

BUILDING RECORDING AT
ROMERS FARM, BOCKLETON
WORCESTERSHIRE

WSM 41771



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Summary

Building recording was undertaken at Romers Farm , Bockleton in December 2009 by Mike Napthan Archaeology in response to a proposed development of holiday cottages in part of the farm buildings. The farmstead site is presently centred on a probably late 18th/early 19th Century stone and brick farmhouse with later alterations. The farm-house was not included in the present survey. The survey covered the westernmost range of farm buildings only, consisting of an oast (hop kiln), pig sties, store, workshop, probable root house / hop packing floor, and granary/wainhouse. To the north- east of this range there is the original farmyard, surrounded by traditional buildings, and to the east and south there are modern portal frame buildings serving the working farm.

The farmstead is probably of 18th Century or earlier origin, but no evidence has been located for its foundation, and the name "Romers Farm" cannot presently be certainly traced earlier than the early 19th Century, though "Romer's Common Farm" was named as part of the Bockleton Estate in 1780. The use of this name appears to have lapsed during the early mid 19th C, as the farm was listed on the Census of 1841 as "Romers", but the 1843 Tithe Award map marks it as "New House", and this latter name was also used at the 1851 Census. By 1861 the farm had reverted to the name "Romers".

The Bockleton Estate, of which Romers was part from at least 1780 to the 1960s is fortunately well documented, but estate records are dispersed in various archives nationally. Locally Worcester Record Office holds a small number of 18th Century and earlier records, but a substantial body of 19th-20th C material belonging to the Prescott family who owned the estate 1865-1905(and parts until the 1960s) is located at Worcester WRO. Available mapping for this part of the estate starts with the 1843 Tithe map, and is augmented by detailed plans of 1865 and 1866, the latter with a full written survey of the farm. At that time the farmstead consisted of "Barn, Stable for five horse, nag stable, cowhouses, sheds hopkilns and room over with rough sheds" part of the buildings were then thatched and of timber construction.

There is cartographic evidence for the range which is the subject of this study being partially present in 1885, but not substantially completed until after that date. The earliest cartographic evidence for the present granary/wainhouse, cider house, hop kiln and workshop dates only to 1903-5. This is therefore a fairly late kiln, as the peak of hop production occurred in the 1880s, and the present kiln was evidently constructed during the late 1880s when local production had reached its peak.

The buildings survive in fairly good condition, but retain relatively few interior features. The earliest parts of the range are the store room and pigsties along the eastern side. The brickwork suggests a date no earlier than the 1870s, the roof of this section was rearranged or replaced when the granary was built. One pigsty remains in use and occupied as originally intended without significant alteration. The second phase of building, possibly begun but not completed in 1885, was the construction of a large brick built granary with a probable wain-house beneath. This building replaced the western wall of the existing range, and there is a butt joint where the phases meet. To the north of the granary, and linked to it at first floor level was a two storey storage/processing building. It is likely that this was a root house but no direct evidence survives

to confirm this. The upper floor was originally accessed by an external covered stair on the northern elevation. At ground floor level there were originally two doorways on the western elevation, that to the north being a double doorway.

Subsequent to the completion of the granary/ root-house (post 1885) an oast or hop-kiln and workshop were erected along the western side of the granary block. The hop kiln structure was only sparsely bonded to the earlier fabric, but the cider house roof was partially rebuilt to accommodate the first floor doorway to the drying floor. The oast-house retains both its drying floor, and most of its lower heating chamber floor. The heating floor was of the "hypocaust" type consisting of below ground flues, presumably originally linked to fire-pits of which no surface trace remains. The hop kiln is a very late example of a small scale kiln, and may have had a fairly short working life, though there is some indication that it was adapted for use of a mechanical blower. The adjoining apple-loft room appears to have served as a hop-packing floor, but there were no indications of packing holes in the surviving fabric.

The function of the brick floored "workshop" to the south of the kiln (and of contemporary construction) is uncertain. Its particular feature was a large hearth against the eastern wall. It does not appear that the hearth was linked to the heating of the kiln, and it may have been a "trap house" as one is listed in the farm survey of 1905. Interestingly one of the kiln vents opened into this room, suggesting that the external doors must have been left open to permit a through draught.

Twentieth century alterations to the fabric included the removal of the external covered staircase at the north end of the building, and its replacement with an internal stair. This occurred in the early years of the century. The small northern window was also inserted at this time. Around the mid 20th C the workshop door was crudely widened and the hearth and chimney removed to facilitate use as a car garage. In the latter part of the 20th Century the wain-house was also adapted for modern vehicles by removing the majority of the granary floor and the upper part of the southern gable end. A large opening was also crudely made in the western wall. Within the probable root house the joists were removed from the central bay of the first floor. A steel-framed sliding steel door and metal cladding have been added to the southern gable end in recent years.

Overall the building range is fairly typical of its period and location on the Herefordshire/Worcestershire borders. None of the buildings retains its interior fittings intact, and there has been substantial loss of first floor fabric and some significant loss of external brickwork, though the hop kiln itself is unusually complete.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 An archaeological building description and record was undertaken by Mike Napthan Archaeology. The project is being undertaken on behalf of the landowners Mr and Mrs Phillips (the Clients). This report is designed to meet the requirements of a Brief issued by Mike Glyde on November 12th 2009 Planning reference MH/09/0636 condition no.2. This report is not a definitive summary of the archaeological and historical resources within the farm as a whole, but may be considered as a guide to the architectural significance and history of the westernmost range of farm buildings.
- 1.2 The site location is at the southern end of Romers Common (NGR SO59736254), to the north east of the village of Bockleton. Bockleton parish itself forms a projecting north-western corner of the county of Worcestershire, and indeed straddles the border with Herefordshire and adjoins Shropshire. The site is presently part of a large working farmstead.
- 1.3 This report represents the findings of the building recording and assessment. The project was designed to provide a reliable and independent assessment of the historical and architectural value of the buildings. The project design was prepared in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). Codes of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists will be adhered to, as will English Heritage guidelines, notably "Understanding Historic buildings a guide to good recording" EH 2006 .

2 Aims

- 2.1 The aims of the building recording were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of the historic structures in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature of the built resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, state of preservation and quality)

These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- i) to define and identify the nature of the farm buildings, and date their construction where possible;
- ii) to attempt to characterize the constructional sequence and recover as much information as possible about the internal features and fabric surviving .
- iii) to determine the likely impact of any future development on the archaeological resource and suggest any mitigation required where appropriate.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 Cartographic and published historical sources were searched for information relating to the site and its environs. There is little historic mapping available for the area, other than the 1843 Tithe Awards Plan (held at Herefordshire Record Office), Sales Plan of 1865 and a detailed estate survey plan of 1866 (Fig 2). The latter appears to have been used for farm management for over a century, and the later mapping primarily consists of the Ordnance Surveys of 1885 onwards and a sale plan of 1905 (Fig 3). Trade directories were consulted from copies held "in house" and those held in Worcester Family History Centre, however the remoteness of the site led to its omission from all of the county directories consulted, even those as wide ranging as Lascelles (1851). A search of the County Councils' HER database revealed very few records, mainly relating to Listed buildings, but no previous archaeological fieldwork in the vicinity of the site. In the absence of trades directory data, a search was made for entries in the Census for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1891(all held "in house" on CDRom). Searches at the County Record Office identified a large body of estate material, though it has been established that records relating to the Bockleton Hall estate are dispersed amongst a number of Record Offices in neighbouring counties. The bulk of material held at WRO was too great for a thorough analysis, but a number of useful documents were accessed.
- 3.2 The survey was conducted on 21st-22nd December 2009. A detailed photographic record was made, and selected details recorded with scale drawings at 1:20 and 1:50. The architects base plans were redrawn and amended with additional detail, and the buildings were re-measured. The building descriptions were compiled using the photographs as a reference. The photographic archive accompanies this report on DVD.

4 Site Development

4.1 *Archaeological background*

- 4.1.1 The present site has not been the subject of any previous archaeological intervention. This part of the parish of Bockleton therefore appears archaeologically sparse, other than brief descriptions of listed buildings, however this almost certainly reflects a lack of fieldwork rather than absence of historic settlement sites. The parish also appears not to have had much documentary study, perhaps due to its sparse population.

5 Historical Background

- 5.1 Bockleton lies in the Hundred of Doddingtree and at Domesday contained 8 hides of land (Habbington, Amphlett Ed, 1895, 76) . In demesne there were two caracutes, two radmen, four

villians and right borderers with ten caracutes. There were twelve man servants, one wood a lewe and a half long by half a broad, and there previously might have been four more caracutes. The parish measures about two miles north to south, and three west to east (Nash, Vol I, 115-6) At the date of the Domesday Survey the Bishop of Hereford held Bockleton of the king. Turchil had held it in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and had the right of choosing his lord. The overlordship remained with the successive Bishops of Hereford, the manor being held of their manor of Bromyard until 1638. Richard de Bockleton presented to the church 1174–86. He seems to have been succeeded before the end of the 12th century by Robert de Bockleton, who was holding the manor in 1220. He was apparently followed between 1241 and 1249 by Richard de Bockleton. Margery de Foxcote, complained in 1313 that Philip de Bockleton and others had felled her trees at Bockleton. This Philip was probably son of John de Bockleton, and in 1316 a coroner was elected in his place, as he was disqualified on account of constant absence from the county. John de Bockleton, apparently son of Philip, paid 5s. to the subsidy of 1327, and it was probably he who in 1346 was returned as holding half a fee in Bockleton which had formerly belonged to John his grandfather. (VCH IV ,1924, 241-246).

- 5.2 A petition of circa 1325-50 from one Edith, the widow of William Hosebonde of Maidenhead to the King Edward III and council requested a writ to the justices to continue in an assize between her and John Wyard and Hugh de Hamenassh concerning tenements in Bockleton, which had been halted because John had claimed that the king gave him those tenements by his charter (National Archives Special Collections SC 8/53 2610/ Parliamentary Petition 3964).
- 5.3 In 1557, *“the advowson of the chapel of “Lastres” [Laysters] and the great tithes thereto belonging”*, were sold to Thomas Acton, Esq., of Bockleton (Noake, J, 1868). Habbington describes the descent of the manor from the Bockletons to the Actons *“Bokelton includeth in itt tow tofamillyes bothe of which I am a faythfull wellwyscher, the one Lord of Bokelton and heyre of the family of Bokelton who by theyre longe habitation heere purchased the name of Bokelton, whence spronge Sir Philip de Bokelton in the raygne of Edward the first.....The heyre generall of thys family named Katherin Bokelton and recorded as heyre in the Exchecker by the name of Katherin Faukes was the wife of John Faukes...whose daughter and coheyre Anne Faukes was maryed to Sir Roger Acton...by hys mache with Faukes the heyre of Bokelton hee leafte to hys issue the manor of Bockleton.. .”* (Habbington, Amphlett Ed, 1895, 76). The other family described by Habbington were the Barnabys, a Shropshire family which acquired land in the parish through marriage with Isabel Whitgreve, whose family held “Hull” or Hill, and whose father was Receiver for the Marches under Richard Duke of York, father of Edward IV. In due course the Acton and Barnaby families intermarried, forming the core of the Bockleton Estate. An award was made in 1580 by Edward Pytts (of Kyre Wyard) directing James Pytts of the Perrie to convey to Richard Barneby of Bockleton the chapel and lands in Stoke Bliss lately acquired of Francis Downes. (VCH 4 (1924), pp. 349-354). Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury include a probate “sentence” relating to probably the same “Richard Burnebie or Barneby of Bockleton”, Worcestershire and dated 2nd December 1600 (National Archives: Probate Records 11/96 Wallop Quire Numbers: 39 – 81)
- 5.4 Against the north wall of a chapel with Bockleton Church is a rectangular tomb with recumbent effigies of Richard Barneby, who died in 1597, and Mary his wife, who died in 1574. He is in the plate armour of the period, with his feet resting upon a lion; the lady wears puffed sleeves and a rich fur cloak, and her feet rest on an eagle. Both lie upon a mattress and have their hands joined in the attitude of prayer. On the exposed sides of the tomb are shields divided by demi-figures in high relief. The shields on the west end are Barneby impaling Whitgreve and Barneby quartering Whitgreve. On the south side are three shields. That to the west is charged with Barneby and of Hull, the great-grandmare, for William Barneby of Hull, the great-grandfather of Richard; in the middle is Barneby quartering Whitgreve and Acton impaling Habbington with five quarterings, for Richard and his wife Mary, daughter and heir of Richard Habbington of Brockhampton; the eastern shield has Barneby and Whitgreve impaling Martyn, for John Barneby of Hull, Richard's grandfather. On the east side are two shields, Barneby and Whitgreve impaling Acton, for Thomas Barneby of Hull, the father of Richard, and Joyce his wife, daughter and co-heir of Walter Acton of Acton; and Barneby and Whitgreve impaling Habbington with eight quarterings. Behind the tomb, on the wall, is the legend, with the figures of five sons on one side and of four daughters on the other. This is flanked by shaped pilasters on demi-figures, and above is a broken pediment with a shield of arms, Barneby quartering Whitgreve and Acton. On the west wall of the chapel is

a large marble monument with an inscription in Lation to Charles Baldwyn, Chancellor of the diocese of Hereford, son of Samuel Baldwyn, knight and serjeant-at-law to Charles II, who married Elizabeth, only daughter of Nicholas Acton of Bockleton, and died 4 January 1706. The communion plate includes two silver patens of 1719 inscribed 'The gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Baldwyn to the church of Bockleton 1720'; and a flagon of 1727 inscribed 'The gift of Charles Baldwyn esq 1727 for the use of the parish of Bockleton in the county of Worcester & Hereford.' (VCH IV ,1924, 241-246).

