

CHALLICE GATE COTTAGE & HONEY COTTAGE

LAPFORD

MID DEVON

DEVON

Historic Building Appraisal



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 201123



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Challice Gate Cottage & Honey Cottage, Lapford, Devon

Historic Building Appraisal

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Summary

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Jonathon Rhind Architects (the Agent) on behalf of a private client to carry out a historic building appraisal of the Grade II Listed Challice Gate Cottage and Honey Cottage, Lapford, Devon. This work was undertaken ahead of submitting a Listed Building Consent application for proposed alterations and repair works.

This range of cottages is Listed as mid-18th century in date but are demonstrably earlier, with an early 17th century core extended to each end. The 17th century structure supplies few clues but its large fireplace and double ovens hints at a possible communal function, or its origin as a two-cell, rather than the more commonplace three-cell, building. It was subsequently extended and in the mid-19th century bought by the owners of the Lapford Academy, a small private boarding school that operated from 1859 to 1908. It seems likely the range provided accommodation for the staff rather than the boarders, and after 1908 was tenanted externally.

Proposals to convert Honey Cottage and Challice Gate into a single dwelling would reverse one element of that process of subdivision. The proposal itself is not antithetical to the narrative of the cottages, and as most of the non-structural interior detailing is 19th or 20th century in date, the harm arising from that work would be no great issue, and in many instance will be very positive. Those elements arguably less positive have been carefully considered, for example the retention of side nibs and ceiling downstand from the dividing wall between R5 in Challice Gate and R3 in Honey Cottage will aid in retaining visual clues of the 19th and 20th century history of the range.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION:	CHALLICE GATE COTTAGE & HONEY COTTAGE
PARISH:	LAPFORD
DISTRICT:	MID DEVON
COUNTY:	DEVON
NGR:	SS7316008225
SWARCH REF:	LCH20

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Jonathon Rhind Architects (the Agent) on behalf of a private client to undertake a historic building appraisal of the Grade II Listed Challice Gate Cottage and Honey Cottage, Lapford, Devon. This work was undertaken in advance of the conservation and restoration of the buildings, and proposals convert the cottages into a single dwelling.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The cottages are located close to the centre of Lapford on a slight south-facing slope at an altitude of c.120m AOD. The soils of this area are the well-drained fine loamy soils over rock of the Neath Association (SSEW 1983); the bedrock is recorded as sandstone of the Bude Formation (BGS 2020).

1.3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The cottages form part of a single range located alongside Poor House Lane and south of the church in the village of Lapford. The early history of the site has not been established but in the mid-19th century the cottages were acquired by John Clarke, schoolmaster of the Lapford Academy, a boarding school for boys that operated between 1859 and 1908. The cottages are Listed as mid-18th century in date but are earlier and more complex than this suggests. The core structure appears early 17th century in date and contains a large axial fireplace with diagnostic ovens, with simple 17th century carpentry and A-frame roof structure. This building was extended in the 18th and 19th century and, following its purchase by the school, was subdivided into three cottages, probably for use by members of staff.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The building appraisal was conducted by Robert Waterhouse in November 2020. The work was undertaken in line with best practice and follows the guidance outlined in: ClfA's *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2014) and Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Processes* (2016). The desk-based appraisal follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (ClfA 2014, Revised 2017) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (English Heritage 2012).



FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP.

2.0 DESK-BASED APPRAISAL

2.1 HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Listed structures known as Challice Gate Cottage, Honey Cottage and Pleasant Cottage form a single range located south of the churchyard in the centre of Lapford. The Listing states they were built in 1740 but an examination of the extant structure indicates the range is earlier and more complex. Internal features demonstrate that Honey Cottage and the western half of Challice Gate Cottage formed a single dwelling probably dating to the first half of the 17th century, that the eastern half of Challice Gate Cottage is later, and that Pleasant Cottage was adapted from a service range in the mid-19th century (see Section 3.0 below). It should be noted that the names of these cottages have changed multiple times (i.e. on the Listing Honey Cottage is *Northcott Cottage* and Challice Gate is *Rosebarn Cottage* etc.) and do not provide a reliable guide.



FIGURE 2: EXTRACT FROM THE LAPFORD TITHE MAP c.1841 (DHC); THE SITE IS INDICATED (NORTH IS TO THE UPPER RIGHT).

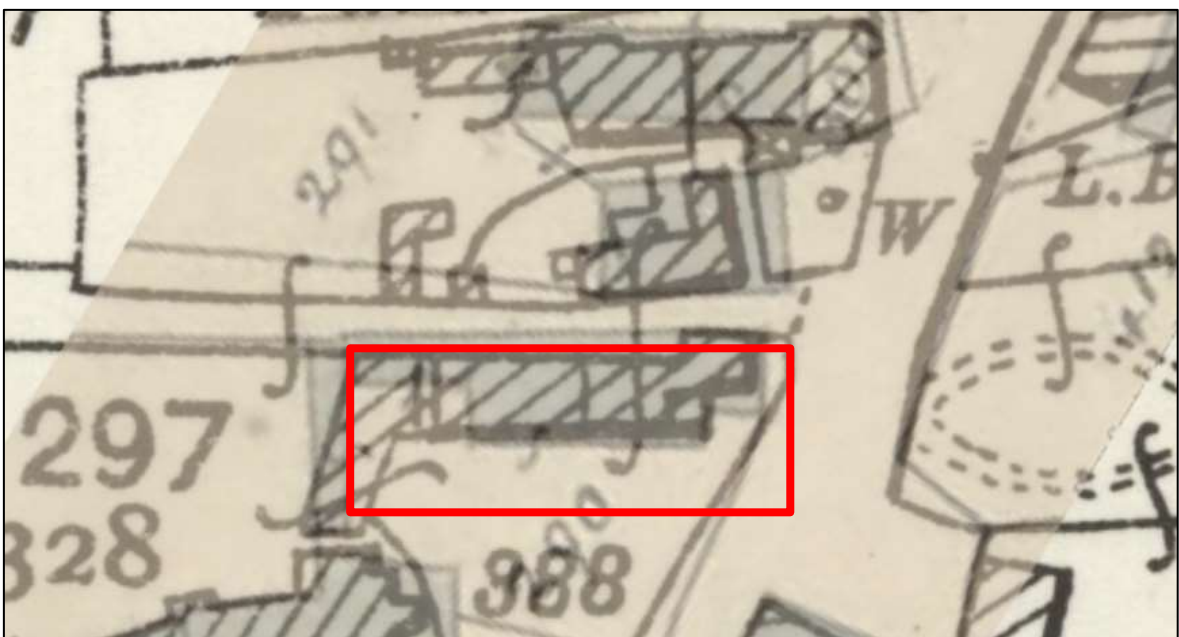


FIGURE 3: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TITHE AND 2ND EDITION OS MAP.

