

NETHER WALSTEAD,

East Mascalls Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex



Historic Fabric Assessment

November 2025
Version 2.0

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SITE NAME: Nether Walstead

LOCATION: East Mascalls Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

NGR: TQ 36095 24551 (centred)

NHLE: 1180891 – Grade II Listed Building

INTRODUCTION: This report has been prepared following a programme of historic fabric assessment and archaeological observations at the property of Nether Walstead in West Sussex (**Appendix I.1**). The work has been undertaken to inform forthcoming planning proposals.

Initial Assessment

An initial assessment of exposed historic fabric at Nether Walstead was undertaken by Richard Pougher MClfA of TJC Heritage Ltd. on 10th September 2025. The purpose was to inform the overall phasing of the site, to make an assessment of areas identified for removal of fabric in the proposals, and to identify areas for opening up to assess obscured fabric.

Archaeological Observations

Following the initial assessment, five discrete areas suitable for opening up were identified, targeting obscured fabric where alteration was proposed. During the course of the fieldwork, additional areas for opening up were identified, resulting in a total of nine areas of archaeological observation (see **Appendices I.2 & I.3**). The recording took the form of visual analysis, site notes, and digital photography, undertaken by Richard Pougher MClfA of TJC Heritage Ltd on 16th October 2025.

The archaeological observations were undertaken through the removal of existing fittings, principally plug sockets and light switches, thus their removal caused no harm to the historic fabric of the building. Additionally, a light fitting was removed in **Room 0-09**, and existing openings within wall panelling in **Room 0-16** were used to inspect fabric behind (**Appendix I.2**). All electrical fittings were carefully removed and replaced as found by a qualified electrician.

Archaeological Methodology

There was no formal Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological observations, however, the archaeological examination of the areas that were opened up were undertaken in accordance with ClfA's (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2020).

RESULTS:

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Nether Walstead comprises a house of probable early-17th century origin with later phases including 18th & 19th century alterations and subsequent phases of extension in the early and mid-20th century (**Appendix 2.1**).

The initial assessment focused on areas where alterations are proposed and are discussed below.

WESTERN EXTENSION (ROOMS 0-01 – 0-06 & ROOMS 1-01 – 1-08)

The western part of the house comprises an early-20th century extension undertaken in the Arts & Crafts style. Externally, this is expressed with brick, large rendered and timber-framed gables, and sweeping catslide roofs (**Appendix 2.2**).

Internally, fabric of note relating to this early-20th century phase includes undecorated but oversized ovolo mouldings to door architraves, moulded elements of panelling in **Room 0-06**, and the open-well staircase.

Of note is the external door in **Room 0-01** which, while set in an early-20th century architrave, has the appearance of a 17th or 18th century door.

LIVING ROOM (ROOM 0-11) & ENTRANCE HALL (ROOM 0-13)

Within the eastern part of the house, the timber frame structure is exposed internally, being obscured externally by weatherboarding, hung tiles, and later extensions. **Room 0-13** comprises a corridor providing access from the external door in the south elevation to the panelled living room (**0-16**), stair tower (**0-15**), and kitchen (**0-12**). The north wall of this forms a timber framed partition to **Room 0-11** and features a scar from a blocked door at its eastern end, noted by a recess to the wall finish and a change in skirting style within **0-11** (**Appendix 2.3**). The infill comprises two posts and a central rail, with evidence of reuse, the western post having a truncated peg hole on the north face (**Appendix 2.4**). Within **0-13**, the post and rail are fitted with nails, suggesting the door was either not part of the original timber framing or these elements were added to achieve the infilling (**Appendix 2.5**).

PLANT ROOM (0-19), DINING ROOM (0-20), ENTRANCE HALL (0-21) & WC (0-22)

The south-east corner of the house comprises multiple phases, including the northern part of **0-20** which features the exposed timber-framing of the stair tower and kitchen walls. **Room 0-19** is a single-storey lean-to of late-19th / early-20th century character, with quality brickwork including queen closers, and a timber casement window with narrow glazing bars, it first appears on the 1909 OS map.

