

**Building appraisal  
at The Sladd  
Kinver Road, Caunsall  
Kidderminster  
Worcestershire**

WSM 41860

Martin Cook BA MIFA

10th September 2009

The School House  
Church Lane  
Tardebigge  
Worcestershire  
B60 3AH

07850 918755

# **Building appraisal at The Sladd, Kinver Road, Caunsall, Kidderminster, Worcestershire**

## **Introduction**

A building appraisal at The Sladd, Kinver Road, Caunsall, Kidderminster, Worcestershire (SO 84151 81579; Fig 1) was undertaken at the request of Mr Terry Preece, on behalf of his client, Mr Nock according to a brief provided by Worcestershire County Archaeology Service (planning ref WF/09/0479). The building appraisal was undertaken in order to provide a basic account of the building (including presence or absence of significant features, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in order to inform the planning process and determine whether preservation or any further recording would be required as a condition of planning permission.

This was to be accomplished by photography which would comprise high-resolution digital photography, all with suitable scales, of the following:

- all visible external elevations and ¾ views of the building.
- inspection, description and photographs of all internal room spaces including cellar and roof space (if accessible).
- photographs illustrating the building's relationship to surrounding buildings and setting
- an annotated floor plan based on existing survey drawings.
- a general description of the building's form, principal phases, architectural features, date and condition.
- a summary description of the building in its current form in the format of a typical listed building description.

## **Description and commentary**

### **The documentary material**

Historic mapping was obtained from Worcestershire County Record Office and a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER) at Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (which cannot be reproduced for reasons of copyright) shows the farm buildings in their existing configurations. The associated cottage, to the north-east, has none of the extensions currently existing. The 1st edition map shows no differences from the two publishable maps of 1902 and 1924 (Fig 2). The HER search identified only WSM 41622, Sladd Barn, Kinver Lane, Caunsall and describes it as an out farm of post-medieval date comprising a stable and threshing barn. The barn is described as having pierced brick work with inserted (?) circular pitching eyes on its gable and side elevations. It has a single storey addition on its southern gable. The stable comprises eight bays of brick construction attached at the north end of the east elevation of the barn, with a possible inserted passage.

### **The fieldwork**

#### *General*

Fieldwork took place on the 24th August 2009. Although the complex is clearly composed of three separate elements (barn, cattle shed and a single cell addition on its southern end; Fig 5) there are no obvious joins in the masonry, differences in the size of the bricks or character of the brickwork. The only indication that the complex was built in stages are the ventilation holes in the north-west wall of the barn, which were subsequently blocked by the construction of the stable/cattle shed. The barn must have been constructed first, leaving masonry tails for the subsequent extensions, which were built when resources became available or when they were required.

*Phase 1: early to mid-19th century*

The barn falls into Peters' (Peters 1969) Type 2 classification (Figs 3.1, 3.2, 5, 6, 7, and 10), which comprises barns in which the threshing floor is neither in the middle nor at the end, there being either an unequal number of bays on either side of it, as in the case at The Sladd, or, if it is a three bay barn, a difference in length of more than 15%. In both cases the difference is sufficient to be intentional.

No specific documentary justification for the asymmetrical plan has been found. The reason may lie in the speed of threshing: flail threshing being a relatively slow process, there would never be as much threshed straw as unthreshed corn, the straw being used as fodder and litter for the livestock. Thus if the longer side were filled with unthreshed corn, the shorter side would be adequate for the straw.

Some very large farms or estates had field barns as well as one or more at the farmstead. Possible explanations for this practice are:

- it avoided having to transport the harvest from the furthest parts of the farm to a single, central point for processing
- the fodder component of the crop could be kept near to where it was required to be used

The latter may be assumed to be the explanation when there is attached accommodation for animals, as at The Sladd.

There is no obvious sign that the pitching holes are later insertions.

Door sizes

The size of the doors opening onto the threshing floor was related to the way in which the barn was used. The example at The Sladd falls into Peters' Type I classification with high doors on both sides of the threshing floor (Figs 3.1, 3.2, 6 and 7). This style makes up nearly three-quarters of the examples, varying in date from the 16th century to 1880. They owed their popularity to their fitness for purpose and their adaptability. They not only permitted laden carts or wagons to enter from either side, but provided light for flail threshing and a flow of air for winnowing.

*Phase 2: mid to later 19th century*

The single storey building on the northern side of the fold yard (Figs 3.1, 3.2, 5, 9 and 10) has been identified as a cattle house, conforming to Peters' type 4b classification, the cattle being tied in a single row facing across the building, rather than a stable, for the following reasons:

- there is no hayloft - these were commoner above stables than above cattle sheds as they provided insulation from the cold in winter for the more susceptible horses
- large numbers of valuable horses were unlikely to be kept at any significant distance from the central farm
- the manger was built at a low level - common for cattle
- the central portion of the building was undivided until Phase 3 (see below)

About 1750 by an improved type of cowhouse was designed in which the cattle facing across (rather than along) it. This became the usual arrangement after 1815. Also during the mid-18th century the loose box appeared, principally for calves but later for fatstock. It gained a small yard during the early 19th century. The final type of cowhouse appeared soon after 1850, having two rows of cattle facing onto a central feeding passage which ran the length of the building. The example at The Sladd probably just precedes this later design.

