

CLDH12



## CHURCH COTTAGE, LITTLE DEWCHURCH

*Historic Building Recording &  
Geotechnical Test Pit Monitoring*

*for Mr A Barnes*

S121243/F

*January 2013*



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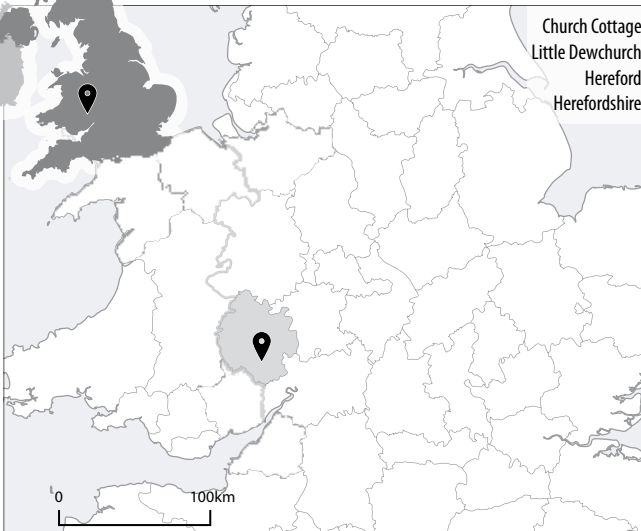


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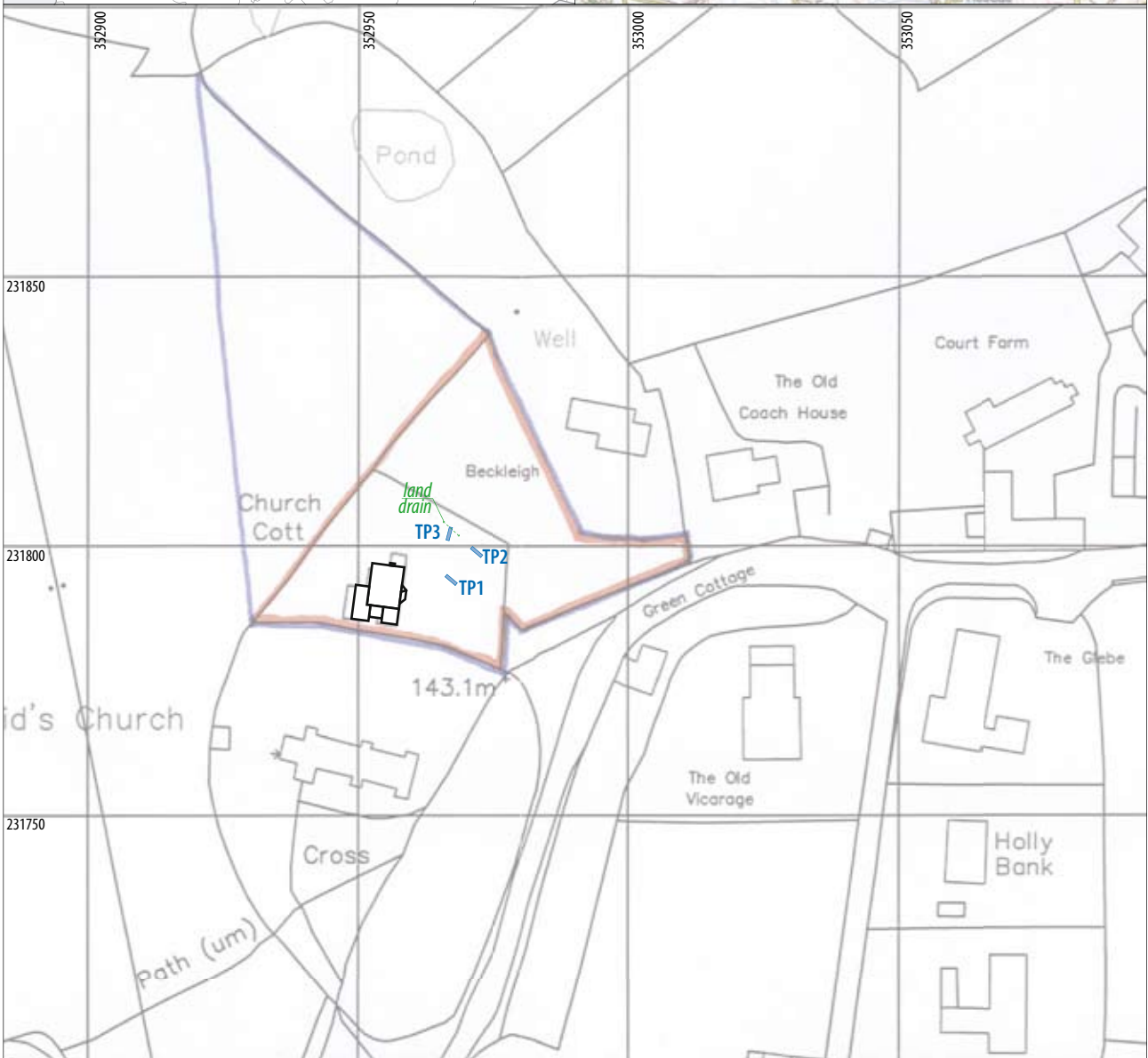
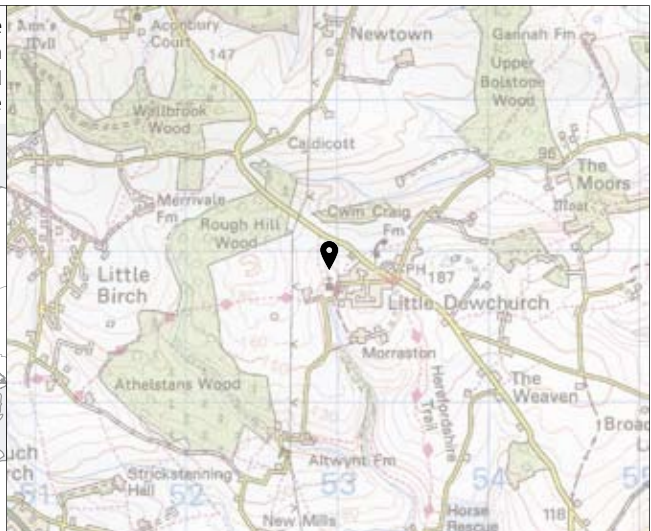
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The authors would like to thank the staff of the Community History and Archives Service and the owners of the property surveyed for this report for their assistance in enabling the work.



