

RED HOUSE

Gomersal

Heritage Assessment to Assess the
Significance of the former Red House
Museum

Undertaken by TheUrbanGlow
Design & Heritage Ltd 2025



Executive Summary

The former Red House Museum in Gomersal has a plethora of historical associations and is a key part of the history of the Heavy Woollen District to which it belongs. The house epitomises the history of the Taylor's and of the Yorkes who Charlotte Bronte wrote so descriptively of in her novel Shirley. The house therefore has strong tangible and intangible connections. The history that we know of dates from around 1550 when the site was bought by the Taylors, but the site has always evolved and changed, not least Red House itself which has seen huge changes, some of them rather heavy handed, over its long history. Despite this, the site and building are still of high local and national significance.

Undertaken by TheUrbanGlow Design & Heritage Ltd
TheUrbanGlow are HESPR Registered Service Providers for the Historic Environment

2025
TheUrbanGlow Design & Heritage
www.urbanglowdesign.com

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to assess the significance of The Red House (formerly Red House Museum) in Gomersal, Kirklees with regards proposals for conversion of the building back into residential accommodation. The building is Grade II* Listed and is located within the Gomersal Conservation Area.

TheUrbanGlow Design & Heritage Ltd were asked to provide a baseline assessment and initial recording of the building prior to proposals being put forward.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this assessment exercise has been based on the references to significance in the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised 2018), as informed by two non statutory Historic England documents namely; Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015) and Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2016).

The exercise was carried out by Andrew Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC. Archive research and map regression were undertaken in order to gain a greater understanding of the significance of the building and the contribution that this building makes to both its significance and the significance of Gomersal itself. Two site visits were undertaken, most recently in January 2025 where a thorough survey was carried out of the building, site and vicinity. This report is indebted to the good work of the Friends of Red House, Dr Stephen Counce, and Caroline Goodwill whose work has shone a light upon the significance of this building and site within the context of the early industrial development of the region.



Statutory List Description

Red House - Grade II*

Date First Listed - 12 January 1967

Date Listing Reviewed - 8 November 2012.

SUMMARY

House with barn and coach house, dating to c.1660, with alterations of the C18 and early C20, formerly belonging to the Taylor family and having close association with Charlotte Brontë.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

The Red House is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * Architecture: the house contains some good survivals of the Georgian period, including a staircase, fireplaces and windows, embedded in a late C17 core; * Function/industrial interest: the architecture of the house, barn and coach house reflects the function and development of this hub for the emerging and developing woollen cloth industry through the C17, C18 and C19; * Historic interest: Mary Taylor, a radical feminist of the mid C18, was born and brought up in the house; * Literary interest: Charlotte Brontë based the house 'Briarmains' and the 'Yorke' family in her novel 'Shirley' on the Red House and the Taylor family, with whom she stayed as a friend of Mary Taylor.

MATERIALS

The house is constructed of red brick with stone quoins and a stone slate roof.

PLAN

The two-storey house has six bays aligned east-north-east to west-south-west. The roof is hipped to the front (south-facing), with four gables to the rear, the westernmost gable extending beyond the line of

the front. An attached square block with a hipped roof is situated to the north-east of the main house. A coach house and barn are situated to the west beyond gardens.

EXTERIOR

The main elevation has an off-centre entrance doorway with small flanking windows and a double semi-circular fanlight with glazing bars. To either side is a six-over-six un-horned sash window, and beyond those a canted bay window with stone dressings. On the first floor are three two-light sash windows and two single sashes, all six-over-six, alternating. To the left is a further bay, slightly recessed, added in the early C20 with one first-floor sash window. The left return (west side) has a large, five-light ground-floor window and a single sash window above. Towards the rear is a projecting section without windows. The right return (east side) has a two-light window with stone dressings to the left and a large window in a square bay under a slate roof to the ground floor, and two first-floor windows with stone dressings. To the right is an attached building in coursed dressed stone with a hipped roof. It has two-light pointed arch windows at first-floor level on the south, east and north sides; the west side which extends beyond the rear wall of the house is brick above with two first-floor windows and a recessed ground floor with two doors. The rear wall of the house, rebuilt in 1995-7, has four gables and a range of modern sash windows in each bay.

INTERIOR

The front door opens into a spacious hall from which the main staircase rises to the right, with an open galleried landing to the rear. The staircase has slender wooden balusters. Below the gallery the ground floor has been opened out with three round arches leading to a shop area to the rear. To the left is the parlour, extended in the early C20, with decorative plasterwork and alcoves to either side of the fireplace, and a kitchen and scullery to the rear, each with a range. A back stair leads up from the kitchen. To the right is a study at the front with a dining room behind, both having a similar fireplace with white marble surrounds and

cast iron grates; the grates appear late C18 but the surrounds are in a mid Victorian style. The dining room contains the stained glass window described in Charlotte Brontë's 'Shirley'. On the first floor is a series of rooms, of which three are dressed as bedrooms. These all have fireplaces including an attractively decorated all-in-one cast iron grate and surround. Other rooms are used as offices, meeting room and exhibition room. All doors, including the main front door, are modern replacements.

SUBSIDIARY ITEMS

The barn, situated to the west of the house and aligned at right angles to it, is a two-storey building in stone with quoins and a hipped stone slate roof. The east elevation, facing the house, has a central cart entrance with a large two-light window above flanked by a circular window to either side, and three further smaller doors. The north end, facing the coach house has a central doorway and a loading door above, and the west side has a single doorway and a row of ventilation slits above. Internally the barn has two floors with modern partitions on the ground floor, open above with exposed roof structure of pegged trusses.

The single-storey coach house is also in stone with a stone slate roof, and consists of four open-fronted arches, the right hand one blocked, with a doorway to the left. The interior has been restored with new and reused timbers.



Principal Front Elevation



Barn to West of the site

RED HOUSE

Historic Context

The history of the Spenn Valley and the Heavy Woollen District in North Kirkstree is rich and fascinating, although, sadly, it often tends to be overlooked. Neither Birstall nor Gomersal appear in the Domesday Survey of 1086, with Gomersal listed as uninhabited waste and Birstall entirely absent, even though it likely had Roman settlements and was certainly a notable village with a church by 1291. Topographical analysis shows that Gomersal stretches along a ridge of high ground, marking the boundary between Birstall on one side and Cleckheaton and Liversedge on the other. Such a position would be typically suggestive of a Roman road and although there are hints at such a feature this has never been recorded neither did Margery¹ consider it a possibility.

The ancient township spanned both sides of the hill, with Gomersal situated at its centre. Birstall Church, located away from the village, served a much larger area, including Gomersal and Liversedge. The reasons for the Church's remote location remain unclear—could it be linked to a lost village, or perhaps to a much older priory or religious site at Birstall? Some suggest it might even have been associated with a pre-Christian site near natural springs, though there is no evidence to confirm this, other than 11th century fragments in the church.

