation management and advice | archaeology | historic interiors

HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL & STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In respect of

BURDROP FARMHOUSE, BURDROP, OXFORDSHIRE

On behalf of

Mr & Mrs D. Brace

AHC REF: ND/9797

October 2019

www.assetheritage.co.uk

Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford, OX2 6UD T: 01865 310563

Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. Registration No: 07502061

CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT	4
2.0	DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE	6
3.0	CAPACITY FOR CHANGE AND THE HERITAGE ISSUES	11
4.0	CONCLUSION.....	14

PLATES

- Plate 1: Redeveloped former farm buildings to south-east of Burdrop Farmhouse
Plate 2: 20th-century houses on approach to Burdrop Farmhouse
Plate 3: Burdrop Farmhouse, from the south-west
Plate 4: Burdrop Farmhouse, construction joint on south elevation
Plate 5: Burdrop Farmhouse, construction joint on north elevation
Plate 5A: Former granary and 19th-century extension attached to east end of Burdrop Farmhouse
Plate 6: First-floor bedroom at west end of Burdrop Farmhouse
Plate 7: Note the way the ceiling beam runs through the inserted partition wall into the landing
Plate 8: First-floor bedroom at west end of Burdrop Farmhouse
Plate 9: The stop end of the chamfered beam in the bedroom
Plate 10: Small inserted bedroom on first floor of Burdrop Farmhouse
Plate 11: Looking into west bedroom from landing
Plate 12: Inserted bathroom at east end of house
Plate 13: Inserted partition wall between lobby to bathroom and bedroom at east end of house; the 18th-century two-panel door must have been reused
Plate 14: The wall separating the room at the west end of the house on the ground floor must be on a different line from the original as the beam from this room carries through the wall to the present hallway
Plate 15: The wall separating the room at the west end of the house on the ground-floor must be on a different line from the original as the beam from this room carries through the wall to the present hallway (detail)
Plate 16: Looking into the west ground-floor room from the hallway
Plate 17: Looking from the west ground-floor room into the inserted utility and bathroom area beyond
Plate 18: Inserted bathroom and utility room
Plate 19: Inserted corridor running parallel with the south elevation, looking west
Plate 20: Inserted corridor running parallel with the south elevation, looking east
Plate 21: 1970s' staircase
Plate 22: 1970s' staircase
Plate 23: 1970s' staircase
Plate 24: 1970s' staircase
Plate 25: Inglenook fireplace in east room in main body of house
Plate 26: Inglenook fireplace in east room in main body of house
Plate 27: The alcove to the left of the inglenook fireplace, now infilled with a cupboard reusing 18th-century panelling, may be the location of an original staircase
Plate 28: Granary, west wall
Plate 29: Mullion window in east wall of former granary
Plate 30: Mullion window in east wall of former granary
Plate 31: Mullion window in east wall of former granary

- Plate 32: Mullion window in east wall of former granary, viewed from roof space of 19th-century addition attached to east end of former granary
- Plate 33: Inglenook fireplace in room below former granary
- Plate 34: 18th-century cupboard in wall with inglenook fireplace
- Plate 35: Former window in east wall of room below former granary
- Plate 36: Present kitchen in 19th-century single-storey addition/granary
- Plate 37: Cellar beneath western part of house
- Plate 38: Stone steps to cellar
- Plate 39: Internal window shutter in south wall of house
- Plate 40: Internal window shutter in north wall of house
- Plate 41: 18th-century two-panel door to built-in cupboard in east wall of main body of house
- Plate 42: 19th-century cast-iron fireplace to left of built-in cupboard
- Plate 43: 20th-century roof structure in attic (west room)
- Plate 44: 20th-century roof structure in attic (west room) - detail
- Plate 45: 20th-century roof structure in attic (east room)
- Plate 46: 20th-century roof structure in attic (east room)
- Plate 47: 20th-century roof structure in attic (east room)
- Plate 48: 20th-century roof structure of former granary
- Plate 49: 20th-century roof structure of 19th-century single-storey addition
- Plate 50: Plank door to east room in attic
- Plate 51: Strap hinges on reverse of plank door
- Plate 52: View looking north-east from Burdrop House
- Plate 53: The rear (north) elevation of Burdrop House, seen from the north-east

Appendix 1: Historic England List Entry

Appendix 2: Indicative phasing plan

© Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd.

