

## **An historical assessment of a mono-pitched shed located at Sidnall Farm, Lower Hope, Pencombe, Herefordshire**

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16<sup>th</sup> February 2012

An historical assessment of a mono-pitched shed located at Sidnall Farm, Lower Hope, Pencombe, Herefordshire (NGR SO 5955 5161) was undertaken by Mike Napthan Archaeology at the request of Lett & Sweetland Architects on behalf of Lower Hope Farms Ltd. The building presently consists of the truncated stone walls of an earlier structure capped by a recent single pitched over-roof. There is some brick incorporated in the jambs of the earlier structure, and indications of brick patching to infilled openings. Although the building is largely devoid of dateable features the brickwork would suggest a very late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> C origin for the structure.

The project consisted of a rapid search for historical mapping and documentary sources at Hereford Record Office, and a review of photographic evidence. The most relevant cartographic sources consulted were: HRO D44 A7/13 (1837 tithe awards map, and apportionments on microfilm – see Fig 1a), and a drainage plan of Sidnall Farm dated 1868 (HRO E41/A/7 i+iii) – see Fig 1b. The farm is exceptionally well documented for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> C, having been part of the Hampton Court Estate of Richard Arkwright. There is much documentation relating to the tenancies and management of the farms, but the most relevant for the purposes of the present project are a series of ledgers dating from 1820-1872 giving an annual description and financial breakdown of the landlord's expenditure on farm buildings and repairs for each of his many holdings. The six relevant ledgers are HRO E41/parcels 290 to 295 ref O/L 360. All entries for Sidnall Farm are transcribed below. Little Sidnall was not acquired by the Hampton Court Estate until 1854, and accounts for that farm were kept separately, though some expenditure at Sidnall clearly relates to the linking of the two holdings.

Sidnall Farm first appears in documentary sources as the place name “Sothenhale” in 1317-20, and as Sothenhal in 1335. The place name suggests a significant habitation (the “south hall”) here or hereabouts from the early medieval period onwards. The only archaeological record for the area appears to have been the chance finding of a possible prehistoric flint to the SW of the farm. The early history of the site has not been considered during the present project, but the farm appears to have been held for many generations as part of the Hampton Court Estate by the Earls of Essex, the Coningsbury family of Hampton Court until 1810 when the estate was acquired by Richard Arkwright, the grandson of the Derbyshire industrial pioneer and cotton manufacturer. Richard purchased the estate for his son John, but ran it himself even after John had relocated to Herefordshire in 1819. Richard Arkwright died in 1843, and the estate was run in a benevolent and improving mode by John, until he was succeeded by his own son John Hungerford Arkwright in 1858. The estate was a model of the improvements in agriculture, and run on very efficient lines, producing its own stone, brick, timber and lime. During the 1860s the farm was extensively drained and the earliest detailed map of the farm located so far shows the drainage scheme as completed to 1868 (Figure 1b). John Hungerford Arkwright died in 1905 and the estate was sold off by his son John Stanhope Arkwright in 1912.

The farm was held by George Jordan until 1835, and subsequently by the Parker family (previously tenants at Marsh Court Farm from 1830 or earlier) who were present until at least 1913. William Parker is listed in local trades directories as at Sidnall from c1851 (Lascelles Directory) until the farm was taken over by Thomas Parker towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> C.

Thomas was first listed by the directories as at “Upper Sidnal” in 1891 (Kelly’s Directory), and similarly until at least 1913 (Kelly’s Directory), subsequent listings were not pursued.

The most useful sources for the development of the farmstead proved to be the building and repair accounts of the Hampton Court Estate relating to Sidnall Farm 1821-72. The items are transcribed here in full, but without the detailed financial accounts (which itemise all bills paid or monies allowed on account in some detail). Some abbreviations are expanded for clarity:

#### Sidnall Farm

George Jordan tenant 1821-35 total expenditure £184.18s.1d

1821 Making a new oven and chimney, new gates and other small repairs , allowed waste, bricks, lime etc , making gates, timber etc

1823 Repairing barn floor and slabbing shed and a general repair of the tiling, allowed mason and carpenter’s wages, sawing, raising stone, timber, nails, tiling stone, hair

1830 Repairing privy and steps at the courtyard, repairing barn floors and a general repair at the outbuildings , allowed mason’s and carpenters wages, allowed G Jordan, sawing, timber, brick, lime, hair, smithy account, nails

1831 Repairing cyder mill, allowed mason’s and carpenter’s wages, timber

1832 A general repair of the house and outbuildings and shed and draining 5 acres of land, allowed mason’s and carpenter’s wages, drainer’s wages, sawing timber, timber, lime, brick and squares, thatch, fixtures, blacksmith’s account, locks, latches etc, nails.

