

**An Historic Building Assessment (Level 2)**

**At Bescaby Park, Bescaby**

**Sproxton, Leicestershire.**

**NGR: SK 822 263**

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## **An Historic Building Assessment (Level 2) at Bescaby Park, Bescaby Sproxton, Leicestershire. NGR: SK 822 263**

**A R Hyam**

### **Summary**

*A Level 2 Historic Building Survey was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Bescaby Park, Bescaby, Waltham on the Wolds, Leicestershire. The survey studied the 18th century Bescaby House and its attached and adjacent agricultural buildings consisting of barns, stables and a cart shed. The house, which was built in 1760, has been altered and extended in the 19th and early 20th centuries as have the barns, one of which has been converted from a threshing barn into stables. Internally there is clear evidence of the social separation between master and servant. Bescaby Park represents an interesting example of a self-contained house and farm that were once typical of the local area. It is proposed that the house and buildings are to be extensively renovated to create new living accommodation as well as new uses for the barns including a picture gallery.*

*Bescaby House and two of the adjacent buildings are Grade II listed and because of the extent of the proposed alterations the Senior Planning Archaeologist requested that a Level 2 survey take place before any work commences. The survey work took place on the 2nd and 3rd of April 2009 and was carried out by A.R.Hyam. The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council under Accession Number X.A.83.2009*

### **1. Introduction**

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning), para 30 and PPG 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), this document forms the report for an historic building and analytical survey (level 2) on the existing complex of Bescaby House and its attached and adjacent agricultural buildings. These buildings form the core of Bescaby Park and are located at the eastern end of Mary Street, Bescaby in the parish of Sproxton, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 822 263). When considering the planning application the Senior Planning Archaeologist, as advisor to the planning authority, recommended that due to the alterations and changes of use involved in this project that the buildings should be subject to an analytical survey prior to the commencement of this work.

The small settlement of Bescaby lies approximately 2km north east of Waltham on the Wolds which is in turn 7km north east of Melton Mowbray (figs. 1 and 2). The site lies at a height of approximately 150m above OD.

### **2. Background**

The proposed development site consists of the main house, an adjacent stable block, a threshing barn that has been converted to a stable, a cart shed and a range of single storey outbuildings (figs 3, 4, 5 and 6). Other contemporary barns and sheds form a

larger part of this complex but are not included in the proposed development. On the northern and western edges of these additional buildings are a number of modern agricultural buildings which will be removed. The house is set on a small terrace facing southwards down a gentle slope towards open farmland. The barns and stables are arranged to create a number of yards and are generally at the same height as the house.

Bescaby House is a Grade II listed building with the details as follows:

*SK 82 NW SPROXTON MARY STREET (East side) 11/89 Bescaby 31.8.79 Bescaby House GV II Farmhouse. Circa 1760. Coursed ironstone and roof of graded Swithland slate. 2 storeys and attic in 3 bays. Central gabled gault brick porch with C20 door. To right a late C19 bay with a tripartite sash, to left a similar sash window but no bay. 3 late C19 sashes to first floor. Gabled roof with internal gable-end stacks. 2-storey late C19 extension abuts to rear. Interior retains early C19 staircase with stick balusters and ramped and wreathed handrail.*

To the south west of the house are a range of stables that are also Grade II listed as follows:

*SK 82 NW SPROXTON MARY STREET (East side) 11/90 Bescaby Stable block 10 m. north-west of 31.8.79 Bescaby House (formerly listed as part of Range of farm Buildings) GV II Stable block, now garaging. Mid C18. Coursed ironstone with pantile roof. 2 storeys. Central double timber doors flanked by 2 pedestrian doors under segmental brick heads. Casement and door to right, one casement to left. 2 first floor windows and a mural dovecote under eaves to left with 13 brick boxes. Gabled roof. Roof structure of tie beams, principals, one tier butt purlins and collars.*

Attached to the south western end of the stables and running south eastwards are another range of stables which have been converted from their original use as a threshing barn. These stables are again Grade II listed as follows:

*SK 82 NW SPROXTON MARY STREET (East side) 11/452 Bescaby Barn 35 m. west of 31.8.79 Bescaby House (formerly listed as part of Range of Farm Buildings) GV II 3 stead barn and stables. Circa 1760. Coursed ironstone with pantiled roof. Central door to east side blocked. Brick mural dovecote to right under eaves. Rear has stable and loose box doors and windows. Half hipped roof.*

Running out from the north western corner of the stables is a single storey range of outbuildings with a north east to south west oriented cart shed attached to its north western end. Neither of these structures is listed.

The proposed plans are to extensively remodel the house by, among other things, removing the ground floor bay windows, increasing accommodation on the third floor and removing a single storey outbuilding to the rear. The stables are to be linked to the house and will be converted to living accommodation and games room etc. The stable/threshing barn is to be a gallery and gym. The outbuildings will house geothermal and associated equipment whilst the cart shed will become a garage. The full details are discussed in the Paul Bancroft Architects Design and Access Statement.

### 3. Objectives

The objectives of the historic building analytical survey as specified in the ULAS Design Specification were:

- The recording by photography, notes and drawings of the building that is to be analysed with specific attention given to those elements proposed for reuse, 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 produce an archive and report of the results.

### 4. Methodology

Black and white 35mm photographs and digital colour photographs were taken throughout the survey. Notes and sketches were also made and scale drawings supplied by the client. The specific levels of detail used in the survey followed the guidelines laid down in the RCHME (1996) and English Heritage (2006) specification, which were:

#### 1. The Written Account:

- The precise location of the building, by name or street number, civil parish, town, etc, and National Grid reference and details of listing or scheduling.
- The date when the record was made, and the name(s) of the recorder(s).
- A statement describing the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners should be given if known.
- An account of the building's overall form (structure, materials, layout) and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
- An account of past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations. An analysis of any circulation pattern or decorative, iconographic or liturgical scheme.

#### 2. Drawn Record:

- Shall comprise plans (to scale or full dimensioned) of all main floors as existing. Small buildings of well-known types, or buildings with a repetitive structure (e.g. many industrial buildings) may be planned on one floor only, but a note or a sketch plan should be made to show the arrangement of other floors. Plans should show the form and location of any structural features of historic significance (e.g. blocked doors and windows; former fireplace openings; masonry joints; changes in internal levels).
- As a minimum, in all cases, the drawn record will include a sketch plan roughly dimensioned (when no more thorough drawn record is required). Such a plan may not always include structural details (e.g. timber framing).
- In each of the above cases, use may be made of available plans (i.e. those prepared as part of a planning application). In all cases these shall be checked by the historic building specialist and supplemented or amended where necessary.

3. Photographic Record:

- General view of views of the exterior of the building.
- The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.
- Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance. In the case of a building designed by an architect, or intended to be seen from a certain point of view, it is important to have regard to the builder's intentions and to record the effect of the design or of the building's placing.

All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhered 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* was followed.

As mentioned earlier this report covers the building survey portion of the project and a second report will be required to fulfil the archaeological strip map and record exercise when the new dwellings are constructed.

## 5. Results

As discussed above, the house and barns consist of the main house, with stables and barns to the west which form a number of open yards in typical 18th and 19th century agricultural fashion. The house is located to take advantage of the views across the open farmland to the south and east which slopes gently down to the south. A shallow ha ha has been built in front of the house beyond which are a number of apparent earthworks and a small pond. A small garden consisting of a lawn and trees is to the east of the house. The complex of barns is on a similar level to the house but tend to follow a gentle rise in the ground to the north east (fig. 7).

### ***Bescaby House***

#### *External elevations*

Bescaby House is constructed from coursed limestone rubble (the listing states ironstone) probably quarried from local sources (fig. 8). It has some attempt at quoins at each corner and a graded Swithland slate roof. To the rear two parallel gabled wings extend north westwards. A single storey extension is attached to the northern end of the western wing. The principal, south east facing, elevation consists of three bays with a brick built chimney stack at either end although one at the eastern side has been removed down to ridge height. The ground floor windows to have been modified from their original design with the eastern window having a shallow square bay built in yellow brick and a slate hipped roof. The bay has sash windows consisting of a larger central sash with two narrow sashes, one either side. The western ground floor window has the same design of sash window but no bay. The lintel above this window is covered in a lot of sheet lead indicating that the opening has been heavily modified. There is also the hint of patched stonework below this window. The DCMS listing states these modifications to be of late 19th century date and there is no reason to dispute this although they are present by the time of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886. A brick built porch that fills the central ground floor bay has a modern door but a late 19th century light above with clear, red and blue glass



decoration. The ridge of the porch impinges on the window sill above. At a later date the porch has been extended eastwards to join the bay window. The first floor has three sash windows that appear to be of late 19th century date except for the western window which is of uPVC. They all have limestone sills and heads.

