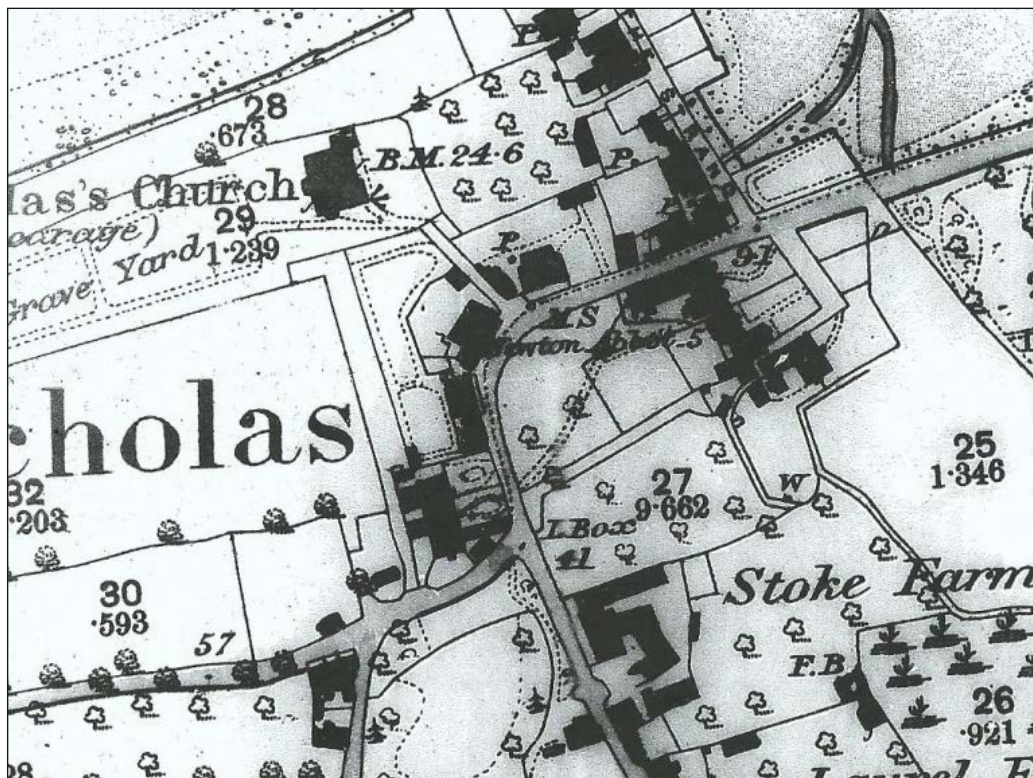




# OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

## Historic building recording at The Hermitage, Ringmore, Devon



*on behalf of*  
**Mr James Ashton**

**Report No. 15-09**

**Project No. 1272**

**August 2015**



# OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological Groundworks and Historic Buildings

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for Mr James Ashton and sets out the results of an archaeological building survey carried out by Oakford Archaeology (OA) between June and July 2015, at The Hermitage, Shaldon, Devon (SX 9242 7225). The work was carried out to satisfy condition no. 5 attached to the grant of listed building consent (15/00295/LBC) granted by East Devon District Council for the demolition of the existing rear extension and erection of replacement extension.

### 1.1 The site

The main house is a Grade II Listed Building (461041) which lies within the Ringmore Conservation Area, a short distance to the south of St Nicholas parish church, at the northern end of the historic village of Ringmore (Fig. 1). The building is described as dating to the late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century, built of painted render over cob, with a hipped thatched roof with ridge stack to right-of-centre and end walls. The original building plan is of a 3-room and through-passage with a later 2-storey slate-roofed rear wing. To the north of the main range a single storey extension was added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The archaeological work was commissioned by the current owner of the property, Mr James Ashton, in advance of the complete demolition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century extension.

### 1.2 Geological background

The site lies on a slight spur overlooking the River Teign. The geology of the area is breccia of the Alphington and Heavitree Breccia Formations; sedimentary bedrock formed 251-260 million years ago in the Permian Period (BGS 1995).

## 2. AIMS

The aims of the projects were to preserve by record any historic building fabric or architectural detail that was to be affected by the development, and to disseminate the results of the investigation by appropriate reporting and deposition of the archive in a public repository, or online with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by OA (2015), submitted to and approved by Teignbridge District Council under the planning condition, prior to commencement on site. This document is included as Appendix 1. Guidance on the scope of work required was outlined by the Planning Officer Naomi Archer in an e-mail dated 12-06-2015.

