



**EAST SUSSEX HISTORIC BUILDINGS RECORD
(Research and Dissemination)**

The Rainbow, Old Town, Eastbourne, East Sussex
Archive Ref. ESRO HBR/1/1813. Site Ref P65/5
Interpretative Historic Building Survey 2020

REPORT NO. 1813

EASTBOURNE - THE RAINBOW, OLD TOWN

NGR TV 60087 99530

LOCATION (Plate 1)

The Rainbow (formerly also known as The Court House and The Counting House) is located on the periphery of the Old Town, in the Bourne Valley 225 metres (740ft) to the ENE of Eastbourne parish church. The street system in this area was modified between 1873 and 1898 by the construction of Moat Croft Road, providing a direct link between High Street / The Goffs to the south with Upperton Road to the north. Prior to this the building stood immediately to the north-east of a right-angled bend in Star Lane, which linked High Street with Crown Street / New Upperton Road, which in turn led through to Upperton Road. A short lane, on the site of the now culverted Bourne Stream, links Moat Croft Road to Star Lane, leaving the garden within which The Rainbow stands bounded on the east by Moat Croft Road and on the south by Star Lane. The main range of The Rainbow is aligned ESE-WNW (hereafter assumed E-W) with its principal elevation facing south and a secondary elevation facing east towards Moat Croft Road.

LISTED STATUS OF THE BUILDING

The Rainbow, Old Town, was listed grade II under the title *Court House, Star Lane* on 17th May 1971, its list entry reference being 1043655. The description in the list entry is purely for the purpose of recognition and is normally, therefore, primarily based on external appearance [Source: English Heritage, Images of England - website]. The description must not be treated as a comprehensive schedule of those elements which are legally protected as, no matter what the grade, the legislative cover not only relates to both the interior and exterior, but also extends to any building or structure within the curtilage which predates the 1st July 1948.

The list entry states "Early C17 or earlier house now refronted with cobbles. On site of medieval manor court house [no source reference mentioned]. 2 storeys and attics, 4 windows, 3 gables facing south with attic window in each, the centre gable retaining its overhang with wooden bressumer, but others cobbled. Modern windows and porch. East part rebuilt 1878 [no source reference mentioned]. Tiled roof. Interior - oak panelled entrance hall, oak panelled room with inglenook fireplace, beams; tie beams."

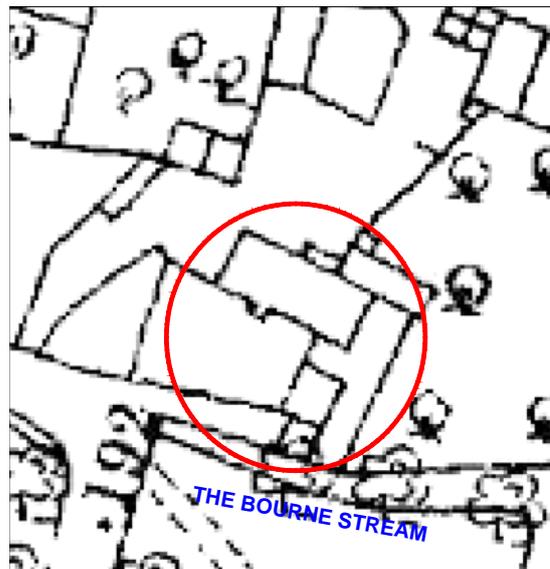


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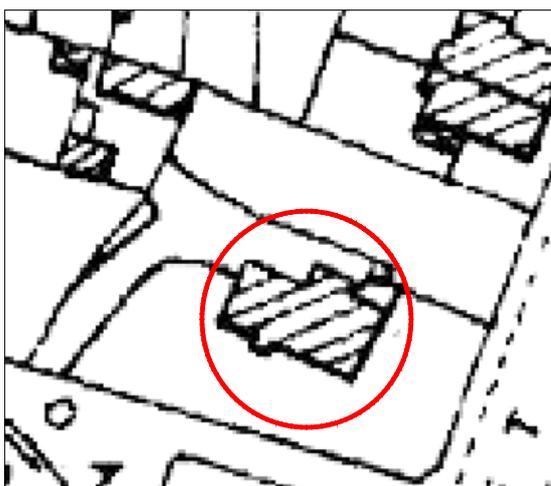
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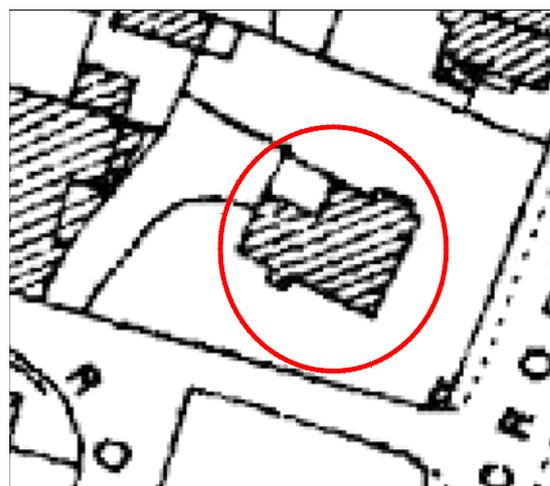
1841 Tithe Map [ESRO TD /E85]