The south western elevation of the house continues from the main range to the western side of the rear wing (fig. 9). There is no apparent joint in the stonework between the main range and the rear wing suggesting a contemporary date for building. A ground floor sash window matches the style of those on the front whilst the two remaining sash windows have six panes in each sash and are also 19th century. A large window has been blocked with stone on the first floor and there is evidence of a smaller square window being blocked on the south side of the main house gable end. The stonework around the ground floor northern window, which is the kitchen window, has a straight line joint and some evidence of modification.

The north eastern elevation of the house has a small step out where the rear wing joins the main range (fig. 10). The five sash windows all match in style indicating that this face, along with the front, was the principal aspect of the house and designed to be seen. The brick heads of two cellar windows can be seen below the two rear wing windows. As with the western elevation a small square window has been blocked in the gable end of the main house.

The north western face of the house has the two gable ends of the rear wings with internal chimney stacks running up each gable (fig. 11). The stonework of the two wings appears to be continuous and a small parapet between the gables joins the two together. Two arched windows with segmental brick heads are located in the centre of the two wings with the head of a cellar window below. The first floor, bathroom window, has been replaced with a modern frame and glass but the ground floor retains its horizontal sliding sash. What appear to be later insertions of two small rectangular windows serve a shower room and servant's stairs on the first floor. There is an indication in the stonework of each gable of a square opening that has been blocked. A stone and welsh slate single storey extension has been attached to the rear of the western wing (fig. 12). This has a single horizontal sliding sash window on the east and west elevation, a single door on the west side and a wide doorway, with a modern door, on the northern end. A single stack chimney built of red brick extends from this extension up the rear of the house wing.

### *Ground floor*

Inside the entrance hall is a fairly narrow staircase with stick balusters and turned newel post. The floor has a diamond pattern of yellow and black quarry tiles measuring 150mm<sup>2</sup> (fig. 13). The moulded detail at dado height which continues around the hall matches that at banister height. The hall leads round to the south western door to the stable yard (fig. 14). This area is clearly designed for servants as the corridor becomes narrower and there are seven call bells on the northern wall (fig. 15). The two principal rooms lead off to east and west from the main hallway through 6-panelled doors with rising hinges and moulded frames. The western room has a second, slightly narrower and less decorative, 6-panelled door leading to the rear corridor mentioned above (fig. 16). The room has a modern fireplace with a recess to the south side of it which appears to be part of the original design (fig. 17). A sash

window is to the north of the fireplace and has hinged shutters each side. The south east facing windows have folding shutters of three leaves built into the panelled casing around the window. Secondary glazing prevents these from working but it is possible to see that once opened they were secured by a pivoting iron bar and simple latch. A beaded transverse ceiling beam with a rounded southern end runs down the centre of the room towards the main window (fig. 18).

The eastern principal room has the same shutters as in the western room (fig. 19), it also has a similar transverse ceiling beam running down the middle of the room (fig. 20). The fireplace is of modern design with sash windows with shutters either side. A recessed arch covers most of the northern wall (fig. 21).

The dining room in the north eastern corner of the house is reached through a 6-panelled door at the north end of the hall (fig. 22). It has a large art nouveau style fireplace on the north wall flanked by two arched recesses (fig. 23). Modification to the floorboards around the fireplace indicates that some alteration to the hearth has taken place. The windows on the east wall have panelled shutters and casements as in the front rooms. The moulded coving in this room is not as ornate as seen in the front rooms.

Two doors at the northern end of the hall lead to a downstairs toilet and a cellar. The toilet has a raised floor to accommodate the headroom needed for the cellar stairs to the west. Inside, the toilet room is fairly plain with modern fittings and wall coverings, only a coat rack with wooden hooks shows any evidence of a former use. The cellar is reached by stone and brick steps leading down to three main rooms and a smaller store (fig. 24). The rooms are divided by brick walls and have brick vaulted ceilings and stone flagged floors. The store has a series of stone shelves supported on brick piers that would probably have served as wine racks (fig. 25). The north western room is slightly higher than the other two and has brick piers supporting a wooden shelf with wooden brackets for further shelving on each wall (fig. 26). The two lower rooms to the east have lockable wooden doors to control access. The south east room has arched brick piers supporting wood and stone shelves that would have acted as cool shelves for perishable goods (fig. 27). Metal hooks, possibly for meat, are attached to the ceiling. A similar shelving arrangement is in the north east room although here the bricks form open troughs which may have held ice (fig. 28). A wooden shelf supported by iron hooks is suspended from the ceiling.

A 4-panelled door in the northern corridor leads into the kitchen which has most walls covered by modern kitchen units (fig. 29). A narrow 3-plank door covers storage space under the servants' stair that intrudes into the kitchen space in the north corner. A broad chamfer in the stonework on the northern side of the kitchen window is further evidence of modification to this opening, as noted on the outside elevation, but what the modification was is not clear. A cupboard in the north west corner may have been a doorway but this has been blocked by units in the kitchen and a copper on the other side. Seven iron hooks are driven into the ceiling in rows that may have held overhead racking.

A door in the north corner of the kitchen, next to the servants' stair, leads into the single storey extension at the rear of the house. This has been divided into two rooms by a modern partition running north west to south east whilst an original wall creates

a smaller room across the northern end of the extension. The paint scheme alone in this scullery extension clearly marks it out as an area of domestic activity where the owners would not normally go (fig. 30). A shallow sink and cast iron hand pump are still present on the eastern wall as is a copper and modified boiler in the fireplace on the south wall (fig. 31). The door to the stairs leading to the first floor is currently secured shut but a small fanlight shows a set of narrow stairs ascending to a door on the first floor (fig. 32). The room at the northern end of the extension has a wooden shelf in but is otherwise empty. It has a wooden door with a sliding ventilator in (fig. 33).

### *First floor*

The main stairs lead up to a narrow landing with arches leading to the rear wings of the house (fig. 34). The stairs continue round to another set of narrow stairs leading to the second floor servants' accommodation. The western front bedroom has a 4-panelled door but is otherwise quite plain and has had its fireplace blocked (fig. 35). The sash window has a low internal sill and wooden panelled casement. The eastern front bedroom is also rather plain with the same door and window treatment and blocked fireplace (fig. 36). A second door leads through to the rear bedroom and a prominent transverse beam runs across the ceiling to the window.

The eastern rear bedroom has been modified by the addition of a shower room and corridor to the west to create a rather long and narrow room (fig. 37). The fireplace is still intact and is of a type that came into common usage from the middle of the 19th century. The windows and shutters are similar to those on the front but have built-in cupboards beneath them (fig. 38). The inserted shower room runs alongside the bedroom and explains the presence of the small inserted window seen from outside. Adjacent to this on the western side is a bathroom which would presumably have been a bedroom when originally built. It is heavily tiled and fitted with modern appliances.

In the north west corner of the first floor landing is a 4-panelled door leading to a smaller landing (fig. 39). From this landing a door (screwed shut) to the north leads down the servants' stairs to the rear extension, a second door leads into the north west bedroom, a third door (screwed shut) leads up a set of enclosed stairs to the rear western wing of the top floor and a final door of plank construction covers a shallow recess in the south wall. The door covering the recess seems likely to have led into the front bedroom at one time whilst the stairs up to the top floor would have allowed the servants to reach the rear wing accommodation without entering the main living areas (fig. 40). The north west bedroom has a narrow cupboard in the south wall which utilises the space beneath these stairs. The blocked window, seen on the south west elevation, is evident in this bedroom although it is not clear why it should have been blocked (fig. 41). A small overlight above the door lights the small landing outside and the remains of a bell pulley system can be seen to the side of the door (fig. 42).

