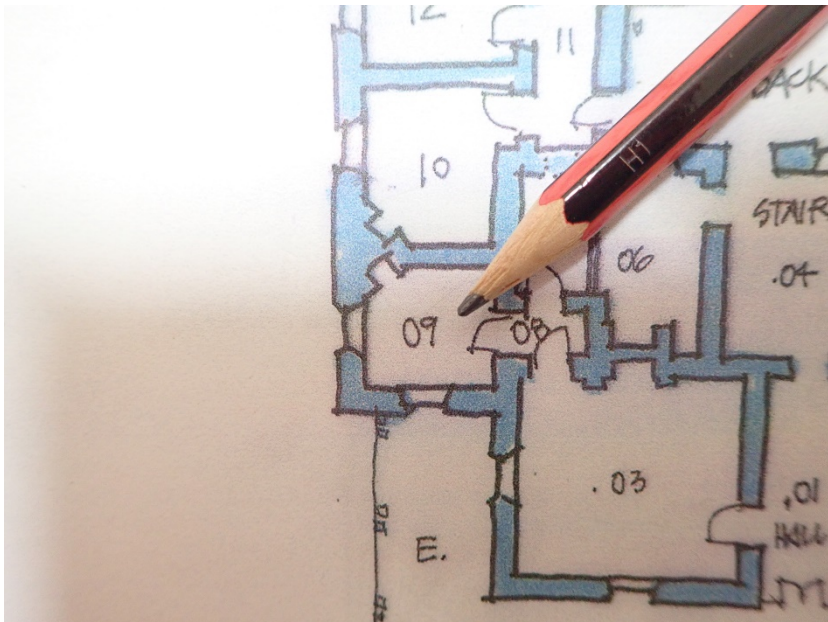


## FABRIC ANALYSIS Report

### Closebourne House ·1829

Morpeth NSW

State Heritage Register item 00375



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Cover Image: 'a room of high significance' all photographs taken by Mark Fenwick, Placemark Consultants unless noted otherwise. 30<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

*Investigating Fabric – Heritage items can be viewed as three-dimensional ‘documents’ with the fabric telling an evocative story about a cultural heritage which cannot be gained from records alone. This physical evidence provides an accurate record of what happened rather than what was intended or believed to have happened; and it is for this reason that places of heritage are conserved.*

*The term fabric refers to all the physical material of a place, including its surroundings and contents (Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, articles 1.1 and 1.3). This means an investigation needs to concentrate not only on the visually-pleasing aspects of the item, but consider all the details of its structure, and services such as plumbing.<sup>1</sup>*

Placemark Consultants have been engaged by the owners to undertake further inspections of Closebourne House and prepare a Fabric Analysis Report to assist and guide the Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) design process on that site.

## 1.2 Heritage Status

Closebourne House is located on the east side of the 40ha site of ‘Closebourne Village’, a LendLease Retirement Living’ development site, to the west of Tank Street, near St James’ Church, Morpeth NSW, close to East Maitland.

Closebourne Estate is listed on the State Heritage Register as item 00375 and is protected by the Heritage Act 1977 with amendments. NSW Heritage Council approvals are required to make changes to a state listed heritage item. This is managed by the Heritage Office. The property is also listed by schedule 5: Environmental heritage, Maitland Local Environmental Plan 2011 as items 201; 202 ;203 and 204.

## 1.3 Methodology

The methodology adopted for the preparation of this investigation and report included:

- Review of the history prepared by Cynthia Hunter for Conservation Management Plan for the site.
- Review the parts of the book ‘A Man of Many Parts – the life and times of Edward Charles Close 1790-1866’ by Ann Beaumont 2016.
- Carried out previous investigations.
- Referred to the 1982-83 drawings prepared by Woodhouse and Danks.
- Photographed each room and external elevation.
- Reinspected the roof space.
- Provided an assessment, as follows.

## 1.4 Drawings

In preparing this report the following drawings were traced, updated and used as the base drawing. These drawings were prepared in 1982 for major 1980s works to the building. The architects have confirmed that when they down-sized they disposed of many project files

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<sup>1</sup> Heritage Manual NSW Heritage Office

and could not assist with further detail. A search at Maitland Council was not any more successful. The notes on these drawings provide some detail.

