

Client Name: Brian Parry
Client Ref No:

Document Title: The Kya, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire

Document Type: Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief
Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SP 660 175
Planning Reference: 01/01922/APP

OA Job Number: 1290
Invoice Code: LUKHWB

Archive Location: Buckinghamshire County Museum Service
Museum Accession No: 2002.49

Prepared by: Jonathan Gill
Position: Project Officer
Date: October 2002

Checked by: Julian Munby
Position: Head Of Buildings Archaeology
Date:

Approved by: Julian Munby Signed.....
Position: Head Of Buildings Archaeology
Date:

Document File Location: Server 5/Buildings/Projects/Ludgershall rep.doc
Graphics File Location
Illustrated by

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2002

Oxford Archaeology

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 1865 263800

f: (0044) 1865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

The Kya

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Summary | 2 |
| 1 Introduction | 2 |
| 1.1 Background | 2 |
| 1.2 Aims and objectives | 2 |
| 1.3 Methodology | 3 |
| 2 Archaeological and Historical Background | 3 |
| 2.1 Ludgershall | 3 |
| 2.2 The Kya | 5 |
| 2.3 Geology | 6 |
| 3 Building recording: The Kya | 6 |
| 3.1 External description | 6 |
| 3.2 Earth wall construction | 7 |
| 3.3 Internal description prior to dismantling works | 8 |
| 3.4 Features revealed by dismantling works | 10 |
| 4 Archaeological watching Brief | 12 |
| 5 Conclusion | 13 |
| APPENDIX I Bibliography and references | 15 |
| APPENDIX II Summary of Site Details | 16 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Figure 1: | Site location |
| Figure 2: | Ordnance Survey 2:1 mile map, Sheet 231A (1815). |
| Figure 3: | First edition Ordnance Survey map (1880) |
| Figure 4: | Site plan |
| Figure 5: | Ground plan of The Kya (below window height) |
| Figure 6: | Cross section through The Kya looking north-east. |

THE KYA, LUDGERSHALL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) has carried out a programme of historic building recording and an archaeological watching brief at The Kya in Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire. The Kya was a small cob-built cottage with thatched roof and it retained some remains of a previous building which formerly adjoined to the south-west. An archaeological watching brief was maintained while the building was demolished and while the ground floor slab was lifted but no evidence of an earlier building on the site was uncovered. Subsequent to the dismantling of the roof a programme of dendrochronology was undertaken which showed that the main roof timbers dated to 1569.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) has undertaken a programme of historic building recording and an archaeological watching brief at The Kya in Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SP 660 175). The work was undertaken in advance of (and during) the demolition of The Kya as part of its replacement with a modern house on the site. Although the Kya is not a listed building it is of historical interest and the recording was requested by Alexander (Sandy) Kidd, Senior Archaeological Officer at Buckinghamshire County Council as a condition of planning approval for the development, under the terms of national planning guidelines (PPG15, PPG16). The local planning authority is Aylesbury Vale District Council.

1.1.2 Oxford Archaeology (then Oxford Archaeological Unit, OAU) previously carried out a field evaluation at The Kya which consisted of two trenches c.5 m to the east of the house and c.15 m to the south-east. Neither trench revealed significant archaeological deposits (see Oxford Archaeological Unit, December 2000).

1.2 Aims and objectives

1.2.1 The principal aims of the work were:

- to create a record of the building prior to its demolition
- to investigate the structure while it was being demolished
- to determine whether there was evidence of an earlier building beneath the modern floor slab
- to assess the potential for environmental thatch analysis and dendrochronological dating

- 1.2.2 The building recording concentrated on the building's structure, construction, development and use.

1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 The building recording comprised three main elements: a photographic survey, a drawn survey and a written, descriptive survey. The photographic survey was undertaken using black and white print film and colour slide film and consisted of general shots and specific details. The drawn survey consisted of a ground plan and a cross-sectional elevation through the building. The written survey consisted of additional notes to analyse, interpret and describe the building. The on-site recording was undertaken on 17 and 30 July 2002 and 9 and 10 September 2002.