### *Second floor*

A narrow set of enclosed stairs is hidden behind a door at the southern end of the main landing which lead up to another landing with doors to the east and west (fig. 43). The lack of decoration and small size of the stairs indicates that this was the servants' accommodation. Similarly the doors are fairly crude with Bakelite knobs and no locks. The western room currently has no floor so could not be properly inspected, however there is evidence of a blocked window in the south western corner that

matches the slight change in stonework seen outside (fig. 44). There is no evidence of a door in the northern wall indicating that the second set of stairs from the small first floor landing served an as yet unseen room that was separated from the others on this floor. The eastern room has a matching blocked window in its eastern gable and a doorway leading into the rear wing which also has a blocked window in its north gable (fig. 45). There is some wooden shelving that survives in the front room and some attempt at wallpaper frieze decoration. A hatch in the ceiling shows that the rear wings are a later addition to the main range as the redundant laths for the original slates are still in place on the roof timbers (fig. 46).

### *The stables*

The stables run on a north east to south west alignment and are attached to the main house by a stone wall containing a doorway leading to the rear yard. They are built of coursed ironstone rubble with a blue pan tile roof known as Bottesford Blues in this part of Leicestershire (fig. 47). A straight line joint between the double door and the single door to the east indicates that the range has been extended eastwards. The roofline dips slightly at this point and the stone appears to be more predominantly limestone. The central double doorway has modern doors fitted and may be an insertion as the opening has caused the stonework above to move slightly. The single doorways have wooden doors with metal latches with curved handles. The upper floor has two narrow openings on the original portion of the building, one of which is now a dovecot. A single storey brick extension has been added to the western end of the stables which joins this range to the north west to south east stable range (fig. 48).

Inside, the eastern addition was originally a bakehouse with a fireplace and bread oven on the north wall but this has been divided into two by the insertion of a partition wall running north west to south east and blocking off the fireplace (fig. 49). The eastern room subsequently acts as a store whilst the western room has a small bread oven with a brick dome still in situ (fig. 50). An open hatch, without stairs, leads to the upper floor which has tongue and groove floorboards and truncated chimney from the bread oven and fireplace. The room is otherwise bare with the roof structure consisting of principal rafter trusses with collar beams into which the purlins are tenoned.

The western room of the stone built stables is currently used as a garage but retains one loose box at the western end (fig. 51). A hole in the gypsum or lime plaster floor shows the roof to have the same structure as in the eastern extension but here the collar beams are roughly shaped timbers selected for their shape rather than sawn to shape (fig. 52). A series of iron pegs set into the western gable end may have held roosts for the doves. The brick built stable has two loose boxes and evidence of blocked doors leading into both stable ranges (fig. 53).

The rear (north) of the stables has a brick built extension to the eastern end and the roof, of red pan tiles, extends from the stable ridge over the lean-to extension in a catslide roof (fig. 54). The rear of the circular bread oven can be seen in both rooms of the lean-to (fig. 55). The rear of the brick built stable extension has blue pan tiles and has evidence of a blocked door (fig. 56).

### ***The north west to south east stables***

The main elevation of this building faces away from the house to the south west and is primarily constructed of coursed limestone rubble with a red pan tiled half hipped roof patched with blue pan tiles (fig. 57). A red brick double and single storey extension has been added to the northern end and joins with the brick extension to the north east to south west stable block. A pitched stone pavement runs along the front of the stables. Two small windows are blocked with stone at eaves height as has a window with segmental brick headers at the southern end of the range (fig. 58). A large central opening has also been blocked and has a matching blocked opening on the opposite wall indicating that the building probably started life as a threshing barn (fig. 59). The south gable end wall has a single blocked doorway with a window above (fig. 60). The north eastern elevation of this building is partially obscured by a modern brick built lean-to shed but the blocked threshing door is clearly visible both to the south of the lean-to and inside the lean-to (fig. 61). A dovecote fills the first floor opening on this elevation. Inside the stable, the southern end room is of full height and is open to the roof which is supported by a truss and king post with raking struts (fig. 62). The main stable is open along its length with loose boxes and brick built troughs (figs. 63 and 64). The ceiling is of straw and gypsum or lime plaster construction and a hole reveals that on the first floor the northern gable end has dove roosts made from red pan tiles. Access to the first floor is from the northern brick extension although the steps or ladder that must have been used is missing (fig. 65). The roof structure creates a central open space divided into bays by the use of interrupted tie beam trusses (fig. 66). Loose boxes fill the rest of the brick extension (fig. 67).

### ***The cart shed***

The cart or implement shed runs on a north east to south west alignment and forms the north western side of a yard created by attached outbuildings and the north east to south west stables. This space is now filled with two modern open barns in a poor state of repair (fig. 68). The cart shed is built of coursed limestone rubble with a half hipped red pan tile roof and is open to the north west elevation (fig. 69). Timber posts support the open front. The timber roof structure is supported by a series of queen post trusses with raking braces and outer princess posts typical of the 19th century (fig. 70). There is evidence of deliberate scratch marks on the underside of most of the trusses although they do not appear to form a coherent pattern. It is likely that these are shipping marks. A blocked doorway in the southern corner once led to the open yard mentioned above. A modern brick single storey office has been inserted into the northern end bay.

### ***The outbuildings***

The brick built outbuildings are attached to the south eastern corner of the cart shed and run south eastwards towards the north west elevation of the north east to south west stables (fig. 71). The northern room has a small brick built trough on the eastern wall but is otherwise bare (fig. 72). The larger central room is also bare and open to the underside of the pan tiled roof. The southern room appears to have been used as an office and has a plasterboard dividing wall inserted to make two smaller rooms. The southern end wall has evidence of three blocked openings of unknown function (fig. 73).

### ***The garden toilet***

Located in the north western corner of the garden is a small limestone rubble and blue pan tile gable ended building which served as the outside toilet for the household (fig. 74). The building is divided into two halves with the servants' door to the north and the family door to the south. The servants' side is open to the roof and has painted walls and two side by side holes (fig. 75). A brick and stone chute from both leads to a well built culvert heading north eastwards (fig. 76). On the opposite side the family toilet has a small window, a ceiling and panelled walls. In addition to the two main holes there is a lower child's seat (fig. 77).

## **6. Discussion**

Bescaby House and barns represent an interesting group of farm buildings that appear to have changed little since the first half of the 20th century. The house has been modified since being built by the addition of both the two storey and single storey extensions to the rear. Because of the amount of lead flashing around the front western window and the style of the sashes of both ground floor windows it is clear that these are not the originals. It is possible that the current windows replace earlier bay windows that were themselves replacements of the original 1760s windows. It would appear that the house was modernised in the late 19th century by the replacement of these front windows and the windows belonging to the more important rooms. Other modifications include the blocking of the rear western bedroom window. The reason for this is not clear although it may be to do with status when this room was given over to use by the servants rather than the owner. The servants' quarters on the top floor have also been out of use for some time and have had their floors removed and windows blocked, possibly to make the roof more weather tight and warmer when staff numbers were reduced and this floor was no longer required.

Throughout the house there is clear evidence of the social separation of the household with lower quality fittings and smaller spaces in the places used by staff rather than by the owner. The lack of locks on doors on the top floor points to a degree of control and a lack of privacy. It is even possible to see different ranks in the staff where some had their own separate rooms, such as the rear western bedroom and the possible division of the sexes with the rear top floor rooms being separate and having their own sets of stairs.

Outside, the bread oven shows that the estate would have had a certain degree of self-sufficiency in what was until relatively recently a quite remote location. The change in use of the threshing barn to stables probably coincides with the rise in importance of hunting in this part of Leicestershire. At this time the provision of stabling and facilities associated with hunting would be a lucrative offshoot of the main business of farming. It is possible that this change also coincides with the new house windows. The small brick extensions at the ends of the stables may also be from around this time and seem to be an attempt to increase the accommodation space for horses. That the estate was still primarily involved in agriculture however is indicated by the number and size of the barns and other agricultural buildings not covered by the remit of this report. The predominant building material for these additional buildings is

brick and their construction may coincide with the conversion and extension of the threshing barn.

The cart shed has remained relatively unchanged since its construction, apart from the creation of the small office. Such a building would have housed carts and agricultural machinery until the increasing size of modern equipment rendered it redundant. The outbuildings have apparently been used for a variety of purposes including stabling animal pens and offices. They are somewhat overshadowed by the construction of the new barns in the yard to the west.

