

**FARM BUILDINGS AT COLVILLE HALL  
CHELMSFORD ROAD  
WHITE RODING  
ESSEX**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**



Essex County Council

**Field Archaeology Unit**

January 2013

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**FARM BUILDINGS AT COLVILLE HALL  
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**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**

**Client:** Mrs Philipa Marriage

**FAU Project No.:** 2632

**NGR:** TL 5534 1347

**Planning Application No.:** UTT/0678/12/FUL & 679/12/LB

**OASIS No.:** 140051

**Dates of Fieldwork:** 15th & 16th November 2012

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A programme of historic building recording was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on four buildings that form part of an important medieval and post-medieval farm complex at Colville Hall. Three of the structures studied are listed and the fourth is curtilage listed with the others, which range between grades I, II\* and II. The farm also forms part of a scheduled monument (SM 213). The work was carried out prior to the conversion of the buildings into a wedding venue and in accordance with a brief prepared by Essex County Council Heritage Environment (ECC HE) (Place Services) team.

Copies of the report will be supplied to the client and also to the ECC HE team and Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) at County Hall, Chelmsford. The archive will be stored with Saffron Walden Museum. An OASIS online record has been created at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/index.cfm>.

The farm at Colville Hall occupies a moated site containing several medieval and post-medieval timber-framed and thatched barns and other traditional farm structures to a wealthy farmstead. Together they form a well-preserved group within their historic landscape setting. The buildings that are part of the conversion plans are listed as the following:

- Early 17th century semi-aisled barn believed to have been built in 1630
- Late medieval animal byre
- Post-medieval cart lodge
- An un-listed modern stable block

The hall lies within the remains of a moated site and there are signs of an adjacent medieval deserted village (DMV) in the scheduled area (SM 213). Consequently, archaeological monitoring works are planned at a later stage for a new roadway and general ground reduction works around the site, the results of which will be the subject of a further report.

The importance of recording historic farm structures prior to conversion is outlined in *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Historic Farm Building* (English Heritage 2006) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011).

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Site location and description**

Colville Hall lies to the west of White Roding (or 'Roothing') village at NGR TL 5534 1347, accessed by a private road off the A1060 Chelmsford to Bishop's Stortford route (fig. 1). The farm buildings form an attractive and well-built group of historic timber-framed and thatched structures in general good order alongside the hall. Moated earthworks pre-dating most of the existing farmstead survive as a large dry ditch and shallow depression and a further part is perpetuated as a pond to the east. In the paddock there are earthworks of earlier house platforms forming part of the scheduled area (SM 213)

The thatched barn (1) is believed to date to 1630 and is grade II\* listed (listing no. 120577). It was refurbished in 1996 (R. Marriage pers. comm.) and has a modern open-sided shed attached. It lies on the north side of the multi-phase farm complex, close to a former mill pond and several modern metal-framed farm structures (fig. 1). To the north-west is a modern (1960s) stable block (4) that is included in the conversion plans but has limited historic significance. The cart lodge (2) on the western side of the farmstead is timber-framed and thatched and is grade II-listed (no. 120578). The byre (3) is a small dilapidated grade II\*-listed structure (no. 120572) that partly encloses the southern yard facing the farmhouse. Colville Hall is a large early 16th-century grade II\* house (no. 120569) and stands within its own formal gardens, with a fine a brick Tudor gateway on the southern side. Various other

timber built barns and outbuildings brick surround the yards, all of which are listed and therefore of national importance (fig. 1), but do not form part of the current proposals. Two medieval fish ponds stand on the north-east side of the hall and to the north of Mill Pond Barn (fig. 1).

Barn 1, which has already been converted from agricultural use, is in good condition although it is 'racking' to the north. The cart lodge and byre however have suffered from neglect, particularly the latter, which is in a derelict state. Stables 4 remains in good condition and contains modern fixtures and fittings.

## **2.2 Planning background**

The planning application to convert Mill Pond Barn, the cart shed, byre and stables for use as part of a proposed wedding venue was validated by Uttlesford District Council (UDC) in April 2012 (UTT/0678/12/FUL & 679/12/LB). Mindful of the historic integrity of the farm complex and the archaeological importance of the scheduled monument, the ECC HE team recommended that a full archaeological condition for building recording and archaeological monitoring be placed on the planning permission. An English Heritage level 3 (2006) record was agreed for the three main historic buildings and a level 1 record for the more modern 1960s stables. Archaeological monitoring was agreed for all groundworks below a depth of 0.2m associated with the conversion.

## **2.3 Historic and archaeological background**

Cartographic and documentary research was undertaken by the author at the Essex Record Office (ERO), Chelmsford, to understand the origins and development of the farm, and in particular the buildings to be converted. List descriptions and secondary sources were also studied. The results from the information that could be gathered at the time are presented below, with accompanying ERO references in brackets. Historic map extracts included in the report as figures 2 and 3 have been enlarged to provide greater clarity.

Roman artefacts were collected by Robert Judd, farmer at Colville Hall in c.1846. These dated to the 1st to 4th centuries AD and included coins dating from the Emperors Nero to Gratian, burial urns, oil lamps and some unusually-designed metal keys (HER 4358).

In the medieval period, Colville Hall was part of the manor of 'Merks' or White Roding (Morant 1763) and was an important moated farmstead centred around an earlier hall house predating the existing Colville Hall. The 12th century Orchard Barn (fig. 1) and the remains of the moat on the west and east side are probably contemporary with its establishment.



Interestingly, a 12th century survey is believed to exist (HER 4356). There were also fish ponds, a mill pond and mill. Earlier or associated medieval occupation was located to the east of the farm (HER 4356), in the current paddock area (fig. 1). The byre (3) is listed as being part of the 14th century farm (listing no. 120572).

It was only in 1537 that Colville Hall was established as a manor in its own right when John Browne bought it from his uncle Sir Humphrey Browne (HER 4356). It was probably around this time that the existing Colville Hall was built to replace the original medieval (hall) house, which was common practice on richer estates in the 16th century. The stable/courtroom and the barn/stable were all built around this time (fig. 1).

In 1555 there are references to *Brounes Mannor* and *Colyle Hall*. The hall stayed in the Browne family for two generations and then passed to the Everards (Morant 1763). Cart lodge 2 is listed as late 16th or early 17th century in date and is therefore broadly within this later phase of ownership.

