

Bickleigh House

Heritage Impact Assessment Incorporating Design & Access Statement

Living Space Architects -5th January 2021 REV A



Heritage Impact Assessment

Bickleigh House, Bickleigh, Devon

21st December 2020

Location

Bickleigh House is a former Rectory situated within the village of Bickleigh in Mid Devon, about four miles south of Tiverton. The village lies in the valley of the River Exe where there is an attractive medieval stone bridge across the Exe. Bickleigh, as Bicanleag, is recorded as the location of a charter issued in 904 during the reign of King Edward the Elder.^[1] The village is mentioned in the Domesday book as Bichelei, meaning "Bicca's meadow".^[2]

Description from The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (1868)]
"BICKLEIGH, a parish in the hundred of Hayridge, in the county of Devon, 3 miles to the S. of Tiverton, its post town. It is situated on the banks of the river Exe, which is here joined by the Dart. The former is crossed by a bridge. The living is a rectory in the diocese of Exeter, of the value of £420, in the patronage of Sir W. P. Carew, Bart. The church is dedicated to St. Mary, and contains monuments of the Carew family, whose seat was Bickleigh Court, which no longer exists. The noted Bamfylde More Carew, styled King of the Gipsies, was a member of this family, his father being rector of the parish at the time of his birth, in 1693. The eccentric wanderer died here in 1758. The charitable endowments of the parish amount to £28 a year."*

The church

Bickleigh House was previously the rectory for the Church of St Mary in Bickleigh.

The church can trace its roots back to Saxon times, although no trace of the original building now survives, it is believed to have been first built around 700AD. The current building dates back to around 1268, the approximate date of its consecration, and the oldest object within the Church is its font which dates to circa 12th century from the markings on it.

Additional parts of the building including the Tower, Chancel and Nave were added in the 14th Century with the South Aisle can be dated to the 15th Century. The patronage of the living at the parish can be shown passing from the Pontyngton and Courtenay families through to the Carew family in the 15th Century who remain the patrons today.

The Post-Reformation tombs of the Carew family are some of the most admired in Devon and most notable among them are an effigy of John Carew (1588) in Half-armor and a particularly beautiful one of Peter and Elizabeth Carew (1634 and 1619)

www.bickleightiverton.co.uk accessed 6/09/2020

The House

The existing house sits with its main elevation facing west, with views towards Cadeleigh, Yearlstone Vineyard and the Little Dart Valley. The building has a u-shaped plan - the formal Georgian west elevation being linked to the earlier, single depth, south facing range behind. This in turn is linked to an east wing, likely early to mid C19, containing service rooms and first floor bedroom accommodation. This eastern wing was converted to flats during the C20.

The property is Grade II Listed and Listing text for the property states:

The Old Rectory 5.4.66 GV II House, formerly the rectory. Late C18/early C19. Stuccoed, blocked-out volcanic stone rubble, hipped slate roof, 5 brick stacks. Plan: U plan with a rectangular south-facing main range linked to a parallel narrower service range by a short block on the right east side. There was probably a narrow service yard between the wing and main range but undergrowth makes this difficult to establish. The single depth main range is 2 rooms wide with a central entrance into a hall with an open well stair lit by a skylight behind. The left hand room is heated by an axial stack ; the right hand room by the right end stack. A 2 room plan block at right angles to the main range at the rear right links the main range to the service range, which has been converted into flats. 2 storeys. Symmetrical 3 window front with steps up to a Tuscan stone porch with entablature, timber front door with rectangular fanlight. First floor window above porch a 12-pane sash ; outer windows 16-pane sashes with louvred sun shutters to the ground floor windows. The east elevation has 5 first floor 12-pane sashes ; 1 ground floor sash to the left, then a French window with glazing bars, then 2 more 12-pane sashes ; panelled door into linking block ; 2 right hand C20 casements with glazing bars. The north elevation of the service block has first floor sash windows. Interior The principal rooms have good contemporary detail with internal shutters and Adam style chimney-pieces. The stair has stick balusters, turned newels, a ramped wreathed handrail and a curved balustrade on the first floor.

Further Research

The previous owner of the property carried out research into the history of the house at the Devon Record Office and has kindly passed this to us. This includes Terrier records, which list the accommodation and land belonging to the church.

The earliest record available is the Terrier record of 1602, which records the house as having: "One parlour, one bedroom over the parlour. Outside there is one barn, one shipped (*shippon?*), one stable and one pound house. The whole of mud walls and all covered reed." At this time George Carew was Rector and Humfrie Carew Lord of the Manor.

Some of the walls of the C17 building above are likely still within the current house, which would have had a simple 1 room deep longitudinal plan typical of simple dwellings at this time. This could have been in the position of the current south facing range (mentioned within the listing text above)

There was little change recorded in the Terrier of 1613, and the next surviving Terrier record is from 1682. This record shows the dwelling has increased its size and describes: "One hall, one parlour, one buttery, one dairy, one larder and one little room within the parlour. There are six chambers with four being plastered and also a cock loft and a gate chamber. In addition there is one bake house, one barn, one stable and one pound house adjoining the stable." All are recorded as having mud walls and covered with reed. There is one meadow of 5 acres adjoining the dwelling house and a herb garden. Other fields around the house amount to 34 acres. The rector at this time is Matthew Carew.

