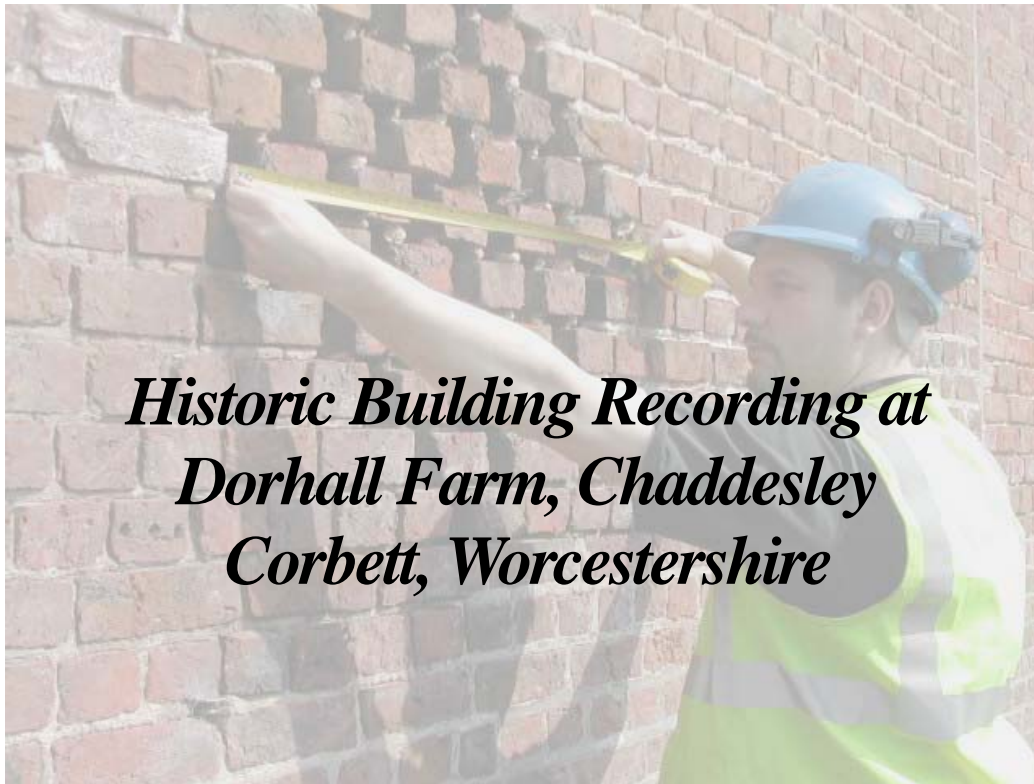


# Mercian Archaeology

-taking the past into the future

*Historic Building Recording at Dorhall Farm,  
Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire*



*Historic Building Recording at  
Dorhall Farm, Chaddesley  
Corbett, Worcestershire*

*A report for Mr and Mrs Palmer*

September 2005

Paul Williams

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**Project: PJ 142**

**WSM 34487**

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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. Dorhall Farm (NGR SO 5789 6110) is located around 1 kilometre to the north of the historic core of Chaddesley Corbett. The farm lies on the western side of the undulating Woodrow Lane at around 100 metres Above Ordnance datum (AOD). The slope rises to around 117 metres AOD to the north-west at Woodrow. Chaddesley Corbett may be described as a large village with an historic core of buildings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century and later ribbon development to the north.

## 1.2. Development Details

A planning application was made to Wyre Forest District Council by Mr Nick Hatton of Lett and Sweetland Architects of Worcester, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Palmer of Dorhall Farm, for conversion of existing farm buildings to provide domestic accommodation and associated infrastructure (reference WF/0834/2004). The planning process determined that the proposed development was likely to affect a building locally 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, for which a brief of work was written (WHEAS 2005).

## 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.

## 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 1999).
- ❑ The buildings were recorded to at least Level 1 as defined by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments of England (RCHME 1996).
- ❑ The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Section, Worcestershire County Council (WHEAS 2004) and for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Mercian Archaeology 2005).
- ❑ 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(s) 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).

### 2.3. Background Research

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork all known relevant and available documentary and cartographic sources were consulted.

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      |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Plan of Chaddesley Corbett (1795-6) | 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)     |                          |
| Ordnance Survey Revised Edition 25". Worcestershire Sheet XV.1 (1927) |                          |

### Other Primary Sources of Use

| Source  | Reference Number  |
|---|-------------------|
| Land Tax Assessment: Lower Halfshire Hundred (1787) | WRO BA 823/2, 152 |

### Other Primary Sources Consulted (of little use)

| Source  | Reference Number              |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Blakeway Estate Plan (19 <sup>th</sup> century) | WRO BA 844, f970.5:92 (i-iii) |
| Corporation Plan (1667)                         | WRO BA9566, r899:874          |
| Will of Charles Blakeway                        | Will Index, p531              |

Secondary sources used are referenced within the report.

## 2.4. The Fieldwork Methodology

The building recording was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2005 prior to any development work being carried out at the site.

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

## 3. The Documentary Research

### 3.1. Background

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chaddesley Corbett parish, in the Halfshire Hundred 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 'saltpans' 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 Barnard's Farm to the north-east of the village (WSM 29583) 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).

### 3.2. Cartographic Evidence

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

The 1745-6 plan of Chaddesley was of limited use, as the plan had sustained slight damage and had degraded along the appropriate section and even the photocopies were very faded. However, from this plan we are able to determine that the farm was known as 'Dorrels' at this time (Figure 2). The fields appear to have already been enclosed and are in a similar configuration as today. Buildings are shown on the plan (Plot 388), but due to the damage it is not possible to be constructive regarding the arrangement.

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 the farm to be still known as Dorrels. The buildings are depicted in a similar form to the present day, with the exception that there is a small attached building or porch to the west of the long western range, the northern end of the western range is narrower than today and the stable block on the east of the site is depicted as a longer building. The farmhouse appears smaller and there is a building adjacent to the west that has now gone. A pond is shown on the northern side of the farmhouse. At this time the farm was owned by Charles D'Oyley and occupied by Charles Blakeway and was listed as 'house, outbuildings, garden and rickyard' (WRO BA 1572, AP s760/178).

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map of the area was not available at the records office, but the slightly later edition of 1902 shows the buildings in much the same configuration as today, except that the northern end of the subject building is still shown as narrower and the sheep-wash, which now stands at the opposite end, is not shown (Figure 4). The eastern building is now smaller and resembles the building that is located there today. The long western range is shown with an access from east to west, suggesting this building was at some stage used as a barn.

The late Ordnance Survey sheet of 1927 shows no significant changes, although there is now an open building on the far western side of the site.

### 3. The Historic Building Recording

The subject buildings have been divided into individual spaces for ease of description, although the spaces do not necessarily denote each is a separate building (see text below). The numbered spaces and buildings referred to are shown in Figure 5.

#### **Building 1**

Building Number 1 is a rectangular stable and tack-room block with hayloft above, standing on the eastern side of the site adjacent to the road (Plates 1 and 2). It is constructed of brick and mortar, with a pitched roof covered in hand-made clay tiles. Ventilation to the upper floor hayloft is via a pattern of quarter-brick holes in the gable ends. There is an owl hole in the southern gable (owls were encouraged in farm buildings to keep the vermin population down) and a pitching door at the opposite end, where hay would be offloaded from a cart into the loft. The western elevation has three windows and a stable door set below rough segmental arched



lintels. The sills are picked-out in Staffordshire blue brick, a feature noted in the other subject buildings. The building has most recently been used for general storage.

