

West Middleton Farm  
Hutton Magna, County Durham

Historic Building Recording  
Listed Building Consent: DM/21/00289/LB



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## Historic Building Recording

Listed Building Consent: DM/21/00289/LB

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Solstice Heritage was commissioned by Emma and Toby Heywood to provide a thorough record of the built heritage resource, to Historic England Level 2 standard, prior to a scheme of redevelopment at West Middleton Farm, Hutton Magna, County Durham.*

*The historic building recording of the farm buildings at West Middleton Farm has provided a documentary record of the buildings, which has been analysed through this study. It can be seen from the study of the structural evidence carried out as part of this study that each of the buildings has developed over time, as well as experiencing innumerable smaller individual alterations. The building recording exercise was focussed on a range of farm buildings including a central, large, north-south oriented barn, and an attached wheelhouse and lean-to, both of which lay to the west of the main barn range. All of the building elements are Grade II listed (NHLE 1121662), including those attached outbuildings to the eastern side of the barn, which were not part of the scope of this study.*

*The wheelhouse to the north-west of the main barn has been shown to have been constructed between 1841 and 1857, perhaps as part of a modernisation and improvement of the farm undertaken by its owner, Cuthbert Watson Esq. of Ovington, the land agent to the Wycliffe Estate. Although no machinery or historic roofstructure survives within this part of the building, its proportions, as well as its spatial relationship to the main barn, illustrate that it was created to house a horse gin, a horse-worked engine for powering a threshing machine, which would have been situated in the northern end of the main barn. Changes to the main barn seem likely to have accompanied the addition of the wheelhouse. These seem likely to have included the addition of the forking hole/loading door in the barn's northern elevation, which is appropriately placed to feed a raised threshing machine on a mezzanine platform at the northern end of the barn. Further to this, the alterations to the northern extent of the barn's west wall included a small window created from an earlier breather, as well as at least one cut-out for the shaft from the horse gin to travel through and provide power to the threshing machine itself. Within the barn's eastern wall, it seems likely that the forking hole to the foldyard beyond would also have been created at this time, based on its similarity to that observed in the barn's northern elevation. No clear evidence for the raised threshing platform, which would have hosted the threshing machine, was observed in the barn, although the state of the walls and the floor made the identification of small sockets, where latterly infilled, difficult. Nonetheless, such a raised platform must have existed.*

*The lean-to addition at the southern end of the barn's western elevation, also constructed between 1841 and 1857, seems to have been added to an existing byre, and may represent a small additional stall or loose box, although it may best be interpreted as a store for feed.*

*The main barn at West Middleton Farm is clearly the building with the highest level of significance examined during this study. The stone construction of the earliest phase of the barn clearly pre-dates 1828 and seems likely to be early to mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century in date. It seems less likely that the stone construction of the barn is 17<sup>th</sup>-century, which is stated as a possibility by the listing description. With that said, the complex and mismatched roofstructure, which incorporates two different types of raised cruck truss and a thickened raised collar truss intended to work with the earlier trusses but using a later truss design, suggests that the building could be a rebuild of an earlier timber-framed barn. Alternatively, the barn could be re-using timber components from an earlier timber-framed barn, or indeed more than one, for which a tradition exists within the region.*

*The barn itself can be seen to have been originally conceived as a partly storeyed combination barn, with multiple uses included within the one agricultural 'factory'. At its southern end, the barn originally incorporated a byre, above which was fully conceived accommodation for farmhands, with a living area including a central fireplace with niches, or saltboxes, to either side. Above this again was a sleeping area or bedroom located within the roofspace and accommodated by an unusual raised-collar truss. Within the main body of the barn, the cart entry and wider doorway, before they were latterly reduced in size, suggest the barn was used for hand threshing, with the wide doorway representing a 'winnowing door'. Following the introduction of powered threshing between 1841 and 1857, this arrangement of a cart entry and accompanying winnowing door would have become unnecessary, and it would seem most likely that the reduction in size of both openings to more standard doorway dimensions would also have accompanied the introduction of the horse gin.*

*The changes made to the barn over time, principally related to the introduction of a horse-gin to mechanise the threshing process, are reflective of common trends linked to wider changes in agriculture in the 'High Farming' years after 1840. At this time, a greater impetus for owners to invest in new farm buildings and greater levels of mechanisation is reflected at West Middleton in the construction of almost all of the other agricultural buildings present aside from the core of the barn itself.*

*West Middleton also provides an interesting case study in the importance of the land agent profession in the history of agriculture. Unusually in this case, the farm was owned directly by a land agent throughout the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence of this ownership it seems to have directly benefitted from forward-thinking investment and proactive management throughout this time, resulting in a well-planned, small farmstead of this period, which survives much intact today. With that said, the size and date of the farmhouse and barn at West Middleton suggests an older and more complex origin for the farm. The relative grandeur of the farmhouse, and the level of investment required to build a barn of the scale present here suggests that the farm may have been developed and owned by a yeoman farmer, or even as part of a manorial farm, from at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps earlier.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This Historic Building Recording (HBR) has been prepared by Solstice Heritage LLP on behalf of Emma and Toby Heywood to provide a thorough record of the built heritage resource at West Middleton Farm, Hutton Magna. The historic building recording was requested by Durham County Council as a condition (Number 7) of Listed Building Consent (reference DM/21/00289/LB) for the change of use and conversion of a former agricultural barn to a dwelling, part demolition of an adjoining shed and erection of a new agricultural storage barn.

### 1.2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The proposed development site is situated at West Middleton Farm, north of the village of Hutton Magna, County Durham (NGR NZ 12958 12775). The site comprises a barn which is probably late 17<sup>th</sup>- or early 18<sup>th</sup>-century in date, together with farm buildings dating to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ferguson 2021). The barn and attached farm buildings are Grade II listed (NHLE 1121662). The listing description is reproduced below:

*NZ 11 SW WYCLIFFE WITH THORPE WEST MIDDLETON 7/196 Barn and attached farm buildings to 6.8.87 north of West Middleton Farmhouse GV II*

*Barn probably late C17 or early C18; farm buildings early C19. Coursed rubble with roughly-shaped quoins; C19 parts have tooled quoins and dressings; graduated stone slate roofs except for C20 asbestos sheets on wheelhouse. Barn with lower ranges to east enclosing foldyard; and wheel-house on west.*

*Elevations to foldyard: Barn has stable door in blocked former cart entrance with timber lintel; small barred window to right and slatted window above left. Coped gables. South range is a 3-bay shelter shed with part-blocked segmental arcade. North range in 2 sections: left part has 2 stable doors and one boarded door, with timber lintels; right part, set back behind C20 shed, shows 2 segmental arches with boarded door to right.*

*End walls of barn show boarded windows in gables; stable door in south end. Wheel-house has cart entrance under timber lintel on south.*

*Interior: Barn has storeyed south end; 1st-floor joists carried by transverse stop-chamfered beam; upper room has small fireplace. Main part of barn has 4-bay roof with raised cruck trusses, the central and southern trusses with blades rising only to the collar. Two levels of purlins carried on extended tie and collar; no ridge piece.*

*Listing NGR: NZ1295812775.*

First listed in 1987, the building remains broadly as outlined within the listing description.



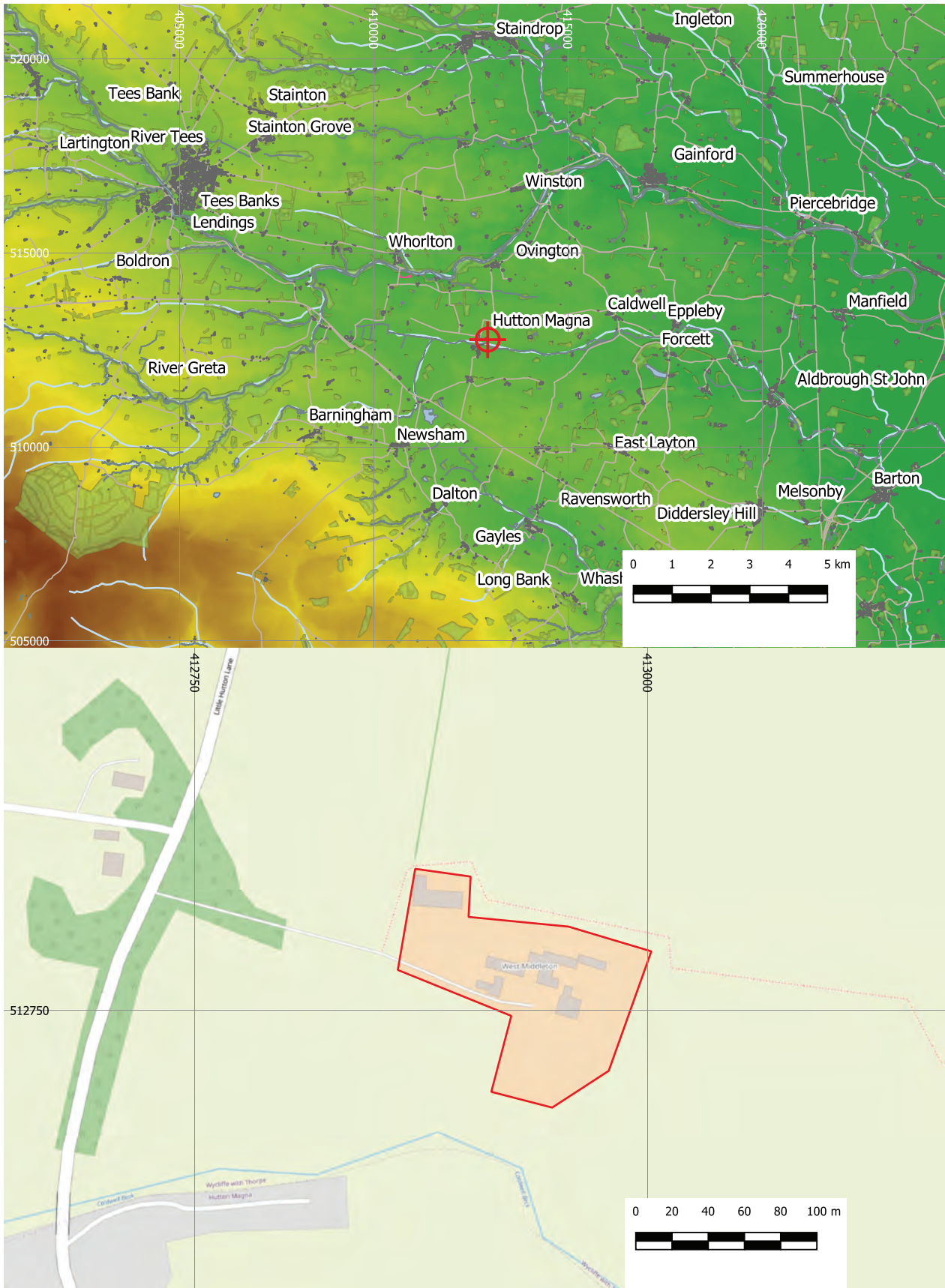


Figure 1 Site location

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 BUILDING RECORDING

An historic building survey to a minimum of Historic England Level 2 standard (Historic England 2016) was carried out by Chris Scott MCIFA and Nathan Berry ACIFA in March 2022. This level of survey provides an analytical record including a descriptive account of the buildings, together with a systematic account of their origins, development and use. The survey consisted of a written, drawn (measured) and photographic account involving the following:

- The written record comprised: the precise location of the building together with any statutory and non-statutory designations; the date of the survey and the location of the archive; a descriptive account of the form, function and phasing of the building based upon a detailed, room-by-room/elevation-by-elevation description. This element of the work will also identify all features, fixtures and fittings relevant to the original and subsequent uses of the site as well as the building's form, function, date, and sequence of development. It will also include a discussion of the building's past and present relationship to its setting as well as a discussion of the historical context of the building in terms of its origin, purpose, form, construction, design, materials, status or historical associations.
- The drawn comprised: measured plans of each of the floors, together with drawings of the principal elevations. Existing plans and elevations will be adapted and added to where necessary, and their accuracy will be checked by means of measured survey on site. The plans will show the form and location of features such as blocked windows and doors, and evidence for fixtures of significance. Phased drawings showing successive phases of the building's development will also be included. These will accurately show the building's structural development using a coloured key.
- The photographic comprised: photographs of the building's wider aspect together with detailed views of the external appearance of the building. These are normally oblique, but right-angle photographs of elevations containing complex detail will also be taken. The overall appearance of internal rooms and circulation areas will also be captured, together with detailed views of features of significance, as well as any machinery or other plant, including evidence for its former existence. Any dates or other inscriptions as well as any building contents which have a significance bearing on the building's history will also be photographed and, where necessary, transcribed. The photographic archive will consist of digital colour photography. All photographs will contain a graduated photographic scale appropriate to the feature being photographed, where possible. A photographic register detailing (as a minimum) location and direction of each shot will also be compiled.

### 3. RESULTS OF THE HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

The results of the photographic survey are presented with exterior elevations described first, followed by interior rooms. This account identifies all features, fixtures and fittings relevant to the original and subsequent uses of the site. Phased construction plans, derived from architect's plans, have also been produced and are included with elevations in Appendix 1.

#### 3.1 WEST MIDDLETON FARM

The buildings to be recorded as part of this exercise consist of a central, stone-built, north-south aligned barn range with two principal offshoot extensions at its western side, both of which are included within the scope of works for this recording exercise. The barn has two further historic agricultural outbuildings attached to its eastern side, which are both excluded from this work.

#### 3.2 EXTERNAL ELEVATIONS

##### 3.2.1 EXTERNAL SOUTH-FACING ELEVATION

The external south-facing elevation of the principal barn range consists of a gable end elevation (Figure 2). This two-storey elevation is constructed of roughly coursed, rubble sandstone masonry and includes a wide original doorway with drawbar socket, stone lintel and threshold at the centre of the ground floor. Raised above the ground floor, but not fully to the height of the barn's first floor, is a blocked doorway, located to the west of the existing central door and presumably accessed when in use by a wooden external stair which has since been removed. Above the blocked door, within the gable, is a small original window. At the western side of the barn gable is a latterly attached lean-to, also in stone. The join between the two phases of work is marked by a clear construction break. The lean-to includes rough, tooled quoining and a stone water table, along with an original breather at its centre, suggesting the interior space was created for livestock use. The barn includes another latterly attached, single-storey farm building at its eastern side, which was not included within the scope of this study.

##### 3.2.2 EXTERNAL WEST-FACING ELEVATION

The external west facing elevation of the barn includes the added lean-to described as part of the south elevation and the wheel-house added at the barn's north-western side. At the elevation's southern extent, a first-floor window can be seen to have been



Figure 2 South-facing elevation of barn, facing north-east. Scale 1x2 m

inserted (Figure 3). Beneath this inserted window is the stone slated lean-to roof, which includes stone water tables at either end. The western elevation of the lean-to is built of roughly coursed stone rubble walling and is featureless. The north elevation of the lean-to includes an original window with a timber lintel and timber casement frame. To the north side of the lean-to is an inserted window, which has been made from the smaller opening of an original breather through the insertion of a timber lintel and the removal of masonry to the south side of the breather to increase the size of the opening (Figure 4). Beyond the window, further to the north and just before the south facing elevation of the wheelhouse, a vertical construction break is visible, illustrating the position of the original reveal of a wide doorway at the centre of the main barn range at this side. As with the central cart entry within the east elevation of the barn, this doorway has been reduced in size by the addition of inserted infill stonework at its southern side. The southern wall of the wheelhouse has then, latterly, been constructed against this blocking forming a clear constructional sequence. The southern wall of the wheelhouse itself includes a central cart entry, which may have been widened at its eastern side from an earlier, original, narrower opening, although this is uncertain (Figure 5). Over the opening is a large timber lintel, which seems to be a reused structural timber. At the eastern end of this elevation is an original door opening with a stone lintel which has been latterly blocked. At the western end of the elevation, a set of original tooled quoins are present.

The gabled west facing elevation of the wheelhouse includes a further blocked doorway at its southern extent (Figure 6). The doorway itself may have been made from an original window, as the quoins on both sides only extend halfway down its height. It is possible that this lower quoining was robbed when the doorway was blocked, although this seems highly unlikely. Surviving pintles, and the blocking itself, illustrate that this opening was in use as a doorway before being blocked, but the original quoining clearly suggests it began life as a window opening. To the north of this opening, an area of refacing seems to be present, which is obscuring the remains of a blocked window noted internally. Given that no tooled quoins are present within the refacing, it is possible that this window was inserted before being blocked, or that its quoins were removed when this section of wall was refaced.

Both pitches of the wheelhouse roof are covered with modern replacement asbestos sheeting, with no clear evidence of the original roof covering present. The roof of the main barn, as with its east facing elevation is covered in stone slates with stone ridge tiles and water tables.

### 3.2.3 EXTERNAL NORTH-FACING ELEVATION

The external north-facing elevation of the principal barn range consists of a gable end elevation (Figure 7). This single-storey elevation, at the uphill end of the barn, is constructed in roughly coursed rubble stonework and includes a central, inserted forking/loading door at its centre. Above the forking door is a stone water table. No other features are present. The roof of the latterly attached gin wheelhouse is visible to the west of the barn's gable, but the sunken level of the building means that no external stonework of the wheelhouse's northern side is visible.

### 3.2.4 EXTERNAL EAST-FACING ELEVATION

The external east facing elevation of the barn range is partially covered at its northern and southern extents by later attached outbuildings which were not part of the scope of this study (Figure 8). This side elevation is constructed in roughly coursed rubble stonework, topped with stone slates and stone ridge tiles. Centrally within the elevation is an original cart entry with a timber lintel, which may be reused in this context. The cart entry has been latterly reduced in size at its southern and upper extents to create a smaller doorway, also with a timber lintel (Figure 9). To the north of the reworked doorway is a small forking hole which has been formed from an original breather slit, its southern side being extended out to form the larger opening. At the upper extent of the southern end of the elevation is an original window with a slatted timber frame and lintel. In each of the areas covered by the two adjoining buildings is a blocked breather, with a further blocked breather present just to the south of the partially infilled cart entry. This would have given an original arrangement of a central cart entry with two breathers to the north side and one to the south, and a window at the elevation's upper southern extent.

## 3.3 INTERNAL ROOMS – LOWER GROUND FLOOR

### 3.3.1 ROOM LG1

Room LG1 is located at the southern extent of the principal barn range and is accessed externally by a central doorway in its south wall. The doorway includes a timber lintel and a stable door, which is a modern replacement of an earlier door that would have been locked by an internal drawbar, and placed further forward in the reveal to clear the drawbar slot in the centre of the wall. The south wall has been whitewashed and is largely featureless aside from a recess at its upper western extent (Figure 10). The recess marks the location of a raised, blocked doorway noted externally in the building's south elevation and can be seen to straddle the existing floor level within this room (Figure 11). Examination of the central principal joist in this room shows that



Figure 3 Southern extent of west-facing elevation, facing north-east. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 4 Central section of west-facing elevation, facing south-east. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 5 South elevation of wheelhouse, facing north-east. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 6 Northern extent of west-facing elevation, facing south-east. No scale



Figure 7 North-facing gable elevation, facing south. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 8 East-facing elevation, facing west. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 9 Detail of centre of east-facing elevation. Scale 1x2 m

two angled sockets are cut into its southern face for the placement of staircase strings (Figure 12). Taken together, this evidence illustrates that the doorway gave access to a small internal raised landing within the south-west corner of the room, which then gave access to a short stair to Room F1 above, supported by two timber strings jointed into the existing floor joist. This whole construction, which may well have been original, has been subsequently removed. The presence of a relatively modern concrete machine base in this corner of the room may provide the answer to why it was removed. Given the size of the machine base it seems most likely that it would have been installed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century to host a cream separator or other dairying machine. The inserted concrete floor in this space, as well as the whitewashed walls, also suggests that this historic byre was latterly repurposed as a dairy.

The room's east wall includes an original doorway at its southern extent, within which is an historic vertical plank door of at least 19<sup>th</sup>-century construction (Figure 13). To the north side of the door is an original square wall niche, a common traditional feature within byres. Beyond the niche is a vertical roundwood timber post, bolted to the wall, which almost certainly represents the remains of a feed rack and stalling against the room's north wall. Below the post, at the base of the wall's northern extent is a small section of exposed bedrock, illustrating that the barn has been likely constructed with this lower ground floor through cutting a step into the bedrock itself.

The north wall itself is largely featureless, although some disturbance in the stonework at points may be evidence of the lost feed rack which would have been present here. The room's west wall includes an original doorway close to its southern extent (Figure 14). The doorway has latterly been narrowed from a wider opening by the insertion of infill stonework at its northern side. It is possible that this was done when the lean-to beyond (Room LG2) was added to the building between 1841 and 1857. To the north of the doorway, close to the wall's northern extent, is an upright stone post with an iron staple leaded into its eastern side. This would have been used for tethering animals in this context, and is further evidence that stalling and a feed rack would historically have been present at the room's northern side. It also further evidences an historic use as a byre. The room's ceiling is composed of the floorboards of Room F1 above, supported by two rows of stop-chamfered oak joists supported on a stop-chamfered oak principal joist extending from east to west. Some of the joists are later replacements, but most appear original to this construction. This floor seems likely to be 17<sup>th</sup>-century in date, with the lack of obvious disturbance around the ends of the principal joist suggesting it could be original to the barn's stone construction.



### 3.3.2 ROOM LG2

Room LG2 is contained within the western lean-to extension to the building, which historic mapping suggests was added between 1841 and 1857. The room could not be safely accessed at the time of survey but was viewed from outside through its collapsed roof. The room's south and west walls were featureless and constructed of roughly coursed rubble stonework. The north wall of the room contained an original window or forking hole opening with a timber frame and lintel (Figure 15). The room's east wall contains the doorway giving access to Room LG1 beyond (Figure 16). As described above, this original doorway has latterly been narrowed from a wider opening by the insertion of infill stonework at its northern side. It is possible this infill was added to further support the thin stone lintel above. No floor could be observed within the room and no ceiling or roof structure survived to be described.

