

# **Hill House**

## **11 Gravel Hill, Nayland, Suffolk**

### **Outline Heritage Asset Assessment**



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

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

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## Content

### Page

1	<b>Summary</b>
2	<b>Documentary History and Map Regression</b>
8	<b>Building Analysis</b>
	<b>Ground plan indicating principal phases of construction</b>
	<b>Introduction</b>
	<b>Listing Entry</b>
9	<b>The Original House</b>
	<b>Later Alterations</b>
10	<b>The Rear Additions</b>
	<b>Historic Significance</b>
11	<b>Illustrations (Photographs)</b>
20-21	<b>Appendix: The Standard Room Plan of Medieval and Tudor Houses</b>

*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 fulfilled the same role for its successor, Suffolk Archaeology CIC. He undertakes commissions on a freelance basis for the National Trust, local councils and various 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. He has been elected to a fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries.*

# Hill House

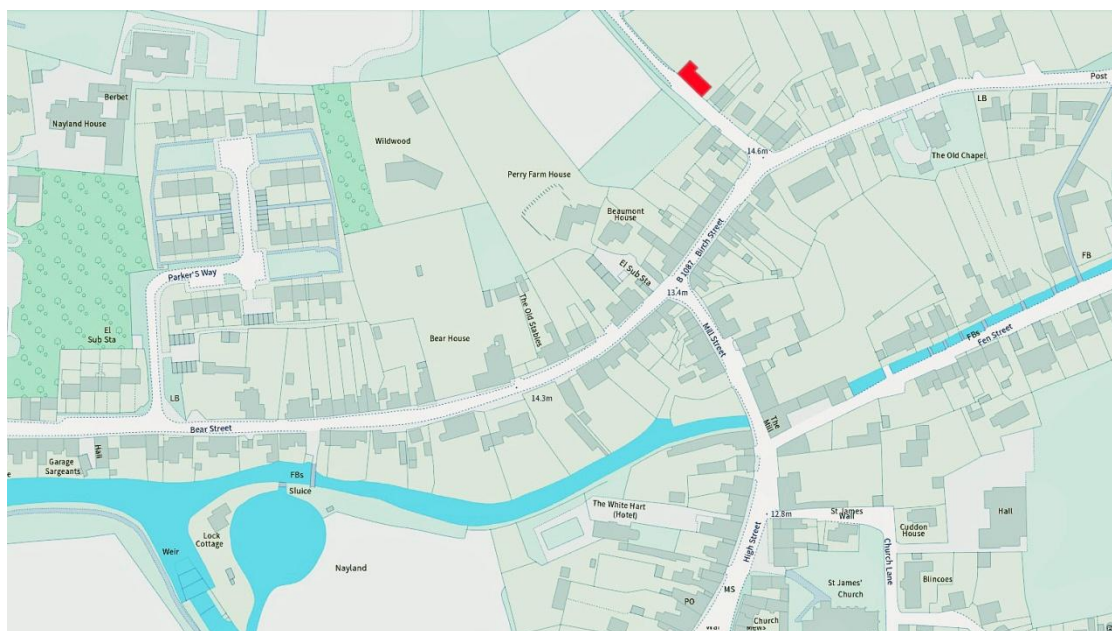
## 11 Gravel Hill, Nayland, Suffolk

### Outline Heritage Asset Assessment

*This report provides a brief historic analysis of a grade II-listed house at TL 97482 34498. It focuses on a lean-to rear extension and is intended to inform and accompany a forthcoming application for Listed Building Consent that affects this structure. It includes 18 photographs but does not represent a complete record. The site was inspected on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023.*

### Summary

Hill House is a picturesque timber-framed and rendered structure of special historic significance. It lies on the northern edge of the village at the foot of Gravel Hill and was built in the late-15<sup>th</sup> or early-16<sup>th</sup> century as a traditional cross-wing house with a central open hall flanked by jettied parlour and service cross-wings to the left and right respectively. Its medieval framing is largely hidden, but an original chamfered crown-post with four braces is exposed in the hall's roof and another plain post survives in the parlour wing. The hall rafters are evenly but lightly encrusted with soot from an open hearth, suggesting a chimney was inserted within months rather than years. Much of the present decor dates from a major early-Victorian restoration that included an unusual Mock Gothic panelled ceiling in the hall and was probably the work of William Synnott who owned the house at the time of the parish tithe survey in 1838 and lived here until the 1860s. He was a wealthy salvage merchant from the East End of London who moved to Nayland and established himself as a country gentleman and 'proprietor of houses', i.e. a landlord. The grade II-listed house was vaguely dated to the '16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century' by the listing inspector who failed to gain entry, and two slate-roofed lean-to extensions against the back wall were wrongly ascribed to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These extensions appear to be absent from the 1838 tithe map and are likely to have been added by Synnott as part of his remodelling in or about the 1840s. They were present by the time of the 1884 Ordnance Survey which shows the present outline of the building.



