



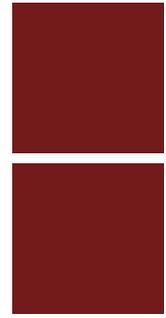
WINTERBOURNE MEDIEVAL BARN

HLF Bid Reference HG-15-04570

Supporting Information

WMB8 – Conservation Statement





Winterbourne Court Farm Barn

CONSERVATION STATEMENT

May 2014

For South Gloucestershire Council

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCUMENT

- 1.1 This Conservation Statement is intended to explain the nature of this heritage asset, why it matters to people, what is happening to it and what needs to be done to look after it
- 1.2 The Statement will help all those concerned for its future to work together to care for and maintain the asset to the benefit of the whole community



2 INTRODUCTION TO WINTERBOURNE COURT FARM BARN

- 2.1 Winterbourne is a large village in South Gloucestershire, located some 5km north-north-east of the centre of Bristol, just north of the M4. It sits on a spur of land between the River Frome to the east as it runs southwards towards Bristol, and the Bradley Brook to the west which runs into the Frome south of the village. The Barn is close to the parish church of St Michael in an isolated position to the west of the village, near to the Bradley Brook.
- 2.2 This group of medieval buildings, set apart from the main village, reflects the historic pattern of small scattered hamlets that survived until well after the second world war. It is significant that the Parish Church, the Barn and surrounding buildings have remained remarkably unaltered as have their settings. The hamlet was designated as a Conservation Area (the 'Church Lane, Winterbourne Conservation Area') by South Gloucestershire Council in November 2005.
- 2.3 The Barn forms part of a group of buildings and a yard, formerly part of Winterbourne Court Farm. It would have had a central role in the economic activity of the medieval Court. Fishponds close to the Bradley Brook were another element of this.

3 CHRONOLOGY

- 3.1 The earliest documentary sources show that the manor of Winterbourne was held by Aluin under Edward the Confessor (1042-66). At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086) *wintreborne* was classed as a member of the Royal Manor of Bitton in Langley and Swinehead Hundred (SCARP report)
- 3.2 Timbers in the Barn have been dated to 1342. It is a rare example of a secular barn (said now to be unique as the other examples have since disappeared): most other examples being erected for monasteries and the other great medieval institutions, e.g. the largest surviving

cruck-framed barn in England, at Leigh Court, Worcestershire, was built by the monks of Pershore Abbey. In 1342 Thomas de Bradeston held the patronage of St Michael's and this secular barn has been credited to his ownership of Winterbourne Court. He was knighted in 1330 and was commissioned to choose 200 archers for the French wars. He is recorded as fighting in the king's division at the Battle of Crecy in 1346. He is noted as living mainly at *Bradeston* (now called Breadstone, near Berkeley) and visiting Winterbourne occasionally. He is mentioned in the Gascon Rolls (documents drawn up by the English royal administration of Aquitaine and Gascony recording business, places and personalities between 1273 and 1468).

- 3.3 Part of the mediaeval barn complex as purchased by South Gloucestershire Council in 1997 was repaired in the autumn of 2003 with the help of funding from English Heritage.
- 3.4 A resistance survey was carried out which appeared to show an earlier structure lying beneath the current building. (SCARP report)
- 3.5 Dendrochronology commissioned by English Heritage to supplement and enhance the original study was undertaken by Roland Harris and Jennifer Hillam in 1991. Previously, only an estimated felling date range of 1326-1368 could be produced, but selective re-sampling of the same crucks, plus an additional six timbers, allowed 10 precise, or nearly precise felling dates to be given. Some degradation of the outer surface of the timber on some of the samples has produced a very narrow date range of a year or two, but are all consistent with a latest felling date of spring 1342. 'Tree-ring dating of oak cores from the Tithe Barn at Winterbourne, near Bristol, Avon', AML (Ancient Monuments Laboratory) Report, 46/91; VA 23, 44-7). (S Gloucs website).
- 3.6 Permission was given in 2012 for another resistance survey which repeated the former finding but also found a low resistance feature south of the barn which may indicate the former existence of a substantial ditch so that this may be a medieval moated site. (SCARP report)

4 DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 Winterbourne Court Farm Barn is Listed Grade II*. The list description is as follows:

C16 or earlier. Rubble, pantile roofs, small stone slates at eaves. Battered walls vary in thickness, steep pitch roof, gabled north entry, probably later, slit vents, pigeon holes now obscured by extension at west; mid C19 parallel range built on at south; lower mid C19 extension to west has double doors under relieving arches. Interior: 7 bays, pairs of raised full crucks sprung from half way down side walls; braced collars, saddles to flat base ridge (which may indicate rare triangular ridge form); one saddle supports a short post which takes the ridge; several windbraces of heavy scantling survive.