### 3.1 Building survey

Recording of the buildings was undertaken by a historic building specialist in accordance with specifications applicable to Level 3 in the English Heritage 2006 document *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practices*. The building recording consisted of:

- A detailed written description of the building and more general record of the main building.
- A detailed photographic record of the building in colour (digital) format, and basic record of the extension.

- A limited drawn record of the building, consisting of annotation of, and additions to, the architect's 'as existing' plans and elevations, to show the locations of any fixtures and fittings, building breaks, blocked openings or architectural detail.

### 3.2 Watching brief

The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any historic building fabric exposed by the demolition works, and to allow further recording of any new exposures in the built fabric made during the course of the works. An archaeologist was therefore present during all the relevant demolition works.

## 4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 4.1 General background

Little is known of the history and development of this area in the prehistoric, Roman and early Saxon periods. The settlement is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The manor of *Rumor* was held by Brictric prior to 1066, and during the Norman reorganisation of the land holdings following the Conquest, and the death of Harold at Hastings, the village of *Rumor* and its land was held by Stephen from Baldwin FitzGilbert, Sheriff of Devon<sup>1</sup>. The place-name probably derives from the Old English *hreod* and *mor* meaning reedy marsh<sup>2</sup>. The small chapel of St Nicholas probably dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although it was rebuilt in 1622, and reconstructed by E. H. Sedding in 1894-6. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Carews held the estate, which was sold to Lord Clifford of Chudleigh in 1671.

### 4.2 The Hermitage

Although the property is not shown on the 1741 estate map (Fig. 2) the main house is dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century on stylistic grounds. The property is first mentioned in Pigott's directory of 1830 when William Mortimer, a wine and spirit merchant, is listed as the proprietor. The 1841 census provides the following description of its occupants 'The Hermitage: William Mortimer, 69, married, living with Elizabeth Mortimer, 63, and William, 22, and Elizabeth, 10'.

The tithe survey of Shaldon parish took place in 1843, revealing that the property was still in the ownership of the Mortimer family. The map clearly shows the main house and a large outbuilding and orchard to the north and west (Fig. 3). William Mortimer is listed again in Pigott's Directory of 1844 as a merchant and ship owner, obviously a man of some wealth and standing. It is unclear what happens to the property following his death in the early 1850's, but it is likely to have passed to his wife and subsequently to his son.

By the early 1880's the property had been sold to Frederik Albert Davenhill. He is listed as a private resident and owned The Hermitage until 1902, when he moved to Priory Cottage, Ringmore<sup>3</sup>. The area was mapped by the Ordnance Survey in 1890, when the property was shown in the greatest detail thus far (Fig. 4). A small outbuilding had been added to the northern end of the main house, and the large outbuilding demolished, while the orchard had been turned into a formal garden.

The extension appears for the first time on the 1905 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5), when it has a small porch on the western side. By 1908 Robert Digby Watson is listed as the owner.

<sup>1</sup> Thorn and Thorn 1985, 16.114.

<sup>2</sup> Mills 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly's Directory 1883, 1889, 1893, 1897, 1902, 1908.

He is a private resident and sold the property in early 1911<sup>4</sup> to Col. Hugh Claude Edward Lucas, a retired Indian Army Officer, and his wife<sup>5</sup>. Originally commissioned into the 7 Bombay Infantry in 1869, Lucas subsequently transferred to the 107 Pioneers, ending his career as Inspector-General of Supply and Transport, Bombay, before retiring in 1909<sup>6</sup>. In early April 1911 an article appeared in the Exeter Flying Post advertising for a cook ‘Cook-General Wanted in April; good, steady, experienced; clean, honest, with good references – Apply Mrs Lucas, The Hermitage, Shaldon, S. Devon’<sup>7</sup>. Their second son, Clifton Malet Lucas, a second-lieutenant in the South Wales Borderers, was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme<sup>8</sup>.

By the early 1920’s the property had been purchased by Col. John Ewen MacPherson. Born in 1869, the son of J. E. MacPherson, a spirit and wine merchant from Newcastle, he attended the Royal Grammar School Newcastle-upon-Tyne, before being commissioned in 1894 into the 1<sup>st</sup> Newcastle Engineer Volunteers as a second lieutenant<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup>. Promoted to Captain in 1906, he became a Major in command of 2 Northumbrian Field Company (TA) in 1910. On the outbreak of war in 1914 the company was transferred to the 50 (Northumbrian) Division. Moved to France in early 1915 the division saw action on the Yser canal in April and by the end of the month he was promoted to command of the Divisional Engineers. He was subsequently transferred in November 1915 to 63 (Northumbrian) Division forming in England. However, due to high losses in France this unit never saw combat but was used to provide drafts of trained men for 50 (Northumbrian) Division on the western front, with the engineers going to the 15 (Indian) Division<sup>11</sup>.

