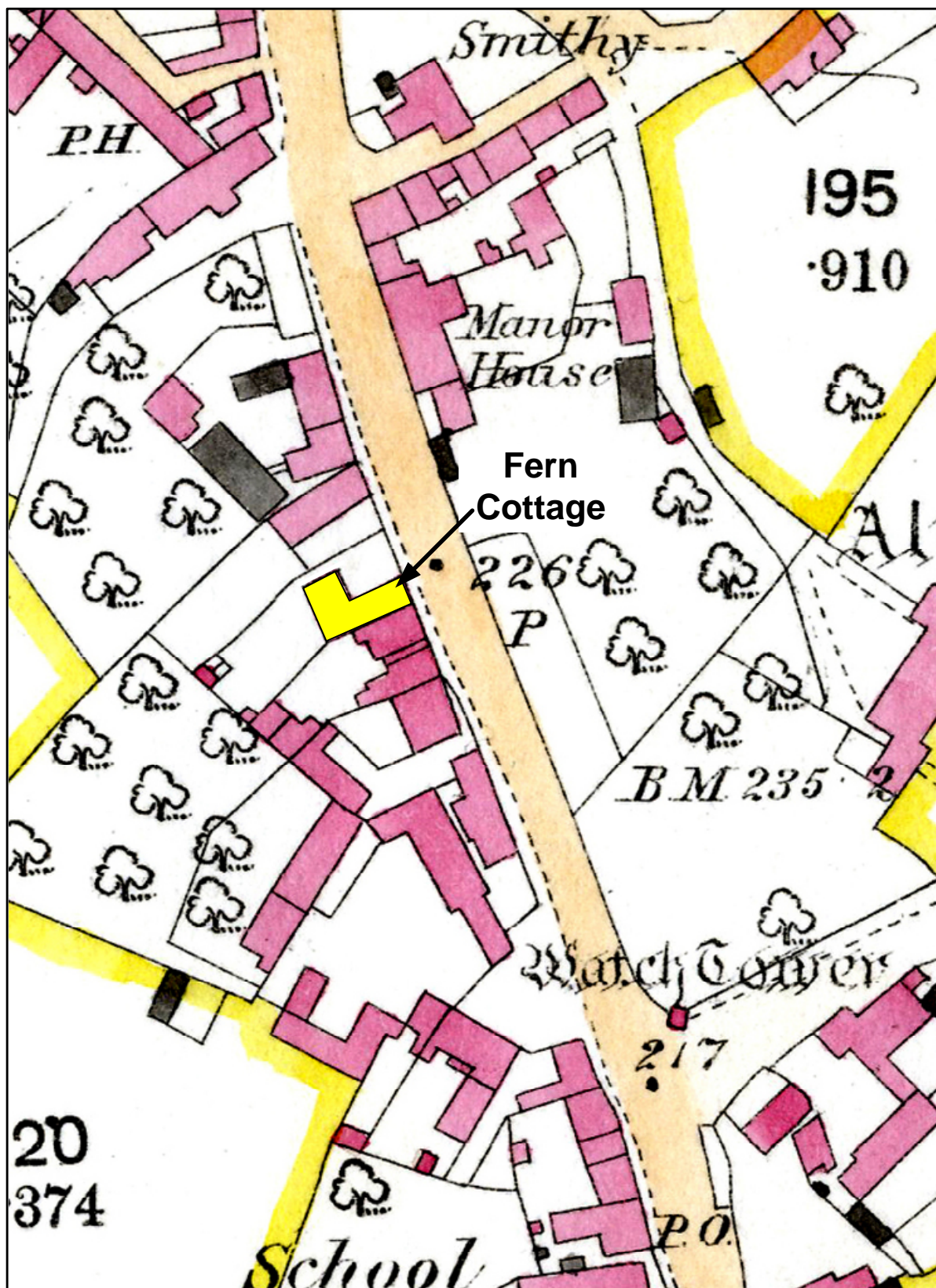


Lyddington Manor History Society
Historic Building Survey

Fern Cottage, 43 Main Street
Lyddington, Rutland





Location Map - Fern Cottage, 43 Main Street, Lyddington
Ordnance Survey 1st Series 1886

HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

FERN COTTAGE, 43 MAIN ST, LYDDINGTON

Survey

Date of survey: 10th March 2012
Surveyed by: Nick Hill/Robert Ovens

Summary

This building probably contains the core of a 17th century house in the main range to the rear, with thick stone walls, an inglenook fireplace and a ceiling spine beam with ogee stops typical of the period. However, the house was much altered in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, so its original form and extent are unclear. A service building was added as a projecting front wing around the later 18th century. This was in use as a laundry for Uppingham School before its conversion to domestic use in 19xx.

Site

OS Ref: SP875970

Orientation: The front wing projects forward, with its gable end to the street facing E. The L-shaped building is shown on the 1886 OS map with a house abutting the S wall, now lost. The boundary wall line running SW from the SW corner is now a line of stone footings at ground level, as the current plot includes both former houses to the S.

Materials

Walling of coursed ironstone rubble with dressings of ironstone and brownstone.
Clay tile roofs.

External features

The front wing N elevation has an ashlar brown/purple stone band at first floor height, and another irregular band around 1m above, of larger blocks with some limestone – probably representing an earlier eaves line, as the upper part of the building has had the roof eaves raised in the 20th century. Doorway with large plain brown/purple stone blocks and flat head to W end, perhaps moved here from the centre of the wall in the 20th century (area of disrupted masonry to the centre). Above the door is the name 'Fern Cottage', carved in limestone with a fern leaf decoration, in earlier 20th century style. The front E gable has good quoins, with the ashlar band carried also across the gable. The gable has distinctive limestone (or cast stone?) ovolo-moulded kneelers of 20th century date. The S elevation has a large 20th century bay window, and a stair window with a flat ironstone head of similar date. There is a straight joint at the junction with the main range, indicating that the front wing is a later addition.

The main block S gable has a doorway, 1st floor window and gable kneeler all probably of 20th century date. The roof eaves to this range was also raised in the 20th century. There is a blocked window to the former first floor height with a characteristic large brownstone chamfered lintel – probably 19th century. The rear W

wall has rather irregular masonry coursing in places, with an area of rebuilding above the S ground floor window. The two main ground floor windows have chamfered brownstone lintels of the same 19th century type as the S gable. At the N end is a small single window which has a highly unusual detail – a 2-light inner window with delicate ogee-headed tracery of alabaster. This is presumably a later insertion, probably of the 19th century, re-using a feature salvaged from elsewhere. The first floor has two large dormer windows. The n gable is blank, and has the same ovolo-moulded kneelers as the front wing, for the 20th century roof raising. The front E wall of the main block has a brown/purple stone ashlar band at first floor level, like the front wing, but with finely jointed ironstone walling. The two ground floor windows here have flat lintels with a slightly projecting false keystone. Three 20th century brick chimneystacks.

Plan

The main block has a two-room plan, but has been much altered, and the original plan form and doorway locations are difficult to deduce. Wall thickness to the main range front wall is 660mm and 720mm to the rear wall, with the front range N wall 460mm.

Internal features

Ground floor

The existing kitchen at the S end of the main block has a slightly irregular spine beam with chamfer stops of ogee type. To the SE is a pantry, set one step below ground floor. The wall between the kitchen and the room to its N has wide masonry whose purpose is unclear – perhaps a former chimneybreast. This wall now extends only up to first floor level, and the roof truss is located directly over it, so it now has no function except to support the spine beams.

The N room has a good spine beam with finely formed ogee stops to the N end, at the inglenook chimneybreast, but no stops at the S end. The inglenook has a high-set beam, cased in boarding. A partition wall now divides the room, with a narrow room to the east. A rounded corner at the N end, beside the inglenook, is said to have been the location of a former winder stair.

