

Historic Buildings Assessment

of

**GREENALEIGH FARM,
MINEHEAD, SOMERSET**

By R. W. Parker

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1. INTRODUCTION

Greenaleigh Farm lies high up on the cliffs on the Somerset Coast just to the west of Minehead (SS 95600 47941). The surviving farm buildings have until recently been occupied as a private residence, two separate holiday lets and an agricultural store. The property has recently changed hands and this assessment was commissioned on behalf of the new owners, by Louise Crossman Architects, to inform the development of proposals for the refurbishment or replacement of the buildings. The buildings are not Listed, neither are they within a Conservation area, but they lie within an area of great scenic beauty, close to an area of special scientific interest and within the boundary of the Exmoor National Park.

1.1 Method

The assessment was carried out by Richard Parker on the 18th of October 2011 and took the form of a rapid, non-invasive survey of the property. This sought to establish the likely date and significance of the buildings, their structural history and state of preservation. A detailed photographic survey was made in digital format, accompanied by manuscript notes. Annotated architect's plans were prepared, based on existing survey drawings, and a rapid search of local archives was also made to establish the broad sequence of development of the site and also the potential for any further documentary research.

1.2 The Site

The site lies on a steeply sloping hillside at Greenaleigh Point, just west of Minehead, and is reached by a long unmade driveway from Burgundy Road, Minehead. The farm buildings are disposed on each side of the driveway and include:

(on the south side of the road)

- 1 The old farmhouse, a long, rendered, stone-built structure with a pan-tiled roof;
- 2 The new farmhouse, a large late 19th-century structure added at the south-eastern end of the old farmhouse (Fig. 7) and forming a cross wing at right angles to it;
- 3 Ruined buildings lying to the north of the old farmhouse, now roofless and utilised as walled gardens, with the remains of further structures to the west;
- 4 A further low building, possibly a piggery, at the north-western end of the site;
- 5 Revetment walls to the north west of the old farmhouse, surviving from demolished buildings aligned with the early house;

(on the north side of the road)

- 6 'Greenaleigh Cottage' a converted threshing barn or stable at the northern edge of the complex, built into the hillside and entered at first-floor level in the manner of a bank barn;
- 7 The fragmentary remains of a further building north of the farmhouse, identified by the previous owners as a 'potato house'.

2. DOCUMENTARY AND MAP RESEARCH

The documentary research for this project was undertaken by Dr Nigel Browne and included a search of documentation relating to the site at the Somerset Record Office and also some online sources.

2.1 Leases and Other Sources

The documentary sources for Greenaleigh rarely give any useful description of the house. Frustratingly, the 1664-5 hearth tax return for Minehead parish does not survive; however, a counterpart lease of Greenaleigh Tenement in Minehead to Simon Punter, clothier, survives dated

5th September 1698 (SRO DD\L/1/45/5A/15) and a further lease to his widow, Joan, dated 17th July 1702 has also been preserved (SRO DD\L/1/53/35/3). These leases, so close in date, might provide a context for alterations or improvements to the property in the period around 1700, which is a likely date for the construction of the present roof of the old farmhouse (see below). An agreement to lease Greenaleigh to Charles Lewis, Husbandman, dated 2nd April 1718 (SRO DD\L/1/50/17/4) and a counterpart lease of a messuage at Greenaleigh and an acre of wood in Minehead, dated 11 Jul 1729 (SRO DD\L/1/46/7/87) may also be relevant.

A lease dated 24th of June 1752 (SRO DD\L/1/53/35/5) gives the first description of the property, and mentions a dwelling house, barn, outhouses, gardens and closes of ground. Later in the 18th century, the property is again described in the Valuation of the Manor of Minehead (SRO DD\L/1/53/33/1) as consisting of a Dwelling house, barn, court and linney. The annual value of the property at that time was £1.10.0 and a list of fields is appended.

2.2 Map Sources

Estate and Other Maps

Map sources also provide an useful source of information about the property and a very useful sequence from the start of the 19th century has been identified. One of the earliest maps to show the site in any detail is described as ‘A plan of part of the manor of Minehead. East Side from Bratton Manor’ this dates from c.1800 and shows the town and surrounding area, including the quay, with insets for ‘Greenlay’ and part of the manor lying on the south side of Oway Hill (SRO A/AOW/77/1). The inset (Fig. 1) shows the site as containing two, or possibly four, structures; a long range aligned from east to west, divided into three sections, which may be identified with the old farmhouse and adjacent structures, and a smaller building on a different alignment, at right angles to these. Unfortunately the functions of the buildings, residential or agricultural, is not distinguished, but it is fairly clear that the earliest buildings on the site stood on the sites of the old farmhouse and of the ruined structures to the north of this.

A particularly detailed map of the ‘Manor and Parish of Minehead in which lands belonging to John Fownes Luttrell Esq. are particularly delineated’ was surveyed by Charles Chilcott in 1822 (SRO DD\L/297/2). This features a large scale inset of the town and harbour areas and is accompanied by a book of reference (stored as SRO DD\L/297/1) with alphabetical and numerical indexes at the front, distinguishing demesne from leasehold, recording the names of tenants, tenements and fields, acreages and state of cultivation. Unfortunately it does not give any description of the house. The map (Fig. 2) shows the farmhouse as a black rectangle and the adjoining, presumably agricultural, buildings as hatched. There have been changes to the layout of the buildings which are suggestive of some demolition.

The Minehead Parish Tithe map (Fig. 3), surveyed in 1842 (SRO D\p\m.st.m/3/2/3) and a later copy of this map (Fig. 4), described as ‘A Map of the parish of Minehead in the County of Somerset in two parts, copied from W. Ponsford's Copy of the Tithe Map’ and dated the 18th of November 1864 (SRO DD\SAS/C212/MAP/97 and 98), show that there had been few alterations to the buildings since 1822. It is unlikely that this map is simply a copy of the earlier map, since it clearly incorporates some amendments: a small structure to the east of the main farmyard is shown on the tithe map, but is absent from the later map, which appears to show some alteration to the entrance to the farmyard. The building may have been erected in the 1820s or 30s, but had probably been demolished by the 1860s. Its site must lie close to the access road as it enters the farmyard, near the gate to the garden of the new farmhouse.

Ordnance Survey Maps

The first edition OS 25 inch map, Sheet 34.4, dating from the mid 1880s, shows the site following considerable development, which must have taken place between the late 1860s and 1885. The range representing the old farmhouse appears to extend into an even longer range, and the building now known as ‘Greenaleigh Cottage’ appears to the north of the roadway through the site. Many smaller structures are also shown which survive today only as ruins or revetments.

The fully developed site, and many of the structures of which fragments survive today, is represented on the 2nd-edition OS 25 inch map sheet 34.4, dating from 1903 (Fig. 6).

