

**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey.
Dry Fields Farm,
Norton,
Northamptonshire.
(NGR SP 59953 62100)**

On Behalf of Mr J. Paybody



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September 2013

**Planning Permission No
DA/2013/0359**

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**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of an Outbuilding at Dry Fields Farm,
Norton, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 59953 62100).**

Summary

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Aims and Methodology	4
3.	Description of the Building	5
4.	Conclusion	7
5.	Archive and Publication	7
6.	Bibliography & Sources	8
7.	Colour Plates	9

Figures

Figure 1	Site Location.	2
Figure 2	Plan of the proposed development area.	3
Figure 3	1900 Ordnance Survey XLIII.7 (1:2500) Proposed Development Area Highlighted in Red.	4
Figure 4	Borough Hill Farm (in Green) Sales Catalogue 1947 (NRO Ref SC558).	5
Figure 5	Principal Elevation (looking North East).	9
Figure 6	South East Facing Gable (looking North West).	9
Figure 7	North West Facing Gable (looking South East).	10
Figure 8	Limited View of Rear Elevation (looking West).	10
Figure 9	North Western Truss (looking North West).	11
Figure 10	South Eastern Truss (looking South East).	11
Figure 11	Rear Elevation (Internal) Showing Feeding Hole & Ventilation Pipes (looking North).	12
Figure 12	Probable Original Floor Level Showing on North West Wall (looking North West).	12

Figure 13	Empty Tenons on Tie Beam of South Eastern Truss.	13
Figure 14	Carpenters Mark on Tie Beam of South Eastern Truss.	13
Figure 15	Empty Tenon on Principal Rafter, North West Truss.	14
Figure 16	Rase Marks on Wall Plate.	14
Figure 17	Modern Barn Scheduled for Demolition.	15
Figure 18	Floor Plan.	16
Figure 19	Profile.	17
Figure 20	External Elevations As Supplied by Client.	18

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Gerwyn Richards

Summary

This document is an archaeological standing building survey of an outbuilding formerly part of Dry Fields Farm, Norton, Northamptonshire (SP 59953 62100), commissioned from Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) by Mr J. Paybody in advance of the proposed conversion of the building to residential use.

The building is stone built with a modern corrugated asbestos cement sheet roof and likely to be 19th century in date. Historical sources indicate the building was originally part of the nearby Borough Hill Farm before being sold in the late 20th century. On first inspection the building appears to be a cart shed, however both documentary and physical evidence confirms the building was originally a cow hovel. There are a number of re-used timbers of unknown date and origin within the roof structure.

The archive will be retained by ABRS under the temporary site code 2013-DFNN until deposition with Northamptonshire County Council can be arranged.

1. Introduction

Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) were commissioned by Mr J. Paybody to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of an outbuilding formerly part of Dry Fields Farm, Norton, Northamptonshire (SP 59953 62100 (*Figures 1 & 2*)). Planning permission has been granted to convert the outbuilding to residential use (Planning Permission No DA/2013/0359). The building is a traditional farm building, believed to date from the 19th century, and located in an isolated rural location. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor, Northamptonshire County Council, as advisor to Daventry 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 outbuilding is not statutorily listed.

The project was completed in accordance with the *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Building Recording at Dry Fields Farm, Norton, Northamptonshire* (August 2013) as issued by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor and followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct*, and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2008).



Figure 1: Site Location

Reproduced from 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. ©Crown Copyright 1990. All rights reserved. Licence number 100053136.

The building subject to this historic building recording lies 1.5km south of the village of Norton, still within the Parish it is located adjacent to the Parish boundaries with Daventry, Dodford and Newnham. There is extensive occupational evidence from Prehistory to Roman, to Medieval recorded by the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) in the vicinity, including the Prehistoric Hillfort at Borough Hill and the alignment of the Roman Watling Street.