## **7. Conclusion**

The complex of house and barns at Bescaby Park represent a well-preserved example of an East Leicestershire farm dating from the second half of the 18th century, *c.*1760, and substantially enlarged in the 19th century. Changes in agricultural practices, the rise in popularity of hunting and the loss of domestic staff can all be demonstrated at this farm. The RCHME has identified that the changes in agricultural and rural practices seen from the middle of the 20th century and into the present century has had a great effect on farm buildings. As a result many buildings have fallen into disuse and have been lost without record.

From the results of this survey, although it is difficult to ascribe specific dates, it is apparent that there are two key phases in the development of the house and barns (below). The desk-based assessment located no enclosure or other early map evidence for the area, the earliest available map being the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1886. This shows that all of the buildings within the complex were in their present form by that date. A more detailed on-site survey of the buildings would serve to clarify the development sequence.

Phase 1. *c.*1760 Bescaby House is constructed probably at the same time as the north west to south east aligned threshing barn, which is of the same limestone. The north east to south west aligned stables, constructed from ironstone, may be a little earlier as the bakehouse extension is of limestone similar to that used in the threshing barn.

Phase 2. Mid to late 19th century (but before 1886) the rear wings and extension to the house added. Around this time the threshing barn was converted to stables and the brick extensions were added between it and the pre-existing stables. It is possible that some of the outlying barns were also constructed at about this time to compensate for the loss of the threshing barn. The cart shed is also of typical 19th century style and is attributable to this phase.

## **8. Archive**

The archive consists of:

This report,

22 pages of handwritten A5 notes taken during the survey,

CD of this report and digital images,

Black and white 35mm negatives & contact sheets,

Photographic record sheets,

A copy of the architect's survey of the buildings

## 9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 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 reports.

## 10. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by A R Hyam. The project was managed by R Buckley and N Finn.

## 11. Bibliography

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11.05.2009



### Appendix 1. Figures

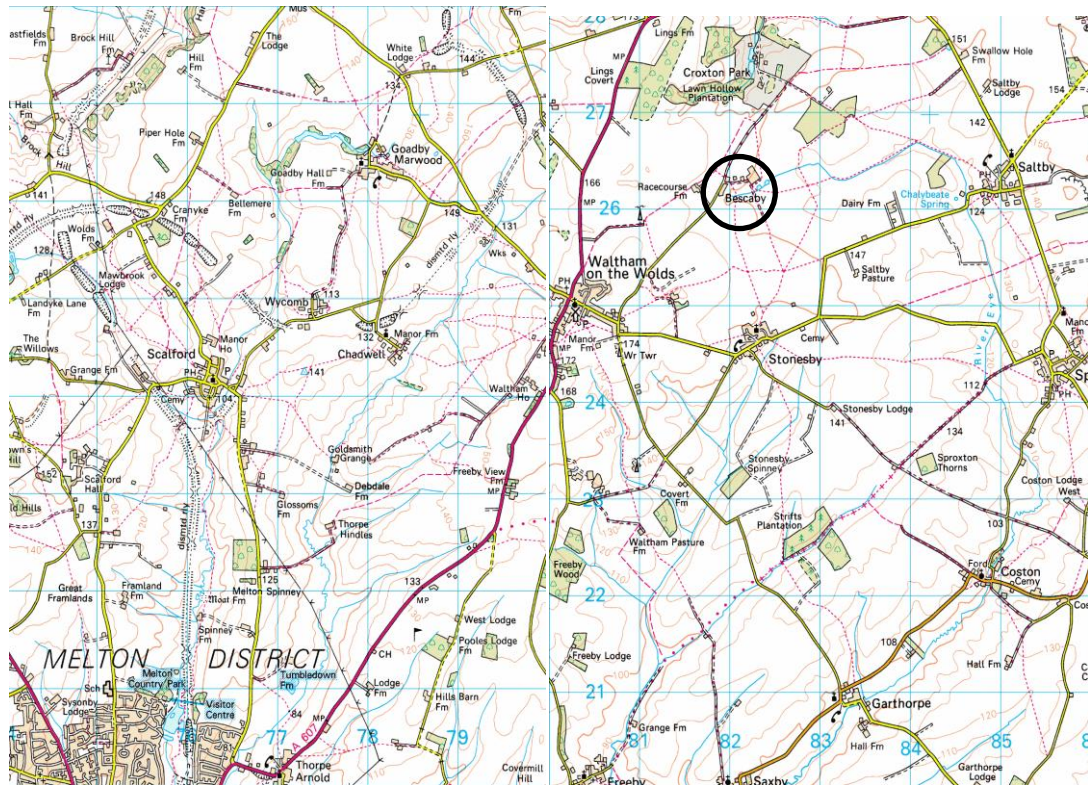


Figure 1 Ordnance Survey map of area

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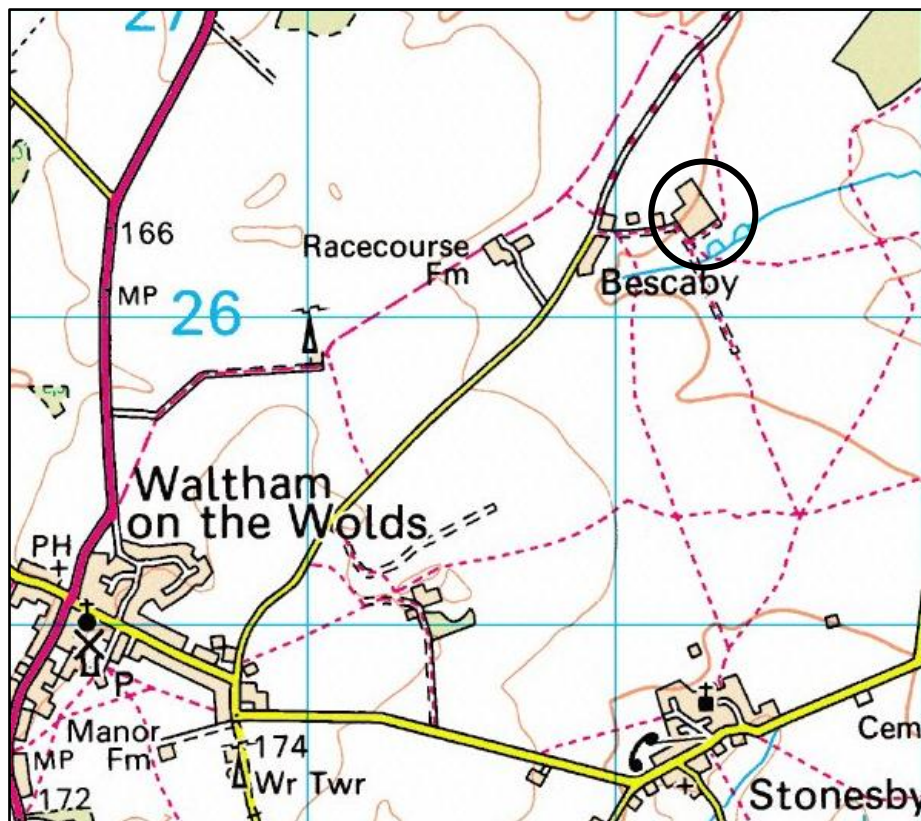


