

Norfolk Historic Buildings Group



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Newsletter



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NHBG Photo archive

The current lockdown has had many different effects, some of them unexpected. The cancellation of our summer programme potentially left the newsletter with nothing to report, but the coincidence with the NHBG's twentieth-anniversary provided the opportunity to present the photographs of some of our previous visits from non-social-distancing time in the last newsletter. Going through my own photos provided many of the pictures for the (summer) newsletter, but some of the pictures in this edition came from the camera of Rosemary Forrest. Like so many of us, she has been sorting through things during this period of enforced inaction and wanted to find a home for her pre-digital photographs. I have scanned over 2000 of her buildings- and NHBG-related photos, some of which are included here. This whole process raised the question of what happens to old photos generally.

The NHBG already has an archive of the details of the buildings that we have surveyed - that sits behind the website - and another archive of all our published works, stored for the future. What about an archive of photos of buildings and NHBG activities? Rosemary's photos, along with mine, will constitute the start of such an archive.

If you are in the process of throwing out old photos of buildings, please let me scan them first so that they can be retained as a record for the future (the buildings do need to be identified first), or if you would like some of your digital photos added to the archive - let me know. Any time-series photographs are useful, as they can document changes over the years which might otherwise be missed, and such a record could reasonably be seen as part of the function of the NHBG.

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August 2020
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NHBG ahead of the game!



Practising for social distancing - almost 5 years ahead of the need to do so - during a summer visit to St Catherine's in July 2015.

Do you have a 15-20 minute talk in you, on any aspect of buildings or their history, that members would be interested in?

When the new zoom version of winter meetings starts, the NHBG will be looking for people to give talks. Experience with PowerPoint or Zoom is not necessary, as we can knock your photos, and text for a commentary, into shape for broadcast.

Please contact Ian, Mary or Jess with any suggestions

Cover photo: An aerial view of The Old Vicarage, Hempnall, in the hands of the owners, probably taken in the 1960s - coloured by Ian Hinton

Winter Lectures

Any actual meetings will be held at The Diamond Centre, Sprowston @ 7.00 for 7.30pm.

The responses to the consultation emails sent out in July about winter meetings indicated that a good number of members might attend one at the Diamond Centre if the prevailing regulations and conditions at the time permitted. Consequently, Mary has prepared a truncated programme probably starting in February or March 2021, but we will keep the whole process under review. Since we are unable to handle contactless payments, the small entry fee charged for previous sessions has been suspended for actual meetings for the time being.

The responses to the second email about the possibility of “on-line meetings” was very encouraging. Scores of replies thought it was a good idea, even the few that would not use zoom personally thought it a good idea for the membership generally. Without a subscription, Zoom connections are limited to 40 minutes and up to 100 participants. A series of short talks is being set up which will be accessible to anyone with a computer, iPad or smart phone. The talks will be limited to 15-25 mins with an additional 10 minutes for questions.

What to expect from NHBG winter series of online talks

Lynne Hodge (lynne@walknorfolk.co.uk) will email information to all NHBG members about an upcoming online talk as she currently does for winter lectures. If you are interested in taking part in a particular talk please email norfolkhistoricbuildingsgroup@gmail.com

Before the talk you will receive an email from that email account with the Zoom link and codes to join the online talk.

A few minutes before of the talk, click on the email link and follow the instructions. You will be held in a ‘waiting room’ from where you will be given access to the talk. When joining the talk please ensure that your microphone is muted and video is switched off; this will ensure that there won’t be any feedback or echo whilst the talk is taking place. (Clicking on the talk link after the scheduled start time requires a more complex procedure - best to avoid).

As with our face-to-face talks Mary Ash will introduce the speaker. The talk will then start, lasting approximately 15mins. The talk may take the form of a recorded PowerPoint with commentary or, if the speaker prefers, they may speak live.

At the end of the talk there will be 10 minutes available to ask questions. If you have a question please type into the ‘chat function’ your name, requesting that you would like to ask a question. (If you are using an iPad or an android phone please follow this link which shows how you can do this without a keypad https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203650445-In-meeting-chat?mobile_site=true) The host will then unmute you and, if you wish, you can turn on your video to ask the question.

For those members who have not used Zoom before, or joined any online talks over lockdown, a few days before our talks we will be offering a practice session for those who feel they need to gain more confidence in using the technology.

All talks will be available afterwards in perpetuity through our YouTube channel

(instructions for which will be sent out once it is set up)

Jess Johnston

Zoom requires NO installation of programmes or the alteration of settings on your phone, iPad or computer.

Michael Brown

possible actual talks
at The Diamond Centre

Ian Hinton

Do Different - A Norfolk motto

We all know that this is a long-held and oft-repeated aphorism, and it appears to have applied to building in Norfolk since medieval times.

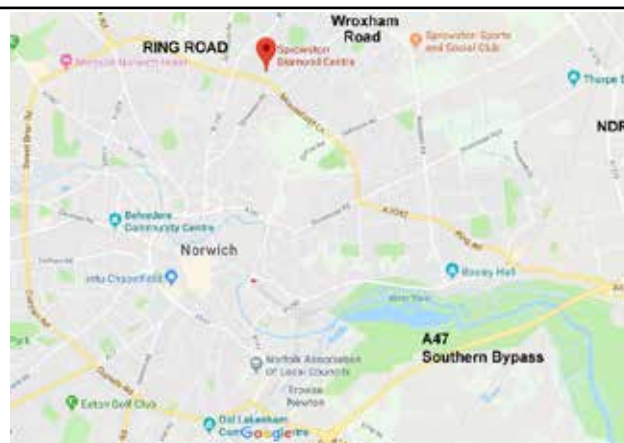
There are differences in technique, style and finish between Norfolk buildings and similar buildings elsewhere in the country. Michael will explore these differences using examples from the buildings that the NHBG has studied.

The Buildings of Hempnall

A detailed review of some of the houses in Hempnall and the histories that detailed recording of the buildings uncovered. In several cases, completely unknown aspects of their dating and construction methods were revealed as the houses were studied more closely.

St Quentin Room, Diamond Centre, 57 School Lane, Sprowston

SATNAV - NR7 8TR



The Old Vicarage, Hempnall: a detective story

Ian Hinton

Introduction

The Old Vicarage in Hempnall was one of the properties that was surveyed for *Journal 7: The Houses of Hempnall...*. We visited the house on many occasions in three episodes. Firstly, as part of the initial assessments of all those houses in Hempnall where the owners had invited us to visit. An initial report on the house was written in June 2012 which also established that there was sufficient detail to merit a detailed recording. Secondly, in November 2018, to record the details of the house in order to prepare measured drawings of the structure. Thirdly, in January and February 2019 we visited as a result of a call from the owners who were having some renovation/re-decoration work done on the first floor which had uncovered some previously-unseen structure.

The Listing

This 'legacy' assessment, made in 1981 for the original listing of the house, was obviously made without the benefit of much of an inspection, along with so many others that were made in the early days of the listing process.

It is listed Grade II as:

C17/18 house, plastered timber frame, fronted in brick in C18. Steep pegtile roof with gabled ends. Large brick chimney stack near west end. Two storeys and attic. One hipped dormer. Four window range. Two-light casements with leafed panes, ground floor large multi-light window. West end doorway with Gibbs surround and panelled door. Gabled wing at rear forming L-shaped plan, plastered. East side faced in brick with embattled parapet, two storeys, three bays, central four-centred arch alcove on ground floor.



The Old Vicarage from the south-west

in the parish that could have been the manor house. All the surrounding parishes have a much larger Grand House - many with 15-20 hearths - some of them are sixteenth/seventeenth century and others are now of later Classical, Georgian or Victorian appearance).

The house is sited immediately north of the churchyard at the eastern end of The Street, almost completely hidden from the road by trees, but in a prime position historically – adjacent to both the church and the medieval marketplace (once called Market Street).

Mo Cubitt's Documentary Summary

A will of 1526 by Richard Machette left "all my wares in my shoppes and messuages to my wife Cecily.

After this, the documentary history is split into 3 messuages, apparently in addition to the original.

