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**Archaeological Services**

**A Level 2 Historic Building Record  
And watching brief at Middle Farm  
House and  
Associated Barns  
Main Street,  
Upper Benefield,  
Northamptonshire**

**NGR: SP 97913 89296**

Andrew Hyam &  
Leon Hunt



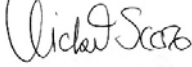

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**A R Hyam  
&  
L. Hunt**

**For: Middle Farm and Associated Barns, Upper Benefield**

<b>Filename/Version</b>	<b>Checked by</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>2016-068</b>	<b>Vicki Score</b> 	<b>23/11/2015</b>
<b>2017-005</b>	<b>Vicki Score</b> 	<b>17/01/2017</b>

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**ULAS Report Number 2017-005**

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**Event Numbers ENN108111 & ENN108259**

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## **A Level 2 Historic Building Recording and watching brief at Middle Farm House and Associated Barns, Main Street, Upper Benefield, Northamptonshire.**

**NGR: SP 97913 89296**

**Andrew Hyam**

**Leon Hunt**

### **Summary**

*A Level 2 historic building Record was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Middle Farm, Main Street, Upper Benefield, Northamptonshire on the 28th and 29th of July 2015. The survey encompassed the Grade II listed farmhouse and the courtyard barns associated with it. The farm house is late 18th century with 19th century additions and alterations. Much of the farm complex is early to mid-19th century in origin although a number of additions and alterations have taken place since that time. The 19th century construction date of the farm buildings can be seen as being representative of changes in farming practices across the country around this time.*

*Planning permission has been granted to convert the now redundant house and farm buildings into a small number of private dwellings.*

*The report and archive will be deposited under Event Number ENN108111.*

*Following on from this building survey, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Middle Farm during the conversion and extension of the former farmhouse and outbuildings. The watching brief visits carried out throughout 2016 mainly concentrated on groundworks associated with the stripping of the existing driveway in advance of the excavation of trenches for new drainage, the reduction of the area for formation levels, the excavation of a soakaway in the centre of the site, and the excavation of foundation trenches for extensions to buildings F and H (Units 1 and 3 respectively).*

*A brick driveway was found underneath the current driveway during stripping and a large pit that yielded modern material, possibly a former soakaway, was discovered during the excavation of the new soakaway within the courtyard area.*

*Part of an undated wall was revealed during excavations within Building D, which appeared to predate the current open archway frontage of the building. No archaeological remains were discovered during new foundation for Unit 1 (Building F), but a large slab of limestone with a carved date of 1702 was discovered during the demolition of a wall in Building E.*

*No archaeological remains were discovered during the excavation for the foundations to extend Building H (Unit 3), except for a large disturbed area close to the northern end of the trenching. This feature was most likely a tree throw.*

*The archive for the watching brief will be deposited with Event Number ENN108259.*

## Introduction and Background

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an historic building recording (Level 2) on the farm house and associated barns and buildings belonging to Middle Farm, Middle Farm, Upper Benefield, Northamptonshire. Level 2 historic building surveys are defined in the Historic England guidance document – *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006). Under planning application numbers EN/14/00518/FUL & EN/14/00519/LBC permission had been approved for the conversion of the existing farmhouse and the associated stone and brick agricultural buildings into a number of private dwellings.

Subsequent to the building recording, the site and buildings were the subject of an archaeological watching brief. This investigation was for the groundworks associated with the conversion and extensions of the existing buildings to create four new dwellings and included works to the existing farmhouse and associated outbuildings and included some demolition of existing structures. The work had been requested by the Planning Archaeologist at NCC as advisor to the planning authority.

Middle Farm, as its name would suggest, lies towards the centre of the village of Upper Benefield on the northern side of the Main Street which runs from east to west along the A427 between Oundle and Corby (Fig. 1). Upper Benefield remains relatively untouched by modern development although a new development is currently taking place opposite the site on the southern side of Main Street at Lammas Farm.

Middle Farm forms a large open courtyard style farmyard set slightly back from the road with the Grade II listed house at a north to south orientation on the south-west corner of the yard (Figs 2-5). Open fields extend out to the north and west of the site.

The site consists of the listed house with a garden behind it which extends eastwards along the edge of Main Street. The site is presently unoccupied but was last used as boarding kennels. The house is positioned to face westwards along Main Street and hence present a more imposing elevation to oncoming traffic than it would if it were to be face-on to the road. On the north side of the garden is the south range of the courtyard buildings. This joins an east range and continues in an unbroken sequence around to the north and west ranges. Access to the yard is between two buildings on the west range or between the north-east corner of the house and the western end of the south range. A separate free-standing former cart shed stands to the north-west of the yard. There is a small pond to the west of the house and the west range.

The house is built from squared coursed limestone with ashlar detailing, whilst the remaining buildings use coursed limestone rubble with brick detail and later brick modifications. A full-desk based assessment was produced by Midland Archaeological Services (Williams 2014) which discusses the archaeological background of the site in detail.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) identifies the bedrock as Kellaways Formation and Oxford Clay Formation (undifferentiated) Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone, overlain with Oadby Member Diamicton.

On the advice of the Assistant Archaeological Advisor, the consent has been granted by East Northamptonshire District Council with a condition for an archaeological programme of works for archaeological building recording at Historic England Level

2. When conversion work commences a separate programme of archaeological work will take place and a report will be prepared for the observation, investigation and recording of the ground works.

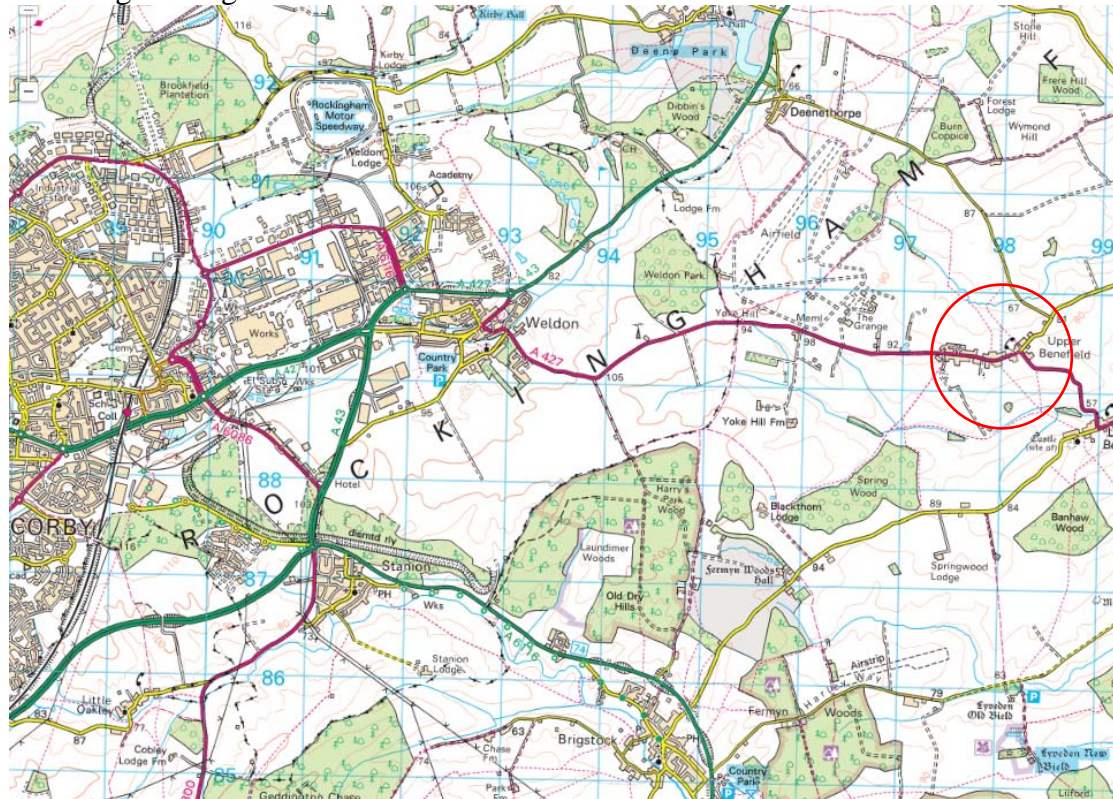


Figure 1: Upper Benefield location

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Figure 2: Middle Farm site layout

Farm House at bottom of plan. Plan supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects





Figure 3: Middle Farm seen from Main Street  
Looking north-east



Figure 4: Middle Farm seen from Main Street  
Looking north-west



Figure 5: Middle Farm complex viewed from the north  
Looking south. Cart shed to right of picture

## Objectives

### *Building Recording*

The overall objectives and research agenda are detailed in the ULAS Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording: *Middle Farm House, Main Street, Upper Benefield* (hereafter the WSI).

The specific objectives of the historic building survey were:

- To provide a written, drawn and photographic record of all the buildings on site prior to the commencement of works with specific attention given to those elements proposed for demolition, conversion and/or alteration. This work to be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed and which subsequently evolved.
- To ensure the long-term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.

### *Watching Brief*

The main objective of the archaeological excavation is to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeology on the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the Watching brief are:



- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground-works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground-works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

## **Methodology**

### ***Building Recording***

The methodology used throughout the survey is discussed in detail in the ULAS WSI and also followed Historic England's 2006 guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings*. The Historic Building Recording for this project was undertaken to Level 2.

### ***Watching Brief***

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2014) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2014).

A *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Work* was produced by ULAS prior to the archaeological work being undertaken (ULAS 2016).

The project involved the supervision of overburden removal, the excavation of foundation trenches and other groundworks by an experienced professional archaeologist during the works.

## **Results**

### ***Historic Environment Record***

#### *Archaeological sites*

Middle Farm lies in an area of archaeological interest and is within the medieval settlement of Upper Benefield. A small number of sites lie within a 1km radius of the farm:

**MNN1033**, SMR8315. Possible Romano-British camp 200m SW of farm.

**MNN132617**, SMR7077/0/5. Ridge and furrow field system. 500m E of farm.

**MNN132618**, SMR7077/6. Ridge and furrow field system. 200m NE of farm.

**MNN1335590**, SMR7077/0/11. Ridge and furrow field system. SW of farm.

**MNN7583**, SMR8315. Medieval core of Upper Benefield.

**MNN102928**, SMR7379/1. Oundle to Cottingham turnpike toll road.

The closest Scheduled Monument is the site of Benefield Castle, **DNN3208**, on the northern edge of Lower Benefield which lies to the south-east of Upper Benefield.

### *Listed Buildings*

There are at least 19 listed buildings within the boundaries of Upper Benefield. The closest to Middle Farm are:

**DNN1050.** Numbers 27 and 28 across a small field to the west of Middle Farm on the north side of Main Street. A Grade II 18th century house converted into two dwellings.

**DNN1059.** Number 32 on the north side of Main Street, east of the farm. Grade II listed early 18th century house which was originally three dwellings.

**DNN1052.** Number 31 opposite Number 32. Late 18th century house and shop with a former bake house.

Middle Farm house is also Grade II listed (**DNN1066**) with the following description:

### *11/35 Middle Farmhouse and attached outbuildings GVII*

*Farmhouse. Late C18/early and mid C19. Squared coursed limestone with Colleyweston slate and C20 plain-tile roofs. Originally probably 3-unit plan. 2 storeys. 3-window range of C20 casements with glazing bars, in original openings, under gauged stone heads. Sash window with glazing bars to ground floor right under similar head. 6-panelled, part-glazed, door and stone gabled porch, to left of centre. 3 eaves dormers. Ashlar stacks at ridge and ends. Mid C19 two-storey stable, with hayloft, now outbuilding is attached to left. Central first floor doorway has flight of stone steps. 2 projecting wings to rear are late C18 to mid C19. 2 storeys, with 2 casement openings at first floor under wood lintels. Interior of house: early C19 staircase with stick balustrade. Room to left of entrance has open fireplace with bressumer. Room to right remodelled early C19 with marble fireplace and arch-head niches.*

### ***Historical Background***

The 1820 Enclosure Act for the local area saw a significant change in farming practices and in the organisation of farms and the surrounding field system. By this time however the fields around Upper Benefield had, for the most part, already been enclosed under an earlier reorganisation. Coupled with the organisational changes farming was also being viewed nationally in a more scientific manner with regard to increasing productivity and efficiency. The years between the 1840s and the 1870s are commonly known as the High Farming Years and followed the rapid adoption of imported and artificial fertilisers. This influx of ideas and new chemicals allowed farmers to move away from the more traditional closed circuit style of farming which relied on locally produced and used manure and feeds with consequent limits on availability. The changes in farming techniques also went hand in hand with the sharp

rises in urban population which provided a willing market for the rapidly increasing farm produce. Other changes in agricultural practices included the shift to larger and more nucleated tenanted farm units and an increasing interest and guiding hand from the landowners who owned the farms. Often larger estates would also employ professional land agents to assist and encourage the tenants to adopt new and improved husbandry techniques. At the same time huge investments were made in more efficient land drainage and infrastructure to help maximise output.

In addition to research and consequent improvements in livestock and crops, much work went into designing new farm buildings to move away from traditional regional styles towards much more standardised designs which were thought to aid efficiency and improve productivity. Middle Farm appears to have been built around a single large courtyard which was subdivided to serve the surrounding buildings. The addition of a courtyard style farm to the existing farm buildings suggests that the owners were able to embrace the new ideas and were wealthy enough to be able to construct new buildings. The house, which is discussed in more detail below, also appears to have been enlarged and upgraded possibly at a similar time to the construction of the courtyard buildings.

A general decline in farming began in the later 19th century when food from across the world could be imported more cheaply than home-grown produce. By the time of the Second World War farming techniques were gradually changing and mechanised farming equipment became more widespread. The war accelerated these changes which often meant that the well-designed 19th century farm buildings were suddenly becoming redundant and this change in usefulness has continued to the present day.

Many of the buildings along the Main Street of Upper Benefield appear, from cursory inspection, to date from two distinct periods; the mid to late 18th century and the mid to late 19th century. It is possible that these two periods coincide with two key events in the life of Upper Benefield, the first being the upgrading of the turnpike road which made accessibility and transport of farming produce and building materials much easier, and the second being the changes in farming practices which perhaps created more wealth within the locality and also brought a small influx of new residents.

### ***Historic Map Evidence***

A poor quality reproduction of a map dated to 1747 shows the area around Middle Farm but the detail is not good enough to be able to identify any buildings on the site (if there are any at all). An 1824 enclosure map appears to show the farm house and yard much as it survives to the present although the free-standing cart shed to the north-west of the complex is not yet present. The south range of buildings also appears to be absent. Two tithe maps, one from 1848 and one from 1850, show very much the same layout. All of these earlier maps are illustrated and discussed in the desk-based assessment (Williams 2014).

The earliest available reliable map is the First Edition Ordnance Survey County Series map published in 1886 (Fig. 6). This edition shows the farm site in a clearly recognisable form with all of the currently present buildings in place by this date. The eastern range of buildings appears to project beyond the line of the north range. There is a rectangular structure in the centre right of the courtyard which also appears to be divided in half along a north to south axis with a further east to west division along its eastern side. A fence line also seems to run from the south-west corner of the south range towards the barn built onto the north side of the house. The free-standing cart

shed is shown as an open-fronted building as it remains today. The garden behind (to the east of) the house is shown as having trees and laid out paths which may represent a formally laid out orchard. The area surrounding the farm contains few buildings and has a number of rectangular plots, a pattern which continues to the present day.

The next available map is the 1900 edition which shows a very similar situation with no changes in the buildings except that the east range now appears to be flush with the line of the north range (Fig. 7). A new boundary has been introduced running northwards from the north-west corner of the northern range of buildings. The fence from the southern range towards the barn appears to have shifted southwards and the detail for the house garden has been omitted. Whether this represents a physical change or not is not clear. The 1926 edition of the Ordnance Survey shows no further changes but the farm is now identified for the first time as Middle Farm. This apparent lack of change continues up to and including the 1958 edition which shows the same details as the 1926 map.