The two settlements were certainly in existence by the early middle ages however and a reference of 1342 describes the agreement of boundary issues by several local yeomen from 'Birstal, Gomersal' and 'Leversegge'. Gomersal itself appears to be focussed around two focal points at Gomersal Hill Top and Great Gomersal. It is likely therefore that the Holme Lane to Heckmondwike Turnpike Road of 1825 (now Oxford Road) superseded an earlier north south route possibly marked by Upper Lane on the 1854 plan and the long linear fields extending in both directions from this road could suggest some form of Medieval planning. Pollard Hall and Red House each had access to this route, with Pollard Hall seemingly having a direct path running south west towards St Mary's Church. The turnpike therefore bisected the lands

of Pollard Hall and Red House from lands to the east and was likely widened at some point in the later 19th or early 20th century. As such the character of Oxford Road is largely a 19th century creation.

The Early House

The story of Red House is intertwined with social, economic, architectural, and literary history of the area, making it one of the more remarkable sites in the area. The site of the house appears to have been purchased around the mid 16th century at a time when the old (possibly monastic) estates were being sold off following Henry VIII's Dissolution. The new purchasers were newly affluent Yeomen who, in this part of the country, were pioneering new industrial and agricultural methods that ultimately led to the predominance of industry and cloth weaving work in the West Riding.

The Taylor family who purchased the land here around 1550 represent this interesting hybrid between estate owners and early merchant industrialists and it was Richard Taylor who purchased the site that consisted of a house, garden, croft and other land. His son, Thomas bought and sold wool and cloth and was one of a newly emerging gentry class who were developing these traditionally small scale industries into something larger and more organised.

The site at this time likely consisted of the house, barn and probably some other outbuildings arranged around a yard of some type. Most likely the site would have been similar to other middling gentry estates and the old house was almost certainly of a stone type design that probably contained some elements of timber framing with mullion windows and typically strong gables. It was also potentially adjoining a barn or laithe, for livestock.

More detail is given with regards the 1688/90 inventory which describes the old house as being focused around the traditional hall or housebody with chamber above and three parlours with a buttery to the rear. Notably clothmaking gear, a loom, and dry food items such as oats, wheat, barley and beans were also recorded within the house².

In 1660 a new house was built apparently next door and perhaps even adjoining the Old House³. The importance of this building is that it dramatically departed from the local vernacular of soft sandstone and was built from deep red hand made brick. This choice of material was as much a statement as an experiment in a newly available material. It may have been influenced by the old Red Hall in central Leeds (1628 opposite) which was reputed to have been the first red brick house built within the city⁴ and it certainly departed (perhaps intentionally) in terms of material from that of the nearby Pollard Hall which was completed just a year earlier in 1659. The Red House was perhaps therefore a gentle piece of competitiveness by the Taylor's over their neighbours the Pollard's as the original footprint and architectural style of the houses may well have had other similarities.

In 1690 more detail is given with regards the site as William Taylor's Will described the "Old House wherein I now inhabit and dwell....one laithe or barne at the West End of the said house...and the rentes thereof." He gave to his son James "The New House...two Closes of land...called Nether Bawsincliffe Close and Fusden Inge." The site of these fields are discernible around the junction of Fusden Lane and Bawsincliffe Lane which is now Cliffe Lane.

Sometime in the late 18th century the Old House was demolished and the site became more akin to a gentleman's seat rather than a kind of hybrid farmstead. The site of the old house was made into a pleasant garden but the more functional side of the estate continued to function towards the west where a new barn was constructed in around 1773 which contained room for livestock to the ground floor and cloth inspection rooms to the upper floor. This upper floor may have begun



life as a more conventional hayloft as to the west slit windows remain open, whereas to the east a large glazed window was either built originally or was a later insert in order to allow maximum light within. The taking in doors also reflect the nature of this space as a warehouse and the nearby carriage house maintained space for four carriages or carts all accessing onto a cobbled courtyard.

Around this time that the gentry of Gomersal, perhaps in an attempt to maximise their profit and reduce journey times to market, sought to construct their own White Cloth Hall to usurp the cloth hall markets in Leeds which had traditionally given the city its economic dominance over its neighbours. In 1774 the new cloth hall was opened around Gomersal Hilltop on land belonging to James Ibbetson and likely involving the Taylors themselves. This hall was much resisted by the merchants of Leeds as a threat to their cloth halls already, most of

³ *Houses as Museums; The case of the Yorkshire wool textile industry". RHS 2003*

³ Stephen Caunce recalls the mention within the inventories of an adjoining door between the old and new houses thereby suggesting the locations were very close.

⁴ <https://discoveringleeds.wordpress.com/the-headrow-red-hall/> Red Hall reputedly housed the usurper King Charles I who, despite being offered the chance to escape from this site, refused. Red Hall may have been the first red brick building within the centre of Leeds but the city was no stranger to the use of brick around its eastern edges, most notably the Temple Newsam Estate which was built around 100 years earlier.

² See S.A Caunce in his published account within the Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

¹ Margery 'Roman Roads of Britain' 1955.

which relied on traded cloth from the Spen and Calder Valley areas. However, the Gomersal cloth hall managed to find its niche and survived for around 30 years.

The Georgian House

The house took on much of its existing external appearance around the later 18th century when it was dramatically modified again. This resulted in the changes of the front elevation, most notably through the removal of front brick gables. Although there is no evidence of this anymore within the roof space, the gabled form would be typical of such a house and was reflected in the rear also. These changes also resulted in the creation of the new stair hall in place of the housebody and the raising of the first floor chamber so as to accommodate the grand parlour beneath. Counce suggests that the front elevation was rebuilt apart from the east end, but this raises the question as to why it was then necessary to so clumsily raise the internal floor level to allow the main parlour to raise its ceiling...why not simply rebuild the whole? It also fails to take into account as to why the stair hall is so awkwardly asymmetrical. Money could have been an issue that halted this surely but wouldn't it have made more sense to raise the height accordingly and rebuild the front ranges to achieve the spaces that were required, including the symmetrical hall?

Either way, the building became much more fashionable and 'gentrified' with its grand parlour and galleried hallway giving the house a more suitable appearance. The alcoves in the ground floor parlour together with the front door and stair remain perhaps the only authentic elements of this period internally however as so much else has been removed. The house at this time however provides the 'classic' appearance of Red House and epitomises the 'Briarmains' as Charlotte Bronte describes.

