

# BRIGHTLEY BARTON

## Archaeological and Historic Building Recording

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## Appendix

### A: References

**Location:** Brightley Barton  
**Parish:** Dolton  
**District:** Torridge  
**County:** Devon  
**NGR:** SS54961148

**Planning Application no:** 1/0343/2013/LBC  
**Proposal:** Alteration and extension to dwelling  
**Historical Environment Team Ref:** ARCH/DM/TO.201301  
**Museum Accession No:** NDDMS 2013.27

A copy of this report will be deposited at the North Devon Museum.  
Accession No: NDDMS 2013.27.

A copy of this report is also available via OASIS (Online Access to the index of archaeological Investigations). ID: sashacha1- 167866 (1).

The interior recording work was carried out by Sasha Chapman, Evolve Business Consultancy and Stella De-Villiers AC Archaeology on 11th June 2013. The exterior watching brief was carried out on 16th and 17th July 2013 by Sasha Chapman.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background**

Brightley Barton and the detached threshing barn are both Grade II listed. The property is subject to Listed Building Consent and the owners Tim and Charlotte Shipton wish to extend and update the existing property.

## **1.2 Historical Significance**

The Statement of Historical Significance indicated that this was a building of late 15<sup>th</sup> Century origin that had multiple phases of construction.

The most significant feature of Brightley is the survival of the lower end of the farmhouse at its original height. It is unusual to find so many phases in a building of such age and as such it is important to record any features exposed during the building work which may shed light on the development of this historic building.

The building provides evidence of the achievement of higher social status having been developed from a 15<sup>th</sup> century cross passage farmhouse by the insertion of a “hall bay” in the central room and the rebuilding, heightening and general gentrification of the farmhouse.

Removal of the external render and internal plaster offers a unique opportunity to further extend our understanding of the development of this property and we are grateful to the owners for allowing unrestricted access whilst the building works are in progress.

## **1.3 Archaeological Background**

As a formal condition of planning consent Torridge District Council requires a record of the historic building be made prior to the commencement of the development. This requires archaeological recording during the course of the proposed works, where previously obscured historic fabric or architectural features are exposed during the development.

As ground will be disturbed as part of the development it will be necessary to monitor the ground works and allow archaeological features and deposits, if any, to be investigated and recorded.

## 2 PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

### 2.1 Desk Based Assessment

The building was described in detail for The Statement of Historical Significance following a documentary review and cartographic research drawing on sources at the North Devon records office.

No references to Brightley were found prior to 1780 but this is not unusual. However much evidence regarding the building and its occupants survives from the 1800's where tithe and census records are quite detailed.



Figure 1: Detail from 1849 Map

### 2.2 Historic Building Recording

As set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) the building was recorded to Level 2 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* – English Heritage 2006. A descriptive and photographic record was made externally and internally. Various build phases were described and recorded using the architects existing plans.

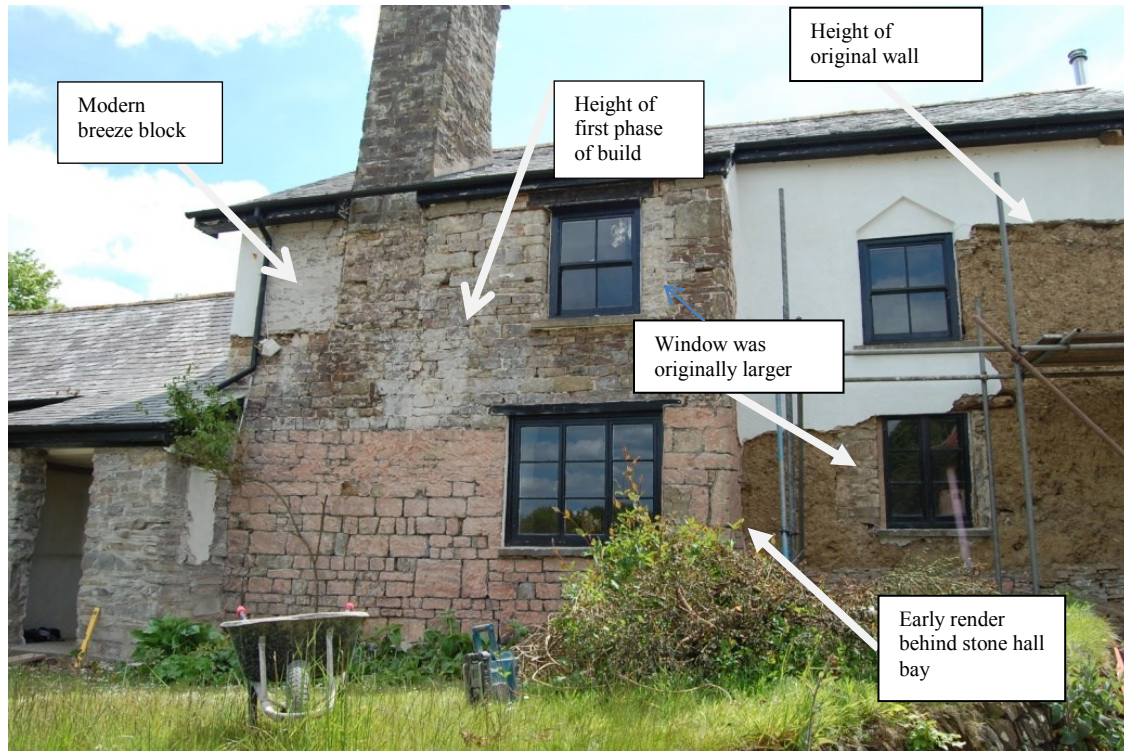
As previously noted in the Statement of Historical Significance at least three phases were clearly identified within the building. Removal of internal plaster and external render has revealed that there are many more phases than first thought and further features have been exposed. These have been photographed and recorded.

