

# The Landmark Trust

## MANOR FARM History Album



**Written by Charlotte Haslam, 1982**

**Updated 2000, 2015**

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**BASIC DETAILS**

**Built: c1580**

**Listed: II\***

**Acquired by Harry and Monica Dance: 1948**

**Acquired by Landmark: 1979**

**Architect: Sonia Rolt and Henry Freeland**

**Contractor: Hoggs**

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**Manor Farm**

## Summary

There is no written evidence to provide dates for the building of the farmhouse and the buildings nearby, and very little concerning the people who lived there.

Dendrochronological dating (using tree rings) suggest that the house was built soon after 1597. Some deeds of 1643 indicate that it then belonged to a family called Maltiward.

The Maltiwards were yeoman farmers. Yeomen had a reputation for good living ('at our Yeoman's table,' wrote Thomas Fuller, 'you shall have no meat disguised with strange sauces... beset with sallads on every side, but solid substantial food'), but were also usually thrifty and hard-working. Their houses, clothes and possessions were simply made even if of good quality; after a good harvest they would keep their money in hand (or under the mattress) for a bad year, or use it to buy more land. That they also had a strong sense of duty and felt a responsibility for maintaining law and order is shown by the fact that parish officials were almost always drawn from the ranks of yeomen. Judging from the house they built, the Maltiwards were comfortably off; a house with eight rooms - which it had by the mid-17th century - would have been considered substantial.

By the early 18th century Manor Farm had passed into the hands of a man named Richard Baker, who is described as a worsted weaver. (In the first of the 20th-century restorations, traces of a loom were found in the house.) He was following a long-established local tradition of combining weaving with farming: small farmers often needed some secondary occupation on which they could fall back in years of crop failure, and weaving was the most usual choice in the neighbourhood. Many surviving probate inventories list quantities of cloth among the deceased's possessions. In the mid-16th century, so vital a part of the village economy was this work that when weaving was suppressed in many rural areas (to protect the Norwich weavers), Pulham was made an exception.

After Richard Baker's death Manor Farm passed to his daughter Hannah, the wife of Robert Thrower, and then to her son Richard for his lifetime only, eventually reverting to his cousin Noah, a miller from Tivetshall St Mary. Noah and Richard, however, came to an agreement after Robert's death: Richard took over all rights in Manor Farm, and Noah was given Richard's share in the mill, in which he already had a controlling interest.

Richard died a few years later and his widow Lucy and their seven children continued to live in the house and to farm the land. In 1844 the Throwers sold the farm to the Hotson family, who continued there until the 1920s. They in turn sold the farm to the Andrews family, but none of them seems to have lived in the house: it fell empty, and began to sink into disrepair. In 1945 it was sold to a junk dealer for demolition, but fortunately he did not feel happy about pulling it down. At this point it providentially came to the attention of Monica Dance, secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, who rapidly decided that her personal intervention was required, and with her husband Harry bought it forthwith.

The Dances restored the farmhouse lovingly and sensitively, subjecting it to the minimum of alteration. It was underpinned and the timber framing carefully reinforced where it was shaky, the roof was re-thatched with reed, several blocked windows were opened up and the walls were repaired with local clay in the traditional manner.

## **Restoration by the Landmark Trust**

The Landmark Trust bought Manor Farm from Mrs Dance in 1979. There was no need for a full-scale renovation of the building, but a certain amount of work did have to be carried out.

First, there were alterations needed to fit the building for continuous use by larger numbers of people, including the fitting of a second bathroom into a landing at the top of the stairs in the kitchen block. Additional oak shelving and cupboards were also provided in the kitchen.

Secondly, there were the more thorough repairs that arise every generation or so in the usual routine of building maintenance, it being exactly 30 years since Mrs Dance's original restoration. Sections of many of the window frames needed renewing, as did one or two of the rafters in the kitchen end roof and some of the ridge tiles too. The kitchen chimney, which was letting in a lot of damp, had to be rebuilt and the area inside it damp-proofed. The whole of the building was replastered, and a new coat of colour-tinted limewash was applied to the exterior, and of white limewash to the inside.

Thirdly, the opportunity was taken to introduce certain small improvements while other work was in progress. Lead piping was replaced, and some of the wiring was renewed in less obtrusive form. The main alteration was the removal of the downstairs bathroom from the oak-panelled pantry in the older part of the house, to the larder or pantry in the later addition, which in turn has now been removed. A more efficient water heater was then fitted into the airing cupboard upstairs, and a ventilated food cupboard built into the kitchen where the old boiler used to stand.

In the larder the traditional slatted dairy window has been retained. Another original window, in the buttery, was opened up, although it now only looks into the kitchen. Finally, a new heating system was installed. The difficulty was to do this without endangering the oak partitions, which could be damaged by the drying-out effect of full central heating. Instead, night storage heaters have been used to provide background warmth, which can then be boosted by open fires.

In 2006 our local thatcher, Stephen Letch, replaced the reed on the south slope with more historically correct longstraw thatch. The north slope will be done in due course when it needs replacing. Around the outside of the house, the flowerbeds planted by Mrs Dance's tenants were grassed over and replaced by small trees. A new entrance was made, and a space for leaving cars, by the farm buildings. Work has continued to repair the main group of barns nearest the house using traditional clay lump, with a clay plaster and tarred finish.

The work was carried out for the Landmark Trust by Hoggs the builders, under the guidance of Mrs Rolt and the architect Henry Freeland. As much care as possible has

been taken to keep any changes in keeping both with the previous careful restoration, and with the character of the original building. In some small ways the comforts of the 21st century, while being added to, have been made to impinge rather less on the 16th-century yeoman's dwelling. In this way you can, when you stay here, all the more enjoy the full flavour of the building, unadorned but at the same time rich like that same yeoman's favourite diet of plain roast meat.



**Manor Farm**





## Manor Farm – the buildings

### **The Great Rebuilding**

‘Every man almost is a builder’, wrote William Harrison in 1587, ‘and he that hath bought any small parcel of ground, be it never so little, will not be quiet till he have pulled down the old house (if any there were standing) and set up a new house of his own.’

Other early modern commentators echo Harrison’s perceptions of ‘a great amendment of lodging’ and the physical evidence of the surviving houses themselves prompted local historian W G Hoskins to write a seminal article in 1953, *The Rebuilding of Rural England 1570-1640*. Hoskins identified ‘a revolution in the housing of a considerable part of the population’ in England. The thesis of a ‘Great Rebuilding’ as it came to be known has proved one of the most enduring explanatory tools in English architectural history, since challenged and refined, debated in chronology and nuanced by region, but still essentially holding good as an identifiable historical development in the period.

The rebuilding took three main forms: complete rebuilding on an existing site; enlargement or adaptation that effectively produced a new house, and building on a site for the first time. It would be wrong to imply that the period of Hoskins’ hypothesis was unadulterated prosperity across the board: the late-sixteenth century especially had periods of poor harvests and increased vagrancy. Hoskins’ third category of ‘building on a new site’ was very largely cottages, often built by squatters on marginal and waste land. An Act of 1589 spoke of ‘the erection and building of great numbers and multitudes of cottages, which are daily more and more increased in many parts of this realm’, and sought to prohibit such cottages on plots of less than four acres without a license. Few of these survive.

What does survive from the period is a quantifiable increase in building activity among the middling sort, enabled by an overall long term increase in prosperity.

'Reconstruction' typically took the form of inserting a ceiling into the open hall and inserting a new-fangled chimney stack, perhaps the most significant single development in domestic architecture, its impact equivalent in impact to the arrival of screen culture in our own times. Increased subdivision through use of partitions meant greater privacy, and more use of coal for heating where available and increased production of cheaper glass completed a revolution in living conditions that is also apparent in contemporary wills and inventories: there was simply 'more of everything and better of everything and new-fangled comforts...as well.'

Several of Landmark's houses across the country embody this building boom (Dolbelydr and Cowside among them), but none more so than Manor Farm. There is no written evidence to provide dates for the farmhouse and its later additions, and very little concerning the people who have lived there, so we have to rely on the physical evidence.

Carpentry details in the farmhouse, originally described by Colonel Glendenning in his article for *Norfolk Archaeology*, suggested that Manor Farm was built in the late 16th century. Thanks to work carried out in 2009 by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group with dendrochronologist Ian Tyers, we now know from tree ring analysis that the main house was built of timber felled between 1599 and 1635.

What is less clear is the construction date of the parlour at the east end. The timber framing of the parlour is in elm, whose growing patterns are not susceptible to tree ring analysis to match its growth to known climatic conditions. In the Dances' era after 1948, it was thought that the parlour was a later addition. However, subsequent examination by the NHBG has pointed out that the wallplate of the parlour end projects into the chimney bay of the main

house. This suggests that the latter (ground floor hall, service end, chimney and first floor chambers and corridor) may have been built onto the parlour as an existing structure. If so, the parlour may be a remnant of an earlier building, perhaps an open hall farmhouse, perhaps a barn, that was now rebuilt c1700 according to the latest developments in housing form. It seems too that the parlour ceiling was originally raised, perhaps as a 1 ¾ storey structure, its roof subsequently raised to a full two storey height.