To Bronte, the house was obviously ancient and she describes the Yorke family, who were a vaguely disguised caricature of the actual Taylor's of whom Charlotte was friends. From her the house comes alive through its illuminated windows and the conversations emanating from within. Charlotte also describes in great detail the use of the rear parlour and

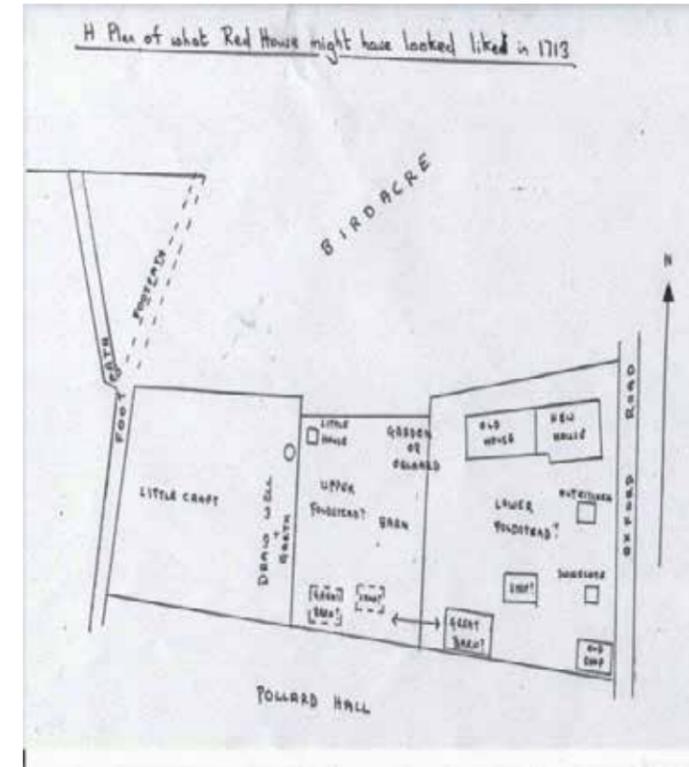
its stained glass window that now belongs to the Haworth Parsonage Museum.

"Some of its windows too were aglow; the lower casements opened upon the lawn; curtains concealed the interior, and partly obscured the ray of the candles which lit it, but they did not entirely muffle the sound of voice and laughter. We are privileged to enter that front door, and to penetrate to the domestic sanctum. It is not the presence of company which makes Mr. Yorke's habitation lively, for there is none within it save his own family, and they are assembled in that farthest room to the right, the back parlour. This is the usual sitting-room of an evening. Those windows would be seen by daylight to be of brilliantly-stained glass, purple and amber the predominant hues, glittering round a gravely-tinted medallion in the centre of each, representing the suave head of William Shakespeare, and the serene one of John Milton. Some Canadian views hung on the walls—green forest and blue water scenery—and in the midst of them blazes a night-eruption of Vesuvius; very ardently it glows, contrasted with the cool foam and azure of cataracts, and the dusky depths of woods."

The other notable personality of course associated with Red House was Mary Taylor, the daughter of Joshua Taylor. Mary was in no way constrained to the Victorian ideals and following her father's death she emigrated for a while to New Zealand where she continued in the family footsteps of running a drapers shop. On her return she was a forthright campaigner for women's rights and as independent as a 21st century woman in her approach to life.

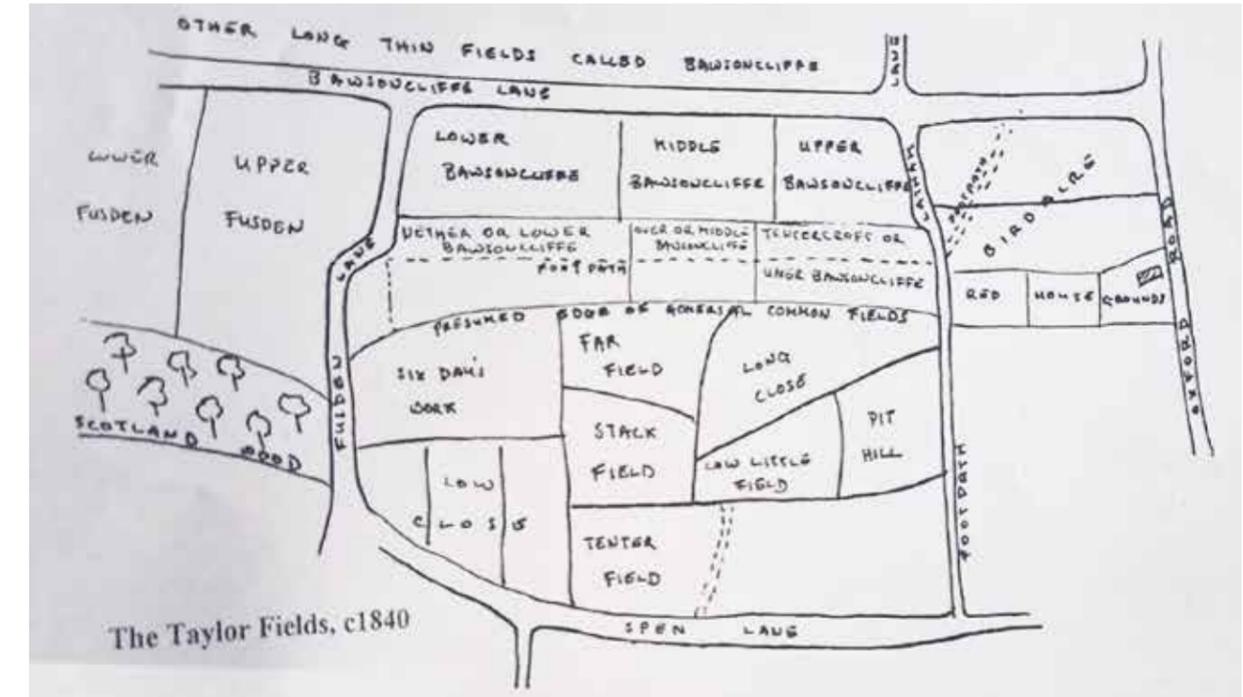
Later History

The house underwent further changes both in the 19th century and early 20th centuries and, perhaps more drastically, in the later 20th century. The Victorians built a rather odd gothic style turret feature in stone to the rear east side of the house adjacent to the Oxford Road. An element of the house's front was also demolished to the south end of the building (shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey Plan) and this likely resulted in the loss of quoining here. Fireplaces were also replaced with great



The above historic sketches by Stephen Counce show the likely historic plot layout of Red House as well as the fields referred to within the inventories.

The upper image shows the plethora of structures that likely existed upon the site in around 1713, these included out kitchens, pig sty and 'shop'. The discovery of the well was to the west of the plot at Little Croft although this map doesn't show the access to the west which must surely have existed at this time. The fields belonging to the Taylor's are shown opposite, Bawsoncliffe Lane is visible today as Cliffe Lane and Fusden Lane still follows its old course. Most of this of course has now been built upon.



marble pieces and the two stone bay windows erected also. In the early 20th century it seems that the main parlour was extended westwards, using reused bricks, with its large windows facing onto what was now an ornate rose garden, this also effectively extended the ground floor parlour in this direction. Following the sale of the house by Dr Richard Waring Taylor, presumably to one of his professional acquaintances, Dr John Clifford Sykes in 1920, the house continued life as a private home until Dr Sykes' death in 1938. Following probate the house was put up for sale again by Miss Sykes and it was advertised as the *“Briarmains of Shirley’ that contained 3 reception rooms, large hall, cloak room, 6 bedrooms and sewing room, 1 bathroom with lavatory and 1 separate lavatory, Maids’ bath, central heating, 2 large kitchen and larger and 2 cellars, Outside lavatory, wash house and coalhouse, garage for 3 cars, outhouses and 2 greenhouses, garden and paddock about 3 and half acres.”*

The accompanying drawing with this advert showed the front elevation of the house with the “walnut-trees rising tall behind the house” as Bronte described. The purchasers were a Mr and Mrs Norman and Dorothy Shaw. Dorothy was a keen artist with an interest in the local area and she produced many nice sketches of both Red House and the surroundings including several drawings from within the property. One of these of the hallway contrasts from a photograph some years earlier in showing the central arch of the hallway as well as showing what was likely the central spine wall of the house behind.

