PRIORY FARM, PRIORY GREEN, SUFFOLK

PARISHES OF EDWARDSTONE AND LITTLE WALDINGFIELD

HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL

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INTRODUCTION

The following report has been drawn up by Lee Prosser on behalf of Prentice-Moore Heritage to provide a better understanding of Priory Farmhouse, Church Road, Priory Green, Little Waldingfield, Suffolk, CO10 5PN. The report follows a site visit and technical analysis of the historic building. It includes a detailed room-by-room description, which helps to reveal the age, form and historic sequence of the building. Measurements are given primarily in feet and inches, as these accord with the measurements used by the builders and to the geometry of the building.

The report is designed to be printed double-sided and bound so that photographs accompany the relevant text.

1 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

1.2 Priory Farmhouse is listed Grade II and stands at the edge of the small hamlet of Priory Green. Priory Green lies in the ancient parish of Edwardstone, but the boundary with neighbouring Little Waldingfield passes directly through the house. Administratively, the building is considered part of Little Waldingfield, though tenurially the farm has far stronger historic links with Edwardstone. Figure 1 below reproduces an extract from the first edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map from 1885-6, showing the local topography in the late 19th century and illustrating the course of the ancient parish boundary.

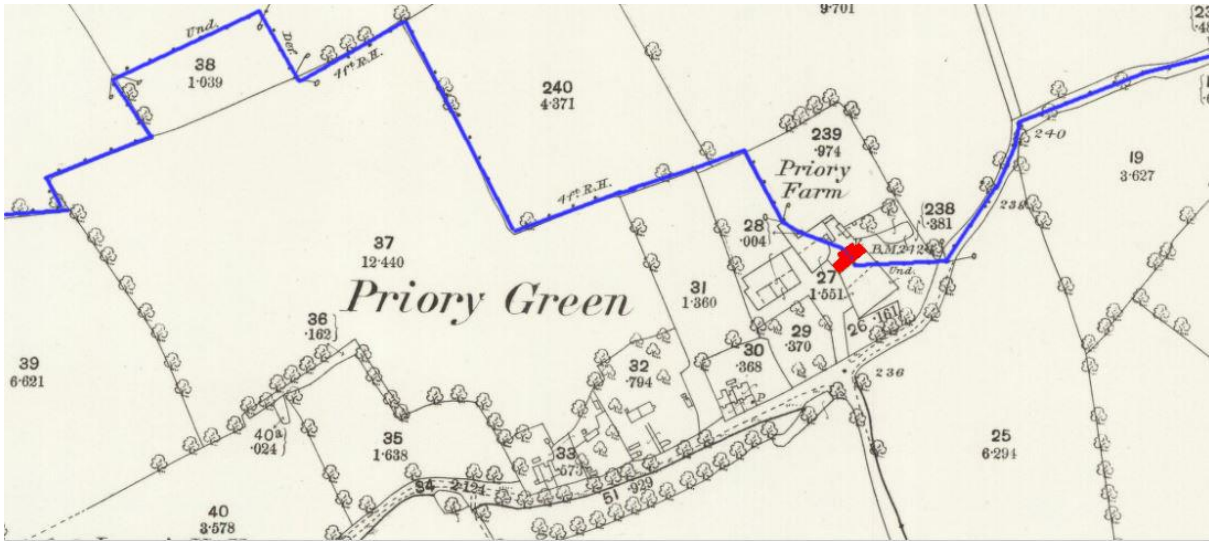

Figure 1: Extract from the 25" OS map, 1885-6 (Sheet LXXIII.10)

2 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Both Edwardstone and Little Waldingfield lie some 7 km to the east of Sudbury, and historically lay within the administrative hundred of Babergh in western Suffolk. The farm lies on the glacial deposits of the Lowestoft Formation over Crag Group sandstone. The area has a long history of wool production, and associated textile manufacture from the Middle Ages onwards.

2.2 There is no detailed published history of Edwardstone or Priory Green, and unfortunately Suffolk is not well served by the Victoria County History. Much potential survives to trace the history of the house in detail however and a number of potential avenues of research are noted at the end of this report for future reference.

2.3 The place-name Priory Green has generated historical speculation which links a short-lived, 12th century monastic cell of Abingdon Abbey known to have existed in Edwardstone with the area. By extension, Priory Farm has been proposed as the site of an

abandoned monastic house. This is doubtful and instead it has been suggested that the monastic presence was more akin to the functioning of a chantry within the church.[1]

2.4 The chronicle of Abingdon Abbey records that in 1114, the lord of the manor of Edwardstone, Hubert de Montchesney (or Monte Canisio) granted the church with its tithes to the abbey to support two monks to pray for his father's soul. The abbot, Faritius duly sent monks to serve at Edwardstone, but less than fifty years later, Abbot Walkeline (1159-64) removed them to Earl's Colne Priory in Essex, some 20 km to the south-west, which was then a dependent house of Abingdon.[2] He replaced them with two secular priests. It is likely that during their residence, they lived and served near the church, possibly in a domestic setting, and it is highly unlikely that any kind of stone monastic buildings were erected for such a short duration and for only two monks.

2.5 When the transfer occurred, as well as the two monks, William, the prior of Earl's Colne also acquired the rectorial tithes of the parish from Abingdon, thus ensuring a continuing income from lands and dues.[3] As is commonly found, the prior appointed a deputy or 'vicar' on a fixed income to minister to the parish, allowing the monastery to keep the profitable residue for itself. We know that these rights included two acres lying alongside the church, the tithes of the rents of mills and woods and pannage for the monks' swine. The cartulary of Earls Colne tells us that they held land at Edwardstone, including four acres at 'Mangarasdune' and all the land of Richard de Vilers, with its appurtenances and with 'all the men dwelling upon the said land'.[4] It can be suggested perhaps that Priory Green formed the nucleus of a discrete landholding belonging to Earl's Colne Priory, developing gradually as a subsidiary settlement from the 12th century onwards. In 1291 its income from these estates amounted to £10 per annum.

2.6 Earl's Colne became independent of Abingdon in the 1320s. In the 'Nonae' Inquisitions of 1340, essentially a tax of one ninth of income levied on lands, we hear more about the nature of the priory's lands in Edwardstone. At that time it held 95 acres of land valued at 31s.8d per annum and also a messuage, with dovecote, curtilage and garden, valued at ten shillings per annum. As well as this, it owned two acres valued at fourpence per annum, six acres of pasture at 10 shillings per annum, four acres of wood at 12 shillings per annum and the tithes of the two mills noted above. [5]

2.7 Further research of these links to Earl's Colne may be productive, as rentals and other documents for the priory survive which list lands and tenants in more detail, particularly towards the end of its history. These are noted below. Earl's Colne was dissolved

[1] Martin Heale, 2004, The dependent priories of medieval English monasteries'. Boydell Press, p.46.
[2] John Husdon, 2002 *Historia Ecclesie Abbendonensis: The history of the church of Abingdon*. Oxford University Press.
[3] William Page and J. Horace Round, 1907,'Houses of Benedictine monks: Priory of Earl's Colne', *in A History of the County of Essex*, vol 2. London
[4] Canon John L. Fisher, 1946, 'Essex Archaeological Society Occasional Publications No. 1.
[5] These are quoted in the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History for 1910.

in the first wave of monastic suppressions in 1534-5 as one of the smaller religious houses. While its core lands reverted to the De Vere earls of Oxford, who had endowed the monastery in the 12th century, many of its more scattered lands were initially retained by the Crown. Its possessions in Edwardstone appear to have been granted to the diocese of Ely in 1559 in exchange for other valuable manors.[6] Ely then appears to have held the freehold until at least the 19th century, but from monastic times the lands were farmed or let out to a series of tenants. In late 16th century exchequer depositions, Priory Farm is mentioned for the first time and appears to have formed the centre of this rectorial estate which had belonged to the priory. William Lyon, noted as a 'husbandman' in the muster rolls of 1522, was brought to make a statement about his holding as farmer of the rectory of Edwardstone. He stated that the property had been let to him in 1527 and produced a lease by Robert Abell, the last prior of Earl's Colne. In it, the prior undertook to sustain all repairs and to allow the lessee four shillings a thousand for tiles for the parsonage, the lessee to do all the daubing, thatching, hedging and ditching, and to pay for the carriage of materials for repairs. The farmer was to find meat and drink and horsemeat for the prior and his steward or his servants coming to keep courts. The lease was recorded as being later renewed to Francis Jobson for 21 years.