The plank and muntin partitions throughout the farmhouse are an extremely unusual feature. A plank and muntin screen along the cross passage is a common feature in medieval hall houses. At Manor Farm, however, the same technique is carefully used in various partition walls including the upstairs corridor, where timber stud work with wattle and daub infill panels might more typically be expected. Instead, microscopic analysis has shown that the planks were carefully crafted, generally placed in pairs cut from the same piece of wood. They have been 'pit sawn' (above a pit, with one unfortunate carpenter standing in a pit to provide upward momentum on the saw strokes for his fellow standing above) and their 'best side' has been dressed. There are faintly scribed carpenters' assembly marks on many of them, and matching these to those also present on the sliding shutters suggest that all this internal joinery may have been carried out by the same master carpenter. Such fulsome use of oak also suggests that it was a very plentiful material in southwest Norfolk at the time.

## The occupants of Manor Farm

Even if no clear documentary evidence exists about the origins of Manor Farm, as it is typical of the area, quite a lot can be told about it by using information learned from similar houses whose owners have left more evidence behind them concerning the way they lived.

The population of south-west Norfolk was surprisingly high in the Middle Ages when, according to Samuel Lewis in his Topographical Dictionary, the two Pulhams formed one single village two miles long, with the church at one end and the market place at the other.

The principal occupations in the village were weaving and other crafts connected with the textile industry. Not only was a heavy furnishing fabric known as Pulham work made there but also 'Hats, dornecks and coverlits in great quantity.' So vital a part of the village economy was this work, that when in 1551 weaving was suppressed in many rural areas to prevent competition with Norwich, Pulham was made an exception.

In spite of legislation such as this many people, even those whose living was not directly dependant of the craft, continued to practice it on a small scale. It was common for small farmers to have some secondary occupation on which they could fall back in years of crop failure, and weaving was the most usual choice. It is likely that many of the farmhouses in and around Pulham would have had a loom for making cloth over and above their domestic needs, and surviving probate inventories list quantities of cloth stored away upstairs. The practice continued until the beginning of the 19th century but by that time the farmhouse weaver had less independence, most of his work being 'commissioned' by Norwich manufactories. Then, as the manufacturers began to install machinery, demand for his work ceased altogether.

After and often alongside with the cloth trade, farming was the most common occupation in the neighbourhood of Pulham. There were few large landowners, the farms on average being of less than 100 acres. The land was, and still is, rich (although Arthur Young in his General Survey of the Agriculture of Norfolk of 1804 rather scornfully describes it as wet and heavy) and so a comfortable living could be made from as little as 50 acres. There were large areas of common land on which to graze the dairy cattle which were commonly kept. The farming was mixed - wheat, oats and barley all being grown - but pasture seems to have predominated in this corner of Norfolk. Besides the commons and farmland, in the 16th and 17th centuries the area was thickly wooded. That oak was plentiful is shown by the lavish use of it in the interior of Manor Farm.

From some deeds of 1643, we know that it belonged at that date to a family called Maltiward, so it is probable that they built it.

The Maltiwards were yeomen; they probably held most of the land as freeholders, but like a lot of yeomen, they were also in part tenants, or copyholders, of the manor. As late as 1920 new owners of Manor Farm had to apply to the absentee lord of the manor, a Mr Copeman, to be admitted for a small part of their land. In the early 18th century the farm consisted of about 30 acres with additional grazing on the common, but it might originally have been larger than this, and subsequently have been divided through inheritance. Like most of the farms in the area it was a mixture of pasture and arable land.

Not all yeomen were as rich as the traditional Yeoman of Kent, but they had a reputation for good living:

They commonly live wealthily, keep good houses and travailleth to get riches. Still at our Yeoman's table you shall have as many joynts as dishes; no meat disguis'd with strange sauces; no stragglyng joynt of a sheep in the midst of a pasture of grasse, beset with sallads on every side but solid substantiall food. (Thomas Fuller)

On the other hand, thrift, saving and hard work were also common characteristics of the yeoman. Their houses were simply furnished, whatever their income and however well-made the individual piece, or its setting, might be. Their clothes were plain and workmanlike, often made at home from home-spun cloth.

Although they might want their possessions to be of good quality, they were always within the limits set by plain living; they did not spend their savings on silver and velvets, but kept them in hand - or under the mattress - for a bad year, or else invested them in more land. That they also had a strong sense of duty and felt a responsibility for maintaining order in the countryside is shown by the fact that parish officials were almost invariably drawn from the ranks of yeomen.

Judging from the house that they built, the Maltiwads were well-off. A house with eight rooms, as it had by the mid-17th century, would have been considered substantial. It is difficult to know what their income would have been, however since this varied considerably from region to region. In one part of Norfolk a yeoman was considered wealthy if he had more than £100 a year from his land as well as a good store of money and stock to fall back on, whereas in Kent it was not uncommon for a yeoman to enjoy £750 - £1,000 p.a. Somewhere around £200-£300 was a more usual figure, except in remote areas.

By the early 18th century Manor Farm had passed to, or been inherited by, a Richard Baker, who is described as a worsted weaver, although he would have been a farmer as well. It was probably his loom of which Mrs Dance found traces in the hall/kitchen. Since this would have taken up a lot of space, it was possibly he who added the new bake-house and dairy at the west end.

After Richard Baker's death, Manor Farm passed to his daughter Hannah. She was married to Robert Thrower, a well-to-do miller from Tivetshall St Mary. For some years Manor Farm was let to a tenant but when their son, Richard Thrower, grew up, he took it on and lived there with his wife Lucy and increasing numbers of children.



**Manor Farm in about 1900 when it belonged to John Hotson.**

Robert Thrower's will, dated 1791, hints that all was not well between father and son. Richard was only to receive a small share in the mill and besides, was only to inherit Manor Farm after he had agreed to certain conditions limiting his powers there. One of these stated that he was not to 'cut or cause to be cut any of the timber, trees, underwood or bushes excepting necessary fencing.' This in itself interesting in that it seems to show a concern for the disappearance of woodlands in the area even at that date.

Once Richard had accepted the conditions he was to have the farm, but for his lifetime alone. Miller Thrower did not think much of his grandsons ('I leave to John one shilling') and on their father's death they were simply to be paid off with £200 each. In the background of this somewhat ill-natured document lurks the figure of Noah Thrower, the miller's nephew. After his uncle's death, however, Noah partly redeemed himself of usurping his cousin's birthright by making over to Richard all rights on Manor Farm, although only in return for the final share in the mill.

Richard Thrower was not to enjoy his security of ownership for long, since he died in 1795. His widow Lucy and their seven children lived on in the house and continued to farm the land. She survived her husband by 46 years, did not remarry, and appears to have managed very well. By her death in 1841 the farm had grown to 69 acres. Part of this was as a result of the enclosure and sharing out of the large common near the farm in 1838, one of the last to take place in the country.

Her son Cornelius did not continue to farm for long after her death; in 1844 Manor Farm was sold to John Hotson. His family continued there until 1920, when they sold to Stephen Andrews. Life was becoming more and more difficult for the small farmer; large mortgages were taken out, and profits were small. Stephen Andrews died in 1926 and ownership of the farm was shared between his two sons and his daughter Thirza Crisp, none of whom, it seems, came to live





**The hall fireplace before it was opened up by Mrs Dance.**

in the house, since it was at about this time that it fell empty and started to fall into disrepair.

In 1945 Thomas Crisp bought the farm and decided to let the house go for its 'break-up' value. Luckily the age of conservation had arrived. Local archaeologists had noted the building, and in the nick of time Monica and Harry Dance, Monica being Secretary to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, appeared to save it. They bought Manor Farm in 1948 with a small amount of land around it (the farm buildings were not added to their ownership until 1973) and set about restoring it and then finding a tenant to live in it.

Monica Dance's indefatigable spirit in working to save and sensitively repair historic buildings was such that any building so directly connected with her attains a particularly special aura. Her own account of how she and her husband saved the building in 1949 appeared in the *SPAB News* in 1981, a copy of which appears later in this album. By then, they had decided to move on to another rescue project, Methwold Old Vicarage.<sup>1</sup> 'The future of a building of this interest and quality [Manor Farm] is something which seriously exercises the mind,' she wrote here in 1981. 'How can it be secured that a building continues for at least another thirty-two years [since the Dances' original restoration] and hopefully continues for much longer?'

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<sup>1</sup> When Monica Dance died in 1998, she bequeathed Methwold Old Vicarage to the Society for the Protection for Ancient Buildings, who in turn offered a long lease on the house to Landmark, which we were delighted to accept. Provision is made each year at Methwold Old Vicarage for the SPAB Scholars and Fellows, schemes initiated by Monica Dance, to stay there. In both these buildings, the Dances themselves hosted many happy SPAB gatherings, still affectionately remembered for their inspiration and homemade cakes.



