



***Historic Building Recording at
Steward's Cottage (Formerly
Brier Hill Cottage), Chaddesley
Corbett, Worcestershire***

A report for Rob & Joy Blakeway

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Project: PJ 193

WSM 38573



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1. Project Background

1.1. Location of the Site

Chaddesley Corbett lies off the A448 Kidderminster to Bromsgrove Road, some 5 kilometres to the south-east of Kidderminster and around 7 kilometres to the north-west of Bromsgrove. Steward's Cottage is located on Brier Hill, around 500 metres to the north of the historic core of Chaddesley Corbett (NGR SO 8931 7401). The cottage lies on the southern slope of the hill, which slopes away to the south towards Hockley Brook. Chaddesley Corbett may be described as a large village with an historic core of buildings dating from the 16th and 17th century and later ribbon development to the north.

1.2. Development Details

A planning application was made to Wyre Forest District Council by Central Building Design on behalf of their client Mr and Mrs Blakeway, for the restoration and extension of Brier Hill Cottage (also referred to as Stewards Cottage; reference WF/07/278). The planning process determined that the proposed development was likely to affect a building locally listed on the Worcestershire County Historic Environment Record (WSM 37427). As a result, the Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, placed a 'Programme of Building Recording' planning condition on the application, for which a brief of work was written (WHEAS 2007).

1.3. Reasons for the Historic Building Recording

The data contained within the Sites and Monuments Record suggested that the building restoration work would affect an historically important building, which is also a statutory Grade II Listed structure: -

Listed Grade II February 1958: Chaddesley Corbett CP Briar Hill (east side)
Stuarts Cottage (formerly listed as cottage 150 yds north of bridge to north of Chaddesley Corbett.:House. C17 with some early C19 and mid-C20 alterations. Timber-frame with painted brick infill, tile roof. Two framed bays aligned east/west, gable-end external brick stacks. One storey with attic lit by two gable dormers. Ground floor: two 3-light casements. Entrance to right of centre has a C20 panelled door; single-storey C19 extension to right.
Framing: three square panels high, with straight angle braces.

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, so that a permanent record may be made of the building before any alteration takes place.

2. Methods and Process

2.1. Project Specification

- The project conforms to the Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (IFA 2001).
- The building was recorded to Level 3 as defined in Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice (English Heritage 2006).
- The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Section, Worcestershire County Council (WHEAS 2007) and for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Mercian Archaeology 2007).
- The project conforms to the service practice and health and safety policy as contained within the Mercian Archaeology Service Manual (Williams 2003)

2.2. Aims of the Project

The aims of the historic building recording were to compile an archive of the building within its topographical setting. This was to consist of written, drawn 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 place the building into its socio-economic context.

2.3. Background Research

Abbreviations used: -

WRO: ~ Worcestershire Records Office

SBT: ~ Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon

CCA: ~ Chaddesley Corbett Archives

WARO: ~ Warwickshire Records Office

IGMT: ~ Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Library

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

Documentary research was carried out by Rob Blakeway on behalf of Mercian Archaeology. The following sources were specifically consulted and were of use: -

Cartographic Sources

Source	Reference Number
Plan of Chaddesley Corbett (1745-6)	WRO BA 844, f970.5:92
Tithe Map and Apportionment of Chaddesley Corbett (1838)	WRO BA 1572, AP s760/178
Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 25".	Worcestershire Sheet XV.1 (1902)

Other sources used are referenced within the report.

3. The Documentary Research

3.1. Background

By the early 20th century Chaddesley Corbett parish extended to just over 6000 acres, of which over half were arable, almost half pasture and just 242 acres being woodland. The loamy soil with red sandy subsoil was traditionally suited to growing wheat, barley, oats, beans and potatoes. The parish is watered by the Elmley Brook and the Doverdale Brook, both of which, rise in Bellbroughton and flow to the south (VCH III, 35).

The place-name Chaddersley derives from the Old English for a personal name 'Ceadda', the 'ley' suffix referring to a clearing, probably of woodland or of scrub (Chaddesley Corbett Local History Group 1986).

The earliest reference to settlement at Chaddesley Corbett appears in an Anglo-Saxon charter of the early 9th century, which King Coenwulf of Mercia granted lands here to the Priory of Worcester (VCH III).

At Domesday, Chaddesley Corbett was held by *Eddeve*, who was unusually (being Anglo-Saxon) allowed to retain the manor after Domesday. The manor was at that time comparable in importance with the now much larger town of Kidderminster and the population is thought to have been similar (Chaddesley Corbett Local History Group 1986). The Domesday survey of 1086 lists three watermills at Chaddersley and interestingly three 'salt pans' at Droitwich, which were solely for its own use (Thorn and Thorn 1982).

The Historic Environment Record for Worcestershire contains several records for the Chaddesley Corbett area. Prehistoric activity in the vicinity is witnessed by a surviving Bronze Age round-barrow on Barrow Hill (WSM 02269), which also has Scheduled Ancient Monument status (SAM 227). Further prehistoric activity has been noted from aerial photographs, which show the ditches of a probable prehistoric enclosure as a cropmark, near

Swancote Farm (WSM 06052). Later Roman activity (Romano-British) is also evidenced; a coin hoard was found at Tanwood Farm to the north-east of the village (pers comm. Robin Blakeway) close to the acknowledged Roman road from Droitwich to Stourbridge (WSM 30553). In line with most of the remainder of the county, there are no recognised Anglo-Saxon or Dark Age (post-Roman pre-Anglo-Saxon) sites listed for Chaddesley Corbett. On the southern side of the A448 to the south of the village there are well preserved extant earthwork, which has been interpreted as a moat (WSM 04052). A system of medieval fishponds and leats, probably also dating from the medieval period add to the overall picture of land use and arrangement during this period (WSM 05326).

Salvage recording during the laying of a new water main along the High Street and The Holloway, identified an earlier cobbled road surface, probably dating from the 18th century (WSM 26343), and a sandstone surface below was interpreted as a medieval property boundary, which pre-dated the realignment of the village. This 18th century date ties in with the date of construction of the bridge over the Hockley Brook to the south of the cottage (WSM 10330). Sandstone rubble identified to the south of the bridge during the same project, was interpreted as the approach to the ford, which is recorded to have been replaced by the bridge (Pearson and Hurst 1998).

3.2. Cartographic Evidence

The Corporation plan of Chaddesley Corbett dating from the 17th century was of no practical use as it only showed the holdings within the core of the village.

The 1745-6 plan of the estate of Robert Throckmorton at Chaddesley, shows the present cottage with a small rectangular projection off to the south-east corner, similar to the present configuration. The plan also shows a second building at right angles to the cottage on the western side. The holding is labelled 'Brier Hill Farm' (Figure 2).

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 Chaddesley Corbett was produced in 1838 (Figure 3). The map shows both the cottage and the adjacent building to the west (referred to above) in a similar configuration to the earlier 1745 map, except that there is a linking building shown between the northern end of the building to the west and the northern side of the cottage. (WRO BA 1572, AP s760/178 and 178a).

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map of the area was not available at the Worcestershire Records Office, but the slightly later edition of 1902 shows the buildings in much the same configuration as today, with the western building and the linking structure now gone.

3.3. Site Specific Background

Brier Hill Farm / Brier Hill Cottage is now known as *Steward's Cottage*, which relates to an hypothesis that the cottage was once occupied by a steward of the Throckmorton Estate. The cottage was Listed Grade II in 1958 as 'Stuart's Cottage', which may have derived from a reference to a previous occupiers family name (Stuart), though this was not evident from the background research. However, it is clear that the cottage has previously been referred to by the occupier's name, i.e. Rose Cottage (the Rose family occupied in 1884) and Webley's

Cottage, as referred to in council minutes of 1927, with reference to the occupiers at that time, the Webley family (see below)

Brier Hill is recorded in the Manorial Court Rolls of Chaddesley Corbett as early as 1541, when the location of 'Long Furlong' is recorded as being 'between Goose Acre and Bryhllle' (Chaddesley Corbett Archives).

The earliest identified reference to Brier Hill Farm (Bryerhill Farm) is in a rental of the Throckmorton Estate dating from 1697, which records a rental of 21 years from 18th February 1997 for the 25 acres 3 roods and 16 perches, for a rent of £14 per annum (CCA: DR5/3144).

The 1745 map of the Throckmorton Estate at Chaddesley Corbett shows the cottage and an adjacent building on the same plot. The schedule for the map identifies the plot as 'Homestall and Garden' (WCRO: CR 1998/M13).

A counterpart lease of 1754 identifies Lord Throckmorton's tenant at the farm as William Smith of Stourbridge, gent, who was sub-letting the farmstead to John Homan (SBT: DR5/1483), Homan is also referred to in documents as 'Howman'.

A tithe valuation document of 1773 records John Perrins as the tenant at Brier Hill (Bryer Hills). Though uncertain, it is likely that Perrins sub-let the farm; Perrins is recorded as being a wealthy Maltster, who also owned much property in Wrockwardine Wood, Shropshire (Salop) (IGMT: 1998-320, DLIL/3, 84).

