

# Windmill Farmhouse, Wingrave

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT / March 2012

Buckinghamshire  
Archaeological  
Society



SURVEY  
AND REPORT:  
Andrew Muir

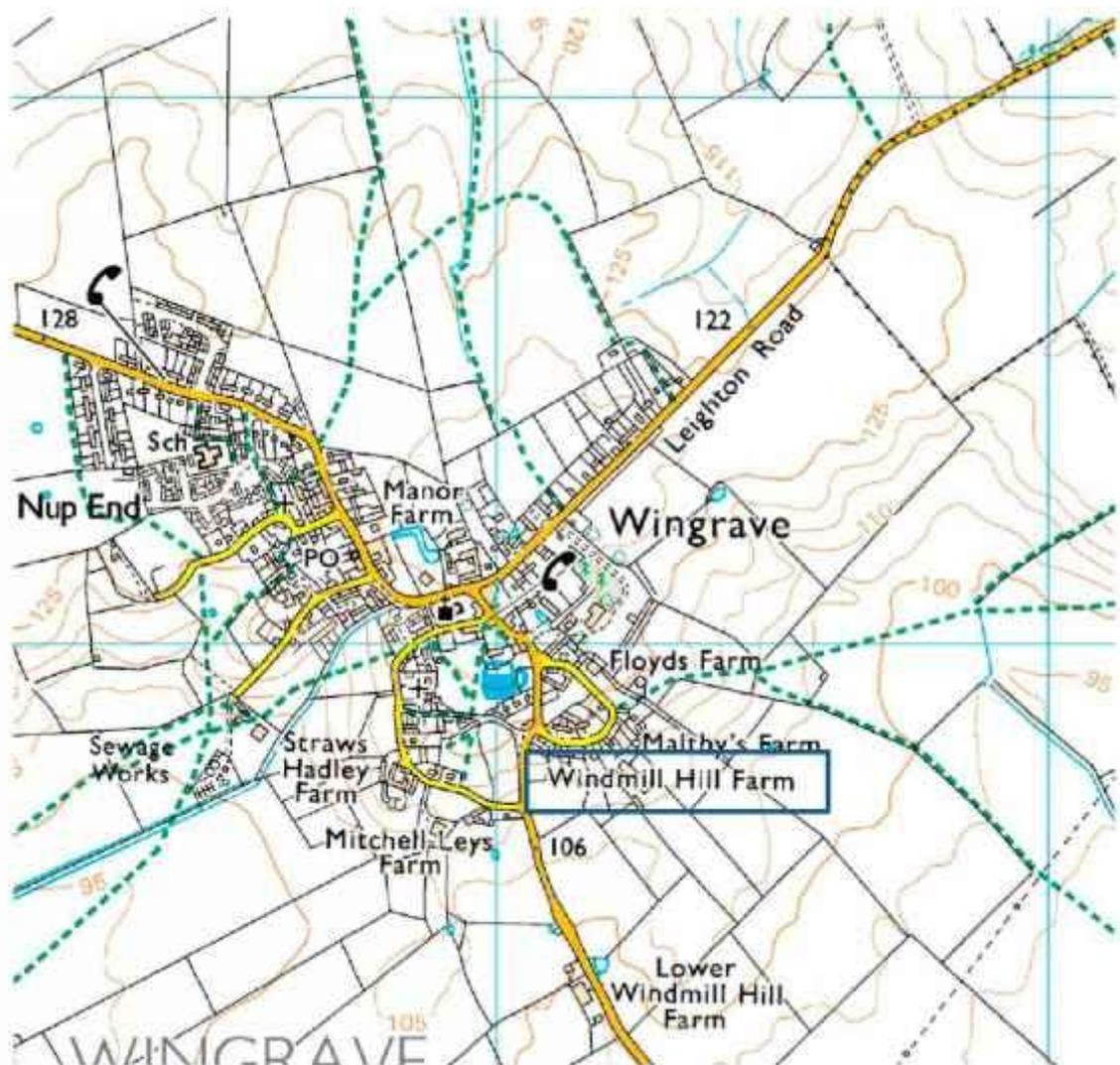
Report number  
BAS/2011-07

# THE HISTORY OF WINDMILL FARMHOUSE



ISSUE 2 MARCH 2012

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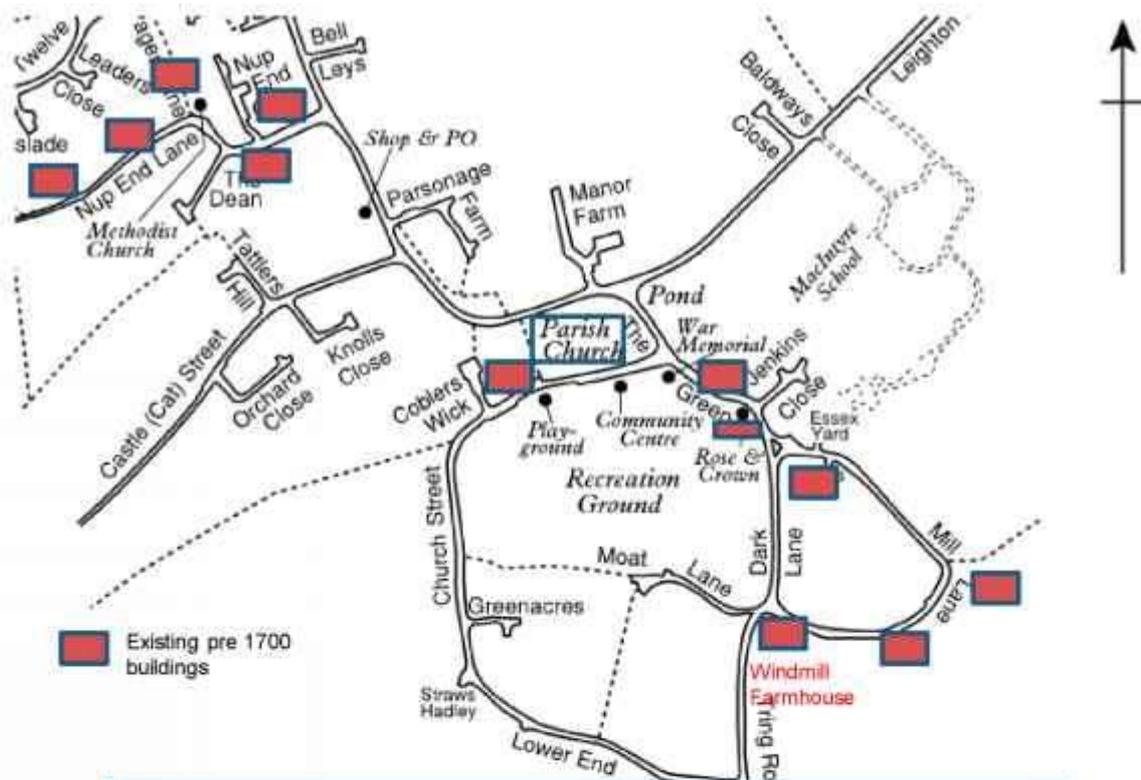


