

Historic Building Record

**‘New Bridge End’:  
A barn with attached former cottage to the south of  
Boulsworth End Farm,  
Ridehalgh Lane, Briercliffe, Burnley**

NGR SD 90840 34710

Prepared by  
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January 2009

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## 1.0 SUMMARY

The building known as 'New Bridge End (Barn)' is a former extended and altered laithe house (cottage and barn) possibly dating from the eighteenth century, located on the remote northern valley slopes of Thursden Brook, near the village of Briercliffe on the western edge of the Forest of Trawden. Built of coursed stone and comprising at least three phases of construction/alteration, the building was last used solely for agricultural purposes (sheep shearing and general storage) having formerly comprised a dwelling with an attached small combination barn. Evidence of human habitation within the building remains in the form of a hearth and chimney within a central bay of the four bay range. Otherwise the predominantly two storey (ground and floor and loft) building retains evidence of animal housing and sheep shearing.

New Bridge End, whilst probably a separate tenanted small holding when first built, is now part of the neighbouring Boulsworth End Farm estate. It has all but lost any worthwhile agricultural function and as such until quite recently risked obsolescence and dereliction. However in 2003 planning permission was granted for conversion into a single dwelling house thus securing a future for the building. In recognition of the building's historic significance as a remnant of rural vernacular architecture, planning permission was granted on the condition that a record of the building be made prior to the commencement of any works that would affect the existing fabric. This document represents that record, offering written, drawn and photographic depictions of the building, alongside brief commentary upon evidence of past function and historical development.

January 2009

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Purpose and Format**

This record has been prepared in response to conditions attached to planning permission for the conversion of the subject building, as issued by Burnley Borough Council under planning application ref: 2003/0997.

The format of the record follows guidance contained in the English Heritage Publication 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practise' (February 2006) and in accordance with the methods of recording required by Lancashire County Council's Environment Directorate.

### **2.02 The Author**

Chris O'Flaherty, the author, is a Chartered Building Surveyor and professional member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). With a background in the surveying and repair of historic buildings, the author is a lecturer in architectural conservation at the University of Central Lancashire and holds a Masters Degree in Building Heritage and Conservation.

### **2.03 Methods of Investigation and Recording**

Visual inspections of the property, carried out in January 2009, were completed with the aid of existing layout plans provided by the owners. Check dimensions were taken to verify the accuracy of these drawings and photographs were taken as a desktop source of reference. Digital photographs and drawings are provided within the record for reference purposes: the photographs are mainly contained in section 4 and a full set of record drawings are contained in appendix 'A'. A plan indicating the location of each photograph is given at the start of section 4. The digital images correspond to matching traditional black and white photographs (and negatives) that form part of the archive deposition (see below).

### **2.04 Archiving: Index of Archive**

A copy of the printed Record forms part of an archive deposition held at Lancashire Record Office, Bow Lane, Preston. The full contents of this archive are indexed below:

- A4 paper, colour printed version of the written record with associated photographic (digital) and drawn records
- Black and white photographs and negatives, matching those digital images contained with the printed record

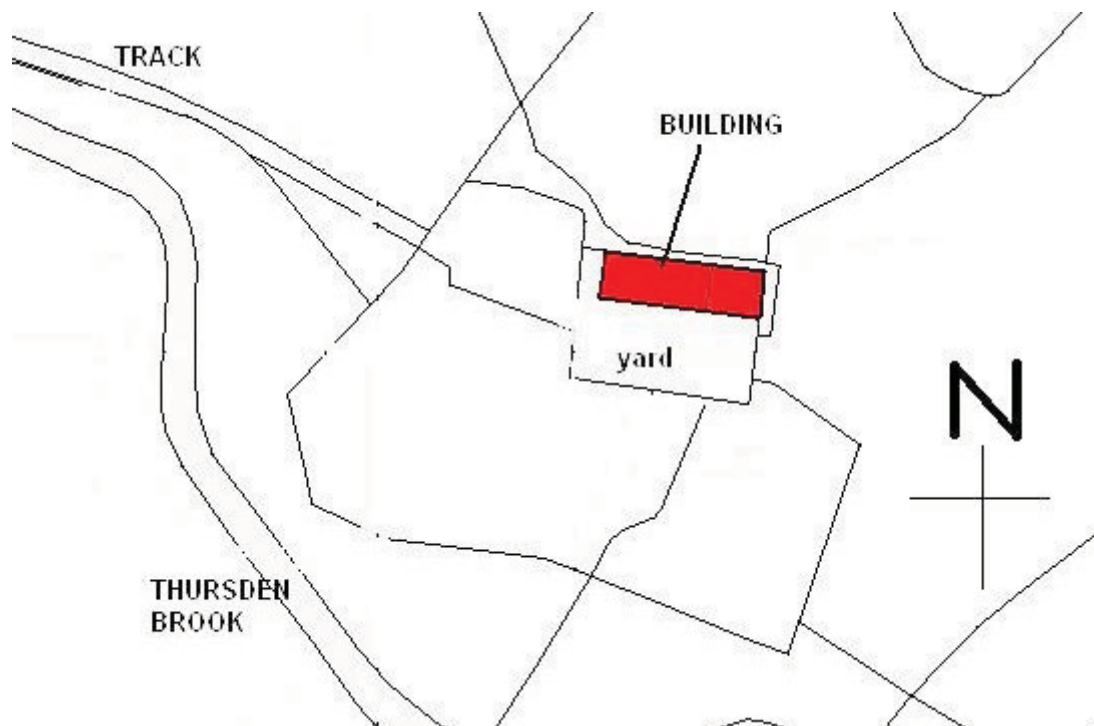
### 3.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1 Site Location

The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 90840 34710 and is situated on land to the eastern side of Ridehalgh Lane and to the north of Thursden Brook, east of Briercliffe near Burnley.

#### 3.2 Site Description

The building is accessed via a track that heads eastwards of Ridehalgh Lane and runs parallel with Thursden Brook which is situated at the base of the steep valley immediately to the south. The track leads to a gated and fenced hardstanding area to the south side of the building, the building being built into the hillside at the north. A site layout plan is given in figure 1 below: a site location plan is given in figure 2.