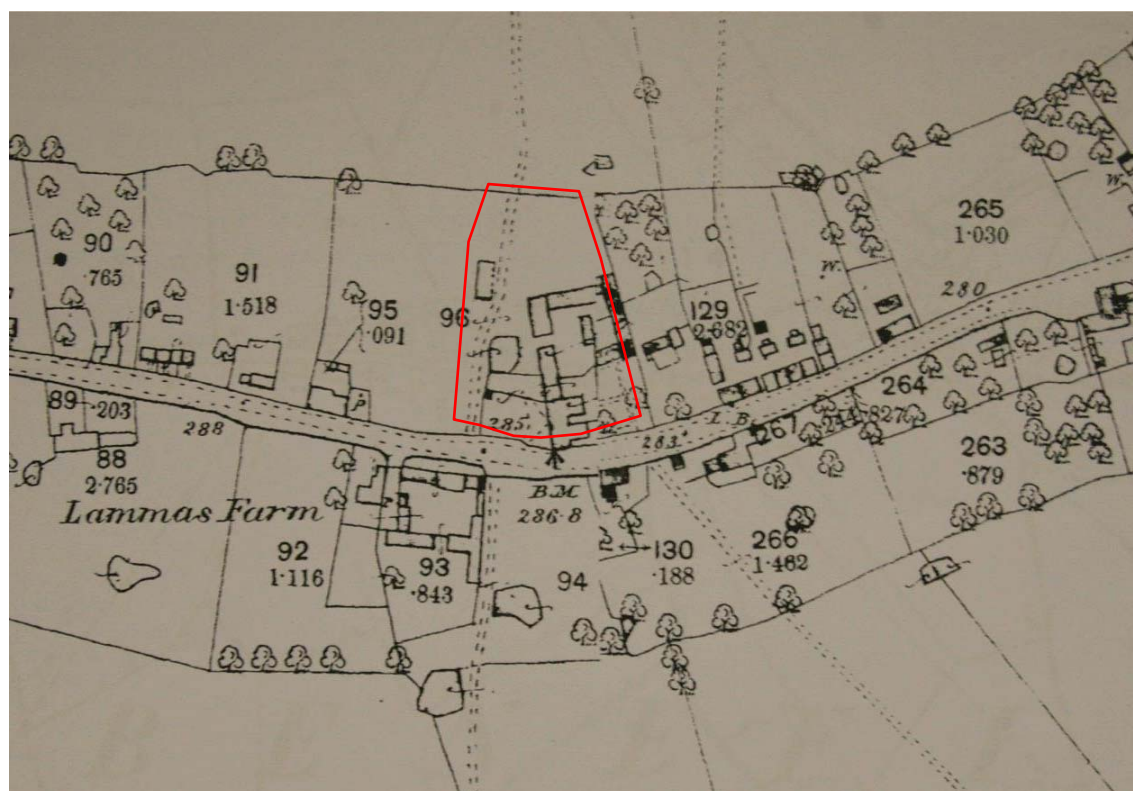


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey County Series. First Edition 1886



By the time of the 1970 OS map a new building has been added to the west end of the south range to create a more enclosed courtyard (Fig. 8). This building is shown as an open-fronted structure opening into the courtyard. It appears to have been present until quite recently as it is still shown on the architect's site plan shown in Fig. 3 above which was drawn in January 2013 and described as a barn. The desk-based assessment site photographs taken in February 2014 still show it in place as an open-fronted lean-to opening out onto the courtyard. It appears to be very recent in date and is unlikely to have been more than fifty years old. At the time of this survey (October 2015) only the concrete floor pad remained of this structure. The 1970 map shows the building in the middle of the courtyard and the detail suggests that it was an open-fronted shed. However, the building appears to be noticeably shorter than shown on earlier maps. The yard is still divided from north to south but the smaller east to west subdivision has now been removed.

### ***Building Survey***

For ease of interpretation the site has been divided into six main areas; the house, the north, south, east and west ranges and the free-standing cart shed. The room and building identification numbering system used for this survey refers only to the survey and does not imply any earlier room or building designation numbering system.

### *The House*

As noted above, the house stands to the south-west of the yard and farm buildings. Its principal elevation faces westwards along Main Street and takes advantage of a curve in the road so that the house tends to stand out more prominently when seen from the west (see Figs 3-4). The house is built from limestone and has a Collyweston slate roof. The west facing elevation uses squared and coursed stone but the other elevations have dressed rubble limestone courses (Fig. 9). Two differently sized rear projecting wings form much of the east facing elevation. The house consists of two storeys with a small cellar and attic rooms running the length of the main building.

### *The House: Outside Elevations*

#### *West Facing Elevation*

In keeping with a principal elevation the west facing elevation has a dressed stone frontage (Fig. 10). Ashlar long and short quoins are built into each corner. The ground floor doorway is slightly offset to the north giving the impression of possible remodelling from an earlier pair or trio of smaller houses - the later 18th century was a time of symmetry and style and a new elevation would be expected to be balanced. This is possibly suggested by the listing information which indicates that the house was once a three-unit plan. There is however no evidence of any blocked openings or joints except where the barn to the north butts against the northern gable end of the house. It was not possible to see if the ashlar stonework was an added skin over an earlier wall.

The southernmost ground floor sash window extends almost to the ground and may have at one time been a doorway. The remaining windows are relatively small and rectangular with gauged limestone lintels. They all have wooden frames pegged at the corner joints (Fig.11). A stone gabled porch over the doorway matches the style and building materials of the house but is a later addition as it is not keyed into the stonework of the house and probably dates to the mid-19th century (Fig.12).



The three ashlar chimney stacks are slightly offset which again may suggest that the building began life as a three-unit building. Three low dormer windows are set into the roof at eaves level and have wooden casement window frames and Collyweston slate roofs (Fig. 13).

#### *North Facing Elevation*

Much of the north facing gable end of the main house building is obscured by the adjacent barn (Building G) which has been built against it (Fig. 14). A narrow covered passageway between the house and the adjacent barn incorporates what appears to have been used as a coal storage area (see plan figure 20) with a blocked doorway leading into the house (Fig. 15). This doorway would have led into the space to the east of the large fireplace in room G1 and is discussed in more detail below. No more of this elevation can be seen although it clearly pre-dates the adjacent barn.

#### *The Eastward Projecting Rear Wings*

The House has two rear wings projecting out to the east. They are both of a slightly different height and footprint size and the northern wing does not extend as far out from the house as the southern wing does. All of the joints with the house and the two-story northern wing are obscured making it unclear about their relationship in terms of building date. The northernmost wing is obscured on its northern elevation by a modern lean-to extension which reaches the eaves on the west side and to the sill of a first floor window on the east. The extension is built of 20th century brick with a damp proof course and corrugated sheet roof and is clearly a much later addition. However the First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the footprint of this wing is the same in 1885 as it is now which may suggest that this later addition replaces an earlier similar sized structure on this side of the wing. The east and south facing elevations of the northern wing have rectangular wooden casement windows at ground floor only. A small narrow rectangular window lights a stairwell near to the junction with the house at first floor level (Fig. 16). This wing appears to have been constructed in a single phase. There is a single storey modern extension built into the gap between the two wings which appears to be late 19th or early 20th century but has a late 20th century roof and door fittings. The extension joins the two wings together without the need to walk through the main house.

The north facing elevation of the southernmost wing shows a number of building and modification phases. At ground floor level a small rectangular window has been blocked with coursed limestone rubble and replaced by a larger window slightly further to the west closer to the main house. There is also a clear difference in the stone courses starting at first floor level indicating that this wing began life as a single storey before being extended to two storeys later on (Fig. 17). This joint in the masonry can also be seen on the east facing gable end of the wing where the sloping joint of the original single storey gable and the added stonework can be seen (Fig. 18). The height of the original gable end is approximately the same height as the northern wing gable end height. The south facing elevation appears to have been extensively rebuilt to incorporate a large first floor sash window which breaks the eaves and to create a first floor room with higher ceilings (Fig. 19). The window presents an imposing view from the nearby road and seems to have been designed to impress. Parts of the south facing wall have been repointed making it difficult to identify joints and rebuilding lines although it is just possible to see a horizontal line running below



the sill of the inserted first floor window. The ground floor window is a wide rectangular wood-framed casement window.

*The South Facing Elevation of the House*

The main house gable end fronts directly onto Main Street and has no windows or doors (Fig. 19). There is no indication of any modifications to this elevation. It is interesting to note that the ashlar quoins are only present on the western corner despite this elevation being clearly visible by the general public. It is possible that the quoins may have been added when the west facing elevation was modified.



Farmhouse, west facing elevation



Farmhouse, east facing elevation (inside yard)



Farmhouse, south facing elevation



Farmhouse, north facing elevation

Figure 9: Middle Farm House elevations  
Modified from plans supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects



Figure 10: Farm house, west facing elevation  
Looking east.



Figure 11 Farm house window details  
Left: ground floor, right: first floor  
1m scale



Figure 12: South facing elevation of porch  
Looking north, 1m scale



Figure 13: West facing elevation, dormer window detail





Figure 14: Farm House north facing elevation  
Looking south, 1m scale



Figure 15: Farm House north facing elevation gable end blocked ground floor doorway. Looking south-east





Figure 16: Farm House, northern rear wing  
Looking north-west, 1m scale



Figure 17: Farm House rear wings showing extension to south wing  
Looking west, 1m scale. Yellow arrow shows blocked window. Red arrows show  
joint in walls on southern wing





Figure 18: Farm House, rear south wing north facing elevation  
Looking west, 1m scale. Arrows show line of original gable



Figure 19: Farm House, rear south wing south facing elevation  
Looking north, 1m scale



*The House, Internal Details*

As noted above, room identification letters shown in the plans below have been allocated for the purpose of this survey and do not refer to any previous uses or identification.

*Ground Floor and Cellar*

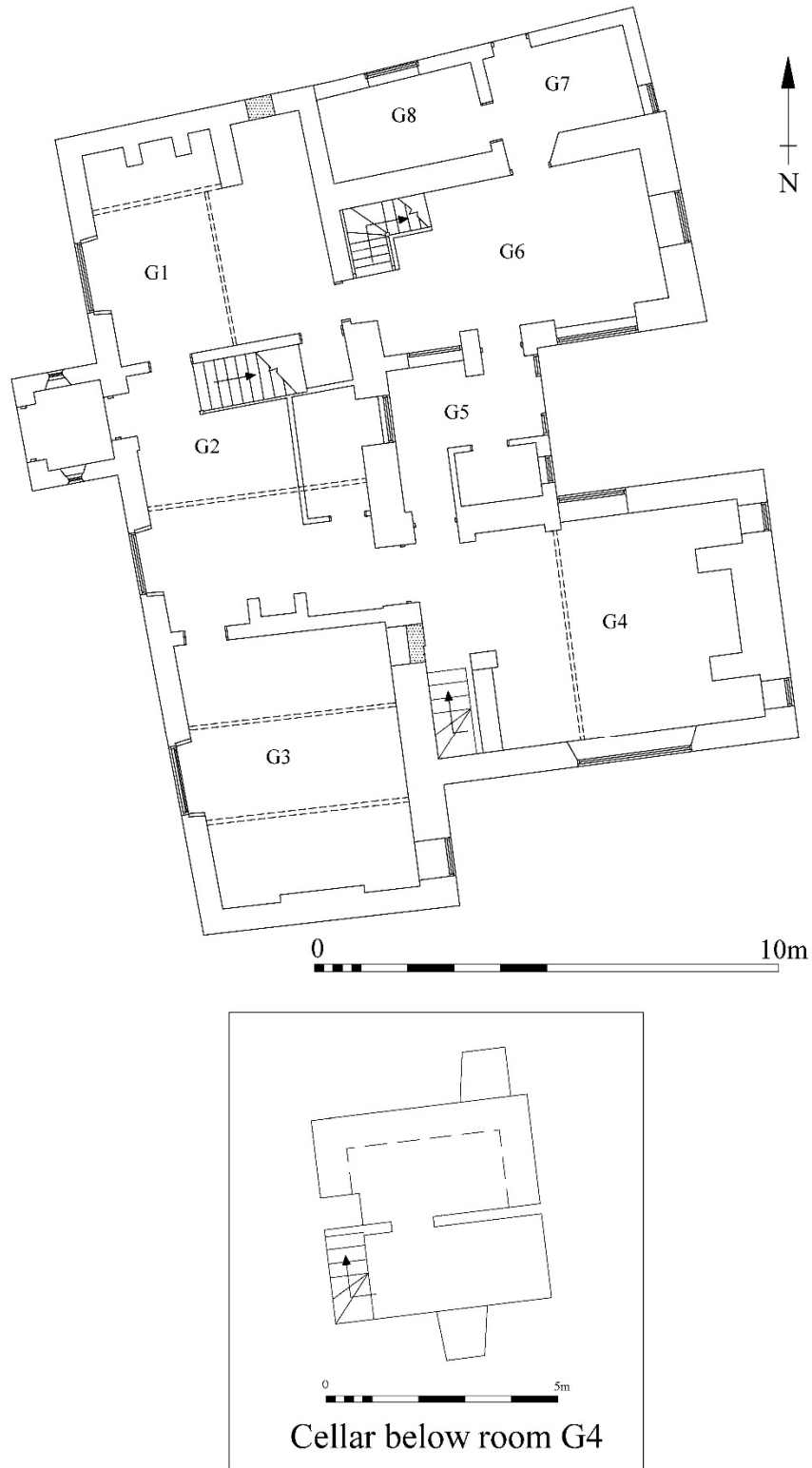


Figure 20: Middle Farm House ground floor and cellar plan (inset)  
Modified from plans supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects

The main doorway into the house is through the stone gabled porch on the west facing elevation. The porch has red and cream 6 inch quarry tiles which match those in the hallway (G2) and which appear to be 19th century in date (Fig. 21). As noted above the porch appears to be butt-jointed onto the house suggesting that it is a later addition.



Figure 21: Porch and hall floors  
Looking north-west, 1m scale

### *Room G1*

Room G1 is the northernmost ground floor room of the house. It is a rectangular room with floorboards set slightly lower down (100mm) than the tiles in the hallway (Fig. 22). The wooden-framed window sits on a narrow masonry wall which is significantly thinner than the main walls and which indicates that this may have once been a doorway before the front of the house was modified. There is a space either side of the window for shutters but these have been removed. The room has a large open fireplace on the north wall with a substantial bressumer beam supporting the chimney stack and the first floor bedroom wall (Fig. 23). Along the front of the beam are a number of wooden pegs to hang items along its front. The fireplace and surrounding stonework have been stripped of plaster and repointed and the current fire sits on a raised plinth with a relatively small flue aperture. The plinth and the small size of the fireplace in such a large opening suggest that some remodelling has taken place relatively recently. The fireplace is offset to the west leaving a recess on the eastern side which is where the blocked doorway could be seen on the north facing gable end.

The stonework inside the recess is of a lower quality than the rest of the fireplace but does not clearly show where the doorway was.



Figure 22: Ground floor, Room G1  
Looking south-west, 1m scale



Figure 23: Ground floor, Room G1 fireplace  
Looking north, 1m scale

A low moulded skirting board only survives along the southern wall and may not be original. A pair of doors in the south-east corner lead to the kitchen (G6) and to a small cupboard or pantry below the stairs. The pantry has a limestone flagstone floor and board shelves supported by wooden struts. The flagstones appear to continue below the floorboards in the Room G1 and seem likely to be the original flooring (Fig. 24).