The door in the N room leading to the kitchen, with pilasters to either side, is made of re-set Jacobean panelling. The panelling is of very high quality, a very unusual feature which must have come from a building of considerable status, probably of earlier 17th century date. The door has two arched sections, one above the other, with intricately carved guilloche borders to each side. The pilasters have panelled pedestal bases, shafts with leaf and floral carving, and Ionic capitals. Over the door, between the pilasters, is a finely carved gadrooned cornice.

The linking hall/stairs area between the main block and the front wing has a W-E beam of vertical rectangular section, with some chamfering, and exposed joists – all probably a late re-working. The large room in the front wing was converted from a former laundry in 1962, with an inserted first floor.

First floor and roof

Single roof truss at centre of main block, of A-frame type with dovetail-lapped collar. At the apex, the principal rafters are joined by a short saddle piece, and rise above this to hold a ridge beam, now missing. The purlins and rafters have all been replaced when the roof was raised in the 20th century. The S room has an irregular projecting chimneybreast, probably a later addition for a ground floor fireplace.

Outbuildings

The 1886 map shows two very small houses at the SW of the two plots adjoining to the S. These survive as the ground floor only of a pair of brick-built 19th century cottages. Each cottage had a single room on the ground floor with a front door and window in the E wall, under flat brick arch heads. The rear W wall and S end walls are older, of stone. The front E wall and N external wall are of 9 inch brick, but the dividing wall between the two cottages (of which only the base course remains) was of half-brick thickness. The N cottage had a fireplace with chimneybreast on the N wall, though evidence for a chimneybreast to the S cottage is unclear. Brick-paved floors, modern profiled sheet roof, with no remains of the former first floors. .

The location of a privy in the NW corner of the main plot, as shown on the 1886 map, can be seen in the masonry of the boundary wall. The privy was subsequently relocated closer to the house.