After retiring from the Army John MacPherson enjoyed diverse pursuits and is listed in the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette on Thursday 7 October 1926 as selling a prize winning hen for 42s at the Teignmouth Show.

By 1935 the Hermitage was owned by Charles Joseph Catling, a retired Captain from the Suffolk Regiment, and his wife Grace. Their son, Wallace Robert Catling, a Captain in the 6<sup>th</sup> (H.D.) Bn. The Wiltshire Regiment died in Taunton on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1947 from the effects of having been gassed during the First World War. He is buried in St Nicholas graveyard (Fig. 7)<sup>12</sup>.

## 5. THE BUILDING SURVEY

### 5.1 Introduction

The removal of plasterboard and wooden cladding during demolition of the extension permitted closer inspection of the historic building fabric of the building, and allowed the identification of areas that contained original features and areas where these had been replaced.

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<sup>4</sup> Kelly’s Directory 1908, 1910.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly’s Directory 1919.

<sup>6</sup> The Official Army List 1907, 1909.

<sup>7</sup> Exeter and Plymouth Gazette - Saturday 01 April 1911.

<sup>8</sup> Western Mail - Saturday 29 July 1916.

<sup>9</sup> The Official Army List 1907, 1909.

<sup>10</sup> Morpeth Herald - Saturday 29 August 1908.

<sup>11</sup> The Official Army List 1907, 1909.

<sup>12</sup> Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser – Saturday 22 February 1947.

## 5.2 The extension

*Exterior* (Fig. 8).

The extension is a single storey structure, constructed of Flemish bond brick above local red sandstone. The building is a rectangular range, aligned north-south, at right angles and slightly off-set from the main house. The extension is crowned with a single centrally located chimney stack at the north end (Pl. 1). The west elevation of the building is its principal façade (Pl. 2), presenting a single storey elevation to the garden under a hipped slate roof. The ground floor is entered through a French door with flanking windows (Pl. 3) at the centre of the elevation. The extension was lit by two simple 12-pane wooden windows in the west elevation (Pl. 4) and a small stained glass window in the south elevation (Pls. 5-6). A further small 3-pane stained-glass window was located at the south end of the eastern elevation (Pl. 7). This range appears to date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Interior* (Fig. 8).

The drawing room is entered from the main house by a double panel doorway with intricate decorations on the inside (Pl. 8), with three steps leading onto the large room with wooden floorboards. Two large windows, flanking a central fireplace in the north elevation, lit the room, while an elaborate arched stained-glass window was located in the south wall overlooking the rear of the main house. A fourth window, with three plain stained-glass panels, was located in the south wall.

The interior of the drawing room had been severely altered. These alterations included the complete removal of the original wall finishes and their replacement with interlocking wooden boards, fastened onto wooden studs, and covered with plasterboard. All the decorated plasterwork, ceiling rose, fire surround and skirting board were fastened onto the plasterboard. Only on the ceiling did the original lath and plaster survive, although even there it was subsequently covered with wooden boards and plasterboard. It is therefore unclear if any of the existing fittings formed part of the original decoration of the drawing room.

The reed and ribbon panelling and the swag and bow cornice both contained hessian and lath. This process was first developed during the 1850's and made it stronger than solid plaster, allowing longer pieces of decorative plasterwork to be cast in a workshop and easily transported to site, with three dimensional additions made within the workshop in moulds and then applied to the reed panelling and corncicing for a more decorative effect (Geoffrey Preston and Jenny Lawrence *pers. comm.*). In the case of the decorated plaster from the drawing room it was felt by Jenny Lawrence that on balance the lack of thick layers of paint on the plaster would suggest that they may be relatively modern in date. The craftsmen could either have used an existing worn mold, which might explain the crude nature of the decorated plaster, or simply taken a cast from the original decorations which may have been either worn or covered in thick layers of paint, obscuring some of the original detail (Geoffrey Preston *pers. comm.*).

Interestingly the swag and bow cornice was fitted below the level of the ceiling, perhaps reflecting the personal taste of the owner.

Whether or not the decorated plaster reflects the original decoration of the drawing room, the fact that the room is lit mainly from the west and north elevation indicates that this was done

to maximise wall space for furniture. The deliberately classical decoration of the cornice and reed mold plaster wall panels was also deliberately created not only to enhance the room's importance but might also suggest a deliberately created environment to display paintings to further impress guests.

### *The roof*

The roof structure of the extension was visible through a small opening at the north end of the ceiling. Access to the roof area was difficult and a detailed inspection could not be made due to the dangerous condition of the ceiling and the uncertain condition of the joists. The following description is based on inspection from a position just within the opening.

