

Lyddington Manor History Society
Historic Building Survey

Meadow Farmhouse
5 The Green
Caldecott, Rutland

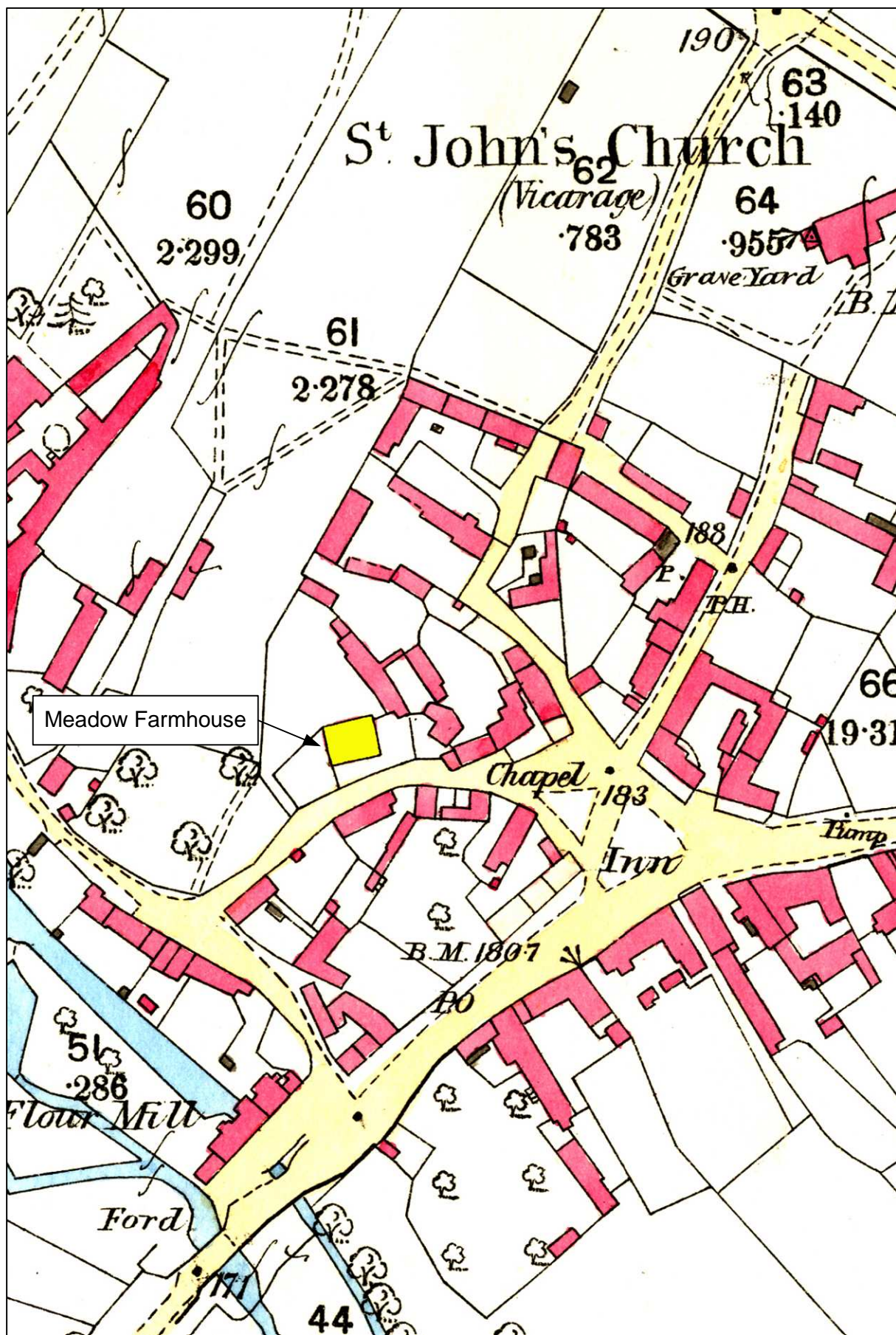


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Location Map – Meadow Farmhouse, 5 The Green, Caldecott
(OS First Edition 1886)

HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

MEADOW FARMHOUSE 5 THE GREEN, CALDECOTT

Survey

Date of survey: 19th October 2013

Surveyed by: Nick Hill & Robert Ovens

Summary

This farmhouse, although standing on an early house plot, was entirely rebuilt in the mid-19th century. It has a 4-room, 'double-pile' plan of a type often found at the period, with the finer rooms to the front and service spaces to the rear. Early maps show that the building plot was always one of the largest in Caldecott. Fragments from the original house, including a date-stone and a fine fireplace beam, indicate that a high quality house was built here in 1651. The builder was probably Peter Woodcocke, who is noted in the 1665 Hearth Tax as occupying an 8-hearth house, much the largest establishment in the village. A good quality stable building of 17th century date also survives, together with later farm buildings.

Site

OS Ref: SP867936

Orientation: For report purposes, the front to the road is taken as facing S.

The house is set back a short distance from the road frontage. The rear yard, with farm buildings along its E side is behind the house, approached by a long driveway from the SW. An extensive plot of land stretches to the N and W.

Materials

Coursed ironstone/limestone, with roof of Collyweston slates.

External features

The house forms a single 'double pile' range, two rooms deep and two storeys high.

The S front is symmetrical, with a central front doorway and windows to either side. Well-squared ironstone to ground floor, with mixed limestone/ironstone above. Limestone band course at the head of ground floor door/windows, the lintels with voussoirs and central, projecting keystone. The 1st floor lintels are the same, but there is no continuous band course here. The wall to the W of the doorway has been much rebuilt (structural repairs of c.1980), but the masonry is original to the E of the doorway. Four large windows to ground and first floor have tripartite sashes, 2/2 sash over doorway, all with 'horns'. Doorway has rectangular fanlight with radial glazing bars, door of 3 lower panels and 3 glazed upper panels.

The E gable is blank, with good quoins and mixed ironstone/limestone. Gable parapet with plain kneelers, seating for stone stack of limestone ashlar blocks to lower part, the upper part rebuilt in modern brick, probably with 3 flues. The roof pitch is around

35°. The W gable and stack are similar, except that there are two windows to the ground floor. Tall, 2-light casement windows with timber lintels, chamfered with ogee, 'peaked' stops.

The rear S wall is of mixed ironstone/limestone, with irregularly set openings. Ground floor has doorway offset to E, with 3-light windows to either side. Three 3-light windows to 1st floor. All openings have timber lintels, chamfered with ogee, 'peaked' stops. Some windows original 19th century, some replaced. Plain boarded rear door with 2-pane rectangular fanlight over. Between the doorway and the E window there is a blocked doorway, probably a little lower than the existing doorway. This doorway is the only altered feature visible, the whole of the rest of the masonry being consistent and of a single phase throughout.

An important piece of evidence for the earlier building survives in the front boundary wall, built in to the gateway: a good quality date-stone, with incised inscription 'PW 1651'. Of Ketton stone, the lettering set on a recessed face.

Internal features

Ground floor

Very regular, double-pile 4-room plan type, with central hallway. Hallway has stone-paved floor and modern staircase, installed in the 1960s. Rear internal doorway to entrance hall with 4-pane fanlight.

Front E room has shallow chimneybreast with arched recesses either side, black slate fireplace with incised linear decoration, decorative cast iron grate/surround. N-S ceiling beam, deep chamfers, no stops. Front W room has shallow chimneybreast with modern fireplace front. N-S ceiling beam, deep chamfers, big ogee stops to S end, no stops to N. Both rooms have pine-panelled window reveals, descending to floor level below the front windows, with shutters. Doorway reveals and doors are also pine-panelled.

