

Field Barn by Eller Beck
off Back Lane, Slaidburn, Lancashire:
Archaeological Building Recording



October 2007
Revised January 2008

STEPHEN HAIGH

B u i l d i n g s A r c h a e o l o g i s t

11 Browcliff Silsden Keighley West Yorkshire BD20 9PN

Tel/Fax: 01535 658925 Mobile: 07986 612548

stephenhaigh@tiscali.co.uk

Field Barn by Eller Beck off Back Lane, Slaidburn, Lancashire: Archaeological Building Recording

CONTENTS

List of photographs

1	Introduction	1
2	Location, condition, and current use.....	1
3	Planning background.....	2
4	Historical background and architectural interest	2
5	Recording methodology.....	2
6	Building description	3
7	Conclusion	5
	Appendix: Contents of the project archive	6

Figures

1: Location maps	5: Ground floor plan
2: Detailed location map	6: Cross-section
3: Extract from OS 1851 map	7: Ground floor plan with key to photographs
4: Extract from OS 1908 map	

Photographs

SUMMARY

Archaeological building recording was carried out for Mr M Wenner in August 2007 at a field barn near Slaidburn, Lancashire (NGR: SD 68565294), before its conversion to holiday accommodation. The barn is four bays long and probably of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date, and although it formerly contained a shippon this has been removed. The records made include a ground floor plan, a section drawing and photographs, as well as a written account.

October 2007

Revised January 2008

STEPHEN HAIGH
Buildings Archaeologist

11 Browcliff Silsden Keighley West Yorkshire BD20 9PN
Tel/Fax: 01535 658925 Mobile: 07986 612548
stephenhaigh@tiscali.co.uk

FIELD BARN BY ELLER BECK, OFF BACK LANE, SLAIDBURN, LANCASHIRE:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

Photo	Subject
1	Distant view of the barn, from the south-east
2	The barn, from the south
3	Front elevation, from the south-east
7	Detail of doorway and window in south-west gable
9	The barn, from the north
11	The barn, from the west
13	Interior of barn, from the west
15	Detail of main doors, interior face, from the west
16	Detail of rear door, interior face
17	South-west corner of interior and main entrance
18	Interior of barn, from the east
20	One of three small dismantled boskins, stored in barn
21	Large dismantled boskin, stored in barn
22	Detail of elbowed, oak heel post from dismantled boskin, stored in barn
25	Central roof truss, from the north-east
27	Detail of head of central truss, from the east

A complete set of photographs forms part of the project archive (see Appendix)

FIELD BARN BY ELLER BECK, OFF BACK LANE, SLAIDBURN, LANCASHIRE:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the results of archaeological building recording at a field barn ("Windhover Barn" or "Burnside Barn"), located next to Eller Beck, near Slaidburn, Lancashire, carried out in August 2007. The work was commissioned by the owner Mr M Wenner, via his agents IWA Architects, to fulfil a condition of planning consent from Ribble Valley Borough Council for the conversion of the building to holiday accommodation.
- 1.2 The barn is thought to be of late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date and is stone-built, four bays long and faces south-east. It has a threshing or unloading bay, formerly with a shippon to one side, which appears to have been removed in recent years. Records made include a floor plan, section drawing, photographs, and a written account.
- 1.3 The work was carried out in accordance with the standard specification for the recording of agricultural buildings issued by the Lancashire County Archaeology Service. This report will be submitted to the client, the planning authority, the County Archaeology Service and the English Heritage National Monuments Record, while the project archive will be deposited at the Lancashire Record Office, Preston.

2 Location, condition, and current use

- 2.1 As far as is known the barn is not named on any map. It stands next to Eller Beck, in a field next to a conifer plantation, 130m north-west of the unclassified road called Back Lane, 2.5km north-west of Slaidburn, at NGR SD 68565294 and at an altitude of 200m above OD. The nearest dwellings are the farms (or former farms) called Laythams, Burn House, and Burn Side, and the site falls within Slaidburn civil parish (Figure 1).
- 2.2 At the time of recording the barn was in good repair although the interior had been cleared of all fixtures and the original floor surface had been removed, and a layer of gravel laid.
- 2.3 The most recent use for the building is as a shooting hut, providing storage and shelter for game beaters etc.

3 Planning background

- 3.1 The barn is not listed as having special architectural or historic interest. Planning permission was granted by Ribble Valley Borough Council on 18 June 2007 for its conversion to use as holiday accommodation (application no: 3/2007/0409), and condition no 5 attached to the consent requires a detailed record of the building to be made before development, which this report is intended to be. A new application for a revised scheme was also made on 29 August 2007 (3/2007/0842).

