NO.139 WILBURY ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG6 4JG

BUILT HERITAGE RECORDING

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY: NORTH HERTFORDHSIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT NO. 12404

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

Historic Building Recording at No. 139 Wilbury Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4JG

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Site Code: LGCWR18

HER Enquiry No. 358/17

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CONTENTS

1	NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY	4
2	INTRODUCTION	5
3	PLANNING BACKGROUND	7
4	METHODOLOGY	8
5	HISTORIC BACKGROUND	10
6	BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS	12
7	DISCUSSION	17
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	18
9	BIBLIOGRAPHY	19

APPENDICES

1 OASIS FORM

2 HHER SUMMARY SHEET

3 BUILDING PLANS

Figure 1 Site Location
Figure 2 Detailed Site Location
Figure 3 Letchworth Garden City Masterplan 1904 (Parker and Unwin)
Figure 4 Estate Plan of 1904
Figure 5 Cheap Cottages Plan of 1905
Figure 6 Ordnance Survey Map of 1921 (sheet VII.7)
Figure 7a Existing Ground Floor Plans with Plate Directions
Figure 7b Existing First Floor Plans with Plate Directions
Figure 8 Existing Elevations
Figure 9 Proposed Plans
Figure 10 Proposed Elevations

Plates

Plate 1 Southern elevation to garden, looking north
Plate 2 Southern elevation, looking north-east
Plate 3 Detail of ground floor casement window (to be re-located)
Plate 4 Detail of first floor casement window (to be re-located)
Plate 5 Rafter and soffit board detail to eaves
Plate 6 Northern elevation, looking south-east
Plate 7 Recessed porch and front door (north elevation)
Plate 8 Open-sided verandah viewed from the south-western angle
Plate 9 Western elevation, deep catslide roof over verandah, looking east
Plate 10 Eastern elevation, looking west
Plate 11 Lounge (1) looking south-west
Plate 12 Lounge (1), fireplace
Plate 13 Typical plank door (to lounge 1)
Plate 14 Norfolk latch
Plate 15 Dining room (2) looking north-east
Plate 16 Dining room (2) looking south-east
Plate 17 Inserted stained glass panel (dining room 2)
Plate 18 Built-in cupboards (2) east wall
Plate 19 Built-in cupboards (2) south wall
Plate 20 Detail of door catch (2)
Plate 21 Kitchen (3) looking east
Plate 22 Detail of wrought-iron work
Plate 23 Bathroom (4)
Plate 24 Latch to front door
Plate 25 Winder stair (6)
Plate 26 Balustrade at first floor
Plate 27 Inserted stud wall to create new passage (7A)
Plate 28 Bedroom (7) looking north-east
Plate 29 Detail of casement window (7) to be re-located
Plate 30 Typical window latch
Plate 31 Typical window stay
Plate 32 Bedroom (9) looking east
Plate 33 Bedroom (9) looking south
Plate 34 Bedroom (8)
Plate 35 Bedroom (8), fireplace
Plate 36 Cupboard on first floor landing
Plate 37 Bathroom (10)

1 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Thereafter PCA) were commissioned by Mr D Spaul to carry out a programme of historic building recording focused upon the proposed alterations and extension of No. 139 Wilbury Road, a Grade II listed cottage in Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire. This report details the outcome of the historic building recording, completed prior to the commencement of structural works and was undertaken to 'preserve by record' the present character of the building, documenting historic fabric, fixtures or fittings that may be affected by the proposals.

1.2 The work was a carried out in response to a planning condition (3) attached to the planning permission (17/01660/1HH) and listed building consent application (ref: 7/01585/1LB) for a proposed two storey rear extension including internal and external alterations and in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and with national guidance published by Historic England and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA 2014).

1.3 No. 139 Wilbury Road was built in 1906 as an early example of a compact, detached artisans cottage designed by architects Wilson Bidwell & Robert Bennett. Today it forms part of a small group of architect designed cottages which were built along Wilbury Road, many as part of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition of 1905, although No.139 was never part of this exhibition as it was not completed until 1906. The cottage was built, in the prevalent arts and crafts style, as a higher status parlour-type cottage and was lauded by C. B. Purdom, a notable in the Garden City and Town Planning Association, for its compact design.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

2.2 PCA Limited were commissioned by the present owner (D. Spaul) to carry out a programme of historic building recording focused upon the proposed alterations to No. 139 Wilbury Road, a grade II listed Arts and Crafts cottage, built during the early phases of Letchworth Garden City and to the designs of architects Bennett and Bidwell. The survey was carried out as a requirement of planning condition (3) attached to the planning permission and listed building consent, for a proposed two storey rear extension including internal and external alterations.

2.3 This historic building survey was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), which sets out the methodology used by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during the project, agreed in advance of works by the local planning authority (North Hertfordshire District Council). The survey works were undertaken in accordance with an English Heritage level 3 survey, as defined by guidance published by Historic England (English Heritage 2006 Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice).

2.4 As the proposals will result in a change to the external appearance and character of the property and internal alterations impacting upon its original internal spatial layout, the aim of the building survey is to provide a detailed record of No. 139 Wilbury Road prior to the commencement of proposed works. The purpose of the project is to record the house in its present character, detailing external and internal treatments, fixtures and fittings, before these alterations are made. The results will then form part of an ordered archive and report that will preserve 'by record' those areas affected by the proposed works and thereby mitigate loss of historic integrity or fabric

2.5 Site Location and Description (Figs. 1-2)

2.6 Letchworth is the world's first Garden City, a concept created as a solution to the squalor and poverty of urban life in Britain prevalent during the 19th century. Based on the ideas of Ebenezer Howard as published in his book of 1898 "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Reform", Letchworth Garden City inspired town planning across the globe. Howard's company First Garden City Ltd began construction in 1903 and appointed architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin to design the masterplan for the new garden city. No. 139 Wilbury Road, lying close to Norton Common survives as one of the earlier examples of workers housing built as part of the Garden City project, which along with a number of other cottages constructed along Wilbury Road and Norton Way North, falls within the scope of the Letchworth Conservation Area. It has also been designated as a Grade II listed building. The listing citation reads:

LETCHWORTH, WILBURY ROAD 6/160 No 139 II Cottage. 1906, by Bennett and Bidwell. Roughcast over brick; gabled plain tile roof; brick ridge and end stacks. Rectangular plan. One storey and attic; 5-window range which has segmental-arched door set in gabled front of cross wing to right which has lean-to roof continued over veranda to right side wall. Two to 3-light wood casements with glazing bars, asymmetrically arranged. Interior: plank doors with Norfolk latches; simple wood fireplace in living room to rear; winder stair to left of front door. Praised by C. B. Purdom (The Garden City, 1913) for its compact planning.

2.7 Listed buildings nearby, include the Grade II* listed No. 158 Wilbury Road, built in 1905 by John A Brodie and regarded as one of the most significant of the early Letchworth buildings for its construction techniques and as a pioneering example of the International Style and No. 126 Wilbury Road, a cottage built in 1905 to the designs of A Randall Wells and winner of Class IV of the 1905 Cheap Cottages Exhibition. Further to the east is the development of Westholm (Nos. 1-24) and Nos. 162-176, built in 1906 by B. Parker and R. Unwin to their designs published in "The Art of Building a House" (1901). The Westholm development survives as one of the earliest known schemes based on the traditional village green layout and formed the prototype of all later development of this type throughout the country. Nearby undesignated buildings of

note include Nos. 150-156 & 160 Wilbury Road, a group by W. Clough of Ringwood, Hampshire and No.148 Wilbury Road, built by Darlington Construction Company and pre-fabricated in Sweden.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

3.2 National legislation and guidance relating to the protection of historic buildings and structures within planning regulations is defined by the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In addition, local planning authorities are responsible for the protection of the historic environment within the planning system and policies for the historic environment are included in relevant regional and local plans.

3.3 Legislation and Planning Guidance

3.4 Statutory protection for historically important buildings and structures is derived from the Planning (Listed and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Guidance on the approach of the planning authorities to development and historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and other elements of the historic environment is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was adopted on 27 March 2012 and which supersedes the Planning Policy Statements (PPSs).

3.5 The requirement for archaeological work is in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 141. The purpose of the work is to complete an appropriate level of historic building recording of the affected structures and their setting. This will pay specific attention to those elements where demolition/conversion and/or alteration are proposed. The work should be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the buildings within the context for which they were originally designed as well as later uses. An archive and report will be created as a result of the survey.

3.6 Local Planning

3.7 Planning Permission (ref:7/01660/1HH) and listed building consent application (ref: 17/01585/1LB) for a proposed two storey rear extension including internal and external alterations was approved by local planning authority (North Hertfordshire District Council, along with a number of pre-commencement conditions (Figs. 9 & 10).

Condition 3 attached to planning permission 17/01660/1HH reads;

A) No development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;

2. The programme for post investigation assessment;

3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;

4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;

5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;

6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.

3.8 B) The development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A)

3.9 C) The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

Reason: To protect the historic environment.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Aims and Objectives

4.2 The aim of the building recording as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Garwood, 2017) is to provide a record of the listed No. 139 Wilbury Road prior to the start of the proposed alteration works. The aim of the work is to produce a permanent record of the building in its present state prior to alteration, meeting nationally recognised standards as set out in the Historic England guidance document Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice (2006).

4.3 The historic building survey will be undertaken to a standard allowing the future understanding and interpretation of the building and its site setting.

4.4 On-Site Recording

4.5 The on-site survey was carried out during the week ending 19/1/2018 & 23/2/2018 by the author. Existing and proposed plans were provided by the client so that the recording works could specifically focus on the areas to be altered. These drawings were annotated on site and used as a basis for the illustrations in this report.

4.6 A photographic survey comprising high resolution digital images was undertaken recording all external elevations, principal interior spaces and key features, fixtures or fittings. General shots of the site, placing the building in context with its immediate environment, were also completed. A selection of the images has been included in this report and Figs. 2 & 7 show the location and direction of these photographs.

4.7 The historic building recording will accord with a level 3 survey as set out in the English Heritage guidelines Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice (2006). This will involve a full visual record, accompanied by a descriptive account, brief site background and annotated building plans.

4.8 The Written Account:

The building's precise location, as a National Grid Reference and in address form.

A note of any statutory designation (listing, scheduling or conservation area)

The date of the record, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and, if an archive has been created, its location.

A statement describing the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners should be given if known. Its purpose is to describe the building when no fuller record is necessary, to serve as an introduction to the more detailed body of the record that may follow, and to satisfy those users who may need no more than a summary of the findings.

4.9 The Photographic Record:

General view of views of the exterior of the building.

The overall appearance of principal rooms.

Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance. In the case of a building designed by an architect, or intended to be seen from a certain point of view, it is important to have regard to the builder's intentions and to record the effect of the design or of the building's placing.

The buildings' relationship to its setting, to other buildings, or to a significant viewpoint.

Internal details, structural and decorative which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs.

Any machinery or other plant, fixtures or fittings or evidence for former existence

4.10 The Drawn Record

Site location plans at suitable scales (preferably indicating the position of the site within the country, within the county and a clear plan of the precise location/outline of the building(s) i.e. 1:1250).

Measured drawings recording the form or location of other significant structural detail, such as timber or metal framing.

Measured drawings showing the form of any architectural decoration (the moulding profiles of door surrounds, beams, mullions and cornices, for example) or small-scale functional detail not more readily captured by photography. A measured detail drawing is particularly valuable when the feature in question is an aid to dating.

A plan(s) indicating the position and orientation of photographs/images included in the report.

4.11 **Project Archive**

4.12 A full and ordered archive that would include any written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating to this phase of investigation will be completed as defined in Brown (2008); Taylor & Brown (2009) and UKIC and ADS guidelines for the preparation of archaeological archives for long term storage, and "Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation" (AAF 2007).

