

**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey.
85 Hartwell Road,
Ashton,
Northamptonshire.
(NGR SP 76861 50027)**

On Behalf of Mrs S. Hill



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**Planning Permission No
S/2012/0967/FUL**

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Gerwyn Richards

Summary

This document is an archaeological standing building survey of 85 Hartwell Road, Ashton, Northamptonshire (SP 76861 50 27), commissioned from Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) by Mrs S. Hill in advance of the demolition of the existing property and the building of a new residential property on the site.

A coin hoard discovered in the roof of the building in 1955 and an historic map of the village dated to 1727 suggests that the building dates from the 17th or 18th centuries. The survey recorded that the building is much altered leaving little of historical or architectural interest; as a result no definitive dating evidence was recorded. The 1727 map appears to record a building, different in appearance to the standing building. The latest coin from the coin hoard dates to 1686, but that provides little indication as when the hoard was closed. Therefore secure dating of the building is difficult to establish.

Ostensibly the building is a pre-19th century stone built rural dwelling with a historic core of two separate dwellings, one a single bay, the other one and a half or two bays. Originally one and half storeys and thatched, the roof was raised and the thatch replaced in 1955. There are a number of late 20th century additions.

The archive will be retained by ABRS under the temporary site code 2012-HRAN until deposition with Northamptonshire County Council can be arranged.

1. Introduction

Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) were commissioned by Mrs S. Hill to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of number 85 Hartwell Road, Ashton, Northamptonshire (SP 76861 50027 (*Figures 1 & 2*)). Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of the building and its replacement by a new residential unit (Planning Permission No S/2012/0967/FUL). The building is a one and a half storey stone built dwelling, believed to date from the 17th century. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council, as advisor to South Northamptonshire District Council has recommended that an archaeological standing building survey to English Heritage Level 2 as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006) be carried out prior to any proposed works being carried out. The building is not statutorily listed.

The project was completed in accordance with the *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Building Recording at 85 Hartwell Road, Ashton, Northamptonshire* (October 2012) as issued by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor and followed the Institute for Archaeologists

1955 by Inspector Reynolds states that no title deeds or other documents could be found relating to the house prior to the Grafton Estate sale in 1913.

At the same inquest a letter written by James Malcher's daughter recalls a number of details about the house including "*the inside roof of the cottage was very high going right up to the peak with white washed beams*". Mr Malcher's daughter goes on to describe that the house was thatched and the windows altered. It also states that James Malcher had died in 1914 and had not carried out the alterations he had wished, it is likely therefore, that the property had remained largely unaltered. The evidence goes on to state that the first floor ceiling was inserted in 1935.

In 1945 the property was sold to Mrs G. Richardson who then sold it on to Charles and Stella Griffin in 1950. Under the ownership of the Griffins water was first piped to the house. In 1955 the Griffins engaged Ernest William Bonser to strip the old thatch and replace the roof with corrugated asbestos cement sheeting. During the work a leather bag containing 184 silver coins was found within the thatch, Mr Bonser, under oath described the bag as being "in the original layer" of thatch and that the thatch was "four foot thick in places". The earliest coins dated to the reign of Phillip and Mary (1554-55) and the latest from the reign of James II (1686). All had considerable wear suggesting prolonged circulation, including the James II coin; the inquest therefore surmised that the hoard had been closed after 1686. The great recoinage of 1696 could have been the trigger for its concealment (Curteis 1994).

The exact date of its concealment is, however difficult to ascertain, it is possible that the hoard is an accumulation of savings, as cash or as silver in which case the hoard may have been concealed at any time after the minting of the most recent coin.

