

**A Revised Archaeological Interpretative Survey of
Kingsdown Farmhouse, Heathfield, East Sussex**

**This revision commissioned by
Matthew and Dominie Stemp**

Project Ref. 4097



**By David Martin FSA IHBC MIFA & Barbara Martin AIFA
2009**

**A REVISED ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INTERPRETATIVE SURVEY
OF**

**KINGSDOWN FARMHOUSE,
HEATHFIELD, EAST SUSSEX**

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**Archaeology South-East
Institute of Archaeology
University College London**

2009

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 and could modify the dates suggested.

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.

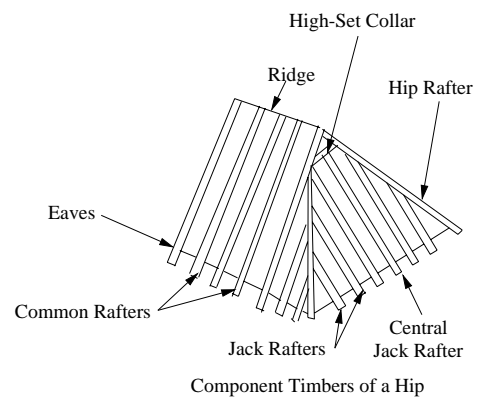
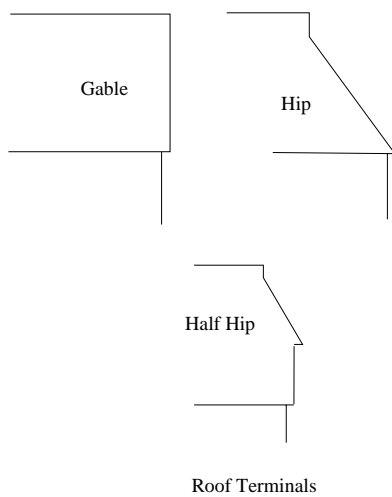
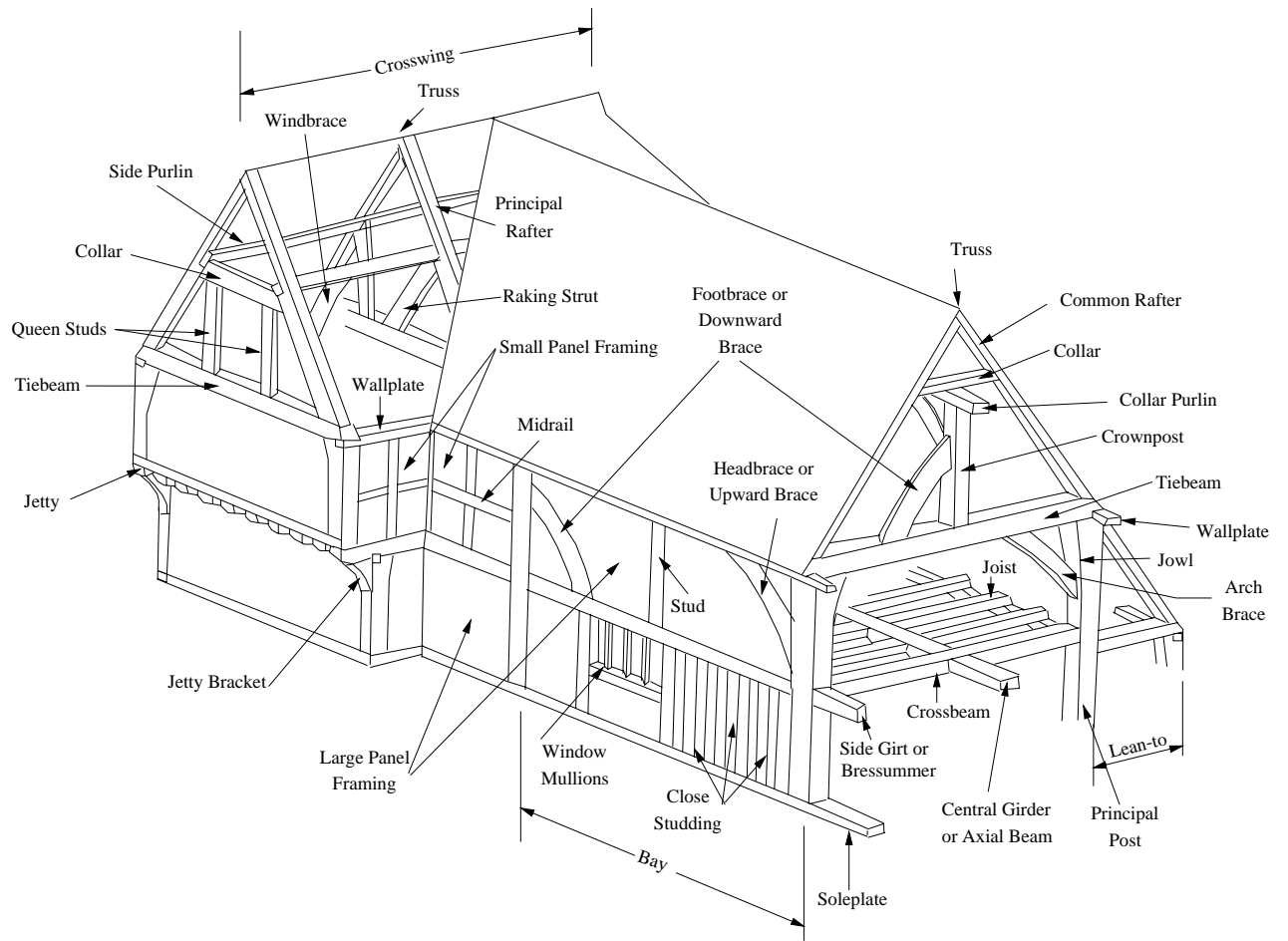
The symbols as used in the drawings attached to this report are as follows:

	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.



GLOSSARY OF PRINCIPAL TERMS

REPORT NO. 0605 (Revised)

HEATHFIELD - KINGSDOWN FARMHOUSE

NGR TQ 6348 2289

LOCATION OF THE BUILDING

Although close to the south-western periphery of Burwash Common, Kingsdown is located within the parish of Heathfield, very close to its eastern boundary with Burwash parish and approximately 3 miles to the NE of Heathfield parish church. Built upon a north-south axis with its front elevation facing west, the house stands approximately 500 metres to the south of the A265 ridgeway and is built parallel to a farm track (now a private drive) which formerly passed to the west of the house. On the opposite side of the track, to the west of the house, is a 17th-century timber-framed barn, for which see ESRO HBR/1/0606.

BACKGROUND TO THIS REVISED REPORT

Kingsdown was surveyed by David and Barbara Martin for the Rape of Hastings Architectural Survey in 1980 and was briefly re-visited by David Martin and Christopher Whittick in 2001 — Christopher was at that time in the process of compiling a historical background to the property (historical account not included within this report). In October 2009 the house was again briefly visited in order to ascertain the extent of surviving historical work within the ground-floor northern room of the original house and within the ground-floor room of a southern extension. The former retains one original timber-framed partition, but otherwise all surfaces are masked by modern dry-lining, applied on battens to the internal face of the brick underbuilding. Likewise, within the southern addition, all internal surfaces (including the internal brick partition on the line of the old southern end wall) are dry-lined, applied to battens. The remainder of the house was checked for 'errors' in the earlier report, but no reasons were found to amend the conclusions of the 1980 survey, though some additional detail is given in this revised version. It should be noted that the reconstruction drawings produced in 1980 did not differentiate between surviving period-A fabric and that which has been removed but is evidenced by mortices. There was no reason during the 2009 visit to amend this shortcoming.

OVERVIEW OF THE BUILDING [Drawing No. 605/1 (Rev)]

Dating from the mid/late 16th century [**Period A**], this is a four-bay, three-cell timber-framed building with an axial three-flue chimney (see description below).

No substantial alterations were made to the building until the mid/late 18th century when parts of the ground-floor framing was replaced by brick underbuilding, carried out in more than one phase. The remainder of the frame was probably weatherclad as part of this work, and the northern gable converted into a half-hip, matching that at the opposite end of the roof. Certainly the northern half-hip is not early — it lacks a high-set collar at its apex.

