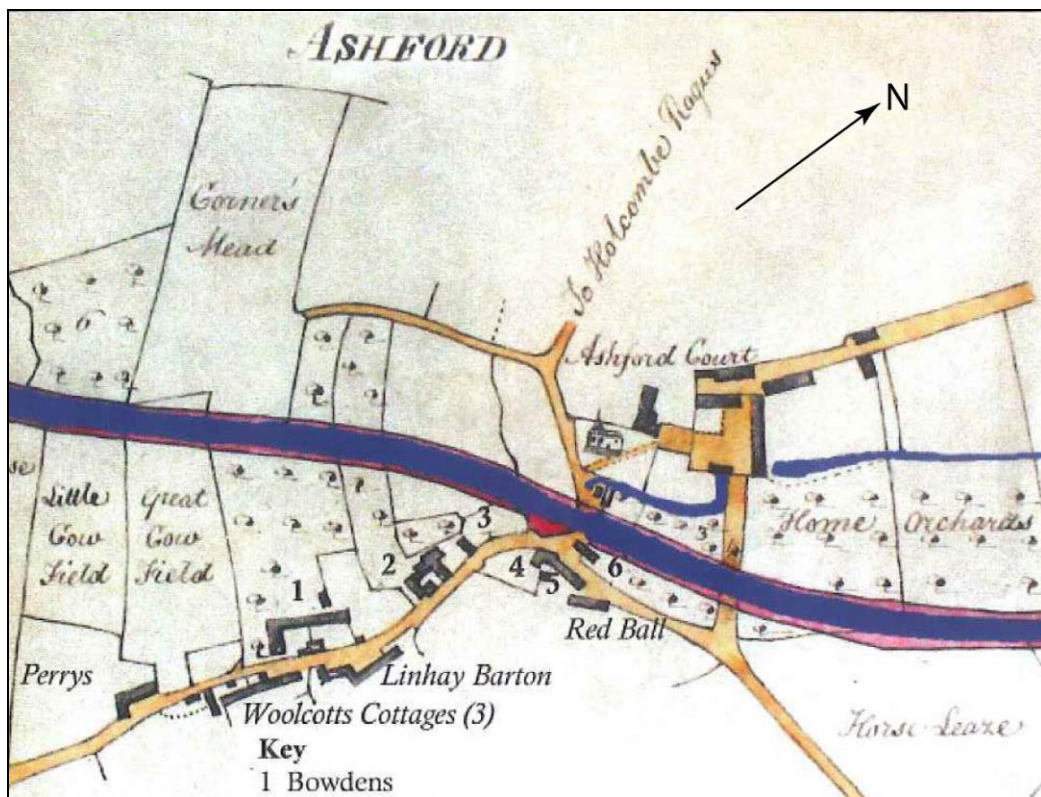


# BARNS at HIGHER AYSHFORD FARM BURLESCOMBE DEVON

Results of a Desk-Based Assessment  
&  
Historic Building Recording



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# **Barns at Higher Ayshford Farm Burlescombe Devon**

## **Results of a Desk-Based Assessment & Historic Building Recording**

*For*

Catherine Baddeley

*By*



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January 2013

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## *Summary*

*First mentioned in a Saxon land charter, the manor of Ayshford became, probably in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the seat of the eponymous Ayshford Family. In common with other prominent estates, medieval Ayshford acquired a private oratory or chapel at least as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century, though possibly earlier. Ayshford Court remained in the same family until the direct line of male descent died out in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. At this period the Ayshford estate became combined with that of the Sanford family who were joined by marriage to the Ayshfords. Under the Sanford name, Ayshford Court was leased to farming tenants, though the Ayshford-Sanford descendants took responsibility for the development of the farm buildings well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the development of the Grand Western Canal sliced through the Ayshford land, altering the topographical relationship of the former Court and farm. The property remained in the hands of the Sanford family until the 1920s.*

*The courtyard of buildings forming the farmyard to the east of Ayshford Court is the subject of this survey. This consists of a stable to the north, open-fronted sheds and gatehouse to the west, a modern pole barn and mill to the east and a lincay to the south. The majority of the standing buildings are of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, although remnants can be found of earlier structures; notably the gate house and the remains of the (Grade II\*) 16<sup>th</sup> century barn towards the centre of the yard that would have divided the area into an upper and lower yard. Only the open-fronted sheds, the gate house, the lincay and a modern pole barn have roofs the rest of the structures have been allowed to reach a seriously derelict state.*

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## Acknowledgements

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Catherine Baddeley (for access and information)

Martin Watts (for information and suggestions regarding the mill building)

## 1.0 Introduction

---

**Location:** Barns at Higher Ayshford Farm  
**Parish:** Burlescombe  
**District:** Mid Devon  
**County:** Devon  
**NGR:** ST 049152

### 1.1 Project Background

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Catherine Baddeley (the client) to undertake a desk-based assessment and historic building assessment of barns at Higher Ayshford Farm, Burlescombe, Devon.

### 1.2 Location and Topography

Higher Ayshford Farm consists of a courtyard of agricultural buildings terraced into a shallow south-facing slope on the north side of a wide valley to the east of Tiverton, with the 19<sup>th</sup> century Great Western Canal immediately to the south of the site. The site is associated with the adjacent Grade II\* listed house, Ayshford Court and a Grade I listed chapel, both of which are now in separate ownership.

### 1.3 Methodology

The desk-based research was undertaken by Terry Green in accordance with IfA guidelines (2008), using a range of sources including those held at the Devon Record Office, accessed online, and a history of Ayshford by Charles Scott-Fox.

The historic building recording was undertaken by Colin Humphreys and Emily Wapshott on 8th November 2012 and was carried out with reference to IfA (2008) and English Heritage (2006) guidelines on the assessment of standing buildings. Photographic and written records were produced.

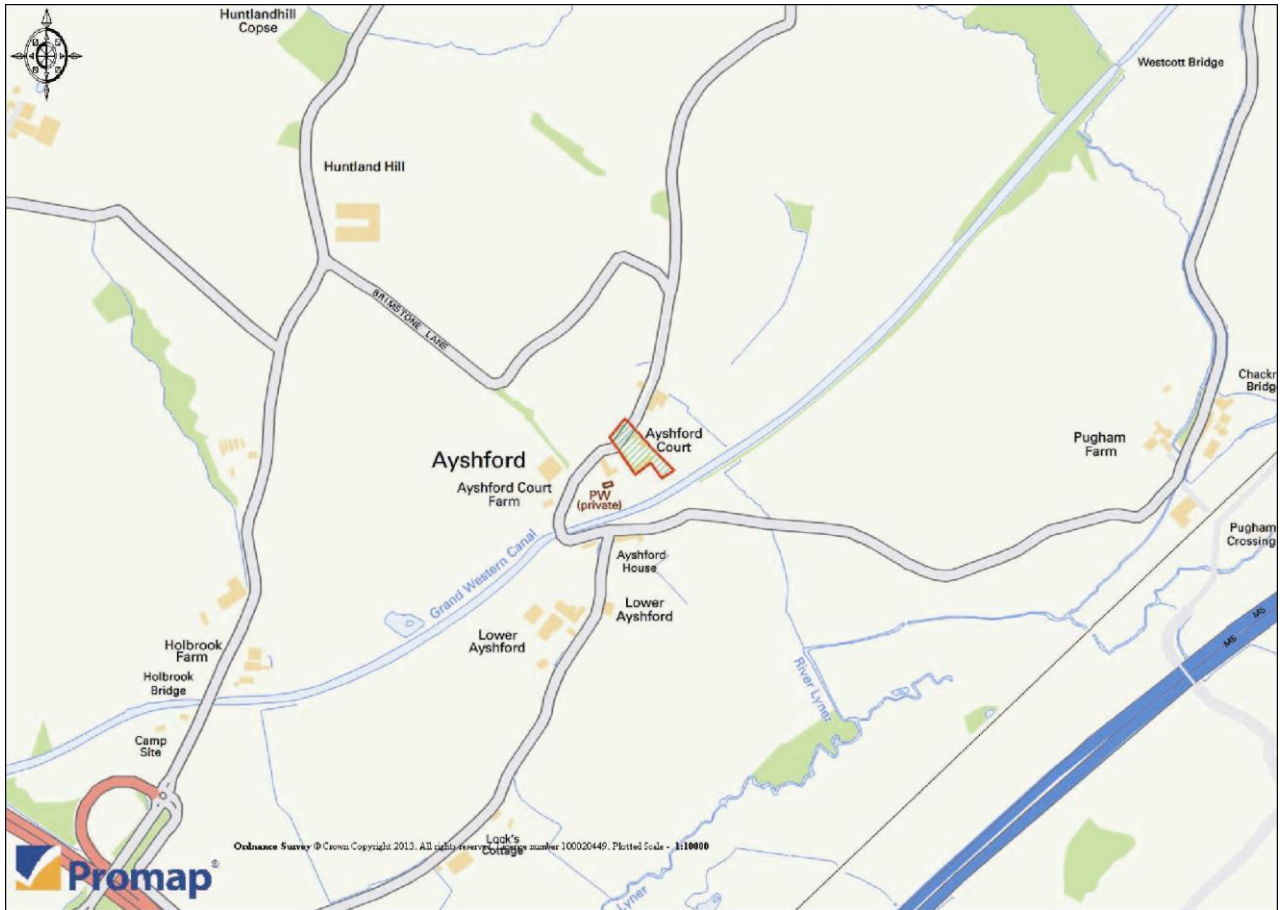


Figure 1: Location map (the site is indicated).



## 2.0 Results of the Desk-based Assessment

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### 2.1 Ayshford Court: The Evolution of the Estate

*A thorough history of the Ayshford family, Ayshford Court and chapel and the attached hamlet of Ayshford has been written and published by Charles Scott-Fox (2008) whose authorship is fully acknowledged as the basis of the following account.*

*Drawing on the published history, the purpose here is to provide a framework for the evolution of the buildings and the immediate estate.*

AD 958: King Edwy of Wessex granted by charter an estate of 2.5 hides comprising Escford (conventional West Saxon spelling Æscford) and Byohyll (Boehill) to Eadheah. It payed geld of 10 shillings. A further charter was granted in 1027.

AD 1086: The Domesday survey records that before the Conquest 'Aisseford' – an estate of one hide - had been held by Wulfweard. After the Conquest it was granted to Walter de Claville who had acquired an extensive holding of estates throughout Devon. Under Walter de Claville the estate was managed by Walter the Steward. The taxable value was now 20 shillings. The Exeter Domesday provides details of the holding, indicating that Walter had half a hide in demesne with one plough (Thorn and Thorn 1984). By 1086 therefore, there was a clearly defined area of land for the lord's own use and it is fair to assume that there was a residence at the heart of it.

AD 1160: At this date *Stephen de Esseford* gave land at Ayshford and Pugham to the newly founded abbey at Leigh Canonicorum (Canonsleigh). How Stephen came into possession is unknown; he may have been a descendant of Walter, assuming the name of the estate as a surname, or he may have acquired the estate by marriage. Since Canonsleigh was also a de Claville holding and since the descendants of Walter de Claville are known to have persisted into the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, it seems probable that at this date Stephen owed allegiance to a de Claville and that Ayshford was still a de Claville possession.

AD 1283: The connection with Canonsleigh was clearly maintained, as at this date a priest from Canonsleigh was appointed to officiate at the Ayshford chapel which must date from at least this period.

NB. If, as is likely, the chapel was a domestic oratory, then it follows that the lord must have had a house nearby.

