

**A Photographic Survey of Top House Farm, Pincent Lane, North Kilworth,
Leicestershire (NGR SP 624 870).**

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A Photographic Survey of Top House Farm, Pincent Lane, North Kilworth, Leicestershire (NGR SP 624 870).

Gerwyn Richards

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Fisher German to undertake a photographic survey at Top House Farm, North Kilworth, Leicestershire. Outline planning permission had been granted for the conversion and extension of the existing nineteenth century outbuildings and the demolition of the twentieth century agricultural buildings.

Top House Farm and its associated outbuildings are recorded on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1884. The farm is a typical nineteenth century lay out with the buildings forming a quadrangle with the south facing farmhouse.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by Fisher German to undertake a photographic survey of House Farm, Pincent Lane, North Kilworth, Leicestershire (NGR SP 624 870). Outline planning permission has been granted for conversion of the agricultural buildings to form three residential units and the demolition of a number of twentieth century prefabricated buildings (Planning Application 05/01017/FUL).

The Senior Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council as advisor to Harborough District Council advised that works would impact significantly upon historic buildings. As a result it was recommended that a photographic survey should be carried out to record the buildings prior to their demolition.

Top House Farm and its associated outbuildings are recorded on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1884. The farm is a typical nineteenth century lay out with the buildings forming a quadrangle with the south facing farmhouse controlling access to the yard; the original farm track can still just about be traced on the ground to the left of the farm house. The buildings on the whole are early nineteenth century in date and of local materials. The prime location of the farm on higher ground, however, suggests that these building more than likely replaced earlier farm buildings on the same site.

The farm also illustrates the changes brought about by industrialised farming in the twentieth century. Much larger prefabricated buildings were built to cope with increased mechanisation and changing farming practices outside the original quadrangle, increasing dramatically the size of the farmyard and ultimately rendering the original buildings obsolete.

Top House Farm is a good example of a typical midlands farm complex; a resource which with the change in farming practices and increased conversion to residential uses which is becoming scarcer. A record, therefore, in its unaltered form is essential to the future understanding of these farms.

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. *Understanding Historic Buildings* (English Heritage 2006) has been used as a basis for defining levels of recording.

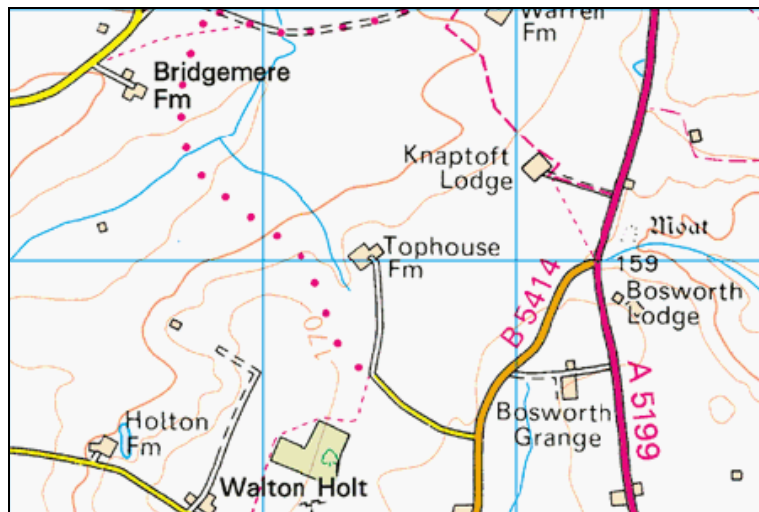
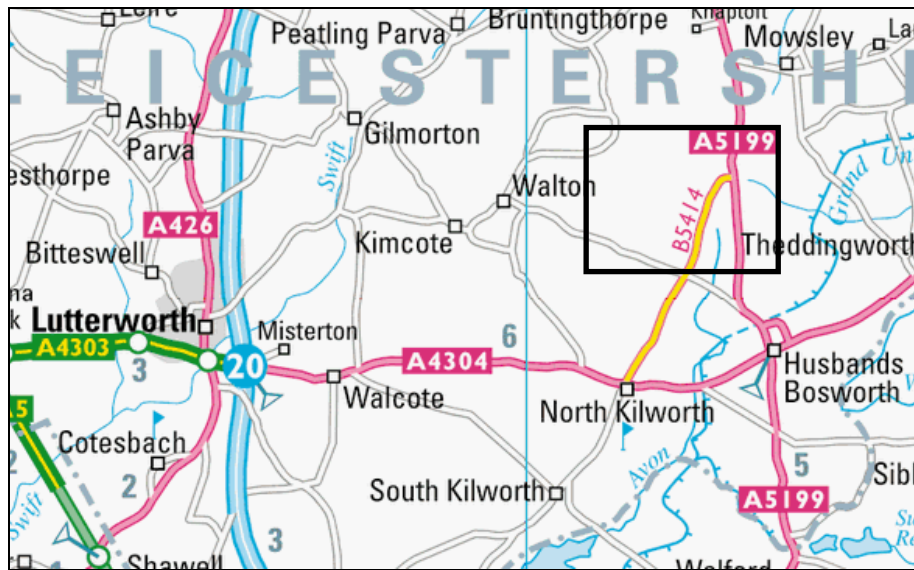


Figure 1. Site location.

