

An Archaeological Standing Building Survey of the Former Fernie Hunt Stables, Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire (NGR SP747 889).

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Gerwyn Richards

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Mendwest Traditional Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of the former Fernie Hunt Stables, Great Bowden prior to demolition and redevelopment. An initial archaeological desk-based assessment identified the stable as being of some interest and the Planning Archaeologist advised that a standing building survey be carried out.

The stables were originally built in 1920 when the hunt moved for their previous stables at Medbourne. The stables are of a high status with quality workmanship, clearly intended to reflect the wealth and status of the hunt at the time.

The buildings are a fine example of early twentieth century architecture, and reflect the importance hunting had within the county at the time.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Mendwest Traditional Homes to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of the former Fernie Hunt Stables, Nether Green, Great Bowden, Leicestershire (SP 747 889). Outline planning permission has been granted for the demolition of the stable buildings and the construction of 11 houses (Planning Application 06/00252/FUL).

The Planning Archaeologist of Heritage Services Section of Leicestershire County Council as advisor to Harborough District Council advised that the buildings were, as an example of early twentieth century architecture and its association with the Fernie Hunt of architectural interest works would impact significantly upon historic buildings. As a result it was recommended that a standing building survey be undertaken prior to demolition being carried out.

All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures*. In addition, Leicestershire County Council's Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire will be adhered to. The English Heritage guidelines (2006) have been used as a basis for defining levels of recording.

The Fernie Hunt originated in a breakaway from the Quorn Hunt in 1853 when local landowner, Sir Richard Sutton encouraged his son to hunt an independent pack in south Leicestershire. The Hunt bears the name of Charles Fernie of Keythorpe Hall who was Master for 31 seasons (1881-1911). After the death of Charles Fernie, Lord Stalbridge of Wiltshire became Master and built the stables as they now stand at Great Bowden, the previous stable being at Medbourne. During the inter war years there

were a number of extremely wealthy Masters including the South African diamond magnate, Sir Harold Wernher. The obvious wealth of these huntsmen is reflected in the stables which are subject to this standing building survey.