### 2.3 Exterior Description

When the modern cementitious render was removed the most striking feature was the hall bay (Room 2) which is constructed from dressed stone. This feature was almost certainly designed to be seen as exposed stonework rather than rendered. Dressed stonework would have been a costly undertaking and it was therefore clearly a symbol of status.

Close examination of this hall bay reveals that it was most probably built in at least three phases. It is possible to see the early render behind the dressed stone bay. This categorically indicates that the central bay is a later addition to the building.

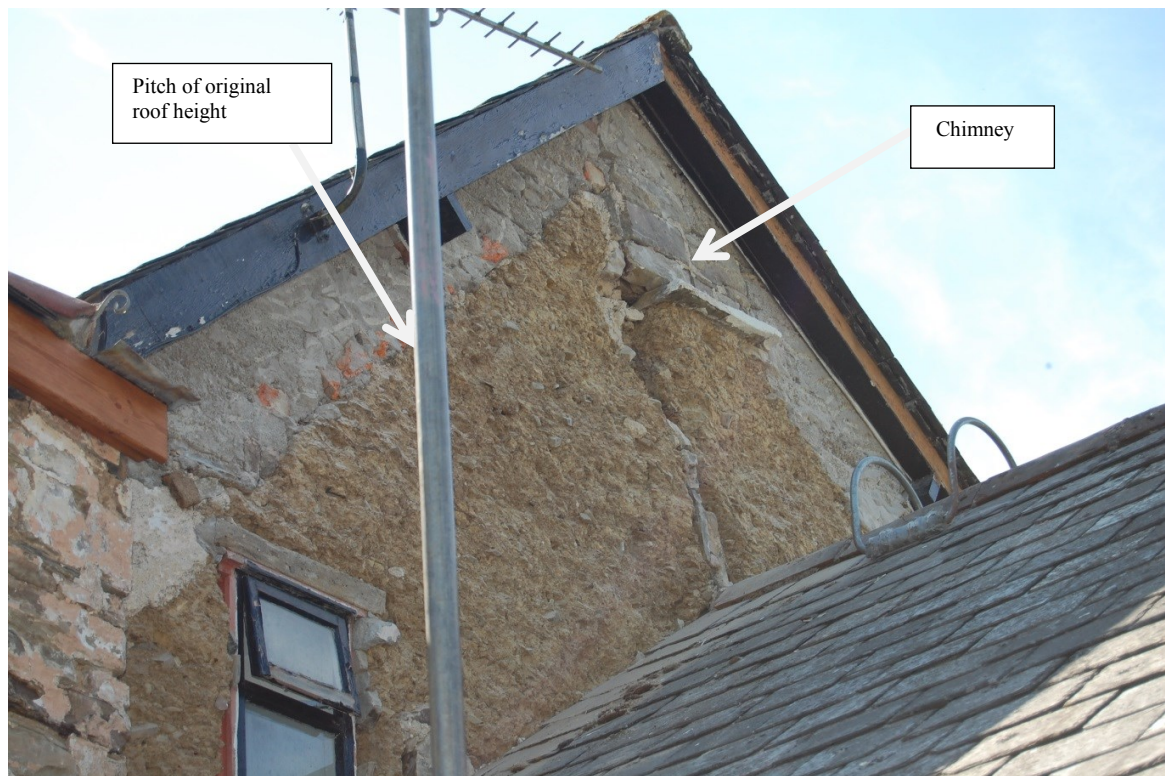
The hall bay was originally built at ground level only and incorporated the lateral stack of the chimney. The hall bay was then extended to first floor on the right of the stack but the roof would have still swept around the left hand side of the gable end above Room 1. The swept thatch can clearly be seen in an old photograph of Brightley. It is interesting to see that the current porch is a later addition to the glass porch in the early photograph.



