

**PERADON FARM,
CLYST HYDON, DEVON**

**HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL
OF FARM BUILDINGS**

December 2013

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Project 235

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HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL OF FARM BUILDINGS

Generally

This appraisal has been compiled to assess the historic character of a former cider barn and other adjacent farm buildings at Peradon Farm, Clyst Hydon, Devon, prior to a planning application being made to East Devon District Council for proposed conversion to domestic accommodation.

None of the farm buildings or the farmhouse are listed. The cider barn has been described as a 'non listed heritage asset' by East Devon District Council's Conservation Officer.

Site visits for the purpose of this appraisal was made by Martin and Sue Watts on 21 November and 3 December 2013.

Background and other information has been compiled from a range of sources, which are acknowledged and referenced.

Location

Peradon Farm is situated in the north-east corner of Clyst Hydon parish, close to the parish boundary with Plymtree, NGR ST 051 018. The farm buildings stand on rising ground above the river Clist. A bench mark on the lean-to extension to the rear of the north range is given as 59.1m above Ordnance Datum. The buildings are set around an irregular square yard, with the farmhouse to the south of the cider barn on the west side and two ranges of animal houses along the north and east sides (see Figure 1). The north end of the west range and the rear of the north range are built into the natural slope on the north-east side. The underlying geology is Permian/Triassic breccia and conglomerate (Geological Survey 1971, map 325). The soil of the parish was described as loamy, with clay sub-soil (Kelly's *Directory* 1889).

Historical background

The place-name Peradon is recorded as *Pirydon* in 1333, *Purydon* in 1423 and *Peridonhill* in a mid-seventeenth century deed. The meaning of the name is given as Peartree Hill (Gover *et al* 1932, 578), suggesting perhaps a long association with fruit cultivation. Various spellings of the farm name have continued to the present: the 1801 Ordnance Survey surveyor's map by Thomas Budgen has *Paytherden* and the late nineteenth century OS maps record it as *Parradon*. In 1841 it was listed under *Peradon* in the Clyst Hydon tithe apportionment, when it was owned by the Reverend Charles Harwood of Plymtree and occupied by Charles Salter. The farm then contained just over 123 acres (50 hectares), over half of which was listed as pasture, about one third as arable and about five percent as orchard. Orchards are shown to the west and south of the farm buildings on the OS maps (Figures 3 & 4).

Charles Salter left Peradon in 1853 (*Western Times* 22 October 1853, 4c) and the farm was subsequently tenanted by the Parris family. In November 1908, when the farm was owned by the trustees of the late T.H. Baxter and occupied by Mrs Mary Ann Parris, a serious fire destroyed some of the outbuildings. It was reported that the fire brigade, from Cullompton, 'were successful in saving the pound-house and parts of the granary and cellar. The rest of the outbuildings which formed three sides of a square, and were brick built and slated, were, with a quantity of corn, hay, and other crops, and a number of farm implements and machinery, completely destroyed.' The house roof, which was thatched, was damped down to prevent it

catching fire. The cost of the damage was estimated as 'not less than £800' (*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* 26 November 1908, 3f).

It appears that there was a significant programme of rebuilding between 1909 and 1913, the surviving brick farm buildings being built apparently on the footprint of those destroyed by the fire; the old farmhouse was replaced by the present house in about 1913 (pers comm).

In 1923 Peradon Farm was put up for auction as Lot 2 of the sale of Hayne House, Plymtree. The farm was described as a 'Capital Freehold Mixed Holding', extending to just under 133 acres (54 hectares). The farm buildings were referred to as 'Model', built of brick with slate roofs, in excellent order and included:

'Engine for chaff cutting and corn milling & bruising. Apple mill and press. Cider store with Granary of 12 hatches, each capable of holding 70 bushels. Barn. Brick & iron Cow house for 13, with cement manger and feeding passage. Root house, capable of holding 200 loads, with loft over all. Two-stall stable, 4-stall stable with loft over. Cow house for 20 with feeding passage. Hay & root house adjoining, loft over all. Bullock house, calving pens, yearling house for 10. Calves' house for 10. Four-bay waggon linhay, implement shed. Trap house & Cattle yard. Open cart shed, Timber & iron Hen House, Brick & tile 4 Piggeries & Meal house.'

The vendor was George Edward Leon and the farm was bought by William Henry Gibbons for £5000 (DHC 62/9/2 box 7/22).

Peradon was again for sale in 1939, the farm buildings then being described as:

'...Brick built with Slate and Iron Roofs, comprise:- Cellar with Granary over, Barn, Cowstalls for 33 Cows with Feeding Passages and Loft over all, Loose Box, 3-stall Stable with Loft over, Hay House adjoining with Loft over all, Bullock House, Calving House, Yearling and Calves Houses, Four-bay Implement Shed, Open Cart Shed, Garage, Piggeries and Meal House, Large Young Cattle Shed with Yard, Large Iron Hay Shed, &c.'

