

## 2.2 The Old Vicarage

### 18<sup>th</sup> century

The Old Vicarage, Elstow probably dates to the mid to late seventeenth century but with numerous later alterations and extensions. The house was not actually used as a vicarage until the early part of the twentieth century. In the early eighteenth century no house was associated with the church; the 1708 Glebe Terrier describes Elstow church as having;

*'... no manner of tythes, no glebe, not so much as the churchyard left to the minister of this Parish of Elstow nor any House, all that remains is an annual stipend of 8 pounds.'*

(BLARS, CRT 170/2/15)

It is likely that the property was a dwelling of some importance (perhaps a farmhouse) within the village, due to its prominent position facing the village green and close proximity to the church.



**Figure 2:** Extract from the 1767 map of the manor of Elstow (BLARS, X1/6/1)

The first map evidence for 'The Old Vicarage' can be found on the 1767 map of the manor of Elstow (Fig. 2). The house (marked with a red arrow) faces on to the green and has an L-shaped projection to the rear. The house appears to have an area of land to the rear (west) and is labelled Hords? Farm; thus confirming its likely use as a farmhouse. No farm buildings associated with the house are shown on this map. The 'Green' is labelled on the map and the Moot Hall on the east side of the Green can be seen.

There is a small circular plaque on the front elevation of The Old Vicarage which reads S.W 1796. This may refer to either the purchase of this property or its alteration / remodelling by the Whitbread family. Samuel Whitbread (SW) acquired the Manor of Elstow in 1792; he then purchased other parcels of land in Elstow between 1792 and 1796, the year he died. The nearby village of Cardington contains a number of houses bearing plaques with the initials SW; these were built by Samuel Whitbread who was born at Maltings Farm, Cardington.

A Glebe Terrier dated to 1822 again refers to the church at Elstow as having no associated house.

### 19<sup>th</sup> century

The first detailed map showing the footprint of The Old Vicarage is the 1884 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3). The house faces east with a path up to the front door and around the front of the house. The house is rectangular with an L-shaped projection to the rear; however the rear appears different to its appearance in 1767. To the north-west of the house are two glasshouses (indicated by crosshatched lines). There are walls indicated forming a square to the south of these glasshouses, this enclosed area is likely to have been a walled kitchen garden used by the servants / staff for growing produce. There are long rectangular buildings, to the north and west of the house, presumably farm buildings associated with the house. There is a small outbuilding in the north east corner of the site and attached to the north end of the house is a rectangular structure, perhaps a walled enclosure. There is a water pump (marked P.) to the west of the house. Trees are indicated along the south and east boundary of the site. Footpaths crossing the Green can be shown and the map also details a 'Sun Dial (remains of)'; this feature has been mis-named and is actually the base of the old market cross.

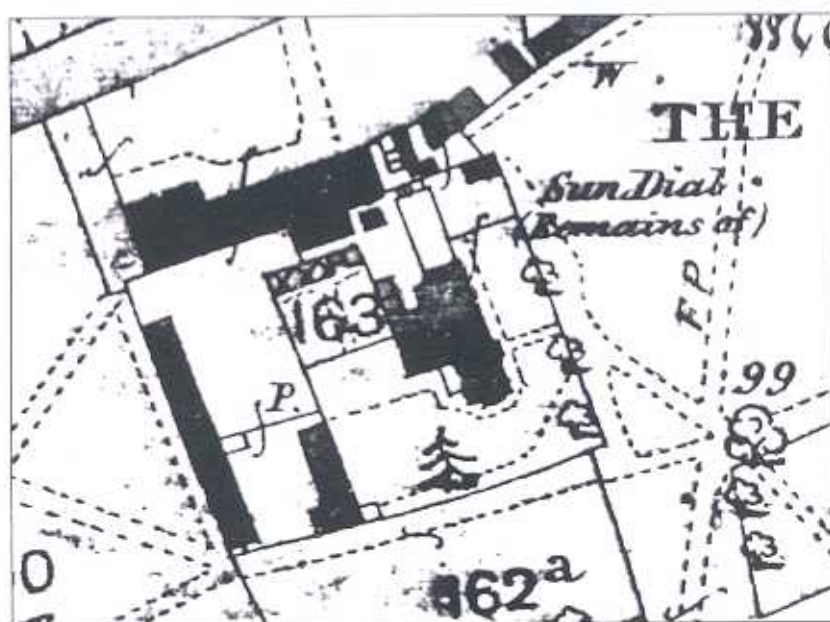


Figure 3: Extract from the 1884 Ordnance Survey map

### 20<sup>th</sup> century

The 1901 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4) shows the house in far clearer detail. The overall plan of the house appears similar but the black outline shown on the 1884 map attached to the north of the house is now hatched suggesting this is a building. A more substantial front porch is indicated on the plan. A rectangular conservatory is indicated in the southwest corner of the house (indicated by the cross hatched lines). A projecting porch has also been added next to this. The south end of the house has been extended out slightly; this may also be indicated on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map. The nineteenth century rear wing appears to have been extended out slightly to the west. The water pump (P) has been moved and by 1901 is located at the north end of the front (east) elevation.



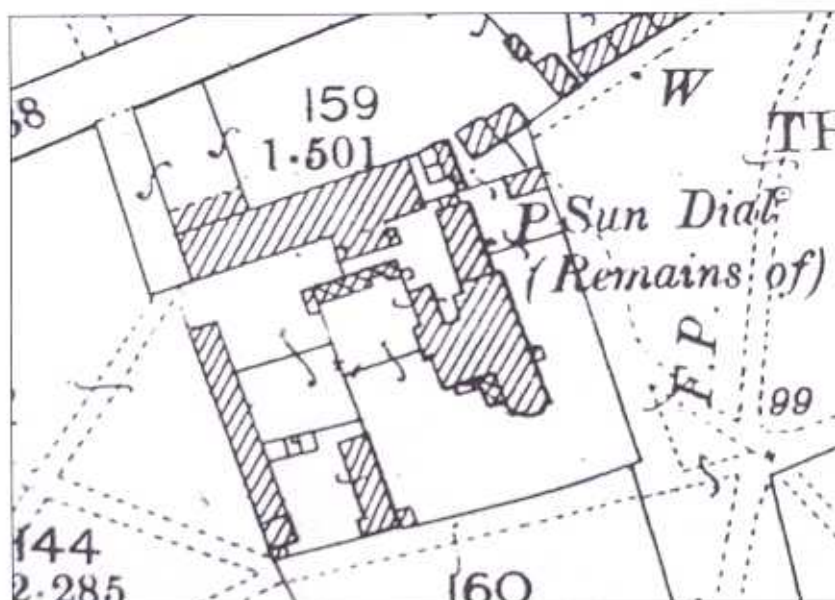


Figure 4: Extract from the 1901 Ordnance Survey map

The Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service contain various letters dating from the mid to late nineteenth century between the incumbent vicar of Elstow and the church / Lord of the Manor complaining about the lack of a vicarage in Elstow. In 1882 James Copner, the vicar of Elstow lived at 7 The Crescent, Bedford which meant a two mile walk to Elstow, a journey he was unsurprisingly reluctant to make. Tentative plans were made to build a vicarage in Elstow but these were rejected by 1901. However by 1904 a house (The Old Vicarage) was being considered as a possible vicarage. A copy of a letter from Mr Samuel Whitbread (Lord of the Manor) to Mr Hawkins (the new rector of Elstow in 1904) is given here;

