

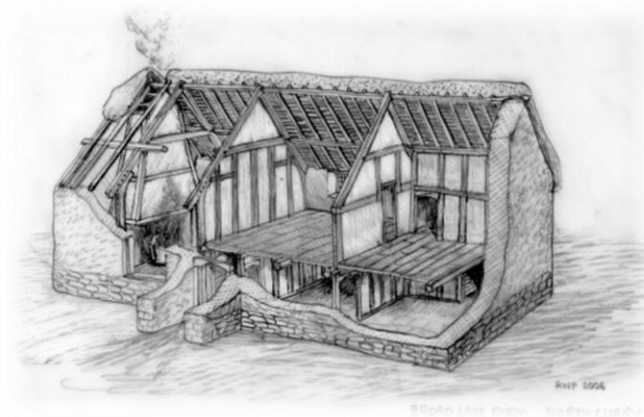
Historic Building Survey

of

**POWLESLAND FARMHOUSE,
POWLESLAND LANE,
SOUTH TAWTON, DEVON**

By R. W. Parker

For Peter and Sarah Howard.



**RICHARD PARKER
HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING & INTERPRETATION**

11 Toronto Road, St James, Exeter, EX4 6LE.

E-Mail: rw Parker@btopenworld.com

Tel: 07763 248241

01392 423233

REPORT No. 2016.01

© Richard Parker. April 2016

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	Page: 1
1.2	The archaeological works	1
1.3	Topography and context	3
1.4	Previous archaeological interventions	3
2.	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (based on a report by Lucy Browne).	4
2.1	Medieval references to Powlesland	4
2.2	Documents from the 17th and 18th centuries	5
2.3	Ownership and Occupancy from Land Tax Assessments	6
2.4	Ownership and Occupancy from 19th and 20th century sources	6
	<i>Newspaper extracts denoting ownership and occupation.</i>	9
	<i>Kelly's Directory.</i>	9
	<i>Valuation Book: 6th April 1910.</i>	9
	<i>Later entries from Kelly's Directories.</i>	9
2.5	Twentieth-century records of the buildings	10
3.	BUILDING SURVEY	12
3.1	The Shippon	13
	<i>Shippon walls</i>	13
	<i>Loft floor structure</i>	14
	<i>Roof structures</i>	14
	<i>Openings into the shippon</i>	14
	<i>The shippon floor</i>	17
3.2	The Cross Passage and Hall Screen	19
	<i>The cross passage</i>	19
	<i>The hall screen</i>	19
	<i>the staircase</i>	20
3.3	The Chamber over the Entry	20
	<i>Features in the chamber over the entry</i>	20
3.4	The Hall	23
	<i>The medieval roof</i>	23
	<i>The windows of the hall</i>	23
	<i>The hall fireplace</i>	24
3.5	The Hall Chamber and ceiling	25
	<i>The hall ceiling</i>	25
	<i>The hall chamber</i>	25

3.6	The inner room	27
	<i>Fireplace</i>	27
	<i>Ceiling and staircase</i>	27
3.7	The chamber over the inner room	27
3.8	The kitchen, kitchen chamber and outshut	28
3.9	The ruined outbuilding	28
4.	DISCUSSION AND DATING	31
	<i>Medieval</i>	31
	<i>16th century</i>	31
	<i>Late 16th century</i>	32
	<i>Mid 17th century, c.1640</i>	32
	<i>Mid 17th-century c.1650</i>	32
	<i>Late 17th century, c.1670</i>	32
	<i>19th and 20th centuries</i>	32
5.	IMPACT ASSESSMENT	33
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	33
	SOURCES CONSULTED	34
	APPENDIX I: The Listing Text	35
	CONDITIONS	36

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1	Location of Powlesland Farm (arrowed) to the east of the A3124, on the north-eastern edge of the parish of South Tawton.	<i>Page:</i> 1
Fig. 2	South elevation of the farmhouse, drawn by C. Lega Weekes in 1902, showing the building prior to 20th-century alterations and the cottages behind.	2
Fig. 3	Details of the doorways, windows and moulded timbers of the building drawn by C. Lega-Weekes in 1902, with sketches of the interior, showing some features which no longer survive.	2
Fig. 4	Map showing lands of Philip Cann, made in 1837, showing field names close to the properties which may point to either a manorial centre or a shrunken settlement with its own mill and possibly also a church site.	7
Fig. 5	Detail of the 1837 estate map showing the layout of the buildings in the early 19th century. The house is shown as an 'L'-shaped structure. Domestic and agricultural buildings are not distinguished.	8
Fig. 6	Extract from the County Series 1st Edition 1:25 inch map, Sheet LXV.16, dated 1888, showing very little change in the layout of the farmstead, though a horse engine house and an open linhay have been added to the south of the barns.	8
Fig. 7	Drawing c.1955 showing the ground-floor plan of the centre of the house prior to alterations.	11
Fig. 8	Drawing c.1955 showing the first-floor rooms at the centre of the house prior to alterations.	11
Fig. 9	Drawing c.1955 showing proposed alterations to provide a new staircase.	11
Fig. 10	Drawing c.1955 showing the proposed subdivision of the first-floor rooms.	11
Fig. 11	Drawing, c.1983, showing proposals to level the floor of the bedroom at the north-eastern end of the house.	11
Fig. 12	South elevation of the farmhouse, seen from the farmyard showing the shippon on the left and the domestic accommodation on the right.	12
Fig. 13	The north eastern gable of the farmhouse showing the rear extension, lean to and the collapsing walls of the ruined building to the north (extreme right).	12
Fig. 14	The rear of the house showing the blank wall of the shippon (right) the stair window marking the position of the cross passage (centre right) and the rear wing and outshut (left).	12
Fig. 15	The stone and cob wall separating the house from the shippon, probably a 17th-century insertion, showing modern intrusions into the fabric.	15
Fig. 16	The upper part of the wall separating the house from the shippon showing two vertical chases (dashed) for short wall posts, probably for braces to purlins or perhaps 'arcade plates' in the lost medieval roof.	15
Fig. 17	The plank door to the shippon, possibly dating from the 18th century.	16
Fig. 18	The plank door to the loft of the shippon, showing reused hinges.	16
Fig. 19	The interior of the shippon, looking south-east, showing the surviving parts of the cobbled floor and the cob and later brick rebuilding of the front wall supporting the joists of the loft floor.	16

Fig. 20	Detail of Lega-Weekes' drawing of the shippon in 1902, showing the early openings in the south-eastern wall and other features now removed.	17
Fig. 21	The beam on the south-western side of the cross passage, supporting the floor of the chamber over the entry, showing the character of the sockets for the floor joists and the peg-holes, perhaps for a short spere, beneath them.	18
Fig. 22	Elevation of the hall screen towards the hall, showing the position of the central doorway and the absence of provision for the staircase, right, suggesting that the screen predates the addition of the chamber over the entry.	18
Fig. 23	Detail of the hall screen, showing the pronounced internal jetty towards the hall formed by the joists of the chamber floor projecting over the earlier screen and the junction with the later beam supporting the hall chamber floor.	18
Fig. 24	Detail of one of the hall roof trusses showing its relationship with the partition behind.	21
Fig. 25	Detail of the partition between the chamber over the entry and the upper part of the hall, showing the hall roof truss beyond.	21
Fig. 26	The roof of the hall seen from the void at the end of the shippon, showing smoke-blackened medieval roof timbers, including a main truss with a high cranked collar, diagonally set purlins and exposed thatch. Beyond, plaster extends to the apex of the roof and, in the foreground, the cranked timbers of the ceiling over the chamber over the entry show light smoke-staining from the open hearth.	21
Fig. 27	The rear window of the hall, possibly of 14th- or early 15th-century date, now opening onto the later outshut at the south-western side of the rear wing.	22
Fig. 28	Part of Lega-Weekes' drawing of the main frontage of the house showing the varied fenestration prior to later alterations, showing the lost hall window with a vertical scar adjoining.	22
Fig. 29	Detail of the fireplace in the hall, showing the granite jambs pierced by a later window. The lintel, also of granite, rises well above the ceiling, which is supported by a trimmer against the lintel.	22
Fig. 30	Detail of the beam supporting the floor structure of the hall chamber.	25
Fig. 31	Doors from the hall to the rear wing and inner room, both decorated with ovolo mouldings and scroll and bar stops.	25
Fig. 32	The inner room from the south-east, showing the 17th-century plank and muntin screens hiding the staircase cut within its north-western wall and the joists of the ceiling reset in 1983.	26
Fig. 33	The remains of the ruined building to the north of the house, sowing a 14th- or 15th-century arched timber doorway. Compare with Figs, 2, 34 and 35.	29
Fig. 34	View of the medieval detached chapel at Bury Barton, Lapford, showing the high eaves and small window openings, including an elaborate traceried east window behind the buttress.	29
Fig. 35	View of the south wall of the chapel at Bury Barton showing the arched timber doorway and proportion of wall to windows.	29
Fig. 36	Ground and first-floor plans of Powlesland Farmhouse showing suggested phasing.	30



Fig. 1 Location of Powlesland Farm (arrowed) to the east of the A3124, on the north-eastern edge of the parish of South Tawton.

1. INTRODUCTION

Powlesland Farm (Fig. 1) is an ancient farmstead lying on the north-eastern edge of the parish of South Tawton and to the south west of Spreyton village, on the northern edge of Dartmoor (SX 68861 96010). Although the house lies close to the National Park Boundary (shown in light green on the location map) it is outside the National Park, within the west Devon Borough Council Administrative area. Powlesland farmhouse is a medieval building, the importance of which is recognised by its status as a Grade II* Listed building.

The house lies on the north side of the farmyard and is an 'L'-shaped building originating as a 'long house' (a vernacular house type characterised by the inclusion of accommodation for both humans and animals under one roof). To the south of the yard are a group of historic barns and, immediately north of the house, a separate building, formerly cottages, but now in ruins. Although this building was not surveyed as part of the present project, it is of great interest. It is correctly oriented and retains some unusual medieval features which suggest that it might possibly have originated as a detached chapel.

The present phase of archaeological recording was commissioned by the current owners of the house, Peter and Sarah Howard, on the advice of their architect, Mark Ledgard, of the property consultants Smiths Gore. The work was undertaken to inform a planning application for the restoration and repair of the shippon (cow house) at the south western end of the farmhouse. The shippon is currently in ruinous condition and is divided by a modern wall into a store and a garage. The proposed repairs would involve the reinstatement of the loft floor, which has partially collapsed, the consolidation of the walls and the repair of the roof. The restored building would be utilised as a farm office and library, with welfare facilities for farm workers.

1.2 The archaeological works

The archaeological works described here were undertaken by Richard Parker Historic Buildings Recording and Interpretation in January 2016. They consisted of a non-invasive site survey of the farmhouse, comprising a photographic record and manuscript notes. The works aimed to provide



Fig. 2 South elevation of the farmhouse, drawn by Cletia Lega Weekes in 1902, showing the building prior to 20th-century alterations and the cottages behind.



Fig. 3 Details of the doorways, windows and moulded timbers of the building drawn by Cletia Lega-Weekes in 1902, with sketches of the interior, showing some features which no longer survive.

a visual and descriptive record of the building, to establish the basic outline of its development and the location of fixtures and fittings of particular significance. The house remained in use as a private residence during the works, and some areas of the house and shippon were inaccessible due to the presence of furniture and stored materials. The loft of the shippon, having partly collapsed, could not be fully accessed and remained full of hay. The survey of the house involved no stripping of existing decorative plasters or investigation of concealed or inaccessible fabric. The conclusions presented in this report and the suggested phasing of the building are therefore provisional and may need to be revised in the light of any future investigations carried out in relation to the building and its environs.

Documentary research was undertaken together with a map regression to show the changing footprint of the structures. The research explored both published sources and unpublished records held at local record centres, records held by the current owners of the property and records published online. These works sought to contribute to an understanding of the historic significance and usage of the farm buildings, concentrating particularly upon the house and shippon.

1.3 Topography and context

The settlement at Powlesland lies in hilly, well-watered country in the northern foothills of the moor. The site is approached by a long lane from the A3124, now known as Powlesland Lane. This is understood to be a modern road, replacing a narrow track; the farm was formerly approached by a more indirect route via the neighbouring settlement of East Nymph (P. Howard, Pers. Comm.). Both Nymph and Powlesland were part of the ancient manor of Itton. The place name 'Nymph' like many others in the area, is derived from the word *nymet*, a variation of the Old Saxon word *nimid* and the Celtic *nemeto* or *nemetis*, meaning a sacred place or grove. The name is of frequent occurrence in central Devon. This area of Devon also has many closely-spaced small parishes, including isolated churches such as Broadnymet, Clannaborough, Nymet Tracey and Hittisleigh, many of which may represent the sites of deserted or shrunken villages. The area is also particularly rich in ancient houses, and many of these retain evidence of private or manorial chapels dating from between the 12th and the 16th centuries. Chapels are known at Croke, north of the site, at De Bathe Barton, Ashridge and Burston in North Tawton and also at North Wyke. There may be many more undiscovered sites of this kind in the area. This evidence points to early settlement of the area and great prosperity in the early medieval period.

