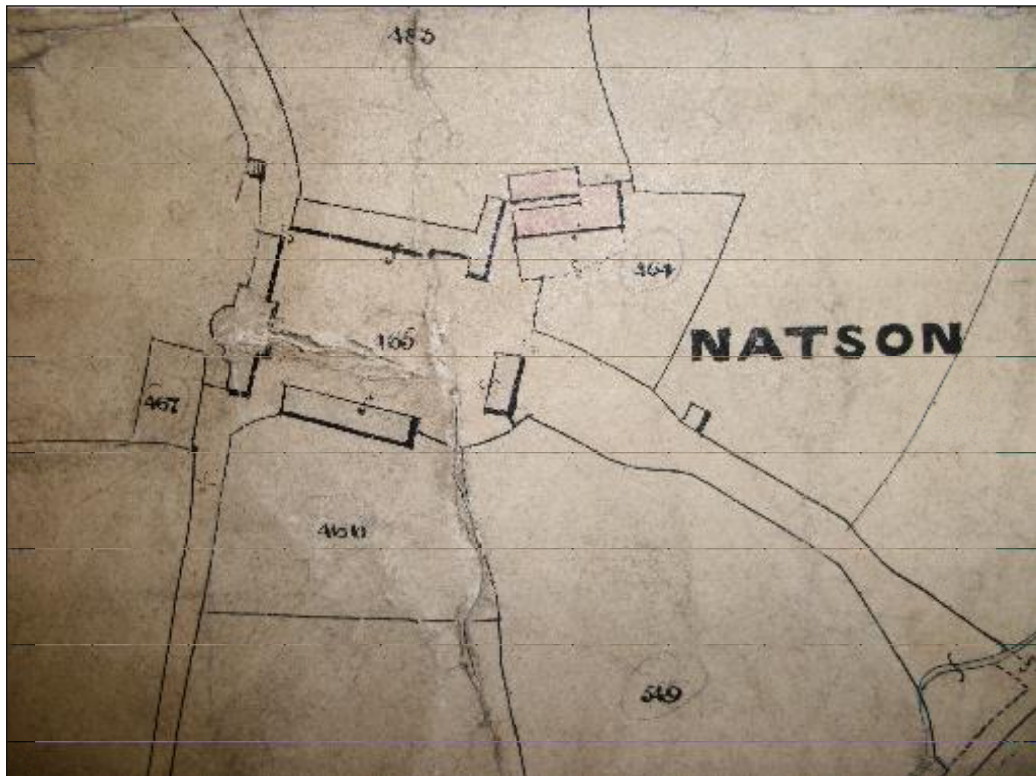




OAKFORD
ARCHAEOLOGY

Historic building recording at Natson's Farm, Bow, Devon



on behalf of
Mr and Mrs R Smallacombe

Report No. 16-09

Project No. 1352

October 2016



OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological Groundworks and Historic Buildings

44 Hazel Road,
Wonford,
Exeter,
Devon,
EX2 6HN
tel: 07834 591406
e-mail: info@oakfordarch.co.uk
web: www.oakfordarch.co.uk

AUTHORS

MFR Steinmetzer

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

Lucy Browne

Report No 16-09

Revision: 02
Date: 8 November 2016

Contents

Summary	
1. Introduction	1
1.1 The site	1
1.2 Geological background	1
2. Aims	1
3. Methodology	1
4. Historical Background	2
4.1 General background	2
4.2 Natson Farm	2
5. The building survey	4
5.1 Introduction	4
5.2 The Barn	4
5.3 The Threshing barn	6
5.4 The Linhay	7
6. Discussion	7
7. Conclusion	8

Site Archive

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Method statement

List of illustrations

- Fig. 1 Location of site.
- Fig. 2 Detail from the 1841 Bow Tithe map.
- Fig. 3 Detail from map of Lot 11, from sales catalogue October 1841.
- Fig. 4 Detail from the 1st edition 1888 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXVI.1.
- Fig. 5 Detail from the 2nd edition 1905 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXVI.1.
- Fig. 6 Detail from the 1965 Ordnance Survey map.
- Fig. 7 General view of early 20th century farmhouse. Looking north.
- Fig. 8 General view of early 20th century farmhouse. Looking northeast.
- Fig. 9 External elevations of the barn showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.
- Fig. 10 Plan of ground and first floor of the barn showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.
- Fig. 11 General view of barn. 2m scale. Looking northeast
- Fig. 12 General view of eastern end of barn. 2m scale. Looking north.
- Fig. 13 General view of eastern barn wall. 2m scale. Looking east.
- Fig. 14 General view of rear wall showing rebuilt section. 2m scale. Looking northeast
- Fig. 15 General view of rear elevation showing rebuilt section. Looking southeast
- Fig. 16 General view of central room with feeding hatch in rear elevation. Looking northeast.
- Fig. 17 Close-up of wooden hay rack.
- Fig. 18 General view of hay drop. Looking northwest
- Fig. 19 General view of feeding passage and livestock stalls. 2m scale. Looking east
- Fig. 20 General view of window and door arrangement. 1m scale. Looking north.
- Fig. 21 Close-up showing earlier floor truss and later floor. Looking east
- Fig. 22 General view of rear elevation showing blocked openings. 2m scale. Looking south
- Fig. 23 General view of eastern end showing original cob elevation and later brick re-fronting. Looking east
- Fig. 24 General view of cob partition running to the apex with later opening. Looking east

- Fig. 25 External elevations of threshing barn and linhay showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.
- Fig. 26 External elevations of threshing barn and linhay showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.
- Fig. 27 Plan of ground floor of threshing barn and linhay showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.
- Fig. 28 General view of threshing barn and linhay. 2m scale. Looking southwest.
- Fig. 29 General view of east doorway (farmyard side) with ventilation shafts. 2m scale. Looking west.
- Fig. 30 General view of rebuilt west doorway (field side). 2m scale. Looking east.
- Fig. 31 General view of rear elevation showing blocked northern doorway (left) and rebuilt section (right). 2m scale. Looking southeast.
- Fig. 32 General view of rear elevation showing earlier roof line. 2m scale. Looking northeast
- Fig. 33 General view of structure at rear of threshing barn. 2m scale. Looking southwest.
- Fig. 34 General view of structure at rear of threshing barn. 2m scale. Looking northwest.
- Fig. 35 General view of southern elevation showing owl holes. 2m scales. Looking north.
- Fig. 36 Close-up of northern elevation showing blocked window and earlier roof line. Looking southwest.
- Fig. 37 General view of upper threshing barn interior showing roof construction and owl holes. 2m scales. Looking south.
- Fig. 38 General view of upper threshing barn interior showing brick partition and doorway to lower threshing barn. 2m scales. Looking north.
- Fig. 39 General view of recess in internal north elevation of south porch with curved head. 2m scale. Looking northeast.
- Fig. 40 General view of square recess in internal south elevation of south porch. 2m scale. Looking South.
- Fig. 41 Close-up showing daisy wheel decorations in upper threshing barn.
- Fig. 42 Close-up showing daisy wheel decoration in upper threshing barn.
- Fig. 43 General view of blocked doorway in lower threshing barn. Looking northwest.
- Fig. 44 General view of north elevation of threshing barn showing blocked window. Looking north.
- Fig. 45 General view of rear elevation of linhay. 2m scale. Looking southeast.
- Fig. 46 Close-up of junction between threshing barn and linhay showing difference in height of stone foundations. 2m scale. Looking east.
- Fig. 47 General view of first floor of linhay showing roof construction. Looking north.

Summary

Oakford Archaeology were commissioned by Mr and Mrs R Smallacombe in August 2016 to undertake a Historical building survey at the site of Natson's Farm, Bow, Devon (SS 7158 0086). The archive and documentary research indicates that the site has been in continuous occupation probably since the early 17th century and that the current farm buildings were probably laid out in the 18th century. The layout of Natson Farm is clearly defined with the agricultural elements concentrated to the west of the farmhouse surrounding a large yard.

At the time of survey there were, in addition to the modern cow shed, two standing buildings on the site. Both surviving farm buildings appear to have been built sometime in the 18th century. The buildings included a large barn, threshing barn and lincay, and most major walls were built from cob above local stone. Modern blockwork partitions were also present. Six phases of structural development have been identified during the survey.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for Nigel Cant Planning on behalf of Mr and Mrs R Smallacombe and sets out the results of an archaeological building survey carried out by Oakford Archaeology (OA) in August 2016, at Natson's Farm, Bow, Devon (SS 7158 0086). The work was carried out to satisfy an upcoming grant of planning permission (14/00208/FULL) granted by Mid Devon District Council for the conversion of two barns and the construction of a new access track.

1.1 The site

Natson Farm lies in the parish of Bow, to the southwest and west of the historic villages of Bow and Nymet Tracey respectively (Fig. 1). The farm buildings are approached by a small track from the main road. The buildings include a large early 20th century farmhouse to the east, which falls outside the scope of this survey. The farm buildings are located around a yard to the west of the historic farmstead. These farm buildings had fallen into a severe state of disrepair, and are no longer required for agricultural use, and are in desperate need of a sympathetic new use.

1.2 Geological background

The geology of the area belongs to the Bow Breccia Formation, which was formed approximately 251 to 299 million years ago in the Permian Period. The overlying sequence consists of clay (BGS 1995).