The structure is of two phases, with some repairs at a later (3<sup>rd</sup> +) stage. The eastern elevation, although repaired is the remnant part of an earlier building on this site. This is shown on the tithe apportionment map as a long narrow structure. The remaining wall (part of) is of rough coursing, with 2 ¾" bricks bonded with a whitish lime mortar. The remainder of the building has been stitched onto this wall and is of 3" orange brick in a sandy lime mortar, built in a common bond with Flemish header courses at random intervals. A rear (eastern) door has been added to the structure at some stage.

The earliest phase of build can be dated to pre-1838 and the stable block dates from before 1902, the style suggests mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Building 2**

Building Number 2 lies at the northern end of the on the western range (the main subject building; Plate 3). The building is single storied of 2 ¾" orange brick bonded in a sandy-cement mortar with a corrugated asbestos roof. The brickwork is constructed in a common bond with Flemish header course every fifth course. It sits mainly on the footprint of an earlier brick structure, of which the base of the western elevation can be seen at ground level and the shadow outline of the southern end gable can be seen on the gable end of Building 3 (Plate 4). The building has been recently used as a workshop/store, but a small entrance and vented window in the western elevation indicate this may have formerly been a calving shed. Further evidence is in the form of internal partitioning for stalls (Plate 5). Early map evidence shows possible external pens at this end of the range and it is likely that the earlier building was a piggery. The structure as it stands appears to be mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is probably a widened version of the earlier build, the eastern elevation now in-line with the remainder of the range.

## **Building 3**

Building 2 butts up against Building 3 at the northern end of the range. The building is of two phases, with 2 ½" brick to the eastern elevation and lower level of the opposite side. The upper level appears to have been rebuilt in the 1970's, including the insertion of two windows (Plate 6). The roof is pitched with a clay tile cover and there is a skylight inserted in the eastern side, again probably from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building is now used as storage; the former use is unknown and there is not sufficient information for speculation. Building 3 butts onto the northern end of Building 4.

## **Building 4**

Essentially Building 4 encompasses Spaces A-C (Figure 5) and is all one structure (Plates 7 and 8), however, it is not all of one phase and there are internal divisions that need some explanation.

Building 4 is a long range on the western side of the farm complex, with steeply pitched clay tile roof. It is constructed of 3"x 9 ½" orange brick in a sandy lime mortar in a common bond with a Flemish header course every 4<sup>th</sup> row.

The building represents a former storage barn with incorporated stable below a granary at the southern end. Externally, the majority of the building appears to date from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Space A (Part of Building 4)

Internal inspection of Building 4 indicates that remnants of an earlier timber-frame structure have been incorporated into the build. Timbers can be seen externally in the north-eastern corner, where a post can be seen protruding from the brickwork and at eaves level in the northern gable end (Plate 9). The steeply pitched roof is also indicative of a former timber-frame. The remaining timbers are likely to have been part of a threshing barn of three or more bays, standing on the same alignment as the present brick structure. The northern gable end frame survives intact (Plate 10) and the adjacent roof truss survives, now supported by brick piers incorporated into the superseding structure (Plate 11).

The end frame sits on a dwarf-wall plinth of handmade 2 ½” brick bonded with a lime mortar, which appears original, rather than an under build. The panel infills are of the same material, with thin timbers tying the brick noggin between the studs. The frame itself is of rectangular panels, with studs from tiebeam to sole plate. The central stud is a re-used timber and has empty peg holes and the rebate of a half-lap joint mid-way up, the adjacent pair of studs also have empty peg-holes suggestive of re-use. There is a pair of curved down braces from posts to sill, although the north-western post has been replaced by brick and the opposite post is partially hidden by the brick skin. Above the tie-beam there is a pair of queen struts and a stud to the collar. The principals are interesting as they are halved (split down the middle) from the same timber. Originally, it was thought that these may have been cut down cruck blades from an earlier building or an unusual form of upper cruck, however, the lack of any remnant joints that could be associated with a cruck-frame, as would be expected in timbers of this length probably suggest otherwise and it appears that the timber may have been carefully chosen, as the natural widening of the scantling, which was located below the purlins, would have given added strength in this venerable area to stress cracking (pers comm. Nick Joyce). The slight curvature on the principals has resulted in them being pegged to the tiebeam around 50 centimetres from the ends (an unusual element) and the resultant gap infilled with brick. They are halved at the apex to support the ridge piece.

The purlins are trenched into the principals and are chamfered and stopped and at least one splayed and tabled scarf joint was noted. They are braced by long straight slender wind-braces below the rafters.

Truss T2 is now supported on brick piers. It is similar in form to the gable end truss in that the principals are again mirrored on each side, the result of splitting one timber longitudinally. The collar and queen struts are re-used from another timber-framed structure, The struts have grooves in both inner faces, suggesting they were originally studs with lath and plaster infill panels between, or possibly part of a former plank and muntion partition. The collar timber has in fact been re-used twice. It originally appears to have been an upper rail with holes for the staves of a wattle and daub infill panel on the underside. This was then re-used (or modified / altered) and mortises were cut in to take studs. The timber was then used again in the present position, with new mortises for to take struts, one overlapping an earlier mortise rebate. The tiebeam also shows evidence of likely re-use, although the empty mortises and peg holes may be associated with transverse bracing or a partition from the (proposed) threshing bay, which would have been adjacent on the southern side. Partitions were often an element of barn construction and timber-framing here would also serve to brace the structure and strengthen the points where the massive barn doors would pivot.

The remainder of this space is of 3”x 9 ½” orange brick bedded in a sandy lime mortar in a common bond with a Flemish header course every fourth row. The western elevation is blocked in with breezeblock and bay 1 of the eastern elevation has been bricked up, with bay 2

enclosed with timber planking with a window and access door. This indicates that either bays 1 and 2 were open on both sides at the time that the brick-structure was built to enclose the timber-frame, or more likely, that there was timber-framing to both elevations of bay 1 and bay 2 was the threshing bay, with floor to wall plate cart-doors. The floor in this space was obscured by organic debris and the owner has never seen the any floor surface below (pers comm. Mr Palmer). A full height brick wall separates this space from the remainder of the building to the south. The wall appears to be contemporary with the brick phase and indicates that the threshing bay was probably no longer used for this purpose and that the northern end of the building was probably given over to cart and implement storage.

### **Space B (Part of Building 4)**

Space B is a three bay area within structure 4, which appears originally to have been a stable with a pair of slat vented windows to the eastern elevation below rough segmental arched heads, with contrasting sills in Staffordshire blue plinth bricks (Plate 12). There were probably 3 windows to this elevation, but a 20<sup>th</sup> century double width sliding door has been inserted into the build below an RSJ on brick piers, which has removed evidence of former features and detail. On the opposite western elevation there is a blocked-up access doorway beneath a rough segmental arched head and with hinge and bolt fix points picked out in a white sandstone, a feature noted on the other original door apertures. There is a further inserted sliding door and an inserted personnel door at the opposite northern end. There is a blocked access way into Space C to the south. The floor is concrete and the pair of roof trusses in this section are typical mass produced 19<sup>th</sup> century king post trusses (Plate 13).