#### *Room G2*

Room G2 forms the hallway of the house from which all of the other rooms and main stairs lead off. As noted, the 6 inch square quarry tiles match those in the porch and may be a 19th century addition. The wide six-panelled front door has clear glass with stained glass upper panels (Fig. 25). The casement window still has its three-leafed single panel shutters intact which appear to be of late 18th century design and have an iron closure bar set on a central pivot (Fig. 26). The brick-built fireplace on the south wall has thin hand-made bricks which are likely to date to the mid to late 18th century (Fig. 27). The plasterwork around the chimney breast has been stripped to reveal the bricks. A beaded beam runs from east to west across the room and continues into a small pantry built into the corner formed by the east wall and stairs. The pantry walls are likely to be a later insertion as the beading on the beam only stops when it reaches the main east wall. The floor of the pantry has large flagstones as seen in Room G1 and not quarry tiles which suggests that the pantry has a similar 19th century date as the tiles. A window on the east wall in the pantry was an outside window but now looks into Room G5 which is the modern extension built between the two wings. The skirting boards are the same all around the room including around the inserted pantry showing that they date to a similar time as the pantry and quarry tiles. The main staircase is opposite the entrance doorway. The stairs have stick balusters and a plain newel post typical of the early 19th century.

#### *Room G3*

Room G3 appears to have been used as the main sitting room and has a large full-height sash window on the west wall with full-height two-panelled shutters (Figs 28 and 29). The floor is laid with floorboards but the skirting boards appear to be mid or late 20th century. A pair of timber beams with decorative beading run from east to west across the room. The beading matches that seen in Room G2. The south wall has a marble fireplace which is in the style of an early 19th century design. On the east wall are two recessed round headed niches with lower cupboards extending to the ground. The southernmost niche has a window looking out along the southern side of the south wing (Fig. 30). The northern niche is blind as it backs onto the internal ground floor room of the south wing. It is not clear if this was originally a window which may have been blocked after the construction of the wing.

#### *Room G4*

Room G4 fills the ground floor of the south wing. It has been modernised by stripping the wall plaster down to bare stone and building a low plinth around the south and east walls (Figs 31 and 32). The floor has flagstone on which do not appear to be as worn as those seen in Rooms G1 and 2 so may be a later insertion. The wide fireplace has a modern stove set into the grate. The wooden beam running from north to south may be modern, or masking the original, as it is fixed in place with modern bolts. The first floor joists have been exposed. On the north wall the stripped stonework allows the blocked and modified window to be seen as was discussed above. However, the

possible blocked niche seen in Room G3 is not clear. A modern drinks bar has been built into the south-western corner of the room behind which is a wooden hatch covering the stairs which lead down to the cellar below this room (Fig. 33). The cellar is discussed in more detail at the end of the ground floor room descriptions.

#### *Room G5*

Room G5 is the small single-storey extension built between the two wings seen on the east facing elevation. The style of the building and the materials used suggest a mid to late 20th century construction date. A toilet has been built into the south-east corner of the room leaving little more than an angled passageway running between the two wings and to an outside doorway on the east. A window on the west wall looks into the inserted pantry in Room G2. The roof is leaking quite badly leading to a significant damp problem in this room.

#### *Room G6*

Room G6 is presently used as the main kitchen and fills the ground floor of the northernmost of the two wings (Figs 34-35). The room width splays outwards towards the east (see plan Fig. 20). The splay is caused by the slight change in angle of the east wall of the main house which may be the result of earlier rebuilding or alterations. The floor tiles and kitchen fittings are all modern and mask any earlier details. As in Room G4 the ceiling has been removed to expose the floor joists. A low doorway on the north wall leads into the lean-to extensions G7 and G8 whilst a door in the south-west corner leads into Room G1. In the north-west corner of the room is an enclosed stair case with narrow wooden treads leading up to the first and second floors (Fig. 36). The narrow nature of the stairs, which curve round to the east, suggests that they were built for servants.

#### *Rooms G7 and G8*

Rooms G7 and G8 appear to be quite modern and have concrete floors and modern plaster walls (Fig. 37). The ceiling of G7 is quite low and slopes down to such an extent that the outside door is barely more than a metre high.

#### *The Cellar*

The small cellar only fills the space below Room G4. The wall is lined with limestone rubble and limestone flagstones are used on the floor (Figs 38 and 39). The space is divided into two by an east to west brick wall and the ceiling of each has a brick barrel vault. Around the floor on the northern room is a low stone plinth. A recessed opening on the north and south walls allows a small amount of light and ventilation into the cellar. There are no cellars below any of the other ground floor rooms.





Figure 24: Ground floor, Room G1. Pantry below stairs  
Looking south-west



Figure 25: Ground floor, Room G2. Hall  
Looking north-west, 1m scale



Figure 26: Ground floor, Room G2. Shutter detail  
Looking south-west. Note pivoting locking bar



Figure 27: Ground floor, Room G2. Hall  
Looking south-east, 1m scale. Note inserted pantry on left of picture





Figure 28: Ground floor, Room G3  
Looking south-east, 1m scale



Figure 29: Ground floor, Room G3  
Looking north-west, 1m scale. Note arched niche on right

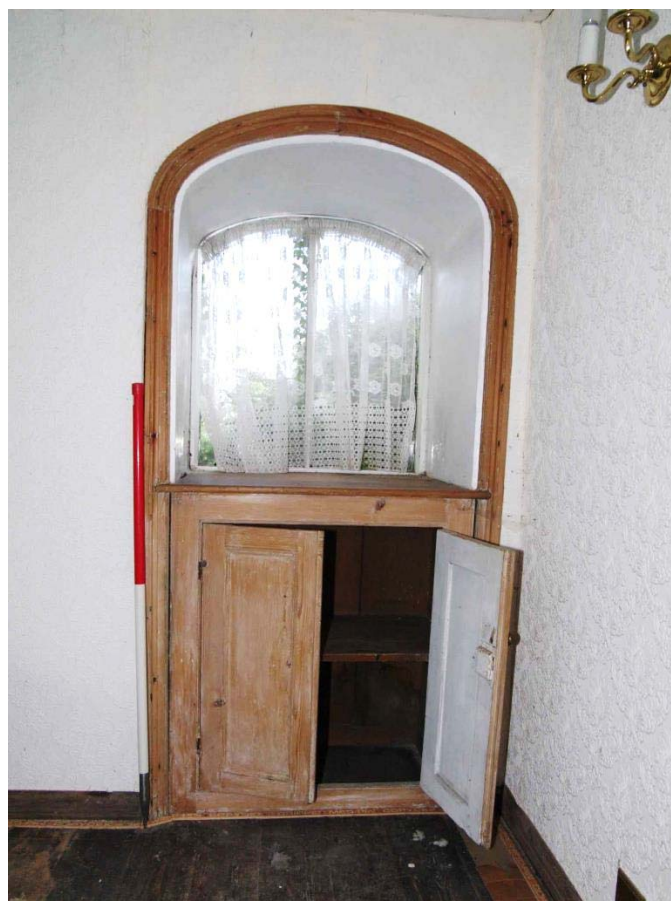


Figure 30: Ground floor, Room G3. Window niche  
Looking east, 1m scale



Figure 31: Ground floor, Room G4  
Looking south-east, 1m scale. Cover to cellar steps just visible on right of picture





Figure 32: Ground floor, Room G4  
Looking north-west, 1m scale. Cellar steps behind bar on left

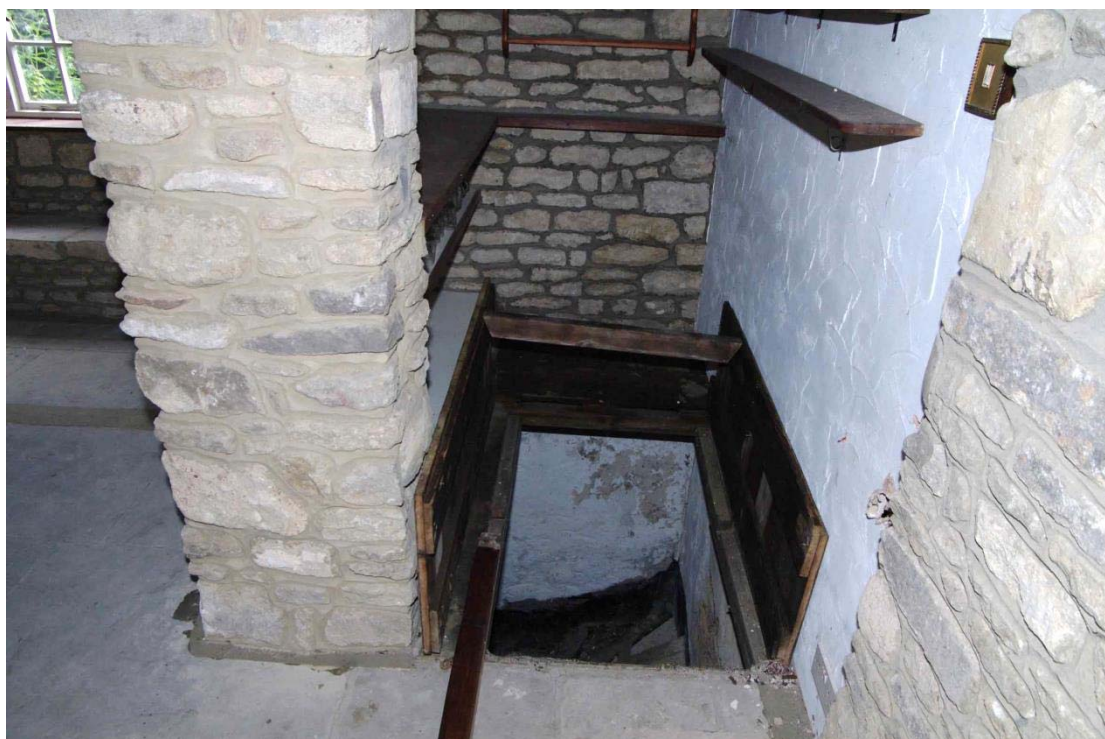


Figure 33: Ground floor, Room G4. Cellar steps  
Looking south



Figure 34: Ground floor, Room G6  
Looking east-north-east, 1m scale. Door to Room G7 on left, G5 doorway on right



Figure 35: Ground floor, Room G6  
Looking south-west, 1m scale



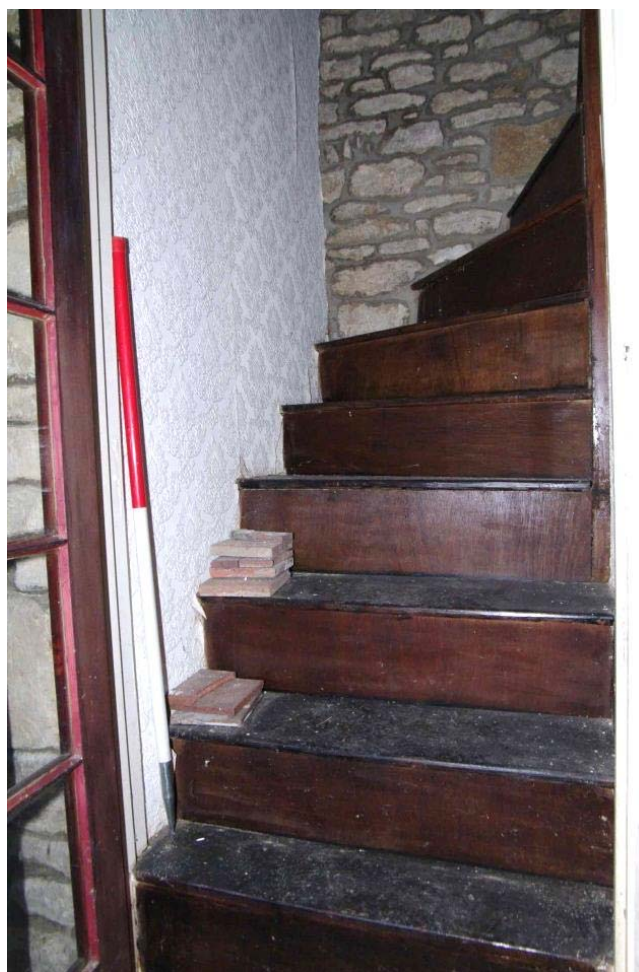


Figure 36: Ground floor, Room G6 staircase  
Looking north, 1m scale

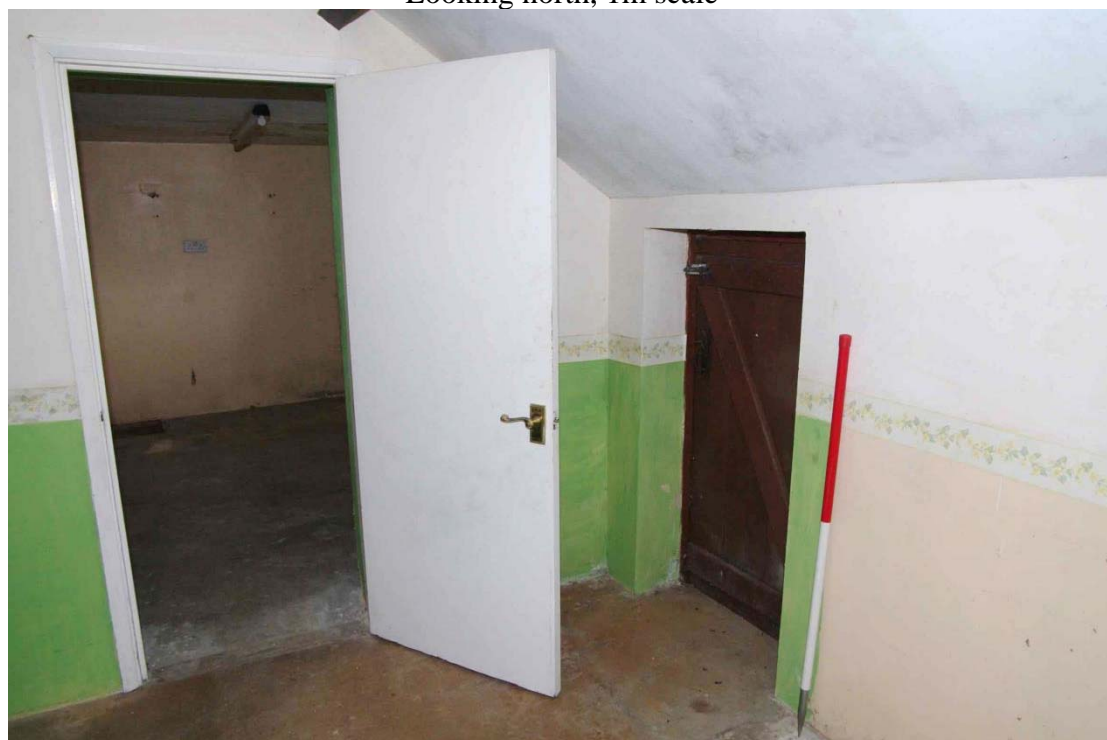


Figure 37: Ground floor, Room G7  
Looking north-west into Room G8, 1m scale





Figure 38: Cellar, south room  
Looking west, 1m scale



Figure 39: Cellar, north room  
Looking south-west, 1m scale

*House First Floor*

The first floor is reached via the main staircase leading up from Room G2, or from the smaller set in Room G6. As with the ground floor rooms the reference letters and numbers were allocated for the purposes of this survey only.

