

Historic Building Information

Relating to:

SHEPPERLANDS FARM,
PARK LANE, FINCHAMPSTEAD, BERKSHIRE, RG40 4QF

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Report by: Mr. Trevor Ottlewski.

Photography by: Mr. Dallyn Salter

Shepperlands Farm

Park Lane

Finchampstead

Berkshire

RG40 4QF

Background information to the area:

The Parish of Finchampstead is gently undulating, but centrally is relatively high in relation to the surrounding land; notably on its southern side from which fine views can be enjoyed over the Blackwater Valley.

Isolated flint hand tools have been found within the parish, and there is an earthwork recorded as a Bell Barrow. It has been conjectured that the present Finchampstead church (first recorded early 12th C) may stand on the site of an earlier temple or fortified hilltop; it lies alongside the Roman road mentioned below

Finchampstead had seen activity during Roman times, and the important Roman road known as the Devils Highway (Margary 4a) runs through the length of the parish and passes close to Shepperlands Farm. Various finds of the period have been made, including that of a Roman Milestone. Large sections of the road remain identifiable as byways, with further sections together with building footprints recorded as archaeology beneath fields.

In the Domesday Book, the entry is as follows:

The King holds Finchampstead in demesne. Earl Harold held it. [it was] then [assessed] at 5 hides. Now it does not pay geld but renders farm in Reading. There is land for 15 ploughs. In demesne is 1 [plough]; and 16 villeins and 8 bordars with 14 ploughs. There are 6 slaves, and a mill rendering 7s 6d, and 4 acres of meadow, [and] woodland for 200 pigs. It is and was worth £8.

It is interesting to note that the above reference to pigs has survived to the present day by virtue of the name "Hogwood", an area close to Shepperlands Farm.

Finchampstead was situated within Windsor Forest, and was a mixture of Heath, Farm, and Woodland. For much of its history the Parish was divided between the two Lords of the Manor, who resided at East and West Court. The "Park Lane" of Shepperlands' address is that which skirts the park lands of West Court (listed grade 2); now the Officers Mess of the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers. Shepperlands Farm had for much of its existence been part of the manor of West Court, although during the 19th C, the bulk of Finchampstead came under the single ownership of the Walter family of nearby Bearwood, founders and at various times owners and printers of "The Times" newspaper; both manors formed part of the Bearwood Estate. The Walter Estate was eventually broken up, the bulk being put up for sale in 1911, after which it became the property of numerous landowners.

The following information relates to:

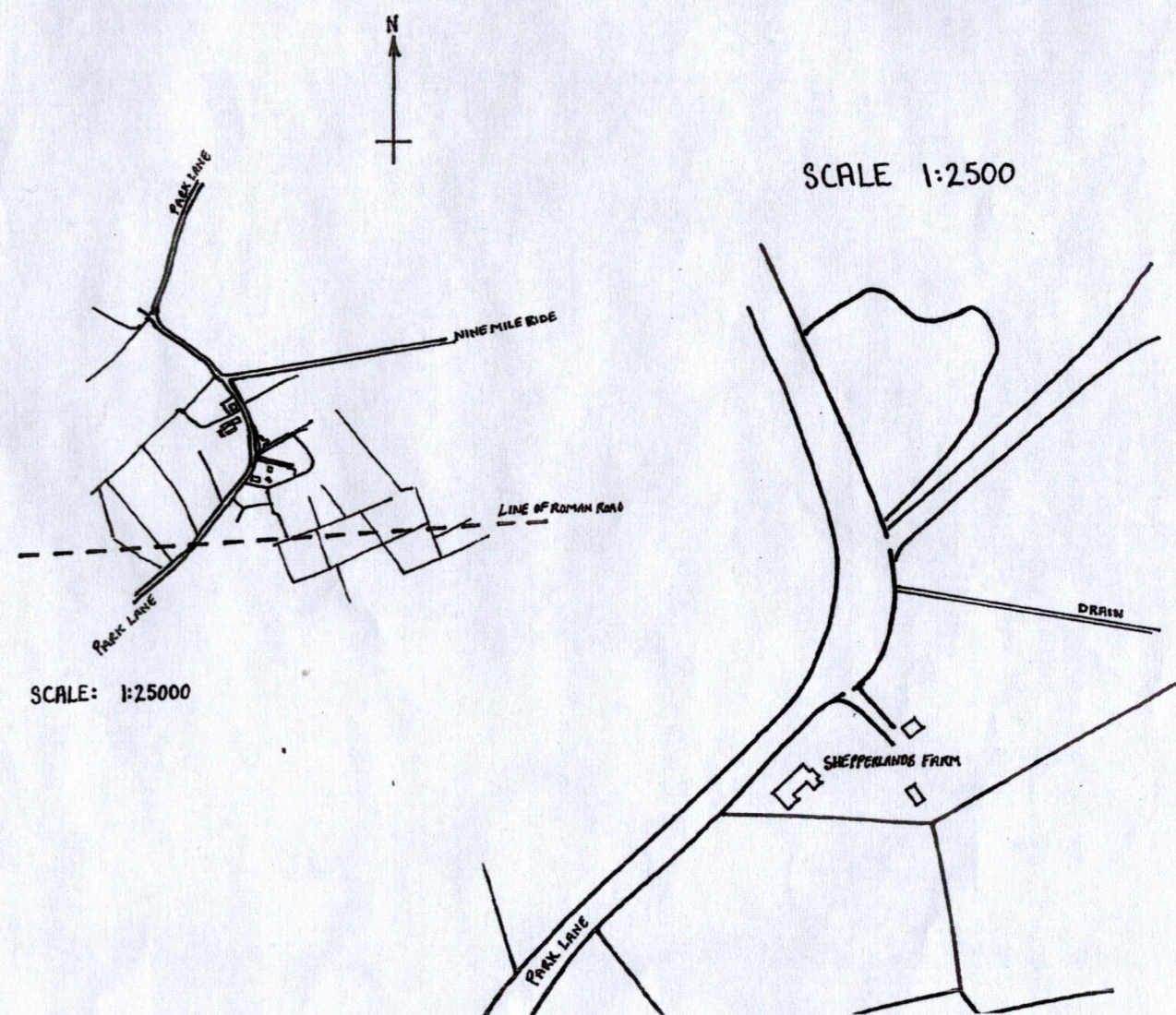
**Shepperlands Farm,
Park Lane,
Finchampstead,
Berkshire, RG40 4QF**