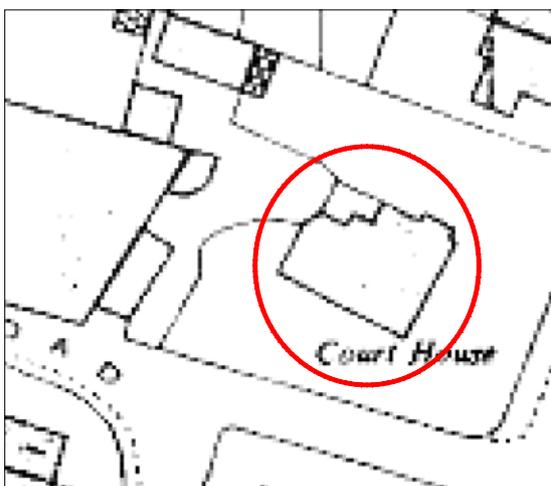
1873 25" O.S. [Sussex LXXX.9]



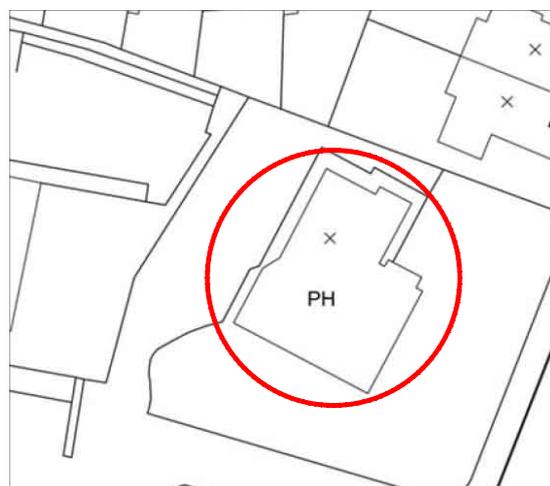
1898 25" O.S (c1910 = same footprint).



c1930 25" O.S. [Sussex LXXX.9]



c1960 25" O.S. [Sussex LXXX.9]



As in 2020.

Plate 1 - Extracts from Historical Maps



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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROPERTY

The 1841 tithe map shows the site as plot 251, whilst the schedule lists the owner as Mary Ann Gilbert (who was the lord of the manor), and the occupier as John Marchant. It is described as a house, garden, yard etc amounting in total to 0 acres 2 rods 05 perches [East Sussex Record Office TD E85]. The manor incorporated a considerable extent of demesne land, together with a capital messuage (principal house) at Gildridge Manor (now 33 The Goffs) on the southern side of the main street [see ESRO HBR 1/1779].

OVERVIEW OF THE HOUSE [Drawing No 1813/1; Plates 1-10]

Now very fragmentary, the earliest identifiable work within the building dates from the sixteenth century [**PERIOD A**] and is restricted to the western two bays. It may always have had some masonry external walls, but is otherwise of timber-framed construction. To the rear is an aisle/lean-to, and there may originally have been a similar feature extending along the front. Unlike now, the western end of the roof was hipped.

At the very end of the sixteenth century or during the first half of the seventeenth century [**Period B**] the structure was totally remodelled as a symmetrically-fronted, two-cell house with central chimney and three front gables, the middle one of which is stilted on side walls. All external walls were now rebuilt in masonry, incorporating ovolo-moulded stone windows.

By 1841 the period-B house had been extended eastwards, linking it to a non-domestic structure beyond. This non-domestic structure projected forwards from the house, had a steeply-pitched gabled roof and tile-hung walls. Running along its eastern side was a lean-to outshut which continued southwards as a narrow pitch-roofed projection which extended to the banks of the Bourne Stream (since culverted) at its southern end. Based upon photographic evidence (Plate 2) the date of none of these three elements can be ascertained, but the link looks, from its proportions, to have belonged to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, whilst the non-domestic structure could easily have dated from the seventeenth century or earlier.