- 5.5 Sir Thomas Poyntz alias Littleton of North Ockendon, Essex, Bt, mortgaged to John Barnaby of Bockleton, Worcestershire, esq, "the capital messuage and site of the manor of Stoke St Milborough, known as the Court of Stoke"[Shrops], etc. On 17 Jul 1650 (Shropshire Record Office ref 6683/1/10 Title deeds of Stoke Court and the demesne of the manor of Stoke St Milburgh) – it would appear, therefore that John Barnaby had inherited from Richard, and it is likely that they held Bockleton Estate at this time.
- 5.6 A lease was signed in 1722 for 21 years from Charles Tunstall of Dean Park, Staffs. [now Shrops.] yeoman, to Charles Baldwyn of Aqualate, Staffs., esquire of two messuages called Bockleton Hall and Weston Hall with associated premises and lands (WRO ref BA8782 899:749//57/23). A subsequent lease dated 1778 was granted from the same Charles Baldwyn of Aqualate, Staffs, esquire to Thomas Ford, late of Norton, Staffs, but now of Bockleton, yeoman of a capital messuage and farm called Bockleton Farm with associated premises and lands and tithes, indicating that the individual farms were sub-let (WRO ref BA8782 899:749//57/24).
- 5.7 The following documents relating to the Bockleton Estate are also held at Shropshire Record Office: one Charles Baldwyn in 1772 agreed to purchase of Robert Pigot esq the manor of Stockton and property there for £15,000 and Thomas Hemming esq advanced £10,000 towards the purchase money - 16 and 17 December 1772 (SRO 1045/668) In 1776 Charles Baldwyn being involved in debt proposed to his son William Childe that he should give Baldwyn estates called Bockleton and the Hill, Worcs (which belonged to Childe, subject to Baldwyn's estate for life) and that Baldwyn would convey to him the manor of Stockton after Baldwyn's life estate, with remainder to uses as the Aqualate estate - Baldwyn to sell Bockleton and Hill, discharge the £10,000 mortgage and pay Childe £1000 for his own use and £4000 to increase portions of younger children. Lease and release 21 and 22 May 1777 Childe conveyed Bockleton and the Hill to Baldwyn in fee simple, and Baldwyn conveyed the manor and estate at Stockton to use of himself for life, after to use of Childe and male heirs of his body, remainder to use of Charles Baldwyn the younger the other son of Baldwyn and heirs male of his body, remainder to use of Charles Baldwyn his heirs and assigns. Covenant to discharge Hemming within 3 months and to pay the £1000 and £4000 (£2000 apiece) to Charles Baldwyn the younger and Catherine Baldwyn the younger children Baldwyn then sold Bockleton and Hill to Thomas Elton esq for £27,000 (SRO 1045/670 c 1797) . The origins of Romers Farm are unknown, but the land was part of the Bockleton Estate, and the farmstead itself appears to have been established in the 18th Century. "Romers Common Farm" is listed in a deed of 1780, and was then held by Thomas Elton, leased to one Esau Evans (WRO BA 7787/5) . At this period there were but six freeholder in the parish (Nash, 1781, Vol I, 116). A rental of 1804-6 mentions "Romers Field", but the farm is not listed by its present name (BA 8901 ref b. 705.365). "Romers Wood Farm", of only 37a20r32p, was listed in a valuation of 1797, and this probably referred to the cottage and buildings to the north-east of Romers farmstead, later described in the 1905 sale particulars as "Wood Cottage".
- 5.8 The parish received scant attention from the county historians after Habbington who wrote in the 17th Century. Only the most comprehensive histories and guides mention Bockleton. Nash, as usual expanded on Habbingtons notes, but added little contemporary information (Nash, 1781). Laird writing in the early 19th C described the church as "*a plain building of stone, consisting of one aisle irregularly pewed*", but described the Barneby monument in great detail, possibly following Nash's text. The neighbourhood he described thus: "*...there is scarcely a spot in this part of the county which may not be called highly picturesque, from its broken and undulating outlines, tufted lofty trees or smiling with cultivation, and enlivened by the rapid course of the meandering Teme*" (Laird [1814], 282-3).
- 5.9 The parish was amongst the first in the county to adopt orchard cultivation in the early 17th C . At the request of Sir Edward Pitt in 1607, and in consequence of the diversion of a path from

Bockleton to Stoke Bliss leading through an orchard at Kyre, permission was granted by the sheriff to enlarge the orchard (Gaut,1939, 104). Bockleton was also amongst those parishes recorded as growing flax in 1781-86 (Gaut,1939, 168). Wheat was extensively grown in the parish, particularly during the boom years of the Napoleonic wars when the price reached 94s3d. per quarter, it dropped back by nearly 50% in the 1830s, but rose again to 102s5d in 1845-7 as a result of the potato famine. Locally large areas were dedicated to arable during the second boom figures for the Bockleton Estate were as follows in 1848 – Bockleton Farm (330acres) 113 acres of arable, Newtown (224 acres) 108 acres and Hill (288 acres) 116 acres of arable (Gaut,1939, 267). Hop growing was significant in the parish but very subject to seasonal variation in the early 1860s the quantities and quality were poor, but crops and prices were good subsequently until 1879 where the crop generally failed. There were hop yards at “Romers Common Farm” in 1780, and hop kilns were present at Romers in the 1860s (Bockleton Estate Survey by Clement Cadle 1866). Both 1880 and 1881 were good years but the following year saw poor yield and high prices. Technical improvements including mechanical drying of the hops, and spraying against blight were steadily introduced, and spraying was recorded in the neighbouring parish in 1872. Nationally the acreage of hops decreased during this period, but locally the acreage given to hops increased by 51% between 1874 and 1894 (Gaut,1939, 384). High prices for hops ended in 1882, and excepting good years in 1888 and 1890 were lower than £4 per hundredweight. It seems probable that it was the boom years of either 1888 or 1890 that prompted the investment in a new kiln at Romers. By 1908 the industry was in a depression from which it never fully recovered (Gaut,1939, 385). No documentary record for the construction of the present oast at Romers has been traced, but an entry in the Estate records for 1907 records that the landlord allowed the tenant William Smith £14.2s.6d. for the bill for the “*dissipater in hop kiln*”. This is evidence that the kiln remained operative at this date, and such substantial expenditure suggests that there was an intention to continue hop production for some years.

5.10 *The Cartographic evidence*

The earliest available detailed mapping of the area is the Tithe Awards Plan by RC Herbert, Surveyor, Worcester, dated 1843. The original is held at Hereford Record Office but a photocopy is available at WRO BA2664 r971.2. The farmstead then consisted of the present farmhouse and the farmyard ranges extending to the north-east of the farm house (Fig 2). These early buildings around the farmyard survive today in a modified condition (not part of the present survey area). The same building range is shown on a detail in a plan in the Estate Survey book by Clement Cadle of Gloucester, dated 1866 (Fig 2), the south eastern corner of the farmyard range appears to have been infilled between 1843 and 1866. A slightly earlier survey, of 1865, was drawn up for the sale particulars. This earlier plan, and the smaller scale 1866 plan both show a small building to the south-west of the main farmstead, in a position now equating with the northern edge of the main drive access to the farm. This building appears to have been fairly small, perhaps a cottage, against the roadside boundary, and was possibly derelict by 1866 as it does not appear to be described in either the 1865 or 1866 particulars. It was no longer present in 1885 (OS mapping). Between 1866 and 1885 a further building was constructed in a position lying to the south-west of the present hop-kiln (Fig 3). From its size it would appear to have been a barn or similar. This building was gone by 1903-4. The 1885 Ordnance Survey shows the earliest elements of the building which is the subject of the present study. As described below the eastern side of the block was present by 1885, but the central part of the building was shown in outline only, and therefore probably incomplete. By 1903-4 (Ordnance Survey) the building to the west was gone, and the hop-kiln/workshop had been added. The granary was also then complete.

5.11 *Occupants*

5.11.1 In the absence of trade directory entries the Census data and Estate Records have been used to identify some of the the earlier farmers:

1780 “Romers Common Farm”
 ?Esau? Evans
 1841 “Romers Farm”
 James Owens 48 Farmer
 Martha Owens 45 [wife?]
 Mary Owens 20 daughter
 George Owens 21 son
 James Owens 17 son

	Joseph Owens	12 son
	William Owens	5 son
1843	"New House" (Tithe Awards Plan)	
1851	"New House, Romers Common"	
	William Davis	29 Agricultural labourer, born Brimfield Herefs.
	Mary Davis	32 Wife, born Bockleton
	Hannah Davis	8 Daughter, Scholar, born Bockleton
	Elizabeth Davis	5 Daughter, Scholar, born Little Hereford, Herefs.
	Mary Davis	2 Daughter, born Laysters, Herefs.
	Martha Davis	6mths Daughter, born Bockleton
1861	"Romer House" [probably Romers Farm as it preceded Middle Common in the enumerator's route]	
	Joseph Barnes	30 Agricultural labourer, born Thornbury, Herefs
	Mary Barnes	24 Wife, born Keysham Shrops.
	James Barnes	3 Son, born Bockleton
	William Barnes	1 Son, born Tenbury
1865	"Romer's Farm"	
	Mr Maund - yearly tenant (detail from sales particulars)	
1871	"Romers Farm"	
	Samuel Phillips	37 Farmer employing 2 labourers and 2 boys, born Bockleton
	Sarah Phillips	36 Farmers wife, born Church Stoke
	Elizabeth Phillips	7 Daughter, Scholar, born Tenbury
	Alice Phillips	1 Daughter, born Bockleton
	Richard Gough	21 Indoor Farm Servant, born Birchell, Herefs.
	William Amyes	16 Indoor Farm Servant, born Bockleton
	Henry Williams	14 Farm Servant, born Ashton, Herefs.
	Ann Jones	24 Servant Dairy Maid, born Tenbury
	Hannah Patton	11 Servant Nurse Maid, born Hatfield Herefs.
1881	[Census data not available]	
1891	"Romers Farm"	
	James Thomas	60 Farmer [places of birth illegible on this return]
	Elizabeth Thomas	58 Wife
	Henry Thomas	27 Son
	William Thomas	21 Son
	Charles Thomas	19 Son
	?Maurice? Thomas	16 Son
	David Thomas	14 Son

Details from Estate Records (later Census data not available):

(James Thomas was at Romers until at least 1895, subsequently listed at "Home Farm" in 1904)

1904-1907	William Smith
1907-1933	John H Bemand
1934-1942	William Townsend
1943-1966 (end of data)	William Seward

- 5.11.2 The information given in the census returns helps give a picture of the fluctuating fortunes of the farm. It was evidently present as a working farmstead in 1841, but was not listed by its present name in either 1843 or 1851, and appears to have descended from a tenanted farm to a tied cottage occupied by agricultural labourers. If this was the case it seems unlikely that there was an operational farmstead on the site during the period, as a farmstead would not be left in the hands of a labourer, but would presumably require a resident manager or bailiff if it was being farmed "in hand" by the Bockleton Estate. The use of the descriptive "New House" appears to suggest that the farmhouse was new-built at this period, and this is possible, though the present building looks to have older origins, and may have been re-modelled rather than entirely rebuilt. The house was not studied during the present project. It does however seem improbable that a newly built farmhouse should be occupied by a labourer.
- 5.11.3 The emergence of the present farmstead layout appears to have originated pre 1843 with the three ranges around the foldyard facing the eastern side of the house. The farm seems to have changed little between 1843 and 1865 (for sale particulars of 1865 Estate Sale see Appendix 1), but some of the recommendations of the 1866 survey (Appendix 2) do appear to have been carried out, as

the outlying portion of the far towards Hill were separated off. It is likely that the beginnings of the expansion which created the buildings which are the subject of the present study occurred after the tenancy of Samuel Phillips, and it is unfortunate that census and estate data is not available for the 1880s to confirm who was responsible for the expansion of the farm in the latter part of the 19th C. The farm, together with the whole Bockleton Estate was sold off in 1905. Records in the National Archives (NMR) include the “*Sale particulars of The Bockleton Estates in the counties of Worcester and Hereford 5th July 1905*” – the estate then included Romers Farm together with around 35 other properties in Bockleton (SC01259, another copy at WRO).

Details of the Romers farmstead were then as follows:

THE FARM BUILDINGS

are of brick and stone and comprise granary, hop kiln, hop pickers’ house, boiler house, pigstyes, trap house and horse box and wain house. 2 stall Stable with room over Cowhouses for ten head and calves’cots. Timber and thatched stable for four horses and fodder store, a 4-bayed timber and corrugated roof open shed. Timber tiled and stone built range of three stall stable and barn.

Timber and tiled Bullhouse and cowhouses for eight head, loose box, chaff house and cattleyard. Corrugated iron dutch barn with four bays and iron supports.

On No, 189 is a smallholding known as Wood Cottage, of stone brick and slate, containing five rooms, garden and timber built buildings of barn, open timber and stone.

6 bayed return open cattle shed with corrugated roof, pigs’ cot, outhouses etc

(See also Fig 3).

- 5.11.4 The farm remained as part of the Bockleton Estate into the 1960s, and there is a brief 1948 survey of the estate, which at this period was being run at a loss:

29th August-1st Sept 1948

Bockleton Estate

Romer Farm

Tenant - W H Seward

Date of entry - About 1942

Area - 185 acres

A mixed somewhat banky holding; stream water with two artificial watering places

The house - a very fair house with pipe water from the estate supply to house and buildings.

The buildings - a modernised cowhouse for 14, other buildings adapted as cow standings. New bullock yard.

4 bay dutch barn, cart shed, new granary and root house.

One rather indiffernt cottage with some off-lying buildings.

Generally - this farm has good direct access from the high road, some good medium land running out to the hill.

There are also about 5 acres of awls, which are waste.

The tenant sells milk, and has a good Clun flock

Suggested rental value - £270.

6 The standing buildings

- 6.1 The earliest buildings of the farmstead, being the farmhouse and ranges surrounding the farmyard were not part of the present study, but all originated pre 1843 as they are shown on the Tithe Awards Plan. Physical and cartographic evidence suggests that the earliest elements of the present building range were those along the eastern elevation. The 1885 (Fig 3) mapping shows the pig sties and a building on the footprint of the present long store-room and spray-store. The present buildings are of typical later 19th C un-frogged red brick broadly datable to the 1870s or 1880s. The eastern elevation and its return walls are one brick thick (225-235mm), and terminate with butt joints against the granary walls.
- 6.2 Pig Sties – the two pigsties are of red brick with a single pitched common flat tile roof, continuous with the eastern pitch of the granary/root house building. The adjoining pens are accessed through modern metal gates, but the pen walls appear to be contemporary with the sties. The northern pen and sty are larger (Fig 4), and this would be compatible with a farrowing pen. Access to the sties is through low arched openings with half brick arches (Figs 7 and 18). The interior walls are plain brick, and the sloping roof soffit shows no indication of former lath and plaster. The floors of both

pens and sties are apparently earthen. At the time of survey only the southern sty was occupied by a pig, the northern sty and pen being used for storage.

