

# Design; Access and Heritage Statement

*August 2020*

Woodside

Suffield NR11 7EH



Refurbishment and Extension

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## INTRODUCTION

This statement accompanies a submission to North Norfolk District Council for planning and listed building consent for Woodside, Suffield. It should be read in conjunction with the following:-

- *G115.003A Location Plan*
- *G115.001C Existing Site Plan*
- *G115.002F Proposed Site Plan*
- *G115101C Existing Plans*
- *G115.201H Proposed Plans*
- *G115.301C Existing Elevations*
- *G115.302L Proposed Elevations*

### *Proposals*

The proposed works look to sympathetically restore Woodside in-line with its status as a building of note within the Gunton Estate.

The scheme will:-

- Remove an inappropriate 20<sup>th</sup> century conservatory
- restore the property throughout, with some minor internal alterations to facilitate a layout conducive to modern day living.
- Refurbish the existing 2 storey lean-to, to provide a useable first floor.
- Restore historic windows and, where required, install traditional replicas.

### *The Property*

Woodside is a grade II listed building within the Gunton Park Conservation Area. It was originally used as an agricultural building, later converted to an estate cottage for Gunton staff before being altered to provide two smaller cottages. In its most recent form it has served as a single dwelling – although it is now close to dereliction.

### *Relevant Planning History*

**(PF/20/1459 & LA/20/1460)**

A previous application was submitted in 2020 for a larger scheme. This was withdrawn following officer advice relating to conservation and ecology (see page 6).

## *The Applicant*

The site has been recently acquired by Mr Ivor Braka who has played a pivotal role in the re-instatement of the Gunton Park Estate since he first visited in the 1980's.

In 1987, encouraged by Mr Braka and his colleague Mr Kit Martin, NNDC commissioned a document<sup>1</sup> to inform the restoration of both Gunton's landscape and its built environment. Written by historian George Carter, it lays emphasis on the important role estate buildings play in Gunton as a carefully planned large estate. Alongside this report, NCC published their conservation area appraisal<sup>2</sup>.

Since these reports, and with the support of NNDC, Mr Braka has worked continuously to restore Gunton in accordance with the guidelines. To accompany his extensive landscape restoration works across the Grade II\* listed parkland, he has sympathetically restored a number of listed and unlisted buildings within the Estate – including Gunton Tower; Thorpe Lodge; South Lodge; Suffield Lodge; Elderton Lodge (now the Gunton Arms) and Ivy Cottage. The architectural integrity of many of these had been compromised by inappropriate changes and developments – but the restoration works undertaken by Mr Braka have sympathetically restored them, bringing these buildings back into use as an integral part of the carefully planned working estate.

When combined with the landscaping transformations, these buildings now make a markedly positive contribution; both individually and collectively; to the significance of the parkland. They are in regular use (many for estate workers) and benefit from a consequential programme of maintenance.

In addition to the visual and aesthetic restoration works, Mr Braka's commitment to delivering a sustainable future for the area and wider community is demonstrated by the successful restoration of the grade II listed Elderton Lodge and adjacent Coach and Barn Houses, creating what is now a unique local country pub, restaurant and hotel (The Gunton Arms). Described in the Guardian as 'pretty much the perfect retreat'<sup>3</sup> and 'spot on'<sup>4</sup> in The Telegraph, the Gunton Arms prides itself in being both an enticing destination for visitors to the region and a local pub for local residents. A viable and sustainable future has been created for an important historic local building, with employment for over 35 staff and a regular and increasing band of loyal local visitors.

This successful formula is being echoed for The Suffield Arms in Thorpe Market. Nearing dereliction in 2015 with a lapsed planning permission for conversion to residential accommodation, Mr Braka rescued the site and has undertaken an extensive and imaginative restoration programme. The site will soon re-open as a welcoming pub and restaurant, providing over 20 new jobs for the local community and drawing both local and distant visitors.

Each and every one of these projects demonstrates Mr Braka's unswerving commitment to restoration of the Gunton Estate and support of the local community.