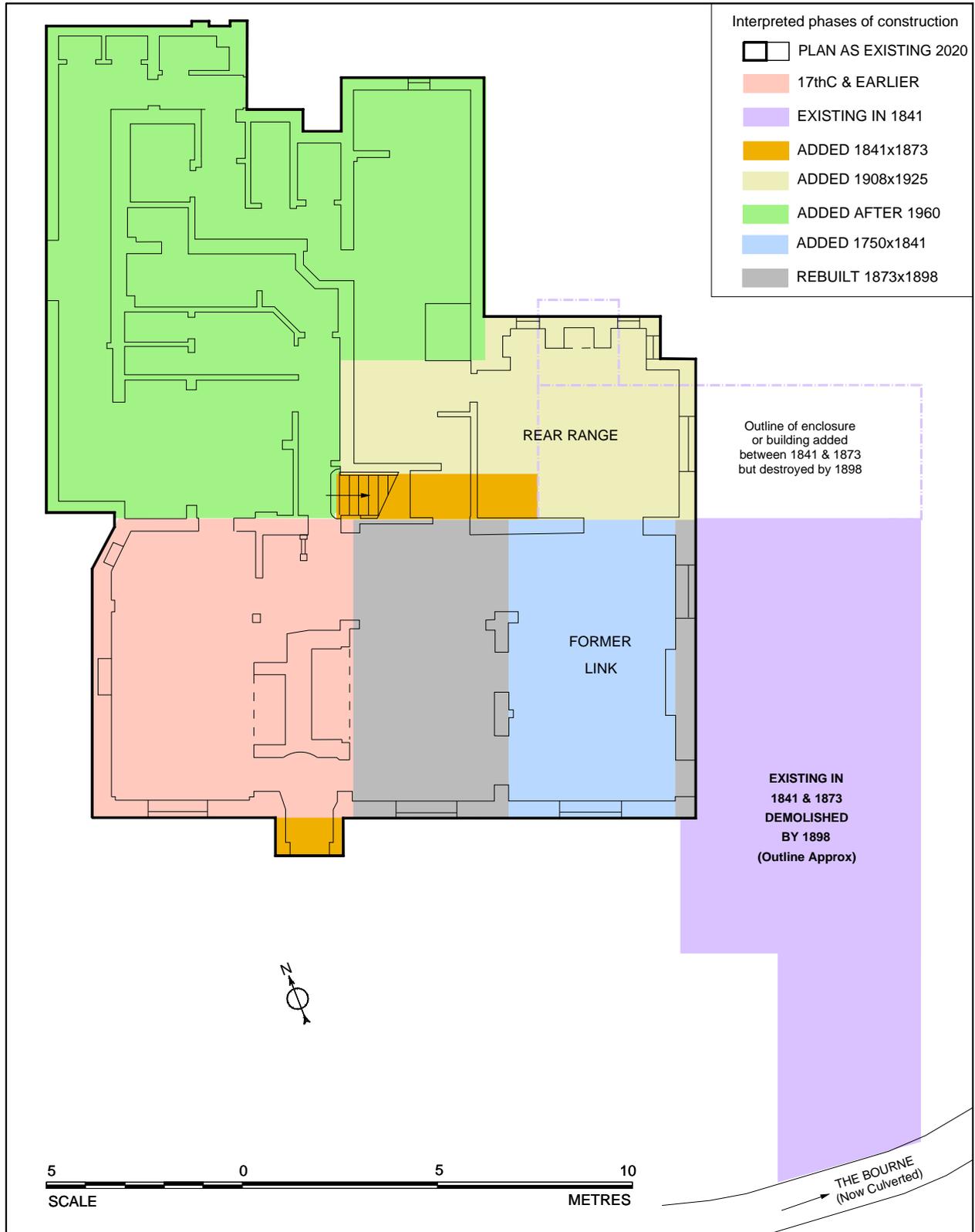
Not shown on the 1841 tithe map, by 1873 a single-storeyed porch with four-centred arched head had been added to the front elevation of the house, projecting forwards from the centre of the period-B, three-gabled facade (Plate 6). During the same period a small rear addition was built: most likely this housed a new staircase, but the addition was subsequently subsumed into a far larger rear range built parallel to the house (see below).

According to the list description (quoted above) the eastern end of the house was rebuilt in 1878, though the listing gives no documentary source for this. Furthermore, the map



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|--|-----------------|-------------|---|-------------------------|---------------|
| THE RAINBOW, OLD TOWN, EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX AS EXISTING 2020 SHOWING INTERPRETATION OF PHASING | | | | Site Ref | P65/5 |
| | | | | Drawing No. | 1813/1 |
| Drawn By | D Martin | Revision No | - | Date of original survey | 2020 |
| | | | | Date of this revision | |



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Plate 2

Exterior from the south-west as in about 1895, before that part served by the furthest of the three front gables was rebuilt and re-roofed to the same profile as the taller 'link' element beyond (to the east) of it, but replicating the front gable. It is assumed the infill 'link' (with its front chimney) was built during the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century to infill a gap between the rest of the house to the west and the non-domestic structure shown projecting forwards beyond the far end. Both the infill and the attached non-domestic structure are shown extant in the 1841 and 1873 maps reproduced in Plate 1

evidence shows no noticeable additions during the period between 1873 and 1898 (see Plate 1 and Drawing 1813/1). It would be tempting to suggest the date relates to the demolition of the non-domestic eastern structures, which certainly occurred between these two dates, but if this was so, the date of the photograph reproduced in Plate 2 is markedly earlier than thought.

During the century after the photograph was taken a raft of modifications were carried out, though to judge from the map evidence no additions were made beyond the structure's reduced footprint until after 1908. The first modification carried out after the photograph was taken involved alterations to the eastern bay of the period-B house, immediately to the east of the axial chimney, extending up to the (assumed) late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century link. This bay of the house was now rebuilt to the same proportions as the link; the external walls restored or re-faced; most of the windows in the front elevation replaced in timber within plain brick surrounds (see Plate 6); and the ceiling in the old hall was raised to a higher level. The work involved increasing the height of the rear external wall (thereby removing the eastern bay of the period-B rear lean-to outshut) and increasing the internal storey heights within the hall



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Plate 3
Exterior from north-west in the early 20thC



Plate 4
Exterior from north-west in 2020



Plate 5
Exterior from south in the early 20thC



Plate 6
Exterior from south in 2020



Plate 7
Exterior from north-east in the early 20thC



Plate 8
Exterior from south-east in 2020

bay to match those of the link. The thus rebuilt hall bay is capped by two parallel roofs, matching and extending those over the 'link'. However, the original front gable was replicated. In addition, with the removal of the eastern structures it was necessary to



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Plate 9
Upper chamber of rear range looking NE
showing pretend timber framing



Plate 10
Pretend timber framing in west bay of
main range, looking south east

rebuild/re-face the east wall of the 'link' so as to convert it from an internal to an external wall. Further, the chimney shown against the south wall of the 'link' in Plate 2 was removed and replaced by an end chimney, incorporated into the new east elevation.