- 6.3 Dog kennel – the small lobby room (Fig 4) presently serving as a dog kennel does not appear to have been intended for that purpose, and in the absence of internal features and the original door its original function is unclear. It might be the boiler room referred to in the 1905 sale particulars. The room presently consists of a doorway with brick arched head and a modern metal grille door on the northern elevation. To the west there is an opening housing an inserted timber stair to the first floor of the cider house. The stairs are contained by a 9” brick wall at ground level, and this wall has a butt-joint with the 14” wall of the cider house. The opening in the 14” wall is evidently inserted, and bridged by a timber lintel. The interior walls show signs of whitewash, but the room is otherwise bare. The roof is continuous with the eastern pitch of the cider house roof.
- 6.4 *Spray/chemical store* – this room lies in the centre of the eastern elevation. The door, door frame, southern wall and floor are all recent insertions, but it appeared possible that the doorway (which extends to the eaves plate) might be an original opening. The door is of secure metal construction in a sturdy timber frame. The floor is of cast concrete, and the southern blockwork wall has been constructed on this slab. The interior of the room was largely occupied by stored chemicals, but it appeared that there were no surviving interior features of any historical interest. The block-work wall had been constructed beneath an original softwood roof truss of simple form (Figs 11 and 17).
- 6.5 *Long store room* – this room (Figs 4, 11 and 18) is accessed only from its southern end, which is entirely open other than modern cladding added to the timber gable end truss. Prior to the insertion of the spray store the present space was 13.25m long and 2.16m wide, with an effective entry height of around 1.88m beneath the eaves. This is an impractical shape for most agricultural purposes, and indicative that it probably served a specialized storage function. The 1905 sale particulars include a “horse box” adjacent to the wain-house, and it is possible that one end served this purpose. The eastern wall is of 9” brickwork (bricks being 234x112x80mm), without any original openings. A number of empty mortices in the brickwork of the western wall may relate to built in racks or fittings now lost. The floor of the room is of earth.
- 6.6.1 *Granary/wain-house* – the granary/wainhouse represents the largest part of the present block. It is constructed of red brick (dimensions vary – examples being 240x110x80 and 232x112x80mm) 1½ bricks thick and its internal dimensions are 13.17x5.40m (varying slightly due to outward deflection of the side walls). The eaves height is approximately 3.7m. As constructed the building had a ground floor opening the full width of the southern gable end, presumably with a central post beneath the lintel. The upper part of the southern gable end appears to have been of brick, as scars are visible in the side walls. Within the building a ground floor “wain house” was bridged by three very substantial (280x300mm) softwood bridging beams supporting a granary floor based on 175x70mm joists. The perimeter of the softwood planked floor was sealed by chamfered timber fillets approx 80mm wide. The floor appears to have been periodically whitewashed, as traces remain on the adjacent walls.
- 6.6.2 The building (Figs 4-6, 9, 10, 11, 13-15 and 19) appears to have been lit only from the southern end and was of bare finishes, excepting the underside of the roof which had been torched with lime mortar. The roof was supported on two substantial softwood trusses of bolted and iron clamped construction. The soffit of the ridgeboard was 6.16m above the earthen floor of the wain-house. The roof was clad in semi-hand made common flat tile. The western side of the roof is largely original, whilst the eastern pitch had been retiled over roofing felt. At the northern end of the granary floor there is a wide central doorway (door missing) leading to the upper floor of the root house. This is an original opening and the two buildings were clearly built as one. The door hinges were on the root house side.
- 6.6.3 The majority of the upper or granary floor had been removed, and only the northernmost bay and the sawn off stubs of the other bridging beams remained. The present wooden steps and balustrading to the remaining fragment of floor are recent (?1970s) insertions. If there were originally internal steps they were not at this position. The upper part of the southern gable end has also been removed, and replaced with a secondary truss and a more recent sliding metal door. A further large opening of unknown purpose has been crudely inserted in the western elevation, and this has been temporarily propped with planks. There are smaller crude openings broken into the

northern end wall, and to the rear of the spray-store.

- 6.6.4 The upper parts of the granary walls showed signs of old outward movement in the centre bay (probably caused by storage of excessive amounts of grain). This movement had been contained by the insertion of a number of tie rods, some tied back to secondary longitudinal timbers beneath the original purlins of the central bay. The movement possibly also caused the failure of the southernmost original truss as this had been repaired, strengthened and possibly lengthened.
- 6.7 *Root house/hop pickers house* – the attribution of this building is uncertain, but it appears very probable that the building may have served as a root house or possibly apple store as such buildings were often closely associated with hop kilns as the seasonality of both cider-making and hop drying made a dual purpose building very economically efficient. In Herefordshire and Worcestershire hop kilns are often combined with provision for cider-making (Brunskill, 1982). In 1905 a “hop pickers house” is described in the sales particulars, and this would seem a likely contender, despite the lack of any domestic comforts. The provision of the internal staircase may have been associated with conversion to this seasonal function. Outside the hop-picking season the building would return to storage use.
- 6.7.1 The present building (Figs 4, 5, 8-10, 14, 15 and 20) is contiguous with the granary, and the original fabric and form of the walls and roof members was identical. There is again considerable variation in the brick size one smaller example being 236x105x76mm - this presumably reflects a variable moisture content when the bricks were fired, as the brick is otherwise identical across the whole granary/ciderhouse block. The Bockleton Estate records include detailed returns of the annual production of a brickyard (Abbotts) at Hampton Charles - much of the annual production was used by the estate, for building such as this, though the destination farms are not named. The structure consists of an earthen lower floor bridged by two bridging beams and a timber floor of identical construction to the granary floor. There were originally two doorways at ground-floor level, both on the western elevation, and both with wide stone thresholds extending well beyond the openings. The northernmost doorway was a double width opening, whilst the southern was a normal width. It is perhaps of note that the northern door had reversed upper pintles (to preclude lifting the doors off their hinges), and this usually reflects a building used for high value storage. The southern door has been internally blocked with concrete blockwork. In the north-eastern corner of this building a staircase had been inserted (as described in para 6.3 above). At first floor level this staircase had been enclosed by a matchboard partition and door. The materials and workmanship appeared to date to the early years of the 20th C.
- 6.7.2 The presence of two original doorways in the same elevation is generally an indication that a building was divided in two, there is, however no surviving indication of an internal division. It is difficult to interpret this building in the absence of diagnostic features. The documentary evidence for the function of the lower floor is ambiguous – it appears to have had a general storage function.
- 6.7.3 When the hop kiln was added to the western elevation (some time after the 1885 survey) the roof of the root house was partially rebuilt to facilitate provision of a doorway from the upper floor to the drying floor of the hop kiln. As usual the drying floor of the kiln was placed higher than the packing floor, and presumably accessed by steps now lost. The upper floor of the root house has been partially removed, but the majority of the joists remain, and these show no sign of the openings usually found in hop-packing floors (known as “presses”) used for filling hop-pockets, which were hung from the underside of the presses and filled from above by a labourer pressing the hops in with his feet, or in some cases by screw presses.
- 6.7.4 The doorway in the northern elevation (Figs 8 and 14) was originally approached by an external staircase, probably wooden. The irregular scar of the blocked opening appears to indicate that the stairway was covered, and the stub of a probable ridge piece is visible internally above the former doorway. The covered approach would have served both to keep out driving rain and to exclude the light – light was considered to spoil the flavour of hops. Around the end of the 19th or beginning of the 20th C the external stair and doorway were replaced with an internal stair as described above. When the doorway was bricked up a window was included in the blocking, suggesting that the space was no longer used for drying hops (though some light was clearly required for the actual packing operation). As this was apparently known as the hop-packers house, they presumably slept on the packing floor.

- 6.8 *The Oast or Hop Kiln* - The oast is square in plan (Figs 4, 5 and 12), a shape that became popular again in the 1870s after a long popularity of circular oasts. The building survives in an near complete condition. It is constructed of red, unfrogged brick (the brick size is 210x108x72mm), and has 9" walls butt-jointed and only sporadically bonded to the western wall of the cider house. At ground floor level there are three original external openings to the kiln floor (Figs 4,8, 9, 11 and 12). Below the northern opening the arched head of a flue opening is just visible above current ground level. A similar arched head flue opening is also present on the western elevation, curiously placed under the south western corner of the building (Figs 9,12 and 16) The northern and southern elevations have small openings with timber lintels. These openings are secured by internal vertically sliding shutters, each pierced for ventilation (Figs 16 and 17). The shutters were used to control the air flow in the kiln, and the openings may have served a secondary purpose for loading the kiln. Originally there was an arched opening above waist height on the western elevation. This opening may have been a window, but more likely was a loading door. Within the kiln the floor was made mainly of brick on edge, but the central area of the kiln was of stone slabs, which also bridged the northern flue. It would appear from the settlement of the brick floor that the flues continued beneath the brick as well as the stone paved areas (Figs 12 and 17). The floor is now in a damaged and repaired state, and the full extent of the flues could not be determined without excavation. To the east of the chamber there is a doorway opening into the cider house – this pre-dated the kiln, but was evidently retained in use as the main access to the kiln. The drying floor, of wooden slats, was located 4.40m above ground level and supported on substantial timber joists (Figs 5,11 and 17). The drying chamber was lined with match boarding nailed to horizontal bonding timbers built into the brickwork on the vertical surfaces, and to the rafter soffits above. As indicated above there is a secondary twin pitched common tiled roof linking the hop kiln roof with the original cider house roof. Above cider house eaves level the eastern wall of the oast is constructed on top of the earlier cider house wall. The construction is plain and functional without any architectural embellishments. The roof is slate, and the collar which originally supported a rotating cowl remains, though the cowl is lost. At this period (post 1885) it is highly probable that the cowl was of metal and designed to direct the vent down-wind. Interestingly there is no sign of the “*dissipater in hop kiln*” purchased or extensively repaired for £14 in 1907. The dissipater (a funnel shaped arrangement of wood, metal or brick) was located over the heat source in the kiln to spread the heat evenly over the underside of the drying floor. It appears here to have been independant of the external walls and therefore probably metal or wood.
- 6.8.1 The building has been maintained in good condition – the slate roof has been repaired and the flashings renewed, with the rotating cowl removed. There is a probably inserted window at high level, and this probably post-dates use of the drying chamber for its original purpose as day-light was considered damaging to hops. The window is, however neatly finished where it meets the matchboarded lining, which suggests either that the window was original or that the matchboarding could be a replacement. Both are unlikely, so it must be assumed that the window is a very neat insertion. The drying chamber remains almost intact, though the door has been removed. The floor is still covered in hessian sacking, but this is likely to relate to a secondary use as an apple-store or similar as hops were usually dried on rolls of hair-cloth.
- 6.8.2 The ground floor western window or loading door has been converted to a full height doorway with louvre above (Figs 9 and 16). The remainder of the external fabric is largely as built, with the exception of two inserted and subsequently blocked large diameter metal pipes on the northern elevation. These pipes were possibly part of a secondary forced air drying system. The kiln floor has been eroded and patched in places, and the flues are choked with debris. It is unclear how the under floor flues were operated, but it is likely that the flues served as a form of draught for the kiln, or possibly a “hypocaust” arrangement providing gentle heat. The small size of the oast reflects the small acreage dedicated to hop-growing on the farm and the kiln would only have been in use for a short period each year, as hops needed to be dried within a few days of picking (Cook and Bretherton, 1998).
- 6.9 *Workshop* – the workshop (Figs 4,6, 9, 11 and 15) was constructed at the same time as the oast/hop kiln building and appears to have served some ancillary function as the southern kiln vent opens into the workshop. The workshop is built of the same red brick as the oast, the only variation in fabric being the south-western corner of the workshop where specially moulded “bullnose” bricks have been used to provide a rounded corner. Such “softened” corners were regularly used where

they might be rubbed by livestock or catch the edges of carts etc. It is probable that this was the building referred to as the “trap house” where the farmer kept his horse drawn trap. As the room was heated it possibly was also used to store the harnesses, saddles etc. The roof of the workshop is a cat-slide continuation from the eaves of the granary, and clad in similar semi-hand made flat common tile. The centre of the roof is supported by a simple inclined tie-beam/prop arrangement and substantial purlin.

- 6.9.1 The original openings to the workshop consisted of a double doorway with brick arched head to the southern elevation, and a small, six pane timber window immediately below the low eaves of the western elevation. This window has a central side opening casement of two panes. The most interesting feature of the interior is the scar of a large former hearth on the eastern wall. The hearth and chimney have been removed, but the scar of the tapering chimney is visible as a soot stain. The base of the chimney is also visible as a scar in the brick paved floor (Fig 4). The presence of a hearth in this position appears to be related to the original function of the building, but not related directly to the firing of the adjacent kiln – the hearth was above the top of the flues beneath the kiln floor, and there was no suitable linkage above the floor for the transmission of heat, other than the shuttered vent. If the vent had been intended to transmit the heated air then the hearth would undoubtedly have been located directly in front of the vent, not some distance away. The brick on edge flooring appears to be totally original and shows no indication of a further hearth or furnace. The vent shows no sign of sooting or scorching, and appears therefore to be an air intake, the shutter serving as a variable baffle.
- 6.9.2 As indicated above the building has been modified by removal of the chimney and hearth. The southern doorway has also been crudely widened, and a secondary lintel added to the base of the earlier arched timber door head (Figs 6 and 14) This modification appears to have occurred in the mid –late 20th C, probably the 1950s or 60s and probably relates to conversion of the building to a car garage. It is noteworthy that the doors themselves were not widened – leaving a gap in the widened entrance. The only other modification of the building has been the crude insertion of a vertical prop beneath the decayed northern end of the purlin.