No part of this report is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, AHC Ltd. cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report, which has been prepared and written by Dr. Nicholas Doggett, FSA, MICfA, IHBC, Managing Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd., on behalf of Mr & Mrs D. Brace, the prospective new owners of Burdrop Farmhouse, Burdrop is two-fold.
- 1.2 The first is to provide an assessment of the house's significance as a Grade II listed building situated in the Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower & Burdrop Conservation Area, designated in 2008, and the second is to examine where it might have capacity for change through further alteration and potential extension.
- 1.3 The value of this two-stage approach (of assessing significance first and allowing this to inform an applicant's proposals) is that it complies with the requirements of paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.4 This rightly places the onus on those planning changes to historic assets to begin this process with a clear description of the significance of the assets affected, albeit that the requirement in the NPPF is only such that *'The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'*.
- 1.5 Indeed, the need to understand and evaluate 'significance' before moving on to assess the impact of potential change on that 'significance' has for some time been regarded as good conservation practice in the design and application process (see, for instance, English Heritage's 'Conservation Principles', 2008) and, following the introduction of the short-lived PPS5 in 2010 and then the original version of the NPPF in 2012, is now effectively a standard requirement for most applications affecting designated heritage assets.
- 1.6 Importantly, this approach also demonstrates to the Council (or to any other decision maker) that the heritage significance of the listed building as it currently exists has been fully analysed and understood as an integral part of the formulation of application proposals.

- 1.7 This report should also be read in the context of the continuing pre-application dialogue between Mr & Mrs Brace, their architect, Thomas Elliot, and the Council, Joyce Christie, the Council's Conservation Officer, advising in her first pre-application response of 7 August 2019 (19/00054/PREAPP) that the preparation of a '*heritage statement to better understand the significance of the building and its phasing before considering change*' would be helpful to this process.

2.0 DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1 Burdrop Farmhouse was first listed in September 1988 as part of the Accelerated Resurvey of Listed Buildings being carried out at this time and is also included in the Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower & Burdrop Conservation Area, designated in 2008.
- 2.2 The list description (attached at **Appendix 1**) is a brief one, with no description of the interior, but it does at least acknowledge the significant degree of alteration carried out to the house during the 20th century.
- 2.3 This is an issue to which I return below, but to begin with the building's origins it appears to have begun life (as its name implies) as a farmhouse, in which use it remained until well into the 20th century when its farm buildings to the south were redeveloped, with more late 20th-century buildings on the other side of the track leading up to the house (**plates 1-2**).
- 2.4 Given however that it has two 'front' doors, it is quite possible that the building originated as a pair of cottages built at slightly different dates as indicated by the construction joints discussed below.
- 2.5 The list entry dates the building to the mid-18th century and there is no good reason to dispute this. Interestingly however, there is a clear break in the masonry on the front (south) elevation immediately to the east of the entrance, but as there is no sign internally of any work earlier than the 18th century, this is probably no more than a construction break rather than anything more significant, and is also consistent with the corresponding change in level inside (**plates 3-4**).
- 2.6 Furthermore, although of markedly different type, the nature of the coursing of the ironstone wall construction to the two sections of wall on the south elevation is consistent with a mid-18th century date as are the coped verges to the gable ends.
- 2.7 The clear straight joint on the rear (north) elevation corresponds with the position of that on the south (**plate 5**), and again seems likely simply to mark a break in construction rather than anything more significant in terms of phasing. Certainly, if

the break represents the extent of an original structure, this would have been a building of unusually short length in relation to its height, adding weight to the hypothesis that, although for much of its life the building served as a farmhouse, it originated as a pair of cottages.

- 2.8 It is unfortunate that, owing to the replacement of virtually all the windows in the early 1990s and the fact that above ridge level the two end stacks are constructed of late 19th- or early 20th-century blue engineering brickwork, that there are few precisely dateable features surviving in the main body of the house (see below). Although they were clearly not original to the house, the four external doors (including those to the granary and the single-storey extension accommodating the present kitchen) are also modern having been replaced in 2001 (application ref. 01/02193/LB), along with the 'facsimile' porch over the 'front' door of the house.
- 2.9 Attached to the east gable end of the house and with a ridge lower than that of the house is a former granary, the upper level of which is approached by a straight flight of old stone steps on the south elevation, with to the east again a lower still single-storey extension (currently accommodating the kitchen), added in the 19th century (**plate 5B**).
- 2.10 Apart from the 1990s windows, which are of good quality hardwood joinery with 'real' leaded lights, and the 2001 doors and porch, all the late 20th-century changes (notably the concrete tile roof over the house, granary and single-storey extension) appear to have been made after 1952, when for a period of over 30 years the house was sub-divided and used by American servicemen based at RAF Heyford.
- 2.11 This period of occupation also left its mark on the interior of the building with effectively all of the partition walling on the ground and first floors dating to that time (**plates 6-20**). The existing staircase, which rises to the attic, is clearly modern and is believed to have been inserted in the 1970s (**plates 21-24**). The position of the original staircase is unclear but is most likely to have been in the alcove to the left of the largely reconstructed inglenook fireplace in the eastern ground-floor room, which is currently filled in by doors made up of reused 18th-century paneling with H-hinges (**plates 25-27**).

