

**A Photographic Survey of School Farm, Main Street, Bruntingthorpe,  
Leicestershire (NGR SP 602 900).**

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## **A Photographic Survey of School Farm, Main Street, Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire (NGR SP 602 900).**

**Gerwyn Richards**

### ***Summary***

*University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by R.D. Lockwood & Co. to undertake a photographic survey at School Farm, Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire. Outline planning permission had been granted for alterations to the farmhouse, conversion and extension of the milking parlour and demolition of the barn.*

*The farm and its associated buildings are Grade II listed, therefore, the planning archaeologist recommended a photographic survey be carried out prior to work being carried out.*

*The farmhouse appears to have originally been constructed as a medieval open hall building, evidence of which is now limited to the substantial central fireplace in the left bay. The house has been extensively rebuilt and extended.*

### **1. Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services were commissioned by R.D. Lockwood & Co. to undertake a photographic survey of School Farm, Main Street, Bruntingthorpe, Leicestershire (SP 602 900). Outline planning permission has been granted for alterations to the existing farmhouse, conversion and extension of the milking parlour into a dwelling, demolition of barn and erection of a detached garage (Planning Application 06/00474/FUL). School Farm and its associated buildings are Grade II listed buildings (HER Ref: MLE 12829).

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.

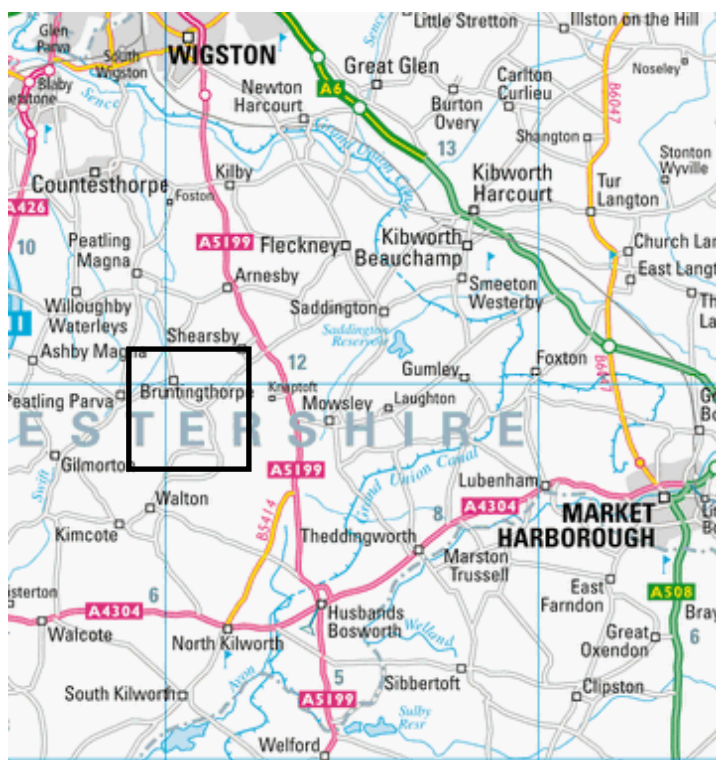
All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures*. In addition, Leicestershire County Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work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

### **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 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 June 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 and August 10<sup>th</sup> 2006.

The proposed development consists of four buildings of interest; the Farm House itself, the two milking parlours behind the Farm House and the Barn. Each building has been allocated a number for identification purposes and a letter 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.



**Figure 1.** Site location Scale 1:50000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

### 3. Description of the Buildings

#### 3.1 Building 1, The Farm House

As part of the proposed development a number of alterations were to be carried out to the building, and the purpose of this photographic survey is to record the building prior to these alterations taking place. The farm house itself consists of a two bay, three storied building fronting onto Main Street, and there is a symmetrical mid eighteenth century façade. Structurally the building is of 9 inch by 2 inch locally made red brick in a Flemish Bond and a Welsh Slate roof; there is a rubble plinth, approximately 300mm high confined to left hand bay.

Fenestration consists of two four light casement windows on the ground and first floor and dormer windows on the second floor, with concrete sills and flat cambered arched lintels above a central door. There is a line of corbelled bricks immediately above the first floor windows, probably indicating the original eaves. The roof was almost certainly raised and the dormer windows added, probably during the later nineteenth century, as there is a clear change in the brick work on the right hand gable.



