

**The BREW HOUSE, GREAT GRACES, GRACES LANE,
LITTLE BADDOW, ESSEX.**

Impact Justification Report on a proposal to build an extension and internal changes to the layout of the Brew House. February 2009.



The southern facade of the Brew House at Great Graces.

Introduction.

The Brew House is a substantial brick building with timber-framed floors and plain tiled roof which was built as an agricultural building. It was later converted to tenencies and is now a single private residence. It is orientated near east - west and has two handsome Tudor style stopped gables with brick copings and a central cruciform chimney stack.

The Brew House is part of the farm complex known as Great Graces which comprises the remains of the Great Graces farmhouse and a number of historic outbuildings which are listed under a group value of Grade II.

An analysis of the fabric and a full description of the building has been made in the report, 'Description and analysis of the fabric of the building recorded on 19th January 2009.' By Barry Hillman-Crouch.

Scope of the proposed scheme.

The scheme proposes two internal alterations to the layout of the building. These are:

1. The creation of a new bedroom in the eastern end of the attic.
2. The moving of a partition wall on the first floor to increase the size of an existing bedroom also creating a landing from an existing bedroom for a new staircase into the attic.

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The scheme also proposes:

3. The erection of a new external kitchen building connected to the southern facade of the Brew House.
4. Addition of a cloak room to the western gable end exterior.

This report looks at the historic precedents that may support each element of the scheme and the impact that they may have on the historic fabric of the building. These are considered in the order given above.

1. The creation of a new bedroom in the eastern end of the attic.

The attic has a fully framed substantial timber-framed floor and it is evident that it was designed from the first to support a considerable load.

From the historic analysis report it can be seen that there have previously been rooms in the attic. This is denoted by the presence of fully finished Georgian style window openings in both end gables. That in the eastern gable has been recently blocked with brickwork but the window in the western gable remains with a poor quality C20th casement.

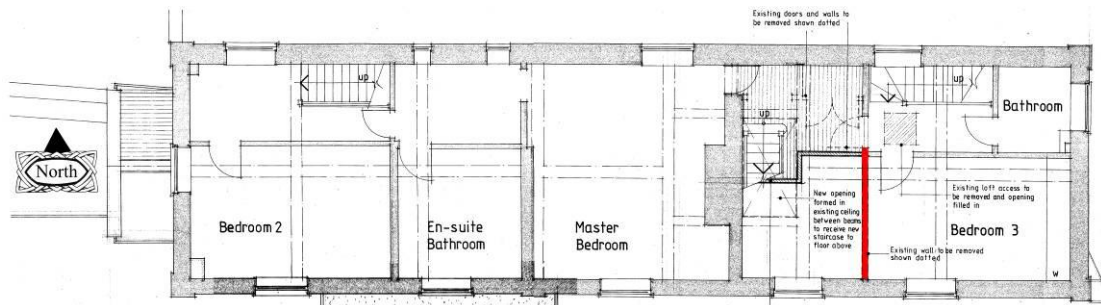
The attic has been formerly divided with lath and plastered studwork divisions of which there remains only one - attached to the chimney stack. However there are stripes of white plaster on some of the principal rafters to show that there have been other divisions.

There is also the presence of a nailed in, birdsmouthed strut across the western end near the window which carries the names of four women in red paint on the white-washed timber. Whether *Joan, Gladys, Jenny and Kitty* actually roomed in the attic or just stored their things there is, of course, debateable.

The creation of a new room in the attic would therefore be in keeping with its earlier use. It is also proposed to fit conservation velux style roof lights between the rafters

such that there is no loss of historic fabric. The roof is in very good order and must have been rebattened and retiled recently.

2. The moving of a partition wall on the first floor to increase the size of an existing bedroom also creating a landing from an existing bedroom for a new staircase into the attic.



Extract from the Wiston Partnership drawings of the first floor. Partition to be removed is C21st.

