



# **WINTERBOURNE MEDIEVAL BARN**

**HLF Bid Reference HG-15-04570**

**Supporting Information**

**WMB1 – History and Heritage**



1.1 History and Heritage of the Complex	Page 2
1.2 Location and Site Plan	Page 6
1.3 Listing Information	Page 8

## **1.1 History and Heritage of the Complex**

### **Main Barn Complex**

The Barn was built in 1342 by Thomas de Bradeston, and, at its original size, was one of England's great medieval barns. It is a building of national importance and is the only surviving example of a medieval barn built by a gentry family.

In 1328 the manor of Winterbourne was held by Thomas de Bradeston. He and his family are believed to have come from Breadstone, near Berkeley, Glos. After the accession of Edward III he became attached to the royal service, taking part in all of Edward's military campaigns as well as frequently serving in parliament. He had two major impacts on Winterbourne. First, he built Winterbourne Court Farm Barn. Second he enlarged the church virtually to the size that can be seen today, though there have been many alterations and renovations since the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

Winterbourne Court Farm Barn is believed to be a unique survival of a very small number of medieval barns built by the lord of the manor for his own use. It has been dated by dendrochronology to 1342.

The Barn originally measured 143ft x 26ft internally and would have had at least eleven bays with two great entrance porches. It would have been larger than needed for farming so was clearly a statement of power and wealth by Sir Thomas. Barns were always multi-purpose buildings – crop storage, crop processing, housing animals, especially sheep at lambing time and village festivities, for which it is once again being used.

The present porch was added in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and there were once two porches. When the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society visited in 1880, their report noted that 'half an ancient barn remains near the church' and there were two 'transepts' (porches) with granaries in the gables. Between the transepts were 'Jacobean stables' with gabled ends. The description implies that the west end of the barn was in ruins by 1880 but it is not clear what caused the dereliction: perhaps there was a fire (the neighbouring Manor House was rebuilt in 1883 after a fire) or the building became dilapidated through not being used. What is now known as the West Barn was subsequently rebuilt in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century narrower than the original building, although incorporating the original south wall, and the second porch was lost.

The South Range was added against the south wall of the barn probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to serve as stables or cowsheds. There were probably upper floors serving as haylofts, but all trace of these have now gone. The original cobbled floors survive.

Besides the main Barn the complex contains a cartshed probably dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and cow byres originally built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although the latter were demolished and partly rebuilt in the 1980's.

### **Architectural Features**

The walls of the barn are built of roughly coursed Pennant Sandstone rubble. The roof would probably have been of Pennant Sandstone tiles, similar to the tiles on the cartshed by the gate, but this was heavy and expensive, and in more recent times was replaced by lighter pantiles.

Inside the Barn the crowning glory is the raised-cruck roof. Crucks are curved roof timbers and cruck construction is common in the western half of England and Wales for both houses and barns. Stone-walled buildings have raised crucks set into the walls.

The timbers are all oak. It has been estimated that up to 240 trees would have been used in the building of the Barn, although many would have been small to provide pegs, laths and tile pegs. It is noticeable

that the workmanship on the windbraces in the centre of the Barn is of a higher standard than elsewhere. This may be because the centre section above the threshing floor would attract more light through the doors, whereas at each end it would be much darker. Naturally the lord of the manor would want to show the best lit part to its best advantage.

The central threshing floor, made of thick slabs of Pennant stone, has recently been re-laid. The threshing floor was located between the main doors to provide light for threshing, to allow the draught to take away the chaff when winnowing and for wagons to go in by one door and leave by another.

In the walls are narrow ventilation slits, which were important when the barn was full of crops to prevent overheating and damp. There are a number of square holes in the walls at various points along the structure. The holes at the west end were probably for joists to an upper floor, perhaps for the separation of different crops. Alternatively this area may have been used as a stable or cowshed at some later period, with a loft above. The purpose of the holes at the east end is more uncertain, possibly they were for scaffolding either for construction or repairs to the roof. Some of the square holes may be connected with the Barn's later use for cider production, housing beams for securing the cider mill and press.

The circular stone path in the floor at the east end was almost certainly for a cider mill. Elsewhere in South Gloucestershire there are a few circular stone paths in farmyards, but it is unusual to have one surviving inside a building.

