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*Historic Building Recording and Watching Brief
at
Grafton Farm, Bockleton, Worcestershire*



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Watching Brief at Grafton Farm,
Bockleton, Worcestershire*

A report for Mr and Mrs Thomas

May 2005

Paul Williams

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Project: PJ 139

**WSM 34219 &
WSM 34220**

Mercian Archaeology undertake archaeological projects across much of the West Midlands and the Welsh Marches. We specialise in Historic Building Recording and Analysis. We also undertake archaeological watching-briefs, evaluation and excavation, desk-based assessment, historic landscape assessment and osteological analysis. We now also carry out historic reconstruction and can produce illustrations for publication, website or interpretative panels.

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1. Project Background

1.1. Location of the Site

Grafton Farm is located at the foot of a gentle hill on the eastern side of the unadopted lane towards Leysters to the north and Puddleston to the south (NGR SO 5789 6110). The nearest town is Tenbury Wells, which lies on the Worcestershire/Shropshire border, some 6 kilometres to the north; the Herefordshire market town of Leominster lies a similar distance to the south-west. Grafton, at best can be described a hamlet, with only Grafton Farm and a small range of cottages.

1.2. Development Details

A planning application has been made to Malvern Hills District Council by Mr and Mrs Thomas of Grafton Farm, via their agent McCartneys, for conversion of existing farm buildings to provide domestic accommodation and associated infrastructure (reference MH/04/0598). The planning process determined that the proposed development was likely to affect a building listed on the Worcestershire County Historic Environment Record (HER). As a result, the Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, placed a 'Programme of Building Recording' planning condition on the application. The granting of the application was also subject to an archaeological watching brief being carried out during groundworks at the site. The brief of work (WHEAS 2004) contained specification for both elements of the project. The building recording part was assigned Worcestershire Historic Environment Record number WSM 34219 and the watching brief element WSM 34220.

1.3. Reasons for the Historic Building Recording

The data contained within the Sites and Monuments Record suggested that the building conversion work would affect a building contained on the local list of historically important buildings. The brief of works states that:

'Buildings of this type form an integral and significant part of the counties agricultural heritage' (WHEAS 2004).

In such circumstances a programme of archaeological work is attached to planning conditions for any development. In this instance, an historic building recording was suggested to record the building prior to its conversion.

1.4. Reasons for the Watching Brief

The watching brief was suggested in response to the possible threat posed to buried archaeological remains associated with the recorded shrunken medieval settlement of Grafton

(WSM 11250), also to record any below ground features or deposits associated with the development of the farm buildings.

2. Methods and Process

2.1. Project Specification

The project was designed to follow the following guidelines and specifications: -

- ❑ Mercian Archaeology Service Manual (2003).
- ❑ Institute of Field Archaeologists Guidelines for an Archaeological Watching Brief (1999)
- ❑ The project conforms to the Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (IFA 1999).
- ❑ The buildings were recorded to at least Level 1 as defined by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments of England (RCHME 1996).
- ❑ Worcestershire County Council requirements and guidelines for archaeological projects in the county.
- ❑ The record archive will be offered to the appropriate museum after discussion with the curator.
- ❑ The Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1997)
- ❑ The Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, Institute of Field Archaeologists (1997)
- ❑ Guidelines for Finds Work, Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999)
- ❑ Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (DoE, PPG 16 1990).
- ❑ Institute of Field Archaeologists 'Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- ❑ Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage (Walker 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections, Museum and Galleries Commission (1992)
- ❑ Conservation Guidelines No 2, United Kingdom Institute of Conservation.
- ❑ Management of Archaeological Projects, English Heritage 1991

- ❑ Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological Evaluations: Recommendation Regarding the Environmental Archaeology Component of Archaeological Evaluations in England, Association for Environmental Archaeology Working Paper Number 2 (1995)
- ❑ The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Section, Worcestershire County Council (WHEAS 2005) and for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Mercian Archaeology 2005).

2.2. Aims of the Project

The aims of the historic building recording were to compile an archive of the buildings within their topographical setting. This was to consist of both written and photographic records. The results of the fieldwork were to be used to produce a report chronicling changes and development within the building(s) and where possible, to attach relative dates to individual phases of building. The documentary survey was to be used to assist the chronological phasing of the complex and also, to ascribe function and use to the building(s).

The watching brief aimed to use the results of the archaeological work to produce a report highlighting: -

1. The survival and location of any archaeological deposits.
2. Make an analysis and interpretation of all identified natural and cultural deposits

Based on the above, establish the significance, survival, condition and period of the archaeological remains and place them within context at local, regional or national level where relevant

2.3. Background Research

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork all the relevant available cartographic sources were consulted and a search of the County Historic Environment Record was made.

Documentary research was carried out at Worcestershire Record Office (WRO) and the following sources were specifically consulted and were of use:

Cartographic Sources

Source	Reference Number
Tithe Map and Apportionment of Bockleton (1841)	WRO BA 2664/5, AP r971.1
Valuation of the Bockleton Estate (1866)	WRO BA 8901 Parcel 3-4 ref: 705:365
Ordnance Survey 6" 1 st edition (1885)	Supplied with the HER search

Other sources used are referenced within the report.

2.4. The Fieldwork Methodology

The building recording was undertaken on 26th January 2005 prior to any development work being carried out at the site.

A full photographic survey was carried out using digital photography. A 2-metre scale was used where possible.

Proforma Building Record Forms were used to record the structure in tandem with site notes and reference to site photographs, to produce the final record contained within this report.

The methodology adopted and the favourable working conditions meant that the aims and objectives of the brief could be fully met and the fieldwork was successfully concluded.

The watching brief was undertaken between on 18th and 19th April 2005, following the progress of the groundworks team.

The methodology adopted and the favourable working conditions meant that the aims and objectives of the brief could be fully met and the fieldwork was successfully concluded.

3. The Documentary Research

3.1. General Background

Bockleton parish is in the historic land unit of Doddingtree Hundred, a ‘hundred’ was essentially an administrative area roughly equating to 100 hides (around 120 acres), which evolved during the Anglo-Saxon period (Hooke 1998, 21).

The earliest settlement at Grafton appears to have been less than 100 metres to the south of the site, where earthworks were interpreted in 1969 by Trevor Rowley of the Medieval Village Research Group as the remains of a medieval shrunken settlement (WSM 11250)

At Domesday, Bockleton was held by the Bishop of Hereford from the king and was formerly held by Turchill (VCH IV, 241). By the 16th century the manor of Bockleton belonged to the Acton family and was later transferred through marriage lines to the Baldwyn family by the late 16th century (*ibid*, 242). The estate remained in the hands of the Baldwyns’ until 1777 when Charles Baldwyn sold the holding to Thomas Elton, who later passed the manor to his nephew, the Reverend Thomas Elton Miller. On the death of Reverend Miller in 1866 the estate was sold at auction to the Prescott family who owned the estate into the 20th century (*ibid* 243) and it was sold at auction again in 1905 and finally in 1948.

3.2. Specific Background

Grafton Farm appears on the inventory for the sale of Bockleton and The Hill Estates in 1777 (the age of the farm is further discussed below). The farm was then leased to William Icke and extended to 15 acres 2 roods 20 perch (WRO: BA 3762/8; Foley Scrapbook p237). The estate consisted of 8 parcels and was valued at £74 (WRO: BA 8901 parcel 3 ref: 705:363).

The farm is further recorded in details concerning the sale by auction of the estate almost a century later in 1866. The estate agent to Mrs Prescott, then a potential buyer, stated that some of the land of the estate would benefit from drainage, a scheme that had already been started and was well under way. It was also stated that some of the cottages were dilapidated and in need of urgent remedial works (WRO BA 8901 parcel 3 ref: 705:363). This is expanded upon in the Book of Valuation of the Bockleton Estate and Manor, by Clement Cadle, Land Agent and Valuer (WRO WRO BA 8901 parcel 3 ref: 705:363). The estate at this time included Hill Farm, Cinders Farm, Romers Farm, Newtown Farm, Plotmans Farm, Weston Farm, Bockleton Court Farm, Romers Common Farm, Upper Quinton, Middle Quinton, Grafton Farm and Little Grafton Farm. Grafton Farm was listed at over 206 acres, showing a vast increase in size of holding since 1777. This was broken down into 76 acres of arable, 120 acres of pasture, 3 acres of hops and the remainder as various. Mr J. Phillips farmed Grafton in 1865 and Mr J. Rogers farmed Little Grafton, which lay the opposite side of the road. An accounts document dated to 1848 indicates that the farms were then referred to as Grafton minor and major.

