



# **Barn at Lower Cory, Morwenstow, Cornwall**

## **Historic Building Record**





Report No

2011R067

Report Name

Barn at Lower Cory, Morwenstow, Cornwall,  
Historic Building Record

Report Author

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Event Type

Historic Building Record

Client Organisation

Mr and Mrs Axworthy

Client Contact

Richard Wellby (Metters and  
Wellby)

Monuments (MonUID)

N/A

Fieldwork dates (From)

31/5/11

(To)

(Created By)

Jo Sturgess

(Create Date)

1/6/11

Location (postal address; or general location and parish)

Lower Cory, Morwenstow, Cornwall

(Town – for urban sites)

(Postcode)

EX23 9ST

(Easting) X co-ord

SS 21589

(Northing) Y co-ord

16310

## List of Figures

*Fig 1: Site location*

*Fig 2: Aerial photograph (2005)*

*Fig 3: Modern OS landline map*

*Fig 4: OS Surveyor's Drawing c1809*

*Fig 5: Tithe map for the parish of Morwenstow c1840*

*Fig 6: First Edition OS map of c1880*

*Fig 7: Second Edition OS map of c1907*

*Fig 8: East (front) elevation*

*Fig 9: West (rear) elevation*

*Fig 10: Threshing door in west (rear) elevation*

*Fig 11: North elevation*

*Fig 12: South and east elevations*

*Fig 13: Partition wall inside the stable showing ground floor stone rubble wall with remains of timber stud wall extending up to the first floor*

*Fig 14: Rear wall inside stable showing a partially blocked original window opening and an opening for a drive shaft to the north of it*

*Fig 15: Rear wall inside cow-house showing two internally splayed ventilators and threshing floor above*

*Fig 16: First floor interior looking south into former hay loft*

*Fig 17: First floor interior looking north into former threshing barn showing the location of a former stud wall as a shadow on the east wall and the remains of studs attached to the truss*

*Fig 18: First floor original threshing floor looking north*

*Fig 19: Roof structure looking north*

*Fig 20: Annotated ground floor and first floor plans*

*Fig 21: Annotated elevations*



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## Summary

The settlement of Lower Cory near Morwenstow is likely to be medieval or earlier in date since elements of the existing farmhouse can be dated to at least the early 16<sup>th</sup> century but probably include parts of an earlier medieval hall house (listed building description). The date of the barn, which lies to the west of the farmhouse (located at NGR SS 21589 16310), is not clear but would appear to be either late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The barn appears to be first shown on the OS Surveyor's Drawing of c1809 (Fig 4). It is later depicted on the Tithe map of c1840 (Fig 5), the First Edition OS 25 inch scale map of c1880 (Fig 6) and the Second Edition OS 25 Inch scale map of c1907 (Fig 7). The building was originally constructed as a small scale multi-purpose farm building to accommodate a stable with hay loft above in the southern half and a cow house with threshing barn above in the northern half.

## Project background

Planning Permission was granted by Cornwall Council for the conversion of a barn at Lower Cory Farm to residential use (ref. 2008/01917). Planning Condition 5 states:

*No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured and implemented a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the County Archaeologist.*

*Reason: To ensure satisfactory arrangements are made to provide a detailed photographic record of this historic building.*

A brief outlining requirements for archaeological recording was produced by Philip Markham, Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer, acting for the County Archaeologist. This document requested the equivalent of an English Heritage Level 2 building survey (photographic recording and description). Historic Environment Projects was subsequently contacted by Richard Wellby of Metters and Wellby on behalf of the owners and an estimate of costs was prepared and agreed. After the completion of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by Phil Copleston (Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer) the building record was undertaken. The results of the work are presented in this report.

## Aims and objectives

The principal aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the historic development and function of the building. The objectives were to obtain an archaeological record of the site prior to alterations.

## Working methods

The fieldwork was undertaken to be equivalent to an English Heritage Level 2 survey (see English Heritage 2006). It comprised a walk-over, photographic survey and the production of brief building descriptions.

### Desk-based research

Before the site visit was undertaken, readily available historic material was consulted, including the Historic Environment Record, historic maps, and the listed building description for Lower Cory house.

The main sources consulted were as follows:

- Cornwall HER
- Early maps (see Section 10)
- Listed building description

## Fieldwork

Analysis of the building fabric was undertaken on site (recorded as notes). Measured information and detail, as appropriate, was added to copies of existing measured drawings (supplied to HE by Metters and Wellby).

The photographic record comprised:

- general views
- internal and external elevations
- examples of structural and architectural detail

The principal photographic record comprised black and white photographs taken using a 35mm camera on fine grain archive quality film.

Supporting colour photographs were taken with a digital camera for illustrative use.