Again there is a gap in the surviving records, with the next available Terrier dated 1745. This records the parsons house of three ground rooms, four upstairs and four cellars.

"Ye ground rooms are each about 20ft square, ye chambers are almost of the same size. Ye hall is lime and sand. Ye other rooms are paved, as are the cellars, one of which is near 8ft square, ye others about 6ft square each all laid over. There is a barn about 50ft with a bread oven, at the end of which there is a thatched linty and a stable about 40ft long and 16ft wide. There is a large House about 16ft square with an apple loft over of the same largeness. The all is thatched over.

The Glebe consists of about 35 acres of land of that 28 acres is tillage ground, the rest are meadows and two orchards all enclosed with good hedges.”

The rev. Theodore Carew was rector of Bickleigh and Cadeleigh, until his death in 1734. Theodore Carew is on record as having lived in the Rectory at ashleigh, leaving Bickleigh Rectory empty.

The existing kitchen has a dimension of 20ft square, which supports the theory that the main south facing range contained the accommodation listed above, which would have been extended both at ground and first floor level, although existing evidence of these rooms is not clear.

There are no further Terrier records available from the research carried out, however the listing text states that the existing house dates from the late C18/Early C19.

It is likely that later changes were made by either John West Carew (rector from 1782) or Thomas Carew (rector from 1826) . The changes carried out in this period created the impression of a grander house, with a symmetrical 3 window front and Tuscan porch with entablature. The west facing rooms would have enabled the entertaining of visitors and guests and suggest the occupants wished to express their wealth and status.

We have discovered from the records that John West Carew (1782) had a tough life, with his wife dying young and 2 of his sons passing away, so it is unlikely he would have carried out such extensive works. It is known that Thomas Carew, Rector in 1826, established the first National School in Bickleigh, perhaps he was also the occupant who built the new west front of the house? The census for 1841 lists 14 people living in the house, so they certainly required the rooms. Anecdotally the previous owner told us that the wing to the east was added for servants quarters, and as the census for 1841 lists 5 family members plus 9 others employed within the house and grounds, this is certainly a possibility. The two storey barn to the east of the house also shows signs of domestic habitation with good sized rooms at first floor and window openings.

Later changes were made during the C20, including the west wing being converted into apartments and alterations to partitions within the ground floor of the main range and circulation areas of the house. It is proposed to remove some of these alterations, as listed within the schedule of alterations and drawings.

Client brief for the alterations works

The new owners of the house are a family and they would subsequently like to adapt the house to modern family needs. This includes removal of some partitions (most of these are C20) and incorporation of one of the two separate apartments at first floor into the main house. One apartment will be retained and be used by the family's teenage son. These alterations are shown on the proposed planning drawing PA01.

It is proposed to create a small lap pool within the walled garden, as shown on the accompanying site plan and item 27 below.

Schedule of alteration works to house and justification (see PA01 and photographs):

1. Flagstone floor in kitchen

Existing flag stone floor carefully lifted and new limecrete floor with underfloor heating installed. Flag stones re-laid. See DET08 for detail of limecrete screed installation from Ty-Mawr.

A small trial hole has shown that the flag stones in the kitchen are not historic and are laid over polystyrene insulation and a plastic DPM. This is impervious to moisture and could lead to moisture build-up in the lower sections of the existing solid walls.

It is therefore proposed to carefully lift the slabs, remove the inappropriate DPM and insulation and replace this with a limecrete screed (containing underfloor heating pipes) over glass rock insulation. The flag stone floor will then be re-installed over this.

2. Move wall to create a smaller pantry

The existing hallway adjacent to the kitchen is restricted and in the area adjacent to the stair to first floor the head height is extremely tight making it impractical. It is therefore proposed to remove part of wall forming the existing pantry, which will open up the hallway area. (photos 2.3 & 2.4)

The pantry was likely inserted in the mid-late C19 into the older main range, cutting into the room now forming the study. Removal of these walls will not have an adverse impact on the significance of the building and will open up what is a very cramped area of circulation.

3 - Create new door opening between kitchen family room

To better connect the kitchen and dining room a double doorway is proposed in the wall between the two rooms. (see DET 12 and door schedule plus photos 2.5 and 2.6)

These rooms are within the older main range of the house where a lot of alterations have occurred over time. It is therefore difficult to ascertain the likely original plan form, however it looks likely that this wall is a late C18 or early C19 insertion with no evidence of older structure is present in this location. Indeed the existing doors (DG 24 and 32) appear to be C19 suggesting that this area is part of later Victorian alterations.

The impact on the significance of the building from removing these walls is therefore low.

4. Install new glazed wall between the courtyard and walkway. (See DET 02 and photo 2.7)

It is proposed to insert a contemporary, glazed screen behind the line of the existing iron columns. This will create a new enclosed service corridor enabling the incorporation of the service rooms into the house as utility rooms.