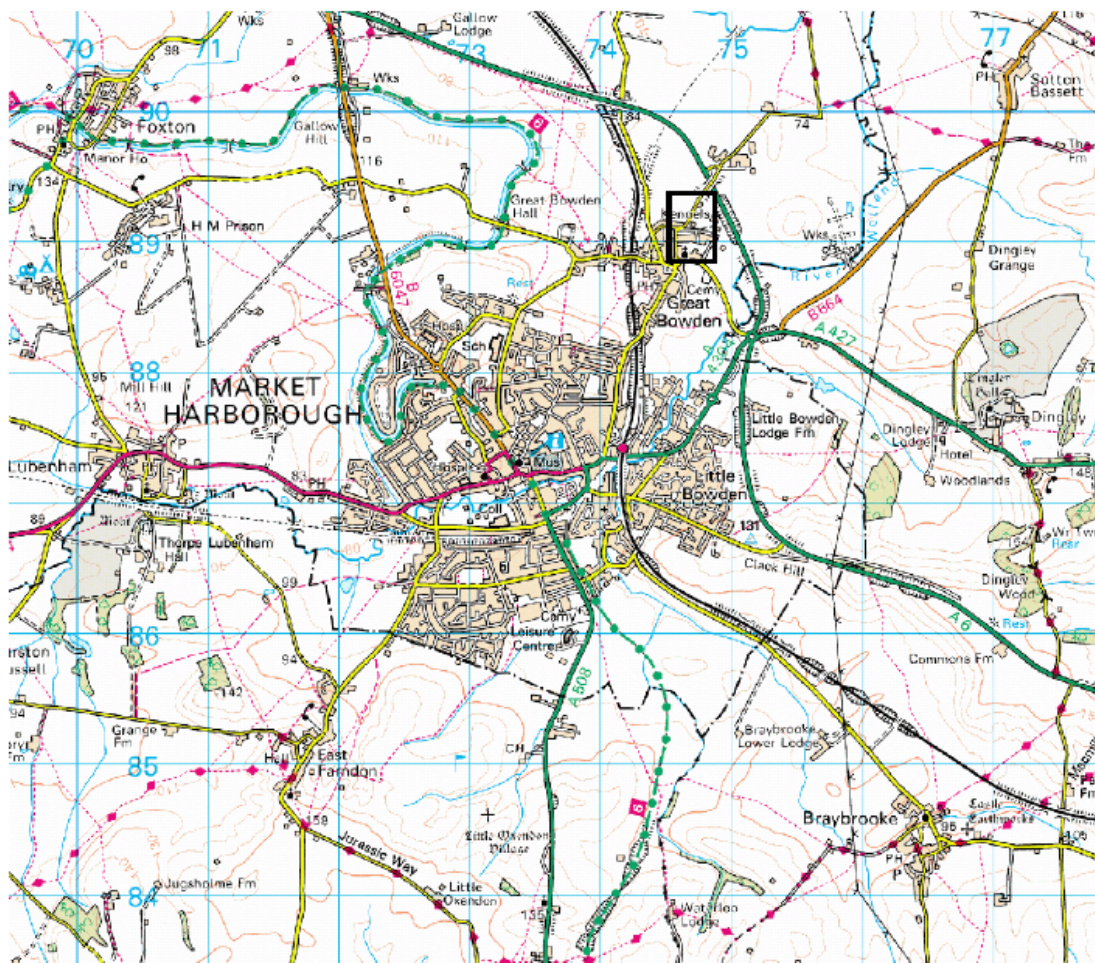


Figure 1: Location Map of Great Bowden (OS Map SP 68) 1:50 000

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2. Aims and Methodology

The objective of the standing building survey as required by Leicestershire County Council was as follows:

- To seek to understand the history and development of a building or site.
- To compile a lasting record of the building ahead of demolition or alteration.
- To disseminate the results of the recording and analysis

The standing building survey was undertaken by Gerwyn Richards. Photographs, in 35mm monochrome negative and colour positive (slide) formats covered items 1-6 of the English Heritage guidelines (2006, 4; Appendix 4.1.2). The site visits were carried out on August 24th and 25th 2006.

The proposed development consists of four buildings of interest comprising the older stable buildings, forming a quadrangle in the north westernmost corner of the proposed development area. Each building had been allocated a number for identification purposes during the initial historic building appraisal (Hunt & Hyam 2006), for the purpose of this report, these same numbers have been retained (it was decided not to include buildings 1, 2, & 3 in this survey). A letter has been added where internal sub-division is also required, while in the following notes the terms 'left', 'right', 'rear' and 'back' are used in relation to the front elevation of each building.