Church Cottage  
Little Dewchurch  
Hereford  
Herefordshire



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scale 1:1,250 @ A4



### Illus 1

Site location

# CHURCH COTTAGE, LITTLE DEWCHURCH

## Historic Building Recording & Geotechnical Test Pit Monitoring

*As part of proposals to redevelop Church Cottage in Little Dewchurch, the Archaeological Planning Advisor for Herefordshire County Council requested that before any development an historical and architectural assessment should be undertaken commensurate to a Level 2 as designated by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.*

*Church Cottage consists of a stone built, two stories dwelling with a series of later extensions to the original building. The upstairs interior floors of the structure have suffered from water ingress and therefore were considered unsafe; the general condition of the building has limited the amount of internal assessment that was possible.*

*The cottage displays a commemorative inscription indicating a construction date of 1837, the overall appearance of the building and the cartographic evidence would concur with this indicated date.*

*During the ground works, the excavation of three geotechnical test pits identified a redundant streambed; the course of the stream now runs in a culvert, aligned with the eastern boundary of the site. The repositioning of the stream was probably as a direct result of later levelling for the garden area of Church Cottage. The makeup of the area directly to the east of the building platform for Church Cottage and within the footprint of the new dwelling consists of man-made ground.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The client, Mr A Barnes, commissioned Headland Archaeology Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits and a level 2 historical building survey at Church Cottage, Little Dewchurch, Herefordshire, in advance of works relating to the redevelopment of the site.

Following the planning application to demolish Church Cottage and construct a new house, garage, and driveway. Herefordshire Archaeology informed the client that the location was likely to contain at risk heritage assets with archaeological interest - in this case, historic standing structures. Herefordshire Council (21/06/12) subsequently granted planning permission, subject to a condition, requiring the recording of the existing building (Condition 8 of the permission) and the subsequent monitoring of groundworks.

