

PUTSBOROUGH COURT GEORGEHAM DEVON

Results of a Desk-Based Assessment
and
Historic Building Recording



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Putsborough Court

Results of a Desk-Based Assessment and Historic Building Survey

For

Mr Tony Bohanan

By



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Summary

The history of Putsborough Court, formerly known as Tuckers Farm, is shared with the history of the manor of Georgeham within which was the manor of Croyde which itself was linked with name of Putsborough. There is uncertainty about the manorial status of Putsborough and it appears likely that the tenements named Putsborough became known as a manor in the early post-medieval period. For much of the medieval period Putsborough within Croyde was held by the Fleming family. In the 15th century the Fleming holdings broke up, Putsborough passing through several hands until in the 17th century it came into the joint ownership of Martha Gay of Barnstaple and Sir Halswell Tynte of Somerset. From the end of the 17th century until the early 20th century the 'reputed manor' of Putsborough, i.e. its lands, tenements and the rents derived therefrom, was sold, resold and mortgaged until it was finally sold off in parcels in 1920. The property remained a working farm until the Second World War period, after which it changed hands several times, becoming renamed Putsborough Court circa 1970.

Putsborough Court or Tuckers Farm appears to be a building of ultimately late medieval origin, having undergone numerous alterations over the centuries, possibly reflecting the 'reputed' manor's changes of ownership. The building(s) appear to date from the 15th or early 16th century but both the form and the function of many of the elements have changed and developed over the centuries.

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1.0 Introduction

Location: Putsborough Court
Parish: Georgeham
District: North Devon
County: Devon

1.1 Background

South West Archaeology Ltd were asked by Mr Tony Bohanan, resident at the property known as Putsborough Court, to prepare an account of the history and development of the house. This was accomplished through a study of available documentary material, historic mapping and published and unpublished historic accounts together with a measured survey and analysis of the building.

1.2 Location and Topography

The house known as Putsborough Court is situated at around 50m above OD in the compact and out-of-the-way hamlet of Putsborough which nestles in a hollow among bare, rolling hills rising abruptly from the seashore at Morte Bay, North Devon. Lying only 0.5km inland from Putsborough Sands, the hamlet is reached by way of narrow, winding lanes from Georgeham to the east and Croyde to the south. The house is located off Putsborough Lane to the south of the house known as Putsborough Manor. To the north-east of Putsborough is the hamlet of Pickwell and c.3.0km to the north is the holiday village of Woolacombe. West of Putsborough is the headland known as Baggy Point, historically more correctly Croyde Hoe, to the south of which is Croyde Bay and the village of Croyde. The coastal landscape here is characterised by the high, hogs-back cliffs of Baggy Point and the extensive sands and dunes of Morte Bay, while inland the largely treeless hills rise abruptly to around 200m on Pickwell Down. The underlying solid geology comprises the Devonian Pilton beds, Baggy sandstone and the architecturally useful Pickwell sandstone.

1.3 Methodology

The desk-based study was undertaken by Terry Green in accordance with IfA guidelines. Cartographic material was viewed in the Devon Record Office, Exeter, the North Devon Record Office, Barnstaple and the West Country Studies Library, Exeter. Records held by the Devon County Historic Environment Service were also consulted. Historic documents were kindly made available by Mr Mc Bride of Putsborough Manor, and copies of 20th century architect's drawings were supplied by North Devon District Council. The property was visited on 18th March, 2010.

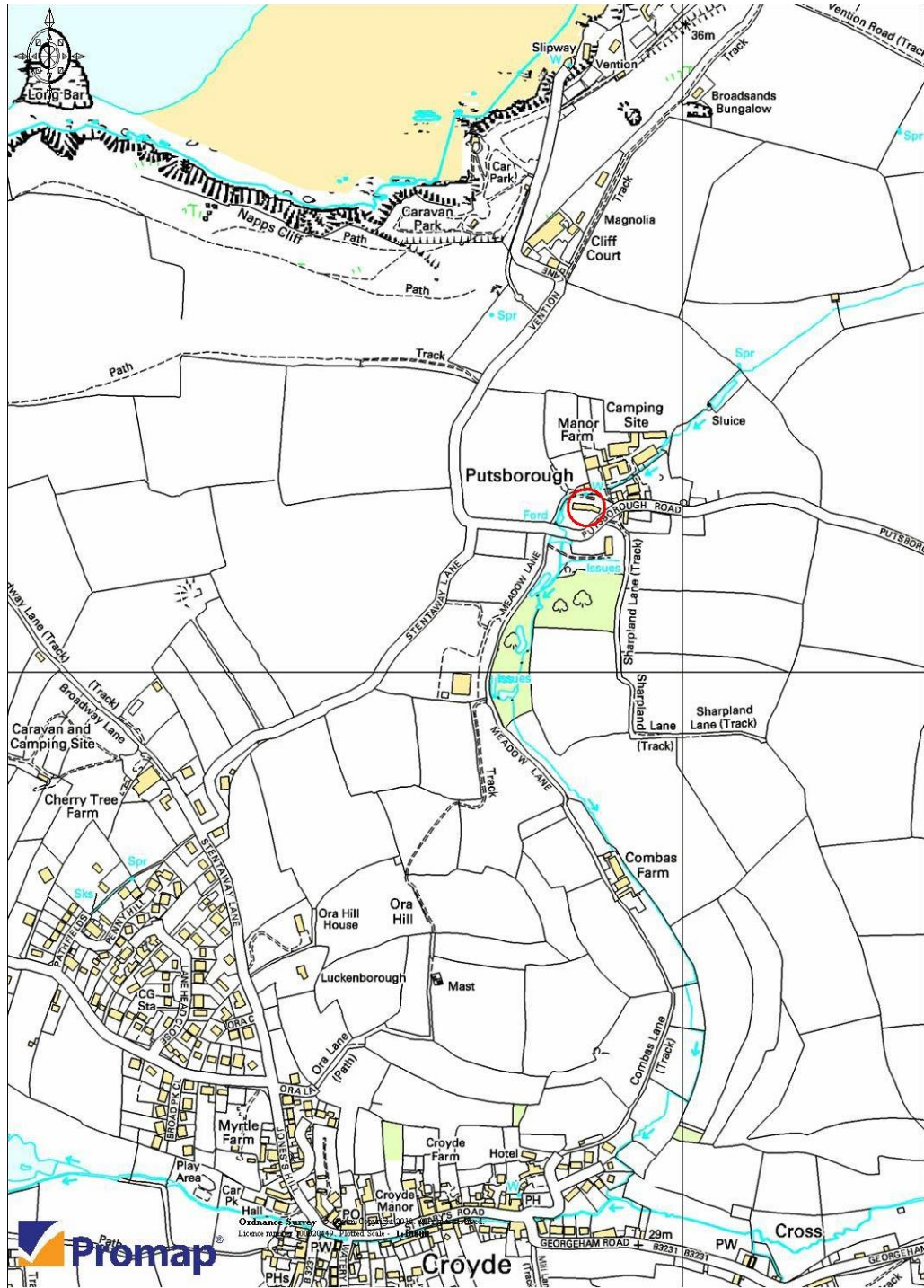


Figure 1: The location of Putsborough Court.

2.0 Results of the Desk-Based Assessment

2.1 Pre- and Early History

On this part of the North Devon Coast there is widespread evidence of Mesolithic occupation in the form of flint scatters. These are particularly abundant on Baggy Point which, during the earlier Mesolithic period (c.8,000 – 4,000 BC) would have been a ridge of elevated land overlooking a coastal plain. Located historically within the manor of Putsborough is a field the name of which - ‘Longstone Land’ is suggestive of a standing stone which may have been erected in the Neolithic or Bronze Age period. The second element of the name Putsborough, like that of Middleborough farther to the west, might be thought to suggest a prehistoric enclosure, but more likely refers to a hill, Old English *beorg*, rather than a fortification, Old English *burh* (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1931, 44). There is slight evidence of a Romano-British presence in the form of a Roman fibula (brooch) and a coin found some years ago near Putsborough (No further details available, but the finds are deposited in the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon). Putsborough would appear to originate as a Saxon farm hamlet within the manor of Croyde, quite probably with its roots in the 9th to 11th century period.

2.2 Second World War, 1939-45

During 1943-4 areas of the North Devon coast and quite specifically the area of Woolacombe and Croyde were the centre of intensive training by the US army in preparation for the D-Day landings on 6th June, 1944. Relics of this period of military activity are still to be seen in the area, most particularly on Baggy Point.

