

Historic Agricultural Buildings
at Mercer's Farm,
9 High Street, Earls Barton,
Northamptonshire

Historic Building Record

Historic Environment Record Event No. 109717
Planning Refs. WP/16/00675/FUL & WP/18/00319/FUL

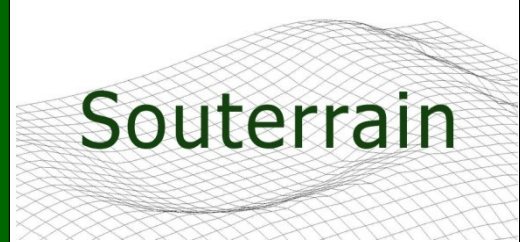


March 2020

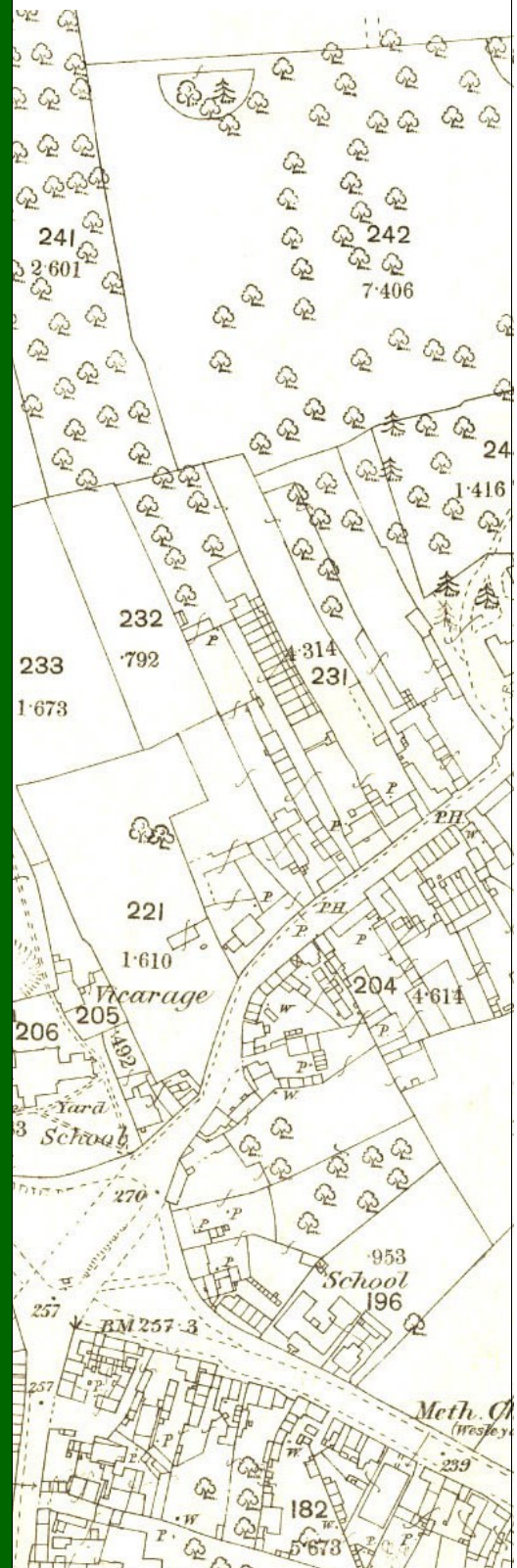
Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd

for

Lexicus Developments



Archaeological Services Ltd



**Historic Agricultural Buildings at
Mercer's Farm,
9 High Street, Earls Barton,
Northamptonshire NN6 0JN
(NGR 485271, 263903)**

Historic Building Record

PLANNING APPLICATION REFS.
WP/16/00675/FUL & WP/18/00319/FUL

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT EVENT No. ENN109717

SOUTERRAIN PROJECT SOU19-677

March 2020

Produced for:

Lexicus Developments
(Wellingborough)

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Summary

A record was made of a group of historic farm buildings at Earls Barton village, Northamptonshire, prior to their conversion to residential usage.

The report combines direct inspection of the buildings and primary source research to ascertain an understanding of their historical context, function, and chronological development.

Centrally located in the village, within an ancient close, the farmstead formerly known as Mercer's Farm was already in existence in 1771. The comparison of historic maps suggests that the farm underwent a planned re-organisation, from dispersed layout, to a courtyard form in the late 19th century. Documentary analysis reveals that the transformation was complete by the mid-1880s, a process which may well have begun in the 1870s.

Although Mercer's Farm was a mixed farm, the courtyard buildings reflect an emphasis on stock rearing and milk production. They comprise an L-shaped brick-built range of enclosed and open-fronted cow houses and milking houses, a free-standing cow house, and a stone-built barn, the latter a modified relic of the pre-Victorian farmstead.

The report identifies the main phases of development for the existing buildings; the L-shaped range possibly comprising two construction events.

The internal features of cow houses and milking houses are variable. Brick-built mangers are present in three of the buildings, while one cow house largely retains a brick floor. The former milking areas have formed concrete troughs and impervious concrete floors with cleansing passage, all of which were undoubtedly a response to the introduction and re-working of regulations for cow houses and milking houses from 1879 and 1885 onwards.

By means of photographic catalogue, scaled elevations and plans, the report provides a descriptive and illustrative account of the building's interior and exterior in its present 'as found' state.

Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd (Souterrain) cannot accept responsibility for errors of information or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of statements or opinions expressed in this document.

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1. THE HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

- 1.1 This document presents an illustrated and descriptive 'as found' Historic Building Record of a group of historic farm buildings at Mercer's Farm, 9 High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire, prior to their conversion to residential usage.
- 1.2 The Historic Building Record (the Record) has been prepared by Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd (Souterrain) for Lexicus Developments Limited (the Landowner and Developer) of 63 Broad Green, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 4LQ, in accordance with conditions attached to the Borough of Wellingborough Council Planning Permissions WP/16/00675/FUL and WP/18/00319/FUL.
- 1.3 The planning conditions were prompted by Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council's Archaeological Advisor; statutory consultant for the Borough of Wellingborough Council. Attention was drawn to the historic significance of the farm buildings (i.e. associations with the rural heritage of Earls Barton village, their historic fabric and disposition¹). It was noted that the buildings proposed for conversion are shown on the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1884 but nothing was known about their period of construction or their usage.
- 1.4 The compilation of the Record is in accord with policy 2 (d) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework² which requires the developer to both record and advance understanding of the significance of heritage assets that are to suffer change or loss due to development. The Record thus observes the current national guidance of Historic England (2016)³. It comprises:
 - a historic account;
 - a photographic archive (digital images);
 - measured plans and elevations; and
 - a descriptive account
- 1.5 The Record provides a comprehensive visual documentation of the farm buildings prior to the permitted conversion. Integral to the Record is a historical account of the buildings derived from primary archive sources and an oral historical account, the aim of which has been to gain an understanding of the local and wider historical context of the farm buildings.
- 1.6 The historic account is drawn primarily from the following sources:
 - Northamptonshire Archives
 - Conversation with Mrs Jane Barker, previous owner of Mercer's Farm
 - Archives held by Earls Barton Museum
 - British Newspaper Archives
 - Secondary published works.
- 1.7 A purpose of the Record is to inform future conservation decisions and subsequent management of the structure.
- 1.8 The report and archive is to be available as a public-accessible record.

¹ *c.f.*. Consultation responses: 1st Dec. 2016 for WP/16/00675/FUL and 9th Jul 2018 for WP/18/00319/FUL

² *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and local Government, February 2019

³ *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, Historic England, 2016

2. PLANNING BACKGROUND

Planning Application WP/16/00675/FUL

- 2.1 On the 29th December 2016, the Borough of Wellingborough Council granted planning permission subject to conditions for the conversion of a stone built barn that stands within the curtilage of No. 9 High Street (Mercer's Farm) Earls Barton. The area and subject of the proposed development is defined on the drawings submitted with the planning application⁴.
- 2.2 With respect to the historical significance of the barn, Condition No 10 states that '*No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority*'. The required programme is to comprise a record of the stone barn to an appropriate level (i.e. Level 2) as defined in Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings* (2016).

Planning Application WP/18/00319/FUL

- 2.3 Subsequently, on 16th of September 2018, full planning consent was granted subject to conditions at the same farmyard location for the "*erection of 2 x 4 bedroom semi-detached dwellings and conversion of barns to form 1 x 3 bedroom dwelling including provisions of parking and access and demolition of barns within conservation area for the Conversion of existing brick barn and construction of 2 No new dwellings at the same farmyard*". The area and subject of the proposed development is defined on the drawings submitted with the planning application⁵.
- 2.4 Planning Condition No 11 stipulates that a programme of archaeological work is to be implemented prior to the commencement of development work. The archaeological work is to comprise two separate elements, as follows:
1. A historic building record to be made of the farm buildings which are to be converted; the record to be Historic England Level 2.
 2. Investigation and recording of buried archaeological remains in the area of the proposed new-build dwellings.
- 2.5 The present report concerns only the historic building recording element of WP/18/00319/FUL. In due course, a separate Written Scheme of Investigation is to be submitted by the Developer for the investigation of buried archaeology.
- 2.6 A Brief for the recording of the farm buildings was issued by the Archaeological Advisor in November 2018⁶ and the recording was subsequently carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme⁷.

⁴ Toby Pateman Architect Ltd. Proposed conversion of barn within curtilage of 9 High Street, Earls Barton, Existing Plans, Drawing no. 38-16-01, Aug. 2016

⁵ David Cosby Chartered Surveyors, Job No. 2734.02; Drawing Nos. 2734.02 (16th Jan. 2018); 2734.01 (10th Jan. 2018); & 2734.11 (Mar. 2018)

⁶ Mordue L, 2018. *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Building Recording at Mercers Farm, 9 High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire V1* 27th Nov

⁷ Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd. 2019 (Nov.) *Scheme for a Historic Building Record: Agricultural Buildings at Mercer's Farm, 9 High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire NN6 0JN (NGR 485271, 263903), SOU19-677, V1*

3. LOCATION & ASPECT

- 3.1 The village of Earls Barton lies in the Borough of Wellingborough, c. 3 km southwest of Wellingborough town and c. 3.2 km east of the settlement boundary of Northampton town. The former farmstead known as Mercer's Farm is located in the historic centre of Earls Barton (Fig. 1) , where it occupies an ancient close on the northwest side of the High Street, about 120 m northeast of The Square and c. 80 m north-northeast of the late 10th century parish church.
- 3.2 The property is located in the Earls Barton Conservation Area and the historic buildings within it are classed as Non-Designated Heritage Assets (i.e. not Listed Buildings).
- 3.3 The farmyard covers an area of around 0.1 of a hectare with the farm buildings occupying an aggregate footprint of about 350 sq. m. It is bordered to the west and southwest by The Vicarage (a large house with extensive gardens), and to the east and northeast by the rear gardens of predominantly terraced houses. The topography of the farmyard is between c. 87.55 m OD on its southern perimeter and c. 88.65 m OD on its northern perimeter.
- 3.4 The farmstead is located on a terraced slope about 2 m above the northwest side of the roadway (High Street). The farmhouse is set back a short distance from the roadside, with the farm buildings behind it, ranged around a yard. Access to the farmyard from High Street is via a track which runs on the north-eastern side of the yard and continues to a close of pasture to the northwest.
- 3.5 The northeast side of the farmyard is formed by a large free-standing stone-built barn which is sited against the eastern property boundary. The northwest and southwest sides of the yard are formed by an L-shaped range of brick buildings. These comprise cow houses, milking parlours and open cattle shelters. The farmhouse stands on the south side of the farmyard and a free-standing cow house encloses the southeast side. The farmyard itself is shrouded by a modern open-sided steel-framed yarn barn on a reinforced concrete base (Section 12, photo 4). The aforementioned farm access track passes between the modern yard-barn the stone-built barn.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS & OBSERVATIONS

Notes on the recording & descriptions

- 4.1 In the descriptions below, the bold numbers in square brackets refer to photograph numbers (Section 12; Appendix 1). The photograph viewpoints are shown on Figures 9 and 10. The metric scales which appear in the photographs are either 2 m in length with divisions of 0.2 m, or 1 m and 2 m with divisions of 0.2 m (for interior features).
- 4.2 The farm buildings have been numbered 1 to 6. Although the buildings forming the L-shaped range are aligned northeast/southwest and northwest/southeast, for ease of description in the text they are referred to as the *east-west* arm (Buildings 2 to 4) and the *north-south* arm (Building 5).

Building 1: the Stone Barn

- 4.3 Building 1 is a bank barn standing against the north-eastern boundary of the farmstead (Fig. 11, [3, 5-7]). It is single-storey and rectangular in form, with its longitudinal axis aligned northwest/southeast. Built of coursed stone rubble (of locally quarried type), it has a dual-pitched roof of corrugated asbestos sheets. It was erected on a terrace cut from fairly steeply

rising ground, with the lower parts of the rear wall and northwest gable end wall are below ground level (Fig. 11, northwest elevation, [6 & 7]). Partial excavation of the bank on the northwest side of the barn in December 2019 revealed a topsoil depth of c. 0.1 -0.15 m directly above geological stratum (ferruginous sandstone of the Northampton Sand Formation). A few sherds of late 19th century / early 20th century pottery were found at the topsoil/ geology interface.