*Figure 1. Site plan*



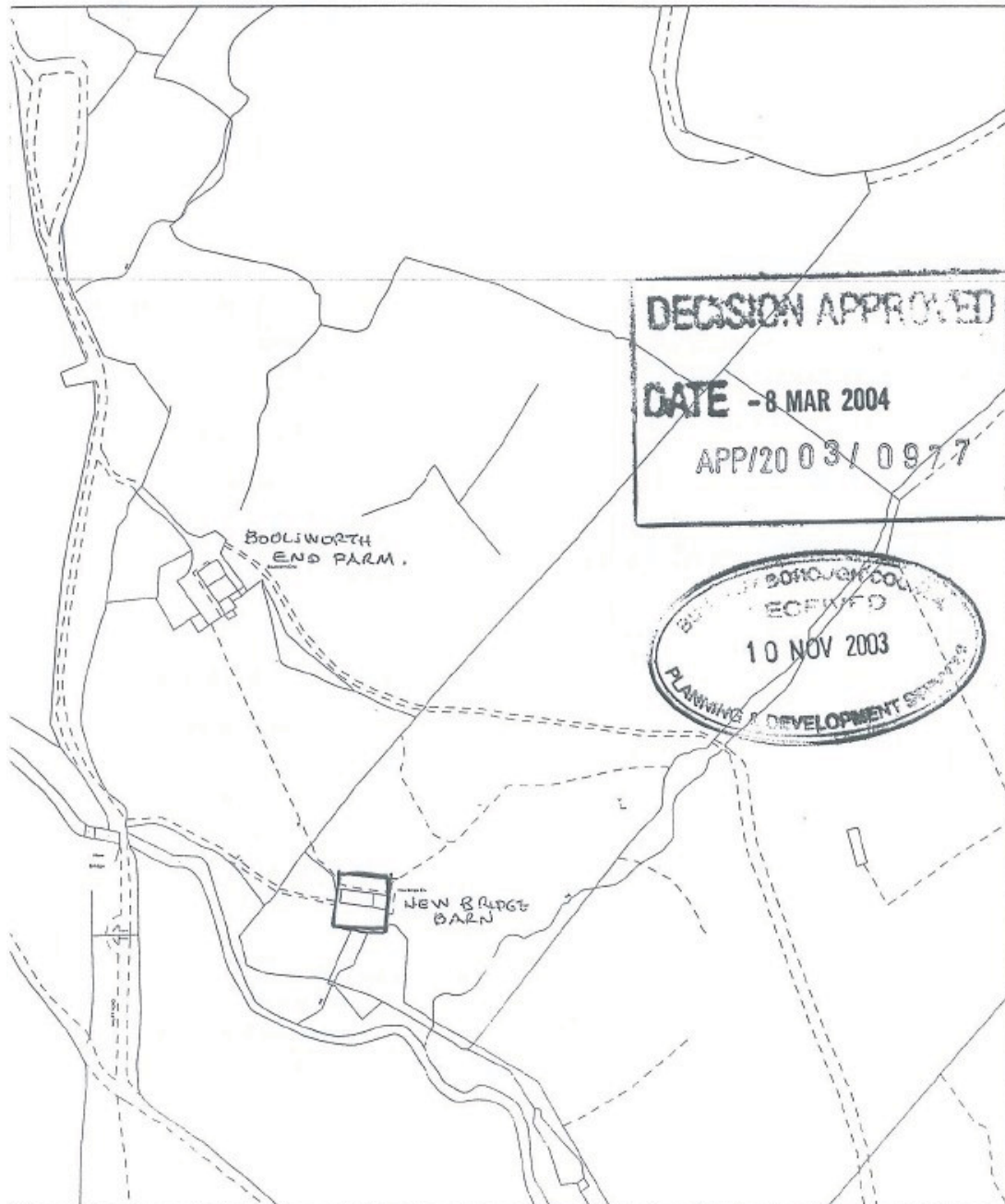
## *Location Plan for Planning or Building Control Applications*

Planning Services  
Parker Lane Offices  
Susan Graham : Head of Planning

Location:



Scale: 1:2500



Printed: 07 November 2003

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*Figure 2. Site Location Plan (supplied by Burnley Borough Council)*

### **3.3 Topography**

The building has a remote location on the western edge of the Forest of Trawden, approximately five miles east of Burnley and a similar distance to the south east of Nelson. The building occupies a steeply sloping site on the northern valley side to Thursden Brook.

## **4.0 BUILDING RECORD**

### **4.1 Orientation**

The building is orientated with its longest dimension along the east west axis. The front elevation, overlooking the yard and brook, faces south: the rear elevation built into the hillside faces north.

### **4.2 Overview - Building Plan and Materials**

The building is rectangular in plan and four bays in length, with ground and loft levels to all but the single storey lean-to eastern bay. The perimeter walls are of coursed rubble construction, with full height cross walls of matching construction dividing the centre east former cottage bay from the twin bay barn part at the west and the single bay (lean-to) altered eastern bay. To the two storey parts there is a gabled roof with a slate covering over rafters and purlins (trenched over the truss) supported by the cross walls and a collared truss (principal rafter) to the centre of the barn. The lean-to roof is covered with corrugated cement sheeting. The loft floor to the cottage bay is of boarded joists supported centrally by a chamfered beam with run-out stops. The barn has a timber loft to the western bay and is open full height to the centre west bay: the latter is a former cart entry bay with entry door to the south and blocked former entry to the north.

### **4.3 Photographic Record**

There follows a photographic record of the building with supporting captions describing elements of significance and interest. The location and direction of each photo is shown on figure 3 below.



