

**Lyddington Manor History Society
Historic Building Survey**

**The Lilacs,
101 Main St,
Lyddington, Rutland**

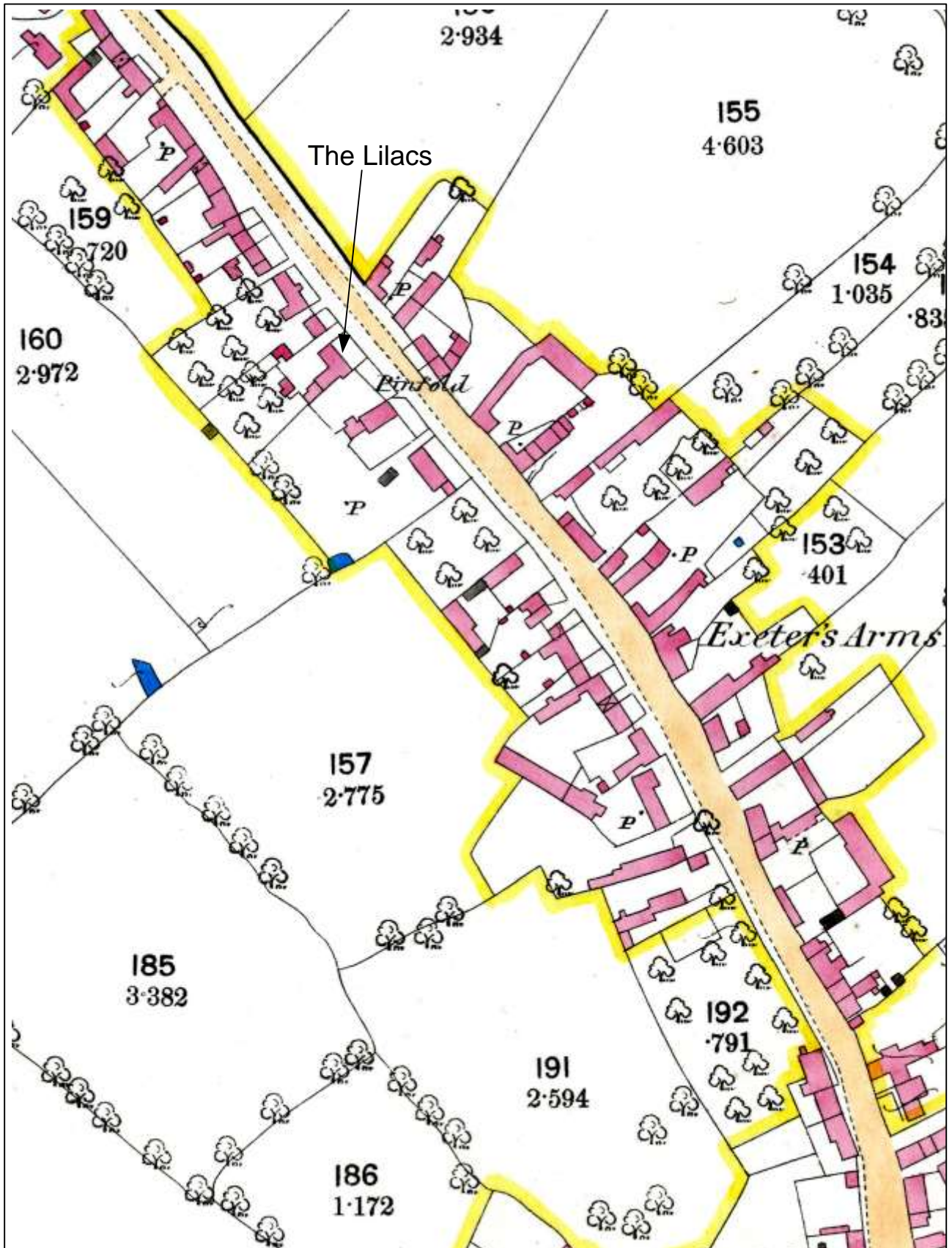


Supported by

The National Lottery[®]

through the Heritage Lottery Fund





Location Map – The Lilacs, 101 Main Street, Lyddington
(OS First Edition 1886)

HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

THE LILACS 101 MAIN ST, LYDDINGTON

Survey

Date of survey: 29th March 2014

Surveyed by: Nick Hill & Robert Ovens

Summary

This good quality, double-fronted house has previously been thought to date from the mid to late 18th century, but documentary evidence and tree-ring dating indicate that it dates principally from c.1814. An 'ancient Messuage House' was taken down by Robert Clarke, a stone mason of Lyddington, soon after he took over the copyhold ownership in 1814. Robert retained only the north gable wall of the earlier house, though the new house seems to have been constructed on the same footprint. The new house has a well-developed plan form, with parlour and kitchen set either side of a staircase entry hall. Many features of the early 19th century house survive, including the front door, some sash windows, a fine staircase and a transitional roof structure (which incorporates re-used timbers dated to 1727-39, from the earlier house). The fine masonry of the front elevation is presumably Robert Clarke's own work, with details of rather old-fashioned design. Robert also replaced the walling to the front garden, where the ashlar stonework with ramped copings formed a more up-to-date feature.