Headland Archaeology produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, Kimber, M 2012), in accordance with the planning conditions set out by the local planning authority, Hereford County Council (Planning Ref: S121243/F).

The building survey took place on the 15th of October 2012 and the monitoring of the three geotechnical test pits on 27 of November 2012.

### 1.1 Site location

The site is located towards the east of the village of Little Dewchurch, and currently comprises of a two story stone built dwelling with additional brick and stone built extensions. Centred at National Grid Reference 352971 231808, the north-eastern edge of the building is cut into the gentle slope of the valley side, forming a level building platform within the development area. The Church of St David and associated graveyard define the southern edge of the site and the eastern extent of the site is constrained by a culvert flowing north-south along the road edge.

Currently the dwelling is in a relatively dilapidated state; the slate roofs have perished and allowed the ingress of water, which has subsequently caused the upstairs of the building to become unsuitable for safe entry.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were:

- to produce a record of the structure intended to be demolished;
- to monitor ground works associated with the development and record any archaeological remains exposed;
- to ensure an archive and report on the work is deposited in an appropriate repository.



### Illus 2

Parish map of 1839, showing Church Cottage (37)

### Illus 3

OS survey map, 2nd edn 1905, showing extension to the rear of Church Cottage

## 3. METHOD

### 3.1 Documentary research

The Community History and Archives Service at Hereford Library was visited and historic maps consulted and searched for references relating to Church Cottage. Copies of books on local history were also consulted, although given the vagaries relating to the building in question and the very general nature of most of the texts there was little of direct relevance that could be obtained from the sources.

### 3.2 Building recording

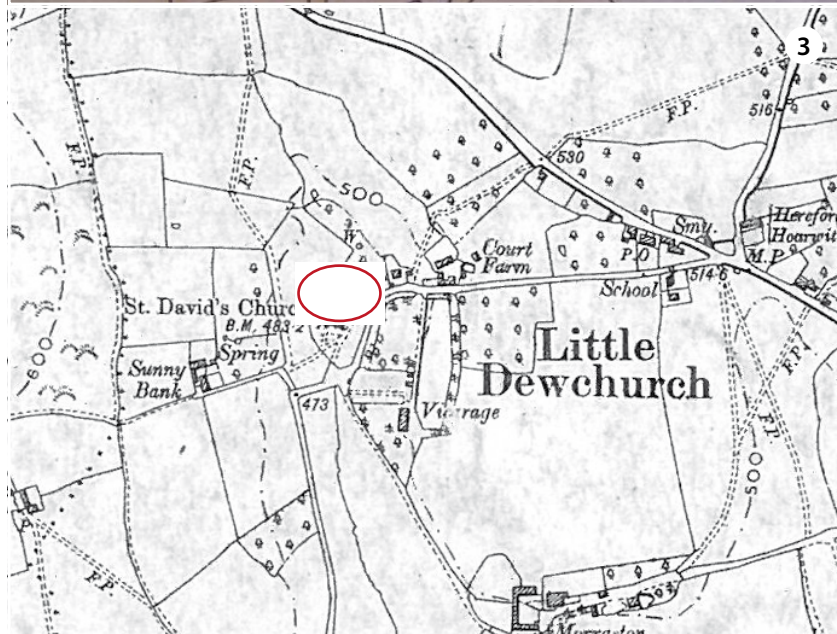
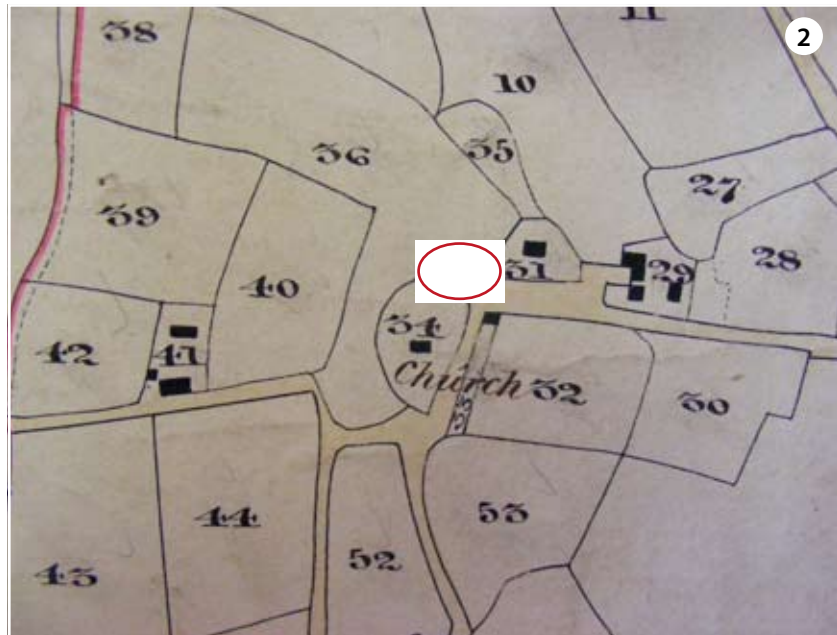
The brief issued by Herefordshire Council requires a level of recording commensurate with RCHME level 2. The overall product comprises:

- General external and internal photographs of the main building and any outbuildings that will be affected by the development;
- A descriptive written record of these structures;
- Annotated plans showing detail relevant to the interpretation of the main building;
- Documentary research using readily available sources to assist in the interpretation of the history of the building.

### 3.3 Watching brief

A mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, excavated three geotechnical test pits. Machine excavation terminated at the top of the natural geology. Excavation of archaeological deposits and features required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation continued by hand. The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the test pits.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology *pro forma* trench and context record sheets. Photographic records consisted of both Digital, and 35mm black-and-white print with graduated metric scale clearly visible. Digital surveying was also undertaken using a Trimble differential GPS system.



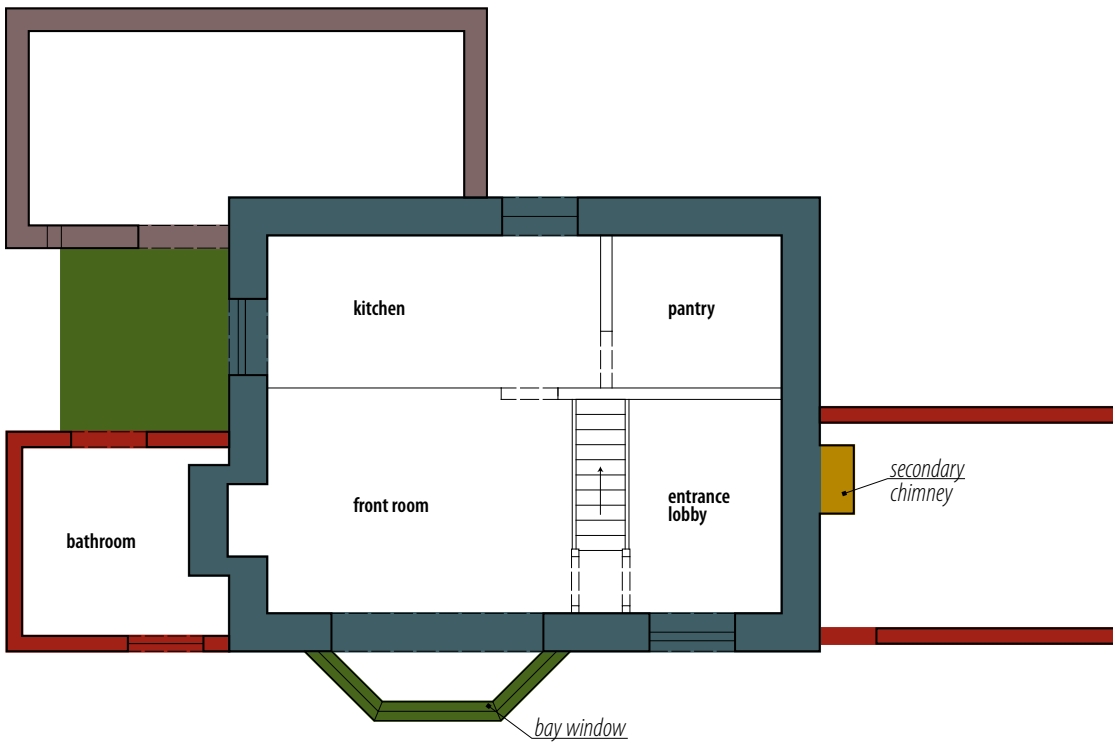
## 4. DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

The historical information regarding Church Cottage is very limited, most texts refer to the foundation and development of St David's Church and little concern has been paid to the development of Little Dewchurch. However, the records for the area do contain a parish map dated to 1839.