- 1.3.2 In addition to this recording a programme of dendrochronology was also undertaken on a selection of the structural timbers by Dan Miles of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory.

- 1.3.3 The project archive will be deposited with the Buckinghamshire County Museums Service (See Appendix II for list of items to be archived).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Ludgershall

- 2.1.1 The following historical account of the village has been taken from a previous OA report (*Land Adjacent to Kya House, Archaeological Evaluation* December 2000). It was prepared for the previous study by Michael Farley .

- 2.1.2 Ludgershall is recorded in Domesday as two manors (Morris, 1978) and the following entries appear in Domesday Book:

Land of the Bishop of Coutances: Ashendon Hundred: 'The Bishop holds Ludgershall himself. It answers for 9 hides. Land for 8 ploughs: in lordship 4 hides: 2 ploughs there: a third possible. 13 villagers with 4 smallholders have 5 ploughs. 5 slaves; meadow for 8 ploughs; woodland, 40 pigs. The total value is and was 100s: before 1066 6 pounds. Edeva held this manor from/Queen Edith: she could sell.

Land of William son of Mann: In Ashendon Hundred: William son of Mann holds 2 hides in Ludgershall. Land for 2 ploughs: in lordship 1 hide and 1 virgate; 1 plough there. 3 villagers have 1 plough. Meadow for 1 plough. The value is and always was 20s. Aelfric, King Edward's chamberlain, held this manor; he could sell.

- 2.1.3 Ludgershall lay at the heart of Bernwood Forest at its greatest in the late Saxon period (Broad and Hoyle, 1997). The forest is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon

Chronicle for AD 921 (ASC). In the early 13th-century Henry III sought but failed to extend forest law into north Buckinghamshire; by the late 13th-century forest law was confined to the Brill/Boarstall/Oakley area south of Ludgershall. Nevertheless, the village remained one of the ‘purlieu townships’. In 1363 and 1452, for example, it paid a pasturage fee for the use of the Forest. By c 1561 representations were made on behalf of Ludgershall and other local villages as ‘...*the commoners of Arncote, Ludgershall, and other towns cannot come into the forest as they have done before by reason of the hedging and ditching.*’ (*Op cit.*, 47). Several areas of forest including or adjacent to Ludgershall had been enclosed quite early, including Clear Field Farm south-east of the village (Fig. 3) that was enclosed in 1305 (*op cit.*, 25). Bernwood Forest ceased to be a legal entity in 1632, but its former existence led to many land disputes.

- 2.1.4 Early maps depict Ludgershall within the much-reduced forest. One of 1590 has the church on the northern margins of Bernwood, with a defined area (*the Brache*) adjoining to the south (BRS 1964, map 2: Broad 1997, 66). This may be the *la Breche* wood, with 100 acres of land adjoining, which John de Moleyns was licensed to impark in 1339 (VCH 1927, 69). A schematic 16th-century map of Wotton Underwood shows Wotton and Ludgershall (Schultz 1939, copy BRO Ma R/7).
- 2.1.5 The parish also contains the hamlets of Tetchwick and Kingswood. Ludgershall comprised 3 tenurial elements (excluding Tetchwick). Two are named ‘Ludgershall’, the third ‘Ludgershall Manor’ (VCH 1927, 68-72). The VCH notes that ‘*there is no manor house, but there is evidence that the capital messuage in Ludgershall was habitable at the end of the 16th century. South-west of the church is a small moated site with the traditional name of King Lud’s Hall which was still connected at the end of the 18th century. Bury Court, from which a portion of the tithes were payable to Bermondsey Abbey ... stood on the north-east of the church in the middle 19th century.*’. The second manor, over which Brill had over-lordship rights, also had a capital messuage, but ‘*in the wood of Brill*’. The third ‘manor’ was apparently not so designated until the 16th or 17th century. This land unit emerged following a grant by Henry II to the brethren of the Holy Trinity, St Inglevert near Picardy. Previously a hospital was built here by 1236 and was still in use in 1348. As an ‘alien’ house, it is thought to have been suppressed by Henry V in the early 15th-century (Gough, 1878, 359).
- 2.1.6 One or both of the above sites (CASS 0033 and 2134) may have been part of the principal manor. The moated site (CASS 0033) is scheduled, and lies near to the medieval church (CASS 0665). The location of the second manor ‘in the wood of Brill’ implies a location outside the village. The hospital site is unknown, though Sheahan suggests that it was north of the Rectory (Sheahan, 1862).

