



Heritage Impact Assessment

Churton Hall, Pump Lane,
Churton

The Barnston Estate

July 2023



Contents

Executive summary	4
1. Introduction	6
2. Relevant conservation planning policy and guidance	7
3. The application site and identified heritage assets	10
4. Historical context and heritage assets	13
5. The significance of the heritage assets	19
6. Impact of the development proposal on the heritage assets	44
7. Conclusion	56
Appendices	



Churton Hall

Executive Summary

This heritage impact assessment has been prepared on behalf of The Barnston Estate to accompany a listed building consent and planning application in support of the restoration and subdivision of Churton Hall, Pump Lane, Churton. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been written to identify the significance of the heritage assets and the impact of any development upon them. This is in accordance with national planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework on the historic environment.

Churton Hall is a Grade II listed building located within Churton Conservation Area. It is located on the south side of Pump Lane. It is in the vicinity of several heritage assets that collectively have group value. They contribute to the conservation area's special architectural and historic character and interest.

Churton Hall is a former cruck framed hall house of the 15th century, that has later and significant additions dating from each subsequent century. It has been a farmhouse for a significant period, and it is now being subdivided into two to provide two separate independent dwelling houses.

Churton Hall is built of timber frame, brick and sandstone. It is of two storeys, an E-shaped plan, with a substantial lateral brick and sandstone chimney to the east side, likely to be of 17th century date. It has a central oak door entrance with porch with a painted board inscribed WB 1569 EB, over a massive door of 3 oak boards on heavy wrought iron hinges. The interior includes an inglenook fireplace and recently uncovered hidden features include three 15th century cruck frames, one with service doors facing a cross passage.

Churton Hall's significance is derived from its historical association with the Barnston family; the remarkable survival of the cruck frame and wattle and daub, the high quality aesthetic and historic appearance of the 16th century box frame, and other associated features; the walled garden and its association with the manor; the hall's historical development within Churton village; and its use as a farmstead. Documentation from the 1400's shows that the Berneston (Barnston) family held the Churton estate, and they are credited with building Churton Hall. The analysis suggests that it is an Elizabethan structure that retains an earlier timber core.

The building can be read architecturally as two separate and distinct phases – the timber framed section of the hall, and the 19th century addition to the south. Within both areas there are period features, but overall, there is a clear sequencing and hierarchy within the house, reflecting the changing of the social status of the house over many centuries.

The proposal will allow the hall to be subdivided into two in a way that best reflects the character of each unit – the Elizabethan wing and the Victorian wing. The subdivision is legible and is reversible. The building will remain within the ownership of the Barnston Estate, with each of the properties used as a family home. There are positive public benefits in the restoration of the building and its ancillary structures, such as the pigsties and sandstone troughs, outbuildings and ancillary walls and other features that will be associated with the proposed development. There are significant benefits from the sensitive restoration of previously covered features. A sensitive thermal upgrade will ensure the building's longevity.

The proposed alterations are honest and legible alterations to the building for the 21st century which is another high-quality design phase in the life of the building. The historic integrity and architectural character of the building and principal views to Churton Hall will not be adversely affected. Overall, the proposed development will have a positive impact on the architectural and historic interest of Churton Hall.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage impact assessment has been prepared on behalf of The Barnston Estate to accompany a listed building consent and application in support of the restoration and subdivision of the hall into two dwellings at of Churton Hall, Pump Lane, Churton.
- 1.2 The proposal includes, and is described in more detail in Section 6: -
- Subdivision of the building into two separate residential units
 - Restoration of the timber frame and infill panels
 - Alterations to the plan form to better reveal the 17th century features of importance.
 - Minor alterations including insulation, the repair of windows, new windows and doors, new WC, woodburning stoves and minor changes to the plan form.
- 1.3 The purpose of the assessment is to describe the significance of nearby heritage assets and their setting. This information will subsequently highlight any impact of the proposal on the significance of the assets. It will identify mitigating measures, where necessary, to address this impact.
- 1.4 The application site is located within Churton Conservation Area, which was designated in 1973 and amended in 1996. The conservation area includes the historic village core. Churton Hall is a Grade II listed building. It was listed in 1952. The Wall to Walled Garden on west side of Churton Hall was listed in 1984. Other structures in the curtilage are listed by virtue of its association with Churton Hall.
- 1.5 This document has been prepared following several site visits between February and May 2023. It is to be read in conjunction with other associated documents in relation to the planning and listed building consent application.

2.0 Relevant Conservation Planning Policy and Guidance

- 2.1 Under Section 66 (1) of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** local authorities must give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 of the same Act states, in the exercising of planning functions in conservation areas special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, when assessing planning applications.
- 2.2 Policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local development plans, including neighbourhood plans, set out national and local planning policy in respect to the conservation of the historic environment. National guidance is within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policies 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Of relevance is policies on Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets, which states that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.” In Considering Potential Impacts the NPPF states that “193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation ... irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 194. states that “Any harm to, or 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. Paragraph 196. advocates that “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.” Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that “Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.”
- 2.3 A **heritage asset** is described in the glossary of the NPPF (Annex 2) as a “building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).” (*Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, July 2021*). Designated heritage assets as those designated under legislation. These are a “World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area”.

- 2.4 Non-Designated Heritage Assets are described in the NPPF as heritage assets. They are defined on the Government’s website as “buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.” (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>)
- 2.5 The definition of **significance** in relation to heritage policy is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. “
- 2.6 The **setting** of a heritage asset is defined 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 an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.” Setting is not a heritage designation.
- 2.7 Relevant local plan policies are in the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan: Part 1: ENV5 Historic Environment, and ENV6 High quality design and sustainable construction; and Part 2: DM 3 - Design, character and visual amenity, DM 46 - Development in conservation areas and DM 47 – Listed buildings. These policies reflect national planning policy in the preservation and enhancement of the building environment.
- 2.8 Local Plan (Part Two) Policy DM 47 – Listed buildings states that development proposals will be supported where: -
- the significance of a listed building and its setting is safeguarded, securing its optimum viable use and minimise the harm to any existing heritage assets on the site.
 - it can be demonstrated that the proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the significance, character, structure, scale, design, appearance or setting of the building.
 - be visually intrusive or unsightly when seen in longer public or private views from ground or upper levels.

- 2.9 Historic England's guidance on "I want to Change the Internal Layout" states that "Changing the internal layout or plan of a house can be a major undertaking. As the layout is one of a building's most important characteristics [and] (t)he layout dictates such things as the size and shape of rooms, the positions of staircases, doors, and windows and how rooms connect". It goes on to say that "the layout of a historic house is valuable because it tells the history of how the house was used when first built, and how it might have changed over time, because of fashion and as living standards improved". However, it does not specifically state that the plan should not be altered, but "it may be possible to remove internal walls to make larger rooms or to divide a large room to make smaller spaces. But this will very much depend on the importance of the wall or room. In most cases - and usually in listed buildings - you will be expected to keep old walls, or at least enough to show where they were. "
- 2.10 There is a balanced view required on use, viability, and conservation. If harm is identified, the degree must be given sufficient weight and balanced against the public benefits generated by the proposals. In the Bramshill case in the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Lindblom stated "what amounts to "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" in a particular case will always depend on the circumstances. Whether there will be such "harm", and, if so, whether it will be "substantial", are matters of fact and planning judgment."
- 2.11 In terms of assessing setting, special regard should be had for preserving the setting of a listed building. Case law has determined that preserve means to not cause harm to the setting, rather than to not change the setting. If there is harm, whatever magnitude, then the harm, must be evaluated in terms of assessing and mitigating positive and negative impacts in a holistic and balanced manner. This is to establish an overall conclusion on the level of harm, the weight that could be attributed to each element, seasonal effects and non-visual impacts and mitigating measures including public benefit.

3.0 The application site and identified heritage assets.

3.1 Churton Hall is located on the south side of Pump Lane on the edge of the village. It is set back from the road with a small front garden to the north side, facing the road. The site is bound to the north by a low sandstone boundary wall of c19th century. The east of the site incorporates a range of 18th and 19th century farm buildings, a U-shaped plan set around a courtyard. To the west of the site is a walled garden accessed from a narrow track between the farmhouse and a small walled 19th century piggery enclosure behind the farmhouse to the south. Behind the piggery enclosure and located to the south west of the farmhouse is a structure known as a giraffe house, a 19th century double height open sided building used for housing large machinery.

3.2 The designated heritage assets that are relevant in considering the proposed development are identified below:

Directly affected: -

Listed Building: Churton Hall (Grade II)

Listed Building: Wall to Walled Garden on west side of Churton Hall (Grade II)

Curtilage Listed Structures: Pigsties and troughs, garden walls.