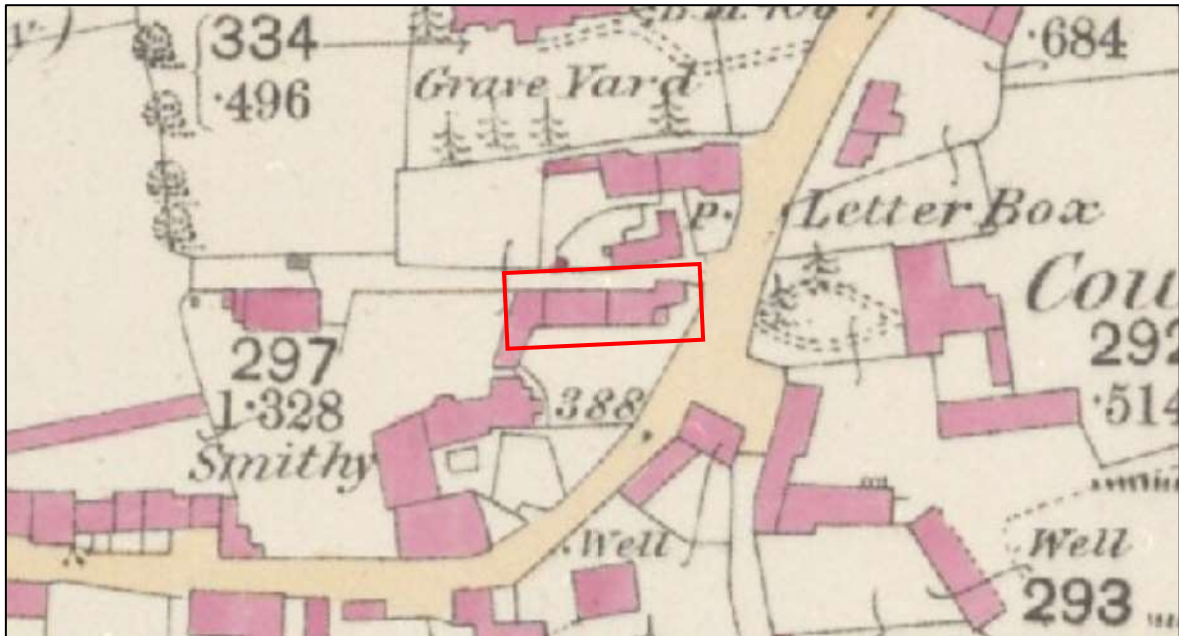


FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM THE 1889 OS 25 INCH MAP (DEVON SHEET LIV.2) (NLS); THE COTTAGES ARE INDICATED.

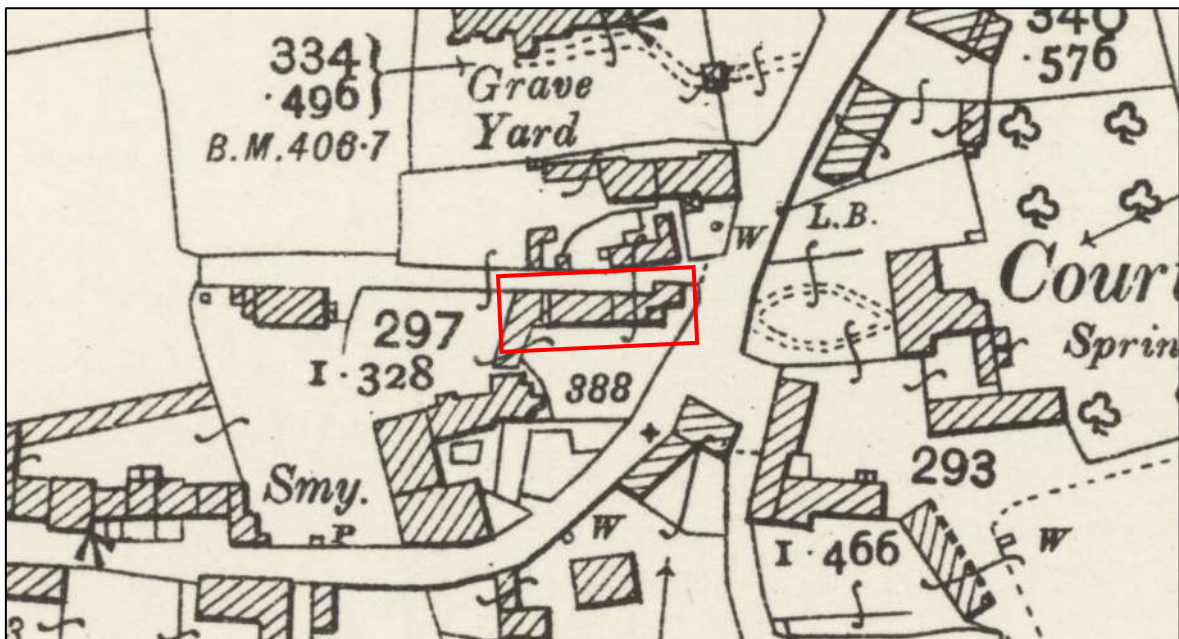


FIGURE 5: EXTRACT FROM THE 1905 OS 25 INCH MAP (DEVON SHEET LIV.2) (NLS); THE COTTAGES ARE INDICATED.

In c.1841 tithe map (Figure 2) is somewhat schematic but a comparison between this map and the later historic OS maps (Figure 3) demonstrates that between c.1841 and 1889 the front of Pleasant Cottage was brought forward to match that of Honey Cottage and Challice Gate. The ligatures (as indicated by the *f* symbol) on the tithe map indicate all the structures arranged around the yard numbered 290 were held by a single owner/tenant. The 1840 apportionment does not indicate who owned or lived on the tenement at this time and the 1841 Census is difficult to interpret without much more detailed study (i.e. there are five blacksmiths in the village (including George Challice), five Challice households and eight Northcott households).

In 1859 Lapford Academy School was established by John Clarke and in 1861 the Census lists John Clarke, his wife and daughter, seven scholars and two servants in a property adjacent to George Challice, blacksmith. The properties adjacent to John Clarke were inhabited by William Clarke ('machine maker') and John Rounsefell ('carpenter master'). Note that in 1850 the

Clarke's are noted as blacksmiths and agricultural machinists, with *a forge situated in part of the main building abutting the Poor House garden* (ref: E. Challice).

In the 1871 census George Challice ('blacksmith') lived adjacent to the 'independent minister' George James Pilgrim (Congregational). John Clarke was Congregationalist in inclination and the boys were escorted to the chapel for Sunday services (ref: E. Challice). The Challice household included the 'school mistress' Elizabeth MacNeil. Adjacent to the Pilgrim house was that of James Townsend ('agricultural labourer'). Then it was the *Village Commercial Academy* with John Clarke ('schoolmaster') and family, John Reed and John Besley ('assistant schoolmasters'), three servants ('housemaid cook, kitchen maid'), and 43 boarders.

If the order in which the Census was recorded can be trusted, it would suggest the Academy had moved or a cottage built between the house of George Challice and the Academy. As this dwelling was occupied by the Congregational minister it is plausible this is Bromstone Cottage, which was built between c.1841 and 1889. This would make the structure (now demolished) between Bromstone Cottage and Lilac Cottage the home of James Townsend, and imply Lilac Cottage was the home of John Clarke. The large increase in the number of boarders would presumably indicate the Pleasant/Honey/Challice Gate range had been acquired by this date.

In the 1881 Census George Challice ('blacksmith') lived adjacent to *Barnhayes Cottage* inhabited by William Delve ('clerk & sexton'). The next house was the *Academy for Boys* inhabited by John Clarke ('schoolmaster') and family, William Harris ('2nd schoolmaster'), 49 boarders and four servants ('general servant, housemaid, cook, and kitchen maid', all female). It is possible the house once occupied by James Townsend now formed part of the Academy.