## 3.4 INTERNAL ROOMS – GROUND FLOOR

### 3.4.1 ROOM G1

Room G1 lies within the wheelhouse extension to the western side of the principal barn range. The width of the room, as well as its spatial relationship to the main barn range evidence that it was built to incorporate a horse gin to power a threshing machine in the main barn, however, no part of the horse gin or threshing set survives within the buildings. The roof structure within this space, which would have connected to the horse gin itself, has also been latterly replaced.

The north wall of the room, which retains the raised ground behind it, is largely featureless aside from a central blocked doorway, which was not visible externally (Figure 17). The doorway presumably led to a sunken set of steps leading uphill to the north, which have subsequently been infilled. At the wall's eastern extent, a clear construction break is visible, illustrating the join between the earlier external wall of the barn, which forms this room's east wall, and the other three walls, which form the wheelhouse extension. The west wall of the room also includes a blocked door, at its southern extent (Figure 18). As noted externally, the nature of the stonework of the reveals at each side of this former opening suggests that this opening was an original window, before being extended into a door, and then finally blocked. Above the blocked opening are four large, empty joist holes, which presumably original located timbers that provided support for the frame of the horse gin. To the north of the blocked door is



Figure 10 South wall of Room LG1, facing south-east. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 11 Detail of blocked doorway in south-west corner of Room LG1, facing south-west. No scale



Figure 12 Detail of angled sockets for staircase strings in southern face of principal floor joist, facing north-west. No scale



Figure 13 East wall of Room LG1, facing south-east. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 14 West wall of Room LG1, facing west. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 15 North wall of Room LG2, facing north-east. No scale



Figure 16 East wall of Room LG2, facing south-east. No scale

a timber lintel and area of disturbed stonework which provides the evidence for the location of another blocked window. The room's south wall includes a large central cart entry, which appears to have been altered, presumably enlarged, at its eastern side (Figure 19). It is possible that this entry may have begun life as a relatively normally sized doorway. To the east of this cart entry, at the wall's eastern extent, is a blocked, original doorway, the blocking of which has been built against the infilling of the large doorway in the western wall of the main barn, illustrating that that infilling occurred first.

The east wall of Room G1 is formed by the earlier exterior west wall of the principal barn range (Figure 20). At its northern extent, this wall includes a small, square window which has been enlarged from an original breather. This seems most likely to have occurred after the wheelhouse was added, in order to provide a route of communication between the gin driver and the operator of the threshing machine it would have powered in the barn. Centrally within the wall, a number of infilled sockets are present, which illustrate the location of the shaft taking power to the threshing machine, as well as supporting framing timbers for the gin itself. At the southern extent of the wall is a doorway leading to Room G2 beyond. This wide doorway has been created from an even wider original opening into the main barn range, which has been reduced by the addition of infill stonework at its south side.

### 3.4.2 ROOM G2

Room G2 is the main space within the principal barn range. The room's north wall includes an inserted forking door close to the peak of its gable, which was noted externally (Figure 21). The doorway includes a sloping sill, indicating it was intended purely for loading. To the right of the inserted forking door a socket for a timber is present, although it is unclear as to what purpose this may have had, unless used as a putlog hole during the construction of the building. At the lower east extent of the wall, a large section of bedrock has been left in place, with the wall built over it, presumably illustrating that preparation for the construction of the barn involved digging a step into the hillside to create a flat platform.

The room's south wall includes an original doorway at its eastern extent, accessed by an original stone staircase, leading to Room F1 beyond (Figure 22). In front of this wall is a modern timber mezzanine platform which appears 20<sup>th</sup>-century in date. The wall is otherwise featureless.



Figure 17 Room G1, facing north. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 18 Room G1, west wall, facing north-west. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 19 South wall of Room G1, looking south. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 20 East wall of Room G1, facing east. Scale 1x2 m

The east wall of the room includes an original breather at its northern extent, which sits close to two further probable putlog holes (Figure 23). To the south of this is an inserted forking hole, noted externally, which has been made from the smaller original opening of a breather. The inserted forking hole has a sloping sill indicating it was only ever intended for this purpose. Above the forking hole is a further putlog hole, and to its southern side is a small, square, original niche. To the south of the small niche is the partially infilled former cart entry noted externally (Figure 24). This formerly larger opening has been infilled with stonework to lower it and to narrow it from its southern side, creating a smaller, relatively standard-size doorway. Beyond this opening are two further putlog holes and a blocked original breather. Against the lower part of the southern extent of the wall is the stone staircase to Room F1.

The west wall of the room includes an inserted window at its northern extent, created from the original opening of a breather (Figure 25). To the south of this is an area of patched stonework where the shaft transferring power from the horse gin in Room G1 would have passed through the wall. To the south again is the central doorway to Room G1 beyond (Figure 26). This doorway was originally larger and has been reduced in width by the addition of infill stonework at its south side. To the south of the doorway, a window has been inserted relatively recently to light the space beneath an inserted mezzanine platform at this end of the barn (Figure 27). The window appears to have been created using the original opening for a breather in this location.

The roof of this room retains considerable interest, although it was in a very poor state at the time of survey. Within the room there are three main trusses, carrying two rows of purlins at each side. The northernmost truss includes two large, curving cruck blades, sunk into the stonework of the walls at their lower extents and carried on shallowly corbelled stone pads (Figure 28). The cruck blades are pegged to a lower and upper collar, both of which extend beyond the blades to carry a lower and upper line of lap jointed purlins. Above these, rafters support battens to which the stone slate covering is pegged. This full cruck truss does not match the other two trusses in this part of the barn, suggesting that all are a selection of parts, perhaps from more than one building, or, that the entire barn itself is a rebuilding of an earlier timber framed barn in stone. The central truss includes two squarer blades which are not chamfered, as the northernmost truss's are, and has upper and lower collars pegged to different sides of the blades, again, different to the northernmost truss (Figure 29). The southernmost truss in the room has elements which match the central truss closely, but its blades do not extend to the ridge and terminate at the upper collar. As with the central truss, this is pegged at the opposing side to the lower collar. A machine cut lower chord has been latterly added to this southern truss, presumably to act as a strengthening member.

### 3.5 INTERNAL ROOMS – FIRST FLOOR

#### 3.5.1 ROOM F1

No safe access was possible to the interior of this room at the time of survey. As such, the room was observed only partially from the doorway. The room is accessed only from a doorway at its north-eastern corner, at the top of an original stone staircase within Room G2. Aside from the doorway, the room's northern wall could not be viewed and is assumed to be featureless. At its east side, the room has an original window, noted externally, which includes a slatted timber frame. The room's west wall also includes a window, which can be seen to have been inserted (Figure 30). At its south side, the room has an original central fireplace and chimneybreast formed with a stone surround and latterly blocked with infill stonework (Figure 31). At each side of the fireplace is an infilled, square niche, both of which appear original. To the west of the fireplace is the upper part of the blocked, raised doorway noted in Room LG1 below, and externally. That doorway would have originally provided access to this room. Within the roof of the room is a single supporting truss, with straight upper chords, rather than curving cruck blades. These straight upper chords have been made extremely thick, so as to enable them to be cut into to admit the passage of the purlins through them without creating a thin, weak section at each side. The suggestion of this truss is that not enough cruck trusses were available to make the barn to the required length, again suggesting they may well be a reuse from an earlier building, or more than one building. Below the truss, an original, central, north-south oriented, floor joist is present, supporting the remains of an upper floor in this area, created within the roof space. The combination of the upper floor, fireplace and windows in this area of the barn suggests that it was originally built as domestic accommodation for farmhands. All of the historic census data illustrate that hands lived on the farm, and so it seems likely they lived here with the lower floor intended as living space and the upper floor intended as a bedroom area. Presumably a ladder, which no longer survives, was used to gain access to the upper floor.



Figure 21 North wall of Room G2, facing north. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 22 South wall of Room G2, facing south. No scale



Figure 23 Northern extent of east wall of Room G2, looking north-east. Scale 1x2 m





Figure 24 Southern extent of east wall of Room G2, looking south-east. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 25 Northern extent of west wall of Room G2, facing north-west. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 26 Central section of west wall of Room G2, facing west. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 27 Southern extent of west wall of Room G2, facing south-west. Scale 1x2 m



Figure 28 Detail of northern section of roof structure in Room G2, facing north. No scale



Figure 29 Detail of southern extent of roof structure in Room G2, looking south. No scale



Figure 30 West wall of Room F1, facing south-west. No scale



Figure 31 South wall of Room F1, facing south. No scale

## 4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

West Middleton Farm incorporates a farmhouse of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, possibly with even earlier fabric included within it (NHLE 2022). The farm itself was clearly latterly part of the Wycliffe Estate but seems to have been owned during the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Cuthbert Watson of Ovington, who was the estate's land agent, on his own account.

The Wycliffe Estate, with its principal residence at Wycliffe Hall (NHLE 1322784), is thought to have been the property of the Wycliffe family, although a part of the honour of Richmond, from the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, until it was inherited by Marmaduke Tunstall of Burton Constable, through his marriage to Katharine Wycliffe, in around 1611 (Page 1914, 138–142). From this point on, the Wycliffe Estate remained in the Tunstall family, latterly the Constable, and then Chichester-Constable, family (*ibid.*), up to the present day. The Wycliffe Estate sold off a number of properties, including West Middleton Farm, in 1935 (HEA SB00037). It presumably acquired West Middleton Farm from Cuthbert Watson, perhaps upon his death.

In 1828, a lease for the farm records that James Bishopridge was the farmer in occupation at West Middleton, leasing the farm, with the help of other partners who presumably took a share of any profits, from Cuthbert Watson, who was the land agent for the Wycliffe Estate (ERA DDCC/130/178). A plan of the farm was made at this time, presumably to accompany the new lease (ERA DDCC/155/23). The same plan was updated in February 1835 to illustrate new fences which were being erected at that time.

The tithe apportionment for the parish of Wycliffe (NAK IR30/42/416) records that in 1841 West Middleton Farm was occupied by Robert Kirkley and owned by Cuthbert Watson (in reality owned by the Wycliffe Estate). Kirkley, who was 43 at the time, was also recorded as living at West Middleton in the 1841 census, along with his sons Thomas and Joseph, both 15, his daughter Dorothy, 11, and his father Thomas, 78. Also in residence were three servants employed on the farm; Sarah Moore, 20, James Barker, 15, and James Blades, 12 (NAK HO107 PN:1247 BN:16 FN:? Page: 82).

On 21st October 1847, Cuthbert Watson deposited the deeds of the farm to secure £800 (ERA DDCC/130/181). Presumably, this was a loan secured against the value of the property, with the deeds being held by a solicitor or other third party. Given that the farm saw significant investment in the development of new buildings during this period (see Section 5 below), it is possible that this transaction was a loan taken to pay for the construction of the new buildings, rather than Watson tying up his own money to pay for their creation.

