

# **Church Lane Cottage, Aldham, Suffolk**

## **Heritage Asset Assessment**



**Leigh Alston MA (Oxon), Architectural Historian**

**Leigh Alston MA (Oxon)  
4 Nayland Road  
Bures St Mary  
Suffolk CO8 5BX  
Tel. 07905 808322  
leighalston1@gmail.com**

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# Church Lane Cottage, Church Lane, Aldham, Suffolk

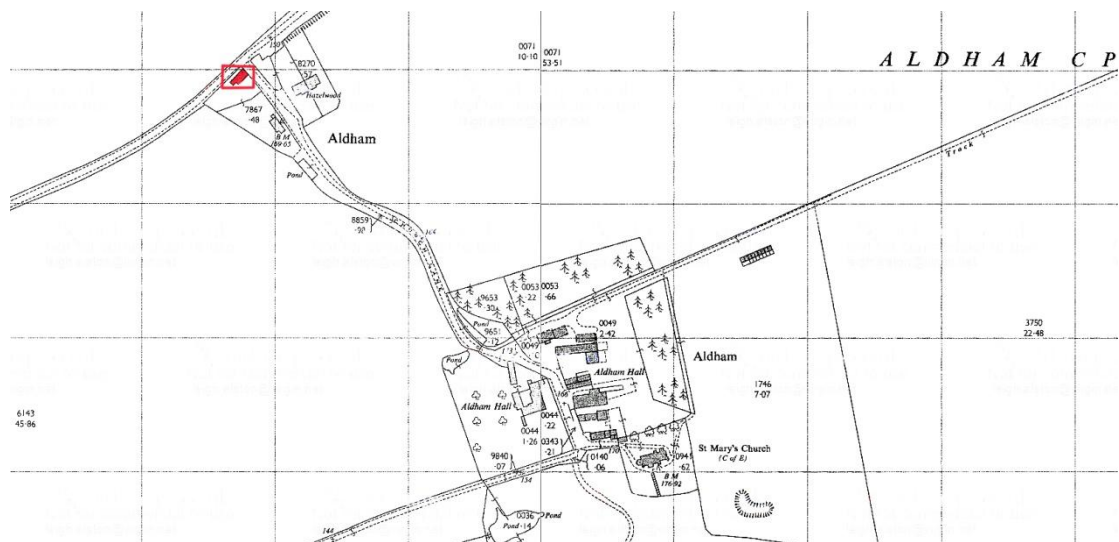
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## Heritage Asset Assessment

*This report provides an historic analysis at Historic England (2016) Level 2 of a grade II-listed dwelling house, and is intended to inform and accompany an application for Listed Building Consent. The site was inspected on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021.*

### Summary

Church Lane Cottage was originally built as an unusually small house of just 3.9 m or 13 ft in width, with low walls of approximately 2 m or 6.5 ft in height. Its upper storey was contained almost entirely within the slope of the roof, but the lower was arranged in the standard manner with a central hall heated by a high-end chimney and flanked by a parlour and service room. Rural dwellings of this scale were once common but are now rare survivors, and the property is accordingly of considerable historic interest. The original timber-framed walls retain some elements from the 16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century, but were largely rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the present upper storey was added, raising the walls by 1.6 m or 5.25 ft. The present hall fireplace dates from this remodelling and there is evidence of a lobby entrance in the front wall immediately opposite. By the time of the parish tithe survey in 1839 the house had been converted into a pair of labourers' cottages belonging to nearby Aldham Hall, and soon afterwards acquired its present outline when lean-to extensions were added to the rear wall and right-hand gable. A photograph of 1961 shows the positions of two front doors that have since disappeared. The lean-to has preserved a section of external weatherboarding in the back wall of the present kitchen that illustrates the building's appearance in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and more may survive above its ceiling. The interior retains a number of good 19<sup>th</sup> century fixtures and fittings including an unusual array of characterful 19<sup>th</sup> century pine cupboards along with a rare screen flanking the chimney corner. Despite an extensive renovation in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which saw the replacement of almost all its windows the property therefore continues to fully warrant its grade II status.



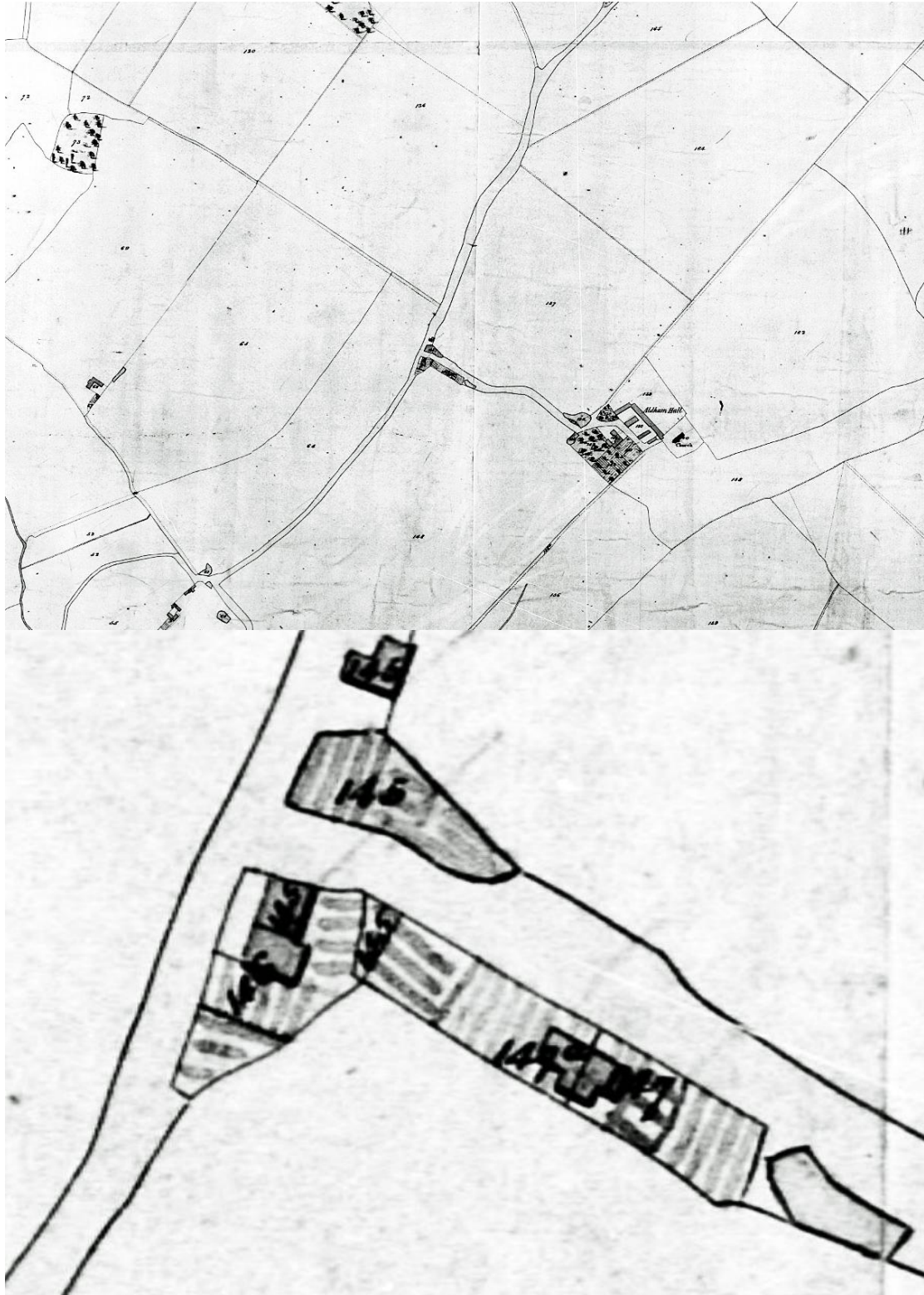
**Figure 1. Location map outlining the cottage 0.5 km to the north-west of St Mary's Church and Aldham Hall.**

