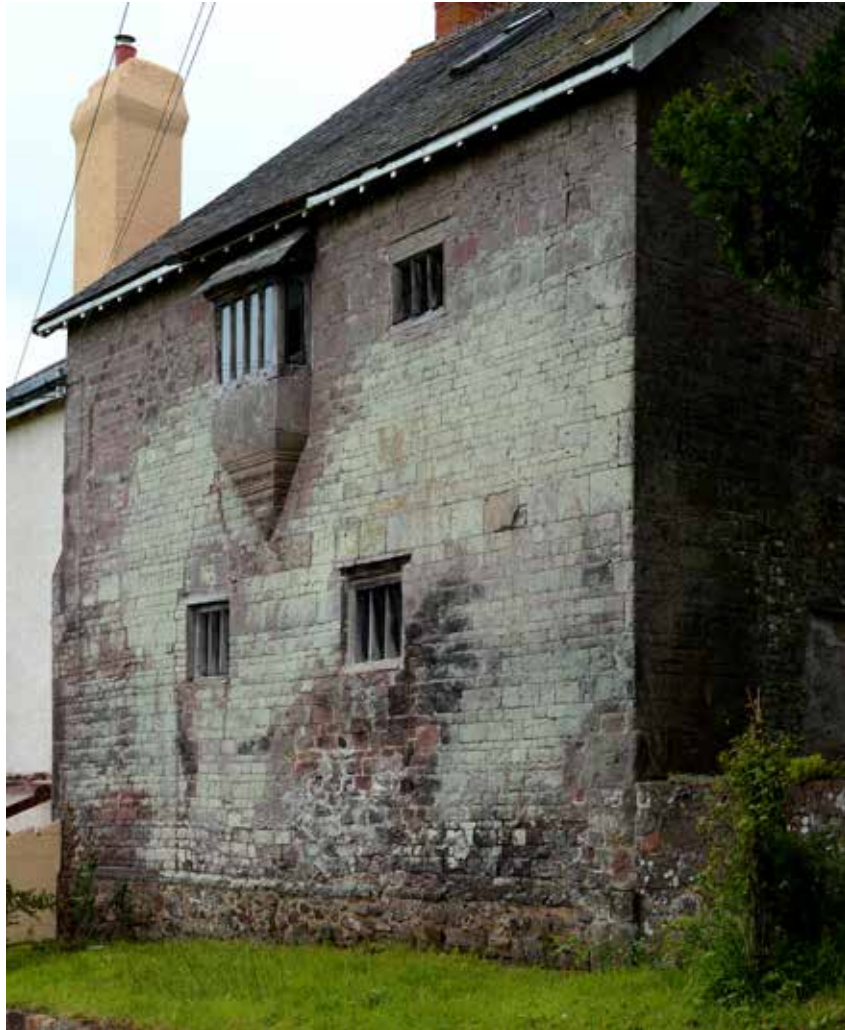


Wynefreds

Washfield

Devon



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WYNEFREDS  
WASHFIELD  
DEVON

Produced for

Dr. Gill Juleff

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WYNEFREDS

WASHFIELD

DEVON

OS Ref. SX 93525 15207

Report K926

Grade 2\* listed building: HE 1106888

## The Brief

Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants are contracted by Gill Juleff, the owner, to provide an assessment of the listed house from an historic and archaeological point of view. The report comprises a description of the fabric of the building, its setting, layout, features, dating and development, followed by a Statement of Historic Significance. It also includes a photographic record.

The site survey was entirely non-invasive and it is likely that building works will uncover historic information which may refine, or even alter the conclusions contained in this report.



1. *Wynefreds from the northwest.*

## SETTING

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The village of Washfield is situated about 6km north-northwest of the historically prosperous and relatively large market town of Tiverton. It sits on a flatter platform at the head of a coombe on an otherwise steep south-facing slope. Brook Lane descends the coombe from the main east-west road through the village and, a couple of hundred metres south, stands Wynefreds (and the adjacent Lower Wynefreds), on the west side of the lane. It is on the springline. At the bottom of the valley a stream flows eastwards to feed the River Exe at the east end of the parish.

