

Archaeological  
Building  
Recording  
Services

**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey  
Norris Hill Farm  
Blackfordby Lane  
Moir  
Leicestershire**

**(NGR SK 32481 17380)**

**On Behalf of Mr G.T. Massey**



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**Blackfordby Lane**

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**On Behalf of Mr G.T. Massey**

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No X.A110.2018**

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**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of Outbuildings at Norris Hill Farm,  
Blackfordby Lane, Moira, Leicestershire (NGR SK 32481 17380).**

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## **An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of Outbuildings at Norris Hill Farm, Blackfordby Lane, Moira, Leicestershire (NGR SK 32481 17380).**

### **Summary**

*This document is an archaeological standing building survey of outbuildings at Norris Hill Farm, Blackfordby Lane, Moira, Leicestershire (SK 32481 17380), commissioned from Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) by Mr G.T. Massey in advance of the proposed conversion of the buildings to residential use.*

*The outbuildings at Norris Hill Farm are known heritage assets and curtilage listed as part of Norris Hill Farm, they are an extremely interesting range of buildings built during the 1860s and following the most modern and up-to-date model farm principles of the period. The farm was constructed on a virgin site and later became associated with the nearby Norris Hill Hall, before the two were sold into separate ownership only to come under the ownership of George Massey Snr in the 1930s.*

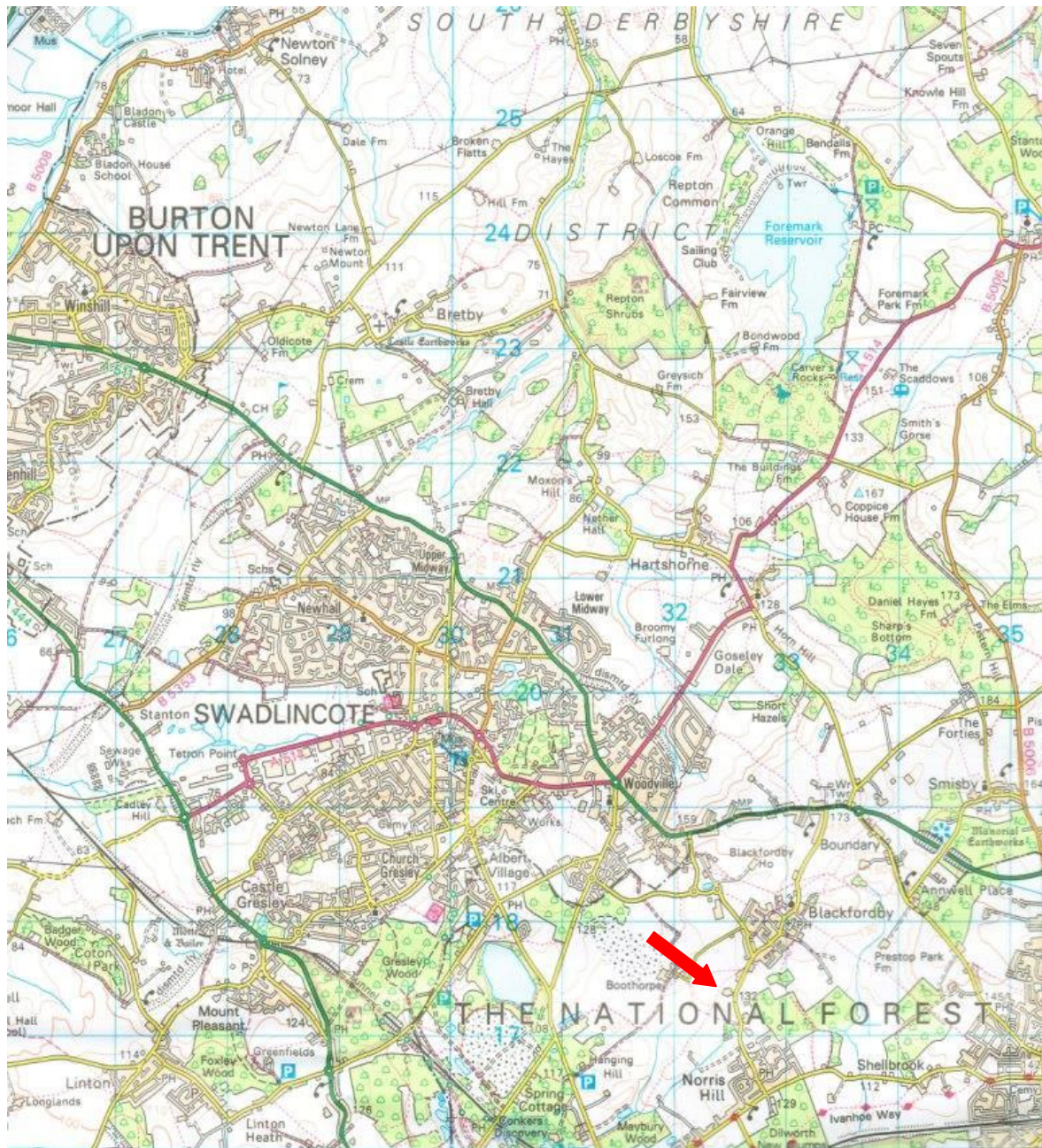
*The buildings are extremely well laid out with feeding passages in all of the cowsheds allowing full and under cover access to all of the animal rearing areas of the buildings. The success of this original layout is confirmed by the significant lack of modern alterations which have occurred to the buildings since.*

*The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums Service, under the accession number X.A110.2018.*

### **1. Introduction**

Archaeological Building Recording Services (ABRS) were commissioned by Mr G.T Massey to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of outbuildings associated with Norris Hill Farm, Blackfordby Lane, Moira, Leicestershire (SK 32481 17380 (*Figures 1, & 22*)). Planning permission and listed building consent has been granted for the conversion of the outbuildings to residential use. The buildings are traditionally built agricultural buildings, believed to date from the mid 19th century. The Principal Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, as advisor to North West Leicestershire District Council has recommended that an archaeological standing building survey to Historic England Level 2 as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016) be carried out prior to any proposed works being carried out. The buildings are curtilage listed as part of the Grade II listed Norris Hill Farmhouse (NHLE No 1073665, HER Ref MLE15134). The buildings are not located within a Conservation Area.

