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**Historical Building Report – Part I
on
Frith Farm
Frith Lane
Wickwar
South Gloucestershire**

**August 2011
by
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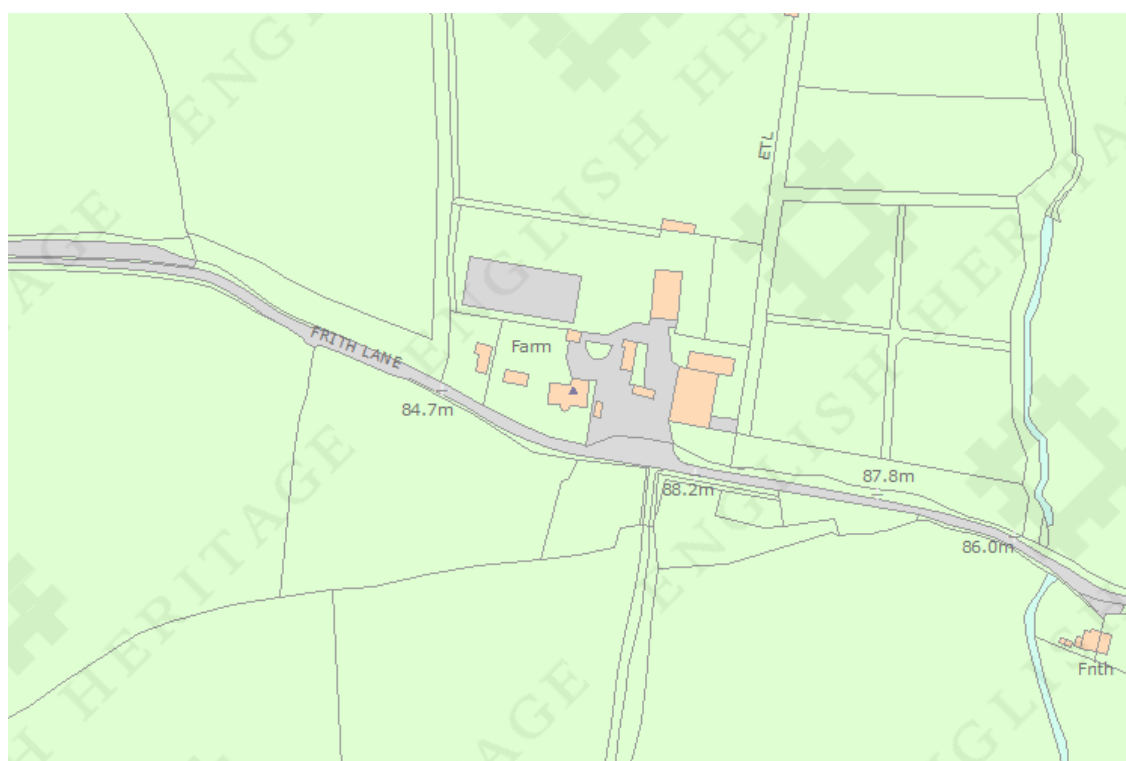
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Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to the staff of Gloucestershire Records Office and Yate Heritage Centre and I am particularly grateful for the very kind help of local historian Mrs Mary Isaac who has generously shared her research of Frith Farm with me and to Linda Hall for her expertise and generosity in sharing her research and allowing me to use her 1975 photographs of Frith Farm. Her survey of Frith Farm from her book *The Rural Houses of North Avon and South Gloucestershire 1400-1720*, 1983, appears in Appendix I. The current owners Donald and Suzanne Duke have kindly made available plans and photographs taken in 1994, which are used in this report. All photographs are by Kay Ross of McLaughlin Ross llp in August 2011 unless otherwise stated.

Location

Frith Farm is located on the north side of Frith Lane, to the south of the town of Wickwar. Now in Wickwar parish, it was originally in Yate Parish until the 1980s. Frith Lane is off the main Chipping Sodbury road between Yate and Wickwar and runs westwards to Hall End.



2011 map showing Frith Farm

Scope

This historic building report is being carried out at the request of the owners, Donald and Suzanne Duke as part of an application for Listed Building Consent to carry out repairs and alterations to the house and outbuildings. The purpose of the report is to provide historic information on the evolution of the current building on the site and the associated outbuildings and demonstrate what alterations have been carried out to the property, through the use of archival and map evidence and analysis of the standing building. The report on the outbuildings is a separate document.

English Heritage Listing ¹



© Ms Hannah Wood 14 July 2007

IoE Number:34873

Location:FRITH FARMHOUSE,AND BAKEHOUSE AT SOUTH EAST, FRITH LANE (north side), WICKWAR (NO LONGER YATE) SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Date listed:17 September 1952

Date of most recent amendment: No date given, but post 1983

Grade II*

ST 78 NW YATE FRITH LANE (north side) 4/239 Frith Farmhouse, and Bakehouse to south east

II* Farmhouse. Late C17, possibly incorporating an earlier building. Rubble; plain tiled roof; rubble stacks. L-plan, with entry direct into the central hall. 2 storeys, cellar and attics in stone gables. 2:3 (in projecting, canted 2 storey and attic porch with hipped roof): 2 bays; C19 marginal glazing bar sash windows and C20 casement windows, which resemble sashes; most under cornice. Cross windows to west gable. Central C20 door. Single storey rubble bakehouse projects at right (south east). Interior: hall, parlour and dairy fireplaces are constructed of neatly coursed rubble and are segmental on plan; stop chamfered beams; doors and hall have bolecion moulded surrounds, passage and dairy doors have ovolo moulded surrounds; very fine dog-leg staircase with panelled newel posts, twisted balusters, carved pendants and finials; first floor, C17 panelling from the hall forms a passage, chamfered door frames; attic, reused members and extended collar beam trusses; decorative panel of rose and 4 fleur-de-lys within a lozenge on stack. A very good, although somewhat altered, example of a high class gabled vernacular/gentry house, built for a surgeon who never occupied the property. (Hall, L, Rural Houses of North Avon and South Gloucestershire, 1983).

¹ www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk

South Gloucestershire HER

Frith Farm Frith Lane Wickwar (Listed under Yate)

SGHER Number: 6550

Settlement Frith Farm Wickwar

SGHER Number: 14051

Type of record: Monument

Grid Reference: ST 7179 8736

Map Sheet: ST78NW

Parish: Wickwar, S Gloucestershire

Monument Types

- SETTLEMENT (Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD to 1900 AD)

Full description

Approximate area of Post Medieval settlement as based on the area depicted as core settlement on the Avon Historic Landscape Survey. The site may have medieval origins. {1}

Sources and further reading

- 1 Bibliographic reference: Chapman M. 1998. Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation.

Pump Frith Farm West End Wickwar

SGHER Number: 18777

Type of record: Monument

Grid Reference: ST 7163 8768

Map Sheet: ST78NW

Parish: Wickwar, S Gloucestershire

Monument Types

- PUMP (Modern - 1901 AD to 2050 AD)

Full description

A pump is marked at this location on the 2nd edition OS map. {1}

Sources and further reading

- 1 Map: OS. 1905. 2nd edition 25" (c1902-5).

Long Barrow Frith Farm West End Wickwar

SGHER Number: 3061

Type of record: Monument

Grid Reference: ST 7172 8780

Map Sheet: ST78NW

Parish: Wickwar, S Gloucestershire

Monument Types

- LONG BARROW (Neolithic - 4000 BC to 2351 BC)

Associated Events

- Iles R 1979

Full description

A possible long barrow is overlain by a field wall close to a stream and about 1km south-west of Wickwar. Discovered by Roger Howell of Bagstone. {1}{2}

Sources and further reading

- 1 Bibliographic reference: Iles R. 1979. Site Visit (Iles R 1979).
- 2 Bibliographic reference: Iles R. 1980. Archaeology in Avon 1979. Avon Past 1 29-35

Introduction

The site on which Frith Farmhouse and its attached bakehouse and outbuildings are located dates back to at least the early 17th century, and possibly earlier. The current house retains re-used roof trusses dating back to the 16th century, which may come from an earlier house on the site. Locally, Frith or Fryth is mentioned in 1347, *The Fryth* by 1605. Frith Wood was immediately north of Frith Farm's lands and a Frith House Cottage is mentioned on the 1841 Tithe map for Wickwar. The farmhouse is referred to as *The Frith* in an 1869 sales catalogue.

The house retains a number of blocked doors and windows reflecting a series of building phases, the earliest being timber ovolo mullions. Carved stops on both beams and door jambs enable these phases to be reasonably dated within the 17th to mid 18th century and archival information regarding change of ownership helps corroborate this. Externally, the various additions; square stair tower, lean-to extensions and bakehouse inform how the house has evolved from a possible 2 storey, 4 roomed house to the present structure, with 19th and 20th century maps showing the plan development.

The original ground floor plan of 2 rooms can be identified in present plans, the western half of the house having thicker walls than the eastern side. The latter was added in 2 phases, the southern half in the later 17th century, the northern in the circa mid 18th (albeit on the footprint of a lean-to structure). The lozenge design on the outer east attic wall above the Hall fireplace shows this had been an external rendered wall. It is probable that there was a small circular newel staircase prior to the later 17th century rear stair tower being built to house the current staircase. An earlier blocked ovolo mullion window and contemporary earlier 17th century carved ovolo chamfered beams remain, prior to the house being refenestrated with large stone cross windows and the bolection moulded doorcases, added at the same time as the staircase and the eastern rooms to form a symmetrical front.

It is probable that the current 3 storey kitchen wing came into existence as a single storey lean-to in the later 17th century. The kitchen passage retains ovolo moulded door jambs at either end, this side of the house remaining largely separated from the western half for some time afterwards. In the mid – late 18th century the rear kitchen wing was built up to attic storey and the first floor wall across the landing breached to provide a passage between the 2 eastern bedrooms. The eastern lean-tos are more recent; there had been an open walled area in the 1840s, the south-eastern end dating from the later 19th century and largely rebuilt. The lean-to against the north-eastern end was built between the 1920s and 1960s.

The lean-to against the north-western end appears to have been added some time before the stair tower, its western ground floor window blocked by the tower. The cellar steps may have been relocated to their current position later; the cellar is directly beneath the Parlour and is contemporary, with a similar late 16th/early 17th century central beam. There is a blocked doorway into the Parlour, now used for shelving.

Frith Farm ceased to be a working farm in the 1980s and many of the outbuildings have fallen into disrepair, along with the bakehouse (Historical Building Report on Frith Farm – Outbuildings by K Ross, August 2011). The farmhouse itself is in need of repair, in particular the roof and windows, the majority post war replacements. The eastern lean-tos are also generally poorly constructed and in need of rebuilding. The current owners wish to carry out a programme of repairs and restoration, incorporating the former bakehouse into a newly built addition to the eastern end of the house which will contain the kitchen and bathrooms.

