

**The Rookery  
Hurstbourne Tarrant  
The Hill  
Hampshire  
NGR: SU 38164 53083**

**A  
Heritage Impact Assessment  
On  
Proposed Development**

**Text**  
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*Summary*

*Proposals have been made for improvements to The Rookery, a property in Hurstbourne Tarrant near Andover in Hampshire. The house is dated 1766 and its main portion has been relatively unaltered – though there have been extensions subsequently and it is now linked to the former farm buildings. The house is Grade II\* listed, the star possibly added because of its connection with the writer William Cobbett who often stayed there. As it is listed, this Consultancy was commissioned to provide a better understanding of the development and significance of the building in order to help inform the proposals and also to provide a heritage impact assessment of them – all under the guidelines of the National Planning Policy Framework. It concludes that the proposals are well-designed and proportionate and whilst there would be a degree of change, such change would not equate to any harm to the listed building. Therefore neither Sections 66 or 72 of the 1990 Planning Act nor Paragraphs 201-3 of the NPPF would be engaged.*

## **1. Introduction**

Proposals have been made for alterations to The Rookery, a Grade II\* listed building in Hurstbourne Tarrant in Hampshire. As the building is listed, this report has been commissioned, under the guidance of the *National Planning Policy Framework* and other relevant guidelines, to assess the potential impact of these proposals on the nearby listed building and on any other adjacent designated and non-designated heritage assets. It is not concerned with any other planning issues.

### **1.1 Report Format**

The report format is based on the basic requirements of this type of an assessment and its sections are set out accordingly. Following this introductory section there are sections on the basic planning guidance for listed buildings and heritage assets (Section 2) and on the purpose of heritage impact assessments (Section 3). Section 4 is an outline of the history and setting of the site and Section 5 is a brief description. Section 6 outlines the proposals and Section 7 is a heritage impact assessment of their potential impact on the listed building. Section 8 is a brief conclusion and Section 9 is a list of the references used for this report.

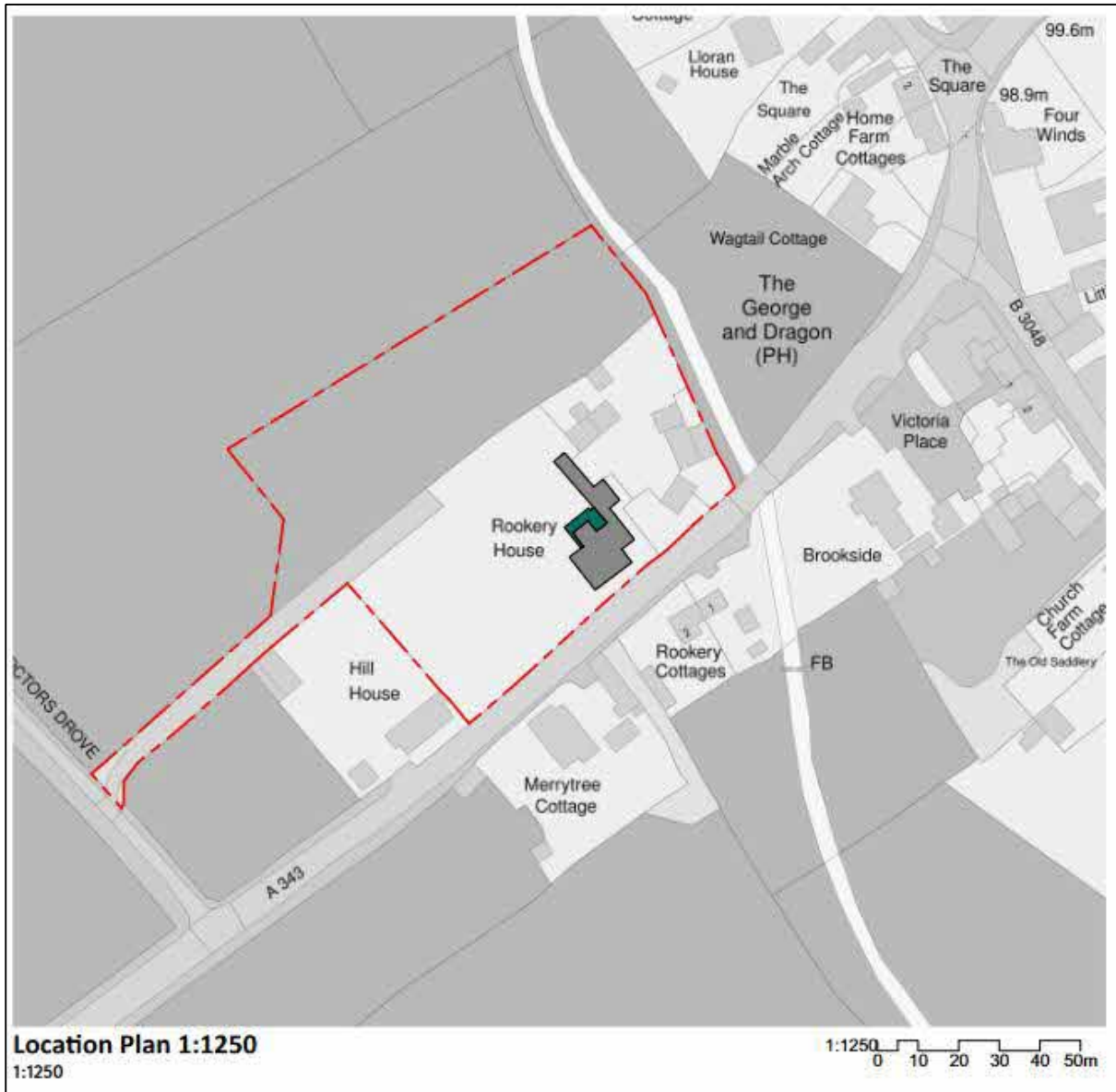


Fig.1: Site and location plan.

## 2. Planning Legislation & Guidance

### 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework

Planning law relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 of the Act deals with the responsibilities of local planning authorities – the decision makers - when dealing with planning applications that could impact on heritage assets and states that:

*‘In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.*<sup>1</sup>

Section 72 of the same Act states that, in relation to conservation areas:

*‘with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.*<sup>2</sup>

Government guidelines regarding the listed buildings and conservation areas legislation in the 1990 Planning Act changed twice in two years, resulting in the introduction of a new *précis* of planning guidance published in March 2012 – the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) – which replaced all other separate *Planning Policy Guidelines* and *Planning Policy Statements*.<sup>3</sup> A revised version was published in July 2018, another in February 2019 and yet another in July 2021.<sup>4</sup> The glossary of the NPPF described ‘heritage assets’:

*‘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 asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’*

The main relevant paragraph in the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require applicants:

*‘...to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance’.*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 c.9 section 66 (1), 41

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* section 72

<sup>3</sup> Department for Communities & Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework*.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, para. 194

### **3. Heritage Impact Assessments**

#### **3.1 General Introduction**

The purpose of a heritage impact assessment (HIA) is to meet the relevant guidance given in the NPPF. This outlines the need to inform the planning decisions when considering proposals that have the potential to have some impact on the character or setting of a heritage asset. It is not concerned with other planning issues.

The nature of the heritage assets and the potential impact upon them through development are both very varied. The heritage assets include both designated heritage assets – such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation area – and non-designated heritage assets, a rather uncomfortable and sometimes subjective category that includes locally listed buildings, field systems, buried archaeological remains and views.

The degree of impact a development could have on such assets is variable and can sometimes be positive rather than negative. The wide range of possible impacts can include loss of historic fabric, loss of historic character, damage to historic setting, and damage to significant views.