**Figure 1. A location map highlighting Hill House in red on the north-eastern side of Gravel Hill and approximately 250 m north of the parish church.**

## Documentary History and Map Regression



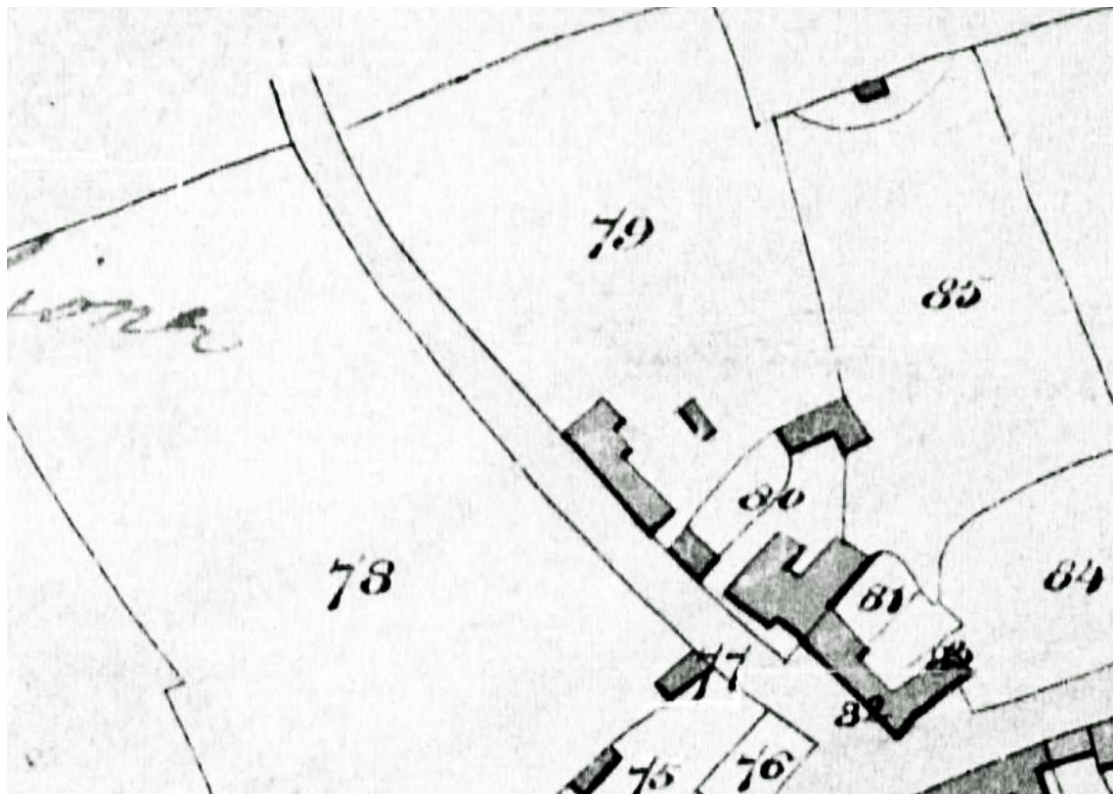
**Figure 2. A site plan showing the house and its garage in red with the garden in pink.**