The land was described as 133 acres of rich grazing and well-watered grass and orchard lands and it was remarked that 'the Farm is noted for its cider' (DHC 74B/MP36).

Peradon was bought by the Burrough family in 1949. In March 1953 a fire is understood to have damaged part of the floor and the roof of the north range. The present farm extends to about 250 acres (100 hectares), land in both Plymtree and Payhembury parishes having been added during the second half of the 20th century (pers comm). Peradon Farm is now an award winning supplier of organic meat.

Description of the buildings

A general view of the farm buildings is shown on p.8 and the buildings which are the subject of this appraisal are identified in Figure 1. These buildings are a former cider house located to the north of the farmhouse on the west side of a grassed yard, and the two ranges of brick animal houses - shippens - one to the north side of the grassed yard, the other on the east side of a concreted yard and thoroughfare. The cider house and former granary are described in detail, being the oldest buildings to survive, with summary descriptions of the north and east ranges.

West range: granary and cider house

On the west side of a grassed yard area is a low, two-storey rectangular block orientated approximately south-north. The walls are of stone, cob and brick under a slated gable roof with plain inverted V-shaped ridge tiles. The building is approximately 25m long by 7m wide and internally it is divided into three. The two southern spaces comprise the original part of the building; the northern end, which is built into rising ground, is a later addition. The south end of this range is that described in the fire report of 1908 as the granary and cellar and the central section was the pound house, containing the cider press and apple mill. These spaces are now used for storage and as a farm workshop.

Exterior:

The south gable is partly obscured by a lean-to slate roofed single-storey extension. The lower part of the gable is of rubble stone, with a possible former doorway in the south-west corner. The stone walling rises to about 3.1m above ground level with brickwork above and shaped coping bricks to the gable verges. These are similar to those used on the buildings on the north and east sides of the yard.

The south end of the east elevation is stone with brick dressings to the ground floor window and doorway, and the north end, to the cider house, is brick. The ground floor window at the south end has a pegged timber frame and mullions and vertical iron bars, with a brick cill. There is a broad timber lintel over, with a pitching door extending below the level of the first floor above. There is a long timber lintel at first floor level extending from the pitching door to a brick column which marks a building break. The ground floor door into the cellar is a vertically-boarded timber door with forged hinges. All the timberwork of the doors and windows is finished black.

Projecting at right angles from the south end of the east elevation, along the south side of the grassed yard area, is a single storey building with brick rear (south) and end (east) walls, open-fronted with brick columns and some concrete blockwork infill on the yard side, with a monopitch corrugated sheet roof inclined to the north. This was formerly used for calves, with a bull house at the west end.

The north end of the east wall is of brick, laid in Flemish bond. The cider house is entered through a wide doorway with double leaf doors under a flat arched head with three courses of bricks headers and a timber lintel. At the north end is a timber shuttered opening with a brick cill and arched brick head.

The space adjoining the north end of the cider house is entered from the yard through a pair of wide timber sliding doors. The north wall of the cider house is of brick with a vertical slot at high level in the south wall was for belt a drive from the layshaft at first floor level (see below). The space at the north end is single storey, open to the roof which is of two bays

with a steel angle truss and corrugated sheet roof cladding, with some translucent panels. There is a loading/pitching door in the north gable end, which is accessible from the raised bank and track along the north side of buildings. In the south-west corner a timber boarded door leads out to the west side. On the east side is a single storey link, with brick walls and a manger along the east side, with steps up to a doorway into the feeding passage of the shippin on the north side. The south roof slope of the link is clad with corrugated sheet and the north with slates.

The west wall is built into the natural slope to a height of about 1.9m at its north end, the ground level falling gradually to the south along the west side. There is a vertical joint in the brickwork about half way along the west wall of the northern extension and brick quoins to the south side of the external door. The remainder of the west wall is of cob on a stone base which stands about 1.05m high. There is some brick patching and the remains of render on the cob and the outer ends of the timber first floor beams project through the cob. There is a building break in the stone and cob with some brick repair at the junction of the cider house and cellar. The west elevation is now largely protected by a post and corrugated sheet clad implement shed; the wall was partly obscured at the time of the site visit by farm vehicles. The ground floor window to the cider barn has a brick cill, timber lintel and pegged timber frame with shutters and vertical iron bars. That to the cellar was not readily visible from outside, but has a robust timber frame with three mullions.