### **Space C (Part of Building 4)**

Space C appears originally to have been a cart-shed and a separate process room (probably fodder) with a granary above (Plates 14 and 15). Physically, this part of the building was two-spaces with a dividing wall. However, the only original access to the processing area was internal and so for the purposes of this report, the area is regarded as a single 'space'. A 20<sup>th</sup> century sliding door now obscures the original open cart-door aperture, which is below a rough brick arched lintel in the western elevation (visible above the sliding door). There is a six light window with arched head and Staffordshire blue brick plinth brick sill in the western elevation of the process shed and the only access between the spaces was via an internal door. A single external doorway has been inserted into the south-west corner, below the open aperture of a pitching eye to the floor above, this is also likely to be an insertion, probably as the granary was also used as a hayloft in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a window in the southern gable end bringing light into the granary. The process room has a stone flag and brick floor and the cart-shed is brick floored. The granary roof is supported on king post trusses with raised tie-beams and steel tie-rods giving extra head height in this area (Plate 16). More recently the lower floor space has also been used for produce storage and processing. There is a partially sunken turnip bin within the former cart-shed and late-20<sup>th</sup> century three phase electric processing plant still remains in the form of a 'Markham Mixer', the hopper of which, would have been supplied through a hatch in the granary floor.

### **Building 5**

Building five is a single storey brick structure at the far southern end of the range, below a hipped roof (Plate 17). The phasing evidence here is difficult to accurately interpret and various theories can be put forward, but also refuted due to anomalies within the evidence. On the face of it the building is later than Building 4, onto which it butts and earlier than Building 6, on the eastern side. However, the eastern elevation of Building 4 extends through and forms

the rear wall of Building 5. There is a bricked in aperture to this elevation, which can just be seen below the roofline of the adjoining Building 6 (Plate 18). The logical explanation for a bricked in aperture at upper level is that the building was two-storied. However, there is no evidence that Building 5 was ever more than one story. In fact, the evidence suggests otherwise; there is a window at upper level in the gable end of building 4, which therefore must have been an external face. The alternative is that at some stage Building 6 was a two-story structure and the aperture was an upper window in the precursor to the current Building 6, although there is no physical evidence to suggest this is correct either. So the most likely scenario is that the blocked in window ‘aperture’ is actually another form of feature or a poor repair to the wall?

Building 5 has a concrete floor and has most likely been used as a calving pen or animal shelter, as there is a blocked up drain through the southern elevation and the building has direct access to the shelter-shed (Building 6). There is a vent window (now minus slats) below rough brick arched lintel and with Staffordshire blue plinth brick sill, in the southern elevation and doors to both west and east elevations.

## **Building 6**

Building 6 is now a shelter shed standing at the southern end of the buildings complex and projecting from the eastern elevation of Building 5 at less than a right angle. The structure is mainly of breezeblock with a corrugated asbestos roof cover over arched steel trusses (Plate 19). The building as it stands dates from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, although the map evidence indicates that there was a building on the same footprint since at least 1838. There is also remaining physical evidence within the build of Building 6. The eastern end elevation is partially constructed of large ashlar sandstone blocks, with brickwork completing the existing wall (Plate 20). It cannot be determined if the sandstone was part of an earlier building, which was replaced mainly in brick, or if the sandstone was just a handy material to re-use in the wall. There is also evidence that the building had another phase contemporary with Building 4 (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century). The eastern elevation of Building 4 still forms the western elevation of Building 6 and this suggests a return wall followed the current building footprint. The fabric of this wall suggests that the form of the building, prior to its 20<sup>th</sup> century modifications, was a single storey apex roofed structure, ruling out theories of a two-storey structure here. On the southern side of the shed there is a sheepwash, which probably also dates from the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Plate 21).

## **4. 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. In such instance, the dating and phasing of the buildings has to be subjective. Where brick farm buildings are dated to within a quarter of a century without substantiating documentary evidence, a certain amount of conjecture will almost certainly

have been used. It is sometimes possible to date domestic architecture (approximately) using brick typology. Generally, bricks got gradually larger between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and in 1784 a brick tax was introduced, resulting in standardised 3” bricks. However, this typology cannot be relied upon in agricultural buildings, as materials were frequently re-used.

The cartography indicates that the farm-building complex at Dorhall Farm was in a similar configuration as today’s plan, with some minor exceptions and therefore, is of little use in tying absolute dates to various phases of build. Fortunately, the phasing at Dorhall Farm is fairly straightforward (generally) and an outline is produced below.

### **Phase 1 (late 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century)**

A timber-framed threshing barn stood at the northern end of the range of buildings shown on the earliest map and it is likely that other buildings were on the site at this time, of which there is now no record. The brick panel infills on the surviving intact northern gable end frame of the former barn are of 2 ¼” brick in a white lime mortar and there is no reason to assume that these are not original and contemporary with the construction of the frame, although there are re-used timbers within the frame. The frame is unusual with a halved slightly curved timber used to make a pair of principal rafters and similar timbers used in the principals on the other remaining truss of the same phase (Truss T2). The principals on both trusses are set in some 50 centimetres from the ends of the tie-beams, another unusual feature for pre-1700 non-cruck trusses. The curved down braces are the other identifier that suggests a late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century date, as later braces were usually straight.

Some ashlar sandstone blockwork within the eastern elevation of Building 6 may also date from this period and many of the buildings shown on the tithe map may have been founded on sandstone, which may have been re-used elsewhere, or sold when the buildings were demolished and redeveloped. Only excavation would shed light on the extent of the use of sandstone. It was often common to use a different material at lower levels of a building, a recent watching brief at the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Button Factory in Bromsgrove noted the extensive use of sandstone foundations below the brick built structure (Mercian Archaeology 2005b) and, for example, many of the brick buildings of the Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire, use industrial slag waste as foundation material.

The feature shown on the tithe map (Figure 3), which suggests that the buildings depicted are precursors of the current buildings rather than the buildings we see today, is the porch or outshot shown on the western side of the plan. There is no indication on the ground that such a structure stood against, or was incorporated within the standing buildings, indicating that they are not the same buildings. It is likely that the timber-framed barn was part of a larger timber framed (and possibly sandstone) range on this side.

### **Phase 2 (mid-19th century)**

Sometime around 1840-50 there was wholesale demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the farm complex. The two northernmost bays of the timber-framed barn were retained and incorporated into a brick built storage barn and stable complex (Building 4). The stable and tack-room on the eastern side (Building 1) appears to be contemporary with this rebuild and most likely was completed at the same time. It is likely that there was also a contemporary shelter shed on the footprint of Building 6; this may have incorporated elements of an earlier build, especially at the eastern gable end (as did the stable/tack room block), which includes sandstone blockwork and rough brickwork.

### **Phase 3 (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, possibly 1860-70)**

Buildings were added at either end of the western range. Building 3 was butted onto the northern end of Building 4 and Building 5 was inserted between the building that stood on the footprint of Building 6 and Building 4.

### **Phase 3a (late 19<sup>th</sup> century 1880-90)**

The remains of the eastern elevation frame of the timber-framed barn was removed and rebuilt in brick, incorporating a window.

### **Phase 4 (late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

Building 2 was added at the northern end of Building 4.

### **Phase 5 (early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

The remaining western elevation of the timber-frame was removed and rebuilt in breezeblock (although it is possible that the frame was removed at the same time as the opposite frame (Phase 4) and the bay left open on the western side). The former threshing bay was also blocked up at this time and the eastern cart-door aperture was planked in and a window and door included.

Building 6 was partially demolished and rebuilt in breezeblock and corrugated asbestos sheeting.

Overall, the farmstead as it stands is a product of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and is comparative with many smaller farmsteads of this period in form and function.

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

## **5. General Discussion**

### **5.1. High Farming**

Much has been written regarding the ‘progression’ of farming, although the majority relates to the agricultural revolution of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> century, which were basically the response to improvements afforded by mechanisation and increased profits revealed in planned farms with high architectural elaboration. A similar glut of papers dealing with ‘high farming’ of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> 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 had brought down the price of grain 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.