- 4.2 The barn is therefore a building of national importance with a magnificent interior. The use of crucks is significant in this context:

‘Crucks are known over very wide areas of England, but they probably reached their most highly developed and impressive form in the west midlands and the Welsh Marches, in medieval halls and barns’ (Harris 1978, p.71)

- 4.3 At its original extent, the barn at Winterbourne is thought to have had 11 bays and measured at least 143 ft (43m) long by 26 ft (8m) wide internally, although it might have stretched to 12 bays on symmetry grounds. It would also have had two great porches originally, but the building has now been reduced to 7 bays and one porch, with 6 roof trusses. The trusses are fine examples of ‘raised crucks’ with strongly-elbowed cruck blades, raised about 9 ft (2.7m) off the ground and standing on timber pads built into the wall. The crucks carry arch-braced collars and rise to saddles supporting the square-set ridge piece 31 ft (10m) above the floor. The crucks in the truss closest to the eastern gable are slightly shorter and this truss employs a short king post above the saddle to support the ridge. There are two sets of purlins, with wind braces to the lower set. They are tenoned into the cruck blades either side of the cross-entry, but are trenched into the backs of the crucks, or onto packing pieces, on the other trusses. Most of the original rafters survive. (S Gloucs website). The original 14th century walls are formed of local stones set in red loam, distinct from the construction of the repaired three-bay block immediately adjoining it on its south side, which dates from the 17th or early 18th century survey (in 2001 by Ferguson and Mann, architects) prior to the renovation works.

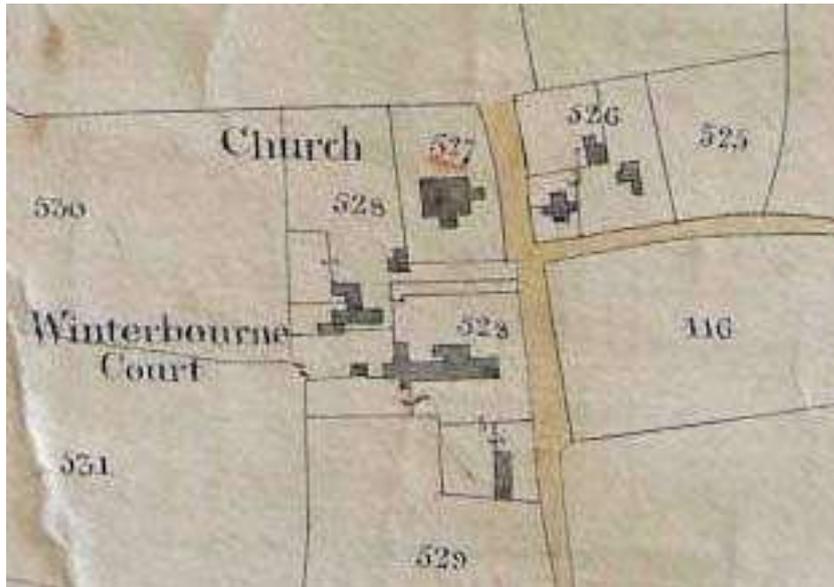
- 4.3 The setting of Winterbourne Court Barn

- 4.4 As set out above, the barn is an integral part of a small group of buildings that reflects the original scattered development pattern of the area. Winterbourne has grown into a large village mostly by filling in between the original nuclei formed by older farmsteads, which are scattered around the perimeter of this mostly modern village. A considerable number of these farmsteads are listed.

- 4.5 All the listed buildings in the Winterbourne church and barn group considered below in **Bold type** are marked ‘G.V.’ because of their assessed ‘group value’.