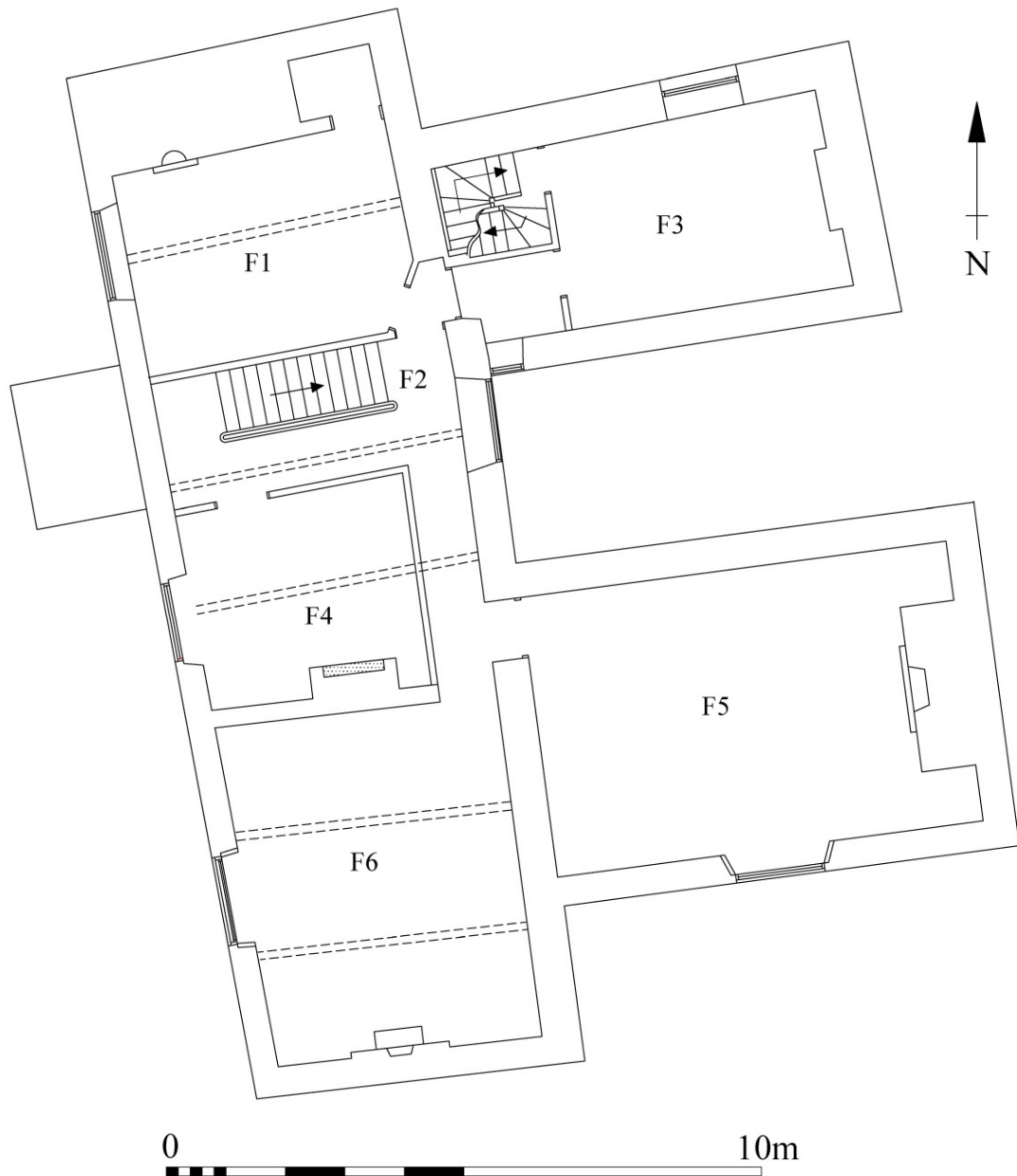


Figure 40: Middle Farm House first floor plan  
Modified from plans supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects

### *Room F1*

Room F1 is set at the northern end of the house. It is slightly shorter than the ground floor Room G1 directly below due to the massive chimney breast above the ground floor fireplace (Figs 41 and 42). The casement window on the west wall is set into the upper half of a larger recess (see Fig. 41) and has a chamfered east to west beam set into the wall above it. Around the window recess is a single beaded moulding to break the sharp angle of the plaster. The door into the room is set at an angle in order to accommodate the doorway into Room F3 in the northern rear wing. The door is four-panelled and is likely to be early to mid-19th century with fittings to match (Fig. 43). The framing around the doorway is built using wooden boards. In the north wall, which is supported by the bressumer on the floor below, is a small, probable 19th century, fireplace with recessed cupboards set into the wall above it. To the east of the fireplace is a large walk-in cupboard which fits around the large chimney breast. Inside the cupboard are two sets of wooden coat pegs fixed to wooden battens which are consistent with 18th century examples (Fig. 44). Peeling wallpaper reveals the plaster was painted a pale green before the first layers of wallpaper were applied.

### *Room F2*

Room F2 consists of the staircase, landing and corridor leading to the other rooms (Figs 45 and 46). The stairs also lead up to the attic rooms. An awkwardly shaped space to the north-east of the stairs leads into Rooms F1 and F3.

### *Room F3*

Room F3 is the first floor room of the northern rear wing and, until recently, has functioned as the toilet and bathroom (Figs 47 and 48). The floor level is slightly lower than the main house resulting in a shallow step down from Room F2. The 0.17m wide floorboards appear to have machine cut or stamped nails which are likely to date to the 19th century. Unlike the main house the ceiling is much lower which may suggest that this room was for domestic staff or younger members of the family. The narrow staircase from Room G6 is behind a small door in the north-west corner which means that the occupants of this room would have suffered from a lack of privacy unless an internal wall has since been removed. The narrow stairs continue upwards to the attic rooms (Fig. 49). There is evidence in the east wall of a small blocked opening for a fireplace which has been removed. Both doors are modern late 20th century as are the door fittings.

### *Room F4*

Room F4 has a wooden framed partition wall forming its north and eastern walls which create a fairly small rectangular room with a blocked offset fireplace on the south wall (Figs 50 and 51). The recess on the west side of the chimney breast appears to have once been a long shallow cupboard as there are traces of shelf supports. The doors for this cupboard are missing. The window is set in a full-height recess as seen in Room F1. The four-panelled door and catch are the same as in Room F1 and Rooms F5 and 6.

### *Room F5*

Room F5 is the first floor room of the southern rear wing and is significantly different to the other rooms in the house. The ceiling forms a plaster-coated barrel vault running from east to west across the room (Figs 52 and 53). The south wall has a central fire-place which appears to be mid-19th century in date (Fig. 54). The cast-

iron fireback has the name of *Wright's Patent Bivalve* cast into it. On one side of the fireplace is a porcelain and metal bell-pull to call servants. Either side of the chimney breast are two full-height arch-headed niches which echo those in Room G4 below and which may point to the same reconstruction and remodelling date. A large sash window on the south wall dominates the room and breaks the line of the barrel vault. The sash window has eight over eight panes, does not have horns and has narrow glazing bars which suggest a late 18th, or more likely an early 19th century date. The two-leaf shutters are of the same date (Fig. 55).

#### *Room F6*

Room F6 at the south end of the house is very similar in style and fittings to Rooms F1 and F2. The casement windows, as with the other casement windows on this floor, do not have shutters nor is there any evidence that any were present. Two unchamfered beams run across the ceiling from east to west. The fireplace appears to be a mid or late 19th century design.



Figure 41: First floor, Room F1  
Looking north-west, 1m scale





Figure 42: First floor, Room F1  
Looking north-east, 1m scale



Figure 43: First floor, Room F1. Door lock detail  
20cm scale

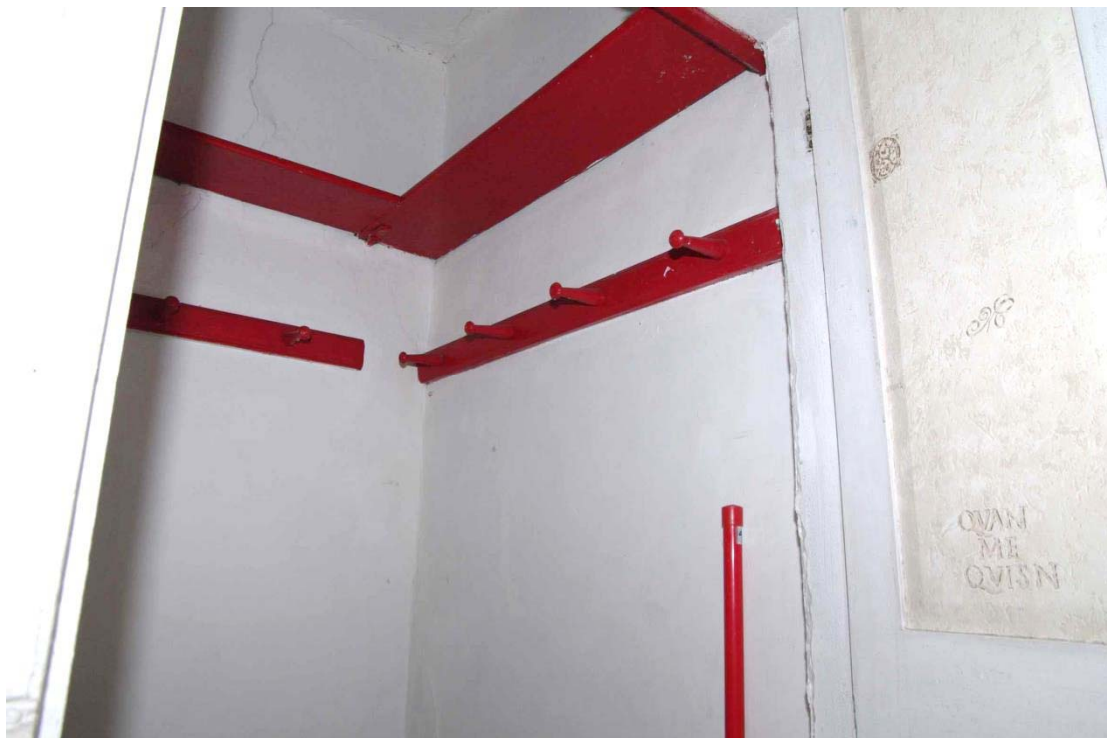


Figure 44: First floor, Room F1. Coat hooks in cupboard



Figure 45: First floor, Room F2. Staircase  
Looking west, 1m scale



Figure 46: First floor, Room F2  
Looking south, 1m scale



Figure 47: First floor, Room F3  
Looking south-east, 1m scale





Figure 48: First floor, Room F3  
Looking north-west, 1m scale

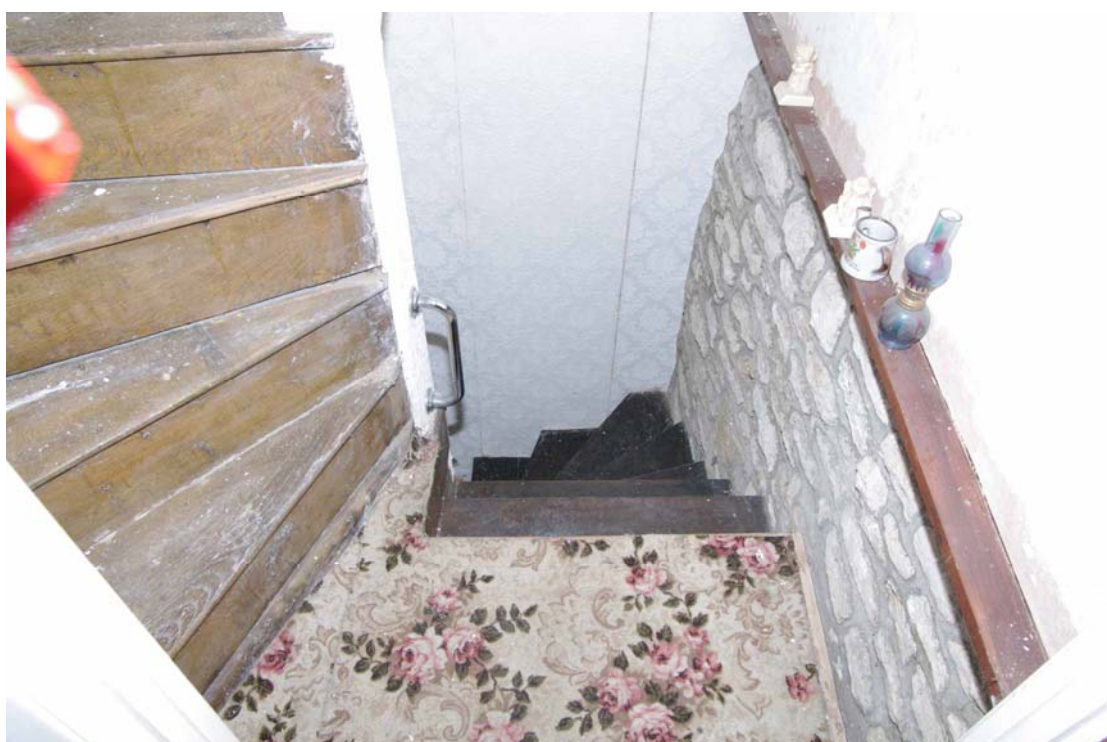


Figure 49: First floor, Room F3. Servant's stairs  
Looking west





Figure 50: First floor, Room F4  
Looking south-west, 1m scale



Figure 51: First floor, Room F4  
Looking north-west, 1m scale



Figure 52: First floor, Room F5  
Looking south-east, 1m scale



Figure 53: First floor, Room F5  
Looking north-west, 1m scale



Figure 54: First floor, Room F5. Fireplace  
Looking west, 1m scale. Note bell pull to right of fireplace



Figure 55: First floor, Room F5. Shutter detail

*Second floor attic rooms*

Only the main house has a second floor which is built into the roof space (Fig. 56). The narrow servant's staircase partially uses the roof space of the northern wing in order to gain enough headroom to enter Room S1. A small access hatch is located above these stairs but it was not deemed safe to enter this area during the survey (Fig. 57). It was not possible to investigate the roof structure in either wing.

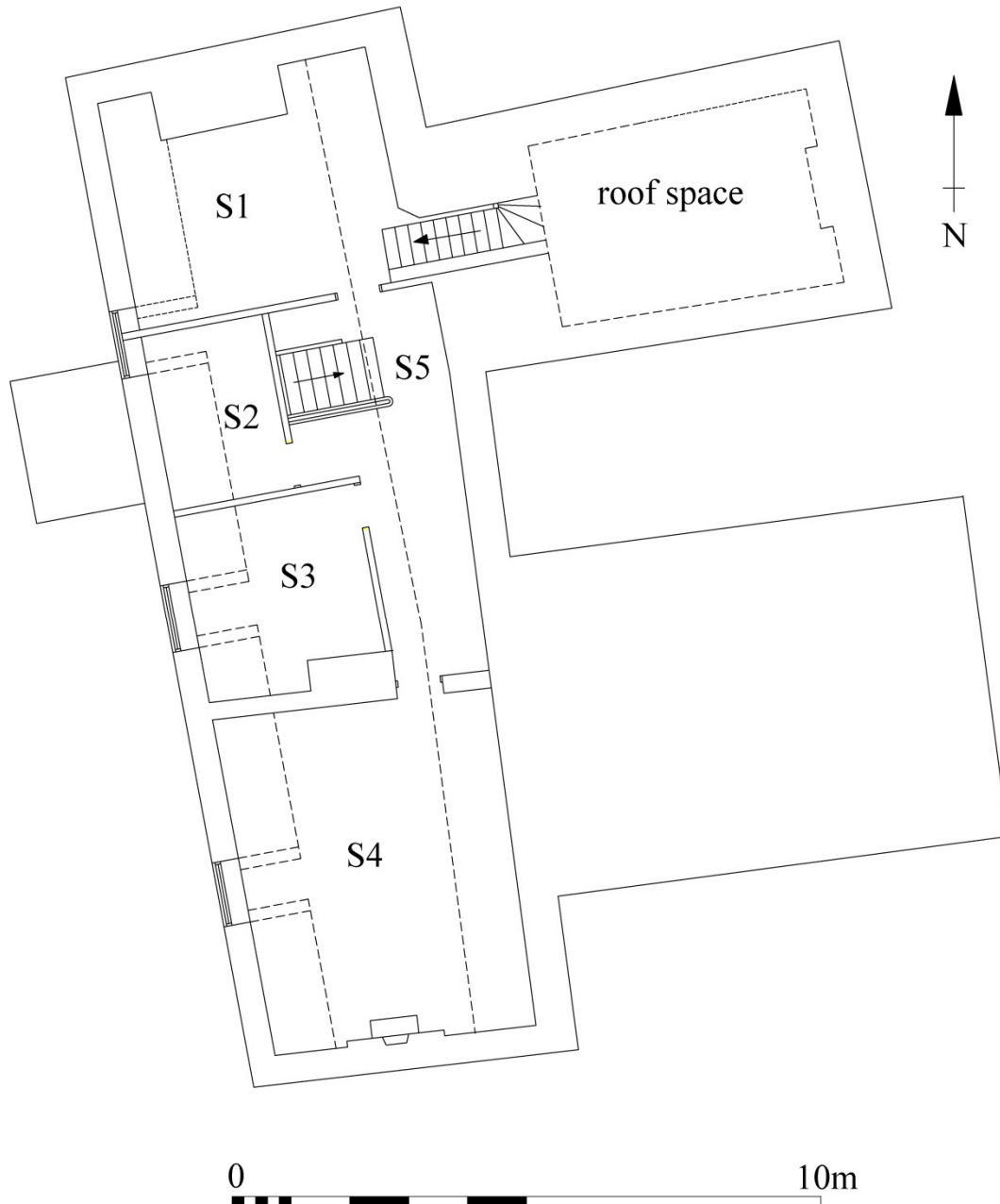


Figure 56: Middle Farm House second floor (attic) plan  
Modified from plans supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects





Figure 57: Second floor. Servant's staircase up from F3 into Room S1  
Looking east, 1m scale. Note access hatch (arrowed) to roof space of north wing

### *Room S1*

Room S1 has a low ceiling which follows the roofline and has partially exposed principal rafters (Figs 58 and 59). A plaster and lath wall on the south side of the room bisects the dormer window which it shares with the adjacent room and creates a quite dark space. The door on the south wall has four panels but does not have any moulded detail around the panels as seen on the doors on the first floor. The top corner of the door has been sawn off in order to fit the angle of the sloping ceiling but the doorframe is square which leaves a gap when the door is shut. The stairs down to Room F3 are open and would create quite a hazard in the dark. The floorboards are a range of widths with many tapering and which appear to be offcuts. A chamfered batten on the south wall has had its wooden coat hooks sawn off but they were presumably similar in style and date to those seen elsewhere in the house. There is no evidence of a blocked fireplace in the chimney breast.