We must look at Dorhall Farm in this light as it spans this period of innovation and agricultural development. It should be stressed here that often farms are lumped together into a category without taking account of 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. Dorhall Farm seems to have diversified and altered its farming methodology during the period of high farming. The threshing barn appears to have become redundant and was immediately replaced by storage facilities, processing areas and stables, although the layout of buildings at the farm never appeared to follow the acknowledged, almost factory like form associated with many of the larger farms at this time, suggesting that Dorhall was only ever on the peripheries of the high farming revolution. Later extensions, additional buildings and modifications were seemingly less well built than the 1840-50 planned redevelopment and it seems likely that this reflected the economy of the farm, and probably the general economy of the surrounding farms.

## **5.2. The Importance and Significance of the Barn**

For centuries the threshing barn was the most important building on any farmstead. At the time of the survey, the threshing barn at Dorhall had one bay surviving to the north of the threshing bay, indicating that it was probably originally a three-bay structure with central threshing bay, although this configuration was not unique and sometimes barns may have had offset threshing bays or sometimes two threshing bays. The threshing or 'thrashing' bay is where the threshing process would take place to separate the wheat from the chaff, or the grain from the stalks of the crop. This process involved thrashing the crop on the floor with hand flails. After the separation had taken place, the threshed crop would be thrown into the air to separate out the chaff. This was known as winnowing and the bay doors would be opened to allow a through draught, which would aid the process as the heavier grain would fall to the floor and the waste would be blown away. It has been logically suggested, that for this reason the barn, which was the most important building on the early farmstead, would be aligned to take advantage of the locally prevalent wind (Wade-Martins 1991, 167). However, little research has been carried out with respect to this suggestion (Kenworthy 1988). Winnowing was a lengthy process and may have taken several weeks a year to complete. The gradual introduction of mechanisation and acceptance of the 'improvements' by farm workers meant that threshing floors became redundant by the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century and barns reverted to processing plants and storage facilities.

This decline of the use of a threshing barn is in evidence at Dorhall Farm. Threshing floors became obsolete as mechanised threshing became widely accepted and utilised into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. After this, barns were generally not built and existing barns were used for other purposes (Harvey 1997, 8). Two bays of the former timber-frame threshing barn were

incorporated into the new farmstead design at Dorhall farm around 1840-50. These were divided off from the main building, in effect isolating the former barn from the new space and it seems likely that remainder of the former barn was then used for storage, probably as an implement shed, as the through doors of the former threshing bay would still have been serviceable. It is also a possibility that the space was used to house animals, as the brickwork to the corner of the build against the former threshing bay was rounded, rather than a sharp corner, which may injure animals should they rub against the brick.

The importance of the horse to the small farmstead can also be detected from the build. A new freestanding stable and tack-room was built at this time, which probably housed the riding horses, whereas the stables incorporated in the western range (Building 4 Space B) would have been for the cart horses, a valuable commodity to the farmstead.

### 5.3. Farmstead Layout

The layout of the farmstead has also been variously discussed in an attempt to categorise. Whilst there are recognisable 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 and sheltered from the elements etc (Peters 1969), sweeping assumptions that farms all follow these ideals may be questioned as the use of space on individual farmsteads is likely to have evolved in response to local situations. For example, the barn (remnants of) at Dorhall Farm faced east-west, which is likely to be into the prevalent wind to provide a through draft for the winnowing process. The stables are on the same alignment, highlighting the fact that commentary on agricultural use of space should be questioned, as for example; the stable at Dorhall farm is not sheltered from the prevalent wind and elements. In fact, out of all the projects carried out by Mercian Archaeology over the last 2 years, only one farmstead has had a barn on the northern side of the foldyard.

What can also be maintained from the evidence at Dorhall Farm is that the position of the farmhouse is separated from the 'working area' of the farmstead. It is suggested and is frequently the case, that the farmhouse is situated to oversee the working farmyard area partly for security purposes, partly to save time travelling from home to work and partly so that it overlooked the workforce, as the farmhands would be uncertain when they were being observed, '*servants and stock cannot be too much under the eye of the master*' (Waistell 1827, quoted in Cook 2004). Although we must remember that the earliest farm buildings at Dorhall pre-date the farmhouse (as we see it) and so any analysis of positioning is assumption.



## 6. Conclusion

*The results of the historic building recording at Dorhall Farm determined that the earliest surviving upstanding fabric was part of a late 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed threshing barn, which had been incorporated into mid-19<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment of the site, which provided new brick built stables, cart-shed and granary. Further expansion was carried out during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with a calf shed added to the north, which replaced an earlier piggery and a storage building at the southern end, which may also have been used during calving. The current 1950's shelter shed at the southern end of the complex stands on the site of an earlier shed, contemporary with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century development, which had in-turn replaced an earlier building on the site.*

## 7. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr and Mrs Palmer of Dorhall Farm for their help and enthusiasm for the project and to Mr Nick Hatton of Lett and Sweetland Architects of Worcester for his help and supply of the excellent plans and elevations, which have been used as the basis of Figures 5-7. Thanks are also due to Mike Glyde, Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, and the staff of Worcester records Office.

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# Plates

## Plate 1



*The stable block (Building 1) looking east (scale 2 metres)*

## Plate 2



*The stable block (Building 1) looking west (scale 2 metres)*

# Plates

## Plate 3



*Building 2 view to the east (scale 2 metres)*

## Plate 4



*Building 2 viewed to the south-east showing earlier wall (scale 1 metre)*

# Plates

## Plate 5



*Interior of Building 2 showing stalling*

## Plate 6



*Building 3 viewed to the east (scale 2 metres)*

# Plates

## Plate 7



*Building 4 view to the south-east (scale 2 metres)*

## Plate 8



*Building 4 (after gate) viewed to the south-west (scale 2 metres)*

# Plates

## Plate 9



*Principal rafters in gable end of Building 4 (far), also note shadow of former roofline on gable of Building 3*

## Plate 10



*Timber-frame of northern gable end of Building 4, Space A (scale 2 metres)*

# Plates

## Plate 11



*Truss T2 in Space A of Building 4*

## Plate 12



*Blocked stable door in Space B of Building 4 (scale 2 metres)*



# Plates

## Plate 13



*Trusses in Space B of Building 4*

## Plate 14



*Space C, former cart-shed with granary above (scale 1 metre)*

# Plates

## Plate 15



*Space C of Building 4, the window is within Space B (scale 2 metres)*

## Plate 16



*Trusses in Space C of Building 4*

# Plates

## Plate 17



*Building 5 at the southern end of Building 4 (scale 2 metres)*

## Plate 18



*Eastern elevation of Building 4 where Building 6 butts it, note the blocked aperture (arrowed)  
(scale 1 metre)*

# Plates

## Plate 19



*Building 6 at the southern end of the yard (scale 2 metres)*

## Plate 20



*Eastern elevation of Building 6, note the sandstone and the line of a former pitched roof  
(scale 1 metre)*

