

# **EDISFORD HALL FARMHOUSE, EDISFORD BRIDGE, CLITHEROE, LANCASHIRE:**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This archaeological assessment has been produced at the request of Dr W MacKean, via IWA Architects Ltd, to inform an application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for listed building consent at Edisford Hall Farmhouse (NGR: SD 72433 41369). It provides a summary of the heritage significance of the building in accordance with Policy HE6 of PPS5, and has been produced by Stephen Haigh MA, Buildings Archaeologist, following a site visit on 1 December 2011. Proposals have not been finalised at the time of writing, but in essence the applicant will be seeking to make minor alterations to what is an almost entirely 21st century interior, in essence recreating a previous arrangement, and to add a small, ground floor extension.

### **2 Site designation and planning background**

- 2.1 Edisford Hall Farmhouse has been listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest, in conjunction with the two adjoining cottages forming the north end of the range, since 1954 (National Heritage List no 1362278). The identifying description, thought to have been made in 1986, reads:
- House and 2 cottages, late C18th with C17th remains and late medieval fragments. Pebbledashed rubble with sandstone dressings and stone slate roof. Two storeys. The cottages, to the right, are of one bay each and have plain stone window surrounds with ogee heads. Those on the ground floor have poppyheads above the ogees. The windows are sashed, with curved glazing bars beneath the heads. The doors are paired and have plain stone surrounds. Above is a re-set stone with 3 shields carved in relief. The upper 2 are inscribed 'W' and 'T'. The lower one has a flower motif. The farmhouse is of 4 bays. The window to the right of the door has plain reveals. The one to the left is of 4 lights, mullioned with outer chamfer and inner hollow chamfer. At the far left is a window with plain stone surround and square mullions, of 3 lights. On the 1st floor are similar windows of 3 lights, 2 lights, 3 lights and 2 lights. The door, in the 3rd bay, has a plain stone surround. At the right of the facade are 2 re-set stones with decorative motifs. On the 1st floor, to the right of the 2nd bay, are 2 re-set stones carved with blank tracery in relief, having cinquefoils with panel tracery above. Under the central arches are the monograms of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Chimneys to the right of the left-hand bay, between the house and cottages, and on the gable of the right-hand cottage. At the rear of this latter cottage is a C17th window surround, now with no mullions and partly blocked. The interior of the farmhouse was not accessible at time of survey but was said to retain no features of interest.

- 2.2 A study of the cottages to the north of the farmhouse was carried out in 2006 by JWRC<sup>1</sup>, but otherwise the Lancashire Historic Environment Record has no additional information on the site.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.3 The farmhouse and the cottages have been subject to a number of planning applications, the earliest being from 1984 (see appendix), and also to some unauthorised works, of which RVBC are aware.

### 3 Historical background

- 3.1 The origins of Edisford Hall are obscure, but the present building is thought to have been built in the 17th century, though it contains isolated fragments derived from an earlier structure, and has been very extensively altered since.
- 3.2 There is documentary evidence for settlement at Edisford Bridge from the late medieval period, relating to a hospital established in the 13th or perhaps 12th century for residents of Clitheroe afflicted by leprosy, and although there is a local tradition that the Hall is located on the hospital's site, there is no firm evidence for this supposition. Such a hospital would have been as much a religious institution as one concerned with physical health and well-being, and would have been run as a monastic house, but it seems to have fallen into decline and its assets transferred to Whalley Abbey by about 1350, so that its chapel, dedicated to St Nicholas, was described at the time of the dissolution as already being "decayed".
- 3.3 Whittaker, the 19th century author, wrote how  
The site of this ancient hospital was on the Yorkshire side of the Ribble, near the road to Mitton, and on the spot where now stands a farmhouse. Some remains of strong and ancient masonry are remembered here, there are also some rude armorial sculptures....<sup>3</sup>  
but he gives no account of any firm evidence for linking the farmhouse directly with the hospital. The Ordnance Survey did not note the site of the hospital on their first edition 1:10560 map published in 1850, and simply showed the range of farmhouse and cottages, with farm buildings to the south-west, while their 1:2500 map of 1886 depicted essentially the same arrangement, albeit more clearly, and later maps show that the building's footprint remained the same until the late 20th century.
- 3.4 Census returns from the 19th century show that the Hall was the home to a succession of farmers and their families: in 1841 James Hargreaves lived there,

---

<sup>1</sup> JWRC 2006 *Edisford Hall Cottages, Clitheroe, Lancashire: An Appraisal of their Architectural and Historical Significance*

<sup>2</sup> Enquiry made 6 December 2011

while in 1861 James Dawson, farmer of 87 acres, was resident. He had died by 1871 when his widow Dinah still farmed 128 acres from the house, but in 1881 the Hall was occupied by Matthias Frankland and his family; his widow Isabella still lived there in 1901.