Site

OS Ref: SP873975

Orientation: For report purposes, the front to the road is taken as facing E.

The house is set back from the road frontage, on rising ground, with a walled front garden. A vehicle entrance to the N leads to the rear, with a large garden.

Materials

Coursed ironstone, with a Collyweston slate roof.

External features

The main block forms a single, double-fronted range of two storeys. To the rear, modern extensions have replaced earlier buildings.

The E front is symmetrical, with a front door and sash windows to either side. Coursed ironstone with well-cut blocks, continuous across the whole façade; small offset at the base of the wall. The doorway and five window openings have slightly projecting brownstone surrounds. The doorway surround is tall, with bead moulding with square-edged plinth blocks and a projecting triple keyblock. The door is of 6-panel, flush-moulded type, with a rectangular fanlight over. Two good brownstone

steps lead up to the doorway. Over the doorway is a block of limestone with a carved lion's head and the top of a moulded panel – clearly an inserted feature, probably introduced at a late date. The window surrounds are square-edged, with projecting triple keyblock and square cills. The wall is somewhat distorted to the N of the doorway. The ground floor right-hand window still has early sashes, of 6/6 pattern, without horns; crown glass panes survive, with thin glazing bars, ovolo-moulded internally. The first floor right-hand window upper sash is also of early type without horns, but the remaining sashes are Victorian replacements, with horns.

It is evident that the house had a Collyweston slate roof from the beginning, as the tops of the first floor windows and the in-situ gable kneeler detail would not allow enough space for a roof of thatch.

The N gable is now blank, but there is a blocked window at attic level, with a lintel of thin, old oak. Coursed ironstone, less well-cut than the front façade. The masonry coursing is disrupted to the NW, indicating that the NW corner has been rebuilt, with good new quoins. The NE corner has probably also been rebuilt, though the signs of disruption to coursing are less evident. Gable parapet with plain kneelers and seating for a 2-flue stack, of brownstone ashlar, with square-cut plinth and cornice.

The S gable is blank, of well-coursed ironstone. Gable parapet with plain kneelers and seating for a single-flue stack, which has a brownstone ashlar base and plinth, but the upper section has been rebuilt in C20th brick.

The rear W side is largely covered by modern extensions, but is visible to the S. Rather irregularly coursed ironstone rubble. Modern window with new oak lintel to ground floor. The first floor has a small gabled section at the top, with an offset window below. This seems to be an old opening with good stone jambs and an old timber lintel, but it could have been a doorway (leading into an earlier first floor extension), rather than a window. The scar of the roof line is visible, continuing down to the SW corner.

An old stone wall abuts the SW corner, though it is not bonded into it. This wall, with a small offset from the front block's S gable at upper level, runs W for 6m or so, where it joins a single-storey former outbuilding, whose E wall is also of irregularly coursed ironstone, with a straight joint near its centre. This former outbuilding is now single-storeyed under a modern, low-pitched roof, with the other stone walls much re-worked. Another short section of old stone wall abuts the main house front block, of irregularly coursed ironstone and not bonded to the front block. This wall formed part of the rear extensions shown on the 1996 plan. The remaining walls of the rear extensions on the 1996 plan have been replaced by modern extensions.

In front of the house is a rectangular walled garden. The front E wall is of good quality ironstone ashlar, with a brownstone chamfered plinth and central gate entrance with timber gateposts. Flat brownstone copings, which ramp up at the ends. The side walls are of coursed ironstone with brownstone copings.

Internal features

Ground floor

Central entrance hallway, with cased spine beam and a stair of generous width (890mm between the side wall and balusters). The stair has a plain, open string with thin stick balusters and a moulded pine handrail, which ramps up at the mid-way and top newels. The stair is of L plan, though it has two winder treads rather than a quarter landing. The bottom and top newel are turned and moulded, with white paint finish. The mid-way newel and the first floor newel around the stair landing are a later insertion of Victorian date, of square form with chamfered corners and straight stops. The balustrade along the E side of the landing is also later, with slightly thicker balusters. In the stair cupboard, the underside of the lower part of the stair structure can be seen. This has old oak bearers under the first flight and an old oak trimmer beam at mid-height. Roughly cut oak brackets are nailed to the sides of the bearers to support the treads. The treads and risers are of pine, though these may have been renewed. The wall (only 185mm thick) which separates the stair hall from the kitchen can be seen under the stairs to be, unexpectedly, of ironstone ashlar.

The N room was the parlour, with a cased spine beam. Fireplace set between open alcoves, which have Tudor arched heads, with bead-moulding to the plasterwork. The fireplace has an eared surround of moulded timber (probably Victorian) and a cast iron round-arched grate (probably a modern insertion). The rear W wall has a cupboard recess with panelled doors.