- 4.6 The group principally comprises **St Michael’s church (listed Grade I)** with its fine prominent spire, mostly of 13th and 14th century date but with an earlier chancel and various additions and replacements from the 19th century including the spire itself, replaced in 1871 following damage by lightning. To the south-east of the church (and north-east of the barn) stands the former Court

Farmhouse extended slightly from the footprint evident on the 1844 Tithe Map - when it was



The Winterbourne group as shown on the 1844 Tithe map (thanks to Frenchay Museum on-line archives)

occupied by Thomas Lawrence – and now converted into two houses. Between the barn and the houses is a range not evident on the 1844 map but shown on the first 25" Ordnance survey sheet of 1881-2. Further west again is a **late medieval dovecote (listed Grade II)**. It is circular with a conical roof. This would have provided young pigeons (called 'squabs') for the dining table of the owner of Winterbourne Court in season (roughly between Easter and October). The list description is as follows:

Dovecote, 20 metres south-west G.V. of Winterbourne Court II Dovecote. Late mediaeval, altered. Rubble, stout slate roof. Circular, buttressed single storey, conical roof, small lean-to abuts one buttress, low door. Interior: nesting holes, 3 perching string courses, roof has one circular purlin.

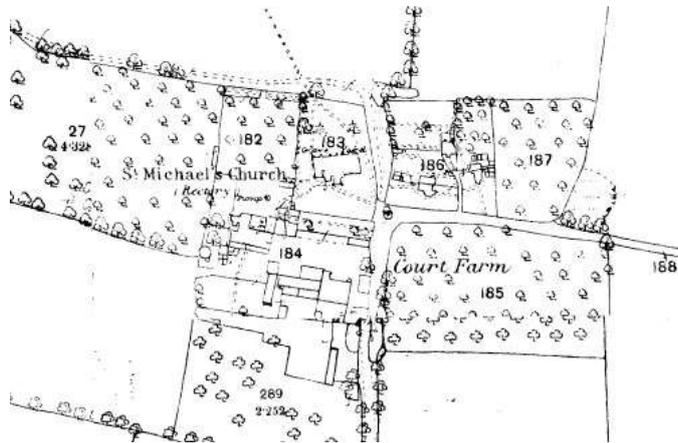
4.7 Between the barn and the church is another range, again not shown on the 1844 map and in place, though with a slimmer footprint, in 1881-2. It retained this earlier footprint until at least the mid 1930's and has since been rebuilt with a deeper plan.

4.8 East of the church is a group of four cottages of similar style: they are all shown on the 1844 map (and noted at that time as occupied by Robert Stockton, Charles Offer, Thomas Skipton and John Escott). Two are listed: **no 4 Church Cottages (grade II)** and the cottage furthest east (**Rose Cottage: also grade II**). They are picturesque stone buildings with details in Tudor style. No 4 is dated 1829 and it is likely that Rose Cottage is of similar date. Their list descriptions are as follows:

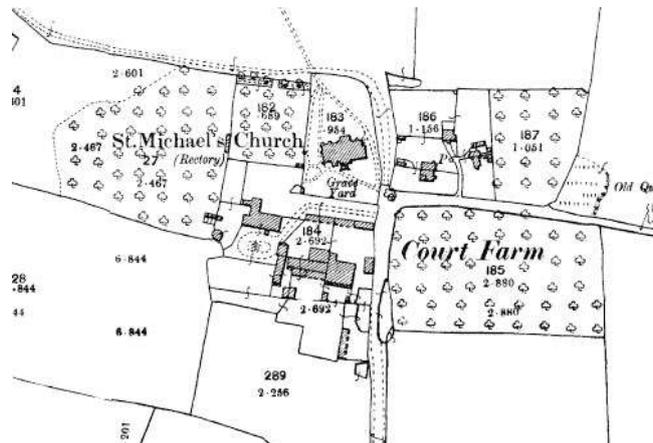
4 Church Cottages G.V. II Cottage. Dated 1829. Rubble, freestone dressings, concrete tile roofs. Picturesque gabled composition. 1½ storeys, 2 windows, all casements, gable to left has gabled bay with Tudor arch window, above is a window then a datestone, both with labels, to right door under label. Part of a group that complements church of St. Michael (q.v.).