Under the requirements of the NPPF and of other useful relevant guidance, such as English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* and *Informed Conservation*, and recent material from the newly formed Historic England, the process of heritage impact assessments can be summarised as involving three parts:

1. understanding the heritage values and significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets involved and their settings;
2. understanding the nature and extent of the proposed developments;
3. making an objective judgement on the impact that the proposals outlined in Part 2 may have on the information outlined in Part 1.<sup>6</sup>

#### **3.2 Definition of Setting**

Setting, as a concept, was clearly defined in PPS5 and was then restated in the NPPF which describe it 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.'*

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<sup>6</sup> English Heritage, 2008, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*; Clark, K, 2001, *Informed Conservation*

The latest version of the Historic England guidance on what constitutes setting is virtually identical to the former English Heritage guidance:

*‘Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.’<sup>7</sup>*

The new Historic England guidance also re-states the earlier guidance that setting is not confined entirely to visible elements and views but includes other aspects including environmental considerations and historical relationships between assets:

*‘The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance’.<sup>8</sup>*

In terms of the setting of heritage assets the approach is the same but the latest Historic England guidance - *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 (GPA3)* of 2017 - suggests a five-step approach.<sup>9</sup>

The steps are:

- Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
- Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm;
- Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

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<sup>7</sup> Historic England, 2017, *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*, para.9

<sup>8</sup> *Op.cit.*, Part 1, reiterating guidance in the PPG of the NPPF.

<sup>9</sup> *Op.cit.*, para.19

### 3.3 Definition of Significance

The glossary of the *Planning Practice Guidance* (PPG) to the NPPF defines significance as:

*‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’.*

These are further explained as:

***Archaeological interest:*** *as defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.”*

***Architectural and artistic interest:*** *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.*

***Historic interest:*** *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

The PPG also states that:

*‘Local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as ‘locally listed’’.<sup>10</sup>*

but cautions that:

*‘A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process’.<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, 2014, paragraph 39

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



### 3.4 Definition of Harm

Current guidance by Historic England is that ‘change’ does not equate to ‘harm’. The NPPF and its accompanying PPG effectively distinguish between two degrees of harm to heritage assets – *substantial* and *less than substantial*. Paragraph 201 of the revised NPPF states that:

*‘Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable use of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use’.*<sup>12</sup>

Paragraph 202 of the revised NPPF states that:

*‘Where a development proposal would 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 proposals including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’.*

Recent High Court rulings have emphasised the primacy of the 1990 Planning Act – and the fact that it is up to the decision makers in the planning system to *‘have special regard to the desirability of preserving the [listed] building or its setting’*. As stated by HH Judge David Cooke in a judgment of 22 September 2015 regarding impact on the setting of a listed building:

*‘It is still plainly the case that it is for the decision taker to assess the nature and degree of harm caused, and in the case of harm to setting rather than directly to a listed building itself, the degree to which the impact on the setting affects the reasons why it is listed.’*

The judgment was agreed by Lord Justice Lewison at the Court of Appeal, who stated that:

*‘It is also clear as a matter both of law and planning policy that harm (if it exists) is to be measured against both the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset. Although the statutory duty requires special regard to be paid to the desirability of not harming the setting of a listed building, that cannot mean that any harm, however minor, would necessarily require planning permission to be refused’.*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, *op. cit.*, para.201

<sup>13</sup> Court of Appeal (PALMER and HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL & ANR)(Case No: C1/2015/3383) 34.

## 4. Setting & Outline History

### 4.1 Hurstbourne Tarrant

Hurstbourne Tarrant is a village in the steep-sided valley of the River Swift a few miles to the north of Andover in the northern portion of Hampshire; it lies on the main road between Andover and Newbury and is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The name has Saxon origins and the first element is probably derived from ‘hysseburna’ meaning a thin stream – and possibly the type of ‘winterbourne’ stream that mainly flows in the winter season.

At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 it is listed as *Esseborne* and in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as *Hesseburna*; by the 14<sup>th</sup> century it had obtained the suffix ‘Tarrant’ – a result of the granting of the manor by Henry III in 1266 to the recently established Cistercian nunnery of Tarrant in Dorset; the nunnery retained ownership until the house fell victim to Henry VIII in the 1540’s. In the local vernacular it appears to also have been known as Uphusband well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The vilage appears to have always been a reasonably prosperous agricultural settlement and neither a canal nor a railway passed through it – possibly ensuring that it remained purely rural in character and did not grow significantly. It has also retained much of its historic character and has been described as ‘*one of the most picturesque villages in Hampshire*’.<sup>14</sup>



Fig.2: Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1817.

<sup>14</sup> Pevsner, N & Lloyd, D, 1973, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, 302

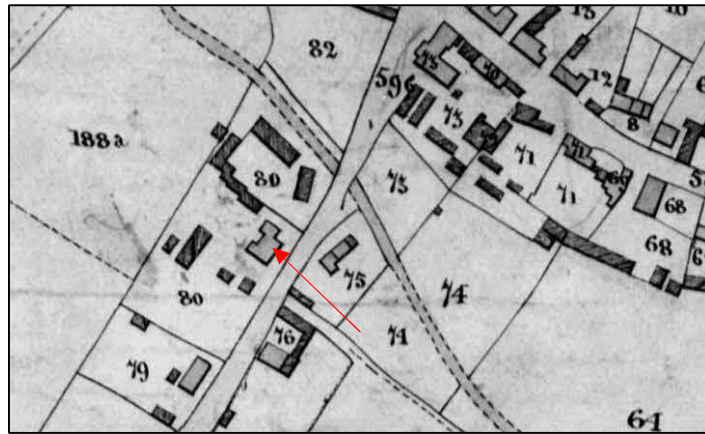


Fig.3: Extract from the 1841 tithe map.

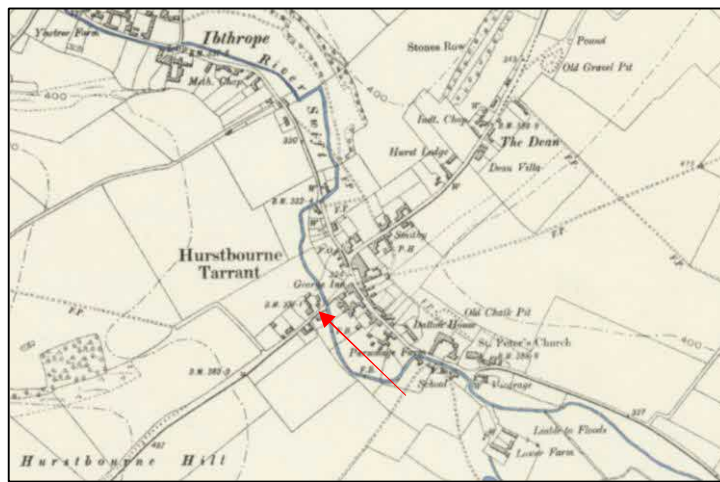


Fig.4: Extract from the 1894 revision of the 6" OS map.

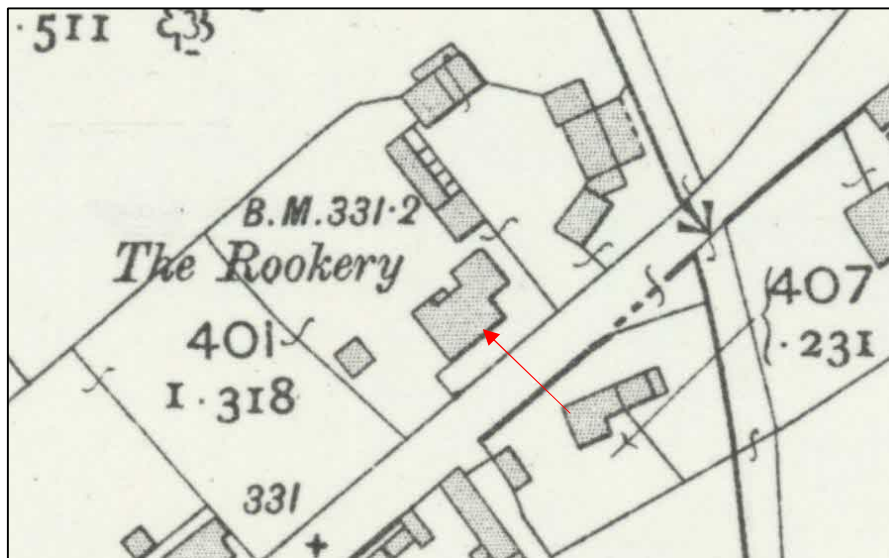


Fig.5: Detail from the 1909 revision of the 1:2500 OS map.

## 4.2 The Rookery

The Rookery lies on the north side of the bottom of The Hill, the road leading westwards from the offset crossroads in the heart of the village up Hurstbourne Hill on the route towards Andover.