All the partitions on the first floor are very recent with the exception of the wall containing the firestack which in this proposal is not to be disturbed. The partition wall to be moved is a 100mm thick plasterboard and studwork wall dividing Bedroom 3 from Bedroom 4. From its appearance and almost total lack of wear it is unlikely to more than five years old - if that. The doors are brand new and most of the fixings are held with Pozidrive screws. There is also a brand new built-in wardrobe on the north wall.



The joists in Bedroom 4. The one with the slot cut in it is probably Georgian - the others are later inserts.

The proposal seeks to place an opening in the ceiling from Bedroom 4 into the attic and this position has been chosen because there is clear evidence for a previous opening. The original axial bridging joist was removed and replaced with two flanking joists to allow the construction of the once considerable firestack. The firestack has

since been partly dismantled, probably as part of extensive works carried out in the 1960's.

The void has three joists inserted to remake the ceiling. That to the western extreme next to the wall is most likely an early one placed there as part of the Georgian alterations to the firestack. It has a large rectangular cut-out presumably to receive the chimney still in-situ above the ceiling in the attic.

The other two joists are anomolous. They are half the thickness of the other joists and do not fit the tenons in the flanking joists. One has the appearance of having been through a circular saw. They have been stained and then stripped back and it is hard to estimate their age. Given the amount of woodworm holes in one it is most likely they are re-used timbers cut for the purpose and again they were probably put there in the 1960's.

3. The erection of a new external kitchen building connected to the southern facade of the Brew House.



Graces shown on Chapman & Andre's Map of AD1777.

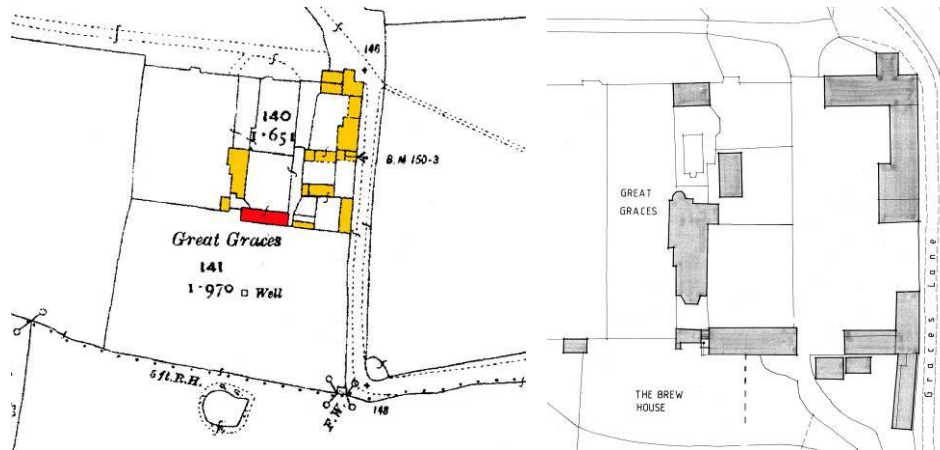
Historic and Contemporary Topography.

Great Graces, formerly known as simply 'Graces' has undergone many substantial changes in its layout and function since the 'Greate House' was conceived and built. Chapman & Andre's Map of AD1777 shows the main house as being substantially bigger and all that remains today is one flemish gabled cross-wing.

This house has been recently extended, following permission granted in 2005, to the west with a large, oak built 'garden room'. A swimming pool and changing rooms was also granted permission as recently as 2005. There is also a tennis court and other improvements all listed on Chelmsford Borough Council's planning website.