The first is a message "next to the message of the late Richard Machette on the west". In 1562 it was occupied by John Camell, then William Yvans and Margaret. This house was taxed for 2 hearths in the 1664 Hearth Tax. It is not clear whether the houses or the sites of the houses were next to each other.

The second is a message called Cockshop and a cottage opposite the churchyard. In 1651 it was lived in by a baker who was convicting of witchcraft in relation to the death of a pig owned by another baker who lived opposite.

The third, another cottage – adjoining the graveyard on its north side, was first referred to in 1576.

After 1736 there was a new description - Three messuages, tenements or cottages then in 3 parts abutting on the churchyard of Hempnall towards the south and Hempnall Street in part and Revd. Mr Joseph Parsons in part west and lands of Edward Luckyn esq. east and yard of Mr Parson's north. (So these appear to be separate from the land owned by the Revd. Parsons at this point)

These last two were surrendered to Revd. Parsons in 1750. This was the point when the house was first described as The Vicarage. Prior to this, the vicarage appears to have been on the



Extract from the Tithe Apportionment Map of 1842

NHBG Detailed assessment

Prior to any fieldwork, the documentary history was prepared by Mo Cubitt as part of her book *Hempnall: A Treasure Trove of History* (Halsgrove 2008) and revealed a complex story. Various deeds and abstracts of title refer to this house as the Manor House (there was no other large house

opposite side of The Street.

Revd. Parsons died in 1797 and the property was sold. An indenture held at Barningham Hall in north Norfolk records that it was bought in 1805 by John Thruston Mott, the Lord of the Manor.

By 1807, the vicars began renting the house and ensuing vicars lived in the house until the 1960s.

It was put up for auction in 1924 by Mr Mott as The Old Manor House. It is not known whether it sold or not, but it was conveyed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England two years later.



The Old Vicarage - phase 1 from the south-east

Initial Building Report (June 2012)

Summary

The Old Vicarage is all of two storeys plus attic, the earliest part appears to be an east-west, timber-framed, tripartite range, possibly later extended eastwards and now brick clad. There are two north-south abutting ranges on the north side at the western end of the first range, both of which are rendered. A further east-west range was built on the north side of the original range towards its eastern end, thereby forming a rectangular footprint. This is brick built and has a dentil strip of paired bricks. There is a shallow, brick-built, eastern extension covering the eastern gable ends of both ranges. It has a full dentil strip and is crenellated above in the gothic style. East of this is a further, twentieth-century, single-storey extension.

Internally the different building periods are united by a grand open-well staircase of oak in a central hall.



phases 1 and 2? from the south-west

Exterior

The south range (phase 1 - see plan overleaf) is timber-framed and brick faced in Flemish bond with no dentil strip at the eaves; now with a red peg-tile roof, presumably once thatched due to its steep pitch, with one inserted dormer window. There are two axial brick stacks, the principal one being towards the west. There is no evidence of the position of the original entrance or staircase. There is a vertical join between the bricks of the south wall (phase 1+) and those of the east gable, where the courses do not match. The west gable is rendered and now contains an entrance (20th century?) with a rusticated timber door frame and keystone, set between two casement windows.

The gable-ended, north-south ranges (phase 2?) are rendered, with an off-centre axial stack. The owner informed us that there is some pargetting locked in the western-most gable end. The ranges are not identical in width or height.

The northern east-west range (phase 3) is brick built, in Flemish bond, with a black pantile roof and a central, lateral stack. The dentilation at the eaves is in pairs. There is a grand entrance in the north elevation with a wide four-panelled door, three small panelled sidelights and an elliptical fan light under a plain, four centred arch. The windows on the north elevation of this range are of the cross-casements type and have brick labels.

The shallow eastern extension (phase 4) has angled corners, a large central alcove, platband, and crenellated parapet above a full dentil strip and windows that match the northern elevation.



*above:
phases 2? and 3 from the north-west*



*left:
The Georgian entrance
in phase 3*

*below:
Phase 4 and modern single-storey
extension from the east*

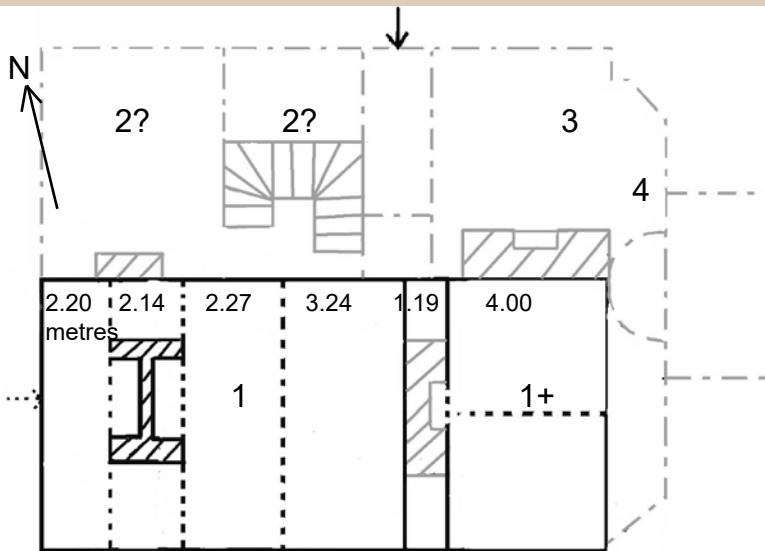
Interior

Ground floor

The phase plan of The Old Vicarage, shown on the next page, has a degree of speculation as the constructional details at the junctions between the phases are not visible.

The parlour at the west end of the original range (phase 1) is shallow - 2.20m - and contains a large, tudor-arched brick fireplace. In the north and west walls, the sill beam sits on 13 courses of English-bond brickwork.





The 2.2m-deep parlour with its out-of-scale hearth

The transverse principal joist in the hall has a plain chamfer with simple shield stops. It appears to be tenoned-in at both ends and is additionally supported at both ends by applied brackets. The sill beam is missing on the southern, external, wall where much of the wall is occupied by a later window. On the north wall, the sill is cut through by three doorways, two of which are blocked. The top and right side of the westernmost blocked doorway is comprised of two pieces of the same reused elaborately-moulded timber, possibly a principal joist, which has a chamfer consisting of a double ogee separated by a central raised section, all terminated at one end by a bar, large leaf stop and nick. The bays in this room are unequal - 2.27 and 3.24m. This room has a stack at both ends, although there is no visible hearth in the eastern stack.



The applied additional supports at either end of the principal joist in the hall

The room on the other side of this stack (phase 1+) is panelled entirely in pine hiding all constructional details, including a pine-clad axial principal joist. A detailed inspection is required to assess whether the panelling was made for this room or was re-used from elsewhere.

To the north, in the brick-built part (phase 3), the walls are plastered with fluted cornices and a small marble fireplace of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century with reeded sides and corner roundels.

The central extension to the north of the first range (phase 2?) houses an inserted oak staircase, the turned balusters of which are seated on a crudely chamfered rail applied to the staircase string to make it wide enough to house them; six half flights continue to the attic.



above: inserted seventeenth-century oak staircase

First floor

Only the principal joists are visible in the ceilings of the first floor. In one room the chamfer is terminated by leaf stops and in the hall chamber there are additional large nicks at each end.

Where visible, the corner braces are straight and internally trenced. Five pegholes, approx 25cm apart, can be seen in the wallplate in what would have been the outside, northern, wall of the hall chamber in the south range (phase 1). Below and to the right is part of a weathered horizontal timber only visible from the

Five pegholes in the wallplate for a window in the hall chamber (seen from the outside)



below: the pine-panelled eastern room (phase 1+)

outside and could be a fixing point for an outshut. The floor level to the northern east-west range (phase 3?) is raised by five steps.

Roof

The attics are used as living space, plaster hiding some of the details. The roof of the western end of the south range (phase 1) has two sets of in-line butt purlins each side, and the collars are tenoned into the principal rafters above the upper purlins. The south face of the roof contains an inserted dormer window. The roof above the eastern end of south range (phase 1+) also has two sets of purlins, but here the upper set is clasped by the collars. The roof of the whole of the south range is considerably steeper than the other three roofs.