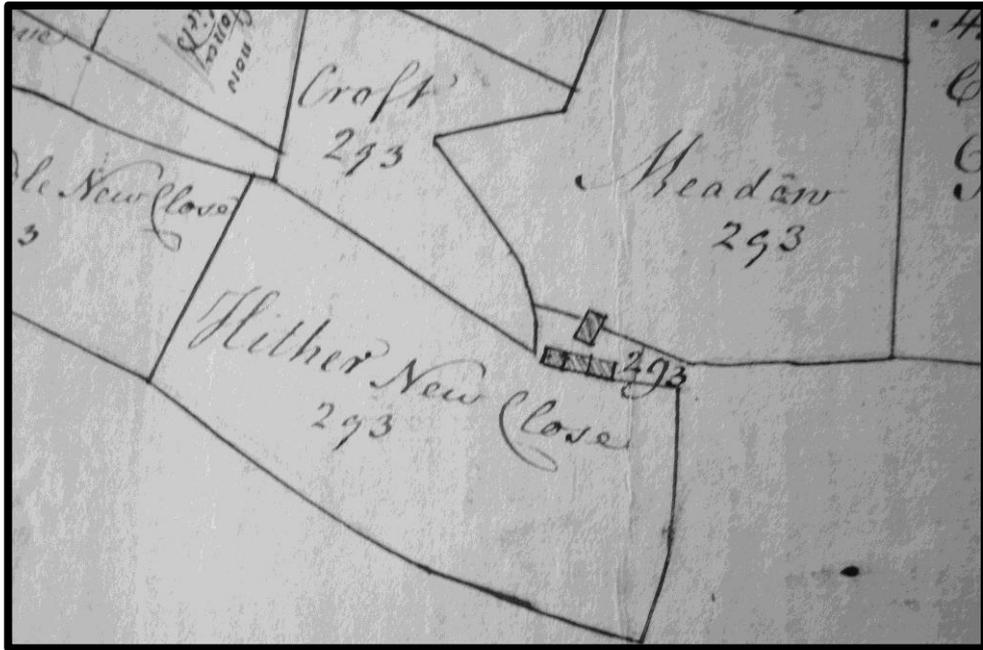


Fig. 1 Extract from 'A plan of part of the Manor of Minehead..' showing the configuration of the buildings at 'Greenlay', and some of the field names c.1800. The long range to the south may represent the farmhouse (SRO A/AOW/77/1).



Fig. 2 Extract from a map of the 'Manor and Parish of Minehead in which Lands Belonging to John Fownes Luttrell are Particularly Delineated' surveyed by Charles Chilcott in c. 1822. The farmhouse at Greenleigh is shown dark-coloured and two farm buildings are shown hatched, one perhaps the building shown on the 1800s map (above) extended to form an 'L'-shaped range. Gates are shown to north, south and west of the yard (SRO DD\L/297/2).

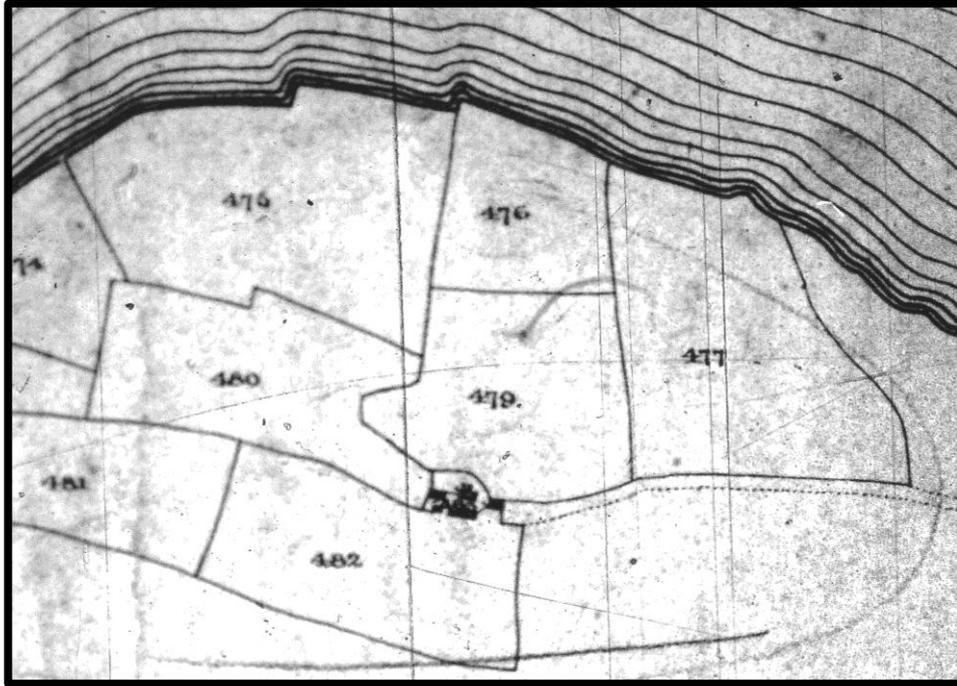


Fig. 3 Extract from the Minehead Parish Tithe Map, surveyed in 1842, showing the addition of further buildings to the complex. The 'L'-shaped building is still present and a new structure has been added to east of it (SRO D\p\m.st.m/3/2/3).



Fig. 4 Extract from 'A Map of the Parish of Minehead in the County of Somerset in two Parts' copied from W. Ponsford's Tithe Map (with some amendments) and dated 18th November 1864. The structure east of the 'L'-shaped building appears to have been demolished. (SRO DD\SAS/C212/MAP/97).

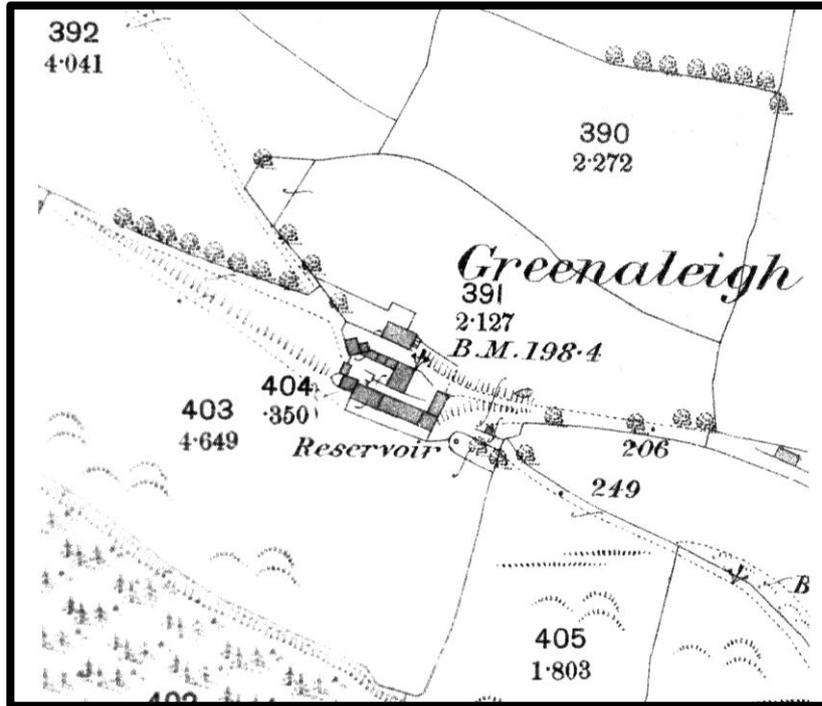


Fig. 5 Extract from the OS 1st-edition map sheet 34.4 dating from the mid 1880s, showing the extension of the farmhouse range to the west, the addition of 'Greenaleigh Cottage' and the projecting cross wing possibly representing the new farmhouse'

