



The Farmhouse - Great Trill Farm, Musbury, Axminster, Devon, EX13 8TU

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been produced in order to explain the proposals for alterations and extensions to the Farmhouse at the property known as Great Trill Farm, Axminster, Devon.

The proposals have been compiled based upon the extant planning and listed building consents, references 89/0905 and 89/0906, dated 20-10-89 which included significant alterations to the farmhouse, and also approval reference 08/1444.

This latter approval also included significant alterations to the farmhouse including the demolition of an existing porch and its replacement. The porch demolition has been implemented.

The proposals have also been prepared following a pre-application planning consultation with East Devon District Council under application reference 21/0040/preapp, the outcome of which was received on 27/04/2021.

Prior to describing the above works, to follow is a brief history of the site at Great Trill Farm.



2.0 Description of Property and Property History

2.1 Site Location

Great Trill Farm sits within its own land extending to around 270 acres. It is located near the village of Musbury and access via a single track road heading West of the A358.

When stood within the complex of buildings which make up Great Trill Farm, the topography of the land around is such that the farm sits within a bowl of land and almost completely concealed from the public domain.

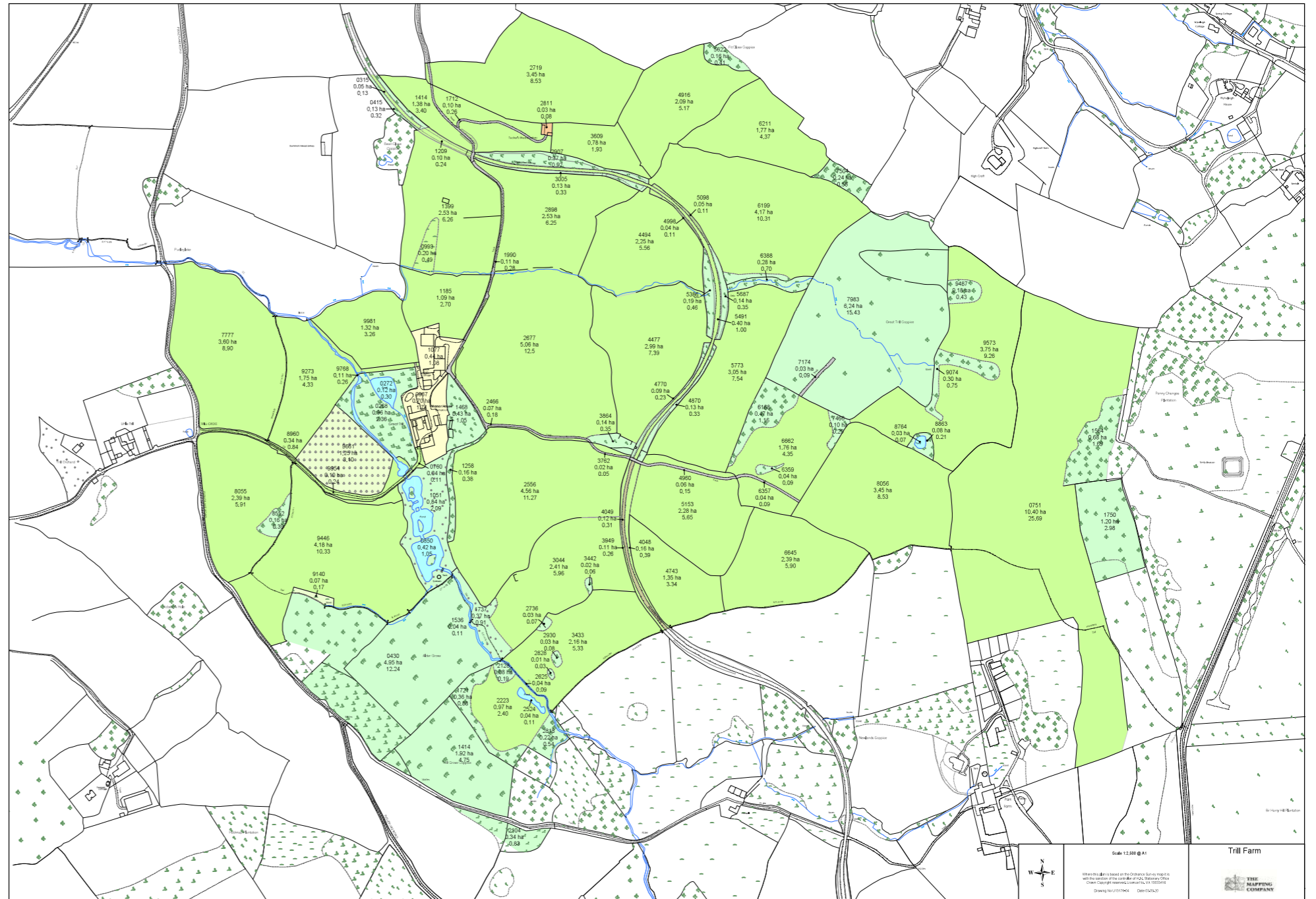
This can be seen on the adjacent land ownership plan.

2.2 Site Layout

The grouping of buildings which make up the core of Great Trill farm, are arranged about 2 courtyards, the first, the southern courtyard, between the north range of the farmhouse and the opposing south facade of Manor Barn, which are then flanked by what was the dairy barn on the east side and lean-to buildings to the west side, all of which have been re-purposed under previous planning approvals.

One could say that this area has a degree of loose formality about it, being close to the hierarchically important buildings of Manor Barn and Farmhouse.

The second, less formal courtyard, lies to the North of Manor Barn, with Manor Barn on the southern side and then flanked to the east and west by workshops and stores with the North side open to the land beyond.