Grafton farmhouse is described in 1866 as having a large kitchen, parlour, dairy, back kitchen, 5 bedrooms, attics and lean-to cellar or cider house. The farm complex consisted of a double barn, sheds, stables, hop kilns, cider mill, calves cot, 2 pigs cots with 'old' buildings used as a cowhouse, a further cowhouse and an eastern stable. It was further stated that the farm was very hilly and that the buildings were badly arranged and needed repairs. The house was said to be 'in such an awkward place and that it would be necessary to increase the extent of buildings and to provide a larger yard for manure'. The valuer advised demolition of the house and erection of a farm building across the northern side in its place, but added that this would only work if the farm could be amalgamated with Little Grafton Farm (on the opposite side of the road). He finally commented that the old buildings, currently used as stables and cowhouse, are in very poor condition and are not worth saving.

The auction sale catalogue for the estate dating to 1905 (WRO BA 8901 parcel 4 ref: 705:363) indicates that Grafton Farm was now extended to almost 300 acres, indicating that the farm, had on the advice of the valuer at the 1866 auction, been amalgamated with Little Grafton Farm. The farmhouse is now described as 'of brick and tile' (the present farmhouse on the opposite side of the road). The buildings were now listed as a 6 bay open cattle shed, cowhouse, stone, brick and tile stable, ciderhouse, 2 hopkilns and granary, two-storey building, 4 bay dutch barn, stone, brick and tile cowhouse for 5 head, large barn, cowhouse for 3 head with calves cot, 3 cowhouses (2 for 5 head and 1 for 4 head), timber and corrugated iron engine room, 4 open cattle sheds and bull-house, implement shed. Listed separately (possibly as they were on the other side of the road – but unknown) were a stone built shed, cattle shed for 4 head, cowhouse for 6 cows and shed at side, cattle yard adjoining with a 4 bay timber and tile shed, stone built cattle shed with hayloft over and another shed with thatched roof. The whole had been leased to Thomas Jenkins from 1883 at £200 per annum.

At the sale of the Bockleton estate in 1948, Mr J.M.Thomas is listed as having been the tenant at Grafton farm since 1914.

3.2. Cartographic Evidence

In 1836 the Tithe Commutation Act was passed by Parliament, resulting in an extensive survey of land across England in order to produce a series of Tithe Apportionment Maps that relayed information about land ownership and use, aimed at converting the commutation of tithe in kind to land taxation (Hoskins 1972, 37). The Tithe Apportionment Map for Bockleton was produced in 1841 (Figure 2). The apportionment shows the owner of Grafton Farm as Reverend Thomas Elton Miller and the tenant as John Phillips. The map shows buildings along the north and south of the central yard, with the farmhouse shown slightly offset at the eastern end. The angle of the house appears exaggerated. There is a further building to the east of the farmhouse, which still stands although much dilapidated. The pond, next to this building, is shown as being much larger than it is today. (WRO BA 2664/5, AP r971.1).

The plan of Grafton Farm included in the Book of Valuation of the Bockleton Estate and Manor, dating from 1866, shows the buildings in similar configuration, to the north, south and west of the central yard (Figure 3). The northern buildings have been extended on the western side and the buildings to the south appear to have been replaced, or drastically altered. The farmhouse is shown at a more realistic angle and the plan-form of the house can clearly be seen.

The early edition Ordnance Survey 25” maps of the area were not available at Worcester Records Office and the 6” maps were not detailed enough to be of use.

An undated plan of the farm is shown in Figure 4 (courtesy of Mr and Mrs Thomas). The plan was made to show the drainage scheme that was carried out on the estate during the mid to late 19th century. The map is likely to date from around 1860-70, as the documentary research indicated that the drainage scheme was underway prior to the auction of the estate in 1866 (see above) and the present farmhouse, which dates from circa 1880, had not yet been built.

3. The Historic Building Recording

The subject buildings could be easily divided into separate elements for ease of ease of recording, these are alphabetically labelled and are shown in Figure 5.

The Farmhouse

The remains of the original farmhouse stand on the eastern side of the complex (Plates 1- 4). The building is of two storeys plus attic, rough coursed stone construction with later alteration in brick. The roof cover is now of handmade clay tiles, but the steep pitch of the roof suggests that the cover may formerly been of thatch. With the exception of a first storey slit window to the eastern elevation, all the windows appear to have been inserted into the earlier fabric, rough segmental brick arched lintels being used above some windows and indications that the stonework has been disturbed above other windows that rely on the frame to support the wall

above. It is not clear if the opposing doors, on the east and west elevations are original, but this seems likely. The northern elevation has been rebuilt in orange-red handmade brick and a limey mortar. The bricks measured 2 ¾" x 9" and are laid in an unusual quarter lap bond, with one row of alternate headers and stretchers over a row of stretchers. There are windows to the ground and second floors beneath polychrome segmental brick arched lintels. Part of the stonework of the western elevation was rebuilt at the same time that the new brick gable wall was built (Plates 2 and 3).

Inside the structure, a brick hearth, bread-oven and chimneybreast have been inserted into the northern end of the lower room. The chimneybreast is built over a heavy timber mantel beam (Plates 5 and 6). Some ironwork still remains in the hearth; with a spit, hook and chains surviving in the accumulated debris at this end of the structure. The bread oven was in a dilapidated condition. A brick partition had been extended into the room from the hearth, forming a storage area, this was lately used as the control area for electrical systems around the farm. A set of timber steps had been added over the bread oven to give access to the (later) adjoining building (Structure A in Figure 5). A staircase once rose up to the first floor in the opposite (southern) corner and then dog legged up to the attic from the first floor; the lower level of the timber constructed staircase is missing and access to the first floor is now via the steps on the opposite side, referred to above. It is unsure if the staircase is an original feature. Elsewhere within the original fabric, it was noted that timbers from earlier building(s) had been used within the stone built construction (Plate 7), it would have been good economics to re-use building material, in this case timbers, inside the wall fabric and many may have been strategically placed so that nails could be driven in to fix internal fittings.

The first floor joists were carpented into chamfered bridging axial beams, which with the bridging beams were carved with straight cut stops (Plates 8 and 9). The ceiling was lath and plaster between the joists. The internal space was lately used for milling grain and some associated infrastructure for the milling process was still in place (Plate 10).

At first floor level, there was a small grate in the chimneybreast, this would originally have had a plain cast-iron fireplace. The axial (tie-beam of the truss above) and transverse beams at second floor height were in the same pattern as the floor below. They were carpented in similar style, but were much rougher and had been agitated to accept plaster. The eastern end of the room had been partitioned off at the top of the staircase. The original slit window in the eastern elevation was unlike the remainder of the windows to the build as the aperture had a greater splayed reveal on the southern side, thus allowing more light into the room than to the other side, which was close to the gable end wall and therefore, did not require as much light (Plate 11). This floor was used for storage at the time of the survey. The second floor (attic) was reached via the dog-leg staircase in the south-eastern corner behind the partition.

The attic space was divided into two by a heavy central timber truss. The truss was of twin queen-struts pegged into the collar between the principals, with rails and studs forming panels (Plates 12 and 13), the rafters were supported on trenched purlins. The space between the struts formed access from one space into the next and the partition was formed by infilled panels of riven oak wattles and staves between the timbers and covered with a lime plaster including horsehair (Plate 14). There were empty mortises and peg-holes in the collar and queen-struts, this and the fact that the collar and strut joints were undisturbed, indicates that these were re-used timbers rather than due to modification of the truss. Empty peg holes in the purlins show that originally the rafters were spaced further apart (Plate 15). Chiselled carpenters' marks were noted on the rails forming the bottom of the infill panels. There was also evidence to show that at least two purlins were made from re-used timber (Plate 16). The space appears to have been used lately to store saddlery and riding tack.

The Western Range

The western range of buildings consist of a stone and brick built extension on the northern side of the northern end of the farmhouse, a two storey range projecting off to the west, part of which dates from an earlier build and a stone built extension at the western end. Essentially, the structure is an infill building between the former farmhouse and the footprint of a former range of timber-framed farm buildings to the west, of which only part now remains. The separate sections of this build are labelled A, B & C on Figure 5.

The map evidence caused some confusion when interpreting this construction as the early plans show the farmhouse to align on the centre of the western range of farm buildings (Figures 2 -4), whereas on the ground the remnant part of the farmhouse lines up with the southern elevation of the western range. Close inspection of the stone coursing of the eastern elevation of the farmhouse was able to decipher this anomaly. It appears that originally there was an annexe built onto the northern end of the farmhouse, the stone coursing can be seen carried through at low level below the attached extension to the original corner of the annexe (Plate 17). The structure is referred to as an annexe here, as it did not appear to have had access from inside the farmhouse and also the remnant section of farmhouse has a full gable end (although now hidden inside the attached extension) on the north. The documentary sources referred to above, describe a 'lean-to cellar or cider-house' at the farm in 1866 and it seems likely that this structure was attached to the northern gable of the farmhouse, leading to confusion as there is now no physical trace of the structure.

