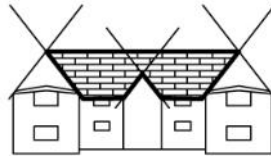


**Woodlands Farmhouse, Bildeston Road,  
Ringshall, IP14 2LY  
Heritage Assessment and Impact Statement**

**August 2022**



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document presents a Heritage and Impact Statement on Woodlands Farmhouse in Ringshall, Suffolk, IP14 2LY.
- 1.2. The historic site comprises of the Grade II designated farmhouse and a group of farm buildings to the south of the farmhouse. The farmhouse was listed as dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century with a 17<sup>th</sup> century extension to the south elevation. The rear extension to the house dates to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 1.3. The assessment was commissioned by Whymark & Moulton Chartered Surveyors and Building Engineers in advance of a Planning and Listed Building Application for a replacement rear extension to the farmhouse.
- 1.4. The Heritage Assessment was carried out by Nicolaas Joubert Historic Buildings Consultant (MSc.)

## 2. Statutory Designations

- 2.1. Woodlands Farmhouse is a Grade II designated heritage asset. The farmhouse is not located within a Conservation Area.
- 2.2. Suffolk Historic Environment Record (RGL 040): Recorded as part of the Farmsteads in the Suffolk Countryside Project - Woodlands Farm (Wood Farm), Ringshall. 19th century farmstead and 16th century farmhouse. Regular courtyard full plan formed by working agricultural buildings. The farmhouse is set away from the yard. Significant loss (over 50%) of the traditional farm buildings.
- 2.3. Figure 1 below locates Woodlands Farmhouse in Ringshall. Listing description below.



**Figure 1: Location Plan**

## Woodlands Farmhouse, Ringshall



**National Grid Reference:** TL 01842 53573

**Designation:** Grade II

**List Entry Number:** 1352188

**Date First Listed:** 22-Jan-1988

**Description:**

RINGSHALL BILDESTON ROAD TM 05 SW

5/159 Woodlands Farmhouse - - II

Farmhouse, built in two stages: the hall and service cell to right probably C16, the parlour block added to left in early C17. 1 storey and attics, and 2 storeys and attic. 3-cell plan with lobby-entrance. Timber-framed and plastered. Pantiled lower range probably once thatched; the parlour block plaintiled with axial chimney of red brick with a central pilaster. The lower range has mid C20 flat-roofed casement dormers. Mid C20 small-pane casements. Boarded C20 door at lobby-entrance. A C17 ovolo-mullioned window at the rear. A rear range of mid C20 is not of special interest.

**Significance: Medium**

Grade II Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, locally listed buildings and undesignated assets that can be shown to have good qualities in their fabric or historical association.

Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, undesignated special historic landscapes and townscapes with reasonable coherence, integrity, time-depth or other critical factor(s).

Medium Evidential, Aesthetic, Historic, and Communal Value.

### 3. Historical Background

#### 3.1. Historical Maps

*Extract from the Tithe Map of the Parish of Ringshall in the County of Suffolk, 1838 (IR 30/33/338)*

