

AVON (ex Somerset
Wansdyke District Bathaven Rural District)
Corston
Church Farm

ST 694653

11, 6/3

No longer a farm although some buildings (modified) still stand on rising ground to the rear (W). House walls are of coursed ~~stone~~ rubble, roof is slated with coped gables. It is of tall two storeys with small attic windows at the wall top. A single storey gabled porch is off centre to the R. The only stack visible at the front is at the N gable; at the back is a wide W facing gabled stack incorporating a spiral stair between a pair of fireplaces on both floors, the whole in a wall over 5' thick. At the back a two storey wing at the N end has eaves at 5' below those of the house; the wing at the S is single storeyed; both have gable stacks. Other than a modern window in the S gable (beside a blocked original), a recent ovalo copy on the ground floor to the R of the porch and modern windows in the wings, all are in stone ovalo moulded frames, some at the back under bar drip moulds. At the front, to the L of the porch only, are bands of ashlar Bath stone flush in the walls above ground and first floor windows over which are similar relieving arches. House walls are 28", the N wing 28" on the N side but only 24" on the S and the S wing 20". Both wings are additions, the N one partially blocking a three light ovalo window, the S one is straight jointed to the house and encloses the lower ovalo window of the stairs. The differing wall thickness of the N wing may indicate ~~that~~ rebuilding of an earlier (if not original) narrower wing.

The stone frame of the inner door of the porch has an unusually deep four centred head to be associated with the ovalo/ogee moulding; shields in the spandrels reputedly had the initials 'E R' on them. The outer arched opening, because of its greater width, appears to have a depressed four centred head, but the height of the peak above the springing is the same in both and mouldings are the same. Arch has plain incised spandrels (see sketch.) Both have urn stops. The inner door is weathered and off centre with the arch, so probably the porch in its present form is added.

Beyond a thin partition to the S of the cross passage were two rooms (now combined). The room to the N of the passage has a number of peculiarities for which no explanation can be offered. Its 18" passage wall, partly 28" thick, is aligned at an angle; against its thinner part is a large beam with shallow step and run out to plain chamfer similar to the beam at mid length, and at the back of the half beam at the gable; the front end of the latter is buried by the resited fireplace F3. The flue from this somehow leads into the gable stack. Stone lintel and sides of F3 are moulded ogee/step/hollow, the lintel very depressed four centred; moulding has urn stops; outer face has a shallow rebate. A shelf has ogee/double step/ovalo moulding. External to the gable is a sealed off projection 16' 9" wide by 4½' deep with a lean-to roof and no signs of a stack over it being removed; it was seen to be loosely filled with rubble. A blocked door into it from the room had a wooden frame. Further to its apparent lack of a stack (unless the gable has been rebuilt) its width is exceptional for a fireplace, but no other explanation can be offered. The back wall of the room (28") aligns with the back wall of the house; its curved inner face near the gable suggests onetime stairs; at the top of its outer face, in a store room, is a very large beam. A final mystery is that prior to the insertion of the modern front window, no one remembers there being an earlier one.

Both rooms to the S have/had lateral fireplaces F1 & F2; one is blocked, the other has a modern grate. The flues from them rise each side of the stairs and meet overhead in the gabled wall over 5' thick; an extraordinary arrangement not met elsewhere. The first room (the hall ?) has ovalo moulded ceiling beams, the second (inner ?) room has a plain ceiling at lower level. The stairs, rising to the attics, have two windows at intermediate levels to both flights; the lowest is now within the S wing, the first of the second flight is blocked and the frame is probably that reused at the wall top to light the attic. In the N gable of the attic is a three light ovalo window. Along the front of it are three small two light ovalo moulded windows at the wall top.