7 Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1 The building range is of interest as an example fairly typical of the 19th Century small mixed farms found along the Herefordshire borders, where such oasts and granaries were once very common. Hop growing was extremely common in this area in the latter part of the 18th C and through the 19th C, but the industry rapidly declined nationally after the 1880s. Hop growing in the parish also decline gradually towards the end of the century as it became concentrated on larger, more specialised holdings (Gaut 1939). In common with most of the local farms there was a mixed farming regime, once with a distinct concentration on orchard and hop-yard production as high value crops. This had the advantage that many of the buildings could serve a dual purpose as apple/pear stores and hop storage and processing areas in season. A cider mill of similar design to that formerly at Leigh (WCM 33907; Napthan, 2004) survives re-used as a garden feature in front of the Romers farm-house. The cider house appears to have been at the northern end of the farmhouse. In 1905 William Smith was allowed £33 for fruit trees planted on the farm (Estate Records).
- 7.2 The cartographic evidence appears to throw some light on how farm buildings were developed at this period. The 1885 mapping shows the eastern edge of the range to be completed and roofed, and the outline of the area to be occupied by the granary/cider house, without the central dividing wall. The hop kiln/workshop were not present, but there was a large building, probably a barn or granary further to the west. As this building disappears from the record once the granary/root house had been completed it is likely that the present building was a direct replacement in functional terms. At present, however it is unclear where the 1865-6 oast houses were, as they appear to have been either in the ranges surrounding the farmhouse or improbably in the small building that stood just to the north of the drive. Traces might survive in the un-surveyed buildings, but it is perhaps more likely that they were slight timber structures not recorded by the cartographers.
- 7.3 Close observation of the fabric suggests that the eventual form of the block was already envisaged

when the eastern buildings were constructed, and it is likely that the granary/cider house were laid out in some form at the same time. The butt joints between the internal walls of the pig sties and the eastern wall of the central block are, however curious as they appear to have been constructed against pre-existing walls of the granary, contrary to the cartographic evidence, which shows it absent at this time. If all was intended as one scheme then the walls would generally have been bonded in. Possibly the eastern part of the range was reconstructed on the same footprint after the lower part of the granary walls were completed, this would avoid the problem of the bricklayers working overhand. This complex inter-relationship between the buildings strongly suggests that construction was occurring around the time of the 1885 Ordnance Survey, which shows a “work in progress”. As was the norm with agricultural buildings until fairly recently construction could be a long-drawn out process undertaken mainly by farm labour as and when they could fit it into the farming year.

- 7.4 The marked difference in fabric, and alterations made to the cider house roof strongly indicate that the hop-kiln and workshop were added some while after the original construction scheme, and were not part of the original plan. The shallower brick evidently came from a different source, and is dissimilar to both that used in the eastern part of the range and that used in the granary/root house. Due to the difference in course height the hop-kiln is largely butt jointed to the western wall of the cider house, but there must be sporadic toothed bonding as the joint shows little sign of movement. Where the western wall of the oast-house overlies the ciderhouse wall a levelling course of cut brick was used to make up the difference in coursing levels.
- 7.5 Little has been discovered about the early origins of the farm, but it would appear that the farm originated in or before the 18th Century, and probably had been part of the Bockleton Estate since at least the 16th Century. There is a substantial amount of surviving documentary material relating to the management of the estate, and the present survey has only skimmed through much of the documentation. The farm at Romers is perhaps typical of the varied fortunes of an estate farm – its prosperity varying both with the abilities of the tenant and the attitudes of the landlord.
- 7.6 The buildings which were the subject of the present project are unexceptional, and typical of late 19th C estate architecture in the region. Whilst externally well maintained they retain few features relating to their original function, and cannot be considered well preserved. The buildings have added significantly to the existing very poor record of the architecture and agricultural history of Bockleton, but their remaining significance is principally their positive visual contribution to the built environment of Romer' Common.

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9 **Acknowledgements**

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Appendix 1: 1865 Sale of Bockleton Estate in the parishes of Bockleton, Laysters and Hatfield:

Containing 2259a1r15p of excellent arable, pasture, hop, orchard & wood land with convenient farm homesteads and cottages. Interspersed with thriving plantations, containing good stone for building, and lying well for the preservation of game. For sale by Messers Cobb, at the Guildhall Coffee House, Gresham Street, London, Wednesday the 14th day of June 1865 IN ONE LOT

Romer's Farm, in the Parish of Bockleton, consists of

A FARMHOUSE containing 4 bedrooms, 2 attics, parlour, 2 kitchens, pantry and cellar.

THE BUILDINGS comprise Oast-house with stowage under, a double bayed barn, another barn, stabling cowhouses, waggon lodges, sheds, piggeries &c.

A COTTAGE containing 4 rooms

ROMERS FARM LANDS:

Nos. Plan	on	Description	Cultivation	Quantities		
				A	R	P
41		Ash Bed	Ash Plantation	0	3	14
42		Romer's Wood Croft	Orchard and Pasture	6	1	17
43		Romer's Sheep Walk	Arable	5	1	32
46		Wood at the Wood's End	Pasture	2	3	0
55		Upper Broom Sheep Walk	Pasture	12	0	30
47		The Orchard at Wood's End	Orchard and Arable	3	2	37
53		Plantation	Wood	0	3	30
54		Great Field at the Wood's End	Arable	8	0	0
56		Romer's Field	Pasture	4	3	33
57		Wood, Field and Road	Arable	6	1	7
59		Lower White Lands	Hops	5	0	16
60		Middle White Lands	Arable	5	0	8
61		Romer's Bank	Pasture	9	0	14
62		Cottage Buildings	Fold and Garden	0	1	18
63		Romer's Cottage Croft	Pasture	1	0	38
64		The Cow Field	Arable	7	1	37
65		The Upper Field	Arable	5	0	17
66		The Sling	Arable	8	1	19
84		The Great Meadow	Pasture	13	3	9
87		Plantation	Pasture			
88		House, Outbuildings, Yard, Garden and Orchard	Pasture	2	0	22
89		Rickyard	Pasture	0	1	15
90		The Great Field	Arable	13	0	32
91		The Cow Pasture	Pasture and Orles	5	0	4
92		The Flax Piece	Pasture	6	0	31
93		Far Romer's Bank	Pasture	9	0	31
94		Upper White Lands	Hops	3	2	34
95		Mattin's Hole Bank	Orchard and Pasture	3	3	17
96		Mattin's Hole	Wood	4	3	0
97		Mattin's Bank	Arable	7	0	27
98		The Leasom	Pasture and Orles	10	1	23
99		The Hop Yard	Arable	6	2	0
106		Daisy Furlong	Arable	5	2	16
107		Round Hill	Pasture	6	3	30
119		School Field	Pasture	3	1	35
120		School Field	Arable	2	3	3
121		The Orles	Pasture and Orles	10	0	38
130		The Four Acres	Arable	4	2	3
131		Thistley Croft	Arable	7	2	7
133		Pool Piece	Arable	7	3	6
147		Goblet Orchard	Arable	5	3	3

148	Quarry Field	Arable	9	3	9
151	Butcher's Meadow	Pasture	3	2	0
		TOTAL:	247 A	2 R	2P

Appendix 2 : Extract from “*Valuation of Bockleton Estate and Manor, the property of Mrs Arabella Prescott, situate in the parishes of Bockleton, Hatfield & Leysters in the counties of Worcester and Hereford, by Clement Cadle Land Agent & Valuer Gloucester 1866*”

ROMERS FARM

Romers farm in the parish of Bockleton consists of 247 acres 2 roods 2 perches of which 113 acres 3 roods 16 perches are arable; 115 acres 3 roods 12 perches pasture, 8 acres, 3 roods 10 perches hops and the remainder various.

The house contains a large kitchen, parlour, back kitchen, dairy, cellars and 4 bedrooms.

The buildings consists of barn, stable for 5 horses, nag stable, cow houses, sheds, hop kilns and rooms over with two rough sheds.

This farm has been very badly farmed and is in a very bad cultivation, wants roads made and stoned and dirt cleaned up.

The arable land is much of it very fair and would I think with proper farming produce as good crops as any on the estate.

There is also a good cottage, sheds etc at as near Romers Wood which should be kept up, being in a very suitable situation for young stock; but a road is required to be made to this part.

The house is very good and substantial and the buildings compact, but are small in quantity. A portion is covered with thatch which should be removed as this thatch gets old. The same remarks applies to the sheds by the cottage at Romers Wood.

The fold yard should also be divided. A portion of this farm and also a part of The Hill should be put together and have a shed built; it can then be put to either farm; as it is at present it is so far from both that the land is not properly done, when if a shed was put up, the manure made would make the land better.

ROMERS FARM LAND – 1866

Nos. on Plan	Names of Fields	Cultivation	Acreage			Value			Remarks
			A	R	P	L	S	D	
41	Ash Bed	Ash Plantation	0	3	14	0	14	1	This plantation is very much injured by the tenant cutting the best poles. It should not be cut until fit
42	Romer's Wood Croft	Orchard and Pasture	6	1	17	4	15	4	This could be much improved or it might be planted. Orles and bushes should be removed
43	Romer's Sheep Walk	Arable [Pasture]	5	1	32	3	15	4	A nice dry soil and capable of great improvement. Past next brook should be planted with larch or ash.
46	Wood at the Wood's End	Pasture	2	3	0	2	4	0	No. 46 is a rough meadow but capable of improvement
55	Upper Broom Sheep Walk	Pasture	12	0	30	9	2	11	No. 55 is a very rough field and a great portion should be drained and orles brambles cut.
47	The Orchard at Wood's End	Orchard and Arable	3	2	37	4	9	6	
53	Plantation	Wood	0	3	30	25	1	2	
54	Great Field at the Wood's End	Arable	8	0	0	6	0	0	A few oak trees should be felled & fences laid and the field drained.
56	Romer's Field	Pasture	4	3	33	3	19	1	No. 56 is a rough field having been allowed to go to grass but could be improved by draining and laying with? fesk seeds.
57	Wood, Field and Road	Arable	6	1	7	0	0	8	No. 57 is a moderately good field and in a totally dry state.
59	Lower White Lands	Hops	5	0	16	15	6	0	No. 59 seemed a very good hopyard but badly saturated.
60	Middle White Lands	Arable	5	0	8	1	10	8	No. 60 is drained and appears dry but in a bad state of cultivation, a few oak trees had better be felled.
61	Romer's Bank	Pasture	9	0	14	6	7	3	No. 61 is a rough banky field mostly covered with gorse which should be cut. A fair stone quarry upon it.
62	Cottage Buildings	Fold and Garden	0	1	18	1	16	0	This cottage is stone built covered with tile. Has 3 rooms up & 1 down, is in good repair but very dirty; a barn shed wants repairing.
63	Romer's Cottage Croft	Pasture	1	0	38	0	19	9	
64	The Cow Field	Arable	7	1	37	6	1	2	No. 64 is an open field, contains a quarry.
65	The Upper Field	Arable	5	0	17	4	1	8	A quantity of hedgerow timber should be felled.
66	The Sling	Arable	8	1	19	6	13	11	No. 66 is in a bad state of cultivation but is capable of improvement, a few trees in fence.

Nos. on Plan	Names of Fields	Cultivation	Acreage			Value			Remarks
			A	R	P	L	S	D	
84	The Great Meadow	Pasture	13	3	9	12	8	6	Meadow requires draining and dropping with manure.
87	Plantation	Pasture	Included above			Include above			Orles and hedges want cutting.
88	House, Outbuildings, Yard, Garden and Orchard	Pasture	2	0	22	18	0	0	No. 88 Buildings want repairing. Soot comes into house by chimney, spouting wants repairing.
89	Rickyard	Pasture	0	1	15				
90	The Great Field	Arable	13	0	32	10	11	2	No. 90 has a good deal of holly upon it, hedges want laying.
91	The Cow Pasture	Pasture and Orles	5	0	4	4	10	5	There is a good depth of soil here and if drained would be good land. A few ash trees, orles and bushes to remove
92	The Flax Piece	Pasture	6	0	31	4	12	11	The haylage on the field is very poor, it requires draining, has a good depth of soil. Pollards to remove.
93	Far Romer's Bank	Pasture	9	0	31	1	0	0	No. 93 a rough bank with a number of brambles which should be cut, a few Ash and Oak
94	Upper White Lands	Hops	3	2	34	12	0	4	No. 94 appears a good yard with a good depth of soil but badly situated.
95	Mattin's Hole Bank	Orchard and Pasture	3	3	17	12	17	10	No. 95 is a very rough field, brambles want cutting, it might be planted or would do for hopyard.
96	Mattin's Hole	Wood	4	3	0	2	7	1	Some fine Oak, Beech and other trees should be felled.
97	Mattin's Bank	Arable	7	0	27	5	7	6	Field in 97 might be improved, a few trees should be felled.
98	The Leasom	Pasture and Orles	10	1	23	1	15	1	This field is covered with orles which requires grubbing up. A few Oak may be felled.
99	The Hop Yard	Arable	6	2	0	5	4	0	A good loam but in a poorly cultivated state.
106	Daisy Furlong	Arable	5	2	16	4	4	0	Part clay and part rock an Ash and Pollard should be removed.
107	Round Hill	Pasture	6	3	30	5	11	0	107 is rough land. Orles, ash and bushes to remove.
119	School Field	Pasture	3	1	35	3	9	5	This has only recently been laid.
120	School Field	Arable	2	3	3	2	9	10	This has some nice holly trees round it, a Pollard to be felled
121	The Orles	Pasture and Orles	10	0	38	8	14	0	This is rough and requires draining. A number of Oak, Ash, Orles to be felled, fences want repairing.
130	The Four Acres	Arable	4	2	3	4	1	0	130 a good loamy subsoil, a few spreading Oak trees.
131	Thistley Croft	Arable	7	2	7	1	8	3	131 is an open field but

					has a few Pollards which should be felled
133	Pool Piece	Arable	7 3 6	1 1 11	Some hedgerow timber in 133 a few of which want felling.
147	Goblet Orchard	Arable	5 3 3	5 9 1	147 appears in a tolerably dry state; it has a few apples trees but of poor growth.
148	Quarry Field	Arable	9 3 9	1 16 6	No. 148 has a few Ash which should be felled.
151	Butcher's Meadow	Pasture	3 2 0	3 17 0	This is a tolerably good meadow, has been partially drained, has good spring of water and is good clay for bricks.
		TOTAL:	247 2 2	241 11 8	