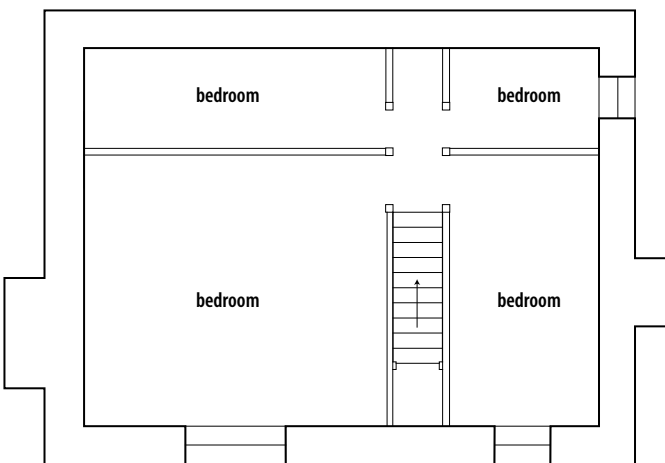
Church Cottage can clearly be seen on this map, the building appears to consist of only one structure, confirming that the associated extensions to the property are in fact later developments (Illus 2).

The parish register indicates that Church Cottage belong to a Mr John Stevens and was described as 'New house and Gardens'. It would appear that the inscribed date upon the fabric of Church Cottage is the correct date for the foundation of the building.

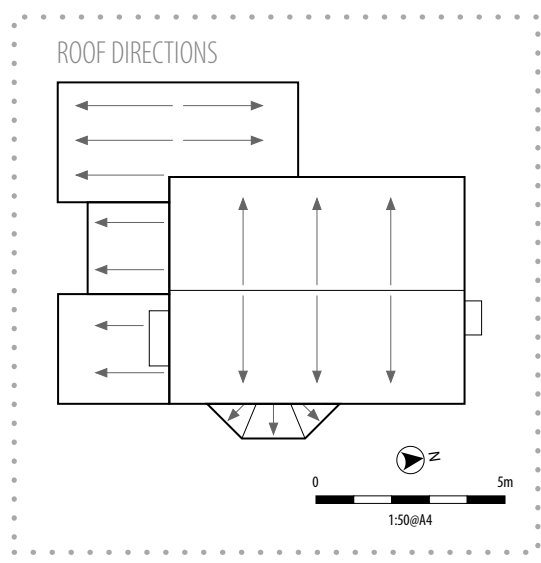
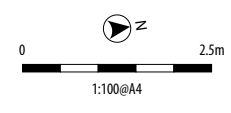
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



- phasing**
- phase 1
  - phase 2
  - phase 3
  - phase 4
  - phase 5



Illus 4

Building plans; ground floor (phased) first floor and roof directions





**Illus 5**

*General view showing the main elevation of Church Cottage*

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**Illus 6**

*General view of Church Cottage taken from the NE showing latter chimney and offset roof line*



Examination of the 1905 Second Edition OS map indicates that towards the rear of the property an extension or annex has been constructed, this is probably the first cartographic indicated date for the construction of the stone built rear extension but the stylistic evidence from the building survey suggest that the extension is earlier than 1905.

## **5. BUILDING SURVEY OF CHURCH COTTAGE**

### **5.1 Results**

#### **5.1.1 External**

Church Cottage consists of a rusticated stone-built two-story dwelling with its main axis's aligned north south. The property comprises of four ground floor rooms and four first floor rooms. The cottage displays a commemorative inscription on the main facade indicating a construction date of 1837.