- 2.12 The room beneath the granary, which on the strength of the two-light mullioned window obscured from view externally by the single-storey extension to the east (**plates 28-32**), appears to have been added to the house only shortly after its original construction also has a partly reconstructed inglenook fireplace with a bread oven backing onto that in the eastern room of the main body of the house and a plank wall cupboard with H-hinges (**plates 33-34**).
- 2.13 It is worth noting that the ceiling of this room has no exposed beam or joists, this being the result of the fact that the floor of the granary above was replaced in the late 20th century.
- 2.14 From this room a doorway, to the left of which is a former window opening (**plate 35**), leads into the 19th-century single-storey extension housing the present kitchen. There are no features of interest in this room (**plate 36**).
- 2.15 Beneath the western part of the main body of the house, accessed by a straight flight of old stone steps behind a plank door in the west wall of the eastern room is the cellar. Although clearly contemporary with the house and retaining an old stone sink in one corner, the original character of the cellar has been compromised by modern steelwork supporting the modern timber floor structure above (**plates 37-38**).
- 2.16 In addition to the features described above and illustrated in the plates, it should be noted that there are internal panelled window shutters to the windows in the north wall of the eastern room in the main part of the house and in what is currently the corridor to the south of this room.
- 2.17 The 18th-century two-panel door to the store cupboard in the east wall of the first-floor room at the eastern end of the main body of the house appears to be *in situ*, as is the decorative cast-iron Victorian fireplace in the same wall (**plates 39-40**), but the two-panel door in the north wall of this room cannot be so as the partition wall in which it sits has clearly been inserted (see **plate 13**).
- 2.18 Usually in a building such as Burdrop Farmhouse, the most undisturbed (and therefore historically most interesting) element is the roof space, but this is not the case here as the whole roof structure (including that to the granary and the 19th-century single-

storey extension) was completely replaced at the same time that the original roofing material was replaced with concrete tiles in the second half of the 20th century (**plates 41-49**).

- 2.19 This means that the only feature of true historic interest remaining in the roof space is the stout plank door with strap hinges to the eastern part of the attic in the main body of the house (**plates 50-51**).
- 2.20 An indicative phasing plan of the building is attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.21 Despite the extensive degree of change to Burdrop Farmhouse in the second half of the 20th century (both before and after statutory listing took place in 1988), there can be little doubt that Burdrop Farmhouse warrants its Grade II listed status.
- 2.22 It will however be equally clear from the above description and accompanying plates that the various parts of the building are far from being of equal significance in heritage terms, the highest levels of significance attaching to the main body of the house, with the attached granary also making a substantial contribution to the house's overall heritage value.
- 2.23 Less heritage value can be assigned to the 19th-century single-storey addition attached to the granary, while internally in the main body of the house the extensive modern partitioning means that there is clear potential for reconfiguration in a manner that would not be detrimental to either the historic fabric or plan-form of the listed building.
- 2.24 The existing 1970s' staircase clearly detracts from the character of the listed building and there would be significant benefit in replacing it with a new one more appropriate to the character and form of the listed building.
- 2.25 Certainly, in overall terms the heritage value of Burdrop Farmhouse is not so high that no further change can be contemplated to it either externally or internally, particularly if such changes are limited to areas of intrinsically lower significance, or serve to undo

at least some of the insensitive and poorly executed alterations carried out in the later 20th century.

2.26 The building's capacity for change, with a firm understanding of its heritage significance now in place, is considered in the next section of this report.

3.0 CAPACITY FOR CHANGE AND THE HERITAGE ISSUES

- 3.1 From the account of the historical background to the development of Burdrop Farmhouse as it exists today, together with the description of its constituent parts and the assessment of heritage significance set out in Section 2.0 above, there is no denying its heritage value, but it is equally clear that it does not fall into that very small category of listed buildings which cannot be altered or extended in any way without a diminution of their 'special' qualities.
- 3.2 What this section of the report therefore considers is the building's capacity for further change and whether the scheme of alteration and extension currently being formulated could be carried out without causing harm to its existing character as a Grade II listed building and the contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the Burdrop Conservation Area.
- 3.3 In terms of the building's capacity for further changes this falls into two distinct categories: one - changes that would be entirely beneficial to the character of the listed building and – two – alterations that may not be wholly beneficial in heritage terms (i.e. the possible extension option considered below) but which, when seen as part of the proposals as a whole could be viewed as acceptable on the basis that the limited harm they cause are outweighed by the benefits accruing from the entirely beneficial aspects of the proposals.
- 3.4 Into this first category would come the removal and reconfiguration of the existing poor-quality 1970s' staircase. No firm decision has been made at this stage as to precisely how this can be carried out but the 'hole' left in the building as a result of its insertion, together with the extensive changes already made to room layout on both the ground and first floors, means that there is ample scope for its replacement/reconfiguration without causing harm either to historic fabric or plan-form.
- 3.5 The extensive changes to the original layout of the house obviously also mean that further changes could be made without causing harm either to historic fabric or plan-form. Likewise, the fact that the floor of the former granary was replaced in the late

20th century means that there is scope for altering its existing level should this be necessary or desirable.

