

**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey.
Village Farm,
Diseworth,
Leicestershire.
(NGR SK 45129 24498)**

On Behalf of: FJ Dakin & Son Ltd



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February 2015

Planning Permission No N/A

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Archaeology Collections Accession
No X.A16.2015**

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An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of Village Farm (outbuildings), Diseworth, Leicestershire (NGR SK 45129 24498).

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Gerwyn Richards

Summary

This document is an archaeological standing building survey of Village Farm (outbuildings), Diseworth, Leicestershire (SK 45129 24498), commissioned from Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) by FJ Dakin & Son Ltd in advance of the proposed conversion of the buildings to residential use.

Village Farm is a good example of a Leicestershire farm which has survived in its village centre location well into the 20th century. The outbuildings subject to this historic building recording are a common cross section of the farm buildings of the period. The principal building is a timber framed threshing barn and later, animal rearing buildings, reflecting the growth in pastoral farming.

There are elements of recorded buildings which are difficult to understand due to the complexity of structural features in small areas. There are limited features which hint at earlier buildings being partially retained within the standing buildings.

The archaeological building recording survey provides a permanent visual (drawn & photographic) and descriptive record of the building in its current state. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service, under the accession number X.A16.2015.

1. Introduction

Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) were commissioned by FJ Dakin & Son Ltd to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of a number of outbuildings belonging to Village Farm, Hall Gate, Diseworth, Leicestershire (SK 45129 24498 (*Figures 1 & 7*)). Planning permission is being sought for the conversion of the buildings to residential use. The buildings are traditional agricultural buildings believed to date from the mid 19th century, and located within the historic core of the village. The Principal Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to North West Leicestershire 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 the determination of the planning application. The buildings are not statutory listed but are located within the Diseworth Conservation Area and described as “Unlisted Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest” by Diseworth Conservation Area Appraisal & Study (NWLDC 2001).

A Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Building Recording has not been issued, the Principal Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council has been consulted and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI (ABRS 2014-VFDL_WSI)) has been submitted. The project 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

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The village Diseworth is first documented as *Digheswyrth* in the Charter of AD 966, and later as *Digopsworp*; 'worp' refers to a walled or more likely in this case an enclosed settlement. By Domesday, the village is recorded *Diwort*. The use of the suffix 'Gate', as in Hall Gate and Lady Gate as street names within the village may be a reflection of Viking influence, 'gata' meaning the way to in Norse, and is a common usage within the Danelaw. It is documented that Danes wintered in the surrounding area in AD 874-5. In Domesday Diseworth is owned by William Loveth, in the following centuries as the parish changed hands frequently. Langley Priory, situated southeast of the village became the primary landowner and remained so until the Dissolution. Margaret Beaufort, mother to Henry VIII bought a considerable part of the village in the 15th century and materials, including timber and income from the parish was used towards the foundation of Christ's College, Cambridge.

The historic settlement core is recorded by the Historic Environment Record (HER Ref MLE5936). At the western extremity of the village is a series of earthworks interpreted as a manorial site (Hartley 1984), documentary references to the site include references to a 'capital messuage with a garden, dovecote and outbuildings'. The field is still known as Hall

Close and is recorded by the Historic Environment Record (HER Ref MLE4759). One of the buildings subject to this historic building recording is on the periphery of this manorial site, but post-dates it.



Figure 2
Diseworth Enclosure Map (1796).

The earliest map recording Diseworth is that drawn by John Prior in 1777, it records the village of Diseworth as well as a number of buildings fronting the principal thoroughfares, the published map, however misses a far proportion of the village and the remaining map contains insufficient detail to confirm any of the buildings are those of Village Farm. The village was enclosed in late 18th century, the accompanying map (ROLLR Ref Ma/En/A/90/1 (*Figure 2*)) records the parish as a whole in detail, but not the village core, it is likely that the village core had been subject to an earlier enclosure and as such not subject to this 18th century enclosure. The location of Village Farm (Site B) can be established using the alignment of Hall Gate and Diseworth Brook, there is also a lane joining Hall Gate following the alignment of the current Shakespeare Drive (to the west of Village Farm) indicating this is a lane of some antiquity. The location of the Site A can also be identified on the Enclosure Map using the alignment of Hall Gate; in this case the area is identified in the map key as Hall Close, no doubt named after the manorial site within the field and number 102. 102 is recorded as being occupied by George Baker.