Mill Pond barn (1) is believed to have been constructed in 1630, since there are inscriptions upon it that include this date (see list description in section 5.1). Traditionally, it is suggested, this was the wheat barn and Orchard Barn at the opposite end of the yard was the barley barn (SALE/B5370, produced in 1965),

In 1701 Mrs Prisca Coburne left the farm to the *Seaman's Widow's of Stepney* charity, which held the property until 1914 (D/DU 574/4).

The Chapman and Andre map of 1777 (plate 12, not shown) refers to *Covett Hall*, but provides no clear detail of the 18th century farm. Such early county-wide maps often convey only basic impressions of the landscape and its settlements.

White Roding tithe map (1840) depicts the hall and farm very much as it appears today, with the farm buildings broadly set around two yards and the hall to the south-east. The main exception is that it shows cart lodge 2 in its original three-bay form (fig. 2). The accompanying tithe award mentions a largely arable farm with a holding of at least 220 acres and occupied by Robert Judd (D/CT 299A).

Sometime in the mid to late 19th century, between 1840 and 1874, the hipped southern bay and north extension were added to the cart lodge, which are first depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1874 (fig. 3). The map provides a good representation of the site,

though there is little change to the previous map apart from the clear demarking of yards with the barns at either end and some outshots built onto barn 1.

The Trustees of the Seaman's Widow's charity sold the farm to Mr J N Lunkies in 1914 with a holding of 264 acres (D/DU 574/4). By 1965, when the farm was again up for auction, the holding had increased to 430 acres. This time the Lot was withdrawn from sale (SALE/B5370).

Farming had ceased by 1996 when the Mill Pond Barn was refurbished (Richard Marriage pers. comm.). When the present owners brought the Hall, the byre and cart lodge had suffered from severe neglect, particularly the byre.

## **2.4 Farming in the medieval and post-medieval periods**

Early farm buildings were often scattered rather than grouped around a yard, though those on the larger estates tended to be better planned. Several aisled medieval barns survive in Essex built for large manorial estates or religious institutions, the most famous being the barley and wheat barns at Cressing Temple, which are 13th century in date. The Orchard barn at Colville Hall, according to the list description, pre-dates these and probably belongs to the establishment of the farmstead, the construction of the moat and an early hall house. Very little is known about the early development of the site but there is reputed to be a 12th century map in existence.

There are few complete farmsteads in East Anglia which date to before 1750 and none to before 1600 (English Heritage 1997). Most buildings that survive are barns, because of their adaptable size and good construction. Stables also survive, but lesser so livestock accommodation, which, before the 18th century, consisted of temporary shelters at best. Demands for timber increased during the 17th and 18th centuries, causing prices to rise and old timbers were increasingly reused together with new, less substantial, pieces in more vernacular buildings (Harris 1993).

The agricultural revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries was founded on improvements dating back to the 17th century: new root crops and grasses, drainage and colonisation of new land, plus ongoing improvements in manuring, animal husbandry, 'permanent tillage' (elimination of the fallow year) and enclosure. From the 1740s, new planned or 'model' farms were constructed to replace or improve earlier farmsteads, forming more symmetrical, planned, layouts around a central courtyard with the barn one side and stables and stock sheds and stores for feed and bedding forming perpendicular wings, thus creating a more

efficient working unit. The planned form continued into the 19th century reaching its peak during the agricultural boom between the 1840s and 1870s.

It is interesting to note that the more efficient symmetrical enclosed yard layout had already been established at Colville Hall by the 17th century and there were only minor changes were made in the late 19th century, mainly in the division of yards.

### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the historic building record was to provide a detailed record of the buildings to be converted in their present state prior to conversion works. The barn, cart shed and byre were recorded to English Heritage level 3 standards (2006) and the modern stable recorded to level 1 to complete the record.

As part of the work, the record addressed the following: plan form, materials and method of construction, dating and phasing, function and internal layout, fixtures and fittings, additions and modifications and the context of the farm within its contemporary landscape.

### **4.0 DESCRIPTION OF FIELDWORK**

The buildings were recorded using drawings (floor plans, sections, frame surveys and elevations) supplied by the client and their architect. Internal drawings (frame survey and cross-section) of the byre were not provided, since parts of it were unsafe. However, parts of the west and east walls within the safer area were drawn as part of the survey and are included in the archive. Photographs are included in the report.

All buildings covered in the survey were open and free to access. However access inside the byre was limited to parts of the north bay only, due to its overgrown nature and the unsafe roof. The weather was foggy at times, damp, cold and drizzly, which affected some of the photography.

A series of photographs (digital and 35mm black & white print) were taken to record the structures internally and externally. Specific shots were taken of any areas of important architectural detail, fixtures or fittings. A representative selection of photographs is reproduced at the back of the report as plates 1-34. The remainder can be found in the archive.

## 5.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

The main historic structures recorded in the survey are all timber-framed and weatherboarded/plastered with thatched roofs, reflecting the overall form of the group as a whole. Most survive intact without much alteration and the varied dating of these buildings and the often high level of construction illustrates the changing needs of a wealthy working farm. The form of the late stable is perhaps worthy of note but has no architectural interest.

### 5.1 Barn 1

Mill Pond Barn was traditionally the wheat barn (SALE/B5370) and stands on the north side of the farmstead with its porch facing southwards onto the former yard. It is a substantial and well-preserved timber-framed and half-boarded structure, i.e. the lower part is clad in weatherboarding (generally pine) and the upper in lime render on wooden laths; a traditional Essex form. It measures 22m in length, 7.5m in width and 9.75m (maximum) in height with the porch extending southwards by 3m. The southern part is aisled, and the roof is steeply pitched at 55°, hipped at the ends and over the porch, and thatched.

The walls are set on a low rendered brick plinth constructed from narrow 8¾ - 9 inch (210-230mm x 55mm x 105-115mm) whole and three-quarter sized red and purplish bricks laid in a rough English-bond of probable late 17th or early 18th century date (Ryan 1996). On the north side is a large modern open lean-to structure.

Inside, the barn has been refurbished with the addition of windows either end, a stone floor and replacement of some timbers in the walls and roof. The timber frame is clearly 'racking' towards the north and the eastern bays are propped from within the later shed. The building will be used for wedding receptions in the proposals (KPT Architects 2012).