- 3.6 The removal of the incongruous stone insert fireplace from the inglenook fireplace in the eastern room of the main body of the house and reinstating the inglenook to something closer to its original form would clearly be beneficial to the character and feel of this room.
- 3.7 Turning now to the possibility of extending the house, the new owners understandably want to take advantage of the fine open views to the north of the house (**plate 52**) and, particularly given that any form of extension to the south and west elevations are out of the question, would like to consider an extension either to the north or east of the existing building.
- 3.8 They are however also mindful of the clear advice offered by the Council's Conservation Officer in her first pre-application response of 7 August 2019 regarding the strong linear form of the existing building and the 'solidity' of the north (rear) elevation with its relatively limited fenestration (**plate 53**).
- 3.9 For this reason, an earlier proposal to extend the main body of the house at right-angles to the north towards its western end has been abandoned and other options are currently being explored instead.
- 3.10 These options focus on either further extending the existing single-storey addition at the eastern end of the building or demolishing and rebuilding it. Either option could in my view be supported, given the existing extension's 19th-century origin and lack of historic features (all the windows and door are modern, while its roof structure was entirely replaced in the late 20th-century).
- 3.11 Certainly, it seems to me that a sensitive remodelling or replacement of the existing extension, which could include the opportunity to provide views northwards from it, would be an appropriate option to develop further.

- 3.12 Finally, as far as the impact of the proposals on the Burdrop Conservation Area is concerned, this is a case where it follows that, provided any alteration or extension proposed to the listed building is considered to be acceptable, there can be no additional harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 3.13 In short, it is my considered view, following the preparation of this report, that Burdrop Farmhouse has clear capacity for further change which, particularly when its already much altered state is considered, would through a sensitively designed scheme for alteration and extension that works with rather than against the character of the existing building, be compatible with its Grade II listed status and the contribution it currently makes to the character and appearance of the Burdrop Conservation Area.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 For all the reasons set out in the body of this report, it is clear that Burdrop Farmhouse, a building much altered in the later 20th century, has capacity for further alteration, provided such alteration is sensitively designed and is therefore compatible with the house's status as a Grade II listed building located in a conservation area.
- 4.2 Such a scheme for alteration and/or extension would therefore comply with the relevant guidance contained in the NPPF, local planning policy and, most importantly of all, meet the statutory requirements set by Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

PLATES



Plate 1. Redeveloped former farm buildings to south-east of Burdrop Farmhouse



Plate 2. 20th-century houses on approach to Burdrop Farmhouse



Plate 3. Burdrop Farmhouse, from the south-west



Plate 4. Burdrop Farmhouse, construction joint on south elevation



Plate 5. Burdrop Farmhouse, construction joint on north elevation



Plate 5A. Former granary and 19th-century extension attached to east end of Burdrop Farmhouse



Plate 6. First-floor bedroom at west end of Burdrop Farmhouse



Plate 7. Note the way the ceiling beam runs through the inserted partition wall into the landing