13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century: When and how the Ayshford estate came fully into the possession of the resident *de Esseford* or *Ayshford* family is not known, but it appears that through these centuries the family grew in importance and influence, as their lands grew in extent.

Medieval Ayshford Court was described by Polwhele (*History of Devonshire 1793-1806*) as one of the finest houses in the West of England.

Late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> century: At the core of the existing house there appears to be a 16<sup>th</sup> century hall, perhaps representing a break with whatever earlier medieval structure stood on or near the site. This development – quite possibly a complete rebuilding of the house - has been associated with William Ayshford (1456-1508) and his son Nicholas (1485-1557).

*Features suggestive of a late medieval hall house include soot blackening of the roof timbers above the former hall (west wing), jointed cruck construction of the roof of the west wing and a two-light rectangular oak-pegged window with ovolo moulding and sunken spandrels set low in the wall to the right of the former main entrance.*

A refurbishment of the chapel is likewise associated with Nicholas Ayshford as well as his grandson Roger (1534-1611).

*Nicholas Ayshford may have ceiled the open hall and built the fire-place and chimney on the west wing.*

AD 1584: Roger Ayshford came into possession of the estate and added a wing to the Court on its south-east.

AD 1584 – 1669: Roger's son Henry (1576-1650) expanded the Ayshford holdings even further, determined to establish himself as one of the principal personalities of Devon.

*Evidence of these works, noted by Raleigh Radford in the 1950s, includes a now obscured date stone with the date 1594 and details of the principal bedroom. Also three three-light rectangular mullioned windows on the south side of the first floor appear to be of (early) 17<sup>th</sup> century date.*

*An elaborate moulded plaster ceiling in the 'Court Room' bears the date 1631.*

Henry had three children. Arthur (1601-1645), John (1603-1654) and Mary (1607-1662). On his death the estate passed to Arthur and then to his son Henry who died at the age of 22. On his death it passed to John's son Arthur whose son John died without live issue in 1690. John's will made provision for the repair of the chapel and – by dint of an entail – handed the estate to John Sanford, descendant of Mary who had married Henry Sanford of Nynhead. Thus the estate passed out of the direct Ayshford line to the family subsequently to be named Ayshford-Sanford.

c.AD 1700: John Sanford consolidated to himself all rights to the Ayshford estate, but living at Nynhead, consigned Ayshford Court to tenancies. Tenancy agreements among the Sanford papers include detailed descriptions of the 'barton of Ayshford'. It is probably safe to assume that from this date Ayshford Court acquires a purely farming function.

AD 1706 and 1713: Leases of these dates include mention of the 'newly built stable and shippon.

Mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century: William Sanford further improved the farm buildings, removing or renovating old wooden structures and replacing them with cob and stone barns.

Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century: After the Napoleonic Wars William Ayshford-Sanford built new barns at Ayshford as well as two small extensions to the Court including modern sanitation. He also restored the chapel windows and possibly replaced a wooden cupola with the bell-cote now to be seen on the western gable.

AD 1833: At this date Edward Ayshford-Sanford succeeded to the estate. During his tenure, principally between 1847 and 1860, he restored the chapel, extended the west wing of the Court and added buildings to the complex of farm buildings including a barn on the south side (sic).

Beyond these dates, the estate undertook only repairs.

1930s: In the late 1930s the Ayshford estate of 2000 acres was divided. What was now known as Ayshford Court Farm was bought by Charles Home Smith and so passed out of the possession of the family that had held it since the Norman period. Only the chapel and the chapel field were retained by the family.

1939-45: During WW2 the house was divided into two separate dwellings.

1970s: The farm was divided in two, Ayshford Court and Lower Ayshford on either side of the canal.

2003: The house was sold to a developer and extensively renovated and refurbished. It is now once again a single dwelling.

## 2.2 The Grand Western Canal

The early 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the Grand Western Canal which passes to the south-east of Ayshford Court had a profound effect on the topographic relationships of the house and the farm. The purpose of the canal was to create a link between Topsham and Taunton, joining the rivers Tone and Exe and enabling the transport of cargo from the English Channel to the Bristol Channel without sailing round Lands End. The first survey was completed in 1769, but plans were shelved until the 1790s when an enabling act was passed in Parliament. The wars with France held up any further development until in the period 1808-10 negotiations were restarted involving William Ayshford Sanford through whose Nynhead and Ayshford estates the route would pass. The route of the canal which was finalised in 1811 passed between Ayshford Court and the village of Ayshford, cutting off the historic access to the Court from the east and south-east and precipitating changes in the configuration of the buildings.

## 2.3 The Cartographic Record

Three principal maps provide a record of the configuration of the buildings and the surrounding landscape from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century

### 2.3.1 An Estate Map of 1760

This 1760 estate map (Figure 2) provides a view of the immediate estate prior to the construction of the Grand Western Canal. The map clearly shows the chapel in its own enclosure with a footpath leading off the road to Holcombe Rogus and crossing it from south-west to north-east where it meets the south-west corner of what appears to be a small rectangular court or courtyard. On the north-west side of the chapel enclosure and contiguous to the small court or courtyard is the main house consisting principally of a long wing lying south-east north-west with a smaller wing projecting north-eastwards from its south-eastern end. No further detail is evident.

Joined to the small court or courtyard on its north-east is a much larger court (now Higher Ayshford Farm) which, at this date, we may assume to be a farmyard. The north-east side of the farmyard is completely taken up with a long building on a south-east north-west axis. On the north-west side of the yard and separated from the long building by an opening or passage is a building on a south-west north-east axis separating the farmyard from a track coming in from the north-east and apparently terminating. Access to the track is via the passage described above. On the opposite side of the track is a long building with a somewhat narrower extension at its south-western end. This track provides access to the farm buildings from the north-east (from the direction of Westleigh). What must have been the other major access is provided by a road or track coming from the south-west and entering the farmyard at its north-east corner. Apart from the footpath crossing the chapel enclosure, this was apparently the only way by which to gain access to Ayshford Court from the south or east.

In the eastern corner of the farmyard the map shows an uncoloured square (the rest of the yard is coloured ochre). The nature of this is not clear, but it may have been a pond.

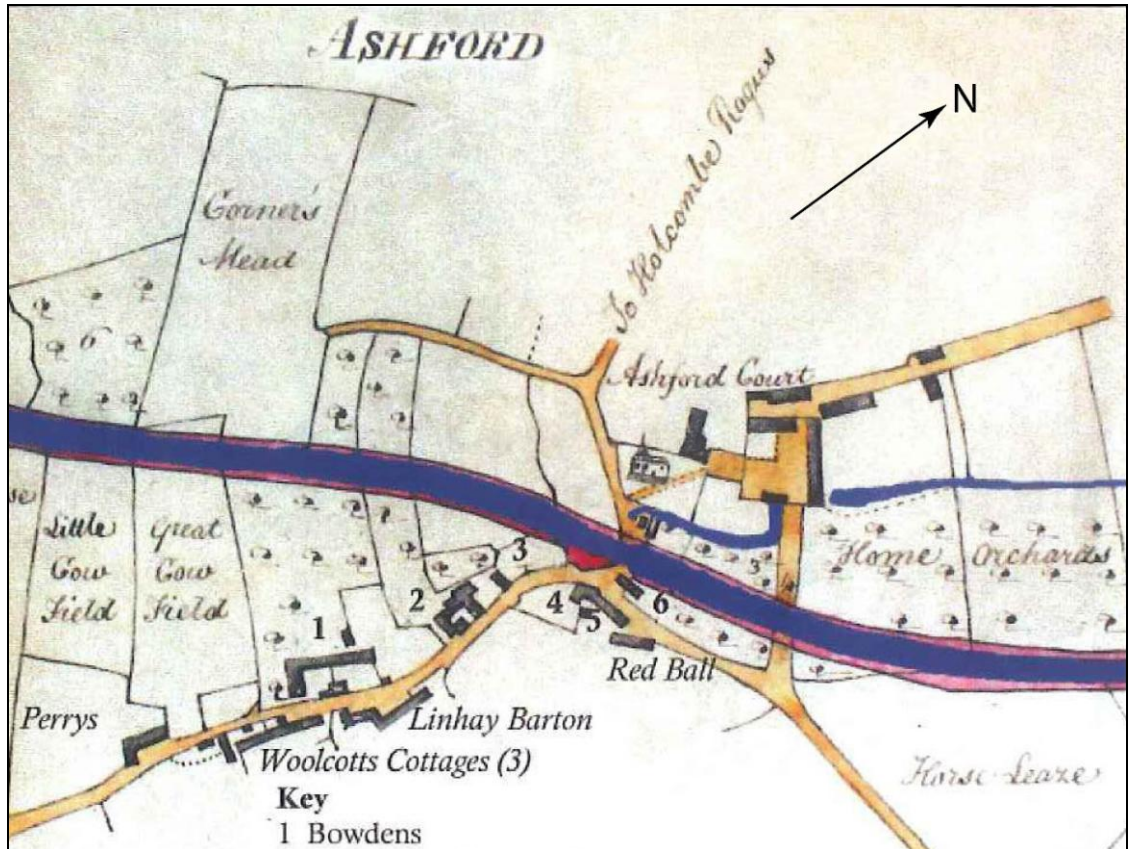


Figure 2: Extract from an estate map of c.1760, subsequently used to trace the projected course of the Grand Western Canal (the dark blue line). (Extracted from C.Scott-Fox, Figure 42)

Approaching the eastern corner of the farmyard from the north-east is a watercourse which widens into a long pond as it nears the long building on that side of the yard. The water appears to plunge underneath the building and the yard at the point where the access from the south-east enters the yard. Lying on the south-eastern edge of the yard and immediately adjacent to the access point is a small building beneath which the water re-emerges to flow away south-eastwards then south-westwards along the edge of an orchard. Skirting then the south-eastern boundary of the chapel enclosure the water passes immediately besides a small building on a south-east north-west axis with a smaller building beside it on the east. The water then disappears beneath the Holcombe Rogus road.

As for the fieldscape, there is evidence to the south-west of remnants of a medieval strip field system in the shape of long, parallel curving boundaries (located to the west of Building No.2).

### 2.3.2 The Tithe Map of 1839

The tithe map provides evidence of changes within the preceding 80 years (Figure 3). Probably the most significant development was the building of the Grand Western Canal which had sliced through the immediate estate cutting off the approach to the house from the south and east. Where the approach road had formerly lain, an orchard (number 959 on the tithe map) had been extended. The house could now only be approached from the south-west. The road to Holcombe Rogus also having been cut, a new 'accommodation' bridge had been constructed across the canal somewhat farther to the south-west. Access to Ayshford Court was now via a new road joining the bridge to Brimstone Lane (the Holcombe Rogus road). The approach from the north-east appears to have been extended to meet the new road at its junction with Brimstone Lane. The new extension allows access to the farm buildings from the Holcombe

Rogus road entering by way of a small enclosure numbered 958 on the tithe map, i.e. part and parcel of 'House, Garden, Barns, Barton etc.'

At this date the map seems to indicate that the main wing of the house had been extended to the northwest. This extension would have been the work of Edward Ayshford Sanford. The footprint shown on the map also suggests a porch on the south-west side of the original building which may now have been the principal entry by way of a path coming from the south-west (not shown on this map, but recorded on the later Ordnance Survey map – see below). On the north-east side of the house a small enclosure is shown in the angle of the two wings, probably a garden. As before, the north-east wing meets the small court or courtyard on the north-east side of which a small building is shown. This is presumably the gatehouse. This was not shown on the earlier map, not necessarily because it was not present, but because it was not a functioning building.