The house was again put up for sale again in 1969 and was bought by the Spenborough Council to become a museum. In 1974 the newly contrived Kirklees Council took over the museum. It is unclear exactly what happened following these sales but some extensive renovations certainly took place. These included the drylining of many of the walls, including the main ground floor parlour, the re-plastering (in gypsum plaster) of several areas, the lifting of the hallway stone flags and the insertion of a plastic (likely non breathable) membrane beneath, and the boxing in of fireplaces. Most disturbing is the wholesale rebuilding of the entire rear elevation in 1996 due the rear wall becoming unsafe

and the stripping out of any and all historic roof structure in the loft including the likely dismantling of any historic ceilings. Moreover, due to the house being a museum of ‘Georgian life’ the Victorian fireplace in the ground floor parlour was removed and replaced with a Georgian grate and surround from elsewhere. Such artistic license has, ironically, significantly eroded the authenticity of the house and made it incredibly difficult to date the phasing of the building or even to appreciate any remaining historic fabric within. The only area of likely original fabric exists around the eastern bay window ceiling and the likely reused floorboards to the rear upstairs bedroom, as well as the alchoves and cellars.

In 2012 the house was re-assessed by Historic England and, despite these drastic and perhaps heavy handed internal changes, the property was re-grade as a Grade II* Listed Building, presumably due to its connection to the Bronte’s.

In 2017 the museum was closed to the public pending Local Authority funding cuts. The live in guardians of the house were subsequently moved out and the house and land left unoccupied. Not surprisingly, following this action, vandalism commenced and stone slate roofing from the barn was stolen forthwith. Remarkably, the house has survived and was recently put up for sale by the Council. The new owner is a local developer with a passion for the area and its local heritage assets.

Chronology of Red House

1550 - The site bought by Richard Taylor, likely Merchant Trader dealing with cloth. The site was bought with a house, garden, croft and other land.

1660 - William Taylor built a new house next door to the ‘old house’ around the same time that Pollard Hall (in its present form) was constructed. Notably this new house was built using red brick which, (years later) earned it the name ‘Red House’.

1736-1805 - The site became a cloth manufacturing and finishing businesses that likely started on site before expanding to larger premises off site. The large barn to the top of the site was built in around 1773 and was possibly used to finish or inspect cloth and there was early evidence of dyeing to the front of the existing Red House. John Taylor expanded the business and built nearby Hunsworth Mill for fulling and perhaps cloth finishing, he also built the Taylor Chapel for the New Connexion Methodists in around 1800.

1783 - John Wesley visited John Taylor at Red House and was reputed to have signed his name on a window!

1811-1816 - Luddite uprisings and the Taylor’s Hunsworth Mill attacked.

1825 - Holme Lane to Heckmondwike Turnpike Road constructed likely modifying any existing route and segregating Pollard Hall and Red House from their respective lands to the east.

1826 - Joshua Taylor, the son of John, appears to have provided the inspiration for Charlotte Bronte, his estate was valued at £30,000 at this time. Around this time onsite industry ended and the gardens were changed to be more formal.

1849 - Shirley is published by Charlotte Bronte under the pseudonym Currer Bell.

Later 19th Century - Fireplaces installed of marble to upper chamber and main parlours.

Late 19th/Early 20th century - New window installed to overlook the gardens.

1920 - Red House sold by Dr Richard Waring Taylor to Dr John Clifford Sykes.

1938 - Dr Sykes died and Red House put up for sale again to be bought

by the Shaw family. Dorothy Shaw undertook many sketches of the house and its surrounds.

1967 - Red House is added to the National Heritage List as a Grade II Listed Building.

1969 - The house came up for sale again and was purchased by Spenborough Council with the intention to open the building as a museum.

1974 - Kirklees Council took responsibility for the Red House Museum

1995 -97 - Rebuilding of the entire rear elevation of the house.

Late 20th century - Several modifications were undertaken within Red House, this not only included the rebuilding of the entire rear elevation, but also the dry lining of several rooms, the installation of ‘georgian’ fireplaces in place of the Victorian ones and the complete removal of all historic roof timbers and even internal ceiling structures.

2012 - Despite these changes the building was re-designated a Grade II* Listed Building on 8 November 2012.

2016 - Red House was closed as a museum.

2024 - Red House auctioned for sale.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The architectural and historical significance of Red House is considerable. As mentioned above this is enhanced through the literary connections of the building and its subsequent communal significance. However, much evidential value has been lost through arguably inappropriate alterations where valuable historic fabric has been lost. The building therefore exhibits the following heritage values:

Evidential value: *the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.*

The archaeological potential of the site is likely low due to past disturbance, however little is understood about the plethora of historic buildings and structures that existed on the site from as early as 1550. As such the site may contain elements of evidential value that can shed light both upon the functional operations of Red House as a place of industry associated with the cloth trade as well as potential to shed light upon notable earlier structures such as the old (1550) house.

Red House itself remains a puzzle to date accurately in terms of phasing, not least because so much historic fabric has been removed. As such, Red House does retain some evidential value in its remaining fabric, but much, (such as the rear elevation and roof structure) has been removed, thereby diminishing any value.

Despite this, when taken as a whole, the site of Red House and its outbuildings retains a potentially **High** level of Evidential value.

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

The building has important historical associations with a key family of the area as well as associative connections to Charlotte Bronte. These values survive in the fabric of the buildings, especially through the fact that the building is still recognisable to that that Charlotte knew and

described in detail. The local historical value as a house of middling gentry and early industrial pioneers in the cloth trade as well as the building being the first such brick building of its type in the local area are also of interest. The historical value of the site is therefore considered to be **Very High**.

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Red House is a building of many phases and externally at least its principal elevation survives as it was seen by Bronte. The house retains its interest as a building of grandeur that has used a material still now not wholly common in the area. Inside the building has seen much artistic licence imposed upon it including dry lining and the removal of most notable or original decorative features. Nevertheless the site epitomises the legacy of history and as such the aesthetic value of the building is **Medium/High**.

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Red House was always a private home until the later 20th century however the interest in the Bronte's and the subsequent opening of the house as a museum and education centre reinforced its communal importance to the people of the local area and this interest continues and is demonstrated through the continued interest and desires for the building to have remained in public ownership. As such the building has **Very High** Communal Value.