Plate 8. First-floor bedroom at west end of Burdrop Farmhouse

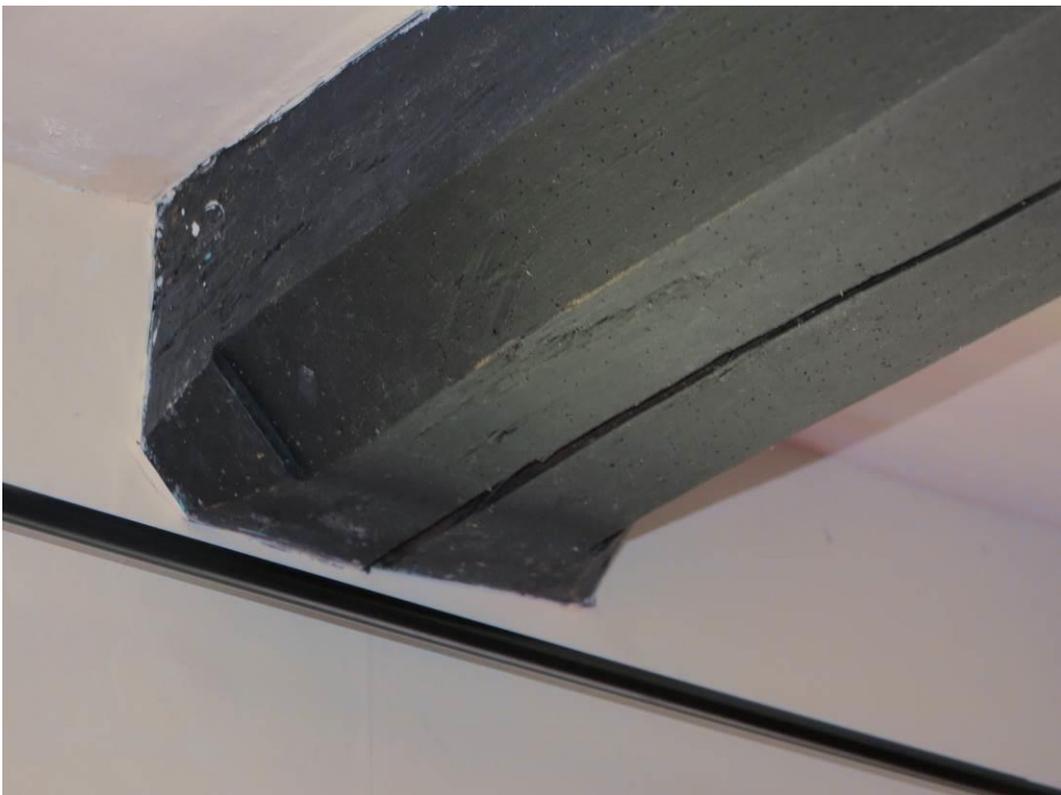


Plate 9. The stop end of the chamfered beam in the bedroom



Plate 10. Small inserted bedroom on first floor of Burdrop Farmhouse

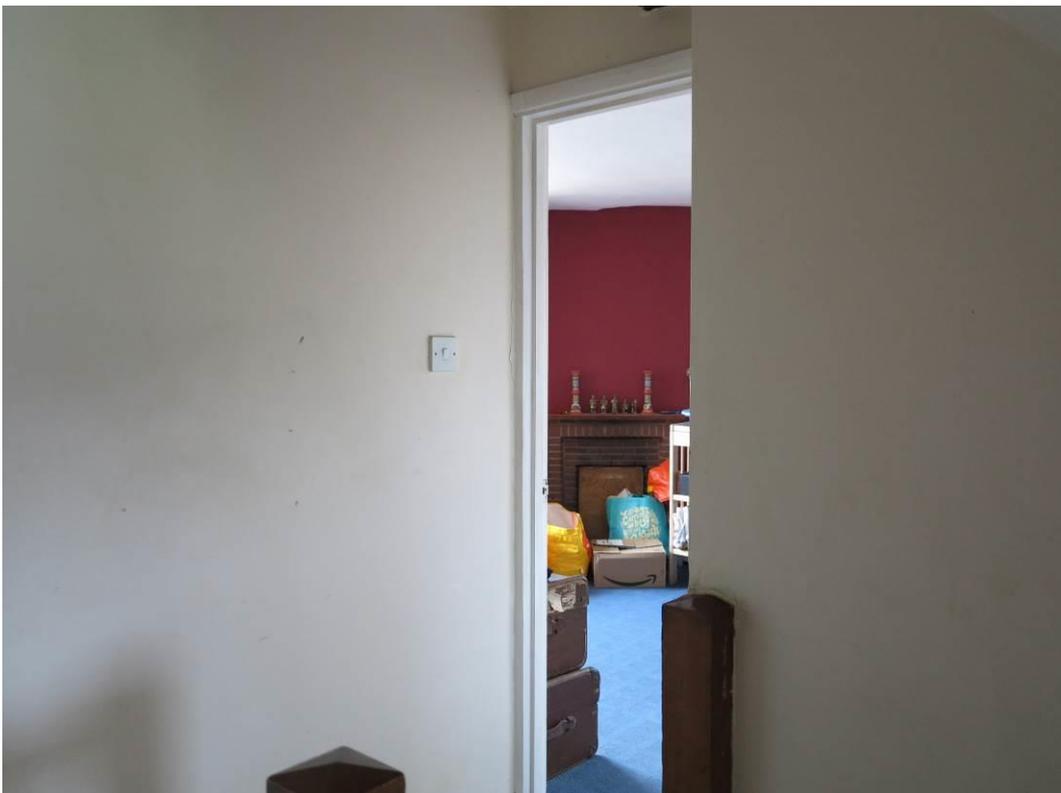


Plate 11. Looking into west bedroom from landing



Plate 12. Inserted bathroom at east end of house



Plate 13. Inserted partition wall between lobby to bathroom and bedroom at east end of house; the 18th-century two-panel door must have been reused



Plate 14. The wall separating the room at the west end of the house on the ground floor must be on a slightly different line from the original as the beam from this room carries through the wall to the present hallway



Plate 15. The wall separating the room at the west end of the house on the ground-floor must be on a slightly different line from the original as the beam from this room carries through the wall to the present hallway (detail)



Plate 16. Looking into the west ground-floor room from the hallway



Plate 17. Looking from the west ground-floor room into the inserted utility and bathroom area beyond



Plate 18. Inserted bathroom and utility room



Plate 19. Inserted corridor running parallel with the south elevation, looking west



Plate 20. Inserted corridor running parallel with the south elevation, looking east