The village remained rural throughout its history, Melville's Leicestershire Directory of 1854 records 17 farmers within the village, but no specific mention of Village Farm, which remained the case throughout the 19th century. White's Directory of Leicestershire of 1877 records a William Hutchinson, a farmer with the address of Hall Gate, who could conceivably be occupying Village Farm, however a later White's Directory, 1892 records two farmers on Hall Gate, Mrs Fanny Hutchinson and George Marshall, so identifying Village Farm is difficult.

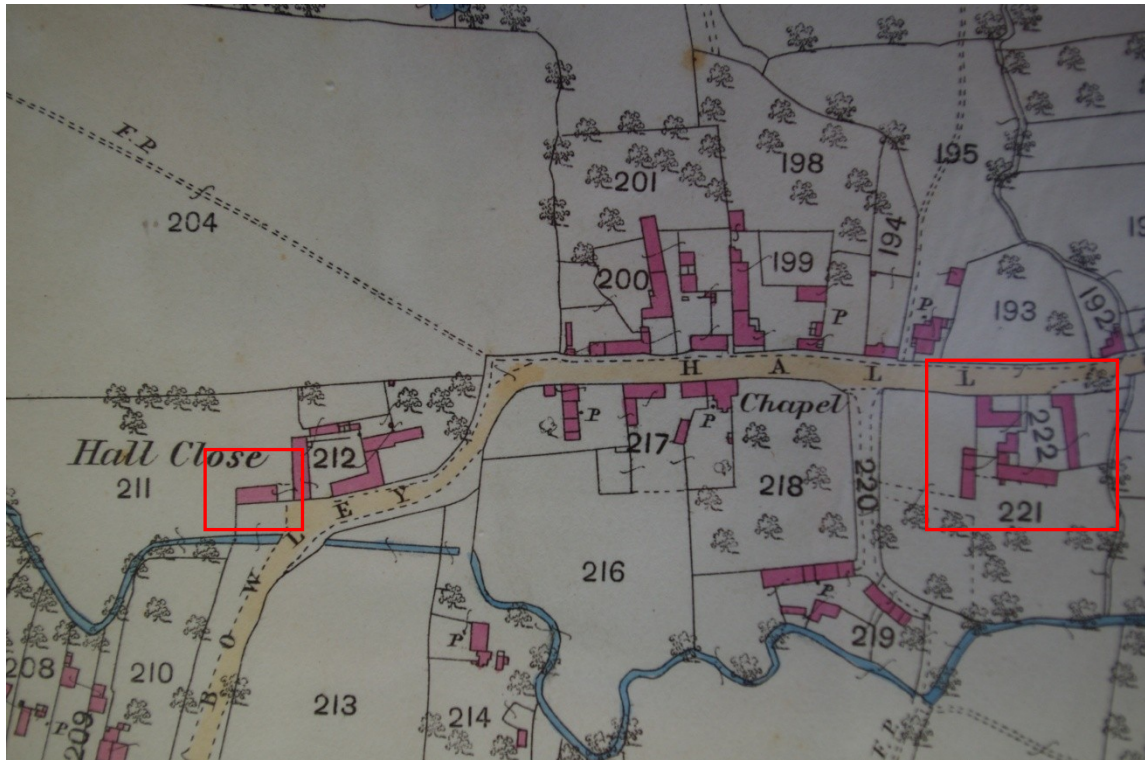


Figure 3
First Edition Ordnance Survey X.9 (1884).
1:2500

In 1884 the first edition Ordnance Survey covering Diseworth was published (ROLLR Ref X.9 (*Figure 3*)). Village Farm and Hall Close are clearly identifiable, as are the buildings within these two areas. Site A consists of a single linear building to the north of Hall Gate. Village Farm consists of a number of buildings with a yard to the east of the farm house, which fronts Hall Gate. There is large linear building forming the southern end of the yard, its appearance suggests it may have been a threshing barn. The linear range forming the easternmost boundary follows almost exactly the current building and is therefore likely to be one and same.

Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland published in 1900 provides the first clear record of Village Farm, in 1900 Mrs Hugh Ferguson of Village Farm is listed, Mrs Ferguson was again listed in 1908. Following 1908, Village Farm again disappears from the available trade directories, finally being re-listed in 1922 when an Albert Marshall of Village Farm, Marshall remained at Village Farm until at least 1941.