The farmhouse is dated 1766 and is a fairly typical house of its type, date and region. Its main interest is in its association with William Cobbett (1763-1835), the radical pamphleteer, journalist, politician, author and farming pioneer. His best known written work is *Rural Rides*, originally published in serial form in his *Cobbett's Political Register*.

In the early-19<sup>th</sup> century the farm was occupied by a farmer called Blount, a Roman Catholic at a time when that was still problematic; Cobbett, despite being a supporter of the Church of England, was also an advocate of Catholic emancipation. In an early entry in *Rural Rides*, Cobbett refers to a visit to Hurstbourne Tarrant in his first 'ride', in early November 1821 – not long after he had finished a two year prison sentence. He wrote that:

*'This place is commonly called Uphusband, which is, I think, as decent a corruption of names as one would wish to meet with. However, Uphusband the people will have it, and Uphusband it shall be for me'.*

He specifically mentions a Mr Blount later in the same month, in relation to the fact he had a very large black-spotted hog; he seems to have visited Blount regularly thereafter and wrote a year later that Uphusband '*is, as the reader will recollect, a great favourite with me, not the less so certainly on account of the excellent free-quarter that it affords*'. For example, in 1830 he mentions '*Mr Blount, at whose house....I am, went with me to the fair*'. A brick in the front wall, incised 'WC 1825', is traditionally thought to have been carved by Cobbett. In other entries, Cobbett comments on Blount's generosity, particularly to Irish travellers.

The Mr Blount is occasionally referred to as George Blount but he may instead have been Joseph Blount who, at the time of the 1841 tithe apportionment and several years after Cobbett's death, owned and occupied the Rookery farm.

In the limited details of the census of the same year, Joseph appears to have been living on his own with two female servants. Joseph was still living at the house ten years later and was then described in the census as a farmer of 125 acres and had two housekeepers and a female servant in the house – and also employed six labourers on the farm.

By the 1861 census he described himself as a gentleman; he was then 81 years old and the farm then seems to have been run by Henry Hill (34), his son-in-law, who lived at the house together with his wife Jennette (35) and their three young children. Also living in the house were a housekeeper and a house servant and also on site were a carter and a 12-year old plough boy. Blount died in 1863.

In the 1890's The Rookery was occupied by Samuel Gerrish, described as an 'agricultural valuer and farmer' living with his wife and their three young children and a live-in domestic; in 1911 it was the home of Richard Palmer and his wife Mary who had two small boys but no live-in servants. By 1916 it was farmed by Mr. R E C Burder.

## 5. The House

### 5.1 Description

The main sections of the original dwelling are relatively uncomplicated; they have, for convenience, been identified alphabetically and assigned names of no known historical precedent to assist the narrative. The identified components are shown on the sketch plan from the estate agent's details shown below.

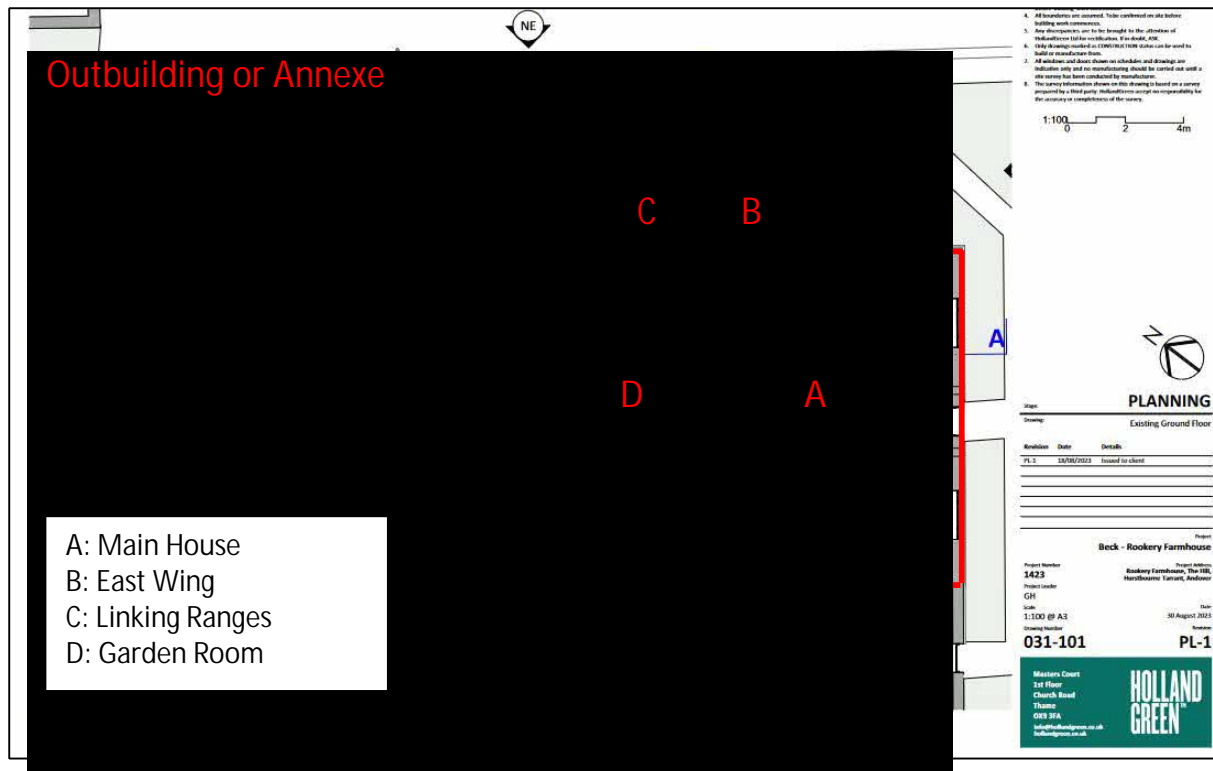


Fig.6: Components of the house and the annexe, based on the ground-floor plan.



Pl.1: The Rookery from the south-east (GoogleEarth ©).



### **5.1.1 Building A: The Main House**

The Main House is the earliest and largest portion of the present dwelling and is of two storeys, built of two different types of brick as well as some flintwork with flush brick detailing. It is of stubby ‘L-shaped’ form – almost square in plan but with a projecting section to the north-west.

#### **5.1.1.01 The Exterior**

##### *The South, or Entrance, Front*

The entrance front faces south, towards the main road and away from the farmstead. It is a symmetrical three-bay two-storey elevation faced with a combination of hand-made blue-grey and red brick headers. The main brickwork is of the blue-grey headers but there is a flush plinth and a first-floor band course of red brick as well as moulded brick dentilled eaves detailing.

The central doorway has a simple timber surround with a consoled canopy and a part-glazed panelled door. The window openings to either side have broad tripartite balanced sashes – with 3x2 or ‘6 over 6’ sashes in their centres and narrow 1x2 sashes to either side. The central window above the doorway is narrower, with just a 3x2 balanced sash.

The windows are set in broad vertical ‘columns’ of flush red brick from plinth to eaves – the bricks forming their jambs. The ground-floor windows have, within this brickwork, flat-arched heads of red rubbed brick; the heads of the first-floor windows are set beneath the eaves brickwork.

##### *The East Elevation*

The return elevations are plainer although the first-floor band course and the dentilled eaves detailing are continued on the side elevations. On the shorter right-hand, or eastern, wall the bricks are a mixture of red stretchers and blue-grey headers, emphasising the Flemish bond.

There are vertically aligned windows at ground and first-floor levels but no repeat of the red brick ‘columns’ in the brickwork. The ground-floor window has a flat arched head of rubbed brick, the head of the upper window is in the eaves. Both openings contain ‘6 over 6’ thin-barred sashes.

The rest of this side is abutted by the raised East Wing but some of the brickwork is visible internally on the first floor. This continued the same brickwork as the rest and there is a scar of a gabled roof for a single-storey range at right-angles to it visible on the east side of that section – presumably indicating the roof level of the original East Wing.



Pl.2: The front, or south, elevation of the Main House.



Pl.3: The rear, or north, elevation of the Main House.

### ***The West Elevation***

The west elevation is surprisingly plain – apart from the band course and dentilled eaves detailing; there is just a single presumably widened or even inserted window, on the ground floor, towards the front, or south, end of the elevation.

