



aeon archaeology

The Ash Barn, Woodhouse Lane, Audlem, Cheshire CW3 0DT.



Level 2 Historic Building Survey
Project Code: A0098.1
Report no. 0105



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Report no. 0105 v1.0

Level 2 Historic Bulding Survey

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Project Code: A0096.1

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Mr. Glyn Davies (owner) to produce a level 2 historic building record at The Ash Barn, Audlem, Cheshire (centered on **NGR SJ 68669 41174**) in advance of conversion .

The archaeological recording was completed as part of a planning condition (Planning Reference: **16/1074N**). Planning permission has been secured by the client for the conversion of the existing agricultural building to provide ancillary accommodation. The following archaeological condition was assigned to the permission:

Condition 5

No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason

In the interests of the historic environment and in accordance with the NPPF.

The Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service did not prepare a mitigation brief for this project, but has requested the following:

As the proposed conversion will have an impact on the historic character and appearance of the buildings, and also result in the loss of some historic fabric, the Archaeology Planning Advisory Service would therefore recommend that should planning permission be granted for this, or any similar scheme, that the buildings be the subject of an archaeological record.

The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in Paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

This design and all subsequent mitigation conformed to the guidelines specified in English Heritage ‘*Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*’ (2006) & Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

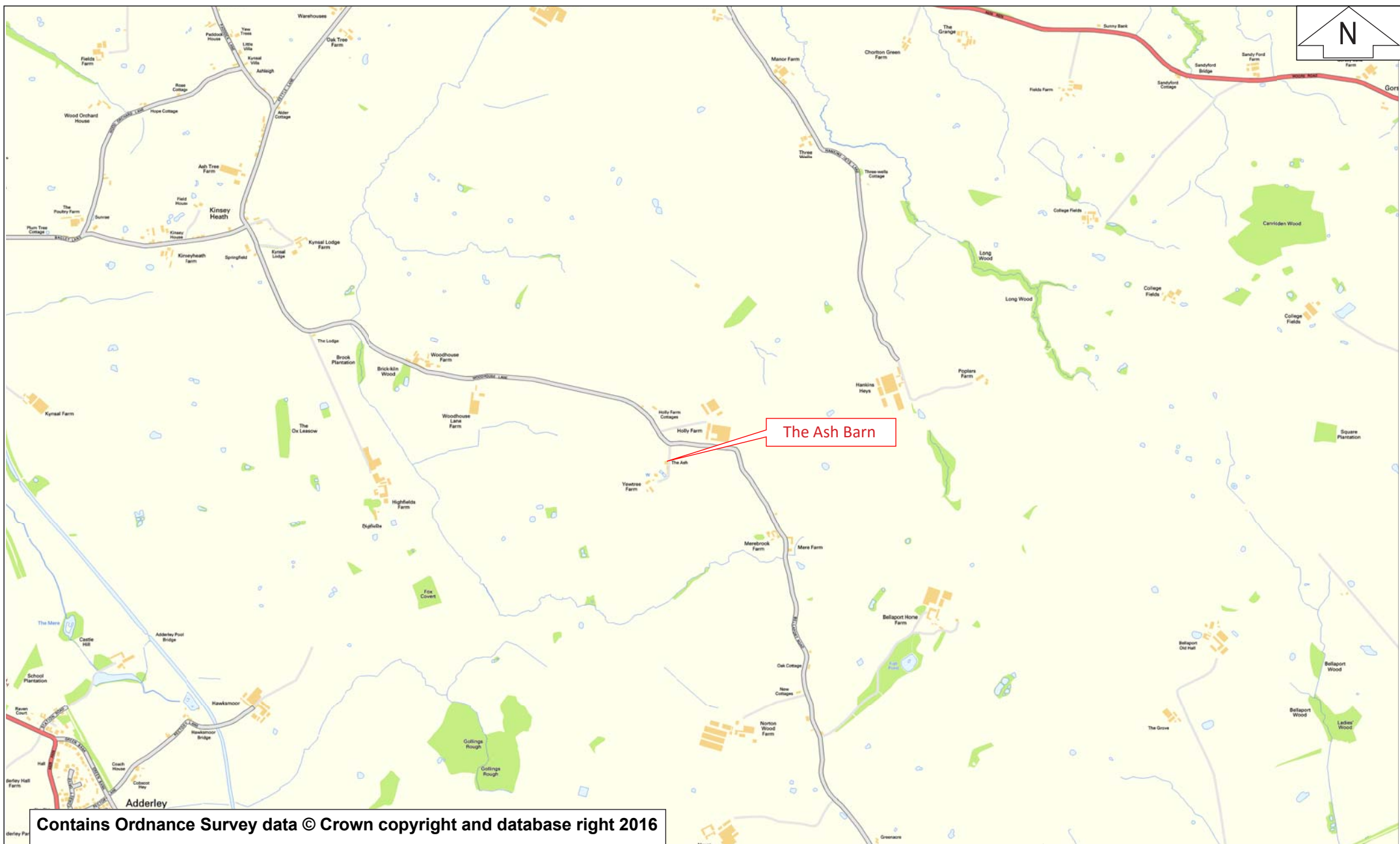
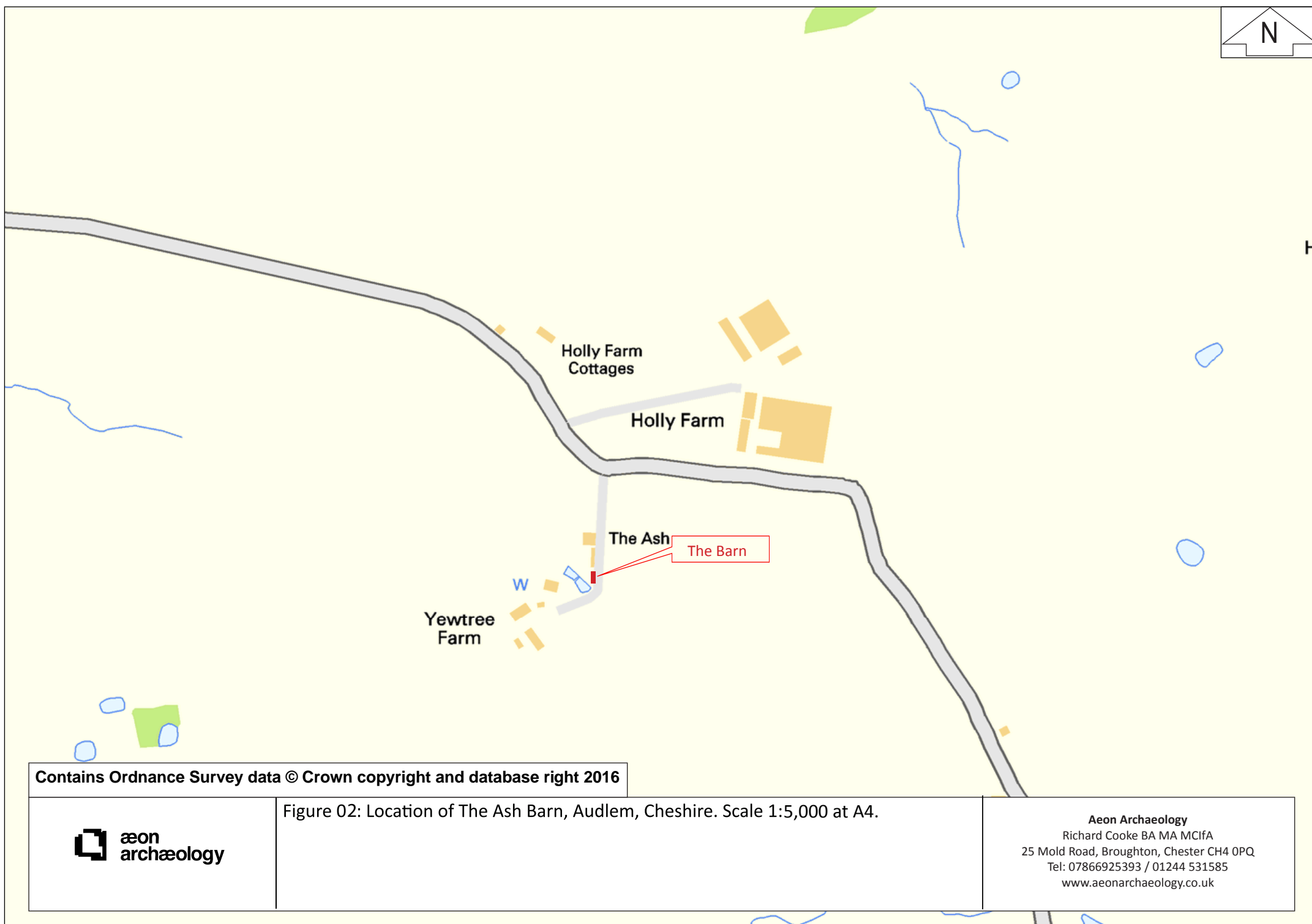