*Dear Mr Hawkins*

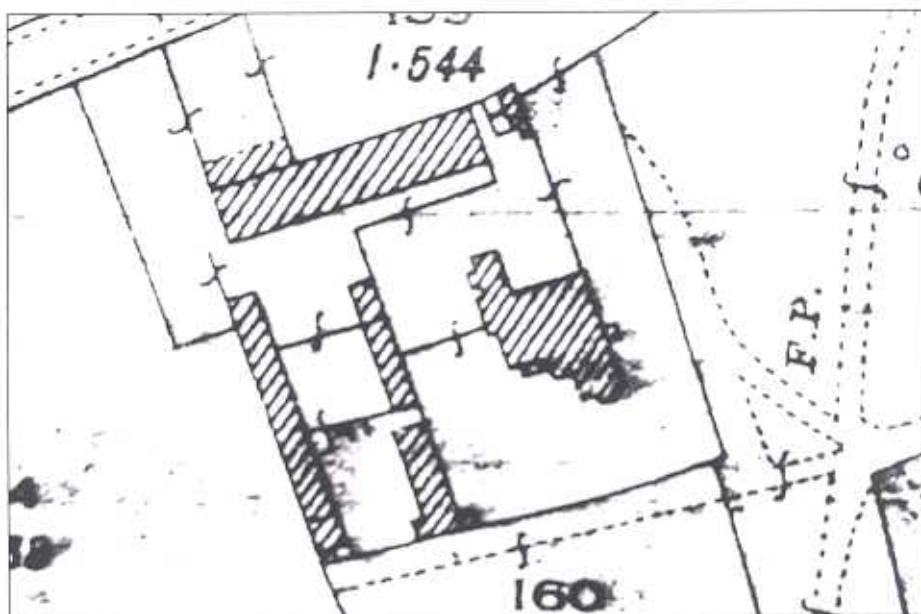
*I made a full examination of the old house at Elstow this morning and I find it is quite impracticable to raise the ceilings. The fact is that the front of this house is an old brick and stud building with beams built in to the wall to carry the floors – there is nothing above these beams for the floors to rest upon – and it would be better to pull the old house down and built it up again rather than make any effort at structural alterations.*

*I fear you would not like the house as it is although we have spent, I should think, fully four years ... in improvements since it was last occupied – but I shall be glad if you will let me know within a few days whether you think it would suit you in order to enable us to deal with other applicants.*

*Yours faithfully  
Sam Whitbread*

(BLARS; W3987)

This confirms that the house was owned by Samuel Whitbread and part of the manor of Elstow at this time. The letter also describes the house as 'an old brick and stud building' and indicates that the house had undergone a lot of repair work between c. 1900 and 1904. Mr Hawkins obviously felt the house was not entirely suitable as his residence; however a letter dated to 1908 from Mr Hawkins gives his address as The Green, Elstow which would indicate that he had decided to move into the house and use it as the vicarage.



**Figure 5:** Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map 1925

The 1925 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5) shows that the house has been greatly reduced in size; the adjoining building to the north of the house has been demolished, as has part of the northern end of the house. The nineteenth century rear extension remains in situ and a small extension has been added on to its west side. The conservatory in the south west corner of the house has been replaced by a small extension. The glasshouses to the north west of the house have been demolished however the long rectangular farm buildings to the north and west remain.

The footprint of the house does not seem to have altered since 1925. A new vicarage (The Abbey Vicarage) was built in the 1950s / 60s just to the south of The Old Vicarage (pers. comm, D Olney); it is still in use as the vicarage today.



## 3 Description

### 3.1 External

The Old Vicarage, Elstow is a part rendered, two storey red brick and timber frame property with a clay tile roof, it has a series of chimney stacks including a multiple red brick stack between the two northern bays. To the rear of the house are eighteenth century timber frame and brick extensions and nineteenth century brick extensions. Almost all the windows are nineteenth or early twentieth century replacements.

#### *Front (east) elevation (Figs. 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10)*

Pebbledash render on timber laths over timber frame and red brick (small area of brick and timber frame exposed at time of survey). There are a series of nineteenth century casement windows on the front elevation with thick timber mullions and transoms. At first floor level is a circular stone plaque which reads 'S.W 1796' (Fig 7). There is a large projecting timber gabled timber porch with a clay tile roof (late nineteenth / early twentieth century), it is open at the front and part of the sides, next to the house it is enclosed with windows either side and a front door. The early nineteenth century moulded door case with a broken triangular pediment has been retained within the later porch. Windows have been inserted either side of the front door. The timber door dates to the late nineteenth century but has a large frosted glass pane inserted into its upper part. Small black and white geometric tiles to porch floor. At the north end of the east elevation and set well back from the front is the nineteenth century two storey painted brick extension with a single storey painted brick extension attached. Two timber doors lead to the kitchen and store room. A water pump is located just outside the kitchen door; it dates to the nineteenth century and has a stone basin.

#### *Rear (west) elevation (Figs. 12, 13 & 16)*

At the south end of the west elevation the walls are timber frame and brick covered with pebbledash render, attached is a nineteenth century yellow brick chimney stack. The principal projecting gabled rear wing is also brick and timber frame covered with pebbledash render. To the north of the principal projecting wing are two gabled brick wings dating to the mid to late nineteenth century. The stock brick is laid in Flemish bond; the timber casement windows have brick arches and stone sills. Also attached to the rear elevation is a small flat roofed brick extension which contains open brick arches at ground floor level. There are a series of nineteenth and early twentieth century timber casement and sash windows.

#### *Side (north) elevation (Figs. 14 & 15)*

The gable end of the front elevation with its projecting rear wing is visible, pebbledash render over brick. To the west is the nineteenth century gabled brick wing which continues to the north, attached to the north of this is a gabled single storey brick extension.

#### *Side (south) elevation (Figs. 11 & 12)*

Timber frame and brick gable end, pebbledash rendered. Projecting rectangular, single storey, flat roofed stone bay containing four 1-over-1 sash windows (late nineteenth century). Timber casement window at first floor level, 9-pane garret window above (early nineteenth century).



**Figure 6:** Front (east) elevation



**Figure 7:** Circular plaque on front (east) elevation



**Figure 8:** Front (east) elevation, exposed timber frame and brick



**Figure 9:** Front (east) elevation, early nineteenth century door case within porch



**Figure 10:** Timber porch to front (east) elevation



**Figure 11:** Side (south) elevation





**Figure 12:** View of the property from the south-west



**Figure 13:** Rear (west) elevation



**Figure 14:** Side (north) elevation



**Figure 15:** Side (north) elevation



**Figure 16:** North end of the rear (west) elevation



**Figure 17:** Water pump outside kitchen door

attic space above the front range contains a fireplace and has partition walls suggesting it was at one time in use.

### Ground floor (Fig. 52)

#### Room 1 (Fig. 18)

Current function: Hall

Original function: Hall

Roll moulded skirting boards and picture rail to all elevations (late nineteenth century).

North elevation: Rendered brick wall; at the east end a 4-panel door set within a moulded surround (late nineteenth century) leads to room 5 (study). At the west end the hall is open to a small corridor which runs to the north and has doors leading to rooms 4, 5 and 6.

The staircase up to first floor is set against the north wall; it is wide with chunky square cut newel posts, fretwork balusters and a timber handrail. The two curtail steps are curved, these rise to the north at which point there is a small quarter landing, the staircase then returns to the east and rises up to the first floor.