At this date the farmyard had a new building on south-west side adjoining the south corner of the yard. Where there had formerly been the enigmatic uncoloured square were now two new buildings, one on its north-east side- apparently freestanding - and one on its south-west, also freestanding in that it was not joined to the long building on the north-west side of the yard. This latter appears unchanged since 1760. On the north-east side of the yard was a long building as before. However, the mapmaker has shown this to comprise two elements, a long substantial building taking up two thirds of that side of the yard with at its south-east end a narrower open-fronted lincage(?). The small building that formerly stood where the water emerged from beneath the yard had now been removed. Buildings outside the yard on the north-east appear unchanged.

The water arrangements show no change at this date. However, the mill building now stood isolated from the road, although it may have retained access by way of a remnant of the now defunct Holcombe Rogus road.

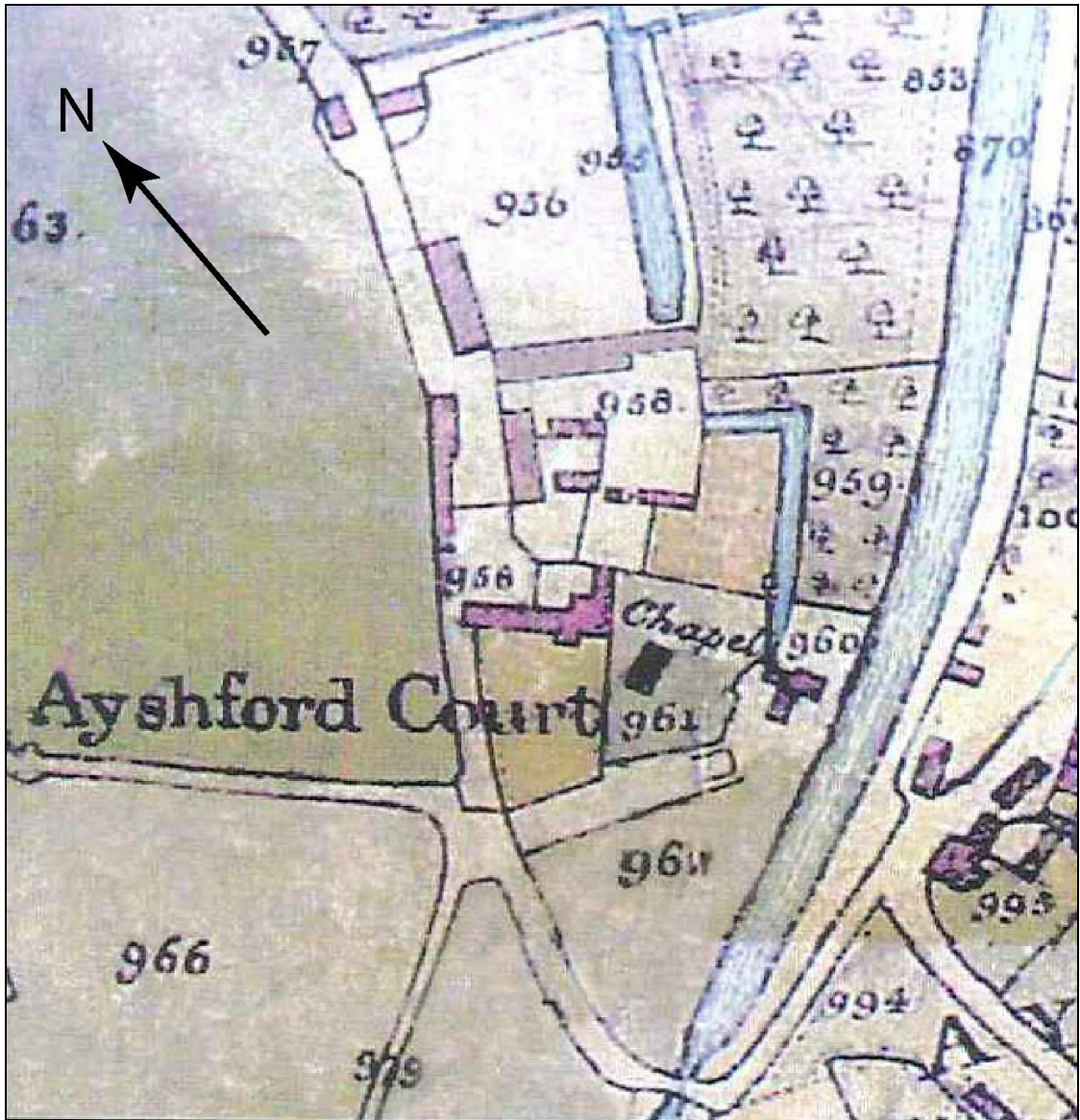


Figure 3: Extract from the Burlescombe tithe map of 1839 (Extracted from C.Scott-Fox, Figure 26).

### 2.3.3 The Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> (1889) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1905) Maps

The Ordnance Survey First Edition (1889) and Second Edition (1905) maps at a scale of 1:2500 (Figures 4 & 5) provide evidence of later 19<sup>th</sup> century developments within the farmyard. Firstly it is clear that between 1839 and 1889 the millhouse had been done away with and the leat leading to it had been covered over. However, the long header pond north-east of the farmyard was still open and probably in use to provide power. The 1905 map records sluices at the point where the water meets the north-east corner of the farmyard and a small feature shown in the very corner of the yard most probably represents the wheel pit which is to be seen there today. Other changes in this area include the creation of a new open-fronted building backing onto the south-eastern wall of the yard and set within an enclosure the boundaries of which roughly follow the now hidden course of the leat together with what was formerly the north-eastern boundary of the Chapel Yard (961 on the 1839 tithe map). It is clear from the 1905 map that the element recorded on earlier maps as a north-western extension of the main house at Ayshford Court was treated as a separate entity, since an internal division is shown. This element appears by this date to have acquired an additional wing at its south-east end.

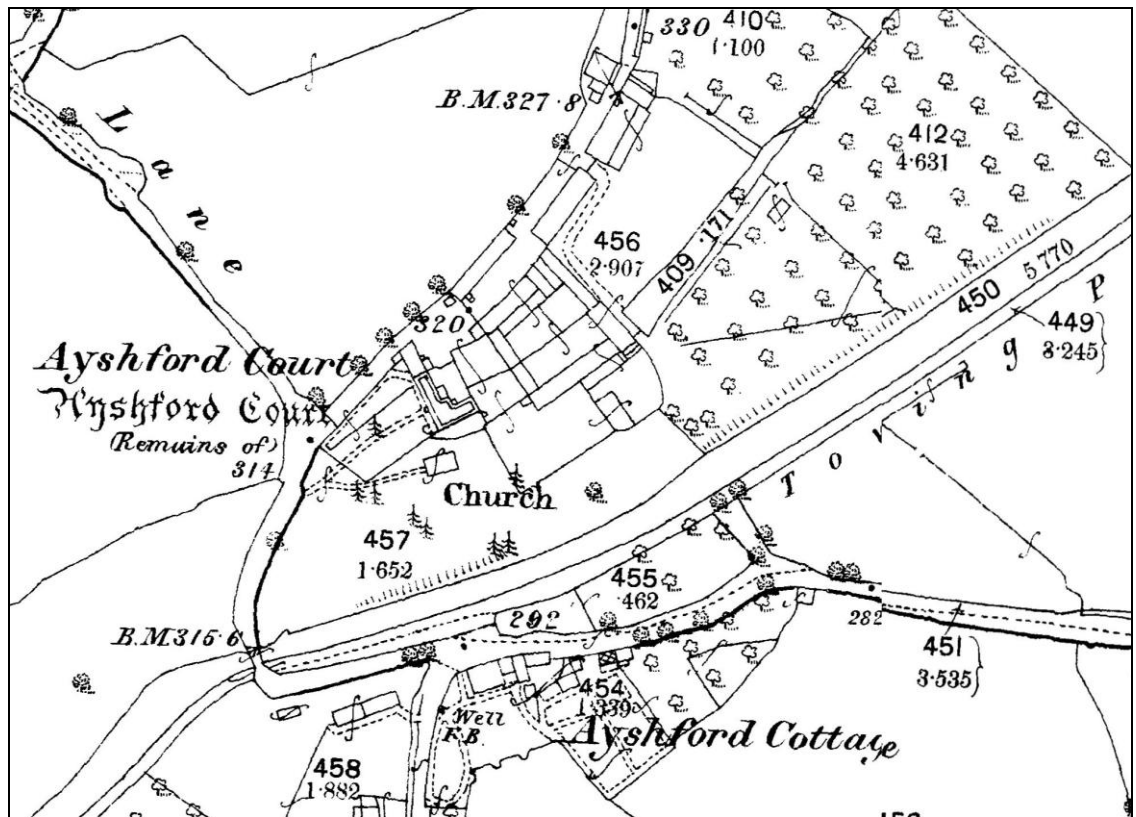


Figure 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey First Edition map at 1:2500 published 1889. North is to top.

Apart from an opening at the north-east corner, the farmyard is shown on these Ordnance Survey maps as fully enclosed. Along the south-eastern side is an entirely new long building abutting at its north-east end a structure now standing where before there was an open-fronted linhay(?). Abutting to the north-east of this is a long building of relatively shallow depth and open-fronted, apparently also a new structure. The building formerly shown free-standing within the yard is no longer there and the other former free-standing building along the southwest edge of the yard has now been replaced by a structure occupying the whole south-western edge of the yard (apparently incorporating the gatehouse). The building on the north-east side of the yard – seemingly the most constant among all the changes of the preceding 140 years – has at this date what is probably a lean-to extension along its south-east side. Outside the farmyard to the north-west and to the north buildings remain much as before, though what was a linhay on the north-west side of the track may have been built out into a solid-fronted structure

All these various developments were very probably the work of Edward Ayshford Sanford between 1847 and 1860, as referred to above.

#### 2.3.4 20<sup>th</sup> Century Developments

During the 20th century, according to the historic notes above, developments were largely a matter of repair. Post-1945 evidence in the form of, eg. large scale OS mapping of c.1970 suggests loss of structures, principally initially on the north-east side of the farmyard where the open-fronted structure shown in 1905 had by this date disappeared. During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century it seems to have been a story of decay and further loss, so that today, for instance, the building on the north-east side of the yard, which had survived 19<sup>th</sup> century changes now has no roof.

