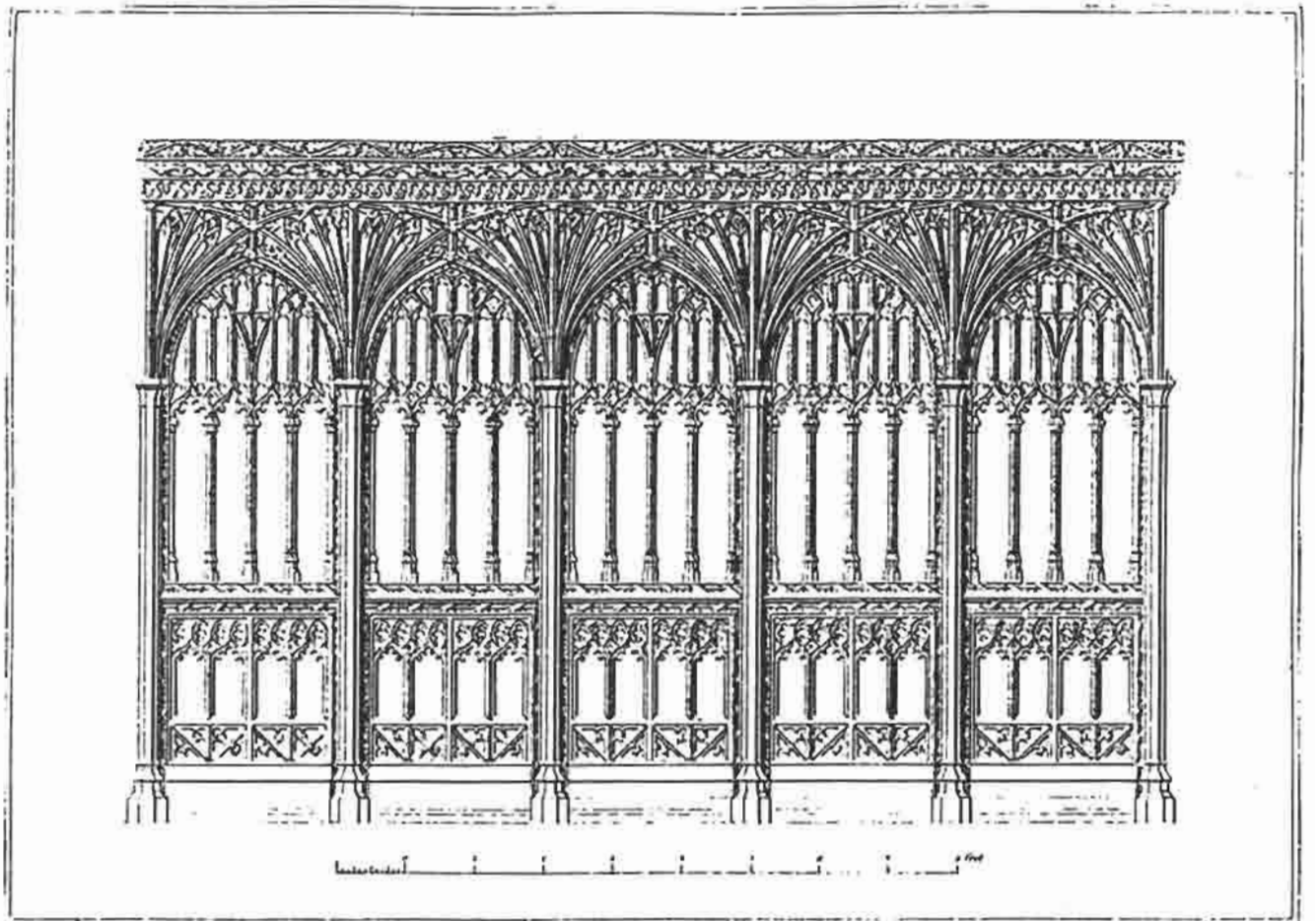


# DEVON BUILDINGS GROUP

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 12



MARCH 1994

Cover illustration is of the oak rood screen of St Mary's, Coleridge, Devon, drawn by F. Wills, from sketches by Rev. J.L. Fulford. From *Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society*, Vol.II (Exeter, 1847).

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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 12, MARCH 1994

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## EDITORIAL:

I would like to introduce myself as the new editor of the *Devon Buildings Group Newsletter*. I would gladly welcome any members' views about format or content. It has already been suggested to me that there could be a place for open letters to the Group from members with queries, interests or particular concerns. Replies from other members would then be published in the following issue. This seems to me an excellent way of opening up the *Newsletter*, which I would like to see as a forum for as many members as possible. Articles from those who have not contributed before would be particularly welcome. A list of contents of previous *Newsletters* has been compiled by Roger Thorne and appears at the end of this issue, giving a clear view of the scope of the Group's interests and work.

Letters, articles and constructive (or even deconstructive) criticisms should reach me by April at the following address:

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I look forward to hearing from you.

*Su Jarwood*

## 'BARE RUINED CHOIRS'? Coming problems and Devon's historic churches

[The following is the second part of the Secretary's report to the 1993 AGM. The first part of the report was concerned with current developments and changes in the organisation of the DBG.]

One of the reasons underlying the need for these changes, is a strong sense that I have that the

Group is going to be faced with some really major issues of architectural conservation over the coming few years – and it is vital that we feel we are in the right shape to respond to them. Some of these we already know about, and have experience of. To start with an old problem, there is and will continue to be, the consequences of the decline – or, at least, radical reshaping – of agriculture in the county: the amalgamated holdings, the unwanted farmsteads sold away from their land, the redundant farm buildings awaiting demolition or the dreaded domestic conversion. We had a lull in such applications during the peaceful days at the depth of the depression, but, if the number of recent applications in Mid-Devon is anything to go by, the first thin air of economic recovery is reanimating the barn converter – "And now darling they're just so *cheap!*" If tourism recovers then we will get more holiday home conversions and the wider problems of strain on an increasingly less than adequate infrastructure – problems that will certainly have repercussions for the county's historic buildings. On top of which there is the unresolved battle between Heritage and the historic built environment – broadly speaking the issue of whether the nation is going to divide between Olde Britain, where everybody lives either as a curator or as an exhibit, and the inner cities, where living at all is an extremely precarious business. To cheer everybody up, I recently heard an interview with an American promoter of theme parks and heritage, who said, "Whether you Brits like it or not, you can't get away from it: you all live in Britain World".

Even if a tourist revival does not happen, the projected increases in Devon's permanent population almost certainly will. And that means extensive new housing – already proposed in the new County Structure Plan – and, inevitably, road schemes. A deeply insensitive scheme for the centre of Tavistock is currently being proposed, and, I'm glad to say, fought; the scheme for a bypass through the Great Field at Braunton is still alive. And, as we have seen at Bideford, there are other kinds of massively intrusive infrastructure proposals as well. Whatever the reasons – from high tides to global warming – behind the Flood Prevention scheme, one thing is certain: sorting out the flooding problem at Bideford, and the sewage problem that is associated, is the necessary first step to a major redevelopment of the town itself. Moreover, if central Bideford goes

down before the National Rivers Authority, then coastal town after coastal town in the South West will be similarly threatened. Meanwhile, while one is contemplating historic habitations by the sea what *is* going to happen to Plymouth's Royal William Victualling Yard? It is now two and a half years since we had our conference there – and the Newcomen Society are meeting to discuss it and other historic dockyards at the same time as this AGM – and still God has not said a word – God in this case being the Urban Development Corporation supposedly set up to deal with it.