East elevation: Late nineteenth century front door, modern glass pane inserted in upper part. The doorway has a moulded surround (early nineteenth century) and an old stone step. Either side of the door are two windows (late nineteenth / early twentieth century), probably inserted when the porch was constructed to give more light to the hallway.

South elevation: Brick wall, plastered. A 4-panel door within a moulded surround leads into room 2 (drawing room). To the west another 4-panel door within a moulded surround leads into room 3 (WC). Both doors date to the late nineteenth century.

West elevation: Brick wall, plastered. A recess at the south end contains a window. The wall returns to the north with a doorway leading into room 4 (school room).

Ceiling: Plaster

Floor: Herringbone parquet floor, early to mid twentieth century replacement of earlier floor.



**Figure 18:** Room 1. Staircase in hall



**Figure 19:** Room 2, sitting room. Detail of skirting board and un-moulded plinth to door surround



### Room 2 (Figs. 19 & 20)

Current function: Drawing room

Original function: Drawing room

This room has the appearance of a high status room with its stone fireplace and high moulded skirting boards and moulded picture rail to all elevations, late nineteenth century.

North elevation: Plastered brick with a nineteenth century 4-panel door within a moulded surround leading to the hall (room 1). The surround has an angled unmoulded plinth, a high status feature.

East elevation: Lath and plaster over brick and timber frame, nineteenth century casement window within a moulded frame.

South elevation: Plastered brick with a rectangular projecting bay, rendered stone with timber panelling. The bay contains four late nineteenth century 1-over-1 sash windows.

West elevation: Plastered brick wall, carved stone fireplace, late nineteenth / early twentieth century. A bell push is sited just to the north of the fireplace. To the south is an early twentieth century single pane window.

Floor: Herringbone parquet floor, early to mid twentieth century

Ceiling: Plaster

### Room 3

Current function W.C

Original function W.C

The W.C is divided into two by a rendered brick dividing wall.

North: Rendered brick wall with a 4-panel door with a moulded surround leading into the hall

East: Rendered brick wall

South: Rendered brick wall with two early twentieth century casement windows

West: Rendered brick wall

Floor: Geometric red and black clay tile floor

Ceiling: Plaster



**Figure 20:** Room 2, carved stone fireplace



**Figure 21:** Room 4, fireplace and arched niches

#### Room 4 (Fig. 21)

Current function: School room

Original function: School room / dining room

Roll moulded skirting boards and picture rail to east, south and west elevations (removed from north elevation due to renovation work).

North elevation: Timber frame with red brick, plastered (at time of survey the plaster and some of the brickwork had been removed).

East elevation: Plastered brick wall. Late nineteenth century 4-panel door in moulded surround leading to hall

South elevation: Timber frame? and brick re-plastered. In the centre of the wall is a set of double doors with a window either side (late nineteenth century), these lead out to the garden.

West elevation: Rendered brick chimney breast. Central cast iron fireplace with a timber surround. Two niches with moulded timber surrounds, one either side of the chimney breast, contain nineteenth century timber casement windows.

Ceiling: Lath and plaster ceiling, two black painted lengths of timber have been applied to the ceiling. These have the appearance of beams but are not structural; they may cover over existing timber beams.

Floor: Herringbone parquet floor, mid twentieth century replacement of an earlier floor.



**Figure 22:** Room 5, fireplace



**Figure 23:** Room 5, 4-panel door with moulded surround, roll-moulded skirting boards and picture rail

#### Room 5 (Fig. 22 & 23)

Current function: Study

Original function: Study

Deep moulded skirting boards and picture rail (nineteenth century) to all elevations.

North elevation: Brick wall, plastered. Fireplace in centre, timber surround with cast iron grate and tiled cheeks; tiled hearth with raised tiled surround (late nineteenth century). Bell push to side of fireplace.

East elevation: Lath and plaster over brick and timber frame. Timber casement window with moulded surround (nineteenth century).

South elevation: Plastered brick, 4-panel door at east end within a moulded surround (nineteenth century) leading in to the hallway (room 1).

West elevation: Plastered brick, 4-panel door at south end within a moulded surround (nineteenth century) leading to the hallway / corridor (room 1).

Floor: Pine floorboards, nineteenth century

Ceiling: Plaster



## Room 6

Current function: Staff room

Original function: Staff room (part of the servants quarters)

This room contains roll moulded skirting boards on its east wall and to the south of the fireplace. No picture rail.

North elevation: Rendered brick wall containing a large timber casement window within a simple moulded frame (early twentieth century).

East elevation: Plastered brick wall, doorway with plain moulded surround (door removed) at northern end leading to the store (room 8). There is an early twentieth century indicator board for an electronic call bell system on the upper part of this wall; all or most of the relevant rooms have retained their bell pushes.

South elevation: Timber frame and brick wall, plastered (the brick and plaster has been removed). The plans show a door at the east end (removed at time of survey).

West elevation: Central projecting brick fireplace, plastered. The fireplace originally had a brick arch, subsequently infilled below to square it off. To the south of the chimney breast is a step up and a 4-panel door leading to room 7 (sitting room). To the north of the chimney breast is a timber board doorway (early twentieth century) to room 9 (kitchen).

Ceiling: Plaster

Floor: Herringbone parquet, clay tile



**Figure 24:** Room 6, staff room. Early twentieth century indicator board for call bell system



**Figure 25:** Room 6, staff room. Timber frame to south elevation



**Figure 26:** Room 6, staff room. Brick fireplace



**Figure 27:** Room 7, sitting room. Tall timber cupboard in north-east corner

### Room 7 (Figs. 27 & 28)

Current function: Sitting room

Original function: Parlour / sitting room

Roll moulded skirting boards (nineteenth century) and moulded picture rail (nineteenth century) to all elevations.

North elevation: Plastered brick. At the west end is a narrow late nineteenth century built-in floor to ceiling timber cupboard.

East elevation: Projecting brick chimney breast, cast iron fireplace, surround painted white (nineteenth century). Bell push to side of chimney stack.

South elevation: Plastered brick wall (nineteenth century), with timber frame and brick wall behind (eighteenth century).

West elevation: Plastered brick, central casement window with moulded surround (late nineteenth century).

Ceiling: Plaster

Floor: Herringbone parquet floor, early to mid twentieth century.



**Figure 28:** Room 7, sitting room. Nineteenth century fireplace



**Figure 29:** Room 9, kitchen. Door to staff room

### Room 8

Current function: Store

Original function: Store / game preparation room

North elevation: Painted brick

East elevation: Painted brick, timber casement window with moulded surround (nineteenth century).

South elevation: Painted brick

West elevation: Rendered brick, timber beam visible along upper part of wall.

Floor: Red quarry tile

Ceiling: Plaster

### Room 9 (Fig. 29)

Current function: Kitchen

Original function: Kitchen

North elevation: Brick wall covered with late twentieth century timber panelling. A nineteenth century 4-panel door at the east end leads to the rear staircase (room 10).



East elevation: Rendered brick wall with an early twentieth century panelled doorway at the northern end leading out to the garden / yard. A timber boarded door at the south end leads through to room 6, staff room.

South elevation: Rendered brick wall. Projecting chimney stack and fireplace (blocked).

West elevation: Rendered brick, tiled (tiles now removed). Window, mid to late nineteenth century.

