

# Cawdles, Keer's Green, Aythorpe Roding, Essex

*A Level-2 Historic-Assessment Report*



Report dated March 2023.

This Report is produced by.

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# BACKGROUND

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author respectfully acknowledges the work of previous historians and interpreters and is grateful for their help in providing the basis for current and future investigations and interpretations.

The following individuals and organizations have helped with the preparation of this document:

The author is particularly grateful to Mr. John Bennett, architect for providing the commission of the report and to the client Mr. and Mrs. Paul Murphy for confirming the appointment and being so friendly, helpful and interested in the building during my inspection.

The author is particularly grateful for observations provided by **John Walker plus Elphin and Brenda Watkin**, acknowledged experts in historic buildings and timber-framed construction. Their astute help has allowed for a fuller interpretation of the history and phasing of the building.

Sources for historic information has been via The Essex, archives, the Victoria County History, British History Online, plus Census records, as well as articles in groups such as The Essex Historic Building group and the Vernacular Architecture Group.

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No revisions or alterations to this report will be sanctioned and no liabilities can be accepted in this regard.

## REASONS FOR PREPARING THE REPORT

This level-2 recording report is intended to:

- Record the Building and its site.

- Understand its context and construction.

- Set the building and site into historic contexts.

- Analyse and understand the building, site and setting in order to prepare a Statement of Significance to be issued to the Statutory Authority.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This report concentrates on the building and site as seen at the date of the inspection.

This is a recording and assessment report only and should not be used for any other purpose.

Work should not be carried out on the basis of this report.

This inspection was carried out on one visit before research work and is supported by photographs and observations provided by the client.

We have not inspected enclosed any hidden construction directly, or behind covered surfaces.

The extent of the building and the curtilage of the park have been taken as seen.

For specialist readers, timber-frame terminology is based on Cecil Hewett's and R. W. Brunskill's, wording in their various publications. Clarification is given where appropriate and possible, otherwise the Internet should be consulted.

## THE BRIEF

Alan Greening, architect, was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Murphy, through their architect Mr. John Bennett, to carry out further a Level-2 recording and assessment report, supported by initial historic documents and research, in-order to record and report on the existing porch as seen.

## METHODOLOGY

The exterior and interiors of the buildings were photographed generally, with particular attention being paid to elements of fabric and construction which were found to be of note. This was carried out using a Nikon D3000 digital camera.

A limited initial desktop search of documentary evidence was carried out and included in the report, helped by historic building experts as consulted above in the credits.

General Condition of the Fabric

Having been in disrepair the house and grounds are in the process of being brought into a usable residence by the clients Mr and Mrs Murphy. It follows some years of deterioration before the present owner recently purchased the property.

# Summary

## Location

The house and site known as Cawdles is situated on the south of a local circular lane to the east of the Road from Great Dunmow to Chipping Ongar and southwest to Chelmsford.

The road from Great Dunmow through to Chipping Ongar is a survival of the Roman Road to London, through the Rodings before its route becomes confused in local roads and lanes. The location is on high ground on clay that then descends to lower levels towards London and the lands north of the Essex Thames estuary. Chelmsford is the nearest large town to the southeast.

There were many Cawdle families in Essex in the 17<sup>th</sup>. and 18<sup>th</sup>., centuries but the property is referred to as "Candles" in the early-C19.

Before the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530's the area was a detached farm belonging to Tilty Abbey located north of Great Dunmow, there would have been other around that town. After the Dissolution lands were sold and reallocated with new local farms and plots being established. The farmhouse overlooks open fields northwards and to Friar's Grange in the east, likely the remnant of the monastic farm sold into private farming ownership.

## The building

The first phase of the building would be a 3- unit small house of timber-framed construction and from wall-frame details, would date from the late-C16 to early-C17, perhaps even to the mid-C17. The "cob-stack" is likely to be a clay-block and timber-framework construction finished with a thick layer of daubing and with a stack rising through the roof, which would have been rendered and limewashed. The chimney stack is now formed of brickwork built on top of the stack.

The east unit is likely to have been the "service-end" used as storage, full-height to the roof. The mid-unit the heated "Hall" open to the roof and the west unit with a parlour on the ground floor and chamber above.

The roof now seen is a thin-sectioned, side-purlined structure with clasping collar-ties and poor quality rafters of coppiced-branched lengths that are known historically, but may be a later rebuilding, but retaining the basic roof framework.

The mid-unit hall has been floored over in the late-C17 to C18's with square section joists to an axial beam of either concave chamfer stops plus rounded edge or slight ogee style-profile.

C19 alterations include a wrap-around north front and east-side lean-to addition to increase the width of the service area, plus a 1970 extension of this to form a study and an entrance porch. Internally there has been

considerable late-C20 “structural-carpentry” alterations and replacement of historic timbers, particularly on the ground floor and rear walls. These are in a crude “craft” style.

### Listed Building Status:







District: Uttlesford (District Authority); Parish: Aythorpe Roding

National Grid Reference: TL 60128 14481; TL 61 SW AYTHORPE RODING

6/1 CAWDLES

Grade II

### Inspection photographs

		
<i>Mid-bay fireplace and SE view</i>	<i>Front wall to side of chimney</i>	<i>View west from chimney to end</i>
		
<i>E bay first-floor wall bracing</i>	<i>W bay attic, C20 alterations</i>	<i>Clay and daub chimney with brick stack through the roof.</i>

The house or cottage, depending on the status of the original owners, was likely to have been built for a small local-farming family and some-time in the early-to later-C17. It can be suggested that it was still arranged in a late-medieval domestic-planning arrangement of three units with a service end at the east, a mid-unit open-hall and a further bay, east, for a parlour on the ground floor and with a chamber above. The entrance and doors are not known but the opening on the rear elevation opposite the chimney stack is of some vintage. The door is modern.

## Detailed Study

The Rodings do not lie within a single district in the county; they are arranged around the tripoint of the administrative areas of Chelmsford, Uttlesford and Epping Forest.

**The Rodings** are a group of eight villages in the upper part of the River Roding and the west of Essex, England, the largest group in the country to bear a common name. An alternative arcane name, linked to the Middle English Essex dialect, was *The Roothings*. They are the remnants of a single Anglo-Saxon community known as the *Hroðingas*, and it is supposed were led by *Hroða*; who sailed up the River Thames and along a tributary, to settle in the area in the sixth century. This was one of the tribal areas that were absorbed into the Kingdom of Essex. The River Roding and the villages derived their name from *Hroða*. The place-name meaning of Roding is derived from Old English *Hroþa ingas*, settlement of Hrotha's people (Ekwall, 1960).

The villages are recorded in the *Domesday Book* of 1086 as *Rodinges* in the Hundred of Dunmow. In the time of Edward-the-Confessor, it was held by the Abbey of St Æthelthryth of Ely; however, after the Norman Conquest, part was taken by William de Warenne, part was also held by the de Veres and de Mandevilles families, who became the Earls of Oxford and Earls of Essex. By the 14th century, the boundaries and names of the villages had become fairly established. Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding now form a single parish in the district of Epping Forest.

In the second half of the 19th century The Rodings came part of the Dunmow and Ongar Unions – poor relief provision set up under the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834.

Crops grown at the time were chiefly wheat, barley and beans, on a heavy soil with a clay subsoil.

