

Buildings Dept  
04/05

# Cherry Croft Cottage Kingwood Common



## Historic Building Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

May 2004

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# CHERRY CROFT COTTAGE, KINGWOOD COMMON

## *HISTORIC BUILDING ANALYSIS*

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# CHERRY CROFT COTTAGE, KINGWOOD COMMON

## HISTORIC BUILDING ANALYSIS

### SUMMARY

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) has carried out archaeological analysis and recording of a small outbuilding and its extensions in the garden of Cherry Croft Cottage, Kingwood Common, south Oxfordshire. The work was commissioned by the owner, Mr P Snapes in order to fulfil condition three of planning approval P04/E0167 set by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) prior to the building's demolition. The building is a small, flint and brick, labourer's cottage which has developed over several years and which initially dates to the mid to late eighteenth century.*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 LOCATION AND SCOPE OF WORK

- 1.1.1 Cherry Croft Cottage, owned by Mr P Snapes sits within a garden of approximately 1.87 acres in the small village of Kingwood Common roughly five miles east of Henley-on-Thames, south Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The property contains several outbuildings the largest of these sited immediately to the east of the main house it is in a very dilapidated and dangerous condition through continuing neglect. The owners have applied for planning permission to demolish this building and in order to satisfy planning condition P04/E0167 of the SODC, OA have recorded this building.

### 1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 The outbuilding, and indeed the Cherry Croft Cottage itself, is not listed and has not been the subject of any previous archaeological research, however, Kingwood Common is a settlement of some antiquity and there is certainly roman, Saxon and medieval activity in the local area.
- 1.2.2 There are twelfth-century references to 'Kingswood'; it is very likely that the name 'Kingwood' derives from the fact that it was part of royal lands. Henry II and later kings are certainly recorded as hunting in the area around Ewelme,<sup>1</sup> and in 1279 twelve men at a court session in Ewelme, to the north of Kingwood Common, declared that Bensington Manor, which probably contained Kingwood Common, was a Royal demesne. Recently in the 1950s occupants of houses on Kingwood Common have fought to retain their historical commons rights and, confirmed by the courts, they are still entitled to tether livestock; gather firewood and bean poles and pick cherries from the common.
- 1.2.3 The main two storey element of the outbuilding at Cherry Croft Cottage appears to be shown on the 1797 Davis map (Fig. 2) and the building with its extension to the

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<sup>1</sup> Macleod, M (2000) *Land of the Rother Beast: An Oxfordshire Chronicle* Skye Publications.



north appears on the first edition 1:2500 ordnance survey map of 1872 (Fig. 3). The main cottage was probably constructed in the early twentieth century.

### 1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Mr and Mrs Snapes for their patience, the staff at Oxfordshire Local History Library and South Oxfordshire District Council.



## 2 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 The primary aim of the investigation at Cherry Croft Cottage was to make a comprehensive record of the outbuildings to mitigate against the loss of any information through its destruction, preserving it through record. Although the building is not listed it is within an area of outstanding natural beauty and is of some historical interest.
- 2.1.2 The investigation would lead to the production of a report that will be accessible to future researchers.
- 2.1.3 In order to achieve this the following objectives were identified:
- Make a detailed descriptive and photographic record of the building. The photographs were to be indicative of the buildings general character and of specific details of construction and phasing.
  - Create measured sketch plans of all floor levels which will indicate the phases of the building's development.
  - Create measured sketch sections through the building at points that will be indicative of its construction and complement other records.
  - If necessary compile drawn details of other elements of interest - for example carpentry joints.

## 2.2 LEVELS OF RECORDING

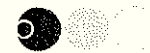
- 2.2.1 The former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME now English Heritage) has outlined four levels of recording in their *Recording Buildings; a Descriptive Specification* Third Edition 1996.
- 2.2.2 It is important to distinguish between the detailed and careful investigation of the fabric, and detailed recording. Where a building or wall is clearly of a single-phase the recording of outlines and specific events and interventions may be more important than drawing every stone or brick. Given the small scale of the outbuilding at Cherry Croft Cottage the more detailed levels of recording outlined by the RCHME are not deemed necessary to adequately understand and record this particular building.
- 2.2.3 An overall understanding of the building expressed in a written account and accompanied by phased plans and a photographic record is essential. The record will generally be that covered by RCHME level II.