The project was completed following a written scheme of investigation ((WSI) ABRS 2018-NHBL\_WSI) approved by the Principal Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct*, and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2014).

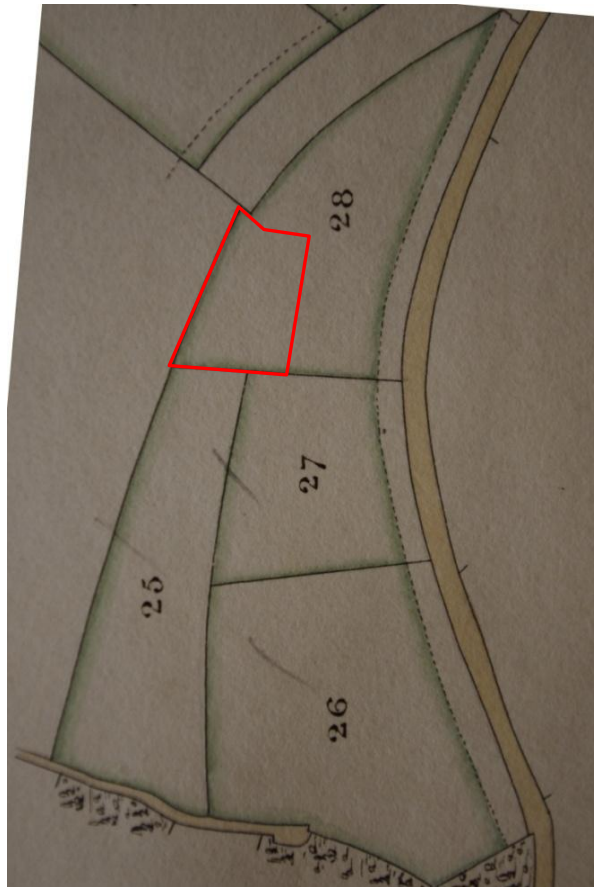


**Figure 1**  
Site Location

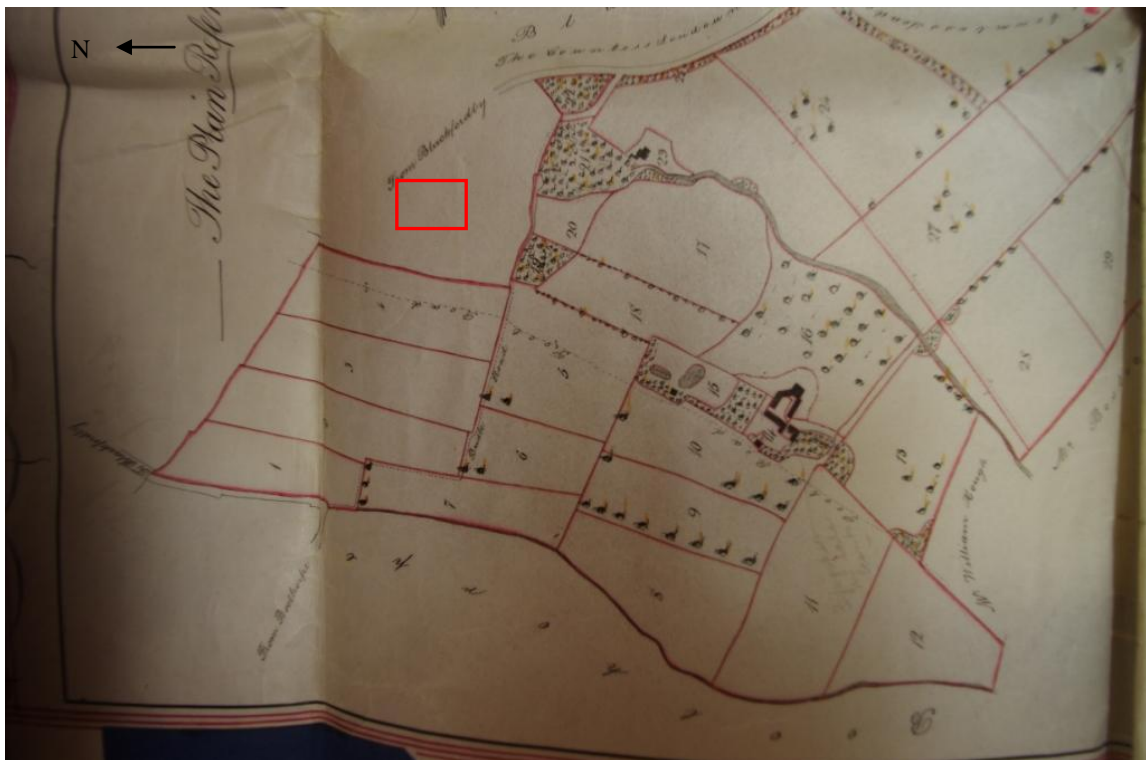
Reproduced from 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office.  
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The current Parish of Blackfordby was formed in 1876 from portions of the parishes of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Seal, and Hartshorne and included the villages of Blackfordby and Boundary. Earlier cartographic sources record the settlement as Blaughterby in the 16th century. The Parish was originally held by the Hastings Family of Ashby de la Zouch.