### ***The Rear or North Elevation***

The rear, or north, elevation of the Main House is partly obscured by the modern garden room and by the East Wing. It incorporates the original north-west projecting wing. The elevational treatment is quite different than the other three elevations – being a mixture of flint and hand-made red brick; the dentilled eaves detail, however, is continues on this elevation. The flintwork is banded by the brickwork and there are brick surrounds to the window openings.

On the gable end of the north-west projection there are tripartite sashed windows on the two floor levels – the lower window opening with a flat-arched rubbed brick head and the upper one with its heads beneath the brick eaves detailing.

The doorway leading into the garden room has a segmental arched head, rendered over, and could be original – being at the end of the hallway. The wide window adjacent appears to be in a primary location but is clearly widened and any original glazing replaced in steel-framed ‘Crittall-type’ fenestration.

On the first floor of this section there are two windows of different sizes with soldier course red brick heads beneath the dentilled eaves; they appear to be secondary despite their brick jambs.

#### **5.1.1.02 The Roof**

The roof consists of four linked ranges around a central leaded flat, with the western arm continuing northwards to cover the north-western projection of the original design. The junctions of the roofs are hipped and the roof covering is of plain tile. The roofspace was not accessible so the character of the roof structure was not possible to assess. There are tall brick chimneys rising from the inner slopes of the western and eastern piles above the stacks in the spine wall.

#### **5.1.1.03 The Interior**

Both floors of the Main House were originally virtually the same in their layout, with rooms front and back on either side of a central stair hall on the ground floor and a long stair landing on the first floor.





Pl.3: The entrance hall, looking north towards the stairs.



Pl.4: View from halfway up the stairs down into the hall.

### *The Ground Floor*

On the ground floor the front doorway leads into the long entrance hall which spans the whole width of the building, with the stairs to the rear. Towards the front of the hall there are opposing doorways into the two front reception rooms; these have well proportioned architraves and six panelled doors that are either restored or replicas. There are two other similar doorways further to the north leading to the rear rooms.

The hallway has a plain panelled and now painted dado and thin dado rail but, surprisingly, no cornice; there is, however, in the southern section, a simply moulded ceiling rose of ‘bat’s wing’ design – typical of the Adam period and the later-18<sup>th</sup> century but possibly not original. The floor is of planks and the walls above the dado quite plain.

The stairs have a solid string with simple mouldings and stick balusters supporting the plain-moulded handrail; towards the top of the stairs is a section of ‘kites’ turning up to a quarter landing and as the hand-rail has a ‘swan’s neck’ or ‘ramp’ as it begins to turn. The newels are quite thin and square sectioned, with simple caps.

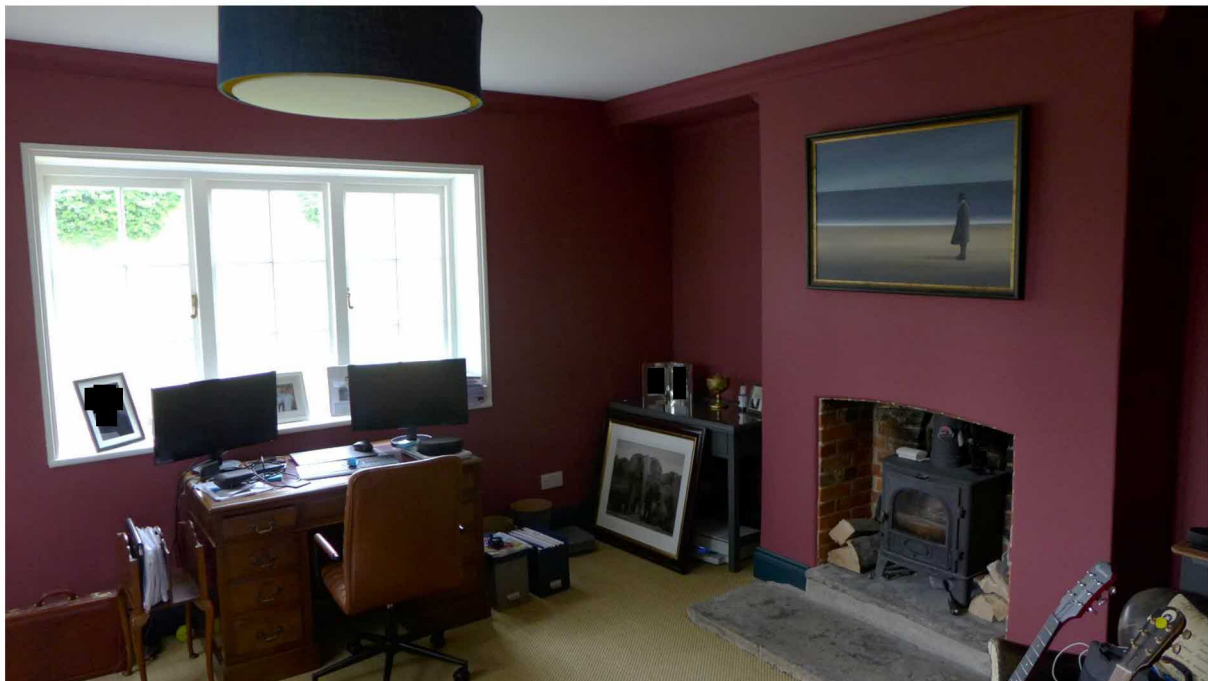
The south-eastern front room – the former dining room - is lit by windows in the front and east walls – the front one with a sill above the room’s plain unpainted panelled dado and that in the side with a full height recess with low window seat. The room has no cornice and is spanned by a boxed west-east bridging beam. There is a solid stone floor of large and well-worn flags and a modernised brick-lined fireplace in the north wall. The room has evidently been modernised. A doorway through the eastern end of the spine wall leads into a baffle entry lobby leading not to the rear room but to the East Wing.



Pl.5: The former dining room, looking north-west.

The south-western front room, the present drawing room, is lit by windows in the front and side wall – though the character of the latter is unconvincing. Both windows are silled and the front one probably retains its original architrave.

The room has a skirtingboard – possibly modern – and no dado. It does have a very simple cyma moulded cornice – repeated at a slightly lower level in the recesses to either side of the stack in the rear, or spine, wall. That has a brick fire-place with segmental arched brick head with a modern woodburner within it and looks suspiciously modern. The ceiling in this room is lower than that in the south-eastern room – presumably in order to hide the structural bridging beam supporting the first-floor joists.



Pl.6: The drawing room, looking north-west.

The north-eastern rear room, or study, is accessed from the stair hall, the doorway leading into what is in effect a ‘baffle’ entry against the flank of the stack. This room also has a higher floor level than the hallway so the access includes several steps; the floor height could be associated with a basement below.

It is a very plain space lacking any significant joinery or plasterwork and lit by an inserted – or presumably widened – window in the north wall, now contained a steel-framed or ‘Crittall-type’ four-light casement. Against the stack on the south side is a boxed in chimneypiece of some kind, and there is what appears to be a blocked recess to the east of it – perhaps blocked when the baffle access from the dining room to the East Wing was created.





Pl.7: The north-eastern ground-floor room or study.



Pl.8: The sitting room, looking south.

A doorway with a six-panelled door of the back of the hall opposite the stairs leads into the rear north-western room, the present sitting room. The room is lit by the silled window in the north wall; it has a skirting board of uncertain date and an equally difficult to date plain cornice. The room is spanned by a west-east bridging beam.