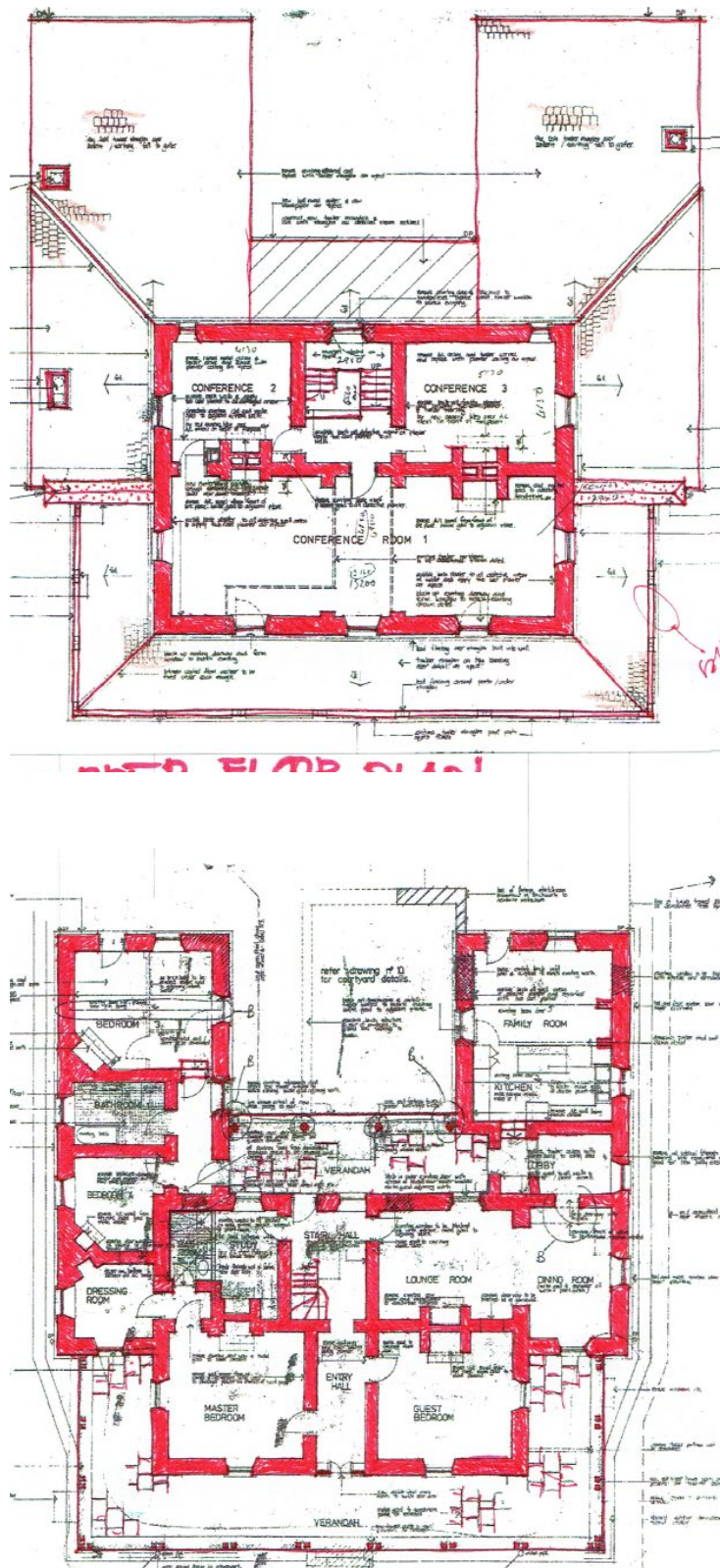


Image 1: Closebourne House floor plans showing proposed works 1983. Source CMP 2005 "Restoration of Closebourne House at Morpeth Conference Centre" by H.O. Woodhouse & Danks Architects, August 1982. Geoffrey Danks, architect. North down the page.



## 1.5 Existing Conditions

Existing conditions are the sum impact of many changes of ownership, use, levels of care, 'taste' and various projects.

Edward and Sophia Close went to great efforts to build Closebourne House, moving in 1829 but only for 20 years. William Tyrrell, first Bishop of the Anglican diocese of Newcastle purchased it from Edward and lived there until his death in 1879. It is reasonable to expect William changed the place to suit his needs but unlike Edward, he did not have a family.