4 Historical background and architectural interest

- 4.1 Traditional farm buildings are of historic interest because they contribute to an understanding of the vernacular architecture and past farming systems of the region. As a group they are under threat due to redundancy and neglect, as well as their potential for conversion, and records of them can help provide an understanding of this diminishing and irreplaceable stock.
- 4.2 The Forest of Bowland was largely protected from settlement during the medieval period, but during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries encroachment and enclosure became widespread and the dispersed pattern of individual farms, which is still evident today, was established.
- 4.3 The barn has been called Windhover Barn within the planning application, and has also been referred to as Burnside Barn, but the derivation of these names is not known and for how long they have been in use is unclear. Little is known of the history of the barn, but Ordnance Survey maps show that it was present in the mid nineteenth century when the first edition 6" to the mile map was surveyed (1847; Figure 3); this map shows it as a detached building standing within a field. The 1907 revision of the 1:2500 map (Figure 4) shows it similarly, albeit at a larger scale; its outline was then the same as at present.

5 Recording methodology

- 5.1 The archaeological building recording took place on 24 August 2007, and in accordance with the standard specification issued by the Lancashire County Archaeology Service for agricultural buildings.
- 5.2 It involved the production of a new ground floor plan and a cross-section drawing of the barn, showing all significant archaeological detail, and employing conventions based on those specified by English Heritage¹.

¹ English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*

- 5.3 A photographic record was also made, using a medium format camera with shift and other lenses, and black and white film for the sake of archival permanence. External and internal photographs were taken, in most cases using either a 1m or 2m ranging pole marked with 0.5m graduations as a scale, and all have been printed to a size of 7" x 5", with two at 10 x 8.
- 5.4 The locations of all photographs are shown on copies of the site and floor plans, and they are referred to by numbers in bold in the following text. A selection are reproduced in this report; a full set is however included in the project archive (see Appendix).

6 Building description

Exterior

- 6.1 The building stands within a gently sloping field of improved pasture, facing south-east with its south-west gable close to the minor watercourse called Eller Beck (**1**). It occupies a relatively level site reached by a vehicle track (**2**), and the building's forecourt has traces of setts which once would have formed a small causeway along the front elevation. A field boundary runs along the rear line of the building.
- 6.2 The building has walls of local sandstone and gritstone rubble, mortared and laid randomly, with courses of projecting throughstones, although these are not used consistently. The quoins are of edge-laid stone, and dressings are plain, with the low arch over the front entrance being the most sophisticated architectural feature of the masonry, as the lintels and surrounds to the other openings are simple squared blocks. Although essentially of a single phase, the east corner has been rebuilt, and the south-west gable has been covered with cement render, no doubt as an attempt to weather-proof it against the prevailing winds. The roof is covered with stone slate, incorporating modern roof-lights, and the ridge is also stone.
- 6.3 The front elevation has the main entrance to right of centre (**3**), and has plain, quoined jambs and a low arch which has dropped slightly: large enough for a cart, it contains a pair of re-boarded doors. To the left of here is a small window, the altered masonry around it indicating it has either been inserted or is an enlargement of an earlier opening. At the far end of this wall is a doorway to the shippon, plain but with a rebated jamb to hold the internally opening door.
- 6.4 The rendered south-west gable has two openings: a doorway at the left, probably indicating a separate room within the shippon, and an adjacent opening, probably a muck-hole (**7**). The opposite north-east gable, partly rebuilt, has no

openings except for two rows of breathers or putlogs at upper level; the internal face of the south-west gable suggests that these were matched originally. To the rear, the barn has a central pedestrian doorway containing what is probably the original door (9,11).

Interior

- 6.5 A single space, open to the roof, now occupies the interior: formerly however, there appears to have been the typical field barn arrangement of a shippon with hay loft over at one end, with the central unloading (probably not threshing) bay, and mewstead at the other. This can be deduced from the positions of the doorways, the presence of beam holes in the walls and whitewash, and dismantled structures both stored within the barn and outside. It is not clear when the internal structures were removed, but presumably the flagged and cobbled floor was also taken out at the same time and the present layer of gravel laid.
- 6.6 The roof trusses form four unequal bays, that at the north-east forming the mewstead being longer than the other three (13). The main entrance opens into the third bay; the opening has a curved oak timber used for a lintel, which holds a pair of harr-hung doors whose frames appear to be largely original (15); more of the original rear door survives (as noted above), including the spoon-head strap hinges (16). To the north-east of here, the mewstead would have formed a storage area, and there is no indication of any subdivision or upper floor level.
- 6.7 In the south-west end of the barn however there is good evidence for the presence of a shippon, although its precise arrangement is not clear. Whitewash to the front and rear (but not gable) walls clearly shows its former extent, but it does not appear to have comprised simply a row of stalls facing into the building. This is apparent from the beam sockets for the horizontal timbers in the long walls, of which there are two in the front and three in the rear walls, which do not align with each other (17-18). This observation, together with the presence of the gable doorway, suggests a slightly different arrangement, borne out by the form of the dismantled boskins (stall divisions) stored within the building: there are three "standard" length examples (20) and one longer one (21), the latter probably having formed a longer partition within the shippon, next to the gable entrance. These boskins are constructed entirely of softwood and are likely to be of early twentieth century date; within and next to the barn there are also the remains of earlier oak-framed and slate-panelled boskins, typical for the district, and which were probably the original fittings. The remains include a number of timbers, among which is a good example of an elbowed heel-post, with slot for the slate panel, and a tenon for the loft beam (22), and a number of other timbers with less clear functions for the most part. In addition, piles of stone lie to the