The barn was listed in 1983 and the list description is provided below:

*Lower barn north east of Colville Hall GV II\* Built in 1630. Timber framed and weatherboarded with hipped thatched roof. Hipped midstrey to north. 5 bays most of the original frame survives, with long jowls, and arch braced tie beams. Aisled on north side only. Trenched wall bracing to south wall. The original date 1630 is inscribed in 2 places.*

It should be noted that the original date of 1630 date is carved on one of the bay posts and is accompanied by the initials 'I.B.', perhaps referring to a member of the Browne family.

### **5.1.1 External description**

#### ***South elevation***

The main elevation (plate 1) facing onto the farmstead has the porch located on the central bay and contains historic strap-hinged cart doors, which have been refurbished inside. On the east side of the doors the lower weatherboarding has been laid vertically rather than horizontally in the refurbishment. Either side of the porch is historic lath and plaster (KPT 2012). The long thatched roof extends over the low eaves of the south aisle and the low walls show few details apart from the small window east of the porch (fig. 4 & plates 1 & 2) that may represent a former vent. The wall west of the porch bows out slightly (fig. 6). Plain tiles have been built into the valleys around the porch roof for greater damp-proofing. The side walls of the porch are half-timbered and on the east side is an early ledged and braced plank door with old fittings including a wooden lock (plate 2).

#### ***East elevation***

The east elevation is fully-boarded and has an inserted leaded window below the eaves, likely to have been added in the 1996 refurbishment (plates 2 & 3).

#### ***North elevation***

The north wall faces onto the existing concrete roadway obscured by a modern open-fronted extension that probably dates broadly to when the grain-processing buildings were constructed opposite. The extension is built on a brick plinth and is weatherboarding with earth-fast posts at the front supporting a single-pitch corrugated steel roof (plate 3). In the second bay is a thick c.25cm<sup>2</sup> prop against truss T5, which is racking badly. This timber is an old, probably medieval, wall plate reused from a large structure elsewhere on the site and it would be useful to compare these dimensions with those of the Orchard Barn.

The north wall of the historic barn is viewed from the interior of the extension (plate 4). On this side the plinth is higher to counteract the natural slope of the ground down to the mill pond. The main feature is an old door located centrally and accessed by concrete steps, providing pedestrian entry into the barn. The door has a ledged and braced plank form and good hand-forged strap hinges of likely 17th century date (plate 5) and simple looped cast iron latches. Above it is a narrow pitching hatch, contemporary in date and presumably leading to a former hay loft inside.

### **West elevation**

The west elevation is fully-boarded with a small cement render panel above it, mimicking former lime render, an inserted leaded window below the eaves and a rendered brick plinth (plate 6).

#### **5.1.2 Internal description**

The interior (plates 7 & 8) is laid out over four c.4m-wide bays, with the midstrey slightly larger at almost 5m and extending to the south. A wider midstrey is common in barns, providing greater room for unloading the carts at harvest time. The aisle on the south side is 2m-wide. The floor is laid to modern stone and the stud walls rendered over in the lower half, a modern hygiene measure often associated with animal use. A substantial amount of original wall and roof timbers remain and none of these are reused; it would seem the 1996 refurbishment was carried out well.

There are no visible remains of mullion windows, hay lofts or other earlier features.

### **Construction**

Main framing, defining the bays, is built from fully-pegged oak trusses incorporating 4m-tall and c.22cm<sup>2</sup> wide bay and arcade posts, with well-carved lightly-swelling jowls at the top - except for truss (T) 5 and 6 south that are more angular at the jowl's base (plate 7). Jowls in Essex buildings are common from the 14th century up to the mid to late 16th century, and up to the 18th century in some barns (Walker 1994). Almost all the jowls have cracked at the head through racking to the north and those on the south side are drifting from the tie beams. All the aisle posts have scribed carpenter's marks at the top of the posts behind where the braces fork (1-6 in fig. 8), whose order, though slightly wrong, suggests the barn was built from west to east. Held within the jowls are the wall and arcade plates that reach from one end of the barn to the other in long one-and-a-half bay lengths, supported over the aisle by long semi-curved braces set high and double-pegged to the post (fig. 8). Across the span of the barn, bracing between post and tie beam is the same long semi-curved type (fig. 5), some of which are missing, while others on the north side are combined with secondary braces, which are nailed and tenoned rather than pegged onto the frame.

Wall plates, c.16cm wide (6-inch), are crudely chamfered and connected by face-halved and bladed scarf joints, common from the late 16th-century onwards. The joints are quite crude with either four or six pegs along the face depending on the length of the blade (plate 9). Over the midstrey, modern planks have been bolted either side where the scarf joint is failing (fig. 8). Sill beams, where they are exposed underneath the render, appear to be largely

original but in shorter approximately one or one-half bay lengths. It is hard to identify the joint exactly, apart from having an over-lipped face in order to prevent water seeping in (Hewett 1980). Round iron straps have been added between the sill plates in the north-west and south-east corners, which is unusual (plate 10).

The bay posts along the south wall are all jowled, apart from those either side of the midstrey. Against the main area of the barn, the south aisle is attached by jowled aisle ties, short but fairly substantial lengths of timber shaped to flare outwards against the arcade posts (fig. 5). Their tenons are secured internally by oak pegs; three pegs on the arcade side and one onto the jowled wall plates (fig. 5). Modern ties have been nailed above in some cases to support the aisle purlins.

The perceived construction date of 1630 and initials 'I.B.' is carved on the west side of the south-east midstrey post (fig. 4 & plate 11). Below the graffiti are some criss-cross marks and other initials that are harder to decipher.

### ***Wall-framing***

The walls of the barn remain original and unaltered apart from the west wall which has been partly rebuilt. Original studwork comprises c.12cm by 8cm -wide studs (c.5 by 3-inch), seven per bay and eight in the midstrey, and spaced at c.56cm wide intervals. The studs are fully pegged top and bottom and in-line except for the porch. They are accompanied by semi-curved nailed and trenched internal braces (plate 12), a common late medieval and early post-medieval form (late 15th-17th century according to Walker 1994), though early examples are pegged rather than nailed. There appears to be no cut or chisel marks on the sides for wattle staves and therefore no evidence for wattle and daub infill between the panels, so it would seem the barn was always boarded and plastered.