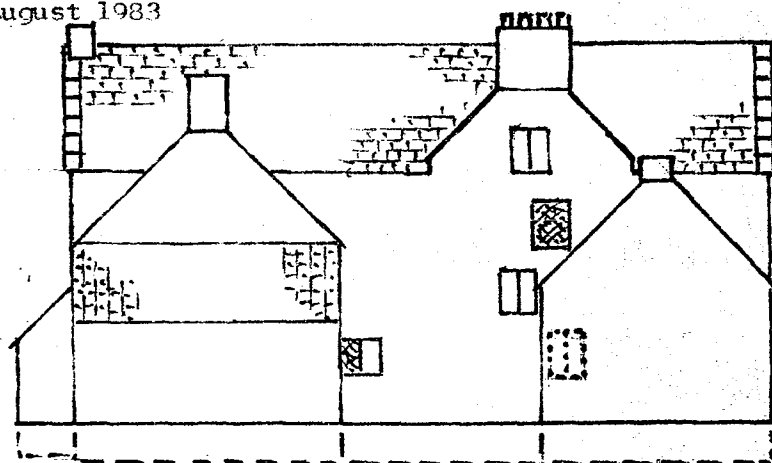
A first floor fireplace over F2 has a wide depressed four centred lintel moulded ovalo/step/ogee with a blunt rounded step stop to small chamfer on the sides; a shelf is moulded ogee/double step/ovalo. Four pots on the stack suggest a fireplace over F1 is blocked; perhaps F3 was resited from here, although moulding details are different to the other. Ceiling beams with plain run outs to small chamfers are transverse except in the N room where it is axial. Roof trusses have diagonally set ridge tenoned into deeply notched halved apex; purlins are fully staggered in a common mortice, but not tusked. Collar is bolted on and c.1' above the wall top is a bolted tie beam. Wing roofs not sighted.

N wing ceiling beams have plain run outs to small chamfers and a stove blocks the gable fireplace. The S wing is divided, the separate W room having an external door; wing reputedly was a dairy. Neither can be dated.

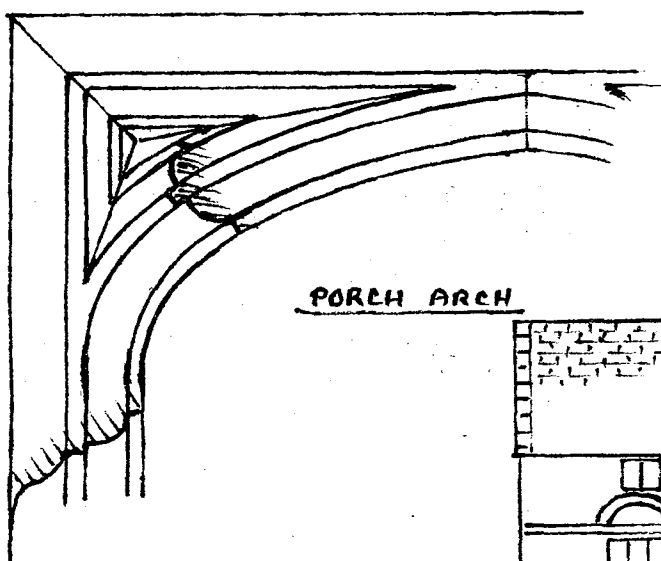
In its present form the house is of the 17C (with later modifications), but an earlier origin seems possible; many unusual features make interpretation uncertain. Walls have been raised and reroofed in the (early ?) 18C. The ovolo moulding of the small attic windows (unless reused from dormers) is presumably a late copy to match the lower ones. The front appears to have been partly refaced but never finished. The porch is evidently an addition reusing earlier masonry.

E.H.D. Williams

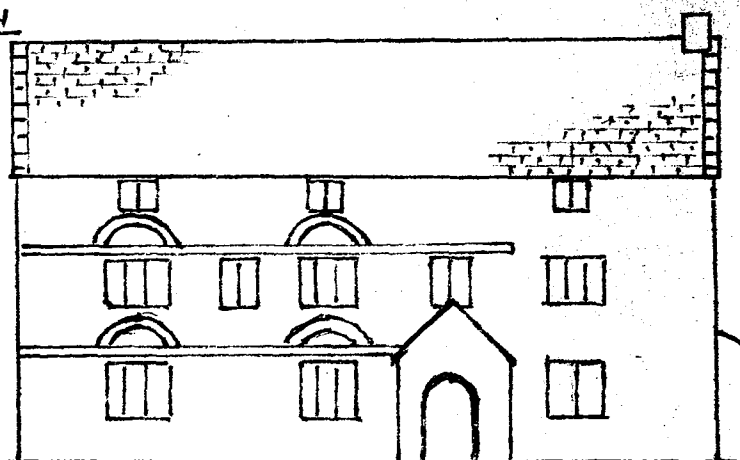
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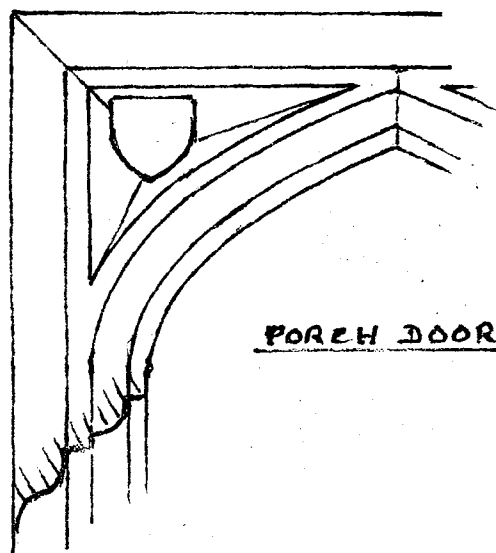
W. ELEVATION