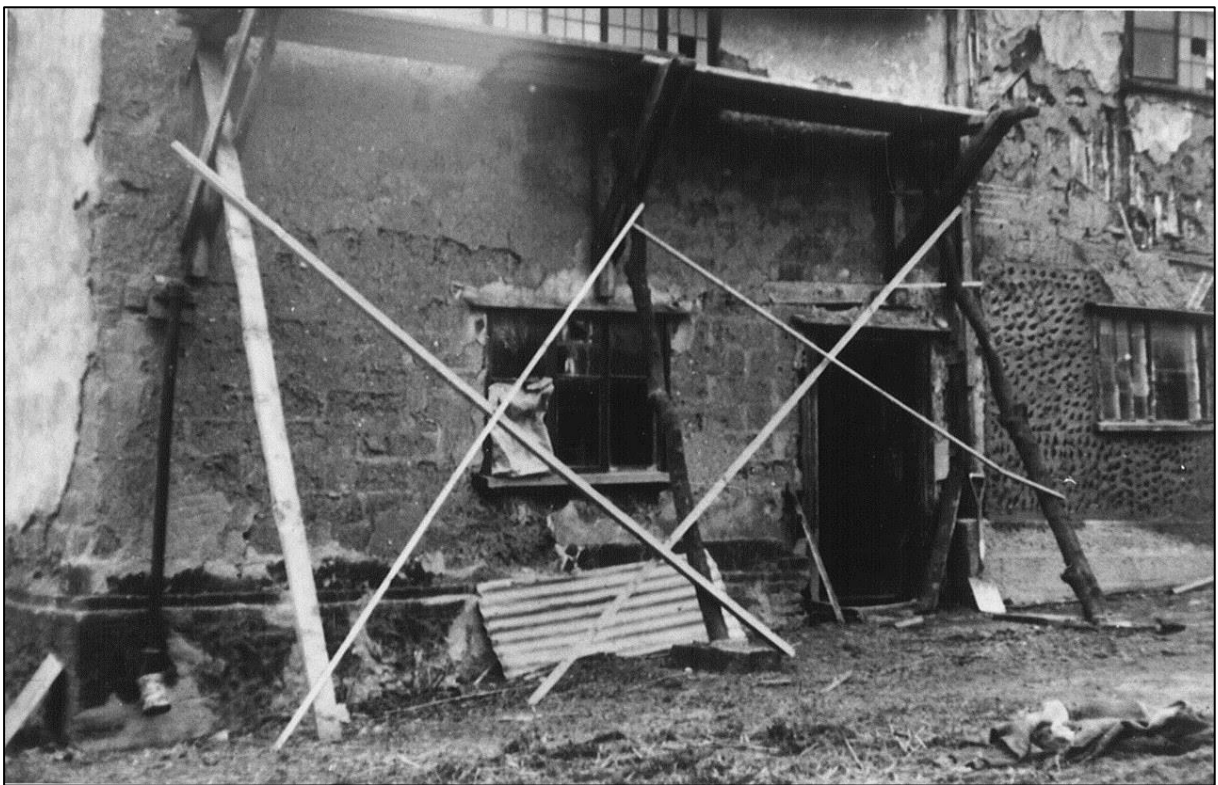
**The screens passage in 1948**



**The fireplace in the central bedroom in 1948**



Manor Farm in 1948-9





**Manor Farm as it was in 1948 when bought by Mr and Mrs Dance.**





**Manor Farm in 1979. The clay plaster had suffered from damp and was breaking up in a number of places.**





**A bulge in the wall at the east end had caused the plaster to crack more than elsewhere so that it no longer formed a secure base for the coating of limewash.**

## Refurbishment by the Landmark Trust 1981/2

The Dances approached the Landmark Trust for a solution to Manor Farm's future. This was in an era when the trust was still backed by the generosity of John & Christian Smith's Manifold Trust, and they agreed to buy Manor Farm from Mrs Dance in 1979. Obviously there was no need for a full-scale renovation, but a certain amount of work did have to be carried out, which fell into three broad categories. Firstly, alterations were needed to fit the building for more continuous use by larger numbers of people. Foremost among these was the provision of a second bathroom, fitted into a landing at the top of the stairs in the kitchen block. Additional oak shelving and cupboards were provided in the kitchen.

Secondly, there were the more thorough repairs that arise every generation or so in the usual routine of building maintenance, it being exactly thirty years since the Dances' original restoration was completed. Sections of many of the window frames needed renewing, especially sills. One or two of the rafters in the kitchen end roof needed replacing, as did the ridge tiles. The kitchen chimney was coming away from the end wall, and letting in a lot of damp. It was properly rebuilt, and the area inside it damp-proofed.

Areas of the external lime plaster were again breaking up. The initial plan was just to repair these patches, but the sections needing attention turned out to be larger than had been expected, and so the more practical course in the long term was to replaster the whole of the building, especially since the work was then eligible for a grant from the local authority. A new coat of colour tinted lime wash was then applied. The interior was also given a new coat of white lime wash.

The third category to some extent overlapped with the first, but consisted in small improvements sensible to introduce while other work was in progress. Besides replacing lead piping, and some of the wiring to make it less obtrusive,





**The kitchen as it was in 1979. A lot of damp was coming through the chimney wall.**

the main alteration was the removal of the downstairs bathroom from the oak-panelled pantry in the older, central part of the house, to the larder or dairy in the later addition. A more efficient water heater was fitted into the airing cupboard upstairs. The previous boiler was in the kitchen, where the ventilated food cupboard has now been built.

In the lower bathroom the traditional slatted dairy window has been retained. Another original window, in the buttery, was opened up, although it now only looks into the kitchen.

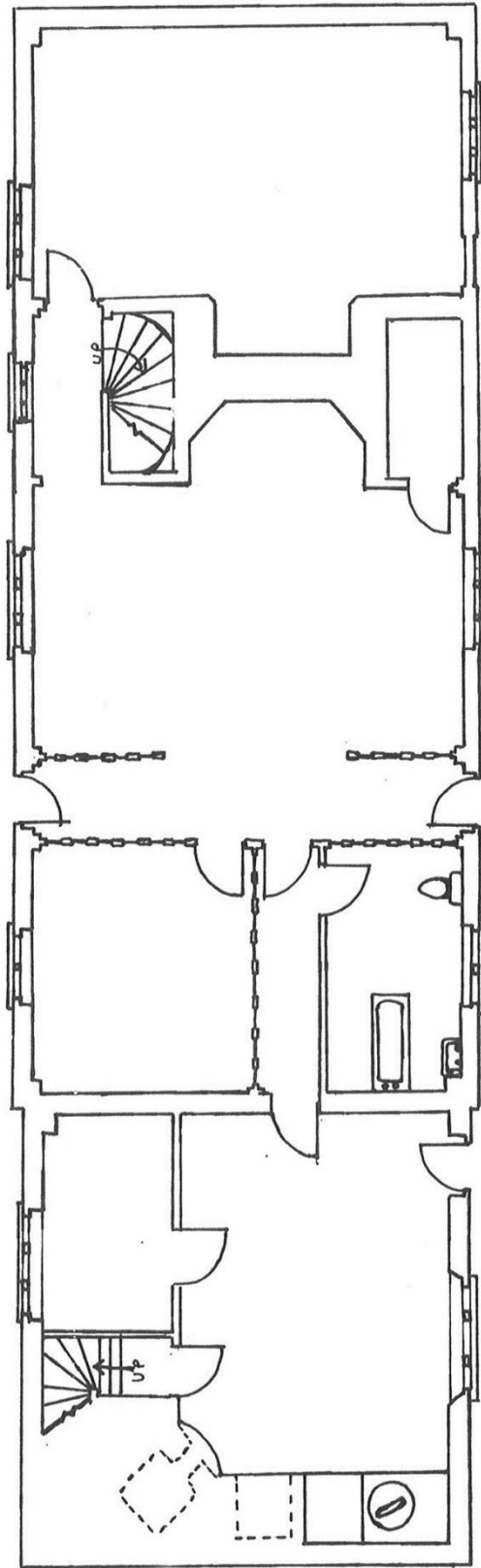
Lastly, a new heating system was installed. The difficulty was to do this without endangering the oak partitions, which could be damaged by the drying-out effect of full central heating. Night storage systems have therefore been kept too, but of new and improved design. That in the older part, lying concealed in a cupboard, blows out the stored heat in the form of warm air during the day. This provides background warmth which can then be boosted by open fires.

Around the outside of the house, Mrs Dance's tenants had planted a garden, but this had become rather overgrown after they left. Most of the flowerbeds were simply grassed over and replaced by smaller trees. A new entrance was made, and a space for leaving cars, by the farm buildings.