Fig 1 Surviving buildings in Wingrave dating from 1700 or earlier

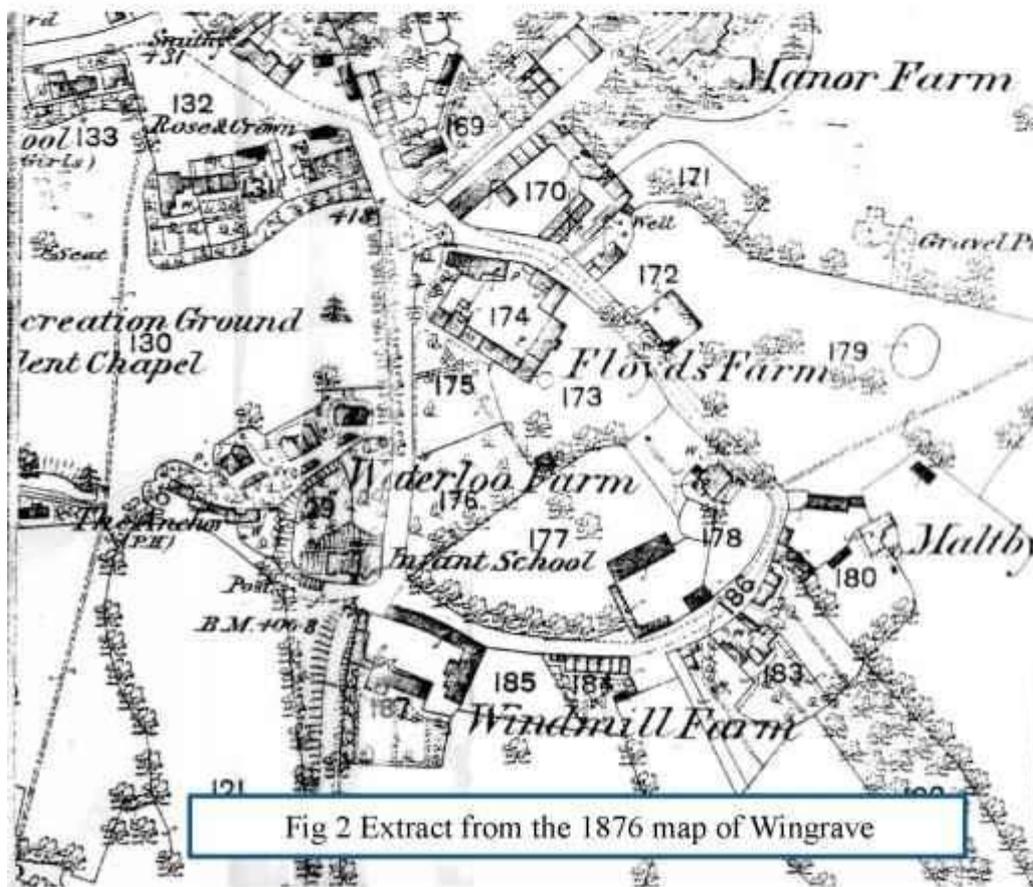


Fig 2 Extract from the 1876 map of Wingrave

## Introduction

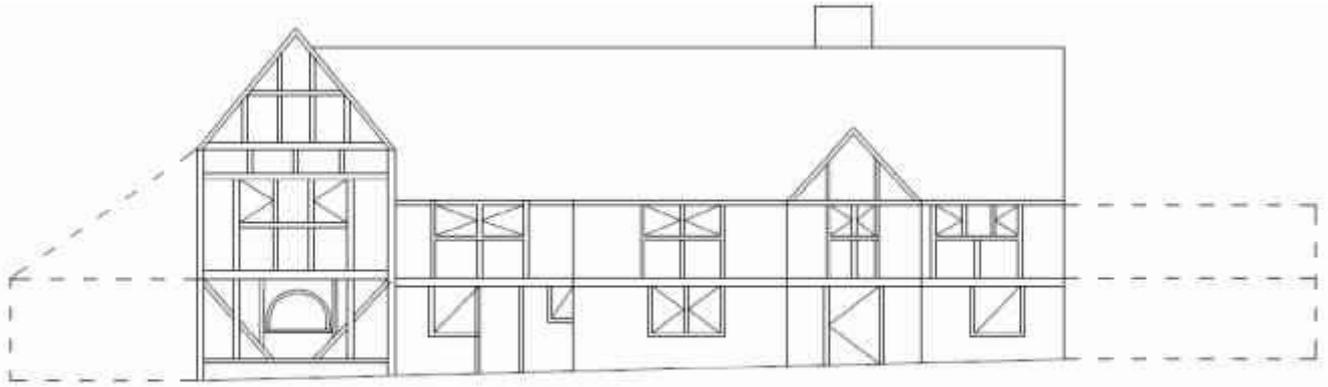
Windmill Farmhouse (now known as Windmill Hill Farm) is situated on the southern edge of the village of Wingrave, near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. It is one of about 13 surviving buildings in the village dating from before 1700, which are grouped in three distinct clusters - the area around the Church and Green, Nup End to the north west of the Church, and Mill Lane to the south east of the Church (Fig 1).

*The building was surveyed by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHM) in 1911 [1] when it was described as "... the building is of F shaped plan, and probably of late 16<sup>th</sup> century date, much altered, and with modern additions ... ". It was subsequently listed in 1951 [2] with the description "... C17, altered. Timber frame with whitewashed brick infill, ground floor of 3 bays to left rebuilt in whitewashed brick ... ".*

This brief history looks at the farmhouse from two inter-related perspectives: the physical structure of the building, and the people who owned and lived in it. No records have yet been found of the owners and occupiers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, so the early history is necessarily an examination of the structure of the building, making reference to authors such as Brunskill. There are, however, documents in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies and other archives which make it possible to identify the owners and some of the occupants from about 1700 onwards, so that the emphasis in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is more on the social history.

A list of owners is shown in Annex 1, which ranges from the Rothschilds to Buckinghamshire County Council. The occupants were predominately farm labourers until the house ceased to operate as a farm in the 1970s, and (perhaps unusually for this size and status of building) no owners lived in the house between 1800 and 1970.

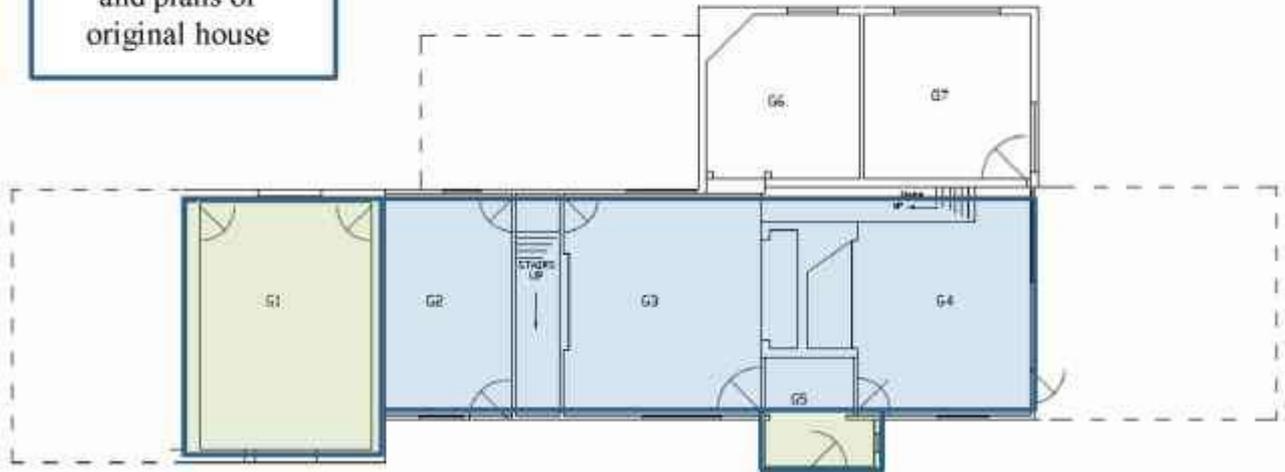




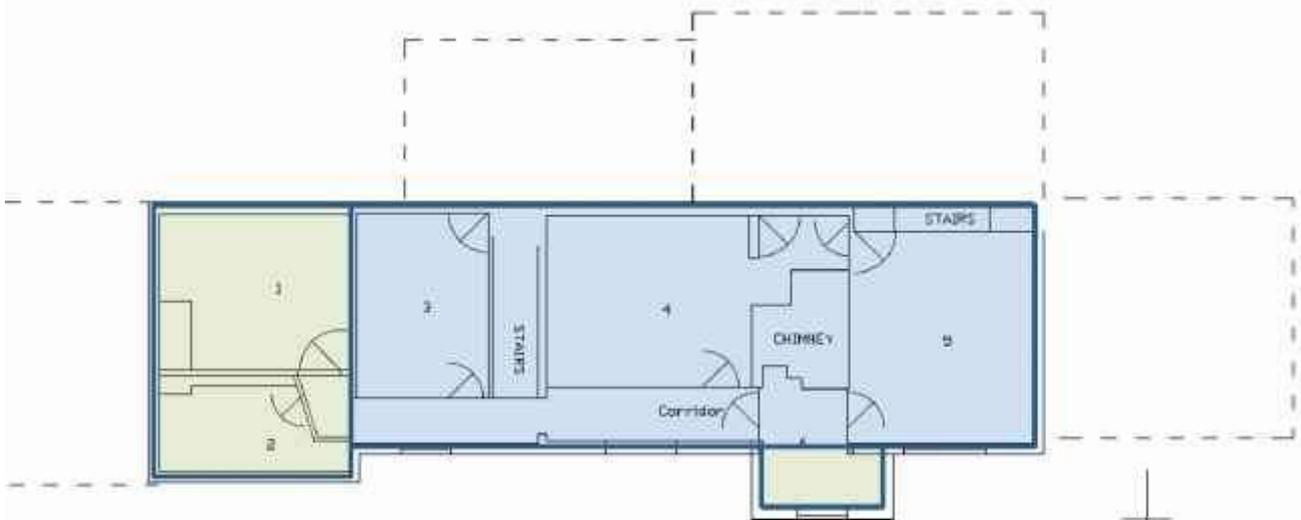
Windmill Hill Farm - Front Elevation



Fig 4 Elevation and plans of original house



Windmill Hill Farm - Ground Floor Plan



Windmill Hill Farm - First Floor



### The 17<sup>th</sup> Century house

The construction of the house suggests that it was probably built in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and this has been confirmed by a dendrochronological survey which indicates an original construction date of 1616 (Annex 2). The house was built in two stages, the first one (shaded blue in Fig 4) being a "textbook" three bay, two storey lobby entrance farmhouse as described by Cunnington [3] and Brunskill [4] (Fig 5).