The Parish of Norton was inclosed in 1756, no map of the inclosure award is known to have survived. The inclosure award was reconstructed by Dr T.J Waterfield in 1999 (NRO Ref ROP 2814). The land to the south west of the village, including the proposed development area was granted to Eliab Breton as Lord of the Manor and in his capacity as Improprate Rector of the Parish "*in lieu of Tithes*". In addition to this, Breton was to receive the equivalent annual sum of 2s 6d in lieu of tithes of hay and grass paid to other landowners. Although specified separately, these were combined into a single parcel of land (Waterfield). It is unclear where this was land elsewhere or as part of the parcel of land in the south west of the Parish or within the "Great Allotment" awarded to Breton in the centre and south east of the Parish. A year after the inclosure, the adjacent Borough Hill farm was surveyed on behalf of Eliab Breton by John Collins, no doubt creating an inventory of his new holdings. Borough Hill Farm was recorded at 103 acres, and included the proposed development area.

As a result of Eliab Breton's position as Rector when the Tithe Map of the Parish was drawn in 1847 (NRO Ref No ZB 1341) it did not cover the land Breton owned in the south of the

Parish, as such there is no cartographic source covering the proposed development area which pre-dates the Ordnance Survey.

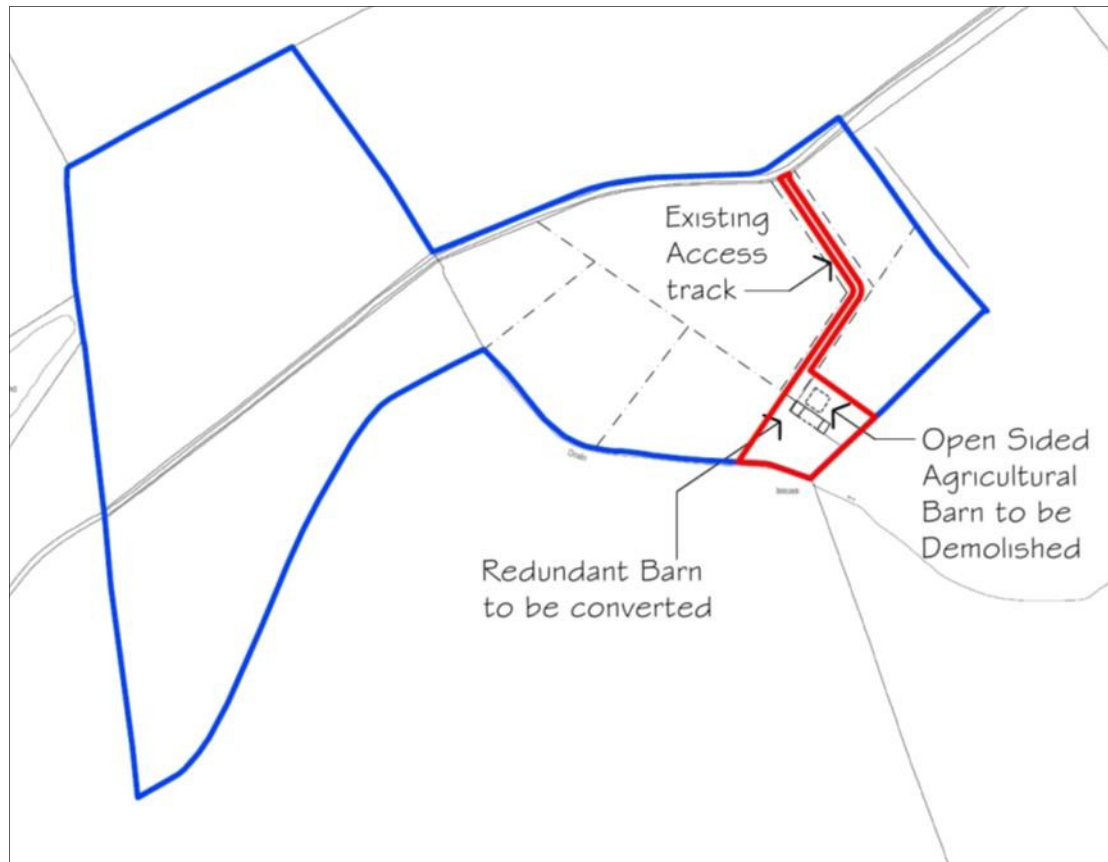


Figure 2
Plan of the proposed development area.
(Provided by client. Not to Scale).