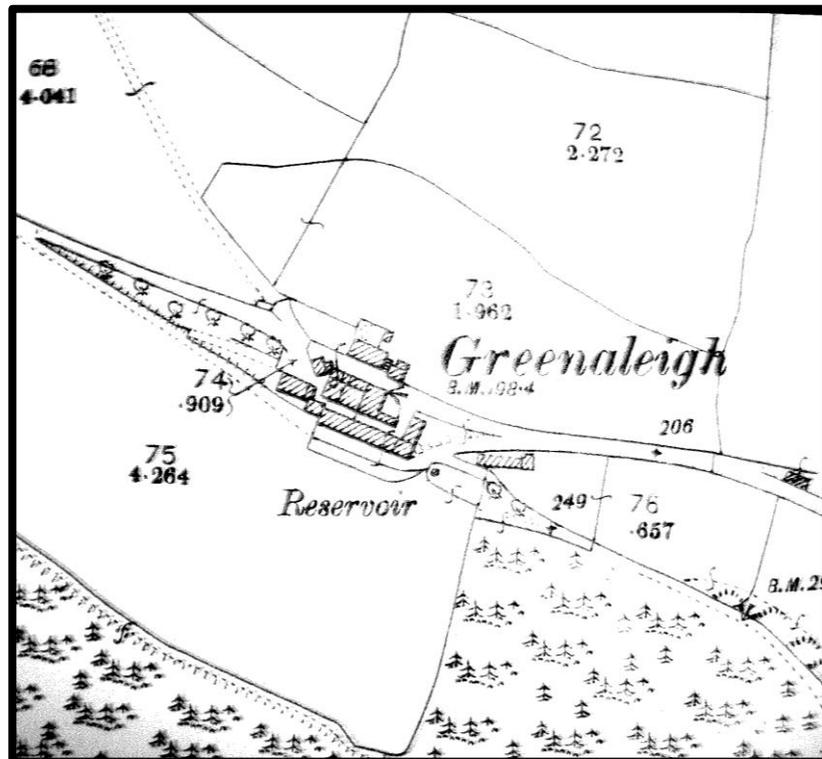


Fig. 6 Extract from the OS 2nd-edition map sheet 34.4 dating from c. 1903 showing the extension of the barn complex to the west and the addition of the piggery and the 'potato house', among other structures.



Fig. 7 General view from the north, showing the relationship and differing character of the two farmhouses.



Fig. 8 The front elevation of the 'old farmhouse', showing replacement windows and the irregularities in the render suggesting alterations to the fenestration.

3. BUILDING SURVEYS

3.1 The Old Farmhouse

This is probably the earliest structure to survive on the site and the most archaeologically sensitive. It retains much historic fabric, though it has been extensively refurbished for use as holiday accommodation.

Exterior

The house is broadly identifiable on most of the historic maps as a long range lying parallel with the hillside. It faces northwards over the Bristol Channel and is built into the hill slope almost to the height of the eaves on the south. The façade is rendered, obscuring the fabric, which appears to be of stone rubble (Fig. 8). The present external finish is presumed to be modern, though traces of patching in the render around the windows may reveal the survival in places of earlier rendered finishes. The patching of the render was presumably carried out when the existing double-glazed timber casements were substituted for earlier windows; the size and position of the windows may have been slightly altered at this time, but it seems likely that the pattern of fenestration broadly reflects the original arrangement.

The eastern gable end is entirely obscured by the adjoining new farmhouse range, but the eastern end wall and part of an early brick axial chimneystack survive. The early chimneystack rises to a point just above the present ridge; it is constructed of large, yellow/brown bricks which might date from the late 17th or 18th centuries. Above this it has been rebuilt and extended to an higher level, presumably as a consequence of the addition of the adjoining new farmhouse. A further chimney stack survives towards the western end of the early farmhouse. This is also an axial stack and is constructed from similar yellow/brown brickwork, retaining a simple decorative cap of projecting bricks, above which a picturesque circular shaft has been added. The chimney also has brick offsets projecting at a high level above the present roof, which may suggest that the existing pan tiles replace an earlier, deeper, roof covering: the roof may originally have been thatched.

Interior: Plan Form

The chimney stacks and a partition divide the house into three sections, forming the classic vernacular plan of three rooms; though, in this case, without the usual cross passage penetrating the house from front to rear (since the topography precludes this feature). As the configuration of the chimneys shows, the room at the eastern end was also heated, but there is no evidence of a fireplace in the room at the western end of the house; it is possible that this room was an unheated service room; a scullery, pantry, or perhaps a dairy.

The first floor is divided into a similar three sections, though the arrangement of the windows suggests the possibility of further division of the western part of the house by partitions which have since been demolished.

Ground Floor: Central Room

The house appears to have been entered by a doorway roughly at the centre of the façade, which opens very close to the base of the westernmost chimney stack. There was no passage: the doorway seems to have opened directly into the main central room, which may have been protected from draughts by a small vestibule or lobby partitioned off within the doorway. Evidence of this feature is betrayed by a scar in the ceiling immediately within the doorway.

This room was probably the principal room in the house and was heated by a large fireplace. The opening to the western room adjoining the fireplace has rather a ragged jamb and appears to have been broken through a solid wall. The wall survives across the full width of the roof above this, which may suggest that it was originally a solid division and that the existing openings through it at ground and first floor are alterations. It is possible that the western rooms were formerly independent of the rest of the house, with an external access only, or that a feature built into the wall adjoining the fireplace, such as a staircase or alcove, has been removed or enlarged to create the link between the two rooms.

The fireplace in the central room has a large, rather rough timber lintel without stops or decorations (Fig. 9); it may therefore have been intended to be masked by a chimneypiece. A 19th-century oven with brick jambs and vault has been added within its northern jamb. The remains of a cast-iron doorframe for the oven survive. There are also traces of a rectangular feature in the southern jamb of the fireplace which may represent a blocked recess or alcove.

This appears to be the only fireplace served by this stack; indeed, the chimney breast contracts sharply above first floor level, with a pronounced offset at a height of approximately 0.75m above the present first floor. This offset may suggest that the ceiling of the principal room was originally higher than at present, with lower first-floor rooms over it beneath the roof, or even that the room was originally open to the roof, with the offset forming a shelf or a support for a structure such as a hood, canopy or smoke bay over the fireplace. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of any other features which might confirm the existence of an open hall, and it is impossible, at the present time, to tell whether the existing first floor is inserted. The floor structure is supported by a large chamfered beam with shallow run-out stops at its northern end. The joists are concealed by a plaster ceiling, the uneven texture of which suggests that it probably retains ancient plasterwork, and has the potential for preserving historic decorative treatments.

The staircase rising within this room is a modern structure, but it seems to incorporate some earlier elements and may replace an earlier staircase in the same position. The structure of the partition between the central room and the eastern room could not be examined as it is covered with plaster. This partition is cut away in a curved form close to the southern wall of the house, which is initially suggestive of a curving newel stair; however, the structure of the ceiling beams seems to preclude a stair of this type and it seems likely that the staircase was formerly in a different position. The partition was perhaps cut away like this to allow clearance at the base of a staircase and to allow access to the corridor communicating with the new farmhouse. The most likely context for this would be the addition of the new farmhouse in the late 19th or early 20th century.

