

THORNBERS

WADDINGTON, RIBBLE VALLEY



HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

GARRY MILLER
Heritage Consultancy

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JULY 2020

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ABOUT GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant and architectural historian who has spent more than 35 years studying buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘*scholarship as its best*’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘*well analysed and presented*’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004) and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings. His specialism are the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment, and his area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands and North Wales along with parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his reports as examples of best practice, and on average reports on more than 100 buildings and sites are produced annually.

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1: KEY DATA

Heritage asset: Thornbers

Location: Fell Road, Waddington, Borough of Ribble Valley. Lancashire

NGR: SD 72202 45282

Designation: Grade II

Date: 17th century core, with 18th, 19th and 20th century alterations

Development: internal and external alterations

Survey date: 2019-2020 (various dates)

2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This subject of this report is Thornbers, an isolated former moorland farmhouse north of the village of Waddington in the borough of Ribble Valley. Thornbers is statutorily-listed at Grade II.

Ribble Valley Borough Council has granted planning and listed building consents for various external and internal alterations at Thornbers (planning references 3/2018/0220 & 0221). A condition of consent is that a programme of historic building recording of the property is undertaken. Garry Miller Historic Building Consultancy has been appointed by the applicant to undertake the recording.

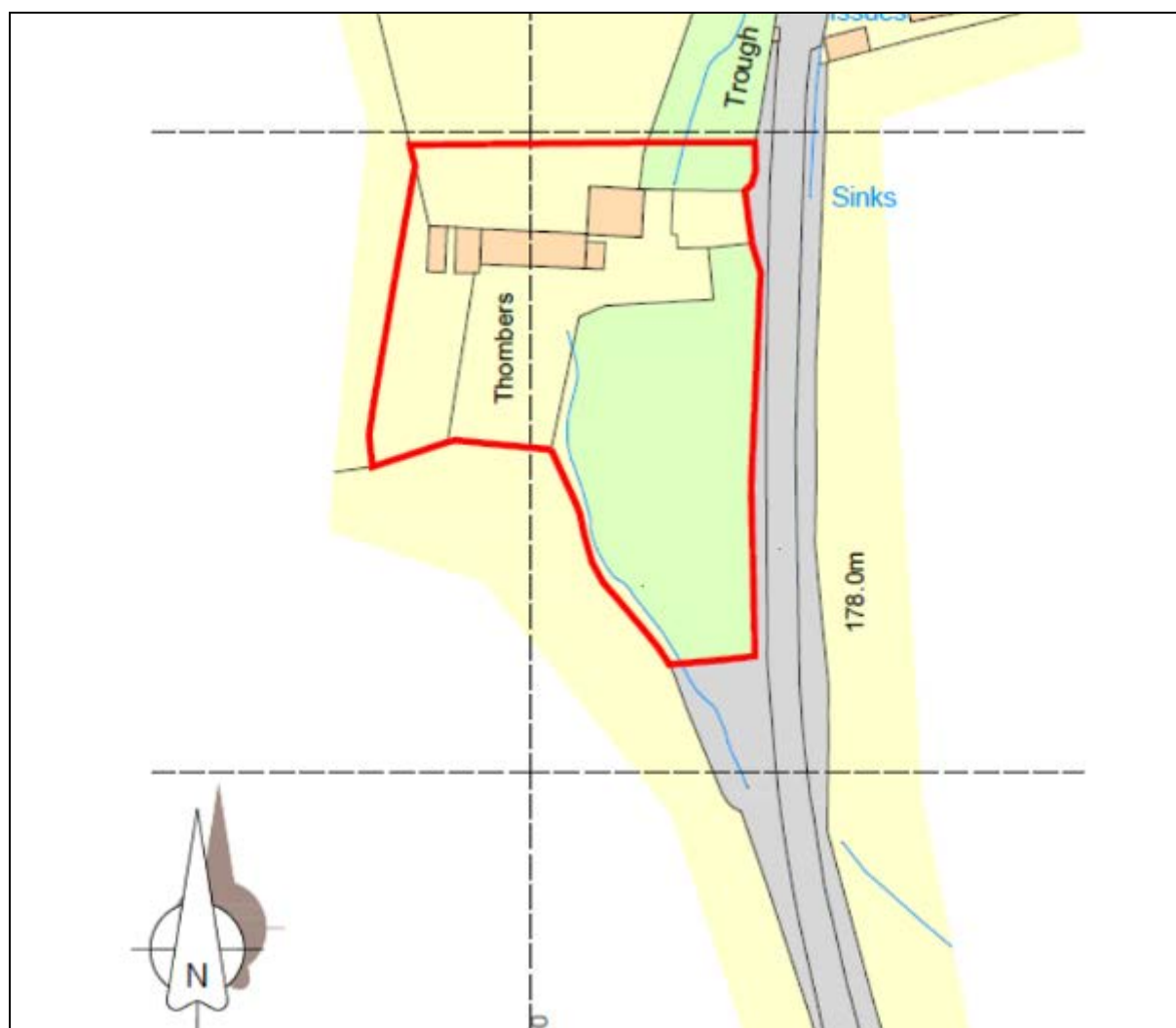
The list description states Thornbers is late 18th century, but it is in fact earlier. The main range dates probably from the mid-later 17th century and is of three bays, with stone walling and an upper cruck roof. A four-light mullioned window in the east gable dates from this period, but otherwise the house was then re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century. The eaves were raised probably at this time. Extensive internal alterations were made in the 20th century, with little surviving prior to that date. The principal internal feature is a single upper cruck truss of light scantling.

Attached at the west end are two small outbuildings, a single-storey former cartshed or garage, perhaps early 19th century but converted to domestic use in the 1970s, and a mid-19th century L-shaped single-storey range now converted to a garden room. East of the house is a free-standing two-storey former stable, now used as garages, along with an early-mid 20th century cartshed of austerity construction.

The Grade II designation of Thornbers confirms it is a building of national importance for its special architectural and historic interest. This special interest stems from its intrinsic merits as a stone-built moorland farmhouse of complex evolution, extending from the 17th to the early 19th centuries. The significance of Thornbers lies primarily in the main range.

