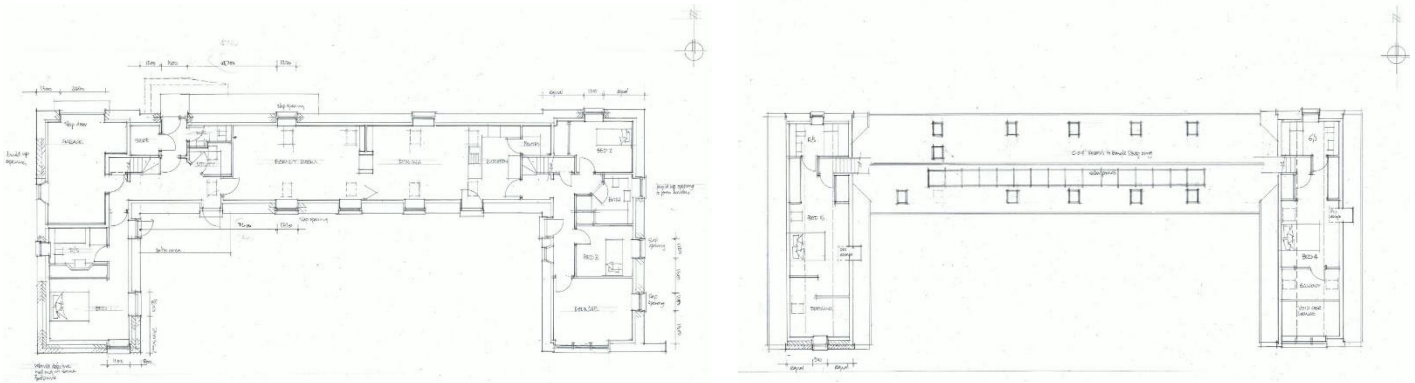


October 2015 – Planning Permission

Our architect had drawn up plans for the revised planning permission, we liked them. The gable-end wall is to be rebuilt on the same line as the one we took down. There are five bedrooms. One each in the upstairs of the west and east legs of the steading, with en-suites and through-rooms – one a 'study' and the other the gallery that overlooks our big picture window. There is a master bedroom downstairs at one end and two in the other end with the family bathroom. Under the gallery is a sitting room. The long north leg houses a large kitchen/family room (with pantry) and a separate dining/living room. The remaining space is garage, a utility room and a plant room. The floor area will be about 250 square m.

We asked him to go ahead and submit the applications for planning permission and building warrant (the detailed plans for the building,) with the expectation of getting them cleared for next May 2016.

They duly popped up on the Aberdeenshire Council website and went out to consultation. The possible causes of additional expenditure did not happen. No bat survey because we had already taken the roof off. No contribution to local services because the local school has spare capacity. Increasing bedrooms from 3 to 5 meant that we should pay a charge, but they decided it was too small to be worth collecting!

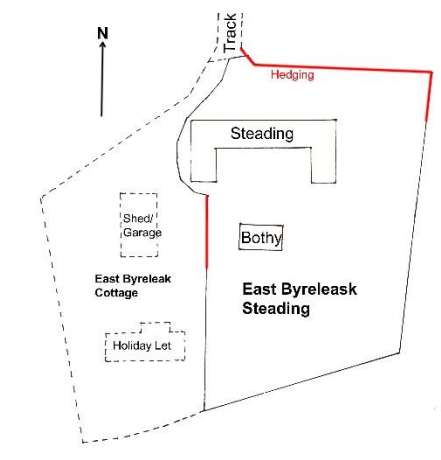


November 2015 – Hedging

We had already planned to run mixed native hedging along the north side of our property as soon as we reasonably could, so that we would have some shelter by the time we moved in. Back in September we bought rolls of 2m wide weed membrane and laid them just inside our fence, from our track, across the north side and down the east side until we ran into our piles of bricks, granite and waste – some 60m. We used ex-roof timbers to

weigh it down rather than the puny plastic pegs provided, having a fair idea of what winter gales are capable of. We put a roll of windbreak netting up on the fence mesh using cable ties.

In October we looked around for bare-root hedging and, rather oddly, ended up buying from Eddie Krutysza at



Jill & Andy Walker



Hattens Farm Nursery, Metfield - the far side of Bungay. He gets his stock from the Netherlands, probably where many other UK sellers get theirs. He was significantly better value, with a wide choice of species.

We took one of his 'standard mixes', reduced the proportion of Hawthorn and added some extras – around 330 whips in total. We also got a number of tree to plant amongst the hedge, particularly where we would want to more screening – for example the large garage in the next property. So we bought **Field Maple, Amelanchier Lamarkii, Hornbeam,**

Common Dogwood, Hazel, Coryllus Maxima Purpurea, Cotoneaster Bullatus, Hawthorn, Spindle, Beech, Holly, Crab Apple, Cherry Plum, Bird Cherry, Alder Buckthorn, Buckthorn, Dogwood, Wayfaring, Guelder Rose, Red Maple, Italian Alder, Paper Bark Birch, Silver Birch, Copper Beech, Liquidamber Styracifula, Purple Cherry Plum, Blackthorn, Wild Pear and Red Oak!

Everything was ready to go when we arrived on site. We had allowed ourselves three days to get everything in the ground, this turned out to be challenging. The ground was very variable, with longish stretches where we more of less had to forge planting holes out of compacted trackway, buried concrete and bouldery ground. The weather played its part. A day of strong winds which at one point blew the whips out of their holes faster than we could tread them in. A day of heavy rain. Then a day of horizontal rain i.e. windy **and** wet.

We had read up on planting bare root hedging and started out by the book – nice wide holes, spreading the roots out, covering with loose soil, watering and gently heeling it all in. It quickly became clear that we would run out of time, so we optimised our technique...



We used our Post Hole Bar to make a narrow hole up to a foot deep, watered the hole to soften the ground up, pushed in a whip and a bamboo cane, heeled it all in, then put a spiral tree guard around the whip and bamboo. We got bit of economy doing batches of 20 or so at a time.

We planted the whips in two rows about 50cm apart, each plant spaced at about 50cm, in groups of 5 plants of the same species. The future trees we put about 5m apart. We covered the northern boundary on the second day, with rather less than half the plants left over, so we put more weed membrane down the west boundary and carried on until we ran out.

We got there, late on the third day and were able to head back down south with a clear conscience, but also a good deal of trepidation over whether we had been nice enough to the plants for them to survive and flourish.