Floor: Red and black geometric tiled floor (late nineteenth century).

Ceiling: Plaster



**Figure 30:** Room 10, turned newel posts at base of staircase (nineteenth century)

#### Room 10 (Fig. 30)

Current function: Stairs and stairwell

Original function: Stairs and stairwell

North elevation: Rendered brick, door to store (room 11) at east end. The staircase up to the first floor runs against the north wall, there is a small half landing with a doorway to the lavatory, the dogleg staircase then returns to the east and meets with the first floor corridor running north to south.

East elevation: Painted brick, small casement window

South elevation: Painted brick, a 4-panel door at the east end leads to room 9 (kitchen)

West elevation: Painted brick

Floor: Red and black geometric tiled floor (nineteenth century).

Ceiling: Plaster

#### Room 11 (Fig. 31)

Current function: Store

Original function: Store

North elevation: Painted brick with a timber beam along the top of the wall and a casement window below at the east end of the wall.

East elevation: Painted brick. Early twentieth century 4-panel door at south end leading to yard.

South elevation: Painted brick with a 4-panel door at the east end leading to the stairs and stairwell (room 10).

West elevation: Painted brick, nineteenth century

Floor: Red and black geometric tiled floor (nineteenth century).

Ceiling: Plasterboard? The single storey room is open to the apex of the roof.



**Figure 31:** Room 11, store. Nineteenth century black and red quarry tile floor

## First floor (Fig. 53)

### Room 12 (Figs. 32 & 33)

Current function: Landing

Original function: Landing

The landing is large and has retained its roll moulded skirting board and picture rail (nineteenth century)

North elevation: Rendered brick wall, the staircases rises up from the ground floor along this wall. At the west end the corridor continues to the north with a doorway to room 14.

East elevation: Lath and plaster over timber frame and brick. Large late nineteenth century casement window gives light to the stairs and landing. The window consists of 4 1-over-1 panes, the end windows are casement opening; the window retains some of its original glass.

South elevation: Plastered brick wall, timber step and entrance to room 13 (bedroom). At the west end is a timber casement window with a moulded surround, it has retained its original catch.

West elevation: At the south end is a cupboard fronted by a 4-panel door and moulded surround, late nineteenth century. To the north is a 4-panel door leading to room 11 (bedroom). To the north end of this wall is a 4-panel door with a vent over it, this originally led to a cupboard which was part of room 14.

Ceiling: Plaster

Floor: Pine floorboards, narrow (east to west). To the western end of the corridor are wider pine floorboards, running north to south.



**Figure 32:** Room 12, landing. Fretwork balusters to staircase (late nineteenth / early twentieth century)



**Figure 33:** Nineteenth century roll moulded timber beam running north to south to west end of landing

### Room 13 (Figs. 34 – 37)

Current function: Bedroom

Original function: Bedroom

Roll moulded skirting board and picture rail to all elevations

North elevation: Plastered brick wall, nineteenth century 4-panel door with moulded surround and rim lock which leads out to the landing (room 12) with a step down.

East elevation: Timber frame and brick wall, plastered. Casement window at north end

South elevation: Plastered brick wall, central timber casement window

West elevation: Plastered brick wall. Cast iron fireplace with green and black marble surround, tiled cheeks and raised ceramic tile surround.



Floor: Pine floorboards  
Ceiling: Lath and plaster



**Figure 34:** Room 13, bedroom. Cast iron fireplace with marble surround.



**Figure 35:** Room 13, bedroom. Deep moulded skirting boards



**Figure 36:** Room 13, bedroom. Window catches, late nineteenth century



**Figure 37:** Room 13, bedroom. 4-panel door leading to landing

#### Room 14 (Figs. 38 - 41)

Current function: Bedroom

Original function: Bedroom

Roll moulded skirting boards and moulded picture rail to all elevations (nineteenth century).

North elevation: Timber frame and brick, plastered (some brick removed)

East elevation: Lath and plaster? A 4-panel door within a moulded surround leads to the landing. There is a further 4-panel door with a vent above it at the north end of this wall, it would have given access to a cupboard within the room, the cupboard walls have been removed.

South elevation: Brick, plastered. Two timber casement windows within moulded timber surrounds, each window containing 6 panes. The windows have retained their late nineteenth century catches and stays.

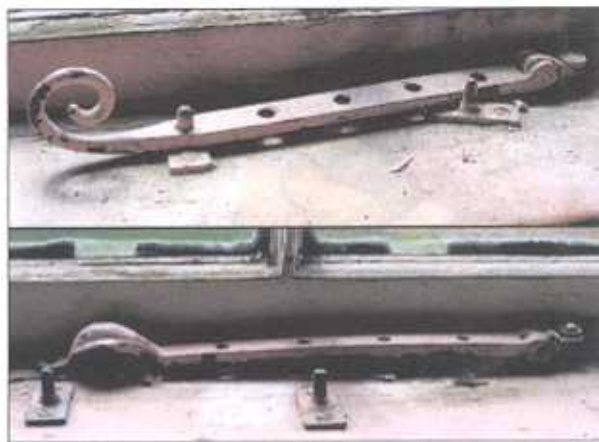
West elevation: Brick, plastered. Central chimney breast with a cast iron fireplace, painted surround and hearth. To the north of the chimney breast is a cupboard fronted by a 4-panel door with rim lock.

Ceiling: Lath and plaster? (removed at time of survey)

Floor: Pine floorboards (late nineteenth century). The floorboards which were once inside the cupboard are wider and older, dating to the early nineteenth century.



**Figure 38:** Room 14, bedroom – west elevation



**Figure 39:** Room 14, bedroom. Two different styles of window stay



**Figure 40:** Room 14, bedroom. Older pine floorboards retained in cupboard (cupboard walls removed)



**Figure 41:** Room 14, bedroom. Bell push on north elevation

#### Room 15 (Fig. 42)

Current function: Bedroom

Original function: Bedroom

Roll moulded skirting boards and moulded picture rail to all elevations.

North elevation: Plastered brick wall. Timber fire surround, cast iron fireplace with red tile cheeks and raised ceramic surround (late nineteenth century). At the east end is a 4-panel door with a moulded surround and rim lock, this leads into room 16 (nursery).

East elevation: Timber frame, brick, lath and plaster. Late nineteenth century casement window with moulded surround.

South elevation: Brick wall, plastered.

West elevation: At the south end is a 4-panel door with a moulded surround and rim lock leading out to the landing. Call bell to north of door. Part of the nineteenth century roll moulded timber beam is visible running along the top of the wall (continues from landing).

Floor: Narrow pine floorboards, late nineteenth century

Ceiling: Lath and plaster





**Figure 42:** Room 15, fireplace on north elevation



**Figure 43:** Room 16, nursery. Timber beam visible running along the top of the wall.

#### Room 16 (Fig. 43)

Current function: Nursery

Original function: Bedroom

Roll moulded skirting boards and picture rail to all elevations.

North elevation: Rendered brick wall

East elevation: Timber frame and brick wall, lath and plaster. Late nineteenth century timber casement window with moulded surround.

South elevation: Brick chimney stack projects into the room, small ornate cast iron fireplace with a plain timber surround and a stone / slate hearth (placed off centre). A 4-panel door with a moulded surround to the east of the chimney breast leads into room 15 (bedroom).

West elevation: Plastered brick wall, a 4-panel door with a moulded surrounds (nineteenth century) leads to room 17. Part of a timber beam is visible running along the top of this wall.