## 2.3 METHODOLOGY

- 2.3.1 Of prime importance is the understanding of this building, and its preservation through record before its agreed demolition. In order to achieve this, examination of the building needed to be combined with selective recording of pertinent areas and a full photographic record. OA seeks to record the elements of the outbuilding at Cherry Croft Cottage to a level which will give the maximum amount of understanding without embarking on needless and extraneous recording.

## 2.4 THE DRAWN RECORD

- 2.4.1 The drawn record consists of measured sketch plans and sections, and relevant details.



- 2.4.2 Required drawings are produced to a useful metric scale, usually 1:20 and 1:50, using pencil on permatrace. The drawings are fully annotated.
- 2.4.3 These drawings will form part of the final archive. Individual drawings may be digitised to include in the final report. All drawn records are produced alongside a formal written record.

## 2.5 THE WRITTEN RECORD

- 2.5.1 The written record is linked to the drawn record (by descriptive terms, or numbering). It includes summary descriptive sheets for rooms and areas, and (as appropriate) more detailed records for individual features and components.
- 2.5.2 Both clearly defined identifiable features and more obscure, less easily identifiable features revealed are recorded. Significant features and constructional elements will be assigned individual context numbers as appropriate.

## 2.6 THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

- 2.6.1 This would principally be made using 35 mm film (black and white prints, colour slides) and would include both general shots of the building and its setting and specific details. Wherever possible a tripod would be used with natural light illumination but with dark interiors flash lighting would be used. All films will include a chalk board indicating the film number and site code and where appropriate photographs will include a photographic scale.
- 2.6.2 Digital photographs will also be taken to supplement the record on film.

## 2.7 THE STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 2.7.1 This report will be divided into three principal sections.
- The first will be a general discussion of the exterior form of the building, its building materials its elevations and the general phasing and development of the building.
  - Following this will be a description of the character of each of the rooms including evidence of construction and phasing along with any features of specific interest.
  - Finally there will be a discussion of the conclusions drawn about the building and its development.





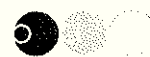
### 3 DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1 GENERAL FORM AND EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

- 3.1.1 The outbuilding is aligned almost exactly north-south and consists of three main elements (Fig. 4); **Area A** is the two storey main block forming the southern part (Plate 1); **Area B** is a single storey extension added to the north on the west side (Plate 2) and an open sided single storey shed with a diagonal set of possible pigsties to the north on the eastern side forms **Area C** (Plate 3). There is also a glass greenhouse added to centre of the south side, **Area D**. The building is approximately 13m long, not including the green house and at its widest point is approximately 9.5m wide. The two storey element is approximately 5.5m high. All the elements are suffering from collapse and large cracks are visible in the walling and roof timbers of the extension and shed are rotted and failing.
- 3.1.2 At the building's south eastern corner a wall (Plate 4) extends to the east for approximately 4m with a door to the rear of the building, it then turns to the south for another 4m it also is of brick with irregular flint nodule panels and probably dates to the same period as the south front, which has the same style of brickwork and panels. The outbuilding is joined at its south western corner to the main house by a covered diagonal pathway with large windows between the posts on both sides. Cherry Croft Cottage itself sits to the west and slightly north of the outbuilding's south wall.
- 3.1.3 The earliest part of the building is represented by the north and west walls of the area A. Next the extension to the north, area B, was added, and then widened and extended to the west. During the next phase, area C - the shed - was constructed using the east wall of the extension as part of the roof's support, and perhaps the south east wall of area B was rebuilt. Most recently, the south of the building, much of the eastern wall and the upper part of the north wall were reconstructed, the south west door was widened and a toilet was inserted into the ground floor room of area A. At this point also the main block was probably re-roofed and the upper room added in its present form.
- 3.1.4 The building is constructed primarily of unknapped flint nodules with red brick dressings to the corners, doors and window surrounds. The extension to the north and the eastern side of the building, also have a band of brick approximately half way up the height of the wall (Plate 5) but these are not continuous. The south face, which has been rebuilt, is constructed of grey concrete breeze block with a brick facing with irregularly shaped flint panels. On the north gable ends are broad wooden boards with waney edges (see Plate 2) and on the eastern wall the upper storey is hung with wall tiles (Plate 6). The roofs of the main block and the low extension are red tile, and that of the shed is corrugated white asbestos with the sty walls being of concrete breeze block.