Between 1908 and 1925 the mid-nineteenth-century rear stair turret was removed and a new two-storeyed rear range added against the eastern half of the house, served by a substantial projecting chimney against its north wall. With external walls of brick or, in the case of the east wall, of stone, the new range has a gabled roof aligned east-west, with a short spur roof linking to the chimney. Internally the walls are clad in false timber framing, perhaps added later (Plate 9).

A number of photographs show that during the early part of the twentieth century the building fell into a very poor state of repair, with holes in the roof covered by tarpaulins (Plates 3, 5, 7). At this time it was still in use as a private house. It was subsequently totally restored both internally and externally, including opening up the interior of the western end by removing most of the first-floor joisting, and adding much applied false timber framing (Plate 10). However, apart from a small extension shown in the re-entrant angle between the main and rear ranges, no further additions are indicated in the 1960s revision of the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey plan which, for the first time, indicates its name as the 'Court House' (see Plate 1). Whether by this date it had been converted into an inn is unknown to the authors, but after 1960 it had sizeable extensions added at the rear (see Plate 1 and Drawing 1813/1) and became 'The Rainbow Inn', subsequently renamed 'The Counting House': in 2020, it reverted to 'The Rainbow'.

It has been necessary to summarize the complex post-1700 development of the building in order to understand the context of the surviving earlier work. Only the pre-1700 work is described within the detailed architectural description which follows.



DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

PERIOD A (16th C) [Drawing No. 1813/2; Plates 11-12]

LAYOUT

Now very fragmentary, the earliest surviving work within the building is restricted to the western two bays, and even here the eastern of the two may be a fragment. This surviving element measures about 6.50 metres (c21ft 4ins) in length. It is evident from the remains that the main frame measured approximately 5.00 metres (roughly 16ft 6ins) wide overall its main posts. Extending along the rear is a hybrid aisle/lean-to which added a further 1.50 metres (4ft 11ins). The footprint of the house as altered during period B suggests (but does not prove) there was a similar aisle extending along the front. If this was the case, the overall width of the structure was about 8.00 metres (26ft 3ins); if not it was roughly 6.50 metres (c21ft 4ins). At 1.60 metres (5ft 3ins) measured from floor to wallplate, the first-floor walls were a little below average for surviving houses of this age in the area.

It is a general rule that the daub infill in internal trusses was set flush facing into a principal area, with the timbers protruding into the adjacent secondary room/area. In this instance the infill within truss B-B was flush towards the western rooms and the chamber above, indicating these spaces were considered of higher status than the areas to their east (where the period-B central chimney now stands). The former existence of a hip to the roof over the western bay, supported by wall A-A, indicates the house never extended further westward.

Although secondary areas are not uncommonly divided into two rooms by an axial partition, normally a principal ground-floor room extended across the width of the structure. However, in this instance stave-holes running along the centre-line of a very off-centred ceiling girder divided the space into a principal front room and a much smaller 2.00 metres (6ft 6ins) to 2.15 metres (7ft 0ins) wide rear room, the width being dependant upon whether the rear external wall was timber-framed or masonry. There was no doorway linking the two spaces, so presumably the rear room was accessed through the area to the east. The first-floor chamber above the two western rooms also incorporated an axial partition, but it was not positioned over that on the ground floor. Instead, it was located beneath the aisle-plate, positioned flush with the southern face of the plate, dividing the aisle's triangular roof-space from the chamber. It is this off-set positioning of the ground- and first-floor partitions which makes it impossible (in our view) to define the rear of the building as either an aisle or lean-to outshut: it is a hybrid combining features from both.