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2.0 Description of Property and Property History

2.3 Site History

On examination of the local history archive, the following is mentioned of Great Trill:

'Great Trill, First mentioned in 1173, was one of the properties of the Drakes of Ashe, and at one time a small manor house. There are remains of Tudor buildings in the yard. The house itself has been modernised to some extent. It is practically certain that the great Duke of Marlborough was born in this house on 24th May 1650, and not at Ashe House in Musbury, as is so often asserted.'

To accompany a recent planning and listed building application connected to Great Trill Farm, messrs Keystone Historical Consultants undertook a study of the property and found the following:

Great Trill was connected to Ashe, in Musbury, which is said to have been acquired by marriage, by the Drake family, in 1415. Great Trill was certainly in the ownership and probably occupancy of Sir John Drake (1625-1669), JP, MP, Sheriff of Devon etc. in the 17th century. An 1896 privately published history of the Drake family states that the house at Trill 'which stills stands, is about the size of a modern English Farm-house, and it had a walled court, lodge and loop-holed towers.' (The Drake Family in England and America 1360-1895...by Louis Stoughton Drake (Boston, 1896). The Drake family were major figures locally as well as nationally. The south aisle in Axminster church is known as the Drake or Trill aisle and contains monuments of Drake family members, both of Ashe and Trill.

It is sometimes said that the first 1st Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722, son of Winston Churchill and Elizabeth Drake of Ashe) was born at Trill, but this appears to be contentious. A stone plaque with the Marlborough Crest, evidently re-sited, is built into the west gable of the farmhouse at Trill.



Fig 1. - 1840 Devon Tithe Map.

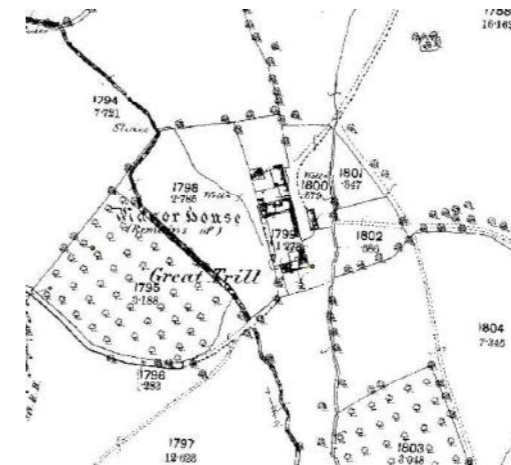


Fig 2. - 1880 OS first edition.

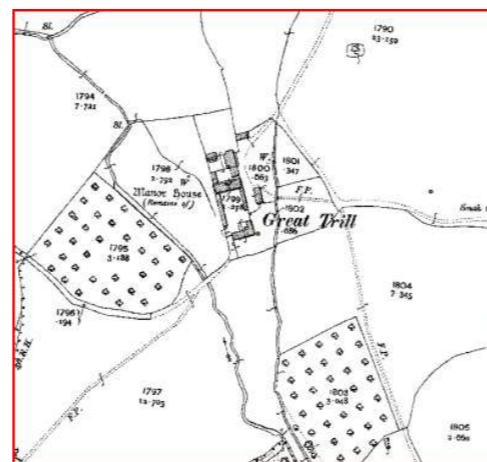


Fig 3. - 1904 OS map.



Fig 4. - 1946 aerial photograph.

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2.0 Description of Property and Property History

2.4 Property listing description

Grade 2 listed

Location

Statutory Address:

GREAT TRILL FARMHOUSE, PUDDLEYLAKE ROAD

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

Devon

District:

East Devon (District Authority)

Parish:

Axminster

National Grid Reference:

SY 29096 95637

Details

SY 29 NE AXMINSTER PUDDLEYLAKE ROAD 4/48

Great Trill Farmhouse

C18 stone rubble house with dressed quoins and rendered front. Stone roof with stone coping to gable ends. Band at first floor level. Two storeys. Four window range. Sashes with glazing bars, four of which are tripartite sashes. Doorway to left of centre with modern glazed porch. Brick ridge and end stacks.

Wing at rear forming L-shaped plan may be earlier, and has hipped roof. - This speculation as to provenance has no grounding. On inspection of the 1840 Devon Tithe Map, the rear part of the 'L' is present and on site there is no discernible difference in walling between the gable of the main part of the house and the rear 'L'

Shield reset in west gable is the arms of the Drakes of Ashe.



Fig 5. - Drakes of Ashe Coat of Arms set in west gable of farmhouse.

2.0 Description of Property and Property History

2.5 Property description

Described in the listing description as an 18th C. Farmhouse.

The farmhouse is a two storey property, with rear wing, set off the north east corner. It has a single pile plan form.

The roof is slated, below which are set rubble stone walls to the east, west and north (rear) elevations, with stone quoins. To the south elevation, the principal elevation, the walls are rendered with struck course lines. There is a stone string course present at approximately first floor level.

Windows are modern sash, having been replaced in the late 20th century. Many of these are double glazed and many are operated on spirals rather than traditional pulleys and weights.

Important note

On inspection at the property and examination of the local authority's planning archive it is apparent that the building has been significantly altered and adjusted over time, particularly so in the late 20th century, where consented works included the following:

- Replacement of main staircase with new.
- Replacement of most of the windows.
- Lining of all external walls with insulation and plasterboard.
- Replacement/ renewal of all windows.
- Removal of existing servant's stair.
- New servant's stair in new location.
- Various new windows openings.
- Adjustment of partition locations.
- Single storey rear extension.
- Replacement porch on principal (South) Elevation.
- Renewal of entire first floor joists and floors and first floor ceilings.
- Re-rendering of principal elevation using lime render.

The building has been so significantly altered there is little in the way of historic fabric or plan form which remains.