### *Room S2*

Room S2 is a small room fitted into the space above the main staircase and the dormer window which is partially shared with Room S1 (Fig. 60). It has a plain two-panelled door with a probable mid-19th century spring locking latch mechanism (Fig. 61). On the east wall is a leaded window which allows light into the stairwell and landing but minimises any privacy that the occupant of S2 may have wished for (Fig. 62).

### *Room S3*

Room S3 is large enough to have its own dormer window and has the same plain door and lock as in Room S2 (Fig. 63). The chimney breast on the south wall does not have

any sign of a blocked opening and it must be assumed that Rooms S1, 2 and 3 were likely to be for domestic staff and were unheated.

#### *Room S4*

This is the largest and most well-appointed of the attic rooms. It has a fireplace at the south end and the door frame is shaped to accommodate the shape of the ceiling unlike in Room S1 (Figs 64 and 65). The door however is still the two-panelled plain variety. The ceiling has had the plaster removed to expose the timbers which are unlikely to have been on show when first built. There is no evidence of the removal of any dividing walls.

#### *Room S5*

Room S5 is the landing which connects the second floor attic rooms and into which the main staircase enters (Fig. 66). The only natural light comes from the leaded light in the wall of Room S2. Low down on the eastern wall is the remnant of the bell-call system consisting of a wire and the spring from which the bell was suspended (Fig. 67). There is a curved mark in the plaster showing where the bell used to swing and rub. Presumably its location on the landing would be heard by all occupants on this floor which suggests that everyone here was part of the domestic staff.



Figure 58: Second floor, Room S1

Looking south-west, 1m scale. Note batten with sawn-off wooden hooks above scale. Also note bisected dormer window lighting this room and the adjacent room



Figure 59: Second floor, Room S1  
Looking north-east, 1m scale. Stairs down to F3 to left of door



Figure 60: Second floor, Room S2  
Looking north-west, 1m scale





Figure 61: Second floor, Room S2. Door detail  
Looking east, 1m scale. Latch close-up on right



Figure 62: Second floor, outside Room S2  
Looking north-west, 1m scale. Door to room S1 on right



Figure 63: Second floor, Room S3  
Looking south-west, 1m scale



Figure 64: Second floor, Room S4  
Looking south-west, 1m scale



Figure 65: Second floor, Room S4  
Looking north-east, 1m scale



Figure 66: Second floor, landing S5  
Looking south, 1m scale. Arrow indicates location of bell pull. Main staircase in foreground. Room S2 on right of picture.



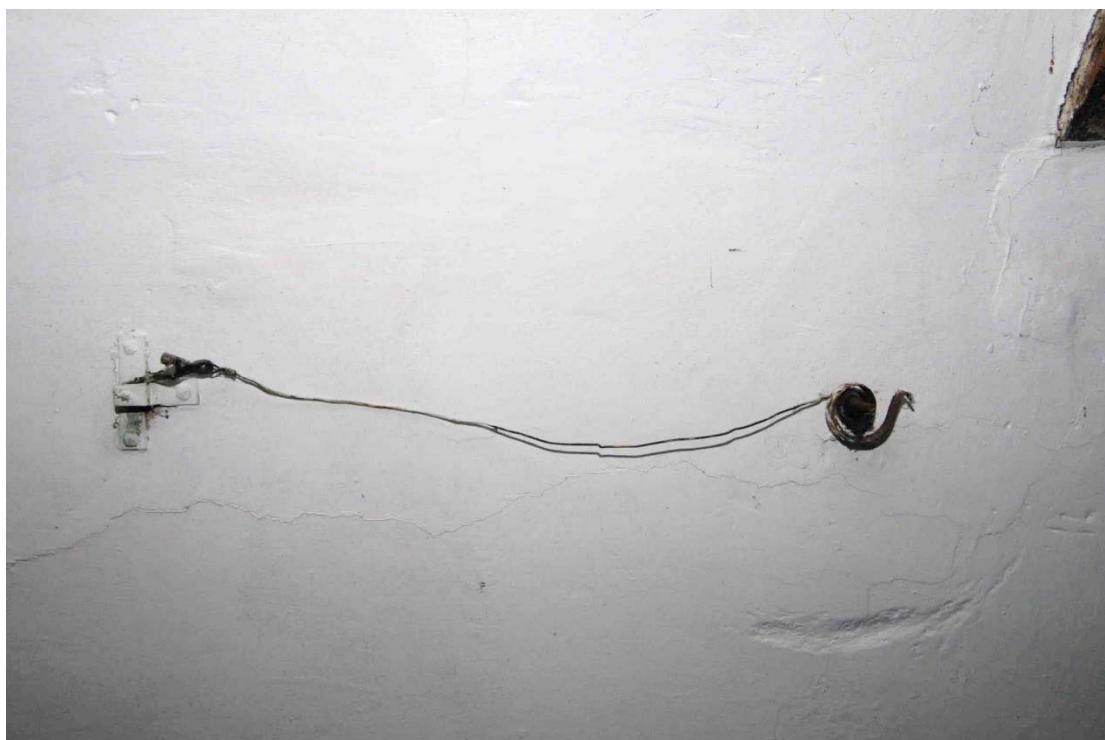


Figure 67: Second floor, landing S5. Remnant of bell pull  
Note mark in plaster where the bell used to swing

### *The Yard Buildings*

As noted above, the buildings belonging to Middle Farm consist of a range of stone-built barns and sheds centred around a rectangular courtyard. The main access to the yard is through a gap in the buildings on the western side although a large gap to the south, close to the house, also gives access to the former garden or orchard area. A covered gateway also leads through the north range into the fields beyond. The buildings, although disused, were generally in a reasonable state of repair. For the survey buildings were identified with letters from A to H based on the order of inspection and where natural breaks in each range occur. The lettering system is shown below in Fig. 68. At the time of the survey the yard was heavily overgrown and had piles of building debris scattered across the area. A large area of concrete shows where the modern building in the south-west corner of the yard used to be. There was no sign of the small courtyard building shown in the Ordnance Survey maps.

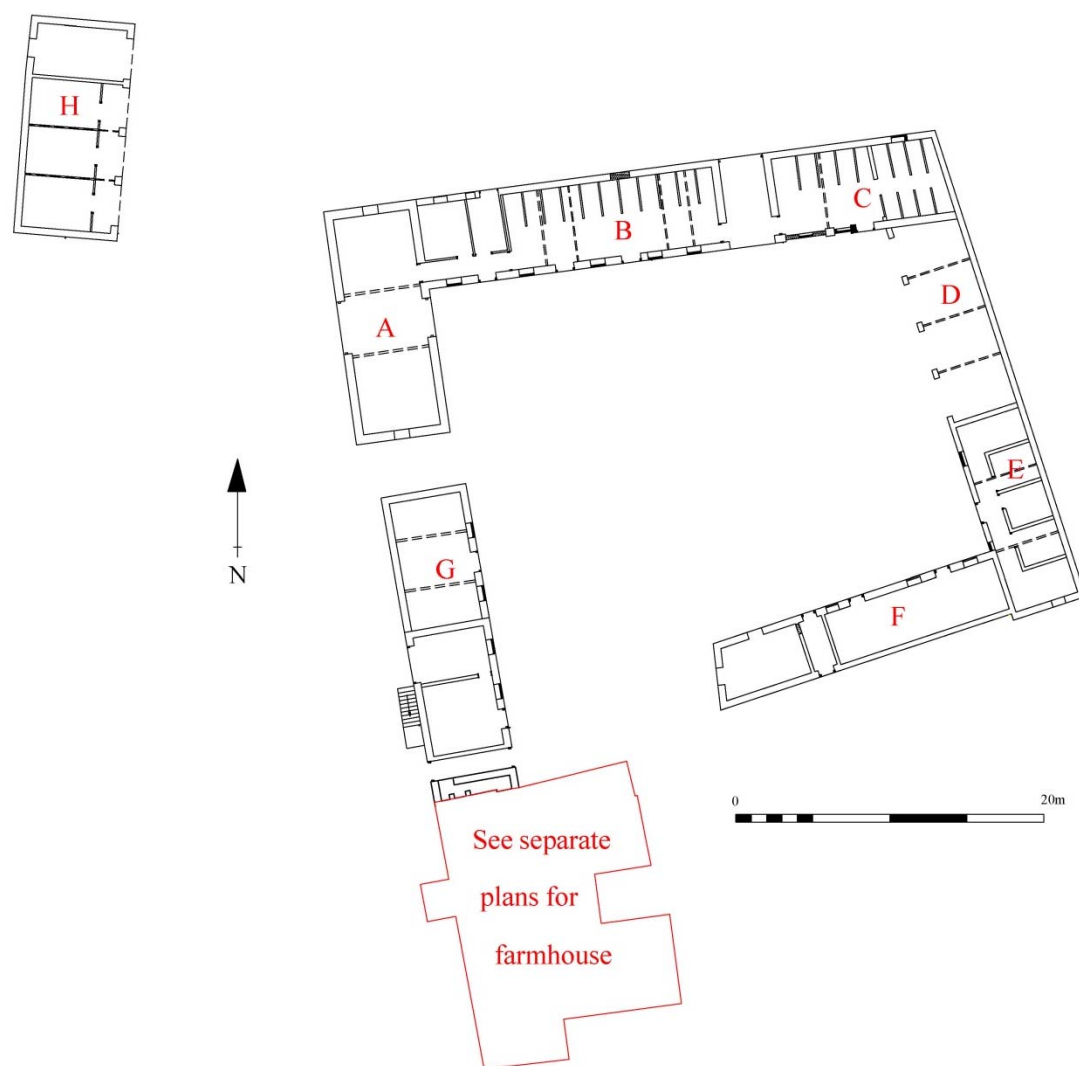


Figure 68: Barn layout and identification lettering system used in this report

### *The North Range*

The north range of buildings is divided into two distinct components identified as ranges B and C in Figure 68 above (Fig. 69). Both are built from coursed limestone rubble and have mid to late 20th century roof coverings (Fig. 70). The western component (Building B) butts against the adjacent barn (Building A) to the west and has straight joints between the two buildings indicating non-continuous building phases. Building B has a corrugated sheet roof covering which has a lower ridge height than Building C to the west (Fig. 71). It is difficult to ascertain if Buildings B and C have the same construction date as they are separated by a wide covered gateway which has the same cement-tiled roof of Building C. However, no clear joint can be seen in the masonry on the gateway supporting pillars.

The south facing elevation of Building B has a series of rectangular windows and doors with arches above them formed by a single course of red brick headers. All of the openings appear to be original although the easternmost window has a concrete lintel suggesting a probable rebuild at some stage. The stable doors are made of narrow planks with strap hinges of mid-19th century design (Fig. 72). The east facing

elevation which looks into the covered gateway between this building and Building C has a blocked window set into the gable end (Fig. 73). The ground floor doorway on this elevation has brick jambs.

The north facing elevation of Building B clearly shows the joint between it and Building A to the west which again may suggest slightly different building phases (Fig. 74). Two small windows and a door match the style of those on the south facing elevation but these do not have the arched brick heads. A blocked doorway towards the eastern end of the elevation has a brick arched head.

Inside Building B the main space is divided into eleven stalls which are separated by modern breeze block walls (Fig. 75). The floor is concrete and was probably laid in the late 20th century at the same time as the breeze block stalls. One of the stalls obscures the doorway on the north wall, hence the reason for it being blocked. A brick-walled room has been inserted into the western end of the building and appears to be a later addition. The room is open to the raftered roof which is supported by tie beams and collars attached to the principal rafters (Fig. 76). The purlins are joined to the principal rafters using mortice and tenon joints which are also pegged. The use of joints and pegs suggests a mid-19th century design. The windows have metal bars set horizontally which were presumably intended to prevent animals pushing against them and damaging the window.

Building C began life with three open arches on the south facing elevation (Fig. 77). The west opening forms the gateway out to the open fields as discussed but the two arches to the east have been blocked with brickwork into which windows and a doorway have been inserted. The open cart shed Building D obscures the eastern end of Building C. The north facing elevation of Building C is relatively plain and contains the gateway arch with a rectangular window at the eastern end which has been partially blocked to reduce its size (Fig. 78). There is no indication that the building extended northwards at this point as suggested on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map. It is possible that the map shows a small outbuilding which necessitated partially blocking the rectangular window.

Inside Building C are the same relatively modern breeze block stalls and concrete floor as seen in Building B (Figs 79 and 80). The modification of a new doorway in the easternmost arch can be clearly seen, as can the other blocked arches. The east end wall is set at a slightly skewed angle to accommodate the line of the east range of buildings which runs out from the north range at a slightly wider angle than 90°. A brick partition wall supports the roof ridge which drops down to the east and which appears to be part of the original design. The roof structure consists of a bolted post supporting the principal rafters which in turn support cleated purlins all of which are typical of late 19th century agricultural roof design (Fig. 81).



