

The Chantry, Combe Raleigh, Honiton, EX14 4TQ

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Listing:

COMBE RALEIGH COMBE RALEIGH SY 10 SE 6/130 The Chantry 22.2.55 GV I Chantry priest's house, built for a priest serving a chantry founded by William and Joan Deniss in about 1463 (Pantin, citing Oliver). Late C15 with repairs of the 1920s and 1930s and a 1930s addition. Local flint rubble; slate roof, gabled at ends (thatched until the 1920s); projecting end stacks with Beer stone weatherings to the set-offs and flint rubble shafts with moulded Beer stone cornices. Plan: The house is sited below the church, about 80 metres to the north-east and faces west-south-west, say west. It is a 2 cell plan, the higher end to the south divided from the lower end and passage by a transverse partition that now rises almost to the apex of the roof and may originally have risen fully to the apex. The higher (south) end of the building is 2 storeys, the north end is 3 storeys and the transverse partition is tiered as a series of plank and muntin screens according to the ceiling heights of the various rooms, the uppermost tier is a framed partition with plaster infill. The higher right (south) end consists of a remarkably fine, tall heated, hall, rich in carpentry. On the first floor above it, there is a heated chamber with a high status 2 bay arch braced roof and a garderobe in a projection off the rear (east) wall. On the ground floor the lower left end consists of a cross passage with a newel stair in a turret at the rear (east). The services were divided axially between a kitchen to the rear and a buttery to the front. The passage, kitchen and buttery are now one room but evidence of the former partitions survives. On the first floor of the lower end a richly carpentered, heated room may have functioned as a bed chamber and there is a plainer, unheated room on the second floor which was originally open to the arch braced roof which has a chamfered finish over the lower end. A small closet, possibly a second garderobe, opens off the newel stair between the ground and first floor, and a flight of 4 steps leads from the newel into the chamber over the hall. Pantin compared the ingenious planning of the house with the vicar's lodgings at Lincoln and Wells, the Old Court at King's College, Cambridge, the houses built by Abbot Selwood at Mells and the retainer's lodgings at Thornbury (Gloucestershire). There are 2 rather puzzling features of the plan: the first is the somewhat cramped stair and narrow doorframe leading into the grand chamber over the hall where one might have expected a more generous entrance. The second oddity is the comparatively plain character of the upper tier of the transverse partition, which would have formed with north end wall of the chamber over the hall and contrasts with the richness of the moulded roof timbers - perhaps it was originally concealed by a hanging or decorated in some way: there are traces of red colouring on the studs. In the 1920s and 30s the chantry house was repaired: this work is well-documented in a letter from one of the craftsmen to the present owner, Mrs Hatch. Most of the windows were replaced with new timber casements with square leaded panes. Ties were introduced, these may have been removed subsequently. In the 1930s the house was extended by a block adjoining at the north-west corner. The position of the addition has preserved the integrity of the original building. Exterior: 2 storeys at the south end, 3 storeys at the north. Asymmetrical 3 window west front with the door to the cross passage to left of centre. The 1920s doorframe has moulded jambs of re-used timbers, the front door with shallow-moulded planks and studs was also introduced at the same time. The original doorframe was moved back to form an internal porch in the passage: it is chamfered with a slightly pointed head. The higher end (to the right) has 2 windows on the front, a 2-light 1920s timber casement to the ground floor and a similar transomed casement to the first floor. The lower end, to the left of the front door, has one window to each floor, 4-light to the ground floor, 3-light to the first, 2-light to the second. On the first floor the old house is linked to the new wing by a projection. The right return has a 1920s 2-light casement to the