In 1903 the second edition Ordnance Survey was published (ROLLR Ref X.9 (*Figure 4*)). Both sites remain largely as they were recorded by the first edition (*Fig. 3*). The only significant differences are Site A is now clearly recorded as being open fronted to the north, other Ordnance Survey first editions do record open fronted buildings, so it is likely that in this case the building has undergone some alteration and is now open fronted. A clearly recorded filed boundary has also appeared separating the building from Hall Close. Secondly, within Site B, the small yard to the north of the threshing barn has apparently been roofed.

The third edition Ordnance Survey published in 1921 records the two sites identically to the second edition and is, therefore not reproduced for the purpose of this record.



Figure 4
Second Edition Ordnance Survey X.9 (1903).
1:2500

Following World War II historic maps show significant alterations to both sites and especially Village Farm, reflecting the industrialisation of farming. The 1961 Ordnance Survey (ROLLR Ref SK4424 & 4524 (*Figure 5*)) records new buildings on both sites. Both buildings are recorded as open sided, most probably Dutch Barns. However, the earlier buildings recorded by previous editions still remain in both sites. The 1977 edition shows no change and is, therefore not reproduced for the purpose of this record.

The 1992 Ordnance Survey (ROLLR Ref SK4524 (*Figure 6*)) records Village Farm as it currently stands, there is no later sheets available showing Site A. Village farm has undergone significant re-development; the southernmost threshing barn has been largely truncated, leaving only the westernmost end, replaced by a large open sided building, the isolated linear range to the south west of Home Farm house has also been demolished. A number of the earlier buildings do remain.



Figure 5
1961 Edition Ordnance Survey SK4424 & 4524.
1:2500



Figure 6
1992 Edition Ordnance Survey SK4524.
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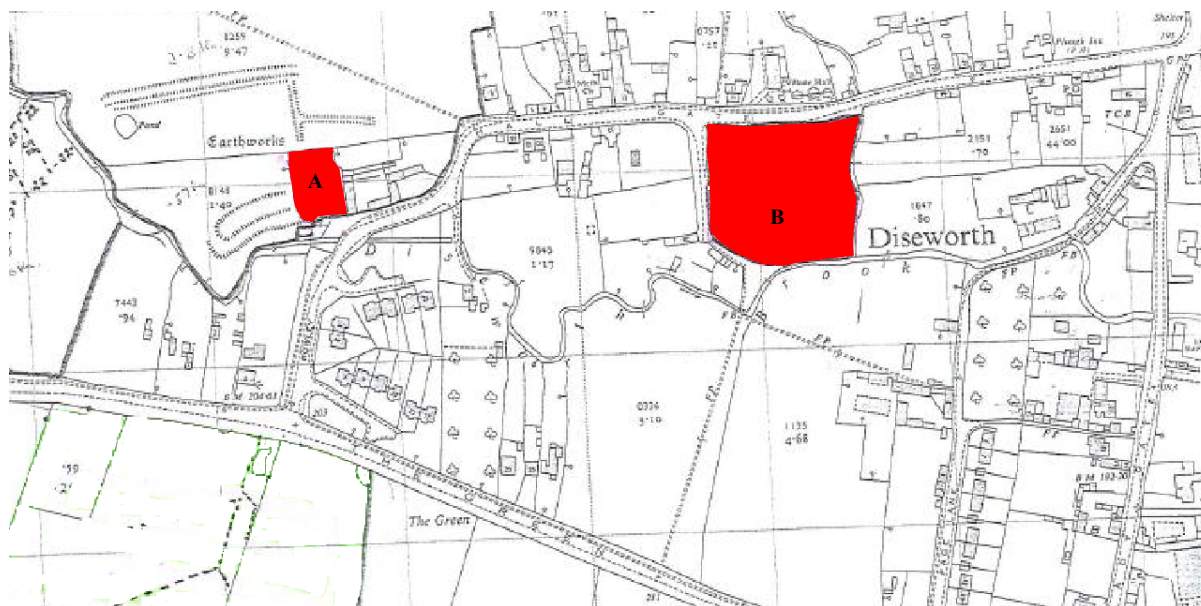


Figure 7
Proposed Development Areas in Red.
(Provided by client. Not to Scale).