2. AIMS

The aims of the archaeological building survey were to assess the significance of the structures standing on the site at the time of survey. The recording methodology adopted during this survey was in accordance with Historic England guidelines. The survey aims were to assess the form, function and phasing of the standing buildings, and to understand the development of the buildings.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Building survey

Recording of the buildings was undertaken by a historic building specialist in accordance with specifications applicable to Level 3 in the English Heritage 2006 document *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practices*. The building recording consisted of:

- A detailed written description of the buildings and more general record of the main building.
- A detailed photographic record of the buildings in colour (digital) format, and basic record of the main building.
- A limited drawn record of the buildings, consisting of annotation of, and additions to, the architect's 'as existing' plans and elevations, to show the locations of any fixtures and fittings, building breaks, blocked openings or architectural detail.

4. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

by Lucy Browne

4.1 General background

The site lies in an area where evidence for prehistoric activity has been previously identified, including ceremonial features such as, henge monuments and ring ditches, along with evidence of prehistoric settlements and enclosures. ¹ In addition, surface artefact collection in 1937 on ground overlooking Station Road has recorded a concentration of prehistoric pottery,² while a possible Upper Palaeolithic shoulder or tanged point, or possibly a backed blade, was found to the west of the village of Bow. ³

Little is known of the history and development of this area in the Roman and early Saxon periods. A Roman road, leading directly to the Roman military complex in North Tawton, is located to the south of the parish, near to the village of Nymet Tracey (Carbonell 1928). The name Nymet is thought to be derived from the old English '*nemento*' meaning a sacred place or grove, ⁴ suggesting that the early church was located on ancient pagan site. ⁵ Gover, however, thought that the OE *nymed* or *nimed* were related to the River Taw at Lapford (cf. Nymet Rowland). ⁶ Interestingly the original dedication of the Church was to St. Martin of Tours, who was renowned for driving out pagans.

The manor of Nymet was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon charter of 739 and held in 1066 by Alwin. During the Norman reorganisation of the land holdings following the Conquest (recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086), and the death of Harold at Hastings, the village of *Limed* and its lands were held by Geoffrey de Montbray, a trusted advisor of King William and Bishop of Coutances, from Drogo FitzMauger. ⁷ Known as *Nymeton* until the mid-13th century, the name Tracey came from the 'de Tracey' family. These were Norman landowners originally from Tracy in Normandy, and who came to prominence during the time of king Stephen. They probably held the manor from the middle of the 12th century. ⁸

By the 13th century a new settlement had grown up to the north of Tracey Nymet. In 1259 Henry de Tracey had obtained the right to hold a weekly market and three-day fair at the feast of St. Martin. This was held in what is now the village of Bow, which was located on the main road from Crediton to Okehampton and further into Cornwall. Early in the 14th century an attempt was made at expansion and create a borough, but the village never developed any urban characteristics. The Manor later passed through the Martin, Audley, Fitzwarren, Bouchier and Lethbridge families.

4.2 Natson's Farm

Natson Farm is a small farmstead lying a short distance to the southwest and west of the villages of Bow and Nymet Tracey respectively. The site is first mentioned in 1086 when it was held by Godwin of Chittlehampton. Interestingly this is a Saxon, rather than a Norman

¹ Griffiths 1985a & b.

² NMR SS 70 SW 11.

³ NMR SS 70 SW 32.

⁴ Griffiths 1985b.

⁵ Carbonell 1931.

⁶ Gover 1931.

⁷ Thorn and Thorn 1985, 52.9.

⁸ Cunningham 2009.

name. It was formerly part of the medieval manor of *Notteston* or *Nottesdon*, and the place-name probably derives from the Old English *Hnot(t) 's* and *tūn* meaning Hnots estate.^{9 10}

Other than the name of some of the owners, little is known of about Natson throughout the medieval period and it is first mentioned again during the reign of Henry II, when it is named in the lists of the Honour of Gloucester. The manor at this time was held by William Burnell for a ¼ fee. It was subsequently held in 1303 by John Burnell and Simon Lampree,¹¹ and by 1346 had passed to Richard Burnell, who also owned the manor of Down St Mary. By 1428 John Notte is recorded as the owner.

The farm was owned in 1610 by John and Zenobia Lethbridge, starting a long association between the Lethbridge family and Natson.¹² An extract from the Churchwardens' accounts for the church rates mentions that by 1689 William Pits rented Natson.¹³ In 1735, Christopher Lethbridge of Westaway, Devon was leasing "*all that farm messuage and tenement with the appurtenances commonly called or known by the name of Notesdon also Noteston situate ... in the parish of Bow also Nimettracey ... and all houses edifices buildings courtlages orchards, gardens ... whatsoever to the said messuage and tenement belonging ...*" to "*John Wreford of Colebrook, Junior, Yeoman*". The Wrefords, as tenants, also had a long association with the farm which might predate this document. Wills transcribed by Olive Moger¹⁴ include Mary Wreford of Ashburton,¹⁵ who named her uncle "John Wreford of Natson", and John Wreford of Natson, Bow, gent.¹⁶ John left to his "son, John Wreford", West Langford, close to Natson, and the residue of his estate, presumably including the tenancy of Natson. The Land Tax Assessments for Bow show John Lethbridge as owner and John Wreford continuing at Natson from 1780 until 1810 when the tenant changed to "Mr R Kelland".

From 1817 through to 1830, the owner was Sir Thomas Buckler Lethbridge of Sandhill Park, son of Sir John Lethbridge, who was created 1st Baronet in 1804. From 1826, the occupier was Robert Powlesland. The Powleslands also farmed in Spreyton, South Tawton and other nearby parishes. The property was valued at £4, 15s and 2d throughout this period.

The 1840 Bow Tithe Map (Fig. 2) clearly shows the buildings at Natson Farm. The long barn, with a small recessed frontage along the southeastern elevation, and the large threshing barn and linhay occupying the western and northern edges of the farmyard. The map also shows a now demolished possible semi-circular horse engine house at the rear of the threshing barn. The property, along with the gardens and fields, was owned by Sir John Lethbridge and occupied by John Elworthy.

Natson Farm is shown again in two sales catalogues, in 1841 (Fig. 3) and in 1846. In 1841, John Elworthy was named as the tenant whose tenancy was to be "determined at Lady-day 1848".

⁹ Gover 1931.

¹⁰ Burnet Morris Index of Devon Places and Names, Devon Heritage Centre

¹¹ Tesda de Nevil no.222, p. 177.

¹² Lethbridge, Sir Roper (comp.). *The Lethbridges: A Devonshire clan. Views of their ancient homes, & portraits of heads ...* (Exeter, 1900)

¹³ Devon Heritage Centre

¹⁴ Devon Heritage Centre

¹⁵ Devon Heritage Centre 22nd February 1761, proved 13th May 1763

¹⁶ Devon Heritage Centre 23rd September 1760 and proved 15th January 1779

In 1852, a further sales notice for Natson appeared in the *Western Times* of 11th September, “the property of Mr John Elworthy who is about to relinquish farming at Michaelmas.”

The farm was acquired by John Norrish sometime after 1852, and he remained at Natson until the late 1880’s.¹⁷ The area was mapped by the Ordnance Survey in 1888, when the property was shown in the greatest detail thus far (Fig. 4). The semi-circular horse engine house behind the threshing barn has disappeared by this time, while it is unclear whether the protrusion shown on the front of the threshing barn is real or simply a mistake by the surveyors. The large barn had a small extension or porch added to the rear elevation, while the eastern building range has been demolished and the frontage now appears to run through the full length of the building.

The farm was briefly owned by George Powlesland between the late 1880’s and late 1890’s.¹⁸ By 1897 the property had been bought by James Wreford, who remained at Natson until 1915.¹⁹ The property remained remarkably unaltered throughout the early 20th century, as is evidenced by the 1905 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5). The only addition is a small square building is shown at the rear of the threshing barn.

Shortly before the outbreak of the first world war a sales notice appeared in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* of 28th March 1913 advertising the sale of 43 acres. Further adverts in 1915 in the *Western Times* and the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* gave notice of James Wreford quitting at Michaelmas and the sale of “*boar pig, slip pigs, apples, choice varieties, produce of 3 acres, implements, surplus furniture and effects by Frederick John Helmore for Mr J Wreford, quitting*”.²⁰

The farm, described at the time as 280 acres in extent, was bought in 1916 by Charles Jackman. He appears at Natson in the directories for 1919, 1923 and 1926, changing to “Jackman, Chas & Son, farmers” in 1935 and 1939. The property was advertised for sale in the *Western Times* of 20th October 1939 on instructions from “Messrs C Jackman and Son”, with a further advertisement for the household effects the following month, stating that the farm had been sold.

Sometime in the early 20th century the farm house burnt down and was replaced by the current building (Fig. 6).

5. THE BUILDING SURVEY

5.1 Introduction

The barns were recorded prior to any work commencing, allowing the identification of areas that contained original features and areas where these had been replaced. Although Natson Farm has been greatly altered it nevertheless retains features dating from the late 18th-19th centuries.

5.2 The Barn

The barn is a massive structure measuring 34m long, and is aligned east/west (Figs. 9-24). It is situated along the north side of the historic farmyard, with the threshing barn and linhay

¹⁷ Kelly’s Post Office Directories for 1856 and 1866 and Kellys Directory for Devonshire for 1883.

¹⁸ Kellys Directory for Devonshire for 1889 and 1893.

¹⁹ Kellys Directory for Devonshire for 1897 and 1914.

