

## 39793 REEPHAM

### Swiss Cottage/The Bays

These two properties form one building, near the centre of the village. The older part of the house is aligned roughly northwest-southeast, here taken as east-west, with the 19th century facade block across the east end. Swiss Cottage is the western end of the building and therefore is officially in Malthouse Yard, whereas The Bays to the east has its address in Norwich Road. There are extensions to the north.

To the south of the house, on the other side of Malthouse Yard and in front of new buildings, is a curving low brick wall which contains a blocked brick arch near the base. Older maps suggest this relates to a building that stood in Norwich Road on the site of Nos. 11 and 12, rather than to Swiss Cottage, although its purpose is obscure.

A 19th century well and water tank exist in the garden north of the house.

#### EXTERIOR

The east facade block, The Bays, is constructed of red and yellow brick on two storeys, the ground floor having two canted bay windows with the door between them. In the base of the right hand bay is a brick inscribed BUILT MAY 1866. The south gable wall of this block is painted over but has similar brickwork with odd horizontal skintlings; the gable stack is in coloured brick like the facade. To the north, the build of this block curves round to form a stair turret on the exterior of the older block.

The south wall of the older work is plastered at the east end where old photographs show an ornate conservatory. To the west is a Tudor-style verandah running up to a bay window. The first floor is all clad in mock-Tudor work with a central gabled oriel. The pantile roof has a slender stack to the east and an axial stack to the west.

The west gable wall has a wide first floor oriel.

The north wall has two large square plastered projections at the west end; the northwest corner is curved off, as if to allow vehicle access. There is a short length of wall before the staircase turret.

#### INTERIOR

The division into two properties is complicated and the building is here described as a whole.

#### Ground floor

The westernmost room gives the impression of being an addition. The floor is stated to have once been of slate. In the north wall, in front of the extension, is a small fireplace said to be set below a high bressumer. In the east wall the rear of the axial stack projects.

The room to the east has a staircase of recent date taken out of the north side. There is a coated spine beam which is central to the room and stair combined, but is offcentre to the axial stack; this has a fireplace of recent date. The east end of the beam rests above a stud or post. In the south wall a small horizontal timber is apparent near ceiling level east of the bay window.

To the east, the entrance lobby of Swiss Cottage is taken out of the main room of the rear section of The Bays, the division being of studwork of late date. There is a beam in the

partition between the properties which therefore is mostly visible within The Bays but which can also be seen within the lobby of Swiss Cottage. Its north end rests on a post which has an expansion in the plain of the north wall, not beneath the beam. There are also peg holes in the beam following an unusual pattern.

A spine beam joins this cross beam. It has no visible stops at the junction, but its east end has ogee stops where it joins a beam across the eastern stack; this has a chamferstop at the north end. The joists are laid flat and are set in the wall to the south, but at the north they rest on a timber girder pegged to the studs.

At the west end of the north wall of the room there is studwork on a high plinth, now cut through to give access to the extensions. In this sill a dead cat in a curved posture was found, and replaced. To the east, the studs are widely spaced.

The east stack fireplace is small, with a bressumer much cut about. There are closets to each side with flat ceiling joists.

East of this point is the 19th century facade block. A well was discovered under the door.

### **First Floor**

The westernmost room, taken to be a later extension, has a higher ceiling than the next room, where there is a chamfered spine beam. The stack is concealed at this level. To the north, part of the room has been taken over the stairs; a beam crossing the recess is probably modern. In the southeast corner is the attic stair and here can be seen an arched brace supporting a tiebeam. The other side of this beam, in The Bays, does not have the brace visible, but two pegs mark its position, and there is another pair at the north end. There is a taper burn on the beam; this is a surface mark, not impressed into the wood, and thus more likely to be accidental rather than ritual. There are widely set studs below the beam. There is a studded post visible at its north end, but not at the south; indeed the south wall has no timbers visible. The north wall has studwork, and an inserted window. The wallplate is broken at the base of a principal rafter.

The ceiling of this room has crossed ceiling beams set on edge, which appear to be of late date. There is an older tiebeam in front of the east stack resting on a wallpost at the north end, and with three pegholes on the upper edge. To the south of the east stack is a closet, and a small cupboard with an old door beside it. The jamb of the closet is attached by pre-modern nails.

### **Attic**

The westernmost room has a single purlin in each slope. The top of the stack is visible and also a vertical flue to the south. The centre of the attic of Swiss Cottage has a truss from which a collar has been removed. There is one register of in-line butt purlins, with later repairs, and V-windbracing of a later date; but the principals stop at the level of a ceiling of boards on edge, above which there are only common rafters. Presumably the principals are connected by a collar in the ceiling.

The wall dividing the two houses once had a central door; the wall is of studwork, with daub infill decorated with pockmarks. In The Bays, each room slope has two registers of purlins - the lower consists of in-line butt purlins, the upper should be clasped, as the central pair of principals are reduced; but in fact on the north slope the purlin passes on the outside of the principal, although the south principal clasps its purlin. A second truss against the east stack has a principal in the north slope alone. Between the trusses there are intermediate collars birdsmouthed over the purlins. The north slope has paired windbraces in each bay; but the south slope has only large flat rafters, although there are marks in the central principal that might once have held windbraces. This principal has a long scarf joint which has split open and been bolted.