According to the local historian, Oliver Nicholson, in conversation with the architect Alison Bunning, Wynefreds is associated with Town Mead, a plot of 6½ acres granted in 1336-48 by William Abbott to Adam Hobkyn. Between 1429-39 it passed to Thomas Worthe, a member of a family who were to become the largest landowners in the parish until the death of the childless Reginald Worth in 1880. According to Nicholson, Town Mead had gone out of the family but was recovered in the mid 16th century. Wynefred was the eldest daughter of Simon Worth (who died after 1557). His will was proved in 1564 in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and survives in The National Archive in Kew. She is described as Wenifryed Berdi or Winifred Berde.



2. Brook Farm on the parish tithe map of 1840.

The earliest known map of a scale large enough to show individual buildings is the parish tithe map of 1840 when the steading was known as Brook Farm (Fig.2). The accompanying apportionment or award of 1838 describes Plot 165 as 'Brook House, homestead yard & garden: with Plot 164 as Lower Orchard and 166 as Higher Orchard. At this time the owner was John Francis Worth Esq. and the tenant was Thomas Poole. The holding was relatively small at 37 acres.

The first edition OS map (surveyed 1887-8 and published 1889) and the second edition OS map (revised 1903 and published 1905) both show a similar arrangement of house and farm buildings (Figs 3 & 4).



3. Brook Farm on the first edition OS map of 1889.

4. Brook Farm on the second edition OS map of 1905.

Gill Juleff bought Brook from the Clark's. Before that it was a working dairy farm run by Dennis and Barbara Gill up until the 1970s. It was then that the house was divided into the present Wynefreds and Lower Wynefreds.

## LAYOUT AND BUILDING MATERIALS

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The old farmhouse serving Brook Farm was split into two units in the 1970s with the wider northern half comprising Wynefreds and the south half as Lower Wynerfreds. As far as is known 16th century work is confined to Wynefreds. This is a tall two-storey block on a north-south axis with attic rooms in the roofspace. The ground is falling away both to south and east. The house faces west onto the garden/former farmyard although the east side was clearly built for show.

Historically the ground floor comprised a kitchen with a large fireplace in the northern gable-end chimneystack. The drop in floor level at the south end of the present room suggests that there was formerly a small service room there. However Gill Juleff reports: 'Some years ago I tidied the rough edge of the step between the upper and lower areas in the kitchen. I exposed the vertical section between the two levels and, although the section was shallow and messy, it was clear that there had been an earth floor across the whole kitchen. My interpretation was that the lower area may have been cut back and created with a lime ash floor at a later date.' (email from 13.11.2019)

The rear, or east side, of the room is screened off by an axial primary stone wall to create a narrow lobby giving access to a generous winder stair rising in the southeast corner and a small closet at the north end. Thus, the east side was built with an inner and outer wall set only a little more than 1m between them, and this element of the design was repeated through all three floor levels.

At first floor level the main living space to west was originally a large high-status chamber heated by a fireplace in the north end chimneystack. This has since been subdivided to create two bed chambers and a corridor along the east side. Formerly the stair rose from the ground floor to the southeast corner of the chamber and, in the northeast corner a primary door opened to another stair, this one a newel, from the chamber to the attic chamber. The internal east wall contains a pair of primary doorways – the centre one into the tiny, but smartly finished, oriel room, presumably built as a study, oratory or muniments room or similar, and the northern one into a small closet room, probably provided for a closed stool garderobe.

The attic level appears to have been a single unheated service room, maybe for children or servants, at the head of the northeastern newel stair. The outer east wall does not rise above the attic floor level.