## Documentary History and Map Regression



**Figure 2. A recent site plan highlighting the cottage in red on the corner of Church Lane to the east and The Street in Aldham to the north. The narrow brick lean-to projects from the south-western gable on the left but unlike today the rear lean-to appears to extend along the entire two-storied building.**

Church Lane Cottage occupies an isolated site in open countryside at the junction of The Street in Aldham and Church Lane which leads to Aldham Hall and St Mary's Church 0.5 km to the south-east. A small garage of Fletton brick lies in the rear corner of the plot as shown in figure 2. The parish tithe map of 1839 shows the property as two cottages with another pair of semi-detached cottages that still survives to the south, albeit much altered (Honeysuckle Cottage). A third building which has since been demolished lay beyond the road junction to the north-east (figure 3). The map suggests these dwellings were built on a narrow strip of wasteland that once formed part of a wider road junction in a manner often seen elsewhere. The outline of what is now Church Lane Cottage was then very different, with an L-shaped profile caused by a rear (south-eastern) projection from the south-western cottage to the right of the present facade in illustration 1. Both were owned by Thomas Leonard Esquire in conjunction with Aldham Hall and much of the surrounding land, as were the neighbouring tenements. The south-western cottage was occupied by Frederick Strand and was described by the tithe apportionment like the others as a 'house and garden' but listed under 'cottages' (plot 146). The 1841 census includes Frederick Strand as a 30-year-old agricultural labourer living with his wife and two infant children. Unusually, the north-eastern cottage to the left of the facade was recorded in the apportionment as plot 145 jointly with the house beyond the junction, a large triangular island of land on the other side of Church Lane and a small area to the south-east – presumably because both of these garden plots were shared between them while the majority of the present garden belonged to plot 146. The tenants were named as Henry Payne and James Emmerson. Payne was described as a blacksmith in the 1841 census and evidently lived at the separate house to the north which was shown as a 'smithy' on the 1884 Ordnance Survey (figure 4), and while Emmerson was not mentioned in the census his cottage was probably occupied by the next in the list: Andrew Hales, a carpenter also of 30 with a wife and four young children who lived with a lodger or apprentice of 15. The building had changed shape significantly by 1884 as noted in the captions to the various maps below.



**Figure 3. The 1839 tithe map of Aldham with a detail below (PRO IR 30/33/5). North lies towards the top left-hand corner. Church Lane Cottage is depicted as two labourers' cottages with an L-shaped outline created by the greater width of the south-western dwelling. The adjoining garden appears to have belonged to the latter (plot 146) with a narrow strip to the rear and a larger triangular garden on the opposite side of the road shared by the second cottage and the detached house to the north-east of the road junction (all plot 145). The outline of Church Lane which contains a pond to the south-east suggests plots 145-147 were initially built as inexpensive encroachments.**

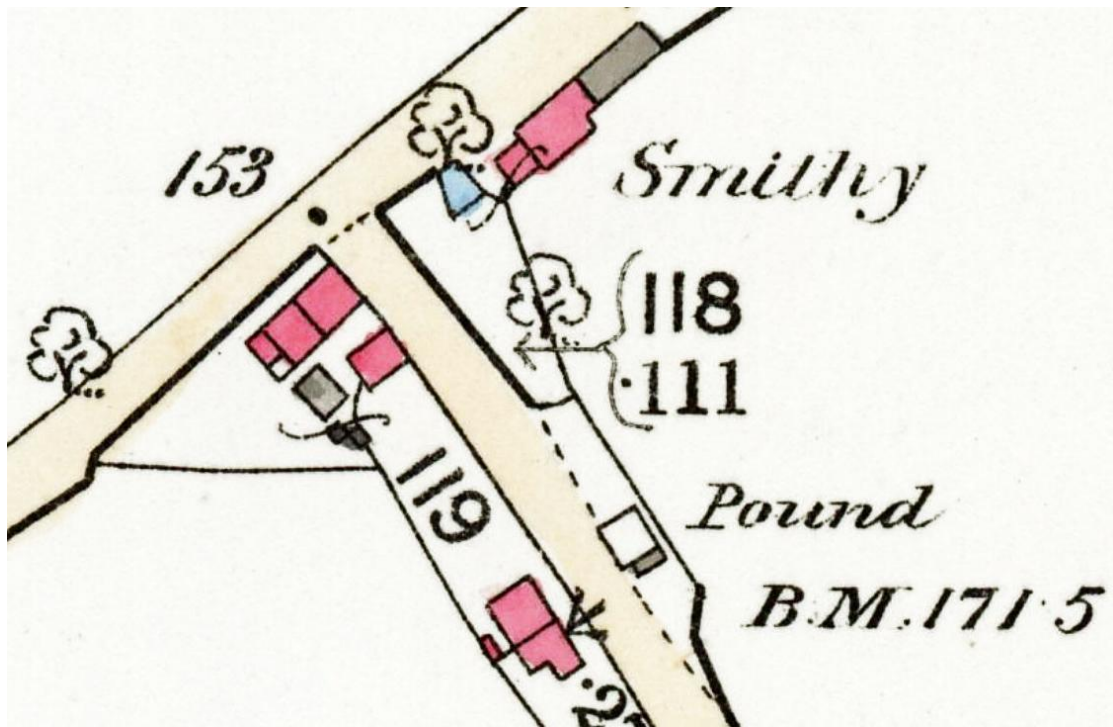


Figure 4. The highly accurate First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1884. The two cottages had acquired their current outline since 1839 with the brick lean-to projecting from the south-western gable and what appears to be the rear lean-to extending along the entire south-eastern wall of the main structure. Two substantial outbuildings lay in the rear garden.