Rose Cottage G.V. II Cottage. Circa 1829. Rubble, freestone dressings, stone slate roofs. Picturesque gabled composition. 1½ storeys, 3 windows, all casements, gable to left has gabled bay below and window with label above,

main block has door and 3-light window with labels, a plain window rises above as a gabled eaves dormer, return facing road has gabled bay with Tudor arch window and window above with label. Part of a group that complements church of St. Michael (q.v)

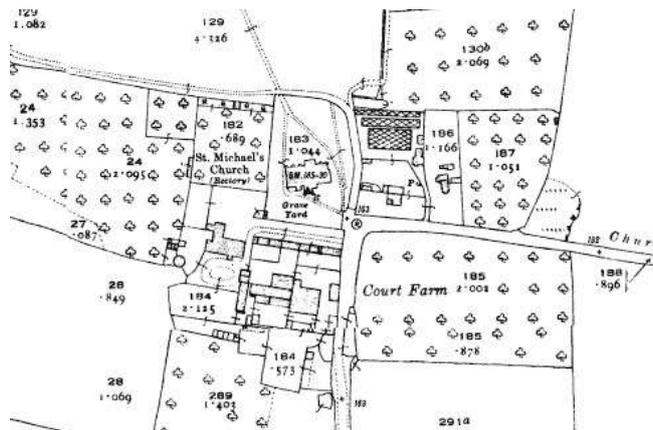


Historic Ordnance
Survey 25" maps:
Top: 1881-2
1st Edn.



1902

Centre:
2nd Edn.



Bottom: Edn.
of
1935

4.9 Nothing apparently survives of the original Winterbourne Court. The two houses (not listed) north west of the barn have been formed from the previous farmhouse on the site of the building that is mapped in 1844 (then occupied by Thomas Lawrence). If the old building was destroyed by fire in 1881 (South Gloucester Council [2006]) the building mapped in 1844 is the old Court building. Its modest footprint is similar to

that of today except that the building was slimmer and was probably not 'double pile' (two gabled roofs side by side) as today.

- 4.10 The medieval fishponds ('monks' pool') to the west of the Court close to the Bradley Brook are also undesignated and would have been stocked with fish and with the dovecote constituted an important element of a self-sufficient medieval estate. North of the Court Farmhouse/site of the former Court is a **raised terrace (listed Grade II)** known as the 'monks' walk' the list description reading:

Raised terrace. Late mediaeval, repaired. Rubble, freestone. In two halves, each about 20 metres long, from a central gap rise two flights of six steps, a plain terrace is carried at this height in either direction by walls which rise about 1 metre above terrace, vaulted at east end. Believed to be terrace of original Winterbourne Court; since lost.

5 SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.1 Even in its reduced form, the barn is the largest Gloucestershire cruck building of which South Gloucestershire Council are aware. Its splendid interior and its architectural significance are greatly enhanced by the historical evidence that it belonged to gentry rather than to a monastic estate. The size of these barns reflect the centralised agricultural organisation of the estates of that period. Winterbourne is unique in that no other substantial 14th century lay barn survives elsewhere.
- 5.2 Its position close the site of a medieval house, with dovecote and fishponds in a tight group with a fine medieval church and other listed buildings adds to its significance with important resonances with the former medieval agrarian settlement pattern. It is an integral part of a 'classic medieval manorial site where the field systems could possibly have remained unchanged for a thousand years' and indeed potentially a former moated site ('SCARP' report).

Asset	Description	Relative significance 1 = highest
Main Barn	Substantial remains of larger barn. Fabric dates from 1342. Roof structure largely intact from this date. Secular origins make this very rare if not unique at this scale.	1
South Range	Dated to late C17 or early C18. Roofless in 2003. Subsequently reroofed in 2002-2005 works.	2 =

West Barn	Possibly C16 or early 17C on site of western part of former C14 barn. Possibly using some earlier fabric. In poor condition. Was subjected to unauthorised works to convert to a dwelling in the 1980s.	2 =
Cow Byres	Original buildings date from early C19. Western half demolished and remainder much altered, particularly in late C20 .	4
North lean-to	Roofless modern structure on site of building evident on OS maps since 1900.	5
Small barn (S of main yard entrance)	Poor condition, evident on OS maps since 1900	3

6 MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The Barn is managed by the Trustees and Volunteers both as a site and as a venue for Events. Whilst there is no physical presence on site it does benefit from the presence of the proprietor and his son of Winterbourne Willows (operating from the South Range) for large parts of the working week.
- 6.2 A particular group of volunteers known as Barnforce takes responsibility for care and maintenance of the grounds. An active group of up to 15 volunteers provide manual labour to ensure that the site is in good condition.
- 6.3 Certain works will be undertaken by SGC the property owners.
- 6.4 The property is less under threat than it was but as an ancient property not entirely secure from the elements there is the need for maintenance. It is not helped by the geographical location as the site is prone to drainage problems that can undermine the fabric and can impinge on peoples use and enjoyment of the site especially in the winter months so most events for the public take place between April and October.
- 6.5 The site also suffers from traffic at unrestricted speeds being on a local rat run, poor access and very limited parking
- 6.6 The main themes of the project are:
- Learning
 - Conservation
 - Participation
- 6.7 The capital works to enable these activities are:
- Heating, lighting and security to all the buildings.