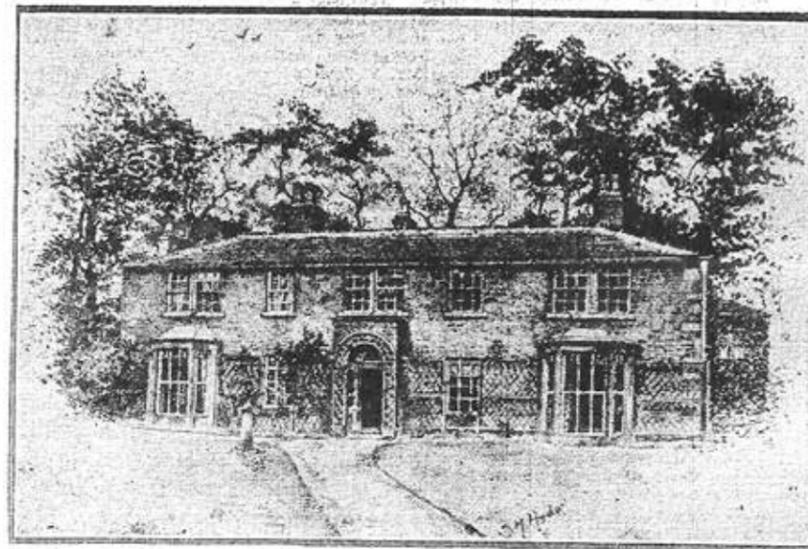
Historic detailed maps of Red House show the building and its subsequent phasing. The first edition Ordnance Survey plan (top left) shows the house with formal gardens to its south and west with a protrusion to the front and other associated building to the rear west side. The carriage drive is also visible leading to the foldyard where the great barn is located. This was likely the Laithe barn and its foundation was probably used for the later greenhouses on the site. An other entrance into the site is visible to the west which may well have been the main entry into the site prior to the turnpiking of the Oxford Road. The line of this driveway is still to be seen as a banked, tree lined causeway along the same alignment.

The 1888 map shows the general size of Red House remaining but the frontage element has now been removed and replaced by a similar protrusion to the rear. The large barn has gone to be replaced by the carriage house and a linear greenhouse that extended along the north western boundary.

The more detailed Ordnance Survey plan of 1894 is the earliest detailed representation of the house. The outbuildings are clearly visible, as is the greenhouse together with one other building to the south of the plot. The access to the rear is also clearly visible and demonstrates that this route was in use for access for a considerable amount of time until relatively recently. (source The Leeds Library)



Top Left: Mary Taylor on an expedition to the Alps. Below Left: the recent plaque to Red House and Mary Taylor on the Oxford Road frontage. Right: Sales advert for the sale in 1938 by the Skykes family.



FOR SALE — HISTORIC BRONTE HOUSE
 THE RED HOUSE, GOMERSAL.
 (Briarmains of Shirley.)
 3 Reception Rooms, Large Hall, Cloak Room,
 6 Bedrooms and Sewing Room, 1 Bathroom
 with Lavatory and 1 separate Lavatory, Maids'
 Bath, Central Heating. 2 Large Kitchens and
 Larder and 2 Cellars, Outside Lavatory, Wash-
 house and Coalhouse, Garage for 3 cars.
 Outhouses and 2 Greenhouses, Garden and
 Paddock about 3½ acres.
 Apply: MISS SYKES, THE RED HOUSE, GOMERSAL.



Principal Front Elevation c1900



Same view today



Principal Front Elevation c1900





Rear Elevation with the toilet block in the foreground and the Victorian turret feature to the mid ground.



View from Oxford Road



Oxford Road Elevation today. The bay window must surely have had a better outlook than this when built.



Western part of the site showing the later greenhouses that likely used the lower courses of the old barn for its foundation.



The same view today



Front (east) elevation of the barn



End (north) elevation of the barn



Rear (West) elevation of the barn



Existing car house



The former causeway into the west of the site, now demarked by a row of trees and the banked plateau



Existing view up the old driveway from Oxford Road as the barn comes into view, its oculus window prominent.



Main Front West Parlour with the Georgian alcoves prior to being extended.



The images show the front parlour probably in the late 19th century before the addition of the extra bay onto the side of the principal parlour. As can be seen here not only is the room now different, but so is the fireplace. The cornice has been replaced with a modern cornice and this room has also seen extensive dry lining. The only 'authentic' detail left from this period are the alcoves.