Figure 2 Location of Bescaby

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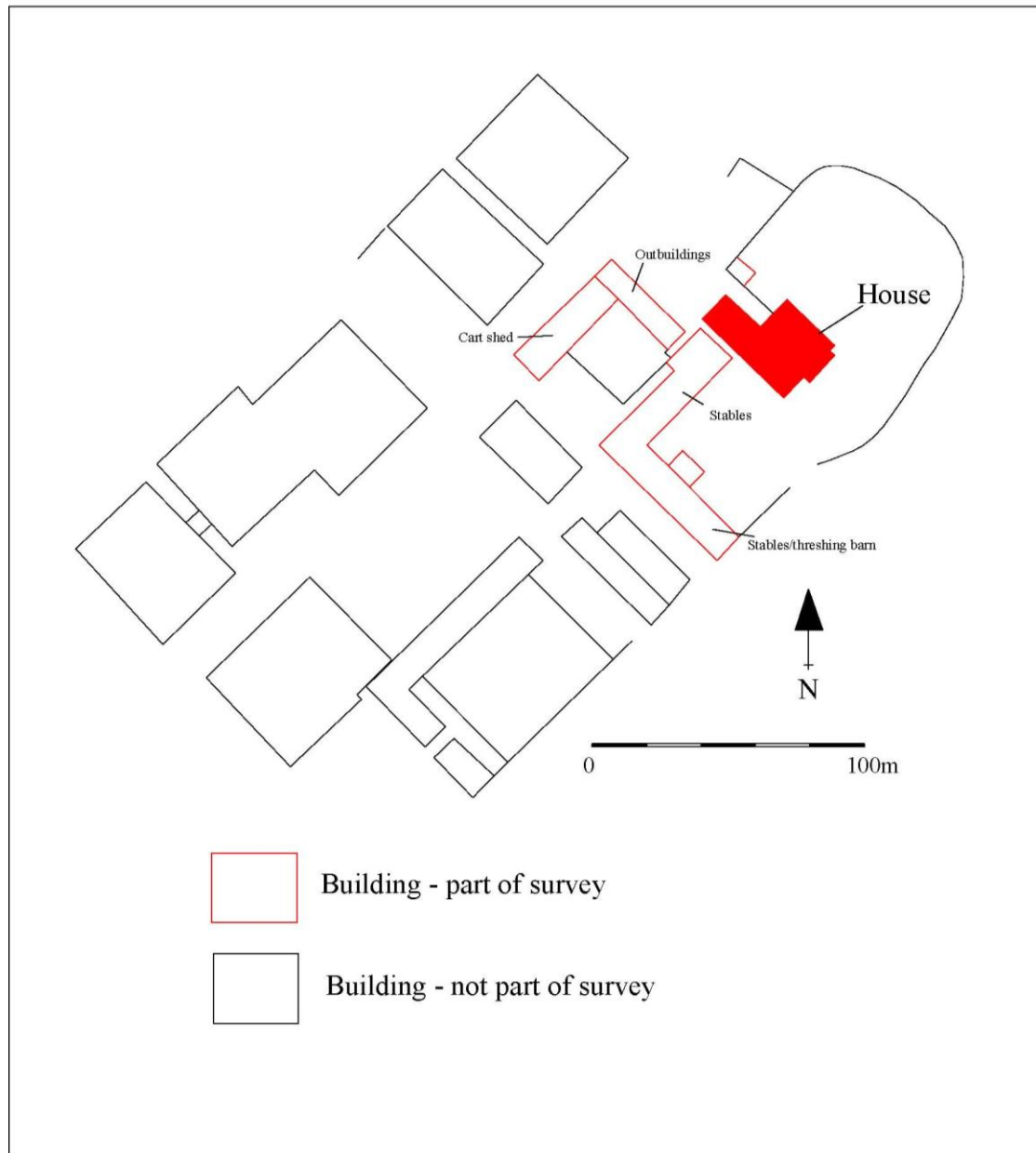