The listing description for Norris Hill (sometimes spelt Norrishill) Farm describes the farm as a mid 19th century farmhouse, the 1842 Tithe Map (ROLLR Ref Ti/39/1 (*Figure 2*)) does appear to support this as it records the area of Norris Hill Farm as un-developed fields. The accompanying apportionment describes the fields as arable occupied by John Mason, under the ownership of Sarel Andrew Lovering Esq. The first definitive reference to Norris Hill

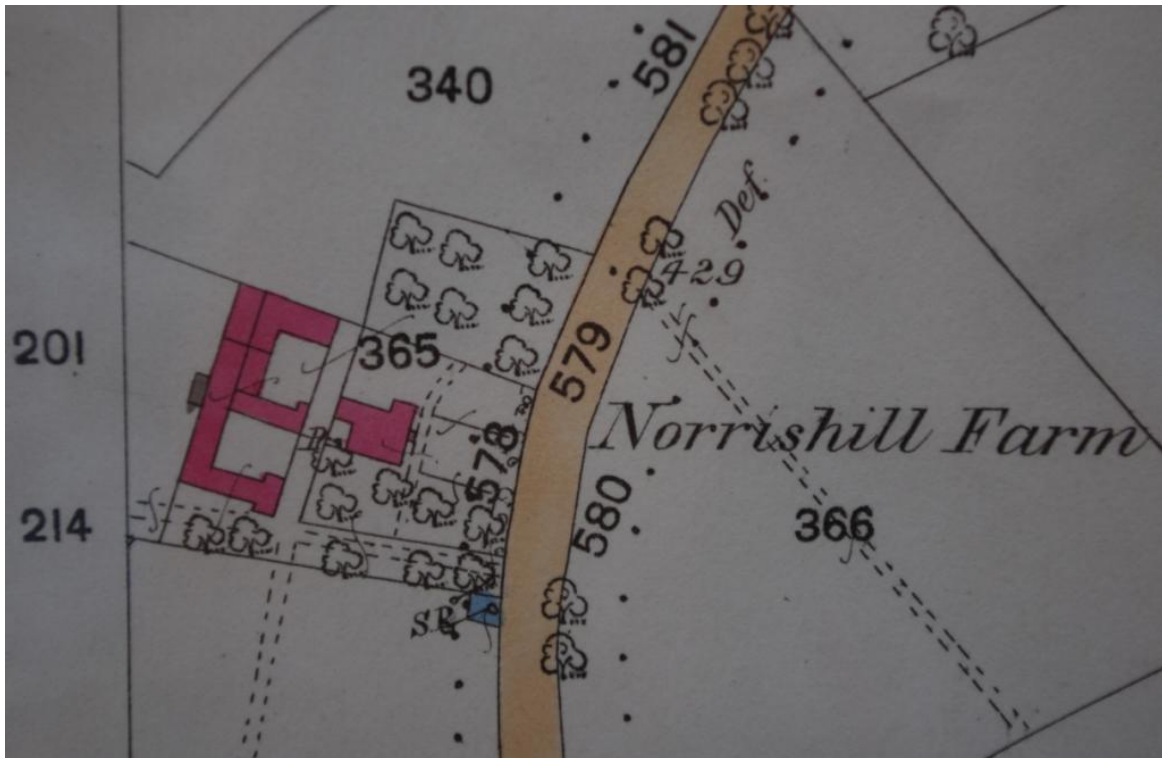


**Figure 2**  
Blackfordby Tithe Map (1842).



**Figure 3**  
1869 Conveyance of Norris Hill Hall (Approximate Location of Norris Hill Farm Highlighted).

occurs in Whites Directory of 1863, where a Henry Brown, Farmer is indicated as the owner of Norris Hill. It appears, therefore that the widely held assumption that Norris Hill Farm was constructed as Home Farm for Norris Hill Hall is incorrect, further evidence of this can be seen in the map attached to a conveyance of Norris Hill Hall dated 1869 and retained by Mr Massey (*Figure 3*) which clearly records the site of Norris Hill Farm as beyond the boundaries of the Estate. Frustratingly, but unsurprisingly the map does not include any detail of the area of Norris Hill which would confirm the construction date for the farm itself. Both Drakes Directory of 1861 and the Post Office Directory of 1855 list Norris Hill Hall, which was constructed in 1845 by Henry Brown, an Ashby Solicitor, but neither mention Norris Hill Farm, it is likely, therefore that the farm dates to the late 1850s or early 1860s.



**Figure 4**  
First Edition Ordnance Survey (1882).

The first edition Ordnance Survey was published in 1882 (ROLLR Ref XV.12 (*Figure 4*)), it is the first available representation of Norris Hill Farm. The Farm is clearly identified as Norrishill Farm and consists of an “E” shaped range of outbuildings to the west of the farmhouse, there is an iron or timber framed building abutting the westernmost elevation. The farm buildings appear to be planned and potentially built following a model farm plan.

In 1888 Kelly’s Directory lists a William Brown, Farmer at Norris Hill Farm, in all probability a descendent of Henry Brown, William remained on the farm until at least 1891. In 1895 William Ward occupied Norris Hill, William remained at Norris Hill until at least 1915. Kelly’s Directory of 1922 lists Fred Hutchison at both Norris Hill Farm and at Norris Hill Hall, confirming that by 1922 both the Hall and the Farm were under the same ownership, a Guilbert Hutchinson had purchased Norris Hill Hall in 1921. Fred Hutchison is again recorded at both addresses in 1928, although Mr Massey does not recall Fred Hutchinson ever having resided at the farm, he is said to have lived in a cottage in the grounds of the Hall.