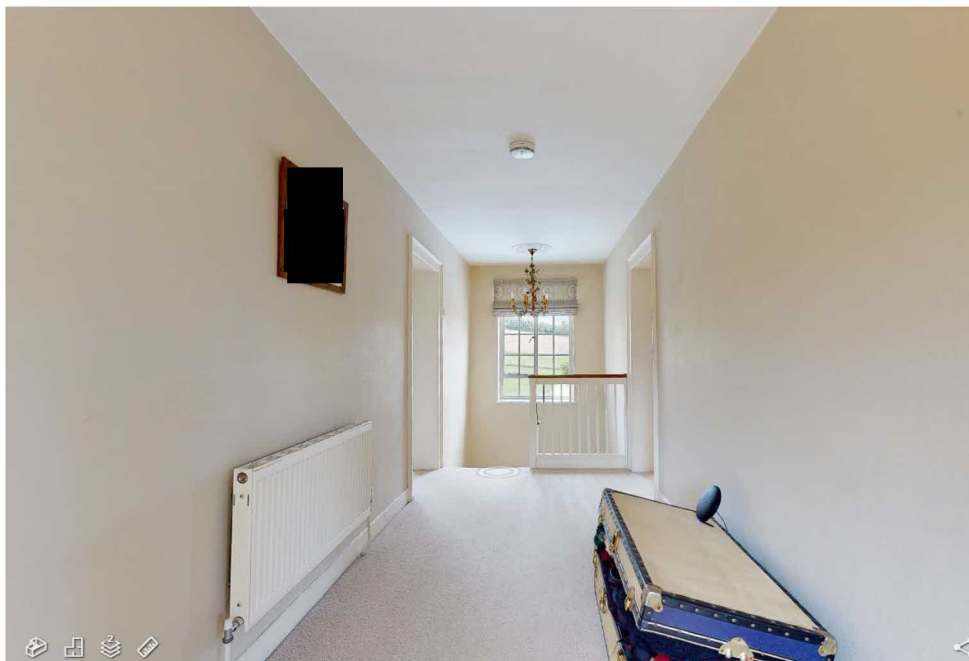
On the south, or spine, wall there are shallow recesses to either side of the stack; in the stack is a fireplace with a timber chimneypiece of vaguely later-18<sup>th</sup> century form though rather tall for the typical character of the time which creates a very tall frieze for its floral swags; the end pilasters support a corniced sill. It is possibly primary but could be a later addition in an old style.

The present cast-iron grate with its ornate semi-circular head, and the associated glazed red tile hearth, are probably of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The flanking recesses have semi-circular backs and curve-fronted shelving, topped with hemispherical ribbed domes – all typical of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; each set of shelves is, however, recessed oddly and there is no architrave to either.

### *The First Floor*

At first-floor level the window lighting the top of the stairs in the north wall is a two-light steel-framed ‘Crittall-type’ casement of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The stair landing extends to the front, or south, elevation where the sashed window has splayed reveals that could suggest it once had shutters.

The landing is plainly decorated with just a low skirting board, though the simply moulded but well-proportioned doorcases of the doorways of it do seem to be original as are, presumably, the two panelled doors they contain. The landing has no cornice.



Pl.9: The first-floor landing, looking north to the stairs.

The door to the south-eastern bedroom at this level has fielded panels on the room side and was probably originally hung on ‘L-hinges’; a small cupboard doorway to the west of the stack on the north side of the room still is.

The room is lit by silled windows in the south and east walls. It is plainly decorated with a low skirting board of uncertain date and what appears to be a modern thin coved cornice. The chimneypiece in the flush stack on the north, or spine, wall could be primary. It has a simple surround with full ebntablature and a segmental arched head to its original opening. That has been partially infilled to accommodate a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century cast-iron grate with semi-circular head. The plain tile hearth could be primary.



Pl.10: The south-eastern front bedroom, looking north.

The door of the doorway into the south-western front bedroom is still hung on ‘L-shaped’ hinges and has a fairly crude fielding on the inner face of the panels. For some reason the plaster has been stripped off the east wall of the room, exposing the brickwork. The room is lit by the silled tripartite window in the front wall. As with the other front bedroom it is plainly decorated – with a low skirting board that could be primary but no cornice.

On the north side is the same type of probably primary chimney piece as in the other front room – though this has decorative plaster swags above the original fireplace opening. The opening has also been infilled with a later cast-iron grate, presumably of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and also retains a quarry tile hearth. To the right of the fireplace is a recess with a two-panelled door hung on ‘L-shaped’ hinges and assumed to be original.





Pl.11: The south-western front bedroom, looking north.



Pl.12: The former north-eastern rear bedroom looking east; the partition is inserted and the present arrangement quite modern.

The evidence indicates that there was originally a single room north of the spine wall and to the east of the stair landing, presumably lit by a single window in the north wall and lit by a fireplace opposite, in the stack projecting from the spine wall.

That space has been sub-divided by a modern west-east wall to create a bathroom on the north side of a corridor leading from the stair landing to the raised upper floor of the East Wing. Consequently the fireplace – now in the corridor – had to be blocked and there are no traces of it left.

The fact that there are two windows of quite different sizes lighting the modern bathroom suggests that the space could have previously been subdivided further, perhaps into a WC and a bathroom. All of the fixtures and fittings in this area are modern – and the corridor did not need to exist before the East Wing was raised to two storeys.

The north-eastern bedroom is also accessed from the stair landing and retains its original parameters. It is lit by the tripartite sash in the north, or rear, wall and opposite that is another possibly primary chimneypieces of the same type as those in the two front rooms. This lacks the swags of the one room but is otherwise very similar. Its original opening has also been infilled when a later cast-iron grate was fitted. The room is also quite plain, with simple skirting board and no cornice.



Pl.13: The south side of the north-eastern rear bedroom.



### **5.1.2 Building B: The East Wing**

The East Wing is a much altered range that appears to have been added against the eastern side of the Main House – originally as a single storey structure which was then raised up to two storeys.



Pl.14: The eastern side of the house, with the East Wing (Building B).

#### **5.1.2.01 The Exterior**

The building is virtually square in plan and now mainly of two storeys except for a single-storey lean-to section at the north side; it abuts against the northern half of the east side of the Main House and laps around its north-eastern corner. It is built of brick but of two quite obviously different phases of work.

The ground-floor brickwork is of a deliberate mix of red stretchers and blue-grey headers laid in a Flemish bond; this butts against the earlier work of the Main House. In the east elevation at this level is a central window opening under a segmental arched head which appears primary; it contains a balanced sash of '6 over 6' pattern. The window to its right has a soldier-course brick head and is clearly a relatively modern insertion, probably dating to the time the range was raised. At the left-hand end is a clearly inserted doorway under a flat lintel.

The elevation appears to be continued northwards on the east side into a single-storey lean-to section – which has a decorative brick verge and some similar brickwork. This forms the gable end of the lean-to section of the Linking Ranges. Despite the similarities there are clear breaks in the continuity of the coursing and especially at the right-hand or northern end, greater use of plain red brick. Additionally if the slope of the lean-to's verge is genuine then it would have

resulted in a very tall roof for a single-storey range and one that would be incompatible with the evidence of the scar of the weathering of its roof visible in the brickwork on the side of the main house at first-floor level. It is assumed that the brickwork has been largely rebuilt. There are no openings on the south side of the range at this level.

The first-floor of the range is clearly later than the ground floor and built of a completely different type of brick with a different bond pattern. It has wide windows in the south and east side under soldier arch brick heads and a narrower one offset to the west on the rear, or north, side.

### **5.1.2.02 The Roof**

The roof is flat with overhanging eaves and clearly relatively modern.

### **5.1.2.03 The Interior**

The interior of the ground floor was evidently gutted and modernised when the range was raised and remodelled. It is now mainly a modern kitchen with a utility room in the single-storey lean-to section. Interestingly the exposed internal brickwork indicates that the brick wall now dividing the kitchen from the lean-to is secondary to the eastern wall. The remodelled fireplace in the north wall of the kitchen containing the cooker is probably an early feature of the range but there are no surviving fixtures or fittings of note at this level. The added first floor contains a bedroom and *en suite* and contains nothing of architectural interest.



Pl.15: The ground-floor of the East Wing (Building D).

### 5.1.3 Building C: The Linking Ranges

Between the East Wing and the outbuilding to the rear are low structures of uncertain date that link the main portions of the house and the converted outbuildings. None of these are shown on the detailed 1909 revision of the 1:2500 OS map and all appear to be relatively modern. There are two main elements – a single-storey lean-to built against the northern side of the East Wing and then extending from its north-western corner to the rear elevation of the main house – thus creating an ‘L-shaped’ footprint; and a shorter section at right-angles to it provided the direct link to the outbuilding.

The latter section is clearly of recent date, added in the 1980’s; it is built of reused bricks and its eastern side wall butts against the side of the lean-to section at the south end and against the gable end of the outbuilding at the north. The brickwork is enlivened by panels of flint on the west side. It has a plain gable and tiled roof and nothing of interest internally.