Rear E room is the kitchen, with inglenook fireplace. Fine fireplace beam, with 4-centred shaped arch formed in the solid timber, with flat soffit, on which there is a large raised triangular section of timber at each end; outer moulding of ovolo form, which returns vertically at each end and under the soffit. Towards the left end there is a roughly carved graffiti inscription: AM 1732, with a further inscription, in smaller letters to the left end: WT. Both look authentic, with lettering of historic pattern, but added to the beam at a later date, not made when it was first constructed. N-S ceiling beam, deep chamfers, big ogee stops to N end, no stops to S. In the ceiling to the W of the beam, an uneven line shows the location of a former staircase, removed in the 1960s.

The rear W part is divided into two rectangular rooms, each lit by a window on the W gable. A beam runs above the W-E partition wall, on which a deep chamfer is visible to the N side, which has a large stop to its E end, with a big raised triangle (like the kitchen fireplace beam). The N room has a boarded oak door on strap hinges, rather than the pine-panelled doors elsewhere. In the notebook of Catherine Murray, who

carried out the local re-listing survey in 1985, this area is noted as 'former sunken dairy'.

First floor and roof structure

The 1960s stairs rises to a central landing. This was lit by the front S window and a N window, though later partitioning now separates the N window from the landing. A N-S ceiling beam runs above the W wall of the landing, exposed to its N part; it has fine ogee stops with raised triangles to its N end, but is buried in the partition wall to the S.

Two principal bedrooms to the S front, the W one with a cast iron grate fireplace, set flush in the wall. The E bedroom presumably had a similar fireplace, but has been blocked off. Pine-panelled door reveals and front windows. The smaller NW bedroom has a small cast iron grate fireplace, set flush. A fairly narrow, plain doorway opening leads from the main landing into the NE room, which was probably a service space, with no fireplace. The E gable has a large stepped chimneybreast, for the inglenook below. Catherine Murray noted in 1985 that the floor over the two rear rooms was of gypsum plaster.

The roof structure is of kingpost form, of square-sawn softwood, except for a few pieces of re-used timber. Two main trusses, with a stone-built cross wall also rising to support the purlins. The W side, which is wider, also has struts to support purlins, rising from the W wall of the central hallway/landing. The trusses have straight kingposts, with shallow notching at top and bottom to receive the struts or principal rafters. It is interesting to note that the kingpost/tiebeam joint has a traditional pegged tenon, rather than the iron strap or bolted detail which is more usual by the mid 19th century. The joints of the struts and principal rafters to the kingpost are tenoned, but the struts are unpegged. There are chiselled carpenter's marks, of traditional form. The struts clasp the purlins, which have a simple splayed scarf joint at this point. Raking struts also rise from the tiebeam to support a lower set of purlins. Ridge-board and sawn pine rafters. Big, stepped chimneybreast to the E gable (over the inglenook fireplace), the W gable being flush. The whole of the roof structure and gables are clearly of a single 19th century phase, with no evidence of earlier work.

Outbuildings

Immediately NE of the house is a stone building known as the Brewhouse, converted to domestic use in c.2008. It is rectangular ((5.3m x 6.5m internally) and of two storeys. Good quality coursed ironstone with occasional limestone, roof of Collyweston slate. The W front has a central doorway, flanked by windows, all under a continuous thin timber lintel. Above is a single window, probably a hatch originally. Good quality gables with large quoins and coped parapet, plain kneelers and apex. The N gable coping has a short horizontal tabling to the kneeler, to both W and E, but the S gable is plain - a high quality feature, which faces towards the more visible farmyard side. The S gable is blank except for a small vent opening. A short brick stack emerges beside the apex coping, but is clearly an insertion, as it does not fit the coping. The N gable is largely blocked by the adjoining Stable range, but seems also to have been blank, except for a blocked first floor doorway or hatch. The rear E wall,

against the plot boundary, is blank. It has rather different masonry to ground floor level and no quoins to the NE corner, though there is some disruption at the junction. Perhaps the building was constructed against an existing boundary wall.