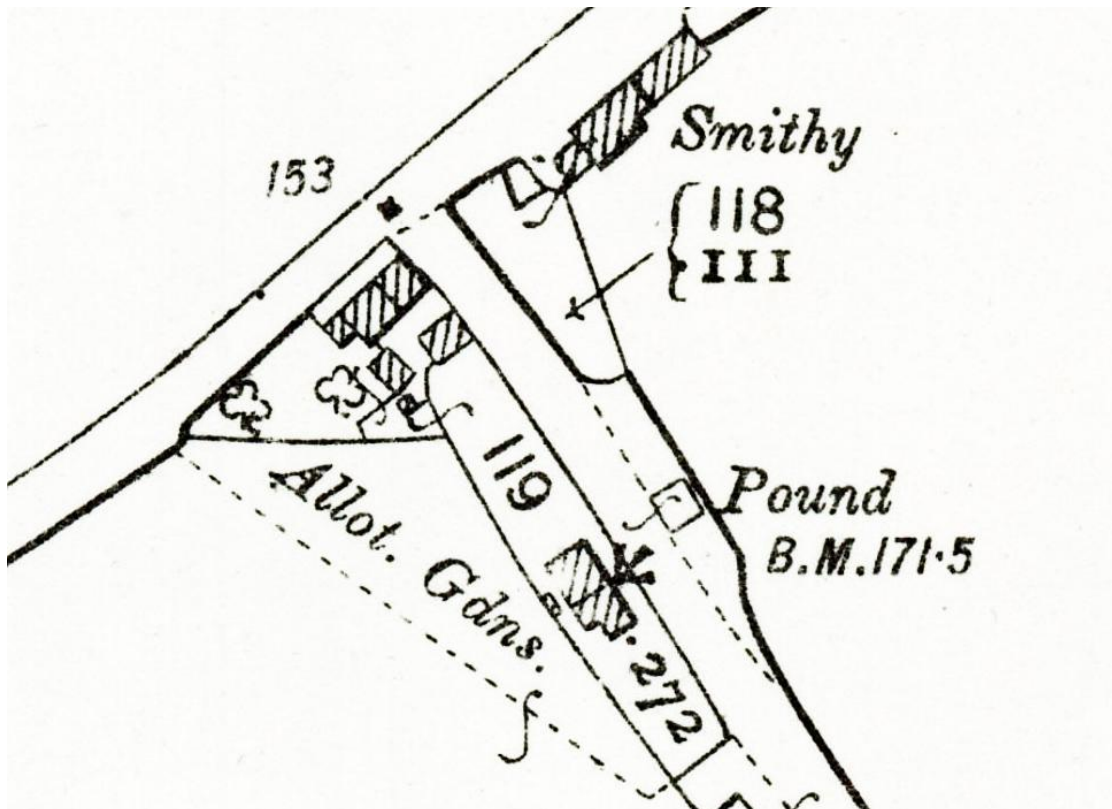


Figure 5. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1902, showing little change.

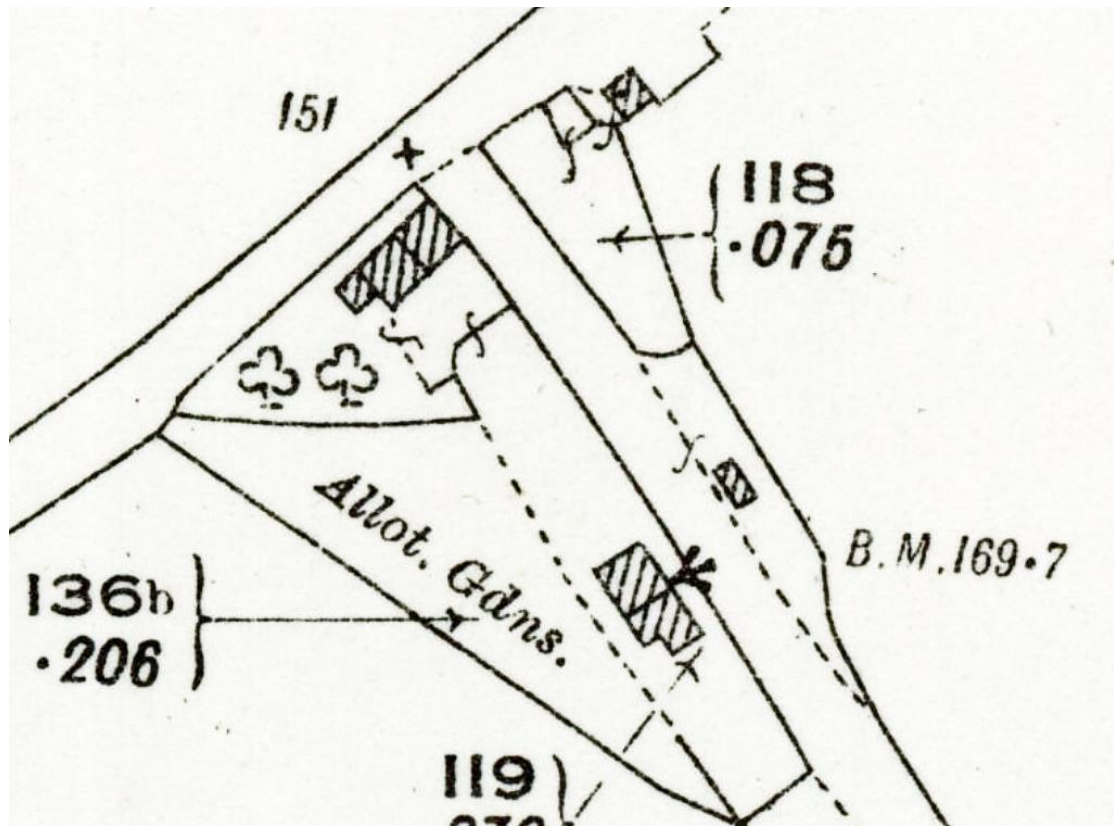


Figure 6. The 1924 Ordnance Survey. The outbuildings had both disappeared since 1902 along with the smithy but the cottages remained the same. The brick lean-to on the right in figure 8 is delineated separately to indicate a distinct structure rather than separate occupation.