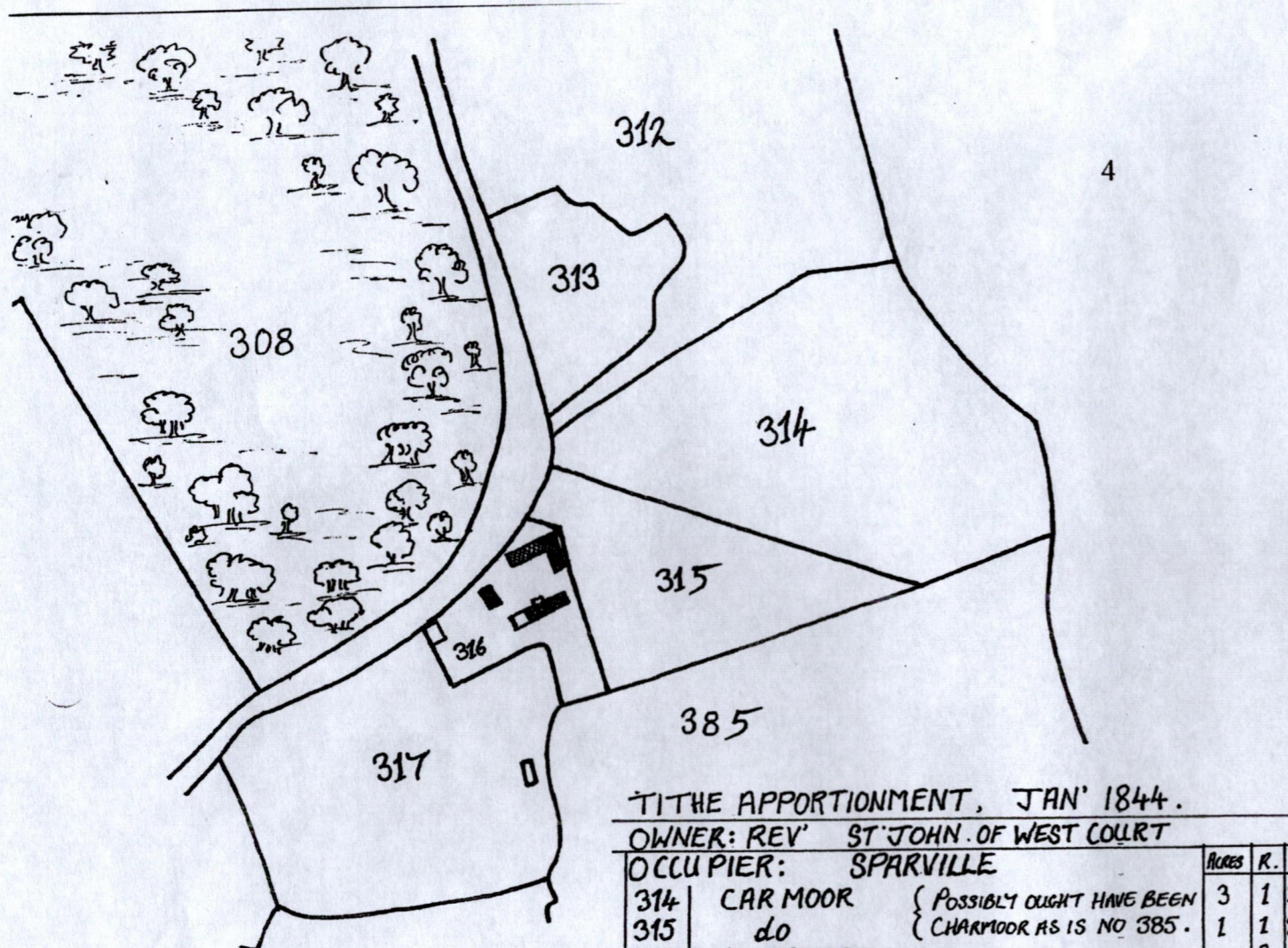
Currently owned and occupied by: Dr L Goodwin.