1.4 Previous archaeological interventions

The richness of the area in important historic houses has been noticed on many occasions by antiquarians and historians, several of whom have mentioned Powlesland. Between 1901 and 1904, the Devonshire Association published four papers by Ethel Lega-Weekes entitled *Neighbours of North Wyke*, which included histories of the manor and parish of South Tawton and its sub-manors of Ash¹ and Itton based upon an examination of a great many early records, many of which were in private collections. Lega-Weekes carried out most of her own transcribing and translating but also brought in the expertise of other local scholars of the time. Further, her papers were illustrated with fine drawings by Cletia Lega-Weekes, showing general views of the house and details of its moulded door and window frames (Figs 2, 3). This record is particularly significant as many features of the building, such as the shouldered-headed doorway interpreted by Lega-Weekes as of 14th-century date (Fig. 3 top right) and the mullioned windows of the main façade and kitchen

¹ with its own sub-manor or temporary substitute, Gooseford (Part I, p.445)

wing (Fig. 3, A & B) were removed shortly afterwards during a phase of early 20th-century refurbishment.

The house is not mentioned by S. Baring-Gould in his gazetteer of Devon, published in 1907 and revised by R.L.P Jowitt in 1931 (Baring-Gould 1931, 288-9); however, it does appear in W.G. Hoskins' *Devon* in 1954. Hoskins interpreted the house as of 'c.1600 or a little earlier, with some 15th-century work in the barn behind' (Hoskins 1954, 491). But the most detailed description of the building is contained in the Listing Description, dated 4 March 1988 (Historic England Listed Building Identity Number 9496. This was written by J. R. L. Thorp (Thorp Pers Comm.) and is so instructive and analytical of the fabric that it is reproduced here in its entirety as an appendix (Appendix I, below).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (based on a report by Lucy Browne).

2.1 Medieval references to Powlesland

The following medieval spellings for Powlesland are recorded in *The Place Names of Devon*: Polesland or Polleslande (Assize Rolls, 1244), Pollisland (Lay Subsidy Rolls, place name form derived from a personal name, 1333) – “Pol(l)’s land.”. Alternatively “Land of (or by) the pool” is also possible as the land here is marshy. The Burnet Morris index gives the following spellings: Polslonde, Polsland, Poulsland, Polislände, Polislond/e and Pollesland.² The South Tawton Parish Cuttings Folder, held at the Devon Heritage Centre contains two early references to Powlesland:

i) From a letter to the Western Morning News of 9th September 1902 from Ethel Lega-Weekes writing about South Tawton:

1260: The Manor of Itton was subinfeudated out of part of the manor of South Tawton which included 10 shillings from two tenements in Polyslonde.

ii) Transcriptions of documents included in cuttings folder:

Presented in November 1262 “...deem solidosum per manus duorum tenericum in Polys Lond.” - possibly part of a deed for the manor of South Tawton given in marriage by Williellmo de Moyhon and a rental included.

Powlesland was a part of the manor of Itton, and Lega-Weekes's four papers in the DA Transactions include records such as rentals and homage lists containing references to Powlesland Farm and the family with the two properties often linked, e.g. a Rental for the Manor of Itton c.1509: “Willo. Pollysland cert terr [certain lands] in pollysland & luffeton, viii s [8 shillings].³

Three deeds record William Polysland transferring land to Richard Wyke:

i) “12th Hen. VI. Willm Polysland did grant & confirm to Richard Wike of Cocktree & his heirs forever, all his messuages, lands & tenements, reversions, rents, and services with the appurts. In Yetton & Polysland”.

ii) “Willm Polysland did ordayne & put Richard Wyke of Mill and Wm Wyke of Cocktree his attorneys to deliver to Richard Wyke of Cocktree full & peaceable seisin of & in all the messuages, lands & tents, etc, reversions, rents and services etc in Yetton & Polysland as in the deed last recited...”

iii) “Willm Polysland & his heirs forever did remise and quitclaim to Richard Wyke of Cocktree his heirs and assigns all his right & claim which he had in all messes etc in Yetton & Powlesland as in the sd deed last recited...” (1433).⁴

Later, in 1475 a deed is quoted recording that “John Wykys of Wyke” Richard Wyke's son “did grant and confirm to Thomas Fulford, Kt, John Speake, Esq., Michael Dennis, Gen., Richard

² For details of sources used by Burnet Morris, see the Devon County Council website:

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/print/index/cultureheritage/libraries/localstudies/lstatabase.htm?url=etched/etched/100348/1.html>

³ Part II, p.604

⁴ Part II, p.633-4

Wekys, Clerk, all his lands in Spreyton Yatton, Pollesland ... in Chevereston and Roborough in the Parish of Roborough..."⁵ Powlesland family members also appear in various transcribed lists showing the presence of the surname in South Tawton back to the thirteenth century.

2.2 Documents from the 17th and 18th centuries

Documents pertaining to Powlesland which do not appear in Ethel Lega-Weekes's papers include a number of marriage settlements and deeds from the 17th and 18th centuries, now in the Devon Heritage Centre. The full list of those examined appears separately and only those with relevant information are included below. Due to time constraints, details pertaining to the farm buildings only have been extracted; however, the documents would merit further examination for a wider history of the farm and its ownership.

i) 1640: the "marriage settlement of William, son of Henry Pollesland the elder of South Tawton, yeoman and Jane, daughter of Thomas Battishill, deceased" includes the premises "Pollesland" in South Tawton. The property is described thus:

... and also of all those houses roomes and chambers parcell of the said premises called/Pollesland hereafter particularly expressed that is to say one chamber over the entry and one chamber over the hall when the said William Pollesland or Jane Battishall shall have built and made a chamber there the w[hi]ch it shalbe lawfull for them to doe and one house called the higher shippen and likewise of all those closes and parcelles of land meadowe and pastures with th[e] appurtences part and parcell of the said premises called Pollesland hereafter ..."

(here follow the names of the fields. (1926 B/HM/FS/1/1)

ii) 14th April 1697: Mortgage with counterpart for the moiety of Powlesland - James Powlesland, Jane his wife, Henry Trend of Chagford, yeoman, Edward Endacott of Chagford, Butcher, 2. Thomas Hore of South Tawton, yeoman.

"...all that one chamber over the entrie, one chamber over the Hall one house called the Higher Shipen..." (1926 B/HM/L/2/2-3)

iii) 1702: Mortgage by way of lease and release for the moiety of Powlesland - James Powlesland, Jane his wife, Elisha Powlesland, Henry Trend of Chagford, yeoman, Thomas Hore of South Tawton, yeoman. 2. Mary Wise of Exeter, widow [/10 & 11:

"... that is to say one chamber over the entry and one chamber over the hall and one house called the higher shippen..." (1926 B/HM/T/2/9-11)

iv) 3rd January 1751: Lease for 21 years: 1. Agness Hore of South Tawton, widow, 2. Henry Polesland of South Tawton, yeoman, 3. Browse Trist of Bowdon, Esq., and Agness his wife.

Premises: messuage called Polesland now in the occupation of 2., reserving timber rights, fruit trees, the "Room of Mills", Mill Pool and Mill Leat, and a nursery adjoining for the first three years of the term Rent: £40 Covenants: 1. to pay 2. £21 after 6 months of the term. 3. agree with 2. to continue the term if 1. dies before it has expired, (Agness Trist being executrix of the last will and testament of Thomas Hore late of South Tawton, gent., in trust for her son Browse Trist) (2779 M/19/2).

These documents are of great importance in recording the existence, before 1640 of 'a chamber over the entry', which probably corresponds to the bathroom and landing at the south-western end of the first floor of the present house. Exceptionally, the documents also provide a date for the addition by William Pollesland and Jane Battishill after their marriage in 1640, of a 'Chamber over the Hall'. This can be confidently identified as the present first floor room at the centre of the house.

⁵ Part III, p.391

The mention of a 'higher shippon' presumes the presence of a lower shippon, also not mentioned separately. The location of these rooms is unfortunately uncertain. If we assume that the lower shippon may be identified with the present shippon at the south-western end of the house, it might be suggested that the 'higher shippon' was on the first floor above this. This would give a *terminus ante quem* of c.1640 for the insertion of a loft floor over the shippon. Alternatively, the use of the word 'shippon' may be taken to imply that both the higher and lower buildings were in use as cow houses and, as this is a most improbable use for a first-floor room, it is perhaps more likely that the 'higher shippon' was not a loft, but a separate cow shed on another part of the site. It is possible that the medieval building to the rear of the house, for example, had been converted for use as a shippon by this period and that it was this building which was to be reserved for the use of William and Jane after their marriage, but unless further evidence is discovered this must remain a conjecture.

It is very interesting that no mention is made of the first-floor chamber at the north-eastern end of the house, or of the chamber in the rear wing to the north. It is possible that these chambers had either not yet been constructed, or that they were reserved for the use of other family members and were thus not mentioned separately in the marriage settlement.

2.3 Ownership and Occupancy from Land Tax Assessments

The earliest Land Tax available in the Devon Heritage Centre – 1780 - lists Trist as the owner, paying £2,4s,10d for Powlesland. In 1784 until 1787, Powlesland was valued at £2, 5s, 5d, owned by Mr Trest/Trist and occupied by John Powlesand. In 1788 – 89, John Powlesland was listed as owner of Powlesland, Nymph and Spitler. Robert Powlesland owned another part of Nymph. In 1790, John was listed as owner of Powlesland while a Robert Luxton owned John's portion of Nymph, also Spitler, and Robert Powlesland retained his own portion of Nymph. From 1791 until 1798, John Powlesland continued to be listed as owner of Powlesland, paying £2,5s, 5d. In 1799, Mr Trist was once more listed as the owner – further research would tell us if this was the same Mr Trist as before – and in 1800, William Powlesland was listed as owner of Powlesland. William remained listed thus until 1812 when the owner's name changed to Thomas Powlesland. The following year, Thomas was listed as occupier, with George Cann listed as owner. This state of affairs lasted until 1820. From 1821 until 1830, George Cann was listed as owner and occupier, then for the last two years of the Land Tax run, George was listed as owner with Philip Cann as occupier.

2.4 Ownership and Occupancy from 19th and 20th century sources

Philip Cann was the owner of Powlesland in 1837 when a map showing his land at Powlesland and Nymph was drawn (Fig. 4). This shows the layout of the farms and fields prior to the creation of Powlesland Lane. The unusual layout of the access roads, turning many right angles, and the concentration of small square fields at the centre of the map near East Nymph may suggest a more complex settlement pattern than two isolated farms. Some of the field names, such as Nortown, Bove-town, Mill Park, Great Mill Orchard, Town Close might indicate a larger settlement with its own mill, perhaps with the character of a manorial centre. The name 'Crist Close', for a square field near the centre of the map is of particular interest since it might be derived from 'Christ's Close' and could thus potentially relate to a lost chapel and churchyard. Further research would be necessary to establish this with any confidence.

On the 1841 census, he is listed at East Nymph, while an Agricultural Labourer called William Potter and his family are listed at Powlesland.

The details of the Tithe Map, recorded in 1847 are as follows:

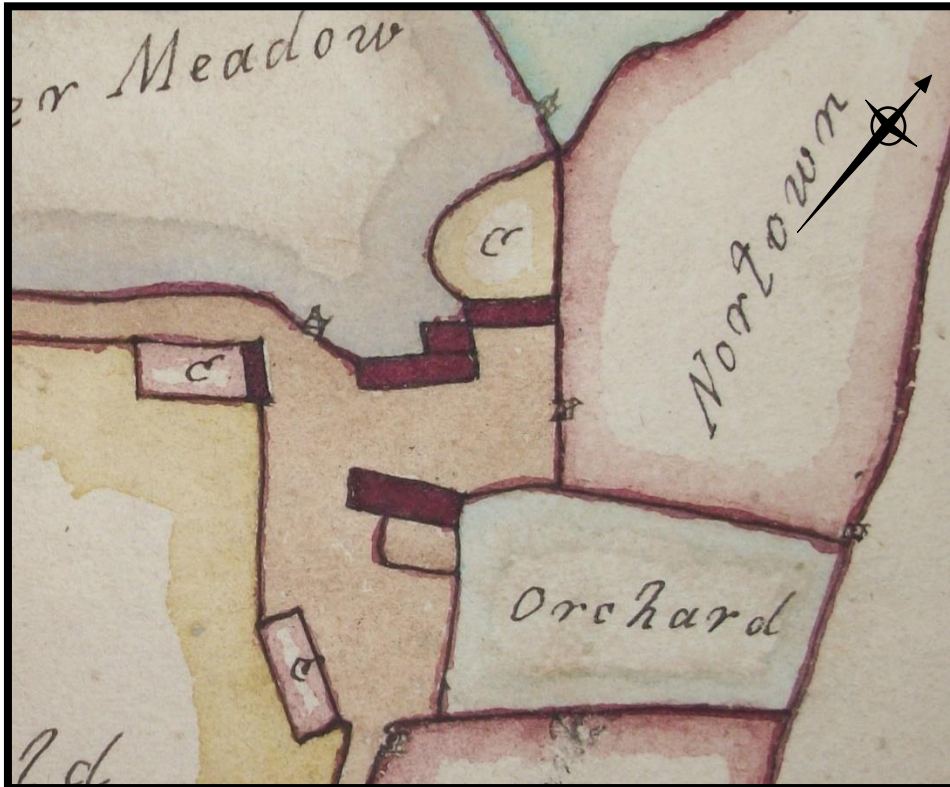


Fig. 5 Detail of the 1837 estate map showing the layout of the buildings in the early 19th century. The house is shown as an 'L'-shaped structure. Domestic and agricultural buildings are not distinguished, but both buildings north of the yard were probably residential at this time.

