

LANGDON COURT HOTEL WEMBURY DEVON

Results of a Desk Based Appraisal,
Historic Building Appraisal & Impact Assessment



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**Langdon Court Hotel
Wembury
Devon**

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Historic Building Appraisal &
Impact Assessment**

For

Geoffrey Ede

By



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Summary

SWARCH were commissioned to undertake appraisal and impact assessment of the cellar at Langdon Court Hotel, Wembury, Devon. *Langdon Court Hotel is a Grade II* Listed house set within a registered park and garden and with a number of other Listed buildings located in close association.*

The cellars appears contemporaneous with the 1693-1707 rebuilding of the House, although the well within could potentially be of an earlier origin. There are a number of features of architectural merit contained within the cellar particularly within the former wine cellar. There have been some less than sensitive changes in the 19th and 20th century, and the parts of the cellar beneath the west range are therefore generally less sensitive to further alteration.

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Acknowledgements

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1.0 Introduction

Location: Langdon Court Hotel
Parish: Wembury, Plymouth
County: Devon

1.1 Project Background

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Geoffrey Ede to conduct a desk-based appraisal, historic building appraisal and impact assessment of the cellar at Langdon Court Hotel, Wembury, Devon (Figure 1). These works are to inform the proposed installation of a spa/treatment room in the cellar of the hotel.

The work was undertaken in order to understand the date, form, function and development of the building from its origins, with the aim of understanding the impact of any proposed development on the historic elements of the building.

1.2 Topographical and Geological Background

Langdon Court is located to the east of Down Thomas and west of Wembury, set within the remaining estate buildings and former parkland. It sits at approximately 72m AOD overlooking a narrow and wooded river valley, with the ground rising up to the south-west to 100m AOD.

The underlying geology is the Dartmouth Group, slate, siltstone and sandstone (BGS 2013); these overlie the fine loamy or fine silty soils of the Denbigh 1 Association (SSEW 1983).

1.3 Historical Summary

Langdon Court is a manor with early medieval origins, noted in the domesday book of 1086 as Langadona. Langdon was one of four manors within Wembury at this time. The present house is a Grade II* Listed courtyard mansion house, remodelled and restored over several key phases. The building currently functions as a small boutique country house hotel.

The area proposed for development is the cellar of the hotel, which runs under the south and west ranges of the house, now only accessible via a stair in the hallway of the east range. The owners of the property are exploring the options for siting a small spa area within the cellar.

1.4 Methodology

The building survey was undertaken by Emily Wapshott in November 2014 in accordance with English Heritage and IfA guidelines on the recording of standing buildings and structures. The survey was based on an internal and external site inspection, using architect plans supplied by the client.

The desk-based appraisal was compiled by Natalie Boyd and Dr Samuel Walls in accordance with IfA (2008) guidelines.