### *Landmarks*

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The area is typified by medieval thatched cottages, timber-framed manor houses and farmhouses. There is a mid-18th-century post mill windmill in Aythorpe Roding, the only surviving windmill in the area. There are a number of churches dating from the Norman period; the oldest is St Margaret of Antioch in Margaret Roding, which has a Norman doorway and the tomb of a crusader.<sup>[1]</sup>

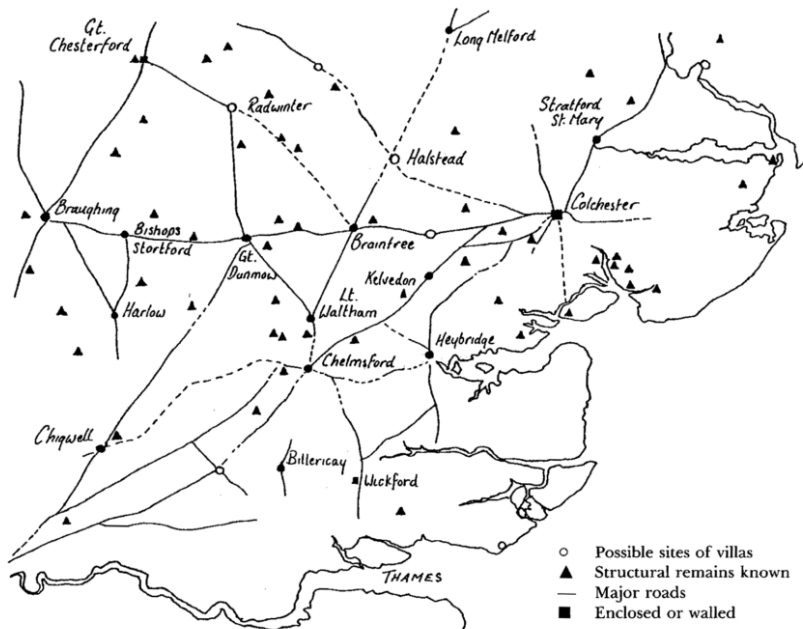
### *Roding names*

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- Abbess Roding, Aythorpe Roding, Beauchamp Roding, Berners Roding, High Roding, Leadon Roding, Margaret Roding, White Roding, Morell Roding.

## Roman Essex

Roman archaeological remains have occasionally been found in the area.



Map showing the Roman system of roads in Essex, with the position of structural remains and possible sites of Roman villas.

The main Roman road ran from Colchester west through Great Dunmow to the fort at Puckeridge joining the Roman Ermine Street, then the Saxon and Medieval Great North Road to Scotland and also west to St. Albans. Great Dunmow was also located on a north-south Roman Road travelling southwest direct to London, through the Rodings and close to Aythorpe Roding. As such it was placed near a major east-west route linking to the rest of the country and remained so through the medieval period.

The Roman era became noted for the areas farming-estate villas particularly between Chelmsford and Great Dunmow.

### Saxon

With the decline of the Roman Empire in England, the area became attractive to Anglo-Saxon farming families immigrating from the near Continent to form new farming communities such as the Roothings, the basis of the Rodings.

*Saxon Roothings* was granted by Leofwine son of Æthulf in 1002 and c.1016 3 hides and 45 acres to Ely Abbey. *Rodings* was held by Thorkill, a free man, before 1066 as a manor for 2 hides, and in 1086 by Roger de Auberville.

## The Norman Invasion

Saxon estates developed, some large, before William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066, after which the French, German and other conquerors were rewarded by gifts of land confiscated from the defeated Saxons. Religious bishops and clergy were replaced with continental supporters of William and those Saxon nobles that had survived the battle were largely supplanted from their estates and holdings to be replaced by those of the successful side. These developed into the medieval structure of England's aristocracy and holdings in the landscape.

Hatfield Forest, close-by to the northwest, was established as a royal hunting forest in the late-eleventh century, following the introduction of fallow deer. Forest Laws were imposed on areas by the king. Deer hunting and chasing was a popular sport for Norman kings and lords and the word 'forest' strictly means place of deer rather than of trees. In the case of Hatfield the area under Forest Law consisted of woodlands with plains and would have stretched over Hainault Forest to the south and Writtle Forest to the east and would have covered the Rodings.

Oliver Rackham, the botanist and rural historian, wrote in his book about the site, entitled "The Last Forest" argued that: .....The Forest owes very little to the last 250 years .... Hatfield is the only place where one can step back into the Middle Ages to see, with only a small effort of the imagination, what a Forest looked like in use.

After the Conquest, at the Domesday Survey in 1086, Ely held 2 hides (120 acres for tax measurement) and 45 acres, one hide having been taken by William de Warenne.

Another unspecified *Rodings* (but possibly Marks Hall in Margaret Roding) was held by Serlo from Hamo the Steward which Withi had held in 1066 as a manor for 1½ hides plus 1 hide 15 acres, 45 acres having, perhaps Morrell Roding on its southern boundary. In 1086 Rainalm held *Roinges* from Geoffrey de Mandeville which Asgar had held in 1066 as a manor for 2 hides less 10 acres, plus 10 acres which a free man had held in 1066. William held *Rodings* from Geoffrey which a free man held in 1066 for one hide 3 virgates.

These were the manors in Aythorpe Roding.:

1. Aythorp Roding-hall, part of Ely's endowment. In 1221 the earl of Oxford held 4 fees from the bishop. Then are found four generations of the family Aythrop. In 1570 Elizabeth I granted it to Walter Devereux afterwards earl of Essex. Thomas Aylett (died 1607) held this manor and the manor of Keeres and lands called *Bygoods, Chalkes* and *Tayle field*.



2. Keer's, the house one mile southeast of the church, was probably held by Geoffrey de Mandeville. In the reign of James I, Thomas Aylett held it from Peter Palmer esq. In 1661 Sir John Barrington purchased it with £600.

3. Friars-grange 1½ miles southeast of the church belonged to Tilty Abbey. Henry VIII granted it to Charles Brandon duke of Suffolk who sold it to Robert Trappes in 1538 (Morant, 1768).

The church dedicated to St. Mary is of the 13th century with a 15th century belfry.

Religious monasteries and palaces developed and "grange" monastic farms were formed to farm individual lands estates for the Monasteries, such as Tilty Abbey North of Great Dunmow. Administrative manors and parish communities formed and their areas were largely farmed communally in sets of two-or three "Great Fields", together with the lord of the manor's own estate and fields. This then would have been the landscape of Aythorpe Rodding like other parishes or townships in the Medieval period before the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530's.

The "Grange of Roenges Aytrop" is mentioned in 1251, and was owned as a farm by Tilty Abbey, a very important and the abbot was one of those summoned by Edward 1 to one of his parliaments. The abbey was dissolved in 1536 and after its dissolution in 1536 its lands were given by Henry to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. The grange came to Lord Audley one of Henry's favourite courtiers, who would have then sold parcels of lands and properties on to others down the status order. In the agricultural landscape those individual farmers who had the means, the freedom from their lords of the manors and who saw new opportunities for developing individual private farms for family profit rather than communal farming, took advantage of this new redistribution of land and fields such as at Friar's Grange. Some small family plots developed as individual farms,

In the reign of James I, Thomas Aylett held it from Peter Palmer esq. In 1661 Sir John Barrington purchased it with £600. The Friar's Grange is a Scheduled Ancient Monument which includes a moated site situated on an east-facing slope overlooking the River Can. The moated site encloses a rectangular shape. There are buried features beneath the present farmyard. The present house at Friar's Grange dates from the 15th century and is Listed Grade II\*. The present house, greenhouse, shed, outbuildings, (including the 17th century granary which is Listed Grade II) and driveway are all excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath these features is included.

*Source: Historic England*

## Owner/occupiers/occupations

In 1809 a John Smith, agricultural labourer, is a lodger at the Axe and Compasses public house aged 52, born at High Easter, the adjoining parish. The period was a boon-time for farmers with England at War with the French and continental produce being blocked from entering the country with resulting prices and prices for farm owners. On the 1841 Census there are several Smith families, all agricultural labourers and all living in "cottages". William Smith aged 31 is an agricultural labourer living at Labourers Cottage Scotches and Henry Smith, aged 25 at the same address adjoining on the census list, perhaps two parts of the same cottage.

In the 1841 Census, John Smith is recorded at a cottage near Keer's Green is the first property before Friar's Grange. He is a gardener aged 45 with wife Keysiah of the same age, a son Joseph 16 and a daughter Keziah aged 12.

The decades after peace resulted in relative decline in agriculture with cheaper continental produce becoming available and the country entered into a period of agricultural decline and rural poverty that lasted until WW11 and reconstruction. The novel 'Akenfield' reflects the Suffolk experience, and by extension that in Essex, although areas closer to London were less affected. The period was a time of agricultural recession with rural poverty and this was to remain embedded in the countryside until war intervened, briefly in the Boer and First World Wars, and in improving conditions following WW11.