A record of the field names of Norton by Daventry held by Northamptonshire Records Office (Ref MAP 1932) identifies a number of the fields surrounding the proposed development area, but not the field in which the proposed development area stands. The fields to the east are recorded by Whitefield (1999) as being Glebe and Charity Land.

The building is first recorded on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1885, the earliest edition available at Northamptonshire Records Office is the second edition, sheet XLIII.7 published in 1900 (*Figure 3*). The building is clearly identifiable within a yard and small paddock (Field 209) in the south eastern corner of field number 210. The building appears to be three bays. There are further two small complexes to the east of the proposed development area recorded by the Ordnance Survey, both of which are no longer in existence. The larger of the two is identified as being linked to the Glebe water supply (*Figure 4*), so although there is a lack of documentary evidence it is possible that this complex was a Glebe Farm.

During the mid 19th century Norton became the property of the Botfield Family and remained in that family until the death of Lady Beatrice Thynne in 1941, after which the village passed to the Marquess of Bath (of Longleat fame). In order to pay death duties following the death of the Marquess in 1947 Norton Hall Estate, including the village and Borough Hill Farm was placed up for sale by auction.

The sales catalogue (NRO Ref SC558 (*Figure 4*)) detailing Borough Hill Farm contains the clearest reference to the proposed development area. The building is described as “...*stone and slate 3 bay cattle hovel and two loose boxes having yard and stack yard*” located within Ordnance Survey field number 209. For the remainder of the 20th century the proposed development area remained part of Borough Hill Farm until sold by a previous owner, a Mrs Dry.



Figure 3
1900 Ordnance Survey XLIII.7 (1:2500)
Proposed Development Area Highlighted in Red.

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 conversion.
- 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 including Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) & Northamptonshire Records Office.

Orientation: The building is orientated north west to south east (*Figures 2 & 18*) with the principal elevation facing the south west. Where the terms ‘left’, ‘right’, ‘front’ and ‘back’

etc are used in the report, this is in relation to this principal elevation as viewed from the south west. A letter prefix has been allocated for significant partitions where required.

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 September 5th 2013.