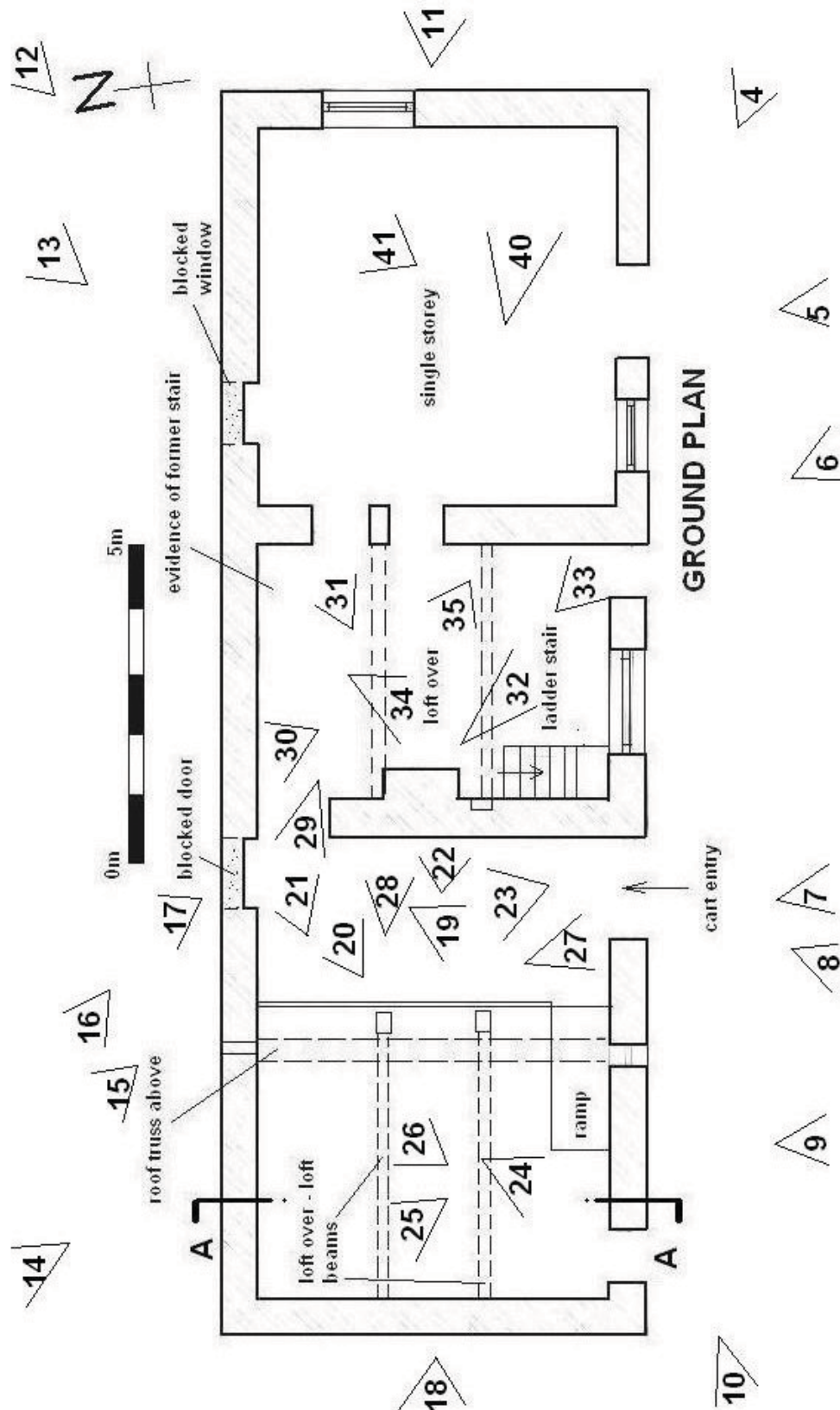
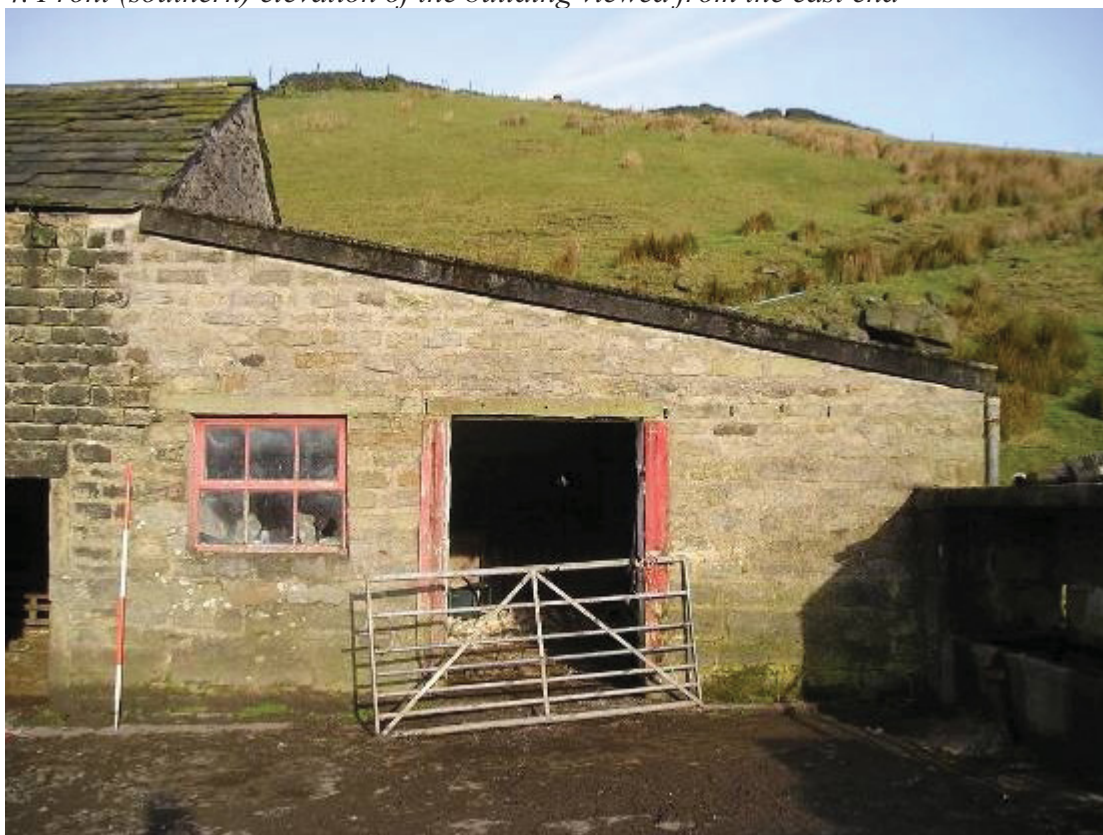


Figure 3. Location plan of photographs





*4. Front (southern) elevation of the building viewed from the east end*



*5. Front elevation, east end bay – a single storey bay last used for shearing which was formerly two storey in height and probably formed part of the dwelling*