- 4.4 The barn's internal surface area is c. 68.28 sq. m (c. 13.44 m by c. 5.08 m) [32-37]. Its wall thickness is c. 0.48 m. The height from floor to wall plate is c. 4.20 m, and to the ridge, c. 6.71 m. The front elevation (Fig. 11) has a large central wagon access with double doors, which is also the pedestrian access [8]. At some juncture the double doors were reduced in height. The rear elevation is no longer accessible or visible. There were two loading doors from the bank sides – one in the rear wall directly opposite the wagon entrance situated c. 1.58 m above the barn floor, the other, in the northwest gable end (Fig. 11, [9, 10]), c. 1.1 m above the floor [33, 34]. Both door openings were sealed internally at some juncture in the mid to late 20th century using breeze blocks and cement.
- 4.5 Inside the barn the areas of wall that are below ground level have been extensively re-built in brick [33, 37, 38], undoubtedly to control damp and decay. The bricks are a type commonly manufactured in the late 19th and early 20th century. The floor of the barn was covered in laid brick, of the same type used in the wall repairs. Partial removal of the brick floor in December 2019 revealed it had been laid above a thin layer of sand-mortar blinding above the geological stratum. A series of sectional clay land drains had been laid in the geological stratum. The drainage pipes were an extruded type with flat base, commonly manufactured in the late 19th and early 20th century⁸. The roof is held by three machine-sawn, 'A'-frame trusses of a 20th century type (Fig. 14, [32-36]), which are probably constructed from imported pine. There are no discernible fittings inside the building.
- 4.6 The earliest reliable map of Mercer's Farm is dated 1772. It shows a range of buildings bordering the eastern boundary of the property (Fig. 3), one of which is most likely to have been this stone barn. Late 19th century farm financial records refer to 'the big barn' having been thatched on two occasions (*post*, 5.7). Given that the roof pitch seems somewhat squat for thatch, it is possible that a more steeply pitched roof was reduced in height when the corrugated asbestos roof was erected. As for the adjoining buildings of the range shown on the 1772 map, there is only a faint trace of a dual-pitched roof building on the southeast gable end, in the form of differential weathering (Fig. 11, southeast elevation, [3 & 5]), while only two possible beam slots are present in the northwest gable end [9 & 10].
- 4.7 The farm's previous owner, Mrs Jane Barker, recalls that in the second half of the 20th century the barn was only used for the storage of mangel-wurzel, beet cattle fodder which was cultivated on the farm.

The Victorian Cow Houses

Building 2: Loosebox & Milking Parlour

- 4.8 Building 2 forms the eastern gable end of the L-shaped brick-built range (Figs. 12 & 13; [12 to 16]). This is a two storey building of red brick in Flemish Garden Wall Bond, with a dual-pitched roof of Welsh slate. The external ridge height is 6.6 m. The ground floor consists of

⁸ n.d. 'Field Drainage Tiles and Pipes, The Museum of English Rural Life, Type 17 http://www.collectionsgateway.org.uk/collections/8/field_drainage_tiles.pdf

two small cells of similar internal dimensions: the end cell being 3.6 m wide by 4.59 m deep, the other, 3.68 m by 4.59 m. The ceiling of each cell is height is c. 2.38 m.

- 4.9 The end cell is a loosebox with the capacity for two beasts. It is accessed from the farmyard via a split stable-type door [21, 23], which was typically wide for a cow or a bull. The floor is brick and the walls and low ceiling are lime-washed [39]. A brick-built manger spans the width of the cell along the northern wall. The manger has a timber rail a wrought-iron tethering ring towards either end. The manger trough is cement-formed. Above the western half of the manger, there is a timber-framed feeding rack fixed to the wall. The cell was lit, by a half-shuttered/ half-slatted window in the east (gable end) wall, with additional ventilation via two small cast-iron air-bricks, one at the front, the other in the gable end (Fig. 12, elevation 2; Fig. 13, Elevation 3). There were no indications of trapdoors in the ceiling, for dropping hay from a first-floor loft.
- 4.10 A doorway, inter-connecting the two cells has been blocked up using breeze blocks [40, 41]; the choice of material suggesting that the doorway became redundant after the mid 20th century.
- 4.11 The west cell was a milking parlour with two stalls. Unlike the loosebox, the floor is built of concrete. This has a step (c. 17.5 cm) up to the stalls which are located in the northern half of the building, where a feed trough of formed concrete spans the rear wall [41, 44]. The floor of the stalls area is very slightly sloped away downwards to the lower level (the cleansing passage) allowing separation and drainage of effluence. The stall divider is made of galvanised tubular steel set into the concrete floor and secured by a horizontal brace fitted to the side walls above the head-height of cows. Although tube galvanising appeared in England as early as 1876⁹, its general use as stall dividers in milking parlours is thought to have been prompted by government legislation in 1959¹⁰. Access to this milking parlour was via a doorway from Building 3 (Fig. 12, Elevation 2) [42]. Initially lit solely by a half-shuttered/ half-slatted window in the front elevation [43], a single electric light bulb was fitted to the east wall.
- 4.12 The front elevation of the upper storey was obscured by the canopy of the modern yard barn. Access to the upper storey (or loft) was via an external door in the east gable end (Fig. 13, Elevation 3); presumably always by means of a ladder, or from a wagon during loading. At the time of the survey the loft was considered unsafe to enter, although a limited view of the interior was enabled from a ladder. Inside there are two rooms [50]. These are separated by the upper half of the wall dividing the ground floor cells, which has a central doorway. The walls are lime-washed. The western cell was light by a small window in front elevation (Fig. 13, Elevation 2), although this was not visible from the inside. It appears to have been a hayloft, though was evidently used for storing farming utensils, hand tools and materials.

Building 3: Cow house / Milking Parlour

- 4.13 Building 3 is adjoined to the west side of Building 2 (Figs. 12 & 13; [21, 22 & 16]). Brick-built in Flemish Garden Wall Bond, it is the farm's largest enclosed cow house, the interior measuring 7.25 m by 4.58, with a stall area intended for 7 cows [45-49]. It is single storey. Like Building 2, the interior has a concrete floor on two levels. The stalls area occupies the raised northern half, while a cleansing passage forms the southern half; the step height being

⁹ See. Porter, F C. 1991. *Zinc Handbook: properties, Processing & Use in Design*, pp. 66-7 (North Carolina)

¹⁰ c.f. Adair, H. 2019. 'A Guide To The Countryside: Farm Buildings & Milking Parlours', *Scottish Field*
https://www.scottishfield.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2019/08/farm_buildings_and_parlours.pdf

0.17 m. The internal wall height of the cleansing passage is 2.91 m, while in the stalls area it is 2.74 m. The internal ridge height is 4.81 m. Access from the farmyard is through a single door in the southeast corner of the building (Fig. 12, Elevation 2, [23]). An integral trough of formed concrete spans the length of the north wall [45, 49]. There are no stall dividers, although individual stalls are denoted by a concavity in the facing wall of the trough [47], where, presumably, each cow was somehow tethered.

- 4.14 The floor of the stalls area has a slight incline away from the trough. The cleaning passage also has a slight slope down west to east to allow drainage of liquid waste and urine. The walls are lime-washed. The building was light by a single half-shuttered/half-slatted window in the front wall [24] and a single bulb electric light above the doorway. There are no discernible internal fittings.
- 4.15 The roof frame is supported by a single kingpost truss with struts (Fig. 15, Section 3; [45, 46]). The truss is recessed into the brickwork at the top of the front and rear walls. The truss is machine-sawn and probably constructed of imported Scots Pine. Joined with nails, it has kingpost and tie beam fastened by a wrought iron king bolt.

Building 4: Open Shelter

- 4.16 Building 4 is a large brick-built open shelter adjoined to the west end of the enclosed cow house/ milking parlour (Building 3) (Fig. 13, Elevation 4; [13, 16 & 52]). As with Buildings 2 and 3, the brickwork is constructed in Flemish Garden Wall Bond. The building faces northwards, away from the farmyard. There is no access from the enclosed range or farmyard.
- 4.17 In line with other buildings in this range the shelter has a dual-pitched slated roof. The external ridge height is c. 5.04 m. At the front, the roof is supported by side pilasters and a central brick pillar. A late 19th / early 20th century cast-iron downpipe with hopper survives on the eastern pilaster [17]. The central pillar supports the shelter's single roof truss [53]. The truss, made of machine-sawn pine, is similar in construction to that inside Building 3 (i.e. kingpost truss with struts, with kingpost / tie beam fastened by a king bolt) (Fig. 15).
- 4.18 When first built, the internal floor space of the shelter measured 20.2 m by 6.18 m. At some juncture, the shelter was foreshortened to c. 17.65 m by the insertion of a timber partition wall (formed of horizontal planking) at the west end to create a vehicle lock-up (Fig. 13, Elevation 4; [51]). The rear wall forms part of the farmyard enclosure to the south, the eastern half of the wall being shared with the north-south arm of the L-shaped range (i.e. Building 5) (Fig. 12, Elevations 1 & 2).

Building 5: Open-fronted Cow house

- 4.19 Building 5 forms the north-south arm of the L-shaped brick-built range (Fig. 12, Elevation 1). It consists of an open-fronted cow house with a loosebox at its southern end [20, 26-29]. The interior of the shelter is c. 12.5 m long by c. 4 m wide, with an internal ridge height of c. 4.36 m. Its front elevation has two brick pillars, each of which supports a roof truss [54, 55]. The trusses are made of machine-sawn pine, with a king post fastened to tie beam by a wrought-iron king bolt. In accord with the east-west arm, the brickwork is Flemish Garden Wall Bond.
- 4.20 A timber-framed, brick-built manger spans the rear wall [55-58]. The manger has a trough of formed concrete [57], not dissimilar to the manger in the loosebox of Building 2. The floor is

concrete. There is no cleaning passage and no discernible drainage trench or incline. Calving is said to have taken place in this building¹¹.

- 4.21 Visibility inside the loosebox was restricted due to present use as an equipment store. Significantly, however, the partition separating the loosebox from the open shelter is a stud wall built of re-claimed hand-sawn timbers (presumably oak) (Fig. 15, Section 5; [59]), while a salvaged cambered oak tie beam is in use as a longitudinal /spine beam [60]. The timbers were presumably reclaimed from a pre-Victorian farm building.

Building 6: Cow House

- 4.22 Building 6 is free-standing cow house forming the south-east side of the farmyard enclosure (Fig. 7; [31, 3]). Archive building plans and cost calculations of 1883 show that it was purpose-built as a 'cow place' (*post*, 5.9). It is a single-story building with dual-pitched roof covered in pan tiles, and a ridge height of 4.43 m. The front elevation and gable ends are constructed of brick in Flemish Garden Wall Bond, while the rear wall is coursed stone rubble, by reason of it having been salvaged from a former garden wall to reduce costs (*post*, 5.9).
- 4.23 Its internal dimensions are 7.2 m by 4.89. A brick-built manger, c. 0.6 high, supports a formed concrete trough along the rear wall [62]. The floor is of laid brick, except for a metre-wide strip of concrete-cement along the foot of the manger [62, 63]. There are no discernible individual stalls. The stalls area has a slight incline, before a stepping down to cleansing passage. The front elevation has a central doorway with split-stable-type door, flanked on either side by a window with vertical wooden slats [61]. The building appears to have been re-roofed at some time in the fairly recent past.

5. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 5.1 Mercer's Farm was put up for auction in 2019 by Mrs Jane Barker of Earls Barton, at which time the farm had been in her family's ownership for a century. Mrs Barker's received tradition is that the property was owned in the 18th century by an Elizabeth Mercer of Yardley Hastings, Northamptonshire. Indeed, the Earls Barton Inclosure Award of 1772¹² shows that the farmstead was owned by a Thomas Mercer and his wife Elizabeth. As the third largest landowner in the parish the couple contributed £103 to the total enclosure bill of £1,654¹³. Their tenant farmer is presumed to have been a Mr Warren, of whom nothing is yet known¹⁴. The couple appear to be the same Thomas Mercer (of Hackleton, Northamptonshire) and Elizabeth Mercer (née Farrow or Farrer, of Earls Barton) who married in 1744¹⁵.
- 5.2 The Farrowes were renowned Earls Barton's landed gentry in the 17th and 18th centuries, the most notable figure being Rev. William Farrow, who died in 1750. It is of interest that when the farm was inherited by the Rev. J F Mercer in the late 19th century (*post*, 5.5), it came with a charitable obligation to provide two coats (of a certain cloth) annually for poor men of the village from the proceeds of one of the fields belonging to the farm. Given that the charity

¹¹ (pers. comm. Jane Barker)

¹² NA map 2886 Inclosure map of Earls Barton 1838. A copy of the map

¹³ Palmer, J, E. 2006. *Earls Barton. The History of a Northamptonshire Parish*, p.80

¹⁴ *Earls Barton Inclosure: Minute book, 1771-2QS/CC/095*

¹⁵ NA. O/1845, Marriage Settlement - Thomas Mercer/Elizabeth Farrow (lands), 22 February 1744

was set up by the aforementioned Rev. William Farrow, it may indicate that the farm was originally a possession of the Farrowes.

- 5.3 In addition to the Inclosure Award map, there survives a fairly accurate chain-surveyed plan of the various parts of the Mercer Estate at Earls Barton in 1772¹⁶ (Fig. 3). Interestingly, on a portion of the map¹⁷, one of the fields located to the southeast of the village bears only Elizabeth Mercer's name, which seems to reflect that the estate was regarded as a joint-possession of husband and wife. With respect to the farmstead at High Street, the map has an outline survey of the buildings, which is assumed to be a reasonably accurate depiction of the farm's layout. It may be compared to arrangement of buildings at the time of the first Ordnance Survey in 1884 (Figs. 4, 5 & 6). It is likely that only one of the farm buildings surveyed in 1772 survived into the late 19th century: the large stone barn (Building 1) on the northeast side of the property. It is also now known that a substantial part of the ancient farmhouse has also survived, having been incorporated into a new form of dwelling in the late 19th century (*post*, 7.4).
- 5.4 The farmstead remained in the possession of the Mercer family throughout the 18th and 19th century, and was probably tenanted throughout the period, although there is a conspicuous lacuna of detail about the tenancies and the nature of farming operations until 1881.