3: THE SITE

Thornbers is an isolated former moorland farmstead at Fell Road, Waddington in the borough of Ribble Valley, Lancashire. It is located around one kilometre north of the village centre on the west side of the road to Slaidburn, where it faces south across the valley of the Ribble. The listed building stands end-on to the road and consequently public views of it are limited to glimpses obtained from the entrance to the site and also more distantly from Slaidburn Road, in which it is largely concealed by surrounding trees. To the rear of the house the ground rises steeply towards Newton Fell, while to the southeast are the ruins of former agricultural outbuildings



Map 1. Location of Thornbers



1. Thornbers, viewed from the entrance to the site



2. Glimpse amid trees, looking south along Slaidburn Road



3. Ruins of agricultural buildings southwest of the house

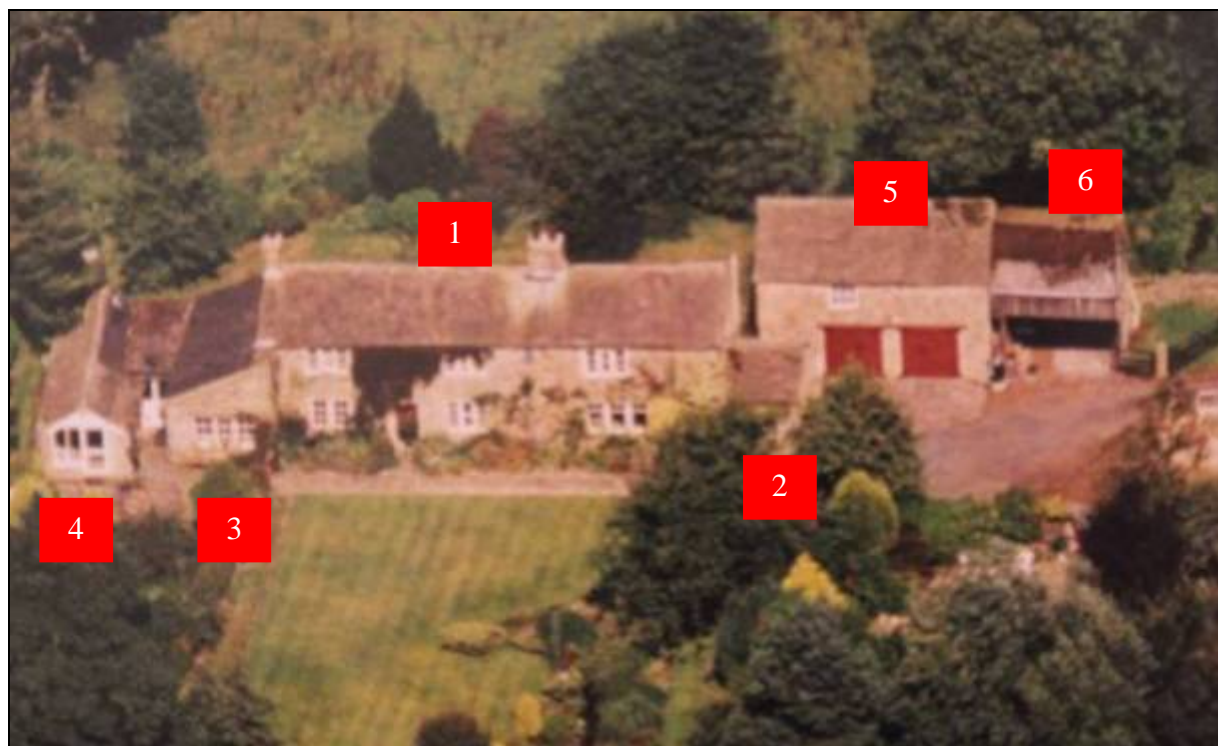


4. Distant views across the Ribble Valley, looking south from the end of the garden

2.2 Elements of the site

Thornbers comprises the following:

- 1** **The main range**, a rectangular three-bay, two-storey structure of mid-late 17th century date built of stone and containing an upper cruck roof truss. This was re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century and the eaves raised probably at the same time
- 2** **A single-storey porch** at the east end of the range, probably mid-late 19th century
- 3** **A single-storey former cartshed or garage** attached at the west end, perhaps late 18th or early 19th century. This was converted to domestic use in the 1970s
- 4** **An L-shaped range of outbuildings** attached to the cartshed, probably mid-late 19th century but incorporating an earlier and originally free-standing single-storey building, possibly a privy, at the northwest corner. They were converted to a garden room in the 1970s
- 5** **A two-storey former stable**, now converted to a garage, located immediately east of the house and probably early-mid 19th century
- 6** **A timber open cartshed** of austerity construction, attached to the east end of the former stable and of early-mid 20th century date



5. Elements of the building, taken from circa 1980s aerial image

4: BACKGROUND TO THIS REPORT

4.1 Designation

Thornbers is listed at Grade II.

4.2 Approved development

Ribble Valley Borough Council has granted listed building consent for various external and internal alterations at Thornbers (planning references 3/2018/0220 & 0221). The original application was supported by a heritage assessment produced by Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy.

4.3 Recording condition

A condition of consent is that a programme of historic building recording of the building is to be undertaken. Garry Miller Historic Building Consultancy has been appointed by the applicant to undertake the recording, in accordance with a methodology agreed with RVBC.

4.4 Scope of the work

The work involved:

- a. Exterior survey and photography.** This was undertaken at various dates in 2019 and 202. A Canon EOS1200D digital camera with 14 megapixel resolution was used, shooting images simultaneously in JPEG and RAW formats. The former are used in this report, while the RAW images form a separate archive produced. Survey drawings produced by the applicant's agent have been adapted for use in this report.
- b. Historical research.** A rapid map regression exercise using Ordnance Survey editions was undertaken to establish the development of the site, while historical background has been incorporated from the original heritage assessment.
- c. Significance assessment.** A brief summary of the building's heritage significance is given at the end of the report.

- d. Output.** The report will be deposited with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record and the project archive, which consists of a bound copy of this report, along with the photographic archive, will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office approximately six months from completion.

5: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

5.1 Overview

Thornbers occupies a site which is probably considerably earlier than the buildings which stand today, and is of likely medieval origin. The main range is probably of mid-late 17th century date and it is understood that documentary evidence refers to the building in the 1620s. The farm probably takes its name from its occupants the Thornber family, who were resident in Grindleton and Waddington in the 18th century. Henry, son of John Thornber of Grindleton, was baptised on September 10, 1745 at Bolton-by-Bowland, and by the 1770s had moved to Waddington, where several of his children were baptised. The burial of Henry Thornber at Waddington is recorded on 20 May 1789. In 1801, Thornbers is thought to have comprised almost 100 acres and was one of three farms owned by George Walmsley of Rochdale but later acquired by Thomas Taylor of Eaves House, West Bradford, and later of Waddow Lodge, Waddington.