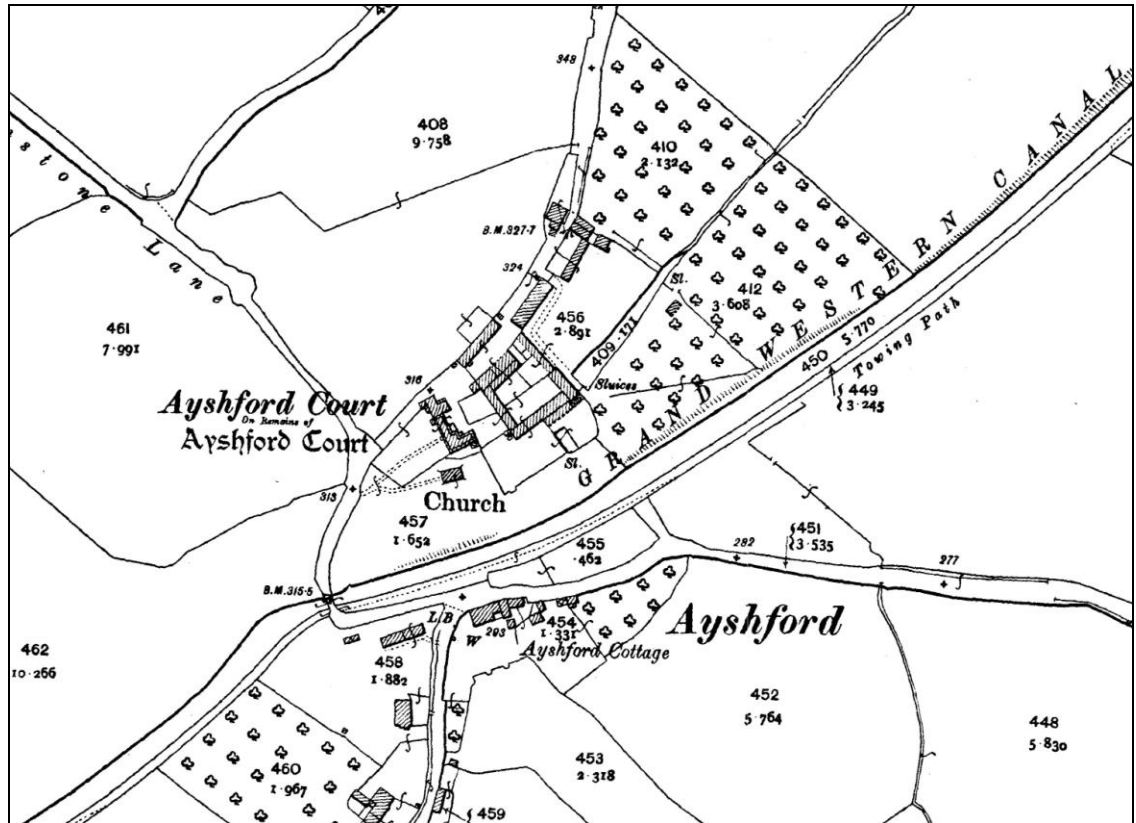


Figure 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Second Edition map at 1:2500 published 1905. North is to top.

## 2.4 The Mill and Use of Water Power

The use of water power at Ayshford Court is evident from at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The maps of 1760 and 1839 provide evidence of long header ponds to the north-east of the farmyard and again to the south-east, the two linked by a clearly man-made channel running beneath the east corner of the yard. The assertion by C. Scott-Fox that water was supplied to these ponds by run-off from the fields and was therefore poorly suited to running machinery seems unfounded since it is clear from the OS maps that the ponds were fed by a stream running from the north side of Huntland Hill to the north.

The quality and quantity of the water supply is borne out by the wording of a notice that appeared in the *Sherborne Mercury* on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1815. This advertised to let a 'capital dairy and grazing farm called Ayshford Court Barton'. Among the virtues of the property was 'a capital set of mills and threshing machine on the premises, with a never failing supply of water...' In 1815 therefore there was a mill as well as water operated machinery, which is at a very early date for Devon.

This ties in with the cartographic evidence in two ways. The area numbered 960 on the tithe map of 1839 is identified in the tithe apportionment as 'Mill House, Linhay and Garden'. The 'mill house' is evidently the T-shaped building on the site. It is apparent from the tithe map that the course of the water, as it emerges from beneath the farmyard, has been engineered as a leat feeding a long pond which narrows as it approaches the mill house forming a choke point which would speed the flow as it enters the launder of a working mill. That which was represented in this location on the map of 1760 was presumably the same. C. Scott-Fox suggests that this mill was built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, but, as Martin Watts has commented,



there would be no good reason to create a mill at this date since there were other mills close by. An earlier manorial 'customary' mill is therefore likely.

Quite intriguing in light of the 1815 advertisement is the presence on the map of 1760 of a small building sitting over the point where the water emerges from beneath the farmyard. The building's location here may be coincidental, but the possibility exists that some sort of water-driven device was housed here. This is unlikely to have been a threshing machine, since the mechanism was not invented until c.1780, but other uses of water power cannot be excluded.

Reference in the advertisement of 1815 to a water-powered threshing machine raises the question of where it might have been housed. The small building mentioned above is no longer present on the map of 1839; although there is no way of knowing whether it was still there in 1815. If there was a water-driven threshing machine in 1839 it may have been in the open-fronted building in the east corner of the yard.

On the first and second edition OS maps of 1889 (Figure 5) and 1905 (Figure 6) the mill house is absent, so that what was quite possibly a functioning grist mill in 1839 had been demolished during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, presumably as farms ceased to mill their own grain, sending it instead to the industrial mills which were developing in the 1860s to 1880s.

On the other hand the now roofless three-storey building now standing in the north-east part of the yard has a wheel-pit beside it (particularly evident on the map of 1905), the wheel having been removed in the 1960s. The OS maps record sluices where the water enters on the north-east side of the building. According to C. Scott-Fox a plaque remains attached to a stone pillar indicating building or rebuilding in 1860, which makes it the work of Edward Ayshford Sanford. Martin Watts suggests that this would be 'a good date for a 'farm wheel' – the wheel driving machinery for threshing and producing animal feed for use on the home farm'. Whether or not this building was also a grist mill in the traditional sense is open to question.

### 3.0 Results of the Historic Building Survey

#### 3.1 General Description of the Buildings

The buildings forming the farmyard to the east of Ayshford Court are of mixed forms of stone and brick construction some with corrugated iron roofing others in a semi-derelict state. The farmyard is formed by a stable to the north, open-fronted sheds and gatehouse to the west, a modern pole barn and mill to the east and linhay to the south. The listed structures; the stable (grade II) to the north and the remains of a former Grade II\* barn (demolished in the 1990s) set near the centre of the yard and the unlisted mill have been allowed to go derelict and survive as walls but without any roof structures.

The courtyard is accessed via a track from a small parish road, and passes through the northern end of the site to the rear of Ayshford Court. Field access is gained through a gateway in the north-east corner and via a large doorway in the southern wall of the long linhay to the south. Access to the rear of Ayshford Court house is through a brick and stone built gatehouse to the west of the courtyard.



Figure 6: Buildings to the south-west of the courtyard, viewed from the north-east.

In the centre of the courtyard is a large L-shaped section of rubble stone walling which encloses some standing ruined walls and piles of rubble; the remains of the barn.

The courtyard has recently been cleared of vegetation and some historic cobbled surfaces have been revealed. These are of two distinct forms, one of small slate stone cobbles and another which includes river pebbles and quartz stone. To the north the farmyard is surfaced with modern cement.

#### 3.2 The Building Survey

Note: The buildings have been numbered as shown on the attached plans: Buildings 1-3 are the stable block; Building 4 is the standing 20<sup>th</sup> century pole barn; Building 5 is the mill building; Building 6 is the long southern linhay; Building 7 & 9 the open-fronted building to the west; Building 8 the gatehouse and Building 10; the demolished barn in the centre.

### 3.2.1 Building 1 – Part of the Stable Block

This and buildings 2 and 3 are built against a wall of earth bonded roughly coursed stone; possibly part of an earlier building or perimeter wall to a courtyard.

The eastern part of the range is a ruined, roofless stone-built two storey building of rubble stone construction (Figure 7); the gable to the east and the front wall to the south both appear to be later additions to the wall to the north. The south wall contains two small window openings to either side of a central doorway, all with stone segmental arches. These openings have deep splays, patched with brick, with pegged timber window frames and timber lintels. The doorway has brick and stone quoins, a pegged door frame and timber lintel. Above the ground floor windows are a pair of loading doors.

Only parts of the first floor and the roof structure (as described in the listing) survive and much of the detail has decayed due to prolonged exposure to the elements. There is no internal partitioning surviving between Building 1 and Building 2.



Figure 7: The south elevation of buildings 1 and 2, the former Stable Block, viewed from the south-west (2m scale).

### 3.2.2 Building 2 – Pole Barn or Former Linhay; part of the Stable Block

A ruined, roofless stone-built structure, formerly an open-fronted pillar barn or linhay which has had its south wall infilled with rubble stonework during a later phase; the south wall abuts both Buildings 1 and 3. To the west is a rubble stone partition wall dividing Building 2 from Building 3 with a blocked doorway, with a narrow timber lintel set into the centre. This wall appears to have straight joins to both the north and south walls showing it to be a later insertion. The south wall has rubble stone infill between substantial timber posts and cross beams, with ‘mortise and tenon’ joints visible above where the roof trusses would have socketed into the wall posts. Small ‘keeps’ have been built into the rubble stone infill and there

is evidence of plaster and whitewash surviving in places. What can be seen of the floor under the debris suggests it is cobbled.

The ground floor openings in the south wall consist of a door opening with a narrow timber lintel at the western end and a wide window to the east. Parts of the chamfered timber window frame survive; with pegged joints and two timber mullions forming three lights with diamond set iron glazing bars. Timber ledged shutters survive in part. The first floor has a pair of loading doors. There are shallow splays to the windows and loading doors at the western end. The centre of the south wall has partly collapsed at first floor level (see Figure 8).



Figure 8: The south elevation of Buildings 2 & 3, viewed from the south-east (2m scale).

The first floor level is high within this building, its cross beams very substantial, they have however suffered significant weathering but may have formerly been chamfered. The cross beams sit on pads in the wall with the floor joists running between, only one survives against the north wall and this is laid flat, suggesting an early date for this structure. The rear north wall contains a series of sockets in the stonework; possibly joist holes for the first floor of an earlier building.

### 3.2.3 Building 3 - Stable Block

A ruined roofless stone-built, possibly formerly two storey, building which adjoins Building 2 to the east. The building appears to be divided in to two compartments separated by a thick stone partition wall that has a door opening against the south wall. Some of the internal faces of the walls are plastered. The south wall has a single opening to the west, possibly a window, with a timber lintel; this is partly obscured by a heavy fall of stone debris. To the east there is a door opening with a stone threshold and the possible base of a former window opening, again the standing remains are largely obscured by debris (Figure 9). The west wall may also contain a window opening but is obscured by overgrowth. The north wall appears to be part of the

large stone perimeter wall. There is a clear build line to the east between the remains of the south wall of Building 3 and the adjoining south wall of Building 2.

Elements of a roof structure survive within the rubble and debris that fills the building; possibly including the remains of a jointed cruck truss blade.



Figure 9: The south elevation of Building 3, viewed from the south (2m scale).

A large block of masonry juts out to the track from the front (south) wall of this building at the western corner, with a clear build line between; this stonework displays dressed stone blocks forming quoins to its exterior face. The block of masonry also appears to lie on a slightly different alignment and may be associated with the large perimeter wall which survives to the north and east of the courtyard or perhaps an earlier building or structure of a different phase. How this stonework relates to the standing building it adjoins is not immediately obvious.

#### 3.2.4 Building 4 – Pole Barn

A one and a half storey 20<sup>th</sup> century open-fronted pole barn positioned in the centre of the east side of the courtyard, built up against the substantial perimeter stone wall to the east and abutting Building 5 to the south. To the north of the pole barn is a demolished concrete block building and an area of raised concrete surfaces. The pole barn is constructed of re-used telegraph poles, with a concrete block wall to the north, with corrugated sheeting upper portion and the north wall of Building 5 providing the southern side, it is open to the courtyard (Figure 10). The roof structure is timber with corrugated iron sheeting. The substantial perimeter wall which forms the east side of this building is of fine quality coursed tightly-packed faced stone blocks in an earthen bond. There is several lime mortar and cement bonded elements of rubble stone repair to the wall. The wall runs down to the north wall of Building 5, where it has been truncated; elements of the internal face of this substantial stone wall c. 1-1.5m in width, have collapsed revealing a densely packed stone core with heavy earthen bonding.