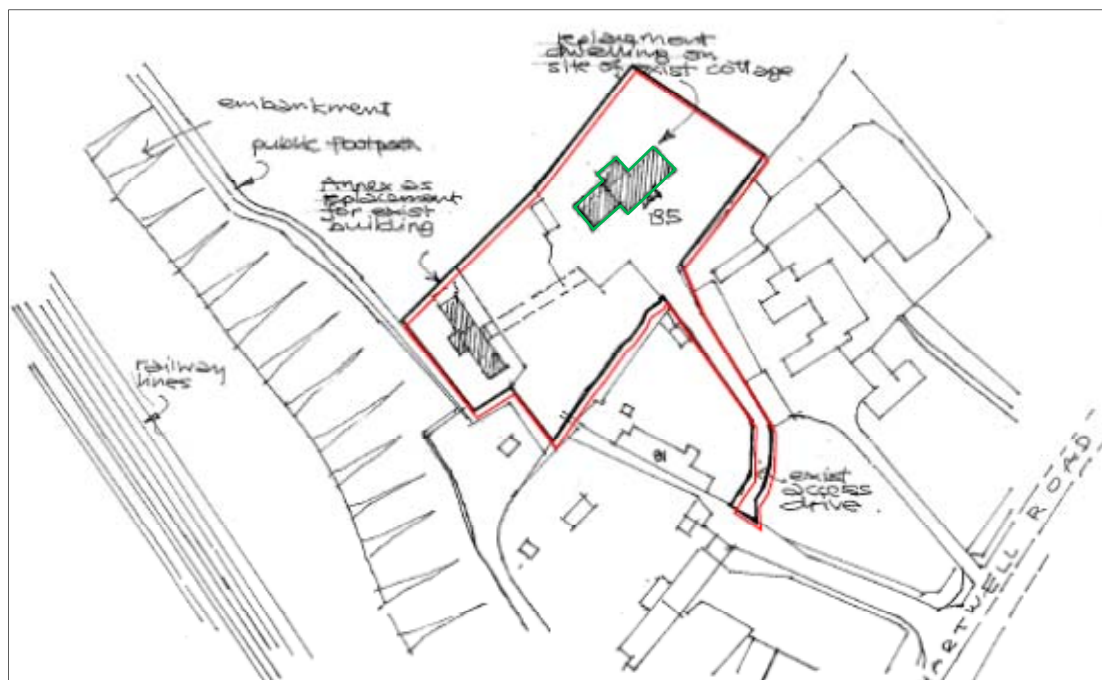


Figure 2

Plan of the proposed development area (Highlighted in Red). Building Recorded Highlighted in Green.
(Provided by client. Not to Scale).

2. Aims and Methodology

The specific objectives of the standing building survey were as follows:

- To provide a written, drawn and photographic record of the building prior to its permitted demolition.
- To ensure the long term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.
- The site based element of the Historic Building Recording programme involved the production of measured survey drawings and the completion of photographic and written records.
- Desk-based research included the analysis of readily available documentary and cartographic sources.

Orientation: The recorded building occupies the centre-northern most part of the proposed development area and consists of a single building. The long axis of the building is orientated approximately north east to south west (*Figure 2*), for ease of description this is taken hereafter to be east to west with the principal elevation, facing Hartwell Road, to the south. Where the terms 'left', 'right', 'front' and 'back' etc are used in the report, this is in relation to this principal elevation as views from the south. For the purpose of this report a number prefix has been added for significant partitions.

As far as is known, no previous historic building recording has been undertaken of the building.

The site visit was carried out by Gerwyn Richards on October 29th 2012 with an additional visit on November 2nd 2012 to view the exposed roof structure.



Figure 3
85 Hartwell Road, Centre.



Figure 4
Hartwell Road, Demolished Cottages in Foreground.

3. Description of the Building

85 Hartwell Road is a single stone built 1 & ½ storey dwelling of squared local stone with a pitched roof of corrugated asbestos cement sheets. There is a red brick chimney stack on the west gable. Although built in the same local stone there are four later groundfloor additions to the building: a garage to the west, a kitchen extension to the east, an extension on the eastern side of the rear elevation and a full length porch on the principal elevation. The historic core of the building consists of two un-equal bays, the larger being the eastern bay. Historic photographs suggest these two bays were originally separate dwellings. The

pointing all appears to be modern cement mortar. All windows and doors had been removed prior to the site visit; an examination of recent photographs supplied by Mrs Hill indicates that these were all modern replacements. The size of the window openings suggests that they are unlikely to be original. Although early photographs (*Figures 3 & 4*) do appear to show surprisingly large window openings for such early stone-built buildings. Evidence of the original steeply pitched roofline can be seen on both gables (*Figure 6*); there is no evidence of the roofline on either the principal elevation or the rear elevation.

Extensive modern re-pointing has obscured any potential evidence of building phases. The only potential evidence of this is a small straight joint adjacent to the western end of the principal elevation. However, this is more likely to relate to an alteration in the adjacent opening, possibly blocking an original window in order to insert the current doorway. Early 20th century photographs appear to show a window and door in this part of the building (*Figure 3*), the window now being blocked.