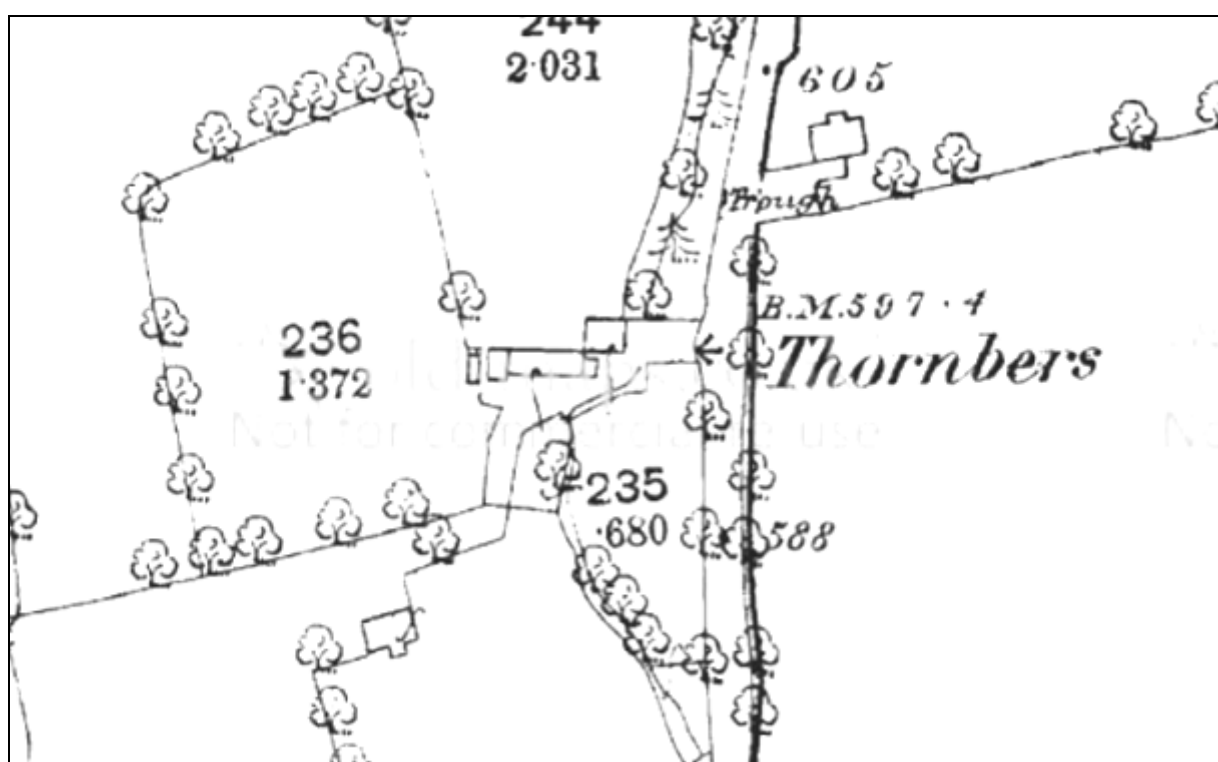
5.2 Development of the building

Map evidence demonstrates that Thornbers is the product of a complex sequence of rebuilding. This can be summarised as follows:

- In the early 19th century, a building of somewhat different footprint existed, as depicted by the six-inch OS map of 1847 (Map 2).
- Most notably, a projection is shown at the east end of the front of the main range, which no longer stands. At the west end, only the present cartshed/garage existed, along with a small, narrow free-standing structure; the range also appears to have extended further east, perhaps with a longer structure occupying the site of the present porch.
- Four decades later (Map 3) the projection had gone and the outbuilding that now forms the garden room had appeared; it seems likely the narrow building was incorporated within it.
- In the late 1970s, when farming had ceased and the house had become a private residence, further alterations were made which included the conversion of the cartshed/garage and outbuilding to domestic use and the stable to garages.



Map 2. Thornbers as depicted by the six-inch OS map of 1847(enlarged)



Map 3. 1886 25-inch edition shows the alterations which had taken place in the interim



6. Circa 1970s view of the main range and porch



7. The original garage/cartshed at the west end, photographed circa 1970s

6: ANALYSIS OF THORNBERS

6.1 Overview

A house of earlier date and more complex evolution than its exterior suggests. The main range of three bays was first built probably in the mid-later 17th century and had stone walls and an upper cruck roof. This was re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century, probably when the eaves were raised. In the mid-later 19th century, the building experienced further alteration with the construction of attached outbuildings. Internally, few features pre-date the 20th century.

6.2 List description

The National Heritage List description of Thornbers, compiled in the mid-1980s, is brief and does not include the interior. It reads:

House, late C18th. Sandstone rubble with stone slate roof. 2 storeys, 3 bays. Windows have plain stone surrounds and square mullions and are of 3 lights except for the left-hand ground-floor one which is now of 2 lights. The right-hand ground-floor window is wider than the others. The door, between bays one and 2, has a plain stone surround. Chimney on left-hand gable and between bays 2 and 3. In the right-hand (east) gable is a re-used C17th hollow-chamfered mullioned window, formerly of 4 lights, now with one light blocked.

6.3 Exterior

- a. Analysis.** The appearance of Thornbers largely disguises its earlier origins. The plain surrounds of the doors and windows, and the square-cut mullions of the latter, suggest a date of the late 18th or early 19th century. The only major external clue to its earlier origins is the four-light low mullioned window on the first floor of the east gable. Although the list description states this is reused, it appears integral with the surrounding rubble masonry and hence is probably in its original position. The date is likely to be the mid-later 17th century, on evidence also of a surviving internal upper cruck truss. The house was thereafter re-fenestrated in the late 18th-early 19th century and the eaves most likely raised at the same time. As noted above, further alterations occurred in the mid-later 19th century, involving demolition of a projection to the front; this rebuilding may have been extensive as there are no witness marks to tell of this vanished structure. There is however some evidence of a blocked window at the east end of the main range, left of the

junction with the porch. As to the windows, their framing is largely modern, but some of the facade windows incorporate 19th century glazing.