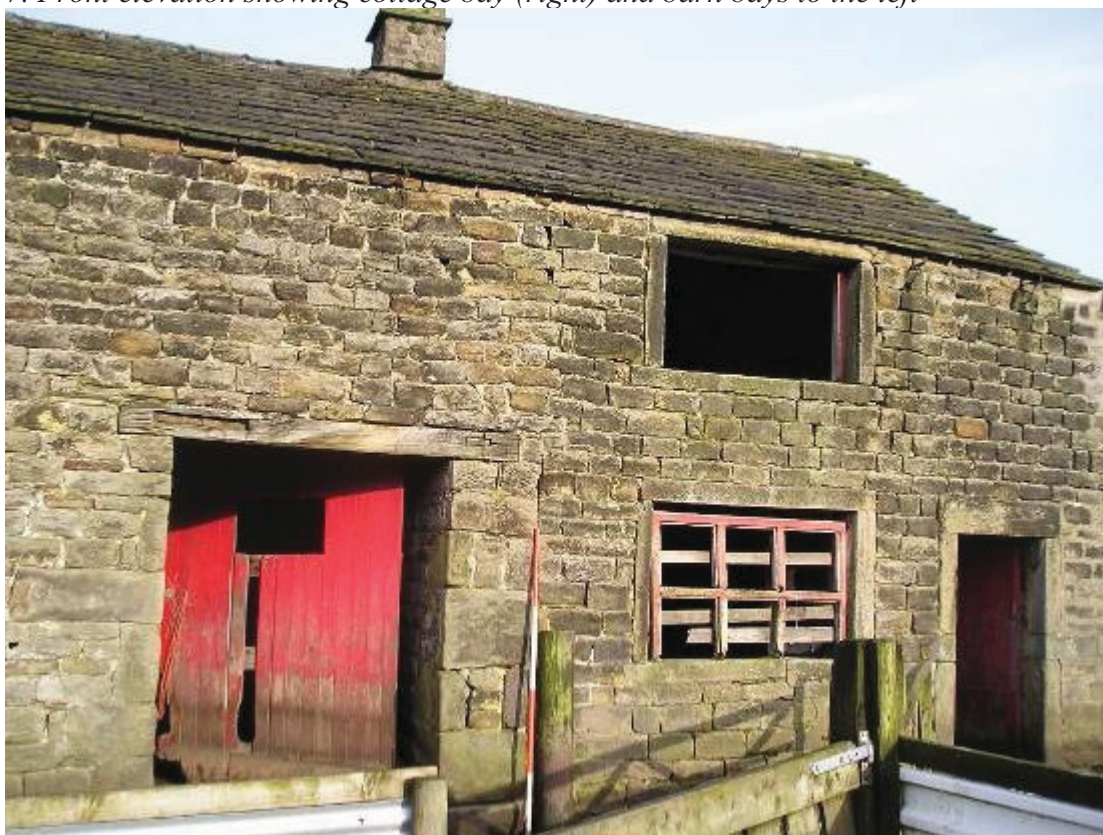


*6. Front elevation – centre part showing cottage bay with adjoining altered single storey part to the right and barn to the left. Disturbance of the upper coursing where cottage and single storey part meet indicates that the single storey may have been added or lowered (as mentioned earlier). Evidence in the interior suggests (connecting doorways) that the single storey part was in fact two storey and once part of the dwelling.*





*7. Front elevation showing cottage bay (right) and barn bays to the left*



*8. Close up of front elevation where cottage and barn meet. The irregularity to the stone coursing and straight joint to the left of the barn door indicate that the cottage may have been added to the barn*





*9. Front elevation of the two barn bays*



*10. View along front elevation from the west. Note shippon entry door in the foreground with chamfered reveals serving shippon at lower level.*





*11. Eastern elevation, with lean to in the foreground and rising gable of the cottage above. This upper wall bears no real evidence of ever having been plastered for interior use, thus questioning whether the dwelling did indeed continue to this western end of the range*



*12. View down on to the building from the northern hillside*





*13. Close up of 12.*



*14. Rear elevation from the west*



*15. Rear elevation of the barn part. Note the variation in coursing to upper and lower levels: this might indicate past alteration or even evidence of an older building that has been reused. The exact nature of such variation, though, remains unclear.*

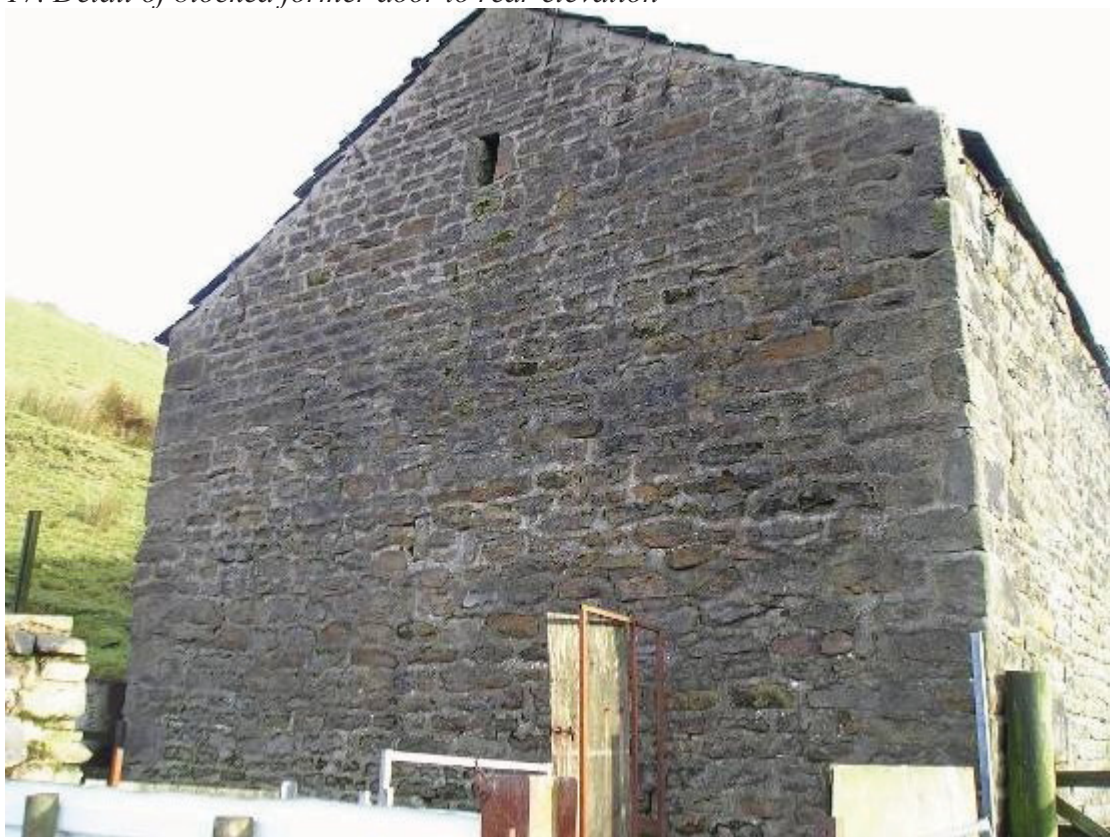


*16. Rear elevation – note blocked former door to the centre (see also 17) which opposes cart door to the front elevation. This shows that land to the rear was once dug away to reveal more of the wall than is now visible.*