Internally, the building is much altered and modernised, leaving very little of architectural or historical interest. Modern decoration conceals all the walls and ceilings; the floor appears to be a poured concrete slab. There is a partially blocked chimney breast on the west gable. The first floor is supported by a full length axial beam, mostly boxed. Where this boxing has been removed (Room 01), the axial beam is revealed as a being chamfered with a straight cut step stop at the western end (*Figure 7*). Such stops were common in the late 17th and early 18th centuries (Hall 2005). The ceilings are all underdrawn; again where this has been partially removed the original joists can be seen and appear to be contemporary with the axial beam.

A second chamfered beam has been exposed within an opening between rooms 01 and 02. Acting as a lintel, its profile is identical to that of the axial beam, it is likely that this beam is re-used as the opening is unlikely to be original.

First floor access is via a straight flight stair with a winder partially recessed into the rear wall of room 02. The stair is timber built but lacks any diagnostic features; however the narrowness of the treads suggests an early date.

On the first floor, there are two original partitions, creating three rooms, between rooms 05 and 06 is a stone-built partition while between 06 and 07 is a stud wall, again further evidence of the original lay out of the building as two separate dwellings.

Within room 05 the chimney breast seen on the groundfloor is again visible as is a small hearth of red bricks. The floors throughout the first floor are wide hand sawn floor boards ranging between 180mm (7 inches) and 280mm (11 inches). The boards appear to be hardwood and may be original. In the south west corner of room 05 is an area of narrower, probably inserted, floor boards, it is possible therefore that this is the original stair opening for this bay, however, the conflict with the fireplace suggests that this is unlikely.

The partition between rooms 06 and 07 is a timber framed plaster and lathe wall (*Figure 8*), originally with a central doorway, a new doorway has been inserted towards the north of the building. It appears that the frame was originally exposed within room 07. The irregular nature of the framing suggests an early date.

Clear evidence of the raising of the roof height was clearly visible internally as a step in the front wall of room 07 and infilling revealed by the removal of modern dry lining in room 06.

A limited view of some of the rafters exposed during initial stripping out suggested the roof structure may have been of some antiquity; therefore an additional visit was carried out after the removal of the corrugated asbestos cement covering to further record the roof. However, the removal of the modern roofing only revealed that the roof structure was made up of coupled rafters in mixed timber, both early hardwood and 20th century deal (*Figure 10*). Some rafters were little more than barely finished poles. The lack of any uniformity in the roof structure suggests that the timber is likely to be a job lot of second hand timber brought in from elsewhere or retained from the adjacent demolished cottages. These rafters were originally supported on purlins, probably original, since the construction of the modern roof covering the purlins seemed to have little structural purpose. A number of pegged rafters, clearly reused remained (*Figure 11*).

There was no remaining evidence of bridling or a ridge piece at the apex of the rafters. There was a pair of collared principal rafters above the stud wall between 06 and 07. Both were badly rotted and diagnostic details were lacking. In appearance they were similar to the other timbers, so are likely to be contemporary to the remainder of the original/early roof structure. The painted finish of these and the other newly exposed timbers indicated that the rooms were originally open to the roof as indicated by the inquest evidence.

The removal of the modern roof covering also revealed a capped chimney within the wall between 05 and 06.

Two interesting timbers were recorded within the roof space. The first (*Figure 12*) is arched piece, likely to be the original lintel piece for one of the eye brow dormers seen on the building in historic photographs. Fragments of a second, apparently identical piece had been used to pack between the purlin and the common rafters on the southern roof of room 05 (*Figure 13*). The second is less easily identified (*Figure 14*) and consists of an oak plank with a raised rounded moulding on one end. It is possible that this timber is a barge board or eaves board dumped in the roof space when the original thatch was removed.

4. Conclusion

Hartwell Road appears to be a largely single phase locally built rural dwelling, originally constructed as two individual dwellings and later formed into a single dwelling. Cartographic sources and coins recovered in 1955 from the thatch suggest the building is late 17th century in date. However, the 1727 map records a building with significant structural differences to the extant building and the latest coin from the hoard, 1686 provides only an earliest date for the closing of the hoard. No evidence to confirm or deny this 17th century date was recorded during this survey.

There has been considerable cosmetic renovation of the groundfloor leaving little of historical or architectural interest, with the exception of a chamfered axial beam, tentatively dated to the late 17th or early 18th century. Again, on the first floor there is little of historical or architectural interest, floor boards and a stud wall appear to be early, and may be original to the building.

Both historical sources and physical evidence confirm that the roof level was raised during the 20th century. The initial site visit suggested significant structural remains of an original, or early roof may have remained within the building, however, a subsequent visit indicated that only limited and fragmentary remains of this early roof remained. The roof had been altered significantly during the building of the asbestos cement roof in 1955.