Ground Floor: Eastern Room

The eastern room has few visible features of archaeological interest, yet it was formerly heated and the ceiling is crossed by an unsquared beam, deeply recessed into the existing plaster ceiling, which would seem to demonstrate that the room was originally fully ceiled with plaster and may have been an important room, perhaps the parlour. Much of the ceiling plaster, apart from the casing of the beam, survives and appears to be historic.

The position of the chimney in the eastern room suggests that the room originally extended the full width of the house and that the corridor has encroached upon it, perhaps to allow communication with the new farmhouse. The chimney opening is now blocked, the chimneypiece has been removed and the date and character of the fireplace cannot be known. If the fireplace is an early one, perhaps of late 17th century date, there is the potential for sgraffito decorations within the embrasure, perhaps concealed by later infilling for 18th- and 19th-century register grates.

Ground Floor: Western Room

This room has two north-facing windows. This may suggest that the room may have been subdivided by further partitions, perhaps to form a small pantry, larder or scullery in the north-western corner of the existing room. The ceiling is crossed by a large beam, part of which is well squared. This part may show the line of the dividing partition. To the south the beam is more rounded, perhaps revealing that the putative 'pantry' did not extend the full width of the house. There are few other visible historic features, but a shallow curved recess in the eastern wall, created within the back wall of the main fireplace remains. This has a slate shelf at its base. The room may have been furnished as a dairy prior to its conversion to a kitchen and integration with the rest of the house.

First floor: Landing

The staircase rises from the main central room on the ground floor into a long narrow landing or corridor. The staircase is modern, as noted above, but the square, vase-shaped newel posts incorporated into the structure of the existing staircase seem to have been reset and may represent



Fig. 9 View within the central room of the old farmhouse showing the plain character of the fireplace. Note the scar in the ceiling within the doorway (right) which may relate to a draught lobby.

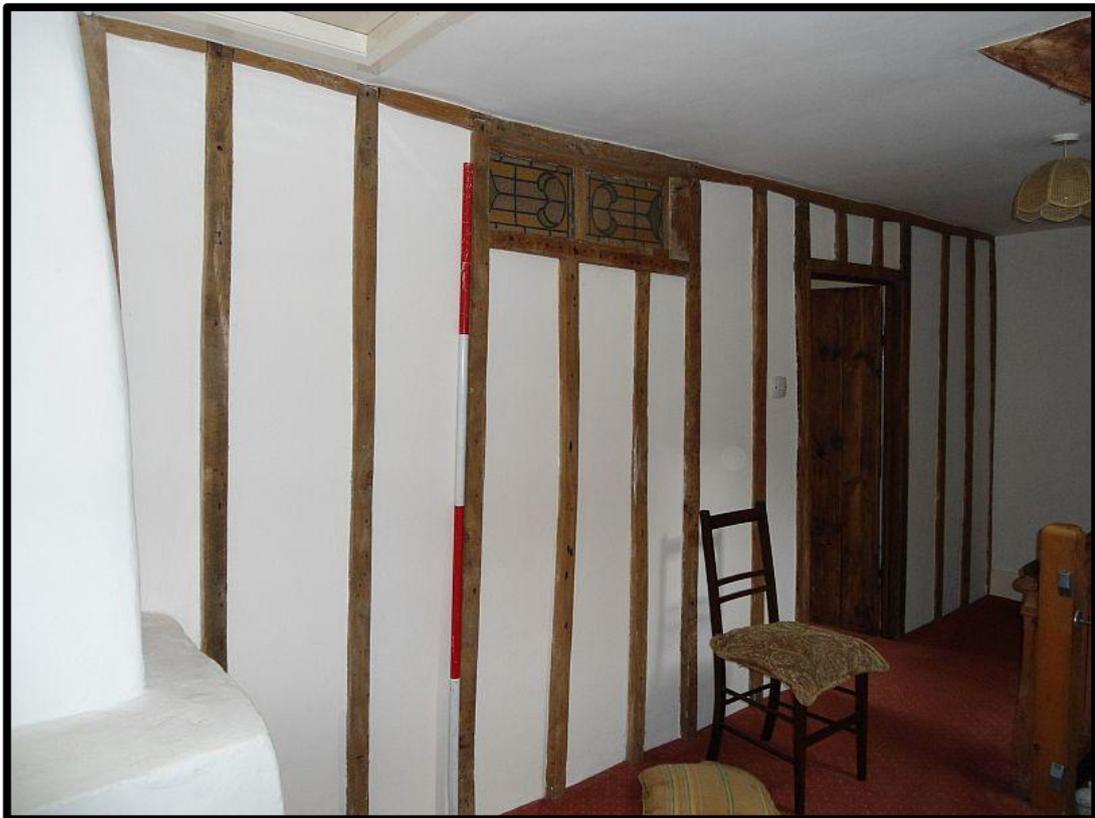


Fig. 10 detail of the construction of the partition on the first-floor landing showing typical late 17th-18th studwork, and the offset in the chimney shaft (left) which seems unrelated to the floor levels.

GREENALEIGH FARM, MINEHEAD

FARMHOUSE RANGES

Suggested Phasing

(Not to scale)

