

THE ABBEY MANOR GROUP LTD

The centre of the Headquarters of the Abbey Manor Group is Abbey Farm, the largest and finest ancient secular building in Yeovil, with its barn, it is listed as a Grade 1 protected building by the Department of the Environment and scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

This old Manor House, built at the very latest by 1420, appears today very much the same as it did 570 years ago. Between 1841 and 1847 the Hall roof was lowered and the tall dais window shortened. The small projecting wing to the west was added then and a gable to the north of the porch removed. Other rooms seem to have existed to the south-east of the Hall and these were demolished at the same time.

Following a fire in the 1920's, the Hall and dais window were restored to their original height. In 1940 German bombs narrowly missed the buildings. Repair work by F. R. Bartlett Limited in 1951 included restoration of some stone tiles and timbers in the house and barn, new finials and renovation of the fine octagonal louvre chimney stack.

The restored Hall now has had an extra upper floor inserted. It is possible that such a floor had existed formerly. A fireplace has been opened up in the south wall on this new floor and a fine carved wood seventeenth century chimney-piece erected. The handsome two-storied porch has a ribbed vaulted ceiling and an old door, leading to the cross passage in which are two good original doorways. Good windows show in the northern wing to the west. Unfortunately most of the interior was drastically altered in earlier years so that little of its former character is left, but recent renovation has brought to light several medieval details which have been retained in the new internal layout.

The splendid barn, 104 feet long, is one of the largest in Somerset. It has ten bays with buttresses, between which are tall cruciform slits serving as windows. Most of the original roof timbers have survived.