



ABBOTSFORD THORVERTON, DEVON

HERITAGE STATEMENT
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Abbotsford is a Grade II listed house set within the historic core of the village of Thorverton, Devon. The house is located approximately 35m to the east of the C15 Grade I listed Church dedicated to St Thomas á Becket; also known as St Thomas of Canterbury. Abbotsford was first listed on the 5th April 1966. The list description is included at Appendix A.

Located within rural Devon, surrounded by an undulating agrarian landscape, Thorverton lies approximately 8.5km north of Exeter, and 7km south of Tiverton. The village was first documented in 1201, being identified as Torverton, and subsequently referred to as Thulverton (1301), Thurfurton (1340) and Tharverton (1630). Whilst there is little archaeological evidence to define Roman settlement or activity, this is likely due to lack of investigation as the surrounding area has revealed such finds and features. The historic core of the village evolved from the Medieval period, with suggestion that the C15 Church tower may have C13 origin.

Thorverton is characterised by its local vernacular buildings, constructed of locally resourced stone, lime and cob, with thatched or slate roofs, cobbled streets and the stream which runs through. The village was designated as a Conservation Area on the 6th February 1973, with review in 2014 and adjustment in 2015 to further recognise and record the architecture and historic built environment (Conservation Area map Appendix 2). Abbotsford is individually commented upon in the Appraisal, being identified as having connection to the Church.

Abbotsford, dating to the C17 with C20 renovations, is situated to the north of the village (fig. 7), and is constructed of local rubble; part rendered to the front and rear elevations. The thatched roof is gabled at the ends, with brick stacks to the left and rear. The 2-storey house is a single depth 3-room plan house with a later addition to the right which is currently used as a store. The building includes a considerable full-depth fireplace with large bread oven to the north room; its size indicating the original purpose being more than that of catering to a single household, lending weight to the theory it was a bakery for the Church. The rear of the building comprises a small garden area, with a stream running north to south from the Raddon Hills to the River Exe. The stream once comprised crossings of which 'Abbotsford' derives its name, being located at the site of a now disappeared ford which allowed passage from the Old Vicarage to the village and church.

This statement has been prepared by The Heritage Consultancy and has been written by Adrienne Ridler-Lee MSc on the behalf of Mr Nick Paget in accordance with the requirements of the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (Adopted July 2020) and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advice to inform a Householder Application for planning permission and Listed Building Consent (LBC). This statement will reference Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, and Advice Note 2; Managing Significance in Decision – Taking in the Historic Environment (GPA 2).



2.0 MAP REGRESSION



Figure 1. 1814 Glebe map. Abbotsford indicated, with left hand structure to rear, and protruding structure to extreme left. (external steps to front floor). No workshop/store structure.



Figure 2. Title Map 1842. Abbotsford indicated, note 2 protruding elevations to rear and no side building (former garage/workshop/store) located to south east (right hand side) elevation. No external staircase to far left of front. © Devon County Council

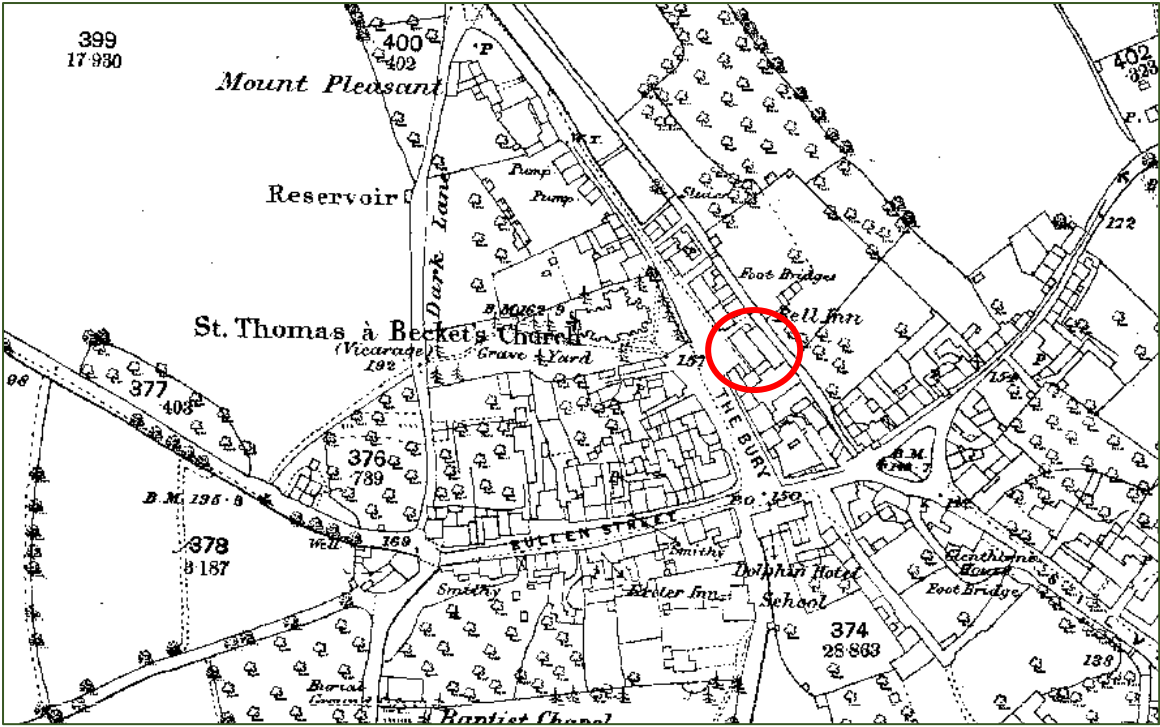


Figure 3. 1880 OS map. Abbotsford indicated with structure to the rear/north east elevation. Side building (former garage/workshop/store) located to south east (right hand side) elevation. A small built structure is illustrated to north west of building; potentially steps leading to first floor. ©Kypwest.org.uk



Figure 4. 1888 OS map. Abbotsford indicated with structure to rear/north east elevation. ©kypwest.org.uk