The foldyard (Figs 5, 7 and 9) served two purposes: it was the collecting point for all the manure produced in the farmsted and it provided shelter for loose cattle which were used to convert into manure the hay and straw grown on the farm. Its form and use underwent a number of changes

between the 17th century, when it was first recorded, and 1880. At first apparently used for all cattle, by the mid-18th century it was largely used to collect manure, all cattle at the farmstead being housed. By then it was beginning to be used with the field barn to house fatstock, and was re-introduced to the farmstead for this purpose in the late 18th century. Permanent foldyards had appeared by the mid-17th century. They generally adjoined the barn, as at The Sladd, and were to a certain extent, sheltered by it. In this position they could also be supplied with hay and straw with the minimum of labour. It was noted that less food was needed by the cattle if they were kept in a yard than in the field which was a very important consideration before the general use of winter feed crops. The foldyard also kept them in better condition. The type 1b foldyard, to which The Sladd conforms, had appeared by the middle of the 18th century.

#### Mangers and racks

Very little was written about mangers and racks for cowhouses. Owing to Ministry of Agriculture regulations only a few original ones now remain. Only a short length of manger remains at The Sladd.

The manger or trough (Fig 5) was always placed low-down for cattle, as at The Sladd, unlike that for horses. Parkinson suggested that it should be sufficiently low for the cattle to feed lying down, a height which Dean put at 18 inches. Stephens, however, considered that they should be about 2 inches higher.

The single storey building on the southern side of the barn was added. It is unknown what its original function was and was converted to a garage in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

#### *Phase 3: late 20th century*

The Sladd, in a dilapidated condition, was purchased by Mr and Mrs Nock. Extensive work was carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s comprising underpinning, stabilising, rebuilding, the addition of decorative features such as tiles, etc.

The general external character of the buildings was retained by the use, reuse and retention of appropriate materials, particularly with regard to the brick and stonework (Figs 13 and 14). With regard to the interior of the cow house, the passage was created, most of the manger or trough was removed and the central part of the cow house was sub-divided. The metal, round-headed windows, which had been salvaged from a demolished building in Birmingham, were inserted. A photograph, taken by the client c 1979 (Fig 15), shows the original configuration of the windows on this side of the cow house. A photograph was taken during the course of this project from the same position (Fig 16), showing the inserted, round-headed windows.

## **Condition**

The buildings are in very good condition, having been substantially restored around 20 years ago (Figs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10). Slight signs of structural movement still exist in a few places but this only to be expected in buildings of this age which were originally built with little or no foundation.

## **Summary**

A building appraisal was carried out of The Sladd, Kinver Road, Caunsall, Kidderminster, Worcestershire. The appraisal determined that the earliest phase of the building was probably of early to mid-19th century date, with alterations and additions in the mid to late 19th century. Substantial renovation and reconstruction was carried out in the late 20th century. A distinctive feature of the complex, the metal, round-headed windows, was found to have been introduced during this time. Surviving features include much of the brick and stonework, brick floors, and feeding apparatus, although much of the latter has been repositioned.

## **Bibliography**

Peters, J E C, 1969 *The development of farm buildings in western lowland Staffordshire up to 1880*