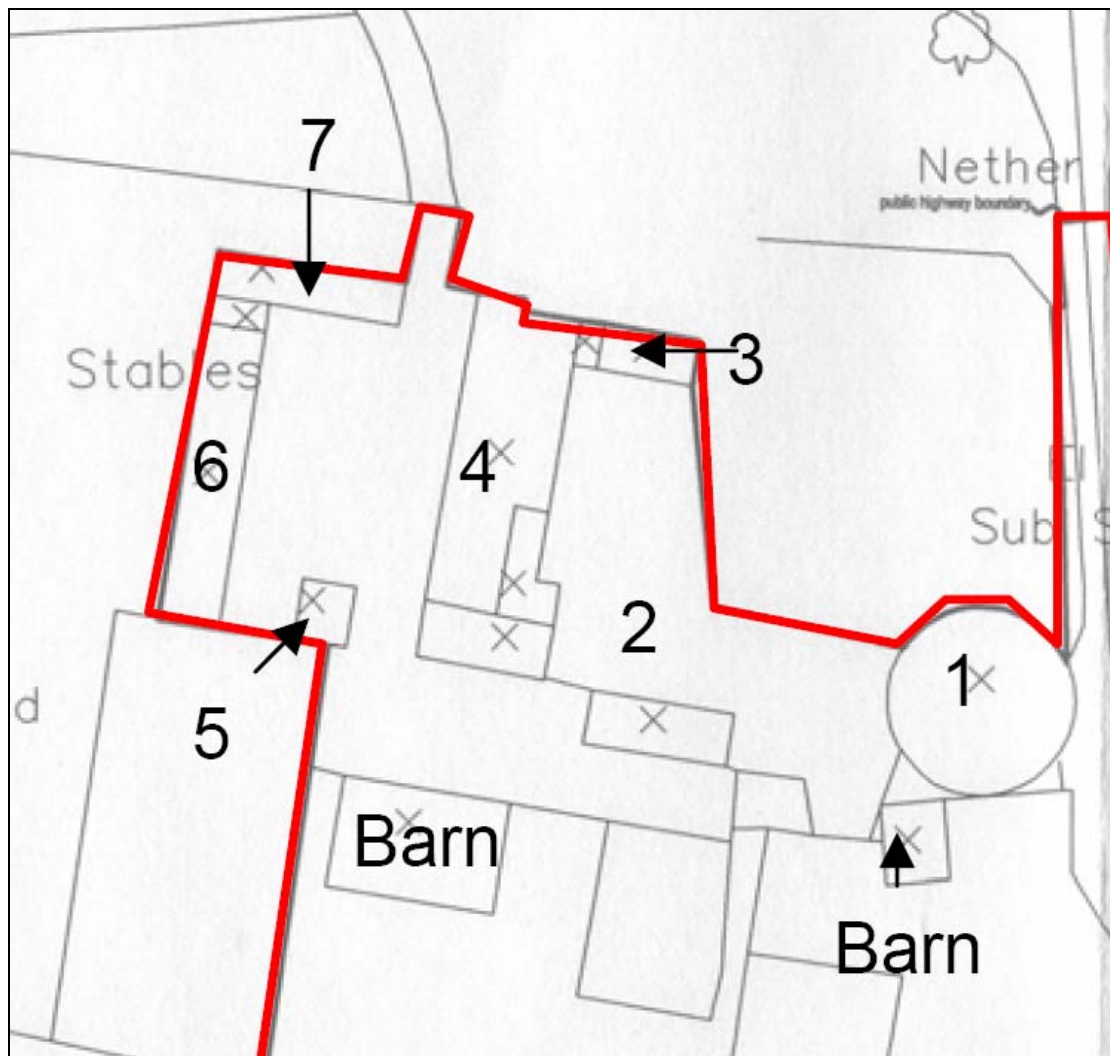


Figure 2 Building Identification.
(Not to Scale, Drawing Supplied by Client).

3. Standing Building Survey

3.1 Building 4

Building 4 is the most substantial of the buildings within the proposed development area and consists of a brick built, three bay building. The bricks themselves are 9 inch by 3 inch machine made bricks atop a blue brick damp proof course and cement bond in Flemish Garden Bond. The roof is of Welsh Slate with red ceramic ridge tiles and

two timber louvered and leaded ventilators and a central chimney. The building is mostly single storey, but there is a first floor grain loft set at a right angle within the central bay (04c) and the front elevation is well balanced, but not entirely symmetrical.



Photo 1 Building 4 Front Elevation

Fenestration consists of six paned steel framed arched windows with central four paned opening lights in white. There are flat cambered arched lintels above

in brick and concrete sills below in Royal Blue. Access to the right (04b) and left (04d) bays are via stable doors, central to their bays. The central bay has double coach doors set beneath a single grain loft door with a pulley system set above it. There is a single door to the left of the central bay.

Internally, as expected is laid out for stabling, with the left and right bays housing the main stabling, which contain four and three single stalls respectively. By normal standards the stalls are of a considerable size and reflect the status of the Hunters as superior to common work horses. The stalls are partitioned by waste high single brick walls with iron railings above to approximately 2200mm with corner troughs and the floors are of blue brick.