Figure 01: Location of The Ash Barn, Audlem, Cheshire. Scale 1:20,000 at A4.



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2.0 REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Building Record

The requirements were for an archaeological building record of the farm building at Ash Barn to be conducted prior to the alteration and refurbishment work, however should observations or desk-based research suggest the potential for significant features to be encountered during the renovation and site clearance/ground work, the archaeological contractor should make arrangements to undertake any appropriate supplementary recording work during the development. The Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service has requested that the building record be roughly commensurate with the English Heritage '*Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*' (2006) **Level 2**.

Both the exterior and the interior was viewed, described and photographed. The record presented conclusions regarding the building's development and use, but did not discuss in detail the evidence on which these conclusions are based.

The detailed photographic record consisted of English Heritage '*Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*' (2006) elements:

- written account: 1-3, 6
- drawings: sometimes 1, or more of 2-7
- photographs: 1,2,4

3.0 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 Level 2 Record

3.1.1 Written Account

The written account included:

- The building's precise location as a National Grid Reference and address form;
- A note of any statutory designation and non-statutory designation;
- The date of the record, name(s) of the recorder(s) and archive location;
- A summary of the building's form, function, date, and sequence of development.

3.1.2 Photographs

The photographic record included:

- A general view or views of the building;
- The building's external appearance. Typically a series of oblique views will show all external elevations of the building and give an impression of its size and shape;
- The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas.

A Digital SLR (Canon 550D) set to maximum resolution was used throughout.

3.1.3 Drawings

The drawn record included:

- A site plan showing the location and orientation of photographs. This will label all room spaces and indicate any architectural features of note.

3.2 Processing data, illustration, report and archiving

Following completion of the record as outlined above, this report was produced (job number A0096.1) which incorporates the following:

- A copy of the design brief and agreed specification
- A site location plan
- A plan illustrating the location and direction of photographs
- Basic background and relevant historical, descriptive or analytical detail
- A full bibliography of sources consulted
- Illustrations, including plans and photographs, will be incorporated within the report.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RECORD

The barn proposed for conversion is absent from the 1844 Tithe Map for Buerton, but is depicted on the 1st Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey of 1875, and therefore dates to sometime around the middle of the 19th century. The period 1750-1880 has been recognised as the most important period of farm building development in England (Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement – North West region, English Heritage 2006, p. 6); the Council for British Archaeology's '*An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 2, Research Agenda and Strategy*' (Brennand 2007) has indicated that farm buildings are "an important historical research resource" (p. 140), that "there is an urgent need for all local authorities to ensure that farm buildings undergoing adaptation are at least considered for recording" so that "a regional database of farm buildings can be derived and variations across the region examined." (ibid.)

5.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

5.1 External description of Ash Barn (plates 1-4)

The Barn is located southeast of the village of Audlem, East Cheshire (centred on **NGR SJ 04429 43709**) and will be referred to as the barn throughout this section of the report. The building is a two-storey rectangular structure orientated north to south; along which axis it measures 11.10 m by 4.20 m east to west. It has a dual-pitch roof comprising of 'nibbed' roof ceramic tiles hooked over wooden battens and walls of red-brick bonded by mortar. These brick walls have seen various phases of repair often utilising different brick and mortar types as will be discussed below.

Western elevation

The barn's roof is comprised of ceramic 'nibbed' roof tiles with red ridge tiles running across its spine. Directly below the eaves of the roof, pine purlins support the roof's wooden structure and also visible are some of the battens that the tiles hook onto. At the extreme southern end of the building there is a modern plastic downpipe finished by a traditional cast iron hopper head. The roof of the structure sits upon a reasonably substantial pine purlin along three quarters building's length from the south, and on a smaller purlin towards the northern end.

