

HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT OF  
BARN AT  
ECKINGTON FIELDS FARM, ECKINGTON,  
WORCESTERSHIRE

WSM46064



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# Historic Building Assessment of barn at Eckington Fields Farm, Eckington, Worcestershire WSM46064

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## Summary

*A historic building assessment was undertaken at Eckington Fields Farm in November 2011 by Mike Napthan Archaeology in response to the proposed conversion of the barn to two dwellings. The "barn" (WSM 42205) is actually a composite range of buildings of different periods and functions centred on a true barn. The present report considers the whole range. The barn forms the centre of a comparatively large farmstead site which was developed on the former common field of Eckington, then known as "Norton Side Field" shortly after the Inclosures. The farmhouse, which lies at the southern end of the farm yard, and its outbuildings were not included in the present survey, nor were the other historic structures of the farmstead which include a partially timber framed stable, former cart-house, three farmworker's cottages and an associated pig sty. The western and northern sides of the farmstead are still partially enclosed by a high stone wall, which also forms the back of the cattle byres along the western side of the fold-yard. To the east there are early 20<sup>th</sup> C dutch barns and modern portal frame buildings serving the working farm.*

*There is cartographic evidence, apparently pre-dating the creation of the present farmstead, dating from circa 1811-12, when the whole parish was surveyed in detail by Nathaniel Izod for the Inclosure Award plan of 1813. Izod was an established local surveyor, and may be considered reliable by the standards of his time – he marks all the buildings in the village of Eckington, and the absence of buildings on the present plot is fairly conclusive evidence that the farmstead was not yet established. The next piece of cartographic evidence is the county map by Greenwood published in 1822, and this does show a small group of buildings on the site of the present farmstead, giving a fairly close indication of the dating of the farmstead.*

*The present range consists of a three-bay brick built former waggon-house with granary loft above at the north end, the main barn (of five bays with threshing porch) in the centre, and a brick built pig-cote, with loft over at the southern end of the range. The eastern and western sides of the barn and waggon house are also flanked by lean-to shelters, the most substantial of which is presently disused pig sties.*

*The waggon-house is of early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> C brick construction, with a traditionally framed roof, and substantial granary floor on oak bridging beams. The building was originally open-fronted to the west, but there is now a stud-wall clad in corrugated iron enclosing this face. The present ground-floor windows and doorways are all later 19<sup>th</sup> C insertions, probably contemporary with the closure of the western side. An inserted doorway provides communication with the main barn. A likely date for the waggon-house is circa 1830.*

*The barn is partially stone built, the gable ends being stone up to tie-beam level, and the side walls almost entirely stone up to girth-beam level. The exterior faces are neatly coursed squared blocks of Bredon Hill limestone, the interior random rubble. The eastern face of the plinth wall is capped with a chamfered ashlar coping, which is omitted on the western side of the building, except on the exposed portion of the sides of the threshing porch. The southern gable end has ventilation slits at two levels. Just below girth-beam level on both sides of the building the construction internally changes to brick, forming a level base for the wall-plates of the timber framing. The eastern wall of the northern two bays is entirely brick up to eaves level.*

*The eastern wall of the southern two bays is of traditional pegged box framing infilled with brick. The west facing elevation is crudely framed, and the exterior is weather-boarded. There is a projecting central threshing porch to this elevation, and this is very crudely framed, with brick infill. The threshing floor, and most of the floor of the southern half of the barn are stone flagged. The barn roof is of a composite open-truss design, with widely spaced queen-posts which are shouldered for short side-struts. The trusses are oak, and entirely pegged with small diameter pegs. They rest on storey posts with log square jowls. In its character the roof framing would be generally considered as mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> C. An interesting feature is the use of red chalk (or raddle) carpenter's assembly marks rather than the traditional figure incised with the chisel or rase-knife. Ephemeral markings such as these are more characteristic of late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> C carpentry. The first-floor structure is substantially framed, the outer ends of the joists being carried on the wall-plates, and the inner ends on a central spine-beam supported on earth-fast posts. The solidity of these floors (which occupy the four end bays) suggest that they were intended for use as a granary. Original side doors to the end bays have been blocked, and subsequently shafting was installed to power belt driven machinery (such as chaff-cutters) – the shafting remains in situ. Overall the building is constructed in a traditional style that might be as early as the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, however the use of brick of distinctive early 19<sup>th</sup> C character beneath the wall plates of the timber framing throughout the building tends to confirm the c1811-1821 date range offered by the cartographic evidence. This dating seems also to be broadly confirmed by the use of chalk or raddle carpenters marks on the roof framing, which would be indicative of a later 18<sup>th</sup> –to mid 19<sup>th</sup> C date. Oak was increasingly scarce as a building material by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> C, and very rarely used as widely as in the present building after the 1780s. Its use here suggests a fairly wealthy land-owner.*

*Overall the original farmstead appears to have been developed between c.1811 and the 1830s, with other buildings added subsequently, and some partial losses through re-building. The present range dates from c1811 to c1870, with the eastern lean-to shelters added some time before 1903 and subsequently modified. The west facing lean-tos appear to be integral with the original barn design (excepting the northern section), but have been heavily repaired/rebuilt since. Despite widespread later repairs/modification these structures are worthy of retention, particularly as they serve to protect the western elevation from the weather, and this was part of the builder's original purpose*

*The barn's significance particularly lies in the late date at which traditional techniques and materials were still being used. These partly reflect the location, a short distance from a suitable stone quarry, and on the border of the area in which the Cotswold tradition of barn construction persisted to the beginning of the industrial age. The barn has suffered some alterations and repairs, but retains much of its original character, though externally obscured by the later lean-to shelters to the east. The waggon-house/granary is a fairly common building form of the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> C, and the present example is somewhat mutilated by later 19<sup>th</sup> C alterations, though the granary remains largely unspoilt. The pig cote is a rather poor example of a later 19<sup>th</sup> C farmyard building, modified and in very poor condition. It tends to detract from the building range by concealing the fine stone gable end of the barn, which was originally intended to be seen.*

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 An archaeological building assessment and rapid photographic record was undertaken by Mike Napthan Archaeology at the barn, Eckington Fields Farm, Eckington, Worcs. Eckington Fields Farm, Hollands Road, Eckington, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 92900 40603 : Fig 1) The project is based upon a brief supplied by Mike Glyde of WHEAS (November 9th 2011, Planning reference W/11/2245. A planning application has been submitted to Wychavon District Council by Mrs Robinson via her agent Darren Hall Architects Ltd (Planning Reference W/11/2245). The application proposes the change of use from redundant agricultural barn to two semi detached residential dwellings, each with separate garage / storage buildings, and associated works. The development affects buildings of intrinsic historic, architectural and archaeological interest, which are registered on the Historic Environment Record (WSM42205). The buildings are not however listed. This report is not a definitive summary of the archaeological and historical resources within the farm as a whole, but may be considered as a guide to the architectural significance and history of the eastern and northern ranges of buildings around the original farm yard.

- 1.2 The site location is just to the south of the village of Eckington in an area of gently sloping farmland between the edge of the Avon flood-plain and the lower slopes of Bredon Hill. The sub-soils are sands and fan gravel giving way to the richer soils of the Vale of Evesham to the north and west. The Vale area is of Lias clay with free draining base rich clay soils and a rolling lowland topography. The land use is a mix of regular arable and pastoral regular fields.
- 1.3 This report represents the findings of the building assessment (WSM46064). The project was designed to provide a reliable and independent assessment of the historical and architectural value of the buildings. The project design was prepared in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). Codes of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists will be adhered to, as will English Heritage guidelines, notably "Understanding Historic buildings a guide to good recording" EH 2006.

## 2 Aims

- 2.1 The aims of the building assessment were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of the historic structures in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature of the built resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, state of preservation and quality)

These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- i) to define and identify the nature of the farm buildings, and date their construction where possible;
- ii) to attempt to characterize the constructional sequence and recover as much information as possible about the internal features and fabric surviving .
- iii) to determine the likely impact of any future development on the archaeological resource and suggest any mitigation required where appropriate.

## 3 Methodology

- 3.1 Cartographic and published historical sources were searched for information relating to the site and its environs. There is little historic mapping available for the area, other than the 1813 Inclosure Awards plan (Fig 2), and general county maps such as Christopher Greenwoods map of 1822 (Fig 3). There is a sale plan of 1877(Fig 4), and an undated farm plan (probably of the 1880s, with pencil additions (such as the extension to the house built c1890) sketched in (Fig 6). The later mapping primarily consists of the Ordnance Surveys of 1885 onwards. Trade directories were consulted from copies held "in house" and those held in Worcester Family History Centre. A search of the County Councils' HER database revealed very few records, mainly relating to Listed buildings, but little previous archaeological fieldwork in the vicinity of the site. In the near absence of trades directory data, a search was made for entries in the Census for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1891(all held "in house" on CDROM). Searches at the County Record Office were restricted to the bare basics because of the present closure for re-location. Special dispensation was granted to access three key documents, but a wider trawl of sources indexed as non-specific "Eckington deeds etc" was not possible. Detailed searches were made on line for documents in other public repositories with some success. See Appendix for a chronology of sources.
- 3.2 The survey was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011. A basic photographic record was made, and selected details recorded on the architects survey drawings (survey by AD Horner Ltd, 2009). The building descriptions were compiled using the photographs as a reference. The photographic archive accompanies this report on DVD.

#### 4 Archaeological background

- 4.1 The present site has not been the subject of any previous archaeological intervention. This part of the parish has had little archaeological study. Aerial photographs, and Google Earth satellite imagery, show extensive ridge and furrow to the north east and west of the farmstead (WSM 10450, WSM 10495, WSM 10499, WSM 10506), there is also crop-mark evidence for a rectangular enclosure to the NE of the farmstead (WSM 09781). Possibly related to the latter is an Iron Age metalwork findspot WSM33006 close to the field-barn about 800m NEE of the present site. Finds of various periods have been recovered during fieldwalking in this area (WSM 07281), no distinct clusters have been noted and these are likely to be part of a widespread pattern of prehistoric and Roman activity in the Avon Valley and around Bredon Hill.
- 4.2 Historic Environment Record numbers have recently been created for the majority of historic structures on the farmstead, although the records lack in detail. The range of three farmworkers cottages (the eastern two being now combined) are recorded as WSM27106. All three are brick, with tile roofs, the westernmost being of early 19<sup>th</sup> C date, and the remainder mid 19<sup>th</sup> C. At least two cottages were present by the time of the 1841 Census. There are outhouses to either end of the range, and a mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> C pigsty in the back garden of one cottage. All are presently disused.
- 4.3 The farm house is listed on the HER as WSM42204, and erroneously described as “18th? century brick and limestone farmhouse. Rendered and covered in 20th century faux timber” – the building is all of brick, only part rendered, and the “faux timber” is late 19<sup>th</sup> C. The core of the building is probably circa 1815-25, extensions were made in several stages, and the building reached it’s present size before 1903. Associated with it is a carriage house/stable wing of brick, present before 1877, and probably circa 1850s. Amongst the other farm buildings (WSM42205) there are a three-bay stable block, the northern elevation of which is timber framed with brick infill on a stone plinth. There is also a modified cart-house, which appears to have been reduced in length – very similar framed roof trusses are stored in the barn. These might also derive from the former cattle byres along the western side of the foldyard, which have been re-roofed in recent times, though retaining the stone built western wall which encompasses the north and west sides of the farmstead. These structures all appear to be early 19<sup>th</sup> C in origin, but have not been examined in detail.