The Late Victorian Farm

- 5.5 At some juncture in May or June 1881 the Rev. John Francis Mercer M.A. inherited the Earls Barton farming estate; presumably from his father¹⁸. Three years earlier, Mercer, who was educated at Harrow and Exeter College, Oxford, had taken up the appointment of Rector of East Carlton, near Market Harborough, Leicestershire¹⁹, where he placed his business affairs in the hands of local land agents, E K Fisher Esq. of Market Harborough²⁰. Meanwhile, his legal affairs for the Earls Barton estate were dealt with by the solicitors H & H Markham of Wellingborough, who appear to have dealt with his father's affairs. It is from bundles of accounting documents and correspondence kept by the land agent²¹ between 1881 and 1903, that we may gain an insight to the nature of Mercer's Farm: the pattern of tenancies, investment, and the chronology of the existing farm buildings.
- 5.6 The records show that Earls Barton estate was the Rector's only land possession. Between 1896 and 1900 it earned him an average of £100 per annum (about £13.400 p.a. in 2020), which represented approximately 20% of his gross income. (His other main sources of income included the East Carlton tithes and dividends from overseas investment, such as the Argentinean and Mexican railways). Significantly, the evidence shows that Mercer made considerable investment at Mercer's Farm over a period of three decades: new farm buildings and the repair of an existing building in the early 1880s, followed by their regular maintenance thereafter. It would seem to reflect the economic viability of the farm, at a time when British agriculture was generally suffering depression.

¹⁶ NA Map/3602, Map of an estate at Earls Barton belonging to Mr Thomas Mercer, surveyed by E. Platt, 3 Chains to 1 inch

¹⁷ Not illustrated here

¹⁸ The previous owner was a Mr Mercer.

¹⁹ *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* – Sat. 22 Jun. 1878, 'Ecclesiastical & Religious Journal. Preferments and Appointments'

²⁰ Later, Edward K Fisher & Son, then Fisher & Sanders

²¹ now in Northampton Archives

Mercer's Farm Tenants 1881 - 1924

Thomas Spencer (< 1881 - c. 1890)

- 5.7 Prior to March 25th 1881, the Rev J .F Mercer's estate at Earls Barton amounted to just over 117 acres and was valued at £8,882. Following a partition of land to his cousin, Mrs Elizabeth Catherine Newsam, Mercer's share was a little over 66 acres. Correspondence between Mercer's land agent and solicitor suggests that Thomas Spencer, an Irishman, was the sitting tenant of Mercer's Farm at the time of the rector's inheritance²². Spencer's accounts reveal that it was a mixed farm, comprised of 30 acres of arable, roughly 20 acres of pasture and 16 acres of meadow. Correspondence reveals both Spencer's shrewdness and Mercer's racial prejudice²³, but in spite of this Spencer seems to have held on to the tenancy until 1890.
- 5.8 Throughout Spencer's tenancy from 1882 onwards, Earls Barton builder Frederick Johnson was regularly and annually engaged to carry out all construction and repairs to the farm buildings and farmhouse. Spencer submitted the bills to the Rev. J. F. Mercer, for reimbursement. Occasionally a bill would refer to a specific farm building, for example, the 'big barn' which was re-thatched by Johnson in January 1882²⁴, and again in the spring of 1890²⁵. This was most probably the stone barn (Building 1). In the summer of 1882 a bill was submitted for 'putting of door in barn', and in June 1885 drainage was laid²⁶ (possibly including the drainage inside Building 1). Between February and March 1892²⁷ all of the farmyard walls were completely demolished and rebuilt at a cost of £15 17s. 6d. (about £1,850 in 2020).
- 5.9 Northamptonshire Archives have two scaled architectural design drawings for proposed cow houses at Mercer's Farm - the plans, elevations and sections, carefully inked and water-coloured. They were submitted with Frederick Johnson's tenders. One of the drawings dated 1883²⁸, is quite clearly a design for the cow house (Building 6) which stands to the northeast of the farmhouse. The plan shows the building's proposed location bordering the north side of the farmhouse garden with its eastern end adjacent to the farmyard entrance. The western end, however, is shown just 3 feet from the farmhouse. The existing cow house (i.e. 'as built') is substantially foreshortened, but increased in width. It is possible that the reduction in length was to provide adequate clearance from the dwelling house; in response to regulations for new cow houses which were being implemented throughout the county from around 1885 (plans required the approval of the Local Authority's Inspector)²⁹. Johnson's written agreement with the Rev. Mercer's land agent was to partly build the cow house from stone salvaged from the demolished garden wall³⁰. The total proposed cost: £71 10s. 0d. (about £8,500 in 2020). The building is not shown on the Ordnance Survey first edition (1884), so is presumed to have been erected a short time afterwards.

²² In bundle NRO. F.S.29/9 4th June 1881 'Mercer Deceased', letter from H & H Markham (Wellingborough) to E H Fisher Esq. (Mkt Harborough)

²³ Correspondence Rev. J F Mercer to Fisher Esq. 4th April 1882

²⁴ Note attached to bill in bundle NA. F.S. 29/10, Jan. 1882

²⁵ NA F.S. 29/9 in 'Vouchers' bundle, Apr. 1890

²⁶ NA F.S. 29/9 in 'Vouchers' bundle, 29 Jun. 1885

²⁷ NA F.S. 29/9

²⁸ NA. F.S. 29/11, Plan of Proposed Cow Shed on Mr. T Spencer's Farm, proposal by F Johnson, 28th Jun.1883

²⁹ There is evidence from Yorkshire in response to the Dairies, Cowsheds, & Milkshops Orders, 1885-1899, that a cowshed should be no less than 25 feet from a dwelling house or a workshop. See Suggestions of the West Riding Sanitary Committee 1901, Wellcome Library. <https://archive.org/details/b30694991/mode/2up>

³⁰ NA F.S. 29/11, Tender from F Johnson 28th June 1883

- 5.10 The other design, dated 1884³¹, is for a 'cow place' with internal dimensions 42 ft by 13 ft. This is a fairly close match for the footprint of Building 5 (41 ft. by 13 ft.). The proposed cow house and Building 5 also have a loosebox at one end. It is not impossible that the building shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885³² (Fig. 4) was newly built. If this was indeed the case, then the length of the building was reduced, and design was subsequently altered from a closed to an open-fronted house (perhaps reflecting a means of reconciling farming needs and ventilation regulations).

Frederick Johnson (1891-1896)

- 5.11 Surprisingly, in May 1891 the builder Frederick Johnson took over the tenancy of Mercer's Farm³³. The 1891 census lists Johnson (aged 45) as a 'Builder and Farmer', originally from London. His wife Elizabeth (45) was from Wilby, Northamptonshire. Their household included: son Amos (22), a bricklayer; daughter Fanny (21), a school mistress; son Herbert (18), a boot closure; son Frederick (13); and Elizabeth Kingston, their domestic servant. It is not known if Johnson's brother-in-law Samuel (48), a plasterer, also resided at Mercer's Farm, or just happened to be there at the time of the census.
- 5.12 Johnson's tenancy of Mercer's Farm terminated shortly after his death in 1896; briefly continued by his wife and sons. The tenancy was taken up by a William Wilson, who seems to have held the farm for barely four years, 1896 to 1899/1900³⁴. The brief tenancy of Alfred Cook followed between 1901 and 1903³⁵. The 1901 census, lists Cook (aged 39) as a 'farmer and employer'. He was originally from Wellingborough, while his wife Esther (38) was from Earls Barton. The couple occupied the farmhouse with their four off-springs, aged between three and eighteen. The eldest, Eva worked as a boot closer, probably in the village. The short-lived experiences of both Wilson and Cook probably reflect the difficulties of making a living from mixed farming in the late 19th century.

Thomas Mallard (1903 - c. 1924)

- 5.13 The Rental Accounts show that Thomas Mallard of Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire was the Rev. J. F. Mercer's final tenant at Mercer's Farm. He took up the tenancy in 1903³⁶. A lengthy valuation record of the condition of the house and farm buildings³⁷ shows that a fair amount of repair work needed doing prior to his tenancy. The works were carried out by building contractor Samuel Knight, who succeeded Johnson in 1893 to carry out building maintenance and repairs work³⁸. Thomas Mallard worked a mixed farm with an emphasis on a dairy. The government's Land Valuation of 1910 shows that he rented c. 81 acres from the Rev. J.F. Mercer and another 86 acres of glebe from the vicar of Earls Barton³⁹. The Census of 1911 shows that Mallard (aged 44) ran the farm together with his wife Sarah (43), whose profession was given as 'Assistant in the Dairy', and their son Alfred (21), a farm worker. A daughter, Ellen (13) was still at school.

³¹ NA. F.S. 29/11, 'Plan of Cow Duck & Hen Places to be built at Earls Barton', by F Johnson, 28th Oct. 1884

³² surveyed 1884

³³ NA F.S. 29/2

³⁴ NA F.S. 29/1, rent accounts; NA F.S. 2, letting agreement to Wm William, 11th Oct. 1896

³⁵ NA F.S. 29/1, rent accounts 25 Aug. 1900

³⁶ NA F.S.29/2, letting agreements 1892-1912

³⁷ NA F.S.29/1, arbitration award between incoming and outgoing tenants

³⁸ NA F.S 29/9, vouchers bundle, 1882-1908

³⁹ 1910 Land Valuation record book for Earls Barton, p.1, 3 to 5

20th Century Change of Ownership: Charles Pettit

- 5.14 Mallard held the tenancy of Mercer's Farm when the Rev. J. F. Mercer died in 1913⁴⁰ Mallard is however, noticeably absent from the Kelly's trades directory of 1914, although was listed as still running a farm on the High Street in 1920 and 1924⁴¹. The oral tradition of Mrs Jane Barker (former owner of Mercer's Farm) is that her grandfather Charles Pettit (aged 38) purchased the dairy farm in 1919 from the Earls Barton Silica Company, at which time the sitting tenant is understood to have been a Mr. Lines (a name common in Earls Barton), not Mallard. The change in ownership from the Rev. J. Mercer and the Silica Company is not yet understood.
- 5.15 Charles Pettit was a builder by trade. Mrs Barker described her grandfather as a wheeler-dealer, who had already bought a various properties and lands in Earls Barton. After the purchase of Mercer's Farm he operated a milk round, delivering to Earls Barton and the surrounding villages. A press article informs us in November 1940 that Pettit (aged 59) had a herd of a least 15 cows – he was fined 10 shillings for driving the herd along the road in darkness⁴². Unfortunately, there are no family photographs of Mercer's Farm throughout the Pettit years, although a photograph survives of the dairy herd being driven along High Street (Fig. 8). In 1948 the Earls Barton Co-operative Society bought the milk round from Pettit. Mrs Barker's branch of the family moved to Mercer's Farm in 1968, prior to which they ran a piggery from a former Pettit property in nearby Tebbutt's Yard.

6. CHRONOLOGY & PHASING

- 6.1 Architecturally, all of the brick-built cow houses are resonant with the style of the mid-to late Victorian period - the 1850s to 1890s. The construction of the buildings and their arrangement most likely represent planned re-organisation of farming operations and economy; but exactly when this took place is not entirely certain. With the exception of the stone barn (Building 1), all of the building ranges depicted on the late 18th century map had been removed by 1884. It is surmised that they were redundant following the re-organisation.
- 6.2 Although documentary evidence from 1881 to 1912 reveals that Mercer's Farm was a mixed farm, the new brick buildings ranges suggest there was an (?increased) emphasis on dairy farming. There is documentary proof that investment in new cow houses was taking place at the farm in the early 1880s with the erection Building 6 around 1885, but it is uncertain when investment of this type began. The brickwork bonding of the east-west arm of the L-shaped range shows that Buildings 2, 3 and 4 were a single design and thus erected at the same time. Buildings 2 to 5 were present at the time of the Ordnance Survey in 1884, and it is just possible that Building 5 had either just been completed, or was nearing completion at the time of the survey (*ante*, 5.10).
- 6.4 It is inferred from the presence of brick floors in Building 6 (cow house) and the loosebox of Building 2, that all of the floors were originally brick. The concrete floors of Buildings 3 and 2 and the formed concrete troughs in Buildings 2, 3, 5 and 6 will most likely to have been installed in response to the regulations for cow houses and milking houses (*post*, 6.6), and could easily date from c. 1899, if not the second half of the 1880s.

⁴⁰ Death of Rev. J.F Mercer, *Northampton Mercury* - Friday 28 March 1913

⁴¹ E.g. *Kelly's Directory of Northamptonshire*, 1924

⁴² *Northampton Mercury* – Fri. 22 Nov. 1940, 'Cows In The Darkness'

- 6.5 However, assigning a closer date on the east-west arm of the L-shaped range is not easy. In many parts of England a reasonable indicator of the period of construction, or alteration, of a cowshed or milking house is whether or not it conforms to regulations implemented by Local Authorities, in response to government directives of 1879, 1885 and 1899, which attempted to prevent the transfer of contagious diseases from cows to humans. It had been realised that certain diseases were linked to the consumption of milk (e.g., tuberculosis, diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhoid). By 1899, statistics were showing that some 70,000 people were dying annually from tuberculosis alone⁴³. Since milking operations in Victorian England were customarily carried out in poor conditions, milk might contain any variety of cowshed contaminants (e.g. dung, cowshed dirt, cobwebs, dust). Not only this, but once the milk had left the dairy, it was open to further contamination, particularly from the widespread practice of dilution with water from dubious sources⁴⁴.
- 6.6 '*The Dairies, Cow-sheds, and Milk-shops Order*' of July, 1879 came on the heels of the Contagious Diseases Act (1878). The regulations required all cow-keepers, dairymen or purveyors of milk to register their trade with the Local Authority and make their premises open to inspection. The Northamptonshire list opened on 15th September 1879, allowing 21 days for registration, and hefty fines for non-compliance⁴⁵. A revised *Order* came into force in Northamptonshire on the 30th June 1885⁴⁶. This time there was emphasis on the 'Construction and Water Supply of New Dairies and Cow-Sheds'. After this date it became unlawful for new cow-sheds or milking houses to be brought into use without the Local Authority being reasonably satisfied with a building's lighting, ventilation, including air-space, and its cleansing, drainage, and water supply. Neither would it be lawful to use existing buildings without the inspector's approval that they were fit for the health of the cattle and the production of milk for sale. By this date, many Local Authorities, including The County Borough of Northampton⁴⁷, were being more specific in the required minimum spatial dimensions for all cowsheds and milking houses. But it is not known how early such regulations were implemented, and whether or not the Borough of Wellingborough shared the same requirements. Only a document which broadly outlines the requirements of the Borough of Wellingborough Sanitary Authority has been found⁴⁸.
- 6.7 It is of interest though that in 1899 the Borough of Northampton specified that each cow should have no less than eight hundred feet of air space, and that this tallies with the 1885 London requirement per cow where ventilation was imperfect in existing cow houses⁴⁹, which might suggest there was a fairly widespread agreement on such matters from an early date. If such ventilation regulations were applied to Mercer's Farm, Building 3 would be only marginally adequate for six cows, and not the seven as suggested by the feeding trough arrangement. Not only this but without the introduction of electric lighting Building 3 would have been inadequately lit, which suggests that the inspector was able to exercise a certain amount of leeway for existing buildings.