In 1799, Briar Hill Farm was presented to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in exchange for other lands in the parish under the Inclosure Act (Chaddesley Corbett Archives).

The 1838 Tithe Apportionment lists the owner of Brier Hill Farm as The Reverend George Henry Piercy, who leased the subject cottage to Thomas Dandy. The map also indicates that the adjacent building to the west was a domestic structure (rather than an agricultural building), listing it as 'a house and garden' leased to Elizabeth Bate (WRO: BA 1572, f760/178a).

The census returns for Brier Hill Farm from 1841 to 1901 contain a full list of those at the property at the time the enumeration was carried out; this information is included in tabulated form below.

Name	Association	Age	Occupation
1841 census			
Thomas Dandy	Head	55	Agricultural labourer
Hannah Dandy	Wife	60	
1851 census – details not found			

1861 census			
Richard Jenkins	Head	31	Agricultural labourer
Jane Jenkins	Wife	30	
William Frederick Jenkins	Son	6	
Emily Jenkins	Daughter	1	

1871 Census			
Thomas Edwards	Head	45	Agricultural labourer
Elizabeth Edwards		39	
Jane Edwards		6	
Frederick Edwards		1	

1881 census			
William Daniels	Head	65	Gardener
Mary Daniels	Wife	55	
John Daniels	Son	18	Agricultural labourer
Ellen Daniels	Daughter	15	Laundress
Annie Daniels	Daughter	12	Scholar
Alice Payne	Visitor	8	
Charles Perry	Grandson	3	

1891 census			
William Pratt	Head	44	Harness maker
Sophie Pratt		40	
Albert Pratt		13	
Nellie Pratt		17	
Amy Pratt		11	
John Edwards	Cousin	54	

1901 census			
Edward Marshall	Head	51	Agricultural Labourer
Susan Marshall	Wife	49	
Susan E. Mayhew	Daughter	28	
George Marshall	Son	18	Agricultural Labourer
Emily Mayhew	Daughter	10	
Mill----? Marshall	Daughter	7	
Alfred Cook	Nephew	10	
Albert Mayhew	Grandson	3	
Eva M. Mayhew	Grandaughter	11 months	

The registers of Chaddesley Corbett School admissions, record that Eliza J. Rose was living at Briar Hill Cottage in 1884, when her daughter May Rose was admitted to the school. The registers also indicate that Albert George Victor Mayhew (born 20th June 1897) was admitted to the village school on 25th June 1900, his guardian was Susan Marshall of Briar Hill (see 1901 census details above); Sarah E Baker was living at the house by 1902, when her son Edwin Arthur Baker (born June 6th 1896) was admitted to the village school (Chaddesley Corbett Archives).

Evidence regarding the fabric of the cottage derives from the Diocese of Worcester Records held at Worcestershire Records Office. Repairs to the premises were ordered by the Bishop under the Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act of 1871, which remained in force until 1923: -

1885: Briar Hill Cottage (Occupied by Hancock)

Details of repairs required to cottage refer to repairing, tiling and boarding to the pigsty and reconstructing a brick wall in yard.

1903: Briar Hill Cottage

Repairs to the wash-house; repairs and repointing of walls in the fowl house; application of gas tar to both sides of the ash pit and paint door and removal of the pigsty against the house which is of temporary character, and not suitably situated

1916: Briar Hill Glebe Cottage

Details of repairs required to cottage refer to renewal of lids, decayed part of frame, and missing hinge to pit of earth closet, and gas tar whole.

Later evidence derives mainly from property deeds held by the present owners of the cottage, Rob and Joy Blakeway. These and other relevant documents are detailed below in chronological order: -

1919 Deeds (Held by R & J Blakeway)

January 9th: Conveyance between Frederick Arthur Applewhaite of the first part, The Ecclesiastical Commissions for England on the second part, The Right Honourable Bannalyne Baron Finlay K.C.M.G. on the third part and John Harper Bean on the fourth part. Briar Hill, totalling 70 acres 1 rood and 5 perches was sold for £3,100.

1924 Deeds (Held by R & J Blakeway)

November 10th: Conveyance between John Harper Bean of the one part and James Meredith on the other part. The land at Briar Hill totalled 54.221 acres, though some 16 acres were not included in the sale; these were later to become The Hemmingway & the allotments.

1927 Council Minutes relating to land above the Cottage

Reverend Thatcher indicates that he is prepared to release glebe land on Briar Hill subject to the approval of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Lord Chancellor (The Patron). The British Legion support the scheme. Solicitors identify land immediately behind Webley's cottage (Briar Hill Cottage occupied by the Webley family) for the building of council housing. The land was valued at £75.

1928 Three blocks of semi-detached houses were built above cottage on Briar Hill

1929 Register of Chaddesley School Admissions (Chaddesley Corbett Archives)

Ernest George & Alfred Joseph Webley twin sons of Ernest, address given as Briar Hill were admitted to the village school on 5th of March 1929, they were transferred to mixed department on 22nd December 1931.

1933 Deeds (Held by R & J Blakeway)

December 30th Assent in favour of Francis Harvey Meredith and Agnes Annie Meredith.

1934 Deeds (Held by R & J Blakeway)

May 1st: Conveyance between Francis Harvey Meredith and Agnes Annie Meredith on the one part and James Meredith on the other part. Valued at £2,450

1936 Deeds (Held by R & J Blakeway)

August 8th Ernest Webley (Electrician at the Austin Factory at Longbridge) purchased from J. Meredith on the first part & Lucy Beatrice Hill and Elizabeth Florence Meredith on the second part (owned by their late father James Meredith probably part of Vicarage Farm) all that piece of land fronting the road from Chaddesley to Drayton called Briar Hill, together with 0.530 Acres.

1973 Deeds (Held by R & J Blakeway)

Ernest Webley transferred the property to his two sons-Alfred Joseph Webley and Ernest George Webley.

1985 Feb 10th Ernest George Webley died.

2005 Dec 2nd Alfred Joseph Webley died.

2006 October 25th Auctioned by Phipps & Pritchard, bought by Robin & Joy Blakeway.

3. The Historic Building Recording

3.1. The Fieldwork Methodology

The building recording was undertaken during August 2007. Due to the poor condition of parts of the structure, particularly the front (south) elevation, certain remedial works had been undertaken prior to the onset of the programme of building recording. This had resulted in the removal of the majority of the southern timber-frame and consolidation of the structure with scaffolding.

A full photographic survey was carried out using digital photography. Either a 2-metre or 1-metre scale was used where possible.

A drawn record was made of the timber frame of the building at a scale of 1:20, these are reproduced in this report at a suitable scale for reproduction.

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, with the exception that certain detail was lost with the removal of the southern frame, though due to its condition it would not have been able to record it sufficiently anyway.

3.2. The Recording

Steward's Cottage is a two-bay, one and half storey timber framed structure sitting on an aslar sandstone plinth, with a plain handmade clay tiled roof cover over a steeply pitched frame, which was most likely originally thatched. The timber-frame now has brick infill panels, though they were originally of wattle and daub. There is a timber-framed outshut (lean-to) to the northern elevation with a projecting single-storey brick outhouse off the eastern elevation. There are chimneystacks to both gable ends, with a further brick lean-to between the western chimneystack and the cottage, which now serves as a fuel store. The timber frame is square panelled with angle-braces from the posts to wallplate, which is a type of framing common in the West Midlands region (Plates 1-5).

For the purposes of this report, the building has been divided into key elements; these are Bay 1, Bay 2, Outshut and East Extension, with timber frames identified as T1 (western end), T2 (central) and T3 (eastern end), with north and south frames forming the front and rear elevations. These are identified in Figure 5.

TTruss and Frame T1: Description (Figure 6 and Plates 6 and 7)

Truss T1 is formed by a pair of steeply pitched principal rafters above the tie beam, braced by a collar with three queen struts below, the present central one being an inserted replacement, and a single strut above the collar (Plate 6). The purlins are trenched into the principals, with a ridge purlin at the apex. A small window has been inserted into the gable at some time, with the strut, principal and collar notched to take the frame, this has since been removed and the aperture subsequently bricked up.

The frame below the tiebeam is much altered and the evidence suggests that many, if not all of the timbers are non-original re-used / adapted items (Plate 7). The southern post is a replacement, which has been scarfe jointed onto the stub of the original post. The pattern of peg-holes in the mid-rail indicate that this is also a later insertion and the pattern of peg-holes in the tiebeam indicate that there were originally three studs between the tiebeam and mid-rail, with a similar configuration below the mid-rail to the sole plate. It is possible that these alterations took place when the brick chimneystack was butted up to the gable end, with fireplaces being added at ground floor and first floor levels. The first floor joists are supported on a ledge pegged and nailed to this frame, indicating that the first floor above Bay 1 is also a non-original insertion.

Truss and Frame T2: Description (Figure 7 and Plates 8-10)

Truss and frame T2 form the central frame of the two-bay cottage. The truss is of steeply pitched principal rafters braced by a pair of raking queen struts to a cranked tie beam. Empty mortises and peg holes in the opposing faces of the principals indicate that there was originally a collar, which also braced the truss (Plate 8); this has now gone, having been removed when a loft platform was inserted into the attic space. There is evidence for former windbraces from the principals to the lower purlins, with a remaining mortise in the southern principal and a rebate to the northern timber. The principals, struts and tiebeam all have shallow chamfered and stopped edges to the eastern face, but there are none to the western face.