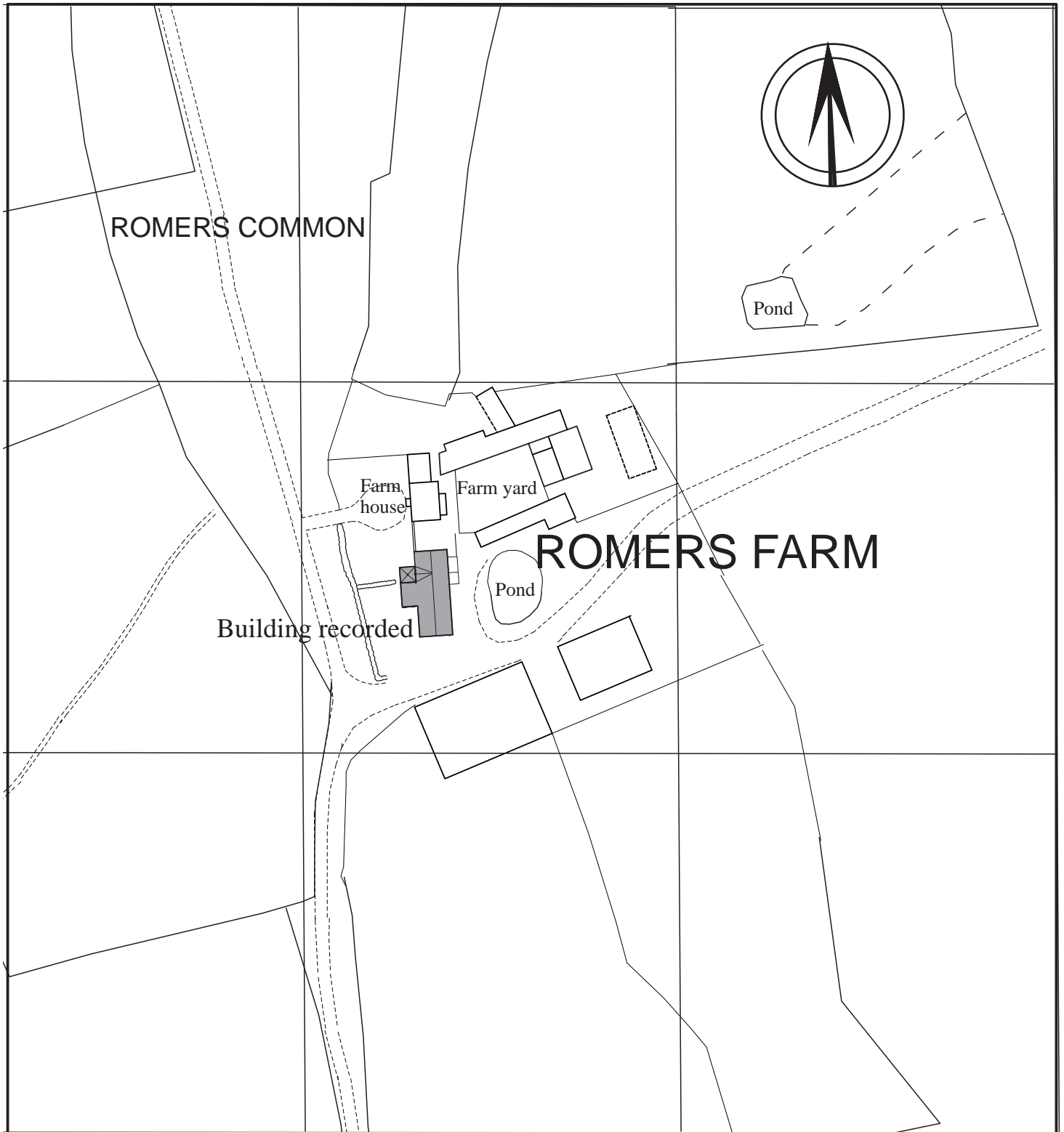
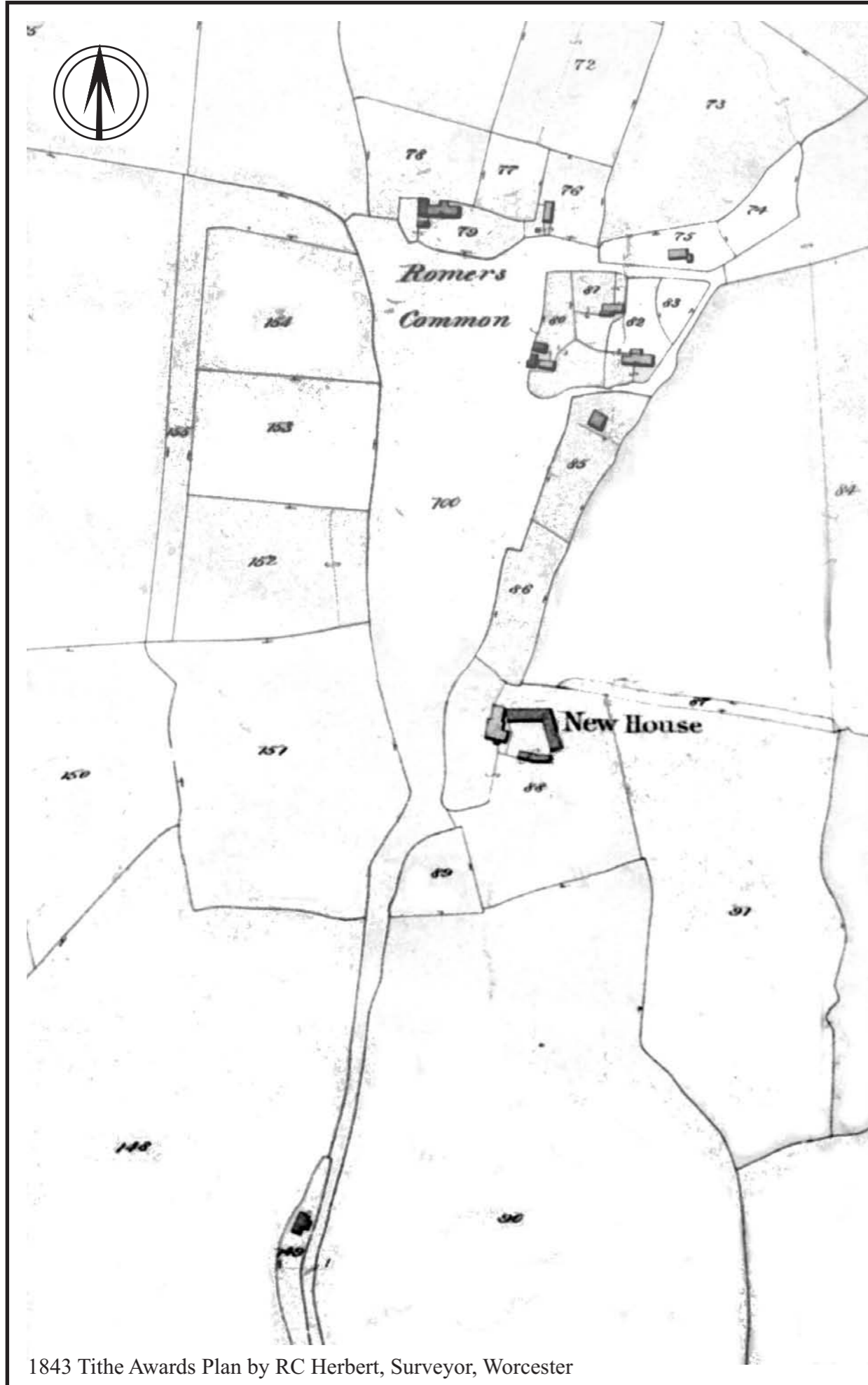
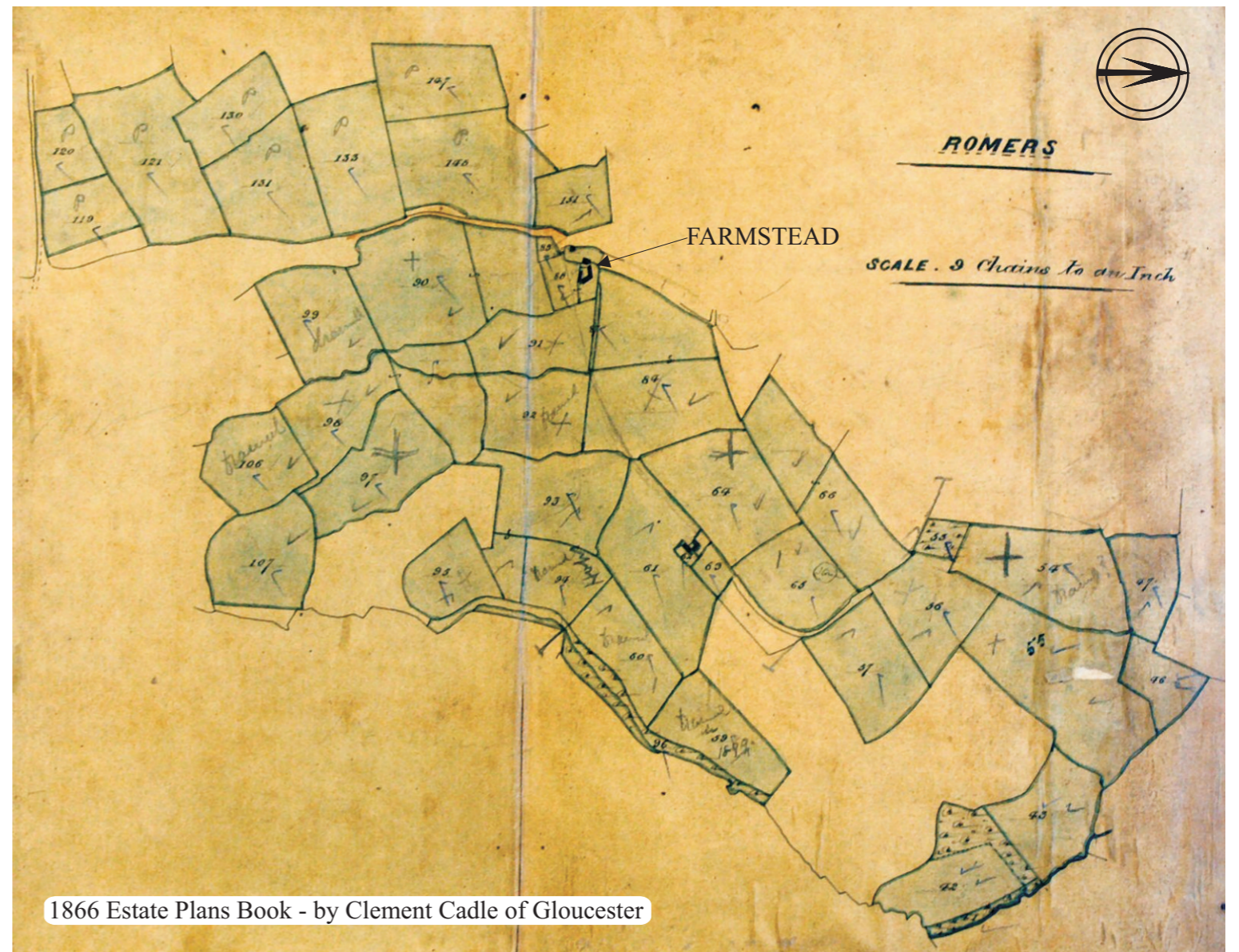


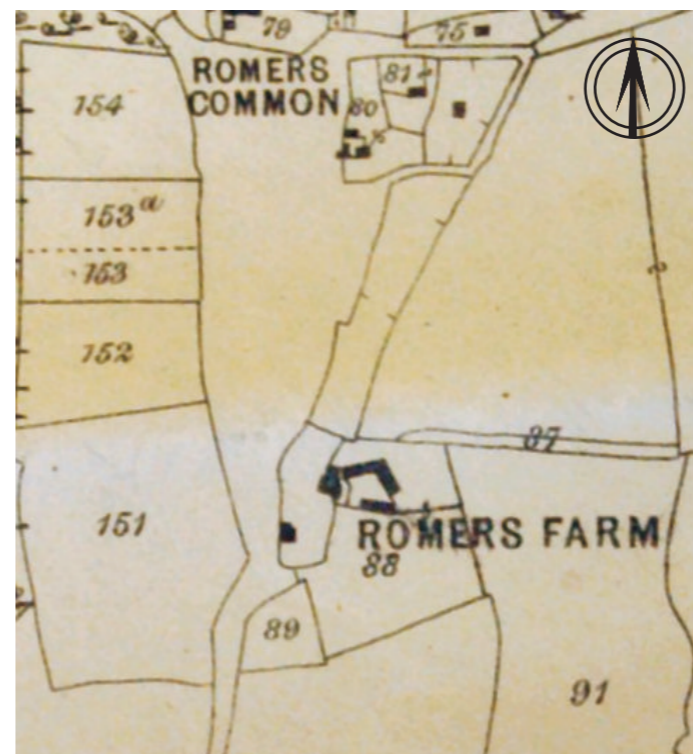
Figure 1: Location plan - Romers Farm, Romers Common, Bockleton, Worcestershire



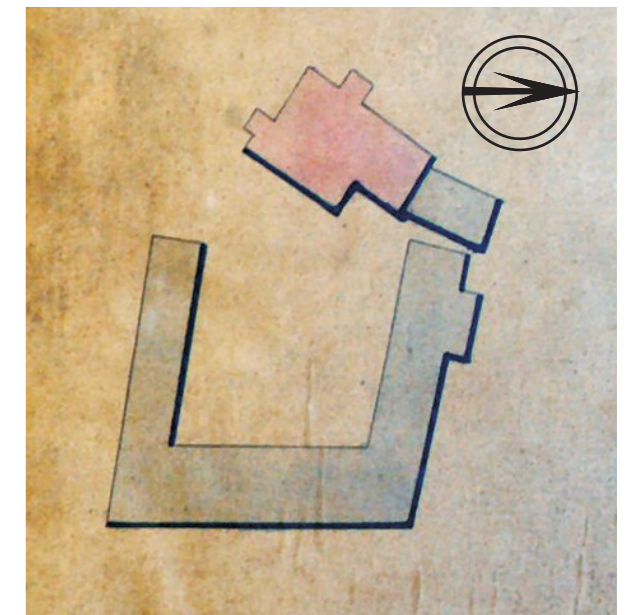
1843 Tithe Awards Plan by RC Herbert, Surveyor, Worcester



1866 Estate Plans Book - by Clement Cadle of Gloucester



1865 Plan in sales particulars by Messers Cobb of Lincolns Inn Fields, London



1866 Estate Plans Book: detail of farmstead

Figure 2: Early and mid 19th Century maps and plans of New House/Romers Farm

18

ROMER'S FARM,

Containing about
191 a. 1 r. 26 p.