Other issues and problems are going to come from legislative and political change. The new Planning Policy Guidelines for listed buildings have now got as far as the national amenity societies, who submitted their joint response a couple of days ago, so perhaps it will arrive some time in 1994. It has actually got a number of good elements, and an interesting statement from our point of view is a re-iterated stress on the value that Ministers place on the work of the voluntary societies. They undoubtedly like us most of all because they don't have to pay us, but it might strengthen our negotiating hand. At the same time, the Department of the Environment has issued a consultation paper on Conservation Area legislation. This reads as if it had been drawn up by a hand-picked team of property developers, and has been thrown back at the DoE by the amenity societies and English Heritage with carefully concerted shouts of disbelief and derision. Larger administrative changes that may be in the offing are also ominous – I'm thinking particularly of the threat to County Councils, and the effect that that will have on the management of the built environment and the availability of expertise on historic buildings.

But above all, I think, we are going to be confronting a major crisis in the future preservation of the historic church. At last year's AGM I talked about the new Faculty Jurisdiction Measure governing work on Anglican churches. The newly-constituted Diocesan Advisory Committees set up under the measure began work in April 1993, and the system is still on trial. The threat of the removal of Ecclesiastical Exemption has also resulted in parallel structures being proposed by the Roman Catholic church and the Methodist church. But the crisis that I think is coming is not primarily about the monitoring of works, alterations and repairs in historic churches,

vital though that is: it is about the very survival of historic churches. Statistically, decline in the membership of Britain's churches has been long-established and has shown no sign of being reversed. Nonconformist membership peaked in the 1870s, held steady for a couple of decades, then started to fall off, steadily for the first half of this century, then precipitately in recent decades. Anglican membership increased up to the First World War, began to decline thereafter, and has slid sharply since the 1950s. Roman Catholic membership showed the first signs of decline about ten years ago, and that decline appears to be gathering pace. All the indications are that we are witnessing a long-term desertion from organised, institutional religion: the only signs of marginal revival are among the happy clappers and the pick-and-mix brigades of the New Age. Neither of these last have any interest in buildings. The traditional churches, on the other hand, hold the single most important body of historic buildings in the country – with the Anglicans responsible for more than 50% of the nation's grade I listed structures.

Nationally, hundreds of urban churches have been closed, to be converted in one way or another, turned into flats, or merely demolished. In Exeter, for the Anglicans, the city centre team ministry does not know what to do with buildings for which it no longer has any use: St Pancras is the heritage centre-piece of a shopping precinct. Holy Trinity is a clubhouse. St Mary Arches is closed having failed as a Christian Education centre, St Michael is hovering on the verge of redundancy, and St Petrock bravely continues open without a congregation and with no future that anybody can think of. In Plymouth, a grand strategy for the fate of the city's churches hangs ominously, but obscurely, over the horizon: there is too much architectural plant – to use the terminology of the present Bishop of Exeter. Nonconformity has increasingly been forced to withdraw: in Barnstaple, a few years ago, Roger Thorne took me to see two or three nonconformist churches of real architectural stature and historical significance that are surplus to requirements. In rural Devon, the situation, though less well known about, is every bit as grave. The county is already littered with the abandoned buildings of Devon's nonconformist tradition – converted to houses at the best, or simply standing derelict: Chris Stell's splendid inventory of nonconformist churches in



the South West, published only the other year, begins to read like a casualty list from the Great War. As for the Church of England, scores – probably hundreds – of parish churches are kept more or less intact by the efforts of a handful of committed folk who somehow patch the roofs, repair the gutters, replace the broken glass. In the Deanery of Holsworthy there are 31 medieval churches, and an Anglican parish roll of between three or four hundred people to raise the money to look after them – let's say a dozen people for each building. The diocese has managed to date with relatively few redundancies. In the towns and cities, a number of Victorian churches have been allowed to go entirely: after all, they were only Victorian and nobody apart from a few cranks cared about them – Hayward's St Marks's in Dawlish, Ferrey's St Mary Magdalene's in Barnstaple, Hine's All Saints' in Plymouth, Ashworth's St Mary Major's in Exeter. In the country there was always somebody to look after the medieval churches, and then, after a while, there was the Redundant Churches Fund: and they took, and looked after, Parracombe, West Ogwell, Luffincott, Torbryan. But now that is no longer the case. The Fund has always fought shy of the difficulties involved in taking over urban churches, and now is holding its breath for the deluge from the diocese of Norwich, which, as we understand, is going to sort out its financial bankruptcy by the redundancy of who knows how many little medieval churches in rural Norfolk. Planned ruination will be the strategy for many of them.

Meanwhile, here in Devon, the parish church of North Huish, in the South Hams on the edge of Dartmoor, was declared redundant in March. It has a thirteenth-century chancel and north transept, a fourteenth-century tower and spire, a fifteenth-century nave and south aisle, medieval wagon roofs, a nice collection of Georgian monuments. Its medieval rood screen is in bits in the transept, its south aisle arcade is filled with a concrete wall erected about ten years ago. When I attended a meeting there last month, there were three inches of water at the west end of the nave. The Redundant Churches Fund has said that it cannot take the building. It is hoped that the ex-churchwarden will be able to think of something to do with it. If not, and if no other possibilities arrive, then Devon could well see its first demolition of a complete medieval church in recent times.

In the next few months I will be having meetings with the Council, for the Care of Churches and English Heritage about a strategy for the future protection and preservation of historic churches. I do not know what the outcome of that will be. I do know, however, that it is essential from the point of view of this county, that the Devon Buildings Group is dynamically present in the efforts to secure a future for churches in Devon. To return to the beginning of my report: we are in a process of transition because the whole context of the historic buildings of Devon is itself changing. We must engage with that, and we must be in a position to deploy our very considerable strengths in support of the buildings we are committed to protect.

*Chris Brooks*

## JOHN BETJEMAN MEMORIAL AWARD

This important award is made annually by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for outstanding repairs to churches or chapels in use. It was granted this year to representatives of the Church of St John the Baptist, Plymtree and to conservator and DBG member Andrew Lawson.

Andrew has recently carried out conservation work on a medieval statue of the Madonna and Child on the west face of the tower and it was because of his 'gentle and conservative approach' that his work was chosen from amongst entries from all over the country.

The statue, carved in beerstone, is rather too large for its niche, but has been well protected by it and so retains many clear details, particularly the carving of the hair. Both niche and figure were repointed during the restoration of the whole church by G. Fellowes Prynne in 1895. Andrew Lawson's work was completed in May 1992. The architect was Michael Willis of Lucas Roberts & Brown partnership. Statue and niche were carefully cleaned, using the minimum of water to remove dirt and organic growth. This was



Statue of the Virgin & Child  
St John the Baptist Church, Plymtree



followed by the application of a very dilute solution of bleach, which was then thoroughly washed off.

The cleaning process revealed some exciting finds. Andrew has suggested that the discovery of a number of large pebbles together with a small hand-stitched leather ball and a wooden top found behind the figure may indicate that it was once used as target practice by local children. A further discovery would seem to suggest that their aim was true and that they eventually succeeded in knocking off the Virgin's crown. A beerstone crown was found behind the figure, well preserved in its unweathered position and apparently fixed with a wooden dowel, part of which still remains.

The second phase of conservation involved the consolidation and pinning of all unstable parts. The child's torso had fractured due to the erosion of an iron pin which had been used to fix the head, now missing. Three stainless steel pins were used to consolidate and resin was injected into the gap. The Virgin's left arm and hand were also fractured and received two pins. It seems likely that this figure once held a sceptre. Similar work was carried out on all areas of stone displaying signs of breakage or stress and a cusp in the niche was pinned.

All friable and weathered areas were repaired using lime mortar. This was also used in the repointing of cracked joints. Two coats of yellow ochre limewash were given forming a 'sacrificial coat' which will protect the statue for several years. The Victorian backing of cementitious material, probably applied during the Fellowes Prynne restoration, was also limewashed.

It was decided that there would be no conjectural replacement of missing parts. What has been achieved is a sensitive conservation of the existing statue and niche and a clearer visual definition of both.