By 1851, West Middleton was occupied by William Birkitt, 56, a farmer of 130 acres employing 2 labourers (NAK HO107 PN:2387 FN:? Page:3). Birkitt was a local man, from nearby Layton, and lived here with his wife Margaret, 60, their daughter Jane, 19, who was employed on the farm, and Thomas Fryer, 18, who was also employed by the family. In 1861, Birkitt, now a widower, still lived at West Middleton, but seems to be farming in partnership with his son-in-law, Philip Hutchinson, who had also taken up residence at the farm (NAK RG9 PN:3720 FN:? Page:117). Philip, 36, had clearly married Birkitt's daughter Jane, now 29, between 1851 and 1861, and the couple had three children living with them; William, 4, Robert, 3, and Margaret, 1. The ages of the children suggest that Jane and Philip married in around 1856. Also living on the farm at this time were Jane Smedley, 19, and Francis Tinkler, 15, both employed as general servants. Another plan of the farm, which also identifies it as the property of Cuthbert Watson, was made in 1857 (ERA DDCC/130/131), and it is possible this may have been made to accompany a new tenancy for Philip, upon his marriage.

By 1871, Philip Hutchinson is recorded as the head of the household, a farmer of 130 acres, and has clearly taken over the running of the farm altogether (NAK RG10 PN:4944 FN:? Page:163). William Birkett (*sic*) is still alive and living at the farm, and is still recorded as a farmer. The Hutchinsons have nine children living with them by this time, two of whom, presumably twins, are just two weeks old at the time of the census. Also at the farm were two servants and, clearly necessarily, a nurse. In 1881, Philip and Jane Hutchinson still lived at the farm, now with eleven children (NAK RG11 PN:4934 FN:? Page:113), but presumably William Birkitt had died between 1871 and 1881. Hutchinson still farmed the same 130 acres.

By the time of the 1891 census, the Hutchinson family had left West Middleton, and the farm had been taken over by William Nicholson, 52, a native of nearby West Layton (NAK RG12 PN:4081 FN:71 Page:142). The population of the farm had reduced substantially by this time, with only William, his wife Sarah, their son Joseph and George Green, their farm servant, living there. The 1901 census records that William's son John Joseph had taken over the farm, and was living there with his wife Mary, and their daughter Greta (perhaps named after nearby Greta Bridge) (NAK RG13 PN:4657 FN:? Page:118). As was most often the case, two servants were employed on the farm.

By 1911, the farm had changed hands again and was the home of John and Jane Alsopp, their two daughters, and a farm labourer (NAK RG14 PN:29802 RD:548 SD:2 ED:15 SN:71 Page:145).



## 5. HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION

### 5.1 1828 FARM PLAN (ERA DDCC/155/23)

A plan of the farm, dated 1828, and with new fences added in 1835, shows the long, north-south-aligned barn in place and with the northern east-west-aligned outbuilding attached at the northern end of its eastern elevation (Figure 32). The southern east-west-aligned outbuilding is not yet in place, nor are the attached wheelhouse and lean-to, which are now in place at its western side.

### 5.2 1841 TITHE MAP

The 1841 tithe map of the Parish of Wycliffe (NAK IR 30/42/416) (Figure 33) also shows the long, north-south-aligned barn in place and with the northern east-west-aligned outbuilding attached at the northern end of its eastern elevation. Just as in 1828, the southern east-west-aligned outbuilding is not yet in place, nor are the attached wheelhouse and lean-to.

### 5.3 1857 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP

The 1857 First Edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map (Figure 34) shows a number of changes to the farm buildings at West Middleton in comparison to the depiction from the tithe map. Firstly, the large, square gin wheelhouse has been added at the northern extent of the barn's western elevation, with the existing lean-to now shown to the south of that. At the other side of the barn, the southern east-west-aligned outbuilding is now in place, creating an enclosed, walled foldyard at this eastern side of the barn. The additions to the barn shown on this map are therefore all likely to have occurred between 1841 and 1857.

### 5.4 1857 FARM PLAN (ERA DDCC/130/131)

This plan confirms most of what the 1857 Ordnance Survey map shows, although it does not clearly illustrate the northern east-west aligned building which must have been present by this date as it is illustrated in 1841. It is possible this plan suggests that the foldyard between both of the outbuildings at this side was covered at this time, making one larger block on the plan (Figure 35). Oddly, later mapping does not show this arrangement and so the discrepancy may simply be an error of the plan's maker.

### 5.5 1892 ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP

The 1892 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Figure 36) is the first truly accurate and detailed map of the buildings at West Middleton. This map appears to show no alterations whatsoever to the buildings from the situation illustrated in 1857 and appears to show that no meaningful changes have occurred between then and now, with the buildings illustrated as they appear today.



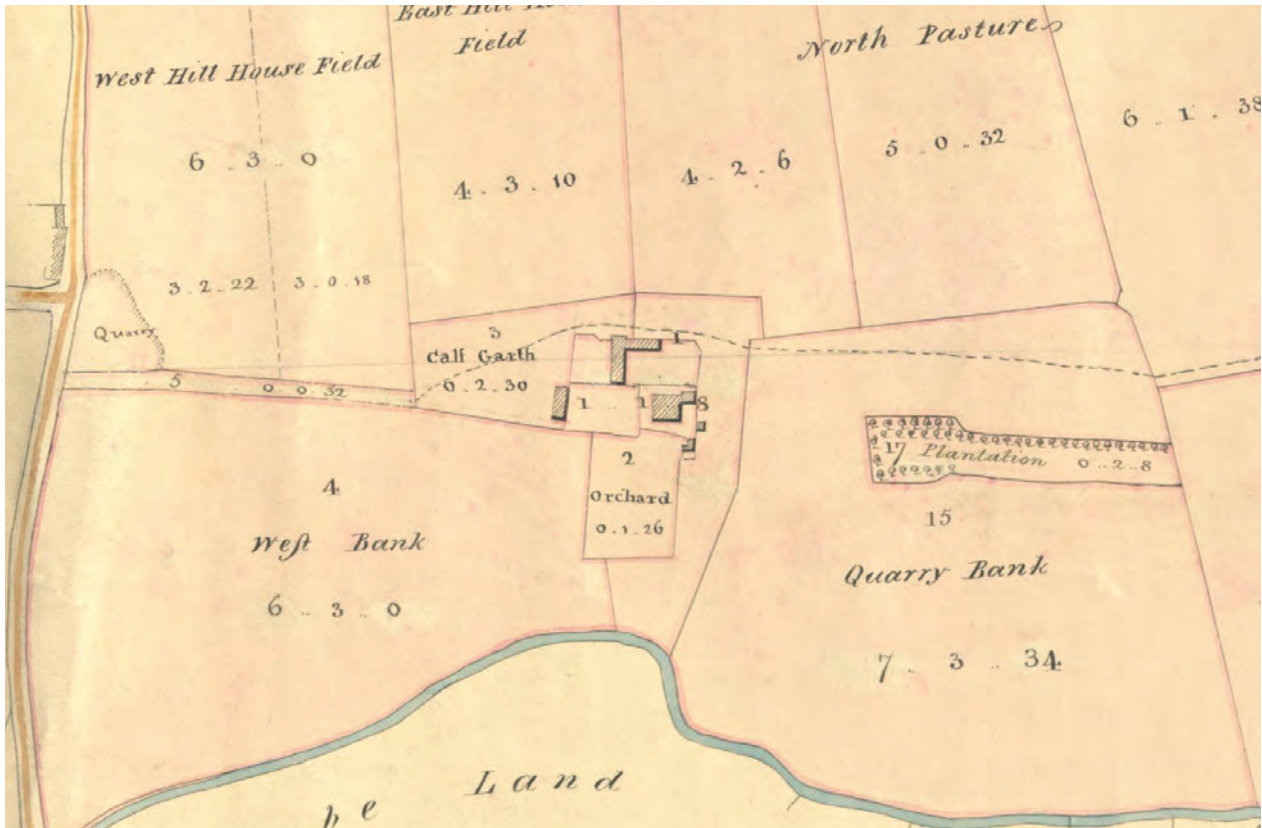


Figure 32 Extract from plan of West Middleton Farm, dated 1828 and revised in 1835. reproduced courtesy of East Riding Archives – ref. ERA DDCC/155/23)