4.13 The archive will be provisionally stored in Pre Construct Archaeology's Cambridge Office in Pampisford, Cambridgeshire, before its deposition with the relevant museum (North Hertfordshire Museum).

4.14 **Guidance**

All works were undertaken in accordance with standards set out in:

- Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers: Analysis and Recording for the Conservation and Control of Works to Historic Buildings (1997)
- British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group: *Code of Practice* (1986)
- British Standards Institution: *Guide to the Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings (BS 7913)* (1998)
- English Heritage: *Guidance Paper 98:* GLAAS: *Guidance Paper 3-Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London*
- English Heritage (Clark K): *Informed Conservation* (2001)
- English Heritage: *The Presentation of Historic Building Survey in CAD* (2000)
- CIFA: *Standards and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2014)

5 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

5.1 The Garden City was created as a solution to the squalor and poverty of urban and rural life in Britain prevalent during the 19th century.

5.2 Based on the ideals of Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928), published in his book of 1898 "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Reform", referring to the garden city as 'the peaceful path to real reform', and saw it as the physical setting for a radically different lifestyle involving a 'joyous union of town and country' from which will 'spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilisation'. The garden city was Howards 'big idea' gaining worldwide acclaim and supported by Howards close friend, George Bernard Shaw and later, by the Fabian Society.

5.3 In April 1903 the Letchworth Hall estate covering just 1014 acres was purchased along with land nearby amounting to an area covering 3818 acres. The First Garden City Ltd was registered in September 1903 and a limited competition for the layout plan brought entries from a number of renown architects, including Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, whose winning entry was endorsed by the company in 1904. The area was bisected by the Hitchen to Cambridge branch line of the GNR and crossed by Hitchin to Baldock Road to the south and the Norton to Wilbury Road to the north (see fig. 4 Estate Plan of 1904). The Masterplan (fig. 3) was laid out to a geometric plan with major and minor axes. The factory estate was ideally situated either side of the railway and the railway station close to the town centre, above the Pix valley along which Norton Way, the main north-south road, ran. The two centre was located to the west of Norton Way South and on a open plateau, from which a web of roads radiate outward. The housing areas were informally treated, with working class housing, closer to the factory area, to the east of Norton Way South and lower density zones of larger houses close to the Broadway (Miller, 2010).

5.4 Due to lack of investment early progress was slow with by 1905 approximately only a thousand people living on the estate and only 201 houses built or in the process of construction. Despite some initial reticence by industry to relocate to Letchworth, the industrial area began to develop with by 1906 companies including the Garden City Press, the Idris Mineral Water Works, Heatly Gresham Engineering Co. Ltd, and a book binding department for W.H Smith & Sons. With the arrival of industry came the increased requirement for worker houses.

5.5 Housing development and its character was greatly influenced by the Cheap Cottages Exhibition of 1905, organised by the County Gentleman and Spectator periodicals. The aim of the competition, apart from providing propaganda against rigid contemporary bye-laws which prohibited building in materials other than stone or brickwork, was to showcase different building materials and systems, and to find a cottage that could be built for £150 or less, and a sum at which it would be more attractive for landlords to erect labourers' dwellings. 124 dwellings were built with the emphasis on the detached cottage. A £100 prize was offered for the best £150 cottage, with living room, scullery and three bedrooms, with other prizes for the best 'wooden' and best 'concrete' cottages. The exhibition was mainly located on land between Ickneild Way and to the north of the railway (close to the station), along Exhibition Road (now Nevells), Cross Street, with some isolated plots along Wilbury Road and a small estate at Birds Hill. The prize winner (No. 217 Ickneild Way) was designed by Percy Bond Houfton, architect friend of Raymond Unwin, while the best wooden cottage (221) was won by Robert Bennett and Wilson Bidwell, former colleagues of Parker and Unwin, who also designed, for the exhibition, the 'Stone House' (212 Nevells Road) built using textured stone blocks. On Wilbury Road, which marked the northern extent of the infant development, two revolutionary concrete cottages were built, No. 140, the 'Round House' a concrete panel construction by Robert Lempriere Heskett & Walter Stokes for Cubitts (now demolished) and No. 158, another pioneering reinforced concrete panel construction by John Alexander Brodie (now Grade II*). Eastholm Green (1905) at the junction of Norton and Wilbury Roads was developed by the Garden City Tenants and mainly designed by Parker & Unwin, while No. 150-156, a group with a Mansard roof

was built by W. Clough and his nephew Clough Williams-Ellis. Further to the west No. 126 Wilbury Road, a simple cottage design by A Randall Wells, won prize in Class IV. The plan of the cheap cottages exhibition (fig. 5) shows the extent of the exhibition sites and the cottages along Wilbury Road (annotated as Norton Road). No.139, is not illustrated on this plan nor is it mentioned in the prospectus, giving support to a post 1905 date.

5.6 The novelty of the 1905 Cheap Cottages Exhibition was followed in 1907 by a second exhibition entitled the 'Urban Cottages Exhibition' and held under the auspices of the National Housing Reform Council. The urban cottage area, more focused upon town planning and grouped schemes, included parts of Lytton Avenue, Gernon Road and Pixmore Way. The exhibition failed to attract large numbers due primarily to competition from similar exhibitions across the country, and shortly afterwards the Daily Mail sponsored the first Ideal Home exhibition in 1910.

5.7 Housing societies such as Garden City Tenants Ltd played a key role in development at Letchworth, under the consultancy of Parker and Unwin. Westholm, begun in 1906 followed Unwins' idealised village green development taken from his *'Art of Building a Home' (1901)*. Westholm and its successor Birds Hill (1906) marked an important stage in the evolution of site planning, with a cul-de-sac to enable depth, in addition to a village green, playground and a tree planted buffer. By 1907 Letchworth had begun to develop a significant industrial base, which increased the need for housing. Letchworth Cottages and Buildings Ltd a subsidiary of First Garden City Ltd, built nearly 200 cottages, many for under £150 and to designs of Parker and Unwins principles on standardisation. Taking the provision of social housing further, The Howard Society was formed in 1911, Rushey mead their first scheme was landmark with a sensitive layout by Unwin and notable contributions from Bidwell & Bennett and Crickmer, both of whom were influential in the design of council housing after the war.

5.8 House plans were divide into parlour and non parlour types, an important distinction and status symbol which divided artisan from labourer. Rents varied accordingly and many of the labourers were priced out of the market, who rented more cheaply in Hitchin or Baldock. No. 139, completed in 1906, just after the Cheap Cottages Exhibition and at the same date as Westholm, to the designs of Bidwell & Bennett, an architectural practice who worked close with Parker and Unwin during the early development of Letchworth, and were much influenced by the Arts and Craft Movement and particularly the work of M.H. Baillie Scott. It is a larger cottage of the parlour type built using steeply sloping red tile roofs (non-traditional slates were not allowed), gables and while or cream coloured rough cast elevations, which had become the visual tradition of the Garden City and the Arts and Craft movements. Bidwells own house, No. 7 Willian Way (1909), is a homage to the Arts and Craft, built with large, low double gables and an open plan interior.

5.9 Apart from a reference by C. B. Purdom in The Garden City (1913), No.139 is seldom referenced in contemporary publications on early Letchworth or secondary publications on the Garden City movement. It does first appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1921, sheet VII.7 (fig. 6) as plot 132, forming part of a string of detached housing plots built along the south side of Wibury Road, not previously illustrated on the exhibition plan of 1905. Little alteration to the site or the adjacent buildings is shown on the later OS maps that immediately pre and post date the Second World War.

6 BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

6.1 Introduction

6.2 No. 139 is a detached brick-built cottage laid out to a rectangular plan over one and a half storeys, with a pitched roof and gable ends facing to the north, south and east and a deep catslide extending over an open veranda, to the west. The cottage is orientated east-west, presenting its principal long elevations to the north, facing toward Wilbury Road and to the south and toward the garden. It is set back from the road frontage, in harmony with the prevalent building line, and lies not central to the plot but biased toward the western site boundary. The roof is laid out to an L shaped plan incorporating a cross wing to the west and an in-line gable to the east.

6.3 A prominent external gable wall chimney stack lies central to the eastern end wall, while a through-pitch chimney stack is located just west of the junction of the two main roofs. The roofs are covered using a 'traditional' style red clay plain tile, laid in regular courses, with matching red clay ridge tiles and clay hips. For the most part the fenestration is regular and balanced, although the symmetry of the openings is less consistent across the northern elevation. The windows are typically softwood casements with small panes and glazing bars. They vary in size and form, from the largest, typically two mullioned three light casements, to the smallest, a simple four paned light. All are designed around multiples of a 6 pane or four pane light. The external walls, though brick built, are faced using a heavy rough-cast render. The combination of deep gables, small paned traditional windows and rough cast walls are typical of the Arts and Craft movement and of the so called 'Letchworth Look'.

6.4 South Elevation (Plates 1-5)

6.5 The southern garden elevation is the elevation which will impacted the most by the proposals. At present it comprises a one and half storey cross-wing with an asymmetrical gable facing south and an adjoining in-line one and half storey range to the east. The walls are rough-cast (over brick), the render either continuing to the ground level (rear of the dining room 2) or terminating short of the ground (probably to inhibit damp). The fenestration is as built, and symmetrical, with two mullion, three light casements to the ground and first floors of the cross-wing and an identical casement to the dining room (2). The openings to all three windows incorporate a clay tile drip mould (above) which has also been rendered. A deviation from this balance is afforded by the open veranda to the west side, over which the western roof pitch of the cross-wing continues as a catslide. The roof is pitched moderately steep at c. 45-48 degrees, suitable for its plain tile covering, but changes to a slightly shallower pitch over the veranda, similar to sprocketed eaves. The plain tiles project for half a tiles width beyond the eaves, which are left unadorned (by the use of a fascia or bargeboard) and the visible ends simply torched. The feet of the common rafters oversail the top of the wall and are visible, simply decorated with a chamfered end. The soffit to the projecting eaves is formed using 2-3 depth, softwood boards. The guttering is mainly modern plastic replacement, apart from a short section of cast-iron guttering toward the south-eastern angle. The veranda, supported on timber posts is clearly an original feature and is open-sided to the west and south sides. The two stacks are broadly identical in appearance built in red brick in English bond but using special narrow bricks or clay tiles used as over-sailing courses. The only difference in the appearance of the stacks relates to the number and design of the terracotta pots.

6.6 North Elevation (Plates 6-7)

6.7 The northern elevation, in the characteristics of material, treatments, scale and form, is broadly identical to the southern elevation. The principal difference is the pattern of the fenestration, which is much less balanced, incorporating combinations of four pane windows, as either single or double casements to the ground floor and a taller two light, mullion window to the first floor. A stair window, of two lights, is located between the ground and first floor, while another small casement, set low in the wall, lights a small under-stair cupboard. The main entrance is biased slightly west of the elevation centre

and to the western side of the stair. The main door is recessed back from the outer wall line and sits to the rear of porch built with a simple arched opening. The interior of the porch is likewise rendered and the threshold to the door paved using red terracotta floor tiles. A modern introduction, which despoils the appearance of the elevation, is the soil pipe emanating from the first floor bathroom.

6.8 **Western End Elevation (Plates 8-9)**

6.9 The western end elevation is dominated by the depth of the roofline and the open-sided veranda. The latter is laid out over two equal sized bays and supported to the centre and to the south side by a pair heavy scantling square section posts. The northern end is enclosed a formed from a continuation of the north wall. The posts support an arcade plate or lintel seen as a down-stand and are set onto clay tile pads. The southern post shows evidence of an historic repair to the base, a new section scarfed in and re-mounted onto a tile pad. The roof structure above the veranda was enclosed by a ceiling and the floor covered by 9 inch red terracotta floor tiles. A single doorway flanked by frieze lights was present within the southern half of the elevation. The upper half of the door was glazed and the side lights, of six panes, coincided with the level of the door glazing.