*Figure 2: Removal of Render in Progress Revealing Dressed Stone of Hall Bay*

The render on the gable end facing west (of Room 2) was removed and this revealed stone above a feature that was previously described as a drip moulding. This stone probably forms the base of what was an earlier chimney stack serving a fireplace backing onto the cross passage which was replaced by the lateral stack built in conjunction with the hall bay.





*Figure 3: Gable End of Room 2 Facing East*

The cob wall now exposed on the west and east gable end has been heightened to accommodate a first floor when the stone hall bay was added.

Although it would be entirely reasonable to think that the building was remodelled during the Victorian period the modern breeze blocks make it clear that that the entire building was re-roofed in the 1970's to 1980's.





*Figure 4: Unreferenced photographs showing front and rear elevation.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Note the swept thatch and part glazed porch and the un-rendered kitchen wing

The left side of the hall bay was built up in breeze block and the roof was heightened, evident at the gable ends and at first floor height above Room 3. This appears to have been done solely to alter the pitch of the roof as the building wasn't significantly heightened internally. The entire building would then have been rendered in cementitious render.

We can assume Room 1 had an agricultural use and was therefore not upgraded. However removal of render has not shown a lower build height linking Room 1 and 2.

Internally the wall of Room 2 is stone at ground floor and cob above; this can be seen externally and internally. One would assume that the property would have originally been built at one height, that is, open to the roof. At present it is not possible to say whether the three rooms of the original cross passage house were all at the same height. Also there is no evidence to suggest that the upper part of the house, Room 2 and Room 3, were altered to add a first floor. However it is most probable that the original building was single storey and that subsequent alterations have removed evidence of this early phase.



*Figure 5: West Gable End Showing How the Breeze Blocks Have Been Added Above Cob*

The external chimney on the west end existed prior to the upper storey being heightened, but a brick extension was added to give the stack more height. The ground floor window of Room 3 would originally have been much wider, possibly three mullioned and this has been reduced in size.

Externally the walls of Room 1 are a mixture of cob and stonework. A small area of cob has been lime rendered to appear as coursed stonework, where the bay window has been inserted is a crude blocking of a larger opening. The opening has been blocked with breeze blocks and the modern bay has been inserted within this. To the rear of this room opposite the bay opening is another large opening that has been closed with breeze blocks. This is in addition to the blocked rear of the cross passage.

The rest of the building is of cob construction sitting on a stone plinth. Removal of the render has revealed many alterations to the various phases of building development. Generally where

cob failed it was repaired with stone. This means that early phases of the building are mainly of cob construction above a stone plinth. Where there is stone walling above the plinth it is most likely a later repair. This arrangement is sometimes confusing as early windows and doorways are also blocked using stone, making interpretation complicated.