Conservation Area: Churton

Setting considerations: -

Curtilage Listed Building: U shaped range of outbuildings to east of Churton Hall

Non designated heritage assets: Stone outbuilding to south east of U shaped outbuildings

Non designated heritage assets: The Giraffe house

3.3 The building has no known archaeological implications. It is unlikely that the development will affect archaeology, however if it does, the views of the Council's Archaeologist will need to be considered during the processing of the application.



Fig 1. Site Location and Layout Plan (Copyright: RAISE architects)

4.0 Historical context and heritage assets

- 4.1. Churton may date from the late Saxon / medieval period. It is said to have formed from a moiety of two townships that date from the 11th / 12th century, Churton by Aldford to the north, and Churton by Farndon to the south. The division was said to be on Pump Lane, an ecclesiastical boundary with Knowl Lane and Hob Lane. Churton by Aldford was a township in Aldford parish in the Broxton hundred, with Churton became a civil parish in 1866. Churton by Farndon was a township in the Farndon ancient parish, in the Broxton hundred, and became a civil parish in 1866. In 2015 the civil parishes of Churton by Aldford, Churton by Farndon and Edgerley were abolished and incorporated into Churton civil parish.
- 4.2 The Barnston family are believed to have owned the Churton estate near Farndon (Cheshire) since the mid 14th century, and the earliest surviving deed of the Churton estate is dated 1393. The lineage is said to have begun with Hugh de Berneston of Barneston and Worleston, was 'lord of a moiety of Berneston' (Wirral), active in the reign of King Edward I. His grandson, Robert de Berneston of Barnston and Heswall had a younger son, Robert who settled at Churton. Robert de Berneston of Chirton (c.1380 - 1477) bequeathed the Churton lands to his son, Ralph Berneston of Churton (c.1404 – 1449). Ralph's daughter, Marjory inherited part of the land, but she died without issue, and it passed to her first cousin once removed, Robert Berneston, born in about 1477. His son, Thomas Berneston or Barnston, (1509 – 1562) lived at Churton with his wife and two children. His son William Barnston (1545-1620) and his wife, Elizabeth, have their initials and date on the front porch of Churton Hall. 'WB 1569 EB'. Evidence of three surviving cruck frames and a dendrochronology survey, suggests that the hall is earlier, and the house remodelled in 1569.
- 4.3 William and Elizabeth's son, Thomas (1565-1646) inherited and lived in Churton Hall in 1620. Their son, William Barnston (1592-1664) inherited and lived at Churton Hall, and fought in the Civil War as a staunch Royalist. Following his imprisonment in London for his contribution to the Civil War, his lands were seized, he was fined and some of the properties on his estate burnt. His estate included Churton, Farndon, Aldford, and Overmarsh.
- 4.4 William's grandson, Robert Barnston (1683-1753) was possibly the last Barnston to live at Churton Hall. A survey of his estate at Churton Hall in 1742 included a manse house, gardens and yards, best garden, barn croft, orchard, and a new orchard or kitchen yard. This appears to corollate with the suggested dating of the walled garden on the west side of Churton Hall, which is described as 18th century or earlier.

- 4.5 Robert Barnston's eldest son, Trafford Barnston (1707-1771), built a town house, Forest House, in Love Street, Chester. The design is attributed to the architect Sir Robert Taylor (1714-1788), whose commissions include Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, London, Chilham Castle, Kent, Bishop's Palace, Chester, and alterations to George Sampson's Bank of England. Forest house at the time was described as the largest town house in Chester at that time, apart from the former Bishop's Palace at The Groves. His nephew, Roger Barnston (1749-1837) resided at Forest House from the age of 10.
- 4.6 A drawing of Churton Hall dated 1793 by John Ingleby (1749-1808), a Welsh topographical artist from Halkyn, Flintshire, shows the building which in terms of form, looks very similar to as existing. It shows that the building was a E-plan, a central hall portion with two cross wings and a porch. There is a single storey projecting wing with a hexagonal lean-to roof to the north east. The drawing depicts mullioned windows to ground and first floor, and what appears to be a slate roof with finials to the projecting north gables. Externally the building, except for the single storey north projection, is expressed as a box frame construction. The drawing shows that there are three chimneys, one offset forward from the roof apex to the hall area, off centre from the porch, the other two are lateral to the east gable end. There is also a possible bell tower above the porch to the north roof slope of the roof apex. The boundary wall around the north front is brick, as is the much taller garden wall to the west. The low roof structures to the rear of the house are also evident, possibly a separate kitchen.
- 4.7 Churton Hall represents the house remodelled by William Barnston (1545-1620) and his wife, Elizabeth, 'WB 1569 EB'. Internally there is evidence of three surviving cruck frames and a cross passage. The crucks represent the core of an earlier hall that was substantially remodelled and refaced.
- 4.8 Roger Harry Barnston (1802-1849) is recorded as owner of Churton Hall on the 1840 tithe map for Churton by Farndon. The tithe map describes the occupier as Thomas Gaman, as Plot 9. The land is described as house buildings and yards, gardens etc. He also leased Plots 1-24, except for Plots 7, 11, 18, 19. It was mostly arable farming. The land has remained in agricultural use since.



Fig 3. Churton Hall, 1793, drawn by J. Ingleby (Image: National Library of Wales). Note the wall next to the lateral chimney of which remnants remain; the outbuildings to the rear, which were rebuilt in the early 19th century. Also note the central chimney stack, the eaves line which is roughly parallel to the timber framing wall plate, the walled garden to the west and entrance. At this point the Georgian side door hasn't been built. There are mounting steps for a carriage to the front of the wall of the hall.



Fig 4. Churton Hall, 2023. Note the raising of the roof, probably undertaken in the 19th century, with 19th century casement windows; the smaller windows above the porch that replaced a dormer window; the off centre first floor window to the west wing; the central chimney stack is a late 19th or early 20th century addition the right chimney has been altered. The lateral chimney stack to the east gable has been truncated. The north west projecting gable perhaps retains some 19th century vernacular revival chevrons to the first floor.



Fig 5. The east elevation of Churton Hall, 2023. Note the curved wall adjacent to the lateral chimney stack shown in the image of 1793. The second photograph shows the jettied first floor and close studded timber framing, truncated by a coursed sandstone wall, part of the second lateral chimney stack – the earlier one is of stone.



Fig 6. The east wing of the house, with a service wing to the rear. Note how this has changed since the 1793 drawing. There is a two storey wing, which appears to be one build and is early 19th century. This has metal small paned windows. There is a side entrance from the farmyard, which suggests that this became the primary entrance. It is a six panel raised and fielded Georgian front door, probably early 19th century. Internally there is a door of the same age leading to the early 19th century wing. The bay window to the left of the latticed entrance door is later 19th century, this room was the farm office.

5.0 The significance of the heritage assets

5.1 **Assessing significance** is embedded in national planning policy. Heritage values that contribute to a greater understanding of significance are identified by Historic England in 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (April 2008)' as being: -

Evidential
Historical
Aesthetic
Communal

5.2 There are six commonly accepted levels of significance. These are as follows: -

Outstanding	Highest level of importance, SAMs, WHS, Grade I / II* listed buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens
High (significant)	Grade II listed buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and conservation areas
Medium (moderate)	Locally listed buildings, and those buildings that contribute to a listed building's setting.
Low (limited)	Limited heritage value
Neutral	Neither positive nor negative features
No significance	Features that detract from the heritage values

5.3 Churton Conservation Area

5.3.1 Churton Conservation Area has a very distinct rural village character. The development proposals are largely internal and as such will not affect the conservation area or its character or appearance. The development impact on the conservation area is not given any further consideration in this report.

5.4 U shaped range of outbuildings to east of Churton Hall

5.4.1 The development will not impact on the building fabric, setting or key views of these curtilage listed buildings. The development impact on these structures is not given any further consideration in this report.

5.5 Stone outbuilding to south east of U shaped outbuildings

5.5.1 The development will not impact on the building fabric, setting or key views of this non-designated heritage asset. The development impact on this structure is not given any further consideration in this report.

5.6 The Giraffe house

5.6.1 The development will not impact on the building fabric, setting or key views of this non-designated heritage asset. The development impact on this structure is not given any further consideration in this report.

5.7 Listed Building: Churton Hall (Grade II)

5.7.1 There are internal and external changes proposed to the listed building. None are contentious, and several aspects will better reveal the building's significance. This is described in more detail overleaf.

5.8 Listed Building: Wall to Walled Garden on west side of Churton Hall (Grade II)

5.8.1 There is some impact and changes proposed to the listed building. These are not considered to be contentious. This is described in more detail overleaf.