⁴³ Northampton Chronicle and Echo – Thur. 11 Jan. 1900

⁴⁴ For comprehensive discussions on the subject, see: Otter C, 2006. 'The vital city: public analysis, dairies and slaughterhouses in nineteenth-century Britain'. *Cultural Geographies*, SAGE Publications, 2006, 13 (4), pp. 517-537; and Atkins, P, 2017. The Long Genealogy of Quality in the British Drinking-Milk Sector in *Historia Agraria* 73(73):35-58 ·Nov.

⁴⁵ Northampton Mercury - Sat 13 Sep. 1879

⁴⁶ Northampton Mercury – Sat. 11 Jul. 1885

⁴⁷ Northampton Mercury – Fri. 17 Aug. 1900

⁴⁸ NA LG34/60 Regulations made by Wellingborough Sanitary Authority in pursuance of the 1885 Dairies, cowsheds and Milkshops Order, 1889, Wellingborough Rural District Council.

⁴⁹ Otter, C 2006, p.525

- 6.8 The only reasonably firm dating evidence is for Building 6, and possibly Building 5. It seems probable that the proposed plans were revised after examination by the council's sanitary inspector⁵⁰.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

- 7.1 The present research of the historic farm buildings at Mercer's Farm has highlighted various knowledge lacunae, largely beyond the remit of the present report, but nonetheless valuable to understanding the historical context of what may be one of the oldest farming establishments in Earls Barton.
- 7.2 With regard to the brick-built cow houses and milking houses, they are considered likely to belong to the late Victorian period, probably somewhere between the 1870s and mid-1880s, especially as the documentary evidence shows positive interest and capital investment in the first half of the 1880s. However, there appears to be a dearth of records before the Rev. J. F. Mercer became the owner of the farm in 1881. All that is known is that it was owned a Mr. Mercer, who is presumed to have been the father of Rev. J. F. Mercer. Further research into Earls Barton parish records might shed light on Mr. Mercer's tenants, which may in turn point towards the nature of farming operations prior to 1881, and hopefully a closer date of the east-west arm of the L-shaped range.
- 7.3 The present development has indeed roused the interest of the curator and local history researchers of the Earls Barton Museum of Village Life, who have welcomed the opportunity to conduct a wider-embracing study of Mercer's Farm.
- 7.4 During the recording of the agricultural buildings, limited opening up works at the farmhouse were inspected by Souterrain, out of curiosity. The works revealed several previously concealed structural features, which so far suggest a late medieval origin for the farmhouse. The features comprise: a rare example of a carved timber-framed window, previously concealed by blocking of timber and daub; a spine beam with chamfered stops; and a former steeply-pitched roof, indicating a former thatched roof. It is possible that the stone barn (Building 1) shares the antiquity of the house⁵¹.
- 7.5 The present historical study has highlighted the mid 18th century Mercer-Farrer/Farrow connection, local families who appear to have been yeomanry-cum-gentry. The so-called Mercer Charity of the late 19th century was undoubtedly a legacy of the Farrows. More in-depth study the Mercer Charity, and of 18th century landownership and change at Earls Barton may shed light on the antiquity of Mercer's Farm.

8. ARCHIVE & REPORT

- 8.1 The archive is intended as a public-accessible record, copies of the report to be housed in the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record. The archive comprises a CD containing digital images, a copy of the report and index to photographs. Copyright is retained by Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd from whom permission may be sought for reproduction.

⁵⁰ Inspectors were required to have competent knowledge of building plans, c.f. Northampton Mercury – Fri. 30 Aug. 1895

⁵¹ A photographic record of the farmhouse is to be undertaken in due course as development work progresses

8.2 The report and photographs are also to be accessible via the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) website (www.oasis.ac.uk). The OASIS identification number for this project is souterra1-388472.

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Historic Documents

Abbreviations:

NA = Northamptonshire Archives

F.S. = Fisher & Sanders Collection, NA Accession No. 1944/29 – Rev. J.F. Mercer, Earls Barton

1744 Marriage Settlement - Thomas Mercer/Elizabeth Farrow (lands), 22 Feb. NA. O/1845

1771 Earls Barton Inclosure: Minute Book, NA 2QS/CC/095

1881 'Mercer Deceased', letter from H & H Markhams (Wellingborough) to E H Fisher Esq. (Mkt Harborough) 4 Jun. NA. F.S.29/9 in bundle

1881 'Mercer's Partition', letter Land from H & H Markham solicitors to E K Fisher esq. re. Mercer-Newsam land partition (9th Jun.)

- 1882 Correspondence J F Mercer to E K Fisher Esq. Jan - Apr. NA F.S. 29/10, in Misc. financial papers 1882-1908, NA F.S. 29/10
- 1883 'Plan of Proposed Cow Shed on Mr. T Spencer's Farm', proposal by F Johnson 28 Jun. NA. F.S. 29/11
- 1883 Tender from F Johnson 28 Jun. in Misc. financial papers 1882-1908, NA F.S. 29/10
- 1884 'Plan of Cow Duck & Hen Places to be built at Earls Barton' by F Johnson, 28 Oct. NA. F.S. 29/11
- 1885 Vouchers (29 Jun.), in bundle 1882-1908, NA F.S. 29/9,
- 1887-1913 Rent Accounts; NA F.S. 2, letting agreement to Wm William (11 Oct. 1896); Rent Accounts 25 Aug. 1900, NA F.S. 29/1
- 1890 Vouchers (Apr.), in bundle 1882-1908, NA F.S. 29/9
- 1889 Regulations made by Wellingborough Sanitary Authority in pursuance of the 1885 Dairies, cowsheds and Milkshops Order, Wellingborough Rural District Council. NA LG34/60
- 1900 Tenancy Agreement Wm Wilson (11 Oct.), in letting agreements bundle 1891-1912;
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- 1903 Arbitration award between incoming and outgoing tenant as to value of tenant right to farm, NA F.S 29/3
- 1910 Land Valuation Record Book, Earls Barton, p.1, 3 to 5

Historic Maps

- 1838 Inclosure map of Earls Barton 1838. A copy of the 1771 map, NA Map 2886
- 1772 'Map of an estate at Earls Barton belonging to Mr Thomas Mercer', surveyed by E. Platt, 3 Chains to 1 inch NA Map/3602
- 1884 25" Ordnance Survey, Northamptonshire (published 1885)

British Newspaper Archives

Northampton Mercury

Saturday 13 September 1879
Saturday 11 July 1885
Friday 30 August 1895
Friday 28 March 1913

Friday 17 August 1900

Friday 22 November 1940, 'Cows In The Darkness'

Northampton Chronicle & Echo

Thursday 11 January 1900

Salisbury & Winchester Journal

Saturday 22 June 1878, 'Ecclesiastical & Religious Journal.

Preferments and Appointments'

Architect's Drawings

David Cosby Chartered Surveyors 2018, Job No. 2734.02; Drawing Nos. 2734.02 (16th Jan.); 2734.01 (10th Jan.); & 2734.11 (Mar.)

Toby Pateman Architect Ltd. 2016 (Aug.) Proposed conversion of barn within curtilage of 9 High Street, Earls Barton, Existing Plans, Drawing no. 38-16-01,

Acknowledgements

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11. Figures

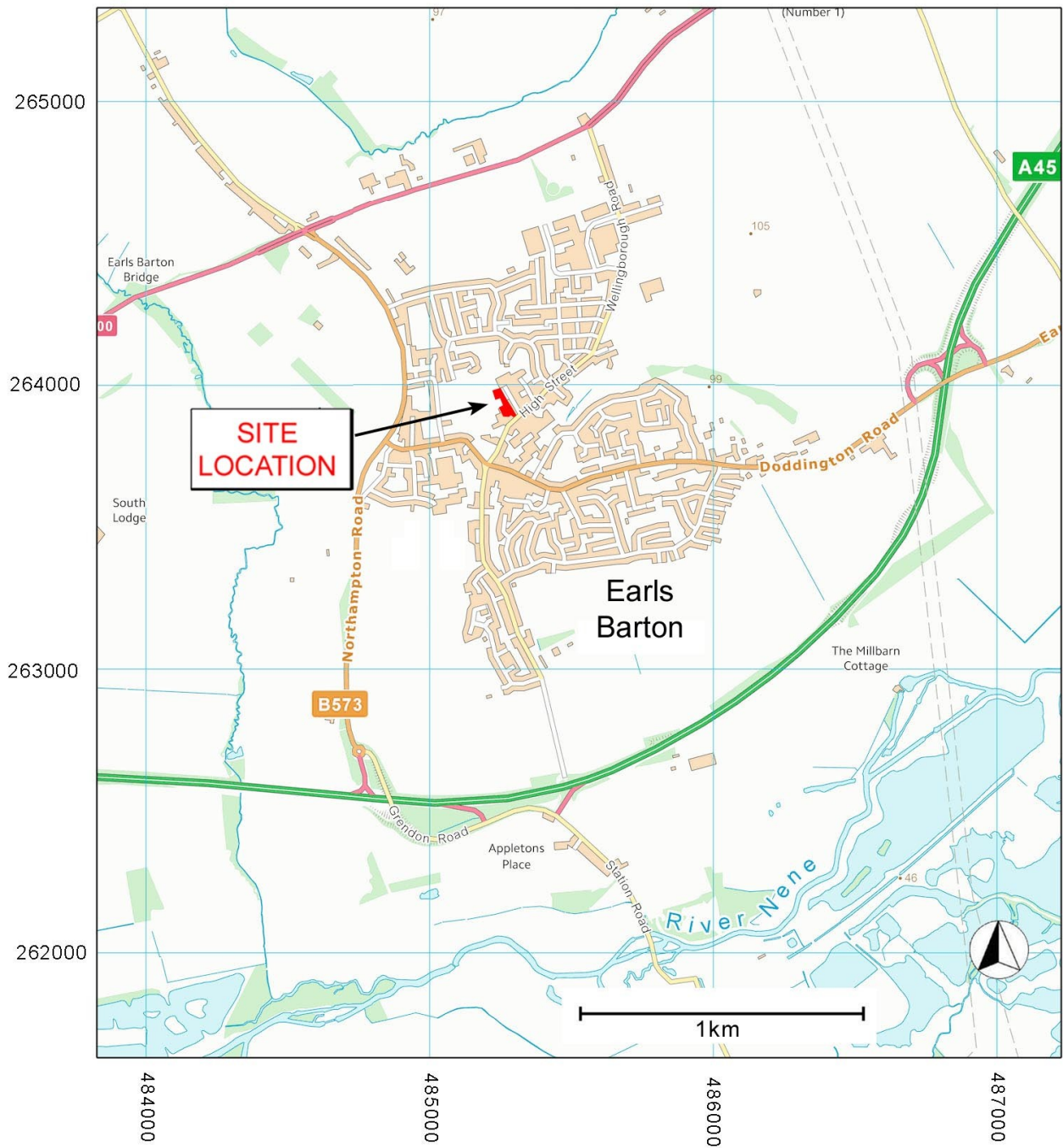


Figure 1. Location of the Development Site

(based on Ordnance Survey Open Data mapping, © Crown Copyright 2020 All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100015565)



Figure 2. Location of the historic farm buildings to be converted.