The History of Frith Farm

Frith or Fryth is mentioned as early as 1347, *Frith Cottage, Le Frith (GR 340a), and the Fryth in 1605 (GR 340a)* and is thought to come from the Saxon word *fyrhðe* meaning wood. Frith Wood was immediately north of Frith Farm's lands and the boundary stream between Yate and Wickwar and there is a Frith House Cottage mentioned on the 1841 Tithe map for Wickwar in what was by then called Frith Grounds.²

*Frith (Le). Freathe. Freeth. Vrith. Firth. Thrift, by metathesis. (The) Faith is also a variant. A game-preserve and forest-land ; or, simply, a wood ; some-times underwood.*³

Examples of the word connected with timber appear in deeds and in place names e.g. Chapel en le Frith

*Lessee covenants to keep in repair and good husbandry and...His right to take **frith** and fencing stuff on the premises.*⁴

*Tenant is to repair and keep up the walls, **frith** and door at his expense when necessary.*⁵

The Site of Frith Farm and its surrounding lands have probably been inhabited for centuries; Roman coins have been found nearby and an earthwork to the north of Frith Farm close to the stream may possibly be a long barrow.⁶ Frith Farm on the north side of Frith Lane was almost certainly originally part of a larger property which included Frith Wood, which became Frith Grounds. Frith Grounds is described on the 1841 tithe map for Wickwar parish, and included a Frith House Cottage.

Whilst Frith Farm is now in Wickwar Parish, it did not move there until the 1980s. Frith lands, therefore, spanned the Wickwar and Yate parishes, the Frith Farm property bounded by the Parish boundary, a stream, by the 19th century, after the owner, Adrian Stokes, had swapped land with other landowners in both parishes during Enclosure. The deeds for Frith Farm, which date back to the 17th century, if not earlier, were mislaid during the 1989 sale of the property, although fortunately several had been transcribed by local historian Mary Isaac and form the outline of the history of the house within this report. It is therefore difficult to ascertain whether this farmhouse was originally Frith House, to which Frith House Cottage belonged, or whether this became the farmhouse attached to a Frith House which no longer exists. There certainly appears to be no other evidence for a Frith House in the vicinity.

From at least the second half of the 17th century the house was the property of the Tomes. The house, like most of the properties in Yate parish, belonged to the lord of the Manor, who leased each property to a main tenant, who could then sub let to others. The leases were usually let for one or more 'lives', and when a life was over, either because of that person's death or a change in circumstances, a new life could be added on payment of a 'fine'. In 1677, Mary Tomes, now widowed, appears to have added the lives of Richard Belsire and Arthur Hicks to her lease on the property. Richard Beckford, Lord of the Manor of Yate, and Sir Francis and Sir William Chaplin officially conveyed the new lease to Mary Tomes, Richard Belsire and Arthur Hicks on 16 October 1677. A

² Place Names in Gloucestershire : Wickwar p.42

³ Place Names in Gloucestershire P.68

⁴ BRO 21789/18-22 1743 March 26. Deed to declare the uses of a fine on a Somerset property.

⁵ BRO P.AS/D/NA/69 Counterpart Lease of 1550

⁶ SMR 3061; Iles 1979

Mr and Mrs Batten then occupied Frith Farm for some time, presumably paying rent to Mary Tomes et al.

In June 1691 Thomas Gerring and his wife became the new owners of Frith Farm, possibly following the death of Mary Tomes. It is probable that it was they who carried out the substantial alterations to Frith Farm. The date would tie in with the style of the cross transom windows and doorways and staircase within the hall.⁷

The Gerrings later sold Frith Farm to Mr & Mrs Shellard, from whom James, Lillie and Thomas Stokes purchased the farm in 1744. The Stokes do not appear to have lived at the house but it is probable that they carried out the 'Georgianisation' of the house, which added on the eastern south front and the projecting bay.

Thomas Stokes was the owner of Frith Farm by 1750 and farmer Gabriel Amos was his tenant. He was followed by Charles and Margaret Brown from 1780 and Margaret Brown, presumably by now a widow, tenant to Elizabeth Stokes in 1800.⁸

The 19th century

Prior to the Higgs Family becoming tenant farmers at Frith Farm, the Daniells family appear to have been living there. Charles Isaac (1808 -1872), the second son of local farmer John Isaac (1768 - 1821) married Ann Daniell "*of Frith Farm*", with whom he had at least five children, including Augustus William, born in 1840. From 1841 the tithe and census records, as well as local directories show two farming families occupying Frith Farm well into the 20th century; the Higgs, followed by the Parkers. The owner by the mid 19th century was JC Bengough esq.

In 1841 both the tithe award and the census show William Higgs, 40 and his wife Mary, 35 living there with their daughters Emma, 2 and Mary, just 7 days old on census day. The tithe award shows Edward Stokes as owner of the property – House Garden and Outbuildings [856] and all the associated land. Edward Stokes was given as owner, but in 1844 when the enclosure map and awards were drawn up, the property and lands belonged to Adrian Stokes the younger *of the City of Edinburgh, Gentleman*.

Red Croft [850] 6-1-13

Colly Well [852] 9-2-7

The Hill [853] 4-2-39

The Home Ground [854] 15-2-10

Orchard [855] 1-0-16

House Garden & Outbuildings [856] 0-3-14

Orchard [858] 0-1-18

⁷ Frith Farm Deeds: Release settlement between Thomas Gerring and Mary Tomes conveyed the lease to William Martin and Richard Belsire.

⁸ Mary Isaac, A Record of Yate Farms

Adrian Stokes 63e] Unto Adrian Stokes aforesaid for other part of his right // and interest in the Land to be inclosed in respect of his Tenement // called Stanshaws // One piece of Land part of the Lower Common numbered **63e** // on the said Map containing thirteen acres one rood and twenty // perches bounded Northwestward by the Road numbered XVII Northeastward by the Road // numbered XIX and on other parts by the Allotments numbered 63b, 63c, 63d, 63f and 63g //

Adrian Stokes as Lessee under Henry Jones Randolph Clerk 63f] Unto the said Adrian Stokes as Lessee under the said Henry Jones // Randolph in respect of his Tenement held of the Manor of Brinsham // One piece of Land part of Lower Common numbered **63f** on the said Map // containing One Acre one rood and fourteen perches bounded Northwestward by the Road // numbered XVII and on other parts by the Allotments numbered 63c and 63g //

Adrian Stokes the Younger sold to Peter Cliff 889a] Unto Peter Cliff of Wickwar aforesaid Pig Butcher as the Purchaser from Adrian // Stokes the Younger of the City of Edinburgh Gentleman of part of his right and interest // in the Land to be inclosed in respect of his Tenement called Frith Farm // One piece of Land part of Wickwar Common numbered **889a** on the said Map // containing Two acres three roods and twenty four perches bounded Eastward by the Turnpike // Road and on other parts by the Allotments numbered 888, 889 and 890 //

Adrian Stokes the Younger 825] Unto Adrian Stokes the Younger for other part of his right and interest in the // Land to be inclosed in respect of his Tenement called Frith Farm // One piece of Land part of the Waste in Frith Lane numbered **825** on the said Map // containing One rood and twenty eight perches bounded Northward by the public road Eastward // by the Road numbered LXXV and on other parts by the Allotment numbered 825a and // by Old Inclosures //

852a] One other piece of Land part of the Waste in Frith Lane numbered **852a** on the // said Map containing Ten perches bounded Southwestward by the public road and on other // parts by Old Inclosures //

856a] One other piece of Land part of the Waste in Frith Lane numbered **856a** on the // said Map containing seven perches bounded Southward by the public road and on other // parts by Old Inclosures //

1 1844 enclosure award A Stokes (transcribed YHC)

In 1851 William is described as a *Farmer of 50 acres* employing 1 labourer. He was born in Codrington, now part of South Gloucestershire. They had a third daughter, Ann, 5. They had a single servant living in; Laura Brown, 18.

Ten years later, William was still employing one man to help him, suggesting the farm had not expanded. The three girls still lived at home and there were no sons to take on the heavy farmwork. No servants are listed either, suggesting they either had local help living out or the girls carried out the lions share of the farmwork.

In 1871 William Higgs was 74 and the two elder girls had left home, just Annie Higgs, 24, remaining. Mary Grant, 77, William's sister, lived with them and a servant, Mary Witts, 19. Mary Grant died soon after.

In 1876 William Higgs died and his son-in-law George Parker, a farmer from Monmouthshire, took over the farm, having married Mary Higgs. In 1881 George was 45 and Mary, 38. They had a son, William, 10 who had been born in Wales. His brother Isaac, 3, had been born in Yate. They also had 2 further daughters mentioned in later census records; Annie, 8 and Ethel, 6. The Parkers had two servants; Ellen Hunt, 16 and Mark Besant, 14.

By now, Frith Cottage to the east had been built to house agricultural workers for Frith Farm. Moses Always 37, an agricultural labourer from Yate lived there with his wife Sophia, 59 and daughter Fanny, 15. Thomas Hury Chew, 57, lived in the adjoining cottage with his wife Caroline, 54, sons Thomas, 22 and William 8. The two Thomas's, father and son, were also agricultural labourers working for George Parker.

In 1889 Frith Farm, called 'The Frith' and 'well arranged farm buildings', Lot 3, was put up for sale along with lands comprising just over 75 acres. By directions of the Trustees of the late Mr J Bennett.

The premises were described as being '*in good repair*', comprising the Entrance Hall, 2 Sitting Rooms, Kitchen, Back Kitchen, Pantry, Dairy, Cellar, 4 bedrooms and a Cheese Room. There was an '*excellent supply of water*'.

The 1889 sale resulted in the purchase of Frith Farm by local landowner JC Bengough esq. who owned much of the surrounding land. The Parkers remained as tenants for a further generation. In 1891 there is no mention of William, who may have moved away. Daughter, Ethel, 16, is listed with son Isaac, now 13. The Parkers now had 3 servants living in; Sarah Stinchcomb, 16, John Brabant, 13 and William Selby, 16.

In 1901 George Parker was 66 and Mary, 58. Annie and Isaac lived with them, as well as John Ransford, 19 Farm labourer and Sarah Stinchcomb, 26, the housemaid.

In 1906 Isaac (Jock) Parker and his wife Violet took over the farm of 100 acres of arable pasture and orchards. They kept 60 head of cattle, pigs and poultry as well as harvesting apples for Cider production. George Parker died in 1907 aged 73 and Mary Parker died on 28 Dec 1915.