6.10 **Eastern End Elevation (Plate 10)**

6.11 The eastern gable end is one of the more visible elevations, particularly when entering the site from the easternmost entrance off Wilbury Road and viewed from the thoroughfare through a break in the hedge-line. The elevation is perhaps dominated by the central brick gable wall stack which rises the full height of the building to project above the ridgeline. The stack is considerably wider at the base, buttressed out on the southern side to incorporate the fireplace within former dining room (2) and the corner fireplace in bedroom (9). The stack is also shouldered above the level of the first floor windows, the shoulders protected by tile copings. A door opening, to the present kitchen (former utility) is located toward the northern angle. It contains a part glazed softwood door with a single fixed light and internal security screen. The two first floor windows are identical casements immediately either side of the central stack.

6.12 **Internal Descriptions**

6.13 **Plan Form**

6.14 An internal inspection of the cottage has confirmed that the present spatial layout, apart from slight alterations on first floor and in the area of the kitchen, still remains much as it was when first built. The layout adopts a simple and compact plan of two rooms depth and a central winder staircase. The larger principal rooms at ground floor (including a parlour) are positioned along the sunnier southern side to the garden, the veranda enjoying the benefits of afternoon/early evening sunlight, with the lesser utility spaces relegated to the shadier northern side. The two principal ground floor rooms (1) and (2) were both heated and ventilated by open fires, which was not the case with utilty (3) and bathroom (4). The three main bedrooms at first floor (rooms 7-9) were also provided with open fireplaces, although room (10), the present bathroom, was unheated and was most likely a former box room. In plan form the layout shows similarities to a traditional lobby entry plan, with a central compact winder stair positioned close to the entrance and flanked by rooms to either side, but while it may be loosely based on this plan, it is clearly a modern re-interpretation of it.

6.15 **Common Features**

6.16 One of the more notable features of the house is the level to which the original softwood plank internal doors and their ironmongery survive. This also applies to the softwood cupboard doors and their latches and to the style of the window fenestration and their ironmongery. However many of the windows appear to be modern versions of the originals and much of the glass panes to the windows have been replaced. Internally the floors to the ground floor have been modernised using ‘laminate type’ flooring. This simply overlies quarry tiles within the passage (5) and the bathroom (4)

and a replacement suspended timber floor (added 2008) in the lounge (1) (pers comm..Mr Spaul).

6.17 **Lounge (1) (Fig. 7a; Plates 11-14)**

6.18 The lounge (1) or parlour is the largest of the two principal ground floor rooms and the room, at this level, to be most impacted by the proposals. These alterations entail the removal of the present window to the south wall, the creation of an opening, in place of the window, into the extension and the re-use of the present window within the extension. The window is a replacement casement of three lights and two mullions. The central light is fixed while the two flanking lights open and area side hung. Each light is arranged as six panes of 3 high by 2 wide. The glazing bars are plain and unmoulded but with a simple bevel detail to the interior face. It retains its original ironmongery with cockspur-type catches and window stays. The window joinery is sharp and fresh and does not have the appearance of age. The window is set flush to the outer wall line (not recessed back) and incorporated within an opening with plain inner reveal. The removed internal sill revealed frogged nine-inch brickwork.

6.19 A door onto the veranda lies central to the west wall. It comprises a part glazed softwood door of 3 x 3 panes flanked either side by narrower frieze lights, which coincide with the level of the door glazing. The side lights have plain over-sailing sills with a rounded off edge. The internal door is a typical stripped softwood plank and batten door of eight vertical planks and three battens, the latter facing into the passage (5), to present its 'best or fair face' to the lounge. The door retained its wrought iron Norfolk latches, secured by modern round headed slotted screws, and a pair of strap hinges. The door architraves were also simple and unmoulded. A fireplace with its original timber surround was positioned just to the west of the internal door. Whilst the fireplace is incomplete, missing its basket, a glazed brown tile surround with matching tile hearth and fender remains intact. The oak surround is plain in detailing, befitting the 'cottage style' with decoration limited to the shaping of brackets to the mantle shelf. The skirtings are recent additions more akin to the original skirtings, replacing inappropriate Torus moulded skirtings added when the floor was replaced in 2008 (pers comm..) and the picture rails are also later replacements.

6.20 **Dining Room (2) (Fig. 7a; Plates 15-20)**

6.21 The dining room (2) is located within the south-eastern quadrant of the house and outside of the scope of the works. It shares the same style of window as described for room (1) and an identical internal door opening into the passage (5). The room is lit by a window opening in the south wall and was heated by a small fireplace, central to the east wall. The former is a replacement three light casement (see 1 for description) while the latter no longer retains its original cast-iron fireplace, but now incorporates a small modern wood burner. The hearth to the front of the wood burner is original and comprised of nine inch terracotta tiles. The north wall to room (2) incorporates an inserted stained glass panel of two lights, each with a central sun motif. The wall to the west of the inserted light appears to have been rebuilt, suggesting an earlier more symmetrical layout, with a possible smaller kitchen (3) and a walk in larder/coals adjacent to the stair.

6.22 Two sets of 'fitted' cupboards are built into small niches along the south and east walls. The southern occupies the space created by the wider cross-wing returning north to the narrower east bays, while the eastern, occupies a similar sized niche to the north side of the chimney breast. Both use a pair of softwood plank doors, closely matching the internal doors, which are each hung off typical strap hinges and secured by simple catches with pendant drop handles.

6.23 **Kitchen (3) (Fig. 7a; Plates 21-22)**

6.24 The kitchen is located to the east of the staircase. It presently is a long narrow 'galley type' kitchen with fitted units built along the northern wall and eastern wall. The floor is a continuation of the modern flooring laid in the passage (5) and overlies a modern tile floor of red and black chequerwork. It is illuminated by two pairs of window openings along the north wall, a wider double, two light casement to the east and a smaller

single light casement of 2 x 2 panes to the west. The glazing bars to both use a bevel detail and retain their original ironmongery. A part glazed softwood external door lies within an original door opening in the east wall. The door includes a plain glazed light which appears to have been inserted into the upper half of the door as it is out character with the style of the original fenestration. A decorative wrought iron security screen is attached to the inner side of the glass panel.

6.25 **Bathroom (4) (Fig. 7a; Plate 23)**

6.26 The bath room (4) lies to the west of the main entrance and stairwell and is accessed directly from the hall. Typically it retains a softwood plank and batten door, which opens into a much re-decorated modern bathroom with a ceramic tile floor, a timber dado rising to window sill level and tiling across the upper wall. The ceilings also appear to be modern. A free standing roll top bath sits alongside the west wall and a toilet and hand basin to the north wall (all modern). The bathroom is lit by a single casement window of two lights (2 x 2 panes) central to its northern wall. The casements were side hung and each divided into four panes with plain glazing bars showing no internal chamfer (as seen elsewhere). This window appears to be a later replacement.

6.27 The main entrance to the east of the bathroom still retained its softwood plank and batten front door with an original wrought iron latch and heart shaped motif to the latch pivot (Plate 24).

6.28 **Stairwell (6) (Fig. 7a; Plates 25-26)**

6.29 The winder stair lay between the main entrance and the kitchen, extending around the back (north) of a cupboard opening into the hall (5), as it progressed up to first floor . The stair was a softwood construction with softwood treads and risers, the former with prominent nosings. A matching softwood skirting with a chamfered detail, attached to the wall either side of the treads, while a short length of balustrade, with plain stick balusters, a moulded handrail and newel post with finial, enclosed the lower treads (to the east). This use of a short balustrade was repeated on the first floor landing.

6.30 **First Floor (Fig. 7b)**

6.31 The layout of the first floor was similar in plan to the ground floor comprising four main rooms, three bedrooms and a bathroom, one located within each quadrant of the building. The main bedroom (7) was of the same size and location as the lounge (1) at ground floor, although the second bedroom (9) was slightly narrower than the dining room (2) below and the third bedroom (8), longer than bathroom (4) as it also occupied the space above the main entrance hall. The bathroom (10) was a recent creation integrating a former WC and a small box room.

6.32 **Main Bedroom (7) (Fig. 7b; Plates 27-29)**

6.33 The main bedroom (7) formed the western of the two principal bedrooms along the south side. This bedroom will be the most impacted by the proposed extension, as it entails the removal of the window in the southern wall and subsequent blocking up of the window opening (which will then become part of an internal party wall) and the shortening and sub-division of the room along its east side to accommodate a narrow passage (7A) to access the new fourth bedroom within the extension. It is the intention that the removed window will be re-used to light the new bedroom, thus maintaining the character and appearance of south elevations.

6.34 The bedroom (7) had at the time of the survey been sub-divided, with the insertion of a lightweight stud wall to create the passage from the first floor landing which will eventually connect with the new extension. This new passage resulted in a change of entry into bedroom (7), with the door now re-hung off the stud wall close to the landing. The stud wall aligned with the eastern end wall to bedroom (8) and partly over-built the southern window. The latter conformed to the standard pattern of fenestration built as below with three casement lights each comprised of six (3 x 2) panes and two mullions. The outer casements opened and were side hung and the central light was fixed. The window retained its ironmongery. This was also the case with the latches to the re-hung plank bedroom door.

The room was partly in-eaves along its western side, the walls and ceilings re-plastered and the floor comprised of 5½-5¾ inch softwood boards. A chimney breast and fireplace lay off-centre to the north wall, the 'niche' between the breast and the east wall enclosed to form two narrow built-in cupboards, each with matching plank doors. The taller cupboard had been designed for use as a cloak cupboard/wardrobe. The picture rail appears to be a later replacement having the profile more typical of a modern door architrave. A hearth comprising two courses of black tiles lay to the front of the small bedroom fireplace. The was simple in its design built with a plain wrought iron fire basket and an simple timber surround with mantle shelf supported off solid half-elliptical brackets with a single rebated decoration.

6.35 **Bedroom (9) (Fig. 7b; Plates 32-33)**

6.36 Second bedroom (9) is located within the south-east quadrant and remains unaffected by the proposals. Many of the standard fixtures, the softwood plank doors and the fenestration were features of this room. A built-in under-hip cupboard with a plank cupboard door was located in the south-western corner of the room and diagonally opposite to a small corner fire-place built into the north-eastern angle of the room. It closely matched the fireplace described in bedroom (7). Otherwise the fittings and decor in this room were modern.

6.37 **Bedroom (8) (Fig. 7b; Plates 34-35)**

6.38 The smallest of the three bedrooms, shared many of the features present in the main bedroom (7), using the exact same style of fireplace and surround, the opposing fireplaces sitting side-by-side and each opening into one of the two flues in the chimney stack. The room is partly in eaves and lit by a standard two light, 6 (3 x 2) pane casement window and entered using a plank and batten door. Otherwise the decor is all modern.

6.39 **Bathroom (10) (Fig. 7b; Plates 37)**

6.40 The present bathroom is a modern adaptation created by converting a former WC and box into a single large bathroom comprising a walk-in shower (in the former WC), a free standing bath, hand wash basin and WC. Apart from plank and batten door and the casement windows, all other fixtures and decoration are modern. The walls and floors have been covered with matching tiles, and a glass screen separates the shower from the bath/WC. A small in-pitch velux type roof light has been inserted into the in-eaves ceiling above the shower.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 No. 139 Wilbury Road was built in 1906 as an early example of a compact, detached parlour-type cottage designed by architects Wilson Bidwell & Robert Bennett. It forms part of a small group of architect designed cottages that were built along Wilbury Road, the more notable examples including No. 140, the Round House by Robert Lempriere Heskett & Walter Stokes, No.158 Wilbury Road by John Alexander Brodie, both pioneering examples of concrete panel construction, and No. 126 Wilbury Road, a simple prize winning cottage by A. Randall Wells, were built as part of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition of 1905. The aim of the competition, apart from highlighting the draconian bye-laws which prohibited construction in materials other than stone or brickwork, was to showcase different building systems and to find a cottage that could be built for £150 or less, a sum that would more likely attract landlords to invest in new labourers' dwellings. A £100 prize was offered for the best £150 cottage to be built with a living room, scullery and three bedrooms, with other prizes for the best 'wooden' and best 'concrete' cottages. The prize winner (No. 217 Ickneild Way) was designed by Percy Bond Houfton, architect friend of Raymond Unwin, while the best wooden cottage (No. 221) was won by Robert Bennett and Wilson Bidwell, former colleagues of Masterplanners Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin.