Interior, ground floor:

Cellar

The floor is of compressed earth, with suspended timber decking over part of it on the west side. The first floor structure is of three bays, defined by two plain timber cross beams, both with slim iron columns supporting them at mid span. The floor joists are built into the walls in the outer bays and carried on battens nailed to the beam faces, with herringbone strutting between. There is a flight of 12 timber steps up to the first floor just inside the doorway on the east side.

Cider house

The cellar and cider house are separated by a cob dividing wall. The cider house has a concrete floor, with a raised concrete slab in the north-west corner on which a small stationary engine was formerly mounted. This was a Lister petrol engine of about 5 horse power (pers comm). The cider press occupies the south-west corner. It has a single iron screw with a ratchet which allows it to be located in a corner. The first floor structure is of three bays, similar to south end but with heavier cross beams which the joists are notched into. The joists and herringbone strutting are similar to that at the south end. In the south-west corner of the centre bay an apple mill or scrapper is hung from the floor beams. This has a pair of cast-iron toothed rollers which are visible from the underside; the upper part of the machine was not visible. On the north side of the central bay a cut out and oil throw against the main cross beam indicate the position of a former drive shaft which was skewed towards the north-east corner, (see photograph). The work bench in the north-east corner is understood to have come from the American World War II air base at Dunkeswell (pers comm).

First floor:

Granary

This is reached by the steps up from the cellar, which land close to the loading door on the east side. The bottom of this doorway is lower than first floor level, for lifting sacks through,

and the opening has a vertically-boarded timber door which opens outwards. There is a window in rear (west) wall which has a pegged timber frame, two mullions and vertical iron bars. This window form is typical of that found on cider houses and granaries on Devon farms.

The granary roof is carried on four trusses. Those at the north and south ends are set fairly close to the gable walls (1.0 - 1.2m), while the spacing of the others is about 2.4m. The principals are hand-sawn timbers which lap over each other at their apexes to carry the ridge purlin. There are two rows of purlins on both slopes which run over the backs of the principals, supporting widely-spaced common rafters and battens for slates. The trusses are basically A-frame type, with two collars, the lower ones being set just above head height to allow access. Trusses 1, 2 and 3 (from the south) have all been reinforced by the addition of new softwood trusses fixed to their north sides. Truss 4 is original.

Cider house

The dividing (north) wall between the granary and cider house is of cob up to 1.45m high, with a single brick wall with piers rising from its top to the ridge. There is an opening through to the cider house, the south bay of which is not floored, the cider press being on the west side, with a 0.65m wide walkway across to the centre bay. The centre and north bays are fully boarded. There are double shuttered openings on both sides of the first floor in the northern bay. Along the north wall is a horizontal iron or steel shaft carried on four cast-iron bearing brackets fixed to the wall. This has fast and loose pulleys, for engaging/disengaging a belt drive from the engine on the floor below, at its west end, and three other pulleys or belt wheels of different diameters. That towards the centre is the largest, placed adjacent to the slot in the north wall, through which a belt drive was taken to a saw bench in the northern extension (pers comm).

The roof is of three bays with two trusses, which are similar, but of more modern construction than those to the granary roof. The trusses have double collars, the lower set at quite a low level, which are bolted to the principals. There is a single row of through purlins over the backs of principals on each slope, with common rafters, battens and slates.

North range: cow shippon and milking parlour

This block along the north side of the grassed yard was built as a cow shippon and is about 20m long east-west, and 4.6m wide north-south internally, with a loft for feed storage above. The walls are of brick laid in Flemish bond, with nosed bricks to the external corners and door openings. The gable verges are capped with coping bricks at both ends and the roof slopes are clad with corrugated sheet metal. The south elevation has four doorways with arched brick heads at ground floor level and three at first floor level, all with vertically-boarded timber doors. There is access into the feeding passage along the north side at both ends. The rear wall is of brick with pilasters which carry the north ends of the principal cross beams. The feeding passage, feed troughs and stalls remain in place. There are seven bays, the first five from the west end being narrower than the two at the east end. The upper floor is boarded, on joists spanning between the principal cross beam. Access to the loft is by cat ladders fixed to the north wall. There is a double doorway through the north wall in bay 5 (from the west), which gives access into a lean-to roofed single storey shed at the rear. This is built into the slope of the ground and the wall on its north side is stone up to about 1.5m and brick above. Its lean-to roof is clad with corrugated sheet.

The roof of the north range has seven A-frame trusses, with purlins on cleats on the backs of the principals on both slopes, carrying corrugated metal sheeting. This building is understood to have been re-roofed after a fire in 1953.