Grid ref: SU 7785 6415.

Location: **On the South-East side of Park Lane, approximately 500mts SSE from its junction with Nine Mile Ride.**

The position of the property within Finchampstead is outlined in red on the maps below. Buildings already listed are marked in green.





TITHE APPORTIONMENT, JAN' 1844.

OWNER: REV' ST JOHN OF WEST COURT

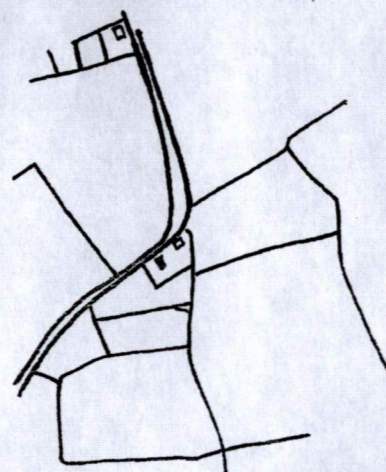
OCCUPIER: SPARVILLE

		Acres	R.	I.
314	CAR MOOR	3	1	3
315	do	1	1	2
316	HOMESTEAD	-	2	1
317	CARMOOR PIGHTLE	2	1	3
385	CHARMOOR	12	-	-
OWNER/OCCUPIER: REV' ST JOHN OF WEST COURT				
308	SHEPHERD LANE COPSE	18	2	1
313	SANDPIT COPSE	-	3	3

SHEPPERLANDS FARM, DESCRIBED AS "HOMESTEAD", HAS ITS DWELLING HOUSE COLOURED RED IN THE ABOVE MAP, WHICH CORRESPONDS WITH THE EARLY PORTION OF THE PRESENT DWELLING HOUSE.

ENCLOSURE MAP 1817

OWNED BY: REVEREND HENRY ELLIS ST JOHN.
LORD OF THE MANOR OF WEST COURT.



Finchampstead was predominantly agricultural, and prior to the Second World War had remained a relatively small, if scattered, rural community. During the 1960's and 70's, a couple of large new housing estates were built, but were confined to the centre North of the parish, and to a large extent, Finchampstead has retained its rural identity to the present day, albeit, with the threat that unsympathetic development could erode its traditional rural nature. One area that is protected, lies in the south of the parish, and is owned by The National Trust which in a recent BBC poll, was voted Berkshire's favourite beauty spot.

Two noteworthy features relating to the land surrounding Shepperlands Farm are of particular interest; one being the field boundaries, which have almost all survived, and follow the same positions as those which existed in the early 19th century; another, being the hedge which divides the farm from Park Lane which has been dated using species analysis to being in excess of 500 years old, and unfortunately, is one of the few early hedges along Park Lane that have been retained since dating was carried out in the late 1970's.

Shepperlands Farm is shown on Rocques map of 1752 and although the clarity of the map is less than ideal, the shape of the building matches that of the existing hall and crosswing, and shows an accompanying outbuilding, which appears to relate to the dwelling as does that shown on the enclosure map described below.