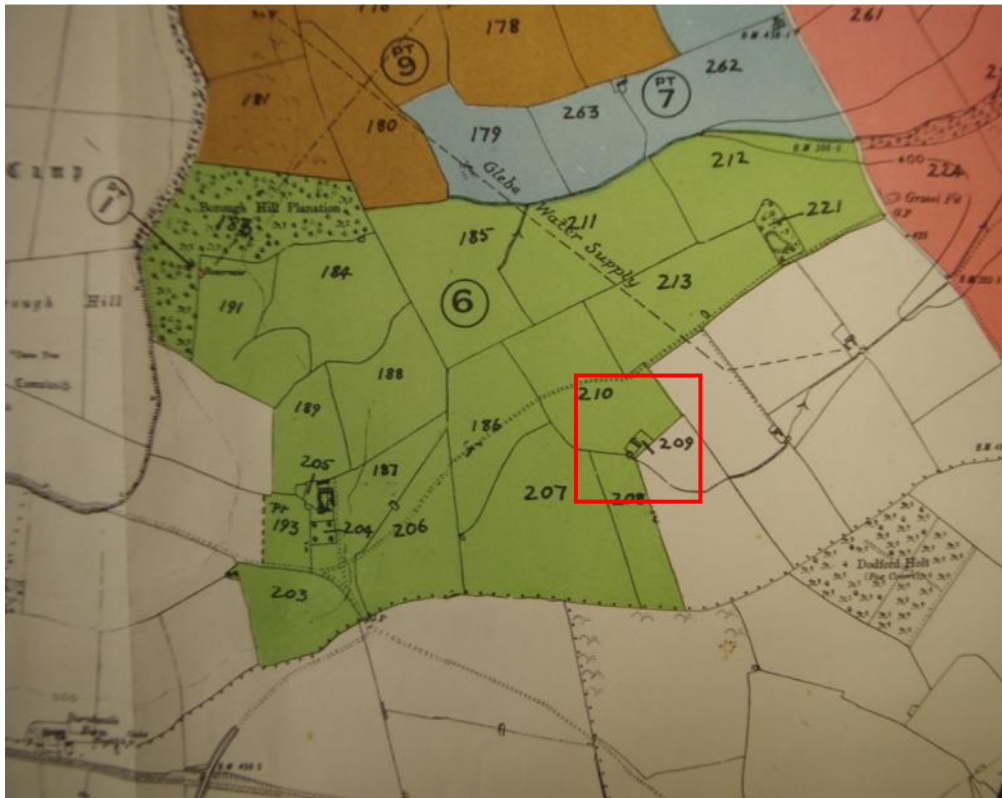


Figure 4 Borough Hill Farm (in Green)
Sales Catalogue 1947 (NRO Ref SC558).

3. Description of the Building

The building is located in the southernmost corner of a field some distance from the road, it is aligned north west – south east, the principal elevation, which is largely open faces the south west (*Figures 2 & 18*), away from the road, to what was originally described as a yard, the yard is no longer apparent. Early mapping indicates the road was until the 20th century a farm track and the building was located within its own paddock.

The building itself is a single storey stone-built building of local ironstone with a modern corrugated asbestos cement sheet roof. The stonework is roughly squared and coursed and the stones range in size from 50mm x 200mm up to 170mm x 450mm with extensive recent lime mortar pointing. The building consists of three central open bays and two loose boxes, one on each gable (*Figure 18*). As such the building has the appearance of a cart shed. The southern wall plate is carried on two brick-built piers brick dimensions 9inch x 3inch x 4inch (230mm x 76mm x 100mm), again with recent lime mortar pointing, the bricks are red bull nosed bricks probably locally made (*Figure 5*).

There are two openings on the north east (rear) wall, both near ground level externally but at approximately 2350mm above internal ground level (*Figure 8*). There is a window opening on the rear wall of the right hand loose box, it is likely that there would have been a similar opening in the left hand loose box, but no trace remains, however there is extensive recent pointing suggesting that this part of the building has been re-built, which may conceal the infill. On the north west gable there is a blocked opening at eaves level (*Figure 7*); such an opening may suggest this box originally had a loft, there is however, no internal evidence of this, and the loft space would have been limited, it is likely, therefore that this opening was also a window, perhaps instead of a window in the rear wall.

The size and location of the central opening (*Figure 11*) suggests it was originally a pitching, or feeding hole. In the 19th century feeding passages were incorporated into cow hovels allowing farmers to lay feed directly at the cows head speeding up the feeding and reducing waste because the farmer no longer needed to push pass the beasts from behind with the danger of dropped feed being fouled in the dung. Although there is clearly no feeding passage with this particular building, this central opening could have been used for the purpose of laying feed at the cows heads without having to pass the beasts themselves. This confirms documentary sources that the building was indeed, originally a cow hovel and not, as it appears now a cart shed. Further evidence of this are the ceramic ventilation pipes in the rear wall (*Figure 11*), such pipes are common in cow hovels providing fresh air to the cows heads.