The 16th century house is built of purple-coloured volcanic trap ashlar laid to neat courses, some of them quite narrow (Fig.5). The east side includes some high-quality carved decoration, and original c.1564 openings contain oak joinery, where the original features still remain. Such volcanic trap ashlar is not uncommon in historic houses of this part of Devon with major historic quarries known from the Thorverton, Silverton and Crediton areas. However, the historian Oliver Nicholson, suggested to Alison Bunning that the Wynefreds stone might have come from an old quarry in Washfield village known as Mousebeare. This is an interesting avenue for further research – certainly a local quarry would have been used for the rubble





5. *Detail of the volcanic ashlar masonry on the north wall - there is no plinth on this side.*

masonry forming the core and maybe interior faces of the walls, but maybe not the display faces of smart tightly-jointed ashlar, which are such a distinctive feature of historic church and high-status houses surviving in the Lower Exe Valley. On the exposed east, west and northern sides the ashlar masonry is built on top of stone rubble footings, made up of irregular blocks of volcanic trap and local metamorphic mudstone. That on the west front may have been rebuilt in the late 19th century – early 20th century, but the footings on the east and north walls are certainly primary.

The west front was completely rebuilt in the late 19th century or (more likely) the early 20th century in red brick, laid to Flemish bond. At the same time the roof was repaired and rebuilt at a slacker pitch than the original. It is now clad with Welsh slate with earthenware ridge tiles featuring a crest of hoop-like piercings. Each end of the roof the chimneyshafts are rebuilt in late 19th century – early 20th century brick (the south one apparently serving Lower Wynefreds). The north shaft preserves late 19th century – early 20th century chimneypots. The original roofline would have suited either thatch or slate. Thatch is probably unlikely for such a high-status 16th century building. Slate is more likely and Devon is known to have had a number of historic slate quarries in the South Hams which exported their products throughout the gentry houses of Devon and indeed London, Southampton and Bristol. These were however top-hung peg-slates which were generally laid to diminishing courses from the eaves to the ridge, and coloured bluish grey. There were smaller outcrops of slate in other parts of Devon but the South Hams quarries were close to the sea and therefore easy to export.

The Welsh slate beds, which could produce larger and more regular slates, were inland and therefore unviable before the age of the railways. However, this killed the Devon slate quarries in the mid-late 19th century.

## EXTERIOR

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**The west front** was rebuilt in the late 19th century – early 20th century as described above (Fig.6). It is brick laid to Flemish bond with a hollow-chamfered plinth on volcanic stone footings, re-used quoin stones of volcanic ashlar and a roll-moulded eaves cornice. It has a balanced, not quite symmetrical, two-window front with the front doorway set just south of centre. This is now set behind a secondary mid 20th century gabled brick porch. The late 19th century – early 20th century doorway, like the windows, has a segmental arch head and a roll-moulded surround. It contains a solid timber frame in which each timber is externally chamfered with pyramid stops top and bottom of the jambs and each end to the head - typical of the period. It contains a replacement braced plank-and-ledge door from c.2000 (email from 13.11.2019). Late 19th – early 20th century timber-framed windows survive on the south side – both are three-light casements with two horizontal glazing bars to each light. The northern windows are mid 20th century metal-framed replacement casements – three-lights to the ground floor and two to the first floor.



6. *The west front.*

The attic includes a late 20th century skylight directly above the southern windows. It would seem that the late 19th century – early 20th century attic was unlit part from the small primary window through the deep north wall (west end) , but we might assume that the 16th century attic room was lit by dormer windows, but maybe not on this side.

**The north end** is largely 16th century coursed volcanic ashlar on stone rubble footings, but the west end corner shows evidence of late 19th century – early 20th century repairs associated with the rebuild of the west front. They use 16th century volcanic ashlar blocks and include two buttress-like weathered offsets to accommodate for the fact that the north end wall is apparently leaning southwards from the bottom to the top (Fig.1 above).

It includes three primary window openings. Two contain heavily repaired oak three-light windows with chamfered mullions – one to the first floor east and the other to the loft level west end. Both appear to preserve their primary lintels and sills. The latter has an unusually deep internal embrasure due to its situation next to the north end chimneystack. They were mended in the late 20th century. At the same time the third window - a tiny oak-framed single-light slit with a crank-arched head lighting the stair at about second floor level east of centre - was in a poor state but the remains are preserved behind an external cladding of lead. (Gill Juleff e-mail of 09.11.2119)