From the left end of the elevation the original brickwork demonstrates an 'English Cross' pattern. There is a window located approximately 1.70 m from the left corner and 1.30 m up from ground level. The window is approximately 0.90 m square, single glazed with lead window comes. The exterior window sill is formed from dark red tile.

Immediately to the right of this window there is a wooden framed door with original door jambs; on the left half of the frame is a barrel bolt lock receiver and simple pin lock with a chain. On the right half of the frame the original hinges are visible where a door would have initially been fitted onto the outside of the frame. The door's construction is of heavily reinforced plank and battered design which opens inwards on hinges from the interior of the frame at the left hand end.

Above the door frame the brickwork changes to allow for ventilation slots demonstrating bricks on-end design; these slots are arranged in four banks of nine north to south separated by a single brick separator (the lowest bank is of seven ventilation slots), each of these banks are separated by three courses of bricks. The bricks appeared to be more weathered at this location. Also visible on this section of the western elevation are two metal grates, presumably also for ventilation. To the right of door mentioned earlier the brick type changes to a darker variety. Also 0.70 m up from ground level at this point two distinct courses of bricks are visible demonstrating a header design, or perhaps they were coping on end bricks reflecting an earlier wall level. Approximately 1.50 m to the south from the door and 1.60 m up from ground level is a small single-glazed window with a wooden frame 0.84 m tall by 0.64 m wide.

The southern portion of the western elevation is slightly different in terms of brickwork from the northern portion; it is composed of a darker fabric of brick in the central part to southern area of the elevation before becoming a lighter orange in the upper right corner; these probably represent a later phases in reconstruction. There is a distinct 'gap' running parallel with the window frame demonstrating the presence of an earlier brick pillar (0.48m width) another potential pillar is also visible at the southern end of the building, this is also made visible by a distinct 'gap' in the brickwork. Therefore the remaining brickwork on the western elevation appears to be an attempt at "bricking-up" in between the pillars clearly making it a later phase than the pillars. Into this phase of building a modern doorframe has been inserted

into the wall with a brick arch possibly installed above the door to act as a lintel supporting the brickwork above. The modern door jambs are supported by square cut stones with an end-on course of darker bricks forming the step-up into the barn at this point. Furthermore an exterior metal frame has been fixed to the brick wall here in order to support a modern metal security door. This metal door covers the door frame and brick arch when closed and measures 2.40 m in height and 1.50 m in width.

Immediately to the south of this modern door is another metal venting grate and just prior to the gable end is another small wooden framed window, dual-paned with a dark quarter brick window sill measuring 0.90 m in height by 0.60 m in width. Above the metal security door and also within this 'bricked-up' phase two banks of two ventilation slots are visible. These banks of ventilation slots are separated by a dilapidated wooden latched door with decorative cast iron hinges.

Exterior northern Gable

Emanating from through the gable end brick-work are the ends of the roof purlins which are finished rather decoratively with a crescent cut. All the brickwork on the open northern gable end is of a uniform 'English cross' pattern. The upper portion of the gable is dominated by a large wooden door with wooden door jams surmounted by a single course of bricks (bricks on-end coping) and single cut-off rafter, the saddle of the door demarked by a wooden threshold. Slightly offset to the west below the central door is a lower entrance door also of wooden construction but with a sandstone threshold.

Exterior eastern elevation

From the southern end a door hatch is visible that matches the one directly opposite on the western elevation, it is quite dilapidated with a cast iron latch on the door and the same decorative set of cast iron hinges found on the western example. In the center of the elevation is an opening with no door, which is of the same dimensions as the other door. This is surrounded by ventilation slots mirroring the opposing elevation but the layout is different due to the presence of the opening; there are seven banks of three slots located on either side of the opening. Furthermore there appears to be a distinct area of repair or rebuilding in the central area containing the opening with ventilation slots; approximately a 3.40m long section of wall near the top of the building appears to have been rebuilt at some point.