#### 5 Historical background

- 5.1 Eckington lies on the southern boundary of the county, on the east bank of the River Avon. The parish is also watered by the Hammock Ditch, a small tributary of the Avon. The ground falls from Bredon Hill in the southeast, where a height of about 950 ft. is reached, to the bank of the Avon, where the land is liable to floods. The present site lies just above the floodplain. Eckington contained in 1913 2,168 acres, of which 1,520½ acres were permanent grass and the remainder mainly arable land. Much of it is under cultivation by market gardeners. The parish lies on the Lower Lias, and the chief crops grown were wheat, barley, beans and fruit. There was formerly a stone quarry at Wollashull, about 2km east of the present site.
- 5.2 Eckington formed part of the original endowments of Pershore Abbey, 16 manses here being said to have been restored by King Edgar's charter of 972. It was again lost by this church, being granted to the abbey of Westminster by Edward the Confessor with part of the manor of Pershore. In 1086 4 hides less 1 virgate at Eckington were held of the abbey of Westminster by the Sheriff Urse, and had been previously held by Dunning. This estate was held of the abbey by the sheriff's descendant William Beauchamp in the 12th century. The overlordship of the abbey was acknowledged until the beginning of the 15th century, when the greater part of the estate was acquired by the abbot in fee.
- 5.3 The date at which the abbots began to farm out the land which they had in 1086 held in demesne is not known, but it was before 1193–5, when William de Leigh held the manor. The property held by William de Leigh in 1193–5 may have been identical with half a knight's fee in Hindlip and Eckington which was recovered by Margaret de Hindlip in 1196 against John D'Abitot and Maud his wife. In 1288 Sir William Poer granted to Walter Berthover or Berton the manor of Eckington

for an annual rent of £30 to himself and his heirs, and an annual rent of 13 marks to the Abbot of Westminster. Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, sold or mortgaged the manor to William Parsons, who is said to have purchased it in 1542–3, and William was succeeded by his son Ralph Parsons of Overbury. According to a statement made by the defendants in a suit of 1569, Ralph Parsons on 23 June 1559 conveyed the manor to his brother John, but the conveyance referred to is probably one of a moiety of the manor made in 1562 by Ralph Parsons to John Parsons. John Parsons shortly after granted certain tenements in the manor to Richard Pates and John Richardson, who seem afterwards to have acquired the manor, for in 1573 they were in possession of it, and in 1583–4. John Richardson and his wife Dorothy sold it to John Russell of Strensham. It then followed the descent of Strensham until 1697, when Sir Francis Russell gave it as part of the endowment of the almshouses at Strensham (VCH IV, pp. 68-76).

- 5.4 A mill was held by Urse at the date of the Domesday Survey. This passed with his holding to the Earls of Warwick, and was granted by Guy Earl of Warwick in 1302–3 to James Russell of Strensham. It followed the descent of the Russell estate, but was reserved when that manor was given to the almshouses at Strensham, and Sir Francis Russell left it by his will (1705) to his wife. The mill survived into the late 19<sup>th</sup> C and its occupants are recorded on the census returns generally immediately before Fields Farm, as it was the most southerly habitation in the parish.
- 5.5 On 14 September 1538 the Abbot and convent of Pershore demised to Edward Morgan, late of Comberton, the reversion of the tithes of corn and hay in the parish of Eckington, with the reversion of the tithe grange there, immediately after the death, forfeiture or yielding up of William Vampage (in whose tenure they were) for three years. At the Dissolution the tithes of grain and hay belonged to Pershore Abbey and were valued at £12 13s. 4d. In August 1542 the tithes and tithe grange in Eckington (the latter in the tenure of William Vampage) were granted to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, and remained in their possession until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (VCH IV, pp. 68-76).
- 5.6 The area of the present site remained as open common field, known as Norton Side Field (due to its neighbouring the parish of Bredon's Norton) into the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The few available deeds relating to this area from the 18<sup>th</sup> C (eg a marriage settlement of 1721 relating to the marriage of the daughter of Ann Watkins (widow) to the son of Thomas Hyatt – WRO BA10051 ref 705:183) describe a very complex pattern of land ownership, each holding consisting of dispersed strips of land spread across the various common fields, some if not most holdings also carried the right of pasturage for a set number of beasts in the common meadows, which lay within the floodplain.
- 5.7 A document, dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 1795 (also WRO BA10051 ref 705:183) throws light on the way in which the common field strips, mostly held under copyhold leases from the lord of the manor, were gradually becoming the free-hold property of individuals during the 18<sup>th</sup> C. The document is an indenture between Margaret Leonard of Thornbury (Glos.) and one Lot Cope of Pershore. The property had come to Margaret by bequest from her sister Ann Farnolls, and appears to be an agreement for Lot Cope to “*soon as conveniently may be sell and dispose of the said sixth part or shares of the said messuages or tenements [and lands appertaining]...for the best prices*”. In return for a share of the proceeds Lot Cope paid Margaret £100 up front on the day of the agreement, and there was an arrangement for the overplus of the money from the sale (if over £100) to be divided between Lot and Margaret’s executors or administrators. This appears to suggest that Margaret was expecting to die before the sale was completed. The lands relating to the present Fields Farm property involved in this transaction were “*...an orchard situate on the north side of Eckington Field adjoining a lane called Hacketts and containing 1 acre, and also those 6 cow pastures, one horse pasture and 30 sheep pasture at Eckington appertaining to said hereditments & premises some of which said arable meadows and pasture are now in the occupation of Thomas White as tenant thereof...*” As White subsequently appears as farmer of Field Farm it would appear probable that parts of the lands sold on behalf of Margaret Leonard became part of Field Farm, but the whole land-ownership of the parish was about to be comprehensively re-arranged. An Inclosure Act for Eckington was passed in 1810, the award being dated 22 May 1813. The purpose of the act was to create a new pattern of ownership where the dispersed strips of land were exchanged and re-exchanged to form contiguous land parcels made up of several former striplands, which could then be farmed as larger fields, ideally arranged around a central farmstead. Outlying farms, other than Woollas Hall, appear to have been unknown in Eckington prior to the Inclosures, everyone lived in the village as it was central to

striplands dispersed about the parish. The Inclosure map of 1813, (Fig 2; WRO BA4341 ref s850) shows the newly consolidated holdings. The present property was one of the largest holdings in the parish, and was granted to Joseph B Tidmarsh by way of exchange. He already held part of the property as freehold, and therefore acquired extra adjacent holdings to form the present farm. His holding ran right down to the Avon, and this farm remained almost exactly the same area in 1877 (Fig 4). Little is known about Tidmarsh – the family had holdings in Kemerton and Overbury, and Hannah Tidmarsh, Widow of Overbury whose will was dated 27 April 1846 (PRO PROB 11/2035) was probably Joseph's wife. Tidmarsh appears to have been the person who owned the land at the time the farmstead was created, but it is unclear whether he ever farmed here himself. It is probable that the farm was constructed to be let to tenant farmers, which would explain the solidity of construction.

- 5.8 No documents are available that show how the farm came into the hands of the White family, but they could have been the original tenants. A magistrates court record of 1820 is the earliest reference that may relate to Fields Farm: Quarter Sessions Midsummer 1820: *Stable of Thomas White, Eckington, farmer broken into & hair cut from tails of 8 cart horses: suspects Matthew Attwood: John Carr, foreman to Mr. Rodgers, Worcester, hair manufacturer who bought hair from Attwood, who denies.* (WRO 1/1/643/137 [n.d.]). A few years later White himself appeared in court - 30 Nov. 1824 *Indictment and judgement of Thomas White of Eckington, yeoman, for keeping a greyhound in Eckington to kill game* (WRO BA5/ii ref 705:183). The earliest solid evidence for White's presence at the present property is Bentleys Directory of circa 1840-1 which lists "*Thomas White Farmer - The Field*". The Census of 1841 confirms this and gives White's age as 75 (nb: in this census ages were rounded to nearest 5yrs for adults), an age at which he is very unlikely to have recently taken on a new farm. For details of his household see Appendix 1. The Will of Thomas White, Farmer of Eckington, Worcestershire was dated 19 December 1846 (PRO PROB 11/2047). By 1851 (Census) his son George White, was head of household at Field Farm, aged 53, farmer of 260 acres, with 5 labourers, his mother then aged 88 was still living with him. In 1856 he appears to have had a farm-sale. A small notebook dated 1856 recording the "*Particulars of stock and implements of Geo. White, of Eckington, (Worcs.), farmer*", with purchasers and sale prices is held by Gloucestershire Archives (ref D2079/V/34). Cassey's Directory of c.1860-61 lists George White as still a farmer in Eckington, but without location, so he may have left Field Farm at the time of the sale (his father had acquired other land in the parish by purchase at the time of the Inclosure Award). The next occupant that can be traced was John Godfree, who in 1857 took out a fire insurance policy relating to his agricultural produce in Eckington (WRO BA 8779/13/iii/26 ref 705:414). This is likely to relate to Field Farm, but is not presently checkable due to the Record Office closure. The 1861 Census lists "*Eckington Field John Godfree, head, aged 23, farmer of 229 acres*". He lived with his sister and a household that included a groom amongst other domestic servants, so was clearly fairly wealthy despite his youth. His tenure of the property was apparently fairly brief as by 1861 (Census) he had been replaced by Philip H Gibbs, then aged 60. Gibbs had married into the Holland family, as is clear from the Census, and it is possible that the property had belonged to the Hollands who had owned property in this area since at least 1813 – "*an indenture between Samuel Barnes of Tewkesbury, co. Glouc., gent., and Robert Holland of Tewkesbury, co. Glouc., innholder, concerning money matters arising from a mortgage of premises and land in Eckington, co. Worc*". (Birmingham City Archives MS 3192/Acc1930-009/363086) By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> C the Holland-Martin family owned very extensive estates around Bredon Hill, which still survive as extensive land holdings of the Overbury Estates.

- 5.9 In 1877 Philip Henry Gibbs sold the "Eckington Fields Estate" – (Figs 4 and 5), copies of the sale particulars are held by WRO and a further copy at the Shakespeare Centre Library (ref. no. ER6/214/1] DR 165/1154 10 July 1877). This document includes both a plan of the estate and a brief description (see Figs 4 and 5). It is of interest that the house is described as "*newly and substantially erected*" – this may be an exaggeration as the house appears to be earlier 19<sup>th</sup> C in origin, and was marked (as far as can be deduced from the small scale map) on Greenwood's map of 1822. It is possible that either Godfree or Gibbs had the house substantially extended. As Godfree kept a groom, resident in the house, it is likely that the carriage house/stable block (with servant's accommodation over) were built 1857-61.

The next occupier of the house may have been Joseph Holland, who was listed as a farmer at an unspecified property in Eckington in Owen's Directory of 1881. He had been living at Field Farm

in 1871, aged 19, with his uncle by marriage Phillip Gibbs, so it is not improbable that he may have purchased the property in 1877 or acquired it through a family arrangement if it failed to sell. He appears again in relation to the farm in a listing of 1893, as “*Mary and Joseph Holland Eckington Fields Farm 1893*” – unfortunately the source for this snippet is not listed on the website where it was seen. Probably during his tenure a carriage drive was laid out across the field to the west of the house, and a gate created at the junction of the Eckington Road with Holland Road (the name of which is evidence of the family’s local influence). The carriage drive appears on the 1884 mapping (but not the 1877 plan), as do a number of specimen trees (some of which survive) laid out to form a parkland setting. The original ornate wooden gate to this drive is retained in the buildings. The drive has subsequently been grassed over.