Figure 3 Layout of buildings at Bescaby Park



Figure 4 Bescaby House elevations and plans  
Source: Paul Bancroft Architects

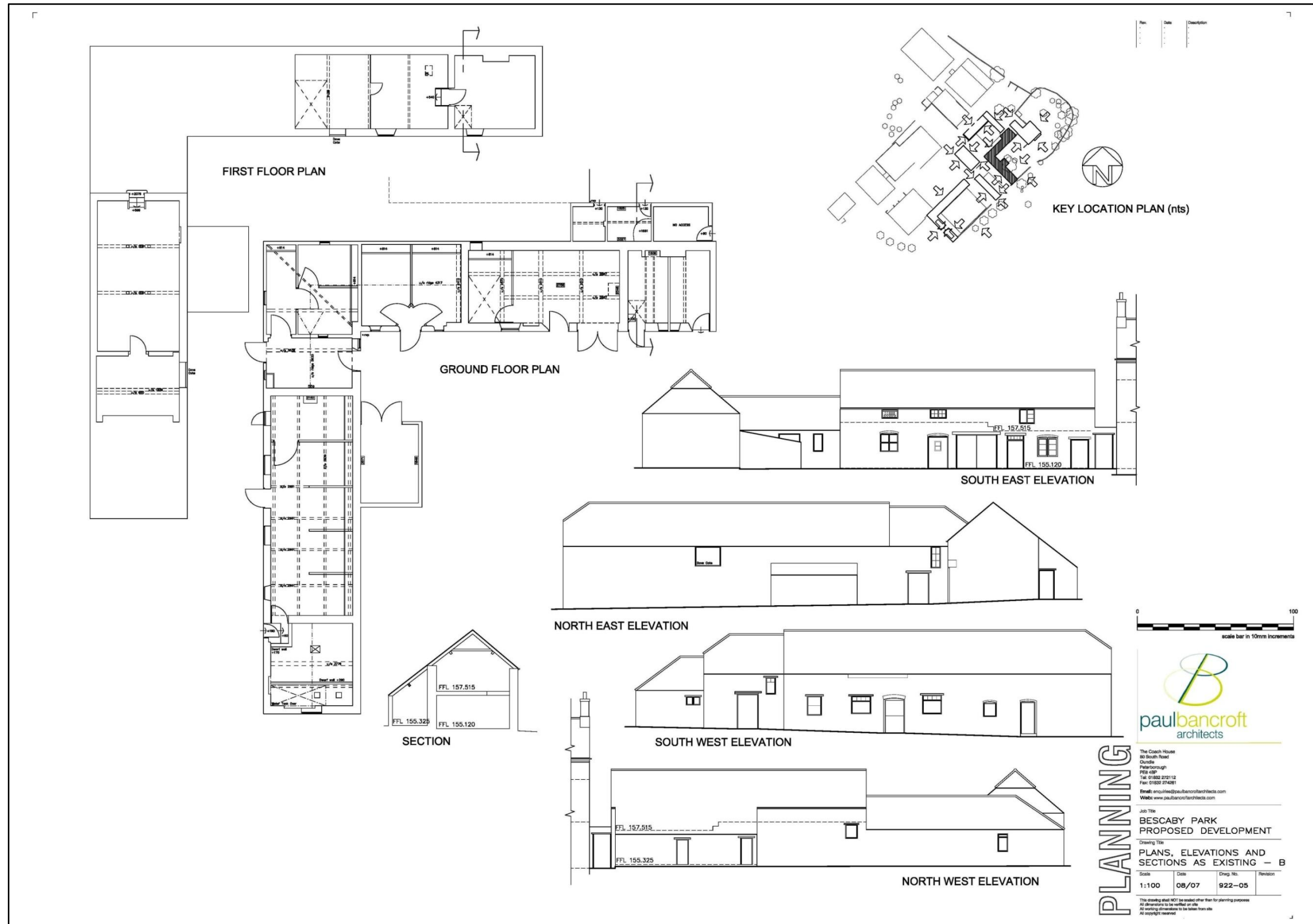


Figure 5 Stable elevations and plans  
Source: Paul Bancroft Architects

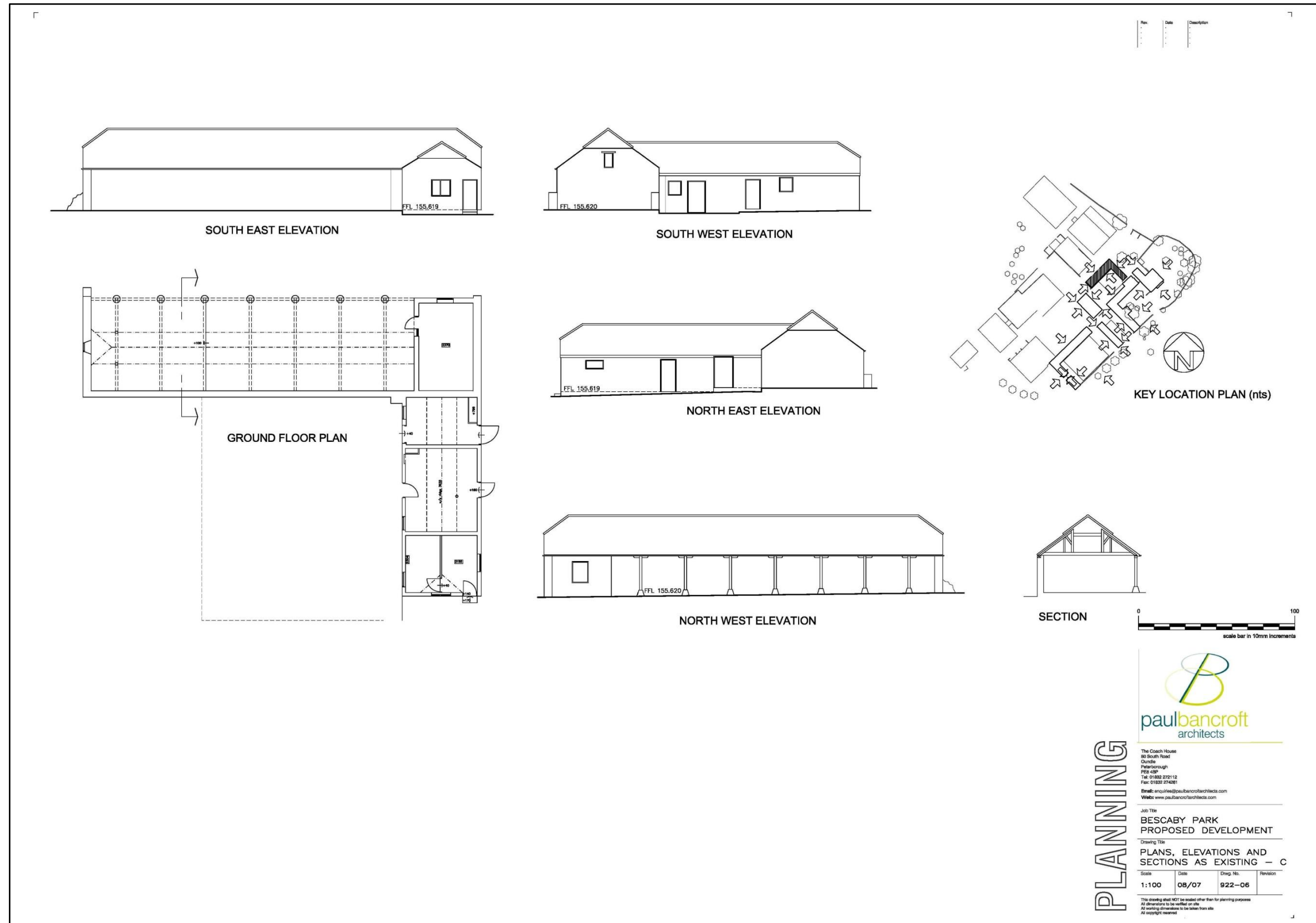


Figure 6 Cart/implement shed elevations and plans  
Source: Paul Bancroft Architects