A building platform cut back into the valley side, provides shelter for the rear of the property. It is reasonable assumption that the cutting back of the valley side was a necessary action to achieve a level construction area for Church Cottage and is not an indication of earlier activity on the site such as quarrying.

The general appearance of the property when viewed from the east elevation shows a slight offset to the main roofline, with the rear eaves being lower than the front. This has led to the suggestion that the rear of the property is a later extension; however, investigation within the ground floor rooms confirms that the dwelling has not been extended, as there are no supporting walls present within the building, the internal walls being formed of timber, laths, and plaster.

The building's main elevation consists of two symmetrical second floor windows with side opening frames and supporting brick arches, above an offset entrance, with an additional and later metal framed and roofed bay window at ground level (Phase 5). The bay window although a later feature, attempts to mirror the construction of the main building though its use of coursed stone possibly reused when the original window was opened up to form the bay window, the use of a metal framed window within the bay would suggest that this was a late phase of works

The two modern extensions that flank the main façade are less sympathetic in their construction, and pre-date the bay window. Both extensions are constructed in hand made red brick; however, the eastern extension has undergone modern alterations in cinderblock (Phase 4). Although not exactly recent they possibly represent a period of expansion and modernisation to the faculties originally offered at Church Cottage, as the southwest lean-to extension was used as the house bathroom and toilet. The discomfort of accessing the external bathroom was somewhat eased through the addition of an open sided lean-to roof over the southwest entrance (Phase 5). The northeast extension survives in a very dilapidated condition; access to the extension appears originally only to be from the front of the dwelling, however, nothing-obvious remains to suggest a primary function.

**Illus 7**

*Detail showing construction of internal walls*



**Illus 8**

*General view showing extension located to the rear of the property*



The original design of Church Cottage incorporated an offset fireplace on the southwest elevation this provided heat, only to the main ground floor room, however a relatively modern, brick built chimney (Phase 3) was constructed on the northeast elevation, both stacks appear to have only provided heat to the ground floor rooms.

Towards the rear of the property a stone-built single story structure, which on first inspection appears to pre-date the ground plan of Church Cottage is located. The building although, constructed in stone does not share the general characteristics of the main building. The stone is irregularly coursed, as well as showing a greater variation in general dimensions; the structure also exhibits a more weathered appearance.

**5.1.2 Internal**

The internal examination of the building is limited only to a general inspection of the ground floor, due to the dangerous condition of upper floors. The roof material has decayed and allowed the ingress of water causing subsequent damage to the wooden fabric of the building.

Within the building, the ground floor comprise four rooms. The main access into the property is through the offset southeast entrance, this room is the main link to the staircase, which is also offset to the northeast of the property. The offset location of the staircase gives an imbalance to the internal dimension of the dwelling, the largest rooms located towards the southwest of the property.

Located towards the rear of the property, is room currently used as a kitchen; however, this is possibly a later alteration to the original design of Church Cottage, as the room is devoid of a fireplace

The upstairs accommodation has been divided into four main areas built into the roof space. The two front rooms both benefit from higher ceilings while the small rooms at the rear of the property are constructed within the steeper pitch of the rear roof space.

**5.2 Discussion**

The construction of Church Cottage shares similar techniques and styles with other dwellings in the surrounding area, however the cottage displays a commemorative inscription indicating a

construction date of 1837, suggesting that Church Cottage is later than its neighbours are. A similar, but earlier house can be seen towards the south of Church Cottage, this is a very narrow and long building, and has been part of the local speculation suggesting that the rear of Church Cottage was extended. These two buildings although not sharing construction dates, do share similar characteristics.

The nature of both buildings and their close proximity to each other may indicate that a localised progression of building development originally influenced the larger and wider design of Church Cottage.

As to the stone built structure to the rear of the property, the unusual ground plan and incorporation into the footprint of Church Cottage, would imply that the structure predates the foundation of Church Cottage. However, Church Cottage is building of two faces, the main facade being constructed from regular undressed ashlar blocks; whereas, the rear of the property contains weathered and irregular sized stones. This pattern of construction is repeated in the



fabric of the rear extension, possibly indicating that the building is relatively contemporary with the construction of Church Cottage. Examination of the available historical information also confirms that the structure is later than Church Cottage as the 1839 parish map shows only one building present on the site. The exact date of the rear structure may never be known but the 1905 OS map indicates the extension had been built by this date.