²⁰ *Western Times - Friday 09 April 1915, Exeter and Plymouth Gazette - Friday 17 September 1915.*

located to the west, and the modern sheds to the south. Dating to the 18th century, the building is constructed of cob above roughly coursed stone rubble. The barn originally consisted of two structures. A large central and western section which was separated from a smaller eastern section by the original cob wall extending to the apex of the roof. In addition, the eastern building range was originally recessed back from the frontage of the main barn. The southern façade was rebuilt in brick in the late 19th century. The range is two storeyed.

The eastern room is accessed through a large double doorway at the east end of the range. Immediately ahead, is a stair ladder leading to the first floor. Flanking the doorway are a pair of late 19th century industrial iron windows, while a square pitching hole is located immediately above the door. The eastern and western walls consist of cob above stone rubble, while both the front and rear elevation have been rebuilt in brick. The façade consists of 19th century brick, while the rear elevation was rebuilt probably sometime in the early 20th century. All fabric breaks extend to the level of the roof. A modern opening in the rear elevation provided access to the pig sties at the rear of the barn.

Access to the first-floor and roof was difficult and a detailed inspection could not be made due to the uncertain condition of the floor. The following description is based on inspection from a position just within the cob partition wall. The first-floor was accessed via a wooden stair ladder at the rear of the room and consisted of a large unlit loft, separated from the remainder of the range by a cob wall extending to the apex of the roof. A large opening had been created in the partition to provide access to the remainder of the range in the late 19th century. Three large pitching holes in the main elevation would have allowed hay and/or straw to be pitched direct from the farmyard. A gap in the floor on the north side, immediately beyond the cob partition wall, would have served the central room below, allowing hay to be pulled through the gap directly into the hayrack underneath.

The central section was accessed through a wide doorway, with a late 19th century industrial iron window to the right of the elevation and a pitching hole above. The room was very plain and contained modern animal stalls. At the rear of the room were the remains of the 19th century wooden hayrack, extending the full width of the room, with the opening in the floor above allowing feed to be dropped directly from the loft. The eastern wall consisted of cob above stone rubble, while the western wall was composed of brick. This partition had been inserted at the same time as the frontage of the barn was renewed in the late 19th century.

The western section consisted of a simple doorway with flanking late 19th century industrial iron windows and a pitching hole above. Once inside, the doorway would have provided access to four animal stalls. All of these were built of concrete block and modern in date. The large opening at the western end of the barn would originally have had an opposing opening in the north elevation. This would have allowed direct access from the fields into the farmyard and was blocked with stone rubble, probably sometime in the early 20th century. In addition, an opening from this passage also gave access to a feeding passage, running the full length of the western section and lit by five simple openings in the north elevation. A doorway at the eastern end of the passage would have provided access to the feeding passage from the rear of the building.

Although the south façade was rebuilt in brick, the west wall of the barn was built of stone rubble tied into the 19th-century brick frontage, presumably because it would not have been directly visible

The roof

The roof structure over the barn presents a unified appearance, being hipped at either end and covered in corrugated iron. The roof was completely rebuilt in the late 19th century and consists of A-frame trusses, built into the existing walls, with three levels of cleated purlins on each side. The common rafters continue to two purlins, closely set and acting as a ridge plate. The end of the range was hipped. These was built directly off the wall, and typically included at the corners small, diagonal beams, providing extra support.

5.3 The Threshing barn

The barn is a massive structure measuring 32.5m long and is aligned north /south (Figs. 25-44). It is situated along the west side of the farmyard, with the linhay located to the north. Dating to the 18th century, the building is built of cob above roughly-coursed stone rubble and follows the classic plan of a double threshing barn with two sets of large opposing doors centrally placed within the long elevations; a central threshing floor and opposed doorways designed to create a through draught for winnowing.

The upper barn is entered from the farmyard by a large porch supported on two cheeks built of cob above roughly coursed stone rubble. Two small recesses either side of the entrance would have been used for storage. The barn is generally unlit, with a large window high up in the east elevation north of the porch, providing some additional light and ventilation. Two small square openings immediately below the roof line in the south elevation would have provided access for barn owls. All the original cob walls are lime rendered and contained carved daisy wheels. These were on average 0.12-0.2m in diameter and ranged from simple circles to complete daisy wheels and finally more intricate patterns, containing a second, larger, circle and added daisy petals. Five were located on the east wall, while three were situated on the south gable wall. A further five were sited to the south of the farmyard porch, while a total of 17 were located to the north of the porch.

At the north end of the upper barn is a doorway with a simple wooden surround providing access to the lower threshing barn. The wall dividing the upper and lower threshing barns is built of brick to a height of c. 2.75m and timber cladding above. This was constructed at the same time as the rear elevation and the western porch were rebuilt, probably in the late 19th century. There is no evidence that the upper barn was storeyed.

The lower threshing barn consist of two large, centrally placed, opposing doorways. Nothing now remains of the covered porch in the east elevation and it presence only survives on the historic mapping. The barn is lit by two large rectangular slit windows in the north elevation. These would have provided some additional lighting and ventilation. The western window is now blocked by the roof of the later linhay. Part of the western elevation was rebuilt in brick in the late 19th century. The barn continued to be used for threshing at this time and the western doorway wasn't blocked with stone rubble until sometime in the early 20th century. A wooden loft was inserted through the blocked doorway to provide additional storage, while a large section of the eastern elevation has been rebuilt in concrete block. A single daisy wheel was identified to the south of the farmyard entrance.

The roof

The roof structure over the threshing barn presents a unified appearance, being hipped at either end and covered in corrugated iron. The roof has been rebuilt in the late 19th century and consists of a series of A-frame trusses with collar beams and lap-jointed nailed apices.

The feet of the main trusses rest within the masonry on both sides. There are three sets of cleated and nailed back purlins on both sides side of the roof.

The site of the horse engine house

The remains of a single storey brick building are located immediately behind the threshing barn. Originally the site of a horse engine house, built probably sometime in the early 19th century at a time when mechanised threshing techniques were introduced to the county, the original structure was demolished sometime before 1888. It had been replaced by 1905 by a small square building. Built of brick the building may have had partly open sides, while the remains of the roof line were preserved in the rear elevation of the threshing barn. The function of this building is unclear.

5.4 The Linhay

The Linhay is a small 2-storey structure measuring 10m long, and is aligned north /south (Figs. 25-28, 36, 45-47). It is situated along the west side of the farmyard, with the threshing barn located to the south. The building consists of an open-fronted linhay facing east, with a loft over. Dating to the late 18th century the linhay is constructed of cob above roughly coursed stone rubble, with wooden piers.

The east front of the linhay is supported by four wooden piers resting on stones, dividing the interior into four bays, and supporting the loft above. A large section of stone rubble masonry is located in the western elevation. Higher than the rubble walls supporting the main cob wall in the north elevation, or the foundations of the lower threshing barn, it is possible that this section represents the remains of an earlier building. The west wall and northeast corner of the building was partially rebuilt with breeze blocks, while the building received a new concrete floor, cattle stalls and feeding troughs at this time.

The loft over the linhay is accessed by an internal ladder located at the southern end of the building. Access to the first-floor and roof was difficult and a detailed inspection could not be made due to the uncertain condition of the floor. The following description is based on inspection from a position just within the present doorways.

The roof structure over the linhay presents a unified appearance, being hipped at the north end and consists of three A-frames with collar beams and lap-jointed nailed apices. The feet of the main trusses rest within the cob on both the west and north side. There are two sets of nailed back purlins on both sides of the roof.

6. DISCUSSION

Phase I The primary buildings (18th century)

The development of the farm buildings displays a complex history of alterations and additions. By the 18th century a complex of purpose-built farm buildings was constructed, probably in a single phase. The buildings, several of which have since been demolished, were set around a farmyard to the east of the main house. The building to the north is a large barn, while a large double threshing barn was located on the western edge of the yard. The threshing barn is relatively large for a vernacular farm building; the production of wheat was clearly an important part of the agricultural history of the site. Although the linhay, projecting north from the threshing barn, was built at a later time, the presence of a large section of stone rubble masonry in the rear elevation might suggest the presence of an earlier structure. Nothing is known of this building and it was replaced by the current linhay.

Phase II Additions (*late 18th century*)

The linhay was probably added at this time, possibly replacing an earlier structure, with the roof line blocking one of the windows in the north elevation of the threshing barn.

Phase III Additions (*early 19th century*)

By the early 19th century a semi-circular structure had been added to the west of the threshing barn. This probably represents a horse-engine house and would have provided power for mechanical threshing.

Phase IV Rebuilding and additions (*late 19th century*)

The late 19th century was a time of agricultural expansion and there was a great increase in the number of cows kept on farms along with a growing market for livestock products. By the mid-19th century shelter for cattle had become generally adopted across the country and an important role of livestock was the production of manure for crops.

The alterations to the large barn may reflect the expansion of cattle husbandry at Natson Farm and/or changes in animal husbandry practices at this time. The building underwent large-scale rebuilding of its farmyard elevations at this time and was probably used as a series of cowhouses with a hayloft above. In addition, new partitions had been added forming the present arrangement. With the addition of these partitions, the function of the building was made more versatile. It could have been used for housing a bull, for segregating sick animals, or for fattening livestock.

The threshing barn had remained relatively unaltered until the late 19th century. Although some brick buttresses were provided to the farmyard elevation at this time there was no large scale re-fronting. At the rear of the building, however, following the demolition of the horse engine house the western elevation, including the southern doorway and elements of the northern doorway were rebuilt entirely in brick. The building was probably re-roofed at the time.