- 5.10 Kelly’s Directory of 1884 does not list any occupants for Fields Farm, and it is likely that it was being managed by an agent or bailiff. Farm bailiffs were not regularly listed in trades directories. The 1891 Census lists the head of the household as “*Joel E Govett, 35, Farm Bailiff*” and Kelly’s Directory of 1892 adds the information that Govett was farm bailiff to Richard Allen Esq. He remained here till at least 1896 (Kelly’s Directory 1896). By 1900 the farm had been acquired by Bertram Hutchinson (Kelly’s Directory 1900 and 1904). He lasted only a few years, but perhaps was the resident who added a “billiards room” to the farm-house around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and added the mock timbering to the west front. By 1908 the farmer was R H Jackson (Kelly’s Directory 1908), who farmed here until the First World War. Edward Herridge acquired the farm between 1916 and 1921, and together with his brother farmed it until 1959. In 1959 it was acquired by the present owners.

## 8 The standing buildings

### 8.1 *The Waggon House*

The waggon-house stands at the northern end of the range and is of early-mid 19th C brick construction on a low plinth of local limestone slabs. The three-bay building was originally open-fronted to the west, but there is now a relatively recent (?mid 20<sup>th</sup> C) stud-wall clad in corrugated iron enclosing this face. Jowled hardwood posts on the western side support a substantially built granary floor on oak bridging beams. The present ground-floor windows and doorways are all later 19th C insertions, probably contemporary with the initial closure of the western side. An inserted doorway provides communication with the main barn. A feature of the waggon house are two small niches at waist height, possibly intended to hold lanterns. At eaves level there is the granary, with a wide boarded floor, and boarded walls beneath the pitch of the roof. These isolate voids which are open to the waggon house below, and would serve to prevent vermin from entering via the eaves. Within the granary one large corn-bin survives (and parts of two more), and there is a fine planked door of 1830s date, complete with box lock and wooden latch. The roof is traditionally framed in oak or elm, with two “A” frame trusses, probably using the bridging beam below the floor as a tie-beam.. The north-facing window is in poor condition but appears to be in an original opening and may be original. A likely date for the waggon-house is circa 1830. Overall the wagon house is in relatively good condition, and the blocking of the western side appears readily removable should it be wished to use the building as a ready-made garage or carport

### 8.2 *The Barn*

- 8.2.1 The five bay barn is partially stone built, the gable ends being stone up to tie-beam level, and the side walls almost entirely stone up to girth-beam level (Figs 8 and 13-15). The exterior faces are neatly coursed squared blocks of Bredon Hill limestone, not strictly speaking ashlar, but close to it, particularly on the originally exposed north, south and eastern elevations. The eastern face of the plinth wall is capped with a chamfered ashlar coping, which is omitted on the western side of the building, except on the exposed portion of the sides of the threshing porch. The stonework of the west facing elevation is generally less well finished, probably because it was intended to be an internal face. There are two blocked pedestrian doorways in the extreme end bays on the eastern elevation. Both have been blocked and later windows have been inserted next to and partly across the original openings. There is a further blocked doorway on the western elevation in the northern bay. The southern gable end has four ventilation slits at two levels. There is no evidence of ventilation slits in the northern gable end, which implies that the waggon house may have been part of the original plan, though not built immediately. The flank walls of the threshing porch each have original pedestrian doorway openings; the doors in these openings are marked for

replacement with new doors on the plan reproduced as Figure 6. The interior of the main walls are random rubble. No brick appears to be included in the original stonework fabric. Just below girth-beam level on both sides of the building the construction internally changes to three or four courses of brick, forming a level base for the wall-plates of the timber framing. The eastern wall of the northern two bays is entirely brick up to eaves level. The bricks used are unfrosted hand made clamp fired brick with multiple through piercings (which were used to improve the thoroughness of the burning; Fig 17). Such bricks are generally found only in structures of the first two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> C, after which time brick manufacture became more industrialized, particularly with the invention of machine pressed, wire cut bricks in the 1840s (Davey & Roseff, 2007, 24). The position of the bricks beneath the wall plate implies either that the building superstructure has been entirely replaced (very unlikely) or that the brickwork was contemporary with the completion of the stone plinth, and used to form bonding courses tying the random rubble interior, rubble core, and exterior coursed stone together. It is uncertain whether the eastern wall of the northern two bays was always without framing, and it remains a distinct possibility that it has been rebuilt. The upper walls show some outward bulging (Fig 17) due to lateral pressure from the diagonal struts between the tiebeam soffits and storey-posts (which are fairly slender), and total failure of a framed wall not long after construction is a distinct possibility. Detailed examination was beyond the scope of this assessment.

- 8.2.2 The eastern wall of the southern two bays is of traditional pegged box framing infilled with brick. There is a diagonal brace at the southern end, and a former opening at high level, now partially filled by a later window. The west facing elevation is more crudely framed, and the exterior is weather-boarded. This wall appears to have served as a structural stud-partition, and was apparently not intended as an external wall, its outer face being protected by the “catslide” or “lean-to” roof along the western elevation. There is a projecting central threshing porch to this elevation, and this is very crudely framed, with brick infill.
- 8.2.3 The barn roof is of a composite open-truss design, with widely spaced queen-posts which are shouldered for short side-struts. The trusses are apparently oak, and entirely pegged with small diameter pegs. They rest on storey posts with long square jowls. In its character the roof framing would be generally considered as mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> C, but even as early as the 1750s the absence of any iron-work (such as strapping and forelock bolts) might be considered a little out-moded. The carpenter here was clearly very competent at his craft, and perhaps was aware that oak is very corrosive of iron, so avoided its use. The shouldering of the queen-posts is a feature that comes into fashion in the later 18<sup>th</sup> C however, and becomes almost universal in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> C. An interesting feature of the roof is the use of red chalk (or raddle) carpenter’s assembly marks (Fig 17) rather than the traditional figure incised with the chisel or rase-knife. Ephemeral markings such as these alphabetical symbols are more characteristic of very late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> C carpentry. The change to ephemeral markings appears to be related to the widespread availability of mass-produced waterproof “tarpaulin” cloths (then known as Willesden canvases – Ayers 1998, 51) which could be used to protect the timbers from the weather whilst in the framing yard and during assembly. Prior to the mechanical mass-production of such covers it was inevitable that the frames and components would lie in the wet, and so it was necessary to permanently inscribe the markings. The use of letters rather than roman numerals also implies the increasingly literate workforce of the 19<sup>th</sup> C.
- 8.2.4 The threshing floor, and most of the floor of the southern half of the barn are stone flagged. The first-floor structure is substantially framed, the outer ends of the joists being carried on the wall-plates, and the inner ends on a central spine-beam supported on earth-fast posts. The solidity of these floors (which occupy the four end bays) suggests that they were intended for use as a granary. Against the eastern wall a wooden thresh-hold is stored. Original side doors to the end bays have been blocked, and subsequently shafting was installed to power belt driven machinery (such as chaff-cutters) – the shafting remains in situ, and some of the belting is still present. A belt driven chaff-cutter survives at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level. Until recently the eastern lean-to also housed a belt driven baler of c1920-30s vintage – this has been moved to one of the dutch barns. Within the building there are presently stored a fine pony trap of late 19<sup>th</sup> C date and a two wheel cart – the latter has clearly been acquired from another farm (Tirley, Glos). In another building on the site there is stored a horse-drawn spring-harrow of circa 1910-20.

### 8.3 *Western Lean-to*

8.3.1 The lean-to structures against the western elevation are much altered (Figs 8,10,13 and 18) but most of the principal posts are jowled to support the simple hardwood trusses of the over-roof, and stand on small stone bases. These elements appear to be original, although the intervening fabric of the outer wall has been widely replaced – in the case of the northern section the outer wall is largely clad in corrugated iron, weather-boarding only survives at the top of the wall. The southern section retains some weatherboarding, which has no doubt been replaced several times since the lean-tos were built. Both of these lean-tos appear to be integral with the barn as the form of the barn walling on this side suggests that it was not intended to be exposed to the prevailing westerly winds. The presence of side doorways in the threshing porch is also indicative that the lean-tos were original to the barn design. The lean-to against the waggon house is clearly much later, probably early 20<sup>th</sup> C, and of no architectural merit.

### 8.4 *Eastern Lean-to*

8.4.1 The two lean-to structures on the eastern elevation (Figs 8, 11, 13 and 18) are also late additions, that on the north end of the building probably added to protect a stationary engine to power the shafting. This structure is very late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> C in character. The south-east lean-to possibly has slightly earlier origins, but does not appear on the 1880s mapping. A re-used jowled post (head down) possibly relates to an earlier structure, but most of the fabric appears to be early 20<sup>th</sup> C. The southern end seems to have been used as a poultry house. Removal of the lean-tos from the eastern elevation would be a positive contribution to the appearance of the barn, though they have served to protect the framing from the weather.

### 8.5 *Pig-cote*

8.5.1 The pig-cote (Figs 8-11 and Fig 14) appears to be present on the 1880s plan (Fig 6) but must have been relatively recent at that date as it is not shown in 1877 (Fig 3). It is curiously bonded and in an under-fired brick, which suggests that it was the work of an amateur builder. The structure has suffered significant movement and much spalling of the brick. The movement is partially restrained by a tie plate secured to the gable end of the barn. The ground floor is divided into three stalls by half-height walls, which appear to be early 20<sup>th</sup> C in date. The loft space above is accessed by a doorway on the western elevation. It possibly served as occasional sleeping accommodation as it is provided with a window and has been whitewashed internally – the decayed remains of a mattress are also suggestive of this function. It presently contains a sheet metal door and frame of late 19<sup>th</sup> C character, but this does not appear to relate to the present location.

## 9 **Discussion and Conclusions**

9.1 The building range is of interest as an example of a “Cotswold Style” barn, which originally contained almost all the required agricultural accommodation under one roof. It has closer regional affinities with the barns of north Gloucestershire than of Worcestershire, and this is unsurprising given its location only a few miles from the southern border of the county.

9.2 The most interesting aspect of the building is that it was constructed in a very traditional, if not antiquated, style that might be as early as the early 18th Century, and harks back to earlier post-medieval constructional techniques. The use of brick of distinctive early 19th C character beneath the wall plates of the timber framing throughout the building however tends to confirm the c1811-1821 date range offered by the cartographic evidence. This dating seems to be broadly confirmed by the use of chalk or raddle carpenters marks on the roof framing, which would be indicative of a later 18th –to mid 19th C date. Oak was increasingly scarce as a building material by the end of the 18th C, and very rarely used as widely as in the present building after the 1780s. Its use here suggests a fairly wealthy land-owner. There are various quirks of the framing (most noticeably on the northern gable end) that show it to be a slightly debased late copy of the box-framing techniques of the previous two centuries, but the roof trusses particularly show considerable competence in providing tall and wide open spans with minimal obstruction of the storage space. The stonework of the walls is also very competently executed, and the building was undoubtedly the work of professional barn builders rather than the farmer and his neighbours.

- 9.3 The barn range is, (as is almost always the case with agricultural buildings), the product of many generations of repair and alterations. It is not therefore “substantially as built”. Detailed analysis is beyond the scope of the present project, but there are clearly several phases of alteration, blocking of doorways and insertion of windows etc. Despite these alterations the original layout appears to be recoverable, and more detailed analysis may reveal the earlier function of several parts of the building that are presently enigmatic – there are for instance scars within the flagged floor of the barn that may reflect the locations of removed equipment. Some of the later alterations to the building range detract from its original appearance – these include the lean-to shelters along the eastern face, and the pig-cote to the south. The infilling of the western face of the waggon house, and creation of another lean-to against the former open side have significantly affected the original appearance of the structure, and these might also be considered detrimental alterations. These alterations of course are part of the building’s historical development, and may in some cases reflect important changes in agricultural practice. As an example part of the NE lean-to was apparently created to house a stationary engine to power equipment within the barn – this marks the mechanisation of the farmyard in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> C, and therefore with the surviving shafting might be considered of historical interest.