1833 Making shed in fold and draining [...] acres of land and allowed the tenant for fencing and lime for land , allowed mason’s and carpenter’s [wages], drainer’s wages, timber and sawing, stone and raising, lime for land, fencing, thatch, turnpikes on land and materials, smithy account, nails

1834 Allowed brick for repairing oven

1835 Making and repairing gates and fixing posts, allowed carpenter’s wage, sawing timber and timber

#### Sidnall Farm

William Parker tenant 1836-43 total expenditure £201.16s. 5d

1836 Building cow houses, new roofing and tiling the granary and hopkilns, allowed mason’s and carpenter’s wages, smith’s bill, ?walkirn?, smiths account, stone and tile, lime, hair, timber, nails, locks

1838 Opening well etc, allowed pump maker’s bill

1839 Allowed new gates and timber for repairing old gates, allowed timber and gates, smith’s account, nails

1840 Laying paving around the pump, mason’s wages, smith’s account, nails

1841 Repairing barn door & beam, allowed carpenter’s wages , smith’s account, timber, nails

1843 New Iron for pump, allowed smith’s account

William Parker tenant 1846-1857 total expenditure £169.16s.14d

1846 A general repair of the house and buildings, allowed raising stone, mason’s wages, Banford bill for work, allowed tenant for hauling materials, timber, nails, locks and hinges, smith’s account, mortar and lime, stone tiles, paving stone

1847 Repairing the pump, allowed carpenter’s wages, smith’s account, timber

1848 and 1849 Allowed tenant for repairs done by him: Smith’s account, nails 6 locks 4/- gates and stiles, timber for repair of gates, boards

1850 Repairing the tiling, allowed mason's wages, stone tiles, new gates, timber for cratches & for repairing gates, nails

1852 Repairing pump, allowed workman's wages, smith's account, timber

1853 Squaring posts, repairing and hanging gates, allowed carpenter's wages, smith's account, nails, timbers

[nb: 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 1854 Little Sidnall purchased from Rev H B Bonnville – accounts for Little Sidnall kept separately but also farmed by Parker]

1854 Hanging gates, paving barn floor and chaff pen and making a stone fence, allowed mason's and carpenter's wages, smith's account, new gates, timber, paving stone, lime mortar, allowed tenant for erecting a shed

1855 Allowed tenant towards expense of new calves cot floor, repairing manger and fencing Sheepstye road

1856 Repairing the tiling on house and barn and paving barn floor, allowed mason's wages, stone tiles, barn floor paving, nails

1857 Finishing the paving of barn floor, repairing barn walls, pump and hop-kilns, allowed mason's wages, hauling materials, blacksmith's wages, nails

William Parker tenant 1858-1868 total expenditure £2523.15s.5d

1858 Repairing walls and tiling on hopkilns, pitching stable, allowed mason's wages, hauling materials, smith's account, nails and hinges

1860 Building a shed and wall, repairing tiling on house and buildings, pump, barn and cider mill, thatching barn, hanging and repairing gates, allowed workmen's wages, blacksmith's bills, lime, stone tiles, gates and stiles, timber to repair gates, timber, nails

1861 New shed, wainhouse, goosecots, wall at back of house, taking down and rebuilding part of house, building bridge over brook in dingle, drains to fold, cellar, dairy & stable, levelling fold, repair barn, stable, pump and tiling on buildings, allowed raising stone, workmen's wages, painter and glazier, blacksmith's bills, paving and wall stone, plinths and sills, stone tiles, slates, bricks & crests, lime and sand, timber, gateposts etc, nails, locks and hinges, glass and lead, grates, rock powder [for blasting the stone]

1862 A continuation of the work to house, new roof, windows, back kitchen and menservants bedrooms, new parlour & bedroom, new shed, wall to rickyard and folds, new barn doors and a general repair of the outbuildings. Allowed raising stone, workmen's wages, blacksmith's bills, stone for sills, plinths etc, paving stone, bricks and crests, George for slates, lime, timber, nails, locks, hinges, sash pulleys fire grates & blind ends, rock powder, lead and spouting.