Inside, the Brewhouse has two transverse beams – of unusual thin proportion (150 x 300mm), chamfered, with good ogee stops to both ends and haunched mortices for former floor joists. Against the S gable is a brick chimneystack with arched fireplace opening and slightly re-worked iron bar grate, with Victorian-size bricks. Right of the fireplace is a brick-built water heating ‘copper’, with bowl still in place and fire opening below. Left of the fireplace, the wall is fire-eroded, where a range stood, with a flue pipe connected to the brick stack. Above the ‘copper’ is a small high-set vent opening, with sliding pine shutter. There is another of these in the E wall, near the S end. A modern staircase at the N end leads to the first floor. A queenpost softwood roof truss with iron strapping supports softwood purlins – of Victorian date.

The fireplace and chimneystack to this building were clearly inserted around the mid or later 19th century. It then served as a brewhouse, laundry or back kitchen. The form of the building and the quality of construction suggests that it was originally built as a small stable block, dating from the 17th century. The first floor beams appear original, and would have supported a hayloft floor, with hatch openings in the front wall or N gable. The front W wall was much re-faced in the 19th century, so the doorway and window openings may have been altered at this time.

Attached to the N gable of the Brewhouse is a Stable range. It is 10m in length along the front wall internally and 5.1m wide, set at a slight angle to the Brewhouse, as it follows the line of the plot boundary. Single storey, with ceiled attic, of ironstone with Collyweston roof. S section with plain door and brick wall separating it from the main part. The main section has a central tall stable door and windows to left and right, also a roof dormer. N gable with plain kneelers and coped parapet. The N gable and rear E wall are blank. Inside, the main part has 3 transverse chamfered ceiling beams. The central beam has ogee stops to both ends, the N beam has stops visible only to the W end. These beams are probably re-used. Pine boarded ceiling, with large access/hay hatch to S and two small vent holes to central bays. Blue brick floor with drainage channel. Along the E wall are the remains of a hay feeding rack, though the trough below has gone. This building was clearly constructed as a stable.

Built against the N gable of the Stable is another open-fronted outbuilding. Rear wall of ironstone, part of front W wall of brick, corrugated iron roof. At the S end is a brick stack, built against the N gable of the Stable, with brick arched fireplace.

Site history

The 1800 enclosure map shows the house of a different form to the existing building, with a main block set rather further back from the street, and an L-shaped range to the W. This must represent the house before it was rebuilt in the 19th century. The 1800 map also shows that the house had a very extensive plot. To the E, the Brewhouse and Stable ranges are indicated, but there was a further block, projecting S from the S gable of the Brewhouse. W of the house was another building, the S gable of which survives in the front boundary wall, with good quality masonry, quoins, a chamfered

plinth and a central doorway. Another large range of outbuildings lay to the NE corner of the plot, of which the rear N wall survives as the N boundary.

The 1886 1st edition OS map shows the house in its current form. The Brewhouse/Stable range had a small projection to the S gable, and also extended further N. Part of the outbuilding range to the NE survived, but the block to the W of the house has now gone. The plot now stretched northwards right across to the Uppingham Road. A driveway access from the W was established by this date – probably as an integral part of the Victorian rebuilding. .

Date and development

Close analysis of the house indicates that it dates entirely from the mid to later 19th century – probably around 1840-60. The masonry, windows and doors, internal features and roof structure all conform to this date, and the structure was clearly constructed in a single, integrated phase. The front elevation, with its limestone band course and flat, keystone lintels, is an old-fashioned feature for this date, but Fernleigh House in Caldecott has a similar frontage and is firmly dated to 1855.