A metric scale was included in all shots.

## Post-fieldwork

All project materials were prepared for long term storage. This report was prepared to summarise the results of the study.

# Results

## General description

The barn at Lower Cory is a two-storey building with a hipped roof. It was originally built to serve several purposes with a cow house and stable on the ground floor and threshing barn and hay loft on the first floor. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries a lean-to adjoined the north end of the building; now demolished but formerly used as a piggery (Mr Axworthy pers comm.). The surviving building is rectangular in plan measuring approximately 11m long by 6m wide and is aligned north-south. The walls are constructed from randomly coursed sandstone rubble bonded with lime mortar. Internally the building is divided into two parts; the northern half slightly larger than the southern half. The ground floor interior partition wall is also constructed from sandstone rubble bonded with lime mortar. On the first floor this was originally a timber stud wall (now removed) and there is evidence for another removed stud wall one bay to the north of it. The roof structure is a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement of the original. It comprises five bays with simple iron-bolted timber A-frame trusses and a slate covering.

The building certainly pre-dates the Tithe map of c1840 and appears (although this is not certain) to be shown on the c1809 OS Surveyor's drawing (see Figs 4 and 5). It was designed originally as a multi-purpose farm building. In recent years the building has been used as a stable and for storage.

## East (front) wall

*See Front cover, Figs 8 and 21*

This wall is constructed from sandstone rubble bonded with lime mortar. There are three original door openings. The two ground floor openings (one leading to the stable and the other to the cow-house) have inserted brick lintels replacing earlier timber lintels. The first floor threshing door opening has a timber lintel but has been blocked with a workshop window inserted. The stable door itself is modern and there is no door surviving to the cow-house.

## West (rear) wall

*See Figs 9, 10 and 21*

The west wall is constructed from sandstone rubble bonded with lime mortar. The northern half of the wall relates to the cow-house on the ground floor and the threshing barn on the first floor. At ground floor level here there are two slit ventilators and the level of the former ground surface can be seen immediately below these openings. At first floor level here is the threshing door opening containing its original door with timber

lintel over and timber supports for a former hood (Fig 10). The southern half of the wall relates to the stable on the ground floor and the hay loft on the first floor. At ground floor level here is an original window opening which has been partially blocked on its northern side and a workshop window inserted and cement replacement lintel. To the north of this window is a small inserted opening for a drive shaft indicating that a small grinding or chopping machine was installed at some point inside the stable (possibly to crush oats for horses). The line of the earlier external ground level can be seen in the west elevation at the base of the window and drive shaft opening. At first floor level here there is a blocked loading door opening (serving the former hay loft) containing an inserted window. This also has a replacement cement lintel. All the openings are original in this wall except the small opening for the drive shaft which has been inserted.

### **North wall**

*See Figs 11 and 21*

The north wall is constructed from sandstone rubble bonded with lime mortar. Towards the base of the north elevation are two reused worn slate blocks (possibly former steps). In this elevation the position of the roof line of the now demolished lean-to (former piggery) is visible. Above this at first floor level in the eastern half of the wall is a small opening (possibly a pigeon hole).

### **South wall**

*See Figs 12 and 21*

The south wall is constructed from sandstone rubble bonded with lime mortar. Towards the base of the north elevation are two reused worn slate blocks (possibly former steps). There are no openings or other features of note in this wall.

### **Interior ground floor north room - cow-house**

*See Figs 15 and 20*

The floor itself is slate or sandstone cobbles (although only a small area was visible at the time of the survey) and there is a surface drain which runs north-south across the room within the eastern half. The ceiling is exposed timber joists and the floor boards above. Many of the joists are original and have clearly been cut with an adze and display carpenters marks whilst others are later sawn replacements. Two of the joists have plain chamfers and are likely to have been repositioned. All of the joists have been strengthened in recent years by the addition short lengths of timber bolted to them at the western end. Supported by the joists in the northern half of the room wide threshing boards are visible whilst narrow boards are visible in the southern half. Two internally splayed slit ventilators are visible immediately below first floor level in the west wall of this room and the door opening to the yard lies opposite them in the east wall. This room was originally constructed to function as a cow-house. At the time of survey it was in use as a storage room.

### **Interior ground floor south room - stable**

*See Figs 13, 14 and 20*

The floor is slate or sandstone cobbles partially overlain with modern cement. The ceiling is exposed timber joists and the floor boards above. This floor structure is a late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement of the original. All of the joists have been strengthened in recent years by the addition short lengths of timber bolted to them at the western end. In the south-west corner there is access via a ladder to the hay loft above. The walls are lime-washed and in the west wall there is a partially blocked original window opening and an inserted opening for a drive shaft. The north (partition) wall in this room is stone built up to the first floor level in the northern half of the building. However, the first floor level in the southern half of the building is 0.45m higher than that in the northern half, to allow the extra height a horse would need. This lower part of the first floor stud partition is therefore visible on top of the stone partition in this room. This room appears to have been originally constructed to function as a stable. At some point in its

history part of the space has been used to house a small grinding mill or chopping machine for processing animal fodder, most likely driven by a horse-engine outside the rear of the building. At the time of survey it was in use as a storage room.