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<sup>1</sup> Gunton Park 1670 – 1987; George Carter (Norfolk County Council) 1987

<sup>2</sup> Gunton Park – Guidelines for its Conservation and Enhancement; NCC 1987

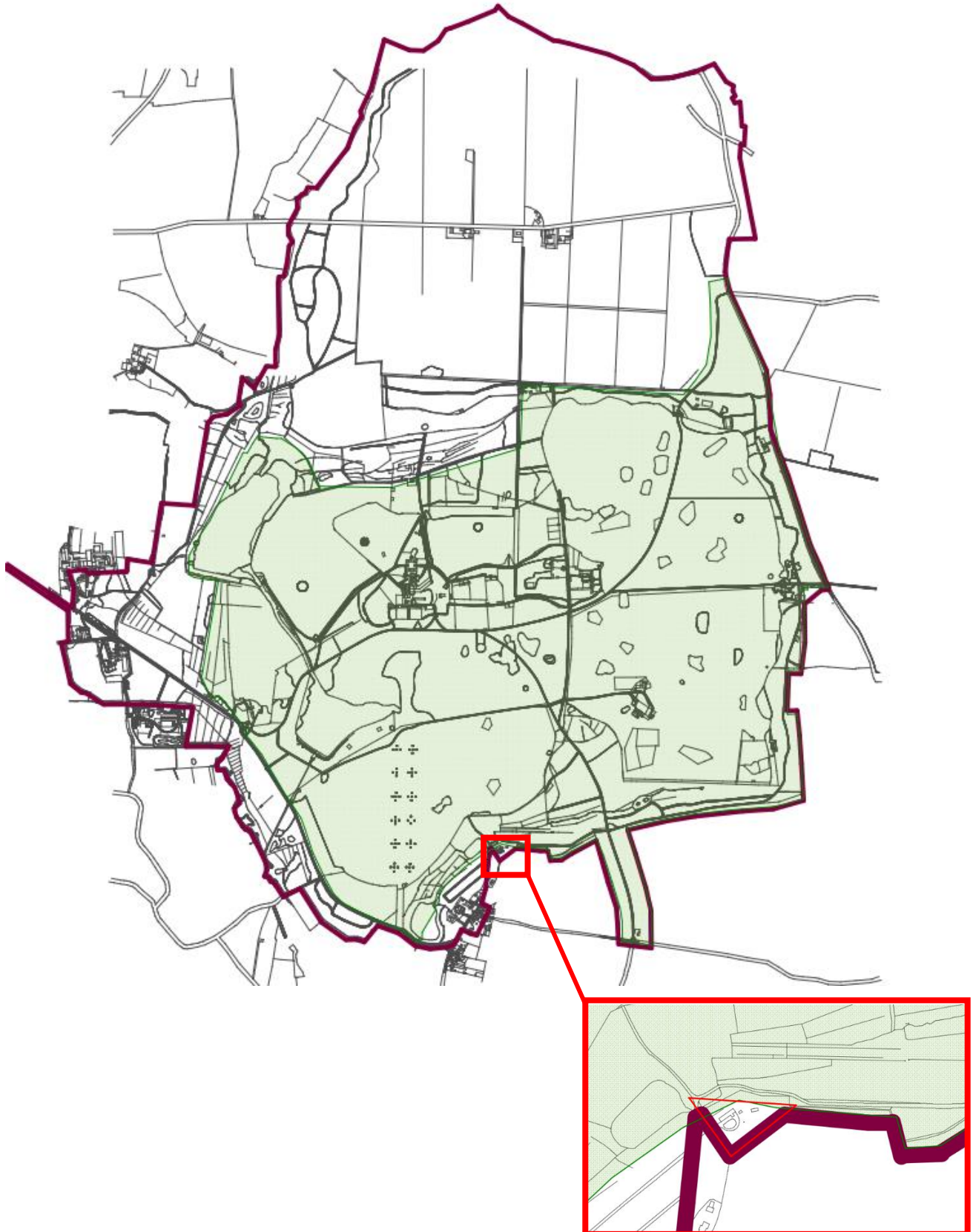
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2012/nov/30/gunton-arms-norfolk-hotel-review>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/hotel/73256/The-Gunton-Arms-Thorpe-Market-Norfolk-hotel-review.html>



*Location*

The site sits within the Gunton Park Conservation Area (red boundary) and outside the southern boundary of the Grade II\* listed Gunton Park (green shading).