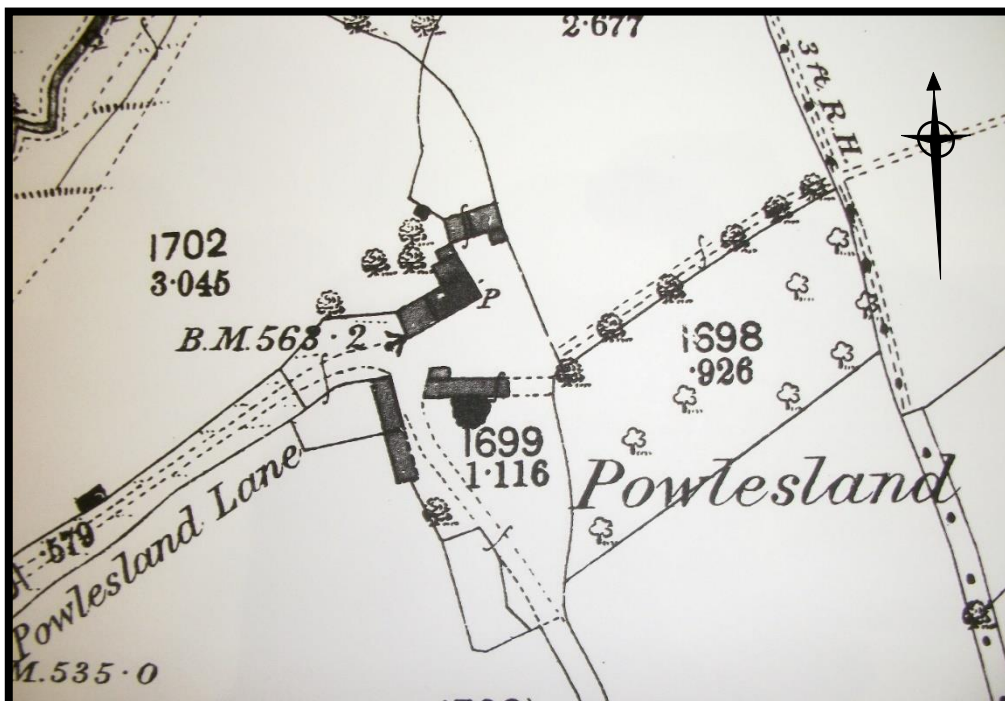


Fig. 6 Extract from the County Series 1st Edition 1:25 inch map, Sheet LXV.16, dated 1888, showing very little change in the layout of the farmstead, though a horse engine house and an open linhay have been added to the south of the barns.

Owner and Occupier (together with East Nymph): Phillip Cann.
 Portion 1691: Orchard; 3 roods, 24 perches,
 Portion 1692: Courtlage &c; 1 acre, 1 rood, 10 perches
 Portion 1693: Outhouses and Small Garden; 13 perches
 Portion 1694: Dwelling House &c; 9 perches [Powlesland Farmhouse]
 Portion 1695: Outhouses and Garden; 24 perches

Newspaper extracts denoting ownership and occupation:

Philip Cann was still the owner of Powlesland in 1865 according to an advertisement in the Exeter Flying Post on 8th February for a sale of 230 oak and 53 ash trees.

On 30th March 1881, a sale was advertised at Powlesland Farm of “valuable livestock and 150 acres of grass, the property of Mr T Powlesland. On 15th June, an advertisement appeared for the sale of “two valuable estates”, East Nymph and Powlesland, “containing 256 acres, 2 rods, 8 perches ... of arable, meadow, orchard and pasture land with a valuable right of common on Dartmoor. There are two good farmhouses, out buildings and two labourers’ cottages, the whole being in the occupation of Messrs Powlesland.” By 12th October 1881 when an advertisement appears for a sale of livestock, farm implements, household furniture and other effects at Powlesland, “Mr T Powlesland” is described as “quitting”.

On 21st March the following year, Mr M Cann is noted as the owner of 150 acres of meadow, clover and pasture lands for sale at East Nymph and Powlesland Farms (Exeter Flying Post). It is possible from these sources that Powlesland continued to be included with East Nymph/Nymph. The relevant information below has been extracted from directories available in the Devon Heritage Centre from 1883. Powlesland is not listed between 1883 and 1935.

Kelly’s Directory

1883: Mark Cann, farmer, Nymph [East Nymph] (Powlesland Farm is not listed).
 1889: As 1883 – Mark Cann, farmer and landowner, Nymph. Three Powleslands are listed as farmers at Coursebeer, Itton and Trundlebeer
 1893: As 1889 except William Powlesland is farming Taw Green instead of Trundlebeer.
 1902: As 1893 except the Powleslands are farming only Coursebeer and Taw Green.
 1910: No Mark Cann listed, nor East Nymph/Nymph.

Valuation Book: 6th April 1910

No. of Assessment: 53
 No of Poor Rate: 69
 Christian Names & Surnames of Occupiers: Powlesland R & G
 Christian Names & Surnames of Owners with their Residences: ?Pridesman, Wid
 Description of Property: Ho. & Bdgs, Agl-land
 Street, Place, Name and Precise Situation of Property: Powlesland.

Later entries from Kelly’s Directories:

1919 - 1926: “Powlesland Bros, farmers” listed at Coursebeer. (No Powlesland or Nymph/East Nymph listed).
 1935: Powlesland Bros, farmers, Coursebeer and Powlesland
 1939: As 1935.

Comparison between the 1837 and the 1888 1st-edition OS maps(Figs 5, 6) show very little change to the layout of the farm buildings in the middle of the 19th century. A horse-engine house has been added to the rear of one of the barns and another barn has been extended by the addition of a linhay. This lack of significant change may reflect the ownership of the site by Mr Cann and the period of occupation of the house and cottages by the Potter or Pridesman families.

2.5 Twentieth-century records of the buildings

When the building was recorded by Cletia and Ethel Lega-Weekes, it appears to have been undergoing a period of neglect. Soon afterwards, perhaps in the 1930s following the return of the Powlesland family, the building was refurbished and in this phase a number of alterations were made which adversely affected its historic character.

The early fenestration of the building, which had included very handsome moulded oak mullioned windows, recorded by Cletia Lega-Weekes, were removed at this time and replaced with standard early 20th-century window frames and casements. The drawings (Fig. 3) record window (A) as having a complex moulding with three ovolo mouldings of decreasing size divided by rectangular fillets. This might date from the late 17th century, perhaps *c.*1650-70. The location of the window is rather imprecisely given as in 'the old addition to the house': this might suggest the rear wing of the building, which is likely to have been an extension to the original rectangular plan form. Unfortunately Lega-Weekes then contradicts her own interpretation of the phasing by noting that 'these two rooms and perhaps also (the) passage seem to have constituted the whole of the original house'. The drawing of the house before the render was renewed (Fig. 2) shows a vertical break between this section of the building and the hall which Lega-Weekes might have interpreted as a break between the house and the 'old addition'. It may perhaps be conjectured that the window of the north-eastern room is meant. The second moulding (B) is simpler, perhaps of earlier date, and is located 'in window of kitchen' (sic). By this we assume Lega-Weekes means the hall, since her sketch of the 'kitchen corner' shows that room.

A further significant loss was the shouldered-headed doorway recorded in the same drawings. The location of this doorway is uncertain. It may have been located at either end of the cross passage between the house and the shippon, or perhaps at the south-western end of the shippon, where a further doorway gave access for the cattle. It may, of course, have been in an entirely different building in another part of the farm. A further loss since 1902 has been the thatched roof of the shippon. It is not known whether this was also replaced in the 1930s, with corrugated iron, or whether this alteration was made later in the century. The red brick walls and simple purlins supporting the present iron roof might date from either period. The conversion of part of the shippon into a garage may provide a context for these alterations.

Documents held by the present owners of the building record later alterations to the house dating from *c.*1955, at which time the garage was already in existence. The drawings (Figs 7-10) provide ground and first-floor plans of the central part of the house 'as existing' and also 'as proposed', showing the replacement of a narrow spiral stair rising from the 'living room' alongside the cross passage with a new staircase filling the whole end of the passage. The 'as existing' drawings record that the cross passage had already been blocked, to provide a store, perhaps during the earlier, 1930s phase of alterations. The staircase removed in the 1950s seems unlikely to be an original feature, since it rose against a plank-and-muntin screen defining the cross passage, but it may have been an early addition to the house relating to the addition of the 'chamber over the entry', perhaps in the late Middle Ages. The replanning of the upper floor with a diagonal partition (Fig. 10) is curiously wasteful of space, but this was perhaps unavoidable given the low height of the eaves in this area. None of the drawings shows any entry to the shippon at either ground or first-floor level.

A later series of drawings, dating from *c.*1983, show proposed alterations to level the floor of the north-eastern first-floor room. This involved the removal and reinstatement of the existing floor joists at a slightly higher level, and possibly also the creation of an additional step upwards from the small landing at the head of the stairs from the parlour.

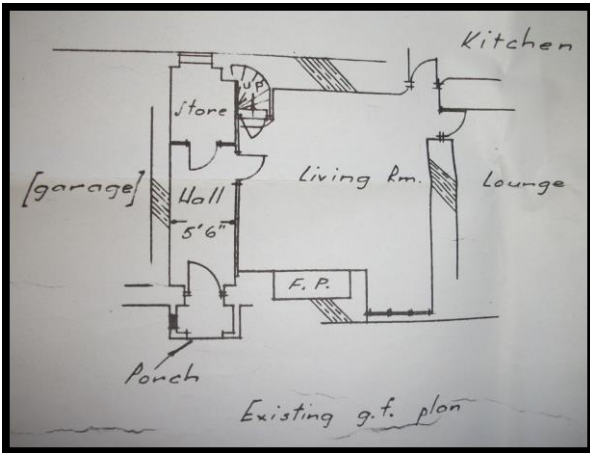


Fig. 7 Drawing c.1955 showing the ground-floor plan of the centre of the house prior to alterations.

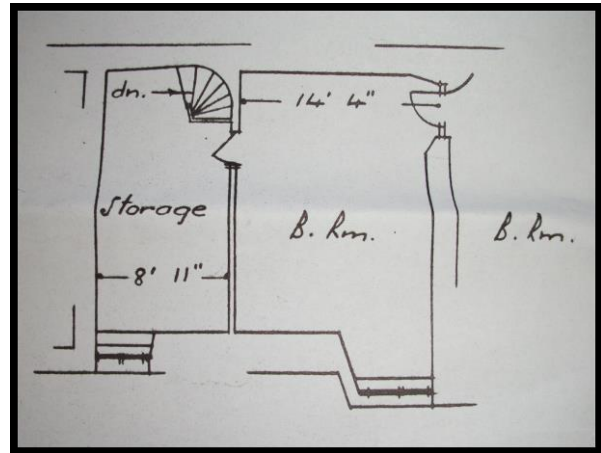


Fig. 8 Drawing c.1955 showing the first-floor rooms at the centre of the house prior to alterations.

