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“Internal divisions in buildings”

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The Charles Close Society was founded in 1980 to bring together all those with an interest in the maps and history of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and its counterparts in the island of Ireland. The Society takes its name from Colonel Sir Charles Arden-Close, OS Director General from 1911 to 1922, and initiator of many of the maps now sought after by collectors.

The Society publishes a wide range of books and booklets on historic OS map series and its journal, *Sheetlines*, is recognised internationally for its specialist articles on Ordnance Survey-related topics.



*Figure 1: Old Manor House, Bassingham*

## ***Internal divisions in buildings***

***Rob Wheeler***

‘Divisions between contiguous houses ... and between parts of a building of different character; for instance between a dwelling house and an outbuilding with a separate outside door ... ‘ have long been marked on large-scale plans.<sup>1</sup> The instructions do not actually state that where there is internal communication, no division is to be marked;

nevertheless the presence of internal communication could create ambiguities as to where the dividing line should be shown. The underlying rule seems to have been in practice that dividing lines delineated those parts of a building that were accessed of necessity by different entrances, or rather the limits at ground floor level of the respective domains.

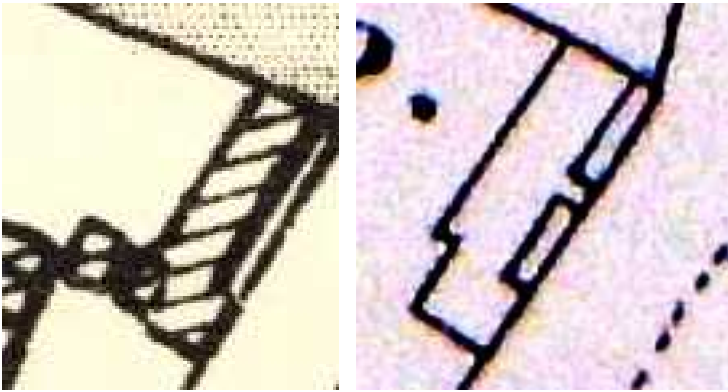
There were exclusions: divisions between contiguous small outhouses were ‘not to be shown’. Lines of privies and wash-houses behind cottages seem to have been what the drafter of this instruction had in mind, but in Lincolnshire these divisions are nevertheless usually shown. A new instruction in 1937 excluded outhouses of less than about 16 square metres attached to houses; I have not looked at enough sheets of this vintage to make any comment on this.

The underlying rule is very useful when using OS plans to interpret the history of a house, so useful in fact, that one would like to know how rigidly it was followed. The account given here is intended as a warning against too strong a reliance on it.

The building at issue is shown in figure 1. It is an early-eighteenth century farmhouse on the site of the manor house belonging to one of the parts of the manor of Bassingham, Lincolnshire. It is built of brick, laid in Flemish bond. Nearest to the camera is a single-storey attachment with a complicated building history: the brickwork up to eaves level is of eighteenth century dimensions, laid in a form of garden-wall bond (the occasional courses of headers are at variable spacings) and with blocked openings. The gable is in larger, nineteenth century brickwork; faded paint declares it to be the premises of a painter and decorator. It is entered by a plank door and has a single window of a type often found in workshops of this date.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Oliver, *Ordnance Survey Maps: a concise guide for historians*, Charles Close Society, 2005, 78.



*Figure 2 (left): As shown in 1905*

*Figure 3 (right): As shown 1887*

Figure 2 shows the house on 1:2500 Lincs 85.4, revised 1905. The depiction is a little complicated because there is also an attached outbuilding at the back of the one just described. This is still extant and is thought to have been a wash-house; it is built of brick, of nineteenth century dimensions. The map also shows a detached rectangular outbuilding (no longer extant). In the course of printing, its SE wall has fused with the NW wall of the house but there

must have been a gap between them, otherwise that SE wall would not have been shaded. Further outbuildings straddle the edge of the map extract; these are extant but irrelevant to the discussion. The key point about figure 2 is that there is no internal division between the house and the presumed workshop.

The deduction one would normally make from this is that there must have been internal communication between house and workshop. However, it is possible to inspect the full length of the internal wall from inside the workshop. That wall may be presumed to have been originally the SW external wall of the house. Towards the house it is covered by plaster but towards the workshop the bricks can be seen under a layer of paint. Those bricks are of eighteenth c. dimensions, laid in Flemish bond; there is no evidence of a blocked doorway, nor of any other opening. It is clear that nothing has been done to the wall for some decades.

Of course, it is possible to rebuild a wall re-using old bricks, such that evidence of a former opening is completely lost. The extra trouble and expense might be thought worthwhile for a building of some status where the wall is visible externally. But here, the brickwork was only visible internally from a room that has never been other than a workshop or shop. It therefore seems highly unlikely that there was ever any internal communication. Any deduction to the contrary made from the map seems to be mistaken.

By way of additional information, figure 3 shows an extract from the First Edition of the six-inch County Series, surveyed 1887. At this date the presumed wash-house had not been built, and there seems to have been a front porch. No internal divisions are shown. So the error on the map (and it is difficult to see how it can be other than a breach of the instructions to surveyors) goes back to 1887. One presumes that the reviser in 1905 noted the addition of the wash-house and may even have confirmed that there was no communication with the rest of the house, but saw no need to investigate anew the status of the workshop.