2.8 In the late 16th century, a commission was held to see whether William Whittle, to whom Queen Elizabeth had let the rectory of Edwardstone, enjoyed the tithes also of Little Waldingfield. During the depositions of witnesses, Daniel Davies of Boyton, a clerk, noted the he knew 'one Champon, farmer of the parsonage, otherwise called the Prire (Priory). This crucial reference confirms that Priory Farm was the rectory or parsonage of Edwardstone. This should not be considered in the modern sense of the term as a residence for the parish priest, but rather the centre of the rectorial estate, annexed to Earl's Colne, and let out or farmed by indenture for specific numbers of years. In the same series of depositions, Edmund Mundford of Assington, aged 60 years stated that he had known four or five vicars in his time, and two or three farmers of the Priory. Thomas Fitch of Edwardstone stated that Sorrell and Stocke, as farmers of the Priory, had received the tithe of cropping of trees. In the calendar of Exchequer inquisitions of 1592, Thomas Alston and William Stocke are mentioned, as well as Mr Chapman (presumably the 'Champon' mentioned above) as farmers of the parsonage.[7] Earlier documents suggest that during monastic times, the income from the estate was apportioned for the support of the sacristan of the monastery. At the time of the dissolution it was worth £20 per annum.

2.9 So far, the later tenancy of the farm has not been traced but offers good potential for further research, particularly as the records of the diocese of Ely are fairly rich.

[6] Richard Taylor, 1821, *Index monasticus, or the abbeys and other monasteries, alien priories, friaries*, etc.., p82.

[7] National Archives E134/34Eliz/Trin2). Published as *Calendar of Exchequer Depositions by Commission during the reign of Elizabeth and James I relating to the County of Suffolk* by the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History, vol XIV, part 1 (1910).

2.10 By the early 19th century, though Ely continued to own the property, the farm was in the hands of the Waring Family of The Grove, also known as Newhouse, who may be descendants or heirs of Thomas Alston, noted with William Stocke above. A sale indenture survives in Wolverhampton City Archives from 1826 which records the sale of Priory Farm by Richard Waring.[8] By the early 20th century the farm appears to have been in the hands of the Edwardstone Estate, from whom it was sold, along with many other properties in 1939.[9] The first record of the Kingsbury Family, which owned the farm for much of the 20th century occurs in 1947, when a record for alterations to the building survives.[10] The last owner, Jack Kingsbury, lived at farm from 1951 until his death in 2019.

[8] Wolverhampton City Archives, DX55/24 (1826): Sale Catalogue. Waring family papers. Sale of Priory Farm in the Parish of Edwardstone.
[9] Suffolk Record Office HD 1180/173 (1939)
[10] Suffolk Record Office EF 503/5/1/744 (1947)

Figure 2: View of the south elevation: East is to the right. Small outshuts have been pushed out on either side; that to the west with a steep cat-slide roof, while a smaller addition to the east created internal closets on ground and first floor.

3 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE

3.1 South elevation and general appearance

3.1.1 The house is orientated approximately east-north-east to west-south-west, but for ease of convenience, is noted as east-west in the descriptions below. It stands in a large plot with extensive grounds to the rear, on a raised platform overlooking the main road (Fig 2). Historic maps show that more barns and outbuildings once existed to the rear of the property. Several surviving outbuildings survive to the west and appear to surround an 18th century barn, but are now in separate ownership.

3.1.2 The house is a typical Suffolk hall-type house with a jettied cross-wing to the west, preserving a decorative and pierced 19th century bargeboard. A single curved bracket for the jetty support survives on the south-west corner. Much of the building is smooth-rendered – most appears from close inspection to be of modern form over expanded steel mesh and renewed in recent times. The entrance is fairly central to the main range and has a four-panel door with a classical 18th or 19th century architrave. Large six-light transom and mullion windows light the rooms on either side at ground and first floor level, with similar windows in the cross-wing. The lower windows have little timber drip-moulds for added protection from the elements. A large stack rises through the apex off-centre to the right; a second, grander stack with clasped upper hexagonal shafts is attached at the east end, but partly obscured on the south by a small pent-roofed extension pushed out from the main building to fill in the re-entrant angle. This houses a closet in the associated rooms.

3.1.3 The cross-wing is likewise lit generously, though the lower window is somewhat squashed in its proportions to accommodate the overhang of the jetty. A tiny four-light WC light has been inserted at the upper level. We see a large outshut to the west, through which a third attached brick stack emerges.

3.1.4 The building is almost entirely timber-framed with some 20th century brick replacement to the rear outshut and in other discrete places. The frame sits on at least three courses of probable 18th or 19th century bricks of an homogenous fabric which most likely replaced earlier flint walling.

Figure 3: East end of the house showing the shouldered stack and closet outshut.

Figure 4: North elevation with cross-wing to the right.

3.2 East elevation

The east gable end is dominated by a large stack, square on plan, which is constructed of small, thin bricks of homogenous orange colour, laid in English bond and typical of 16th century fabric (Fig 3). Some repointing and careful replacement with matching bricks has occurred, but the stack has been little altered otherwise. It has a low off-set to the east and diminishes with three shoulders to an upper course before terminating in two clasped stacks of hexagonal profile. It retains square yellow terracotta pots of 19th century date. The upper gable is rendered and contains a tiny single-light window providing some light to the attic. To the south of the stack, the small pushed-out pent-roofed extension is slated, and has rough rafter-ends visible. The render appears fairly new. It is lit on the ground floor by a three-light window of 1920s or '30s date. To the north, the main range continues to an outshut with a cat-slide roof. To the north of the stack we see the lower area constructed of 18th to 19th century orange brick laid in English bond, to a height of approximately two metres, stepping down within the later cat-slide extension. The upper area is all rendered – clearly mostly modern. A small boarded door gives access to the outshut, noted below.

3.3 North elevation

3.3.1 The rear, northern elevation is dominated by the long sweep of the cat-slide roof which rises from a low rear wall (Fig 4). It does not incorporate the cross-wing. The lower wall is laid in 20th century bricks laid in stretcher bond, forming a facing to modern salmon-pink Fletton bricks which are exposed on the internal face. A central boarded door has a four light window to the west, each with six panes. To the east, a six light window and a smaller two-light window light other internal rooms; all appear on close inspection to be 20th century in date. The roof is only interrupted by an attic dormer at the western end. This appears to have been refurbished, and is framed by its own plain little bargeboards.