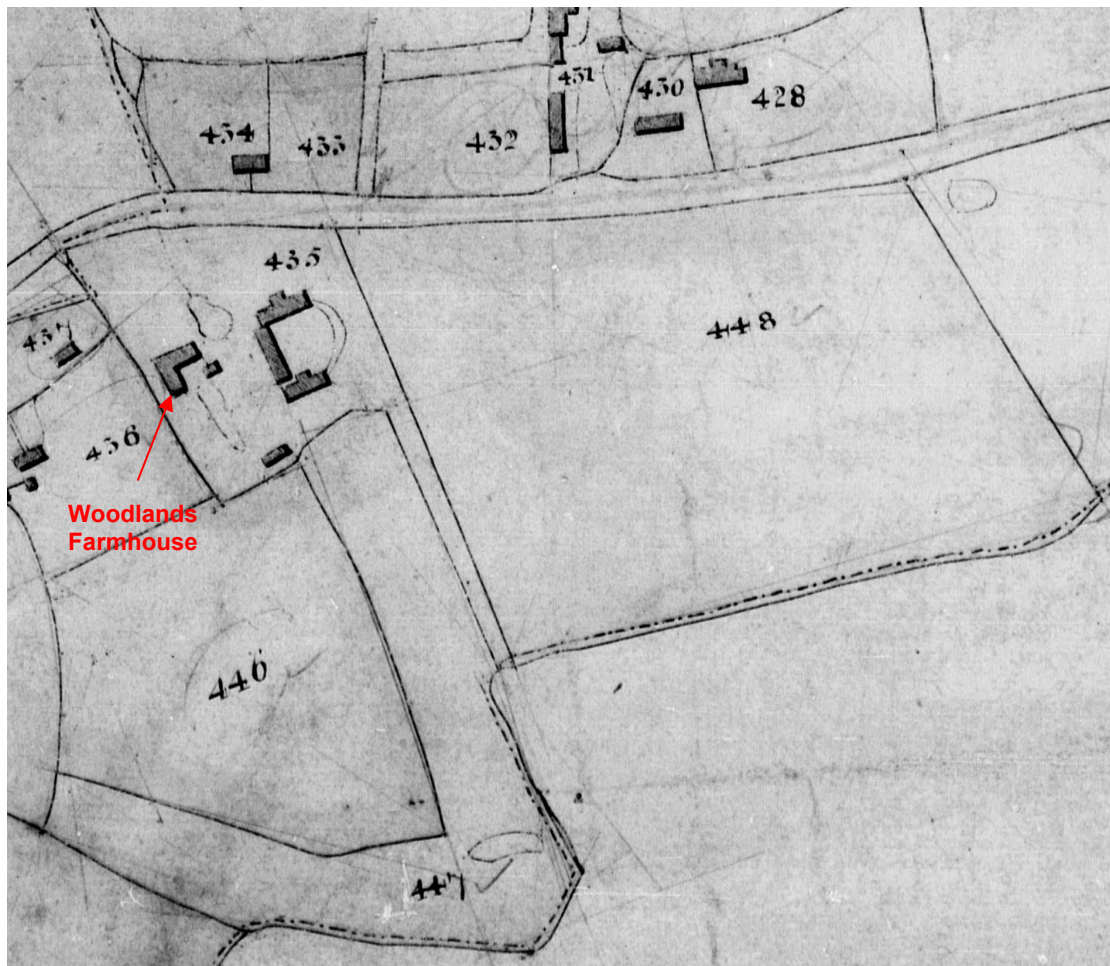


Figure 2: Extract from 1837 Tithe Map of Ringshall.