The roofs of the north-south ranges (phase 2?) have single sets of in-line purlins, clasped by the collars. The south face of the roof of the northern east-west range (phase 3) also contains a dormer window.

Outside

The grounds contain a range of eighteenth/nineteenth century outbuildings, one of which - The Stables - is listed Grade II.

Discussion (2012)

The Old Vicarage is formed by at least four distinct phases of different periods dating probably from the late sixteenth/early seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. It merits detailed measuring to try and establish its development history more closely.

Detailed Measurement (November 2018)

The house was revisited in November 2018 in order to take detailed measurements to enable the accurate drawing of the elements of the timber frame to try and aid interpretation of the building's development sequence.

The elevation below locates the visible timbers (in solid) and those inferred from pegholes (pecked). The inferred timbers in the upper part of the wall were located mainly from pegholes visible in the outside of the wall (such as the window mentioned earlier).

Also revealed were two pegholes close together in the principal joist now set into the western edge of the narrow

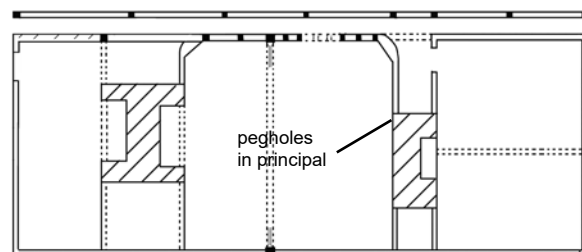
stack between phase 1 and 1+ at ground-floor ceiling level (see floorplan below). There were no other pegholes apart from a counter-bladed scarf joint close to them. One interpretation of these pegs is the joint for a post defining a timber-framed chimney whilst allowing access past it through into the eastern room. Had this principal been originally built into the brick stack, then there would not have been any need for additional support of any sort. This bay is only 1.19 metres wide - too narrow for a stack with a hearth serving both rooms, but wide enough for a timber-framed chimney or smoke bay or for a brick stack with a single hearth. The 1.19m-wide bay extends right into the roof and now contains a narrow brick stack with a hearth heating the eastern room. This would mean that the larger stack towards the western end of the hall was another later insertion, built around the hall/parlour wall. The insertion of the larger stack seems to have been required as the original stack bay was not deep enough to heat the rooms on both sides.

The bay spacing of the roof does not match with the spacing of the two floors below, apart from the narrow stack bay which continues into the roof.

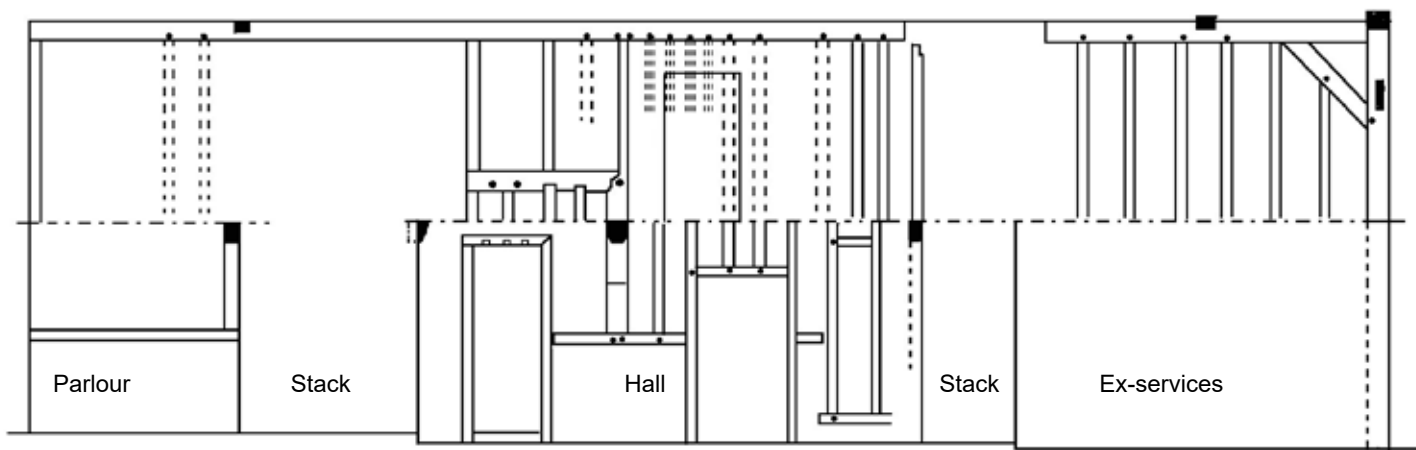
Discussion (2018)

Little extra could be drawn from the measurement of the visible timbers. The narrow bay to the east of the hall seemed to be confirmed as a smoke bay as a result of the joint in the principal joist for an apparent post. The counter-bladed scarf joint also confirmed that this was not part of the original build where all the other scarf joints were edge-halved, bridled and single-pegged.

The explanation of the sequence of building of the two chimney stacks and the uses of the ground floor rooms could not be furthered.



Ground-floor plan, showing the location of the pegholes in the principal joist. Also the different spacing of the building bay frames and the roof bay spacing (top bar)



The Old Vicarage - North Wall of phase 1 and 1+ from the inside

Revisit (January & February 2019)

Finally, we revisited in early 2019 during renovation and redecoration in the hall chamber and parlour chamber. This work involved removing the blown plaster, which uncovered the timber framing beneath.

In the north wall, this revealed several new aspects. The degraded timber originally seen from the outside only - which was thought to be an outshut connection - was actually part of the substantial midrail; the studs in this wall were of considerable scantling, such that the gaps between them were no larger than the width of the studs, and they were fully pegged. The storey posts on both sides of the hall contained long mortices approximately 1m long overall and 5cm wide. In the southern wall the timber framing sits inside the brick cladding above the mid-rail. The jowls and surface of both storey posts had been significantly hacked back prior to the plastering out of the room, to the extent that one of the brace pegs in the northern storey post has been bisected and two others are now very close to the face of the post.

Remnants of red colouring were found on the inner surface of the mid rail of the south wall.

The roof above the hall is a replacement of the original and the principal rafters do not coincide with the wall frames, so that the current principal joist/tie-beam would have been an easy replacement for the presumed original canted tie-beam that would have been supported by the large braces from the storey posts. Whether this supported a crown-post or queen-post roof is unknown. A hypothetical reconstruction is shown later. When the original tie beam was replaced is unclear. The current principal joist has no mortices to house the jowl tenon, so presumably must have been done after the storey-post jowls were hacked back, i.e. when the room was plastered out.

The lack of pegholes at the bottom of the mid rail at the eastern end of both hall walls clearly indicates the presence of opposing doorways. There is no surviving evidence for the

attachments of a screen of any sort as the walls adjacent to the doorways have been replaced.

Close to the bottom of the eastern section of the mid rail in the south wall (elevation C) are pegholes for the hall-window mullions close to the opening for the cross-passage door, but the other side of the storey post has no peg-holes at all - did a window exist this side too, to match that in the north wall, but built inside a frame? In the north wall (elevation B) a later doorway has removed the part of the midrail that would contain some of the hall window evidence, but the pegs exist for the window mullions to the west of the storey post.

The window in the upper part of the north wall, where pegholes exist on the outside of the wall plate, is likely to have been an insertion after the hall was floored over as the cill of the window is notched, rather than jointed, into the stud, the opposite end is lost in a later doorway.

The east wall of the hall chamber (elevation A and photo next page) does not have a mid rail above the floor level, unlike the north and south walls of the hall and the west wall of the parlour, indicating that it was an internal wall, thus confirming this house was originally a three-celled building. It also has pegholes for studs in the tie-beam above at approximately 65cm centres, rather than the 38cm centres in the north and south walls. Only a few of the current studs in this wall coincide with those peg-holes and the doorway at the left hand side has been inserted into the studwork, as the spacing is different.

Upstairs in the south wall, behind the brick cladding, the mid-rail changes level where a ghost of the storey-post between hall and parlour was located, close to the centre-line of the larger brick stack.

