

Barton Farm Barn, Barton, Bidford-on-Avon, Warwickshire

Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1607
JANUARY 2016



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Barton Farm Barn, Building Recording and
Watching Brief

Commissioned by: Mr Barry Green

Project Report No. 1607

Site Code: BB14

Planning Reference: S13/01681/FUL

National Grid Reference: SP 1160 5084

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SUMMARY

Archaeological recording took place at Barton Farm Barn, ahead of and during groundworks for the conversion of the barn into a dwelling. A programme of photographic recording took place before any alterations had been carried out. The building recording showed that the barn did not contain any re-used timber from earlier buildings and that it was purpose-built for this site in around 1750, a date carved into one of the beams. The barn had remained largely unaltered except for the gradual degradations of age such as rotting of the timbers and the replacement of the original tile roof and weatherboarding with corrugated tin. No significant archaeological deposits associated with nearby prehistoric and Roman sites were exposed during the groundworks.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-upon-Avon District Council for the restoration and conversion of a farm building at Barton Farm, Bidford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. The barn is a Grade II Listed Building believed to date to the mid 18th-century and it was therefore thought possible that archaeological remains might be disturbed during the development. A condition of planning permission therefore required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, following on from the photographic recording of the building, consisting of the archaeological observation of soil stripping and foundation trenches in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (November 2013), was commissioned from Archaeology Warwickshire and carried out between March 2014 and February 2015. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under site code BB14.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The development site is located in isolation, outside the village of Barton, at national grid reference SP 1160 5084. The site is at the summit of a gently-sloping hill, with panoramic views of the surrounding land on all sides. The area of the development site is within an existing barn and farmyard and parts of the surrounding fields.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Second Terrace River Gravels (British Geological Survey 1974).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The site lies in the Avon Valley, south of the River Avon, in an area of known prehistoric and Romano-British settlement. In the vicinity of the site there have been finds of Iron Age coins (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No. MWA 7507), and finds of a hoard of 4th-century Roman gold coins by a metal detectorist in 1997 (MWA 9331) and a Romano-British brooch dated to around AD50 (MWA 9330). To the north-east Roman-period burials have been recorded (MWA 6015 and 6323; the latter in a lead coffin). A field survey found a Roman villa site in this area, overlying an Iron Age site (MWA 4708).

3.2 The village of Barton has medieval origins and there is evidence of empty building plots on the 1834 Ordnance Survey map, suggesting the medieval settlement was larger than the 19th-century one (MWA 590, MWA 5119). A find of a medieval horse harness pendant has been made in the vicinity, dating to 1250-1400 (MWA 9332). On the river to the north is the site of Grange Mills; a mill may have existed here at the time of Domesday (AD 1086) and there are mills dating from the 16th century through to the early 20th century.

3.3 Barton Farm dates to the middle of the 18th century and the barn is a Grade II Listed Building List entry no 1200653, UID 305035. As such it confirms that this area has been occupied from at least the earlier post-medieval period, if not earlier.

The Listing description is as follows:

Name: BARTON FARM, BARN APPROXIMATELY 25 METRES EAST OF FARMHOUSE

List entry Number: 1200653

Location

BARTON FARM, BARN APPROXIMATELY 25 METRES EAST OF FARMHOUSE

County	District	District Type	Parish
Warwickshire	Stratford-on-Avon	District Authority	Bidford-on-Avon

Grade: II

Date first listed: 13-Dec-1984

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 305035

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Details

SP15SW BIDFORD-ON-AVON

6/23 Barton Farm, barn approx 25 metres east of farmhouse

- II

Barn. Dated 1750 on tie beam. Timber-framed with weatherboarding; some old weatherboarding to left of doors. Corrugated iron half-hipped roof. 3 bays with central entrance; plank doors. Queen post roof. Some alterations, and small corrugated iron addition to left bay. Included as a dated example.

Listing NGR: SP1160550850

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SP1160550850

3.4 No early estate maps, tithe maps or inclosure maps are known covering this area. The earliest historic map of this area is the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 (Fig 2). This shows the building with a small extension to the north, and another structure adjoining on the western side. Farm buildings are shown in the centre of the site and to the east which were also present in 1905 (Fig 3), as late as 1967 when the first national grid map was produced, but have since been demolished.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains disturbed by the development, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination.

4.2 The secondary aim was to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context.

4.3 The objective of the work was a programme of controlled excavation to development formation levels, or the geological natural, whichever the higher.

4.4 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other

publications.

4.5 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI/Brief planning condition.

5 RESULTS

Building recording

5.1 Building recording was carried out before any groundworks associated with this phase of the development were carried out, but after the removal of the floors of the barn, and much of the limestone plinth, which had been removed much earlier. The barn has been clad in corrugated iron since 1984 (D. Turner pers. comm., see Photos 1 and 2), although the roof had been replaced by corrugated iron much earlier and is mentioned in the Listing, which was also carried out in 1984. At that time the barn had plank doors and weatherboarding – these were stripped out prior to the barn being clad in metal sheeting.