Floor: Narrow pine floorboards (late nineteenth century)

Ceiling: Lath and plaster

#### Room 17 (Figs. 44 & 45)

Current function: Bathroom / cupboard / WC

Original function: Unknown

This room was, until very recently, subdivided by block work walls to form a bathroom, W.C. and cupboard with two corridors to rooms 16 and 18. At the time of the survey these mid twentieth century block work walls, the floorboards, skirting boards and ceiling plaster were removed.

North elevation: Rendered brick wall, three early twentieth century casement windows with early twentieth century catches / stays.

East elevation: Plastered brick wall. A 4-panel door within a moulded surround leads to room 16 (nursery).

South elevation: Timber frame, lath and plaster wall (lath and plaster partially removed).

West elevation: Plastered brick, projecting brick chimney stack. To the south of the stack is a timber step up to a nineteenth century 4-panel door within a moulded surround leading to room 18 (bedroom).

Ceiling: Lath and plaster? (removed). Loft hatch.

Floor: Floorboards? (removed)



**Figure 44:** Room 17, north wall



**Figure 45:** Room 17, south wall

### Room 18 (Figs. 46 & 47)

Current function: Bedroom

Original function: Bedroom

Roll moulded skirting boards and moulded picture rail to all elevations.

North elevation: Plastered brick wall. Tall, narrow cupboard at the west end, 2-panel door, nineteenth century. At the east end is a 4-panel door with moulded surround leading out to the landing.

East elevation: Projecting brick chimney breast, nineteenth century cast iron fireplace. To the south of the chimney breast is a 4-panel door with a moulded surround leading to room 17.

South elevation: Plastered brick wall

West elevation: Plastered brick wall, late nineteenth century timber casement window.

Floor: Pine floorboards, nineteenth century

Ceiling: Lath and plaster, the ceiling slopes down to meet the top of the north and south walls



**Figure 46:** Room 18, bedroom. Cast iron fireplace



**Figure 47:** Room 18, bedroom. Narrow timber cupboard





**Figure 48:** Room 19, bedroom. Timber cupboard door



**Figure 49:** Room 19, bedroom. Cast iron fireplace

#### Room 19 (Figs. 48 & 49)

Current function: Bedroom

Original function: Bedroom

Roll moulded skirting boards to all elevations, no picture rail.

North elevation: Plastered brick wall

East elevation: Plastered brick wall, 4-panel door within moulded surround leads out to landing.

South elevation: Plastered brick wall, nineteenth century cast iron fireplace. Tall, narrow timber cupboard at east end with a 4-panel door, moulded surround with cornice at top. Cupboard interior is timber boarded with nineteenth century hooks.

West elevation: Plastered brick wall, timber casement window

#### Room 20

Current function: Corridor

Original function: Corridor

North elevation: Plastered brick wall

East elevation: Plastered brick wall, late nineteenth century casement window. The line of the original end wall of the house can be seen by the break in the wall to the south of the window.

South elevation: 4-panel door leading into room 18 (bedroom)

West elevation: Plastered brick wall, stairs to ground floor at north end. A 4-panel door at the south end leads into room 19 (bedroom).

Floor: Pine floorboards, nineteenth century

Ceiling: Lath and plaster

#### Room 21 (Fig. 50)

Current function: W C

Original function: W C

North elevation: Brick covered by modern pine cladding, small 1-over-1 sash window

East elevation: Brick covered by modern pine cladding, 4-panel door leading out to half landing and stairs. Above the door frame the brick header arch of an earlier window is visible

South elevation: Brick covered by modern pine cladding  
West elevation: Brick covered by modern pine cladding  
Floor: Pine floorboards, early twentieth century  
Ceiling: Modern pine cladding

#### Roof (Figs. 51 & 54)

The roof space / attic was not accessed during this survey, however views of part of the roof structure were obtained as the lath and plaster ceilings have been removed in rooms 14 and 17. The roof structure appears to date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, the timbers are square cut and uniform. The rafter roof has side purlins and a ridge plate. The roof level above the front range of the property contains a fireplace (D Olney, pers. comm.), and has been divided by partition walls. A garret window is also visible on the southern gable end.



**Figure 50:** Room 21, WC. Arch of former window opening above door



**Figure 51:** View into roof space from room 14



## 4 Discussion

The development of The Old Vicarage, Elstow can be analysed by its surviving structural details and historic fabric, and also by utilising archive material. Its phases are described below.

### 4.1 Development of the site (Fig. 55)

#### Seventeenth century

The listing description describes The Old Vicarage as eighteenth century with possible earlier origins. At the time of the survey some areas of the pebbledash render had been removed from the front elevation, this revealed the underlying walling material - timber frame and red brick infill with lath and plaster. The timber frame is not medieval in appearance and it probably dates to the mid to late seventeenth century. The front range consisting of rooms 1, 2, and 5 (and possibly 8) on the ground floor, and the rooms directly above formed the first phase of development of this house.

#### Eighteenth century

The rendered rear wing is also of brick and timber frame construction, this part of the house which includes room 4 (school room) on the ground floor and room 14 (bedroom) on the first floor probably dates to the eighteenth century. The extension to the north (which includes rooms 6 and 17) may date to the mid to late eighteenth century; the red brick in the fireplace of room 6 would appear to be pre-nineteenth century. The 1767 Estate map of Elstow shows the front range and an extension to the rear; it also shows an extension to the south of the rear elevation – no evidence for this remains. The house was substantially altered and 'updated' during the nineteenth century so any interior fixtures and fittings from the earlier phase of the building were entirely replaced. The roof space above the front range was in use at one time, perhaps as servants accommodation. A fireplace and partition walls remain although the access staircase has been removed, the roof space may have been accessed from the existing landing. An early nineteenth century garret window has been retained on the south elevation.

#### Nineteenth century

In the mid nineteenth century the house was extended to the north; this involved constructing the two storey brick built extension at the rear and included rooms 7, 9 and 10 (staircase) on the ground floor and rooms 18, 19 and 20 on the first floor. Soon after, a single storey gabled extension (room 11) was added to the north. The size and location of these rooms would suggest they were staff accommodation; these new servants' quarters would have made the accommodation in the roof space redundant. Most vernacular houses only had one staircase however during the nineteenth century it became important to have a separate service staircase to isolate the family from the servants. The servants' quarters at The Old Vicarage are really quite extensive and the nineteenth century planform of the house has been retained. The division in the house between the rooms used by the family and the servants quarters is still apparent.

The red brick stack to the principal rear wing was widened to incorporate a second flue for the first floor fireplace. A yellow brick stack was also constructed for fireplaces in the drawing room (room 2) and the bedroom above. Fireplaces were incorporated into nearly every room in the house. The south end of the drawing room was extended out slightly with the addition of a stone rectangular bay, this would

have been a high status feature and shown the wealth of the owners / occupants of the property.

The nineteenth century rear wing was extended slightly to the west with the addition of two projecting gables; this would have given rooms 18 and 19 more headroom. It would appear that all the windows were replaced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the earlier windows are likely to have been sliding sashes. An early nineteenth century 9-pane window has survived on the south elevation at garret level.