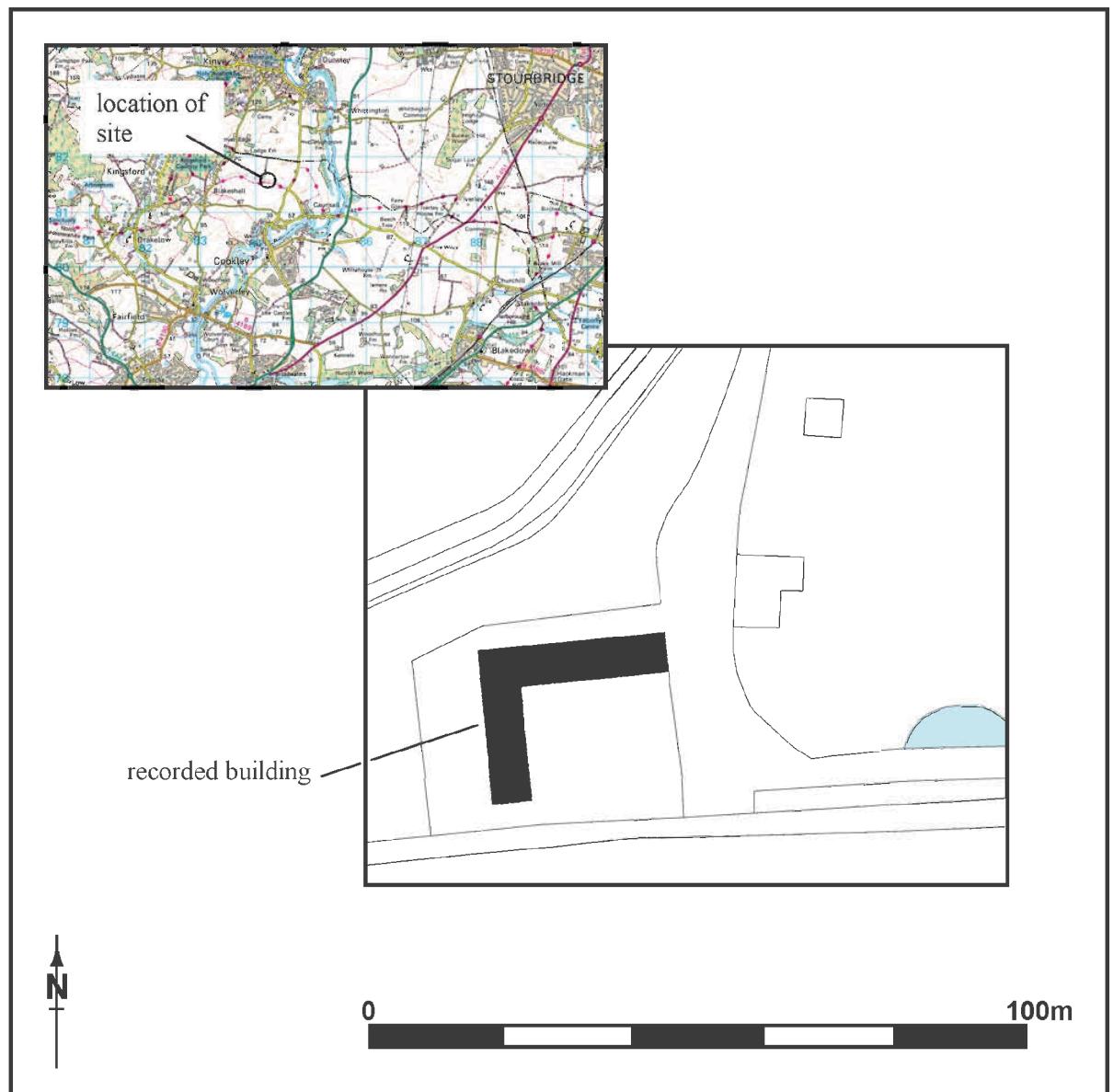
## **Acknowledgements**

The author would particularly like to thank Mr Terry Preece, Mr and Mrs Nock and Mike Glyde of Worcestershire County Council for their kind cooperation.

## **Archive**

The archive consists of

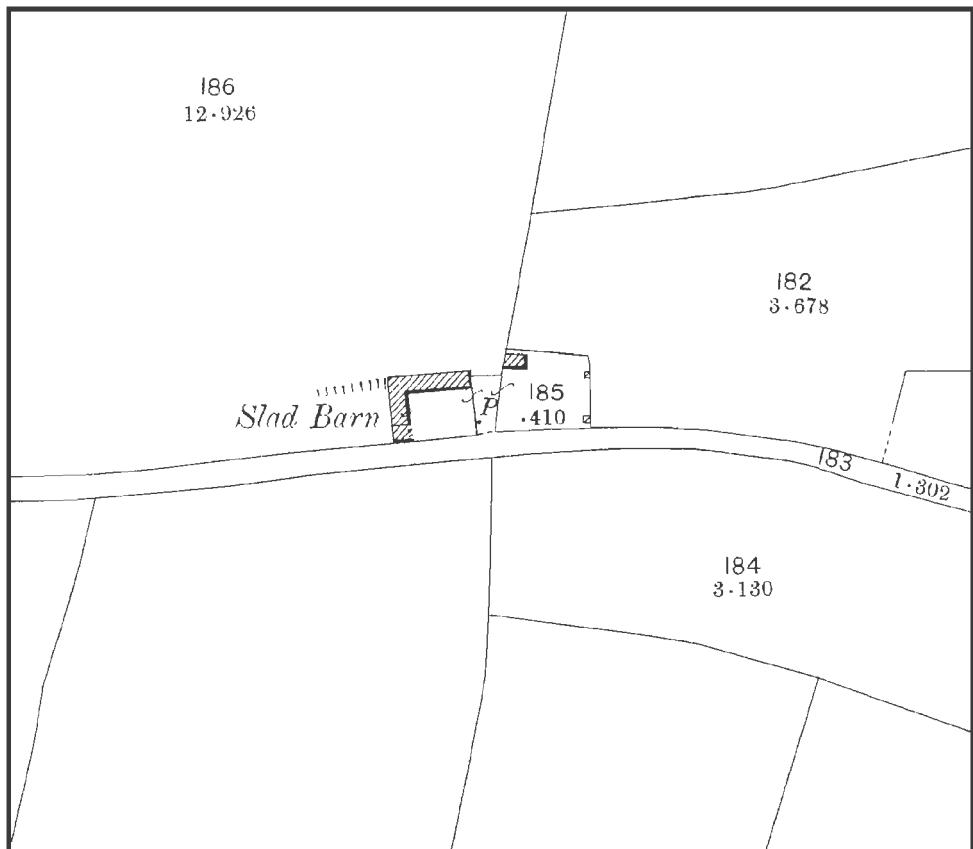
- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 4 | Annotated scale drawings |
| 1 | CD-ROM                   |