Plate 21. 1970s' staircase



Plate 22. 1970s' staircase

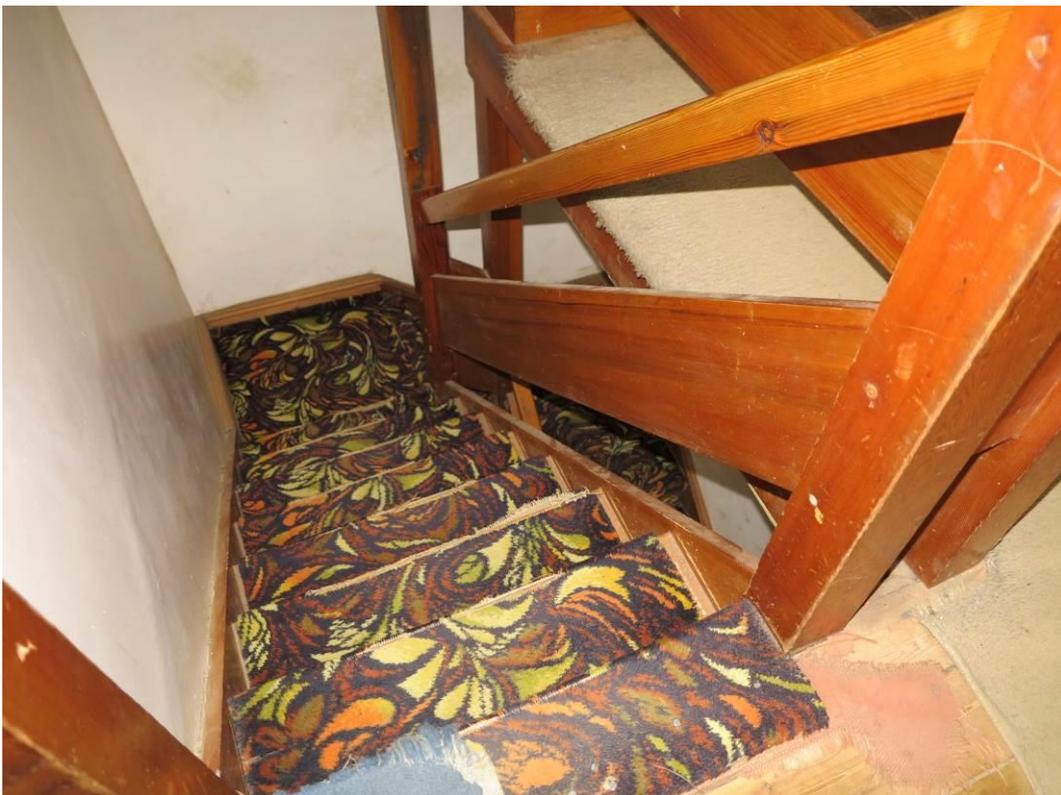


Plate 23. 1970s' staircase



Plate 24. 1970s' staircase



Plate 25. Inglenook fireplace in east room in main body of house



Plate 26. Inglenook fireplace in east room in main body of house

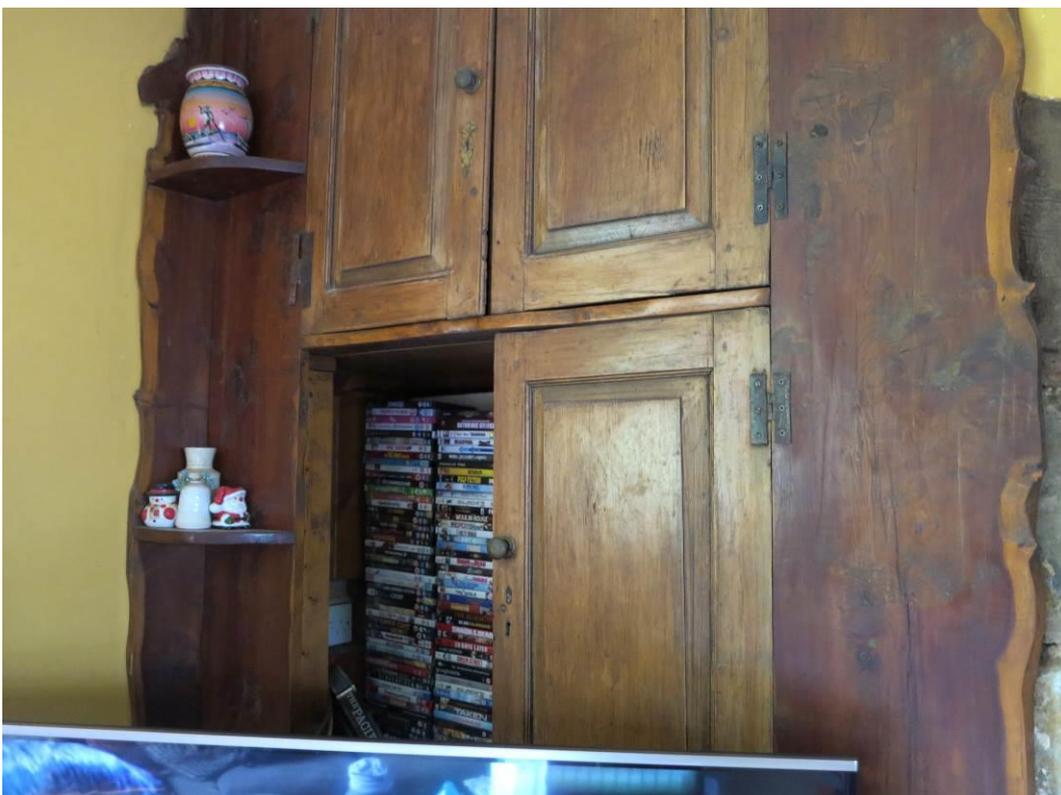


Plate 27. The alcove to the left of the inglenook fireplace, now infilled with a cupboard reusing 18th-century panelling, may be the location of an original staircase