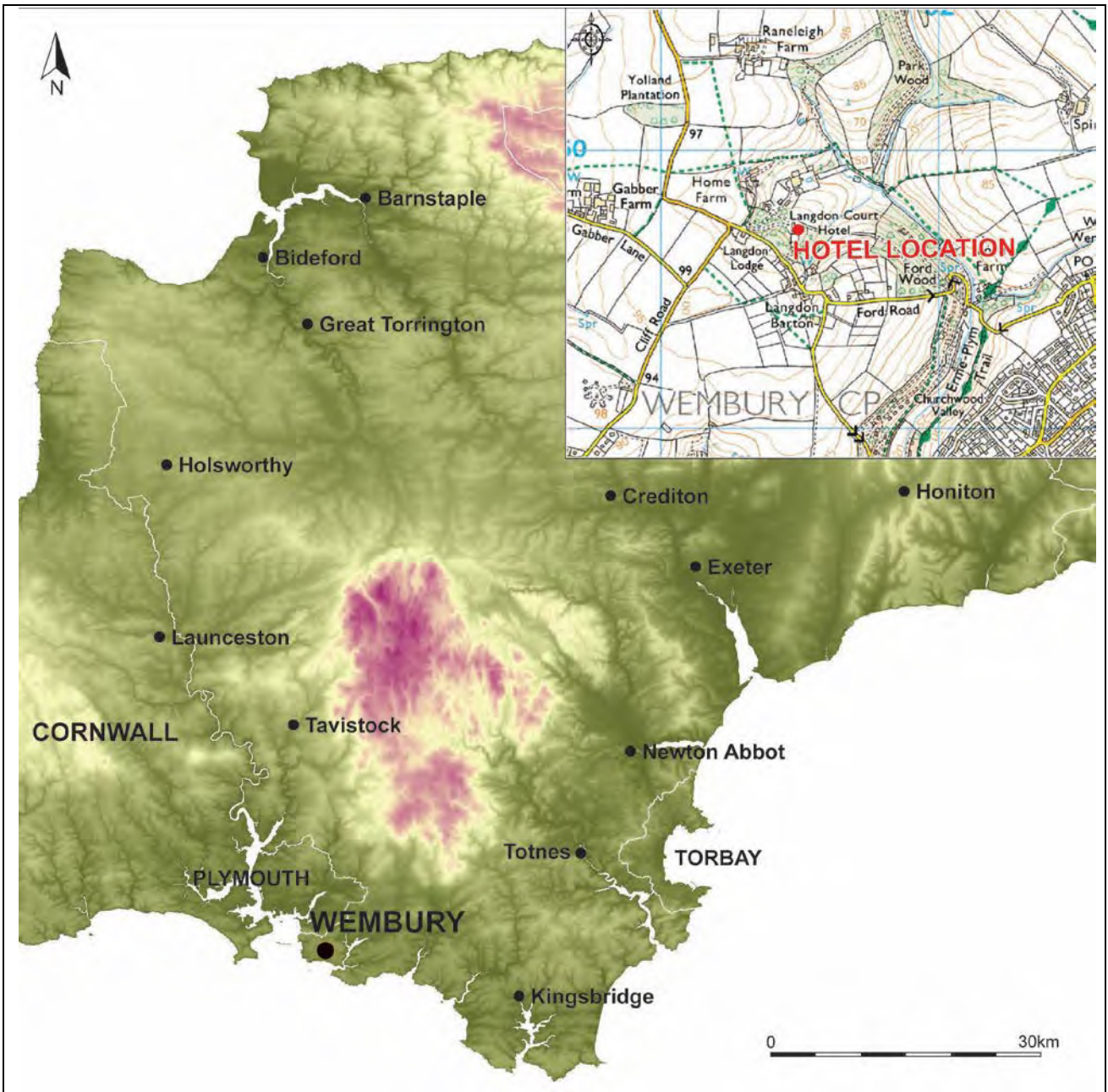


Figure 1: Location map, the site is indicated.

2.0 Results of a Desk-based Appraisal

2.1 Historical Background

Langdon Court was apparently rebuilt in 1577, and subsequently remodelled (probably rebuilt) in 1693-1707 as a courtyard mansion. The house retains a walled formal garden originally laid out in the 17th century. The house was built on a terrace, which has in part been cut into the hillside, with 228 acres of parkland sloping away to the east and north-east.

Langdon (Langadona) seems to have been in existence by the late Saxon period, when it was two separate manors owned by Heca and Goda. The Domesday Book lists Waldin holding the two manors at Langdon from Judhael, Lord of Totnes. From Henry III's reign one of these manors was held by the Pipard family for a number of generations, ending with Sir William Pipard, whose two heiresses were married into the Hamlyn and de Lisle families. He appears to have disposed of Langdon before his death in 1350.

Plympton Priory may have held the other manor at Langdon from at least its foundation in 1121, although a collegiate church at Plympton was recorded in the Domesday Survey, and may well have already had ownership of Langadona, most likely from 1087-1088, when Judhael was expelled from his barony at Totnes. Langdon remained in the ownership of Plympton Priory until along with the Manor of Wembury it was confiscated in 1539 by the Crown during the Dissolution of the monasteries. Although it is unclear which of the Langdon holdings is which, the present Langdon property was in Crown hands immediately prior to 1555, when it was sold to a lawyer named Vincent Calmady.

There is no surviving architectural evidence, although there is a tradition which says that Vincent Calmady rebuilt the medieval house in the late 1570s. Josias Calmady, descendent of Vincent, is attributed the remodelling of the house in 1707, although a major rebuild is dated to 1693 on the south and west fronts. By the 1620s, the estate included the Mewstone and part of Down Thomas manor, as can be seen on a 1789 estate map (Figure 2).

The Calmadys lived at Langdon until 1875, when it was sold to Richard Cory due to the lack of an heir. Cory added the Scottish Baronial tower and adjoining service range. The Corys seem to have held Langdon Court until 1927 when the estate was broken up into over seventy lots and sold. The house has since seen much change, having been at various times a maternity hospital, army billets, a school and a hotel (after Cherry and Pevsner 1989; Hoskins 1972; Devon Rural Archive).

Cherry and Pevsner (1989) suggest the cellars have an 18th century date, and note that similar examples can be seen at Mothecombe and Puslinch.

2.2 Cartographic History

2.2.1 Painting of Langdon Court c.1710

A c.1710 painting provides one of the earliest detailed depictions of Langdon Court, this shows the primary east elevation, with its formal walled gardens to the front (east), and south. There are numerous other buildings shown, including the large tithe barn (behind the gates) at Langdon Barton. The tithe barn (built in c.1709) is still extant, but this south orientated drive and the other buildings along it, including a smaller tithe barn(?) have since been demolished, as have the buildings to the north of Langdon Court.