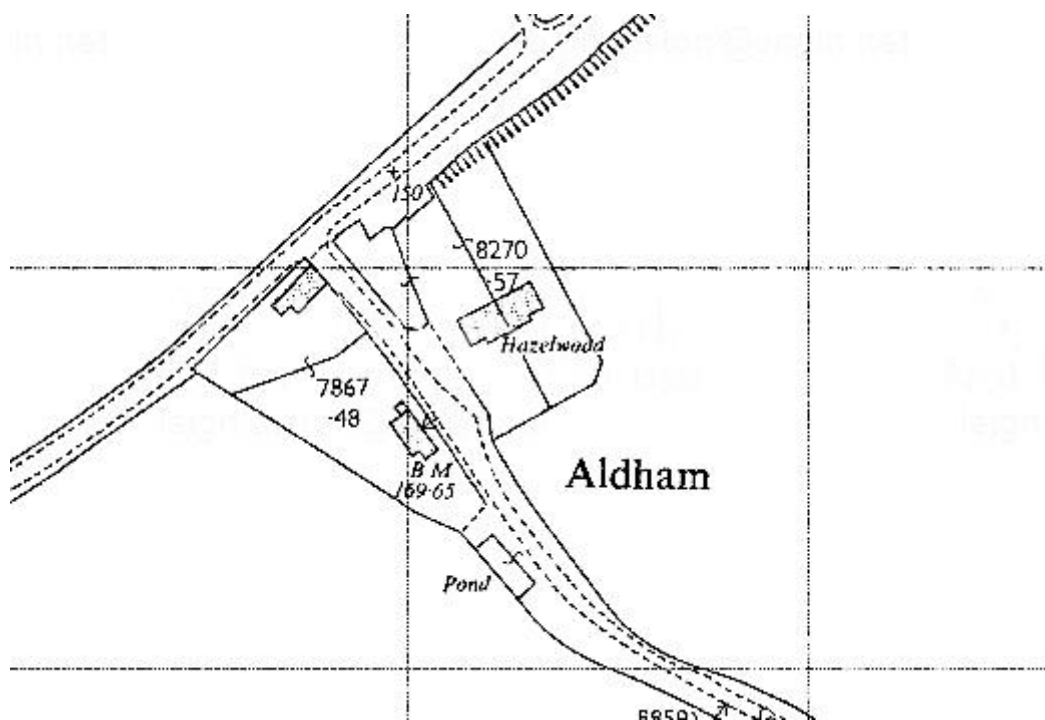


Figure 7. The Ordnance Survey of 1970. The cottages known as Hazelwodd had appeared to the east but the outline of the cottages appears to have remained exactly the same as in 1884 – although they had been combined into a single dwelling.



**Figure 8. The house in 1961 with an entrance door in the front wall of the central ‘dining room’ as labelled in figure 10 and the outline of a blocked second door clearly visible in the right-hand corner of the present kitchen to the left (Royal Commission Archive). The windows have since been largely renewed with different glazing patterns.**



**Figure 9. The property in 1967 from a photograph hanging in the house. A note to the reverse states that it was then owned and occupied by Pam and Bill Oldroyd. The gable door was probably a recent insertion as the dining room door had been blocked since 1961 and a new window cut into the front wall of the kitchen.**



## Building Analysis



**Figure 10**

An existing ground plan of the cottage with a first-floor plan above, as supplied by the owner and adapted to highlight the area of the original timber-framed building in red. The bathroom and the rear section of the central dining room lie in a pantiled cement-rendered lean-to extension ostensibly of brick but possibly modern block-work and the 'store' against the south-western gable is formed by a separate brick lean-to. The general proportions of the building are depicted accurately but the distortion to the rear wall is exaggerated and the north-eastern gable to the left forms a right-angle with the front wall. The back walls of the original timber-framed building and the lean-to are essentially straight as shown in illustration 3, and comparison with the outlines of the building on historic maps suggests the lean-to formerly continued behind the lounge. The kitchen, dining and lounge equate to the parlour, hall and service room of the 18<sup>th</sup> century building. Scale in metres.

**The following analysis is intended to be read in conjunction with the captions to illustrations 1-26 which form part of the description and with the account of traditional room plans in the Appendix.**

## **Listing Entry**

The cottage is listed at grade II with the following entry in Historic England's schedule, which was last revised in 1980 (entry no. 1037440):

### *CHURCH LANE COTTAGE, CHURCH LANE*

*A 17th century timber-framed and plastered building, altered and renovated, with lean-to additions at the rear and west end. The east end is partly weatherboarded. Two storeys. Three window range of modern casements. Roof tiled, with an external chimney stack at the west end.*

This entry was last updated in 1980 when internal inspection was not considered necessary, and the 17<sup>th</sup> century date is based on external appearances and possibly the exposed wall timbers visible through the windows. The building does contain some elements of a 16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century single-storied building, but as discussed below these have been extensively altered and may even have been re-used from elsewhere.

## **The Original Single Storied Building**

### **Proportions**

Although known to have been divided into two cottages by 1839 the original timber-framed and rendered structure was built as a single dwelling with a standard 'three-cell' layout. It extends to 3.9 m in total width by 10 m in length on a north-east/south-west axis parallel with the road to the north-west (13 ft by 33ft). At two perches of 16.5 ft this represents a very common length for early buildings, but with just 3.6 m or 11 ft 9 inches between its roof-plates it is exceptionally narrow and therefore appropriate for an artisan or smallholder rather than a typical farmer. Complete three-cell houses of this scale are now far less common than their more substantial counterparts and the property is accordingly of considerable historic interest. Most contemporary dwellings ranged between 15 and 17 ft in width, with high-status farmhouses exceeding 20 ft. Its narrow span is reflected in the height of its walls which initially rose to only 2 m or 6.5 ft at their roof-plates with the ground-floor ceilings supported by rails just beneath and the upper storey contained almost entirely within the slope of the probably thatched roof. The internal floors are likely to have risen over the years while the walls sank, so the internal clearance was probably slightly greater initially.

### **Layout**

Like most rural houses at the lower end of the social scale the building contained a chimney with a single fireplace between its central hall and parlour (i.e. the dining room and kitchen in figure 10). The hall of 3.5 m in length (excluding the chimney) would have operated as a multi-purpose kitchen and living area while the parlour of 2.75 m was a bedroom which at least benefitted from some radiated heat (11.5 ft and 9 ft respectively). There is clear evidence of an original door in the usual 'lobby entrance' position in front of the chimney (illus. 15), and a narrow newel stair would normally have adjoined the chimney immediately opposite – although in a narrow structure such as this it may have been located in the parlour instead. To the south-west of the hall lay a small service room of just 2.2 m or 7 ft in length that would have been unheated initially and operated as a store room.