The frame below the tiebeam is wholly a later insertion, with only the northern post an original timber (Plate 9). The southern post has been scarfe jointed onto the foot of the original post, close to the sole plate. The girding beam has been slotted into the southern post aided by a long groove down the inner face, and into the northern post with the aid of a slip-tenon and further carved out groove (Plate 10). The inserted timber is re-used and was originally a tiebeam from a truss of another building; there are mortises at both ends for the original trusses principal rafters and the cut angles at the ends of the tiebeam can just be seen, there are also empty mortises, peg holes and stave holes on the lower face. Stud both below and above the girding beam also show evidence of re-use, with many empty peg holes and mortises. The insertion of this frame also indicates that the first floor is a non-original insertion, as an axial beam off a bracket nailed to the inserted timbers supports it.

There is conflicting evidence that gives rise to two interpretations of the inserted frame. The first suggests that Bay 1 and Bay 2 were separated by the insertion of the frame, with no access between them; this derives from identification of empty mortises and peg-holes suggesting that the lower doorway was created only *after* a rail was removed from the frame, though the counter argument is that the rail may never have been inserted into the re-used frame, which is the favoured interpretation of the author. The present upper doorway has replaced an earlier one, which must have been inserted at the time that the upper floor was added; the tie beam and the inserted girding beam were cut to make the new door aperture a practical size. This doorway was subsequently bricked up and a new opening formed adjacent to it on the northern side. Again, the tiebeam and girding have been modified to allow practical access through the doorway; an arch moulded architrave has been used to embellish the doorway.

Truss and Frame T3: Description (Figure 8; Plates 11-15)

Truss and frame T3 form the eastern end gable of the timber-framed element of the cottage. The truss is almost identical to T1, with three struts below the collar and a single strut above to the apex of the principals, though the truss has a pair of curved wind braces rising to the lower

purlins. The truss still retains two wattle and daub panels, with the remainder later infilled with brick (Plate 11).

The frame below the tiebeam is much altered, with modifications to accommodate upper and lower hearths from an external sandstone chimneystack, which was butted up to the northern side of the eastern gable. The evidence that indicates that the chimneystack is later than the frame comes from an empty mortise for a lower rail, which must have been removed so that the stack could be positioned (Plate 12), with a further empty mortise (though rotted away) in the bottom of the tiebeam, which once housed a post or stud. The sole plate is also cut through to allow the stack to be placed (Plate 13). The frame doesn't appear to have had a mid-rail, but originally had tiebeam to sill posts with interceding rails. The north-east corner post has been trimmed to allow the sandstone blocks of a later bread oven to be butted against the side of the chimneystack in order that the oven could utilise the same flue (Plate 14), seemingly this was easier than cutting the sandstone blocks; this also suggests that the blocks used for the bread oven were re-used from elsewhere.

An access into the eastern lean-to extension has been created by the removal of a rail and trimming down a post to form an access; interestingly, there is a drop of around 60 centimetres inside the lean-to (Plate 15). The faces of the sole plate at the base of the aperture are well worn, suggesting that something was being constantly dragged from the lean-to into the cottage, possibly fuel for the fire, this would suggest that the created aperture was not a doorway, but a fuel hatch.

Southern Frame

Unfortunately, the southern frame was removed prior to the commencement of the building recording work, as the front of the cottage was deemed to be in a dangerous condition. At the time of the survey scaffolding supported the structure. Photographs supplied by the client (Plates 4 and 5) and sketch drawings prepared by the architect show that the frame was of square panelling, with two tiers of panels and knee braces from each post to wallplate. However, detail of original window and door positions could not be ascertained from the available material and little can be said regarding re-use of timbers and remnant original components.

Northern Frame: Description (Figure 9; Plates 16-17)

The northern frame (Plate 16) is partially hidden by the outshut, which butts the frame at the west and eastern corner posts. The evidence presented by empty mortises, peg holes and the non-uniformity of carpenters' assembly marks, indicate that the frame is extensively altered and contains much re-used timber, and it is possible that the entire frame between the posts is of re-used material. However, the frame provides interest in that it offers the only evidence from the entire structure for the position of an original window / vent opening, as there are two remaining mullion rebates in the wallplate over Bay 1 (Plate 17), further rebates seemingly having been destroyed when a slot was created in the wallplate to allow the sliding into place of a new (re-used) post in this location. It is possible that the timber containing the lower rebates for the mullions, which has also been removed, has been re-used at the eastern end of the frame (see Figure 9). The doorway through this frame is also probably not in the original location, as a post has been notched to take the doorframe.

Bay 1: Comment

The framing of Bay 1 has been described above. It is clear from this that the upper floor is inserted and, therefore, the winder staircase is not original and likely dates to the time of the

inserted floor. The upper floor is supported on ledges fixed to the side frames (south frame gone) and the inserted girding beam of T2. A loft floor has been inserted in the rafters over Bay 1; the access stairs to the upper level had been removed sometime prior to the commencement of the development. The timbers of the bay are without carved elaboration or architrave.

Bay 2: Comment

Bay 2 has a similar inserted upper floor to Bay 1, with access through from Bay 1 via a doorway in the central frame; as outlined above, the doorways must have been created at the same time as the central frame was added if the bays were to be accessible from each other. The notable difference between Bay 1 and Bay 2, is that Bay 1 has chamfers and stops on the eastern face of truss T2, the doorways have architrave and there is a large fireplace providing heat to the living area, with a smaller fireplace at upper level.

Northern Outshut (Plate 18)

A lean-to (outshut, also 'outshot', or 'outshoot') extends along the length of the northern frame. This is timber framed on a sandstone and brick plinth, with brick panel infills. Much of the frame has rotted away, or been replaced; the pattern of original framing is hard to decipher as, similarly to the main structure, much of the timber-framing appears to be re-used, but the likely pattern is of three posts to the northern (side) elevation, with a curved down brace at each end and a pair of straight braces from the central post to the wallplate. Similarly, the framing of the western and eastern ends and the central support frame is of re-used timber. The outshut has clearly been added to the cottage, though it could not be determined if this replaced an earlier, possible original outshut.

Eastern Extension (Plate 19)

The eastern extension is a brick and mortar build, with a pitched roof-cover of plain handmade clay tiles. There is a single access door to the southern elevation and a small square six-light timber casement window allows light into the space. The floor level inside is some 60-centimetres lower than the adjacent cottage floor and as noted above (see Truss T1), fuel stored in the space was apparently dragged up into Bay 2 of the cottage through an open panel in the eastern gable end frame. The chimneystack at the eastern end of the cottage provides a flue for a hearth inside the extension, which once housed a copper boiler, which would have supplied the domestic hot water; the space appears to have been used as a washhouse and store. The flue has been inserted into the earlier sandstone block chimneystack (Plate 19).

4. Phasing of the Buildings and Dating

Discussion of the Fabric and Dating Evidence

The fabric survey has determined that the present cottage was originally a two-bay structure, with an open truss between Bay 1 and Bay 2 and bays open to the rafters. There is no evidence that the space was originally heated (thick uniform smoke-blackening of timbers in the roofspace, indication of a smoke-hood, survival of a hearth at ground level etc) and the only evidence for the former existence of windows / vents is a pair of rebates for mullions in the northern wallplate, though it cannot be definite that these are contemporary with the original

build. This all tends to suggest that the original function of the structure was not domestic, though the re-use / addition of timbers during the later life of the building has confused interpretation and has masked crucial evidence.

In the absence of other tangible evidence (i.e. position of doorways and windows, evidence of a hearth, evidence for domestic activity etc), the interpretation of the building from its fabric rests on the form of the central truss (T2). It has been noted above, that the tiebeam, struts and principal rafters have carved stops and chamfered edges to the eastern face. The truss collar has been removed to allow access through the truss for the inserted loft floor, but the carved chamfers clearly respect the former position of the collar. This indicates that the chamfers pre-date the loft insertion, but from this evidence alone we cannot determine if the chamfers were original to the truss, which would add weight to the theory that the cottage was originally a domestic building, as such carvings imply status to the space in which that can be seen, which would suggest that Bay 2 was the upper end of the building (the hall / parlour / private quarters), whereas the lower end frame was plain, indicating the lower status of the space (i.e. service rooms etc). However, it may be that the truss members were carved in-situ, if / when the building was converted from non-domestic to domestic use.

The evidence from the fabric analysis indicates that the northern outshut is added to the cottage; mullion rebates in the northern wallplate of the cottage (if they are original features) indicate the former location of a window or vent on this side, which would not have been necessary if the elevation was blocked by the outshut; the framing of the outshut is of re-used timbers and it is not mortised into the cottage framing, as would be expected if the two were contemporary.