- 2.1.7 Jefferys' map of 1770 shows the open-plan of the village as a roughly rectangular central core with buildings facing outwards at the periphery. An open band encloses these with buildings facing inwards at the edge of the common. The church is at the south-west of the 'outer' band and buildings are shown on the opposite (west) side of road to church (site of the Rectory and moat). Bryant's map of 1825 is similar to Jefferys' but names the Rectory and defines its grounds; more buildings are shown on the west side of High Street.
- 2.1.8 Aerial photographs reveal that the village has well-preserved ridge and furrow and therefore direct evidence for medieval open-field cultivation. The furrows stop c 100 m west of High Street, south-west of the village (CAS, runs 215 of 23.1.76: 498 of 12.3.85: see also unnumbered Cambridge University/Northants Open Field photos, 1999). Local evidence of this 'blank' area suggests there may be north-south aligned linear boundary features present here, with possibly a platform of a croft. The SMR records other earthworks in the village (e.g. CASS 2332, 2366, and 2331).
- 2.1.9 Archaeological work has recently been undertaken in Duck Lane (TVAS, 2000). A considerable quantity of pottery wasters from discarded pots fired in the Brill-Boarstall tradition was recovered. The material is provisionally of later 15th-century date and indicates a pottery kiln site nearby (Saunders, 2000).
- 2.2 **The Kya**
- 2.2.1 Ludgershall has a rectangular plan with four main roads around each of which the village has developed. There are also four roads which lead away from the village and which connect with the rectangle approximately at each corner. The Kya is located on a small parcel of land immediately to the north of the Piddington Road which leads away from Ludgershall towards the north-west. It is c.300 m along the road from the north-west corner of the main Ludgershall rectangle. The irregularly shaped parcel of land on which The Kya stands is at the junction of two large fields and appears to have been taken from the corner of each.
- 2.2.2 The earliest map consulted for the current study is an Ordnance Survey drawing of 1815 (Fig 2). Although this plan is at a small scale (2":1 mile) it shows the parcel of land and a building on it (presumably The Kya) and it also gives a good indication of the layout of the village with buildings either side of the four roads. The earliest large-scale map which has been consulted is the 1880 first edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 3). This shows the current Kya House together with another building adjoining to the south-west. The adjoining building is slightly deeper than the main Kya House and approximately three-quarters its length. The footprint of this building is now partly overlain by the smaller modern extension at the south-west end of The Kya. The 1880 map shows that the two adjoining buildings were separate properties and that a boundary extended south-east from the house to the road.

- 2.2.3 There are a number of earthworks within the village and The Kya is surrounded by two substantial banks both of which are c.1 m above the ground floor height of The Kya (Fig 4). One of these banks forms the boundary between the Kya and the adjacent property (labelled D'Oyley's Farm on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1880) and passes c. 3 m to the north-east of The Kya. The property boundary (and therefore the bank) has a distinct curved bulge at the point where it passes the house. The other bank also curves around The Kya immediately to the north and west forming a terrace of higher ground c. 6 m to the north of the house. The higher ground is now within the ownership of The Kya but on the 1880 OS map it formed part of the adjacent farm. However the property boundary shown on the map does not show the current form of the curve.

2.3 **Geology**

- 2.3.1 Two north-south aligned bands of alluvium roughly define the extent of Ludgershall to the east and west. The southerly part of the village is on Upper Oxford Clay. This material is a pale-grey calcareous mudstone. The northern third of the village including the site of Kya House is at 60-70m above OD on Middle Oxford Clay (BGS 1994).