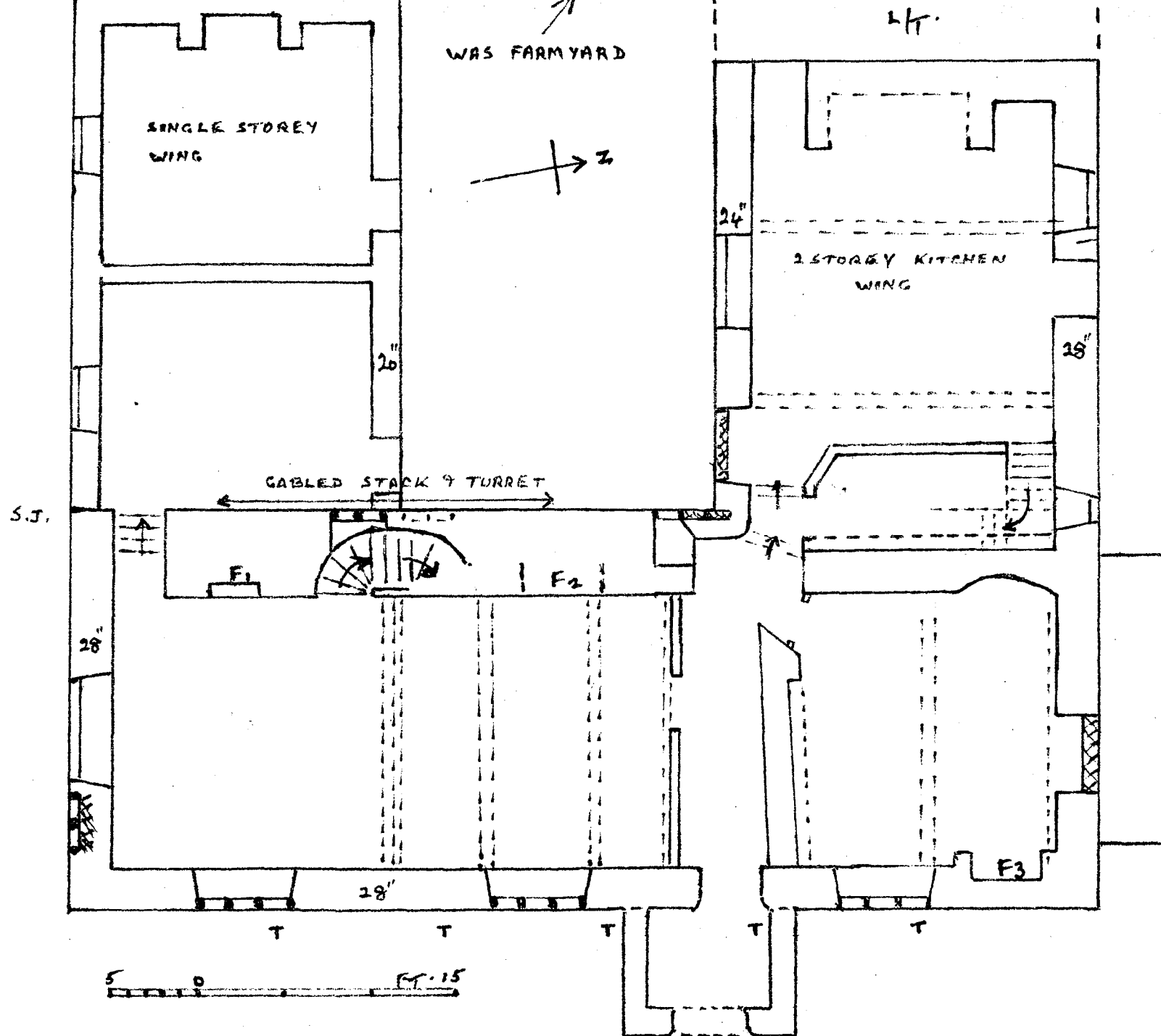
PORCH ARCH



E. ELEVATION



PORCH DOOR



CHURCH FARM
CORSTON. AVON
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