2.3 Manorial History

NB. During the medieval period when ‘manorialism’ was the dominant system of control over the land and its resources, a manor was an area of land held by a lord. The lord would have received the land as a grant from a higher lord whose tenure ultimately derived from the monarch. Within the manor was the demesne farm, being land which the lord reserved for his own use. The lord did not necessarily live on his manor, but would frequently be represented by a steward or reeve, for whose accommodation a well appointed house, ie. a manor house, would be provided. This would also accommodate the lord should he wish or need to visit his manor. The legal status of the manor required the holding of a manor court to deal with local disputes, over which the reeve would preside. In the later medieval period the system gave way to more economically based arrangements, so that manors became saleable and divisible, turning into a commodity purchased and held by a landowner. As the original character and status of the manor became obscured, it became possible for landowners to style their land, its messuages, tenants and rents drawn from it a ‘manor’. Hence, in the case of Putsborough, the term ‘reputed manor’ which figures in the post-medieval documents quoted below. Only in recent times when the majority of manors have been parcelled up and sold off, has the term ‘manor’ come to be applied to the principal residence.

2.3.1 Medieval

While the Domesday Book of 1086 records manors of (George)ham, Croyde(hoe) and Pickwell, there is no explicit record of a manor of Putsborough. However, it is recorded that the manor of Croyde(hoe) had been held before the Conquest by the Saxon Ordwulf and that his

sister held a virgate of land within the manor, which she 'could not separate from him' (Thorn and Thorn 1985, Vol 1, 15.41). In fact one virgate (about 30 acres) would have made a rather small manor, but the fact that the recorder – quite unusually - saw fit to mention the sister's attempt to hold land in her own right, clearly suggests that within the manor of Croyde(hoe) there were the makings of a separate entity, which Stevenson-Balfour speculates (1965, 45) may have been Putsborough.

As the surviving and accessible medieval records rarely mention Putsborough, and in light of the historic link, its early history is best treated together with Croyde. In 1086 the manor of Croyde(hoe) was among the lands which the Conqueror had granted to the Count of Mortain, under whom it was held by Erchenbald. It had land for 10 ploughs and was valued at £4. This valuation makes Croyde(hoe) more valuable than (George)ham which was valued at a mere 20 shillings. By the late 13th century Croyde had become the possession of Baldwin le Fleming who held it together with Bratton, Alverdiscott and Ash Rogus (Ash Barton near Braunton). Successive generations of the Fleming Family held Croyde until the late 15th century, but during this period the manor began to break up. A document of 1428 (Feudal Aids) states that six men held between them land in Bratton and Croyde which formerly had been held by Simon Fleming. In 1472 a dispute over lands lately belonging to Christopher Fleming was settled in favour of Patrick Bellew of Ash Rogus whose right to half of the rents from Putsborough – here named for the first time - was confirmed (NDRO 48/25/9/4). Stephenson-Balfour states (1965, 57) that in 1459 Patrick Bellew was owner of Putsborough. That he at least had an interest in it is clear from the document cited above.

2.3.2 Post-Medieval

The family of Bellew continued at Ash Rogus until the later 16th century and presumably maintained an interest in Putsborough, thereby carrying on the Fleming heritage. A similar and presumably related linkage was created when at the end of the 16th century Sir Robert Dillon of Bratton Fleming came into possession of Putsborough (Stephenson-Balfour *ibid.*). From Dillon it passed to the local family of Incledon and then to Sir Halswell Tynte (of Somerset) together with Martha Gay (of Barnstaple).

In 1698 Sir Halswell Tynte and Martha Gay sold the 'manor or reputed manor' of Putsborough to Thomas Smith of Bideford. In 1718 Thomas Smith, as part of the marriage settlement between his son Edward Smith and Elizabeth Cleverdon, passed the manor together with lands in Woolfardisworthy and Bradworthy to a consortium of four individuals. In 1743 Thomas Smith Junior sold to Edward Barrett of Middlesex, but Barrett's right was disputed in 1744 by Peter Glubb, one of the earlier consortium of four and the case went to Chancery. From the available documents the outcome is not clear, but a year later Thomas Smith the Younger leased the manor to John Shapley as security against a mortgage of £250. At some time before 1778 Thomas Smith the Younger died and his beneficiaries Harry Luppincott and Edward Wren sold the property to John Richards who owned a number of properties across North Devon. The will of John Richards, dated the same year, left the manor of Putsborough to his nephew John Horwood and his sons John and Edward Richards Horwood. In January 1804 Edward Richards Horwood sold the 'manor or reputed manor' of Putsborough to Samuel Anstice of the Inner Temple, London, but shortly afterwards it was reclaimed by Edward Richards Horwood together with John Pyke.

For much of the 19th century the manor of Putsborough was the subject of a succession of mortgage agreements, while remaining nominally the property of first Edward and then John Richards Horwood, then of his daughter Elizabeth. Sometime after 1834 Elizabeth Richards Horwood married John Dunning of Winkleigh and brought the property to him as her dowry. White's Directory of 1851 tells us that John Dunning owned large parts of the parish of Georgeham, though whether or not this included lands other than the manor of Putsborough is

unclear. The manor continued to be the subject of a mortgage until 1882, after which date the manor appears to have begun to break up.

Richards Horwood Dunning died in 1907 and his widow Jessie Hannah Elizabeth Dunning remained in possession until 1920, when the land was put up for sale in lots. The extent of the 'Putsborough Manor Estate' and the identity of the lots is made clear by a statutory declaration contained among the documents which are now the property of Mr Mc Bride . To this is appended a map showing the location of Lots 1-7 (Fig.9). It is significant that the author of the statutory declaration, F.R.Fox, states that the Dunnings had received rents from Lots 1,3 and 4 and from Lots 2 and 5 with the exception of a substantial number of fields, confirming that the manor had already been breaking up. The dwelling now known as Putsborough Court was part of Lot 3 from which rent was received, so clearly it was tenanted. The purchaser of Lots 2,3,4,5 was a W.L.Peacock.

2.4 The Manor

While it is evident from the Domesday record that in 1086 Putsborough did not have manorial status, it may yet have been identified as a separate parcel of land within the manor of Croyde. The fact that in 1472 Patrick Bellew confirmed his right to half of the rents from Putsborough might confirm its (partial) independence within the manor of Croyde. It is not until direct documentary evidence becomes available in 1698 that we find Putsborough described as a manor. In a Lease and Release of that year Sir Halwell Tynte and Martha Gay sold to Thomas Smith *All that the manor or reputed manor of Puttesborough within the parish of Georgeham in the ... County of Devon (except parcell of the said manor called Croidhoe.....with the appurtenances thereunto belonging) together with the severall messuages lands and tenements to the said Puttesborough belonging now or lately in the severall tenures or occupations of* Here there follow the names of 11 tenants. From this and from late 17th century mapping (Fig.2 – one of three roughly contemporary maps held in the North Devon Record Office) it emerges that within the parish of Georgeham an area of land and the tenements on it were identified as the Manor of Croydehoe and Putsborough. If Croydehoe is properly to be identified as Baggy Point, then it emerges from the 1698 document and from the late 17th century mapping that Putsborough land was in fact separate from Croyde and Croydehoe, though the wording of the document entails some ambiguity. While Putsborough brought with it a number of rent paying tenements, the manorial status of Putsborough was not certain, probably because strictly a manor should have a manor court, and there appears to be no record of any such at Putsborough. The 17th century solicitor who drew up the Lease and Release would have been aware of this absence, nevertheless he respected the claim that Putsborough was considered to be a manor. The documents drawn up in succeeding centuries repeat the claim.

To have Putsborough considered to be a manor was certainly in the interests of its succession of owners. From the history of ownership detailed above it is evident that the manor was an investment passed back and forth among numerous individuals or groups of individuals. As owners they would be regarded as Lord of the Manor which entitled them to receive rents and also endowed them with responsibilities – the maintenance of the 'seagate', for example, as written on one of the late 17th century maps.

2.5 Putsborough Court: History of Occupancy

The entire manor, including eleven messuages (houses), appears to have been treated as an investment in the form of rents and mortgages throughout its documented history, so that its owners scarcely lived there. In the available documents only once, in 1815 is the owner, Edward Richards Horwood, said to be 'of Putsborough'.

From the Georgeham tithe map of 1839 (Fig.6) it is possible to identify the messuage now known as Putsborough Court as number 1525. The accompanying tithe apportionment tells us that in 1839 this was the property of John Dunning and that it was occupied by James Hooper. The census of 1841 confirms the presence of a James Hooper and his family in Putsborough, presumably living at what has become known as 'Putsborough Court'. Examination of the Land Tax records for the parish of Georgeham which cover the period 1784 to 1832 provides the information that in 1832 James Hooper was a tenant of Mrs Horwood at Crowberry, which, now named Crowborough, lies between Georgeham and Darracott in the south-east of the parish. We can only assume that James Hooper and family moved to Putsborough between 1832 and 1841. Aged 81 in 1841, James Hooper does not appear in the census of 1851, and it is probably safe to assume that he had died in the intervening decade. Unfortunately, without a name to provide a starting point, it is not possible to identify 'Putsborough Court' in the Land Tax record, so we cannot trace it back beyond 1839. It is however, possible to trace it forward in time. From records held by the North Devon District Planning Department it is evident that up to the 1960s this property was known as Tuckers Farm. This former name is also recorded in the English Heritage listing document of 1965 (Appendix 1). George Tucker is recorded as a farmer at Putsborough in 1841 and 1851 (Census), in 1857 (Billings Directory), in 1866 (Post Office Directory) and in 1870 (Morris's Directory). By 1871 (Census) he appears to have been dead and his widow is recorded as farming 60 acres. Beyond this date the Tuckers seem to have given up farming, though the family name apparently stuck. In 1839 a George Tucker – a farmer according to the 1841 census - is recorded in the tithe apportionment as occupying the 'house and court' numbered 1488 on the tithe map (Fig.6) lying adjacent to what is now known as Putsborough Manor. . Between 1839 and 1886 the house numbered 1488 disappears from the map, presumably having been demolished by manorial directive, and it would appear that the Tuckers were re-housed across the way in what in 1839 had been the residence of James Hooper, but which now became known as Tuckers Farm.