Internally, there is little of architectural or historical interest remaining; the internal north west gable and rear wall of the left hand box have been skinned in modern breeze blocks, further evidence that this part of the building may have been re-built, the remainder of the walls are the original rubble built faces. The floor appears to be modern disturbed material. There is evidence of what was likely to be the original floor level visible at approximately 800 to 1000mm above current ground level on the north west wall (*Figure 12*). It appears, therefore that the floor level has been reduced at some point. This recent change in floor level again confirms why the building has the appearance of a cart shed rather than a cow hovel. Cow hovels were originally built with low roofs to retain heat; cart sheds were built to include a loft over, and were therefore taller. Evidence of an originally higher floor level again confirms the building as a cow hovel.

The roof is carried on two plain tie beam trusses, lapped at the apex (*Figures 9, 10, & 17*) carrying a pair of trenched purlins, common for such a narrow building span. The trusses do not match; one is oak, while the other is mixed oak and deal. Some of the timbers are only roughly finished. There is extensive evidence of re-used timbers throughout the roof, the clearest evidence of which can be seen on the tie beam of the south eastern truss. On its north west face there are open peg holes, next to which are carpenters marks (*Figure 14*), numbering the peg holes front to back (in its current position) from two to four in Roman numerals. Further evidence of this tie-beam's re-use can be seen on its south east face, where adjacent to the rear wall a series of open tenons can be seen (*Figure 15*). Both the spacing of the tenons and the angle suggest they originally held common rafters and that this beam was originally a wall plate in a different building.

The north westernmost truss is made of both hand finished oak (the principal rafters) and deal (the tie beam). The rear rafter contains an open tenon adjacent to the purlin (*Figure 15*). This location could suggest that there was originally a wind brace here, this is however,

unlikely given the small size of the roof and the lack of a corresponding tenon on the front rafter, and it is more likely that the rafter is again a re-used timber.

The wall plate in the principal elevation appears to be deal and is likely to be original. A number of rase, or shipping marks can be identified on the underside of the timber (*Figure 16*). These marks would be scored into the timber using a rase knife either immediately after purchase or during shipping. Both Arabic and Roman numerals are known to have been used. Once the timbers have been cut interpreting such marks is extremely difficult as they no longer complete, although in this case the rase marks can be tentatively identified Arabic numerals, the number 4 can be clearly made out at the far left of figure 16. The marks are likely to represent ownership, order numbers, shipping information or other such information.

The roof timbers carry a modern corrugated asbestos cement sheet roof, the sales catalogue of 1947 describes the hovel as being stone and slate, this roof is clearly a modern replacement.

4. Conclusion

The first inspection of the building suggested the building was originally a cart shed, with stabling for two horses, however its isolated location meant this would have been unusual, cart sheds were normally within the farmyard. This historic building recording along with documentary evidence confirmed that the building was originally a cow hovel. The building is likely to be mid 19th century in date and was originally part of Borough Hill Farm.

There are a number of re-used timbers of unknown date and origin within the roof structure. The wall plate has a number of well preserved rase marks and is almost certainly original.

Modern repairs and upkeep, including new roofs and re-pointing has concealed or removed some of the historic fabric of the building, however enough remains to confirm the original use of the building.

5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

- 1 320 x 290mm permagraph sheet containing a plan, elevation & notes
- DVD containing 54 digital images
- 2 A4 contact sheets
- 54 Black & White negatives and contact prints
- 2 A4 photo record sheets
- 1 Unbound copy of this report

The archive will be held by ABRS under the temporary site 2013-DFNN 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 East).



Figure 6
South East Facing Gable (looking North West).



Figure 7
North West Facing Gable (looking South East).



Figure 8
Limited View of Rear Elevation (looking West).



Figure 9
North Western Truss (looking North West).



Figure 10
South Eastern Truss (looking South East).



Figure 11
Rear Elevation (Internal) Showing Feeding Hole & Ventilation Pipes (looking North).



Figure 12
Probable Original Floor Level Showing on North West Wall (looking North West).



Figure 13
Empty Tenons on Tie Beam of South Eastern Truss.



Figure 14
Carpenters Mark on Tie Beam of South Eastern Truss.