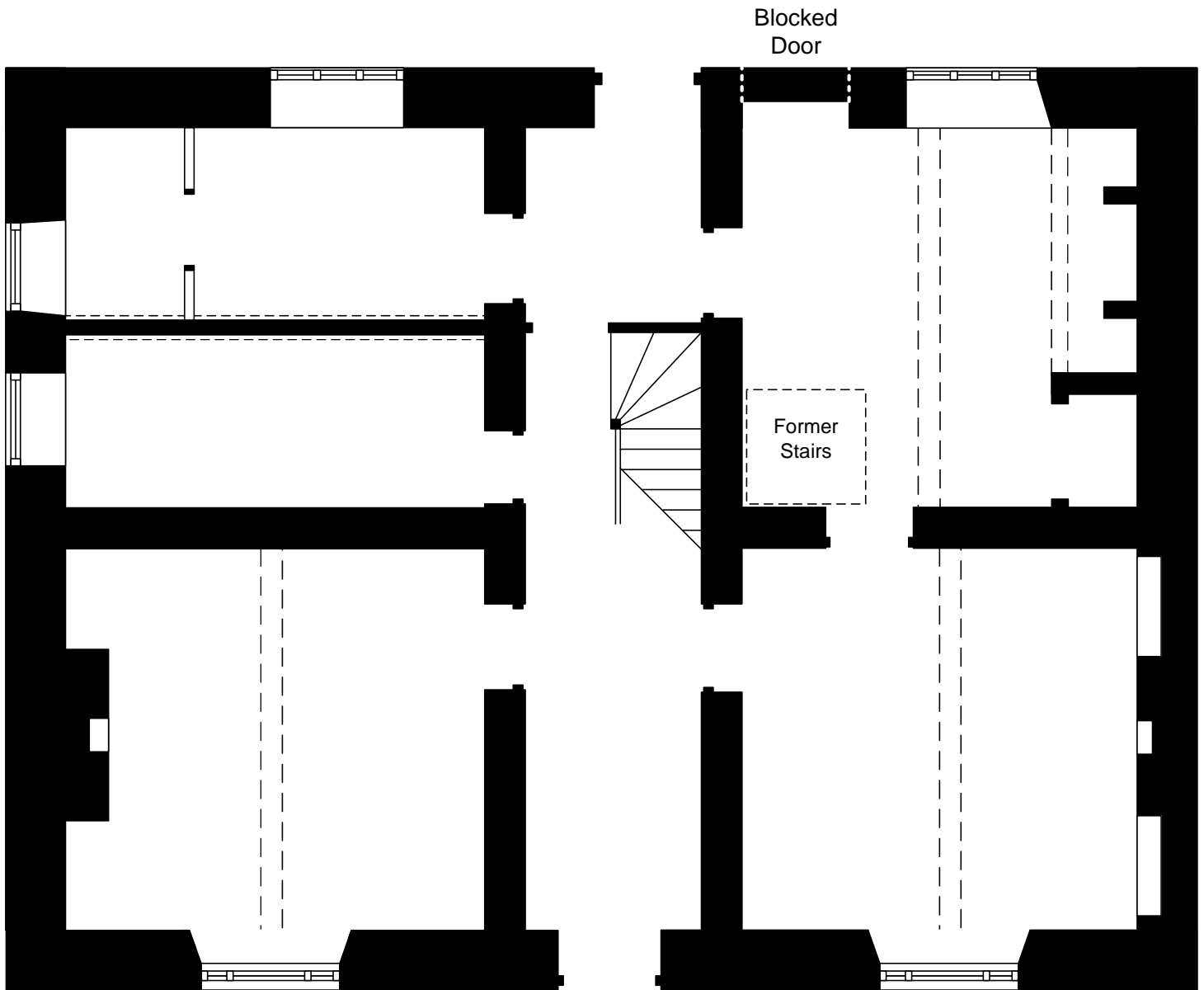
The 4-room plan form is very typical of good-sized 19th century farmhouses (as seen also at Fernleigh House). The two main rooms on the ground floor would have been the dining room and the drawing room, with the kitchen to the rear NE. The NW quarter was further subdivided for service spaces, including a dairy, and unheated. The central hallway must surely have been designed from the outset to contain the principal stair, although this seems to have been lost by the mid 20th century. The former small stair which rose beside the kitchen must have been a ‘back’ service stair. It emerged on the first floor within the NE quarter of the house, which was an unheated servants’ space, connected to the principal stair landing by a plain, narrow doorway. The only puzzle is the existence of the blocked doorway to the rear, perhaps an early change of plan.