The S room is the kitchen, with cased spine beam. The bead-moulded boards of the beam casing are in two parts to the soffit, with one narrow and one wider board. Chimneybreast to S wall with re-worked fireplace opening, and cupboard recesses to each side, with panelled doors. Fine floor of ironstone paving, in large slabs – probably the original floor. The rear door also has an ironstone step.

The ground floor doors are generally of 6-panel Victorian type.

First floor and roof structure

Beside the top of the stairs is a recess in the W wall, probably a former window opening before the addition of the rear extension and first floor doorway which leads into it. The N bedroom has a chimneybreast which must have had a fireplace, though this is now blocked off. In the W wall is a cupboard recess with timber surround, though no doors. The S bedroom has no chimneybreast, the single-flue chimneystack indicating that it was never heated. There are 4-panel doors of Victorian style.

The roof structure is clearly original to the main build of the house. It has 3 trusses with lower tie-beams/collars, upper collars and raking struts, all of rather crudely shaped or re-used timber. The lower tie/collars are visible to the bedroom ceilings, with deep boxing-in around them. The upper collars have lap-dovetails with big, square-cut skew pegs. Only part of the lower tie/principal rafter joint can be seen to the N truss (T3); this is dovetail-lapped, though any pegs are not visible, and only the end of one screw-threaded nut and bolt can be seen (which could be added, not original). It is unclear how the ends of the truss are supported in the wall – ie whether

the load is taken by the raking principal rafter ends or by the lapped tie. The raking struts have no tenon joints, but are simply nailed on. There are staggered, tenoned purlins, the tenons taken through the principals, with a peg through the protruding ends. The apex probably has a bridled joint, though any pegs are concealed. There is an original oak ridge board, supported at the truss apex on nailed oak brackets. The original rafters survive, of roughly shaped oak with some re-used timber.

Truss T3 to the N has a lower tie of re-used timber of irregular shape, with a slot cut out of its top face from a former use. The W principal rafter has a chamfer to both lower corners and a series of old peg-holes, which show it was originally a ridge beam, with pegs to fix rafters. The E principal also has a slot with pegs to its underside and a partly cut off chiselled carpenter's mark 'II' to its S side, so is also re-used. The upper collar has a whole series of old peg-holes, showing re-use, and there are also old peg-holes to both struts.

The central truss T2 has re-used principals with an unusual half-circle (50mm diameter) recess cut into one face. The upper collar is re-used, of oak painted light blue. The W strut is re-used, with a row of mortices for studs. The E strut is also probably re-used, of large, square-cut oak. The S truss T1 has re-used principals, one a former ridge beam (like T3) and the other with a row of through mortices. The collar here is roughly shaped, but may be original not re-used. The struts are re-used, with curved heads from some particular former use. The purlins to all 4 bays are of roughly shaped timber, but may well be original. Beside the W side of truss T1 there is a dormer-type roof projection (as seen externally), whose rafters are also of roughly shaped or re-used oak (indicating that the roof projection might be original).

The masonry of both gable ends can be seen in the roof space. The purlins bear onto oak wallplates in the masonry at both gables. The N gable has a projecting masonry stack, but the S gable has a flush face internally.

Tree-ring dating

Tree-ring dating samples were taken in 2014 by Robert Howard of Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory from the roof timbers. The principal rafters of truss T2 dated to 1714-39, while the E principal of truss T1 and a nearby common rafter dated to 1727-45. Given the overlap in dates, all these timbers may well represent a single phase, of 1727-39. All of these timbers are clearly re-used in the current structure, so it they are probably from the earlier house on the site. Three other common rafters dated to 1809-34, which fit well with the rebuilding of c.1814.

Site history

The 1804 enclosure map shows the front block as existing, with an enclosed front garden, but also with a rear wing to the SW. Beyond the SW wing, the building extended further W as an outbuilding (shown dotted on the 1804 map). An outbuilding is also shown against the N boundary. The plot was no 68, the copyhold owner Edward Peach and the area 1 rood 6 perches.

The 1848 estate map shows the house as plot 41. The house was still L-shaped, but the SW outbuilding is shown with a narrower width. There was now an outbuilding in

the centre of the plot, and the N outbuilding extended further W. The copyhold owner and occupier was Robert Clarke, with a description in the schedule as 'Farm house barn stables sheds yard garden and orchard' and a plot area still of 1 rood 6 perches.

On the 1st edition OS map of 1886 the house is again shown as L-shaped, with a further section extending to SW, presumably still an outbuilding. There is a small L-shaped outbuilding in the centre of the plot and another against the N boundary. Neither of these outbuildings survive, though a timber shed now stands on the same site to the N boundary, where the boundary line has an offset to the S. By the time of the 1904 2nd edition OS map the central outbuilding seems to have been reduced to a roofless footprint, though the rest of the site is unchanged.

