

December 2023

Kerris Manor  
Farmhouse, Kerris,  
Cornwall  
Heritage Impact Assessment

PORTICO HERITAGE

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# 1 Introduction

## Purpose

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to support the submission for listed building consent for the repair and partial replacement of the slate roof to Kerris Manor Farmhouse following considerable on-going damage from storms etc.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to set out the history and heritage significance of the site and its context and to consider the impact of the proposals on that significance.
- 1.3 The report should be read in conjunction with the plans and method statement and other documentation prepared as part of the application.

## Author

- 1.4 The author of this report is Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Nick set up Portico Heritage in 2014. Previously he was a Director of Conservation at Alan Baxter & Associates. Nick spent nine years at Historic England where he was a Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas leading a specialist team of historic building inspectors, architects, and archaeologists on a wide range of heritage projects in East & South London. Previously a Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Bromley, Nick began his career at real estate consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle as a Chartered Surveyor.

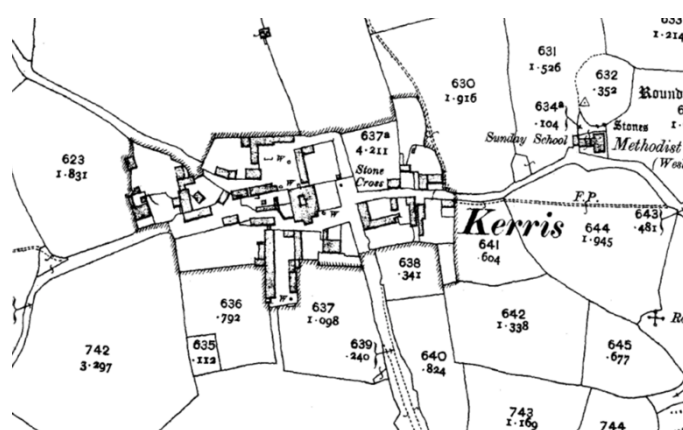
## 2 The site and its context

### Kerris

- 2.1 The barton of Kerris is supposed to have once had manorial rights, as a manor of *Keres* was granted in 1483 to John, Duke of Norfolk. The barton was successively the seat of the Chivertons, Hexts, Pearces and Blewetts, and the property of Mr Pascoe and others<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2 There are a number of prehistoric relics in the immediate vicinity including the Roundago and Kerris Standing Stone or menhir.

### Kerris Manor House

- 2.3 The origins of Kerris Manor are medieval. The original building comprised three farmshouses all of which were under separate ownership until 1694 when Richard Pearce bought the three parts.



Figures 1 & 2: Tithe Map 1840 & Ordnance Survey Map 1906

- 2.4 Figures 1 and 2 show the complexity of land occupation/ownership around Kerris during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, relating to the originally separate occupation of the Manor. At the time

<sup>1</sup> Trelease, GM (2006) *The History of the Church in Paul Parish*

the Tithe Map was drawn up the piggery, swill kitchen and wash house, to the north of Kerris Manor, had not been constructed.



Figure 2: Kerris Manor House from the south west showing the medieval western range

- 2.5 Both the north and west wings of Kerris were medieval buildings, with a courtyard between. There is still an original medieval fireplace, and remains of early windows and doors.
- 2.6 The north east wing was probably a Hall house, as there is a very large old chimney in the middle of it. The south of this building has a Queen Anne panelled room made in the time of the second Richard Pearce, when the whole front was given a 18<sup>th</sup> century Cornish face, built of dressed ashlar (figure 2).
- 2.7 The southern section of the house which joins these two is of 15<sup>th</sup> century construction. The south west gable was a dwelling house, and the south east, a Manorial Courtroom<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.8 The main change that took place at Kerris – the rebuilding/fronting on the eastern range – took place in 1721 following the marriage of Richard Pearce Jnr. and Maria Jones of Penrose. He extensively altered the house, putting the new Queen Anne front, a new staircase and panelling in the best parlour. The works are commemorated in the stone over the front door.



Figure 2: 1721 Eastern Range today

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<sup>2</sup> ibid

- 2.9 These works contributed to Pearce being declared bankrupt and the property was sold to John Hawkins in 1743.
- 2.10 Following a succession of owners the freehold farm was advertised for sale by auction in 1882 and bought by the owner of adjacent land, Mr Thomas Bedford Bolitho. Kerris remains part of the Bolitho Estate.