The building range is clearly of local historical and architectural interest, and as part of the whole historic farmstead represents a generally positive contribution to the local landscape. To assess the building’s wider significance several criteria must be considered:

*Condition:* the building range, although disused, has been historically well maintained, and the original elements are in generally good condition. The pig-cote is a later addition and in very poor condition. The waggon-house/granary is also secondary, and is in fair condition, with some movement of the gable end. The lean-tos are in varying states of repair, but all fairly weatherproof.

*Rarity:* this form of barn is relatively rare in Worcestershire, but similar examples exist in some numbers in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire. The most unusual feature of the present building is its comparatively late date traditional pegged oak framing. It is difficult to ascertain how many early 19<sup>th</sup> C barns are similarly framed, as box-framed buildings are generally listed as 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> C by default without detailed examination of the structure or documentary research. The present example should ideally be scientifically dated to confirm the dating suggested by the present rapid assessment. The waggon house/granary is of a comparatively common building type in the county for this period (the present author has surveyed three in the past two years), though each individual building has a unique layout. With changing agricultural practices and the pressure for rural development in the last three decades unconverted traditional farm buildings are now becoming increasingly scarce, and this scarcity adds some significance to the heritage value of the present building.

*Group value*

The present building range forms the centre of a substantial early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> C farmstead, which retains a number of fairly contemporary buildings in various states of completeness and in some cases substantial later repairs and alterations. The farmstead also contains a number of 20<sup>th</sup> C buildings, the scale of which dominates views into the farmstead from the north-east. The principal elements that contribute to the group value of the farmstead are the high stone shelter wall to the north and east (the north wall is externally brick faced), the fine row of three (now merged to two) early mid 19<sup>th</sup> C farmworkers cottages, the former cart-horse stable, and the fine farmhouse with its adjoining carriage house/stable block. The former cart-house and fold-yard cattle byres also contribute, but are much mutilated by later repairs and alterations. The farmstead cannot be considered a “planned” or “model” farmstead, but represents an interesting group of traditional farm buildings built within a period of perhaps 10 years, with subsequent additions.

*Associations*

The building range has no known historic associations with significant persons or events

*Significance*

Whilst the present building range is of substantial importance both as a contribution to the landscape and setting of the farmstead as a whole, its altered state, relatively common form and late date mitigate against it being considered sufficiently regionally or nationally important for Listed Building status. The building is, however of substantial local and architectural importance as well as having historic and archaeological value. It has a particular charm, being built in the Cotswolds vernacular style and local materials, and every effort should be made to ensure that the basic fabric, form and exterior appearance of the core structures is retained during conversion to a secondary use

- 9.7 The proposed conversion of these buildings will offer an opportunity to remove some of the later, and more unsightly, accretions from the exterior whilst ensuring the future maintenance of the building envelope. Where possible the design of the conversion should seek to retain historic fabric by utilizing existing openings (and re-opening currently blocked former openings as necessary). As the barn has few interior structures, other than the granary-level floors (which are at a level with adequate headroom above and below) there is ample scope for low-impact and “reversible” conversion without significant structural alterations. The roof structure is in generally good repair, and with fairly minor structural attention (e.g. to failing purlins) should be retained as-is wherever possible. The main areas that may prove problematic in the event of conversion are the poorly built cheeks of the threshing porch (roughly timber framed with single skin brick infill), whilst these are adequate for the present function, some rebuilding of the porch superstructure might be anticipated in the event of domestic conversion. The west-facing lean-tos against the main barn are integral to the main structure, and should be retained and restored (perhaps as utility areas), so that their roofs may continue to protect the most vulnerable elevation.
- 9.8 It is to be expected that some further archaeological or historic building recording works will be required as mitigation for the proposed conversion. The scope of these works will be dictated by the local authority, but it may be anticipated that further drawn and photographic recording of the structure, and possibly tree-ring dating of the structural timbers might be considered appropriate in the present case.

## 10 **Bibliography**

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## 11 **Acknowledgements**

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*Appendix 1: Documentary references and sources for owners/occupants of  
Eckington Fields Farm (formerly Field, or Fields Farm)*

*Owner /occupants of present property underlined*

*Nb: Other local farmers listed for elimination purposes where occupants uncertain*

**Birmingham City Archives**

[November] 1813

Draft copy of an indenture between Samuel Barnes of Tewkesbury, co. Glouc., gent., and Robert Holland of Tewkesbury, co. Glouc., innholder, concerning money matters arising from a mortgage of premises and land in Eckington, co. Worc. MS 3192/Acc1930-009/363086

**Worcestershire Record Office**

Quarter Sessions Midsummer 1820: Stable of Thomas White, Eckington, farmer broken into & hair cut from tails of 8 cart horses: suspects Matthew Attwood: John Carr, foreman to Mr. Rodgers, Worcester, hair manufacturer, bought hair from Attwood, who denies. 1/1/643/137 [n.d.]

WRO BA5/ii BA705:183

30 Nov. 1824 Indictment and judgement of Thomas White of Eckington, yeoman, for keeping a greyhound in Eckington to kill game.

**Bentleys Directory 1840-1**

*Nb: all farmers listed in parish*

Catherine Attwood farmer Upper End  
Wm Bramall farmer Wollershill  
Thos Bushell farmer Upper End  
Joseph and Robert Crump farmers Wollershill  
Wm Foster grazier, Court Close  
Ann Goddard farmer Bunn St  
Wm Harris farmer and maltster Pass St  
Mary Jayns farmer Church St  
Wm Mucklow, grazier Pass St  
Ann Newman, farmer, Lower End  
G Pitcher farmer Wollershill  
John Shepherd farmer Upper End  
Geo Russell farmer Bunn St  
Thomas White Farmer - The Field

**Census 1841**

*Nb: in this census ages were rounded to nearest 5yrs for adults  
- location not named, but immediately before Woolas Cottage*

Thomas White, 75, farmer

Household members:

*Ann White, 75*

*George White, 40*

*James Hill, 45, agricultural labourer*

*William White, 75, agricultural labourer*

*Ann Griffiths, 20, female servant*

*Elizabeth Griffiths, 20, female servant*

*John Gloor, 15, male servant*

*John Wood, 15, male servant*

*Ann Griffiths, 15, female servant*

*George Atkins, 15, male servant*

----- [in cottage]-----

*John Holmes, 30, agricultural labourer*

*Mary Holmes, 25*

*Mary Holmes, 5*

*William Holmes, 3*  
 -----[in cottage]-----  
*Joseph George, 55, agricultural labourer*  
*Martha George, 50*  
*Joseph George, 12*  
*Suzannah George, 10*  
*Sabina George, 7*

#### **National Archives (PRO)**

Description Will of Thomas White, Farmer of Eckington , Worcestershire  
 Date 19 December 1846  
 Catalogue reference PROB 11/2047  
 Dept Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury  
 Series Prerogative Court of Canterbury and related Probate Jurisdictions: Will Registers  
 Piece Volume number: 19 Quire numbers: 901-950

#### **Census 1851**

George White, Field Farm, aged 53, farmer of 260 acres, with 5 labourers

Household members:

*Ann White, mother, 88, no occupation*  
*James Hill, ?brother in law?, 56, carter*  
*Ann Griffiths, servant, 51, housekeeper*  
*Elizabeth Griffiths, visitor, 19*  
*Hannah Taylor, visitor, 19*  
*Mary Newman, servant, 19, maid servant*  
*Thomas Glover, servant, 22, carter*  
*Samuel Straight, servant, 19, carter*  
*Joseph Osbourne, 16, cow boy*  
 [Nb – no cottagers listed]

#### **Birmingham City Archives**

27 July 1854 Indenture between Francis Woodward of Clifton in the parish of Severn Stoke, co. Worcester, esq., Christiana Woodward of Twynning, co. Gloucester, spinster, James Arthur Taylor of Strensham Court, co. Worcester, esq., and Thomas Holland of Upton upon Severn, co. Worcester, gent., being a grant of land and appurtenances in Eckington, co. Worcester, to hold for certain uses. MS 3375/420888

#### **Gloucestershire Archives**

1856

D2079/V/34

1 small volume - Particulars of stock and implements of Geo. White, of Eckington, (Worcs.), farmer, with purchasers and sale prices

#### **Cassey's Directory 1860-61**

Thos Attwood [?farmer Upper End]  
 Thos Bushell  
 Joseph Crump  
 Stephen Davis [?Woollas Hill vide 1851/61 Census]  
 John Goddard [?farmer Bunn St]  
 Wm Harris [?farmer and maltster Pass St]  
 Thos Newman [?farmer, Lower End]  
 John Parish  
 Wm Shepherd [?farmer Upper End]  
George White – [? The Field Farm – present in 1851 Census]

#### **Worcestershire Record Office**

BA 8779/13/iii/26 ref 705:414

1857 Fire insurance policy of John Godfree, farmer, relating to his agricultural produce in Eckington

**Census 1861**

-----[in cottage]-----

David Teale, 28, carter  
Jane Teale, 23, wife  
Emma Teale, 3, daughter  
Samuel Teale, 1, son  
-----

John Godfree, Eckington Field, aged 23, farmer of 229 acres

Household members:

*Harriet Godfree, 22, sister, no occupation*  
*Edith M Hobbs, 17 visitor, no occupation*  
*Caroline Arkell, servant, 44, housekeeper*  
*Charles Howards, servant, 28, groom*  
*Lucy Conebeare, servant, 19, housemaid*

Next property listed was Stephen Davis, Woollas Hill

**Census 1871**

Eckington Fields

Philip H Gibb, 60, farmer of 229 acres

*Ann Gibbs, wife, 58*  
*Elizabeth Holland, sister in law, 54*  
*Joseph Holland, nephew, 19*  
*Annie Holland, niece, 17*  
*Annie Pale, visitor, 22, tradesman's daughter*  
*Thomas Holmes, servant, 20, general servant*

-----[in cottage]-----

David Teal, 34, agricultural servant  
Jane Teal, 32, wife  
Emma Teal, 12, daughter  
Samuel Teal, 11, son  
Ann Teal, 8, daughter  
Sarah Teal, 6, daughter  
Alice Teal, 2, daughter

-----[in cottage]-----

Henry Tennant, 30, shepherd  
Margaret Tennant, 34, wife  
Mary Tennant, 5, daughter  
Ann Tennant, 3, daughter

-----[in cottage]-----

Thomas Hemming, 65, groom  
Elizabeth Hemming, 67, wife  
-----

Next property listed was Stephen Davis, Woollas Hill

**Littlebury's Directory 1873**

Philip Gibb, The Field Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1876**

*Nb: only farmers that have no defined location within Eckington are listed – ie these are possible farmers at Fields Farm – where the name appears in other years at known locations these are given in brackets as probable locations for this year*

Abner Andrews [Church St 1873]

Richard Brown

Stephen Davis [?Woollas Hill vide 1873 Littlebury's]

Phillip Gibb [Field Farm vide census 1871, directories 1873 and 1877]

William Harris [?farmer and maltster Pass St]

William Mumford

John Parish

William Sutton

**Shakespeare Centre Library**

1877

Philip Henry Gibbs. Eckington Fields Estate, viz: new house, 231 acres, 3 cottages in occupation proprietor. [Sale particulars 10 July 1877] document ref. no. ER6/214/1] DR 165/1154

**Owen's Directory 1881**

*Nb: only farmers that have no defined location within Eckington are listed – ie these are possible farmers at Fields Farm – where the name appears in other years at known locations these are given in brackets as probable locations for this year*