5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

- 1 A3 permagraph sheet containing plans, elevations & notes
- DVD containing 96 digital images
- 3 A4 contact sheets
- 96 Black & White negatives and contact prints
- 3 A4 photo record sheets
- 5 A4 Historic Photographs of the Building (Re-productions)
- 13 A4 printed digital images of 85 Hartwell taken by Mrs Hill
- 16 A4 pages of information relating to the Ashton Hoard.
- 1 Unbound copy of this report

The archive will be held by ABRS under the temporary site 2012-HRAN until deposition with Northamptonshire County Council can be arranged.

A version of the summary (above) will be submitted to the editor of the local journal for inclusion in the next edition.

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7. Colour Plates



Figure 5
Principal Elevation (Looking North).



Figure 6
Original Roof Line Seen in West Gable (Looking East).



Figure 7
Chamfered Beam in Room 01 (scale is attached to west gable).



Figure 8
Stud Wall, Room 07 (looking south west).



Figure 9
Purlins and Common Rafters in South Facing Roof, Room 06.



Figure 10
Southern Roof after Removal of Asbestos Roof.



Figure 11
Pegged Common Rafters on South Facing Roof (Room 05).



Figure 12
Eyebrow Lintel from Attic Space.



Figure 13
Eyebrow Lintel Piece Used As Packing on Top of Purlin (Room 05).



Figure 14
Barge Board/Eaves Board from Attic Space.

Figure 15 Groundfloor Plan.

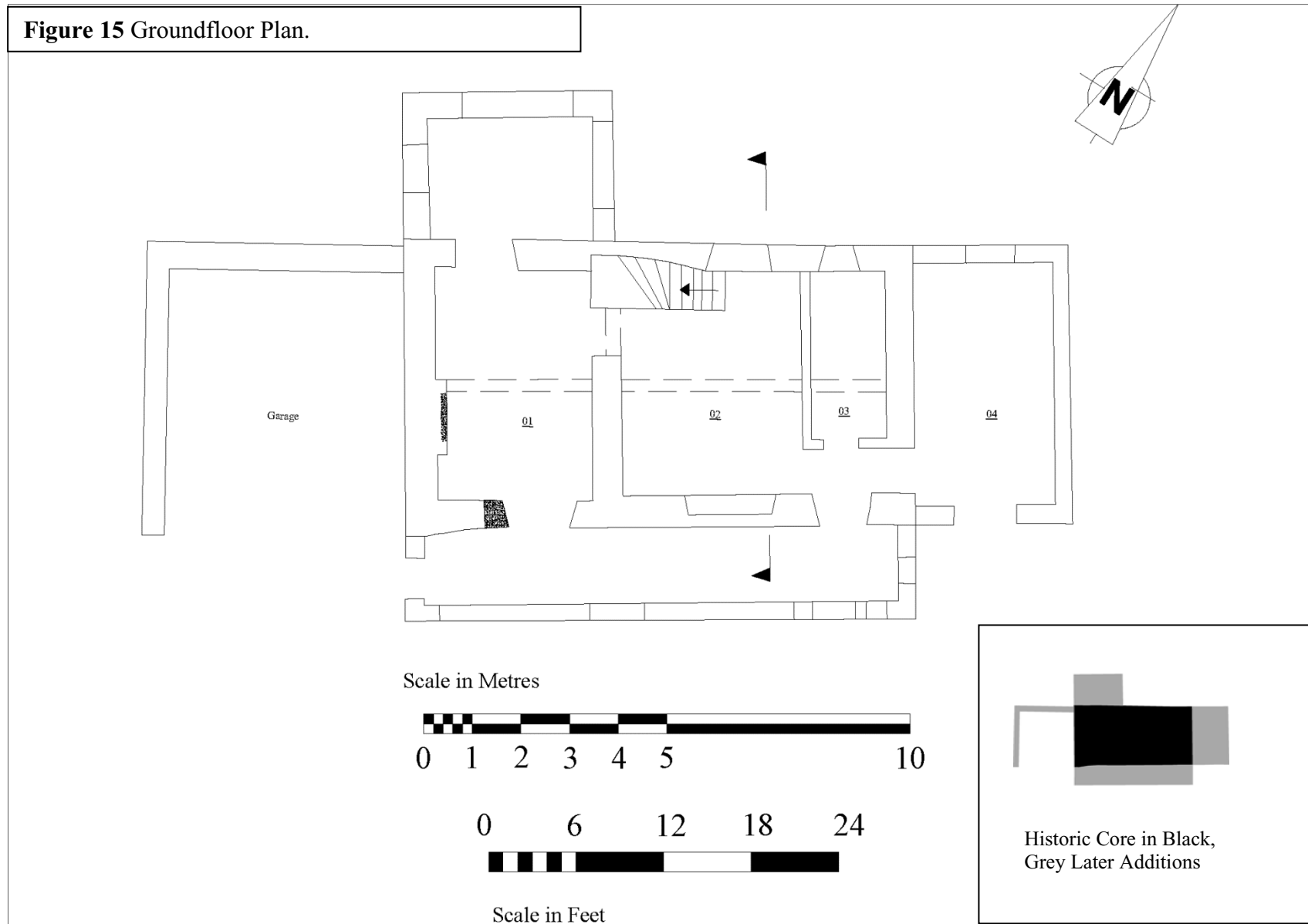
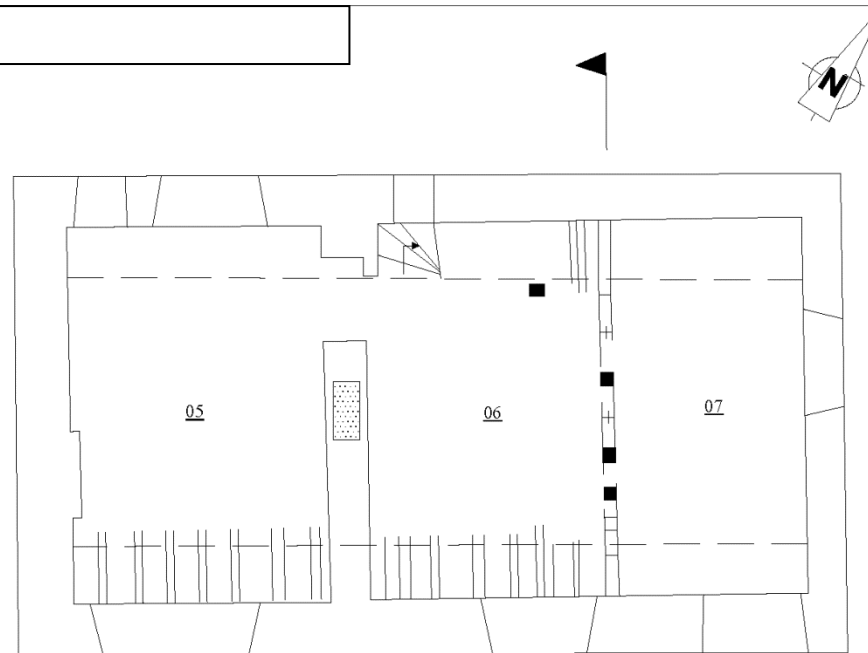


