

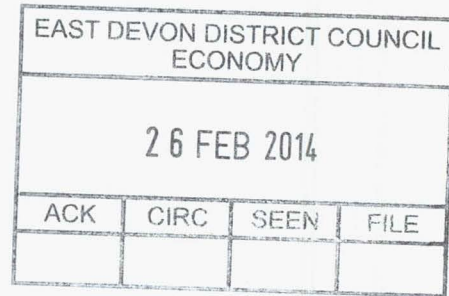
1.0 Introduction

This report seeks to outline change and development of Upper Seavington Farmhouse, and to assess the extent of surviving historic fabric within the building. This is a summary report, and other than reference to the first and second edition Ordnance Survey, does not utilise documentary evidence. My inspection was visual, and included both internal and external investigation, along with the main roof space and that of the upper cat-slide roof over the kitchen. Survey of the farmhouse revealed fabric dating from C17 through to the C20th century. The house has also been much altered, disguising areas of the building's history.

We have also taken the opportunity to search all relevant archives relating to 'Seavington in Stockland Parish' at the Devon Records Office in Exeter. Whilst interesting in terms of supplying information about occupancy, ownership and tenancy agreements, there was unfortunately no evidence of maps, plans, photographs or any Architectural descriptions that might have proven useful in our research.

2.0 Listing Description

ST 20 SW STOCKLAND MILLHAYES
4/556
Higher Seavington Farm
House



II

Farmhouse. Circa C16 or C17 house heightened in circa C19. Roughcast stone rubble. Heightened asbestos slate roof with gabled ends. Two storeys. Four window range. Modern casements with glazing bars. Plain doorway to cross passage to left of centre. Rebuilt rendered ridge and end chimney stacks. Stone over rear window inscribed "Cheese Room R and J B 1816", probably originally doorway to loft. Lean-to at lower (west) end. Interior: stopped chamfer fireplace bressumer and ceiling beam. Doorway at rear end of cross passage has large timber sliding bolt.

Planning Support Statement - 14/0526/LBC

Listing NGR: ST2370803775



3.0 Recent history

SUMMARY HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT - 26/02/2014

It is known that the building was thoroughly refurbished by the previous owners around 1974, when significant alteration and demolition of the outlying buildings occurred.

Within the house, this work included replacement of all rafters to the main and lean-to roofs (although the original trusses and purlins were retained), alongside new bathrooms, replacement of the lower staircase, stair balustrade, and a number of doors within the house.

More recently the windows on the south front were double glazed, with some on the north side also being replaced (perhaps early to mid 1990's).

The extent of redecoration and refitting of the house at this time has disguised some of the earlier phases of change.

4.0 Earlier twentieth century History

Close inspection of the south windows reveals the surround frames are circa 1920's in date, and match profiles to the first floor bathroom window. Peg holes reveal the location of lost mullions and transoms, allowing the pattern of fenestration to be recovered. The surviving timber window cills are all of this date.

Given the lack of disturbance, it is likely that the existing pebble dash (cement based render) dates to this period, as do the cast iron gutters and downpipes still serving the main house. Lack of disturbance of render around pipework suggests both are contemporary.

Within the house, 1920's fittings are present within both the first floor bathroom and adjacent bedroom, the latter including a small fireplace, picture rails and a four panelled door of contemporary date.

Above the line of the bedroom north-south wall is a brick nogged and pebble-dashed (rendered) truss, suggesting this was once an external wall. This coincides with a reduction in wall thickness of the main north and south walls of the house, all suggesting a possible different construction phase.

A triangular pattern of render absent from the lower part of this truss is suggestive of a low roof line, prior to reconstruction of the roof.

It is perhaps significant that no historic roof structures survive between this truss and the west gable of the house, the only part of the main roof where this is the case.

The line of the adjacent catslide and gable (undisturbed to current ridge height) make the presence of render and possible former roofline difficult to explain.

One possible explanation however is that a much lower roof covered this end of the house (perhaps including the end catslide area), contrasting with the taller later C18/early C19 roof to the East.

5.0 Later Nineteenth century history

A number of windows and doors of nineteenth century date survive in the house, including that the small south bedroom/office (first floor) dining room (all 3 doors) and pantry. Windows to the catslide west wall and north west bedroom are also of C19 date. The boarded partition and door now dividing the small central bedroom/office from the landing are of late C19 date.

6.0 Eighteenth or early C19th century History

The rooms within the east end of the house preserve good doors and frames plus cupboards around the chimney stack at first floor level, all of the above date. The door into the sitting room is a good quality C18th or very early C19 raised and fielded 6 panel door on HL pattern hinges, within partly original frame.

The ceilings of the two eastern bedrooms preserve historic plaster to walls and ceilings, possibly of the same date as above. The south bedroom may have had a fireplace, now partly obscured (adjacent entrance door).

Within the main roof space, the fine king post trusses, purlins and ceiling joists are of contemporary date.

The above improvements may in part match the date stone on the north side of the house, ie 1816, when at least part of the house was rebuilt with a higher roof.

7.0 Earlier history

The two large fireplaces, cross passage and north window of the pantry are the oldest features of the house, along with the central beam over the sitting room.