There is a passageway through between the east end of shippon and the north end of the east range, with large folding timber double doors towards the rear. This is wide enough for vehicles and is also a public footpath. The yard front of the north end of the east range is of brick, with two doorways of similar width. That to the west has a raised cill, at the height of the internal floor. Both have brick arched heads. The west wall, to the passageway, is rendered and this and the rear wall appear to be part of an earlier building, being of stone and cob. There is a sliding door to the north (rear), giving access to the milking parlour, which has provision for 12 cows. Internally the space with the raised floor to the west of the milking parlour was formerly a diary. The loft is reached by a cat ladder from the milking parlour; its floor is fully boarded, carried on two RSJs and steel columns. The loft has a four bay roof, the east bay being hipped to the slope of the east range roof. There is a gable clad with corrugated iron facing north, through which a pneumatic feed pipe was taken to feed the wooden hoppers which are set along both north and south sides of loft, over the milking bays.

East range: cow shippon

The main east range was built as a shippon, similar to that on the north side, but wider on plan at about 7m east-west. There were formerly four ground floor doorways, with brick arched heads and nosed reveals, three of which are now half closed with brick infill, and three loft doors above. The main part of this block is of six bays, with a step-back at south-west corner and additional narrower bay at end. This appears to incorporate part of an earlier building, the lower part of its south and east walls being of rubble stone, with rounded corners. A building is shown in this location on the tithe map (Figure 2). The first floor is carried on five cross beams and joists, with additional support on both sides from inserted steel beams and columns. Some stalls and feeding troughs remain at the south end, with a half-height concrete block dividing wall across the third bay from the north end. The northern bays house a cylindrical grain silo and a feed mill is located in the north-west corner. The upper level is accessed via a cat ladder and is fully boarded. The main roof is of six bays, with five light A-frame trusses with bolted collars and three rows of purlins each side, on cleats on the backs of the principals. The roof slopes are clad with corrugated metal sheet.

Dating and discussion

The earliest detailed plan of the layout of the farm and buildings is the Clyst Hydon tithe map of 1840 (DHC) (Figure 2). This shows the farmhouse (shaded red), with a rectangular building across the north end of the site, perhaps a lincay as it is south facing, and a second rectangular building to the east. The first edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch map of c.1890 shows more buildings, with similar footprints to those which survive, with the exception of the house (Figure 3). The second edition map of 1904 shows no significant alteration to the late 19th century plan. The conclusion from this is that the farm buildings were substantially rebuilt in the period between 1840 and 1880. The pound house (cider house) survived the fire of 1908, together with 'parts' of the cellar and granary, while the remainder of the farm buildings were reported as 'completely destroyed' (*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* 26 November 1908, 3f, cited above). As these buildings were described as being of brick with slated roofs, it seems probable that they were simply rebuilt to a similar form. The 1923 and

1939 sale particulars imply a mixture of slate and corrugated iron roof cladding, the latter probably for economy.

The southern end of the east shippon, where rubble stonework survives in the lower part of the south and east walls, appears to represent the remains a building which is shown in this position on the tithe map of 1840, although the remainder has been substantially rebuilt. This can therefore be considered as the oldest remains of a building in the area covered by this appraisal. The main part of the west range, which comprises the former granary over a cellar and the cider house, were, from the evidence of the tithe map, built after 1840. It is possible that some of the stonework surviving at the south end of this range, and in the lean-to adjoining the south gable, may be earlier, perhaps incorporating part of the north end of the original farmhouse. The stone and cob walls and hand-sawn timbers used in the roof trusses in the west range indicate a traditional form of building construction familiar on many Devon farms (Child 1995). The roof structure of the granary retains its original trusses, some of which have been reinforced, and those to the cider house are of similar pattern but appear to be more modern. The stout shuttered window openings with vertical bars are characteristic of cider houses (P. Child, pers comm). The cider press and apple mill are also considered typical of those found on Devon farms, and probably date from the second half of the 19th century. An interesting feature is the horizontal layshaft at first floor level in the cider barn, which was driven by a small stationary engine. This appears to have been in place by 1923. The use of an internal combustion engine is considered to be a 20th century feature, and it is possible that the apple mill was originally turned by a horse gear located at ground floor level within the cider house; its approximate location may be implied by the evidence of the skew drive on the ground floor ceiling of the central bay.

The cider house, granary and cellar form an interesting contrast in scale to the shippons which face them on the north and east sides of the yard. These appear to have been substantially rebuilt on 19th century footprints after the major fire in 1908, with walls of Flemish bond brickwork and corrugated iron clad roofs. The roof structures of the shippons and over the milking parlour are relatively modern and lightweight. The external appearance of these buildings, particularly the yard elevations with their neat door and loft door openings, is impressive; they were described as 'model' in the 1923 sale particulars.