3.3.2 The north face of the cross-wing is plain-rendered and given access through a split door of oak or elm planks. An adjoining four-light window lights a larder. Above, a four-light casement is of the same type as seen on the front, and here has its own little tiled projecting hood. At the base of the cross-wing, a large baulk of masonry pushes out slightly. Internal inspection reveals that this is probably the demolished stump of a former bread oven, which survives in part in the kitchen.

3.3.3 The western return of the outshut has a door into a former dairy or utility room. This is adjoined by a modern window which sits in a small recess off the internal stair hall and probably allowed the occupant to see who approached the door.

Figure 5: East elevation seen from the north-west, with outshuts to north (left), and west (right).

Figure 6: Rear of the west chimney stack within the outshut, latterly used as a coal shed. The chimney has an off-set at the base, as we see on the eastern stack. The left hand brickwork is later in date.

3.4 West elevation

Originally, the eastern stack was attached to the northern bay of the cross-wing, but was then subsumed within an outshut, producing a cat-slide roof on this side also (Fig 5). The lower outer walling, now in poor condition with some signs of structural failure is of 19th century mass-produced brick, laid in Flemish bond and rises from an off-set of moulded bricks. The stack rises to a flat stage before continuing as a more slender shaft, but conforming in brick type and fabric to its companions. The outshut, latterly used as a coal store is entered from the north by a split door (Fig 6).

Figure 7: Main entrance lobby with Sitting Room beyond. Visible adjoining the door are post and principal joist.

Figure 8: Detail of chamfer stop on door lobby joist.

3.5 Plan form of the house

The house as it is now configured forms a lobby-entry (or baffle-entry) on plan – that is to say the front door opens against the main internal stack in the 17th century manner, with the stairs positioned on the corresponding rear side of the stack. The lobby gives access to rooms to the left and right – that to the right being the former sitting or parlour, and to the left a more utilitarian space (dining room) which in turn connects to the rear hall and kitchen, housed within the cross-wing. Plans of the house have been reproduced in the condition survey and other documents for reference.

3.6 Door lobby

3.6.1 The front door is of four panels and fairly rough, most probably repurposed from a domestic, internal door. It has rough chamfers on both sides rather than conventional mouldings and is poorly made (Fig 7). When compared to the back door, which is robust, with multiple bolts, chains and evidence of locking bars (Fig 16), the general appearance of added security there is contrasted with this example, which barely offers any protection and was probably added to give a polite veneer to the building when viewed from the road. It opens into a small lobby paved with ummortared 19th century brick pamments. A tall, plain skirting extends around the room, though contact with the brick has caused severe decay in places. To the east of the door are the remains of late Victorian coat hooks. Set high on the opposing stack, a shallow recessed cupboard with a plain door, 18th century key escutcheon plate and H-hinges survives. The cupboard retains a shelf, but is otherwise plain.

3.6.2 Visible elements of the timber-frame include a principal post, which serves as the west jamb for the door. This supports a principal binding joist, which extends through the adjoining western room and beyond into the stair hall to terminate at a second post at the base of the stairs. This measures 12 inches in width with wide, two-inch chamfers on either side and wavy chamfer stops (Fig 8). The post is nine inches wide with adze or side-axe marking to the lower area, suggesting it has been hacked back slightly. It retains small slots for the ledges of the earlier door.

Figure 9: Sitting Room from the south-west, showing fireplace and closet door adjoining to the south. The main joist is boxed in, but fragments of the mid-rail of the timber-frame survive to the east and north.

Figure 10: Detail of fireplace lintel showing scribed 17th century apotropaic or protective marks, including Ms. Off image to the left are several taper burns, deliberately applied. The timber is keyed, suggesting that it was formerly plastered over.

3.7 The Sitting Room

3.7.1 The east room is entered by turning right from the lobby through a good 18th century two-panelled door. This has plain mouldings on the lobby side, but is raised and fielded on the rear face. It retains a late 19th or early 20th century rim lock and bakelite knobs. A second door in the north-west leads to the rear stair hall. This is four-panelled, of 1940s date.

3.7.2 The room is floored in wide-boarded knotty pine (up to 6¾ inches in places) of 19th century date, though the northern quarter of the room has been re-floored in similar, but distinct pine boards in more recent times (Fig 9). Where one board has been lifted for inspection we see a substrate of pebbly concretion, with some lime mortar acting as a bedding for the boards. The skirtings are plain. The walls are papered and painted.

3.7.3 Much timber-framing is exposed – including a corner post in the south-west, a small section of mid-rail on the north wall and on the east wall to the north of the stack. In addition, the principal binding joist extends along the line of the central stack and the vestibule door. This is roughly chamfered and looks wormy, with some clear signs of weathering on its east face. The main east-west bridging joist is also present, but boxed in and so not visible. Both south-west and north-west posts have splay-cut jowls. Their dating and significance will be discussed below. The section of rail exposed on the north wall has one visible peg-hole for a stud. Its companion on the east has two peg-holes.

3.7.4 The fireplace aperture is of old bricks contemporary with the stack, though the hearth with a small upstand are of probable 19th or 20th century date. The jambs have a residual chamfer, while the back has a low off-set and recessed panel. Prominent remains of ruddled or colour-washed mortar can also be seen. The lintel now has a modern applied oak shelf with brackets, but the timber preserves many ritual protection marks, typically applied in the later 16th or early 17th century (Fig 10). These include taper burns, which it is now suggested are not random but deliberately applied for protection, as well as scribed M marks[11]. The lintel sits on small timber pads. The likelihood is that both brick jambs and lintel were plastered originally.

3.7.5 To the south of the fireplace, a small cupboard or closet occupies the push-out adjoining the chimney stack noted above. This has a little two-panelled door of late 17th century date with a spring latch and one surviving so-called 'Hampton Court' hinge, characterised by its small finials, which reinforce the date. The rear face has three crude ledges. It originally had a large rim lock, now lost. Inside, the closet is fitted with modern shelves and a modern window with typical geometric 1920s or '30s stay-bar. Nothing else of interest is visible.

[11] See Timothy Easton, 2016, 'Apotropaic symbols and other measures for protecting buildings against misfortune', in Ronald Hutton (ed), *Physical evidence for ritual acts, sorcery and witchcraft in Christian Britain*. Palgrave, pp.37-67. For taper burns , the latest work is John Dean and Nick Hill, 'Burn marks on buildings: accidental or deliberate'. *Vernacular Architecture* 45 (2014), pp 1-15.

Figure 11: Window detail, showing the heavy glazing bar profile, scrolled tulip-leaf handle, catch and saddle-bar.

Figure 12: Window details including knob on catch-bar and finger-loop on saddle-bar.

3.8 Windows

3.8.1 The windows are rare survivors and require a detailed description which serves for almost all the surviving fenestration of the house, except where they differ in slight detail. In the sitting room the typical form is of six-light, transom and mullion form having glazing bars of heavy ovolo and fillet in the manner of the thick profiles we see on late 17th and early 18th century sash windows (Fig 11). The lower windows are larger, some 28 inches in height, compared to 14½ inches for the upper lights. The shelf and moulded architrave may also be contemporary. The central lower light has a refined iron-framed casement, hung on external pintles. This has an elegant tulip-leaf handle at its base, and a single horizontal saddlebar with a finger loop for drawing the window back, where it is fixed with a vertical locking bar on the left hand side (Fig 12). This has shaped head and base, and is designed with a central knob to slide up and down, where it engages with a pair of latch-pins integrated into the frame. This ensured that the window could be secured without deflection of the frame and the customary rattling for which English windows were notorious. The type of timber of the frame has not been established, but given their longevity is likely to be of oak. Overall the windows would benefit from paint investigation. A single external stay-bar of twisted iron was observed on the ground floor. This may be contemporary.