The John Betjeman award, which consists of a certificate bearing a print specially produced for it by the late John Piper, was presented by Peter Brooke MP at the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings AGM in King's Lynn, Norfolk on 19 June 1993. It was accepted by Alan Barnett, a churchwarden of St John the Baptist, Plymtree and by Andrew Lawson.

Sources: SPAB press release (21.6.93).  
Report compiled on completion of the conservation - May 1992.

*Su Jarwood with Andy Lawson*

## **DEVON'S HISTORIC BUILDINGS: NEW DISCOVERIES A Conference Report**

It is not conventional for speakers at a conference to comment on the event for those who were unable to attend. Nevertheless, I would like to use the form of the *DBG Newsletter* to mention some of the issues raised by the conference on Devon's Historic Buildings: New Discoveries, held on 14 March jointly by the Council for British Archaeology and the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Exeter. This conference consisted of papers given by most of the fieldworkers from the Rural Resurvey and from the more recent programme of Urban Reviews of listed buildings in Devon. It also included a paper on late medieval farming in Devon by Harold Fox of the Leicester Department of Local History.

From my viewpoint, two very important themes emerged from the papers and the discussions. The first was an element of debunking the *status quo* in vernacular building studies in Devon. The old picture of Devon, which I had in mind before the Rural Resurvey, could be crudely painted as a county where late medieval houses of three room and through passage plan were ubiquitous and rather standardised (unless you were in the north or west of the county where the numbers and interest simply faded out). Dartmoor was different, with a small number of long-houses with specialised plans. What emerged from the conference was a much more complex and sub-regional picture, with far more variety in it, both of date and type, than I had supposed.

James Moir, for example, proved from distribution maps that the long-house, far from being confined to the Dartmoor National Park,

appears in numbers to the southern sector of North Devon. The connection and use of its parts are less obvious than existing published material suggests. Martin Cherry argued that the late medieval and post-medieval gentry house in Devon is more indebted to the historically peasant arrangement of the long-house than to aristocratic houses of the fourteenth century. It seems that, in Devon at any rate, the influence on the layout of gentry houses comes from below, not the more conventional view which argues for imitation of one's social betters.

The three room and cross passage plan house is not the rule for Devon medieval and post-medieval houses, as both James Moir and Jenny Cheshier indicated. A two-room plan was more common in North Devon, where there is evidence for extensive remodelling, addition and alteration at both ends of the medieval open hall.

John Thorp's paper referred to a small but significant number of pre-Black Death fourteenth-century houses in the county. These were of base cruck construction but with considerable variety and experimentation within that tradition, which is national in extent and probably originally derived from France. After the Black Death a stronger sense of regionality seems to have developed, generating specifically local types of domestic roof carpentry which remained the norm for several generations, such as the jointed cruck in mid and east Devon and the roof with principals with short curved feet in the north and west of the county. The issue of medieval wagon roofs in churches, which has interested a number of DBG members over the last year or so, was also drawn into the debate.

Michael Laithwaite revealed just how extensive, if fragmentary and disguised, is the evidence for seventeenth-century and earlier town houses in the county. There is clearly still a great deal of work to be done on historic urban houses in Devon.

Harold Fox described the wealth of the late fifteenth-century cattle farmers of mid Devon, or 'Dallas' as he dubbed it, whose profits were sufficient to comfortably fund the building of new open-hall houses. The mid Devon farmers were contrasted with the poorer, arable farmers of the South Hams who had less disposable income as a result of labour costs. This paper represented a great leap forward for many of us in explaining

the existing distribution maps of medieval houses in the county.

The second issue that the conference raised for me was the fact that the listing process, developed as a bureaucratic planning tool and funded basically for that reason, is adding enormously to our understanding of local history in Devon. The historic buildings we visited on the Resurvey mean little as individual constructions until they are set in a social and economic context. Each paper at the conference, in different ways, was a plea for, or an attempt towards a better, historian's view of the buildings identified on the listing programmes. This approach was attempted, however, in an amateurish way on the Resurvey, when many of the buildings mentioned at the conference were first identified, and now needs to be developed.

The way the rural listing resurvey was carried out in Devon received plenty of criticism and even downright hostility from bureaucrats: 'we never asked for a Rolls Royce, we only asked for a mini' is one quote I remember. This was counterbalanced by support and encouragement from individuals (some in bureaucratic positions) and organisations who were prepared to take seriously the label of 'special historic interest' that is applied to listed buildings. A protection order on an old building is not simply there to generate a special local or national government procedure when changes are proposed, it is a judgement on what is historically valuable and should be historically informed.

The support of Martin Robertson, then working for Listing Branch at English Heritage, was crucial to the thoroughness of the Devon Resurvey relative to other counties. At the conference he praised the Devon project for producing lists that 'stood the test of time' – that were useful in the bureaucratic process.

Those of us who were fieldworkers know how many failures there were on the Resurvey – both buildings we misunderstood and buildings we just plain missed. As John Thorp pointed out, the opportunity to look more carefully at buildings that were inspected for listing nearly always reveals errors of dating or interpretation in the Resurvey description. Those of us now working in the conservation business also know how many failures, as well as successes, there are after listing. On the positive side, though, it does seem

that an approach that attempted to unravel the evolution of the individual buildings and tried to consider some social and economic issues, rather than simply describing the front elevation, has paid off, both from the viewpoint of judging what is historically important and from the viewpoint of planning.

What this suggests to me is a need to make the listing process itself more historically based, more sensitive to the context in which the buildings, of whatever type and date, were put up and more ready to include documentary research. The official statement of what is 'listable' is perfectly clear that buildings can be considered for listing if they have social or economic interest. Unfortunately, in the course of time, this properly historic approach appears to have gradually been displaced by snap judgements on the aesthetics of an individual building.

I believe that if the balance were redressed, and a well-informed sense of history came to the fore, there would be not only a radical impact on what is included in future lists, but planning decisions on listed buildings would be influenced for the better.

It would probably halt the tendency to automatically include many of those drastically-altered Georgian urban houses, which are often completely gutted for shops on the ground floor and are little more than a section of front wall with 2 sash windows. It would involve a more careful consideration of the buildings generated by local economics, raising the profile of, for instance, the last historic commercial cider barn in Paignton, a town which, in the nineteenth century had an economy largely based on cider production. It would pay more attention to the often rather re-vamped rear blocks and subsidiary buildings in historic towns which sometimes mark medieval urban plots and whose survival is crucial to the conservation of a medieval urban layout. It would involve changes of procedure which ensured that buildings that worked together as groups, like farmbuildings, were protected as groups rather than piecemeal, and it would encourage more detailed investigation of selected buildings prior to alterations.