### **Interior first floor - hay loft and threshing barn**

*See Figs 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20*

Although now a single open room space the first floor was originally partitioned with stud walls to form two, if not three, rooms all open to the roof space. The northern room is the former threshing barn with its threshing floor still intact. The boards measure 0.35m wide and extend from the north wall as far as a line between the southern jambs of the two opposing threshing doors where the threshing took place. The opposing doors were designed to create and control a draught for winnowing (removing the chaff). To the south of this, but still within the threshing barn, the boards are narrow, probably late 19<sup>th</sup> century replacements in an area which is likely to have been used for storage. It is possible that this narrow area was partitioned off to form a separate room since there are signs of removed stud walls either side of the central bay (see Fig 20). Around the walls within the whole of this area there is a timber skirting approximately 0.2m high; a typical feature of a threshing barn. In the north-east corner of the floor a slot has been cut in recent years (Mr Axworthy pers comm.). The area of the threshing barn and storage area measures 5.8m north-south where as the area of the hay loft at the southern end of the first floor measures 4.1m north-south.

The hay loft area was once partitioned off from the room(s) to the north with a timber stud wall and there are indications that there was a door at the west end of this partition wall. The floor of the hay loft lies 0.45m above that of the threshing barn. This appears to be an original part of the building design to allow extra head room in the stable below. The joists and boards here are late 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century replacements and the original floor may have been approximately 0.1m higher since a floor ledge survives in the south wall 0.1m higher than the present floor level. In the west wall is the original (blocked) loading door and in the south-west corner an opening in the floor giving access to the stable below.

The whole of the first floor is currently unused.

### **Roof**

*See Fig 19*

The roof structure is a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement of the original. It is a hipped roof comprising five bays with simple iron-bolted timber A-frame trusses and a slate covering with ceramic ridge tiles. There is no indication that the roof has been either raised or lowered from its original position and it is likely that it replaced a roof of similar construction.

## **References**

### **Primary Sources**

Ordnance Survey, c1880. *25 Inch Map* First Edition (licensed digital copy at HE)  
Ordnance Survey, c1907. *25 Inch Map* Second Edition (licensed digital copy at HE)  
Ordnance Survey, 2007. *Mastermap Digital Mapping*  
OS Surveyors Drawing c1809 (licensed digital copy at HE)  
Tithe Map and Apportionment, c1840. *Parish of Morwenstow* (digital copy at HE)

### **Publications**

English Heritage, 2006. *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*. Swindon  
Gover, JEB, 1948. *Place-Names of Cornwall* (manuscript at RCM, Truro) 77



## Websites

<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/> English Heritage's online database of Listed Buildings

## Project archive

The HE project number is **2011050**

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of Historic Environment, Cornwall Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. A project file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration.
2. Electronic drawings stored in the directory ..\CAD ARCHIVE\Sites C\Lower Cory HBR 2011050
3. Black and white photographs archived under the following index numbers: GBP 2191
4. Digital photographs stored in the directory ..\Images\Sites A-D\Lower Cory HBR 2011050
5. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-102333

This report text is held in digital form as: G:\Historic Environment (Documents)\HE Projects\Sites C\Lower Cory barn 2011050