In the 1891 Census William Challice 'blacksmith' lived adjacent to Henry Northcott ('thatcher'), then John Clarke ('retired schoolmaster') and household. Next in the sequence were William Hurd ('railway worker'), James Chillcott ('railway worker'), and John Davy ('tailor and draper'), the latter having the shop next to the church. Teachers, most of the servants, and all but one of the boarders are omitted from the Census this year; as the Census was taken just before Easter they were presumably all on holiday.

John Clarke died in 1891 and his will includes *his three cottages called North Cotts in the parish of Lapford afed then in the respective occupation of James Chilcott, William Heard, [and] Jane Burridge* (Veitch Penny Solicitors, Crediton).

In the 1901 Census the household of William Challice ('blacksmith'), which also included Ada Challice 'schoolteacher', was directly adjacent the Collegiate School. The household of William Clarke (the son of John Clarke) included his wife, widowed mother, five children, two teachers, two servants and 26 boarders. The next houses in the sequence were occupied by Jane Burridge ('widow'), William Hurd ('railway porter'), Alexander Snape ('schoolmaster') and Sarah Ann Johnson ('matron'), then Henry Northcott ('thatcher'). If the Challice household remained constant, this would suggest the Pilgrim house had become the principal residence.

The school closed in 1908 and the boy's dormitory was demolished (ref: E. Challice). This would suggest that the Pleasant/Honey/Challice Gate range was not used for boarders, but for the servants and schoolteachers. The recollections of Eric Challice are worth reproducing in full:

[Following the closure of the school in 1908] *William Clark, now left with the buildings on his hands, employed a firm of builders from North Tawton to convert the property into three separate dwellings. After the conversion, Edgar Clark, who had married Minnie Densham of Bury Barton, occupied the larger residential part. This part fronts on to the Village road. The central detached house, formerly ore of the classrooms was let to Captain Binney, Royal Marines (Reserve); and the*

other detached cottage was occupied by Fred and Ada Ley. The only part of the school buildings completely demolished were on the site between Binneys and Leys and contained the boys' dormitory on the first floor, and the ground floor was used for class rooms.

In the 1911 Census the household of William Challice ('blacksmith') was adjacent to those of (in order) Henry Northcott ('sexton'), Elizabeth Lee ('widow'), Walter Binney ('retired captain, Royal Marines'), Frederick Ley ('farmer's son'), Tom Littlejohns ('porter'), and Thomas Hawkins ('railway porter').

The accounts differ slightly in terms of the dating (i.e. *contra* Eric Challice). The Census would suggest the range had been divided up into separate cottages between c.1880 and c.1890. The fact that multiple schoolmasters are listed in the earlier Census entries would imply the range had been subdivided at an earlier date, perhaps in the 1860s.

3.0 HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL

3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

Three thatched cottages of traditional appearance, facing gardens on their south and backing onto a narrow unmetalled lane to their north, forming a long rectangular two storey range with stuccoed cob walls and a ridged thatch roof, half-hipped to the east and fully hipped to the west, with a plain stitched ridge of traditional local form.

A modern red brick chimney stack with a single pot, presumably replacing a 19th century stack of similar form is present in the ridge to left of centre between Pleasant and Honey Cottages, a tall square dull red brick stack at the north-west corner has a 19th century lower half with stepped cap and a modern brick upward extension. A small sub-square two-storey extension is offset to the rear at the east end; this has a hipped roof to the east and a partial gable where it joins the main roof to the west, with a tall modern red brick chimney stack with stepped cap and tall terracotta pot in the rear inner angle, probably replacing a 19th century stack of similar form and materials.

Modern single storey domestic extensions have been added in the front angle to the south of this wing, and to the west end of the range, within an older L-plan single storey range of cob and stone rubble, which extends to the south-west and abuts the rear of a neighbouring cottage (Lilac Cottage) to the south.

The cottage gardens and a narrow area just east of the range are enclosed by a decorative wrought iron fence, painted black, set upon a red brick dwarf wall with a narrow cobble apron to the village street. This has radiused stone cart-wheel strikers at regular intervals and contains an extremely flamboyant gateway with a segmental arch of wrought iron over it. This has slate and granite steps up to a cambered cobbled path which runs the full length of the south front of the cottages. These features probably date from 1859, when the cottages were acquired by the Lapford Academy (School) in Homefield House, 50m to the south-west. The gate and railings are thought to have been made by blacksmith George Challice; Challice Gate Cottage is named after him and his splendid gateway.



FIGURE 6: THE SOUTH ELEVATION OF THE THREE COTTAGES; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH.

CHALLICE GATE COTTAGE & HONEY COTTAGE, LAPFORD, DEVON

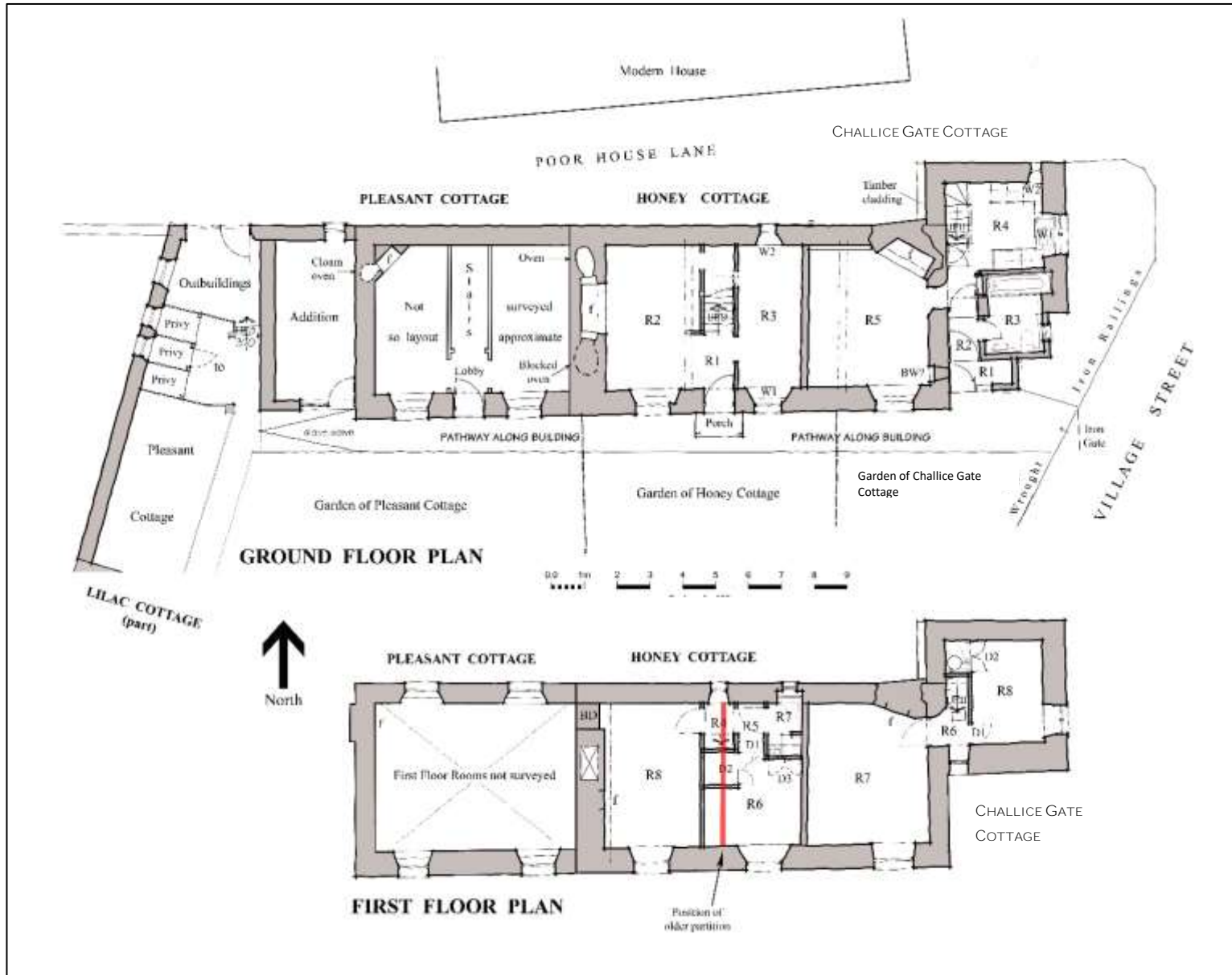


FIGURE 7: GROUND- AND FIRST-FLOOR PLAN OF THE THREE COTTAGES (BASED ON SUPPLIED PLANS).