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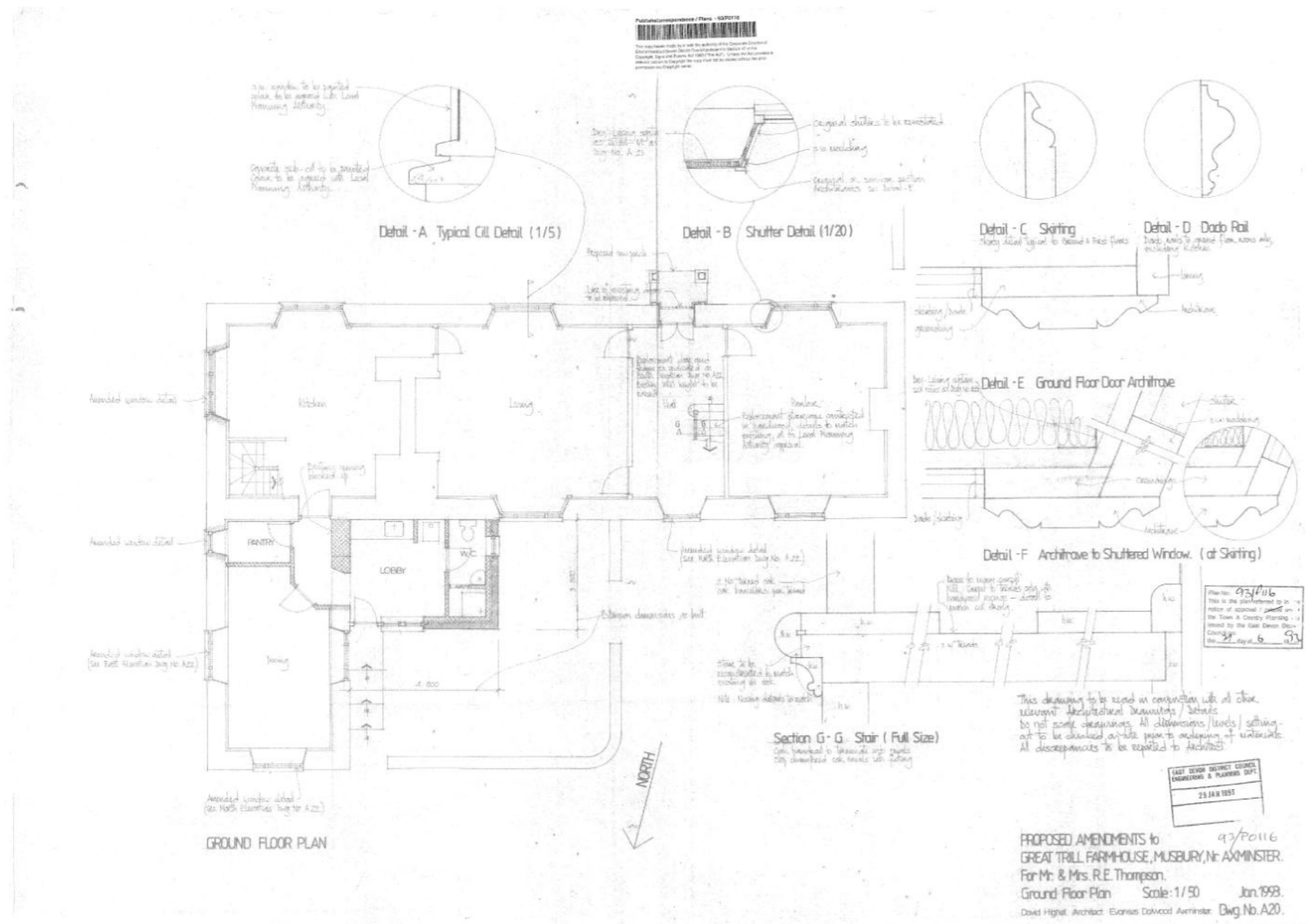


Fig 6. - Approved works to ground floor plan.