3 **BUILDING RECORDING: THE KYA**

3.1 **External description**

- 3.1.1 The Kya was a small single storey cottage (with attic) orientated NE - SW. The original building had been extended with a small addition at the south-west end (constructed in 1978) which partly overlay a previous adjoining building and also by a porch which enclosed the main entrance to the centre of the front of the house (south-east). There had been a further secondary projection to the rear (possibly of 19th-century date) but this had been demolished prior to the recording work. The roof was thatched. It was gabled over the primary building and hipped over the extension at the south-west end. The thatch extended over the gabled secondary porch in the south-east elevation.
- 3.1.2 The *south-east elevation* (front, see Pl. 1) of the house was c.2 m tall and was of white-washed cob (see 3.2 below for discussion of cob construction). There was a plinth of bricks (later 19th or early 20th century) laid against the base of the cob. From other evidence (detailed below) it is apparent that this wall was a secondary rebuild of the front of the house and that the original wall was outside the current line of the wall. The main entrance to the house was towards the centre of this wall and was enclosed by a simple 20th-century porch with glazing on each side on brick foundations. There were two windows to the elevation, one on each side of the porch, each of which was a simple timber casement of probable 20th-century date.

- 3.1.3 The **north-west** (rear) elevation was also of cob but was lower (c.1.3 m tall) than the front wall and it was largely obscured behind a later brick skin (possibly of early 20th-century date). This brickwork extended from a secondary cob projection (towards the south-western end of the elevation) to a point c.50 cm from the north-eastern end of the elevation. The projection had been demolished prior to the current survey but low sections from the two cob walls survived to confirm that they abutted the primary cottage walls with a row of tiles (probably 19th-century) inserted between the two structures. The north-eastern end of the elevation was of old brick (non-frogged, late 18th/early 19th century) and dated to a larger rebuilding of the north-eastern end of the building. There was a single small window towards the north-eastern end of the elevation. The window itself was secondary but the opening is likely to have been primary.
- 3.1.4 The **north-east elevation** (Pl. 10) was dominated by a chimney stack which projected from the centre of the elevation. The lower section (beneath 1 m) of the stack was constructed of limestone rubble and the upper section (above 1 m) was of brick (probably of later 18th-century date). Immediately to the north-west of the stack was a former doorway which had been blocked in 20th-century brickwork (with concrete block to the inner face) beneath a casement window.
- 3.1.5 The **south-west elevation** of the primary building was obscured by the modern extension constructed in 1978.

3.2 **Earth wall construction**

- 3.2.1 The primary walls at The Kya were c.30 cm thick and were of a dried earth/clay with straw binding clad in a mud-based daub and white washed. This construction technique is common in many areas of Britain and is frequently known as cob (particularly in the south-west) although in Buckinghamshire it is more commonly called witchert. There are several earth-built structures in different areas of Buckinghamshire including cottages in Grendon Underwood c.3 miles north-east from Ludgershall and most particularly in a large north-east - south-west belt across the central part of the county. This belt is centred on Haddenham about nine miles south-east of Ludgershall and contains many witchert buildings and boundary walls. Martin Andrew (see *A Note of witchert and earth building* in Pevsner 1994) reports that many witchert buildings survive from the 17th century; generally farmhouses from early in the century and cottages towards the end.
- 3.2.2 It has not been possible as part of this study to determine whether any other cob buildings survive in Ludgershall. There are no listed buildings in Ludgershall whose description refers specifically to their being cob or clay built but there are several small, white-washed listed cottages which may be constructed of clay. It is unclear why The Kya was unlisted particularly when, as detailed above, clay buildings are of some importance in Buckinghamshire.