7.2 The Exhibition plan of 1905 illustrates that No.139 did not form part of this exhibition, not completed until the following year (1906) and at the same time as Parker and Unwins 'village green' development at Westholm. The cottage was built as a detached artisans cottage of the higher status parlour-type, lauded by C. B. Purdom, a notable in the Garden City and Town Planning Association, for its compact design. The architects Bidwell and Bennett were heavily influenced by the design and ideologies of the Arts and Crafts movement and particularly by the works of M. H. Baillie Scott. Bidwells own house, No. 7 Willian Way (1909), a homage to the Arts and Craft movement, built with large, low double gables and a rendered exterior, shows the influence of the movement on his work. Its Old English revival or country Queen Anne style became the visual tradition of the Garden City movement and No.139 clearly adopts its neo-vernacular styling built with steeply sloping red tile roofs (non-vernacular slates were not allowed), deep gables and white or cream coloured rough cast elevations.

7.3 Unlike the some of the more experimental cottages built as part of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition, the elevations of No. 139 were constructed in 9 inch brickwork, though hidden by an external render. The plan form comprising a parlour, kitchen and three bedrooms, the standard of many small early cottages (illustrated in comparable building plans, see appendix 3) is still recognisable within the present building, despite some internal re-arrangement. The principal room (1) equates with a parlour and the dining room (2) was formerly in use as the kitchen. The present kitchen appears to be a modern adaptation formed by integrating two smaller spaces, such as coals and/or WC and the bathroom (4), a scullery cum bathroom. The small lobby and the winder stair are also common features of these compact designs. Alterations to the plan form at first floor, apart from the recent addition of an internal wall forming a corridor to the new extension, are mainly directed toward modernisation, with the creation of a new bathroom/WC, replacing a former unheated box room. Otherwise the cottage remains relatively unaltered, apart from the like for like replacement of much of the fenestration, areas of re-plastering and loss of some skirtings and rails, all of the original plank doors and their ironmongery and the fireplaces and surrounds survive mainly intact.

Though the proposals will alter the original plan form of the cottage, the impact upon its historic fabric is light, limited to the removal of small areas of external wall to enable access into the extension. This low impact is further mitigated by the re-use of the removed fenestration to light the new rooms at first and ground floor levels. Overall the proposals will not affect the buildings significance or its listed status and will barely visible from the roadside.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank D Spaul for commissioning the project and the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record for their input. The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited by Christiana Meckseper. The historic building survey and the report was completed by Adam Garwood, while the Illustrations were prepared by Hayley Baxter.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-311121

Project details

Project name	Historic Building Recording at No. 139 Wilbury Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4JG
Short description of the project	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd was commissioned to carry out historic building recording focused upon the proposed alterations to No. 139 Wilbury Road, a Grade II listed cottage in Letchworth Garden City. No. 139 Wilbury Road was built in 1906 as an early example of a compact, detached artisans cottage designed by architects Wilson Bidwell and Robert Bennett. Today it forms part of a small group of architect designed cottages which were built along Wilbury Road, many as part of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition of 1905, although No.139 was never part of this exhibition as its was not completed until 1906. The cottage was built, in the prevalent arts and crafts style, as a higher status parlour-type cottage and was lauded by C. B. Purdom, a notable in the Garden City and Town Planning Association, for its compact design
Project dates	Start: 19-01-2018 End: 23-03-2018
Any associated project reference codes	7/01660/1HH - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	COTTAGE Modern
Methods & techniques	"Photographic Survey","Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY No. 139 Wilbury Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire
Postcode	SG6 4JG
Site coordinates	TL 21715 33628 51.987314877373 -0.227296826736 51 59 14 N 000 13 38 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	No Brief
Project design originator	Adam Garwood
Project director/manager	Christiane Meckseper
Project supervisor	Adam Garwood
Type of sponsor/funding body	Private owner

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	north herts museums
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive Exists?	No

Project bibliography 1

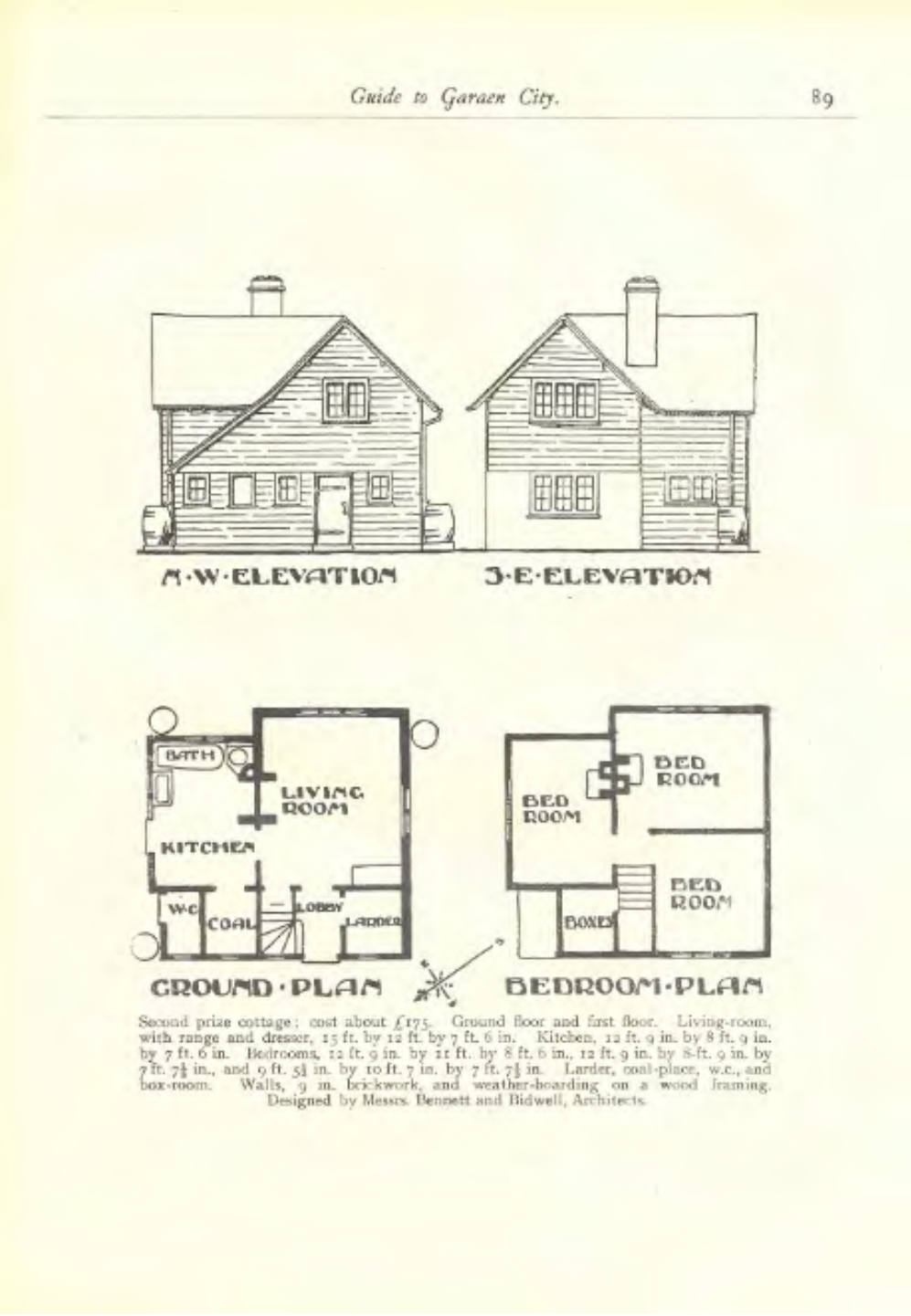
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Historic Building Recording at No. 139 Wilbury Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4JG
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Garwood, A
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	p
Place of issue or publication	Cambridge Office
Description	A4 PDF

Entered by	adam garwood (agarwood@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	7 March 2018

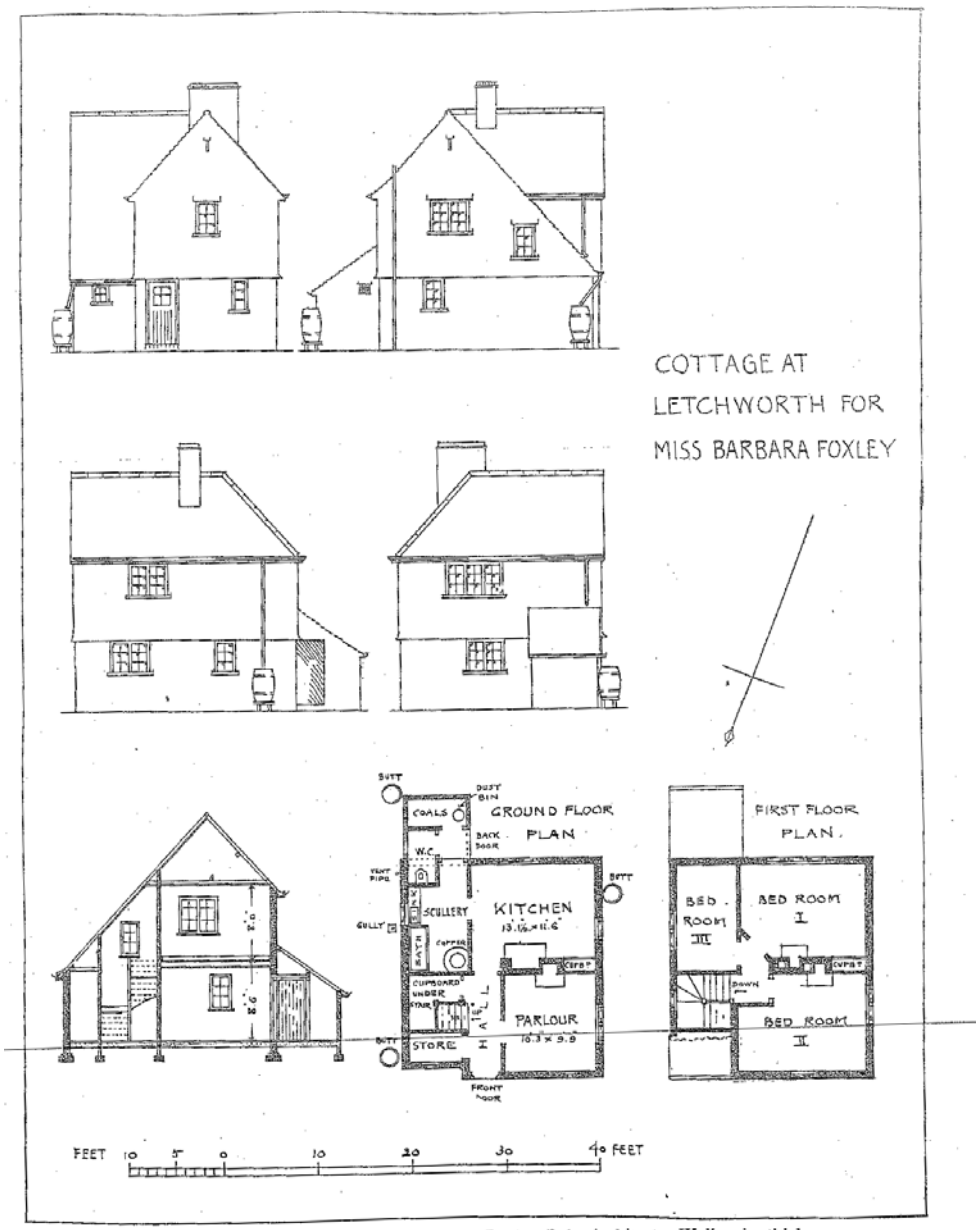
APPENDIX 2 HHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: No. 139 Wilbury Road, Letchworth		
County: Hertfordshire	District: North Hertfordshire	
Village/Town: Letchworth	Parish: Letchworth	
Planning application reference: 7/01660/1HH		
HER Enquiry reference:		
Funding source: Danny Spaul		
Nature of application: Residential extension		
Present land use: Dwelling		
Size of application area:	Size of area investigated:	
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 21715 33628		
Site code (if applicable): LGCWR18		
Site director/Organization: Adam Garwood- Pre-construct Archaeology Ltd		
Type of work; Historic Building Recording		
Date of work:	Start:19/01/18	Finish: 23/02/2018
Location of site archive: North Herts Museum		
Related HER Nos:	Periods represented: modern	
Relevant previous summaries/reports NA		
No. 139 Wilbury Road was built in 1906 as an early example of a compact, detached artisans cottage designed by architects Wilson Bidwell & Robert Bennett. Today it forms part of a small group of architect designed cottages which were built along Wilbury Road, many as part of the Cheap Cottages Exhibition of 1905, although No.139 was never part of this exhibition as it was not completed until 1906. The cottage was built, in the prevalent arts and crafts style, as a higher status parlour-type cottage and was lauded by C. B. Purdom, a notable in the Garden City and Town Planning Association, for its compact design.		
Author: A Garwood Date: 6-3-18		