1862 Raising stone and making road and culverts to Little Sidnall, completing bridge and approaches in dingle. Allowed raising stone, mason's and labourer's wages. J Gurney smith's bill, rock powder, allowed tenant half the expenses stocking up stubs and fences

1863 Filling up quarry and stoning the above road. Allowed labourer's wages, mason's and carpenter's wages, blacksmith's bills, George for slates, lime and bricks, gates and posts timber, nails, locks and hinges, sash weights and fastenings, glass and wire lattice, paint and gas tar, lead and spouting.

1863 Draining 65acres0rods27perches of land under loan from the Lands Improvement Co. Allowed drainer's wages, draining pipes, rock powder

Levelling waste ground top of horse pasture No 1332.

1864 Draining 108acres2rods0perches of land, stocking up 8acres1rod3perches of alders in Leasows. Making a new watercourse, large main drain underneath, filling up dingle and old watercourse making a new road 580 yards long from Sidnall House unto the Ullingswick Road. Pitching pool and making two watering places under loan from the Lands Improvement Company. Allowed drainer's wage, stocking up alders, new watercourse etc, new road, pitching pool etc, draining pipes, powder

1864 Rebuilding shed and repairing cider mill. Allowed workmens wages, timber and nails.

1865 Draining 37acres,0rods,31perches of land under loan from the Lands Improvement Company. Allowed drainer's wages draining pipes, hauling materials, powder and stationery

1865 Repairing pump and lock. Allowed smiths wages, nails for other work  
 1866 Making outlets for drains under loan from Lands Improvement Company. Allowed drainer's wages  
 1867 Draining 13 acres, 2 rods, 0 perches of land under loan from the Lands Improvement Company. Allowed drainer's wages, draining pipes, bricks and cement, powder & smith's bills  
 1867 Making extra short drains, repairing others, mason repairing tiling on buildings. Allowed drainer's wages, J Baylis mason, draining pipes etc, new gates and stiles, timber to repair gates, boards & nails.  
 1868 Repairing drains in fields. Altering and repairing cattle sheds at Gasbage. Allowed tenant half the expense of stocking up old and planting new fences Gasbage land. Allowed drainer's wages, mason's and carpenter's wages, allowed tenant, smith's account, J Gurney smith's bill, Paving stone, bricks, timber, gateposts, nails, Carless for cast iron cistern.

William Parker tenant 1869-72 total expenditure not listed but £119.10s.0d

1870 Making cowl for & repairing hopkiln, repairing tiling and doors, tenant stocking up old and planting new fences. Allowed for: Slates, timber in cowl, nails  
 1871 Making door for kitchen, repairing grate and furnace, repair floor, whitewashing, painting and paperhanging, Repair tiling, Repair walls and gates and hanging gates. Repair stable & calves cot & making gighouse Allowed for: Painting and paperhanging, glazing, J Gurney smith's bill, drainpipes, E Abell for sand, bricks, lime, W Parker for building wall and puddling pond Ditto for stocking up old and planting new fences. Ditto for levelling in dingle in White field. Firebricks, nails, paper, locks and hinges, paint and varnish, glass, timber, gate posts, stiles, and timber to repair gates.  
 1872 Building gig-house, raising stone for gig-house, repairing hopkilns, pigstyes, fixing shelves in dairy and repairing doors. Allowed for: E Abell for sand, J Gurney smith, W Parker & R Thomas raising stone for pitching stable, stone sills paving stone, bricks, roofing tiles and crests, brick squares, lime, timber, nails, bolts

Here the set of records ends.