The eastern extension is clearly a later addition to the cottage as is the internal flue into the earlier stone chimneystack, and the hearth for the copper boiler. The stone chimneystack itself appears to be secondary to the original build, but the evidence is problematic. The evidence to suggest that the stone stack is a later addition to the building, as outlined above, derives mainly from the identification of empty mortises and peg holes in the north-eastern corner post, which suggest a rail had been removed to allow construction of the stack, a similar empty mortise in the lower face of the tiebeam, and the sole plate has been cut through. Re-use of timbers could be used to explain the empty mortises, but not the sawn through sole plate. The reason that the lower portion of the north-eastern corner post has been trimmed is also unclear. It is suggested above that the timber was trimmed to allow the insertion of a later bread oven fabricated from re-used sandstone blocks. This would suggest that the oven was not planned before its construction and the construction method was adopted to suit the available materials at the time.

From the evidence above and in the absence of a programme of scientific dating (dendrochronology), it is impossible to determine an accurate phased development of the site, but the following hypothesis is suggested: -

Phase 1 (probably mid-17th century, though possibly 16th century)

A two-bay timber framed structure was built on the site. The function of the building is unknown, but it may have been an agricultural storage building rather than a cottage, though it is also possible that the structure was a two-bay hall house, or a detached service block for a further domestic building on the site.

Phase 2 (late 17th or early 18th century)

Sometime during the late 17th century the building was overhauled and extended; an outshut was added to the northern side and the main building was split by the insertion of the central frame. An upper floor was added, with dormer windows to light the space. An external sandstone chimneystack was also added at the eastern end to provide two heated rooms.

Phase 3 (mid to late 18th century)

Around half a century later the cottage received a further overhaul, with further framing removed and replaced by re-used material (north frame and west frame); a winder staircase was inserted to give access to the upper floor from inside the cottage as original access may have been via a basic staircase inside the outshut (no evidence).

Phase 4 (Late 18th century to early 19th century)

A brick and tile extension was added at the eastern end, with a further chimneystack and hearths at the western end; a fuel store was also added at the western end. The bread oven probably also dates from this period, though it may be earlier.

5. General Comment

The early map evidence indicates that there were two separate buildings on the site and the tithe apportionment of 1838 refers to them both as being a 'house and garden' and lists two separate occupiers. The later documentary evidence, however, only specifically refers to Brier Hill Farm, which suggests that the second building was demolished sometime during the mid to late-19th century. The form of this building is unknown, but the tithe map suggests that it was larger than the present cottage.

In the absence of the use of scientific dating techniques (dendrochronology), the fabric analysis was inconclusive regarding accurate dating and phased development, this was due in main to the fact that there had been an extensive overhaul of the original structure, which involved re-using timbers from another structure, thus masking evidence. The original form and function of the structure is also inconclusive, the evidence suggesting the structure started out as a two-bay open hall, though equally it may have been an agricultural building, which was later converted to domestic use. A third possibility, especially considering the close association with the demolished building, is that the structure may have been a detached service block (kitchen, buttery, pantry etc) and that the demolished structure was the main house. However, the lack of clear evidence for the presence of hearths inside the building confuses this issue.

It was commonplace during the medieval and early post-medieval period, for domestic buildings to have elaborate carving and higher standard carpentry faced towards the upper end of the internal space, the upper end being the hall and private quarters of the owner (Cooper 2002). This demonstrates an accepted social importance of the central-frame, which was the pivotal point between those that served and those whom they served. This represented the accepted hierarchy of society, with those that served at the lower end viewing the less elaborate carpentry of the lower face, with the more elaborate reserved for the eyes of the owners. Of course the owner – servant relationship was reserved for the halls of the wealthy, but the same social ethics applied to the use of space in lower status halls, with a domestic end and a service end, much in the same way that modern houses may show status in differing fittings within the front room and the back room. At Brier Hill Cottage, the central truss is chamfered and stopped on the eastern face, with the western face being plain, which provides the only evidence suggesting that the building was probably always domestic.

6. Conclusion

The results of the historic building recording at Steward's Cottage determined that the earliest phase of building dates from the 16th or 17th century, represented by a two-bay timber-framed structure, which was originally open to the rafters, with an open central truss. However, there was not enough physical evidence to conclude that the cottage represents the remains of a late-medieval domestic hall house, rather than an agricultural building or detached service block associated with a further domestic structure on the site. Later repair and alteration of the structure, with timbers re-used from another building, insertion of an upper floor, chimney stacks and extensions to the north and east, have masked or removed valuable evidence regarding the early history of the building.

The documentary sources have served to develop the basic story of tenancy and ownership over some 250 years, but has not forwarded our knowledge regarding the early history of the site, though it is understood that the clients, Rob and Joy Blakeway, intend to take the research further and hopefully this may result in a better understanding of the form and use of the building from the earliest times.

7. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Rob and Joy Blakeway for their help and enthusiasm for the project. Thanks are also due to Steve Greybanks, Architect, of Central Building Design. Thanks are also due to Mike Glyde, Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, and the staff of Worcester Records Office.

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Plate 1: Cottage looking north-west (scale 2-metres)



Plate 2: Cottage looking west (scale 2-metres)



Plate 3: Cottage viewed to the south-east (scale 2-metres)



Plate 5: Steward's Cottage in 2006, looking north-east. Photograph kindly supplied by Rob Blakeway



Plate 5: Steward's Cottage around 1950. Photograph kindly supplied by Rob Blakeway



Plate 6: Truss T1 upper



Plate 7: Frame T1 lower (scale 2-metres)



Plate 8: Truss T2 upper, view from Bay 2 (scale 2-metres)



Plate 9: T2 lower, from Bay 2 (scale 2-metres)



Plate 10: Slip tenon in T2, looking north



Plate 11: Truss T3 upper (scale 2-metres)



Plate 12: Empty peg-holes in north-east corner post, for rail removed when chimneystack constructed



Plate 13: Frame T3 lower (scale 2-metres)



Plate 14: North-east corner post trimmed down to accept bread oven fabric (scales 1-metre)



Plate 15: View of T3 from inside eastern extension (scale 2-metres)



Plate 16: Mullion rebates in the wallplate of Bay 1 north-framing.



Plate 17: The north frame from inside the outshut (scale 2-metres)

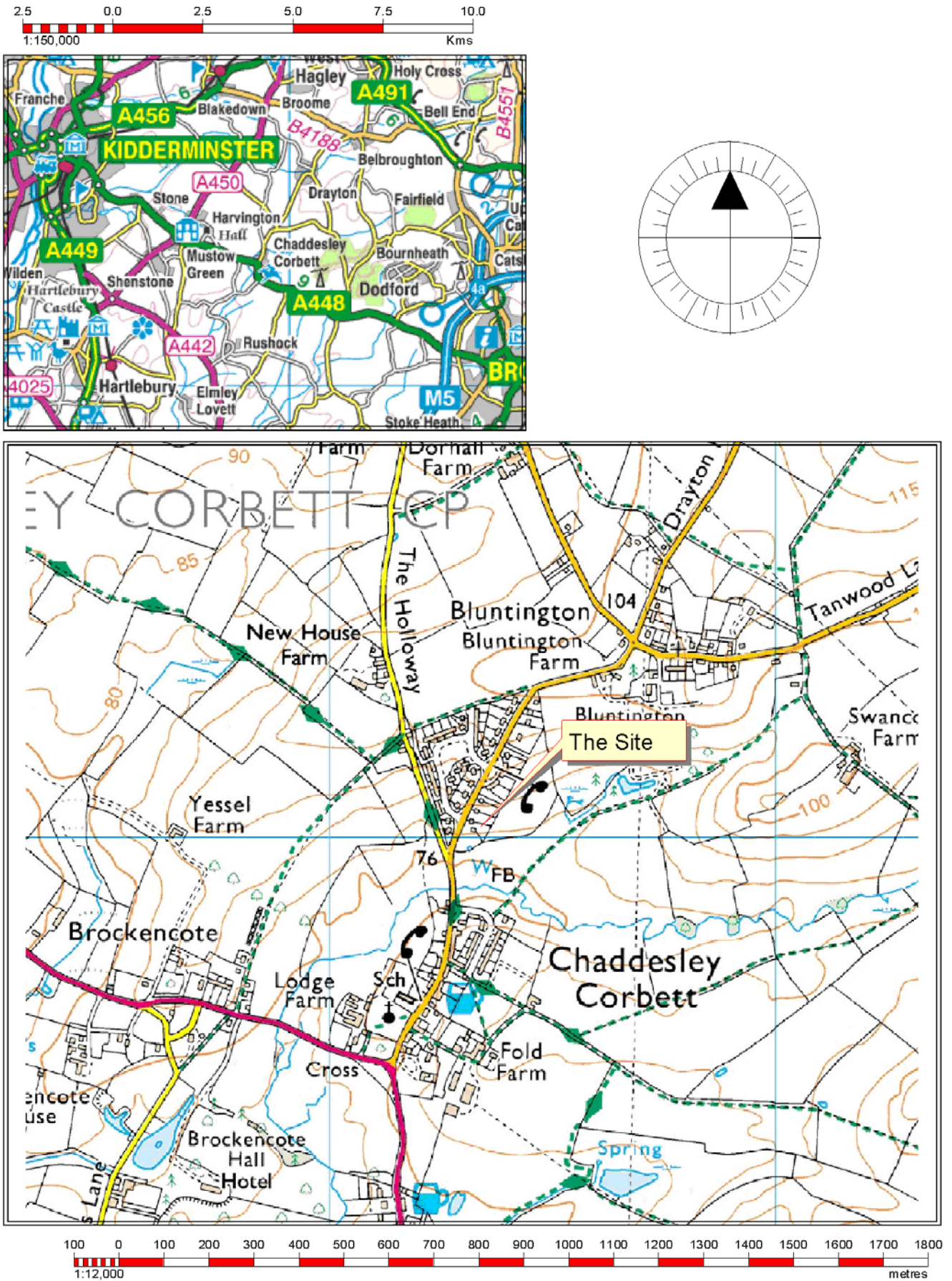


Plate 18: North frame of outshut looking south-east (scale 2-metres)