Figure 16 First Floor Plan.



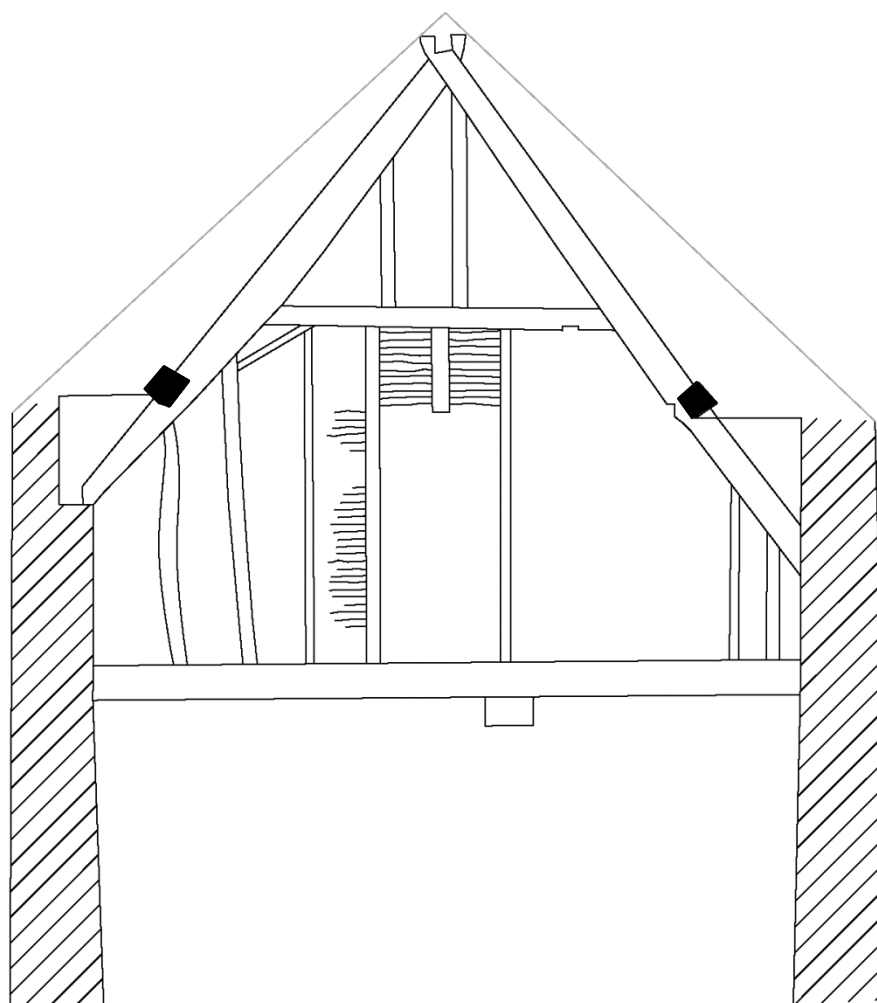
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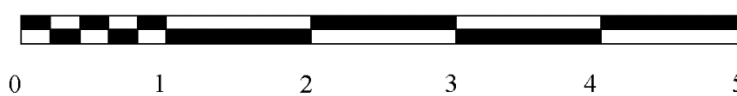
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Scale in Feet