In the 1846 Tithe Award the whole parish measured 1394 acres of which 1213 acres were subject to tithes. 1041 acres were arable, 132 acres meadow or pasture, 40 acres wood, 33 acres 2 roods 14 perches roads, common and waste, and 22 acres 3 roods 14 perches glebe.

### The Tithe Award Place-names of Aythorpe Roding.

<b>Candles field</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>TL</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>field</b>	<b>arable</b>	<b>Hockley, Elizabeth</b>		<b>Smith, John</b>
<b>Cottage, garden</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>TL</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>bldg</b>		<b>Hockley, Elizabeth</b>		<b>Smith, John</b>

On the Tithe Award and its map of award of 1846 plots 121 and 122 are owned by Elizabeth Hockley and occupied by John Smith. The Hockley family were farmers of the Great Dunmow/Takeley area, but not in this parish, this is the only plot of land that she owned. The small plot at the east, or part of the larger field surrounding the smaller, was the residence and the larger strip the adjoining field with other small structures, likely to be agricultural. Fields around it were owned by the Patmore family and occupied by Henry Tanner, farmer of Friar's Grange.

The occupier of Cawdles, Caudles or Candles, John Smith, is recorded on the 1861 census in a labourers cottage, a widower aged 67 whose occupation is as a gardener, born at High Easter in 1794 with a daughter Keyziah aged 32, the same name as her deceased mother. The Smiths are in the same property in 1871.

In 1891 The property has descended to George Emberson through marriage to John Smith's daughter. In 1901 George Emberson aged 59 is a horsekeeper for Friars Farm and Keziah is 71, with Walter aged 32, an agricultural labourer and Charles a grandson aged 15. In 1911 the situation is similar.

C20

There is a stone cross in the churchyard to George Bertie Emberson who died in the military hospital at Caterham in 1918 aged 19.

In the period between the two World Wars those in middle-class professional and higher-income classes were able to purchase motor cars which allowed for their visits to the country and seaside. They were able to purchase cottages and houses as holiday homes as mechanisation in agriculture expanded reducing the need for labour with properties becoming vacant. The rise of middle-class weekend and holiday home retreats.

## The site

For some reason the site and its two plots appears to be a singular road-edge outlier in an area with larger farms and areas. The site appears to have been built half into the road and half within the fields to the south and there is a sharp dog-leg kink to the lane at the west of the property.

In the late-C16 and early-C17's "waste land" to the side of roads came to be squatted under population pressure and shacks that were built developed into small cottages adopting rights of occupancy. Under the "Erection of Cottages Act of 1588" to become law the house had to be built overnight and could only have an area of land of 4 acres in order to become legitimate. However, as will be shown, the construction of the building is too-well carpented to be a squatted building, but could be a later construction and consolidation of the right of ownership and status within the parish. More research is required.

It is owned at the Tithe Award 1846 by Elizabeth Hockley, perhaps of Takeley, who owns nothing else in the parish. It has the quality of a cottage originally being built on the waste, to the side of the lane, or out of a larger field of lower status, by arrangement with another owner, perhaps Friar's Grange Farm.

## Broadly dateable construction details

The wall bracing seen in the northeast corner of the frame is of horizontal, straight arch-bracing, rising from the corner post to the wall plate and is of secondary construction so that the brace does not interrupt the aesthetics of the exposed vertical studs as seen on the front elevation for display to the lane. As such the building had some modest pretence of a style on modest means. The period for this style of construction would be from the late-C16 to the mid C17. The face-bladded scarf joint in the wall plates would suggest any time between the early-C16 to the mid C19 as it became an almost universal joint-type, but in context with other features suggests the late-C16 to mid-C17 for the wall framing.

The roof construction as seen is a side-purlin form with clasping collar-ties, one against the side of the chimney stack. It appears that the roof was subsequently rebuilt/ recovered, but the essential construction of the purlins and collar-ties were retained. The principal rafters at the bays might be considered to be of regular scantlings, if slight, but all else if of very-poor quality straw-thatched construction using coppiced branches as the rafters, rather than sawn timbers. There is no sooting to the roof so would have been built or altered when a chimney stack was already in-situ, presumably the chimney-stack construction.

The stack is reported by the client to be solid cob, but is likely to be built of either:

A first-phase clay-block built within a timber construction with a thick coating of daub, as seen to the upper reveals between the mid and east bays;

An C18/C19 clay block with daub rebuilding of an earlier timber-hood fireplace associated with the rebuilding of the roof.

The present stack stops short within the roof space and is surmounted by C18/C19 brickwork beneath and through the roof, with modern brickwork above. The stack could have passed through the roof in rendered clay-block, but some early examples are known where the stack stopped short in the original construction so that heat (and smoke) could have been distributed throughout the roof spaces with the smoke percolating out through the roof finish and possible gablets, either end of the roof, although the chimney stack is more likely in a building of this later date.

The first floor over the mid bay appears to be a later insertion with the axial beam having concave-stops with rounded edge to the "stop", a style suggesting a period for this detail of the later-C16 to early-C17. If the chamfer-stops are considered to be slight ogee-stops then their period would be from the late-C16 to later-C17, the former style supplanted by the later then developing into equal-curved ogee's of the later-C17 and

C18. The square-sectioned floor joists would provide a period of construction from circa the mid-C17 to the mid-C18 before the use of tall-thin floor joists.

The apotropaic superstition-marks scratched into the tie beam of the partition between the west and mid units could date from the late-C16 to the C17 and it is interesting to note the trail for witches in the parish in 1633 and 1634, but the period before and after is also subject to superstition.

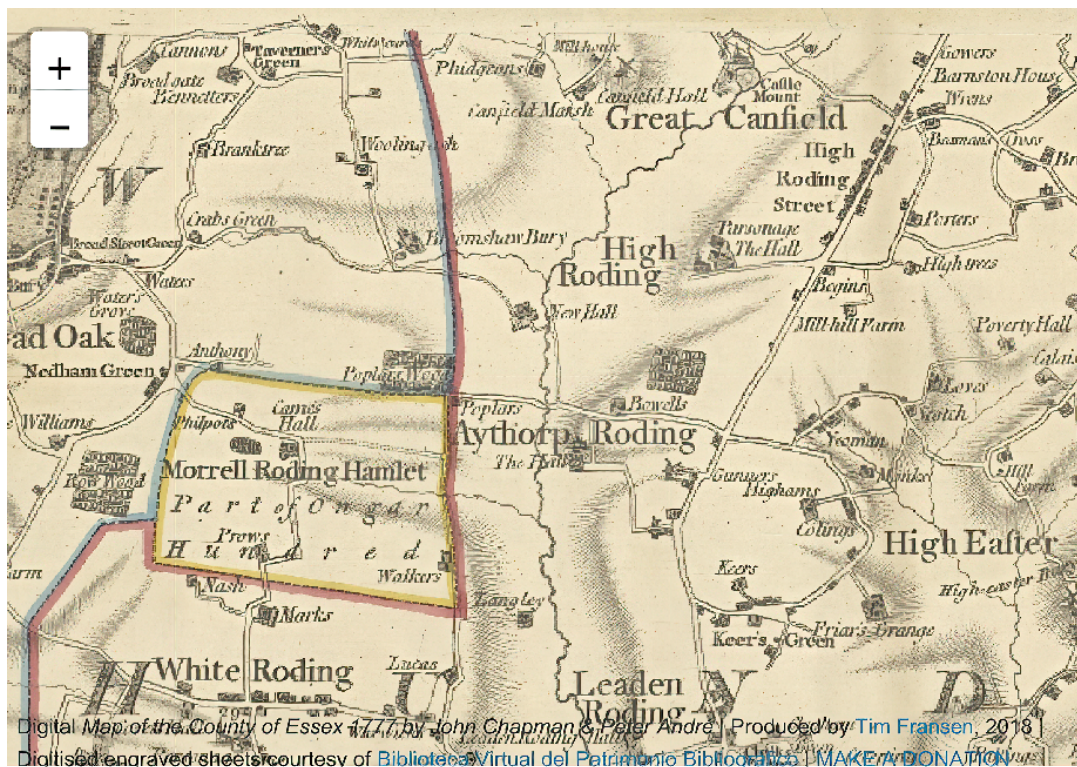
Much of the property has been altered in the C20 and evidence removed, particularly on the ground floor partitions and rear wall.