3.8.2 Reference has already been made to Linda Hall, an expert on fixtures and fittings. Though certain similarities can be drawn with houses in Hampshire, this type of mechanism appears to be unique and a very rare survivor in such quantity. The glazing bars seem to place the windows in the period 1690-1700, but this date already reflects the end of the 17th century casement tradition, when more conventional handle catches were introduced. It thus represents an interesting transition between two traditions – that of the old-fashioned casement and the newer sash. Had the owner followed more avant-garde fashions, sashes would have been introduced. It is a most interesting case study and a rare survival.

Figure 13: The Dining Room with 18th century fireplace surround, with 1940s door to right. **Figure 14** (below): late 17th or early 18th century door, and below right, **Figure 15**, fragment of early window sill or lintel preserved above existing window.

3.9 Dining Room

3.9.1 This room, entered to the left from the entrance lobby, continues the utilitarian form of the flooring with brick pamments (Fig 13). It is entered via a four panelled door of 1940s date with modern frame and bakelite knobs. A second door to the rear hall is of typical later 17th to 18th century form, being wide, and having two panels, those to this side being raised and fielded. It retains H-L hinges and bakelite handle and knob. A crude ledge has been nailed over the lower panel as a repair (Fig 14).

3.9.2 The window is of the standard form and fully intact. Above the window, a small section of window lintel has been bolted to the wall as a relic – presumably a discovery made during repairs. It retains diamond-shaped mortices for the earlier, medieval-style window mullions (Fig 15).

3.9.3 Timber framing is exposed in several places. The principal joist which we noted in the lobby continues across the fireplace, where it diminishes in quality at the northern end before extending through the wall into the stair hall. It is linked to a bridging joist, 11 inches wide, which is fairly rough. A post is visible in the south-western corner. This retains peg-holes for a possible tension brace.

3.9.4 The principal feature of the room is a large fireplace on the east wall, serving the central stack. This has a thin 18th century board-like surround and probably a later shelf. Within the aperture, much has been filled with 20th century brickwork, creating a smaller arched aperture, but leaving high side-shelves which frame deeply-recessed cupboards. The whole thing appears to be cobbled together, but preserves elements of an earlier inglenook.

Figure 16: Rear door with ledges and braces. Probably 17th or 18th century in date with contemporary hinges and lower bolt. The door abuts a principal upright of the frame.

Figure 17: Partition wall between the Stair Hall and Dining Room with blocked doorway to left and small wattle panel exposed behind glass to the right. Note that the studwork of the partition is independent of the ceiling joists.

3.10 Rear Hall/Stair Hall

3.10.1 From the dining room the floor level steps up approximately 10 cm into the cross-wing, which has been divided and partly consolidated with the main range to form a hall serving the back door and a stair hall. Walls separating this area from the kitchen are probably modern. Next to the back door, a row of 20th century coat hooks survives. The door itself is very robust, of split-form in oak or elm, ledged and braced for strength with hefty bolts, and even a slot for an earlier locking bar, which does not appear to relate to this door (Fig 16). The strap-hinges are blacksmith-made and hang on large pintles.

3.10.2 Much timber-framing is exposed within the area, including the internal wall to the dining room and ceiling joisting (Fig 17). The mid-rail forms the lintel over the back door, while its right-hand jamb is the north-west structural corner of the cross-wing. The ceiling joists are spaced evenly and extend independently of the studwork into the dining room, where they disappear above the plaster ceiling. They are six inches wide with a 15-inch gap and all well-chamfered, but with no embellishment such as chamfer-stops. On the north side they rest on the outer mid-rail, hinting that the floor is probably inserted.

3.10.3 Nearby, a small push-out in the hall is probably later, providing a recess and a flanking window to see who is approaching the back door. This is supported by a section of exposed reused timber, preserving little wattle-slots. The north face of this small section of timber is weathered. The window is modern.

3.10.4 The internal partition wall to the dining room preserves six visible studs with, at the east end, a section of hard-board or similar modern fabric applied over earlier fabric. The studs are fairly thick, five inches in places and incorporate the remains of a blocked door. Several large peg-holes survive in discrete lines which might suggest the presence of shelves at one time. A small section of the internal wattle is exposed behind glass, presumably left as a point of interest after a modern repair.

3.10.5 The staircase rises at the eastern end of the hall, and was accommodated by notching out a section of the principal joist which we saw carried from the lobby through the dining room. It engages with a principal post, which appears slighly jowled, but might have been hacked back slightly like its southern counterpart. The whole junction is somewhat awkward and contrived, suggesting that this joist has been inserted. The stair is 20th century in date, with stylised but modern 17th century style splat balusters in close-grained pine. This undoubtedly replaces an earlier staircase in the same position.

Figure 18: Kitchen viewed from the south-west showing the primary elements of the frame. The arrow denotes the position of the protective mark shown in Figure 21, below.

Figure 19: Kitchen from the south-east with the truncated principal, now supported by brickwork.

3.11 The Kitchen and Larder

3.11.1 The former kitchen occupies the footprint of the western cross-wing, though divided from the hall by inserted walls, and partitioned to create a larder to the north (Fig 18). The west side has an applied stack, which has then been subsumed to the south by the extension of the building into the western outshut (Fig 19). Structural problems inherent in this corner are clearly visible by a rise in floor level and the bowing of the ceiling. There has been much replastering of the ceiling and of south and east walls in recent times.

3.11.2 Timber framing is visible along the south and east walls, with large bay-division posts surviving to support a principal binding joist. That to the west has been truncated and underbuilt in brick adjoining the fireplace.

3.11.3 The window is of the standard form, except that it here it is foreshortened by the presence of the jetty and so has been modified accordingly with the transoms lowered. The saddle bar does not have the finger loop we see on other examples.

3.11.4 The door from the hall is two-panelled and of 18th century form. It has a brass knob and H-L hinges with a 20th century rim lock. The door to the pantry is two-panelled with bakelite knobs, of similar date but with a 20th century rim-lock.

3.11.5 The fireplace occupies most of the north-western corner. It shows much piecemeal modification. The principal bay-division post has been underpinned as noted above, while a large lintel is accompanied by a second upper lintel, infilled with brick and stepped to form a hood. The lintel preserves taper marks and large peg-holes for an earlier shelf.

3.11.6 The large posts, including the truncated example noted above and its eastern companion are of most historic interest. They are both large, (7 x 10 inches) and are braced to the principal joist by short, shaped braces of square section and preserve, on their northern faces, carpentry assembly marks. These form circles with long, scribed Roman numerals (Fig 20). The underside of the joist is 10½ inches, with regularly-spaced pegs of 5/8 inch diameter to upper floor joisting – but only on the south side of the joist and not on the north. The pegs are two feet apart. The underside preserves a faintly scribed hexafoil or so-called ‘daisy wheel’ representing a typical protective mark applied in the early 17th century (Fig 21).

3.11.7 To the side of the chimney we see a rebuilt oven, which may have extended originally into the adjoining larder space, and explains the presence of the protruding baulk of brick on the exterior face of the building at this point.

3.11.8 Just to the north of the eastern bay-division post we see a short section of shutter groove in the underside of the horizontal member, though it doesn’t extend far. At the moment this cannot be explained easily.

3.11.9 The larder preserves some external framing on the north wall, including the mid-rail and a few pegs. The outer walls include primary bracing, which indicates a later date.