Scale in Metres

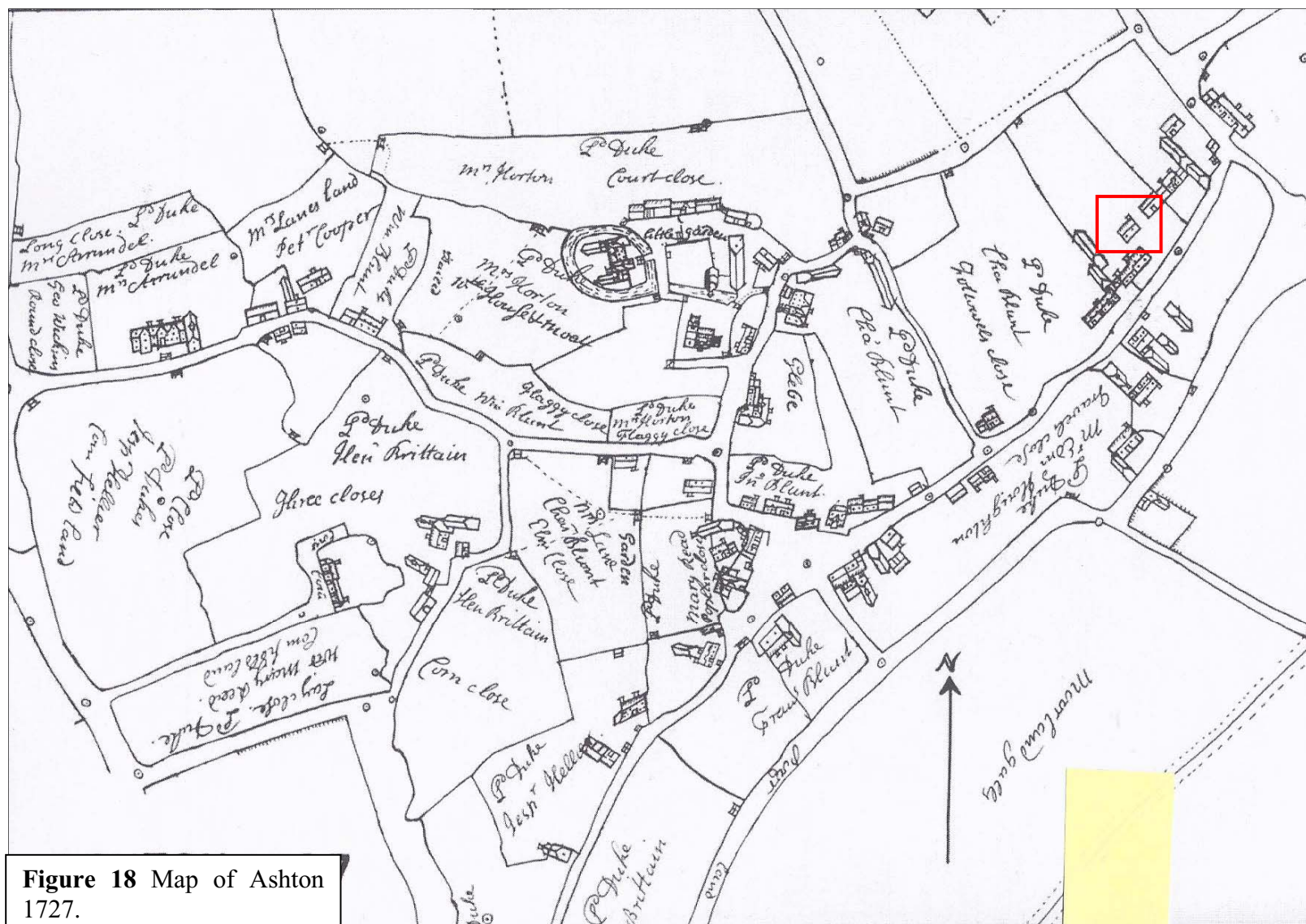


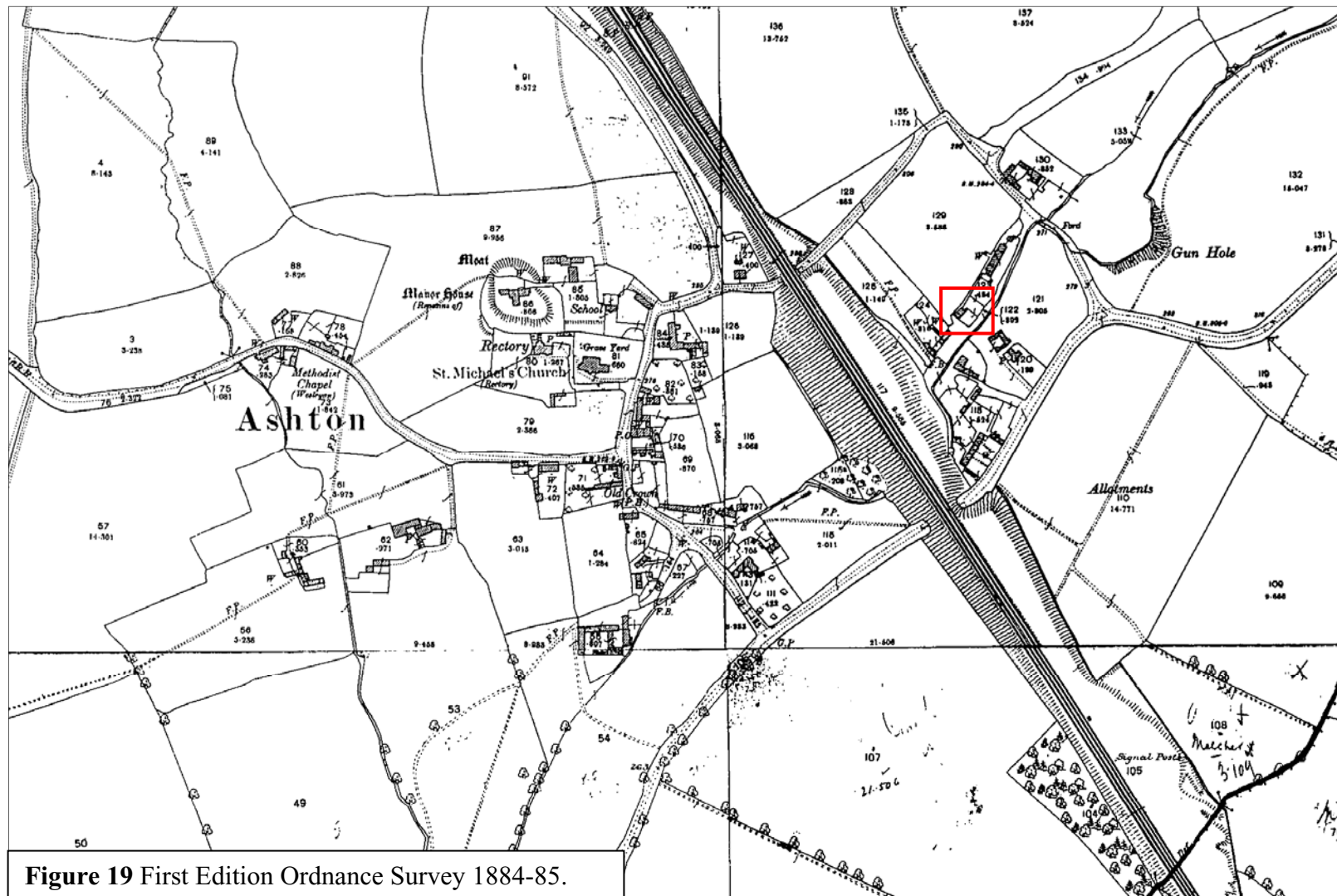