- b. Rear elevation.** This is not mentioned in the list description. It is a long low stretch of coursed rubble wall with small casement windows in plain surrounds: on the ground floor in the first and third bays and on the first in the second and third bays. Right of the latter is evidence of a small blocked opening. There is a straight joint between the main range and the cartshed.



8. Thornbers, looking north across its gardens



9. The 17th century four-light window of the east gable is a crucial piece of evidence in the dating of the building



10. The plain surround of the door and windows suggests a late 18th-early 19th century date



11. First floor window of the first bay, showing 19th century centre light glazing and late 20th century replacements in outer lights



12. Evidence of possible blocked window at east end of main range



13. The plain north-facing rear of the main range



14. Straight joint on rear wall between main range and former cartshed



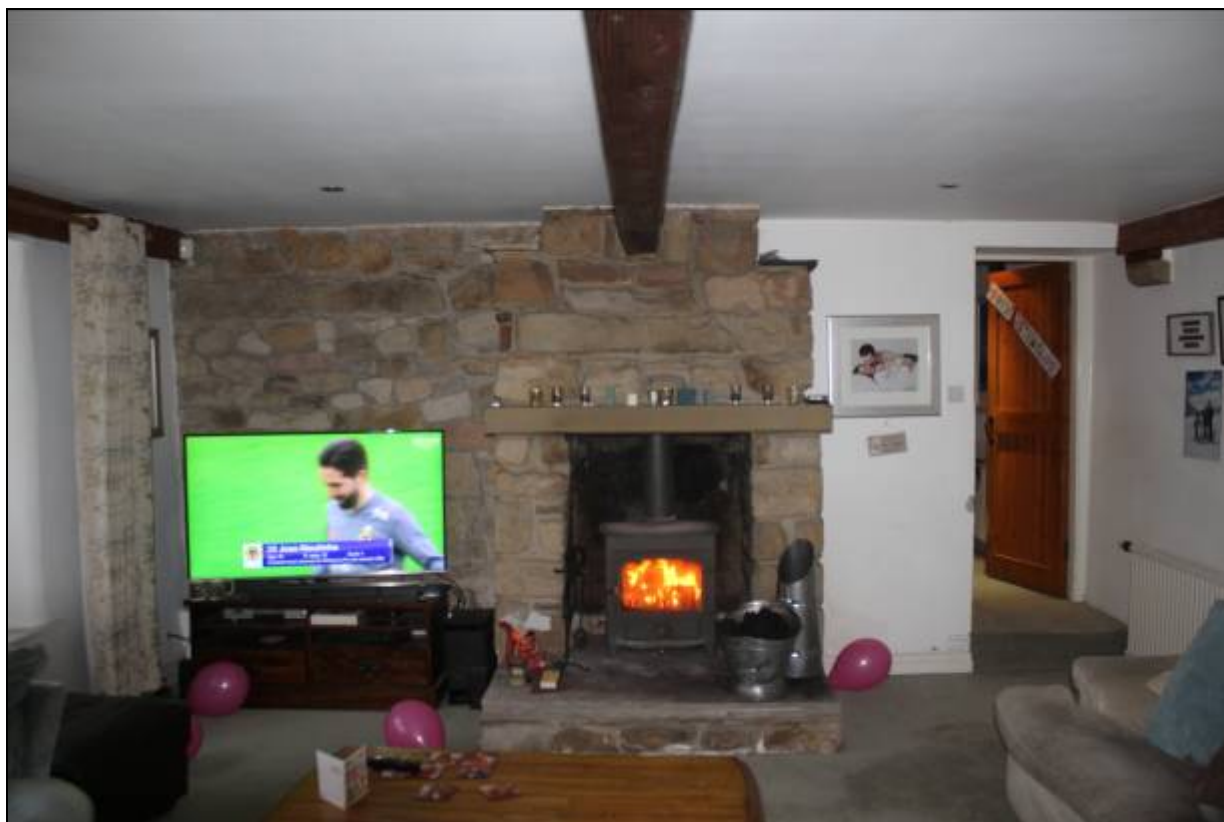
15. First floor window of third bay with blocked opening alongside



16. The single-storey porch, probably late 19th century

6.4 The interior

- a. Layout.** The main range is of three-unit, single-depth plan. The front entrance leads directly into the middle bay, which would have acted as the *housebody* (original living/dining room). The position of this entrance is unlikely to be original however, as in 17th century yeoman houses the entrance normally opened against the spere (side wall) of a fireplace or into a passage behind it. The doorway was therefore probably moved here during the late 18th-early/mid19th century alterations. The first bay, at the west end, was originally subdivided to form two rooms, each with separate doors from the housebody. This accords with the traditional arrangement of the upper end of a 17th century linear house, which was usually subdivided to form a small parlour and adjoining dairy. The third bay is now a parlour.
- b. The upper cruck truss.** The principal feature of the interior is a single upper cruck truss of light scantling, whose frame is embedded in the crosswall which separates the first and second bays of the main range. During the original examination of the house in 2017, it was considered that this might have been the upper portion of a full cruck truss. During the renovation works of 2019-2020 this was proved not to be the case, with the blades terminating at tiebeam level. The truss is now redundant, with the eaves having been raised, probably in the late 18th/ early 19th century and new purlins inserted on load-bearing crosswalls. The blades of the truss are halved at the ridge, which is now concealed above an underdrawn ceiling. The presence of the upper cruck indicates the building belongs to the end of the cruck tradition, and is therefore probably of the mid-later 17th century. There is no evidence that the truss was associated with timber-framed outer walling, implying the walls were always of stone. The principals are pegged to the tiebeam and appear to be halved at the ridge, which is now concealed above an underdrawn ceiling. There is a mortice for a former purlin visible on the left principal around 1.75 metres above floor level.
- c. Other features.** Apart from some exposed purlins, altered stone fireplaces and some plain ceiling beams (all probably 19th century) on the ground floor, the appearance of the interior is largely mid-later 20th century. The staircase, in the central bay, dates from this period also, as witnessed by its first floor newel. The stair is unlikely to be in the original position. Visible in the third bay, left of the fireplace, is a what appears to be a lintel, but otherwise there is no evidence of a blocked opening in this location. The door from the kitchen to the outbuildings is 19th century and incorporates a sliding panel for ventilation. The roof structure has been renewed, with machine-cut purlins carried on crosswalls, again suggesting a late 18th or 19th century date.