OF
PASTURE, ARABLE, ORCHARD AND HOP LAND,
IN THE

Parish of Bockleton, Worcestershire. It is bounded on the west by Romer's Common, on the south and east by The Kyre Park Estate, and on the north-west by the lands of Birchley Mill. It comprises

BRICK AND TILED FARMHOUSE,

Containing—On the Attic Floor—Two Rooms. On the First Floor—Four Rooms. On the Ground Floor—Front and Back Kitchen, Pantry, Dairy, &c. Stone-built Cider House, &c. Small Garden.

THE FARM BUILDINGS

Are of brick and stone, and comprise Granary, Hop Kiln, Hoppickers' House, Boiler House, Pigstyes, Trap House and Horse Box and Wain House, 2-stall Stable with room over, Cowhouses for ten head and Calves' Cots, Timber and Thatched Stable for Four Horses and Fodder Store, a 4-layed Timber and Corrugated Roof Open Shed, Timber, Tiled and Stone-built Range of 3-stall Stable and Barn, Timber and tiled Bullhouse and Cowhouses for Eight Head, Loose Box, Chaff House and Cattle Yard, Corrugated Iron Dutch Barn with 4 bays and Iron Supports.

On No. 189 is a

SMALL HOLDING, known as WOOD COTTAGE,

Of stone, brick and slate, containing Five Rooms, Garden and Timber-built Buildings of Barn, Open Timber and Stone 6-bayed Return Open Cattle Shed with corrugated roof, Pigs' Cot, Outhouse, &c.

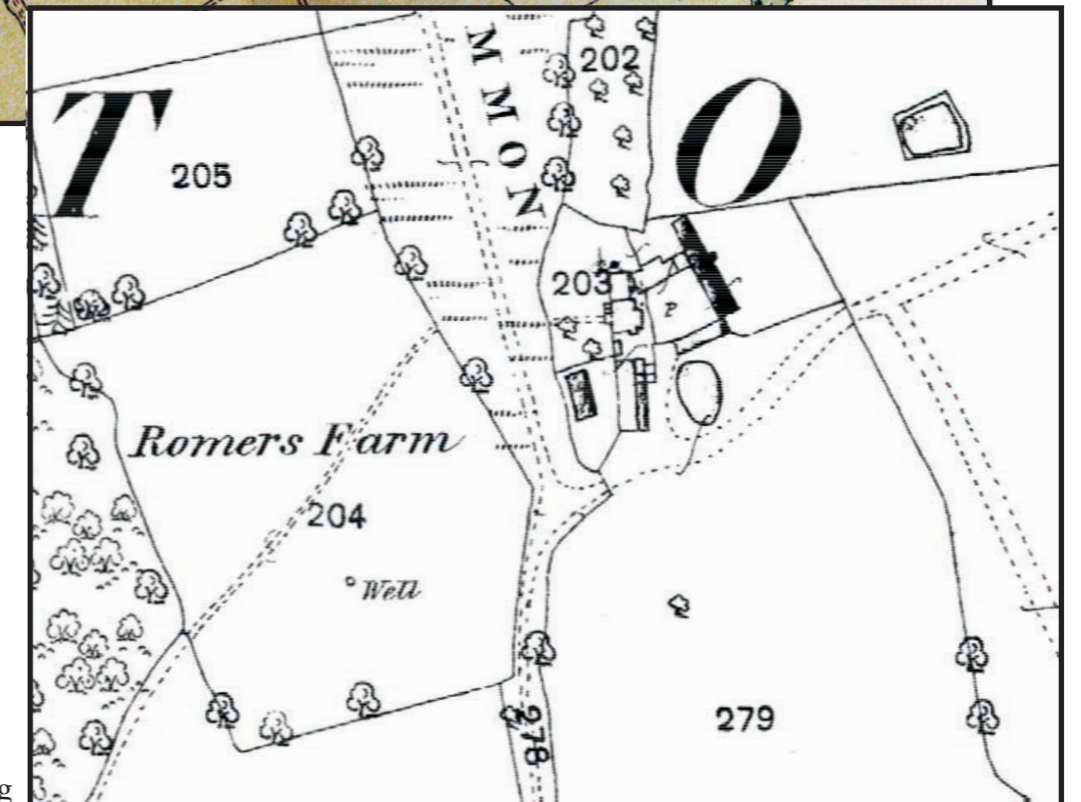
The Lands are divided as follows:—

No. in Plan.	Description.	Cult.	Quantity.	No. in Plan.	Description.	Cult.	Quantity.
		A. R. P.				A. R. P.	
95	Wood's End	Pasture	2 2 16	188	Middle White Lands	Arable	5 0 7
96	Coppice	Wood	4 2 28	189	Wood Cottage and Garden &c.		0 0 37
98	Getto's Pasture	Pasture	4 2 19	190	Upper Whitelands	Hops	4 3 32
110	Romer's Wood Croft	Ditto	5 3 1	192	Far Romer's Bank	Pasture	7 5 3
110a	Orchard	Orchard	0 1 21	193	The Flax Piece	Ditto	12 3 26
111	Ashbed	Wood	0 0 37	194	The Great Meadow	Ditto	12 0 15
112	Romer's Sheep Walk	Pasture	4 2 7	202	Orchard	Orchard	0 2 20
113	Ashbed	Wood	0 3 23	203	Romer's Farm House, Buildings, Yard, &c.		1 1 34
116	Upper Broom Sheep Walk	Pasture	7 2 36	204	Butcher's Meadow	Pasture	3 1 34
117	Great Field	Ditto	7 2 13	279	The Great Field (part of)	Ditto	3 0 33
118	The Orchard	Ditto	3 1 28	279a	Orchard	Orchard	1 2 23
118a	Orchard	Orchard	0 1 29	280	The Great Field (part of)	Arable	9 8 33
162	Romer's Field	Pasture	6 1 5	281	The Hop Yard	Ditto	6 1 24
163	Wood Field	Ditto	5 3 36	282	The Leasow	R. Pasture	3 2 6
164	Roadway	Road	0 2 5	283	Motlins Bank	Pasture	3 0 8
166	Lower White Lands	Arable	5 1 21	284	Ditto	Arable	7 0 33
167	Romer's Cottage Croft	Pasture	0 3 39	287	Round Hill	Pasture	7 0 8
168	Cow and Upper Fields	Arable	12 2 6	301	Daisy Furlong	Arable	5 2 11
169	The Sling	Ditto	8 0 33				
186	Romer's Bank	Pasture	9 0 28				
	Carried forward		91 3				
							TOTAL A. 191 1 26

Let to Mr. William Smith on the terms of a yearly agreement, dated 1st October, 1895, at a present rent of

£130 per annum.

The Landlord paid the Tenant £33 for planting the orchard adjoining the Homestead, and the Purchaser has the benefit of this outlay; also included are the hop poles, valued in 1897 at £17 10s., which amount the Tenant is to pay on the expiration of his tenancy or leave poles to this value.



1885 OS Mapping

Figure 3:1905 Sale Particulars, Fairbrother, Ellis & Co. Surveyors, with inset detail of 1885 mapping showing changes between 1885 and 1905