### Kerris Today

- 2.11 Whilst there is now only one tenant living at Kerris Manor, in the 1721 wing, the building still forms the heart of the settlement and Kerris, which still supports three farm tenants.
- 2.12 Apart from the rear north-western range, which has a simple corrugated roof covering, the majority of the rest of the building is covered with a scantle slate roof with regular (as opposed to graded) sized wet laid slates with wooden pegs. The roof is topped with late 19th or early 20<sup>th</sup> century pierced crested clay ridge tiles.
- 2.13 It is thought that this is when the roof was last re-covered – which also correlates with the purchase of the farm by the Bolitho Estate in 1882.
- 2.14 The surrounding farm buildings relate primarily to the other farms at Kerris.

### The Roof Today

- 2.15 Over recent years the repair of the roof has become an increasing concern with storms increasingly regularly causing damage – to the extent that since Storm Ciaran on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 the house has now been scaffolded from a health and safety perspective because of the uncertainty but regularity of tile slippage and fall.
- 2.16 The following images show the extent of recent damage:





Figures 3-7 Recent roof damage following autumn storms

- 2.17 As can be seen from the photographs, damage is not just in particular areas, but also adhoc, and often in relatively inaccessible parts of the roof – making the task of repairing it difficult and increasing the regular risk of water penetration and internal damage.

## 3 The heritage significance of the site and its context

### The heritage context of the site

- 3.1 Kerris Manor House is listed Grade II\*. To the north, the former piggery, swill kitchen and wash house are separately listed Grade II. Immediately in front of the house the medieval cross is listed Grade II and also a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a second Grade II listed cross head is located just to the south east.

### Heritage Significance

#### Assessing heritage and townscape significance: definitions

- 3.2 Listed buildings and conservation areas are 'designated heritage assets', as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF). Other buildings and structures identified as having heritage significance can be considered as 'non-designated heritage assets'.
- 3.3 Heritage 'significance' is defined in 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 or historic'. The Historic England 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2' puts it slightly differently – as 'the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest'.
- 3.4 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (English Heritage, 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.

### Kerris Manor House and surroundings

- 3.5 Kerris Manor is a fine example of a historic farm complex in this part of Cornwall where a group of three adjoining farmsteads are joined together at the centre of the 'townplace'. A common feature of Cornish farmsteads noted by VM & FJ Chesher in their 'The Cornishman's House: An Introduction to Traditional Domestic Architecture in Cornwall (1968).
- 3.6 The list description describes the building as dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, possibly incorporating earlier walls (remodelled at the front in 1721 and extended in the 18<sup>th</sup> century) which dates much of the 'original' 17<sup>th</sup> century element to the same time as the 'Great Rebuild' of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.



- 3.7 Historic reference to the manorial courtroom further indicate the status of Kerris within its immediate context.
- 3.8 Its architectural interest is reflected in its representation of a vernacular Cornish farm complex and is manifested in its evolved architectural form, detailing and appearance. This includes, externally, the use of traditional materials – rubble stone, slate, timber windows.
- 3.9 The older parts of the building contain many architectural features – not just in plan form, but details such as chamfered windows and doors; which reflect and represent the different architectural styles and periods.
- 3.10 The rebuilding of the east wing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century is an important part of the building's evolution reflecting the desired status of the owner – presenting a polite ashlar front with timber sash windows, doors and the new panelled parlour with bolection mouldings and moulded cornices.
- 3.11 As with all working places, the building has been adapted and renewed as necessary throughout its life. The existing roof would appear to date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century and is now coming to the end of its practical life.
- 3.12 Beyond the farmhouse itself, to the north the former piggery, swill kitchen and wash house – which date to the mid/late 19<sup>th</sup> century - are separately listed. These form a long rectangular range with 4 pigsties on the left and swill kitchen and washroom to the right.
- 3.13 They form part of the farm complex 'group' with Kerris Manor Farmhouse to its south.
- 3.14 Immediately in front of the farmhouse are the two medieval crosses – one that has been re-sited and originally came from Carnelanga and the other, just the head of the cross, which is identified as medieval or possibly pre-conquest.
- 3.15 Other buildings/barns at Kerris relate to the various farm tenancies that form the small 'townplace'.