Date and development

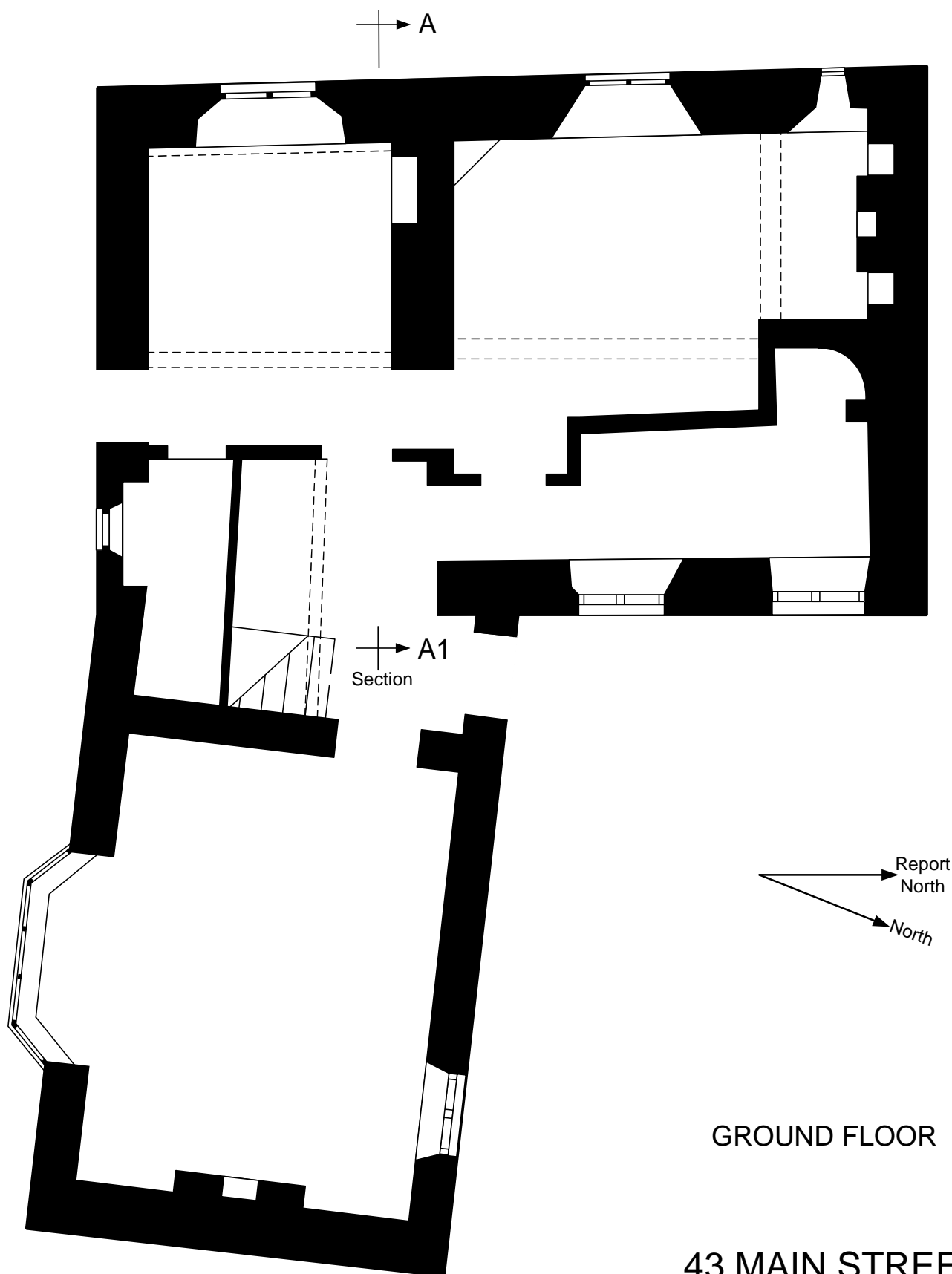
The main block probably dates back to the 17th century, but has been much altered, so the original form is unclear. The N room has a good inglenook fireplace and spine beam from this period, with a thicker wall to the rear W. The existing S gable, with its quoins, may indicate the original extent of the 17th century house, but could be a later rebuilding, as the S room has been altered, and the thick masonry wall separating the N and S rooms may be a later insertion. If the roof truss is of 17th century date, then it has probably been re-set, as its location directly over the thick masonry wall does not make sense. The location of original doorways, windows and staircase is unclear.

The S end of the house was altered at a later date, but before the addition of the front wing (which abuts the main block with a straight joint). This alteration may have occurred in the 18th century, and the work may have included the central roof truss. The inglenook fireplace had its original, lower-set beam raised and cased in pine boarding around this period.

The front wing was probably added around the later 18th or early 19th century, with the E wall of the main block refaced around the same time. Both areas have a matching band of ashlar stone at first floor level, with keystone lintels over the window openings of the main block, typical of this period. The front wing was non-domestic, but its use is not clear. It seems it had a single doorway of normal width to the N front, windows and no first floor. It is unclear if it contained a chimney, the existing chimneystack being modern. Given its intimate location beside the upgraded frontage of the main block, it seems more likely to have served as a workshop or for other ancillary service purposes, rather than being for agricultural use.