11 Gravel Hill, which is listed at grade II as Hill House, lies within the Nayland Conservation Area on the north-eastern side of Gravel Hill approximately 250 m north of St James' Church. The northern edge of its rear garden forms the ancient boundary with Stoke-by-Nayland. The property's early history is unknown, but at the time of the parish tithe survey in 1838 the 'house and garden' of 0.75 acres belonged to William Synnott along with the 1.5-acre paddock on the opposite side of the road (plots 79 and 78 respectively in figure 4). He also owned a small farm of some 40 acres in Leavenheath and a number of cottages in Nayland including most of the southern side of Birch Street and the 'malt office' at no. 17 (now the Old Maltings). The census of 1851 lists him as a 'proprietor of houses and land' aged 58 and born in Clerkenwell but living in Gravel Hill with his 31-year-old Lambeth-born 'contractor' son of the same name and a 43-year-old housekeeper. According to local historian Wendy Sparrow he was described as a 'scavenger' in 1835 when he bought the large property now known as Bear House in nearby Bear Street (as William Sinnott), and he can probably be equated with W & J Sinnot, scavengers, of Bowling Green Lane Clerkenwell in Robsons Street Directory for 1832. Watkins Directory for 1852 has a 'dust contractor' of the same name in Lambeth. Sinnott was clearly a successful scrap merchant, as a scavenger would be termed today, and presumably preferred the more salubrious surroundings of Nayland to his native East End. As an affluent individual, recorded as a gentleman in White's Suffolk Directory for 1855, he is likely to have been responsible for the extensive mid-19<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment of Hill House that probably included the present sash windows, decorative barge-boards, panelled ceilings and slate-roofed rear extensions. The tithe map was drawn soon after his arrival and shows the house with a stepped rear outline that appears to represent the projecting original cross-wing to the north-west with a shorter stair turret in the return angle of the hall and service wing. By 1884 the turret had evidently been extended and the building's outline was identical to that of today. William senior was still in residence in 1861 but by 1871 had been replaced by his son and his family (described as a retired farmer), while in 1881 the house appears to have been occupied by Henry Stannard, the assistant manager of Nayland Mill. By 1911 it had passed to a 47-year-old journalist, James Frederick Blyth, whose address was given as Hill House in Kelly's Directory for 1912. He was still at Hill House, Gravel Hill, in 1921. The name's origin is unclear as the 19<sup>th</sup> century census returns lack house names, but it may well have formed part of Synnott's aggrandisement.





**Figure 3.** The 1817 Enclosure Map which shows a number of buildings in the paddock to the west of the house (i.e. in the plot numbered 78 in figure 4). William Sinnott may have removed these to improve his view. The rear garden also appears to have been enlarged between 1817 and 1838. The outline of the house is partly concealed by a crease in the map but the projection of its north-western cross-wing is still apparent.



**Figure 4.** The 1838 tithe map of Nayland. William Synnott or Sinnott owned the house and garden at plot 79 along with the paddock at plot 78 which had been cleared of buildings. The outline of the house appears to show a smaller stair turret in the return angle of the projecting parlour cross-wing to the north-west and the narrower width of the hall and service wing suggests they lacked their present lean-to rear extension.