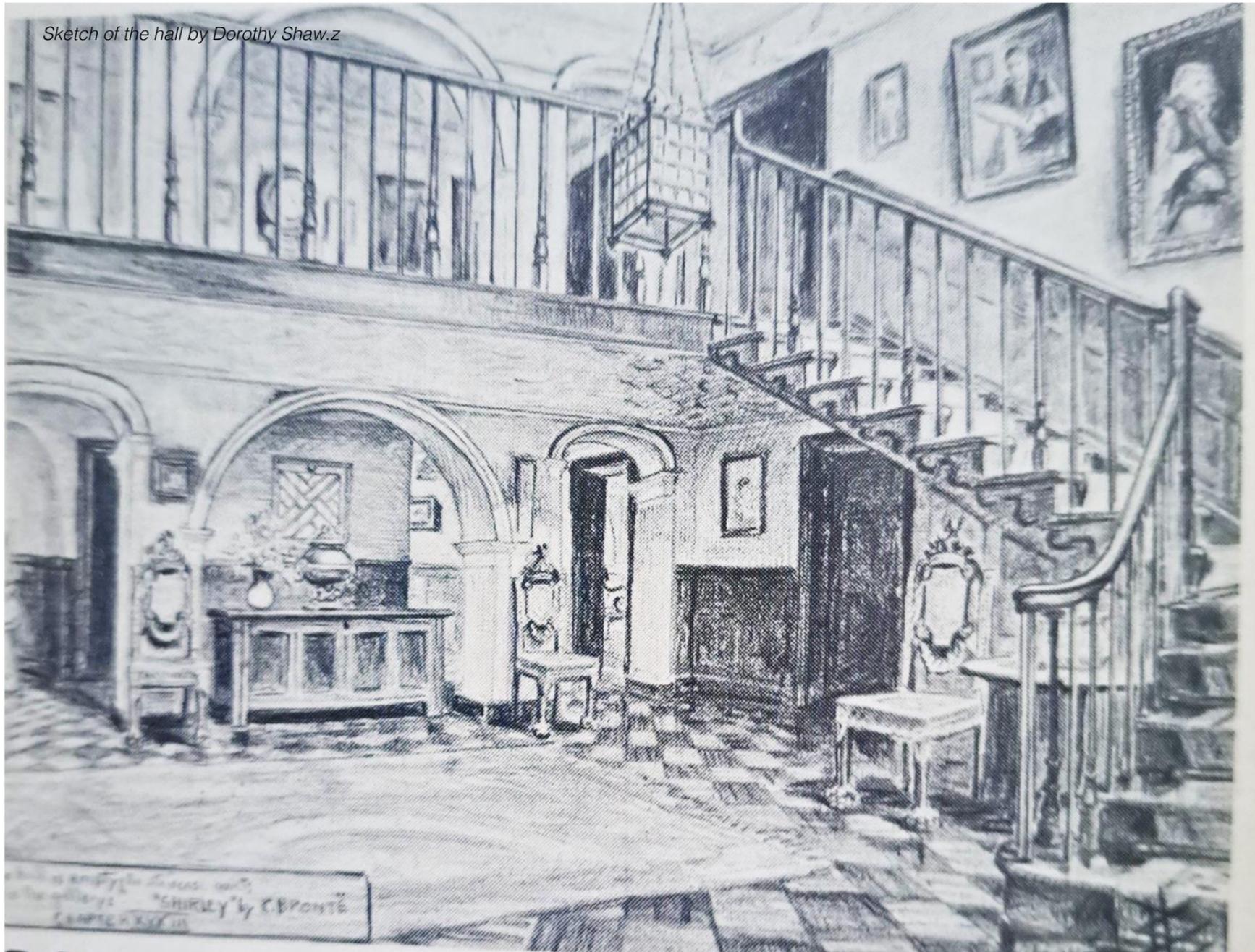


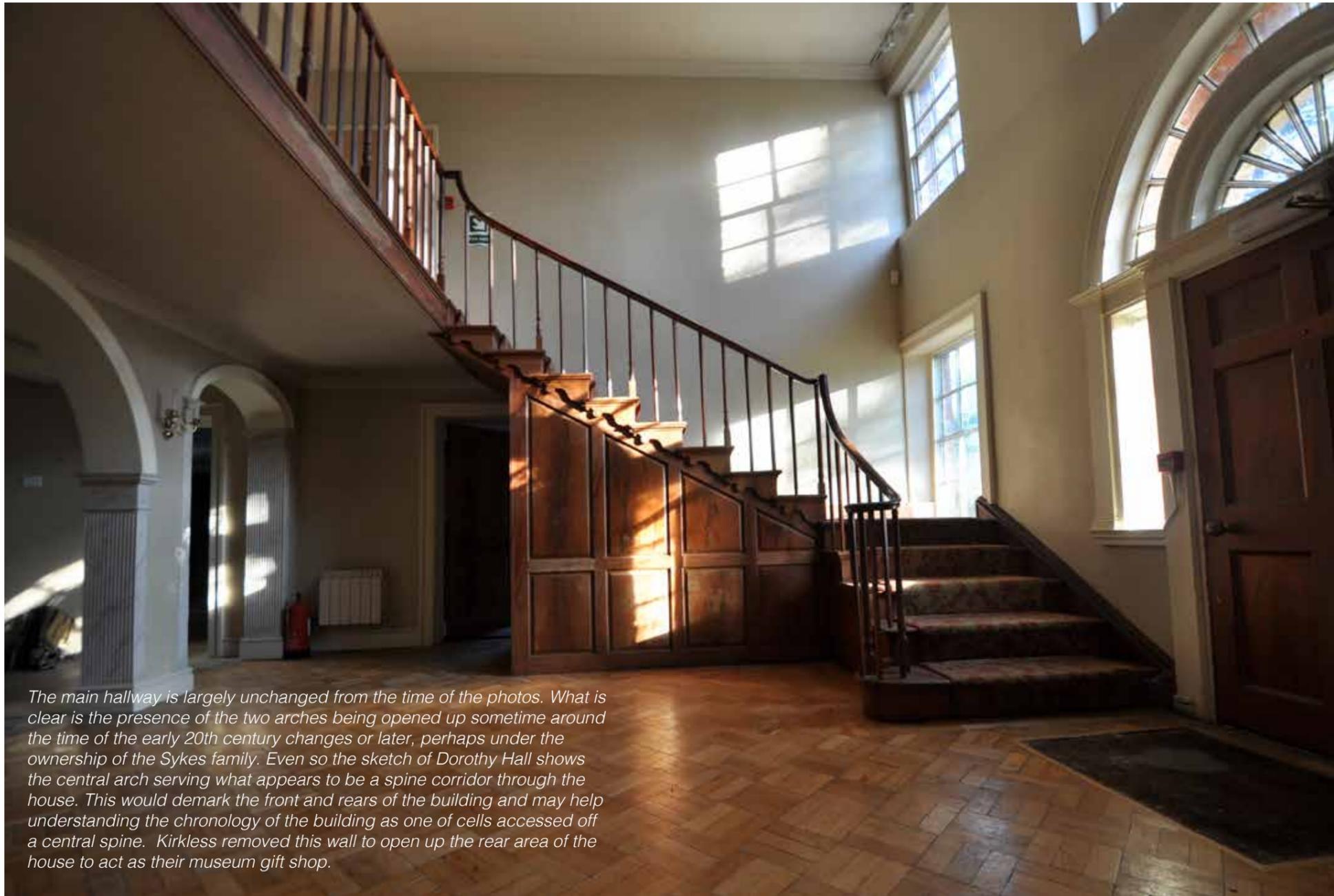
Front East Parlour Prior c1900

Once again these beautiful old photographs capture Red House prior to 20th century changes. What appears to be the east front parlour however soon illustrates that the house has seen even more renovation in its recent history as here the roof beam is clearly different. This image cannot be from any other room and yet it is noticeably different. The lack of cornice to the roof is notable however and would support Caunce's idea that this was the earlier part of the house. Unfortunately this authentic detail was substituted by later custodians to make the building appear more 'Georgian'.