Figure 7 Bescaby House and barns  
Looking north west



Figure 8 Bescaby House south east facing elevation



Figure 9 Bescaby House south west facing elevation



Figure 10 Bescaby House north east facing elevation



Figure 11 Bescaby House north west facing elevation and extension



Figure 12 Bescaby House north western extension





Figure 13 Ground floor entrance hall  
Looking north west



Figure 14 Rear corridor from hall  
Looking south west



Figure 15 Servant bells in rear corridor  
Looking north west



Figure 16 Front, western room  
Looking north



Figure 17 Front, western room  
Looking west



Figure 18 South end of ceiling beam in front, western room  
Looking west



Figure 19 Front window shutters, eastern room  
Looking south east



Figure 20 Front, eastern room  
Looking south



Figure 21 Front, eastern room  
Looking north



Figure 22 Rear dining room  
Looking south



Figure 23 Rear dining room  
Looking north



Figure 24 Cellar steps  
Looking south west



Figure 25 Racks in cellar  
Looking south. 1m scale



Figure 26 Cellar, western room  
Looking north west



Figure 27 Cellar, south eastern room  
Looking north east. 1m scale





Figure 28 Cellar, north eastern room  
Looking north. 1m scale



Figure 29 Kitchen  
Facing west. Note chamfer by window

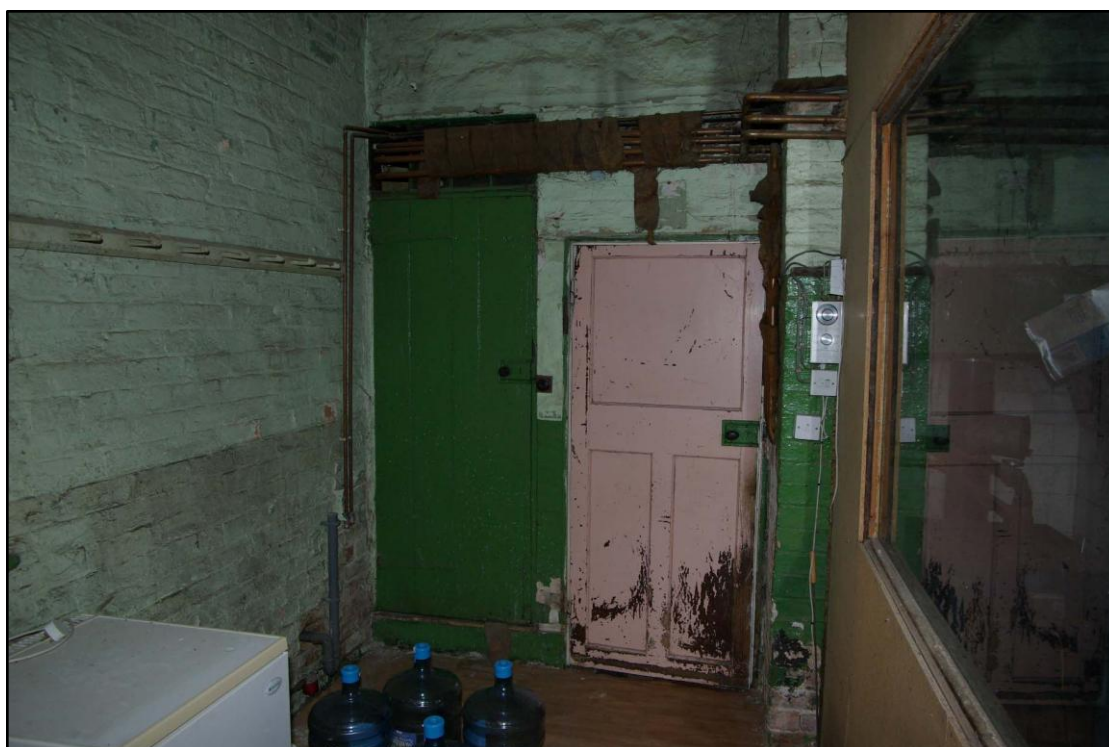


Figure 30 Rear extension, eastern half  
Looking south east



Figure 31 Rear extension, western half  
Looking south east

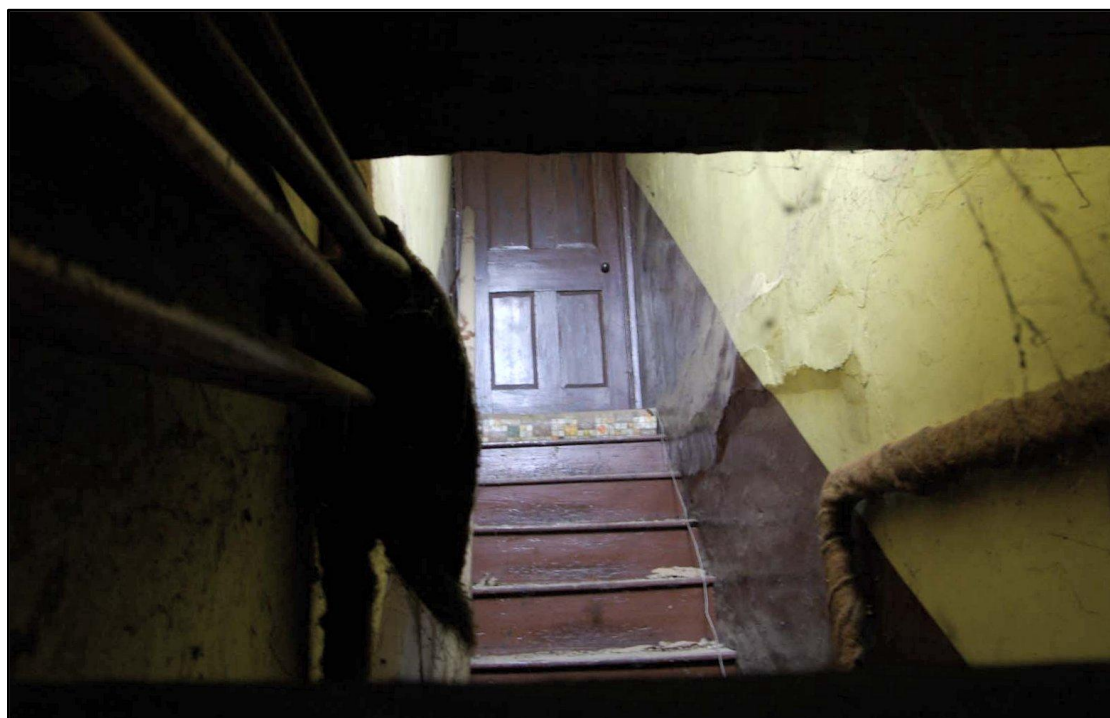


Figure 32 Servant's stairs from rear extension  
Looking south east



Figure 33 Rear extension, north end room  
Looking north west

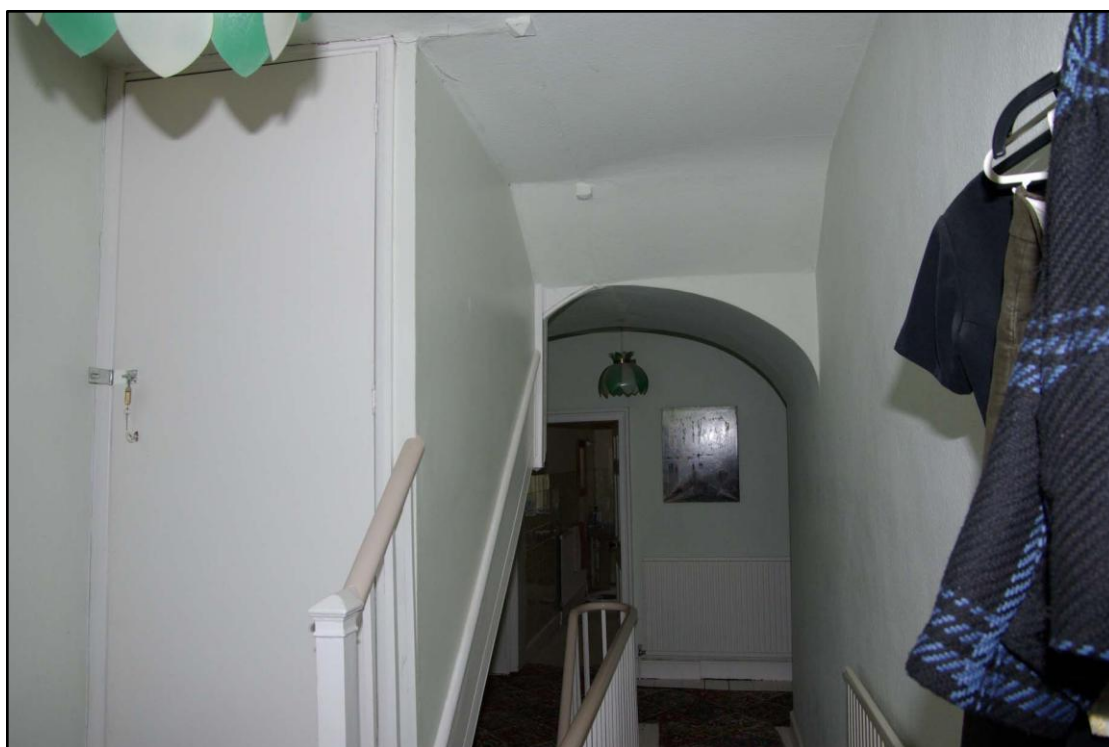


Figure 34 First floor landing  
Looking north west



Figure 35 Front, western bedroom  
Looking south east

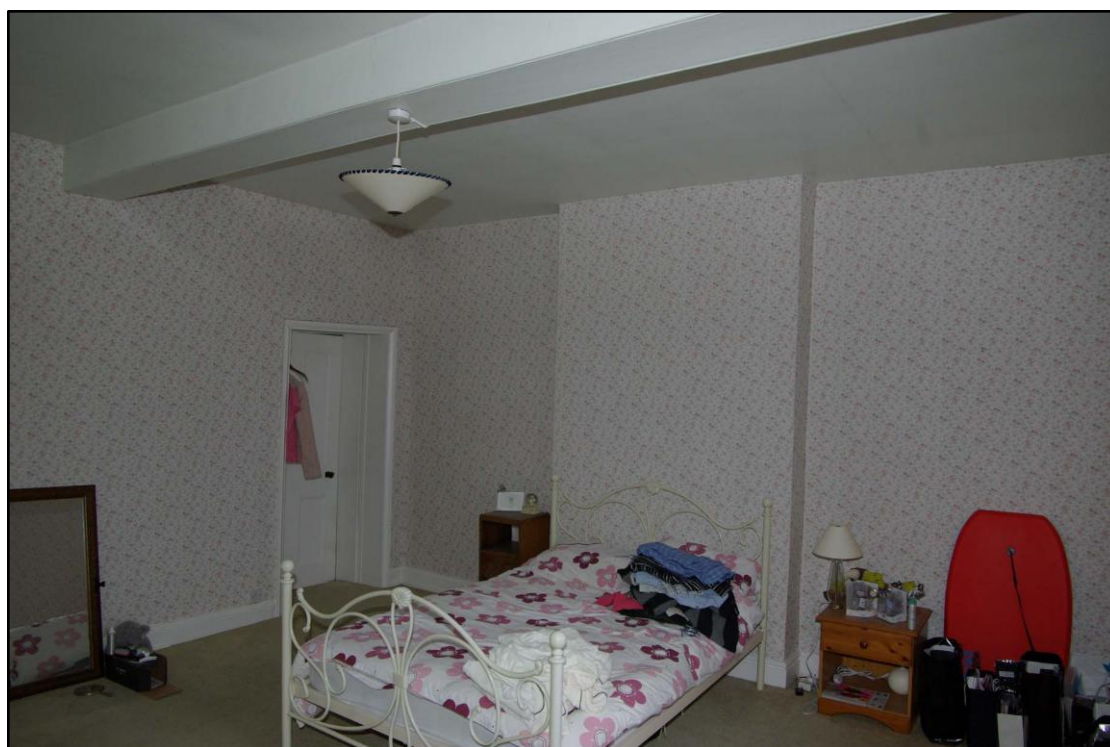


Figure 36 Front, eastern bedroom  
Looking north



Figure 37 Rear, eastern bedroom  
Looking north west



Figure 38 Rear, eastern bedroom. Window cupboards  
Looking east



Figure 39 Servant's landing from main landing  
Looking west

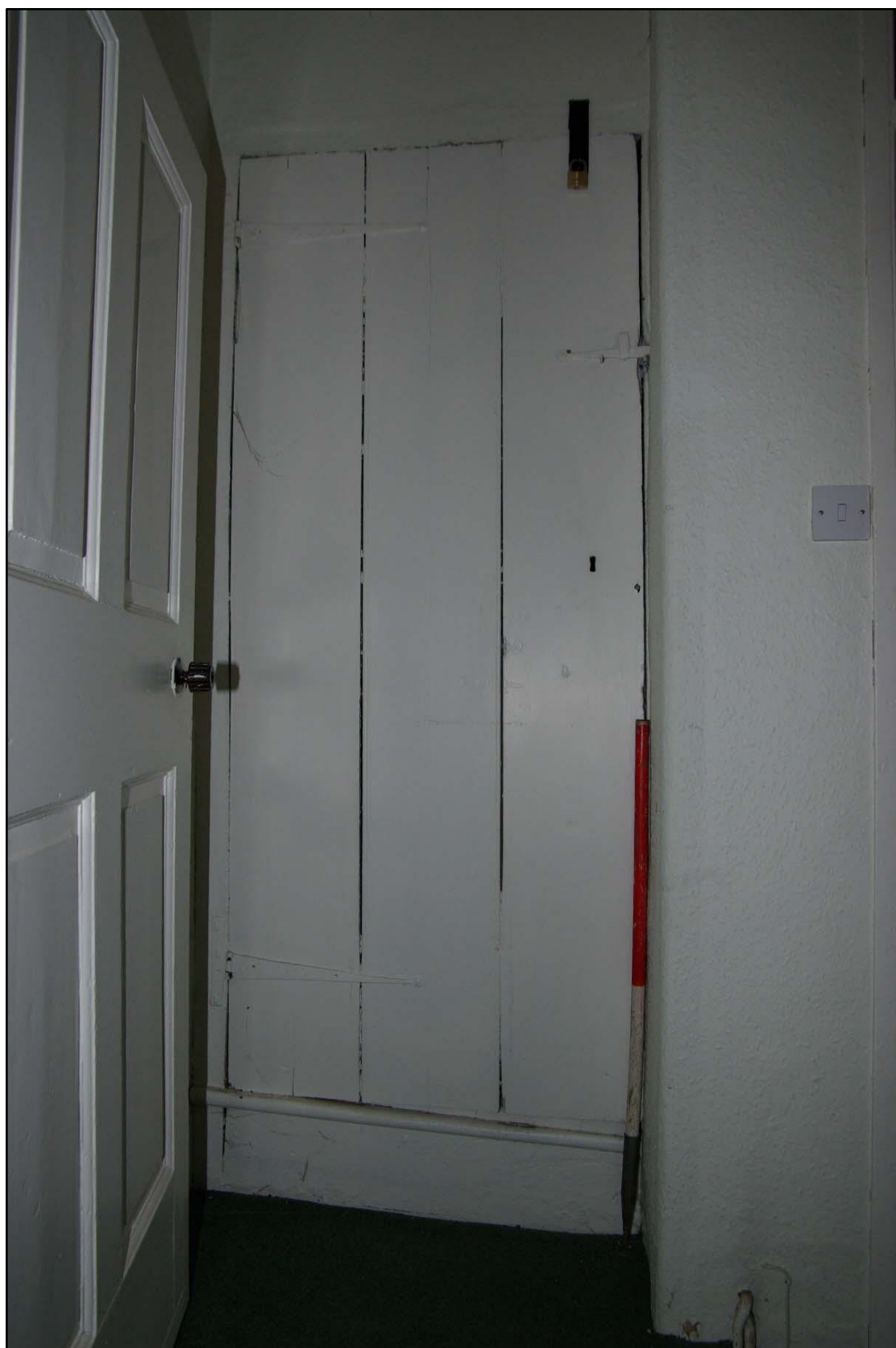


Figure 40 Door to servant's stairs leading up to rear wing gable accommodation  
Looking south west. 1m scale





Figure 41 Rear, western bedroom  
Looking west



Figure 42 Rear, western bedroom. Door light and bell pulley  
Looking north east



Figure 43 Top floor servant's landing  
Facing north



Figure 44 Top floor servant's accommodation, front west room  
Looking south west



Figure 45 Top floor servant's accommodation, rear east room  
Looking north west



Figure 46 Junction of house roof and eastern rear gable  
Looking south east



Figure 47 Stables, south east elevation  
Looking north west