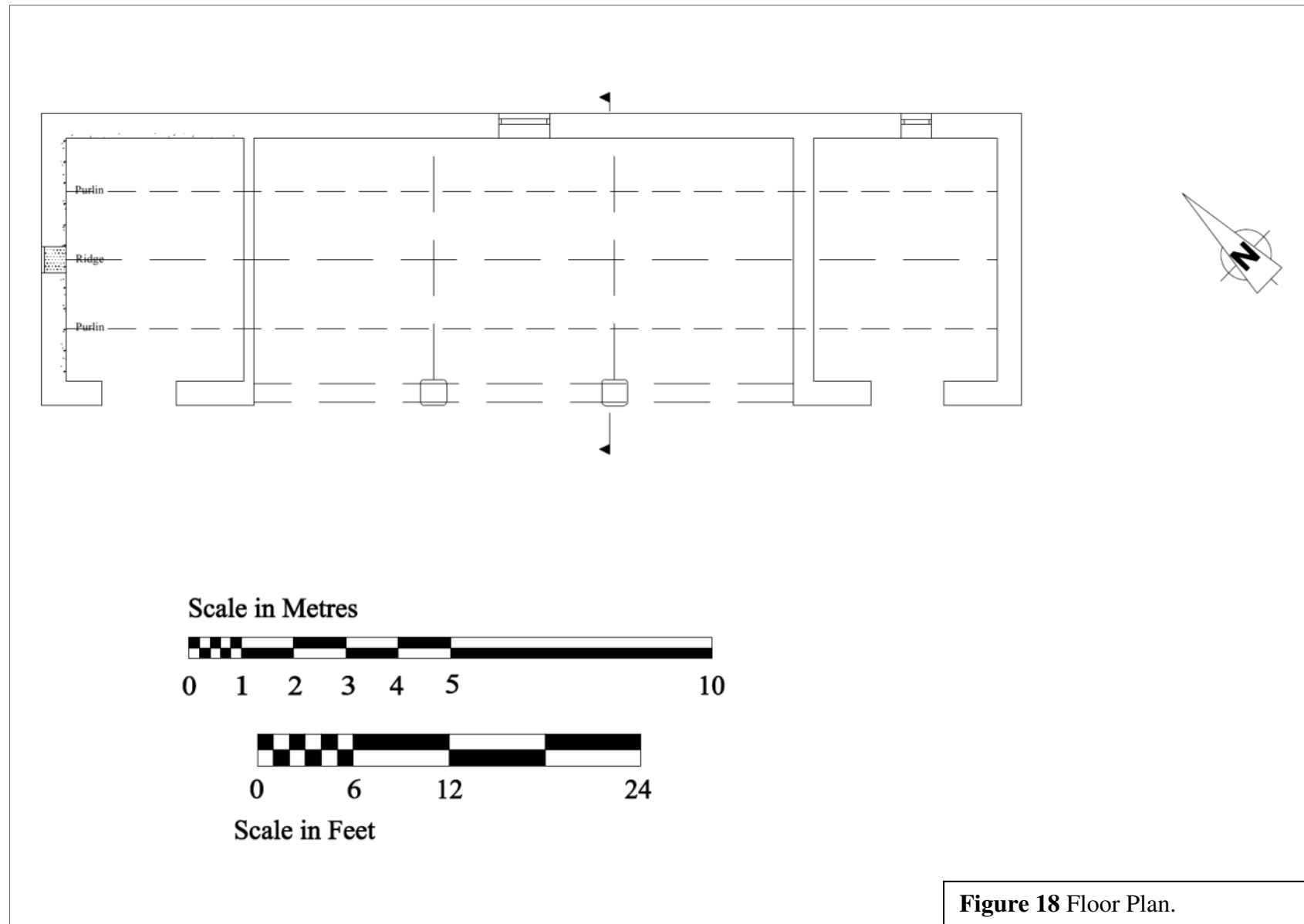
Figure 15
Empty Tenon on Principal Rafter, North West Truss.