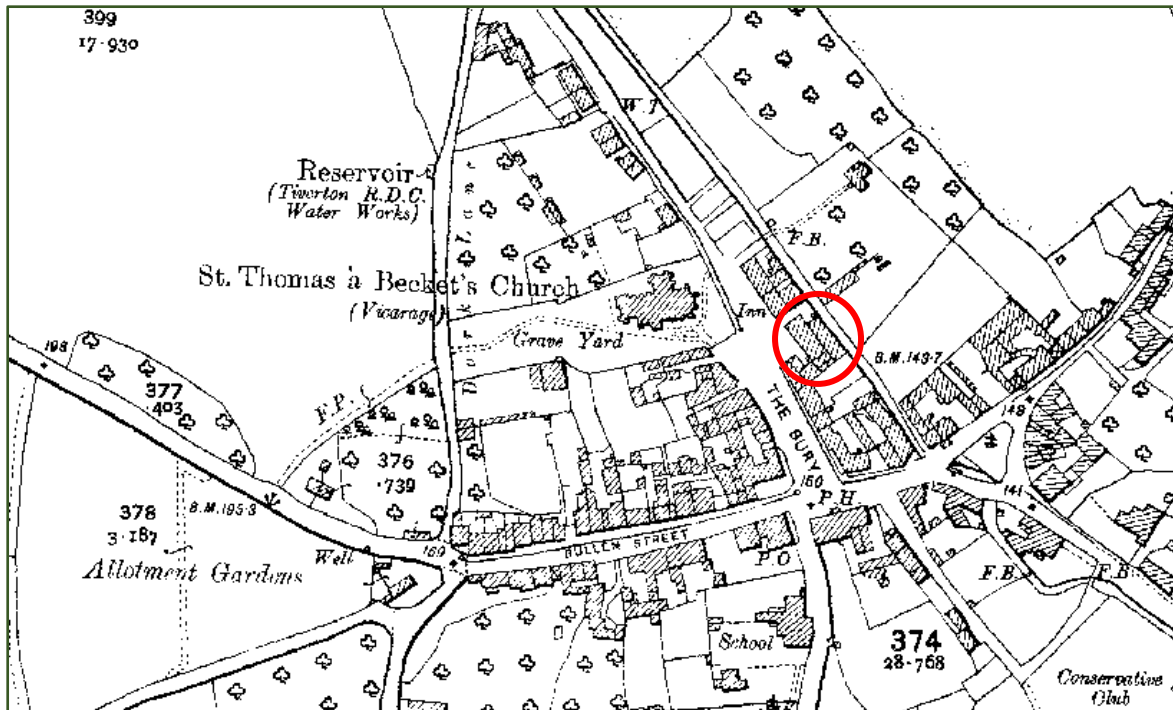


Figure 5. 1904 OS map illustrating building to rear still in situ. Abbotsford indicated. ©kypwest.org.uk



Figure 6. 1946 aerial map of Thorverton with Abbotsford indicated. Thatch, 2 stacks and lack of building to the rear identified. ©kypwest.org.uk

The 1814 Glebe (Coleridge) map (fig.1) illustrates Abbotsford, and indicates that there were formally external stone steps at the extreme front left, facing onto The Bury. To the rear, in what is now the garden, there was a structure to the northernmost elevation.

The 1842 Tithe map (fig.2) of Thorverton does not specifically identify Abbotsford in the accompanying Apportionment list, but the garden and lawn to the rear, beyond the stream (plot 1177) is detailed as being under the ownership of The Reverend James Duke Coleridge, with himself

and 'others' listed as occupants. It is likely that the garden adjoined was within the curtilage and occupancy of Abbotsford. The neighbouring gardens were owned by the Dean & Chapter of Exeter, demonstrating ecclesiastical ownership, and the significant historical connection between the Church and the surrounding land and built environment.

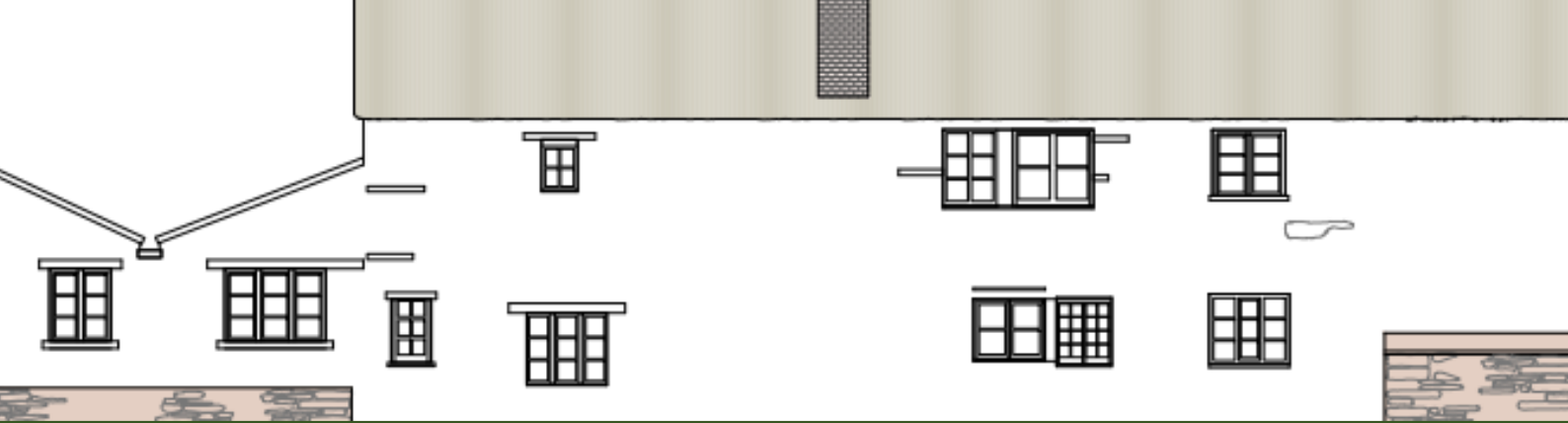
The Tithe map illustrates a symmetrical building, with 2 protruding elevations to the rear, the northernmost structure not entirely concealing the rear extension. The front steps indicated in the 1814 Glebe map are not illustrated in the 1842 map, nor is the building to the south east elevation which is now identified as the former garage/workshop/store.

Maps from 1880 (fig.3) to 1904 (fig.5) illustrate the building to the south east elevation (workshop/store) had by then been constructed. The protruding elevations to the rear had either been replaced or subsumed by a structure which almost spanned the entirety of the width of the building, albeit not to the northernmost part.

An aerial photograph taken in 1946 (fig.6) shows Abbotsford, with the 2 chimney stacks clearly visible. The structure to the rear appears to have been removed. The image is more easily scrutinised online rather than in the photograph provided in this report.



Figure 7. 2023 Aerial view of Thorverton with Abbotsford indicated. ©Google Maps



3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DECISION DATE	APPLICATION NUMBER	PROPOSALS	DECISION
	79/00105/LBC	Rebuilding of garage with greenhouse over	Granted
19 th September 1990	90/00404/LBC	Alterations and improvements	Granted
1 st October 1998	98/01636/LBC	Internal alterations and fenestration and lean-to roof configuration	Granted

There are 3 previous planning applications relating to Abbotsford. No associated documents are available on the Mid Devon Planning website. It would appear that the 1979 proposal to rebuild the garage with a greenhouse over never came to fruition, and it is difficult to identify any alterations and improvements potentially carried out in 1990. The apparent age and construction materials of the workshop/store roof (fig.9) suggest the proposed scheme in 1998 did result in improvement/alteration of the building; most evidentially the roof.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021
- Historic England GPA 2 – Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment 2015
- Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance 2008
- Mid Devon Local Plan 2013 – 2033 DM25 Development Affecting Heritage Assets & DM1 High Quality Design



5.0 DESCRIPTION

Abbotsford is set back from the road, within The Bury. Approached from the cobbled street, the principal façade (fig.10) is constructed of dressed stone rubble with a C20 render. The render conceals any evidence that may remain of the historic exterior steps to the far left. The list detail (Appendix 1) comments upon the 'asymmetrical 4 window front'. The existing windows are C20 replacements and are of inconsistent size and design. The first floor window to the left has been enlarged, and the bedroom window opening to the far right has likely seen alteration as it is not in keeping with the overall style of the house, or the purpose of the room. The front windows of which there are 7, are mostly simple wooden casement of 3 or 4 lights, with the window above the porch having horizontal glazing bars. All windows and frames are in poor, to parlous condition.

The principal entrance comprises a C20 wooden stable door, set underneath a crude, modern timber framed porch (fig.11) which possesses no historic, or architectural merit. To each side of the entrance, a small garden border sits behind a stone wall. The rainwater goods are a mix of cast iron, with modern UPVC replacements and additions.