George Stanton became bishop in 1890, moved in and renovated inside and out. It is thought the Victorian staircase was part of that work. He died in 1905. John Stretch became bishop the following year. The remnant footings of a poorly considered pragmatic addition at the rear of the building are called 'the Stretch Room' footings. Doorways were created to access that room. He had lived in Newcastle as Dean since 1900. Stretch moved his residence and office to Newcastle from Morpeth in 1912.

Major interventions occurred with new uses including as a Children's Home and a Boy's Boarding School. This included knocking doors through windows, blocking up doors, new openings, a new enclosed verandah above the existing verandah roof to house a dormitory.

The records indicate (from the book by Ann Beaumont) that in the late 1970s the church became aware of the place's significance. During the 1980s rectification and conservation works were undertaken. It appears that scope exceeded funding and a number of items were not completed.

Part of the works involved demolishing back to a simple stone box and rebuilding verandah roofs back and front over repaired and renewed stone flagging. During this time the building was re roofed in timber shingles. On the low-pitched wings at the rear this leaked. Correspondence to the Heritage Council sought to remove the shingles and use corrugated 'custom orb colorbond'. The gutter system behind the lofty timber parapet of the front verandah was small and ineffective once it was full of leaves, leading to water damage and rot. Later the lead flashings were stolen and ceilings were water damaged. The whole roof is now corrugated galvanised sheet with eaves gutters and additional down pipes. That work was undertaken over the last twelve months.

The Stretch Room was demolished. Most of the windows were replaced in the late 1980s, pre the 1988 Bicentenary celebrations. New skirtings, some architraves and sills were installed. A large quantity of new stone was used and repairs undertaken. The rear verandah was rebuilt (with timber columns). Lend Lease have recently repaired windows and undertaken more stone repairs.

It is difficult to judge the age of some of the internal joinery and how much if any dates prior to George Stanton's tenure.

Now the conditions are very good. The 1980s project replastered many internal walls. The recent work by Lend Lease and their building contractor, Raybal Constructions has rectified damage brought on by vacancy, vandals and vermin, including supporting areas of collapsed floor frames.

## 1.6 Proposed Interventions

The proposal is to adaptively reuse Closebourne House and integrate it into the proposed RACF development behind. The ground floor is proposed for client/ resident assessment

spaces (Consulting and Assessment Rooms) and at the upper level staff training/lounge and other meeting rooms for general use.

The proposal is to link from the rear of the building to the circulation corridor of the reception area of the RACF, near a café space and courtyard beyond. The proposal includes to remove the 1950s bathroom and the 1980s Accessible WC, install a lift and new toilets, achieve a wheelchair-friendly path to and from the lift. For that NCC / Access requirements clash with heritage imperatives. It is also proposed that the lower rear wings will be used as a chapel space to the west and meeting room to the east. The proposal includes a narrow link to a new partially enclosed space at the back verandah. This enclosure is proposed to be of glass and fully transparent, allowing views to the back elevation of the house from the RACF Reception area. The Stretch Room footings are shown retained outside.

## 1.7 Limitations

For the purposes of this report floor coverings were not removed, inspections were visual only and did not include beneath floors. The roof inspection was brief for photography only.

# 2 Understanding the Place

## 2.1 Historical Context

The following summary addresses the layered history of the site and is taken from the recently installed interpretative panels arranged along a walking path across the site. From the last installation, number eight 'the summary' includes the following:

### 1821 the land grants

A young, well-educated Lt Edward Charles Close arrived in the colony of New South Wales with plans to stay. He happened to be in the right place at the right time. He obtained land grants totally 2,560 acres then set about his plans for this place we all know now as Morpeth. Edward and his wife, Sophia built on the ridge that later became High Street.

### 1825 the village

Land grants and settlers were established along the length of the Hunter River, Close was building his rural enterprise and contemplating the layout for a village. Property for the churches, schools, the Courthouse and School of Arts were provided for in Close's plan. In 1834, a formal subdivision shows the streets of Morpeth and he started building St James Church in 1837.

### 1829 a manor house (Closebourne House)

Perhaps inspired by the prestige of a 16th century mansion in Suffock, Edward built a new two storey stone house, which he named 'Closebourne'. It was grand and the centre-piece of his estate. The Close family grew, made friends and Edward became more involved with colonial administration, the church and the local community as Morpeth, Maitland and Wallis Plains developed.