It seems very likely that ownership of the property remained with the manor up until the sale of 1920, but without documents to hand, it is not possible to trace the occupants from 1871 until the mid-20th century. According to the present owner, the property was occupied by a tenant farmer during the Second World War, an occupancy which tragically ended in a suicide. Copies of plans for various alterations and extensions supplied by North Devon District Council Planning Department make it possible to trace developments for several decades of the post-war period. In 1954 plans were drawn up for alterations to Tuckers Farm for 'Croyde Bay Caravans', which, according to the present owner, was a scheme of a Mr Palmer. When permission for the caravan site was refused by the planning authority, Palmer sold the property, apparently to a Mrs Dodge who in 1965 submitted plans for an 'improvement of the front elevation'. By 1970 however, the property was again in the hands of Mr Palmer who by this time had renamed it 'Putsborough Court'. (According to the present owner Palmer had taken the property back in settlement of a debt.) Palmer submitted plans for the conversion of the barn on the south side of the property, but does not appear to have followed through, because in 1971, when another new owner, Mr P.Vernon submitted plans for a kitchen extension, the barn remained unconverted. Mr Vernon resubmitted plans for a kitchen conversion in 1977, at which date the former barn had still not been converted to domestic use, but housed a stable, a store and a garage. There would appear to have been a further change of ownership after 1977, because we are informed that the present owner bought the property in 1986 from a Mr Shattuck.

2.6 Cartographic History and Building Plans

The earliest available cartographic representation of Putsborough is found in a set of undated maps or plans (NDRO 3704M/E2/1-3) (see Fig.2) which probably date from the late 17th century. The hand drawn maps all apparently relate to a dispute over the hauling of sand from Croyde Bay and from Putsborough Sands. (Before the widespread availability of lime the



Figure 2: Extract from 'The Map of the Royalty of Cryde and Puttsborough', late 17th century. Puttsborough is arrowed. (NDRO 3704M/E2/1)

calcareous sand of the North Devon beaches was used to sweeten the local acid soils.) On the best drawn and apparently earliest of the three, the hamlet of Puttsborough is clearly shown (Fig.3), though the buildings are drawn in a stylised fashion and cannot be thought to represent the architectural forms of the time. However, the extract from the first map, here shown as Fig.2, represents the topography of Puttsborough clearly enough to identify the location of Puttsborough Court.

The earliest published map is Benjamin Donn's map of Devon 1765 (Fig.4) This shows Puttsborough lying on a road from Georgeham to Croyde. Donn's map is followed chronologically by the Ordnance Survey surveyor's draft map of around 1805 (Fig.5). This shows Puttsborough in crude detail; nevertheless, rough as the drawing is, it is possible to identify the location of Puttsborough Court.

The Georgeham tithe map of 1839 is the first to provide a detailed record of buildings, gardens, orchards and fields. The extract from the tithe map illustrated here (Fig.6) shows the lay-out of Puttsborough. The 'island' in the centre represents the curtilage of Puttsborough Manor to the south-east of which Number 1525 represents 'Puttsborough Court', which, as already indicated, was identified in the tithe apportionment as the property of John Dunning leased to James Hooper. On this map the buildings are represented in a stylised manner as simple blocks with only a half-hearted attempt at representing the actual footprint, an excusable strategy since the purpose of the map was to identify the ownership, tenancy and use of land for taxation

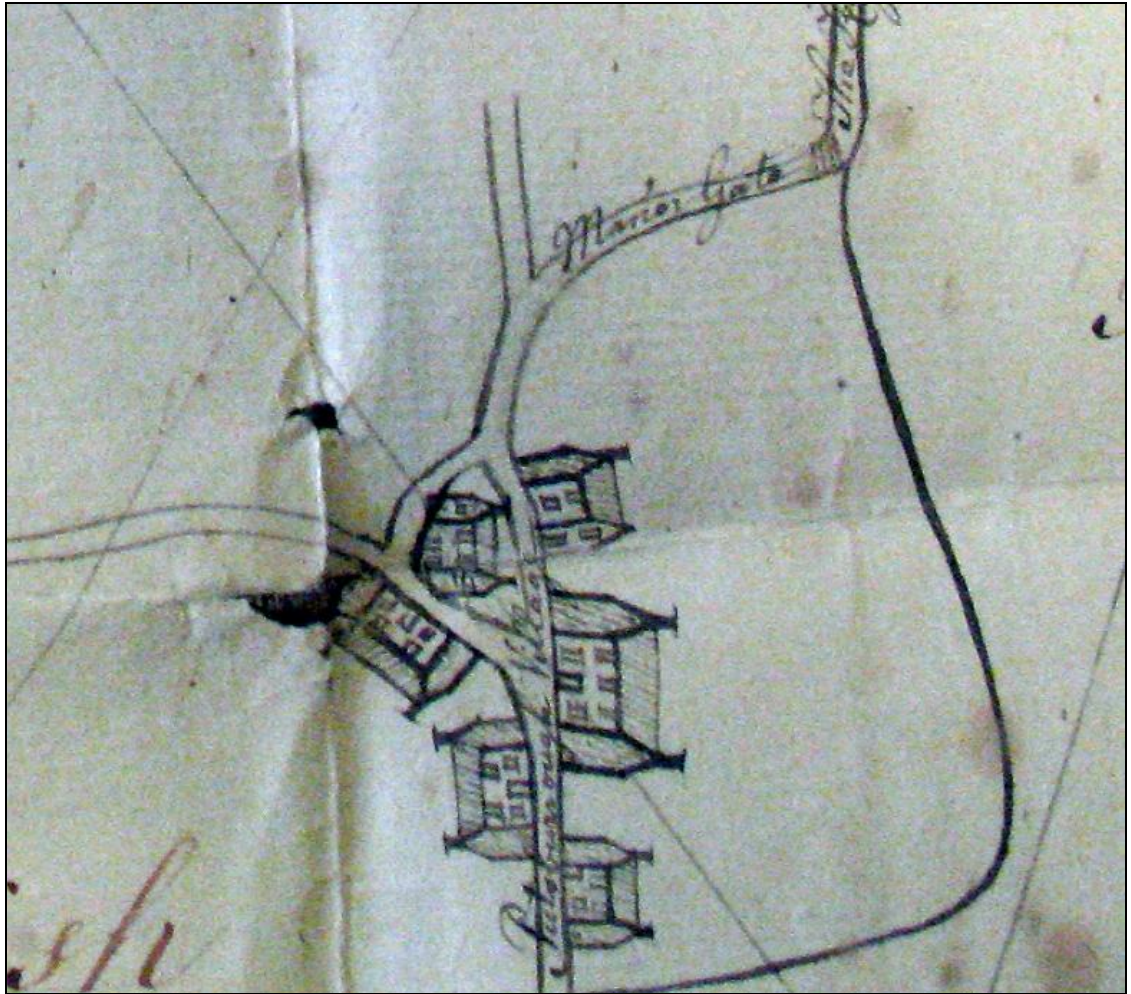


Figure 3: Puttsborough – detail from ‘The Map of the Royalty of Cryde and Puttsborough’, late 17th century.

purposes, accurate representation of buildings being a bonus. Nevertheless, in this case the representation of some of the buildings, when compared to that of the Ordnance Survey (see below Figures 8 & 9), is actually misleading. The building now known as Puttsborough Court is drawn here as a simple north-south range with an east-west wing at its southern end, providing an L footprint. Over against this, the plan produced by the Ordnance Survey in 1889 (Fig.7) together with examination of the building certainly indicates that a substantial block has been omitted at the north end of the range.

For earlier periods, analysis of the building suggests a late medieval origin, probably as a three-cell-and-cross-passage house with a wing added to the east in the 16th/17th century and further alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries. The east-west wing on the south was originally an agricultural building, possibly a threshing barn of 17th century date. Named Tuckers Farm in mid-20th century records, but also ‘Water Meadow’ (Devon County HER and EH Listing document), the house was renamed ‘Puttsborough Court’ around 1970.