Figure 10: The west elevation of Building 4, abutting Building 5 to the south, viewed from the west.

### 3.2.5 Building 5 – Mill Building

A three-storey stone-built building forming the south-east corner of the courtyard with a large stone wall lined wheel pit to the south. An inserted wall divides the interior of the building in to two compartments however there are no internal floors or roof structure that may aid the understanding of the former layout of the building. Large sockets for the floor structure can be seen at both first and second floor height and the wall reduces slightly in width at the second floor forming a ledge. The southern part of the ground floor has fine quality brick paving.

The building has lost most of its western wall, to the farmyard side, with two large openings now framed with concrete block repairs (Figure 11). At the southern end of this wall at ground floor level, giving access to Building 6, are two doorways with pegged timber frames with heavy timber lintels and a third opening, adjacent to the opening to the farmyard, that has been blocked with concrete blocks (Figure 12). The central doorway has a brick threshold, with a door of even width planks with strap hinges and an iron bolt. The door to the south has random width planking with strap hinges and evidence of a timber latch. A large stub of wall projects into the interior of the building between this pair of doorways.

There are two door openings at first floor level; the doorway to the north is a large forced opening that has been rebuilt with stone and brick jambs with an angled frame and lintel. The doorway to the south is a narrow opening off-set from the doorway below.

The mill appears to be abutted by (earlier than) Building 4 (the 20<sup>th</sup> century pole barn) and to abut Building 6 (the early/mid 19<sup>th</sup> century linhay).



Figure 11: The open west elevation of Building 5, showing the central partition wall, viewed from the west (2m scale).



Figure 12: The west wall of Building 5, showing openings into Building 4, viewed from the north-east (2m scale).

The rubble stone northern gable wall stands to three storey height with surviving internal plaster to the first floor with one opening, a narrow doorway, in the ground floor against the

east wall (Figure 13). This doorway has a large timber lintels and a brick threshold but is partially obstructed by a pillar of the adjacent Building 4.



Figure 13: The three storey north gable of building 5, viewed from the south-west (2m scale).

The long east wall of the building is of rubble stone, plastered for the majority of the first floor, except the northern end which is exposed stone. To the northern end of the wall at ground floor level there is a blocked arched opening within the northern partition. This has a segmental stone arch and the opening is partly blocked with brick, stone and a re-used timber door. This large low-level opening suggests the function of this partitioned ground floor space could have been a root store; with the doorway in the north wall providing access to a feed passage for an earlier building, later replaced by Building 4. To the south end of the east wall between ground and first floor level is a large doorway with a rough segmental stone arch and plank door with strap hinges.

The south gable wall is of a stone rubble construction with a heavy use of lime mortar. There are six symmetrically placed window openings, two to each storey and one small opening to the gable apex; the windows are graded in height, getting smaller as the storeys rise (Figure 14). All the openings have rough segmental stone arches with chamfered pegged frames, timber lintels and sills. The windows are two light, with a central chamfered timber mullion and iron glazing bars. On the ground floor in the centre of the wall is a square opening with timber framing and a double flat segmental brick arch. This has a boarded timber shutter. Either side of the opening are timber lined alcoves, above which is a long narrow timber lintel with four small sockets; this is presumably the fittings for the mill wheel which was situated in the adjacent wheel pit





Figure 14: The south elevation of Building 5, with wheel pit, viewed from the south (2m scale).

### 3.2.6 Wheel pit

The wheel pit is against the south gable of Building 5 (Figure 14), and is bounded to the south, east and west by rubble stone walls in a lime mortar, showing some repairs and rebuilt sections (Figure 15).



Figure 15: The view into the wheel pit.

### 3.2.7 Building 6 – Linhay

The long range to the south of the farmyard; an open-fronted two-storey linhay adjacent to the mill building (Figure 16); this and the open-fronted sheds to the east are of one build. The linhay has had its first floor removed.

The north open-fronted elevation faces onto the farmyard, the roof structure is supported on large stone-built pillars which are evenly spaced along the length of the elevation. These are built with a rounded curve to the interior and are flat to the exterior.

The pillars also supported the large elm floor joists which carried the plank floor of the loft/feed store; these too have been cut off, with only stubs remaining in some pillars or in the south wall. The western end of the north wall is solid where building 6 and building 7 adjoin, there is a small door opening in the wall against the west gable-end, with a narrow timber lintel and plank door, ledged to the rear, with strap hinges. The south wall is rubble stone heavily mortared to its internal face. The rubble stone western gable has a small window opening or air vent in the apex, with steep sloping sides and set with a timber pegged frame.



Figure 16: The eastern end of Building 6, viewed from the north-east (2m scale).

There is a stone partition to the east end of the linhay forming two compartments (Figure 17). One to the east is full height and has been converted to a grain store, with plastered walls and loft above, with fixed grain bins. The compartment has a door to the north into the courtyard and one to the west into Building 6; both doors are plank, ledged to the rear in pegged timber frames. Surviving cobbled floors can be viewed down the length of the building. The roof structure is formed of (13<sup>1</sup>) scissor trusses, with pegged mortice and tenon joints to the apex and spiked joints to the truss blades and scissor struts, the ends of which are turned over on the rear face (Figure 18). There are tie-beams as well as scissor struts for added strength and three sets of modern purlins to each side. The trusses rest on timber pads built into the wall to the south and on pillars to the north; there is no surviving ridge pole and the roof is of replacement corrugated iron sheeting.

<sup>1</sup> Access could not be gained above the compartments to the east to confirm truss numbers within this area



Figure 17: The north elevation at the eastern end of Building 6, viewed from the north (2m scale).



Figure 18: The roof structure of Building 6, showing the scissor brace trusses, viewed from the east.

The south wall of the linhay is abutted by a modern lean-to structure, built between two standing rubble stone walls, which may represent the remains of an earlier lean-to. The door to the lean-to in the south wall has a flat double brick segmental arch. To the western end of the south wall there is a second doorway of similar form but this boarded over.

### 3.2.8 Walls south of Building 6

To the south of the Building 6 is a grassed area that is enclosed by stone walls to the east and south, with a later garden wall to the west side. The east wall is of fine quality coursed stone, with faced blocks in an earthen bond, the west is a semi-coursed rubble stone in a lime mortar. There are a number of partially demolished walls or ruins beneath the grass, which run parallel to the outside walls. This wall to the south is a largely fine quality structure of coursed faced blocks, in an earthen bond, *c.* 1m-1.5m wide. The wall to the east turns on a right angle to form a square enclosure, contiguous with the south wall (Figure 19). To the east side the wall has been heavily repaired around the gateway, patched with concrete blocks to the north face and rebuilt partially in rubble stone; these repair slightly obscure the angle of the eastern half of the south wall, making it off-set from the opposing west side of the gateway and the curving profile of the possible defences is truncated by the repairs. To the west side of the gateway/entrance the wall curves out, forming a wide semi-circular section of wall, *c.* 3m wide in diameter, with a wall thickness of *c.* 1m-1.5m. The internal face of this curve appears splayed and straighter and there is a significant amount of grassed-over rubble within the structure. There is a large stone built shaft which could be a drain or culvert which may have been within the curving structure, however damage to the wall and its eventual truncation here make confirming a relationship hard. An integral section of stone wall of the same construction runs north from the western edge of the gateway/entrance, framing or walling in the opening.



Figure 19: Remnants of walls; south of Building 6 viewed from the south-east.

### 3.2.9 Building 7 – Open-fronted shed

Building 7 is a single-storey open-fronted shed, lying north-south to the west of the farmyard. It appears to be integral with Building 6 to the south and is built up against Building 8 to the north (Figure 20). The south gable end is formed of the north face of Building 6, with an interlinking doorway to the west side with a timber lintel and a beaded plank door hung on strap hinges. The long west rear wall is of rubble stone construction with a blocked doorway towards the northern end, blocked with brickwork, formerly giving access to the rear of Ayshford Court. The north gable end is formed of the south wall of Building 8.

The roof is of four bays with three A-frame trusses, with pegged ‘mortice and tenon’ joints to the apex and spiked joints to the truss blades and tie-beam. The central truss has a larger tie-

beam which is socketed into the central stone-built pillar bracing the building. There are two sets of modern purlins to each pitch of the roof which is covered with corrugated plastic. The floor appears to be of stone cobbles.



Figure 20: The east elevation of Buildings 7 & 8, viewed from the east (2m scale).

### 3.2.10 Building 8 – Gatehouse

Two-storey brick and rubble stone construction ‘gatehouse’ building lying to the west of the courtyard between two single-storey open-fronted sheds (see Figure 20). The building displays several clear phases of build appearing to contain the remains of an early gatehouse on the ground floor on to which a brick second storey has been added.

The east elevation is open to the ground floor with two rubble stone pillars, similar to others in this and the linhay range, either side of the opening that support a large timber lintel. The pillar to the north is built around elements of an earlier coursed stone wall and incorporates several pieces of dressed stone which are clearly re-used. To the first floor the wall has been raised in Flemish bond brickwork in a greyish-white lime mortar, with timber barge boards to the gable and with a carved timber window to the centre with two ‘Tudor’ arched lights and bead moulding. The brickwork is built onto a timber wall-plate on the top of the rubble stonework. The west wall also has the ground floor doorway and a brick upper with a central timber arched window, as to the east.

The south wall is of rubble stone, with a door opening forced into the first floor within the apex of the roof line of Building 7. This doorway appears to have quoins to the east but is more ragged to the west, patched with some individual bricks. There is no obvious access to this doorway. The door has a timber doorframe fixed to timber lacing to the side of the opening. The door is re-set in this position and is of random width planks, with re-used early nineteenth century iron strap hinges with wedge shaped ends.

To the ground floor the rubble stone walls are built around a central section of fine quality dressed stonework; this stonework is of shaped and dressed blocks which form two pillars either side of a deep rectangular alcove which drops to the floor, this is also built of dressed stone and appears to have a stone slab lintel (Figure 18). Within the alcove the stonework is

disturbed, suggesting fittings may have been removed. The stonework continues to the west side of the wall forming the western reveal to the gateway to Ayshford Court house, between the rest of the wall and the dressed stonework is a narrow slot running from the ground floor to the first floor, this has been blocked with mortar. The stones appear to be in an earthen bond with no clear sign of mortar. To the north the rubble stone wall is of poorer quality build, with a large crack running from ground to first floor and numerous areas have been rebuilt or repaired, with brickwork and loosely packed rubble. The rubble stone construction walling is again built around a section of fine quality shaped and dressed stonework, forming two pillars either side of a central rectangular alcove, identical to that to the south. The exterior side of this stonework (within Building 9) narrows at first floor level, forming a ledge which is capped with a dressed stone drip course. To the west of the fine dressed stonework is a further section of quality stonework of semi-coursed small blocky stones in a lime mortar. This appears finer and earlier than the rubble stone wall but appears to extend the dressed stonework and may represent a third 'middle' phase. To the west the large ground floor opening is boarded with plank doors and sheets of corrugated iron and is open to the courtyard to the east.

The roof structure cannot be viewed from the ground as the lathe and plaster ceiling obstructs the view; the pitched roof is covered with corrugated iron sheeting.