Phase V Alterations (*early 20th century*)

The early 20th century was a time of consolidation and the use of the farm buildings remained much the same as before. The western doorway of the lower threshing barn was blocked and a loft inserted, the lower level presumably used to house livestock. The function of the small square building, replacing the earlier horse engine house and shown on the 1905 Ordnance Survey map, is not known. In addition, the northern doorway at the western end of the barn was also blocked at this time and the space possibly used as a cart shed. The historic farmhouse was demolished at this time, possibly following a fire, and replaced with the current building.

Phase VI Later alterations (*modern*)

By the 20th century the buildings seem to have declined in importance and were allowed to fall into their current state of disrepair. The farm buildings on the south and east side of the farmyard were demolished and replaced by modern cowshed, while the roofs and floors were allowed to decay in all the barn, threshing barn and linhay.

7. CONCLUSION

Natson Farm is an important historic farmstead, its size reflecting a prosperous farming establishment. The development of the farm buildings displays the complex history of

enlargement and alterations of historic farm. The buildings were set around a separate farmyard to the west of the house. Both buildings were probably first constructed in the 18th century, subsequently undergoing a number of renovations and alterations.

The most extensive changes were carried out in the late 19th century when the large barn was re-fronted and the horse engine house, at the rear of the threshing barn, demolished and the western elevation partially rebuilt. The highly functional layout of these buildings and their location around a central farmyard suggests a high degree of planning, while the function of these buildings reflects a focus towards intensive livestock rearing during this period requiring more specialised buildings. Despite many later alterations, the buildings remain substantially as they were at this time.

SITE ARCHIVE

Details of the building recording, including a pdf copy of the final report will be submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (oakforda1-266236).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was commissioned by Nigel Cant Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs Smallacombe and administered by Marc Steinmetzer (OA). The building recording was carried out by M. Steinmetzer, the desk-based research was carried out by Lucy Browne and the drawings for this report were prepared by M. Steinmetzer. Thanks to the staff of the Devon Heritage Centre, Exeter. Thanks also to Stephen Reed of the Devon County Historic Environment Team.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published sources

- Aston, M. 1985 *Interpreting the landscape*. Routledge.
- BGS (British Geological Survey), 1995, *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) 1:50000 Series Solid and Drift Geology*.
- Carbonell, B, M, H, 1928 Notes of the history of the parishes of Nymet Tracey alias Bow, with Broad Nymet, Devonshire Association. Report and. Transaction. 60: 299-311.
- Carbonell, B, M, H, 1931 Nymet Tracey area (Nympton), Devonshire Association. Report and Transaction. 63: 297-299.
- Cunningham, P. 2009 *Discovering Bow and Nymet Tracey through the ages*. Bow Community Archaeology Project
- Griffith, F.M. 1985a *A nemeton in Devon? Antiquity 59 (226): 121-123.*
- Griffith, F.M. 1985b *Some newly discovered ritual monuments in mid Devon. Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society 51: 310-315.*
- Schofield, J. and Vince, A. 1994 *Medieval Towns*. Leicester University Press: Leicester.

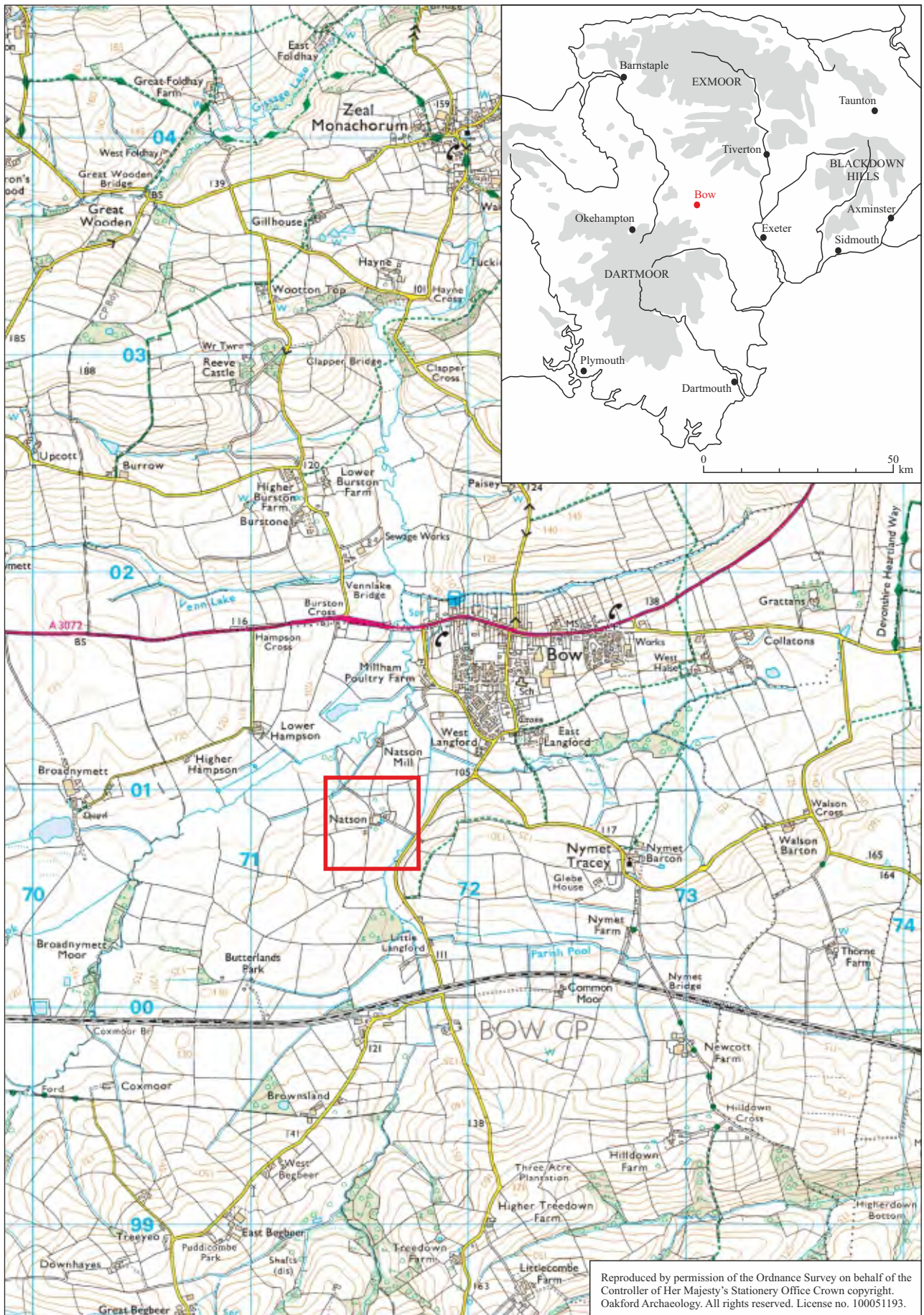


Fig. 1 Location of site.



Fig. 2 Detail from the 1841 Bow Tithe map.

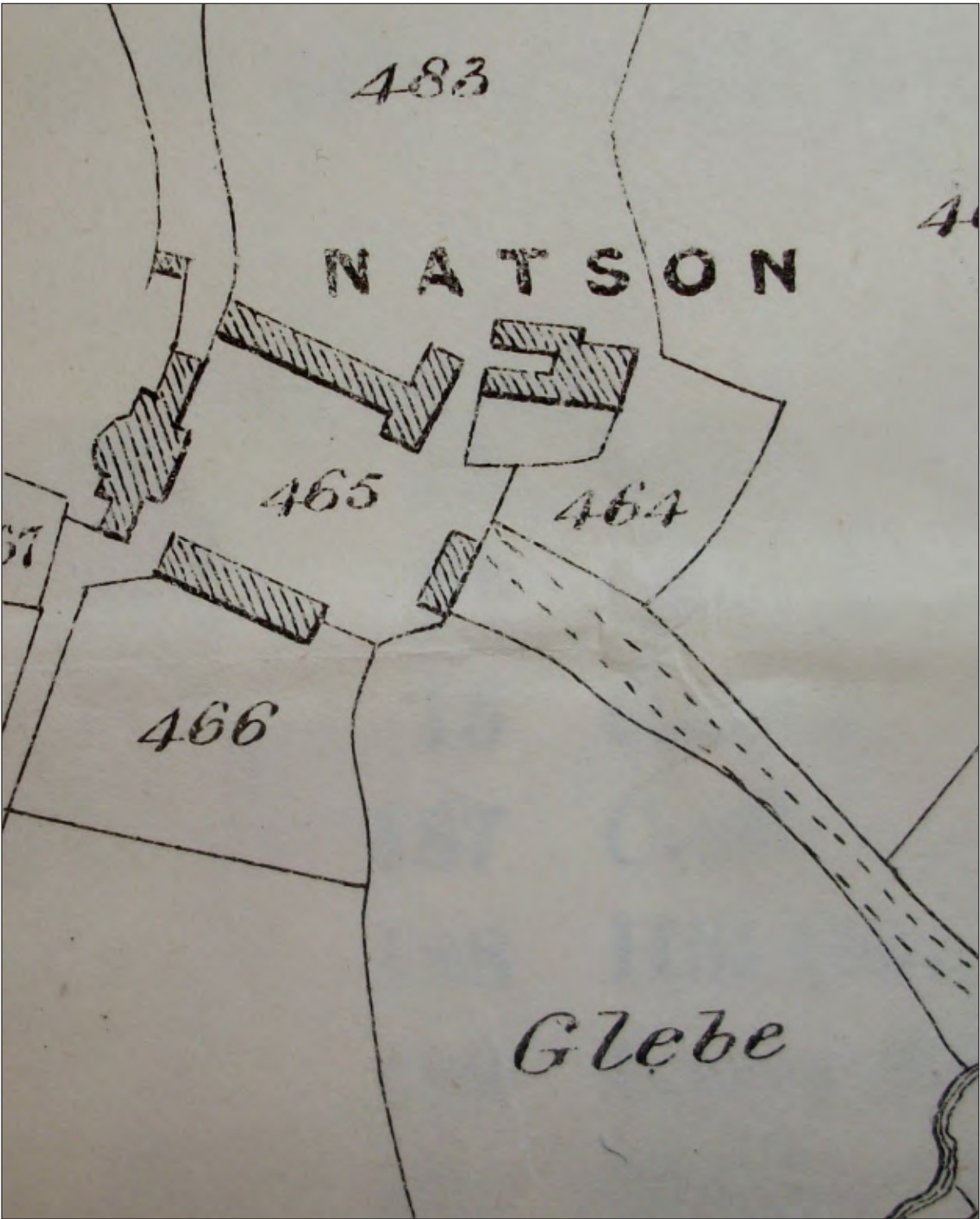


Fig. 3 Detail from map of Lot 11, from sales catalogue October 1841.