The cartshed alongside the eastern boundary wall is the usual design for Gloucestershire, stone-walled and originally open at both ends. This allows carts or wagons to be taken through, provides ventilation to dry off wet vehicles and gives easy access to vehicles or implements from either end. This probably dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the ends have been filled in at a later date with different materials. The large projecting stone at the north west corner is an original feature to stop carts or animals knocking against the corner and damaging either the building or themselves.

## **Surrounding Area**

The current house adjacent to the west of the yard is not the original manor house, which was destroyed by fire in the 1880's, However in the garden is the original dovecot, with typical medieval buttresses and a louvre at the top for pigeons to go in and out. It shows the importance of Court Farm as, in medieval times, only the lord of the manor was allowed to keep pigeons, which were for his own table. They would have provided fresh meat to supplement the rabbits kept in the coneyfields in artificial warrens. Old maps make reference to 'conygre' fields nearby, 'coney' being an old word for rabbit.

The earliest architectural evidence in St Michaels indicates that it was probably built in its original form between 1160 and 1200. In 1351-2 Sir Thomas Bradeston founded a chantry chapel, and the church contains wall paintings which are mainly secular with images glorifying Sir Thomas. There are also effigies and memorials to later members of the Bradeston family.

Some 500 metres to the west of the Church and Barn is the Old Gloucester Road. This track was used by pilgrims and other travellers as the direct route from Bristol to Gloucester, and on to Worcester, in which diocese Winterbourne came.

There is a footpath leading from the Old Gloucester Road to the church, and part way down that footpath, just over the Bradley Brook are four ponds. The layout suggests that they were fishponds which at one time would have had wooden sluices controlling the flow. It is clear that these were extensive fishponds, and the channels between them were probably to allow fish to be moved from pond to pond as they grew in size. They may be monastic or have lordly status.

## **1.2 Recent History and Restoration**

In 1974 with the formation of the new County of Avon certain assets were transferred from Gloucestershire County. This included the historical farm complex of medieval buildings adjacent to Winterbourne Court and the Parish Church. Then the barn was attached to 190 acres of prime land shared by three tenant farmers. Prior to 1980 Avon rearranged the tenant farmland and decided to auction off the Court Farm complex as a separate entity; it was sold to a local building company who made an application for conversion to housing. The site was sold on again without the new owner appreciating the national treasure acquired after 600 years of unbroken agricultural use; the site became derelict, the owner and the planners unable to agree on a way forward. After 10 years of neglect, local people working on a Conservation Area designation for this small hamlet persuaded the SGC to start CPO proceedings. By now, this wonderful historical Barn was on the national Buildings-at-Risk register and in a very sorry state. The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings was called in by CPRE to help set up a Building Preservation Trust.

Now in the ownership of the SGC, with the help of English Heritage and Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, major repair work was started to save the 600yr-old Barn. The newly formed Trust-in-Waiting was faced with the problem of preventing another sell-off. Talks were held with the Council to investigate the possibilities of working in partnership with the local community to save this historical asset for a village that has lost so much heritage. The neighbouring Grade 1 listed Parish Church and medieval dovecot, however, were being cared for admirably.