3.2 THE COTTAGES – EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

3.2.1 SOUTH ELEVATION

In three parts, comprising single storey outbuildings at the left (west) end serving Pleasant Cottage, a two storey main range to their right encompassing all three cottages, while a two storey wing at the right hand end is set back from the main block and is part of Challice Gate Cottage.

The south front of Pleasant Cottage's outbuildings are built of timber faced with corrugated iron, with a corrugated iron roof over; the eastern half having rebuilt in block in the later 20th century and incorporated into the house with a door to the right and adjoining plate glass window to its left. A ridged roof over this is of asbestos slates with black clay ridge tiles, modern plastic gutter and timber bargeboard.

The main two-storey block has a seven bay continuous south elevation, divided into three cottages with paint colour changes being the only obvious difference between them. The thatched roof has horizontal eaves, largely continuous, though rethatching of the western two cottages' roofs at different dates has produced a slight ripple. Most of the windows have modern, though traditional fenestration; all have cast cement sills, suggesting a wholesale re-windowing of the entire block in the mid-late 20th century.

From the left, Pleasant Cottage has a largely symmetrical appearance with a central modern glazed door and modern windows either side, mirrored at first floor level; the latter being a little smaller, having horned later 19th century vertical sashes with 3x1 over 3x2 panes. Where Pleasant Cottage abuts Honey Cottage, a vertical joint is visible as a crack in the render; the wall face also angles outwards slightly.

Honey Cottage has the same window and door layout as before, but all the windows have modern two-light 2x3 pane casements; the central door is modern with vertical tongue and groove planks, in a modern frame. A small self-supporting shelter porch on curved and chamfered brackets projects from the wall-face above; its monopitch roof is slated.

No physical change other than paint colour marks the property boundary with Challice Gate Cottage to the right. This has a single, though broader bay with modern two-light casements as before, the thatch eaves rising slightly to the half hip.

To the right, the south wall of the two-storey east wing is set back about 3m from the façade of the main block, with modern lean-to's fronting it. The south elevation of the wing is largely blind above a modern single storey lean-to porch/bathroom extension, but a single light casement at the extreme left-hand end has 2x3 panes: it too is modern.

The modern lean-to structure below largely occupies the re-entrant angle between the two older buildings and has a modern panelled door to the left with a fixed 2x3 pane light to its right; it steps back a little to the right before continuing further east to enclose a small bathroom. The shallow monopitch roof is slated, with black plastic gutters and downpipes on white painted timber bargeboards.



FIGURE 8: THE NORTH ELEVATION OF THE COTTAGES; VIEWED FROM ALONG POORHOUSE LANE TO THE NORTH-WEST.

3.2.1 NORTH ELEVATION

In three parts, comprising the main two storey range backing the three cottages, a single storey continuation to the right of Pleasant Cottage, and the forward-projecting east wing of Challice Gate Cottage to the left. Poorhouse Lane: a narrow track serving properties to the west, runs the full length of the buildings, with an overgrown hedge continuing the line of the elevation to the west. From the left, the north wall of Challice Gate Cottage's east wing is largely blank stucco, with a single light window opening at bottom left, containing a modern single light stained glass window and a painted stone sloping sill. A cement splash skirt at the base is modern. Stains and marks just above this suggest that modern damp-proofing has been injected into the wall here. The C19 wrought iron garden railings abut the façade to its left, while a vertical plank to the right supports modern weatherboarding in the west-facing re-entrant angle of the wing. An electricity cable enters the building at first floor level. The thatched eaves above are horizontal, the pitch above is in poor condition, with a plain stitched ridge at the apex.

The rear elevation of the main block is blind behind Challice Gate Cottage (dull pink), but a tall chimney stack of modern brick in the re-entrant angle with the east wing is stepped slightly back from the wall-face with a slated shoulder; it has a stepped cap and a tall terra-cotta pot. A mortar fillet seals its joint with the weatherboarded west-facing wall face adjoining to its north. Modern cement flashing to thatch, which has receded beneath it, especially on main range roof.

Elevation of Honey Cottage (buff) has three randomly placed windows in left half, one at ground floor is single light late 19th/early 20th century casement with 2x2 panes in deeply recessed tall opening with timber lintel and cement sill, another of similar size and shape is at first floor level at centre of façade, details the same. Also at first floor, a mid-20th century single light steel frame with fixed obscured glass pane below and top-hinged single pane above; lintel and sill as before. A tall ceramic soil stack painted black is on extreme left with various soil and grey-water pipes feeding it.

This cottage has a black tarred band at base; the other two do not. A short length of painted plank at top right in the wall-face has an unknown function, but appears old. Lower part of wall at bottom right has large dished area, which continues into elevation of Pleasant Cottage.

Elevation of Pleasant Cottage has one first floor window just to left of centre with cement sill and modern timber window with 2x2 fixed panes below and 2x1 pane top-hinged toplight. Another slightly higher first floor window to the right has the same features, but may be an older opening. Large dished area to lower left of façade continuous with Honey Cottage to left, with vertical joint visible as a crack in the render, showing where Pleasant Cottage was added to the earlier Honey Cottage to its east. Thatch eaves are horizontal, rear pitch in a poor state rises to stitched plain ridge.

To right, single storey building is rendered for half of its length, apparently continuous with two storey building to left but almost certainly abutting it. Single window of same form as above to left, vent brick in wall to right may be in blocked opening. Roof above of slate with black-glazed clay tile ridge, modern plastic gutters and timber barge-boards.

Right-hand half of buildings has coursed rubble pier to right and modern horizontally-boarded wall between it and rendered part to left. This has a recycled earlier 20th century casement leaf of 2x3 panes, laid on its side and fixed in place; two-leaf stable type plank door to left, in plain frame. Modern plastic gutters, very rusty mid-20th century corrugated iron roof above with plain ridge, modern lead sheeting forming slight step up to slate roof on left.

3.2.2 EAST END ELEVATION

In two parts, the east-facing wall of the main block under the thatched half hip is blind and its lower half obscured by the modern porch lean-to, which steps out twice; its east face contains a modern single-light casement window with 2x3 panes and a cement sill.

The east elevation of the projecting east wing has a wide central window at ground floor level containing a modern two-light casement with 3x3 panes per light and a cement sill. A small two-light casement of late 18th century or early 19th century date at first floor level is located under the slightly downward-curving thatched eaves of the full hip, towards the left-hand side. This has 2x3 panes per light and a slate sill.