### 1849 Bishops court (Closebourne House)

William Tyrrell arrived in the colony, the first bishop of the new Diocese of Newcastle. He temporarily moved into the parsonage, but decided to stay and purchased 'Closebourne', renaming it 'Bishops court'. Edward and William became good friends.

The 20th century brought new uses and many changes, including a children's home, a boarding school and a conference centre, illustrated by the following images:



Image 2: The site: after 1946 and before 1956  
Source: Local Studies Library MCC

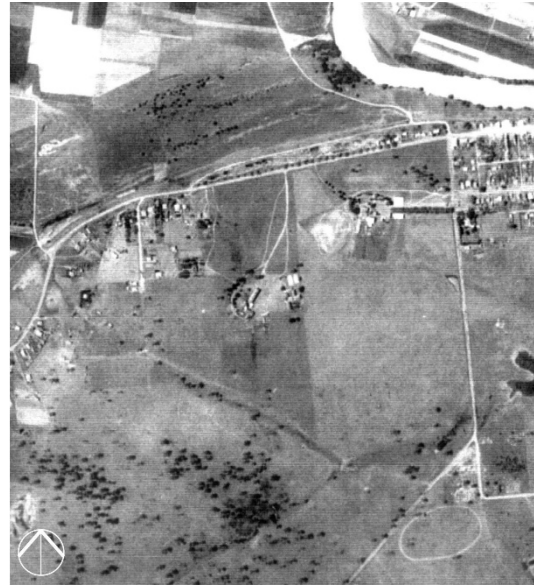


Image 3: 1958  
source: CMP and Terra Landscape Architects.



Image 4: extract from the Post 1946 image above, showing the Gym, Arkell House and the Main Hall. There are also a number of other smaller buildings close to Closebourne House. The existing Olive Tree, west of Arkell House could be the tree evident in this image. Note the additional upper level enclosed verandah of Closebourne House.



## 2.2 Timeline Summary

Note that alterations have occurred over time, associated with major changes of ownership and use as set out in timeline summary below. These include;

Front verandah considerably altered: original verandah with open parapet and timber posts demolished; new verandah with eaves and cast iron columns built (c.late 1800's shown in 1912 photo); enclosed upper storey verandah added (c1925 shown in 1937 photo); two storey verandah demolished and reconstruction of original built with enclosed parapet (1980-1988).

### Date of Construction / Brief History

c.1829 Building completed when first occupied by the Close family.

c.1849-1879 Bishop Tyrrell in residence. Known as 'Bishopscourt'.

c.1891-1905 Bishop Stanton in residence (alterations carried out).

c.1912 Bishop Stretch Room constructed at rear of the building. Demolished in 1983.

c.1922 Conversion to 'St Alban's Boys Home' (with associated alterations).

c.1925 Construction of enclosed verandah to provide more accommodation for boys.

c.1942-1959 Newcastle Boys Grammar School moved into Closebourne buildings.

c.1960 First conference held in new conference centre located in Closebourne buildings.

1980-1988 Conservation works undertaken under direction of Geoffrey Danks (NSW Heritage Council) included: removal of enclosed upper verandah, reconstruction of original verandah, demolition of Bishop Stretch Room, opening up of cellar, internal conservation works.

1993 Further conservation works undertaken including restoration of rear verandah and stone repairs and alterations to east wing.



Figure 2.3 1847 drawing of Closebourne House by Sophia Ives Campbell  
Dixon Galleries, State Library of New South Wales  
IE8637788

Image 5: From the Archaeological Scoping and Strategy Document prepared by AMAC Archaeological August 2019 for Lend Lease.

### 3 Investigation and Grading

#### 3.1 Inspection

The following labels rooms eg, R.01, doors D.01 and windows W.01. General grading is shown using the colours provided in the legend.