Key: Buildings A = planning ref. WP/18/00319/FUL; Building B = planning ref. WP/16/00675/FUL

(Ordnance Survey, © Crown Copyright 2020 All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100015565)

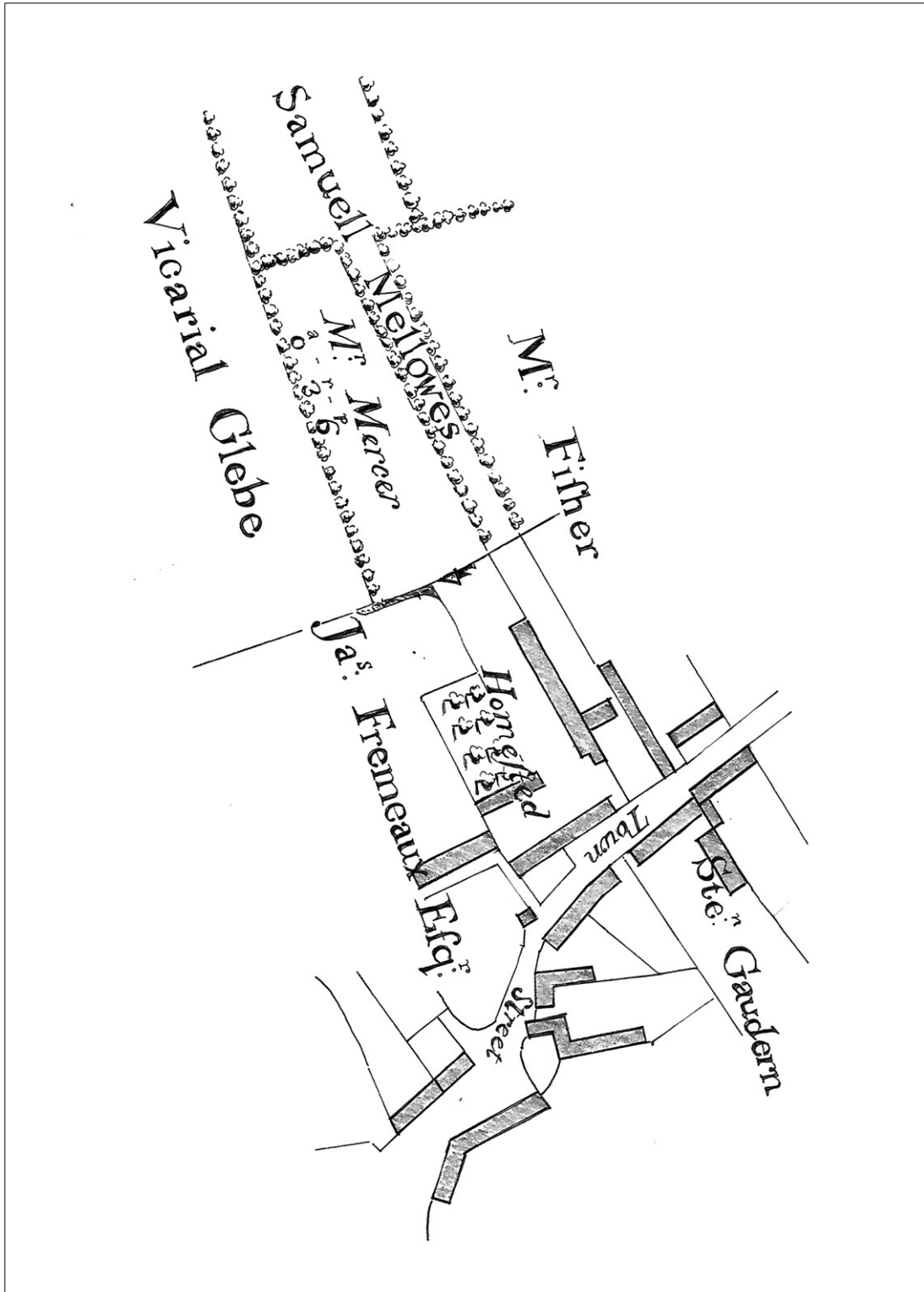


Figure 3. Extract of 'A Map of an Estate Lying at Earls Barton belonging to Mr. Thos. Mercer, Inclosed 1772' (NA Map/3602), showing the layout of Mercer's Farm (marked as 'Homestead').

(redrawn by M.D Wilson 2020)

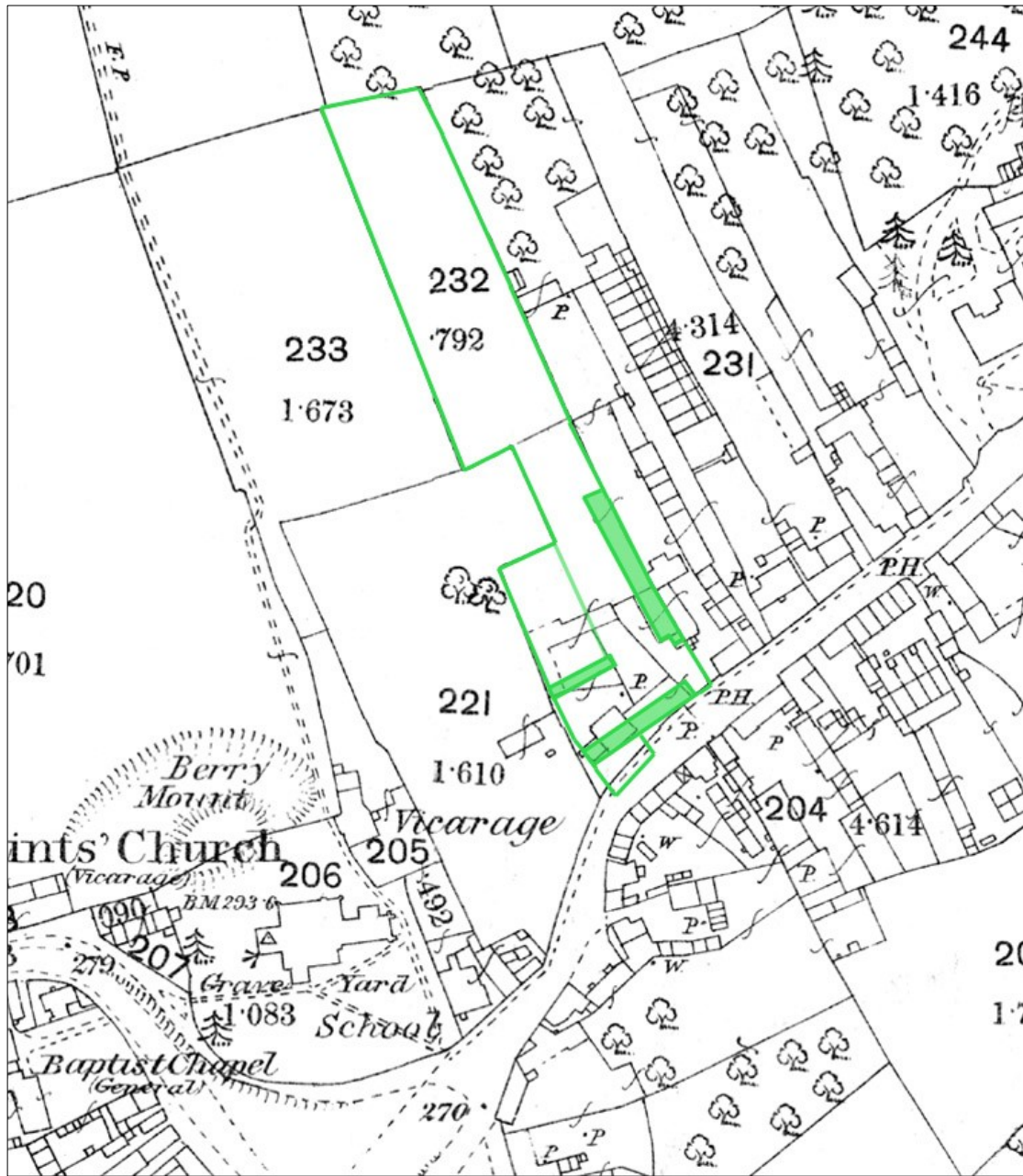


Figure 4. Extract of OS 1884 25" mapping of Earls Barton, with the location of the late 18th century farmstead super-imposed

(base map extracts: Ordnance Survey 25" maps , © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100015565)

Figure 5.

Detail of extract of OS 1884 25" mapping of Mercer's Farm, Earls Barton, with the layout of late 18th century farm buildings super-imposed



Figure 6.

Layout of Mercer's Farm, Earls Barton, 1884





Figure 7. Postulated Phase Plan of Mercer's Farm, Earls Barton



Figure 8. Charles Pettit's dairy herd make their way up High Street to Mercer's Farm , c. 1940s. Possibly the only photograph related to Mercer's Farm.

Photo: courtesy of Earls Barton Museum.



Figure 9: Direction of photographs (1- 31)



Figure 10: Direction of photographs (32- 64)