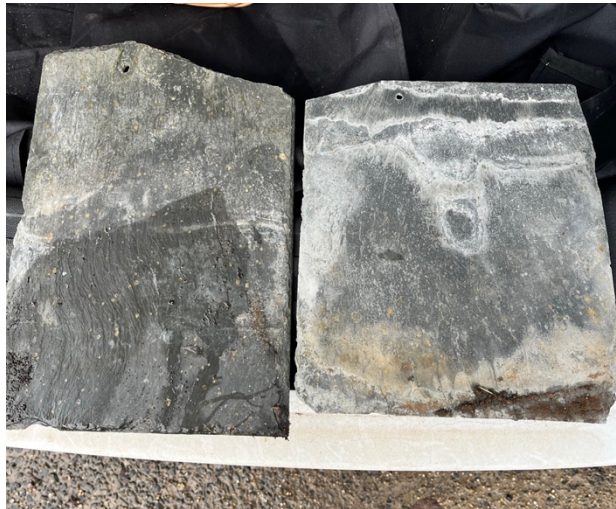
### Summary

- 3.16 Kerris Manor Farmhouse has considerable historic and architectural special interest. Historically it is an example of a high-status local farm complex in a remote part of West Penwith which is reflected in its architectural evolution, materials and the quality of workmanship.
- 3.17 The buildings surrounding the farmhouse, particularly the piggery complex to the north, are an important part of the farmhouse's context which sits at the heart of the townplace of Kerris.

## 4 The proposed scheme and its effect

- 4.1 The proposals are for the repair and re-roofing of Kerris Manor Farmhouse. This is further illustrated in the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared as part of the application. It is proposed that the work is undertaken using existing and reclaimed slates.
- 4.2 The roof has been professionally inspected to understand the extent of damage and the prognosis for its future. Through a combination of weather, a failure of the slates themselves as well as the timber pegs that hold them, on-going damage is now increasing in regularity has led to the conclusion that the roof covering needs to be entirely overhauled.
- 4.3 The photographs in the first part of this report highlight the issue – representing damage from one storm and also showing where ad hoc slipped slates further increases the risk of water ingress.
- 4.4 The adhoc nature of the slippages has also led to the decision that a ‘crash deck’ of scaffolding has been necessary for the safety of the tenants.
- 4.5 Whilst there are no specific records, the nature of the slates and ridge tiles suggest that the roof was last re-covered in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This would also coincide with the purchase of the property by the Bolitho Estate.
- 4.6 Considerable deliberation has been had as to how to best address the issues with the roof – which for many years has been repaired on an as-and-when basis.
- 4.7 Research into the cost and delay associated with a complete re-slating in Delabole slate has revealed that it would be both prohibitive in cost and the delay in being able to undertake the works could lead to considerable further damage.
- 4.8 Whilst an assessment of each slate would not be possible until works are fully underway it is thought that it is likely enough of the existing slates could be salvaged to cover the main ‘external’ elevations of the roof. Specifically it would be the eastern, southern and western external elevations covered with the slates re-used from the existing roof and the northern elevation and courtyard elevations that would be covered with slates from the barns.
- 4.9 It is then proposed that the slates on two other barns from adjoining farms at Kerris (neither of which form part of the listed complex) would be used to complete the remainder of the roof – thus ensuring that the farmhouse is covered in local slate. It was planned that these barns would be re-roofed in the near future, so will bring this planned repair work forward so that all three roofs are done at the same time.
- 4.10 The unlisted barns would be re-slatted in a carefully matched, alternative slate.

- 4.11 The following image is a comparison of a slate from the roof of Kerris Manor and from one of the barns – showing that they ensure a good quality match.



- 4.12 The proposals have aimed to address a series of important considerations: the need for a repair/replacement solution that will protect the roof and prevent water ingress; the desire to re-use as much of the existing roof covering as possible; the cost and availability of local slate particularly in comparison to alternative sources; the importance of Kerris Manor.