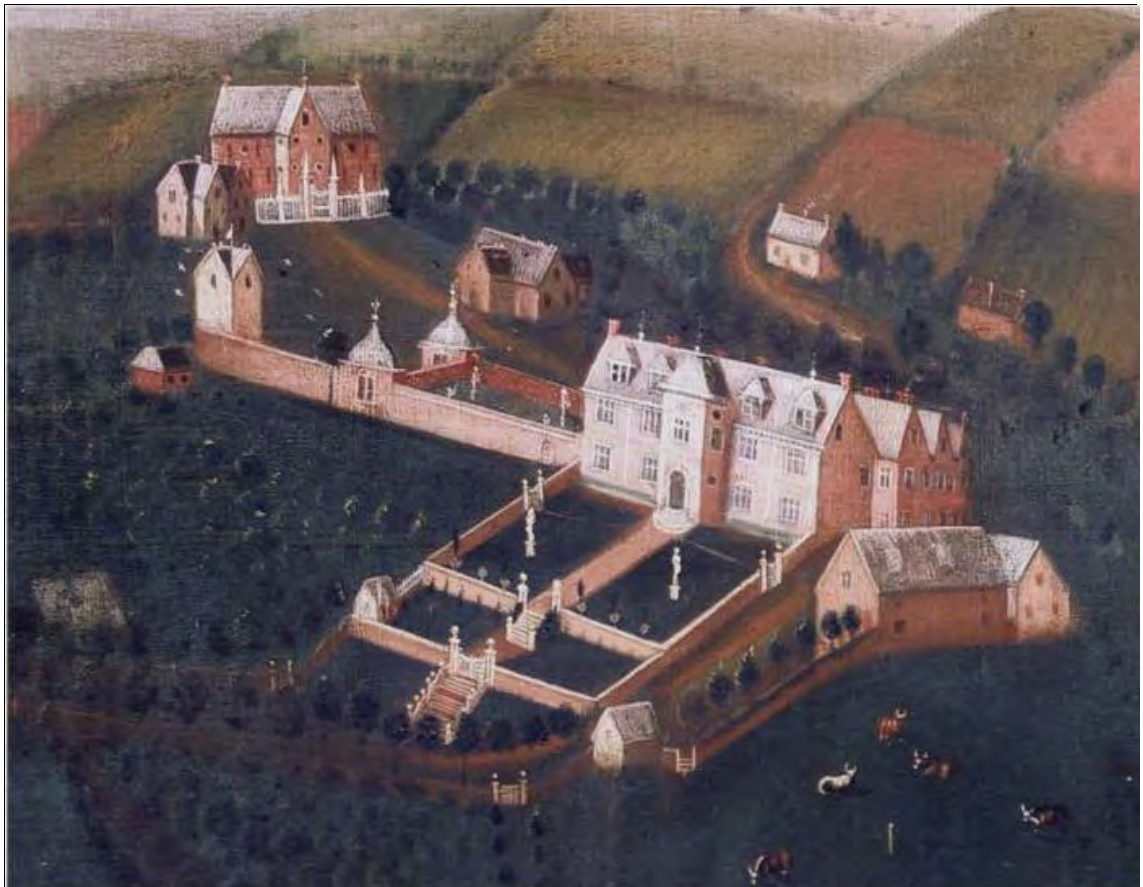


Figure 2: Detailed extract of the c.1710 painting of Langdon Court (Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery).

2.2.2 Calmady Map of 1789

The Calmady Estate Map of 1789 provides a very detailed depiction of Langdon Court and the estates holdings at this time. It emphasises the relative accuracy of the earlier painting, as buildings and drives appear in the same locations on the map.

It is of note that the majority of the field boundaries and many of the buildings on the map are orientated broadly north-east to south-west, suggesting that the present Langdon Court was probably completely rebuilt at the end of the 17th century on a different orientation to the other (earlier) buildings and boundaries.



Figure 3: Extract of Calmady Map of 1789. Langdon Court is indicated (DHC).

2.2.3 Tithe Map

The next detailed cartographic source available for this study is the 1839 tithe map (Figures 4-5). The map depicts Langdon Court, much as it was shown on the earlier sources, with the exception of the central courtyard, which is no longer shown as fully enclosed but open to the west; perhaps indicative of a carriage entrance (see Figure 5). There are several changes apparent in the surrounding area, with the drive to the south no longer shown, and the present main drive added. Also most of the buildings shown close to Langdon Court on the 1789 map appear to have been demolished by the time of the tithe map. The east garden also appears to have been lost, becoming part of the driveway leading east towards Wembury. Many of the field boundaries to the immediate east of the house appear to have also been removed between these two maps, and list large single field is listed as lawn rather than meadow in the accompanying apportionment.



Figure 4: Extract from the 1839 Tithe map. Langdon Court is indicated.



Figure 5: Detailed extract from the tithe map showing detail of the buildings at Langdon Court.

2.2.4 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1896

The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1896 more closely resembles the building as it is today (Figure 6). The mock-fortified 'Scottish Baronial' 1876 extension to north-west of the house is depicted. This was part of the changes instigated by Richard Cory and the change in ownership of 1875. There are few other notable changes, although a formal terrace appears to be demarked to the east of the house.