### 3.2.11 Building 9 - Open-fronted shed

A single-storey open-fronted shed, lying north-south, to the west of the farmyard is built up against Building 8 to the south and is partially collapsed to the northern end (Figure 21). There are timber lintels to the openings either side of a central pillar; to the north end a further opening and possible pillar have been infilled with rubble stonework.

The west (rear) wall is of rubble stone construction, built up against the stonework of building 8, with heavy use of lime mortar; the interior face of the wall has been white washed, some of which survives. There is a small window opening to the southern end of the wall, with deeply splayed reveals and a timber frame that is set with iron pintles and an iron looped catch. A larger window opening to the centre of the wall has straight sides, timber lintel and chamfered frame, it also has iron pintles and an iron looped catch similar to that to the south.



Figure 21: East elevation of Building 9, viewed from the southeast (2m scale).

The building is made up of eight bays but has been truncated at the north end. The building contains seven scissor braced trusses (of a style as Building 6) with spiked joints and pegged mortice and tenon joints to each apex. The timbers appear machine cut, but are rough, some retaining bark in places. There is one set of heavy purlins to each pitch cut into the back of the truss blades and there is a diamond set ridge pole and a corrugated iron sheet roof. The roof trusses sit on timber pads built into the wall (as in Building 6). The interior is divided by double-sided brick and concrete cattle troughs with iron mesh hayracks above. The north end of the linhay has partially collapsed, or been demolished, and the building may formerly have continued for several bays length. A section of this building has survived where it returned to the west and now stands detached, having been converted into a garage, with concrete block and timber cladding filling in between the surviving stone walls.

### 3.2.12 Building 10

The remains a barn which sat set slightly to the north of centre in the courtyard. The barn was constructed of rubble stone with jointed cruck roof, with wind-bracing and was separately Grade II\* listed (Appendix 1). Significant amounts of stone rubble remain and the south wall survives to a height of c.1m and is of coursed stone blocks set in an earthen bond, markedly similar to the perimeter wall and stonework within Building 8. The possible east end of this survives to c.1.8m in height (Figure 22). The north and west walls appear to have been wholly demolished but the northern side is still extant but covered in vegetation.

The surrounding area is enclosed by a truncated L-shaped rubble stone 19<sup>th</sup> century wall, forming an inner yard to. Within this area is evidence of a cobbled surface. Immediately adjacent to the remains of the ruined building stands a single-storey rubble stone gable wall of a further building, which would have stretched to the west within this inner courtyard.



Figure 22: Ruins of Building 10, viewed from the east.



## 4.0 Phasing and Development of the Buildings

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The site appears to have four distinct historical periods of use. The first is represented by the medieval perimeter wall and the gatehouse; the second by the 16<sup>th</sup> century barn (Building 10); the third by the 17<sup>th</sup> century Buildings 1-3 and fourth the later 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion and development when many buildings such as Building 4 and Building 6 replaced earlier buildings in a similar position and alignment. These phases must be seen as a broad guide many intermediary phases are likely.

### 4.1 Phase One (Pre-16<sup>th</sup> Century)

The earliest structure on the site appears to be the perimeter wall represented by the sections of surviving masonry which run to the north and east of the yard, with some extended areas to the south within the fields surrounding the buildings. This wall is of very fine quality stonework, with large faced blocks, laid in courses within an earthen bond and it is to be noted that the wall has no evidence of lime or other mortars (except for repairs). To the rear of Buildings 1-3 (the Stable Block) the wall stands to a height of 2-2.5m. The wall only survives in the central section of the east side. Here the wall has been exposed by the demolition of a modern concrete structure and is abutted by Building 4 (a modern pole barn); standing to 1.5-1.8m, increasing to 2-2.5m within the pole barn (Figure 22). To the southern end of the east side of the courtyard the perimeter wall has been completely replaced by Building 5 (the Mill building) however it appears to continue to the south beyond the Mill and its associated wheel pit. It does not appear to survive to the west side. This wall may well be of medieval date and is certainly possible this structure is earlier than the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century buildings within the courtyard.

Building 8 contains the remains of a gatehouse to the west of the site, facing the large 17<sup>th</sup> century stone block of the current main house at Ayshford Court. The stonework within the gateway is of fine dressed and chamfered stone and is presumed of a similar period and date to the perimeter wall possibly medieval or late medieval in date.

### 4.2 Phase Two (16<sup>th</sup> Century)

Building 10 which has been largely demolished (in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century) appears to have been a 16<sup>th</sup> century barn. The listing (Appendix 1) describes a 'substantially intact' peg jointed cruck truss roof with wind-bracing, elements of which may survive re-used within other structures on the farm.

### 4.3 Phase Three (17<sup>th</sup> Century)

Buildings 1-3 which stand in the north of the courtyard, beyond Building 10, appear to be of a number of phases. The east and west ends of the combined structure have different roof structures and Building 3 appears to have been abutted by Buildings 1 and 2. All three appear to have been built up against the Phase 1 perimeter wall which runs along the north side of the courtyard. It is likely that some element of these structures is of early 17<sup>th</sup> date; possibly a Stable Block, with two enclosed ends and with an open-fronted linhay between. The buildings have undergone possibly multiple phases of alteration. There also appears to be build lines between the eastern gable of Building 1 and the south elevation, suggesting the south elevation has been rebuilt or altered. There is also a clear build line between Buildings 1 and 2. It is worthy of note that the jointed crucks which are exposed in the front south wall of Building 1, may have been reused in this position, as they appear to curve outwards, away from the

building, not inwards toward the apex. The jointed post and truss construction of Building 2 may date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the cross beams are very substantial and appear to be chamfered and the floor joists for the loft above are also large and are laid flat, an earlier form of construction. The first floor is of a notable height, suggesting that if this was a Stable Block it may have been for taller riding horses rather than lower, heavy farm or cart horses. The keeps with stone lintels forced into the north wall will have been used to light the interior using candles or lamps. Keeps are often found in stables and the large number of windows in the front elevation may also support this function for the building.

#### 4.4 Phase Four (Early/Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century)

Building 6 (the long southern linhay) and buildings 7 and 9 (the two small ranges either side of building 8) all exhibit the use of large stone-built pillars, rounded to the interior and straight to the exterior and building 6 and 7 are of one build. Building 6 is of two storeys (Figure 29) buildings 7 and 9 are single storey but buildings 6 and 9 share the scissor truss roof structures; building 7 having had its roof replaced. All three lincays have been used for the storage of feed or bedding above animal housing. This large single phase of linhay construction highlights a large capital investment in the agricultural use of the site (with a focus on dairy or beef) in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Building 8 has the same rubble stone build of the other 19<sup>th</sup> century lincays (Buildings 6-9); however both Building 7 and 9 are built up against it, suggesting an earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century date for this structure (separate from the medieval remains it contains). The gable walls of the building are of rubble stone but those to east and west are brick, whether this is a later alteration or repair it is hard to say, although the brickwork clearly abuts the stonework. The interior of the first floor is plastered which may suggest this was used for storage or possibly a farm office. It would appear to be non-agricultural in use as the windows would not make it suitable for a granary, although no method of access to the first floor has survived, Building 7 having been built up against the south wall, where the access door is situated.

It may have been at this point that rubble stone walls were built dividing the farmyard into inner yards, possibly with different functions when the complex expanded.

#### 4.5 Phase Five (Mid/Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century)

Building 5 (the Mill) is adjacent to Building 6 and adjoins it at its eastern end. A stone partition has been constructed within Building 6, forming two compartments and that to the east has then been converted for use in coordination with the Mill, forming a grain store, blocking an earlier window in the north wall. This would suggest the mill was a slightly later 19<sup>th</sup> century development. An earlier building may have stood on the site however, as the walls to the south appear to have been truncated by the insertion of the wheel pit. It is likely the mill therefore represents a rebuild or expansion/development of the earlier long eastern range of buildings.

Buildings 1-3 have all been significantly altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Buildings 1 and 2 seemingly having their front 'presentation' elevations, rebuilt in rubble stone. Building 1 seems to have had its southern elevation re-built at an earlier date however, with stone segmental arches to the windows and a clear build line to Building 2, which can be seen to abut the earlier stonework. Loading doors were added within the infill stonework which suggests the loft retained its function of storage for feed. Building 3 may have been divided into two compartments at this point with a linking door and the walls seem to have been plastered. The function of this end of the block may have changed at this point, becoming an ancillary service building to the adjacent house, such as a dairy? A long range which ran to the east of the courtyard (and since demolished) may have belonged to this phase.

#### 4.6 Phase Six (20<sup>th</sup> Century)

Along the east side of the courtyard there were two concrete block structures, one has now been demolished and Building 4 (the pole barn) remains. These are mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century structures.

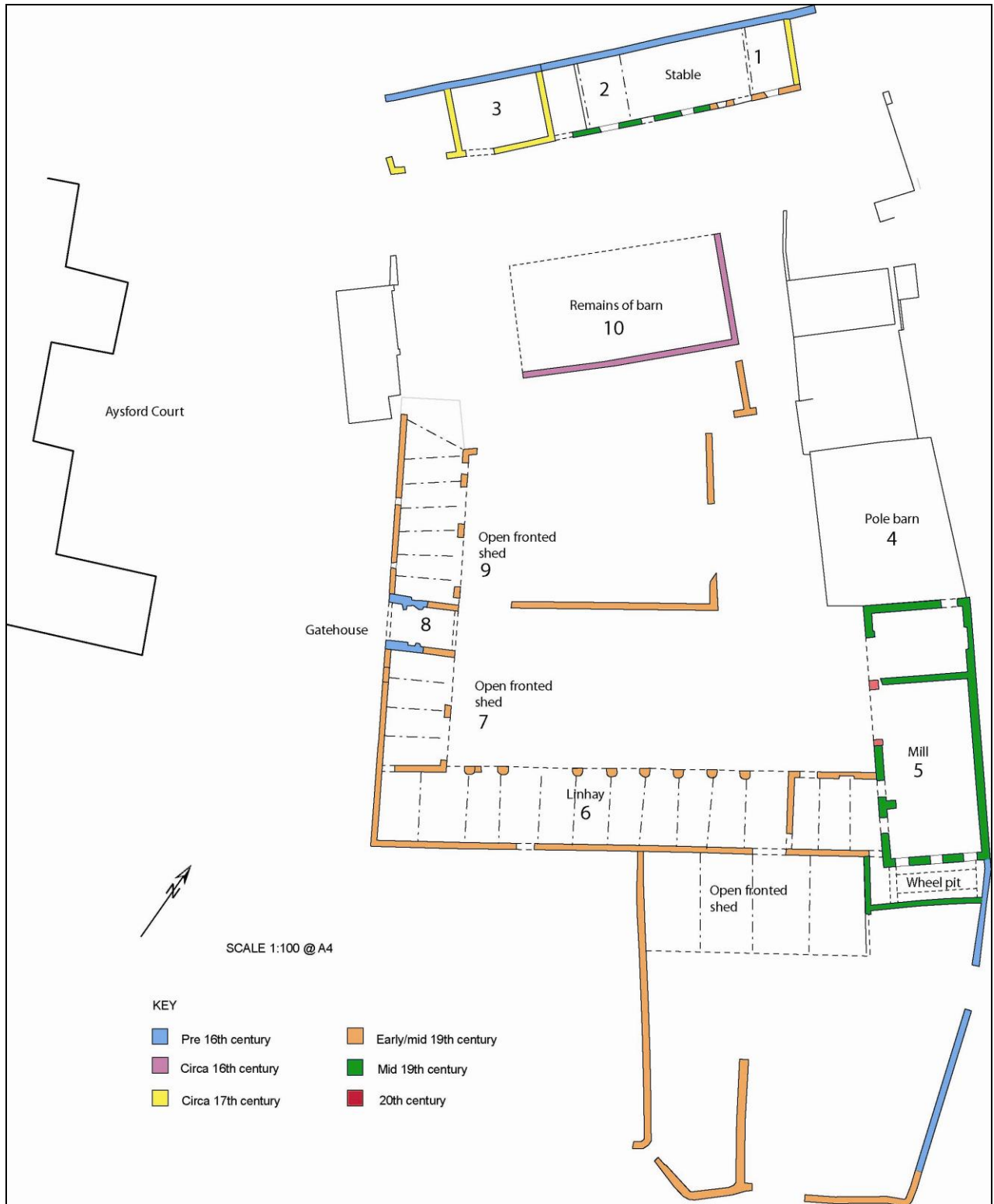


Figure 23: Phased plan of the Barns at Higher Ayshford Farm.