*17. Detail of blocked former door to rear elevation*



*18. Western gable (barn part)*





*19. Barn interior – looking to rear wall and blocked former door with inserted door to the right giving access to the cottage bay*



*20. Barn, looking to west end with loft over lower shippon – note feeding rack*





*21. Truss to barn, with collar, overlapped and pegged principals at the apex and lapped and trenced purlins*



*22. Detail of truss apex*



*23. View to barn entry door from interior*





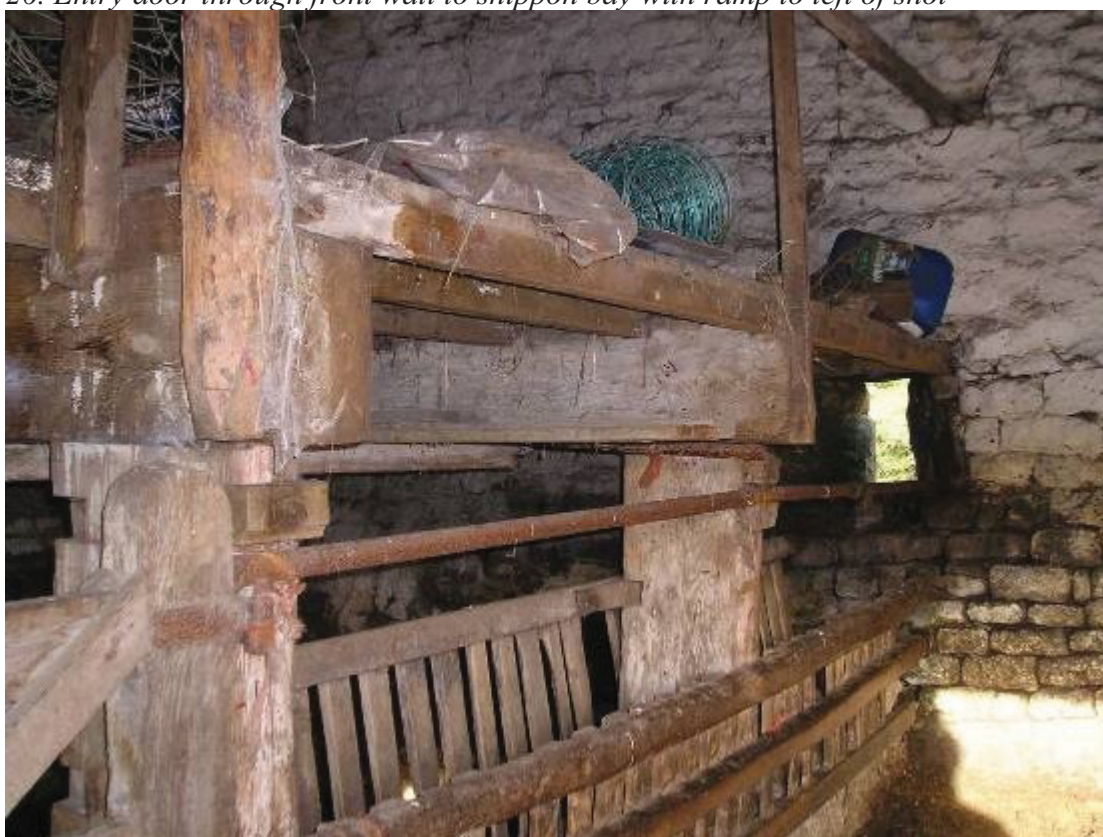
*24. View in shippon bay to barn with low wall to the right showing drop in level from cart entry bay (right) to shippon floor.*



*25. Ramp down from cart entry bay to shippon part*



*26. Entry door through front wall to shippon bay with ramp to left of shot*



*27. Detail of loft and rack in barn*





28. *Roof truss*



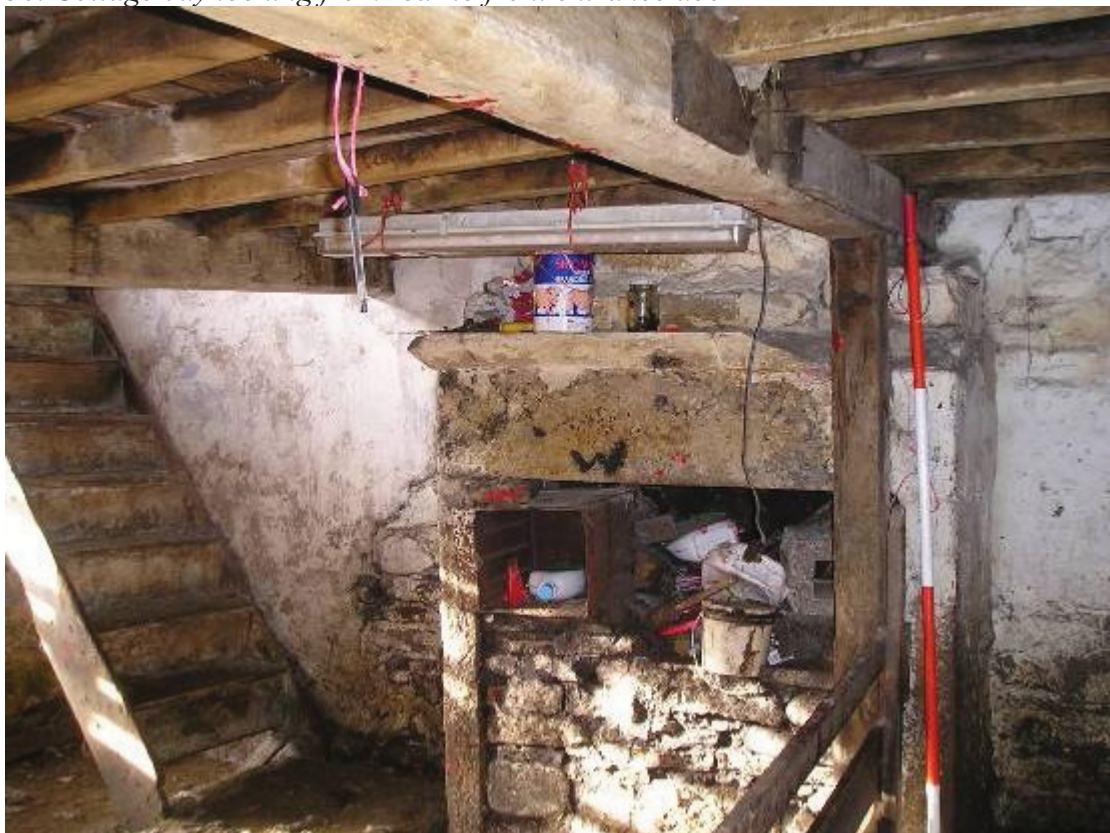


*29. View east along rear part of cottage bay (ground floor) showing inserted wooden railing and walkway for movement of sheep into shearing area (east end of the building)*