## 2.4 Interior Description



Figure 6: Plan of Brightley Barton

### Room 1

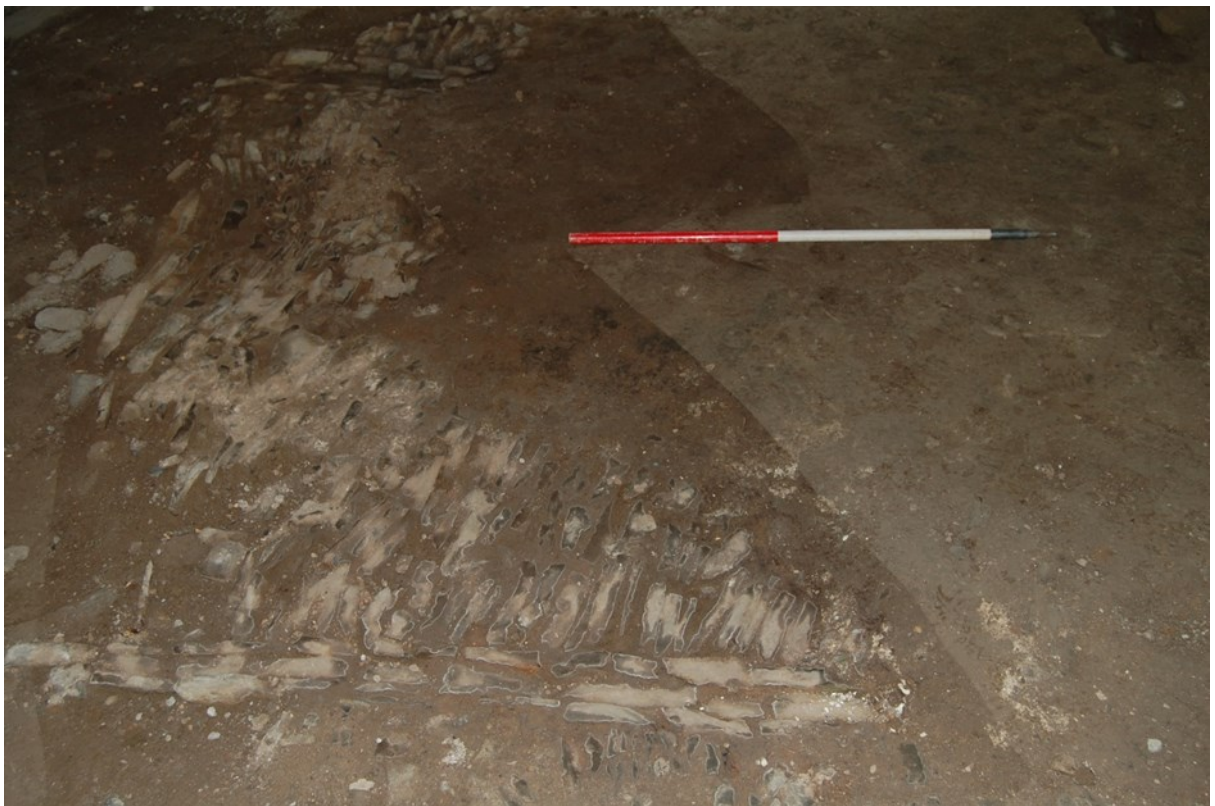
The concrete and tiled floor was removed to reveal a rather fine cobbled floor with two drains either side running east – west. The run off for this drain is in the east gable end.

Clearly this room had an agricultural function as was proposed in the Statement of Historical Significance. One would expect to find a floor of this type in a Devon longhouse, but this floor is slightly narrower in width than traditionally found. For a building of this width a central drain would normally have been more likely.





*Figure 7: Cobbled Floor, Room 1.*



*Figure 8: Close Up Of Cobbled Floor In Room 1.*

It was felt necessary to excavate the floor and record any significant features as there was evidence of charcoal within the rubble and earth above the cobbled stone floor.

The floor was divided into four and the opposing sides (north east corner and south west corner) were excavated and recorded. At first it was thought that this charcoal may be evidence of a central hearth but further investigation and cleaning revealed a distinct layer of burning above the cobbles. This layer is probably indicative of a thatch fire as the roof has been replaced and a large amount of charcoal was found across the whole floor, even into the corners of the room. This would explain why only one cruck exists as the other could have been damaged in a fire. No finds of any historical significance were found during the excavation.

## **Room 2**

The wall that forms the partition between Room 1 and 2 appears to be built of stone rather than cob, although it could just be faced in stone as the exposed exterior upper part is all cob. This is the only internal stone wall in the building and as such is likely to be where the original fireplace was situated before the later 16<sup>th</sup> century fireplace was added.

Removal of exterior render on the gable above Room 1 confirmed that this was the site of a chimney the dressed stone base of which is supported by a stone lintel, previously described as a drip moulding. As the moulded timber ceiling runs across this wall it is possible to say that the ceiling post-dates the original fire place.

The fineness of the moulded ceiling beams is slightly incongruous when juxtaposed with the chunky workmanlike lintel of the fireplace. It may be that the lintel was from the earlier fireplace and this was moved to the new position when the moulded ceiling beams were added.

There is no moulding along the back of the ceiling beam across the bay and the front moulding is part buried by the fireplace indicating that the ceiling precedes the lateral stack but is later than the axial stack.

Internally within the floor is a stone linear feature that runs north to south. It consists of large stones which overlay a stone lined gully. Whilst it is obvious that this is a drain it is difficult to date and could at its latest be contemporary with the earliest phase of the house.





*Figure 9: Stone Linear Feature within Room 2*



*Figure 10: Detail of Stone Linear Feature within Room 2*



This feature was photographed and drawn in case a continuation of the feature is uncovered during ground works outside of the building. The feature was drawn at a scale of 1:20 and consisted of fourteen large stones laid on top of a stone lined gulley. The feature measured 14cm wide and 4cm deep.

No finds of any significance were found during the initial excavation of this feature internally. A new floor has been laid in Room 2 but the stone lined drain has been protected by shuttering either side. The eventual floor finish will then be laid on top of the concrete floor either side but be suspended over the stone lined drain. No further features or finds were discovered during this work.

On the internal south facing rear wall is a blocked window. This indicates that originally the building was one room deep and this would have been an external wall.