17. Third bay, with altered stone fireplace



18. Possible lintel to left of fireplace in third bay



19. The housebody, looking west toward entrance and door to first bay



20. Housebody, looking east to altered stone fireplace



21. Housebody during renovation work



22. First bay during renovation, looking to ventilated door to outbuildings



23. The northern cruck blade, viewed from stair landing before work commenced



24. Southern blade, exposed within middle bedroom during renovation



25. Truss is of upper cruck form, with blade terminating at tiebeam level



26. North blade following removal of cupboard



27. Termination of north blade



28. Apex of truss



29. Staircase: its position in housebody is unlikely to be original



30. Sliding panel in door from kitchen to outbuildings



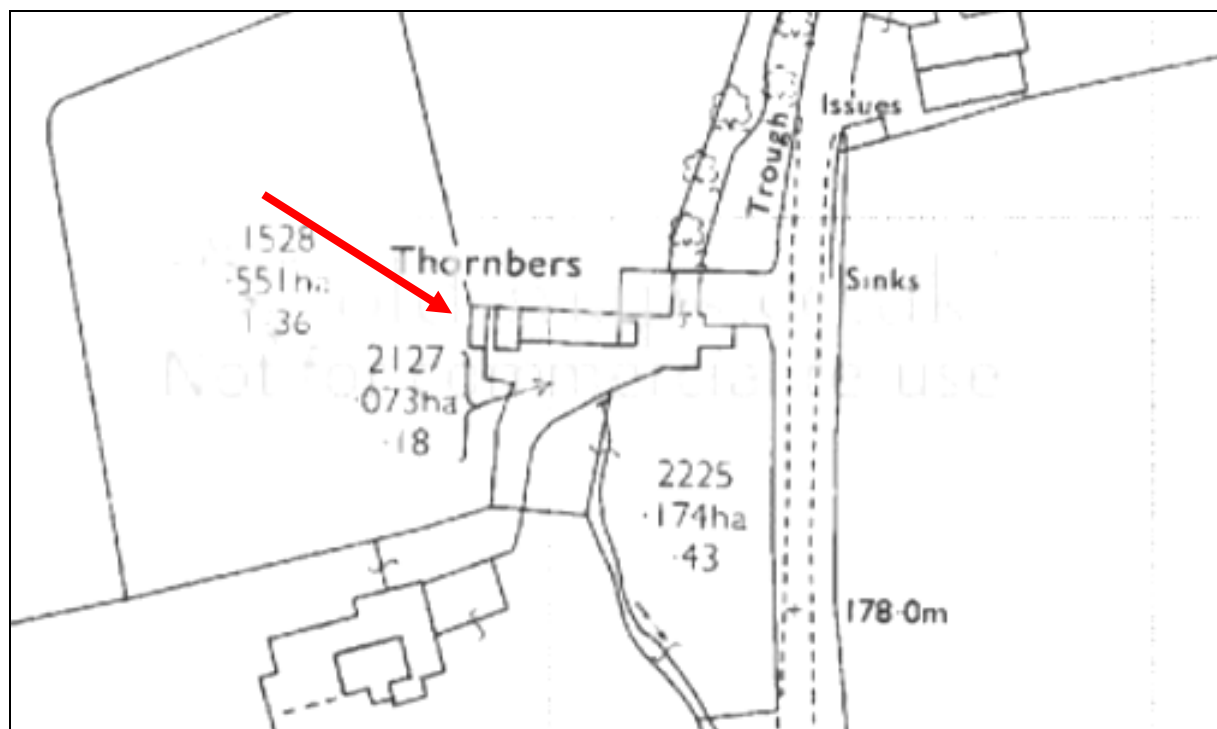
31. First floor staircase balustrade, mid-late 20th century



32. Roof above third bay

6.5 The outbuildings

- a. **The former cartshed/garage.** During its conversion to domestic use in the 1970s, a tall three-light mullioned window, in matching style to those in the main body of the house, was fitted to replace the original entrance. This only serves however to mask its original agricultural role. There are no features of note internally.
- b. **The garden room.** This is not of particular interest, being a late 1970s alteration of the mid-late 19th century outbuilding which also incorporated a small earlier structure at its northwest corner (see Maps 2 and 3) that was probably a privy. The garden room remained separate from the cartshed until the 1870s alterations as Map 4 (following page) demonstrates. During these alterations, the space between the garden room and cartshed was filled with a flat-roofed link to form a utility room. The present full-height stone wall linking these structures at the rear probably dates from this period, or is a heightening of an earlier low wall. Large modern windows were also introduced into the west elevation of the garden room at this stage.
- c. **The garage.** A two-storey, two-bay structure with large paired off-centre ground floor wooden doors and a first floor six pane fixed window. The side elevations are blank and the rear has two small ground floor windows. The interior is of two bays and is of no particular note, with ceiling beams set on edge remaining in the second bay. The roof structure has been renewed, with purlins carried on the crosswalls.
- d. **The wooden shed.** This austerity structure is of no interest and somewhat dilapidated: it both masks and detracts from the views of the listed building.



Map 4. 1968 1:2500 mapping shows how the present garden room still stood separately



33. The front elevation of the former cartshed/garage (compare Plate 7)



34. Rear of the outbuildings showing 1970s link between cartshed/garage (left) and garden room



35. Former window in crosswall between first bay and cartshed (viewed from latter)



36. The garden room, a mid-19th century outbuilding altered and converted in the late 1970s



37. Interior of the garden room



38. Rear of garden room, looking southwest, showing how it incorporates a small originally free-standing building, perhaps a privy (indicated by red arrow). To its left is the rear wall of the flat-roofed 1970s link (blue arrow)