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence no AL 100016585

Fig 1: Location of site

1902



1924

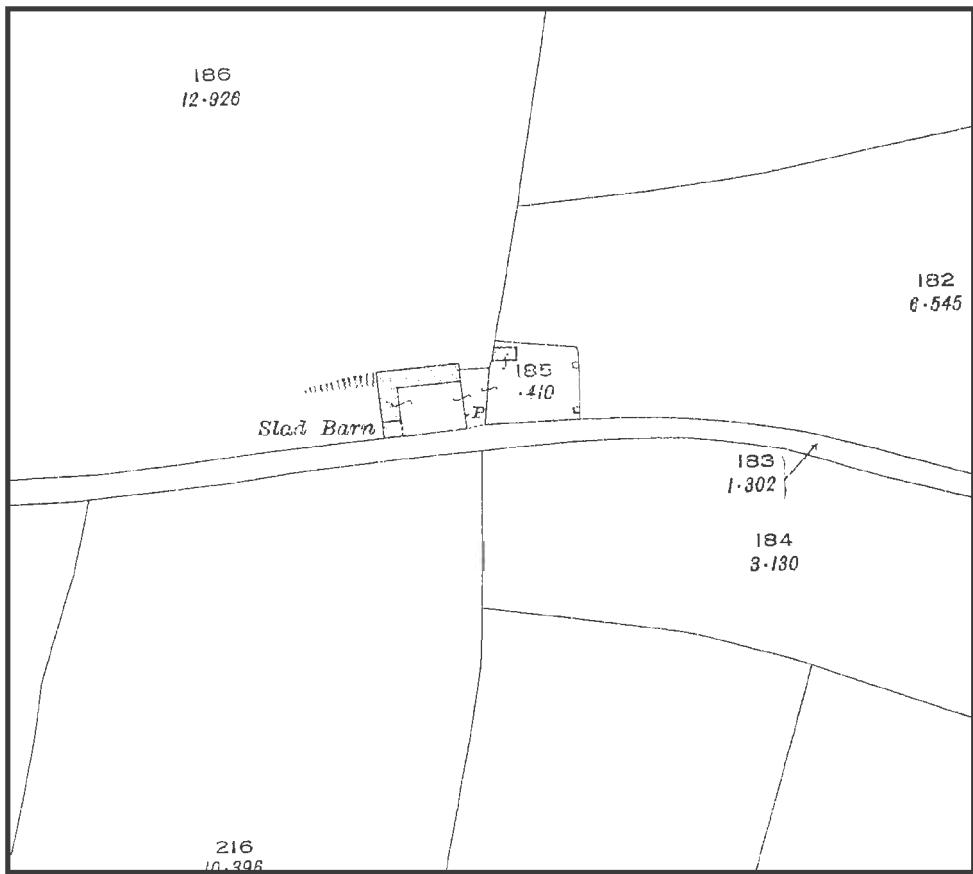
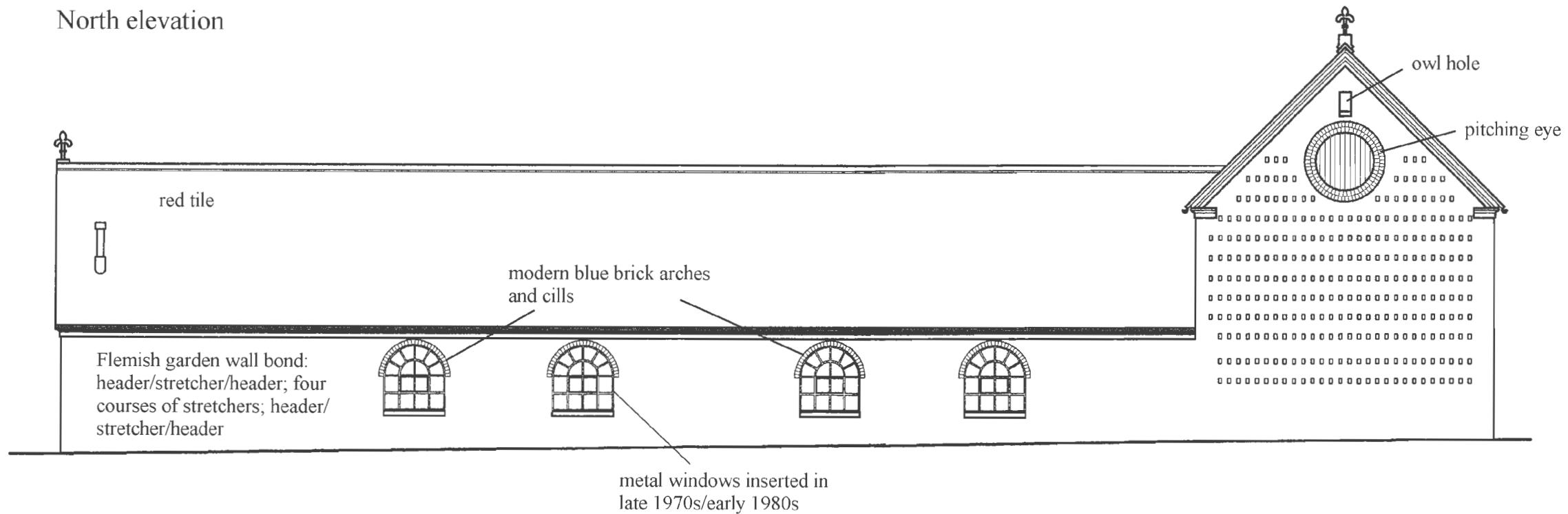