There could also be a blocked opening into Room 3 but at present this is inconclusive as plaster was still covering most of this wall.

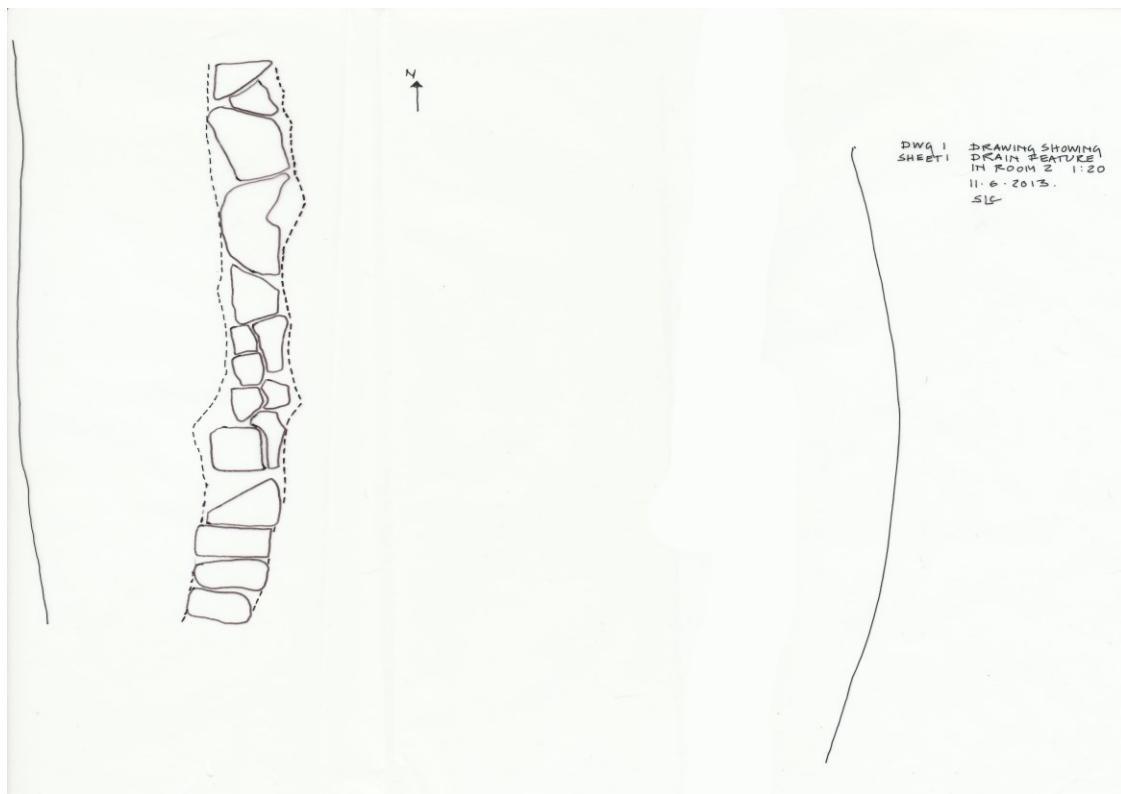


Figure 11: Drawing of Stone Linear Feature within Room 2. Scale 1:20

### Room 3

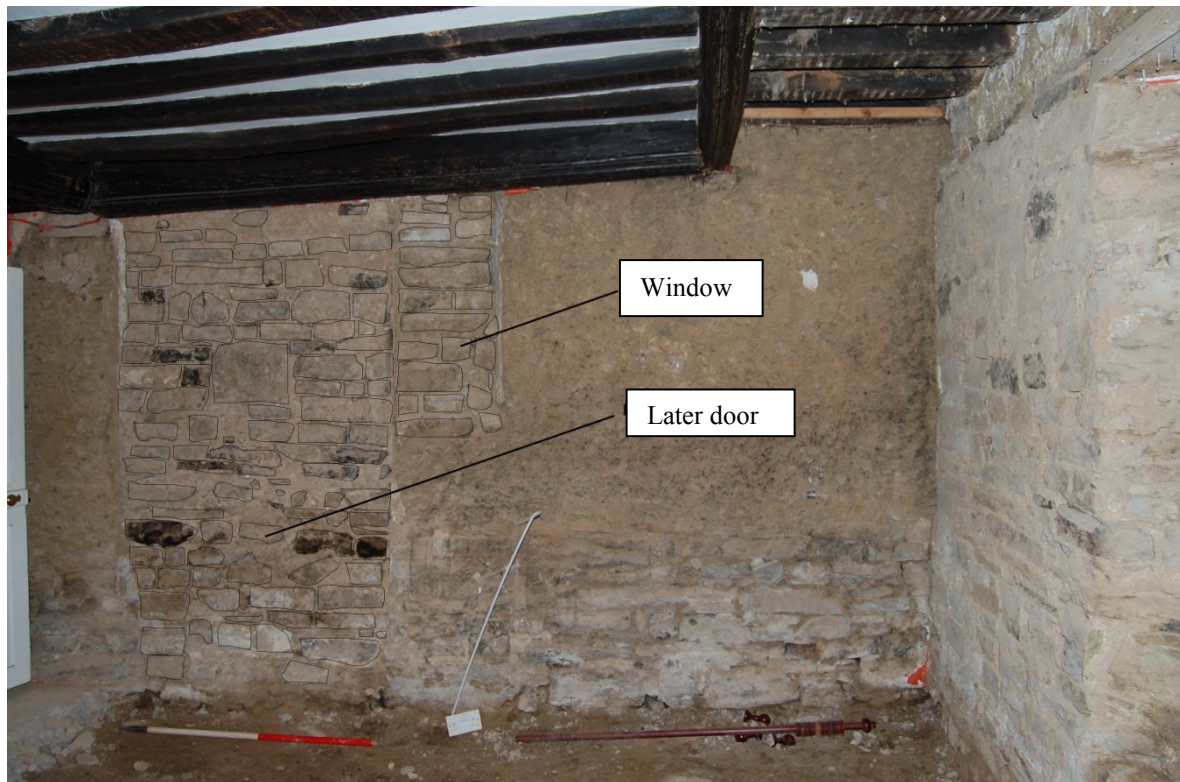
Within this room is an unusual timber feature on the east internal wall. A short vertical timber sits on a lateral timber off of ground level which seems to support the early ceiling beam running east to west.

There is a blocked doorway on the west facing gable end, to the right of the fireplace. This is not apparent externally as the stone plinth has been rebuilt disguising this early opening.