Isaac Parker continued farming Frith until his death in 1949. His daughter Mary married Major F W Gooderham who took over the farm and carried on farming until his death in 1983, although the herd of milking cows had been sold prior to this. Mrs Mary Gooderham continued to occupy the farm until November 1989, when the property was sold to Mr & Mrs Donald Duke. Mary died on 17 July 1992. The Dukes currently use the farm for horse breeding alongside a small Jersey suckling herd.⁹

⁹ Mary Isaac, A Record of Yate Farms, Yate Heritage Centre

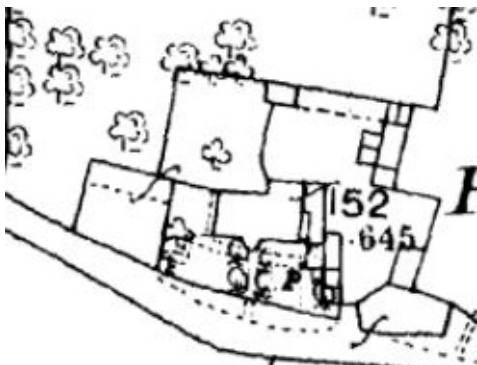
Chronological Maps of Frith Farm



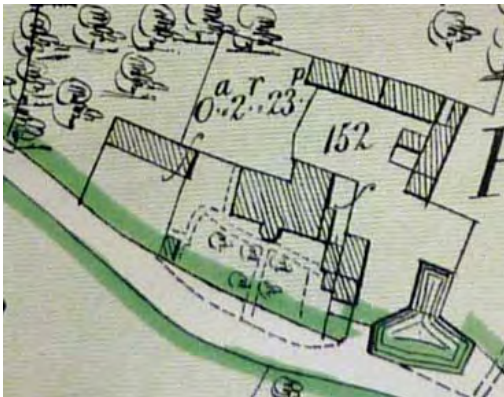
1841



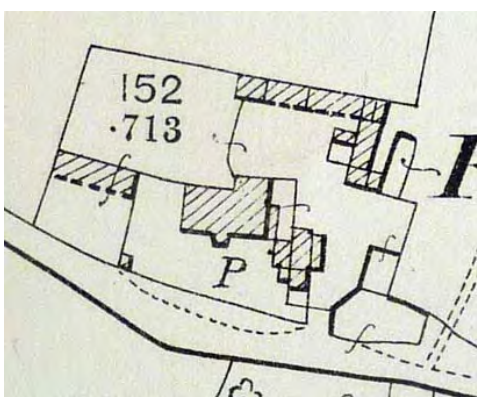
1844



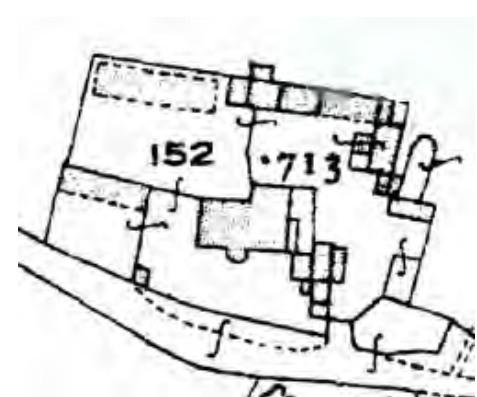
1882



1889



1903



1921



1967

The Structural History of Frith Farm

Phase 1 – 16th century

Frith Farm has evolved during several building phases, the first one probably during the later 16th century, when the Hall and Parlour and chambers above were built. A number of re-used roof timbers with empty mortice holes for windbraces may have come from the 16th century roof, but it cannot be verified. The subsequent rebuilding phases resulted in alterations to the roof in the 17th and 18th centuries, which has resulted in a series of roof trusses of varying dates.

Phase 2 – Early 17th century

The dating of this phase is informed largely by the raised lozenge discovered by Linda Hall in 1975 on a wall in the attic (2). It is on the east side of the hall stack, which suggests either the eastern end of the house was not in existence or it was only 1 to 1 ½ stories at the time. Now on an internal wall, it was clearly added to the original exterior east wall and retains its render beneath later plasterwork. The raised border encloses a diamond with a raised central rose with a trailing leaf pattern, similar to a Fleur-de-Lys, on all four corners. The lower point has a further diamond below it, which may be repeated on the other 3 points, now covered by plaster. It is possible that further contemporary decoration exists beneath the plasterwork.



2 Circa mid 17th century lozenge with former exterior rendering in attic (D & S Duke 1994)

The floor plan of the house shows the western half of the house, incorporating the Parlour [00-01] and Hall [00-00] (but not the projecting bay) as the earliest remaining part of the house. The juxtaposition of the central and largely unsupported beams on the 2 lower floors with the ceiling beams to the west suggests this was either a 2 roomed house on each floor or that there was a cross passage with small service rooms to the east. The thickness of the east wall between the Hall and Sitting Room [00-04] suggests that it was originally the exterior wall. The curved section of this interior wall at attic level also suggests there was a small newel staircase in the rear north-east corner of what is now the Hall [00-00].

Looking at the 2011 Floor Plan and those executed in 1994 (18-20), it seems probable that the Parlour was the former Hall with a window in the north wall (possibly later a doorway, retained within the Log Store as a shelved alcove with what appears to be a blocked arch above). It is also likely that the rear lean-to was in existence in some form, though only single storey. The wide blocked window in its east wall must surely have belonged to this structure rather than the stair tower.

The cellar below the Parlour was almost certainly constructed at the same time, although the cellar steps were probably originally accessed from beneath the earlier newel staircase. The wide chamfered beam with run out stops, although worn, is very similar in design to those in the Parlour above.

The ovolo moulded beams with hollow chamfers and unusual carved stops in the Parlour and Hall Chambers suggests this was once a higher status house than mere farmhouse. Wide elm or oak floorboards lie beneath later, more regular, boards. Any original fireplaces have generally been either blocked up or rebuilt. It seems clear from the evidence of the curved attic wall and the later widened access doorway that the attic floor was accessed by stairs from an early age, and therefore in use for more than just storage, when a ladder would have been utilised.



3 Circa early-mid 17th century carved stops and timber mullion window (D & S Duke 1994)

A sole remaining blocked timber ovolo mullioned window [W6] in the north wall of the Parlour Chamber [01-02] can be seen from inside the rear lean-to. Between each of the mullions is a metal security bar set at a 45° angle. Another blocked window of about the same size can be seen in the 1994 plans (20) beside it and a further smaller window lies behind the northern chimney alcove in the same room. Prior to the external rendering of this gable, the blocked window could still be seen (13).

There may well have been a 1 to 1 ½ storey kitchen against the east wall, because the southern stops of the ceiling beam are embedded in the south wall (Phase 3).

Phase 3 – second half of the 17th century

This phase occurred in the later part of the century when stone cross transom windows were popular. It involved extending the south- eastern half of the main house to full height, with a rear single or 1 ½ storey addition where the kitchen is now located, separated by the wide kitchen passage. The presence of the hoodmoulds with deep returns either side on the south front strongly suggests the whole wall was rebuilt when the stone cross windows were added. The thickness of the wall was increased to

support the high stone windows, resulting in the southern end stops of the earlier ceiling beams being embedded within it; the northern ends remain visible as originally intended. In 1975 there were still 3 remaining cross windows in situ, two blocked on the ground floor west gable (13) and one at first floor landing level on the staircase (12).

There would have been 3 gabled attic roofs at the front forming a symmetrical elevation with the new cross windows. The central gable, later lost to the projecting bay, would probably have had an attic window like that on the western gable, now blocked. There is no sign of a window in the eastern gable but there may have been a window in the northern wall (prior to Phase 4).

The rear stair tower was also built, seemingly incorporating the east wall of the rear lean-to against the Parlour. The kitchen lean-to may have been probably added at this point. The doorway into the attic has been widened and relocated, probably at this point, to accommodate the wider staircase. The gabled roof above it was considerably steeper than the south front gables. Whilst the attic floor retains small wooden mullion windows, and an interesting smaller window on the west side, the ground and first floor staircase windows had new stone cross transoms to match those newly added to the south, west and probably east and north fronts of the house.

After the eastern front half of the house had been extended up to attic height with a single room on each floor, the first floor chamber extended across the kitchen passage [00-05] to the rear wall (later partitioned to create the landing passage), effectively making it the same depth as the Parlour and Hall and their chambers. It is probable that the Parlour lean-to was rebuilt or raised, blocking the Parlour chamber's [01-02] timber mullion window. There is no sign of a cross window having been inserted in this part of the wall. There may well have been new windows on the north-eastern half of the house, but they would have been destroyed when the kitchen wing was extended upwards [Phase 4].

The Hall was created to impress newly arrived visitors. The remodelling of the interior resulted in the addition of the handsome timber staircase with lozenge patterned newel posts and barley twist balusters. The bolection moulded doorways, reaching up to the ceiling, are almost too elaborate for the space, but are very imposing, none the less. There was a bolection moulded fireplace (probably more than one) but the previous owners were told it had been destroyed in a fire, although it is not clear when the fire took place. The panelling around the room was also damaged, the remaining sections re-used on the first floor landing and part of the attic.

The bolection moulded doorcase leading into the Parlour lean-to has almost certainly been relocated. It seems improbable that such an expensive piece of joinery would be used for a mere lean-to, and the fact that the latter had an exterior door suggests a high probability that the doorway into the Hall did not exist at this point. The interior of the original front door would almost certainly have had a similar doorcase, and its removal in the 18th century when the projecting bay was added may well have resulted in its relocation to the rear of the Hall.

The kitchen passage [00-05] was added at the same time; the carved stops on the door jambs appear contemporary on the timber doorways at each end. The panelling above remains at the eastern end of the wide passage and a blocked doorway once led into the Sitting Room [00-04]. The current doorway into the Hall into [00-00] was made later, probably during Phase 4 or even later. It seems probable that this passage was the only access between the service rooms and the main house at that time, and that a separate staircase accessed the chamber [01-04] above at this point.

Phase 4 – Mid 18th century

This phase saw the building of the central projecting bay and the rear kitchen wing built up to attic level, along with the rebuilding of the east wall and double eastern roof. The landing wall was breached and a passage made out of the sitting room chamber [01-04], providing access to a bedroom on either side. The new north-east attic room, possibly a cheese loft, was accessed from the staircase half landing at some point. The Parlour [00-01] had an alcove cupboard with shaped shelving inserted, blocking the cross window behind. The other side of the fireplace was probably given similar treatment. Possibly the Sitting Room doorway was now opened up into the hall and the one into the rear passage blocked.

The Stokes family purchased the farm in 1744 and whilst they do not appear to have lived at the house for any length of time it is probably they who carried out the 'Georgianisation' of the house, adding the new 3 storey projecting bay and a new kitchen wing to the rear of the eastern range. It seems probable that they also added similar though shallower hood moulds to the projecting bay in keeping with the Phase 3 ones, although it is not clear what type of window they added. There is no evidence of any 18th century sashes, and some of the stone cross windows survived, suggesting they may have made timber copies, which would explain the hood moulds. They appear to have removed the central front wall leaving the central ceiling timber suspended and relatively unpropped on all 3 floors. The first floor beam was only propped up after 1989 by the present owner, but not before the ceiling had dropped considerably. The ground floor beam was attached to the ceiling by iron braces in the 19th century and the attic beam propped up by the collar of the roof truss. All three beams retain the exposed end section which would have been embedded in the original outer wall, though part may have been sawn off. At ground floor level, the sawn off mortice is visible on the south side.

It appears that much of the eastern wall may have been rebuilt at this time, to provide the twin gabled roofs at right angles to the main roof, with the valley gutter inserted between the two eastern roofs. An archway with a central keystone on the eastern front has 2 sets of windows with stone voussoirs to either side. The lead gutter ran out below this arch and can be seen clearly in a 1994 photograph (14). At first floor level, the east wall was breached at some point to give access to a newly created passage [01-03] made from part of the Sitting Room chamber [01-04], with a further bedroom [01-06] off it above the present kitchen. The original connecting doorway between the two south front chambers was blocked up, leaving the doorway intact (the current owners rediscovered this doorway, and the door has been removed to safety before blocking it once more). It is probable that there was a window at the end of the landing below the arch, both to provide an aesthetic quality and to light the passage. The addition of the bathroom [01-05] in the early-mid 20th century removed any evidence of this.

The bolecion moulded doorcase into the parlour lean-to may have been relocated at this point from the interior of the original front door after the front wall was removed. It was later damaged by being cut away to allow barrels through, suggesting the lean-to may have been in use as a cellar/buttery for a long time, later possibly a cider barn. The outer north wall has a blocked doorway and there is a further doorway in the north-western half.