Fig 2: Historic mapping

North elevation



East elevation

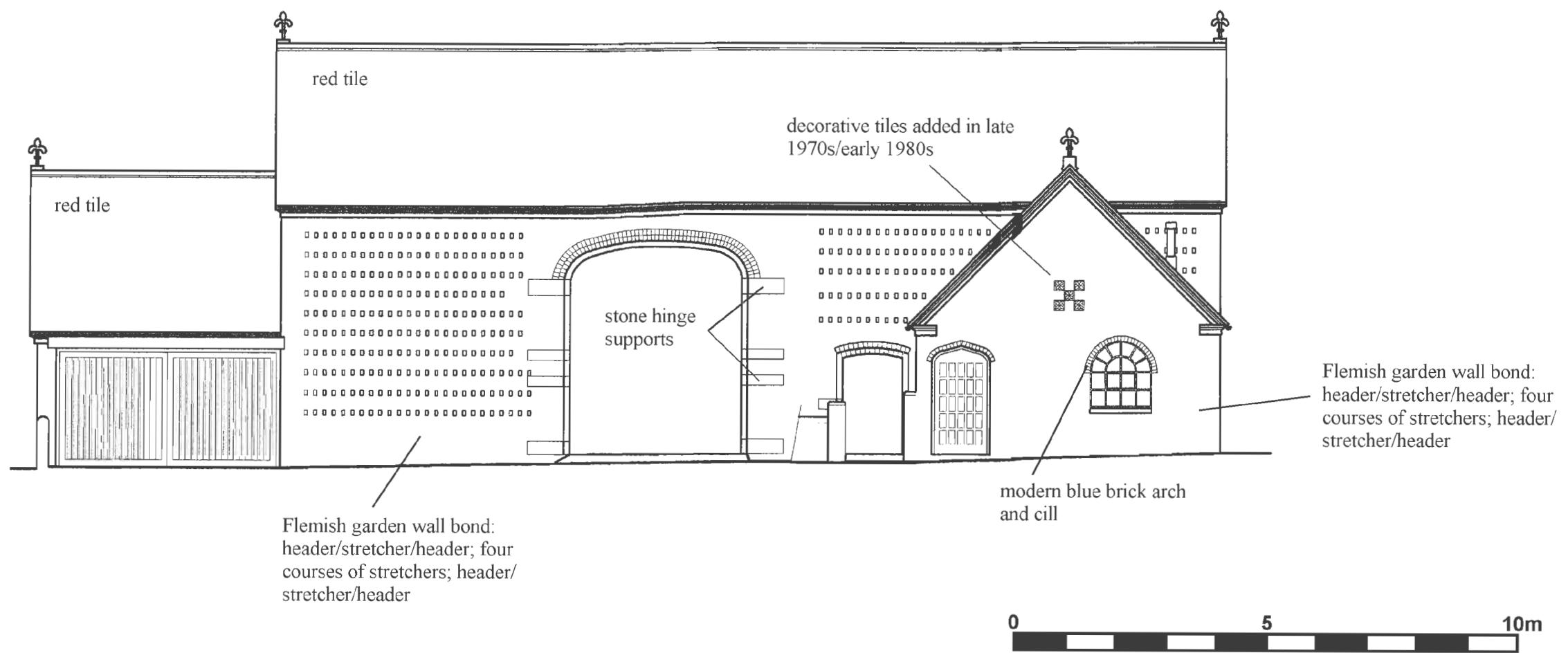
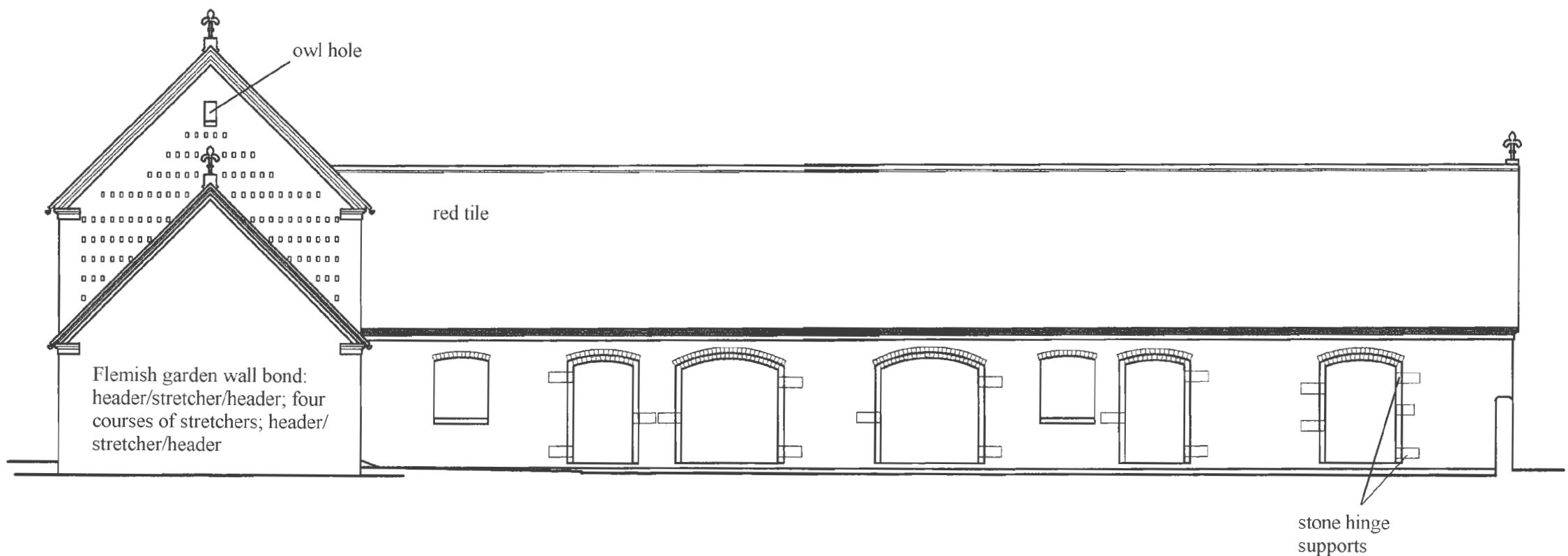