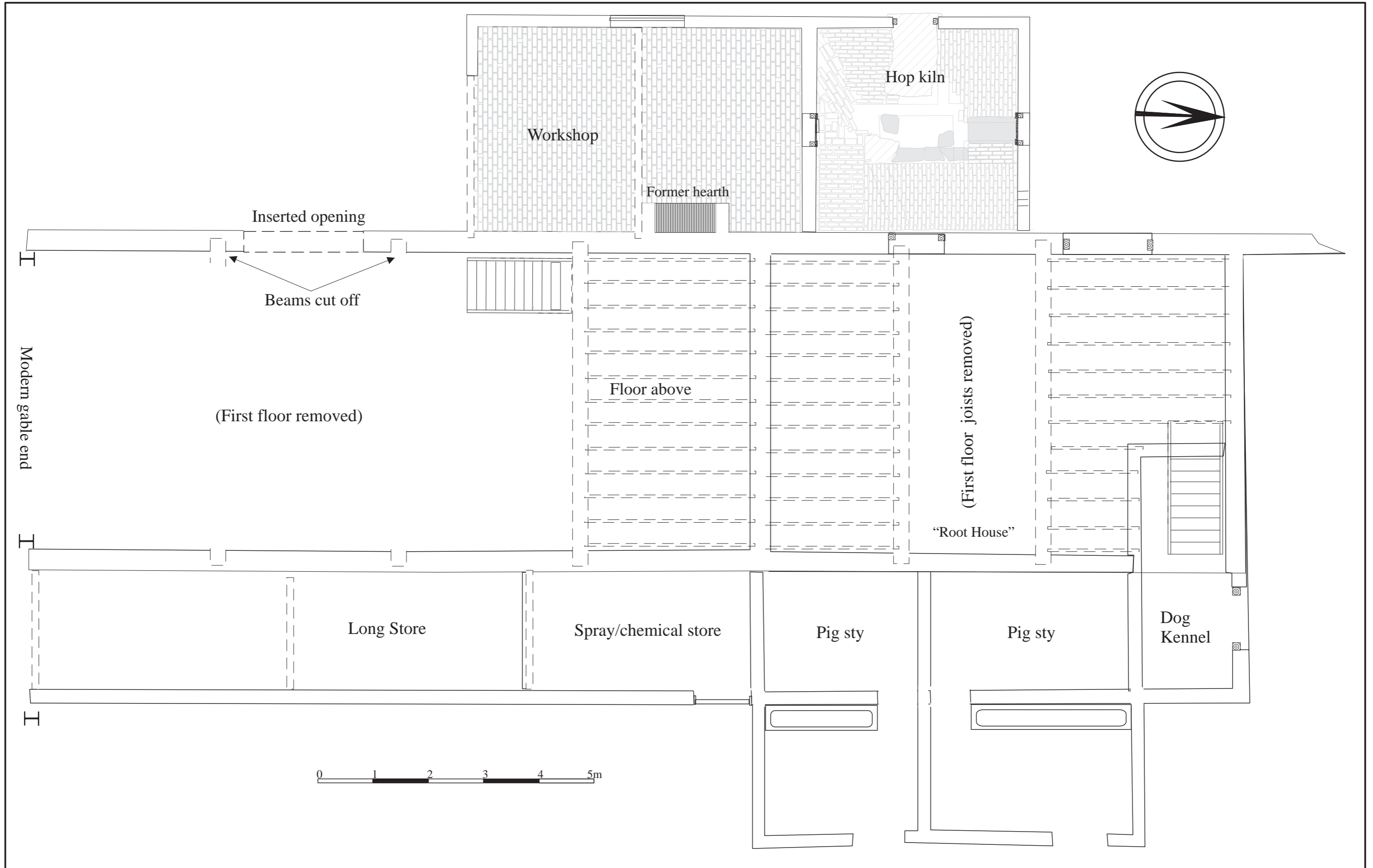


Figure 4: Ground floor plan

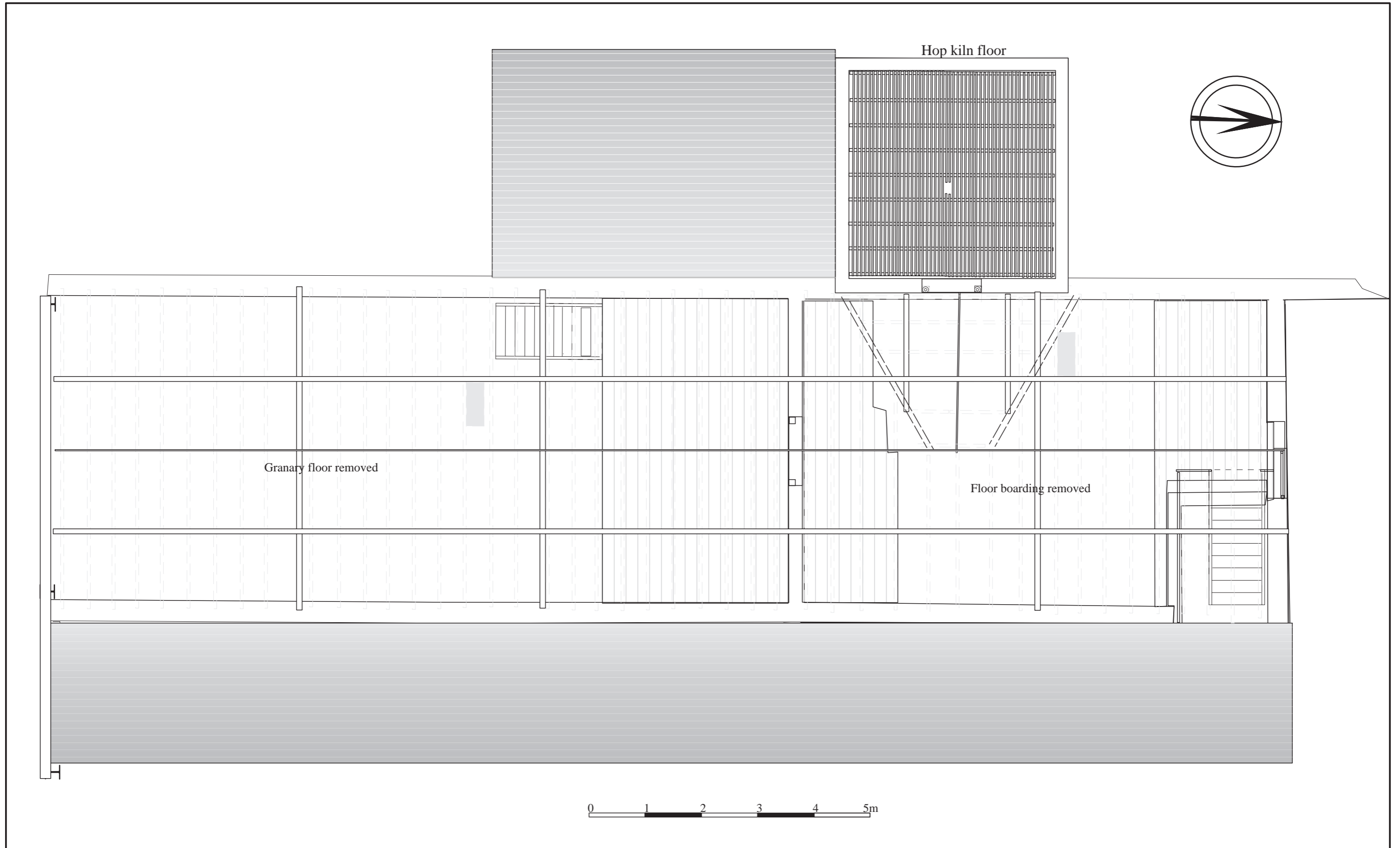


Figure 5: First floor plan

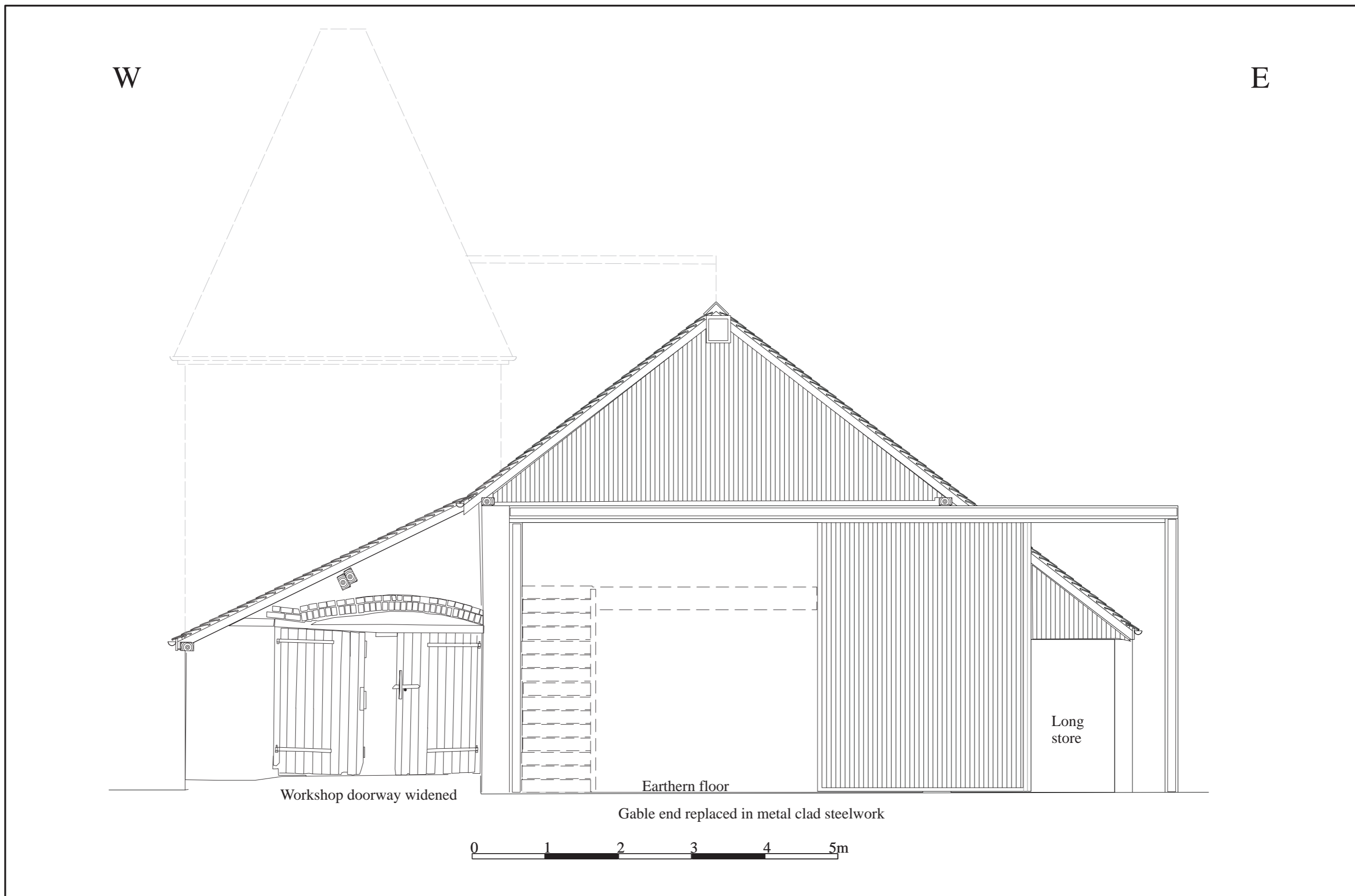


Figure 6: Southern elevation

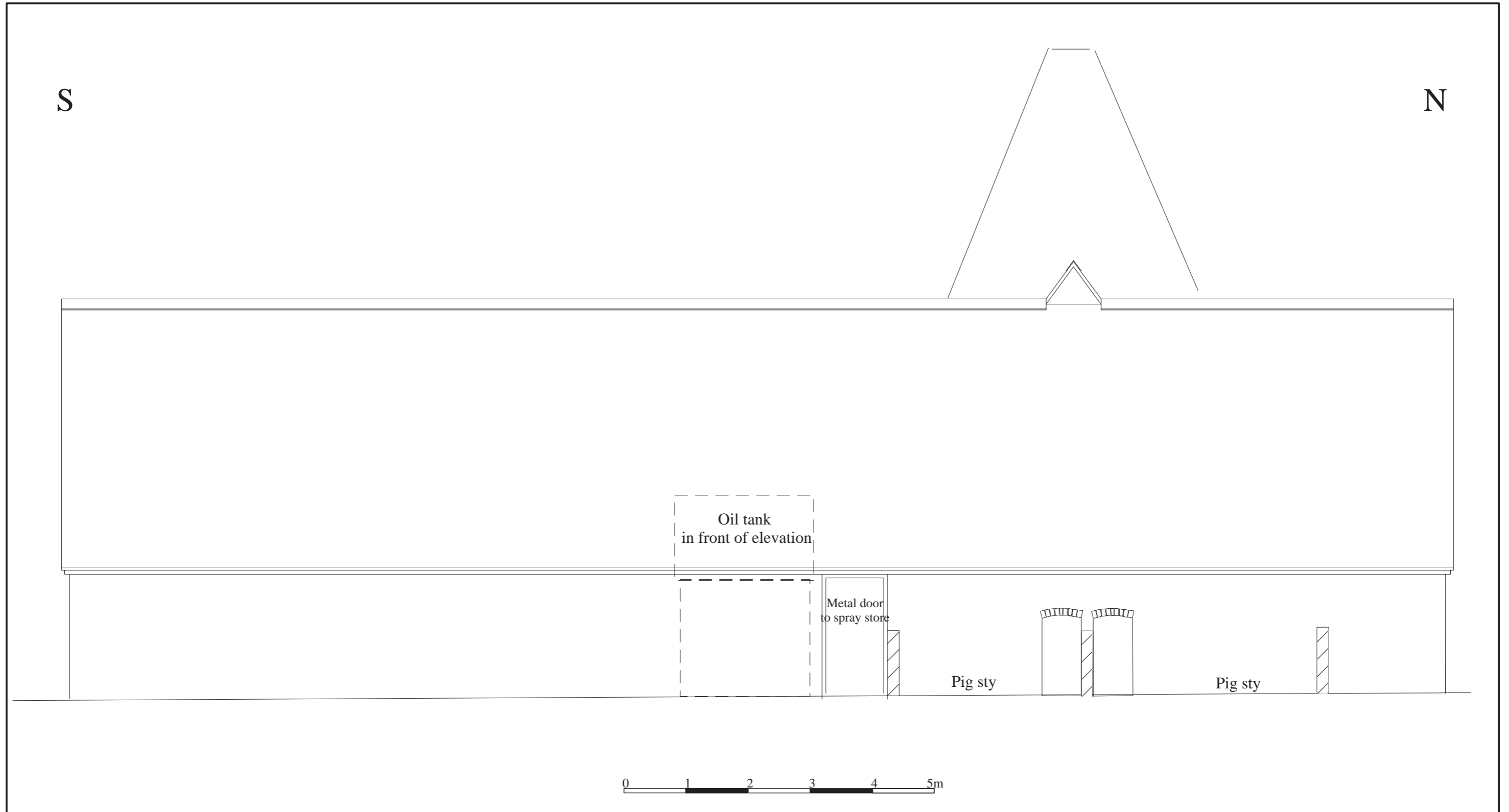


Figure 7: Eastern elevation

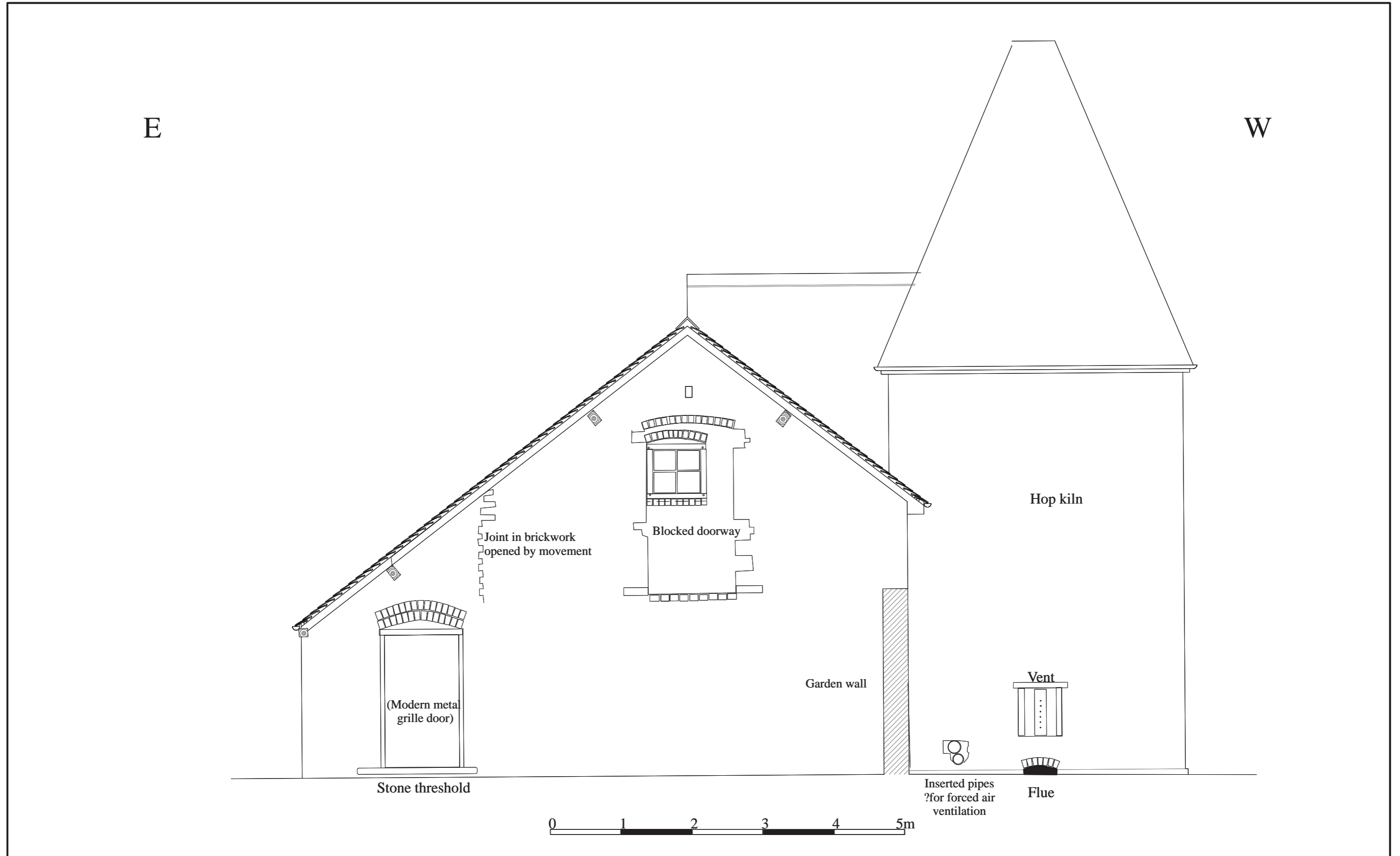


Figure 8: Northern elevation



Figure 9: Western elevation

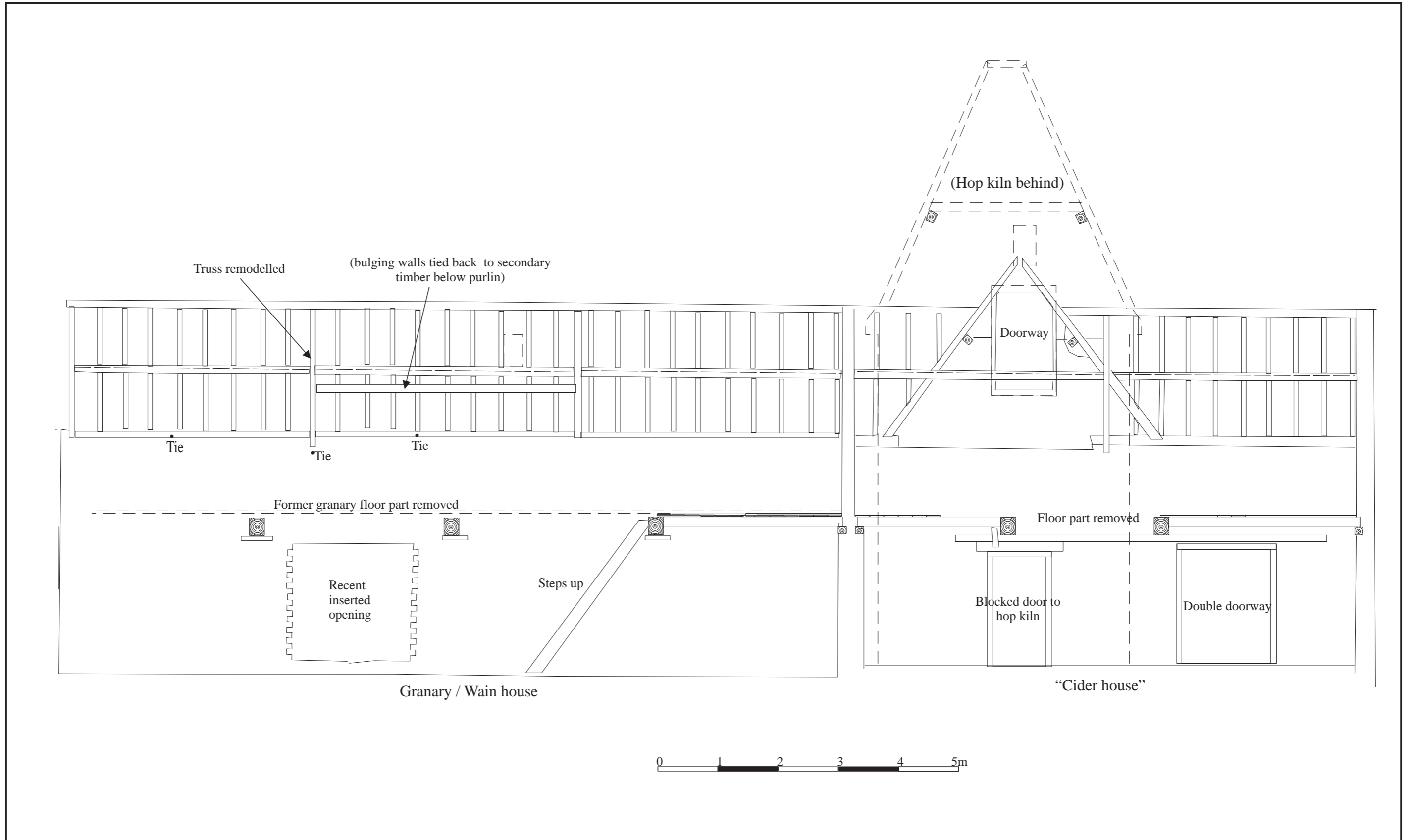


Figure 10: Long internal elevation facing West

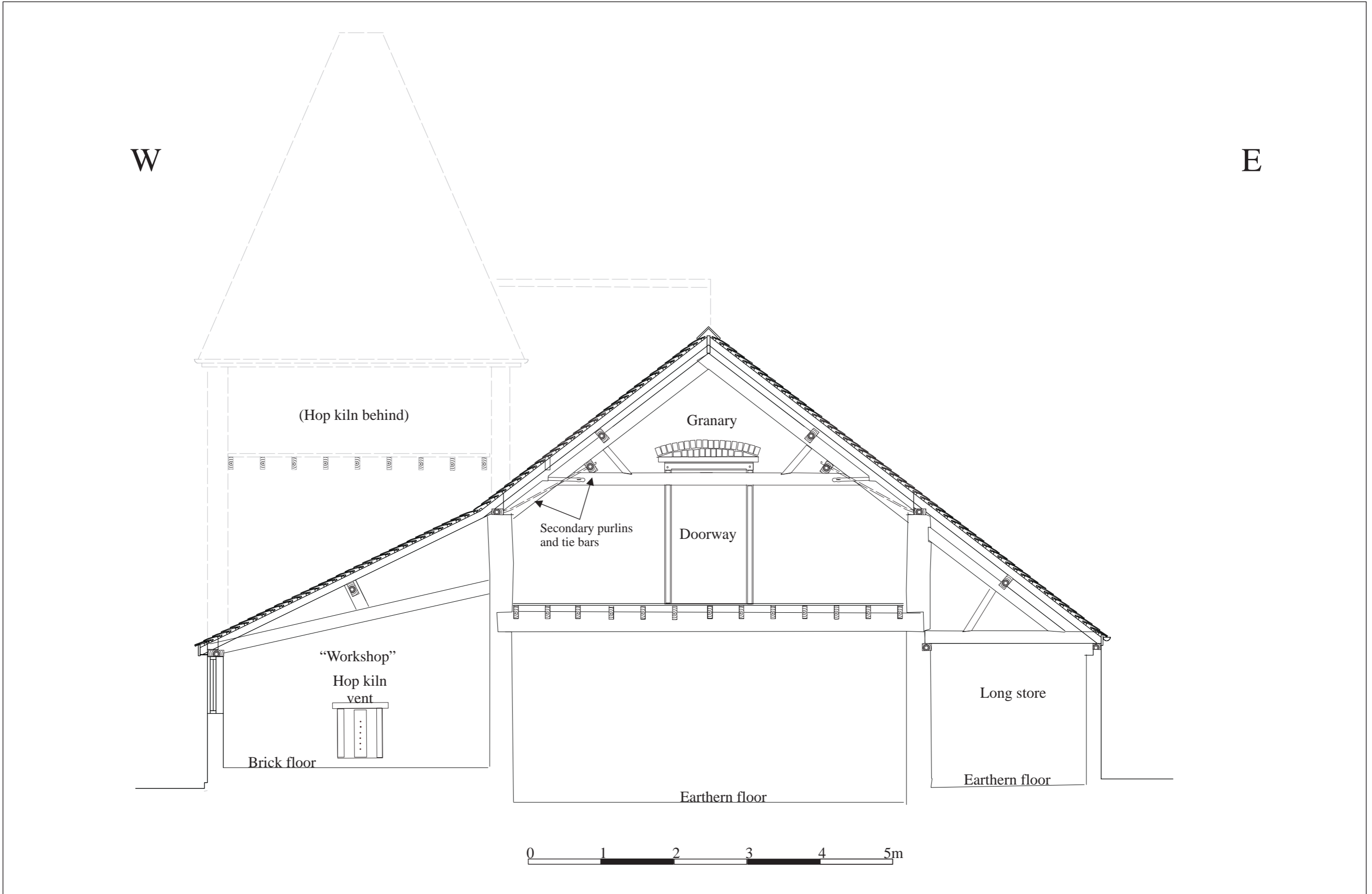


Figure 11: Composit cross section facing North

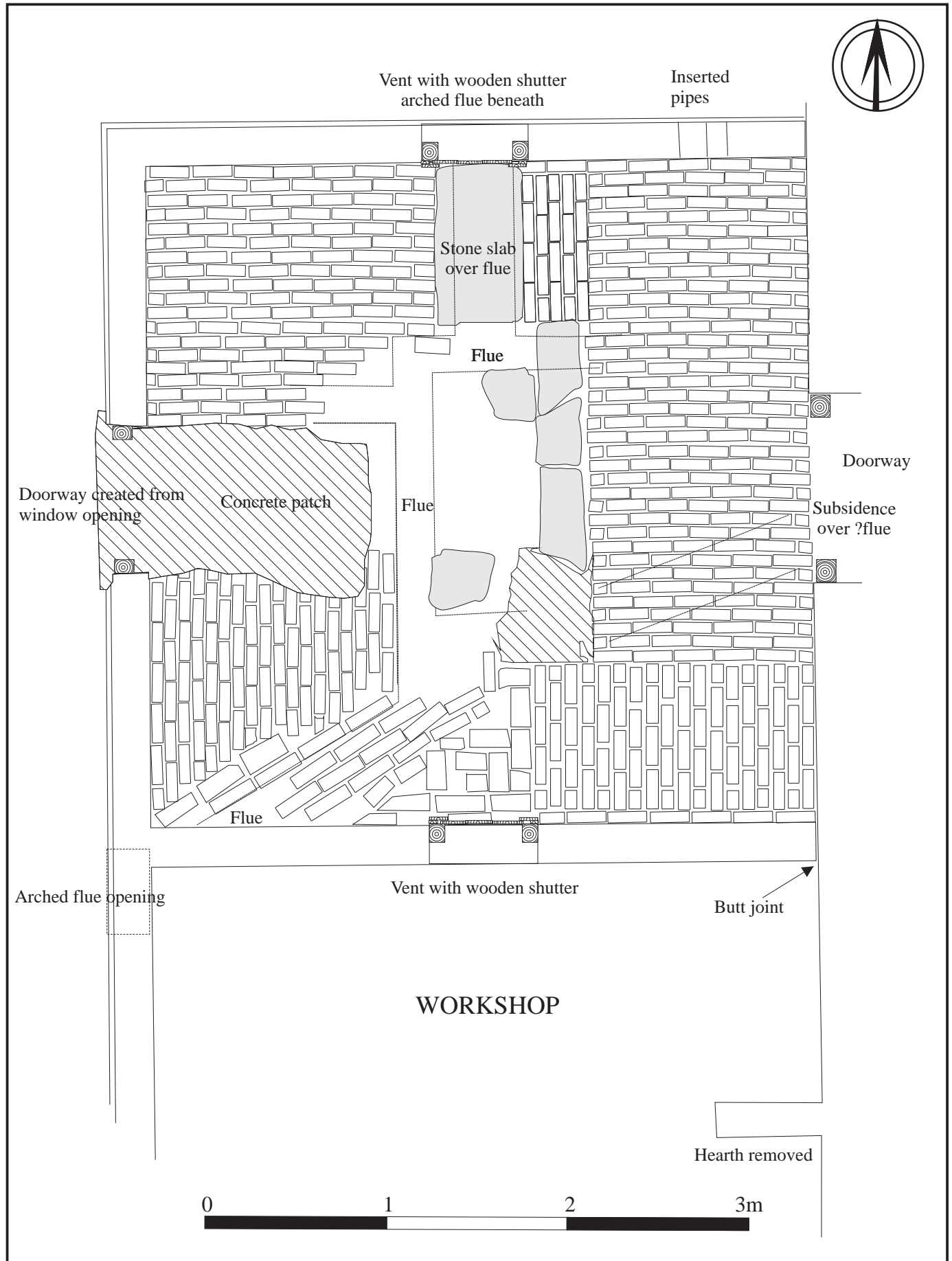


Figure 12: Detail plan of hop-kiln floor (nb some flues partially collapsed and patched, central slabs missing)



View of entrance to farmyard from south-west, with the subject buildings in the foreground



View of hop kiln from the north-west



View of granary range from the east (farmhouse and pond visible to right)



Southern elevation



Northern Elevation

Figure 14: External elevations



West elevation south of hop kiln



Northern end of Western elevation

Figure 15: Western external elevation