A fourth bay (shaded green in Fig 4) was added to the house at some time in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the roof line at right angles to the original one, and at the same time the entrance lobby was extended outwards. The date and reason for adding the fourth bay are not known, but Cunnington [5] comments that *"from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century we sometimes find two farmhouses built close together, even attached, apparently sharing the farm buildings and land ... these houses often appear to be deliberately planned to avoid one house overlooking another ... the two units may have been built together, or differ in date, perhaps only by one generation, say forty to fifty years"*. The additions certainly add "status" to the original farmhouse and it can be conjectured that they reflect an increase in status and fortunes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century owners.

No documents have yet been found which identify the owners and occupants of the house during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

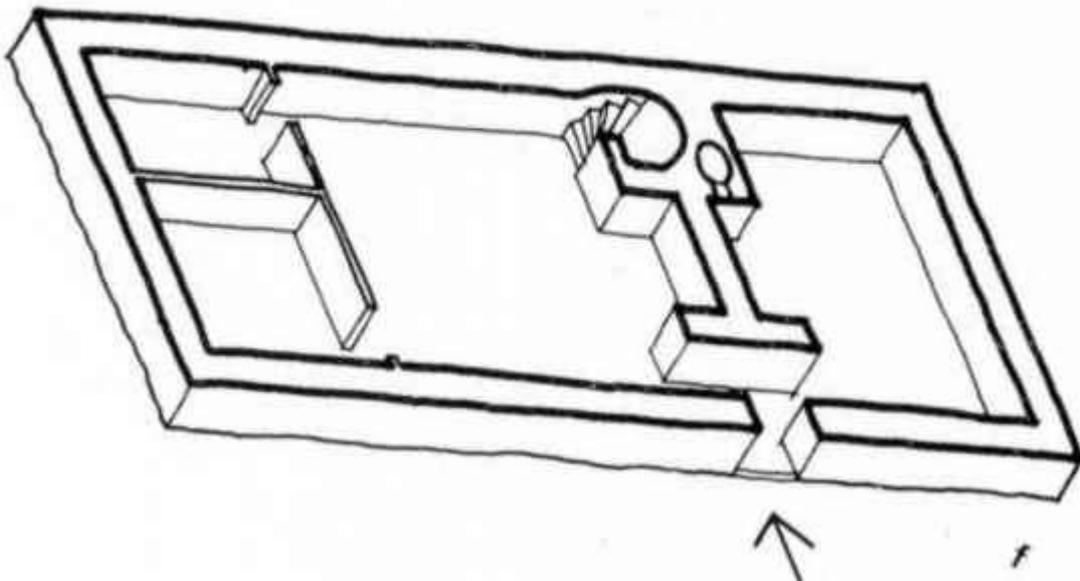


Fig 5 Lobby entrance farmhouse (Brunskill)



Figs 6 and 7 West elevation:  
exterior (left) and interior (above)

Fig 8 Centre of north elevation



### The structure of the house

The structure of the house is an oak box frame (Fig 9), probably originally with a lath and plaster infill, which was replaced in later centuries by the existing brick infill; this structure is typical of farmhouses built in eastern England [6]. It is also probable that the brick chimney was constructed at the same time as the timber frame, but there is no evidence to confirm or counter this assumption.

Figs 6 and 7 show the west elevation; of particular note are the curved windbraces, which are generally associated with 16<sup>th</sup> century houses - 17<sup>th</sup> century houses tend to be associated with straight windbraces. Possibly the curved windbraces had been reused from an earlier house or maybe construction techniques in rural Buckinghamshire did not follow contemporary practices!

Fig 8 shows the two centre bays of the north elevation - note the closer spacing of the intermediate posts of the principal bay (room 4, Fig 4) and the lack of visible intermediate posts at ground floor level, due probably to the original timbers having rotted.

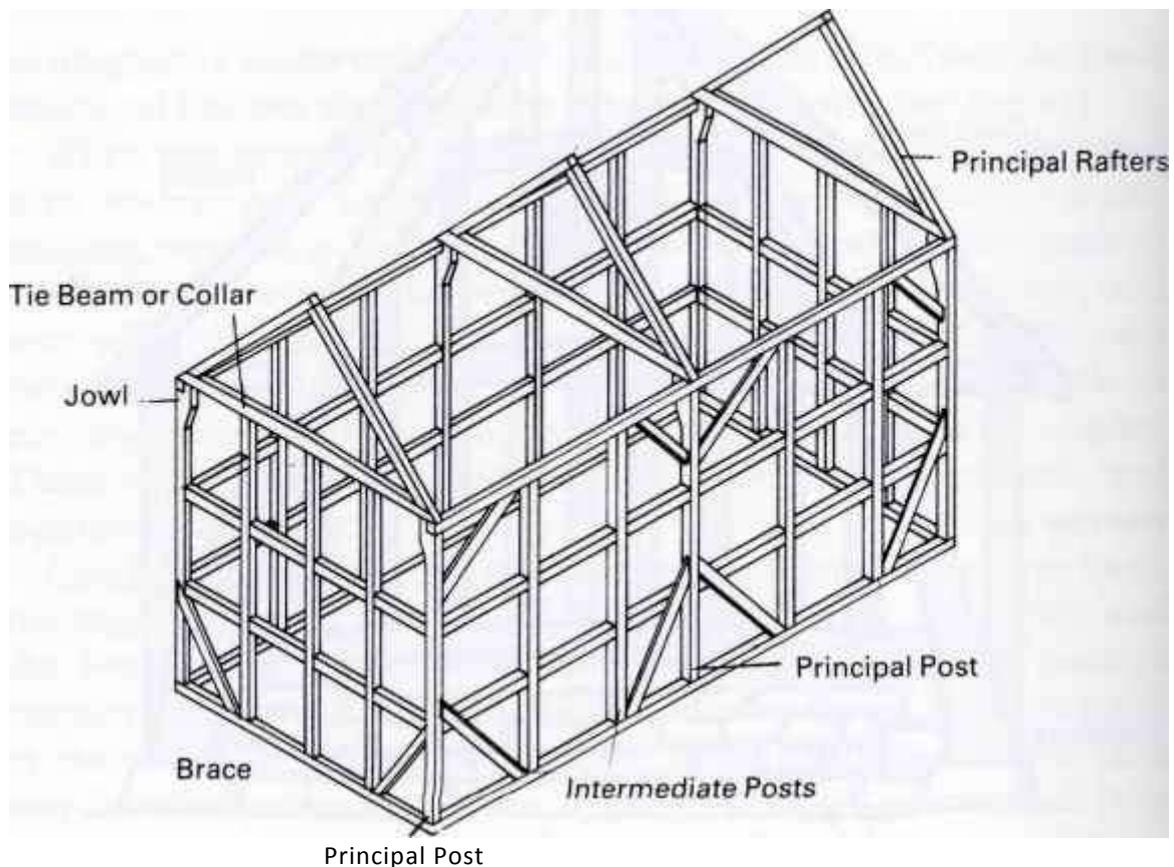


Fig 9: Box frame structure of a typical 17<sup>th</sup> century house (Brunskill)



Fig 10 Clasped purlin



Fig 11 Collar

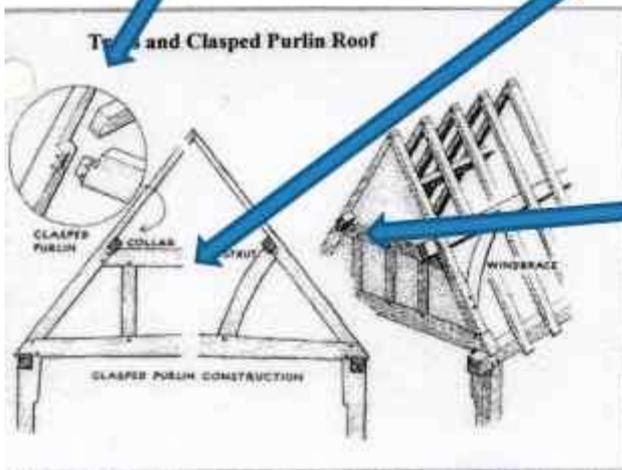


Fig 12 truss and clasped purlin roof



Fig 13 Junction of third and fourth bays



Fig 14 Carpenters' mark



Fig 15 Plastering around chimney

## The roof structure

The roof is a clasped purlin structure (Fig 16) constructed from oak which is also typical of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Buckinghamshire farmhouses. Figs 10 and 11 show detail of the structure, and Figs 13 shows the junction between the original structure and the added fourth bay. The extension of the purlin beyond the collar suggests that this was the end point of the original roof (Fig 12), and hence the fourth bay was a later addition.