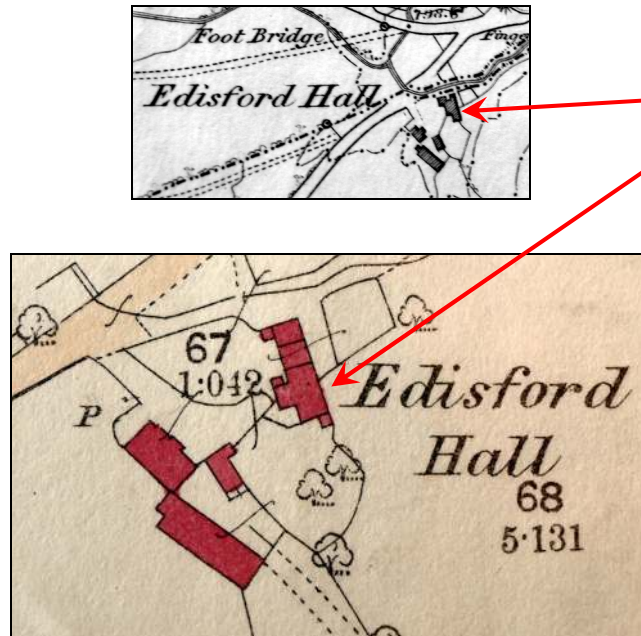


**Figure 1:** Ordnance Survey maps: 1850 (top) and 1886

## 4 Recent history

- 4.1 The earliest planning application for the farmhouse was made in 1984, when permission was given for the demolition of an existing lean-to at the south-west corner of the farmhouse and its replacement with a new kitchen extension, the construction of a porch to the front (east) elevation, and internal alterations<sup>4</sup>.
- 4.2 More recently, and particularly after 2002, a series of other works were carried out, many unauthorised and undocumented, including the entire reconstruction of the front (east) elevation and much of the rear (west) wing, the rebuilding of the chimney stacks, and the re-organisation of the interior on ground and first floors. The last item involved the introduction of a modern staircase into the main range, the construction of a concrete block wall against the party wall with the adjoining cottages, and new partitions on the first floor, removing what was previously a passage running along the west side, which the present proposals aim to recreate. Although the RVBC microfiche copies of the 1984 application drawings are poor, they clearly show that the stairs were at that time housed

<sup>3</sup> Whittaker, T D 1805 (3rd edition, 1878) *The History and Antiquities of Craven in the West Riding of the County of York*, p 33-34

<sup>4</sup> Application no 3/1984/0588

within the western wing, a position which the current proposals also seek to re-instate.



**Figure 2:** Photograph of 2002, taken before the rebuilding of the front elevation (Images of England)

## **5 The present building and its historical development**

- 5.1 Given the extent of modern alterations, it is not easy to arrive at a clear understanding of the farmhouse's historical development, but it would appear that the building originated in the 17th century, with the medieval fragments referred to in the listed building description being confined to the heraldic stones set as ornaments within the east elevation.
- 5.2 The 17th century farmhouse seems to have been built as a three-bay structure<sup>5</sup>, a single room deep, and lacking the present southernmost bay, but no fixtures and very little of the building fabric remain from this period. The two ceiling beams in the present living room are probably survivals however, and the northern one may have held a plank partition originally. This room is now an open area, but in 1984 it contained a central cross passage with a room to either side (housebody and parlour). The movable partition now proposed for this room would go some way towards re-creating this division of the ground floor into two rooms, by breaking up what is now a large, open plan area, very modern in character.
- 5.3 The rear wing attached to the west elevation seems to have been an early addition to the house, but has been drastically altered since 1984: its walls have been largely rebuilt and incorporate a new arrangement of openings, which does

---

<sup>5</sup> though the cottages to the north probably formed a continuation of the range at that time – there was a connecting doorway at first floor level until 1984, and other evidence for the northern part of the range having been extant in the 17th century was identified by JWRC in 2006

not reflect the fact that previously there was a doorway in its west elevation<sup>6</sup>. It has also been altered by the addition of the 1984 kitchen extension to the south. The 1984 application drawings clearly show that the stairs were housed within this wing historically, a position which the current proposals seek to re-instate.