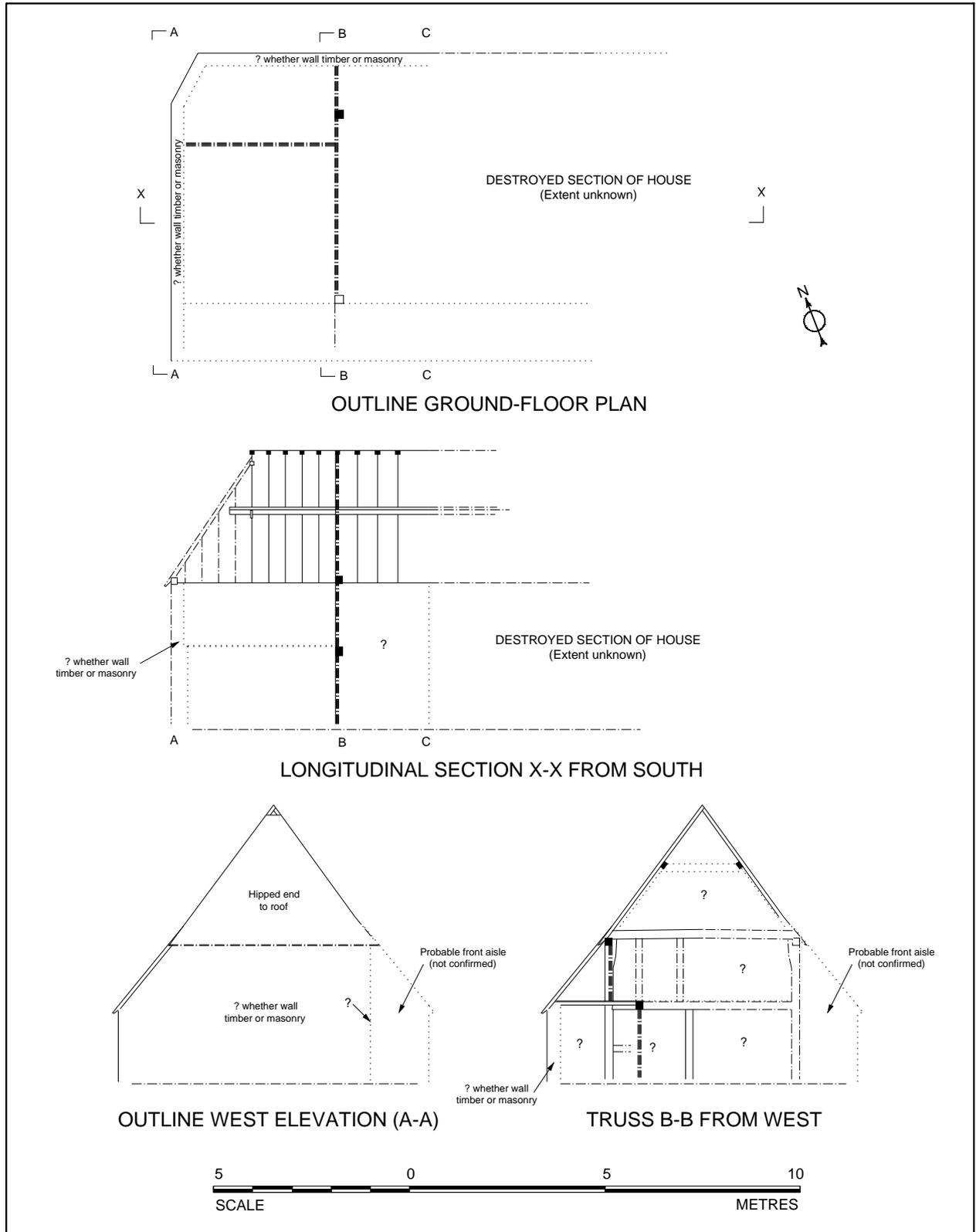
WALL DESIGN, WINDOWS AND DOORWAYS

Whether when built the structure was entirely timber framed or had masonry external wall cannot at present be told. The only clue is that the rear and canted western end



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| PERIOD-A RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS (1 of 1) | | | | Drawing No. | 1813/2 |
| Drawn By | D Martin | Revision No | - | Date of original survey | 2020 |
| | | | | Date of this revision | |



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Plate 11

Canted end wall of rear aisle/lean-to showing quoin, smaller cobbles here than to in the period-B wall on the right, and worn window surround



Plate 12

Frame of truss B-B viewed from east, looking towards western bay (A-B)

wall of the aisle/lean-to is currently faced in coursed, un-knapped flint (of different nature to the other walls) and measures on average 360mm (1ft 2ins) thick. At roof level the end wall incorporates a small arch-headed window of eroded greensand (Plate 11). This may either indicate that all the period-A external walls were of this construction, or that the rear wall represents a later rebuild.

What can be certain is that the internal walls were of timber-framed construction, though of the main frame all that is now visible are the northern jowled post of truss B-B, a short section of truss B-B's crossbeam and slightly-cambered tiebeam, one stud beneath the crossbeam, and the wallplate between the main frame and north aisle/lean-to. Almost certainly more of the crossbeam and tiebeam survives than is visible, but today both timbers are masked on their western face by added planks, whilst the rest is obscured by the period-B central chimney. The exposed sections of soffit within both the crossbeam and tiebeam show stave-holes for staves supporting daub infill flush with the west face of the timbers, whilst the tiebeam has two pegged mortices for removed studs. In addition, a mortice in the south face of surviving post B seems to indicate a former midrail within the ground-floor partition (see Drawing 1813/2, Truss B-B)

The only other walls for which evidence survives are the former axial partition beneath the aisleplate separating the main frame from the northern aisle/lean-to, and the former axial ground-floor partition which was located beneath the off-centred ceiling girder. The former consisted of a single daub panel set flush to the southern face of the aisleplate (and thus flushed-up to the first-floor chamber rather than the roof area of the aisle/lean-to), whilst the latter was divided into two daub panels by a central stud. Unlike that under the aisleplate, in this instance the daub infill was positioned under the centre-line of the ceiling girder, the lower leading edges of which were chamfered along both sides of the beam.



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FLOORS AND STAIRS

The only surviving section of period-A floor is that over the narrow northern ground-floor room within bay A-B. Its joists, which are aligned north-south, measure 100mm by 110mm and are entirely plain. At their southern end they are jointed into a 190mm by 250mm girder with chamfered lower leading edges (see above). As noted above, a partition formerly existed beneath the girder, running down its centre-line.

The floor over the room to the south of the girder has been removed in modern times to open the ground-floor room to the space above. Its original form is unknown, the southern face of the girder and west face of the crossbeam to truss B-B being hidden by modern applied boards, whilst any evidence which may exist in the east and north faces of the west and south walls is today hidden by plaster.

The first-floor west chamber was open to the roof during period A, whilst there is currently no exposed detail to suggest the form of the floor to the east of truss B-B, nor to indicate the location of the period-A stairs.