Most of the rafters in the roof have carpenters' marks (Fig 14) but the numbering of the marks is in random, not sequential, order. Possibly the roof was rebuilt at some time in the life of the house. There are also signs of plastering in the roof space, including the area around the chimney (Fig 15). This suggests that the roof space has been occupied at various times in the life of the house, or alternatively that the original house had a smoke bay, not chimney.

The roof is tiled, but clay tiles did not exist before 18<sup>th</sup> century [7], so it was probably initially thatched.

I

## **Truss and Clasped Purlin Roof**

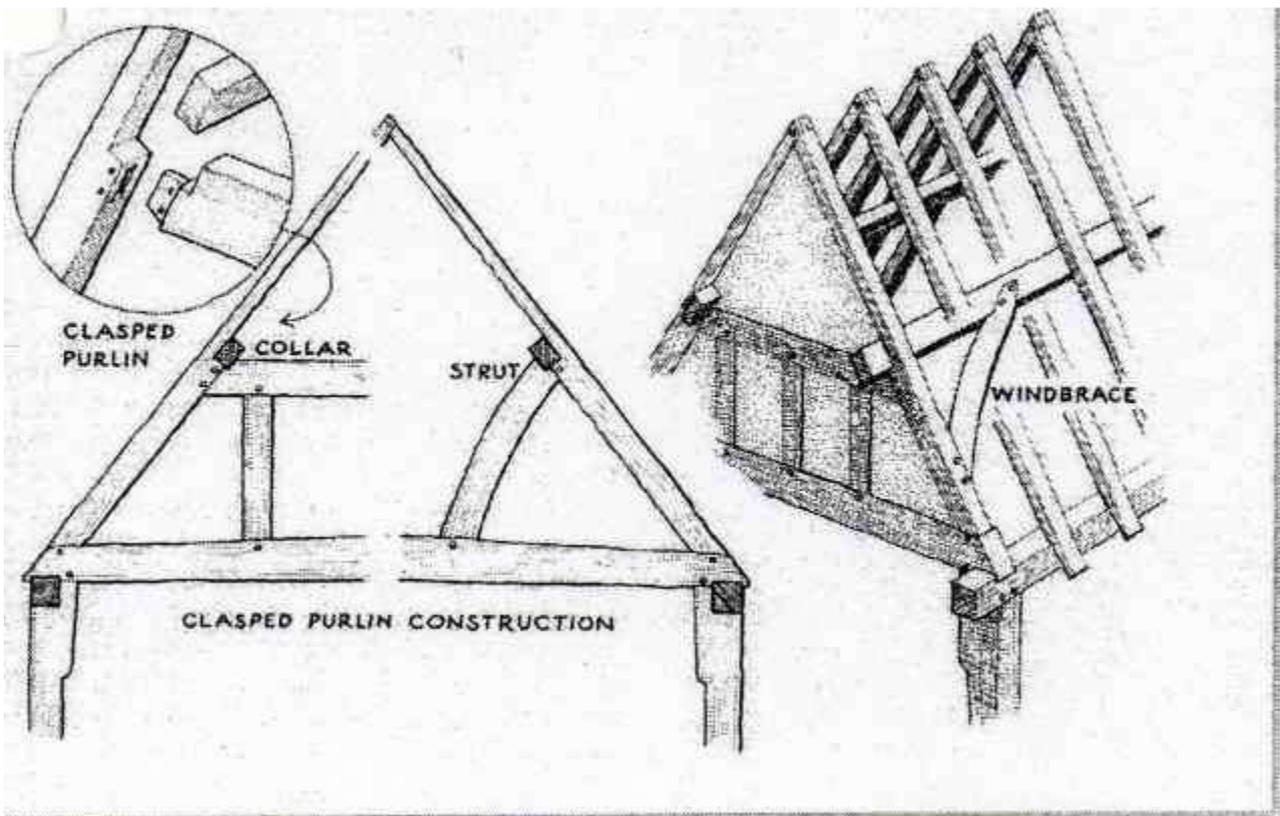


Fig 16 Truss and clasped purlin roof



Fig 17 Bread oven, detail



Fig 18 Beam and stop, detail



Fig 19 Living room

## The Farmhouse Rooms

The principal room of the farmhouse was the living room (Fig 19 and numbered G3 in Fig 4), which is typical of a lobby entrance house (Fig 20), with the original winding stair beside the fireplace being replaced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by a bread oven (Fig 17) - in the case of Windmill Farmhouse the bread oven is accessed from the other side of the chimney in room G4. The living room is built to a very high standard for a village house, and of particular note is the quality of the beams and the chamfer stops (Fig 18).

The other rooms (G1, G2, and G4 on the ground floor and 1 to 5 on the first floor) have been altered at various times in the history of the house, but many of the original timbers are visible. Most of these timbers are rough hewn but chamfered but, again, they are of a high standard for a rural farmhouse. There is evidence throughout the house of timbers being added or modified over its life - for example mortices in some posts suggesting possible small extensions, and what appears to be a former gate post propping up a beam in the entrance hall.

All of the rooms of the original house were surveyed and measured in October 2009 by a combined team of Wingrave people and members of the Bucks Archaeological Society Historic Buildings Group (Fig 21).

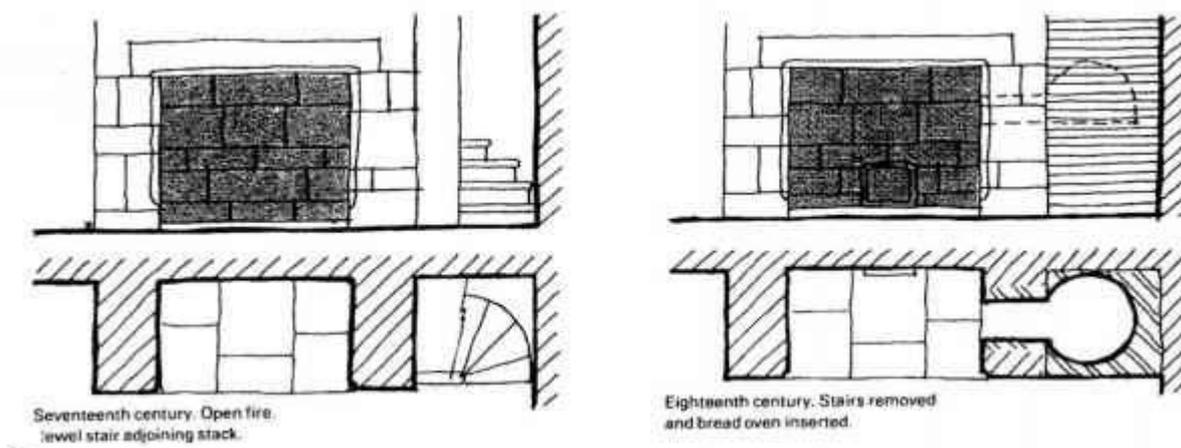


Fig 20 Typical arrangement of a lobby entrance house [8]



Fig 21 Measurement of room 1, first floor

Fig 22: 18<sup>th</sup> century extension



Fig 24: Bread oven

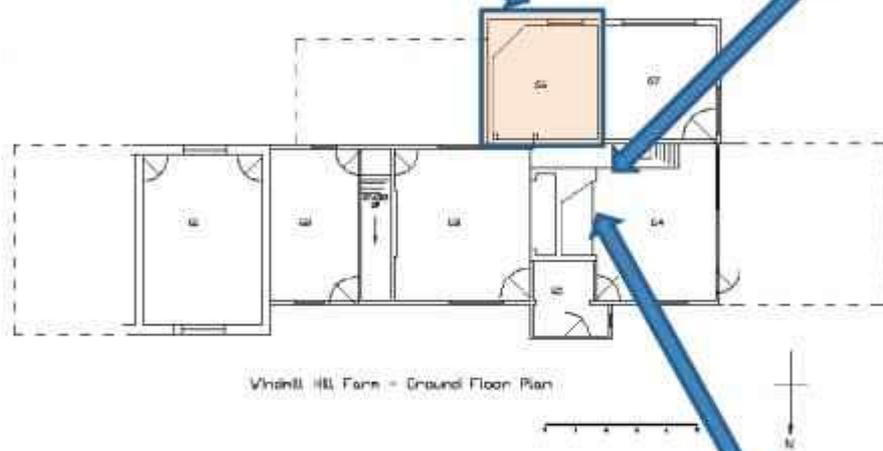


Fig 23: 18<sup>th</sup> century extension (shaded orange)

Fig 25: chimney (view in roof space)



## Windmill Farm in the 18<sup>th</sup> and Early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

At some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the house underwent a major alteration: a single storey extension to the southern side with a cellar underneath was added, a bread oven was installed and the chimney was enlarged (Figs 22 to 25). The timing of, and reason, for this alteration can best be established through examination of primary and secondary sources of documentation, and in particular, the enclosure map, wills, published books and other unpublished correspondence.