The roof of the extension was hipped. This was built off a wall plate, and typically included at the corners small tie pieces supporting small, diagonal beams. These supported hip rafters, with jack rafters nailed onto these. The main element of the roof is supported on 15 A-frames with tiebeams and nailed halved-jointed apices. The feet at the eaves rest on the top of the wall plate. The common rafters are linked at the apex by a ridge plank. The roof was further strengthened by the addition of five timber uprights, nailed to the tiebeams and additional horizontal beams. It is likely that the whole roof is late 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century in date

## 7. CONCLUSION

The Hermitage is an important historic building within the Ringmore area, its size reflecting a large and prosperous establishment. The layout of the house perpetuates that of an earlier house which was probably first constructed as a three room and cross-passage house in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century the extension was built to provide a large formal space to entertain guests, functioning at times as a drawing room or as a formal dining room. The lighting arrangement would suggest the presence not only of paintings, but also of cupboards and sideboards. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the increasing production of glass, porcelain and silverware resulted in large and elaborate dining services, while new serving dishes and centrepieces embellished the table, requiring elaborate storage. Along with other fashionable household goods tableware spoke volumes about the host's standing in society.

## SITE ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive which is currently held at Oakford Archaeology's offices under project number 1272, pending deposition with the ADS. Details of the building recording, including a pdf copy of the final report will be submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (oakforda1-219356).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was commissioned by Kate Sammons (Living Space Architects) on behalf of Mr J. Ashton and administered by Marc Steinmetzer (OA). It was monitored for Teignmouth District Council by the Conservation Officer, Naomi Archer. The building recording was carried out by M. Steinmetzer. The drawings for this report were prepared by M. Steinmetzer. The author wishes to thank Geoffrey Preston and Jenny Lawrence for their assistance with the decorated plaster.



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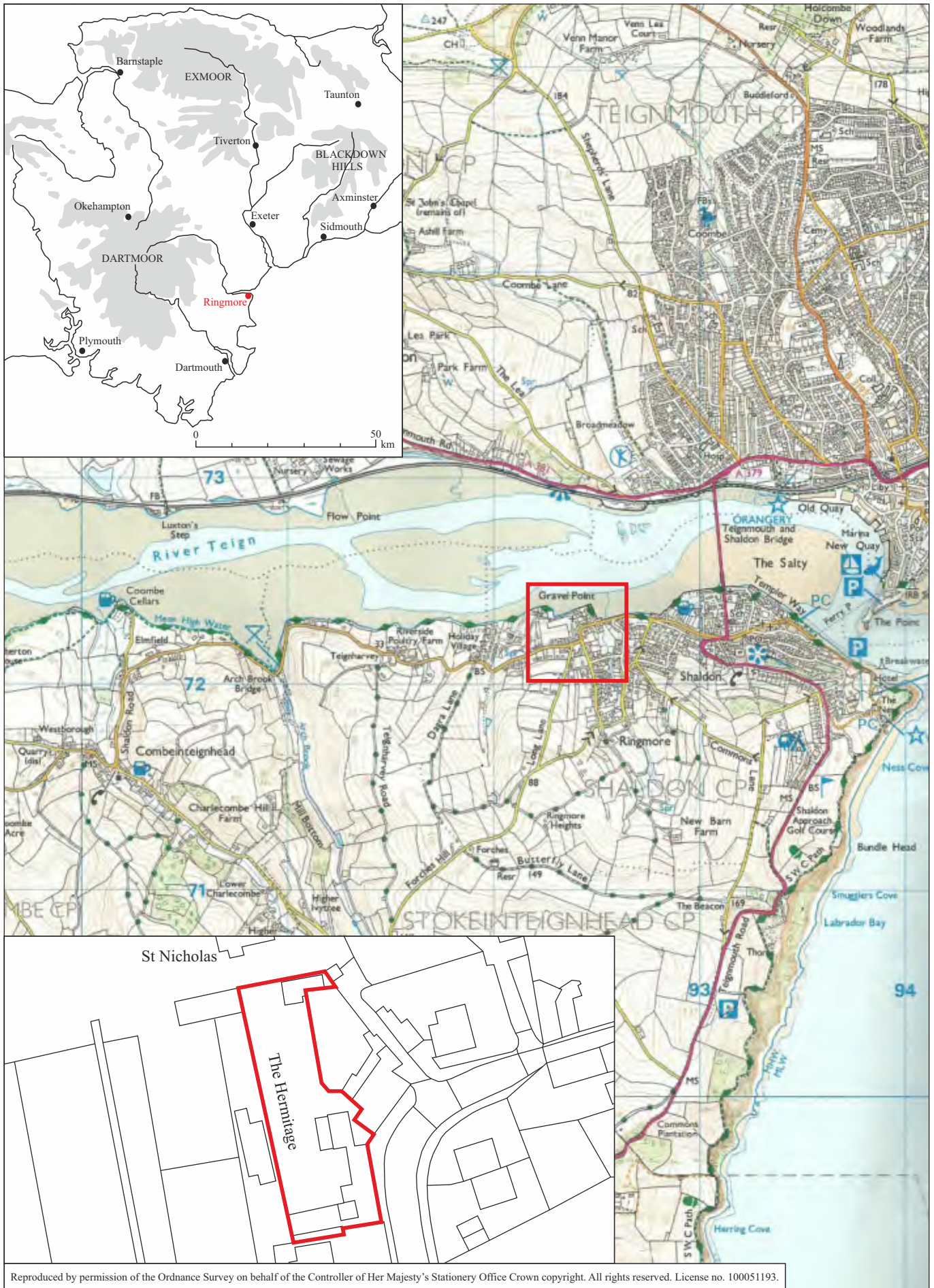
Shaldon Tithe Map & Apportionment 1843  
 1890 1<sup>st</sup> ed. OS map Devonshire Sheet CX.10.  
 1906 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. OS map Devonshire Sheet CX.10.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Kelly's Directory</i>  | 1883, 1889, 1893, 1897, 1902, 1908, 1919, 1923, 1936 |
| <i>Robson's Directory</i> | 1840   |
| <i>Pigot's Directory</i>  | 1830, 1844   |
| <i>White's Directory</i>  | 1850   |