Studwork on the north wall (fig. 6) is divided into two registers by a 17cm-wide midrail. The central bay contains the original ledged and braced north door which is sited below the narrow pitching door, of the same form, and set between the studwork (plate 13). There are no remains of a former hay loft. Both doors are quite crude and made from 8 to 11-inch planks and provide good examples of wrought ironwork fittings. The bays either side contain internal braces in the upper register falling towards the centre (fig. 6). Original bracing has been removed on T3 and a secondary brace removed on T2. Otherwise the wall would seem to be original, though the lower register is partly obscured by cement render, applied incidentally by 'B SMITH JULY 16 1946' who left his mark there (fig. 6 & plate 14).

The lower register and sill plate in the east (gable) wall (fig. 7 & plate 15) has been rendered although there is still the sawn-off remains of a low boarded partition in the aisle of the east bay (fig. 4). This was constructed to a height of 1.4m from 6-inch boards, presumably to contain livestock, perhaps a calving pen, since often barns contained livestock as well as the cereal crop. On the north side of the upper register the brace was cut back and a stud removed in the modern period (in 1996) to allow for a leaded window to be inserted (fig. 7).

The south wall is the lower aisle wall. All of the studwork has been rendered over up to the wall plate which was done by 'C.DAWKINS (and) D MARKUS MAY 1953', who also left their marks. The wall plate was repaired in the west bay during the refurbishment. The only exposed feature is a small oblong window on the penultimate east bay, which may have formerly been a vent for animals inside. The brace to the arcade post at the east end has been replaced with a bolted knee brace, which were commonly used in farm buildings from the late 18th to late 19th-centuries. The roof over the aisle was largely rebuilt with new rafters and purlins in 1996 (fig, 7).

The west gable wall (fig. 9 & plate 16) displays well-pegged studwork in the lower register and primary-bracing in the upper register, which is either evidence for a later rebuild or part of the original form, though clearly not in keeping with the rest of the barn, since the midrail relates to the lower and upper registers alike. Primary-bracing is where the brace is inserted first and the studwork then nailed onto it and tenoned into the midrail below and wall plate above. This construction form was used from the 16th-century onwards; early examples being quite large and curved (Walker 1994), mimicking the bracing of the time. This example, like many others, employs pegging only to the brace. A leaded window was inserted in the gable during the refurbishment, removing most of a stud here (fig. 9).

The porch appears contemporary with the main part of the barn and was originally panelled in 4½-inch boarding up to the midrail but open to the aisles. Boarding remains on the west wall (fig. 10a & plate 17) and either side of the cart doors. Studwork is similar to that of the main barn in size and spacing, but is not fully pegged. Trenched and nailed braces have been added over the studwork in the upper register that are likely to be secondary additions (figs 10a & 10b). The side door is a rather askew original feature.

Jowled posts stand at the corners by the cart door whose empty mortices on the edge of the jowls suggest they were manufactured for internal braces, though the studs themselves are not trenched. At the base of the cart doors are the slots to hold 'leap boards' to prevent animals entering the barn at threshing time.



### **Roof-framing**

This is a fairly basic raking queen post and side purlin roof where the raking struts are pegged either end and are lapped under, rather than over, the purlins, which is unusual (fig. 5). There are no collars apart from the two gable ends (figs. 7 & 9). In the apex, the tips of the rafters are pegged and tenoned in the traditional form and survive well, without the need for a ridge plate that are so often inserted in refurbished roofs where the tips have rotted. The roof frame itself has no wind-bracing and the line of the rafters matches those of the studs. Many rafters on the south side were replaced with machine-sawn timbers in the 1996 refurbishment, particularly over the aisle, the place that invariably suffers the most. Some purlins were replaced at the same time. The new timbers are of the same scantling as the old and match in well. The porch contains a simple collar purlin roof (plate 17).

### **5.2 Cart lodge 2**

A former open-sided cart lodge (plate 18) stands to the west of the farmstead that according to the list description below is dated to the late 16th or early 17th century, around the same time or slightly earlier than the barn. This is a more roughly-built, practical building that was used at one point in the past to keep animals, since there are rail sockets on most of the open sides. Its use as cart lodge perhaps came about when it was extended in the 19th century. The present structure, which is largely open to the elements, is rectangular and occupies four bays with a hipped bay at the south end. It measures 14m by 3.6m and stands to a height of 3.5m. The east and south sides are open-sided with earth-fast posts but the north and west sides are clad in corrugated iron sheeting. The nailed raking strut collar purlin roof is a 19th century or later replacement for an earlier double-pegged collar purlin roof, part of which is hanging off at the south end. The roof, pitched at 50°, is largely missing its thatch apart from the hipped end and corrugated iron sheets have been added on the west side. The opposite end is gabled and weatherboarded. The interior has an earth floor and is currently used for storing old fencing, timbers, etc.

The cart lodge is grade II-listed and the description is provided below:

*Late C16 or early C17 cart lodge extensively altered in C18. Timber framed with thatched roof, hipped at north end. 4 bays long and open on west side, with knee bracing to top plates. Included for group value.*

There is little architectural detail remaining to date the structure so precisely to the late 16th or early 17th century, and the alterations were carried out in the 19th rather than 18th century, but the description was done 30 years ago when the building was in a better condition.

It would appear that the original structure was three bays long and open on the east side, but with wooden rails more suitable for livestock than carts. The hipped bay to the south was also enclosed by wooden rails that continued beyond the south end as a small animal pen. The later extension was built completely open-sided, from what can be gathered, and extremely crude. In the proposed plans, it is intended to convert the cart lodge to accommodate the bride and groom (KPT Architects 2012). The different elements of the building are discussed separately below.

### **5.2.1 Primary build**

#### ***External description***

The main east elevation (plate 18) is open-sided, representing the three modern bays rather than the original layout. The posts at the two ends along are original, the northern-most of which retains its curved brace, which has been replaced by a bolted knee brace at the opposite end. This replacement is likely to have been part of the 19th century phase and includes another such post dividing bays 1 and 2, which is narrower than the others (fig. 11). A post of similar dimensions to the main ones has also been inserted along the centre of the original second bay (B2 in fig. 11). Evidence for wooden rails exist at the front of bays 1 and 3. The central bay (B2) may have been railed or gated but there are no original posts to verify this. All the posts on the east side have scribed carpenter's marks at their top from 1 to 4, indicating a direction of build from south to north (fig. 11).