Of particular importance is the enclosure map of 1798 [9] (Fig 26) which shows the "footprint" of the house. The footprint includes the southern extension, confirming that it was built before 1798 - i.e. in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The enclosure map also indicates that Windmill Farm was at that time owned by Francis Cox of Eythrop and was farmed by Robert Cox.

Why was this extension built and why was such a massive chimney (Fig 25) added to the house? A possible answer lies in the analysis of wills of Wingrave residents of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries which is set out in Annex 3.

This analysis indicates that Windmill Farm was owned and farmed by the Mortimer family in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the death of Francis Mortimer in 1751. Francis had only one child, a daughter, who appears to have moved away from the village but his widow, Anne, probably continued to live in the house up to the time of her death in 1778. After Anne's death ownership of the house and farm passed to the Cox family, but it is unlikely that any of the Cox family actually lived in or occupied the house.

After Francis Mortimer's death in 1751 Windmill Farmhouse would have been under occupied and underused, and it is probable that Robert Griffin and his young family moved into the house in about 1765. Robert was the fourth son of the Stewkley village baker and moved to Wingrave to start up a new baking business; he appears to have been an ambitious and successful man, and his descendants continued to be the village bakers for another two hundred years until the 1950s. There is no definitive evidence of Robert Griffin's occupancy of Windmill Farmhouse, but the combination of the name ("Windmill Farmhouse" is recorded on the 1798 enclosure map), the 18<sup>th</sup> century structural alterations and the absentee owners provide strong circumstantial evidence that the house was occupied by Robert Griffin and used as the village bakery.

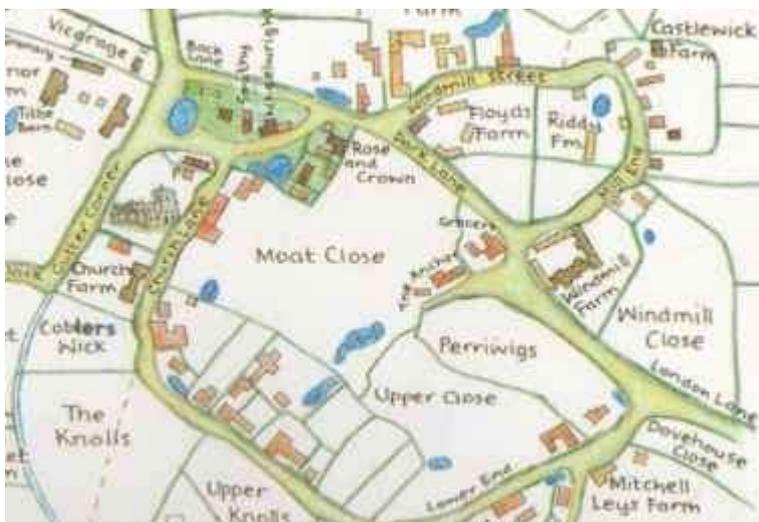


Fig 26 Extract from 1798  
Enclosure Map



Fig 27 Extracts from a map drawn by the parish clerk in 1862 [12]

**REFERENCE**  
to the

Acres of Parishes	Furlongs as they lay in the Fields.	A	R	P
1	The Farm Homestead and Premises Wingrave	-	5	11
2	A Close called Slope Close . . . . .	2	3	..
3	A Meadow called Common Close . . . . .	7	2	20
4	Middleway Ruddy Meadow . . . . .	12	1	20
5	Middleway Furlongs of Ploughing . . . . .	54	2	20
6	Little Middleway Meadow . . . . .	7	1	23
7	The Old Ploughed Furlong . . . . .	16	-	20
8	Stollidge Meadow . . . . .	20	-	-
9	The Little Stollidge Meadow . . . . .	14	3	..
10	The Great Meadow . . . . .	50	-	20
11	A Close called Pottyswige Close . . . . .	1	3	..

Estimate Extent of Windmill Darn Acres 148 . 1 . 11

Rent to the Poor

at one Shilling in £ - 212 . 15 . 0 - 202 . 5 . 0    10 . 2 . 3

The farm in the 19<sup>th</sup> century - after the enclosure

Following the enclosure in 1798, the Cox family retained ownership of the farm for several decades in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; Ken and Margaret Morley note [10] that Windmill Farm was owned in the 1830s by William Cox (presumably the son of Francis), who actually lived near Thame and for a time allowed the nonconformist pastor for Wingrave (the Rev Aston) to live here, before the Manse was built. The Charity Commissioners also referred to William Cox's occupation in 1833 [11].

At some time in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ownership of the farm was transferred to Alfred Roads, who was one of Wingrave's larger farmers. He then sold the farmhouse and about 150 acres of land to Lionel de Rothschild, probably in the late 1870s.

During the whole of this period - and indeed right up to 1971 - the fields owned by Francis Cox at the time of the enclosure remained associated with the farmhouse. Fig 27 is an extract from a map drawn up by the parish clerk of Alfred Roads' estate in 1862 [12] and Fig 28 is an extract from the sale of the farm by Alfred Roads to Lionel de Rothschild [13].

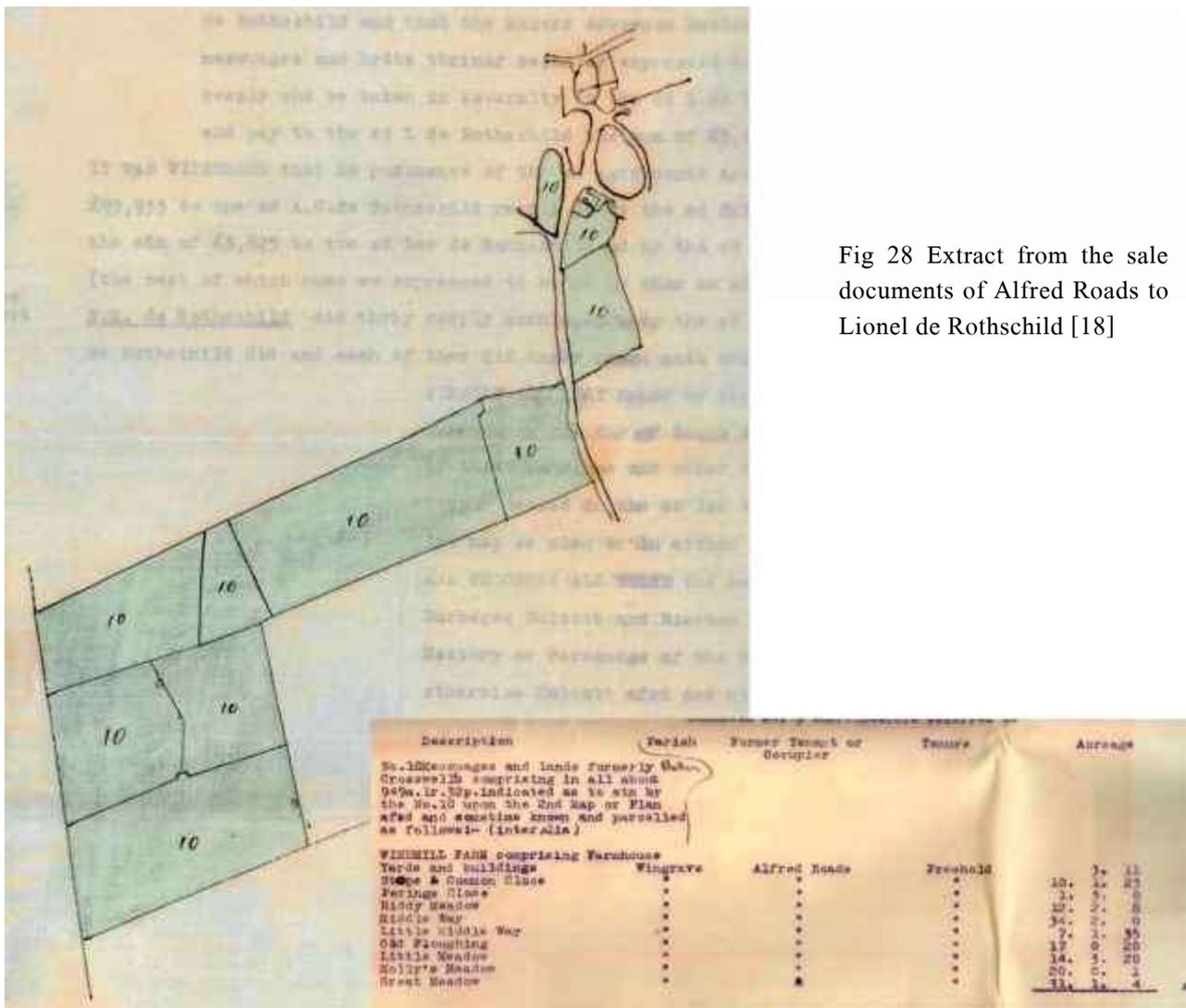


Fig 28 Extract from the sale documents of Alfred Roads to Lionel de Rothschild [18]