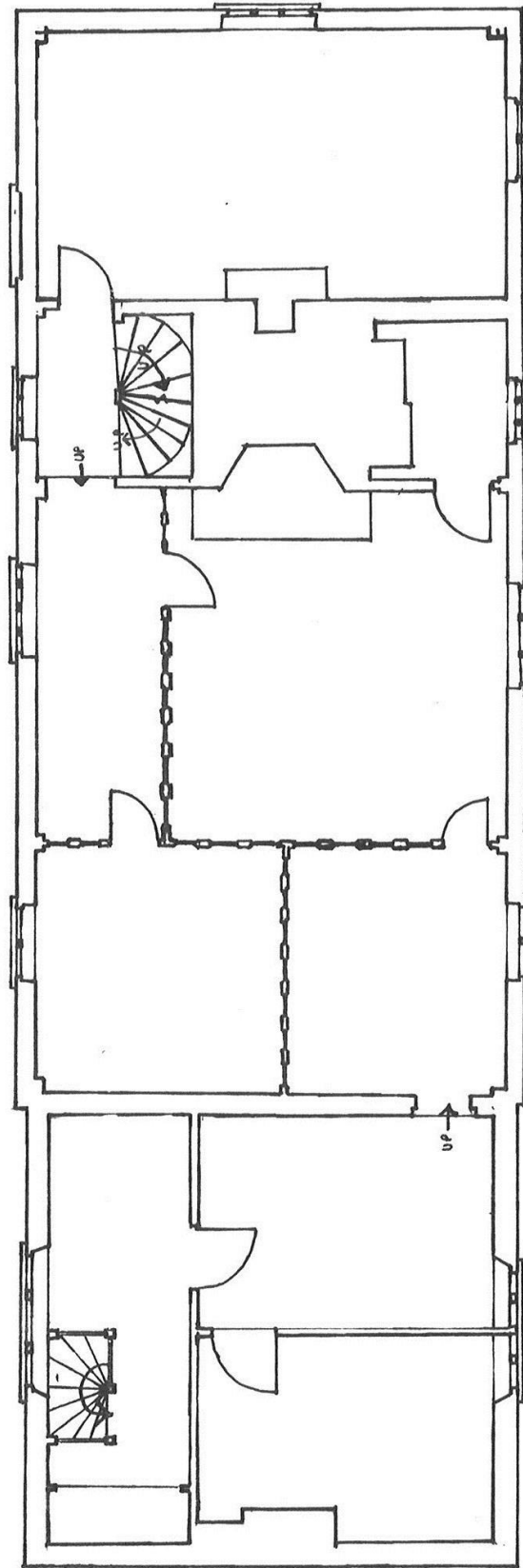
The work was carried out for the Landmark Trust by Hoggs the builders, under the guidance of Sonia Rolt, another luminary of the SPAB and the conservation world, and a close friend of the Smiths, and the architect Henry Freeland. As much care as possible was taken to remain in keeping both with the Dances' careful restoration and with the character of the original building. In some small ways the comforts of the 20th century impinge rather less on the 16th century yeoman's dwelling. In this way the full flavour of the building, unadorned but at the same time rich like that same yeoman's diet of roast meat, can be enjoyed all the more.

Charlotte Haslam,

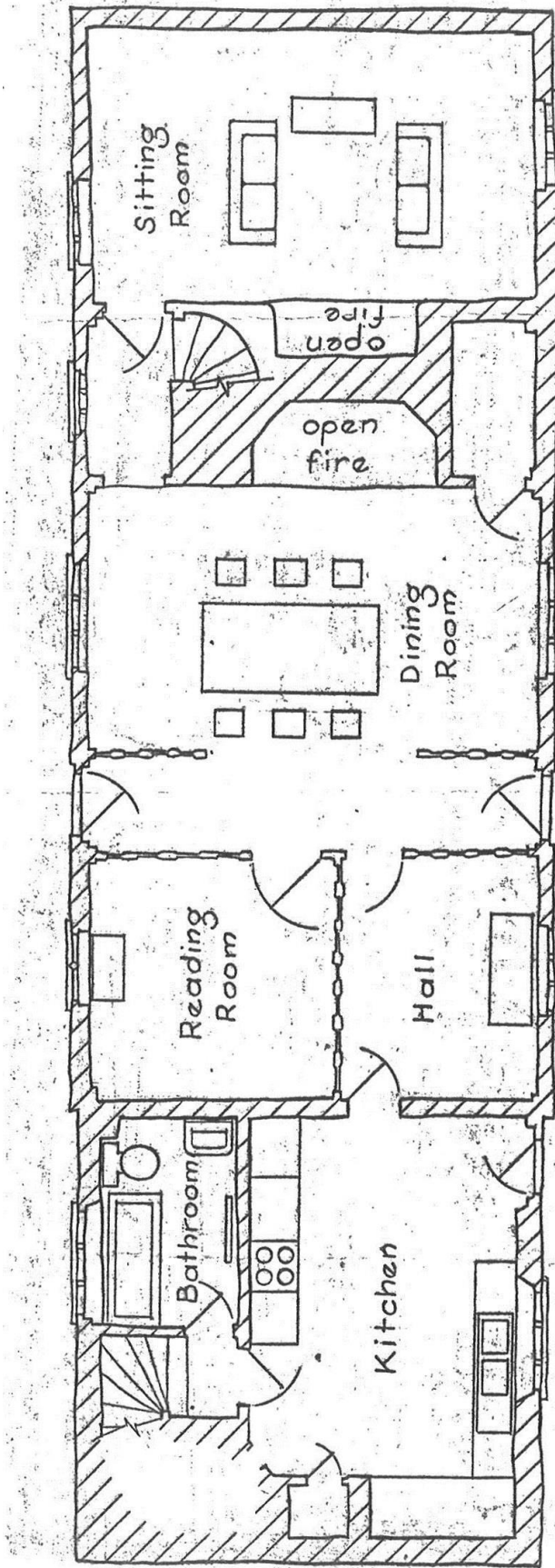
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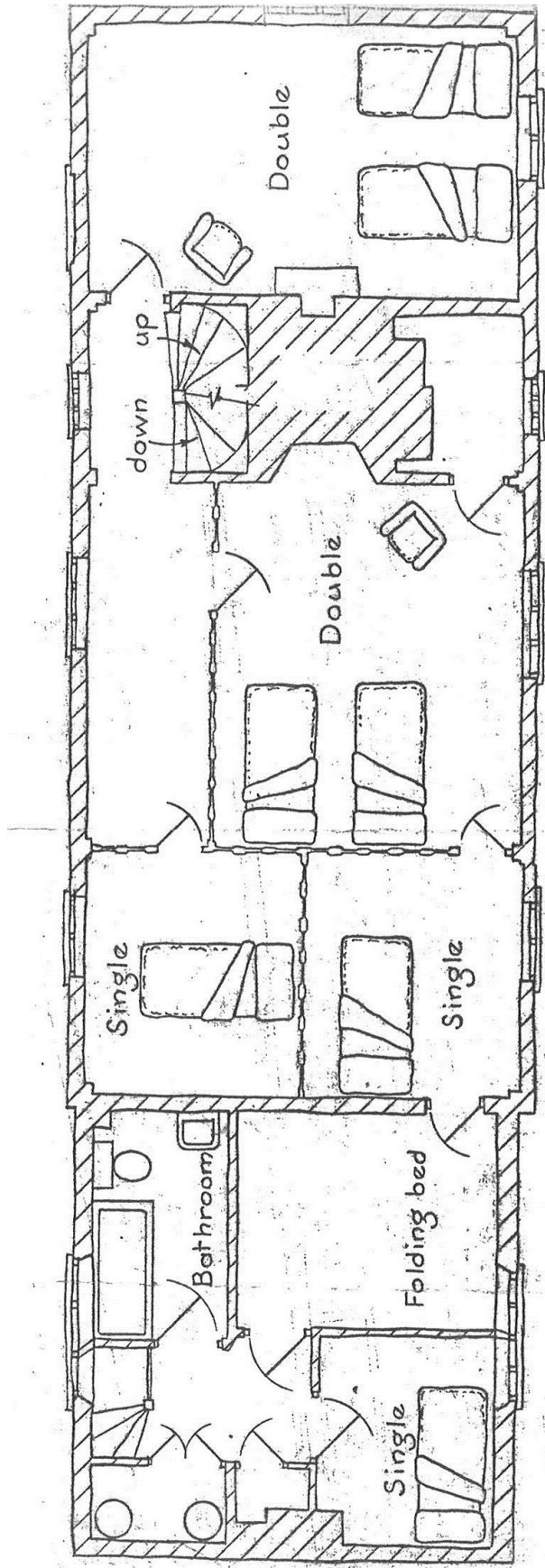
The ground floor as it was when Manor Farm was bought by Landmark



The first floor when work was carried out by Landmark



Manor Farm – Ground floor



Manor Farm – First floor

### Later improvements

In 1997 some improvements were made to the kitchen and bathroom arrangements at Manor Farm under the direction of Philip Orchard, an SPAB scholar and the then architect of Monica Dance. To improve space in the kitchen the ground floor bathroom was converted to a pantry to give extra storage space and to house new kitchen appliances. The original doorway between the pantry and kitchen was reinstated and the old bathroom door leading onto the stairs sealed up. The original kitchen units were modified slightly, but without altering the open slatted shelving arrangement.