The pitched gable roof is thatched with water reed, in poor condition and in need of replacement. The left red brick stack has been rendered and repaired in part with local Raddon stone mortar.

The left hand (north) elevation (fig.12) is of locally sourced dressed stone rubble, with Raddon stone rubble and brick. Alteration in the stone construction at higher level indicates the roof has been raised. The left elevation features no window or door openings. The southernmost elevation (fig.13) is abbutted, and concealed by the adjoining workshop/store, and corrugated iron sheeting at first floor level. The original exterior wall is experienced from within the workshop/store and comprises a wide door opening to the front of the building (fig.14), a small window opening (with a single timber shutter) and a further door opening which leads to the rear store room.

The rear elevation provides strong evidential and aesthetic experience, with phases of alteration being more identifiable. The lower level of the building is constructed of stone rubble, with indications within the stone rubble of where the historic protruding elevations once abbutted the host building (fig.15). From the ground floor level upwards, the wall is rendered, concealing potential evidence of historic evolution and alteration, such as a single wooden lintel to the northern end of the exterior wall which could indicate a former opening. A curious small recess (fig.17) to the far southern elevation, set within the lower level stone work of the workshop/store room, was perhaps installed to support a timber of the historic adjoining building.

The wooden casement windows feature glazing bars, and are set beneath wooden lintels. The first floor window openings are set underneath the eaves, the recessed landing window (fig.16) being of interest with timber inserts being set within the surrounding stonework. One timber is grooved; its purpose unidentifiable, but this is likely to have been repurposed from another building during repair or alteration. The rear elevation unusually provides no access to/from the house from the garden.

The workshop/store room is constructed of stone rubble, and rendered. The valley roof (fig.18) has been repaired/reconfigured, and is of rubber/resin above modern timbers and ply board (fig.9) likely to date from works in 1998. The front of the workshop/store room comprises weathered wide timber panelled door openings underneath a C20 timber framed double casement (fig.19); neither of which are of historic interest or significance. The southern gable end of the house which the workshop abutts, is currently concealed by rusted corrugated sheeting; the historic fabric of the building concealed beneath. 3 small, irregular window openings are set within crude 'makeshift' frames (fig.18).

6.0 INTERNAL DESCRIPTION – FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Internally, the general condition of the house is poor, and need of restorative renovation and modernisation. Little work has taken place during the C20 and C21, which benefits the building in that original or historic fabric remains. Reconfiguration has previously taken place, most latterly in order to accommodate letting rooms; local residents recall this being done in the 1960's when 'well-heeled' students from Exeter University resided at the house.

The principal entrance leads into the entrance hallway (figs. 20 & 21), of which the staircase to the first floor, sitting room and dining room are accessed. The front door appears to be set within an older frame based on the cut and texture of the timber; both are concealed underneath layers of paint. The panelling which is located to the south of the entrance hall is not original. The panelling hosts a 1930's GEC brass and bakelite bell and transformer. The entrance comprises a worn stone step leading down to Parquet flooring.

The substantial, and significant sitting room is located to the north of the house; it is within this room that the 'massive fireplace' mentioned in the list description is located. The fireplace (fig.22) is constructed of local stone, with a large bread oven situated to the right hand side (fig.23). The stonework to the rear of the opening is blackened, demonstrating the former operational design and use before a combustion oven was installed. The hearth which would have originally been stone, has been replaced by brickwork. The stone work to the front of the fireplace opening has seen remodelling, with a large steel RSG set behind the later lintel (fig.24); the original keystone visible behind the later stone facade. A white plate installed at the same time as the woodburner conceals additional stonework above.

Set within the east facing rear wall is what appears to be a blocked up window or hatch (fig.25), perhaps used to pass flour through for the bread making process (being highly flammable, flour would not have been stored in the house). It is not possible to assess evidence of an opening on the exterior wall due to the render.

To the south of the sitting room, the wall comprises a timber frame (fig.26) which would have likely once supported a 'plank and muntin' screen. This frame has been subject to sanding, planing and irreversible timber treatments. A number of the timbers have been replaced based on the inconsistency of wood/cut. A small doorway opening within the frame leads to the space underneath the staircase. The frame is currently filled with C20 white plyboard panelling. The 4-panelled, moulded door to the sitting room may be aged, but it is not original; as with other doors in the house, it has been fitted with a Yale lock. The doorcase timbers are of a different cut than the frame, and do not correspond with the doorcase between the dining room and kitchen suggesting replacement. Both the frame and door sit beneath a large beam which is chamfered at the western end, and the east facing end visible within the exterior wall to the rear within the render (fig.27).

The sitting room is carpeted, yet upon inspection by lifting one corner, parquet flooring is visible (fig.28). The parquet has rotted in places revealing the stone block surface underneath (not visible due to wood debris/dust); a sensible and safe surface considering the former use of the room.

The dropped ceiling is constructed of lathe and plaster, with modern recessed lights. The windows facing out to the principal and rear façade are set deep within the thick stone walls and comprise replacement wooden casements; the reveal comprising a deep timber insert to the top. As in keeping with C17 design, the windows feature a single or central opening casement (fig.29). The decorative swivel catches are likely to be historic being commensurate with C17 design and manufacture. The catches would have been removed from previous windows and replaced on the new, as was often the case for economic reason.

The dining room is located to the south of the entrance hallway and comprises a redundant fireplace opening with stone jambs and a timber lintel (fig.30). The circular hole within the C20 plate indicates a wood burner has previously been installed. A timber frame dividing wall of similar construction to that of the feature in the sitting room indicates the historic existence of screening, and the original intended design and construction of the room. Unlike the sitting room, the square headed door frame (fig.31) is wide, and the timber evidentially from an earlier period to that of the sitting room door case due to the general patina, method of cutting and fixing, with a round wooden peg visible to the top left (further confirming the doorframe in the sitting room has been replaced). A moulded timber has been inserted to the left of the frame. The moulded four panel door with latch is not original. The timber framed casement window with 3 lights has a central opening, with modest iron catch and stay. The room is currently carpeted with a screeded surface beneath.

The understairs cupboard (figs. 32 & 33) which has recently been utilised as a small office/storage space is unusual in that it features a double casement window with leaded lights, iron glazing bars and a modest swivel catch; inconsistent with other windows in the house. Set within the dividing wall to the dining room, is a window of curious design and purpose (fig.34). The wooden casement window, with 12 lights features a further opening set within. C20 timber panelling conceals the staircase timbers, making it impossible to assess the age or originality of the staircase. It is unusual and unlikely that a house of this proportion with the suggested historic purpose of a church bakery, would not have had a point of access from the rear. The exterior render does not allow for assessment of potential alteration or infill of stonework to identify any historic doorway openings in this area.

Leading off the dining room is the kitchen (figs.35 & 36) which is fitted with floor and wall mounted units, the walls being partially tiled and the floor consisting of modern quarry style tiles. The kitchen has undergone reconfiguration. Historically, the casement window to the east (rear), with a heavy inset timber within the reveal to the top, would have been set centrally between the large chamfered beams to both the north and south of the room. The southernmost beam has been subsumed and mostly concealed by the creation of a wall as seen in figure 36, the construction being inconsistent with the other ground floor internal walls (in that it is brick/stone and not timber framed), to create a corridor and shower room/W.C. in between the kitchen and former workshop/store, negatively impacting upon the historic layout of the space.