front of the building, one of them of slate panels, the rest probably the former floor surface.

- 6.8 The three roof trusses are all of the same form, best described as upper king-post trusses, in that they have very short king-posts rising from collars above the tie-beams (25). All are formed from sawn, square-section timber, but it is not certain whether this is softwood or oak, and the north-east truss may be a later replica. The principals are tenoned and pegged to the tie-beams and upper king-posts, the collars pegged and tenoned into the principals (which taper at their upper ends), and the feet of the upper king-posts are pegged and tenoned into the collars; on the south-west and central truss all these joints are numbered on their north-east faces by chisel marks, both sides of each joint on the former being marked with "I", and all those on the latter marked as "II" (27). The third truss does not appear to be numbered in the same fashion however. The purlins, most of which are of oak, are all of a single bay's length, and are halved and staggered over the principals.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This is a good example of a field barn in a district where such buildings are relatively common, but diminishing in number. It is a plain structure with a largely typical form, comprising the shippon, central bay, and mewstead, but which has lost its internal features. Its slightly unusual roof structure roughly suggests an eighteenth century date.
- 7.2 The barn's location at some distance from the farm with which it was associated indicates that its intended use was as a field barn, for overwintering livestock, and storing hay from the surrounding fields for their winter fodder. Barns such as these were a key part of the upland agricultural economy in the post-medieval period but have for the most part fallen out of use because of changing agricultural practices.

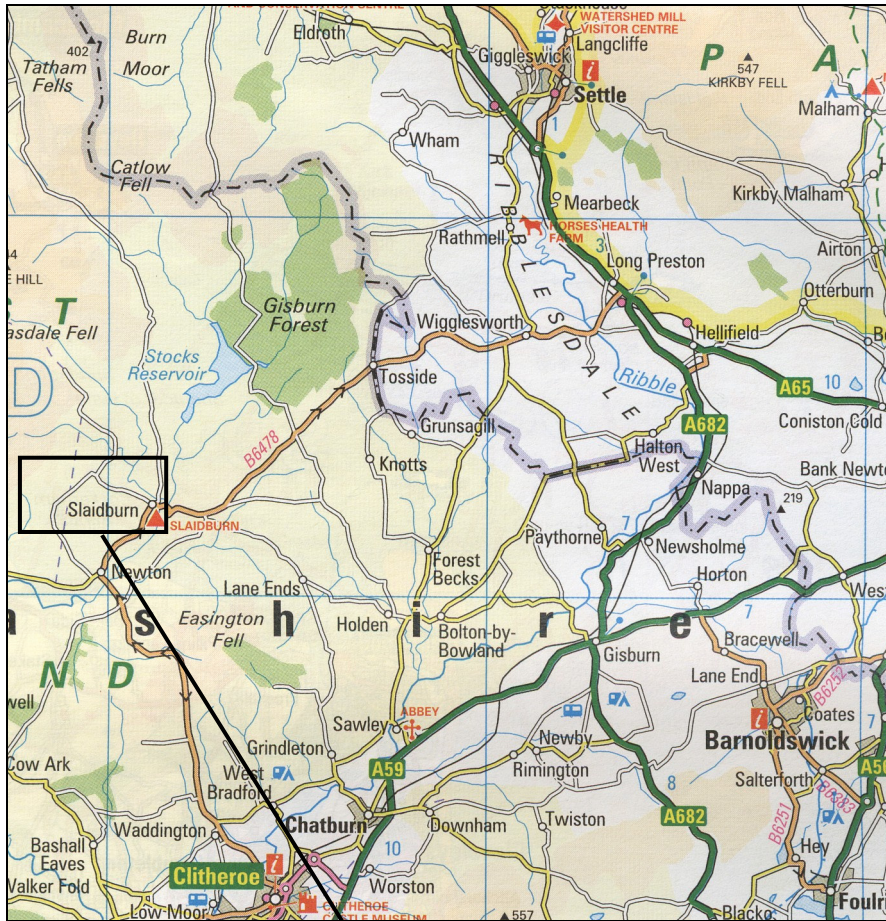
Appendix: Contents of the project archive

To be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office, Preston
1 file, containing:

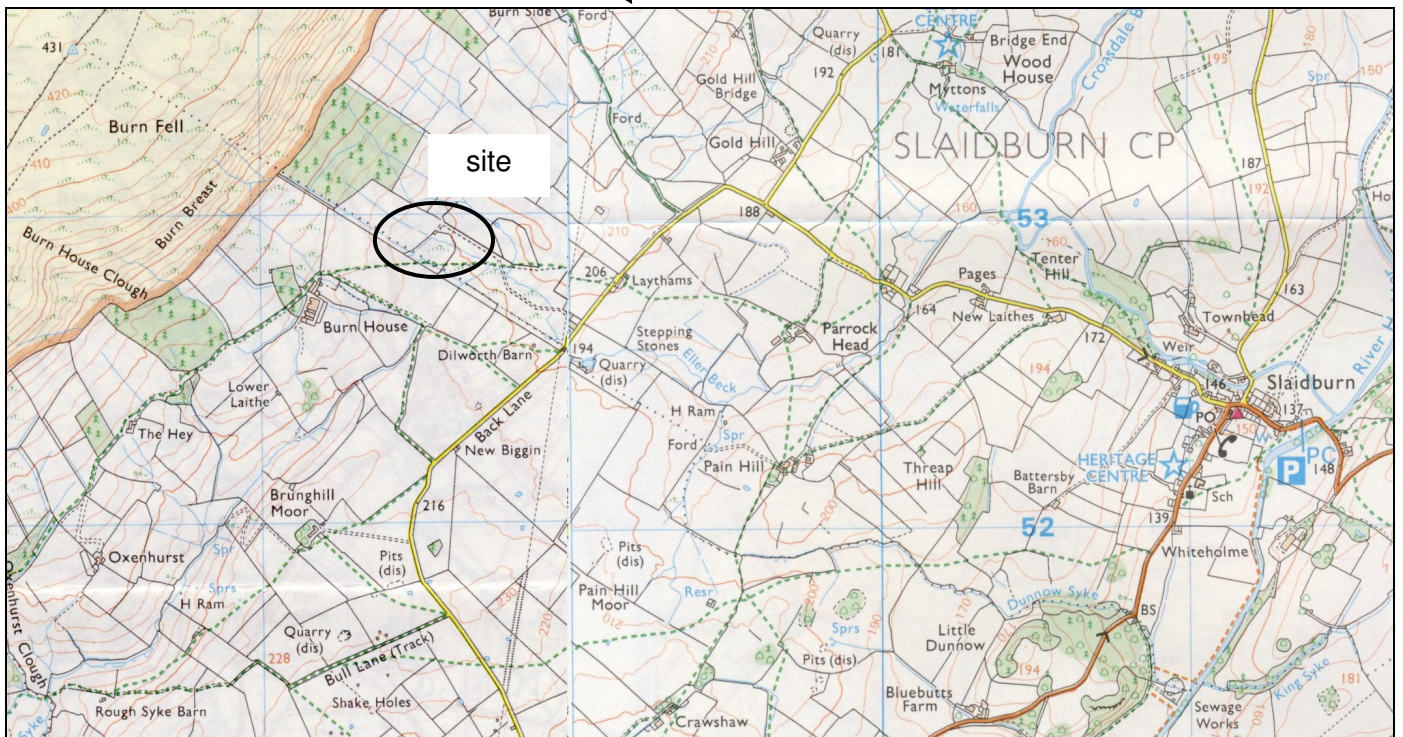
- a copy of the report text & figures
- full set of labelled photographs
- photographic negatives
- site notes (annotated plans etc)

Complete list of photographs taken, in film order

Photo	Film	Frame	Subject
8	1	1	North-east gable
3	1	2	Front elevation, from the south-east
4	1	4	Front elevation
2	1	5	The barn, from the south
6	1	6	South-west gable
9	1	7	The barn, from the north
11	1	8	The barn, from the west
12	1	10	Detail of rear doorway, from the west
5	1	11	Detail of front entrance and inserted window, to left
7	1	12	Detail of doorway and window in south-west gable
18	1	16	Interior of barn, from the east
19	1	17	Interior of barn, from the south
14	1	18	Interior of barn, from the south-west
25	2	1	Central roof truss, from the north-east
17	2	3	South-west corner of interior and main entrance
15	2	4	Detail of main doors, interior face, from the west
13	2	5	Interior of barn, from the west
26	2	6	Central roof truss, from the south-west
22	2	7	Detail of elbowed, oak heel post from dismantled boskin, stored in barn
23	2	9	Collection of timbers from dismantled boskins etc, stored in barn
21	2	10	Large dismantled boskin, stored in barn
20	2	11	One of three small dismantled boskins, stored in barn
27	2	12	Detail of head of central truss, from the east
16	2	13	Detail of rear door, interior face
24	2	15	Pile of material including slate boskin panels, to front of building
10	2	16	Rear elevation, from the north-west
1	2	17	Distant view of the barn, from the south-east