## NNDC PREVIOUS ADVICE

Following the previous (withdrawn) application, NNDC offered the following advice:-

### *Ecology*

A PRA was undertaken during the first application. Whilst no evidence of protected species was found; potential roost features were identified.

To accompany this new application a dusk emergence and dawn re-entry survey have been commissioned – to be carried out in May in accordance with the guidance. NNDC officer Joe Barrow confirmed that these reports can be submitted as soon as they are available and prior to any decision.

### *Conservation*

Conservation Officer Chris Young confirmed that sympathetic restoration of the property as a single dwelling was welcomed; and acknowledged that the applicant's previous works within Gunton demonstrated his commitment to high quality works and.

The following advice was offered:-

- *Proposed layouts should be driven by existing layouts and openings.*
- *The removal of the modern conservatory is welcomed.*
- *The original scheme proposed the existing extension was altered to include a roof to match the primary roof in form and height. This was felt to be "less than ideal" as it would extend the two-storey massing and remove historic fabric. It was suggested that the removal of the lean-to may be acceptable if the replacement was clearly subservient to the primary building (perhaps as a longer single storey unit). This scheme proposes a solution that retains the existing extension footprint and seeks to retain historic fabric with a clearly subservient form.*
- *The scheme suggested a new window/Juliette balcony to the SW gable. Concern was expressed that this proposal involved the removal of too much historic fabric. The new scheme removes this element.*
- *It was proposed to provide additional living space through the addition of a single storey lean to on the rear elevation. This was seen as unacceptable The new scheme removes this element.*
- *Whilst it was acknowledged that new openings within the existing fabric may be needed to facilitate 20<sup>th</sup> century living; concern was expressed regarding the addition of openings that were not reflective of historic ones. This advice has been followed in the new proposals.*
- *Internally, concern was expressed that works should respect the historic fabric and be on a like for like; minimal intervention basis. This application confirms that works will be undertaken within this framework.*

## DESIGN AND ACCESS

### *Design Objectives*

In line with previous restoration projects undertaken by Mr Braka within Gunton Park, Woodside's restoration will be sympathetic to the traditional property, local vernacular and the role the property plays within the wider site. The works will have a positive impact on the site, removing modern clutter and providing a property that is representative of both its history and location.

### *Amount*

Existing GIFA 177.6 m<sup>2</sup> (across the two floors)  
Proposed GIFA 178.5.0 m<sup>2</sup> (across the two floors)

### *Use*

The property will retain its existing use as a residential dwelling.

### *Scale*

The original scale of the property will be maintained and respected, with the refurbished side extension fitting within the existing footprint and remaining subservient to the primary roof line; with the new eaves only minimally higher than the existing.

### *Layout*

The linear nature of the original cottage will be retained, with the unsightly UPVC front extension removed to reveal the historic elevation. The two doors to the original two cottages will be retained.

Internal layouts will reflect the existing. A new partition to the ground floor redefines the kitchen space. Minor alterations to the top floor remove the inner room; create a 3<sup>rd</sup> private bedroom and provide an ensuite bathroom to the master bedroom.

### *Landscaping*

External spaces will be protected and landscaped in accordance with the established Gunton Park vernacular.

### *Appearance*

Following NNDC advice, the proposed scheme promotes the simple linear form of the dwelling.

The historic cottage will be retained with minimal intervention to the historic form. The existing two storey extension will be restored/rebuilt within the same footprint, retaining existing historic brickwork where possible and replacing in-appropriate post war bricks. The proposed dual pitch roof is in-line with NNDC advice; removing the uncomfortable post war lean-to roof.

The design is mindful of existing and historic openings; with proposed openings largely reflecting existing and historic forms. Openings within the front (SE) elevation will be retained and restored. To the rear some new openings are essential to provide a level of internal light conducive to 20<sup>th</sup> century living. These have been minimised to respect the historic fabric and retain a clear sense of the original agricultural use.

Priority will be given to the repair of historic window units but, where required, new windows will replicate these timber and metal units in form and materials. New roofing materials will match existing.

### *Access*

Access to the property will be unchanged in principle – but with additional doors to the rear providing better links to garden areas. Internal access will allow better use of spaces, particularly on the top floor where the new configuration allows the creation of a third private bedroom.