The kitchen displays few historic features, but the northernmost beam (fig.38) hosts a number of wrought iron hooks and nails. This beam is supported by two upright C20 timber posts; chamfered in an attempt to compliment the original. The southernmost stop chamfered beam (now concealed by the wall) is partially visible above the door opening to the corridor (fig.39), which comprises a 6 panelled door with latch, set within moulded panelling (fig.37). The GEC doorbell system, likely to also be from the 1930s is present.

The corridor (figs.40 & 41) was created to create covered access to the workshop/store, and to incorporate space for a W.C. and shower room to the rear, providing ground floor facilities accessible from the rear room inserted into the workshop/store space. Access to the workshop/store is achieved from the corridor via a 4 panelled door, with latch and large locking mechanism (fig.42), with hammered iron hinges and nails visible through the paintwork. Set within the original southern exterior wall of the house is a modest square window with hatch door made from timber (fig.43), with a small iron catch and strap hinges. This opening would have been one of the south facing windows within the original (external) elevation and is consistent in scale with the first floor windows above.

The former workshop/store to the front indicates the construction material of the building, due to the loss of render, revealing the stone rubble walls which over time have been repaired with mortar made from the locally distinctive Raddon stone. The wall to the south, and the wall between the corridor appear to be original. The roof has been repaired/replaced with modern timbers and ply board. The design and construction of the roof valley has caused issue with water ingress which has impacted negatively on the integrity of the roof.

The workshop/storage space illustrates little in the way of historic features and fittings (figs.44 & 45). The space has been divided, as the main workshop now incorporates the rear storage room; the timber panelled wall visible to the east from the room. The rear room is likely to have been used as a living space (possibly in the 1960s) based on the existence of parquet flooring (fig.46) and an old hearth and blocked up circular hole in the rear wall indicating the previous installation of a wood burning stove. Both rooms which comprise the workshop/store are in poor condition; their original purpose now redundant and the scale not suitable for garaging or modern workshop installations.

The first floor has also seen unsympathetic reconfiguration, the suggested layout illustrated in figure 47. Originally Abbotsford would not have comprised five bedrooms; additional lightweight timber walls have been constructed to divide the space.

The master bedroom (figs.48 & 49) is located to the north of the house, directly above the sitting room. A small stone fireplace survives within the north wall. To the right is modern shelving within a recess in the stonework; possibly a former window opening. The exterior side of this wall demonstrates indentations within the render hinting at alteration or the blocking of the window (fig.50). The room has been unsympathetically partitioned, with a double sliding door opening. The pitched ceiling partially reveals two rafters; it is not possible to tell if these are original, although the saw marks and general patina indicate they are a later addition; perhaps when the roof was raised. Access to a small bathroom is achievable from the master bedroom, as well as the landing (fig.51). The small bathroom area would have likely originally been open to allow natural daylight into the landing space.

Bedroom 2 (fig. 52) is located centrally to the front of the house. It was possible to lift the carpet in one corner to reveal elm boards of differing width (fig.53) It is not absolutely possible to say if these are original, but they are certainly aged. The bedroom also has a blocked doorway to bedroom 3; the wall is not constructed of historic fabric, and is insulated with fibreglass. Bedroom 3 (fig.54) is located above the kitchen, and has an upright timber post which is located directly above the one below, which then extends through the ceiling into the roof space. A principal rafter and false are visible; as with the other roof truss timbers on the first floor, this rafter is not C17. The false beam conceals pipework from the old water tank cupboard in bedroom 4. The window opening (fig.54) is neither original or in keeping with the room, or house. The wooden panelled wall that separates bedroom 3 and 4 is not historic and looks to be damaged and inappropriately fixed. This lightweight

dividing wall was likely installed when the house was let out to students. Bedrooms 3 and 4 would have originally been one room, spanning the depth of the house.

The room identified as bedroom 4 has previously been used as a kitchenette and is unsympathetically furnished with C20 fixtures and fittings. This room also has a corresponding upright supporting post to that of the one below in the kitchen. The false beam spans the depth of the house (also through bedroom 3). The tank is located in a separate cupboard where historic floorboards are visible at a lower level than the current boards (fig.56) demonstrating that the floorboards were not replaced, merely installed over. Bedroom 4 leads to a shower room (fig.57) with a dated suite including a W.C., wash basin and shower. The bathroom has 2 small windows with crude wooden frames which appear to be 'makeshift' and are not compatible or complimentary to the design, fabric or character of the house. None of the first floor doors are original, and have been fitted with Yale locks dating to when Abbotsford was a multi occupancy residence.



7.0 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012 defines the setting of heritage assets as:

"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral".

The purpose of this statement is to place the overall asset in its historical context and describe its characteristics and appearance; an important component of the evidence gathering exercise, which enables understanding of the site's significance and contribution of the setting to significance.

Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' (2008) explain how the understanding of how a place has evolved and how different phrases contribute to significance, which can be defined as using evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values.

- Evidential value; evidence of past human activity.
- Historical value; the association of a place with past people or events.
- Aesthetic value; sensory appreciation that may be designed or fortuitous.
- Communal value; the meaning of a place for people who relate to it.

The Grade II designated Abbotsford is listed for historical and architectural importance. The Conservation Area Appraisal (2015) makes reference to the house, its contribution to the area known as 'The Bury', and its historic connection to the church.

Little documentary evidence exists relating specifically to Abbotsford, but sales particulars (Appendix 3) from Rickerd, Green & Michelmore of Exeter (1959) identify a Mrs Channer in residence. The house was marketed as a 'charming old-world village house, being beautifully decorated', with a 'good thatched roof'. The sitting room is described as having a block floor, with large fireplace and combustion stove, the dining room with brick fireplace, and the kitchen being particularly well modernised with a 'Elizabeth Ann' sink. The existence of the lobby to the immediate south of the kitchen demonstrates that the separating wall had been constructed prior to 1959; the area comprising a hand basin and w.c. with modern low suite. The area to the rear of the workshop is identified as the box room with block floor and stove; 'ideal for use as a study. The first floor comprised 4 bedrooms (3 of which had basins), 2 ante-rooms with cupboards and shelves, a dressing room and a bathroom with a full suite including a bath.

Abbotsford provides **historical value**, being a good example of C17 vernacular architecture, demonstrating the use of locally sourced materials such as stone, thatch and timber, alongside local skills and construction methods. The Bury is an intentionally and well-designed area of the village; the buildings and open space once under ecclesiastical ownership (as detailed in the 1842 Apportionment), laid out surrounding the Grade I church, each with a historic purpose that illustrates

the interwoven contribution that buildings such as Abbotsford made to the village, demonstrating the associative relationship between the church, houses and community.

Abbotsford provides **evidential value** in that the great fireplace was used for baking bread for the church; a much needed and relied upon resource for local people in this rural community which undoubtedly witnessed times of hardship due to conflict, social and economic factors, disease and environmental events. The house would have had strong connections to local farmers, millers and may have employed local people to assist with the baking and distribution of bread. The historic ownership of the surrounding gardens, and likely Abbotsford (although this is not specifically identified in the Apportionment) of The Reverend James Duke Coleridge, demonstrates the historic wealth and influence that the church had during that period. The loss of the buildings to the rear may coincide with the halt in production of bread, and although Abbotsford demonstrates a lack of modernisation, its evolving use for its C20 occupiers and their requirements is visible, such as the installation of locks on bedroom doors, a first-floor kitchen and three shower rooms; consistent with a house used for multiple occupancy.