O.S. County Series: Suffolk 1:2500 1886

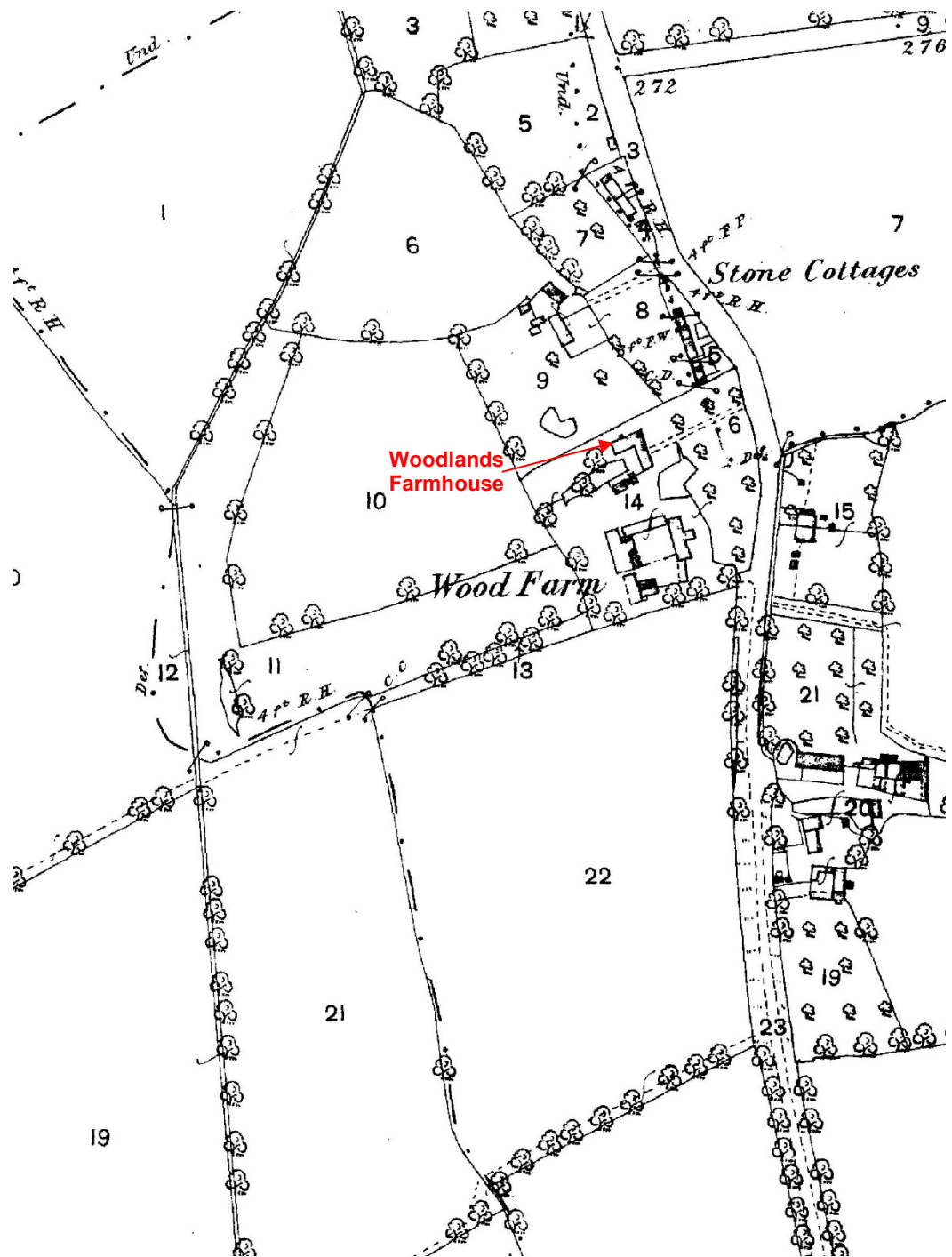


Figure 3: Extract from the 1886 Ordnance Survey Map of Ringshall.



**O.S. County Series: Suffolk 1:2,500 1904**

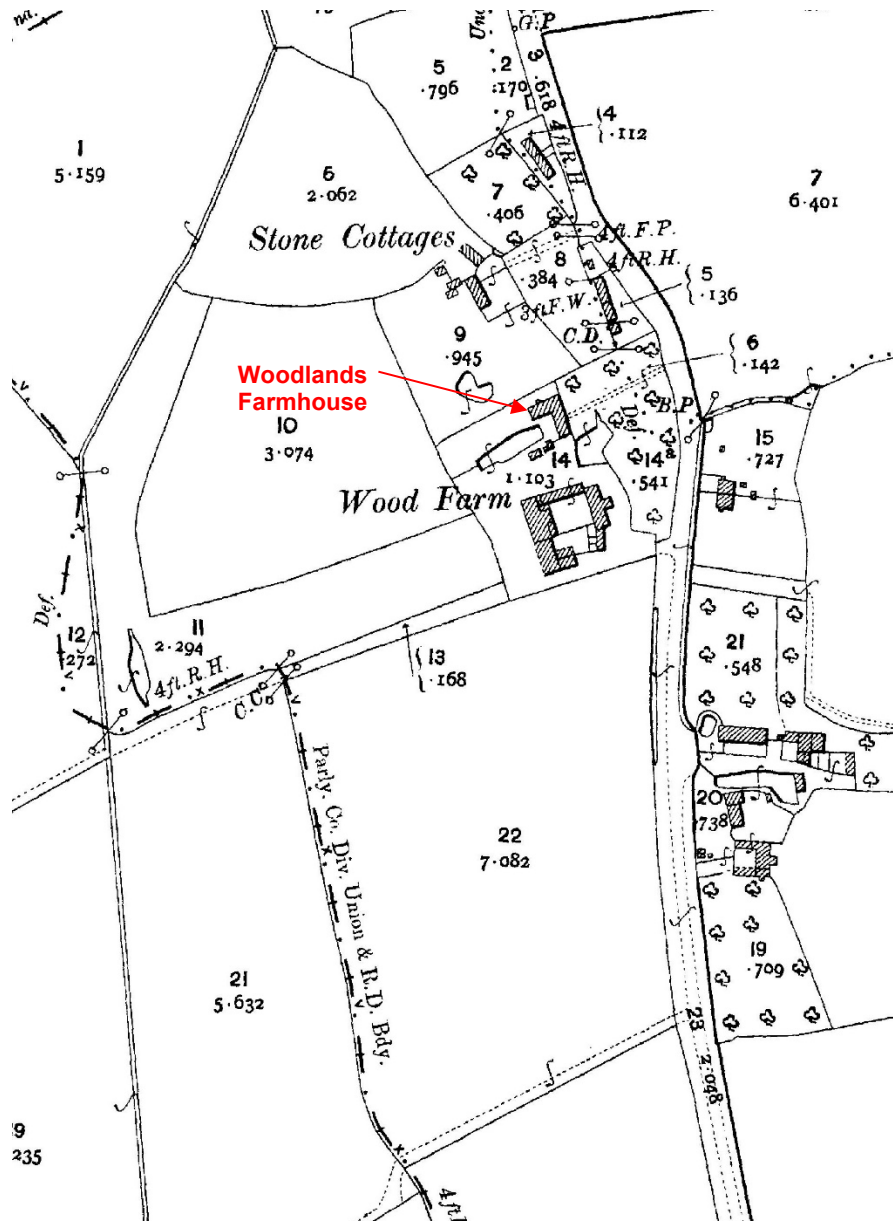


Figure 4: Extract from the 1904 Ordnance Survey Map of Ringshall.