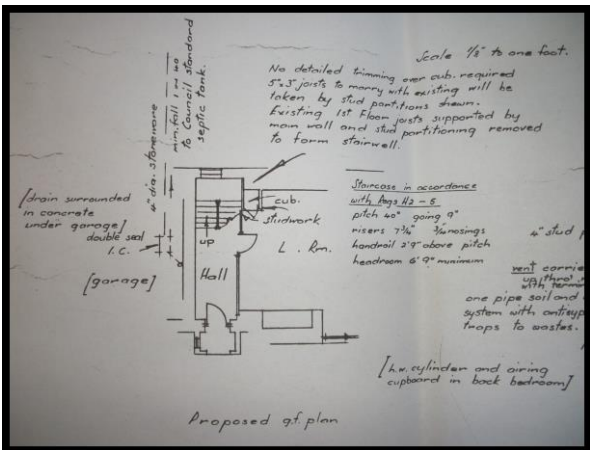


Fig. 9 Drawing c.1955 showing proposed alterations to provide a new staircase.

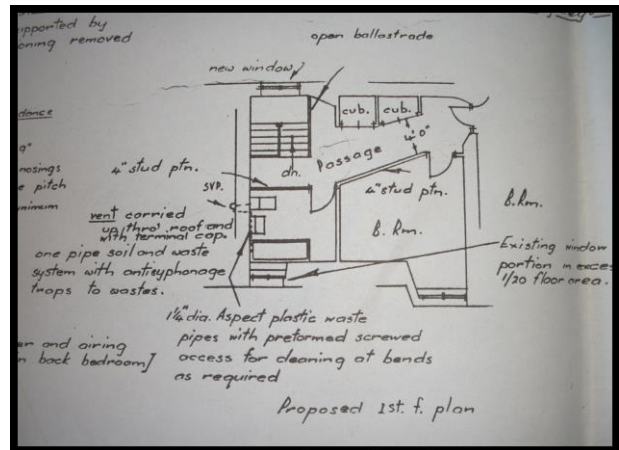


Fig. 10 Drawing c.1955 showing the proposed subdivision of the first-floor rooms.

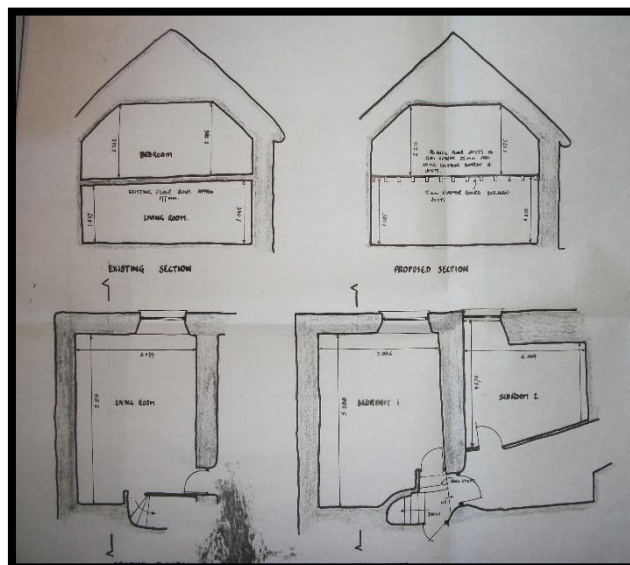


Fig. 11 Drawing, c.1983, showing proposals to level the floor of the bedroom at the north-eastern end of the house.



Fig. 12 South elevation of the farmhouse, seen from the farmyard showing the shippon on the left and the domestic accommodation on the right.



Fig. 13 The north eastern gable of the farmhouse showing the rear extension, lean to and the collapsing walls of the ruined building to the north (extreme right).



Fig. 14 The rear of the house showing the blank wall of the shippon (right) the stair window marking the position of the cross passage (centre) and the rear wing and outshut (left).

3. BUILDING SURVEY

The elevations of the house clearly show the layout and functions of the interior (Fig. 12). At the south-western end of the building the agricultural character of the shippon is betrayed by large areas of blank walling and infrequent, small openings as well as by the lower roofline and the modern garage doors. The domestic parts of the house to the north-east are distinguished by larger windows, the first-floor windows being ‘chickets’, rising partly above the eaves line and sheltered under gables, giving the house a picturesquely prickly skyline typical of 17th-century domestic architecture. The doorway to the cross passage is marked by an early 20th-century porch

and the hall, or principal ground-floor room by a large lateral stack at the centre of the elevation. The parlour at the north-east end of the house is also heated, and a modern stack now rises above the end gable. At the rear of the house a large rear wing projects, with a further chicket over the first-floor chamber window. A modern outshut masks the lower part of the north-eastern gable. (Fig. 13). To the south west of this rear wing a cat-slide roof extends over an outshut (Fig.14). The rear wing contains a large fireplace with several ovens and is likely to have been the kitchen. It must originally have had a large chimney stack rising through the roof of the outshut, but this has been demolished and is represented today by a metal stove pipe. The rear of the main range of the house shows no openings apart from a modern stair window inserted on the site of the original rear entrance to the cross passage. The rear wall of the shippon is entirely without openings and is entirely covered by render (Fig. 14).

3.1 The Shippon

Shippon walls

The south-eastern façade of the shippon is rendered, obscuring the fabric, but the interior walls are unplastered and reveal that the lower parts of the walls are of stone rubble construction, with cob walls overlying them. This is a common feature of vernacular building in Devon and does not necessarily imply two separate phases of building; however, in this case, it is considered likely that the central parts of the south-eastern and north-western walls are indeed later, since the masonry walling rises to a higher level at either end of the building rather than rising from a level stone base, as would be expected if it had been constructed in this way from the start.

The most likely reason for this would be that the original front and rear walls had failed because they had been pushed outwards by the pressure of the roof, and that they were therefore partially demolished and rebuilt in cob, a cheaper and more easily available material than masonry. This would be a likely explanation for the replacement of the original roof of the shippon (discussed below), which had perhaps lost its structural integrity due to the movement of the walls.

There are no openings at all in the rear elevations of the shippon or in its end gable, though there would presumably have been a low-level drain in this wall to allow slurry to drain away. The masonry in the south-western gable survives to a high level and is surmounted by cob walling, though it is also cased in modern brick, probably dating from the 1930s refurbishment of the house, which can be seen from the first floor rising into the gable behind the cob walling.

The shippon is separated from the cross passage in the domestic portion of the house by a wall of rubble masonry rising almost to first-floor level, overlain with cob (Fig 14). This is almost certainly an insertion and may replace an earlier timber screen or part screen (spere) for which some evidence remains in the adjoining cross passage (see below). The lower part of the wall is of solid masonry and appears to be added underneath and around a large beam supporting the floor structure of the 'chamber over the entry'. The wall has been partially stripped of plaster and shows no evidence of any openings between the shippon and the cross passage. The apparent vertical breaks, which might initially have been taken to suggest the presence of a doorway here, prove to relate to the rebuilding of the jambs of the garage door in c.1935 and the insertion of a soil pipe serving the bathroom in the chamber over the entry in the 1950s (Fig.14).

The date of this wall is extremely difficult to determine. It seems to post-date the inserted beam for the chamber over the entry, and yet it appears to bear evidence for a lost shippon roof with unusual constructional features which might date from as early as the 14th century (see below). The most likely context for its insertion would be the addition of the loft floor over the shippon, which was supported on a large beam running the entire length of the shippon, parallel to and beneath the ridge of the building. The socket for this beam can be seen in the wall between the shippon and the cross passage as an area of red brick blocking. The underside of the beam rested directly on the stone masonry of the lower part of the wall, and above this the wall is of cob construction. This may show a relationship suggesting that the stone and cob wall and the beam were contemporary.

Loft floor structure

The floor structure has been truncated, and now only a small section remains. The south-western end of the beam rests upon the stonework of the gable wall, but the joists extending to north-west and south-east from the beam are all seated in the cob walling of the front and rear walls, which are likely to be a rebuilding. This strongly suggests that the loft floor and the dividing wall between the shippon and the cross passage date from the rebuilding of the shippon, perhaps in the late 17th century, rather than an earlier phase of its development.

The joists to the north-west of the beam, now collapsing, are very insubstantial and are set within the larger, earlier sockets of lost joists. As these do not appear to be of early 20th-century character they may represent 19th-century replacements of the originals, inserted perhaps as a result of decay after a period of neglect.

The entire north-eastern section of the loft floor has been removed and replaced in the early 20th century, and the beam socket blocked in modern red brick, which suggests that the loft floor was truncated when the present garage was created in c.1935.

The upper part of this wall is of exceptional interest, (Fig. 16). This wall is of cob, and encompasses or envelops the beam supporting the floor of the chamber over the entry. The wall rises above this beam to collar level, but does not ever appear to have extended higher, the apex of the roof being open over the ceiling of the adjoining chamber and through into the hall beyond. The wall contains two short vertical chases, both of which have a stone pad at the base for supporting the foot of a short timber post buried in the wall. Neither post survives; their date and function cannot be established with any confidence, though it seems beyond doubt that they were connected with the construction of either the 17th-century shippon roof or its lost, medieval predecessor. The chases must have housed short 'arcade posts' providing seating for braces to the roof purlins, or to a pair of 'arcade plates' (square-set timbers) at collar level. As it is uncertain why the purlins could not simply be seated in or upon the cob walling, as so often elsewhere, it is possible that the posts related to an earlier roof of unusual form. The arcade posts might have pre-dated the construction of the cob wall, and were perhaps truncated and encapsulated within it when the wall was constructed. Alternatively the construction of the wall may have involved the removal of one of the main trusses and this device with wall posts and braces may have been introduced to support the ends of the purlins of a truncated roof.

Shippon roof structures

The structural evidence of short posts built into the north-eastern wall may be interpreted as pointing to a lost, medieval roof of unusual form and high quality. Sadly, the medieval roof has entirely vanished and no other evidence for its character remains. For a discussion of the possible implications for the dating of the building and the form of the roof, see below. The existing roof of the shippon is supported upon a single 17th-century roof truss, resting on timber pads built into the cob front and rear walls. This truss consists of a pair of substantial principal rafters, probably of elm, linked by an applied collar with notched-lap joints secured with large, square pegs, the ends of which have been left protruding. Each principal contains sockets for two pairs of trenced purlins; unfortunately these timbers do not survive and thus it is difficult to determine whether or not they were related to the enigmatic chases in the north-eastern wall.

The shippon floor

The shippon retains part of its early cobbled floor, though this is much obscured by the goods and materials currently stored there. The shippon floor is largely of small cobbles, but there are areas of larger cobbles which seem to represent drains or perhaps a head walk. Unfortunately the centre of the shippon floor was not visible and the central drain and its opening in the gable wall could not be observed. The garage area has a slightly higher floor of concrete, which may cover the earlier cobbled flooring of the shippon.



Fig. 15 The stone and cob wall separating the house from the shippon, probably a 17th-century insertion, showing modern intrusions into the fabric.



Fig. 16 The upper part of the wall separating the house from the shippon showing two vertical chases (dashed) for short wall posts, probably for braces to purlins or perhaps 'arcade plates' in the lost medieval roof.



Fig. 17 The plank door to the shippon, possibly dating from the 18th century.



Fig. 18 The plank door to the loft of the shippon, showing reused hinges.



Fig. 19 The interior of the shippon, looking south-east, showing the surviving parts of the cobbled floor and the cob and later brick rebuilding of the front wall supporting the joists of the loft floor.

Openings in the shippon

Prior to the early 20th-century alterations the original openings in the shippon (as recorded by Cletia Lega-Weekes in 1902, See Figs 2 and Fig. 20) included only a doorway at the south-western end of the façade, and a small loft hatch at the north-eastern end of the upper storey of the shippon. Lega-Weekes shows none of the usual narrow slits for lighting, and none survive today. She also shows a projecting feature in the wall below the hatch, and a scar in the wall adjoining this which might be interpreted either as simply a missing patch of render or the scar of a demolished external stair.



Fig. 20 Detail of Lega-Weekes' drawing of the shippon in 1902, showing the early openings in the south-eastern wall and other features now removed.

This projecting feature is also difficult of interpretation. It appears to consist of a large baulk of masonry below a small square window, rising on either side of the window in the form of triangular buttresses (Fig. 20). The window appears to have been an unglazed opening with wooden mullions, of a type which still survives within the present rear extension at Powlesland. The position of the window is unfortunately also ambiguous; it is uncertain whether it lit the shippon or the cross passage, though the former seems most likely. Unfortunately all evidence of these features has been removed by the piercing of the wall in the early to mid 20th century to create the present large garage doors.

The doorway at the south-western end of the façade is the only opening to survive of those shown in Lega-Weekes drawing of 1902 (Fig. 20). This might represent an original opening for the entry of the cattle, though its relatively narrow width may suggest it is more likely to have been used for mucking out and the removal of manure or soiled hay and fodder for use as fertilizer. It is possible that the opening was inserted in the 17th century after the shippon was divided from the cross passage and the passage was annexed as part of the domestic accommodation.