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2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the photographic survey was to provide a permanent visual (photographic) record of the buildings in their current state, prior to alteration or demolition, to standards set down by English Heritage (2006).

The photographic survey was undertaken by Gerwyn Richards. Photographs, in 35mm monochrome negative and colour transparency (slide) formats covered items 1-6 of the English Heritage guidelines (2006, 4; Appendix 4.1.2). The site visit was carried out on March 9th 2007.

The proposed development consists of six buildings of interest; all brick built agricultural buildings which are recorded on the first edition Ordnance Survey, the Farm House itself is not included within this survey. Each building had been allocated a letter for identification purposes by Paul Reading and Partners (Consulting & Structural Engineers); the same identification has been retained for the purpose of this survey. A number has been added where internal sub-division is also required, in the following notes the terms 'left', 'right', 'rear' and 'back' are used in relation to the front elevation of each building.

As a result of lambing within some of the buildings internal photographs were limited (notably buildings C & D), also some external views were obscured by the proximity of the more modern buildings.

3. Description of the Buildings

3.1 Building A

The first building, building A is located on the eastern side of the quadrangle; it is two storied local red brick building with a roof of Swithland and Welsh Slate. The building is much altered with extensions to the front and to the right; the change in roofing material indicates the original outline of the building. First floor access is via a brick built stairway to the left, originally these stairs would have been external and served both building A and building B, they are now enclosed within the later extension.

The rear of the building was originally an open three bay building, probably a cart shed. The original timbers are still *in situ*, although now hanging doors of corrugated steel sheets.

Internally the front extension appears to have been used as stabling, a timber partition remains in the middle bay. The first floor is undoubtedly the original grain store, the original plaster and reed floor remains as does the pitching hole in the left hand gable. The roof is of a bolted king post with raking struts.

3.2 Building B

Building B is at 100 degree angle to the left of building A, although an unusual angle, the buildings area clearly contemporary. The building is by far the largest within the proposed development area, originally a threshing barn with large central doors. There is corbelling at eaves level and carved sandstone hinge plates. There is an original plaster and reed floor in the right hand bay, there is a recent internal stair, but original first floor access was via the external stairs mentioned above.

Internally the building is largely unaltered, there has been some strengthening work carried with railway sleepers on the floor. An early twentieth century corn crushing mill is still in position. As with building A the roof is a bolted king post with raking struts, only larger.

3.3 Building C

Building C adjoins the left of building B, forming the northern wing of the quadrangle, but clearly from different phases of construction; there is a straight joint between the two and the brick work is different. The building is a single storey three-bay cowshed and largely unaltered. Internally there are brick built feeding troughs on the rear wall and some remaining partitions and the roof, unlike the other buildings is supported on purlins alone.

3.4 Building D

Building D is at an approximate right angle to the left of building C, forming the final wing of the quadrangle. The building is similar in style and appearance to building C and is almost certainly contemporary. The building has the appearance of a milking parlour; however, the lack of original features prevents a firm conclusion.

3.5 Building E

Building E adjoins the rear of building D at an approximate right angle to the left hand side, along with building F forming a smaller “U” shaped range of buildings, originally open to the south west. The building appears originally to have been open fronted, or possibly half clad in timber. As newer buildings obscured most of the building, it was impossible at the time of the survey, to see whether the buildings are contemporary.

3.6 Building F

Building F is the final building within this part of the survey, and joins the rear of building D, facing building E, forming a small “U” shaped range. In form, buildings E and F are very similar both being originally open fronted and are likely to be contemporary. Again the exact relationship with building D was obscured by later buildings.

4. Conclusion

Top House Farm is a good example of a typical Midlands farm complex. Due to the joint pressures of changing farming practices and residential development such examples are becoming scarce, it is important, therefore, that a record has been made of the complex prior to alterations being carried out. Although not contemporary it appears that the majority of the farm complex was built within a generation, has remained largely unaltered and due to its prime location it is very likely that the buildings replaced an earlier farm complex. It is likely that it was built using the profits of the agricultural boom between the 1840s and the 1870s.