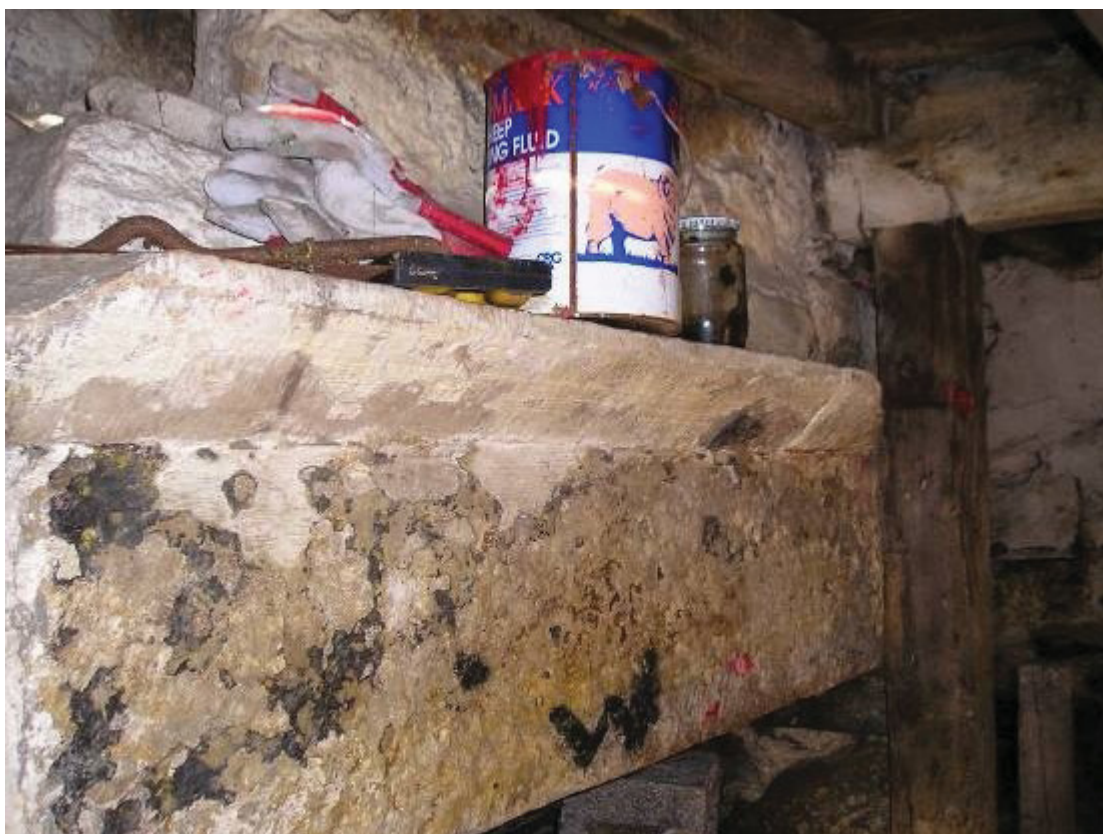


30. Cottage bay looking from rear to front entrance door

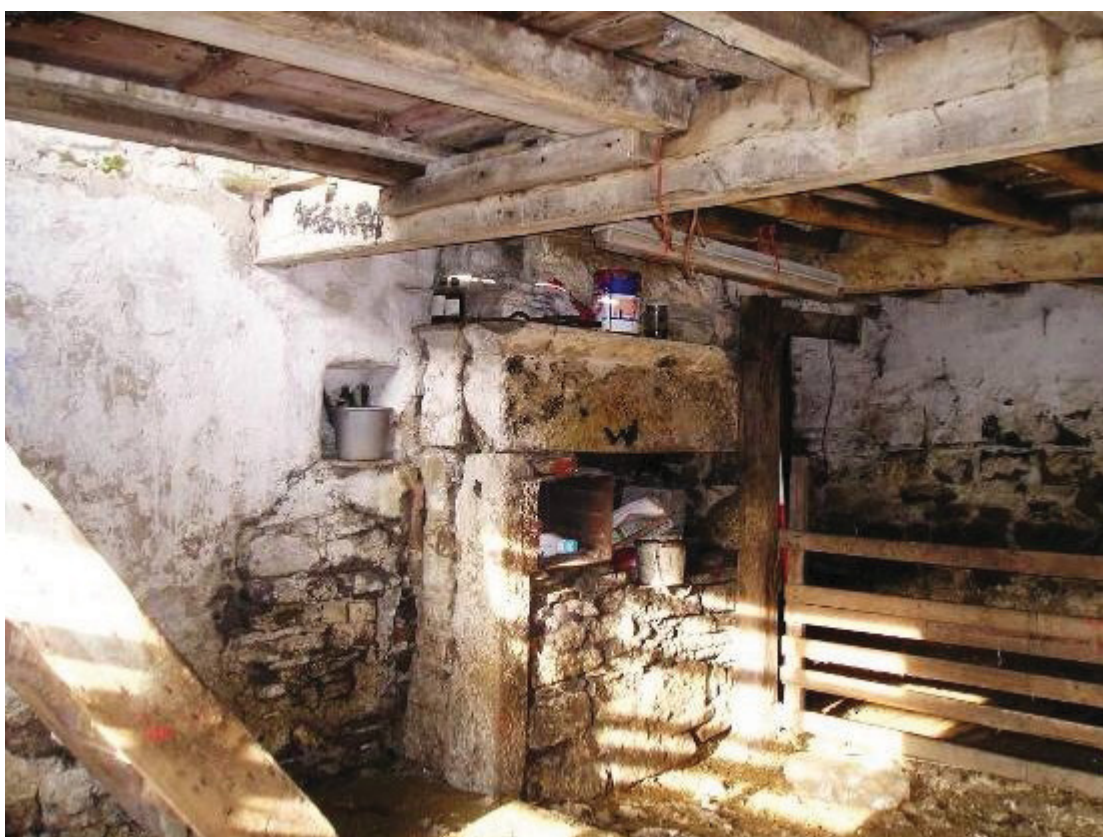


31. Cottage bay – fireplace and ladder stair against western wall





32. *Detail of stone fireplace mantle*



33. *View into cottage bay ground floor from front door*





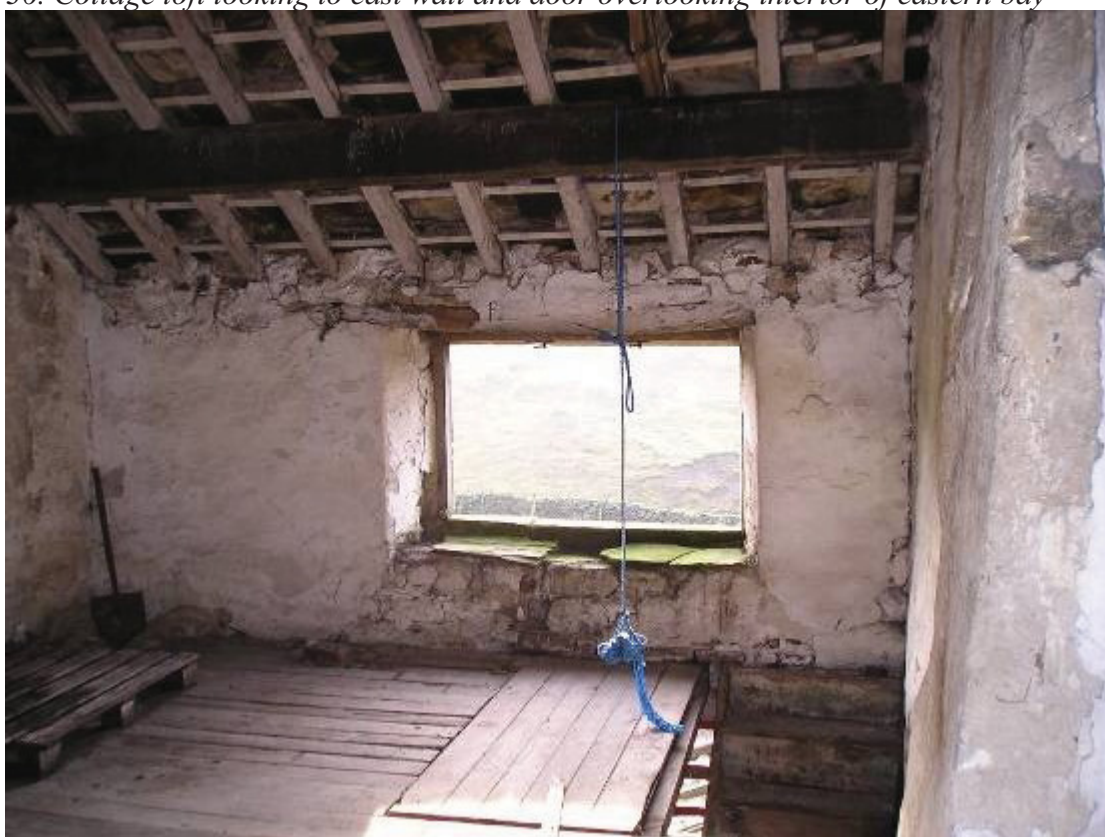
*34. Rear part of cottage bay showing stepped stones to rear wall suggesting possible removal of former stair to this corner*



*35. Detail of chamfered beam (with run-out stop) supporting loft floor in cottage bay*



*36. Cottage loft looking to east wall and door overlooking interior of eastern bay*



*37. Cottage loft, looking to front window*





*38. Chimney rising up against west wall in cottage loft*



39. Detail of stone framed window to cottage loft