From the north the brickwork once more conforms to the pattern seen on the northern gable and appears to be uniform and bonded by mortar. At approximately 3.20 m from the north the brickwork changes on the lower section of the building; with a two course 'bricks on end coping' once more visible 1.10m from ground level, this is reminiscent of the same pattern found on the western elevation. At the southern end the brick pillars are once again discernible with a phase of 'bricking up' once again evidenced by large gaps in the brickwork. In the upper portion of brickwork in this area there appears to be a distinctly different brick and mortar combination used; bricks appear lighter and more orange with rounded pebble inclusions prevalent both within the mortar and the bricks themselves.

Exterior Southern gable

Decorative purlin ends are visible emanating from above the brick piers that are prominent on this gable; once more they are cut into a crescent shape and some of the pine roof truss behind some cladding (discussed later in section) is made visible due to a poor state of repair. Two brick pillars measuring 0.48 m in width dominate this elevation. It is possible that these pillars are the same phase as the first nine courses of bricks from ground level due to a similar brick and mortar combination. Upon these brick courses sits a single course of header 'bricks on-end coping' reflecting the potential for a low wall on three elevations of the barn at the

southern end. There is distinctly different method of brickwork in existence between the pillars above this coping or line of header bricks; fourteen courses of bricks arranged in a familiar pattern before another single course of bricks on-end coping, perhaps an extension to the southern wall. Above which sits the same lighter orange bricks with rounded pebble inclusions found on the eastern elevation, suggesting perhaps the brickwork on the southern gable end and eastern elevation took place at the same time. Pine cladding covers the upper portion of the gable wall, these planks run vertically from the eaves of the roof to the beginning of the brickwork. One of these boards has some hinges attached to it suggesting it has been reused as cladding from elsewhere.

5.2 Internal description of Ash Barn (plates 5 - 12)

Ground floor

Store 1

The ceiling joists are visible in this room supporting the planked floor above; the joists are unpainted and are made of pine. Along the northern elevation towards its western extent there is a plank and battened door with a wooden lintel supporting the brickwork above. The southern elevation is of painted white brick. The eastern elevation and southern elevation are also painted white brick. The western elevation has a single glazed window with lead comes towards its southern extent which stands approximately 1.0 m from the floor. The floor appears to have been cast from concrete and is currently used as a storage space or workshop. The room measures 3.80 m north to south and 3.60 m east to west.

Store 2

The ceiling joists are visible and support a white-painted plank floor above the northern elevation is a brick wall painted white as is the eastern elevation. Two slots of missing bricks in the eastern elevation close to the ceiling reveal a double skin brick wall beneath. The southern elevation is also of white-painted brick and at each end brick pillars project into the room space. The western elevation contains a window at the southern end with an ornate grate just to the north of this window. The northernmost part of the room is dominated by the doorframe. The floor is undulating and made of a darker brick laid in a herringbone style. The room measures 3.75 m north to south and 3.80 m east to west.

Store 3

The ceiling joists are visible and painted white, with the plank floor visible above. A cross brace configuration of thin battens is located between the joists, aligned along the central east-west axis of room. The northern elevation is a brick wall painted white with this paint starting to peel away in many places.

The eastern elevation is of white-painted with two slots visible towards the ceiling once more revealing the double skin wall construction. In the southeast corner the pillar is visible; however there appears to have been a major repair carried out using an extremely dark mortar. Furthermore along this wall there is iron railings attached to the wall via metal clips and it runs the length of the room north to south. There is also a metal ring attached to the wall with a chain at the southern extent. The southern elevation is once more painted white; the paint is heavily damaged and flaking. A metal feeding basket hangs from rafters at the western end of the elevation, close to the ceiling and directly below this is an asbestos sink. Along the western extent of the southern elevation the brick wall is not keyed in with the pillar masonry so that daylight is clearly visible. On the western elevation the brick wall is once again painted white this time with a window visible at the southern end with two metal bars running

vertically on the inside of the frame. The northern portion of the western elevation is dominated by a door frame with wooden lintel. The room measures 3.75 m north to south and 3.80 m east to west.

First Floor

Northern room

The ceiling is dual pitched with a central rafter and two purlins that run from north to south along the length of the building. The central rafter runs through a brick partition wall upon which ventilation slots are visible. Three ventilation slots are visible on the eastern and western elevations respectively; located one third of the way down from the top of the walls. Slots are also visible on the southern partition wall and are positioned roughly along the middle of the wall but are more likely to have been used for ceiling joists rather than ventilation. Two wooden supports set into the brickwork are visible at the base of the purlins as they pass through the partition wall. The floor comprises of wooden planks running east to west. The room measures 3.80 m north to south and 3.60 m east to west.