Aesthetic value is provided on the approach to Abbotsford with the intricately laid cobbled street which contributes to the character and distinctiveness of The Bury. The house is visible from the church yard and provides a strong visual presence to the street scene; the local stonework with its red hues and the large stack to the north making the house easily identifiable. The thatch provides contrast being juxtaposed to the neighbouring two buildings with slate roofs. Internally, the fireplace, timbers and individual characteristics such as the window between the dining room and under stairs space, all provide aesthetic value, interest and distinctiveness to those who experience it.

Abbotsford has a deep history of **communal value**, from once being the church bakery to now being a cherished local asset located in the heart of the historic Bury. During research for the purposes of this report, local people have offered their recollections of the house, such as when it was occupied by students from Exeter University; their AC Cobras, Porsches and Mini Coopers parked outside providing much curiosity and awe amongst the residents of a 1960s rural village. The applicant, Mr Paget, recently received a visit from a local resident who has lived in the village for over 50 years, and whilst having a tour of the house commented that the stonework surrounding the large fireplace had changed, being reconfigured, with the lintel being 'different'. Community engagement revealed great fondness for the house, concern for its future safeguarding, and strong enthusiasm for the house to be renovated.



8.0 THE PROPOSALS

The proposed scheme seeks to update and improve the living accommodation to create a comfortable family home, whilst revealing, preserving, and enhancing remaining historic fixtures and fittings.

Reconfiguration and repurposing of the former workshop/store will provide an additional useable space commensurate with modern living standards and requirements. The scheme comprises converting the space to the rear of the workshop into a garden room, with the creation of a double door opening (currently a window opening) onto the rear garden decking area (accessed by a small timber stair) and seeks to drop the current window to create a larger opening overlooking the outside space. The workshop area to southwest (front) of the building is to be converted to a utility space that will serve the main house, including a separate shower room, a range of storage units, and space for a washing machine. An entrance/boot room will be created with an area for coats, which will lead directly into the kitchen, utilising the current door openings. A newly installed pantry will be located in what is now the corridor; the later wall (between the kitchen and corridor) to be removed to restore the kitchen to its original dimension. The creation of the shower room, and pantry will be constructed using lightweight softwood, being entirely reversible. The flooring throughout this area of the house will comprise natural, and traditional flagstone.

The existing shower room to the eastern end of the corridor will be removed to provide additional access to the rear garden. The rear doors will be constructed of timber and will be sympathetic and complimentary in design to the house with the intention of enhancing the rear elevation. The existing roof over the proposed utility and garden room is to be replaced with a flat resin coated roof, which will be an improvement to the current valley roof which has proved difficult to maintain and has caused damp to this part of the house.

The kitchen will remain much as it is, albeit with the southern wall removed to reveal the historic stop chamfered beam which corresponds with the beam to the north kitchen wall restoring the original symmetry of the space. Original woodwork is to be restored and revealed by sensitive and gentle treatment (as advised in the pre application report). The applicant is to seek advice from a structural surveyor to remove the upright posts that support the beam to the north of the room; this will structurally and aesthetically enhance and restore this part of the house. This application seeks permission to create a new window opening in the west elevation to allow daylight into the room, reducing the need for electric lighting (thus positively contributing to the energy efficiency of the house), and to provide an adequate means of natural ventilation which will mitigate the need for disruptive and structurally intrusive mechanical ventilation.

The small makeshift window to the far right of the ground floor (not original) in the principal façade is to be removed to allow the well designed and balanced incorporation of the new kitchen window; its scale and dimension reflecting the other openings.

The applicant intends to carry out additional restorative and modernisation works on the ground floor. The dining room fireplace is to be reinstated as an open fire, with the carpet removed and replaced with distressed oak boards. The area under the stairs is to remain the same. The sitting room ceiling has been identified as being lathe and plaster, with a number of crude recessed lights which are to be removed; the holes being plastered over with the same material as existing. Upon investigation, it has been found that the floor is constructed of stone block underneath a rotted parquet floor which is not salvageable; this is to be replaced by a distressed, oiled oak floor. The fireplace currently features a brick hearth which will be replaced by stone which will be more complimentary to the integrity of the historic opening. The existing wood burning stove is to be replaced with a more energy efficient model; the asbestos plate above to be appropriately removed with a new plate set higher so that the impressive fireplace can be further restored, revealed and enjoyed.

Alterations to the first floor include the removal of the unsympathetic sliding door partition in the master bedroom (identified as bedroom 1 in the pre application enquiry). The front bedroom window (bedroom 3) has been enlarged and is to be reduced in height to correspond with the other windows proportionally. The historic fireplace and shelved recess will be maintained and further enhanced by considerate decoration.

The original layout of the first floor has been altered and is highly likely to have originally mirrored the ground floor plan (fig.47) being single depth, 3-room plan. The solid walls correspond with those on the ground floor, sitting directly above. The additional dividing walls are of C20 timber panel or stud wall construction which represent no historic interest or significance. The current layout of the first floor does not flow well and does not provide a positive space suitable for a family home. A new stud wall, of modest dimension is to be created incorporating a doorway opening, so that access to bedroom 3 can be accessed without entering bedroom 4.

The windows on the first floor, especially to the rear allow some, but not a great deal of daylight. Originally, if the first floor mirrored the layout of the ground, the windows to the principal façade would have allowed more daylight into each room. Currently, the door from the landing into bedroom 5 opens inwards (from the left of the frame viewed from the landing), blocking light from the window immediately behind; It is proposed that the door is hung from the other side of the frame to allow uninterrupted natural light.

The existing first-floor bathrooms are not proportionate to the size of the house and are not fit to serve a family home. Instead of seeking to install an additional bathroom, the applicant wishes to retain the integrity of the first floor as much as possible, and simply improve the current facilities by relocating the wall of bedroom 2 by 80cm (to the south) in order to create a minimally larger bathroom accessed from the landing. The shower room to the south is to be divided to incorporate a smaller shower room, and a closet, both accessed from bedroom 3; access from bedroom 4 blocked. A new single window in the south elevation will incorporate the space taken by the existing 2 openings, creating improved light and ventilation for the ensuite/shower room.

The bathrooms are to be fitted with heritage style suites complementary to the historic character of Abbotsford, with a cast iron bath in the family bathroom, brass taps and traditionally styled basins.

Internally the doors are not original and have been replaced by those of inconsistent material and design, much damaged by the application of a variety of C20 locks, treatments and layers of paint. The intension is to replace with corresponding panelled oak doors throughout (please see example at fig.59), with antique, reclaimed brass knobs.

The window to the top far right (bedroom 3) is to be altered and lowered to reflect its historic design and dimension, being lowered to reflect the position of the other windows in the principal façade.

Outside, the proposals seek permission for the creation of a stone plinth measuring 6.4m wide by 3.9m deep to the rear, sitting below the garden room and kitchen, of which the garden decking can be installed on top enabling ease of access from the rear of the house (via a timber stair) for the enjoyment of the outside space. The plinth will have a small flight of 4 stone steps which will lead down to the small lawn. The stone will be sourced locally to blend with the existing. A timber shed for gardening tools and outdoor furniture measuring 2.74m by 1.5 is to be constructed upon a brick base to the north of the rear exterior wall.

The existing lean-to porch is a modern, trellis-sided timber frame. This would be sympathetically replaced by a modest pitch roofed porch, with slate tiles, supported on a weathered oak frame.