Subsequently, a southern end lean-to outshut was built, complete with a small projection to its rear. As part of this work, the ground-floor element of the period-A south wall was rebuilt as a half-brick partition, with at least one pier projecting southwards into the new outshut — others may have existed, but, if so, they have been cut-back subsequently. The roof of the outshut was effectively formed by continuing the line of the southern period-A half-hip downwards. All that now remains of the added outshut is the front (western) stone wall (which extends up to the main entrance) and a fragment of brickwork visible in the rear wall. All else was replaced in the late 19th century (or perhaps even the early 20th century) when a two-storeyed range was constructed upon its site, the new rooms being served by an in-built eastern chimney. Although now tile-hung on the south elevation, the walls of the new section are of brick, at least at ground-floor level. The roof is of machine-sawn softwood and is of cut-and-pitched type, with a ridgeboard. A lean-to outshut (of two modern phases — built after 1873 — and of different heights) has been added along the rear: the earlier southern part has relatively tall walls and has had a turret added (probably c.1920/30) so as to accommodate a new staircase.

Since 1980 the house has been carefully renovated and dry-lining has been added to the interior of the external ground-floor brick and stone walls.

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

LISTED STATUS OF THE BUILDING

Kingsdown Farmhouse was listed grade II on 12th August 1981, its listed building reference being TQ 62 8V 4/796. The description in the list entry is purely for the purpose of recognition and is normally, therefore, primarily based on external appearance. The date is given as probably C17 or earlier. [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 both the interior and exterior, but also extends to any building within the curtilage which predates the 1st July 1948.

DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

PERIOD A (Mid/Late 16th C) [Drawing Nos. 605/2-4 (Rev)]

LAYOUT

A four-bay structure measuring 13.60 metres x 5.85 metres (44'7" x 19'3"). As the reconstruction ground- and first-floor plans in Drawing No. 605/2 (Rev) indicate, it is a three-cell house with baffle entry. There is a three-flue stack, the southern chamber being unheated. The size of the fireplace heating the southern room suggests that this acted as a kitchen, rather than a parlour. On the hall face of the hall/service partition are peg holes for a fixed bench, with other holes for shelving within the service room. There was always an attic: this comprised an un-partitioned open space accessible via the main staircase (see below).

WALLS, DOORWAYS AND WINDOWS

The walls throughout are of small-panel type with continuous midrails, all as shown in the elevations and sections illustrated in Drawing Nos. 605/2-4 (Rev). Note the internally-exposed curved footbracing to the external walls, a feature not found on the internal cross partitions. Where they survive, all doorways are of dropped-head type, neatly chamfered on the principal face. That between the hall and service chambers follows the shape of the jowl on the principal post, the rear face being deeply rebated to accommodate a standard rectangular door. One original window survives in the eastern wall of the hall chamber. This is of three glazed panes with mullions which are cyma-moulded-and-hollow-chamfered on the interior. The external surfaces are heavily weathered, but appear to be plainly chamfered. There is mortice-evidence for similar two- and three-pane windows in the north, east and west elevations (see Drawing Nos. 605/3-4 Rev.) whilst the opening in the main facade of the hall chamber is larger and originally accommodated some form of oriel window. This opening is neatly stop-chamfered internally, whilst its jambs are housed to accommodate the projecting cill. It is not known whether the window was capped by a gable.

FLOORS AND STAIRS

In the northern bay the joists to both the first floor and attic floor are aligned longitudinally: elsewhere (because of the longer bay lengths) they are of central-girder construction. All first-floor joists are fully jointed at both ends, and not lodged over the side girts and crossbeam as is more usual.

Sufficient evidence survives to indicate the form of the original newel staircase, which was located immediately to the east of the chimney. It was of part straight-flight and

part winder type leading up from the hall. On the first floor a doorway gave access to a central-newel section rising to the garret. Only the doorway, central newel and one or two bearers for the steps now survive.

