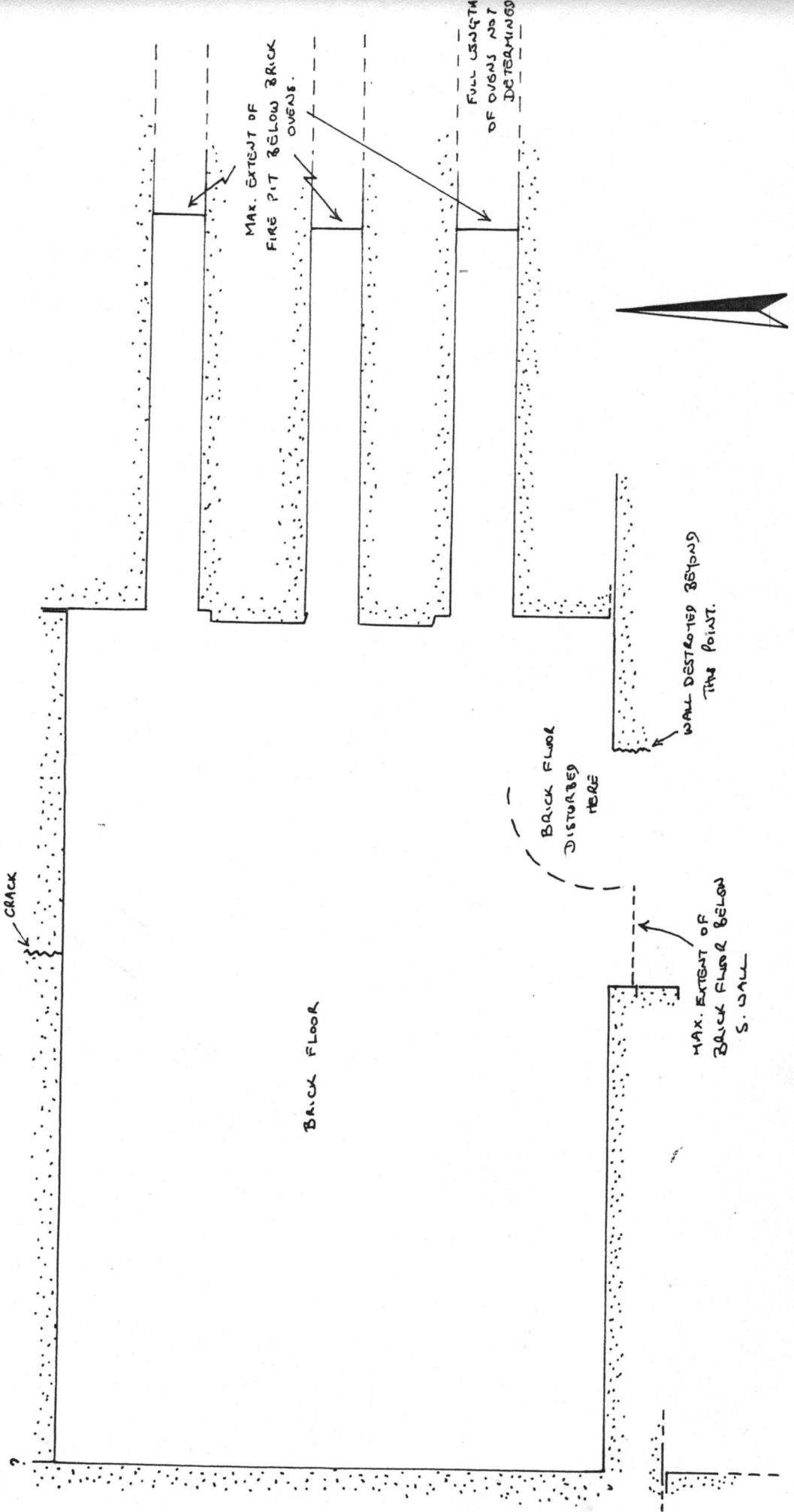


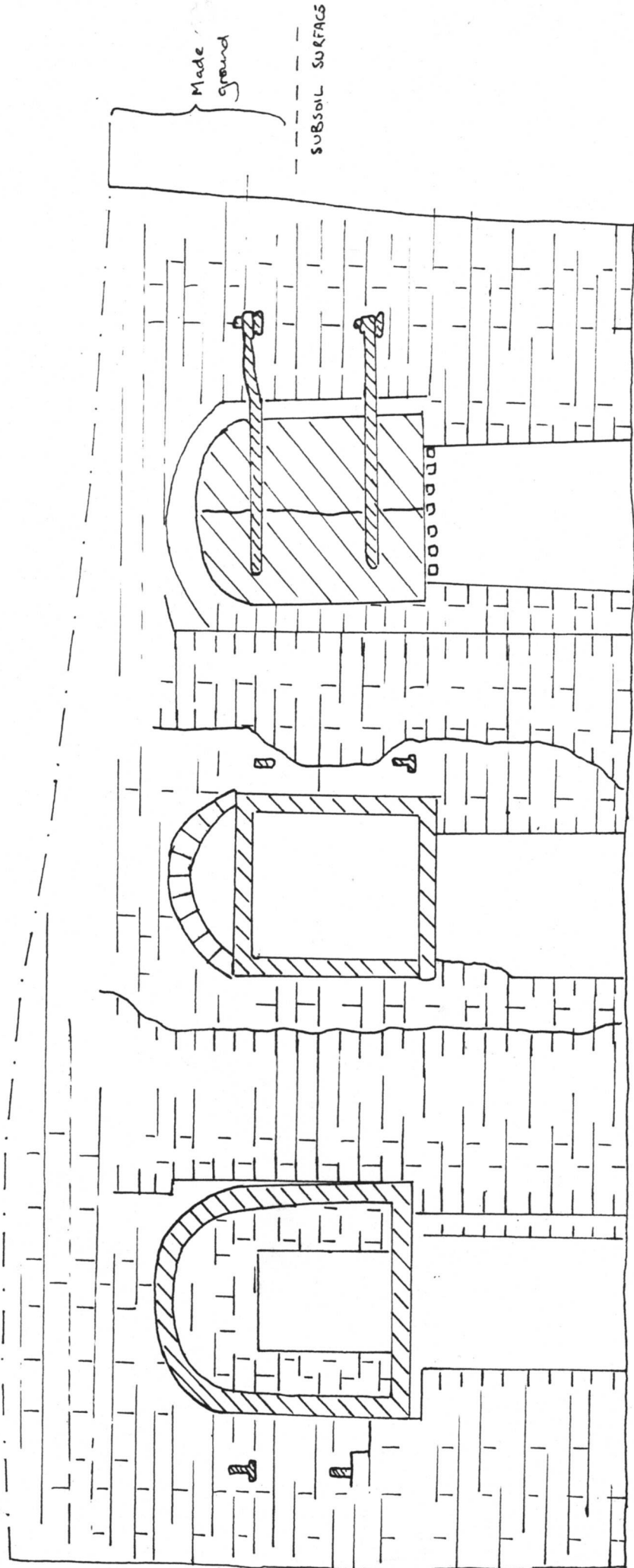
REMAINS OF BRICK KILN

BRICK KILN COTTAGES, LAYHAM, SUFFOLK (TM 030394)

GROUND PLAN



E. WALL ELEVATION FROM THE WEST.



Lower Layham Brick Kiln TM 030 395

Mrs Gibbons , who lives at Brick Kiln House , decided that she would like o have a garden where there was an unsightly area of concrete . When the area was cleared a lot of brickwork was exposed . Being interested in history she contacted the Archaeology Department and they decided it was not of interest to them and contacted Bob Malster . What had been uncovered was part of an old Suffolk brick kiln , last used about 1914 . The remains of the kiln , above ground level , had been demolished in 1968 . Now exposed are the three fire holes , with tunnels behind and a brick lined basement area in front of the fire holes , which had once been roofed over to protect the fuel and the stokers . A kiln had been operating on the site in 1838.

The site is on the road between Shelley Church and Hadleigh , a little more than half a mile north of Shelley Church , right by the side of the road .