Upstairs the single bedroom above the kitchen was converted to a bathroom, and the bed transferred to the twin bedroom on the front elevation. The original bathroom was simplified, and improved hot water arrangements installed.

At the same time the brown ochre limewash on the external walls was changed to a pink ochre colour. Whilst brown is perhaps more traditional in this part of Norfolk it was felt to be rather depressing by comparison to the 'Lizzy Arden pink' Mrs Dance inherited when she acquired the building. The pink is normally associated with buildings towards Suffolk but we felt there was good historical evidence for it on this building and respected Mrs Dance's judgement.

In 2006 our local thatcher, Stephen Letch, replaced the reed on the south slope with more historically correct longstraw thatch. The north slope will be done in due course when it needs replacing.

Work has continued, to repair the main group of barns nearest the house which are built from traditional clay lump, with a clay plaster and tarred finish.

The clay lump barn is the greenest of materials, the local earth and requires regular maintenance to remain sound. When it crumbles, the material can often be gathered up and re-worked. In 2010 Kate Edwards and Charlotte Eve of Edwards Eco Building, practitioners of this reviving skill, carried out general repairs to the barns including building the gable end wall of the SE wing and forming new clay blocks from wooden moulds which were then plastered with more clay and sealed with tar. Meanwhile, the 'hat and boots' (or topping and foundations) of the clay block walls enclosing the yard were proving inadequate protection against the rain, causing the clay to sag, so the walls were given a good new 'hat', this time of clay tiles.



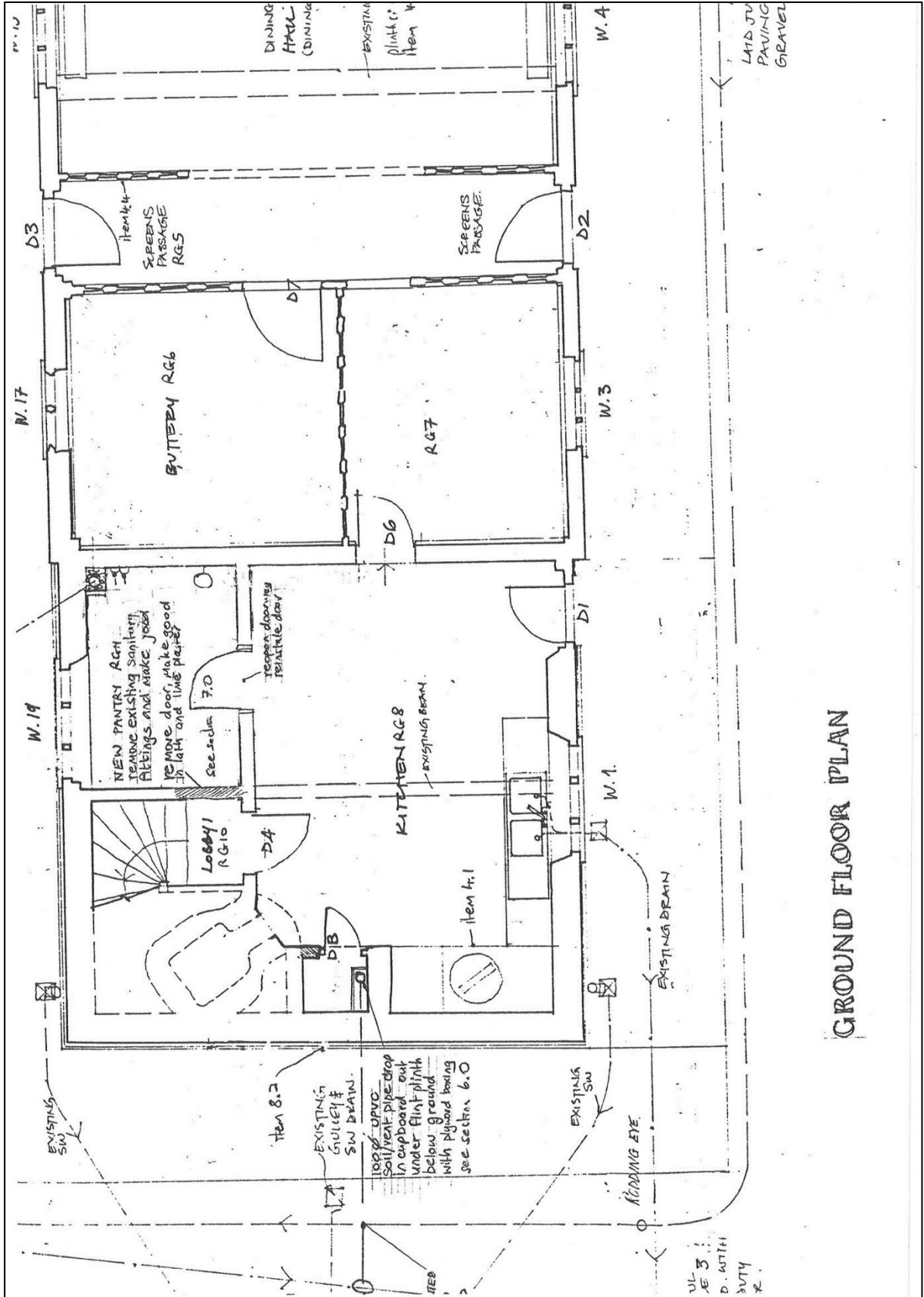
**Charlotte Eve shaping the clay blocks**



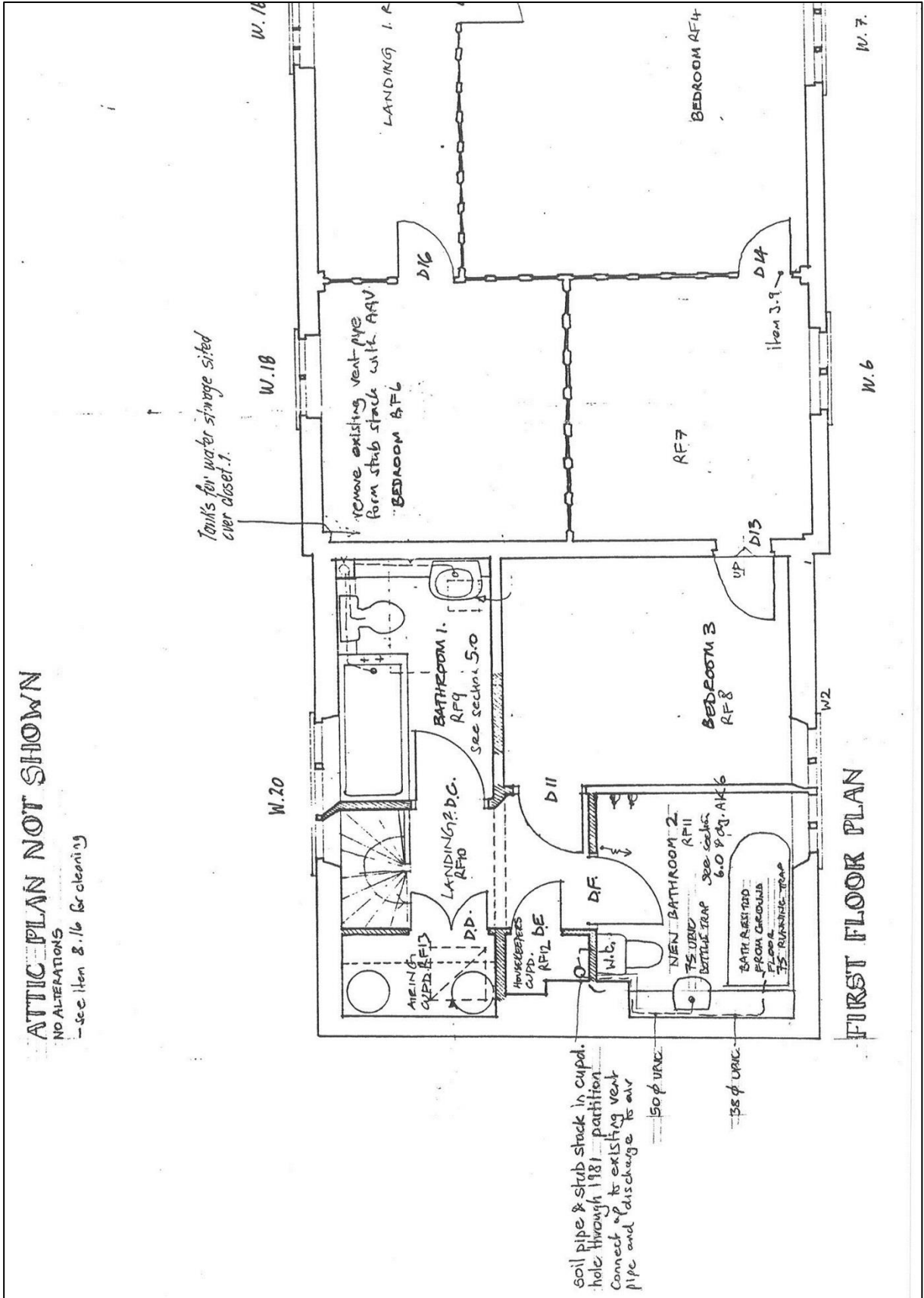


**Kate Edwards daubing the gable and barn still to receive its tarred finish (below).**





GROUND FLOOR PLAN



# Manor Farm, Pulham Market, Norfolk



by Harry and Monica Dance

It was most pleasant to be confronted (SPAB NEWS Vol 2 No 1) with an attic which, for thirty-two years has been in one's possession!