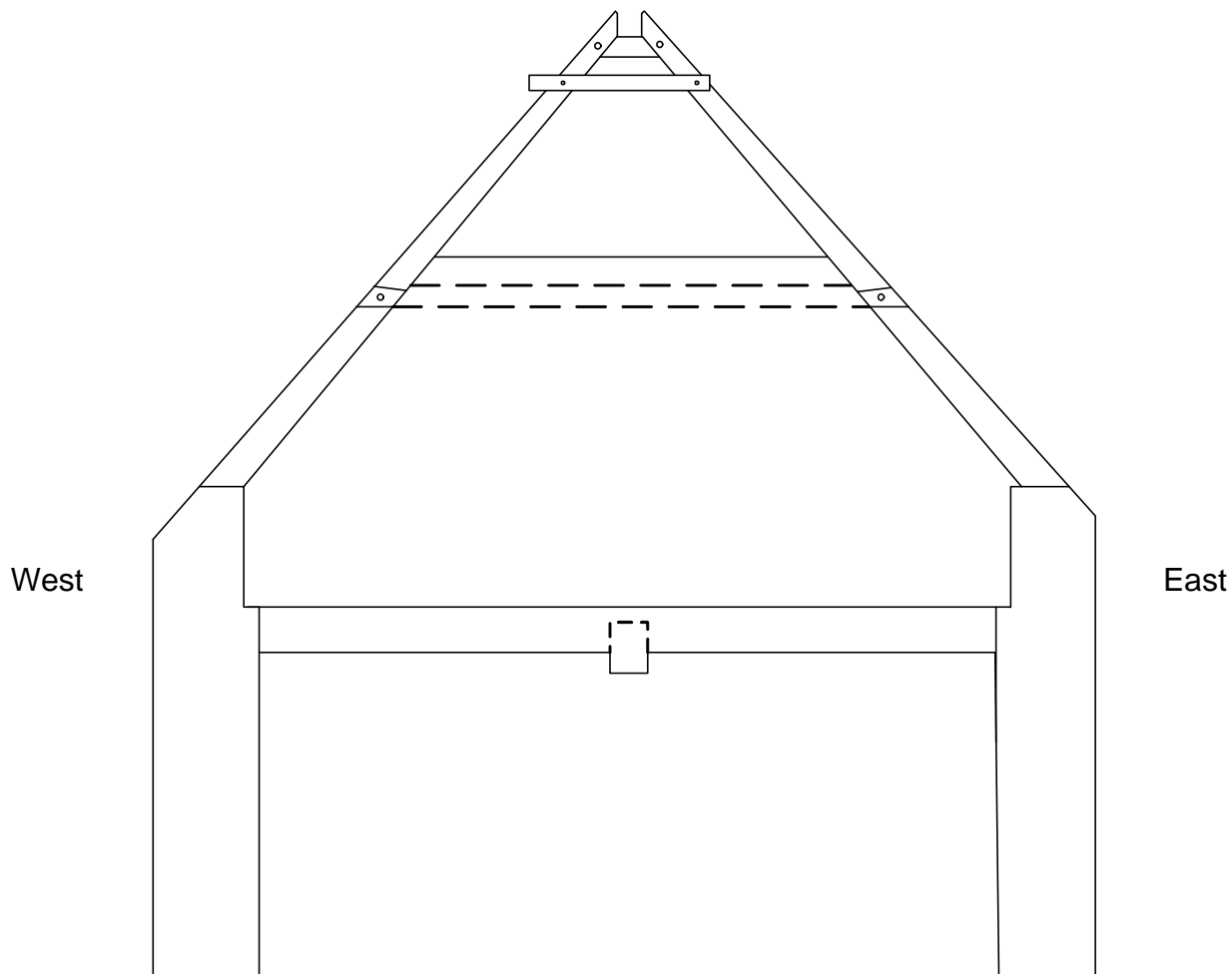
It seems there was a further phase of alteration in the 19th century, when three windows with large, chamfered ironstone lintols were inserted (one to the first floor is now blocked). This may also have been the time when the salvaged features of the alabaster angle window tracery and the Jacobean panelling were imported, indicating an antiquarian interest. By the later 19th century, it seems that the front wing was in use as a laundry, servicing Uppingham School. In 1962 further major changes were made, with the front wing converted to domestic use, the connecting area between the front wing and main block re-worked with a new staircase, the insertion of various new doors and windows under plain ironstone lintels, and the raising of the roof eaves, replacing the lower-pitched thatch.