**Colour Plate 1** School Farm.

The rear of the building again is mainly eighteenth century in date, with the exception of a rather curious “jettied” room at first floor level supported by a brick-built pillar with an open porch leading to the back door below. With the exception of this room all the rear windows appear to be late twentieth century installations. There are two inscribed bricks partially obscured above the back door; the first reads M W and the date 1733 and the second W H and the date 1872. Both probably commemorate episodes of rebuilding.

It is internally that the farm house becomes truly interesting; within the left bay there is a substantial centrally located ‘inglenook’ fireplace. Although much altered, the fireplace is likely to be older than the rest of the building and likely to be of medieval origin. A bread oven was later uncovered to the right of the fireplace, the brickwork of which was mainly Victorian in date, which is to be expected as brickwork would be replaced as the bricks burnt out. It is likely that the left bay was originally a medieval open hall house, originally perpendicular to the road. Further to this is a window in the left gable, the probable remains of the cross passage. The building of the chimney allowed the evolution of the house and a first floor was added with stairs. There is even evidence for these original stairs visible at first floor level with a change in the floor boards where these stairs were blocked when the building was extended.

With this internal evidence it is possible to speculate that the rubble plinth, visible externally, is the remains of the original floor beam, onto which the original timber framed building was built. The 1733 inscribed brick might actually commemorate the rebuilding of this timber framed building in its current brick-built incarnation. The right bay almost certainly dates from this eighteenth century rebuilding, although it contains little of architectural significance. Removal of the ceiling plaster, however, did reveal a number of names chalked onto the ceiling joists, next to the names were chalked vertical lines, possibly representing number of days worked at the building. The names were, right to left

- William Grocock III
- John Blockley-Sparrow IIII
- William Jordan-Sparrow (with a total of 35)
- ? Smith IIIII
- And finally the initials JW SB DE

The first floor is much altered and again has little of architectural significance. The jettied room does have two doorways, which both appear to be contemporary and combined with the high ceilings and airy nature of the room suggests that it was originally constructed as an upstairs drawing room. Externally the brick work is 9 inch by 3 inch machine made, certainly mid to late Victorian in date, a rebuild commemorated with the 1872 inscribed brick.

### 3.2 Building 2

The second building was a two storey barn to the south of the farm house. Due to its precarious state planning permission had been granted to demolition the building. Structurally the barn consisted of 9 inch by 2 ½ inch red brick in a Flemish Bond. The roof is mono pitched in Welsh Slate. Above the centrally placed door there is a sandstone date stone inscribed RJR 1886. Internally, as expected of a barn, there is little of architectural significance; there is a feeding trough along the full length of the rear wall. There is a change in the brickwork within the rear wall which also suggests the barn utilized an existing wall, possibly the boundary wall during construction. It is likely that the footings for this wall were insufficient for the building which explains its current precarious condition.



**Colour Plate 2** Building 2.

One significant feature was the ceiling within the barn; the ceiling had been constructed by placing slate atop of the joist onto which plaster was then skimmed to create the floor above. An unusual technique not seen before by the author, it may represent a primitive attempt at fire proofing or simply

been a way of using up surplus slate.

To the left of the barn there were two smaller extensions, each a lean-to design with the boundary wall forming the rear wall. The brick work was of no particular bond and the roofs were in corrugated asbestos cement sheets.

### 3.3 Building 3



**Colour Plate 3** Building 3.

The next recorded building was the milking parlour to the rear of the farm house, on the property's northern boundary. The brick work was 9 inch by 2 ½ inch red brick in a variation of Flemish Garden Bond and a pan tiled mono pitched roof. Internally there are five double stalls along the rear wall with cattle doors in

each gable end, as well as a central door in the front wall. The roof is a bolted king post design with raking struts.

### **3.4 Building 4**

The final building was another milking parlour which adjoined the rear of the farm house. The brick work is 9 inch by 2 ½ inch red brick in Flemish Garden Bond while the roof is of local Swithland Slate. Internally there are three double stalls along the rear wall there is downward angled ceramic vent pipe in each stall. The roof construction is a king post design with raking struts.



**Colour Plate 4** Building 4

There is evidence of a lost building between the two milking parlours and more interestingly there is a line shaft and flywheel. There is no evidence of an engine so power was likely to have come from a mobile engine with a power take off unit.

This is an unusual level of mechanisation for a relatively small farm and because of the loss of redundant equipment through scrapping, this type of evidence is scarce.

## **4. Conclusion**

School Farm is a fine example of an eighteenth century farmhouse as it stands and the associated out buildings illustrate well its expansion in the nineteenth century. The truly interesting aspect of the house, however, is its evolution from a medieval open hall to the building we see today. Although nearly no evidence of this original building remains it is still possible to trace the evolution of the house from what little remains.