Comparison of the tithe map with the late 19th century Ordnance Survey First Edition map at a scale of 1:2500 usually yields information on 19th century developments, which is unfortunately largely precluded in this case. It is possible to point out however, that a small building (number 1523: ‘House and Garden’) shown to the south-west of the main block in 1839 was no longer there in the later 19th century, at least not in the same apparently habitable state. Figure 7 is an extract from the OS First Edition map at 1:2500 (Devon sheet 8.2) which was surveyed in 1886 and published in 1889. Figure 8 is an extract from the OS Second Edition

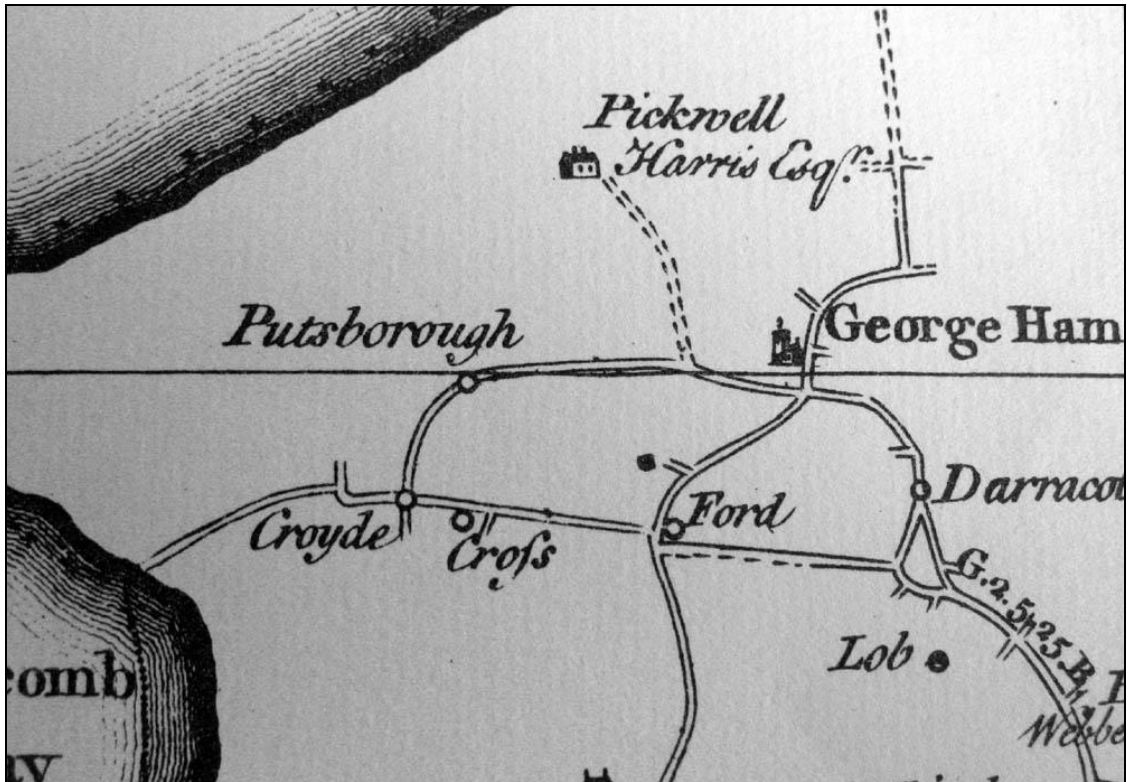


Figure 4: Extract from Benjamin Donn's map of Devon, 1765. (WCSL)



Figure 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey surveyor's draft map, c.1805. The location of Putsborough Manor is arrowed. (WCSL)

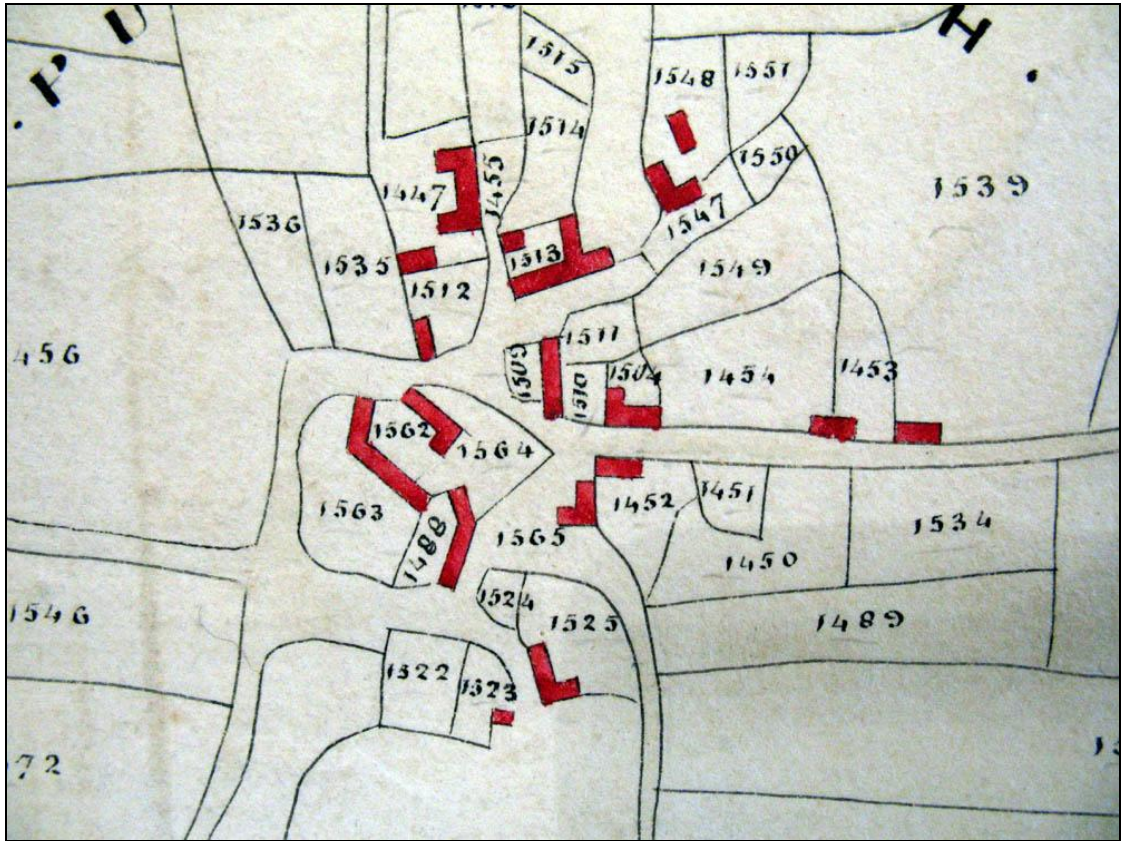


Figure 6: The topography of Putsborough as recorded on the Georgeham tithe map of 1839. 'Putsborough Court' is number 1525.

map published 1905. Both maps represent a substantial building with an enclosed courtyard on the east side. Internal divisions indicate a ground floor plan comprising six elements. These correspond to the principle divisions of the house and adjoining agricultural buildings as existing before 20th century alterations. Externally there is an orchard to the north-east, a small outbuilding to the north-west and conjoined (with a ligature on the map of 1905) is a plot containing what must be a barn with a round-house attached on its south side. This was not (apparently) present in 1839 and is in all likelihood a mid-19th century development. A minor development occurring between 1886 and 1905 would appear to be the building of an open-sided passage or 'colonnade' on the west side of the courtyard.

Comparison of the Ordnance Survey First and Second Edition maps with an architect's plan of 1954 (Fig.10) indicates the removal of an outshut on the south and that the southern east-west wing comprised principally housing for animals. An examination of 20th century planning applications (to which reference was made above) indicates that during the 20th century, the original dairy on the north side of the building was first converted to use as a kitchen and was then, in the 1970s, considerably extended northwards to form the present large kitchen. As for the east-west wing on the south, plans for its conversion to domestic use were submitted on more than one occasion, the wing being used meanwhile partly as store and partly as garage. In the later 20th century a small garage was built on its south side, to be superseded by a larger version in recent times. In addition, a conservatory has been inserted within the area between the rear north and south wings.