Southern room - Hayloft

Two roof purlins are visible either side of the room supporting rafters and roof battens; the western and eastern elevations support a dual pitched roof via a substantial pine purlin. When looking into the roof space the 'nibbed' roof tiles are evident hanging from the battens. There are two king-post roof trusses visible in the hayloft; one situated within the southern gable and another roughly halfway along the room sitting on top of the northernmost pillars. The northern elevation is the partition wall that separates the smaller northern room from the longer hayloft. The eastern and western elevations mirror each other in terms of where the ventilation slots are located and also where the two hatches at the southern end are situated. One difference however is on the eastern elevation (at the northern end) where there is an additional access hatch situated in between the two banks of ventilation slots; it measures 1.10 m in height by 0.60 m in width. Pillars are once again visible on the southern elevation as is the daylight on the western side. A wooden floor made of planks runs east to west all the way across the room. A wooden access hatch is situated along the western elevation near to the northernmost pillars. Furthermore the pillars project into the room by one course of bricks and the roof trusses sit on top of these. The room measures 3.80 m north to south and 7.65 m east to west.

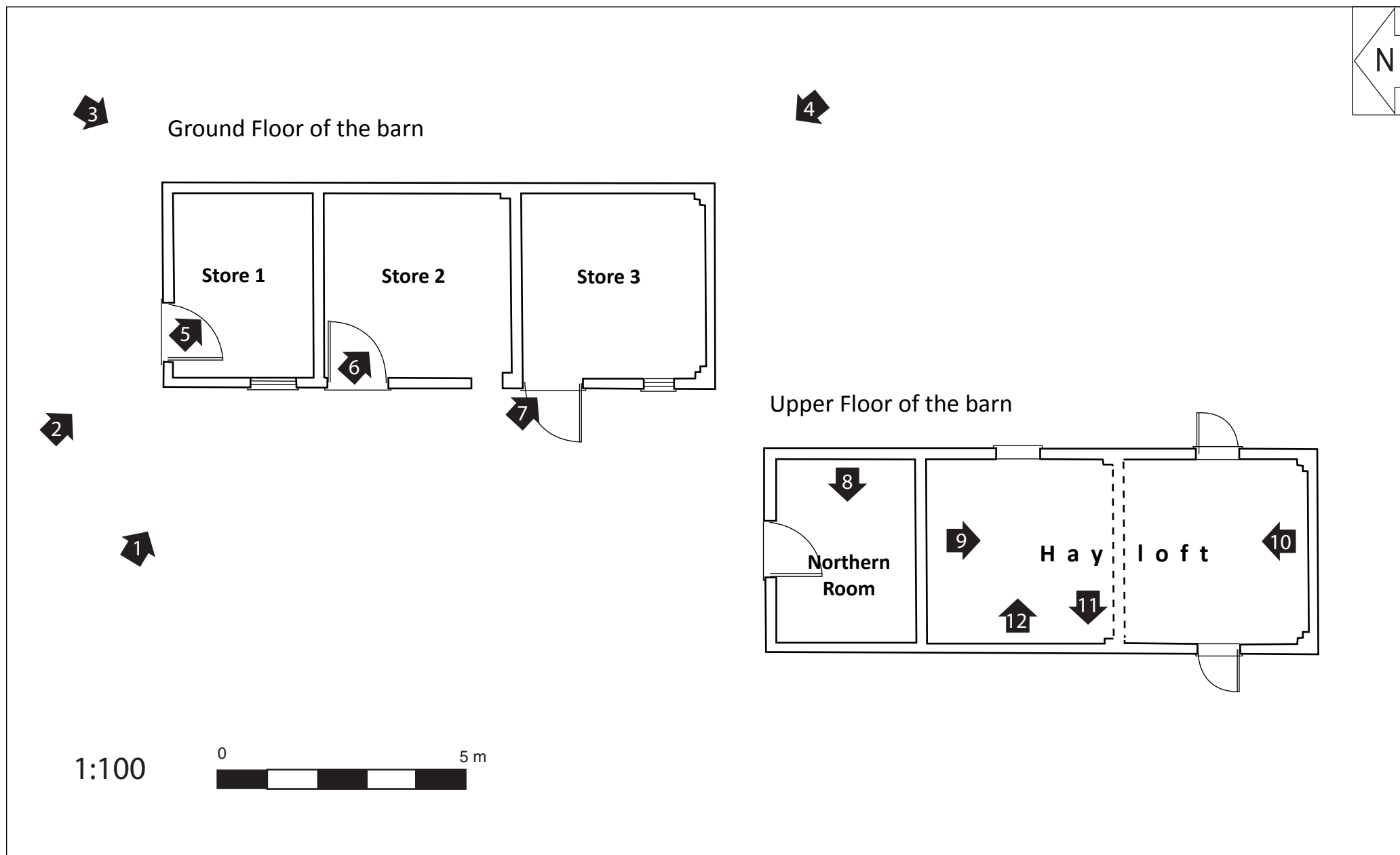


Figure 03. Building plan showing direction of photographs Ash Barn, Audlem



Plate 01: Western elevation showing windows and doors - from Northwest - Scale 1m



Plate 02: Northern gable showing upper door and workshop entrance - from Northwest - Scale 1m



Plate 03: Eastern elevation showing hatches and ventilation slots - from Northeast - Scale 1m



Plate 04: Southern gable showing piers and weather boards - from Southeast - Scale 1m