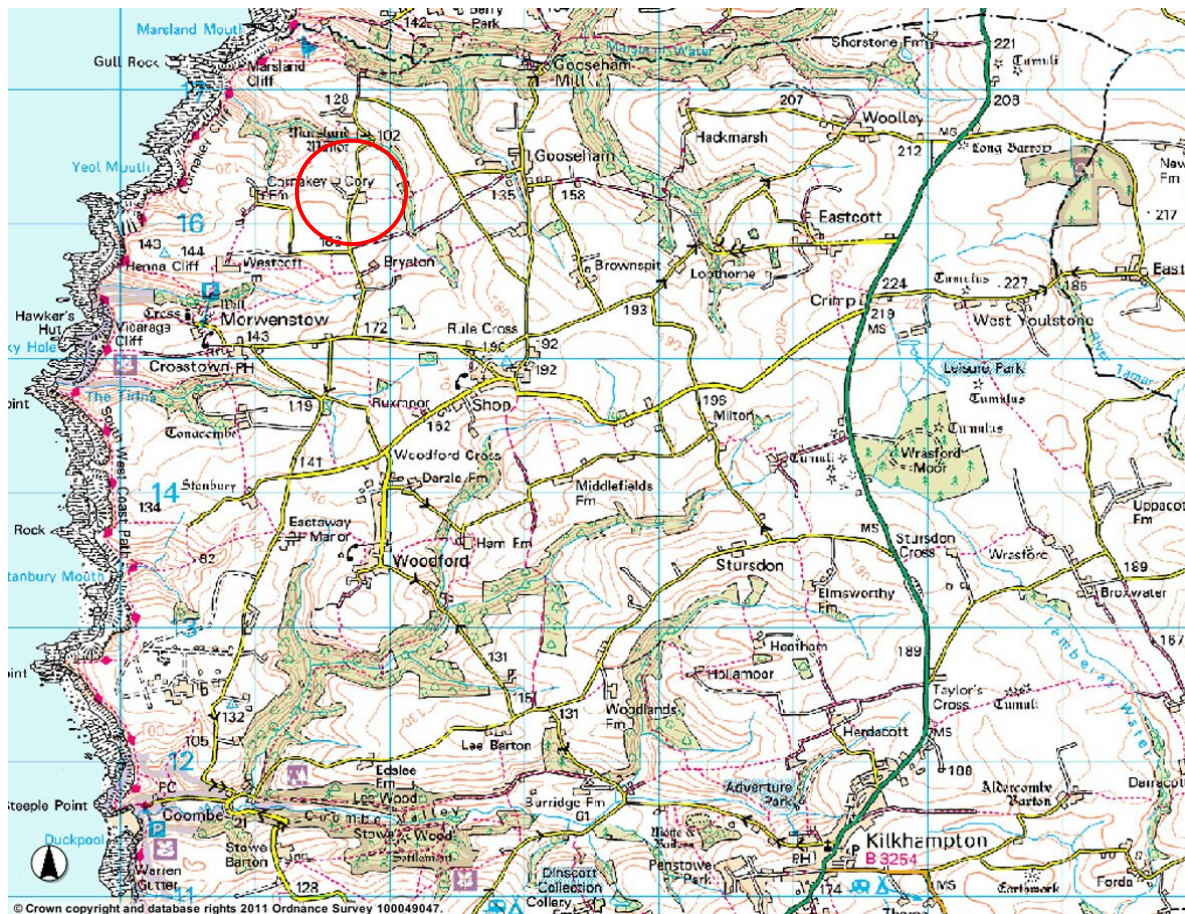


Fig 1: Site location



Fig 2: Aerial photograph (2005)