The other feature in this wall is a blocking filled by brick stone rubble and plaster render at ground floor level to east of the chimneystack (Fig.7). This presents something of a conundrum. On the outside it is approximately 2.5m wide between vertical straight joints each side, and above the horizontal slate dripledge the patch of blocking above rises to about the internal first floor level. This is far too big an opening to serve a housing for the late 19th-early 20th century brick-lined oven which exists within. The only explanation that this writer can suggest is that there was here a walk-in malting chamber for the production of beer. If so this is a very early example in a domestic context although malting was undertaken in Westcountry church houses in the mid-late 16th century. Small beer (weak beer) was produced as a drink that involved the boiling of water which could be used safely for all the family including the children and was effectively replaced by the popularity of tea in the 18th century or 19th century (Brears 2015, pp105-112).

7. *The oven housing within the blocking of an earlier feature associated with the kitchen fireplace.*





8. *The east wall is the back wall of the house but presents a show front to the public.*

**The rear (east) elevation** is a show front facing onto the lane (Fig.8). It is built of volcanic stone ashlar down to a hollow-chamfered plinth and over stone rubble footings. There has been some repair to the masonry, notably a patch of rather untidy masonry beneath the northern ground floor window.

There are two windows to both the ground and first floor levels. Three are somewhat repaired oak three-light windows with chamfered mullions but a rather splendid oriel window occupies the centre of the upper level. It has single canted side-lights and four forward lights. The corner posts are plain on the outside but finished with ovolo mouldings on the inside. The forward mullions are ovolo moulded on the outside but finished internally with a hollow chamfer to a triple-roll nosing. The oriel has a monopitch slate roof and a plain apron of volcanic ashlar, but is supported on a richly moulded and carved base springing from a corbel carved as a human head, made somewhat grotesque by having the eyes set too close together. Above the base expands through multiple orders to support the oriel employing repeated mouldings and two bands of bead-and-ribbon ornament with a cornice of incised decoration (Fig.9) which is discussed below.



9. *The oriel.*



10. The remains of the inscription.

Directly below the corbel and just above the lintels of the ground floor windows there is a wide course of volcanic stone ashlar which bears the remains of an ornamental inscription, some of which is missing (Fig.10). The beginning is clear enough comprising 'WYNEFRED' followed by the double-headed eagle of the Worthy family. There follows a large block of stone which has lost most of its surface and is illegible. The next block could well be 'BERD', the surname of Wynefred's husband followed by the initials 'JP' and 'MS' followed by the date 1564 (Fig.00). The listing inspector describes the male name as R.E. Maynard – his or her documentary thinking is unclear. 'MS' might suggest a university education which should encourage further documentary research into Berd's education focussed on the alumni of Exeter College at Oxford.

**The south end.** Most of this wall is hidden within the adjoining Lower Wynefreds (Figs.11 & 12). One thing is clear. The upper part of the southern gable wall is built of the same late 19th century – early 20th century brick as the rebuild of the west front. Lower Wynefreds is narrower on both sides so that the brickwork can be seen to continue down to about first floor level on the east side and first floor windowsill level to the west.



11. The south end from the west.



12. The south end from the east.

# THE BERD MANSION OF 1564

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*What remains is considered to be only surviving part of the original small but ambitiously show-off 16th century mansion. Nevertheless, it provides an interesting insight into the quality of a lower gentry-status house from the time including some superior features and details.*

## The ground floor kitchen and service room.

The front (west) wall was rebuilt in the late 19th century – early 20th century so it is not known whether or not it included a doorway in the 16th century or the appearance of the windows. The floor level drops down to the southern third of the present room which may indicate that this was originally a separate room, probably of service function. It preserves the remains of an early, if not primary, lime ash floor (Fig.13). There is no physical proof for a partition between the parts of the room, but, of course, there may have been a non-structural screen (as discussed below).