## 5.0 Summary

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The desk-based Assessment and building survey on the barns at Higher Ayshford Farm suggest that the buildings are located within the remains of a (late?) medieval courtyard with surviving elements of a gatehouse (Building 8). This courtyard may have been an outer courtyard to Ayshford Court (thereby forming a double courtyard plan house), although further work would be required to confirm this.

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## Appendix 1

### Text of English Heritage Listing Documents

AYSHFORD COURT, BURLESCOMBE, MID DEVON, DEVON

IoE Number:95868

Date listed:05 April 1966

Date of last amendment:05 April 1966

Gradell\*

Manor house, now divided into 2 houses. The main historic house was built by various members of the Ashford/Aysford family. Late C15-early C16 with major later C16 and C17 improvements (the parlour wing possibly 1607 according to a secondary datestone) and it includes plasterwork dated 1631, some agricultural additions of circa 1910. The original section has plastered walls, probably cob on stone rubble footings, the early C17 parlour wing is of coursed blocks of local chert with Beerstone detail, C19 extensions of stone rubble and brick, much of it plastered; stone stacks and chimneyshafts, 2 of them Beerstone ashlar; slate roofs. Plan and development: essentially an L-plan house. The main block faces east- south-east, say east. At the left (north) end is a 2-room plan former service extension of circa 1910. There is an axial stack between the 2 rooms and a third room projecting at right angles to rear. Part of this extension was probably servant accommodation but some was in agricultural use and it includes a first floor granary. The rest of the main block is the historic house. Adjoining the extension is a kitchen with its large axial stack backing onto the extension. Next an unheated dairy between the kitchen and through passage. At the right (south) end the former hall with a gable-end stack. Parlour block projecting at right angles to rear of the hall and it has an end stack (the chamber above has an outer lateral stack). To rear the passage was extended through a probably C17 stair block built in the angle of the 2 wings and alongside (behind the dairy) is a small brick extension of circa 1910. Now the house is divided; the main block in one occupation, the parlour wing and stair in another. This is a house with a long and complex structural history. Disregarding the circa 1910 extensions the house is essentially that of circa 1650, maybe even circa 1610, although the stairs were renewed in the C19. The roof of the main block is smoke- blackened from end to end indicating that the late C15-early C16 house was an open hall house divided by low partitions and heated by an open hearth fire. However there is not enough evidence exposed to determine the precise layout of the original house. Nor is there sufficient evidence to chart the evolution of the house to its present form. It may once have been a larger house. Indeed one jointed cruck truss does survive in the circa 1910 'extension' suggesting that part at least was included in the C16 house. The house is 2 storeys with disused attics over the parlour wing. Exterior: the main block (including the extension) has an irregular 5-window front of mostly C19 casements with glazing bars. There is however, just right of centre to the dairy, a Hamstone 3-light window with ovolo-moulded mullions and a hoodmould, mid or late C17 in date. The passage front doorway is right of centre and it contains a C19 6-panel door behind a late C19-early C20 slate-roofed porch containing a round-headed timber outer arch. The roof is gable-ended. The right gable-end is blind and a straight join shows in the exposed masonry between the main block and parlour wing. The parlour wing is taller and has irregular fenestration; 2 ground floor windows and 3 first floor windows. The ground floor right one has been enlarged to a C20 French window. The rest however are early C17 Beerstone 3- light windows with ovolo-moulded mullions and all except first floor right have hoodmoulds. The lateral chimneyshaft on this side is Beerstone ashlar with a frieze of carved quartfoils and it is inscribed to the effect that it was built in 1607 and rebuilt in 1910. The roof is steeply-pitched and is hipped each end. The end chimneyshaft is ashlar with moulded coping. The rear elevation includes a couple of late C17 oak flat-faced mullion windows containing rectangular panes of leaded glass (one of them on the stairblock). Also the ground floor window of the kitchen is mid C16 oak 2-light window with moulded mullion, Tudor arch headed lights and sunken spandrels. It also has its original vertical glazing bars and saddlebars. The passage rear doorway (in the stairblock, contains a C19 6-panel door). Alongside it is a stone inscribed with the date 1594. It may date the stairblock but, since it is set close to the ground, it is thought to be reset. Good interior: the oldest feature is the roof of the main block which is carried on a series of side-pegged jointed cruck trusses with cambered collars which is smoke-blackened from the original open hearth fire. The oak arch-headed doorframe in the corridor alongside the dairy may well be original also but is not thought to be in situ. The other structural features exposed are thought to be early C17. The kitchen and dairy have a continuous ceiling, carried on 3 crossbeams of large scantling; all soffit-chamfered with lambstongue stops. The large kitchen fireplace has been altered a little but still has a massive chamfered and step-stopped oak lintel. The hall which was refurbished in the C19 when the fireplace was blocked with a grate. The soffit-chamfered and scroll-stopped crossbeam looks suspiciously like a C17-style replacement. The parlour was refurbished about the same time and has been subdivided. The fireplace too has been blocked. The parlour chamber has also been rearranged. Originally it seems there was a closet (a narrow unheated room) across the outer end but this has been enlarged to a bedroom by encroaching on the main chamber. This parlour now has its original fireplace off centre; a pretty Beerstone fireplace with moulded surround and Tudor arch head with sunken spandrels. This room also contains the remains of a good ornamental plasterwork ceiling probably of 1631. It has an enriched rib design around an ornate centrepiece and is enriched with moulded angle sprays. The finest feature of the house is the coved ceiling of ornamental plasterwork in the chamber over the hall. It is a particularly fine example and is dated 1631. There is a projecting moulded frieze around the room. The coved ceiling has a single rib design enriched with moulded patterns in square panels. Above the frieze on each end wall, is a moulded plasterwork arcade featuring the Ashford arms and floral sprays. The fireplace here is blocked but the oak doorframe into the room is contemporary with the ceiling. From the left end of the main block front a tall rubble wall projects forward between the lane and garden. Ayshford was mentioned in a charter dated 958. It is the Domesday manor of Aiseforda. For most of its history it was the home of the Ayshford/Ashford family and. the parlour wing was probably built by Roger Ashford (died 1610) and the plasterwork was

probably commissioned by Arthur Ayshford. The refurbished kitchen may be contemporary. The owners have a transcript of a fascinating inventory of the place dated 1689 which shows the great wealth of the family at that time. The description of the rooms suggests that the house was a little larger then. Also it is difficult to identify the rooms mentioned with those there now. Nevertheless identification of the Great parlour and kitchen seems obvious. Much of the fabric is still hidden and great care should be taken during renovation work. The inventory for instance mentions a "painted chamber". Ayshford Court, with its chapel (q.v.) and farmbuildings form a most attractive group of buildings.

BARN APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES NORTH EAST OF AYSHFORD COURT, BURLESCOMBE, MID DEVON, DEVON

IoE Number:95869

Date listed:17 March 1988

Date of last amendment:17 March 1988

Gradell\*

Barn. C16, much-altered in the C20. Local stone rubble; corrugated iron roof, formerly thatch. Plan and exterior description: former threshing barn facing onto a lane to the north-west and backing on to a later farmyard. Most of the front wall has been demolished to create an open 5-bay front. There is a stone crosswall dividing the barn into two compartments, the left one larger than the right one. The roof is gable-ended. Interior is open from the ground to the roof and the interior walls are plastered. The original 7-bay roof survives substantially intact and is made up side-pegged jointed cruck trusses with collars mortised, tenoned and pegged to the principals. The 3 sets of trencled purlins and ridge are mostly intact and several bays still contain curving windbraces from single sets between the lowest purlins. The cruck posts descend nearly to ground level and it is they that determine the bay arrangement of the open front. This rare example of a C16 barn forms part of a good group with Ayshford Court (q.v.) and its associated buildings

STABLES APPROXIMATELY 25 METRES NORTH EAST OF AYSHFORD COURT, BURLESCOMBE, MID DEVON, DEVON

IoE Number:95870

Date listed:17 March 1988

Date of last amendment:17 March 1988

Gradell

Stables approximately 25 - metres north-east of Ayshford Court GV II Stables. C17, refurbished in late C19. Local stone rubble; slate roof, probably thatch originally. Plan: stable block facing south-east on the opposite side of the lane to the C16 barn (q.v.). The building was much-altered in the late C19 and the arrangement of doorways, windows and loading hatches date from that time. Nevertheless the basic structure is still C17. It has stables with a hayloft over. Exterior: the front has 3 stable doorways each with a window to right of it. The right end doorway is taller than the others and has a segmental head; so too does its window. This doorway also has a second small window to left of it. The hayloft has an irregular disposition of 4 windows and there is a hayloft loading hatch left of centre. All the joinery is late C19 and the windows are plain and unglazed. The roof is gable-ended. Interior: the carpentry detail is all C17. It is oak and neatly-finished. The crossbeams are soffit-chamfered with runout stops. The 6-bay roof is carried on A- frame trusses with pegged lap-jointed collars and dovetail halvings. The base of each principal is lap-jointed onto wall posts which are set into the top ends of the crossbeams. This arrangement suggests that the hayloft was originally open on both sides. It may even have been built as a linhay. This is difficult to prove since most of the masonry was replaced or refaced in the late C19.

Location:AYSHFORD CHAPEL, BURLESCOMBE, MID DEVON, DEVON

IoE Number:95867

Date listed:05 April 1966

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Gradel

Private chapel of the Ayshford/Ashford family. C15, renovated in the mid or late C19. Local chert stone rubble laid to rough courses, Beerstone detail; slate roof. Plan: rectangular aisleless block with diagonal corner buttresses containing a nave and chancel under a continuous roof and with a bellcote at the west end. It is pretty large for a private chapel in Devon. Exterior: the windows are restored to a greater or lesser extent. All have Perpendicular tracery and plain hoodmoulds; three 2-light windows each side and a 3-light window each end. There are 2 doorways, one in the west end and the other west of centre on the south side. Both are 2-centred arches with moulded surrounds including caps to the shafts and they have C19 hoodmoulds. Both contain heavy studded oak doors with massive strap hinges. Along the wall plates are the original moulded oak wall plates. Each gable end has shaped kneelers and coping. The east gable is surmounted by a small apex cross and the west gable is surmounted by a small open-sided gabled bellcote. Interior: the roof is C15, a continuous wagon roof (now open) with moulded purlins, ribs and wall plate and has oak bosses carved with 4-leaf motifs. C15 carved oak chancel screen; the panelled wainscoting has applied blind arcading, the windows are square-headed and contain slender Perpendicular tracery and the headbeam is carved but relatively plain. The screen was painted in the C19. The furniture is all C19. The floor is made up of C19 red and black tiles and the sanctuary includes the gravestone of one Sir Henry Ashford but the date of his death has worn off. 2 good monuments: both are C17. In the sanctuary there is a black marble chest tomb in-memory of Henry Ashford (died 1666). The inscription is on the plain flat lid which also includes the family coat of arms. The sides have an inscribed arcade which

includes an inscribed text. The second is the marble mural monument on the north wall in memory of John Ashford (died 1689). It comprises a rectangular plaque flanked by Corinthian columns which carry a moulded entablature surmounted by the Ashford arms flanked by carved flaming urns. The columns sit on a shelf supported on consoles carved as cherubs heads. The apron is carved with swags, cherubs and the Ashford arms. There are more Ashford memorials in the Ashford Chapel in the Church of St Mary, Burlescombe (q.v.). This chapel forms part of a very attractive group of buildings associated with Ayshford Court (q.v.).