### **Date**

The exact date of the building is open to some question as the wall framing is largely hidden or missing and the visible areas contain a number of anomalies. At first sight the structure

could be ascribed to the 16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of the substantial oak storey posts flanking the present staircase in the front wall and the equally heavy nature of the adjoining roof-plates (illus. 8 and 15). These posts contain mortices for braces and mid-rails that appear to have framed a narrow bay containing the chimney as might be expected, but the crude overlap of the roof-plates would not be seen in a single-phase structure and indicates either that the parlour was added as an extension to the hall in order to accommodate a new chimney or vice versa. Alternatively it may indicate that the few older timbers were simply re-used from another building altogether, and such an interpretation is supported by several other anomalies such as the joint in the parlour gable's tie beam as shown in illustrations 21 and 22. Joints would not normally be found in transverse timbers designed to hold the outer walls in place, yet a similar feature can be seen in the mid-rail of the service partition in illustration 17. If any 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century framing does remain *in situ*, the structure to which it relates was almost completely rebuilt and altered beyond recognition in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the present hall fireplace was built (as described below). It is even possible that the components of a single-storied frame were imported from elsewhere to form the basis of a new house in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although this would be highly unusual. If the internal or external render of the front wall is stripped in future it should be possible to establish what if anything survives intact from an early period or whether the currently exposed older timbers were simply recycled from the outset.

## The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Two Storied House

If the earlier timbers do survive *in situ* the building to which they belonged was largely rebuilt in the mid- to late-18<sup>th</sup> century when the present upper storey was added, raising the walls by an impressive 1.6 m (5.25 ft). Instead of simply adding new studs to the old walls as would normally be expected most of the original roof-plates and tie-beams were replaced and the wall studs renewed at both levels. The rear lower plates in the hall and service chambers contain pegged mortices for studs above and beneath with no evidence of rafter housings, and the lower tie-beam of the south-western gable was also renewed to form the mid-rail of an entirely new gable of fully pegged studs. The uniform saw marks of these lower timbers match those of the upper roof-plates and tie-beams and contrast with the hewn surfaces of the older storey posts and front plates. The few visible studs in the front wall which form the entrance door in illustration 15 also date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and curiously the much larger and ostensibly older studs in the rear wall of the service bay fail to fit the pegged mortices in the lower roof-plate above. This suggests they may be 20<sup>th</sup> century imports designed to increase the historic character of the interior. The studs between the hall and its rear lean-to may fall into the same category but as they now lie within the lean-to extension the possibility that they were salvaged from the original walls and rearranged cannot be ruled out. The rafters are for the most part re-used, and while the clasped-purlin roof structure is consistent with the 18<sup>th</sup> century its ridge-board suggests some further remodelling occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup>. The ceiling joists are also likely to have been renewed as part of this dramatic 18<sup>th</sup> century remodelling but are currently hidden.

## 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Alterations

The building appears to have retained its original three-cell layout when its upper storey was added, with a high-end chimney of the same period and a single front door in the lobby entrance position. However, the relatively recent nature of the new framing, with fully pegged studs interrupted by diagonal wall bracing, indicates that little time passed before the house was divided into cottages as shown on the 1839 tithe map. This map shows a very different outline to the present, with a projection to the rear of the right-hand unit but not the left, and the exact configuration of the two dwellings is unclear. A new chimney was presumably added but the uniform nature of the existing fireplace against the south-western gable is more consistent with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The present brick lean-to against the same gable may

slightly post-date this chimney and appeared for the first time on the Ordnance Survey of 1884 along with the present pantiled rear lean-to which seems to have extended along the entire length of the timber-framed structure until a relatively recent truncation (if the maps can be believed). The photograph of 1961 in figure 8 was taken shortly after the cottages were recombined and shows the positions of the two doors that replaced the lobby entrance: one to the right of the dining room window and another in the right-hand corner of the kitchen. The dining room was presumably subdivided, perhaps with a new lobby in its front corner, while the new gable fireplace served the right-hand cottage and the 18<sup>th</sup> century fireplace its counterpart to the left. The entire building is likely to have been weatherboarded at this period, as it probably was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with a fragment still surviving in the back wall of the kitchen (illus. 11). The present external boarding and windows were almost entirely replaced in an extensive renovation of the late-20<sup>th</sup> century but the interior retains a number of good mid-19<sup>th</sup> century fixtures and fittings, viz. the screen of pine boards alongside the dining room fireplace (a once common but now rare feature), the boarded surround and cupboards of the stair which blocked the 18<sup>th</sup> century lobby entrance, and the cupboards adjoining the gable chimney (illus. 7, 14 and 18). Whether the rear lean-to was rebuilt when it was apparently truncated is a moot point as its fabric of brick or possibly block-work is hidden by cement render both inside and out.

## Historic Significance

The narrow width and low height of the original structure at Church Lane Cottage illustrates the diminutive proportions of early houses in Suffolk and is accordingly of considerable historic interest. Small rural dwellings of this kind were once common but have now almost entirely disappeared. Much of its ostensibly 16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century fabric was replaced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when an upper storey was added to achieve the building's present height, and this three-cell house with a central hall flanked by small parlour and service bays was subdivided into a pair of labourers' cottages in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The interior retains a number of good fixtures and fittings including an 18<sup>th</sup> century fireplace and an unusual array of characterful 19<sup>th</sup> century pine cupboards along with a rare screen flanking the chimney corner. The evidence of external weatherboarding lends additional historic significance as this too was locally common in houses of lower status during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries but is now scarce. More early boarding may survive above the current ceiling in the later rear lean-to and any future removal of internal or external render is likely to settle the tantalising question of how much 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century fabric survives in the ground-floor walls. Despite an extensive renovation in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which saw the replacement of almost all its previous windows the property therefore continues to fully warrant its grade II status.

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*Leigh Alston is a building archaeologist and architectural historian who for 20 years lectured on the understanding and recording of timber-framed structures in the Departments of Archaeology and Continuing Education at Cambridge University. He worked as the in-house building archaeologist for Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service for 10 years and still fulfils this role for its successor, Suffolk Archaeology CIC. He also undertakes commissions on a freelance basis for the National Trust, private clients and various county archaeological units. Leigh co-founded the Suffolk Historic Buildings Group in 1993, serving as Chairman for 13 years, and has been involved in several television programmes including 'Grand Designs' and David Dimbleby's 'How We Built Britain'. Publications include 'Late Medieval Workshops in East Anglia' in 'The Vernacular Workshop' edited by Paul Barnwell & Malcolm Airs (CBA and English Heritage, 2004) and the National Trust guidebook to Lavenham Guildhall.*

## Historic Impact Assessment

The following proposed alterations may not form part of the application for Listed Building Consent this report is intended to accompany.