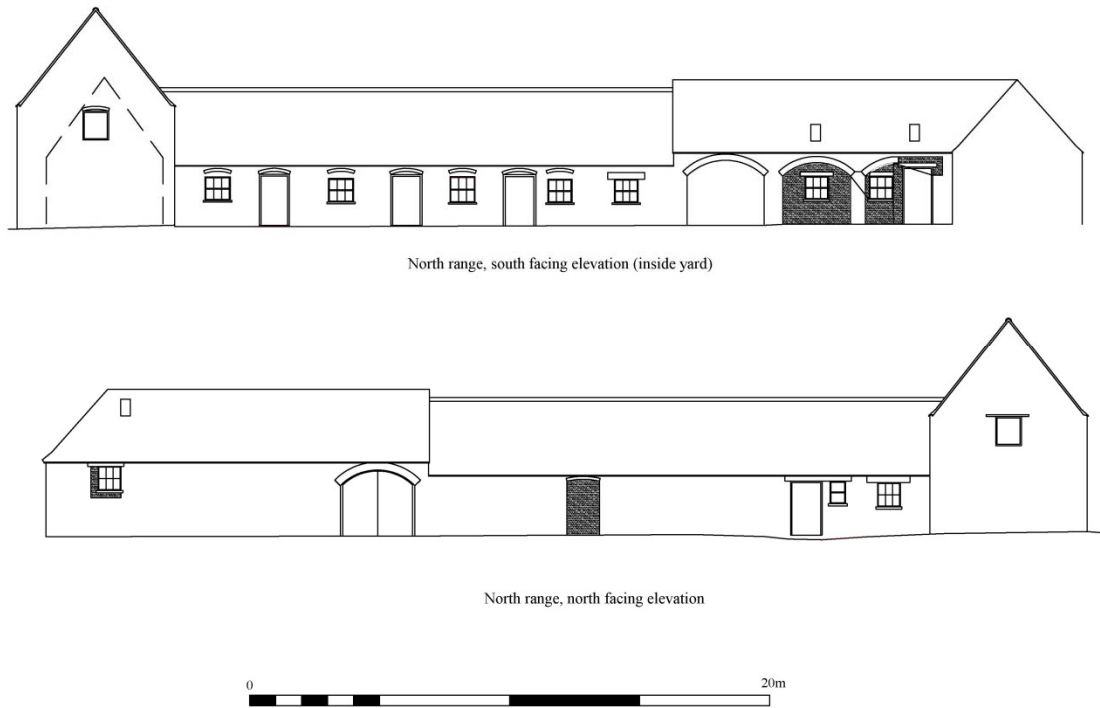


Figure 69: North range elevations  
Modified from drawings supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects



Figure 70: North range, south facing elevation  
Looking north



Figure 71: North range, western half of south facing elevation  
Looking north



Figure 72: North range south facing elevation door and window detail  
Looking north, 1m scale





Figure 73: North range, east facing elevation of Building B  
Looking north-west, 1m scale. Note blocked window



Figure 74: North range, north facing elevation  
Looking south-east. Building A on right, Building C on far left





Figure 75: North range, Building B inside  
Looking north-east, 1m scale

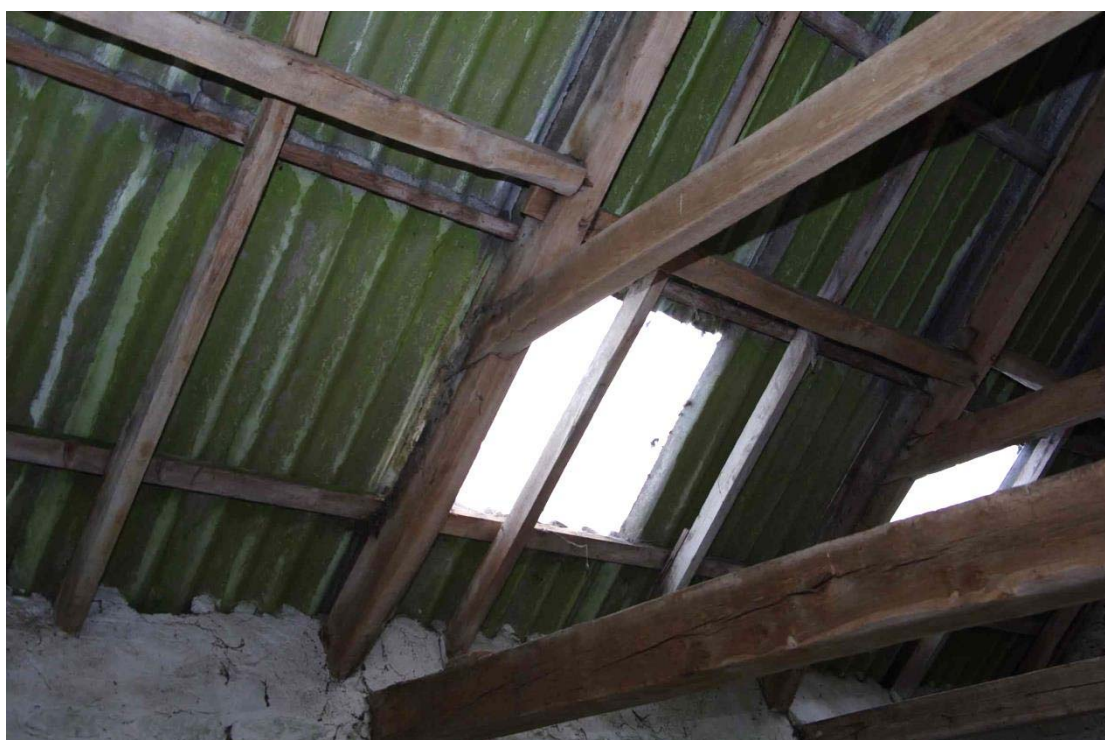


Figure 76: North range, Building B roof detail





Figure 77: North range south facing elevation, Building C  
Looking north



Figure 78: North range, north facing elevation, Building C  
Looking south





Figure 79: North range, Building C inside  
Looking north-east, 1m scale. Note supporting brick wall



Figure 80: North range, Building C inside  
Looking south-west, 1m scale





Figure 81: North range, Building C roof detail  
Looking north-east

### *The East Range*

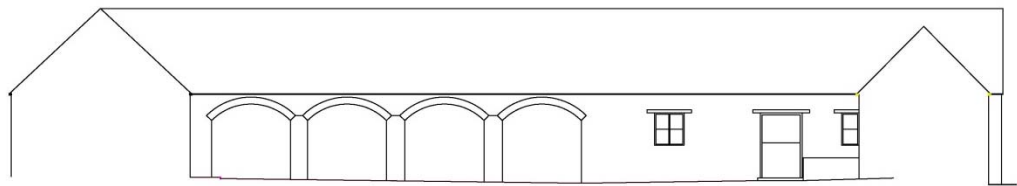
The east range consists of two key elements, Buildings D and E, which share the same roof (Figs 82 and 83). The roof ridgeline is the same height as Building C and uses the same mid-20th century cement tiles. The east and west facing elevations are built from the same coursed limestone rubble as seen on the other buildings at Middle Farm. It was not possible to gain access to photograph and fully record the east facing elevation as this forms the boundary to the neighbouring property. cursory inspection showed this to be a plain elevation with no apparent blocked openings.

The west facing elevation of Building D has four brick arches supported on brick pillars which match the style of those on Building C (Figs 83 and 84). Internally the range has the same bolted posts and roof structure as is used in Building C (Fig. 85). The floor is covered with brick rubble. Each end wall to the north and south is built of red brick and has been rather crudely keyed in to the stonework (Fig. 86). It is probable that this was part of the original design as the bricks are the same type and size as those used on the supporting arch pillars. The crude technique used to key the walls together is the best method given the different natures of brick and stone walls. The bricks are laid in courses of alternating headers and stretchers which is the same bond used in the supporting wall in Building C.

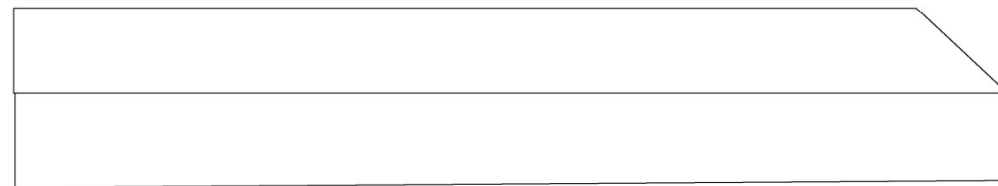
The west facing elevation of Building E continues seamlessly from Building D despite the slight dip in the ridgeline (Figs 83 and 87). The doors and windows have flat timber lintels which have small stop chamfers. The wide door is a modern replacement but the fixed wood-framed windows appear to be original. The window frames are also pegged with wooden dowels and at least some of the wood has been

re-used from elsewhere as there are some redundant mortice holes (Fig. 88). A brick-built trough runs across the corner between the east and south ranges. The south facing gable end elevation of the east range is set slightly proud of the southern range of buildings and has an open window or hayloft type doorway set at eaves height in the gable end (Fig. 89). It is not clear but there appears to be a joint between Building E and Building F to the west.

Inside Building E the space has been divided up into five animal pens which are separated by substantial low brick walls with wooden gates (Fig. 90). The roof structure is the same as in Buildings C and D.



East range, west facing elevation (inside yard)



East range, east facing elevation



Figure 82: East range elevations  
Modified from drawings supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects



Figure 83: Panoramic view of East range  
Looking east. Image created from two photographs





Figure 84: East range, Building D  
Looking north-east



Figure 85: East range, Building D inside  
Looking north, 1m scale





Figure 86: East range, Building D bonding between brick and stone walls  
Looking south-east, 1m scale



Figure 87: East range, Building E  
Looking east





Figure 88: East range, Building E window detail  
Looking south-west. Note pegged frame and mortice hole at top of frame and  
chamfered lintel



Figure 89: East range, Building E south facing gable end  
Looking north



Figure 90: East range, Building E inside  
Looking south-west, 1m scale

### *The South Range*

The south range consists of a single building identified in this survey as Building F. The range is slightly shorter than the north and east ranges as it does not close off the bottom of the yard and leaves a gap between it and the north-eastern corner of the house. Also, because it joins the east range it is at a slightly obtuse angle to the yard (see plan in Fig. 68).

The north facing elevation which faces into the yard has a number of single doorways and rectangular window openings (Figs 91 and 92). The windows and doors have stop-chamfered lintels matching those on the east range. Similarly the door and window frames are also pegged with wooden dowels. Instead of fixed glazing the windows on this elevation have wooden slats to allow for ventilation (Fig. 93). A doorway towards the west end of the elevation has been created from a former window. This side has a corrugated sheet roof covering whereas the south facing roof has cement tiles. A single brick-built chimney breaks the ridgeline towards the west end of the range.

The west facing gable elevation has a single doorway and a small rectangular window set high in the gable end (Fig. 94). Both the door and window have limestone lintels and wooden frames. The gable is built at a slight angle to the rest of the range in order to create a parallel face to the rear of the house and the opposite range of buildings. The roofline of the recently demolished modern structure can be clearly seen running in a line above the doorway. In front of this elevation is the concrete floor and stub of a brick wall belonging to the demolished building.

The south facing elevation has a single doorway opening to the south with no indication of any other former openings (Fig. 95). The south gable end of the east



range extends beyond the wall line of the south range by approximately 0.4m and the stone courses of the two ranges do not appear to match. As noted above the roof covering on this side is of cement tiles which match the covering on the north, east and west ranges.

Inside the south range the eastern side forms a large open space with two doorways leading out into the yard (Figs 96 and 97). There is a wooden byre near to the west end but otherwise no internal fittings survive (Fig. 98). The roof structure in the western end of the building is different from the rest of the farm buildings and has the purlins morticed and pegged into the principal rafters (Fig. 99). The tie-beams are lap-jointed to the principals just below the joints with the purlins. Many rafters show signs of re-use or modification. A pair of brick-built walls divides the range into two parts and creates a corridor leading through the building to the doorway on the south facing elevation (Fig. 100). The corridor has the remnants of wall plaster on and did have a ceiling with joists which has since decayed. This may have acted as a hayloft floor as there are empty sockets for more joists in the walls of the main room (see Fig. 97). The western end of the south range consists of a small room which has had its fireplace removed leaving the chimney breast still in place higher up the wall (Fig. 101). The roof structure in this room is different to the rest of this range and consists of two raking struts supporting the purlins using birds-mouth sockets (Fig. 102). The struts rest on a large truss and are also held by a tie-beam close to the purlins.



**Figure 91: South range elevations**  
 Modified from drawings supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects



Figure 92: South range, north facing elevation  
Looking south-east



Figure 93: South range north facing elevation door and window detail  
Looking south, 1m scale





Figure 94: South range west facing elevation  
Looking east, 1m scale



Figure 95: South range south facing elevation  
Looking north-east. Note slight projection of the east range gable at the right of the picture





Figure 96: South range, west end inside  
Looking east, 1m scale



Figure 97: South range, west end inside  
Looking west, 1m scale





Figure 98: South range, west end byre  
Looking south-east, 1m scale



Figure 99: South range, west end roof detail



Figure 100: South range corridor  
Looking south, 1m scale



Figure 101: South range, west end room  
Looking east, 1m scale. Ranging pole is to right of removed fireplace



### *The West Range*

The west range of buildings is attached to the northern end of the house and consists of buildings A and G (Figs 102 to 104). Building A is attached to the west end of the north range and is separated from Building G by a small alleyway. Once again the building materials of coursed limestone rubble and cement roof tiles on this range match the other ranges.

The east facing elevation of Building A faces into the yard and is partially obscured on its north end by the north range buildings. A slight difference in the stonework can be seen running across the elevation approximately 0.75m below the eaves (Fig. 105). This difference may be due to repointing but the stones used below the eaves appear to be larger and more regular in shape and as such could represent a later rebuild to increase the roof height. A low but wide doorway is set opposite the double doors on the west facing elevation in the style of threshing doors. The only other opening on this elevation is a single slit ventilation hole set just below the change in stonework. A possible blocked window is indicated by a straight vertical joint close to the south corner but the extent of this feature is not clear if indeed it is a former window.

The west facing elevation has a much larger double doorway which extends as far as the line of rebuilt stones below the eaves which is also present on this elevation (Fig. 106). The doorway with its stop-chamfered timber lintel is the only opening on this side although there are two slit ventilators either side of the door. The doors have been removed leaving only the cast metal sockets for what were likely to have been late 19th century strap hinges.

The south facing gable end elevation gives clear evidence of a major rebuilding of the whole of Building A. Two straight vertical joints can be seen running up the wall to a height of 2.7m and is 1.07m from the west corner and 0.45m from the east corner making a smaller wall of 4.62m in width compared to the present 6.14m wide wall (Fig. 107, see also drawing in Fig. 69). The sloping joint of the old roofline is also evident showing that the present building has been widened and raised in height. Within the outline of the original gable end is a rectangular opening, possibly a hayloft door, with a brick arched head. Three bricks are also set into the wall at this point but their function is unclear.

The north facing elevation shows little evidence of modification or extension although there is a hint of a line where the east side of the old roofline might have been (Fig. 108). No clear joints can be seen at ground level suggesting that much of this wall was either completely rebuilt or that the whole building was extended northwards.

Inside Building A the cracks in the south wall are visible showing the outline of the joint of the former gable end and the enlarged wall (Fig. 109). Once again it is difficult to spot any joints on the north wall although there is still a hint of the old roofline on the east side. The floor is of brick and tends to drop towards the west side of the building. A single doorway to the north of the eastern double doors leads into the Building B of the north range. The roof structure is dominated by two large east to west timber trusses set into the walls below wall-plate level (Fig. 110). The principal rafters are also set into the masonry and have small wooden bracers attached to them at wall-plate height. A tie-beam is lap-jointed and pegged to the principals at the point where the relatively slight purlins sit on cleats on the backs of the principals. A small

collar joins the principal rafters at their apex. The principal rafters have been re-used from elsewhere as there are a number of redundant mortice holes and some mortice and tenon joints still with the sawn off tenons and pegs intact (Fig. 111).

Building G, as noted above, is separated from Building A by a small gap which presumably formed the main entrance from the surrounding fields to the yard. It consists of a single storey element rising to a two-storey building which butts against the north side of the farmhouse. There is a clear joint in the masonry between the two-storey building and the north wall of the house (Fig. 112). However, the two-storey and single-storey barns share a continuous wall. Both have cement tile roof coverings which are not the original covering and probably represent a wholesale re-roofing of all the farm buildings in the second half of the 20th century.

The west facing elevation of Building G faces out across the small pond to the west of the farm complex. The single-storey component does not have any door or window openings on this elevation. The two-storey part has a wide ground floor doorway with a modern up and over garage door set within it, there is also a single width doorway close to the junction with the house. Both ground floor doors have arched heads made from a single course of bricks similar in style to those on the south facing elevation of the north range. A set of stone steps leads up to a doorway on the first floor which has flat-headed rectangular unglazed windows either side of it. With the exception of the modern garage door all of the doors and windows appear to be unmodified.

The north facing gable end of Building G is a plain limestone rubble wall with no apparent openings or modifications (Fig. 113). It is not quite as wide as the gable end of Building A and is slightly offset to the east as it follows the alignment of the house which is marginally different to the yard buildings.