The property is identifiable on the enclosure map of 1817 (see page 4), which shows the dwelling in question as the hall and cross-wing (marked in red), which although now extended, on arrival, visually dominates the present building. Also shown is a single large outbuilding. At the time, it was owned by Rev' Henry Ellis St. John, Lord of the Manor of West Court.

The Tithe map (see page 4), shows the same sized dwelling, although includes additional substantial sized outbuildings. The apportionment of 1845 shows the property was still part of the West Court Manorial holdings of the St. John family, but occupied by James Sparville. The dwelling was simply described as "Homestead".

The adjoining hall has a ground and upper floor, with no sign of having been an open hall. The timbers of the ground floor ceiling are exposed, with joists running into a central axial beam (photo page 13), although their appearance has been affected by a fire (confined to that part of the building) which took place during the 1920's. On the 1st floor, the ends of the original tie beams are visible at the SE end, which have been cut off at either side after a short length, and subsequently joined to an inserted tie beam (re-used early timber), from which two queen struts (also added), rise to the current ceiling level (photo page 11); two straight and rather lightweight wind braces are visible at the SE end, as are side purlins running the length of the room. A tie beam at the NW end probably associated with a smoke bay has been cut away to enlarge room space, however, a further tie beam at the NW end survives (barring a short door way cut out), under which survives a section of vertical riven studding visible on the N side (photo page 12).

The rafters over the hall have been subject to some repair, and whilst are in all likelihood the original timbers, most have been turned 90 degrees, and their apex joints cut away, and replaced with a ridge board (photo page 12).

A chimney stack has been added to the SE end of the hall, with the hearth opening both to the hall, and the SE extension (photo page 13). Throughout this part of the building, and particularly upstairs, the plaster work does not appear to be modern, although there is obviously new plaster where repairs to the roof have taken place.

The junction between the hall and cross-wing is separated by what is best described as a very short bay (to left of top photo page 11), and probably indicates the surviving timbers of a smoke bay. It is likely that the stack would have been wattle & daub, as stave holes are visible in both the surviving portion of tie beam and rafters in the upper framing of the hall (top photo Page13), as well as the rafters visible within the loft, which show a smoky line where the partition between chimney and hall would have been. Additionally, later softwood rafters are confined to the narrow area which would have been occupied by the presumed smoke bay.

The ground floor bressumer, (referred to in the cross-wing paragraph), has a shallow upward curve cut away in the central portion, behind which a deep chamfer is cut (photo page 9); the chamfer showing signs of charring. This suggests the direction in which the opening for a hearth may have faced, in this case, somewhat unusually towards the cross-wing, as opposed to the hall. From the bressumer, an area of approximately 2 feet extends into the hall, before the axial beam of the hall starts, which runs SE. The NW end of the axial beam has shading which suggests it was at one time seated into a deeper surface than its present joint, which butts against a replacement beam; potentially the lost chimney stack.

The Building

The detailed description is confined to the early phase of development, as historically, it is the most relevant; subsequent phases 2 & 3 are described only briefly.

The building is of various phases, the earliest timber framed, the later, brick; all phases are now clay tiled. The NE cross-wing and hall form the early or first phase. The second phase is marked by an addition to the SW, and at some time, (perhaps between the second & third phase), an extension with a catslide roof was added to the SE end of the timber framed building. The third phase is denoted by a further addition to the SW end, carried out by the present owner during the 1950's.

As stated, the NE end of the present building represents the early part of the construction, and whilst it is presumed they were built as one phase, insufficient constructional information at the junction of hall & cross-wing is visible to detail whether the original part comprised both hall and cross-wing, or whether the cross-wing followed shortly after as an addition.

The main access to the building is via a small brick extension on the NE front, or from a small lean-to extension which is sited on the inner (S) corner of the phase 1 & phase 2 parts of the building.

Phase 1

Interior:

The hall and cross-wing are likely to date from the latter part of the 16th C

The cross-wing has a number of exposed timbers on the ground floor; its cill beam has been removed together with a few inches of upright timber (presumably due to rot), and the space built up from the cill wall with brick. Timber dimensions are reasonably substantial throughout. The first floor joists are ceiled on their underside except for an exposed transverse beam which has chamfers with ogee stops and is supported at its NW end by a jowled post (photo page 9), and at its SE end is tenoned into the beam which now serves as a bressumer between hall, and cross-wing (photo page 9). The upper floor of the cross-wing has some exposed timbers; tie beam, collar, and wall plate, again reasonably substantial, but with lightweight studding (photo page 10). Much of the plaster work appears of substantial age, if not original. The roof is Queen-strut construction, with rafters surviving in their original form.