## HERITAGE STATEMENT

The application property is Grade II listed and sits within the Gunton Conservation Area, just outside the southern boundary of the Grade II\* listed park. It has most recently been used as a single dwelling but is now close to dereliction and in great need of restoration.

Woodside is first shown on the 1784 Biederman plan of the park as 'Game Keeper's Farm'. The Gunton Keeper at that time was John Booth (1742-1816). He was held in such esteem that the 1st Baron Suffield commissioned a full-length portrait of Booth by Thomas Gooch.



*Biederman's Survey of 1784 showing Gamekeeper's Farm and its adjacent lake linked to Sawmill Pond. Adjacent farm buildings to the South no longer extant.*

The structure's 18<sup>th</sup> century origins are further corroborated by a dated brick of 1754 which sits just above the ground floor windows.

The building appears again in the James Wright Survey of 1835 – where Gamekeeper's Farm is shown – and the outbuildings to the south have been replaced.

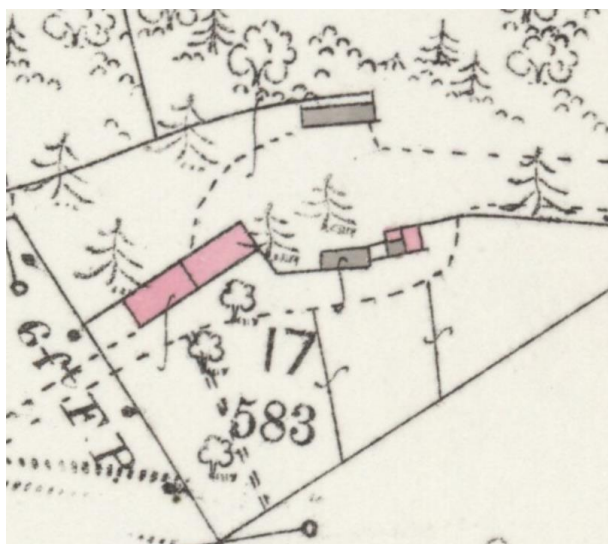


*James Wright Survey of 1835 shows Gamekeeper's Farm*



## Exterior Survey

Later OS maps (1883 & 1906) indicate the property was split into two dwellings with additional ancillary buildings shown at various locations on the site. The current building has been used as single dwelling for many years.



*Woodside from the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey 1883 which shows the house divided into two dwellings and illustrating an outbuilding to the North East and a further two on the site of the present garage.*



*Woodside from the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey 1906*

The brick/flint west gable appears to be the earliest element and to have formed part of an early Granary, indicated by the first floor blocked up opening. Granaries were often built above open cart-sheds, which would account for the returned masonry stop that the later brickwork abuts.

The structure has since undergone a number of changes, with masonry appearing to date from 3 or 4 separate eras. Brickwork to both front and rear elevations indicate the wall plate has been at ground floor ceiling level, with shadows in the flint of the west gable showing the steep pitch typical of a thatched roof. The brickwork was then raised at some later date to create a proper first floor with new shallower pitch pantile roof.

The lean-to addition to the east has been built using post WWII fletton bricks which have been added over an earlier ground floor addition. The roof of this work uncomfortably abuts the earlier parapet gable of the main roof. On the rear elevation a first-floor door indicates a structure may have existed to the rear of the cottage to enable access to this now floating door.

Each elevation has various bricked up openings – further suggesting the property has undergone repeated alterations.

Windows are a mix of historic metal frame mullions in wooden casements, modern replicas of these units and simpler casements with timber glazing bars. A modern UPVC conservatory has been added to the south elevation to form a porch.

## Interior Survey

Internally the property is in a poor state of repair but appears to retain much of an earlier layout. There is evidence of unsympathetic modern alterations to facilitate a semblance of single level living accommodation on the ground floor, but these partitions have since been removed.

Retained ground floor room partitions appear to be historic, with the original lobby to the SE entrance door still in place. The stairs and room divisions to the first floor appear to date from the works that combined the cottages into a single dwelling.