- 5.4 In the late 18th or early 19th century the building was extended to the south to its present length, and it can be seen that this was not an original component of the building, from the observation that its walls are slightly thinner, and also by the higher first floor level, which is borne on pine rather than oak beams. The presence of fireplaces on each floor indicates that this was a domestic addition.
- 5.5 The heraldic symbols re-incorporated within the re-built east wall are clearly of historic significance, but their relevance to the existing farmhouse is limited, not only because they are clearly fragments derived from an unknown medieval building, but because they were re-set in the 21st century. There are eight in total, with a group of five between bays one and two, a pair between bays three and four, and one over the porch doorway. The group of five all contain cinquefoil motifs, two of them with additional symbols, while the pair include a shield within a quatrefoil, and a griffin, in upright position or "serjeant". These two have been re-incorporated in a different position and their orientation "corrected", as shown in a photograph published on the internet.<sup>7</sup> The eighth tablet also contains a cinquefoil design similar to those in the group of five. The meanings of these symbols, and their origins, is a matter for conjecture but the stones may well have been taken from the hospital remains in the vicinity at the time that the present Edisford Hall was built in the 17th century, or from another building altogether.<sup>8</sup>

## 6 Statement of significance

- 6.1 Although of local interest, the architectural and historical significance of Edisford Hall Farmhouse is considered to be relatively low for a listed building, and although this opinion is attributable in part to the recent extensive and destructive works, which have removed fabric perhaps meriting the designation, it seems that a greater proportion of the listed building's exceptional attributes were to be found in the pair of cottages, so the farmhouse can be seen as the poor relation of the group. As far as can be established from available sources, prior to the 21st century works the farmhouse comprised a 17th century house, much altered in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, with relatively few significant details, of which the late medieval bas-reliefs were perhaps the most important: in contrast, the overall external appearance of the building and its plan form, both of which are now largely modern, mean its significance is very much reduced.

---

<sup>6</sup> Information from Dr MacKean

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.grimshaworigin.org/WebPages/Edisford.htm>

## **7 Heritage impact of proposals**

- 7.1 Given the extent of recent work to the farmhouse since 1984, which has removed a high proportion of its historic fabric and fixtures and radically altered its plan form, it is considered that the proposed alterations and extension to the farmhouse would have only a minor impact on its heritage, and to some degree would enhance the building's significance by reinstating former key aspects, including the subdivision of the present living room, the re-siting of the staircase to the rear wing, and the re-creation of a traditional tripartite first floor which respects the historic bay divisions.

Stephen Haigh MA  
28 March 2012

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.grimshaworigin.org/MavisLongResearch.htm>