3.2.3 WEST END ELEVATION

The west wall of Challice Gate Cottage's east wing projects c.2m into Poorhouse Lane, causing a wiggle in this near its junction with the village street. This partial gable is understood to be of cob but presumed erosion of this has necessitated its cladding in horizontal overlapping weatherboarding on a timber frame. This is modern but may replace earlier weatherboarding. At the base is an angled cement skirt, also modern.

The west wall of Pleasant Cottage's two-storeyed part (in the main block) is largely obscured by the modern ridged slate roof of its 19th century single-storeyed western extension, which projects upwards into the thatched eaves of the main roof behind. The fully hipped thatched roof projects somewhat beyond the older wall face, which is stuccoed with no windows. A slightly projecting chimney breast with rounded-off edges is corbelled out from the wall face above the lower roof-pitch, leaning outwards slightly to a slated shoulder at eaves level. This supports a tall square 19th century red brick stack which rises out of the thatch to a former stepped cap at about half its current height; it has been extended upwards in the later 20th century, its plain cap having a narrow brick stringer below.

Further to the west, the west end elevation of the cottage's single storey outbuildings runs away from the north elevation on an obtuse angle to the south-west. It has a wide, outward-leaning gable

of semi-coursed rubble with windows at a low level and a later 20th century corrugated iron roof above. To left of centre is a two-light later 19th century or early 20th century casement with 2x3 panes per light, brick jambs and a sagging timber lintel. At centre are two narrow privy windows with brick outer jambs, a central brick pier and a continuous timber lintel. To the right of this gable, the wall continues at eaves level as the west side wall of a single storey ridged-roof range of outbuildings; this has a blind elevation of eroded cob on a stone rubble plinth; replaced in modern brick towards its right-hand end, which adjoins the north elevation of the nearby Lilac Cottage to the south-east. The relationships at either end of this 18th century or earlier cob wall could not be seen, being in a private garden, but it is assumed to be abutted by the 19th century stone rubble gable to its left.

3.3 CHALLICE GATE COTTAGE – INTERIORS

3.3.1 GROUND FLOOR

The cottage is entered via a single storey porch (R1). This gives onto a narrow lobby (R2) off which is a small bathroom (R3); all three rooms are within a C20 lean-to and contain few significant features, although R3 has been forced into the cob and stone rubble south wall of the east wing, and two mid-20th century four-panelled doors are present, suggesting that the lobby and bathroom are older than the porch, which is clearly of late 20th century date.

The lobby opens into a small modern kitchen R4, fitted into the square unheated ground floor room of the additional east wing. This is lit by a large modern two-light casement in the east wall and a narrow single-light casement in the north-east corner. A late 19th/early 20th century plank staircase against the west wall rises to the south over the entrance lobby; part of its side wall has a modern removable panel to enable furniture to be moved between floors. Late 19th century plank and batten doors with steel T-hinges are associated with this staircase and cupboards in its vicinity.



FIGURE 9: CHALLICE GATE COTTAGE: GROUND FLOOR R5 FROM NORTH, WITH C17 CHAMFERED BEAM TO RIGHT AND POSSIBLE C17 SQUINT WINDOW TO LEFT (WITH 50CM SCALE). FRONT WINDOW IS MODERN, IN C17 OPENING.

Off the west side of the entrance lobby (R2) a doorway apparently forced through the cob and stone rubble east end wall of the main block enters the living room (R5). Across the western side of the lath and plaster ceiling runs a painted beam of 17th century appearance with broad chamfers down either side but no stops. The joists are obscured by the plaster ceiling, which contains the mark of an east-west partition c.1.5m from the south wall. The walls are all lime-plastered except on the north, where some modern vertical planking may box in electrical wires or piping. The west wall is uncomfortably close to the ceiling beam and is known to be inserted. A solid floor of unknown materials is obscured under modern engineered planking. The room is lit by a modern two-light casement in an old wide splayed opening with a window seat below. A slightly splayed alcove in the east wall adjoining may be a blocked squint window.

The north-east corner of the room contains a wide fireplace, in an angled infill, suggesting that it has been inserted; the outside wall face is likewise not in alignment with the remainder of the north elevation of the cottages. The fireplace has been heavily rebuilt in the recent past, with a new oak lintel, but its lower jambs and back are of older mortared rubble, poorly laid. Above this, the back and sides are of recycled brick and it has a modern brick hearth.

3.3.1 FIRST FLOOR

The plank-lined staircase from the west side of R4 turns sharply to the south and rises steeply to a narrow landing (R6). Older pine transverse planks in its floor have clearly been cut into by the insertion of the staircase. A small window lights the landing, but its position suggests it was inserted to light the stair.

On either side of the landing, plank and batten doors with steel T-hinges and rimlocks with wooden knobs enter to the right, the master bedroom (R7) and to the left, the smaller bedroom (R8).

The master bedroom has a flat modern ceiling with boxed truss blades just visible against the wall-faces below it; this ceiling originally rose to collar level in the present roof space, as a limewashed east end wall shows. The lime plastered walls have beaded skirtings, the north-eastern corner is angled with traces of a blocked fireplace, the west wall is a lath and plaster partition; re-used smoke-stained vertical posts can be seen within it in the roof space above. The door opening through the eastern cob wall from the landing may have been forced, as its jambs are oddly angled. A modern two-light casement has a plain plank sill which may be 19th century. Pine floorboards are obscured below a carpet.

The second bedroom has a low lath and plaster ceiling with short sloped sections on the south, east and north, all of which contain the roughly tooled blades of the main and hip trusses. The walls are plastered except on the west which is vertically planked, part of the staircase from the kitchen below, with a modern pair of doors to a cupboard over the staircase in the north-west corner. The most interesting feature of the room is a late 18th century or very early 19th century window facing east in the south-east corner. This is a two-light casement with small panes, beaded glazing bars and frame, and a simple wrought iron turnbuckle with a loop handle. The window opening shows signs of widening an older narrower window to take this frame and a plain plank sill.



FIGURE 10: CHALLICE GATE COTTAGE: C17 ROOF TRUSS OVER R7, FROM SOUTH-EAST. NOTE SMOKE STAINED NORTH TRUSS BLADE AND CLEAN WANNEY SINGLE-PEGGED COLLAR. C19 LATH AND PLASTER PARTITION TO HONEY COTTAGE RE-USES OLDER TIMBERS, SOME SMOKE-STAINED.

3.3.1 ROOF

Above the master bedroom (R8), an A-frame truss of simple form with at least one re-used smoke-stained blade on the north side, morticed and tenoned apex and face-pegged waney collar. Two roughly dressed roundwood purlins per pitch resting on blades, each supported on short vertical peg driven into back of blade. Ridgepole set in V of blades above apex, common rafters of roughly dressed roundwood and waney battens. Several smoke-stained purlins, rafters and battens, recycled from a pre-17th century sooted roof. East wall has plastered and whitewashed cob up to half hip base, abutted at north end with 19th century brick stack base, rising through thatch. Several cracks, through which cob can be seen. Hip timbers are simple straight timbers clasp end of slightly sagged ridgepole with four common purlins in place of battens on eastern hip. This variation from design of remainder of roof may mean hip replaced a gable, cut down due to structural failure.