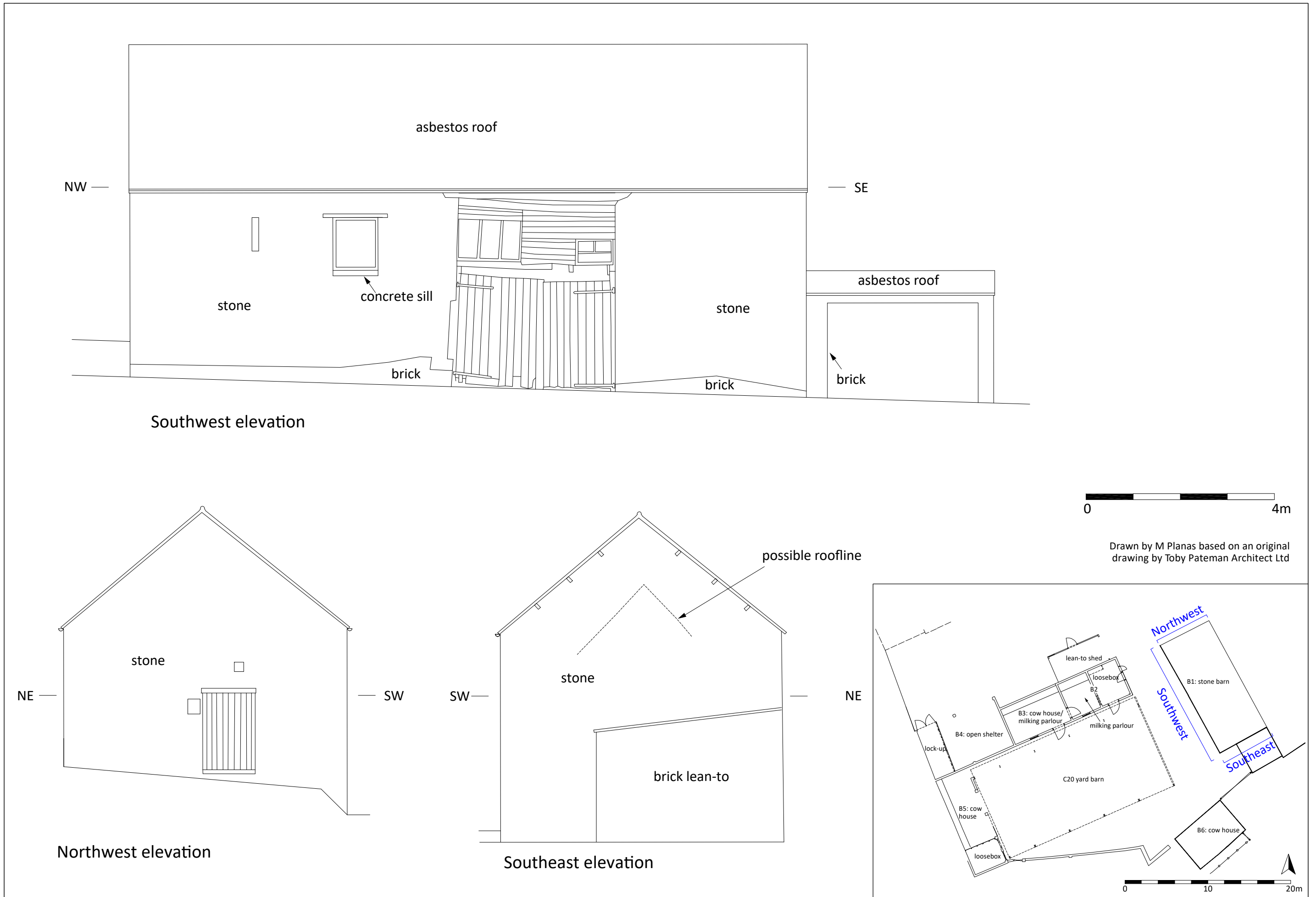


Figure 11: Building 1. Elevations

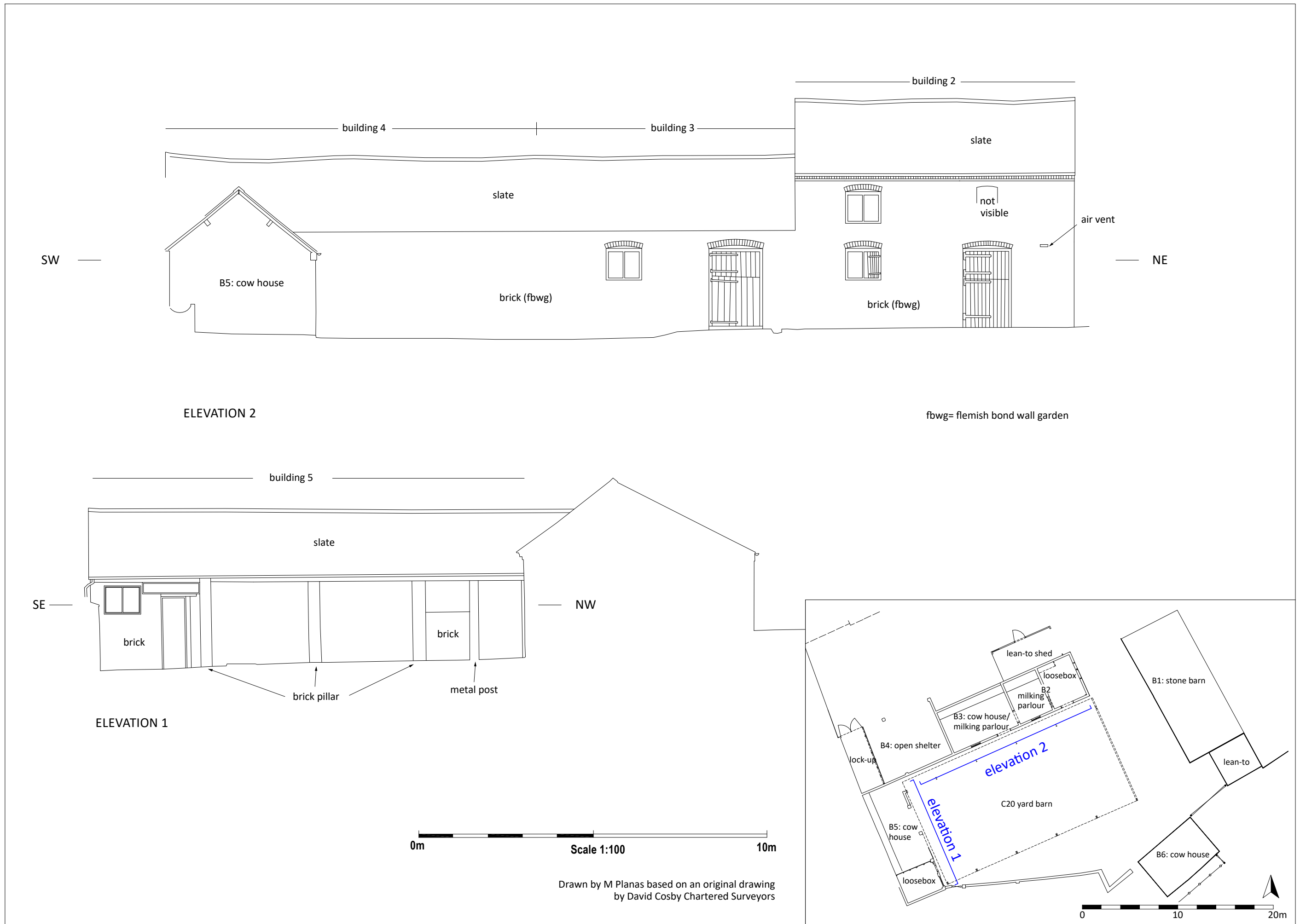
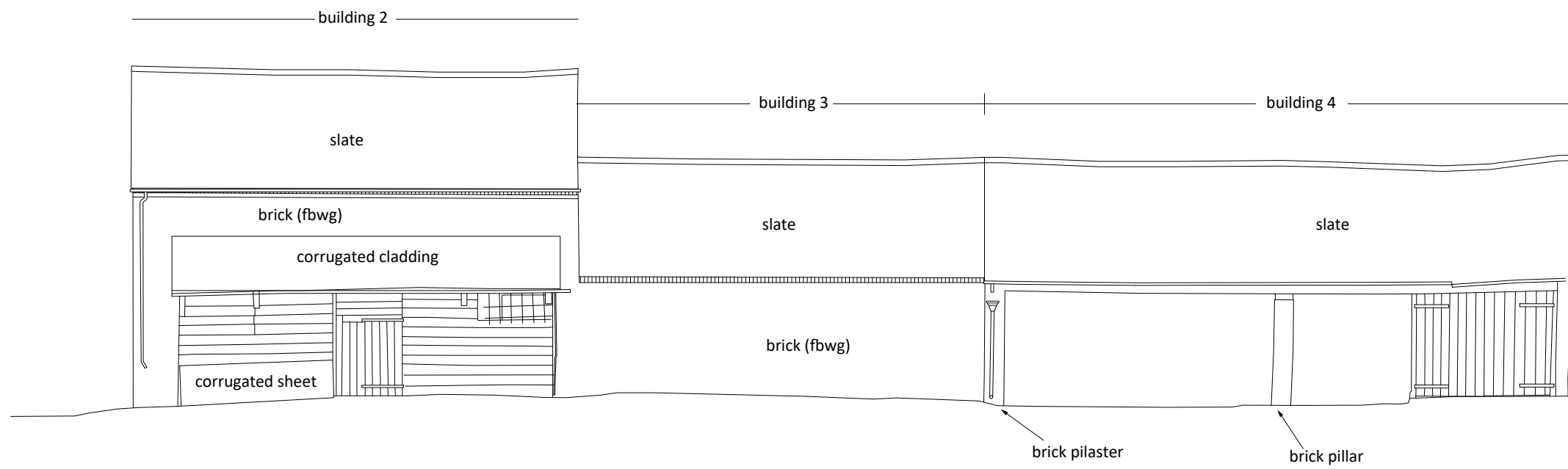
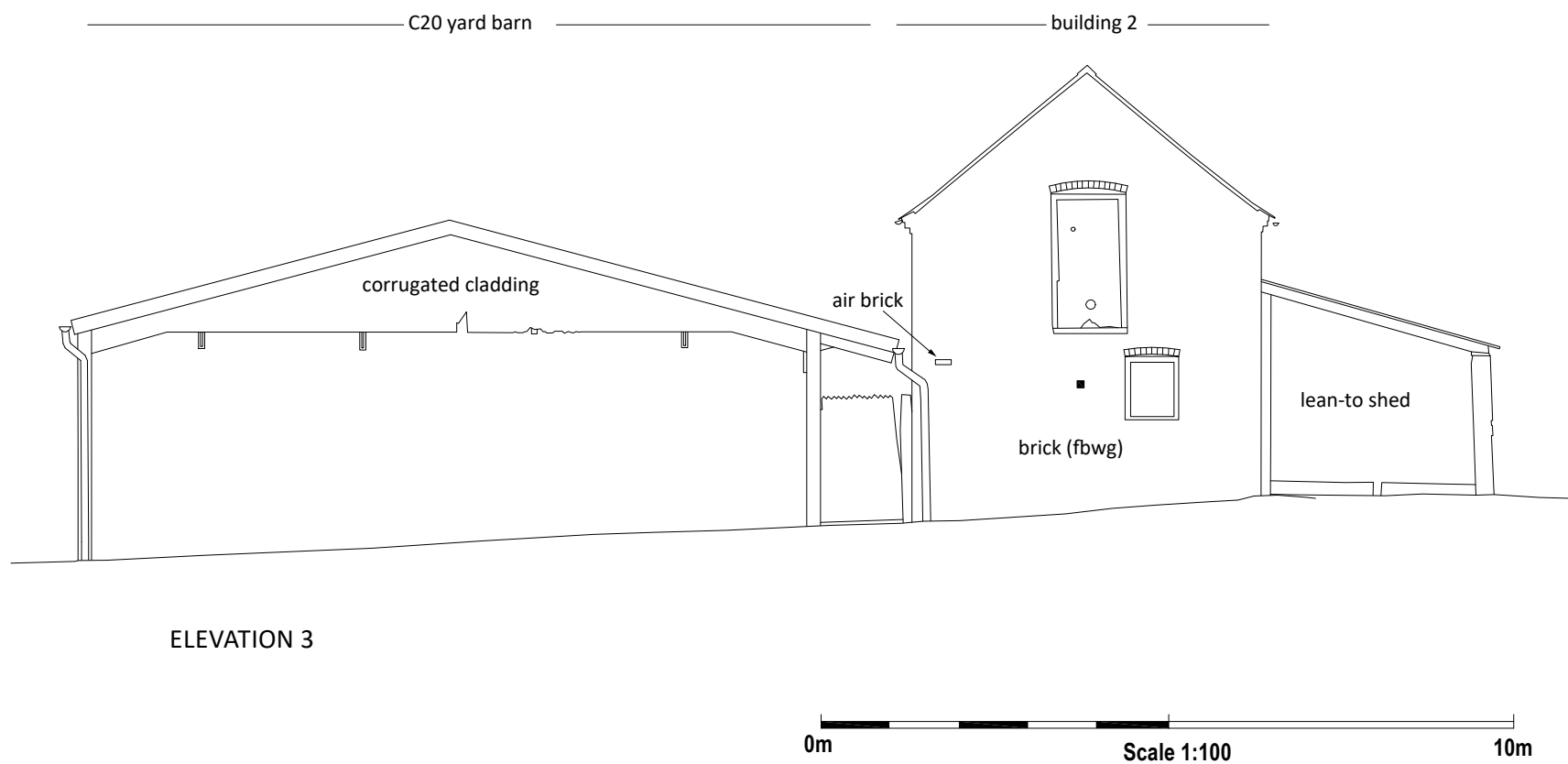


Figure 12: Buildings 2 to 5. Elevations 1 & 2

ELEVATION 4



ELEVATION 3



Drawn by M Planas based on an original drawing
by David Cosby Chartered Surveyors