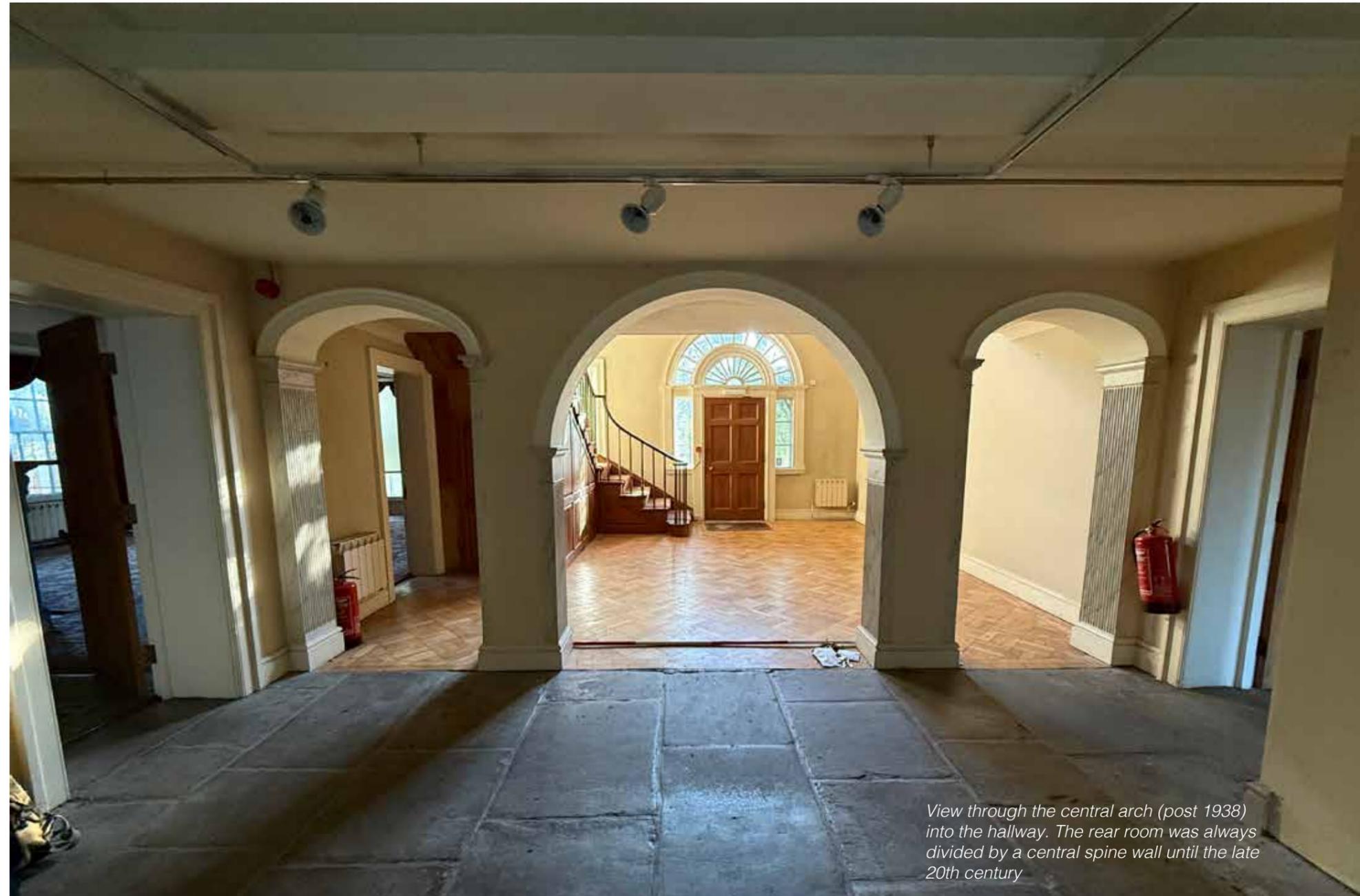


Hallway c1900

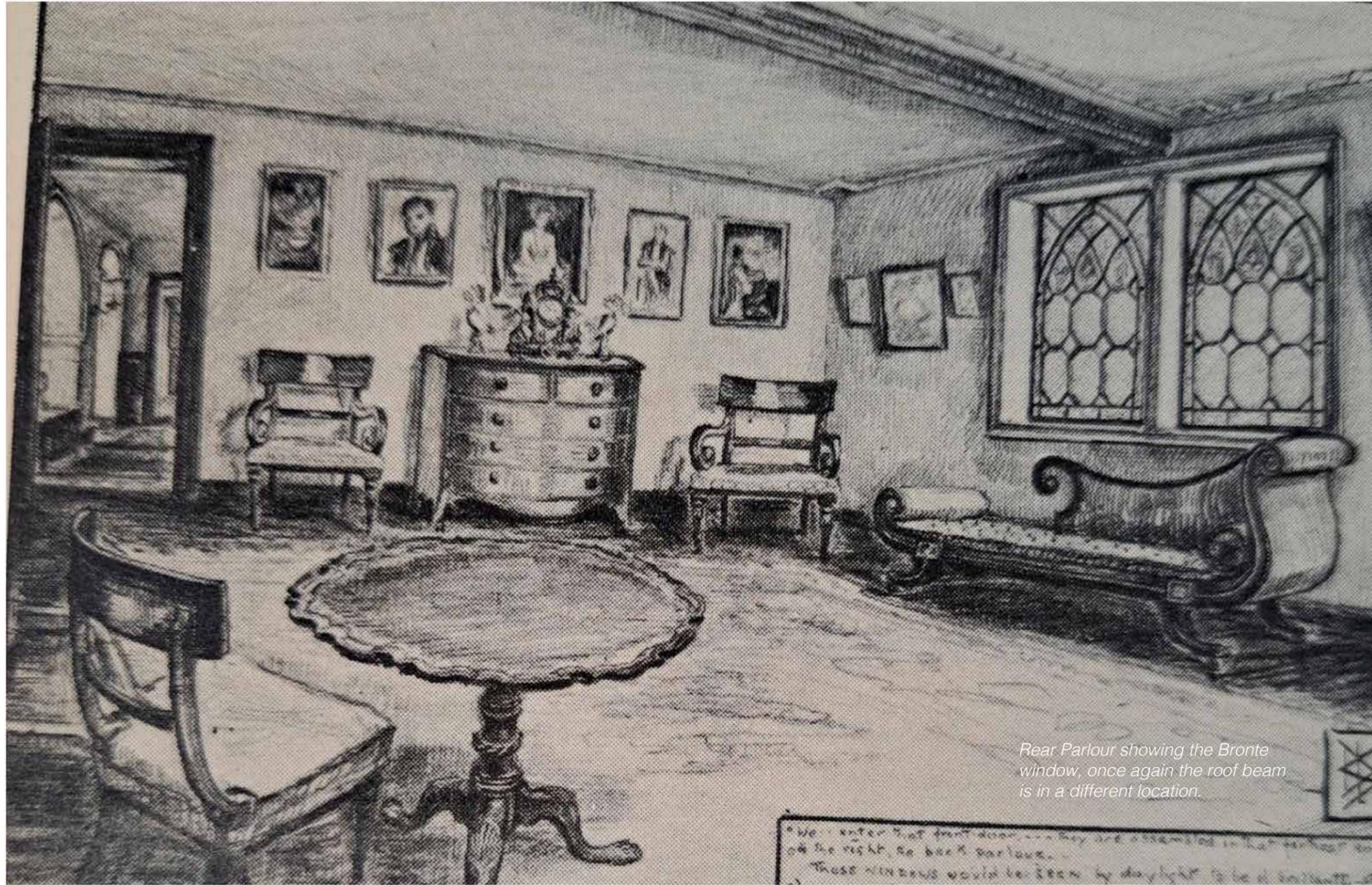




The main hallway is largely unchanged from the time of the photos. What is clear is the presence of the two arches being opened up sometime around the time of the early 20th century changes or later, perhaps under the ownership of the Sykes family. Even so the sketch of Dorothy Hall shows the central arch serving what appears to be a spine corridor through the house. This would demark the front and rears of the building and may help understanding the chronology of the building as one of cells accessed off a central spine. Kirkless removed this wall to open up the rear area of the house to act as their museum gift shop.



View through the central arch (post 1938) into the hallway. The rear room was always divided by a central spine wall until the late 20th century



Rear Parlour showing the Bronte window, once again the roof beam is in a different location.

We enter that front door... they are assembled in that parlour and on the right the back parlour.
These windows would be seen by daylight to be a different...