1:200,000



1:25,000



1 km

Figure 1: Location maps

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey© on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence no: AL100034008

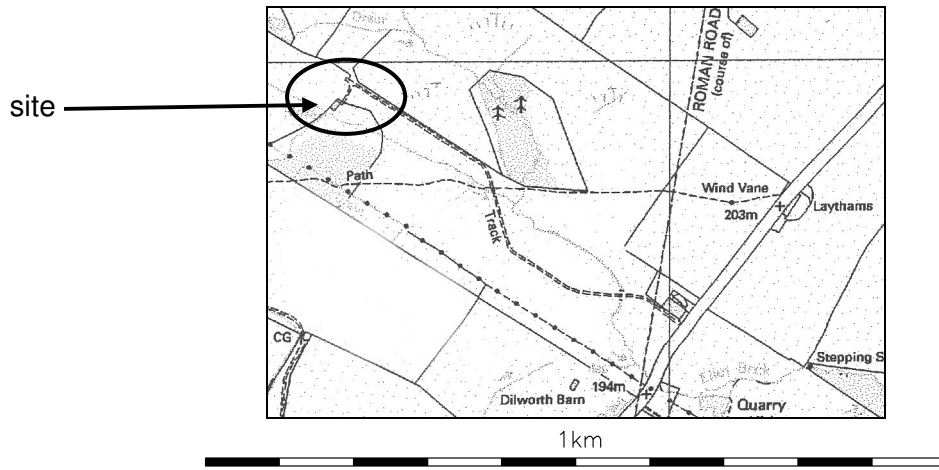
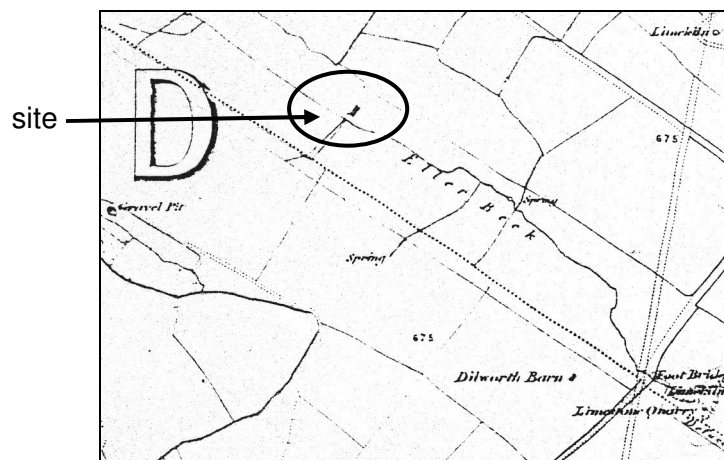
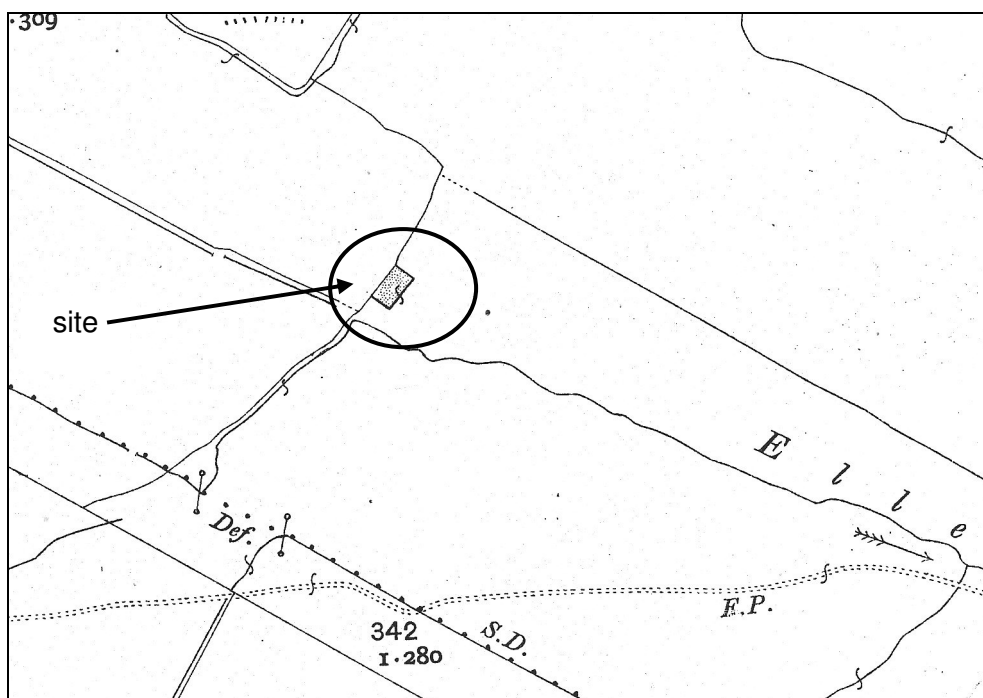