# Plates

## Plate 21



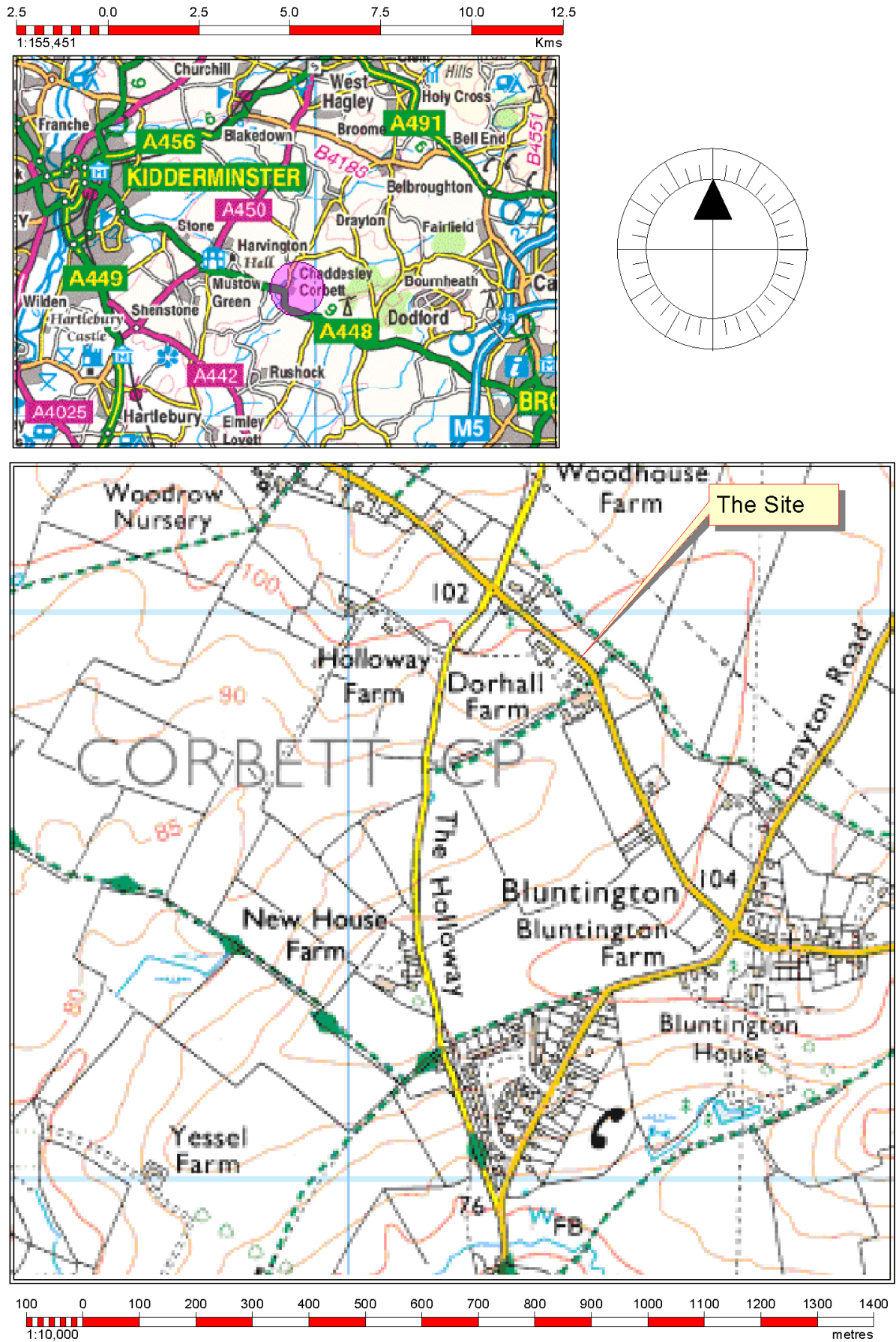
*Sheepwash to the rear (south) of Building 6*

## Plate 22



*General view of the recorded buildings looking north*

# Figure 1: Location of the Site

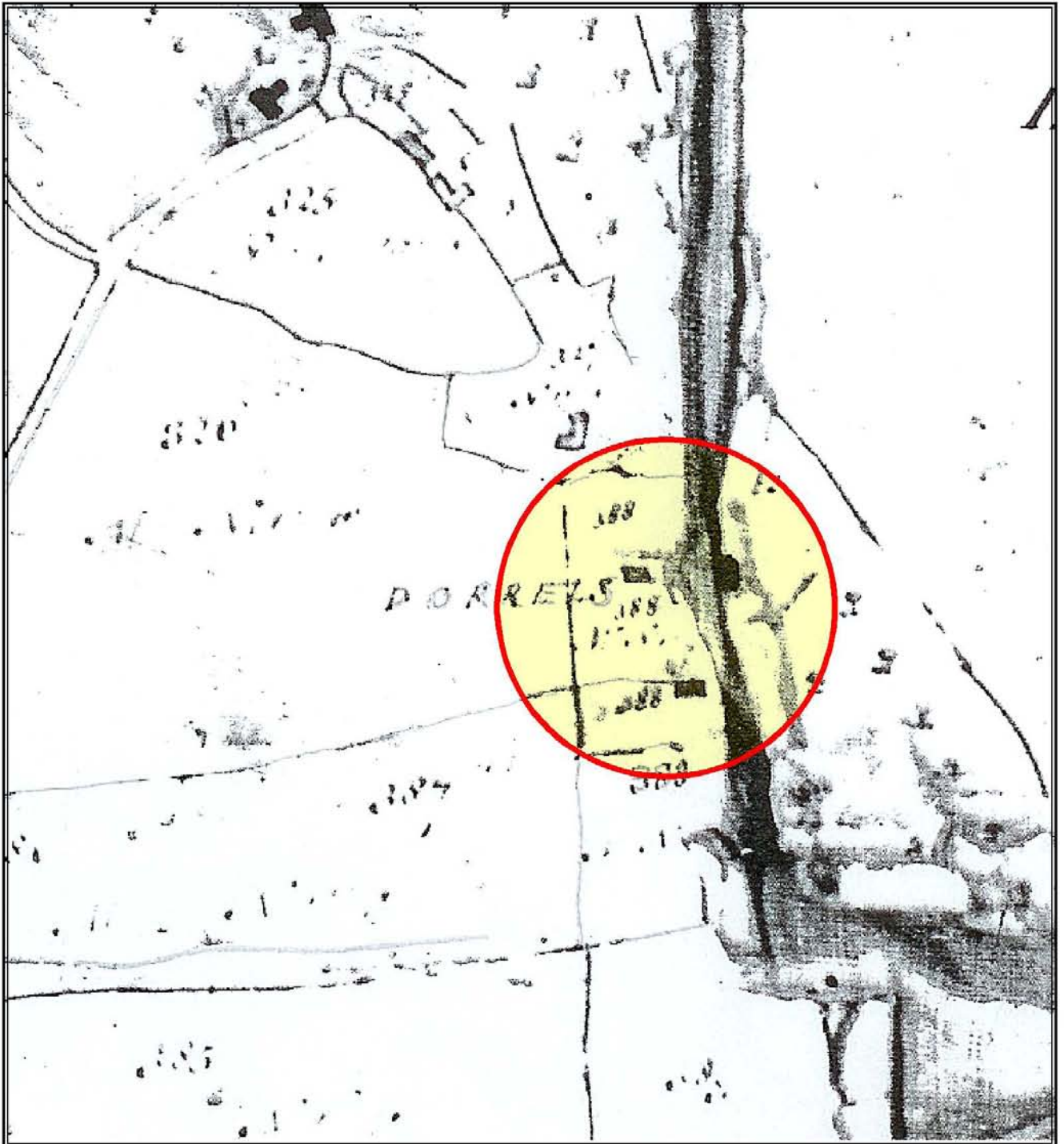


Location of the Site at Chaddesley Corbett

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Figure 2: Extract from the Map of Chaddesley Corbett (1745-6)



The mid-18th century map of Chaddesley Corbett is in poor condition and gives little information with regard to the outline of buildings.