Externally the two-storey structure butts onto the farmhouse (Plates 18 and 19). There are four windows to the eastern elevation with red brick segmental arched heads and quoins, a style followed through along the remainder of the western range (Plate 20). The northern gable end is now obscured by the adjoining brick built hop-kilns (Plate 21). The corner unit (A) has an upper floor that is carried across and above (B) although separate at ground floor level. This space was created at the time that the hop kilns were added, in order to create a processing space or 'oast-house'. Space (C) also has two stories, although the upper floor was not accessible as it was stacked to the rafters with bales-of-hay. From the front (southern side), this structure appears to be two structures, with the timber frame section having a different roofline and construction (Plate 22), however, the stone rear wall (northern elevation) demonstrates that it is of a single build and only the frontage of the timber-framed stable block is of a different phase.

The two storied elements (A) and (B) with the higher roofline are 'matched' to the remnant element of the farmhouse, with stone walls below a steep pitched roof of clay tile. The windows and doors, however, demonstrate the later build style, being embellished with orange brick arched lintels and decorative quoins, as are the doorways. The upper floor of (A) and (B) is accessed from within the upper storey of the farmhouse. The upper room is now used as a feed store (Plate 23) but was formerly used for hop processing and storage; the lower room of (A) is now a feed store and implement shed (Plate 24) and the lower floor of (B) is a stable (Plate 26). Historically (B) and (C) would have been used as a cowshed and stable.

The timber-framed element (C) is now a stable with a hayloft above. The timber studs only survive at first floor level and close inspection indicates that the framing originally extended to the east and west and has been under-built. The panel infills are now of brick, but these almost certainly would originally been of wattle and daub. Internally, the newer stone walls of this space (C) and space (B) have many sections of former timber-framed building within the fabric. These include sections with empty mortises, peg holes, and stave holes and grooves

(Plate 25). A doorway in the northern elevation of the stone element of the build has been bricked up (Plate 23).

Stable at Western End of Range

At the western end of the range of farm buildings described above is a further stone built stable with hayloft above. This has been butted onto and shares a roofline with the gable end of the partially timber-framed section (C). There are pitching eyes with decorative orange brick lintels and sills in the west, north and southern elevation and above the stable door (Plate 27).

The Former Hop Kilns

A pair of square orange brick hop kilns has been attached to the north-eastern corner of the complex. These are constructed in an English bond with a whitish limey mortar, the lower floors were also of brick. The kilns are incomplete with the roofs and ventilator cowls of the cooling loft having been removed and the structures re-roofed with pitched trusses and clay tile. The cowls, with their extended control vanes would have presented a skyline that would have been familiar in this area of north-Worcestershire and Herefordshire, where hop growing was commonplace. The bottom of the kiln structures is entered via individual doorways inside space (A) and down some steps, as the kiln floors are at a lower level. The upper level drying floor can be accessed from the steps inside the former farmhouse and through the upper floor of the adjoining building. There are flue vents in the northern elevation; these would have been controlled by opening and closing the wooden vent hatches against the draught (Plate 28). The furnaces that generated the heat for drying the crop have been removed; these would have been domed brick constructions located centrally on the brick floor. The drying floors over the first floor level were of closely spaced laths over the joists as was usual in these structures (Plate 29). In later drying floors the laths were more widely spaced and the crop was laid on horsehair or cloth to prevent the hops falling into the void below. This cloth also acted as a filter to prevent the sulphur fumes reaching the crop. Sulphur was added to furnaces as it prevented moulding in the drying hops. The use of sulphur in furnaces for this purpose continued into the 1980's (Felbridge & District History Group website).

4. The Watching Brief

The watching brief focused on the lowering of floor levels within the buildings prior to the insertion of damp-proof membranes and new floors.

The floor level in the former farmhouse was lowered by between 0.40 metres and 0.50 metres. The accumulated material was removed by mini-digger and manual labour. It was clear from the visual evidence that the floor had been heavily disturbed and the broken remains of a former flag stone floor, with the occasional quarry tile, had been thrown into the central area, with deposits of red clay, which appears to have been use to level over the disturbed layer. The natural clay was noted around 30 centimetres below the disturbed deposit above. There were no unbroken in-situ flagstones noted, suggesting they had been removed for use elsewhere. There were no dateable finds retrieved from this area.

In the adjacent building (A), the floor level was only reduced by 0.25 metres and the removed material consisted mainly of accumulated farm debris, rather than a significant layer. The natural undisturbed clay was noted at this level.

The floors of the hop kilns were built-up, rather than excavated, with hardcore thrown into the base of both kilns to around 0.50 metres.

There was no further disturbance to ground levels that may have disturbed significant archaeological layers.

5. Phasing of the Buildings and Dating

Discussion of the Fabric and Dating Evidence

Accurate dating of farm buildings is often problematic as dateable architectural features are often changed, modified or re-used. This is usually more pronounced within commercial or agricultural buildings than in domestic architecture. It may also be that architectural fashion takes longer to manifest itself within the fabric of buildings reserved for animals or produce. Consequently, any evidence for close dating is problematic without substantiating documentary evidence.

The cartographic evidence (outlined above) shows that by the mid 19th century the farmhouse was an 'L' shaped construction set at the end of two opposing ranges of farm buildings. The documentary evidence indicates that the land surveyor for the 1866 auction of the Bockleton Estate holdings thought that the farmhouse was in an 'awkward' position and should be demolished. It appears that the new-owners of the farm decided only to partially demolish the structure and incorporate the remainder into a scheme of regeneration at the farm. The remnant structure has physical evidence within its fabric to suggest that it dates from the 17th century; the main evidence being the chamfer stops on the bridging beams, which are typically 17th or early 18th century and the style and scantling used in the remaining roof truss, which suggests 17th rather than 18th century. Some of the timbers of the truss and incorporated within the stonework of the house are clearly re-used items from timber-framed building(s), demonstrating that there was an earlier phase of timber-framed building on the site. It therefore can be hypothesised that the remnant timber-frame structure on the northern side of the site (now part of a hayloft above a stable-space C) is part of this earlier phase; the physical evidence indicates that the timbers formerly extended further along this range and it is likely that this range was originally a complete timber frame construction sitting on a stone plinth. The estate valuer had also commented in 1866, that the 'old buildings' now used as a stable and cowhouse are in poor condition and were not worth saving.

So it appears that when the transfer of estate took place from the Miller family to the Prescott's, around 1866, the farm underwent a drastic change on the advice of the estate valuer. The western range of buildings must have been added around about this time and the salvageable remains of the timber-framed stable/cowhouse and the farmhouse incorporated into the plan. The stone stable block at the western end of the subject buildings is a slightly later construction, evidenced by the butt joint where this building joins structure (C). (Plate 30).

The hop kilns, being square, would not have been constructed between c.1835 and 1875, when circular kilns were favoured due to suggestions that the hot air was able to circulate and escape more freely in a structure without corners. This suggestion was later refuted and square kilns became fashionable again around 1875. It is clear from the structural evidence that the kilns are later than structure (A) onto which they butt, the two strains of evidence suggesting that the kilns date from after 1875, rather than pre-1835. The northern elevation wall of structure (A) was demolished at the same time as the kilns were built and the new structure tied into the east and west elevations, opening the space out to incorporate the processing area, referred to as an 'oast'. The reference to 'hop kilns' amongst the farm buildings in the valuation of 1866, must therefore refer to earlier kilns now gone and it may be that these were located on the south of the site to the rear of the existing stables, the 1866 surveyors plan (Figure 3) shows these buildings to be wider than they are today. However, the 1841 tithe shows the buildings as narrow, so if the 1866 plan does depict the earlier kilns, it would argue against the well held theory that only round kilns were built between 1835 and 1875 as the plan shows square structures in 1866 that were not there 25 years earlier. This is of course conjectural and the accuracy of the plans is questionable, the 1866 plan overlaid onto the drainage plan (Figure 4) shows drastic anomalies in alignment.

Based on the evidence collected we are able to suggest the phases and dates for the buildings at Grafton Farm as shown in Figure 5.

6. General Discussion

Much has been written regarding the 'progression' of farming, although the majority relates to the agricultural revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries, when there was large scale parliamentary enclosure resulting in change of use of vast tracts of land, although inclosure (enclosure) was well under way during the previous two-centuries (English Heritage 1997, 3).