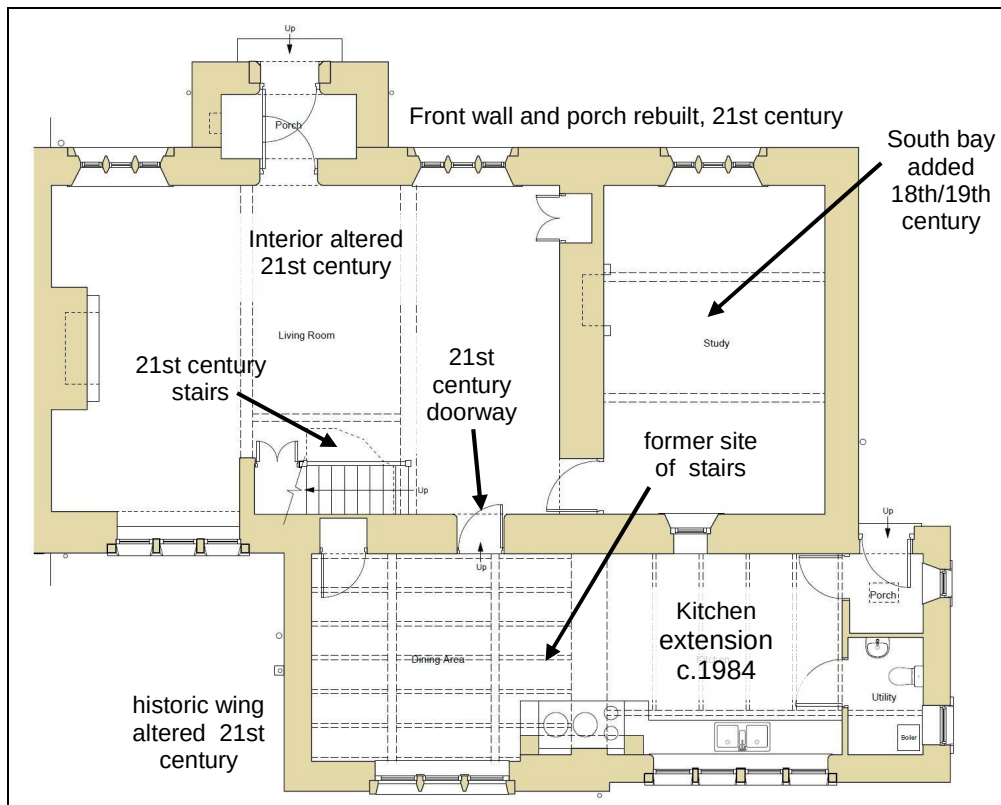


**Figure 3: Ground floor plan**

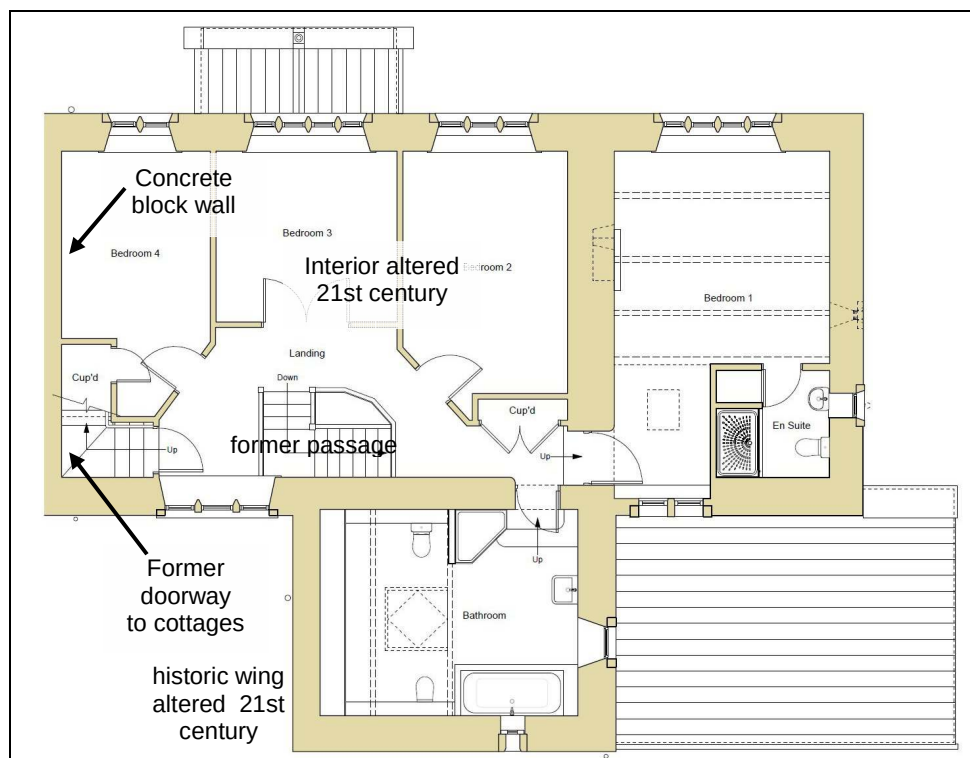


**Figure 4: First floor plan**



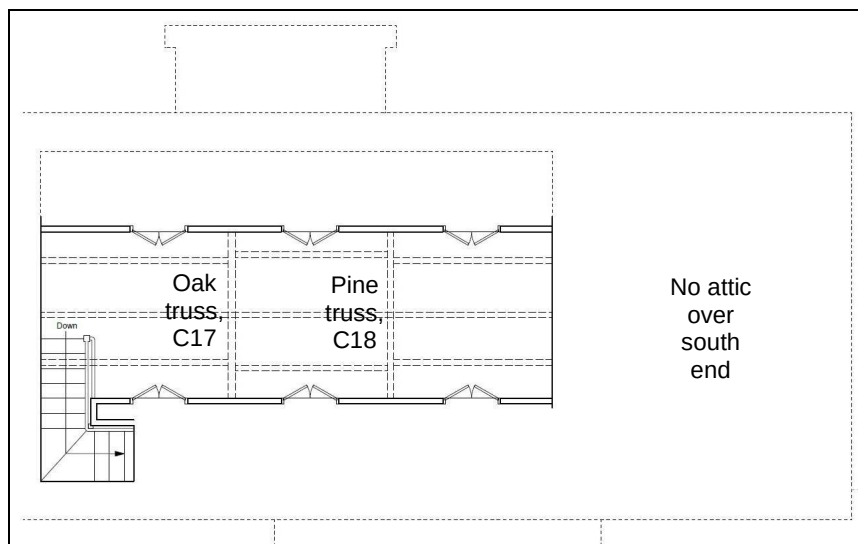


**Figure 5:** Attic plan



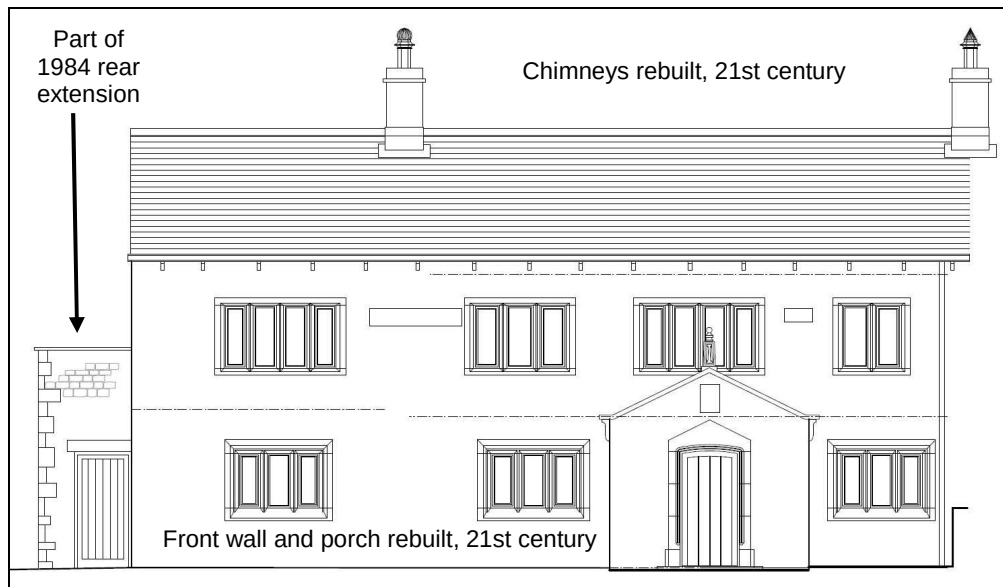


**Figure 6:** East elevation

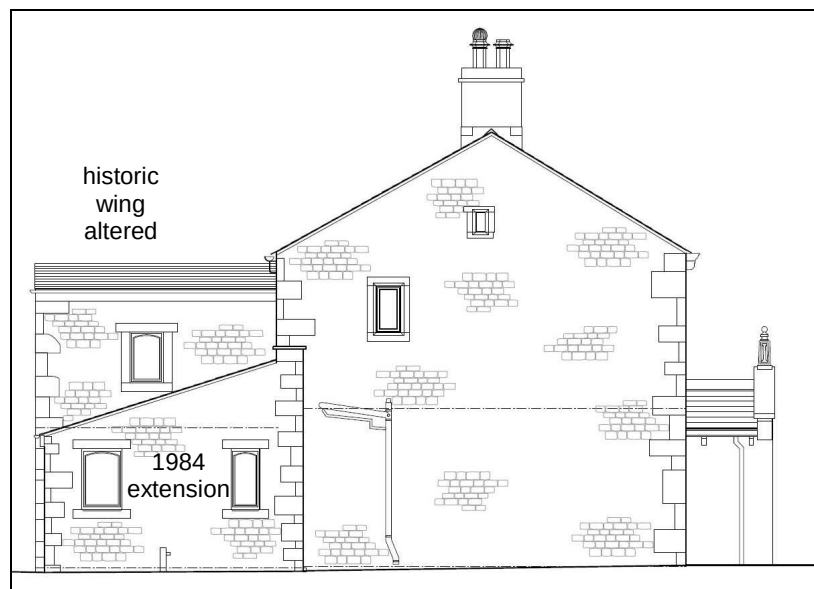


**Figure 7:** South elevation

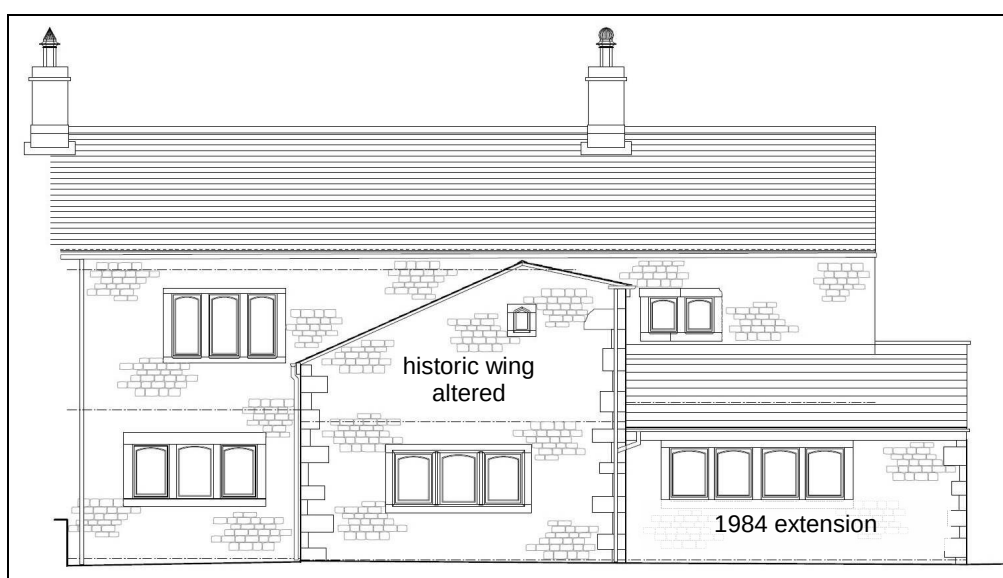


**Figure 8:** West elevation



**Photo 1:** East elevation (rebuilt c.2006)



**Photo 2:** South gable, with part of 1984 extension at left



**Photo 3:** View of the farmhouse from the south-west, showing 1984 extension in centre of picture and