Fig. 4 Detail from the 1st edition 1888 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXVI.1.

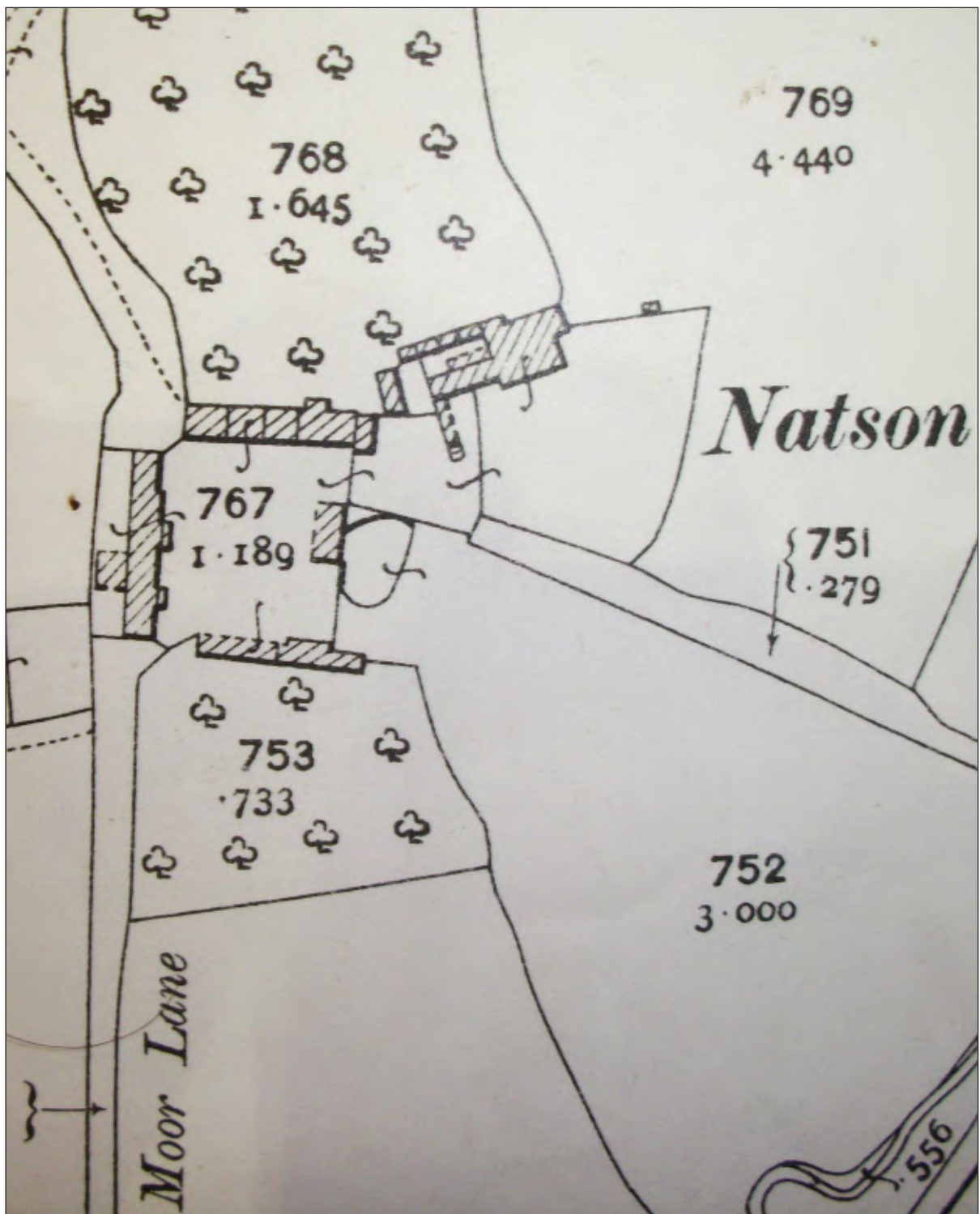


Fig. 5 Detail from the 2nd edition 1905 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXVI.1.

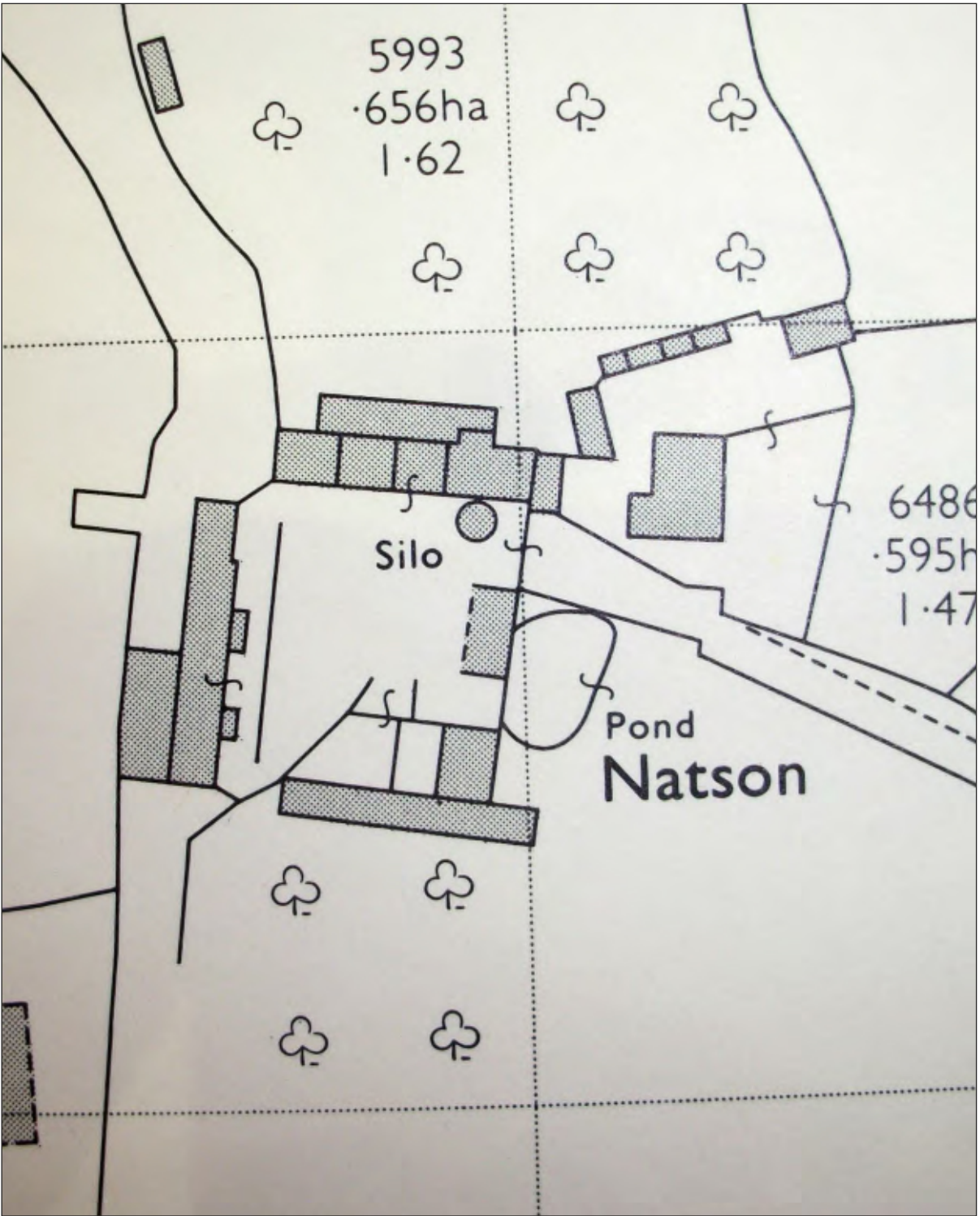


Fig. 6 Detail from the 1965 Ordnance Survey map.



Fig. 7 General view of early 20th century farmhouse. Looking north.



Fig. 8 General view of early 20th century farmhouse. Looking northeast.