The central grain loft bay has very little in the way of internal features and the ground floor was probably originally for general use and feed preparation. There is a hopper still *in-situ*; possibly original bearing the name of Bamford, Uttoxeter, which later became JCB, the plant manufacturer. Access to the grain loft is via a ladder and trap door to the left of the coach doors, as expected for a grain loft, there are very few diagnostic features, there is an exposed central roof truss of an interesting design. It is a principal roof truss with king post rising from a collar with three way stirrup straps securing the collar to the principals. Additional timbers have been bolted through the king post, principle and collar to triangulate the structure to facilitate the omission of



a tie beam, opening up floor space. To similar to Peters' Type 9 roof trusses, in his survey of post-medieval roof trusses in farm buildings in Staffordshire. To the left of the central bay there is a small room containing an iron stove set within a chimney breast. This room has been boarded in tongued & grooved panelling and the left wall has a number of hard wood saddle trees, probably original.

Photo 2 Roof Construction Within the Grain Loft

The bay to the far right, 04a has an open gable with a timber beam and lintel outside and a steel beam inside, possibly a later insertion. Internally there are no diagnostic features and the space appears to have been used as general store or possibly a wagon or cart shed. The roof has been over boarded, although the base of the truss is visible. This appears to be a king post structure, supported by struts with tie beams with a steel strap fixing the king post to the tie beam. In all likelihood this is indicative of the entire roof construction, which elsewhere was unavailable for inspection during the course of the site visit.

To the right of this bay there is another single stall containing a full width brick built trough along the rear wall and a window within the right hand wall. There is also a recently inserted roof light to the right. The floor is stone set.

There are two additional features to the rear of the building, both probably later additions. The first is a corrugated tinned sheet roof with tongued & grooved walls, currently used as general store. The second is a brick and corrugated asbestos concrete sheet lean to between the bays 04c and 04d, the brick work and fenestration match the rest of the building so this may be contemporary.

3.2 Building 5

The next building to be recorded, building 5, was a small single storey building facing building 4. It too was of a red brick construction and a Welsh Slate roof with wooden louvers in the gables of the Gambrel style. As with building 04, the bricks are 9 inch by 3 inch machine made bricks in Flemish Garden Bond, with no damp proof course. There is a large half glazed panelled door set between two steel frame six pane windows to the front and no other fenestration. There are flat cambered arched lintels above in brick and concrete sills.



Photo 3 Building 5 Front & Right Elevation

Internally, the building consists of a single room, which has been boarded with tongued & grooved panelling. This panelling forms

a forty five degree angle in the left rear corner of the room, the reason for which is unknown, externally; there is no evidence for a chimney, so a fireplace is unlikely. One possibility, however, is as the majority of the other stalls have corner troughs, it is possible, therefore, that building 05 was originally built as an individual stall, possible for the Master's horse before being converted and the boarding concealing the trough. The room is currently used as a mess room/general store.

Externally on the right wall, there a mounting block, probably contemporary but having been repaired by the addition of modern concrete slabs.

3.3 Building 6

Building 6 is the westernmost building within the quadrangle; the building consists of eight single stalls with plank divisions. The brick work again is 9 inch by 3 inch red brick in a Flemish Garden Bond, with a blue brick damp proof course, but unlike the other buildings, the mono pitched roof is of flat tile, rather than Welsh Slate (significant moss coverage prevented closer identification).



Photo 4 Building 6 Front Elevation

All stalls have a stable door to the right and a timber Yorkshire horizontal sliding sash window to the left. There is also a ceramic pipe

exiting the wall at ground level, acting as a drain away.

Internally the roof has been over boarded so its exact construction is unknown, although King post design is likely. There is a corner trough in all of the stalls and nothing else of significance.

3.4 Building 7

The final building within this standing building survey is building 7, forming the northern part of the quadrangle. Building 7 is a lean-to construction of 9 inch by 3 inch red brick, again in Flemish Garden Bond.

