

**An Archaeological Interpretative Survey
of The Middle House, High Street, Mayfield, East Sussex**

Project Reference: 2874



**by
David Martin FSA IHBC MIFA & Barbara Martin AIFA**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INTERPRETATIVE SURVEY
OF
THE MIDDLE HOUSE, HIGH STREET,
MAYFIELD, EAST SUSSEX**

**Commissioned by
MIDDLE HOUSE HOTEL**

PROJECT REF. 2874

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STANDING BUILDINGS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIVE SURVEYS

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ABOUT THESE SURVEYS

The intended purpose of an *Archaeological Interpretative Survey* is to give an overview of the date, sequence of construction, and principal architectural features of a building. As such, they should not be regarded as a detailed archaeological record, nor should they be taken as definitive. Further research, particularly that undertaken during building works, is likely to refine and extend the archaeological record.

These reports are aimed at three groups of user, namely those owners who wish to know more about their property, those persons (architects and planners) who are charged with the responsibility for both conserving the buildings and ensuring that they are carefully adapted to the needs of the future, and finally the academic carrying out wider historical or archaeological research,. A secure use for the future is, in our opinion, the only way of ensuring the long-term survival of any historical building.

INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUE

Unless noted to the contrary, the assessments involve a visual inspection of the fabric, both internally and externally, including any accessible roof voids and basement areas. Except where building works are being carried out, intrusive techniques are inappropriate. Interpretation of the fabric and fittings therefore relies principally upon inspection of the visible evidence. As part of the interpretative procedure, a measured outline survey of every property is undertaken.

THE WRITTEN REPORT



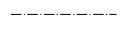




For ease of reference the written reports are divided into sections under a series of headings and sub-headings. The typical sequence of headings is as follows:-

- 1 Location of the building.
- 2 Sequence of development.
- 3 Detailed architectural description, arranged period-by-period.

THE DRAWINGS

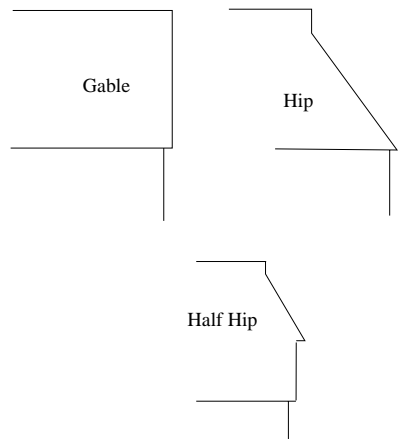
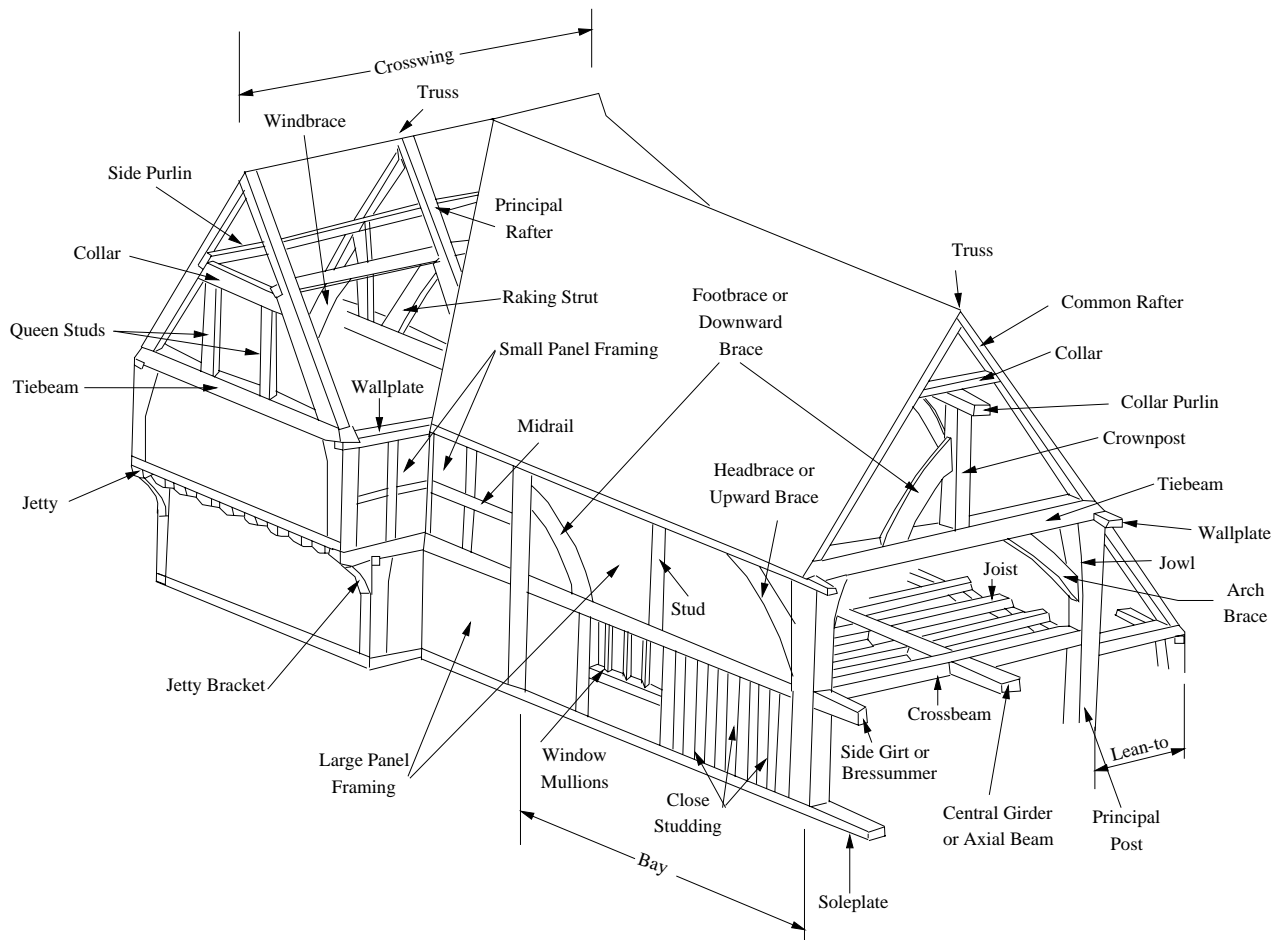
A set of drawings produced from an measured outline survey is included within the body of each report. The purpose of these drawings is to identify the features included within the written text and to illustrate, as far as is known, the form of the structure during its various stages of development. For clarity the drawings have been prepared in the form of scale 'sketches', rather than detailed archaeological record drawings. For reasons of economy, the making of detailed archaeological drawings is restricted to stripped-out or exceptionally important buildings.

The symbols as used in the drawings attached to this report are as follows:

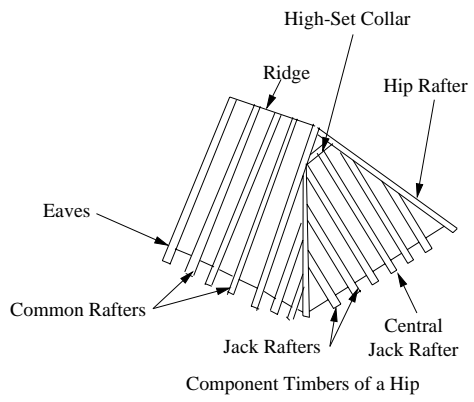
	Surviving Timber-Framed Wall
	Surviving Brick or Stone Wall
	Features evidenced but destroyed or masked from view
	Beam or feature immediately overhead
	Conjectural or very approximate
	Structural timber
	Details unknown or doubtful

OTHER CONVENTIONS USED -

- 1 Doors are shown in plan only where known: hence rooms may appear to have no obvious means of access.
- 2 With the exception of rafters, wallplates, and some chimneys and roof-lines, sections show features cut by or immediately adjacent to the cutting line only.