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 proposed 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 Leicestershire Records Office (ROLLR).

Orientation: Site A, the axis of the building is orientated approximately east to west (*Figure 7*), with the principal elevation, facing north. Site B, the axis of the buildings is orientated approximately north to south (*Figure 7*), with the principal elevations facing the yard. 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 north (Site A) and the yard (Site B). Site A consist of a single building, Site B consists of two linear ranges. A letter prefix has been allocated to each building as part of the historic building recording and a number suffix has been added for significant partitions where required.

All historic maps are reproduced with north to top of page, following Ordnance Survey standard unless indicated otherwise with appropriate north arrow and key.

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

The site visits were carried out by Gerwyn Richards on February 2nd 2015.

3. Description of the Buildings

3.1 Site A

Site A is located on the western fringe of the historic village core fronting Hall Gate and Diseworth Brook (*Figure 7*); there are a number of buildings within the site, the recorded building is that on the southernmost boundary, fronting Hall Gate. The building is largely stone-built with half brick gables with a corrugated concrete asbestos roof (*Figure 20*). The bricks are largely 9 inch x 2 ¾ inch x 4 ½ inch in no discernible bond. The stone work is largely rubble, with some limited coursing towards the ground level, included within the stone work are some large boulders, some barely below eaves level. Also included within the stonework is part of a mill stone or whet stone (*Figure 21*) on the east facing gable.

Internally the building consists of four bays, open to the north. The chamfered and stopped wall plate is carried on three plain iron columns (*Figure 23*). The roof is carried on deal king post trusses and paired purlins (*Figures 22 & 27*). The location of the building suggests it may have originally been an open fronted field hovel, however, the roof is far too high for a field hovel and in all likelihood the building was originally a cart shed.

The building is clearly recorded by the first edition Ordnance Survey (*Fig. 3*), but does not appear to have been open-fronted at that time. The building also appears to have been associated with the former Hall Farm. Both the cartographic sources as well as the physical evidence suggest that the building has only recently become part of Village Farm and may have also undergone significant re-building work in the early 20th century. The roof structure and plain columns suggest a later rather than earlier date.

3.2 Site B

Building A

Building A forms the westernmost boundary of the Village Farmyard (*Figure 24*); the building is linear in plan aligned north – south and built of local mixed rubble stone brick, under a plain tile roof. The brickwork of the rear (east) wall is 8 ½ x 3 x 4 ½ inch red bricks laid in a Flemish Garden Wall bond (three stretcher bricks to one header brick in each course), at ground level there is low stone-built plinth capped with blue cant bricks, at the northern end the stone wall extends some 1000mm above the current ground level, hinting at a potentially earlier building phase here (*Figure 9*). The northernmost gable is largely stone-built, with brick upper courses, again hinting at a potentially earlier stone-built building.

The principal elevation facing the farm house to the west is rubble-built with brick window and door dressings in cant bricks (*Figure 8*). There is a small open-fronted lean to abutting this elevation at its northern end, although awkwardly located both cartographic and physical evidence suggests it is contemporary, the bricks, however being soft, handmade 2 ¾ inch bricks suggests this lean to may pre-date the brick-built rear wall and again hints at potentially earlier building phases.

Internally, the range consist of three bays, the northernmost bay, (4) being separate and the wall being stone-built including some graffiti in the softer stone (*Figure 11*). To the south

the building is divided into two unequal sized bays by a small central bay with no external access, but with internal access to both bays, almost certainly a central feed store. The southernmost bay was later sub-divided into (1) and (2) with the construction of a timber-built wall. The two larger bays, (1) and (3) have concrete built stalls and mangers along the rear wall with tethering for six beasts in pairs in each bay, the interior of (2) has been much altered and the opening enlarged for use as a garage, however the outline remains of the mangers can be seen on the rear wall and floor. The use of concrete for the stalls suggests the building was in use as a dairy parlour well into the 20th century adhering to the Milk and Dairies Act of 1926.

The roof is carried on three king post trusses with raking struts with purlins, all in deal (*Figure 10*). There are no identifying features visible on the timbers and the heel of the king post is bolted suggesting a relatively late date.