- Primary fabric ?C17th
- Late 19th century
- Early 20th century
- Modern

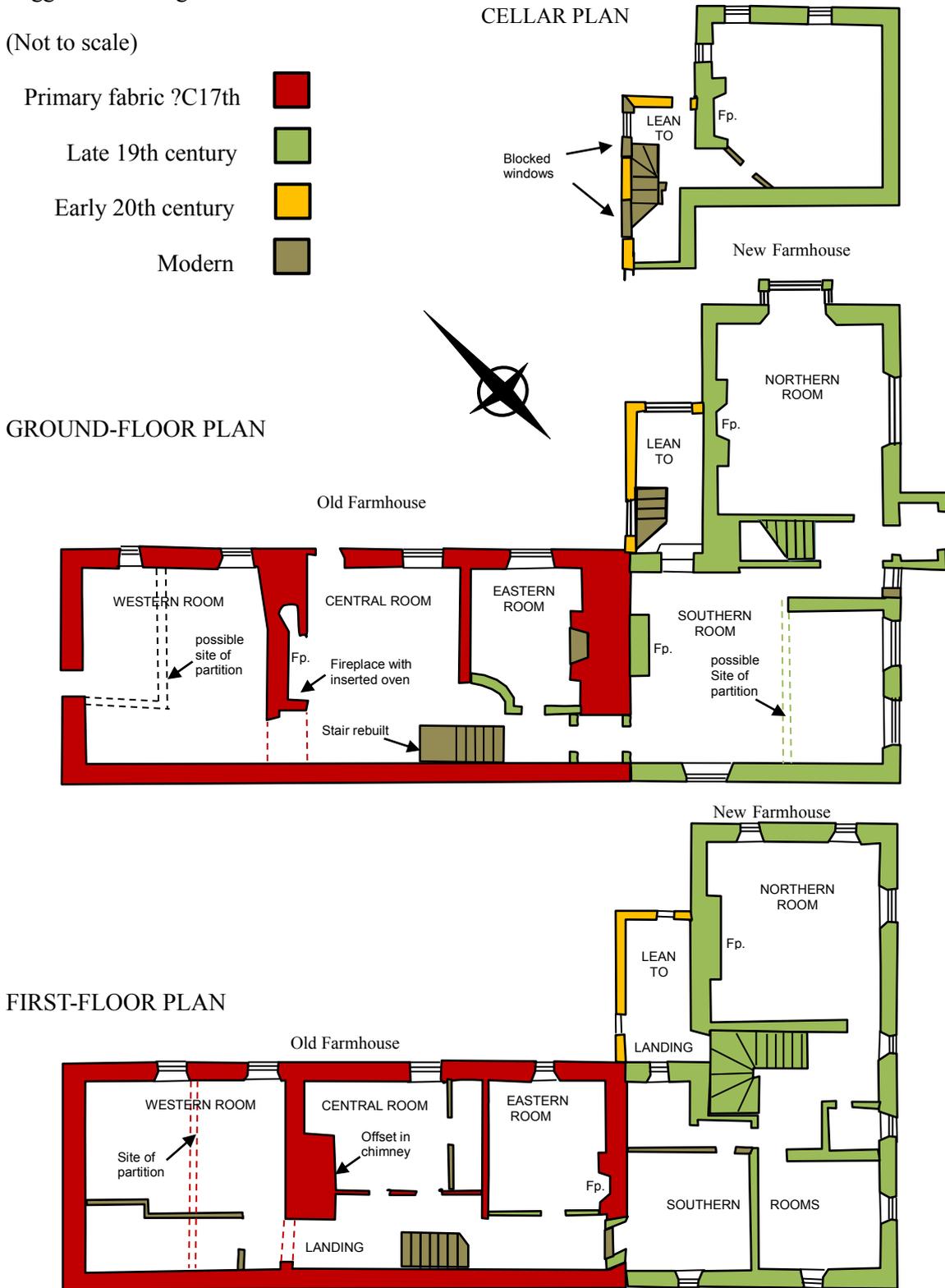


Fig. 11 Plans of the farmhouse ranges showing possible phasing. Redrawn from drawings by Stags estate agents, supplied by Louise Crossman Architects (not to scale).

the remains of an earlier, and perhaps grander staircase, the original position of which is now unclear. The handrail has a trefoil profile and appears to be later. The stick balusters are perhaps contemporary with this and are of more conventional 19th-century type. It is possible that the staircase was reconfigured or rebuilt in its present form in the 19th century when the new farmhouse was added. The treads and risers have since been replaced and the staircase is now essentially a modern structure.

A stair seems likely to have risen within the area of the present landing because the partition defining the wall of the central bedroom on this floor has been set back to allow space for it. The partition is of timber-framed construction, and crosses the large projecting chimney breast serving the western chimney (Fig. 10). Although it has suffered some repair and alteration in recent years, the basic structure of the partition, with tall, narrow studs and plaster panels may be historic and could date from as early as the late 17th century. The landing continues to the east in the form of a corridor linking the old and new farmhouses and the partition between this corridor and the eastern room is likely to date from the late 19th century.

First-Floor: Western Rooms

The western room at first-floor level may formerly have been separated from the rest of the house by a solid stone wall, the projecting stumps of which are still visible on the landing. The present large room at this end of the house was clearly divided at one time to form separate bedrooms. A modern partition has replaced this to create a bathroom at the end of the corridor from the staircase. Both rooms retain simple plank doors which (though rehung in their present positions following stripping) still retain some historic door furniture, such as long strap hinges with expanded ends, and are not without interest. One of the doors retains a row of piercings intended as a ventilator. All the windows are replacements and there is no evidence that these rooms were heated. They may have formed storage lofts or dormitories for servants.

First-Floor: Central Room

This room has been subdivided to form an ensuite bathroom. It seems also to have been originally unheated and, as discussed above, it features the large chimney breast from the main fireplace, with a pronounced offset running around it. This could indicate that the floor level of this room and the partition dividing it from the landing are later insertions within the volume of a former open hall.

First-Floor: Eastern Room

This room has no visible features of archaeological interest. It has a late 19th- or early 20th-century door to the corridor and has a blocked fireplace in the eastern wall. The opening to the adjacent new farmhouse must have been made when that building was added in the late 19th century. It has now been blocked.

Roofs

The roofs of the old farmhouse are supported by three 'A'-frame trusses and by the stone dividing wall of the central axial chimney stack. These elements divide the roof into five bays, two of which are over the western part of the house. The trusses (Fig. 12) consist of pairs of broad principal rafters linked by applied collars, which appear to be secured by spikes or nails. The apex of each truss is concealed by a small triangular yoke applied to each side and fixed with nails and supporting a diagonally-set, square ridge tree. The purlins are staggered in each bay, with spurred and tusk-tenoned joints (Fig. 13), the tenons protruding through the blades of the principal rafters and being secured with pegs or cleats. Many of the original common rafters appear to survive, though there is much evidence of repair. There is no evidence of smoke blackening, no traces of earlier plaster above the level of the existing ceilings. All the early timbers are of a relatively light colour, with a wavy grain, and may perhaps be elm.

Interpretation

The character of the roof, with staggered purlins, tusk tenons, applied collars and roughly-squared timbers intended to be concealed by plaster ceilings, suggests a date in the late 17th- or early 18th century for the existing roof. It is possible that the whole of the old house is of the same period,

and this is the interpretation presented here (Fig. 11). Alternatively, the apparent absence of a first-floor fireplace and the offsets in the upper part of the main chimney shaft (which seem unrelated to the existing floor and ceiling levels) may suggest that the primary building originated as an open-hall house with a tall central volume and storeyed ends. The 'hall' may have risen into the apex of the roof or to a high ceiling suspended just below it, perhaps at the level of the offset. The fireplace is so plain that it is difficult to date confidently, but it seems unlikely to be any earlier than the mid 17th century. It is of course possible that the fireplace is itself an insertion into a much earlier building which was formerly heated by open hearths, though no evidence of smoke blackening has been noted. If the house did formerly have an open hall, the present floor structures, internal partitions and roof structure may have been added in *c.*1700 to convert it into a fully storeyed dwelling; parts of the shell of the existing building could thus be of earlier date. The western end of the farmhouse may have been an independent unit from the main accommodation in the eastern part of the building.

Should plaster be removed either internally or externally during demolition or alterations for refurbishment, evidence of alterations such as the raising of the eaves levels to increase headroom, evidence of the cutting in of sockets for new ceiling beams, or the blocking of earlier cruck chases might be revealed. This might help establish an earlier origin for the walls of the building. There is some potential for the survival of an early partition between the central and eastern rooms on the ground floor and since painted decoration was popular even at relatively humble levels of society in the latter part of the 17th-century, the possibility of the survival of painted and sgraffito decorations, particularly within blocked fireplaces, should be considered.

3.2 The New Farmhouse

This large building appears to have been added to the older farmhouse in the late 19th-century, perhaps to upgrade the domestic accommodation, or to provide a facility for excursionists visiting the area. The older wing may have been retained as a service wing at the time.