#### 3.2 AREA DESCRIPTIONS

- 3.2.1 For the purposes of recording the building was examined room by room and each room given an individual number:
- **Area A** consists of two rooms, room 1 on the ground floor and room 2 on the first floor.
  - **Area B** consists of the single storey extension to the north, room 3.
  - **Area C** is the open sided shed and possible pig sties to the east of Area B.



- 3.2.2 The modern green house, **Area D**, was not assigned a room number; it is of twentieth century date and has a timber frame holding large glass panes (Plate 7). The frame rests on a brick plinth. The greenhouse is entered through a door on the west side and it abuts the south face of the building.
- 3.2.3 Reference should be made to Figures 4 and 5, the plan and sections, throughout the descriptions.
- 3.3 **AREA A**
- 3.3.1 **Area A is a two-storey block made primarily of flint nodules with brick dressings to corners, doors and windows; the south wall is mainly brick with irregular flint panels. There is a single room, Room 1, on the ground floor and Room 2 directly above this partly in the roof space. The north wall and northern half of the west wall belong to the earliest and original part of the building, probably dating from the mid to late eighteenth century. The rest of the structure, including the roof, has been rebuilt much later, probably the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, although using similar materials of brick and flint nodules. Inside the original fireplace remains in the north-west corner of room 1, it has been demolished at first floor level. Both rooms are now used for storage.**
- 3.3.2 Room 1 is approximately square - 6.5 by 6.5m, it has a concrete floor and the ceiling joists are exposed, the ceiling is approximately at 2m high (Plate 8). On the south wall the concrete breeze blocks are visible; the east wall is painted flint rubble and brick. The north-west corner of the room which is the earliest part of the room is plastered with a crumbly lime based plaster. The room is now used for storage but is likely to have been the main functioning room of the building including, perhaps, cooking on the fireplace, the sink and stove on the south wall were added later.
- 3.3.3 The room has two doors. The first and earliest is in the north wall and is a plank and batten door with long tapering iron strap hinges and a box lock with two bolts (Plate 9). The second is a double door added later in the west wall, although it may have replaced an earlier door in the same place. It is within a concrete frame which has removed the southern brick edge of the earlier small window. This window is probably original to the oldest part of the building. It has a deep reveal lined with boards, a wooden frame with single wooden mullion supports small rectangular panes of glass held in lead. On the south wall are four twentieth century galvanised metal frames with horizontal opening top lights and large lower panes.
- 3.3.4 The fireplace is in the north-west corner and has at now been converted into a cupboard with double doors (Plate 10); it was not accessible for close examination. It was plastered including the lintel and tapered slightly towards the ceiling. The space to the right of the fireplace, between the chimney breast and a short pier, has battens fixed to support shelving.
- 3.3.5 In the north east corner of the room is a later toilet with un-plastered cavity brick walls and a modern window. In the south east corner a round six inch diameter pipe approximately 300mm below the ceiling suggests a boiler or stove was once in this corner, the flu going up within the small chimney. In the south west corner is a steel sink.
- 3.3.6 The ceiling and the floor above is supported on common joists resting on an iron RJS beam which runs north-south across the room from the pier wall to the left of



the north door to a shallow brick pier on the south wall. On the west side of this beam the joists show marks and nails from a lath and plaster ceiling which has been removed. On the east side the joists are clean. All the timbers are machine sawn and very evenly sized (50 by 100mm/2 by 4in) (Plate 11).

3.3.7 **Room 2** is directly above room 1; it is accessed by a softwood ladder stair which is fitted next to the brick toilet walls in Room 1. The room measures approximately 5.6m by 3.75m and the ceiling is just over 2m high and is partly the slope of the roof. The floor is boarded with narrow softwood boards and the ceiling is mainly panels of chipboard. It is currently used for storage but may have been inserted as a bedroom during Phase V's rebuilding, although it is likely that earlier phases did have a first floor room.