5.9 Curtilage Listed Structures: Pigsties and troughs, garden walls including dovecote.

5.9.1 There are some changes proposed to this area, which is considered better reveal the significance of this part of the site. This is described in more detail overleaf.

5.10 Churton Hall

- 5.10.1 Churton Hall is a multi-phased building. Recent removal of added plasterwork has led to the discovery that this building started life as a cruck framed building. A dendrochronology survey has determined that the felling dates of the crucks is c1461. A cruck framed building is an early form of timber framing. It is constructed using a single trunk into two symmetrical blades, which are joined together at the apex of a roof. These are located at regular intervals to form bays that support the roof. There are many examples in Wales and the Marches, and northern England.
- 5.10.2 The hall appears to have been a three unit layout with a hall to the west, a cross passage in the location of the present hallway, a screens partition for access to the buttery and pantry to the east. This would make sense given that the ground floor inside the hall slopes from west to east, and natural drainage would therefore follow the topography and terrain. The cross passage had doors at both ends, which remains the case today if indeed the north front door and the Regency style French doors directly opposite were early openings.
- 5.10.3 The location of the crucks point towards them being retained in situ and in preservation of some significant age. It appears that some cruck frame pairs at Churton Hall are a full cruck, where the foot of the cruck is close to the floor. It also appears that the dais end may have been to the west side, as the timbers look larger, more substantial and of better quality. There is evidence of where an arch brace would have been under the cruck to the west, and the better face faces west.
- 5.10.4 There is no evidence to identify more than three cruck frames, but there is a screens partition for the buttery and pantry in the centre of the house. This does not appear to have been moved. The hallway today is very wide, with a 19th century staircase to the right hand side of the doorway. The higher quality cruck is to the west of this. There is a substantial sized curved tie beam, and it appears that this is a raised cruck. There is evidence of a post and jowl beneath the feet of each in the rear south parlour. Later timber uprights and lath and plaster from the 19th century is evident below the tie beam. There is evidence of a spur tie. Purlins have not been uncovered but there are notches for where the purlins would have been. It is possible that the existing hall and the rear south parlour was the location of the open hall, and that the east side of the screen partition was the service end or lower side. The building may have originally had four frames, with one possibly to the north west gable wall, but this is now of brick. At this point in time there is no conclusive evidence for this and as yet the crucks don't reveal enough information.

- 5.10.5 There exists historic wattle and daub infill panels to the ground and first floor, using rose stems to help bind the dung for the daub. There is also evidence of reed and plaster elsewhere. There are also later brick infill panels.
- 5.10.6 The house of 1569 includes, it is assumed, a change to the plan form, the rebuilding of the house as a box timber frame and E-plan shape, a porch, new chimneys and fireplaces. It was thought that this phase included the inclusion of a first floor and stairs. A substantial sandstone lateral chimney and inglenook fireplace was added to the east gable wall - which would have been unheated prior to that because the space previously was for the buttery and pantry. This area and the room above was heated. There may have been winding stairs in stone or timber to the north side of the chimney, later stairs still exist in the same pattern and location; there is also the remnants of a bread oven. The east gable appears to have then been extended out, and the stone lateral chimney stack is encased within the walls of the house, but still visible from the first floor landing.
- 5.10.7 There is evidence of a sandstone cellar under the central sitting room and to the east of the screen partition. It has sandstone steps and bench and was used during the civil war. There are also beams that are stop chamfered, to the central living room and to the south west parlour.
- 5.10.8 In the 19th century there were extensive alterations including the raising of the eaves level above the timber framed wall plate to allow for increased head height. Staircases were added, including within the existing hall. The possible former kitchen area at right angles to the east of the building was demolished and the erection of a significant extension to the southeast of four bays was added. This has windows that look onto the farm courtyard. A secondary farmhouse entrance door was created from the farmyard. A modest staircase was inserted to the 19th century service wing, linking both the service wing and main house.
- 5.10.9 The 19th century wing is regular in plan and has three good sized bedrooms at first floor level, and a bathroom. There is a substantial chimney to the ground floor, which would have serviced the kitchen. This is evidenced by a substantial arch. Internally to the south end of the building there are substantial beams, which suggest that they may have once formed part of another earlier structure or were reused. There is an internal wall missing, indicated by a misaligned roof timbers, it appears that the corridor to the east is possibly late 19th century. In the 1930's the room behind the original house became a farm office. The room next to the kitchen was a cheese room, and used also for the storage of dairy, with meat stored in the south ground floor room.



Fig 7. The assumed screens partition within the cross passage. Note the cruck to the left of the first photograph.



Fig 8. The other side of the screen passage inserted next to an early 20th century fireplace. The floorboards were probably installed at the same time, or later. The sandstone cellar is underneath this floor. A stop chamfered beam is encased in plaster and painted black gloss. This has now been uncovered. It has been raised and is resting on a corbel that may indicate the location of the division wall between pantry and buttery.



Fig 9. The cruck to first floor above the screens partition showing wattle and daub and later brick infill. Note the packing piece (arrowed yellow) and the spur (arrowed green). The tie beam (arrowed orange) at floorboard level appears original to the truss.



Fig 10 The crucks to first floor. To the left is the cruck above the screens partition. Note the inserted door (arrowed orange). To the right is between the 17th century chamber with lateral chimney and inner room. Note wide floorboards.



Fig 11. The raised cruck to the west of the existing hallway. The 'upper' face of the truss faces west, into the bedroom, suggesting that this faced the most important end of the house.

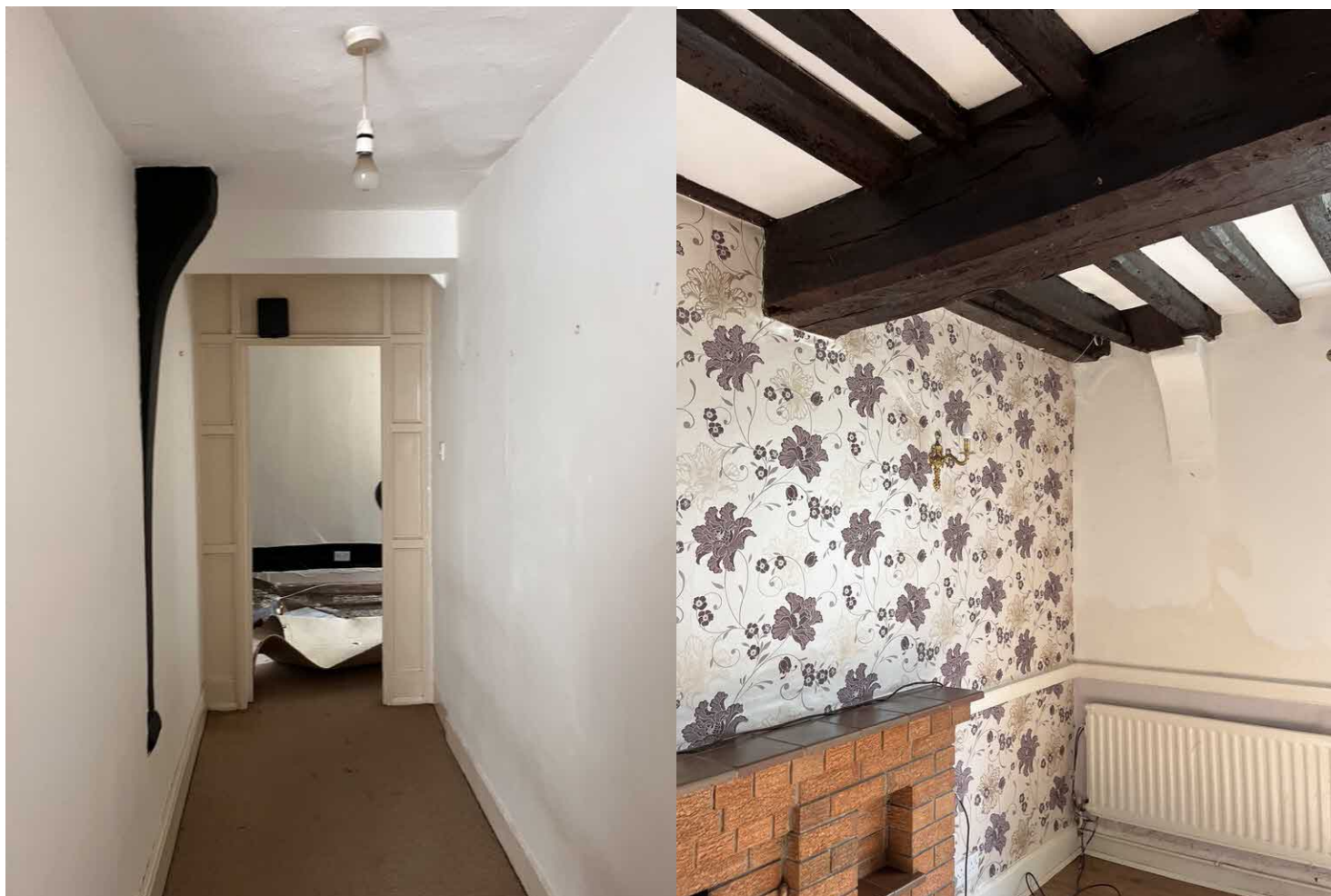


Fig 12. The stop chamfered timbers to the rear south west parlour, assumed to be 17th century but with a felling date of 1741. Note the curved timber post and jowl to either side, denoting the raised cruck, perhaps suggesting that the hall remained in use for longer than previously thought. The north one is inside a modern mid-century corridor partition, which is to be removed.