Photo 5 Building 7 Front Elevation



The rearmost wall doubles as the northern perimeter wall. The roof is of Welsh Slate. The doors all appear to be modern replacements and the windows are timber. Towards the left of the building there is evidence of replaced brickwork, so the windows on this side of the

building may not be original or in their original positions.

There are three rooms within the building; all accessed from doors on the front wall, internally there was very little of architectural significance within the two visited rooms. The room on the far left was in use as kennelling and, therefore, not inspected internally. The room on the far right contained a Belfast sink in the rear right hand corner, possibly original. The central room was locked at the time of the visit but appeared to be in use as a tack room, possibly continuing in its original use.

4. Conclusion

The aim of this standing building survey is to provide a permanent record of the building in their present state, prior to their conversion/demolition comprising both a written record and a visual record. The survey has confirmed that the stables are indeed a good example early twentieth century architecture and well reflect the status of the Fernie Hunt within the community. The hunt itself originated as a break away from the Quorn Hunt, and elaborate stables constructed in an attempt to compete with its more illustrious neighbour.

Although a vernacular building, style and high standard of craftsmanship within the building reflects the wealth and status of its patrons and the high regard in which the Hunters were held, some of the animals were worth a small fortune and were, therefore, treated accordingly. The stables bear little comparison to common stabling at the time and are indicative of the regional importance of hunting.

The stables are a fine example of early twentieth century architecture, but somehow reflect an earlier time, rather than the time in which they were built.

5. Photographic Index

Colour Slide	Black & White	Building No	Description	Dir
001	001	07	Front Elevation, General View.	
002	002	07	Front Elevation, General View.	
003	003	07	Right Facing Elevation, General View.	
004	004	07	Right Facing Elevation, General View.	
005	005	06	Front Elevation, General View.	
006	006	06	Front Elevation, General View.	
007	007	04	Front Elevation, General View.	
008	008	04	Front Elevation, General View.	
009	009	04	Front Elevation, General View.	
010	010	04	Front Elevation, General View.	
011	011	04c	Grain Loft, Internal General View.	
012	012	04c	Grain Loft, Internal General View.	
013	013	04c	Detail of Roof Construction, Looking Back to Front.	
014	014	04c	Detail of Roof Construction, Looking Back to Front.	
015	015	04c	Ground Floor, General View.	
016	016	04c	Ground Floor, General View.	
017	017	04b	Limited View of Roof Construction.	
018	018	04b	Limited View of Roof Construction.	
019	019	05	Front & Right Facing Elevation, General View.	
020	020	05	Front & Right Facing Elevation, General View.	
021	021	04	Right Facing Elevation, General View.	
022	022	04	Right Facing Elevation, General View.	

023	023	04	Rear & Right Facing Elevation, General View.
024	024	04	Rear & Right Facing Elevation, General View.
025	025	04	Rear Elevation, General View.
026	026	04	Rear Elevation, General View.
027	027	04	External Roof Detail.
028	028	04	External Roof Detail.
029	029	04	External Window Detail.
030	030	04	External Window Detail.
031	031	04a	Ground Floor, Roof Detail.
032	032	04a	Ground Floor, Roof Detail.
033	033	04c	Front Elevation, Detail View.
034	034	04c	Front Elevation, Detail View.
035	035	06	Internal, Typical Stall Lay Out.
036	036	06	Internal, Typical Stall Lay Out.
037	037	06	Front Elevation, Detail View.
038	038	06	Front Elevation, Detail View.
039	039	04d	General Interior View.
040	040	04d	General Interior View.
041	041	04d	Detail of Stall Door.
042	042	04d	Detail of Stall Door.
043	043	04d	Stall Detail.
044	044	04d	Stall Detail.
045	045	04e	Internal, General View.
046	046	04e	Internal, General View.
047	047	04e	Iron Range.
048	048	04e	Iron Range.
049	049	04e	Saddle Tree.
050	050	04e	Saddle Tree.
051	051	05	Internal, General View.
052	052	05	Internal, General View.
053	053	05	Iron Wall Mounted Hooks.
054	054	05	Iron Wall Mounted Hooks.
055	055	04a	Right Roof Detail.
056	056	04a	Right Roof Detail.
057	057	04a	Ground Floor, Roof Detail.
058	058	04a	Ground Floor, Roof Detail.
059	059	04c	Detail of Roof Construction, Looking Back to Front.
060	060	04c	Detail of Roof Construction, Looking Back to Front.

6. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

1 A2 permatrace sheet containing building plans

60 Black and white negatives contact sheets

60 Colour Slide Photos

A4 Photo Index Sheet

Unbound Copy of This Report

The archive will be held at Leicestershire County Council

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

7. References

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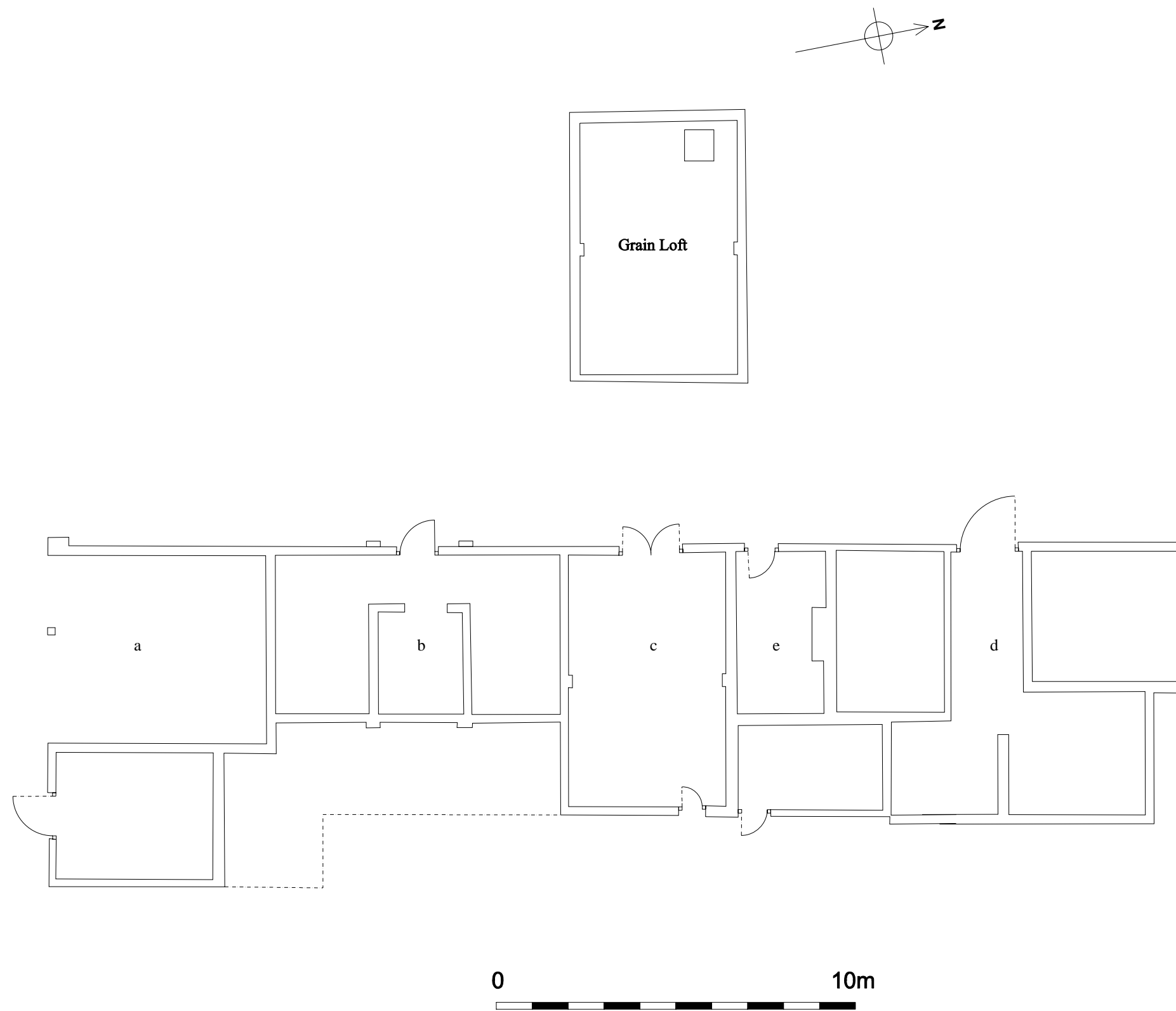