Evidence summarized for buildings and use of materials:

*(nb generally only listed here for first mention)*

1821 Brick built oven in house repaired  
 1823 Barn at least partially of stone, weatherboarded wood framed shed, stone tiles in use for repairs, building stone raised locally  
 1830 Lime and hair plaster used  
 1831 Cider mill house, probably timber  
 1832 Thatched building, use of brick squares (ie quarry tiles) probably in house  
 1833 New shed in foldyard, apparently stone walled, thatch used  
 1834 Brick built oven in house repaired  
 1836 Building cow houses, new roofing and (stone) tiling the granary and hopkilns  
 1838 Well and pump repaired  
 1846 House is of stone with stone tiles  
 1854 New shed (apparently timber), barn floor is paved, and has a chaff pen  
 1855 Calves Cot floor repaired, mention of sheep sty (apparently away from the farmstead)  
 1858 Stable with stone pitched floor  
 1860 New shed, barn is at least partially thatched  
 1861 New shed, wainhouse, goosecots. House partially rebuilt (use of stone sills, slates and ceramic crestings), mention of existing cellar, also existing dairy. Blasting powder in use to raise stone locally for building walls. New fire grate, new glazing  
 1862 New sash windows, new window blinds, more new grates, new guttering  
 1863 Wire lattice for windows, use of gas tar (a form of preservative paint)

1864 Rebuilding shed and repairing cider mill (both timber)

1870 Hopkiln cowl added, roof repaired with slate

1871-2 Building Gighthouse (of locally raised stone), tile roof and ceramic crests. Repairs to pigstyes

1872 First mention of use of bolts

In total 19 buildings are mentioned in the ledgers, but not all were necessarily present at the same time, and several may have been part of a long contiguous building range or ranges. The dairy and cellar are likely to have been part of the house range. The hopkiln also formed part of the house range. The calves cot would probably have adjoined the cowhouses. The goose-cots probably adjoined the back of the wain-house as they were built at the same time. Conventionally the stable and granary would both be placed close to the house (and in clear view) for reasons of security. Often the granary stood over the wain-house, but this does not seem to be the case here (the granary predated the wain-house). Of the surviving historic outbuildings on the site only a few may be positively identified: the timber framed barn, with an adjoining open sided shelter (probably a cattle shelter), the “cart shed” (originally this would have been called a wain-house), with possibly goosescots to its rear can be identified as the range added between the 1837 and 1868 plans. The hopkiln is known from a war-time newspaper photograph to have adjoined the north wing of the house. Both house and hopkiln were badly damaged by a wartime bomb (Hereford Times September 14<sup>th</sup> 1940 or ?1941). The building was repaired and subsequently has been converted. Without internal inspection it is not possible to be certain, but it is likely that the dairy was also part of the house range.

This leaves only a few named buildings as contenders for the present mono-pitched shed – the cowhouses built in 1836 and the granary also repaired in that year both required walling stone and stone tiles, but when the farmyard layout is conjecturally reconstructed on the basis of available documentary and cartographic evidence, with the few fragmentary remains of the original outbuildings it becomes clear that the prime contender for the identity of the present mono-pitched shed would be the former granary. The building appears to have been of at least 1½ storeys (or possibly two storeys), and is built of stone with some brick detailing to former openings. The remaining walls are reasonably robust, and this would be in keeping with a granary. Loss of the front wall and upper parts of the walls has however removed almost all evidence of former function. By process of elimination it is clear that the granary and stables stood on the NE side of the fold-yard, and conventionally the granary would be positioned closer to the house, and the stables as close as conveniently possible to the wain-house and implement sheds. The small stone building at the northern end of the range sits conveniently close to the end of the driveway from the Ullingswick Road (the drive having been built in 1864), and is of suitable proportions to have been a gig-house built in 1871-2. The 1836 cowhouses were possibly the precursors of the present open-fronted sheds adjoining the barn – over wintered cattle would be fed forage stored in the barn, and bedded in straw, also kept in the barn, so it was generally most convenient to keep cattle close to the barn.

In its present much mutilated condition it is not practicable to be certain of the origins of the “mono-pitched shed” – a scar on the rear of the gig-house suggests that the roofline of the end bay was probably of a 1½ storey building, but this evidence relates to a bay that was added apparently after 1868 (see Fig 1b), not to the main part of the structure which is suggestive of a slightly taller building. In either event the building almost certainly was originally twin pitched, and we have evidence of the use of both thatch and stone tiles on these buildings in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The present slate roofs on the house represent repairs dating to after 1861, prior to which local stone tiles were used. The surviving section is clearly part of a much longer structure, all of which would have been at least 1½ storeys if it contained (as it apparently did) the stable block. In the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> C it was standard agricultural practice to have a hay-loft over the stables, both for convenience of feeding and to keep the very valuable farm horses warm. It is unlikely that stabling would be placed beneath a granary as the steam arising from the horses would spoil the grain, it was also common practice to

have access for carts beneath the granary for ease of loading, therefore the building may have been originally at least partially open fronted.