5.2 The building measures 13.20m lengthways and 6.60m on its short side and is oriented north-east to south-west, with the barn doors on the north-west and south-east sides. The access road lies to the north of the barn, and the farm yard to the south. The building stands in isolation; the corrugated addition to the left bay mentioned in the Listing has gone, and the other buildings shown to the south-west on earlier Ordnance Survey maps have been demolished (in the 1980s) and the yard concreted over. The concrete in the area to the south-west of the barn, and a strip immediately around the building to the north-east, had been removed, to facilitate groundworks associated with the current development.

5.3 Only the interior timberwork was visible at the time of photographic recording, and this must also have been the case when AEC surveyed the building in 2012. The survey drawing produced is somewhat stylised, but shows where timbers are missing or staggered (Fig. 4). One timber has subsequently fallen, or been removed, but this remained in the barn.

5.4 The timber framing consists of upright timbers and diagonal braces on all walls (Photos 3-8). There is no indication of horizontal timberwork between the uprights, suggesting that the barn was weather-boarded from the outset and did not previously have box-framing or panel infill, whether of wattle and daub, wattle and staves or brick nogging. The upright timbers average between 0.16m and 0.18m wide with the corner posts being

c.0.20m wide. Carpentry marks are visible on the roof trusses facing the threshing floor (Photo 10). The major joints are held with three pegs and the smaller joints with two pegs. There is no sign of timber re-use on any of the barn's timbers. The majority of the timbers are in good condition, with the exception of those on the western frame, which had been subject to the prevailing wind. The wooden sill rests on the remains of a low wall of Lias limestone, most of which has been removed to ground level and replaced by a series of breeze block pillars. Only at the south-west end of the building did the majority of the wall still support the timber frame (Photo 13). Here it was measured as 0.50m wide and with approximately 0.30-0.40m height visible externally, with the ground 0.10-0.20m lower internally.

5.5 The barn has three bays, in common with many other similar threshing barns. The central threshing floor would have been paved and there is evidence from spalled limestone fragments, that the other two bays (for threshed straw and corn sheaves respectively) were also once paved. The posts either side of the north-western barn doors have two recesses cut into each of them (Photos 15 and 16), rectangular on the northwest side and measuring 90mm x 45mm and 45mm deep, and L-shaped on the other side, with a gap of 0.29m between them. These would have held cross-bars to stop the barn doors blowing inward when the doors were shut. The south-eastern doors had single recesses; this door would generally have been subject to less pressure from the wind. The door posts have the original iron pintles at top and bottom, although the north-west post has one c.1m up from floor level, suggesting this side may have had a split-door. There are mortises with sawn-off tenons in them in the low parts of the southern doorposts.

5.6 The roof timbers are fairly slender and some have bark on them, as does one of the purlins and some of the wall timbers.

Floor reduction

5.7 The old limestone floor (2) of the barn had almost entirely been removed some time ago and the majority of the Lias Limestone plinth (3) had also been removed to ground level and the building supported on a series of breeze block pillars. A small area of concrete (1) could be seen in the south-west part of the barn, suggesting the old floor had been covered in concrete, at least in part. Two trenches had been dug across the barn, possibly to remove walls to the outer bays, and an area of floor reduced by c.0.40m.

5.8 Ground reduction within the barn took place using a mini-excavator with a toothless bucket to a depth of 0.90m below the previous level (Photos 17-18). Geological natural brownish yellow sand with occasional gravel (6) was up to 0.6m below the current ground surface. It was overlaid by 0.40-0.50m of brown sandy loam (5). This layer was overlain by 0.10m of hard-packed dark greyish brown sandy loam (4), presumably either an old floor layer, or the old topsoil layer compacted by flooring above. No finds were recovered from ground reduction within the barn.

5.9 To the south-west of the barn an area measuring 5.5m x 6.5m was stripped to a depth of 0.54m. Geological natural sand was not reached and the lowest level encountered was the same brown sandy loam encountered in the barn (5). A 0.35m wide brick wall (7) was recorded running off the western corner of the barn, to the south-west, on the same alignment as the long side of the barn. The bricks of this wall measured 240mm x 110mm x 70mm and appeared to be 19th-century in date. The two courses of extant brick rested on a Lias limestone foundation, bonded with off-white lime mortar (8). The base of an old Gilbey's gin bottle was recorded embedded in soil between stones in the lower part of the external barn wall (Photo 19).

Foundation trenches

5.10 Foundation trenches (0.70m wide) were excavated to a depth of 1.30m below the external ground level, between the existing breeze block pillars, or remnant parts of the former plinth at the south-west end of the building. The trenches were excavated using a toothless bucket, 1.6m wide, cutting down from the exterior of the barn, to the interior, rather than the more conventional use of a narrow bucket, along the line of the footings. The trench sides were then made vertical by hand. The majority of the trench cut through geological natural sand and gravel.