March 2012



0 1 2 3 4 METRES

NH / RO March 2012



SECTION A – A1

FERN COTTAGE, 43 MAIN STREET
LYDDINGTON

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View from the north-east



View from south



The north side of the front wing



The east front of the main rear range



The rear west side of the main range



The re-used alabaster window in the west wall of the main range



The north room in the main rear range, with ingle fireplace



The apex of the roof truss to the rear range



The re-set Jacobean
panelling in the north room
of the main rear range



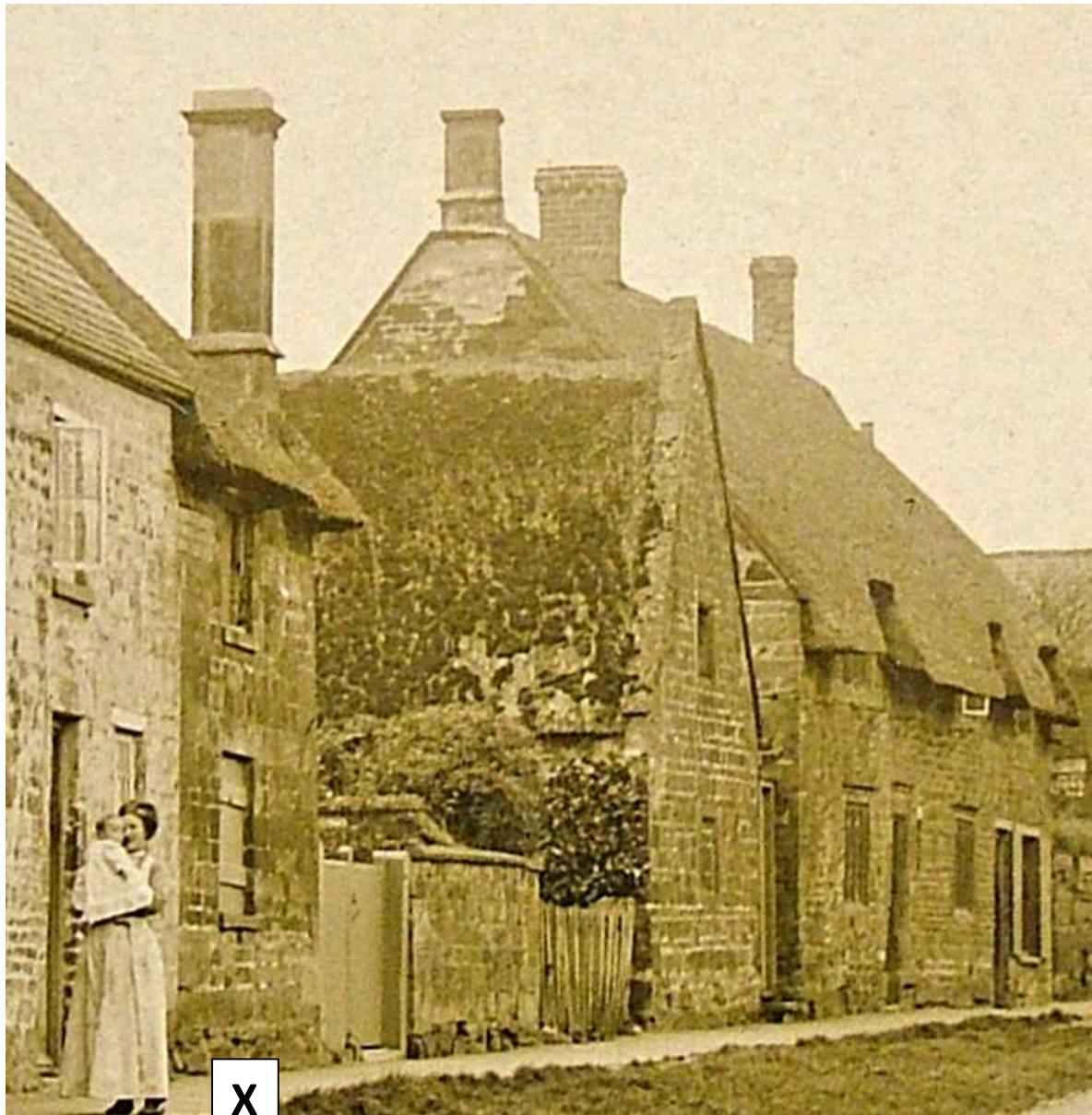
Detail of the panelling



The surviving ground floor of the pair of 19th century cottages at the rear of the plot



Interior of the west cottage, looking west



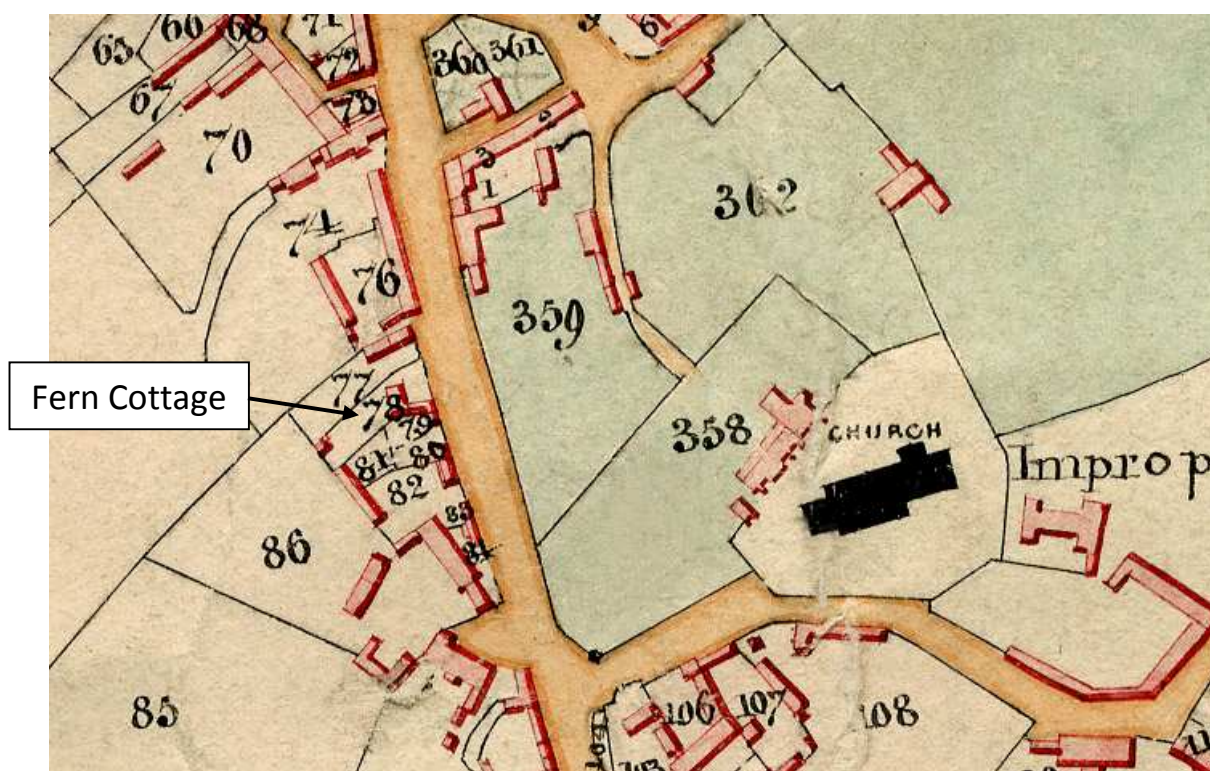
Detail of a postcard of c.1910 (RCM 2002.6.0548), showing the front wing (X) before the 1962 alterations. To the left is the end of the house which was subsequently demolished