The southern part of **0-20**, along with **0-21** & **0-22** relate to a 2003 extension.

BATHROOM (1-18)

At the eastern end of the first floor, the bathroom is formed by inserted partitions which cut across the exposed timber-framing. The date of the partition is likely to be of late-20th century date.

BEDROOM (1-22)

At the far east end of the first floor, this room features exposed timber box framing comprising principal posts at the corners of the room, exposed bridging beam, and the remains of two earlier window openings in the north wall.

In the north-west corner of the room is a corner cupboard constructed of multiple types of historic timber panelling, the provenance of which is unknown. The cupboard itself was possibly installed in the late-20th century (**Appendix 2.6**).

The west wall of the room comprises a cross frame formed of a mid rail and a series of studs. The principal stud to the centre of the wall retains pegs for the terminal ends of the mid rails on either side, however, there are no visible peg holes on either mid rail corresponding to the secondary studs, which are present on the wall plate above. It appears that a repair has been carried out to the mid rail, planting on newer timber and obscuring the peg holes behind (**Appendix 2.7**).

At the southern end of this partition is a doorway formed by a post and simple narrow moulded lintel, presumably a replacement of an earlier timber lintel pegged to the post. The opening contains a timber plank door with large strap hinges hanging on pintles in the principal post.

ROOF SPACE (2-05)

The roof structure above rooms **1-14**, **1-15** & **0-16** comprises two pit-sawn hardwood collar and tie-beam trusses, with tenoned purlins and common rafters tenoned to the purlins (**Appendix 2.8**). The trusses have incised assembly marks numbered I & II at the joint between the collars and principal rafters on the south side, and additionally at the apex of the principal rafters. The roof structure is potentially of an 18th century date, although the simple collar and tie-beam construction may suggest a slightly earlier date. There is also evidence of reuse of timbers, including rafters with redundant lap joints (**Appendix 2.9**). Later alteration (19th century) included the partial boarding of the attic space with softwood tongue & groove boards fitted with square-section nails and late-19th century pencil graffiti (1894).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

A summary of the results of the archaeological observations from opening up works are presented below. The nine areas that were examined are referred to sequentially and their positions are recorded on floor plans included as **Appendices 1.2 & 1.3** with photographs included as **Appendix 2**.

The room name and unique reference numbers are used to identify each area where the historic fabric was exposed.

LIVING ROOM (0-16)

Observation 1: Two existing holes within the timber panelling on the north wall of the room were inspected visually and with an endoscope inspection camera. The walling behind comprised red and vitrified brick bedded with a lime mortar.

Observation 2: An existing hole at the base of the panelling was utilised for inspection. A timber beam was observed behind the panelling, possibly acting as a sill beam, however the access was limited, and an assessment of its age remains inconclusive.

Observation 3: A modern plug socket was removed from the face of the panelling exposing the walling material behind. The face of the north wall of the room was found to comprise handmade red brick laid in thick lime mortar (**Appendix 2.10**). Parts of the wall were observed to be lime plastered (**Appendix 2.11**). The appearance of the hand made brick and use of thick bedding mortar is typically indicative of a pre-20th century date. The wall thickness here is notably thinner than the south wall and north-east corner of the room, which is likely attributed to an 18th century rebuilding, or cladding in brick. It is therefore possible that this narrower part of the north wall post-dates that phase, most likely being from 19th century.

The timber panelling within the room is stylistic of 17th century small square panelling and includes a frieze of stylised foliate lunettes (**Appendix 2.12**). As with many cases, it is suggested that the panelling has been moved or rearranged within the house or inserted from elsewhere (Hall 2005, 136-9). This is evidenced by the mouldings on the full-length vertical stiles, which differ to that of the shorter stiles, and the frieze above appears to be truncated in places.

LIVING ROOM (0-06)

Observation 4: A modern plug socket was removed in the east wall of the room. The wall fabric behind comprised what appears to be a metal vent or flue rising vertically, therefore obscuring the fabric of the wall between this room and the panelled living room (**0-16**).

The wall material of **Room 0-06** comprises lath and plaster with the laths being positioned closer together than elsewhere in the building (see below). This appears to represent the early-20th century finish.