Service trenching

5.11 A service trench for an electricity cable was excavated in October 2014, from the barn to the telegraph pole to the north-west (Photo 20). The trench was 0.30m wide and between 1.04m and 1.16m deep. Natural reddish brown sandy clay (12) was reached below 0.23m of topsoil (10) or 0.25m of modern road make-up (11). A wider area was opened up north of the road to look for a water pipe.

5.12 A trench was also recorded immediately north of the barn, 1.20m to 1.50m wide, which had already been excavated and was holding scaffolding at the time of the service trench excavation. Natural clay was here also overlain by topsoil.

5.13 A further service trench was observed running south from the barn, across the farmyard and into the field to the south (Photos 21-22). It was 0.75m wide and sloped downwards to the south, being 0.45m deep at the north end and 1.1m deep at the south end. The trench exposed geological natural deposits along its entire length and no archaeological features were exposed in it. In the majority of the trench this was geological natural reddish brown sand and gravel (15). Outside of the farmyard this was overlain by 0.4m of brown sandy loam (14), an old plough-soil, which was covered by between 0.3 and 0.35m of greyish brown sandy loam plough-soil. Just outside the farmyard the geological natural was overlain by a layer of greenish grey clay (16). This was 0.3m deep and ran in to the area of the farmyard itself and was either a variation in the geological natural or perhaps more likely a deliberately dumped layer used to build the ground up for part of the farmyard. No dating evidence was recovered from it. It was overlaid by 0.2m of topsoil (13). The concrete yard surface had previously been stripped from the site.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The building recording showed that the barn did not contain any re-used timber from earlier buildings, as for example indicated by redundant mortice joints. This shows that the barn was purpose-built for this site, presumably in around 1750, a date carved into one of the beams (Photo 9). It was a fine barn and would have been a relatively costly structure at that time. The barn had remained largely unaltered except for the gradual degradations of age such as rotting of the timbers and the replacement of the original tile roof and weatherboarding with corrugated tin.

6.2 No significant archaeological deposits were exposed during the ground reduction within the barn. The service trenches around the structure did not cut through any archaeological features such as pits or ditches associated with the known Iron Age or Romano-British activity in the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr Barry Green for commissioning the work, and David Turner for his help on site.

REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 1974 *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Solid and Drift Geology, Stratford-upon Avon Sheet 200.*

EH/DCMS 2006 *Listed Buildings online (www.lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk)*, English Heritage website.

Ordnance Survey 1834 *First Edition one inch to one mile map, Sheet 51, Worcester.*

Ordnance Survey 1884 *First Edition 1:2500 map, Warwickshire Sheet 43.15*

Ordnance Survey 1901 *Second Edition 1:2500 map, Warwickshire Sheet 43.15*

Ordnance Survey 1923 *Third Edition 1:2500 map, Warwickshire Sheet 43.15.*

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment/details</i>
1	Concrete floor	remnant of modern screed floor
2	Limestone floor remnant	floor almost entirely removed
3	Limestone plinth	largely removed
4	Floor layer	hard packed
5	Layer	old ploughsoil outside of barn
6	Sand with some gravel	geological natural
7	Brick wall	2 courses, off corner of barn
8	Wall footing	limestone
9	Modern hardcore	from farmyard outside of barn
10	Topsoil	To north-west of barn
11	Modern tarmac road	To north-west of barn
12	Natural clay	To north-west of barn
13	Ploughsoil	To south-east of barn
14	Layer	To south-east of barn
15	Geological natural	To south-east of barn
16	Clay layer	To south-east of barn

B Warwickshire HLC Full Report

03/02/2014

HLCUID **Name**

HLC Code

HWA11289 Barton Farm
 SET-79

The 2nd edition shows a regular multi-yard plan type. Area of large orchards.

Broad Type
Confidence

Settlement
 Certain

HLC Type

Farm Complex Post 1880s/Pre 1900s

Period Imperial - 1884 AD to 1906 AD

Previous Types

Previous Broad
Confidence

Fieldscales
 Possible

Previous HLC

Medieval Open Fields

Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD

Fieldscales
 Possible

Piecemeal Enclosure

Medieval to Post-medieval - 1066 AD to 1750 AD

Fieldscales
 Certain

Small Irregular Fields

Unknown to Imperial 1884 AD

Full Description

National Grid Reference

Centred SP 1161 5085 (117m by 76m)

Area

0.54

SP15SW

Attributes

Type

Farmstead Plan Type Primary Attribute
 Farmstead Plan Type Secondary Attribute
 Farmstead Plan Type Tertiary Attribute
 Farmhouse Position
 Farmhouse Location Primary Attribute
 Farmstead Survival

Value

Farm: Regular Courtyard
 Multiyard (Dispersed or Regular Courtyard)
 L3 - L Plan with detached building to third side
 Detached side on to yard
 Isolated Position
 Partial Loss - Less than 50% change

Sources

Aerial Photograph: Blue Sky/Warwickshire County Council. 2007. Modern Aerial Photography (High Map: Ordnance Survey (Digital). 1884-1892. 1st edition 6" to 1 mile. Map.
 Map: Ordnance Survey. 1900-1905. 2nd edition 1:2500. Map.
 Map: Ordnance Survey. 2005-2013. Ordnance Survey 'MasterMap' Modern Digital Mapping. Digital.