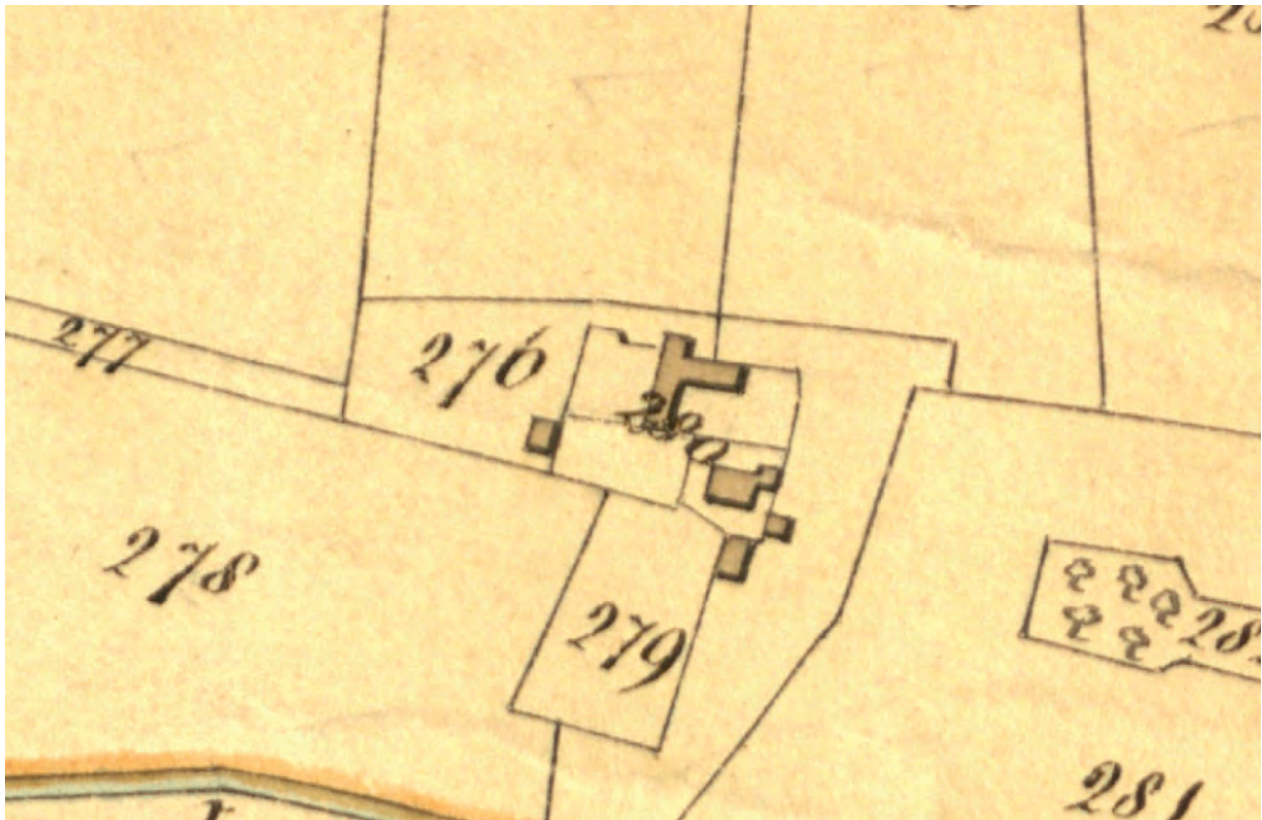


Figure 33 1841 Tithe map

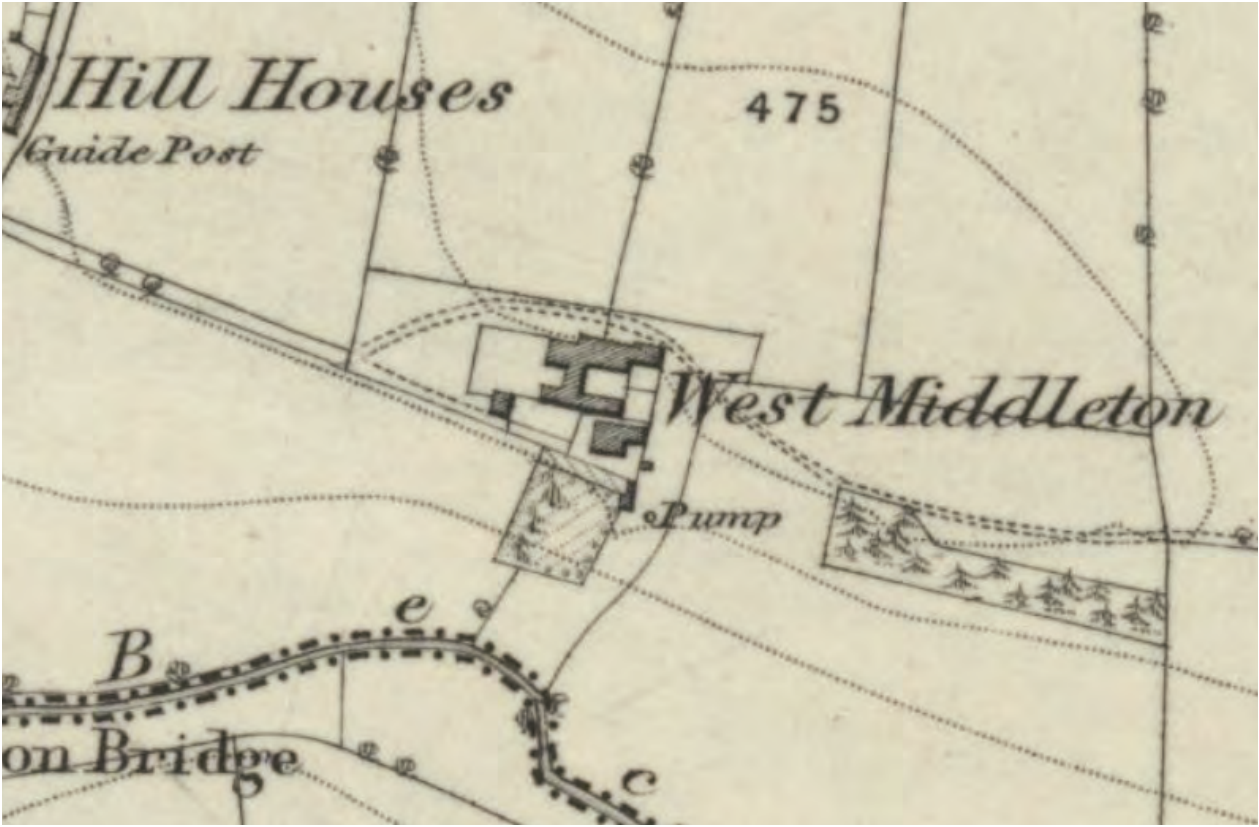


Figure 34 1857 Ordnance Survey map

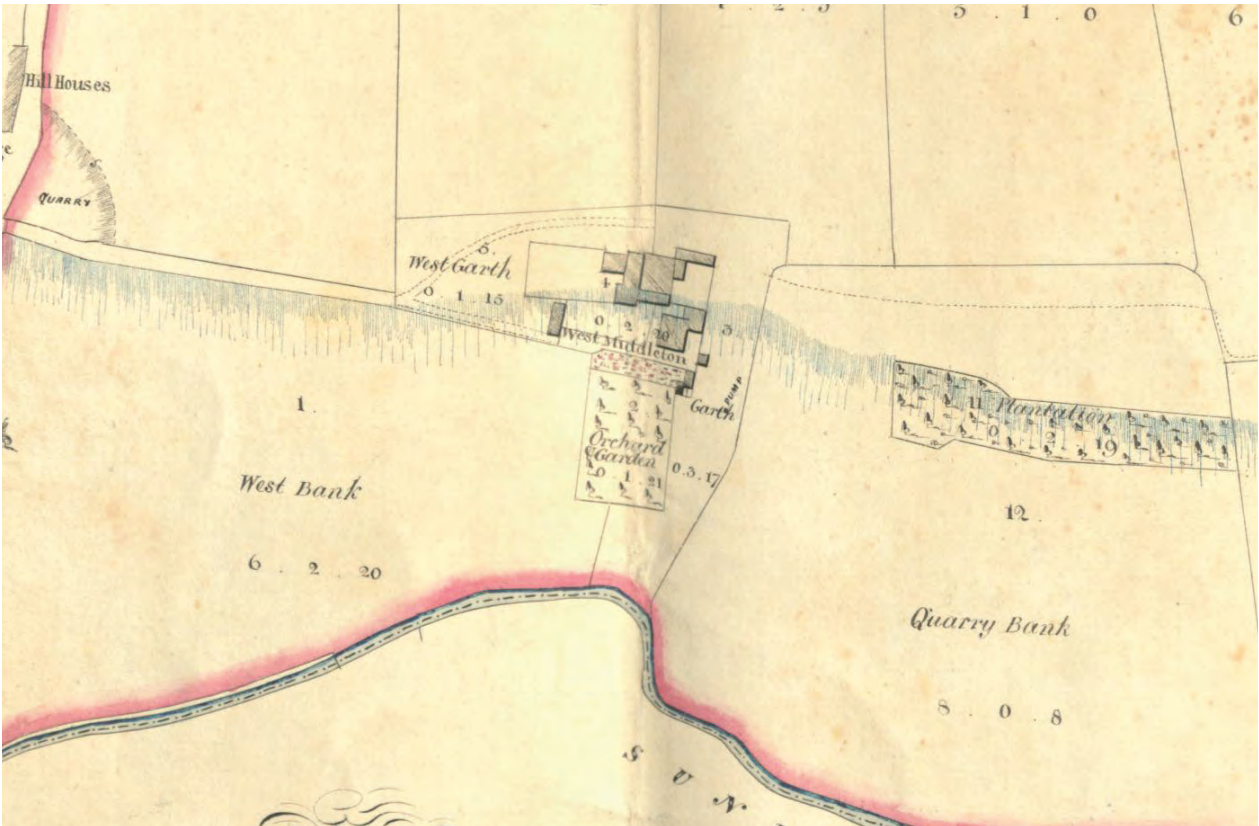


Figure 35 Extract of plan of West Middleton Farm, dated 1857 (reproduced courtesy of East Riding Archives – ref. ERA DDCC/130/131)







Figure 36 1857 Ordnance Survey map

## 6. DISCUSSION

The historic building recording of the farm buildings at West Middleton Farm has provided a documentary record of the buildings, which has been analysed through this study. It can be seen from the study of the structural evidence carried out as part of this study that each of the buildings has developed over time, as well as experiencing innumerable smaller individual alterations. The building recording exercise was focussed on a range of farm buildings including a central, large, north-south oriented barn, and an attached wheelhouse and lean-to, both of which lay to the west of the main barn range. All of the building elements are Grade II listed (NHLE 1121662), including those attached outbuildings to the eastern side of the barn, which were not part of the scope of this study.

The wheelhouse to the north-west of the main barn has been shown to have been constructed between 1841 and 1857, perhaps as part of a modernisation and improvement of the farm undertaken by its owner, Cuthbert Watson Esq. of Ovington, the land agent to the Wycliffe Estate. Although no machinery or historic roof structure survives within this part of the building, its proportions, as well as its spatial relationship to the main barn, illustrate that it was created to house a horse gin, a horse-worked engine for powering a threshing machine, which would have been situated in the northern end of the main barn. Changes to the main barn seem likely to have accompanied the addition of the wheelhouse. These seem likely to have included the addition of the forking hole/loading door in the barn's northern elevation, which is appropriately placed to feed a raised threshing machine on a mezzanine platform at the northern end of the barn. Further to this, the alterations to the northern extent of the barn's west wall included a small window created from an earlier breather, as well as at least one cut-out for the shaft from the horse gin to travel through and provide power to the threshing machine itself. Within the barn's eastern wall, it seems likely that the forking hole to the foldyard beyond would also have been created at this time, based on its similarity to that observed in the barn's northern elevation. No clear evidence for the raised threshing platform, which would have hosted the threshing machine, was observed in the barn, although the state of the walls and the floor made the identification of small sockets, where latterly infilled, difficult. Nonetheless, such a raised platform must have existed.

The lean-to addition at the southern end of the barn's western elevation, also constructed between 1841 and 1857, seems to have been added to an existing byre, and may represent a small additional stall or loose box, although it may best be interpreted as a store for feed.

The main barn at West Middleton Farm is clearly the building with the highest level of significance examined during this study. The stone construction of the earliest phase of the barn clearly pre-dates 1828 and seems likely to be early- to mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century in date. It seems less likely that the stone construction of the barn is 17<sup>th</sup>-century, which is stated as a possibility by the listing description. With that said, the complex and mismatched roof structure, which incorporates two different types of raised cruck truss and a thickened raised collar truss intended to work with the earlier trusses but using a later truss design, suggests that the building could be a rebuild of an earlier timber-framed barn. Alternatively, the barn could be re-using timber components from an earlier timber-framed barn, or indeed more than one, for which a tradition exists within the region (Lake and Edwards 2006, 21–22).

The barn itself can be seen to have been originally conceived as a partly storeyed combination barn, with multiple uses included within the one agricultural 'factory'. At its southern end, the barn originally incorporated a byre, above which was fully conceived accommodation for farmhands, with a living area including a central fireplace with niches, or saltboxes, to either side. Above this again was a sleeping area or bedroom located within the roof space and accommodated by an unusual raised-collar truss. Within the main body of the barn, the cart entry and wider doorway, before they were latterly reduced in size, suggest the barn was used for hand threshing, with the wide doorway representing a 'winnowing door'. Following the introduction of powered threshing between 1841 and 1857, this arrangement of a cart entry and accompanying winnowing door would have become unnecessary, and it would seem most likely that the reduction in size of both openings to more standard doorway dimensions would also have accompanied the introduction of the horse gin.