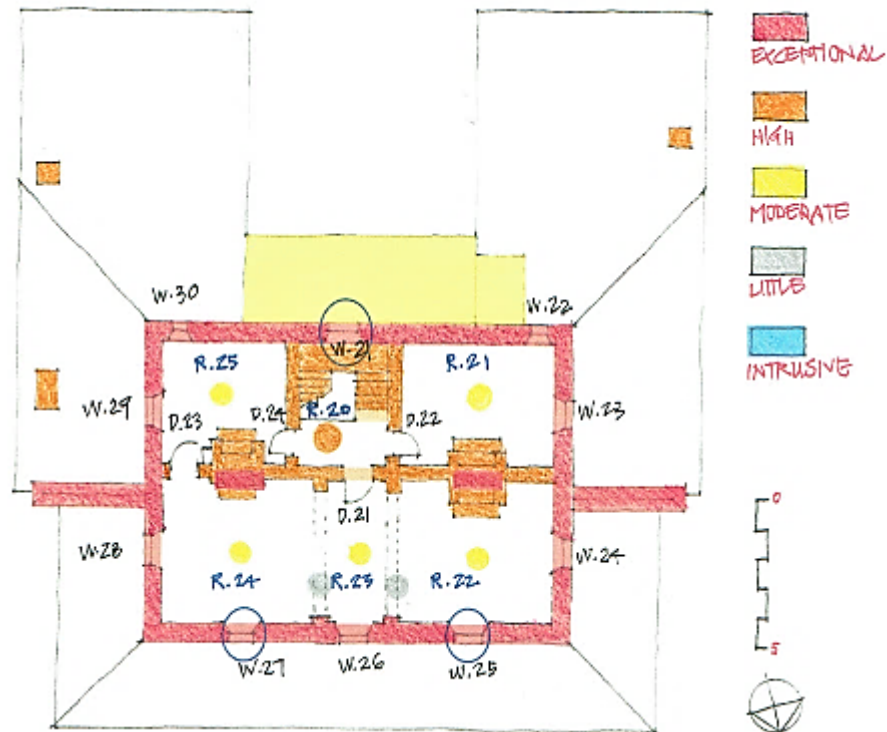


Image 6: Upper Floor Plan – general grading per space

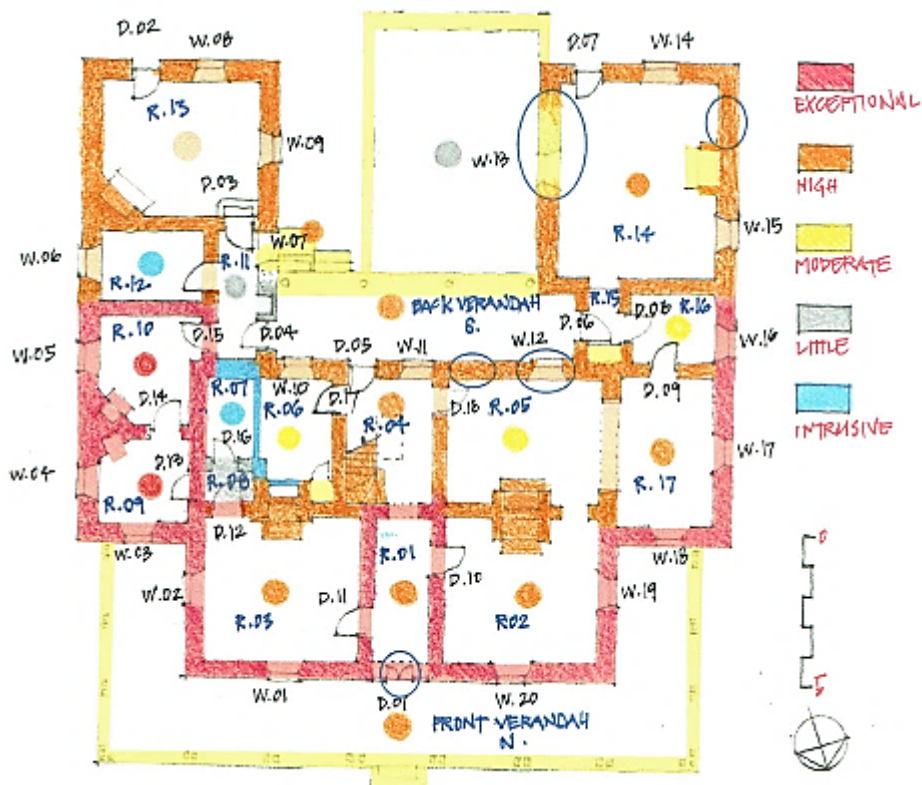







Image 7: Ground Floor Plan – general grading per space

The elements or components of a place make different relative contributions to the overall significance of that place. In this case the listed item is the whole site, with Closebourne House being graded by the Conservation Management Plan and listing as being an element of Exceptional Significance.