Fig 30: south western extension



Fig 31: Rothschild extensions



Fig 32: fireplace in eastern extension

### Ownership by the Rothschilds

Lionel de Rothschild died in 1879 and ownership of Windmill Farm passed to his son Leopold, who continued to own the farm up to 1917 when he died. The farm was then sold out of the Rothschild family as part of the disposal of Leopold's estate in 1918.

Leopold de Rothschild lived at Ascott House and was a major landowner across the Vale of Aylesbury. During his lifetime he made a number of contributions to Wingrave's health and facilities such as new allotments and new building plots [14], and it is very likely that he was responsible for three major improvements to Windmill Farmhouse at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The first improvement was to add extensions to the eastern and western ends of the house, shown in Fig 31. This work was carried out to a high standard and included the construction of a new chimney and fireplaces at the eastern end (Fig 32), which must have greatly improved the comfort of this part of the house.

The second improvement was to add a new extension (Fig 30) on the southwestern corner to complement the 18<sup>th</sup> century extension. This incorporates a cellar which is built on top of an earlier flagstone yard.

Thirdly, the barn on the north side of the yard (fig 33) was rebuilt. The construction is, again, of a high standard and uses threaded iron rods in the roof structure - a technique not developed until the mid to late 1800s.



Fig 33: the barn on the north side of the yard



Fig 34: Joseph Hedges (circa 1913)

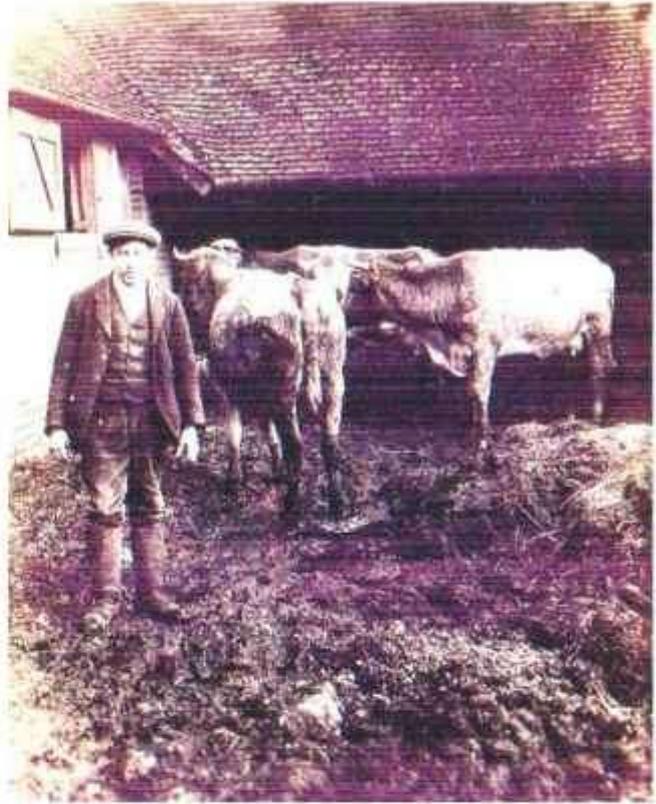


Fig 35: Fred Honor (circa 1913?)



Fig 36: The barn in 2010



Fig 37: Eva and Fred Honor (date unknown)

### The 19<sup>th</sup> Century occupants

One unusual feature of Windmill Farmhouse in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was its occupation by farm labourers, and not the farmer.

From 1841 to 1911 it is possible to identify the occupants through the census returns, and these are detailed in Annex 4. They show that the house was divided into two dwellings, probably with the easternmost two bays forming one dwelling and the westernmost bays the other. One of the dwellings was occupied continuously by successive generations of the Jeffs family (variously described as farm labourer and agricultural labourer), and the other by different families in each census year.

Evidence of plaster, former windows and a staircase suggests that the roof spaces of both halves of the house have been used as habitation, adding a third floor. The 1871 census shows that in addition to two families (Jeffs and Kempster) there were two elderly ladies living in the house - Elizabeth Monger (widow, aged 76) and Ann Hare (unmarried, aged 84). Were they banished to the attics? There is also a suggestion that occupation of the eastern roof space led to structural problems towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as it has been reinforced by a number of unusual timbers (Fig 38). These are probably the sails of the adjacent windmill which was demolished in the 1880s, suggesting that local initiative was taken to solve a structural problem!

A number of photographs of the farm have been found, including one (Fig 34), taken in about 1913, of Joseph Hedges who is recorded in the 1901 census as being a milker aged 57 years. Fig 35 shows Fred Honor probably taken at the same time and Fig 37 shows Fred and his wife Eva at a later (unknown) date. Fig 36 shows the barns in 2010 which still retain the original doors and windows, over 100 years later.



Fig 38 Roof timbers (reused windmill sails?)



Fig 39 Mr and Mrs George Fleet

Fig 40 The house circa 1936 (Bucks County Council)



## The 20<sup>th</sup> century - The Fleets and Buckinghamshire County Council

In September 1911 Josiah Fleet signed a memorandum of agreement with Leopold de Rothschild [15] for the rent of the Windmill Farmhouse, the farm buildings and "147 acres, 2 roods and 5 perches or thereabouts" of land for annual sum of £153.19.10. Josiah lived at Windmill House on the village green (then known as Southampton Lodge) and was a prosperous local farmer and property developer. Unfortunately he died the following year on 15 September 1912 following a fall from a pear tree in his garden, and the tenancy of Windmill Farm passed to his son George (Fig 39).

This tenancy continued until 1917 when Leopold de Rothschild died; his son Lionel, acting as executor of his father's will, then sold the farm house and the 147 acres of land to George Fleet in 1918 for the sum of £3,900 [16].

George Fleet had purchased the farm with a mortgage, but appears to have lived beyond his means: he sold Windmill Farm in March 1920, and thereafter lived on his capital which was gradually depleted until he was declared bankrupt in 1932 [17]. The purchaser (for a price of £4650) was Buckinghamshire County Council, which at that time was buying farmland in the aftermath of World War I [18].

The indenture between George Fleet and the County Council [19] describes the property as "that messuage or farmhouse (formerly two cottages) with the outbuildings and the several closes or pieces of land situate in the Parish of Wingrave and comprising in the whole one hundred and fifty three acres , one rood and five perches or thereabouts". In effect, this is the same land as that which was owned by Francis Cox in 1798 (when Wingrave was enclosed), although the estimates of acreage vary slightly. Note also the reference to "formerly two cottages".

The County Council then owned the farm for over 50 years until 1971. There are few records dating from this period, and it is probable that no significant modifications were made to the house. The only known photograph is one of the south west corner dated about 1936 (Fig 40) which shows that the main access to the house was on the south side, up steps in the bank from the road. Indeed, the main entrance had probably been on the south side for many years - Fig 37 (on the previous page) shows Eva and Fred Honor at what was presumably their front door, again on the south side of the house. Figs 34 and 35 suggest the reason - the farmyard on the north side was extremely muddy.

A number of village residents have personal recollections of Windmill Farmhouse during the ownership of the County Council. Bert Lambourne (who died in the early 1990s) described life during the second World War when the home guard was stationed in the barn and a prisoner of war lived in the upstairs room of the barn for a while.

Tony Lambourne (no relation of Bert) often visited Windmill Farmhouse in the 1950s when he was a boy living in the Anchor pub. He recalls that a bull was kept in the far left stall of the barn and milking was carried out in the middle stalls.