- Safe site parking and two entrances large enough for mini buses
- Exhibition and interactive interpretation / computer installations in the west barn.
- Performance lighting and audio visual systems in both the main barn and the west barn. -
Offices and toilets
- Kitchens and stores with larger kitchen layouts for learning events that are moveable.
- Kitchen garden, tool stores, raised beds for disabled access. - Power and water points in both yards to service the special events - Drainage and all services to supply the works.

6.8 It is to be hoped that the restoration plans will encourage more revenue earning events, greater membership, increased number of volunteers and a revenue stream that will enable employment of a small number of paid part-time staff.

7 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

- 7.1 SGC recognises that with proper repair and maintenance the life of these historic structures can be extended almost indefinitely. At its simplest, preservation is care through prudent maintenance – the slow and continuous replacement of that which has decayed, and the protection of that which would otherwise decay. SCG thus places emphasis on effective maintenance to prevent the causes of further decay and thereby reduce costs.
- 7.2 A condition survey has been undertaken across all of the historic structures at the site and has identified a series of works that are necessary with regard to undertaking repairs and preventing further decay.
- 7.3 The proposed restoration works will enable works to be done to restore and repair the areas of structure that are immediately vulnerable to decay across the site. Thereafter the project will enable the following maintenance regime to be implemented;
- a regular maintenance contract to be set up including any emergency repairs, and routine tasks such as clearing gutters and attending to external decorations.
 - detailed six monthly inspections to identify any problems early.
 - deal with the issues identified above, including addressing security and reducing the risks of vandalism.
 - retain an expert consultant to advise on the detailed condition of the structures at least every six years.
 - regular testing of services.

- 7.4 SGC recognises that the current ongoing maintenance will not be sufficient to secure the long term condition of Winterbourne Barns and that more detailed repair and conservation is required. The key principle for this work is one of minimum intervention to historic fabric.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Harris R (1978) 'Discovering timber-framed buildings', Shire Publications Ltd, Princes Risborough

South Gloucestershire Council (April 2006) 'Church Lane, Winterbourne Conservation Area' Supplementary Planning Document.

'SCARP' (undated) South Gloucestershire Community Archaeology Research Project Report

Websites: Frenchay Museum Archives
 Winterbourne Barn
 South Gloucestershire Council
 The Peerage
 The Gascon Rolls

COMPANY AND PERSONNEL PROFILE

West Waddy ADP is an established architecture, town planning and development consultancy which deals with all types of planning and development proposals with a clientele ranging from private individuals and interest groups through to local authorities, institutions, house builders and major companies. It has a particular track record in the conversion of rural properties of architectural or historic interest.

This report has been researched and written by Geoffrey Huntingford BSc MA MRTPI IHBC.

Qualifications	BSc(Hons) Town and Country Planning Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh 1976 MA in Architectural Conservation De Montfort University, Leicester 1999 Member Royal Town Planning Institute 1978 Member Institute of Historic Building Conservation 1998
Current Employment	Conservation Planner, West Waddy ADP 2002
Employment history	Senior Planner, Smith Stuart Reynolds 2000-2 Senior Planner, McCoy Associates 1985-2000 Senior Conservation Officer, Sheffield City Council 1981-5 Design and Conservation Officer, South Staffordshire DC 1978-81 Local Plans Assistant, Bridgnorth DC 1976-8 Planning Assistant, Banff and Buchan DC 1975
Experience	Considerable local authority experience in respect of listed building and conservation area work, including grants, design guidance, character appraisals and enhancements. Civic Trust Commendation 1985 for street furniture restoration programme in Sheffield.

Private sector experience includes preparation of evidence and appearance at s78 appeals and hearings; feasibility studies and appraisals; applications for planning permission, listed building and conservation area consents including preparation of drawings; heritage assessments of significance, historic research and recording of buildings; environmental improvements and conservation area appraisals and proposals; contract administration of restoration of railings in London squares.