Discussion (2019)

This is a complex building with many phases. The house obviously started as an open-hall house because of the large braces in the hall and the tall windows. It was a three-celled house with services to the east of the hall and a parlour to the west. The position of the opposed entrance doors confirms the service end at the east end. This would also seem to confirm that the narrow smoke/chimney bay at the east end of the hall was part of a rebuild of the east end replacing the services with a(nother) parlour, especially as the counter-bladed scarf joint in this frame was of a later sort from all the others in the house¹.

Detailed measurement revealed two pegholes close together in the principal joist now set into the western edge of the narrow stack (see floorplan earlier). There were no other pegholes apart from a counter-bladed scarf joint (mentioned earlier) close to them. One interpretation of these pegs is the joint

¹ see Hewett, C., 1980, English Historic Carpentry, Phillimore, pp 267-9.

Edge-halved and bridled scarfs were used from 1375 until 17th C. Counterbladed joints - "the ultimate contraction of the ultimate form of the joint" - have been found from the late 16th C in Norfolk.



bisected peg

Hall chamber storey posts:

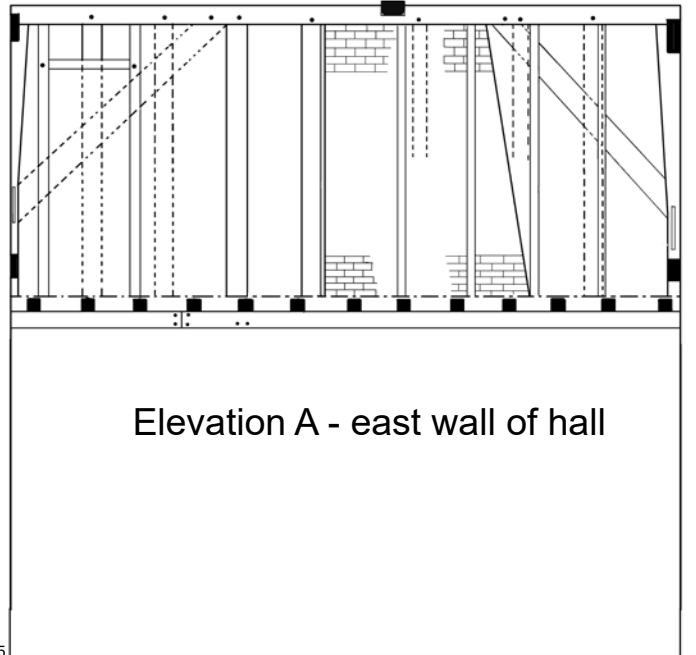
The north wall showing the large-section studs, set close together, the large mortice and the peg bisected during the hacking-back process



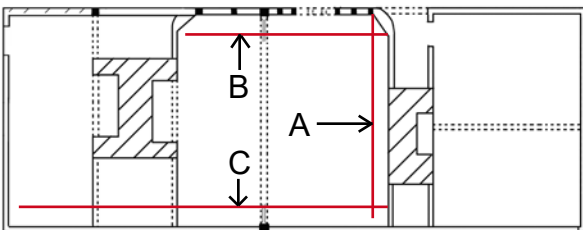
The south wall, showing the matching large mortice (plaster-filled) and the remnants of red colouring on the mid rail



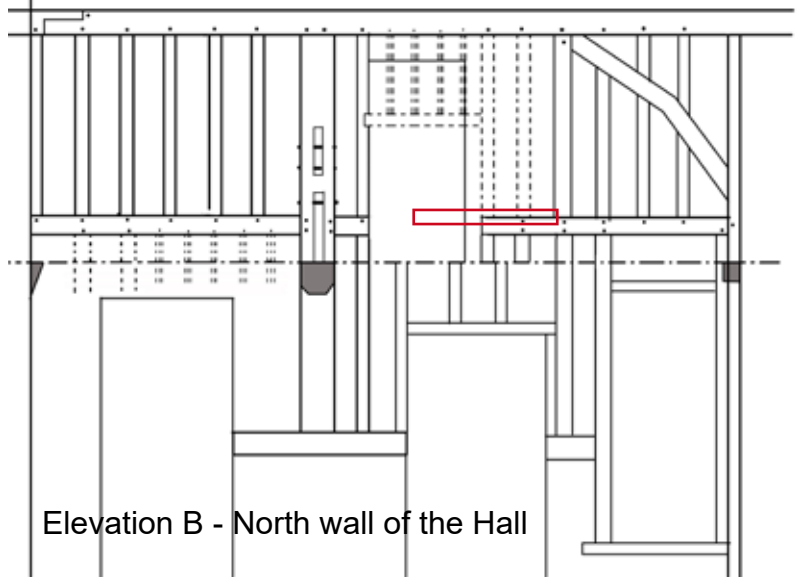
hall chamber east wall showing the lack of a mid-rail and the inserted doorway with different stud spacings from the originals.



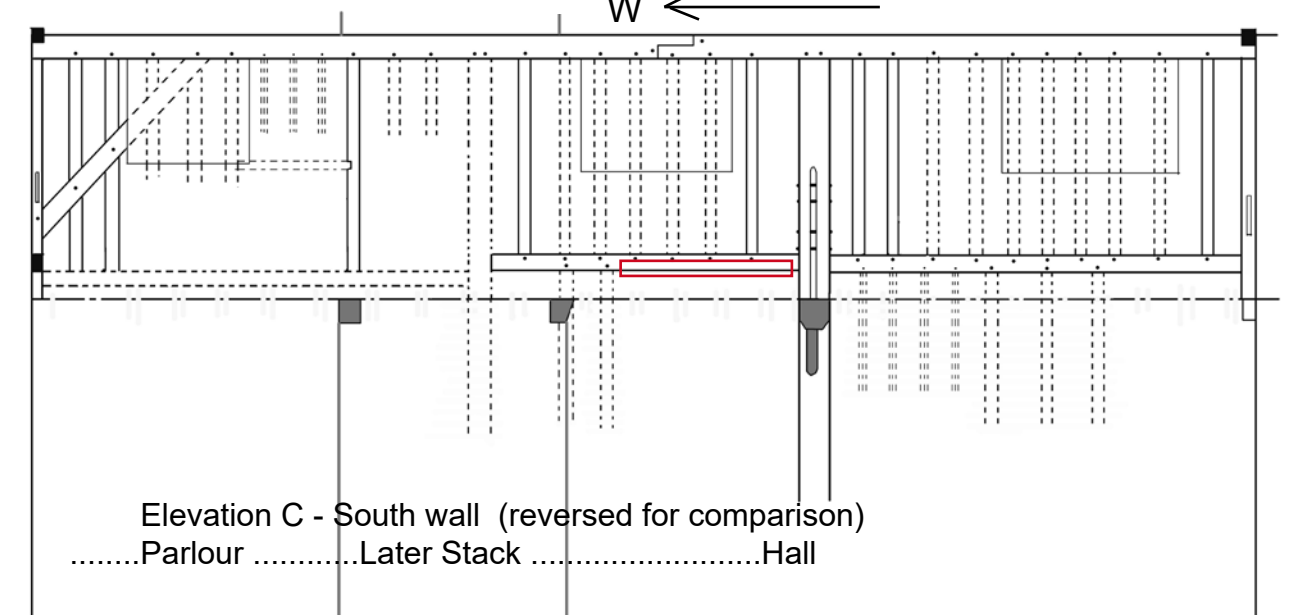
Scale for elevations



No pegholes present



W ←



the ghost of the original storey post of the hall/parlour frame now in the larger, western, stack bay



for a post defining a timber-framed chimney whilst allowing access past it through into the eastern room. Had this principal been originally built into the brick stack, then there would not have been any need for additional support of any sort. This bay is only 1.19 metres wide - too narrow for a stack with two major hearths, but wide enough for a timber-framed chimney or smoke bay or a brick stack with a single hearth. The 1.19m-wide bay extends right into the roof and now contains a narrow brick stack with a hearth heating the eastern room. This would mean that the larger stack towards the western end of the hall was an even later insertion, built around the hall/parlour wall explaining both the large fireplace heating such a small western room, as well as the currently uneven bay spacing in the hall and the buried ends of the common joists in the hall. The storey post defining this frame now exists only as a ghost in the southern wall.