*Jo Cox*

## THE DEMISE OF STEART FARM

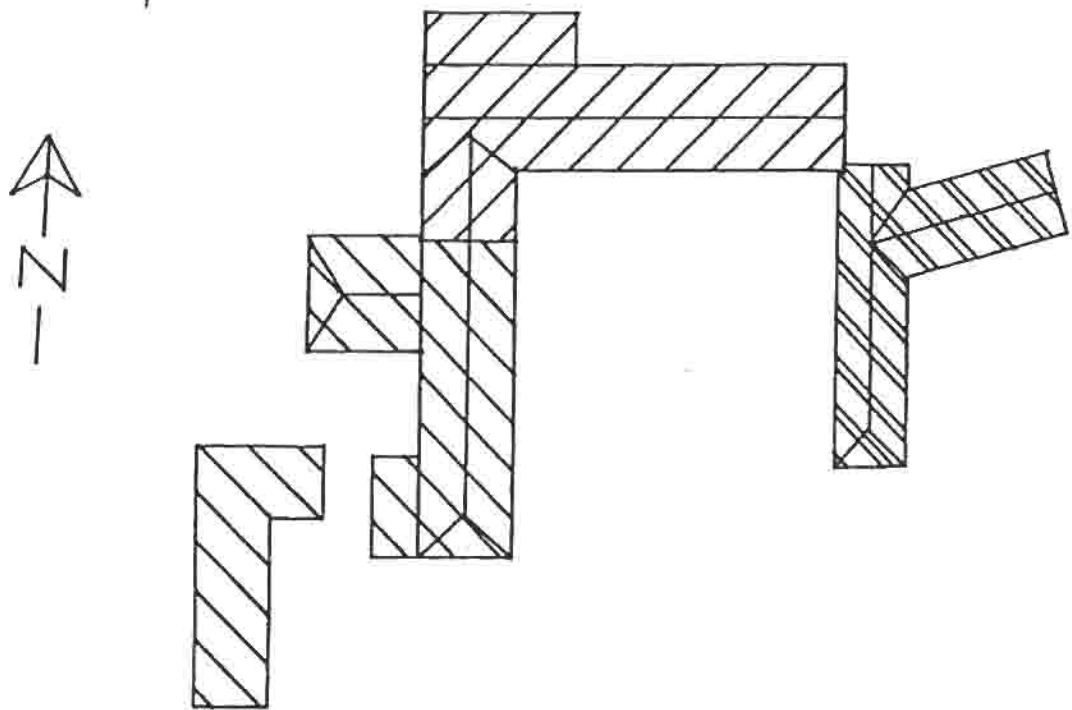
Much of the casework dealt with by the Devon Buildings Group involves assessing the impact of an application for Listed Building Consent for alteration, improvement or conversion on the historic fabric of a building. Other casework deals with work to be carried out to structures within the curtilage of a listed building. A few cases are concerned with work which has been undertaken on a listed building without Listed Building Consent. Steart Farm has the dubious honour of including all of the above types of casework on one site over a number of years.

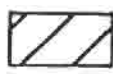
Stearth Farm, Stoodleigh is situated between the villages of Stoodleigh and Cove, approximately four miles north of Tiverton in Mid Devon. It had survived for generations in a relatively unaltered state. The farmhouse is listed Grade II and has its origins in the early sixteenth century as a late medieval open hall house, with remodelling and probable extension in the seventeenth century and alterations in the eighteenth. It was originally a three room and cross passage house, but has now evolved into a house five rooms long, one room deep and two storeys high. It has retained the cross passage with a section of the oak plank and muntin screen on the higher side. At the lower end, the extreme right hand room was a store room with a wool loft over, creating an unusual plan form.

The roof has three massive smoke-blackened jointed cruck trusses below a later roof structure. The ridge was originally diagonally set, but is now missing although some sooted rafters survive.


This information is taken from the list description for Stearth Farm, which was surveyed prior to any of the building works referred to here.

The farmyard consisted of a 'U' shape of buildings – the farmhouse to the north, with a range of modest buildings at each end running north-south, each with an archway giving through access to the yard. The western range had an engine house projecting westwards away from the yard, and the eastern range a projection flanking the side of the lane running away from the yard.



 FARMHOUSE

 WEST BARN

 EAST BARN

Block plan of Steart Farm



To the west of the western range was a separate stable block also running north-south. Mid Devon's Area Planning Officer ventured the opinion that the farmyard may originally have been completely enclosed by a southern range of farmbuildings, hence the need for archways in both the east and west ranges of buildings to give access to the yard itself. However, this was demolished long before we became interested in the property!

Unfortunately for Steart Farm, the family who had lived in the house and farmed the land for many years put the farm up for auction in 1987. The purchasers were not agriculturalists. It was their intention to set up a racing stables and gallops on a parcel of land which included the house, and sell off other portions of the farm. The farmbuildings were to be sold in two lots for development and one block of land sold off to create a separate farming unit.

The Devon Buildings Group first became involved in 1988 when, in February, we responded to an application for Listed Building Consent, which proposed the removal of internal partitions on both the ground and first floors of the house. However, before the application had come before the Planning and Transportation Committee of Mid Devon District Council, work began with much of the internal structure being removed. Work was halted by Devon County Council until the matter had been discussed by the District Planning and Transportation Committee. Upon hearing this, we requested Mid Devon either to insist that the work be reinstated or if it could not be reversed to prosecute the owners for illegally undertaking work on a listed building.

The Committee decided not to prosecute in this instance, but to issue 'a severe warning' to the owner, and resolved 'that all possible steps be taken to secure the best possible reinstatement' of the illegal demolition.

In March 1988 an application was submitted retrospectively by the owners, covering the work they had carried out and detailing their proposals for the rest of the works. This was granted permission by Mid Devon District Council, subject to three conditions. These included the need for the works to be restricted to those detailed on the approved drawings, including the use of natural slate for reroofing. All the features not shown to be altered were to be retained to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority.

In October 1988 we had cause to question the roof covering being used, but were reassured that natural slate was being used – albeit Spanish slate.

By May 1989 Listed Building Consent for conversion of the farmbuildings was being sought. Two separate applications were put before the Local District Planning Authority for the conversion of farmbuildings for residential use. One related to the eastern range of buildings, now called East Barn and the other to the western range, henceforth to be called West Barn.

We objected to both applications, especially in the light of the efforts made to retain the character of the farmhouse. The idea that the whole setting should now be ruined by the conversion of the majority of the buildings in the curtilage of the farmhouse seemed too much like a kick in the teeth for those who had battled for this unfortunate farmstead. However, Mid Devon granted permission for the conversions in July 1989.

Quite apart from the Listed Building Consent applications and related building works, things were changing at Steart Farm. The whole area around the house and buildings was landscaped, with the removal of all trees and hedgerows between the road and the house. Previously the farmhouse and buildings had been hidden from view by the natural slope of the land, an orchard and various hedgerows. One could have been forgiven for not knowing any buildings were there at all. They now stand stark upon the graded slopes of uniform, uncluttered earth.

Between the house and the road were built two huge clear-span buildings, which serve as stables for numerous racehorses, with a large gravelled parking area in front. Any sense of privacy or seclusion has been totally lost with the house, original outbuildings and modern stables standing exposed to the elements and the whole world. The eastern lane to the farmyard forms the driveway into the main house and East Barn. The western farm lane leads to West Barn only. Opposite the eastern lane entrance is a drive leading to the separate parcel of land which is now a free-range chicken farm, with one bungalow already built and planning permission for another, subject to the erection of another chicken shed.

Our attention now focuses on the property of the West Barn which comprises the western range.

of the farmyard and the detached stable block to the west of this range. In July 1991 Michael Hallam Ltd, a firm of consulting engineers acting as agents for the new owner of West Barn, applied for an LBC to demolish the detached stable block and a lean-to attached to the main barn. The plans simply showed the outline of each of these structures on a site plan with 'Derelict stables to be demolished' and 'Derelict lean-to to be demolished' written beside each outline respectively. No details were given of their condition, nor even the type of construction. We objected to the lack of detail and the fact that the subjective description of 'derelict' was considered adequate grounds for demolition by the applicant's agent. We suggested that Mid Devon should request further information from the agent.

I feel it is only fair to say at this point that the owner of West Barn was overseas and, as far as I am aware, had left Michael Hallam Ltd in charge of all matters concerning the conversion of West Barn.

Mid Devon requested further information from the agent, and in late October a revised application was received. The covering letter made fascinating reading. It was written by the consulting engineers and attempted to '*expand the reasons for totally demolishing the stable block on this site*'.

The letter went on:

*Whilst we appreciate the structure is in the curtilage of a listed building, the stable itself is not listed, but of historic interest. We intend to re-use all the materials, including the timber as feature work inside the main barn, therefore none of the materials will be discarded but preserved and retained.*

*We would like to reiterate the important point made in our letter of the 2nd October. This stable structure is not shown on the approved planning approval, which clearly implies that the structure was to be demolished. We therefore feel that should our request to demolish be rejected, we shall advise our client to seriously consider taking this item to an appeal.*

After I had calmed myself down I objected for the Group, highlighting the dubious logic in the letter and pointing out that the application still contained no details of the structures for which approval to demolish was being sought. We urged

Mid Devon to refuse planning permission to demolish, which they did.