3.2.3 The material would be mixed on site, in a pile adjacent to the proposed building, and then the walls built up in layers probably of 30 to 50 cm in height, each layer being left to dry before the next is started. In some areas shuttering was used to stabilise the structure while it dried but it appears that in Buckinghamshire the local subsoil (a decayed Portland limestone) is of a sufficiently high quality to render shuttering unnecessary. The walls are built up roughly and then their sides are trimmed with a sharpened space before they have fully dried. The good quality of the earth in this part of Buckinghamshire also allows earth buildings with thinner walls than those in other areas of the country. Six foot high boundary walls in Buckinghamshire can be as little as 25 cm thick whereas in the West Country a comparable wall would be at least twice as thick. The walls at The Kya (30 cm thick) reflect this regional construction.

3.3 **Internal description prior to dismantling works**

3.3.1 The internal description has been divided into an initial section on the building prior to the start of any dismantling/demolition works and then further description/analysis of features revealed as the building was taken down.

3.3.2 The interior of the primary building was divided into two small rooms (G1 and G2) at ground floor with a further attic room inserted above the south-western room. There was no usable attic room above the north-eastern half of the building.

3.3.3 When the initial survey was undertaken the north-eastern room (G2) had few visible features of significance with plastered walls and ceiling and a solid floor. The only primary structural timbers visible were the lower sections of eleven rafters in the north-west wall, together with the wall plate on which they rest, and the lower section of the two raking struts in the wall dividing G1 from G2. The rafters in the north-west wall were visible due to the low wall plate (1.44 m above the floor) and the sloped ceiling to this side unlike that to the south-east side (front) where the wall was taller (1.97 m above floor) and had a squared junction with the ceiling. The most dominant feature of the room was the fireplace and chimney stack, the visible part of which was constructed of mid to later 20th-century brick, in the north-east wall (Fig. 6). The stack was off-centre within the wall, located towards the south-east, and this, together with the fact that the front wall was higher than the rear suggested that the front wall may have been rebuilt and stepped-in from its original line. The front door was of 20th-century date (probably dating to the construction of the porch) but the door between G1 and G2 was older (possibly 17th century). However this door is likely to have been reused from elsewhere as this doorway is believed to have been raised (detailed below).

3.3.4 Room G1 also had plastered walls, a solid floor, visible rafters to the rear and a taller squared front (ie with no sloped ceiling). The plaster on each of the walls was modern and that on the two external walls was set immediately in

front of a plastic lining within the wall, inserted in recent decades as an anti-damp measure.

- 3.3.5 Unlike the non weight-bearing ceiling above G2 there was a structural first floor above G1 which had been inserted in the 1980s to replace a previous lower first floor. The floor comprised a principal joist along the spine (NE-SW) and tenoned common joists from this to the outer walls. The common joists were supported by a secondary wall plate on top of the front wall and by a simple softwood bearer in front of the rafters to the rear (due to the low wall plate to this side). The first floor was reached by an old set of unsecured wooden steps at the southern corner of the room which rested on the tie beam of a truss between the main building and the 1978 extension (more detail on this truss below). The set of steps was reincorporated from the previous lower first floor and may well be an original features of the building.
- 3.3.6 The south west wall (adjoining the extension) incorporated the remains of a truss from a previous deeper building now replaced by the extension. The principal surviving members of the truss were a single elm principal rafter on the north-west slope and an oak tie-beam (23 cm x 16 cm; 1.7 m above floor) from the rear wall to the front wall of the extension (ie c.1.4 m beyond the front of the main house). There was a groove in the upper face of the tie-beam (for staves to hold wattle and daub) and the principal rafter had a notch for a former clasped purlin and collar. Beneath the tie-beam the wall comprised three visible old timber posts but each of these was nailed and therefore secondary, reused insertions. One of these posts was towards the south-east end (adjacent to the steps) and the other two flanked a doorway through to the extension.
- 3.3.7 The low wall plate on the rear wall had been truncated towards the northern corner of the room to allow a doorway through to the cob-built extension (PI 11). Reused posts had been inserted to each side to support the wall plate and flank the doorway. The rafters at this point had also been truncated immediately below the modern bearer (supporting this end of the first floor) to allow a greater clearance beneath the doorway.
- 3.3.8 Room F1 was the only usable first floor room and this is understood to have been created in the 1980s. It was above G1 and extended a short distance south-west above the small extension at this end of the building, also constructed in the 1980s. The primary rafters were visible to both sides, each set supported by a single purlin and by a square set ridge piece (14 cm x 10 cm) over which the rafters sat. The purlins had simple splayed scarf joints with 3 pegs immediately to the south-west of the cross wall at the north-east end of the room. A waney collar was visible within this wall providing additional support for the purlins. Immediately below this collar there was a small hatch which allowed limited visual access into the adjacent roof space (this area detailed below). The room is lit by a dormer in the hipped south-west gable (1980s) and by a smaller dormer in the primary roof towards the north-east end