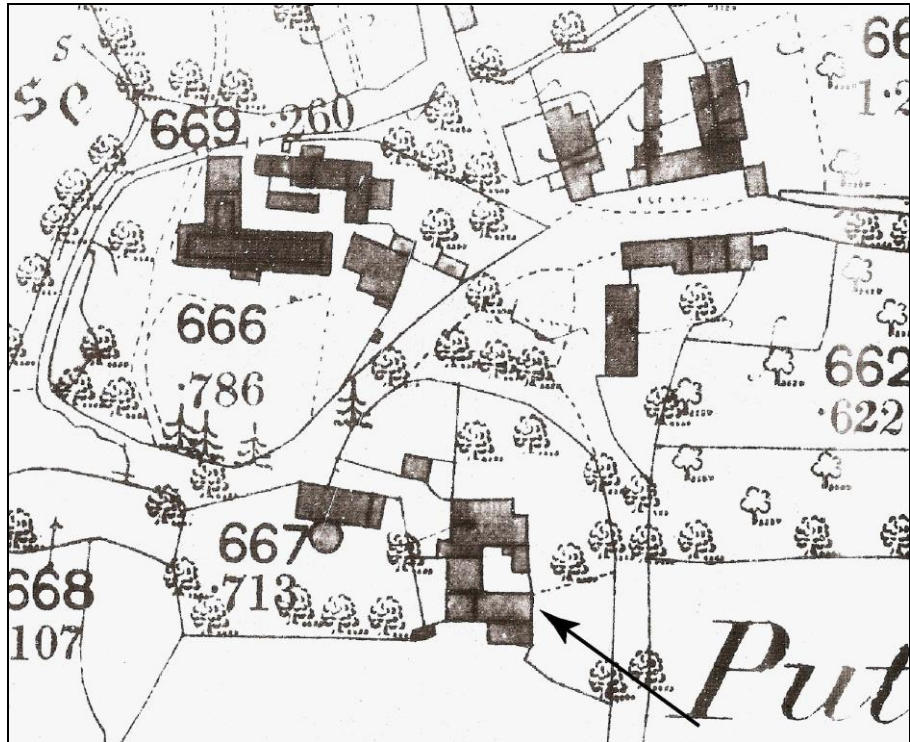


Figure 7: Extract from the Ordnance Survey First Edition map at 1:2500, surveyed 1886, published 1889. 'Putsborough Court' is arrowed. (WCSL)

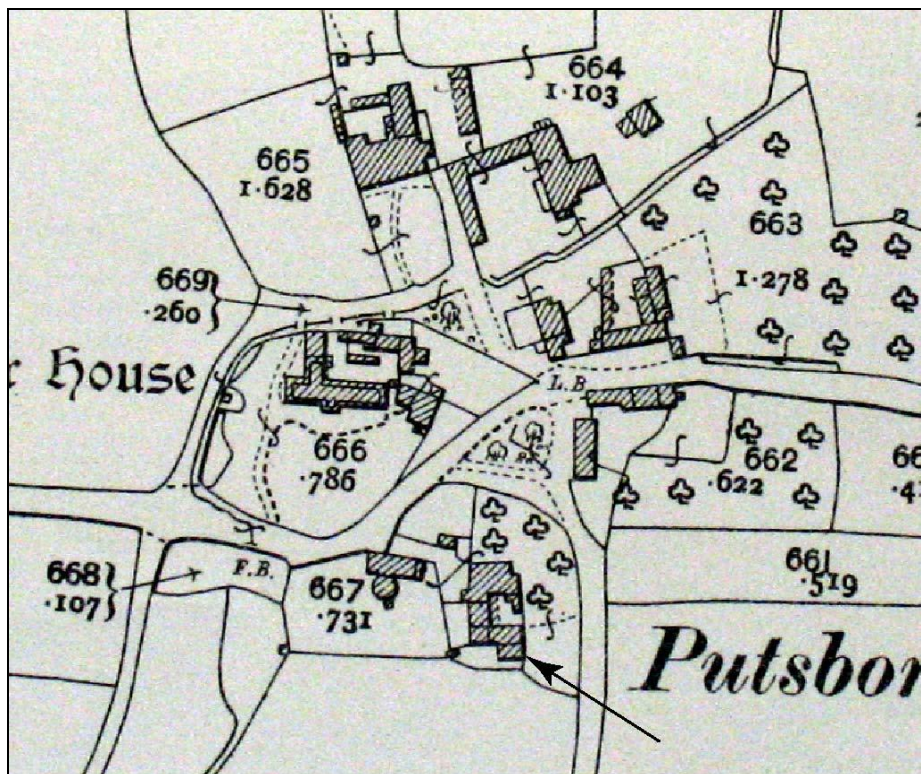


Figure 8: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Second Edition map at 1:2500, published 1905. 'Putsborough Court' is arrowed. (WCSL)

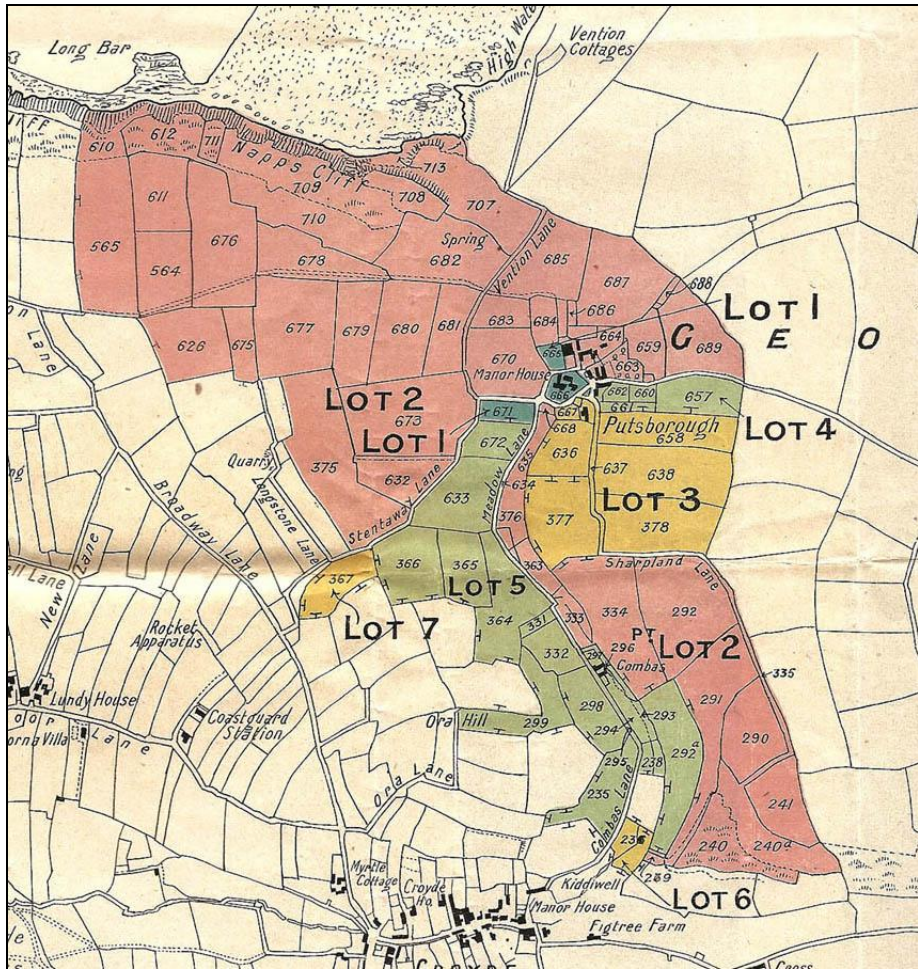


Figure 9: Map showing the Putsborough Manor Estate parcelled up into lots for sale by auction in 1920. 'Putsborough Court', numbered 667, is part of Lot 3. (Document kindly lent by Mr Mc Bride of Putsborough Manor)

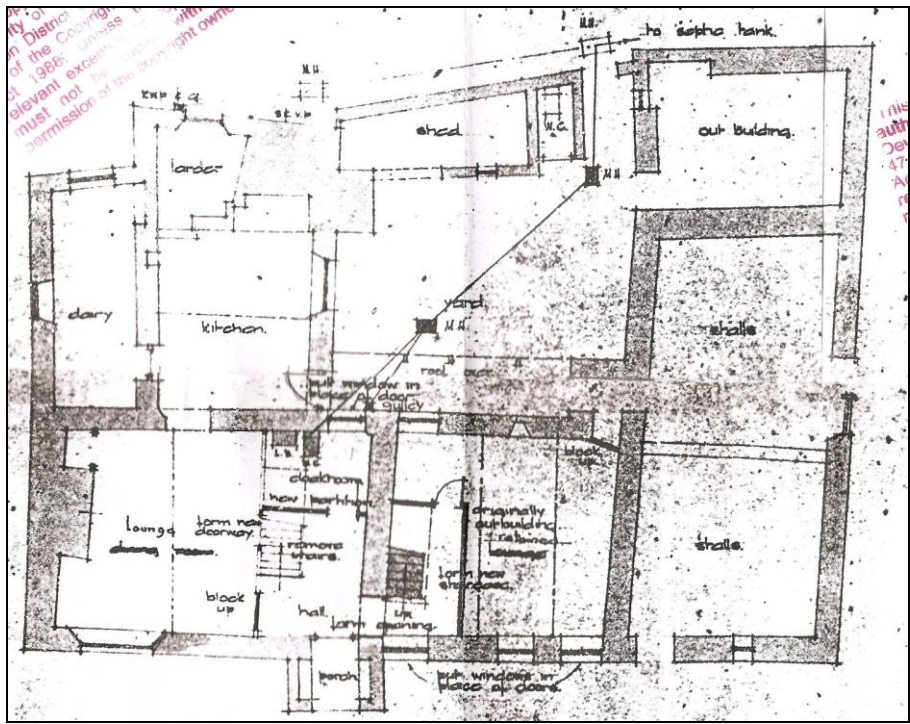


Figure 10: Plan of the ground floor drawn up in 1954. (NDDC)

3.0 Results of the Building Survey



Figure 11: The west elevation of Putsborough Court; viewed from the north-west.