The north end is now part of the later extension (plate 19) but the timbers suggest this end was originally open-sided and without bracing. The western elevation (plate 20), which is clad in corrugated iron sheeting, reflects the bay divisions more clearly, since the posts are original. Part of the rear wall survives at the north end. The south end is separated from the hipped bay by corrugated iron and modern wooden rails but was originally open-sided.

#### ***Construction***

The cart lodge bays are defined by stout 20cm-wide oak posts that support double-pegged c.16cm<sup>2</sup> wall plates (plate 21). On the east, the wall plate consists mainly of one length of timber joined to a shorter length by a rather rotten 4-pegged face-halved and bladed scarf joint above the replaced post (fig. 11). On the opposing west side the wall plate has failed and been replaced midway along by a new plate that has been lapped over the existing one. Diagonal braces are lapped over the side plates and pegged into the wall plates in the four corners (fig. 11 & plate 22).

Tie beams with c.16cm<sup>2</sup> dimensions have failed between bays 1 and 2 and 2 and 3 (plate 21), and the only existing complete tie beam to remain is contemporary with the roof rebuild (fig. 11). The later beams are lapped rather than dovetailed onto the posts.

The only original roof timber is an old collar plate that is hanging vertically from the centre of the southern wall plate (fig. 11 & plate 21).

### ***Internal description***

The early structure is open-plan with no evidence for former partitions apart from the rails along the east side. A small section of stud walling survives in the north-west corner which may be the remains of a former back wall. Two studs remain, and the wall plate has a vacant mortice in it for a third (plate 22), though not for any more. Stud mortices may have been under the old wall plate but are difficult to see. None of the existing studs are pegged and it is unclear whether they are tenoned or nailed in position and there is no evidence for a sill plate. The daub render on the inside has been applied to split laths but appears not to have been applied more generally since there is no room for further laths to be added, nor are there nail marks on other timbers for laths. Rather, this may be just a 'practice panel' for some other works around the farmyard, meaning the cart lodge was open on this side too.

### **5.2.2 19th century extensions**

The hipped southern bay was built onto the early build in the mid-late 19th century, between 1840 and 1874, probably at the same time as the extension to the north. It uses the same heavy posts (though of more varied size) and curved braces, the latter of which are nailed rather than tenoned onto the frame. Wall plates are more considerable at c.20cm<sup>2</sup> and pegged to the posts. On the south the wall plate is rotten.

There is no roof frame to speak of, only a thick pile of thatch sitting on an uneven framework of sawn tree branches that is kept in position by split willow or hazel 'spars' (plate 23).

The single bayed north extension is crudely built from large uneven timbers of similar size to those in the main build. At the join between the two builds, the later wall plates are simply lapped over and strapped to the existing ones. The north end was built open-sided and crudely braced with straight nailed timbers. The existing north wall is perhaps a later addition. Inside, long poles have been nailed onto the beams to create a very rough loft area.

### 5.3 The byre (3)

Traditionally the byre (plate 24) was used for keeping cows or perhaps oxen in the early days before they were replaced by horses. By the 1960s it was used as a 'hay, coal and wood house' (SALE/B5370). According to the list description it is one of the oldest buildings of the farm but unfortunately it was left to deteriorate for a long time before the present owners bought the site. The main structure is still standing but much of the roof has collapsed or is on the verge of collapsing and the interior was completely overgrown at the time of the survey. In view of this, only the southern half was entered and the rest was recorded externally or by photograph through existing apertures. Given the conditions, some plates in this report are included from the Structural Survey by The Morton Partnership, which was carried out in early March 2012 when there was no vegetation and the north wall, which has now partly collapsed, was still standing.

This is a small rectangular structure measuring 13.2m by 4.5m and overall height of 5.6m, standing on the eastern side of a former pond/watering hole (figs. 2 & 3) that is now marked as a damp hollow in the ground. It is built on a brick plinth made from whole and three-quarter sized soft red bricks laid in a English-bond whole and constructed from 8¾ - 9 inch (210-230 x 50 x 100-120mm) bricks similar in character and range to those in the barn and likely to be of late 17th or early 18th century date (Ryan 1996). The main elevation is on the east side, facing the house and the entrance to Orchard Barn. Walls are timber-framed and a mixture of weatherboarding and cement render laid on steel mesh to replace historic lime render. The roof, like the cart lodge, is modern, i.e. late 19th or 20th century in date, and only survives over the north end. There are very few elements of the original roof surviving. The interior is divided into two by a central partition.

The list description was made in 1983 when the structure was in better condition and reads:  
*Late C14 or early C15, timber framed, plastered and weatherboarded. Thatched roof. 4 bays. Crown post roof with cambered and chamfered tie beams and vertically strutted arch braces. Halved and bridled scarfs to top plates.*

Its position within the regular group of buildings around the farmhouse and its general level of construction suggests it is more likely to be of 16th-century date (fig. 1), though again important information may have been lost during its deterioration.

Only a small part of the crown post roof structure has survived. The rest has been replaced with a modern (late 19th-century or later) roof and all but a small amount of thatch on the west side has been removed. The survey revealed two separate builds to the byre.

In the proposals, the byre will be used to accommodate wedding guests (KPT Architects 2012).

### **5.3.1 External description**

The main east elevation (plate 24) facing onto the farmstead can be divided into two halves. That to the south, beside Orchard Barn, is mainly weatherboarded apart from the very top which has a long wooden vent, for the animals inside (fig. 13 & plate 24). Battens have been attached below the vent for wooden and iron tethering hooks and over the plinth, which is rebuilt here, is a simple over-lipped joint in the sill plate (fig. 12). There are doors either side, the one closest to the barn being an original battened and ledged half-heck door secured by traditional strap hinges and is wider than the rest at 1.15m to allow access for the animals (fig. 12). The other has been replaced by a modern wire mesh door and the original half-heck door dumped inside the byre with the third door. These doors have the same looped closing fixtures as the north door into Mill Pond Barn and presumably on other buildings elsewhere on the site.

In the northern half the upper part of the wall is rendered (in the form common to the site) and there is a central doorway that formerly contained the same door type as the other side.

The north gable wall faces the old stable/courthouse structure and represents one side of one of the main routes into the farmyard, with a good view of the house (cover plate). It is half boarded/rendered but only part of it survives (plate 24). There is a small wooden hatch in the centre that has been refitted with modern T-hinges. Part of the plinth has been rebuilt in the south-west corner. None of the roof gable survives.