Edward Browne

Stephen Davis [?Woollas Hill vide 1871 Census and 1873 Littlebury's]

Joseph Holland [Joseph Holland listed as nephew aged 19 at Fields Farm in Census 1871 and again in 1893 so reasonable probability]

Christopher Peace

William Sutton

**Kelly's Directory 1884**

Richard Browne

Frederick Davis [?Woollas Hill vide 1912 Kelly's]

Stephen Davis [?Woollas Hill vide 1873 Littlebury's]

William Dee [?Woollas Hill vide 1912 Kelly's]

William Diaper (market gardener)

[Nb: Farm Bailiffs were not regularly listed in trades directories]

**Census 1891**

Eckington Field

Joel E Govett, 35, Farm Bailiff

Household:

*Mary Baker, 35, servant, housekeeper**Samuel Parry, 49, servant, domestic gardener**Walter E Walter, 20, boarder, farm servant*

-----[in cottage]-----

Thomas Cook, 49, agricultural labourer

Emma Cook, 46, wife

Henry Cook, 22, agricultural labourer

-----[in cottage]-----

William Hurley, 35, agricultural labourer

Lucy Hurley, 25, wife

?? Hurley, 4, daughter

Emily Hurley, 2, daughter

-----[in cottage]-----

Josiah ?Hawker, 36, shepherd

B?? ?Hawker, 43, wife

William ?Hawker, 5, son

H?? ?Hawker, 7, daughter

Rose ?Hawker, 2, daughter

Sarah ?Hawker, 2, daughter

Next listed property:

Frederick Davis Woollas Hill

**Kelly's Directory 1892**Joel Evered Govett, farm bailiff to Richard Allen Esq.

**Internet listing**“Mary and Joseph Holland Eckington Fields Farm 1893” source unknown

**Kelly's Directory 1896**Joel Evered Govett, farm bailiff to Richard Allen Esq.**Kelly's Directory 1900**

Bertram Hutchinson, farmer The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1904**

Bertram Hutchinson, farmer The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1908**

R H Jackson, farmer The Fields Farm

**Littlebury's Directory 1908**

R H Jackson, farmer The Field Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1912**

R H Jackson, farmer The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1916**

R H Jackson, farmer The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1921**

Edward Herridge, The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1924**

Edward Herridge, The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1928**

Edward Herridge, The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1932**

Edward Herridge, The Fields Farm (farm listed as over150acres)

**Kelly's Directory 1936**

Herridge Brothers, The Fields Farm

**Kelly's Directory 1940**

Herridge Brothers, The Fields Farm

Herridge family held the farm until it was acquired by the current owner's parents in 1959

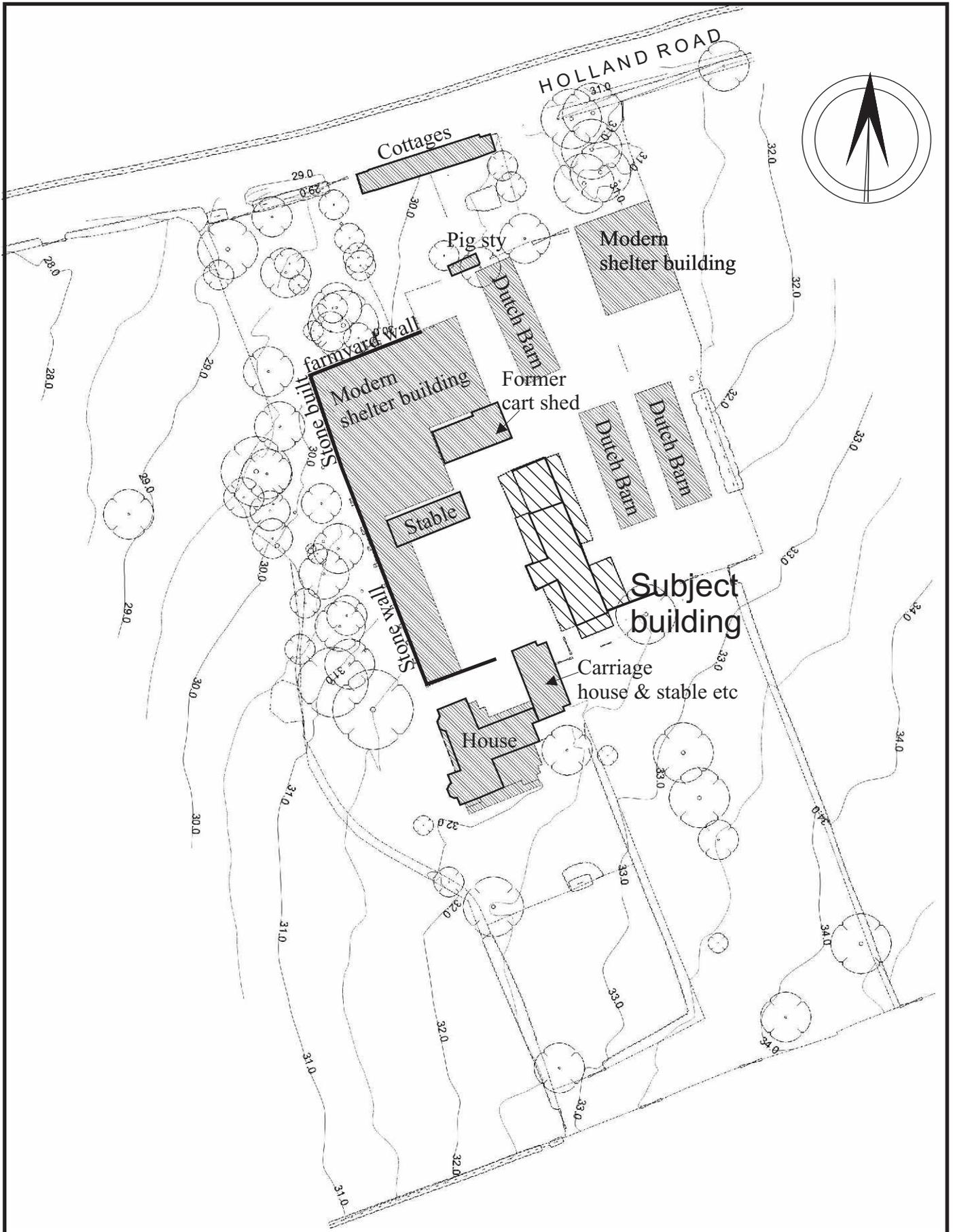


Figure 1: Location of "Large Barn" Eckington Fields Farm, Holland Road, Eckington



Source: WRO BA4341 ref s850

Figure 2: Nathan Izod’s map of 1813 shows the site location (ringed) without any farmstead buildings. This map shows the new owners of the lands following the Inclosure Act and Awards of 1810-13. It is the earliest detailed map of the parish. Joseph B Tidmarsh owned or leased most of what was to become Eckington Fields Farm. Parcels 19 and 20 were then parts of “Norton Side Field”, parcel 18 was known as “Clatsmoor”

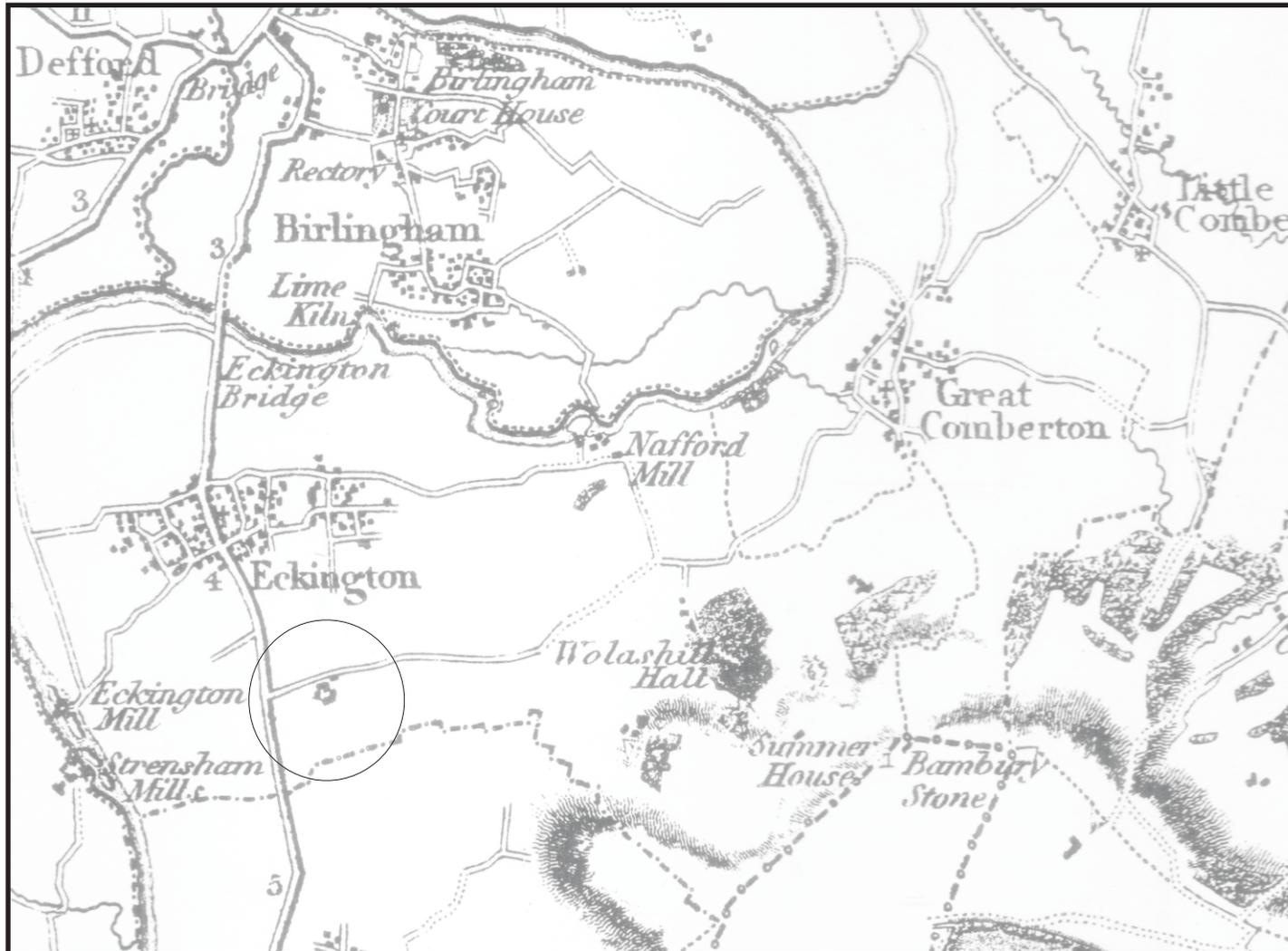
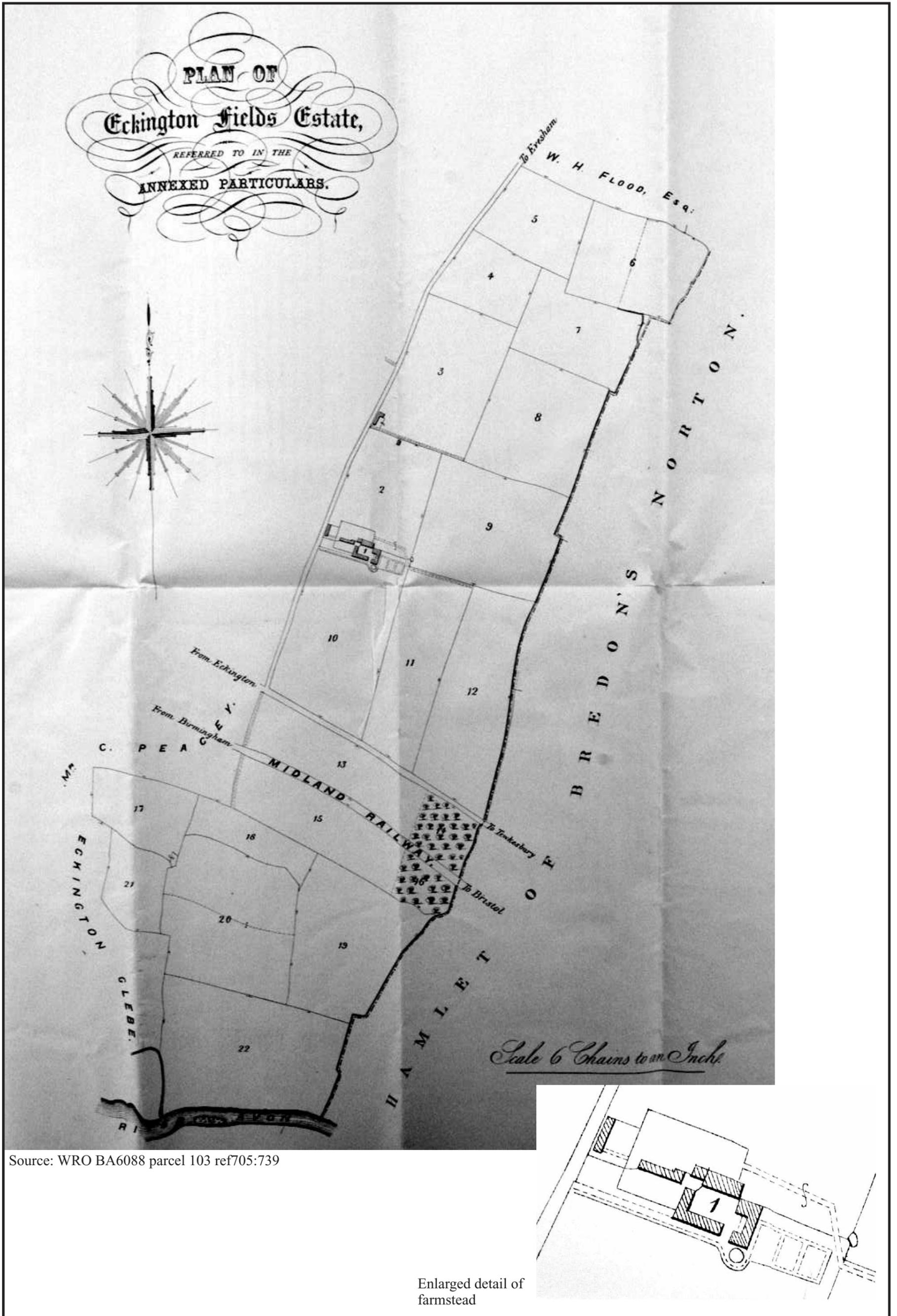