Although not a true bank barn in the strictest sense, the barn at West Middleton can be seen as an uncommon example of Brunskill's 'Lancashire' combination barn type (Brunskill 2007, 111–113), where a gable-accessed cow-house, hand-threshing barn and a loft – although in this case accommodation for farmhands – were accommodated within the one building.

The changes made to the barn over time, principally related to the introduction of a horse-gin to mechanise the threshing process, are reflective of common trends linked to wider changes in agriculture in the 'High Farming' years after 1840 (Lake and Edwards 2006, 27–29). At this time, a greater impetus for owners to invest in new farm buildings and greater levels of mechanisation is reflected at West Middleton in the construction of almost all of the other agricultural buildings present aside from the core of the barn itself.



West Middleton also provides an interesting case study in the importance of the land agent profession in the history of agriculture. Unusually in this case, the farm was owned directly by a land agent throughout the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence of this ownership it seems to have directly benefitted from forward-thinking investment and proactive management throughout this time, resulting in a well-planned, small farmstead of this period, which survives much intact today. With that said, the size and date of the farmhouse and barn at West Middleton suggests an older and more complex origin for the farm. The relative grandeur of the farmhouse, and the level of investment required to build a barn of the scale present here suggests that the farm may have been developed and owned by a yeoman farmer, or even as part of a manorial farm, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps earlier.

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### 7.1 ARCHIVAL SOURCES

#### 7.1.1 THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, KEW (NAK)

- IR 30/42/416 – Plan of the Parish of Wycliffe in the Country of York, 1841.
- IR 30/42/416 – Tithe Apportionment
- HO107 PN:1247 BN:16 FN:? Page: 82 – 1841 Census, Yorkshire, Parish of Wycliffe
- HO107 PN:2387 FN:? Page:3 – 1851 Census, Durham, Parish of Wycliffe
- RG9 PN:3720 FN:? Page:117 – 1861 Census, Durham, Parish of Wycliffe
- RG10 PN:4944 FN:? Page:163 – 1871 Census, Durham, Parish of Wycliffe With Thorpe
- RG11 PN:4934 FN:? Page:113 – 1881 Census, Durham, Parish of Wycliffe With Thorpe
- RG12 PN:4081 FN:71 Page:142 – 1891 Census, Durham, Parish of Wycliffe With Thorpe
- RG13 PN:4657 FN:? Page:118 – 1901 Census, Durham, Parish of Wycliffe With Thorpe



RG14 PN:29802 RD:548 SD:2 ED:15 SN:71 Page:145 – 1911 Census, Durham, Parish of Wycliffe With Thorpe

7.1.2 HISTORIC ENGLAND ARCHIVE (HEA)

SB00037 - THE WYCLIFFE ESTATE, NORTH YORKSHIRE : ON THE YORKSHIRE - DURHAM BORDERS

7.1.3 EAST RIDING ARCHIVES (ERA)

DDCC/155/23 – Plan of West Middleton Farm [Wycliffe, Yorkshire, North Riding] – 1835

DDCC/130/131 – Plan of West Middleton farm, par. Wycliffe – 1857

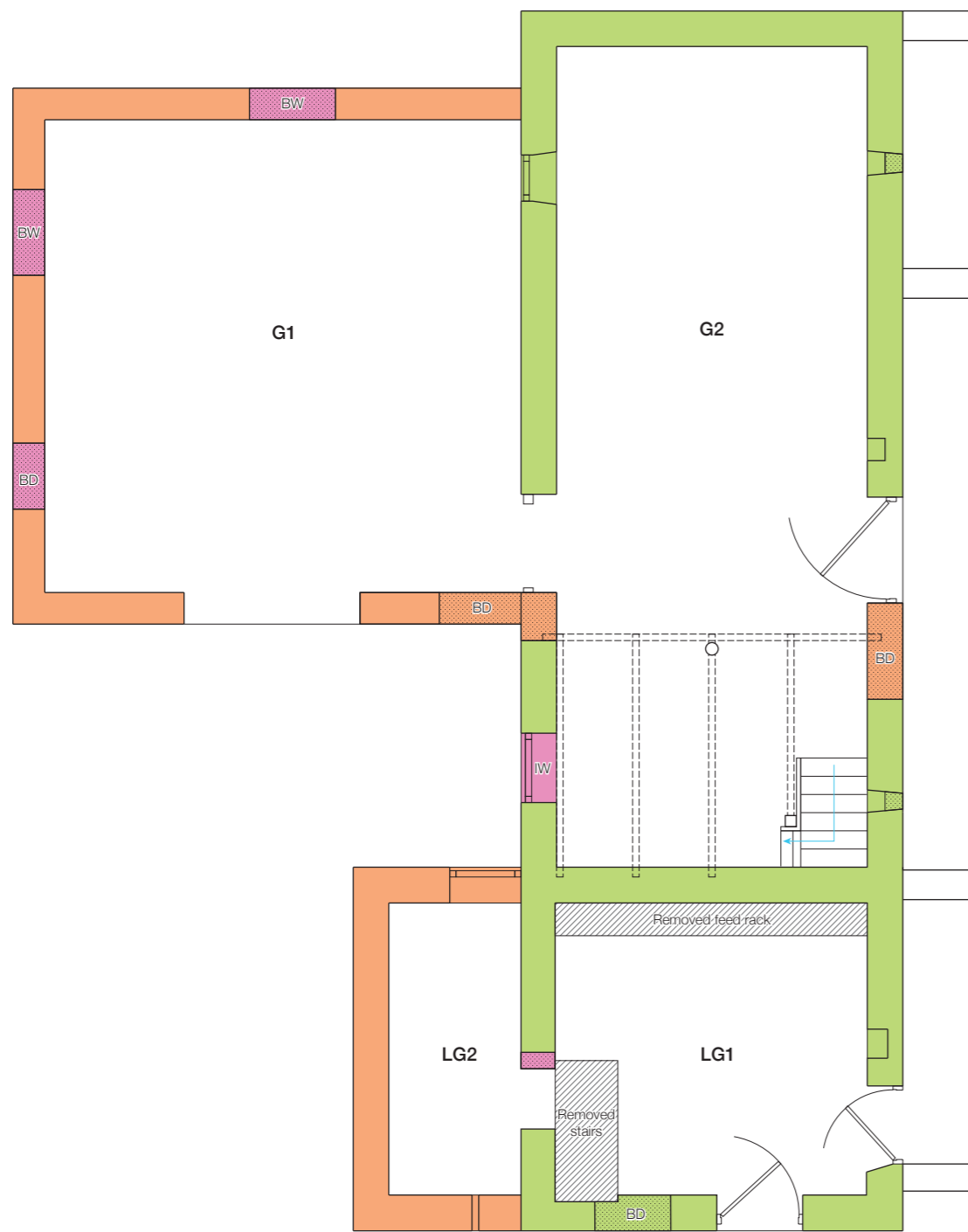
DDCC/130/178 – Lease and release – 30–31 Jan 1828

DDCC/130/181 – Memorandum – 21 Oct 1847

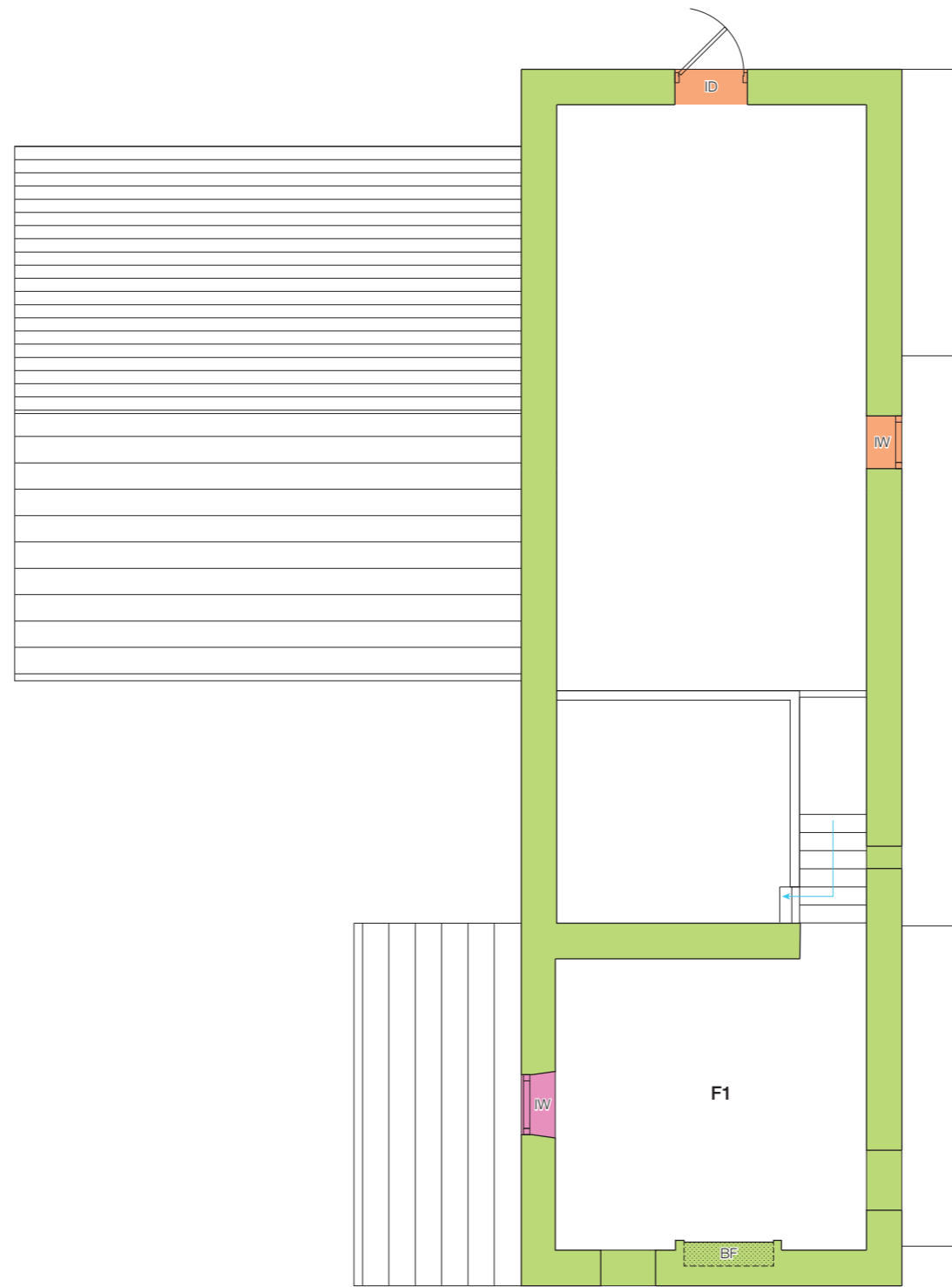
DDCC/130/252 – Abstract of title – 1773–1858