The windows all require repair or replacement. Simple timber, flush fitting casements with glazing bars are to be installed, set underneath oak lintels, replacing those which are beyond repair. The frames are to be painted white to compliment other historic buildings within The Bury as seen in figure 58. The applicant requests permission to install discreet Slimlite double glazing to greatly enhance thermal performance and energy efficiency within the home.

Additional restorative works to the exterior include the re-thatch of the roof material with water reed. The historic cast iron rainwater goods are to be removed, cleaned and treated before being powder coated in black. Inconsiderate installation of economic UPVC guttering and downpipes are to be replaced with reclaimed cast iron. Cement fill is to be raked out and refilled with lime mortar. The render is to be painted in cream, using an appropriate permeable product. The corrugated sheeting to the south gable is to be removed, and the remaining lime render underneath repaired, or replaced as necessary.



9.0 EFFECTS OF PROPOSALS UPON SIGNIFICANCE – RELEVANT POLICY

The historic interest of Abbotsford has been assessed, and the proposals have been sympathetically designed in accordance with the constructive pre-application advice.

The NPPF (July 2021) provides guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment in chapter 16 and paragraphs 197, 200 (a) and 202.

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

200. Any harm to, loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II listed registered parks or gardens should be exceptional;

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Reference has also been made to the Mid Devon Local Plan (2015), policy DM25; Development affecting heritage assets; Heritage assets and their settings are an irreplaceable resource.

Accordingly, the Council will:

- a) Apply a presumption in favour of preserving or enhancing all designated heritage assets and their settings;
- b) Require development proposals likely to affect the significance of heritage assets, including new buildings, alterations, extensions, changes of use and demolitions, to consider their significance, character, setting (including views to or from), appearance, design, layout and local distinctiveness, and the opportunities to enhance them;
- c) Only approve proposals that would lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss or the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework are met;
- d) Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use; and
- e) Require developers to make a proportionate but systematic assessment of any impact on the setting and thereby the significance of heritage asset(s).

10.0 EFFECTS OF PROPOSALS UPON SIGNIFICANCE – ASSESMENT

The proposed alterations and improvements to Abbotsford provide a sympathetic and well considered solution of how it is achievable to transition a long-neglected heritage asset into the C21.

The conversion of the workshop/store to new uses, constitutes a pragmatic approach to redundant spaces which are not fit for purpose or no longer have a designated function. Whilst the workshop/store has not historically been part of the main house, its proposed inclusion into living accommodation does not present an alien approach as to how the space has previously been used, with the rear room previously having been utilised for living accommodation. The incorporation of this area into the living space will still be separated by the original external wall with the historic door openings being retained and further revealed by the removal of the later wall to the south of the kitchen. Abbotsford is a substantial family home, and occupants will have modern requirements fitting of such a residence, such as garden and leisure space. Without identifying a solution which provides enjoyable outdoor space, the future of Abbotsford as a family home is questionable. The utilisation of the workshop/store space as the garden/utility room, combined with sensitive and traditional design compatible with the architectural style of the house provides a solution which will give this area a much-enjoyed purpose, guaranteeing its maintenance and safeguarding its future.

The scheme proposes to replace the valley roof of the current workshop/store, with a flat roof with resin covering, which will provide longevity, incorporating an aesthetically discreet appearance which will be easier to maintain and will further reveal the south gable end of the house. A previous planning application from 1998 refers to a 'lean to roof' which was likely the workshop/store. The proposed design seeks to restore the roof to this configuration, along with 1 Conservation rooflight. The design is subtle and modest and will blend with the surrounding Welsh slate roof coverings, and will also mitigate the issues commonly encountered with valley roofing, and the subsequent water ingress/damp issues that often arise from such construction. The workshop/store roof is hidden from The Bury by buildings to the west, with only glimpses achievable from the north. There will be no significantly negative harm caused to the heritage asset, or wider Conservation Area by reinstating a flat roof or the incorporation of a discreet rooflight. The corrugated iron sheeting which currently conceals the southern gable end will be removed, with lime render applied which will reveal, restore and enhance the elevation.

The removal of the kitchen wall (not original) to the south will reinstate the former layout of the kitchen, and will reveal the currently concealed historic beam, which will provide the room with its originally intended symmetry and balance, with the kitchen window located centrally between the original beams. The new kitchen window in the west elevation will involve a small loss of historic fabric, but this is offset by the benefits to the building of introducing improved ventilation and air circulation. The additional natural light achieved will reduce the need for artificial lighting/electricity. The new window will architecturally and aesthetically compliment the principal façade and will have a minimal impact upon the historical or architectural significance of the building.

The small window to the far right of the ground floor set within the principal façade is incongruous in design and dimension; its enlargement will enhance and improve the balance and aesthetic experience of the front of Abbotsford. The creation of 2 door openings to the rear of the building will provide the owners with a better connection to the outside space and will reinstate access to the garden from the rear of the house; this will also enable younger members of the family safe access to the garden to play, without having to enter public space used by vehicles and pedestrians. Alteration has previously occurred to the rear of the building, and the new openings and dropped window merely represent evolving requirements commensurate with modern living. There will be an impact upon significance but less than substantial harm at the lowest end of the scale, and this is outweighed by the benefits to the public.

The introduction of Slimlite double glazing will provide a visually and physically discreet solution which will provide improved thermal and energy efficiency, reducing the carbon footprint of the house; contributing positively to Climate Change Strategy. The hardwood replacement windows are to be flush fitting, side opening casements as advised by the Conservation Officer in the pre-application enquiry. The windows will be constructed of timber with glazing bars, of varying lights which are a commonplace design within the Conservation Area (fig.58). The new windows will be a great enhancement on the current window openings and will further complement Abbotsford and the surrounding area whilst not detracting from character or distinctiveness.

The alterations to the first floor are sensitive and modest. The removal of the dividing wall with sliding doors within bedroom one will reinstate the original full depth and scale of the room, and will further reveal the historic fireplace and recess in the wall. The door to the ensuite off bedroom 1 will be blocked. The family bathroom, which is accessed from the landing will be increased in size by the relocation of the wall of bedroom 2 (by a mere 80cm to the south). This will reduce bedroom 2 in size, but will provide a central bathroom facility, with cast iron bath, suitable for family use. This slight reconfiguration mitigates the conversion of a bedroom into an alternative use, which is deemed a sensitive approach.

The blocked-up doorway in bedroom 3 will be reinstated to provide access to the small shower room to the south elevation. The creation of a small closet will further enhance the room. The 2 small windows in the shower room are to be made into one, which will provide improved ventilation and natural light from a single opening. The doorway leading from the landing to bedroom 5 is to be altered, with the door hung from the other side of the frame, as it currently blocks out light from the rear window when opened; please see figure 47. A small stud wall with door opening is to be created in bedroom 4, to provide privacy and access to bedroom 3. The discreet and modest alterations to the first floor seek to enhance the upstairs living space, and will restore the flow and functionality of the area after unsympathetic C20 reconfiguration causing no harmful impacts upon the significance of Abbotsford.

Externally, the proposal intends to create an enjoyable space which includes the construction of a decked area upon a stone plinth measuring 6.4m wide, by 3.9m deep. The rear of the building has previously undergone much readaptation which has reflected its evolving purpose, including the construction and demolition of buildings over time. The plinth is to be constructed of locally sourced stone to compliment the construction material of the house and its size proportionate to the host building, yet sizeable enough to allow the area to be enjoyed by family members of all ages. The intended proposal constitutes a new element to Abbotsford, but one that will enhance its purpose and identity as a cherished family home; any harm to significance outweighed by the benefits it provides.