*13. The ground floor level looking southeast. The table stands on the lower level lime ash floor.*

The first floor is carried on two crossbeams and a half-beam across the chimneybreast at the north end. These are primary mid 16th century beams, all finished with typical deep and slightly-hollow chamfers with step stops (Fig.14). Gill Juleff related that, when she bought the place, basic square-section oak joists were open to view, but she put in, or most likely replaced, the plaster ceilings between the beams. There are old timbers against the south wall forming two lengths of half-beams. The longer western length has a narrower chamfer with



14. *Detail of the chamfer and stop at the east end of the northern crossbeam*

straight-cut stops each end. The east end, stopping short of the staircase enclosure, is supported on a vertical timber post against the wall, with the last 40cms or so taken up by a separate half-beam. This untidy arrangement would seem to be a late 19th century – early 20th century arrangement, re-using old timbers, when the Lower Wynerfreds part of the house was rebuilt, if not created.

The north wall includes an original large fireplace set centrally (Fig.15). It has undergone a series of modifications but it is essentially a primary feature. It is built of volcanic stone blocks under an oak lintel which has a chamfered soffit and rises to a low cambered arch

over the opening. At each end the chamfer curves downwards but it is not continued down the stone jambs. The back of the fireplace has been extensively relined with probably 19th century brick on the lower level but the intact upper masonry includes two small keeping places. The west (left) cheek includes the remains of an oven, but the front of the oven has been cut away to create a niche (Fig.16). There is another niche in the east cheek which is plastered; it is therefore not possible to determine whether this is an early feature or secondary adaptation.



15. *The kitchen fireplace.*





16. The western cheek of the fireplace.

17. Detail of the burn marks on the fireplace lintel.

An interesting feature of the fireplace is the burn marks on the lintel (Fig.17). There are so many examples from 16th and 17th century houses throughout England that these cannot be accidental. Over the past few years there has been an interesting argument regarding the cause of these amongst building historians. The conventional theory was that they come from tallow and rush candles which were stuck against the timber and left to burn down. Others point out that these marks are often too close to the bottom of a timber for the candle theory. They go on to suggest that the marks were made probably made by a red-hot poker. John Dean and Nick Hill have taken a serious interest in these burn marks to the extent they raised research funds to experiment in laboratory conditions. They concluded that 'the typical mark takes both skill and perseverance, and was created with a hand-held rushlight or taper' (Dean and Hill 2014, 7). They avoid speculation as to why anyone might choose to take time to produce such marks, but demonstrate examples from across northern Europe as well as England. However, it is generally considered to have superstitious significance. Maybe the belief was that by anointing the timber with such a burn, as sympathetic magic, it would become charmed against a worse fire which could threaten home and family. A recent VAG winter conference on *Marks on Buildings* held at Leicester - 4-5th, January 2020 - included a paper by Nick Hill on burn marks which was followed by an interesting discussion on the liturgical use of candles in churches and the possibility of their 'magical' significance in secular buildings during the Puritan ascendancy in the mid 17th century.

To east of the fireplace there is an opening lined with blocks of volcanic ashlar and with a segmental arch head (Fig.18). It contains a cast-iron door to a brick-lined oven of presumably



*18. The northeast corner of the old kitchen.*

19th century date. This occupies the space of an earlier chamber or feature which has been described above from the outside. Close by, at the north end of the east wall there is another alcove of similar size with a segmental arch head but this is plastered (Fig.18). It looks like it might have been a doorway to another oven, but this cannot be proved even though the space behind it is deep enough to house one.

There is an internal stone wall along the east side of the kitchen and putative service room. It is a 16th century wall and includes a central doorway opening which now includes a 19th century or early 20th century solid timber doorframe and four-panel door. The narrow space to east provides a lobby providing access to the stair to south and a small closet to north. This closet has its own 16th century window so might always have been a small separate space, but now it features only 20th century joinery and fixtures. Gill Juleff reports that there seems to have been a doorway to the closet directly from the kitchen, from the evidence of concrete blockwork between the two. The lobby includes a revealed panel of early, if not original, red paint on the east wall. In the late medieval period colored walls, or timbers, usually denoted rooms or spaces of some status. It also has a 16th century oak-mullioned window which lights the rising flight of stairs. This stair is not a newel stair. Technically it is a closed well stair rising up the east side of the internal stone wall to a half landing then returning up the west side of the stone wall. It is a relatively early example of the type that was commonly found in gentry mansions in the late 16th century and early 17th century, before the arrival of framed stairs. The half landing includes a doorway-sized alcove in the south wall.