The Burghley estate manorial records show that the copyhold passed from Edward Peach to 'Robert Clarke the younger of Liddington Stone Mason' on 5th May 1814. The property was then described as 'All that Messuage House with the Barns Stables and all other Outhouses and Appurtenances in Liddington formerly Cave's.' When Robert Clarke used the property as security for a loan of £100 in 1847, it is described as 'All that Messuage Tenement or Dwelling House sometime since rebuilt by the said Robert Clarke with the Barns stables outhouses yards gardens orchards and appurtenances in Liddington formerly Cave's.' So, although the description of the property is largely unchanged, the documentary record is clear that the house was rebuilt by Robert Clarke some time during his ownership from 1814-47. When Robert Clarke later had another mortgage of £150 in 1862, the description runs: 'All that Messuage tenement or dwelling house sometime since rebuilt by the said Robert Clarke upon the site of an ancient Messuage House with the Barns Stables Outhouses yards gardens orchards and appurtenances in Liddington.' So there is a specific reference here to the older house which Robert Clarke replaced.

The earlier copyhold owners of the property include the Ireland family (probably from at least the mid-17th century) and then in 1747-1763 Watson Cave, who was occupying the house and was described as 'Gentleman' in 1763. At this date the property, which it seems included an area of land to the south, was subdivided into two plots, with a new wall to be built dividing the properties. The plot of The Lilacs (No 101) was held by John Williamson in 1763-1774, then by Conyers Peach, a tanner, who left it to his youngest son Edward Peach in 1784.

Date and development

Although this house has previously been thought to date from the 'mid-late C18' (as in the listed building description of 1985), the documentary and tree-ring dating evidence indicates that it was rebuilt by Robert Clarke, probably soon after he took over the copyhold in 1814. The 1804 map indicates a house standing on exactly the same footprint as the current front range, though there was also a rear wing. Even the enclosure of the front garden occupied the same site as the current front walling. Robert Clarke must have taken down this building in c.1814. Although later referred to as an 'ancient Messuage House', it seems that the roof structure of this previous building dated only from 1727-39 (though it may have been re-roofed). When rebuilt in c.1814 only the north gable wall was retained above ground, though the new house may have made use of the old foundations. The blocked attic window in the north gable suggests that the old house was of two storeys with attic rooms. It must have

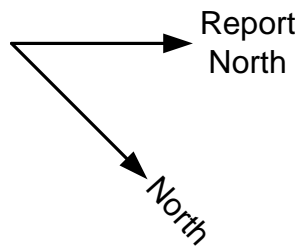
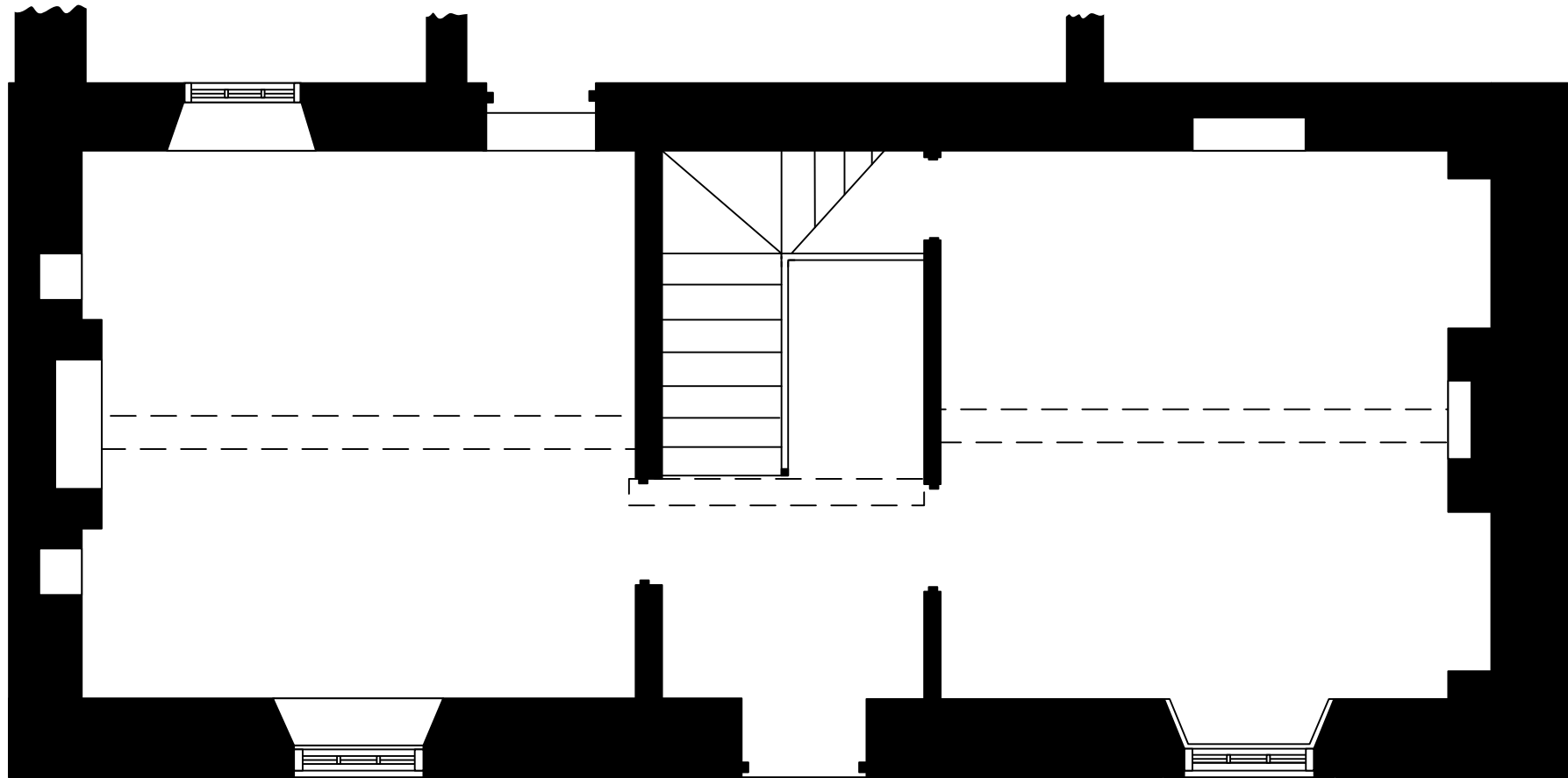
been a reasonably substantial property to have formed a suitable home for Watson Cave, 'Gentleman' in the mid-18th century, and stood on a plot which was double the current site area. The plot was subsequently subdivided and by 1814 it was no longer considered a suitable residence for its new owner, Robert Clarke.