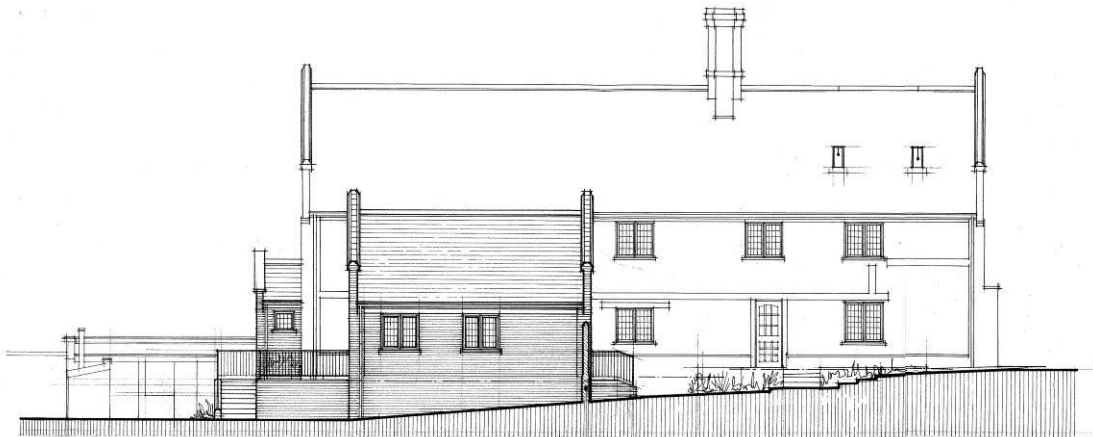
The position of the proposed kitchen extension is guided by the fact that the extension is to the rear of the property and so is not visible from the other properties or indeed from Graces Lane which is completely screened along its

eastern boundary by a Listed brick wall which is therefore immutable. All the land south of the Brew House is in the same ownership so the southern facade can only be seen by trespassing on the land. It is visible from the west which is open pasture given to horses.



1925 OS map (left) shows that all of the development south of the complex is C20th or later.

The proposed extension is outside of the original confines of the complex as defined on the historic maps. However there are already three other buildings south of the complex limits which comprise of a cart lodge, workshop and stables. This was also formerly the site of the kennels for the local hunt pack and so there is established precedence for building south of the historic boundary.



The proposed extension sits in the natural hollow. The ridge height is at eaves height on the main building.

The proposed extension also sits in the natural hollow to the western end of the Brew House and this will dramatically lessen the effect of its appearance by effectively reducing its ridge height.

The Built Form.



The kitchen extension with the eastern gable of the Brew House.

The design of the kitchen extension has been chosen to compliment the built form of the Brew House without resorting to pastiche. The kitchen extension is in brick with shouldered gables to echo those of the Brew House. The kitchen extension stands away from the main building and is connected with a modest link. In some ways this echoes the form of a mediaeval house where the kitchen was kept away from the dwelling house.

The eastern wall has been positioned to sit on the existing foundation of a recently removed wall which has left a fresh ragged scar on the southern facade of the building. This wall does not appear on any of the historic maps and must be presumed to be later C20th and therefore not of archaeological value. Using the existing foundation line will lessen the impact of any groundworks. Reinstating the garden wall will merely return the appearance of the site to that of only a few years ago.

The introduction of the new front door will mean that the current entrance door can be returned to being a window thus reinstating the southern facade.

4. Addition of a cloak room to the western gable end exterior.



The cloakroom echoes the design of the gabled end of the Brew House.

At present there is a raised patio reached by steps from the south which terminates in a brick arched gateway towards Great Graces. This is built of flettons and the whole structure likely dates to the 1960's improvements done on the site. The roman arch of pink bricks is somewhat incongruous.

The proposal seeks to remove the archway and create a covered cloak room leading into the current kitchen. The design proposed is brick built and has a shouldered gabled roof to compliment the existing ones.

A new platform patio is proposed to link the western doors of the kitchen extension with the cloak room at the same level. This will require the removal or absorption of the current C20th brick staircase and will cover about 1.2m of the existing brick plinth thus protecting it from frost, animal and plant damage without encouraging damp within the building.

FIN. Barry Hillman-Crouch. 10 02 2009.