In March 1927 Norris Hill Farm was offered for sale by auction on behalf of Mrs Mary Bentham, who had only lived there for some two years. The sales particulars retained by Mr Massey describe the farm buildings as consisting of Tie-up Shedding for 43 cows, Stabling for 5 Cart Horses, 2 Loose Boxes, Wagon Hovel and Implement Shed, Store Room, Hay Barn and Implement Shed with large Granary over, Mixing Place, Pigstyes [sic], Carriage or Motor House, Tool House and Duck House. In the Stackyard there was also a Dutch Barn, as confirmed by the 1923 Ordnance Survey (ROLLR Ref XV.12 (*Figure 5*)) and a calf shed in enclosure No. 49, which is to the north of the farm buildings. Norris Hill Farm was purchased by Mr George Massey Snr, father of the current owner, George Massey.

A photograph taken during the 1930s (*Figure 6*) gives a glimpse of the buildings and shows a dovecote on one of the buildings. The farm has remained with the Massey Family since. Mapping shows no significant changes to the buildings throughout the remainder of the 20th century, larger scale farm buildings are constructed to the north west and some minor extensions added to the traditional buildings. Mr Massey Snr went on to purchase Norris Hill House, reuniting the two properties; Norris Hill Hall was then demolished during World War II.



**Figure 5**  
1923 Edition Ordnance Survey.



**Figure 6**

Early/Mid 20th Century Photograph of George Massey Snr (centre) Showing Farm Buildings in Background.

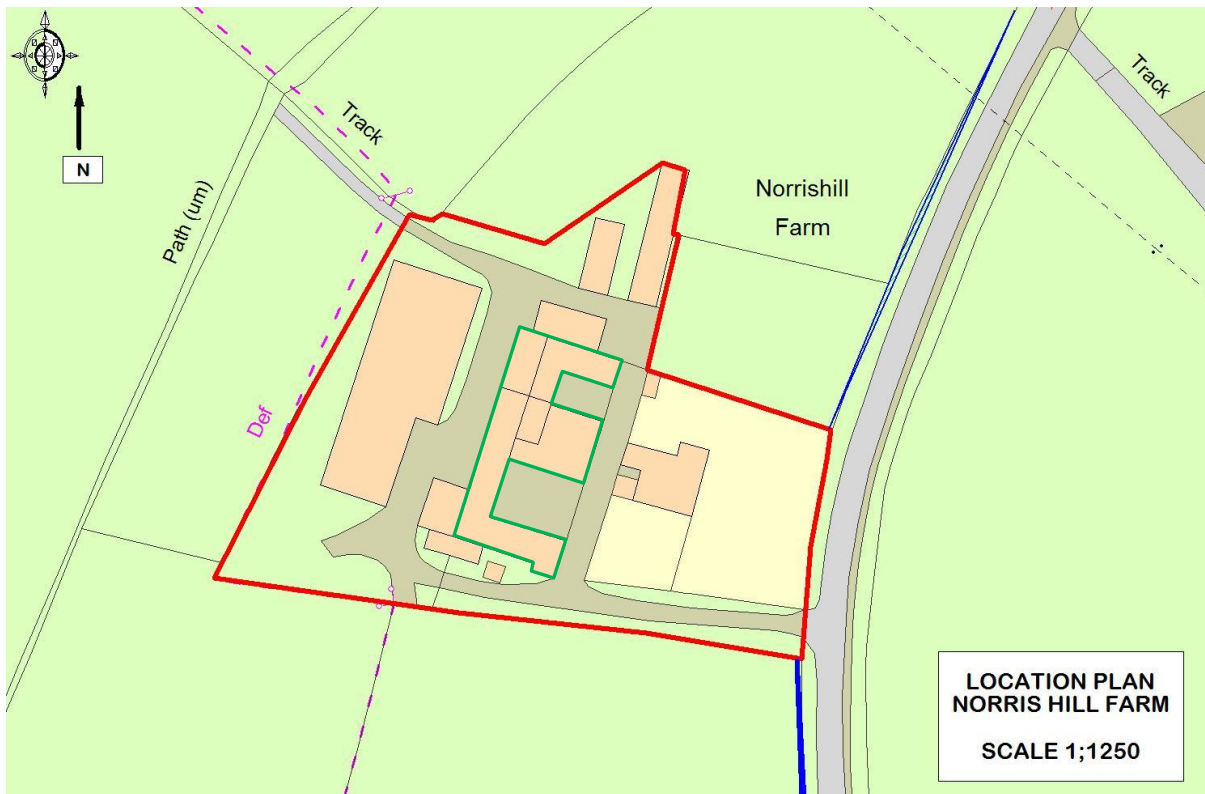
## 2. Aims and Methodology

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

- To provide a comprehensive written, drawn and photographic record of the building prior to the permitted conversion, as it represents upstanding archaeological/historical remains of local, regional or national importance.
- The project report will provide a comprehensive review of the local and regional historical context of the structures recorded by the project, making reference to the appropriate regional research agendas.
- The project will produce a high quality, fully integrated archive suitable for long-term deposition in order to 'preserve by record' the buildings in their current form prior to conversion and/or demolition.

Desk-based research included the analysis of readily available documentary and cartographic sources including Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) & the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland (ROLLR).

The Historic Building Recording verified existing measured survey drawings (supplied by the client) and completed a photographic (35mm monochrome negative) and written record of the building to the equivalent of Historic England Level 2. An ordered archive has been compiled and will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service, under the accession number X.A110.2018. An Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) record has been completed.



**Figure 7**  
Plan of the Proposed Development Area (in Red), Recorded Buildings in Green.  
(Provided by client)

*Orientation:* The buildings subject to this historic building recording are “E”- shaped in plan, with the long axis orientated north – north east to south – south west (*Figures 7 & 22*) for ease of description this is taken hereafter to be north to south. The principal elevation faces east. 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 east. For the purposes of historic building letter identification has been allocated to each principal element and a number suffix added for significant partitions where required.