3.3 ***Building B***

Building B is located to the west of building A and forms the western end of the yard to the rear (south) of the farmhouse (*Figure 24*). The building is largely linear in plan, but consists of a number of different elements. Externally the building is brick-built under a plain tile and pan tile roof. The brick dimensions vary, reflecting the different elements, all with the exception of B(4) are likely to be mid to late 19th century in date, the bricks used in B(4) are 2 ½ inch handmade red bricks and are likely to be late 18th or early 19th in date. There is only limited physical evidence of phasing visible externally, most notably the straight joint between (2) & (3) and (4) and between (4) and (5) suggesting a broad chronology for the range.

By far the most significant element of B is the timber framing of (4); three bays of an east – west aligned building remain, largely concealed by the later and more modern buildings. The building originally extended to the east as indicated by historic maps. The south facing long elevation is partially visible as the rear (north) wall (*Figure 12*). The remaining frame consists of wall posts and straight braces. Limited remains of potential rails suggests the building was originally a box frame, on the north west corner limited remains of potentially original infill panelling remains (*Figure 14*). The tie beam is exposed on the west facing gable, which itself has been largely rebuilt using 20th century brick (*Figure 13*). The timber framing and brick dimensions suggests that (4) is likely to be the earliest element within the range.

Internally, the remainder of the building is more complex, again reflecting the multiple phases. The northernmost part, (1) has been rendered and the ceiling underdrawn leaving little visible of historical significance, there are two smaller bays at the southern end of (1), under the same roof. To the south are (2) and (3), there is straight joint clearly visible between these two bays and B(4), suggesting the two post date (4), however a thick rubble built wall dividing (2) and (3) (*Figure 15*) complicates this chronology. It is possible that this stone-built wall may be a remnant of an earlier building fossilised by the surrounding 19th century buildings. There is a blocked opening in the stone wall between (2) and (3), the origins and purpose of which is unclear. The roof is mix of modern deal and earlier timber of varying scantling. There are two separate ridges over (1), (2) and (3), which again is an indication of the complexity of this small part of the building.

The interior of (4) is much simpler, the eastern gable is open into a modern steel portal building; Mr Dakin states that (4) originally extended further to the east and was demolished in the 1970s in order to construct the current building. There is ground floor, divided by a modern timber-built wall and a modern first floor. There are four wall posts remaining on the southern wall and three on the northern wall, all jowled. There are two trusses remaining, both truncated and altered by modern re-roofing; the trusses have collared concave principal rafters atop a braced tie beam (*Figures 16, 17, 18, & 26*), all pegged. There are open mortises on the upper faces suggesting the presence of wind braces. The purlins are almost certainly re-used with apparent stave grooves visible on the southernmost purlin (*Figure 19*). Extensive use has been made of modern timber to stabilise and repair both trusses, leaving little of the original structure.

The final, southernmost bay, (5) is an open fronted lean-to abutting the southern elevation of (4); it is brick-built with a box profile tinned steel roof.

4. Conclusion

Village Farm is a good example of a Midlands farm which has survived in its village centre location well into the 20th century. The farm, given its location is likely to have early post medieval origins and contains physical remains dating to the 18th century. The most significant of which is the early timber framed threshing barn, there are also hints of earlier buildings including the limited remains of a potentially stone-built building abutting the threshing barn.

The principal and possibly earliest building is the timber framed threshing barn, this however became less important as pastoral farming began to replace arable farming in the later 19th century and the animal rearing buildings became equally, or more important, as a result the other animal rearing building were re-built or re-modelled.

There is only limited documentary evidence to support the physical evidence recorded during the historic building recording, but it is likely that the farm underwent significant re-building during the late 19th or early 20th century, when it was likely that building A was at least partially re-built and Site A likely became part of Village Farm. Building B has a more complicated history, with the potentially early remains of stone-built building within the current structure, but with the limited visible remains establishing this history is difficult.

5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

- 1 A1 paper sheet containing annotated plans & notes
- 1 A3 paper sheet containing annotated plan & notes
- DVD containing 79 digital images
- 3 A4 contact sheets
- 77 Black & White negatives and contact prints
- 3 A4 photo record sheets
- 1 Unbound copy of this report

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A16. 2015.

A version of the summary (above) will be submitted to the editor of the local journal *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for inclusion in the next edition.

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The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) Feb 2015.

7. Colour Plates



Figure 8
Building A, Principal Elevation (Looking East-North East).



Figure 9
Building A, Rear Elevation (Looking West-South West).