## The first floor Great Chamber and associated features

The stair now rises into a corridor past two bedchambers on its west side. In fact the studwork partition forming the west side of the corridor and the east-west division between the present bedrooms were introduced in the late 19th century – early 20th century refurbishment of the house. The 16th century chamber occupied the whole first floor space with direct access to the descending stair in the southeast corner and the rising stair in the northeast corner. As on the ground floor the east end is divided off from the main chamber, here providing two small rooms, each with its own 16th century window. The 16th century windows lighting the chamber proper have gone with the rebuilding of the west wall.

The chamber ceiling and loft level floor is supported by two crossbeams with half-beams at both ends indicating that the chamber preserves its original dimensions. The beams are unstopped but feature double ovolo mouldings with a recessed slot along their soffits (Fig.19). The floor includes a number of wide oak boards which are now exposed only in the northern chamber.



19. Detail of the crossbeam, mouldings.

20. The chamber fireplace.





*21. The chamber fireplace from the southeast showing the doorway to the fire-box in the western cheek.*

The room is heated by a smart fireplace in the north wall (Figs.20 & 21). It is built of volcanic ashlar with an oak lintel which extends well beyond the left (west) jamb. The soffit of the fireplace has been mutilated over the opening. It now has a rebate, presumably cut when the fireplace was blocked for a 19th century grate. It is assumed that it originally featured a hollow chamfer as survives on the stone jambs. The hollow mouldings descend to elaborate pyramid stops embellished to resemble crocketed finials, as are commonly found on Devon church towers (Fig.22). The fireplace also includes an interesting feature. That is a hearth level doorway in the west cheek which opens in to a fire box. Taken together with the extended lintel this might well represent the remains of a heated laver. This writer recorded a complete example in the 1970s in a chamber in the merchants house, coincidentally built in 1564, at 41 High Street, Exeter (unpublished record for Exeter Archaeology at the Devon Heritage Centre). Here the fire box was capped with a slab of Beerstone forming the base of an alcove.

22. *The elaborate stop on the eastern jamb of the fireplace.*

The top of the Beerstone slab included a shallow circular depression which was interpreted as the setting for a metal bowl which could be used for heating water for washing.

Interestingly the lintel also includes a couple more burn marks.



The internal north-south stone wall forms the east side of the chamber. It contains a 16th century oak frame containing two doorways with Tudor arch heads (Fig.23). The southern one is to the small oriel room, the present office, and it has a chamfered surround down to step stops on the chamber side. The northern doorway is rebated to the chamber so that its door originally opened outwards. In the 20th century the original beaded plank and ledge door was re-hung to open inwards so as not to interfere with the secondary corridor. However, the door is still hung on its original wrought-iron hinges (Fig.24).

The tiny northern room is hardly larger than a walk-in cupboard and was probably a garderobe originally, presumably housing a closed stool. It is lit by an original window and includes traces of early, if not original, red paint on the walls and door. The slightly larger southern room is lit by the 16th century canted oriel window described above (Fig.25). Obviously it features views of the countryside to east. It could have provided a small space for privacy, contemplation and maybe prayer but could also have been used to store important documents – a kind of muniments room. Its ceiling is made up of baulks of oak and the walls include evidence of early if not original red paint on the walls.

The northeast corner of the chamber has another 16th century oak doorframe with Tudor arch head and chamfered surround (no stops) providing access to a newel stair up to the loft level. The stairs are built of stone rubble with oak treads (Fig.26). The ceiling of the rising stairwell is boarded.



23. (Left) The double doorway to the eastern closets off the Great Chamber.

24. (Above) The lower of the re-set hinges on the doorway to the small northern closet

25. (Below) Detail of the oriel window mullions in the larger southern closet.

26. (Right) The base of the stair rising to the attic level, originally from the northeast corner of the chamber.