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Fig. 1 Location of site.

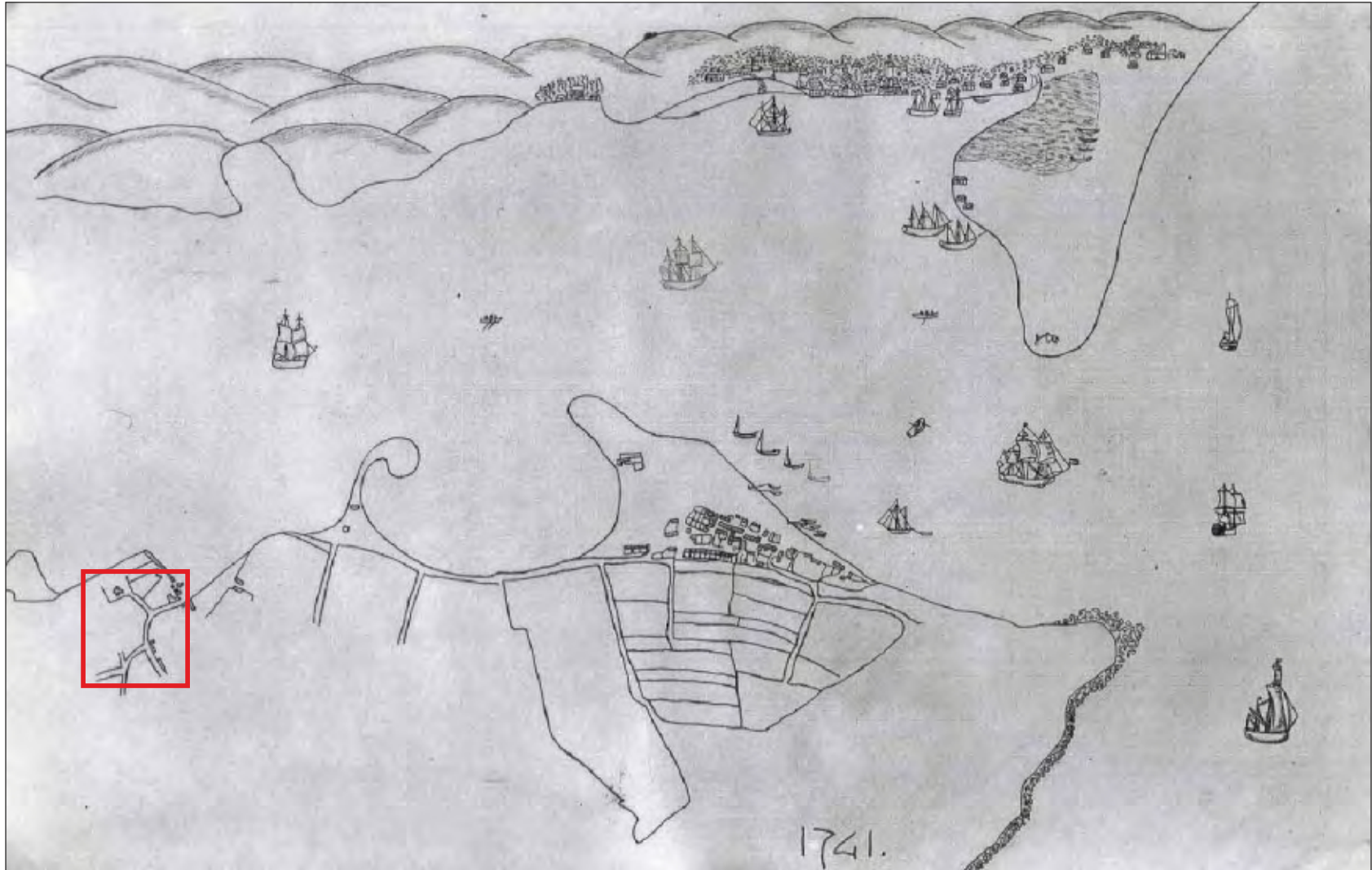


Fig. 2 Detail from the 1741 Estate map.