The buildings have been maintained in good condition and several are still in use, although not as intensively as formerly. The west range is used for storage and as a workshop; the north range has animal pens at ground floor level with fodder storage above; the milking parlour and dairy are disused; and the north end of the east range has a grain silo and feed mill, with animal pens to the south.

Conclusion

The buildings at Peradon form an interesting group of traditional, although not contemporary, farm buildings. The granary, cellar and cider house of the west range appear to date from the mid 19th century; the south end of the east range incorporates earlier stonework and both this and the north range were substantially rebuilt following a fire in 1908. The northern end of the west range, including the north and part of the east walls of the cider house, is also later in date. The cider house retains a cider press and apple mill, as well as the layshaft and pulleys from which drives were taken to the apple mill and other barn machinery. The whole group reflects well the requirements and improvisations due to changes in agricultural practice and prosperity that are in evidence on many 19th century Devon farmsteads where traditional buildings survive.

Acknowledgements

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Martin Watts
December 2013

References

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Gover, J.E.B, Mawer, A, and Stenton, F.M. 1932: *The Place-Names of Devon 2*



Farm buildings at Peradon, Clyst Hydon. from the south

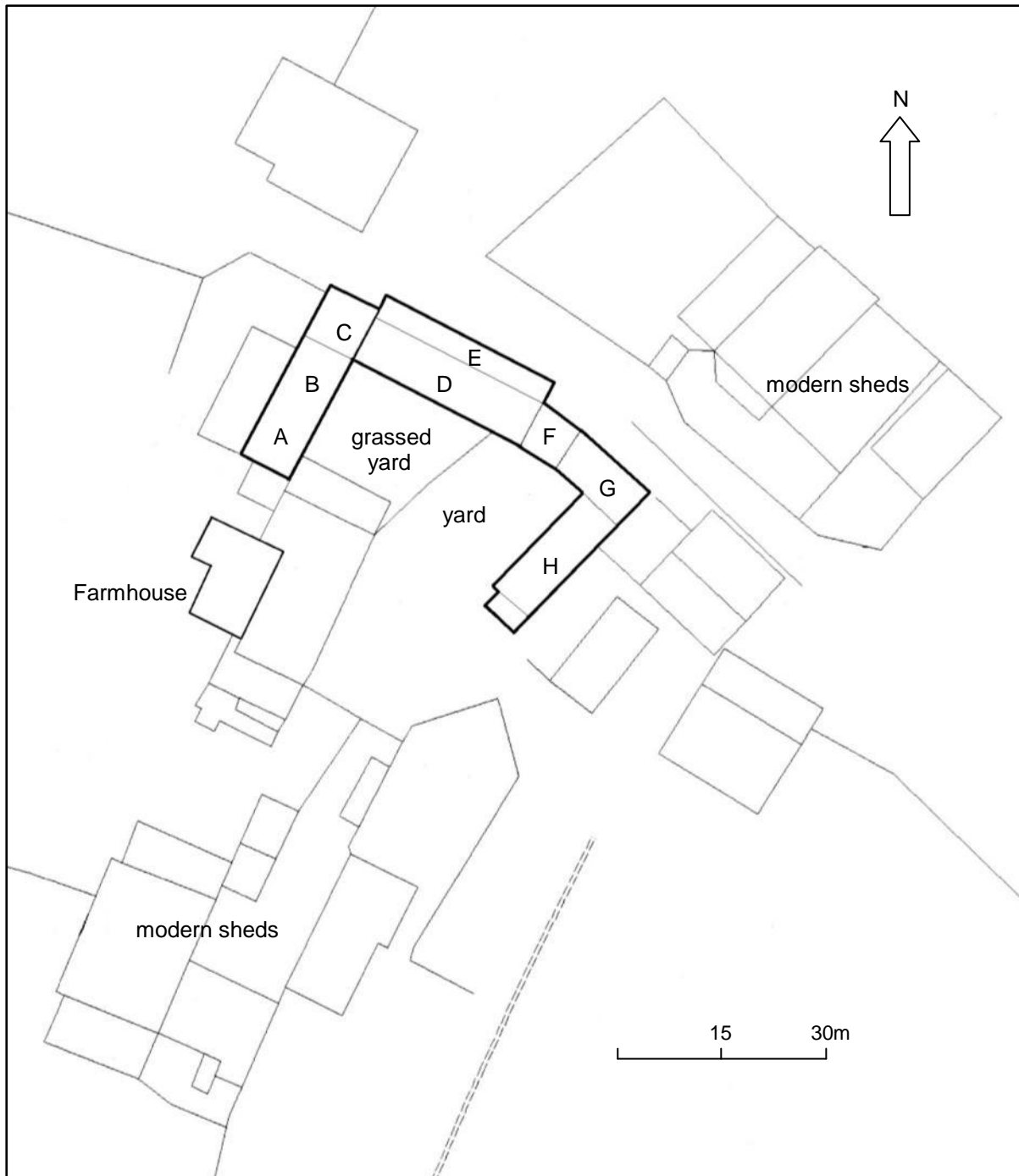


Figure 1: Peradon Farm, Clyst Hydon: site plan.
 The buildings considered in this appraisal are outlined in bold