3.3.8 The eastern wall is covered with vertical tongue and groove softwood panelling over a timber frame, which also supports the external hung tiles. The western wall is a plaster board partition on a stud frame of reused softwood inserted half way under the slope of the roof. At the north end of the room is a slight projection which is of uncertain date, it is not a continuation of the chimney below. Looking into the roof, in an area where the ceiling tiles were removed, it is clear that the upper part of the north wall has been rebuilt with breeze blocks and brick facing like the south wall (Plates 12 and 13). The narrow chimney flu for the later inserted boiler in Room 1 is visible as a slight projection in the south east corner of the room.

3.3.9 The window on the south facing wall is of a similar type to those in room one, although larger with three sections the two side ones opening out and the middle section having a top hinged opening section. On the east wall are two large windows of ten panes in two rows. The frame is painted metal and the middle six panes are within a separate centrally hinged opening section which swings inwards from the top (Plate 14).

3.3.10 The space formed by the partition wall to the west of the room shows that the roof is a common rafter construction with rafters of 2 by 4in. The tiles are visible and are hung on battens with metal nails. At the north end of this small space the wall is heavily sooted indicating the course of the chimney, the sides of the chimney are indicated by stubs of brick projecting from the wall slightly (Plate 15).

#### 3.4 AREA B

3.4.1 **Area B** is an extension that was built to the north west of Area A in at least two, and possibly three phases to form a third room. It is likely to date from the early nineteenth century. It is, like Area A, constructed of flint nodules with brick dressings and the roof is of similar red tile to Area A. The north gable is, however, covered with broad irregular boards. The entrance is in the middle of the east wall with a window to the south; the north and extended west walls each contain a small window. The walls and roof structure abut the north wall of Area A, and the roof is much collapsed. It is currently used for storage and for a large oil tank at its southern end.

3.4.2 Room 3 is 6m long, 2.5m wide at its southern end and 3.5m wide at the extended northern end with a concrete floor and a door with four recessed panels in the eastern wall. The earliest phase of this section, Phase II of the building, is the western wall which abuts the north-west corner of the main block and by the majority of the south wall and the east wall up to the door. Brick quoins in the upper part of the south wall show where the original section ended (Plate 16). Most of the roof timbers in the room appear to relate to this earliest phase although





the tiles have been re-laid over a lining, perhaps with the extension of the room. The roof is of common rafter construction with rafters meeting at a ridge piece, a single tier of purlins under the rafters and wall plates. The timbers are mostly halved small trees or branches or roughly boxed timbers, several very waney. The north wall does not extend for the full height of the roof and the gable is weather boarded with the boards being fixed to five halved timber posts resting on a wall plate (Plate 17).

- 3.4.3 This phase has a single window surviving in the southern wall, it is a small, four pane square window with a brick surround and square head and a timber above the window with a curved upper edge, this is not a lintel and may simply be decorative (see Plate 16). There may have been a stove of some sort in the centre of the room. The ridge piece is interrupted in the middle of its length and the ridge supported on two triangular yokes (Plate 18), the single tie-beam in the roof is also at this point and has a section cut out of its north side. However there is no other clear indication of a stove.
- 3.4.4 The second phase of this section is the extension to the west of the northern half of the room (see Plate 2). The extension is built into the southern end wall, leaving only the upper brick quoins, and abuts the western, original wall. The rafters, at least over this extension, have been replaced to extend to the new wall line and a new wall plate inserted, the old wall plate in this area now acts as a second purlin.
- 3.4.5 The south eastern section of wall between the door and the main block may be contemporary with this second phase but it may be a later rebuild. The metal framed window has frosted glass and an opening top section but does not look inserted as if it were in an earlier wall. It abuts the north wall of the main block. At the south end of the room is a narrow brick wall which abuts and is built over the top of the western wall and the character of the flint work is larger. The junction between this wall and the south eastern section is obscured by the oil tank so it is unclear whether the two sections are contemporary.
- 3.5 **AREA C**
- 3.5.1 **Area C diagonally fills the corner formed by the north wall of Area A and the east wall of Area B. It is constructed of softwood and concrete breeze blocks with later inserted partitions of a mixture of reused timbers. The trusses in the roof have vertical iron ties and the roof is covered with corrugated white asbestos. The structure has no coherent clear design and irregularly fits within the diagonal space between Areas A and B. It was probably constructed in the twentieth century and may possibly have been used for some kind of animal pens; now it is also used for storage.**
- 3.5.2 **Room 4** is an open sided shed with a corrugated white asbestos roof covering an open area and a series of four low stalls which run diagonally from the north-west to south east. Most of the floor is earth that slopes slightly down to the west, a path of concrete paving slabs has been laid parallel to the stalls.
- 3.5.3 The roof consists of four bays divided by five trusses with queen struts and iron ties securing the apex of the rafters to the tie-beam, there are no common rafters but three plank purlins rest on each of the rafters (Plate 19). Two of the five trusses form the northern and southern ends of the structure; the northern has broad irregular weather boarding on it and the southern one is against the wall of the main block. Below the central southern two trusses are later inserted partitions of irregular pieces of timber, several are reused.