Fig. 3 Detail from the 1843 Shaldon Tithe map.

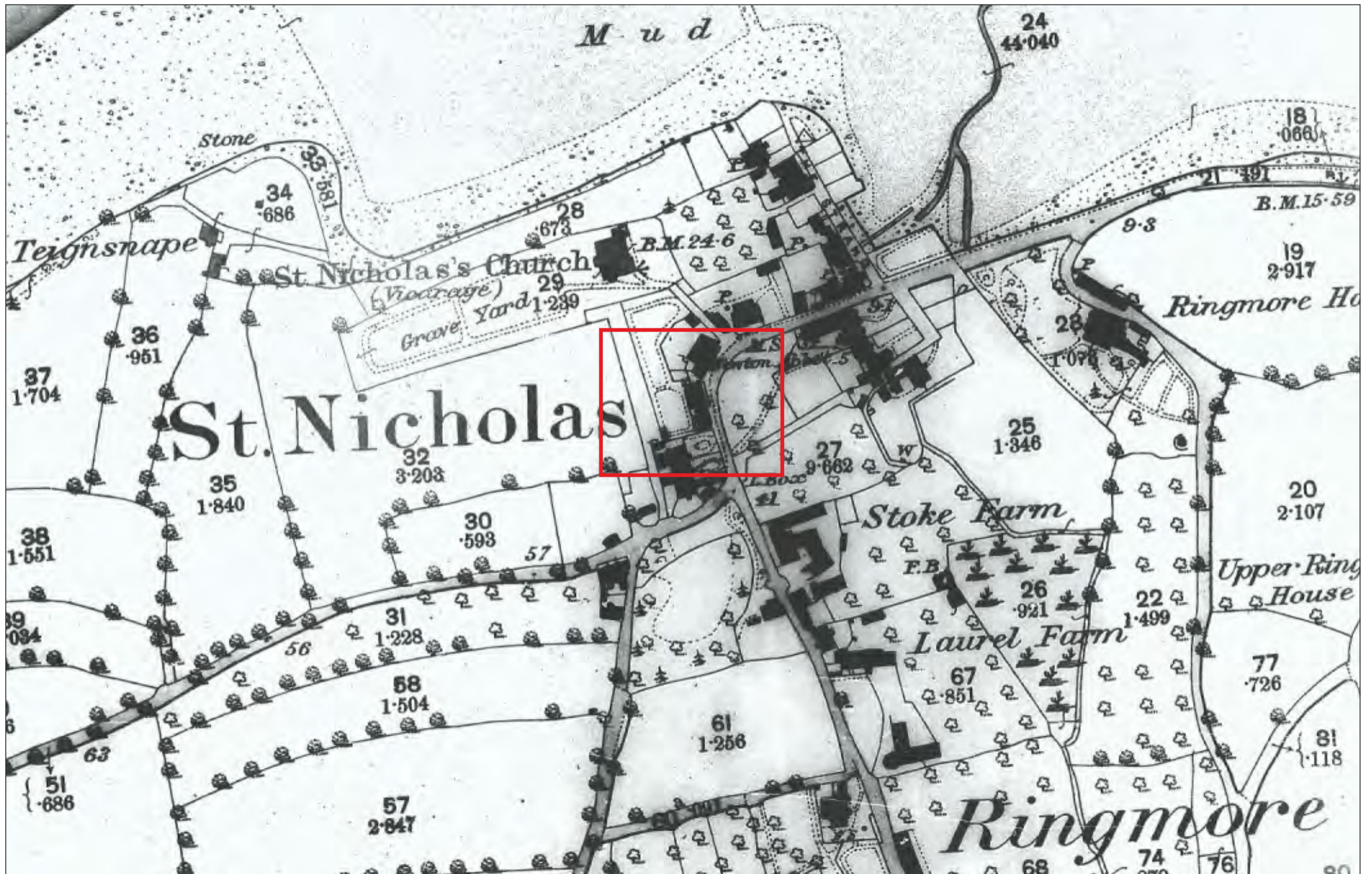


Fig. 4 Detail from the 1st edition 1890 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet CX.10.