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first floor. The rear (east) elevation has the garderobe projection with a catslide roof to the left and the gabled stair on the outer return. Between the projections a blocked window opening for the hall window; parts of the original window may have been re-sited on the first floor to the right of the stair projection where a partly-blocked 2-light transomed window survives, apparently made up of several different moulded timbers, the central moulded mullion probably a sill or lintel. The first and ground floor windows to the right of the stair are C20 timber casements. The right (north) return has a bread oven bulge adjacent to the projecting stack. Interior: The hall, to the south, has a splendid ceiling of intersecting richly-moulded beams forming 9 panels with cross-joisting. 4 carved bosses at the intersections of the centre panel survive, 3 of the bosses are 1920s replacements (information from owner), one is original. Barber's pole painting on the moulded beams is re-coloured, but said to follow original paint. The axial beams are supported on timber corbels at the south end. At the north end the bottom tier of the transverse partition rises as a plank and muntin screen with chamfered muntins with straight cut stops and an original doorframe into the cross passage. A narrow gap between the head beam of the screen and the ceiling is filled by a brattished timber plate which may be part of the 1920s repairs. The fireplace has a massive chamfered Beer stone lintel and chamfered jambs, the plaster has been removed from the wall exposing a relieving timber lintel above the fireplace, which has been partly-blocked by a C20 chimney-piece. The rear (east) wall of the room has a blocked recess with a timber lintel high up below the ceiling, presumably the position of the original window. On the passage side, where the ceiling is lower, the transverse partition has a moulded head beam completing the plank and muntin screen. The lower side partition of the passage has been removed, except for a short section forming the internal porch. The screen between kitchen and buttery has also disappeared but mortices and peg holes indicate the former positions: the buttery was probably entered via the passage only. At the rear of the passage an original door frame to the stair turret exists. The kitchen fireplace is also Beer stone with a chamfered lintel, jambs and a bread oven. The stair is a newel of solid timber baulks with some repair. Original door frames survive to the lower end rooms opening off the stair. The first floor chamber over the hall retains an original doorframe to the garderobe and an original door with a heart-shaped handle. The chimney-piece is blocked. The first floor room over the lower end has a fine ceiling of moulded intersecting beams, forming 6 panels, all painted white this century. The ceiling has been given extra support on the north and east sides: posts on the north side and a chamfered curved brace to the east. The transverse partition forms a low tier of plank and muntin screen on the south wall, the muntins chamfered and stopped, the head beam at the level of the floor of the higher end chamber over the hall. The second floor room has been re-partitioned. It is unheated and the transverse partition has a tier of plank and muntin screen with chamfered stopped muntins rising about 1 metre above the floor level. Above this, there is a framed partition which rises through the roof space stopping short before the apex. A mortise in the head beam, which has a birdsmouth joint with the purlins, suggests that the partition was originally full height. It is lime washed on the south-side but traces of red colour show on the timbers. Roof: An outstanding survival. 3 arch braced trusses over the higher end, the end truss butting the south wall, with moulded braces, moulded purlins and elaborate moulded 'X' wind braces, which survive to the east of the ridge only. The lower end trusses are also arch-braced but chamfered, with chamfered purlins. There is a gap of about half a metre between the last moulded truss and the transverse partition. An outstanding survival. The building is described with a ground plan and sections in W.A. Pantin's article, "Chantry Priest's Houses and Other Medieval Lodgings", in *Medieval Archaeology.*, vol. 3 (1959) pp. 241 - 243 fig. 87. Listing NGR: ST1594602372

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Significance of heritage asset:

The village of Combe Raleigh is located within the AONB of the Blackdown Hills north of Honiton and consists of a core of historic houses dating between the C15th and C19th.

The Chantry is Grade 1 listed and has its origins in the late C15th. It is situated to the north-east of the Church of St Nicholas, itself Grade 2* listed. Additionally, nearby listed properties include Fiddlers and Glebe Cottages, Abbots as well as the lychgate to St Nicholas.

The Chantry, whilst built as a dwelling for a Chanter Priest to the Denys family and therefore having a strong ecclesiastic connection, has been a private home for hundreds of years. It has remained in the custodianship of the present family for almost fifty years.