Exterior

This building takes the form of a very tall cross wing at the end of the older building, aligned at right-angles to the slope of the hillside and terminating in a high gable facing north. It is 'L'-shaped in plan and has two principal storeys, but stands over a semi-basement containing a cellar. The walls are constructed of squared, randomly-coursed rubble with red brick dressings to the window openings and quoins. The basement storey and the ground floor show exposed rubble, but the uppermost storey is rendered. The roof is slated and crowned with a decorative cresting of pierced terracotta tiles.

The main façade of this house faces east, away from the farmyard and farm buildings to the north of the older house and towards the driveway from Minehead. The house is approached through a large triangular garden rising to terraces cut into the hillside above. The façade is relatively modest and asymmetrical, with tall casement windows on the ground and first floors. Many of the original window frames have been replaced with modern double-glazed hardwood units, which have been allowed to remain unpainted; this has not helped the coherence of the building and has given it a somewhat piebald effect.

The main doorway is sheltered by a very attractive Victorian Gothic porch (Fig. 15) with a steep roof supported by a timber two-centred arch and open, arcaded sides with curved braces. There is some brattished ornament and a small trefoil in the gable. The roof is covered with plain and fish-scale tiles in alternate courses.

The north-east facing gable of the house rises to a considerable height and features pairs of windows on the basement and first floors, and a large projecting oriel window supported on corbels and timber brackets. The other façades are unremarkable. In the angle between the new and the old farmhouses is a curious lean-to structure, three storeys high. It contains a bathroom and modern stairs. This structure appears to be of brick construction and may be of a different period than the new farmhouse since it conflicts with a first-floor window and has an awkward relationship with the main staircase. Despite these anomalies it is unlikely to be much later in date than the early 20th century and may yet be contemporary with the new farmhouse.



Fig. 12 View within the roof of the eastern section of the old farmhouse, looking west, showing a typical truss and the upper part of the central chimneystack.



Fig. 13 Detail of the construction of the purlins and collars at their junction with the principal rafters showing typical tusk-tenons (the spurs within the joints are concealed in this assembly).



Fig. 14 General view of the new farmhouse from the west, showing the lean-to structure in the angle of the two buildings.



Fig. 15. Detail of the Gothic porch of the new farmhouse.

Interior

The interior retains many fixtures of the period around *c.*1900. The principal rooms on each floor lie in the northern part of the range, respecting the sea views; there is a large sitting room at ground floor level, lit by the oriel window and retaining a chimneypiece of the period and a cast-iron insert. In the south part of the ground floor there is now a single large room, now a kitchen, which was presumably created by knocking two large rooms together by removing an internal wall. These rooms may have been a kitchen and scullery.

The main staircase rises in a dog-leg, with winders, to first-floor level, where the landing is railed with a handsome balustrade with tall, chamfered newels crowned with ball finials and turned spindles (Fig. 16). The relationship of this staircase with the room in the lean-to structure to the east is awkward, suggesting that the lean-to is an addition.

The bedroom in the northern part of the first floor has lost its fireplace and has replacement windows, but retains its original four-panelled door with planted mouldings; most of the door furniture is modern. The rear part of the first floor contains two bedrooms and an utility room which appears to have been created by the division of one of the bedrooms by the insertion of a modern partition. There was formerly an opening into the first floor of the old farmhouse from this level, but this has been blocked and now forms a cupboard. These rooms retain their original doors but there are few other features of archaeological interest in these areas.

The staircase to the cellar now descends within the lean to, but it is uncertain whether this is the original arrangement. The underside of the main staircase is smoothly plastered down to ground level, as though forming the ceiling of a further staircase which originally descended beneath the main stair. It is possible that the stairs were repositioned within the lean-to during the 20th century. The existing staircase may be a modern rebuilding.

Roofs

The roof space is very large, but remains unconverted; it has never formed part of the domestic accommodation. The roof is supported by widely-spaced tie-beam trusses formed of pairs of principal rafters seated in tie beams resting on the wall tops at eaves level. The trusses are braced with short diagonal struts but are without king or queen posts. The purlins are slightly trenched into the tops of the principals and are supported on cleats. Some of the carpentry is rather clumsy, particularly the junctions of the purlins under the valleys, which may suggest that there may have been some renewal of the roof timbers, but the basic roof structure is likely to be of late 19th-century date.

Interpretation

The new farmhouse appears to have been added to the older house in the late 19th century. Its character suggests a very late date within that period, perhaps *c.*1880-1900. A cross wing at the end of the old farmhouse is shown in the position of this building on both the OS 1st-edition map of the mid 1880s (Fig. 5) and the 2nd-edition map of *c.*1903 (Fig. 6). This may represent the new farmhouse, though neither the Gothic porch nor the lean-to structure are shown. The new farmhouse appears in picture postcards of the 1900s (Fig. 17) and must have existed by the time of the production of the 2nd-edition map; it probably dates from around 1880, and the lean-to may be an addition of around 1910-20.

The new farmhouse is a good example of ‘growth by accretion’; the enlargement of a property by the addition of a prestigious new wing and the demotion of the earlier building to service use. The new wing may have been added to provide not only improved domestic accommodation at the farm, but also a suitable place for serving teas to respectable visitors seeking refreshment, away from the dirt and smells of a working farm. It may thus reflect the great increase in prosperity in the area in the late 19th century due to the development of Minehead as a popular resort. The building is admittedly not of particularly high architectural merit, and has been compromised by the loss of its original windows, but its unusual alignment at right angles to the hillside, variety of building materials and surface finishes together with the high gable show that the structure was clearly intended as a picturesque incident in the coastal landscape.



Fig. 16 Detail of the staircase in the new farmhouse showing the late 19th-century elongated chamfered newels crowned by ball finials.



Fig. 17 Postcard view of the farm buildings at Greenleigh, *c.* 1915, showing the new farmhouse (left), the ranges of barns (centre) and Greenleigh Cottage and The Potato House (Right).



Fig 18 View of the remains of the barns to the north of the old farmhouse, showing stone construction and brick dressings to the openings.



Fig 19 View of the piggery and sheds at the north-western end of the site showing the remains of revetment walls associated with demolished 19th-century farm buildings

3.3 Ruined Barns North of the Old Farmhouse

These ruined buildings represent the remains of a complex of farm buildings which probably originated in the 18th century. Unfortunately they survive in very fragmentary form and have few datable features. It is therefore necessary to refer to the historic maps for evidence as to their development. The maps of course do not help determine the original functions of the buildings.

The earliest structure on the site of these buildings is shown upon a map of *c.*1800 as a rectangular building lying at right angles to the farmhouse range and separate from it (Fig. 1). By 1822 (Fig. 2) a further building had been added to the west of this and the original structure had either been extended or rebuilt to form an 'L'-shaped building. Later historic maps (Figs 3-4) seem to show that there was little change to the configuration of the farm buildings until the late 19th century. The 1st-edition OS map (Fig. 5) shows the situation by the mid 1880s: a large rectangular building lies to the north of the old farmhouse, linked by a long range of smaller buildings fronting a large open courtyard. At the western end of this long range was a small structure arranged at approximately 45° to the other buildings. Part of this latter structure, which perhaps might date from the mid 1860s or 1870s survives, but the rest of it has been entirely demolished and there are no clues to its possible function. By the early 20th century the original rectangular building seems to have been trebled in depth, infilling the former court with large buildings (Fig. 6). These structures presented their gables to the roadway running through the side, as can be seen in the early post card reproduced as Fig. 17, and must have been covered with a series of large parallel roofs.