The truncated common joists also point to the larger stack being built after the flooring of the hall - if contemporaneous then the detailing of the joists would be properly finished. The insertion of the larger stack seems to have been required as the original stack bay was not deep enough to heat the rooms on both sides.

Upstairs, a new doorway was cut through the east wall of the new hall chamber for access between the new chamber and the eastern chamber, after the ceiling over of the hall. The fact that the doorway interrupts the studding of this wall also indicates that the ceiling over of the hall postdates the building of this wall when the narrow stack was constructed - if they were done at the same time then the studding would have been positioned to incorporate the doorway (see photo on p 8). The flooring of the hall and the construction of the doorway must also have predated the construction of the two northern ranges (phase 2?) as access to the hall chamber after this was via the corridor created in the extension, so the doorway would not have been necessary.

It has been suggested that the presence of the window in the upper part of the frame in the north wall, below the wall-plate, argues against an open hall, but the storey post is notched where the cill would have met it, indicating that it is likely to have been an insertion after the ceiling over of the hall. This window too, must predate the building of the extension as that



the eastern end of the hall chamber north wall (part of elevation B previous page) showing the lack of pegholes in the lower edge of the mid-rail, thereby revealing the position of a possible window and the cross-passage door below it.

The odd-shaped niche cut into the brick noggin probably dates from the building of the corridor and stairwell the other side of the wall, as a previous resident of the Vicarage told me that in his time there, this niche was open to the corridor and stair on the other side of the wall (presumably for a night light) rather than open to this chamber.

would make the window an internal one.

The joints at either end of the current principal joist of the hall ceiling below are supported on applied brackets as well as tenons. The large brace-mortices above the principal, originally for the braces, could have allowed tenons of the principal to be fed in when the ceiling was inserted, but it was provided with additional support at both ends.

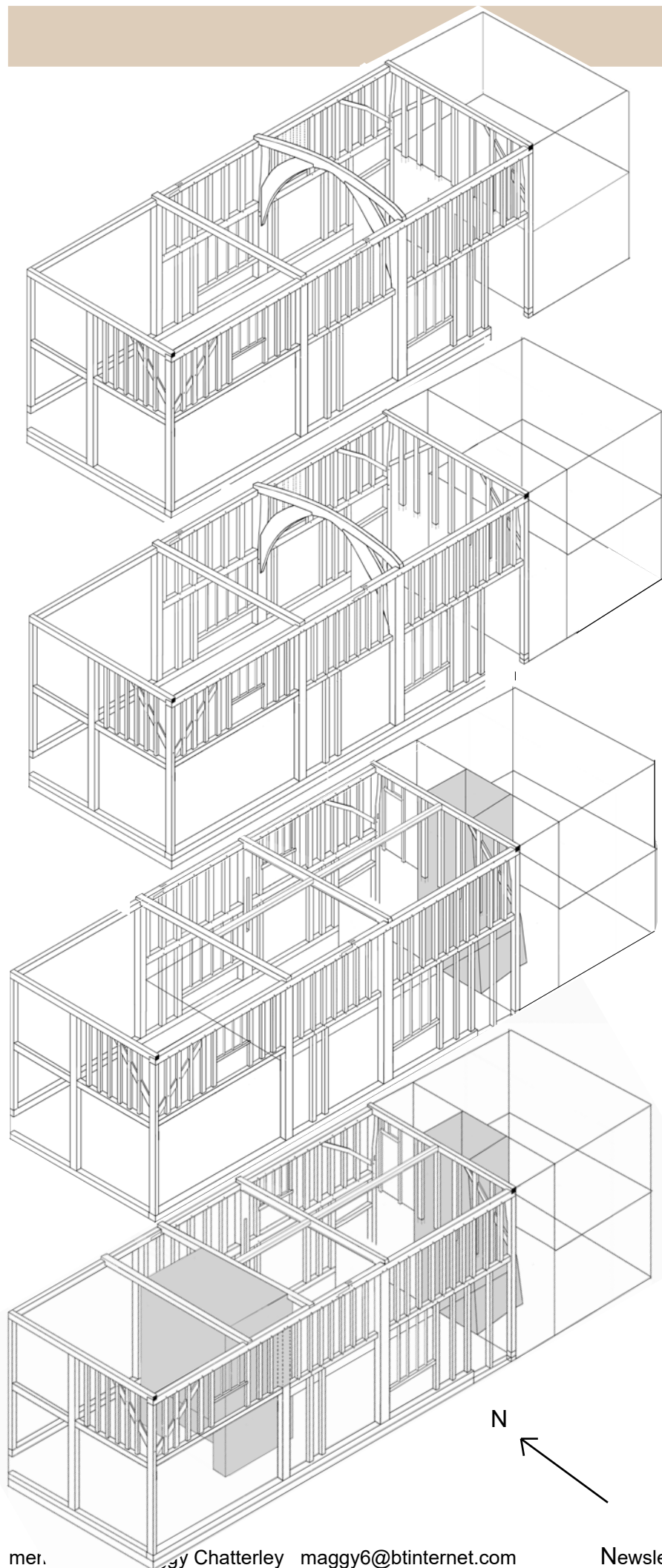
Conclusion

The likely size of the braces deduced from the length and width of the mortices are similar to those found in King's Head Cottage in Banham, thought to have been a manor house and dated to the second half of the fifteenth century². The edge-halved and bridled scarf joints in the wall-plates here could suggest a similar or later date. Examples of this joint were found in our study of Walsingham buildings in late fifteenth-century contexts. However, the overall size and height of The Old Vicarage far exceeds that of King's Head Cottage and constitutes a grand building of the period. The other open-hall houses in Hempnall, (studied in NHBG Journal 7 on Hempnall houses) only had one or one-and-a-half storeys and were considerably smaller.

It is hoped that the dendro investigation which will be undertaken in the near future, assuming that suitable samples can be found for coring, will provide an accurate date for the initial construction of the hall as well as for the ceiling over of the hall converting it to its current form - two of the key dates in this story.

Despite the current name of the house - The Old Vicarage - and the fact that it was lived in by the local vicar for almost 250 years, various deeds and abstracts of title discovered in the documentary research referred to this house as the Manor House; maybe now, with its uncovered earlier origin and form, a good case can be made confirming that it was once the Manor House.

2 Heywood, S., 1997, Kings Head Cottage Banham, *NAHRG Annual No 6*, 37-44



The original open hall with large braces and ornate roof (not illustrated) with cross-passage doors, dairy and brewing services at the east end and a parlour and solar at the west end

The east end of the house rebuilt and extended by the addition of a smoke bay. It would seem unlikely that the cross-passage entrance would have still been in place after this as it would have been adjacent to the fireplace and smoke bay. The service functions were probably moved elsewhere as their access doors had been replaced by the smoke bay. It is not known whether the hall was ceiled over at the same time, creating the hall chamber.

A brick chimney stack was inserted into the smoke bay (had this been built initially, instead of the smoke bay, it would almost certainly have been built deep enough for a hearth either side).

Was the hall floored over at this time, necessitating the new doorway into the newly-created hall chamber and the window inserted below the wallplate in the north wall to light the room?

Perhaps the large braces and tie-beam were removed at this time to improve access about the room by the current transverse principal joist and the secondary axial ones, ceiling the room from the roof, although there are pointers to its replacement at a later date.

The larger western double stack was inserted across the original hall/parlour frame, creating the very shallow western room and cutting off the ends of the common joists in the hall.