Exterior

NW side has some light sectioned exposed timber framing infilled with brick, presumably an attempt at the time of building to provide token respect to the framing of phase 1; three timber casement windows are situated to the left of the outside chimney stack (photo page 14). Phase three is smooth rendered and painted, with timber casement windows, with a small timber porch added to the SE exterior (SW end).

Additional buildings

On entering the present drive, an early 20thC timber garage is situated to the NE, and a short way further along, a 19thC farm building lies a short way off to the SW; it is single story, weather-boarded with a single casement window, and a clay tiled hipped roof (photo Page 17).

Summary

A building with three dominant phases:

Phase 1, comprising of a hall with ground and upper floor, and a cross-wing with ground and upper floor, whether built together or not, the dates would not be substantially different, and are likely to date from the late 16th C or at latest, early 17th C.

Phase 2, continuing the line of the cross-wing, and dating from the later 19th C.

Phase 3, a mid 20th C addition, allowing the owners additional bedroom space and storage areas.

The three phases are generally in sympathy with one another, both in proportion and the types of material used, albeit not mimicking the original building.

The framing on the NW side of the cross-wing is noteworthy due to the completeness of its carpenter's marks.

The size and proportion of the phase 1 building, shows the type of property to which a tenant or employee of the Manor of West Court could aspire, and also illustrates the way in which whilst expansion of accommodation was restricted, the related farm buildings were both greatly enlarged and then substantially reduced as farming requirements dictated.

The environment of the property has in essence remained unchanged, and although its farming use has receded, it continues to convey the rural aspect that must have been familiar throughout its existence. It is important that this building be protected by listing, as much of historic interest remains intact; its phases provide snapshots of the changes in rural life, whilst its origins recall a dramatic change in design, when open halls gave way to the chimney and enclosed hearth, and the form of modern houses became established.

Access to the phase 2 part of the building is via an opening in the SW wall at the top of the staircase; the tie-beam has a curved portion cut away from its underside to increase headroom, and mortise slots are visible on the side of the original corner post, where a horizontal timber has been cut away to form an opening (photo page 10).

Exterior:

The exterior is a mix of exposed timber framing; timber framing clad with a brick façade; and rendered brick. All brickwork is painted white, and the roof is wholly covered in clay tiles.

As referred to earlier, the cill beam has gone and the vertical framing is now supported on a brick plinth. The NW face has predominantly original timber, with some minor replacements; the unfortunate insertion of a window on the ground floor has cut through two intermediate studs in the left lower side, and is the only loss to this area of framing, in which the carpenter's marks survive in sufficient quantity, that the sequence of construction is wholly described, (see photo page 14 and diagram on page 15). The windows are mid 20th C timber casements with diamond leaded lights.

The NE wall of the hall end of phase 1 has been faced with bricks and no framing is visible (see frontispiece). A gable has been inserted into the roof to allow space for a window, the insertion of which would have cut through the wall plate. At the junction of the two gables, a decorated lead rainwater hopper collects water which then runs into a cast iron down pipe (photo page 16).

Phases 2 & 3Interior

On the ground floor, a kitchen with breakfast area forms one room, which leads to further rooms used as a utility area.

On the 1st floor, access is provided to phase 2, through the above mentioned cutaway framing in the SW wall, at the top of the staircase within phase 1. There is a certain amount of exposed timberwork, although generally lighter in section and of less age.

Two rooms are situated to the SE side of phase 2, and a through corridor runs along the NW side, which gives access to the 20th C development of phase 3. An attached chimney stack stands outside the wall on the NW side of the corridor.

Crosswing, NW side,
Towled Post.

Ogee stop on
transverse beam



Crosswing: transverse beam, SE end tenoned through bressumer.
Chamfer and charring on bressumer suggest former hearth use.

Shepperlands Farm

Finchampstead

Pages 9 – 17

Illustrations

(Photographs taken 2005)

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1st floor of hall looking NE.
The rafter and collar to the left, mark the line of the probable smoke-bay.
Note wind brace top right (visible in photo below on the left).



1st floor of hall looking SE. Queen-posts & tie-beam replace originals, however, ends of tie-beams are visible on extreme left & right.



Cross-wing
1st floor room
looking NE.