39. The former stable, converted to garages



40. Rear of the former stable



41. First bay of the garage



42. Second bay of the garage



43. Renewed roof structure over garage

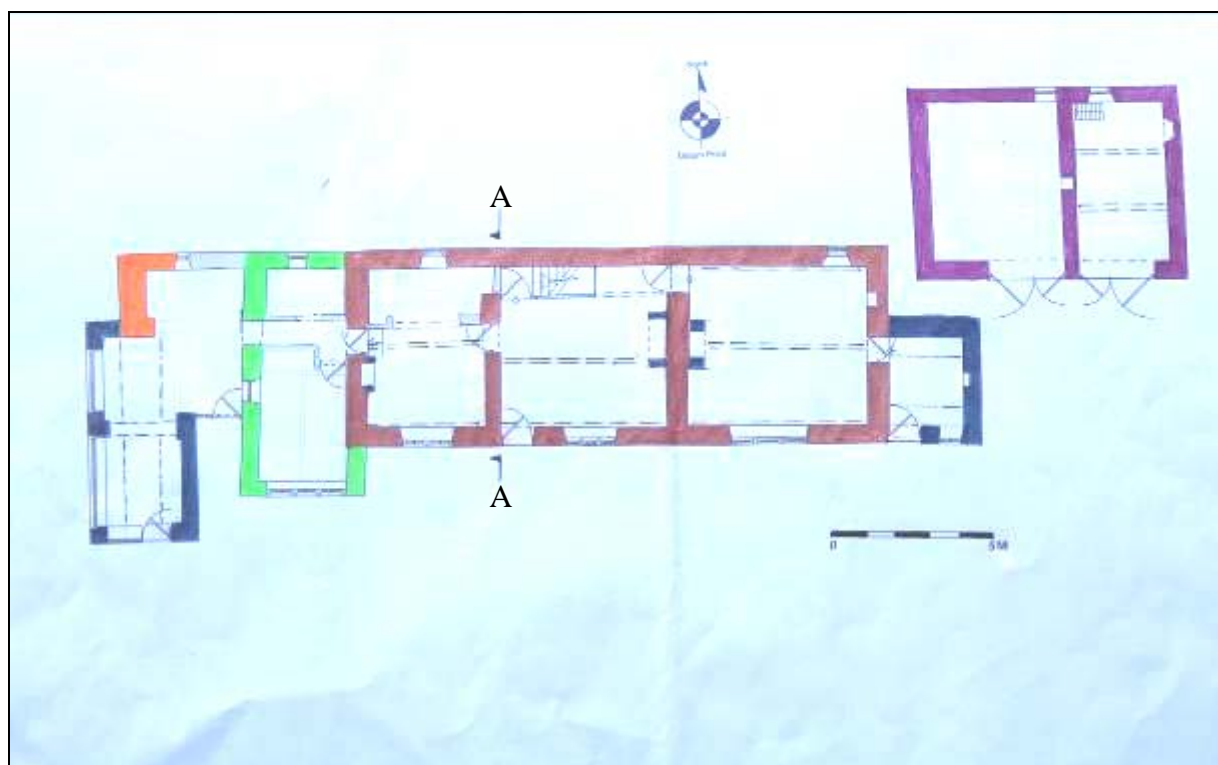


44. The wooden cartshed, viewed from Slaidburn Road

6.6 *Evolution of the site*

The evolution of Thornbers can be summarised as follows:

- The earliest phase dates probably from the mid-later 17th century. The house was of at least three bays. i.e. occupying the footprint of the main range of the present house
- This house had stone walling with an upper cruck roof. The four-light mullioned window in the east gable dates from this period
- In the late 18th or early 19th century the house was upgraded, with the present tall mullioned windows and entrance installed
- The eaves were probably raised at this time. The ceilings appear to have been renewed also in the 19th century
- The former cartshed/garage was existing by the early 19th century. Map evidence of 1847 suggests there was a projection to the front of the main range, and the building may have extended further east. The stable appears to have existed by this time
- The 1886 map shows the projection to the front had been removed and the outbuildings that now form the present garden room had been built, perhaps reusing material from the demolished elements
- The porch was probably existing by then
- Extensive alteration occurred in the 20th century, particularly from the late 1970s when the cartshed/garage was converted to domestic use and the outbuildings altered to create the garden room



Key

- Mid-late 17th century*
- Mid-later 19th century*
- Late 18th /early 19th century*
- Early-mid 19th century*
- Early 19th century?*
- Late 20th century/uncertain*