The east facing elevation of Building G which looks into the yard has wooden-framed windows which have dowel-pegged joints and arched brick headers on the ground floor as seen on the west facing elevation (Figs 114 and 115). The stable doorway in the single-storey part of the range has a large stone lintel in place of a brick arch. A small rectangular window on the first floor at the south end of the range has been blocked with coursed limestone rubble.

Inside Building G a stone flagged brick-walled passageway runs straight through the building from east to west close to where the range joins the house (Fig. 116). This passageway incorporates the house coal store and partially blocks the doorway noted on the north elevation of the house in the earlier discussion (see Fig. 15). To the north of the passageway is a stable and adjoining tack room which has had a modern garage door replacement for the earlier door (Figs 117 and 118). The tack room still has two wooden racks for saddles and a row of wooden pegs for other paraphernalia. Two large chamfered east to west beams support the floor joists of the first floor in the stable room whilst in the tack room the joists appear to be relatively recent replacements. The tack room window has two single leaf shutters made from planks and battens with strap hinges (Fig. 119). The northernmost room of Building G is a large open room with a floor which slopes down towards the east (Fig. 120). Marks in the whitewash on the west wall show where a byre has been removed which used to run the whole length of the wall. The roof structure has two substantial trusses embedded into the wall and tie-beams are lap-jointed and nailed to the principal

rafters which have carpenters marks in the form of Roman numerals identifying each principal. The rather slender purlins are joined to the principals with mortice and tenon joints and have had an additional timber batten attached to their upper sides for strength (Fig. 121).

The first floor of Building G can only be reached via the outside stairs on the west facing elevation. The floorboards were in a dangerous state of repair so an inspection of this floor was only made from the threshold at the top of the stairs. The first floor is divided into two rooms of unequal size (Figs 122 and 123). The smallest room is to the south of the entrance door and has remnants of a ceiling and has wall plaster still in-situ. At the south wall is a fireplace and chimney breast (Fig. 122). There is no sign of a chimney breaking the roofline outside which indicates that the fire was out of use before the present roof covering was put on. Access was difficult but there does not appear to be any marks on the wall plaster where the blocked window on the east wall is indicating that it was plastered after the window was blocked. The larger of the two rooms, to the north, is open to the roof which is supported by common rafters (Fig. 123). The windows of this room have single leaf shutters similar to the ones in the tack room below.

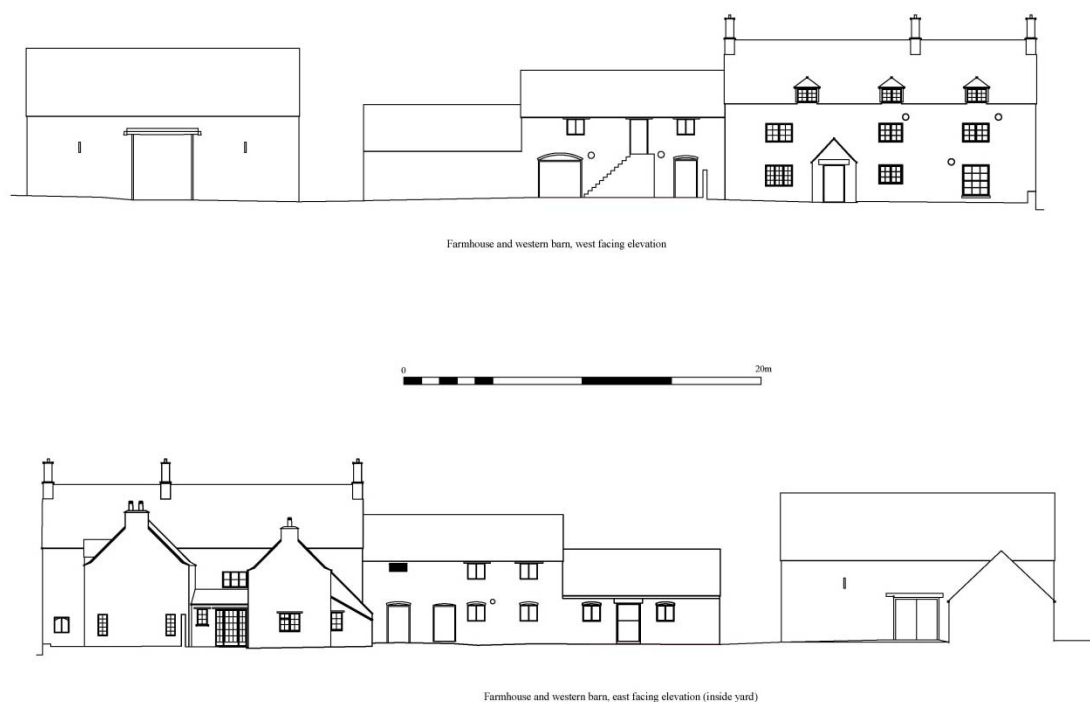


Figure 102: West range elevations  
 Elevations include house for reference (see also Fig. 9 for house)  
 Modified from drawings supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects





Figure 103: West range, east facing elevation  
Looking north-west, 1m scale



Figure 104: West range, west facing elevation  
Looking south-east. Pond in foreground





Figure 105: West range, east facing elevation of Building A  
Looking west, 1m scale



Figure 106: West range, west facing elevation of Building A  
Looking east





Figure 107: West range, south facing elevation of building A  
Looking north west. Note joint of earlier gable (arrowed), 1m scale marks the vertical  
joint of the earlier gable wall





Figure 108: West range, north facing elevation of Building A  
Looking south, 1m scale



Figure 109: West range, Building A inside  
Looking south, 1m scale. Note joint of former gable end starting close to scale



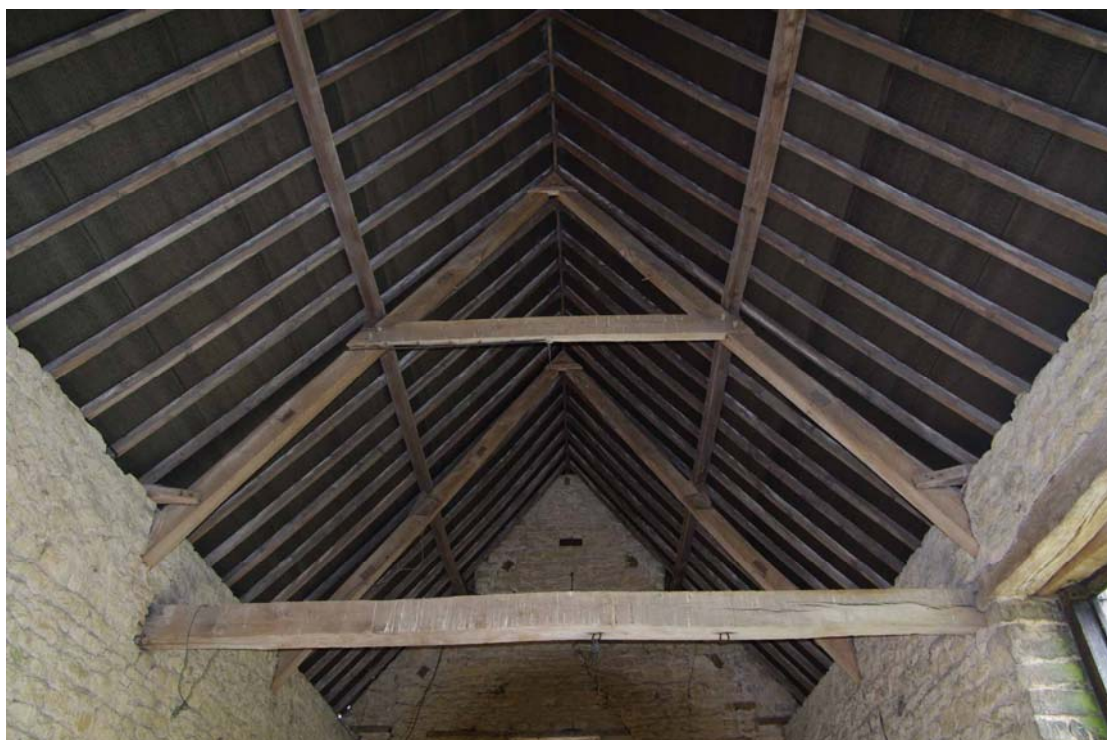


Figure 110: West range, Building A roof detail  
Looking south

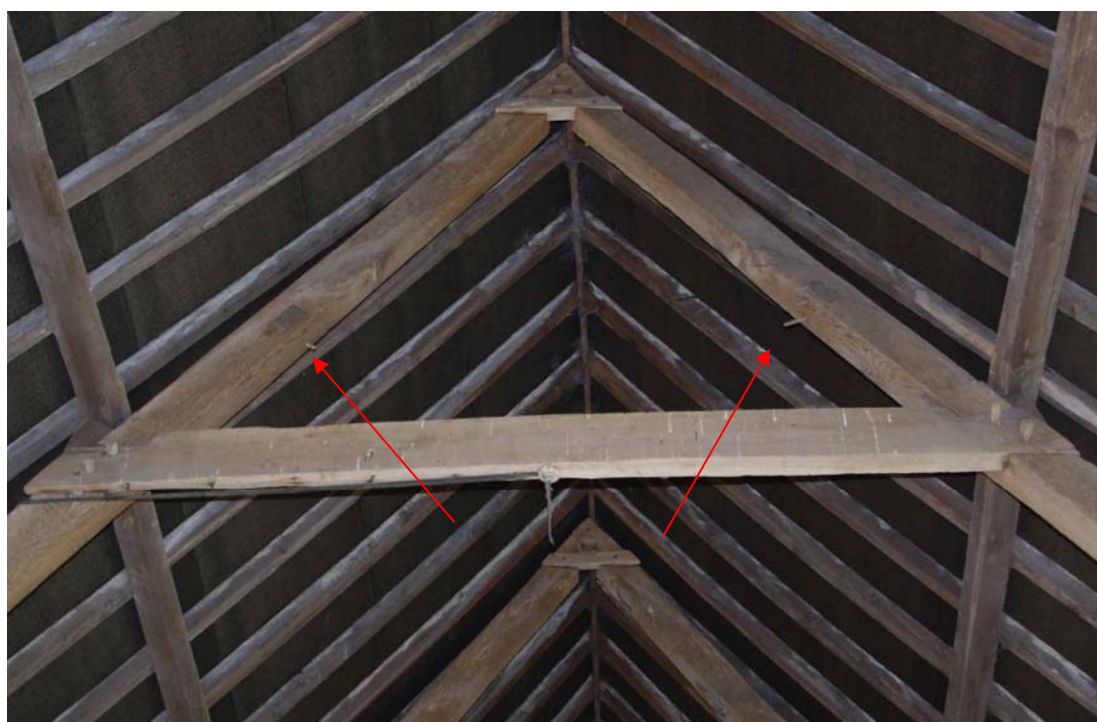


Figure 111: West range, Building A re-used roof timbers  
Looking south. Old mortice and tenon joint arrowed





Figure 112: West range, west facing elevation of Building G adjacent to house  
Looking east, 1m scale



Figure 113: West range, north facing gable end of Building G  
Looking south-east, 1m scale. Corner of Building A on extreme left





Figure 114: West range, east facing elevation of Building G  
Looking west, 1m scale. Note scar of recently demolished lean-to



Figure 115: West range, east facing elevation of Building G  
Looking south-west towards house





Figure 116: West range, passageway through Building G  
Looking west, 1m scale. Entrance to the coal store and north end wall of house just behind the 1m scale



Figure 117: West range, ground floor of Building G. Southernmost room  
Looking north-west, 1m scale



Figure 118: West range, ground floor of Building G. Tack room  
Looking west, 1m scale



Figure 119: West range ground floor, Building G. Tack room shutters  
Looking west





Figure 120: West range, north end of Building G  
Looking south, 1m scale. Note marks in paint showing position of byre on right



Figure 121: West range, north end of Building G. Roof detail  
Carpenter's Roman numeral marks arrowed



Figure 122: West range, first floor of Building G. Southern room  
Looking south-east from outside doorway



Figure 123: West range, first floor of Building G. North room  
Looking north-east from entrance doorway



### *The Free-Standing Cart shed*

The free standing barn or cart shed to the north-west of the courtyard and house complex was identified in this survey as Building H. The slightly odd angle of the building is explained by studying the map evidence showing that it sits alongside a trackway running from Main Street past the front of the house and northwards out into the open fields beyond. The use of coursed limestone rubble, brick arches and modern cement roof tiles continues the theme of building materials from the other buildings on site.

The east facing elevation is the principal elevation and has four equally sized brick arches which also have brick pillars similar in style to those on the north and east range buildings (Figs 124 and 125). Both the north and south facing elevations have flat gable ends pierced only by a narrow ventilation window set just below the ridgeline (Fig. 126). The west facing elevation has a single doorway with a flat wooden lintel which opens out to the fields to the west of the complex (Fig. 127).

The inside of the cart shed has been heavily modified from an open shed to create three large stables and an open area at the north end (Fig. 128). The stables have been built using modern breeze blocks and have brick and concrete floors laid on a new plastic membrane. The northernmost space is open to the front archway and to the smaller door on the western wall. It is divided by a full-height brick wall which appears to be part of the original design (Fig. 129). The roof structure appears to be of late 19th century design and has bolted and nailed joints. The roof truss supports two queen posts which join the shortened principal rafters. A tie-beam bolted to the top of the queen posts supports the slender purlins which in their turn support the common rafters. To add stability a pair of centrally located raking struts rises up from the truss to support a higher line of purlins which also have collars to hold them apart (Fig. 130).



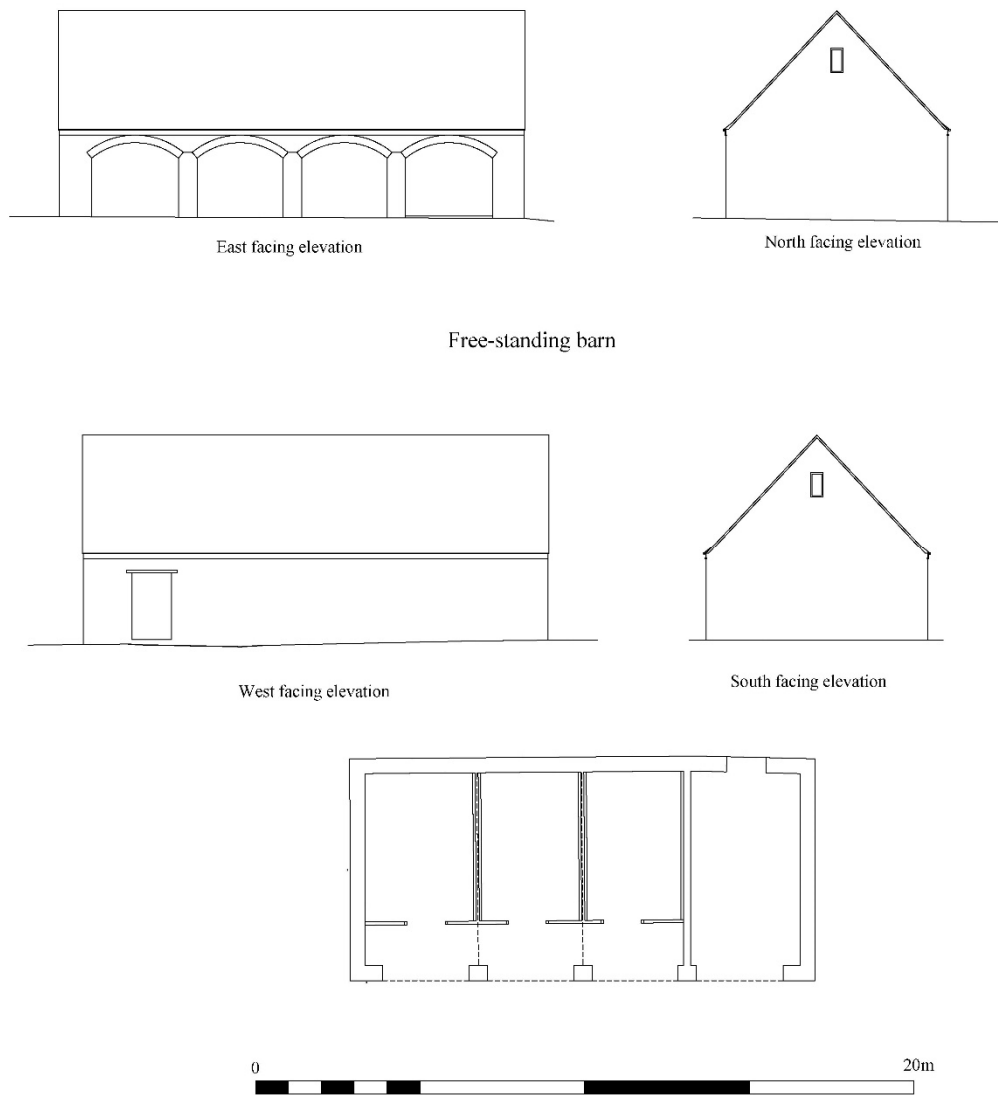


Figure 124: Free standing cart shed (Building H)  
Modified from drawings supplied by Paul Bancroft Architects