In the same way, the house is itself the combined value of its components. The following provides further definition and considerations for the existing built fabric of the place.

code	Grade	Significance	Consideration
	Exceptional	<p>A rare or outstanding element directly contributing to an item's listing for State Significance.</p> <p>Changes to be avoided or minimised.</p>	<p>The form of the building, its presentation to front paddocks and Morpeth Road, the character of the C19 interior all rely on the original walls. The sandstone is likely to have been won from Close's quarry on site. Avoid or minimise any impact on stone.</p>
	High	<p>An element possessing a high degree of original fabric. Demonstrates a key attribute of the place's original fabric, original character and significance.</p> <p>Changes to be avoided or minimised.</p>	<p>The house has experienced many changes and reversals in its 190 years, particularly in the late 1890s then in the 1920s. original fabric from periods of changing use remain. The 1980s restoration works are evident. All contribute to understanding and interpreting the C19 origins of the house, including the hierarchy of spaces in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century home.</p>
	Moderate (considerable)	<p>An altered or modified element still having significance, particularly as contribution to the overall significance of the place.</p> <p>Changes may be carefully undertaken. Unnecessary changes to be avoided.</p>	<p>The restoration works of the 1980s were ambitious and unfinished. New reconstructed windows and doors make valuable contributions to the character and value of the house. Care should be taken to protect, display and complete internal joinery detail.</p>
	Little (some)	<p>An element that makes a minor or no contribution to overall significance or is difficult to interpret.</p> <p>Either remove the element or improve the interpretation of the element and understanding of any significance attributed to the element.</p>	<p>The removal of internal walls at the upper level has impacted on the house. The remaining beams generally allow an understanding of the original layout. Bishop Stretch lived in Newcastle as the Dean and Morpeth for a short period, moving soon after to where the Cathedral is located.</p>

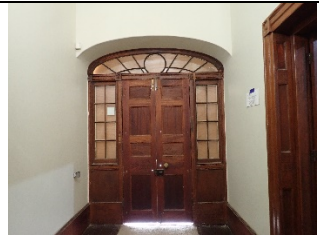
code	Grade	Significance	Consideration
	Intrusive (none)	Is damaging to an item's heritage significance.  Remove the element, restore the remnants or if appropriate reconstruct to reinstate, contributing to an authentic understanding of the place.	Upgrading for a new use will bring new hardware, fittings eg, door hardware. Do not strip out the house prior to the proposed works. Retain the former where ever possible to enhance the presentation of the building, its origins and character.
	Integrity	Has particular value as being a near-complete, intact or in good condition. Notable representativeness for a style, period, construction method, detail, etc.	Contribute to improving to the integrity of Closebourne House, its built fabric, presentation and setting.
		Overall, Closebourne House is assessed as being of Exceptional Significance	Protect, conserve and interpret the story of the place


### 3.2 Summary of Findings

The legend for the codes used here are included after the table.

Generally, the assessment codes are:

.01	E	.03	M	.05	N	.07	H
.02	H	.04	L	.06	intrusive	.08	M

#	name	Size*	ceiling	walls	Doors	windows	photo
01	Entry Hallway <b>Sp02</b> <b>Arch=</b> <b>DR07</b> <b>Floor</b> <b>F.02</b>		<b>CC02</b>	<b>Wm01</b>	D.01- 1935h Clear <b>DR02</b> <b>In 2</b> <b>leafs</b>	<b>WD02</b>	