## Map evidence

### C18

In the Essex map produced by John Chapman and Peter Andre dated 1777, the property is clearly drawn and is essentially in the same layout as exists today, although now divided. It is shown with a small cottage at the east and a larger building, likely a barn, at the east, although shown indicatively only.

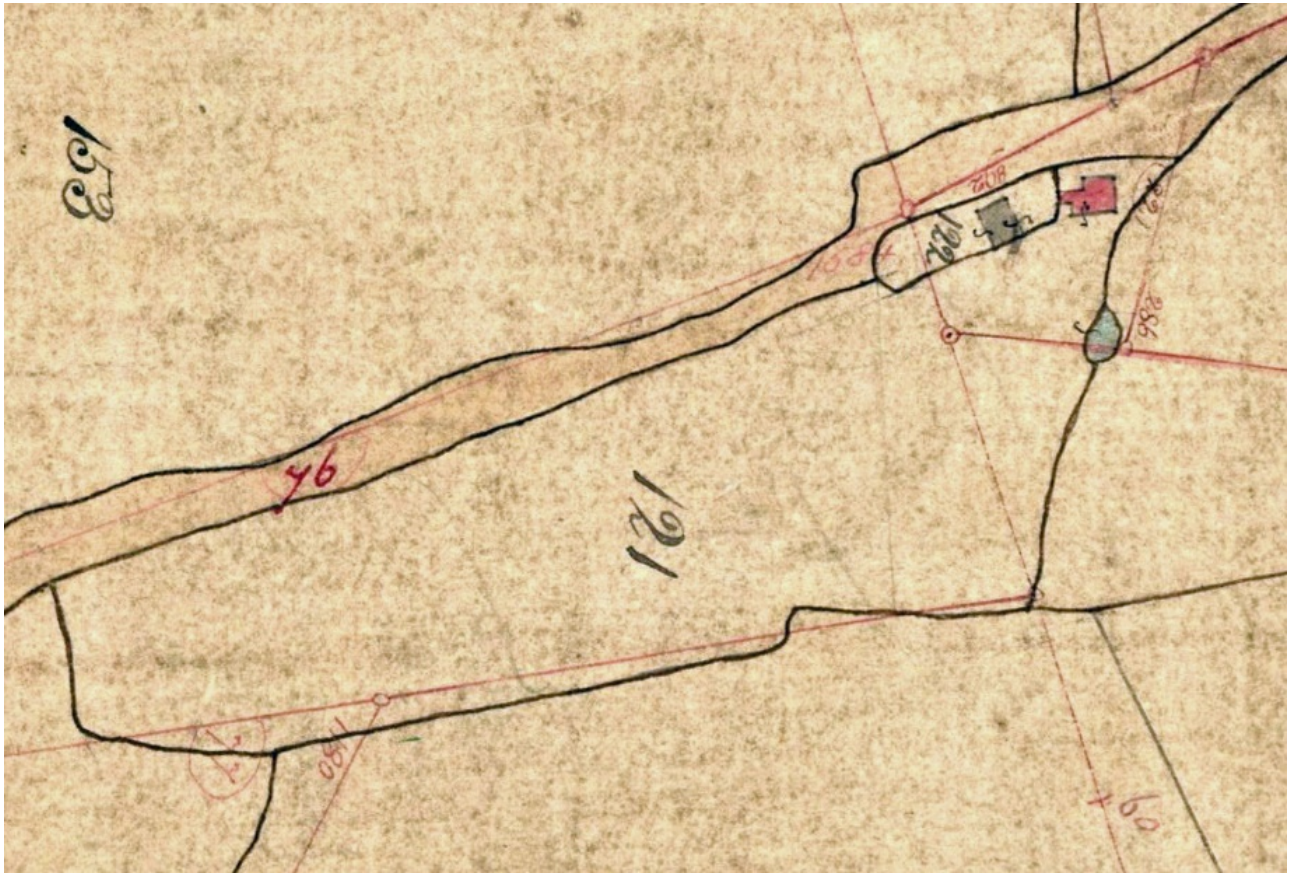
Copyright acknowledged.



The property is shown just to the west of Friar's Grange on the map.

### Early-C19

On the map attached to the 1846 Tithe Award, the cottage is shown set just within the west boundary of the property, essentially as a rectangular first phase building with the north and east lean-to wrap around

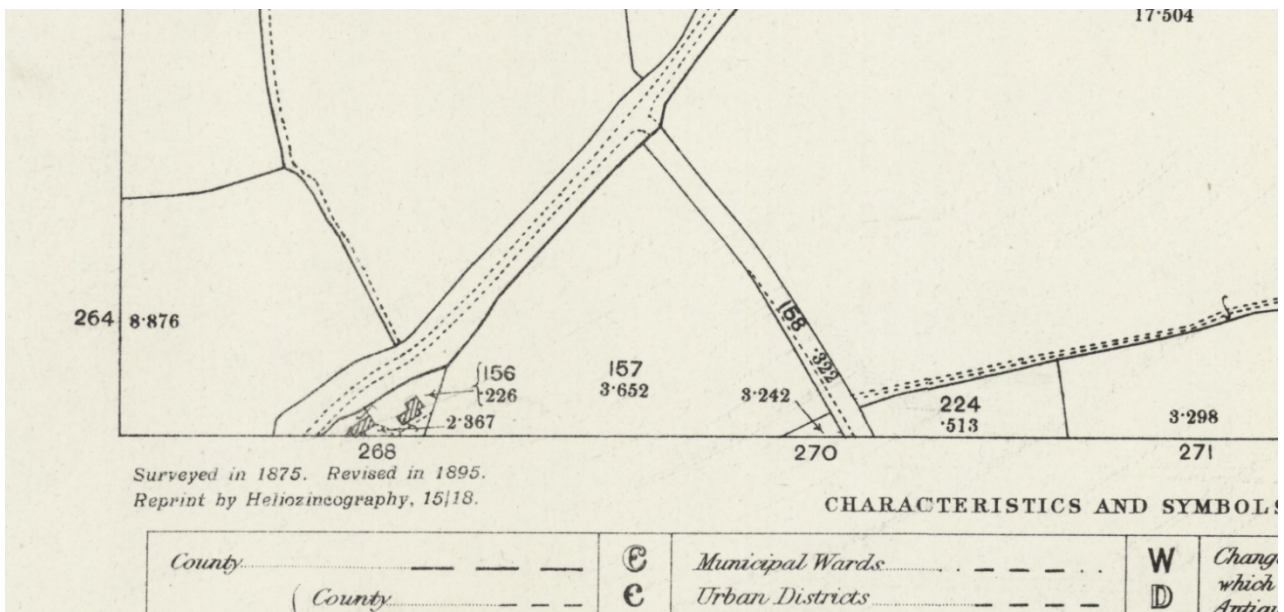


addition. There is a small square extensions at the east, either an entrance porch or a stair-turret to the chamber above the parlour. There is a field to the west that contains a square building, likely to be a barn.

As seen on the Tithe Award map of 1846, the house and its associated fields form a long thin strip of land to the south of the lane with the house at the east end of the property, abutting the lands of Friar's Grange Farm. The profile of the property seems to indicate that the north and east lean-to wrap-around addition had already been built, plus that there was a small square addition to the side of the building, that could either have been a staircase turret and/or an entrance porch. The property was owned by Elizabeth Hockley and occupied by John Smith and his family, later described as a gardener. This is the only property Elizabeth owns in the parish, her family being farmers in the Great Dunmow area. It seems that the Smith family owned other houses or cottages in the area as agricultural labourers and owned Cawdles for much of the C19, it descended through his daughter Keziah and her husband George Emberson's family until the C20. Cawdles is a not uncommon name in Essex and so is "Smith", more generally.