Figure 2: Detailed location map (1:10,000)

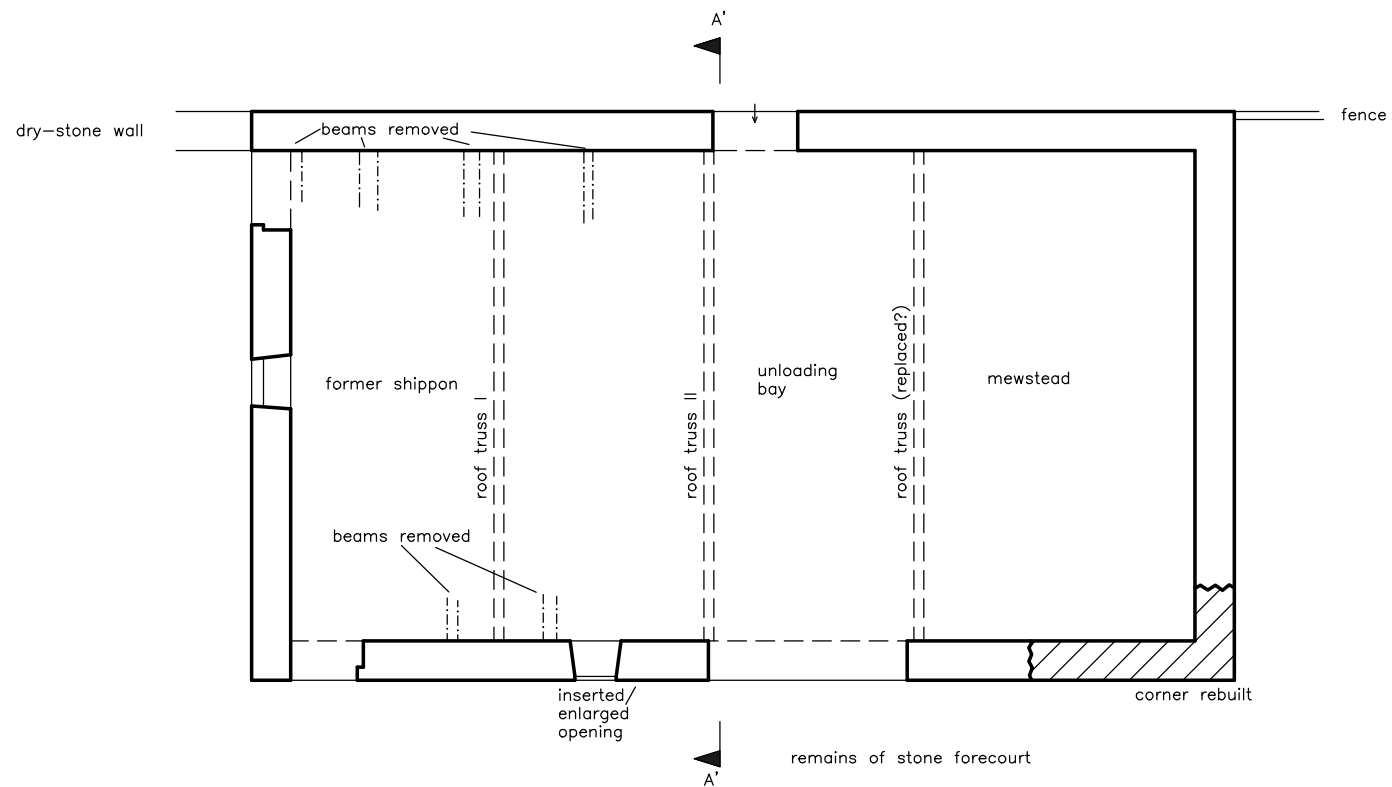
Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey© on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
 © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence no: AL100034008



**Figure 3: First edition Ordnance Survey 6" to mile map, 1851 (surveyed 1847)
 (Sheet no: Yorkshire, 164)**



**Figure 4: Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 1908 (revised 1907)
 (Sheet no: Yorkshire, 164.4)**



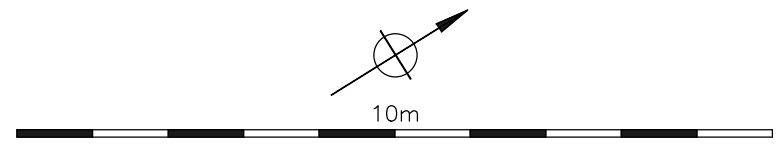
FIELD BARN BY ELLER BECK
 OFF BACK LANE
 SLAIDBURN
 LANCASHIRE (NGR: SD 68565294):
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING

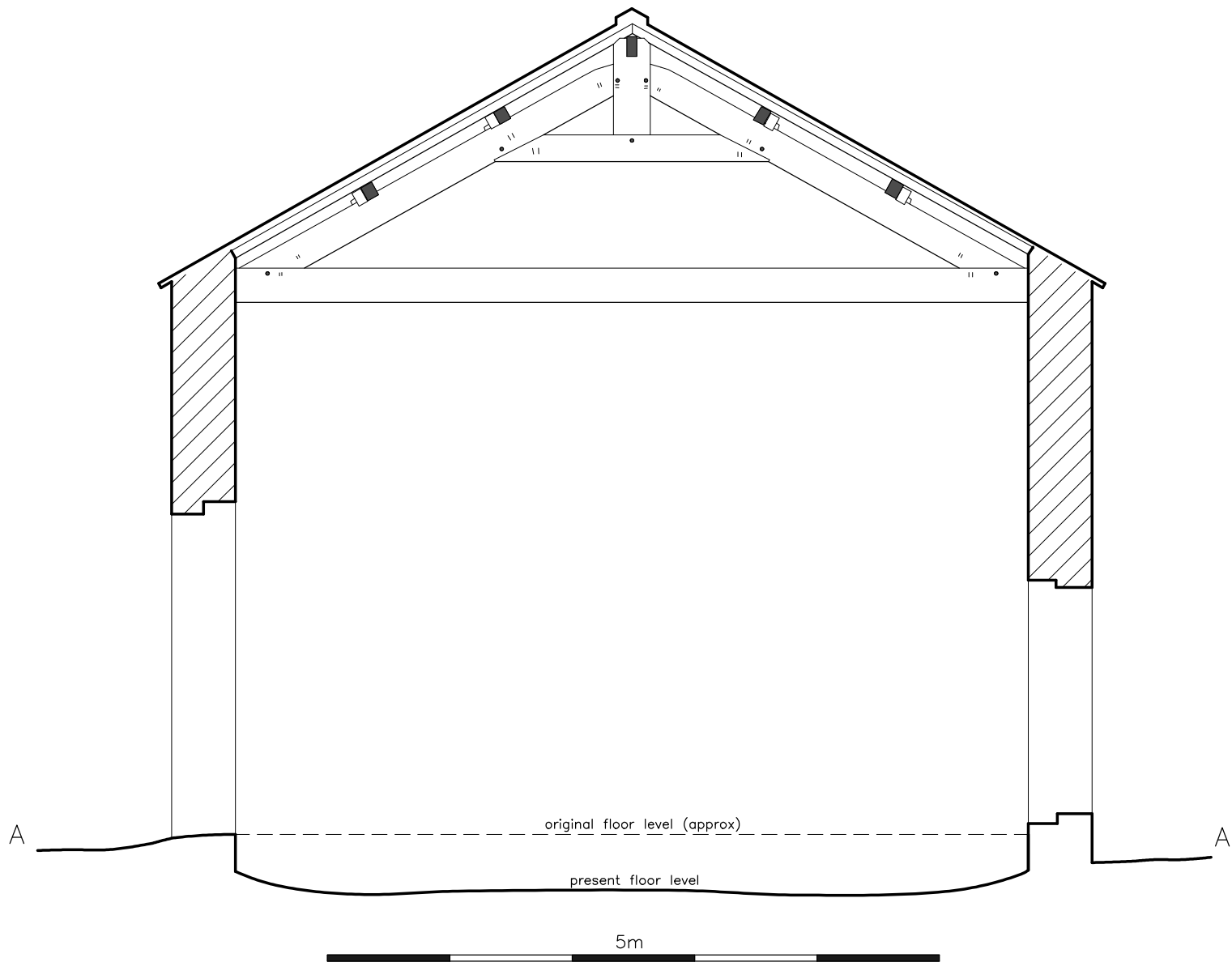
FIGURE 5:
 GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1:100