The doorway retains an historic plank door constructed of five narrow planks covered on the exterior by four applied fillets (Fig. 17). The interior has three horizontal ledges but is not diagonally braced (Fig. 19). The topmost hinge may be original; it is a long strap hinge with a dart-shaped terminal, and runs behind the fillets. The lower hinge is a plain rectangular strap and is evidently a replacement, the fillets being removed to allow its replacement. The door frame may also be a replacement. This door is of such simple and plain construction that it is very difficult to date. It could date from as early as the late 17th century, but the absence of any form of mouldings may indicate a date in the 18th century.

The jambs of the modern window and doorway to the garage are constructed of early-mid 20th century red brick. The wall above the doorway and window has also been rebuilt in brick of the same period, the cob wall presumably having collapsed or been demolished when these openings were made. A new loft hatch was created at the south-western end of the loft in the early 20th century. This has a 20th-century plank door with two ledges to the interior and a diagonal brace. The door is hung in a modern frame but retains a pair of reused earlier strap hinges with dart-shaped terminals (Fig. 18).



Fig. 21 The beam on the south-western side of the cross passage, supporting the floor of the chamber over the entry, showing the character of the sockets for the floor joists and the peg-holes, perhaps for a short spere, beneath them.



Fig 22 Elevation towards the hall of the hall screen, showing the position of the central doorway and the absence of provision for the staircase, right, suggesting that the screen predates the addition of the chamber over the entry.



Fig 23 Detail of the hall screen, showing the pronounced internal jetty towards the hall formed by the joists of the chamber floor projecting over the earlier screen and the junction with the later beam supporting the hall chamber floor.

3.2 The Cross Passage and Hall Screen

The cross passage

The main door of the house opens directly into the cross passage which, as in most vernacular houses, formerly ran the full width of the building and had a rear entrance in the north-western wall. The present porch, door and doorframe of the main entrance to the house are of early 20th-century date. It is possible that the shouldered-headed doorway shown in Lega-Weekes illustrations (Fig 3) came from this opening, or from the rear doorway. This may have been removed and the doorway blocked in *c.*1935, when a cupboard was installed in the position of the present staircase. This cupboard appears on the drawings of *c.*1955 and was removed when the present staircase was installed shortly afterwards (Fig. 7).

The south-western wall of the cross passage is today formed by a solid wall of cob and stone but this does not appear to be the original arrangement. The wall seems to have been inserted below an earlier, very large, chamfered beam which in part still bears the joists of the chamber over the entry. This room is known to have been already in position by *c.*1640 when it is mentioned as one of the areas reserved for the use of William Powlesland and his wife Jane (see above). This chamber had perhaps been the earliest part of the building to be floored. Evidence for the dating of the beam as earlier than this wall is visible at the north-western end of the beam, where a series of peg-holes, unrelated to the floor joists above them, may still be seen (Fig 21). These are most likely to relate to sockets under the beam, now obscured by the cob and the masonry of the later wall. The sockets may have housed the three vertical muntins of a short plank-and-muntin screen, forming a spere running only a few feet across the building towards its centre. This seems to confirm that the present wall is later and that the rest of the beam originally spanned a wide void. There are no other visible peg-holes in the beam corresponding to these, from which we may assume that most of the area below the rest of the beam was open. This wide opening may have allowed easy access for the cattle from the cross passage to the shippon.

The joists of the chamber over the entry are seated in deep mortices in this beam. Several of the joists have been removed to allow the insertion of the modern staircase, exposing their character (Fig 21). This is sophisticated carpentry, the sockets cut to allow for projecting tenons with 'diminished haunches' at the ends of the floor joists. The joints were pegged from above and it is probable that, prior to the insertion of the cob wall above the beam, the beam supported a much narrower timber partition enclosing the chamber. Whether this partition incorporated the putative 'arcade posts' identified at a higher level in this wall remains unknown, though it seems probable that the partition was entirely demolished when the cob wall was erected and that the 'arcade posts' were either inserted or retained to support the remains of the roof at this time.

The hall screen

The north-eastern wall of the cross passage is formed by a plank-and-muntin screen of substantial vertical oak muntins, each chamfered and with straight-cut stops at the base, and with masons' mitres to the chamfers on the head beam, each muntin being secured with two pegs. The chamfers appear to both sides of the screen, facing both the hall and the cross passage. The present central doorway is an alteration, but probably replaces a wider doorway in the same position giving upon the hall. A staircase to the chamber formerly climbed steeply against the north western end of the screen, on the hall side and, as there is no provision for this in the mouldings and chamfering of the screen, we may assume that this staircase, whatever its date, was not contemporary with the screen. It is likely that the present screen was formerly a free-standing screen within the open void of the building and that the chamber and the staircase were added above and around it as the interior of the building began to be subdivided. The screen may thus be one of the earliest examples of joinery in the building, if not a primary feature. Dendrochronological dating of its timbers, as well as those of the inserted chamber and of the surviving smoke-blackened parts of the roof might help refine the dating of the building and of the main periods of its development.

The staircase

The joists of the floor structure of the chamber over the entry extend over the top of the head beam of the hall screen to form a very pronounced internal jetty on the hall side (Fig 23). The depth of this jetty appears to have allowed for a staircase to rise between the screen and the jetty bresummer in a very steep flight against the hall side of the screen, with winders at the summit to take the stair over the head beam of the screen. The staircase has unfortunately been removed and the void infilled with modern material. A new staircase has been erected within the north-western part of the cross passage. This alteration was made in c.1955, on the evidence of the drawings reproduced here (Figs 7-10).

3.3 The Chamber over the Entry

The chamber over the entry appears to have been inserted within the volume of the building while it was still undivided by cob or masonry walls and may have been the first enclosure of this type made within the shell of the house. The chamber was probably separated from the shippon by a timber partition, rising above the beam and spere which would have defined the very wide opening to the shippon below. The spere and the partition above were replaced with the present cob and stone wall, probably in the late 17th-century, when the shippon walls were rebuilt and its roof replaced.

Towards the hall the chamber was enclosed by another timber partition, which survives in part today. One half of the partition remains, between the present bathroom and the central bedroom which, with the corridor alongside it, occupies the 'hall chamber' known to have been inserted within the roof void of the former hall in c.1640. Another short section of the partition remains towards the north-western wall. A narrow doorway between these two sections, which may have been broken through the partition at the time the hall was floored over, was widened in the 1950s to create a large opening to the corridor running along the north-western side of the former hall chamber. Although this has destroyed any evidence for the character and thus the date of the doorway, it has revealed details of the construction of the partition which would not otherwise have been visible.

The partition was not aligned with the main truss over the hall, which survives today a few feet north-east of the partition (Fig. 24), but was fixed instead to one of the common rafter couples in the southwestern bay of the hall. It was formed of substantial, widely-spaced vertical studs or muntins, tenoned into the jetty bresummer at the base and also into a cranked timber running across the roof void of the medieval hall roof below collar level. The panels between the muntins were formed by rod laths: short timber laths, the ends of which were shaped like dowels and which were seated in a series of regularly spaced drill holes provided in the sides of the studs (Fig 25). This construction formed an armature to support the plaster panels forming the partition. Without making an investigative hole, it was impossible to know the nature of the plaster employed; however the other details of the construction suggest a date for this alteration in the post-medieval period.

Features in the chamber over the entry

The chamber over the entry now serves as both a bathroom and landing and few early features are now visible. One feature of particular interest is that the new chamber had an integral ceiling, formed by closely spaced cranked timbers secured to the common rafters of the original hall roof. These enclosed the chamber below the apex, leaving only the apex of the roof above open to the hall (Fig. 26). Smoke blackening from the open hearth in the hall continued to percolate above this ceiling, lightly staining the ceiling joists. Often, the enclosure of the ends of an open hall with partitions and first-floor structures preserved the medieval roof open to its apex and the underside of the thatch, which appears to have been admired for its decorative qualities, remained on display. At Powlesland, however, the ceiling structure of the chamber was designed to support a plaster ceiling having four flat planes or cants rising to a central point, a rustic approach at the barrel type



Fig. 24 Detail of one of the hall roof trusses showing its relationship with the partition behind.



Fig. 25 Detail of the partition between the chamber over the entry and the hall, showing the hall roof truss beyond.



Fig. 26 The roof of the hall seen from the void at the end of the shippon, showing smoke-blackened medieval roof timbers, including a main truss with a high cranked collar, diagonally set purlins and exposed, blackened thatch. Beyond, plaster extends to the apex of the roof and, in the foreground, the cranked timbers of the ceiling over the chamber over the entry show light smoke-staining from the open hearth.



Fig. 27 The rear window of the hall, possibly of 14th- or early 15th-century date, now opening onto the later outshut at the south-western side of the rear wing

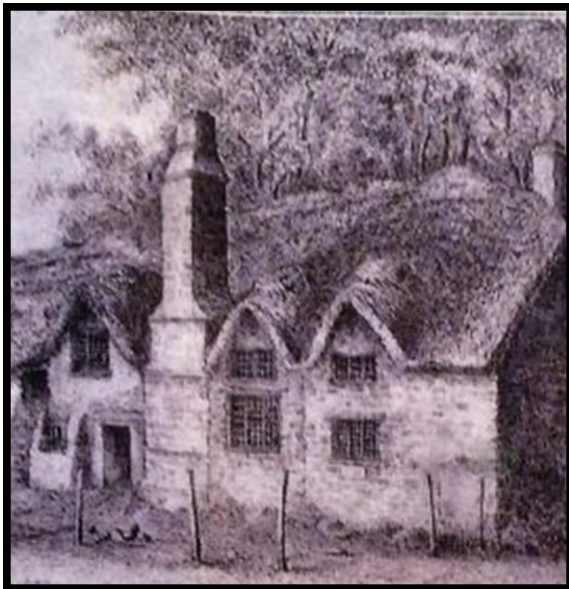


Fig. 28 Part of Lega-Weekes' drawing of the main frontage of the house showing the varied fenestration prior to later alterations, showing the lost hall window with a vertical scar adjoining.



Fig. 29 Detail of the fireplace in the hall, showing the granite jambs pierced by a later window. The lintel, also of granite, rises well above the ceiling, which is supported by a trimmer against the lintel.

of ceiling popular in the late 16th and 17th centuries. These ceilings were sometimes decorated with hand-run ribs or perhaps with painted decorations, if funds did not allow for more elaborate work. Although no decorative plasterwork is evident today, the structure of the ceiling survives and there is a possibility of decorative painting beneath the many layer of whitewash and other decorative finishes.

Decorative plaster ceilings of this type became popular in Gentry mansions in Devon in the second half of the 16th century and rapidly reached down the social scale to the houses of merchants and yeomen farmers (Thorp 1990, 131). As the chamber was already in existence by 1640, it is suggested that this chamber may have been created in the period *c.*1570-1600.

The chamber was lit by a small window in the south-western wall at eaves level and was probably unheated. The window shown in Lega Weekes' drawing of 1902, with a gabled chicket and two lights (Fig. 28) may be a late 16th or 17th-century alteration made after the addition of the hall stack or after the flooring of the hall chamber. This window, which was not recorded in more detail by Lega-Weekes, was replaced by the present window during the re-fenestration of the whole house in *c.*1935. There may also have been a window lighting the chamber, and more particularly the staircase, in the rear wall but, if so, this does not survive.

There was never any access at first-floor level between the chamber over the entry and the loft over the shippon. The chamber was originally approached solely by the staircase against the earlier screen, or by a stair ladder in the same position, and only later by the doorway to the hall chamber.

3.4 The Hall

The hall was the principal room of the medieval house, and the medieval fabric still survives complete, though it has been much altered to accommodate 16th- and 17th-century standards of comfort. This room was originally open to the roof and was heated by a central hearth which has sooted the surviving roof timbers over the central part of the house. The hall seems originally to have been divided from the cross passage and shippon only by a single-storey timber screen, which was later used as a support for the joists forming the chamber over the entry, which must have been inserted while the open hearth was still in use. It is uncertain whether or not a similar screen separated the hall from the parlour to the north-east, though this seems highly likely. Unfortunately there is no access to the roof of the north-eastern part of the building, and it has not been possible to determine whether or not the roof over this part of the house is also smoke blackened.

The medieval roof

The hall retains its medieval roof (Fig. 26), which extends for two bays, with a central truss consisting of a pair of principal rafters tenoned together at the apex, without provision for a ridge. The principals are linked by a high, cranked collar with a chamfered underside. There are no arch braces. At eaves level the principals are tenoned into large cruck posts with jowled heads side pegged into the feet of the rafters (Fig. 27). It is unclear whether there are wind braces but, given the great width of the bays, this is likely. They may simply be obscured by plaster finishes. The very long, diagonally-set purlins are without mouldings and support the original common rafters throughout the roof. The timbers and the historic thatch are all heavily smoke blackened and were clearly displayed within the hall

The windows of the hall

The character of the original fenestration of the hall may be known from the surviving window in the rear elevation, which has only been discovered relatively recently and was known neither to the Lega-Weekes sisters nor J.R.L. Thorp, who listed the building in 1988. This window (Fig 27) is a rare survival and of great importance. It was unglazed, and consisted of a sill, a shaped head-beam and five square-cut, un-chamfered or moulded oak uprights forming four narrow lights with ogee heads. The window retains pintles for shutters. It may have been matched by another window

on the south-eastern side of the hall, perhaps of rather larger size, since this is likely to have been the front elevation of the house. The window was probably replaced when the present fireplace and chimney stack were inserted, replacing the original south-eastern wall of the hall. This almost certainly took place before the floor structure of the present hall chamber was inserted c.1640.