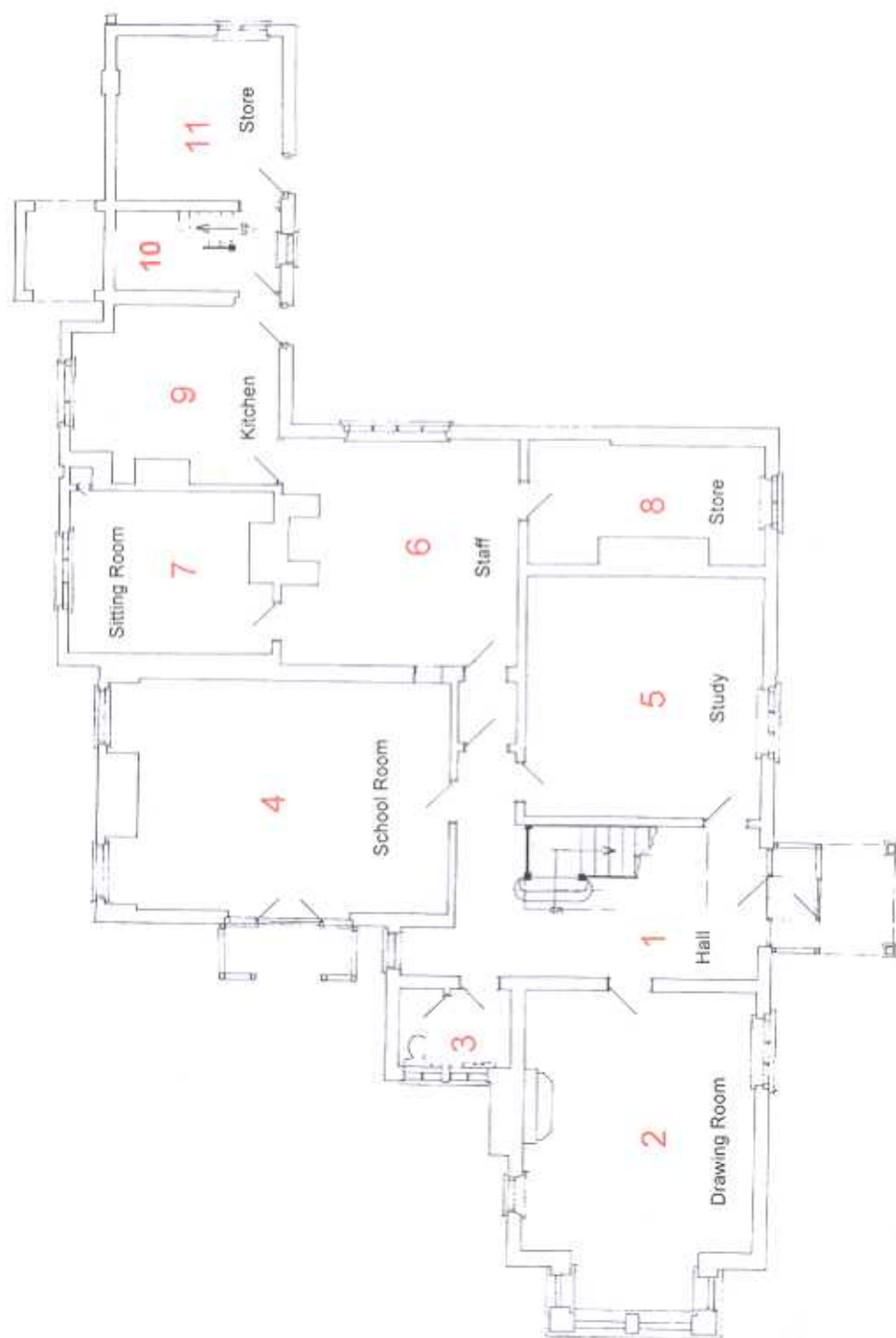
#### Twentieth century

Documentary evidence in the form of a letter from Sir Samuel Whitbread to Mr Hawkins, the rector of Elstow makes it clear that the house was renovated between c1900 and 1904. The biggest change involved the demolition of the adjoining rectangular building to the north of the house and also part of the north end of the front range; a comparison between the 1901 and 1925 Ordnance Survey maps shows a substantial amount of the building has been removed. This is likely to have occurred during the renovation works; the north wall of the front range was rebuilt in brick. The staircase in the front hall was inserted in the early twentieth century, replacing a previous staircase.

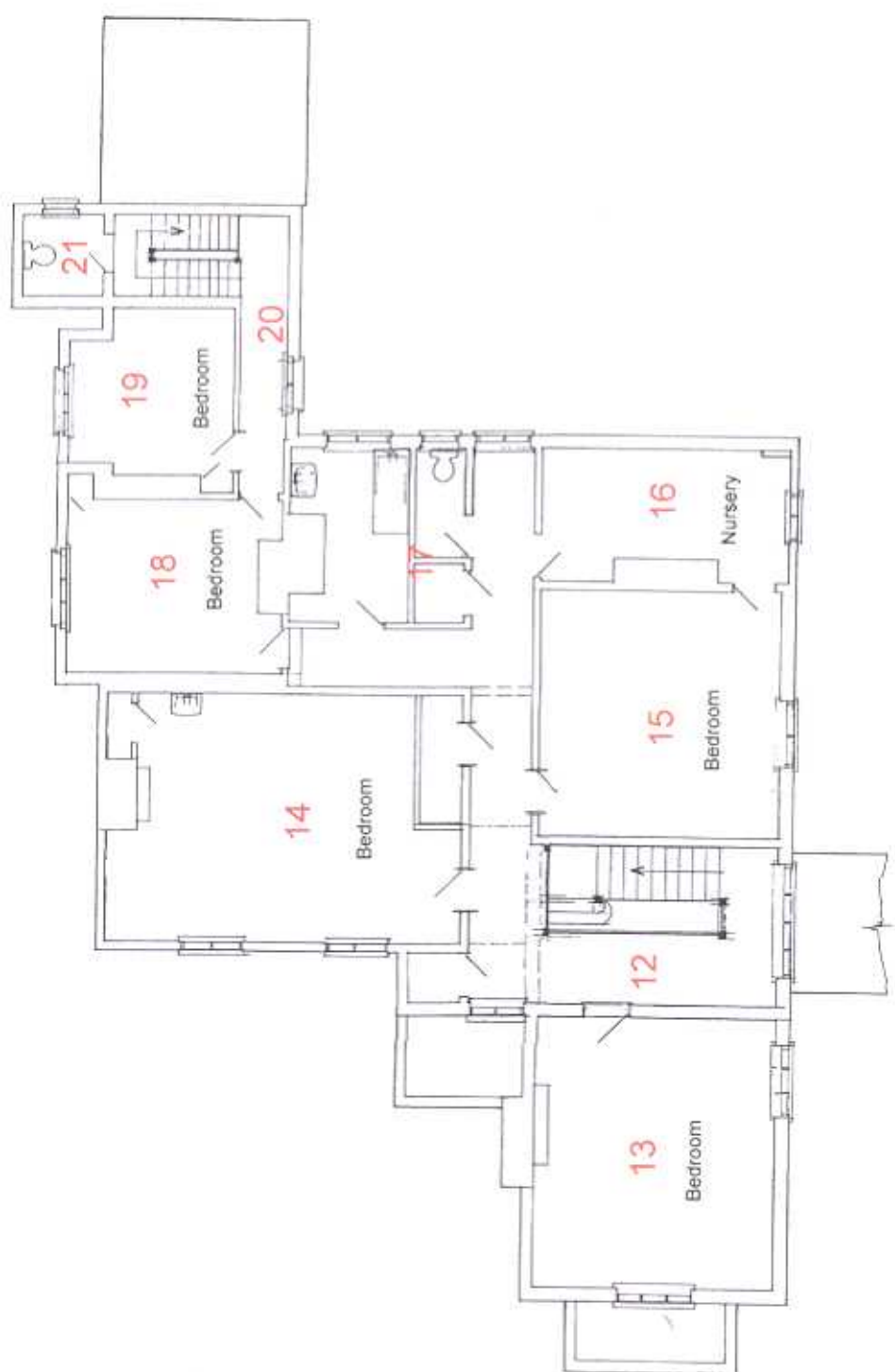
The 1901 Ordnance Survey map shows a small glazed roof structure in the south west corner of the house, by 1925 this had been demolished and the existing one and two storey extension built in its place which provided an indoor WC at ground floor level. Between 1901 and 1925 a small extension was built to house the WC at mezzanine level on the rear elevation. A bathroom and separate WC was inserted into room 17 in the early to mid twentieth century; additional windows were also inserted to light this newly subdivided room.