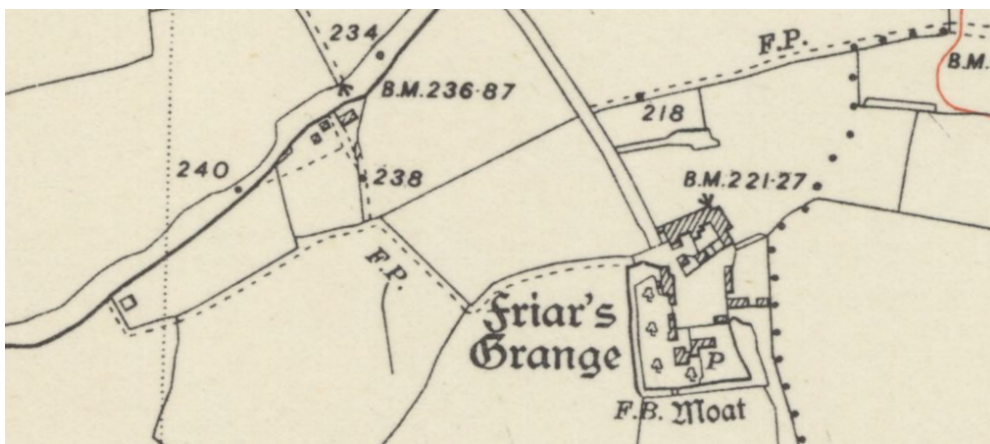
Later Ordnance-Survey sheets are less-detailed in relation to the profile of the house and the site.

On the 1875 First-Series Ordnance-Survey, map revised in 1895, the property is shown as two intersecting rectangles in line with the lane and a barn-like building is shown at the boundary between the cottage and the field. Note: it was known at the time that there were inaccuracies in surveying in the early OS maps so the exact details cannot be relied on, only the essence.



The sheet shows a similar property to that of the title award map, both appears again to show the lean-to additions to north and east walls of the original construction, however the earlier west small rectangular addition, has not been shown. The boundaries between the two plots are also changed.

The plan, below, in 1946 is simplified to a rectangle with two small individual sheds (?) in the field adjoining, the larger field having been divided and with a large element at the east boundary with a larger feature at the east. Footpaths have been shown for the first time. Boundaries within the site have altered.







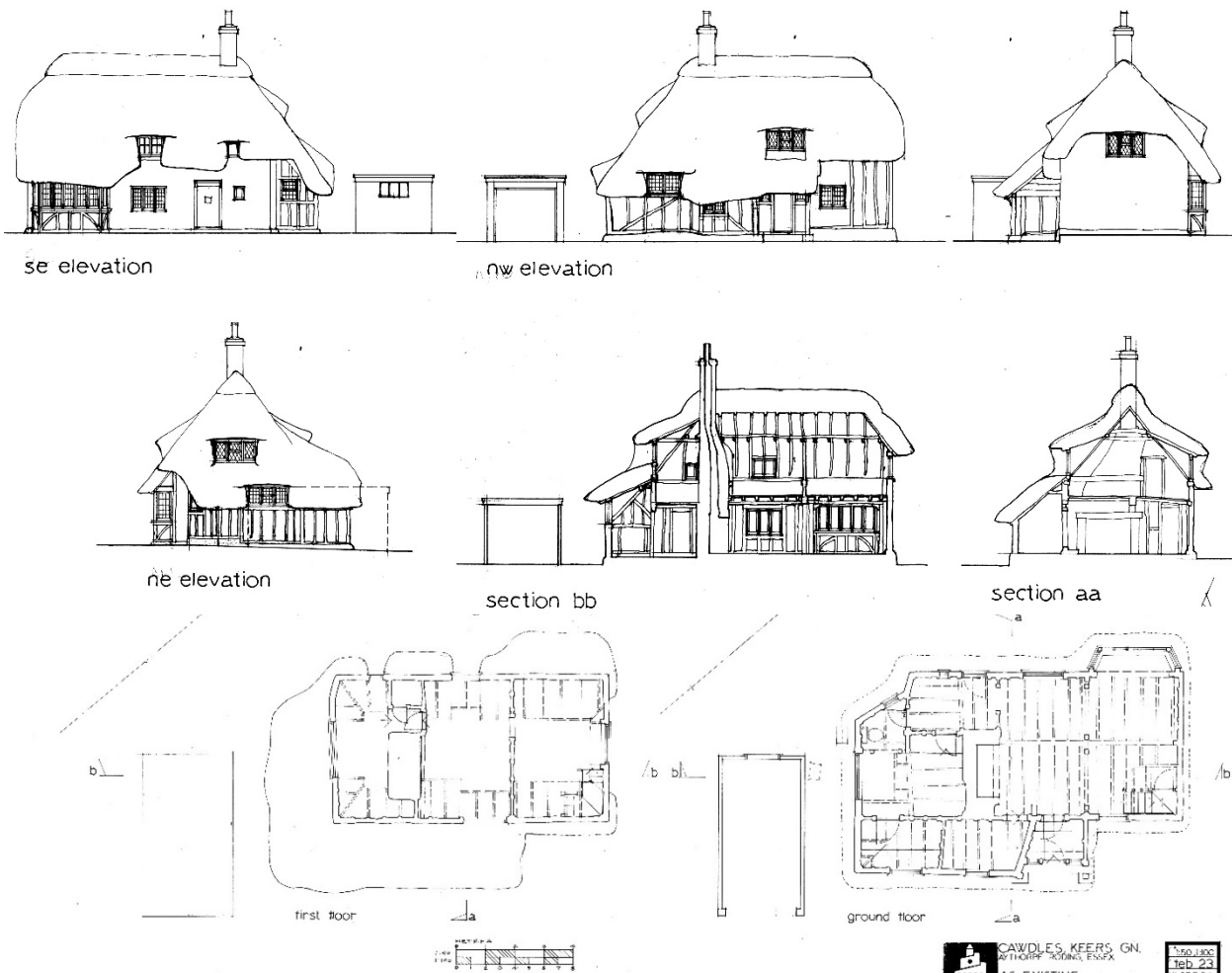
# Detailed Listed Building Status

District: Uttlesford (District Authority):Parish: Aythorpe Roding; National Grid Reference: TL 60128 14481  
TL 61 SW AYTHORPE RODING; 6/1 CAWDLES

II

Cottage, C18, extended in C19 and C20. Timber-framed, plastered with some exposed framing at front, roof thatched. 3 bays aligned approximately NE-SW, with chimney stack at NE end of middle bay. Lean-to extensions at E and N, C19 and C20. Bay window to SW, C20. Single storey with attics. NW elevation, 3 C20 casement windows and C20 porch, one C20 casement window in eyebrow dormer in middle bay. Roof originally half-hipped at both ends, but thatch swept over lean-to extensions. Some framing exposed internally, primary straight bracing. Partition between ground floor middle and SW bays removed, re-used timber introduced to support beam. Old photograph in NMR shows the cottage unchanged since the 1950s. Listing NGR: TL6012814481





The architect's survey drawing



CAWDLE'S KEERS GN.  
AYTHORPE RODING, ESSEX  
AS EXISTING  
160801

# Inspection Photographs

<p>Front, north; original studs at northeast closer</p>	<p>North addition and porch</p>	<p>C18, C19 west wrap around lean to addition</p>	<p>Rear, south</p>
<p>Wall braces at northeast-front with quality of studs below inside of lean-to</p>	<p>Cut brace and mortice at southwest-rear</p>	<p>North wall, front-a lodging mortice in a stud on the line of the partition, all else false.</p>	<p>Northwest corner storey-post-jowl seems to be just a curved bracket-shape</p>
<p>West wall-C20 "Disneyland-history" insertion; why?</p>	<p>Real C19 window on south mid bay attic</p>	<p>Partition between west and mid bay, door between chambers cut in</p>	<p>Studs below tie beam morticed and tenoned, nothing above; later wall above?</p>
<p>West face to partition</p>	<p>Top of chimney stack in mid bay with tie-beam</p>	<p>Lath and timber side cheeks to fireplace.</p>	<p>clasping collar-tie to face of flue</p>

			
			
<p>Axial-joist with lamb's tongue chamfer stop, supported on a block onto the timber fireplace bressemer.</p>	<p>Joist with soffit-haunched below a mid tenon and soffit haunch above</p>	<p>Face-bladed scarf joints on front and rear wall plates either side of the chimney stack.</p>	

#### Dateable features

3-unit wall-framing of good carpentry but of reducing quality timbers with wany-edge; C17. Studs at approx. 16-inch centres.