### Assessment of Significance

The Historic England listing describes it as:-

*“Cottage, formerly 2 cottages. Late C18 with earlier core, Brick, Flint, Pantile roof. Lobby entrance type plan. 5 bays, 2 storeys. Brick plinths to first 3 bays. C19 panel doors to second and 4<sup>th</sup> bays. Leaded casements under segmental arches to ground floor, wooden lintels to upper floor. Brick dentil eaves cornice. Parapet gables. Off central axial stack. Left hand gable of flint has large blocked up window to upper floor; evidence of eaves having been raised. Gable return also of flint not bonded in to brick front of house. Lean-to right-hand side”*

The Gunton Park Guidelines<sup>5</sup> specifically mention the importance of the preservation of all the traditional buildings of the park and emphasises the importance of the repair of unrestored buildings – under the primary aim of:-

*“ to preserve existing buildings of character, to prevent alterations or extensions which are out of character; to encourage their proper maintenance and repair....”*

Woodside derives its significance from its role as one of a collection of early estate building within the wider park. Its traditional form and materials are typical of the Gunton vernacular for secondary buildings.

Externally, its regular proportions and form remain clearly legible and the many shadows of brickwork changes show that continued adaption and alteration is integral to its story.

For the roof; the parapet gables clearly define the primary building and have good significance. The eastern lean to sits uncomfortably against the primary building, with the upper floor construction dating from post war. This 20<sup>th</sup> century roof and upper storey have a negative impact.

Window form and proportion are representative of historic openings and provide a good link to the property’s history.

20<sup>th</sup> century alterations detract from the value of the property – in particular the modern conservatory which has a negative impact on the significance of the site. The retained entrance lobby adjacent to the primary chimney stack and retained historic partitions make a positive contribution. The poor state of internal finishes and the removal of 20<sup>th</sup> century interventions leave the internals subject to significant decay. The staircase form appears to date from the conversion to a single property.

Woodside has a good level of significance and makes a positive contribution to the evidential, historical and communal value of the wider park. The many alterations are integral to the history of the site – although 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations have compromised the aesthetic value.

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<sup>5</sup> Gunton Park – Guidelines for its Conservation and Enhancement; NCC 1987

## HISTORIC BUILDING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### *Architectural Interest Character Assessment*

The heritage interest and character of this property is gained from its setting, its role as an estate building in the wider Gunton Park and its simple form and local materials. The proposed alterations will better demonstrate these credentials. By restoring the property and removing the unsympathetic modern additions, the architectural interest is enhanced and the property will make an improved contribution to the conservation area.

The internal layout of the property gives some reference to historic layouts. Proposals will retain this legibility.

### *Setting*

Proposals will have a positive impact on the setting, with the restored elevations contributing to the wider and on-going restoration of Gunton Park

### *Extension/New Structure*

The 2-storey extension fits within the existing footprint, retains the linear form of the dwelling and provides an improved interface to the existing gable.

To the rear the new single storey extension is subservient in form to the historic building and will be constructed in materials in keeping with the building and wider vernacular.

### *Internal Works*

Proposed internal works are respectful of the historic form whilst enabling an improved layout which meets modern day expectations.

### *Materials*

Proposed materials will respect the following hierarchy: -

- a) Priority to be given to retaining original materials/fixtures, with sympathetic restoration works undertaken as deemed essential. Where restoration works are required, new materials/manufacturing techniques will match/mirror the original.
- b) Where original features have been compromised, new works will look to re-instate to original design and will be manufactured from materials sympathetic to the period. Precedent will be taken from surviving elements.

In particular, proposed works will involve:-

### *Ceiling/Partitions*

- where ceilings/partitions which retain their lath and plaster construction are exposed, repairs will use traditional materials and techniques, retaining all original elements.

### *M&E*

- Replacement of existing wet heating system with updated equipment. Pipe runs to be located within existing floor void, retaining existing joists/floor boards and using existing cuts within joists where possible.
- Addition of new bathrooms. Waste will run within (existing) floor voids into existing drainage runs.
- Updating of electrical provision. Cable runs to be within existing floor/ceiling voids.
- Provision of ventilation system to kitchen and bathrooms – ducting runs to be concealed within existing voids wherever feasible.
- Where disruption to original materials/fixing methods cannot be avoided, restoration works/materials will replicate original works.