CHIMNEY

It is not known how the period-A structure was heated, though it seems safe to assume it stood on the site of the period-B chimney and incorporated either one or, less likely, two fireplaces.

ROOF

The steeply-pitched roof over the period-A part still survives, though much of its detail is currently hidden by plastered ceilings. It is either of inline-butted-side-purlin or clasped-side-purlin construction with substantial 100mm by 165mm purlins (stop-chamfered at truss B-B) and common rafters of 110mm by 90mm. All common rafters were pegged to the purlins. Because of the roof's former hipped western terminal, the purlins terminate part-way along bay A-B, where they are clasped by an intermediate collar (now cut) located beneath the head of the hip. That this evidence relates to a removed hip is confirmed by the end of the southern purlin which is trimmed to the pitch of the hip.

PERIOD B (L16th-E17thC) [Drawing Nos 1813/3-4; Plates 13-20]

LAYOUT

A date of 1588 on a rainwater hopper could indicate the time when the period-B works were carried out (Plate 13), though such a date would be a little early for a house of this design. It is

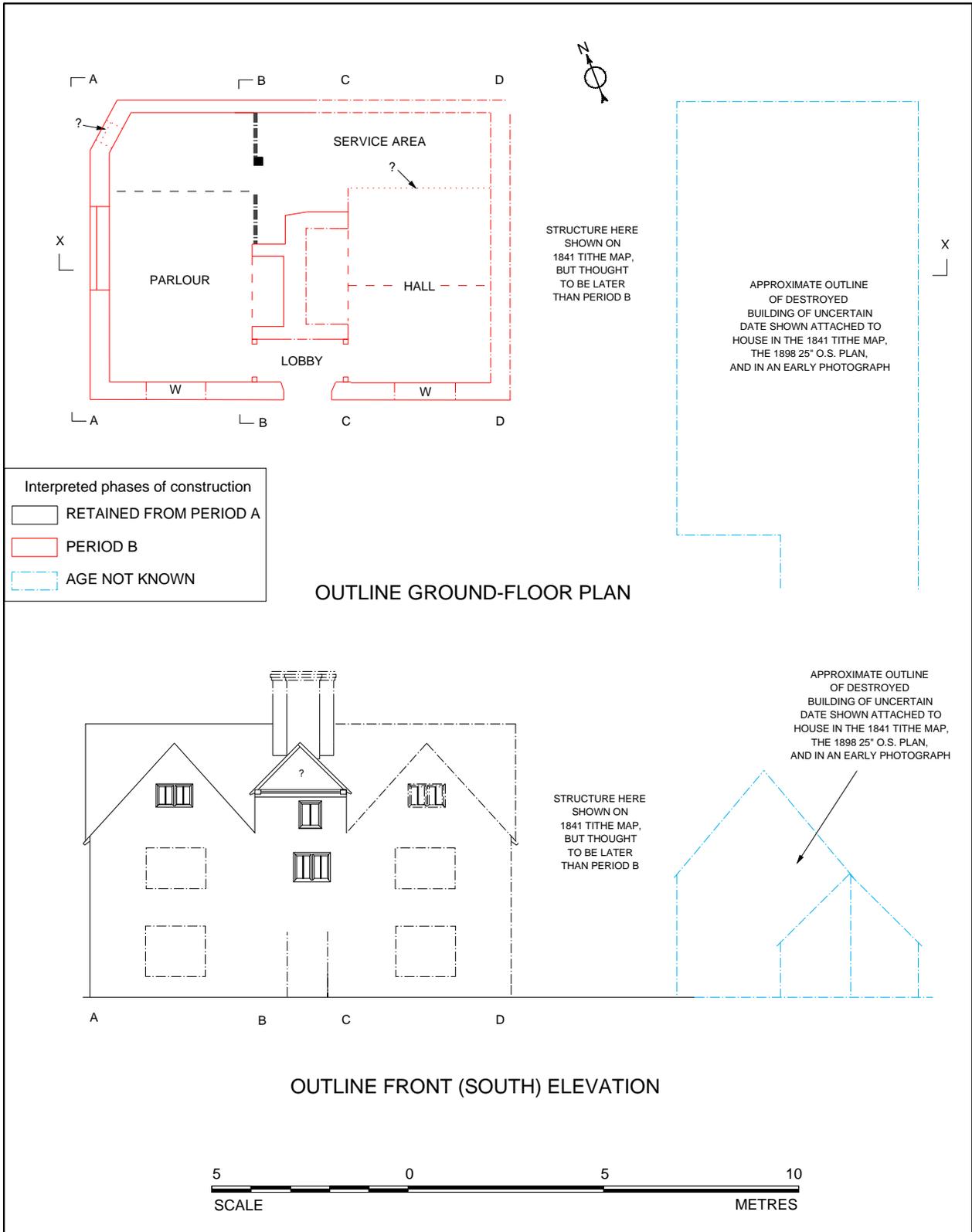


*Plate 13
Rainwater hopper now at the
west end of the south elevation*



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| THE RAINBOW, OLD TOWN, EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX PERIOD-B RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS (1 of 2) | | | | Site Ref | P65/5 | | |
| | | | | Drawing No. | 1813/3 | | |
| Drawn By | D Martin | Revision No | - | Date of original survey | 2020 | Date of this revision | |