C.J.Pankhurst

Mr.C.J.Pankhurst  
750 Foxhall Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk IP4 5TR  
Tele IPS 720356  
11 June 1992

Mrs Gibbons  
Brick Kiln House  
Shelley Road  
Lower Layham  
Near Hadleigh  
Suffolk

Dear Mrs Gibbons ,

I was told by Mr Malster about the kiln exposed just by your house and an archaeologist had told Mr Malster . When I visited the site last week , I spoke to your neighbour and later also to 'Peter' when he came to your house . I promised 'Peter' that I would write to your to tell you what little I knew about the kiln . Over the last few years I have been checking the documents in the County Record Offices at Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich for any references to 'brickmaking' and there are still many documents to examine .

From the Tithe Map of 1838 we can see that a kiln had begun operating on the site before 1838 and from Ordnance Survey of 1837 (1" = 1 mile) , 1884 and 1904 (6" & 25" = 1 mile) we can see that the kiln was working over this period . Good Trade Directories were issued for Suffolk from 1844 until 1937 but it is not always clear whether particular entries refer to the kiln by your house or to the kiln at Upper Layham , however , it seems that the kiln by your house ceased operating about 1914 . A kiln must have operated on the site for 100 years at least .

Your neighbour said that the had kiln stood until 1968 , although after about 54 years out of use it must have become dilapidated . The kiln was pushed over into the paved area between the fire holes and the road and the whole area concreted over . The paved area would originally have been roofed over to provide a fuel ( coal ) store and to protect the stokers . Once the fires had been lit they would have to have been kept going day and night for three or four days . The stoking would have been done just from the three fire holes exposed on the site and since the fire tunnels seem to have been at least 30 feet long distributing the fuel ( egg sized lumps of coal ) would have been hard and skilful work . There had been two doors in the wall by the road side according to your neighbour .

Looking around the site , most of the goods I saw were 'white' although there were a few red bricks and red pantiles . I gathered together samples of the various goods that I found on the site measured them up and photographed them . None of the bricks with frogs ( depressions on one face ) had any names or initials to help with identification . Apparently both red and white bricks were made at the kiln .

A Mr. James B.Frisby , Bungalow , Lower Layham ( then 78 years old ) wrote to Mr.C.H.Blowers on 21st November 1978 , to say that his

grandfather , Thomas Bennett had worked at the kiln from 1858 until early 1890 and that Thomas Bennett's eldest son Henry Thomas Bennett had taken over for about one year . The brickyard was then taken over by Arthur and Thomas Partridge who worked it until the 1914/18 war when they were compelled to close the kiln down because the light from the burning kiln could attract Zeppelins which at that time were making bombing raids over the country . Mr Frisby said that he had some second hand red bricks that had been made at the kiln .

In his notes Mr Blowers said that Coniston House , Hadleigh ( built around 1835 to 1840 ) , was built with "Layham Whites".

From Directories etc. it seems that the kiln was operated by Henry Wilkinson , in 1838 . A Henry Wilkinson operated a brick kiln at Upper Layham and at Aldham Common , Hadleigh at this time also , John Clarke from early 1840's to about 1860  
Thomas Bennett from 1858 to 1890  
Henry Thomas Bennett 1890  
Mrs Emily Bennett (widow of Thomas) 1890/92  
Arthur Edward & Thomas William Partridge 1892 to about 1906  
Thomas William Partridge from about 1906 to 1914 when the kiln was closed because of the war but never re-opened .

The kiln at Upper Layham , which made only red bricks , had closed by about 1890 .

I will make a drawing of what the kiln may have looked like and call on your neighbour to see if I can jog his memory on a few details .

I enclose photocopies of the parts of the tithe map and a couple of OS maps.

That is all I know . Other snippets of information may turn up , you never know your luck . I hope that this is of interest but it is all too easy to go on and on about one's pet subject and bore a captive audience . It is a useful exercise for me to try to sort out my data .

Yours Faithfully

C.J.Pankhurst

Secretary Suffolk Industrial Archaeology Society .