much altered historic wing to left



**Photo 4:** Interior of kitchen within wing (former site of stairs), and 1984 extension beyond (far left)

## **APPENDIX: PLANNING HISTORY FOR EDISFORD HALL FARMHOUSE**

Note: Does not include enforcement action, which is confidential

**3/2010/0793** Retrospective application to render the quoins over on the east side, to make water-tight. Approved with conditions 17/01/2011

**3/2010/0447** Discharge of condition no. 3 (materials), of planning consent 3/2007/0344. Refused 30/07/2010

**3/2010/0362** Discharge of condition no.3 (relating to materials) of planning consent 3/2007/0344. Approved 09/06/2010

**3/2007/0344** Render east elevation, reconstruction of chimney, removal of Velux windows, replacement of patio doors with 3 light window, reconstruction of porch. Approved with conditions 03/10/2007

**3/2002/0635** Alterations to existing windows in front elevation. Approved with conditions 24/09/2002

**3/2002/0389** (Farmhouse & cottages) Re-roof existing east facing roofslope to three dwellings. Approved with conditions 26/06/2002

**3/1995/0447** Remove cement render. Approved with conditions 05/09/1995

**3/1984/0588** Demolition of existing lean-to and erection of kitchen extension and porch and internal alterations and improvements. Granted 11/12/1984