The proposed conversion of the “mono-pitched shed” is not likely to be more detrimental to the historic integrity of the structure than the present inappropriate and unsightly modern roof. Conversion may offer the opportunity to restore a more traditional roof arrangement, and would secure the long-term survival of the structure.





Figure 1a: 1837 Tithe Map - poor quality microfilm only available at HRO. Plot 182 identified as Sidnall's homestead

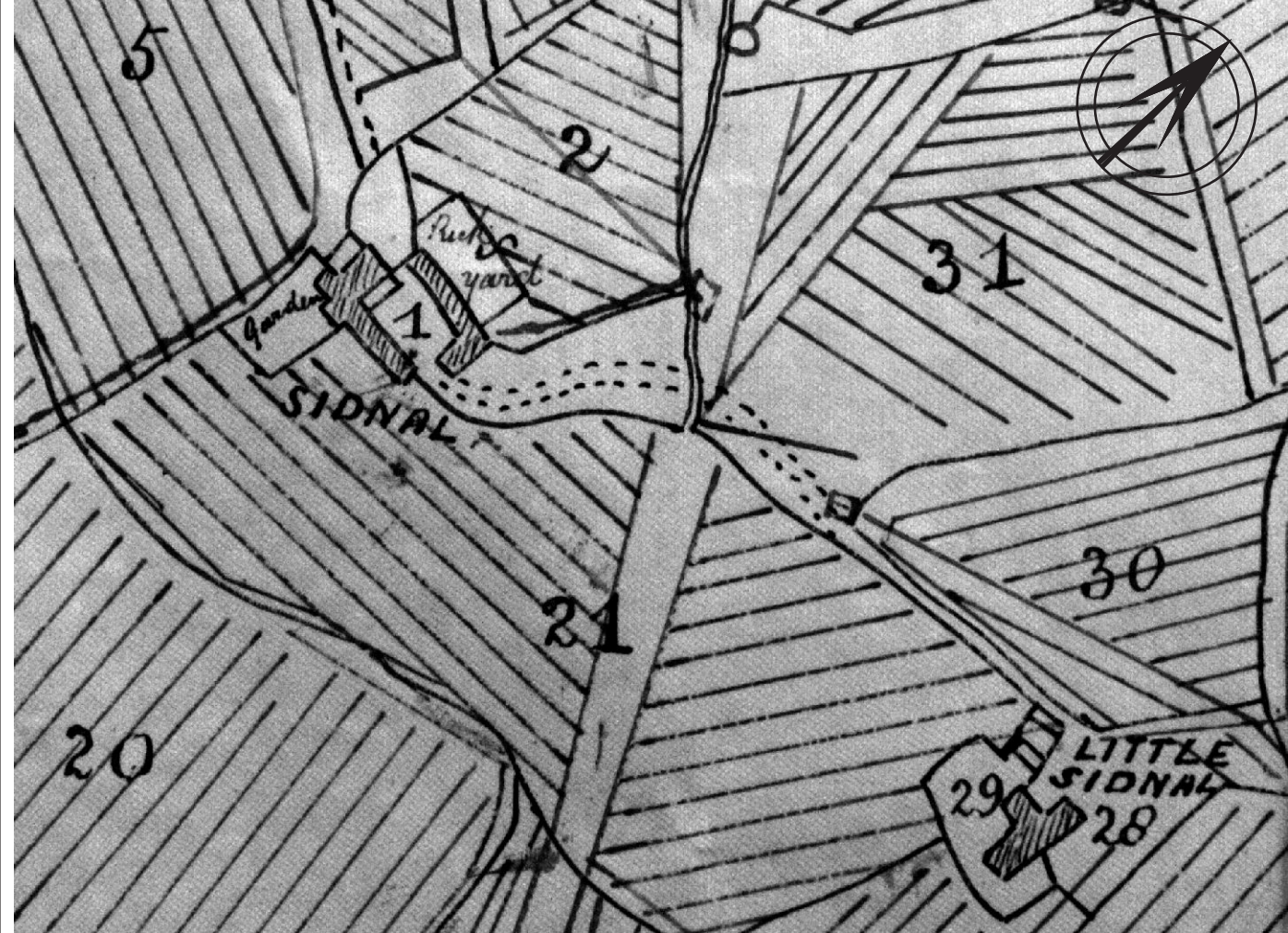


Figure 1b: 1868 Drainage plan of Sidnal Farm, showing enlargement of farm buildings since 1837