Figure 3: The earliest map to show Eckington Fields Farm - Christopher Greenwood's map of Worcestershire published in 1822 - farmstead ringed for identification



Source: WRO BA6088 parcel 103 ref705:739

Enlarged detail of farmstead

Figure 4: Estate plan from July 1877 Sales Particulars - nb north arrow on original map actually points east

**WORCESTERSHIRE.**

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**VALE OF EVESHAM.**

---

Particulars and Conditions of Sale

OF A

VALUABLE FREEHOLD AND TITHED-FREE

**ESTATE,**

Known as the ECKINGTON FIELDS ESTATE, near PERSHORE, distant about half-a-mile from the Eckington Station on the Midland Railway, and about one-and-half miles from Defford, a first-class Station on the same line; consisting of

**231a. 3r. and 17p.,**

OF RICH OLD PASTURE, LUXURIANT ORCHARDING, AND FERTILE ARABLE LAND,

In the highest state of cultivation; together with a newly and substantially-erected

**GENTLEMANLY RESIDENCE,**

With all the requisite Farm Buildings, Cart and Nag Stables and Coach-house, Three Labourers' Cottages and Gardens, the whole in excellent repair, and now in the occupation of the Proprietor, Philip Henry Gibbs, Esq.

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY**

MESSRS.

---

**PHILIP THOMAS & SONS**

---

AT THE ANGEL HOTEL, PERSHORE,

**ON TUESDAY, THE 10TH DAY OF JULY, 1877,**

At Three or Four o'clock precisely, subject to the within Conditions.

*Further Particulars may be obtained on application to the Auctioneers, Tewkesbury, or to*

**MESSRS. EADES & SON,**

Solicitors, Evesham.

---

W. & H. SMITH, STEAM PRINTING WORKS, "JOURNAL" OFFICE, EVESHAM.

**PARTICULARS.**

---

ALL THAT COMPACT, MOST

**VALUABLE & DESIRABLE FREEHOLD ESTATE,**

Situate at Eckington, near Pershore, in the County of Worcester, comprising an excellent BRICK-BUILT and Substantial Gentlemanly RESIDENCE (approached by a Carriage Drive) with Pleasure and Kitchen Gardens, Three Labourers Cottages, Nag and Cart Stables, Coach-house, Barns, Cart-houses, Feeding Stalls, Sheds, and all requisite Farm Buildings (the whole in first-rate repair.) Fold and Stack Yards, together with 231A. 3R. 17P. of exceedingly rich and fertile Meadow, Pasture, Orcharding and Arable Land, well drained and in a high state of cultivation, known as Eckington Fields Estate, now in the occupation of the Proprietor PHILIP HENRY GIBBS, Esq., who will on application show the same.

The following are the Particulars of the Fields, Acreage and State of Cultivation.

No. on Plan.	Names of Fields.	Description.	Quantities.		
			A.	R.	P.
1	House, Homestead and Garden		2	0	30
2	Home Ground	Pasture	9	0	37
3	Barn Ground	Arable	13	3	19
4	Five Acre Piece	"	5	3	35
5	Seven Acre Piece	"	7	2	26
6	Agg Hill	"	11	1	36
7	Beggar Boys	"	9	1	15
8	Twelve Acre Piece	"	13	0	20
9	Fifteen Acre Piece	"	15	2	0
10	House Ground	Pasture	16	2	8
11	Middle Ground	Arable	12	1	10
12	Clotsmoor	"	15	0	26
13	Upper Long Ground	"	10	1	16
14	Upper Norton Side	Pasture Orchard	3	2	4
15	Lower Long Ground	Arable	10	2	30
16	Lower Norton Side	Pasture Orchard	2	2	24
17	Upper Boulter's Moor	Pasture	6	2	36
18	Plain Ground	"	4	2	14
19	Maple Stubs	"	15	2	1
20	Middle Ground	"	18	2	32
21	Lower Boulter's Moor	"	5	0	12
22	The Meadow	Meadow	21	2	26
			<b>231</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>

A portion of the Estate is subject to a chief rent of £2 8s. 4d. and the whole to a Land Tax of £21 17s. 7d.; but there are no other charges with the exception of the liability to keep the Chancel of the Parish Church of Eckington in repair. This Church however has very recently been restored, and the Chancel therefore will not need repair for a length of time. The residence is most delightfully situate on a slope at the foot of Bredon Hill, and commands beautiful and extensive views of the far famed Vale of Evesham, facing as it does towards the South, looking across the River Avon with the Malvern Hills in the back ground. It is a most desirable property, either for investment or occupation, all the land being of first-class quality, part of the Meadow abutting on the River Avon (in which there is a good fishing) and lying in a ring fence close to the Village of Eckington. The House is nearly in the centre of the Estate, is distant from Eckington Station Half a mile, and Defford (a first-class station) about One-and-a-half Miles on the Midland Railway (which runs through the Estate) affording easy access to all parts of the Country, and the main road from Pershore to Tewkesbury, which also runs through the Estate, gives an easy method of transport by Road. It is within a pleasant drive of Evesham, Pershore, Tewkesbury, and Worcester, all excellent Market Towns, and is within reach of several first-rate Packs of Foxhounds. The Gardens are tastefully laid out, and the whole of the Buildings are in an excellent state of repair, and the Estate in its entirety presents an opportunity to Capitalists rarely to be met with even in this fertile district.

Source: WRO BA6088 parcel 103 ref705:739

Figure 4: July 1877 Sales Particulars - note that the vendor was Philip Henry Gibbs