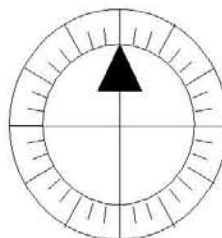
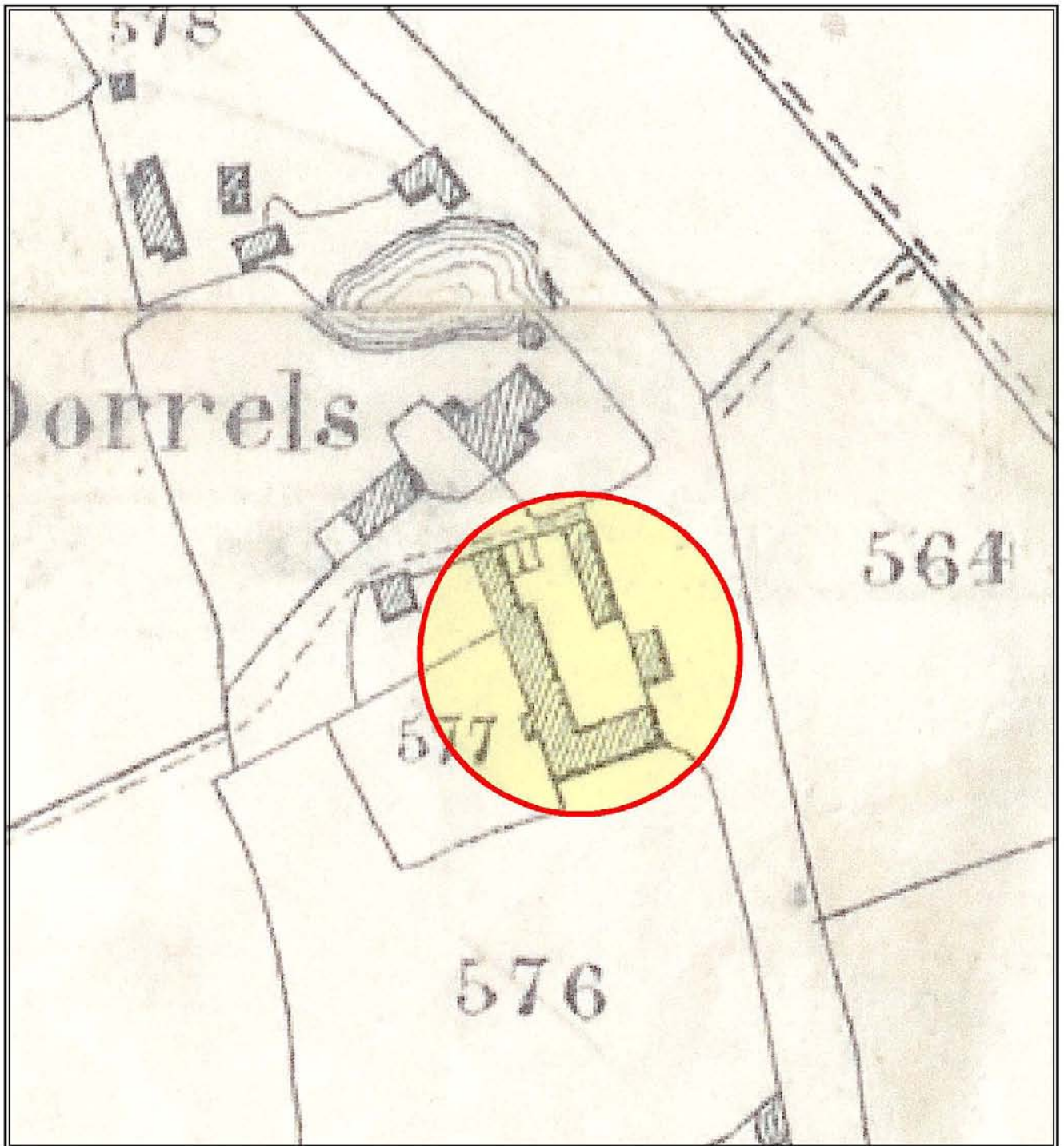


Figure 3: Extract from the Tithe Map of Chaddesley Corbett (1838)



The Tithe Map of 1838 shows the outline plan of buildings at Dorhall Farm, then known as Dorrells. The development site is highlighted

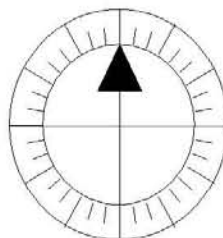
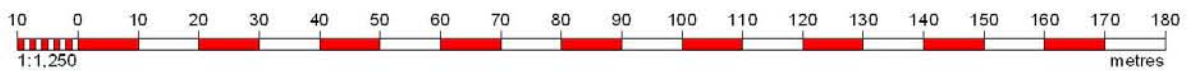
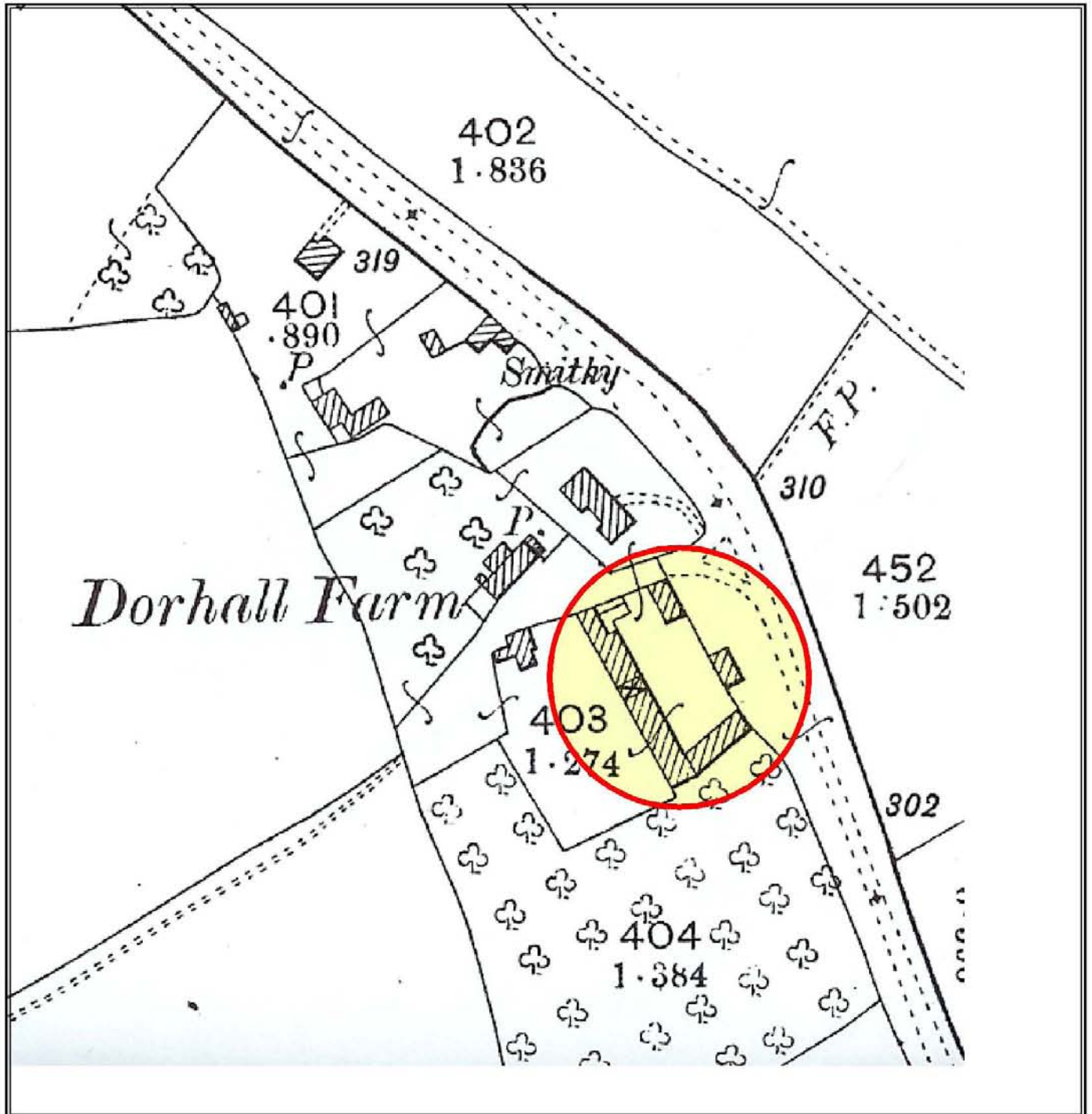
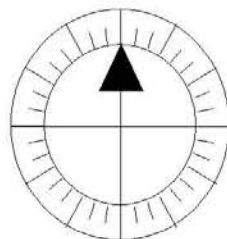