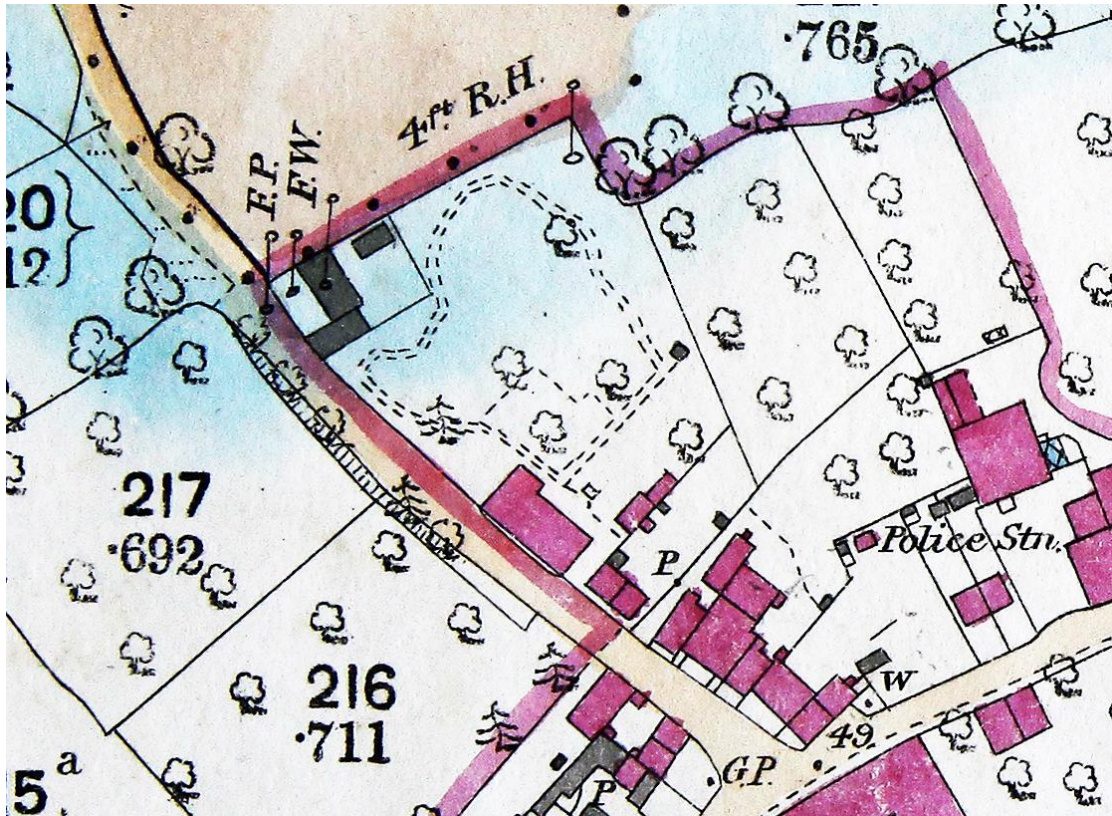


Figure 5. The highly accurate First Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey of 1884. The house had acquired its present outline since 1838 with the hall range appearing significantly wider with respect to the neighbouring building on the south-west. William Synnott is likely to have been responsible for the addition of the present stair turret and lean-tos soon after his acquisition of the property in the mid 1830s. He is known to have bought and quickly sold Bear House in Bear Street in 1835, presumably as a prelude to settling on Gravel Hill. The dotted line to the north marks the Stoke-by-Nayland boundary.

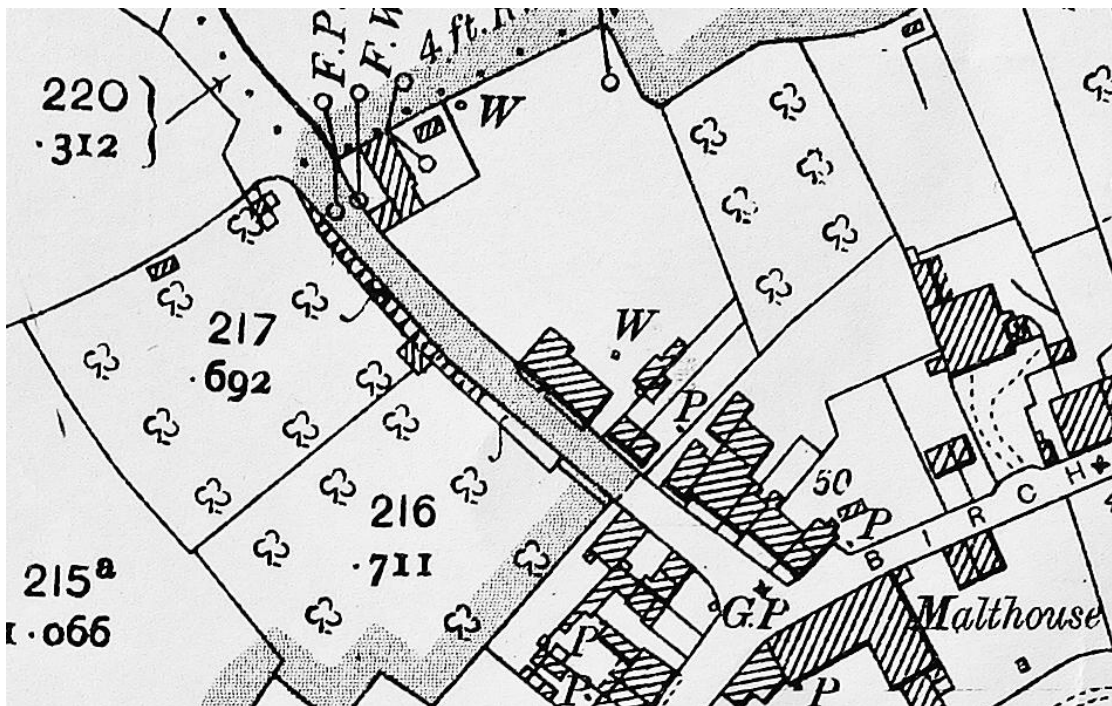


Figure 6. The 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1902, showing no significant change.





**Figure 7**

**The house from Gravel Hill to the north in a postcard of *circa* 1905 showing the mill and church tower in the rear with the outbuilding to the right. The lean-to structures against the back wall are clearly visible but unfortunately the definition of the image is not sufficient to identify their exact configuration. The mill was largely demolished in 1922 and the church tower was rebuilt in 1963.**



**Figure 8**

**A postcard view of the 1920s showing the twin gables of Hill House in the centre with the junction of Gravel Hill and Birch Street in the foreground. At this period Nayland's streets were plagued by a surfeit of urchins that severely hampered photography. Birch Street was labelled Back Street on the 1817 enclosure map in figure 3.**





**Figure 9. An early-20th century image showing a good 18th century casement window with leaded lights above the jetty of the service cross-wing. This has since been replaced by a sash window to match those of the street facade but probably indicates the building's appearance when acquired by William Synnott.**