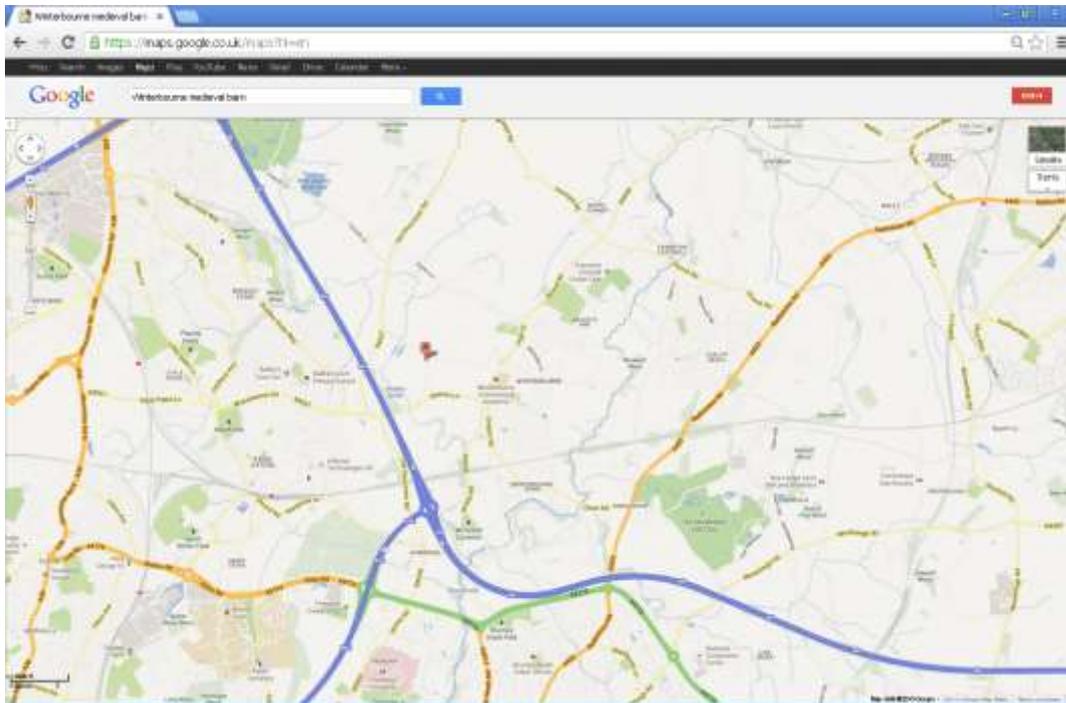
Following the Winterbourne Barn Trust's registration at Companies House in 2003, the removal of the Barn from the national Buildings-at-Risk register was achieved because the sympathetic change-of-use from agriculture to a Centre for Rural Regeneration was accepted.

As 2005 drew to a close, full Charitable Status (No.1112908) was granted. With much planning, fundraising and clearance of the site, the local community was becoming aware of this beautiful building and all its possibilities for the community of South Gloucestershire. With the active support of both SGC and the Parish Council, the Trust has grown. The University of the West of England has taken an increasing interest with invaluable academic & technical support and practical help on site by students from all over the world. Working toward the aims of Sustainable Food and Farming, Heritage Education and Small land-based Business Opportunities, the Trust is encouraging the groundswell of public interest in local food and farming.

With the support of various grants, SGC and the Trust have been able to complete a number of improvements to the complex. Details are shown in the table below:

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Self Funded</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>Grant Provider</b>
Office Refurbishment	2011	£3,000	Nil	£3,000	South Gloucestershire Council (SGC)
Strengthening repointing West Barn cable end wall	October 2013	£30,000	£30,000		SGC
Second Entrance	November 2013	£18,469	£2,597	£4,802	SGC and WPC
				£11,070	Ibstock Corry Environmental Trust
Electrical Supply Upgrade	December 2013	£3,724	Nil	£3,724	SGC and Winterbourne Parish Council (WPC)
Provision of Toilet Cabin	December 2013	£15,036	£9,036	£4,500	SGC and WPC
				£1,500	Quartet
Disabled Toilet in Office	December 2013	£840	£336	£554	Donation
Limecrete Floor	March 2014	£7,062	£1,062	£6,000	New Homes Bonus through SGC

## 1.2 Location of the Barn and Site Plan



# Winterbourne Medieval Barn

Property Services  
South Gloucestershire Council  
The Council Offices  
Thornbury  
BS35 1HF  
Telephone 01454 865083

Compiled By: Kate Targett on 7 August 2014    Scale 1:1250

N



Please note: this plan is an indication only of Council ownership.  
Definitive boundaries should be obtained from the relevant Deed Packet

### 1.3 Listing Information

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: Court Farm Barn

List entry Number: 1128852

### Location

Court Farm Barn, Church Lane

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
	South Gloucestershire	Unitary Authority	Winterbourne

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II\*

**Date first listed:** 12-Feb-1979

**Date of most recent amendment:** Not applicable to this List entry.

### Details

ST 68 SW WINTERBOURNE CHURCH LANE (west side), Winterbourne 1/33 12.2.79  
Court Farm Barn G.V. II\* Barn. 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.

Listing NGR: ST6412180931

National Grid Reference: ST 64116 80931