The Lega-Weekes' drawings (Fig. 28) show the hall window as taller than at present, with its lintel very close to the sill of the window in the hall chamber above, and describes the window embrasure as 'higher than the ceiling' (Fig. 3, B), suggesting that the embrasure, if not the window itself, predated the insertion of the present ceiling. Unfortunately the window was replaced in c.1935 and its date can no longer be determined. It may have been inserted in place of an earlier window in the mid 17th century. The drawings (Fig 28) also show a vertical break in the walling adjacent to the north-eastern jamb of the window, as though the hall window and the window above have been pushed out flush with the outer face of the stack, and with the front wall of the building to the north east. This may mean that the hall window was originally recessed slightly, in the presumed plane of the original wall of the medieval house, and that the front wall of the north-eastern rooms had previously been brought forward to its present alignment.

.An alternative explanation for this feature is that the hall was provided with a hall bay, or projecting window, and that the north-eastern rooms of the building were enlarged at some point to align with the front of this hall bay, perhaps in the mid-to late 17th century. There are two possible contexts for this alteration: the insertion of the hall ceiling, or the addition of the large rear wing at the back of the house, both of which may have been undertaken during extensive alterations to the medieval house with possible changes to the function of its rooms.

The hall fireplace

As the smoke blackening of the roof structure shows, the hall was originally lit by an open hearth. This remained in use after the chamber over the entry was inserted, but may have been replaced soon after as part of a series of improvements to the house designed to increase cleanliness and comfort and to enlarge and improve the accommodation.

After the creation of the chamber over the entry the next alteration was the provision of a large new fireplace in a lateral stack, either replacing or built against the original south-eastern wall. The Lega-Weekes illustrations (Fig. 28) show this chimney stack much as it now survives, with a high chimney breast contracting just below, and again above, the level of the eaves. It is clear from the relationship of the existing ceiling of the hall with the lintel of the fireplace, that the fireplace and its adjacent window were both inserted when the hall was still an open volume, before the present hall chamber was created in c.1640. The height of the window, and the lintel of the fireplace, which can be seen to extend above the floor of the hall chamber, show that the hall ceiling was inserted after these features were already in existence. The window may have formed a 'Hall Bay' or projecting bay window contemporary with the fireplace.

The north-eastern jamb of the fireplace incorporates a small window, which opens through the jamb into the embrasure of the hall window. This appears to have been cut through the granite jamb of the fireplace and may be a secondary feature. It is possible that this was an external opening before the hall bay was brought forward into its present plane, or that it was simply inserted to improve the light within the fireplace by borrowing light from the hall window embrasure.

The layout of the hall today retains its traditional form, with a bench running along the base of the north-eastern wall and a large historic table occupying the space within the window bay. The doorways in the northern corner of the hall, opening on the rear wing and the inner room have ovolo-moulded frames with scroll and bar stops. These same stops are found in the staircase structure within the inner room, and it is suggested that these doors were inserted in the later 17th century, along with the staircase, during the a phase of redevelopment and enlargement of the north-eastern parts of the house. Both doorways retain historic plank doors with either nailed or pegged boards. Adjoining the door to the inner room is a recess identified as a cream oven.

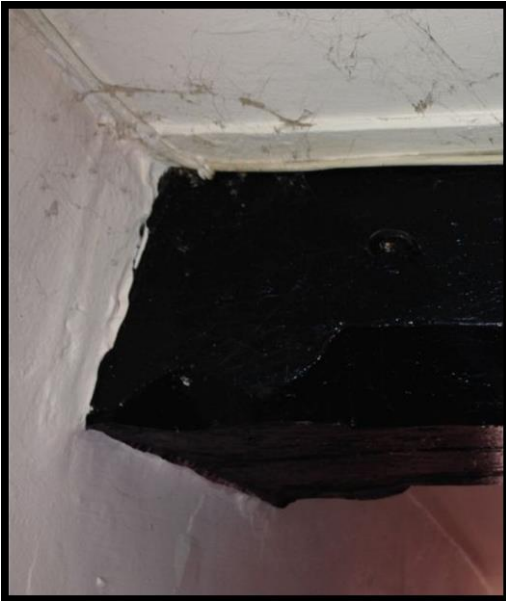


Fig. 30 Detail of the beam supporting the floor structure of the hall chamber showing the nicked ogee stops.



Fig. 31 Doors from the hall to the rear wing and inner room, decorated with ovolo mouldings and scroll and bar stops.

3.5 The Hall Chamber and ceiling

It is unusual to have such a precise date for the flooring over of the hall as at Powlesland. The subdivision of the hall can be confidently dated to *c.*1640 through documentary evidence in the marriage settlement of William and Jane Powlesland.

The hall ceiling

The inserted hall chamber floor is supported on a very large chamfered beam decorated with nicked-ogee or 'leaf' stops (Fig 30). The beam rests at one end on the jetty bresummer of the chamber over the entry and, at the other end, is seated in a thick masonry or cob wall defining the north-eastern wall of the hall and extending to the full height of the building, into the apex of the roof. The trimmer against the lintel of the fireplace, bearing the other end of the joists, is also supported in this wall. The joists are obscured by plaster.

As the thick wall dividing the hall from the inner room supports the beams of the hall chamber ceiling, it is perhaps contemporary with the insertion of this beam, perhaps part of a larger phase of remodelling of the house in the 1640s. The wall may have replaced a low timber screen defining the inner room of the house, which as in many medieval houses may have served either as a service room or a parlour. It is uncertain whether there had previously been a first floor chamber at this end of the house and, if so, why it was not retained at this time (as the earlier hall screen and chamber over the entry was) to support the north-eastern end of the new floor structure. The marriage settlement of 1640 makes no mention of a chamber in this position, but this does not mean such a chamber did not exist; rather that was not part of the house reserved to William and Jane Powlesland.

It is possible that the refurbishment of the house involved the reassignment of roles to the rooms. This may have favoured the construction of a solid wall in this position rather than the usual timber screen and partition. For example; the removal of the central hearth and the provision of a fireplace in the hall may have led to the relocation of kitchen functions to the inner room. The provision of a solid wall between the rooms may have been to guard against the penetration of cooking smells and smoke from the end bay of the house into the newly formed hall and hall chamber. The hall fireplace is certainly smaller than would have been expected for a



Fig. 32 The inner room from the south-east, showing the 17th-century plank and muntin screens hiding the staircase cut within its north-western wall and the joists of the ceiling reset in 1983.

kitchen fireplace, and has no provision for ovens or other facilities for cooking, with the exception of the small window cut into its jamb, which may be a later alteration.

The hall chamber

The hall chamber on the first floor is now converted into a bedroom and a corridor. This room is now ceiled at the level of the lower purlins, but was formerly open to the apex of the medieval roof as can still be seen above the present ceiling within the roof space of the hall, where clean, un-sooted plaster on the partition wall with the inner room and chamber continues into the apex (Fig. 26). The hall chamber seems always to have been unheated and was lit by a three-light window in the south-eastern elevation. This window may have been of 17th-century date, probably dating to the 1640s. It was presumably added after the insertion of the hall chamber floor structure, when the window of the hall bay was modified to reflect the new horizontal division of the room. It has since been replaced by an early 20th-century casement.

The original access to this room may have been via the cross passage, the staircase in the hall and the chamber over the entry, through a doorway now removed. The doorway to the 17th-century stair at the north-eastern end of the house has a very plain chamfered frame with simple domed stops. This is unexpected, as the principal chamber of the house would be expected to have been most elaborate ornament. The stops are not unlike those of the door to the kitchen chamber, which is certainly a later modification. This reinforces the conjecture that this doorway, the staircase and the floor of the chamber over the inner room are later insertions and that the north-eastern parts of the house may still have been open to the roof in the 1640s.

3.6 The inner room

The inner room (Fig. 32) occupies a position which in many medieval houses was occupied by a parlour, the service room usually lying at the opposite end of the house beyond the cross passage. In a longhouse, however, the shippon to the lower side of the cross passage generally means that the inner room was utilised as a service room. At Powlesland such evidence as survives suggests the use of the inner room as a service room until at least the middle of the 17th century, or a little later, when the rear wing was added and high-status features were inserted, including the present staircase and the internal floor structure.

As discussed above it is considered probable that the kitchen activities of the early house were relocated to this room after the provision of the new fireplace in the hall. Cooking within the inner room may have still been performed on an open hearth at this period, and it is therefore possible that inner room was still open to the roof. Medieval and post-medieval kitchens were often tall rooms, where smoke and smells could disperse in the large volume, well above head height. Confirmation of this might be found above the ceiling of the first-floor room, if smoke-blackening appears on the plaster at the apex of the wall dividing this room from the hall. Unfortunately the roof structure over the north-eastern end of the house is not visible as it is concealed by inserted ceilings.

Fireplace

The present fireplace in this room is modern, but replaces an earlier fireplace in the same position. This fireplace is known to have had a projecting oven, which appears as a semi-circular projection on the gable wall in the Lega-Weekes' drawing of the house (Fig. 2). This was unfortunately removed when the north-eastern lean-to extension was constructed against the end gable. The presence of an oven in this position, however, may show that the room did indeed function as a kitchen. The date of the fireplace is uncertain; it may have been added in the same phase of alterations as the hall fireplace, or in a later 17th-century refurbishments of the house, either when the hall was floored over, or when the inner room was ceiled and the new kitchen wing at the rear of the house constructed.

Ceiling and staircase

The inner room is ceiled by plain, squared joists without chamfers or mouldings. These are thought to have been reset in the 1980s to level the floor, and this has unfortunately disturbed their relationship with the walls and other features of the room. The joists may be of 17th-century date; as they are unmoulded they may have been intended for plastering; some still bear traces of nail and lath marks. This ceiling does not survive and its date is not known.

The insertion of the ceiling within this room, to create the chamber over the inner room, is the most likely context for the addition of the staircase houses in a projection within the north-western wall of the house. This is contained within a plank-and-muntin screen consisting of chamfered muntins with scroll and bar stops. The door frames are ovolo-moulded and also have scroll and bar stops. Since precisely similar stops are used on the door frames from the hall to the rear wing, and at the head of the stairs, opening into the chamber over the inner room, it seems most likely that the inner room was floored over and the rear wing added at the same time. The fine new staircase and door frames may show that the inner room had by now been upgraded to the status of a parlour, the kitchen functions being displaced to the new rear wing.

3.7 The chamber over the inner room

This room was probably created at the same time as the addition of the rear wing, and may be dated by the details of the staircase, plank doors and door frames, to the mid-to-late 17th century. It is entered from the staircase by a door way with ovolo mouldings and scroll and bar stops identical with those of the staircase screen and the doorways to the rear wing. The doorways from

the staircase to the kitchen chamber and the hall chamber are much plainer, with domed stops and simple chamfers. This may imply that both these doorways are later additions. The staircase may therefore have given access only to the chamber over the inner room. The room appears to have been unheated, though it is possible a blocked fireplace may be concealed in the north-eastern wall. As there is no loft hatch in this part of the house, it cannot be established whether the original medieval roof remains over this part of the building. If the front wall of the house was indeed moved outwards in the 17th century, some modification, if not the replacement of the medieval roof is likely. The roof spans the room in a single, very wide bay, supported on long diagonally-set purlins which, for all their large size, have much deflected as a result of the weight of the roof.

3.8 The kitchen, kitchen chamber and outshut

The rear wing of the house was probably added at the same time as the flooring over of the inner room and the addition of the staircase. When the building was listed in 1988, this wing was interpreted as an unheated dairy wing, with a contemporary outshut alongside it (see Appendix I). Since that time alterations to the building have revealed several features which were not previously visible and thus this interpretation must be revised. In the south-western wall is a large fireplace, with two ovens and alongside this, at a high level, is a small unglazed two-light window with a wooden mullion. The position of this opening conflicts with the present first floor level, and thus the interior must originally have been open to the roof. The window also opens into the interior of the outshut, which shows that the outshut is itself an addition. The rear wing may thus be reconstructed in its original form as a large single storeyed building open to the roof and lit by high-level unglazed windows. There can be little doubt that this served as a kitchen, perhaps replacing the earlier facility in the inner room which, in its turn, replaced the open hearth in the hall. The first-floor structure and kitchen chamber must be a later addition.