40. Eastern bay, looking to west wall with doors through to cottage





*41. Eastern bay, looking to front wall*

## 5.0 INTERPRETATION

Map research confirms that, whilst now part of Boulsworth End Farm, the subject building was formerly a separate farmstead called New Bridge End. This is depicted on Ordnance Surveys maps of the 1840's and 1890's, as shown in figures 42 and 43. The later map also shows a connecting path between New Bridge End and Boulsworth, which perhaps shows that at this time the two farms had become related and perhaps the smaller New bridge End had been vacated. Further proof of this could possibly be found through census research.

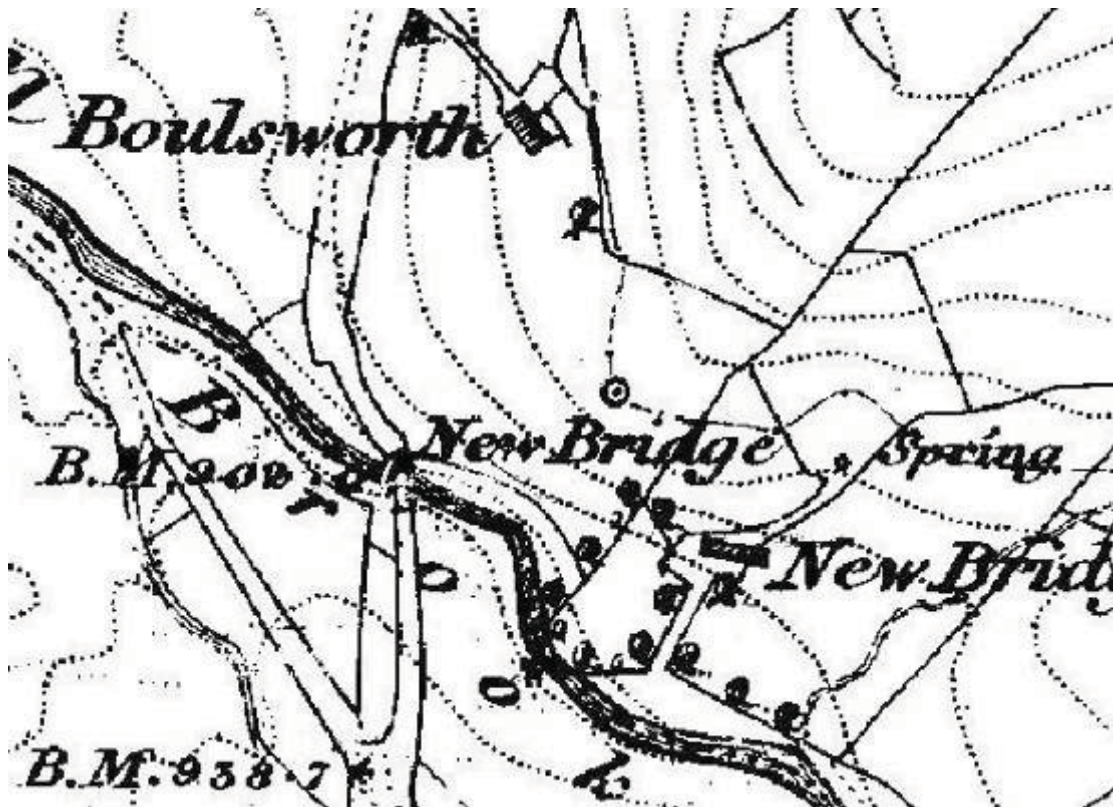


Figure 42, Extract of 1840's OS map showing the subject building to the bottom centre/right of the picture