Fig 3.1: Elevations

South elevation



West elevation

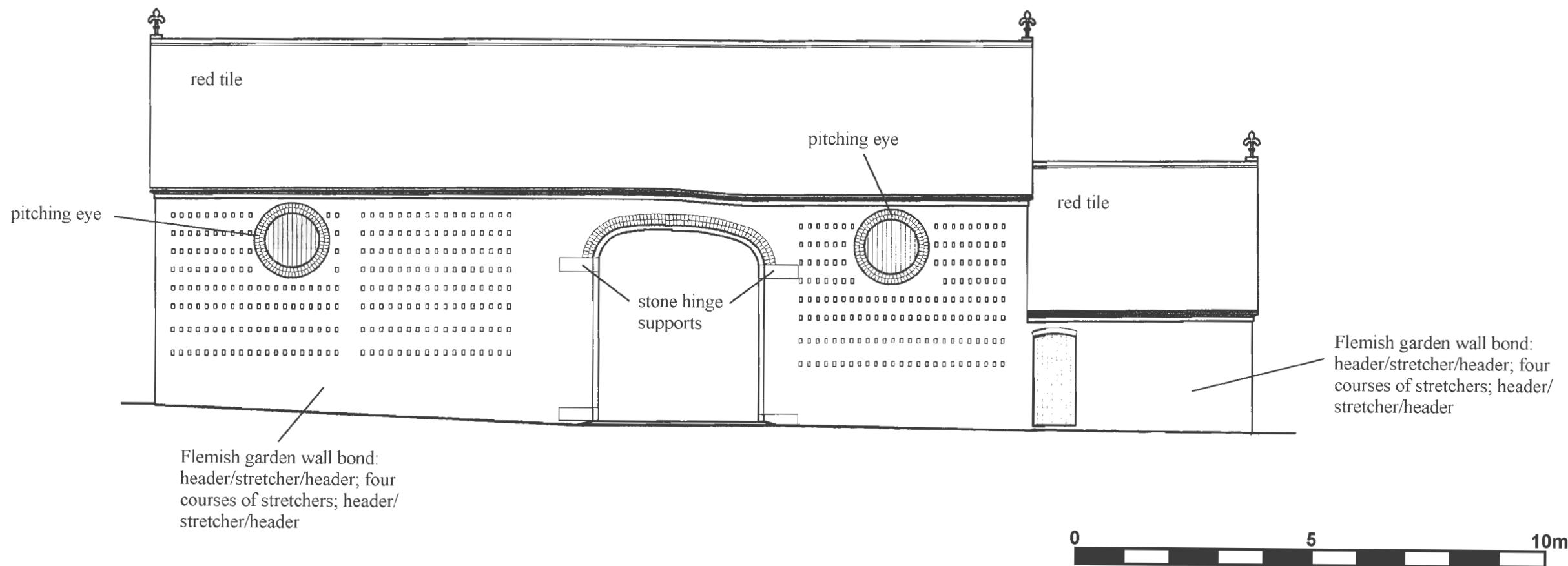
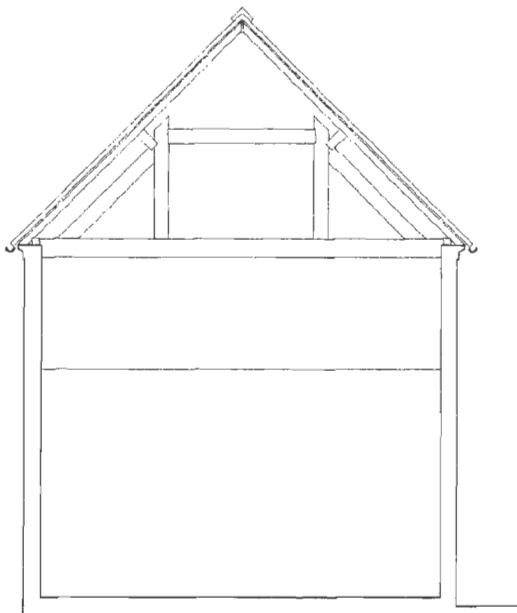
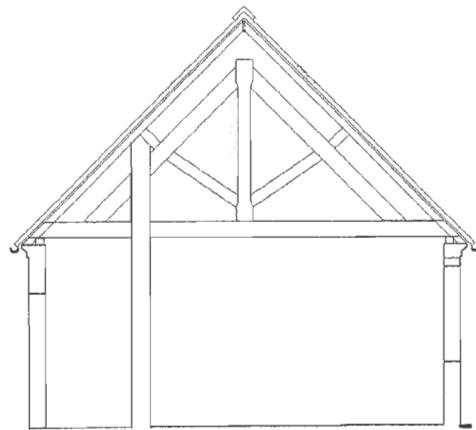