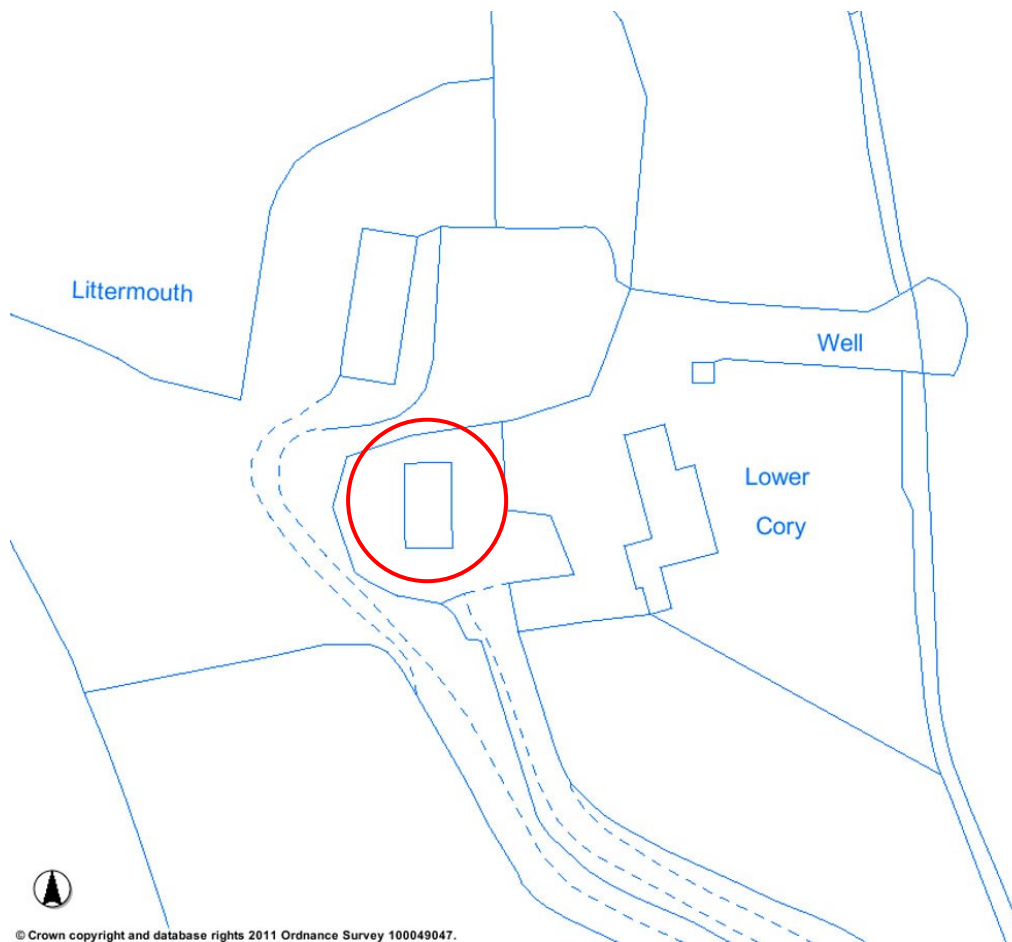


Fig 3: Modern OS landline map



Fig 4: OS Surveyor's Drawing c1809