LIVING ROOM (0-09)

Observation 5: The southern part of this room appears to have been altered as part of the early-20th century works. The ceiling to the south sits lower than that to the north, which features a chamfered and stopped bridging beam and joists (**Appendix 2.13**). This lower ceiling is formed by two parallel cross beams above four timber columns. The columns do not appear to be load bearing, with evidence in the cellar below indicating the north-west one was nailed through the flooring.

An existing speaker fitting was removed from the northern cross beam. The area around the speaker fixing point was found to be solid timber, however the nature of the full beam was not identified due to the localised nature of the fixing point. As such, it was decided to remove a spotlight from the southern beam which is visually of a similar construction (see Observation 6).

Observation 6: A modern spotlight was removed from the underside of the southern cross beam revealing a void containing modern services. Beyond this, the cross beam was found to be constructed of timber with one joist jointed to it within the area of observation (**Appendix 2.14**).

BEDROOM STORAGE (1-16)

Observation 7: **Room 1-16** is a storage cupboard at the east end of a bedroom (**1-15**). It sits to the immediate south of the central chimney stack and contains exposed timber framing in the east wall.

A modern plug socket was removed from the south wall of the room which forms a partition to **Room 1-21**. The wall was found to be constructed of lath and plaster with one timber stud visible having large redundant nails hammered flush to its surface, suggesting reuse. The laths appear to be machine-sawn, indicating a potential date for the partition being in the last half of the 19th century (**Appendix 2.15**).

BEDROOM (1-14)

Observation 8. A plug socket was removed from the north wall of the room, revealing its construction to be a lath and plaster stud wall (**Appendix 2.16**). The laths appear to be machine-sawn, indicating a potential date for the wall being in the last half of the 19th century. A timber beam was noted at the base of the north side of the wall void, while the south side was finished with lath and plaster all the way to the base. This beam was potentially inserted to achieve the raised floor level in the first-floor corridor to the north (**Room 1-09**).

Observation 9. The west wall of the room forms a partition to another bedroom (**Room 1-15**). Within **1-15**, raking light highlights a vertical scar in this wall, and it corresponds to a cut mark on the skirting board and a slight change in moulding. On the west side of the partition, within **Room 1-14**, a similar alteration to the skirting is visible, although this is narrower (**Appendix 2.17**). A plug socket was removed, and the wall construction was found to be of timber studs with lath and plaster. The laths appear to be machine-sawn, indicating a potential date for the wall in the last half of the 19th century. Within the wall void, a redundant lead pipe was noted (**Appendix 2.18**).

SUMMARY

The examination of targeted areas of historic fabric has revealed details of the construction methods and materials in areas of the house that are proposed for alteration.

The north wall of **Room 0-16** is constructed of handmade red brick with lime mortar bedding and some evidence of lime plaster. A timber sill beam was also noted below this, however the relationship between the two elements was unclear due to a lack of access. The difference in wall thickness compared to the rest of the room suggests the north wall in its present form may be the result of a later alteration. The 17th century panelling may have either been installed in the room following this or re-applied to the wall after alteration.

The form of the two cross beams above the hollow columns in **Room 0-09** visually takes the form of a boxed-in RSJ. On inspection, it appears these are in fact timber beams.

Partition walls to first-floor rooms **1-14**, **1-15** & **1-16** are constructed of timber studs and machine-sawn laths with a lime plaster finish. This appears to relate to a phase of mid to late-19th century alteration. The possibility of these dating to the early-20th century building works has been discounted due to a distinct difference in door architrave style, with those in the early 20th century west extension having far larger profiles.