Fig. 5 Detail from the 2nd edition 1906 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet CX.10.



Fig. 6 Photograph showing The Hermitage in the early 1940's.



Fig. 7 Grave of Captain W. R. Catling in St Nicholas graveyard.



Fig. 8 Plan of ground-floor showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.





Pl. 1 General view of the late 19th - early 20th century extension with The Hermitage in background. 2m scale. Looking southeast.



Pl. 2 General view of garden elevation with modern conservatory. 2m scale. Looking east.



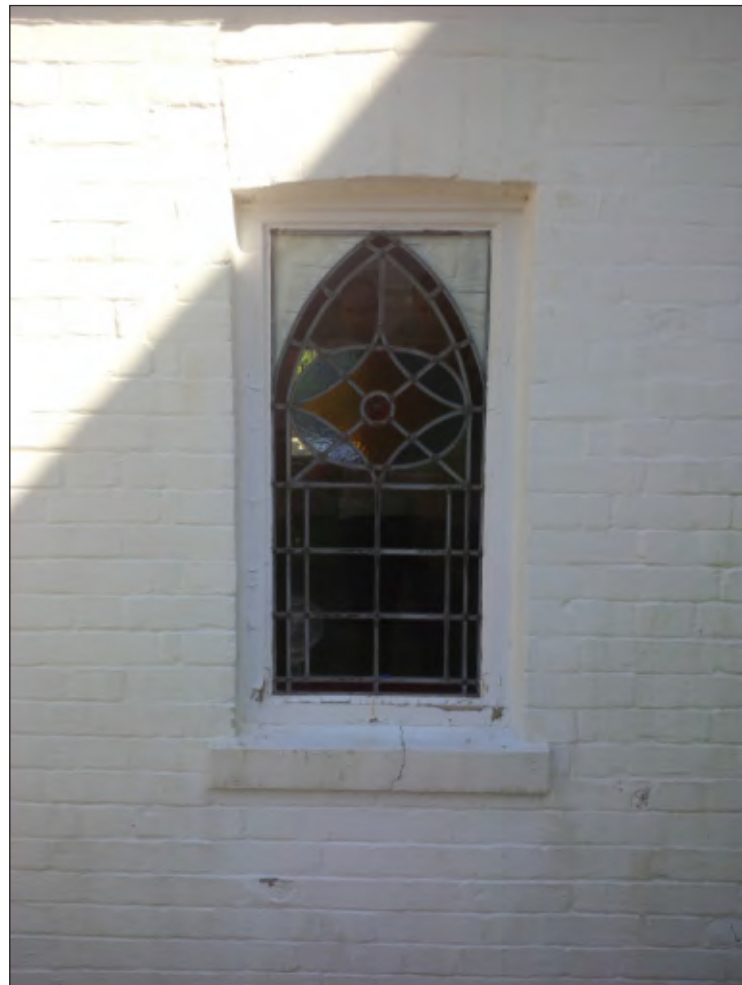
Pl. 3 General view of French doors. 2m scale. Looking northeast.



Pl. 4 General view of window in north elevation. Looking southeast.



Pl 5 General view of south elevation. 2m scale. Looking northeast.



Pl. 6 Close-up of stained-glass window. Looking north.



Pl. 7 Close-up of small window in east elevation.  
Looking west.



Pl. 8 Close-up of decorated internal door panels.  
Looking south.



Pl. 9 General view of fireplace and swag and bow decorated cornice. Looking northeast.



Pl. 10 Close-up of fireplace showing detail of mantelpiece decoration. 1m scale. Looking north.



Pl. 11 Close-up of decorated ceiling rose.



Pl. 12 General view of reed and ribbon decorated plaster panel moulding and swag and bow decorated cornice. 2m scale. Looking east.



Pl. 13 General view of roof arrangement. Looking south.

Appendix 1:

Written Scheme of Investigation for  
Historic Building Recording



## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This document has been produced by Oakford Archaeology (OA) for Mr James Ashton. The document sets out the methodology to be used during historic building recording at The Hermitage, Shaldon, Devon (SX 9242 7225). The work is to be carried out to satisfy condition no. 5 attached to the grant of listed building consent (15/00295/LBC) for the demolition of existing rear extension and erection of replacement extension and internal alterations to the existing dwelling. The present document represents the 'written scheme of investigation' required by Teignbridge District Council (TDC), as advised by the Conservation Officer Naomi Archer (CO).
- 1.2 The Hermitage is located less than 50m to the south of the parish church of St Nicholas, in the centre of the historic village of Ringmore. The main house is of late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century date, with painted render over cob, a hipped thatched roof with ridge stack to right-of-centre and end walls. The original building plan is of a 4-room and through-passage with a later 2-storey slate-roofed rear wing. To the north of the main range a single storey extension was added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. AIMS

- 2.1 The aim of the project is to ensure the adequate recording of any historic fabric exposed and to report on the results of the project as appropriate.