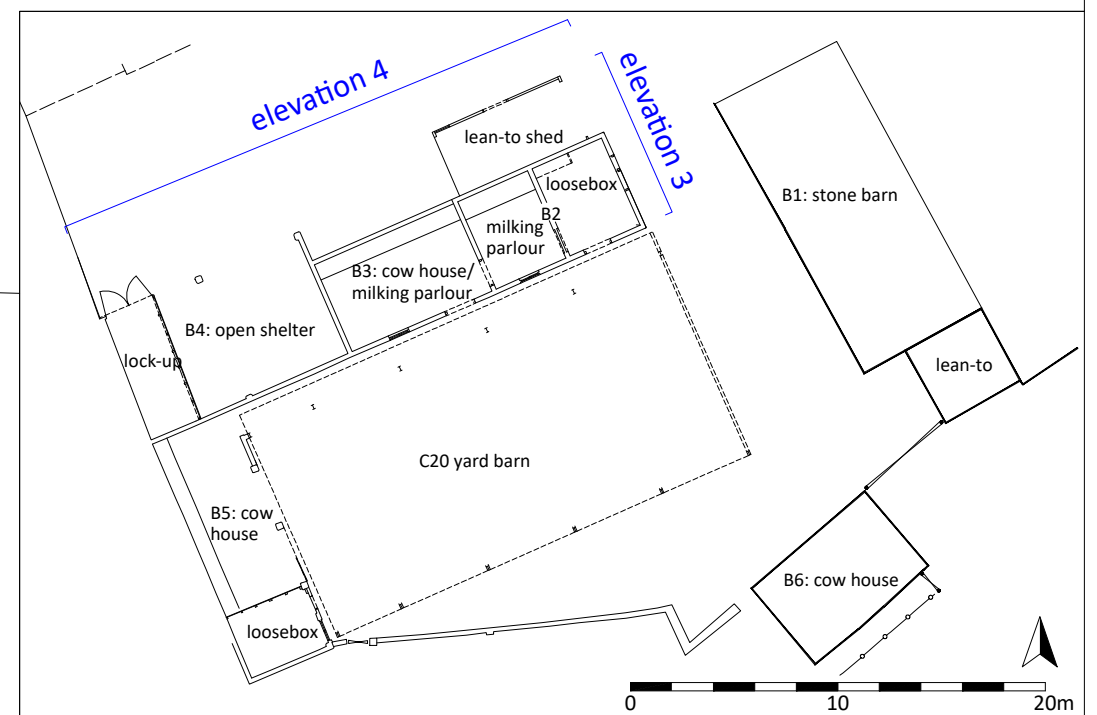


Figure 13: Buildings 2 to 4. Elevations 3 & 4

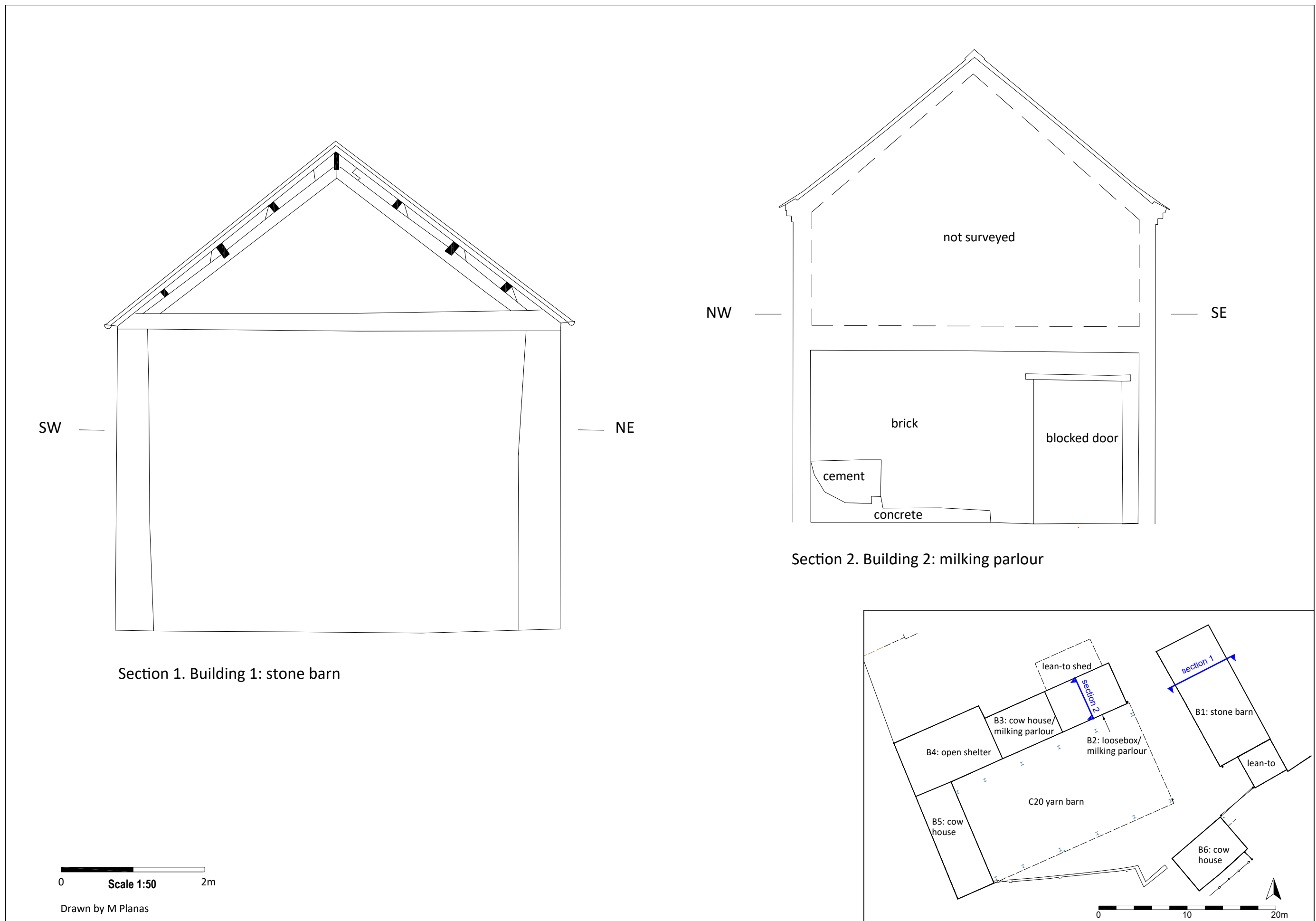
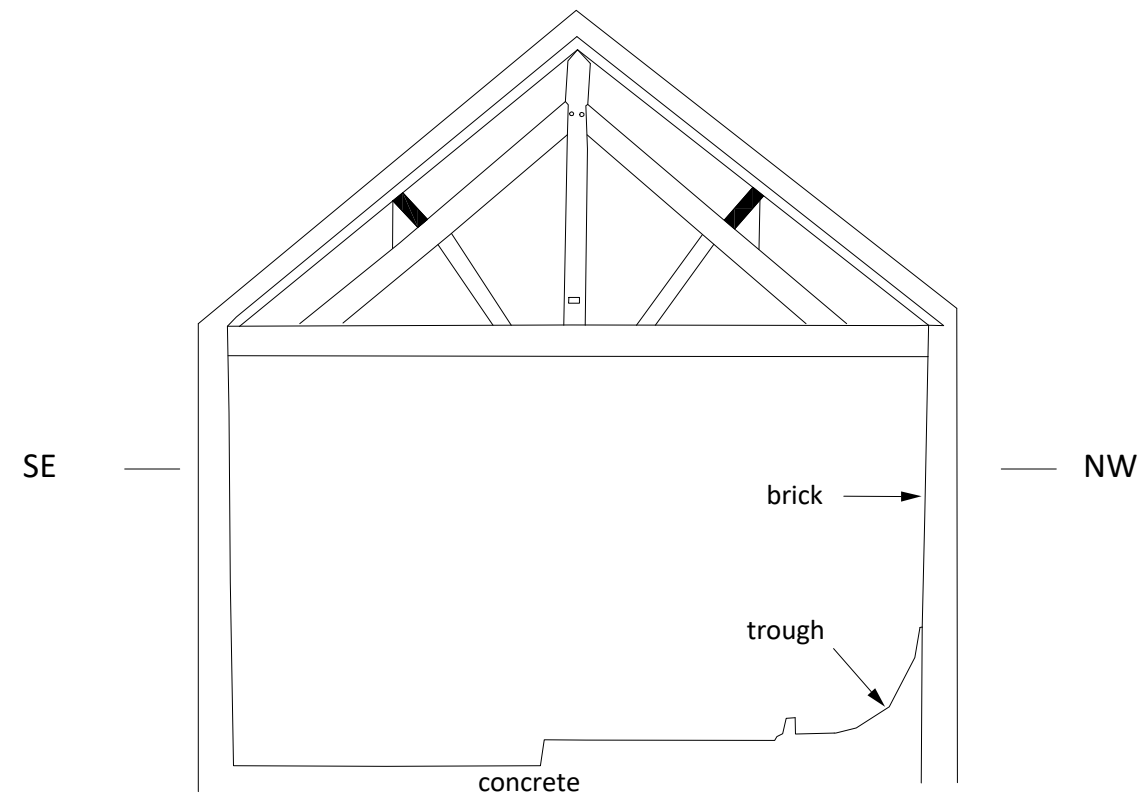
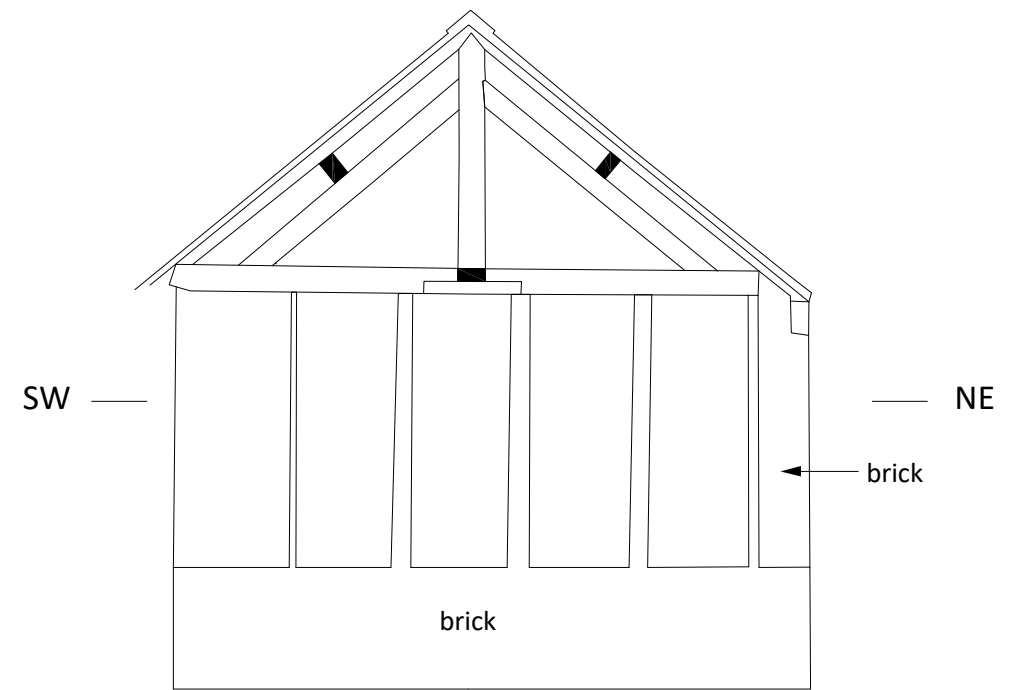


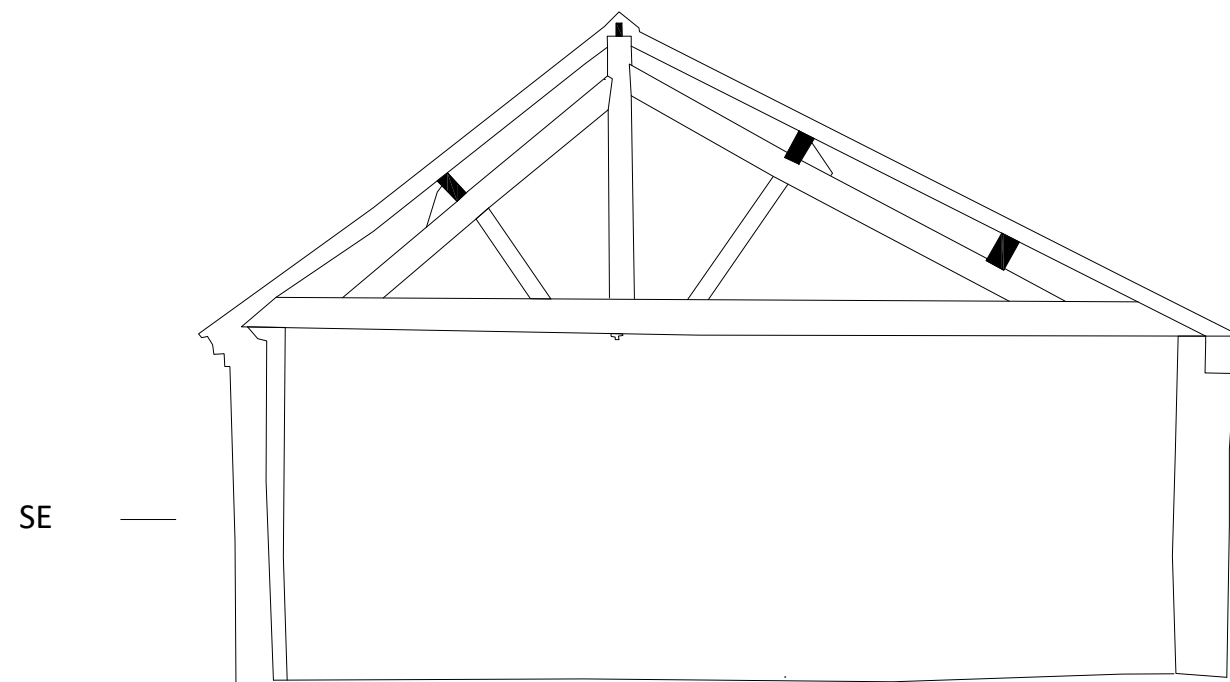
Figure 14: Cross-sections. Buildings 1 & 2



Section 3. Building 3: cow shed



Section 5. Building 5: cow house



Section 4. Building 4: open shelter

NW

0 Scale 1:50 2m

Drawn by M Planas

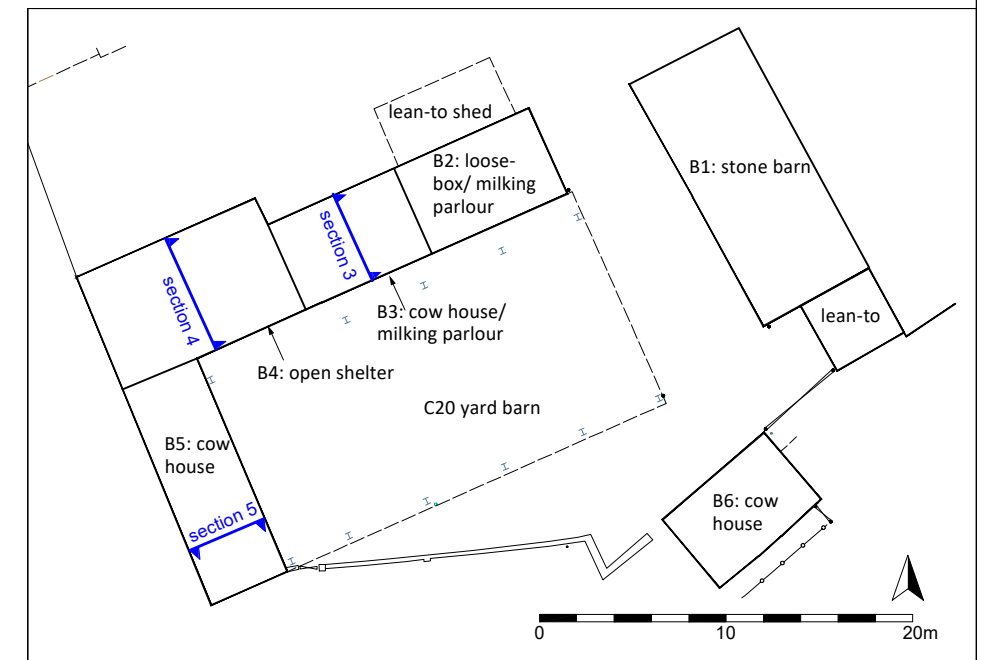


Figure 15: Cross-sections. Buildings 3, 4 & 5

12. Photographs: 2019



1. View of Mercer's Farm from High Street. Facing ENE



2. View of Mercer's Farm from High Street. Facing N

3. Entrance to the farm yard from from High Street, facing NW (Building 6, foreground L; Building 1 (the stone barn), middle-ground R)



4. View of the farmyard, facing NW (Mid-C20 open-sided yard barn; Building 2 background R; Building 5 background L)



5. Building 1 (the stone barn). Facing NNE



6. Building 1 (the stone barn). Facing SE



7. Building 1 (the stone barn). Facing SE



8. Building 1 (the stone barn), wagon entrance. Facing NE



10. Building 1 (the stone barn). Loading door in NW gable end. Facing SE



9. Building 1 (the stone barn). NW gable end. Facing SE



11 . Overview of the farm buildings from the NW



12. View of the Buildings 2 to 4, facing SW. Looking beyond to The Vicarage and Earls Barton Church. Mercer's Farm farmhouse to extreme L



13. View of the Buildings 2 to 4 (L to R), facing SSW. (The building in background R is The Vicarage)



14. Building 2 (cow house), NE gable end with hayloft door and lower light in cow house. Facing SW



15. Mid-C20 timber lean-to shed and rear view of brick cow house (Building 2). Facing SE



16. The rear of brick-built cow-houses, Buildings 2 and 3. Facing ESE



17. Cast-iron down-pipe and hopper (Building 4)



18. Building 4 (open shelter). Facing E

19. (Below) General view of Building 1 from farmyard and farmhouse. Facing NE





20. View towards Building 5 (open-fronted cow house) through mid-C20 open-sided yard barn. Facing SW



21. View of the frontage of Buildings 2 and 3 (cow houses/milking parlours) through mid-C20 open-sided yard barn. Facing NW



22. View of the frontage of Buildings 2 and 3 (cow houses/milking parlours) through mid-C20 open-sided yard barn. Facing N



23. Building 2 (cow house/milking parlour), entrance with stable-type door. Facing NW



24. Building 2 (cow house/milking parlour), shuttered window. Facing NW



25. Building 3 (loosebox), entrance with stable-type door. Facing NW



26. Building 5 (open-fronted cow house), view from the yard. Facing SW



27. Building 5 (open-fronted cow house). Facing W



28. Building 5 (open-fronted cow house). Facing NW



29. Building 5 (open-fronted cow house). Facing SSW



30. The farmhouse. View from the farmyard. Facing S

BUILDING 1
(STONE BARN):
INTERIOR



32. Interior of the Building 1, the Stone Barn. Facing NNW



31. Building 6, cow house. Facing SE



33. Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn. Facing NNW



34. Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn. Facing NW

**BUILDING 1
(STONE BARN):
INTERIOR**



36. Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn. Facing SE



37. Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn. Facing SE



35. Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn. Facing SSE



38. Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn. Facing NE



39. Interior of the loosebox, NE end of Building 2. Manger. Facing NW



40. Interior of the loosebox, NE end of Building 2. Entrance from the yard and blocked doorway (R) to the SW box (milking parlour). Facing SE

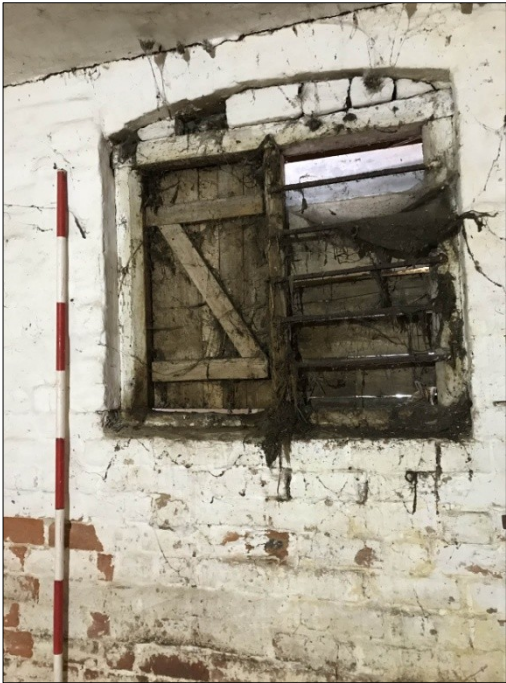


41 Interior of the SW box (milking parlour) of Building 2. Manger (L) and blocked doorway (R) to the the NE box. Facing NE

**BUILDING 2
COW HOUSE
MILKING PARLOUR**



42. Interior of the SW box (milking parlour) of Building 2. Entrance from Building 3. Facing SW



43. Building 2. Half-shuttered window in milking parlour. Facing SE



44. Building 2, SW box (milking parlour), cow stalls and trough manger. Facing NW

**BUILDING 3
COW
HOUSE**



45. Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough



46. Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Facing SW



47. Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough manger to R. Facing SW



48. Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough manger to L. Facing E



49. Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough manger to L. doorway to Building 2. Facing NE



50. Interior of the hayloft above Building 2. Facing SW

BUILDING 4: OPEN SHELTER



51. Building 4. Partitioned vehicle lock-up at the SW end of the Open Shelter. Facing SE



52. Interior of Building 4 (open shelter). Looking towards the rear wall of Building 3 (the Milking Parlour) Facing NE



53. Interior of Building 4 (open shelter). Looking towards the timber partition wall of the vehicle lock-up at the SW end. Facing W

BUILDING 5: OPEN SHELTER/COW HOUSE



54. Interior of Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter), facing SE. Manger to R. Rear of farmhouse visible outside in background



55. Interior of Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter), facing NW. Manger to L. (the object in the foreground is a misplaced stoneware Victorian W.C.)