Northern elevation of hop kiln with detail of vent and flue (above)



Western elevation with detail of blocked flue (ringed on main image)

Figure 16: Hop kiln exteriors



Apex of roof



Underside of drying floor



Drying floor (covered with hessian sacks)

Kiln floor facing south-east



Kiln floor facing east, showing subsidence in front of doorway, probably over a flue

Southern vent sliding shutter

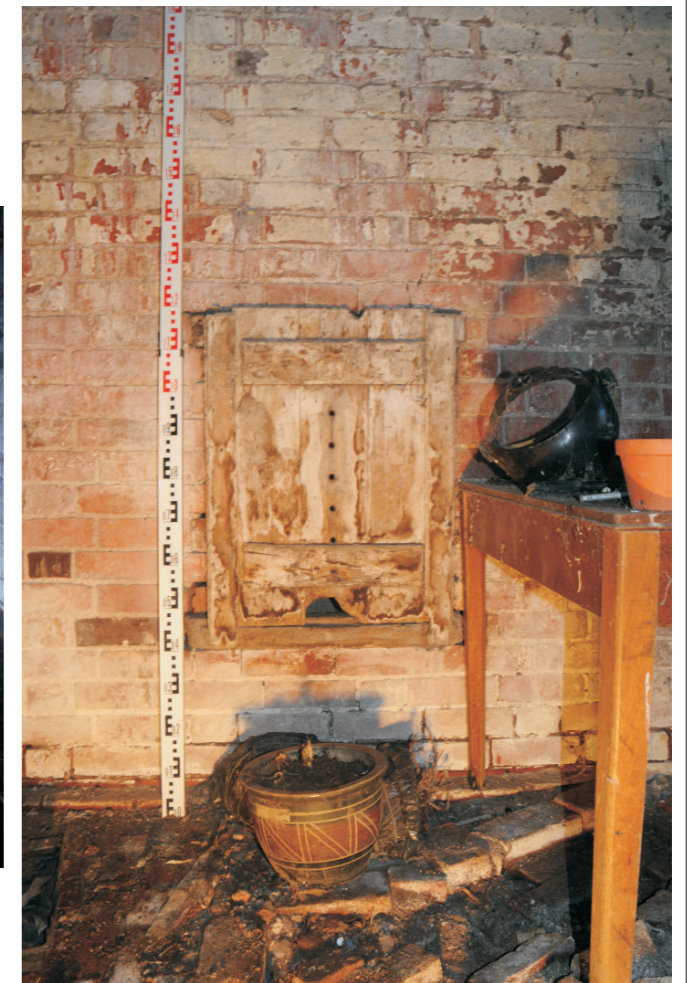


Figure 17: Hop kiln interior



Pig sties



Interior of northern pig sty

Interior of “long store” facing south (below) and north - note inserted block wall of spray/chemical store



Figure 18: Pig sty and “long store” photographs



“Granary” facing south - note white line marking former upper floor level



“Granary” facing north - note truncated former upper floor bridging beams

Figure 19: “Granary” interior photographs



Entrance to Hop Kiln drying floor from upper floor of "Root House"



Northern end of upper floor of "Root House, showing matchboarded enclosure of inserted staircase"

Figure 20: "Root House" interior photographs