The lean-to section is more complex. As noted above its east wall appears to continue the line of the east wall of the East Wing (Building B), but there are inconsistencies in the brickwork and the decorative verged slope is odd. Its north wall, visible between the link section and the side of the Garden Room, is of old brick but most of that is set in cement mortar.

There are possible remnants of older brickwork *in situ* low down in the wall but the rest, above about 500mm, has evidently been rebuilt - presumably when the present casement window with its soldier arched brick head was added and, given the manner in which most of the brickwork is coursed through between the two, when the link was built. The lean-to roof is plain tiled and appears to be of recent date – as is the general character of the interior which is devoid of any fixtures or fittings of note.



Pl.16: The north side of the Linking Range; note modern window, the use of cement mortar and plainer brick above 500mm and bonding in of the two sections on the left-hand side.



#### **5.1.4 Building D: The Garden Room**

The Garden Room was built against the rear, or north, wall of the Main House, tucked into the angle between the main section of that wall and the side of the north-western projection. It replaced an earlier and smaller glazed conservatory or porch after being given planning consent in 2009. It is a large structure with vaguely neo-classical detailing on a brick plinth with fully glazed sides and a large top lantern.



Pl.17: The modern garden room (Building D).

## 5.2 Discussion

There is little reason to doubt the 1766 date of The Rookery. Its symmetrical design, detailing and layout would have been quite typical of this size and type of property for that period. The original portion appears to have been the Main House (Building A). The basic elements of the house have been little altered since it was built. The use of the two different types of brick colour, the red stretchers and the blue-grey headers – the latter presumably a result of deliberate colouring through over-firing within the brick kiln or clamp – was subtle but effective. There is a clear hierarchy between the front elevation and the side elevations in the manner that the bricks were used, all linked by the decorative brick eaves detailing. The rear or north elevation was seen as the least important and so was built of brick-banded flint instead.

The accommodation within was set out in a logical fashion, centred on the entrance/stair hall and first-floor landing and divided by a spine wall – thus creating rooms in each quarter of the building – with the western side being extended further in the north-western projection. The roof design was of four linked piles to match the footprint of the building and thus avoided the need for a much taller and elaborate single or double pile structure.

Many of the internal fixtures and fittings could be primary – including the plain panelled dadoes, the door architraves, most of the doors (typically with a hierarchy of six panels to the ground floor and two panels to the first floor), the stairs with the typically ‘ramped’ hand-rail, and several chimney-pieces. What is seemingly lacking are many cornices, which would have been expected in a house of this status; most have presumably been removed.

It appears that the East Wing (Building B) was an early addition to the design to provide additional accommodation but was, originally, of just one storey. Quite how it was originally laid out is unclear. The Lean-to elements (Building C) against its northern wall are difficult to interpret because of the radical changes made to them – but whilst there are elements of early work in the lower courses of the brickwork these are, in essence, the result of much later rebuildings that seem to have been associated also with the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century linking of the house with the Outbuilding to the north (*q.v.*).

Later changes to the property have been largely associated with internal modifications rather than wholesale change. The obvious exception to that is the raising and remodelling of the East Wing, which appears to have been undertaken in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was probably that change that also led to the creation of the corridor link from the Main House at first-floor level which sub-divided the original north-eastern bedroom.

There has been some inevitable loss of primary and other historic features in the interior, including some chimney-pieces and, as outlined above, cornices – as well as some odd decisions made to expose internal brickwork that was never intended to be exposed – but the overall character of the property has been well-maintained. The building is listed Grade II\* which places it amongst the top 8% of all *listed* buildings. Quite why it has such a high listing grade is unclear. It is a fairly well-preserved exemplar of a not uncommon type of property but it has lost some of its historic character and its East Wing has been rather unsympathetically altered. Normally the degree of change would have resulted in it being listed Grade II. It is assumed that the added ‘star’ was granted because of the property’s association with William Cobbett.

## **6. The Outbuilding or Annexe**

The Outbuilding closest to the main house is linked to it by a relatively recent structure, but was previously detached until the 1980's. It is a long single-storey structure of an attenuated 'L-shaped' plan form – but overgrowth and the refacing makes it difficult to properly assess whether the two parts of the 'L' are contemporary or not.

### **6.1 Description**

#### **6.1.1 The Southern Section**

##### **6.1.1.01 The Exterior**

The southern section, or 'foot', of the 'L' is wider and taller than the northern part of the building. It is almost square in plan but its roof is aligned north-south. It is faced in crude flint-rich rubblestone with decorative red brick banding to the plinth, two rows in the walls up to wall-plate level.

##### *The South Gable*

The main entrance at present is in the south gable. The gable itself has, expressed in the brick detailing, a 'tie-beam' and two 'collars' of brick as well as brickwork in the verges. Also incorporated in the gable end are three diamond patterns made up of the bases of wine bottles.

The main entrance at the east side of the south gable is a doorway with brick jambs and a segmental arched head of alternating red and burnt-grey brick headers – the surround enriched with a row of wine bottle bases above the brickwork.

##### *The Eastern Elevation*

The eastern side elevation is expressed by the brick detailing as a two and a half bay composition – the narrow bay being at the right-hand or northern end. The 'bays' are articulated by irregular flush brick 'piers'. The end bay now contains a modern window but the detailing and obvious changes to the surrounding brickwork suggests that it was originally a doorway instead. At the southern end of the elevation the brick pattern indicates that the building was contemporary with the surviving stub of a yard wall continuing southwards.

##### *The Western Elevation*

The western side has a rounded brick corner at the south-western corner and a primary window opening in the shorter northern 'bay' of the design. A smaller window, set between the two intermediate rows of brick, appears to be inserted.



Pl.18: The Outbuilding from the south-east.



Pl.19: The west elevation of the Outbuilding.

### *The North Gable*

The north gable end is abutted by the narrower northern section; it retains the rows of decorative brick detailing and incorporates a doorway – with a timber lintel – at the western end. Its gable has just the ‘tie-beam’ and a single ‘collar’ of brick.

#### **6.1.1.02 The Roof**

The roof is plain gabled and covered with the same modern interlocking pantiles as the northern section – the western slopes of the two being contiguous. The roof is of two bays, the cross-wall acting as a ‘truss’.

#### **6.1.1.03 The Interior**

The interior is divided into two by a cross-wall built and decorated in the same basic materials of the end gables. There is a doorway through the eastern end of the cross-wall which may be inserted. The space has been modernised and has no fixtures or fittings of note.

### **6.1.2 The Northern Section**

#### **6.1.2.01 The Exterior**

##### *The West Elevation*

The western elevation is largely obscured by overgrowth – making it difficult to see if there is a junction between this section and the southern end. It is faced in rubblestone with two bands of hand-made red brick continuing the pattern of the southern section. Towards the northern end is a pair of double doors set between brick jambs; the older plank doors are retained externally, but the actual doors are a pair of modern glazed ones.

##### *The East Elevation*

The eastern side wall is now rendered and has four modestly sized windows with modern glazing.

##### *The North Gable*

The north gable end is of crude flint-rich rubblestone with brick quoins and surrounds to original openings as well as horizontal bands echoing the traditional locations of a truss tie and collar – as well as further brickwork in the verges. There are now three window openings in the elevation, each occupied by modern casements.





Pl.20: The Outbuilding from the north.



Pl.21: Interior of the northern section of the Outbuilding, looking south.

These have almost pointed two-centred arched heads of two rings of brick and brick jambs. The small central window opening and the one on the extreme left-hand side are assumed to be original. The larger two-light casement at the right-hand end seems to have been set into the blocking of an original doorway – accounting for the inconsistency of cement mortar of the masonry and brickwork below its sill.

### **6.1.2.02 The Roof**

The roof is plain gabled and covered in modern interlocking flat-profiled machine-made pantiles. Structurally it is of four bays and the trusses consist of tie-beams, from which pairs of ‘V-struts’ rise to support a single tier of purlins. It is assumed that there are also principal rafters, but if so these are hidden by the ceiling.

### **6.1.2.03 The Interior**

The interior is mainly one long single modernised space, with a narrow section separated off from the rest at the northern end. Little of interest survives internally, but there are clear scars of a former longitudinal partition in the soffits of the truss ties.