## The Attic Level

The newel stair rises to a 16th century oak framed doorway with Tudor arch head and chamfered surround to step stops which opens to the attic level. It contains a beaded plank-and-ledge door which could be primary but now includes 19th century ferramenta (Fig.27). The present partitions dividing the attic level all date from the 20th century. There is no evidence for any former partitions. However one of the doorways (to Bedroom 3) does include an ancient plank-and-ledge door hung on 20th century hinges. - it was found in the barn, cleaned up and put here by Gill Juleff

The roof is carried on three uncollared trusses which are probably the originals. The principals are of generous scantling. They do not descend to the present eaves levels but sit on the tops of the west and inner east walls, so far as can be seen. At the apex the principals engage with notched mortise-and-tenon joints each fixed with a single peg (Fig.28). There are trenches for three sets of purlins and many of the primary purlins still remain but most have been reset to accommodate the pitch of the late 19th century – early 20th century roof. Secondary collars are nailed to the principals and the southern truss includes a plate yoke which has been introduced to raise the level of the ridge (Fig.29). On the east side the pitch of the roof extends beyond the inner wall to the outer east wall now using late 19th century – early 20th century common rafters, presumably replacing a similar original arrangement.



27. The door from the stair to the attic. During repairs to the adjacent wall plaster Gill Juleff noted that the studs were clad with primary laths clad with a base coat of mud plaster mixed with red cows hair finished with a skim of lime.



28. The apex of the southern roof truss.

29. The apex of the northern truss with secondary collar.



## Dating and Discussion

Wynefreds was built in 1564 for Wynefred Berd and her husband, as is proudly announced by the inscription carved on the east wall. Most of the primary features identified above are consistent with such a date.

What remains is a fragment of a larger mansion house of gentry status. It is three storeys high and built to impress. This writer cannot think of anything quite like it in Devon, but that is probably because we do not know the extent of the original Elizabethan house. Mansions like Cadhay, near Ottery St Mary and Holcombe Court in Holcombe Rogus are both a little older, and much larger aristocratic courtyard-plan houses, whilst most of the more modest gentry mansions which spring to mind either were built as late medieval hall houses or were new built in the 17th century. However, the remaining 16th century fabric and features are very well-preserved, even down to the survival of wide oak boards on the upper floors.

It is very interesting that the main rooms which remain from 1564 are the kitchen on the ground floor and the Great Chamber, along with the two contemporary stairs. Despite the loss of the original west wall the two rooms are remarkably well-preserved. As described above the large area of blocking exposed on the outside of the north wall behind the existing brick-lined oven looks very much like a malting chamber or kiln. The chambers are commonly walk-in from a doorway in the kitchen but some are accessed through hatches in the side or back of the fireplace. The fireplace here includes a plastered alcove in its eastern cheek which could be a blocked hatch. Such chambers are always positioned close to the kitchen fireplace because they include a flue in their roof returning smoke to the flue of the kitchen fireplace. Most maltings date from the early or mid 17th century, so this one is an early dated example.

The Great Chamber is a significant survival. It was up to date in terms of design and decoration. The crossbeams feature ovolo mouldings, which are a Renaissance form; and this is a relatively early use of them. The fireplace includes a rare heated laver and the chamber enjoyed private access to a garderobe closet and small unheated study, oratory, muniments room or something similar. These at least were painted red, not necessarily in 1564, but certainly by the early 17th century. The study enjoys the use of the oriel window, which is such an important element of the show front. By this time timber oriel windows were a common feature of Elizabethan merchants houses along the main streets of Devon's larger towns, as at 41-42, High Street, Exeter (now Laura Ashleys), also dated 1564. However the stone apron and base of the one at Wynefreds suggests gentry antecedents. Impressive early-mid 16th century examples survive on the remarkable front of Yarde family's Bradley Manor (A National Trust property on the outskirts of Newton Abbot), but perhaps the closest parallel - but much grander - is surely the c.1550 first and second floor oriel to the front porch of the Bluett seat, Holcombe Court in Holcombe Rogus, with its diminishing stone aslar base of multiple mouldings. Even so the base of the Wynefreds oriel includes pre-Renaissance 'primitive' carving, notably the female face at the very bottom, which we might suppose might be a representation of Wynefred herself.