Rear Parlour Today

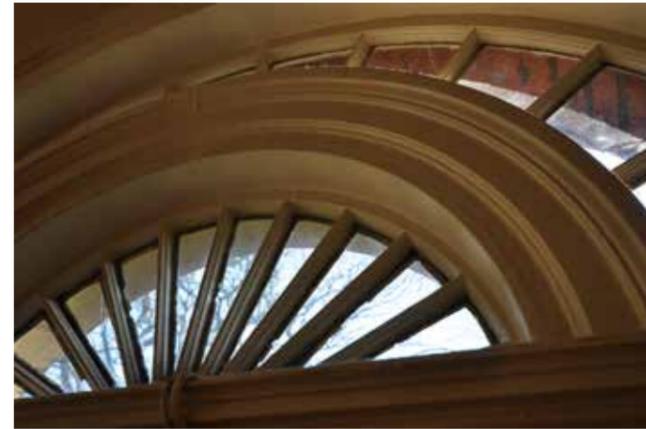
Front West Parlour Today



Central bedroom chamber that was raised to increase the size of the parlour beneath.

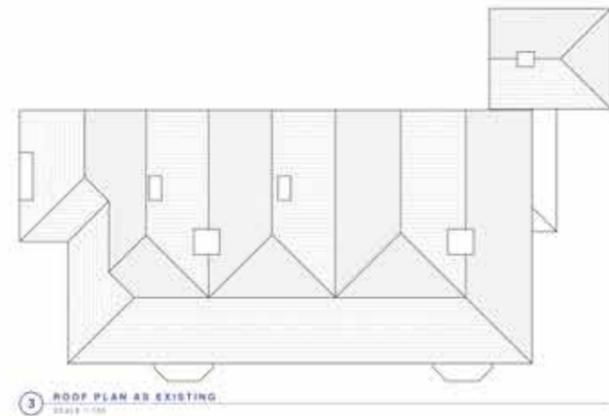
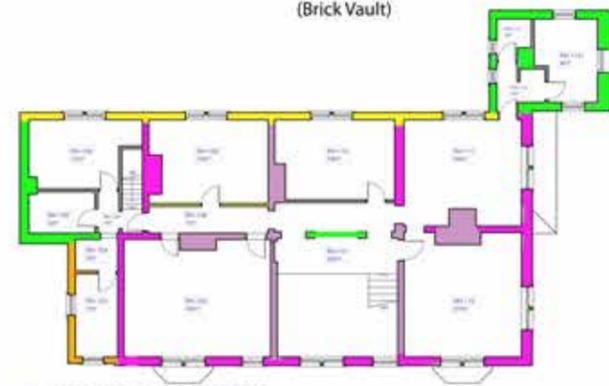
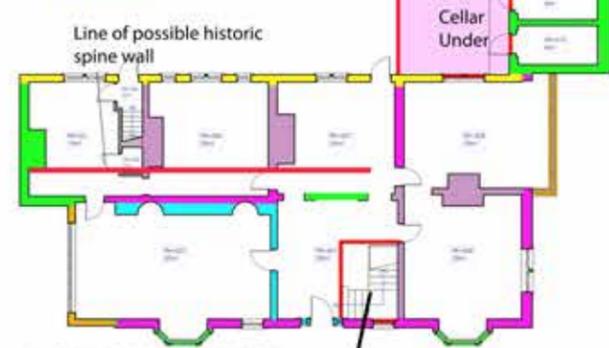


The disappointment of the roof space, which has been decimated of any historic fabric or any valuable dating evidence.



Selection of details from the building

RED HOUSE



TOILET BLOCK

8 GROUND FLOOR PLAN AS EXISTING
SCALE 1:100

9 ROOF PLAN AS EXISTING
SCALE 1:100

10 WEST ELEVATION AS EXISTING
SCALE 1:100

11 NORTH ELEVATION AS EXISTING
SCALE 1:100

12 SOUTH ELEVATION AS EXISTING
SCALE 1:100

13 EAST ELEVATION AS EXISTING
SCALE 1:100

RED HOUSE Potential Phasing Plan
The Urban Glow

Legend:

- Likely First Phase Mid 17th Century
- Possible First Phase Mid 17thC
- Georgian Phase Early 19thC
- Likely Victorian (Late 19thC)
- Early 20th century
- Modern (Late 20thC) Alterations/Rebuild

NORTHLIGHT CONSULTANTS

BP Land Ltd

Red House, 29 Colton Road, Gomersal, Cleckheaton, BD19 4JP

Red House & Toilet Block Plans & Elevations as Existing

PLANNING APPLICATION

As Shown DG

Jan 25

24.034/ (EX)02

DISCUSSION

Red House is undoubtedly an important building. It not only represents tangible evidence and intangible values related to the Brontes but also epitomises the character of this part of Yorkshire in what became, arguably, its hey day. The association of this site with the early transition from small scale weaving, to more industrial scale manufacturing, together with it being the seat of one of the main local families behind this change, and the income and money that came with it, makes this site very important.

Ultimately this site represents the thoughts of many local people that the Heavy Woollen District was not simply an 'industrial' area to be dismissed or forgotten about, but it was, together with nearby Leeds, Halifax and Bradford, a core component of what made modern Britain great.

It is now rare to find such buildings that so many local people have knowledge of. Through its life as a museum it made an impact upon school children throughout the area and its strong connection to Charlotte Bronte enabled people to see for themselves what this area was truly like before it became so overrun with unrestrained development of the late 20th century.

The house is, just about, still legible as having a 17th century core, even though only few elements of this building now survive. The Georgian character that was so precious to the past custodians of the building is still present, but has been very much altered with lots of artistic licence in the features within the building. Indeed, so little historic fabric remains within Red House itself that it is really only the walls, room divisions and the footprint of the building that maintain any resemblance to where the Taylor's (or the Yorkes) once lived.

Nevertheless, the historic images we have provide enough evidence for us to directly relate to these spaces and to feel the intangible qualities that those past inhabitants and visitors left behind. The fabric has been

altered, the roof gone and the rear elevation rebuilt, but, the house itself remains, like the ship of Theseus, restored but still the same(?)

In terms of significance, despite the plethora of alterations, this building still retains much of it. But, its historic fabric has been so altered as to make it fruitless in trying to preserve a 'Georgian aesthetic' that is largely false. Yes, there are rooms and features left that relate to this period, but the building has so much more to offer and therefore likely has capacity for change..

Outside, it has been demonstrated that this site has evolved and altered many times through its long history. The site is now read as one of east and west, even though the division between these two halves was always a practical one. These buildings that are now the principal elements of the site do therefore have scope for sensitive extension were it to be needed.

The areas of sensitivity are ofcourse now the garden and the western foldyard as well as the trees, however the history of this site demonstrates clearly that the site does not, and has never existed in one time period and that by managing this future change sensitively, Red House can once again thrive and remain a key part of the communities who's histories are so merged with that of the Taylor's and of Red House.

Conclusion

Red House is a building of high significance but equally has a fair capacity for change and high potential for Positive Enhancement.



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