## Room 4

This room was added when the building was upgraded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The room has been subject to many alterations and modifications.

On the interior west wall is a blocked doorway. This appears originally to have been a window which was then enlarged to be a doorway when the building was further extended, leading in to Room 5.



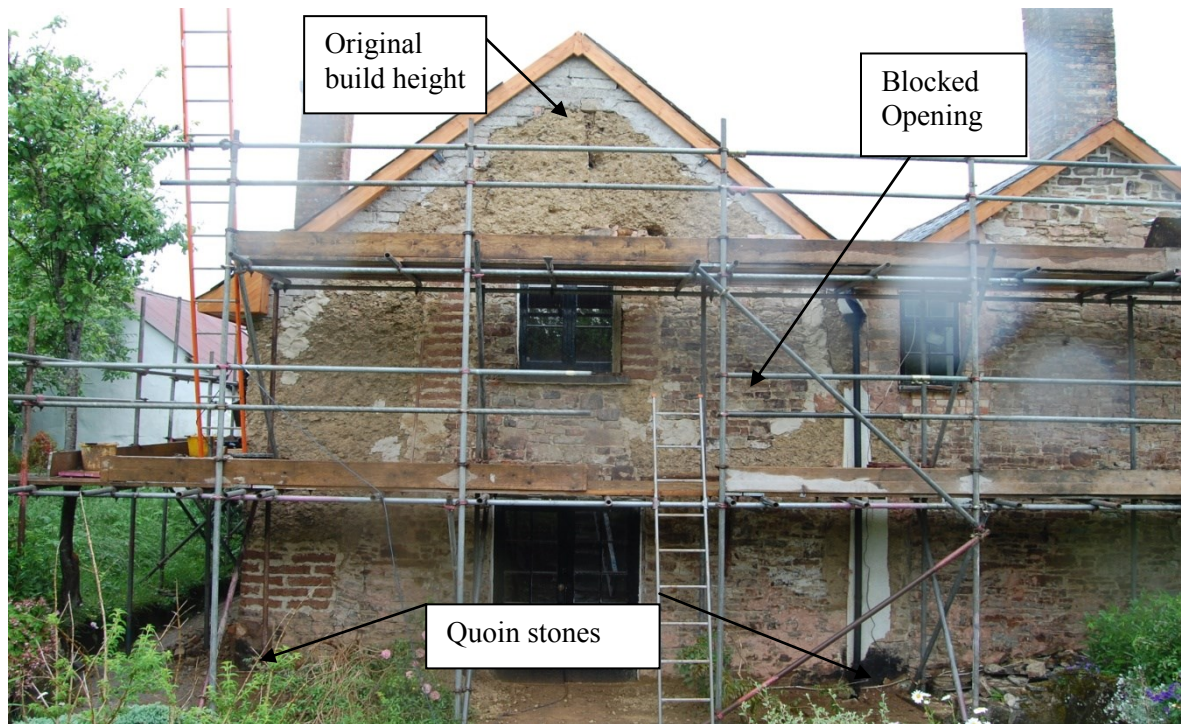
*Figure 12: Blocked Window and Later Blocked Doorway Room 4*

The rear gable end has French doors and above at first floor is a window. There are blocked openings at ground floor and first floor to the right of the current openings. The first floor opening is an unusual shape which is either a large window or short doorway that has been blocked in.