Straight arch brace trenched to back of front elevation wall at east bay, of "Secondary Bracing" type; late-C16 to mid C17.

Face-bladed scarf joint: Early-C16 to mid-C19.

Axial beam in mid bay with concave chamfer stop; if stop is accepted as with a rounded edge; Later-C16 to mid-C17., if as a slight lamb's tongue to later-C17.

Square-section floor joists; mid-C17 to early-C18.

Rear Door opening with pintols; Medieval and post-medieval.

Apopotraic "superstition marks to partition between west and mid bays; late-C16 to C17.

Surviving 2 number vertical boarded doors with back-battens out of context; C18 or C19.

Side open casement window in attic with 4 panes; late-C18 to early-C19.

Diamond-paned side-opening casement windows in attic; C18-C19 type in C20 frames.

Rectangular-paned side-opening casement windows on ground floor C19 to C20.

Roof, clasping tie beam survivals with through purlins; late-C16 to C18.

Roof, poor quality branch construction; C17 to C19, depending on status.

Roof, romantic picturesque forms; late-C18 in status buildings, C19 to C20.

Roof finishes; long straw thatch 60 to 100 years old, inter-war or post-war periods.

Clay-block chimney stack with likely a bread leavening oven at the rear, previously removed; date not known, but supporting the later-C17 inserted floor of the mid unit. Either a unique C17 survival in Essex, or a C19th., or even a C20 renewal associated with the craft-style timber alterations to the ground floor.

## The Plan and Section

The framing is of timber laid out in 3 equal bays with a depth of 1 2Rod" a medieval unit of measurement approximately of 16 feet-six inches. The plan can be described by three intersecting circles of 1 Rod radius as can the height of the walls by a semi-circle, other geometries are possible.

All is raised on a low solid wall approximately 300 mm above the external ground level. The roof can be seen to have been set out on a 3-4-5 triangle section provided an angle of 53 degrees, a medieval and post-medieval arrangement.

In terms of plan arrangement, a three-unit house would have usually been laid out in the late-medieval plan form; one or a pair of service storage rooms at the "low-end" adjoining a cross-passage, with front and rear doors leading through an opening into the mid-unit open-hall with a hearth placed on the floor. This hall would have had a partition and settle on a dais opposite the entrance into the hall and behind this at the high-end unit would have been the owner's parlour and/or chamber.

The layout of the property, although much altered, could be seen to follow this arrangement with the "High-End" at the west.

## Joinery

The frame is well-carpented with fine saw marks slightly inclined across the width of converted timbers, but without the back stroke associated rougher conversions. Surfaces and edges, not affected by wany-edge and bark or deterioration, are sharp and straight. Joints have good-quality mortice and tenons with pegs to the main framing, but no evidence was seen of joint numbering, although timbers are painted black and deterioration may have obscured these details.

Bay and roof-frame construction at the unit-bays is of slighter than usual dimensions and there is little or no sign of jowls to storey-posts.

The wall-bracing to the front elevation is of low-angled straight arch-bracing, rising from the post to the wall-plate and the braces are secondary braces trenched across the inside of the studs which would give a period of construction dating from 1500 if curved, but is generally C17 when straight. The type of bracing is not found after the middle of the C17. The rear corners have straight-bracing at 45 degrees, presumably not being used as display to the lane.

The ground floor rear wall in the mid unit, is first-phase and is highly significant, the attic floor joists are lodged on a C17/C18 girt timber later fixed to the studs that can be seen to rise full-height through to the attic. The window is C20 and distressed to look antique. The studs and lodged floor joists indicate a later insertion of the attic floor to this unit.

There are face-bladded scarf joints joining timbers in the wall plates, front and rear, either side of the cob chimney stack in the east bay. The base plate has a scarf joint with top lip as is common.

The internal partition between the mid and west bays is not jointed into the adjoining storey-posts as might be expected. The carpentry is of good-quality, if using reducing standard of timber with wany-edge in places, as in the plates of the wall frames. However, the studs beneath the tie-beam are morticed and tenoned with pegs of good quality, but those above the tie beam are of thin and wavy scantlings and not pegged to the tie beam, or to any principal rafters and would seem to be a later alteration or addition to the partition, perhaps associated with a roof-recovering.

## Heating

There is clay-built chimney stack set to a line between the west and mid units and set within the west bay, creating a minor space area at the east, that does not have a first floor within it, being open full-height to the roof slopes above. The rear of the stack in the east back is recessed in a large area and it is possible that this was part of a cob oven or bread leavening oven, with or without a flue respectively, since reported by the client to having been removed.

The stack, rises and tapers to just below the ridge within the roof space and is surmounted by an C18 or C19 brick stack above it through the roof with modern brickwork above the roof line.

The stack is reported by the client to be solid cob, but is likely to be built of either:

A first-phase clay-block fabric built within a timber construction, as seen to the upper reveals either side of the stack in the attic.

An C18/C19 clay block with a thick coating of daub, a rebuilding of an earlier timber-hood fireplace associated with the rebuilding of the roof.

There are burn marks to the lower edge of the opening timber bressemer as a “fire-insurance” topping-out of the construction, but no apopotraic marks were observed scratched into its surface or initials.

The clay stack appears to be earlier than the C17 first-floor construction, as it is used to support the axial beam and floor construction, which is supported by a timber block off the timber-fireplace bressemer, but these details could be underpinned when and if a stack was rebuilt.

There is a large recess area in the walling of the stack in the west bay and this is interpreted as having been hacked-back to house the position of a washing-copper, boiler or similar, since removed. These features are likely to be C19

## The roof

The roof construction as seen is a through side-purlin form with clasping collar-ties, one built against the side of the chimney stack. It appears that the roof was subsequently rebuilt/ recovered, but the essential construction of the purlins and collar-ties were retained. The principal rafters at the bays might be considered to be of regular scantlings, if slight, but all else if of very-poor quality straw-thatched construction using coppiced branches as the rafters, rather than sawn timbers. There is no sooting to the roof so would have been built or altered when a chimney stack was already in-situ, presumably the chimney-stack construction, either as built in a first phase, or rebuilt in the C19, or even rebuilt in the C20 associated with the ground-floor timber alterations and structural inserts.

Slopes are finish with straw-reinforced wattle and daub recessed between exposed rafters and there is evidence of the attic having been flat ceiled at collar-tie level with laths fixed with hand-made nails.

All has deteriorated and ceiling plaster have been removed. The roof is thatched in straw and is in poor condition, 60-100 years old, which would place it's re-thatching during the inter-war, or post-WW11 period.

## Layout alterations

The quality and surface condition of the partition between the west and mid bays suggests that it is of a different quality than the general framing of the house. The partition is of good joinery quality, if rather reduced quality of timber in places. There is no evidence that the partition was jointed into the main wall frame or any storey-posts, suggesting a later insertion. The apopotraic marks would suggest a partition of the C17.

The studs which would have formed the ground floor part of the partition have been trimmed when the ground floor alterations were made in the C20, but they were all pegged into the tie-beam of the partition. The wall above the tie-beam is plastered and with poorer-quality, thinner and wavier studs rising to the roof,

all plastered over in the west bay and not pegged into the tie-beam. One interpretation is that an earlier ground-level building has been improved in the C17 by the forming of this good-quality partition plus the insertion of the first floor over the west unit. Unfortunately, much of the ground floor evidence has been destroyed in the C20.

The good-quality framing to this partition only exists at tie-beam level and below, the studs being pugged to the underside of the tie-beam, but the plastered partition above is of poorer quality, not pegged to the beam or seemingly jointed into any roof construction. The fair-face of the partition faces the status part of the building, the fireplace and is of good surface quality.

There would not have been the need for superstition mark to be scratched on this face, in this position, if it was contained in an enclosed attic chamber, only if it were facing directly to the fireplace in an open hall and prone to the access by witches down the chimney, into the hall and then to the west-unit chamber which it protects as well as the Hall itself..