The list description states: 'The remains of a plank and muntin screen with a chamfered cambered doorframe survive in the barn opposite the house and originated in the house'. This



no longer remains there. It is tempting to suggest that this was a ground floor screen between the kitchen and putative service room. The narrow outbuilding projecting north of the 'barn' includes the remains of a 16th century oak four-light window with chamfered mullions, which presumably is re-used here and came from the mansion.

The size and layout of the missing part of the 16th century Wynefreds is not known. Did the building continue down the hillslope or was the surviving historic fragment a wing of an east range? The evidence is fugitive. One might suggest that the south end of the east wall is the primary southeast corner of the range, but that is unlikely. Firstly it includes a weathered offset which is a feature of the late 19th – early 20th century repairs of the northwest corner. Secondly a range projecting west would cover most of the west wall leaving little room for windows lighting the kitchen and chamber. Alternately, one could propose that the southern end of Brook Farm as shown on the tithe map of 1840 was the rest of the 16th century mansion, but that too is unlikely. It is surely too small when compared with the size of the original Great Chamber, although the doorway-sized alcove on the south side of the southern stair half landing might establish the original house did continue to the south if it were proved to be a blocked doorway.

## LATER CHANGES

Wynefreds is remarkable for the absence of any modernisation from the 17th and 18th centuries. This would seem to suggest that the house declined in status relatively quickly. Presumably it became a tenanted farm by the mid 17th century and the farmers invested in their working buildings rather than the house.

Some of the alterations in the kitchen might have been undertaken in the 19th century, before the first major refurbishment of the late 19th – early 20th century. Most of the elements of this have been described in passing above.

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Text and photography by John R.L.Thorp

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# STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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The significance of Wynefreds is assessed below on the basis of recommendations in Historic England's Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (April 2008). Significance is assessed broadly and divided into categories: evidential (what can actually be seen in the building); historical; aesthetic, and community. Degrees of significance are identified. These are: highly significant; significant; some significance; neutral significance, and detrimental to significance. This assessment does not include the landscape except as the context for the house.

The house is listed Grade 2\*

## Evidential Significance

The farmhouse is highly significant:

- as a historic house built in a sustainable fashion from locally-sourced materials.
- for the extent of surviving 1564 fabric, and the information it provides of the original layout of the surviving part of the house.
- for the quality of the 1564 masonry, carpentry and other features, including the evidence for a remarkable and rare heated laver in the chamber and a possible early malting kiln in the kitchen.

The house has some significance:

- for the evidence of early, if not original, red paint in the stair lobby and first floor closets.

Detrimental to significance:

- the demolition of part of the original house and the rebuilding of the west front wall of the surviving historic part in the late 19th-early 20th century.

## Historical Significance

The house is significant:

- as a fragment of an high quality Elizabethan mid Devon gentry house.
- for the evidence it demonstrates of the layout and original features of a gentry-status Great Chamber.
- for the quality of the 16th century carpentry.

## Aesthetic Significance

The house is highly significant:

- for the high-quality craftsmanship exhibited in the appearance of the east wall with its remarkable oriel window and carved base, other original windows, and the remains of the carved inscription.

The house has some significance:

- as part of a historic gentry house set within a farmstead setting. Most of the traditional farm buildings remain, and are those shown on 19th century and early 20th century maps. It is intrinsically an attractive setting.

## Community significance

The house has some community significance:

- because the east front is built next to Brook Lane.

## Conclusion

Wynefreds is a fascinating house from an historic and archaeological point of view. The part that survives from the 1564 mansion stands out as a superior and well-preserved example with high-quality craftsmanship and it contains interesting features which reflect of the living standards of its 16th century gentry builders since it includes a well-preserved Great Chamber and kitchen. Wynefreds stands in its own right in a part of Devon containing an unusually high number of important historic houses.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

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## CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This report has been prepared for use by Dr Gill Juleff and her professional advisers and not to give assurance to any third party.

The purpose of this report is to give an opinion on the specific matter which was the subject of the request and not to comment on the general condition of the buildings.

Parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed, or otherwise concealed and/or inaccessible have not been inspected.

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