3.1 Exterior Description

3.1.1 The West (Front) Elevation

A long north-south range with a high status end to the north and a single storey gabled porch to the left of centre (Figure 11). Of one and half storeys with a single phase slate roof, formerly with a split level roof, of slate to the left hand third, with slightly lower right hand thatched section (see Figure 12). The southern two thirds of the front elevation has been raised to allow a roof with a continuous ridge to be fitted. The walls are a mix of pointed render and flush pointed masonry. The front door is set within the porch and there is a smaller door in the right hand part of the building. The roof has a gable to the north with a heavy stone chimney stack with drip course and modern upper, to the south the roof is fully hipped with a small stone stack inset from the hip (a modern insertion). There is a mature garden to the front which was formerly a farmyard.

The porch is single storey with a cambered plaster ceiling; semi rendered stone walls and a decorative cobbled floor with two interior bench seats. The outer doorway has a pair of chamfered oak lintels with multiple peg holes that are probably recycled ships ribs. The door to the cross-passage (Room 1) is a heavy plank and batten oak door with applied clench nailed mitred strips to the exterior forming an impression of 3x3 panels. The door is set in a mitred oak ovolo frame with a heavy bar and run-out stops, dating from the early to mid 17th century. The windows form an irregular pattern with only the two to the right of centre in line at first and ground floor level. There is a mix of traditional early 20th century and modern casements. All have multiple slate sills.



Figure 12: Historic photograph of the west elevation; viewed from the north-west (courtesy of Mr A. G. Bohannan).

The north gable is a mix of flush pointed stone and rough cast render; all painted. A straight joint in the upper half shows where the stack was inserted into an earlier wall, with cob added to the right.

The south end of the main range runs into the south-east wing. The end of the main range is truncated to the right of centre with a small step down to a ridged shingled roof over the south-east wing. This is gabled to the east with a 1930s style arched dormer to the right. Of clay bonded semi coursed rubble in the lower half of the wall with stone, mortar bonded sections around the door and the south-west corner. Above the ground floor window sill the wall is painted over flush pointed masonry to the left of the façade and cob to the right. The door is to the centre in an older opening which has been reduced in width. All windows in this façade are 20th century apart from that set in the ground floor opening to the lower west which is 19th century.

3.1.2 The East (Rear) Elevation

Two substantial gabled wings project from the rear of the western front range, with a wall closing a central cobbled yard off from the surrounding garden and obscuring the view of the rear of the house from this position. Both wings walls are rendered and painted and probably constructed of cob on stone plinths. Both wings have shingled roofs, the east gable of the south-east wing has a first floor access door. The north-east wing has two window openings, that on the first floor is probably an older opening. The north elevation of the north-east wing is obscured by a modern kitchen extension.

The rear (east) elevation of the main range is rendered to all three openings on the ground floor. That to the south has been forced, that to the north was formerly a doorway to the rear of

the cross passage. A vertical disturbance to the left of this is probably where the side wall of a former stair turret has been removed. The current central window was formerly a door.

The south elevation of the north-east wing has an irregular layout of doors and windows with a disturbed area around one first floor window where the stair turret formerly stood in the north-west corner of the small yard (Figure 13). This comprises a broad recess at first floor level, with plastered lintel and adjacent window. To the centre of the elevation the ground and first floor windows are in line and probably an original 16th century opening at ground floor level, but possibly later to the first floor. To the right is a rectangular oven bulge with small slates forming a mono pitch cover over a solid masonry body.



Figure 13: The angle between the front range and the rear north-east wing showing the possible position of the stair turret; viewed from the rear yard (the south-east).

The north elevation of the south-east wing is flush pointed stone rubble below with a rendered upper half (probably of cob) with single storey porches to right and left. The door into the yard to the left of centre was probably forced through in the 20th century. The window to the ground floor left was formerly a doorway. The porch (over the yard gate) in the south-east corner of the yard covers the windows and formerly part of a lean-to across the eastern side of the yard. The porch in the south-west corner of the yard has a monopitch tile roof over the doorway into

the south wing. This is now approached from modern conservatory on the west side of the yard.

3.2 Interior Description

The building is entered from the west front into the former cross passage Room (1), closed off at the rear in the 20th century to form a bathroom, and widened to the north. The transverse ceiling beam (probably elm) is chamfered with scroll stop ends and has secondary notches in its north side from a former partition forming the original north side wall of the cross passage. The present width of the room has been increased to include the bathroom to the east. The bathroom (2) is modern with a window onto the rear yard inserted in the former rear door of the cross passage, which later became the access to the stair turret (see Figure 13).

From the cross passage through a relocated 17th century door frame with a plank and batten door the Drawing Room (3) is accessed (Figure 14). This 17th century room consists of two bays with a central transverse stepped ovolo moulded beam with a flat chamfer with scroll stop mouldings. The north wall is of dressed semi-coursed sandstone rubble with the jambs to a large fireplace with 19th century slate hearth and with a modern chamfered oak lintel (RH1966). To the right of the fireplace there appears to be a blocked door opening, now functioning as an alcove, which may have formerly given access to an inner room – now demolished. To the left of the fireplace is a small bible cupboard adjacent to the front wall.



Figure 14: The drawing room (3) showing the fireplace, the possible former door opening and the 17th century doorframe; viewed from the south-west .

The 17th century doorway in the east wall, containing a 17th century chamfered oak frame, gives access to Room (4), which would have formerly been a single storey space terminating at the rear wall of the fireplace in the east wall. This space is divided into bays by the central

transverse elm beam with a moderately plain chamfer and scroll stops. All joists are removed, now with modern replacements. The room appears to have been a kitchen extended to the east (5) and with a stack, with oven, inserted in the 18th – 19th century.

From the cross passage (1) a large opening in the west end of the south wall leads to Room (6) which is a modern conversion of a cow shed, with the fireplace added on the south wall at the time of the conversion. A very heavy rounded elm beam in roughly shaped roundwood supports the modern ceiling and a modern stair is positioned against the north wall.

At the top of the stair a small landing gives access to a small passage along the east (rear) side of the main range. Midway along this, set in the east wall, is a blocked doorway, probably the top access to the former stair turret. The feet of the truss blade enter this rear wall to the north of the closed doorway. From the end of the passage to the east is a chamber with a modern bathroom at the east end. To the west of the end of the corridor are two bedrooms, that to the north has the chimney stack in the north wall to the left of which is a small cupboard (wall press), although this may be a small blocked window. The ceiling is lath and plaster and the wall to the south appears to be of early origin, possibly wattle and daub. Regardless, it appears an early element of the first floor of the front range. The bedroom to the south would have occupied the remainder of the space (the corridor to the east being modern). From the top of the stair to the south you enter a modern bedroom with a bathroom to the south. The whole of this space was formerly the loft to the cow shed below.

Through the bathroom is a studio, open to the roof and covering the full length of the first floor of the south-east wing. The roof structure is entirely 20th century with 4 coach-bolted A frames. The east gable appears to have been formerly fully hipped. A stair gives access from this space to the ground floor utility room/possible former barn (8). This is the eastern part of a two cell range, formerly free standing but now connected to the south end of the main range. A blocked doorway in the west wall of (8) formerly connected it to the western cell of this wing; a former stable (7), now a workshop which is accessed externally via a doorway in the west wall. To the east of room (8) is another utility (9) added to this wing at a later (possibly 18th century) date although no features remain to determine the exact date. The room may have been heated by a fireplace in the east wall but this is now blocked and the position unclear.

3.2.1 Roof Structure over the Rear North-East Wing

A single A-frame truss, with a mortise and tenoned apex, with two projecting pegs in the apex joint, a threaded diamond set ridge pole, scarfed and pegged in the apex, with common rafters halved and pegged over the top of the ridge pole (circa 1575). The rafters, the upper part of the truss and the ridge pole are smoke stained (not heavily). The present roof ridge is about 40cm above the old roof and slightly offset and is an entirely modern structure.