Associated Monuments - None



1: The barn with its corrugated iron cladding and roof cover



2: The barn from the south-east



3: General view of the interior, looking west



4: General view of the interior, looking north-east



5: North-east wall



6: North-east half-hipped gable



7: South-west wall



8: South-west half-hipped gable



9: Date of 1750 carved into the cross beam



10: Carpentry marks and bark on timbers



11: Roof structure



12: Diagonal bracing



13: Remnant of wall plinth



14: Remnant of wall plinth



15: Slots for cross-bars on north-west door frame



16: Slots for cross-bars on south-east door frame



17: Ground reduction in the barn and on the line of the plinth wall



18: Ground reduction showing below-ground extent of plinth wall at south-west end of barn



19: Base of Gilbey's Gin bottle embedded in barn wall



20: Service trench to the north-west of the barn



21: Service trench across courtyard



22: Service trench out into field

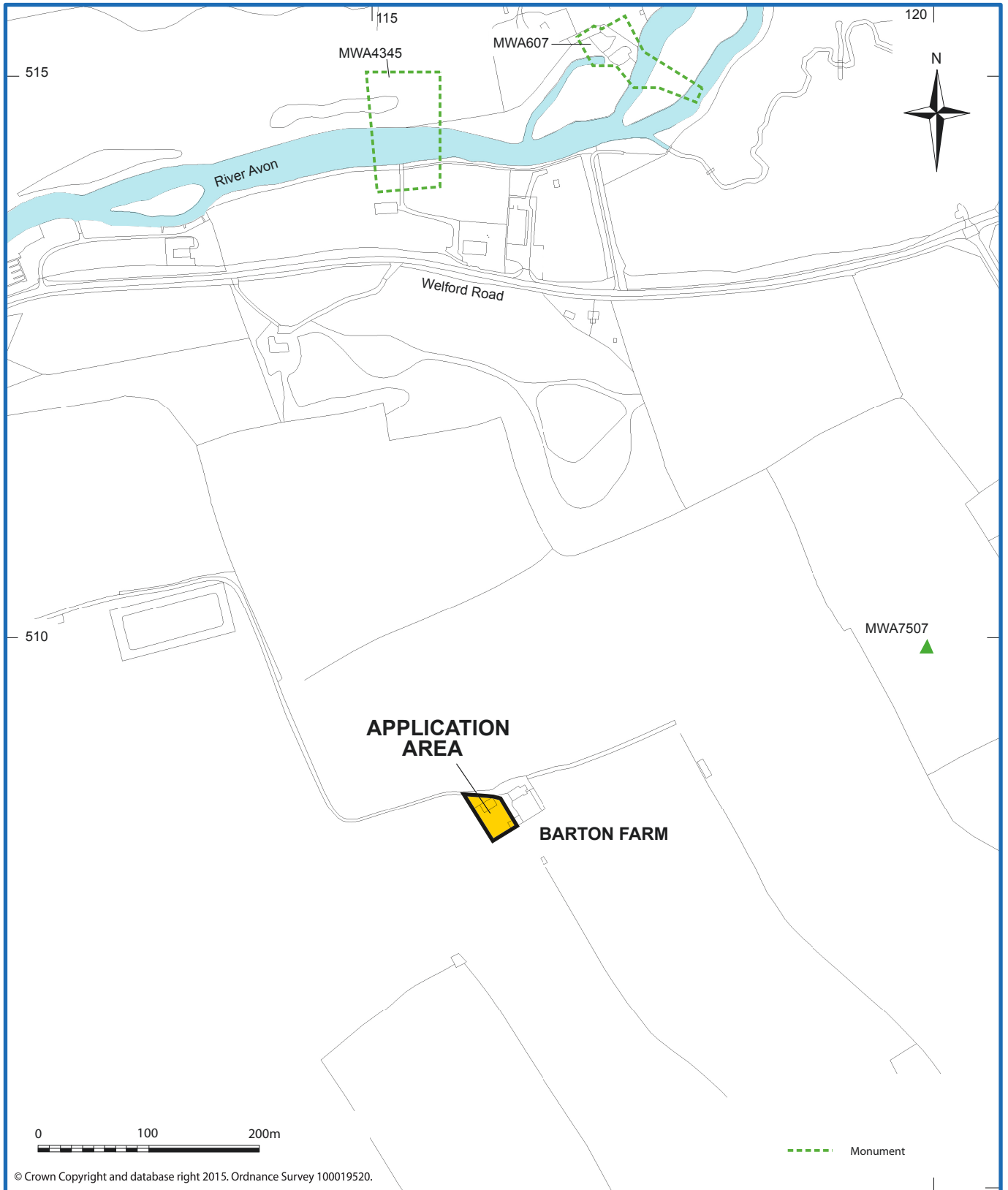


Fig 1: Location of Application Area and Historic Environment Record

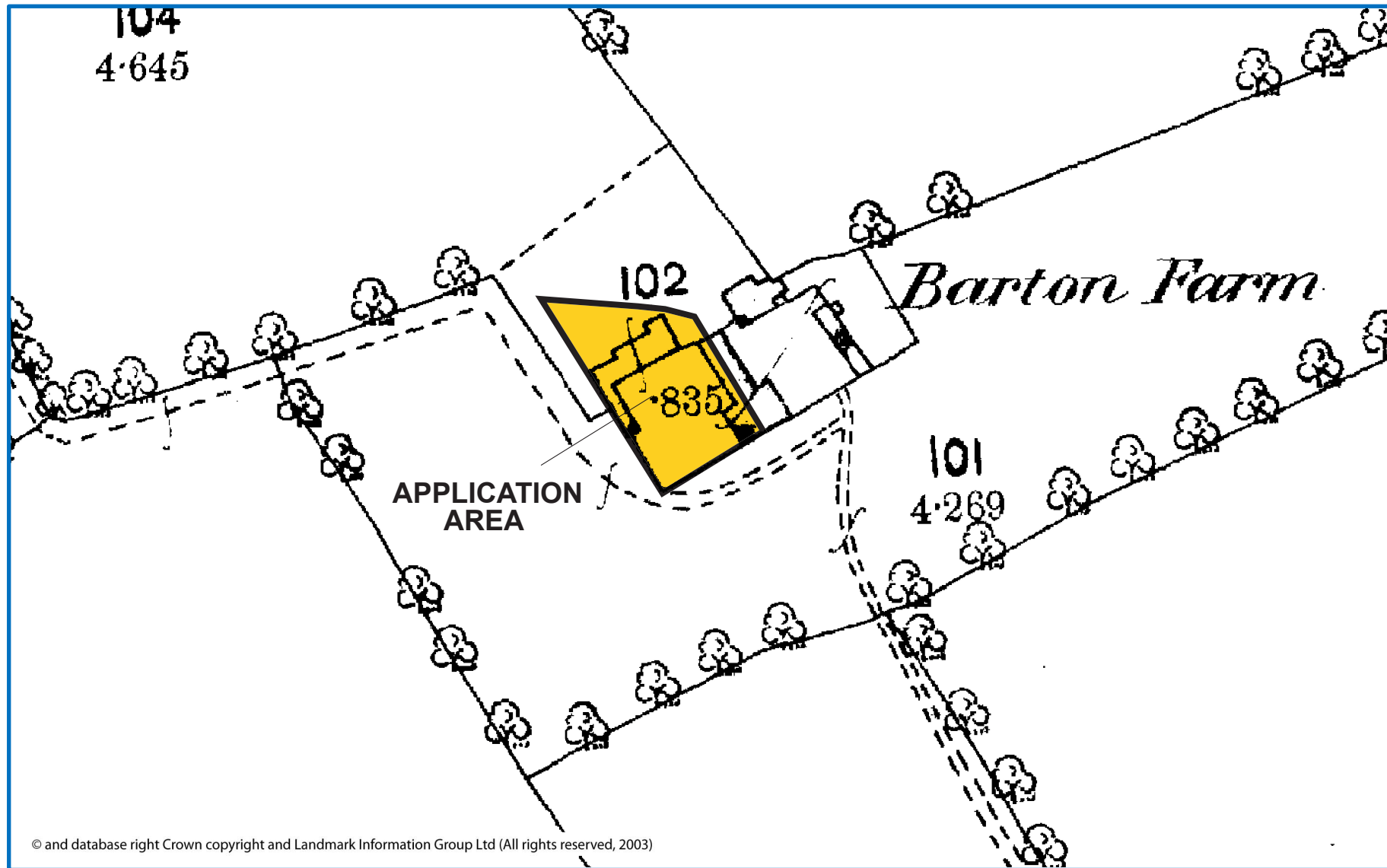


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884

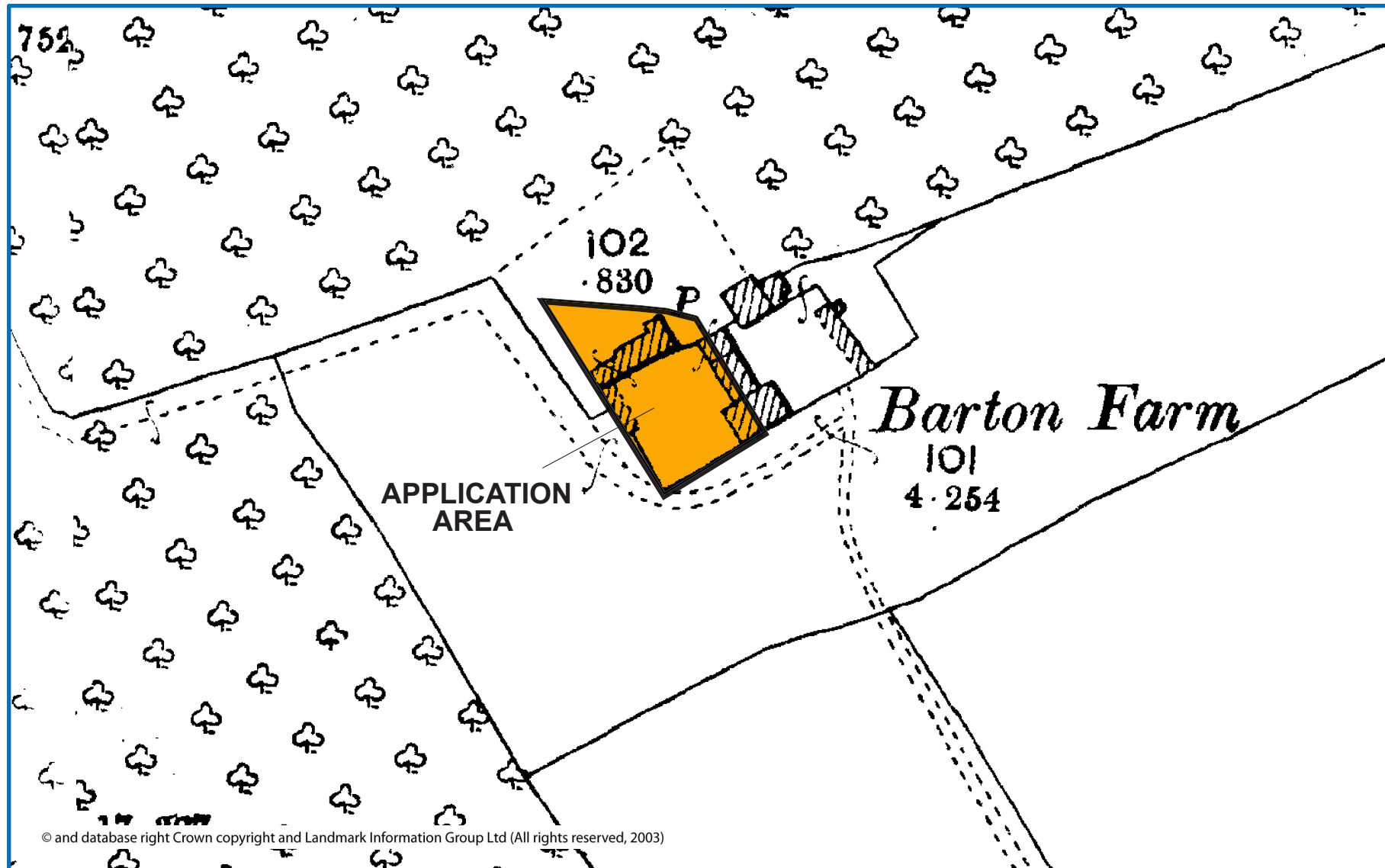