Plate 05: Northern room, ground level - from Northwest - Scale 1m

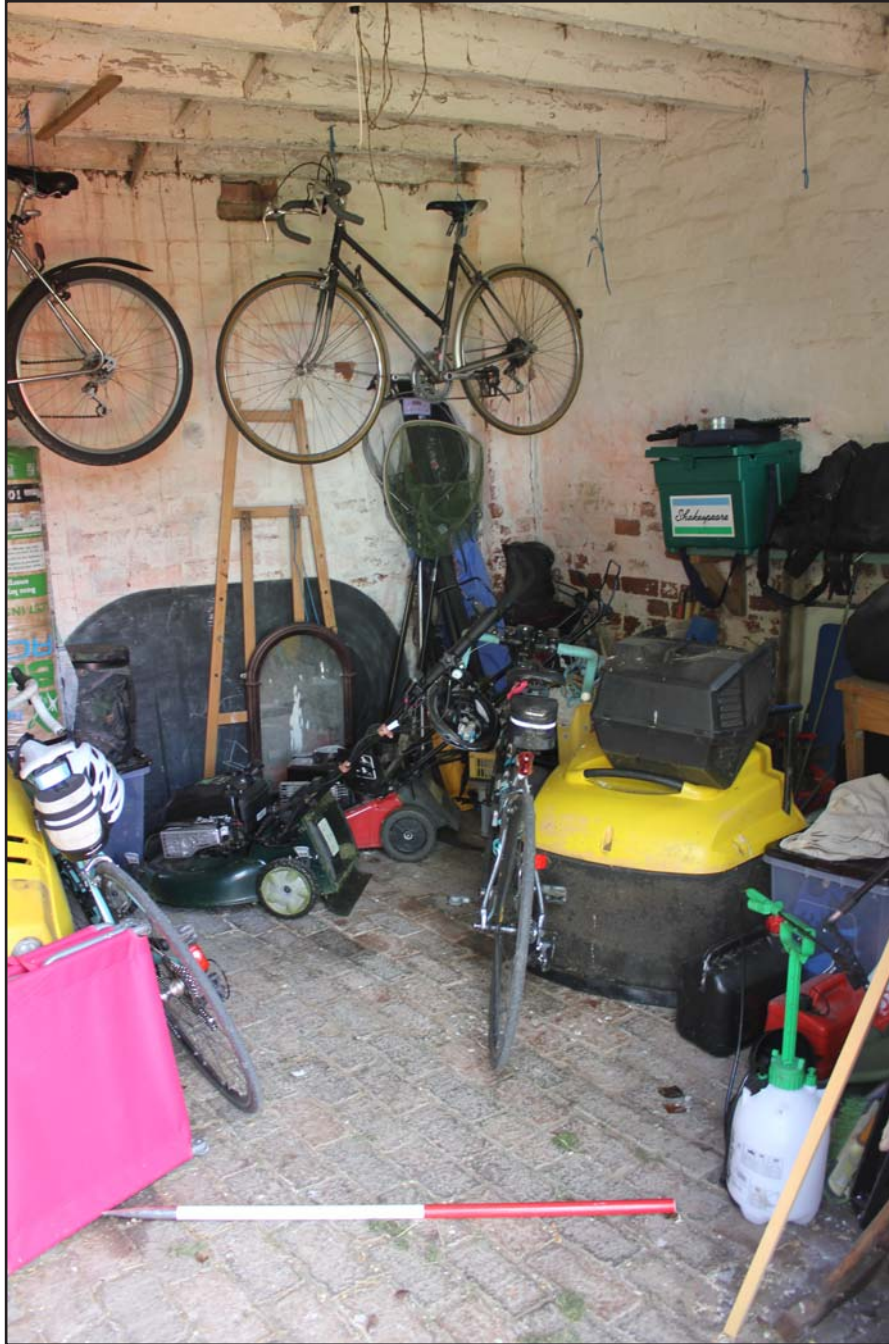


Plate 06: Central room, ground level - from Northwest - Scale 1m



Plate 07: Southern room, ground level - from Southwest - Scale 1m



Plate 08: Northern Room, upper level, western elevation - from East - Scale 1m



Plate 09: Hayloft showing southern gable and roof trusses - from North - Scale 1m



Plate 10: Hayloft showing northern partition wall and roof trusses - from South - Scale 1m



Plate 11: Wooden hatch leading to central room on ground floor - from East - Scale 1m



Plate 12: Eastern elevation of hayloft showing ventilation slots, access hatch and roof batons - From West - Scale 1m

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Council for British Archaeology's *'An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 2, Research Agenda and Strategy'* (Brennand 2007) has specified that farm buildings are "an important historical research resource" (p. 140), and that "there is an urgent need for all local authorities to ensure that farm buildings undergoing adaptation are at least considered for recording" so that "a regional database of farm buildings can be derived and variations across the region examined." (ibid.). The level 2 Historic Building Record has been undertaken in response to and further investigation of, this regional research framework.

The building is a long narrow barn with a hayloft on the upper floor and a series of storage rooms on the ground floor. It is constructed from redbrick bonded by mortar that originally had its southern portion open with four piers also constructed of brick, supporting a dual pitched 'nibbed' tile roof. The roof is supported by pine roof trusses and pine purlins which sit directly upon a double skinned brick wall. The northern portion of the building exhibits uniform patterned brickwork with analogous brick types and a regular mortar; however there is some evidence of rebuilding work particularly on the eastern elevation.