A number of external features of the house are entirely consistent with a date of c.1814: the tall, double-fronted and well-proportioned façade; the ramped front garden wall; the flush-panelled front door with plain rectangular fanlight; and the horn-less sash windows. Inside, the staircase with its turned newels, stick balusters and ramped handrail is also typical of the early 19th century. The roof construction, using a combination of older methods (eg lap-dovetail joints) with a more modern ridge-board detail – but still using oak throughout – is also consistent with an early 19th century date. The brownstone masonry surrounds to the windows and front door, however, with their projecting from and triple keyblocks, are a rather old-fashioned feature, more generally seen locally in the second half of the 18th century. It seems very likely that the masonry was the work of Robert Clarke himself, who followed traditional fashion.

The early 19th century house had a parlour with a fireplace and cased-in ceiling beam. The recesses to either side of the fireplace probably had full-height cupboards, and it seems more likely that the recess in the rear wall was also a cupboard, rather than a window. On the other side of the elegant stair hall was the kitchen, which may have had an iron range rather than an open hearth, and a fine ironstone flag floor. The back door led into a rear wing, which (as indicated in the roof structure) was probably built at the same time as the front range, and would have housed storage or back kitchen space, as well as the back door to the rear yard. Upstairs, there were two good bedrooms, though the southern one had no fireplace, relying on the kitchen underneath for warmth. There was probably also a further bedroom or storage space to the first floor of the rear wing, accessed via the southern bedroom. The oddly located recess and cill beside the top of the stairs probably mark the location of an original rear window, offset in this way because of the projecting rear wing just to the south of it. Besides the neatly walled front garden, there was a rear yard with two outbuildings and a back garden (probably containing an orchard) beyond.

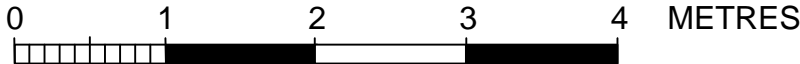
The house had some upgrading in the later 19th century, when fireplaces were altered and new internal doors fitted, together with some replacement sashes. The rear wing survived until after 1904, but was later replaced by shallower extensions, partly single-storeyed, as shown on the plans of 1996. In that year a new rear extension was built (as date-stone in its rear wall), replacing all but one wall of the previous extensions.