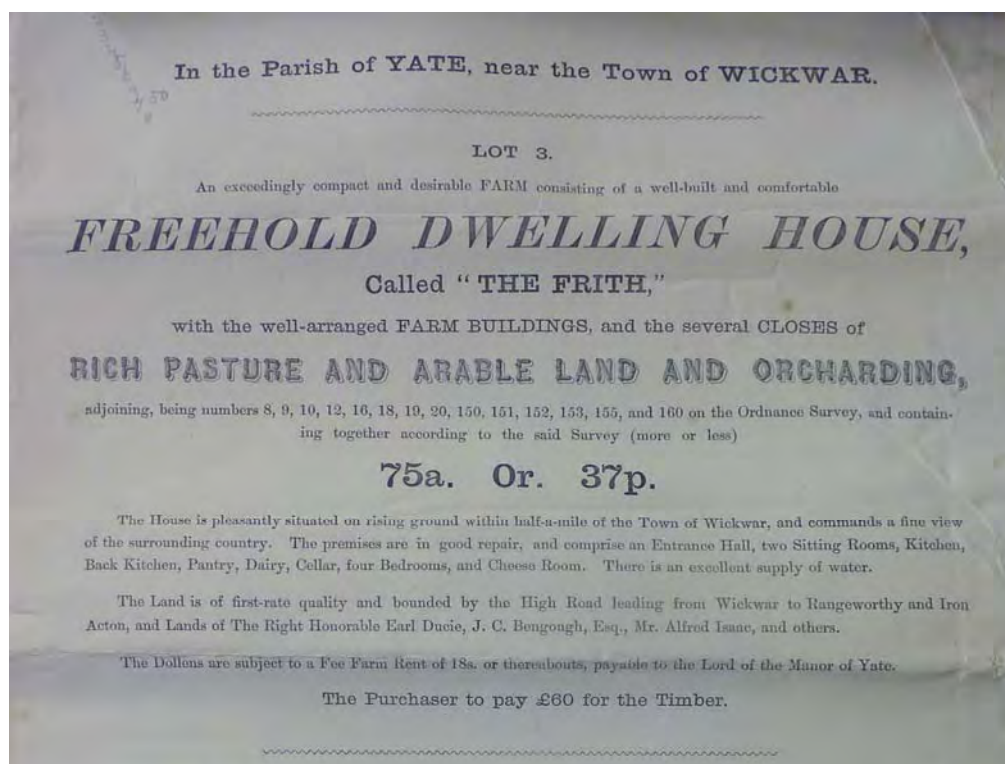
Phase 5 – Early 19th century

The single storey extension along the east front was added sometime after the 1840s and before 1889. Prior to that the area was an open yard, bound by a wall bounded by a rectangular building on the south, rebuilt as the bakehouse and adjacent current garage (4).



4 1841 Tithe map of Yate (GRO)

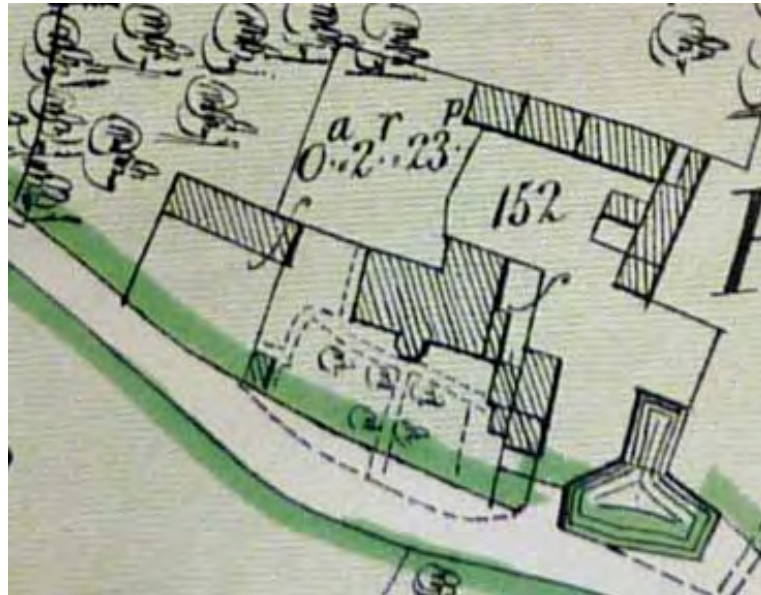
For all of the 19th century and much of the 20th century it was a working farmhouse. In 1889, the farm was put up for sale by the then owner, J C Bengough. The tenant farmers, the Parkers, remained. It is probable that the new owner spent money building new outbuildings and improving the house.



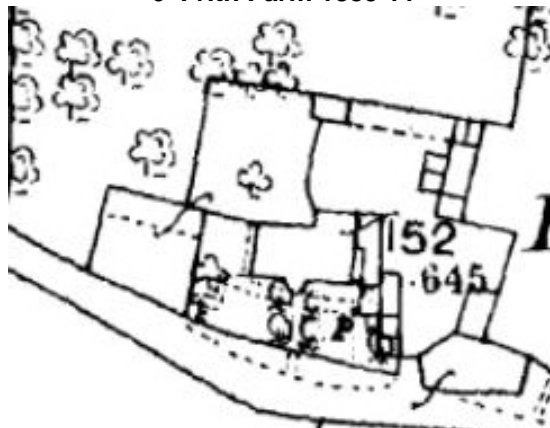
5 1889 sales description for Frith Farm10

The Sales Catalogue describes the premises as being in good repair and comprising:

Entrance Hall, Two Sitting Rooms, Kitchen, Back Kitchen, Pantry, Dairy, Cellar, 4 Bedrooms and a Cheese Room. Oddly, it doesn't mention a brewhouse or bakehouse, although the buildings were clearly extant (5). Given the location of the now built small eastern lean-to, it is probable that the kitchen may have been at the front, where the current sitting room is. This had been the kitchen in 1975 (L Hall) and the present kitchen a Dairy, and this arrangement may have been the same in 1869. It follows that the second Sitting Room may have been in part of the hall with the fireplace, partitioned off from a smaller entrance hall, possibly in the bay alone. This would therefore be where it is today (although relocated in the interim) and the Back Kitchen and Pantry in the small eastern lean-to [00-5a to 00-5c].



6 Frith Farm 1889 11

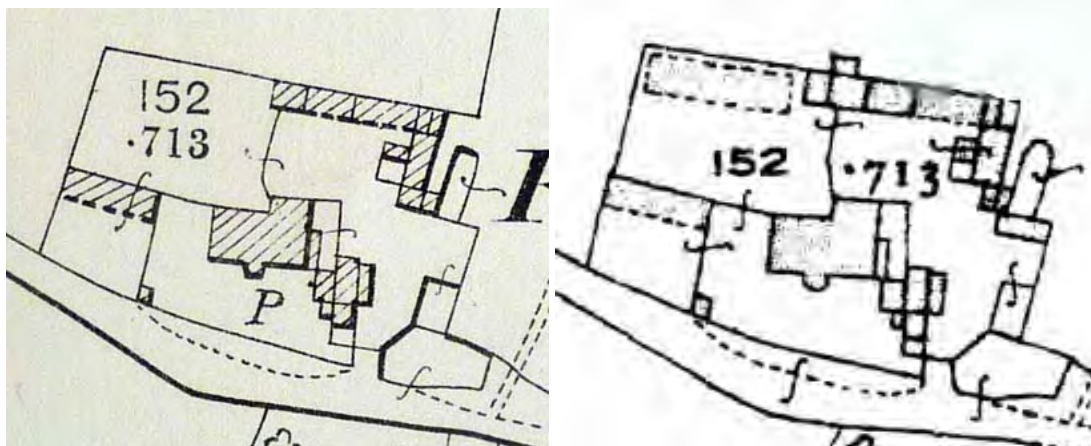


7 1882 Frith Farm

The current north-eastern lean-to [00-07 to 00-08] had not yet been built, the open area remained with the boundary wall that opened onto the brewhouse as well. It is odd that no bake or brewhouse was mentioned, but they may just have been included in the overall description of outbuildings. The 1882 map (7) confirms the location of the pump on the corner of the brewhouse, which would have required a regular supply of water.

11 GRO D/4639/3/7/286/2

There appear to be no further descriptions of the farm and its layout, other than the evidence of maps and photographs taken in 1975 (L Hall) and 1994 (D & S Duke). The current owners were told that in the 1930s the south wall of the Sitting Room fell down and was rebuilt. This, then, may be the reason for the stops on this side of the house being embedded in the wall at ground and first floor level and the corbels added to support them. There was also a fire in the hall, date unknown. The Parlour door and others may well have been damaged in this, hence the poor condition of the woodwork under the paint. At some point the small section of wall between the attic gable and the attic above the kitchen was added to allow easier access to the room by a short flight of steps.



8 1903 & 1921 maps of Frith Farm



9 1967 map of Frith Farm

In 1952 the farmhouse and adjoining bakehouse were listed as Grade II*, almost certainly because of the Hall and staircase interior. It mentions 19th century windows with margin lights, possibly inserted c1889. A new timber mullioned window with leaded lights was inserted into the rear stair tower window in c1900 (17) (later relocated to the rear lean-to to replace the blocked doorway). The north-eastern kitchen lean-to [00-07] was not built until some time between 1921 and the 1960s.

The previous owner replaced many of the earlier windows with modern timber sashes and casements with margin lights. When Linda Hall carried out the survey in 1975, the Sitting Room [00-04] was being used as the kitchen and the current Kitchen [00-06] as the Dairy. The Hall [00-00] was the Dining Room. Several photographs taken at the time (9-12) show the house little altered externally today, except for the renewal of some windows.

The new kitchen lean-to with the corrugated roof [00-07] provided additional offices, joining up with the existing narrow lean-to and forming a lobby. The doorway onto the back passage [00-05] shows considerable weathering, showing it had been the original back entrance.

The South Front (10) shows sashes with margin lights on all windows except for the first floor windows in the projecting bay, which were modern timber cross windows. The present concrete roof tiles had been added by then. The porch pediment was not extant until more recently. On the East Front all but one of the first floor windows was blocked, the bathroom extension in situ with a larger modern casement window and both lean-tos in their present location.

The North Front (11) retained the remains of 2 cross transom windows, the lower one replaced with a c1900 timber mullion with leaded panes, the lower half later blocked by breeze blocks when an additional section of corrugated iron roof was added to the rear catslide roof of the parlour lean-to, running between the stair tower and the west end of the house.

The stair tower was rendered and the north-west gable. The render must have been old, because the kitchen wing and the piece of wall between it and the east angle of the gable roof were unrendered. The rear lean-to was unrendered and the current window in the north wall (replacing a blocked doorway) was not extant. There are signs of a blocked doorway and window in the west exterior wall of it as well. A stone wall continues to run north from the north-west corner of the kitchen to the stand alone barn. The 1994 photographs(17) show a pair of timber French windows on the west side of the kitchen and a blocked window above at attic level.

The west gable end (12) was also unrendered, with 2 blocked stone cross transoms at ground floor level. A blocked first floor window can just be seen above the northernmost, with possibly another blocked window above the other.