**Figure 10. The rear elevation in 1999, looking much as it does today.**





**Figure 11. The plainly chamfered and step-stopped crown-post of the central open hall, as photographed in 1999 from the high end to the north. A modern pine plank has been inserted alongside, and the wattle-and-daub infill of the low-end wall in the rear has been removed to expose the rafters of the service cross-wing. The rafters and other original timbers are all evenly but lightly sooted, suggesting an open hearth was replaced by a chimney within months rather than years.**

## Building Analysis



Existing Ground Floor Plan

**Figure 12**

A current ground plan of the house by Whymark & Moulton Architects of Sudbury (scale in metres). The timber-framed late-medieval house is coloured green with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century additions to the rear in purple (wrongly described as 20<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of the inaccurate listing entry below). The entrance hall and dining room represents the original open hall (with the addition of part of the rear kitchen), while the drawing room occupies the contemporary parlour wing and the sitting room the area of the service cross-wing. The original cross-passage may have been undershot (i.e. within the service wing), as it would then have opened into a matching passage in the rear lean-to for which evidence survives in the form of two closely spaced partitions.

## Introduction

Hill House is a timber-framed and rendered cross-wing house of the late-15<sup>th</sup> or early-16<sup>th</sup> century. This analysis briefly describes its original layout with reference to the account of early domestic buildings in the Appendix on page 20, but focuses on the 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations that included the lean-to extensions coloured purple in figure 12. The text is intended to be read in conjunction with the captions to the 18 illustrations which form part of the description.

## Listing Entry

The property is listed at grade II with the following entry in Historic England's Schedule (no. 1283672).



**Gravel Hill (North East Side), Nayland with Wissington.  
No. 11 (Hill House).**

**A 16th/17th century timber-framed and plastered house with cross wings at the north and south ends. Altered in the 18th century and renovated in the 20th century. 2 storeys. The cross wings are jettied on the upper storey. 1:2:1 window range on the west front, double-hung sashes with glazing bars. The ground storey windows to the cross wings are shallow canted bays. Roof tiled, with shaped bargeboards to the cross wings. There are 20th century additions at the rear.**

The house was first listed in 1953, but this entry was probably revised in the 1970s before internal inspection was considered necessary. The dates are accordingly based only on external appearances and are mistaken.

## **The Original House**

Although much of its fabric is currently hidden by later plaster, the original house is a late-medieval oak-framed structure that reflected the standard layout illustrated in the Appendix. A central hall, open to its roof like a barn, divided a jettied parlour cross-wing on the left (north-west) from a matching service wing to the right. This 'cross-wing house' was substantial by the standard of its day and clearly of reasonably high status, but surprisingly its wall timbers were widely spaced compared to most contemporary houses in Nayland (illus. 9). Lying on the edge of the village, it may have been a farmhouse whose owner felt no need to compete with the expensive and ostentatious fashion for 'close-studding' favoured by the local cloth merchants.

The open hall extended to a very respectable 21.5 ft in length by 17 ft in internal width between its roof-plates. It was divided into two unequal bays by an arch-braced open truss that retains its original chamfered crown-post as shown in figure 11. The sooting to this post and the intact rafters is evenly distributed but exceptionally light and suggests the open hearth was quickly replaced by a chimney. Any leakage from an original timber-framed chimney is likely to have been concentrated in a particular area. This unusual feature is consistent with the late-15<sup>th</sup> and early-16<sup>th</sup> centuries when many houses were built with chimneys and floored halls from the outset. The high arch-braces of the open truss formed a flat Tudor arch typical of this period. The wider high-end bay of 12 ft was lit by large diamond-mullion windows in the usual way, and the remains of the rear window are now adjoined by the stair turret (illus. 6 & 18). There is no exposed evidence of the cross-passage but it may have been placed within the service wing rather than the hall as its rear door would then have aligned perfectly with a matching passage in the later lean-to (illus. 17). Both the parlour and service wings were 17 ft in internal width and the former possessed a third bay that projected behind the hall and appears to have formed a separate rear parlour. A plain crown-post survives in its roof with thin braces of standard early-Tudor form. An original partition forms a narrow first-floor compartment of 3 ft to the rear of the service wing that probably enclosed the stair rising from the back of the cross-passage.