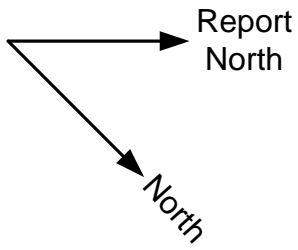
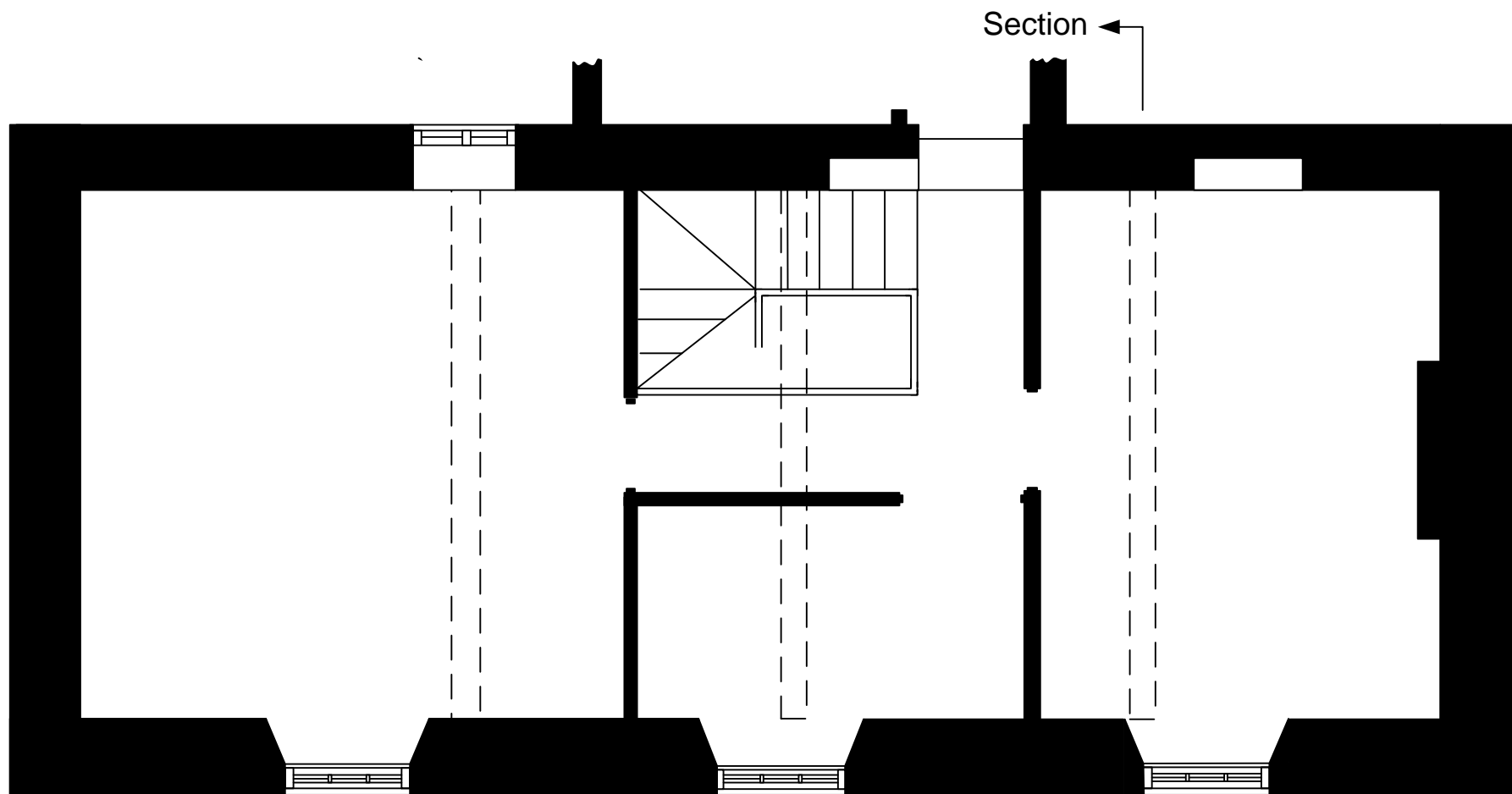
Nick Hill
August 2015