Prior to the sale of Frith Farm to the current owners, some windows were replaced, and in one case opened up. On the western front, one of the two remaining blocked stone cross transom windows was re-opened and a modern timber casement inserted, the wall then rendered. On the south front, the 2 first floor timber cross windows on the bay were replaced with modern margin lights to match the others on that front. On the east front, the current bathroom window has been made smaller, otherwise much of it is unaltered. On the north front the two stair tower windows were replaced, the lower c1900 one re-used in the north wall of the rear lean-to.

The Exterior 1975 & 2011



10 Frith Farm South Front 1975 & August 2011





11 Frith Farm East Front 1975 & August 2011





12 Frith Farm North Front 1975 & August 2011





13 Frith Farm West Front 1975 & August 2011



Post 1989

In 1989 the house was sold to the present owner, Donald Duke. The Dukes opened up the fireplace in the Sitting Room [00-04] and having been granted listed building consent in 1994, carried out a number of alterations; primarily replacing fenestration and opening up a small number of windows.

A series of photographs (13-17) record the state of both the exterior and interior then and the plans (18-23) drawn up for the planning application show both the existing structure and the proposals. Permission was given to open up two further windows on the east front at first floor level and insert 2 new window in the attic gables to either side of the projecting bay, as well as blocked windows in the kitchen and bedroom above on the north wall, which was carried out (23). More recently they repaired the two main chimneys which were in a dangerous condition.



14 1994 Bathroom with larger casement & archway detail with valley gutter above bathroom roof



15 1994 north and east fronts with blocked kitchen windows and brick lean-to wall



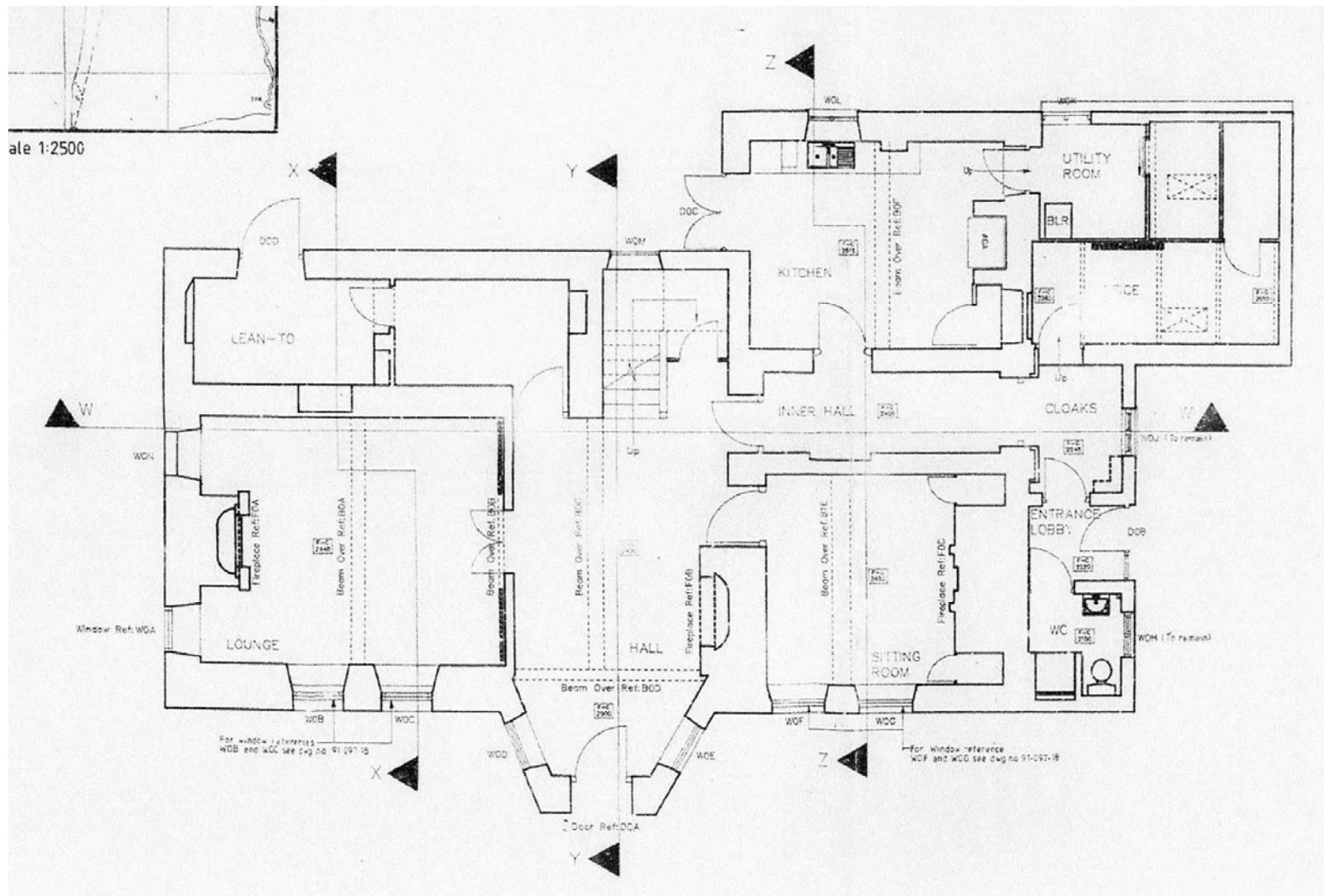
16 The North front showing the partially rendered gables with remains of a stone transom window in the stair tower and various blockages

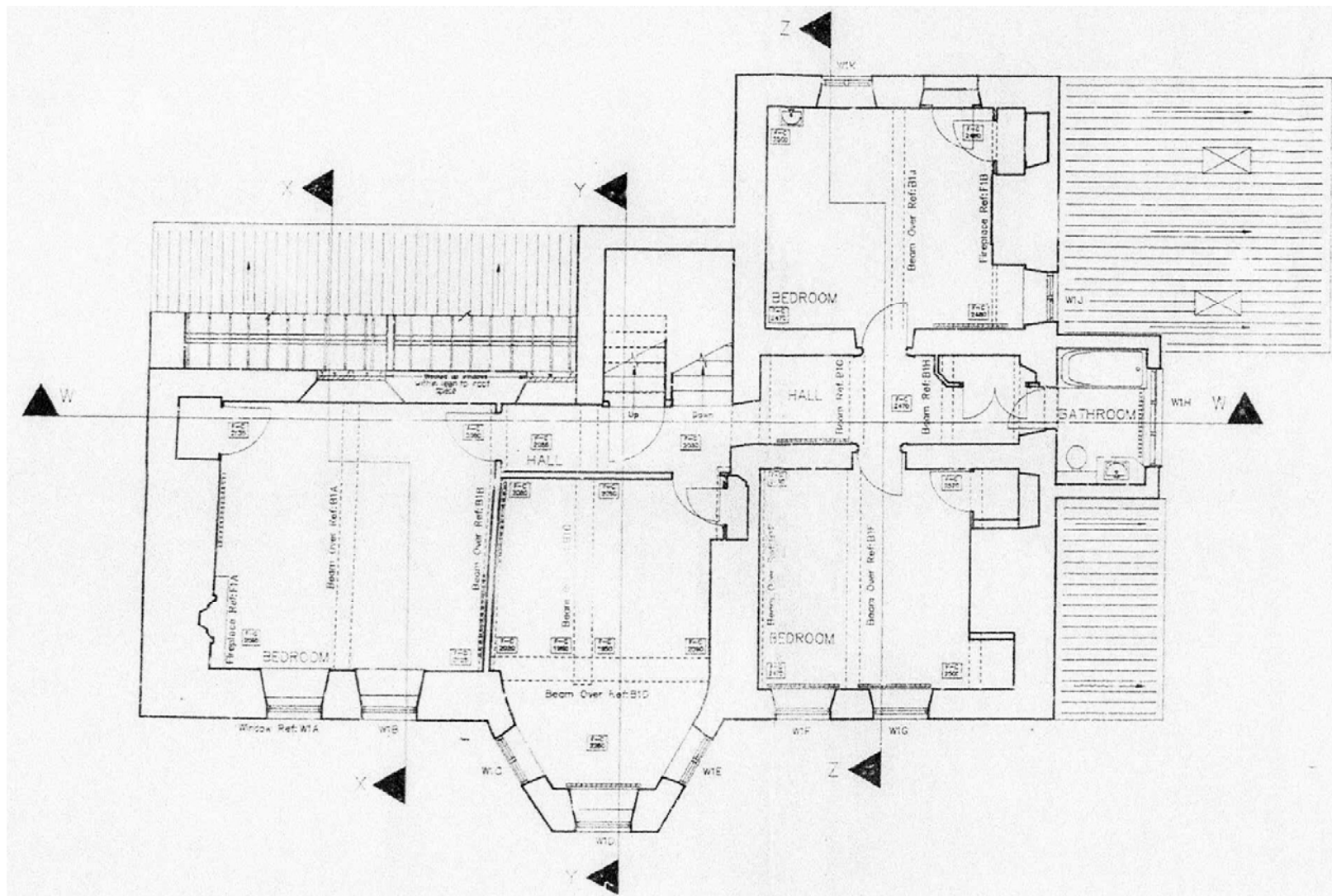


17 Detail of the stair tower with remains of blocked stone transom and c1900 timber leaded mullion; first floor 17th century timber ovolo mullion & blocked doorway in the rear lean-to (north wall)