Roof Terminals



Component Timbers of a Hip

GLOSSARY OF PRINCIPAL TERMS

REPORT NO. 1535

MAYFIELD - THE MIDDLE HOUSE, HIGH STREET

NGR TQ 58700 26980

LOCATION [Drawing Nos. 1535/1-2]

Middle House is an imposing and prominent building standing on the southern side of Mayfield High Street, opposite the parish church to the northwest and the entrance to the former Archbishop's Palace to the northeast. It is built upon an east-west axis with its imposing principal facade hard against the back edge of a narrow forecourt which separates the public footpath from the highway. The ground slopes gently down from east to west, with a more marked fall away to the south. It is flanked on the east by Walnut Tree House and on the west by Shirley Cottage, both of which predate Middle House and are separated from it by relatively narrow areas of open ground owned with Middle House.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

based upon information kindly supplied by C H C Whittick

The Middle House is built upon what had until the second half of the 16th century been two tenements held of the manor of Mayfield, both of which had dwellings upon them. In 1498 one of the two was the property of Gilbert Luck, being described as a messuage (house) in which he lives in the town of Mayfield, late William Fry and before Stephen Bromley. Abutments: west [of the] tenement of William Pentecost (present day Walnut Tree House); east [of the] tenement [late] of John Rede. Annual quitrent 7d. [East Sussex Record Office (hereafter ESRO) AMS 5512 - 1498/81/1]. Luck also held of the manor one acre of new assart under the town on which a barn is built, quitrent 4d. [ESRO AMS 5512 - 1498/81/2], together with 21 acres of other land [ESRO AMS 5512 - 1498/81/3-7]. The second of the two adjacent High Street properties was at that time owned by William Weston [but formerly by John Rede], being described as a messuage and adjoining garden in the town of Mayfield between the tenement of Gilbert Luck (mentioned above) and the tenement of John Pont (owner of present day Shirley Cottage *etc*) on the south side of the road there; quitrent 9d. [ESRO AMS 5512 - 1498/106/1]. He also held a foreland lying before the messuage in the High Street, lately purchased of the lord's soil; quitrent ½d. [ESRO AMS 5512 - 1498/106/2] and a garden called Smythaugh (1r. new assart, late Thomas Avery) [ESRO AMS 5512 - 1498/106/3].

Already by 1558 both the High Street houses had come into the ownership of

Christopher Luck. The principal of the two was in that year described as a messuage (house) in which the said Christopher Luck lives in the town of Mayfield, late the property of Gilbert Luck, and afterwards of Christopher Luck's father, Richard Luck. The copy of court roll showed a foreland 9 feet wide by 58 feet long at the north end of the messuage; quitrent 7d, 'but 1s.2d. by another book' [ESRO ACC 1244 - 1558/14/1]. Also a croft (1 acre new assart) under the town on which a barn is built, with roads around, rent 4d. [ESRO ACC 1244 - 1558/14/4]. The second of Luck's two adjacent High Street properties was described in the same rental as a cottage and garden. Its abutments are given as follows: [to the] west [of] the aforesaid messuage of Christopher Luck; [to the] east [of] the messuage late Richard Basshe (late owner of present day Shirley Cottage etc). Quitrent 9d. [ESRO ACC 1244 - 1558/14/2]. Also a foreland late William Weston lying to the cottage, in the High Street, lately purchased from the lord's soil. <A note has been added to the rental to the effect that he does not have such in the copy of court roll but that above>. Rent ½d. [ESRO ACC 1244 - 1558/14/3].

By 1602, when John Aynscombe was the owner, both adjacent manorial holdings had been merged and the two houses replaced by a single mansion house. The property is described in the 1602 manorial rental as a 'capital messuage' in the middle of the town, with a barn and garden adjoining (½ acre); he pays for the house and the garden on the east side as far as the corner of the house 1s.3d, and for the rest 10d; discharge from heriot by charter. Total quitrent 2s.1d. [ESRO ACC 2547 - 1602/2/1]. The reference to a single capital messuage where two houses had stood previously is clear indication that the present house known as Middle House had been built by this date. John was the brother of Thomas Aynscombe, the builder of Aylwins *a/s* Lower House, further down the High Street on the opposite side [ESRO KIR 3/13; ESRO ACC 2547]. The date at which John acquired the property is not currently known, but it appears to have been prior to 1591 [ESRO AMS 6086/33]: it must surely have been he who built the present house - Courthope was in error when he assumed the builder to be William Houghton, an error which has been perpetuated ever since (see below). By 1607 and 1608 John was steward of the manors of Mayfield and Rotherfield respectively [ESRO DYK 455, 725]. He was probably the John Aynscombe of Mayfield, gentleman, whose PCC will was proved on 31st January 1612 [TNA PROB 11/119 - details of will not checked]. The descent of Middle House for the years immediately following John's death is at present a little unclear, though his will (if checked) is likely to shed clarification. It seems likely that he had no direct heir, for Middle House seems to have descended to Mary, daughter of Thomas Aynscombe (John's brother), who married Thomas Houghton of Mayfield, thereby bringing the property to the Houghton family [Harleian Soc. **53** (1905) 198-9, in which Mary is described as his second, rather than his first wife]. What is certain is that Middle House became the property of Thomas Houghton.

According to the mid 19th-century genealogist and herald, William Courthope, Thomas Houghton esq. was the son of William Houghton, late of Taverstock in Devon, and grandson of Houghton of Houghton Tower, Lancashire. Born about 1594, Thomas became a lawyer and was a Principal of Cliffords Inn, London. He married first Mary Aynscombe (died 1624) and secondly Walsingham, daughter and coheir of Thomas

Theobald, gent. of Stonepitts, Seal, Kent (d. 1670 aged 65 yrs) [College of Arms, Courthope MS 23, 200-202 (ESRO XA38/2)]. Thomas was assessed in Mayfield for 11 flues in the 1662 hearth tax returns, though this total may have included at least one of his other properties within the parish [ESRO XA5/2]. Alternatively, the additional flues may relate to a hitherto unknown detached service block. Thomas died 30th July 1669 and was buried in Mayfield Church under a cast iron grave slab, where he lies with his second wife and son, John. His estate (which included the local farms called Maplesden, Church Settle and Shottinghurst) was inherited by his daughter(s). [Courthope MS 23, 201-202]. In 1683 his daughter and coheiress conveyed 42¼ acres of lands associated with Middle House to Thomas Hooper of Mayfield, gent. The property concerned all lay together and was described as follows:- A barn under the town of Mayfield with a little piece of land adjoining its south east side called The Croft Under the Town (3r.) with a wainhouse recently built upon it. Also a barn, stall, etc + 41½ acres land called The Hilly Field, The Old Orchard, otherwise The Petfield, The Cardswell Field and The Necker Mead, The Misse Field otherwise Cransden Field, The East Field otherwise the Ten Acres, The Stumblett, Long Field, and The Galletts, all lying together (details and acreages given) [ESRO AMS 6530].

In 1688 Middle House (described as being 'in Mayfield Town') was conveyed to Thomas Baker [ESRO KIR 23/66] and it subsequently descended to Robert Baker, the second son of John Baker of Gildredge in Withyham. In about 1675 he married Marthanna, daughter of Samuel Cole of Braybrooke Castle, Northants. At Robert's death in 1714 he was described as of Middle House in Mayfield and of London. Thus by this date the house had taken on its present name of 'Middle House', no doubt to differentiate it from the houses of other branches of the Baker family within the town - namely Aylwins *a/s* Lower House and The Palace, *a/s* Mayfield Place *a/s* Upper House [ESRO KIR 14].

From 1714 until his death in 1746 Middle House was in the owner occupation of John Baker, eldest surviving son of Robert. In about 1717 he married Hannah Wood and was buried on 12th February 1746 at Mayfield. [ESRO KIR 17]. His only son and heir was Samuel Baker of Middle House who married Ann, daughter of George Baker of Mayfield Place on 22nd May 1754 and died in 1796 [ESRO KIR 19].

Hannah Baker of Middle House was the eldest daughter of Samuel Baker of the same and outlived all her brothers and sisters. After her death in 1841 her trustees put the property on the market by public auction in October 1841. The sale particulars are of more than passing interest. They read as follows:-

'The freehold residence advertized for sale for £500 is situate in the Village of Mayfield. It is an old house very strongly timbered built in 1597, the front being filled up with ornamental woodwork & carved vergeboards to the gables. <The late proprietor who only died in the Autumn occupied it.> It contains spacious garrets throughout the roof. On the 1st floor 3 bedchambers each 18ft x 16, one 18ft x 13 with dressing closet, & one 17.6 by 9.6. 2 staircases. On the ground floor, Hall 18 x 16, Parlour 13 x 14, Do. 21 x 14, Do. 9 x 9, Kitchen 18 x 16, large brewhouse with china and water closets & Pantries. Numerous and spacious

cupboards throughout the house. Large cellars under the whole house. Small stable and walled garden of about ½ acre. The small fields contain 1.2.4, of which about a quarter of an acre will probably be reserved. The remainder will be sold of £100 p. acre if taken with the house. The fixtures must be taken at a Valuation. Possession may be had immediately on the completion of the purchase. The fields are freehold but the whole is subject to a hifling quitrent of 2/5½ per annum, the reliefs of 2/5½ on death or alienation'. [ESRO KIR 23/59].