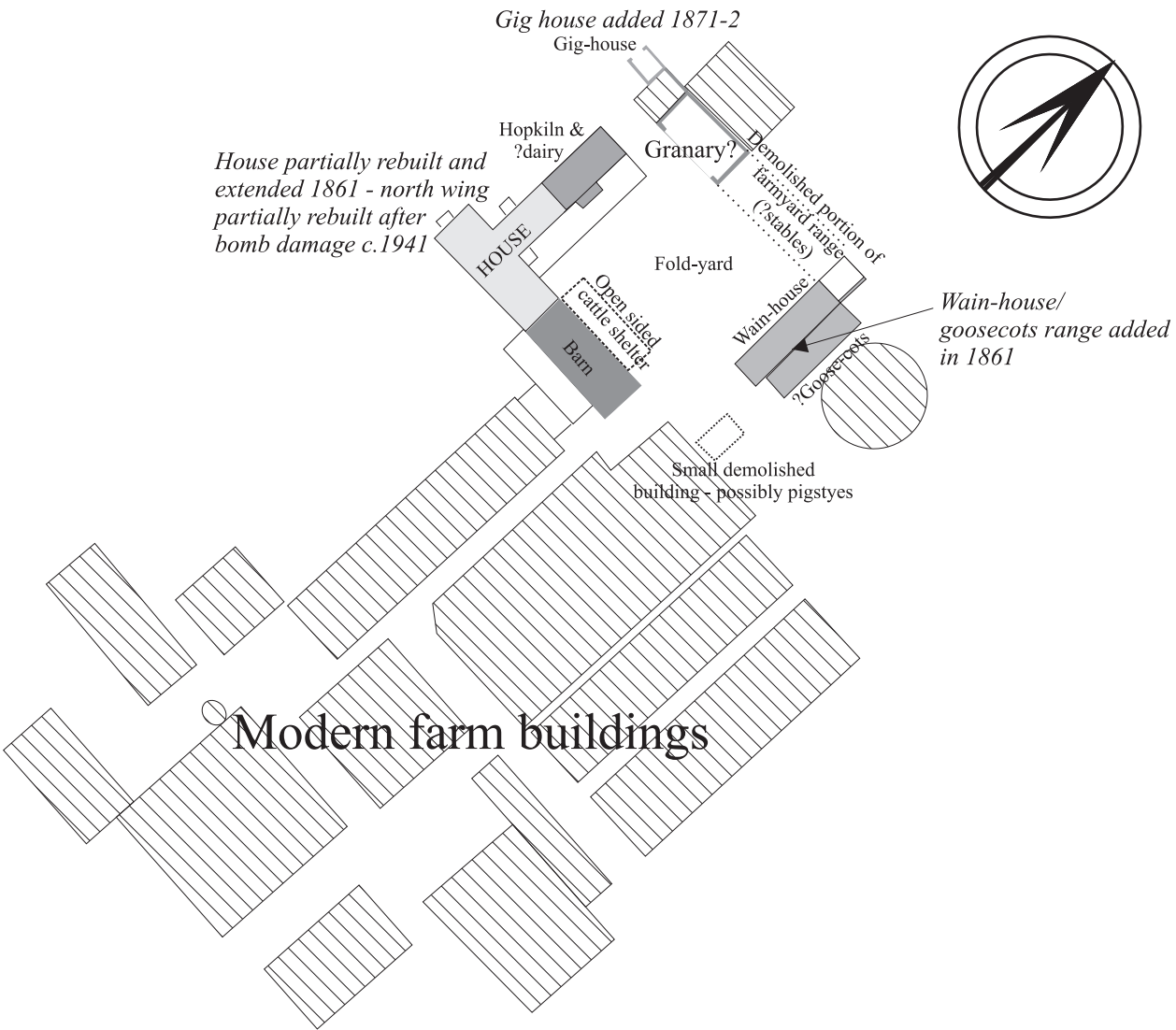


Figure 1c: Present farm layout, modern buildings hatched, and historic buildings identified where possible. “Mono-pitched shed” interpreted as possibly remains of a former granary building. NTS.

Figure 1: Historic development of Sidnall