of the room. This window almost certainly dates to the works undertaken in the 1980s.

3.4 **Features revealed by dismantling works**

3.4.1 The building was taken down in a controlled, phased programme which allowed the structure to be investigated as it was dismantled. The thatch was removed and the roof timbers below assessed for which ones had potential for dendrochronological dating. These timbers were marked while in-situ and the others numbered (by Brian Parry the owner of the house) to allow them to be reused in the new house.

3.4.2 The full-height cross wall which divided G1 from G2 (and F1 from the unusable loft space) would originally have been of wattle and daub but the lower section (below c.1.5 m) had been replaced by concrete blockwork presumably to provide support for the inserted first floor above F2. Above the concrete block was a thin (7 cm tall x 18 cm wide) tie beam (presumably split and reused from a previously thicker beam) which supported two rough raking struts and wattle and daub up to the roof line. The raking struts, which supported the purlins with birds-mouth ends immediately beneath the collar, were thin, waney pieces of wood which had not been squared (Pl.8). Although the struts were not tenoned to the purlins they appeared to be integral with the wattle and daub and were probably primary. A rough collar spanned between the purlins (clasping the purlins) and there were six small posts between this collar and the tie around which the wattle staves had been woven. Daub had been applied to both sides of this along with modern plaster beneath the height of the modern ceiling (2.05 m). The tie-beam was roughly propped up at its north-west end on top of the low wall plate in a way which suggested that it had been raised when the concrete block was inserted to allow a taller doorway between the rooms (Pl. 7).

3.4.3 The ceiling above G2 was taken down and this was found to be supported by tongue and groove boards fixed to thin softwood ceiling joists. The joists supported a water tank within this loft space. The removal of the ceiling revealed the roof construction and a number of other significant features in this part of the building. The rafters (average size 13 cm x 9 cm) were all of oak, with waney edges, and were laid flat (Pl. 3, 9). They ran directly over the purlins (pegged to them) and on the north-west (rear side) they were white washed beneath the height of the purlin (but above the secondary ceiling). Also beneath the purlin (and between the rafters) was lime plaster confirming that there was formerly a ceiling at the height of the rafters. Immediately in front of the chimney stack at the north-east end was a collar supporting the purlins and this was also whitewashed. Adjacent to this collar the purlins were supported by two secondary posts sitting on a lower secondary joist (part of the ceiling removed in the current works). None of the rafters to the front were whitewashed and there was no ceiling. The rafters (together with the ridge piece and purlin) were a dark colour which could have been smoke blackening

but is more likely to have been a coating of pitch applied to the underside of the rafters and thatch to prevent insects falling through the thatch into the building. However the underside of the thatch had no such dark coating and was clearly entirely secondary. Thick wattle laths (c.6 cm wide, split) were fixed to the rafters and the thatch was tied to these with rope. There was no evidence of an earlier thatch fixing across the main roof but at the northern corner of the house (immediately north-west of the chimney) the thatch sat on nailed wattle staves. This probably dates to the rebuilding in brick of this part of the building in the 19th century.