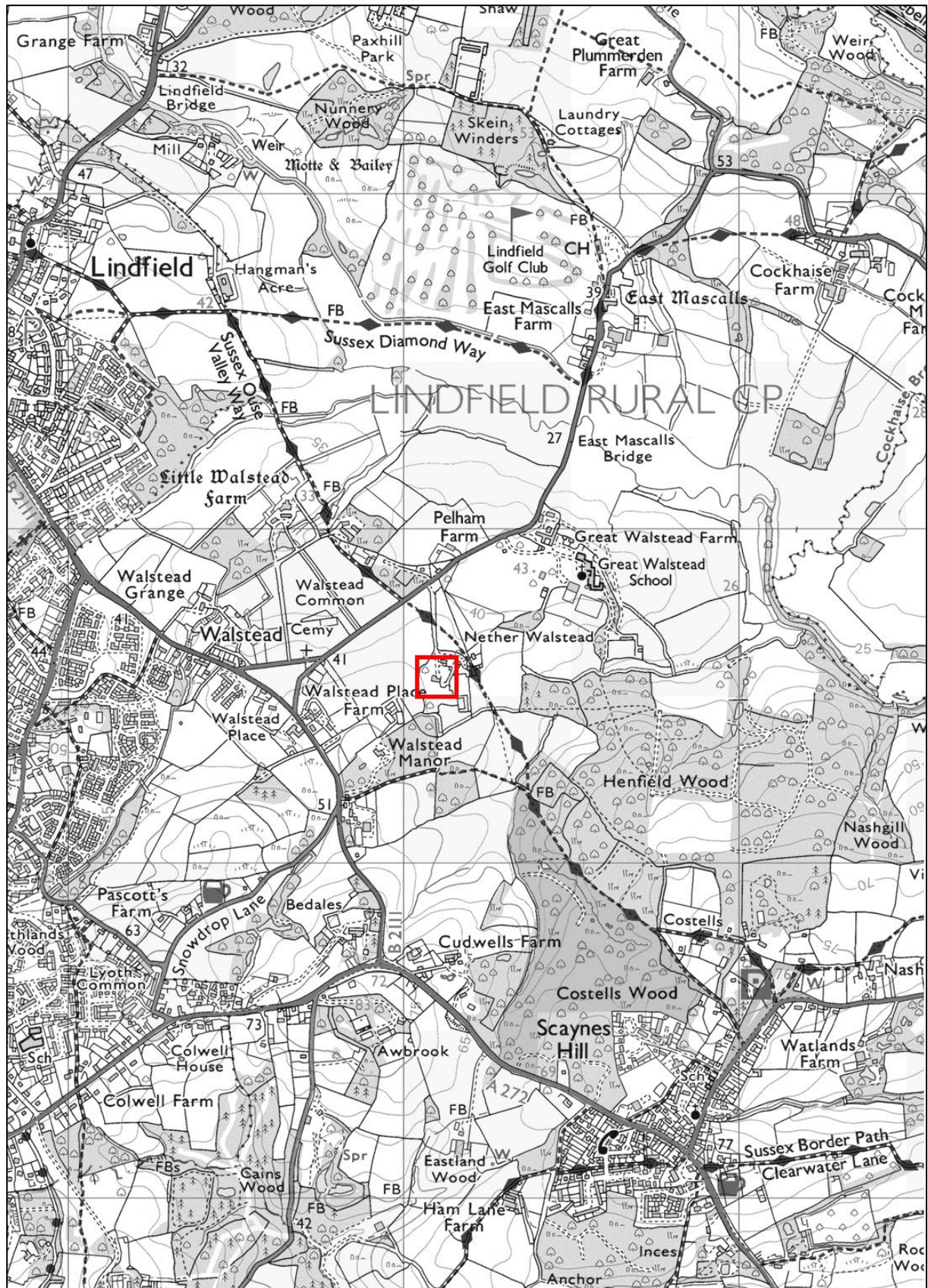
Recommendations

1. A scheme of archaeological monitoring should be undertaken during any future alterations, as it is highly likely that additional evidence for the development of the house will be revealed through larger-scale opening up of historic fabric.
2. Any detailed recording or monitoring should be undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