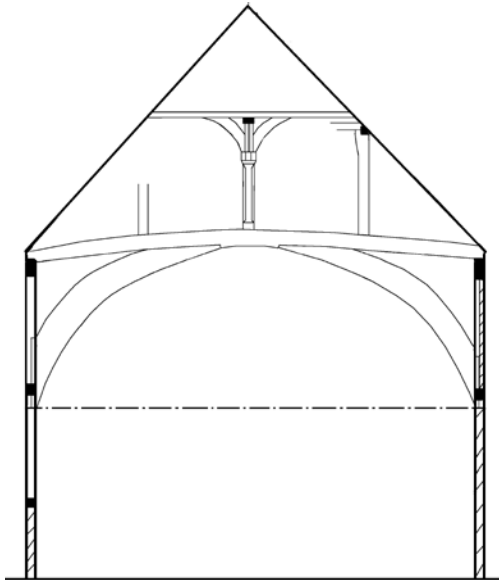
Was the storey post of this frame removed at this time, or as part of the bricking up of the southern facade? The bricks that constitute the stack are thinner and less consistently fired than those in the south wall, so are probably earlier.

Finally

Initially thought to be a fairly standard early seventeenth-century house in an area and village that contain so many of them, the true origins of The Old Vicarage came to light gradually, resulting in the uncovering of a grand early open-hall house.

Like all good detective stories, the evidence revealed itself slowly, much of which was hidden in the early stages of the investigation, but a result was achieved in the end. However, there are still unanswered questions as to the exact sequence of events and their dates which it is hoped to be able to reveal later after the dendro work is completed.

This study also raises the question of how many other houses that have been examined in the past still hold as much information hidden away, and are not entirely what they first seemed?



Left: A possible reconstruction of the original roof, similar to a crown-post from the same period in Walsingham, which was radio-carbon dated to between 1480 and 1495. Also shown is part of a possible lesser-quality queen-post roof

The Old Vicarage was one of several houses in the Hempnall Study where the final detailed assessments turned out to be quite different from first impressions. Unfortunately we were unable to examine the hidden details of any of these other houses quite so comprehensively. We hope the dendro sampling will provide a date.

**(NHBG Journal 7 -
The Houses of Hempnall:
Part of the Great Rebuilding?)**

**The Journal is available from the Membership
Secretary (for address see page 2)
at £8 for members and £15 for non-members
(+£4 P&P if necessary)**

Below: A similar roof at 3-5 Castle Street, Thetford (also awaiting dendro)



NHBG Research

Unusual Chamfer stop turns up locally, twice



Meadow Farm, Hempnall



The Old Rectory, Woodton

Another of the discoveries during the study of Hempnall's houses was the attractive leaf-pattern chamfer-stop in the hall of Meadow Farm. None of us had come across this pattern before.

The Old Rectory in Woodton was also visited for the project at the invitation of the owner Jack Clover, as a result of an appeal placed in the church newsletter. It had a similar arrangement to the Old Vicarage in Hempnall - with a chimney stack at both ends of the Hall. The parlour end of the house had been replaced by a brick-built crosswing in the 1820s and some of the timbers were cut up and re-used below the floor. Having seen the picture of the stop at Meadow Farm in the Journal, Jack has sent the NHBG a photo of a similar stop on one of the re-used timbers in his house (in remarkably good condition, given that has been below a floor for 200 years!). The only difference being the continuation of a diminished chamfer after the stop.

Since the houses are less than 5km apart, were these unusual stops the work of the same carpenter? If they are, does that mean there are more still to be found?



The Old Rectory, Woodton

A Digest of Buildings Visited Since September 2019

This is a digest of the Norfolk houses which the NHBG has been invited to look at and to prepare brief reports on. These are ALL private houses and NO contact may be made with the owners in any way except through the Committee. These summaries of those reports are to inform members of the work undertaken on behalf of the Group.

Lynne Hodge

Penfold, Aldborough

Penfold is a two-celled cottage, originally of just over a single storey, located immediately south of the village green in Aldborough. It has an off-centre axial chimney stack.



The rear (east) wall consisted almost entirely of flint up to the original eaves height. There is a lean-to single-storey extension at the rear.

The front and rear walls have been raised by twenty courses and topped by a two-course dentil strip. The roof ridge was raised by the same amount, with tumbling-in at both front and rear. There are two vertical joins in the front wall – the first, up to the original eaves height, aligns with the centre of the chimney stack and the second is above the left-hand window in the photo above; both are 13½ bricks long (app 3.15m). The brickwork of the remainder of the lower part of the front wall matches that of the eaves-raise. The three-casement window in the front wall has replaced the original door, opposite another in the rear wall, also replaced by a window.

The northern room has a narrow transverse oak principal joist. It is chamfered with runout stops at its western end, but tapers to an almost circular shape in the eastern end. The very-steep brick winder stair rises from this room between the stack and the front wall. The springing point for the original roof is still visible in the back wall of the northern room, about 30cm above the floor. The flint wall below is some 10cm thicker than the brickwork above it.

The flint construction of the rear wall and the two rather-odd vertical joins in the front wall pose the question of whether this house was originally all built of flint, perhaps with brick gables, with the front wall replaced in brick at different stages. The burnt headers in the gable ends are often seen in seventeenth-century buildings but can stretch into the eighteenth century. What probably started as a small two-room-with-attic cottage, probably of the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century was enlarged and improved in the late-Georgian- or early-Victorian period.

Ian Hinton & Anne Woollett

Ivy House, East Somerton

Ivy House has an almost square floorplan, with a two-storey, red-brick front range built on the edge of Somerton common. Behind this are two extensions, the first, to the east, has a rebuilt



east wall in mid-twentieth-century bricks with a blocked opening in older red bricks. The other, western extension is known to have been built in 1969.

The front wall has a central door case with a rectangular fanlight over. This, and the five modern windows, are under skewback arches, rendered over. To the rear is a single-storey outbuilding built in clay lump at an angle to the house and has a thatched roof. It has been subsequently joined to the house. A further thatched outbuilding, built in brick and flint, sits behind the house, again at a slight angle to the house axis.

The front range was originally divided into three rooms. The central room housed the original staircase, now moved to the eastern flank wall and the internal walls removed. The two side rooms were heated by chimney stacks in the rear wall.

Interpretation

Ivy House was originally a small single-pile, three-celled, building of two full storeys with two lateral chimney stacks at the rear. The room sizes do not indicate a building of status and the overall design suggests a date of around 1800-1820. There is likely to have been a rear extension, perhaps single storey, replaced by the later extensions.

The clay-lump building is difficult to date; there have been no clay-lump buildings dated before 1790, but its angle to the house, and that of the other outbuilding, could indicate that they were both built at a different time from the house, possibly before. Taken together, the buildings suggest a small farmstead built on the edge of the common in about 1800, extended not long afterwards and again in the mid-twentieth century. It is possible that the current house is a replacement for an older building on the site.

Ian Hinton & Anne Woollett

Requests for surveys from owners of other houses are awaiting visits until after lockdown/shielding restrictions are relaxed enough to allow any of your (elderly) buildings investigators safely loose again.

Correction

In the article in *Newsletter 40* in June detailing the buildings in Norfolk that had been dated by dendro, I listed the description of Hemsby Barn used by the VAG in their original summary, which seems to be a repeat of the description contained in Pevsner; which describes the roof as fourteenth century.

NHBG Member John Walker has drawn my attention to an article he has written, awaiting publication elsewhere, which reassesses the roof as being a modern replacement. The full text will appear in the next newsletter.

Ed

Howard House Revisited

Mary Ash

We were invited by Philip Martin of Orbit Housing to have a tour of the newly refurbished Howard House on King Street, Norwich. This building had stood empty on the corner of Mountergate for over twenty years, the once-gracious summer house or belvedere for the Dukes of Norfolk, built out of the ruins of the Augustinian Friary gatehouse which stood on this site for 400 years before the Dissolution. It had ended its useful life as offices for Morgan's Brewery, later Watney Mann.

Henry Howard, the sixth duke, had bought the Friary site and developed it as pleasure gardens to serve the palace further up-river. It is now thought that the rubble-built section of Howard House on King Street is part of the old precinct. The south wing, built at right angles and at a much lower level, is probably later, with Pevsner dating its brick façade to about 1690. This four-bay elevation has large sash windows to ground and first floors; earliest surviving sash windows in England date to the 1670s, so these were very fashionable.