The installation of the shed, measuring 2.74m by 1.5m upon a brick base, will provide a means of outdoor storage representing built change commensurate with evolving living requirements as the building has witnessed over the centuries. The shed is a necessary attribute to the garden, and represents no long-term harmful impact upon the significance of Abbotsford. The open sided porch is to be constructed of aged/weathered oak upon the existing stone base, the timbers being of modest and traditional design and joinery to enhance the principal façade whilst providing an attractive method of protection from the elements. The porch roof will be pitched, with slate tile to correspond with the palette of materials found within the Conservation Area.

The additional restorative and decorative works to the exterior, most notably the principal fenestration will greatly improve and enhance the significance and aesthetic appearance of Abbotsford, and will improve and contribute to setting and Conservation Area.



11.0 CONCLUSION

The proposals will not result in negative harm to the historic features or significance that remain, in fact elements of the scheme seek to restore and reveal original features by the removal of C20 installations which are not sympathetic to the historic fabric of Abbotsford, enhancing the accommodation, and improving energy efficiency. There are no negative impacts upon the historical or architectural importance of which Abbotsford is grade II listed, and it must be concluded that there are no harmful impacts upon significance that outweigh the benefits of this proposal.

REFERENCES

Historic England GPA 2 – Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment 2015

Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance 2008

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Thorverton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2015

Mid Devon Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (2020)

APPENDIX 1

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1240593

Date first listed: 05-Apr-1966

List Entry Name: ABBOTSFORD

Statutory Address 1: ABBOTSFORD, THE BURY

County: Devon

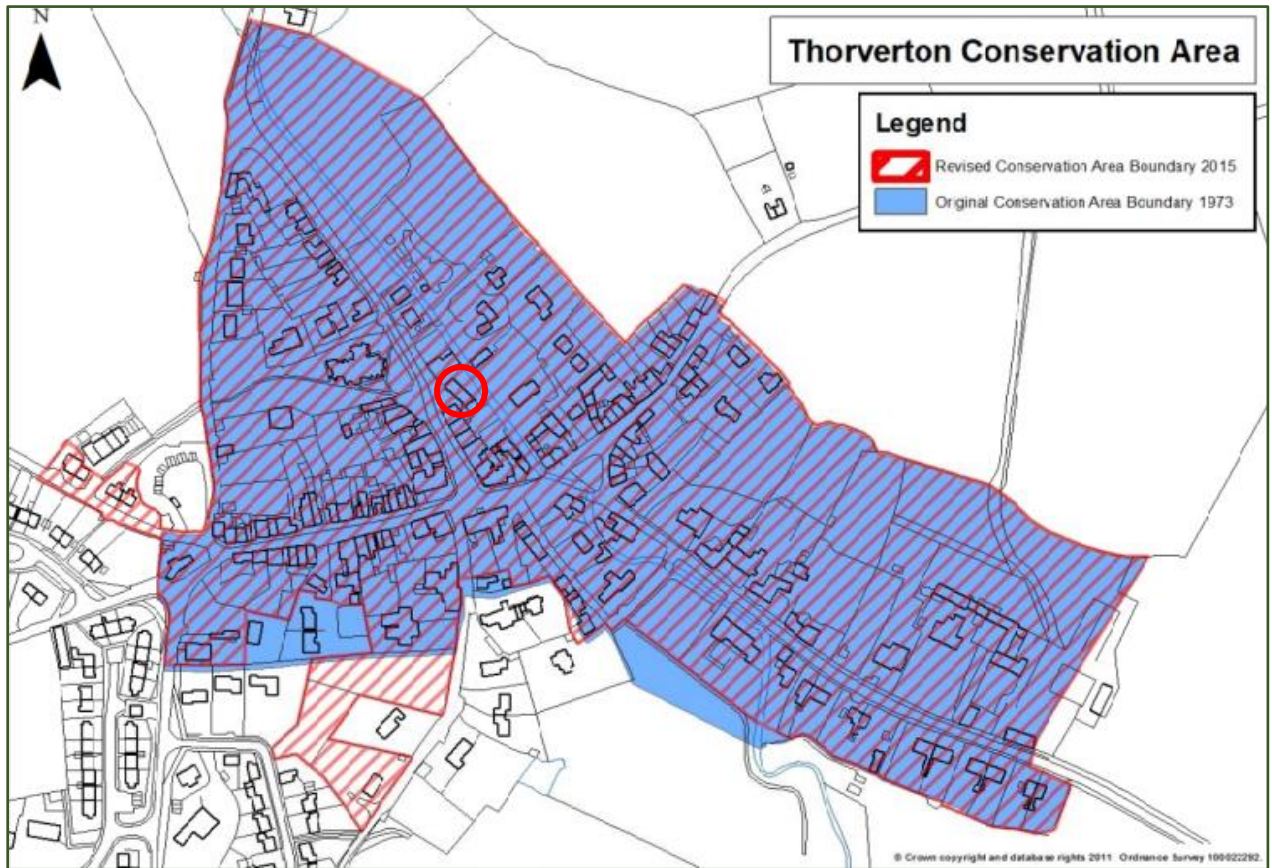
District: Mid Devon (District Authority)

Parish: Thorverton

National Grid Reference: SS 92528 02168

Details - SS 90 SW THORVERTON THE BURY, Thorverton 8/129 Abbotsford 5.4.66 GV II House, formerly probably Church house. C17, C20 renovations. Local stone rubble, the front elevation mostly colourwashed and rendered ; thatched roof with plain ridge, gabled at ends; left end stack with brick shaft, rear lateral stack with brick shaft. Plan and Development: Single depth 3 room plan, present entrance to left of centre. The 1814 glebe map indicates that there were formerly external stone steps at the extreme left of the front leading to a first floor entrance. The massive fireplace to the left end stack suggests that the left end room may have been used for baking church bread. Exterior : 2 storeys. Asymmetrical 4 window front with a front door to left of centre. First floor window right is a 4-light casement with glazing bars; the other windows have been re-glazed in the last 12 years but preserving earlier embrasures. Interior : Not inspected but said to have a massive fireplace to ground floor left with stone jambs and exposed beams in each ground floor room.

APPENDIX 2



Conservation Area Map. Abbotsford Indicated. © Mid Devon Council

APPENDIX 3

7/22/77

RICKEARD, GREEN & MICHELMORE
 81, QUEEN STREET
 EXETER

ESTATE AGENTS, AUCTIONEERS, ESTATE AND VALUERS

NOTE - The following particulars are intended to give a fair description of the property but their accuracy is not guaranteed; they do not constitute an offer or form part of any contract.

Described and Highly Commercial. Reference to L.M.S.

TENURE by agreement with Mrs. Shaper in reversion, (Telephone Director 211) or with the Agents as above.

ADDRESS: BURNHAY, BARN HAY.

A particularly desirable six-unit village house, occupying a quiet position opposite the Church in Burnhay, a pretty village in the East Valley, 2 miles from Exeter and Newton.

Abundant is superbly constructed of stone with a good National roof, and is carefully decorated and appointed throughout.