CHIMNEY

The brick chimney comprises three flues, the inglenooks being plain with timber lintels and wide jambs. The cap is of staggered type and has its projecting weathering course set high, indicating the former existence of a thatched roof covering.

ROOF

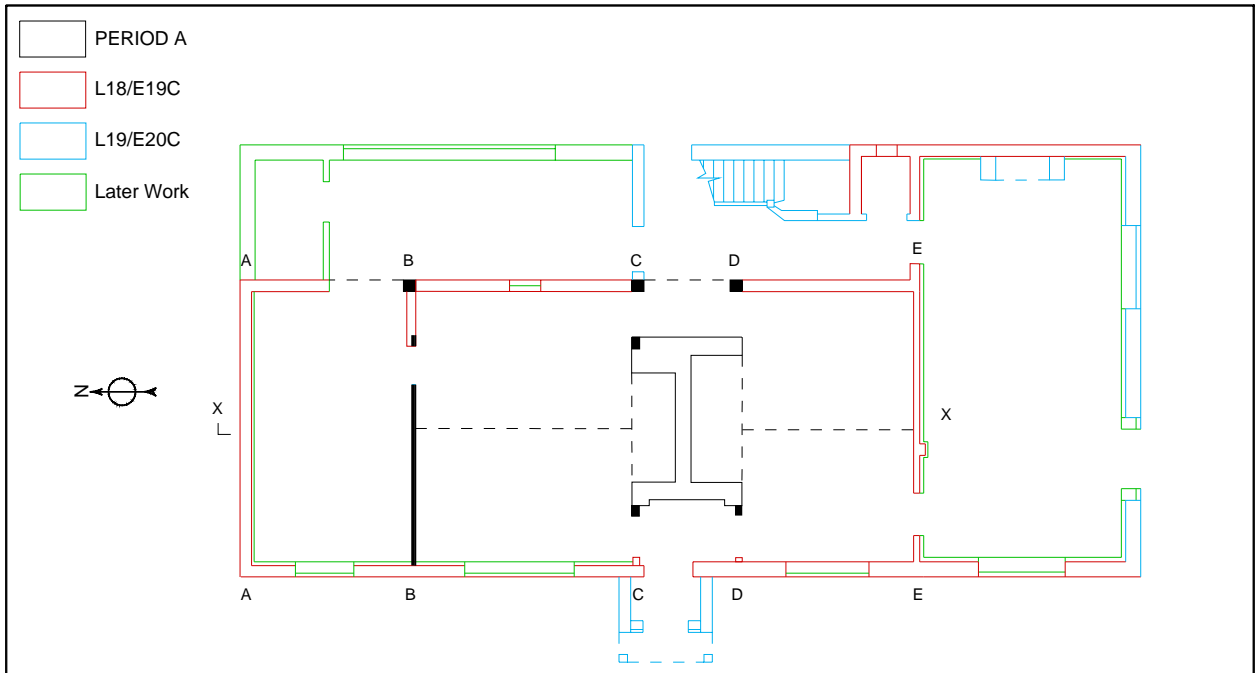
There have been several alterations to the roof, including work to both terminals. Originally the roof was gabled to the north (evidenced by pegged mortices) and half-hipped to south (rebuilt, but the original is evidenced by a high-set collar). The construction is of windbraced clasped-side-purlin type with principal rafters notched for the side purlins. Collars support the purlins, whilst truss B-B is also fitted with raking struts. All windbraces have been removed and are now only evidenced by mortices.