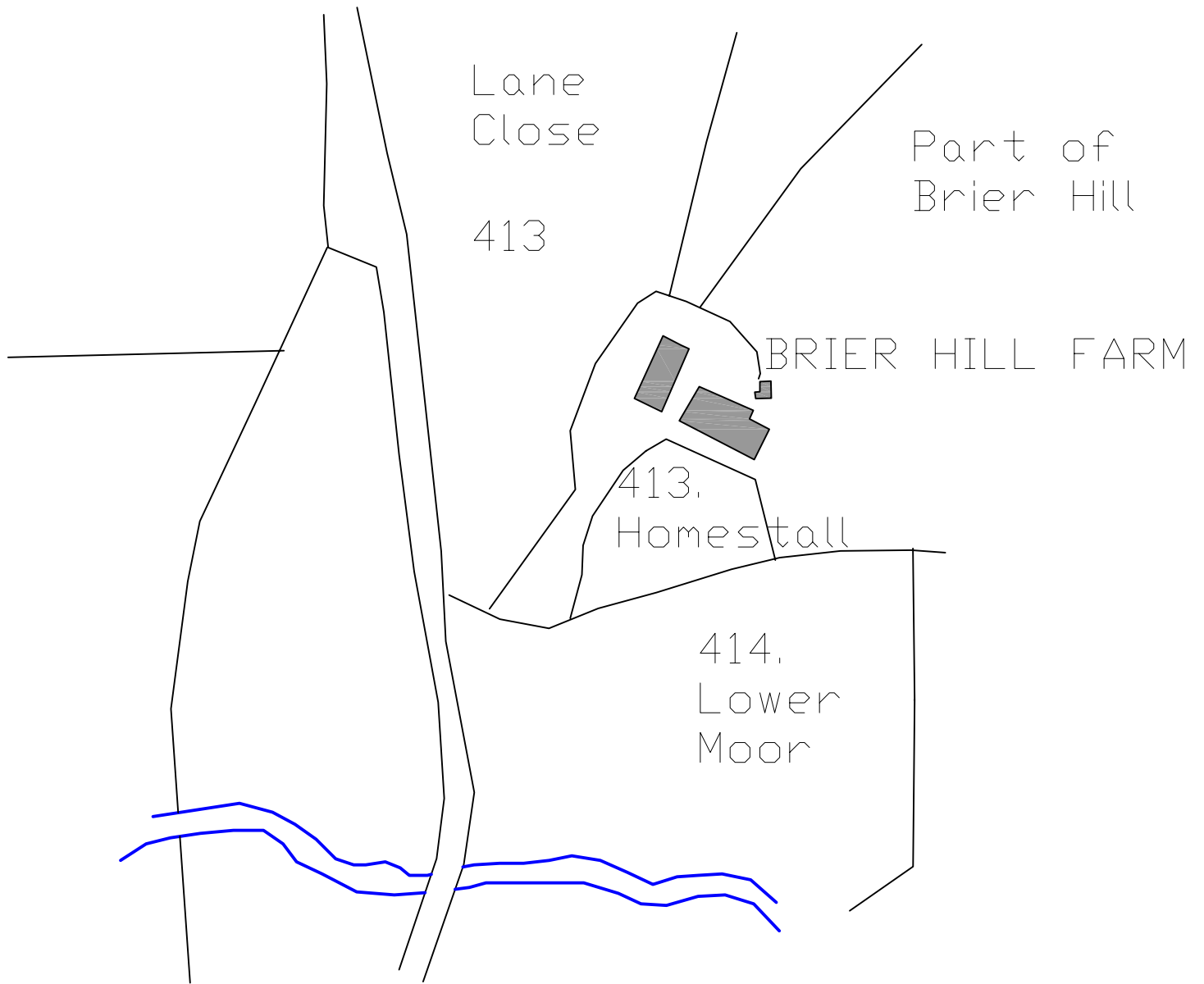
Plate 19: Flue for the copper, inside the east extension (scale 2-metres)

Figure 1: Location of the Site



Location of Stewards Cottage, Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire

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Scale unknown

Figure 2: Sketch of Part of the 1745-6 Plan of Chaddesley Corbett, Throckmorton Estate (after WRO BA844, 970.5:92)

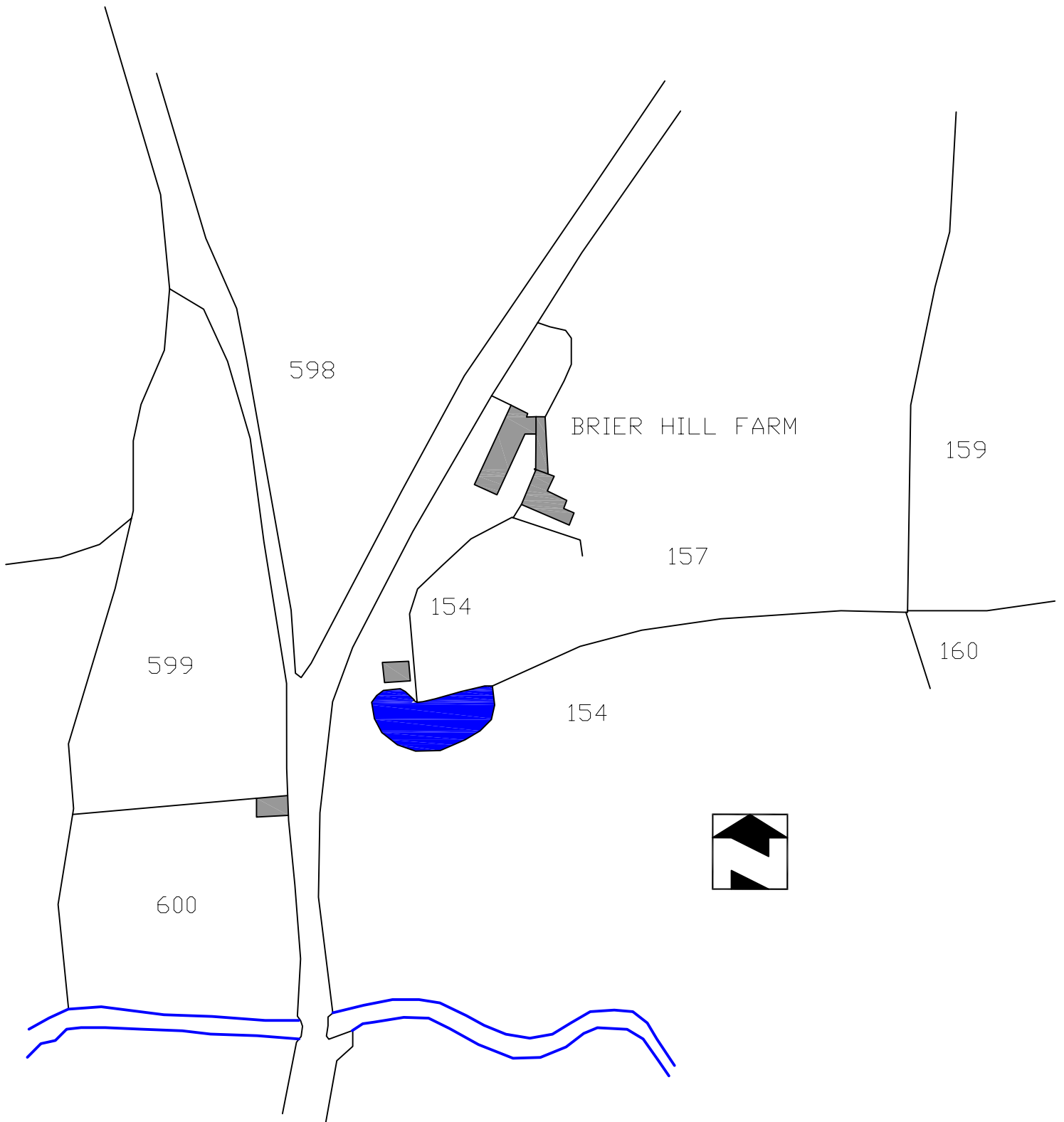
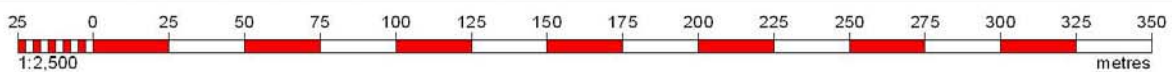
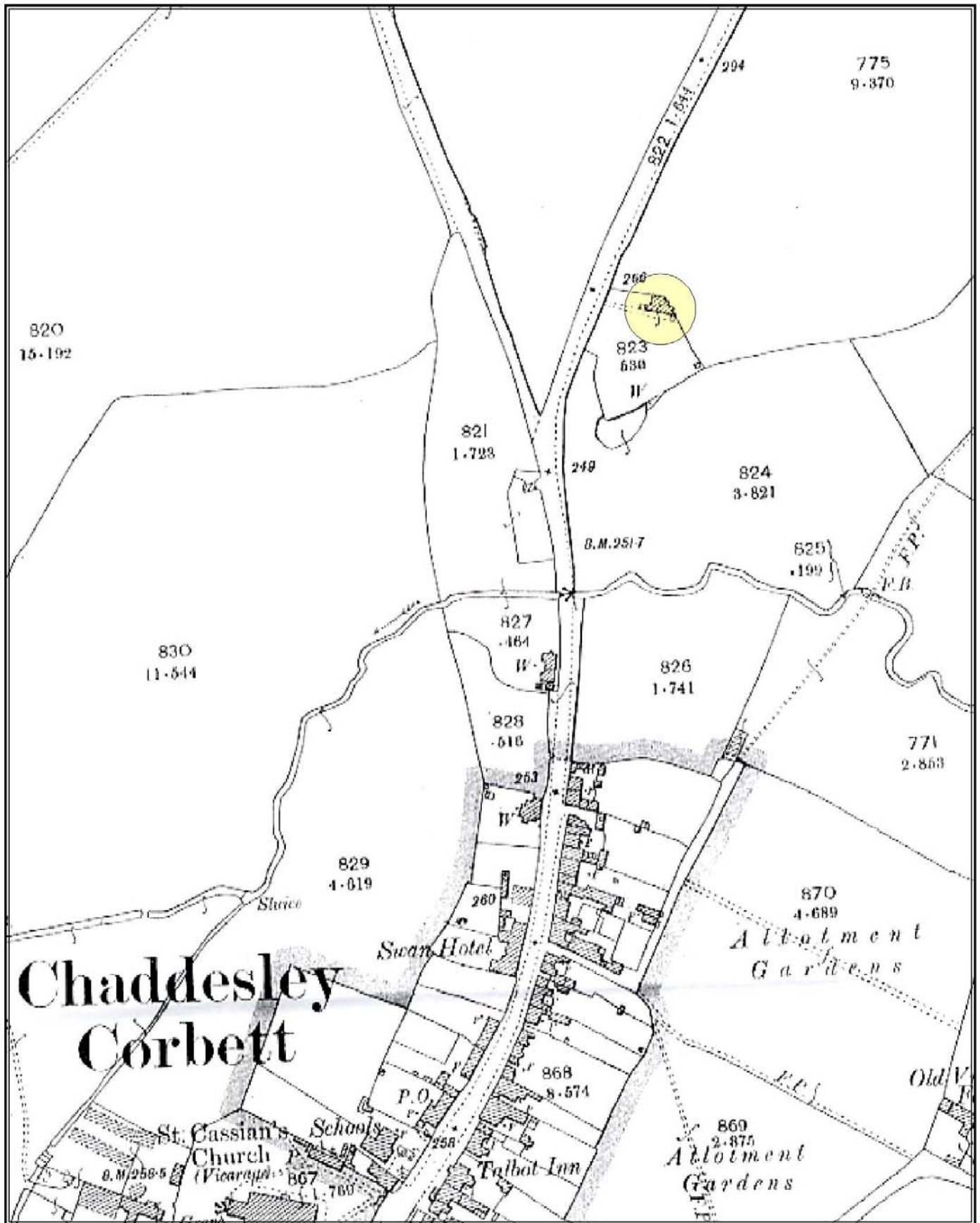
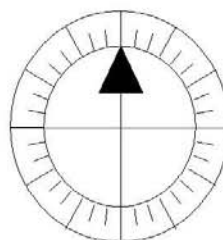