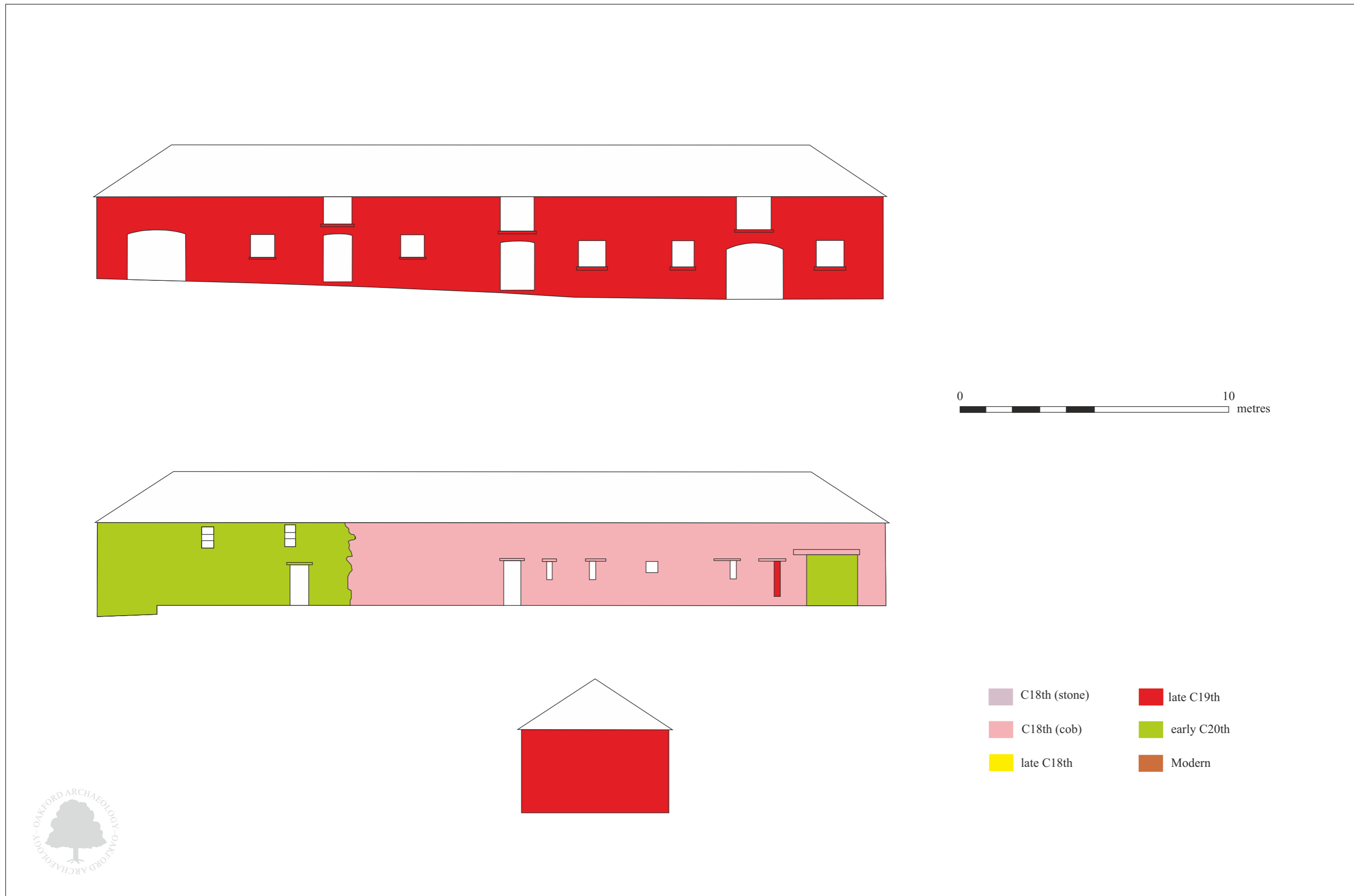


Fig. 9 External elevations of the barn showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.





Fig. 10 Plan of ground and first floor of the barn showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.



Fig. 11 General view of barn. 2m scale. Looking northeast.



Fig. 12 General view of eastern end of barn. 2m scale. Looking north.



Fig. 13 General view of eastern barn wall. 2m scale. Looking east.



Fig. 14 General view of rear wall showing rebuilt section. 2m scale.
Looking northeast.



Fig. 15 General view of rear elevation showing rebuilt section. Looking
southeast.



Fig.16 General view of central room with feeding hatch in rear elevation. Looking northeast.



Fig. 17 Close-up of wooden hay rack.



Fig. 18 General view of hay drop. Looking northwest.



Fig. 19 General view of feeding passage and livestock stalls. 2m scale. Looking east.



Fig. 20 General view of window and door arrangement. 1m scale. Looking north.



Fig. 21 Close-up showing earlier floor truss and later floor. Looking east.



Fig. 22 General view of rear elevation showing blocked openings. 2m scale. Looking south.



Fig. 23 General view of eastern end showing original cob elevation and later brick re-fronting. Looking east.



Fig. 24 General view of cob partition running to the apex with later opening. Looking east.

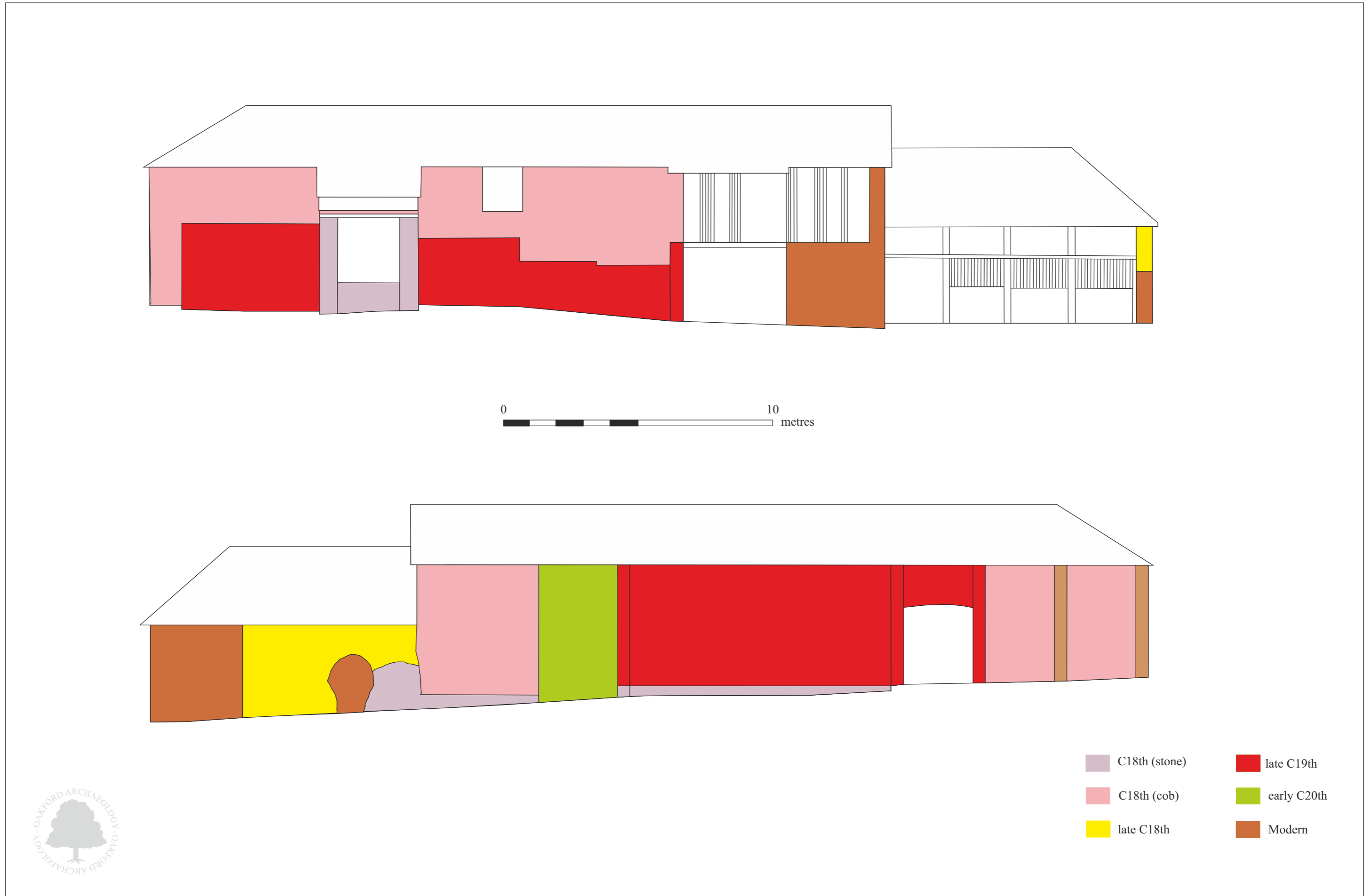


Fig. 25 External elevations of threshing barn and linhay showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.