Figure 3 Building 4 with Principle Sub Divisions Identified.

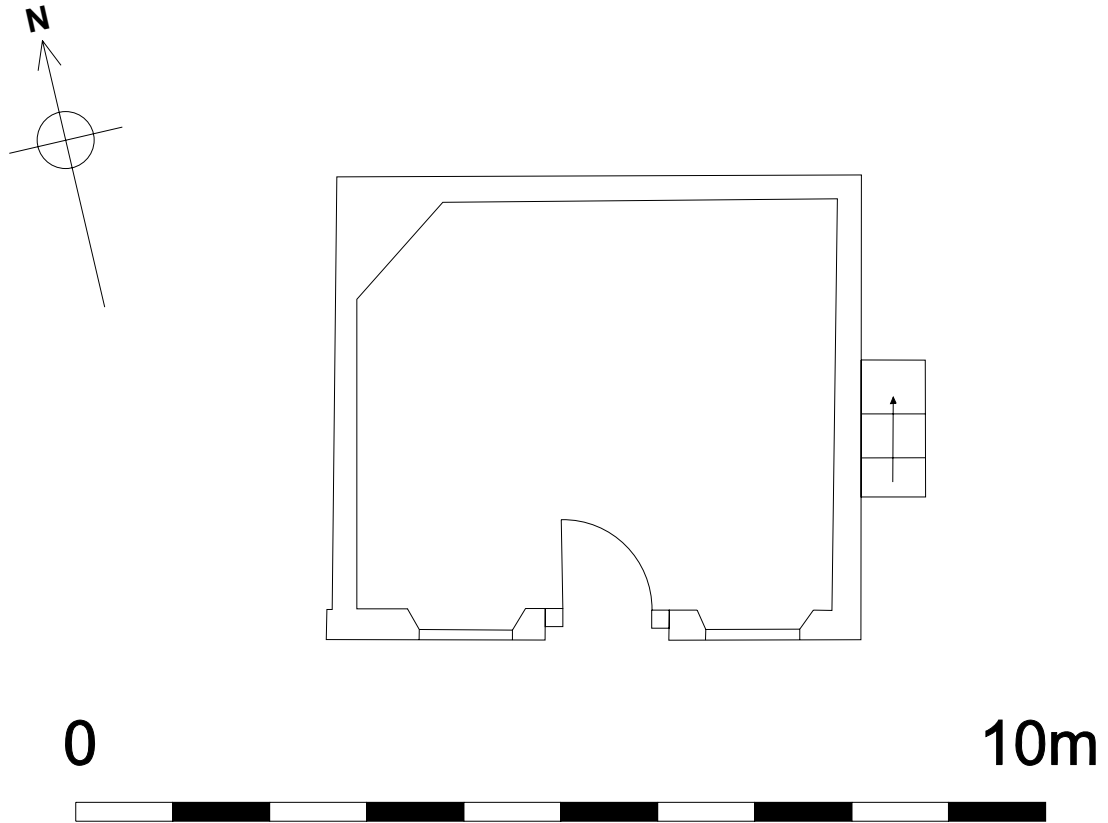