## APPENDIX 1 – PLANS AND ELEVATIONS





Ground Floor



First Floor

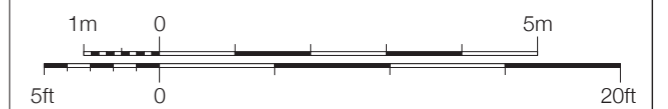
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County Durham  
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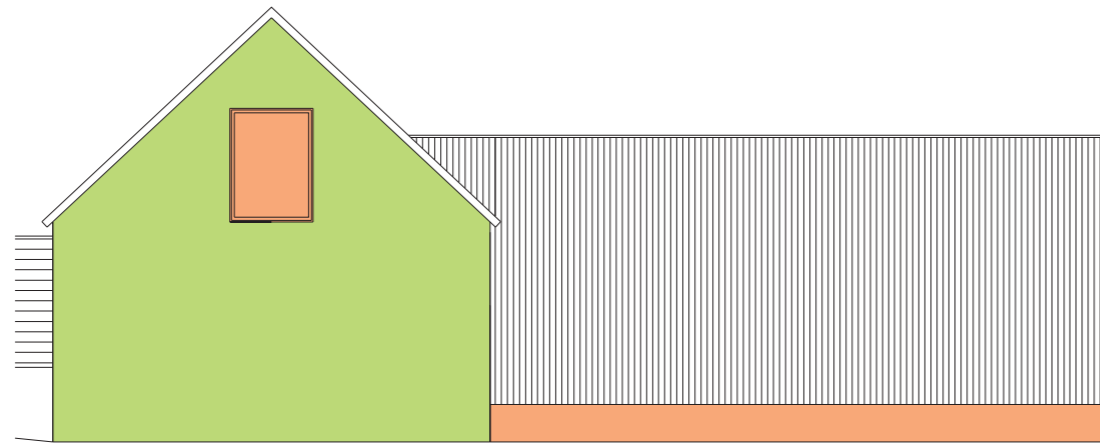
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Drawn: JB March 2022  
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Drawing Version: 1.0

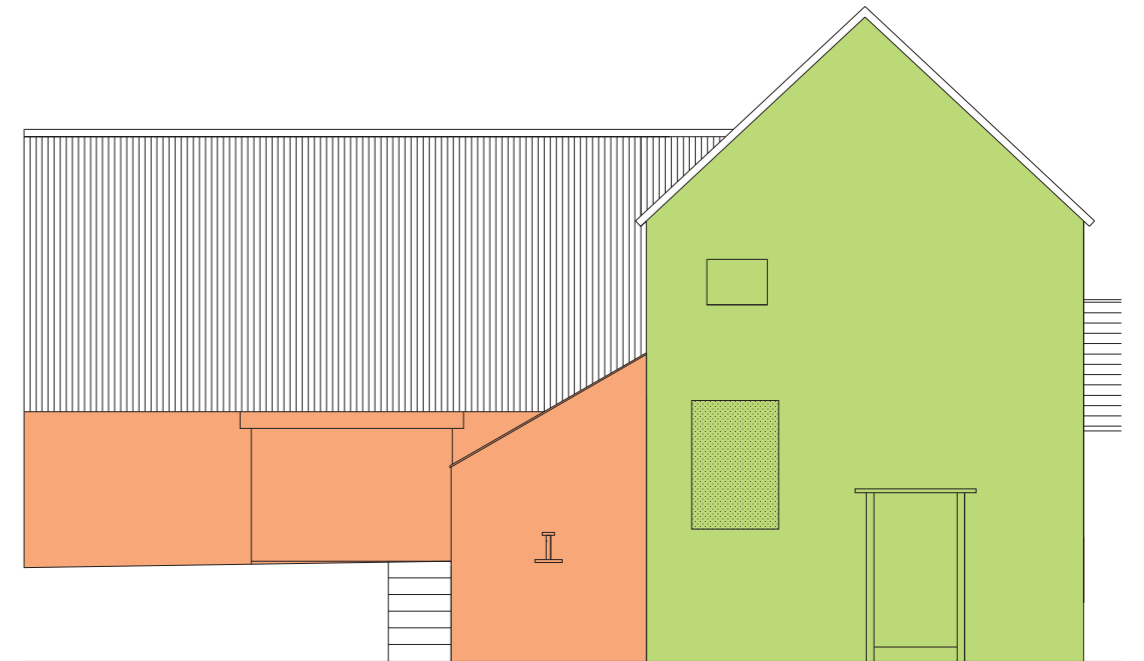
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- 1841–1857
- Late 19th–early 20th century
- Areas of blocking



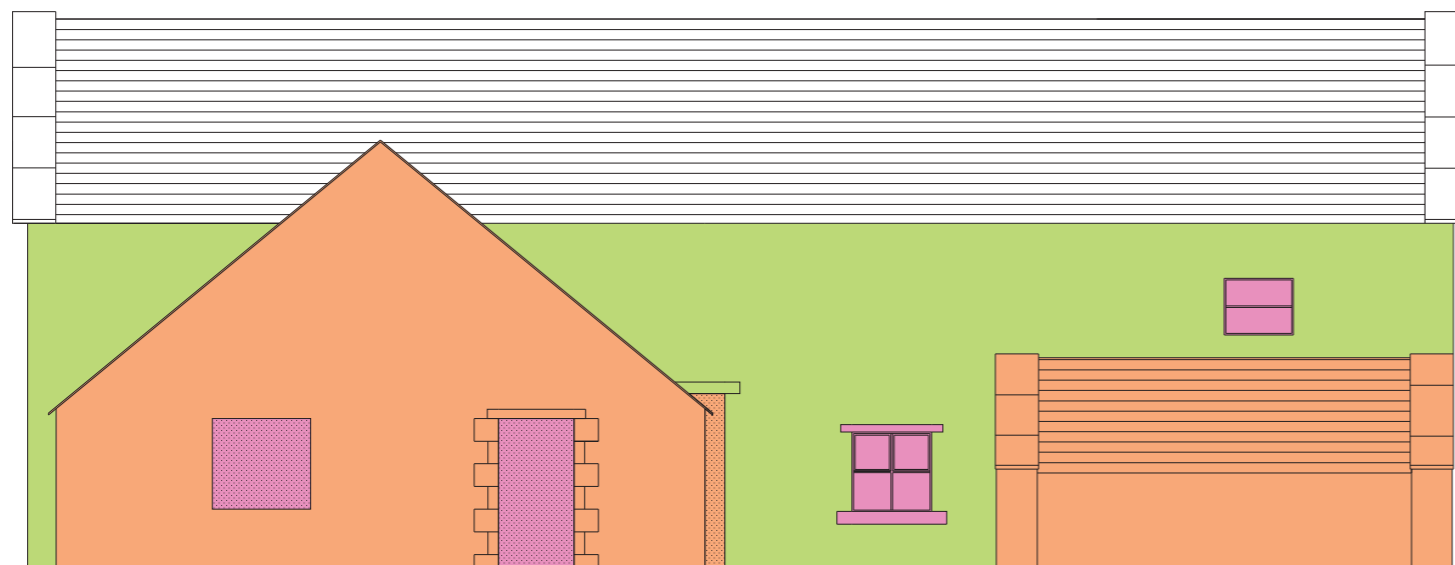
This drawing is for planning purposes and is not considered to be a construction drawing.  
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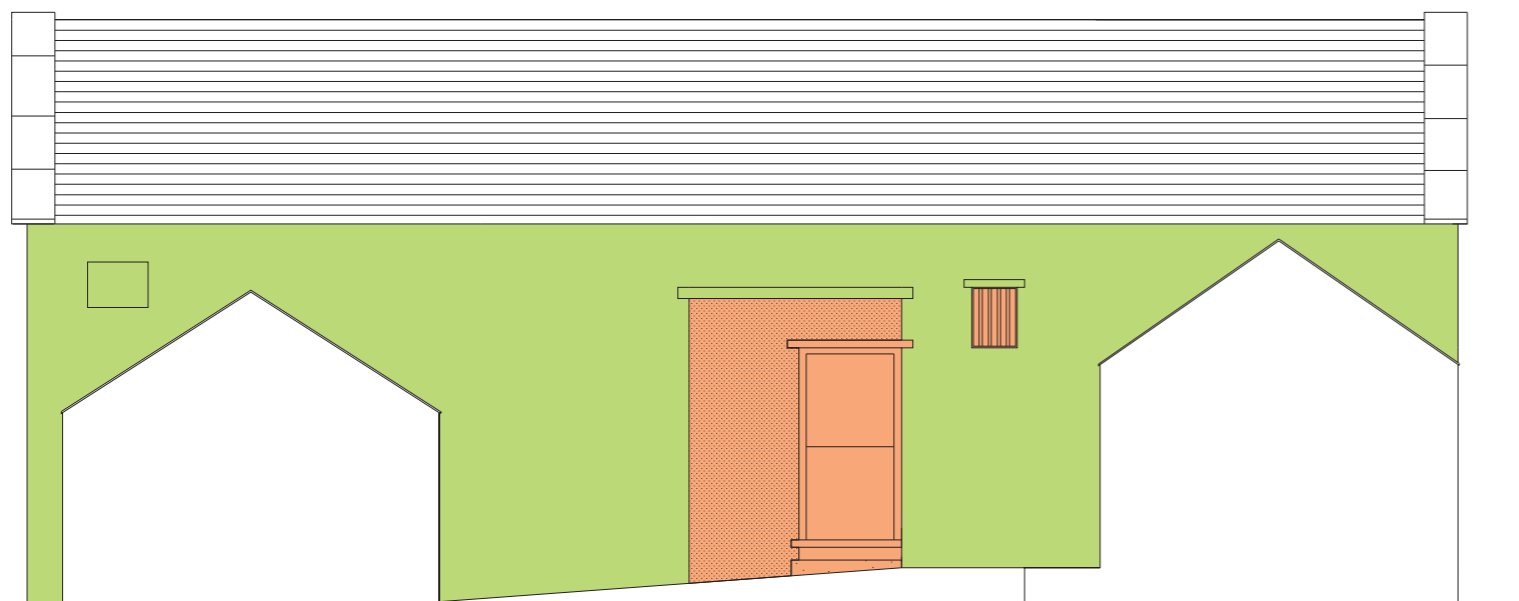
North Elevation



South Elevation



West Elevation



East Elevation

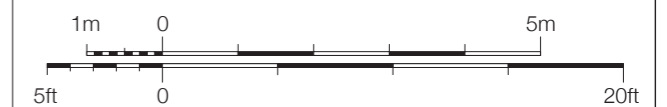
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**Phased elevations**