There was a later phase of "bricking-up" that took place in the southern portion of the building as evidenced by some poor joint work within the piers. Furthermore entirely different light-orange brick types and a rough lime mortar with stony inclusions have been used to build up this second phase of walling on three elevations (East, West & South). There is also the suggestion of a low wall having been present between the piers (directly below the light orange bricks); this is demonstrated by a course of header bricks or 'bricks-on-end coping' visible in the fabric of the building on the same three exterior elevations. There are ventilation slots situated around the top of the building and these are a common feature of haylofts; it must be noted that brick damage and 'blown out' mortar is more prevalent around these slots than elsewhere on the building. The interior of the building is much altered on the ground floor with white painted walls and a cast concrete floor in the northern room; although in the southern room there is the remnant of some metalwork and a feed basket that may allude to a previous use as a byre.

The barn is absent from the 1844 Tithe Map for Buerton, but is depicted on the 1st Edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey of 1875, and therefore dates to sometime around the middle of the 19th century. The barn is of local importance as it is a well preserved example of mid-19th century half pier barn with a hayloft and was therefore preserved via record prior to the commencement of renovation and alteration.

The historic building record can be seen as having fulfilled the spirit and intent of the archaeological condition and as such it is recommended that the condition now be discharged.

7.0 SOURCES

OS Maps

OS 1:10 000 Series sheet SJ 64 SE

Historic Environment Record online gateway

English Heritage: Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice

(2006) Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014: Standard and Guidance for the

Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures

British Geological Survey website. www.bgs.ac.uk