Figure 1. Ground floor plan

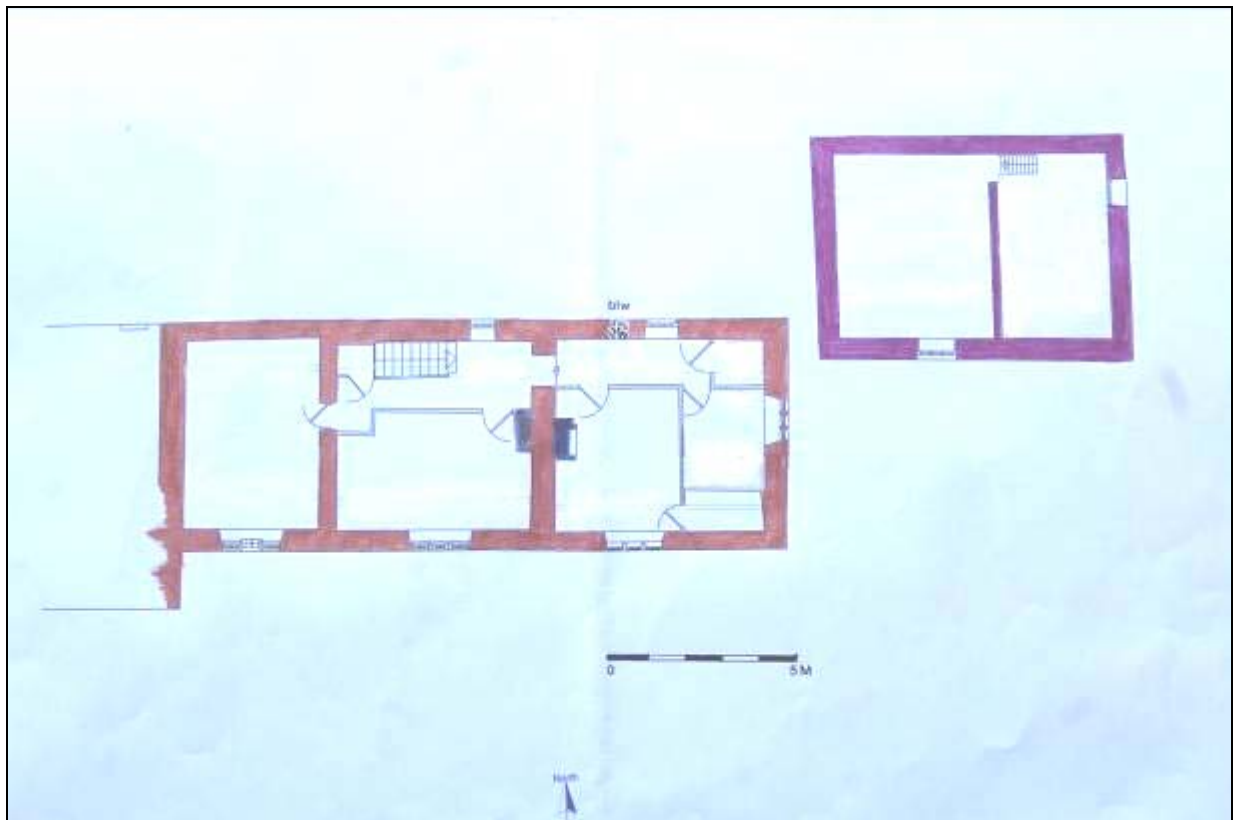


Figure 2 First floor plan

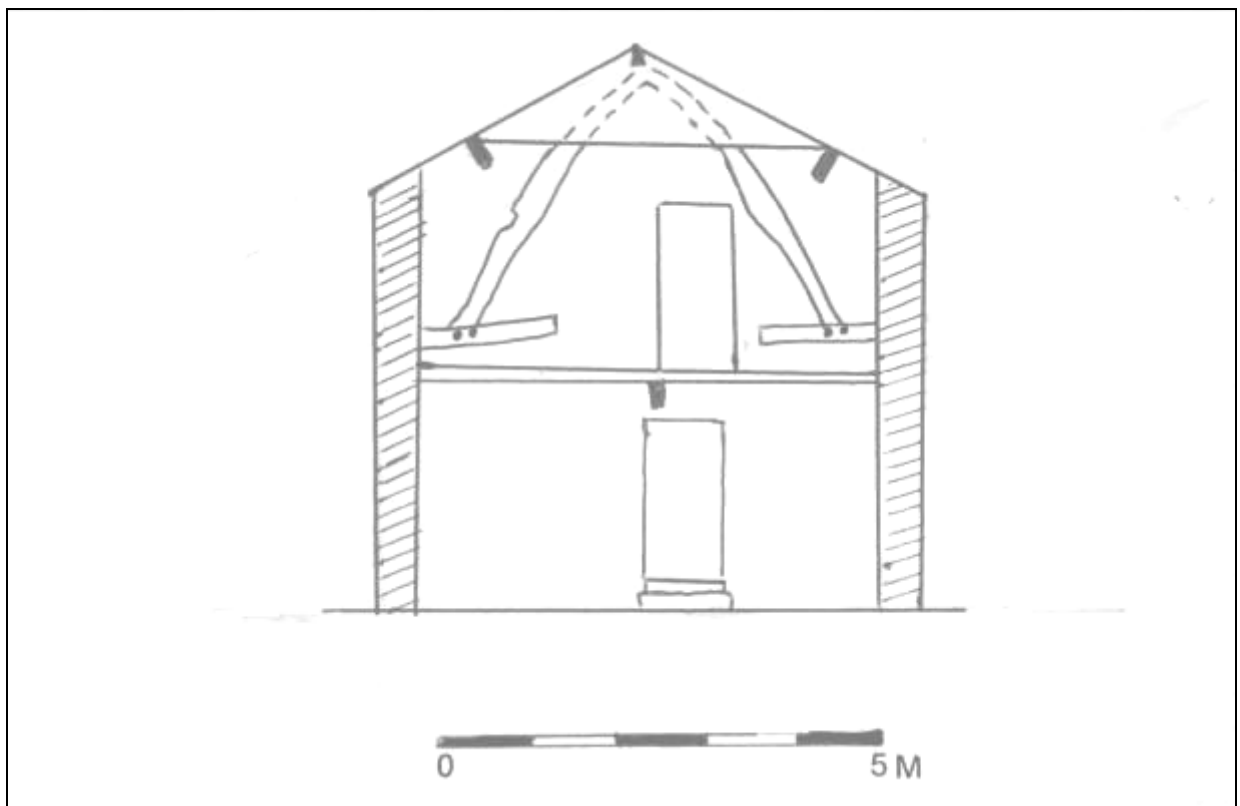


Figure 3. Section at A-A

7: SIGNIFICANCE OF THORNBERS

The significance of Thornbers was described as follows in the heritage assessment supporting the original application:

Significance of the listed building

Essentially the significance of Thornbers derives from the special architectural and historic interest which has warranted its Grade II designation as a building of importance in the national context. This special interest stems from its intrinsic merits as an example of a stone-built moorland farmhouse of complex evolution, spanning several centuries. This development is clearly legible, beginning with the cruck structure of the 16th or early 17th century, then followed by the late 17th century rebuilding in stone and thereafter the improvements of the late 18th and early 19th century; map evidence suggests other alterations occurred in the mid-later 19th century. The physical significance of the building is therefore embodied in the elements and features which date from these principal phases, i.e. from the 16th-17th centuries to the early 19th. In the historical sense, the building possesses further significance from its likely connection with the Thornber family of Grindleton and Waddington, but this is relevant more to the local rather than national context. The moorland setting of Thornbers, little altered since the time it was built, makes a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building.

Relative significance of the elements of the site

As touched upon above, not all the elements of the site contribute equally to the significance of the listed building. The relative significance of these elements is as follows:

High significance

- ***The main range of the building***
Reason: encapsulates the original upper cruck structure and 17th century walling along with and late 18th-early 19th century adaptation

Moderate significance

- ***The former cartshed/garage***
Reason: probably the earliest of the outbuildings, likely to be late 18th-early 19th century

- ***The former stable, now garage***
Reason: the most substantial outbuilding, probably early-mid 19th century
- ***The single-storey porch***
Reason: prominent addition to the main range probably of the mid-later 19th century

Low significance:

- ***The garden room:***
Reason: much-altered mostly mid-later 19th century outbuilding
- ***The wooden cartshed***
Reason: early-mid-20th century structure of little intrinsic interest; masks and detracts from the listed building