The focus of such studies has been to categorise the use of space on a farm and tie it into the type of architecture used. This has resulted in a wealth of papers focusing on 'model farms' of the mid to late 18th century, which were basically the response to improvements afforded by mechanisation and increased profits, manifesting in planned farms with high architectural elaboration. A similar glut of papers dealing with 'high farming' of the mid to late 19th century also dominates the record. High farming came after a period of agricultural depression at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, when the monetary impact of imported grain had brought down commercial crop prices resulting in lower profits and therefore, lower rents from tenanted farms (Wade-Martins 1991, 60). A growing population over the following 30 years meant that a market was created and agriculture began to get back on its feet. It was during this time that owners of large farms and smaller estate owners must have realised that they needed to invest in farming in order that the decline would not be repeated. Progressive farming saw changes and improvements in crop rotation, fertilisation, use of space, use of machinery, soil science and produce processing (Wade Martins 1991, 62). In actuality, farming had become industrialised. The documentary and fabric evidence suggests that Grafton Farm lagged behind with respect to this new industrialised, formal and planned system of farming. Possibly, as suggested by the estate valuer in 1866, because the layout of the farm stifled expansion and improvement.

We must look at Grafton Farm in this light as its working life as a mixed farm spans this period of innovation and agricultural development, when clearly much expenditure on alteration and modification was carried out at the farm at the expense of the landowners (although this expenditure can only be comparable to the amount spent on similar tenanted farms by the same landlord). Grafton Farm falls into a category that is generally overlooked, as all farms are sometimes lumped together as if there were no variations regionally, locally or from farm to farm. This is like talking about modern farming but not recognising the fundamental differences between western and northern hill farms and the extensive 'high-plains' farming of the lowlands, where hedgerows are a thing of the past. Grafton Farm is best described (during the period before the 20th century) as a tenanted farm, more akin to a smallholding. The tenant would have had responsibilities to the estate owner not only for rent, but also to maintain and improve the land, hedgerows, waterways and buildings. It is clear from the construction of all the buildings, that the estate had not lavished more than necessary capital outlay on the buildings, using local stone and re-using materials where possible. The documentary sources refer to a state of dilapidation and an unplanned format. This probably reflected the economy of the farm, and probably the general economy of the surrounding farms in the Bockleton area, where to a great extent the landscape has dictated the way that the farmsteads have developed, operated and survived until the diversification of farming during recent times. This brings us to hop growing.

Hops have been grown in Britain since at least the 15th century, although it appears that hops never became popular in Worcestershire until much later (Cook 2003). Hops were sold after harvesting at licensed hop fairs and hop markets across the country and the hop fair at Tenbury Wells was opened on 26th February 1774 (Gaut 1939, 157); this is probably where the hops grown at Grafton were sold. The documentary evidence indicated that there were hop kilns at Grafton Farm by 1866 and as highlighted above, these were not the kilns that we see today. So Grafton farm was by at least the mid 19th century and likely a lot earlier, tied into a local economy that cannot be categorised within the remit of the wave of progressive farming that was changing the face of English agriculture. There were clearly advances in hop growing and processing technology and Grafton Farm would have had to keep up with these changes to compete at a local level. The best indicator of this is the construction of the existing kilns themselves; existing hop kilns were replaced; a wall of a recently built stone farm building (A) was completely removed; the upper floor of the range of buildings (A) and (B) was altered to form an oasthouse and the lower floor of (A) would also have been given over to the process, identifying the importance of hops to the farm.

The general layout of farmsteads has been variously discussed in an attempt to place them into categories (a prime identifier in model farms and high farming). While there are generally accepted patterns in use of space, i.e. enclosed central foldyard sheltered on the north by the barn, east facing stables to catch the morning sun etc (Peters 1969), the assumption that the layout of all all farmsteads follows such models may be questioned, as the use of space on individual farmsteads is likely to have evolved in response to local situations. For example; the barns at Grafton farm referred to by the estate valuer in 1866 could not have been on the north of the site (map evidence), it is likely that the barns would have been orientated to make best use of the direction of the locally prevalent wind to aid the threshing process; the stables faced south into the yard, which is likely to have been the direction best sheltered from the local elements or micro-climate. In fact, out of all the recent projects carried out by Mercian Archaeology, only one farmstead has had a barn on the northern side of the foldyard, as is suggested is the norm. The estate valuer, when in 1866 argued that the farmhouse was in an 'awkward' position, may have been looking at it from the perspective of the time and moulding Grafton into an already recognised category of progressive farms, where the barn

may have been on the north and the stables may have been east facing, but the notion of such textbook agricultural practice can only, when statistics are analysed, be viewed as a general trend.

Overall, the farm buildings at Grafton have generally taken on the plan suggested as improvement by the estate valuer in 1866, with demolition of obsolete parts of the farmhouse and derelict timber framed buildings, but also indicates the way that small tenanted farms such as this adapted to a situation and adopted development, managing to incorporate it into an evolving 'farmscape'. Later changes in use of space renders any notation that the view of the valuer is the best and therefore the only economically viable use of space to be flawed and such textbook idealism must be questioned as the evidence suggests that Grafton Farm has evolved in response to local economics, agricultural practice indelibly linked with the terrain and the financial restraints imposed on the tenant farmer by the multi-farm landowner.

7. Conclusion

The results of the historic building recording at Grafton Farm determined that there was an earlier phases of timber-framed buildings on the site, of which only part survives, now incorporated into the later 19th century stone farm buildings.

The remains of a 17th century constructed stone farmhouse also survive within the altered and modified farmstead. The importance of hops to the economy of the farm is demonstrated in the late 19th century brick hop kilns added to the north-eastern corner of the site.

The watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the conversion of buildings from agricultural to domestic was unable to shed further light on the development of the farm, or highlight occupation of the site prior to the 17th century.

8. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr and Mrs Thomas of Grafton Farm for their interest in the project. The author would also like to thank David Hughes and Christina O'Neill of McCartneys, Leominster, for their help and supplying the excellent plans and elevations, which form the basis of Figures 5-7. Thanks are also due to Steve Williams, building contractor and the ground workers of M.S.Shaw Groundworks, Mike Glyde, Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, and Deborah Overton for carrying out a search of The County Historic Environment Record.

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Plates

Plate 1



The former farmhouse looking north-east (scale 2 metres)

Plate 2



Rebuilt stonework tied into the newer brick southern elevation

(scale 2 metres)

Plates

Plate 3



*Gable end at south of farmhouse
(scale 2 metres)*

Plate 4



The farmhouse (left) extended into Building A (right of chimney, looking north-west)

Plates

Plate 5



Bread oven in the north-west corner of the lower floor of the former farmhouse

Plate 6



Hearth with iron spit below mantel beam, probably 19th century (scale 2 metres)

Plates

Plate 7



Re-used timbers in the stone wall fabric of the former farmhouse (scale 2 metres)

Plate 8



Chamfered axial and bridging beams at first floor level in the former farmhouse

Plates

Plate 9



The construction of the first floor in the former farmhouse seen during the watching brief

Plate 10



The lower floor of the former farmhouse has lately been used for milling grain

Plates

Plate 11



Original splayed window to the upper eastern elevation of the former farmhouse. Note the greater splayed reveal (right) into the room (scale 2 metres)

Plate 12



Truss in attic of former farmhouse with central access through, looking north (scale 2 metres)

Plates

Plate 13



Central access through attic truss in former farmhouse looking north (scale 2 metres)

Plate 14

Wattle and daub panelling surviving in the truss (scale 2 metres)



Plates

Plate 15



Peg-holes in an attic purlin, showing the rafters are not original to the purlin

Plate 16



Attic purlin with cut mortises showing the timber is re-used. Also note a re-used rail in the end gable (north) with groove to take the bottoms of staves of a wattle and daub panel

Plates

Plate 17



The stonework at the base of the build continues past the north eastern corner of the gable of the farmhouse, the extension (right) is built onto it (see text)

Plate 18



Northern elevation of space A (with windows), space B (with bricked up door) and attached stable at western end. Note the drop in roofline, although the wall is of a single build up to the end section.