There being no purchasers at the auction, Middle House was sold the following year by private contract to Edward Tench, esq. of the Legacy Office, Somerset House and of Brixton. He had married Ruth Ann, one of the daughters of Hannah's brother, John Baker of Lewes, grocer. In the formal conveyance dated 1842 the property is described as follows:-

Middle House in Mayfield Town with stable, woodhouse, brewhouse, granary, wellhouse with piece of land (2r.1p., corrected from 1a.1r.24p.) south of the road under the town adjoining a toft where a barn formerly stood mentioned below, conveyed to Thomas Baker in March 1688.

Toft where a house in two dwellings occupied by Thomas Heasman and Thomas Batchelor once stood.

Toft where a barn formerly stood.

Piece of land (¾ acres) where a malthouse or oasthouse formerly stood [‘the malthouse was removed many years ago’] called the croft under the town, now Malthouse Field.

The last three pieces were lately laid together and measured at 1a.0r.3p. and were formerly occupied by Mr John Wood. [ESRO KIR 23, 23/66].

The 1843 tithe award records Edward Tench as owner-occupier of Middle House and garden (plot 917, being 0a.2r.5p.) + Hoopers Plat (plot 2124, being 0a.3r.9p.) + Little Plat (plot 2125, being 0a.1r.39p.), all in his own occupation. Total, 1a.3r.13p. [ESRO TDE 133]. The 1846 Mayfield manorial rental lists Edward Tench, esquire for the Middle House in the town of Mayfield in his own occupation, quitrent 2s.2½d. [Mayfield Rental, 1846]. According to the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey plans, it was not until 1908x1929 that the building became a hotel [see Drawing No. 1535/1].

William Courthope compiled his notes on the house and its owners when Edward Trench was still owner, and with it he attached a copy of an illustration, apparently made some years earlier before the single-storeyed brewhouse was added at the eastern end, and before the porch (now destroyed) was moved to a new location further east. The illustration is reproduced within this report as Plate 1. His description of the house reads as follows:

‘The Middle house situated on the southern side of the Street of Mayfield Town, is one of the most curious specimens of that species of architecture to be met with in the County; it was probably built in the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, or in that of King James 1st. by William Houghton . . . or by his son

Thomas Houghton [builder now known to be incorrect] An idea of its exterior appearance may be gathered from the accompanying view [Plate 1]; its exterior is arranged in the usual style of houses of this description; the door opens into a brick [floored] hall, on the right of which, are two parlours opening one from the other, - low pitched, wainscoted rooms, extending the whole depth of the house; on the left is the kitchen, occupying the other gable; the rooms above are also low pitched, but some of them are of good dimensions: attached to the house is a large walled garden, and two closes of excellent grassland, containing upwards of two acres'

It is interesting to note that Courthope makes no reference to the brewhouse at the eastern end and, despite his reference elsewhere to the death of the last Baker and the house then being in the possession of Edward Trench, the impression given is that he had visited the house some time earlier, perhaps in 1839/40 when he prepared similar entries for the sister houses of Mayfield Palace and Aylwins *a/s* Lower House [for an account of the latter of which see ESRO HBR 1/1562].

LISTED STATUS OF THE BUILDING

Middle House Hotel was listed grade 1 on 26th November 1953, its listed building reference being TQ 5826 40/489. It is described as 'One of the best timber-framed buildings in Sussex.' Dated 1575. Half-H plan. Timber framed building with plaster infilling, restored and enlarged. ' The description in the list entry is purely for the purpose of recognition and is normally, therefore, primarily based on external appearance. [Source: English Heritage, Images of England - website]. The description must not be treated as a comprehensive schedule of those elements which are legally protected as, no matter what the grade, the legislative cover not only relates to all fabric of the house, both internal and external, but also extends to any building within the curtilage which predates the 1st July 1948.

OVERVIEW OF THE BUILDING [Drawing Nos. 1535/1-2]

This double-crosswinged house of modified 'H' plan dates from the late 16th century [**Period A**] and is justly renowned for its very impressive, richly ornamented timber-framed front facade - a rare feature in the south east of England. Originally it was even more impressive than it now appears, for it has lost a central gable, together with a further gable at the eastern end. Given that the house was built for a professional man, it is tempting to suggest that the low-end parlour (just to the right of the front door, within the western crosswing) was intended from the outset as the owner's office/study: to its rear is a room which almost certainly originally served as a kitchen. The main parlour occupied the principal room within the crosswing at the eastern end of the house. As would be expected by this date, the large hall was always of floored-over type.

Around 1700 [**Period B**] the house was upgraded by the construction of a stair turret in the re-entrant angle between hall and high-end crosswing, replacing a more cramped arrangement to the rear of the main chimney. At the same time a lean-to outshut was added adjacent to the turret, to the rear of the hall, in order to give more service accommodation; all clerestory windows were blocked, the front gable over the main hall range was removed and replaced by a small rear gable in order to provide light within the garret over the hall chamber, and the rear hip over the western crosswing was replaced by a gable. The gable within the eastern slope of the eastern crosswing was also removed at this date and the low-end parlour chamber was increased in size slightly by moving the partition into the central stair bay. To judge from their style, these alterations were probably undertaken upon acquisition of the house by the Baker family.

Between the date of the drawing included in the account of the house made by William Courthope and the preparation of the tithe award map in 1844 an 'M-roofed' single-storeyed extension was added onto the eastern end of the house and a small lean-to outshut was built against the chimney at the western end [compare Plate 1 with Drawing No. 1535/1 and Plate 2]. These modifications had already been made when the auction particulars were prepared in 1841 (see Historical Background above) and by this date too the way the interior of the house was used had also been altered. The sale particulars make clear that by then the ends of the house had effectively been reversed by downgrading the principal parlour (within the eastern crosswing) to use as kitchen and upgrading the old kitchen and period-B service lean-to to use as parlours, giving three parlours at the western end of the house. This adjustment explains why a new front door was added, leading into the eastern end of the hall immediately in front of the chimney and protected by the earlier single-storeyed porch, moved from its original location further west [compare Plates 1 and 2]. With the kitchen moved to the eastern end, this allowed a brewhouse and other service rooms to be added against the eastern end wall, with the rear room within the eastern crosswing likewise converted to service use. As part of these modifications the old kitchen chimney was removed and replaced by a much smaller chimney built against the eastern wall of the western crosswing.

Three periods of restoration were carried out on the front facade following its acquisition

by Trench: one in the late 19th century [Plates 3 and 4] and two during the first half of the 20th century after it had been converted into a hotel. The former entailed nothing more than a restoration of decayed timberwork and the reinstatement/reconstruction of some of the projecting feature windows. During an early 20th-century phase of work the porch was moved back to its earlier location, protecting the original front door and at this date the intruded front door was blocked. As part of this work a new (second) front door was, however, inserted, immediately to the east of the earlier intruded doorway, leading into a cramped lobby against the side of the chimney. This necessitated removing part of the hall's inglenook fireplace. Modifications were also made to the projecting window attached to the former brewhouse - it was raised, presumably associated with conversion of this area into a bar. Later the reinstated porch was destroyed and the clerestory windows were finally unblocked.

Turning to the rear of the house, the 1st edition O.S plan indicates that between 1844 and 1874 a glass-house/conservatory was added against the western wall of the western crosswing and a terrace (complete with a flight of steps leading down from terrace to garden) was construction across the rear of the crosswing. Beneath both the terrace and the glass-house are extensions to the cellarage, that under the former being barrel vaulted. Associated with this work the rear wall of the crosswing was underbuilt and the upper part of the same wall modernized by the addition of new bargeboards in typical late-Victorian fashion. During the same period a brick-built two-storeyed detached outbuilding with hipped roof was constructed to the rear of the brewhouse, abutting against the garden wall of Walnut Tree House. Already by 1874 a lean-to outshut had been added against the western end of the outhouse's south elevation [Drawing No. 1535/1]. Both the outhouse and outshut still survive, but now attached to the house. The eastern part of this building now forms a covered access way leading to the rear car park.

The maps show no change in the footprint of the building between 1874 and 1897, but by 1908 the glass-house built against the western wall of the crosswing had been rebuilt in its present lean-to form - forming an extension to the rear room within the crosswing - and a new conservatory had been built over the rear terrace, complete with glass-house at its western end. This is the form of the house as depicted in an old photograph of the rear, which shows the conservatory to be a covered veranda, open fronted towards the garden [Plate 7]. The photograph also indicates that by this date the roof of the period-B lean-to outshut at the rear of the hall had been removed in order to make way for a flat-roofed upper storey with parapet. This flat-roofed upper storey still remains, but the parapet has been removed.