GROUND FLOOR

THE LILACS, 101 MAIN STREET, LYDDINGTON





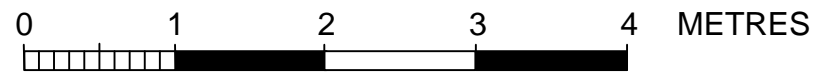
T1

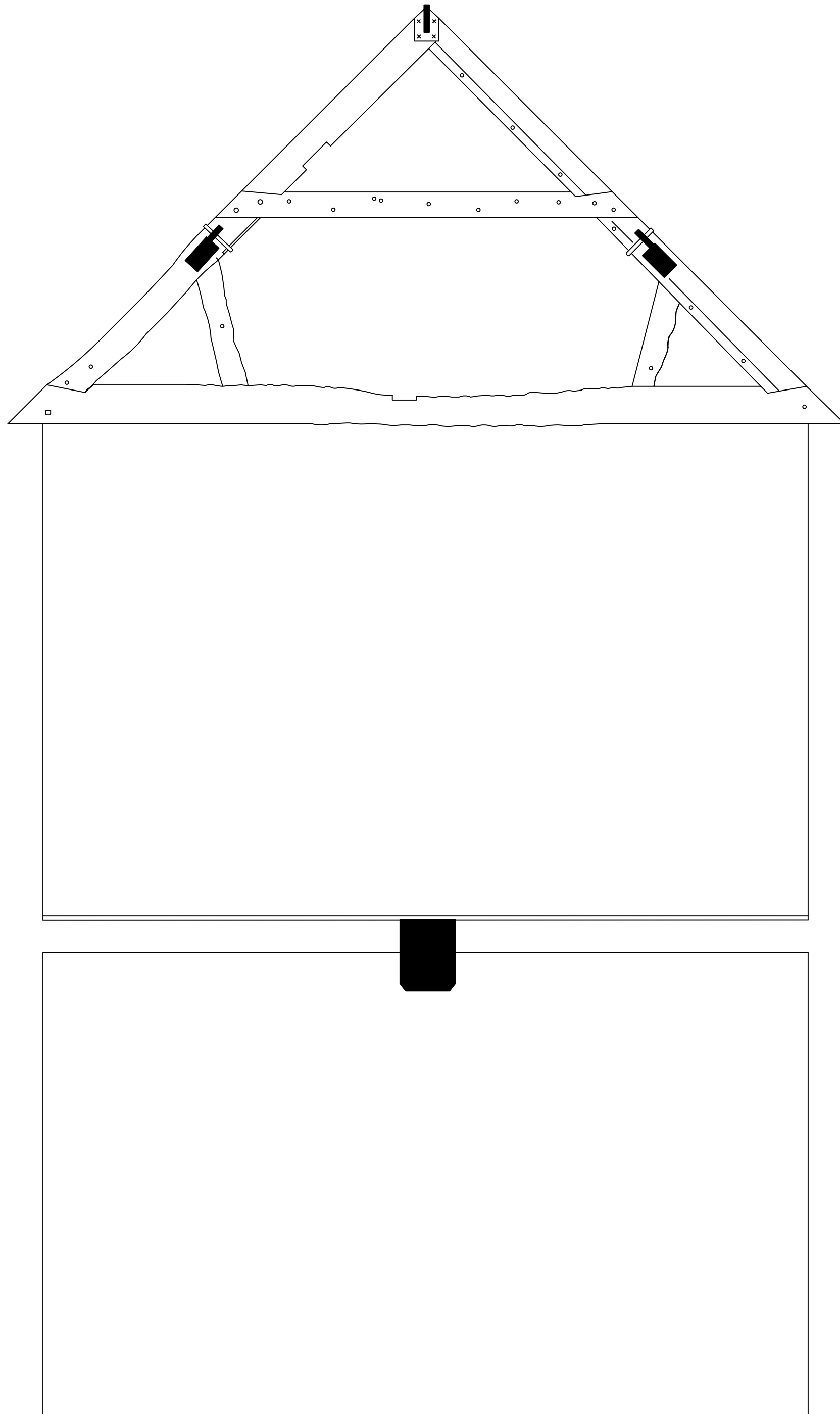
T2

T3

FIRST FLOOR

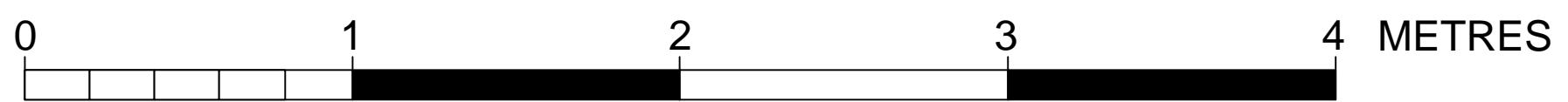
THE LILACS, 101 MAIN STREET, LYDDINGTON





SECTION – TRUSS T3 NORTH FACE

THE LILACS, 101 MAIN STREET, LYDDINGTON





The front door



Sash window to front



North gable with 1st floor opening
blocked by chimneystack



South gable



Rear west side, south end



The north ground floor room



The staircase





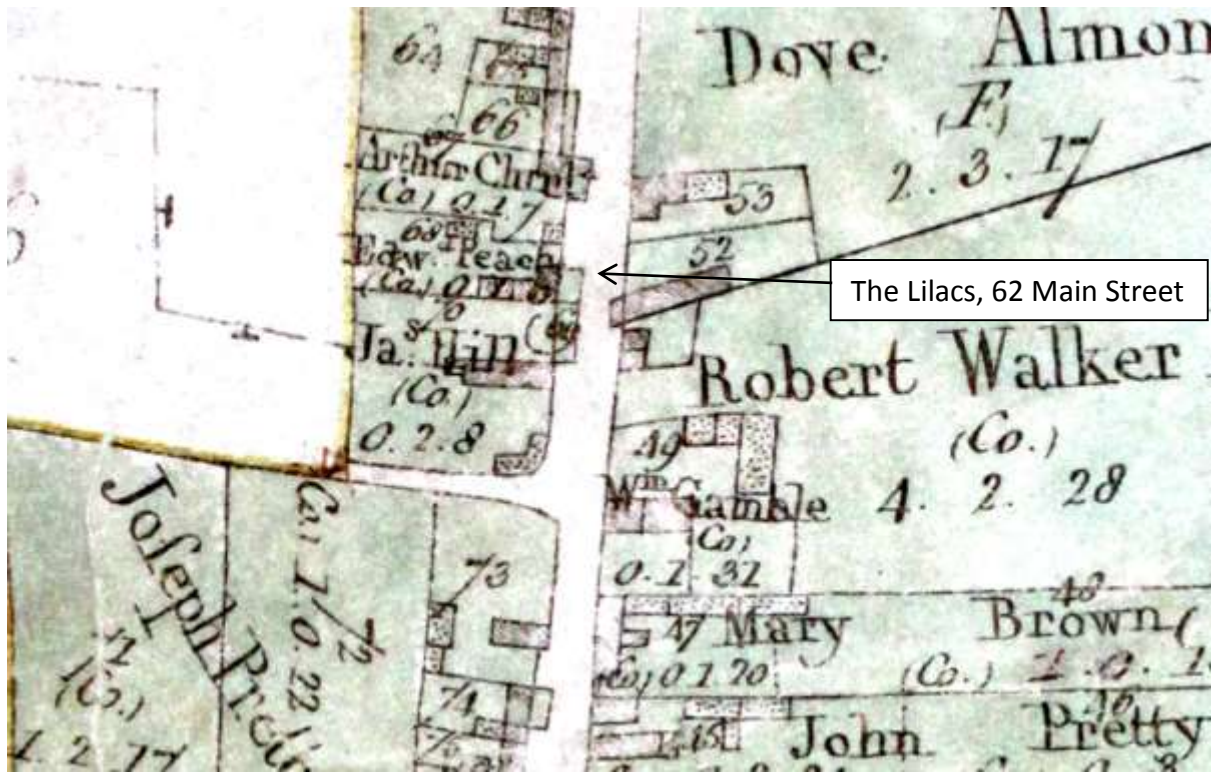
Truss T1 north side, with re-used curved struts