Plates

Plate 19



The butt joint between the former farmhouse (right) and Structure A (left) with the return range running to the west (scale 2 metres)

Plate 20



Southern elevation of the range of farm buildings showing A (right) and B (left)

Plates

Plate 21



The hop kilns on the northern side of the complex (scale 2 metres)

Plate 22



Southern elevation of the remnant timber-framed building (C) and the stone stable attached on the west (right)

Plates

Plate 23



The oasthouse looking east, note the entrance to a kiln drying floor in the wall (top right by step ladder)

Plate 24



Space A: looking north-east, note the entrance to the northernmost kiln in the wall (left)

Plates

Plate 25



Space B (stables) looking north. Note extensive re-use of carpented timbers in the walls

Plate 26



Space C (stables) looking north-east (scale 2 metres)

Plates

Plate 27



The stone stable block with hayloft above, added to the western end of the range (scale 2 metres)

Plate 28

The vent in the northern elevation of one of the hop kilns (scale 2 metres)



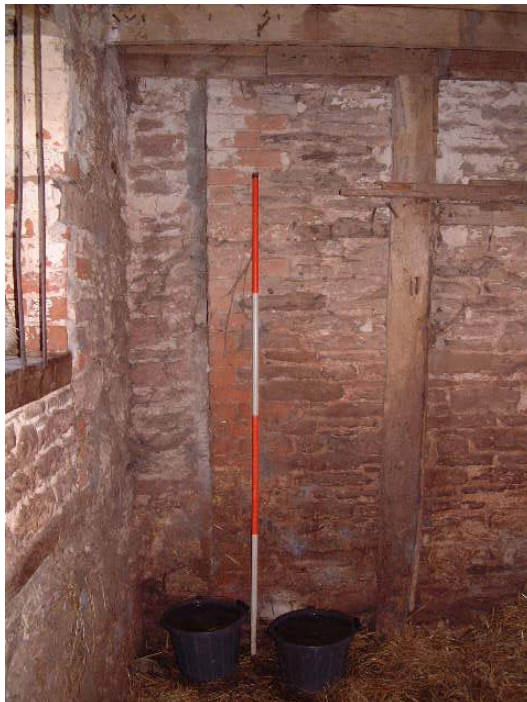
Plates

Plate 29



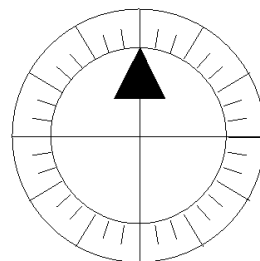
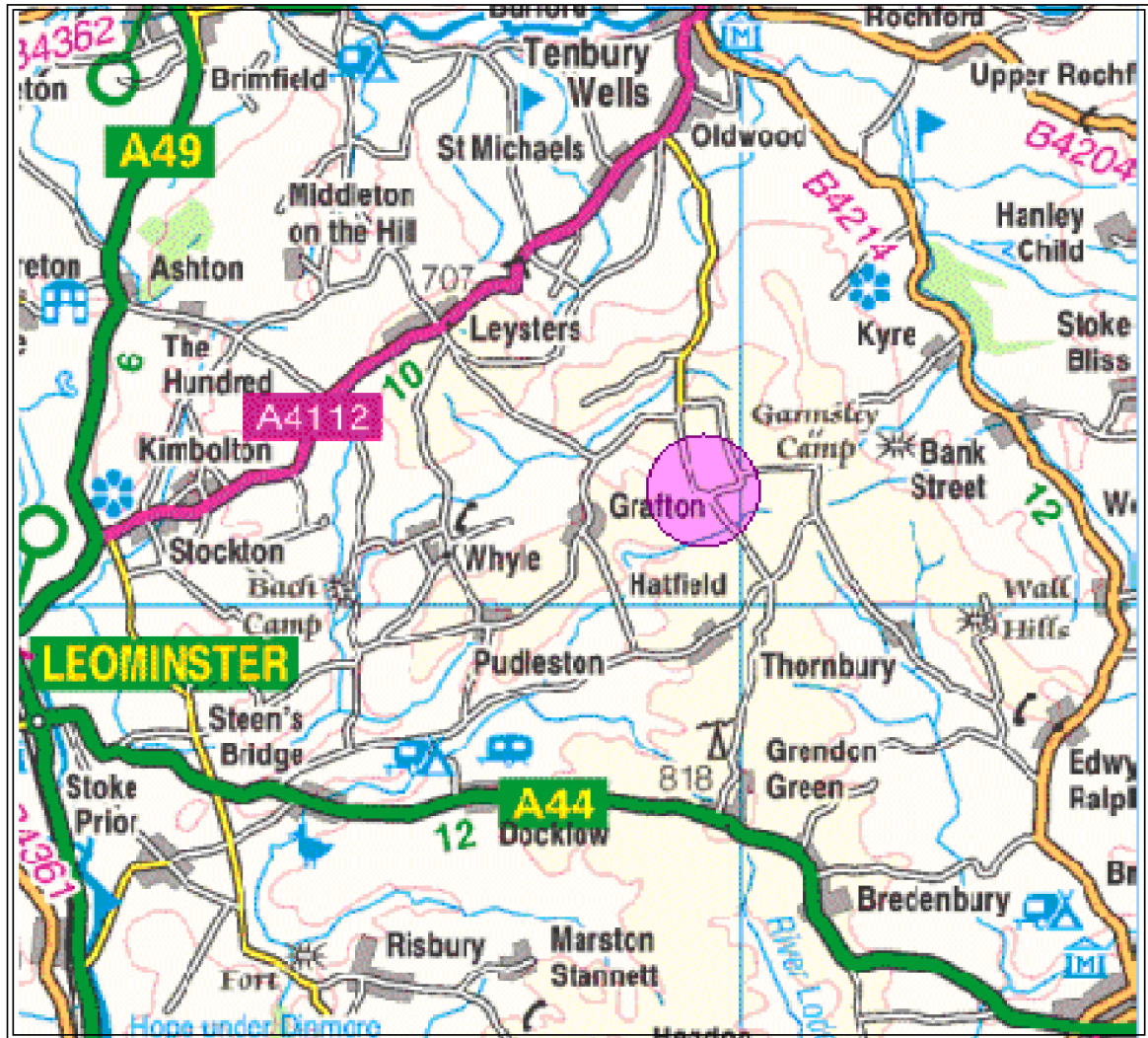
The laths of the drying floor in one of the hop kilns

Plate 30



The joint between the attached stable at the western end of the range and the earlier wall of Space C (scale 2 metres)

Figure 1: Location of the Site



Location of the Site at Grafton Farm

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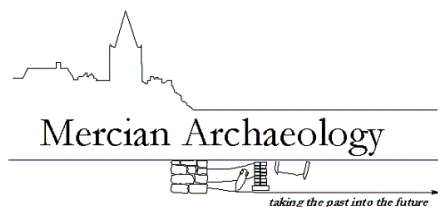
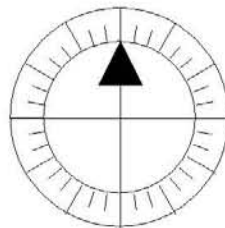
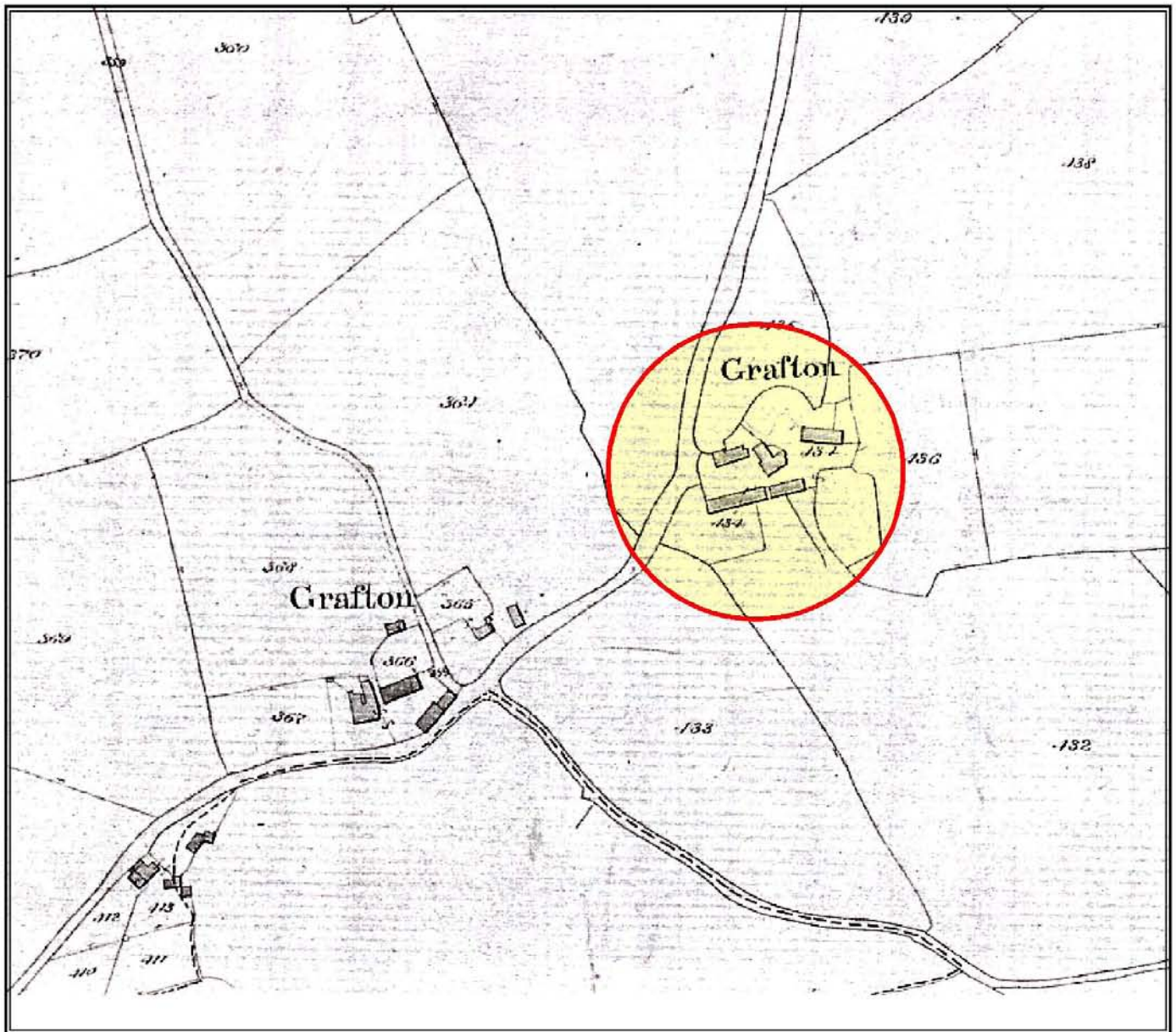