The two wings are knitted together by the insertion of a spectacular Jacobean staircase, built in the south-west corner of the two ranges shown on the floorplan below. The stair dates to 1630 and was imported from a larger building, possibly from the Duke's Palace which was updated by Sir Henry at about this time. This staircase, with its multiple half-landings, brings together the different levels of the two wings very cleverly, but there is no doubt that its original insertion was a rather botched job, pushing the supporting walls of the tower out of position in places and needing propping up with a variety of "table-legs" and odd pillars.



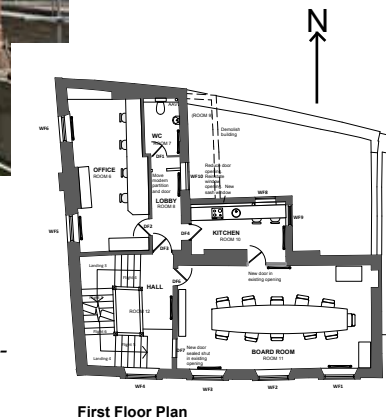
above: the south range of about 1690

right: first floor plan showing the stair tower between the south and west ranges

below: the King Street (west) frontage in 1996 and 2019 (1996 image from <https://www.edp24.co.uk/features/norwich-s-great-survivor-building-still-stands-proud-1-5859262>)



Photos by Rosemary Forrest



First Floor Plan



The magnificent staircase showing some of the "pillars" needed to reinforce the structure



The most notable feature of the staircase, however, is the openwork panels instead of balusters, with strap and leaf motifs.



One of the fine remaining openwork panels

By the time Norwich City Council boarded up the empty building in 1999, several of these panels had been stolen, so the restoration included plain new panels in keeping with the originals.

The restoration architect, Ruth Brennan, has carried out an extremely thorough repair and renovation job, with all historic features carefully recorded, repaired or replaced. The gable wall onto Mountergate has been rebuilt with new hand-made bricks, a clumsy twentieth-century first-floor extension has been removed, the roof is watertight and the flat dormers have been repaired with extra-thick lead casing. The cellar/undercroft has been cleaned up, although it is naturally quite damp still, and the barrel-ramp leading down the stairs has been retained. Old floorboards have been saved where possible, moved to create new floors, and some very old plank doors retained for the second-floor attic rooms, along with their original strap hinges.

In all, 63 wallpapers dating back to the eighteenth century have been discovered and analysed by Lincoln Conservation. The roof timbers in the attic rooms emphasise the seventeenth-century construction methods of in-line butt purlins with hefty collars. The enclosed rear 'yard' is the site of the original well, and an ice-house is under the paving here too. The cleaned up 1840 sundial (shown in the first picture) still tells GMT pretty accurately.

Minimal modern services have been introduced with the aim of using the building as offices. For this reason some rather unsightly strip lights have been installed, but they are apparently easily removeable. Speaking personally, my biggest disappointment is with the wonderfully-proportioned *piano nobile*, now called the Board Room, which has had its panelling carefully repaired, but is painted an unsympathetic blue, with glaringly new light floorboards and the afore-mentioned strip lighting. Somehow it has lost some of its magic.



Two of the retained plank doors and one of the hand-made strap hinges



*above:
the typically
seventeenth-century
roof construction*



*left:
the modern treatment
of the inside of the
building for office use*

The restoration of Howard House was championed by the Norwich Society when Mary Ash was Chair

Tracing the history of a house using documents

Diane Barr



Bridge Green Farm, Burston

In 2003, the NHBG was asked to survey Bridge Green Farmhouse in Burston (see the Autumn 2006 newsletter - No. 12).

This article will go through the process of finding out the history of the property using documentary evidence. The NHBG report interpreted the house as a two-bay hall with parlour end dating from the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century. At the time of the survey the property was part of the Thelveton estate under the ownership of the Mann family. The report has given us a starting point for research: when did the Mann family acquire the estate?

Firstly, it is a good idea to locate the property on a modern-day map or satellite image. Maps are generally good for giving visual and topographical information useful for interpreting evidence found in documents. The map tells us the property is on the Gissing Road with a common to the north variously known over time as Bridge Green, Burston Common and Northgate Green



Image from Google Earth

The best place to start looking for documentary evidence is the catalogue of the local record office; in this case the Norfolk Archive Centre at County Hall. Searching through the catalogue for Thelveton estate items uncovered the title deeds of the Mann family of Thelveton Hall. Among these deeds are the Sale Particulars and Agreement of the conveyance of Bridge Green Farm (fig.1). The farm premises and land were sold to Sir Edward John Mann (of Thelveton Hall) in 1921 by Sir Kenneth Hagar Kemp (of Pentlow, Sheringham), whilst in the occupation of Arthur Valentine Boulton. It also mentions title to the property commenced with the will of Sir William Robert Kemp in 1861.



Fig.1 Map from 1921 Sales Catalogue

We now have the Kemp's as owners in 1861. The Kemp family had held lands in the neighbouring parish of Gissing for some five centuries but how long have the Kemp's owned the farm at Burston?

The tithe surveys of the 1830s and 1840s are a good starting point for researching a building we know was extant in the nineteenth century. They can sometimes be the only full record of owners and occupiers in a parish where estate plans and surveys are scarce. A tithe apportionment and map was commissioned for almost all rural parishes in Norfolk between 1836 and 1850. Looking at the survey map for Burston in 1839/41 we can see the buildings almost match the ones on a present day map (fig.2)

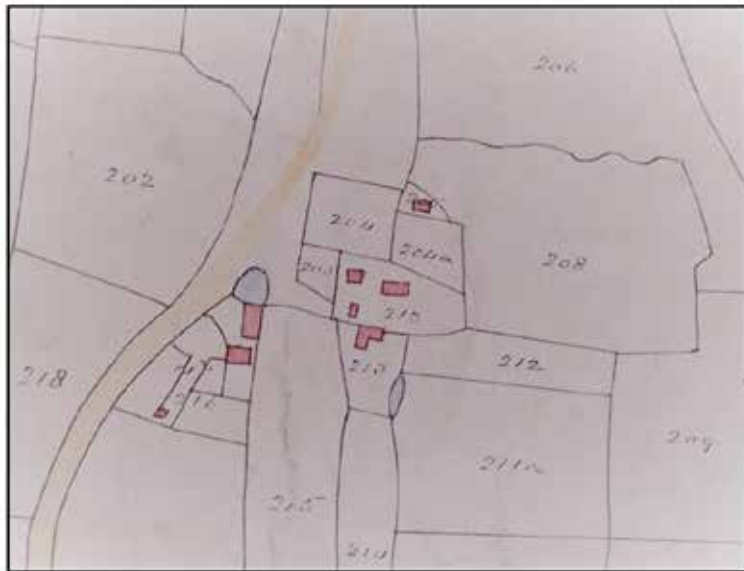


Fig.2 Section of the 1841 Tithe Map

The numbers on the map represent the plots allocated to various land owners listed on the corresponding apportionment. In this case, plot 213 is Bridge Green Farmhouse:

Plot	Owner	1839 Occupier	Field Name
203	Sir Wm Kemp	John Green	Orchard
206	"	"	Field
209	"	"	Field
211a	"	"	Field
212	"	"	Pightle
213	"	"	Premises
214	"	"	Hempland

We can now assume all the plots listed under the occupation of John Green are Bridge Green Farm comprising of approximately 57 acres. Make a note of the acreage it will help with further research. Incidentally, plots 204, 204a and 205 were owned by Edward Murton, and plot 208 by Robert Scales. Always note down neighbouring owners; this can be useful for finding other documents that may have information about your property. We now know Sir William Kemp possessed the premises and land in 1839/41.

Plot	Owner	1823 Occupier	Field Name
203	Leman	John Barber	Stackyard
206	Robt Millard	William Booty	South 5 acres
209	Leman	John Barber	Three acres
211a	"	"	
212	"	"	Pightle
213	"	"	House and Yard
214	"	"	Hempland

To find when the Kemp's first owned the property a search for more documents relating to Burston was made. Among the parish records a reference book to a map of Burston dating from 1823 was found. This gave further information on the plots above:

Two things can be learnt from this table; a different owner and occupier, and plot 206 belonged to someone else between 1823 and 1839/41.