Fig 5: Tithe map for the parish of Morwenstow c1840

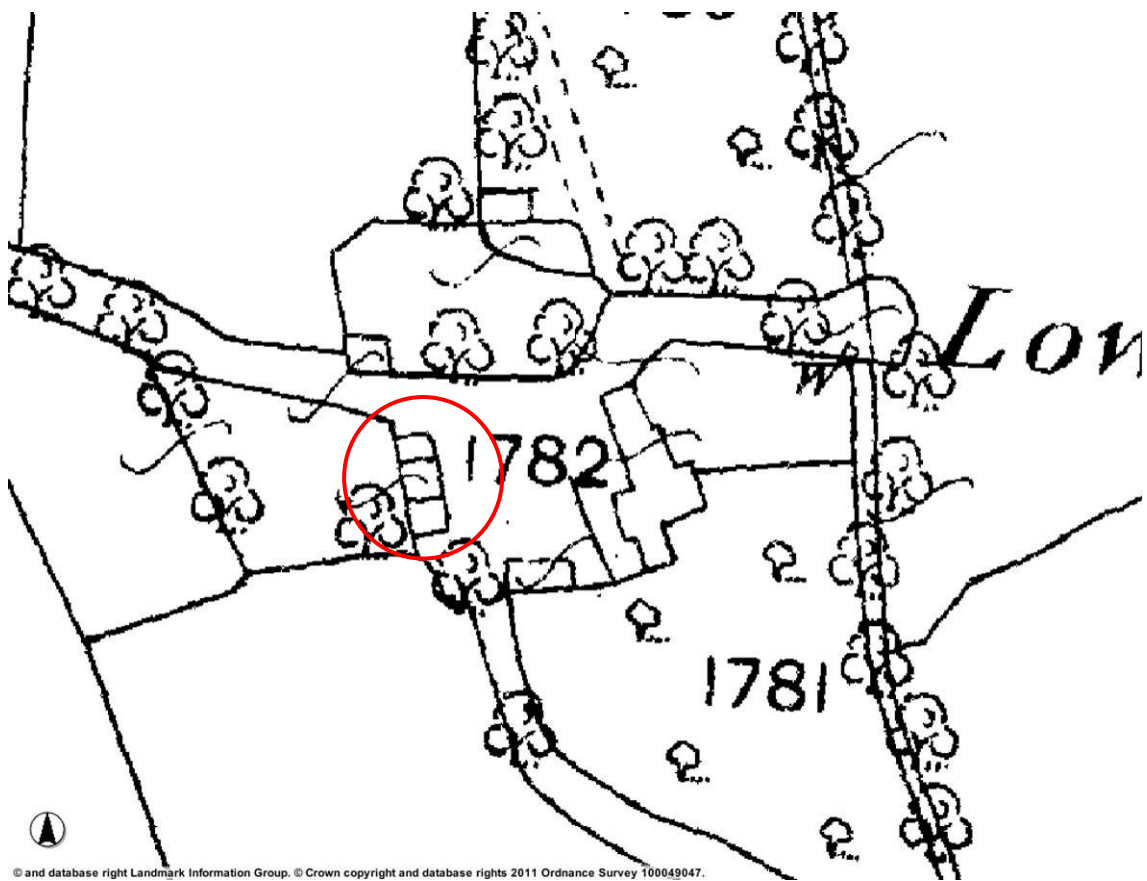
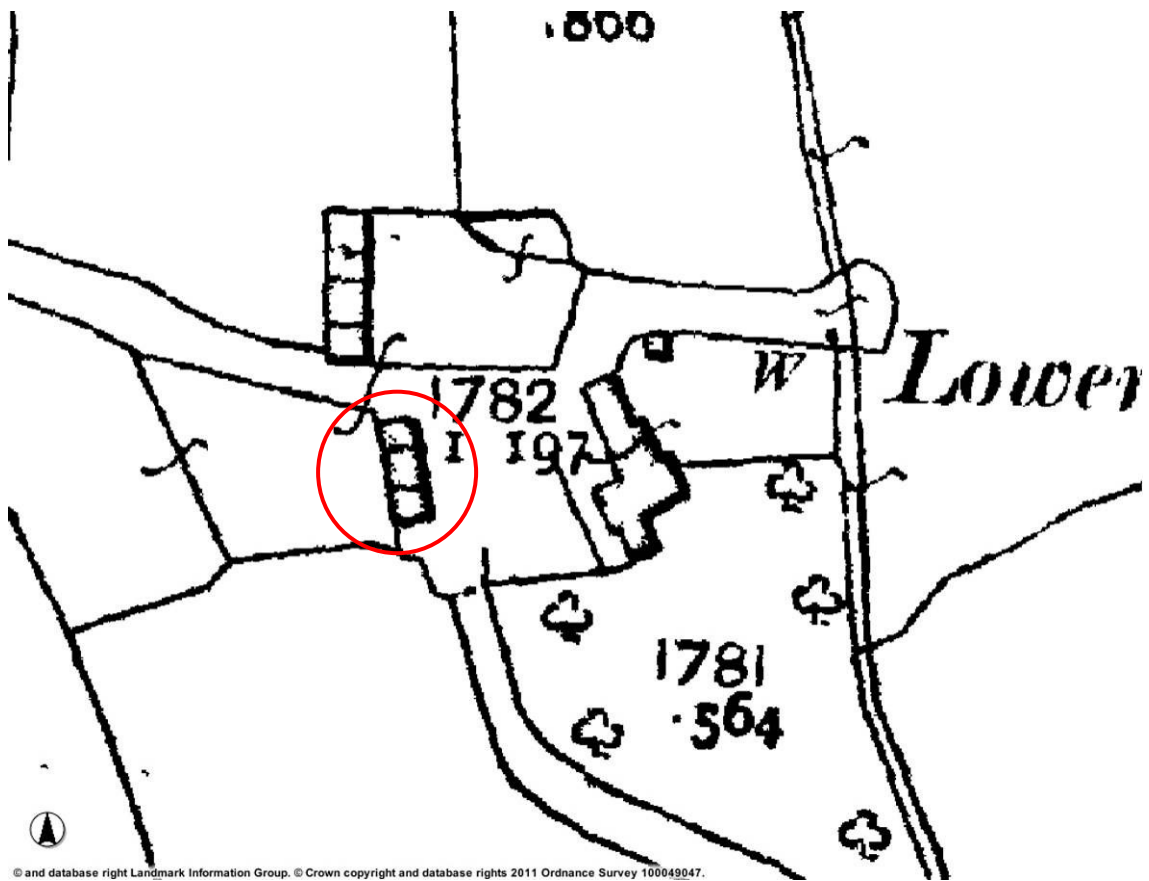