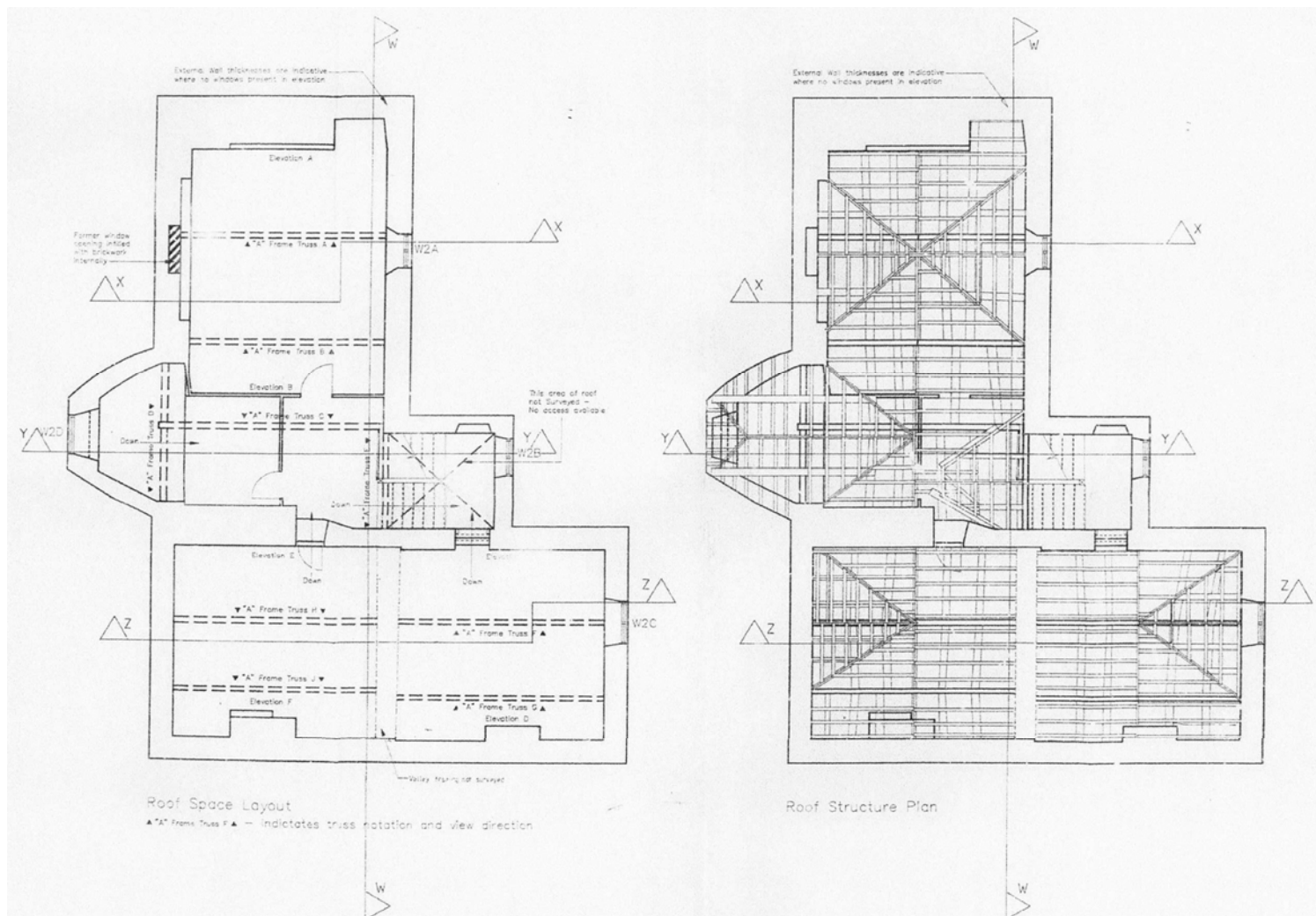


18 1994 Log Store with cheese rack brackets and keeping hole with blocked doorway and arch with further shelving





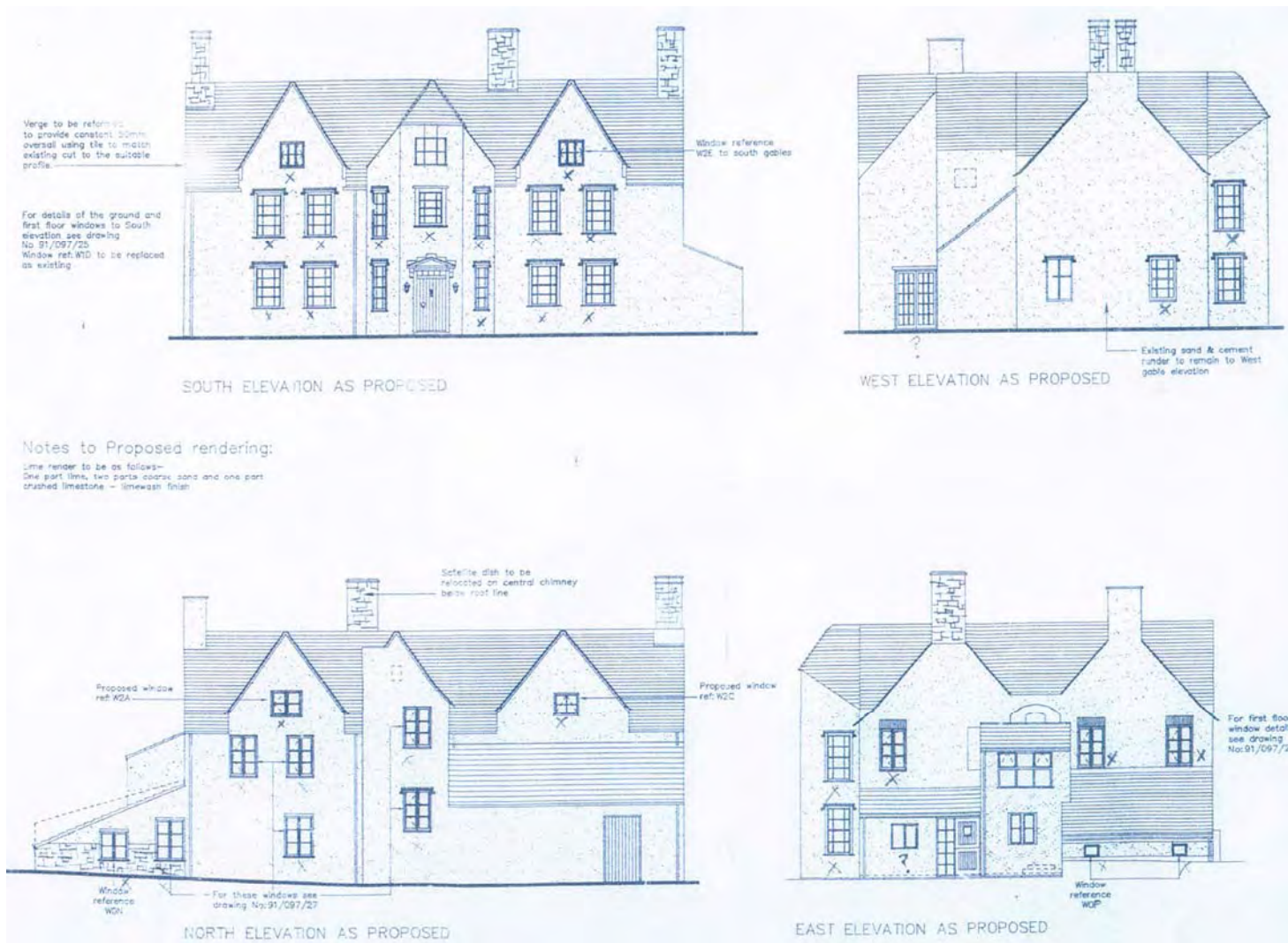
20 1994 First Floor Plan



21 1994 Second Floor Plan



22 1994 Existing Elevations



23 1994 Proposed Elevations

Summary

Frith Farmhouse is a complex building, dating from c16th century to the 20th century. The main changes were carried out in the 17th and 18th century, changing a relatively modest yeoman's house into a high status dwelling. The 17th century saw elegant stone cross windows, beautifully carved bolection doorcases and fire surrounds, panelling and an imposing staircase in its own stair tower. In the mid 18th century the central projecting bay was added to the front of the house, along with the rear kitchen wing extended up to attic level. The east wall may have been rebuilt at this time. The 19th century brought a relatively prosperous period for a farming family through into the 20th century. They didn't make many alterations, although the last Parker son spent money on new fire surrounds and at least one timber mullion leaded window, probably more. Farming continued until the 1980s, when the previous owner died. Prior to the sale to the current owner in 1989 many of the windows were replaced and the staircase and doors had been boarded up with hardboard. The current owners have been responsible for the restoration of the 17th century doorcases and staircase. Today the house and outbuildings are in urgent need of repair and restoration and further alterations are proposed to bring the house up to 21st century standards.

Whilst the main core of the house consists of large reception rooms, kitchen and bedrooms, there is only one small 20th century bathroom and a jumble of 20th century rooms in two poorly insulated lean-to extensions, with a further c17th century lean-to against the rear wall in poor internal condition. The four attic rooms are in a parlous state, most missing flooring and many of the roof trusses in need of repair, as well as parts of the wall. The Parlour ceiling is in danger of collapse and the two upper timbers in the projecting bay left unsupported when the front wall was removed require structural attention. The current owner propped up the beam at first floor level, but the ceiling above is sloping at a precarious angle.

Whilst the north and south fronts reflect the earlier architectural changes, the east front does neither; it is a jumble of different builds, blocked up windows and partial rendering. There are two phases of service lean-tos built against the lower wall and a 20th century bathroom at first floor level. The lean-to's are built piecemeal, largely of inappropriate materials, poorly lit and heated and not in keeping with the house or serving any longer the purpose for which they were first built, i.e. pantries and other service rooms. The northern one dates from the between c1920s and c1960s whilst the eastern, later 19th century one, has been rebuilt to provide a cloakroom and lobbies, probably when the first floor bathroom was added in the 20th century.

The proposed addition to the east front also incorporates the currently ruined single storey bakehouse (see Historic Building Report Frith Farm – Outbuildings K Ross August 2011) as a study. This building, erected in the mid 19th century, was used as a bakehouse and possible brewhouse, with a projecting oven to the south. The roof has fallen in within the last 20 years, the stone wall has collapsed to the side of the chimney and the west wall is leaning about 18 inches and held up by the thick mass of ivy. The building retains the chimney breast and fireplace and the remnants of 2 doors and a window.

The east wall of the house appears to have been rebuilt in either the 18th or early 19th centuries, when sash windows (none of which survive) may have been added beneath the stone tile voussoirs. Whilst the 18th century projecting bay was equipped with large windows (no longer extant) with expensive stone hoodmoulds, this front

was given the rather utilitarian voussoirs. There is no sign of earlier windows or hoodmoulds, so it appears that the wall was rebuilt and new windows added, which would explain the incongruity of the windows, each set within a deep alcove running from lintel to floor level. While all have been blocked on the ground floor, of the four on the first floor, one remains open and the other (now blocked) can be seen inside a cupboard [01-04] and had been open.

At first floor level there are four sizeable bedrooms served by a single, small bathroom extension. There is no remaining evidence of what any earlier window would have looked like at the east end of the passage prior to the addition of the bathroom. The two eastern bedrooms each have at least one window that was inserted in a floor to lintel opening and there may be evidence beneath the plaster of the remaining blocked window in each room also having once been open. Effectively, any architectural integrity of these windows has been lost and there is no evidence of what any earlier windows would have looked like, or of a central one at first floor level. It is unclear quite when the wall was rebuilt, but probably in the mid 18th century to accommodate the new double gabled roof with valley gutter.

The attics retain chamfered timbers with carved stops, as well as plastered and limewashed walls. Many of the timbers also retain evidence of ceilings and the fact that the staircase ascends to this level, complete with newel post and re-used panelling confirms that most of the rooms were used for accommodation, not just storage. It retains windows in the gables as well as evidence of further blocked ones. The one remaining in the south front is an inappropriate replacement. Whilst there is no evidence of a window in the east gable, it is probable that it must have had a window originally, probably in the north wall prior to the north-east attic being added and the double roof with valley gutter. It is very unlikely that this room was intended to be unlit and consent was given in 1994 to insert a window here to match the central window and the proposed re-instatement of the western window on the south attic front. This would also retain the symmetry of this façade.

At present, the house has a large number of modern replacement windows together with a small number of original timber mullions and one of c1900, relocated to the rear lean-to. The 1952 listing refers to 19th century sashes with margin lights, but these in turn replaced either 18th century sashes or the 17th century cross windows. Many of the existing windows, inserted in the latter half of the 20th century, need replacing; they are neither appropriate to the house or ecologically sustainable. The house is located in a high exposed part of the landscape and both weathering and potential heat loss need to inform the choice of new windows, as well as their architectural appropriateness.

The original building was probably rendered throughout, but the 17th and particularly the 18th century rebuilding left the stonework exposed on the south, eastern and north-eastern fronts. The rear of the house from the stair tower west retained its render in 1975 photographs, but the render on the west front was carried out c1980s, probably with that of the eastern lean-tos.