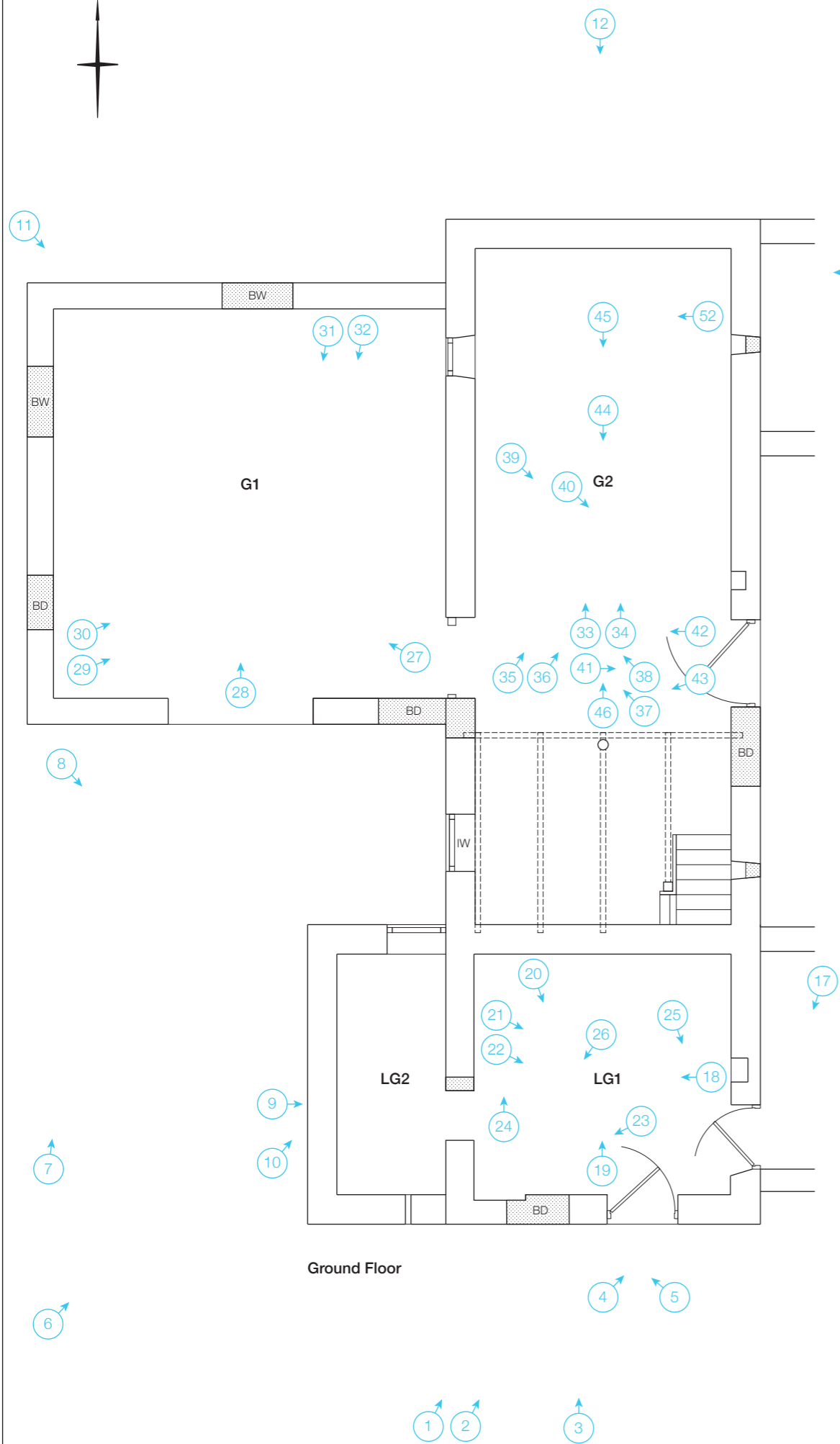
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- Late 19th–early 20th century
- Areas of blocking

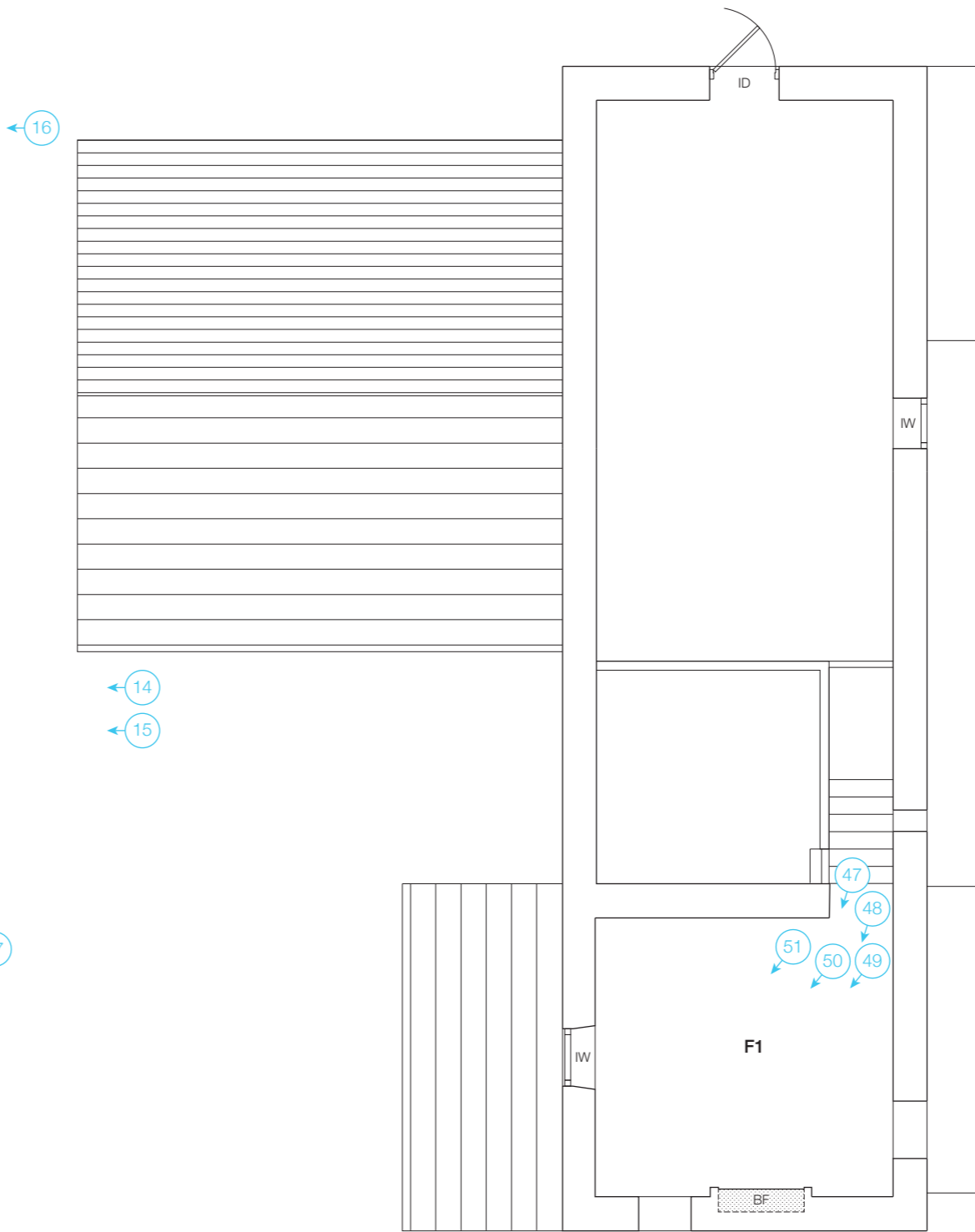


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Ground Floor



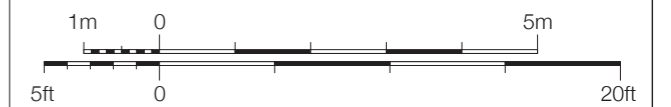
First Floor

West Middleton Farm  
 Hutton Magna  
 County Durham  
 NZ 18623 54024



Photograph location plan

Fieldwork: CS/NB March 2022  
 Drawn: JB March 2022  
 Scale: 1:100 @ A3  
 Drawing Version: 1.0



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## APPENDIX 2 – PHOTOGRAPH REGISTER

Shot No.	Description	Facing	Scale	By
1	S elevation	NE	1x2 m	CS
2	S elevation	NE	1x2 m	CS
3	S elevation	N	1x2 m	CS
4	Detail of doorway, S elevation – E reveal	NE	1x2 m	CS
5	Detail of doorway, S elevation – W reveal	NW	1x2 m	CS
6	W elevation – S extent	NE	1x2 m	CS
7	W elevation – internal angle	NE	1x2 m	CS
8	W elevation	SE	1x2 m	CS
9	LG2 – doorway detail	E	No scale	CS
10	LG2 – window detail	NE	1x2 m	CS
11	W elevation – N extent	SE	No scale	CS
12	N elevation	S	1x2 m	CS
13	E elevation	W	1x2 m	CS
14	E elevation – centre detail	W	1x2 m	CS
15	E elevation – centre detail	W	1x2 m	CS
16	E elevation – N extent	W	1x2 m	CS
17	E elevation – S extent	SW	1x2 m	CS
18	LG1 - west wall	W	1x2 m	CS
19	LG1 - north wall	N	1x2 m	CS
20	LG1 - south wall	S	1x2 m	CS
21	LG1 - east wall	E	1x2 m	CS
22	LG1 - east wall	E	1x2 m	CS
23	LG1 – detail of blocked door	SW	No scale	CS
24	LG1 – detail of staircase sockets	N	No scale	CS
25	LG1 – detail of principal joist E extent	SE	No scale	CS
26	LG1 – detail of principal joist W extent	SW	No scale	CS
27	G1 - west wall	NW	1x2 m	CS
28	G1 - north wall	N	1x2 m	CS
29	G1 - east wall	E	1x2 m	CS
30	G1 - east wall	E	1x2 m	CS
31	G1 - south wall	S	1x2 m	CS
32	G1 - south wall	S	1x2 m	CS
33	G2 - north wall	N	1x2 m	CS
34	G2 - north wall	N	1x2 m	CS
35	G2 - east wall, N extent	NE	1x2 m	CS
36	G2 - east wall, N extent	NE	1x2 m	CS
37	G2 - west wall, N extent	NW	1x2 m	CS
38	G2 - west wall, N extent	NW	1x2 m	CS
39	G2 - east wall, S extent	SE	1x2 m	CS
40	G2 - east wall, S extent	SE	1x2 m	CS

Shot No.	Description	Facing	Scale	By
41	G2 - east wall, detail of partly blocked door	E	1x2 m	CS
42	G2 - west wall, detail of partly blocked door	W	1x2 m	CS
43	G2 - west wall, S extent	SW	No scale	CS
44	G2 - south wall	S	No scale	CS
45	G2 – roof detail	S	No scale	CS
46	G2 – roof structure	N	No scale	CS
47	F1 - south wall	S	No scale	CS
48	F1 - south wall	S	No scale	CS
49	F1 – roof structure	S	No scale	CS
50	F1 – roof structure	S	No scale	CS
51	F1 - west wall	SW	No scale	CS
52	G2 – detail of stone sockets, N end	SW	No scale	CS