Plate 28. Granary, west wall



Plate 29. Mullion window in east wall of former granary



Plate 30. Mullion window in east wall of former granary



Plate 31. Mullion window in east wall of former granary



Plate 32. Mullion window in east wall of former granary, viewed from roof space of 19th-century addition attached to east end of former granary



Plate 33. Inglenook fireplace in room below former granary



Plate 34. 18th-century cupboard in wall with inglenook fireplace



Plate 35. Former window in east wall of room below former granary



Plate 36. Present kitchen in 19th-century single-storey addition/granary



Plate 37. Cellar beneath western part of house



Plate 38. Stone steps to cellar



Plate 39. Internal window shutter in south wall of house



Plate 40. Internal window shutter in north wall of house

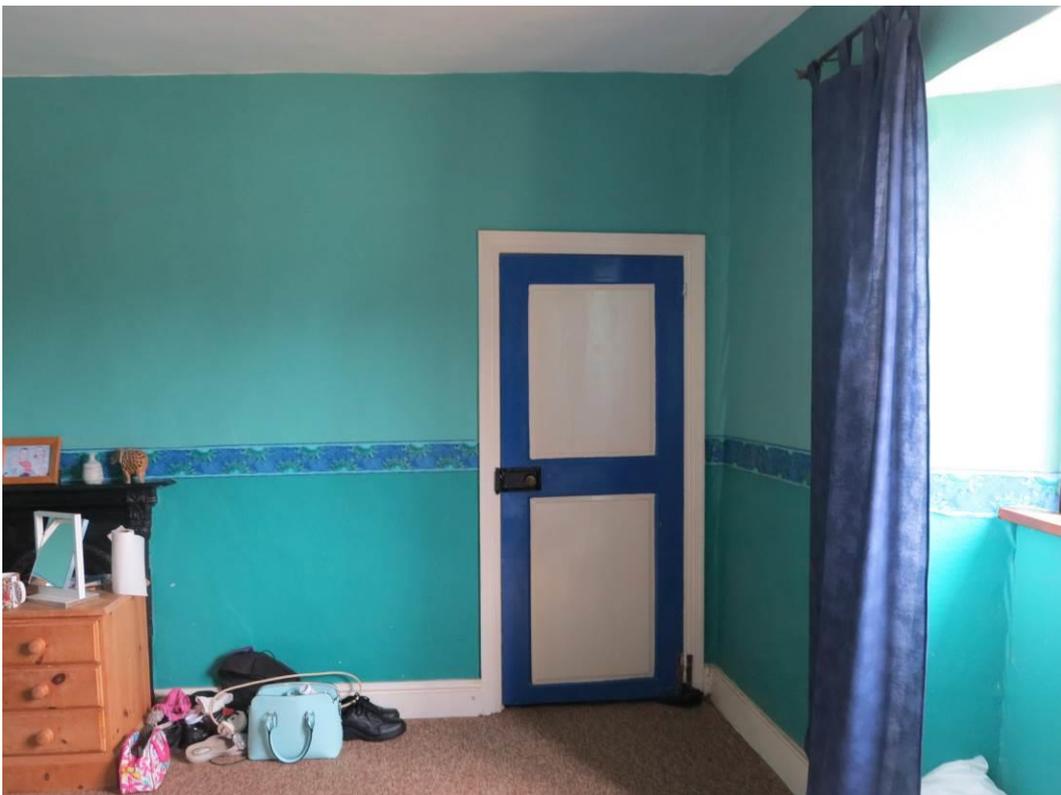


Plate 41. 18th-century two-panel door to built-in cupboard in east wall of main body of house