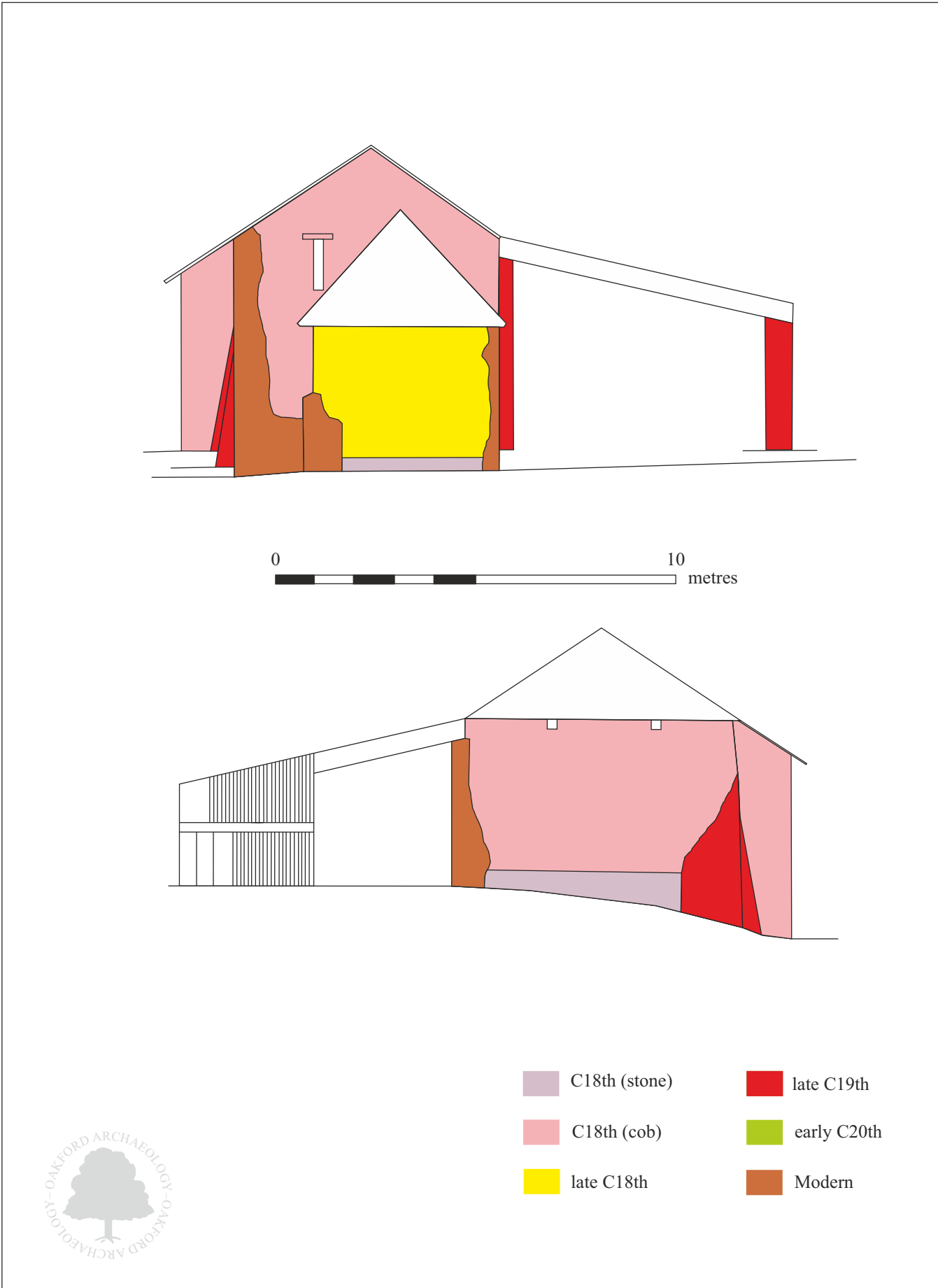
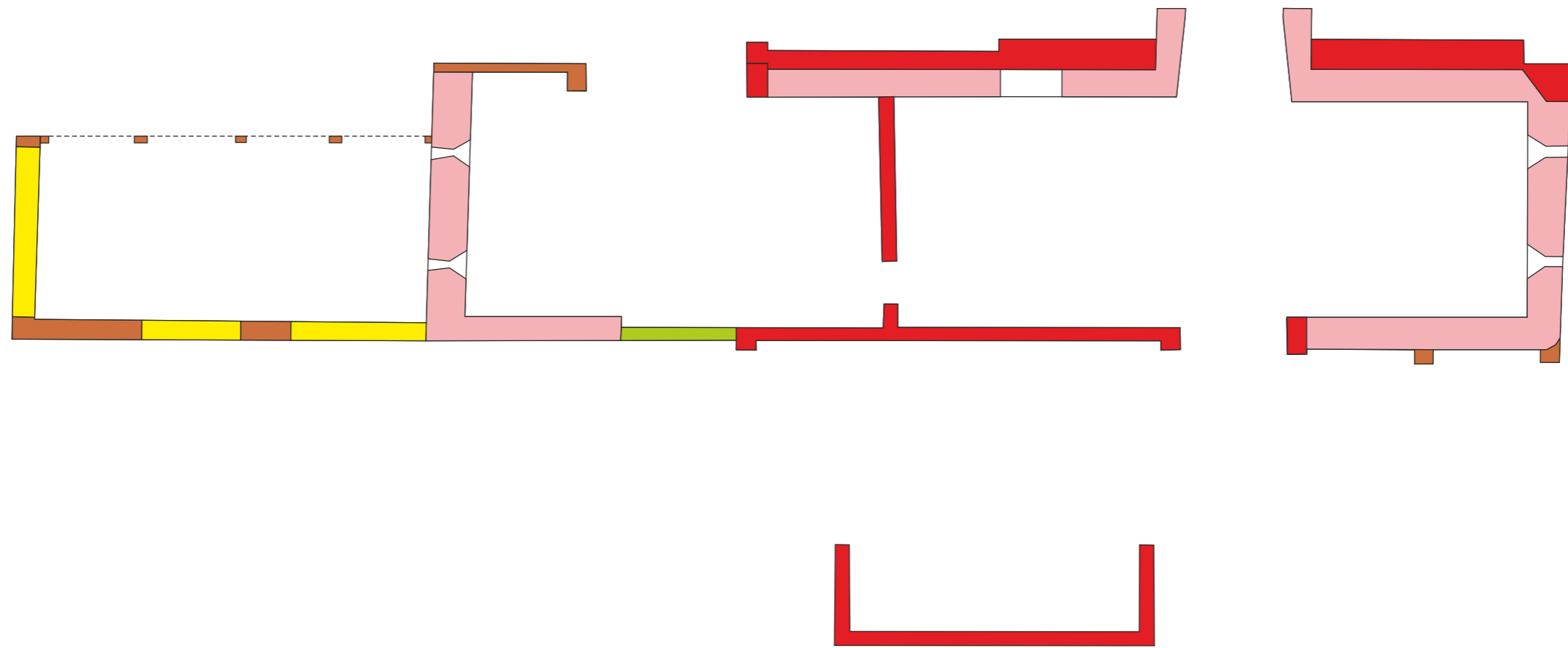








Fig. 26 External elevations of threshing barn and linhay showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.



- | | |
|---|---|
|  C18th (stone) |  late C19th |
|  C18th (cob) |  early C20th |
|  late C18th |  Modern |

0 10 metres



Fig. 27 Plan of ground floor of threshing barn and linhay showing location of observations and suggested phases of development.



Fig. 28 General view of threshing barn and linhay. 2m scale. Looking southwest.



Fig. 29 General view of east doorway (farmyard side) with ventilation shafts. 2m scale. Looking west.



Fig. 30 General view of rebuilt west doorway (field side). 2m scale. Looking east.



Fig. 31 General view of rear elevation showing blocked northern doorway (left) and rebuilt section (right). 2m scale. Looking southeast.



Fig. 32 General view of rear elevation showing earlier roof line. 2m scale. Looking northeast.



Fig. 33 General view of structure at rear of threshing barn. 2m scale.
Looking southwest.



Fig. 34 General view of structure at rear of threshing barn. 2m scale.
Looking northwest.



Fig. 35 General view of southern elevation showing owl holes. 2m scales.
Looking north.



Fig. 36 Close-up of northern elevation showing blocked window and earlier roof line. Looking southwest.



Fig. 37 General view of upper threshing barn interior showing roof construction and owl holes. 2m scales. Looking south.



Fig. 38 General view of upper threshing barn interior showing brick partition and doorway to lower threshing barn. 2m scales. Looking north.



Fig. 39 General view of recess in internal north elevation of south porch with curved head. 2m scale. Looking northeast.



Fig. 40 General view of square recess in internal south elevation of south porch. 2m scale. Looking south.



Fig. 41 Close-up showing daisy wheel decorations in upper threshing barn.



Fig. 42 Close-up showing daisy wheel decoration in upper threshing barn.



Fig. 43 General view of blocked doorway in lower threshing barn. Looking northwest.



Fig. 44 General view of north elevation of threshing barn showing blocked window. Looking north.



Fig. 45 General view of rear elevation of linhay. 2m scale. Looking southeast.



Fig. 46 Close-up of junction between threshing barn and linhay showing difference in height of stone foundations. 2m scale. Looking east.



Fig. 47 General view of first floor of linhay showing roof construction. Looking north.

Appendix 1: Method Statement

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This document has been produced by Oakford Archaeology (OA) for Mr and Mrs R Smallacombe and sets out the methodology to be used during building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording at Natson Farm, Bow, Devon (SS 7158 0086). The work is to be carried out to satisfy an upcoming grant of planning permission (14/00208/FULL) for the conversion of two barns and the construction of a new access track. The present document represents the 'written scheme of archaeological work' required by Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).
- 1.2 The farmstead at Natson is recorded in 1086 in Domesday as 'Nimet' and while the extant buildings do not date to the medieval period there is the potential for the development area to contain below-ground archaeological or artefactual deposits associated with the early settlement here, and, as such, any groundworks associated with the proposed conversion works have the potential to expose and destroy any such deposits.
- 1.3 The two buildings are shown on the mid-19th century Tithe map and appear to be laid out around a central courtyard, typical of later model farm arrangements. However, one of the ranges represents a number of typical historic farm buildings left-over from the earlier farm complex, ie. the linhay and what appears to be a threshing barn.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 The aim of the project is to ensure the adequate recording of any historic fabric exposed and to investigate and record any buried archaeological deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the development, and to report on the results of the project, as appropriate.