Fig 6: First Edition OS map of c1880





*Fig 7: Second Edition OS map of c1907*

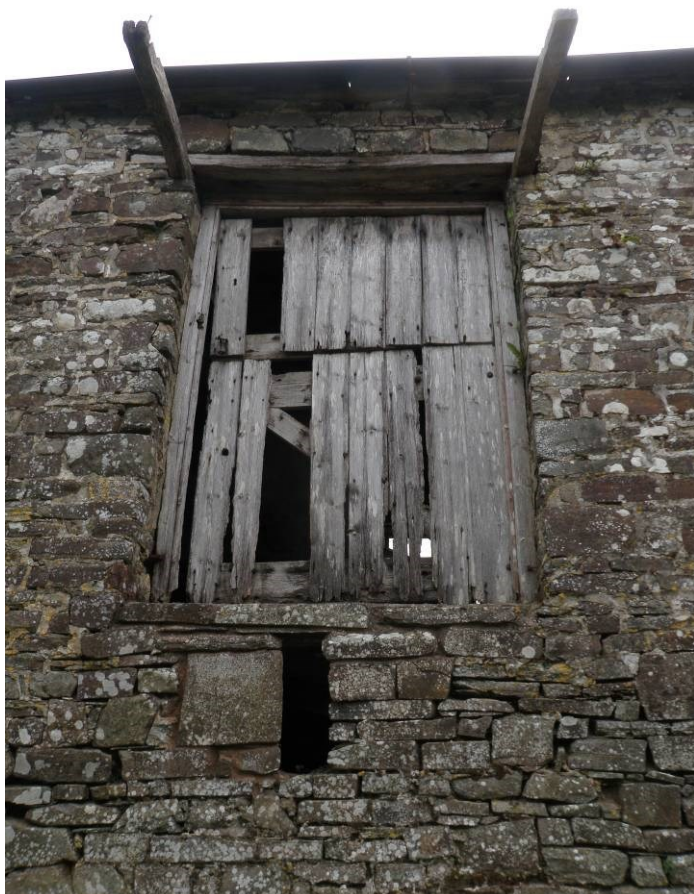


*Fig 8: East (front) elevation*





*Fig 9: West (rear) elevation*



*Fig 10: Threshing door in west (rear) elevation*





*Fig 11: North elevation*



*Fig 12: South and east elevations*





*Fig 13: Partition wall inside the stable showing ground floor stone rubble wall with remains of timber stud wall extending up to the first floor*



*Fig 14: Rear wall inside stable showing a partially blocked original window opening and an opening for a drive shaft to the north of it*





*Fig 15: Rear wall inside cow-house showing two internally splayed ventilators and threshing floor above*



*Fig 16: First floor interior looking south into former hay loft*





*Fig 17: First floor interior looking north into former threshing barn showing the location of a former stud wall as a shadow on the east wall and the remains of studs attached to the truss*