It is interesting to note in hindsight that the letter also states;

*...that the building (stable) would need totally re-building, and not merely renovating or converting as is the case with the main barn.*

In January 1992 Mid Devon received an LBC application to demolish and rebuild West Barn from the same consulting engineers! We objected strongly on the grounds that such wholesale destruction went completely against the statutory protection afforded this building, and recommended refusal. Mid Devon obviously agreed with us and refused permission.

Almost a year later, I read in the local paper, the *Tiverton Gazette*, that two men had appeared before Tiverton magistrates charged with the unauthorised demolition of a listed building, West Barn at Steart Farm, Stoodleigh in November 1991. Their case was adjourned for a trial date to be fixed. The two men were from the firm of engineers and the date of November 1991 was prior to the relevant LBC application to demolish the barn and only weeks after the covering letter for the stable demolition application which stated that the main barn would require 'merely renovating or converting'!

We wrote to Mid Devon offering our support for their action and received a letter from them on 19 January 1993. They informed us that the consulting engineers had been prosecuted for the demolition and fined £1,000. They commented that although the sum was small it was to be noted that this was Mid Devon's first successful prosecution at Tiverton Magistrates Court. The letter, from the Area Planning Officer, also stated that he understood the owner of the property could pursue a civil litigation case against the firm with respect to their mis-handling of the conversion of the premises.

The owner appealed against the refusal of planning and listed building consent to re-build West Barn. A hearing into the appeals was held on 8 December 1992, but both appeals were dismissed in a decision notice dated 3 February 1993. The Statement of Appeal made by the Directorate of Planning with Technical Services at Mid Devon District Council contains the first description of West Barn I have come across, albeit posthumous!



The West Barn of Steart Farm was constructed of local stone rubble under a slate roof. It was a large example of a threshing barn, with two pairs of full-height wagon doors, each with pent roofs on the courtyard side. A threshing machine survived in the upper part of the barn and, originally, was driven from the horse engine house (round house) on the west elevation, which it was planned to convert into a kitchen under the approved proposals (as amended). The lower section of the barn contained an arched through-way to the rear of the building, and a free-standing linhay beyond to the south west. The whole was an impressive vernacular structure, probably early nineteenth century in date, complimenting the late medieval farmhouse to the north and the farm buildings in the opposite eastern range. Although it was not listed in its own right, its contribution to the group as a whole was such that any application to demolish it while it was still standing would have been resisted.

Since the dismissal of the appeals, Mid Devon District Council has been negotiating with the owner's solicitors to remove all unauthorised works from the site. This will leave a clear site where once stood a listed barn. In his decision notice the inspector stated that he thought this to be a better solution than allowing rebuilding on the site, either with a new design or something akin to the original. However, the manner in which this viewpoint is expressed leaves me a little concerned. To quote paragraph 9 of the notice:

*However, the essence of your (Mid Devon's) argument was that the barn represented an important aspect of the character of the listed building group, forming part of a traditional arrangement set around a former courtyard. The accurate reconstruction of the barn would therefore preserve the massing of the group and the setting of the listed farmhouse, whilst its permanent loss would seriously erode this cohesive character. I have given careful consideration to this argument but I have concluded that the permanent loss of the barn would not materially harm the setting of the listed building. It seems to me that the group is so irregular in its arrangement that the truncation of the western range would not be visually disruptive, whether seen from vantage points close to the site, or in more distant views from across the valley. Moreover, I consider that on*

*balance, the reconstruction of the barn, given the domesticated appearance which would result from its residential conversion, coupled with the inevitably raw character of the rebuilt stonework, would be more likely to detract from, rather than preserve, the listed building setting.*

Mr Garside pointed out to me that this paragraph needs to be read in the context set by paragraph 2, which states,

*From the matters put to me at the hearing, from the representations received and my inspection of the site and its surroundings, I consider that the main issue in this case is whether, having regard to its form, appearance and relationship to the listed farmhouse, the reconstruction of the barn to form a dwelling can be justified, bearing in mind the Policies within the approved Structure Plan which seek to restrain development in the countryside.*

It has to be borne in mind that by the date of the appeal the main barn had already been demolished and the issue was to decide the fate of the site. Despite the contrary opinion of Mr Garside, I feel that the argument in paragraph 9 suggests that there could be justification for the demolition of buildings within the setting of a listed building in certain circumstances, especially if this arrangement of buildings is considered irregular!

Nonetheless, at West Barn, the result is a refusal to rebuild the original barn as so little remains that any historical value has been largely destroyed and a refusal to build a new dwelling as this would be contrary to Structure Plan Policies. Therefore, the owner will be left with a worthless site for building purposes. One possible option could be to pursue a civil litigation case against the consulting engineers in an attempt to recover damages for his loss.

I have discussed this chronicle of planning and listed building consent applications at some length with the Area Planning Officer, Keith Garside, in whose area the property stands and who dealt with the compilation of material for the prosecution of the consulting engineers. He has been extremely generous with all the information held by Mid Devon relating to this unfortunate farmstead.

Keith Garside expressed surprise at the number of times Michael Hallam Ltd, the consulting engineers, 'tripped themselves up' in

their inept attempt to justify the demolition of West Barn. In their initial discussion with Mid Devon the engineers claimed to be experienced in dealing with listed and historic buildings, yet when suggestions of prosecution were in the air they pleaded ignorance of all the relevant planning procedures! In their letter supporting the application to demolish the stable block they stated that the main barn required 'merely renovating or converting'! Having applied for and been refused permission to demolish the stable block, they tried then to argue that they were not aware of the need to apply for an LBC to demolish the main barn! On a revised detail for the lean-to attached to the barn, in which they proposed retention of the lean-to rather than demolition as initially suggested, the stonework on the south elevation was apparently indicated as being in good condition!

I discussed with Keith Garside the subject of prosecution. I suggested that more of the original fabric of Steart Farm might have been retained had Mid Devon prosecuted the owners of the farmhouse for their original illegal works back in 1988. Might this not have indicated to unscrupulous developers or agents that such an approach would not be tolerated by Mid Devon District Council? At that time, I was told, that if the defendant was found guilty experience showed that he would probably have received a conditional discharge!

The introduction of new staff in the Planning Department and a change in attitude of the Planning and Transportation Committee has resulted in a shift from a laissez-faire approach to a desire to see the proper procedures followed and a willingness to pursue enforcement action if necessary. This welcome tightening-up has occurred during the series of planning applications which has so affected Steart Farm. It might be that the outcome could have been very different had the shift taken place earlier.

A problem still exists partly in the difficulty of obtaining a successful prosecution being weighed against the expense of compiling the evidence for a case by a local authority and partly in the need for magistrates to understand the stakes for which these developers and agents are playing. In handing down a fine of £1,000 the Tiverton magistrates probably felt they had dealt firmly with Michael Hallam Ltd, and in a manner which would teach them a lesson. This may have

arisen from magistrates not having a full understanding of the profit margins of such developments. It might be in the interest of a local authority wishing to prosecute an offender in future to point out clearly to the magistrates the potential profit to be made from a successful scheme.

Nonetheless, this prosecution should be seen as a great success for Mid Devon District Council, both in its own right and as a valuable precedent for future cases. Developers of listed buildings in this district should now be aware that Mid Devon has used this option successfully and in the right circumstances could well do so again.

The Directorate of Planning with Technical Services can now use the experience gained from this case to evaluate more accurately the chances of bringing a prosecution to a successful conclusion and, where such chances exist, the confidence from this decision to vigorously pursue their case.

This sorry saga has taken place in front of our very eyes. The Devon Buildings Group was concerned about this property from the moment we knew who had purchased the farm. We have watched out for each planning application and dealt with them all promptly and clearly. Despite this, the main house has been irrevocably altered and a range of farm buildings demolished. It makes me wonder what is happening to the rest of Devon's stock of listed buildings which, in spite of our best efforts, we are not able to monitor as closely.