## **6.2.2 Discussion**

The Outbuilding was clearly built as one of the farm buildings of the complex, and much of its detailing and material palette reflects that of the house – though with far more flint than brick as befitted its more mundane purpose. It is obviously possible that it is later than the house, but unlikely to have been built later than the early-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The narrow proportions of the northern section and the lack of a loft could suggest that it was a byre – but the evidence for the design of the eastern side has been covered up in the rebuilding and rendering of that elevation.

It is noticeable that on the early detailed mapping of the site that there was a series of small yards on the east side – which could then perhaps suggest it was a rather generously proportioned pig sty complex. The pattern of existing and former doorways at either end of this section would indicate a feed passage along the western side – and that would tie in with the scars for a longitudinal partition in the soffits of the truss ties.

The wider and taller southern end of the range could have been for feed preparation or perhaps for stabling – but the evidence for the use is slight. The building was evidently refurbished, re-roofed, re-windowed and adapted for domestic use in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century and little of its original internal character has survived.

## 7. The Proposals

Proposals are being developed for some alterations to the property and these can be broken down into two main elements – the removal and replacement of the present modern conservatory or garden room with a new structure of similar scale to accommodate a new kitchen, with associated changes to the existing one; and the conversion of the present Outbuilding or Annexe from *ad hoc* ancillary use into a guest suite. The proposals are shown in the plans and illustrations below.

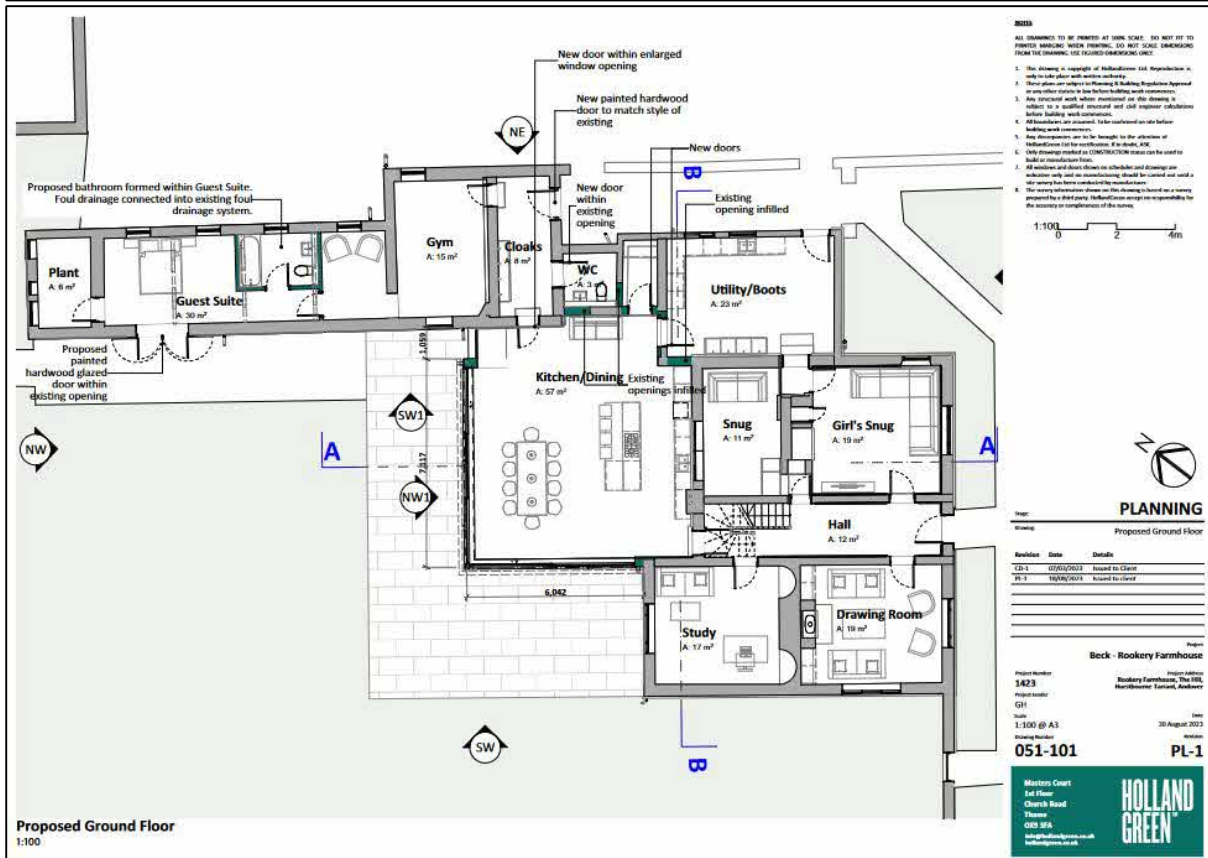
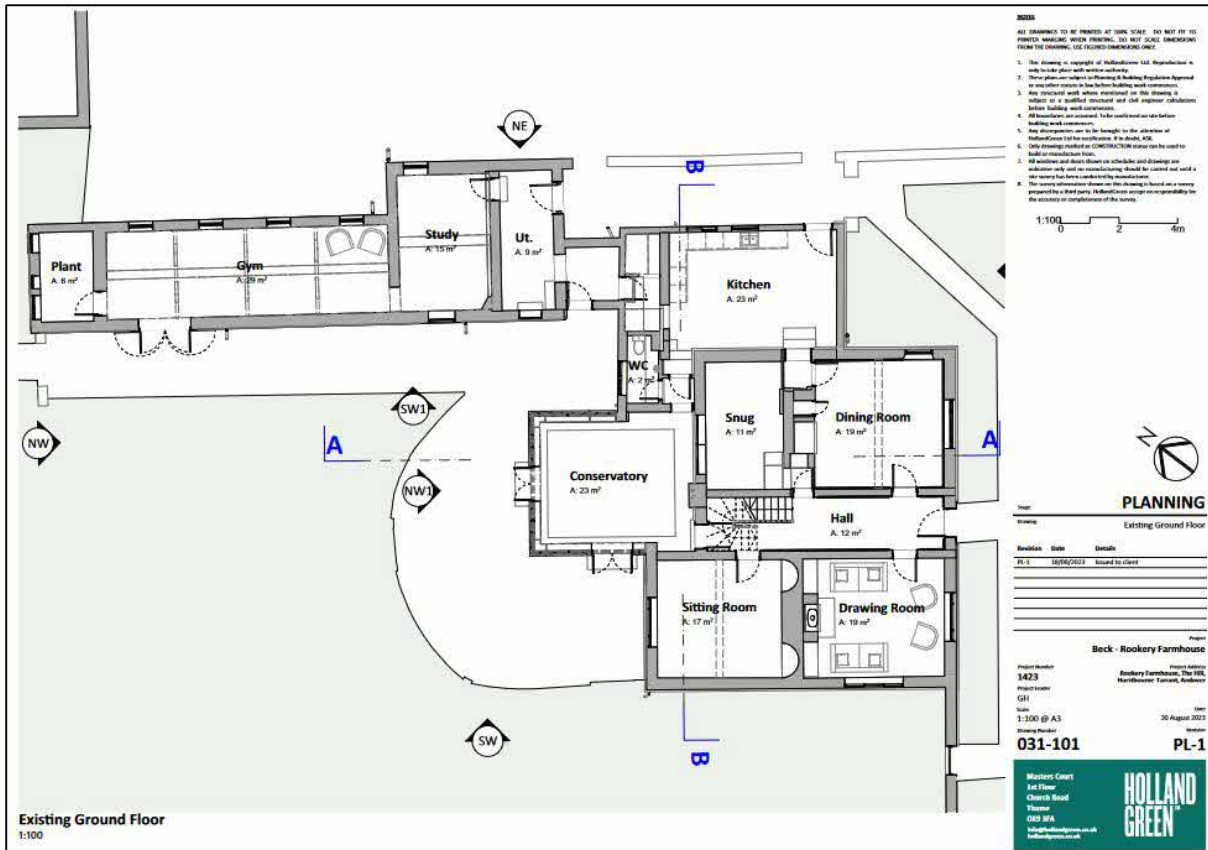


Fig.7: Artist's impression of the new kitchen range from the north.



**Figs.8 & 9 Existing (top) and proposed elevations/sections of the north side of the house.**





Figs.10 & 11: Existing (top) and proposed plans.