## Appendix 2

## Details from the Burlescombe tithe apportionment of 1840

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Occupier</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
Edward Ayshford Sanford	Nathaniel Cook	955	Head Pond
		956	Little Field and Linhay
		958	House, Garden, Barns, Barton etc
		959	Mill Orchard and Pond
		960	Mill House, Linhay and Garden
		961	Chapel, Yard and Garden
		964	Waste

## Appendix 3

List of Jpegs on CD Rom to the rear of the report.

Photo No.	Description	From	Scale
BAC12(1)	Building 8 (gatehouse?) and abutting Buildings 7 and 9 across the courtyard	SE	-
BAC12(2)	As above	E	-
BAC12(3)	Building 8, with Building 7 to the south and Building 9 to the north	SE	2M
BAC12(4)	Building 7, east elevation	E	2M
BAC12(5)	Building 8, east elevation	E	2M
BAC12(6)	Building 9, linhay, east elevation	SE	2M
BAC12(7)	Buildings 6-9 across the courtyard	NE	-
BAC12(8)	Gatehouse with adjoining structures 7 and 9	NE	-
BAC12(9)	As above	NE	2M
BAC12(10)	Buildings 7 and 8, east elevations facing the courtyard	NE	2M
BAC12 (11)	Buildings 8 and 9, east elevations facing the courtyard	NE	2M
BAC12 (12)	Timber arched window in first floor of Building 8, east elevation	E	-
BAC12 (13)	South-east corner of courtyard, showing Buildings, 4-6	NW	-
BAC12 (14)	Building 6, north facing elevation	N	-
BAC12 (15)	Building 6, eastern end	NE	2M
BAC12 (16)	Building 6, north elevation, view through structure showing opening in south wall to fields	N	2M
BAC12 (17)	Building 6, western end	NW	2M
BAC12 (18)	Ruined walls dividing courtyard	SE	2M
BAC12 (19)	Roof structure of Building 6, showing scissor trusses	E	-
BAC12 (20)	Doorway in southern wall of Building 6	N	2M
BAC12 (21)	Scissor trusses and opening at apex in western gable end of Building 6	E	-
BAC12 (22)	South wall of building 8, within Building 7, showing first floor doorway	S	-
BAC12 (23)	As above	S	-
BAC12 (24)	Detail of fine quality dressed stone blocks within south wall of Building 8, within Building 7	S	-
BAC12 (25)	Interior face of north wall of Building 8	SE	-
BAC12 (26)	Interior face of south wall of Building 8	NE	-
BAC12 (27)	North wall of Building 8, within Building 9, showing fine quality dressed stonework	N	2M
BAC12 (28)	Detail of north wall of Building 8, within Building 9, showing break between phases of construction	N	-
BAC12 (29)	As above	NE	2M
BAC12 (30)	Possible remains of south wall of Building 10	W	-
BAC12 (31)	As above	E	-
BAC12 (32)	As above	S	2M
BAC12 (33)	South-east corner of courtyard, Buildings 4-6	NW	-
BAC12 (34)	Eastern end of Building 6, north elevation	N	2M
BAC12 (35)	View of various phases of ruined walls within the centre of the courtyard	E	-
BAC12 (36)	Ruined gable-end wall, with Building 4	W	-
BAC12 (37)	Building 4, abutting north wall of Building 5	W	-
BAC12 (38)	Building 5, showing west elevation, facing courtyard, largely demolished to centre	W	-
BAC12 (39)	Three storey southern gable-end of Building 5, showing fittings for the mill wheel and windows	S	-
BAC12 (40)	As above	S	2M
BAC12 (41)	Detail of window in south gable-end of building 5	S	-

BAC12 (42)	Detail of sockets for the mill wheel in the south elevation of Building 5	S	-
BAC12 (43)	Three storey north gable-end of Building 5	SW	2M
BAC12 (44)	Open west elevation of Building 5, showing interior and stone central partition wall	W	2M
BAC12 (45)	Doorway in ground floor of north gable-end of Building 5, leading into building 4	S	2M
BAC12 (46)	Interior view of Building 5	S	2M
BAC12 (47)	Detail socket for the mill wheel in south gable-end of Building 5	N	2M
BAC12 (48)	West wall of Building 5, showing openings leading into Building 4	E	2M
BAC12 (49)	As above	E	2M
BAC12 (50)	As above	NE	2M
BAC12 (51)	Detail of window in south gable-end of Building 5	N	-
BAC12 (52)	South end of east wall of Building 5, with doorway at first floor	W	2M
BAC12 (53)	As above, detailed view	W	-
BAC12 (54)	Compartment within Building 6, converted for use as a grain store and accessed from Building 5, showing south wall	N	2M
BAC12 (55)	As above, showing north wall	S	2M
BAC12 (56)	Door in west wall of compartment in Building 6, leading to interior of Building 5	W	-
BAC12 (57)	As above, detail of strap hinge	W	-
BAC12 (58)	Second door in west wall of compartment in Building 6, leading to interior of Building 5	S	-
BAC12 (59)	Perimeter wall of courtyard, forming east wall of Building 4	E	2M
BAC12 (60)	West elevations of Buildings 7-9, facing Ayshford Court house, with truncated section of Building 9, now converted to a garage, in the foreground	NW	-
BAC12 (61)	Scissor trusses in the east end of Building 6	W	-
BAC12 (62)	South elevation of Building 5, with wheel pit in foreground	SE	-
BAC12 (63)	South elevation of Building 5, with wheel pit	S	2M
BAC12 (64)	Lean-to abutting south wall of Building 6	S	2M
BAC12 (65)	Looking down into the wheel pit, associated with Building 5	E	-
BAC12 (66)	Wall remains to south of Building 6, (possible gateway/entrance with defences?)	E	2M
BAC12 (67)	Lean-to abutting Building 6 and showing south elevation of Building 5 and wheel pit	SW	-
BAC12 (68)	East elevation of Buildings 4 and 5	NE	2M
BAC12 (69)	Building 5, east wall, with displaced roof	E	2M
BAC12 (70)	East elevation Building 5, south end, showing doorway and displaced roof	E	2M
BAC12 (71)	West elevations of Buildings 8 and 9	NW	2M
BAC12 (72)	As above	W	2M
BAC12 (73)	Building 9, west elevation	SW	2M
BAC12 (74)	Building 8 and with Building 7 abutting it to the south, west elevations	NW	2M
BAC12 (75)	West elevation of building 8	W	2M
BAC12 (76)	Building 7, west elevation, showing the blocked doorway	W	2M
BAC12 (77)	As above, detailed view of blocked doorway	W	2M
BAC12 (78)	West end of south elevation of Building 6, showing second door in south wall, now boarded up	S	2M
BAC12 (79)	Western gable-end of Building 6	SW	2M
BAC12 (80)	As above	W	2M
BAC12 (81)	Ruined wall dividing courtyard	S	2M
BAC12 (82)	Buildings 1, 2 and 3, south elevations	SE	-
BAC12 (83)	Buildings 1 and 2, south elevations	S	2M
BAC12 (84)	Building 1, showing east gable-end	SE	2M
BAC12 (85)	Eastern gable end of Building 1	E	2M
BAC12 (86)	As above	SE	2M

BAC12 (87)	Buildings 1 and 2, showing windows and door in south elevations and re-used jointed cruck truss set into later rubble stone wall	SW	2M
BAC12 (88)	Buildings 2 ,showing windows, doorway and first floor loading door in south elevation	SE	2M
BAC12 (89)	As above	S	2M
BAC12 (90)	West end of Building 2, showing build line to Building 3, south elevation	S	2M
BAC12 (91)	Buildings 1 and 2, south elevation	SW	2M
BAC12 (92)	Internal stone partition wall between Buildings 2 and 3, showing blocked doorway.	W	2M
BAC12 (93)	Stone partition wall between two compartments in Building 3	E	2M
BAC12 (94)	South elevation of Building 3	S	2M
BAC12 (95)	Building 3 , west and south elevations	SW	2M
BAC12 (96)	Remains of east elevation of Building 10	E	2M
BAC12 (97)	As above	SE	2M
BAC12 (98)	As above	NE	2M
BAC12 (99)	Quoins to the remains of the east elevation of Building 10	NE	2M
BAC12 (100)	Internal face of north (rear) wall of Building 2, showing cross beam.	S	2M
BAC12 (101)	Internal face of north (rear) wall of Building 2	S	2M
BAC12 (102)	Internal face of north (rear) wall of Building 1	S	2M
BAC12 (103)	East end of Building 1, south elevation, showing base of jointed cruck truss, reused	S	-
BAC12 (104)	As above, wider view of south elevation showing jointed cruck trusses to top of wall	S	2M
BAC12 (105)	Building 2, internal face of south wall, showing posts and cross beams	NE	2M
BAC12 (106)	Building 1 internal face of east gable-end, showing cross beam in foreground	W	2M
BAC12 (107)	Building 1, internal face of south wall, detail of window and door way	N	2M
BAC12 (108)	South elevation of Buildings 1 and 2, showing build line between. Base of jointed cruck truss in wall to east	N	2M
BAC12 (109)	Stone partition wall between Buildings 2 and 3, showing blocked up doorway.	E	2M
BAC12 (110)	Detail of keep (for candle/lamp) in north (rear) wall of Building 1	S	-
BAC12 (111)	Detail of keep to east end of north (rear) wall of Building 2	S	-
BAC12 (112)	Detail of keep in north (rear) wall of Building 2	S	-
BAC12 (113)	Detail of fallen roof structure (part of jointed cruck truss?) in Building 3	S	-
BAC12 (114)	View of Buildings 5 and 6, with remains of stone walls (to possible defensive entranceway?) in the foreground	S	-
BAC12 (115)	Detail of remains of stone walls (to possible defensive entranceway?)	S	2M
BAC12 (116)	As above	SE	2M
BAC12 (117)	As above, showing curving section of wall (possible defences?)	NW	2M
BAC12 (118)	As above, remains of walls beneath grass	NW	2M
BAC12 (119)	Detail of remains of stone walls (to possible defensive entranceway?)	E	2M
BAC12 (120)	Detail of remains of stone walls (to possible defensive entranceway?)	N	2M
BAC12 (121)	Oblique view down stone shaft, leading to a culvert?	NE	-
BAC12 (122)	View of west elevation of Ayshford Court	W	-



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