Fig 13. The altered inglenook on the east wall; the bread oven; stairs to the side of the fireplace leading up to two bedrooms. The tiles were probably added in the 19th century on an earth floor.



Fig 14. The fireplace to the solar, or chamber above the east room with inglenook. Note the various changes to the fireplace as flues became slimmer. The sandstone blocks are substantial. The Georgian grate was probably inserted in the early 19th century with other improvements undertaken at the time. The image to the right is that of Llwyn Celyn, a late medieval hall house of 1420. Note the similarities of the ground floor fireplace to that at Churton.

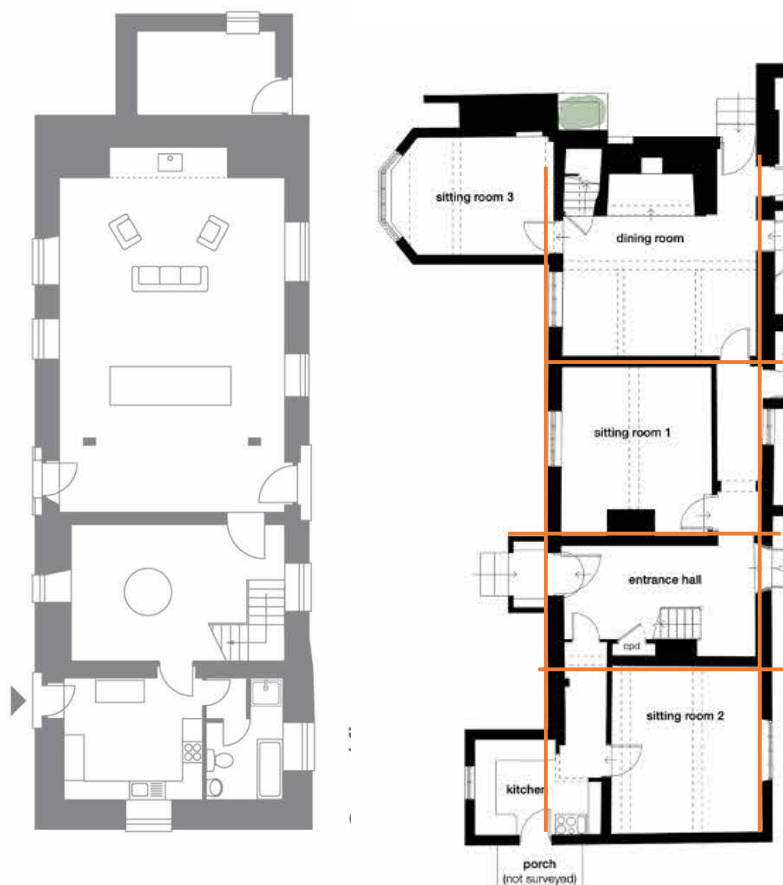


Fig 15. Left: The plan for of Plas Uchaf, near Corwen, Denbighshire, a hall house of c1400; and the ground floor plan of Churton Hall. These are at different scales but the outline in orange of Churton Hall shows the possible layout of the cruck framed hall. Sitting rooms 2 and 3 were added in the 17th century with a lateral chimney to the east elevation. At this time floors and the stairs would have been inserted.



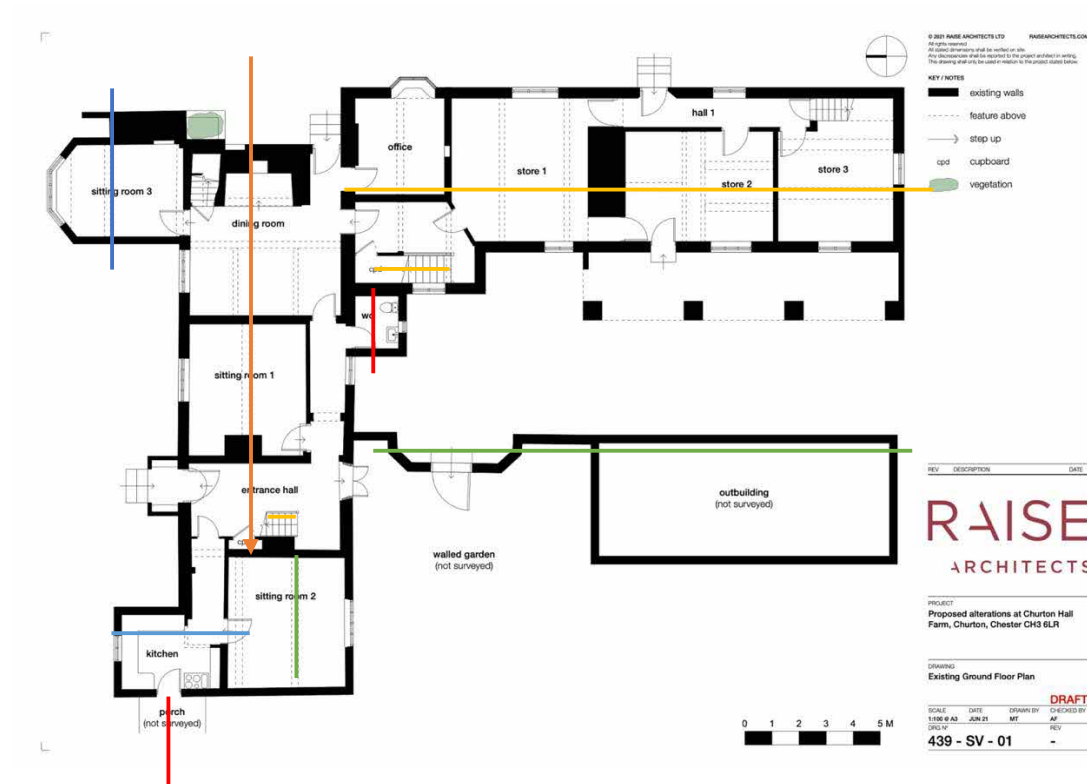
Fig 16. Left: Plas Uchaf, near Corwen, Denbighshire, a hall house of c1400. (Grade I)



Fig 16: Llyn Celyn, Monmouthshire (Grade I) restored by the Landmark Trust. Note the 17th century fireplace and stairs, and restored timber finishes (top photos); the cross passage (bottom left); the cruck frame with arched brace (bottom right)

Fig 17. Possible chronology

Orange - medieval, blue - 17th, green – 18th, yellow - 19th, red 20th century



5.11 Key Points of Significance

Of outstanding significance and particularly sensitive to change (pink):

Its significance as a possible medieval cruck framed hall house, with associated surviving features and cross passage

Of high significance and sensitive to change (red):

The frontage and 17th century changes, including the insertion of chimneys, lateral chimney breast, the 18th century insertion of the first floor to the hall.

Of medium (moderate) significance and opportunity to change (yellow):

The side and rear; the plan form; 19th century additions

Of Low (limited) significance and of limited heritage value and opportunity to change (green):

20th century editions – fireplaces, stairs

Of Neutral or no significance with neither positive nor negative features, of detracting from the building and opportunity to change (blue):

Modern fixtures and fitting such as plasterboard partitions, walling etc.

The house is to be presented as part of its most significant which is that of the 17th century. It means that the less significant aspects of the 19th and 20th century will be removed. This is based on a philosophy undertaken by the Landmark Trust.