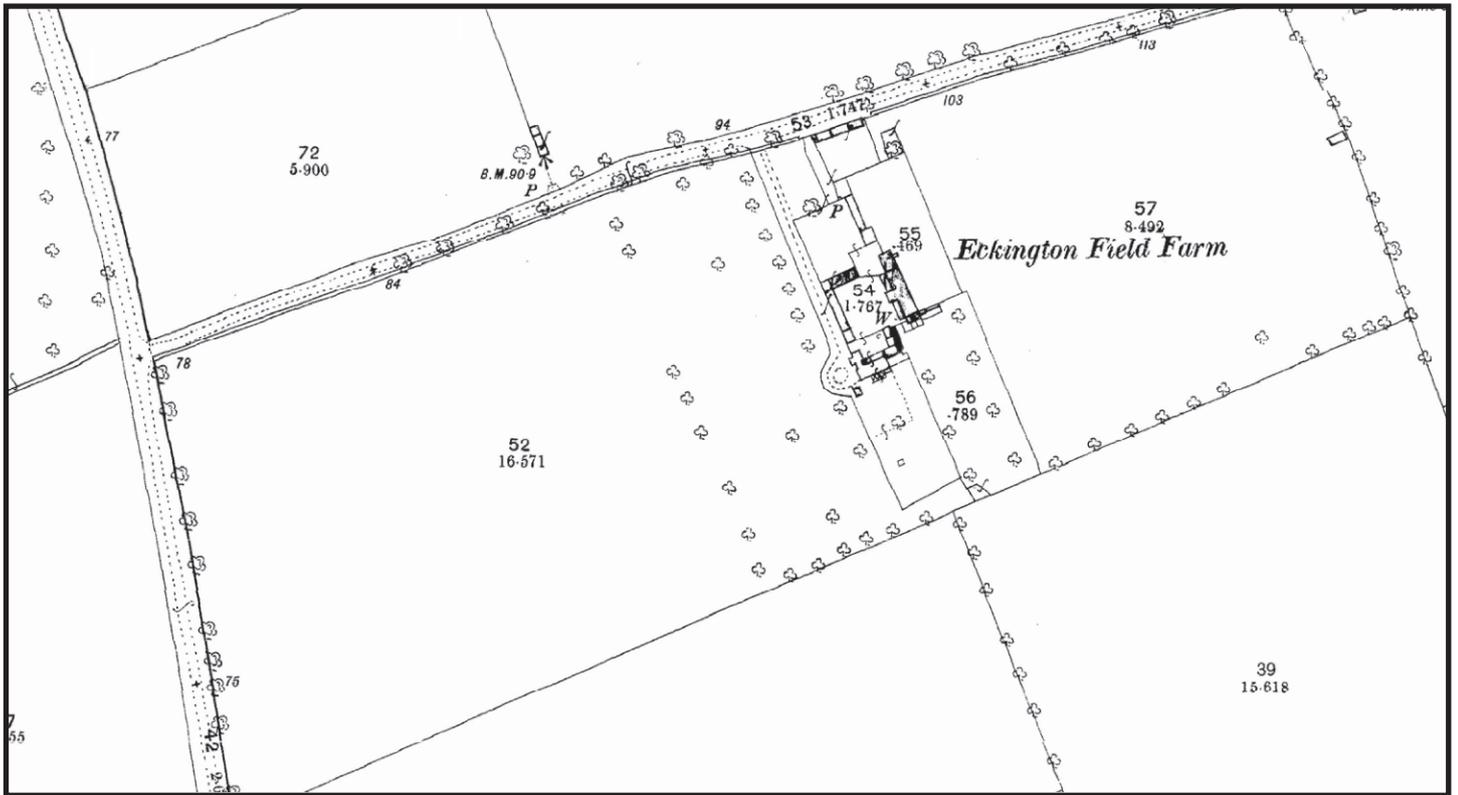


Figure 7a 1885 Ordnance Survey mapping

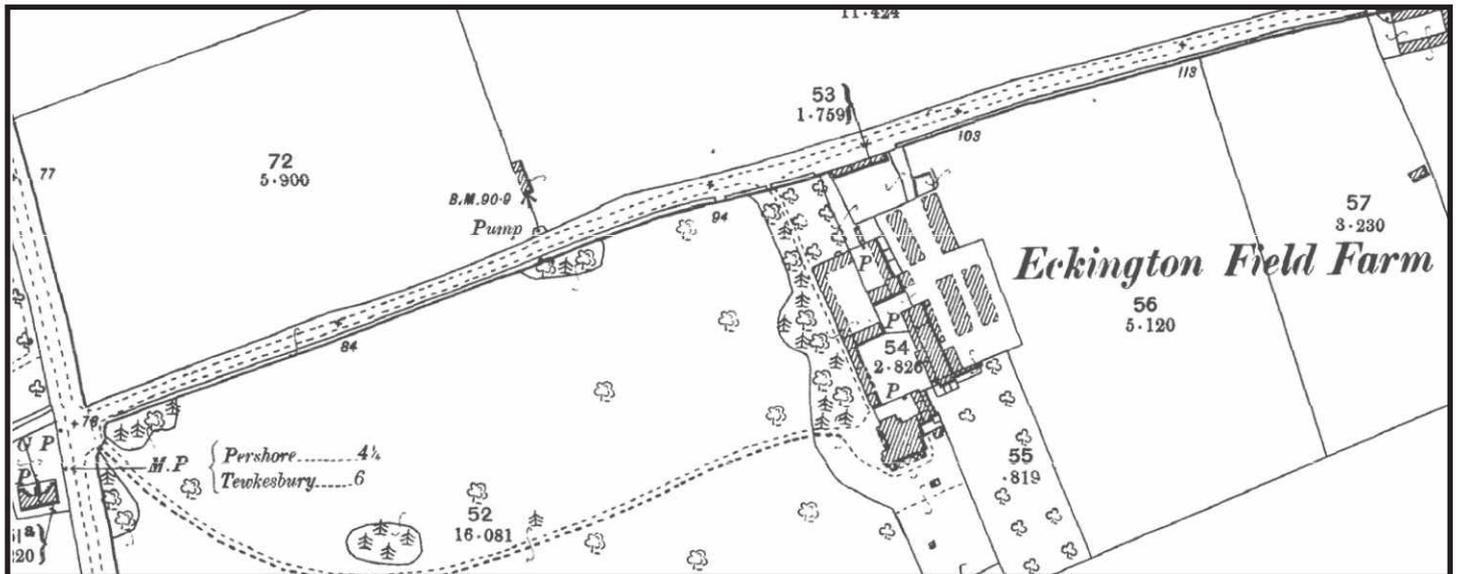


Figure 7b 1903 Ordnance Survey mapping - note the growth of the farmstead with several new ranges of buildings and the laying out of a new "gentrified" carriage entrance to the house, through a "parkland" set with specimen trees the house has also been extended.

