

Case Name: Minley Home Farm

Case Number: 1433100

Background

Historic England has received an application proposing Minley Home Farm for listing.

Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1434649	Minley Home Farm	Listing	Do not add to List

Visits

Date	Visit Type
25 April 2016	Ground floor inspection

Context

Minley Home Farm forms part of the Minley Manor Estate, and stands c550m to the south-east of the Grade II*-listed house, orangery, and Arch Cottage, and a number of Grade II-listed structures. The estate is a Grade II-registered landscape.

The farm was considered for listing in 1998 as part of a thematic review of planned and model farmsteads, and again in 2005. Both assessments concluded that the buildings were not of special interest.

Assessment

CONSULTATION

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), the local planning authority, the Hampshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic England Research Group colleagues were invited to comment on the factual details of the case as part of the consultation process.

The DIO responded opposing listing, noting the validity of the conclusions reached in our previous assessments, and that since then the state of dereliction has increased, and there have been further losses to parts of the building.

A representative of the local planning authority responded in favour of listing, noting that the farm was built during a period when their large-scale, good-quality construction was rare, and that our Selection Guide for Agricultural Buildings (2011) states that such farms justify serious consideration for listing. The response also notes the strong relationship between the farm and the wider Minley Estate, and that the state of repair is not a relevant consideration in listing assessments. These points are addressed in full in the discussion, below.

Historic England Research Group colleagues and the Hampshire HER responded but had no comments to add.

DISCUSSION

The Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (DCMS, 2010) states that for buildings post-dating 1840 selection for listing must become increasingly discriminating due to the numbers of buildings erected and surviving, and their greater levels of standardisation. The context and considerations for the building type are

outlined in the Historic England Listing Selection Guide for Agricultural Buildings (2011). The period from 1880 marked a prolonged depression from which farming did not recover until the Second World War, and few agricultural buildings of the period will merit listing. A small number of wealthy landowners continued experimenting to gain improvements in farming practice, or built model farms as symbols of prestige, and, as noted above, these will warrant consideration. Special interest will depend on architectural quality, innovation in planning or function, and association with an architect of note.

Minley Home Farm was built to the designs of Arthur Castings for Laurence Currie circa 1900. Laurence was the third generation of Curries to inherit the estate of Minley Manor, and like his father and grandfather, made a number of developments to the estate, of which the addition of a home farm was the most substantial.

Stylistically, the home farm follows in the footsteps of the other buildings on the Minley Manor Estate. Arthur Castings was the natural choice of architect, having been involved at Minley since 1886, initially under Devey, and then taking the reins after his death. Castings continued Devey's stylistic tradition, using devices such as shaped gables and brick diapering, though his buildings lack the compositional excellence of Devey's. The home farm is certainly an architecturally distinct complex of buildings, comprising robust sections of brickwork with some good detailing, though the fenestration and the shape of the secondary gables is somewhat inelegant, and the design overall is derivative and old-fashioned for its date.

Despite prolonged neglect and the removal of weather-proofing fabric, the building survives well, testament to the quality of the construction. Attention is paid to practical detailing throughout: floors in the different areas are lined in appropriate tiles or brick, and glazed brick is used in areas requiring the greatest hygiene. Feeding troughs and mangers are incorporated into the architectural fabric, and their survival indicates the functions of the various spaces. However, all of the above are typical features, likely to be found on model farms of this date and much earlier.

The plan of the farm is relatively complex, bringing together a number of functions into one building, with a separate farmhouse and farmhand's cottages. However, neither the planning, nor the mix of functions it enables, are new. A concentration on livestock farming increased towards the end of the late C19 as grain prices fell, and the use of covered yards became commonplace; their arrangement, as a pair surrounded by livestock stalls, was a well-established standard form by the end of the C19. It does not appear that Currie was experimenting with new agricultural methods, but was adding another point of interest, and 'improving' his estate, as when he added the water tower and summerhouse previously.

Since our previous assessment of the buildings we have undertaken further work at Minley Manor and have added a number of new structures to the List, including two buildings attributed to Castings. The farm stands c550m to the south-east of the manor house, and was clearly intended to be visible from it, as is evident by the orientation of the composition and architectural detailing, though the visual relationship has been interrupted by tree growth. The farm is of clear interest as part of the estate, and contributes to the significance of the designed landscape, but to merit listing it must exhibit special interest in its own right. As discussed above, it lacks the innovation and architectural finesse necessary for a model farm of its date.