QUALITY AND DECOR

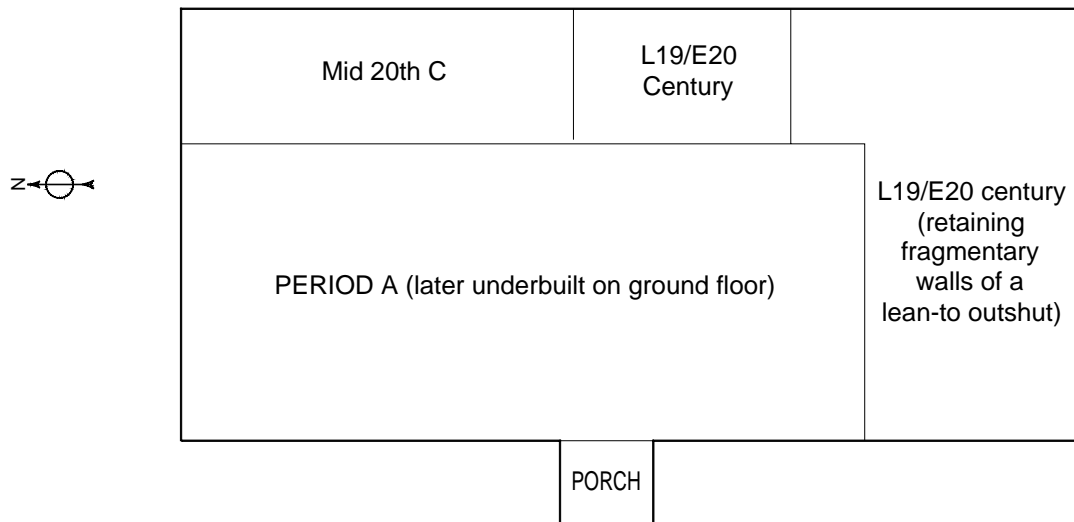
This is a well built house which uses average-scantling timbers, the principal posts being of 280 mm x 250 mm section and the braces 240 mm deep. The joists throughout measure 90 mm x 110 mm and the common rafters 110 mm x 100 mm. The timbers generally are free of sapwood and neatly finished, with some chamfering — including to the hall and hall chamber joists.

DATING

The use of small-panel wall framing in conjunction with internally-set bracing suggests a date of c.1570, a date which is consistent with the use of continuous midrails. A date before 1550 or after 1590 is unlikely.



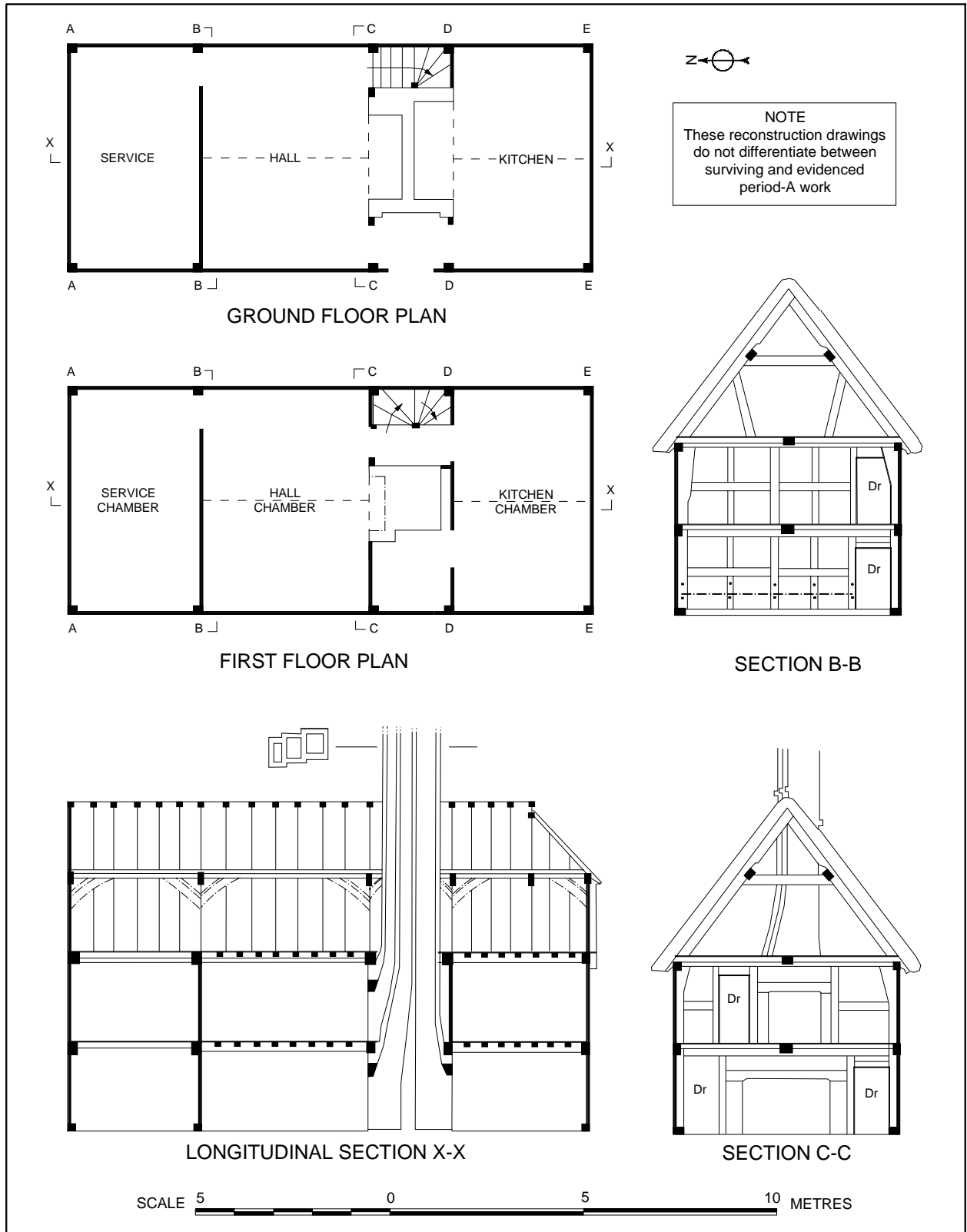
OUTLINE GROUND-FLOOR PLAN AS EXISTING, 2009
 (Some details shown approximate)