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------|
| A: cellar, granary over | B: cider house | C: shed/link | D: shippon |
| E: lean-to | F: passageway | G: dairy and milking parlour | H: shippon |

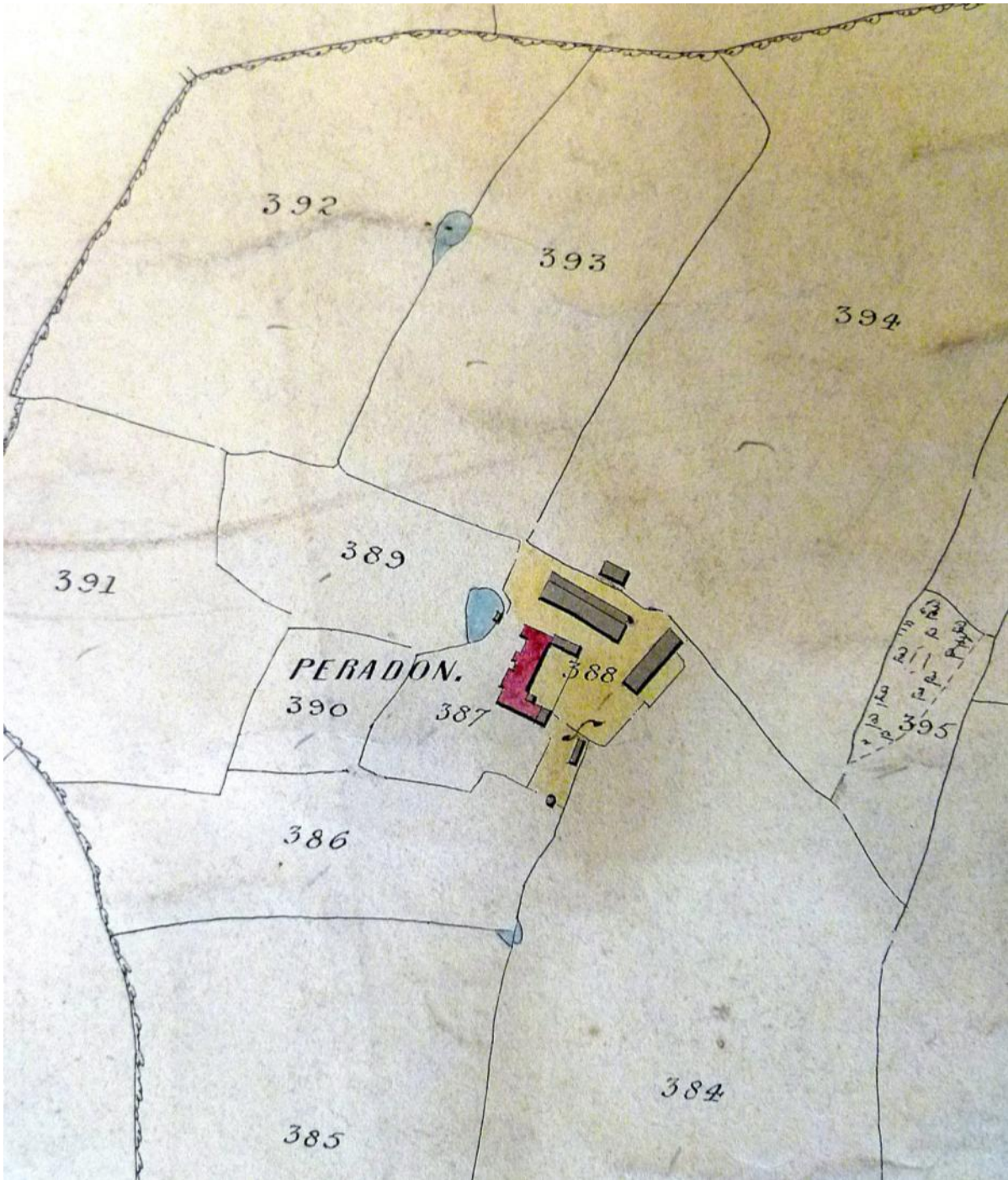


Figure 2: Peradon, from the Clyst Hydon tithe map, 1840

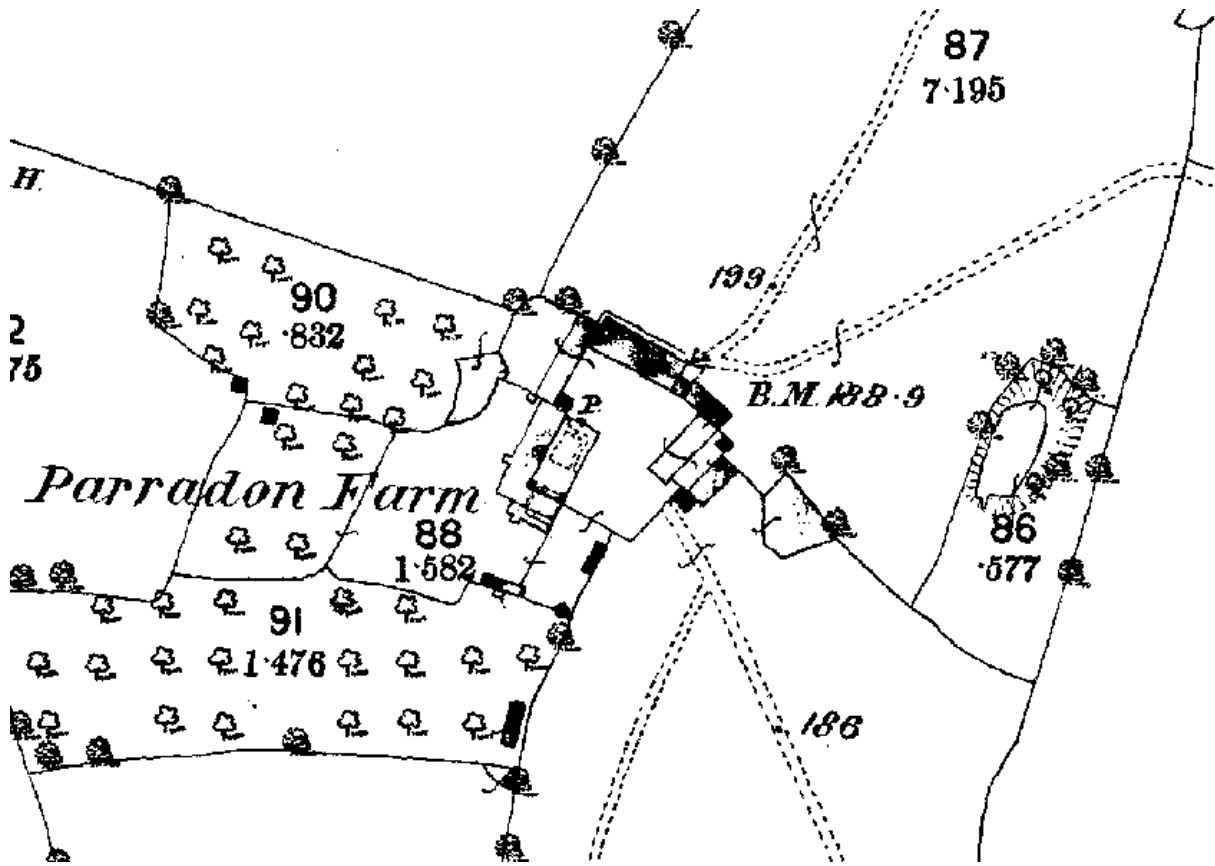


Figure 3: Peradon. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, first edition, 1880-90