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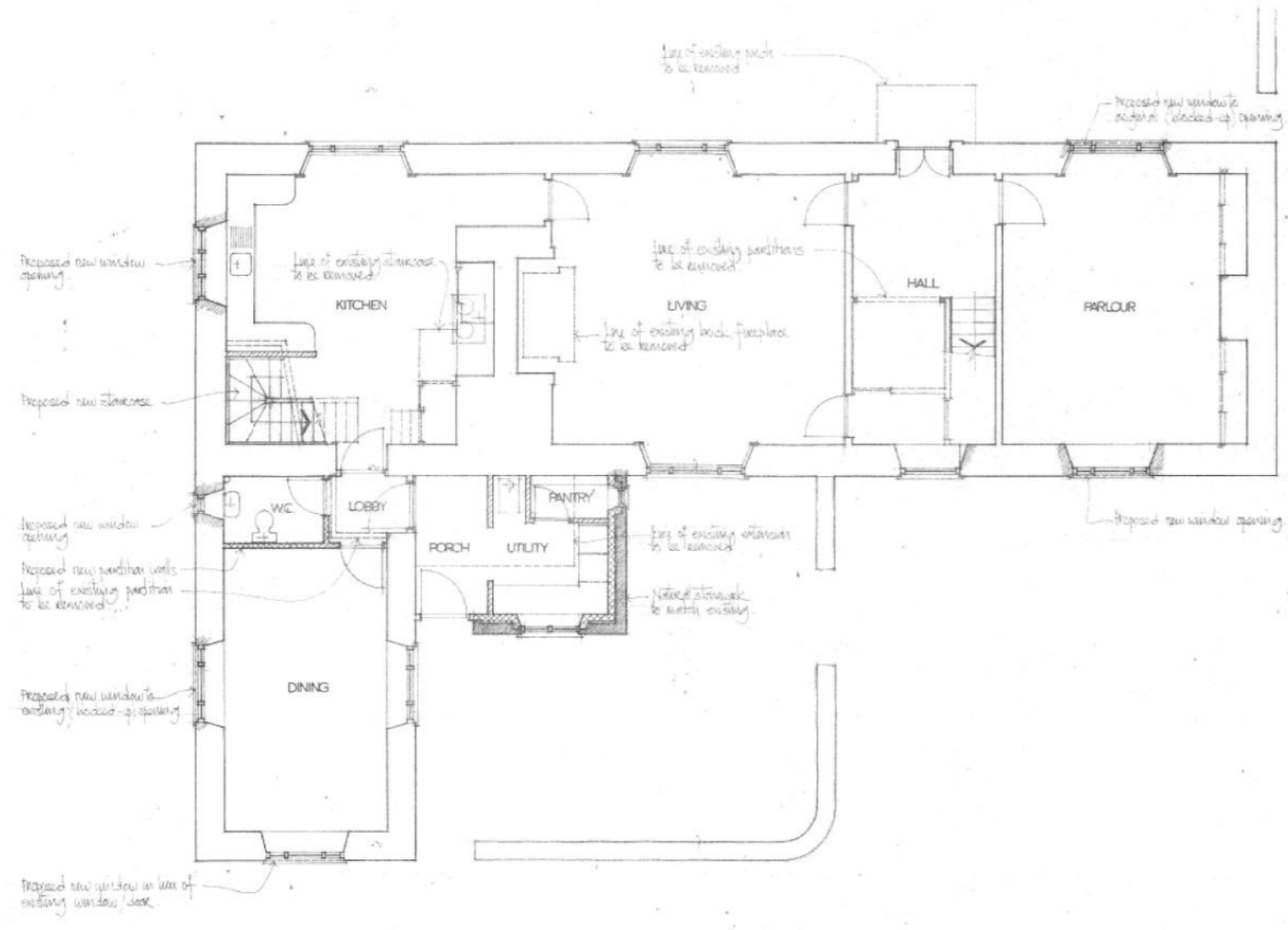
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GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Proposed new windows to be timber sash painted white to match existing - see elevations.

Plan No. 91/1251
This is the plan referred to in the notice of approval under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 issued by the East Devon District Council on the 15 day of 1991

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENGINEERING & PLANNING DEPT.
22 NOV 1991

Adm.	Clk.	Dist.	Pres.
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NORTH

PROPOSED EXTENSION & ALTERATIONS to
GREAT TRILL FARMHOUSE, MUSBURY, Nr. AXMINSTER.
For Mr & Mrs. R.E. Thompson.

Fig 7. - Approved works to ground floor plan.

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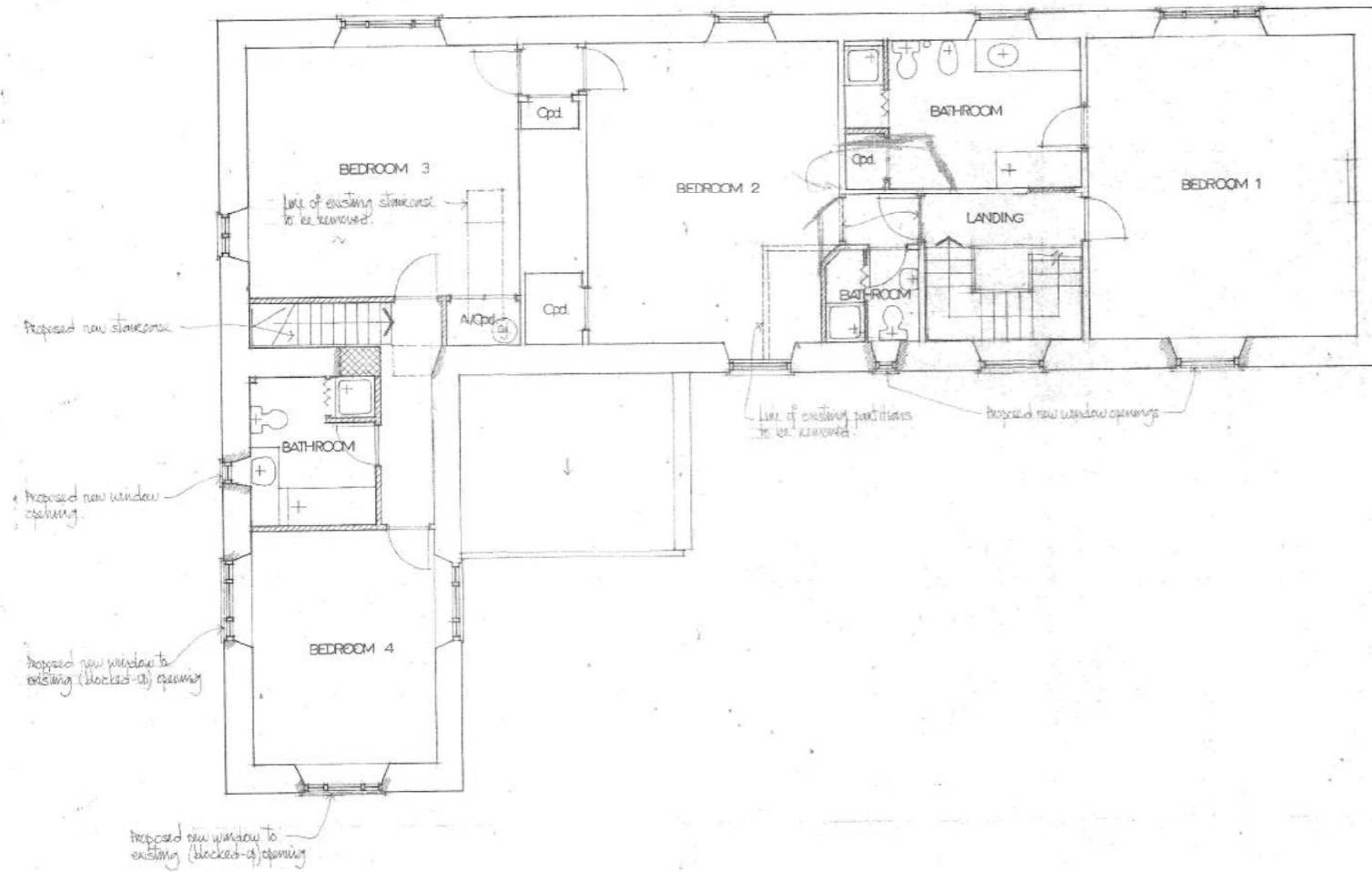
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Plan No: 91/1861
 This is the plan referred to in the notice of approval issued under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 by the East Devon District Council on 13/09/91.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Proposed new windows to be timber sash painted white to match existing - See Elevations.