In 1948 the late Colonel S. E. Glendenning of Norwich, a valued and long-standing member of the Committee, a considerable antiquary and conservationist drew attention to a derelict interesting example of a complete Elizabethan farmhouse known as The Manor Farm at Pulham Market in Norfolk. This had been bought by a junk dealer for demolition but one who fortunately did not feel happy about pulling it down, although the fine quantity of oak conjured up splendid ideas of refectory tables, etc!

The photographs show the extent of decay, but even so inspection on a pouring wet day (the time all houses should be inspected if possible by would-be purchasers) showed the basic structure to be sound. This was at a time when Medical Officers of Health condemned old buildings out of hand due to their lack of knowledge as to the strength of such structures. The Manor Farm was in just such a state as to be an excellent example for showing that despite its condition the house could be brought up to the necessary standards and at a cost less than building new.

Having acquired the building, the responsibility of retaining the unspoilt quality in the repair and reconditioning was felt very keenly.

The house is on a moated site. It is heavily framed in oak on a low plinth with wattle and daub filling between the timbers, except an annex on the west which is of clay lump on a brick plinth. The roof is steep pitched thatch and the annex pan-tiled at a lower pitch.

The completeness of the house and the fact that structurally it remained virtually unaltered from the time it was built was remarkable. There were brick and pamment floors everywhere.

The plan is sufficient description of the layout of the Manor Farm. Beside the chimney the delightful stair-

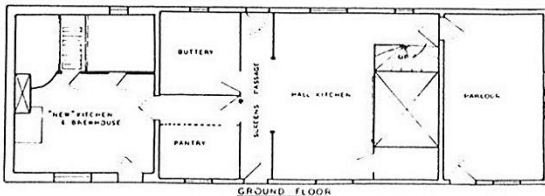
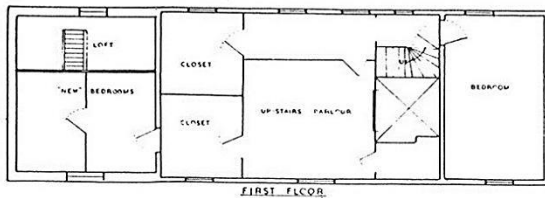
case leads to a wide north landing and three bedrooms. The large south bedroom is particularly attractive with an open arched fireplace, two walls of stud and panel construction in oak and the original oak doors with wooden furniture. The original sliding oak shutters still survive on the north landing window and in the buttery below.

This original part of the house can be dated on the evidence of mouldings and workmanship at somewhere about 1580. Then, a generation or two later, probably before 1620 there was added on the east end, beyond the chimney stack a downstairs parlour (in which wall paintings are to be found), an additional bedroom and a continuation of the loft, all under the same pitch of roof. This part is also heavily framed in oak but the workmanship is rather different and less expensive.

Some time in the 18th century the annex was built on the west end of the house to provide a scullery and bakehouse on the ground floor and an extra bedroom on the first floor. Above is a curious loft on the north side reached by a ladder, traditionally the sleeping place of the servants or farm hands. There is an interesting array of kitchen equipment—a copper, a Dutch oven, fireplace and a brick bee-hive oven.

The most interesting and quite remarkable feature, apart from the actual existence of the screens passage, buttery and larder intact, is that all the original partitions forming the rooms are constructed of oak studs, chamfered and grooved, about 4½" x 3", set 11" apart with vertical oak boards ½" thick, about 12" wide and 8' high fitted into the groove and filling the spaces between the studs. The studs and boards are perfect and of a lovely light brown colour. The five or six doors are each of three oak planks, with wooden handle and latch and "country blacksmith" hinges. All the beams and joists are beautifully chamfered and stopped. The oak floors everywhere are in perfect condition.

On the screen is a curious device of an heraldic nature found beneath the layers of wallpaper and limewash. At the lower part of the screen and on the ceiling beam is evidence of the use of a loom. In the Court Roll it is recorded that Richard Baker, worsted weaver lived in the house and his name appears on one of the bells in Pulham Market Church.



Apart from replacing a broken ladder with a small staircase and putting in a bathroom and renewing a downstairs floor, no other alteration was made, the major work being confined to the structure itself.

During the course of the repair work, the opportunity was taken to "try out" certain methods. For instance, the west gable end had racked away and it was decided to pull the gable back. The reason for the cleared attic, which incidentally until shortly before the photograph was taken, had been filled completely with old bills, cheque stubs and the like, was to enable a cable to be run round the chimney stack, out to a board clamped across the outside top of the gable window. The ratchet was placed in the middle of the attic and on being turned gradually drew back the gable end to its original position. Small iron ties and supporting straight braces inserted at an angle were fixed as a precautionary measure. The quality of the oak timbers was proven by the fact that mortices and tenons were as good as when made, and where they had drawn, slipped back into position when the gable was drawn back.

It was decided while the roof was free of thatch to "make good" a settlement caused by a rotting sole



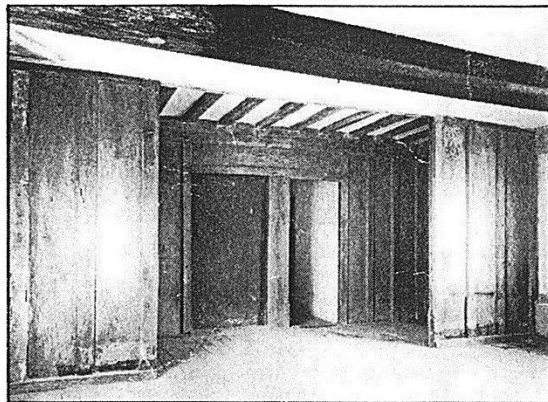
*Exterior wall before repair.*

every particle of the old infill being kept. Where wattle had to be renewed, hazel from the hedge was used. The daub was then thrown at the house, and although cracking badly in the first coating, further applications produced an excellent plastered surface which was then limewashed, the base being tarred.

The future of a building of this interest and quality is something which seriously exercises the mind. How can it be secured that a building continues for at least another thirty-two years and hopefully for much longer?

The house was listed by the Department of the Environment. The National Trust accepted a Covenant on the property, but still further safeguard was sought. This was finally achieved in 1979 when the Landmark Trust acquired the property to add to its remarkable collection of buildings. This gives the expectation, that in the care of the Trust, the greatest security is achieved. In addition to which the Manor Farm will be available for a wide interested public to enjoy.

The house was fully and skilfully recorded both during repair and on the completion of the work by Hallam Ashley, F.R.P.S. of Norwich.



*Screen's passage—16th century oak studs and boards.*

plate. A timber needle was inserted through the stud under the wall plate and with suitable jacks the frame was raised and a new plate inserted.

Little timber repair was required to the roof and the rethatching in reed was carried out to the deep satisfaction of the client and thatcher.

The repair of the clay plaster was especially interesting in that it provided an opportunity for making the daub in the traditional way. Fortunately some clay lump was available and to this, when broken down, more clay was added—taken from the pond in the garden—and the whole pile left for the winter. When the time came to prepare the daub for use, a small amount of sand and lime was added. Normally, straw was added, but a nearby farmer was harvesting flax and this chopped into 1"-2" lengths was put into the mix. To this, water was added and great care taken to ensure it was thoroughly mixed (we did in fact tread it with our feet as we had no animal to do this for us!).

In the meantime, the timber studs were tidied up,



*Manor Farm after the completion of repairs.*

Manor Farm, Norfolk Archaeology 1952:

## MANOR FARM, PULHAM MARKET

By Lt.-Col. S. E. Glendenning, D.S.O., F.S.A.

MANOR FARM is on the northern edge of the large Pulham parish, and is in general typical of the small farmhouses of the Elizabethan period in the Norfolk and Suffolk border country. It is outstanding, however, on account of its virtually unaltered condition, and because the excellent material and workmanship put into it indicate that it was a residence of some importance.

The first deeds available are dated 1640, by which time it was in the hands of the Maltward family, but structural evidence suggests a date for the building somewhere about 1580 to 1600.

The house retains the hall-kitchen with screens passage and north and south doors and buttery and pantry. Over the kitchen is a landing or small gallery along the north side, and a large chamber facing south. Above the buttery and pantry are two small closets. The stairs wind round at the side of the great chimney stack, and continue up to a large loft under the thatch.

Under the same roof beyond the chimney to the east is an extension which was contemporary or a very early addition, and from structural evidence would seem to have been built for a byre or stable with a hay-loft over. (Compare "Restoration of a XVI-century Farm House in Suffolk", by Arthur Welford, *Proc. of the Suffolk Inst. of Archaeology*, 1947.)