*In 1565 Anna Vale of White Roding was accused of witchcraft. In 1633 Jone Dowsit of Aythorpe Roding, Parnel Sharpe and Rebecca Write were accused of witchcraft in the same place. In the following year Joane Dowsett, Jeffery Holmes and Jane Holmes were accused, plus similar numbers in both years in High Roding plus 2 in 1634 in Leaden Roding. It would be the case that superstition was rife in the area at this time and that apopotraic marks would have been a common feature in buildings in this area during these years.*

*The last witch hung in England for witchcraft was Alice Molland in Exeter in 1684 and the last witch to be tried in England was Jane Wenham Hertford in 1712, found guilty, but given a Royal Pardon. The old laws against witchcraft were repealed in 1736, but after that people could still be tried but only for the exercise of supernatural powers.*

The flooring over the mid-unit Hall is suggested by the axial beam supporting the mid-unit floor and has what can be described as either hollow-chamfer-with-rounded stop edge, or as a slight "lamb's tongued" to the chamfered lower edges. There survives some square-sectioned, floor joists jointed into the axial beam with a joint of soffit-haunched mid tenon with diminished haunch above. This carpentry is as if a soffit-haunched, mid-tenon form, but extended with a diminished haunch above to take account of the deeper joist section. The floor joists and boards have been re-arranged/repared in modern times before the present occupancy and there are deeper than wide joists also in both mid and west units mixed with the square-section joists. Floor boards are/were of good even quality, elm boards, wide with rebated edges. These details can be attributed to the late-C17 or C18.

The suggested second phase timber-framed partition has been through in a third phase by the insertion of a new door frame to provide access from the west unit chamber to the new mid-unit space, either for sleeping or storage. This floor insertion and new doorway would relate to the C18 by the carpentry of the doorframe, it is suggested that the construction would have been of slandering construction in the C19.

The C19 lean-to addition apparently shown on the 1846 Tithe Award Plan, wraps around the front and east sides of the original wall frame, and its roof is supported by rafter plates nailed to the wall studs. The space of the east unit has been extended by cutting away the side wall studs of the original end and there are some re-used rafter sections with birds-mouth notches are found in the much-later inserted ceiling above this space.

## Windows and Doors

The doors likewise have been renewed and are mainly C20 apart from two plain boarded doors with back-battens that are out of context so cannot be relied on for evidence. All other doors, windows and partitions, have been removed or altered.

The door on the south wall of the east unit, to the side of the chimney stack, is an early opening with the evidence of pintel hinges and hasp fixings for latches and bolts. However, the door is modern. Some ironmongery may date to the C17 or C18 with heart-shaped terminals, re-used or copied elsewhere in modern times.

There is a C19 timber side-opening casement window to the rear elevation of the mid-unit attic, but elsewhere all has been renewed in a later romantic, picturesque style with leaded glazing of diamond quarries on the first floor and rectangular quarries to the ground. It is suggested that this may have taken place above in the C19 or C20 and below in the C20 during the Inter-War period when motor-car transport become available for the well-to-do allowing the rise of second-home ownership for the "middling-sort" travelling from London and elsewhere for weekend and holiday retreats.

A further extension of this in a small cell, likely to be a proposal for a study that received planning permission in 1970. The construction of an entrance porch takes place after this.

There are C20 stripping out of earlier features and walling on the ground floor and the construction of timber craft-style feature and replacements of ungainly proportions.

C20 leaded glazed side-opening casements elsewhere.



## An interpretation of the evidence.

After enquiry, none of the Essex timber-frame and historic-building investigators have seen a solidly formed clay chimney stack in this context. The question arises as to whether this is a first-phase item of the C17, or has been inserted later in conjunction with other alterations associated with the C17 or later first-floor construction. In Essex and elsewhere there was an increasing use of clay-block or clay-lump features in the C19 and in the late-C19 and C20 the introduction of the French system of rammed earth in timber formwork as Pise construction, particularly in the limestone belt stretching from the Isle of Portland through Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and on to Yorkshire, also in Cornwall and Devon. These may use of the naturally hydraulic limestones of this belt. Essex does not have this tradition unless it is a clay-based construction or as mortar.

The late John McCann an important Essex historic-building researcher, wrote articles on the Essex use of clay-based construction to which reference should be made. He worked with both John Walker plus Elphin and Brenda Watkin who have contributed to this report, have considered the evidence and offered their observations.

His publications include; 2004 'Clay & Cob Buildings.'; In Vernacular Architecture: 1987 Vol 18, "Is Clay Lump a Traditional Building Material?' (Adobe – not in use until C19th) 1997 Vol 28, 'The Origin of Clay Lump in England.' 2007 Vol 38, 'Clay-walled Houses in Norfolk. In VAG volume 28 John described the early-C19 use of building mud walls of cottages using 'clay-lumps' in Cambridgeshire where there was the availability of chalk to mix with the clay. This had been published in 1821 by John Denson describing an existing process in the region and this tradition seems to have then spread to Norfolk by the mid-C19 where the chalk and limestone belts continued from the southwest of the country. The northwest corner of Essex abuts Cambridgeshire and in the Duxford and Chishill areas has similar materials available but in the area under study the ground is largely clay.

It has been suggested that the stack is a C19 construct, relating to the alterations in the east unit of the building, but there are other details that seem to indicate an earlier existence of a chimney stack in this location. It is entirely possible that an earlier known form of timber-framed chimney stack was constructed in the first phase of the building and in this location. Smoke canopies, hung on the walls above fireplaces are known from the C12, but timber framed and clay-lump or wattle and daub timber-hood fireplaces were constructed before the common use of bricks for these structures, largely in the C16. Such a stack would fit with the other evidence and can be seen to have been rebuilt in the C18 or C19 to replace such an earlier heating and cooking feature as seen in this illustration with and adjoining back door, perhaps for controlling draft up the timber-hood, although a nearby window or hatch would have worked as well.

## Conclusion

The residential property is oriented east-west, but defined by the road-edge construction of the site forcing the lane into an awkward dog leg to the west of the property, as if taken out of a former, natural, road alignment.

From documentary research of records, the property was inhabited by agricultural labouring families in the later-C18 through to the early-C20, in the later period relating to horse services to Friar's Grange, although not related to the ownership or occupancy of that farm.

A definitive first-phase plan arrangement is difficult to determine with the extent of alterations that have taken place, particularly in the late-C20 on the ground floor. However, a domestic house or cottage of this period would usually have been laid out in 3-units with a "low-end service unit" a mid-unit Hall, either open to the roof or floored over plus a "high-end" containing parlour on the ground floor and a chamber above, the chamber would be accessed by a ladder from the parlour.

Balancing the various period-features and interpreting the plan layout with subsequent alterations, it would be reasonable to postulate a first-phase structure of the Late-C16 to early-C17, perhaps a little later in this lower-status, rural environment. The quality of carpentry is good, but working with lessening timber quality retaining wavy edge. The wall bracing is secondary with the studs to the main façade, displaying north to the lane, the braces are hidden behind the studs so as not to interrupt the studwork style of the front elevation.

Second phase alterations relating to the attic floor could be of the C17 with the forming of an attic chamber in the west-unit, if it didn't exist before.

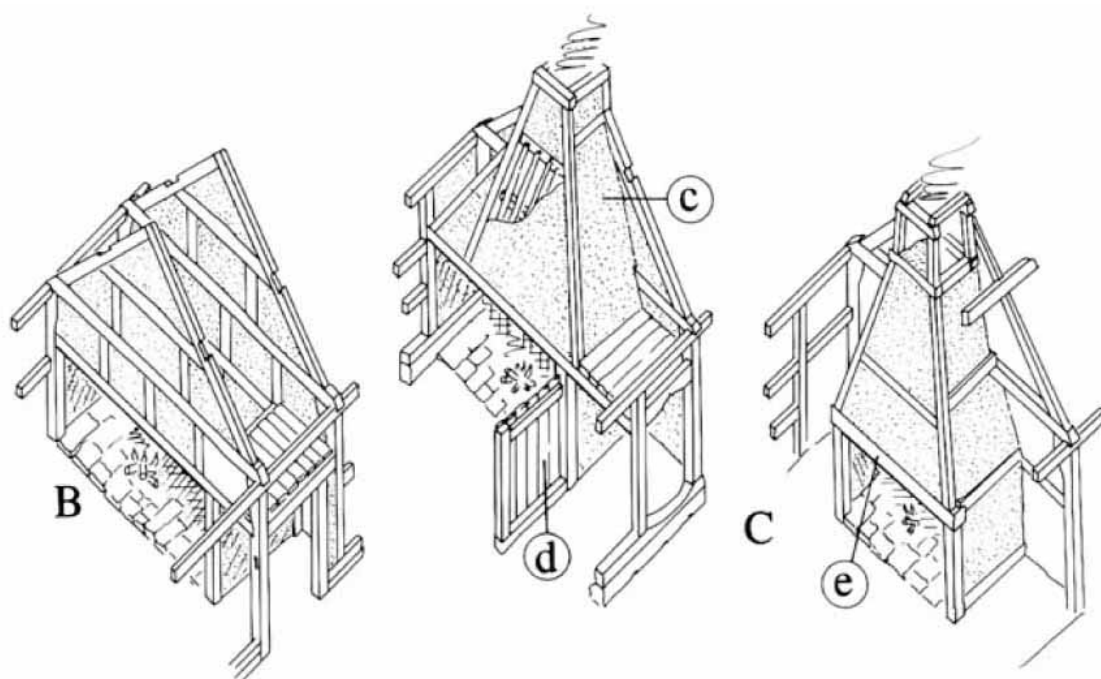
The Hall was floored over in the late-C17 to C18.