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

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

The site visit was carried out by Gerwyn Richards on November 8th 2018.

### 3. Description of the Building

The building is “E”-shaped in plan, the long axis is aligned north – south while the shorter axis are east – west, forming two foldyards to the west (*Figure 22*). The building is brick-built under a plain tile roofs and is a single phase, brick dimensions, although not always accurate of 9inch x 3inch x 4 ½inch supports the cartographic evidence of a mid 19th century construction date. The large north – south range consists of two principal bays, the northernmost being two storey, a large granary over a 4 bay wagon hovel, (6) (*Figure 8*). It

is common for the openings of a wagon hovel to face away from the farmyard, the intention being that animals were less likely to enter the building from the yards and damage either themselves or the machinery. The openings are carried on timber bressumers, above which are brick relieving arches. The first floor granary has diamond shaped missing brick ventilation and there are pitching doors on the west facing long elevation and on the north facing gable. There is also a hanging door on the west facing elevation, the foot of which interferes with the arch of the door below suggesting it may be a later enlargement of a pitching door. The first floor is gypsum and lathe laid on deal joists to the north and timber floorboards to the south, it is unclear whether this is by design or as the result of repair and replacement. The roof is carried on deal King post trusses with raking struts (*Figure 9*), the King post being an iron rod is almost certain to post date the 1860s, which again supports the cartographic evidence.

The southern range, (1) and (2) is a single storey cowshed (*Figure 10*) with standing for 16 beasts with slate stalls, there is standing for a single animal at the southern end used for training young heifers to milk. There is a feeding passage along the rear wall, feeding passages were seen as a significant advance in agricultural practice in the mid to late 19th century introduced to speed up feeding and prevent wastage with feed being fouled in animal dung. The feeding passage being clearly incorporated into the building supports the cartographic sources that the buildings are mid 19th century in date and followed up to date practices. Further evidence of this is the roof over (1) and (2); the roof is carried on two deal King post trusses with raking struts, the King post being an iron bar.

The building has remained largely unaltered with the exception of openings between (2), (3) and (4) being blocked. There is also a blocked opening on the southernmost gable of (1); it is unclear whether this is an original opening, or a later insertion to provide access to the recently demolished modern building beyond.

There is a range projecting from the east elevation of (1), again single storey and forming the southern range of a foldyard. The north facing elevation has a number of attractively finished two centred arched doors (*Figure 11*), the doors are unusually narrow, with cant brick reveals and the range may have originally been for calves. The two westernmost doors have been blocked and replaced by a larger central (to the bay) door. Internally, the range originally consisted of one large bay, (22) and a loose box, (20) to the east, a second loose box was then added to the west, reducing the original size of (22). There is further evidence of alteration work with the use of steel tubing for stalls along the eastern and western walls, the use of steel is almost certain to be 20th century in date. The roof is again carried on deal King post trusses with an iron King post.

At the east end of this range is a perpendicular range of four rooms, (16), (17), (18) and (19), (16), (18) and (19) being the most interesting of the four. (16), the north retains the outline of a kiln or forge in the south west corner (*Figure 12*), the exact origin of which is unclear but may have originally been a copper for heating and mixing feed. The insertion of a water trough indicates the space was most recently used as animal housing. To the south is (18) and (19), (19) consists of a low room with (18) to the east and extending over (*Figure 13*). This arrangement was common with poultry being kept over a pig sty, there is, however no physical or cartographic evidence of the pig sty, so it is possible that the rooms served another purpose.

(15) forms the northern range of the foldyard, with two doors on the south facing elevation (*Figure 14*) and a further two doors on the east facing gable, one of which is a six panel door salvaged from the demolition of Norris Hill Hall (*Figure 15*). Internally, the range has standing for 14 beasts in 7 double stalls, again in slate with brick and ceramic mangers (*Figure 16*). The use of concrete, slate, brick and ceramics in cow sheds was compulsory following the Milk and Dairies Act of 1926 in order to prevent the spread of TB and other diseases, the surfaces allowed easier and more through disinfection. A feeding passage runs along the northernmost wall (*Figure 17*).

The roof is again carried on deal King post trusses with an iron King post.

(7), (8), and (9) form the northernmost foldyard. (7), (8) and (9) were originally stabling with doors on the south facing elevation (*Figure 18*), a large double door has been inserted into (9) and the central door altered with a modern insert, the original flat cambered brick arch survives in the brickwork above. The westernmost door, potentially of oak is original and finished to a high standard with hit and miss ventilation bars and chamfered hole for the latch (*Figure 19*), with a cant brick reveal such details confirm the range as stabling, as stables were frequently finished to higher standard than other farm buildings.

Forming the western range of the foldyard is a lean to building abutting the east face of (3), (4), (5) and (6). The lean to is, according to cartographic sources original to the building, there, is, however a straight joint visible in the brickwork of the east facing elevation indicating this is later (*Figure 20*). It is likely that the lean to was originally a shelter shed for the fold yard. Internally, the lean to is divided into four bays with a feeding passage, (14) between the bays and north – south range, there are attractively finished arched feeding holes (*Figure 21*) between the bays and (14), some of which are blocked; the feeding passage also accesses the stables to the north. The small sizes of these current bays suggest the lean to may have been used as calf pens.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The outbuildings at Norris Hill Farm are an extremely interesting range of buildings built during the 1860s following the most modern and up-to-date model farm principles of the period. Cartographic sources indicate the farm was constructed on a virgin site and, interestingly appears to have been in the private ownership of the farmer from the beginning. The farm later became associated with the nearby Norris Hill Hall, before the two were sold into separate ownership only to come under the ownership of George Massey Snr in the 1930s.