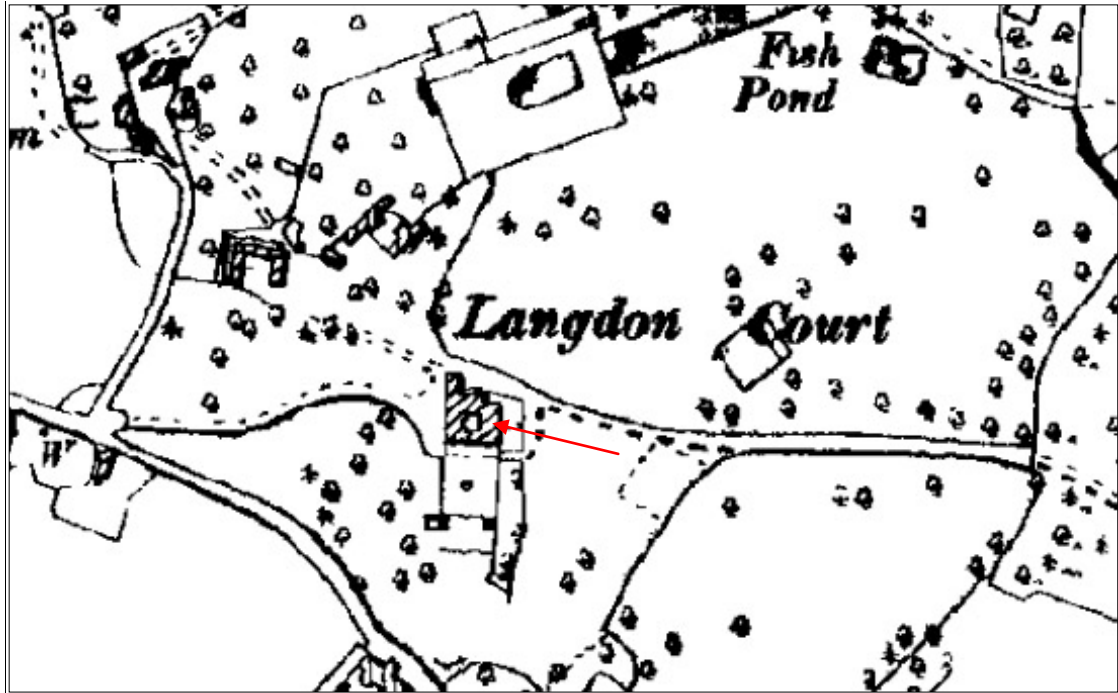


Figure 6: Extract from the 1st edition OS map of 1896. The site is arrowed.

2.2.5 Subsequent Changes

There are no other notable changes on later cartographic sources.

3.0 Historic Building Assessment

3.1 Introduction

Langdon Court contains structural remains from the 1560s/1570s, including possible stone flues, which have most likely been re-used from an earlier house on the site. The majority of the building dates to c.1686-1707. Variations of the local slatestone were used to construct the exterior of the house, with granite and limestone dressings, under a slate roof. The interior structure of the building and the main chimney stacks are of Flemish-bond brickwork over coursed stonework. The house is surrounded by extensive grounds, the remains of a medieval deer park in the valley to the north and fine early 18th century formal gardens to the south, with 18th century kitchen gardens and later 19th century landscaping.

This assessment is focussed upon the cellars of Langdon Court, which are located beneath the west and south ranges of the building.