Very soon, however—probably within a generation, this was taken into the living accommodation of the house by the insertion of two floors, thus providing a parlour on the ground floor, a large bedroom, and an extension to the loft.

So the house has remained, apart from the eighteenth-century addition in clay lump at the other (west) end of a "backhouse" (kitchen-bakehouse) with bedrooms over, and a loft (said to be for the servants to sleep in) reached by a ladder.

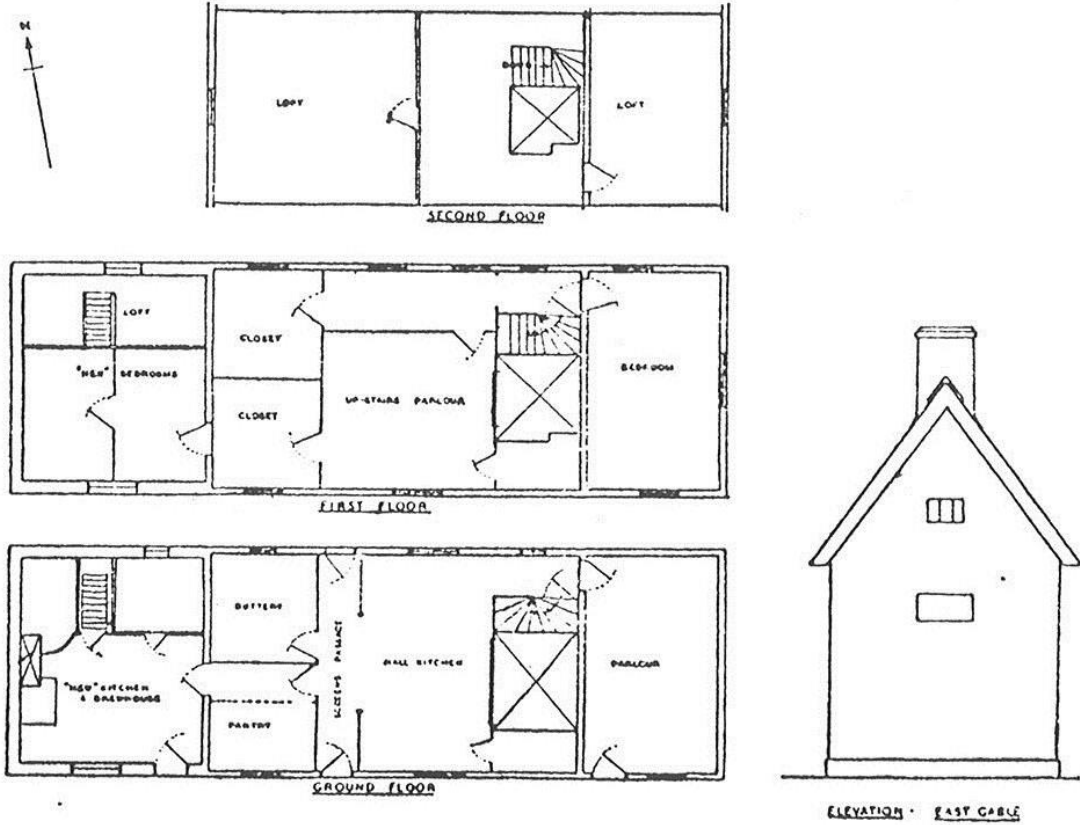
The house, except the eighteenth-century extension, is heavily framed in oak, the main uprights, corresponding in position with the roof trusses, rising from a low ground cill to the eaves level—i.e. there is no overhang or "jetty" in any of the walls.

The ordinary wall-studs are rather closely spaced, and the in-filling is of wattle and daub, the exterior being plastered overall with clay. This is a construction for which the local chalky clay is eminently suitable, and in the course of repairs the original methods were followed. Wattle-and-daub panels were renewed where necessary, and the whole exterior replastered with clay and colour-washed.

In the interior features of interest are the arched fireplaces, the original doors and other joinery, and particularly the stud and panel-board partitions which divide up the living-space of the original house into the compartments noted above. This panelling consists of oak studs, chamfered and grooved, with

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NORFOLK ARCHÆOLOGY



MANOR FARM, PULHAM, NORFOLK.

oak boards fitted into the grooves and the full height of the room. The boards are about a foot wide, of obviously selected wood, and without a knot or shake.

The house, which had got into the last stages of disrepair during the war, had been empty for some years. The roof was partly covered with second-hand sheets of corrugated iron, and flapping sacks protected some of the holes in the walls. Water had been soaking into the shallow foundations, a settlement had taken place which had strained and drawn some of the mortice joints, and the roof framing showed signs of rocking over. The interior contained the mouldering rubbish of the last occupier.

When Mr. Basil Cozens-Hardy heard about the house in 1948 it had actually been sold for demolition for the value of the oak timber. With the good will of the purchaser and the owner of the land, a stay of execution was arranged. Particulars having been sent to the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings, Mrs. Dance, the secretary, made a personal inspection, and realizing that quick action was necessary, she and her husband decided to take over the house as a personal venture and hobby. They spent all available week-ends on the property while mid-week supervision was provided by the writer.

## MANOR FARM, PULHAM MARKET

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The visiting members of our society on 1 September 1949 saw the work of reconditioning nearing completion.

The whole of the timber-framed house has been underpinned with a concrete plinth carried well down, and opportunity has been taken to introduce the damp-course beloved by the Medical Officers of Health. Oak struts have been fitted to stay the roof framing, and doubtful tenon joints reinforced with iron ties and cramps. The roof has been re-thatched with reed, replacing the straw traditional to this part of the country, on account of its better lasting and fire-resisting qualities. Several blocked windows with the characteristic "half-round and square fillet" moulding of the period were opened up in the course of the work; and, as mentioned above, the walls were repaired with local clay in the traditional manner.

The oak panelling is now (1949) being stripped of many layers of whitewash and wallpaper, revealing the natural light-brown colour of the old oak, and an armorial device has been found painted on the screen.

The floor has been levelled and the delicately coloured Norfolk "pamment" bricks re-laid.

With the addition of sanitation and domestic arrangements according to modern ideas without making any alterations to affect its character, the house will be a very interesting and "liveable" place of about the size now generally required.



## The Lost Art of the Clay Lump

In parts of East Anglia there are buildings made of dry blocks of earth, rendered over and often mistaken for other forms of construction. Earth, built into a monolithic structure known as 'cob' had been in use for many centuries, but it is reputed that the art of clay lump walling was brought to the region by Napoleonic prisoners of war. The method was used for farm buildings and cottages in times of economic depression and brick tax in an area where indigenous building materials were hard to come by.

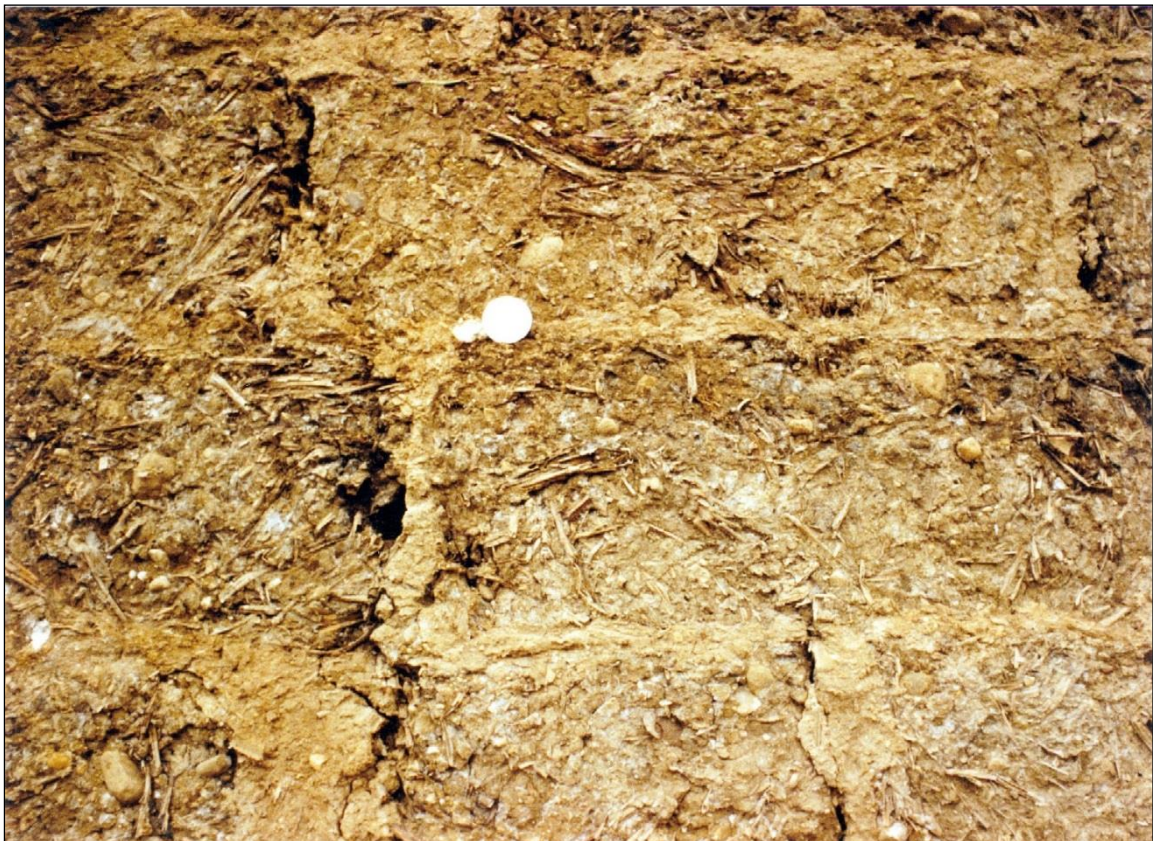
South of the house at Manor Farm in Norfolk is a group of barns forming a courtyard. The walls are made of clay lumps and the roofs are covered with red pantiles. The buildings are no longer used for agricultural purposes and have fallen into disrepair. Cracks have appeared, the render is patchy and the clay lump has been exposed to the elements, gradually washing it away. Some attempts at mending had previously been made using concrete block and shattered concrete, but these hard materials are not sympathetic to clay lump and exacerbate its erosion.