It was not until after 1929 that the large two-storeyed brick-and-tile-hung extension was added at the rear of the building's eastern end, linking the house to the formerly detached outhouse. Also at about this period the rear part of the brewhouse was effectively rebuilt by raising it by a full storey. This brewhouse extension is shown in its various guises in the prints and old photographs on display within Middle House. A low, flat-roofed kitchen extension was built between the western crosswing and the main two-storeyed addition subsequent to 1929. A circular iron fire escape descends from the

hall roof space to the flat-roofed extension at the rear in order to provide additional means of escape, and there is a similar fire escape against the western wall of the western crosswing, tucked behind the chimney.

It will be evident from the above that the rear of the building has been subjected to very considerable alteration during the late 19th and 20th centuries, totally transforming the appearance of the building from this side. Luckily, although panelling and other features were introduced late in the 19th and early in the 20th century, these works have had little effect on the interior, the historic fabric of which survives in a very complete form.

All work carried out on the house since period B is excluded from the more detailed architectural description which follows.

DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

PERIOD A (Late 16th C, perhaps 1597) [Drawing Nos. 1535/3-6]

DATING

A very accurate late 19th-century architectural drawing on display in one of the rooms of Middle House makes the specific statement that the house was built by William Houghton in 1575 [Plate 2], and that date is shown in late 19th- and 20th-century illustrations, painted on a panel high in the eastern front gable. The identification of Houghton as the builder appears to originate from William Courthope's erroneous assumption made in the mid 19th century, but, as has been shown, the Houghton family did not acquire the property until the early 17th century, after the house is known to have been built - it is described as a capital messuage in the 1602 Mayfield rental, when still owned by John Aynscombe. A late 16th-century date is consistent with the architectural evidence, which suggests 1585 +/- 25 years. It is interesting to note that neither Courthope nor the 1841 sale particular makes reference to the 1575 date, nor is it visible in the early drawing of the house. It should be remembered that the 1841 sale particulars specifically state that the mansion was built in 1597, though upon what grounds this was based is not stated.

LAYOUT

This impressive, imposing, double-crosswinged house measures 18.85 metres (61'10") long overall its front facade and is of modified 'H' plan, the rear of the two-bay eastern crosswing being much shorter than that of the three-bay wing at the western end. All three ranges are fully integrated with one another, and each has an identical 5.75 metre

(18'10") overall span. At c2.50 metres (c8'2") floor to ceiling on the ground floor and c2.20 metres (c7'3") floor to ceiling on the first floor, the storey heights are adequate, but not overly generous for a house of this high status.

On the ground floor the main range accommodates a central floored-over hall accessed from the street via a doorway set hard against the western end of the range's facade. This doorway was at one time protected on the exterior by a single-storeyed porch (perhaps added and now destroyed, but shown in early illustrations) and led directly into the hall. At the eastern end of the room was a large fireplace (now sized down) with a passage to the side, leading through to the eastern high-end crosswing. Within the ceiling of this passage is a trimmer, apparently indicating the location of a stairs giving access to the hall chamber and first floor of the eastern crosswing.

The principal private room or parlour of the house was sited in the northern (front) room within the high-end crosswing and had a much smaller room (perhaps a best buttery) behind it. The parlour was lit by display fenestration located within both its northern (front) and eastern (end) walls and was heated by a fireplace in the main axial chimney. Both it and the hall were originally fitted with flush under-plastered ceilings.

Beyond the western (low) end of the hall, in the longer three-bay western crosswing, were two rooms divided from one another by a central staircase accessed direct from the hall via a lobby. Although, apparently, not fitted with a bay window, the front room was nevertheless of some status and was heated by a side chimney. Referred to in the reconstruction drawings as the 'low end parlour', the room probably served as the owner's common reception room, *cum* office, *cum* study. At one time it could be accessed via a second internal doorway located close to the front entrance, perhaps leading directly in from an in-built internal lobby, though the structural evidence suggests that both the doorway and the lobby probably represented modifications to the original scheme. The larger room within the rear part of the crosswing most likely served as the kitchen. It would have been heated, but the stack (most likely built against the west wall, but perhaps against the southern end wall) has been removed, probably on account of its size once the kitchen had moved to the opposite end of the house.

The period-A ground-floor layout is notable for its lack of service rooms. This is probably accounted for by the extensive cellarage beneath the two crosswings. That beneath the high-end crosswing would have served as a conventional wine/beer cellar, but the two-roomed cellar beneath the western crosswing was supplied with its own stair, continuing down from the staircase above, and could easily have been used as service accommodation. Alternatively (or perhaps additionally) there could have been a separate service block, as at the Aynscombe's other house, Aylwins - this may account for the high hearth tax assessment for Thomas Aynscombe (see Historical Background).

The first-floor chambers could be reached by one of two staircases - one in the western crosswing and another in the main range, to the south of the main chimney. Despite the two staircases, there was linked communication throughout the length of the house

on the first floor. As Drawing No. 1535/3 indicates, the layout at this level was effectively a repeat of that on the ground-floor. From the outset the attic area was in use as rooms lit by windows in the various gable walls.

WALL DESIGN

Unlike its sister at Aylwins (which is partly timber framed and partly of stone construction) this is a fully timber-framed house: it uses standard construction techniques throughout. In essence all wall framing is of small-panel type, with some internally-set footbracing at the rear, preventing the frame from racking. Because they were always concealed from view on the exterior, these inset braces are shown in dotted outline in the reconstruction drawings which accompany this report. Despite this use of small-panel framing, the daub panels within the external walls are elaborated in order to give a visually rich appearance. As plate 8 shows, this is particularly the case within the front facade where on the ground floor the panels are infilled with closely spaced, plank-like studwork. Above, on the first floor, the infill is more decorative. Here quadrant bracing has been used to great effect, with further quadrant bracing continuing up into the gables. Occasional examples of discrete quadrant bracing are to be found locally, but not to this extent. There is sufficient visible evidence (both in the form of mortices and surviving studs) to indicate that the side and rear elevations of the house were also originally elaborated with close studding, but within these elevations the quadrant bracing is absent. There is no internal elaboration to the wall panels, though almost certainly the walls of the principal rooms and chambers would have been clad in panelling from the outset. Some panelling survives, but there are no indications to suggest that any of this dates from period A.

As mentioned earlier, there is some evidence to suggest that an internal porch was at some period constructed in the angle between the western crosswing and the hall, immediate inside the front door. This is evidenced by mortices in the framing. The way in which the associated door frame leading into the low-end parlour is fitted suggests that this work may represent a later (but historical) modification. If, as is suspected, the low-end parlour was in use as the owner's study/office, this feature would have allowed 'public' access into the room without the need to enter the main body of the hall.

WINDOWS

In addition to the decorative wall framing within the front elevation, the appearance of this facade was further enhanced by large projecting bay windows to the eastern crosswing and hall, and by a first-floor oriel serving the western crosswing. The evidence within the low-end parlour is unclear - mortices for close studding on the site of the present off-centred ground-floor bay window indicate that this window represents a later insertion. Flanking the bay windows were high-level clerestory openings. Clerestory windows fell out of fashion during the second half of the 17th century and, as was common practice, drawings and photographs show that the windows at Middle

House were subsequently blocked using close studding, but retaining the cyma-moulded jambs *in situ*. The original scheme of fenestration has been restored in modern times. Although now destroyed, details within the roof indicate that the two-storeyed bay window lighting the hall and chamber was originally capped by a large projecting front gable, probably similar in design to those which cap the bay window and oriel window which grace the front walls of the two crosswings. A further gable, likewise now destroyed, is evidenced within the eastern roof slope of the eastern crosswing. It originally capped (since destroyed) projecting windows and clerestory windows which enhanced this elevation and gave additional light to the main parlour and, almost certainly, the parlour chamber too. Evidence of the projecting window on the ground floor is to be seen on the surviving jamb, where an internal chamfer runs part way down the southern face. As is the case with the jambs of the other bay windows and of the oriel window, the base of the chamfer terminates part way down the jamb at a neat stop, beneath which is a haunched mortice for the former projecting window cill. To the north of the jamb survives an extant, though now blocked, high-level clerestory window.

Not surprisingly, within the rear rooms/chambers and elevations the surviving/evidenced windows are of more simple flush type. Parts of such windows can be seen at both levels in the east elevation of the eastern crosswing's rear bay, in the rear wall of the main range, and at first-floor level within the eastern wall of the western crosswing's rear chamber. As with the clerestory windows, the internal cyma mouldings to the jambs are cut integral with the window's structural jambs, whereas the heads were applied to the main timber frame of the house.