Figure 3: Sketched Extract of the 1838 Tithe Apportionment Plan of Chaddesley Corbett

Figure 4: Ordnance Survey (1902)



Extract from the 1902 (25" to 1 mile) map, with the location of the site highlighted.



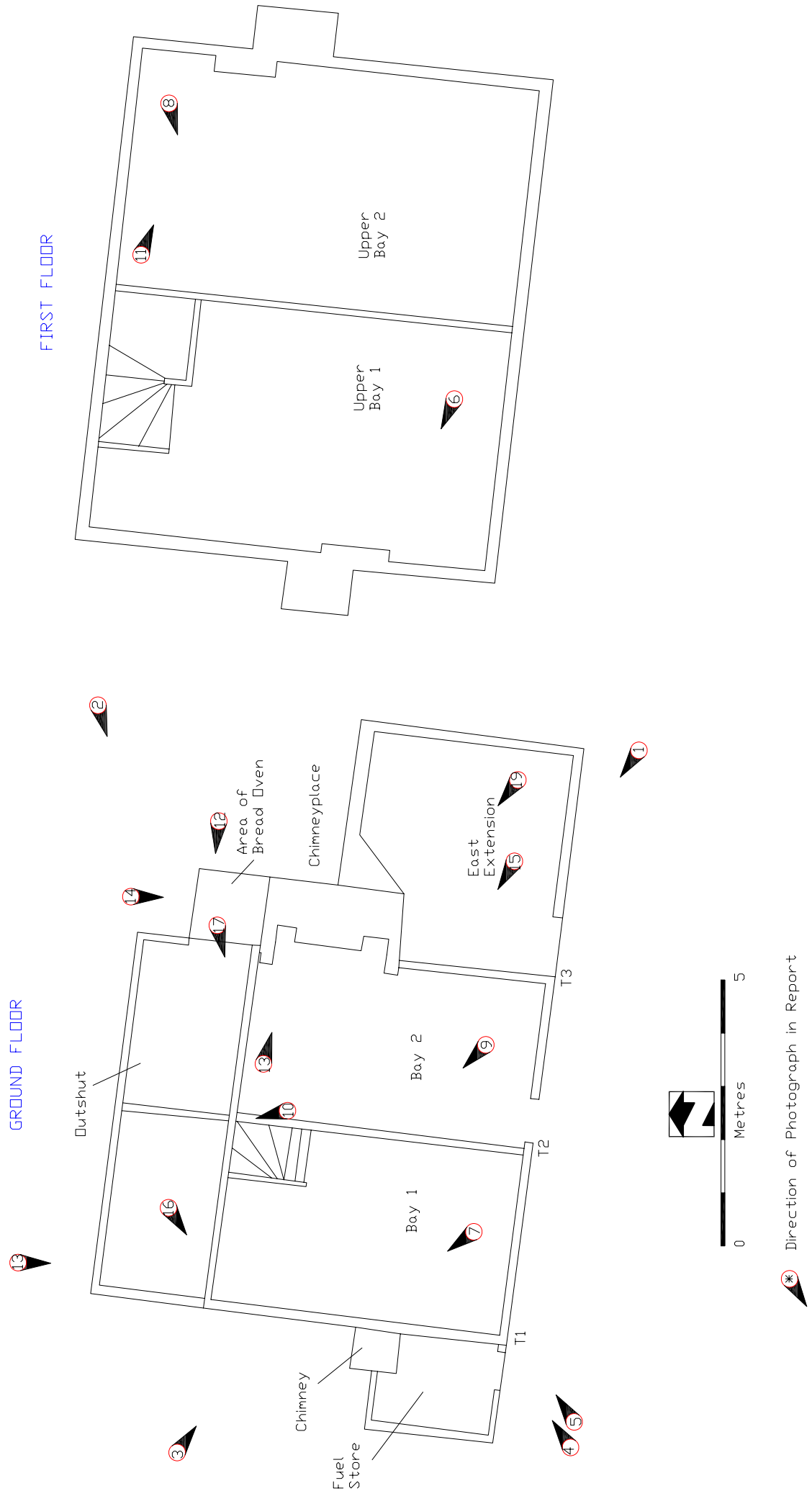
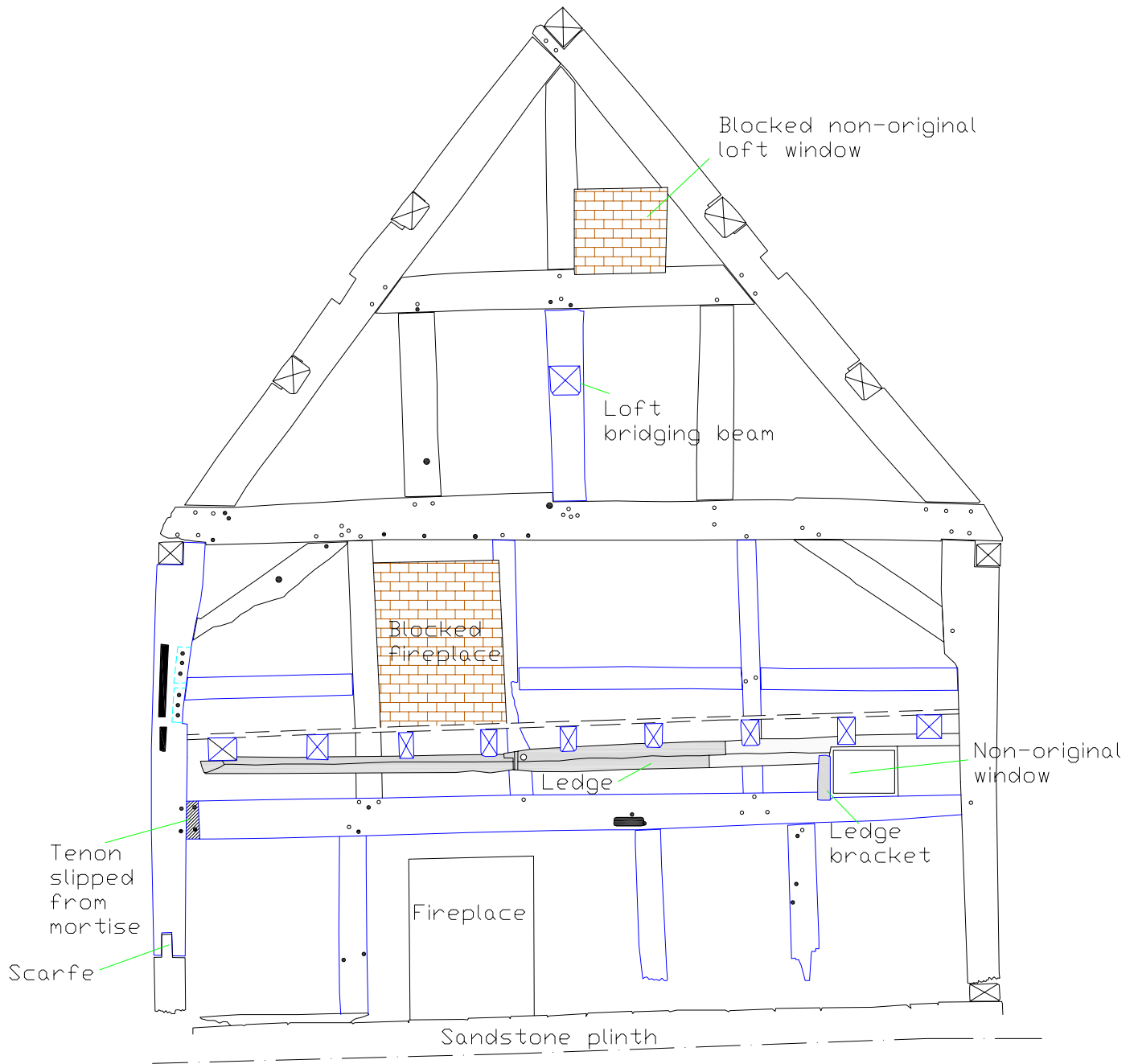