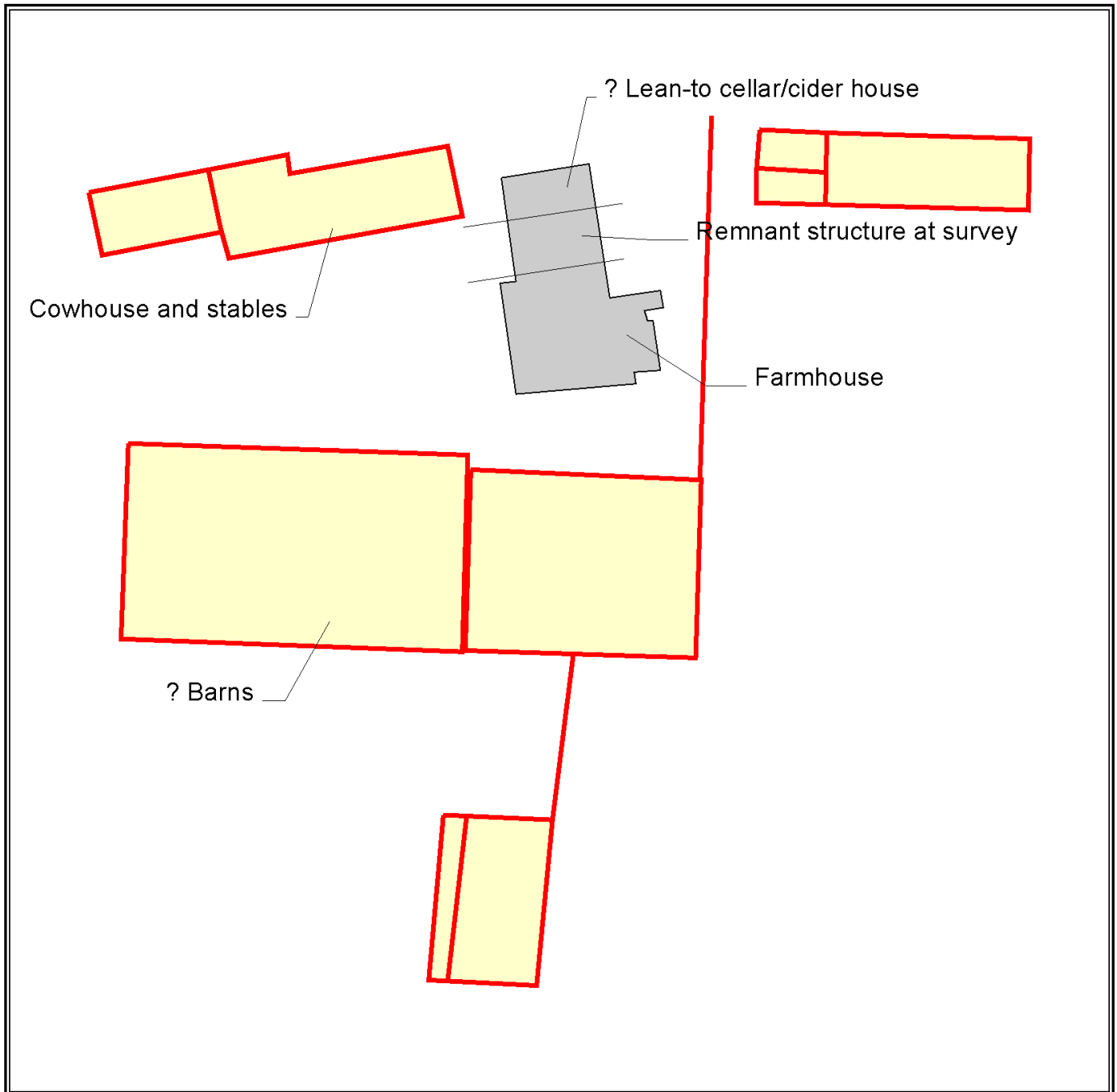
Figure 2: Extract from the Tithe Apportionment Map of Bockleton (1841)



The Tithe Apportionment map showing the layout of buildings at Grafton Farm in 1841.

Scale unknown

Figure 3: Traced extract from the Estate Survey Book from the 1866 auction



The plan of 1866 shows the footprint of the farmhouse in detail and the layout of buildings at this time

Scale unknown

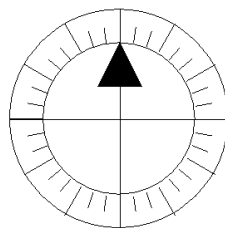
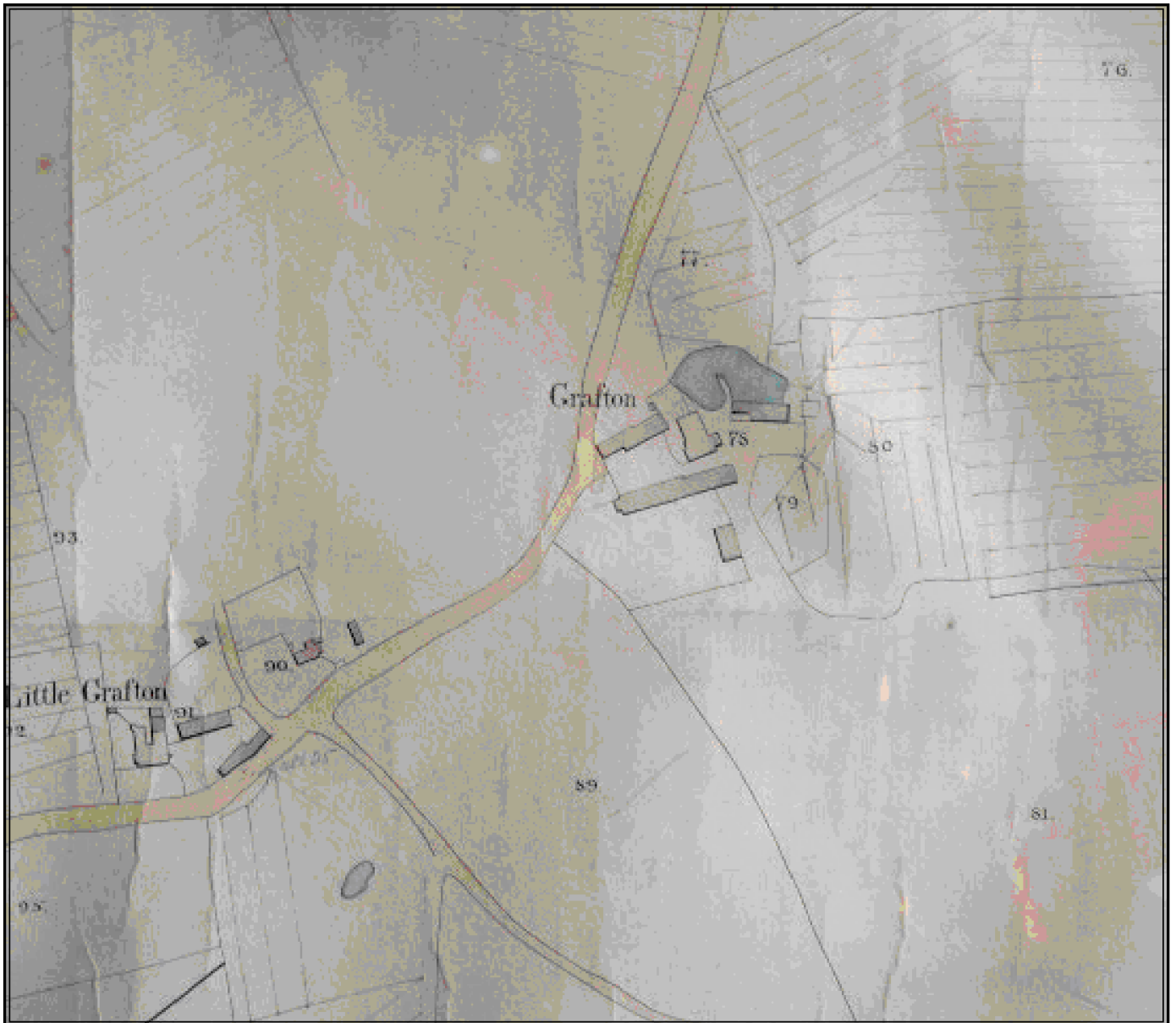