Figure 4 Building 5

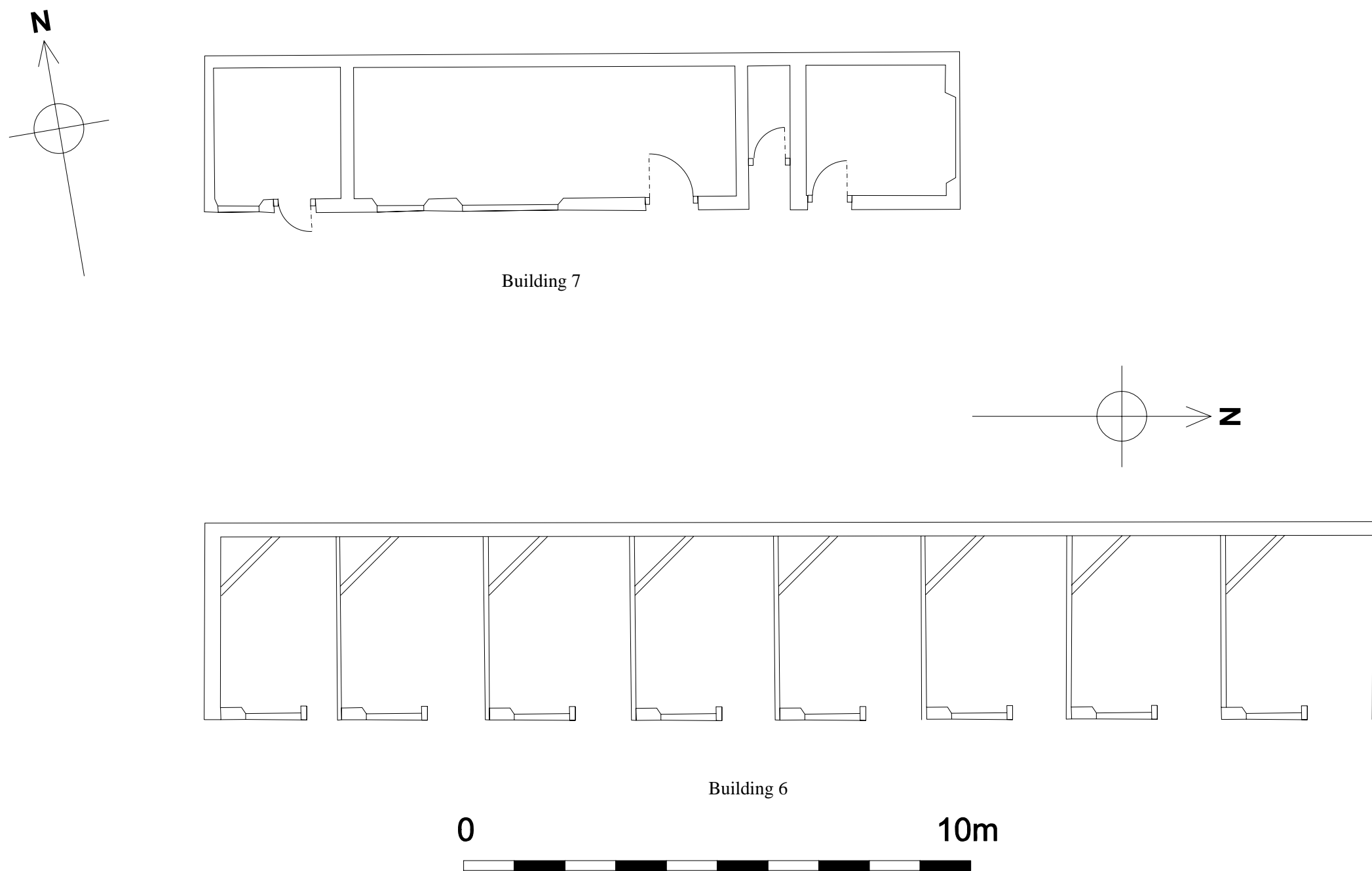


Figure 5 Buildings 6 & 7.