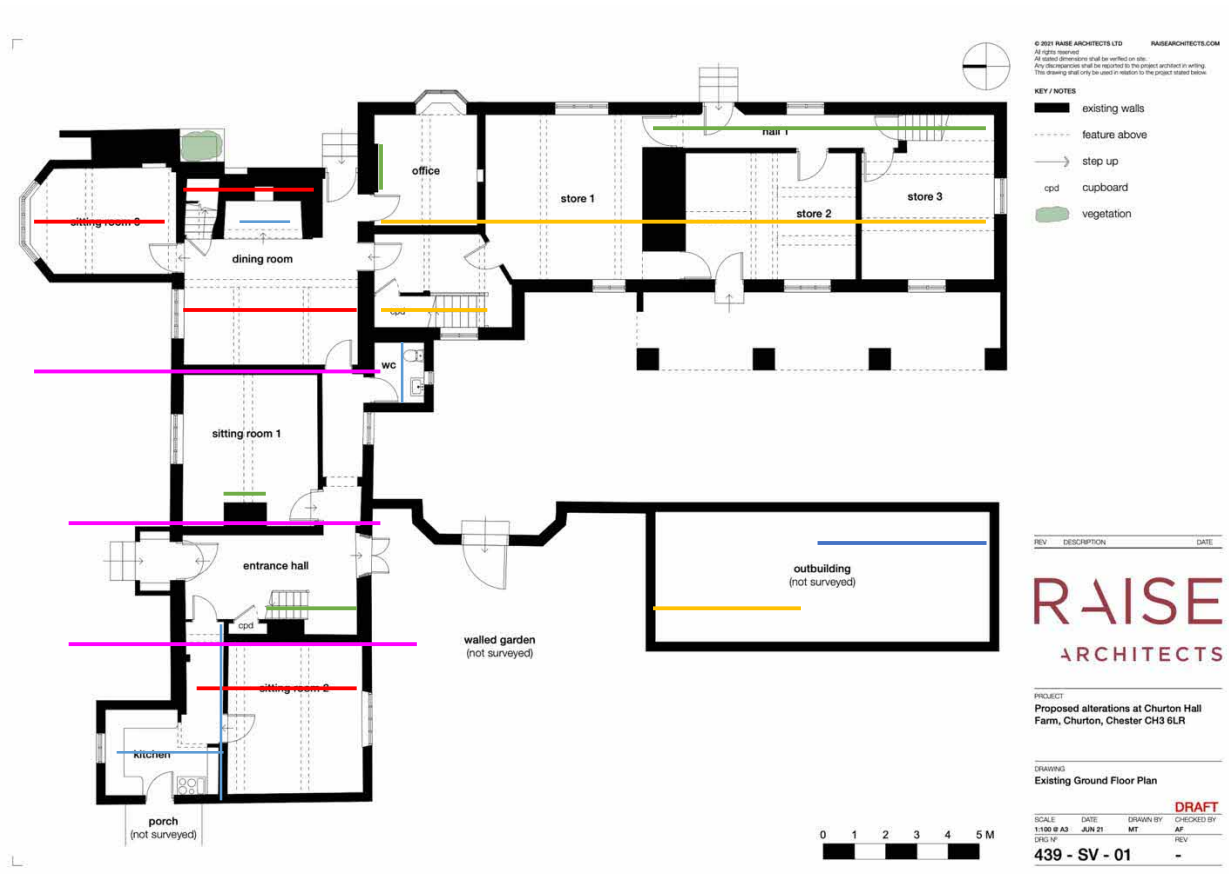


Fig 18. Areas of significance – ground floor

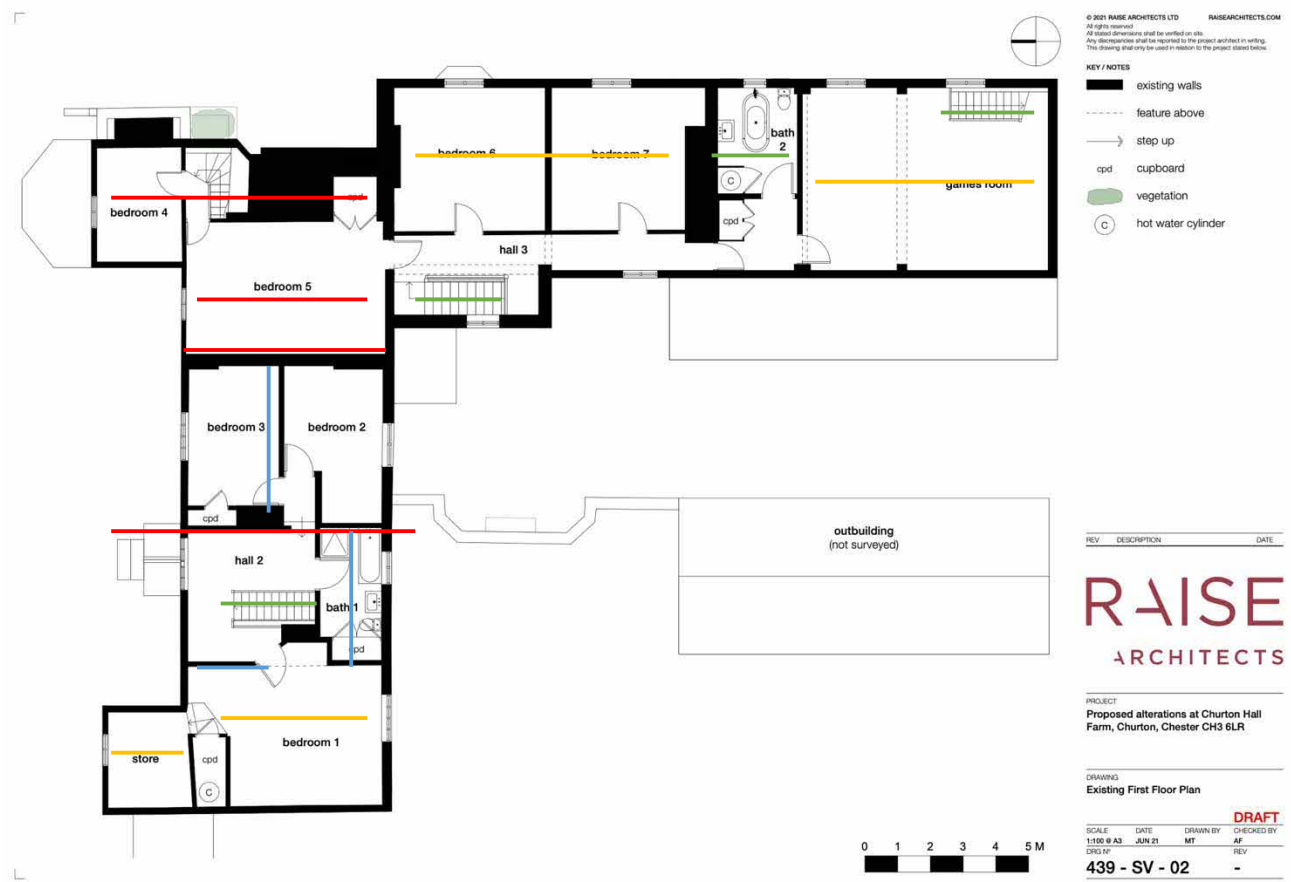




Fig 18. Areas of significance – first floor

5.11 Heritage Value – Churton Hall (Grade II)


Evidential Value - High	<p>The site has a history of use associated with the Barnston's since the 15th century. Dendrochronology dates the cruck frame from this period. The cruck frame is in remarkable condition. There are also clear stages of development from the 16th, 17th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The site is medieval.</p>	<p>Overall significance High</p> 
Historical Value – Outstanding <i>(Special Historic Interest)</i>	<p>The building appears to be a remarkable survival of a cruck framed hall house, uncovered during a soft strip of the building. There is evidence of the upper end being to the west, with the lower service end to the east, including evidence of a screens passage and doors to a buttery and pantry. There are clear sequencing and phasing, including a lateral chimney stack of the 17th century. Internally there are stop chamfered timber beams, and an inglenook fireplace to the east, a possible replaced spiral stair adjacent to the inglenook and various fireplaces dating from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The survival of the cruck frame and the wattle and daub panels suggest that it is a rare surviving example of its type.</p>	
Aesthetic Value - High <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i>	<p>The building is highly decorative on the outside with a different periods of timber framing, including close studding, chevron detailing, and concave -sided lozenges, denoting a high status building. The building phases are reasonably well expressed and read as a cohesive whole. Externally it displays above either side of the porch, two armorial bearings on octagonal plaques: to the left a shield has white chevron band with 3 daggers or above and 3 below, to right white horse's head in circle.</p>	
Communal Value – high	<p>It is possible, that if a hall house, it was a house of manorial status, and the centre of administration during the medieval period, used as a court for legal, business, and other matters of importance. It was used as a private house for the Barnston family before being tenanted out and used as a farmhouse. It remains in residential use and is an important part of the rural village life of Churton.</p>	