Figure 5: Identification of Space, and Photo Directions




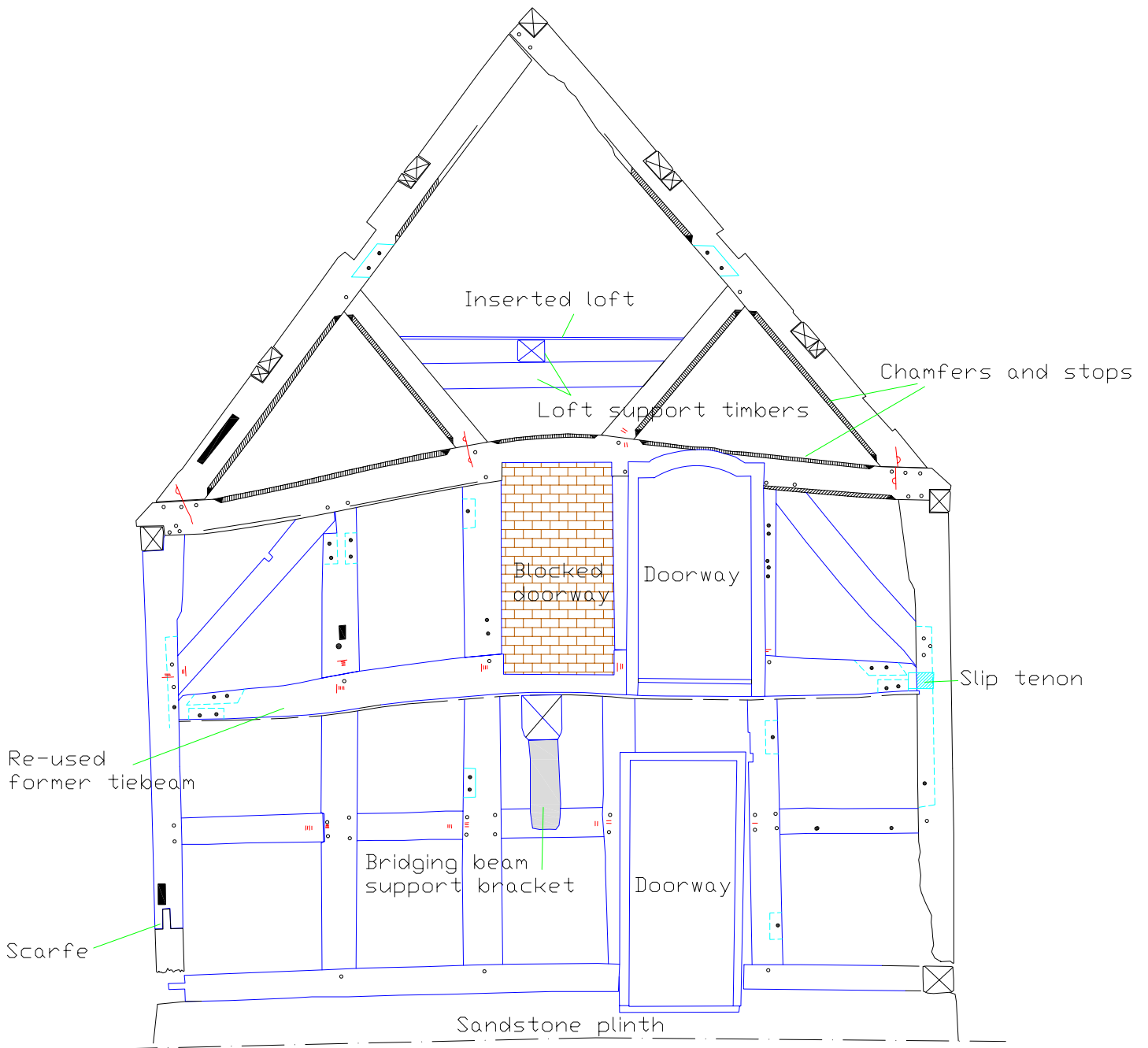
NOTE	
	Bricked up Openings
o	Pegs
•	Peg Holes
—	Metres
---	Upper Floor Level
- - - -	Empty Mortises
— (blue)	Definite inserted / Replacement Timbers
— (dotted)	Present Ground Level
x	Carpenters' Marks