The roof could have been re-covered in the C18 or C19, but retaining the earlier side-purlin clasp collar ties. Straw thatch would require renewing every 60 years or so.

The question of the date of the solid-cob fireplace, apparently unique in Essex, remains scientifically and stylistically undetermined but would fit in easily with a 3-unit domestic-planning arrangement for a C17 property in an agricultural location and status, but could also relate to an C18/C19 re-roofing.

If the cob stack is found, after further investigation and research, to be first-phase then the east bay would appear to be the service end and with a hall in the mid bay hall-family/cooking room and with the parlour plus chamber at the west, but with the possibility of a late-period open-hall. Alternatively the cob-stack could be a replacement for an earlier timber-framed or brick chimney stack rebuilt in the C18 at the same time that the roof was rebuilt. The large recess found to the rear of the stack in the east bay is interpreted as a location for a bread-leavening oven, or for a C19 washing-copper, both since removed.

The alternative is that there existed in this location a clay-block and timber-framed chimney in the first phase and with the same house arrangement, but renewed in the C19, perhaps with the building of the wrap-around north and east lean-to addition and enlargement of the east unit.



There is no evidence for the external door arrangements other than that at the rear to the side of the stack in the east bay and there are no surviving window evidence other than one-C18/C19 window in the rear mid-bay attic. The diamond-quarried lead-glazed windows to the attic may be C19, in a romantic-cottage aesthetic, but they are in C20 timber frames as are all other windows and doors save for 2 number vertical-panelled doors that are not in context.

All other windows and doors are of the C20.

The significance of the apotropaic witch-superstition marks, though not unusual in the C17 context and the recorded witch-trials in the parish of 1633 and 1634, would seem to reflect the first-phase planning arrangement of the property. The scratched marks on the tie-beam of the partition housing the first floor-chamber, would not be relevant as a safeguard in an enclosed chamber above the mid bay, which appears to have been inserted during a second phase as a door has had to be cut through the partition from the first-phase west chamber to afford access to it. These marks would be relevant if the mid bay was full-height to the roof and contained the ground-floor fireplace allowing entry of witches down the chimney. When this hall was floored over in the mid-to-later C17 protection marks would not be required other than at the new windows in the thatch slopes. The chamber to the west would have had a window in the side gable.

# Statement of Significance

The Report and Statement of Significance is, after consideration, the opinions of the author based on the four HE categories and articles published by Andrew Brown of Historic England, reinforced by his Practice, Research and Education experiences plus conservation-accreditation, AABC.

## Definitions

None; means of no historic significance.

Little; suggests some consideration but should not be over-valued and could be altered or removed after consultation with the planners.

Moderate; reflects some importance requiring a degree of agreement and consent with the planners in making any proposals for alterations.

Highly; indicates that this element should not be materially altered by proposals except by discussions and consent with the Statutory Authorities, that may include Historic England and other regional and national organisations.

This should not prohibit “change” and an architect’s careful and considered design to add to the property and alter it should enhance rather than detract from the property.

## Categories

### Highly Significant

#### Form and setting

The overall form, materials and existing aesthetics of the existing building as seen, together with its site and setting are regarded as Highly Significant, including their appreciation by the community and wider groups.

As such the overall form of the existing building should not be “Materially Changed”, without discussion and consent from the Statutory Authority.

#### Walls

The First phase front wall sections that are highly significance are to the northwest corner of the building and that section of north walling that encloses the chimney stack within. The west wall of the building is also highly significant as is rear wall, south, where not affected by the C20 west bay window, as this shows the full height of the wall-framing studs, with the later inserted attic floor. The window is modern and of no significance.

The east wall, ground floor, of the building was stripped out in the C19, but the upper section with its wall-brace is first-phase and highly significant. The southwest corner of this area is highly significant in that it contains the face-bladed scarf joint that is an important carpentry indication of the phasing of the building.

The rear elevation door opening below this scarf joint is of high significance in that it is the oldest and only surviving un-changed doorway in the property and may relate to the first phase of the building as are the ironwork, pintols and clasps in the frame. However, the door is modern and of no significance.

All the walls and partitions in the attic, including the lath and plaster walls either side of the chimney stack and the apopotraic superstition marks on the partition between the mid and west bays are highly significant as are the floors.

The attic floors are highly significant in that they reflect the evolving phases of the building in the C17 and C18.

The indicated full height of the east unit is of interest and while significant should not, in the opinion of the author, preclude an additive alteration rather than a subtractive removal of materials, perhaps as a raising of the very-low C19 first-floor level (made up of salvaged materials) to that of the rest of the attic, or a reinstatement of the full-height space, incorporated into an architect's design such as an addition.

#### Finishes

There is considerable wattle and daub with coppiced branches and withies surviving in walls and roof slopes that are highly significant and although the quality of the roofing is "basic" and the straw thatch deteriorating, this does not detract from the importance of the surviving roof construction.

The North and East wrap-around lean-to C19 additions are also highly significant in that they represent an important phase in the development of the building and the appreciation of the building and roof thatch slopes by the community.

#### Windows

The C19 side-opening casement in the mid unit rear slope is highly significant in that it is the feature that defines the C19 phase in the attic.

#### Moderately significant

All other windows are moderately significant in that they contribute to the aesthetics and appreciation of the building in its setting. All lead-glazed windows in the attic are set in C20 timber frames, whether as a copying of a C19 phase or not. Those to the ground floor are similarly described, the rear bay window is C20.

#### Not Significant

The 1970 study extension and the entrance porch are not regarded as historically significant however they blend in to a historic aesthetic style that should be considered in the setting of the building from the lane and communal appreciation. The internal doors to the porch and the study lean-to addition have been inserted in the C20 and appear to be salvaged materials that again suffer from false-historicism and confuses the understanding of the building.

The crude C20 timber-frame walling inserted inside the west wall of the attic is not regarded as significant, nor the dog-leg staircase to the attic. The ground floor crude timbers to the partition between the mid and west units are similarly C20 and not regarded as significant. The author of the report regards these as having a negative effect on the authenticity of the building and, subject to design and structural proposals could be removed to the advantage of authenticity.

The ground floor rear wall of the west bay has been removed with the insertion of the bay window in the C20. The bay window is of no significance, and apart from representing the C20 phase(s) of the alterations has little historic value or significance.

Doors are not considered to be significant in themselves and apart from the 2 number vertical plank doors of the C19, seen detached and out of context, all have been inserted and formed of machined timbers either of bandsaw or circular saw production but made to look "antique". There are however some elements of historic ironmongery, that would be considered significant if they were in context, but again have been re-fixed or copied to look historic and do not contribute to the authenticity of the property, but to its romantic aesthetic.



Barnwell and Adams    The House Within, interpreting Medieval Houses in Kent  
Publ:                    RCHM

Various articles        Vernacular Architecture Group volumes  
Publ:                    VAG

Eavesdopper articles. The newsletter of the Suffolk Historic Buildings Group.

Essex Historic Buildings Group articles

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