There are a number of late C19 and early C20 model farms on the List. Clements Farm, Brickendon Liberty, East Hertfordshire, dates from 1900; in addition to an unusual plan form it is architecturally striking, with an imposing castellated water tower. At Haver Castle a model farm was added in 1904 and is an extensive complex resembling a Tudor-style village, complete with a circular colonnade, dairy, dovecote and other sheds and shelters. The model farm to the east of Horsegrove, Rotherfield, Wealden, 1899, was built for gentleman-farmer Sydney Snelgrove, proprietor of the popular department stores, Marshall and Snelgrove's. Snelgrove's farm is comparably complex as Minley in its functions, but is a picturesque and architecturally refined composition, built in the fashionable vernacular revival style of the period. Against these, Minley Home Farm does not compare well.

Research has led to a firm understanding of planned and model farmsteads in the national context, and as concluded in our previous assessments, Minley Home Farm is a late example which does not exhibit functional innovation. It is not without interest as a model farm dating from a period of agricultural depression, exhibiting some architectural pretention, and as part of the development of the Minley Manor Estate. However, it does not appear that Currie was striving for improvements in farming methods, because the farm appears to be loosely planned on the covered yard models of the mid-C19. It can be assumed, therefore, that the farm was primarily intended as a prestigious eye-catcher for his estate, and in that context it lacks the architectural sophistication necessary for listing a building of its date and type.

CONCLUSION

After examining all the records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are not fulfilled. Minley Home Farm, c1900, is therefore not recommended for listing.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

Minley Home Farm, c1900, by Arthur Castings for Laurence Currie, is not recommended for listing for the following principal reasons:

- * Insufficient architectural interest: a derivative design based stylistically on Devey's work at Minley Manor, but lacking architectural finesse;
- * Lack of innovation: it is planned on much earlier established models and is not an example of a progressive or experimental facility.

Countersigning comments:

Agreed. We have a good understanding of the development of the Minley Estate and the qualities of its successive architects. The Home Farm is impressive for its scale and level of survival, and is certainly important in the context of the estate, but it does not have the high level of architectural, historic and agricultural interest to merit listing in a national context. P Trevor 8.8.16

Annex 1

Factual Details

Name: Minley Home Farm

Location: Minley Home Farm, Minley Road, Blackwater, Camberley, GU179UF

County	District	District Type	Parish
Hampshire	Hart	District Authority	Blackwater and Hawley

History

Minley Home Farm was added to the Minley Manor estate in 1900 by Laurence Currie (1867 – 1934), and was designed by Arthur Castings (1853-1913).

The manor of Minley was bought in 1855 by Laurence's grandfather, Raikes Currie (1801-1881), a wealthy banker and Liberal politician. He immediately commissioned Henry Clutton (1819-1893) to build a country house on the site (NHLE 1258061), along with the Church of St Andrew and a number of lodges. When Raikes Currie died in 1881 the estate was passed to his son, Bertram Wodehouse Currie (1827-1896), who did not favour Clutton's design and in 1885 employed George Devey (1820-1886) to make extensive alterations to the house and grounds.

Devey, an architect and painter, began his own practice in 1846, and by the mid-1860s had established a busy country house practice. At Minley he remodelled the external elevations, interior spaces and added new buildings and features within the large grounds. Devey died in 1886 and his designs were executed by his assistant, Arthur Castings.

Arthur Castings was born on 17 March 1853 at St Pancras and had become Devey's chief draughtsman by the time of the census of 1881. Following Devey's death, Castings set up offices at Lincoln's Inn Fields to complete the work at Minley, and at St Paul's Waldenbury, the latter for the Earl of Strathmore. When Castings died in 1913 his practice was closed.

Bertram Currie's son Laurence inherited the estate in 1896 and continued to develop it, employing Castings again in 1898. Additional garden and ancillary buildings and landscape features were added, including a water tower and summerhouse. It was following this phase of development that Minley Home Farm was built, 500m to the south-east of the manor, in 1900. In common with other model farms of the late C19, the focus of Minley Home Farm was on livestock and dairy, with accommodation for cattle, horses and pigs. Casting's design uses stylistic devices found in Devey's work, and the principal elevations face the manor house to the north, though the view is now obscured by tree growth. In addition to the extensive livestock accommodation, a detached farmhouse, a second farmhouse attached to the main block, and two modest farmhand's cottages were also built.

Laurence died in 1934 and his son, Bertram Francis sold the entire estate to the Army: the manor house was initially used to house the senior section of the staff college, and latterly the Royal Engineers. The Home Farm continued in its intended use, and was used as a riding school for a period in the latter half of the C20. More recently it has been used for storage, and for the last two decades has been unoccupied. A narrow range of buildings projecting from the south of the farmhouse has been removed, as has one of two ranges of pigsties to the south of the main block.

Details

A model farmstead, 1900, by Arthur Castings for Laurence Currie.

MATERIALS: red brick laid in Flemish bond with blue brick diapering. Roofs are Lakeland slate and have brick chimneystacks.