The original house was thatched and in a relatively poor state of repair until, when in 1933, the house was extended with a wing to the north west corner doubling the floor area, removing the thatched roof for Delabole slate and a number of other works; these included replacing a number of windows in the original wings with modern wooden casements with leaded lights. The current layout of this wing provides a kitchen, study, pantry, utility room and hall at ground level, and two bedrooms, a bathroom, a shower room, loft access from landing and a storage cupboard on the first floor. Access to the C15th wing is gained from hall to dining room on the ground floor and from landing to "The Priest's Room" on the first. "The Priest's Room", currently a bedroom, is believed to have been the chanter priest's private chapel. Internal walls in the new wing are of modern brick construction with a plaster render if load bearing, and stud partition with lathe and plaster where dividing internal space.

The foresight shown with this extension has preserved the integrity and significant historic detail of the original dwelling. The plank and muntin screen in the original wing can be seen at ground level through to the top floor and remains in very good condition. The painted beams in the hall remain the most dominant feature of the ground floor, whilst the original oak spiral staircase leads to upper floors from the dining room. The inglenook fireplace in the dining room with its associated bread oven remains in good condition as does the main fireplace in the hall with its massive beer stone lintel. The chamfered purlins, cross-braces and the five oak braces of the old wing's roof structure which are noted for being an "outstanding survival" in the property listing can only be seen when peering through a small loft hatch, but are inspected regularly.

Whilst the 1933 extension has cleverly added additional space to the original house, there are marked differences. The Crittal windows are pure 1930s but overall the wing is substantially less important than the original C15th wing.

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Over the 47 years of ownership by the current family, considerable history of the development of the Chantry prior to listing has been received from various sources, including letters from a carpenter who worked on the property when it was extended in the 1930s.

Originally listed as Grade 2 in 1955, the property was upgraded to Grade 1 in the early 1990s because of the "outstanding survival" of so many historic elements to the building.

Details of work to be undertaken:

A stair lift is to be installed following the climb of the staircase in the C20th century wing from the main hall up to the first floor landing; it will be attached to the treads of the modern staircase with a series of brackets - see additional plans/pictures and documents submitted.

Assessment of impact:

The proposed stair lift is to be situated on the main staircase of the C20th wing. This staircase is of modern construction, typical of the 1930s period being constructed from modern softwood.

The type of stair lift design has been chosen specifically because it is attached to the treads of the modern staircase. Due consideration has been given to the minimum of disturbance to the fabric of the C20th wing; the walls will not be affected at all by this installation. Although many stair lifts use a rail attached to the wall as well as the treads, this particular installation attaches to stair treads only. The staircase balustrade is on the opposite side to the proposed installation. It is of painted, carved softwood with a stained, oak or mahogany handrail. It will remain unhindered, likewise the handrail for the upper section of staircase.

Additionally, with the stair lift being sited in the newer 1930s, less important, wing of the house, it continues to preserve the original house and has no impact on this heritage asset.

When the stair lift is no longer required it will be removed without disturbance and with the least impact to the modern staircase treads, returning the staircase to its original appearance.

Other options to enable my mother to live at home have been rejected on the grounds of safety - a downstairs bedroom is too far away from potential assistance at night - or impact and cost to the whole house. The additional works to provide bedroom accommodation downstairs for both a carer and cared-for would require considerable alteration to the existing C20th wing - this would include a downstairs bathroom and enlarging a small study to become bedrooms. Likewise, siting a lift would be detrimental the existing layout of the C20th wing, as well as the house as a whole. Both these options would impact the house far more which

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is why a stair lift of the design suggested is the least impactful upon the C20th wing as well as the whole house.

Statement of need:

Without a stair lift, Mrs Hatch is unable to return to the home where she had lived for 45 years prior to staying in a residential care home for the last two years. She is a frail 95 year old and wishes to return to the family home for her remaining year/s. There will be a care package in place for her to remain at home. Since the COVID pandemic, her emotional, mental and physical health have declined, her physical health particularly. She is registered as severely sight impaired, has chronic kidney disease, and can only walk with the assistance of a frame and has no ability to walk up a staircase.

Statement of impact:

There is no impact upon our local surroundings; the works are internal and have no impact on neighbouring properties.

Access:

No Changes