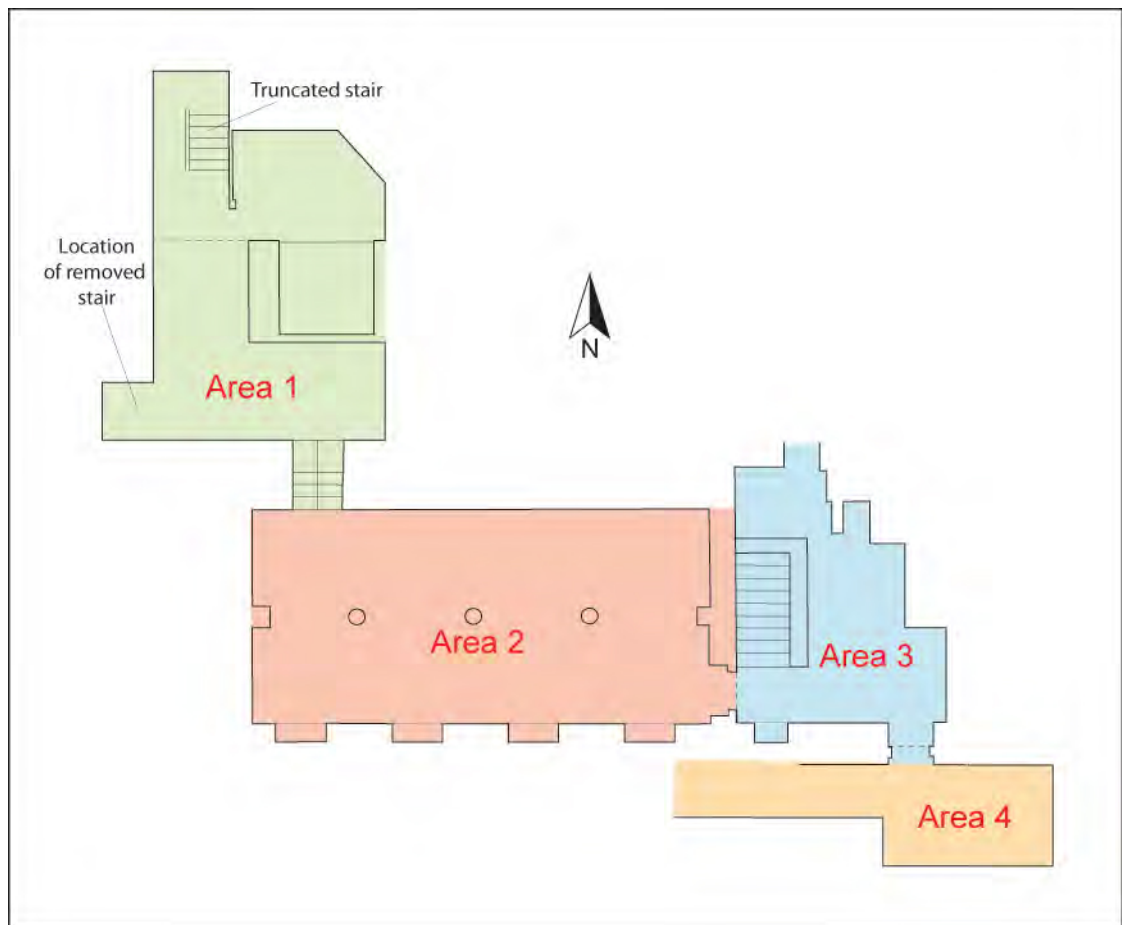


Figure 7: Plan of the cellars, including the separate areas referred to in the text marked (not to scale, supplied by Keith Cook, Architect).

3.2 Building Description

3.2.1 Area 1

Area 1 is located under the west range. It is presently accessed via Area 2, but formerly by a staircase from the kitchen, suggesting this area was used for service/cold food storage. Two parallel brick 'barrel' vaults, with triple-segmental arches, support the timber floor of the kitchen above. These are variations on English bond brickwork, bonded in a lime-mix, built over tightly packed coursed slatestone. The eastern vault is blocked at its southern end with brick rubble. Brick steps, with shale slab treads remain from the former access to the kitchen, which is now boarded over. A delivery chute has been blocked in the west wall opposite the steps. The floor is of concrete, laid over flags. The lobby to the south of this area is served by the stone-built coal hole and has a stone flag floor. The internal wall to the south is of coursed stone in a lime bond. A second staircase which led to the service hallway above has been removed, built across the blocked brick south end of the east vault. A wide opening in the south wall, with triple segmental brick arch, chamfered reveals and run-out stops, leads to the steps to the wine cellar (Area 2) through a panelled secure door, set in a pegged frame.

3.2.2 Area 2

Area 2 lies under the west end of the south range, accessed via Area 3, formerly also via area 1. This area is used as a wine cellar, and is at a much lower level than the other areas. This room has lockable doors and was designed to be secure. Area 2 has brick quadripartite vaults constructed of handmade bricks in a lime bond, with central row of circular granite pillars. The brick vaults are of a variant of English bond brickwork, with stretcher bond to the base of the arches. The granite pillars have stepped, ovolo-moulded square capitals and ogee and ovolo-moulded square plinths. Pilasters frame the row of pillars to the east and west ends, with stepped ovolo moulded capitals. The cellar is cut down into the bedrock, with tightly packed, coursed slatestone walls in a lime bond. There is a shale stone slab floor. Four hollow-moulded, two-light, mullioned windows set in deep arched window embrasures in the south wall. There is a granite jamb doorway leading to Area 3, in the south-east corner of the room, with a ledged plank door. There is a keeping place with a stone slab shelf in the south wall, under the first window. There is another small keeping place in the east wall, and a large stone trough in the north-east corner.

3.2.3 Area 3

Area 3 is in the centre of the south range, accessed via steps from the corridor to the rear of the east range. Possible service/butlers use due to its proximity to the formal dining room. The main two-flight stone slab steps drop into this area, enclosed by a brick wall. The walls are a mixture of brick and coursed stone, plastered and whitewashed. Area 3 has brick arched vaults. There is a fine granite doorway to Area 2, with roll moulding and a stone segmental arch above. Opposite the steps in the south wall is an off-set arched window embrasure with a stone mullioned window. In the eastern end of the south wall is a door leading to Area 4, with plain granite jambs and plank door, with a stone mullioned window above. A round-headed segmental stone arch in the north wall under the stairs leads to a vaulted alcove and the rough stone well shaft, cut out of the bedrock. There is a large keeping place to the east

of the well opening, the stone of which is heavily whitewashed. There is a concrete floor over slabs.