Figure 48 Brick extension to stables  
Looking west



Figure 49 Stables, eastern end room  
Looking south east



Figure 50 Stables, bread oven  
Looking north west. 1m scale



Figure 51 Stables, western room  
Looking west



Figure 52 Stables roof structure  
Looking north east



Figure 53 Stables, western brick extension  
Looking north



Figure 54 Lean-to at rear of stables  
Looking south





Figure 55 Rear of bread oven in stable lean-to  
Looking south west



Figure 56 Rear of western extension to stables  
Looking east



Figure 57 North west to south east stables, south west elevation  
Looking east



Figure 58 North west to south east stables, southern end  
Looking north east



Figure 59 North west to south east stables, blocked barn door  
Looking north east. Ivy on right hides joint



Figure 60 North west to south east stables, southern gable end  
Looking north west



Figure 61 North west to south east stables, north east elevation  
Looking south west



Figure 62 North west to south east stables, roof structure at southern end  
Looking south east



Figure 63 North west to south east stables  
Looking south east



Figure 64 North west to south east stables, trough and blocked entrance  
Looking north east. 1m scale



Figure 65 Northern extension to north west to south east stables  
Looking north east



Figure 66 First floor of north west to south east stables  
Looking south east

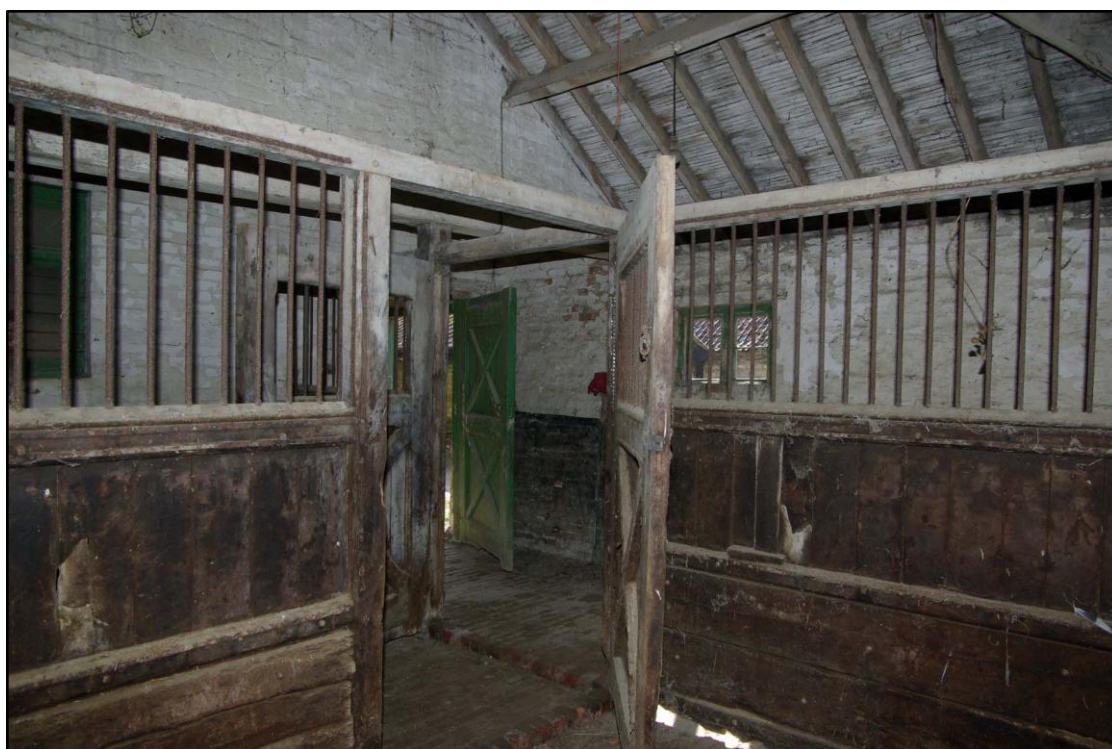


Figure 67 Northern extension to north west to south east stables  
Looking south



Figure 68 Modern barns between stables and cart shed  
Looking north



Figure 69 Cart shed, north west elevation  
Looking south



Figure 70 Cart shed roof structure  
Looking north east





Figure 71 Outbuildings to south east of cart shed  
Looking east



Figure 72 Outbuildings, northern room  
Looking north east



Figure 73 Outbuildings, southern room  
Looking south east. 1m scale



Figure 74 Outside toilet (building on left), servant's side  
Looking east



Figure 75 Outside toilet, servants side  
Looking south west. 1m scale



Figure 76 Chute from servant's toilet  
Looking south west



Figure 77 Outside toilet, family side  
Looking east

## Appendix 2. OASIS Information

INFORMATION REQUIRED	
Project Name	Bescaby Park
Project Type	Building Assessment
Project Manager	R Buckley
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	DBA
Current Land Use	Agricultural buildings and house
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPG15, PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 822 263
Start/end dates of field work	2.04.09 – 3.04.09
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Study Area	Total farm area 1.9 hectares