### **Removal of the wall dividing the kitchen and bathroom**

*It is proposed to remove the present wall between the kitchen and bathroom as shown in illustrations 9-11.*

This wall occupies the position of the original external wall prior to the addition of the lean-to extension which contains the bathroom. A section of formerly external weatherboarding survives in the bathroom (illus. 10-11), but this lies above the height of the kitchen ceiling and has been removed beneath in order to enlarge the bathroom and create a recess for the bath. The weatherboarding probably continues above the connecting door between the two rooms on the left in illustration 10 but is hidden by plasterboard. This boarding illustrates the appearance of the building in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and possibly the 18<sup>th</sup> and is of historic significance as a result. As the position of the majority of the original timber-framed wall is now occupied by the recess the exact nature of the present partition is unclear, although it retains what appears to be the original rail or clamp which supports the joists of the kitchen ceiling (illus. 9). It is therefore possible that some part of the original wall survives below the level of this ceiling, but also that it was entirely replaced as part of the late-20<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment. The exact nature of its fabric cannot be established without removing sections of the plaster with which it is currently concealed.

### **Reconstruction of the brick lean-to adjoining the south-western gable**

*It is proposed to rebuild the large brick lean-to against the south-western gable as shown to the right in illustration 1 and from the interior in illustrations 19-20.*

The substantial brick lean-to was added as part of a major refurbishment in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that included the construction of the rear lean-to and was outlined on the Ordnance Survey of 1884 but not the tithe map of 1839. It may slightly post-date the gable chimney to which it offers a straight joint (illus. 19). While its brickwork and ostensibly 19<sup>th</sup> century gable window are of considerable historic character a like-for-like reconstruction may be necessary if (as suggested) the present fabric is impossible to repair viably. A small crack to the right of the window in illustration 20 demonstrates a degree of movement, but whether or not the present fabric can be saved is a question for a competent structural engineer.

### **Removal of the exposed studs to the rear of the dining room**

*It is proposed to remove the studs which divide the dining room from the rear lean-to as shown in illustrations 12, 13 and 16.*

The original wall between the central hall and the lean-to has already been removed to widen the dining room and the studwork in question lies within the ostensibly mid-19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to. The exact date of this alteration is unclear and it may have occurred as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The substantial individual studs date at least from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the four to the left in illustration 13 are uniform, but it is also unclear whether they belonged to the original back wall or were imported from elsewhere. The lower of the two roof-plates exposed on the upper storey contains pegged mortices for 7 studs which correspond with the remaining 6 timbers (given that one has been removed to create a connecting doorway). However, the studs to the right of the central aperture differ in character and the horizontal ceiling timber to which they are nailed has been renewed. Although not *in situ* there is a distinct possibility the left-hand studs represent part of the original back wall while those to the right are more likely to have been imported from elsewhere.

## Illustrations (pp. 12-24)



**Illus. 1.** The north-western facade with the substantial mid-19<sup>th</sup> century brick lean-to on the right and the uniform late-20<sup>th</sup> century casement windows with narrow lights that differ from those shown in the 1960s photographs (figures 8-9). The present windows were inserted as part of an extensive renovation in or about the 1980s, with only the ground-floor window to the right replicating its predecessor of 1961.



**Illus. 2.** The weatherboarding of the north-eastern gable facing Church Lane is a recent replacement of that shown in 1967 although the early-20<sup>th</sup> century window to the first-floor bedroom survived the subsequent refurbishment along with that of the lean-to.



**Illus. 3.** The higher ground to the rear of the house reflects the slope of the hill into which the Fletton brick garage on the left was inserted at some point after 1970 (figure 7). The cement-rendered rear wall of the ostensibly brick lean-to on the right is straight rather than angled as depicted in figure 10.



**Illus. 4.** If the Ordnance Surveys are accurate, the pantiled rear lean-to originally extended to the left-hand gable of the timber-framed building to leave only the brick lean-to projecting to the south-west. Although first shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1884 its walls are concealed by cement render and the extent of any subsequent rebuilding is unclear. It would be interesting to establish whether more of the earlier external weatherboarding is preserved within its roof than that shown in illus. 11.



**Illus. 5.** The brick lean-to against the south-western gable was added as part of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment and the historic maps suggest the pantiled lean-to once continued to its right-hand corner. The late-20<sup>th</sup> century window in the latter's present gable is consistent with a recent truncation or reconstruction, as is the absence of a rear window in the service bay (i.e. the 'lounge' in figure 10).



**Illus. 6.** The kitchen from the present entrance door in the north-eastern gable with the stair on the right and the 20<sup>th</sup> century shelving attached to the back of the dining room fireplace on the left. The two axial joists differ in character and suggest the common joists have been altered or consist of re-used timber. Figure 9 shows the outline of a 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage door in the front wall to the right.





**Illus. 7. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pine boarding to the stair in the corner of the kitchen which is respected by a trap in the ceiling joists. These timbers date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier but are not pegged and have been re-used.**



**Illus. 8. A detail of the jowled storey post in the corner of the kitchen (illus. 7). This contains a pegged mortice for a missing lateral brace or mid-rail but is not respected by the present mid-rail which preserves a single pegged stud. These timbers all date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century or before, but the extent to which the rest of the wall fabric is hidden by plaster makes it impossible to establish whether they remain *in situ* or have been re-used. The exposed timber at top-right is a rail supporting the ceiling joists.**



**Illus. 9. The back wall of the kitchen with the entrance to the bathroom in the lean-to extension on the right. The exposed horizontal rail supporting the ceiling joists consists of 19<sup>th</sup> century pine but the exact nature of the wall fabric beneath is unclear (see illustrations 10 and 11).**



**Illus. 10. The bathroom in the rear lean-to looking north-west towards the kitchen with part of the original weatherboarded external wall exposed on the right (see illustration 11). The lower section of this wall has been at least partly removed to create the recess that now accommodates the bath and the exact nature of what survives in the partition against the kitchen is unclear. It may represent only a late-20<sup>th</sup> century replacement.**



**Illus. 11.** A detail of the exposed external weatherboarding in the bathroom (illus. 10). The blue paint behind the modern plasterboard would have decorated the internal walls of the lean-to but the whitewash beneath may indicate the original external appearance of the building. The horizontal timber above is the original roof-plate visible internally (illus. 23) and the boarding respects the jamb and projecting lintel of a former door or window adjoining the corner to the right. This fragment suggests the entire house was weatherboarded initially and investigation above the lean-to ceiling may reveal whether it was confined to the lower storey.