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING & DESIGN DEPT.			
22 NOV 1991			
Act	Dir	Scale	File

NORTH

PROPOSED EXTENSION & ALTERATIONS to
 GREAT TRILL FARMHOUSE, MUSBURY, N: AXMINSTER.
 For Mr & Mrs R.E. Thompson.
 First Floor Plan Scale: 1/50 Nov 1991.

Fig 9. - Approved works to first floor plan.

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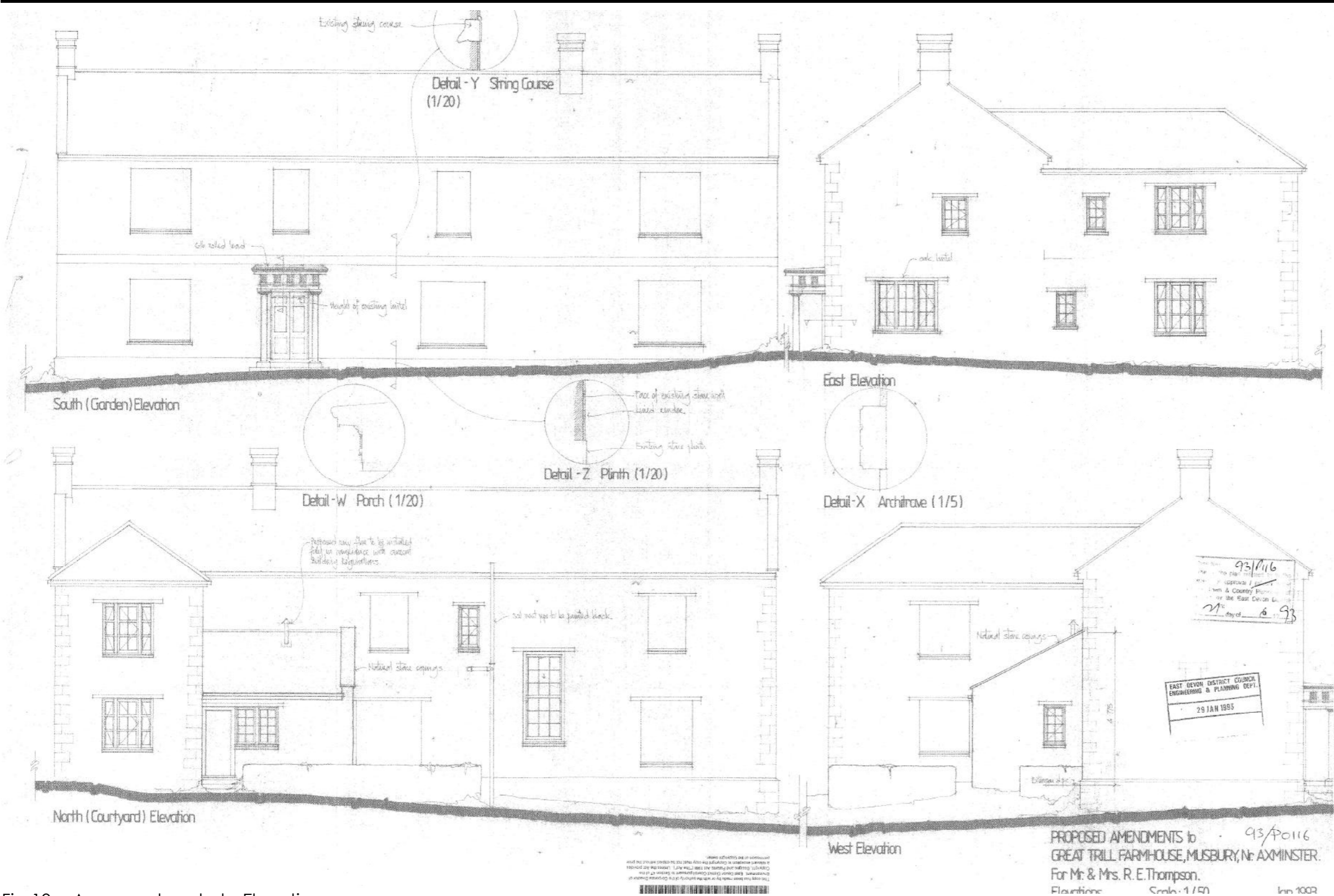


Fig 10. - Approved works to Elevations.