Figure 125: Cart shed (Building H), east facing elevation  
Looking west, 1m scale



Figure 126: Cart shed (Building H), north facing elevation  
Looking south, 1m scale



Figure 127: Cart shed (Building H), west facing elevation  
Looking east



Figure 128 Cart shed (Building H), internal modifications  
Looking north-west, 1m scale





Figure 129: Cart shed (Building H), north end  
Looking west, 1m scale



Figure 130: Cart shed (Building H), roof detail  
Looking north

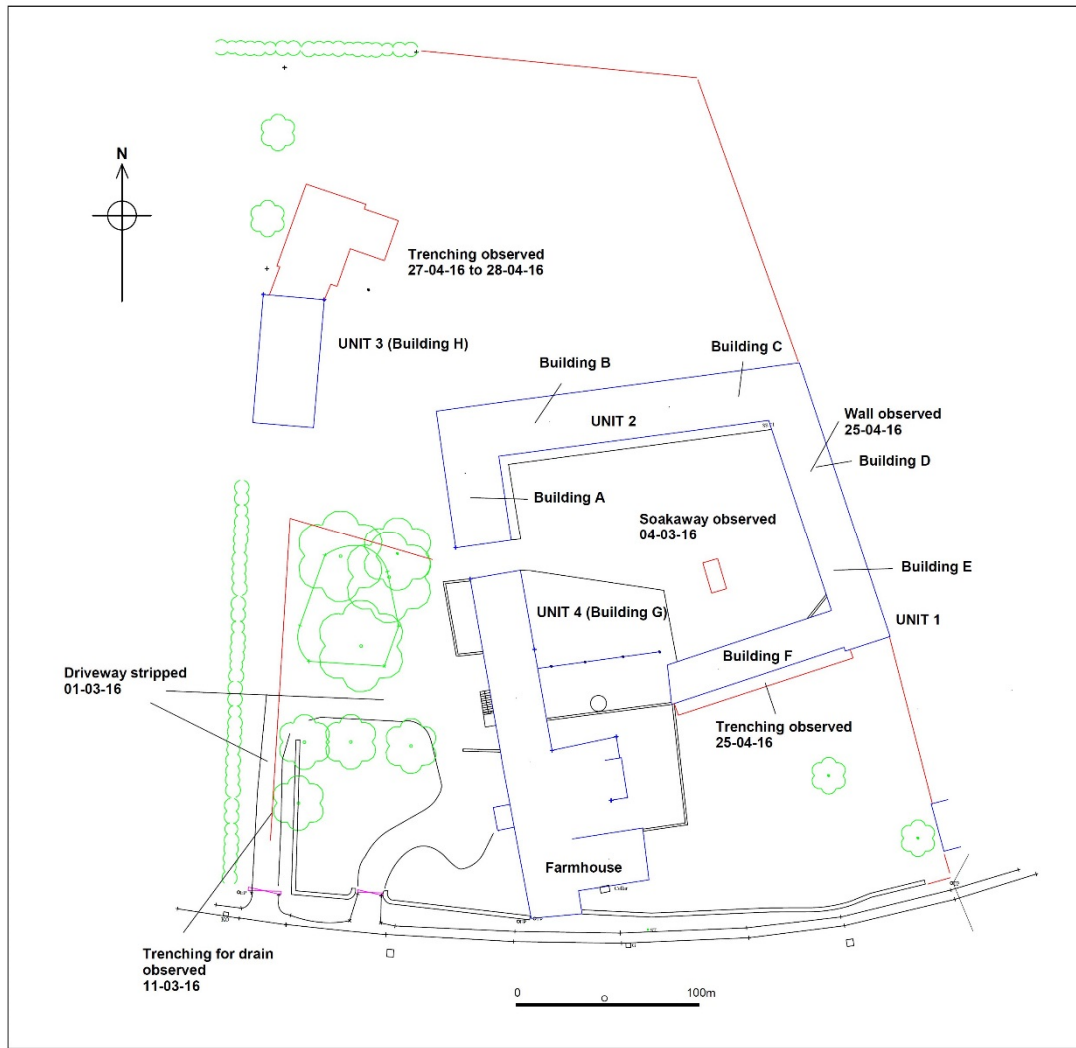


Figure 131: Plan of observations during archaeological attendance



### ***Watching Brief***

The watching brief visits carried out throughout 2016 on the site at Middle Farm concentrated on groundworks associated with the stripping of the existing driveway in advance of the excavation of trenches for new drainage and the reduction of the area for formation levels, the excavation of a soakaway in the centre of the site, and the excavation of foundation trenches for extensions to buildings F and H (Units 1 and 3 respectively) (Fig. 131).

The site was initially visited by an archaeologist on the 1st March 2016 when the stripping of the driveway and turning circle on the western side of the site, in front of the farmhouse and building G, was observed.



Figure 132: Stripped eastern arm of driveway, looking south

The stripping of the west side of the driveway revealed a mixture of soil, gravel and brick rubble. The eastern side when stripped revealed a lain brick surface (Fig. 132).

Subsequently a further visit was undertaken on 4th March 2016 in order to observe the excavation of a soakaway within the central courtyard formed by buildings A-G.

The soakaway measured 7m x 5.5m and was 2.5m deep. The sequence revealed by the excavation consisted of 0.3m of topsoil of dark brown clay loam with brick and stone fragments over 0.2m of yellowish grey clay with fragments of chalk. This lay over the natural sub-stratum of blueish grey clay and chalk. A large rectangular pit was observed around 1.5m under the topsoil. This measured 3.3m x 1.7m and was filled with black and grey silty clays.

A visit took place on 11th March 2016 during the excavation of a drain trench through the main driveway into the site (Fig. 133).





Figure 133: Work in progress on drain trench, looking north-west

The new drain trench was to run from the main entranceway along the street frontage to the north and then south-eastwards round the northern part of the circular driveway.

The trench was excavated using a small tracked excavator fitted with a narrow flat bucket, to a depth of around 2m. The upper layers revealed during the excavations consisted of disturbed ground of yellow brown clay with ceramic building material, stones and soil (Fig. 134).



Figure 134: Partially finished trench, looking north north-west



Another visit took place on 25th April 2016. This work was focussed in and around Unit 1 (Buildings D, E and F on the building survey).

The interior of Building D had been recently stripped inside. A section of wall foundation was observed here, measuring 4.2m in length, 0.6m in width and was located around 0.8m from the brick wall at the southern end of this building, and therefore would end in the centre of the open archway at the western side of the building, suggesting that the arches and brick walls of this building were a later insertion (Fig. 135).



Figure 135: Section of wall revealed in Building D

The southern wall of Building F had been demolished. The new building to be constructed from the conversion of Building F was to be wider than the original build and therefore the building was to be widened here by around 1m, so that new foundation trenches were on the garden area to the south of Building F and therefore the soil here was deeper (Fig. 136).

There were five new inner walls to be constructed running roughly north to south. These were as large as the external walls to take the weight of a large beam, which was to run down the centre of the building to take strain off the outer walls.

All the foundation trenches were 0.6m wide. The southern and eastern walls were 1.1m deep, whereas the inner walls were 0.85m deep. The eastern wall (partially in building E) had a soil sequence of 0.3m of disturbed ground over yellow brown clay. The clay was very dark grey in places, possibly caused by organic matter.

While part of the wall of Building E was being demolished a large slab of limestone was recovered from the rubble with a date of 1702 carved into it. It appears to have been re-used from an earlier structure (Fig.137).





Figure 136: Post excavation view of Buildings E & F (Unit 1), looking east north-east



Figure 137: Slab with inscribed date





Figure 138: Work in progress on Building F, looking south-west



Figure 139: Completed foundation trenches Building F, looking east north-east

The new trench within the garden had a sequence of 0.25m of brownish grey silty clay topsoil over 0.25m of yellow brown subsoil over yellow brown clay with stones. The



inner wall trenches consisted of a layer of rubble straight on top of the natural clay (Figs 138 - 139). No archaeological remains were identified.

The final archaeological observations were carried out on the 27th-28th April 2016 during excavations for the foundation trenches for the extension to Unit 3 (Building H), a former barn in the north-west corner of the site (Fig. 140).



Figure 140: Work in progress on Unit 3, Building H, looking south

The new foundation trenches lay to the north of the former barn; the barn itself was undergoing conversion at the time of the visit.

All the trenches were 0.65m wide and 0.9m deep. The sequence consisted of 0.2m of brownish grey silty clay topsoil, over 0.25m of yellowish brown silty clay subsoil. This lay over yellowish brown clay with stones.

No features were seen, except for a large disturbance along westernmost trench at northern end for about 5m, visible only in the east facing section. Within this lay a grey organic layer, also containing modern brick (Fig.141).

No further features were identified on the site and no further visits were undertaken (Fig. 142).





Figure 141: Disturbed area, looking north-west



Figure 142: The finished trenches at Unit 3, looking south



## **Discussion**

### ***Building Recording***

Middle Farm house and associated buildings present an interesting example of the changes in farming ideas and techniques from the later 18th century through to the late 20th century. The house appears to have begun life as a two or three unit dwelling which was subsequently converted and expanded into a single dwelling which was then further expanded as fashions, tastes and finances changed, and was presumably a reflection of the owner's increasing wealth. There appear to be two key stages in the life of the house; the first being the conversion from multiple units to a single dwelling probably in the late 18th or early 19th century. The two rear wings are also likely to have been added at this time and the dressed stone frontage was also likely to have been created or modified. The incorporation of rooms for domestic staff and their separate stairs shows the changes in attitudes of society and of the owner's apparent elevation in status. The treatment of the staff is clearly shown with their unheated rooms, narrow stairs and shared windows. Around the middle of the 19th century further improvement work took place and the south wing was extended to incorporate the larger first floor bedroom with its prominent sash window looking out onto Main Street. It is likely that the ground floor front room was also remodelled at or around this time. Later modifications to the house included the addition of the porch and the laying of the quarry tiles in the hall. Changes in the 20th century include the removal of the plaster work in some of the ground floor rooms and, probably, the gradual loss of the domestic staff and conversion of their rooms to family rooms. Throughout these changes small details, such as the window shutters, peg coat hooks and the servant bell have managed to survive and are a small but important part of the history of the house.

The farm buildings follow a similar process of improvement and rebuilding. Many model farm complexes tend to be built in a single phase with only minor alterations taking place over subsequent years. At Middle Farm there appears to have been some buildings in place in the later 18th century which were either extended or added to. Indeed the whole courtyard was not enclosed until the late 19th century. The gradual sequence of improvements and additions probably reflects the limitations of the owner's finances who was not able to commit to a grand rebuilding in a single phase. A large estate may have been able to demolish and rebuild in one short campaign whereas here the yeoman farmer is likely to have had to consider his finances before committing to a large project such as this. It is interesting to note though that despite being built over a number of years the attention to detail and the effort to preserve the same overall building style and materials was maintained throughout. This is noticeable even in the free-standing cart shed which was not built until the later 19th century. The buildings have been relatively well maintained throughout their life and appear to have undergone a major phase of work when their roofs were replaced in the mid to late 20th century. It is only the wholesale changes in farming practices that have made this style of farm and its buildings redundant.

### ***Watching Brief***

Few archaeological features were identified during the archaeological attendance at Middle Farm, Upper Benefield.

The disturbed area or pit identified during the inspections on the soakaway appeared to be a large modern pit within the courtyard area, possibly a previous soakaway in the area.

The stripping on the driveway area revealed a former brick driveway under the modern material, but this could not be closely dated.

No features were revealed during the trenching for the new drainage system through the driveway onto the site, the upper soils on the north-south section seemed disturbed.

The excavations for the new southern walls on Unit 1 revealed undisturbed topsoil within the garden area to the south, but the sequence within the building itself seemed heavily disturbed and mainly consisted of rubble and mixed soil over the natural clay.

The discovery of the limestone slab is interesting, although it is simply a date craved on a flat slab of limestone, possibly a floor slab. It predates the farmhouse, which is late 18th century, and the outbuildings, which are 19th century. However, there has been no indication of earlier buildings during the archaeological attendance here.

The excavation at Unit 3 were largely negative apart from the disturbed organic layer seen in the western trench at the northern end. This is most likely a tree-throw, covered with later material.

## **Archive**

### ***Building Survey***

The archive for the building survey (ENN108111) consists of:

The previous building survey report,

7 contact sheets of 226 digital photographs,

3 Contact sheets of 35mm black and white photographs and negatives

4 ULAS pro-forma photographic record sheet,

1 DVD of this report and the colour photographs in jpeg and tiff format.

### ***Watching Brief***

The archive for the watching brief (ENN108259) consists of:

This report,

5 watching brief recording sheets,

1 ULAS pro-forma photographic record sheet,

1 CD of digital photographs

2 contact sheets of digital photographs

## **Publication**

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the appropriate local historical and archaeological journal in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.



## **Bibliography and Sources**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Code of Conduct*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*.

Historic England, 2006 *Historic Farmsteads. Preliminary Character Statement: East Midlands Region*. London: English Heritage.

Historic England, 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice*. London: English Heritage.

Historic England, 2007 *Agricultural Buildings Selection Guide*. London: English Heritage.

Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2015 Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*

Ordnance Survey Maps

Paul Bancroft Architects 2014 *Design and Access Statement: Middle Farm Upper Benefield*. March

ULAS 2015 Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording. *Middle Farm House and Associated Barns, Main Street, Upper Benefield, Northamptonshire*.

Williams, S. 2014 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Middle Farm, Main Street, Upper Benefield, Northamptonshire*. Midland Archaeological Services.

## Appendix 1 Digital photographs of Building Survey



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## Appendix 2 OASIS Information

### *Building Survey*

Project Name	A Level 2 Historic Building Recording at Middle Farm House and Associated Barns, Main Street, Upper Benefield, Northamptonshire.
Project Type	Level 2 Building Recording
Project Manager	V Score
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	Archaeological investigation during groundworks
Current Land Use	Redundant agricultural buildings
Development Type	Residential conversion
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing
Site Co ordinates	NGR: SP 97913 89296
Start/end dates of field work	28 to 29.07.2015
Archive Recipient	Northamptonshire County Council
Study Area	-

### *Watching Brief*

Project Name	A watching brief at Middle Farm House and Associated Barns, Main Street, Upper Benefield, Northamptonshire.
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	V Score
Project Supervisor	L Hunt
Previous/Future work	Building Survey/ Archaeological investigation during groundworks
Current Land Use	Redundant agricultural buildings
Development Type	Residential conversion
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing
Site Co ordinates	NGR: SP 97913 89296
Start/end dates of field work	01.03.2016 to 28.04.2016
Archive Recipient	Northamptonshire County Council
Study Area	-

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2013  
**THE AWARDS**  
AWARD WINNER  
RESEARCH PROJECT OF THE YEAR