DATE OF SURVEY: AUGUST 2007

STEPHEN HAIGH
 Buildings Archaeologist





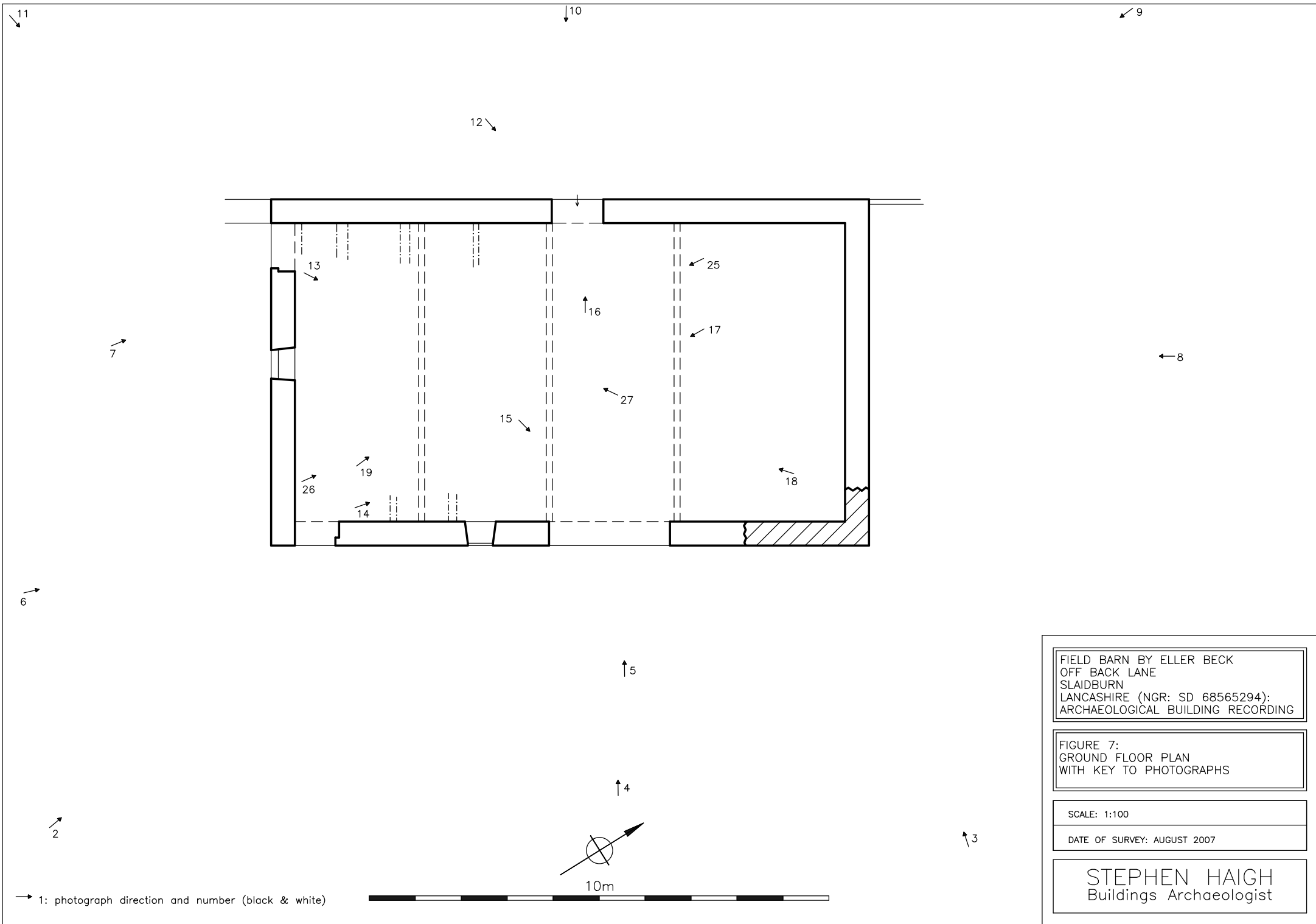
FIELD BARN BY ELLER BECK
 OFF BACK LANE
 SLAIDBURN
 LANCASHIRE (NGR: SD 68565294):
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING

FIGURE 6:
 CROSS-SECTION

SCALE: 1:50

DATE OF SURVEY: AUGUST 2007

STEPHEN HAIGH
 Buildings Archaeologist



FIELD BARN BY ELLER BECK
 OFF BACK LANE
 SLAIDBURN
 LANCASHIRE (NGR: SD 68565294):
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING

FIGURE 7:
 GROUND FLOOR PLAN
 WITH KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS

SCALE: 1:100

DATE OF SURVEY: AUGUST 2007

STEPHEN HAIGH
 Buildings Archaeologist



Photo 1: Distant view of the barn, from the south-east



Photo 2: The barn, from the south



Photo 3: Front elevation, from the south-east



Photo 7: Detail of doorway and window in south-west gable



Photo 9: The barn, from the north



Photo 11: The barn, from the west



Photo 13: Interior of barn, from the west



Photo 15: Detail of main doors, interior face, from the west



Photo 16: Detail of rear door, interior face



Photo 17: South-west corner of interior and main entrance



Photo 18: Interior of barn, from the east



Photo 20: One of three small dismantled boskins, stored in barn



Photo 21: Large dismantled boskin, stored in barn



Photo 22: Detail of elbowed, oak heel post from dismantled boskin, stored in barn



Photo 25: Central roof truss, from the north-east



Photo 27: Detail of head of central truss, from the east