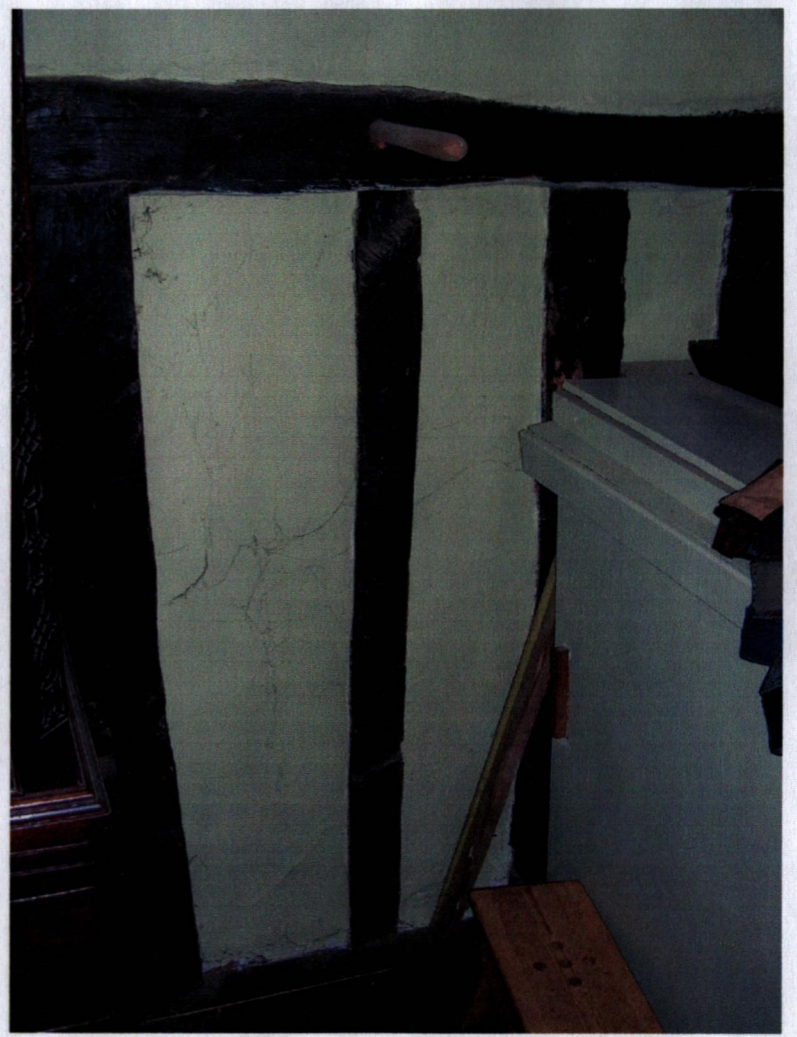
Looking NE from
phase 2 into cross-wing.
Upper curved timber
marks end wall, cut
through for access.



1st floor hall, NW end. Collar (with attached strip light) has stove holes to underside, indicating former panel for smoke bay.