3.2.4 Area 4

This is a storage area carved into the bedrock to the south, with brick semi-circular vault and access to a deep arched land drain to the east, now blocked with concrete blocks. A long air vent/drainage tunnel lies to the west, running along the south elevation, providing light and air to the wine cellar and with small drains cut into the bedrock carrying the natural run-off away from the building. This tunnel is cut from the bedrock with a brick arched vault and granite-built light wells, with iron bars respecting each window of the wine cellar. There are stone slab floors to both storage vault and tunnel.

3.3 Architectural Appraisal

The building is designated Grade II* Listed status and is of local, regional and national importance, being of special historical interest, including key architectural details of particular note.

The cellar is an important element of this building; and we cannot fully understand the function of the ground floor service spaces without some recourse to the various stairs and elements in the cellar which supported those functions. Therefore the cellar layout is of great importance; the differing levels of status and use can clearly be seen in the areas, with good ceiling heights and architectural details applied to Areas 2 & 3, and a very simple functional design to Areas 1 & 4.

The cellar is a fine example of service spaces of this date, with the central wine cellar (Area 2) being of particular architectural note with its granite columns. The whole cellar complex is cohesive in style with the main ranges of the building with granite details, coursed stonework and fashionable brickwork. In date and style it is contemporary with the rebuild of the south and west ranges, sometime between 1693 and 1707.

The well is especially interesting as it may be the earliest feature on the site, perhaps dating back to the medieval period and the earlier buildings. The bedrock around the well may have been altered to fit with the 18th century layout of the cellar. It is more likely that the well is contemporary with the re-building of the house, but an earlier origin should be considered a possibility.

3.4 Sensitivity

3.4.1 Area 1

Within the cellars, Area 1 has seen the most significant alterations, with 19th, 20th and 21st century works; the blocking of the vault and conversion to a boiler room, the blocking of the steps and delivery chute, the laying of the concrete floor and boarding of the walls. To the south a further set of steps to the ground floor has been removed. This area therefore has more flexibility for change, with the only key features being the brick barrel vaults themselves.

3.4.2 Area 2

Area 2, the wine cellar has received some 20th and 21st century structural intervention, with evidence of partitions seen as scars/holes on the stone walls and brick vaults. The concrete barrel roll was also installed, the floor being disturbed to accommodate it. This area is most sensitive to change; it contains the features of most architectural value. This does not preclude works, as long as the structural fabric and architectural details can be protected within any design. The cellar had been flooded when the assessment was conducted. Water has been rising up and lifting the flags and the south-west corner shows sign of severe damp, which is noted as having an effect on the timber bolection moulded panelling in the ground floor room above.

3.4.3 Area 3

Area 3 has been altered in the 20th century, plastered and converted as a beer cellar, the floor concreted. There is more flexibility for change in this area, but the well must be safeguarded, as a feature of architectural and historic importance, which is highly sensitive to modern development.

3.4.4 Area 4

Area 4, the cold storage area and 'tunnel' are also less sensitive to change, with few important architectural features which could be affected by development. This area has seen very little alteration except for the blocking of the land drain to the east. Key elements to retain are the light wells to the garden terrace and the exterior of the wine cellar windows.