## **8. Heritage Impact Assessment**

### **8.1 General**

The Rookery enjoys extensive and well-maintained grounds, most of which are secluded and well away from views from the public domain or reciprocal views with adjacent heritage assets. These proposals are to the rear of the main house and in an attached annexe or outbuilding.

The proposed replacement kitchen range is shielded from the public domain on all sides and the proposals for the annexe do not include any external changes of note. Consequently the proposals will have no impact at all on the significance of the settings of any adjacent heritage asset and the only potential impacts are on the building itself.

### **8.2 The Proposed New Kitchen**

#### **8.2.1 The Proposal**

Following the removal of the present modern conservatory or garden room, it will be replaced by a simple, high quality and well insulated single storey extension containing an enlarged kitchen. The existing kitchen will be re-purposed as a Utility/Boot Room.

Internal alterations will be made to the rooms within the existing linking range to rationalize the circulation and these include forming a new door opening in place of the existing window to provide a new access to the ancillary range through the existing Utility Room, which will be re-purposed as a Cloakroom.

It is also proposed to form a new WC within what is currently a corridor, and create an enlarged Larder where the existing Larder is currently located. The new Kitchen will be accessed from the Existing Hall and new Utility/Boot Room (current Kitchen).

#### **8.2.2 Heritage Impact Assessment**

It is considered that the proposed replacement structure is well-designed and proportionate and its scale and massing have been carefully considered. It is larger than the existing garden room but better infills the junction between the house and the annexe and is lower than the existing one so that more of the historic fabric of the rear of the house is visible.

As part of the proposals the much altered Lean-to Link range will mostly be removed – but the eastern wall with its brick detailing will be retained; its lack of significance in heritage terms is alluded to earlier in this report and a more forensic assessment of its development and change is outlined in the Design & Access Statement accompanying the application.

The precedent for a structure in this position has clearly been set and a replacement build that is slightly larger but of better quality design is not considered to result in any ‘harm’ to the listed building, substantial or less than substantial.

The proposed new range would be linked to the former stabling by a small glazed lobby area deliberately designed to be not as high as the eaves of the existing building. This element of the design ensures that the full width of the new room aligns with the gable end of the house – and the use of this lower link helps to retain that articulation in the elevation whilst still providing the necessary link in the circulation pattern.

Loss of existing fabric other than that of the modern conservatory is limited to elements that are not considered to be of significance in historical or architectural terms, and the overall impact of the design will be to preserve and enhance the listed building in a way that the existing structure does not. It is therefore considered that there would be no harm to the listed building.

### **8.3 The Proposed Guest Suite**

#### **8.3.1 The Proposal**

The Outbuilding or Annexe was converted into ancillary use in the later-20<sup>th</sup> century and is currently a gym. It is proposed to convert this into a guest suite for use by the applicant's mother.

Most works are internal – apart from the replacement of two external doors. One at the southern gable end will be replaced on a like for like basis and the other – the pair of modern glazed doors on the western side – will be replaced by doors of similar design but half-glazed in proportion to match the existing modern windows.

#### **8.3.2 Heritage Impact Assessment**

Most changes are internal with the only external change of any significance being the new abutment between this range and the replacement kitchen range, which will mean that the southernmost section of the west side will become an internal wall. The original plan form and relationship between house and outbuilding would still, nevertheless, be readily appreciated.

Most changes involve the introduction of internal partitions in order to create the necessary circulation pattern for its new use. All of these changes are to a clearly already altered and modernised interior and all are reversible. It is considered that little if any of the building's limited surviving internal historical character will be adversely impacted.

## **9. Conclusions**

It is considered that the proposals are well-designed and proportionate and will result in no harm – substantial or less than substantial – to the character, setting or significance of the listed building or, because of its secluded nature, any adjacent heritage assets. Consequently it is considered that neither Sections 66 or 72 of the 1990 Planning Act nor Paragraphs 201-3 of the NPPF would be engaged.

In terms of the design of the proposed replacement kitchen range, quality rather than style is what matters, as outlined in the 2004 document, *CABE and the Historic Environment* which states that:

*‘In designing for historic environments it is important to achieve high quality design which adds to the quality of what exists, rather than getting bogged down in questions of style. Designs should be developed for present-day needs, in a holistic manner that responds to all relevant considerations and local circumstances. This does not predispose that designs have to be of any particular style, use any particular materials, or have a specific ‘look’, either copying older buildings or looking particularly modern’.*

Additionally, Para.143 of English Heritage’s 2008 *Conservation Principles* states:

*‘There are no simple rules for achieving quality of design in new work, although a clear and coherent relationship of all the parts to the whole, as well as to the setting into which the new work is introduced, is essential. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways....’*

In the recent past, planning guidance has recognised that change to historic buildings is part of their history and that buildings are not and should not be fossilised in time. The prospect of such change, even to listed buildings, is anticipated in the NPPF but is more clearly outlined in earlier guidance from 1996, *Planning Policy Guideline No.15* (PPG 15). This stated that:

*‘Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted.’*

This echoes the statement in the pioneering 2008 document, *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* that:

*‘Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people’s responses to social, economic and technological change’*



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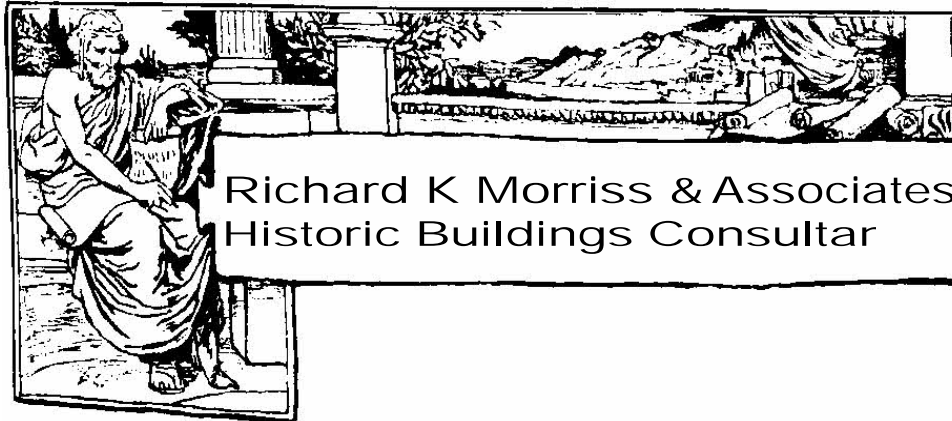
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## *The Consultancy*

*Richard K Morriss founded this Consultancy in 1995 after previously working for English Heritage and the Ironbridge Institute of the University of Birmingham and spending eight years as Assistant Director of the Hereford Archaeology Unit. Although Shropshire-based the Consultancy works throughout the UK on a wide variety of historic buildings for clients that include the National Trust, the Landmark Trust, English Heritage, the Crown Estates, owners, architects, planning consultants and developers. It specialises in the archaeological and architectural analysis of historic buildings of all periods and planning advice related to them. It also undertakes broader area appraisals, heritage impact assessments and Conservation Management Plans.*

*Richard Morriss is a former Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and of the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists, archaeological advisor to four cathedrals, occasional lecturer at Bristol and Birmingham universities, and author of many academic papers and of 20 books, mainly on architecture and archaeology, including *The Archaeology of Buildings* (Tempus 2000), *The Archaeology of Railways* (Tempus 1999); *Roads: Archaeology & Architecture* (Tempus 2006) and ten in the *Buildings of series: Bath, Chester, Ludlow, Salisbury, Shrewsbury, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Winchester, Windsor, Worcester* (Sutton 1993-1994). The latest work is an Historic England funded monograph on the *Houses of Hereford* (Oxbow 2018).*

*He was a member of the project teams responsible for the restoration of Astley Castle, Warwickshire, winner of the 2013 RIBA Stirling Prize; the restoration of the Old Market House, Shrewsbury, winner of a 2004 RIBA Conservation Award; and Llwyn Celyn, Monmouthshire, winner of the RICS Conservation Project of the Year 2019. He has also been involved in several projects that have won, or been short-listed for, other awards including those of the Georgian Group for Mostyn House, Denbigh; St. Helen's House, Derby; Radbourne Hall, Derbyshire and Cusgarne Manor, Cornwall.*



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