The outbuildings are good example of pre-industrialised farming, but the use of Welsh Slate and mass produced brick are indication of the impending change which saw the abandonment of the vernacular style in agricultural buildings by the early twentieth century. The redundant line shaft and flywheel are another indication of change in twentieth century farming practices.



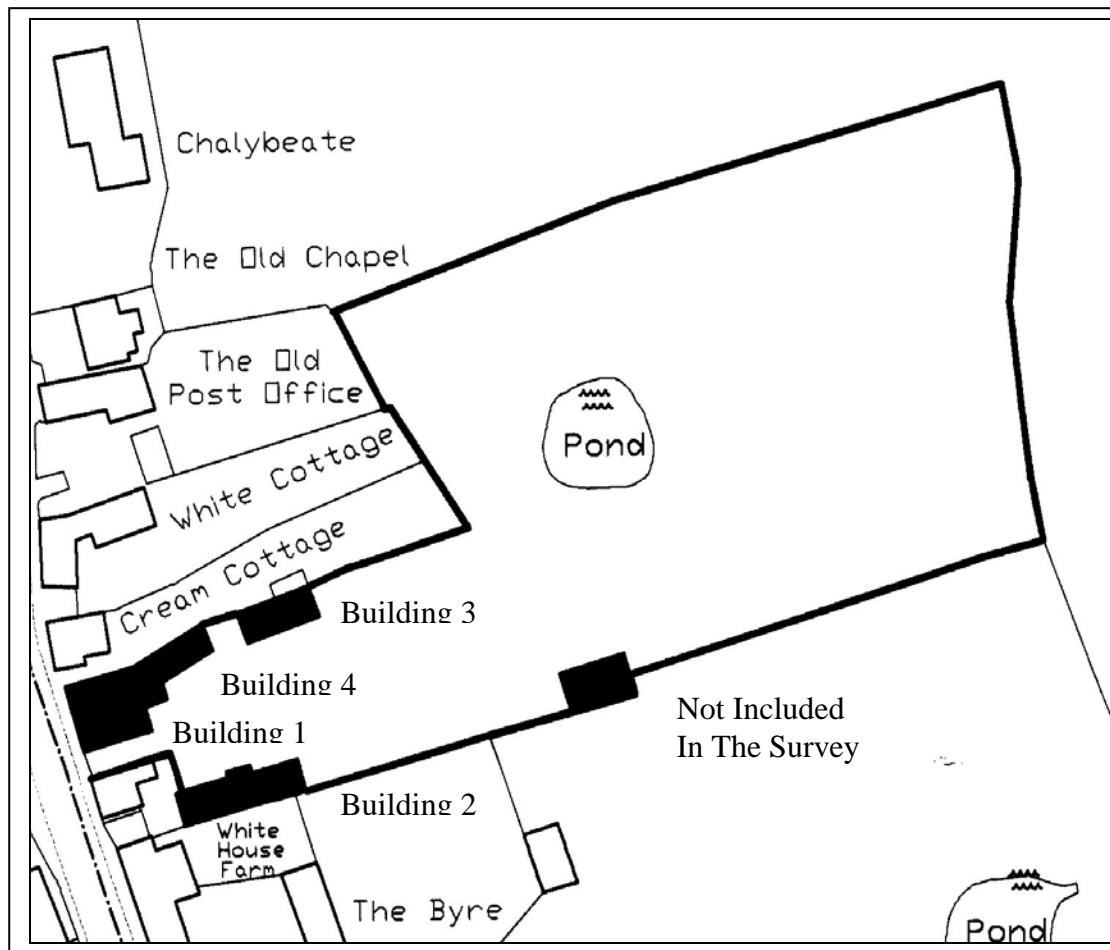


Figure 2 Building Identification.

## 5. Photographic Index

Colour Slide	Black & White	Building No	Description
001	001	01	Frontage, General View.
002	002	01	Frontage, General View.
003	003	01	Left Gable.
004	004	01	Left Gable.
005	005	01	Right Gable.
006	006	01	Right Gable.
007	007	01	Detail of Brickwork.
008	008	01	Detail of Brickwork.
009	009	01	Detail of Rubble Plinth.
010	010	01	Detail of Rubble Plinth.
011	011	02	Frontage, Barn.
012	012	02	Frontage, Barn.
013	013	02	Date Stone, Engraved "RJR 1886".
014	014	02	Date Stone, Engraved "RJR 1886".
015	015	02	Barn, Front & Left.
016	016	02	Barn, Front & Left.
017	017	01	Farmhouse, Rear Elevation.
018	018	01	Farmhouse, Rear Elevation.
019	019	03	Milking Parlour, Frontage, General View.
020	020	03	Milking Parlour, Frontage, General View.