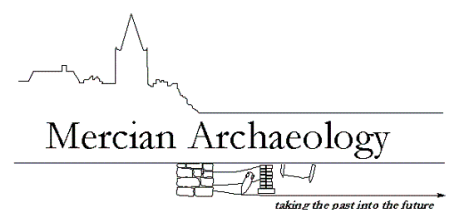
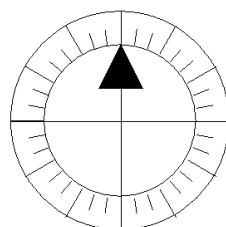
Figure 4: Photograph of an Extract from an Estate Survey Relating to Drainage (circa 1860-70)

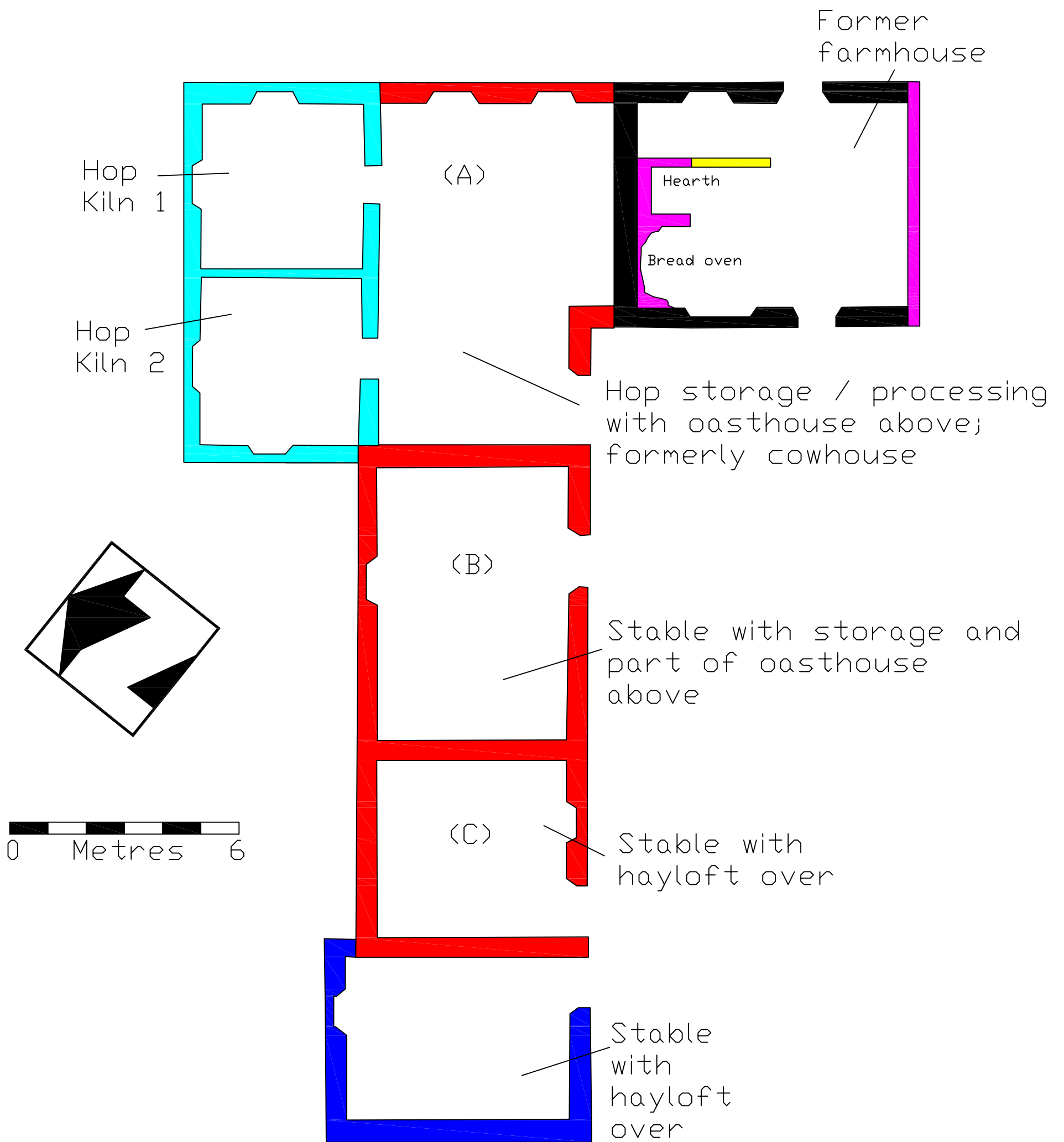


This plan of around 1860-70 shows the extent of the pond on the north of the site at this time. The buildings are on a similar plan to the layout shown in Figure 3, although the buildings on the south of the complex appear much wider (see text)

Photograph used with kind permission of Mr and Mrs Thomas of Grafton Farm

Not to scale





Colour Key			
Black	17th century		
Red	circa 1868		
Magenta	late 19th c		
Yellow	later than	Magenta	
Cyan	circa 1880		
Blue	c 1875	later than	Red