The west elevation (plate 25) is fully-rendered over the plinth. Timber stays flare out from the base of the frame. On the south elevation, close to the barn, the wall is weatherboarded, but the gable has collapsed into the barn (plates 25 & 26).

### **5.3.2 Internal description**

The interior is divided into two two-bay areas by a timber partition (fig. 12 & plates 26 & 27). The southern bays vary in size from 2.7 to 3.7m but the north bays are consistently 3m-wide. A brick floor survives amongst the vegetation in the southern half, but any similar flooring in the north bay was not apparent. Both sides have boarded internal walls suitable for keeping heavy animals. Access during the survey was hampered by the large amount of vegetation and the unsafe condition of the roof, particularly in the north side. There are no visible remains of mullion windows or other early features.

### **Construction**

Construction is formed around c.16cm<sup>2</sup>-wide bay posts, which lack the jowls seen in those inside the barn. Rotted c.13cm<sup>2</sup>-wide wall plates (5-inch) extend over up to two bays and are connected by double-pegged edge-halved and bridled scarf joints, which is a medieval (pre-1600) (fig. 13 & plate 28) joinery form. The sill plates, where exposed were also rotted and joined by simple over-lipped joints (see section 5.3.1). Rotted tie beams, of similar scantling to the wall plates, remain across the bays and there are empty mortice holes for curved braces, all of which are missing.

No carpenter's marks were observed, though they would tend to be on the outer sides of the timbers.

### **Wall-framing**

The walls of the byre retain nailed timber boarding. The original build comprises c.12cm by 8cm -wide pegged studs (c.5 by 3-inch, the same as those in the barn), braced at the ends with semi-curved nailed and trenched internal braces. Stud number per bay varies. Those on the west wall from bay 2 to bay 4 (fig. 13 & plate 29) have close-studding with short gaps of only 20-25cm, similar spacing and form to the stables nearby. Perhaps this is an earlier part of the building, or else a reused portion of wall. Elsewhere the average gap is c.30-35cm.

The east side of the south end has been rebuilt using reused timbers and larger studs and here the gap varies wildly from 30 to 65cm. Part of the south wall has been rebuilt with thin modern studs (fig. 13 & plate 26). Knee braces are fitted between bays 1 and 2, perhaps as part of a 19th-century refurbishment (of the farm).

### **Roof-framing**

The current roof, surviving over bays 1 and 2, is a dilapidated nailed collar roof made from narrow modern machine-sawn timbers (plate 27). The original roof, which survives at the south end attached to the collapsed south gable, is however of some interest, being the remains of a crown post roof. Crown post roofs are another medieval or early post-medieval element, lasting up to the 16th century (Walker 1994). A 3m long length of 14 by 10cm-wide crown plate remains, with one of the blades attached by three pegs (plate 30). The other end has two peg holes to attach it to the crown post at the south end. An impression of how it would have appeared is presented as figure 13. It is not a good quality one since the blades are much wider than the crown plate at 14cm compared to 30cms, and is therefore likely to date from towards the end of the 16th century.

#### **5.4 Modern stables (4)**

The stables were built in the 1960s as a bull pen and converted later to stables. In the proposals, this will be used to accommodate wedding guests (KPT Architects 2012). Due to its modern age, only a brief description was required by the brief (ECC HE 2012) and no plans have been included in the report.

This is a large rectangular timber-built and weatherboarded structure orientated north to south with an enclosed yard to the west (plates 31 & 32). The roof is pitched and clad in corrugated asbestos or fibre glass sheeting and has queen post trusses. Modern half-heck doors provide access into the stalls and windows have wooden shutters.

Inside are three stalls on the west side and another three on the east, plus a tackroom. Their partition walls are made of chipboard or boarded and grilled like traditional stables (plate 33). The south-east stall is fitted with a feed bin (plate 34). Being a modern building, it has no historic interest.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION**

The four farm buildings recorded at Colville Hall help represent the historic development of the wider built complex over the past five hundred years, belonging to an important group of agricultural buildings dating to the time when the farmstead was established in the 12th century. Clearly the most important of the four are the barn, cart lodge and byre. All retain some elements of historic interest that should be retained and preserved in any conversion works.

### ***The barn***

Mill Pond Barn is believed to date from 1630 and this is reasonable given its construction and joinery. It would appear to have changed very little and may even contain some early primary-bracing. Apart from its general good level of survival, there are some interesting early features, notably the north door and pitching hatch and the side door into the porch, which are interesting survivals and contain good historic fittings.

According to later sources, the barn was traditionally the wheat barn, where the corn would be threshed in the winter months and stored in the granary to the south (fig. 1). It is interesting to note the presence of a former water mill to the north. Such barns were often also used for keeping cattle over the winter months and storing carts and implements, and

there is evidence for at least one animal stall still surviving. Other divisions were perhaps of a more temporary nature, such as hurdles. The pitching hatch over the north door suggests there was once a hay loft here.

The original form of the barn was generally the same as today, with half-boarded walls and a thatched roof the same as the majority of buildings on the farm. Most, if not all of the traditional lime render on the upper walls has been replaced and the existing windows at either end are modern, though it would seem logical for earlier windows to have occupied these same areas. There is no evidence for original lighting in the barn such as mullion windows and it would appear that most of the light came through the open cart doors. It is likely that rush lights would have lit the barn in the darker winter months.

### ***Cart lodge***

The cart lodge is a much cruder largely open-sided thatched structure that was probably constructed to contain livestock and the general low-quality nature of the building makes it hard to date effectively. Its location away from the main group (hence its more basic form) meant easy access onto the fields. It was perhaps only later on, in the 19th century, that the building was enlarged for carts and the animals confined to one end, with their own pen. The type of joinery employed is more likely to belong to the 17th rather than 16th century, but could equally date to the 18th or early 19th century. With the interior of the structure exposed, some of the less-substantial timbers have rotted and the roof over the main part has been replaced.

The rough build of cart shed illustrates the diversity of the buildings at Colville Hall of which this is one of a kind. Apart from the roof, it retains much historic character and sensitive restoration will transform this neglected building and display more fully its vernacular charm.