*Fig 18: First floor original threshing floor looking north*





*Fig 19: Roof structure looking north*

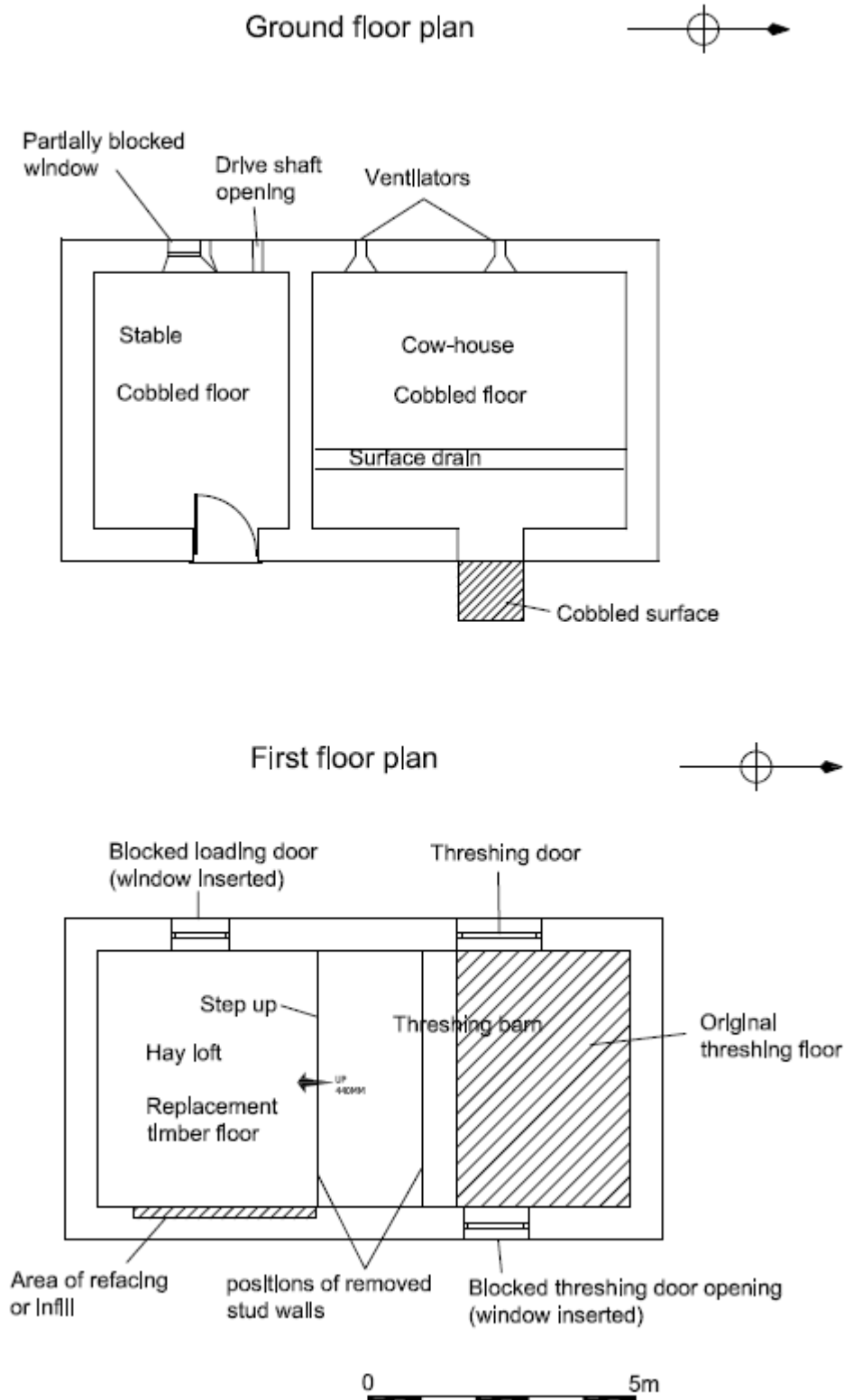
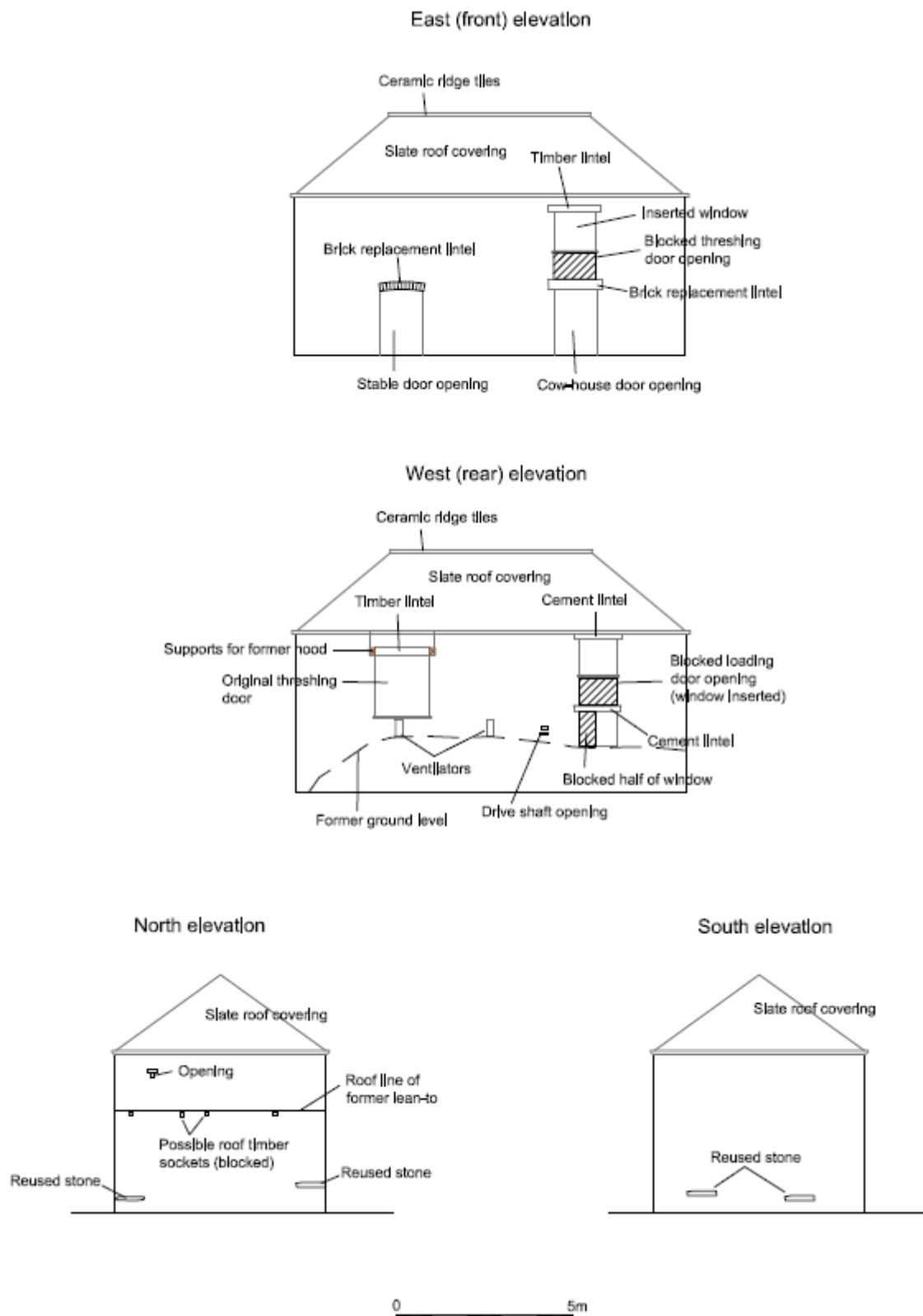


Fig 20: Annotated ground floor and first floor plans



*Fig 21: Annotated elevations*