The easternmost barn probably occupies roughly the site of the 18th-century structure, but it is uncertain whether any fabric of this early date remains. The building retained its roof until the late 20th century, but survives now only walls surrounding a parking bay. At its demolition, the building was reduced to eaves level, but the lower part of the gable still remains (Fig. 18). The walls are intact more or less to the height of the eaves and retain traces of internal plaster. The building was clearly of two storeys, since the scar of a floor level is visible. In the gable end is a doorway (now partly buried) with a timber lintel and, above this, in the centre of the gable, a loading door serving a loft. The levels within the barn appear to have been raised, which may mean that the lower levels and floor surfaces of the structure could be well preserved as buried remains. A further opening with a segmental headed arch of brick appears in the east wall, and there is a blocked opening above this. These all have jambs with brick dressings, which may point to a 19th-century date for these structures unless, the openings have been cut in to earlier fabric or enlarged. The surviving doors are all of 20th-century date.

The buildings to the east of this structure were demolished at an earlier date and now survive only as walls forming the boundary of a large walled garden. No internal walls remain and it is impossible to tell whether the ranges were separated by stone walls or by arcades of timber posts. In one angled corner of this complex a small, low window remains, with widely splayed jambs of brick and a timber lintel. A doorway in the north wall leads out to the roadway and, again, suggests that the existing ground level within the structure may have been raised.

Interpretation

Insufficient evidence survives to determine the functions of these buildings; however, we may conjecture that the eastern building may have served during the 19th century as a shippon, in close association with a large stockyard. The lower doorway in its north wall may have given access to a headwalk along the rear of a row of cattle stalls, allowing the feeding troughs to be easily served from a vehicle in the roadway below the gable. The upper floor is likely to have housed lofts, and the long building along the northern edge of the presumed stockyard may have been a lincay. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries the stockyard appears to have been roofed over, perhaps for additional cattle stalls but, of these, no evidence now remains visible.

3.4 The 'Piggery'

The piggery (Fig. 19) is one of the few farm buildings left on the site which retains its roof. This building appears to have been erected in the late 19th century, between 1880 and 1900, and lies on a terrace above the presumed stockyard, and on the same level as the old farmhouse. It is a

rectangular structure, now in use as an agricultural store, with a short outshut against its north eastern corner. The building is constructed of uncoursed stone rubble with red brick dressings and window sills; its low-pitched roof is covered with terracotta tiles of a saw-toothed profile. Similar 'triple delta' tiles were produced in Bridgewater and other tile manufacturing centres in the late 19th century.

The building is entered by doorways in its eastern and western ends, positioned hard against the southern wall. These give access to a walk or alley running from one end of the building to the other. There are a series of small, low, windows in the northern wall and two high level openings, presumably ventilators, in the gables. A further door in the eastern gable opens into a shed or store within the outshut.

Although the building appears to be of normal proportions externally, due to the difference in ground levels, the roof is in fact very low in relation to the volume of the building. The roof is a very simple 'A'-frame structure with its principals crossed at the top, applied collars and back purlins supported upon cleats. Some of the timbers on the south side appear to have been renewed.

The building is currently furnished with very substantially-built animal pens constructed of brick and concrete, with doorways and separate feeding chutes built in to the walls along the walk or alley. These are typical of modern pig pens.

To the south and east of the building is a small shed, terraced into the hillside, which may predate the building, but contains no obvious dateable features. This may simply have been a storage shed.

Interpretation

As the lowness of the roof and the narrowness of the walk would seem to preclude the use of this building for housing larger animals it is suggested that the building was originally constructed as a piggery. It is likely to have been built between 1885 and 1900 and survives with very little alteration, though its furnishings are modern. This building has some significance as the only agricultural structure in the farm complex to survive intact and unconverted.

3.5 Revetment Walls West of the Old Farmhouse

These walls support the higher ground to the south of the farmyard, and were formerly associated with farm buildings aligned with and continuous with the original farmhouse, extending to the west in a long range to meet the west wall of the shed next to the piggery. The estate map of 1800 (Fig. 1) shows that there were structures in this position by the end of the 18th century, but subsequent maps (Figs 2, 3, 4) seem to imply that these had been demolished and that the site of these buildings then lay vacant until the late 19th century.

The 1st- and 2nd-edition OS maps both show structures extending from the west end of the farmhouse, but unfortunately there is no evidence to show their character or function. The buildings were perhaps demolished in the 20th century after they became redundant for farm purposes. They were unroofed and the greater part of the front wall was removed. This wall shows some evidence of blocked doorways suggesting that the building may have had a solid front wall pierced by regular openings. This might suggest use as a stable or as a shippon. The rear wall and the west gable of the buildings were retained as revetment walls and there is some potential for the survival of early fabric in these areas.

3.6 'Greenaleigh Cottage'

This small detached building originated as an agricultural structure, but is now in use as a holiday cottage following conversion to this use in the late 20th or early 21st century. It first appears on the 1st edition OS map of the mid 1880s and may thus be presumed to have been constructed in the 1870s, unless it replaces a building with a very similar footprint.

Exterior

Like the new farmhouse (with which it may be contemporary) the building (Fig. 21) is constructed of randomly-coursed rubble with red brick dressings to the openings and to the quoins, but the

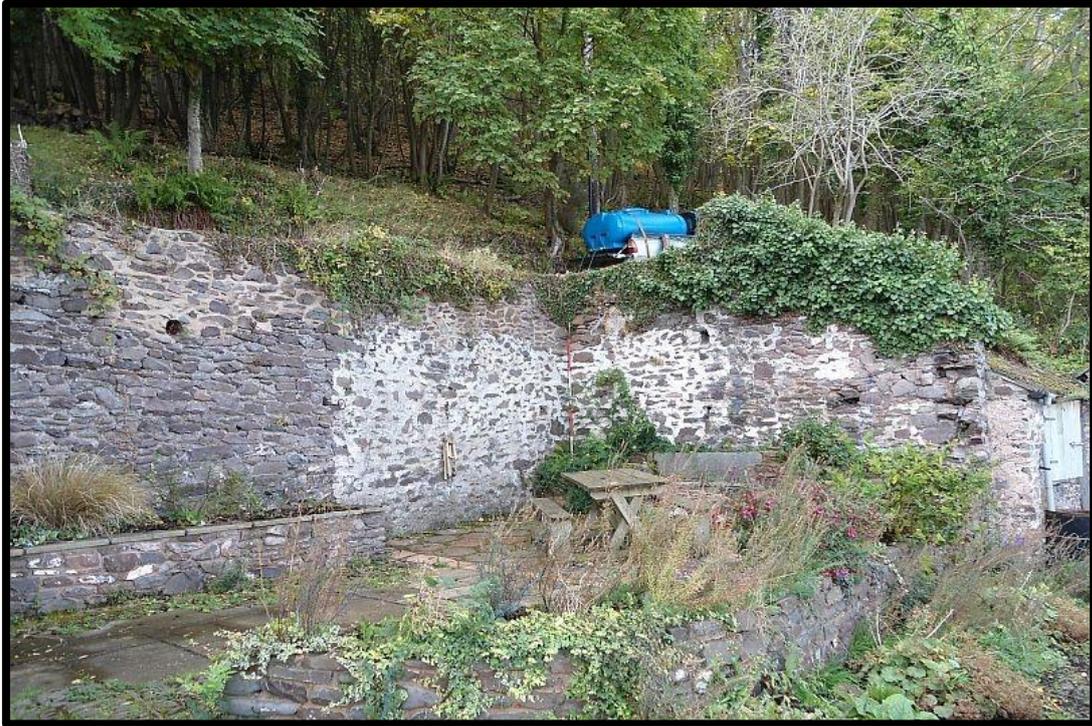


Fig. 20 View of the revetment walls to the west of the old farmhouse showing the remains of demolished farm buildings.