## 3. METHOD

### ***Building recording***

- 3.1 Historic building recording on The Hermitage will be undertaken by a suitably qualified historic buildings specialist. All monitoring and recording will be carried out as per OA standard recording procedures and in accordance with the standards of the Institute for Archaeology (*Standards and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, 1996, revised 2008).
- 3.2 The following method for historic building recording will be utilised, tailored to the level of recording required once historic features have been identified.
- A photographic record using a high-quality digital camera for interpretative and reporting needs. These will be either born digital or scanned to a suitable format for deposition, either in Archaeology Data Service (ADS) or with the Devon Heritage Centre (DRO).
  - Production of floor plans (based on architect's plans where appropriate), with sections, elevations and more detailed drawings of architectural features and details as appropriate. (These will also utilise architect's drawings where required.) These drawings will be prepared at scales of 1:100, 1:50 and 1:20 with smaller details drawn at larger scales as appropriate.
  - A written record outlining the evidence for historic fabric, an interpretation of this evidence, and an outline of the development of the building.

### ***General project methods***

- 3.3 Liaison will be established with the client and their contractors prior to works commencing in order to advise on OA requirements in relation to the works outlined below. If a good working relationship is established at the outset any delays caused by archaeological recording can be kept to a minimum. However, localised delays to site operations may be caused and time should be allowed within the main contractor's programme for the adequate investigation and recording of exposed historic building fabric.
- 3.4 All demolition works likely to expose historic building fabric will be monitored.
- 3.5 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by archaeological staff working on site, particularly when machinery is operating nearby. Personal protective equipment (safety boots, helmets and high visibility vests) will be worn by staff when plant is operating on site.
- 3.6 The CO will be informed of the start of the project, and will monitor progress throughout on behalf of the planning authority and will wish to inspect the works in progress. Any amendments to the specific responses and methods set out elsewhere in this document will be reviewed and agreed with the CO prior to implementation and completion. A date of completion of all archaeological site work will be confirmed with the CO and the timescale of the completion of items under section 4 will run from that date.

## **4. REPORTING AND ARCHIVING**

- 4.1 The results of all phases of work will be presented within one summary report within six months of the date of completion of all archaeological fieldwork. Any summary report will contain the following elements as appropriate:
  - a written description of the exposed historic fabric and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of any locally available historical evidence from any nearby sites and historic mapping;
  - a site location plan at an appropriate scale, and a plan of the site showing the location of the recorded buildings;
  - phased and annotated floor plans, along with copies of other drawn records (elevations, cross sections, etc) as appropriate to illustrate features of historic or architectural interest and/or the development of the building;
  - photographs of features of significant historic or architectural interest;
  - if necessary, an assessment of what further work is necessary to analyse and publish any particularly significant finds and/or results.
- 4.2 A .pdf version of the report will be produced and distributed to the Client, CO, Teignbridge District Council and DCHET on completion of sitework. Hard copies of the completed report will also be sent to Teignbridge District Council planning department and Devon County Council Historic Environment Record. A copy of the report and .pdf version will also be deposited with the site archive.

- 4.3 An ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared with reference to *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) upon completion of the project.

The archive will consist of two elements, the artefactual and digital - the latter comprising all born-digital (data images, survey data, digital correspondence, site data collected digitally etc.) and digital copies of the primary site records and images.

The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) within 6 months of the completion of site work, while the artefactual element will be deposited with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (*ref. number pending*). The hardcopy of the archive will be offered to the RAMM and if not required will be disposed of by OA.

OA will notify the CO upon the deposition of the digital archive with the ADS, and the deposition of the material (finds) archive with the RAMM.

- 4.4 A .pdf copy of the updated summary report will be submitted, together with the site details, to the national OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database within four months of the completion of site work.

## 5. COPYRIGHT

- 5.1 OA shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in this document.

## 6. PROJECT ORGANISATION

- 6.1 The historic building recording will be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced OA archaeologist, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and relevant standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (*Standards and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, 1996, revised 2008,). The project will be managed for OA by M. Steinmetzer *MCI/A*, who produced this document.

### ***Health & Safety***

- 6.2 All monitoring works within this scheme will be carried out in accordance with current *Safe Working Practices (The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974)*.