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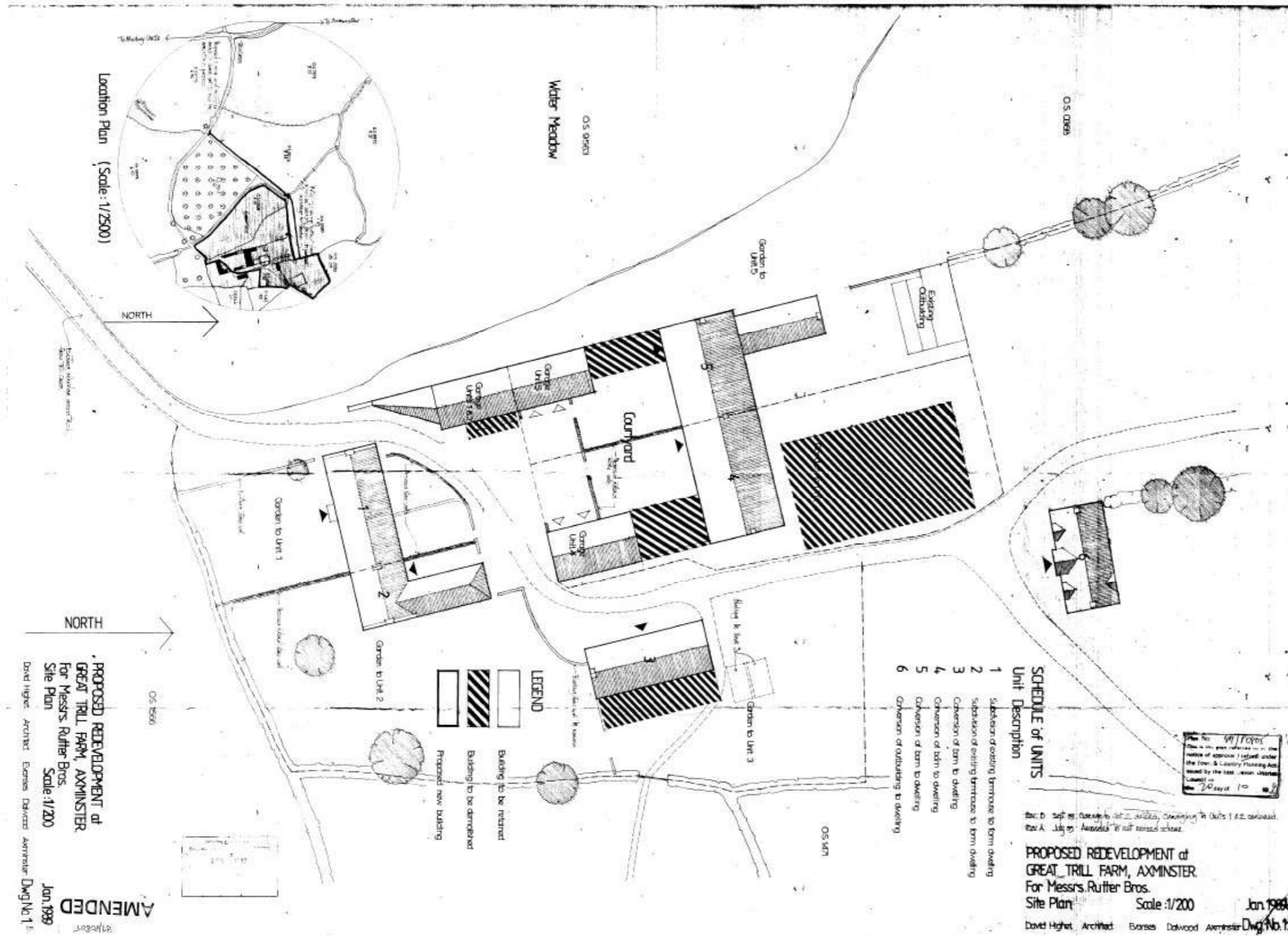


Fig 12. - Approved Site Plan.

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3.0 Pre-application Planning Consultation

A pre-application planning consultation was made to East Devon District Council under application reference 21/0040/preapp the outcome of which was received on 27/04/2021.

Unfortunately, due to social distancing restrictions, there was no opportunity for the planning case officer, nor conservation officer, to visit site in order to meet and discuss the sensitivities of the building, the proposals and what had been granted consent previously.

It was acknowledged by the local planning authority, that in order to form a considered opinion about the proposals a site meeting, at some point and when social distancing rules allowed, would be invaluable in this respect.

Since the pre-application feedback, social distancing rules have been relaxed and it is hoped that the applicant, their agents and members of the local authority's planning team can meet as part of the formal planning and listed building application process in order that the building can be assessed against the proposals, the extant consents and in the context of Great Trill Farm as a whole.

Notwithstanding the above, advice given by the local authority's conservation officer and the scheme has been amended as follows:

1. The originally proposed verandah to the principal elevation has now been omitted from the scheme.
2. The originally proposed first floor windows to the principal elevation have now been omitted from the scheme.
3. The proposed porch to the principal elevation has been amended as follows:
 - i. Reduced size of footprint to match the size of the previous porch which has since been removed, see figs 17 and 18.

- ii. The height of the porch has been reduced in order to allow the existing stone string course to remain visible along the entire length of the elevation.

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4.0 The Proposals

The scheme contemplates the following:

- Reinstatement of porch to the southern elevation.
- Two storey rear extension.
- Other minor alterations.

4.1 - Reinstatement of porch on the southern elevation

Porches, in various forms have existed on the southern elevation of The Farmhouse for sometime and indeed a replacement porch was consented in more recent times, in the late 20th C.

It can even be seen on the adjacent 1880 OS 1st Edition Map there is the gesture of a porch being in existence at this point on the building.

The proposal therefore is to provide a formal sense of arrival on the southern elevation of the building, one which provides an initial lobby which one enters before entering the house proper.

The house currently lacks a porch, following the removal of a previous structure. Through this removal, the sense of status of the house; given that it is the principal building among a tight grouping of other significant, but hierarchically less important buildings, has been diminished. The reinstatement of a porch here will help return the status of this principal building and enhance the sense of arrival.