Fig. 21 View of 'Greenaleigh' Cottage, looking south east, showing the small window openings and doorway on the ground floor, the large opening and small ventilation windows in the north wall and the high-level openings in the gable.



Fig. 22 View of Greenaleigh Cottage from the east, showing the large double width door in its southern elevation, opposing that on the north. These may have been used to regulate the draught for winnowing.

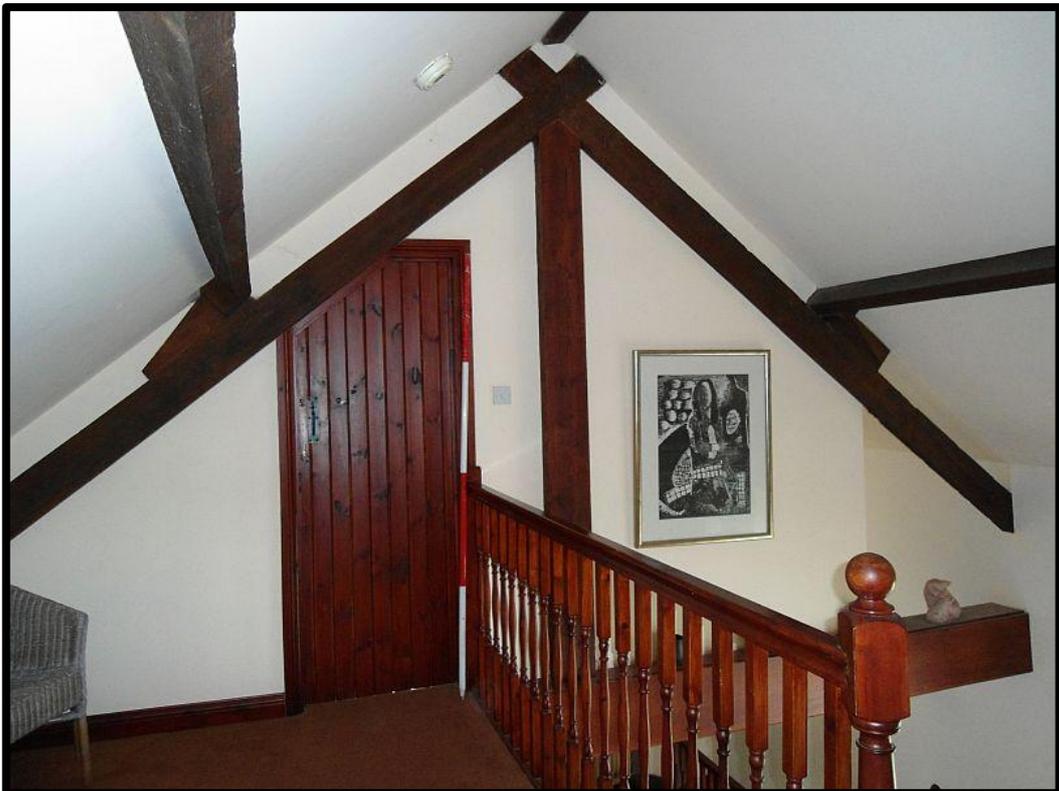


Fig. 23 View of the interior of Greenaleigh Cottage after conversion, showing the survival, though altered, of elements of the original 19th-century roof.

rubble masonry is of lower quality and unsquared. The building has a modern slate roof and all the doorways and windows are replacements relating to the conversion of the building. The building is built into the hillside so that it is entered at first-floor level by a wide doorway opening on to the roadway passing through the site (Fig 22). This is opposed by a large doorway on the north elevation, at such a high level above the ground that it is highly unlikely to have been used for loading. On either side of this doorway are small openings which have the character of ventilators.

The ground floor is lit by good sized windows in the north, east and western walls and has a small doorway opening onto a former yard, now a patio. These openings have segmental-arched window heads but retain no original joinery.

Interior

The interior of the building has been completely altered through conversion to holiday accommodation. The accommodation is now on three levels and, though it is uncertain whether or not this reflects the original arrangement the disposition of the window openings may suggest that the building originally contained two storeys, with lofts above accessed by the doorway in the gable. The roof has been altered but the original principals have been retained, crossed at the apex and with back purlins supported upon cleats. The only other original feature is some machinery close to the northern doorway at first-floor level. The previous owner suggests that this was connected to a horse-engine house below, but no evidence of such a structure remains, neither is any such building shown on the 19th-century maps. It is possible that the machinery drove a mechanical threshing machine located at loft level, and that it was powered by a traction engine in the yard below.

The yard walls to the east of the building are also of some interest; one retains a very interesting if rather perilous stairway consisting of corbelling blocks projecting from the wall.

Interpretation

'Greenaleigh Cottage' may have been constructed in around 1880 to serve as a small threshing barn. The opposed doors at first-floor level and the surviving machinery show that threshing took place on the first floor, at the level of the roadway, using opposed doors to control the draught for winnowing. The large openings and doorway at ground-floor level may show that this part of the building was occupied as a stable. There may have been lofts, one of which might have contained a mechanical threshing machine. The integrity of this building as a traditional farm building has been to some extent compromised by its conversion to holiday accommodation and by the loss of its original joinery, but the conversion has been undertaken with minimal alteration to the original openings and the appearance of the building has been, to a certain extent, preserved.

3.7 The Potato House

This small building stood just to the west of 'Greenaleigh Cottage'. It appears to have been erected between 1890 and 1903 and has since been entirely demolished. It survives only as the remains of walling protruding from the bank below the wall bounding the northern side of the roadway. The appearance of the building is known only from the postcard view (Fig. 17), which appears to show a small stone-built structure with a corrugated metal roof aligned from north to south, its gable facing the road. This building has been identified as a 'potato house' by the previous owner of the farm. No evidence remains to confirm this, but the identification as a root store seems very likely; its position on the roadway would allow for easy loading and if the ruined barns close by are correctly identified as shippens or cattle houses, the position of the building in relation to these would also be convenient.

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Ordnance Survey Maps

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Other Sources

- Postcard of Greenaleigh Farm *c.* 1915 Reproduced on the 'Are we related' website [www.arewerelated.co.uk].