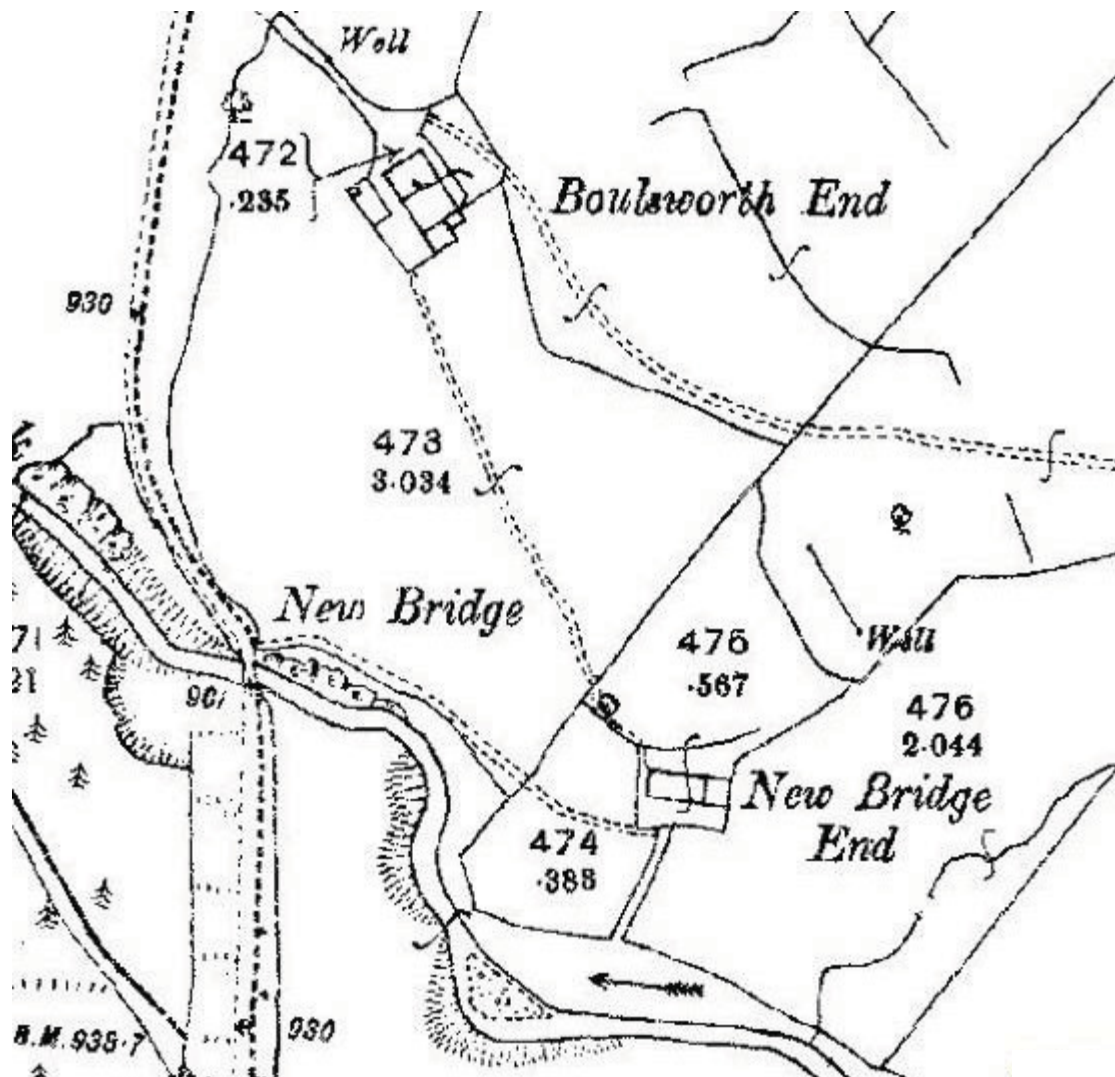


Figure 43. 1890's OS map showing the path between New Bridge End and Boulsworth

As described in the photographic record, there is clear evidence of the building's former function(s), there being remnants of both agricultural and domestic activity within what is a much altered and adapted structure. The cottage dwelling to central portion of the building is discernible by virtue of the chimney alone, but this is also supplemented by chamfered beams in the same space which clearly indicated the elevated status of this part. The adjacent barn part is likewise interpretable, with the cart entry door to the front, the loft and shippon to the west end and the vents to front and back. The blocked door that opposes the cart entry shows that earth now banked against the rear of the building altered what had previously been a readily accessible side of the building, as also suggested on the 1840's map. The eastern end of the building, by contrast, although clearly adapted for its most recent use (sheep shearing), displays conflicting evidence that renders interpretation of its original form

less easy. There are signs that the building was once part of the dwelling, in the form of ground and loft level doors connecting the adjoining parts, but the exposed upper gable of the cottage bay extending above the lean-to roof shows no evidence of ever having a surface render/plaster. It is therefore unclear as to whether this part was once part of the cottage; although had it not been, the cottage would have merely comprised a single ground room with loft room above which is unlikely to have been large enough to satisfy long term habitation. That the eastern bay was once part of the dwelling (being two storey but reduced to one storey), therefore, is considered the most likely explanation of the historic form.

In terms of vernacular classification, the arrangement of dwelling with attached barn fits into the 'laithe-house' tradition which was prevalent across the eastern Lancashire and Yorkshire region from the later medieval period through to the larger scale farming developments of the industrial era. New Bridge End, although much altered, shares many similarities with other small farmsteads in the area of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is therefore presumed that the building dates back at least as far as the mid-to-late eighteenth century, and possibly much further.



# APPENDIX 'A' – DRAWN RECORD