- 3.5.4 The concrete breeze block stalls have no clear function. They are built onto a low concrete plinth and although they could be for housing animals, possible pigs, there is no provision for drainage and no sign of gates or doors to the stalls. The roof trusses on this side are supported on rough posts which simply sit on the plinth and on the walls. The roof extends beyond the tie beam to cover the diagonally aligned stalls

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 4.1.1 The outbuilding at Cherry Croft Cottage probably originally dates from the mid to late eighteenth century. The main block appears on the 1779 Davis map and the single storey extension to the rear of that is shown on the 1872 Ordnance Survey first edition. The main house is likely to be an addition of either the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and with its construction several of the alterations to the out building were probably undertaken. The property boundary has not changed substantially since the eighteenth century.
- 4.1.2 In its original and initial extended form the building was most likely a small labourer's cottage and the occupiers would have held rights on the common lands of Kingwood Common, the ancient Royal hunting grounds and perhaps worked the lands around the cottage. As tenants of Royal lands they would also have been able to petition the royal court. Later its function has shifted to secondary accommodation or a workshop and finally storage with the increasing dilapidation of the structure.
- 4.1.3 The building is probably typical of many similar small vernacular buildings that do not often survive because their use is limited through their small size, so, they are either demolished or extended and altered beyond recognition. In the case of Cherry Croft Cottage the building was retained as out buildings for storage and perhaps for extra accommodation when the larger house was built.



## 5 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Macleod, M (2000) *Land of the Rother Beast: An Oxfordshire Chronicle*, Skye Publications

### 5.1 MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer, 1:25000, (1999) sheet 171, Chiltern Hills West.

Ordnance Survey 25" first edition (1882) Oxfordshire sheet LIIL.14. copy at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies

Richard Davis Map (1797). Copy at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies

## 6 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Cherry Croft Cottage, Kingwood Common

**Site code:** ROPECC04

**Type of evaluation:** Building Analysis and Recording

**Date and duration of project:** May 2004, five days

**Summary of results:** The out building at Cherry Croft Cottage is a small building consisting of three areas, a two-storey main block, a single-storey extension and a twentieth century shed. The building is constructed of flint nodules with brick dressings. It originates in the mid to late eighteenth century but much of it has been rebuilt in the twentieth century. It is used currently for storage and is in a very poor condition.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES.