*Mark Lewis*

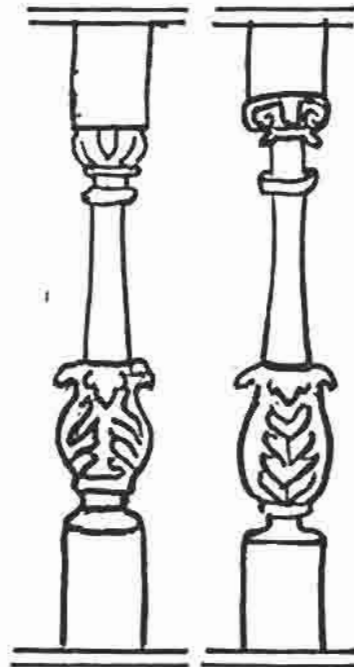
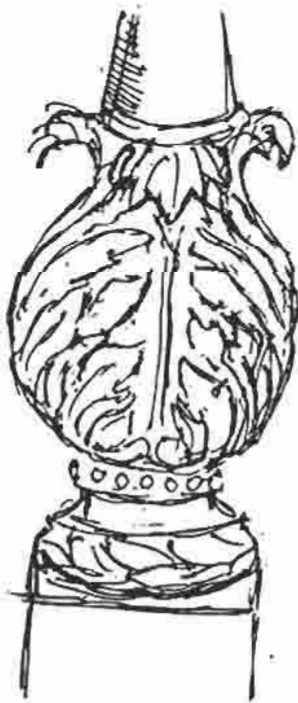


Illustration showing similarities between the banisters of Great Potheridge and Powis Castle



Acanthus

Bead banding

Bay wreath base

Egg and dart capital



Rope banding



Great Potheridge, Merton

Banister details

## PUZZLES AT POTHERIDGE

The remains of General George Monk's mansion of the 1660s, Great Potheridge at Merton (now the North Devon Centre of the Bicton College of Agriculture) present a mystery to archaeologists and architectural historians alike. The full extent of the house, before parts of it were demolished, supposedly in 1734, when the threshing barns were built with re-used masonry, will probably only be proved by excavation. A little of this has already taken place, in 1992, and confirms the outline of one wing suggested by the interrupted string course. More will, hopefully, be revealed, as time and funds become available.

The internal carpentry, however, will still present problems of interpretation, since so much of it appears to have been reconstructed. The panelled room is a particularly overwhelming assemblage of old and much younger panelling, two vast pedimented door cases and an overmantel, crammed into a drastically shortened room and round an apparently introduced chimney (in the roof space it can be seen that this chimney is entirely different from the originals). Most of the overmantel, with its carved military trophies, must be original but still manages to look odd, with a collection of cherubs with garlands, etc. presumably from friezes elsewhere, dotted about in the space where one would expect to see a painted portrait of the General. The fireplace and mantel shelf are plainly of a much later date.

The grand staircase, overhung by a rare and splendid plaster ceiling, with painted panels between garlands in relief, presents problems of its own. The carving of the banisters is of the highest quality, yet the newel posts sit crudely together at the junction of the two flights, as if the carpenter had lost his way. It does not seem possible that the stairs have been moved. The ceiling would have had to be moved also – a delicate and unlikely operation in the conversion of a private mansion to an estate farmhouse.

Puzzling over these matters, during three Sunday afternoons in 1991, whilst stewarding for 'Heritage Days', I realised that the pattern of the banisters is almost identical with that of the stairs at Powis Castle. Was there a connection between the Monks and the Herberts? For a heady moment

I thought there might have been, upon learning that one of Christopher Monk's titles devolved to a member of that family. Alas, the 'Peerage' shows that all the Monk titles died with the second Duke and it was a fresh creation. Where did the design for these elaborate acanthus clasped balusters come from? A pattern book perhaps. The stair treads might have been widened (all the boxing in and trim of the sides appears to consist of much more recent pine, underneath the brown varnish which has been used to unify all the woodwork) and the two central posts originally spaced by a bit more rail and at least one more banister. Of course, the staircase *could* have been brought in as a ready made surplus from another grand house and assembled in the space available. I cannot believe it: the rest of the craftsmanship is too fine – and where could it have come from anyway? The whole matter invites theories and demands and deserves much more detailed study.

*Ann Adams*

## BARNSTAPLE CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Most of you will be aware of the legislation affecting historic buildings and Conservation Areas but I wonder how many of you have heard of a Conservation Area Advisory Committee and are conversant with its work?

Following the introduction of the Civic Amenities Act over 25 years ago a paragraph was inserted in DoE circulars exhorting Local Authorities to establish committees comprised of local people who were not part of the Council to advise on planning applications which affected the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. It was suggested that nominations for committee membership be sought from architectural bodies, archaeological and civic societies, chambers of trade and local residents. The intention was that these advisory committees would also make positive suggestions to improve and enhance the area as well as discussing planning applications which had been submitted to the Local Authority.



I sit on the Barnstaple Conservation Area Advisory Committee as DBG representative and I am Vice Chairman and Secretary of what I understand is now the only surviving CAAC in Devon. We were established around 1969 and miraculously are still operative despite moves from within the Local Authority a few years ago to abolish the committee. Recently we have been plagued with a spate of illness, incapacity and death among members. Last year we lost four of our eleven members in this way and a critical situation arose but we are now welcoming new representatives from local groups such as Dartington North Devon Trust. Presently we have no-one sitting from national societies such as SPAB or VicSoc and we would welcome such nominations.

Our committee covers three Conservation Areas; Barnstaple, Pilton and Newport. The main shopping and commercial core of the town is subject to the most pressure for adverse changes particularly with regard to over-proliferation of signs and advertising. Pilton and Newport, formerly two distinct historic settlements now integrated into the urban sprawl, are of a more rural character and are predominantly residential.

We meet every three weeks on a Thursday evening to coincide with the planning cycle and a North Devon District Council planning officer presents the applications. Meetings start at 5.30 and in the past there were complaints about the longevity of meetings which often continued until well after 7.00 p.m. In an effort to reduce this, I attend a pre-briefing at 5 p.m. The NDDC Officer and I discuss such matters as the history of the application, the efforts which have been made to comply with our policies and whether expert conservation advice has been sought with regard to preservation of architectural features etc. This initiative has reduced the amount of time that the whole committee needs to spend perusing drawings, photographs and written information. Bearing in mind that none of us receive expenses or payment, we find that more members attend when their time is usefully spent.

Our comments are included in the Agendas issued to the NDDC Planning Committee in the same way as those submitted by Parish Council and other statutory consultees.

Since 1988 I have kept a printed record of our responses after each meeting so that we can

refer to this if there is a re-submission of the application. This is helpful too if the Planning Committee decide on a site meeting which I then attend to give the reasons for our recommendation. Should the application be refused, resulting in a subsequent appeal, I also make a written submission from the BCAAC to the DoE Inspector.

It is difficult to judge the outcome of these appeals. Recently an appeal for a change from retail shop to a building society in the town centre was upheld contrary to our recommendation whereas the use of a rear garden of a Public House in Pilton as a potentially noisy beer garden was dismissed in accordance with our view.