Fig 3.2: Elevations



the barn: queen post roof truss



the cattle shed: king post roof truss



Fig 4: The roof trusses

Fig 8

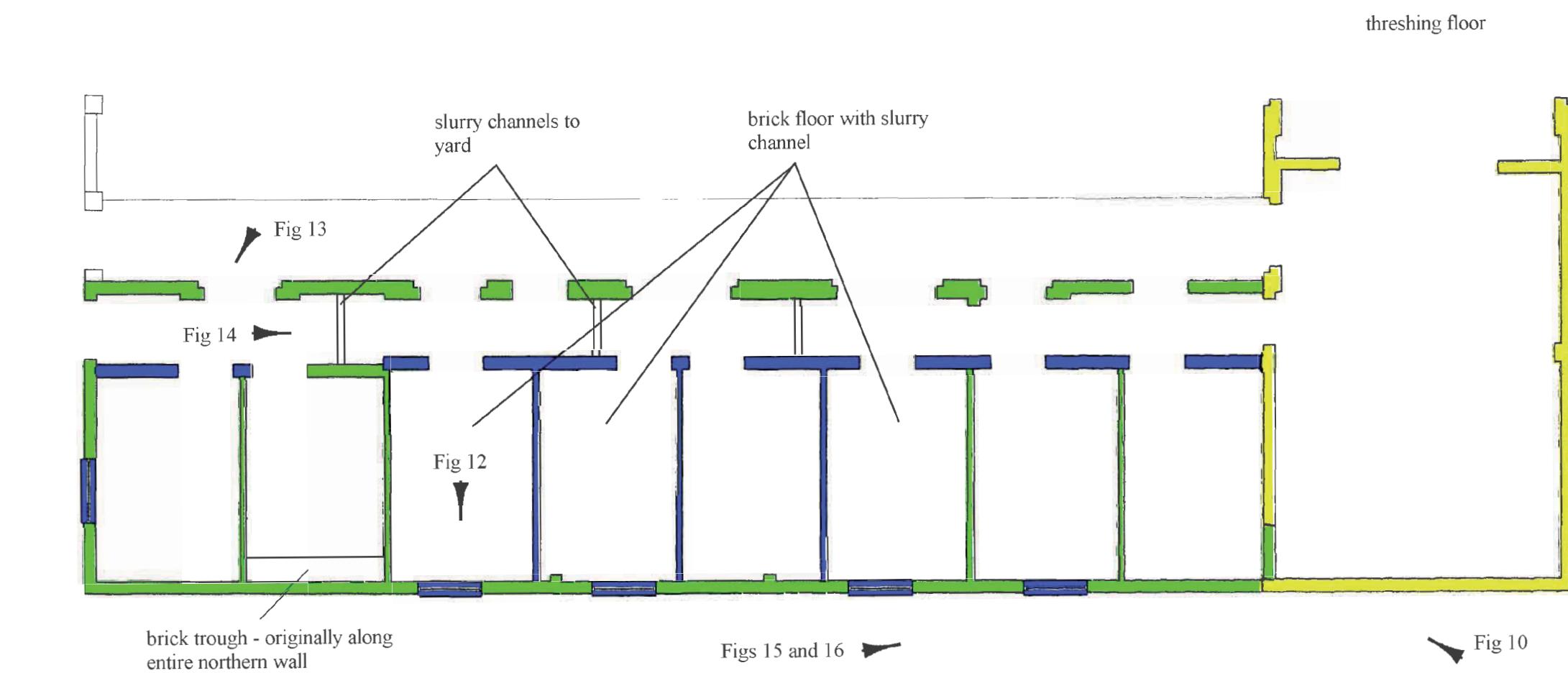
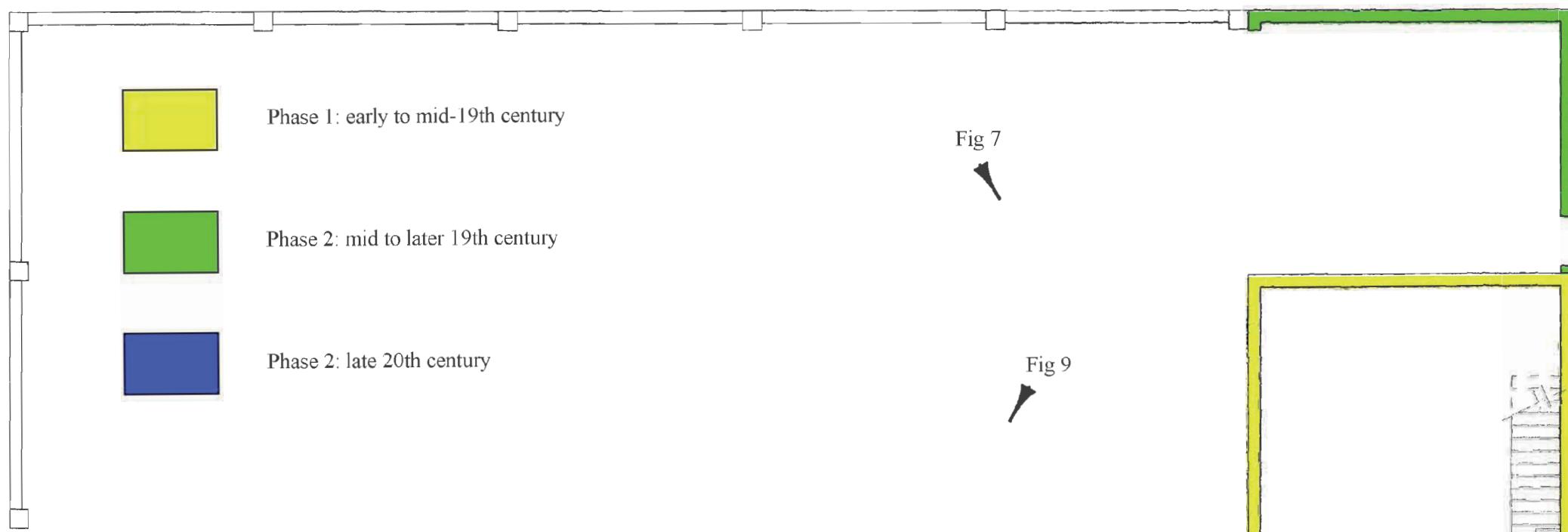