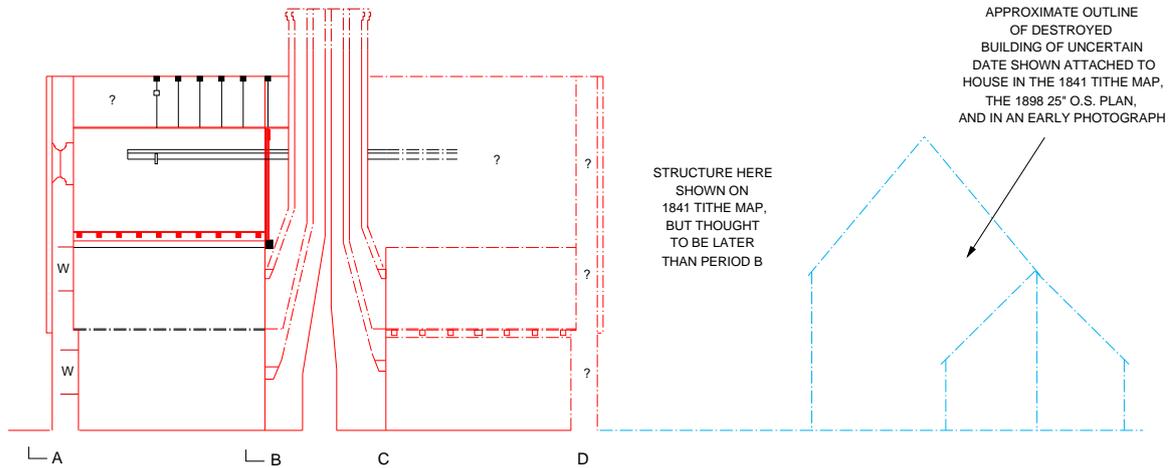


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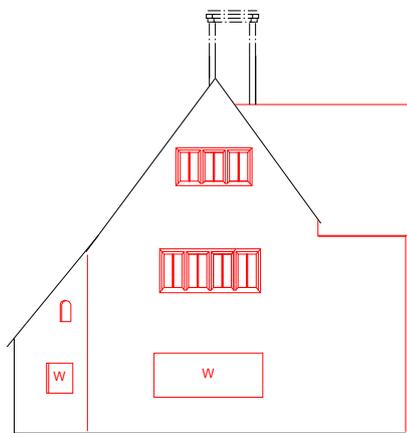
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INTERPRETED PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

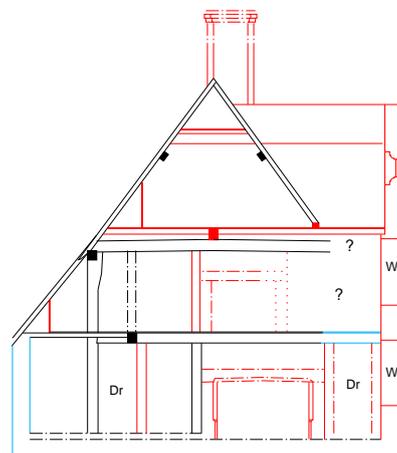
RETAINED FROM PERIOD A
 PERIOD B
 AGE NOT KNOWN



OUTLINE GROUND-FLOOR PLAN



OUTLINE WEST ELEVATION (A-A)



TRUSS B-B FROM WEST



THE RAINBOW, OLD TOWN, EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX
PERIOD-B RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS (2 of 2)

Site Ref **P65/5**

Drawing No. **1813/4**

Drawn By **D Martin**

Revision No -

Date of original survey **2020**

Date of this revision



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therefore more likely the hopper has been reused from elsewhere and that the alterations were undertaken during the period 1600-1650. What is certain is the alterations reflect a considerable increase in the status of the occupiers, regardless of whether they were owners or tenants. As Drawings 1813/3-4 indicate, the building was now converted into an up-to-date, new style symmetrically-fronted house with triple front gables and a central four-flue chimney with central doorway leading into a lobby. To the west of the chimney the period-A room was converted into a parlour, whilst to the east was a hall which doubled as a kitchen. The service room(s) were relegated to the rear aisle/lean-to. On the first floor were two heated chambers incorporating ceilings, whilst above them were attic rooms. In its period-B form the house occupied a rectangular footprint so, despite its status, it was of compact form. The design details suggest that in its re-configured form the house either projected further forwards than its predecessor, or a front aisle was replaced, raising the height of the front part to that of the main body of the building. In addition, the roof's former hipped end(s) were replaced by gables.



Plate 14
Ovolo-moulded window in west gable

WALL DESIGN, WINDOWS AND DOORWAYS

Regardless of whether the period-A external walls were of timber or stone, the west and south walls (and presumably the now destroyed east wall) were rebuilt as thick masonry walls with a coursed cobble external face and greensand dressings at the quoins and window surrounds. As indicated in Drawing 1813/4, West Elevation (A-A), ignoring the rear aisle/outshut this wall originally incorporated three windows; one centrally within the off-centred end gable and others below it lighting the first-floor chamber and ground-floor room. Today only the former survives (Plate 14) though the blocked openings of the other two are still discernible in the fabric. Like the three period-B windows which survive in the front elevation (see below) the gable window which remains has ovolo-moulded mullions, jambs and head, all set within a chamfered external surround. There is no hood mould. This opening is of three panes, unlike the blocked windows on the two floors below which, from their increasing width, were of four and five panes respectively.