Fig 41 Auction notice, November 1971

Fig 42 Windmill farmhouse, 1970s  
Note changes to windows



### The late 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Windmill Farmhouse ceases to be a working farm

The last of the County Council's tenants were Ralph Higgings and his family, who lived in the western half of the house and sub let the eastern half. In the 1960s Alan and Mary Rawlings occupied the eastern half, leaving on 2 October 1963, a short while after their daughter, Angela, was born in the house. During the time of their residence the front door continued to be on the south side of the house, and the back door opened from the kitchen into the farmyard. There were three rooms downstairs - the kitchen and two living rooms and upstairs there were three bedrooms. Solid walls on both the ground and first floors separated the eastern and western halves of the building.

When the Rawlings moved in there was an earth closet in the cowshed (the remains of which exist as a brick wall in the garden); later on a flush toilet was installed in the dairy, but this was still accessed by an external door. There was no fixed bath.

Windmill Farmhouse was sold by the County Council at an auction to Mr and Mrs Bailey in November 1971 (Fig 41). The Baileys continued to work the farm in the 1970s (Fig 42), but in 1982 the house was offered for sale as two properties with the adjacent Tythe Barn being converted to a dwelling house (Fig 43).

The farmhouse was purchased by Mr and Mrs Saunders in 1982 who sold it to the current owners, Jane and Andrew Muir, in 1992.



AM OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE THE LARGER PART OF A FINE TUDOR FARMHOUSE WITH LOVELY VIEWS TO THE SOUTH OVER THE VALE OF AYLESBURY TO THE CHELTERNES

Windmill Hill Farm which is being divided into two properties with a third in the Tythe Barn is a very pretty 16th century house, built of brick with exposed timbers. There is a large courtyard with outbuildings to the other two sides, of which two garages and half the brick built barn (at present looseboxes) would be sold with No. 2.

Fig 43 Estate agent's details circa 1982

### Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the many people who have supported me in the research of Windmill Farmhouse and the production of this booklet.

Within Wingrave, Prudence Goodwin has been tireless in unearthing facts and photographs of former owners and residents of the house and I am extremely grateful for her support. Thanks are also due to Robin Moat, chairman of the Wingrave Archive Association and to Ken Morley who, with his late wife Margaret, undertook so much research on the history of the village, including Windmill Farmhouse. I would also like to thank all of the former residents of, and past visitors to, the house who have provided me with memories and/or photographs.

It would not have been possible to produce this booklet without the help, guidance and encouragement of Historic Buildings Group of the Bucks Archaeological Society and in particular Peter Marsden and Sue Fox. I have especially enjoyed the many discussions with them on the finer points of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century construction techniques.

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13. Buckinghamshire County Council Legal and Democratic Services Archive: Indenture between Sir Nathaniel Mayer de Rothschild and his sons and grandson, 17 February 1880
14. Ken and Margaret Morley page 74
15. Rothschild Archive: Memorandum of Agreement between Leopold de Rothschild and Josiah Fleet for the rent of Windmill Farm, 28 September 1911, Document K 129
16. Rothschild Archive: Conveyance of Windmill Farm by Lionel de Rothschild to George Fleet, 24 May 1918, Document L103
17. Newspaper cutting provided by Prudence Goodwin - source and date unknown
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## ANNEX 1: OWNERS OF WINDMILL FARMHOUSE

c1700	Francis Mortimer senior	Crafton
1722 - 1751	Francis Mortimer junior	Wingrave
1751 - 1778?	Anne Mortimer	Wingrave
c1778 - c1830	Francis Cox	Eythrope/Thame
c1830 - c1860	William Cox	Thame
c1860 - c1877	Alfred Roads	Rowsham
c1877 - 1879	Lionel de Rothschild	Ascott
1879 - 1917	Leopold de Rothschild	Ascott
1918 - 1920	George Fleet	Windmill House, Wingrave
1920 - 1972	Bucks County Council	County Hall
1972 - 1982	Mr and Mrs Bailey	Windmill Hill Farm
1982 - 1992	Mr and Mrs Saunders	Windmill Hill Farm
1992 - present	Jane and Andrew Muir	Windmill Hill Farm

## ANNEX 2: DENDROCHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY

A dendrochronological survey [1] was undertaken by Dr Andy Moir of Tree Ring Services in October 2010 with a follow up visit in March 2011. Twenty five core samples were taken from various locations on the first floor and the roof space, and seven of these samples were crossed matched to form a 75 year site chronology spanning AD 1541 to AD 1615 (i.e. the outermost ring of the core samples corresponded to 1615 and the innermost ring corresponded to 1541).

As seven of the samples all indicated the same tree felling date, it can be concluded with a high degree of confidence that the timber used to build the house was felled in 1615. It was the general practice at that time to use recently felled ("green") timber for house construction, and hence it can be concluded that Windmill Farmhouse was built in 1616. This date is consistent with the overall design and construction of the building.

### Reference

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## ANNEX 3: OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS OF WINDMILL FARMHOUSE IN THE 18<sup>th</sup> AND 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

There are several primary sources (notably wills and enclosure records) which offer the potential to identify the owners and occupiers of houses in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but often these sources are of limited use - for example many wills lack a definitive house name which can link the signatory to a particular property. Consequently an analysis of most of the primary sources will inevitably include an amount of speculation and/or assumptions and the following paragraphs are no exception!

### The Mortimer Family

The earliest primary source found to date which identifies an owner of Windmill Farmhouse is the will of Francis Mortimer, dated 1744 and granted probate in 1751 [1]. In this will he left all of his property in Wingrave to his widow Anne Mortimer and also made provision for his sole child, Mary, who was married to Thomas Lamb.

In addition Francis Mortimer's will made provision for a charity to provide a coat to the poorest person in the village on an annual basis: *"such person who should by virtue of his will be the owner or possessor of his four acres of arable land, lying in the North field of Wingrave, in the furlong there called Sunriddy furlong, parcel of premises thereinbefore devised, should yearly, for ever, on St Thomas's day, pay into the hands of the churchwardens and overseers of the parish, one annuity of 20s ..laid out in a blue coat for the poorest man living in the said parish of Wingrave ..."* The annual sum continued to be paid into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in 1921 there is a record of the sum being paid by Buckinghamshire County Council as owners of Windmill Hill Farm [2]. Francis Mortimer's will was written before the 1798 enclosure of Wingrave when the fields were consolidated and redistributed amongst the local landowners. Consequently the connection with Sunriddy furlong appears to have ceased with the enclosure, and responsibility for providing the coat was transferred to the owner of the house occupied by Francis Mortimer.

Francis Mortimer's father was also named Francis and he signed his will in 1715 with probate granted in 1722 [3]. Francis senior bequeathed to Francis junior all of his freehold property in Wingrave, and hence it is probable that Windmill Farmhouse was in the ownership of the Mortimer family at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and possibly earlier.

Francis Mortimer's widow Anne outlived her husband for more than 25 years - she signed her will in 1773 and probate was granted in 1778 [4]. Anne's will is complex and divides her estate between a large number of individuals but it contains no reference to her dwelling house, so it is probable that Windmill Farmhouse was sold out of the Mortimer family during Anne's widowhood or shortly after her death.

### The Keene family

There were several branches of the Keene family living in Wingrave in the 18<sup>th</sup> century - and many of the family members shared the same Christian names (Thomas, Daniel), making identification of individuals difficult. However there does appear to be a linkage between the Keene family and Windmill Farmhouse through a painted signature "D K 1722" in the main bedroom; this was very probably one of two Daniel Keenes who were known to be living in the village at the time [5] but it is not possible to determine whether they were residents of Windmill Farmhouse or merely visitors. There is evidence of close relationships between the Keene and Mortimer families in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century - for example the witnessing of wills and appointment of executors, and it is tempting to

speculate that "D K 1722" is a sign of occupancy by the Keenes when the house was owned by the Mortmers.

### The Cox family

The first known connection between the Cox and Mortimer families appears in the will of James Mortimer [6] which is dated 1740. James, who lived at Crafton, was the son of Francis Mortimer senior and brother of Francis Mortimer junior (see above), and his will was witnessed by Thomas Cox. The same Thomas Cox wrote his own will in 1797 [7], at which time he was living in Long Crendon.

The second connection between the two families appears in the enclosure documentation of 1798 where the owner of Windmill Farm is recorded as Francis Cox of Eythrop, and the farmer is recorded as Robert Cox [8]. The relationship between Francis, Robert and Thomas Cox and between the Cox and Mortimer families is not clear, but it would appear that all three members of the Cox family had an interest in Wingrave, and Windmill Farm in particular, even though at least two of them lived some distance away on the other side of Aylesbury in the late 1790s. Possibly Francis Cox purchased Windmill Farm from Anne Mortimer through a personal connection.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (up to 1830 at least and probably as late as 1850) Windmill Farm was owned and farmed by William Cox who became a major landowner and a "village eldef" within Wingrave. William lived in Wingrave for many years until he moved to Thame in the mid 1830s [9], but again it is not clear whether he lived in Windmill Farmhouse or elsewhere in the village.