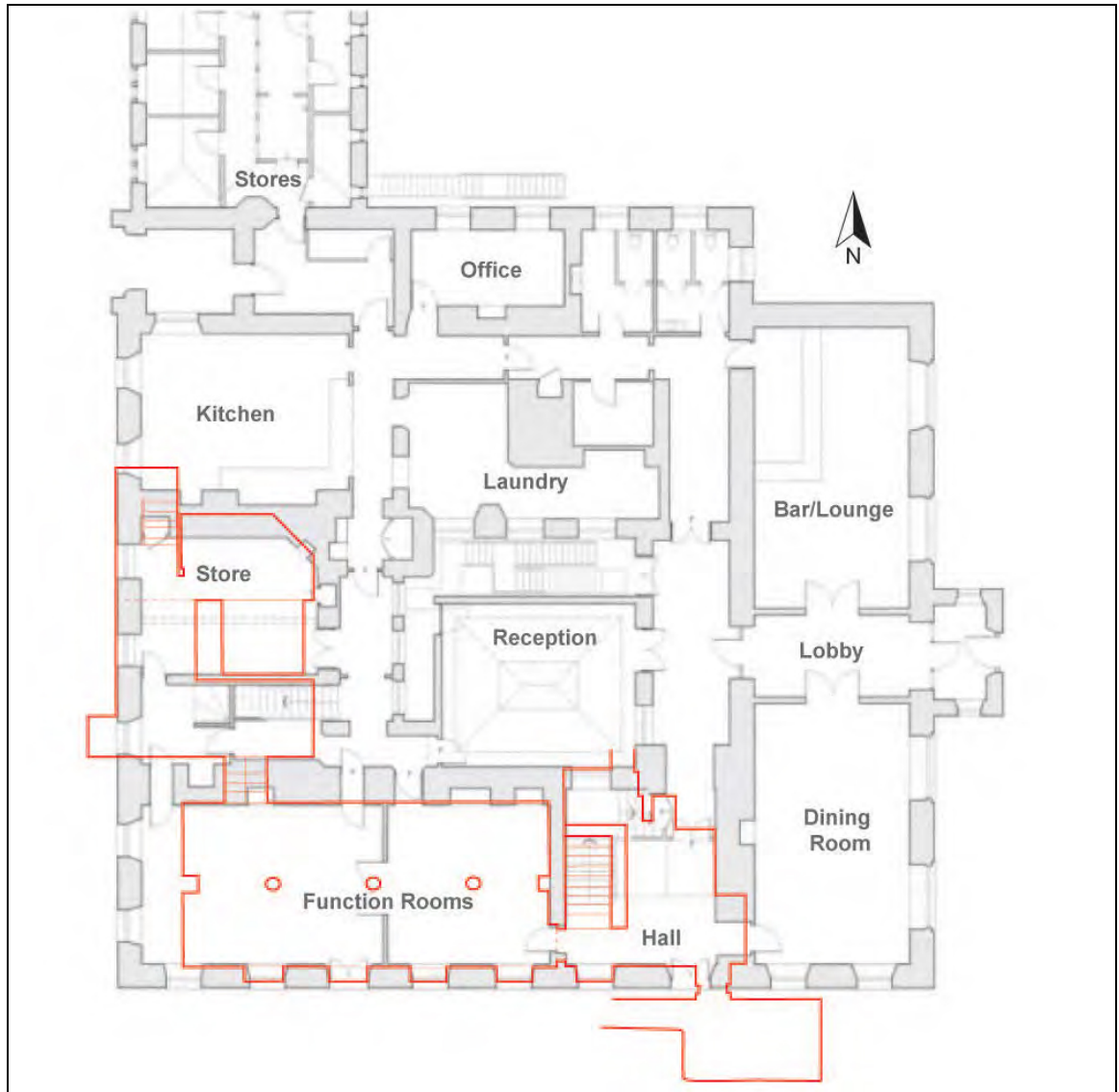


Figure 8: Plan of the cellars (in red) with ground floor plan overlain to show their location, (based on plans supplied by Keith Cook, Architect).

3.5 Setting and Visibility

3.5.1 South Elevation

The granite-framed light wells, which serve Area 4, are positioned symmetrically under the ground floor windows and doorways of this elevation. The stone segmental arches and plain keystones which form the window openings of Area 2 can be seen within the chamfered plinth. The sloping dressed granite slabs which form the light-wells are set with iron bars, those to the doorways with fretwork iron panels. Otherwise there is no visible indication of the cellar. Beyond, in the formal gardens, two Grade II* Listed brick and stone garden houses and Grade II Listed associated walls, steps and gate piers form a cohesive group of considerable architectural value.

3.5.2 West Elevation

To the west elevation the coal hole is set into the ground, immediately south of the central doorway in the west elevation; the blocked delivery chute is set to the north. Both are framed in granite slabs slightly proud of the surface. As on the south elevation however, this does nothing to distract from the symmetry of the facade.

3.5.3 Internal, Ground Floor

The cellar steps rise into the corridor which runs down the rear of the east range. This corridor forms a main circulation route for the principal entertaining spaces of the house. The steps rise beneath the main staircase and are an integral structure with this important architectural feature. The double panelled doors, with stepped bead moulding, of 19th century date are set in a low pegged frame; although later in date these doors are complimentary to the architecture around them. There is a blocked three-light mullioned window which serves the cellar steps from within the central courtyard, with a segmental stone arch with plain keystone. The steps to the cellar in the west range have been boarded (or removed) with no above ground presence.

3.6 Impact Assessment

It is important the layout of the cellar complex is retained within the development; the separate areas played key roles in the function of the ground floor spaces and in the utilisation of the house by its inhabitants. This is particularly important within the wine cellar (Area 2), with the pillars and pilasters being the key architectural features of value on this level of the building, and the proportions of the room an essential part of its aesthetic appeal. Other features which are important and require retention are the hollow-moulded mullioned stone windows in Areas 2 & 3. The visual retention of features within the spaces is vital; loss of the features behind boarding will change our understanding of the spaces and their various levels of status and function.

Drainage works and further renovation/restoration as part of the development process would safeguard these vulnerable spaces from further damp ingress. Requirements for heating and insulation etc would have to be carefully considered to determine how they could be provided superficially to ensure minimal disturbance to the historic fabric.

3.6.1 General Impact on the Building

A small and relatively specific development within part of the cellar complex to provide spa-like facilities and/or a treatment room will be contained within the below-ground structure which exists and the development will have no impact on the rest of the building. To some extent plumbing and wiring may need to be adjusted but the building is already run as a hotel so these will be minor alterations to areas already disturbed by extant cabling or pipework. Deterioration of the cellar will impact the whole building and therefore works to preserve and incorporate this area into the main use of the building would have an overall positive impact on the future condition of the whole structure.