Figure 6: Frame T1, Internal




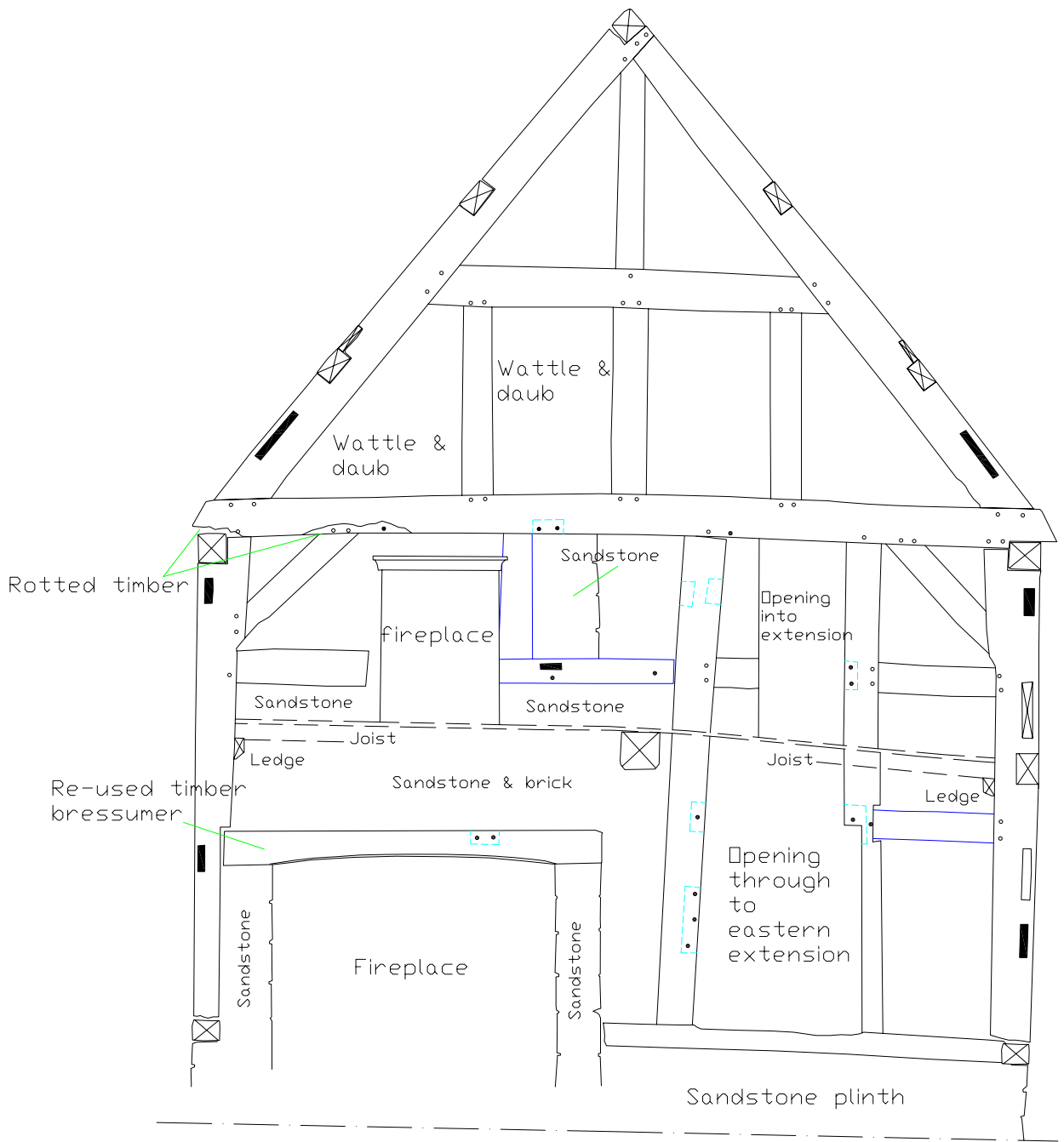
NOTE	All panels of brick unless stated
	Bricked up Openings
o	Pegs
•	Peg Holes
—	Metres
— — —	Upper Floor Level
- - - - -	Empty Mortises
— (blue)	Definite inserted / Replacement Timbers
— (black)	Present Ground Level
x	Carpenters' Marks

Figure 7: Frame T2, East Face












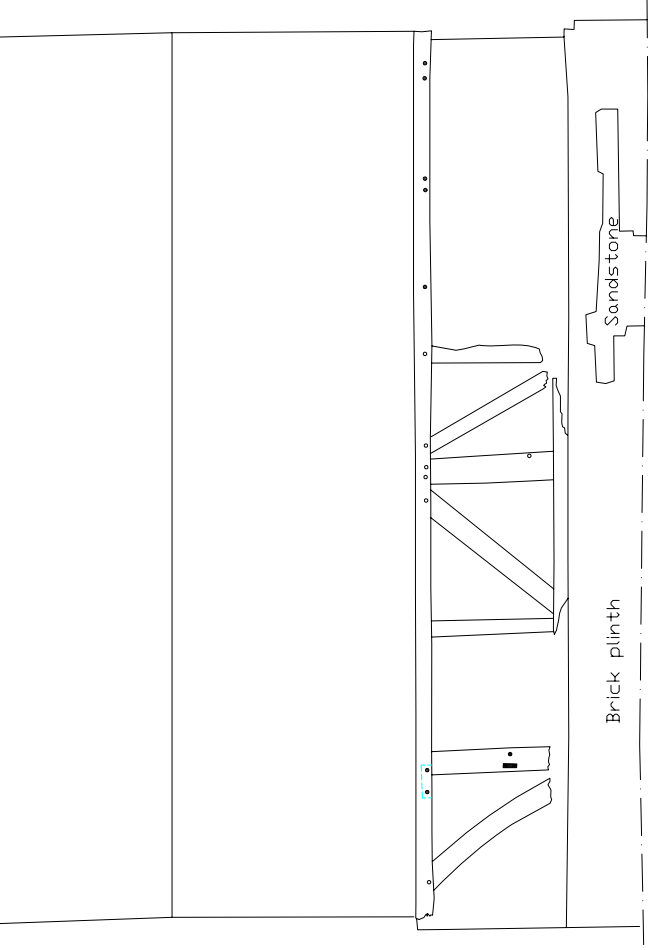
- NOTE** All panels of brick unless stated
-  Bricked up Openings
 -  Pegs
 -  Peg Holes
 -  Metres
 -  Upper Floor Level
 -  Empty Mortises
 -  Definite inserted / Replacement Timbers
 -  Present Ground Level
 -  Carpenters' Marks

Figure 8: Frame T3, Internal



Figure 9: North Frame, External



- Pegs
- Peg Holes
- Metres
- - - Empty Mortises
- Definite inserted / Replacement Timbers
- - - Present Ground Level

Northern Frame

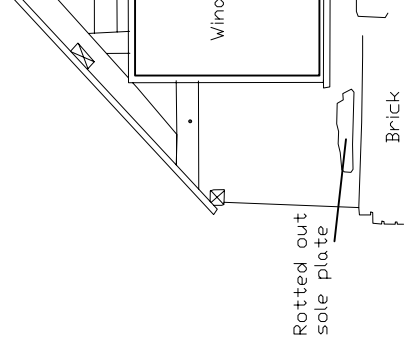
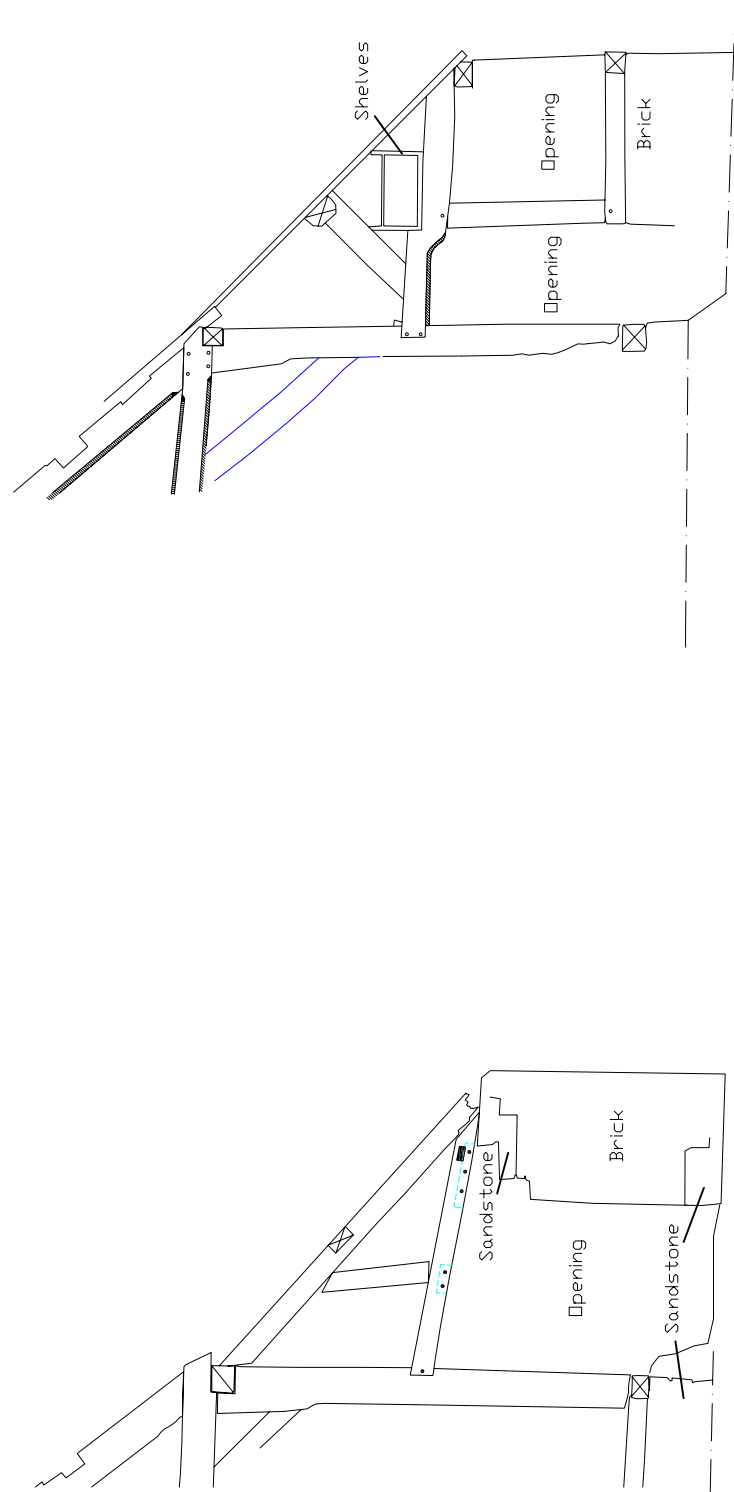
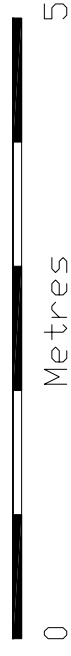




Figure 11: Approximate Phase Plan