Figure 20: Detail of the western brace, north face adjoining the fireplace, showing the carpenter's assembly mark at bottom.

Figure 21: Detail of the protective mark forming a lightly scribed hexafoil within a circle on the soffit of the principal joist.

3.12 FIRST FLOOR

The upper floor is given access from the stair, which then continues via a second enclosed winder into the attic. The upper floor is configured much as the lower, with single large rooms at the east, a central room with corridor behind, while the upper part of the cross-wing has been divided into two principal rooms and a small access corridor.

Figure 22: Bedroom 1 from the north-west, showing fireplace and closet door adjoining to the south.

Figure 23: Formerly external frame elements seen from inside the closet. They include the south-eastern corner post and a stud.

3.13 East chamber (Bedroom 1)

3.13.1 The east chamber mirrors the room below, but is conspicuous for its superb floor of wide oak or elm boards fixed with early nails, all preserving a rich patina and which has clearly never been disturbed (Fig 22). A few cuts are present on the south side. Many boards measure 12 inches in width.

3.13.2 Timber framing is visible on the east and north walls, while there are both bridging and binding joists, and one corner post in the north-west. The south wall-plate is plastered or encased but expressed above the window.

3.13.3 The window is as the standard form, but with no finger loop on the saddlebar.

3.13.4 The door from the landing is panelled and of Victorian date, with a contemporary lock and 20th century bakelite knobs. The cupboard door in the south-eastern corner is a thin-boarded example of probable late 17th century date with bead moulding, three ledges to the rear, rim-lock and 18th century latch. The fireplace preserves a heavily moulded surround of bolection type, possibly 18th century. The shelf and cast-iron grate are Victorian.

3.13.5 The interior of the closet preserves visible elements of the external framing (Fig 23). When the closet was added to the building, the original external cladding or infill was clearly removed, together with a single stud to create the doorway. The corner post is splay-cut and two studs survive, with the door replacing a third, noted by the presence of a peg-hole. This demonstrates the form of the original studwork, with 16 inches between each stud, and these of 5 to 5½ inches in width. Slots and notches survive for original wattle and daub infill. Further pegs for studs are expressed on the eastern wall-plate, including to the north of the fireplace, where two are visible. This part of the beam also houses a continuous slot in the soffit for a shutter groove, which must indicate the presence of a window in the central part, latterly superseded by the fireplace.

3.13.6 The north wall preserves a pattern of regularly-spaced peg-holes for studs. It has a simple chamfer. We see gaps of 20 inches between peg-holes, with a ¾-inch diameter for pegs, all according with the form seen within the closet.

3.13.7 The principal joist is chamfered on both sides but fairly crude towards the west. It retains stepped stops at the east, and continues over the binding joist into the central chimney stack. The binding joist is fairly crude with simple stops at the south.

Figure 24: View of the upper landing from the east with cupboards to the right. The door jambs into Bedroom 3 are medieval studs from the cross-wing frame.

Figure 25: Wall-plate with scarf joint, and inserted, secondary principal post within the landing cupboard.

3.14 Upper Landing

3.14.1 The upper landing is necessarily wide to accommodate the enclosed stair to the attic floor (Fig 24). The elm floor seen in the east chamber continues for a short distance in the eastern area of the landing before being replaced by 20th century narrow oak boards elsewhere. They do not, however extend into a series of modern double-doored storage cupboards against the north wall, where a few wide boards survive. Opposite the stair head, the shouldered chimney is exposed. On the ceiling we see the joists from the north wall, where they rest on the wall-plate, extending to the partition wall to Bedroom 2. These are fairly thin and waney, of around 3½ inches in width. A single middle joist is more substantial at 5 inches and has notches for a former studded partition, though it may not relate to this position. At the end of the corridor we see the wall-plate of the cross-wing, together with two early studs framing the doorway into Bedroom 3, one of which retains a filled notch for a large tension brace as a companion to the example preserved in Bedroom 2.

3.14.2 Within the cupboards, the wall plate of the building is visible and preserves a series of holes – some conventional peg-holes and so structural (at 20 inches apart), and others clearly snapped-off coat pegs. To the east, part of a post with a splay-cut jowl carries the ceiling joist but is secondary, and springs off the mid-rail on the floor below (Fig 25). Nearby, a scarf joint in the primary frame is of simple bladed form.

Figure 26: Bedroom 2 viewed from the north-west, showing the two principals adjoining one another. The left hand post is original, while its companion is inserted.

Figure 27: Bedroom 2 viewed from the east. The end wall is structurally part of the cross-wing, and preserves a partially truncated sweeping brace and blocked door. The ceiling joists change direction to the north, suggesting that the partition wall is contemporary.

3.15 Bedroom 2

3.15.1 The western chamber is partitioned from the landing by a stud wall, now pierced with a modern internal window, and is entered via an old boarded door with latch and bolt (Fig 28). This is very thin and crudely finished but preserves a typical early 17th century pull (Fig 29). The room is floored in old, wide pine boards, some of which are 10 inches in width, with some repair near the cupboard in the south-east corner. This is effectively the lobby cupboard over the lower entrance.

3.15.2 The room has simple decorative finishes, including a planked Victorian skirting. The window is of the standard form, but the casement opens to the left.

3.15.3 There is a conspicuous absence of any fireplace, despite the stack occupying the eastern side of the room. The floor boards, which are of some age, abut the stack, with no sign of an earlier hearth, suggesting that the room was never heated. Further investigation may clarify this anomaly.

3.15.4 The little cupboard door to the lobby closet is of fairly crude construction, perhaps of 17th century date, with strap hinges, four ledges to the rear and an 18th century rim-lock (Fig 30).

3.15.5 Timber framing is visible on the south wall plate, where a plain post clearly forms a bay division of the ancient frame, but a second principal with splay-cut jowl carries the binding joist (Fig 26). A second binding joist to the west rests on the wall plate but terminates at the flimsy partition, despite its size. This may be a reused member, repositioned and truncated.

3.15.6 The south wall-plate retains peg-holes for closely-spaced studding at 19- or 20-inch intervals, as we see elsewhere. There are none visible over the existing window, suggesting that this may be the upper part of the hall window. The secondary principal is splay-cut and corresponds with its companion within the cupboard on the opposite side (Fig 25). The joist preserves redundant mortices for removed braces, but there is no corresponding evidence on the post, suggesting that this too, could be a medieval tie-beam, reused. The principal post to the north, which is medieval is also matched by a second to the north within the staircase compartment, but there is no dovetail joint above in the wall plate which would indicate the presence of a tie-beam at this point. Both are pegged to the wall plate with two pegs, and are 10½ inches wide.

3.15.7 The western wall is the most impressive, being the outer frame of the cross-wing with large timbers, including a conspicuous brace (Fig 27). The wall plate, a blocked door and studs are all visible. The ceiling has a series of short joists between the principals. Most are of the pendant soffit type, though at the moment we cannot establish if they have the typical 17th century diminished haunch on the upper face.

3.15.8 The west wall has no weathering on the timber, so has always been enclosed. The widest stud forms the bay-division post, noted also below and is 10 inches wide, while the brace is 10½ inches wide. It is now truncated, but the pegs survive where it was once jointed to the wall-plate. A doorway was latterly inserted between studs, and subsequently blocked.

3.15.9 The north wall of the room is studded. Many preserve peg-holes in lines which form at least three shelves, together with some slots which may represent a piece of fitted furniture.