**3.2. Historical Development.**

3.2.1 The earliest map used for this study is the 1838 Tithe Map of Ringshall (Fig. 3, IR 30/33/338). Wood Farm extended to just over 11 acres in 1838. The homestall is numbered 435 with two arable fields numbered 447 and 448.

3.2.2 According to the 1838 Tithe Apportionments of Ringshall (IR29/33/338), Wood Farm was in the ownership of Henry James Oaks Esq and occupied by Thomas Mudd. Mudd also owned a small parcel of land with a cottage in Ringshall. By 1841 the Mudd family was resident at Charles Hall (former Manorial site) in Ringshall.

3.2.3 The 1838 Tithe Map illustrates Wood Farmhouse with an L-shaped footprint. The farmhouse faces east with a west or rear projecting wing at the north end of the farmhouse. The rear projecting wing likely served as a kitchen wing to the main house. The house is set back from the road which runs parallel with the farmhouse to the west. The buildings shown on the adjacent properties to the north are all set back from the road which typically suggests that the properties were lining a medieval green. However, in this case, the arrangement of the Battisford, Wattisham, and Ringshall Parish boundaries appears to be the cause.

Large ponds are shown to the front and rear of the house with a small outbuilding near the farmhouse. The farmyard is shown to the south of the farmhouse. It is lined with west-facing barns to east and west, both having midstreys facing east. The north side is flanked by a long but otherwise featureless range which would typically be identified as cattle housing. Another agricultural outbuilding to the northwest of the farmyard is shown in isolation from the rest. This building likely served as a granary/cartlodge.

3.2.4 It appears that some alterations to the farmhouse may have taken place between 1838 and 1886 (Fig. 4). The rear extension is shown with what appears to be a chimney structure to its north elevation. Also, note that the rear extension is shown with a wider footprint than the main front wing. A footpath is shown extending from the road to the frontage of the house. This path has likely been there from an early date but was first recorded on the 1886 Ordnance Survey Map. The pre-1838 small outbuilding nearest the house was still shown but an additional agricultural outbuilding was built to the west of it. This building is still standing today.

The farmyard was enclosed to form two smaller yards with open shelter sheds. This indicates that the former arable farm evolved into mixed farming during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

3.2.5 A comparison between the 1886 and 1904 Ordnance Survey maps shows minor additions and alterations to the agricultural outbuildings. No alterations are evident to the farmhouse.

#### 4. Wood(lands) Farm House.

4.1. Wood Farmhouse also named Woodlands Farmhouse was listed as being *'built in two stages: the hall and service cell to right probably C16, the parlour block added to left in early C17. 1 storey and attics, and 2 storeys and attic. 3-cell plan with lobby-entrance.'* **Figures 19-20.**

4.2. The current renovation works to the farmhouse have allowed me to assess the house in greater detail. The listing description is correct in its assessment of the layout and dating of the farmhouse. The exposed frame has revealed that the 16<sup>th</sup> century Hall and service cell of the farmhouse date to c.1500 or possibly slightly earlier. The original 1½-storey farmhouse was built with a 2-bay hall that was open to the roof, and heated by an open hearth that burnt on the floor. The hall was lit by a pair of opposite almost full-height (in two sections) diamond-mullioned windows (Fig. 5). The windows, of which one has partially survived, were located within the high end (south end) of the 2-bay hall. The north end of the house contained a cross-passage between the end bay of the hall and the single bay service cell (Fig. 6). The cross-passage had front and back opposite doorways. The cross-passage is of interest as it is 'undershot', meaning that the first-floor service chamber/loft extends over the cross-passage. A cross-passage would typically form part of the lower end bay of the Hall but in this case, it is located within its own narrow 'bay'. A plank-and-muntin screen, would have separated the cross-passage from the hall and increased the amount of available privacy. Screens of this kind once existed in most houses, but even fragmentary survivors are now rare. The upper partition wall between the service chamber and the open hall has partly survived and the timbers are smoke-blackened on the Hall side (Fig. 7). There are jowled posts to this upper partition wall. Due to the 17<sup>th</sup> century alteration to the farmhouse it is unclear if the c.1500 farmhouse extended south beyond the Hall.

4.3. There are several historic repairs and alterations to the farmhouse that led to the loss of much of the early fabric; however, Wood Farmhouse is of much historic and architectural interest and significance as it forms part of a small group of early 16<sup>th</sup> century base-cruck houses concentrated in an area of central Suffolk stretching roughly from south of Stowmarket to the Norfolk border.