Some key parts of the fabric from the earlier house do however survive. The date-stone of 1651 probably belonged to the earlier house on site. Likewise, the kitchen fireplace beam is a high quality feature which clearly came from a good 17th century house – as did the four re-used ceiling beams, with deep chamfers and stops. It seems very likely that all of these features were taken from the original building when it was demolished in the mid-19th century, and re-used in the new construction. The ceiling beams (which do not fit the current building, as they all have chamfer stops to only one end) were re-used in a straightforward, pragmatic way, and may well have been cased over in the Victorian building, rather than left exposed. In the kitchen, it is interesting to see it was considered acceptable to have this fine, shaped beam fully on show, though in a servants’ space. The placing of the date-stone, in one jamb of the front gateway, must be seen as demonstrating the wish to retain evidence of the house’s long history.

Although the original house has gone, these fragments do allow some reconstruction of its history. The ‘PW 1651’ date-stone can very probably be identified as the large house recorded in the 1665 Hearth Tax on which ‘Mr Peter Woodcocke’ paid tax for 8 hearths. This was by far the largest house in Caldecott at that date, the nearest in

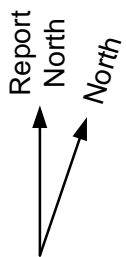
size being a 4-hearth house, with all other houses being of 3 hearths or less. Peter Woodcocke is also the only village resident to have the title 'Mr'. The very large plot on which Meadow Farmhouse is located, near the centre of the village, indicates that it was always an important establishment. The construction of a good quality stable block in the 17th century also accords with this. The Caldecott parish registers show that a Petrus Woodcock was baptised in 1615/6, to Peter and Elizabeth Woodcock. A Peter Woodcock married Jane in 1655/6, and a 'Peter Woodcock Senior' died in 1680. We can reasonably surmise that our Peter Woodcock was born in 1615, built the previous Meadow Farmhouse in 1651 (at the age of 36, when he was still single), and married his wife Jane in 1655. They had two daughters and a son between 1661 and 1666. Peter died in 1680, at the age of 65. By the time of the 1712 Land Tax, although three members of the Woodcock family still had land in Caldecott, their holdings were relatively modest. Further research may be able to show whether they still held the large establishment at Meadow Farmhouse, or had moved elsewhere.