The recorded buildings are extremely well laid out with feeding passages in all of the cowsheds allowing full and under cover access to all of the animal rearing areas of the buildings. Stabling was separate to the cow sheds, but still accessible internally for feeding. The success of this original layout is confirmed by the significant lack of modern alterations which have occurred to the buildings since.

The buildings are known heritage assets and curtilage listed as part of Norris Hill Farmhouse. This historic building recording provided a permanent visual (photographic & drawn) record, analysis of the historic plan and fabric and historical background of the buildings in their current state.

## 5. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

- 6 A3 permagraph sheet containing plans & notes
- 1 A3 paper sheet showing plans & notes.
- 3 DVDs containing 132 digital images
- 132 B&W negatives & contact sheets
- 4 A4 contact sheets
- 4 A4 photo record sheets
- 1 Unbound copy of this report

The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under the Accession Number X.A110. 2018.

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.

### 5.1 OASIS Record Summary

INFORMATION REQUIRED	UPLOADED AS
OASIS No	archaeol30-334469
Project Name	An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of Outbuildings at Norris Hill Farm, Blackfordby Lane, Moira, Leicestershire.
Site Co-ordinates	SK 32481 17380
Project Type	Standing Building Recording
Project Manager	Gerwyn Richards
Previous/Future Work?	No/No
Current Land Use	In Use As Building
Development Type	Residential
Prompt	LBC
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Museums

## 6. References & Sources

- Brunskill, R.W. 2007 *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain and Their Conservation*. Yale.
- Historic England. 2013 *National Farm Building Types*. London.
- Historic England. 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*. London.
- Historic England. 2006 *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice*. London.
- M<sup>c</sup>Kay, W.B 1945 *Building Craft Series, Brickwork*. Longmans, Green & Co.
- Peters, J.E.C., 1988. 'Post-medieval Roof Trusses in some Staffordshire Farm Buildings' in *Vernacular Architecture* Vol. 19, 24-31.

Peters, J.E.C., 2003 *Discovering Traditional Farm Buildings*. Shire Books.

Record Office of Leicestershire Leicester & Rutland (ROLLR) Accessed Nov 2018

## 7. Colour Plates



**Figure 8**  
(6), West – North West Facing Elevation (Looking East – South East).



**Figure 9**  
Roof Truss in Granary.





**Figure 10**  
(1) & (2) West – North West Facing Elevation (Looking East – South East).



**Figure 11**  
B(20), (21) & (22), North – North East Facing Elevation (Looking South – South West).



**Figure 12**  
(16), Outline of Kiln/Furnace Structure  
in South West Corner.



**Figure 13**  
(18), Possible Poultry House (Looking  
East - North East).



**Figure 14**  
(15) South – South West Facing Elevation (Looking North – North East).



**Figure 15**  
(15), Reused Door from Norris Hill Hall.



**Figure 16**  
(15), Manger.



**Figure 17**  
(15), Feeding Passage (Looking East – South East).



**Figure 18**  
(7), (8) & (9), South – South West Facing Elevation (Looking North – North East).



**Figure 19**  
(7), Original Door.



**Figure 20**  
(10), (11), (12) & (13), East – South East Facing Elevation (Looking West – North West).



**Figure 21**  
(11), Arched Feeding Holes from Feeding Passage (Looking North West).

Figure 22 Ground Floor Plan.