3.2.2 Roof Structure over the West Front Range

Two A-frame trusses, face pegged and nailed, with notched lightweight collars and a mortise and tenoned apex with a single peg. The later diamond set ridge pole is set in the apex of the truss blades. Two purlins pegged to the backs of the truss blades. The common rafters are missing but very small section square pegs in the purlins show the former positions.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Historical Summary

The history of Putsborough Court, formerly known as Tuckers Farm, is shared with the history of the manor of Georgeham within which was the manor of Croyde which itself was linked with name of Putsborough. There is uncertainty about the manorial status of Putsborough and it appears likely that the tenements named Putsborough became known as a manor in the early post-medieval period. For much of the medieval period Putsborough within Croyde was held by the Fleming family. In the 15th century the Fleming holdings broke up, Putsborough passing through several hands until in the 17th century it came into the joint ownership of Martha Gay of Barnstaple and Sir Halswell Tynte of Somerset. From the end of the 17th century until the early 20th century the ‘reputed manor’ of Putsborough, i.e. its lands, tenements and the rents derived therefrom, was sold, resold and mortgaged until it was finally sold off in parcels in 1920.

Putsborough Court or Tuckers Farm appears to be a building of ultimately late medieval origin, having undergone numerous alterations over the centuries, possibly reflecting the ‘reputed’ manor’s changes of ownership. We know that in 1839 it was occupied by James Hooper. However, at an indeterminate mid-19th century date, George Tucker, who in 1839 had been resident nearby, moved across the road and conducted his farming activities from what now became known as Tuckers Farm. The property remained a working farm until the Second World War period, after which it changed hands several times, becoming renamed Putsborough Court *circa* 1970.

4.2 Phasing and Development of the Building

The origins and development of this range of buildings is by no means transparent. The different elements have undergone numerous changes in both form and function over the centuries. The remaining extant clues do however enable a tentative phasing to be extrapolated from the evidence of the building fabric itself (Figure 15). The dates for the phases set out below should be only seen as speculative and not absolute, these dates are arrived at by identification of features in certain areas of the building and the relationship of parts of the building; e.g. the infill of a doorway happened at a later date than the construction of the doorway.

4.2.1 Phase 1 – Mid 16th Century?

The primary form of this building appears to be a small cross-passage house set on a north-south axis. The building probably consisted of a central hall (3) with an inner room to the north (now demolished), and a cross-passage to the south (1). It is normal for a house of this type to have a service room below the cross-passage, however there is no evidence of such although it may have been demolished when this building was connected to the barn to the south. It is likely that the building was heated by an unenclosed hearth in the centre of the hall although the roof structure over this area is later and does not show any signs of smoke-blackening. Only some of the walls of this phase remain and the only dating evidence is that the remains of the structure are earlier than the extension which is added to the rear of the building in the later part of the 16th century.

4.2.2 Phase 2 – Late 16th Century?

Buildings are added to the range to the north-east and the south, comprising the majority of the north-east wing and the majority of the south-east wing; the two celled building (rooms (7) & (8)) to the south. The extant late 16th century roof structure within room (4) in the north-east wing is slightly smoke blackened, with blackening on the upper parts of the trusses and ridge pole suggesting that this room was originally open to the rafters. It is likely that this blackening originated from the hearth in the front range and that this room was formerly unheated. The building to the south was almost certainly agricultural and appears to have comprised of two compartments, a stable/shippon at the west end and a (threshing?) barn to the east.

4.2.3 Phase 3 – Early – Mid 17th Century?

During the early part of the 17th century the extant part of the main domestic west facing range appears to have been rebuilt. These works may be associated with the change of ownership to Martha Gay and Sir Halswell Tynte. The fireplace and chimney stack at the northern end of the range was added, and the north wall rebuilt, along with the northern end of the west wall. This part of the building was ceiled at this point and a first floor added, resting on the ovolo moulded beams below and accessed by a stair turret formerly located at the east end of the cross-passage set in the angle between the front range and the rear extension.

4.2.4 Phase 4 – Late 17th Century

Later in the 17th century a number of additions and repairs appear to have been undertaken. Parts of the south wall of the south-east wing appear to have been repaired/rebuilt, with a further building/compartment added to the east end of the range (9). This two storey extension has heavy floor beams, suggesting that this had a first floor granary. It may possibly have been heated, with a former fireplace in the east wall. At the east end of the north-east wing room (4) appears to have been extended to the east, although it is not at all clear what the reason for this was.

4.2.5 Phase 5 – 18th Century

During the 18th century the domestic buildings at Putsborough court underwent not inconsiderable repair and reorganisation. Room 4 had a fireplace and oven added, which suggests that this room was a domestic kitchen by this time (if not before). The main west facing range appears to have undergone truncation to the north, the former door opening in the north-east corner of room (3) was blocked, suggesting that if there was formerly an inner room beyond this room at the north end then it went out of use or was demolished at this time. An agricultural building, function unknown, was added to the south, connecting the house and the barn and a porch was added to the main entrance of the house.

4.2.6 Phase 6 – Early-Mid 19th Century

By the early/mid 19th century the agricultural buildings at Putsborough Court appear to have required some major repairs. The west wall and the west end of the south wall of the former stable (7) were rebuilt, a porch was added to the northern door opening to the barn (8), the late 17th century building at the east end of the south-east range (9) appears to have had part of its east wall filled in (a possible former fireplace?) and the north-east corner rebuilt, and at the same time a wall was constructed enclosing the rear yard to the east.

4.2.7 Late 19th Century

There is very little evidence for any major change to the buildings at Putsborough Court during the late 19th century. The only visible fabric dating from this period appears to be that around the rear (east) access to the yard, in the south-east corner .

4.2.8 Modern

The modern (20th century or later) elements of the building(s) relate to conversion of the interior spaces to suit modern living. Most notably the insertion of partition walls forming a bathroom (1) and entrance hall (2) in the position of the former cross passage and the fireplace in room (6). Other alterations include work to existing doorways and the forcing of new openings as well as the blocking of old ones.

KEY

- 1: Mid-late 16th century
- 2: Late 16th century.
- 3: Early-mid 17th century.
- 4: Late 17th century.
- 5: 18th century
- 6: Early-mid 19th century
- 7: Late 19th century
- 8: Modern
- BD Blocked doorway
- FP Fireplace
- B1-4 Beams

N ←
Approximate scale 1:200

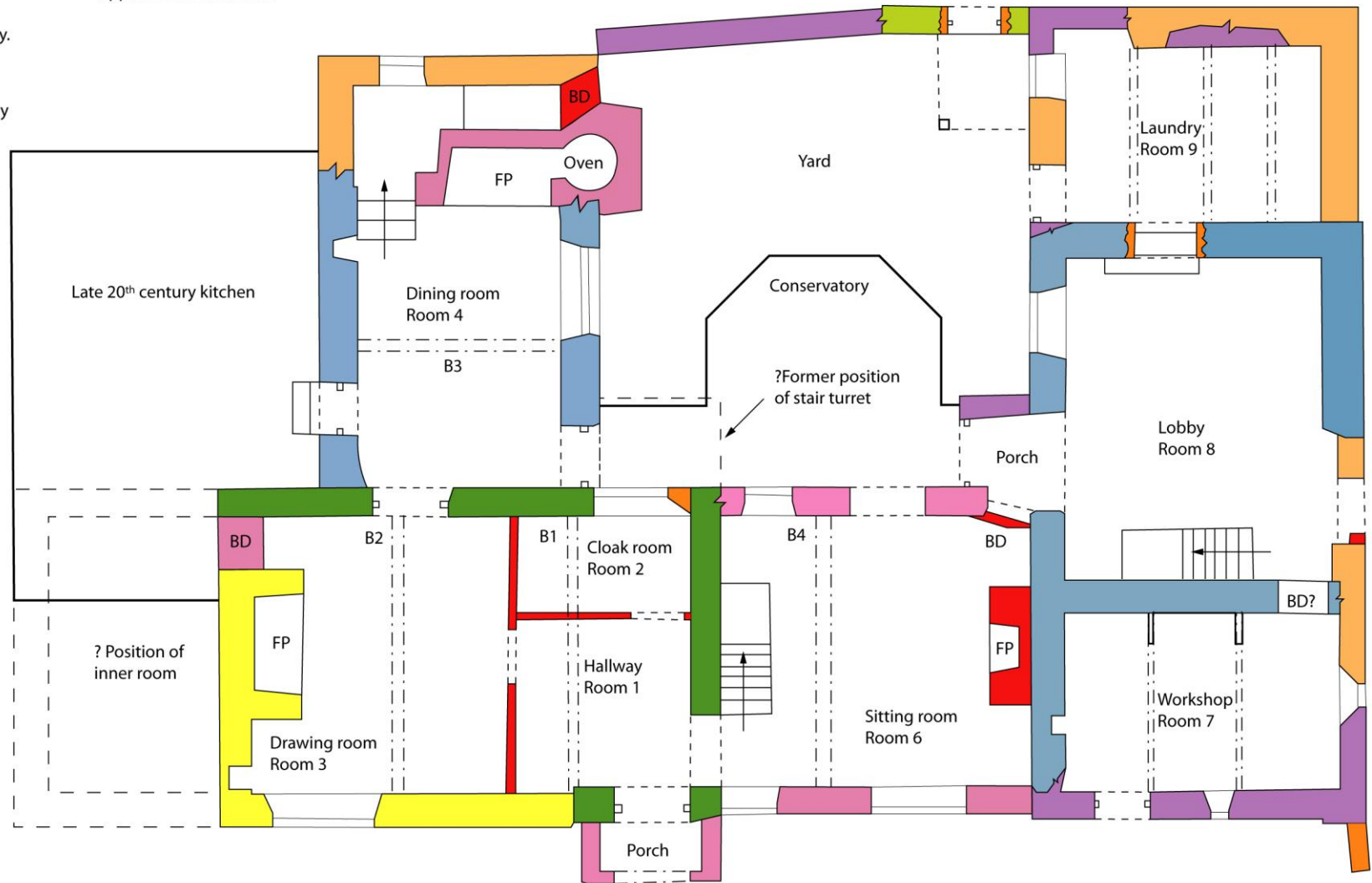


Figure 15: Phased ground floor plan of Putsborough Court..