OUTLINE GROUND-FLOOR PLAN SHOWING SEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT

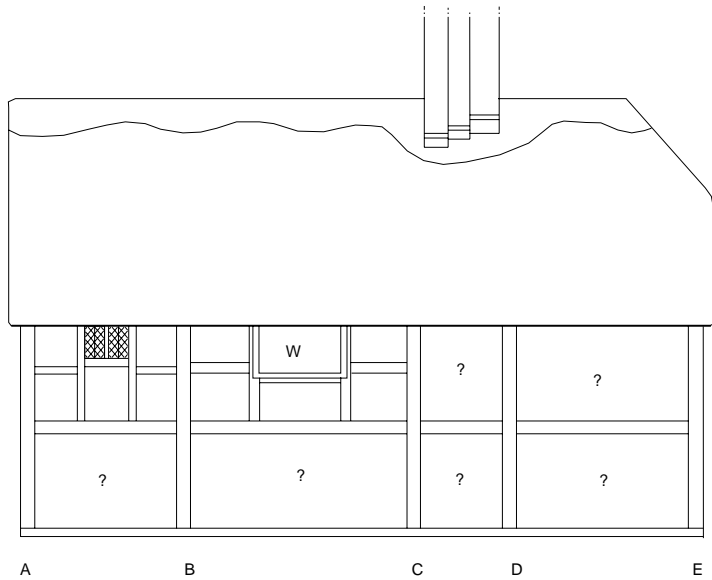
SCALE 5 0 5 10 METRES

KINGSDOWN FARMHOUSE, HEATHFIELD GROUND-FLOOR PLANS				Site Ref	P22/006		
				Drawing No.	605/1 (Rev)		
Drawn By	D Martin	Revision No	1	Date of original survey	1980	Date of this revision	2009

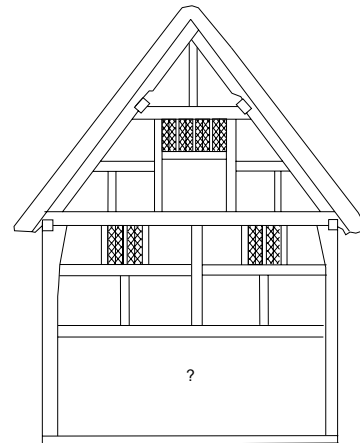


KINGSDOWN FARMHOUSE, HEATHFIELD PERIOD-A RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS				Site Ref	P22/006
				Drawing No.	605/2 (Rev)
Drawn By	D Martin	Revision No	1	Date of original survey	1980
				Date of this revision	2009