DOORWAYS

Access to the house is via a square-headed doorway at the western end of the hall's front wall. The frame survives and has ovolo-moulded jambs of three orders, which terminate in a decorative, now heavily-weathered vase base. The original front door likewise survives and is of plank type with applied, projecting, moulded ledges and muntins on its external face, dividing the door into three panels in width and five in height. Above the opening is a similarly moulded, shallow, rectangular window. Courthope's illustration indicates that at one time the doorway was protected by a single-storeyed projecting porch. By the late 19th century this had been moved eastwards in order to protect an intruded door on the opposite side of the hall's bay window. The architectural illustration of that period reproduced in Plate 2 shows moulding details of the feature, including details of the symmetrical turned balusters which infilled the upper parts of the porch's side walls. They are of typical c1600 profile, but whether the porch was an original feature or added at some slightly later date is now impossible to tell. Photographs indicate that it was subsequently returned to its earlier location, but has now been destroyed.

Sufficient evidence survives within the rear (southern) wall of the hall to indicate that there was never a door opposite the front door. The location of the rear doorway has not been located.

A number of internal doorways either survive or are evidenced within the house - all incorporate dropped heads and are plain, save for stop chamfers running around the principal face.

FLOORS AND CEILINGS

Within the high-end parlour, high-end parlour chamber, and within the hall the ceiling joists are narrow and of identical depth to the crossbeams and girders, indicating that all three of these rooms were designed to have flush under-plastered ceilings with all timbers totally hidden from view: the plasterwork may have been of elaborated type. All other rooms and chambers within the house have central-girder ceilings with the joists intended to be left exposed. All these timbers (crossbeams, tiebeams, girders and joists) are neat and have chamfered lower leading edges terminating in stepped-and-hollowed stops.

STAIRS

Although neither now survives, two period-A staircases are evidenced - one to the rear of the passage within the main range and the other within the central bay of the western crosswing. Despite the fact that the location is obvious from the arrangement of the ceiling joisting, it is now difficult to assess the form of the former of these two stairs based upon the surviving evidence. It would have given direct access from its landing into the hall chamber, as well as to the chambers within the eastern crosswing.

The second staircase was the more spacious of the two and rose from cellar to attic with access from a lobby on each floor. Although located within the central bay of the crosswing, with twin girders incorporated into the bay at each level in order to accommodate it, curiously it filled neither the entire width between the girders, nor the entire width between the crossbeams which define the bay. Despite this, the evidence contained within the joist arrangement in the ceilings at each level prove the feature to be original to the build and is sufficient to indicate with certainty the size and layout of the stair. The remains even include a cut off newel post, projecting down slightly within the ground-floor ceiling. The partitions which surrounded the stair have been removed, but are evidenced by mortices and stave holes.

At each level the stair consisted of a 'U-plan' arrangement comprising two short straight flights linked by half-turn winders - it is the newel to the winders which remains trapped in the ceiling. There were no balustrades: instead the staircase area was fully enclosed by daub walls, with a spur wall extending out to the newel, separating the two short straight flights on each level. The flight on each level turned southwards as it rose.

It is not known how access was gained to the cellar beneath the eastern crosswing: as noted, that beneath the western wing was reached via a downward continuation of the

main staircase.

CHIMNEYS

Two historic chimneys survive within the house, whilst a further chimney, serving the rear room and chamber within the western crosswing, has been removed and replaced by a much smaller, later stack in a revised location.

Constructed within bay C-D of the main range, at the eastern end of the hall is a large four-flue chimney, to which in 'modern' times has been added a further flue heating the garret over the hall chamber. Initially the stack incorporated a large fireplace heating the hall. Of this, the plain timber lintel survives, but the inglenook has been sized down and the northern part of the brickwork/stonework destroyed in order to form a 20th-century lobby. On the opposite side, facing east and serving the parlour is a further relatively wide fireplace with a timber lintel. Photographic evidence indicates that the first-floor fireplace serving the parlour chamber (now masked by later covering) retains its original stone surround with moulded four-centred arched head (see Plate 9) - this is the only stone surround known within the house. The fireplace in the hall chamber is relatively plain, despite having a moulded timber lintel. The chimney cap is of standard rebated type.

The chimney serving the front, low-end parlour in the western crosswing projects from the western wall of the range and is capped by diamond-section detached shafts. Internally all features are masked by later surrounds *etc.* It seems likely that the rear room and chamber within this range were formerly served by a similar chimney, now removed.

ROOFS

The roofs of all three ranges are of butted-side-purlin construction, all with two tiers of purlins within each slope and common rafters which run continuous over the purlins. Only within the western crosswing - the longest of the three - are windbraces incorporated: these are straight and triangulate the upper tier of purlins only. Heavy valley rafters are incorporated into the side slopes of the crosswing roofs where they intersect with that over the main range, each of the two pairs of valley rafters being linked by framed-in collars. These collars in turn intersect with further collars which run at right angles, across the crosswing roofs and joint into principal rafters which rise to the apex of the valley rafters (see Plate 10).

The trusses vary in their design in order to suit their location. Thus, trusses F-F incorporates raking struts and a collar and has had a partition added in after construction, whilst truss D-D also has raking struts, but rather than having a collar incorporates a central stud, midrail and doorway. The most interesting of the trusses, however, is the open truss located towards the western end of the hall roof, positioned

over the western jamb of the hall's bay window. This incorporates a collar, beneath which are two straight braces which rise from the rafters to the collar and triangulate the roof whilst maintaining adequate headroom beneath (Drawing No. 1535/4, Section 4-4). Beyond it, over the eastern wall of the western crosswing, is wedged in a closed partition incorporating a doorway, and there is a similar partition wedged into the roof of the western crosswing, to the north of the staircase. Neither of these coincide with roof trusses and could have been added at any time in order to divide the garret area into individual rooms. However, as at the Aynscombe's sister house of Aylwins, they are likely to represent period-A features, installed during the fitting-out stage of construction.

At the rear, both crosswings formerly terminated in hips, though that of the western crosswing was subsequently converted to a gable (see Period B). In each case a high-set collar supported the central jack rafter, whilst beneath it a standard collar was used to clasp the upper tier of purlins: the lower tier is jointed into the sides of the rafters, which at this lower level are of the same depth as the principal rafters. In contrast to the hipped ends, the fronts of the crosswings finish in overhanging gables which incorporate intricately carved flying tiebeams supported on the projecting ends of the wallplates, strengthened from beneath by carved brackets. Beyond the brackets are carved and moulded hanging pendants which in turn link back to the heads of the projecting windows by means of carved and shaped boards - all very exotic for East Sussex. Projecting scroll-carved bargeboards face the gables, jointed into carved hanging pendants at the apex. The details have been somewhat restored, but an indication of the quality can be ascertained by reference to Plates 4-6 which show details of the gable of the eastern crosswing in c1900.

Two areas of the roof are of particular interest in that they incorporate variations to the norm, indicating where gables have been removed. One of these variations is in the front slope of the roof over the main range, immediately above the hall's bay window. Here, the upper purlin within the roof bay which extends westwards from truss D-D up to the arch-braced collar truss is set at a slightly lower level than elsewhere, is of deeper section, and interrupts the common rafters, which are jointed into it. All rafters above the purlin are pegged in, whereas below it only the three eastern rafters are pegged. The western of the three is of larger scantling and trims the end of the lower purlin - there is no low-level purlin to the west of this rafter and in this area the four lower-level common rafters are nailed into position - they represent later insertions. When first built there was a 2.25 metre wide hole in the roof beneath the purlin, directly above the bay window lighting the hall. This indicates the site of a now lost central gable which capped the bay window and further enhanced the decorative appearance of the front facade. The opening in the roof slope allowed internal access to the gable, which would have incorporated a window within it. A similar arrangement within the eastern slope of the eastern crosswing's northern bay, above the removed bay window which lit the main parlour, indicates the location of yet another removed projecting gable. The subsequent removal of these display features may seem bizarre, but it is known to be a relatively common phenomenon, carried out when multiple gables went out of fashion late in the 17th century.

PERIOD B (c1700) [Drawing Nos. 1535/7-9]

LAYOUT

All the recognizable c1700 additions to the house are at the rear, though it would have been at this time that the two gables were removed from the front and the clerestory windows blocked. The enlargements involved the addition of a lean-to outshut along the rear of the hall, providing revised access to the rear yard and a much needed additional service room with cellar beneath, and a new stair turret, replacing the stairs leading off the passage adjacent to the hall fireplace. The new stair allowed improvements to be made to the first-floor circulation by introducing a passage along the rear of the hall chamber. In order to compensate for light from the removed front gable over the hall, a new, smaller, face dormer was added into the rear roof slope of this garret.