The moulded stops to the cross passage and sitting room beams appear have similar style chamfer stops, being stylistically of mid to later C17 date; both fireplace bressumers and pantry window could also be of this date,

The north door draw bar would fit with the above in terms of date.

The rounded pier within the dining room would appear to be modern although plans suggest initially a C17 form.

8.0 Evidence of planform

The central cross passage, flanking fireplace (sitting room) and second heated room (dining room) appear to form the nucleus of the original house. The consistency of wall thicknesses, and also thin north side of the dining room fireplace suggest the lower walls of the catslide extension are of similar date, perhaps originally under the main roof of the house.

Cracking and movement within the modern ceilings of the sitting room suggest the presence of a corridor running toward the present double garage, formerly a gabled building as evidenced by the scar within the render of the east wall.

This is further backed up by the modest C19 north window of the sitting room, more at home in a corridor than a parlour or 'best room' of the farmhouse.

Brickwork within the east gable (roof space) shows a chimney flue is present; this runs diagonally away toward the south side of the house; a fireplace may have therefore existed within the garage area.

The stair may always have been around its current site, although this was presumably remodelled when the roof of the house was raised in the late C18/early C19. The upper flight appears to be at least partly of this date (the iron balustrades are of 1970's date). The lower flight appears modern and level, suggesting a circa 1974 date.

The presence of running water alongside the house, and associated dampness may have destroyed the lower flight, and may account for the concrete over-floor within the sitting room, now also covering part of the lower step of this flight.

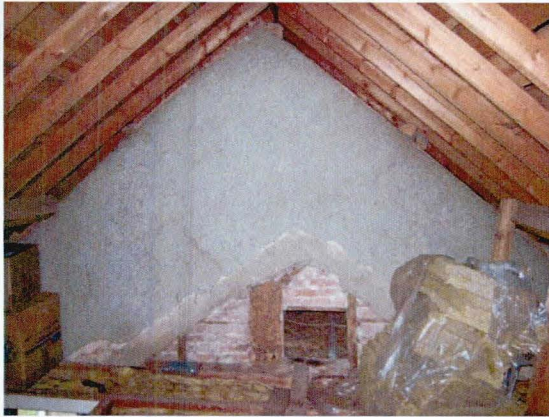
Older floor levels are evidenced by the stone threshold to the sitting room. Adjacent stone random paving may be historic; careful lifting of a couple of stones will quickly reveal whether they are laid on a lime/earth bed or on concrete.

The garden room or south porch to the house has a neatly cut roof formed of machine sawn timber, and appears on the 1889 Ordnance Survey, but must be fairly newly built at this date.

9.0 Ordnance survey information

The first edition Ordnance Survey (1889) shows the house, garage and sun room were in existence at that time, along with a number of barns now partly removed from the site.

10.0 Photographs



Above: Roofspace over main bedroom and bathroom, showing former external gable (?) and roof scar at low level, against brick-nogged king post truss



Above: the eastern roofspace, showing the C18/early C19 trusses and purlins. Note brickwork to far gable, evidence of a lost chimney and fireplace



Left: C18 or early C19 joinery in the east end of the first floor. Note HL pattern hinges to cupboard.



Left: the two 1920's doors, serving master bedroom and family bathroom, to the west end of the first floor.

Very high ceilings to this end of the house may suggest a lower roofline than that now present once existed.

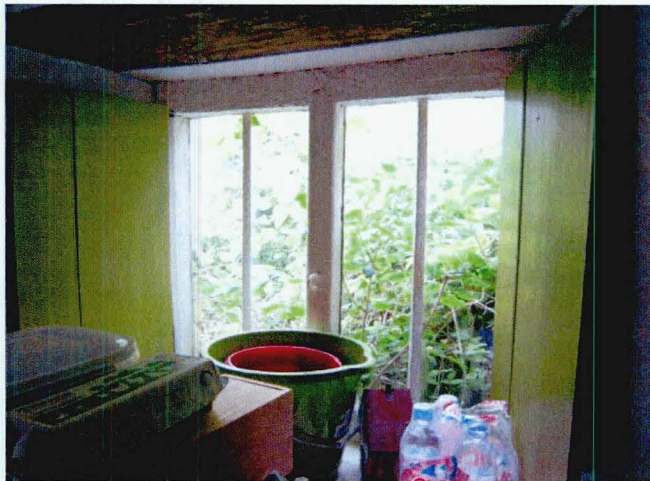
Below: C19 doors to dining room (left) and from kitchen (right)





Left: 1920's window to family bathroom

Below left: bathroom window: internal view



Left: C17 window to pantry, with C19 shutters. Iron bars may be original to the window.



Detail of double glazing sub frame at first floor level. Note peg in timber by window board, evidence of mullion position in lost 1920's window.



Bottom Left: built up floor levels within sitting room. In foreground paving is possibly historic: checking substrate will prove age of finish. Note timber threshold in front of concrete over – floor. Under this the stone threshold of an earlier possibly C18 floor. Below this stone can be seen a possibly earlier floor level, which matches the brick finish of the sitting room hearth. Note doorcase rests on the threshold stone.