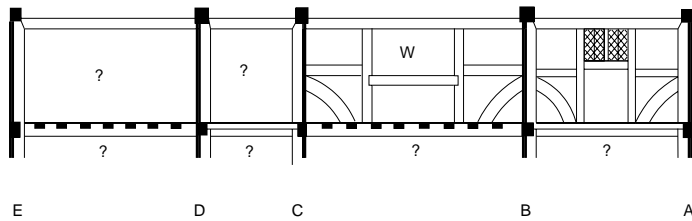
NOTE
 These reconstruction drawings
 do not differentiate between
 surviving and evidenced
 period-A work



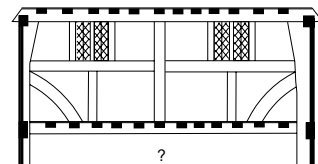
FRONT (WEST) ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



INTERIOR OF FRONT WALL, FIRST-FLOOR LEVEL

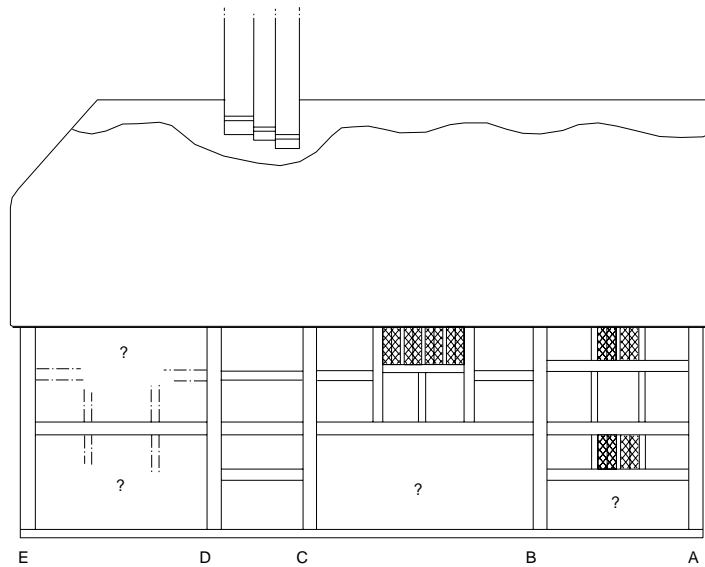


INTERIOR, NORTH WALL

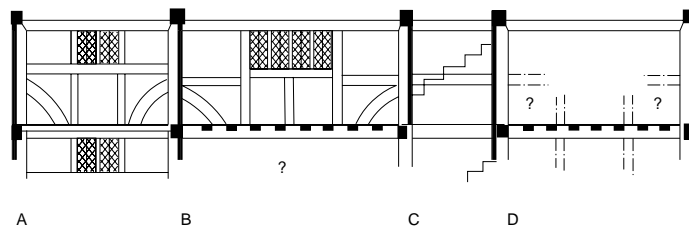
SCALE 5 0 5 10 METRES

KINGSDOWN FARMHOUSE, HEATHFIELD PERIOD-A RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS				Site Ref	P22/006		
				Drawing No.	605/3 (Rev)		
Drawn By	D Martin	Revision No	1	Date of original survey	1980	Date of this revision	2009

NOTE
 These reconstruction drawings
 do not differentiate between
 surviving and evidenced
 period-A work



REAR (EAST) ELEVATION



INTERIOR OF REAR WALL, FIRST-FLOOR LEVEL



KINGSDOWN FARMHOUSE, HEATHFIELD PERIOD-A RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS				Site Ref	P22/006		
				Drawing No.	605/4 (Rev)		
Drawn By	D Martin	Revision No	1	Date of original survey	1980	Date of this revision	2009

Head Office
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
Web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk



London Office
Centre for Applied Archaeology
Institute of Archaeology
University College London
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778 Fax:+44(0)20 7383 2572
Web: www.ucl.ac.uk/caa

The contracts division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London 

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