Nick Hill
October 2013



GROUND FLOOR

MEADOW FARMHOUSE, 5 THE GREEN, CALDECOTT



NH / RO October 2013



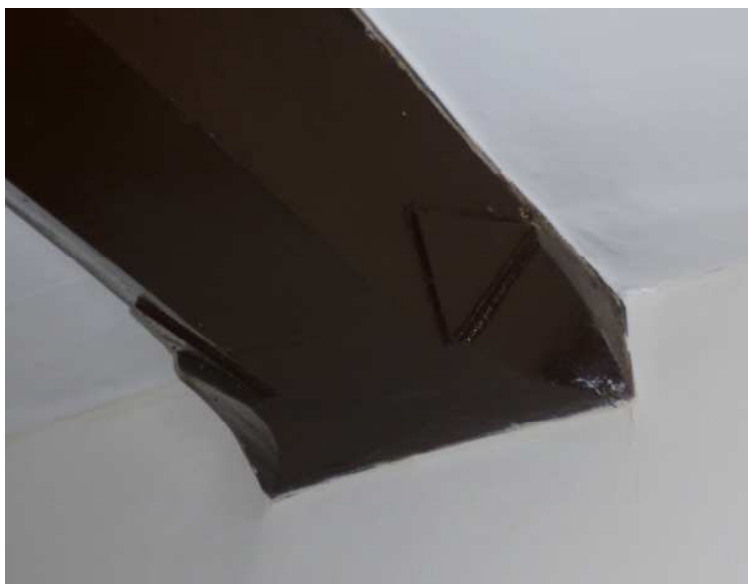
View from the north-west



Date-stone re-set in front gate pier: PW 1651



The front east room,
with slate fireplace



Ogee stop with raised triangle to
first floor ceiling beam



The kitchen with re-set inglenook fireplace beam



King-post roof structure



The brewhouse and stable range from west



The brewhouse – probably built as a stable in the 17th century



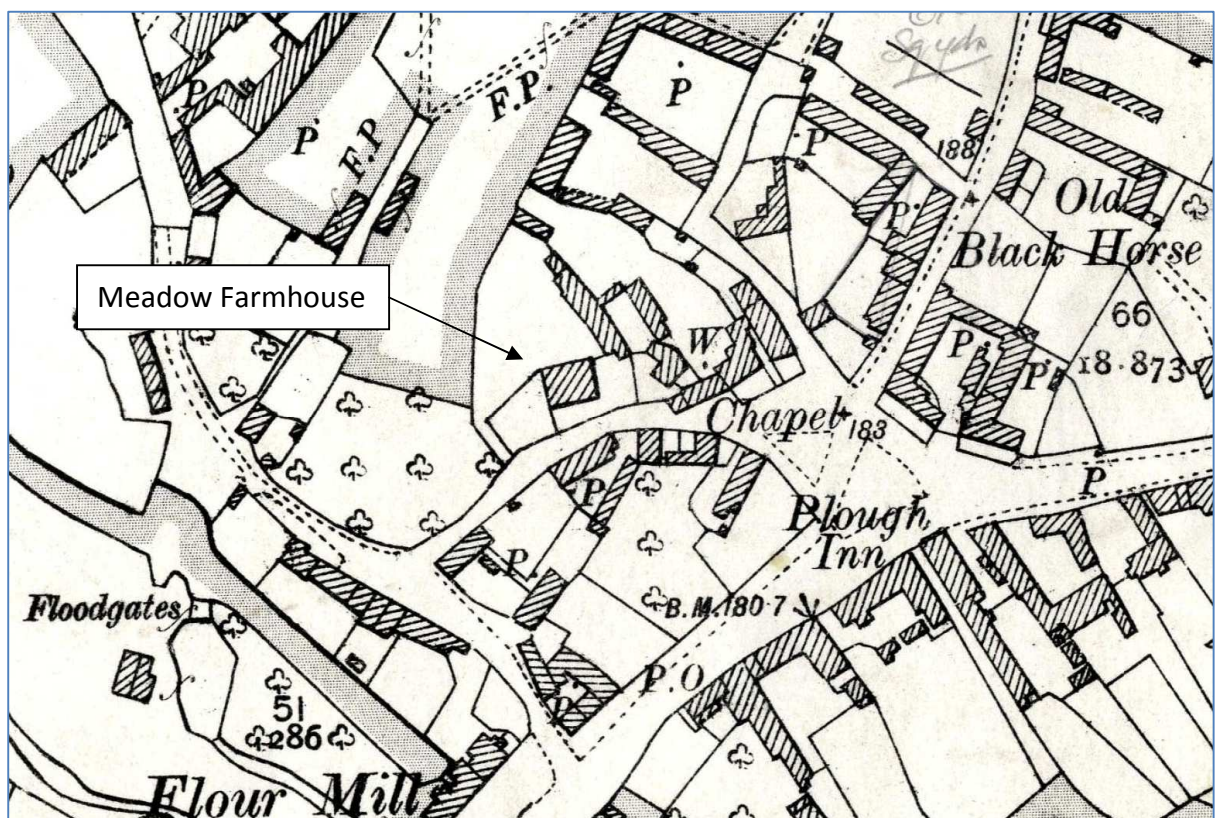
Interior of brewhouse looking south-east



Vent to brewhouse with sliding shutter



Caldecott Enclosure Map - 1800



Caldecott - OS Second Edition 1904