As mentioned previously, the advice of the conservation officer has been taken and the scale of the porch reduced both in footprint and height.



Fig 13. - Archive photograph showing porch on front of building



Fig 14. - Archive photograph showing porch on front of building



Fig 15. - 1880 OS Map showing suggestion of porch structure on front of farmhouse

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4.0 The Proposals

4.2 - Provision of two storey rear extension.

Although the house, may appear of significant size on first impressions, it is in fact somewhat modest when considered in the context of the farm as a whole.

It is lacking in certain vital accommodation at both ground and first floor levels. Therefore, in order to provide a level of accommodation appropriate to an estate of this scale and in order to allow a large family and pets to live harmoniously in the house a two storey rear extension is proposed.

At ground floor level, the extension will be in lieu of the existing single storey extension.

This will facilitate a bootroom/ rear entrance to the house where, on a day to day basis the family can come and go without dragging mud and external detritus through the house after a day of work and play on the farm.

This bootroom will be in the location of the current utility room and the external entrance will be by way of the reinstatement/ modification of a former window/ external door opening.

This former window/ doorway is referenced on the previously approved drawings and can be seen in the adjacent drawing extracts and can also be seen in the adjacent photos of the rear elevation.

Within the new ground floor element of the extension will be located a playroom and utility room.

The playroom, effectively an additional reception room will provide an informal space for younger members of the family to play and a home for toys and games etc.

The utility room will provide a level of space and storage fitting to a house of this stature and will also provide a home for the boiler and associated plant.

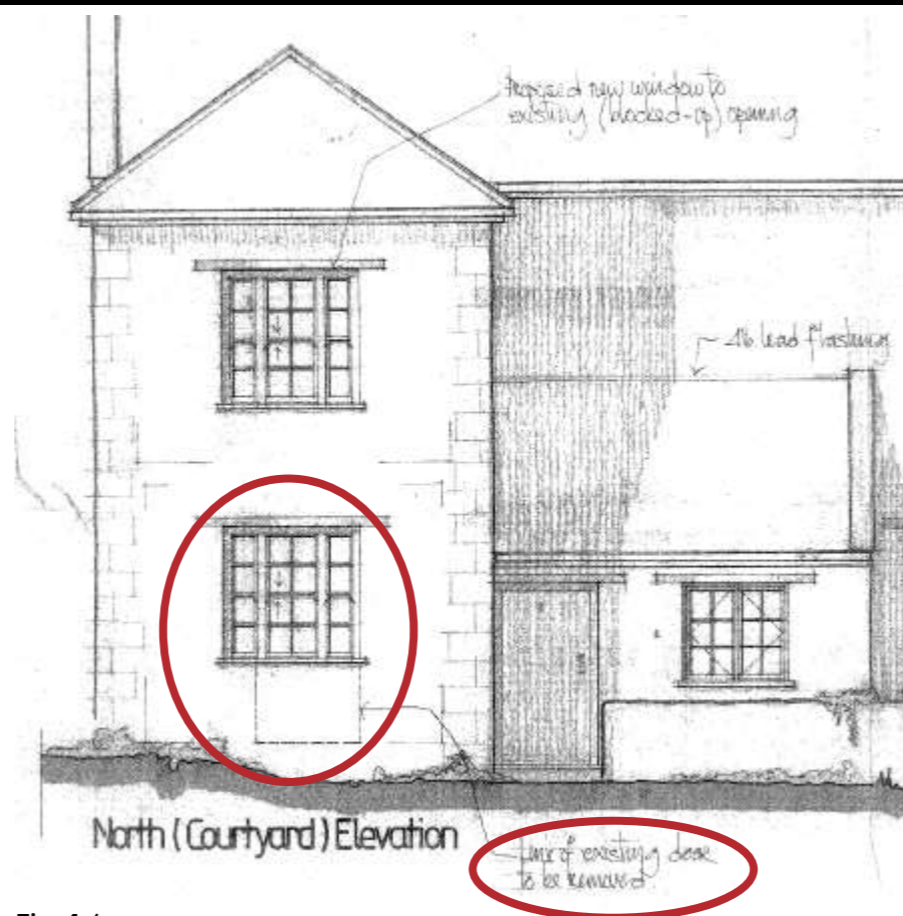


Fig 16.



Fig 18.

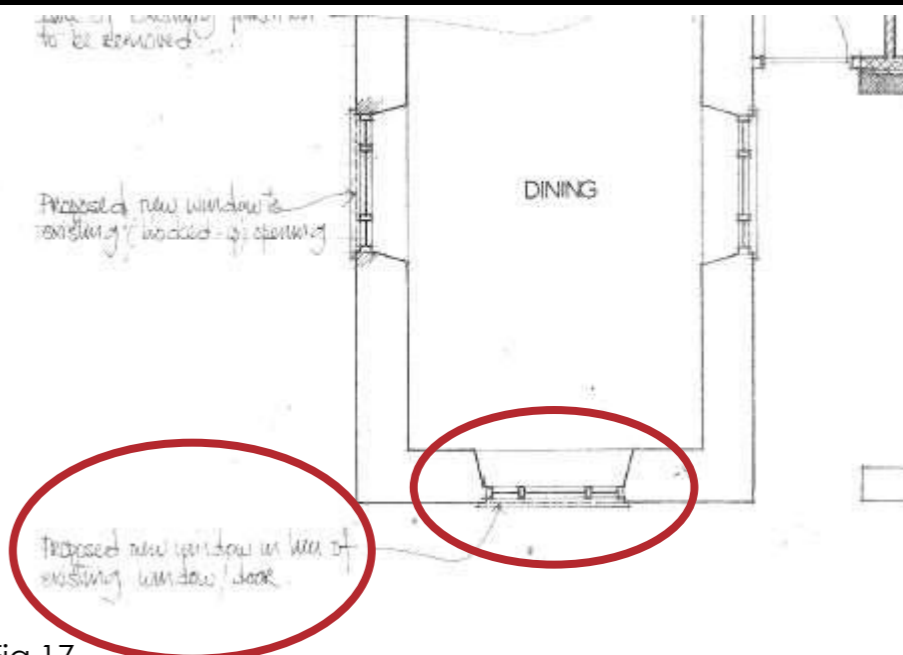


Fig 17.