The end wall of the service cell contains a pair of base-cruck posts or 'blades' that terminate or are truncated by a collar-beam (Fig. 8). The collar-beam supported the half-hipped end of the roof structure. The posts are upright to eaves level and then slope inwards to support the collar-beam. The ends of the wallplates were/are seated on the backs of the cruck posts. A 4-light diamond-mullioned window was located below the centre of the collar-beam. The cill has been altered later when the window was reduced in size, a rebate for a window shutter is also evident. A pair of plank serpentine windbraces were applied to the internal face of the end wall (Fig. 9). The braces extend from the 'blades' down to the end wall midrail.

The c. 1500 farmhouse was likely constructed with a thatched coupled-rafter roof structure but the roof was entirely rebuilt later and covered with pantiles. The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century flat-roofed dormer windows have small-pane casements as seen in the rest of the farmhouse and rear extension (Fig. 10-11). The dormers in the front and rear roof slopes of the early wing detract from the character of the house, and if possible should be replaced with more stylistically appropriate and modest dormers. Cat slide roofs are very much in keeping with historic buildings. Cat slide dormer windows could be a more appropriate feature to the farmhouse than the existing as they would be more modest in appearance and less visually intrusive to the roofscape of the farmhouse.

The use of base-crucks in gable ends of houses such as at Wood Farmhouse allowed for headroom as well as a window in a loft at the end of the low-eaves-ed house. Many of these examples are rural and there appears to be a correlation between historic pastoral farming and the Suffolk Base-Cruck buildings.

4.4. The early 17<sup>th</sup> century phase of alterations had a significant impact on the c.1500 farmhouse. The alterations included the addition of a timber framed parlour block to the south end of the farmhouse (Fig.11), an axial chimney of red brick with a central pilaster inserted into the high end of the Hall (Fig. 5), and the Hall was floored to form a chamber over (Fig. 12). The floor joist was originally exposed to the ground floor room below and was limewashed. Lath-and-plaster was later applied to the underside of the joists. The open truss tie-beam over the Hall was removed to accommodate the inserted floor. These alterations fundamentally changed the character and layout of the farmhouse into a typical 3-cell lobby entry house.

The parlour block was built with close-studding infilled with wattle-and-daub (Fig. 13). Straight diagonal windbracing was applied to the exterior faces of the walls. The principal posts are jowled. The chamfered main ceiling joist over the parlour chamber is exposed to view but a ceiling obscures the roof structure from view. The parlour block has a plaintiled roof.

The inserted red brick stack has back-to-back fireplaces on both storeys heating the old Hall, inserted hall chamber, parlour (Fig. 14) and parlour chamber over (Fig. 15). There is a high number of apotropaic symbols carved into the bressummer beam over the hall fireplace (Fig. 16).

A 3-light ovolo-mullioned window (Fig. 17) is evident in the west first-floor wall of the parlour chamber (bedroom). Two smaller early diamond-mullioned windows can also be seen at first floor level in the front and back walls of the 'chimney bay' (Fig. 18).

The rear extension to the north end of the farmhouse appears to mostly if not entirely date to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As illustrated in the 1838 and later maps the existing wing replaced a fairly large rear kitchen wing pre-dating the 1838 Tithe Map. Backhouses or back kitchens were a fairly common addition to 16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses. Sadly a high proportion of these has been demolished over time. However they were typically detached from the main house but in close proximity to it, sometimes even corner to corner. It was typical during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and later to extend these buildings to