APPENDIX 3 BUILDING PLANS

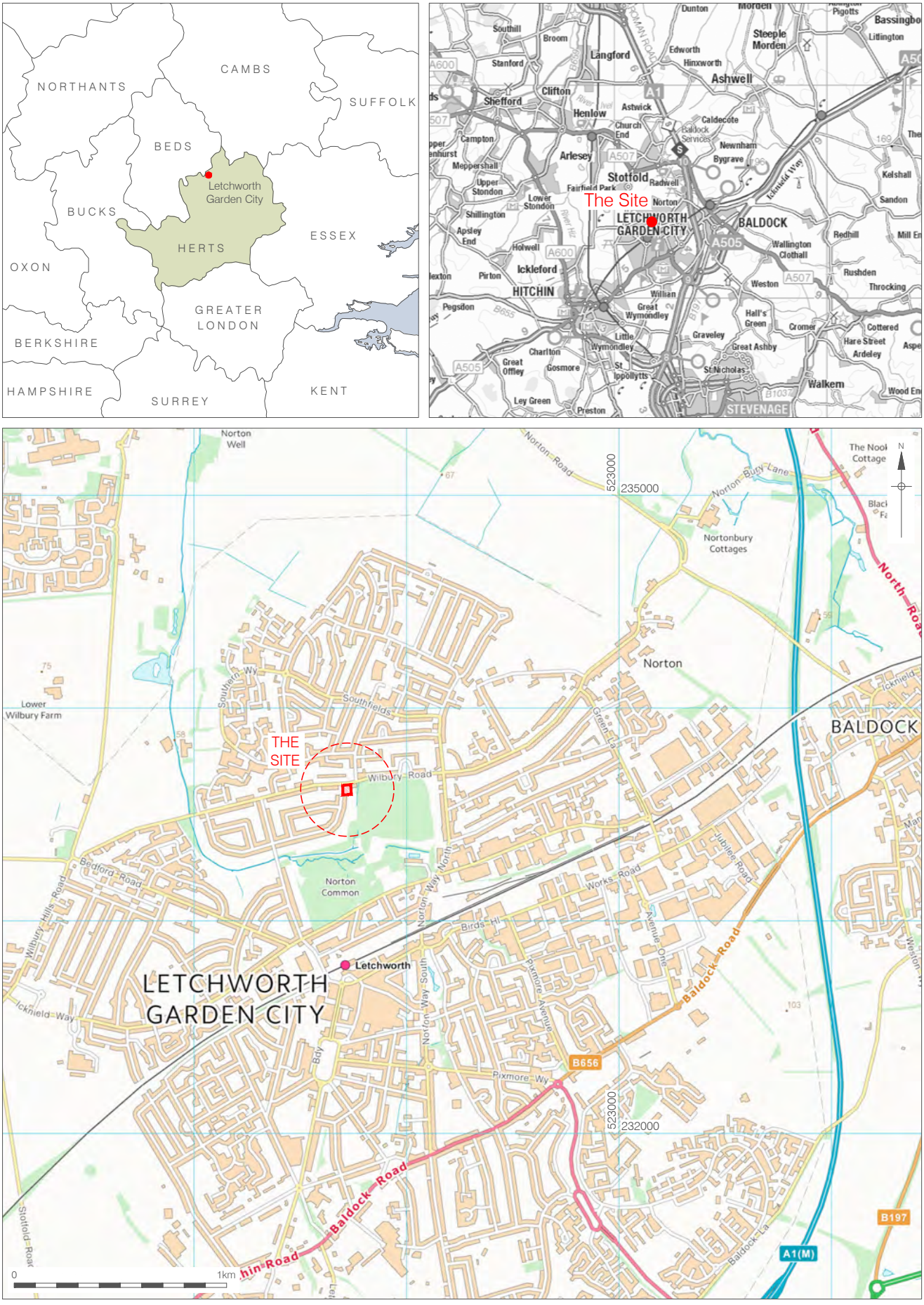


Contemporary cottage design by Bidwell & Bennett



Artizan's cottage. Cost about £250. Allen Foxley, B.A., Architect. Walls 9 in. thick.

Artisans Cottage by Allen Foxley (architect)



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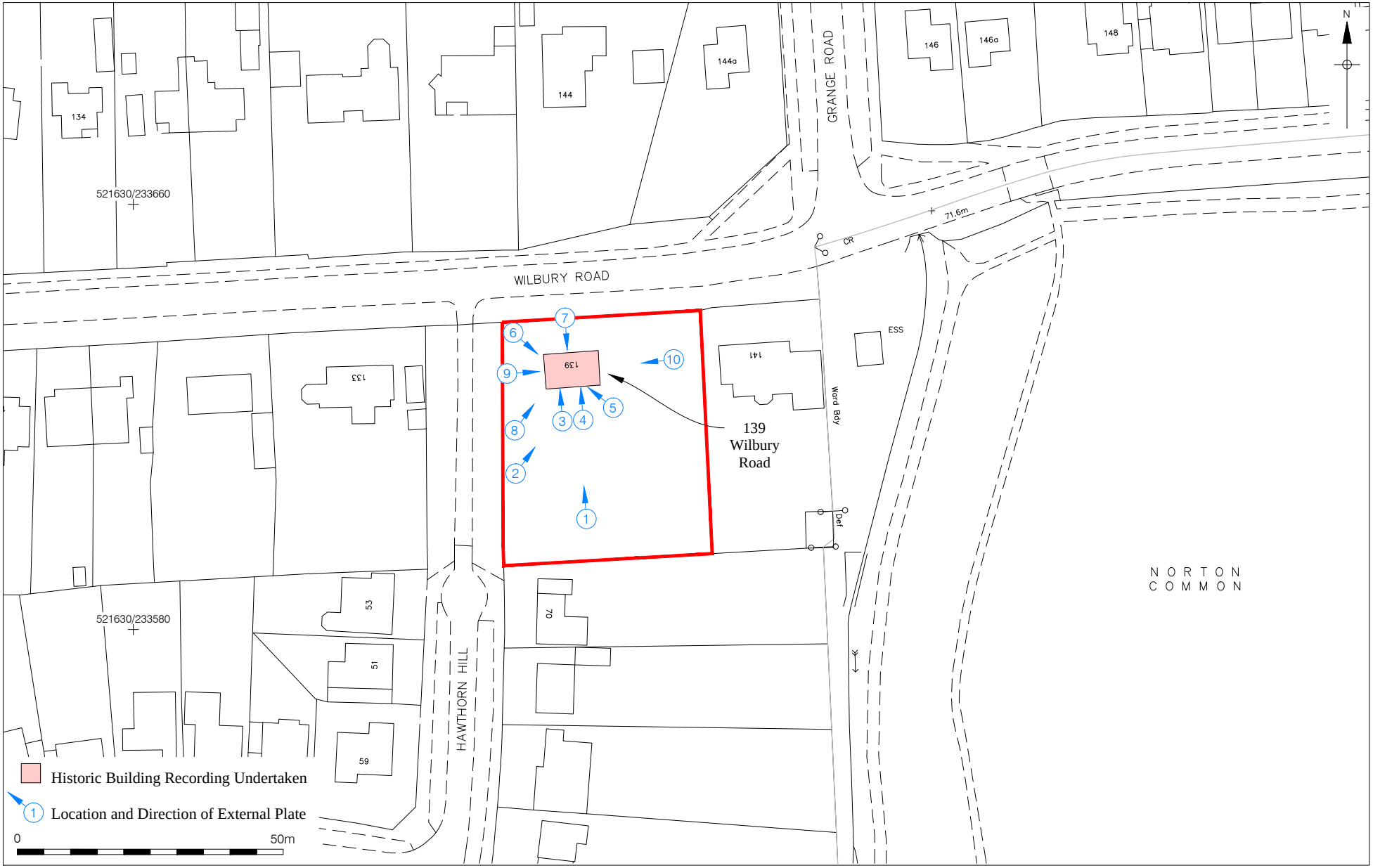
14/03/18 HB