## 6. WATCHING BRIEF – GEOTECHNICAL TEST PITS

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### 6.1 Results

The deposits encountered within the geotechnical test pits consisted of features associated with land drainage and evidence for a redundant streambed.

The general stratigraphy within the area encompassed by the tests pits consisted of a dark brown silty topsoil (avg 0.30m) over a band of orangey brown silty subsoil (avg 0.30m), with inclusion of brick fragments, charcoal and flecks of white limestone, this in turn overlay a heavy deposit of red brown clay (0.40m avg), the clay also contained inclusions of green mudstone and red brick fragments.

At the base of test pits 1, 2 and 3 a grey black organic deposit (0.20m+) represented the remains of a redundant streambed, aligned north-south (Insert Illus 9). Towards the southern boundary of the site, evidence for a culvert can be seen, suggesting that the original course of the stream was relocated in order to create the levelled area that forms the garden of Church Cottage.

### 6.2 Discussion

The results from the excavation of geotechnical test pits indicate that the footings of the new development will be within an area of made up ground, either having been formed as a by-product of the construction of Church Cottage or as a result of the culverting of the stream. Considering the amount of brick debris within the makeup of the levelling deposits, the latter is more likely, the deposits encountered probably representing re-deposited material used to level up the garden area of Church Cottage after the stream was moved.

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Kimber, M 2012 *Proposed Dwelling at Church Cottage, Little Dewchurch, Herefordshire; Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording & Archaeological Watching Brief*, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd.



## 8. APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 Photographic register

Shot	B/W	Col	Dig	Direction	Description	Shot	B/W	Col	Dig	Direction	Description
1	-	-	Y	N	Internal view of entrance lobby	33	Y	Y	Y	N	Internal of rear extension
2	-	-	Y	W	Internal view of front room	34	Y	Y	Y	E	Rear door
3	-	-	Y	W	Internal view of front room	35	Y	Y	Y	E	Lean-to and window
4	-	-	Y	N	Door into kitchen	36	Y	Y	Y	N	Front elevation and extension
5	-	-	Y	W	Internal detail of bay window construction	37	Y	Y	Y	N	Front elevation and extension
6	-	-	Y	S	Internal detail of bay window construction	38	Y	-	Y	-	Test pit 1
7	-	-	Y	W	Internal detail of bay window construction	39	Y	-	Y	-	Test pit 1
8	-	-	Y	W	Internal detail of front room	40	Y	-	Y	-	Test pit 1
9	-	-	Y	W	Internal detail of front room	41	Y	-	Y	-	Test pit 2
10	-	-	Y	W	Internal detail of front room	42	Y	-	Y	-	Test pit 2
11	-	-	Y	N	Internal detail of front room	43	Y	-	Y	-	Test pit 3
12	-	-	Y	E	Internal detail Kitchen	44	Y	Y	Y	-	Test pit 3
13	-	-	Y	N	Internal detail of kitchen cooker						
14	-	-	Y	W	Side door from kitchen						
15	-	-	Y	N	Kitchen window detail						
16	-	-	Y	E	Pantry window detail						
17	-	-	Y	E	Pantry window detail						
18	-	-	Y	S	Detail of internal wall construction						
19	-	-	Y	N	Internal detail showing staircase						
20	-	-	Y	N	Internal detail showing staircase						
21	-	-	Y	N	Internal detail of roof construction						
22	-	-	Y	W	Internal detail of bedroom						
23	Y	Y	Y	W	External east facing elevation						
24	Y	Y	Y	S	Detail of cat skid roof						
25	Y	Y	Y	S	Rear of property						
26	Y	Y	Y	S	Rear of property						
27	Y	Y	Y	S	Rear of property						
28	Y	Y	Y	N	Detail of stone built extension						
29	Y	Y	Y	E	Lean-to roof over rear door						
30	Y	Y	Y	N	Slot window in rear extension						
31	-	-	Y	S	Bathroom						
32	-	-	Y	S	Bathroom						







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