## **Later Alterations**

The hall would have been provided with a new ceiling and chimney during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but most of the evidence for these early changes were lost or hidden by a major refurbishment of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This was almost certainly the work of William Synnott who acquired the house in the 1830s and occupied it until his death aged 71 in 1864. He inserted fashionable Mock Gothic panelled ceilings in the dining and sitting rooms (as labelled in

figure 12), concealing the genuine Tudor joists, and probably inserted the present sash windows to replace leaded-light 18<sup>th</sup> century casements like the example that still survived in the south-eastern side wall at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (figure. 9). Much if not all the ground-floor external walls were rebuilt in brick, indicating the structure was previously in poor condition, and Synnott may well have demolished the large buildings in the paddock opposite to create a property worthy of his new status as a country gentleman. The 1838 tithe map shows a small rear projection in the angle of the open hall and the parlour wing, and this almost certainly represented a stair turret. Small turrets containing narrow newel (spiral) stairs were often built in this position during the 17<sup>th</sup> century to replace the straight internal stairs of the Middle Ages. Synnott evidently replaced this cramped turret with the present structure to accommodate the more spacious and fashionable Victorian stair that still survives, and he also appears to have rebuilt the high-end chimney to incorporate an arched passage linking the new stair to the former lobby entrance (in a standard development of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). The open lower storey of the new turret is an unusual feature that may represent a later alteration.

## **The Rear Additions**

As well as enlarging the stair turret, Synnott added the adjoining slate-roofed brick lean-to against the back wall of the former hall and service wing, thereby creating the present outline of the house as depicted in 1884. Their absence explains the very different outline of 1838 which shows only the smaller turret behind the hall. A date in or about the 1840s is consistent with the brickwork and the roughly hewn hardwood tie-beams, rafters and joists visible above the internal ceiling (illus. 15 & 16). There is no obvious break between the brick fabric of the lean-to and that of the south-eastern side wall of the service wing which was probably rebuilt as part of the same refurbishment. The step in the roof is more likely to relate to the lower eaves of the hall rather than indicating separate phases of construction (illus. 5). The closely spaced central tie-beams in illustration 17 belonged to the walls of an internal passage that probably connected the original back door to its replacement and divided the interior into at least two compartments. The section behind the service wing may have been a wash-house or kitchen heated by the former's new chimney while the area behind the hall operated as a cool, north-east facing pantry. This latter compartment has been enlarged by cutting the medieval wall of the open hall, but this probably represents a 20<sup>th</sup> century alteration along with the replacement windows and the false rafters and roof-plate in illustration 12. These timbers were inserted in recent years to create a fashionably antique interior and are probably contemporary with the mullions of the hall window. The original rafters survive behind what appears to be a sloping ceiling of plasterboard and above the original horizontal ceiling of lath-and-plaster.

## **Historic Significance**

Hill House is of special historic interest as a complete late-medieval cross-wing house with rare light sooting in its open hall that suggests a chimney was inserted soon after its construction. The picturesque exterior dates chiefly from major remodelling in the Mock Gothic style in or about the 1840s by the wealthy William Synnott, who retired to Nayland as a country gentleman after making his fortune as a London 'scavenger'. The building therefore offers an unusual connection to a little documented business described in Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* which features a 'Golden Dustman' who might as well have been based on Synnott as the oft-cited Henry Dodd. The rear lean-to forms an integral part of this characterful early-Victorian structure and retains its original external slate roof despite extensive alterations to its interior.

*Photographs follow on pages 11-19*



## Photographs (pages 11-19)



**Illus. 1.** The picturesque south-western facade showing the barn-like open hall in the centre with the jettied parlour cross-wing on the left and the matching service wing to the right. The original cross-passage lay to the right of the hall and probably under the service jetty but was later replaced by a lobby entrance in front of the inserted chimney which heated both the hall and parlour. This chimney was largely or wholly rebuilt along with the brick ground-floor walls as part of a major mid-19<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment that included the reeded door case, sash windows and barge-boards.



**Illus. 2.** The northern side of the parlour wing showing the Flemish Bond brickwork of its lower storey and a first-floor chimney curiously supported by iron posts. There is no evidence of a fireplace in the brickwork beneath, and it is unclear whether the chimney was designed in this way or was truncated when the lower wall was rebuilt.



**Illus. 3. The equally picturesque rear elevation with the slate-roofed lean-to additions behind the service wing and hall on the left. The three-bay parlour wing on the right contained an additional room that projected behind the hall and is now adjoined by a stair turret that was extended or rebuilt to accommodate the present staircase as part of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment. The position of this turret is typical of the 17<sup>th</sup> century but it is unclear whether any older fabric survived its extension.**



**Illus. 4. The house from the south-east showing the painted brick fabric of the slate-roofed lean-to which appears to be integral to the lower storey of the service wing. The projection of the stair turret and parlour wing in the rear is just as depicted in 1884.**





**Illus. 5.** The step in the slate roof of the rear lean-to is not matched by any obvious break in its external brickwork and probably relates to the lower eaves of the medieval hall on the right (rather than indicating two phases of construction). The structure was added in or about the 1840s as part of William Synnott's remodelling. The windows are late-20<sup>th</sup> century replacements and the 19<sup>th</sup> century door with characterful pintle hinges on the left also appears to interrupt the brickwork. The partly removed internal partitions suggest the original door occupied the position of the central window.