WALL DESIGN, WINDOWS AND DOORWAYS

A new first-floor partition within the western crosswing, located slightly to the south of the original, allowed the front chamber within this range to be enlarged at the expense of the closet to its south. The partition is very similar in design to its predecessor and is likely to reuse at least part of the earlier material. It incorporates a doorway (now blocked) at its western end. Like the others, this doorway has a dropped head. Ignoring this revision, only within the stair turret is any period-B timber framing visible. This shows the period-B framework to be slender and spindly, with walls of traditional small-panel type. No details are known regarding the design of the period-B windows.

Because of the wide nature of the period-A doorway between the western crosswing and the hall chamber, an extra stud had to be introduced adjacent to the door jamb when the circulation passage was introduced into the rear of this chamber. The formation of the passage also required the removal of a section of wall infill at the southern end of truss D-D, whilst the entire area of infill framing was taken out from the southern wall to the east of truss D-D in order to throw the new stair turret open to the main range, thereby allowing light into the first-floor passage.

FLOORS AND CEILINGS

When the period-A stairs were removed to the rear of the central chimney it was necessary to infill the opening with new joists. No other period-B joists are visible.

STAIRS

Steps descend within the new period-B lean-to outshut in order to give improved access to the rear of the property. These are located adjacent to the side wall of the period-B stair turret. The new stairs within the turret ascend to a half landing before rising to the first floor. The present stair (of uncertain date - perhaps modern), has a grip handrail and widely spaced symmetrical turned balusters and shaped finials to the heads of the otherwise plain newel posts. It is possible that the widely-spaced balusters have been reused from elsewhere in the house, for in style they are unlikely to post date 1650 and are more likely to be c1600.

The new stair does not rise to attic level, though the roof of the turret is purpose designed to incorporate a narrow stair immediately to the west, where the present attic staircase now rises.

CHIMNEYS

There are no recognizable alterations of this period.

ROOF

The roof over the stair turret has a gabled terminal and uses butt-purlin construction with the common rafters tenoned into the purlins. It is framed in two bays and formerly had a collar within its truss: the collar has since been removed and replaced at a higher level. A curious feature of the turret is the fact that its roof is of greater span than the staircase area, the western wallplate being offset 1.40 metres (4'8") to the west, apparently in order to accommodate the attic stairs referred to above. There has never been a wall beneath this section of wallplate, the roof slope apparently having been continued down to intersect with the roof of the adjacent period-B lean-to outshut. Similar butt-purlin construction is used for the gabled rear bay of the western crosswing's roof, which replaced the original hipped end in order to improve headroom within the garret and allow extra light into this end of the roof. In comparison to those of period-A date, both roofs are of spindly, inferior construction.

The face gable incorporated into the rear slope of the hall roof is carried off the backs of rafters using a lay board and is of simple paired-rafter construction, absent of ridge board at the apex.

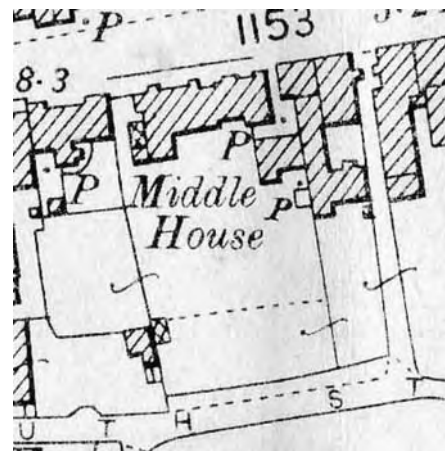
As the roof over the lean-to outshut to the rear of the hall range has been removed and replaced by an added storey with flat roof, no details of this roof's construction are known.



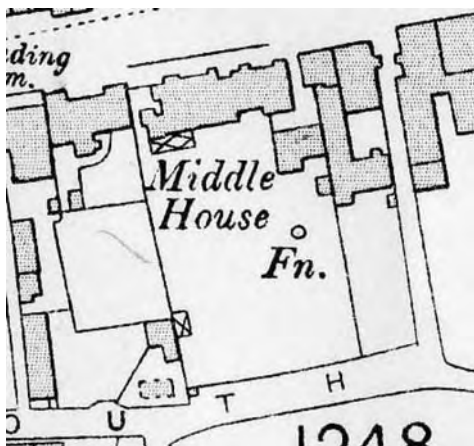
1844 Tithe Map [ESRO TDE 133]



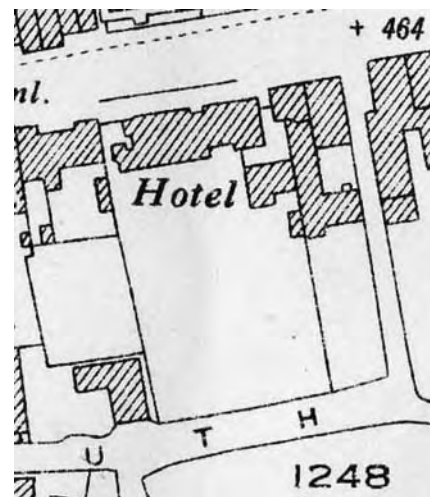
1874 1st Edition 1:2500 O.S. Plan



1897 2nd Edition 1:2500 O.S. Plan



1908 3rd Edition 1:2500 O.S. Plan



1929 Edition 1:2500 O.S. Plan

**THE MIDDLE HOUSE, HIGH STREET, MAYFIELD, EAST SUSSEX
EXTRACTS FROM HISTORICAL MAPS**

Site Ref **P93/34**

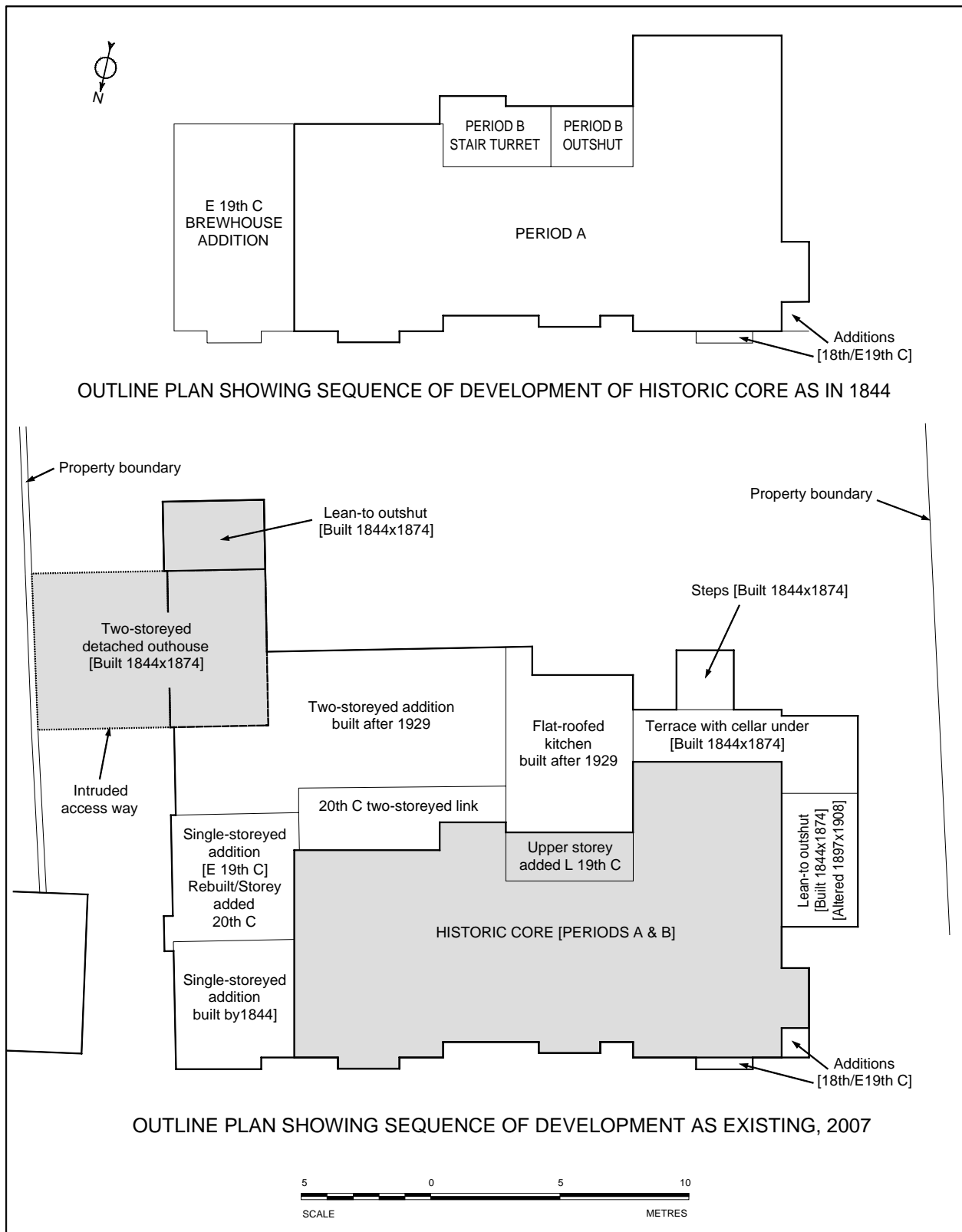
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Drawn By **D Martin**