Most of the windows in the front elevation have been replaced, but those in the elevation's western and central face gables still survives, as does the first-floor window above the front door. Although of less panes than the surviving three-pane window in the west wall (Plate 14 above) these are of identical detail and likewise lack hoods: old photographs show the same was true of that in the since rebuilt eastern face gable.



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Plate 15
Off-centred windows and slightly projecting stilted central gable



Plate 16
Detail of elaborated tiebeam of central gable

Despite the similarity of window details, the central part of the facade — front door, first-floor window and central gable — incorporate one unexplained anomaly in that the openings are positioned off-centred towards the east (see Drawing 1813/3 - South elevation and Plate 15). Furthermore, this central gable has its eaves stilted above those which flank it and rises from a moulded tiebeam set level with the gable's wallplates. The moulding, which gives the timber-framed (though now rendered) gable above a slight projection from the remainder of the facade, is enriched with now very worn egg-and-dart ornamentation set above an even more worn frieze of blind round-headed arches (Plate 16). On the ground floor all details of the front door leading into the lobby were destroyed when the porch was added in front of it.

A ground-floor doorway was now inserted into the northern part of truss B-B, partially beneath the ceiling girder within bay A-B, thereby indicating that by this time the axial partition beneath the girder had been removed. The door has an inserted jamb and is evidenced by the notch cut into the timber for its former latch. On the first floor a stud was inserted against the northern jamb of the new first-floor fireplace, but otherwise no further details are known regarding the timber-framed partitions which flanked the fireplaces, nor with regards the design of the axial partition which divided the hall from the rear service area.

FLOORS AND STAIRS

Two period-B floors survive, though that above the hall was re-fixed at a higher level when this part of the house was rebuilt taller. The re-fixed floor is of central-girder construction with a slender reused 150mm by c140mm girder (see Plate 18). The joists supported by the girder are mostly of 105mm by 110mm scantling, but with a central joist of wider 150mm by 110mm scantling to north and south of the girder. In the soffits of these larger joists are a sequence of four pegged mortices of uncertain purpose.



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Plate 17

Chamfer stops on west end of lodged ceiling girder over western chamber



Plate 18

Modified fireplace in hall showing raised lintel with re-fixed girder and joists above

The first-floor ceiling in the west chamber is also of central-girder design, in this instance with the eastern end of the girder lodged over the period-A tiebeam so as to increase the chamber's storey height slightly. The girder has chamfered lower leading edges, terminated by means of cyma stops, typical of the period (Plate 17). The joists are of 95mm by 100mm section and have blunted lower leading edges, indicating they were always intended to be exposed.



Plate 19

The location of the period-B staircase leading to the first floor has not been confirmed, but was probably immediately to the north of the central chimney. It is common in houses of this design for the attic flight to be located immediately above this flight (indeed this is where the attic flight rises today). However, an alternative location could be above the house's entrance lobby, perhaps explaining the stilted gable and off-centred windows in this area, necessary to provide adequate headroom and avoid the windows clashing with the line of the attic stairs.



Plate 20

CHIMNEY

Although the top of its cap has been rebuilt, sufficient survives to show the four-flue central chimney survives complete, despite the height of its ground-floor fireplaces having been increased and the two first-floor fireplaces having been hidden from view by later wall finishes. As is usual, that serving the parlour is the narrower of the two ground-floor fireplaces. It has chamfered stone jambs: the base of the chamfers incorporate a 'step' below which a narrow chamfer continues down to ground level (Plate 19). The hearth, complete with stone kerb, seems to survive, now largely buried by the slightly raised modern floor. If the fireplace's lintel survives it has been masked, but in any case the opening has been



EAST SUSSEX HISTORIC BUILDINGS RECORD (Research and Dissemination)

The Rainbow, Old Town, Eastbourne, East Sussex
Archive Ref. ESRO HBR/1/1813. Site Ref P65/5
Interpretative Historic Building Survey 2020

increased in height by one jamb-stone in modern times.

Although wider, the hall fireplace is similar, the chamfer on its jambs being stopped just below the original level of the lintel (Plates 18 and 20). In this instance the original timber lintel remains visible, though raised two stone courses with fancy mock corbels incorporated into the modern raising. The lintel is substantial and shows the marks of two spit mechanisms — one at each end — confirming the fireplace was not only used for heating, but also for cooking.

Although now hidden, the existence of the two first-floor fireplaces is confirmed by the surviving lower part of the chimney cap, which incorporates four flues aligned along the axis of the roof. The pair of larger central flues serve the ground-floor fireplaces projecting proud of the two smaller flanking flues which originally served those on the first floor. The cap is of typical layout for the period.

ROOF

Although its western end was converted from a hip into a gable, the period-A roof over the western bay and chimney bay was retained. The original span was increased by adding extra roofs extending southwards to provide front gables which, like the western end gable, incorporate windows. That these front gables were not merely planted onto the front slope of the earlier roof, but enlarged the original span is indicated by the western gable's eaves, which are shown running back from the front wall to meet the period-A roof slope in Plate 4. How much, if any of the period-A roof over the eastern part of the house was retained at this time is impossible to say: this area was totally destroyed when re-configured in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. All that can be certain from the photographs taken before this part was rebuilt is that the profile of the period-A roof continued above this area with an eastern front gable matching that over the western end (see Plate 2 and Plate 5 compared to the modern shot in Plate 6).