List of Archived Items





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Figure 1: Location Map



Figure 2: 1797 Davis map of Oxford



Figure 3: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1882





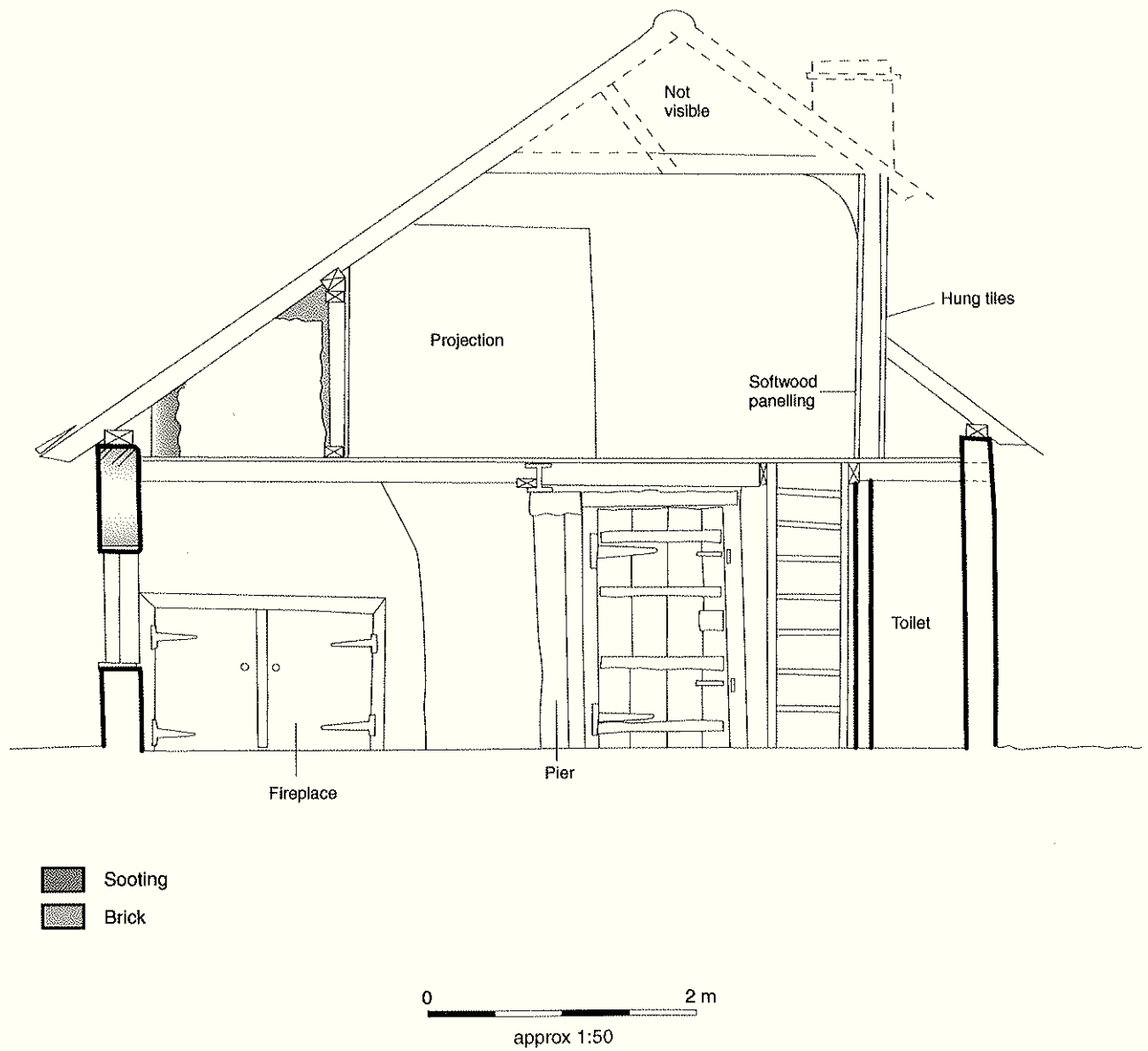


Figure 5: South facing section through main block

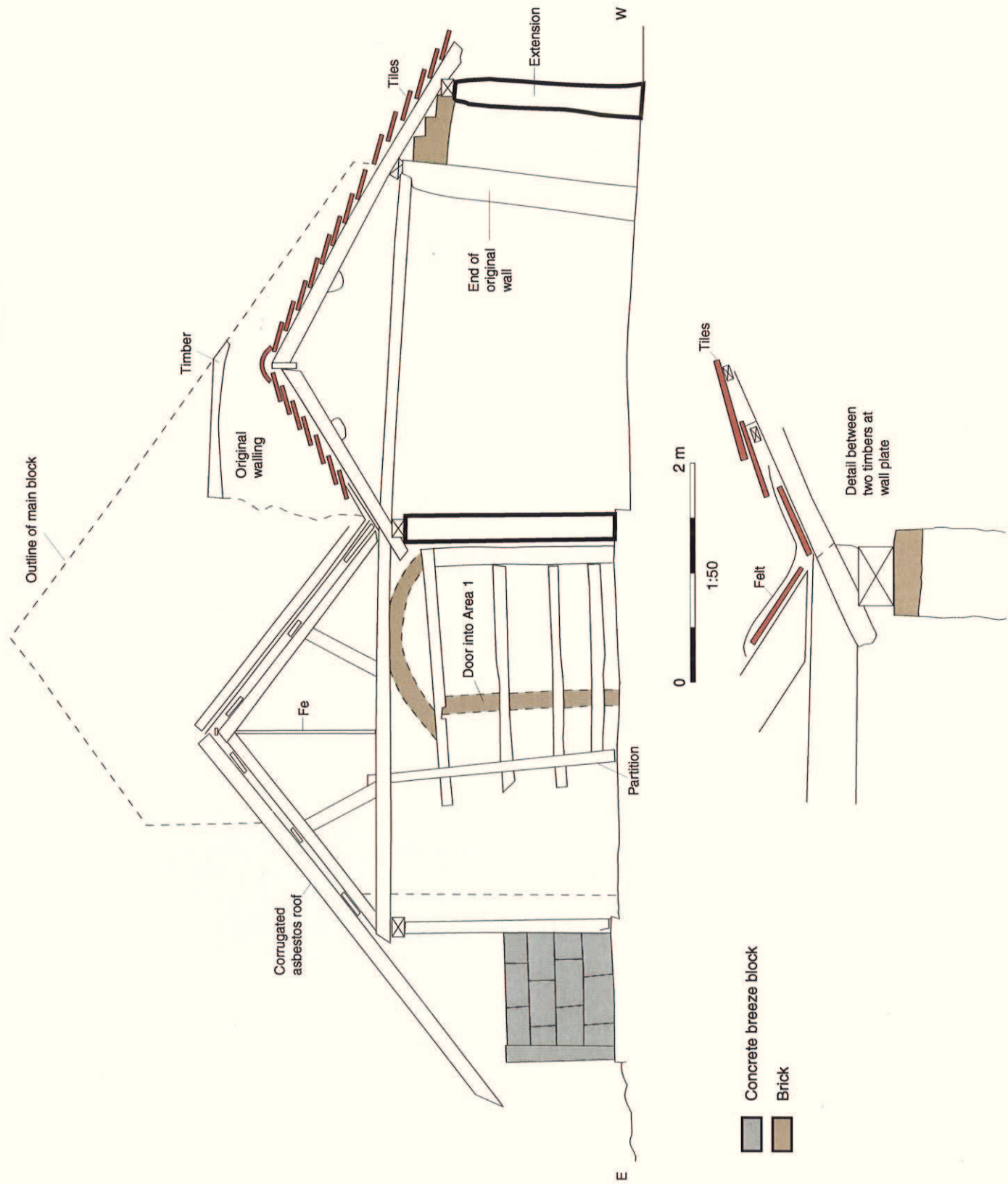


Figure 6: North facing section through extensions to the north of main block





Plate 1: General Shot of the outbuildings



Plate 2: Extensions to the north



Plate 3: Shed to the north east



Plate 4: Garden wall to the south east of the building



Plate 5: Brick banding in extension wall





Plate 6: Tile hung east first floor wall



Plate 7: Greenhouse on south front



Plate 8: Room 1 general shot of east side



Plate 9: Room 1 door in north wall





Plate 10: Room 1 fireplace



Plate 11: Room 1 ceiling joists



Plate 12: Room 2 breeze blocks in the north gable roof space



Plate 13: North wall gable showing original walling and rebuilt upper part



Plate 14: Room 2 window in east wall and panelling



Plate 15: Room 2 sooting on the north wall visible in roof space





Plate 16: Extension gable showing original brick quoins and window



Plate 17: Room 3 north gable posts and roof



Plate 18: Room 3 break in ridge piece for possible stove pipe



Plate 19: Room 4 shed roof construction



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