- 3.4.4 The removal of the ceiling above G1 also revealed that the upper part of the chimney in the north-east wall survived from an earlier larger fireplace. The brickwork of the modern fireplace only extended up to the tongue and groove ceiling and immediately above this was a narrow brick shaft (probably 19th-century brick) which had been created within one side of the original wider shaft. The brickwork of the original shaft survived towards the roof ridge and above it but the lower section had been substantially removed only leaving the smoke blackening from the former wider shaft on the surviving brick gable.
- 3.4.5 This shaft and chimney was immediately behind a partially surviving truss at this end of the building. This truss consisted of a slightly cambered collar which clasps the purlins to each slope but the rafters at this point were no larger than the other common rafters. The purlins were each supported by a low queen post adjacent to the collar but supporting the purlin directly rather than indirectly via the collar. The posts were supported by a secondary softwood joist contemporary with the tongue and groove ceiling and presumably replacing a lost earlier one.
- 3.4.6 Once the thatch had been fully removed from the roof it was possible to see that the common rafters to the north-eastern half of the building (and one in the south-west half) were of thin waney oak whereas those to the south-western half were of more regular, machine-sawn elm. All the rafters were pegged in a broadly similar way suggesting that although the elm rafters were secondary replacements the vernacular construction techniques continued from one phase to another. Alternatively it may suggest that all the rafters were from the original construction of the building and that the older oak rafters had been reused from a previous building.
- 3.4.7 The removal of the thatch also revealed that the wall plate on top of the cob front (SE) wall was machine sawn softwood (8 cm tall x 18 cm wide) and was 1.97 m above the floor height. The lower wall plate on top of the rear wall was of older elm (12 cm tall x 10 cm wide) and was 1.44 m above the ground floor. The rafters to the front were nailed to the softwood plate and were sawn off immediately below it whereas those to the rear were pegged to the lower elm plate. This appears to confirm that the front wall had been rebuilt and stepped back from its original line and that the front would originally have been at the same low height as the rear.

- 3.4.8 Among the more interesting areas of the building was the south-west end where it adjoined with the 1978 extension. As detailed above there was a tie beam (and truss) within this wall visible before the start of the works, which extended south-east beyond the front wall of the old Kya House and which had been incorporated into the 1978 extension. Nineteenth-century maps show a deeper building at this point and this truss must survive from that building.
- 3.4.9 At the north-west end of this wall (ie the west corner of the main house) an elm post (16 cm x 18 cm) was revealed by the demolition works (Pl. 12). The primary wall plate (1.44 m above the floor) was tenoned into this post but the post continued up 15 cm above this and terminated with a vertical tenon (partially surviving) in its top. Above the top of the post (c.20 cm above) was the end of the tie-beam and the space between the post and the end of the tie had been filled with brick packing (hand-made bricks, lime mortar, possibly 18th century). Presumably this brick infill replaced a wall plate between the post and tie and secured to the post by the tenon. However the top of this previous plate would have only been c.35 cm above the height of the surviving wall plate and must therefore have extended south-west from the post and acted as the wall plate of the adjacent previous building.
- 3.4.10 Also apparently confirming that the truss of which this tie is a part predated the main Kya building is the fact that the angle of the principal rafter was slightly shallower than the common rafters of The Kya. This was due to the greater width of this truss and also results in the principal rafter passing beneath the ridge piece in contrast to the common rafters which each pass over it.

4 **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

- 4.1.1 A watching brief was maintained during both the dismantling of the building, the lifting of the concrete floor slab and the initial excavation works beneath. The results of the observations during the dismantling of the building have been incorporated into the main building description above and the main archaeological watching brief is detailed below.
- 4.1.2 Immediately beneath the concrete floor slab, across the whole building, there was a thin layer of yellow ochre-coloured earth and immediately beneath this was a slightly darker yellow-brown clay interpreted at the natural. There was no apparent hard-core for the concrete and no previous floor (other than the ochre-coloured earth). This earth layer may have been part of an original mud floor but due to the low nature of the building it is likely that the previous floor was substantially or entirely removed before the concrete floor was inserted.
- 4.1.3 The external walls of The Kya were set on a very shallow foundation of rubble limestone which would have created a barrier against moisture between the earth and the cob walls.