5.12 Heritage Values – Wall to Walled Garden on west side of Churton Hall including dovecote (Grade II)

<p>Evidential Value - High</p>	<p>An almost complete if dilapidated wall around a former garden associated with Churton Hall.</p>	<p>Overall significance Medium</p> 
<p>Historical Value – High <i>(Special Historic Interest)</i></p>	<p>A structure recorded in an inventory of the 1700’s, at a time when the walled garden and its use, was of key importance to the hall</p>	
<p>Aesthetic Value medium <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i></p>	<p>The wall is dilapidated and requires recording, repair, and restoration. Features of interest include hidden stone gatepost denoting a more formal entrance, and a dovecot, largely hidden.</p>	
<p>Communal Value - low</p>	<p>The site is in private use associated with Churton Hall.</p>	



5.13 Heritage Values – Pigsties and troughs, garden walls (Curtilage listed structures)

<p>Evidential Value - High</p>	<p>The site has a history of use that has gradually evolved over time, as evidenced in archival and archaeological records.</p> <p>The shape and boundary are well preserved as indicated by historic mapping sources and photographs. The immediate surroundings have changed with the loss of the pigsty yards, but the footprint is still evident. The pigsties have been little altered, and the buildings reflect the topography of the site.</p> <p>The pigsties are permanent structures of the 19th century, associated with increased cattle numbers on the farm, and reflecting greater intensification of agriculture, set in a linear plan with associated feed houses, feeding passages and small yards. The original layout and features are retained.</p>	<p>Overall significance Medium</p> 
<p>Historical Value – High <i>(Special Historic Interest)</i></p>	<p>The pigsties are single storey structures with individual boxes and yards. It forms part of a coherent farmstead group.</p> <p>The building layout reflects the most efficient cycle of processes associated with the functional importance of the dairy and cheese farming cycle, where pigs were given a ready supply of whey for food.</p> <p>The introduction of pigsties in the 19th century represented a change to the husbandry of pigs, from being largely outdoors to indoors.</p>	
<p>Aesthetic Value Medium <i>(Special Architectural Interest)</i></p>	<p>The character of the structure is simple in form. They are single storey of local Cheshire brick with slate roofs, brick arches to opening.</p>	
<p>Communal Value medium</p>	<p>The farmstead had communal value as a farm, whose produce is important to the wider community.</p>	

5.14 The setting of heritage assets

- 5.14.1 Although setting is not a heritage asset, it still requires assessment. To understand how adjacent designated heritage assets are experienced it is important to define the contribution that the existing site makes to their significance. Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) - The Setting of Heritage Assets is a key document to consider.
- 5.14.2 The setting of Churton Hall is characterised by its village location on the south side of Pump Lane, set close to the road, where it contributes strongly to the townscape as a high status timber framed house; the walled garden, which is associated with its status as an important manor house in the village, and the farm buildings, which clearly show the evolution of the use of the site since the late 18th and early 19th century.

6.0 **Impact of The Development Proposal on The Heritage Assets**

- 6.1. The proposals pertinent to the impact on the special character of the listed building and its immediate setting are below.
- 6.2 The building is split into several levels, and floor height levels are different. This is because part of it is built on bedrock, and subsequent changes to building acts that determined floor to ceiling heights and such like.
- 6.3 There is a clear physical and architectural break between the house at the front and the service wing to the rear. There is a single ground and first floor door that links the front of the house with the service wing. Both will be blocked off, retaining the doors, and sealing the break with fire and noise resistant panelling within the reveal. The primary staircase to both buildings will remain to allow access to the first floors.
- 6.4 Subdivision on the external space, to allow for private garden, is similarly low key, using existing subdivisions created by the walled garden and the piggery yards. These will create two distinct and private garden areas. The lane access to the rear will remain and will not be compromised.
- 6.5 Details of all the changes are identified in the table overleaf.

6.13 Assessment of Heritage Impact of the proposed works on the house

Proposal	Features affected	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of Change	Heritage Impact	Justification
Solid floor insulation - Remove all floor tiles throughout, dig down to minimum level, insulate with limecrete with underfloor heating system.	All earth ground floors.	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Moderate	Moderate	Positive – no harm	<p>The floor is damp, and a low level of equilibrium heat is required to keep the building at even temperature. Limecrete is a well-established method of insulating floors whilst allowing the building to breathe. The screeded finish is necessary to lay the tiles on. There are several options for the aggregate, such as recycled foam glass, which works well as a hardcore, has very good insulating properties and acts as a capillary break, and the depth of dig is likely to be the same as or less than concrete floor insulation. When dug, a layer of geotextile is laid over the bare earth, this is then followed by the insulating gravel, which is then compacted, but not crushed. Over the compacted surface another layer of geotextile is fitted to stop fine materials falling into the gravel beneath. The hydraulic lime screed is then laid at a 100mm thickness and can either be left or it can be covered with a floor covering once the screed has dried.</p> <p>This system lends itself especially well to water under-floor heating systems. The pipework is fitted to a grid on the second layer of geotextile between the sub-layer and the screed. The heat is transferred into the dense slab rather than the insulated layer beneath. The insulating aggregate is lightweight and can be poured directly onto the floor, without hard to fit layers of insulation board and plastic membrane. Importantly, this system does not compromise the traditional construction of solid walled buildings, because the moisture in the floor is not trapped, and the insulating aggregate simply acts as capillary break.</p> <p>The tiles will be re-laid. The aim is to reduce rising damp, protect the timbers and increase the EPC. Any archaeological implications will be discussed in advance with the Council's Development Management Archaeologist. All the above will be in conjunction with reducing any external factors that may be influencing damp, such as leaking gutters, higher ground levels.</p>

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage impact	Justification
Access to cellar	Main house - Sitting room 1 (central reception room)	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Moderate	Minor	Minor – no harm	This is the only access to the cellar because of the bedrock underneath the house. The proposal is likely to be a trap door arrangement. The area is between the cruck bays; however, it is a late 19 th / early 20 th insertion into the former hall area.
Hipped roof	Ground floor, flat roofed downstairs WC	Evidential Aesthetic	None	Minor	Positive – no harm	A new roof will be a minor beneficial aesthetic impact to the rear of the hall.
Expose previously hidden timber frame and infill panels.	Entrance hall, ground and first floor, other exposed areas	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	High	Major	Positive – no harm	This is a rare opportunity to expose the timber frame and its wattle and daub. There is an option to replace the brick and modern panels with insulating products and systems that will not trap moisture, such as a hemp, Woodfibre board, cork board and lime plaster. Decoration would be with a breathable silicate paint. It is proposed to carefully establish the condition of the cruck under the 19 th century lath and plaster ceiling.
New kitchen, reopen hall doorway, remove partition, French doors replacing south window.	Ground floor rear south parlour	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	High	Moderate	Positive – no harm	The removal of modern partitions better reveal the room's importance and significance and historic plan, exposing all roof timbers to the room. The installation of a kitchen will not diminish the character of the room and the removal of a kitchen is easily reversible. The introduction of French windows will allow for an improved relationship with the garden. The windows are modern and not of significance.
New roof	West porch	None	None	Minor	Positive – no harm	Renewal of roof to a late 20's century porch area in slate with rooflight will improve the appearance without affecting any special features or significance of the building.

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage impact	Justification
Partitioning between house and Victorian wing to create two separate units and installation of ground floor WC and cupboard.	First floor large East bedroom (5) / hallway to Victorian service range; ground floor farm office and hallway from dining room	Evidential Historic Aesthetic Communal	High for east bedroom; moderate to Victorian hall	Minor	Neutral – no harm	This is a minor and reversible area of work, involving the retention and locking and sealing of the door and blocking up the door with fireboard and insulation.
Fireplace restoration - expose stone fireplace mantle.	Bedroom 5	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	High	Moderate	Positive – neutral harm	The exposure of the various fireplace apertures has led to a greater understanding of the changes to the fireplace since the 17 th century. It is proposed to restore the fireplace as it may have been in the 17 th century by undertaking careful restoration and research. The Georgian grate could be reinstated in another fireplace.
New doorway	Bedroom 5 and 2	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	High – cruck truss partition	Minor	Neutral – no harm	This is a minor intervention in the partition wall. The wall will be carefully analysed to establish where the door can best go, depending on the cruck detail to be exposed. The wall will be restored and insulated if required. Door detail to match existing.
New doorway	Ground floor farm office door into Victorian service wing hallway	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Moderate	Minor	Neutral – no harm	The wall to the farm office and hall has already been altered. The existing door will remain in situ (leading into the dining hall) for evidential value. Door detail to match existing.