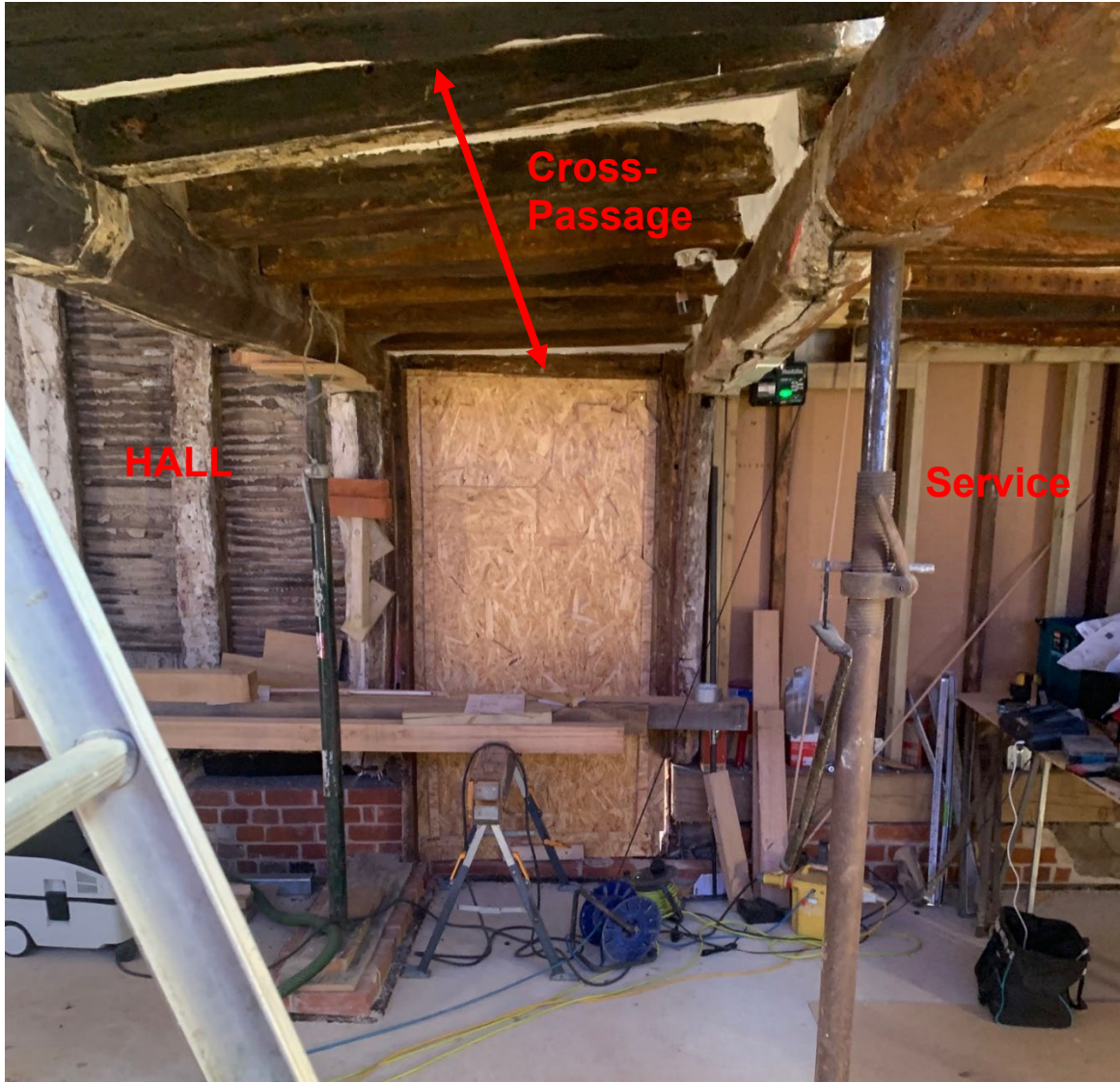
form attached kitchens. I suspect that this may have been the case at Wood Farmhouse.

## 5. Photographs.



Figure 5: 2-Bay Hall with part surviving diamond-mullioned windows.





**Figure 6: Undershot cross-passage with Hall to left and service cell to right.**



**Figure 7: Upper closed truss between the service chamber/loft and the former open Hall. Jowled post to right.**





**Figure 8: Base-Cruck construction to the north end wall**





Figure 9: Serpentine windbracing and an original window with rebate for shutterslide evident in the north end wall.



Figure 10: East elevation of the original c.1500 farmhouse with mid-20<sup>th</sup> century dormer windows.



Figure 11: South west elevation of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse.