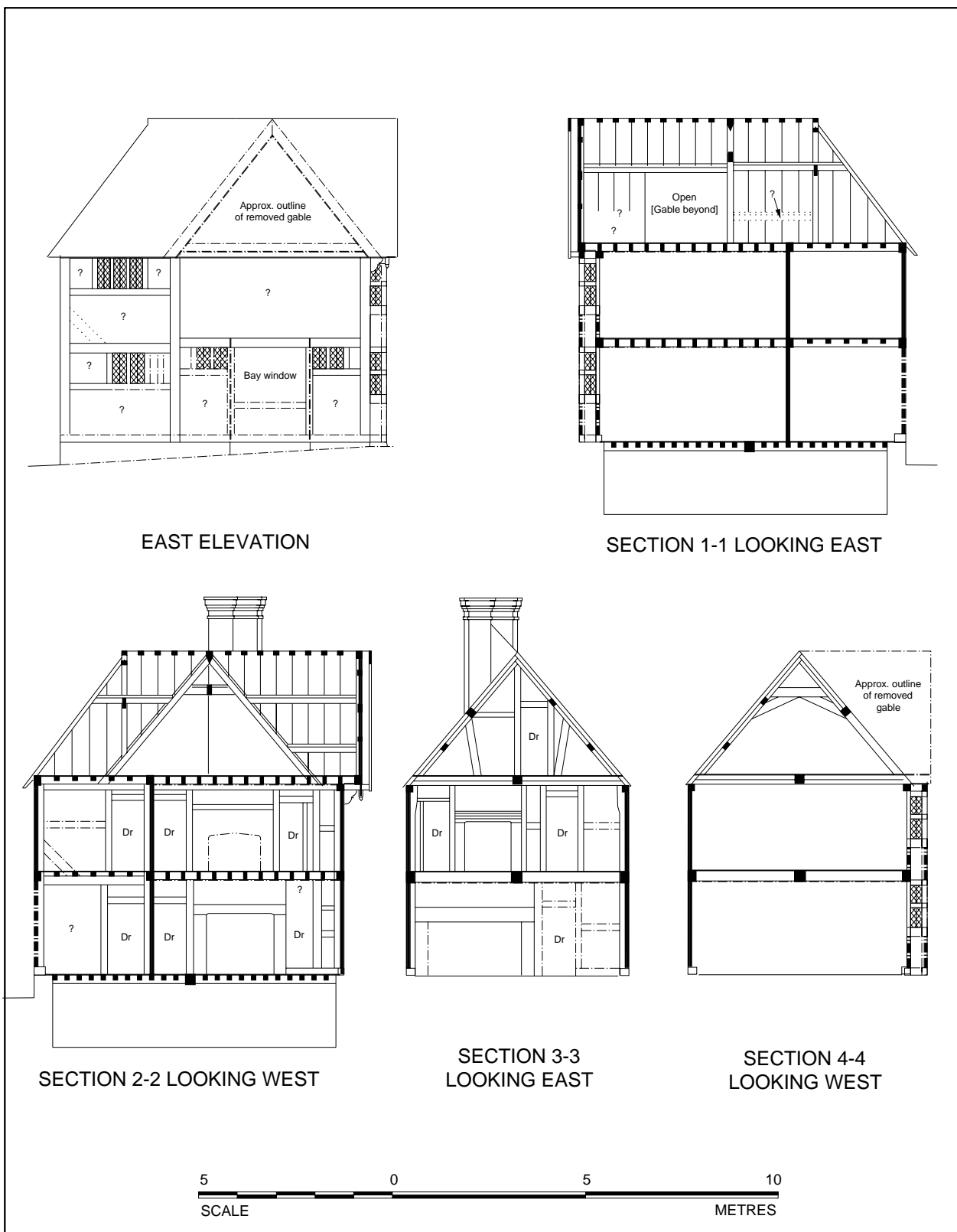
Revision No -

Date of original survey **2007**

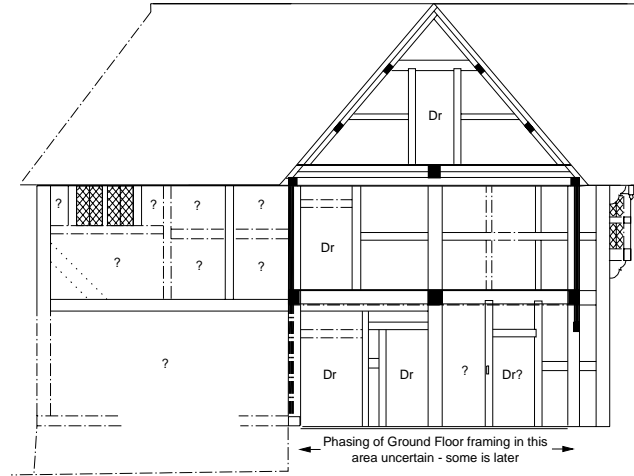
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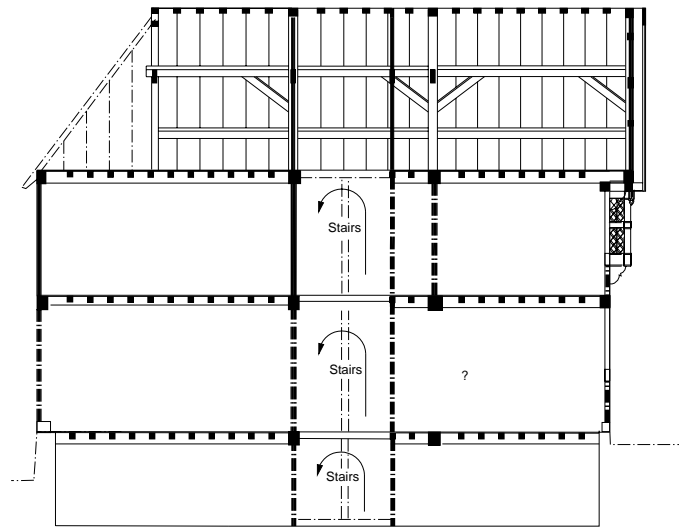
THE MIDDLE HOUSE, HIGH STREET, MAYFIELD, EAST SUSSEX				Site Ref	P93/34
OUTLINE PLANS SHOWING SEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT				Drawing No.	1535/2
Drawn By	D Martin	Revision No	-	Date of original survey	2007
				Date of this revision	



THE MIDDLE HOUSE, HIGH STREET, MAYFIELD, EAST SUSSEX PERIOD-A RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS				Site Ref	P93/34
				Drawing No.	1535/4
Drawn By	D Martin	Revision No	-	Date of original survey	2007
				Date of this revision	



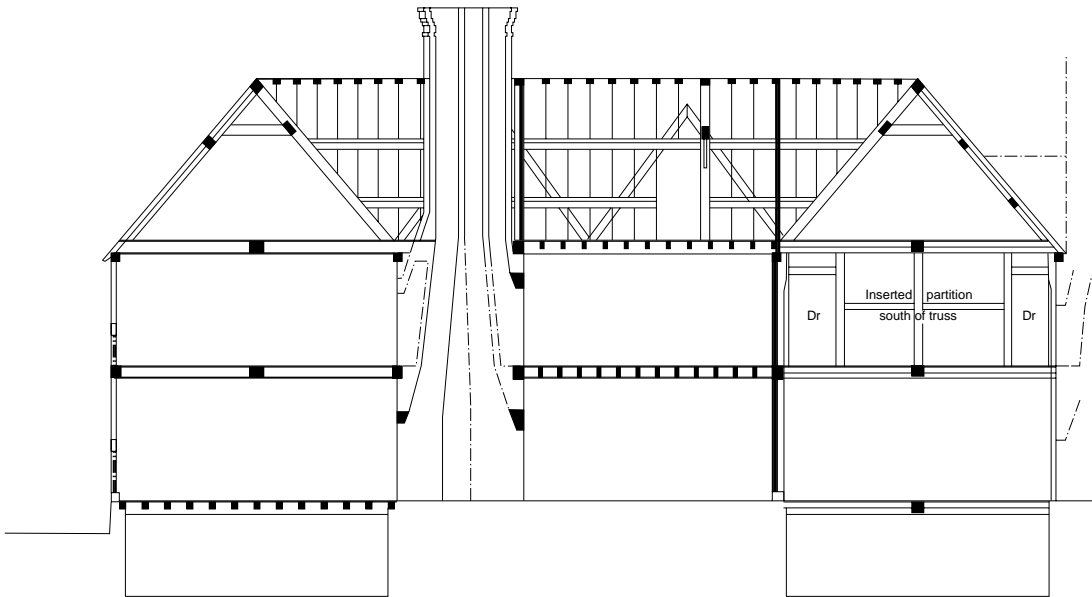
SECTION 5-5 LOOKING WEST



SECTION 6-6 LOOKING WEST



THE MIDDLE HOUSE, HIGH STREET, MAYFIELD, EAST SUSSEX PERIOD-A RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS				Site Ref P93/34	
				Drawing No. 1535/5	
Drawn By D Martin	Revision No -	Date of original survey 2007	Date of this revision		