5.0 Bibliography and References

5.1 Published Sources:

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Directories of Devonshire:

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Devon Record Office:

- Georgeham tithe map 1839
- Georgeham tithe apportionment 1839.
- Ordnance Survey Second Edition map at 1:2500, Devon sheet 8.2

North Devon Record Office:

- 48/25/9/4
- Maps: 3704M/E2/1-3
- Census Records 1841-1901

West Country Studies Library:

- Ordnance Survey First Edition map at 1:2500, Devon sheet 8.2 (fiche)
- Ordnance Survey Surveyor's draft map c.1805.

Devon County Historic Environment Service:

- HER 36864

Putsborough Manor House:

- Collection of deeds 1698-1920.

Copies of planning applications (plans only) 1954-1977 supplied by North Devon District Council.

Appendix 1

Extract from the Devon County Historic Environment Record

HER 36864

District: North Devon District
Class: DOMESTIC
Type: FARMHOUSE
NGR: SS44904020
Historic Parish: GEORGEHAM
OS Map: SS44SW
Civil Parish: Georgeham
Broad Period: Medieval
Listed Building Grade: Grade II
Period: Post Medieval, XVII

Description:

Water Meadow (formerly listed as Tuckers Farmhouse). House, formerly farmhouse, with stables and barns attached. C17 origins extended and remodelled in C20 when stables and barns were converted. Whitewashed rendered rubble and some cob with slate roof hipped at right end. Tiled roofs to rear. Rubble stack at left end. Three-sided courtyard plan with connecting rubble wall and outbuildings on fourth side. Original dwelling is L-shaped forming part of main front range to left side and right-angled extension to rear. Right side of main front range and right-angled extension to rear with stables and barn respectively, now converted to part of dwelling. 2 storeys, 4 window range of two 2-light casements to left, 4 panes each and two 3-light casements to right, 6 panes each above 3-light casements flanking 2-light casement and rubble porch with gabled tiled roof. C17 inner doorway has ovolo-moulded and stopped surround complete with ledged plank door with cover strips and square-headed nails. Plank door at right end with small window to right. Inner courtyard left side wall has two 2-light casements over 3-light casement all early c19 fenestration. Ovolo-moulded beam to front room with old plank doors, possibly reset. Part of original roof survives to right-angled extension of original dwelling with 1 truss with diagonally threaded ridge purlin and single set of threaded purlins.(doe). (Department of Environment)

Text of the English Heritage Listing Document

IoE Number: 98425

Location: WATER MEADOW, SHARPLAND LANE, GEORGEHAM, NORTH DEVON, DEVON

Date listed: 25 February 1965

Date of last amendment: 14 November 1985

Grade II

SS 44 SW (/NW) GEORGEHAM SHARPLAND LANE 2/173 Water Meadow - (formerly listed as Tuckers Farmhouse) GV II House, formerly farmhouse, with stables and barns attached. C17 origins extended and remodelled in C20 when stables and barns were converted. Whitewashed rendered rubble and some cob with slate roof hipped at right end. Tiled roofs to rear. Rubble stack at left end. 3-sided courtyard plan with connecting rubble wall and outbuildings on fourth side. Original dwelling is L-shaped forming part of main front range to left side and right-angled extension to rear. Right side of main front range and right-angled extension to rear with stables and barn respectively, now converted to part of dwelling. 2 storeys, 4 window range of two 2-light casements to left 4 panes each and two 3-light casements to right 6 panes each above 3-light casements flanking 2-light casement and rubble porch with gabled tiled roof. C17 inner doorway has ovolo-moulded and stopped surround complete with ledged plank door with cover strips and square-headed nails. Plank door at right end with small window to right. Inner courtyard left side wall has two 2-light casements over 3-light casement all early C19 fenestration. Ovolo-moulded beam to front room with old plank doors; possibly reset. Part of original roof survives to right-angled extension of original dwelling with 1 truss with diagonally threaded ridge purlin and single set of threaded purlins.

Appendix 2

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

1. Aerial photograph of the house, probably 1970's date. Note the slate roof covering being replaced by wooden shingles (courtesy of Mr A. G. Bohannan).
2. Historic photograph of the west elevation; viewed from the north-west (courtesy of Mr A. G. Bohannan).
3. Historic photograph of the wing to the rear of the building; viewed from the north-east (courtesy of Mr A. G. Bohannan).
4. The south end of the west elevation; viewed from the west.
5. The west elevation of the house; viewed from the south-west.
6. As above.
7. As above.
8. The porch set against the east elevation; viewed from the west.
9. Detail of above showing reused lintel.
10. Doorway inside porch.
11. The west elevation; viewed from the west.
12. The west elevation; viewed from the north-west.
13. As above.
14. The north end of the building showing the entrance to the modern kitchen; viewed from the west.
15. The gateway adjacent to the kitchen.
16. The west elevation; viewed from the north.
17. The north gable; viewed from the north.
18. The rear extension and kitchen; viewed from the north.
19. As above; viewed from the north-east.
20. The rear of the modern kitchen and the north gable of the man range; viewed from the east.
21. As above.
22. The east gable of the rear extension and the wall enclosing the yard; viewed from the north-east.
23. The east gable of the rear extension and the yard wall; viewed from the south-east.
24. As above.
25. Detail of above.
26. The doorway in the yard wall; viewed from the east.
27. The yard wall and the east gable of the barn block; viewed from the north-east.
28. As above; viewed from the east.
29. The south wall of the barn block; viewed from the south-east.
30. The east wall of the barn block; viewed from the south.
31. The south wall of the barn block; viewed from the south-west.
32. The angle between the front range and the rear extension showing the possible position of the stair turret; viewed from the yard.
33. As above showing the south wall of the rear extension.
34. As above.
35. The east end of the north wall of the barn block and the gateway in the yard wall; viewed from the yard.
36. The west end of the same wall showing the porch in the angle between the front range and the barn block; viewed from the yard.
37. The doorway in the south end of the west elevation giving access to the workshop; viewed from the west.
38. The workshop (room 7); viewed from the north-east.
39. As above viewed from the south.
40. The lobby (room 8); viewed from the south.
41. As above; viewed from the south-west.
42. As above; viewed from the south-east showing the blocked doorway to the sitting room (room 6) and the porch to the yard.
43. As above showing the stair against the west wall.
44. As above; viewed from the west showing the doorway to the laundry.
45. The laundry (room 9); viewed from the north-west.
46. As above; viewed from the south-east.
47. As above; viewed from the south.
48. As above; viewed from the north-east showing the doorway to the lobby.
49. The studio above rooms 7-9 viewed from the west.
50. As above showing the roof structure.
51. As above viewed from the east.
52. The rear of the external door in the hallway (room 1).
53. The hallway (room 1) viewed from the south-east.
54. As above; viewed from the west.
55. The drawing room (room 3) viewed from the south showing the fireplace.
56. As above; viewed from the south-west.
57. As above; viewed from the north-west.

58. As above; viewed from the south-east.
59. As above; viewed from the north-west.
60. The rear of the door between the rooms 3&1.
61. The dining room (room 4) viewed from the west.
62. As above.
63. As above viewed from the east.
64. The kitchen; viewed from the south-east.
65. As above; viewed from the south-west.
66. The sitting room (room 6) viewed from the north-west.
67. As above; viewed from the south-east.
68. As above; viewed from the south-west.
69. The roof structure over the rear extension showing the apex of a truss formerly with a threaded ridge pole and the tops of the common rafters.
70. The reverse of above.
71. The roof structure over the rear extension; viewed from the east.
72. As above.
73. As above viewed from the west.
74. The roof structure over the front range (rooms 1-3) viewed from the south.
75. Detail of above showing the apex of a truss.
76. As above showing the purlins and fractured truss blade.



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