## Summary

### Windows

- Existing historic windows to be retained as far as possible, with restoration works as necessary to be carried out in accordance with Historic England's *"Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading"*.
- Where essential, new windows will replicate materials and form of existing historic units.

### Partitions

- Repairs to retained historic partitions will be undertaken using traditional materials and techniques
- Where required, new partitions will be constructed as timber studs with a combination of skimmed plasterboard covering and panelled cladding.

Mr Braka is acutely aware of the importance and value of protecting and preserving our heritage assets. Works have been developed to have a positive impact on the significance of the listed building and adjacent parkland area.

- Room layouts are retained to enable a clear reading of the original form of the farmhouse
- Inappropriate extensions and windows will be removed to allow a better reading of the original listed structure
- Alterations to the historic fabric are limited to those essential to updating the dwelling as a family home suited to modern day living.
- New works are in line with the style and vernacular architecture of the original building.
- Any minor changes are mitigated through the removal of inappropriate interventions introduced in recent years, providing a simple structure which is more in keeping with the original form.
- The conservation area will be enhanced through the sympathetic restoration of this property.



## PHOTOGRAPHS

### **THE SOUTH FAÇADE**

The South facade is built in two dates of brickwork. That built to just above ground floor windows has a dated brick of 1754. It is assumed that, at this date, the wall plate was at ground floor ceiling level with a thatched roof which contained dormers to light first floor attics. The brickwork above was raised at some point later - possibly not later than 1800 to create a proper first floor and a new shallower pitch pantiled roof. There is a dentil cornice in brick at wall plate level



### **THE LEAN TO**

The lean-to extension on the South East corner of the building showing an earlier ground floor addition with a post WWII Fletton brick extension at first floor level.





**NORTH FACADE**

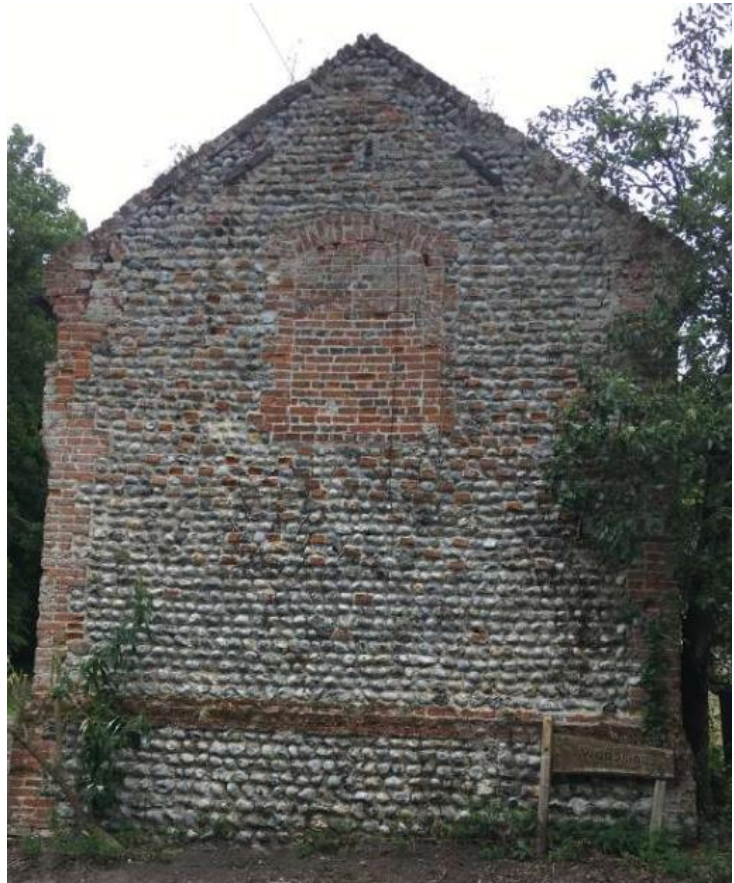
*The lean-to extension on the North East corner of the building showing the earlier gable end. A clear line in the original brickwork shows the original roof wall plate*

*One of several surviving metal framed mullions in wooden casements with leaded glazing.*



**WEST GABLE**

West Gable end showing signs of a steeper roof pitch appropriate to a thatched roof



*North west corner showing a vertical break in the coursing where later brickwork abuts the West gable*