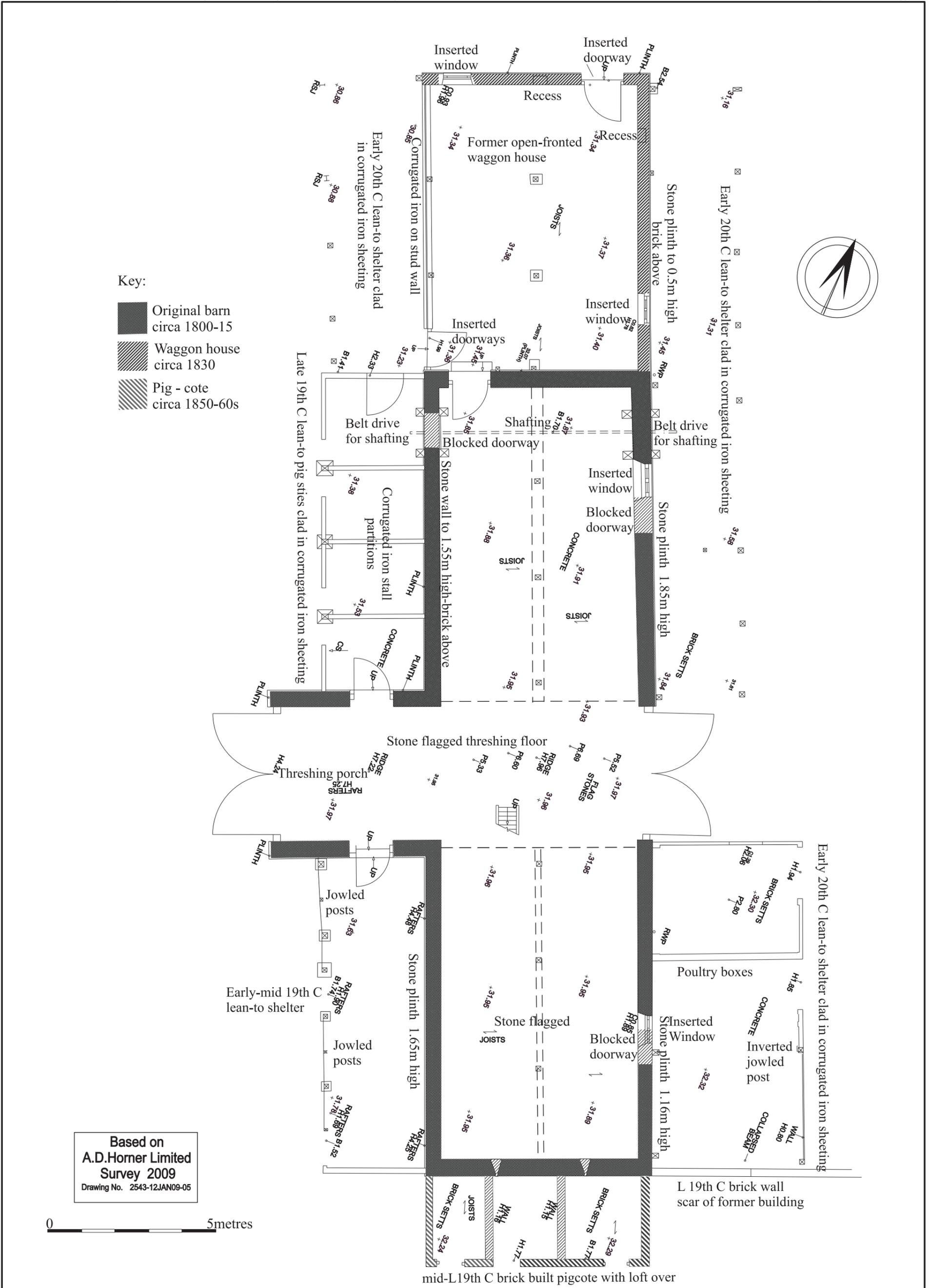


Figure 8: Ground floor plan of barn and adjoining structures

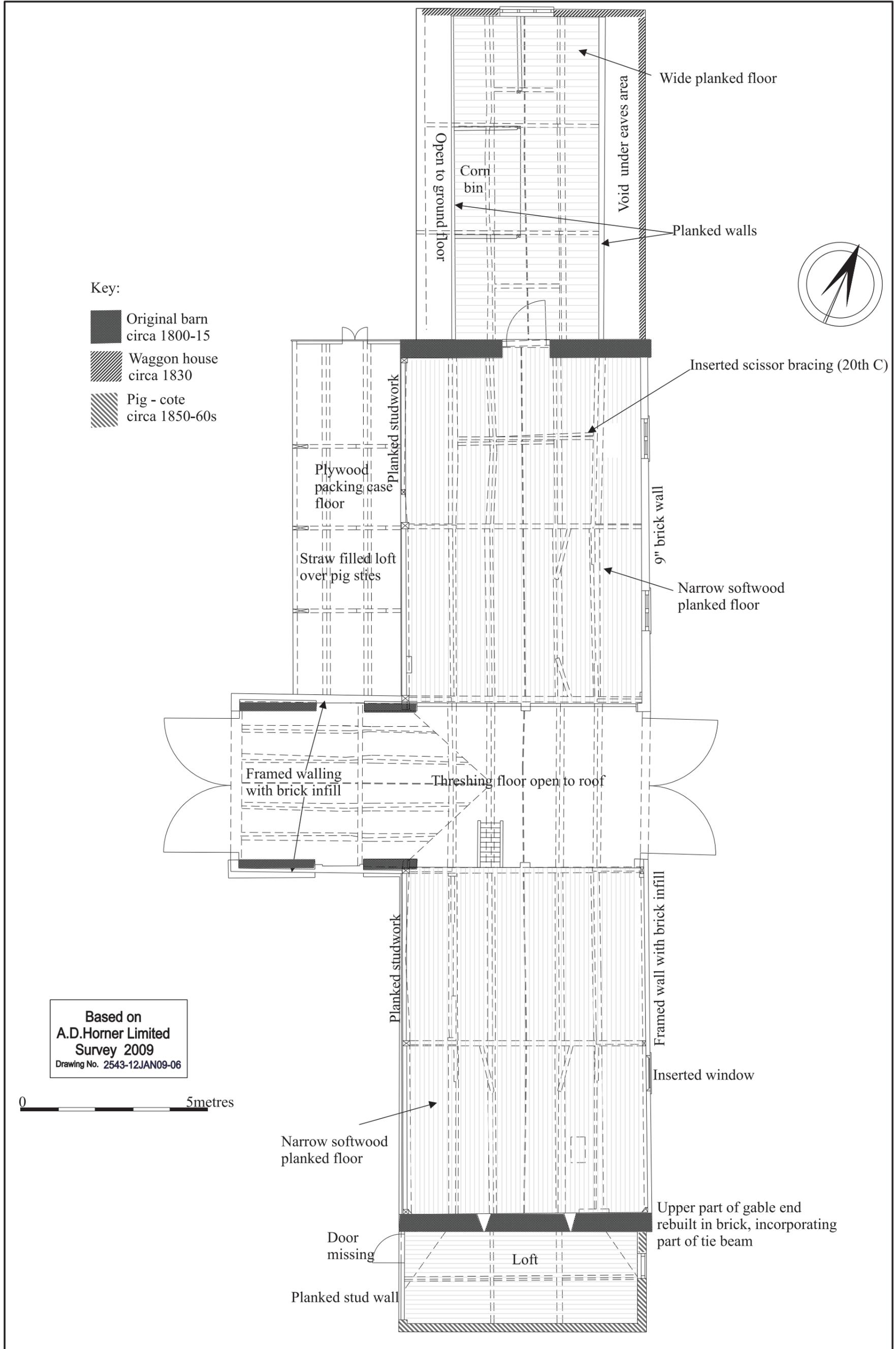


Figure 9: 1st floor plan

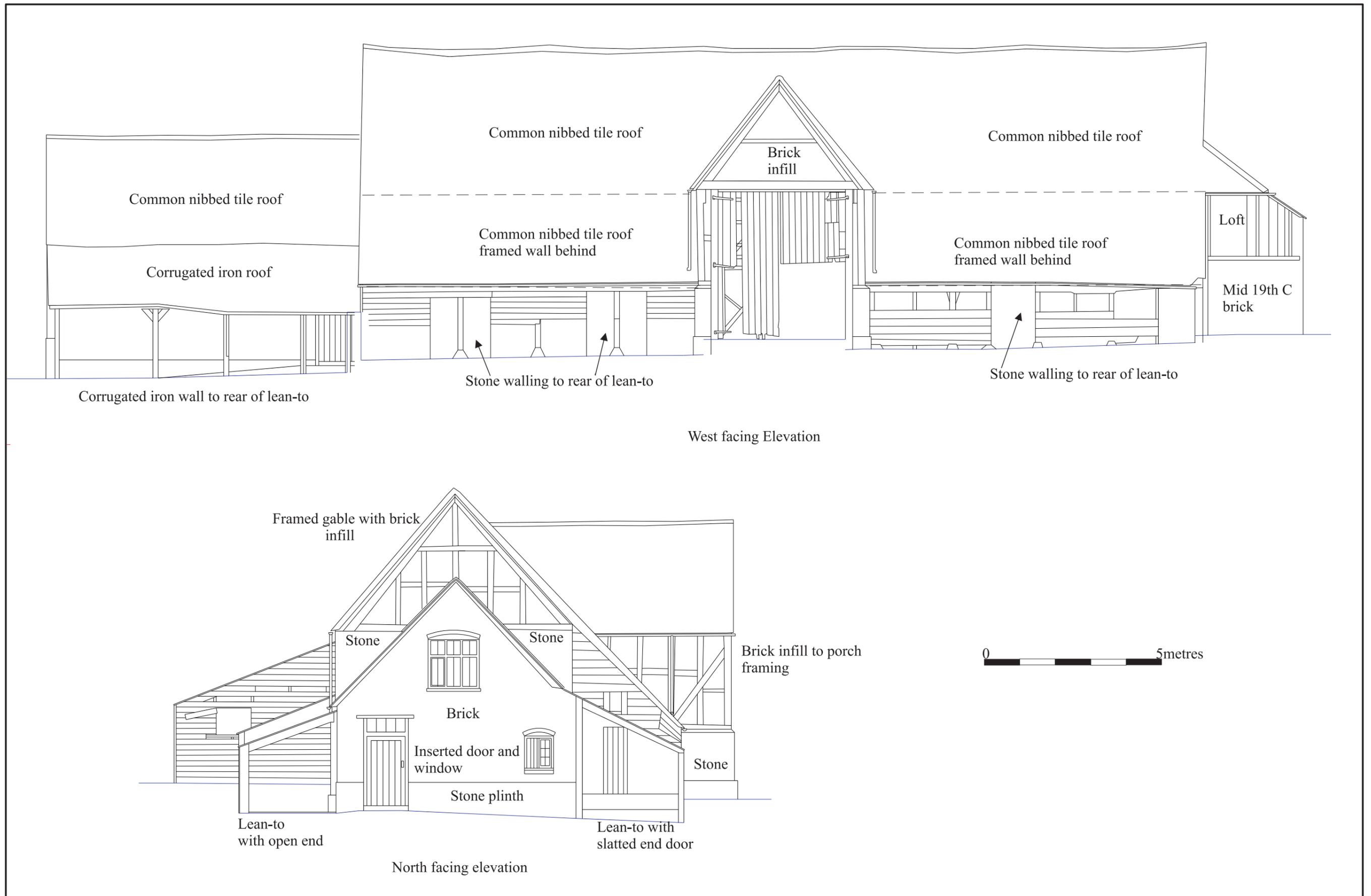


Figure 10: North and West elevations of barn (based on 2009 survey drawings by A D Horner Ltd)

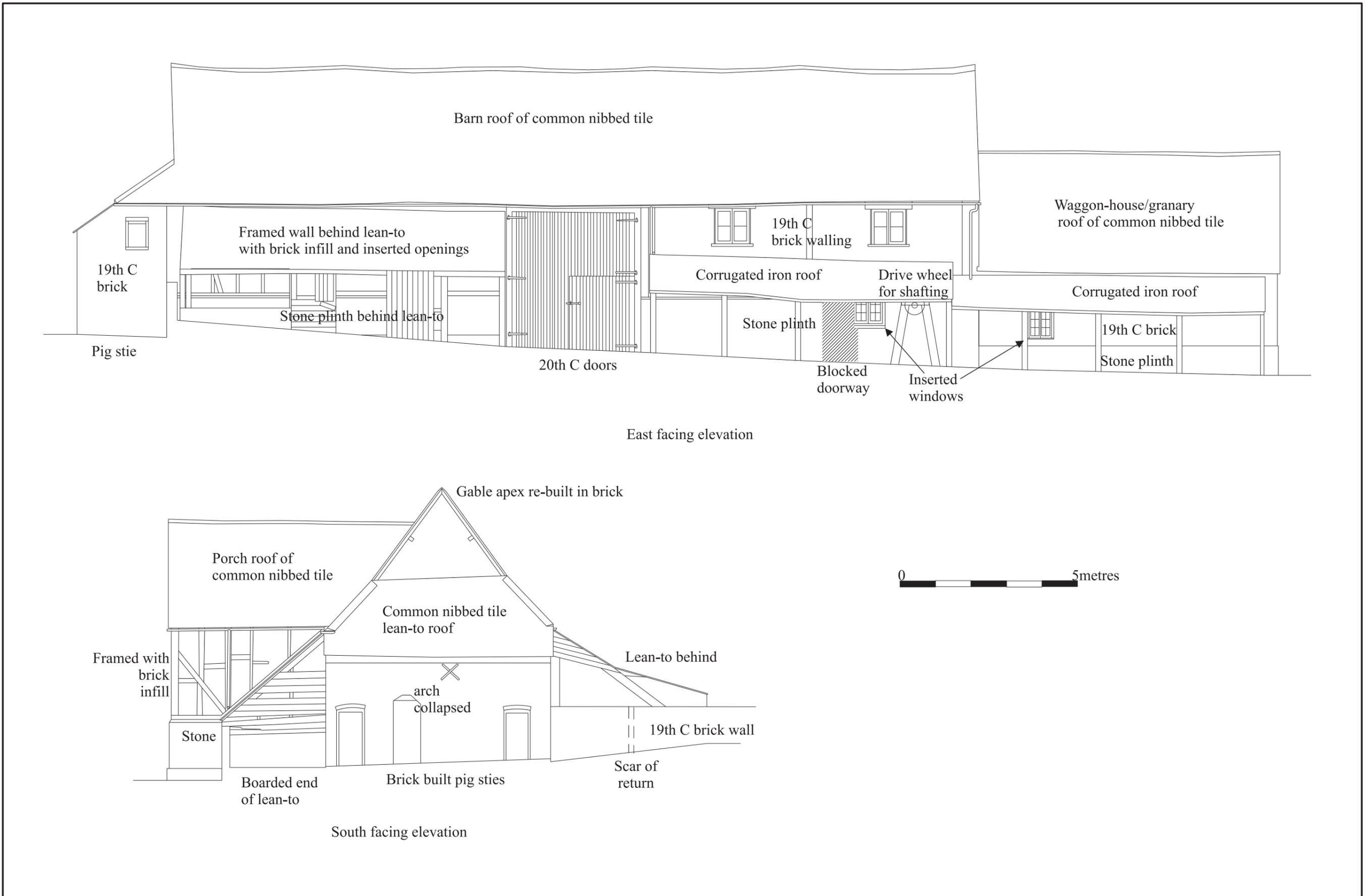
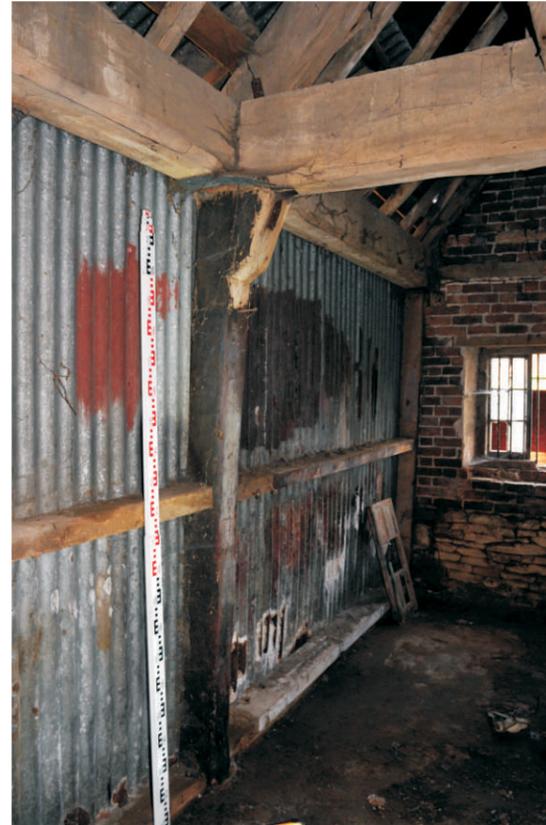


Figure 11: South and East elevations of barn (based on 2009 survey drawings by A D Horner Ltd)



Northern elevation of former waggon house - ground floor door and window openings are later 19th C insertions



North facing view within waggon house, showing jowled post and corrugated iron infill of formerly open side



Granary loft over waggon house (view facing south) - note corn bin to RHS



Detail of east facing elevation beneath lean-to, showing stone plinth and inserted window



Detail of door handle



Southern end of interior ground floor - note inserted doorway in gable end of stone barn

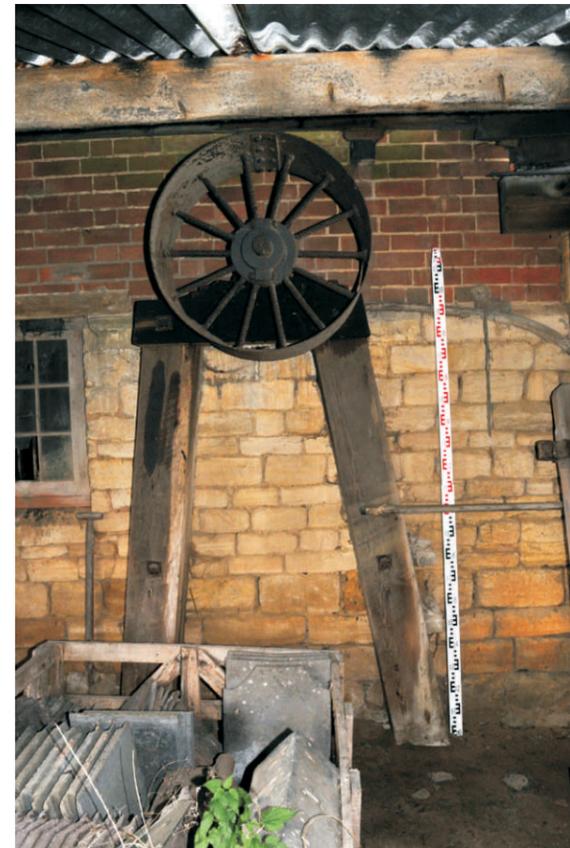
Figure 12: Waggon House, with granary over - dating probably to the 1830-1840s, ground floor converted to store in late 19th Century



Lean-to shelter to NE of barn



SE Lean-to - view facing north, note poultry boxes



Drive wheel for shafting in NE Lean-to

SW Lean-to view facing south - note jowled posts



NW lean to, view facing south



Figure 13: Mid 19th Century and later lean-to shelters. While some incorporate original posts, and some stone post sockets, all have been substantially rebuilt