Fig 5: Phased plan





Fig 6: Phase 1 threshing barn; west elevation



Fig 7: Phase 1 threshing barn; east elevation



Fig 8: Phase 2 extension to south



Fig 9: Phase 2 cattle shed; south elevation



Fig 10: Phase 2 cattle shed; north elevation



Fig 11: Phase 2 cattle shed; east elevation

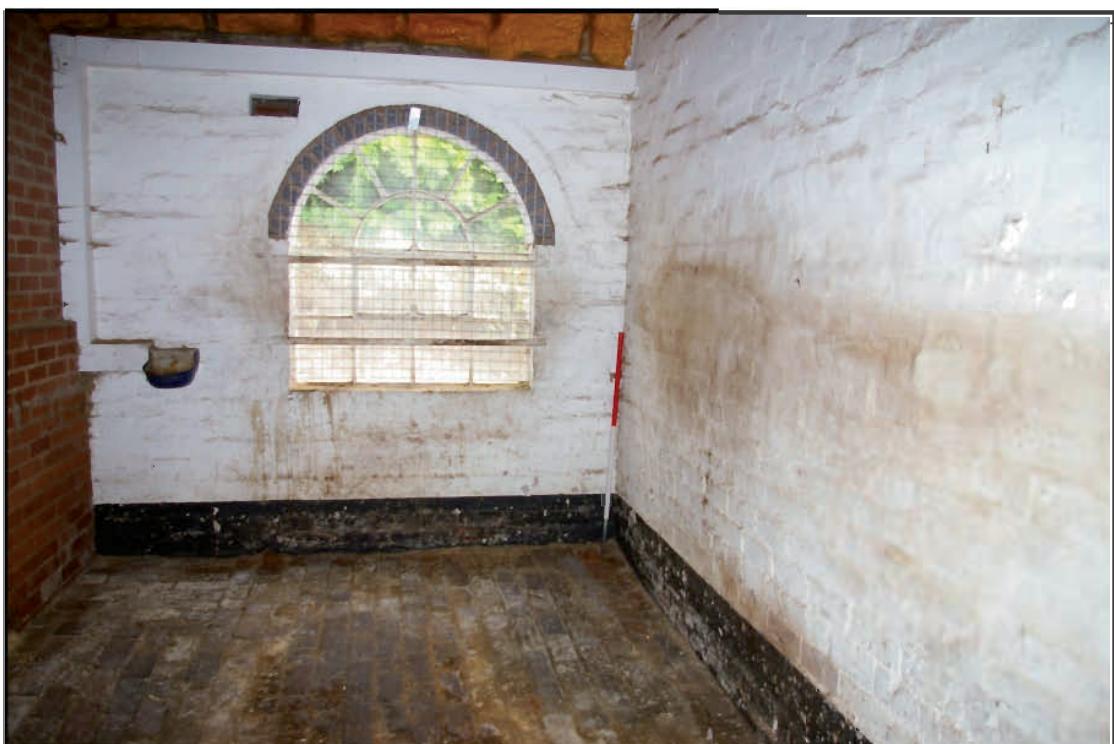


Fig 12: Interior of Phase 2 cattle shed

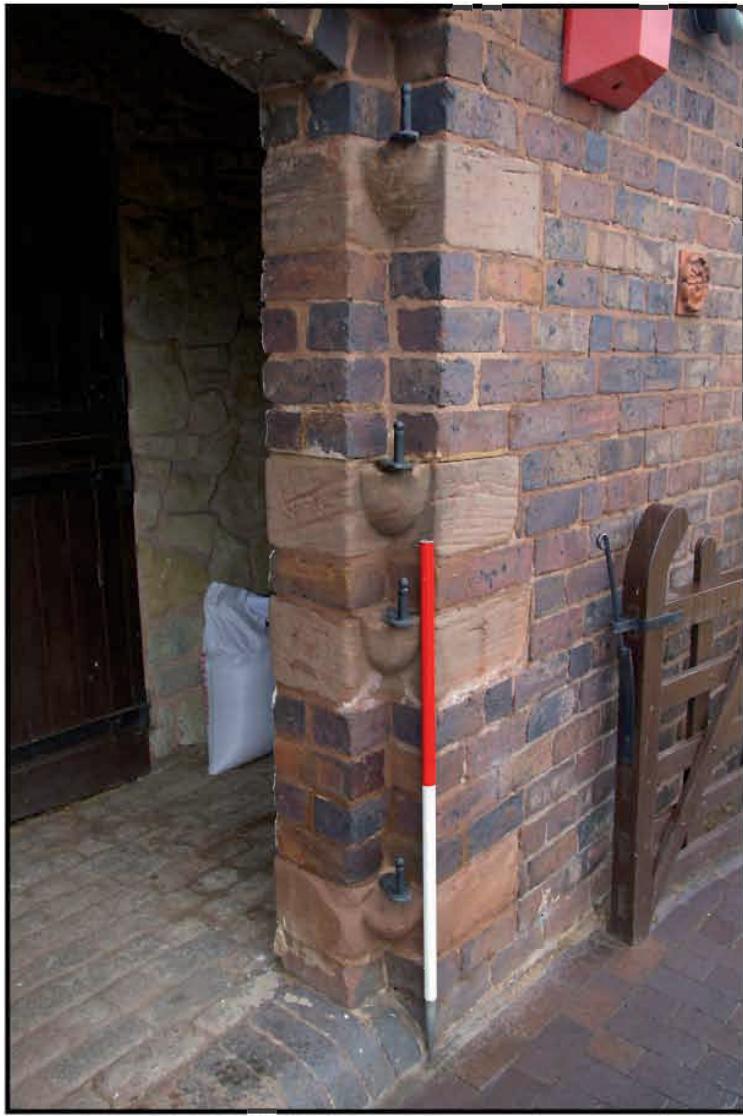


Fig 13: Phase 2 cattle shed; detail of doorway



Fig 14: Phase 2 cattle shed; detail of slurry channel



Fig 15: Client photograph (*c* 1979) showing original position and shape of window



Fig 16: Photograph taken from same location as Fig 15 showing inserted window



Fig 17: General view from north-east



Fig 18: General view from east