Over the last few years, in cooperation with the Landmark Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has instigated first aid repairs. The roof needed to be made watertight and the rainwater taken away from the buildings. Then repairs to the clay lump walls could begin.

Each year, under the direction and with the help of Shawn Kholucey and Michael Wingate, SPAB scholars and fellows have investigated and carried out repairs using traditional materials.

Existing clay lumps and renders were analysed and several experimental blocks made with varying proportions of ingredients. A suitable subsoil of sand, small pebbles and chalk bound with clay is not readily available for building today, so salvaged local clay lump was broken up in order to provide the basic material.

Using pickaxe and sledge hammers the pieces of block were reduced to a medium size aggregate. This pile was then sprinkled with water, turned with a shovel and left overnight. The next morning, more water was sprayed on whilst the mix was turned again. Once a mud pie was beginning to form, several handfuls of straw, together with a trowel or so of well matured cow dung, were laid on top. Shovels were set aside and the Wellington boot took over as a more efficient method of mixing. The consistency was adjusted in order that the clay lump could be thrown; too wet and the lump would splurge out of the mould, too dry and it would crumble and break.



**A detail of the clay daub on the east end of the farmhouse.**

The moulds were made of wood, glued, wedged and soaked overnight so that the lump could be released. The mould was placed on a smooth, hard, flat surface and the clay mixture thrown in handfuls so that it was well compacted into the corners of the mould. The top was then levelled off. By lifting the mould carefully the block slid slowly out and was left to dry out of the sun, undercover for a month.

This year, one of the projects was to continue the repair of the courtyard entrance walls. On one side large new clay lumps were laid in an earth mortar to build up the wall. The mortar mix was made from the same basic ingredients, but with the aggregate sieved to remove pebbles. A similar mix with sand and straw chopped into short lengths was then applied as a render to both sides of the wall. For each stage the materials were kept well dampened with a fine spray. On the other side of the entrance, more of the original wall remained. This was infilled with small brick size clay lumps which could be cut to fit the existing fabric. These were also rendered over. The hard cement outer capping was carefully removed. Both walls have temporarily been protected with a plastic sheet capping. One brick gate pier was rebuilt.

In addition to this earth based technology, lime methods were employed for consolidation work. One gable wall was limewashed. Another wall had large patches of earth render remaining, covered in a hard, black, bituminous paint. The broken edges were protected with a lime mortar filler to prevent water penetration behind. Then limewash, applied with grass brushes, was thoroughly worked into the surface of exposed clay lumps and brushed over the render.

Because the practicalities of clay lump building are not in current use, many of the finer points of the craft have been forgotten. Thus, putting into practice the ideas gained from investigations and discussion makes the nature of these repairs somewhat experimental. The monitoring continues and the SPAB aims to publish advice as a result of this and other case studies in the form of a technical pamphlet.

SPAB Scholars July 1990

## Update in 2012

In 2012, we decided to re-arrange some of the accommodation to give an additional bathroom and to make accessibility to some of the bedrooms more convenient. The utility room off the kitchen was made into a new shower room (with basin and WC). The 'pantry' between the kitchen and the dining room was brought into use as an annexe to the kitchen with a new dresser unit made by our Furnishings Department. The addition of the shower room also gave us the opportunity to make the ground floor study room into a twin bedroom (and so glazed the opening between this new bedroom and the kitchen).

Upstairs, the single bedroom in the extension (ie above the kitchen) was changed to housekeepers' storage, and the other adjacent single bedroom has been made into a 'dressing/writing' room. This now means that those staying in the adjoining double bedroom don't have to go through what were the two single bedrooms to reach the first floor bathrooms at the west end of the house.

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# MONICA DANCE

**Monica Dance, OBE, conservationist, died on July 22 aged 84. She was born on November 24, 1913.**

Civilisation's sure retreat  
Is fifty-five Great Ormond  
Street  
It is from there the troops ad-  
vance  
Under the flag of Mrs Dance,  
Let foul developers beware,  
She looks at them with glassy  
stare  
And though she makes them  
freeze with fright  
She manages to be polite.

SIR John Betjeman wrote this "impromptu of affection" to Monica Dance in 1978, when she retired as secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings after nearly 50 years' unstinting work. Without any doubt Monica Dance was the best known figure in the building conservation world for much of the postwar period. Thousands of historic buildings stand today, or have avoided catastrophic alteration, solely because of her determination to prevent their loss.

Her most lasting impact, however, has been in the training of hundreds of young architects and others in SPAB principles of conservative repair, many of whom now care for the most important buildings in the land. Raban Court, a timber-framed building in Baldock, Hertfordshire, is a memorial to Monica Dance's patience, diplomacy, tenacity and refusal to accept defeat. Between 1938 and 1960 she wrote 281 letters on this one case before the battle to prevent its demolition was won.

Few could refuse a request from Monica Dance. Her ability to motivate people was her greatest skill. With her unique combination of a genuine personal interest in people and an unquestioned forcefulness of character, she was able to persuade even eminent architects to drop everything at a moment's notice either to report on a threatened building or to appear at a public inquiry (often at the other end of the country). Her sense of geography was notoriously weak. It was not unknown for her to ask someone to look at a building at risk in Norwich while on the way from London to Plymouth.

Born Winifred Monica Soppitt in Barnsley, her first job in 1931 was as secretary to the architects, John McGregor and A. R. Powys. Both were intimately involved with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and she was soon on the society's staff. Powys was secretary at the time and after his sudden death in 1936, Monica Dance became increasingly important in the society's administration. When



Monica Dance: portrait by David Hankinson

the Second World War broke out, she resigned but was soon back again. With John Macgregor she became acting secretary both of the SPAB and its offspring, the Georgian Group, at a crucial time for historic buildings.

During the war she married Harry Dance, who from then on found his life taken over by his wife's obsession. Wholly characteristically, she was working on SPAB business even on her wedding day. Until their retirement they lived on the premises at the SPAB offices in Great Ormond Street, which enabled her to carry on writing letters into the early hours.

Once the war was over and she had been confirmed in her secretary's post, Dance turned her energies to the great problems of the postwar period — the widespread decay and demolition of buildings and the growing threats from urban redevelopment and traffic schemes. In 1955 the society started compiling lists of buildings at risk of demolition. Many houses such as Somerset Lodge, Petworth; Heath House, Leintwardine; and Morley Old Hall, Norfolk, were rescued this way.

In 1930 the society had set up a six-month scholarship scheme for young architects, teaching them the practical repair of old buildings. War interrupted the scheme, which by then was funded by Beatrix Potter. In 1950 it was revived, and one of the first of the new scholars was Donald Insall, whose practice played a major

role in the recent repair of Windsor Castle. Numerous ancient manor houses, castles, churches, cathedrals and great country houses are now cared for by former SPAB scholars.

Without children of her own, Monica Dance treated each successive year's scholars as part of an extended family. In 1988 they all gathered together to set up the Dance Scholarship Trust to raise money for future scholarships.

In addition to her work for the SPAB, Dance was honorary secretary of the semi-autonomous Wind and Watermill Section; helped in the founding of both the Georgian Group and the Victorian Society (John Betjeman originally joined the SPAB Committee to help with the mounting number of Victorian cases).

From 1965 to 1975 she was first honorary secretary of the British branch of the International Council on Monuments and Sites. When time allowed she also undertook the repair of several historic buildings on her own behalf, including latterly her own home — the Old Vicarage in Methwold, Norfolk. She was appointed MBE in 1957 and advanced to OBE in 1979.

During her long years at SPAB she worked with only two chairmen. Lord Esher followed by the Duke of Grafton, whom as a young man she helped to initiate into the world of conservation.

She is survived by her husband.