Fig 19.

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4.0 The Proposals

4.3 - Provision of two storey rear extension continued.

At first floor level, the new accommodation will comprise a home office and bedroom and will be accessed via a new door opening off the existing first floor rear landing.

The form of the new 2 storey extension replicates the existing 2 storey rear element of the house. At the intersection of the new and existing hipped roofs will be a tapered lead valley gutter and this will discharge into a cast iron half round gutter, which, in turn will discharge into a cast iron hopper head and circular downpipe.

The stone quoins of the existing 2 storey rear element will be retained in situ and will allow the replication of a detail found elsewhere around the grouping of historic buildings where these buildings have been extended over time. Examples of this can be seen on the Manor Barn, where quoin stones exist apparently mid expanse of wall but in fact on closer examination are there due to how the building has been extended and evolved. These can be seen in the adjacent photographs.

The proposed extension is discreet, tucked away at the rear of the building and does not affect the principal elevations in any way, nor does it significantly affect any historic fabric. All of the windows including sub-cills in the existing 2 storey rear element are modern, late 20th century, as is corroborated on the approved floor plans found earlier in this document.

The discreet nature of this extension will not in any way compete with the character and setting of the adjacent buildings, and in particular will not detract from the character and setting of the manor barn. The manor barn is located 64 metres away from the rear elevation of the farmhouse and directly opposed to this elevation. It is virtually impossible to read the two buildings together; such is the scale of the proposed 2 storey extension, its relatively modest nature will cause very little if any harm to the character and setting of the manor barn.



Fig 20. West elevation of Manor Barn showing quoins mid way along wall where earlier building has been extended.



Fig 21. North elevation of Manor Barn showing quoins mid way along wall where earlier building has been extended.



Fig 22. North elevation of farmhouse and east elevation of existing rear projection showing location of proposed 2 storey extension, in lieu of existing single storey extension. Note modern windows and window openings.



Fig 23. Contextual North elevation of farmhouse showing location of proposed 2 storey extension, in lieu of existing single storey extension.

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4.0 The Proposals

4.4 - Other minor alterations.

Minor internal alterations are proposed within the house at both ground and first floor levels.

At ground floor level this involves the adjustment of the doors location leading into the WC. The door and WC partitions are all late 20th Century and so the intervention is considered minor and of no significance in terms of the impact on the heritage asset.

At first floor is a similar scenario with the minor adjustment of 20th C. partitions.

The details of each of these adjustments can be seen on the proposed floor plans. As described in one of the previous listed building approvals for the house, all of the first floor structures have been replaced and so, by default will all of the internal partitions. This is evidenced on site where it can be seen that all partitions are studwork and modern plasterboard.

As previously mentioned, the majority of the windows in the farmhouse are modern replacement windows, and some of these are double glazed. In order to make the farmhouse as energy efficient as possible; and thus tie in with Devon Council's Climate Change Declaration, the intention is to reglaze all of this windows of the farmhouse using heritage sensitive slimline double glazed units. This method of glazing has the benefit of reducing heat loss through the windows, whilst preserving the proportions of the original glazing bars and also recuding the visibility of the sealing gasket to the perimeter of the double glazed units.

To further respond to Devon Council's Climate Change Declaration, additional insulation is proposed to the loft of the main roof. This will be in the form of a quilt insulation laid over the existing quilt insulation at ceiling level. This will cause very little in the way of harm, however will greatly assist in reducing the carbon footprint of the building.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposals are not intended, nor do they seek to, 'modernise' The Farmhouse as such. The proposals are put forward as sensitive and thoughtful evolutions to the property to make sense of and maximise the existing fabric of the property. If approved, the schemes would (i) Provide a sense of arrival and a degree of formality to the southern elevation of the principal building of the estate and (ii) through the provision of the 2 storey rear extension resolve an access and amenity issue which is at odds with the accommodation otherwise offered by The Farmhouse.

When considering the proposals, reference has also been made to Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out similar aims. Whilst that document superseded Planning Policy Statement 5 "Planning for the Historic Environment", in March 2012, the accompanying 'Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide' is extant guidance and states the importance of plan form to the significance of the building and its understanding.

We would reiterate that through thorough research undertaken, the proposals are put forward with a good understanding of The Farmhouse and one with the best interests of the building at the fore.

It is clear that in terms of the preservation of the listed building, the proposals will cause only limited harm and having regard to the matters outlined above, that harm to the significance of the heritage asset would be less than substantial, a term found in paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework. That passage goes on to say that this harm should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

As can be seen from the supporting information, the house has been significantly altered by various previous interventions, to such an extent that there is virtually no historic fabric remaining. This includes:

- Insulating all external walls and lining with plasterboard.
- Internal partitions.
- First floor structure and floor covering.
- Principal staircase and secondary rear staircase.
- Skirtings, architraves and other mouldings.
- Internal doors.
- All external windows.

In this case therefore, the degree of harm is very limited and capable of being remedied in the future; nothing of historic importance would be lost that could not be readily put back.

The proposals are to the benefit and continued vibrancy of the building and Great Trill Farm as a whole.