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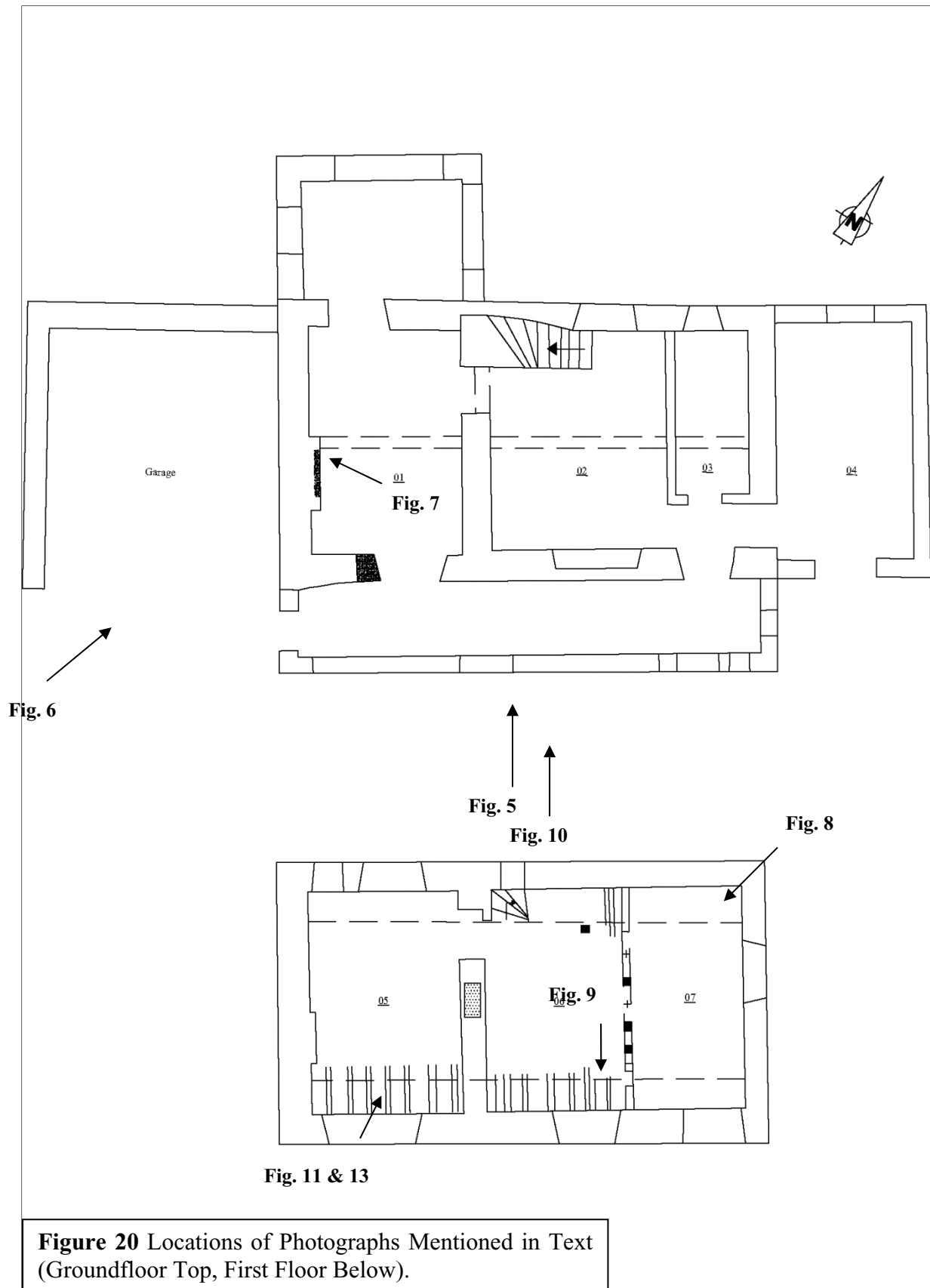


Scale in Feet

Figure 17 Profile.







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