SECTION 5-5 [LOOKING SOUTH]



SECTION/ELEVATION 6-6 [LOOKING NORTH]



THE MIDDLE HOUSE, HIGH STREET, MAYFIELD, EAST SUSSEX				Site Ref	P93/34
PERIOD-B RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS				Drawing No.	1535/9
Drawn By	D Martin	Revision No	-	Date of original survey	2007
				Date of this revision	

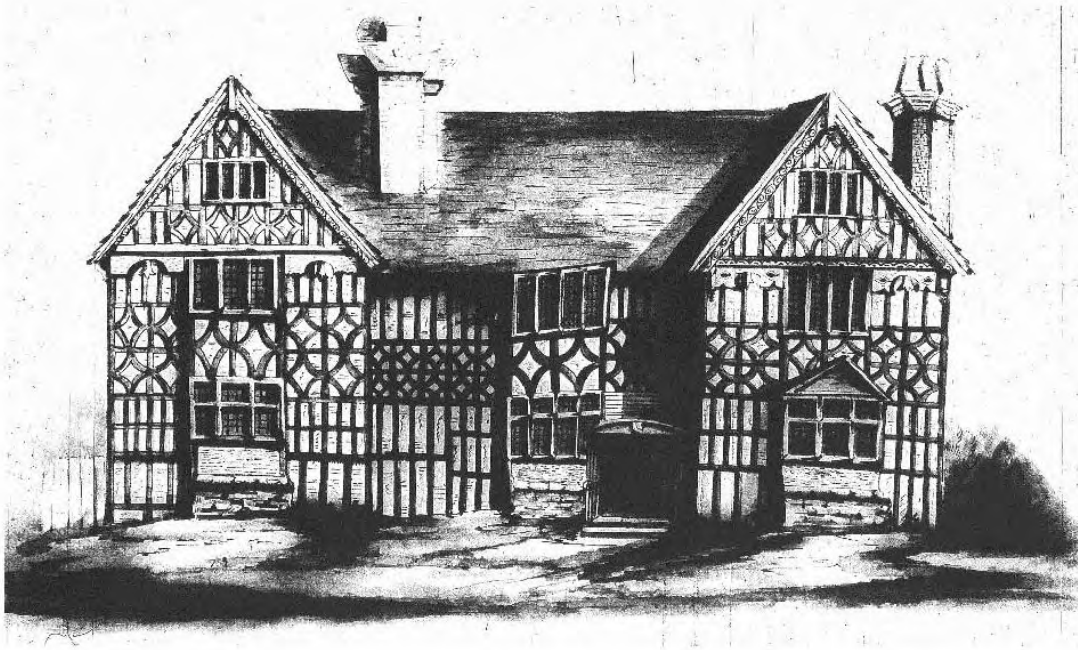


Plate 1
Exterior, pre 1844 [College of Arms, Courthope MS 23, 200-202 (ESRO XA38/2)]



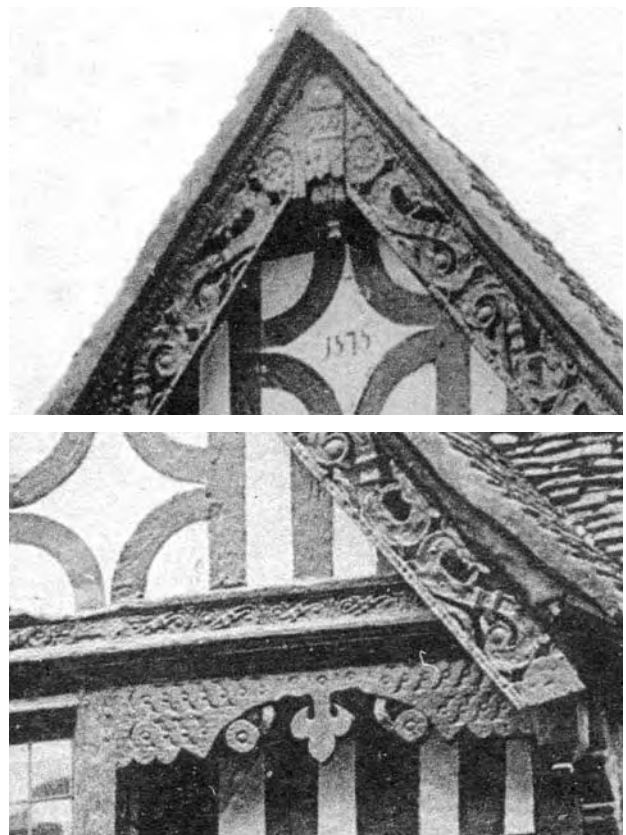
Plate 2
Exterior in the late 19th century [From a picture at Middle House]



Plate 3
Exterior in c1900



Plate 4
Detail of eastern gable, c1900



Plates 4 & 5
Details of decoration, eastern gable, c1900



Plate 7
Rear of the building in E 20th C [From a picture at Middle House]



Plate 8
Exterior as in 2006

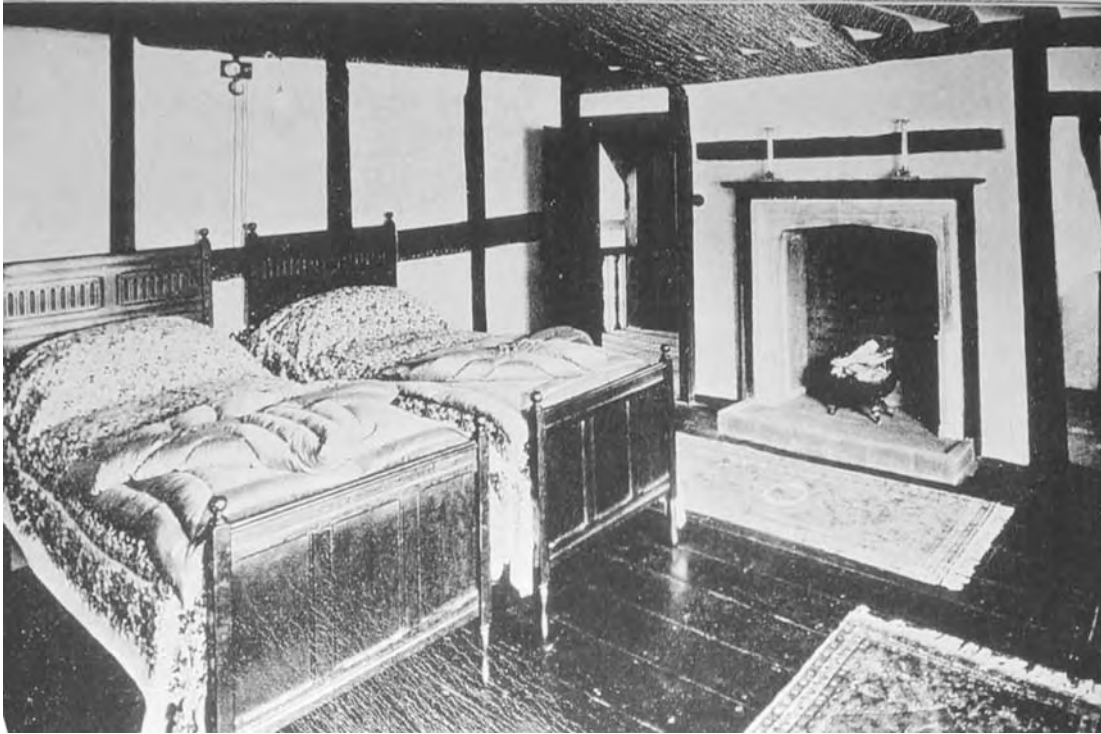


Plate 9
The parlour chamber in the E 20th C [From a picture at Middle House]



Plate 10 [left]
Intersection between the roof over the
western crosswing [right] and the main
range [left], 2007.

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