3.15.10 Within the closet adjoining the stack, we see a possible small blocked window, and a blocked door from Bedroom 1(Fig 31).

Figure 28: Door into the room, with strap-hinges, latch, bolt and rim-lock.

Figure 29: Detail of the pull, of late 16th or 17th century type, to rear of door.

Figure 30: Door to lobby over entrance. This is of supreme vernacular type and simple construction. Late 16th or 17th century.

Figure 31: Detail of external wall within the lobby, with possible small blocked window at top.

Figure 32: Rear of the 17th century inserted/blocked doorway visible from Bedroom 2, seen here from the rear, in the bathroom corridor. Note the taper burn on the wall-plate above.

Figure 33: Bathroom closet: ogee-headed door lintel adjoining the bay-division post.

3.16 Bathroom

3.16.1 The cross wing is divided into two rooms – that to the north (Bedroom 3) given access directly from the hall, but the south room, latterly a bathroom given additional protection with a small corridor contrived to introduce a WC into the south-western corner. The east wall of the bathroom corridor is the reverse of the framing seen in Bedroom 2. The wall between the bathroom and bedroom 3 is a possible insertion as the studwork is fairly rough, but this remains to be clarified further. The whole area is floored or refinished with 19th or 20th century pine, with the corridor entered through a four-panelled door of 1940s date. The window is of the standard type, but in poor condition. However decay has exposed the remains of a shutter groove indicative of an earlier medieval window in this position.

3.16.2 Much timber-framing is visible in the corridor, including the bay-division post, which is splay-cut, and preserves an empty mortices for a brace, which survives in the opposing closet, showing its original form (Fig 32). Some stapling of the tie-beam has occurred, probably in the 17th century. Above the blocked door on this side we also see a single, deliberately-placed taper burn. Within the room, the wall-plates are exposed to the south and west, as well as the principal joist and common joists.

3.16.3 The south wall-plate, measuring seven inches has no visible peg-holes. To the west, within a closet, the principal surviving feature of the house is an ogee-headed doorway and original brace of 8 x 5 inches adjoining the principal post. The brace has two pegs to the post, and one at the head.

3.16.4 The principal joist has simple, 4 x 4 inch common joists spaced 15 inches apart.

Figure 34: Bedroom 3 viewed from the east, with original corner post and wall-plate.

Figure 35: Bedroom 3 viewed from the south-west, showing corner post, studs and standard-type window.

3.17 Bedroom 3

3.17.1 Bedroom 3 occupies the northern part of the cross-wing. It is floored with stained, 19th century pine boards and preserves a simple 18th century fire surround with a decorative cast-iron grate of mid-19th century date (Fig 34).

3.17.2 The window is of the standard form, but here only four lights and opens to the left (Fig 35). A small cupboard to the right of the fireplace is given access via an 18th century boarded door with strap-hinges. Wooden coat pegs of contemporary date are well preserved inside.

3.17.3 Visible timber-framing includes the northern wall-plate or tie-beam and two corner posts, together with a section of the west wall-plate within the cupboard. The north wall has three studs and a shutter groove over the window, indicative of the earlier, medieval window.

Figure 35: Top of attic stair seen from below. The top threshold appears to be a reused window lintel or sill.

3.18 Roof

The attics are given access by the upper enclosed staircase. This is closed off at the base by a 19th century boarded door, and divides at the top landing against the stack into large attics to the east and west (Fig 35). Beyond, an aperture gives low access into the cross-wing roof. The staircase is probably of 17th century construction, of winder form with large treads and risers, and exposed, infilled timber-framing on the walls.

Figure 36: Eastern gable end of the building. The stack preserves impressions of a former saddle or 'cricket' which linked it to an earlier hipped pitch at this end (noted with arrows).

Figure 37: Eastern attic room viewed from the east, with central stack and door from stairs.

3.19 East roof.

3.19.1 This eastern attic is framed on either side by the two stacks – the tapering central stack (Fig 37) and the flush stack on the east gable (Fig 36). The room was formerly entered via a door from the stair, now missing, though pintles remain in the surviving jambs. The room is ceiled above collar level, and plastered to the eaves at low level. The main visible structural elements include a series of collars, mostly bird-mouthed into a slender purlin on each side. These are small and of square-section.

3.19.2 The east bay reflects a slight difference in form, with a second distinct pair of purlins set at a lower level than the rest of the room, and two adjoining collars marking the transition. This suggests a modification and rebuild of the roof, which is confirmed by the traces of a saddle or 'cricket' between the stack and what must have been a hipped pitch at this end of the building. This is confirmed by the fairly crude construction of the gable end, with studs nailed to a collar and little evidence of proper carpentry. Crude elbowed branches serving as hooks survive in the north-eastern corner as a basic vernacular expression of form (Fig 38). A tiny iron casement with a mid- or late 17th century turnbuckle handle and tulip-leaf catch provides the only light on the gable end, though within a renewed frame.

Figure 38: Detail of the eastern gable end, showing rudimentary nailing of studs, and crooked branches used as clothes hooks .

Figure 39: Central attic viewed from the east, showing aperture into the cross-wing roof beyond.

Figure 40: Central attic viewed from the cross-wing back towards the staircase.

3.19 Central Roof

3.19.1 The central attic was once enclosed by a boarded door, which currently lies *ex-situ* as a duckboard near the doorway. The eaves have been boarded at low level, and the whole area ceiled with lime plaster below the collars (Fig 39). One or two areas of failure give a limited view into the upper roof structure, which we can see comprises smoke-blackened rafter-couples, each with mortices for a removed collar (Fig 41). This is proof that the roof was once open and perhaps supported a crown-post. The roof now has three plank-like collars clasping a fairly modest purlin in each pitch, square in section as elsewhere. A rudimentary queen post on the north pitch seems to have no structural purpose, but nonetheless has been stiffened with a rudimentary brace (Fig 40).

3.19.2 The dormer window is modern, renewed, but within an old opening. Others may have existed, as indicated by patching in the roof pitch.

Figure 41: View into collar void above the central ceiling showing smoke-blackened timbers.

Figure 42: Crown post roof in the cross-wing roof. View from the east.

Figure 43: Carpentry marking visible on the north face of the crown-post.

3.20 Cross-wing roof

The cross-wing is of two bays, preserving a simple, unadorned crown-post roof with long, upswept braces to north and south. The stress of the subisiding south-western corner has caused the collar or crown-purlin to fracture and the crown-post itself to rack, though this movement appears to be ancient. The crown-post measures 5 x 4½ inches with 5 x 4 inch braces. The common rafters are all crudely under-boarded in modern materials and so not visible, though the gable end studwork is exposed.

Figure 44: View into the outshut roof above ceiling level.

Figure 45: View into the outshut roof showing external face of the north wall.

3.21 The Outshuts or Stores

3.21.1 The outshuts have limited historic interest below roof level. The western outshut was latterly used as a coal house, and reveals the exposed lower face of the western chimney stack, with high quality brickwork and the back of a bread oven adjoining (Fig 6). The roof is crude, but of oak and has a good tie. The door lintel reuses a section of medieval timber.

3.21.2 The rear, north outshut is divided into three areas, but united above ceiling level under a continuous roof. This is visible through small apertures broken through the north wall of the upper floor of the house, and reveals a good series of regular oak rafters supported on a purlin of similar dimensions and stabilised with several raking ties springing off the mid-rail, all bird-mouthed to the purlin (Fig 44). The rear wall of the main range is covered with plain lath and plaster, with evidence in places of original blocked windows, though these were not investigated closely (Fig 45) due to physical constraints.