**Illus. 6.** The first-floor corridor to the rear of the former open hall, showing the tie-beam of the open truss carrying the crown post in figure 11 in the rear. The roof-plate on the left contains the shutter rebate and mullion mortices of a tall high-end window that lit and ventilated the hall, but this is now overlapped by the stair turret and its diamond mullions are modern replicas.



**Illus. 7. The centre of the tie-beam in illustration 6 contains plaster-filled pegged mortices for the missing arch-braces of the open truss. These braces rose from matching mortices in the wall posts and formed a high and relatively flat Tudor arch in the fashion of the late-15<sup>th</sup> and early-16<sup>th</sup> centuries.**



**Illus. 8. A detail of the centre of the tie-beam in illustration 6 showing the narrow gap between the brace mortices and two pegs for the crown-post above (figure 11). The timber bears a 'dagaz' symbol scratched by the carpenter to indicate the timber's best surface, which faces the high end of the hall. Although the timber has been cleaned it has escaped the usual sand-blasting and preserves its original surface with unusually fine deposits of soot from an open hearth. Similar deposits are visible on the rafters.**





**Illus. 9.** The relatively widely spaced studs of the service cross-wing which are exposed in the first-floor wall of the service chamber adjoining the hall. A mortice for a high arch-brace to a missing tie-beam is visible in the jowled post alongside the present door. This is one of few areas of wall fabric currently exposed in the house and reflects the framing of the front wall (as indicated by the pattern of stud pegs in the hall's roof-plates and the parlour wing's exposed tie-beam). Many merchants' houses of the same period in Nayland contain expensive 'close-studding', with infill panels of no more than six inches, but the builder of Hill House focused on scale rather than ostentation.



**Illus. 10.** The interior of the rear lean-to containing the modern kitchen from its south-eastern gable. The space is undivided and heated by an inserted 19<sup>th</sup> century chimney in the service cross-wing on the left that probably occupies the position of its original stair.



**Illus. 11. The lean-to rear kitchen from the north-west. Little historic fabric is visible internally, with the brick wall on the left concealed by modern plaster. The three tie-beams in the rear are original features, as are most of the vertical studs above, but the exposed roof-plates and rafters are modern replicas. The window on the left is flanked by the tie-beams of former partitions suggesting it occupies the position of an original external door, although there is no obvious evidence of this in the external brickwork.**



**Illus. 12. A detail of the tie-beam in illustration 11, as seen from the south-east. The timber was formerly hidden by plaster, as indicated by the scars of laths nailed to its sides, and nails for the missing studs of a ground-floor partition are visible in its underside. The false roof-plate and rafters to the right bear modern saw marks.**





**Illus. 13.** The north-western end of the kitchen showing the modern machine-sawn false rafters to the right and the original weathered external studs of the open hall to the left. The lower section of the hall has been removed to enlarge the kitchen and the surviving studs and post are presumably supported by a hidden RSJ. The false roof-plate and rafters of the lean-to were inserted beneath the sloping plaster ceiling to create a semblance of age, but the original rafters survive above (illustration 16).



**Illus. 14.** A detail of the weathered studs of the hall's rear wall to the left in illustration 13 showing the nailed rail or clamp supporting the ceiling joists in illustration 16. The undulating lath-and-plaster ceiling is an original mid-19<sup>th</sup> century feature.



**Illus. 15.** The south-eastern end of the lean-to above the ceiling in illustration 10 (photographed by Odette Robson for her Bat Roost Assessment of March 2023). The roughly hewn hardwood rafters in the rear are typical of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the machine-sawn pine example on the right is presumably a replacement. Unless both the rafters and ceiling joists are secondary, the whitewash of the service wing's gable on the left was exposed externally prior to the lean-to construction.



**Illus. 16.** The rafters above the ceiling in illustration 14, with the whitewashed studs of the hall on the left. As in illustration 15, the roughly hewn rafters and ceiling joists in the rear are typical of the 19<sup>th</sup> century while the softwood examples are replacements.





**Illus. 17.** The narrow gap between the original tie-beams in the centre of the lean-to suggests that a rear door occupied the position of the 20<sup>th</sup> century window. Nail holes and scars in the undersides of both timbers indicate the missing studs of two partitions forming a narrow passage that probably linked the external door to the medieval cross-passage (assuming the latter was undershot – i.e. beneath the ceiling of the service wing rather than within the open hall). The exposed rafters and roof-plate are modern.