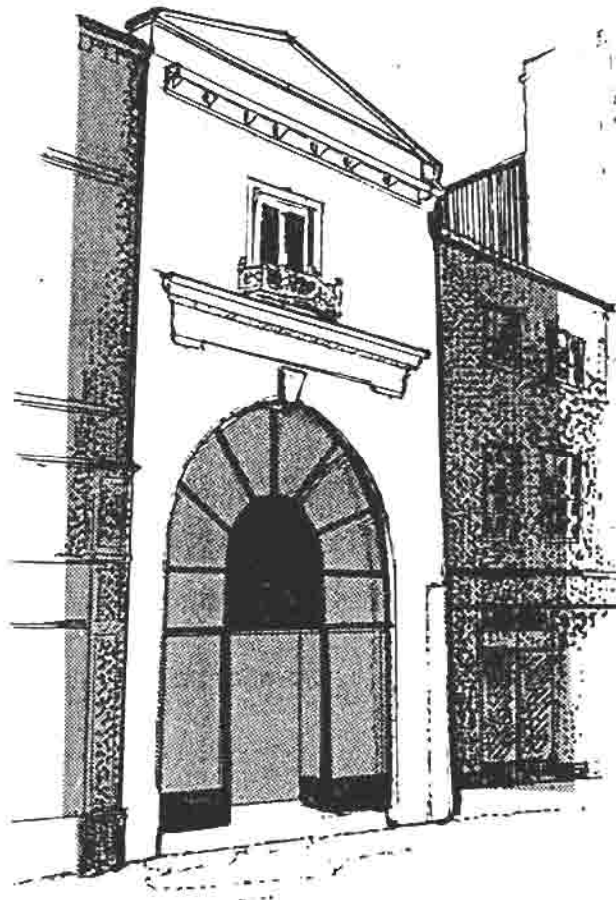
The bulk of the applications which come before us are for alterations to shops and shopping frontages including signs. Alterations to 'listed' buildings come under our scrutiny and we are able to benefit from the excellent local and academic knowledge of our members. Our Chairman is a practising Architect and represents the RIBA and other members have a good working knowledge of archaeology and local history.

We have inherited certain policies, some of which are also NDDC adopted policies or guidelines. We welcome the use of 'natural' materials and minimally obtrusive painted signs rather than Upvc metal or perspex and try to ensure that projecting signs are small and not sited above fascia level. We encourage division of large areas of glazing in shop fronts and try to relate them to the fenestration above. We discourage illumination and consider it to be particularly unnecessary for premises which are not open during the hours of darkness. Existing inappropriate and garish elements make our job more difficult when trying to regulate new applications. Without additional DoE support, such as an 'Article Four' direction to limit specific changes to unlisted buildings (e.g. colours of paintwork, replacement windows and special control of advertisements) our powers are limited.

Nowadays we find ourselves for the most part agreeing with the NDDC Officers recommendation. NDDC no longer have a Conservation Officer but we try to ensure that Devon CC Conservation Officer Peter Childs' advice is sought where we are concerned about possible damage or loss of features in an historic building. What will happen with regard to this co



**The Old Dairy**  
Seventeenth Century former farmhouse at Newport.



**65 High Street, Barnstaple,**  
now occupied by the Early Learning Centre



operation in obtaining conservation expertise following the proposed local government reorganisation has yet to be ascertained.

There are occasions when we disagree with NDDC, such as the proposal to demolish the Edwardian archway shopfront which rises through two storeys at 65 High Street. This was to be replaced with a mundane shop window frontage and we stressed the need to retain this feature which we considered added interest to a line of architecturally uninspired rebuilt frontages and it was preserved.

In February we were again moved to contradict the officer's recommendation when a national chain of newsagents submitted plans to partition off approximately half of the ground floor area of their shop at 98 High Street, resulting in the attractive seventeenth-century plaster ceiling and chimneybreast being lost to public view within a storage area. We asked that this be refused and negotiations entered into to ensure that these features remained within the shop. The Planning Committee agreed to this, and I understand that negotiations are in progress.

Our meetings require a high standard of commitment but we are a close knit group and proceedings are not without occasional humour. There were proposals for a fascia sign written in Latin to be applied to an extension to the front of a rowdy town centre pub which had been the subject of several conflicts with planners. Those of us who learned Latin at school were of the firm opinion that the wording was decidedly 'risque'. We also considered that few of the Planning Committee members would be able to understand the meaning so we recommended that it not be permitted on the grounds of 'ambiguous wording of fascia inappropriate in Conservation Area'. The owners later named these premises 'Fannys'. In another case a former historic coaching inn was to be converted to a Chinese restaurant complete with hanging sign displaying nothing but a group of Chinese characters. We commented that there seemed little point in displaying a sign which could only be understood by a minority of the population in North Devon.

I would be very interested to hear via the DBG of any other Conservation Area Advisory Committees in the South West.

*Pauline Brain*

## CASEWORK IN PRACTICE

### Some thoughts for the Devon Buildings Group

[The author of this piece, first given as a talk to the DBG casework team, is Jeremy Musson. From 1990 to 1993 he was the caseworker for the Victorian Society responsible for South West England; he now works for the National Trust.]

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Communication and Confidence

#### 1. Examples of architecture of quality under threat

It is always salutary to bring to mind the quality of nineteenth-century buildings under threat of demolition, deliberate or by a process of decay and vandalism. Examples which come to mind are the Grade I Holloway sanatorium, an exuberant High Victorian Flemish Gothic masterpiece of W.H. Crossland, empty now for ten years and possibly beyond saving with a history of failed proposals, each one leaving consent for more and more development and more demolition of the original complex. There is also the 1849 chapel of the Brompton Hospital in London, an inspired work of E.B. Lamb: 'the main features survive, above all the maniacally ingenious nave roof, a hammerbeam truss with doubled principals, scissor-braces matchboarding and vaguely Elizabethan pendants'. The hospital (idiotically unlisted) has closed and the chapel, under-listed at Grade II, has an uncertain future, although there has been talk of a squash court to accompany the residential conversion of the hospital building (over my dead body!). In recent months I can also point to the closing down of the college in a fine Grade II\* house by George Devey in Kent, now empty and in want of an occupier, the dereliction of a II\* hospital by Charles Holden, a proposal to demolish an 1870s school by G.E. Street. How to tackle the many different problems of buildings under threat can be a complex business, but one should be realistic, and when cases arise take a pragmatic and straightforward approach based on three things: Knowledge, Communication and Confidence.

## 2. Knowledge

By 'knowledge', I mean this: when a building of architectural interest is under threat it is extremely important to identify clearly the particular characteristics and quality of that building, and in which way it is threatened. If at all possible a representative of the Group should visit the building, at the very least an external inspection, to assess its present condition, the character of the site etc. A set of clear photographs should be taken (and dated) for purposes both of discussion with a casework panel or experts in the field of that particular building type (it should be noted that such photographs are often extremely useful records in cases where details have been eroded – stolen!). Get the 'threat' into perspective as well as the building, know what is proposed, find out the planning history of the site and look at the plans with care. Then, vitally, do some historic research into the building, start with *Buildings of England*, the Department of the Environment List of Buildings of Special Interest, then ask any experts you have access to for advice. On both the historic and planning fronts try and discuss the building with one of the national groups, if it is important enough. By a relatively small amount of research it is quite possible to arm yourself with a most effective argument for the preservation of a building – it has been known for the applicants themselves confronted with the hitherto unconsidered history of their building to thank the Victorian Society!

## 3. Communication

Once armed with effective argument, let the argument be known! If a listed building application, write a clear well set out representation, use their references, make the address of the building in question quite clear, set out the argument based on architectural and historical grounds. Begin with the history and importance of the building, continue with a reasoned criticism of the proposal, and conclude with advice to the planning department – i.e. make your view quite clear. In cases which do not involve listed building applications, or where the stakes are higher, be sure to communicate with the local press, and possibly the national press (be prepared to supply a pithy quote and perhaps a

crisp black and white photograph!). Also circulate copies of representations to the National Amenity Societies, such as the Victorian Society: Let the argument be known!

## 4. Confidence

It is important that you should have confidence in the case, your time and peace of mind are precious, as are most of the buildings that you will be expecting to defend. In most cases confidence should emerge from 2 + 3 = 4 (if you know what I mean!), i.e. knowledge and communication as described above, should leave you confident, but if not perhaps we can return to paragraph 2 and start again?

With very best wishes to the DBG in effective conservation campaigns!