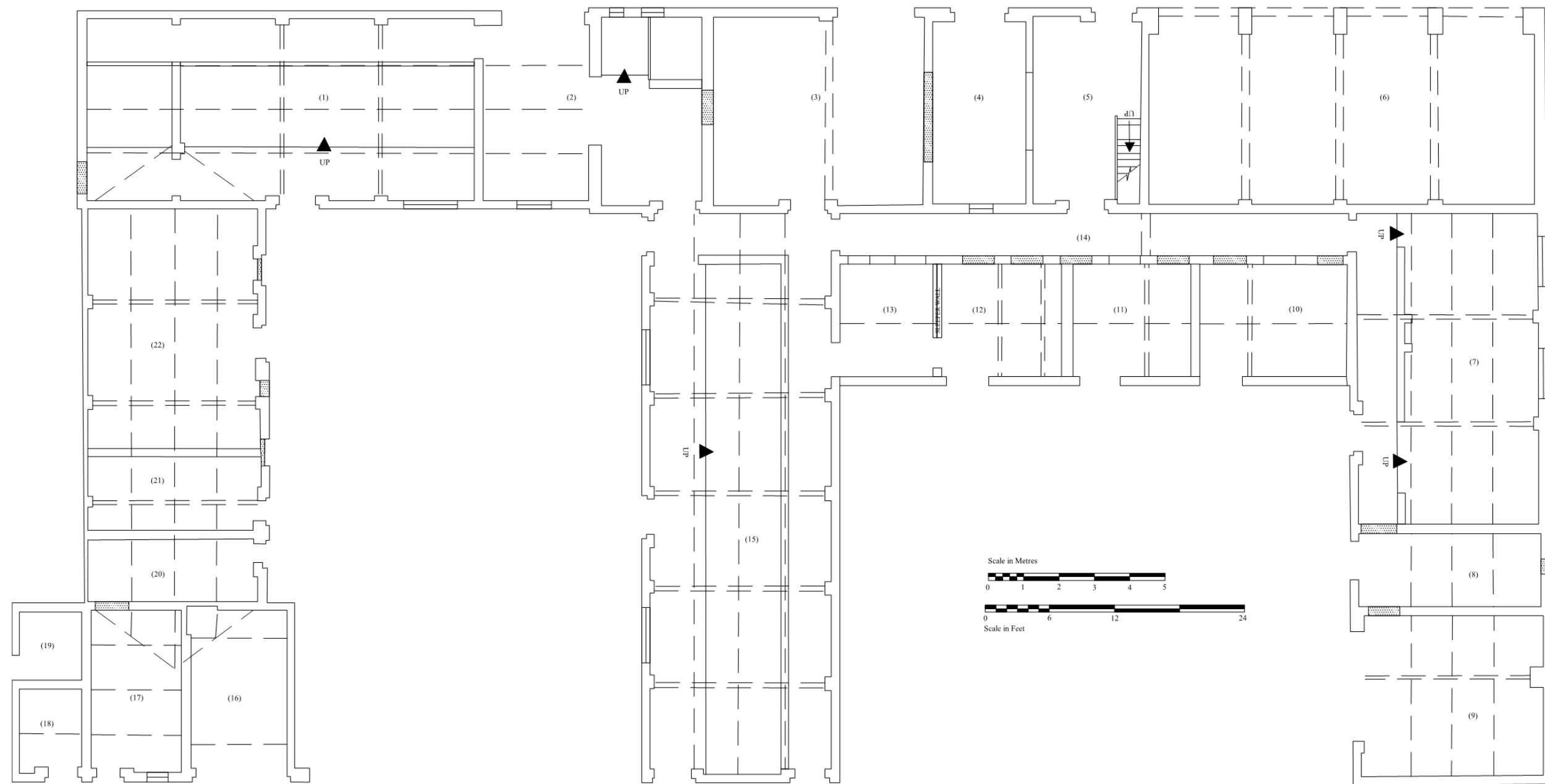
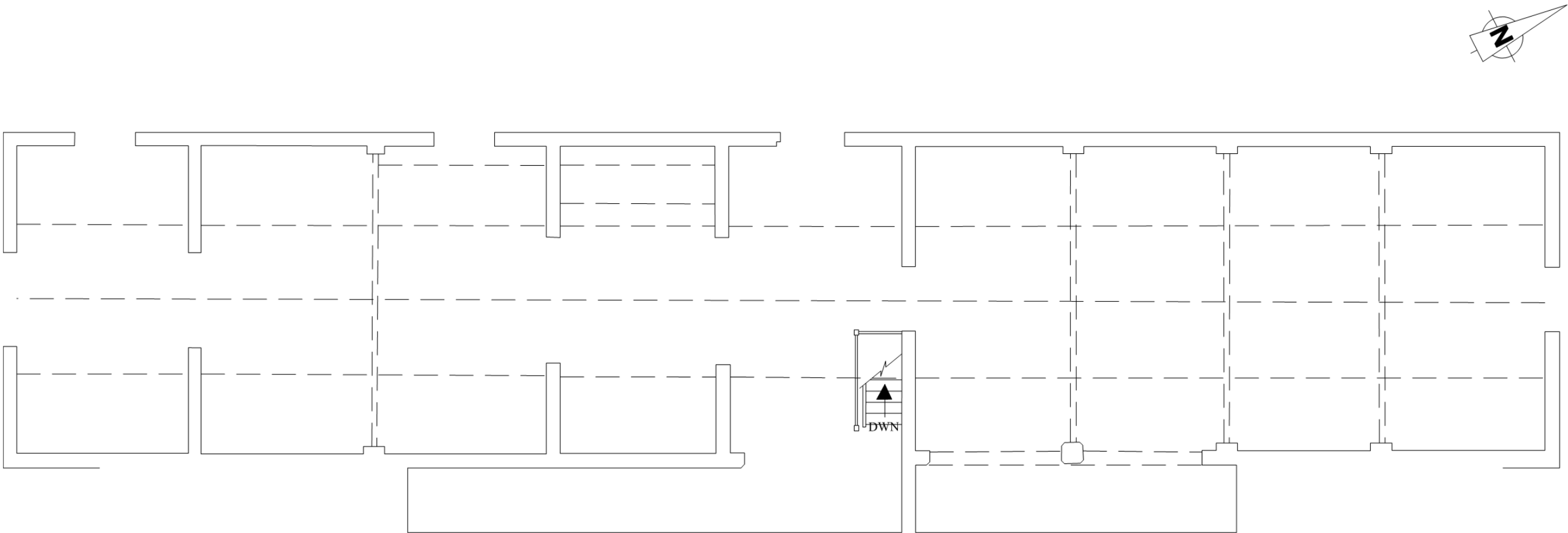


Figure 23 First Floor Plan.