45. Relative significance of the elements of the site

APPENDIX 1: IMAGE VIEWPOINTS



Figure 1. Site and general views

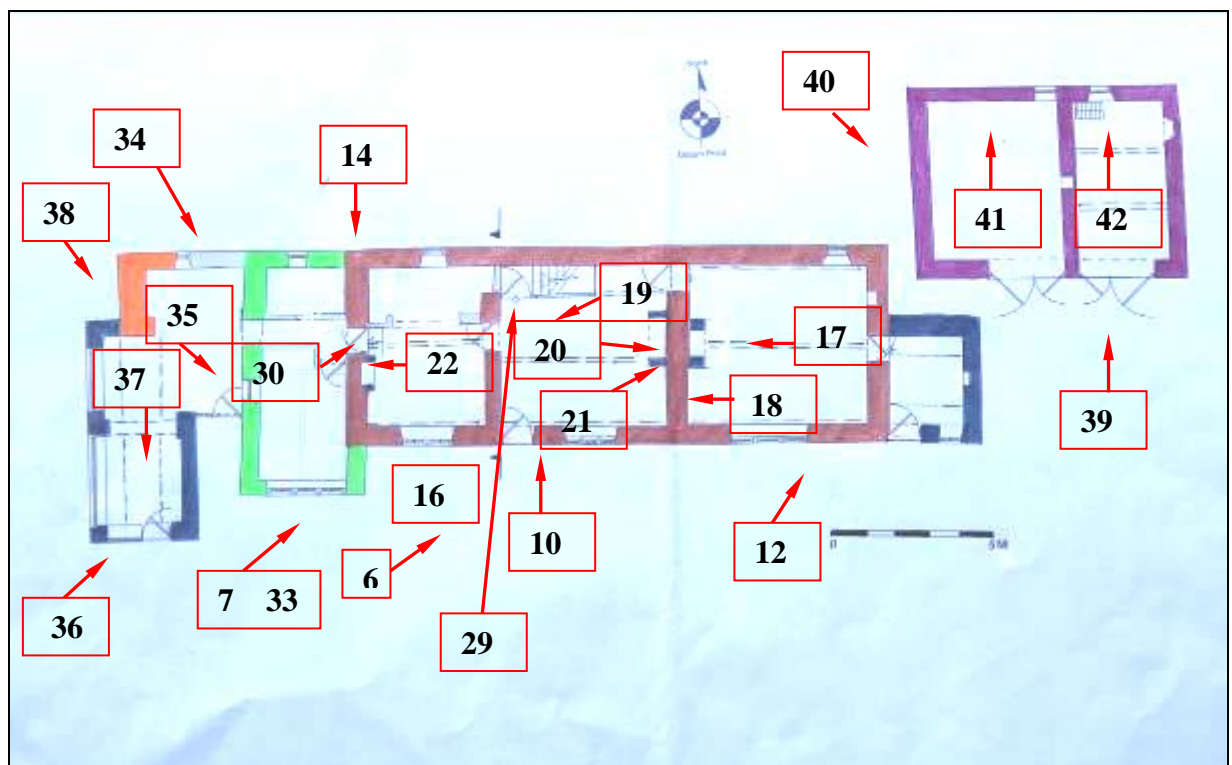


Figure 2. Detailed views, ground floor

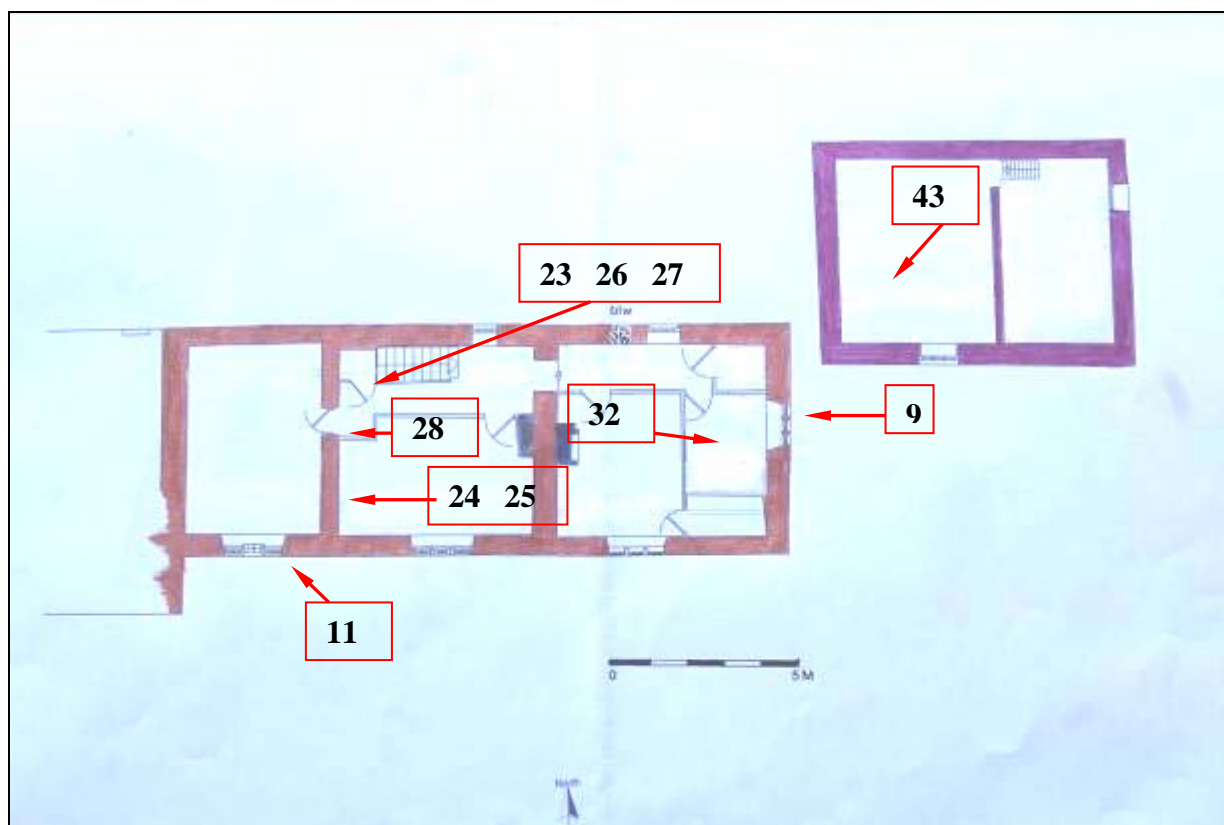


Figure 3. Detail views, first floor

APPENDIX 2: PRINCIPAL SOURCE MATERIAL

Six-inch OS mapping, 1847; 25-inch 1886

Historical information and photographs, provided by former owners of Thornbers in 2016

<http://www.thorber.net/famhist/htmlfiles/thorber.html#William> (Thorber family history website)