In summary, the attic and roof require urgent attention and the re-instatement of floorboards and windows would ensure that this floor is returned to a habitable part of the house as it had once undoubtedly been. Partition walls and trusses, once repaired, would remain unaltered. On the ground and first floors, the resolution of the unsupported central beams and the partial collapse of the parlour ceiling are in need of immediate attention.

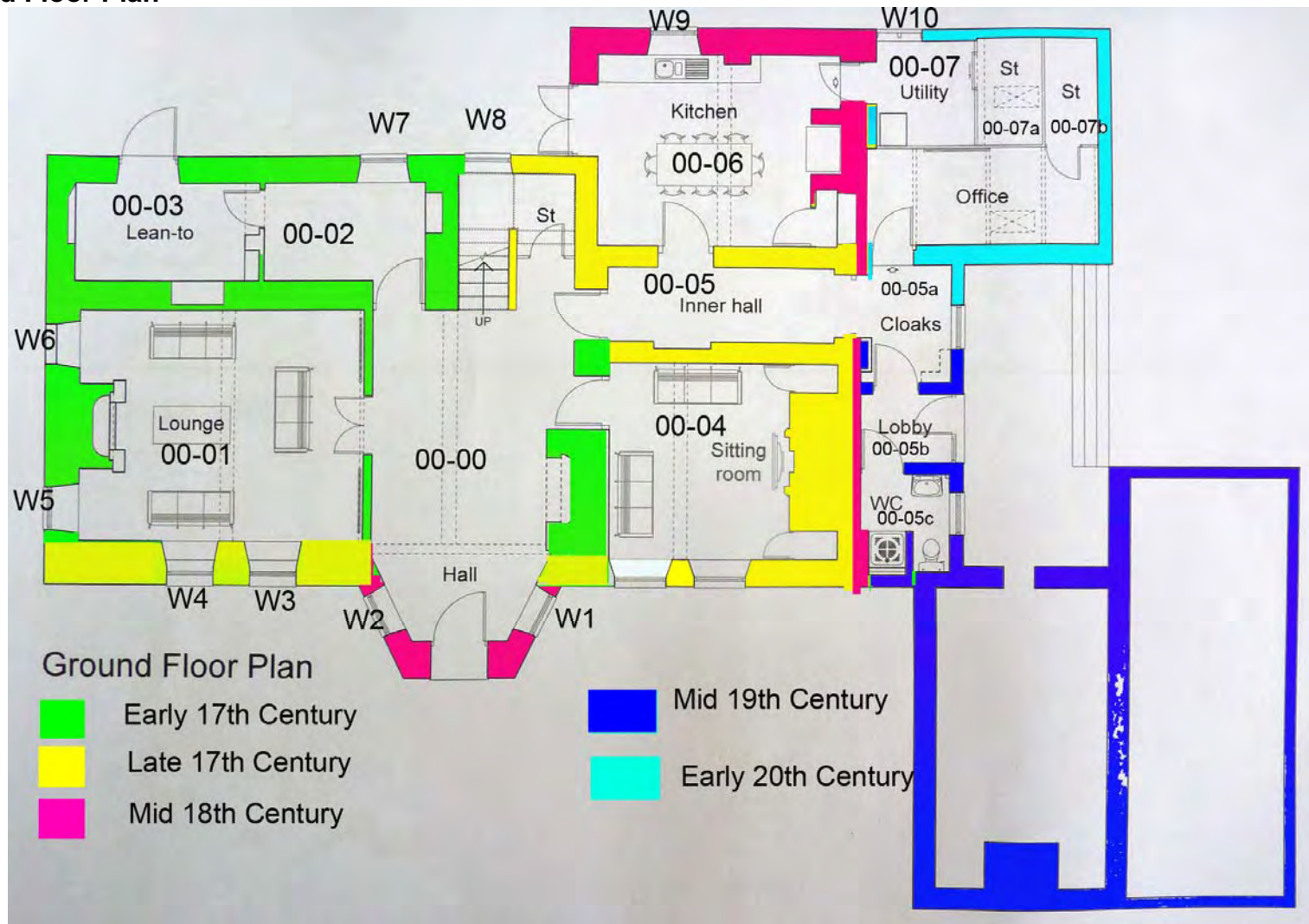
The addition of a sympathetic single 2 storey extension on the eastern side would solve the problem of adding new much needed bathrooms and kitchen services without compromising the existing historic fabric, other than the east wall, rebuilt c18th century. This has been compromised by the addition of the bathroom and the poorly built lean-to's as well as the blocking up of most of the original windows with no remaining evidence of their earlier appearance. The stone voussoirs are a poor architectural substitute in comparison to the stone hoodmoulds on the rest of the fronts.

The proposed addition to the east front incorporates the currently ruined single storey bakehouse (see Historic Building Report Frith Farm – Outbuildings K Ross August 2011) as a study. This would ensure the 19th century structure is restored as a significant component of the Farmhouse once more, re-instating its doors and windows. Little of the stone walls remain intact, although the chimney breast, doors and windows remain evident.

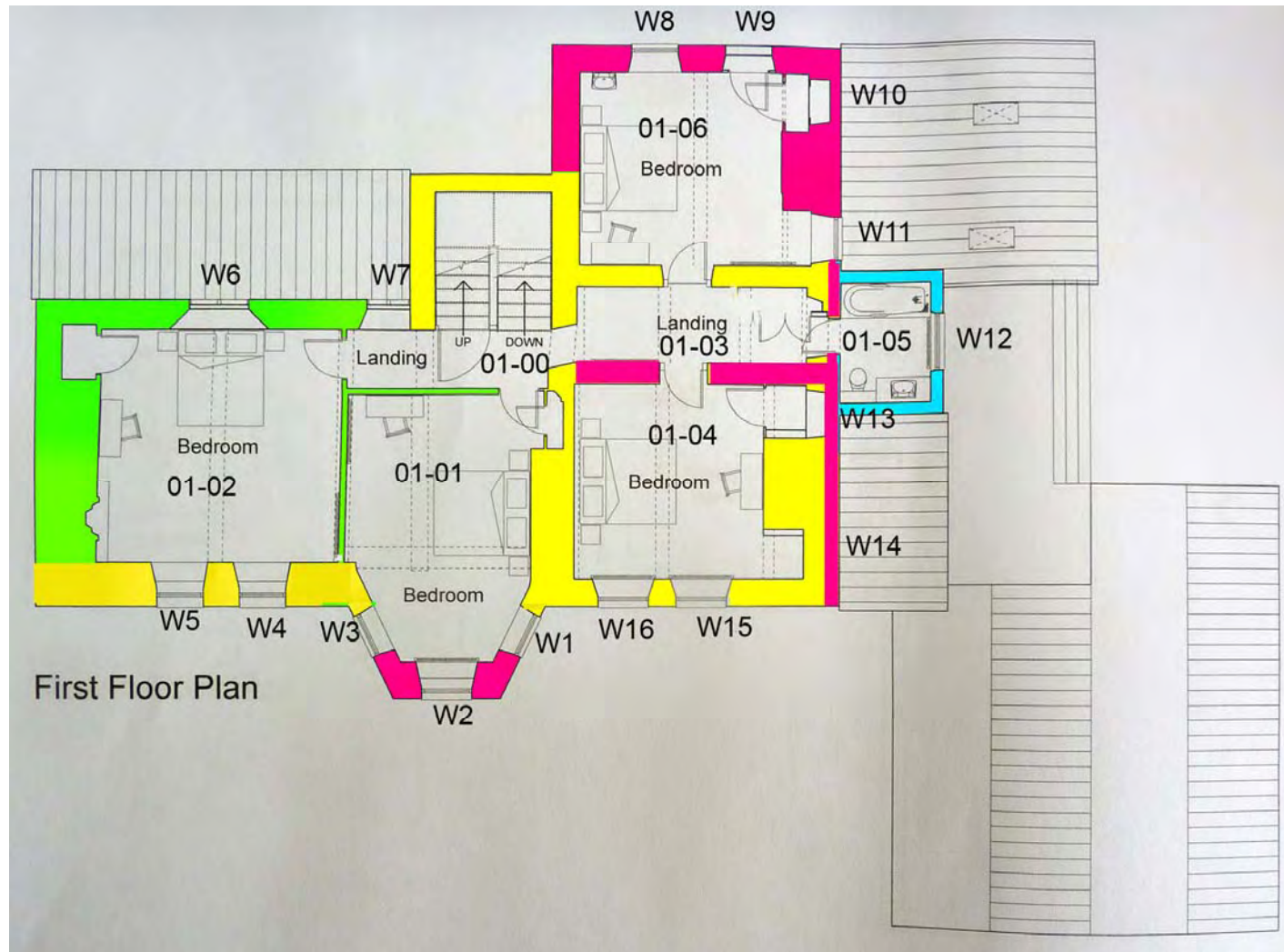
There is currently ingress of water over most of the 20th century replacement windows. Overall, the addition of new sustainable and appropriate windows would help consolidate this magnificent farmhouse and ensure a uniformity to match the elegant hoodmoulds and symmetry of the south front. The insertion of a new window in the east gable on this front would provide the attic room with a window once more (lost on the north side) and provide symmetry at attic level as well.

This farmhouse is a wonderful example of a Gloucestershire farmhouse, retaining many original features from its various building phases. The house has evolved over more than 300 years, adapted to the changing requirements of its occupants. Today, no longer a working farm, it is still a family home and the owners wish to both restore the existing structure, badly in need of structural repair, and adapt it to the needs of their growing family.

Historic Ground Floor Plan



Historic First Floor Plan



Frith Farm, Yate (105)

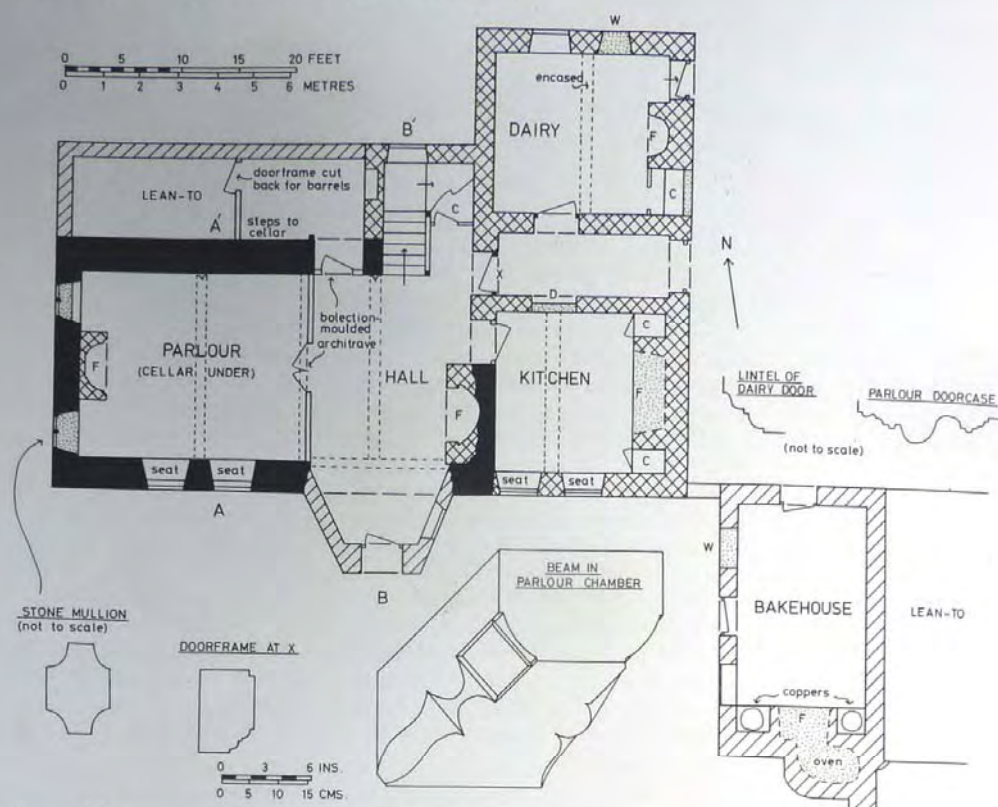


Figure 142.