### Summary

- 4.13 The special interest and significance of Kerris Manor Farmhouse is recognised and outlined in this report as well as the list description. Professional assessment of the existing roof covering suggests that it dates to the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century and so whilst still important is a much later re-covering of the building.
- 4.14 Its state of repair has now necessitated the erection of scaffolding to provide protection to the existing tenant and the roof needs to be comprehensively overhauled.
- 4.15 A combination of the salvaged slate from the building itself as well as those from the nearby unlisted barns is hoped to provide sufficient slate to re-cover the farmhouse. Whilst this will be a time consuming and skilled undertaking, it is hoped that it is recognised as a pragmatic way of ensuring that the roof covering at Kerris is historically authentic.
- 4.16 In following this approach it is believed that no harm will be caused to the significance of the listed building, or its setting and thus will comply with national and local policy and guidance.

## Appendix – List Description

PAUL KERRIS SW 42 NW 5/12 Kerris Manor Farmhouse including - front garden walls and rear courtyard walls GV II\*

Manor farmhouse including front garden walls and rear courtyard walls. C17, possibly incorporating earlier walls. Remodelled at the front in 1721 for RP (Richard Pearce) (datestone over doorway) and extended in the C18. Granite ashlar front, otherwise granite moorstone rubble with granite dressings. Scantle slate roof with gable ends. Granite coped, gable ends to rear range. Original gable axial and lateral dressed granite stacks with moulded tops. Circa late-c19 or early-C20 pierced crested clay ridge tiles. Plan: Large plan built-around a rectangular courtyard plus a short projecting wing set back on the left-hand side. Front (east) range was substantially rebuilt in 1721 and the internal features are probably of this date. There is a large parlour on the left, a similar sized room (now kitchen) on the right and a large central hall with externally projecting stair and fireplace at its rear. The front wall of the rear (west) range continues, at either side of the courtyard and is presumably one of the oldest surviving parts. There is a through passage (front and rear doorways) at left of middle. L-shaped range on the left (south) of the courtyard has many C17 features; right-hand (north) range had a small service room with axial through passage behind with C17 opening on its right. There is a stair beside the fireplace in the front right-hand room. Exterior: 2 storeys. Symmetrical 7 window east front with central doorway (second from left-hand first floor window opening and window opening over doorway blocked). C18 6-panel door with top 4 panels later glazed. Two C18 sashes with thick glazing bars right of doorway, otherwise circa early C19 12-pane sashes and some later copies, all in original openings. Ground floor openings have incised lintels to resemble flat arches with voussoirs. Later lean-to on left. North courtyard front of south range has C17 3-light freestone or elvan hollow-chamfered 3-light mullioned window to first floor. West front of rear range has C17 chamfered doorway left of courtyard front, blocked opening to first floor left and blocked chamfered mullioned window to ground floor right (within north range). Interior: Range set back on the left has C17 chamfered windows in the front, left-hand and rear walls. Front range has many features of 1721 including: complete panelled parlour with bolection mouldings and moulded cornice (repaired at west end in 1987 following fire); ovolo-moulded panelling and moulded cornice to rear wall of hall, left of stair; many doors with fielded panels and eared chimney piece in left-hand chamber. Stair has closed string and heavy turned balusters and appears to be circa late C17. Left-hand range and rear range have C17 chamfered and stopped ceiling beams and there are probably many features not inspected or hidden. Roof structures not inspected. Granite coped rubble walls enclose a rectangular garden at the front. Gateway aligns with doorway of the house and is flanked by gate-piers of reused dressed masonry which are integral with the garden walls. The piers have large chamfered caps and ball finials. Rear courtyard walls are taller, built of granite rubble and enclose 2 yards. Near the rear left-hand corner of the house is a C17

chamfered doorway, partly fallen. For a period until 1694 Kerris was in 3 different ownerships. In 1694 Richard Pearce brought the 3 parts and it was his son Richard (1693-1753) who carried out the last major alteration to the house which was completed in 1721 (datestone). In 1743 Richard Perce and his wife Maria were declared bankrupt and John Hawkins came into possession of the property. Kerris Manor Farmhouse is on an ancient site and is set in a beautiful coastal landscape rich in prehistoric remains including the unique Roundago nearby. Source: Historical information was extracted from copies of historical information from the CRO lent by present occupier.

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