### ***The byre***

Externally the byre was half-boarded and thatched in keeping with the majority of farm buildings on the site. The west wall of the byre contains good quality studwork that is similar in form to the stable/courtroom to the north, suggesting it is contemporary with it, i.e. the early 16th century. The inclusion of a late crown-post roof and the form of joinery, the bridle-scarf joint, would support this date. Parts of the east wall have been rebuilt using reused timbers. The current roof was probably rebuilt when the cart lodge roof was replaced, some time in the late 19th or 20th century. The structure has been neglected in recent years and will clearly benefit from repair and restoration in the new proposals.



### **Modern stable**

The modern stable building has little historic or architectural significance but is in good condition and reflects a later style of building, constructed of similar materials, located away from the historic farm group.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

Colville Hall comprises a diverse and important group of buildings that collectively illustrate the development of the farm complex from the 12th/13th century up to the 19th century, largely unaffected by modern development and set within the attractive historic landscape of the former moated site. The national significance of the structures is reflected in their statutory listings. Two of the buildings are grade I-listed and the others are listed either grade II\* or II. In addition the site is a scheduled monument, originating in the 12th and 13th centuries, when many moated farmsteads were established in Essex.

This is a rare and unspoilt survival of a traditional farmstead that has developed over time within its historic landscape setting and has not been adversely affected by 19th century re-organisation and modern 20th century prefabricated farming buildings that have come to dominate many other Essex farms. The site is worth studying as a whole to examine the evolution of style and carpentry techniques during the medieval and early post-medieval periods on a local level.

The conversion and change of use of the four structures studied in the survey offers the opportunity to preserve them as functioning buildings, particularly the hitherto neglected cart lodge and byre. If further buildings are similarly converted, their recording and analysis would undoubtedly provide an enhanced understanding of the complex. There is also the potential to augment this with archaeological information gained from the monitoring of the associated groundworks to be undertaken in the near future (and reported on separately). The monitoring works are likely to lead to an increased understanding of the chronology of the development of the site, especially its early medieval origins and a greater appreciation of site layout, building configuration and use of space.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Mrs Philipa Marriage for commissioning the survey and to her husband Richard for his on-site assistance. Thanks also to KPT Architects for supplying drawings used in the survey and report. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Mark Atkinson of ECC FAU and monitored by the ECC HE team on behalf of the LPA.

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## **Appendix 1: Contents of Archive**

**Site name: Farm Buildings at Colville Hall, White Roding, Essex**

**Project no. 2632**

### **Index to the Archive**

Document wallet containing:

#### **1. Research Archive**

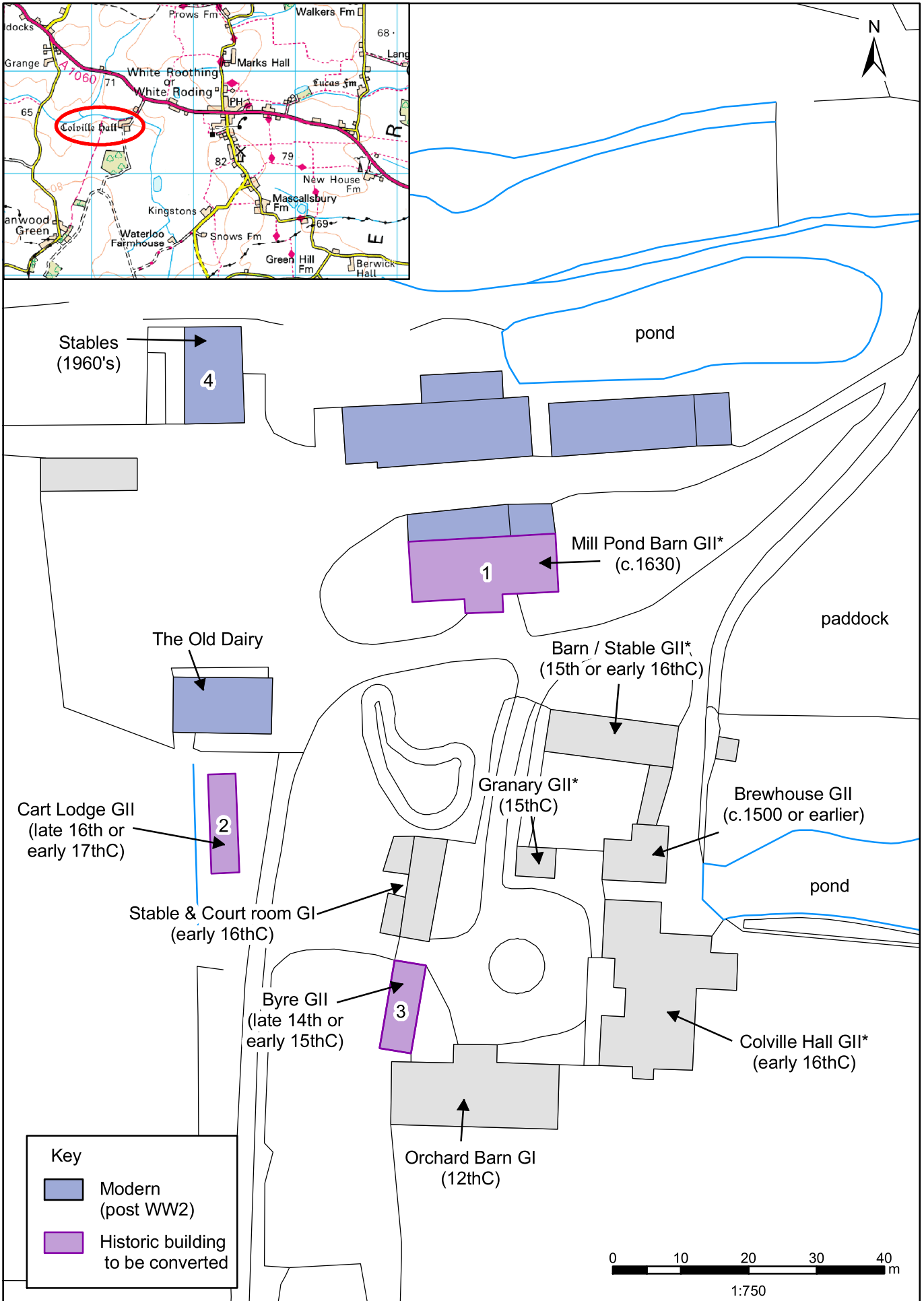
- 1.1 Two copies of the client report (one unbound)
- 1.2 ECC HE brief
- 1.3 ECC FAU written scheme of investigation (method statement)
- 1.4 CD containing digital images, pdf-formatted report, architects drawings, etc