*Jeremy Musson*

# The Devon Buildings Group Newsletter

## Contents of The First Twelve Issues - 1986 to 1994

- a) Each item is listed once under first author named.  
 b) Reference is noted as 'Issue No/Pages' e.g. '3/2-10'  
 c) Town or parish name not in title is shown in [ ]

- d) Illustrations, maps or plans are noted as 'Illus.'  
 e) Compiler's comments are given within [ ]  
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<p><b>Adams, A.</b>  <i>Discovering a Seventeenth-Century yeoman's house and family. Hayne, Zeal Monachorum.</i> 11/11-16            [Author's home]  <i>Puzzles at Potheridge. [Merton]</i> 12/18 Illus. [General Monk's home, 17th. C. but origin of woodwork is uncertain ]</p> <p><b>Bedford, P.</b>  <i>Cob</i> 10/21-22 [Half world's buildings are made of sub-soil. Report of conference]</p> <p><b>Blakeway, B.</b>  <i>The Roadford operation [Broadwoodwidge and Germansweek]</i> 10/5-9 Illus.            [Archaeological study of reservoir site]</p> <p><b>Blakeway, B., Brooks, C. and Cox, J.</b>  <i>Barn conversions: Some statistics</i> 6/9-12 Illus. [West Devon Borough approved 286 conversions in five years]</p> <p><b>Blaylock, S.</b>  <i>Exeter Guildhall</i> 3/5-11 Illus. [Architectural survey carried out prior to 1986 repairs to front block]</p> <p><b>Brain, P.</b>  <i>Court House, North Molton</i> 6/6-8 Illus.            [Proposed changes to Grade II* turned down at Inquiry]  <i>Sticklepath Farm, Tavistock Barnstaple [For Tavistock read Towstock]</i> 10/17-19 Illus.            [Farm has listed barn/round house but other buildings are being developed and application for demolition of barn]  <i>Barnstaple conservation area advisory committee</i> 12/18-21 Illus. [Only surviving such committee in Devon, with some successes to its credit]</p> <p><b>Brighouse, U.V.</b>  <i>The Phillips family of Woodbury</i> 3/14-19 Illus.            [Building firm in village from late 18th. to early 20th. C.]</p> <p><b>Brooks, C.</b></p>	<p><i>Editorial</i> 10/5  <i>Editorial: Chapels perilous</i> 11/5-7 Illus.</p> <p><i>Casework: The first half century</i> 4/4-18 Illus. [First 50 cases, incl. destroyed 17 C ceiling in Exeter Guild Hall]  <i>John Wills and the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Dartmouth</i> 5/18-22 Illus. [Grade II but standing empty]  <i>Casework: The second fifty</i> 7/5-22 [Success at Crediton Parish Church - stopped path being tarmacked]  <i>Economic growth and the conservation of historic buildings in Devon</i> 8/26-30  <i>Sudden death in Dartmouth: An obituary for the Methodist church</i> 10/14-17 [Dynamited]  <i>Casework: The past year and the future</i> 11/16-19 Illus. [Royal William Victualling Yard is county's biggest headache]  <i>'Bare ruined choirs'? Coming problems and Devon's historic churches</i> 12/5-7 [Looming crisis for soon-to-be redundant historic parish churches]</p> <p><b>Brooks, C. and Cox, J.</b>  <i>Charles Fowler and the Devon County Asylum, Exminster</i> 1/11-14 Illus. [1845 and largely intact]</p> <p><b>Brooks, C. and Indunl, B.</b>  <i>The sgraffito decoration of Colaton Raleigh Church and its conservation</i> 6/12-17 Illus. [Rebuilt in 1870's by Fulford with sgraffito decoration]</p> <p><b>Chesher, J.</b>  <i>Paul's Shop, Germansweek</i> 3/11-14 Illus. [C.1600. Part of abandoned farmstead]  <i>Buildings at risk</i> 9/25-29 [Agents of risk are many - 16th. C. doors were stolen during a viewing for auction!]</p> <p><b>Chesher, J. and V.</b>  <i>Inside story</i> 4/26-29 Illus. [Not all owners know that listing includes interiors]</p> <p><b>Child, P.</b>  <i>Conference report</i> 2/18-19 Illus. [DBG Conference 1986 on Plasterwork]</p> <p><b>Cox, J.</b>  <i>The Tavistock pannier market</i> 1/9-11 [1862. English Heritage refused to list]  <i>Coxen, Budleigh Salterton</i> 2/16-17 Illus. [1910. Vernacular revival by E. Gimson]  <i>Cross House, Bishopsteignton</i> 3/20-22 Illus. [Early 19th. C. villa at risk]</p>
<p><i>Secretary's report</i> 1/1-5  <i>Secretary's report</i> 2/1-4  <i>Secretary's report</i> 3/1-5  <i>Secretary's report</i> 4/1-3  <i>Secretary's report</i> 5/1-5  <i>Secretary's report</i> 6/1-5  <i>Secretary's report</i> 7/1-4  <i>Secretary's report</i> 8/1-4  <i>Secretary's report</i> 9/1-6 Illus.</p>	

*The conversion of farm buildings* 4/26-29 Illus. [Changes can be anything from sympathetic to almost total destruction]

*Old Blundell's School, Tiverton* 5.5-12 Illus. [1603 and altered later but Grade I]

*The DBG Conference 1988* [Subject to be farm buildings] 5/25-26

*Yarde Farm, Marlborough* 9/18-24 Illus. [Small scale evolved manor house, Grade I]

*Devon's historic buildings: New discoveries. A conference report* 12/9-11 [New patterns of historic building style are emerging]

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[Practical matters. Traditional dumpy outline being superseded by ornamental ridges]

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*Request for information: Traditional pegged slates* 10/22

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*On organic architecture, fortifications and other matters* 6/18-20 Illus. [Earth ramparts will stop cannon balls]

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*The practical use of limewash* 9/12-18 Illus. [Versatile but not magic material]

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Jarwood, S. and Lawson, A.

*John Betjeman Memorial Award* 12/7-9 Illus. [SPAB award for conservation of statue at St John the Baptist, Plymtree]

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*The British Academy corpus of British Romanesque sculpture: A request for assistance* 11.19-21 Illus. [Not Devon]

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*Exeter Guildhall: a conservation report* 8/21-25 Illus. [Repair of 1593 High Street front. Voids, decay and pigeon repellent gel have all taken their toll]

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*Tiverton transformed* 8/15-20 Illus. [Pannier market site] *Review of the Development Control division in Mid Devon* 10/9-11 [District Council's procedures]

*Inserting a roof truss into Gotham, Baker's Hill, Tiverton* 11/7-10 Illus. [Executed by author]

*The demise of Steart Farm. [Stoodleigh]* 12/11-16 Illus. [Sorry tale of Grade II early 16th C. building resulting in £1,000 fine for Consulting Engineers]

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*A La Ronde [Exmouth]* 11/10-11 Illus. [First house in Devon taken over by NT since 1954]

Musson, J.

*Casework in practice. Some thoughts for the Devon Buildings Group* 12/21-22 [Keywords for case-workers are Knowledge, Communication and Confidence]

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*Newlands Farm [Broadclyst]* 2/4-9 Illus. [Early Victorian farmstead with 16th. C. origins. Killerton estate.]

Richardson, I. and Huxley, S.

*Silverton Mill [Silverton]* 8/5-15 Illus. [Working paper mill on River Culm]

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*Bridgeland Street, Bideford* 4/22-26 Illus. [Planned street of late mercantile housing from 1690's]

Thorp, J.R.L.

*A longhouse at Lower Chaddlehanger [Lamerton]* 9/7-12 Illus. [14th. C. hall house]

Wilkinson, F.

*A new policy for the conversion of traditional farm buildings in the Dartmoor National Park* 7/22-29 [No committee is complete without its Policy Statement and resulting Case Study]

*Roger F.S. Thorne*