Plate 42. 19th-century cast-iron fireplace to left of built-in cupboard

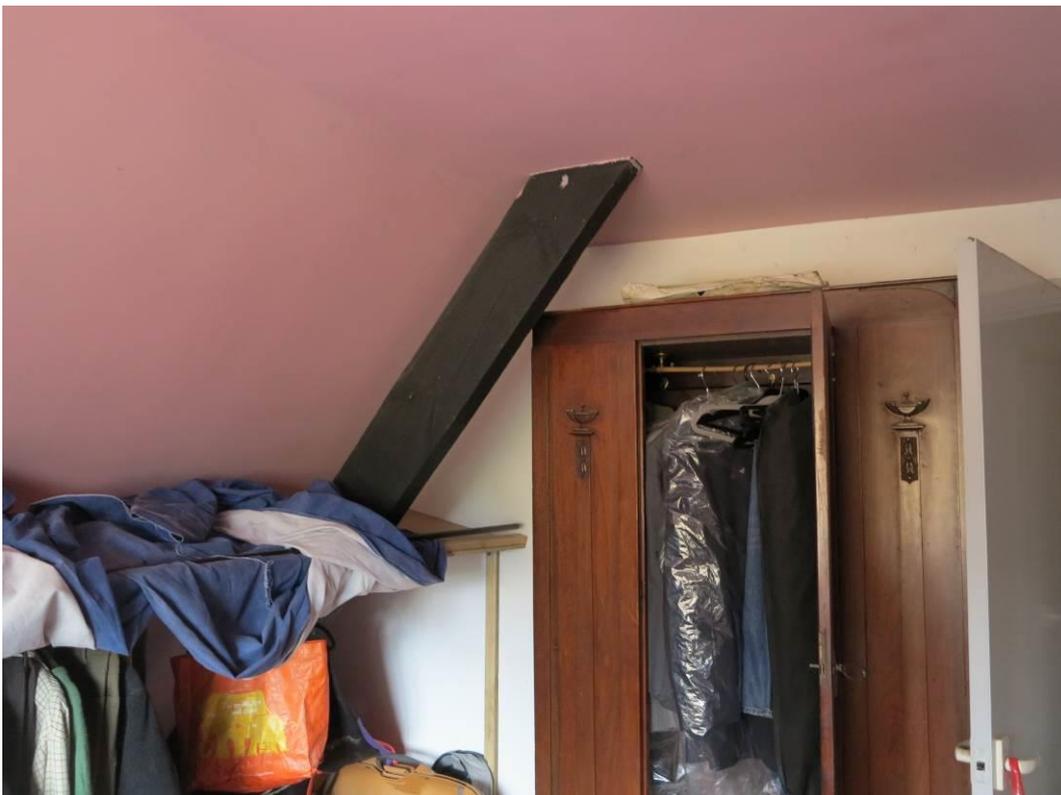


Plate 43. 20th-century roof structure in attic (west room)



Plate 44. 20th-century roof structure in attic (west room) – detail



Plate 45. 20th-century roof structure in attic (east room)



Plate 46. 20th-century roof structure in attic (east room)



Plate 47. 20th-century roof structure in attic (east room)



Plate 48. 20th-century roof structure of former granary



Plate 49. 20th-century roof structure of 19th-century single-storey addition



Plate 50. Plank door to east room in attic

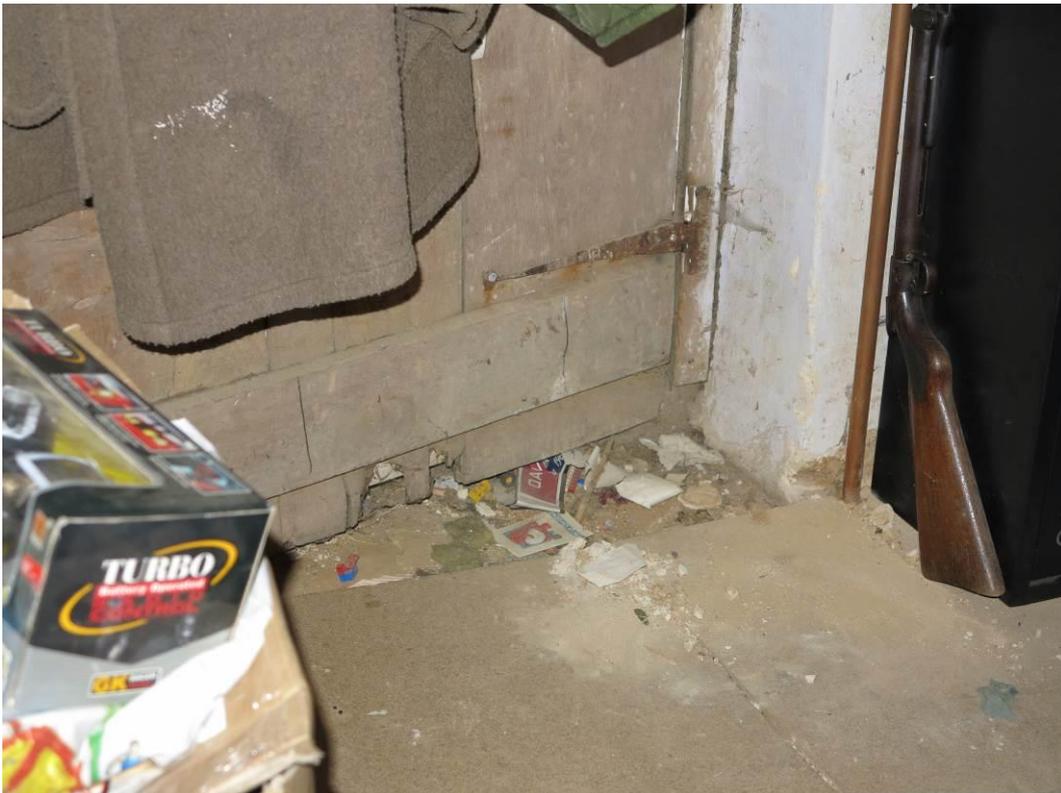


Plate 51. Strap hinges on reverse of plank door



Plate 52. View looking north-east from Burdrop House



Plate 53. The rear (north) elevation of Burdrop House, seen from the north-east