- 4.1.4 There was no evidence of previous walls beneath the slab and no evidence of a former hearth within the building. No other archaeological features or finds were revealed.
- 4.1.5 No evidence of the former building which adjoined the Kya to the south-west was revealed but this evidence would have been substantially or entirely removed by the construction of the extension in 1978. This building had deep foundations and was on a similar footprint (although not as wide) as the previous building.
- 4.1.6 The concrete slab of an adjacent shed which had been constructed in recent years was also removed. Beneath this was garden soil, darker than the clay earth beneath the Kya, reflecting this area's former garden or arable use.
- 4.1.7 The results of the below-ground watching brief concur with the main finding of the previous evaluation at the site (undertaken in 2000) that there is no archaeological deposits across the site which pre-date the construction of the Kya.

4.2 **Dendrochronological analysis**

- 4.2.1 As part of the building investigation a programme of dendrochronological analysis was undertaken in an attempt to determine the probable date of the construction of the building. After the removal of the thatch, but while the roof structure remained intact, the timbers were assessed for their dendrochronological potential and the appropriate members were marked. Elm is notoriously poor for dendrochronology so only oak members were marked. When the roof had been dismantled cores were taken from these timbers and subjected to the analysis.
- 4.2.2 The main conclusion was that the seven oak rafters and the two oak purlins (all from the NE half of the building) came from trees that were felled in the summer or early spring of 1569. These roof members all appeared to be primary to this building and therefore it is likely that The Kya was constructed in 1569 or soon after. The only other timber to provide a date was a rear door post which came from a tree felled sometime between 1803-1835. It is likely that this is when the rear extension was constructed and the door created in the rear wall of The Kya to allow access to it.

5 **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1.1 Although the Kya in Ludgershall was an unlisted building it was interesting and locally significant for a number of reasons. Among its principal features of interest was its earth-walled construction which has an important vernacular tradition in central Buckinghamshire and particularly in a band centred on Haddenham c.9 miles south-east of Ludgershall.

- 5.1.2 It is also of interest simply for its age. The dendrochronological analysis shows that the trees which provided the rafters and purlins were felled in 1569 and therefore the cottage was probably constructed soon after this date, during the reign of Elizabeth I.
- 5.1.3 In addition it is relatively rare for such a small, humble cottage to survive into the 21st century and particularly rare for there to be an opportunity to investigate and record it while it is dismantled. The recording of The Kya adds to the understanding of vernacular architecture in this part of Buckinghamshire and to the development of Ludgershall.
- 5.1.4 Unfortunately the thatch was entirely secondary and therefore offered no potential for environmental analysis.
- 5.1.5 The survival of a mud-walled cottage of this age is relatively unusual, even if there are other examples in Buckinghamshire. It is unfortunate that it has escaped the attentions of the listing team and has been allowed to be demolished.

Jonathan Gill
Oxford Archaeology
October 2002

APPENDIX I BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- Andrew, M 1994 'A note on wichert and earth building' in Pevsner N and Williamson E. *The Buildings of England, Buckinghamshire*
- Nother R 'The repair of earth walled buildings' Guidance notes on web site of Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation
- Oxford Archaeological Unit, 2000
Land Adjacent to Kya House, Piddington Road, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Evaluation Report

APPENDIX II SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Kya, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire

Site code: LUKH02

Grid reference: SP 660 175

Type of evaluation: Historic building recording and archaeological watching brief

Date and duration of project: Site work undertaken 17, 30/7/02, 9, 10/9/02.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA,
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. It will be deposited with
Buckinghamshire County Museums Service (Accession No. 2002.49)

List of Archived Items:

Four sets of colour slides

Four sets of black and white prints (contact sheets)

Four sets of photographic negatives

A copy of this report

Descriptive notes

Plan of The Kya (pencil on permatrace, 1:25)

Cross section through The Kya (pencil on permatrace 1:20)