Figure 10
Building A(1), Roof Structure.



Figure 11
Building A(4), Graffiti.



Figure 12
Building B(4), External Timber Frame on South Facing Long Elevation (Looking North).



Figure 13 Building B(4) West Facing
Gable (looking East).



Figure 14
Building B, Remaining Infill Panels, North West Corner.



Figure 15
Building B, Stone Built Wall Between (2) & (3) (Looking West-North West).



Figure 16
Building B(4), Westernmost Roof Truss.



Figure 17
Building B(4), Easternmost Roof Truss.



Figure 18
Building B(4), Jowled Wall Post, Brace & Tie Beam at Northern End (Western Truss).



Figure 19
Building B(4), Southernmost Purlin with Stave Grooves.



Figure 20
Site A, Principal Elevation (Looking South-South West).



Figure 21
Site A, Mill Stone in Eastern Gable.

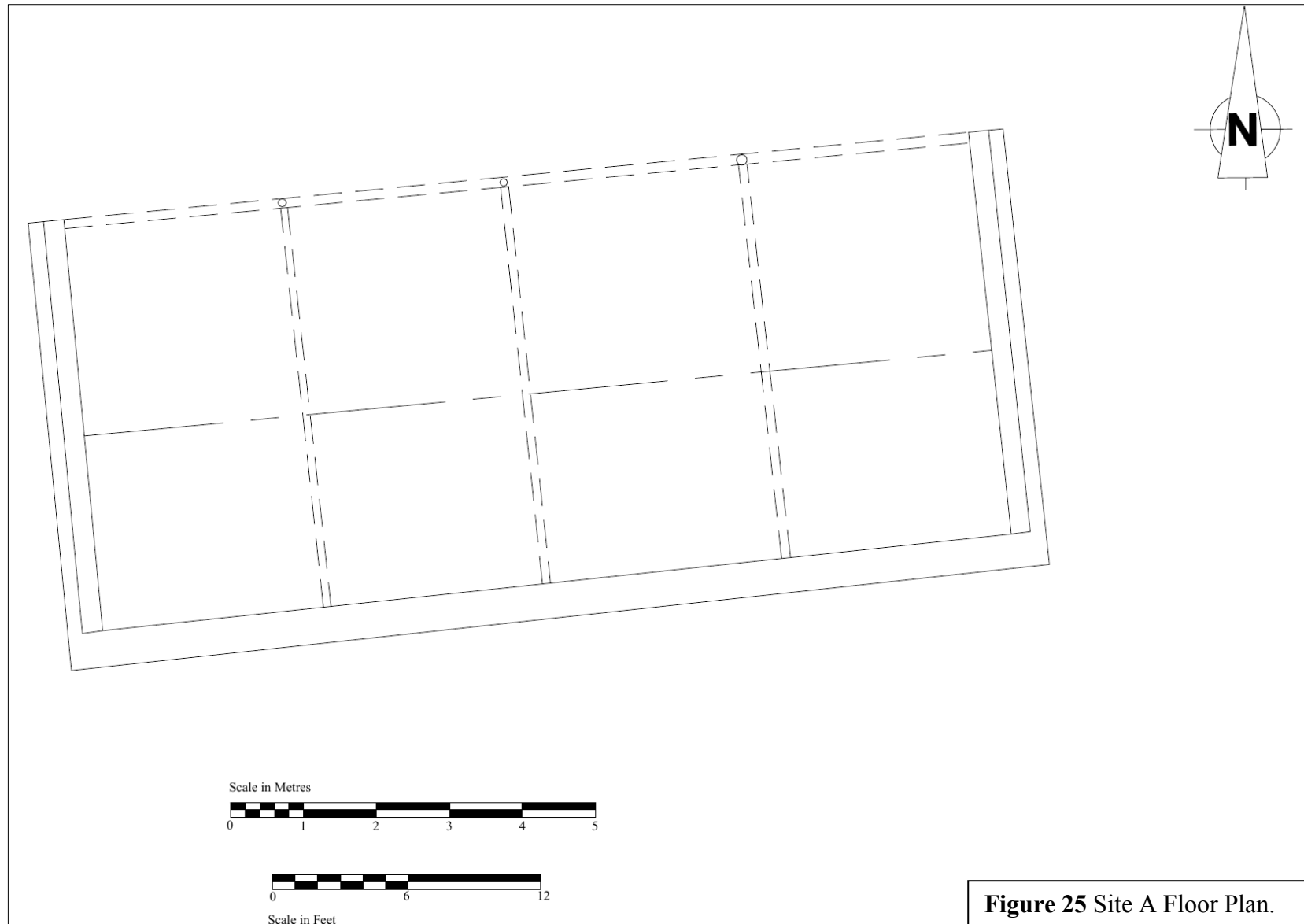


Figure 22
Site A, Roof Structure.