**BUILDING 5:
OPEN-FRONTED
COW SHELTER**



56. Interior of Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter), facing S. Manger to R



57. Brick-built manger in Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter), facing NW



59. Loosebox at the SE end of Building 5, showing a re-claimed cambered oak tie beam used as a longitudinal /spine beam. Facing SW



58. Brick-built manger in Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter), facing SW



60. Loosebox at the SE end of Building 5, showing the partition wall constructed of re-claimed oak timbers. Facing NW

**BUILDING 6:
COW HOUSE**



61. Building 6 (cow house),
slatted window in front wall.
Facing NW



62. Interior of Building 6 (cow house). Manger to R. Facing NE



63. Interior of Building 6 (cow house). Manger to L Facing SW



64. Open-fronted lean-to (vehicle store) attached to SE gable end of Building 1 (the stone barn). Facing E

APPENDIX 1. PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

(REPORT & ARCHIVE: CD)

PROJECT: HER EVENT No. ENN109717, Historic Building Record: Agricultural Buildings at Mercer's Farm, High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire NN6 0JN				
No. in report	Image No.	Direction (facing)	Description	Date
EXTERIOR VIEWS				
1	1-IMG_0576	ENE	View of Mercer's Farm from High Street	11.12.2019
2	2-IMG_0582	N	View of Mercer's Farm from High Street	11.12.2019
3	3-1160880	NW	Entrance to the farm yard from from High Street. (Building 6, foreground L; Building 1 (the stone barn), middle-ground R)	26.11.2019
4	4-IMG_0220	NW	View of the farmyard (Mid C20 open-sided yard barn; Building 2 background R; Building 5 background L)	26.11.2019
5	5-IMG_0226	NNE	Building 1 (the stone barn)	26.11.2019
6	6-IMG_0266	SE	Building 1 (the stone barn)	26.11.2019
7	7-IMG_0254	SE	Building 1 (the stone barn)	26.11.2019
8	8-P1160883	NE	Building 1 (the stone barn), wagon entrance	26.11.2019
9	9-P1160888	SE	Building 1 (the stone barn). Loading door in NW gable end	26.11.2019
10	10-P1160891	SE	Building 1 (the stone barn). NW gable end	26.11.2019
11	11-P1160924	SE	Overview of the farm buildings from the NW	26.11.2019
12	12-IMG_0241	SW	View of the Buildings 2 to 4. Looking beyond to The Vicarage and Earls Barton Church. Mercer's Farm farmhouse to extreme L	26.11.2019
13	13-P1160904	SSW	View of the Buildings 2 to 4 (L to R). (The building in background R is The Vicarage)	26.11.2019
14	14-IMG_0272	SW	Building 2 (cow house), NE gable end with hayloft door and lower light in cow house	26.11.2019
15	1-P1160902	SE	Mid C20 timber lean-to shed and rear view of brick cow house (Building 2)	26.11.2019
16	16-P1160908	ESE	The rear of brick-built cow houses, Buildings 2 and 3	26.11.2019
17	17-P1160910	E	Cast-iron down-pipe and hopper (Building 4)	26.11.2019
18	18-P1160916	E	Building 4 (open shelter)	26.11.2019
19	19-IMG_0223	NE	General view of Building 1 from farmyard and farmhouse	26.11.2019
20	20-P1160451	SW	View towards Building 5 (open-fronted cow house) through mid-C20 open-sided yard barn	26.11.2019
21	21-P1160868	NW	View of the frontage of Buildings 2 and 3 (cow houses/milking parlours) through mid-C20 open-sided yard barn	26.11.2019
22	22-P1160867	N	View of the frontage of Buildings 2 and 3 (cow houses/milking parlours) through mid-C20 open-sided yard barn	26.11.2019
23	23-P1160861	NW	Building 2 (cow house/milking parlour), entrance with stable-type door	26.11.2019
24	24-P1160857	NW	Building 2 (cow house/milking parlour), shuttered	26.11.2019

PROJECT: HER EVENT No. ENN109717, Historic Building Record: Agricultural Buildings at Mercer's Farm, High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire NN6 0JN				
No. in report	Image No.	Direction (facing)	Description	Date
			window	
25	25-IMG_0212	NW	Building 3 (loosebox), entrance with stable-type door	26.11.2019
26	26-IMG_0321	SW	Building 5 (open-fronted cow house), view from the yard	26.11.2019
27	27-P1160929	W	Building 5 (open-fronted cow house)	26.11.2019
28	28-P1160939	NW	Building 5 (open-fronted cow house)	26.11.2019
29	29-P1160930	SSW	Building 5 (open-fronted cow house)	26.11.2019
30	30-IMG_0335	S	The farmhouse. View from the farmyard	26.11.2019
31	31-IMG_0337	SE	Building 6, cow house	26.11.2019
INTERIOR VIEWS				
BUILDING 1: STONE BARN				
32	32-IMG_0061	NNW	Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn	26.11.2019
33	33-P1160733	NNW	Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn	26.11.2019
34	34-P1160734	NW	Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn	26.11.2019
35	35-IMG_0085	SSE	Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn	26.11.2019
36	36-P1160752	SE	Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn	26.11.2019
37	37-IMG_0087	SE	Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn	26.11.2019
38	38-IMG_0091	NE	Interior of the Building 1, the stone barn	26.11.2019
BUILDING 2: COW HOUSE / MILKING PARLOUR				
39	39-P1160762	NW	Interior of the loosebox, NE end of Building 2. Manger	26.11.2019
40	40-IMG_0100	SE	Interior of the loosebox, NE end of Building 2. Entrance from the yard and blocked doorway (R) to the SW box (milking parlour)	26.11.2019
41	41-P1160777	NE	Interior of the SW box (milking parlour) of Building 2. Manger (L) and blocked doorway (R) to the the NE box	26.11.2019
42	42-IMG_0113	SW	Interior of the SW box (milking parlour) of Building 2. Entrance from Building 3	26.11.2019
43	43-IMG_0115	SE	Building 2. Half-shuttered window in milking parlour	26.11.2019
44	44-IMG_0108	NW	Building 2, SW box (milking parlour), cattle stalls and trough manger	26.11.2019
BUILDING 3: COW HOUSE / MILKING PARLOUR				
45	45-IMG_0126	W	Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough manger to R.	26.11.2019
46	46-IMG_0118	SW	Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour	26.11.2019
47	47-P1160788	SW	Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough manger to R	26.11.2019
48	48-IMG_0146	E	Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough manger to L	26.11.2019
49	49-IMG_0147	NE	Interior of the Building 3, cow house/milking parlour. Trough manger to L. doorway to Building 2	26.11.2019
BUILDING 2: HAYLOFT				
50	50-IMG_0377	SW	Interior of the Hayloft above Building 2	26.11.2019

PROJECT: HER EVENT No. ENN109717, Historic Building Record: Agricultural Buildings at Mercer's Farm, High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire NN6 0JN				
No. in report	Image No.	Direction (facing)	Description	Date
BUILDING 4: OPEN SHELTER				
51	51-P1160830	SE	Building 4. Partitioned vehicle lock-up at the SW end of the open shelter	26.11.2019
52	52-P1160820	NE	Interior of Building 4 (open shelter). Looking towards the rear wall of Building 3 (the milking parlour)	26.11.2019
53	53-P1160827	W	Interior of Building 4 (open shelter). Looking towards the timber partition wall of the vehicle lock-up at the SW end	26.11.2019
BUILDING 5: OPEN SHELTER / COW HOUSE				
54	54-P1160846	SE	Interior of Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter). Manger to R. Rear of farmhouse visible outside in background	26.11.2019
55	55-IMG_0178	NW	Interior of Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter). Manger to L. (the object in the foreground is a misplaced stoneware Victorian W.C.)	26.11.2019
56	56-P1160841	S	Interior of Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter). Manger to R	26.11.2019
57	57-IMG_0181	NW	Brick-built manger in Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter)	26.11.2019
58	58-P1160849	SW	Brick-built manger in Building 5 (open-fronted cow shelter)	26.11.2019
59	59-IMG_0364	SW	Closed box at the SE end of Building 5, showing a re-claimed cambered oak tie beam used as a longitudinal/spine beam	26.11.2019
60	60-IMG_0368	NW	Closed box at the SE end of Building 5, showing the partition wall constructed of oak timbers	26.11.2019
BUILDING 6: COW HOUSE				
61	61-IMG_0358	NW	Building 6 (cow house), slatted window in front wall	26.11.2019
62	62-IMG_0351	NE	Interior of Building 6 (cow house). Manger to R	26.11.2019
63	63-IMG_0355	SW	Interior of Building 6 (cow house). Manger to L	26.11.2019
64	64-P117009	E	Open-fronted lean-to (vehicle store) attached to SE gable end of Building 1 (the stone barn)	

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

OASIS ID: souterra1-388472	
Project details	
Project name	Historic Agricultural Buildings at Mercer's Farm, 9 High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire
Short description of the project	A record was made of a group of historic farm buildings at Earls Barton village, Northamptonshire, prior to their conversion to residential usage. The report combines direct inspection of the buildings and primary source research to ascertain an understanding of their historical context, function, and chronological development. Centrally located in the village, within an ancient close, the farmstead formerly known as Mercer's Farm was already in existence in 1771. The comparison of historic maps suggests that the farm underwent a planned re-organisation, from dispersed layout, to a courtyard form in the late 19th century. Documentary analysis reveals that the transformation was complete by the mid-1880s, a process which may well have begun in the 1870s. Although Mercer's Farm was a mixed farm, the courtyard buildings reflect an emphasis on stock rearing and milk production. They comprise an L-shaped brick-built range of enclosed and open-fronted cow houses and milking houses, a free-standing cow house, and a stone-built barn, the latter a modified relic of the pre-Victorian farmstead. The report identifies the main phases of development for the existing buildings; the L-shaped range possibly comprising two construction events. The internal features of cow houses and milking houses are variable. Brick-built mangers are present in three of the buildings, while one cow house largely retains a brick floor. The former milking areas have formed concrete troughs and impervious concrete floors with cleansing passage, all of which were undoubtedly a response to the introduction and re-working of regulations for cow houses and milking houses from 1879 and 1885 onwards. By means of photographic catalogue, scaled elevations and plans, the report provides a descriptive and illustrative account of the building's interior and exterior in its present 'as found' state.
Project dates	Start: 26-11-2019 End: 04-02-2020
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Assoc. project ref.	WP/16/00675/FUL - Planning Application No.
Assoc. project ref.	WP/18/00319/FUL - Planning Application No.
Assoc. project ref.	ENN109717 - HER event no.
Assoc. project ref.	SOU19-677 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	COW HOUSE Post Medieval
Monument type	SHELTER SHED Post Medieval
Monument type	BARN Post Medieval
Monument type	LOOSE BOX Post Medieval
Monument type	DAIRY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	SHERDS Modern
Significant Finds	SHERDS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	DRAIN Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Measured Survey","Photographic Survey","Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Project location	
Country	England

Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WELLINGBOROUGH EARLS BARTON Mercer's Farm, 9 High Street
Postcode	NN6 0JN
Study area	0.1 Hectares
Site coordinates	SP 85271 63903 52.266270426935 -0.750325332667 52 15 58 N 000 45 01 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 87.55m Max: 88.65m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd
Project design originator	Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd
Project manager	M D Wilson
Project supervisor	Mercedes Planas
Type of funding body	Developer
Name of funding body	Lexicus Developments
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	landowner
Physical Archive ID	ENN109717
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Archaeological Data Service
Digital Archive ID	ENN109717
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record
Paper Archive ID	ENN109717
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Report"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Historic Agricultural Buildings at Mercer's Farm, 9 High Street, Earls Barton, Northamptonshire NN6 0JN (NGR 485271, 263903): Historic Building Record
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Wilson, M.D and Planas, M
Other bibliographic details	SOU19-677
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Description	illustrated technical report, 55 pp inc cover, A4 with A3 fold-ins, colour
Entered by	M Wilson
Entered on	11 March 2020