Above the second bedroom (R7), a single A-frame truss of heavy oak with low collar pegged to east face just above ceiling level, later additional pine collar nailed to west face slightly higher. Apex joint indeterminate, three hip blades laid up against it, all with roundwood common battens at about 50cm intervals, dressed on inner and outer faces only, quite waney. Main truss and hip blades are darkened, perhaps 17th century and central hip blade possibly smoke-stained, but battens are all clean and clearly later, perhaps 18th or 19th century. Many sharpened thatching spars piercing underside of basecoat, especially on south pitch. Former external face of east end wall of older main block visible, bare cob with sockets for common battens cut into it, eaves of previously external half hip thatch are preserved, with eaves roll beneath tied on with straw rope, all seems quite fresh and unweathered.

3.4 HONEY COTTAGE – INTERIORS

3.4.1 GROUND FLOOR

The cottage is entered via a lobby (R1) at the bottom of a straight run staircase up to the north. The lobby had doors to west and east, but the west wall has been removed in the recent past; it is now open into the living room (R2). The lobby ceiling has axial sawn pine joists of later 19th century date, the remaining partition to the east is modern, but the solid wall flanking the front door to the south is of cob and hair plaster over clay-bonded rubble with traces of whitewash. This rubble can be seen to rise as far as the lintel, but it is not certain how far it extends to either side. The living room (R2) is a relatively narrow room with a continuously chamfered elm 17th century beam with no stops and squared, lightly chamfered but slightly waney elm axial joists in its western bay; to the east these have been replaced with sawn pine joists. No trace of a partition can be seen under or against this beam or the other in R5 of Challice Gate Cottage. The walls are of cob-plastered cob on a stone rubble plinth, clearly visible on the south wall and splays of the window where the faces have been cleaned off. A modern partition to the staircase on the east may mean that this was once an open structure with balusters. The plank floor has been replaced with a limecrete floor, although the former planks and joists will be re-used elsewhere in the building.

Other than the ceiling, the most impressive feature of the living room is a large fireplace centrally in the west wall. This has dressed grey sandstone rubble jambs and a well-built stepped rubble back wall, with primary oven openings on either side, both with tapered corbelled lintels, that on the left with a lower sill than the other. This oven is blocked in, that on the right is oval and has been relined in 19th century red brick with a segmental arched opening and an iron clavel. The original lintel has been replaced with a length of recycled 17th or 18th century oak ceiling beam, lightly chamfered with a plain runout which does not respect the opening.

R3 is now a kitchen, it is narrow and has few features of note other than an old window opening to the front and a forced one to the rear, sawn pine axial joists as in the lobby and a transverse sawn pine beam against the west wall; this has a 'trait de Jupiter' scarf joint. The east side wall is an inserted partition of early machine-made brick which appears to be the same as those relining the oven in R2 and in the dwarf wall under the railings enclosing the front garden against the village street. Exploratory holes cut in this wall show that the single skin of mortared brickwork infills a timber frame and abuts a plastered wall face at its south end.



FIGURE 11: HONEY COTTAGE: GROUND FLOOR R1 & R2, LOOKING THROUGH DOORWAY TO R3; VIEW FROM SOUTH-WEST. ALL PARTITIONS ARE MODERN, IN POSITIONS OF LATER C19 ONES, BUT BEAM ABOVE IS C17. RECENT LIMECRETE FLOOR.



FIGURE 12: HONEY COTTAGE: C17 FIREPLACE IN GROUND FLOOR R2, FROM NORTH-EAST. 50CM SCALE BAR IS IN CORBELLED RECESS FOR C17 OVEN IN SOUTH JAMB; RECYCLED C17 CEILING BEAM REPLACED ORIGINAL LINTEL IN C19/C20.

3.4.1 FIRST FLOOR

The staircase from the ground floor lobby (R1) appears of early-mid 20th century date, supported by door surrounds and a four in-line panelled door to east and west of the landing (R4) at the stair top, and a lobby (R5) fronting a bathroom (R7) further east; these are of 1930s-40s style as is the metal windowframe in the bathroom. The partitions either side of the stairwell are however older, perhaps later 19th century, of lath and plaster on a timber frame, abutting cob plaster in the north and south side walls. The windows in both R4 and R7 are visibly forced through the cob wall, in the 19th and 20th century respectively, and their jambs made good with white plaster.

South of the bathroom and lobby is a later 19th century four panel door to a small second bedroom (R6). This has a lath and plaster ceiling, raised to truss collar level and sloped to the south with a semi-squared truss-blade visible. Two cupboards have modern doors. The ghost of a partition can be seen in the ceiling near the west wall and can be traced in the ceiling and north wall of the landing to its north; this clearly predates the present partitions and stair position. The splayed window opening in the south wall is old, though its frame is not.

The master bedroom (R8) to the west has the same high ceiling as R6, but it is modern plasterboard, replaced when a new bolted pine truss and tiebar were added against the west wall in the early 2000s. Cracks in the plaster of the front wall near the south-west corner show the structural problem which necessitated this intervention. Feet of an original truss of the same form as in R6 have cracked the cob below and around them, apparently as the timbers moved during seasoning after they were installed. This shows that they are primary to the building.

The north and south walls have cob plaster on solid cob walls, the south wall containing a splayed window opening which is clearly original to the building; it has clear evidence of the lowering of its sill from a typically 17th century wide but shallow frame to a 18th-19th century deeper casement similar to the modern one now present; the breaks being filled with white plaster on either side of the pine sill, which may date from this lowering. The west wall contains a blocked 19th century fireplace with cement hearth, and a slight recess for a blocked door at the north-west corner. This is believed to connect with the first floor of Pleasant Cottage to the west.

The transverse pine planks of the floor have a number of graffitos carved into them. E. Cuming, H. Headon & C. Bendle can be read – there may be more. These may be associated with the boarders of the Lapford Academy (John *Cummins* in 1871; James *Headen* in 1901).

3.4.2 ROOF

Two A-framed trusses of simple form, both apparently lightly smoke stained, morticed and tenoned apexes with one blade slightly notched into the other, face-pegged waney collars. Two roughly dressed clean roundwood purlins per pitch resting on blades, each supported on short vertical peg driven into back of blade. Additional roundwood purlins in western bay especially near tops of pitches. Ridgepole set in V of blades above apex, common rafters of roughly dressed roundwood and waney battens on north side, many rafters and battens on south replaced with modern sawn pine. Western bay appears to have suffered a partial collapse, with lower purlin on north pitch sloping down to west and massively constructed sawn pine truss with W-bracing planks bolted into it, supporting two axial timbers in roof space between truss and posts rising from staircase partitions to east, from which modern sawn pine and plasterboard ceiling structure is suspended. North pitch contains several smoke-stained rafters and battens, recycled from a pre-17th century sooted roof.

Western gable is of unplastered cob up to apex, lack of stone stack may suggest a cob upper once existed, although it is believed that the stack projects from the west face of this wall into Pleasant Cottage's roof space.



RIGHT: FIGURE 13: HONEY COTTAGE: FIRST FLOOR LANDING R4 LOOKING UP LATER C19 STAIRS FROM SOUTH WITH INSERTED WINDOW OF SAME DATE, CUTTING ACROSS TRACES OF OLDER PARTITION.

LEFT: FIGURE 14: SOUTH BLADE OF EASTERN ROOF TRUSS OVER R6 IN HONEY COTTAGE, FROM NORTH-WEST. NOTE FACE-PEGGED COLLAR AND PEG SUPPORTING PURLIN. SLIGHT SMOKE STAINING ON BLADE.