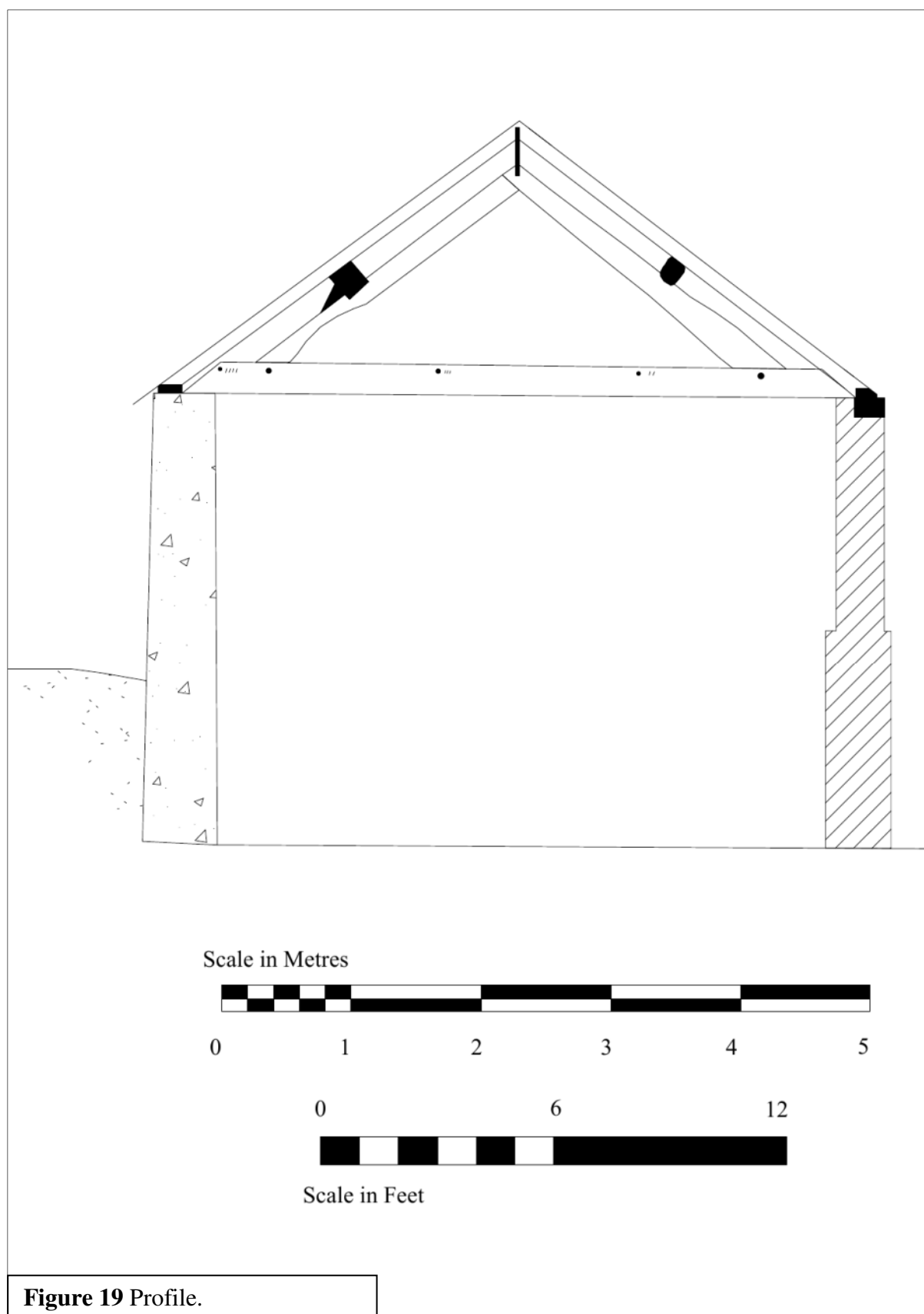


Figure 16
Rase Marks on Wall Plate.