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage impact	Justification
Fully expose and restore kitchen arch to central fireplace.	Victorian service wing – ground floor former kitchen	Evidential Historic Aesthetic Communal	Moderate	Moderate	Positive – no harm	The opening up of this feature, and reinstating lime plaster is positive to better reveal the significance of this feature and the historic use of the room.
Replace main front door and renew stairs in sandstone and new metal casement window.	Victorian service wing – east elevation; first floor west elevation	Evidential Historic Aesthetic Communal	Moderate (none to concrete steps)	Minor	Positive – no harm	This aspect of work will restore the building's character and appearance.
Removal of corridor and stairs	Victorian service wing – hall 1, store 3 and games room	Evidential Historic Aesthetic Communal	Low	Moderate	Neutral harm	This is a later addition that has changed the plan form. There are benefits in reinstating a previous plan; with slight adverse impacts of removing later fabric. Overall, this is a neutral change.
French doors, new first floor sliding sash window and external sandstone steps to ground level.	South elevation to Store 3	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Moderate	Minor	Neutral harm	The introduction of French doors will allow for an improved relationship with the garden. The introduction of French doors will change slightly the external appearance of this elevation, but the change is not adverse, and the character of the building is retained. It will allow easy access to the restored piggery yard, which is the private garden space for this house.

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage impact	Justification
Remove corrugated veranda and install glazed door.	Victorian service wing west elevation	Evidential Historic	Low	Moderate	Positive – no harm	This aspect of work will restore the building's character and appearance. A new glazed door will add light into this part of the building – a neutral addition.
New 'lobby area' inside the front door	Victorian service wing east elevation	Evidential Historic	Low	Low	Neutral	Minor reversible change of new partitions.
New wood burning stoves.	Main house – dining and sitting room 1, Victorian wing store 1.	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Moderate	Low	Neutral – no harm	The lining of chimneys with a flue liner and the installation of a stove is not contentious, nor will it involve any removal of historic fabric.
Remove fireplaces.	Main house - sitting room 1, 2, 3, bedroom 1.	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	Moderate	Moderate	Neutral - Minor adverse	Fireplaces are an important focal point in the room. Sitting room 1 has a later fireplace inserted. The removal of the early 20 th century fireplace will be slightly adverse, but it will allow for a wood burning stove to be installed. Sitting room 2 has a poor 1970's brick fireplace that detracts from the room. Its removal is positive. Sitting Room 3 has a modern fireplace but historic chimney. Chimney will be retained in situ; slightly adverse as it removes focal point.
En-suites	Main house – Bedroom 1 store, Bedroom 4	Evidential Historic	Minor	Low	Neutral – no harm	The installation of bathroom and pipework will not diminish the character of the room and the removal of a bathroom is easily reversible. All pipework to be internal and pipes run through existing notches / holes etc.

Proposal	Features affected.	Heritage values	Significance	Scale of change	Heritage impact	Justification
Insulation measures including wall, roof, secondary glazing, window restoration and repair.	Roof, walls, windows	Evidential Historic Aesthetic	High	Minor	Positive – no harm	<p>Warm roof insulation will prolong the life of the building. Breathable insulation and good ventilation is essential. This will be undertaken in accordance with the following advice: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-insulating-pitched-roofs-rafter-level-warm-roofs/heag070-insulating-pitched-roof-rafter-warm-roofs/</p> <p>Options for insulation include sheep wool fitted between the rafters, with wool fibre board to the underside of the rafters, and wood fibre lime plaster.</p> <p>Repair, and where beyond repair, necessary to upgrade and improve windows in line with good conservation practice. All glazing bars and dimensions will be repaired. / Replaced exactly to match originals. Secondary glazing will be installed by Aldford Aluminium. Secondary glazing is beneficial in that it improves thermal efficiency and reduces background noise with a large air gap.</p>
Removal of modern fabric	Outbuilding attached to garden wall	Evidential	Moderate	Minor	Positive – no harm	Changes to restore the space for the benefit of the Victorian wing.

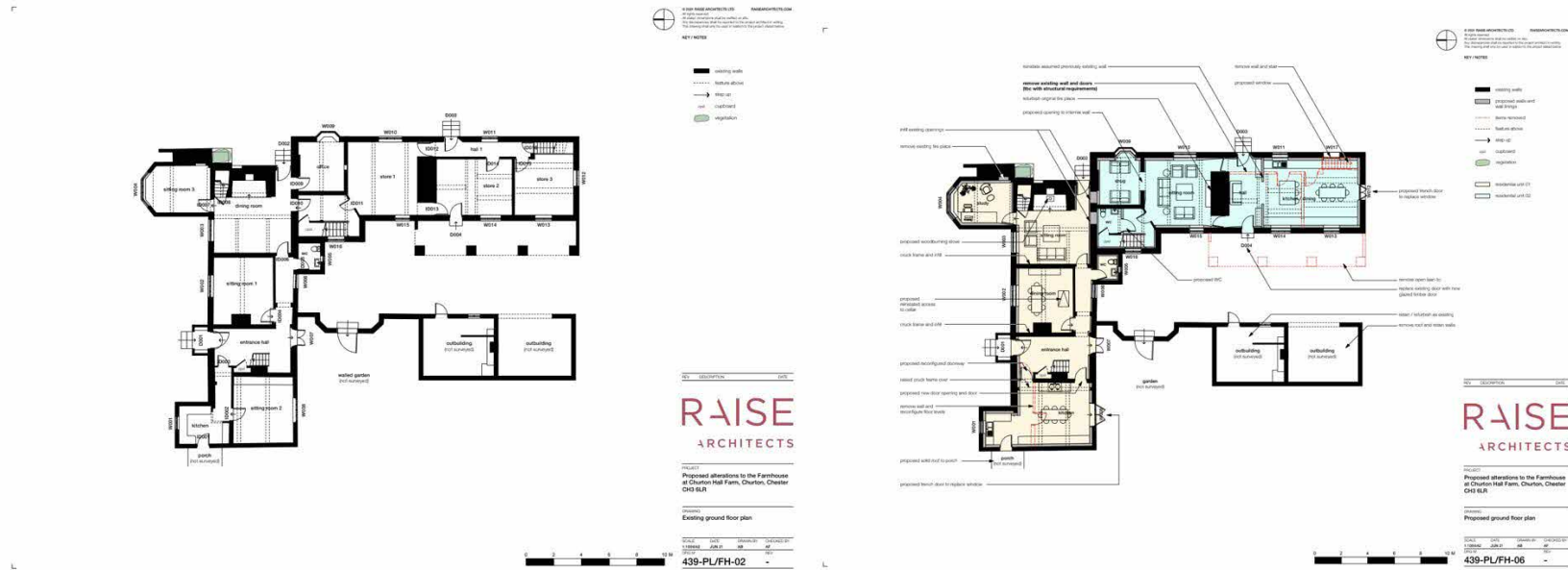


Fig 19. Ground floor plans – existing and proposed from left to right (Copyright: RAISE architects)