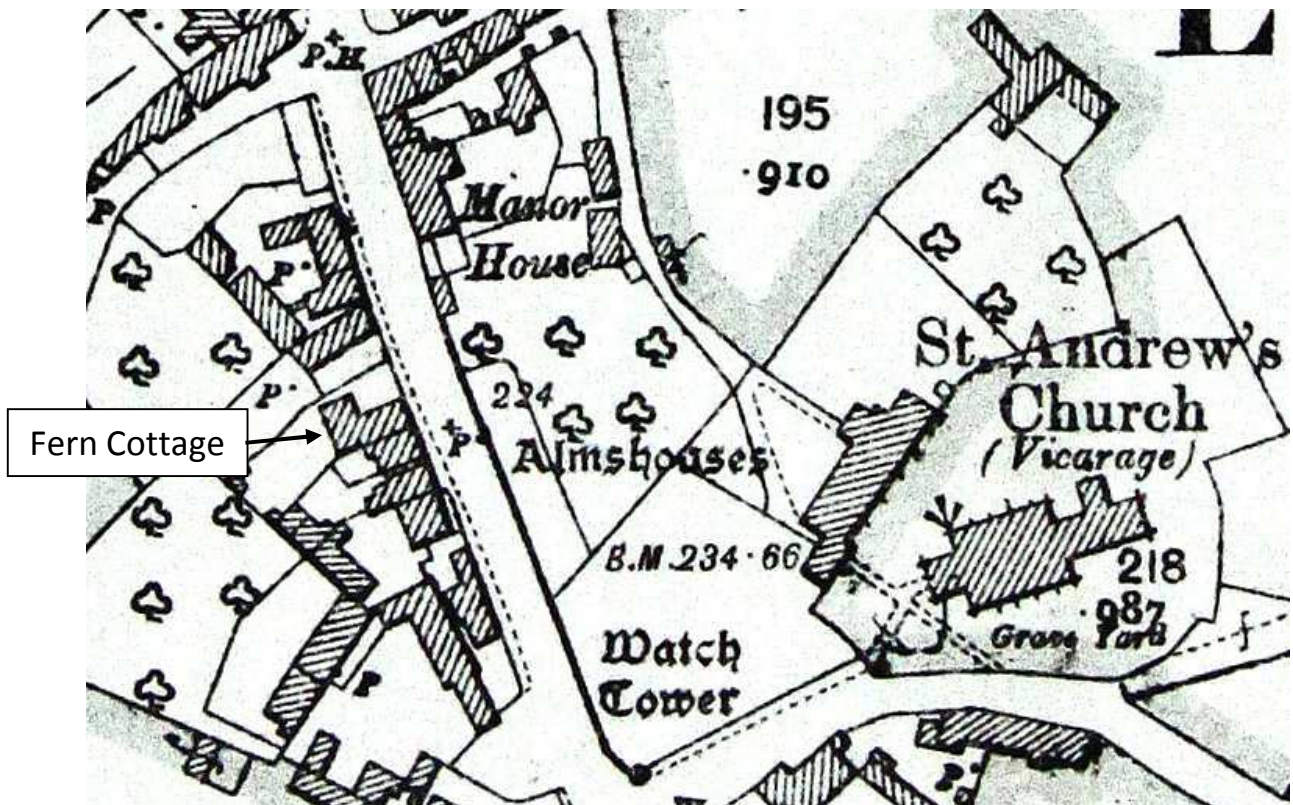
A painting of the demolition and building work being carried out on Fern Cottage in 1962



Lyddington Enclosure Map - 1804



Lyddington Estate Map, 1848 (Burghley Archives)



Ordnance Survey 2nd Series, 1904