Figure 1
Site Location
1:2,000,000; 250,000 & 25,000 at A4



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14/03/18 HB

Figure 2
Detailed Site Location
1:1,000 at A4

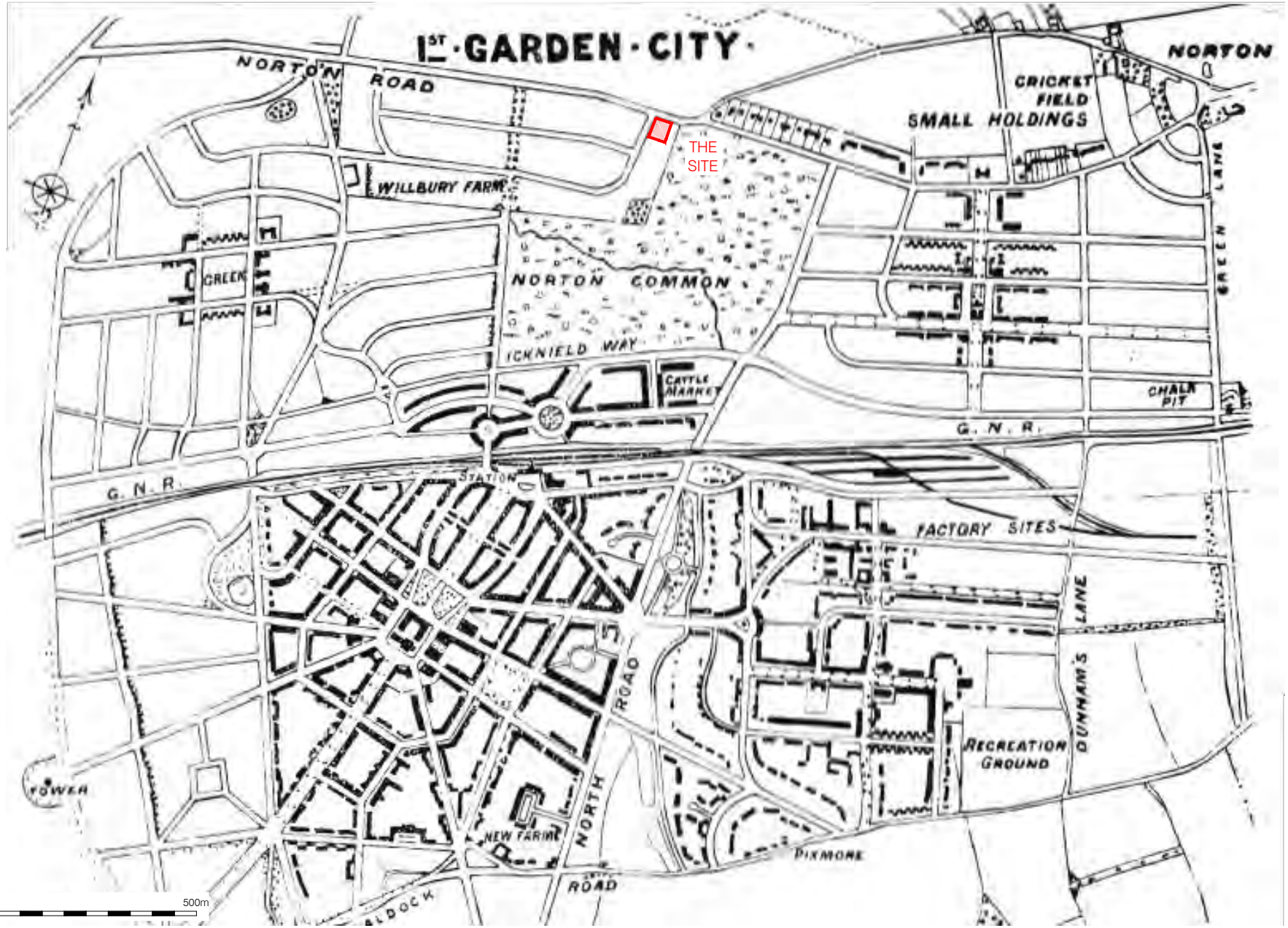

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Figure 3
Letchworth Garden City Masterplan 1904
(Parker and Unwin)
1:12,500 at A4



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Figure 4
Estate Plan of 1904
1:12,500 at A4



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Figure 5
Cheap Cottages Plan of 1905
1:6,250 at A4

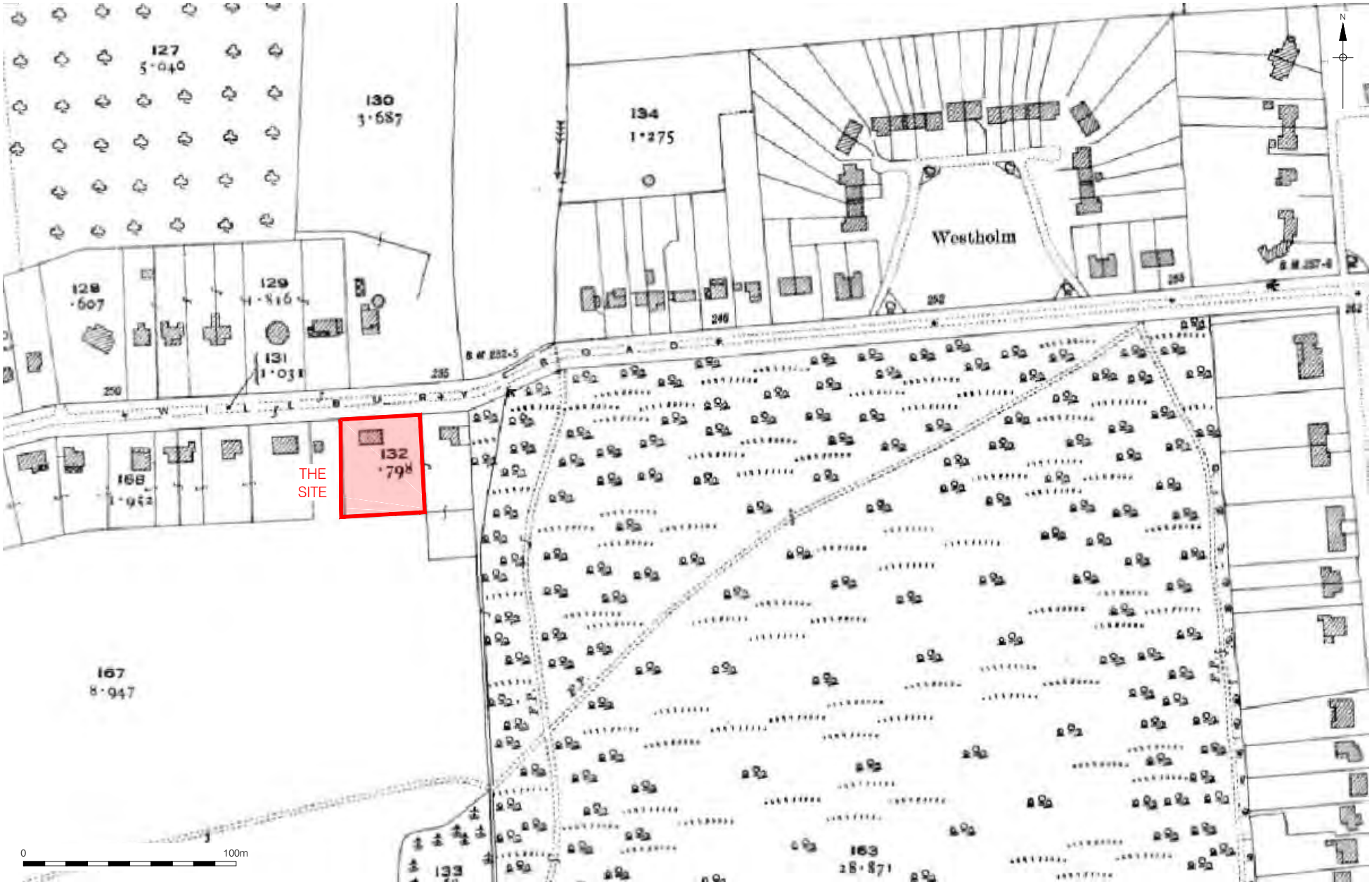

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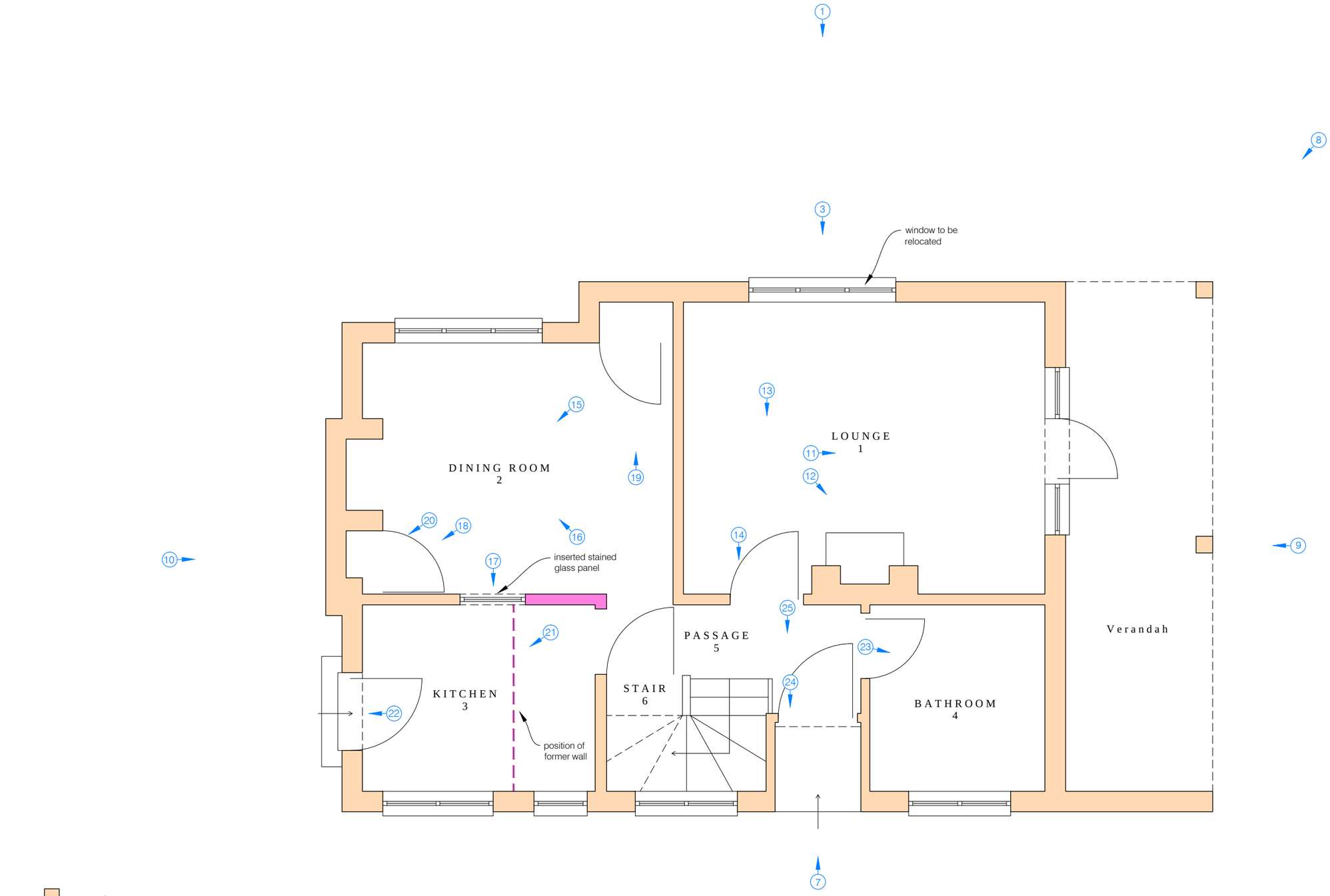
Figure 6
Ordnance Survey, 1921
1:2,500 at A4



Original

Added/Removed Walls

1 Location and Direction of Plate

0 2 6 Feet

0 1 2 Metres

Existing Ground Floor Plan based on drawing no: 6717/01 supplied by Improvement Design Ltd