It also reflects the changes in agriculture with none of the buildings still being used for their original purposes, and the modern prefabricated buildings to the north having replaced the brick built buildings. Although not included within this survey these later buildings are an important part of the development of twentieth century agriculture and are worthy of note.

5. Photographic Index

Colour Slide	Black & White	Building		Description	Dir
		No			
001	001	01		Dutch Barn.	N
002	002	01		Dutch Barn.	N
003	003	A		Rear Elevation.	NW
004	004	A		Rear Elevation.	NW
005	005	A		Front Elevation.	NE
006	006	A		Front Elevation.	NE
007	007	A		Chamfered Brick Corner.	
008	008	A		Chamfered Brick Corner.	
009	009	A		Change In Roofing Material.	
010	010	A		Change In Roofing Material.	
011	011	A		Weathervane.	
012	012	A		Weathervane.	
013	013	B		Front Elevation.	N
014	014	B		Front Elevation.	N
015	015	B		Door Detail.	
016	016	B		Door Detail.	
017	017	C		Front Elevation.	NW
018	018	C		Front Elevation.	NW
019	019	C		Louvered Roof Hood.	
020	020	C		Louvered Roof Hood.	
021	021	B/C		Straight Joint & Corbelling.	
022	022	B/C		Straight Joint & Corbelling.	
023	023	B		Dovecote.	
024	024	B		Dovecote.	
025	025	B		Corbelling & Rain Water Hopper.	
026	026	B		Corbelling & Rain Water Hopper.	
027	027	C		Door Detail.	
028	028	C		Door Detail.	
029	029	C		Left Gable.	E
030	030	C		Left Gable.	E

031	031	D	Right Gable.	S
032	032	D	Right Gable.	S
033	033	D	Rear Elevation.	E
034	034	D	Rear Elevation.	E
035	035	D	Graffiti Reading GMW on Front Elevation.	
036	036	D	Graffiti Reading GMW on Front Elevation.	
037	037	D	Graffiti on Front Elevation.	
038	038	D	Graffiti on Front Elevation.	
039	039	B	Rear Elevation.	N
040	040	B	Rear Elevation.	N
041	041	A	Rear Elevation & left Gable.	S
042	042	A	Rear Elevation & left Gable.	S
043	043	A	Timber Upright.	
044	044	A	Timber Upright.	
045	045	A	General View of Timbers.	
046	046	A	General View of Timbers.	
047	047	D	Front Elevation, Oblique View.	NW
048	048	D	Front Elevation, Oblique View.	NW
049	049	D	Blocked Entrance.	
050	050	D	Blocked Entrance.	
051	051	D1	General Internal View.	
052	052	D1	General Internal View.	
053	053	E	General Internal View.	
054	054	E	General Internal View.	
055	055	F	Front Elevation.	SE
056	056	F	Front Elevation.	SE
057	057	F	Roof Timbers.	
058	058	F	Roof Timbers.	
059	059	D	Graffiti.	
060	060	D	Graffiti.	
061	061	D	Front Elevation, Detail.	
062	062	D	Front Elevation, Detail.	
063	063	B	Corn Crusher.	
064	064	B	Corn Crusher.	
065	065	B	Mice Totals Recorded on Inserted Timber Work.	
066	066	B	Mice Totals Recorded on Inserted Timber Work.	
067	067	B	Roof Timbers.	
068	068	B	Roof Timbers.	
069	069	B	General Internal View.	
070	070	B	General Internal View.	
071	071	A	General Internal View, First Floor.	
072	072	A	General Internal View, First Floor.	
073	073	A	Roof Timbers.	
074	074	A	Roof Timbers.	
075	075	A	Interior & Partition.	
076	076	A	Interior & Partition.	
077	077	02	Corrugated Steel Building.	N
078	078	02	Corrugated Steel Building.	N
079		03	Dutch Barn.	S
080		03	Dutch Barn.	S
081		02	Makers Plate.	
082		02	Makers Plate.	

083 04 Makers Plate.
084 04 Makers Plate.

6. Archive and Publication

The site archive consists of

1 A2 permatrace sheet containing building plans
93 Black and white negatives contact sheets
72 Colour Slide Photos
A4 Photo Index Sheet
Unbound Copy of This Report

The archive will be held at Leicestershire County Council Accession Number X.A46.2007

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

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Figure 2 Building Identification.

8. Colour Plates



Colour Plate 1 Building A, Front Elevation.



Colour Plate 2 Building B, Front Elevation.



Colour Plate 3 Building C, Front Elevation.



Colour Plate 4 Building D, Front Elevation.