Other alterations include the construction of the porch over the front door and the porch to the south side of the rear wing (by 1901). The house also appears to have been re-roofed in the early part of the twentieth century.



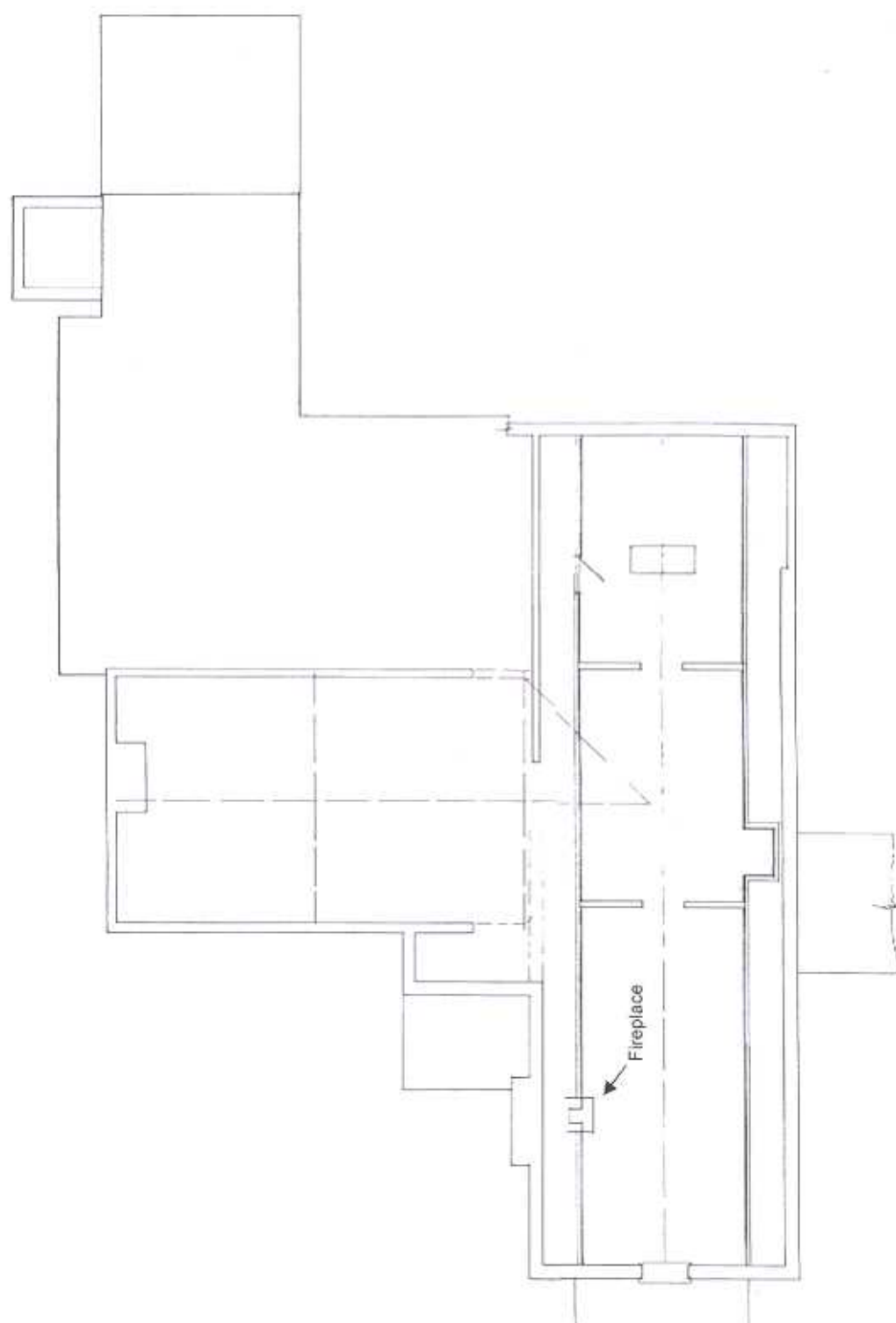


**Figure 52:** Ground floor plan of The Old Vicarage (Plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt)

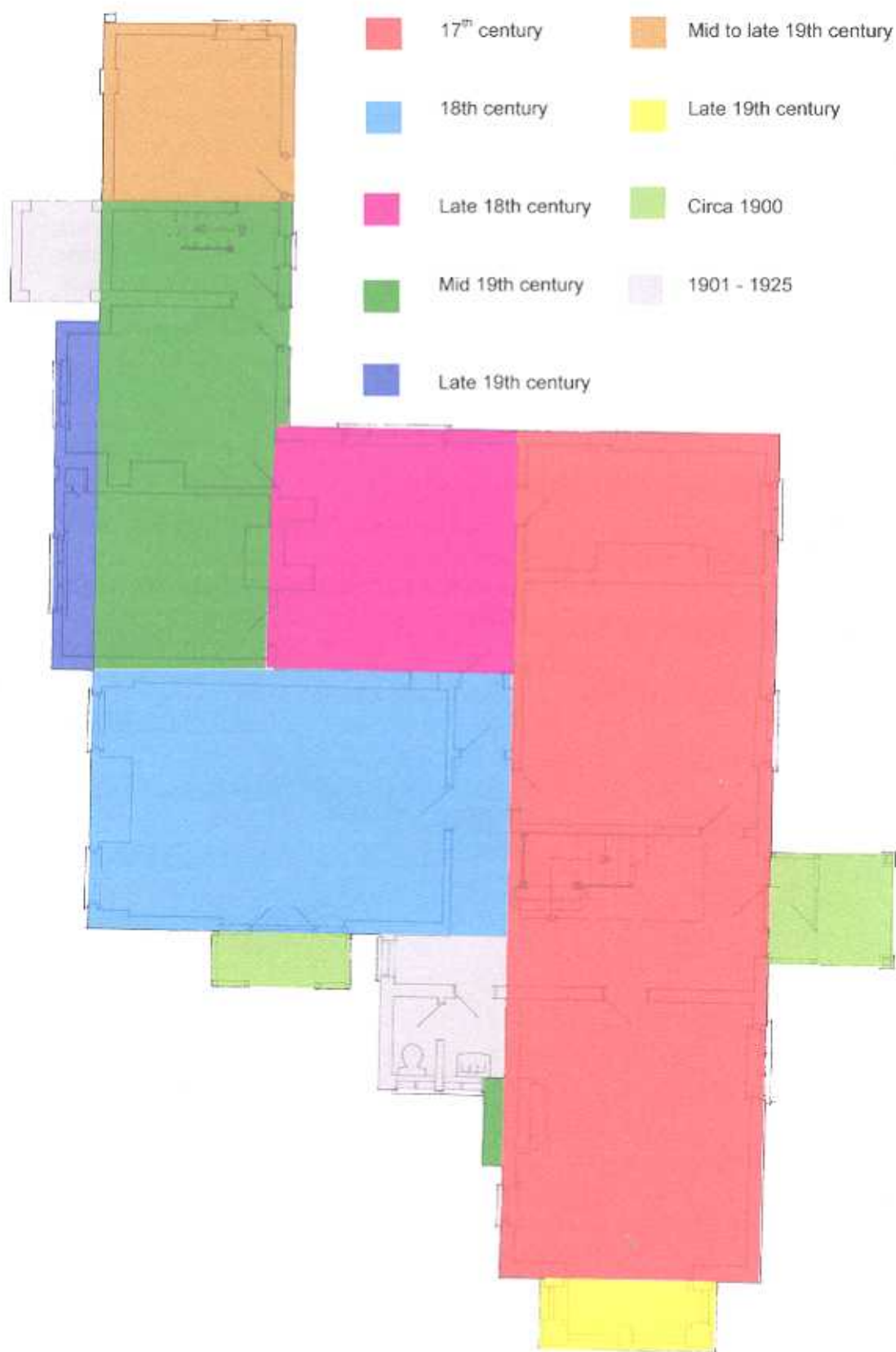


**Figure 53:** First floor plan of The Old Vicarage (Plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt)





**Figure 54:** Attic / roof plan of The Old Vicarage (Plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt)



**Figure 55:** Phased plan of The Old Vicarage(Plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt)



## 5 Conclusion

The Old Vicarage occupies a prominent position in Elstow facing on to the historic village green and lying to the north of the church of St. Mary and St. Helena. A Benedictine abbey was established in Elstow in c1078 by Judith, niece of William the Conqueror which assured the prosperity and future growth of the village.

The Old Vicarage is a two storey house surrounded by a garden. The front range is the oldest part of the house, dating to the mid to late seventeenth century. The house was extended to the rear in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to form a substantial residence. In the nineteenth century, typical Victorian features such as fireplaces, moulded skirting boards, picture rails and 4-panel doors were inserted in almost every room and any earlier fixtures were replaced. The house was also re-fenestrated in the nineteenth century. In the early part of the twentieth century part of the north end of the house and an adjoining building to the north were demolished, reducing the size of the house. The house has been little altered since the early part of the twentieth century and has retained a huge number of its nineteenth century fixtures and fittings.

In 1796 the house and its land to the rear was acquired by Samuel Whitbread, owner of the Elstow estate; the plaque on the front elevation would attest to this. The Whitbread family would have leased or rented out the house and farm to tenants. The Old Vicarage was not actually used as a vicarage until the early twentieth century (c 1905). Prior to this it was almost certainly a farmhouse, the house was probably separated from its surrounding farm buildings at the turn of the twentieth century. In the 1950's / 1960's a new vicarage was built just to the south of 'The Old Vicarage'.

# CONTENTS

1. Introduction .....	3
1.1 Location .....	3
1.2 Site description .....	3
2. Historical Background .....	5
2.1 General .....	5
2.2 The Old Vicarage .....	6
3. Description .....	10
3.1 External .....	10
3.2 Internal .....	13
4. Discussion .....	26
4.1 Development of the site .....	26
5. Conclusion .....	32
6. Bibliography .....	33

## Figures

1. Site plan .....	4
2. Extract from the 1767 map of the Manor of Eistow .....	6
3. Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map 1884 .....	7
4. Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map 1901 .....	8
5. Extract from the Ordnance Survey Map 1925 .....	9
6. Front (east) elevation .....	11
7. Circular plaque on front (east) elevation .....	11