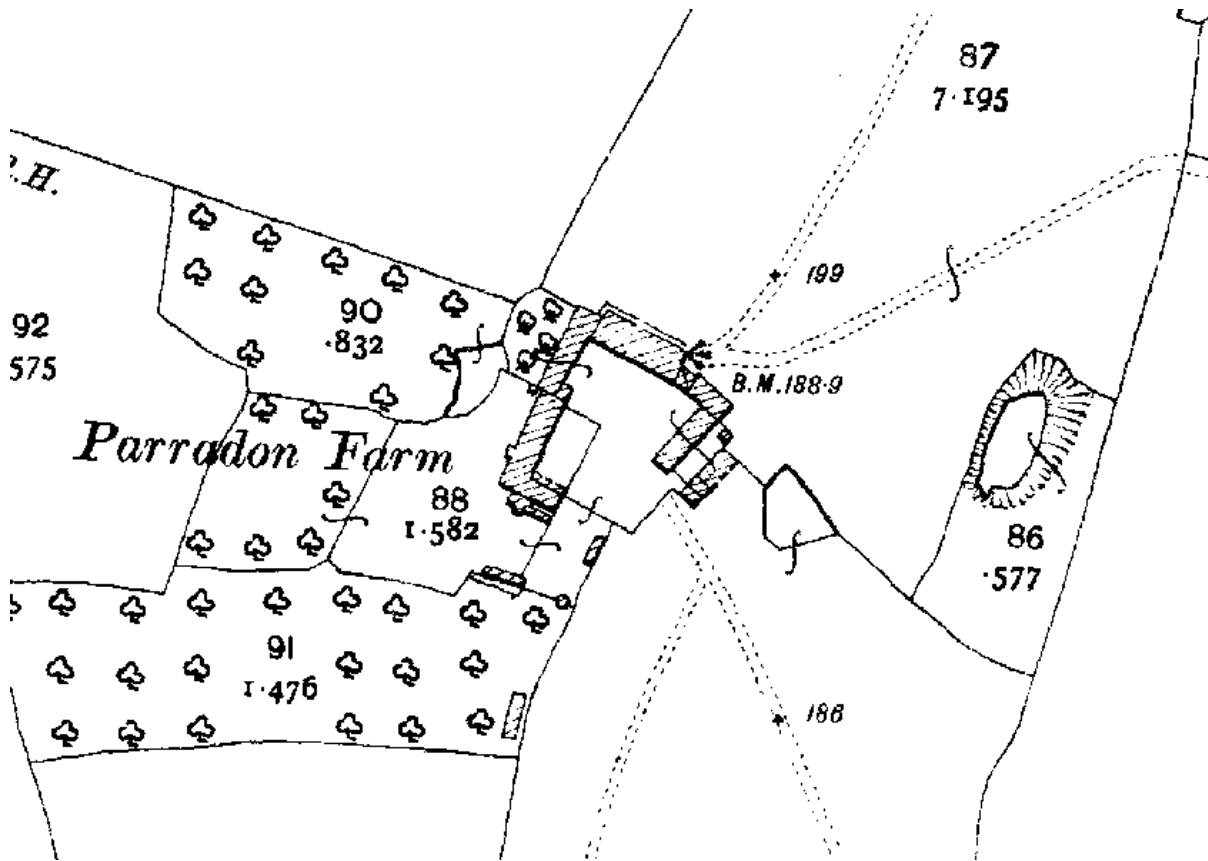


Figure 4: Peradon. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, second edition, c.1904



Farm buildings from south



South elevation of north range



East elevation of west range



East range from south-west



South end of west range with farmhouse



South gable of east range, showing stonework



North end of west range and north shippon



East range, south end and east side



North range, dairy and milking parlour



North end of west range, with loading doors



North side of passageway, north range



North end, east side of west range



North side of milking parlour



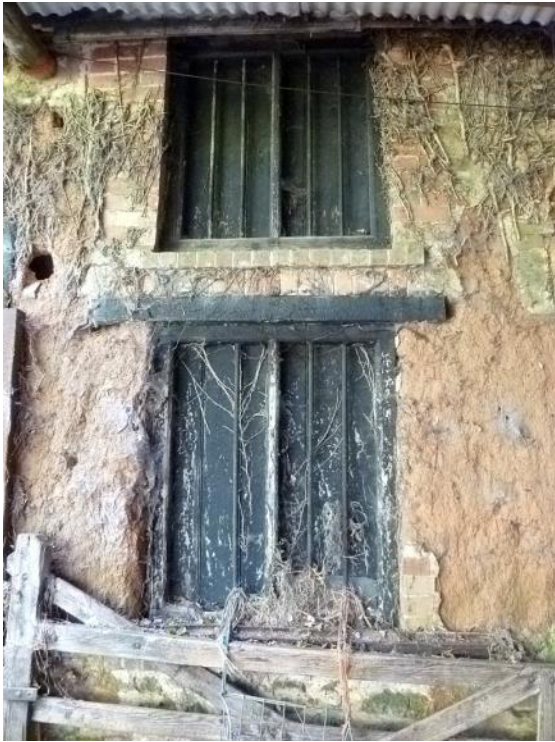
South gable of west range with lean-to shed



Lean-to roofed shed and north end of west range



Lean-to shed at south end of west range



Detail of window openings, east elevation of west range



Cider press with apple mill to right



Underside of apple mill



Interior of cellar (west range) showing first floor construction and steps up to granary



Roof structure in cider house, looking south



Roof truss, north end of granary, west range



Layshaft along north wall of cider house, driven by belt from engine on floor below



Roof in north extension, with belt slot in wall



Roof in feed loft over milking parlour



Roof structure over north shippon range



Roof structure over east shippon range



Feeding passage and stalls, north shippon



Grain silo, north end of east shippon range



Lean-to shed, north shippon back wall to right



Stalls and steel supports in east shippon