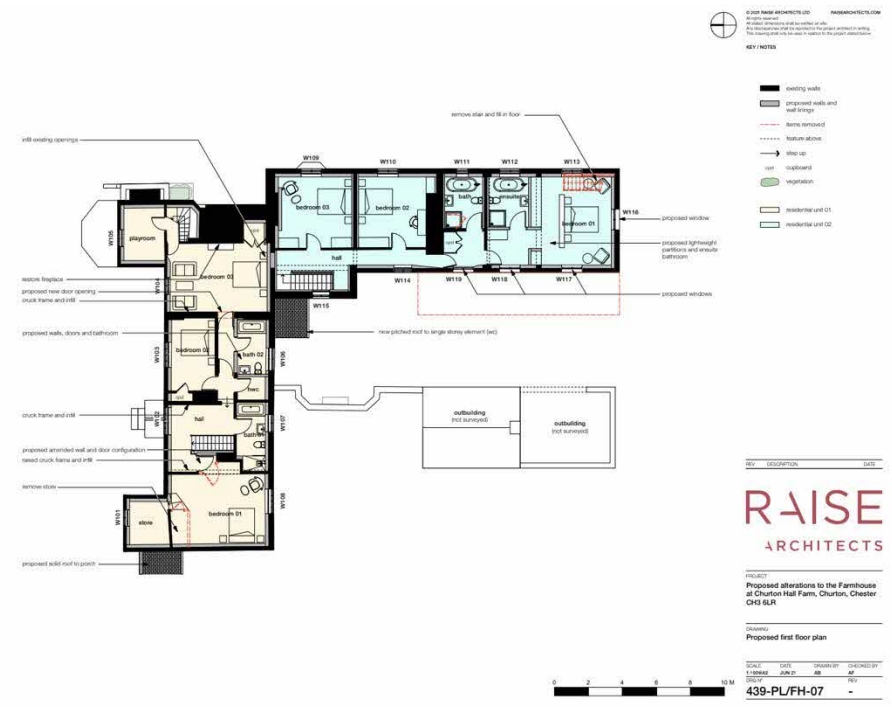
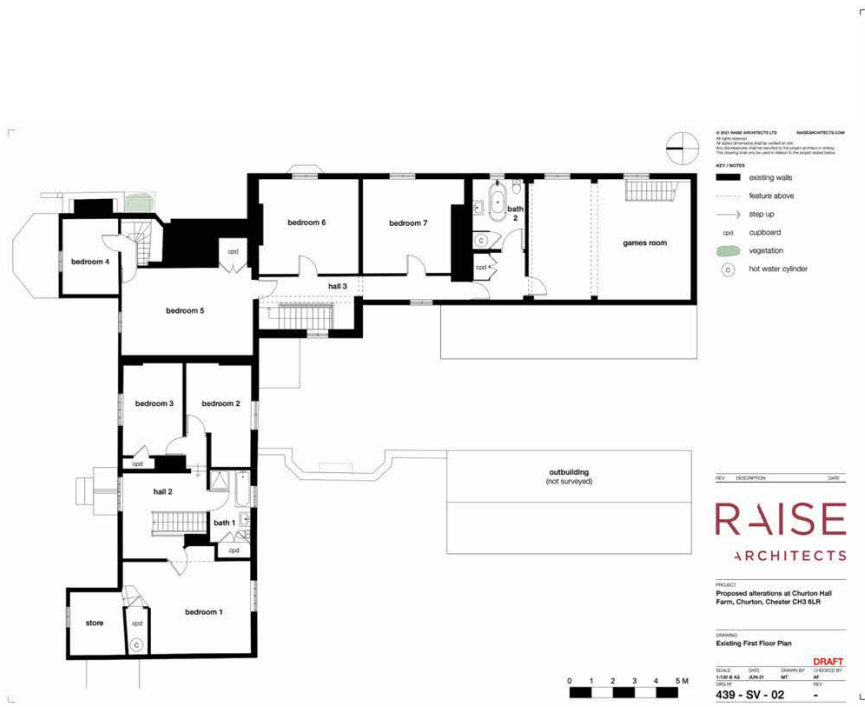


Fig 20. First floor plans – existing and proposed from left to right. (Copyright: RAISE architects)

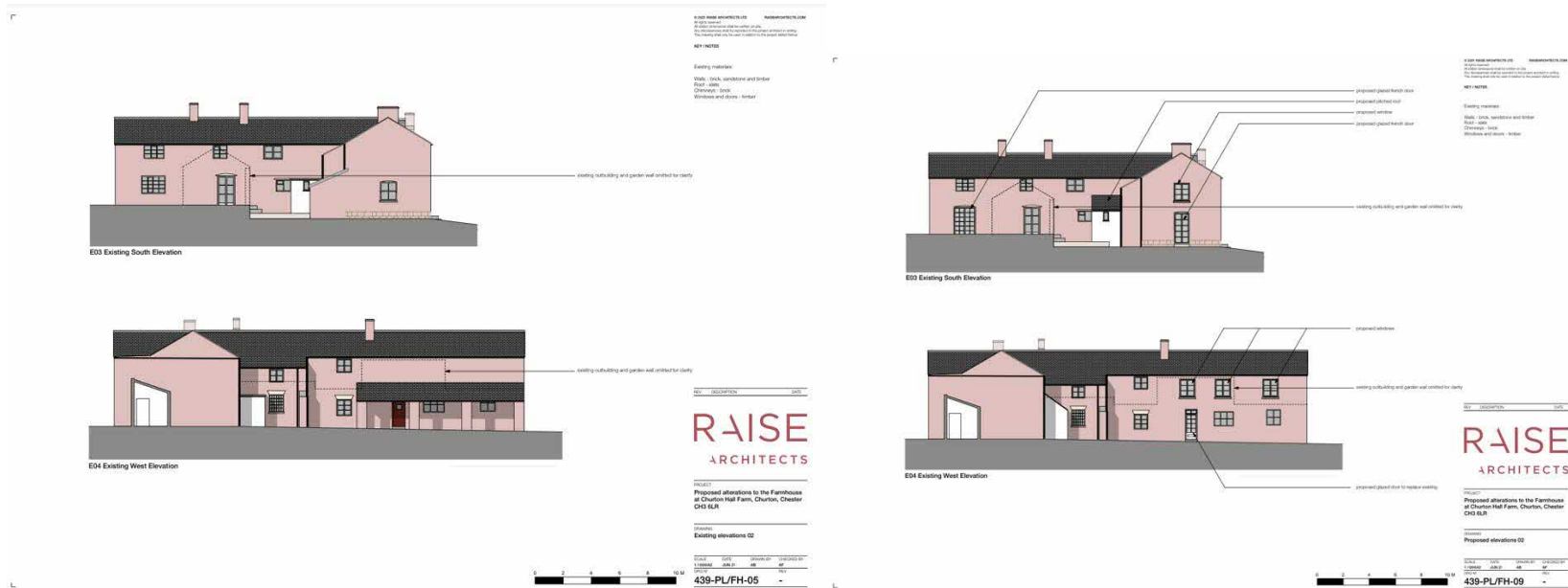


Fig 21. From left to right: - Existing and proposed elevations – south and west. (Copyright: RAISE architects)



Fig 21. From left to right: - Existing and proposed elevations – north and east. (Copyright: RAISE architects)



Fig 22. Features of the Victorian wing including from top left to right: the former kitchen range area – the second image is from ‘The Victorian Society Book of the Victorian House’, image 3 and 4 show the meat room and the later staircase to be removed, which will reinstate the room proportions. Bottom left to right; evidence of a missing wall to be reinstated, the flat roofed modern WC behind main house; the functional veranda to be removed – former dairy area; and the south facing gable.

6.14 **The impact on the listed building and its setting** - The rear of the site and the setting of adjacent structures is not adversely affected by the development proposals. The garden use to the rear, including its boundaries with the site are not going to change, and will be restored and reused as garden areas, which will breathe new life into structures that have long been redundant. The changes are minor, the sequence of development is legible, the unity and expression are contextual, and the new changes are honestly expressed. The minor plan changes are designed so that the space inside can be used to its full potential without impacting on the building's original plan form. Overall, the changes have little material impact on the building's architectural or historic interest because the features of the listed building are still appreciated, and more importantly better revealed in terms of their significance, and it means that the key historic and aesthetic features of the listed building are given greater prominence. There is an appropriate balance between the scale of alteration and that proposed. The proposals conform with Policy DM47 – Listed Buildings.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The application site Churton Hall, is a building of high significance within an historic plot in Churton Conservation Area. The proposals overall are a positive and sensitive intervention, which will preserve the character of the listed building whilst making it suitable for the 21st century. It would not affect the ability to appreciate and understand the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and is an evolutionary process of use of rooms and their hierarchy. It is considered that this would not cause harm to the building. The proposed changes are of high quality and based on proven solutions, with a substantial financial investment by the ancestors of Churton Hall to ensure that its legacy as a building of importance is restored.
- 7.2 The proposals would not cause harm to the significance of the listed building or its relationship and integrity with the nearby listed buildings, or the conservation area. The proposed development has been designed with care to avoid harming the essential elements that contribute to their significance, nor is it considered harmful to the application site or the setting.
- 7.3 The proposed development would be in accordance with the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the requirements of the NPPF and the relevant local plan policies.
- 7.4 The application encompasses changes that are of a high design standard and appearance, that deals appropriately with the sensitivities of the listed building and the site constraints that suggests longevity. As such, the application should respectfully be supported.

Appendices

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/policies_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/local_plan/key_social_economic_and_environmental_planning_evidence_base/chester_characterisation_study

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/heag039-traditional-windows-revfeb17/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-insulating-pitched-roofs-rafter-level-warm-roofs/heag070-insulating-pitched-roof-rafter-warm-roofs/>

<https://the-past.com/feature/cruck-construction-an-uncouth-and-rudimentary-building-technique/>

Historic Environment Record – Cheshire

Harris, Richard *Discovering Timber Framed Buildings*, Shire Classics 3rd Ed.

Suggett, R and Stevenson, G *Introducing Houses of the Welsh Countryside* Y Lolfa 2012

Brunskill, R.W. 2000. *Vernacular Architecture: An Illustrated Handbook*. Faber & Faber, London

Brunskill, R.W. 2007. *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain and their Conservation*. Yale University Press

Kit Wedd: *The Victorian Society Book of The Victorian House*, Aurum Press Limited 2002