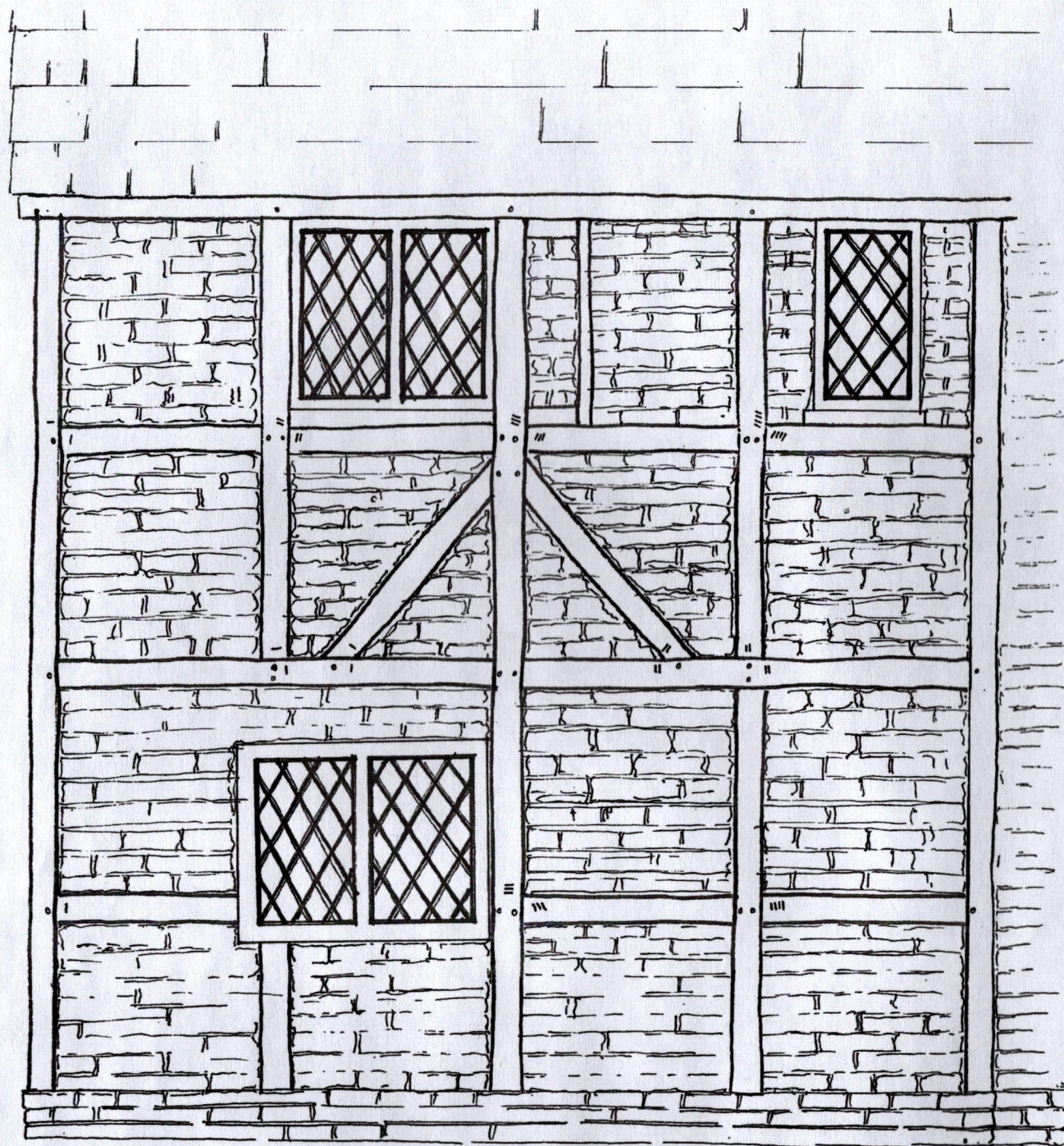
Ground floor looking SE. Axial beam is visible top centre, with joists off to left and right, and inserted fire place ahead.



1st floor of hall, NW end. Riven struts mark rear line of smoke-bay, backing onto crosswing.

Early rafters over hall, turned at 90°.





The Cross-wing, NW side. The majority of original timbers remain, together with an almost complete set of carpenter's marks.



Exterior : NW side



Exterior: carpenter's mark detail



General view looking SSW



Clay-tiled & weather-boarded 19th C. outbuilding. East of house.



Exterior: NE side:
Detail of rainwater hopper at the junction of the gables.



View from the rear. Phase 1 to the right, phase 2 to the left, looking N.

SHEPPERLANDS FARM.

Visited on November 9th 2004, with Dallyn Salter and Trevor Ottleswki.

Present owner Dr Len Goodwin and his late wife, Dr Marie Goodwin, came here in 1951. It was then quite open and Park Lane, really was a narrow lane, as shown in the painting he did soon after they came. He also has an oil painting done in 1910 by F. Vingoe, it showed sash windows, rather than casement.

About 1925, it was a poultry Farm. The owner got strapped for cash and set fire to it, fortunately only the ground floor was affected and the upper floor survived. Len and Marie found burnt timbers in the garden. It was bought by a wealthy couple, from London in the 1930's as a country cottage. They put in the present windows and added the study at the back. Len and Marie put on the porch and later the extension. They had a garage built for their Rolls Royce, which is still in use.

They think that the original had a chimney. (Trevor couldn't find any evidence). The base of the building is of bloomery cinder.

They used to buy water from Berkley Owen, Wheatlands Manor Farm.

When the stables across the road, were sold by Mr Ramsey, they also sold the end of ?

No reference to sheep at Shepperlands, but in Domesday, Hogwood had woodland for 50 swine. Hogwood still a puzzle They had wanted to build houses, Len appealed, quoting the wild life.

Major Shone suggested, that the Park Lane triangle could have been a Roman settlement.

Len owns 30 acres, which will go to BBONT., bounded by Commonfield Lane, Nine Mile Ride, along Park Lane to Wheatlands. There is a bit of heathland, some wetland, where orchids grow.

Len first worked for Burroughs Wellcome, ending as Scientific Director at London Zoo. They had albino wallabies, Whipsnade had the grey ones and they had a cross breeding programme. Len had some of the albinos. The three males have now gone to Beale Park. Nellie now 18 years old, is happy on her own as to males knocked her about.

Len met a Mr Burroughs, (used to buy horse manure) from him. He turned out to be Burroughs grandson (of Burroughs Wellcome).