**Illus. 12.** The hall ('dining room') from its western corner showing the rear lean-to on the right and the door to the kitchen on the left. The original back wall adjoined the fireplace but has been moved into the lean-to by approximately 2 feet.



**Illus. 13.** A detail of the studs in the back wall of the ‘dining room’ (illus 13). In addition to the scars of lath-and-plaster these 17<sup>th</sup> century timbers contain grooves that were normally cut into the external surfaces of contemporary walls to secure external wattle-and-daub, indicating they have been re-used. Their upper ends are now nailed and tenoned to a rail which lies beneath the roof of the lean-to, but the attachments are not modern and they may have occupied their present positions since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



**Illus. 14.** The ‘dining room’ fireplace is impossible to date closely but is more typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> century than either the late-17<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The pine boarding of the stair relates to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century remodelling as does the screen to the left of the fireplace which is intended to shield the occupants of the fireside from draughts and represents a rare survival.



**Illus. 15.** The front wall adjoining the stair with clear evidence of a blocked lobby entrance door: the horizontal lintel corresponds with a rebate in the jowled post on the left. The post contains mortices for a mid-rail and wall brace similar to those in the corner of the kitchen which is hidden to the right (illus. 8), and these two posts appear to have formed a narrow bay for the chimney in a manner often seen elsewhere. The crude manner in which the roof-plates overlap suggests either that one was added as an extension to the other or they were re-used in the original single-storied structure. The ostensibly *in situ* narrow wall studs are typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



**Illus. 16.** The south-western wall of the dining room with the door to the 'lounge' on the right. The isolated jowled post to the left marks the position of the original back wall and the present studs lie within the lean-to. The axial joist is central to the present room, suggesting the ceiling may have been rebuilt when this room was widened.



**Illus. 17.** The narrow service room ('lounge'), showing the chimney against its south-western gable on the right and the door to the hall ('dining room') on the left. The substantial studs in the back wall date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier but unlike their counterparts in the hall do not correspond with the pegged mortices in the exposed roof-plate on the upper storey. The narrow studs and diagonal brace of the internal partition are typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> century but the mid-rail above is in two sections linked by a splayed scarf joint in a manner that suggests the timbers have been re-used.



**Illus. 18.** The fireplace against the south-western 'lounge' gable with the lean-to beyond. The uniform nature of its soft red bricks indicates this fireplace post-dates that in the 'dining room' and was added when the house was divided in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century. The pine cupboard doors are likely to survive from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century remodelling.



**Illus. 19.** The back of the 'lounge' chimney from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to against the south-western gable. A straight vertical joint divides the chimney from the brickwork to its right, suggesting the lean-to may slightly post-date the chimney. The curious curved section above may survive from a former bread oven in the position of the present 'lounge' cupboard but there is no other evidence to support this.



**Illus. 20.** The southern western internal wall of the gable lean-to which was shown for the first time on the Ordnance Survey of 1884. The 19<sup>th</sup> century casement window is similar to that of the present bathroom and is one of the few that survived the late-20<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment.



**Illus. 21. The interior of the north-eastern gable, facing Church Lane. The low tie-beam rests on jowled corner posts with corresponding roof-plates just above the floor and survives from an earlier single-storied building to which the present upper storey was added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A number of anomalies including a joint in the tie-beam (illus. 22) indicate that this earlier timber frame was either extensively rebuilt as part of the process or consisted of re-used material from the outset.**



**Illus. 22. A detail of the low north-eastern tie-beam in illustration 21 (bedroom 1) showing a diagonally splayed joint secured by a nailed length of characterful roughwood. A tie-beam should not contain a joint of any kind and the presence of this feature indicates a significant degree of alteration or reconstruction.**





**Illus. 23.** The rear wall of the bedroom over the kitchen with the north-eastern gable to the left. A jowled post with an upstanding tenon for a missing tie-beam is visible in the right-hand corner, immediately opposite that shown in illustration 8. The roof-plate lies above the area of external weatherboarding in illustration 11 but is interrupted by a section of decay that would normally relate to a junction with another structure adjoining at right-angles. There is no evidence of any such structure on early maps.



**Illus. 24.** The partition between the central bedroom (2) in the foreground and the south-western bedroom (3). Although the low roof-plates of the single-storied structure continue throughout, with a jowled post visible in the left-hand corner, the partition studs were replaced when the upper storey was added as there is no trace of the former roof. These studs are pegged to the upper tie-beam but their narrow proportions and straight diagonal primary braces respect the connecting door and are typical of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The front roof-plate on the right appears to be a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber but its counterpart on the left contains pegs for studs above and beneath and was probably replaced when the upper storey was added.



**Illus. 25.** The south-western bedroom (3) with no evidence of the single-storied roof in the gable on the right despite the presence of a lower tie-beam which also appears to have been renewed when the upper storey was added – as does the lower roof-plate of the back wall to the left. The good 19<sup>th</sup> century pine doors open into cupboards in the brick lean-to alongside the chimney.



**Illus. 26.** The roof structure seen from the axial chimney to the north-east. The rafters consist of a variety of re-used timbers with pegged collars and clasped-purlins. The presence of a ridge-board indicates a degree of alteration in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Appendix