3. METHOD

Liaison will be established with the client and their contractors prior to works commencing in order to advise on OA requirements in relation to the works outlined below. If a good working relationship is established at the outset any delays caused by archaeological recording can be kept to a minimum. However, localised delays to site operations may be caused and time should be allowed within the main contractor's programme for the adequate investigation and recording of archaeological material and exposed historic building fabric.

Building recording

- 3.1 Historic building recording will be undertaken by a suitably qualified historic buildings specialist. All monitoring and recording will be carried out as per OA standard recording procedures and in accordance with the standards of the Institute for Archaeology (*Standards and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, 1996, revised 2008).
- 3.2 The following method for historic building recording, agreed with DCHET, will be utilised, tailored to the level of recording required once historic features have been identified.

- A photographic record using a high-quality digital camera for interpretative and reporting needs.
- Production of floor plans (based on architect's plans where appropriate), with sections, elevations and more detailed drawings of architectural features and details as appropriate. (These will also utilise architect's drawings where available.) These drawings will be prepared at scales of 1:100, 1:50 and 1:20 with smaller details drawn at larger scales as appropriate.
- A written record outlining the evidence for historic fabric, an interpretation of this evidence, and an outline of the development of the building.
- The archive will be either born digital or scanned to a suitable format for deposition in Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

Groundworks

- 3.3 Liaison will be established with the client and their contractor prior to the works commencing, in order to obtain details of the works programme and to advise on OA requirements. If a good working relationship is established at the outset, any delays resulting from archaeological recording can be kept to a minimum. However, localised delays to site operations may be caused and time should be allowed within the main contractor's programme for the adequate investigation and recording of archaeological deposits.
- 3.4 All machining will be carried out under direct archaeological control, using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Machining will proceed in spits, and will cease if archaeological deposits are exposed in order to allow those deposits to be investigated, excavated and recorded. This may cause localised delays to the groundworks programme, although every effort will be made to keep any such delays to a minimum. If no such deposits are present then, once natural subsoil has been confirmed, or formation/invert level reached, across the whole of the development area, archaeological monitoring will be terminated. Similarly, if it can be demonstrated that there has been significant modern truncation, then archaeological monitoring will be terminated in these areas.
- 3.5 If archaeological features are present, then hand-excavation will normally comprise:
- The full excavation of all features and structures to formation level;
 - Spoil will also be examined for the recovery of artefacts.

Additional excavation may also be required for the taking of palaeo-environmental samples and the recovery of artefacts.

General project method

- 3.6 If present any environmental deposits will be assessed on site by a suitably qualified archaeologist, with advice as necessary from Allen Environmental Archaeology or the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor, to determine the possible yield (if any) of environmental or microfaunal evidence, and its potential for radiocarbon dating. If deposits potential survive, these would be processed by Geoflow using the EH Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology (EH CfA Guidelines 2002/1), and outside specialists (AEA) organised to undertake further assessment and analysis as appropriate.

- 3.7 Initial on-site cleaning, conservation, packaging and any stabilisation will be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist in accordance with relevant professional guidance (including *Conservation guidelines No 1* (UKIC, 2001); *First Aid for Finds* (UKIC & RESCUE, 1997) and on advice provided by A Hopper-Bishop, Specialist Services Officer, RAM Museum, Exeter.
- 3.8 Should artefacts be exposed that fall within the scope of the Treasure Act 1996, then these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Act. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 3.9 Should any articulated human remains be exposed, these will initially be left *in situ*. If removal at either this or a later stage in the archaeological works is deemed necessary, these will then be fully excavated and removed from the site subject to the compliance with the relevant Ministry of Justice Licence, which will be obtained by OA on behalf of the client. Any remains, including cremated remains, will be excavated in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologist Technical Paper No. 13 (McKinley and Roberts 1993). Where appropriate bulk samples will be collected.
- 3.10 The project will be organised so that specialist consultants who might be required to conserve artefacts or report on other aspects of the investigations can be called upon (see below).
- 3.11 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by archaeological staff working on site, particularly when machinery is operating nearby. Personal protective equipment (safety boots, helmets and high visibility vests) will be worn by staff when plant is operating on site. A risk assessment will be prepared prior to work commencing.
- 3.12 The DCHET will be informed of the start of the project, and will monitor progress throughout on behalf of the planning authority and will wish to inspect the works in progress. Any amendments to the specific responses and methods set out elsewhere in this document will be reviewed and agreed with him prior to implementation and completion. A date of completion of all archaeological site work, including historic building recording, will be confirmed with the DCHET, and the timescale of the completion of items under section 5 will run from that date.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

- 4.1 For the groundworks, the standard Oakford Archaeology recording system will be employed, consisting of:

(i) standardised single context record sheets; survey drawings, plans and sections at scales 1:10, 1:20, 1:50 as appropriate;

(ii) colour digital photography;

(iii) survey and location of finds, deposits or archaeological features, using EDM surveying equipment and software where appropriate; and

(iv) labelling and bagging of finds on site from all excavated levels, post-1800 unstratified pottery may be discarded on site with a small sample retained for dating evidence as required.

4.2 For the historic building recording observations will be recorded by means of a written description on watching brief record sheets, annotation of existing architect's plans, and black and white print and colour digital photographs. Detailed scale drawings will be made of any architectural features or exposed details of particular significance that cannot be recorded by the above means.

5. REPORTING AND ARCHIVING

5.1 The reporting requirements will be agreed with the DCHET on completion of fieldwork.

5.2 The results of all phases of archaeological work and historic building recording will be presented within one summary report within six months of the date of completion of all archaeological fieldwork. The summary report will contain the following elements as appropriate:

- A site location plan at an appropriate scale, and a plan of the site showing the location of the recorded building observations and archaeological features;
- a written description of the exposed historic fabric and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of any locally available historical evidence from any nearby sites and historic mapping;
- Phased and annotated floor plans, along with copies of other drawn records (elevations, cross sections, etc) as appropriate to illustrate features of historic or architectural interest and/or the development of the building;
- Photographs of features of significant archaeological, historic or architectural interest;
- if necessary, an assessment of what further work is necessary to analyse and publish any particularly significant finds and/or results;
- a written description of the exposed features and deposits and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of the known history of the site;
- plans and sections at appropriate scales showing the exact location and character of significant archaeological deposits and features;
- a selection of photographs illustrating the principal features and deposits found;
- specialist assessments and reports as appropriate.

5.3 A .pdf version of the summary report will be produced and distributed to the Client and DCHET on completion of sitework within the timescale above (5.2). A copy of the report and .pdf version will also be deposited with the site archive.

5.4 An ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared with reference to *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991 2nd edition) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*, (English Heritage, 2006) upon completion of the project.

The archive will consist of two elements, the artefactual and digital - the latter comprising all born-digital data and digital copies of the primary site records and images. This will be deposited with the ADS while any retained artefacts will be deposited with Barnstaple Museum in accordance with their current conditions of deposit (Barnstaple Museum reference number *pending*) within 12 months of the completion of site work. A retention and discard strategy will be agreed with Barnstaple Museum after the finish of site work, when it is clear what has been found, but before any processing of the material for archiving (other than cleaning).

- 5.5 A .pdf copy of the updated summary report will be submitted, together with the site details, to the national OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database within four months of the completion of site work.
- 5.6 A short report summarising the results of the project will be prepared for inclusion within the “round up” section of an appropriate national journal, if merited, within 12 months of the completion of site work.
- 5.7 Any amendments to the method or timescale set out above will be agreed in writing with the DCHET before implementation.

6. COPYRIGHT

- 6.1 OA shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in this document.

7. PROJECT ORGANISATION

- 7.1 The groundworks will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced OA archaeologists, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and relevant standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (*Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*, 1994, revised 2008, and *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, 1994, revised 2008), plus *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* 1994, revised 2008), and the and the historic building recording and reporting by Richard Parker, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and relevant standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (*Standards and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, 1996, revised 2008). The project will be managed for OA by M. Steinmetzer MCIFA, who produced this document.

Health & Safety

- 7.2 All monitoring works within this scheme will be carried out in accordance with current *Safe Working Practices (The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974)*.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Specialist contributors and advisors

The expertise of the following specialists can be called upon if required:

Historic and archaeological research: John Salvatore;
Bone artefact analysis: Ian Riddler;
Dating techniques: University of Waikato Radiocarbon Laboratory, NZ;
Building specialist: Richard Parker;
Illustrator: Sarnia Blackmore;
Charcoal identification: Dana Challinor;
Diatom analysis: Nigel Cameron (UCL);
Environmental data: Vanessa Straker (English Heritage), AEA, AC;
Faunal remains: Charlotte Coles;
Finds conservation: Alison Hopper-Bishop (Exeter Museums);
Human remains: Charlotte Coles;
Lithic analysis: Dr. Linda Hurcombe (Exeter University);
Medieval and post-medieval finds: John Allan;
Metallurgy: Gill Juleff (Exeter University);
Numismatics: Norman Shiel (Exeter);
Petrology/geology: Roger Taylor (RAM Museum), Imogen Morris;
Plant remains: Julie Jones (Bristol);
Prehistoric pottery: Henrietta Quinnell (Exeter);
Roman finds: Paul Bidwell & associates (Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields);
Others: Wessex Archaeology Specialist Services Team, Oxford Archaeology.

MFR Steinmetzer
27 July 2016
WSI/OA1352/01