Externally this extension has two large quoins at ground floor level which set out this phase of the build.

The Statement of Historical Significance referred to the fireplace within Room 4 being moved to the left when the staircase was added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Removal of plaster has made it possible to see the blocked flue of the earlier fireplace in this room.





*Figure 13: Rear of Property Showing Earlier Extension to Left and Later Extension on Right*

The moulded ceiling existed when this room had its central fireplace indicating that both were contemporary with each other as the moulding has been in filled around the area that housed the central fireplace, (now in the north west corner).

During building works a small plastered opening was uncovered on the west wall of Room 4.



*Figure 14 and 15: Plaster Lined Feature and Detail in External West Wall of Room 4*



### 3 MONITORING AND RECORDING GROUNDWORKS

A modern prefabricated garage to the rear of the property was removed. The top soil was removed to a solid level suitable for putting in a new concrete slab and the footings were dug for a new garage. No finds of any significance were found but two features were discovered.

A stone lined drain was discovered in the top right hand corner. This was photographed but was not disturbed. It was approximately one meter below ground but exits at ground level in the top right area of the photograph (see arrow). There is a natural spring in this area as water was noted as lying on the surface of the ground despite one month's dry weather.

The soil found below the top soil was clayey with large stone inclusions. In the north facing section was a layer of three stones 30cm below the ground, see Figure 15. This was later discovered to be the bottom of a further stone lined drain found running east to west and is marked in red in Figure 16. This area had previously been disturbed as a modern drain runs parallel to the stone lined drain.



*Figure 16: Area Once the Prefabricated Garage had been Removed, Prior to Excavation.*