It is clear more documents dealing with the early nineteenth century are needed. There is a set of documents a researcher can use to bridge in the gap between the enclosure awards of the early nineteenth century and tithe records of the 1840s. These are Land tax Assessment records that list, year by year, the proprietors and the occupiers of land and premises in each parish from 1797 to 1832. Each holding was recorded separately as a total acreage. A note should be made of the acreage this will be useful for determining the size of the holding over time.

The land tax return for Burston is contained within the tax assessment for Diss Hundred. It shows Sir William Kemp did not become owner of Bridge Green Farm until 1830, when it was joined to the 25 acres he already owned in Burston. At this time, the holding is described as a house and land of 23 and half acres (late Murton) with John Green as occupier. The tax return also shows that George Murton (of Shelfhanger) was owner/occupier for a short time in 1829. Prior to this the Reverend Leman held the 29 acre property from 1825 to 1828 with John Barber as occupier. Robert Rede had it from 1808 until it was passed to the Orgill-Leman family in 1828. From 1800 to 1807 it was in the possession of Mrs Leman with John Roper in occupation; she is recorded as holding 29 acres. Several farmers occupied the Bridge Green premises from 1800 to 1828 namely John Roper, Thomas Daines, Samuel Cooke and John Barber.

To find out how the Lemans and Redes came into ownership manor court records, wills, and biographies/local studies (to find background information) were studied. The background search showed that Burston had two manors; Brockdish Hall and Mildenhall. The records held at the Archive Centre for these two manors date from 1805 to 1934. It was discovered that Bridge Green Farm was in the manor of Mildenhall, and the court book for 1805 to 1906 was searched through (luckily there is an index). From this we found Mary Leman of Bury St Edmunds died a spinster in 1807, and that she had held the copyhold for land in Burston since 1788. Her will, proved in 1808, passed her messuages and land in the occupation of John Roper to Robert Rede of Beccles (fig.3 - following page). (see endnote)

In 1824, Robert Rede died without issue. His will bequeathed all his property to the Rev'd Naunton Thomas Orgill- Leman of Brampton. Finally, in 1828 the land comprising of 28 acres was bought absolutely from N.T.O Leman by George Murton of Shelfhanger.

The acquiring and transferring of land fluctuates over time but an approximation of acreage can be gleaned from what we have gathered so far. Sir William Kemp held about 48 acres in 1830 when he joined his 25 acres to Murton's 23 and half. With the 9 or so acres he gained from William Booty he had near enough 57 acres by time the tithe apportionment was allotted.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to get any information about an individual house unless it is mentioned separately in documents. Apart from those farmers already mentioned, the occupation of the farm can be traced from 1841 using census returns and trade directories. John Green occupied until about 1864 when John and James Self became tenants; they are listed on the 1871 census as having a 57 acre farm. Frederick Self is mentioned as being the tenant in the Harrod's Directory of 1878. To get further back from the nineteenth century another set of records can be used.

assigns and also all that my M^{rs} Mary and
 herin with the lands Grounds and Buildings
 as well as the hold as copyhold tenures belonging
 situate and being at Burston Dips and
 Winfarthing in the County of Norfolk or in
 any other Parish adjacent to the same or adjoining
 now in the occupation of John Mynne his
 undertakants or assigns with the tenures rights
 and appurtenances wherof Robert Redd of Burston in
 the said County of Suffolk Gentleman and his heirs

Fig.3 Extract from the will of Mary Leman

We know Mary Leman acquired the land and buildings in 1788. When property changed hands an Abstract of Title was usually produced. This gives a list of owners going backwards in time as proof of ownership. The abstract of title from when the Rev'd Leman took possession shows Mary inherited the estate of Robert Leman of Wickham in 1781 as requested in his will. Prior to this another Robert Leman had come into the land and buildings of Robert Mynne, alias Meene, in 1708. In 1658, an indenture to levy fines (an agreement to the sale and purchase of property) transferred to Mynne two messuages, two gardens and two orchards with 70 acres of land in various locations. One of these was a capital messuage called "Matts" in the occupation of William Rice with adjoining close containing by estimation 6 acres. This is described as abutting upon Breaches Green towards the north, possibly an earlier name for Bridge Green. A further 23 acres or so of land in Burston was also obtained.

Evidence to take the story further back was not found. More abstracts of title, manor court records, hearth tax records, wills would add to what has already been discovered. Most importantly a probate inventory would be invaluable as these often give descriptions of each room in the house. Since, the early owners were connected to Suffolk it would probably be worth a visit to the county archives there. In addition, documents can be stored in archives beyond the local area as landowners were not necessarily resident to the property under investigation.

(Mo Cubitt found some of the Hempnall Manor records in a trunk in the muniments room at Barningham Hall, the home of the Lord of the manor of Hempnall since the eighteenth century. Ed)

1 Both the Rede family and Leman family were very important in Beccles from the the late sixteenth century. Sir John Leman became the Sheriff of London in 1606 and Lord Mayor in 1616. He endowed a free grammar school in Beccles in 1632, which now houses Beccles Museum. Various members of the Rede family were Reeves (Mayors) of Beccles in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Diane leads the NHBG Documentary Research Team, which is working (though currently paused) on the archives of Boulton & Paul

Although not related to this property, the probate inventory shown below shows how useful it might be to the buildings researcher - listing and naming rooms (four upstairs and a garrett) and their contents

Probate Inventory of John Ellered, shepherd – 1700 (DN/INV 68A/20 – MF/X 18)

In the Kitchen
 fireguarde wth cheek iron cobbtongs and other items for pewter and warming pan box ?
 table and kneeding trough
 chairs and a pr of bellows

In the Hall
 one clockline and weights for pewter
 one ? and rack
 one chesepress and box
 one table and 4 chairs
 for dishes and other things

In the backhouse
 one copper and other goods

In the Diary
 one milk ? and churns
 one butter ? and other things

In the Kitchen Chamber
 one bed and bedstead with stand
 one case of ? & a chist
 a table a trunk & a chaire

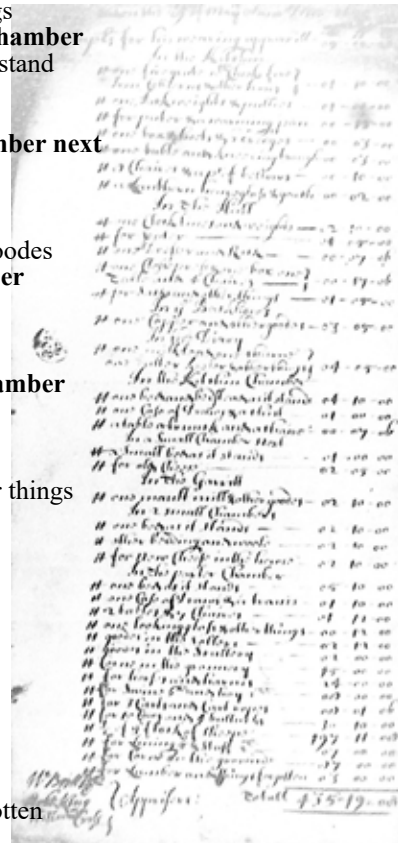
In the small chamber next
 a small bed as it stands
 for old cheese

In the Garritt
 one mault mill and other goodes

In a small chamber
 one bed as it stands
 other bedding and woole
 for new cheese in the ?

In the Parler Chamber
 one bed as it stands
 one case of ?
 2 tables and chaires
 one looking glass and other things

goodes in the cellars
 goodes in the scullery
 corne in the granary
 for horses and harnis
 for swine and hay
 for 3 carts and cart ropes
 for 10 oxen? and 4 bulles
 a flock of sheep
 for lining & stuff
 for ??? in the grounde
 for lumber and things forgotten



Twenty years of summer visits (members giving their full attention to the speaker!)





From the archives...
 What NHBG members
 get up to when
 out on visits.

Viewing of fine details ...
 or just noseys?

Photos:
 Ian Hinton & Rosemary Forrest