This intervention will enable the existing service rooms to be better used and incorporated into the house. It will also help insulate the rooms above within the east wing (which are currently cold and exposed to the elements, as they over-sail the open corridor). This alteration will leave the form of the courtyard intact and form a clearly contemporary addition. The resultant impact on the historic fabric and form will be low there - will be a significant benefit to the occupants and the building in terms of reduction of heat loss and incorporation of little used outbuildings (providing for their ongoing maintenance).

5. Create new opening between wet-room and boot-room (see ground floor door schedule)
This new door opening will enable the wet-room and boot room to be connected and will be a low impact alteration on the significance of the house overall.

6. Existing cobbles carefully retained under sand and glass rock aggregate. Limecrete slab cast over, with underfloor heating and reclaimed brick finish. See drawing DET02 for further details.

During pre-application discussions it was agreed that the existing cobbled floor would be retained in this area under a new layer of protective sand, with glass rock insulation and limecrete screed with u/f heating.

7. Remove wall of existing first floor cupboard (see photo 2.8)
This wall with the first floor hallway is likely C20 and has been inserted to enable the subdivision of the east wing of the house into apartments. Its removal will not cause any damage to the significance of the house and will create a more open landing.

8. Existing C20 stone floor and shower tiling to be replaced (first floor bathroom)
This bathroom was installed by the previous owner with wall tiles and floor tiles and is of low significance.

9. Lock shut existing door to ensuite and create timber stud-work wall behind, with waterproof tiling board finish to enable shower to be inserted.
The existing door will be retained in place - this alteration is reversible in the future and will not damage the fabric.

10. Reconfigure walls to create dressing room and ensuite for guest room.
The existing walls in this room are C20 alterations made to form the 2 apartments at first floor in the east end of the house. Their removal and insertion of new walls will have very little impact on the historic fabric (there are no historic cornices within this room).

11. Create new door opening with new timber door to match existing (see door schedule).
The new door opening into the master bedroom dressing room will connect at the position of an existing cupboard between the two spaces and will have a low impact on the historic fabric.
The door between bedroom 4 and the adjacent room will enable its use as an en-suite bathroom and also have a low impact on the existing fabric.

12. Demolish walls between existing bedrooms 6 and 8 to create one big bedroom. (see PA01)
As above, these walls are C20 partitions and are of no significance.

13. Raise lintel and replace garage door. (see external photo 1.2 and door schedule)
The garage door here is low and the lintel is larger than needed for the roof structure. It is proposed to replace it to enable a larger opening for bigger vehicles.

14. Air source heat pump
It is proposed to replace the existing oil fired heating system with a more sustainable air source heat pump alongside a gas boiler in the basement. The installation of this integrated system will reduce the use of fossil fuels by up to 60%. The proposed location on the north elevation of the house will have a very low impact impact, being tucked next to the garage and not visible from the front elevation.

15. Wall of garage to be rendered in lime
All existing walls to the inner courtyard are painted or rendered and it is proposed to render this stone wall in lime with a lime wash finish, which will make the inner courtyard as bright as possible.

16. Shelving to be retained
During the pre-application enquiry it was agreed that the existing shelving within the utility rooms and pantry would be carefully removed, stored and re-instated.

17. Floor boards carefully lifted, insulation installed between joists and underfloor heating installed within trays. Existing boards to be kiln dried and then re-laid (see underfloor heating dwg DET 05) After careful consideration during the pre-application enquiry, it was agreed that the floor within the south-west living room could be lifted to enable the installation of insulation and underfloor heating pipes. To ensure the floor does not warp the exiting boards will be kiln dried prior to being relaid.

The floor of the north-west drawing room can be accessed from the basement level to enable the installation of insulation from underneath.

18. Chimney is badly leaning and requires re-building. Existing bricks to be carefully removed, cleaned and retained, lime mortar to be used (2:1 sharp sand to NHL5 (Natural Hydraulic Lime as per Ty Maur spec for chimneys).

19. Existing steel framed window with leaded lights to be retained and refurbished.

20. Existing C20 window to be removed and new timber casement inserted (see window schedule and DET01 for details). These windows are of low quality and will be replaced with high quality timber casements of a more appropriate design within the existing openings.

21. Existing C20 door to be removed in entrance hall and new glazed double doors inserted. This existing partition is a later insertion, as can be seen from the scaring on the adjacent wall showing the original position of an internal wall. It is likely that the wall was moved to create more space for the stair. See door schedule for further details of proposed door design.

22. Existing door to pantry carefully removed, stored and then relocated to new position.

23. Existing C20 door replaced with timber stable door (see door schedule for further details).

24. Existing window frame retained and new timber window inserted - (see window schedule and DET 11 for further details).

The original windows have been removed from these frames and glass inserted. These windows are not openable - the proposed new casements will be in keeping with the existing frames and enable ventilation.

25. New timber wainscot panelling added below dado height - see drawing DET 13

26. Existing C20 window removed, reclaimed steel window inserted with leaded lights to match WG08.

27. Proposed Lap pool in walled garden.

The photograph below shows the proposed design of the lap pool. This will be a simple construction edged with stone as shown.