3.21.3 At lower level, the eastern outshut is entered via a modern boarded door to the east. Most of the internal structure has been rebuilt in Fletton bricks, including the former north-west wall of the Sitting Room in the main house. A brick pamment floor survives.

3.21.4 The middle outshut is may have formed a small dairy (Fig 47) and has been extensively modernised, with the exception of the dividing wall to the east, which has an open lattice at upper level. At low level, the original sill beam for the central range is visible, extending further to the west into the adjoining area. A small hatch survives at low level, giving access directly into the staircase. This may have been used to pass produce from the room into the house without needing to go outside.

3.21.5 The western outshut has been extensively modernised, but preserves a section of the original sill as noted above.

3.22 Outbuilding

To the north-east of the house, a small, stand-alone brick-built privy survives in a ruinous state (Fig 48). This has been stripped of any fittings, but appears to be constructed in 20th century bricks.

Figure 46: Internal view of the western outshut.

Figure 47: Central outshut with latticed wall to the east.

Figure 48: Small former garden privy, now ruinous.

4 SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The unmodernised state of Priory Farm is now an unusual phenomenon in Suffolk, but its fairly dilapidated condition has allowed it to be examined in greater detail than would normally be possible and reveals a building of much interest and greater significance than the listing would suggest. Further investigative works such as the removal of the modern external render and the lifting of some floors and other fabric in due course will no doubt refine many of the conclusions drawn below, and allow a more confident sequence to be suggested.

4.2 Priory Farm appears to have formed part of a substantial monastic estate in Edwardstone, belonging to Earl's Colne Priory in Essex. It was, perhaps built in its present form as part of the economic transformation of Suffolk which witnessed a change from direct management of estates to the farming and leasing out of economic resources which took place in the half-century after the Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt. It provides a context for construction and indeed the building may have been erected deliberately in order to attract a tenant. Though of fairly high status in its own right, it may not have been a conventional house, as the estate would have been visited by officials of the monastery who required accommodation from time to time. It is possible that the rectorial estate also included lands in Little Waldingfield, as the priory also held the presentation, or right to appoint the priest there. The fact that Earl's Colne owned the tithes of both parishes offers the intriguing possibility that the house was deliberately positioned across the parish boundary to avoid the need to build a second rectory.

4.3 After the dissolution of the monastery in the 1530s it came into the hands of the Crown, where it remained for a generation until granted to the bishop of Ely, but appears to have been let on short leases of perhaps 20 years or so for much of this early period. Several tenants are recorded. The construction of the house, together with its main phases of augmentation and remodelling probably reflect changes of hands and major investment into the building by new owners.

4.4 The external form of the house belies the complexity and the early dating of the historic building fabric. The initial attribution of its origins to the 16th and 17th century reflect both the predominant sequence found in most surviving farm houses in Suffolk and indeed elsewhere, and was a sensible conclusion to draw by the inspector who first listed the building in 1958. With only external access, the inspector deduced that the jetty on the cross-wing probably indicated a 16th century date, while the massing and bulk of the main range, the appearance of a lobby-entry plan and the absence of a second cross-wing at the eastern bear the superficial hallmarks of a 17th century rebuild.

4.5 Closer technical analysis reveals both a complex evolution, but also a much earlier origin, which is indicated by specific diagnostic features in the framing, jointing, size of the timber and other characteristics, which help us to clarify the sequence. They suggest, at this

initial phase that the entire building is of later 14th century or early 15th century date, essentially forming a typical medieval hall-house, having a full-height hall with open hearth, a two-storey cross-wing at the lower, service end of the building and an in-line high or parlour end to the east, also of two storeys.

4.6 The exposed timber elements of the cross-wing provide the most emphatic evidence of the medieval origins of the house. The framing is robust, with splay-cut corner posts, wide tension braces at least on the side elevations (where one is visible in the upper west chamber (Bedroom 2), and chunky, square-section braces in the kitchen and a closet in the bathroom. The crown-post is also fairly unadorned but right for the date. Both the south and north gable ends at upper level have long slots in the soffit of the tie-beam/wall-plate for sliding shutters, indicating crude, unglazed windows which would have been protected by large boarded sliding shutters. The most conclusive evidence is an ogee-shaped door head on the external wall of the bathroom, now contained within a cupboard. Similar examples in Shropshire have been found on tree-ring dated houses of 1416 and 1419, though it might be argued that stylistic developments in Suffolk were more advanced than the western shires and might be earlier.[12] This seemingly incongruous position for a door on the external wall of a building suggests that it may have been a small garderobe, cantilevered over the side of the house and discharging into a ditch or drain. Alternatively it may have been an external door given access by a staircase.

4.7 The idea of rigid delineation of rooms within medieval houses has largely been modified by modern scholarship. Though the notion of a high and low end is useful, and in part remains valid, many such buildings were fluid in their use. If the external door is a garderobe, it is indicative of fairly high status accommodation and rather than being a purely service area, perhaps formed a chamber apportioned for visiting officials from Earl's Colne Priory.

4.8 The dominant characteristic of the building was its large open hall. As with almost all medieval halls, this was later divided horizontally by an inserted floor, and laterally by studwork partitions to create the current arrangement and give separate access to individual rooms. Evidence for the original medieval hall survives above the attic plasterwork where we see smoke-blackening to all the rafter-couples and in each pair, empty sockets which denote the presence of collars. These indicate that the roof once carried a crown-post as seen in the cross-wing, though arranged laterally, and probably more highly decorated. Most of the collars appear to have been removed, though some may survive to provide further diagnostic evidence.

4.9 With this knowledge, the lower frame becomes more intelligible. Mid-rails survive on both north and south walls, together with wide posts dividing the hall into bays, which are best viewed where they meet the wall-plates in Bedroom 2 and within the upper staircase

[12] Linda Hall 2005, *Period House Fixtures & Fittings 1300-1900*. Countryside Books, Newbury, p.19.

on the north wall. Each has a second, splay-cut post adjoining to the west (that to the north within an enclosed cupboard), which appear to have been inserted in order to carry a new tie-beam for the attic floor. The large principal on the south may form the jamb of a large, double-height hall window, normally encountered near the dais at the high end of the hall. Where the earlier principals meet the wall-plate, we might also expect to see a mortice for the original tie-beam supporting the crown-post, but it is absent. In western Suffolk, 'floating tie-beams' are often encountered in medieval buildings, which are not logically part of the structure, and this may be such a case.[13] Either of the two large principal joists visible in the west chamber may be the reused tie-beam. The eastern joist in Bedroom 2 preserves mortices for large downward braces and is the more likely candidate.

4.10 When the building was erected, there was most likely a cross-passage adjoining the low end with screen, and a door into the high end from the east at ground floor level. Later insertions have reversed that orientation, so that the inserted chimney now occupies the former high end of the hall.

4.11 Suffolk has a tradition of demolishing high end cross-wings and rebuilding them in-line in the 17th century. Here however, the visible frame is entirely consistent with the rest of the building. Jowled posts and peg-holes accord with the spacing and dimensions (where visible) of the framing seen in the low end cross-wing and indicators for the traditional wattle and daub infill are also present. Elements of the frame must also pre-date the attachment of the stack; in the upper chamber for example, a window is implied by the lack of studwork and the suggestion of a shutter slot on the east wall, subsequently blocked by the stack. There is thus little doubt that the high end is contemporary with the rest.