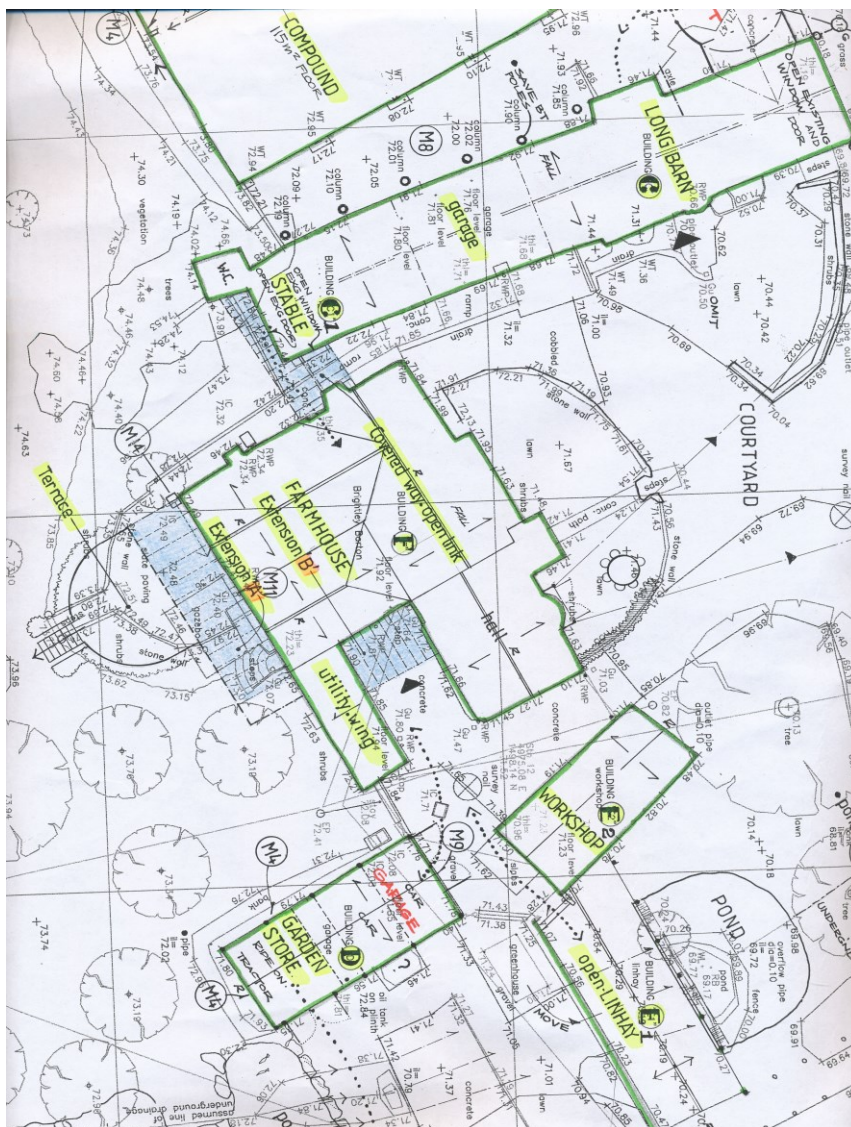


Figure 17: Plan Showing Farmhouse, Garage and Associated Outbuildings. Scale 1:200

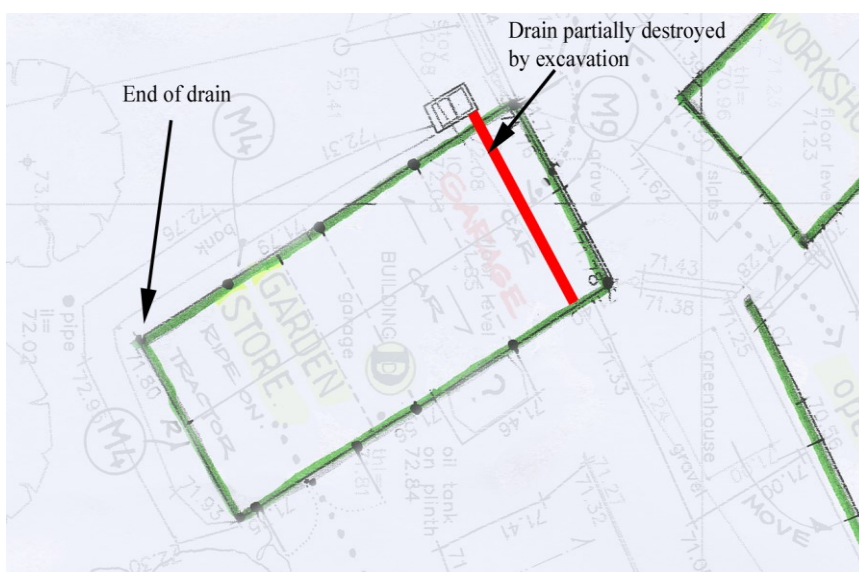


Figure 18: Exit Point of Stone Line Drain and Drain that was Partially Destroyed by Ground Works.





*Figure 19: Close up of Stone Lined Drain in South West Corner of Garage Area.*



*Figure 20: North Facing Section Showing Layer of Three Stones found 30cm Below Top Soil.*





*Figure 21: Stone Lined Drain That Runs East to West and Was Partially Destroyed by the Ground Works.*

The second drain discovered ran horizontally to the rear of the property and was partially destroyed by the ground works. The feature was stone lined. No finds of any significance were discovered. Both drains were similar in appearance to the drain in Room 2. It was noted that there are a number of natural springs in the area and that the stone lined drains had modern drains running close by indicating a continuing need to deal with ground water. A modern clay drain can be seen near the surface running parallel to the drain that was partially destroyed. This modern drain had already disturbed the area.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

The Statement of Historical Significance observed that Brightley Barton was a farmhouse of multiple phases dating from the 1400's through to the present day. The archaeological and historic building recording carried out subsequently confirmed these original phases. Removal of external render and internal plaster has revealed previously hidden features which indicate further stages of development.

The building is a highly complex development of a farmhouse rarely seen and its redevelopment has allowed us to see features that have been previously hidden. The build phases are as follows:

1. Single storey three room house with cross passage.
2. Upper end (Room 2 and 3) raised to two storey and stack inserted between Room 1 and 2.
3. Moulded timber ceiling and Room 4 and lateral stack added.
4. Lateral stack rebuilt in conjunction with hall bay.
5. Room 5 added (kitchen wing).
6. Staircase added and Room 4 made smaller. Fireplace moved and lintel possibly moved to Room 5 (kitchen).
7. Building heightened and slate roof added, external cementitious render added.

It is recommended that the cobbled floor in Room 1 should be retained in situ and covered using a geotextile material such as "Terram". This would protect the cobbles as they do not need to be lifted in this room to achieve the levels necessary elsewhere in the house.

## Appendix A

### References

Dick, A.M, June 2013 *Brief for Historic Building Recording and Archaeological monitoring and Recording of Groundworks*. Ref: ARCH/DM/TO.20301.

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