Richard Pougher MCIfA

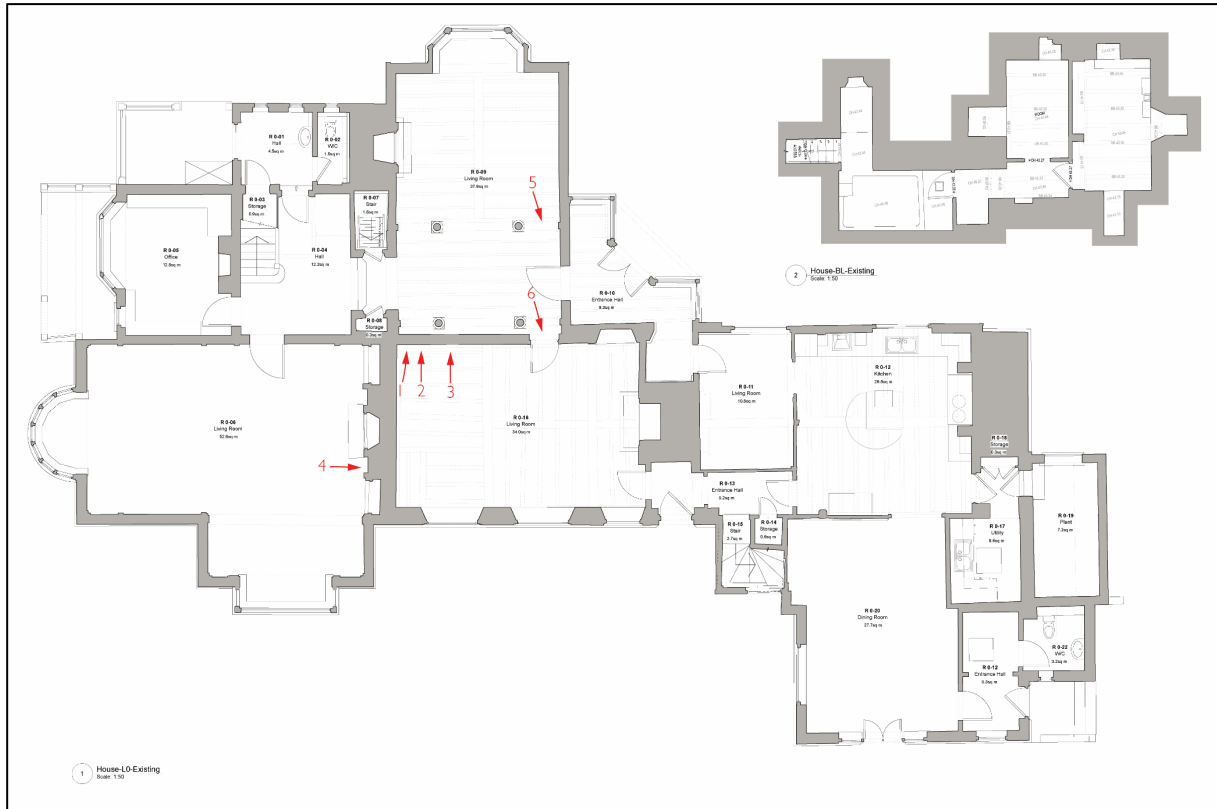
November 2025

Appendix I – Site Location & Plans

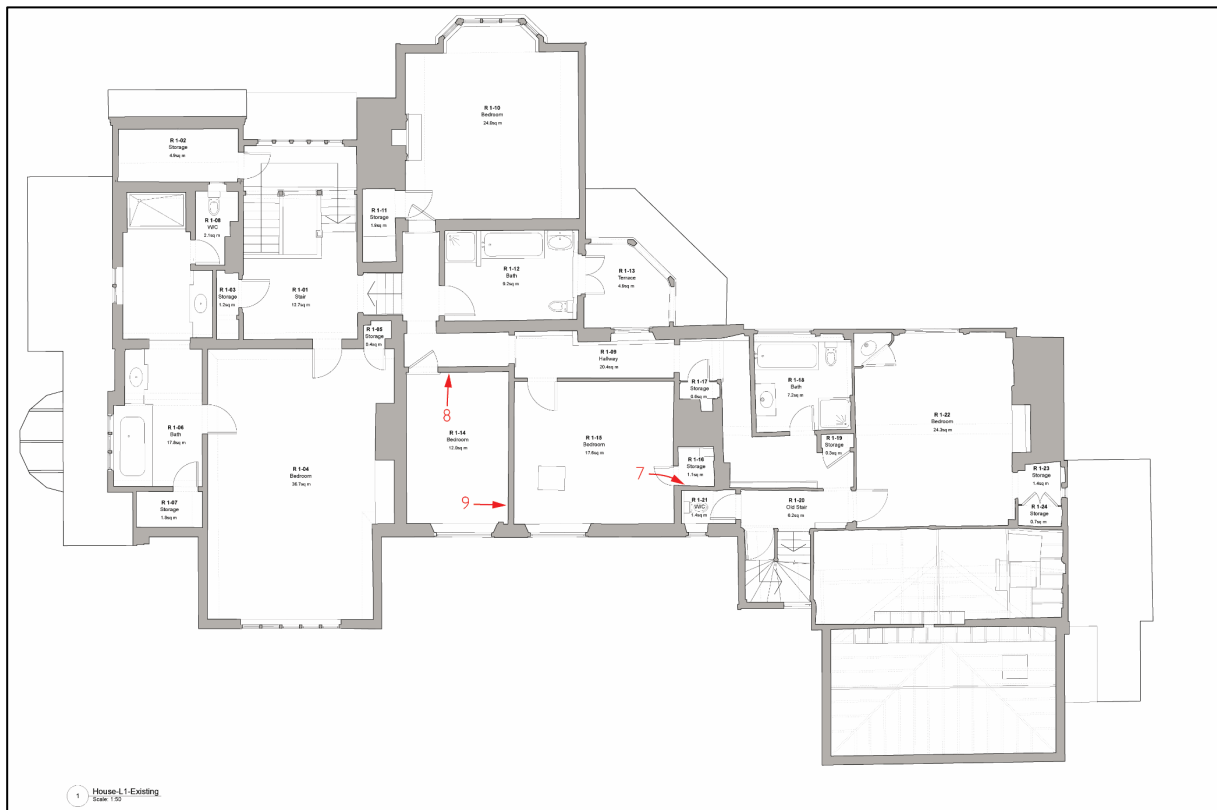


Appendix I.1: Site location plan

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Appendix I.2: Ground floor plan showing areas of archaeological observation
After George & James Architects



Appendix I.3: First floor plan showing areas of archaeological observation
After George & James Architects

Appendix 2 - Photographs



Appendix 2.1: General view of the house, looking south



Appendix 2.2: General view of early-20th century extension, looking east



Appendix 2.3: General view of blocked door in **Room 0-11**, looking south-east



Appendix 2.4: Detail of reused timber in blocking, **Room 0-11**, looking south (5cm Scale)



Appendix 2.5: Detail of infill to blocked door in **Room 0-13**, looking north



Appendix 2.6: General view of north wall and corner cupboard, **Room 1-22**, looking north-west



Appendix 2.7: General view of cross frame, **Room 1-22**, looking west



Appendix 2.8: General view of roof space, **Room 2-05**, looking south-east



Appendix 2.9: Detail of reused common rafters, **Room 2-05**, looking south-west



Appendix 2.10: Detail of north wall, **Room 0-16** (Observation 3), looking north-east (20cm scale)



Appendix 2.11: Detail of lime plaster, **Room 0-16** (Observation 3), looking north-east



Appendix 2.12: Detail of panelling in **Room 0-16**, looking north



Appendix 2.13: Detail of chamfered ceiling beams, **Room 0-09**, looking north-east



Appendix 2.14: Detail from inspection camera of timber beam above columns in **Room 0-09**, (Observation 6) looking north



Appendix 2.15: Detail from inspection camera of lath and plaster south wall in **Room I-15**, (Observation 7) looking east



Appendix 2.16: Detail from inspection camera of timber stud and lath and plaster north wall in **Room I-14**, (Observation 8) looking north



Appendix 2.17: Detail of disturbed skirting board on east wall in **Room I-14**, (Observation 9) looking south-east (20cm Scale)



Appendix 2.18: Detail of lath and plaster east wall in **Room I-14**, (Observation 9) looking north-east

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