4.12 The flooring of the hall follows the tradition of all medieval houses, but the sequence may have been protracted. The first alteration was the addition of the three stacks. These may be as late as the early 17th century, but on balance of context and fabric they are more likely to be 16th century in origin and perhaps date from the transfer of the property to the bishop. Their effect was twofold. Firstly they upgraded the comfort of the house typical of later 16th century developments, such as the spread of heating beyond a single open fire, the introduction of window glass and more substantial furnishings which came with rising levels of prosperity in the Elizabethan period. Secondly however, they were important status symbols. Furthermore the eastern stack is more ostentatious and decorative than its companions, making an emphatic statement that this is the 'better' end of the building.

4.13 One slightly incongruous feature suggests a longer sequence. Normally, we would expect to see the conversion of the hall effected by the introduction of a single large internal stack with back-to-back fireplaces, thus heating the former hall, parlour and chambers above from a single internal chimney and thereby converting the building into a

[13] Philip Aitkens, 2002 'Timber-framing in Suffolk', in D.F. Stenning and D.D. Andrews (eds), *Regional variation in timber-framed buildings in England and Wales down to 1550*, Essex County Council, pp 40-46.

lobby-entry at lower cost. Here, however, we have three ostentatious chimneys as a conspicuous symbol of prosperity, with one placed internally which only seems to serve the lower part of the former hall. The lack of a fireplace in the upper hall chamber (Bedroom 2) is curious; further investigation may reveal a blocked aperture, but the floor in this area is fairly ancient, with no sign of a hearth. This suggests that the open hall was initially given a single stack and only later was floored over, though we cannot presume that all three stacks were built at the same time; a slight delay, even of a generation would not make appreciable difference to the visible characteristics of the brickwork.

4.14 Conversion of the hall into two large chambers appears also to have accompanied the conversion of the roof into further attic accommodation, presumably for servants or storage. The new floor joisting is fairly regular but thin where visible in the ground floor stair hall, and less accomplished on the upper floor, where the jointing is partly visible. Here, the common joists have pendant soffits at their junction with the principal. Lifting of the attic floor may reveal the diminished haunch which is characteristic of the later 16th and early 17th century form. Other elements within the rooms, such as the upper doors reflect characteristics which are dateable from the later 16th to the early 17th century as well, while the continued use of wattle and daub in the newly inserted partition wall between the dining room and stair hall suggests that the medieval tradition had not been totally superseded by the use of lath and plaster by the time the wall was built.

4.15 Within the roof, the need for attic accommodation resulted in drastic structural changes. For head height and freedom of movement, the crown posts were in the way, and so were removed and replaced by the clasped side-purlin roof which is typical of the later 16th and 17th century. The timber is fairly slender. Yet this was not the last time the roof was modified. A further development is visible at the eastern end, where a short section of the eastern roof has two collars marking a transition to a slightly lower purlin occupying the remaining eastern bay to a very rough, and poorly-made gable. The presence of impressions on the stack for a small saddle or 'cricket' which joined the chimney to the main roof and threw water off the brickwork suggest that this end initially retained its medieval hip and was only later lifted to create more room with a conventional gable. The little window with its turnbuckle catch, if in its original position, may suggest that this occurred in the latter half of the 17th century.

4.16 The appearance and finishing of the building has changed extensively. The timber frame of the medieval house would have been exposed, with infill panels of wattle and daub. The first application of all-over render may have occurred with the flooring of the hall, the loss of a large hall window, the relocation of the door and other alterations which required 'tidying up' and which was by then fashionable. We see such 17th century plaster surviving on the formerly northern external face of the building, later entombed when the outshut was constructed. The unweathered nature of the plaster here helps to establish a 17th century date for the northern outshut.

4.17 An extensive, but mostly cosmetic refurbishment appears to have occurred in the later 17th in order to give the building a polite veneer. All the historic windows were replaced with generous lights of ingenious design, which have been discussed at length above. We can date these to around 1680-1700, and they accompany other modest alterations, such as panelled doors, and undoubtedly other 'soft' features such as wall finishes and chimneypieces which are most susceptible to obliteration under changing fashions and are no longer apparent in many places.

4.18 The issue of decorative finishes is one which cannot yet be established for Priory Farm with any certainty. In the 17th century many houses of similar status in Suffolk were adorned with painted plasterwork in imitation of textiles, and elements of these early schemes may survive in places here too. In this house they are particularly promising because of the unrestored nature of the building and the preservation of much old plaster. Internal timbers were occasionally painted red or grey. An interesting observation is the predominance of early 17th century apotropaic or protective marking, such as taper burns and scribed symbols, particularly on areas of perceived 'vulnerability', such as doorways and fireplaces. Recent study has shown these to be almost ubiquitous, but rarely observed or recorded in detail.

4.19 Later alterations, particularly marking the 19th and 20th centuries are sparse, but this is not surprising, and probably reflects the gradual decline of Priory Farm from the house of a prosperous yeoman farmer in the early modern period, to that of a tenant, with little or no further investment in the property by the actual owner, nor any incentive by the tenant to undertake improvement. Several of the 20th century alterations seen in the house appear to date from the immediate post-war period, but since then only essential repairs were undertaken and cosmetic refurbishment attempted.

5 POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 The technical analysis reveals a most interesting and significant house, with much potential for further discovery. First and foremost is forensic examination. The removal of render and the process of refurbishment offers a unique opportunity to clarify areas of uncertainty and in particular to reveal the structural frame in more complete detail. More precise dating might also be achieved by a programme of tree-ring dating, though Suffolk is notoriously problematic as its timber is often fast-grown and subject to particular local conditions of growth which make cross-matching difficult. Refurbishment should also consider that important decorative finishes might survive.

5.2 The initial documentary research outlined above offers good omens to complete the story of the house. Though the documents are scattered, they are plentiful, and might allow a more detailed history to be compiled. Tenants and owners from the early 19th century onwards could be established by reference to Post Office directories such as 'Kelly's', which

are useful particularly from the 1840s to the 1960s, and can be tied to occupation. The tithe survey of 1839-41 would also be helpful in this respect.

5.3 There are many scattered sources for the Priory of Earl's Colne which may yield some results; some in the Essex Record Office and others in the National Archives. Many of the records for the bishopric of Ely now reside either at Cambridge University Library, where the local court rolls are also to be found, or in the case of the parliamentary survey of 1648-52, when the holdings of the bishopric were inventoried and liquidated during the Commonwealth, at Lambeth Palace Library (COMM/12A/7).

5.4 Select documents which might offer further potential include:

- Abstract of the survey of the manor of Edwinstree of 1684: British Library Add MS 19197.
- Rental of the manor of Edwardstone, 1680: British Library Add MS 19198.
- Extent of Edwardstone Manor, 1300-1400: British Library BL Add MS 34560.
- Edwardstone Hall Rental 1875: Suffolk Record Office HA407/6022 (Box 4).
- Minute book of the manor, 1805-93: Suffolk Record Office HA 518/8/1.
- Notice of sale of farming stock at Priory and Grove Farms, 1917: Suffolk Record Office HD526/42/6.
- Court Rolls: Many survive in the University of Cambridge Library, 1334-1672: KCAR/6/2/020/1.
- Census returns from 1841 to 1911. Accessible online.
- Hearth Tax and Lay Subsidy returns, taken in the 16th century and 1664. Most are housed in the National Archives. The 1660s subsidies have been published, but the return for Edwardstone is damaged.
- Court of Chancery Records: Title to the rectory or Priory of Edwardstone and the rectory of Little Waldingfield, 1603-25. National Archives C2/JasI/A6/38.

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