APPROXIMATE

Ground Floor: Entrance hall with closet cupboard.
KITCHEN, 10'6" x 12'0" with black floor, attractive fireplace of local stone with slate combustion stove, large deep cupboard, power and light points, television aerial point.
DINING ROOM, 13'7" x 13', exposed beams, brick fireplace, attractive stone seat, large cupboard, power points.
LIVING, 15'6" x 12'7", particularly well furnished and equipped, fireplace with tiled wall with tiled splashback, gasiron boiler for hot water supply, large fitted china cupboard with sliding doors, electric cooker, refrigerator and power points.
HALL with built-in bookshelves (h/w), h.t. off with meters for gas.
REAR, 13' x 7'6", black floor, slate combustion stove, power and light points. (Ideal for use as study).

First Floor: (Approached by easy straight staircase).
BEDROOM, 12' x 9", fitted beds (h/w) with splashback, hanging wardrobe, linen rail cupboard, power point.
BEDROOM, 12' x 7'6", fitted beds (h/w) with splashback, power and light points.
BEDROOM with fitted shelves.
BEDROOM, 12' x 10', fitted beds (h/w) with splashback, power and light points.
BEDROOM, 10'6" x 10'6", fitted shelves, power and light points, telephone extension.
BATHROOM with bath, tubular basin and modern low level VpB units, sliding cupboard, cylinder having fitted immersion heater.
TOILET ROOM with linen and dresses cupboards.
CLOSET with large chest cupboard.

Outside: Good sized GARAGE and WASHHOUSE with large timber fuel bunker, roofed water cover over back door.
 Small front garden.

Services: Main Water, Electricity and Drainage are connected.

Water Rates: approx £25. 7. 6. per 1/2 year. **L.I.C.** There is a small outlying of 1/2-acre paid for outlay.

PRICE: £ 175,000 + A.G.V.

APPENDIX 4



Figure 8. The setting of Abbotsford within The Bury.



Figure 9. Workshop/store – original external wall and roof timbers.



Figure 10. Principal façade of Abbotsford.

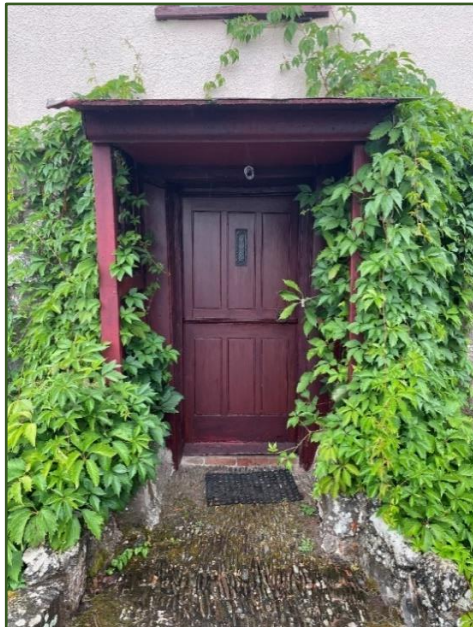


Figure 11. Principal entrance set within modern timber framed porch.



Figure 12. North elevation.



Figure 13. Southern elevation showing Workshop/store, southern gable end concealed with corrugated sheeting.



Figure 14. Workshop/store; timber doors.



Figure 15. Rear elevation showing stonework, sitting room beam end and indentations in render.



Figure 16. First floor landing window.

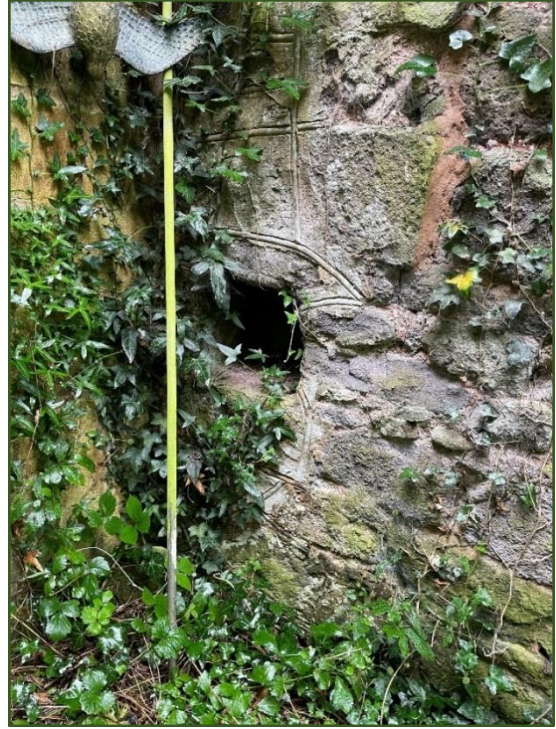


Figure 17. Recess in rear wall lower level.



Figure 18. Valley roof, with left gable concealed under corrugated sheeting. Note 3 small window openings.



Figure 19. Workshop doors and window.



Figure 20. Entrance hallway.



Figure 21. Entrance hallway.



Figure 22. Fireplace (white asbestos register plate visible) with bread oven.



Figure 23. Bread oven stonework.



Figure 24. Large steel RSJ set behind existing stone lintel (fireplace). Note keystone to top of photo.



Figure 25. Blocked opening to rear of Abbotsford.



Figure 26. Wooden timber framed dividing wall with panelled door with modern Yale lock.



Figure 27. Rear wall with location of end of beam under lintel.



Figure 28. Sitting room rotted parquet flooring.



Figure 29. Sitting room window recess.



Figure 30. Dining room fireplace opening.



Figure 31. Dining room doorway (note frame timbers) leading to kitchen. Later installation of southern kitchen wall visible.



Figure 32. Understairs space.



Figure 33. Understairs casement window with glazing bar and lead. Note internal window to right.



Figure 34. Internal window opening between downstairs and dining room.



Figure 35. Kitchen. Note north beam and central window.



Figure 36. Historic doorframe from dining room to kitchen. Note south wall in kitchen (later addition).



Figure 37. Kitchen doorway to corridor set within panel frame.



Figure 38. Kitchen doorway to corridor set within panel frame.



Figure 39. Kitchen doorway to corridor showing partial revealed southern beam.



Figure 40. Downstairs W.C. & shower.



Figure 41. Corridor to downstairs W.C. Shower room.



Figure 42. Timber 4-panelled door to workshop/store with iron hinges, latch and locking mechanism.



Figure 43. Historic window opening in original external wall (south) looking into workshop. Note wooden latch door.



Figure 44. Interior of workshop/store looking towards timber infill.



Figure 45. Interior of workshop looking towards front of building.



Figure 46. Rear room within workshop/store area with parquet flooring.



Figure 47. Floorplan illustrating likely original layout – 3 room deep plan on both floors.



Figure 48. Bedroom 1 with stone fire surround and recess in wall.



Figure 49. Bedroom 1 with dividing wall and sliding doors.



Figure 50. Indentations in render opposite bedroom 1 wall recess.



Figure 51. First floor shower room accessed from bedroom 1 and landing.



Figure 52. Bedroom 2; note blocked doorway to bedroom 3.



Figure 53. Elm floorboards first floor.



Figure 54. Bedroom 3 with large, inconsistent window set high under eaves.



Figure 55. Bedroom 3 – upright support and false beam.



Figure 56. Elm floorboards set under later boards (first floor).



Figure 57. First floor shower room/bathroom.



Figure 58. House within The Bury (opposite Abbotsford) demonstrating the style of window to be installed at Abbotsford.



Fig.59 Example of oak panelled interior door.