Detail of truss T3, south side



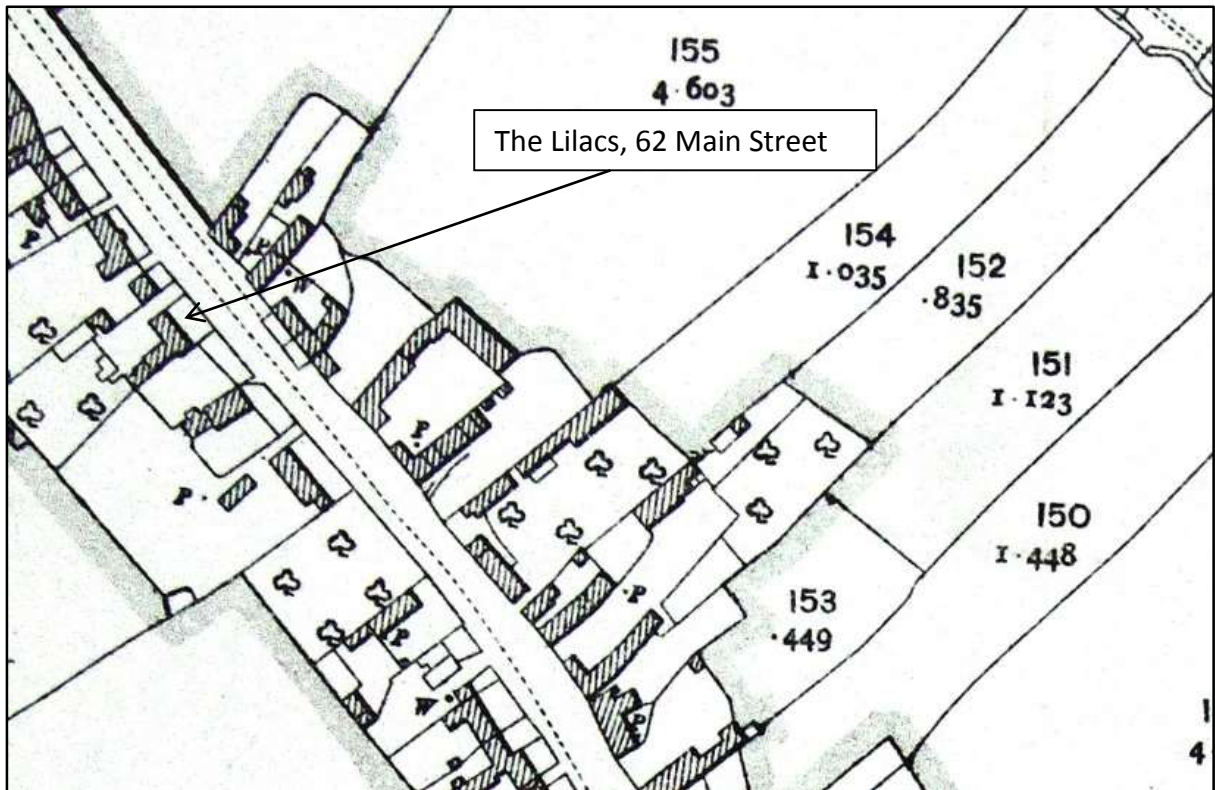
Earlier photograph



Lyddington Enclosure Map - 1804



Lyddington Estate Map, 1848 (Burghley Archives)



Ordnance Survey 2nd Series, 1904