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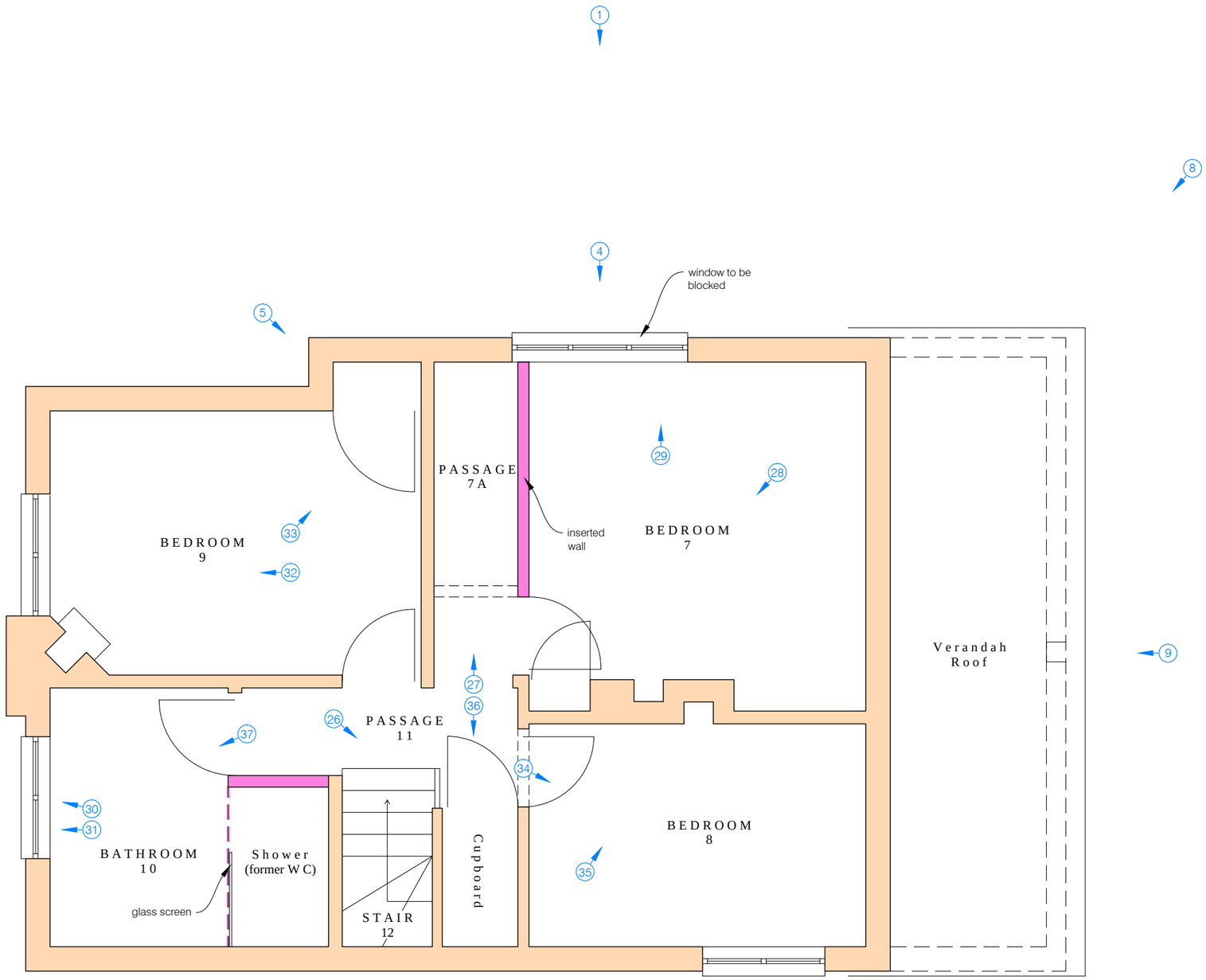
Figure 7a
Existing Ground Floor Plan
1:50 at A3



Original

Added/Removed Walls

1 Location and Direction of Plate

0 2 6 Feet

0 1 2 Metres

Existing First Floor Plan based on drawing no: 6717/01 supplied by Improvement Design Ltd

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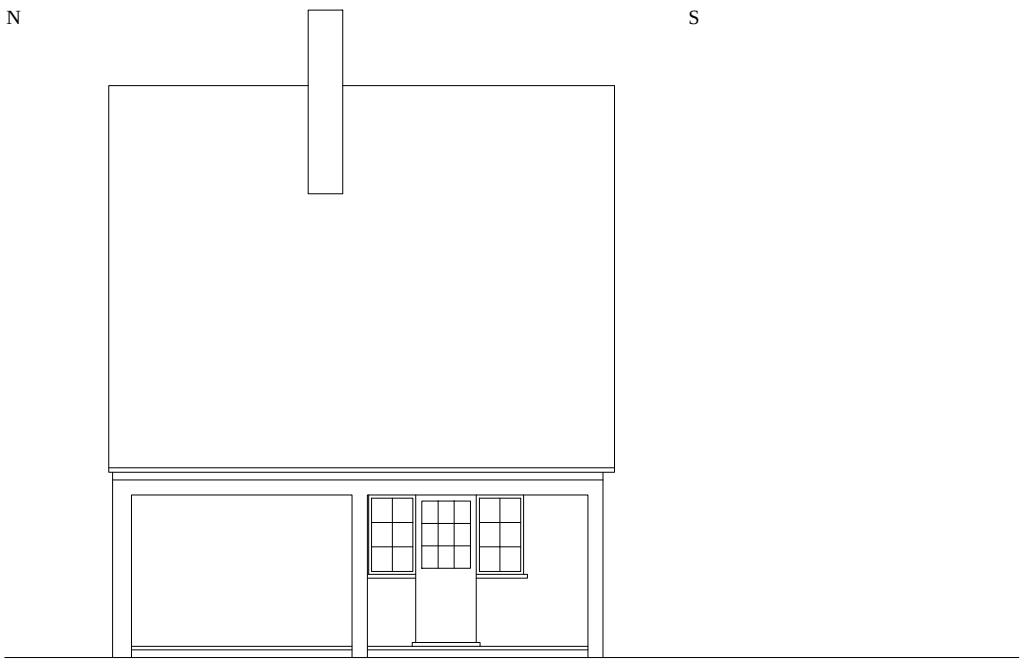
Figure 7b
Existing First Floor Plan
1:50 at A3

W E



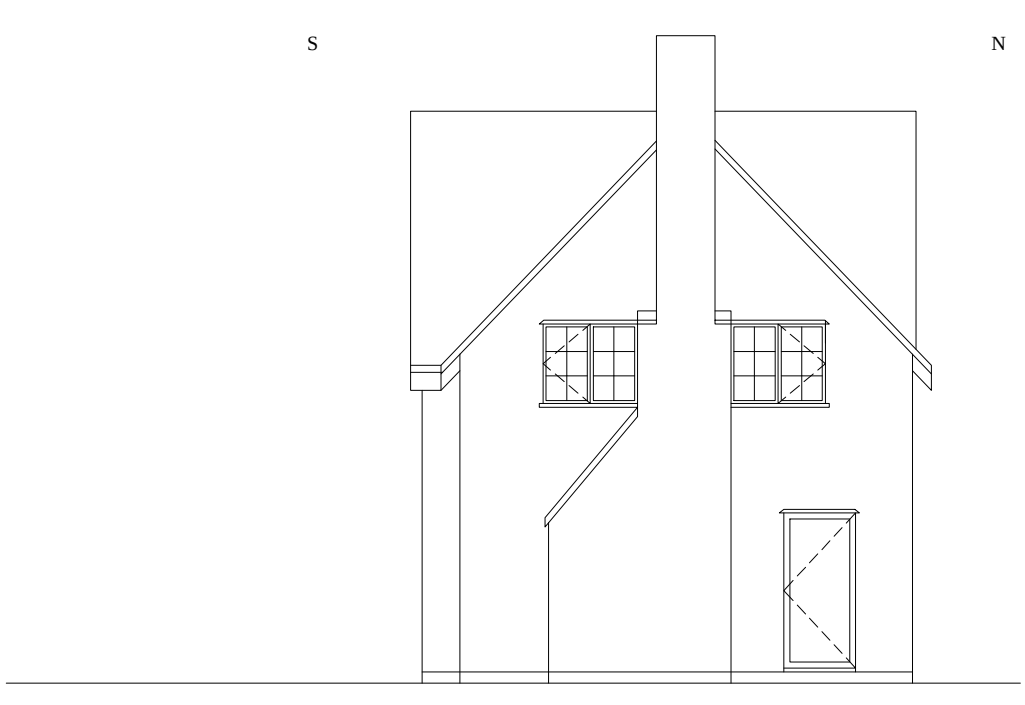
Southern Elevation

N S



Western Elevation

S N



Eastern Elevation

0 4 12 Feet
0 2 4 Metres

Existing Elevations based on drawing no: 6717/02 supplied by Improvement Design Ltd

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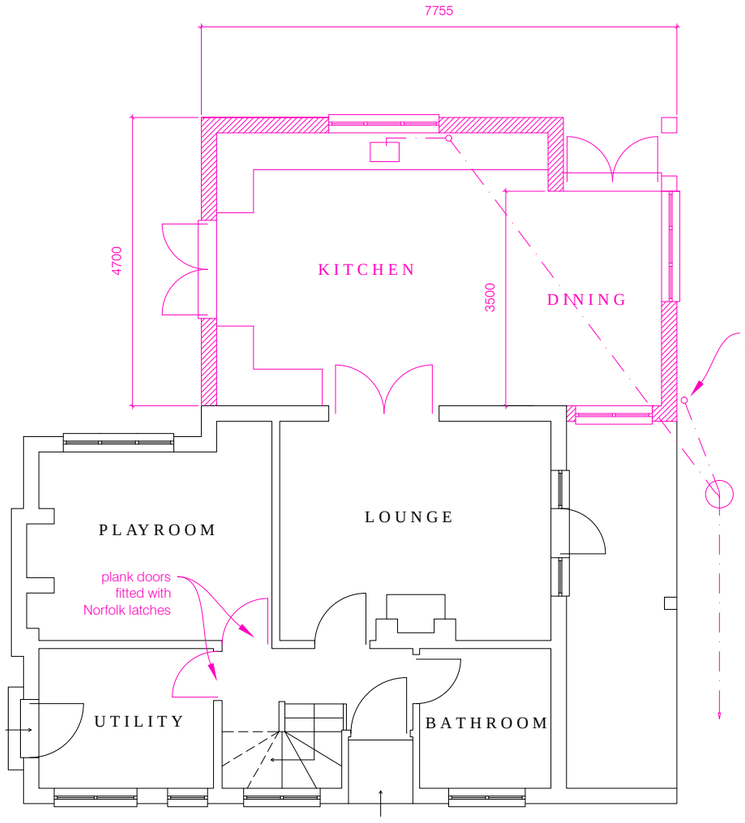
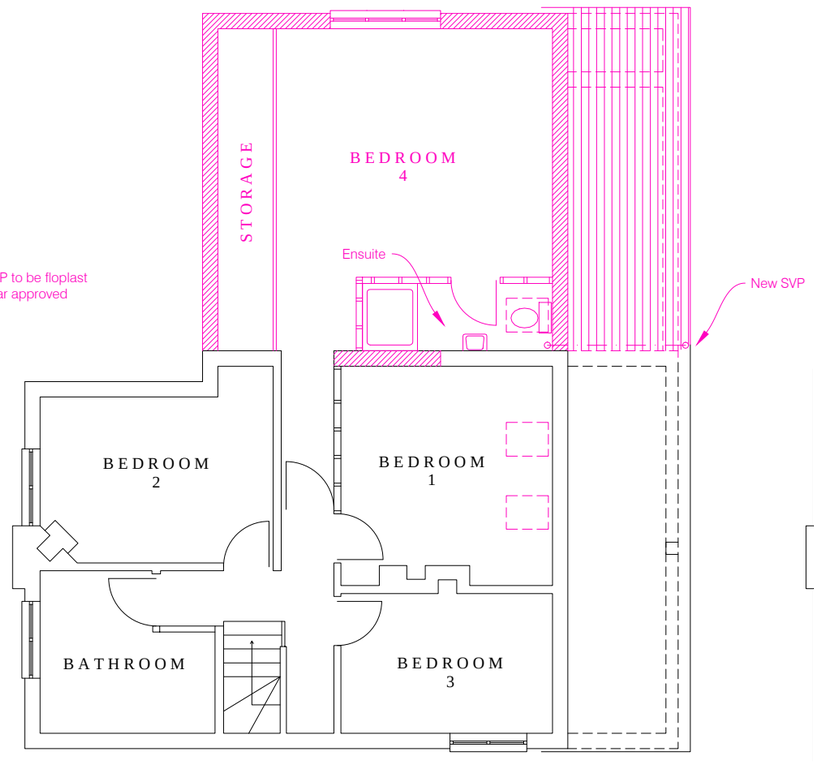
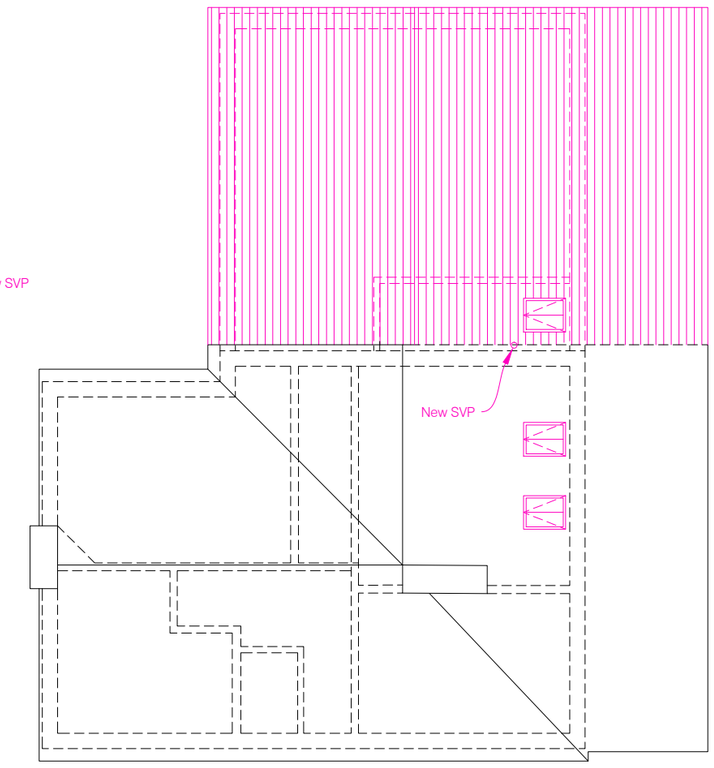
Figure 8
Existing Elevations
1:100 at A3