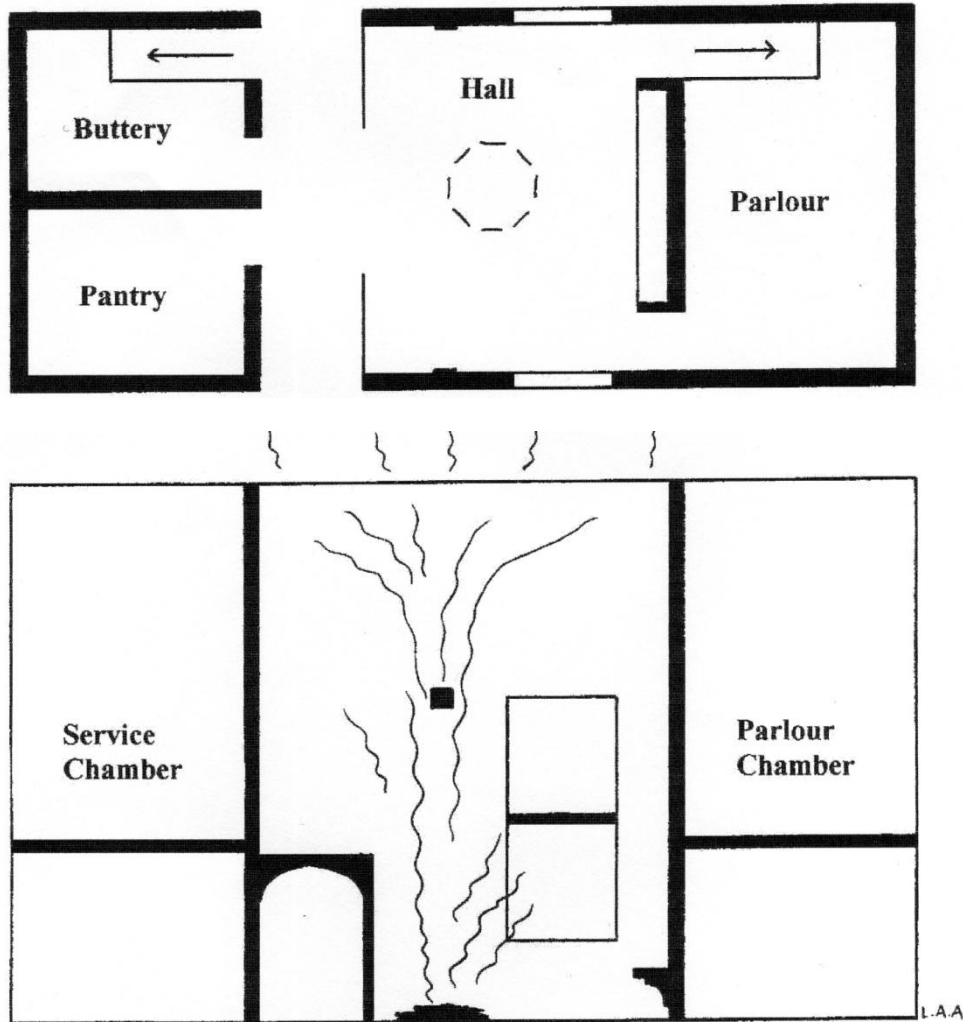
### The Standard Room Plan of Medieval and Tudor Houses

Although identical houses are rare, almost all domestic buildings constructed between the mid-13<sup>th</sup> and the early-17<sup>th</sup> centuries reflect the same room layout (see accompanying diagram). Until the opening decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the only heated space in a typical house comprised an open hall with an open hearth akin to a bonfire burning on its floor. In the absence of a chimney the hall, as its name suggests, was open to its roof in the manner of a barn to allow smoke to escape through the roof covering and through tall, unglazed windows which rose from normal sill height to eaves level. The hall was a communal space with little or no fixed furniture, and was used as a dining room, a dormitory for household servants and apprentices, and as a kitchen and general purpose working area at varying times of the day. The hall was also designed to display the wealth and status of its owner, and at meal times was arranged like a modern college dining hall, with the head of the household sitting with his immediate family behind the 'high table' at one end, while his servants and employees were arranged in order of precedence at secondary tables along the side walls. The lower an individual's status in the household, the further he sat from the 'high' end of the hall. The high table was often raised on a platform or dais, but contemporary references to the high and low ends of houses relate rather to social than physical hierarchy. Halls were usually divided into two structural bays, separated by a pair of principal posts carrying a tie-beam that spanned the walls at eaves level, with the great windows in the high-end bay towards the dais. Fixing pegs for the high-end bench, which was often attached to the wall, can sometimes be seen in surviving examples. The front and back doors of the house (which often stood open for ventilation purposes) lay opposite each other at the low end of the hall, forming a cross-passage that was partly screened by boarded partitions to exclude the weather.

The open hall in the middle of the typical medieval house was flanked by additional rooms that were usually floored over. Beyond the high end of the hall lay a single room known as a parlour, that served as the main bedroom for family members and guests and contained at least one bed (perhaps consisting of nothing more than a straw mattress) and perhaps a few pieces of furniture that normally included a storage chest. The parlour was entered by a door to one side of the high-end bench, and sometimes a second door on the opposite side of the bench opened onto a stair to the solar (upper room) above. Medieval living took place primarily on the relatively warm ground-floor, and the two solars of the house were used chiefly for storage purposes. An increasing demand for domestic privacy during the later 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the provision of additional bedrooms on the first floor, and the 'parlour chamber', as the room over the parlour came to be known, was often provided with its own fireplace. Principal bedrooms, used more and more for sitting and entertaining as well as sleeping, remained downstairs until well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Beyond the low end of the hall lay two service or storage rooms termed butteries and pantries (or collectively as 'spences', i.e. dispensing rooms). As their names suggest, these were used for storing wet and dry goods respectively, and represent the household larder. The front service rooms of town houses often contained shops, and the buttery sometimes served as a dairy in rural contexts. Two doorways lying side by side in the middle of the low-end wall gave access to these rooms, usually in conjunction with a third door against the back wall that opened onto a stair to the service chamber above. Although the original arches of these doorways have frequently been removed, their position may be revealed by the distribution of peg holes used to secure the mortise and tenon joints of the wall timbers. The tripartite plan described here is found in both large manor houses and small peasant cottages in the countryside, but is sometimes condensed in towns where houses consisting of only a hall and subdivided parlour (or occasionally a hall with service rooms) may be found. Houses of high status might also possess rear courtyards, containing additional accommodation or perhaps bake-houses and workshops, but rarely add to the tripartite arrangement in their main ranges.

Rectangular houses under a single roof are common, but more ostentatious town houses frequently contain their parlour and service rooms in relatively expensive cross-wings with jettied gables built at right-angles to their halls. From the beginning of the 16th century chimney stacks were inserted into open halls, and new houses built with ceilings throughout, but the standard layout endured. By the end of the same century fireplaces were typically provided in parlours as well as halls, and often the parlour chamber was also heated (but rarely the hall chamber). Not until the second quarter of the 17th century did the cross-passage plan begin to disappear from new houses, to be gradually replaced by a number of different layouts of which the 'lobby-entrance', where the main door opens into a narrow 'lobby' in front of a chimney stack between the hall and parlour, was the most common.



### The Standard Medieval House Plan

**Church Lane Cottage reflected this arrangement, albeit with a ceiling throughout and in reverse, with a single service room to the right of its hall when viewed from the road and a parlour to the left. A chimney with a single fireplace lay at the 'high' end of the hall backing onto the parlour and instead of a cross-passage a lobby entrance lay immediately in front of the chimney. The exact location of the original stair is unclear.**