The roof of the rear wing is supported by a single jointed cruck truss with at least two levels of large, diagonally-set purlins. This is difficult to date stylistically but would not be untypical of the mid-to-late 17th century. The roof is ceiled with plaster below the levels of the collars, so the apex is not visible and the constructional details of the truss cannot be inspected. It is uncertain whether the underside of the thatch was originally exposed, as seems likely. The kitchen chamber also appears to have been unheated, though a fireplace might be concealed in one of the walls behind modern plaster and built in wardrobes.

The outshut to the south-west of the kitchen is clearly an addition to the building, and must have blocked both the high level window in the kitchen and the medieval hall window, both of which were thus, fortunately, preserved. The only datable feature in the outshut is its ovolo-moulded doorway, with a cranked head beam and an early plank door of 17th-century date.

3.9 The ruined outbuilding

To the north of the house and slightly to its rear is a small outbuilding, now in ruins, which is of exceptional interest. This was in use as cottages when it was visited by Ethel and Cletia Lega-Weekes. Their drawing (Fig. 2) shows the building as having very high eaves and few windows, except where these have been added for its conversion to dwellings. The building is in two sections, the south-westerly part being of stone construction and the north-easterly part, which is considerably larger, of cob, probably an addition. The main surviving feature, in the stone portion of the building, is a timber doorframe (Fig. 33) with a two-centred arch, of very high quality and possibly dating from the 14th or 15th century. Access to the interior is no longer possible and the function of the building cannot be determined, but its orientation, nearly east west, the character of the doorway and the general proportions and appearance of the building are comparable with the surviving medieval chapel at Bury Barton, Lapford (Figs 34, 35). It is thus possible that this ruin represents the remains of a hitherto unrecorded private chapel at Powlesland, converted to profane use after the Reformation and now, rapidly, passing away.



Fig. 33 The remains of the ruined building to the north of the house, showing a 14th- or 15th-century arched timber doorway. Compare with Figs. 2, 34 and 35.



Fig. 34 View of the medieval detached chapel at Bury Barton, Lapford, showing the high eaves and small window openings, including an elaborate traceried east window behind the buttress.

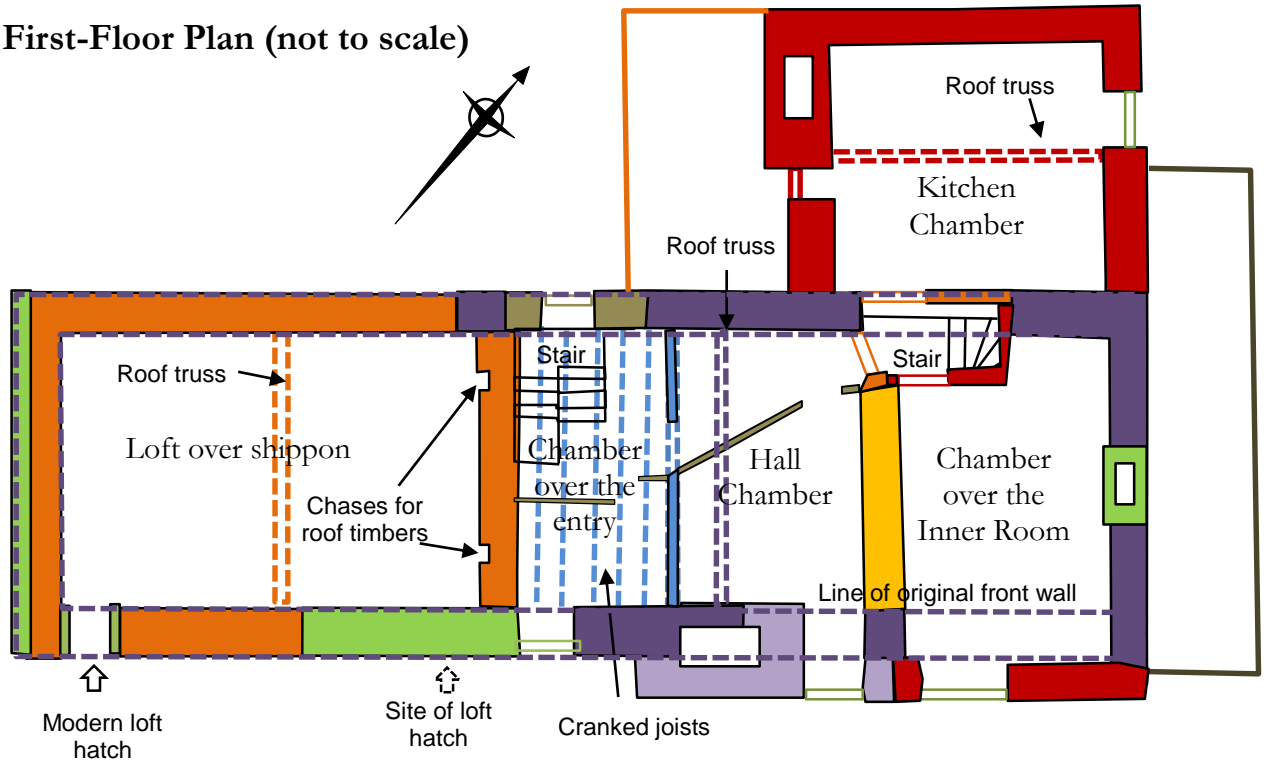


Fig. 35 View of the south wall of the chapel at Bury Barton showing the arched timber doorway and proportion of wall to windows (Compare with Fig. 2, showing the building at Powlesland before its ruination).

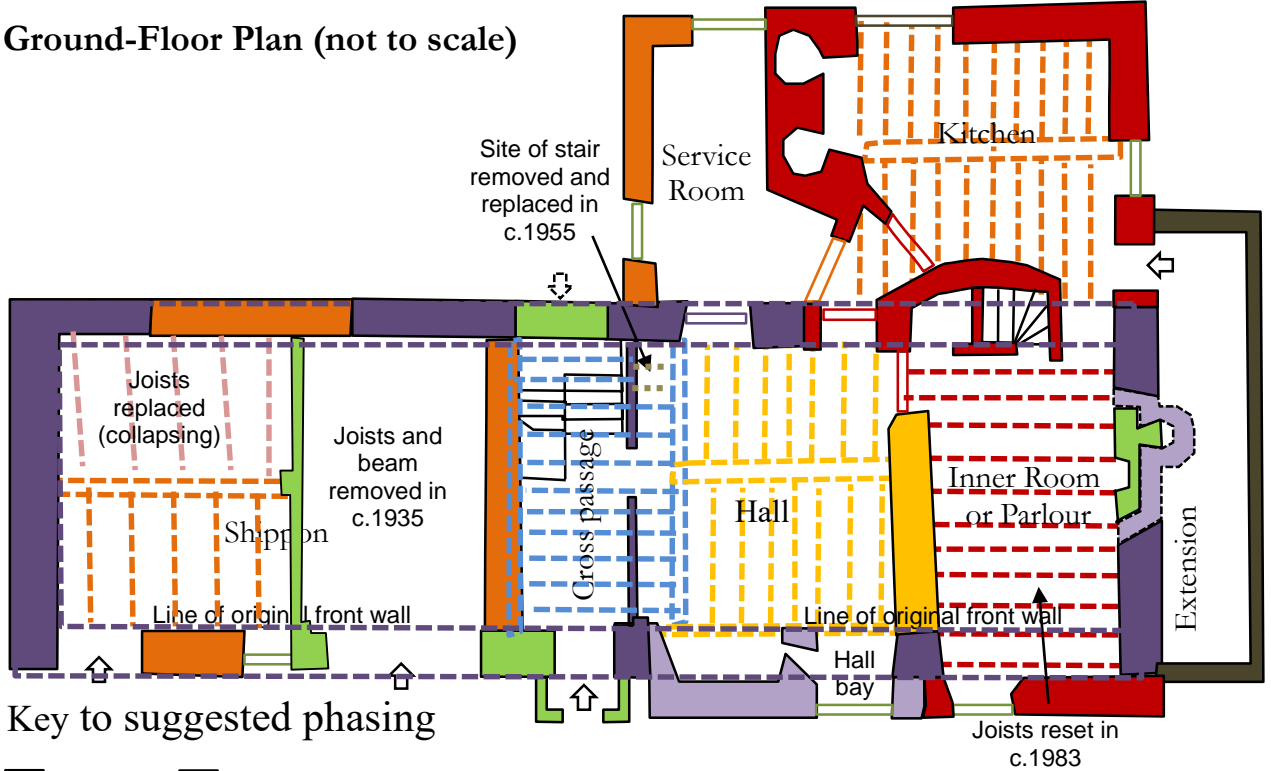
SOUTH TAWTON: POWLESLAND FARMHOUSE 2016

PLANS WITH SUGGESTED PHASING

First-Floor Plan (not to scale)



Ground-Floor Plan (not to scale)



Key to suggested phasing

 c.1400	 c.1600	 c.1650	 c.1850	 c.1955	 External doorway
 c.1570	 c.1640	 c.1670	 c.1935	 c.1970	 Blocked doorway

Fig. 36 Ground and first-floor plans of Powlesland Farmhouse showing suggested phasing.

4. DISCUSSION AND DATING

Powlesland is a well preserved example of a Devon longhouse, a vernacular house type common in highland areas of western England, providing accommodation for both humans and animals under a continuous roof. In early long houses the shippon, or cow house, was entered directly from the cross passage, as may still be seen in the case of the ruined longhouses at the deserted medieval village near Hound Tor on Dartmoor, or at the well-preserved longhouse at Higher Uppacott at Poundsgate, Dartmoor. These buildings were originally of one storey only, the interior volumes being separated only by low partitions, and the upper parts of the house open to the roof from end to end, heated by an open hearth at the centre. That Powlesland began as this type of house is clearly demonstrated by the smoke-blackening of the roof structure, which extends through the centre of the house and demonstrates the presence of an open hearth prior to the addition of the hall chimney. Because of the tradition in Devon of rarely stripping thatch back to the rafters, but rather renewing the top coats only, the county is considered to preserve ‘the largest resource of the study of historic plant remains (archaeo-botany) left in Europe’; a precious resource for environmental archaeologists ‘which deserves to be looked after with the greatest care’ (Thorp & Cox 2001, 21, 183).

The house is clearly of medieval origin, perhaps dating from as early as the 14th century, but was much rebuilt in the 16th and 17th centuries. The house is remarkable in particular for the 17th-century alterations, including the flooring over of the hall which, most unusually, can be very closely dated by documentary evidence to the 1640s. Later modifications to the house seem to have been concentrated in the second half of the 17th century and involved successive improvements to the north-eastern end of the house by the addition of chimneys, the flooring over of rooms and the addition of extensions in a number of interventions which seem to have been closely spaced in time and are thus rather difficult to untangle. The suggested development of the house is illustrated in Fig. 36 and may be summarised thus:

Medieval

The original medieval house was a long rectangular building open from end to end and divided by low timber screens into three separate areas. At the south-western end was the shippon, entered by opposed doorways at its north-eastern end. As at Higher Uppacott today, this entry does not seem originally to have been divided from the shippon by a wall or partition. The hall, at the centre of the house, was entered from the north-eastern end of the shippon through a central doorway in a timber plank-and-muntin screen, which survives today. The hall was heated by a central hearth and lit by unglazed windows with narrow ogee-headed lights defined by timber mullions. It had a high, open timber roof supported on a single jointed cruck truss at the centre of the hall, which retains today its medieval, smoke blackened thatch in quite remarkably good condition. At the north-eastern end of the house the third room, probably a service room, may have been either an heated or unheated space, but was probably only separated from the hall by a low timber screen, allowing smoke and heat from the fire to percolate throughout the entire building.

To the north of the house, a small detached building of stone, with a remarkable arched timber doorway, has the appearance and character of a detached chapel like that surviving at Bury Barton, Lapford, though this conjecture could only be confirmed by further examination of the ruins and, perhaps, through documentary research.

16th century

As domestic standards improved, usually in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods, the low partitions dividing the interior of medieval houses were sometimes extended vertically or replaced with more substantial masonry walls, providing separation for the domestic and agricultural parts of the building and also forming supports for internal flooring, creating private chambers for the family and perhaps also separate accommodation for farm hands. At Powlesland the first such intervention appears to be the ‘chamber over the entry’ which appears to have been

constructed over the hall screen as a mezzanine floor, overhanging the hall by the width of a staircase, and extending over the north-eastern end of the shippon. There appears to have been no firm division between the shippon and the cross passage beyond a short 'spere' or parclose extending from the north-western wall of the house a short distance across the shippon. The new chamber was ceiled with cranked joists, creating a canted ceiling in four planes, which enclosed the chamber below the apex, allowing heat and smoke to percolate above it into the shippon. This intervention is considered to have taken place in the late 16th century, in around 1570.