Figure 17
Modern Barn Scheduled for Demolition.





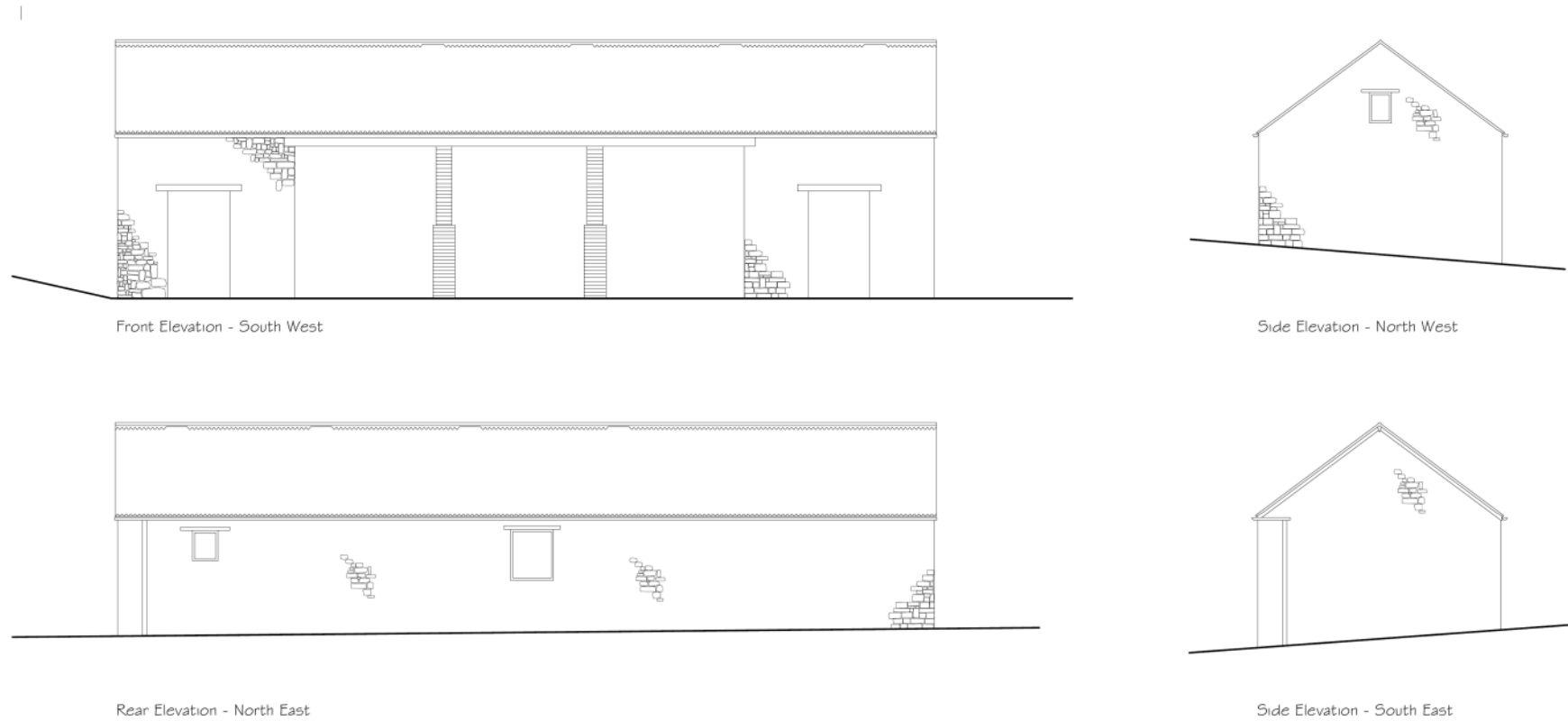


Figure 20 External Elevations As Supplied by Client.

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