SE
Side
View from
the rear.
Phase 1 to the
right, phase
2 to the left
looking N



Exterior
detail
Carpenter's
mark.

N.W
Side



Rainwater
hopper at
junction of
the gables



Oldest
part on
N.W.
Corner



NW
Side



N W .



East side - old part
Dallyn Trevor



East side - original part

East side
(Trevor O)



Along front extension to original part



Oil painting of Shepperton's Farm
by F. Vinage c. 1910



Dining room, oldest part of house
Dr Ken Goodwin F.R.S



Dallyn



Joan



Lounge area - doorway to study



displaying old painting c 1907
of Shepperlands Farm



Dr Ken Goodwin's study





Looking NE from
phase 2 (with cross wing)
upper curved timber
marks end wall, cut
through for access



Beam between
old (dining room)
and sitting area



Tessa O'Hlewske
Examining detail on
landing

Handwritten notes in blue ink, partially obscured and illegible.



1st floor of hall, looking NE
(window looking towards garage)



Upstairs study



1st floor of hall looking SE
Queen posts and tie beam replace originals,
however, ends of tie beams are visible on
extreme left and right

1st floor of hall, N.W. end
Riven struts mark
like of smoke bay,
backing onto crossing





Cross wing 1st floor room
looking NE



Crossing NW side Towlea Post.
Ogee stop on Transverse beam



Bedroom
1st floor of
hall
looking NE

The rafter and
collar to the left,
mark the line of
probable smoke
bay

1st floor hall
looking
NW end

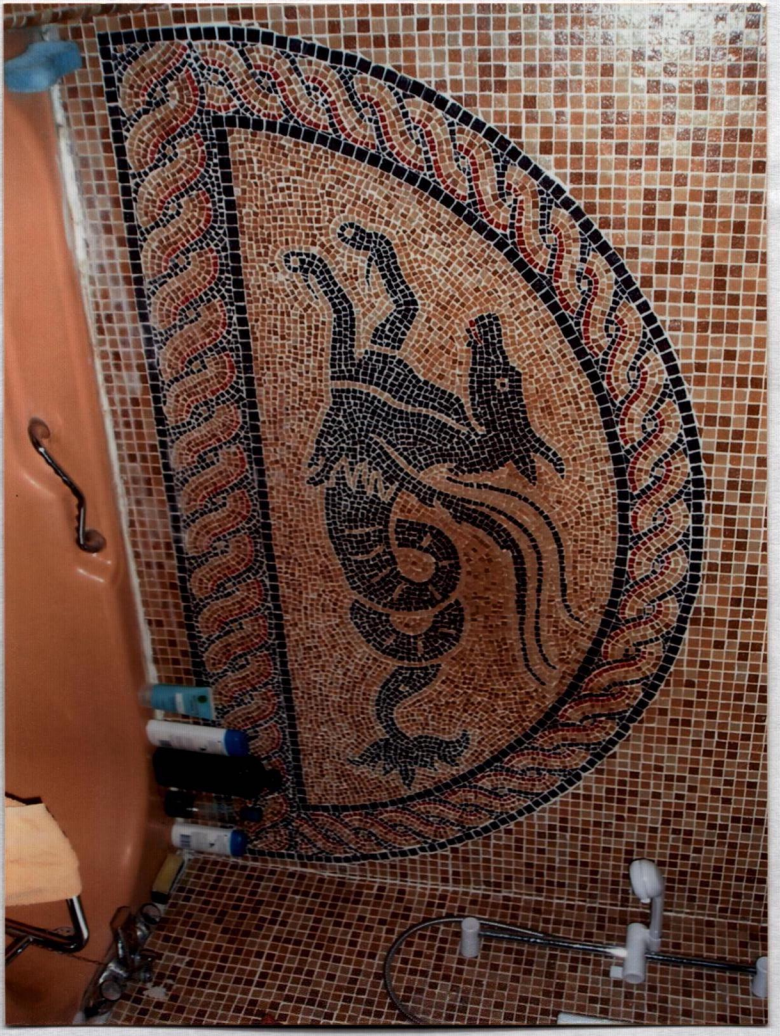


1st floor hall
NW end
collar (with
attached strip
light) have
saw holes to
underside,
indicating
former panel
of smoke bay



Details of unknown beams





Bathroom - mosaic made by Dr. Hel
Goodwin (copied from mosaic at
Fishbourne
Palace, Chichester)



garage built 1930's for Rolls Royce



?

left



left looking from newer extension towards original part