Late 16th century

The next phase of alteration seems to have been the insertion of a fireplace and chimney in the open hall, and the creation of a hall bay alongside the chimney. The hall remained open to the roof at this period and the other rooms may have been unaltered, though it seems likely that the inner room was now utilised as a kitchen and that an open hearth or perhaps even a chimney, may have been installed in this room.

Mid 17th century , c.1640

The next phase of alterations is known to have involved the construction of 'one chamber over the hall' in c.1640 by the insertion of a floor supported on chamfered beams. This floor structure was supported on the earlier jetty bresummer of the chamber over the entry and also by a high masonry wall separating the new chamber from the service room/kitchen at the north-eastern end of the house. The new room was probably entered from the earlier chamber to the south west. There is no evidence to show that the north-eastern part of the house was floored at this time and it seems likely that it continued in use as a kitchen, open to the full height of the building. The fenestration of the front elevation seems likely to have been modified at this time by the division of the large hall window into two storeys.

Mid 17th-century c.1650

Probably soon afterward, the accommodation in the house was improved by the addition of a new kitchen wing at the rear of the house, and the flooring over of the former service room to create a comfortable new parlour and a chamber above it, accessed by a handsome staircase. The fenestration of the northern part of the house seems to have been renewed at this time and it is likely that the chickets or gables over the first-floor windows were added also, giving the house a fashionably prickly elevation.

Late 17th century, c.1670

The shippon and cross passage do not appear to have been separated by a wall or partition until relatively late in the 17th century when, perhaps due to the failure of the medieval roof over this part of the house, the roof and side walls were demolished and rebuilt in cob. At this time a new loft floor was inserted, supported on a beam seated in a new masonry wall to the south-west of the cross passage, in the south western gable, and upon joists seated in the new cob walls. This phase may be dated by the carpentry details of the replacement truss, which has large notched lap joints and trenched purlins typical of the third quarter of the 17th century.

Also in this phase, further alterations were made to the kitchen wing, including the addition of a new floor across the earlier volume of the kitchen, entered by a new doorway to the staircase, and also the addition of a lean-to or outshut to the south-west of the kitchen. These alterations brought the house effectively to its full development, and subsequent changes were relatively minor.

19th and 20th centuries

There is very little evidence of substantial change to the house in the 19th century. At some point part of the loft floor in the shippon appears to have been renewed, but essentially the house survived unaltered until a drastic refurbishment in the early 20th century, when the 17th-century

fenestration and perhaps also the original 14th-century entrance with its shouldered arch were removed and replaced. At the same period the rear door of the cross passage may have been closed up and the shippon encroached upon by a garage, which involved the truncation of the loft floor and the destruction of part of its south-eastern wall. The south-western gable end of the building was clad, or over built in modern brick. Much of the 17th-century roof of the shippon was removed and replaced by modern purlins. Corrugated iron sheeting replaced the historic thatch, destroying the unity of the house and the shippon, both of which had formerly been covered by one continuous thatched roof. Later alterations in the 1950s saw the removal of the presumed 16th-century stair in the hall and its replacement with a modern stair, and the subdivision of the first-floor chambers to create a bathroom, corridor and landing. In the 1970s a further lean-to was constructed to the north-east of the house and, in a 1980s intervention, the joists of the inner room ceiling were removed and reset.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Although the shippon at Powlesland survives today as a store, it is in poor condition and has been seriously compromised by the intrusion of the modern garage. The loft floor is collapsing, the walls are in poor condition and the 17th-century roof truss is the sole survivor of the early roof, the present corrugated iron roof being supported on modern purlins.

The current proposals are for the refurbishment of the shippon for use as a farm office, library and welfare facilities for farm staff. This would involve the consolidation of the shippon walls and the reinstatement of its thatched roof, retaining the existing 17th-century truss. The existing concrete garage walls would be removed and new partitions inserted in their place. Although the insertion of modern rooms, lighting, floors and finishes would inevitably have an impact on the character of the shippon (which is unlikely to have been finished to a high standard and would almost certainly have had unrendered walls, a rough cobbled floor and exposed thatch to the underside of the roof), the proposals would provide the shippon with a new use and secure it from further dereliction and structural failure. Reinstatement of the thatched roof of the shippon would unify the house under a single roof covering once more, and this seems a highly desirable outcome.

A potentially more controversial proposal is the creation of openings in the wall between the house and the shippon, to allow access between the dwelling house and the farm office. Although the shippon and the house were never linked at first floor level, and have been entirely independent units since the late 17th century, it is clear that in its primary, medieval form, the house and the shippon were one continuous space. Even after the insertion of the chamber over the entry, the house and the shippon were still linked by a wide opening under the beam supporting the chamber floor, and this link between the accommodation for animal and humans is a fundamental characteristic of a longhouse. The creation of an opening under the beam, at ground-floor level, perhaps in the position where the wall has been cut into by an unsightly (though no doubt very useful) soil pipe, would therefore reinstate the historic relationship between the house and the shippon and would be consistent with the plan form of an historic Devon longhouse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was commissioned by Mr Peter Howard on the advice of his architect, Mark Ledgard. The archaeological work was carried out by Richard Parker Historic Buildings Survey and Interpretation in January and February 2016 and the Documentary research by Lucy Browne. We are grateful to the staff of the Devon Heritage Centre, the North Devon Record Office and the Devon and Exeter Institution and to Peter and Sarah Howard for sharing useful material, for their hospitality on site and for their patience during the production of this report. Thanks are also due to David Beadle, John Allan and John Thorp.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Sources

- Beacham, P. (ed.) 1990 *Devon Building: An introduction to local traditions*. (Exeter).
- Baring-Gould, S. 1931 *Devon* (London).
- Cherry, B & Pevsner, N. 1989 *The Buildings of England: Devon* (London).
- Emery, A. 1970 *Dartington Hall* (Oxford).
- Hoskins, W.G. 1954 *Devon*. (London).
- Lega-Weekes, E. 'Neighbours of North Wyke' *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*.
 Part 1: Volume XXXIII, pp 399 – 468 (1901).
 Part 2: Volume XXXIV, pp 578 – 647 (1902).
 Part 3: Volume XXXV, pp 497 – 538 (1903).
 Part 4: Volume XXXVI, pp 415 – 444 (1904).
- Mawer A. and Stenton F. M. (eds) 1932 *The Place Names of Devon* (English Place Name Society, Volume IX, (Cambridge).
- Radford, R. 2000 *The Book of South Tawton and South Zeal, with Sticklepath: 100 years beneath the beacon*
 SWHT reference: xB/SOU 7/0001/RAD(Tiverton).
- Thorp, J.R.L & Cox J. *Devon Thatch* (Tiverton).
- Thorp, J. 1990 'Wall Painting and Lime Plaster Decoration' in Beacham (ed.) 1990, 129-149.

Directories:

Kelly's Directory of Devon for the years 1883, 1889, 1893, 1902, 1910, 1919, 1923, 1926, 1935, 1939

Newspapers:

Searches carried out on www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk and in the Exeter Flying Post card index (1763 – 1885, Devon Heritage Centre. (South West Heritage Trust reference: sx720.9/DEV/049

Other Sources

- Sales Brochure for Powlesland and Coursebeer Farms, 17th June 1916 (Powlesland Farm Archive).
- List of Buildings of Special or Architectural Interest : West Devon parishes of Belstone, Drewsteignton, South Tawton and Spreyton* (Department of Environment, London, 1988).
- Powlesland, a Devonshire Family* by Helen Amy (typescript, 1989) (Powlesland Farm Archive).

Maps and Plans

Coloured map of Nymph and Powlesland estates, the property of Philip Cann (1837) South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) Reference: 4210 Z/Z74.

- Tithe Map for the parish of South Tawton (1847).
- Ordnance Survey County Series 1st Edition, 25" – Sheet LXV/16 (1888).
- Ordnance Survey County Series 2nd Edition, 25" – Sheet LXV/16 (1905).
- Ordnance Survey Plan Map Series, 1:2500 Sheet SX6896 (1956).
- Ordnance Survey Plan Map Series, 1:2500 Sheet SX6896/6996 (1976) (Powlesland Farm Archive).

APPENDIX 1: The Listing Text:

SOUTH TAWTON: POWLESLAND FARMHOUSE (J. R. L. Thorp, dated 4th March 1988)
Grade II*

Farmhouse, former Dartmoor longhouse-type. Early C16 with major later C16 and C17 modernisations. Plastered cob on stone rubble footings; granite stacks, the hall one with a tall granite ashlar chimneystack, the hall one with a tall granite ashlar chimneyshaft; thatch roof, shippon/stable end replaced with corrugated iron.

Plan and development: T-plan house. The main block faces south-east and is built down a very gentle hillslope. It has a 3-room-and-through-passage plan. Uphill at the right (north-eastern) end is an inner room parlour with a disused gable-end stack and mid C17 stair rising to rear. The hall has a front lateral stack. It projects forward from the passage and shippon section but the hall window and inner room are brought forward flush with the front of the stack. There was once a winder stair rising from the hall, to rear lower end. The passage is now blocked to rear by C20 stairs. Shippon end still in agricultural use and has hayloft over. Unheated dairy block projecting at right angles to rear of hall and inner room with integral outshot on hall side. The roof shows that the early C16 house was open to the roof, divided by low partitions (at least to the passage), and heated by an open hearth fire. Maybe the inner room was floored from the beginning. If not it was in the mid C16. The hall fireplace was inserted in the mid or late C16 and about the same time a passage chamber was built jutting into the lower end of the hall. In the mid C17, maybe in more than one of the closely-spaced building phases, the house was thoroughly refurbished. Hall and inner room front was thrown out a short distance, the hall floored over, the inner room stair built and the dairy block with its outshot added. Henceforth the hall was the kitchen, the inner room the parlour. (Present kitchen in dairy). Shippon (latterly stables) reroofed in late C17 - early C18. House only superficially altered since then. It is 2 storeys with C20 outshot on right end. Exterior: house part has regular but far from symmetrical 3-window front of C20 casements with glazing bars, those on the first floor are gabled half dormers. Passage front doorway left of this section and left of centre overall now contains a C20 door behind a contemporary gabled porch. The stable section to left has 2 doorways with a small window between and a hayloft loading hatch over the left doorway. Roof is gable-ended. Good interior: on the lower (shippon/stables) side of the passage a soffit- Chamfered and step-stopped beam is half-buried in the crosswall. The hall-passage partition is late C16; an oak plank-and-muntin screen with raking step stops. At the same time the passage chamber was jettied into the hall with an oak close- studded first floor crosswall. The large hall fireplace is granite ashlar with a hollow-chamfered surround. There is a tiny fire window in the left side, now to the bay window. The upper end cob crosswall includes a cream oven above an ancient oak bench. The mid C17 axial beam is soffit-chamfered with exaggerated scroll stops. Mid C17 oak doorframe from hall to inner room parlour is ovolo-moulded with bar-roll stops. Inner room fireplace is blocked and ceiling of plain joists. Mid C17 straight flight stair hidden from the room by an oak plank-and-muntin screen, its muntins ovolo-moulded with bar-roll stops (same surround to doorways off its landing). Doorway to dairy from rear of hall and C17 crank-headed doorframe from dairy to outshot. Several old plank doors throughout the house, two of the earliest held together by projecting oak pegs. The stable/shippon has a plain soffit-chamfered crossbeam, probably late C17-early C18 and the same date as the A-frame roof with pegged lapped-jointed collar over the hayloft. Original roof over passage and hall carried on large side-pegged jointed cruck trusses with cambered collars, and this section is smoke-blackened from the original open hearth fire. Roof over inner room parlour inaccessible. Roof over dairy carried on a side-pegged jointed cruck. Powlesland is an attractive late medieval farmhouse with good C16 and C17 features. Lega-Weekes recorded the mouldings from some of the C17 oak-mullioned windows before their removal and sketched a shoulder-headed oak doorframe here. It is still occupied by the Powlesland family. Source: E Lega-Weekes. *Neighbours of North Wyke, Part II*, Trans. Devon. Assoc. 34 1902), illustrations facing pages 599 and 647.

CONDITIONS

This report has been prepared for the use of Mr Howard and his professional advisors and should not be used or relied upon for any other project or purpose without the prior written authority of the author. Richard Parker Historic Buildings Recording and Interpretation accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of the use of this document for any other persons or purpose other than that for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Richard Parker Historic Buildings Recording and Interpretation for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. No copies, in whole or in part, may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without the prior written authorisation of Richard Parker Historic Buildings Recording and Interpretation. © Richard Parker Historic Buildings Recording and Interpretation, April 2016.