Figure 5: Building Identification and Phasing

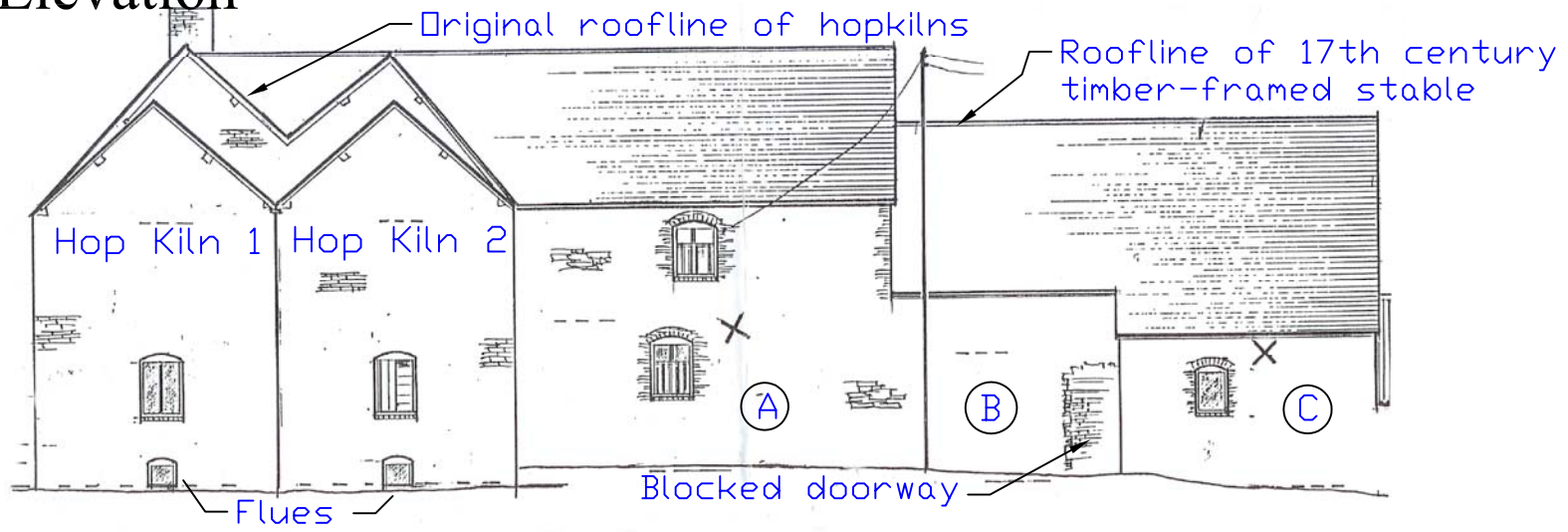
Ground Floor

First Floor

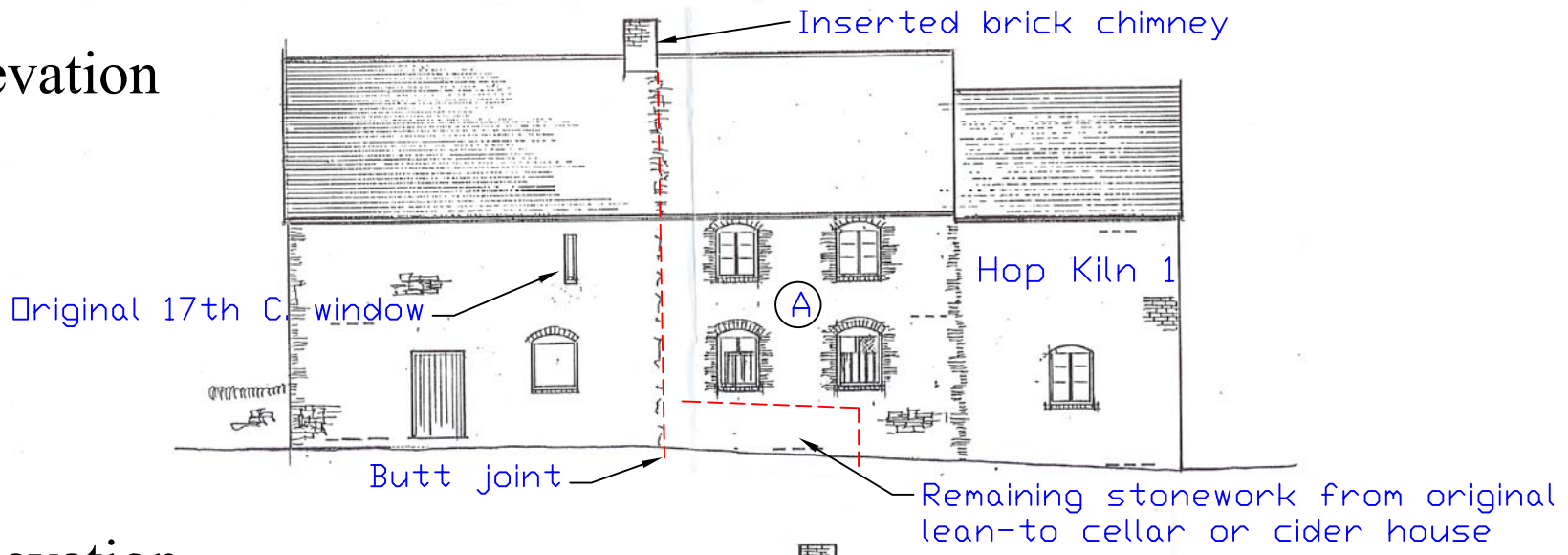


Figure 6: Direction of Photograph in Report

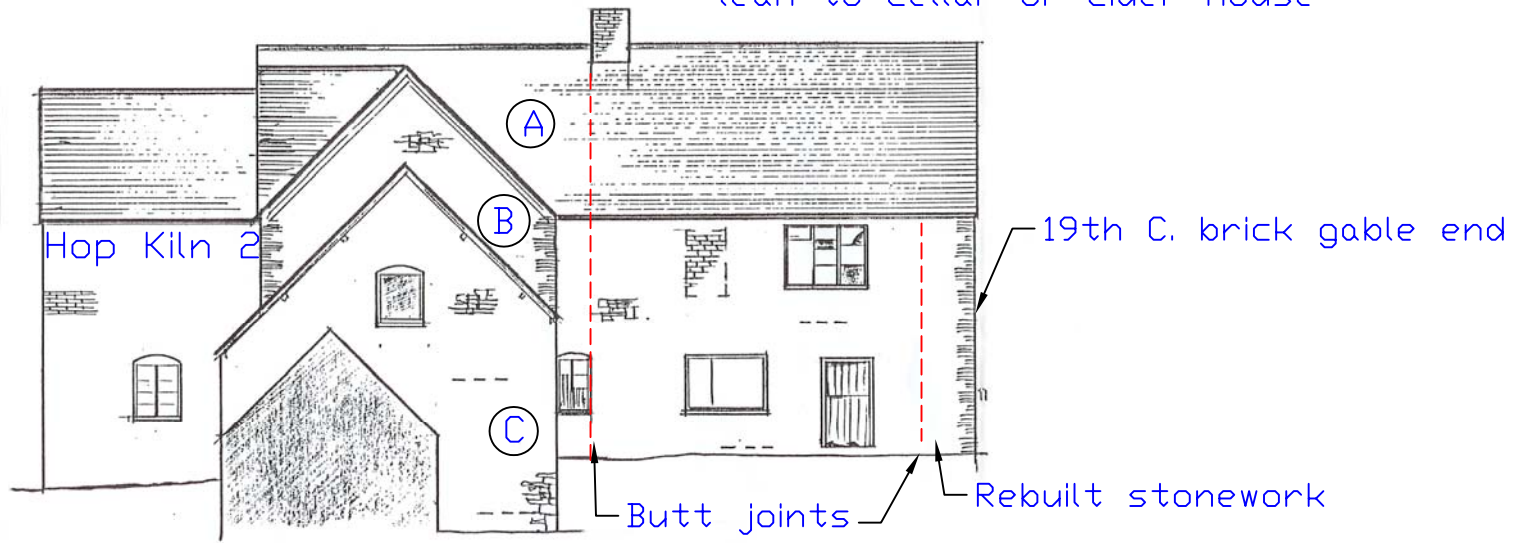
North Elevation



East Elevation



West Elevation



South Elevation

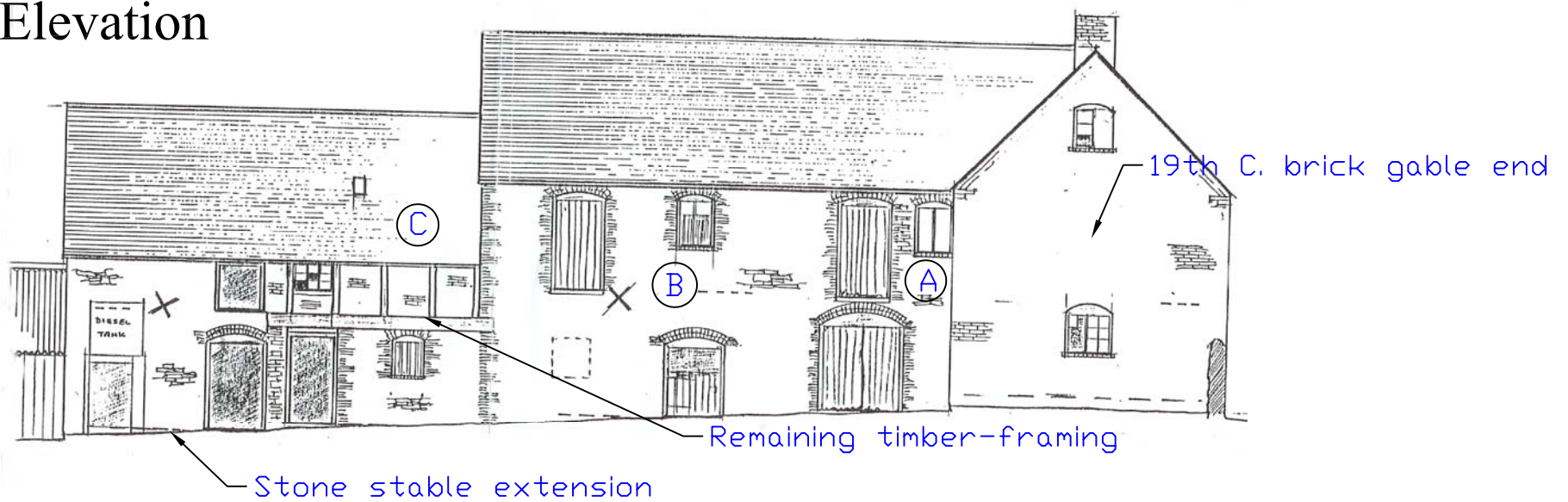


Figure 7: Elevations (based on original survey by McCartneys)