Figure 23 Chamfered & Stopped Wall
Plate & Plain Column.





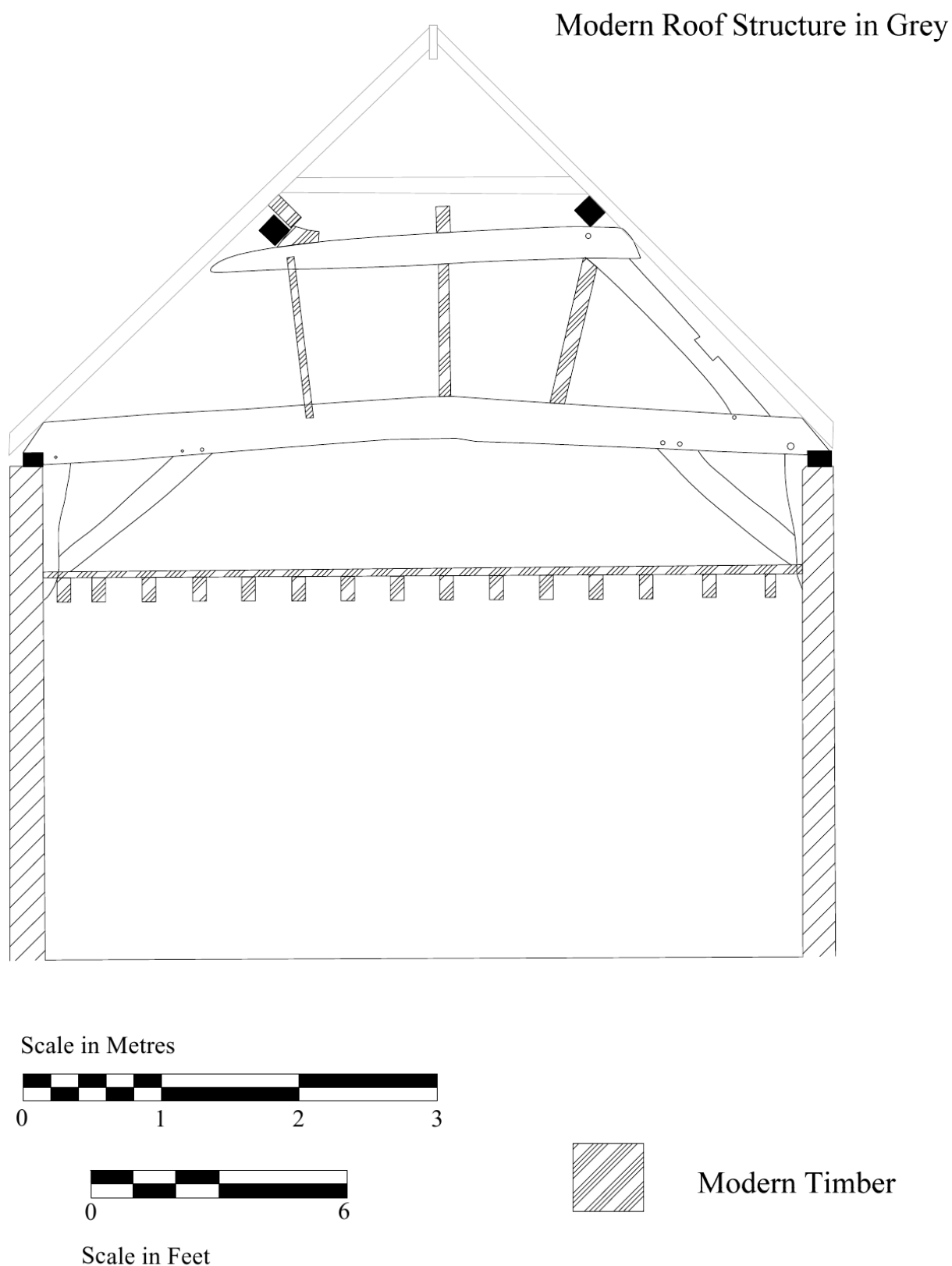
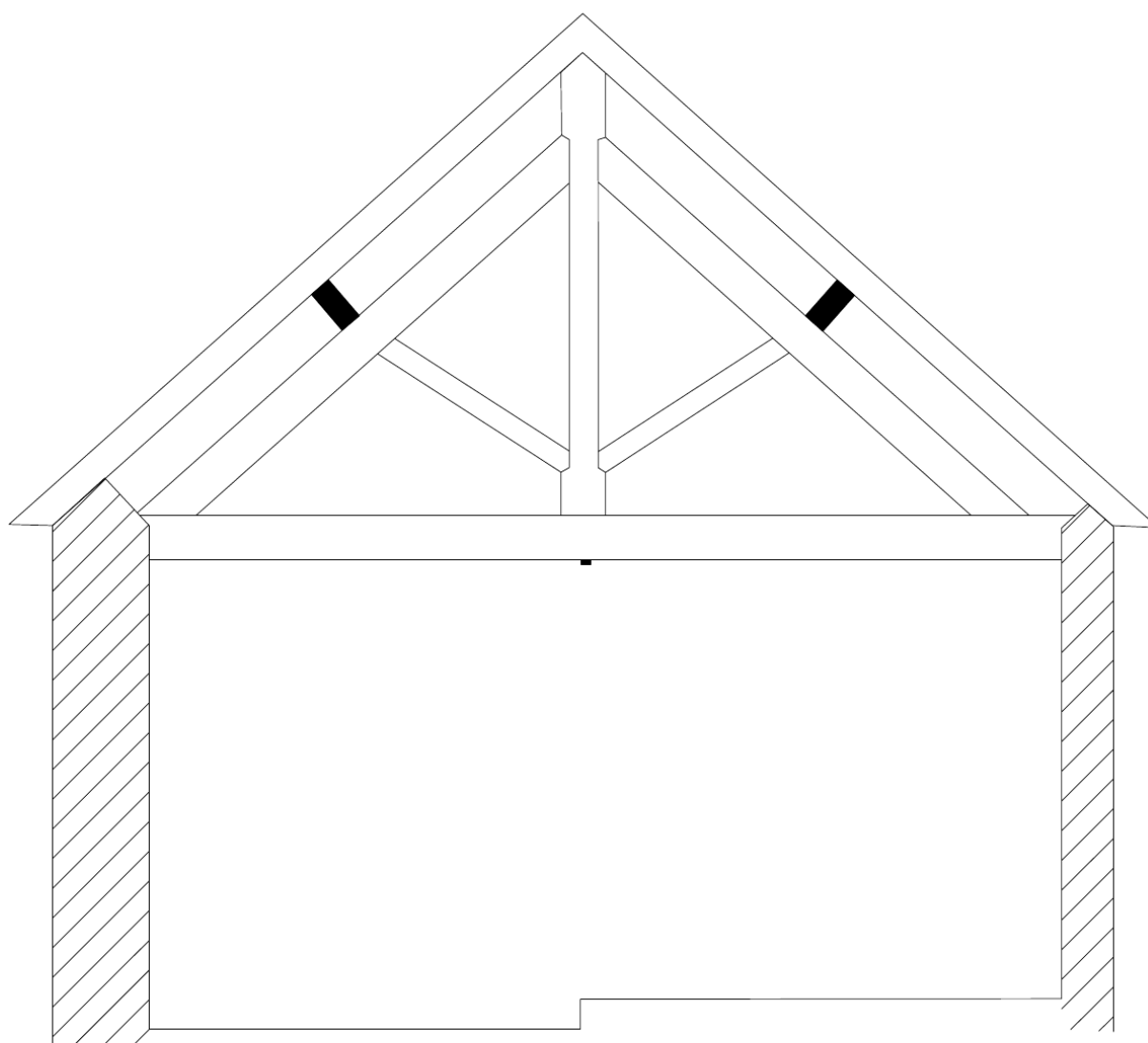


Figure 26 Building B(4) Profile.



Scale in Metres



Scale in Feet

Figure 27 Building A(4) Profile.

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