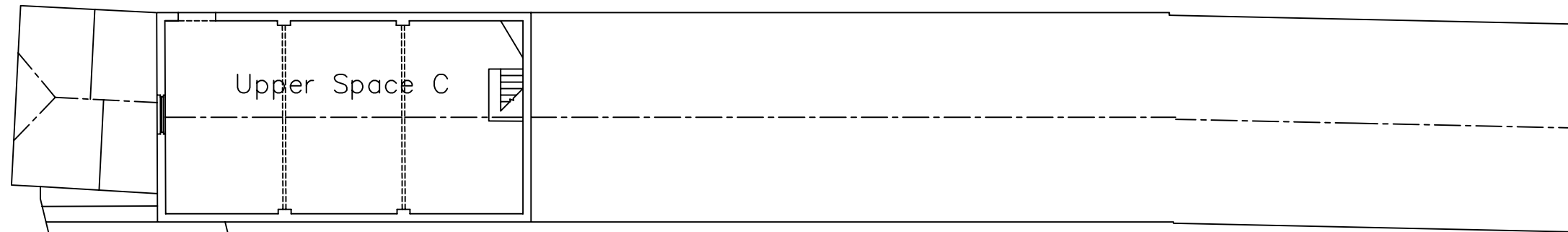
Figure 4: 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey (1902)



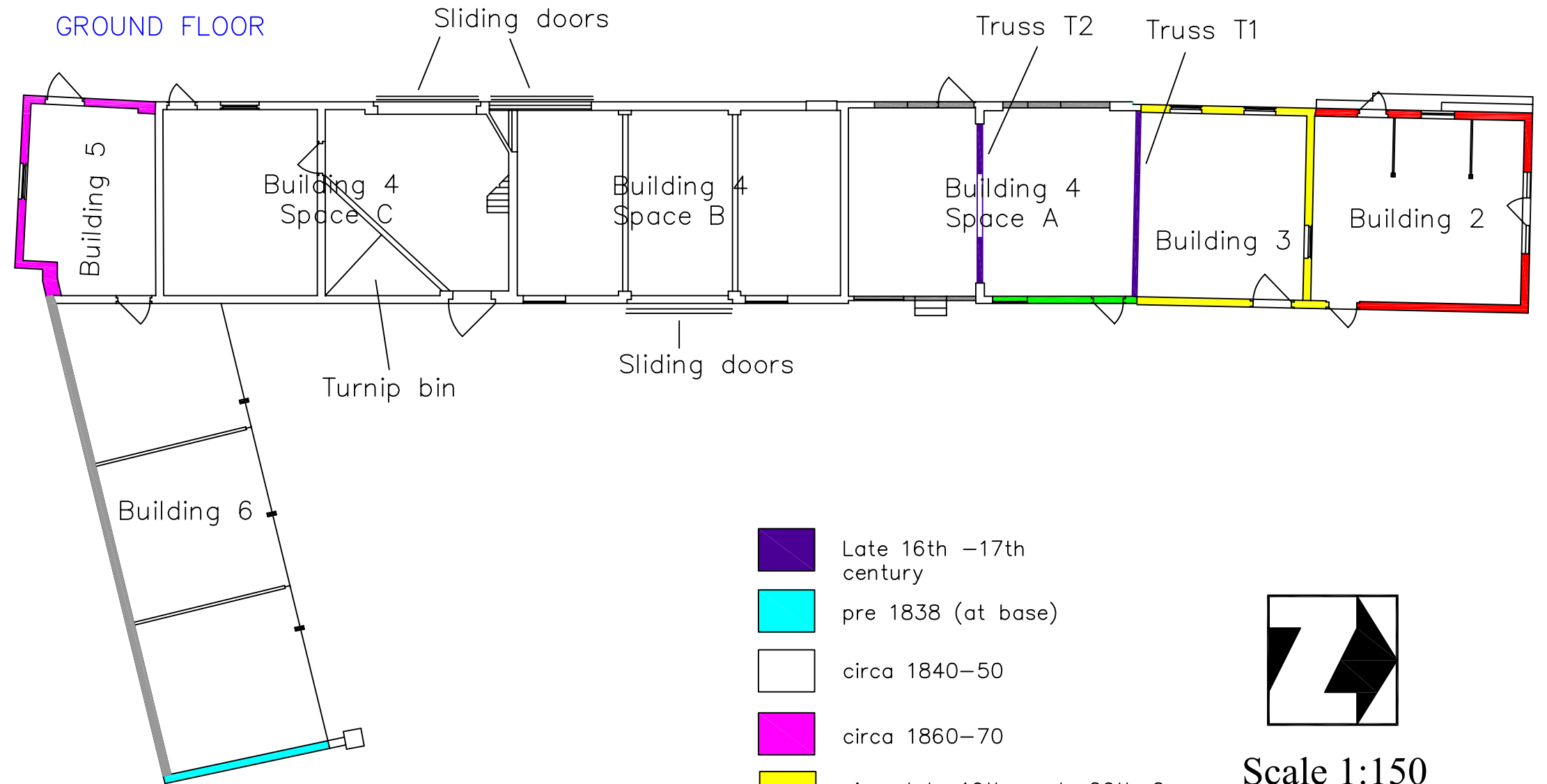
The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map with the development site highlighted.