### The Griffin family

The final family with a possible link with Windmill Farmhouse is the Griffin family, who were bakers in Wingrave for more than two centuries.

The first member of the family to live in Wingrave was Robert Griffin, who was born in Stewkley in 1736 as the fourth son of the Stewkley village baker. Robert married Ann Walduck in 1759 and the family moved to Wingrave at some time between the birth of their daughter, Esther, in 1764 and the birth of their son, John, in 1766. Ann Griffin died in 1797 but Robert lived until 1821 and in his will gave to his son John *"all my tenement, baker's shop and premises in Wingrave wherein I now dwell and all my Close in Wingrave which I now occupy. My daughter Esther Griffin to have exclusive use of the parlour end of my said tenement .....*" [10]. Esther died in 1830.

Robert's son John Griffin is recorded in the enclosure documents of 1798 as owning a dwelling and bakehouse in Mill Lane where Rose Cottage now stands. John also purchased a windmill from Whitchurch in 1809, which he erected behind Rose Cottage [11].

It would therefore seem that both Robert Griffin and his son John were working and trading as bakers in the late 1700s and early 1800s, and that by 1798 John was running his own bakehouse in Rose Cottage. But where was Robert Griffin's bakehouse and where did father and son mill their flour before the windmill was installed in 1809? Circumstantial evidence suggests that the bakehouse was very probably at Windmill Farmhouse with a windmill nearby:

- Robert Griffin arrived in Wingrave in 1765 with his wife and young family needing a house in which to live and work; at that time Windmill Farmhouse was only occupied by the widowed Anne Mortimer and therefore offered spare vacant accommodation
- Windmill Farmhouse was an ideal location to establish a windmill (which would be an essential component of a bakery), being on the south facing escarpment of the village. The naming of Windmill Farm on the 1798 enclosure map indicates that a windmill must have existed in the near vicinity of the farmhouse at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century
- There is a reference to a miller in the Churchwardens' accounts of the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century [12], indicating that there was a mill in the village at that time. As Wingrave lies on the Thames/Ouse watershed, the mill could not have been water driven, and hence a windmill on the escarpment appears to be most likely
- Windmill Farmhouse was extended in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when a large bread oven and expanded chimney were installed. These alterations suggest that baking on a wholesale basis was being undertaken in the house
- John Griffin's bakery was set up in close proximity to Windmill Farmhouse
- Robert Griffin's grandson (George) is recorded as paying the Francis Mortimer charity in 1897, suggesting a connection between the Griffin family and Windmill Farmhouse extending into the 19<sup>th</sup> century [13]

Although all of this evidence is circumstantial, it does provide a sound explanation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century alterations to the house and the name of "Windmill Farm" in the 1798 enclosure documentation. After Robert Griffin's death in 1821 the house probably reverted to a more traditional role of housing farm labourers, as recorded in the census returns from 1841 onwards.

#### Summary: The Occupants of Windmill Farmhouse from about 1700 to 1821

No primary sources have been found to date which unambiguously confirm the tenants and occupants of Windmill Farmhouse in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> ' centuries. However it can be hypothesised that ownership of the house passed from the Mortimer family to the Cox family over this period, and the main occupants were the Mortimers (and possibly Keenes) followed by the Griffins. Hopefully further work and study of further primary sources will confirm this hypothesis

#### References

1. Will of Francis Mortimer. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies* PR 235/25/7
2. *Unto the Poore of Wingrave Town*: Unpublished pamphlet by Michael Tunnicliffe, 2009
3. Will of Francis Mortimer. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies* D/A/WF/72/221
4. Will of Anne Mortimer. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies* D/A/WF/101/206
5. Unpublished papers held by Prudence Goodwin, Wingrave
6. Will of James Mortimer. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies* D/A/WF/85/211
7. Will of Thomas Cox. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies* D/A/WF/108/31
8. Wingrave and Rowsham enclosure award. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies*
9. Wingrave: A Rothschild Village in The Vale *Ken and Margaret Morley*, p29
10. *Will of Robert Griffin*. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies*
11. Wingrave: A Rothschild Village *Ken and Margaret Morley*, p8
12. Wingrave Churchwardens' accounts 1560/1760. *Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies*
13. Charity Commissioners Report 1897 as recorded in *Unto the Poore of Wingrave Town* Unpublished pamphlet by Michael Tunnicliffe, 2009

## ANNEX 4: CENSUS RETURNS FOR WINDMILL FARMHOUSE

Note: the house description varies widely from one census return to the next, and hence the following is a "best guess" interpretation of the returns

### 1841 Census

Windmill Farmhouse:

Thomas Aston, 56, dissenting minister

Harriet Aston, 56

Hannah Bateman, 19, female servant

Windmill Farmhouse:

George Jeffs, 26, agricultural labourer, born Bucks

Ann Jeffs, 39, agricultural labourer, born Bucks

London Lane Hill:

Isaac Hare, 78, farmer, born Bucks

Ann Hare, 50, agricultural labourer, born Bucks

### 1851 Census

93: London Hill:

George Jeffs, 35, widower, farm labourer, born Wingrave

94: London Hill:

Ann Hare, 61, unmarried, grazier of 6 acres, born Wingrave

Jane Gibbs, 22, lodger, unmarried, plaiter, born Wingrave

95: London Hill:

Henry Emes, 21, head, cooper, born Wingrave

Ann Emes, 21, wife, cooper's wife, born Hogston

### 1861 Census

10: Windmill Farmhouse:

George Jeffs, 45, head, agricultural labourer, born Wingrave

Ann Jeffs, 45, wife, born Ellesborough

Arthur Jeffs, 6, son, born Wingrave

Lucy Jeffs, 3, daughter, born Wingrave

11: Windmill Farmhouse:

Elizabeth Monger, 65, widow, retired, born Drayton Beauchamp

12: London Hill Road:

Ann Hare, 74, head, unmarried, retired, born Wingrave

13: London Hill Road:

Charles Bates, 27, head, agricultural labourer, born Wingrave

Ellen Bates, 28, wife, born Rowsham

Mercey Bates, 4, daughter, born Wingrave

### 1871 Census

124: London Hill:

Elizabeth Monger, 76, head, widow, assistant [?], born Drayton Beauchamp

125: London Hill (farm house):

George Jeffs, 55, head, farm labourer, born Wingrave

Ann Jeffs, 53, wife, born Ellesborough

Arthur Jeffs, 16, son, labourer, born Wingrave

126: London Hill:

Ann Hare, 84, unmarried, assistant, born Wingrave

127: London Hill, private:

Joseph Kempster, 24, head, farm labourer, born Wingrave

Sarah Kempster, 22, wife, farm labourer, born Astrope, Puttenham

Albert Kempster, 2, son, born Wingrave

James Kempster, 1, son, born Wingrave

#### 1881 Census

102: Mill End [note: may not be Windmill Farmhouse]:

John Harriss, 49, head, fish dealer, born Wingrave

[?] Harriss, 46, wife, dressmaker, born Wingrave

Elizabeth Priscilla Harriss, 18, daughter, straw plaiter, born Rowsham

Ernest Arch Harriss, 7, son, scholar, born Wingrave

104: Mill End:

Arthur Jeffs, 26, head, farm labourer, born Wingrave

Emily Jane Jeffs, 28, wife, born North Marston

Arthur William Jeffs, 5, son, scholar, born Notting Hill

Earnest Edward Jeffs, 3, son, born Wingrave

Lucy Jeffs, 1, daughter, born Wingrave

#### 1891 Census

108: London Hill:

Joseph Hedges, 46, head, agr labourer, born Long Marston

Sarah Badrick, 37, housekeeper, born Wingrave

Kate Hedges, 10, daughter, scholar, born Wingrave

109: London Hill:

Arthur Jeffs, 36, head, agr labourer, born Wingrave

Emily Jeffs, 38, wife, born North Marston

Arthur W Jeffs, 15, son, agr labourer, born Notting Hill

Lucy Jeffs, 11, daughter, scholar, born Wingrave

George H Jeffs, 6, son, born Wingrave

Leonard S Jeffs, 4, son, born Wingrave

#### 1901 Census

146: London Hill:

Arthur Jeffs, 46, head, carter in farm, born Wingrave

Emily Jeffs, 48, wife, born North Marston

Leonard Jeffs, 14, son, ag labourer, born Wingrave

147: London Hill:

Joseph Hedges, 57, head, milker on farm, born Long Marston

Sarah Hedges, 48, wife, born Wingrave

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County Museum,  
Church Street,  
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Buckinghamshire  
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