PLAN: the farmstead stands c500m to the south-east of the manor, accessed by a separate drive from Minley Road.

The main block faces north towards the manor, the view to which is now obscured by tree growth. It is roughly square and comprises two yards either side of a central cow house, surrounded by livestock stalls. Along the east and south sides is horse stabling with looseboxes, and along the west is a range of pigsties. A lodging house is built into the north-west corner.

Detached, on the east, is a second house, and there is a pair of cottages detached from the south-east corner of the main block. There is a range of pigsties to south, the yards to which have been lost.

EXTERIOR: the principal elevation has a symmetrical central section flanked by a pair of shaped gables on the right, and a single shaped gable on the left. There is a wide central two-storey shaped gable with a central doorway and a Venetian window to the first floor, with diamond-patterned diapering to either side. The gable is topped with a copper-covered bell cote. Lower, gambrel-roofed ranges flank the gable; each has a carriageway entrance leading into the covered yards, with a timber-framed, half-hipped hayloft above. The hayloft and roof to the left-hand range were lost in a fire. Terminating the elevation on the right is a pair of shaped gables to the lodging house, with a recessed central bay with a doorway beneath a segmental arch opening. The elevation terminates on the left in a single shaped gable. Windows to the agricultural parts of the building generally have segmental arched heads and metal frames of multiple lights; those to the domestic areas are narrower and have flat arches. The architraves to the doors and windows are chamfered with moulded brick.

On the west elevation, beyond the diamond-diapered return elevations of the lodging house, is a row of open-fronted bays built in glazed brick, opening into low sties. The remains of troughs enclose the bays at the base; other parts of the structure relating to the pigs' enclosure have been lost.

The east elevation, beyond the return of the gabled corner block, drops to a single-storey row of stables with alternating doors and windows and a pitched roof.

The rear corners (south-west and south-east) each have a tall square block with a pyramidal roof with semi-circular vents and topped with a finial. The block on the west has four high window openings which were originally blind, and may have been used for the storage of grain. The block on the right is blind on the south, and has two mid-level windows on the east elevation. Between these, the south elevation is a single storey of seven bays with a central doorway beneath a moulded brick round arch. Above the doorway is a timber-framed structure with a tripartite, multiple-light window. To either side are stable doors and windows, and a chimneystack marks the position of a groom's fireplace.

The detached farmhouse has two pitched and one hipped ranges of diminishing height, all of two storeys, making up the living accommodation. Facing north is a single-storey, three-bay loggia entranceway with a portico. To the left of this is a two-storey gable with an opening to each floor and diamond brick diapering and decorative brickwork to the apex. There are two wide brick chimneystacks. The building continues with a number of single-storey ranges to the south, which had an agricultural function. The main one of these ranges has brick diapering on the gable ends, the eastern of which is shaped. A round-arched opening, leading to a through-passage, separates the domestic and agricultural parts of the building.

The pair of cottages stands to the south-east of the main block. They are a matching, symmetrical pair of pitched ranges with a central cross wing. Their main entrances are within the north-facing gable ends, above which are six-light timber mullioned and transomed windows, with diapered brickwork to either side. The east and west elevations have irregularly sized and positioned windows, and diamond diapering. The south gables have a six-light window to each floor.

INTERIOR: the core of the main block has two partially covered yards either side of a central cow house. These are floored in blue brick and have blue brick plinths, with long troughs built into the south walls. Roofs are supported on metal double-fink trusses and have long lanterns. There are a number of individual cow houses leading off the yards, each with a trough, manger, and outward-facing window. There are panelled and plank doors, often mounted on sliding brackets. Windows, as on the exterior, are generally wide, segmental arched openings, with multiple lights, and sometimes have iron mangers attached. Doorways are lined in rounded blue brick.

The cow house has tiled floors and green glazed brick to some areas of the internal walls. Some stalls survive, and have tubular iron frames, timber screens, and integrated mangers and troughs. Elsewhere there are block partitions with metal rails above. The cambered metal trussed roof survives with matchboarded ceilings.

In the stables the floors are tiled and some looseboxes survive, and consist of timber partitions within a metal frame with ball-finial posts, and a curved metal grille, with water troughs and mangers. Roofs are supported on timber trusses.

The state of dereliction within the four dwellings is such that there is only fragmentary survival of interior features, which includes brick and timber chimneypieces, panelled doors, and square newels and handrails to staircases. The southern section of the detached farmhouse has a through passage lined in white glazed brick, suggesting a non-domestic use.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: there is a mono-pitched range containing eight pigsties to the south of the main block. Each sty has a low open front, and is enclosed internally by brick partitioning and low iron rails facing onto a through passage.

Selected Sources

Books and journals

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Websites

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Map

National Grid Reference: SU8265257574



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