#	name	Size*	ceiling	walls	Doors	windows	photo
02	Front west <b>Sp02 Floor F.02</b>	5.1 x4.8 x3.3h	<b>CC02 20<sup>th</sup> C work</b>	<b>Wm01 Fire place and wall -High</b>	D.10- 1932h Clear <b>DR02</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>  Late 1980s	
03	Front east <b>Sp02 Floor F.02</b>	5.1 x4.8	<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm01 Fire place and wall -High</b>	11- 1953; 12- 1932 to 1952h clear <b>DR02 both</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
04	Stair- way GF <b>Sp02</b>	6.56 high	<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm02. Stair - High</b>	D.05 <b>DR02-3</b> Archway <b>DR07</b>	-	
05	Back west <b>Sp03</b>	5.1 x4.1 x3.3h	<b>CC03 battene d Cornice protect ed.</b>	<b>Wm02 Fire place and wall -High</b>	<b>DR02</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
06	Former comms <b>Sp03</b>		<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm02 Fire place and wall -High</b>	D.17 <b>DR02-3</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
07	acc.wc 1980s <b>Sp06</b>		<b>CC05</b>	<b>Wm01</b>	<b>DR05</b>	-	
08	Tiny corri- dor <b>Sp06</b>		<b>CC05</b>	<b>Wm01- 02 Fire place and wall -High</b>		-	









#	name	Size*	ceiling	walls	Doors	windows	photo
09	Office <b>Sp01 Floor F.02</b>	3.0 x2.87 x3h	<b>CC02</b>	<b>Wm01 Fire place and wall -High</b>	13-1815 to 1810 cpt <b>DR02</b> 14-1830 to 1827 <b>DR02-3</b>	<b>WD02-3</b> Joinery <b>High</b>	
10	Side room east <b>Sp01 Floor F.02</b>	2.98 x3.57 x3h	<b>CC02</b>	<b>Wm01 Fire place and wall -High</b>	D.15- 1807 over thick carpet.	<b>WD02</b>	
11	Corridor <b>Sp04</b>		<b>CC04</b>	<b>Mix Wm01 Wm02 &amp; Wm03</b>	Ext D.04 – 1870 clear <b>DR03</b>	<b>WD03</b>	
12	Pre1980 Bathrm <b>Sp06</b>		<b>CC02</b>	<b>Wm02</b>	D.16- 1800 to 1805 over thick carpet <b>DR02</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
13	East rear wing <b>Sp02 Floor F.02?</b>	3ste ps	<b>CC04-5</b>	<b>Wm02</b>	D.03 – 1805 <b>DR03</b> D.02 <b>DR03</b>	<b>WD03</b>	
14	West rear wing <b>Sp02 Floor F.02?</b>	4ste ps	<b>CC04-5</b>	<b>Wm02</b>	D.07 <b>DR03</b>	<b>WD03</b>	
15	Back entry door <b>Sp02</b>		<b>CC02</b>	<b>Wm02</b>  Joinery cupb'd <b>High</b>	D.06 <b>DR02</b>	-	



#	name	Size*	ceiling	walls	Doors	windows	photo
16	Fmr laundry <b>Sp03</b>		<b>CC03</b>	<b>Wm02 Exterior Wm01</b>	D.08 <b>DR03</b> D.09 Damaged <b>DR03</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
17	Side room west <b>Sp02</b>	CH 3.01 1	<b>CC03</b>	<b>Wm02 Exterior Wm01</b>		<b>WD02-3</b>	
18	Archway <b>High-Modera te.03</b>					-	
19	Front paddock <b>High</b>						
20	Stair UF <b>Sp02</b>	6.56 tall	<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm01 &amp; Wm02</b>		<b>WD02-3</b>	
21	Back room west <b>Sp03</b>	CH 2952	<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm01 &amp; Wm02</b>	<b>DR03</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
22	Front room west <b>Sp03</b>	CH29 50	<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm01 &amp; Wm02</b>	<b>DR03</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	

#	name	Size*	ceiling	walls	Doors	windows	photo
23	Fmr Corridor <b>Sp03</b>	CH29 30	Beams <b>CC04</b>	<b>Wm01 &amp; Wm02</b>	<b>DR03</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
24	Front room east <b>Sp03</b>	CH29 51	<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm01 &amp; Wm02</b>	<b>DR03</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
25	Back room east <b>Sp03</b>	CH29 24	<b>CC02-3</b>	<b>Wm01 &amp; Wm02</b>	<b>DR03</b>	<b>WD02-3</b>	
-	Back veranda h <b>Sp02-3</b>			<b>Wm01 &amp; Wm02</b>			
-	Cellar <b>Sp02</b>						
-	Front veranda h <b>Sp02-3</b>						
-	Chim- neys <b>High</b>						