8. Front (east) elevation, exposed timber frame and brick .....	11
9. Front (east) elevation, early nineteenth century doorcase within porch .....	11
10. Timber porch to front (east) elevation .....	11
11. Side (south) elevation .....	11
12. View of the property from the south-west .....	12
13. Rear (west) elevation .....	12
14. Side (north) elevation .....	12
15. Side (north) elevation .....	12
16. North end of the rear (west) elevation .....	12
17. Water pump outside kitchen door .....	12
18. Room 1, staircase in hall .....	13
19. Room 2, sitting room. Detail of skirting board and un-moulded plinth to door surround .....	13
20. Room 2, sitting room. Carved stone fireplace .....	14
21. Room 4, school room. Fireplace and arched niches .....	14
22. Room 5, study. Late nineteenth century fireplace .....	15
23. Room 5, study. 4-panel door with moulded surround, roll-moulded skirting and picture rail .....	15
24. Room 6, staff room. Early twentieth indicator board for call bell system .....	16
25. Room 6, staff room. Timber frame to south elevation .....	16



26. Room 6, staff room. Brick fireplace.....	16
27. Room 7, sitting room. Tall timber cupboard in north-east corner.....	16
28. Room 7, sitting room. Nineteenth century fireplace.....	17
29. Room 9, kitchen. Door to staff room.....	17
30. Room 10, rear staircase. Turned newel posts at base of staircase.....	18
31. Room 11, store. Nineteenth century black and red quarry tile floor.....	18
32. Room 12, landing. Fretwork balusters to staircase.....	19
33. Room 12, landing. Nineteenth century roll moulded timber beam.....	19
34. Room 13, bedroom. Cast iron fireplace with marble surround.....	20
35. Room 13, bedroom. Deep moulded skirting boards.....	20
36. Room 13, bedroom. Window catches, late nineteenth century.....	20
37. Room 13, bedroom. 4-panel door leading to landing.....	20
38. Room 14, bedroom. West elevation.....	21
39. Room 14, bedroom. Two different styles of window stay.....	21
40. Room 14, bedroom. Older pine floorboards, retained in cupboard.....	21
41. Room 14, bedroom. Bell push on north elevation.....	21
42. Room 15, bedroom. Fireplace on north elevation.....	22
43. Room 16, nursery. Timber beam visible running along top of wall.....	22
44. Room 17, north wall.....	23
45. Room 17, south wall.....	23
46. Room 18, bedroom. Cast iron fireplace.....	23
47. Room 18, bedroom. Narrow timber cupboard.....	23
48. Room 19, bedroom. Narrow timber cupboard.....	24
49. Room 19, bedroom. Cast iron fireplace.....	24
50. Room 21, WC. Arch of earlier window opening.....	25
51. View into roof space from room 14.....	25
52. Ground floor plan of The Old Vicarage (Plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt).....	28
53. First floor plan of The Old Vicarage (Plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt).....	29
54. Attic / roof plan of The Old Vicarage (Plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt).....	30
55. Phased plan of The Old Vicarage (based on plan courtesy of S. R. Everitt).....	31

© BEAMS Ltd. Written permission must be gained from BEAMS Ltd to use or copy any part of this report.

BEAMS Ltd is the trading company of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust Reg No. 2792915.



**The Old Vicarage  
Elstow  
Bedfordshire**

**An Historic Building Appraisal**



**June 2008**