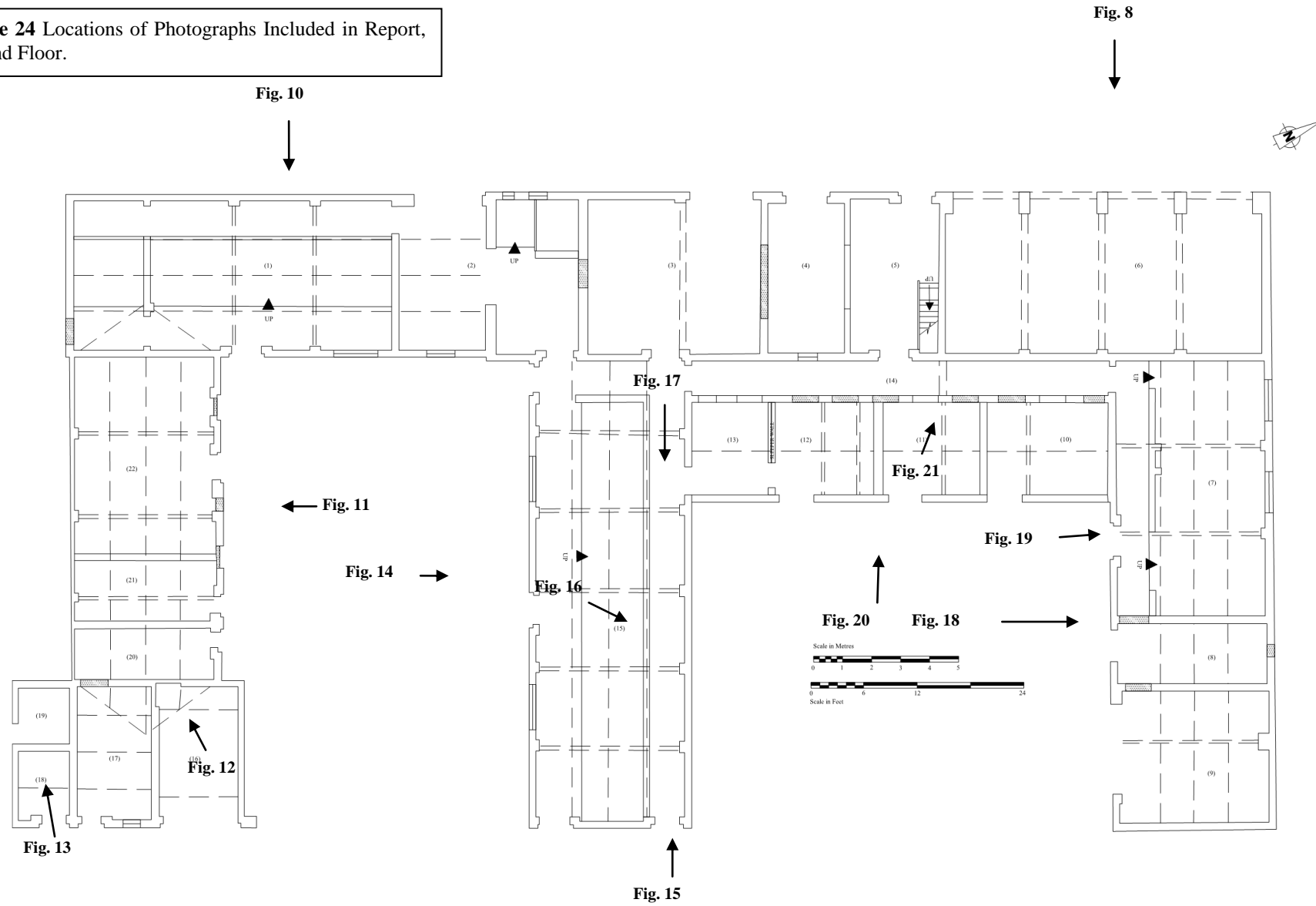
Scale in Metres



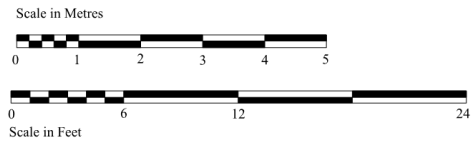
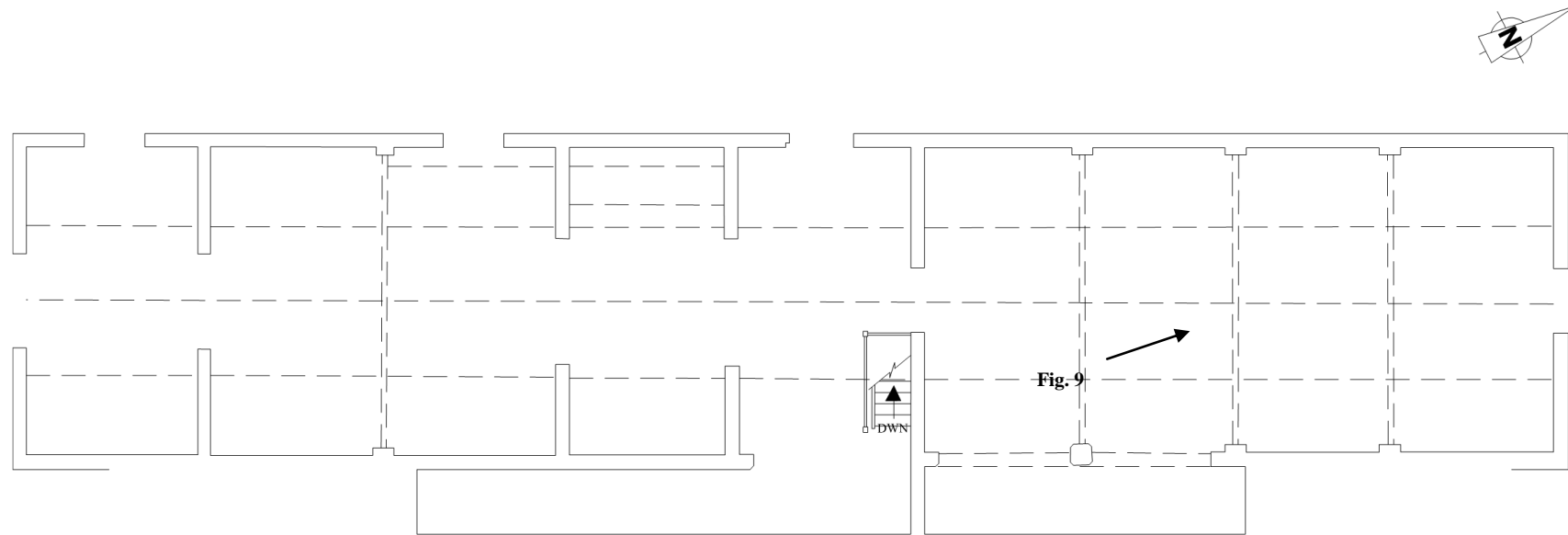
Scale in Feet



**Figure 24** Locations of Photographs Included in Report, Ground Floor.



**Figure 25** Locations of Photographs Included in Report,  
First Floor.





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