3.5 PLEASANT COTTAGE

On the ground floor a small lobby inside the front door has doors to two flanking rooms and a third to a central staircase. The left-hand room is also accessed from a modern single storey addition to the left, within an earlier single storey L-plan outbuilding which turns to the south-west. None of these rooms were accessible, but an impression of their layout was visible from outside. The list description mentions a presumably 17th century chamfered beam with step-runout stops, and an angled fireplace in the north-west corner of the left-hand room; this has a cloam oven. On the first floor the symmetrical window layout on the south front suggests a similar layout to the ground floor, but this was not seen, and the list description does not describe it. The roof structure was not seen, but assumed to have at least two full trusses and hip blades at the west end. It is likely to have purlins, common rafters and thatch battens as over the roofs to the east. The list description does not mention the roof structure.



FIGURE 15: SOUTH FRONT ELEVATION OF PLEASANT COTTAGE, FROM SOUTH. FRONT DOOR IS TO RIGHT BEHIND BUSH.

3.6 SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

- Two 17th century continuous-chamfered elm beams in R5 of Challice Gate Cottage and R2 of Honey Cottage.
- Continuous-chamfered 17th century waney elm joists in western bay of R2 in Honey Cottage, may exist above plaster ceiling in R5 of Challice Gate Cottage.
- Chamfered 17th century beam with step-runout stops in Pleasant Cottage (list description).
- Dressed stone kitchen fireplace with two stone-built ovens of 17th century form in R2 of Honey Cottage.
- 17th century roof structure over western part of Challice Gate and Honey Cottages.
- Angled fireplaces inserted into R5 & R7 of Challice Gate Cottage in 19th century; also in north-west corner of Pleasant Cottage.
- Possible re-used 17th century truss in later roof structure over R8 of Challice Gate Cottage.
- Smoke stained timbers recycled from a pre-17th century open hall or open kitchen roof over Challice Gate/Honey Cottages.

3.7 PHASING

The phasing as presented here is, due to the changes undergone and the renders and plasters, necessarily tentative.

3.7.1 PHASE 1 – EARLY 17TH CENTURY

The western half of Challice Gate Cottage and all of Honey Cottage is the earliest building in the group (Red in Figure 16). This was a two-storeyed structure of stone rubble at ground floor level and cob above, divided into three bays at ground floor level and four bays divided by three A-frame trusses at first floor level. Its thatched roof was gabled to the west and half-hipped to the east.

The ground floor appears to have been a single undivided room with two chamfered beams and chamfered joists, all of elm. A large kitchen fireplace of dressed sandstone rubble in the west end had an oven on either side, suggesting that the ground floor was a kitchen. The first floor appears to have been unheated, with a partition dividing it into two unequal parts; no evidence for a staircase could be found.

The awkward position of the present front door into Honey Cottage suggests that the original front door was W1 in R3. This would give the south elevation a symmetrical appearance on both floors; the rear elevation seems to have been blank. The only other opening is a possible squint window in the south-east corner of R5 in Challice Gate Cottage.

The primary building (Honey Cottage and the western half of Challice Gate Cottage) appears to have had a 17th century service function, either as a detached kitchen or bakehouse to a large house now gone, to its south (Lilac Cottage to the south-west may possibly be a remnant of this), or as a public bakehouse, perhaps associated with Lapford's Church House. The two-storeyed extensions to the east (part of Challice Gate Cottage) again suggest they had a service function to a principal building elsewhere. The peculiar offset of the eastern extension may imply the former existence of a detached building to its south.

Evidence

The roof can be dated to the 17th century, as can the original form of the ovens in the main fireplace (c.1660-1640). However, the lightly smoke-blackened elements in the roof could hint at something earlier. The fact that the beams are chamfered but lack stops could suggest they have been cut down to fit an existing building. This, together with the replacement bressumer over the main fireplace, might hint at an earlier building gutted by a catastrophic event (i.e. fire). The lack of evidence for partitions might suggest the first floor is unheated and that the roof has been raised.

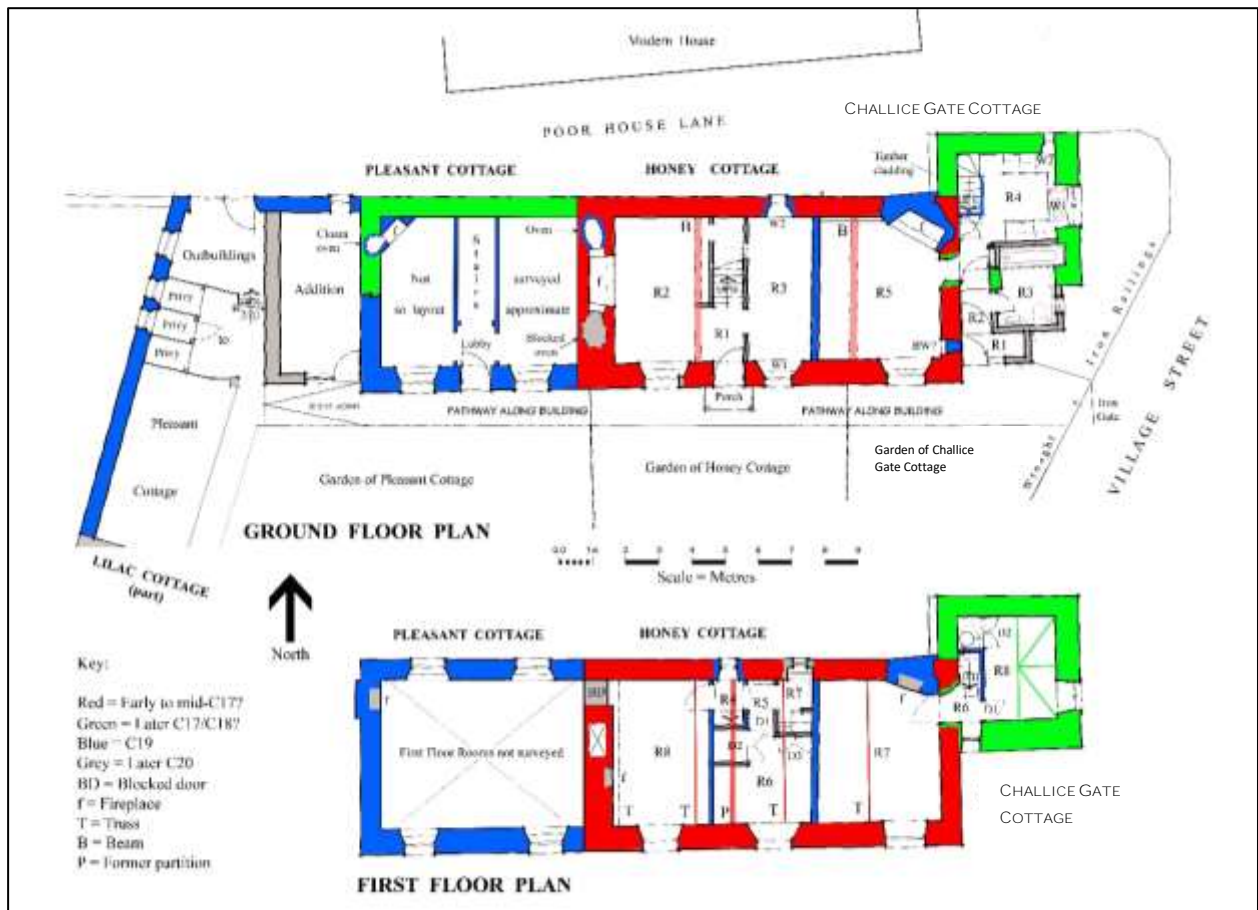


FIGURE 16: PROVISIONAL PHASED PLANS (BASED ON SUPPLIED DRAWINGS).