**Figure 12: Inserted floor over the former open hall.**



**Figure 13: First floor parlour chamber showing the timber-framed structure of the parlour block.**



**Figure 14: Ground Floor Parlour and fireplace.**





**Figure 15: Parlour Chamber fireplace.**



**Figure 16: Apotropaic markings on the bressummer over the hall fireplace.**





**Figure 17: 3-Light ovolo-mullioned window in the parlour chamber.**



**Figure 18: 3-Light 17<sup>th</sup> century diamond-mullioned window in the first-floor 'chimney bay'.**





**South Elevation**



**North Elevation**



**East Elevation**



**West Elevation**

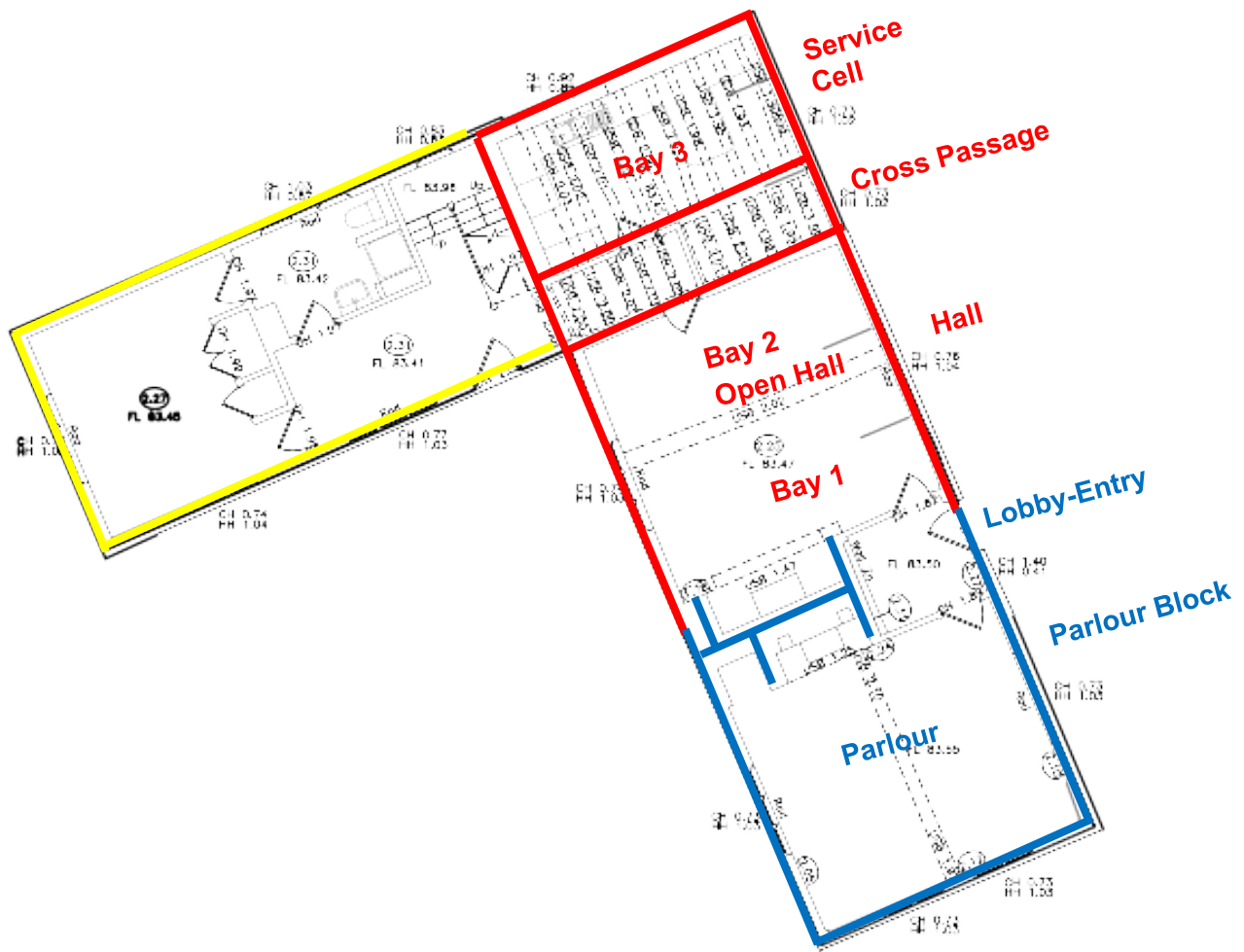
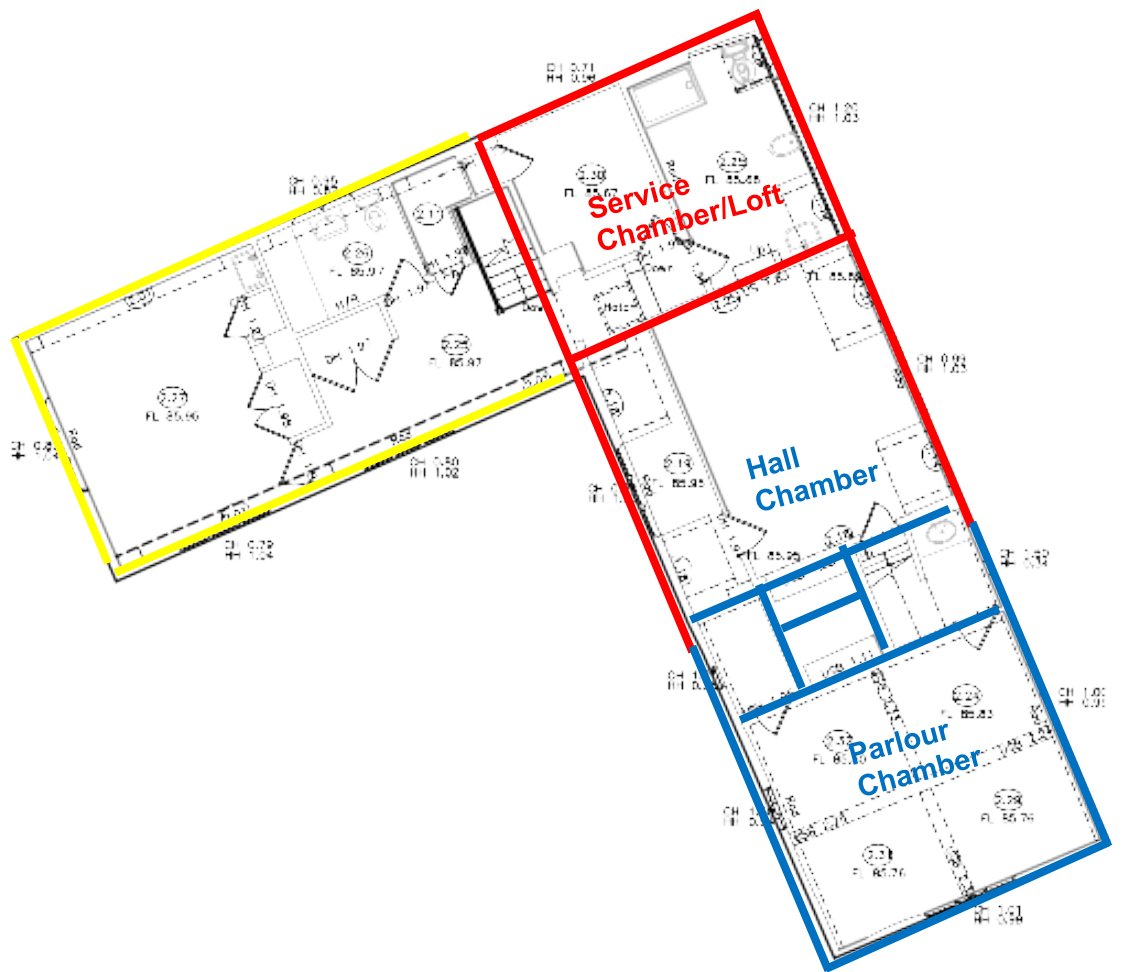