#	name	Size*	ceiling	walls	Doors	windows	photo
-	Stretch footings <b>Moderate-Little</b>						
-	Front driveway <b>High-moderate</b>						
-	Rear court Yard						
-	Specimen trees <b>High</b>						
-	Views over river <b>High</b>						
-	Roof structure <b>High</b>						

## LEGEND

Code	description
Sp01	A Space, volume, element, connection that is of Exceptional significance
Sp02	A Space, volume, element, connection that is of High significance
Sp03	A Space, volume, element, connection that is of Moderate significance
Sp04	A Space, volume, element, connection that is of Little significance
Sp05	A Space, volume, element, connection that is of no significance
Sp06	A Space, volume, element, connection that is intrusive or inappropriate
NOTE	This could include the relationships between a number of spaces

Code	description
Wm01	A wall element or walls that are of Exceptional significance
Wm02	A wall element or walls that are of High significance
Wm03	A wall element or walls that are of Moderate significance
Wm04	A wall element or walls that are of Little significance
Wm05	A wall element or walls that are of no significance
Wm06	A wall element or walls that is intrusive or inappropriate
NOTE	Wall structure or substrate, height, thickness, not just appearance
CC01	A ceiling / cornice element that are of Exceptional significance
CC02	A ceiling / cornice element that are of High significance
CC03	A ceiling / cornice element that are of Moderate significance
CC04	A ceiling / cornice element that are of Little significance
CC05	A ceiling / cornice element that are of no significance
CC06	A ceiling / cornice element that is intrusive or inappropriate
NOTE	Condition, cornice type, ceiling materials, not just appearance
DR01	A door leaf and reveal set that is of Exceptional significance
DR02	A door leaf and reveal set that is of High significance
DR03	A door leaf and reveal set that is of Moderate significance
DR04	A door leaf and reveal set that is of Little significance
DR05	A door leaf and reveal set that is of no significance
DR06	A door leaf and reveal set that is intrusive or inappropriate
DR07	A doorway reveal (jambs and head) opening that is of High significance
WD08	A doorway reveal (jambs and head) opening that is of Moderate significance
NOTE	The door's relationship to the hierarchy of the C19 room, not just condition.
WD01	A window opening and window that is of Exceptional significance
WD02	A window opening and window that is of High significance
WD03	A window opening and window that is of Moderate significance
WD04	A window opening and window that is of Little significance
WD05	A window opening and window that is of no significance
WD06	A window opening and window that is intrusive or inappropriate
FP01	A fireplace that is of Exceptional significance
FP02	A fireplace that is of High significance
FP03	A fireplace that is of Moderate significance
FP04	A fireplace that is of Little significance

## 4 General Considerations

### 4.1 To be noted

Throughout the house there are construction details, timber moulding and wall lining details that have been compromised but retain significance. For example, wall plastering repairs have created increased thickness against old architrave details.

The intact door sets are in many cases set into a thick wall, with either a panelled timber detail for the very thick walls or a flush timber reveal for the standard thick wall. The skirtings and architraves that frame the door set contribute to the value of the door set. The width is

grand for doors to the front of the house and the height standard.<sup>2</sup> this is a feature that makes clear distinctions between a Manor House 1829 and a grand 2019. It is immediately apparent and understood by visitors to the house. The C19 hierarchy of and status afforded to each space is strengthened by these and other details.

Some skirting at ground floor are timber, others are hard plaster. Upstairs they are timber and appear to be 1980s but inconsistent.

Wide, hardwood floor-boards are all of High significance. The roof structure is to be protected. The cellar is of High significance.

Each fireplace (although different), the fire recess and back wall, the chimney breasts projection into the room and the area of the hearth are all of High Significance.

The size and volume of spaces should be retained and experienced by the building's new users.

As the design detail is resolved for each space and each element, individual contradictions will need to be resolved to achieve the best possible outcome in the context of the proposed interventions. General rules will not cover all circumstances.

Where doorways are technically non-compliant in width or height further concessions should be negotiated. The wall thicknesses create deep doorway reveals, often lined in panelled joinery detail that cannot be lifted in the wall without substantial damage to the original fabric (the walls are the most original fabric of the building).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-23896855> "For British men, the average height at age 21 rose from 167.05cm (5ft 5in) in 1871-75 to 177.37cm (5ft 10in) in 1971-75".