St 717873 (figures 142 – 144)

SITE. Level ground on top of ridge, facing S.

MATERIALS. Limestone rubble; plain tiles, which replaced stone tiles (i.f.o.).

EXTERNAL FEATURES. Symmetrical elevation, two and a half storeys, diagonal chimneys on parlour stack. Two gables and central projecting bay (which has half-hipped roof) had ball finials (i.f.o.). House L shaped, with stair turret in angle. Rear wing, unusually, roofed parallel to main roof. Windows have angled hood-moulds above modern sashes. Two hollow-chamfered stone cross-windows survive, blocked, in W. wall (figure 143); wooden cross-windows in stair turret.

PLAN. Entry via projecting bay directly into heated hall. Stairs open off this room. To W., a parlour, with cellar below (i.f.o.); kitchen to E. Kitchen narrower than main range; separated by passage from dairy in wing.

FEATURES: GROUND FLOOR. Hall, parlour, dairy fireplaces have curved openings. In parlour, deeply-chamfered beam with step stops at N. end. Chamfered beam in hall, with flat stops, supported at S. end by cross-beam. Doors to parlour, lean-to, and cupboard under stairs have bolecion-moulded architraves (figure 142). Fireplace had similarly moulded surround, unfortunately destroyed by fire (i.f.o.). W. doorframe in passage has double-ovolo moulding on E. side (figure 142). At E. end, very weathered doorframe. Dairy doorframe has scroll- and ovolo-moulded lintel (figure 142); jambs have been partly roughed out for moulding, never completed. Very fine dog-leg stair has twisted balusters, moulded hand-rail, carved pendants and finials (figure 144).

FEATURES: FIRST FLOOR. Kitchen, dairy chambers, have chamfered doorframes, scroll stops, chamfered beams. Central beam in hall chamber and that along W. wall, chamfered with unusual flat, bar and scroll stops (figure 142). Central beam 'floating' at S. end where wall removed when bay added. Passage on N. side made with C17 panelling from hall (i.f.o.). Blocked window in N. wall has wooden

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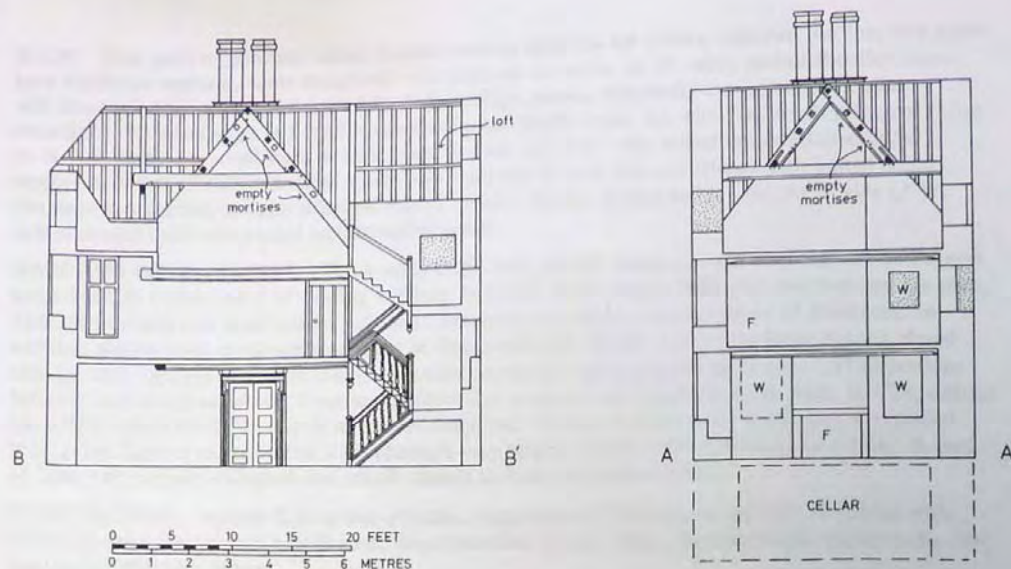


Figure 143.

ovolo mullions, doorframe to parlour chamber chamfered with flat, bar and scroll stops, mason's mitres. Beam along E. wall shared with hall chamber, but has flattened ovolo moulding on this side, with same type of stops. Central beam similar (figure 142).

FEATURES: ATTICS. Stair has plain, solid banister with moulded newel posts. Four rooms, with small loft, perhaps pigeon loft, above stairs. On E. side of hall stack, small patch of weathered roughcast with remains of pattern; consists of rose, four small fleurs-de-lis inside lozenge (plate LXVIII).

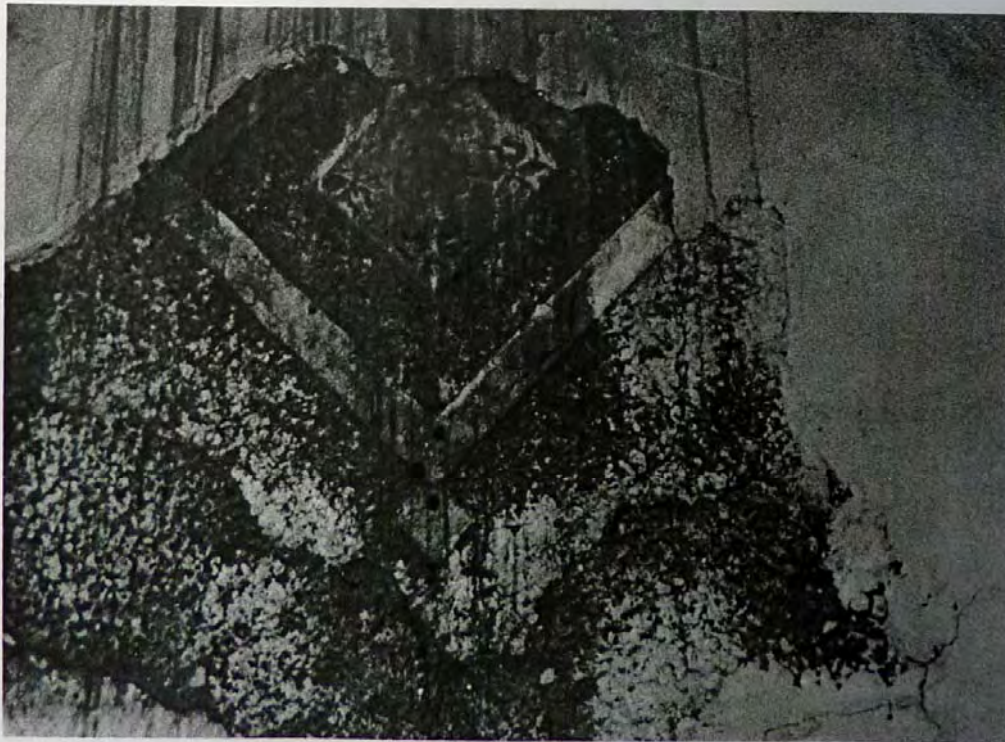


Plate LXVIII. Frith Farm, Yate. Decorative lozenge in roughcast of a former external wall. A similar lozenge occurs on porch of Rangeworthy Court, dated 1664.

ROOF. Four pairs of principal rafters re-used; contain mortises for collars, and butt purlins; two pairs have windbrace mortises. Some chamfered with diagonal-cut stops. In W. attic, extended-collar truss, with short principal rafters, two pairs butt purlins, ridge passing diagonally through apex. Collar chamfered with scroll stops at S. end. Central attic has similar truss, but with full-length principal rafter on N. side; collar has scroll stops at both ends. Bay has one truss with bolted lap-dovetailed collar, supporting S. end of extended collar where wall removed. E. attic has two trusses with bolted collars, two pairs butt purlins; one pair principal rafters re-used. Similar trusses in N. attic. At E. side of W. attic is re-used truss with pegged lap-dovetailed collar.

DATE AND DEVELOPMENT. Thick walls at W. end, parlour beam, re-used roof timbers all suggest house has C16 origins. Most of existing building, however, dates from c.1680. Datable features are plan, with entry directly into small heated hall, stair, bolection moulding, rounded shape of fireplaces. In addition, similar stone cross-windows occur at Commonwealth House, Latteridge (Iron Acton), dated 1686 (p. 191). Decoration in attic clearly originally on outside wall; suggests there were C17 alterations before E. end added or rebuilt. Presence confirms that some houses roughcast from start. In C18, central bay added, which involved removal of part of front wall. Extended-collar truss shows that it replaced third gable. Lean-to probably also C18, although may be part of late C17 rebuilding. In c.1930, E. end of front wall partially collapsed, but rebuilt exactly as had been before (i.f.o.).

OUTBUILDINGS. Against S.E. corner of house, single-storey C18 bakehouse; built of rubble with projecting oven, low-pitched pantile roof. Single truss has bolted collar, diagonal ridge, plated yoke, one pair purlins with tusk tenons.

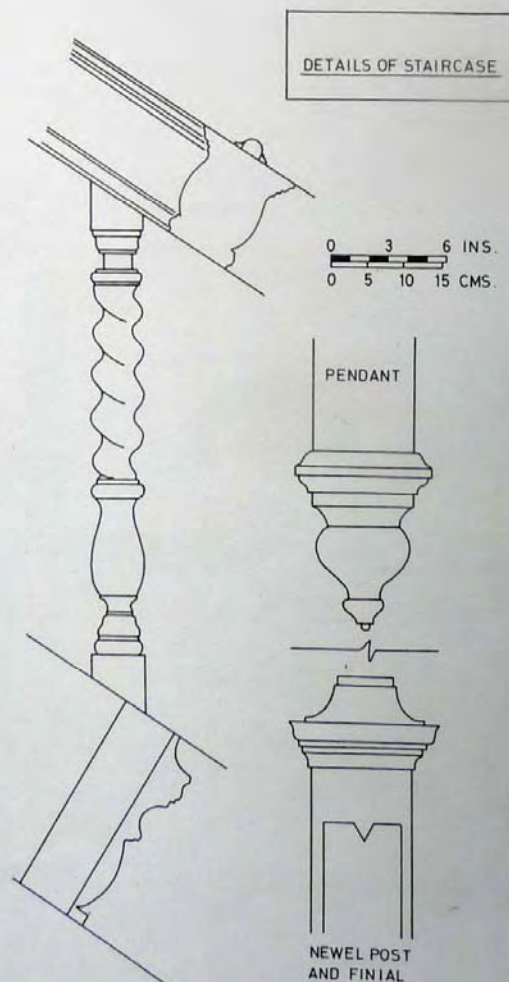


Figure 144.