Figure 19: Ground Floor Phase Plan



**Figure 20: First Floor Phase Plan**

## 6. Statement of Significance

6.1. **Significance** – Wood Farmhouse is a grade II designated Heritage Asset with medium Evidential, Aesthetic, and Historic Value (*Refer to listing description in Section 2 – Statutory Designations*). Wood Farmhouse was constructed in two phases, the earliest phase dates to c.1500 followed by the addition of an early 17<sup>th</sup> century parlour block. The c.1500 farmhouse appears to have consisted of a 2-bay hall, an undershot cross-passage with a single bay service cell. The c.1500 farmhouse is of architectural and historic significance and interest as it forms part of a small group of early 16<sup>th</sup> century base-crack houses concentrated in an area of central Suffolk stretching roughly from south of Stowmarket to the Norfolk border.

## 7. Impact Statement

6.1. The statutory duty of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 informs to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historical interest which they possess.

6.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development and that protection and enhancement of the historic environment is an overarching objective in this. The significance of listed buildings can be harmed or lost by developing in their setting. Clear and convincing justification should be made for any such harm and that ‘great weight’ should be given to the conservation of listed buildings irrespective of the level of harm caused. This weight and the justification for harm should be especially convincing where harm to buildings of a high grade of listing is concerned.

6.3. **Scheme Drawings:**

- *8068 - MS/21/100 – Existing Floor Plans & Elevations*
- *21/205-01 - Site Location & Site Plan*
- *AP 8086/21/205 – 02 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations*

6.4. The scheme proposes to replace the existing rear extension with a new double-piled extension to serve as annexe accommodation for an elderly relative of Mr and Mrs Drinkald.

6.5. The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century rear extension is of no heritage value. It appears to have been built on the same footprint of an earlier kitchen range that was shown on the 1838 Tithe Map. Double-pile arrangements are very much in keeping with historic buildings. This arrangement ensures that the addition is not visible or interferes with the historic roofscape of the main farmhouse as observed from the east or front elevation of the farmhouse. The larger addition will have a small impact on the prominence of the Heritage Asset as observed from the north, south and west elevations of the house. I recommend for the west end of the proposed addition be reduced to match the line of the existing gable end of the rear addition. This will reduce the impact on the prominence and therefore the significance of the Heritage Asset.



## 8. References.

- *Historic England, Listing Descriptions (database online)*  
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- *Tithe Apportionments of the Parish of Ringshall in the County of Suffolk, 1838 (IR 29/33/338) [database online].* [TheGenealogist.co.uk](http://TheGenealogist.co.uk)
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