**Illus. 18.** The first-floor stair landing from the rear, showing the heavy moulded mahogany rail of the Victorian stair in the foreground and the modern mullions of the medieval hall window in the rear. A tight spiral stair of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is likely to have occupied the smaller turret depicted in 1838 which was later extended to accommodate the present stair.

## 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.

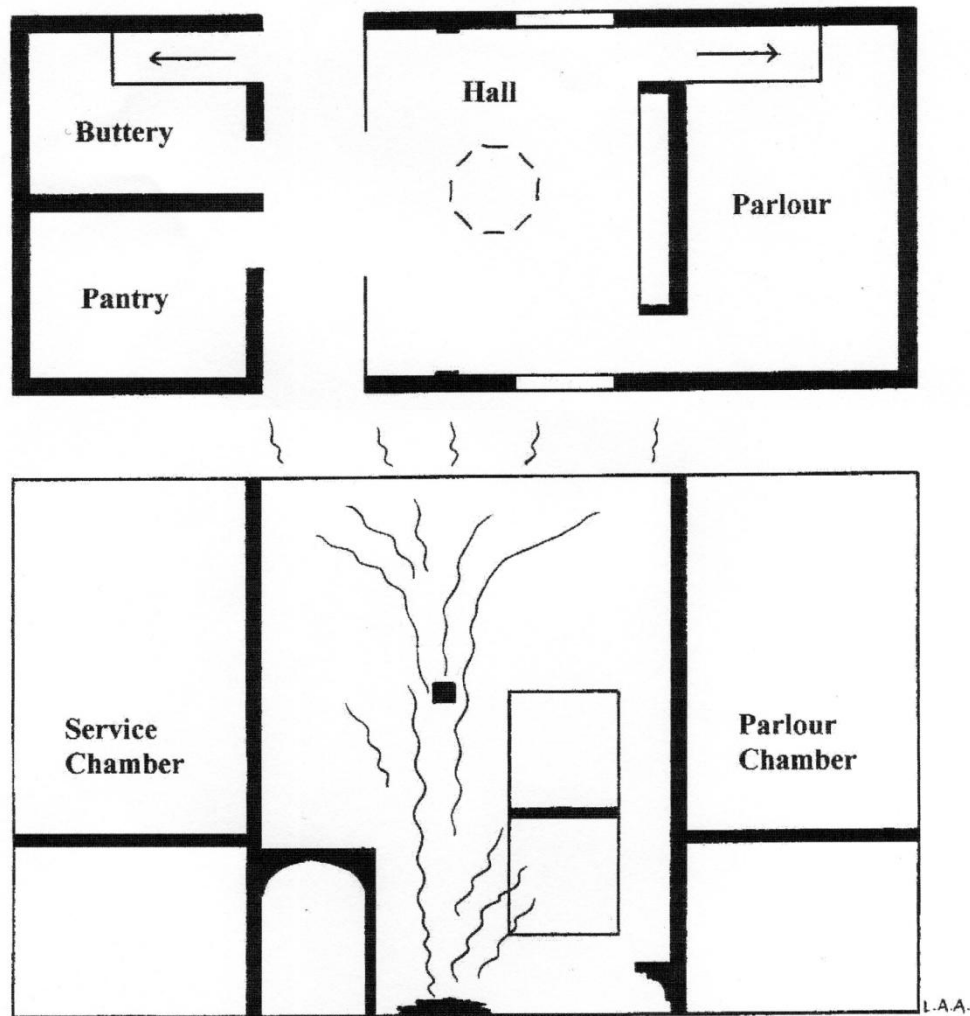
The open hall in the middle of the typical medieval house was flanked by additional rooms that were usually floored over. Beyond the high end of the hall lay a single room known as a parlour, that served as the main bedroom for family members and guests and contained at least one bed (perhaps consisting 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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

Hill House closely reflected this arrangement, albeit in reverse with the parlour in a cross-wing to the left of its open hall and the service rooms to the right. Houses on hill sites almost invariably placed their parlours at the upper end of the slope to keep them as dry as possible. Although much of the framing is hidden, there is clear evidence of an original hall window to the left of the hall's open truss and this high-end bay is significantly longer at 12 ft as opposed to 8.25 ft. The cross-passage may have been placed beneath the ceiling of the service wing instead of within the open hall. The very light nature of the sooting indicates that the open hearth was short-lived, although the hall may have remained open to its rafters long after the insertion of a chimney.