021	021	04	Milking Parlour, Frontage, General View.
022	022	04	Milking Parlour, Frontage, General View.
023	023	03	Interior, Left to Right.
024	024	03	Interior, Left to Right.
025	025	03	Detail of Roof Timbers.
026	026	03	Detail of Roof Timbers.
027	027	04	Detail of Roof Timbers.
028	028	04	Detail of Roof Timbers.
029	029	02	Brick Niches.
030	030	02	Brick Niches.
	031	01	Downstairs Rear Fireplace After Stripping Plaster.
	032	01	Downstairs Rear Fireplace After Stripping Plaster.
	033	01	Detail of Brickwork Within Fireplace.
	034	01	Detail of Brickwork Within Fireplace.
035	035	01	Downstairs Front Fireplace.
036	036	01	Downstairs Front Fireplace.
037	037	01	Chimney Breast Detail.
038	038	01	Chimney Breast Detail.
039	039	01	Change in Floorboards.
040	040	01	Change in Floorboards.
041	041	01	Original Floorboards.
042	042	01	Original Floorboards.
	043	01	Plaster & Lathe Floor.
	044	01	Plaster & Lathe Floor.
			Limited View of Original Ceiling Joists Above
045	045	01	Kitchen.
			Limited View of Original Ceiling Joists Above
046	046	01	Kitchen.
047	047	01	Limited View of Original Wall Plate.
048	048	01	Limited View of Original Wall Plate.
	049	01	Chimney Breast Detail.
	050	01	Chimney Breast Detail.
051	051	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
052	052	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
053	053	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
054	054	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
055	055	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
056	056	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
057	057	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
058	058	01	Chalked Names on Ceiling Joists.
	059	01	Downstairs Chimney Breast.
	060	01	Downstairs Chimney Breast.
	061	01	Downstairs Chimney Breast Detail.
	062	01	Downstairs Chimney Breast Detail.
063	063	01	Inscribed Date Bricks.
064	064	01	Inscribed Date Bricks.
065	065	02	Brick Niches.
066	066	02	Brick Niches.
067	067	02	Plaster & Slate Floor Construction.
068	068	02	Plaster & Slate Floor Construction.
069	069	01	Detail of Eaves Corbelling.
070	070	01	Detail of Eaves Corbelling.
071	071	01	Reused Timber in Rear Fireplace, Detail.
072	072	01	Reused Timber in Rear Fireplace, Detail.
073	073	01	Possible Original Timber Element Within Fireplace.



074	074	01	Possible Original Timber Element Within Fireplace.
075	075	01	Possible Original Timber Element Within Fireplace.
076	076	01	Possible Original Timber Element Within Fireplace.
	077	01	Possible Original Timber Element Within Fireplace.
	078	01	Possible Original Timber Element Within Fireplace.
	079	01	Original Ceiling Joists From Ground Floor Level.
	080	01	Original Ceiling Joists From Ground Floor Level.
081	081	01	Downstairs Rear Fireplace After Further Work.
082	082	01	Downstairs Rear Fireplace After Further Work.
083	083	01	Newly Exposed Bread Oven.
084	084	01	Newly Exposed Bread Oven.
085	085	01	Stripped & Cleaned Ceiling Timbers.
086	086	01	Stripped & Cleaned Ceiling Timbers.
	087	01	Downstairs Front Fireplace.
	088	01	Downstairs Front Fireplace.
	089	01	Chimney Breast Detail.
	090	01	Chimney Breast Detail.
092	092	01	Inscribed Brick.
093	093	01	Inscribed Brick.

## 6. Archive and Publication

The site archive consists of

1 290x320 permatrace sheet  
 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

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

## 7. Bibliography

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T R Projects Ltd 2006. *An Historic Building Assessment and Record of the Standing fabric forming the Grade II\* Listed Building known as Bradgate Stables (Bradgate House) Groby, Leicestershire*. ULAS Report 2006-055.

## 8. Colour Plates



**Colour Plate 5** Newly Exposed Bread Oven (to the right of the fireplace).



**Colour Plate 6** Newly Exposed Ceiling Joists.



**Colour Plate 7** Evidence of Older Staircase in First Floor Floor Boards.



**Colour Plate 8** Newly Exposed Chimney Breast

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