3.7.1 PHASE 2 – 18TH CENTURY

The building was extended in cob to the east. The lack of datable features makes it difficult to be certain. In its primary form, this building does not appear to have been heated, so its function is also uncertain and could have agricultural.

Evidence for an earlier conversion to cottages is present in the form of angled fireplaces of late 18th or early 19th century form inserted into previously unheated rooms of Challice Gate Cottage and Pleasant Cottage. These fireplaces, the similar-dated window in R8 of Challice Gate Cottage, and the identification of the building as cottages on the 1840 tithe apportionment, back up the impression of the domestication of previously non-residential buildings c.1800.

Evidence

The evidence for this phase is limited to the seemingly pre-19th century roof elements.

3.7.2 PHASE 3 – 19TH CENTURY

These buildings underwent considerable alteration in the 19th century. This phase probably relates to their purchase and incorporation into the school in 1859. This conversion could have taken place in the 1860s, the 1880s or even the early 1910s; and earlier date is, however, more likely. The range was extended to the west as an outbuilding was extended and the original range divided into two cottage units. Both Challice Gate and Pleasant Cottages had fireplaces inserted diagonally into their north-east and north-west corners: this is a feature typical of the 18th to mid-19th centuries. Challice Gate Cottage was separated from Honey Cottage by a brick partition at ground floor level after c.1860, as it contains early machine-made bricks; the first floor partition and others in Honey Cottage is of lath and plaster on older recycled timber posts.

Also of 19th century date is a single-storey stone rubble extension to the west of Pleasant Cottage. This contained three privies, possibly belonging to the school phase after 1859, but the wing extending towards Lilac Cottage to the south-west is older and of cob construction.

A single-storey porch and entrance lobby incorporating a small bathroom (R1-R3) were added into the south-eastern angle of Challice Gate Cottage in the later 20th century; these and other modern alterations are shown in grey on Figure 16.

There is evidence for the buildings' conversion to residential use as cottages as part of Lapford School from 1859. Pleasant Cottage and Honey Cottage have roughly symmetrical south front elevations and internal plans, and later 19th century staircases have been inserted into both Honey Cottage and Challice Gate Cottage.

Evidence

The evidence for this phase is relatively extensive: the alterations to the layout of the structures, the carpentry, the layout of the cottages and narrow stairs etc.

3.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILDING

This range of cottages is Listed and is accorded national importance on that basis. It is more complex than it appears and there are some good early features (the main fireplace; the beams; the roof structure). Most of the other interior features date to the latter part of the 19th century, and both Honey Cottage and Challice Gate Cottage have been modernised several times during the 20th century. A reasonably good understanding of both cottages was achieved during the site appraisal, and thus the *evidential value* of the structure is now more limited than formerly (the Listing note *interior not inspected*). However, the external and internal walls retain concealing render and plaster, and Pleasant Cottage was not inspected, so there is clearly more still to learn. In terms of *aesthetic value*, the rustic appearance of the exterior is visually pleasing, and the wrought-iron gateway is striking. The interiors are more workaday. There is some *communal value*, but as it is likely all the boarders are now dead that value has faded. The *historical value* of the range is probably the most significant. The original form of the 17th century building is curious but not unparalleled (cf Church Town Farm at Beaworthy, SWARCH 2018). The internal carpentry is consistent, but it is just possible this is a fragment of an earlier, larger building (i.e. a cut-down three-cell cross-passage structure). The association with the school is of principal interest, but the extension and subdivision of a long range is paralleled elsewhere (e.g. Arlui in Chittlehampton, SWARCH 2018) but as the classroom, dormitory and school owner's house appear to have been elsewhere, we are left with a set of small 19th century cottages for associated and then unrelated tenants.

3.9 CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSALS

It is proposed that the separate dwellings Challice Gate Cottage and Honey Cottage be combined to form a single dwelling. The brick dividing wall between R5 in Challice Gate and R3 in Honey Cottage would be largely removed to form a larger space with side nibs and ceiling downstand retained to indicate the position of this subdivision. Conceptually, as the structure originally formed a single dwelling, this would affect the narrative of the building as expressed via its *current* form but would not be antithetical to its *original* form.

The current layout reflects the division of the building in the later 19th century; its earlier layout on either floor is difficult to establish given the apparent lack of scarring or sockets. The simplest layout would consist of a central passage with stair with rooms off to the east and west. The proposals re-establish this layout and remove some of the 19th and 20th century changes and subdivisions, although not the evidence of the evolution and development of the building.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

This range of cottages in Lapford are Listed as mid-18th century in date but are demonstrably earlier, with an early 17th century core extended to each end. The 17th century structure supplies few clues but its large fireplace and double ovens hints at a possible communal function, or its origin as a two-cell, rather than the more commonplace three-cell, building. It was subsequently extended and in the mid-19th century bought by the owners of the Lapford Academy, a small private boarding school that operated from 1859 to 1908. It seems likely the range provided accommodation for the staff rather than the boarders, and after 1908 was tenanted externally.

Proposals to convert Honey Cottage and Challice Gate Cottage into a single dwelling would reverse one element of that process of subdivision. The proposal itself is not antithetical to the narrative of the cottages, and as most of the non-structural interior detailing is 19th or 20th century in date, the harm arising from that work would be no great issue, and in many instance will be very positive. Those elements arguably less positive have been carefully considered, for example the retention of side nibs and ceiling downstand from the dividing wall between R5 in Challice Gate and R3 in Honey Cottage will aid in retaining visual clues of the 19th and 20th century history of the range.

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APPENDIX 1: LISTING TEXT

NORTHCOTT COTTAGE PLEASANT PLEASANT COTTAGE, NORTHCOTT COTTAGE AND ROSEBANK COTTAGE
INCLUDING GARDEN RAILINGS TO EAST AND SOUTH ROSEBANK COTTAGE

Grade II

List Entry Number: 1250131

Date first Listed: 04 Nov 1985

3 cottages, said to date from 1740 and features are consistent with mid C18, C19 addition. Plastered cob on rubble footings; rubble stacks topped with C19 and C20 brick; thatched roof. Row of 3 cottages under same roof facing south with 1 room added in C19 set back from main front at right (east) end. Pleasant Cottage at the left (west) end is a 2-room plan cottage with corner stack to left rear. Northcott Cottage in the centre is a 2-room plan cottage with an axial stack in left party wall. Rosebank Cottage at right (east) end has 1 room in the main block with rear corner stack and another room in the recessed addition. All are 2 storeys. Main block has a regular 5-window front and addition has a 6th window. Both Pleasant Cottage and Northcott Cottage have symmetrical 2-window fronts with central doorways and C20 slate monopitch roofed porches. Pleasant Cottage windows are C20 casements and sashes, most with glazing bars. Northcott Cottage has C20 casements with glazing bars. Rosebank Cottage has C19 and C20 casements and door is to recessed room behind C20 single storey extension. Only Pleasant Cottage inspected internally. It has plain carpentry detail, a chamfered beam with runout stops and diagonal corner rubble fireplace with replacement lintel and includes a Bideford cloam oven with its pot door to left. Late C19 cast iron boundary spear railings and fleur-de-lis finials to main verticals, brick footings and ornate gateposts with round-arched overthrow enriched with scroll work and twisted pieces is included for group value.

Listing NGR: SS7316008225



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