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



ROOF PLAN

Proposed

0 4 12 Feet
0 2 4 Metres

Proposed Ground Floor Plan based on drawing no: 6717/03 D supplied by Improvement Design Ltd

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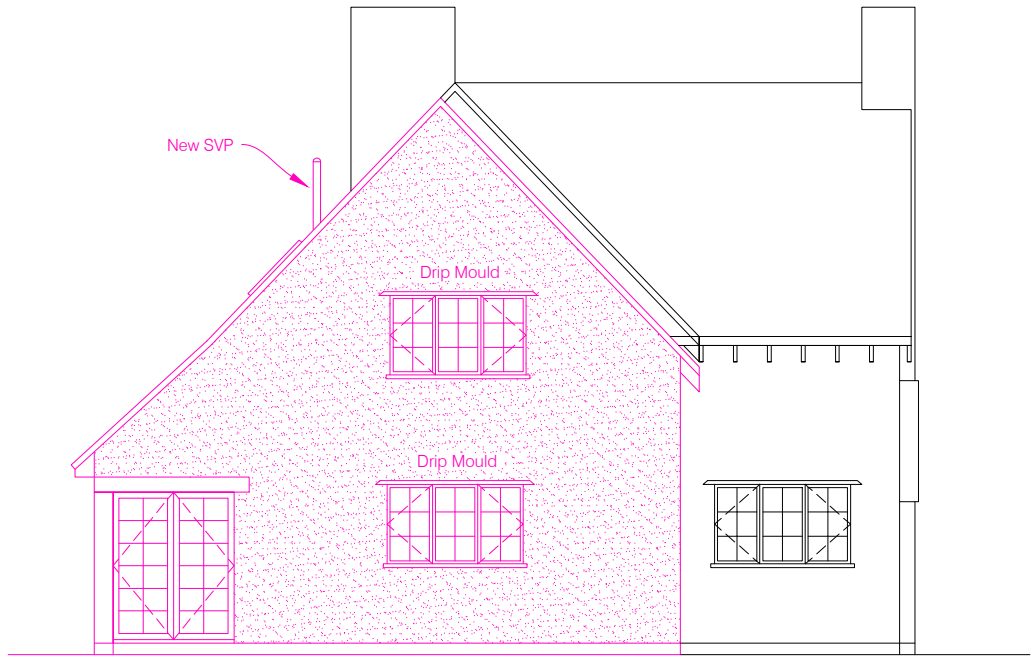
13/03/18 HB

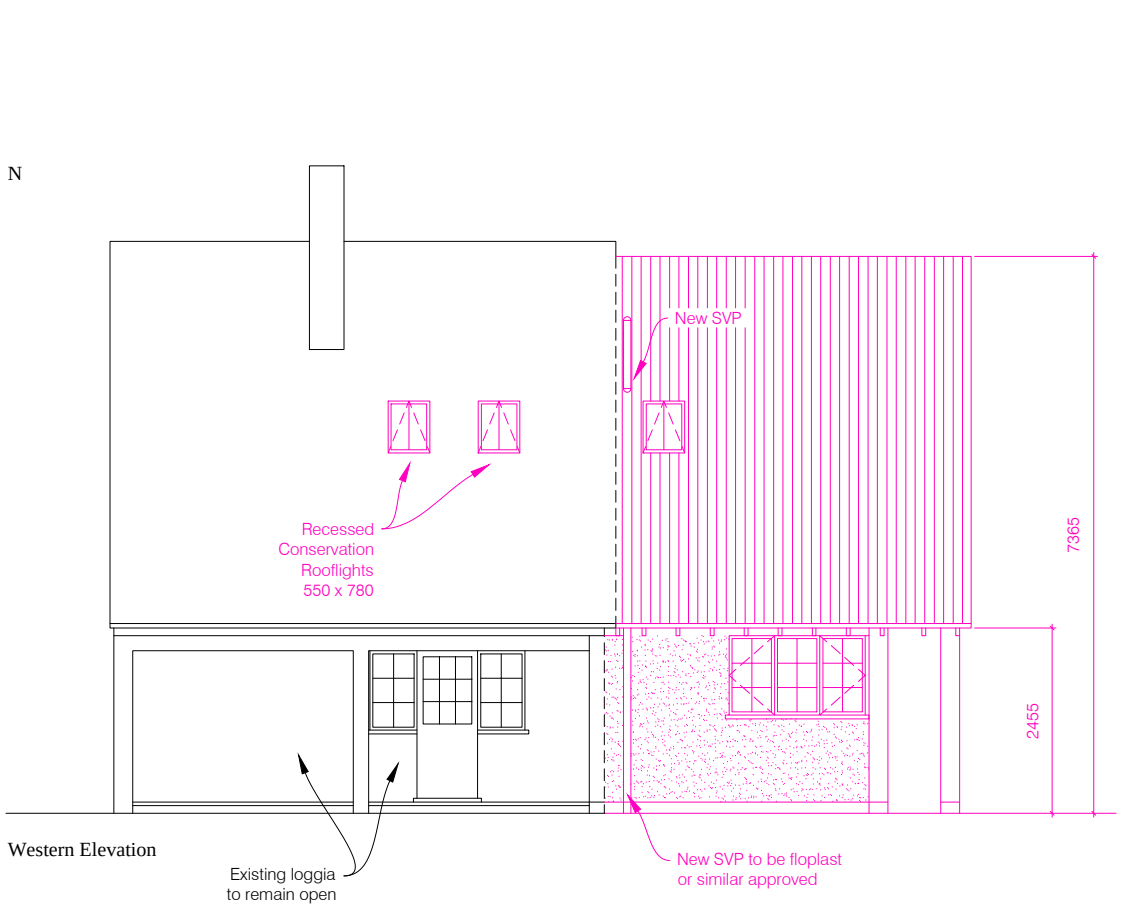
Figure 9
Proposed Plans
1:100 at A3

W E



Southern Elevation

N S



Western Elevation

S N

Eastern Elevation

Proposed

0 4 12
0 2 4
Feet
Metres

Proposed Elevations based on drawing no: 6717/04 C supplied by Improvement Design Ltd

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Figure 10
Proposed Elevations
1:100 at A3



Plate 1 Southern elevation to garden, looking north



Plate 2 Southern elevation, looking north-east



Plate 3 Detail of ground floor casement window (to be re-located)



Plate 4 Detail of first floor casement window (to be re-located)



Plate 5 Rafter and soffit board detail to eaves



Plate 6 Northern elevation, looking south-east



Plate 7 Recessed porch and front door (north elevation)



Plate 8 Open-sided verandah viewed from the south-western angle



Plate 9 Western elevation, deep catslide roof over verandah, looking east



Plate 10 Eastern elevation, looking west



Plate 11 Lounge (1) looking west



Plate 12 Lounge (1), fireplace



Plate 13 Typical plank door (to lounge 1)



Plate 14 Norfolk latch



Plate 15 Dining room (2) looking north-east



Plate 16 Dining room (2) looking south-east



Plate 17 Inserted stained glass panel (dining room 2)



Plate 18 Built-in cupboards (2) east wall



Plate 19 Built-in cupboards (2) south wall



Plate 20 Detail of cupboard door catch (2)



Plate 21 Kitchen (3) looking east



Plate 22 Detail of wrought-iron work



Plate 23 Bathroom (4)

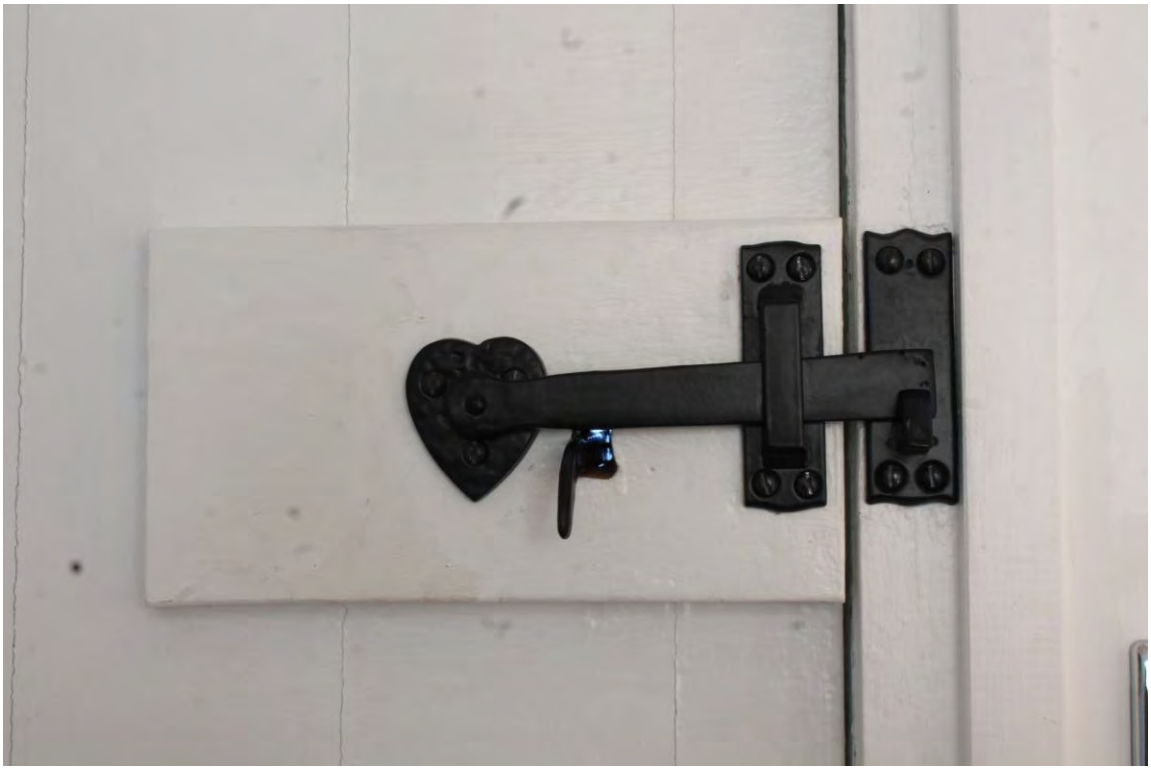

Plate 24 Latch to front door



Plate 25 Winder stair (6)



Plate 26 Balustrade at first floor



Plate 27 Inserted stud wall to create new passage (7A)



Plate 28 Bedroom (7) looking north-east



Plate 29 Detail of casement window (7) to be re-located



Plate 30 Typical window latch



Plate 31 Typical window stay



Plate 32 Bedroom (9) looking east



Plate 33 Bedroom (9) looking south



Plate 34 Bedroom (8)



Plate 35 Bedroom (8), fireplace



Plate 36 Cupboard on first floor landing



Plate 37 Bathroom (10)

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