Fig 3: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1902

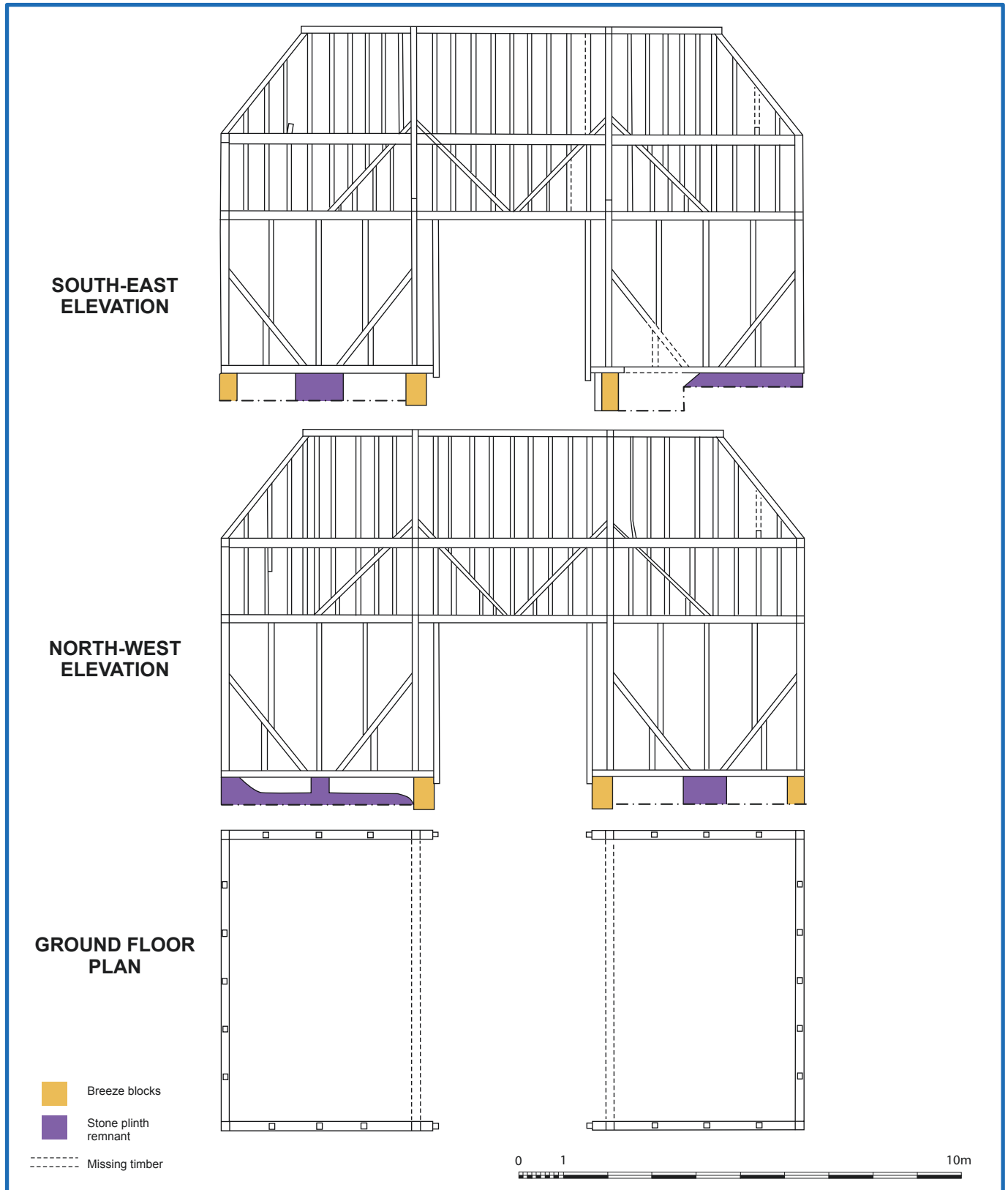


Fig 4: Side elevations and plan

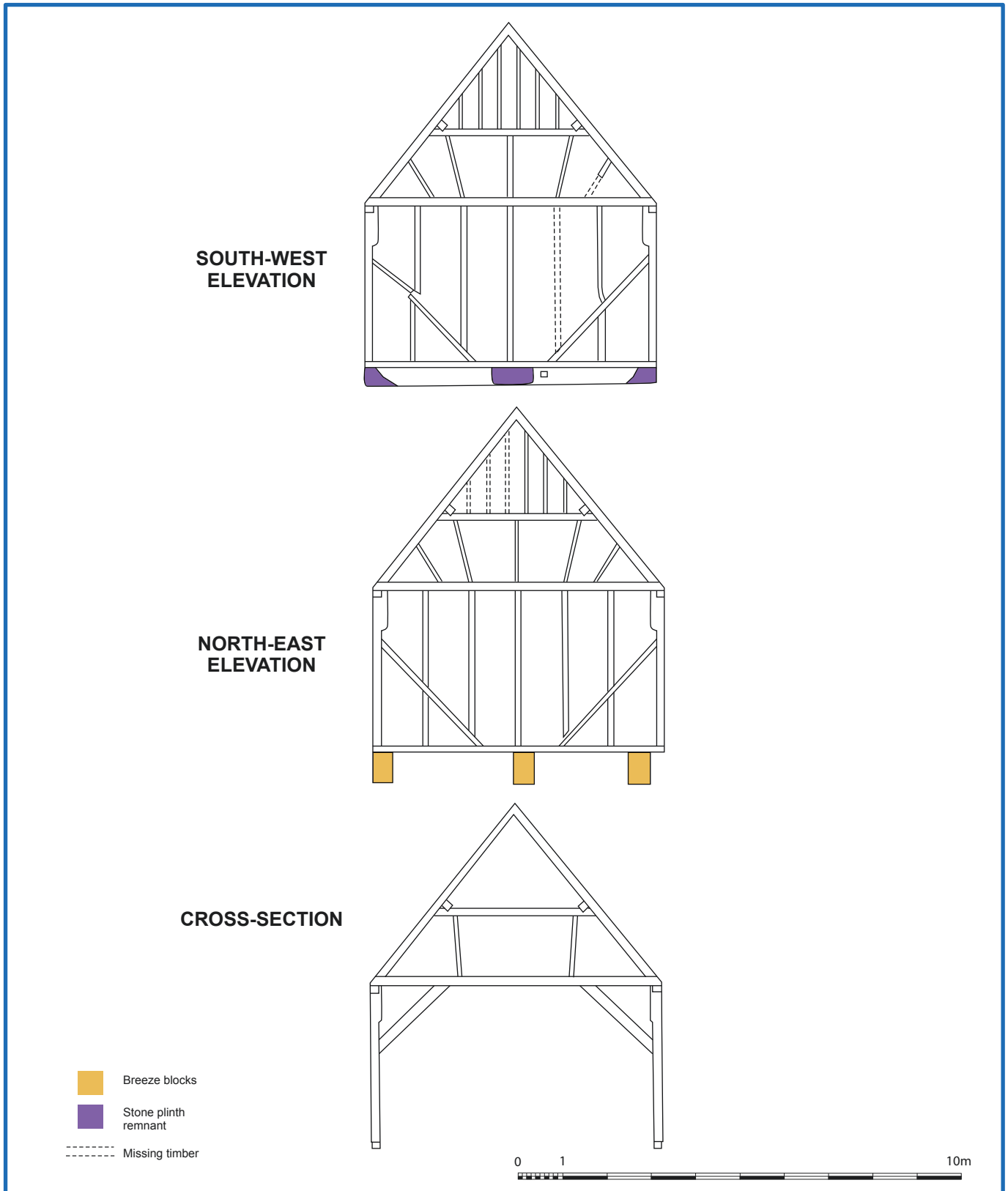


Fig 5: Gable elevations and cross-section

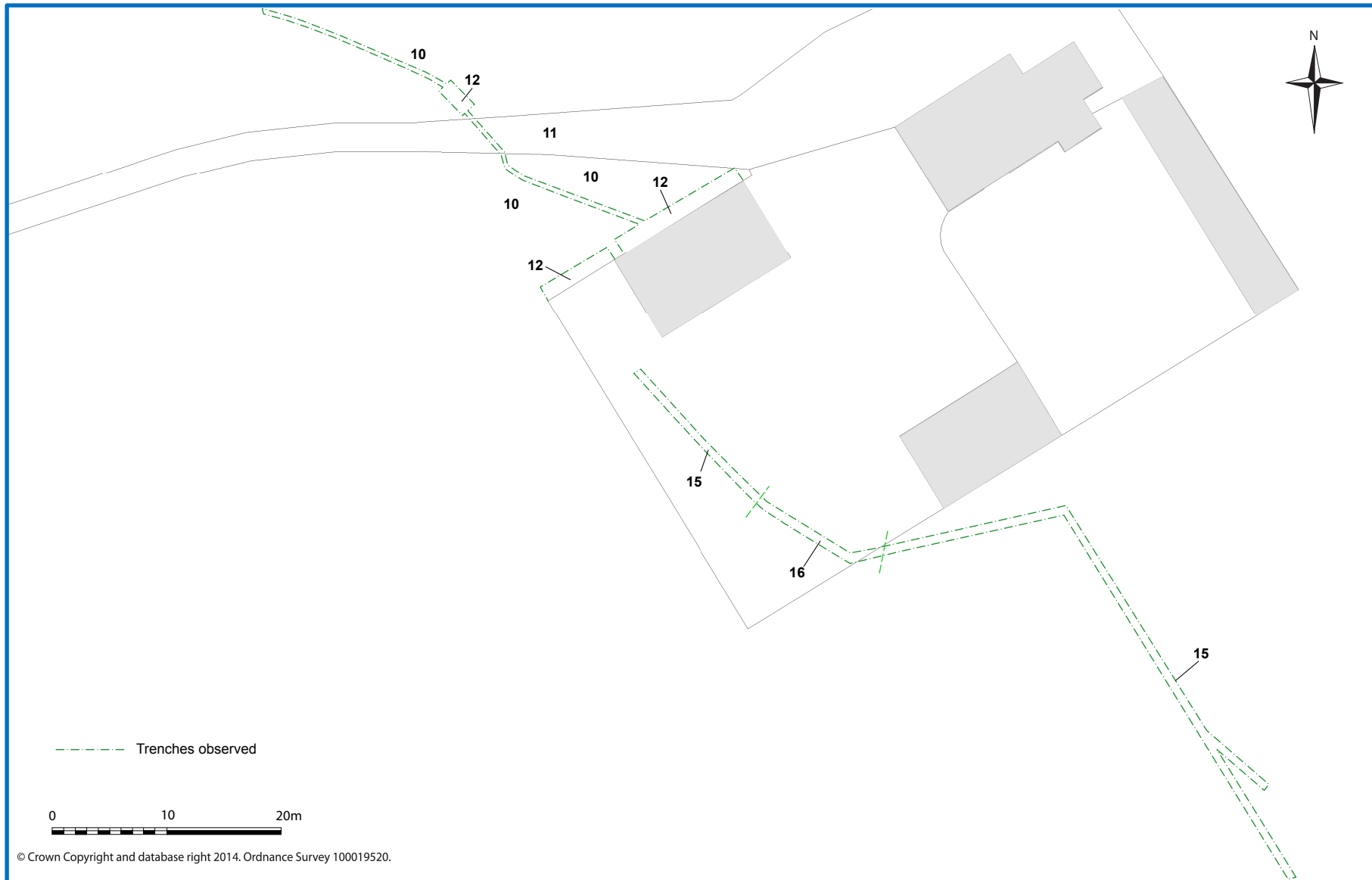


Fig 6: Location of trenches observed