The only foreseen issue will be that of providing appropriate access to the cellar. Careful planning/design is needed which satisfies both health and safety requirements and minimises impact on the historic fabric of the building and the appearance of the corridor in the east range. It may be appropriate to reopen/rebuild a set of the historic steps to the cellar within the west range, as these areas have already been heavily altered. Any impact on the appearance of the ground floor and any features within it is inherently negative, but this is focussed and limited to a small area and can be mitigated through eventual design if the development process progresses.

3.6.2 General Impact on Grounds/Views

There will be no discernible impact on the gardens, drive approach, registered parkland or Listed garden structures if the development is retained within the current layout of the cellar. The existing light wells and drainage tunnel along the south elevation can be utilised to provide light and the space for necessary equipment for ventilation or heating below ground, with no need to affect the sensitive views between the house and its grounds.

3.7 Archaeological Potential

Any excavation/groundworks for levelling the floor, inserting a damp course and drainage will necessitate the disturbance of possible archaeological deposits beneath the historic stone slab floor in the cellar. There is slight potential that deposits may include evidence of the earlier buildings which stood on the site. There is greater potential of uncovering evidence of deposits associated with the present house. Impact on such deposits can be mitigated by archaeological monitoring which can record any remains in an appropriate manner.

4.0 Conclusions

The cellars form part of the late-17th to early 18th century rebuilding of Langdon Court, and although they have been subject to a degree of alteration and modification, many architectural details survive, particularly within the wine cellar. There have been a number of 20th century alterations, notably within Areas 1 and 3, which enable the space to be suitable for accommodating changes in use. Any changes would have to ensure the retention of the key architectural features of value, such as the pillars and pilasters and the hollow-moulded mullioned stone windows. The former wine cellar should also not be subdivided, as its proportions are an essential part of its aesthetic appeal, and defines its higher status use over the other spaces in the cellar.

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Devon Rural Archive

<http://www.devonruralarchive.com/LangdonCourt.html>

The National Archives

<http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Promap 2014

<http://www.promap.co.uk/>

The National Archives

<http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Appendix 1

Details of the DoE Building listing

Langdon Court Hotel
(formerly listed as
Langdon Court)

GV II*

Country house, now used as an hotel. The medieval house was rebuilt in 1577. Remodelled in 1707 and altered and extended circa 1877. Rough ashlar. Slate roof. The original house had projecting wings left and right. During the 1707 remodelling a new front filled in between the wings and the house is now square on plan around a small central courtyard. Two storeys, attic and cellar. Granite string course at first floor level. West front 2:3:2 bays. Gabled either end with ball finial and sundial. Centre three bays have heavy modillion cornice. Sash windows with glazing bars some retaining thick glazing bars, stone arches with keystones, centre first floor in rusticated architraves with grotesque mask keystone. Ground floor granite mullion/transom windows. Blocked central doorway with two pairs of pilasters, entablature with large segmental pediment with pineapple finials and quartered arms of the Calmady and Courtney families in the tympanum. Similar south elevation but 2:1:3:1:2 bays. Third and seventh bay has rusticated window architraves similar to west front, and have doorways below in moulded architraves with mask keystones and broken segmental pediments on console brackets. Good early C18 lead rainwater heads and drainpipe on south side. The east front appears to be largely C19, five bays and with two-storeyed gabled porch at the centre. The north front is asymmetrical the centre gabled with range of sashes and stone mullion windows in segmentally headed openings. Late C19 crenellated tower on the north west corner with octagonal stair turret. C19 brick chimney stacks, and C20 dormers.

Interior: much altered in C19, but retains early C18 open well staircase with twisted balusters, heavy hand rail ramp up at corners, carved scroll brackets and dado panelling. Two early C18 dog-leg secondary staircases. Some bolection panelling with broken scroll pediment overdoors and cornice. Various chimneypieces. Brick vaulted cellar on granite piers - circa early C18. Langdon was the Seat of the Calmadys. Vincent Calmady a lawyer purchased the property from the crown in 1555 and rebuilt the medieval house in 1577. Josias Calmady remodelled it in 1707. The Calmadys sold Langdon in 1875. Transactions of the Devonshire Association 1910 Vol 42 page 522.

Listing NGR: SX5148149722

Appendix 2
Historic Building Assessment: Supporting photos



Detail of one of the light wells, with the segmental arch within the plinth; from the south-east.



View of the south wall, cut out of the bedrock, within the vault in Area 4; from the north-east.



View down the drainage/air vent tunnel in Area 4; from the east.



View through the granite moulded doorway between Areas 2 & 3; from the east, north-east.



View into the stone cut well shaft; from the south.



Detail of the secure 19th century plank door; from the west.



The keeping place in the south wall under the first window; from the north.



The east wall of the wine cellar, with keeping place and stone trough; from the west.



The stone slab floor in the lobby of Area 1; from the west.



The west elevation of Langdon Court; from the west-north-west.



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