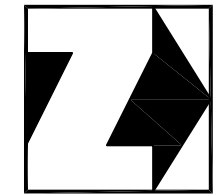
UPPER FLOOR AND ROOF



GROUND FLOOR



- Late 16th –17th century
- pre 1838 (at base)
- circa 1840–50
- circa 1860–70
- circa late 19th–early 20th C
- circa late 19th–early 20th
- 20th C



Scale 1:150

Figure 5: Phase Plan of Buildings 2-6

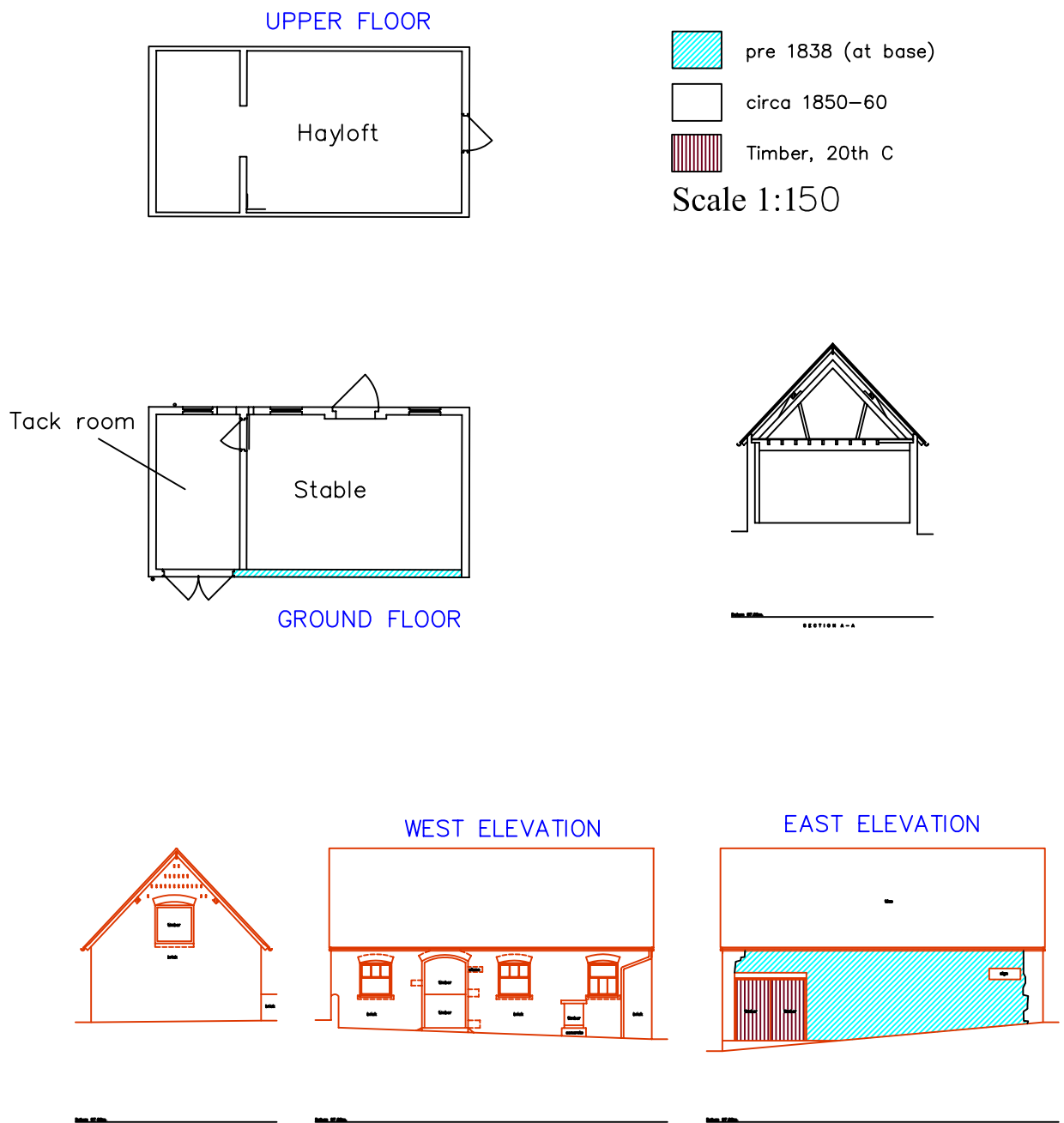


Figure 6a: Elevations, Truss Section and Plan of Building 1



Figure 6: Elevations and Sections of Buildings 2-5

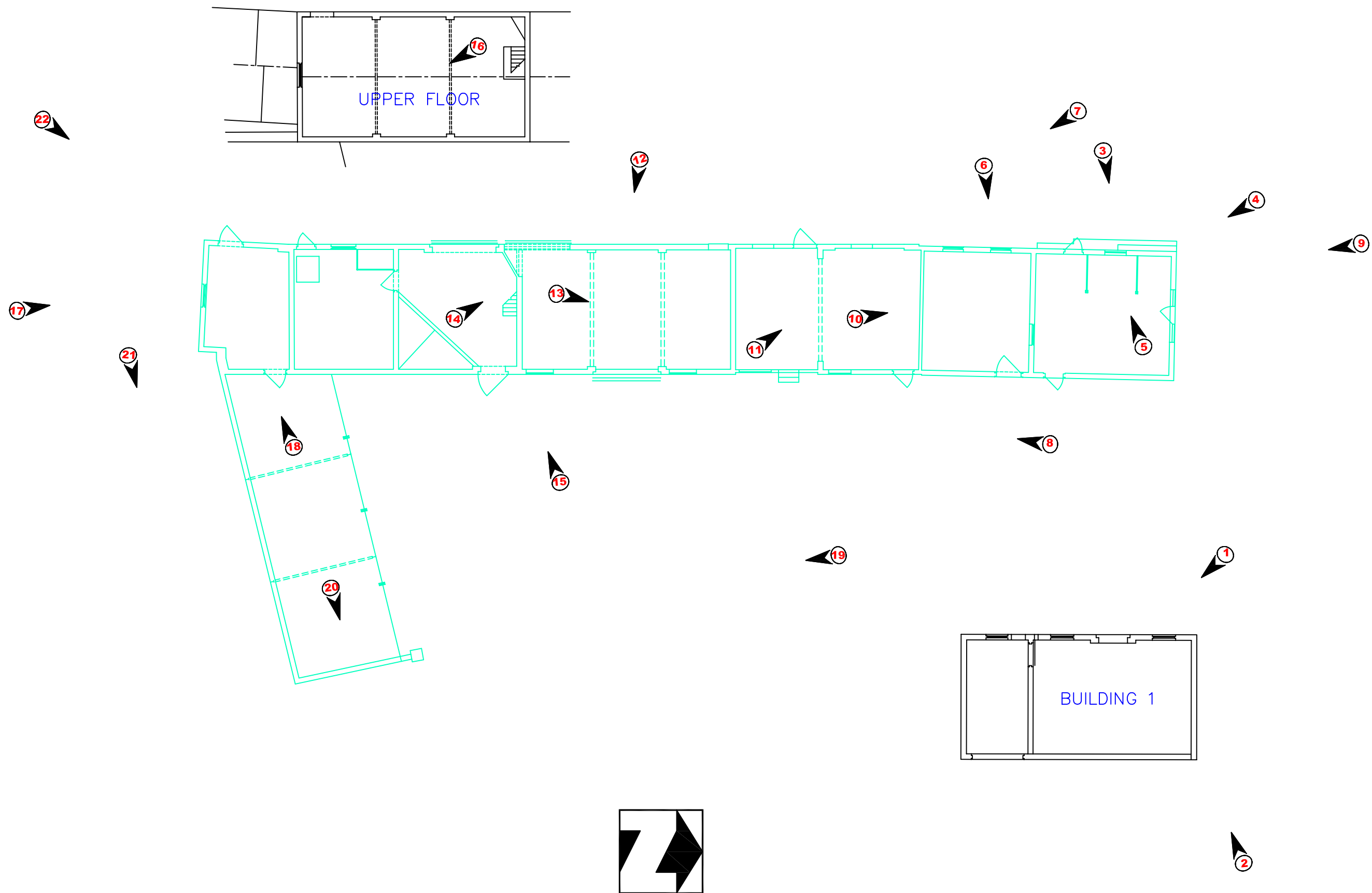


Figure 7: Direction of Photographs Reproduced in Report