#### **2. Site Archive**

- 2.1 Photographic registers
- 2.2 Photographic record (colour digital & 35mm monochrome prints)
- 2.3 Site notes & annotated survey plans

## Appendix 2: EHER Summary Sheet

<b>Site Name/Address:</b> Farm Buildings at Colville Hall, White Roding	
<b>Parish:</b> White Roding	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 5534 1347	<b>HER ref.:</b> 4356; SM 213
<b>Type of Work:</b> Building recording	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Andy Letch, ECC FAU
<b>Dates of Work:</b> November 2012	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> N/A
<b>Curating Museum:</b> Saffron Walden	<b>Funding Source:</b> Client
<b>Further Work Anticipated?</b> Yes, archaeological monitoring	<b>Related LBS Nos.:</b> 120572, 120577 & 120578.
<b>Final Report:</b> Summary in EAH	<b>Oasis No.:</b> 140051
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Post-medieval & modern	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p>A programme of building recording was undertaken on three listed post-medieval farm structures and a modern stable at Colville Hall prior to conversion and change of use of part of the site into a wedding venue. The extensive farm complex lies within a scheduled area (SM 213) containing the remains of a medieval moat, fish ponds and signs of a postulated deserted medieval village.</p> <p>The barn is semi-aisled and dated to 1630 but was repaired and refurbished in 1996. It is half-boarded in traditional Essex style, with a large thatched roof. Much original wall-framing survives comprising internally-braced studwork and queen post strut roof. Original doors survive with wrought iron fittings and there is some evidence for a hay loft and stalls for animals. The cart lodge is a crude 17th or 18th open-sided thatched building that was probably constructed to contain livestock before becoming a cart lodge in the 19th century. Some of the less-substantial timbers have rotted and the roof over the main part has been replaced. The rough vernacular build of cart lodge illustrates the diversity of the buildings here. The original collar purlin roof was replaced with a late 19th or 20th century. Though largely dilapidated, the byre contains good quality studwork and the remains of a crown post roof. Its close-studded walls are similar in form to the grade 1-listed stable/courtroom building and it is probably contemporary with it, i.e. 16th century in date. It was the earliest building included in the survey. Externally the byre was half-boarded and thatched like the barn. The current roof is late 19th or 20th century in date. The modern stable building has no historic or architectural significance.</p> <p>These buildings are part of a rare and unspoilt traditional farmstead that has developed since the 12th century within its historic landscape setting and has not been adversely affected by 19th century re-organisation and modern 20th century developments that have come to dominate many other Essex farms. Further archaeological monitoring of conversion groundworks may provide further insights into the origins and development of the site.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Andy Letch	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 4th January 2013



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Fig.1. Site location and block plan

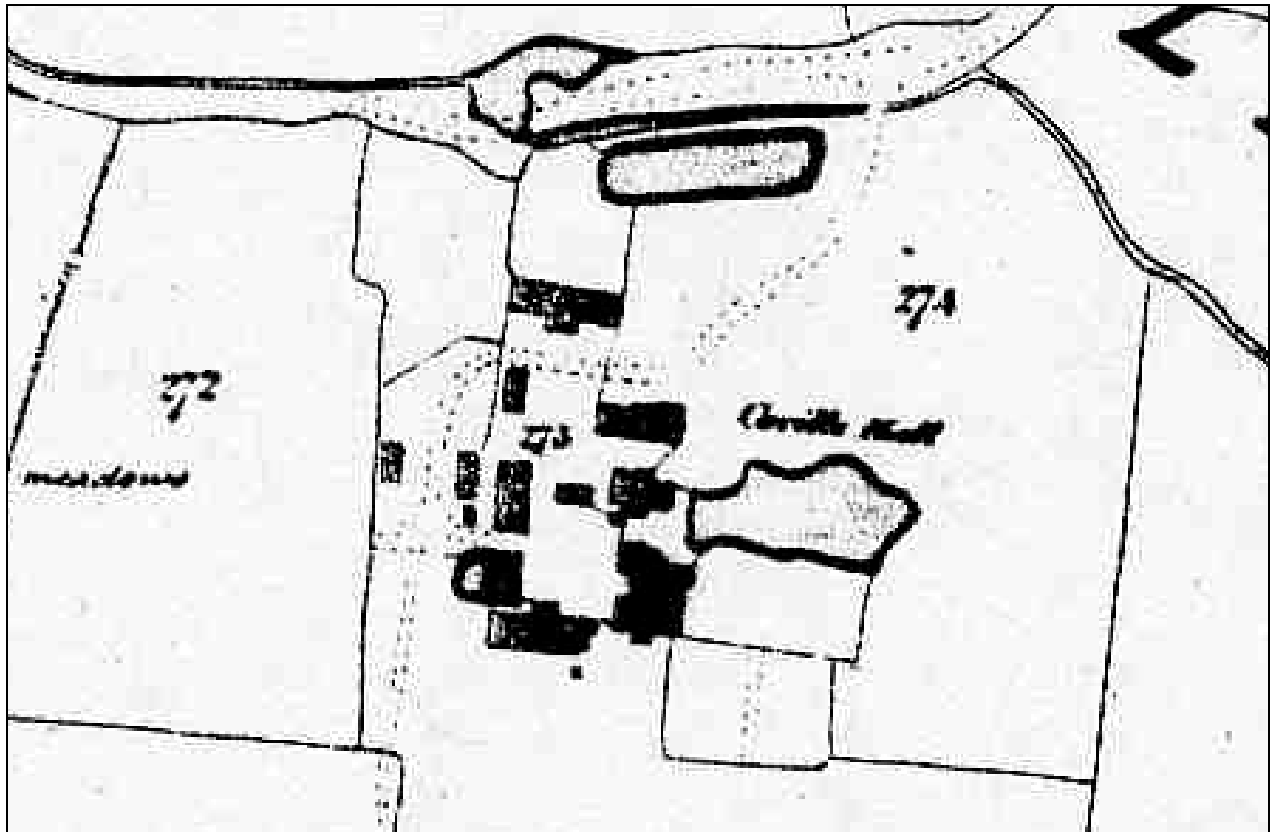


Fig. 2 White Roding tithe map, 1840 (D/CT 299B)

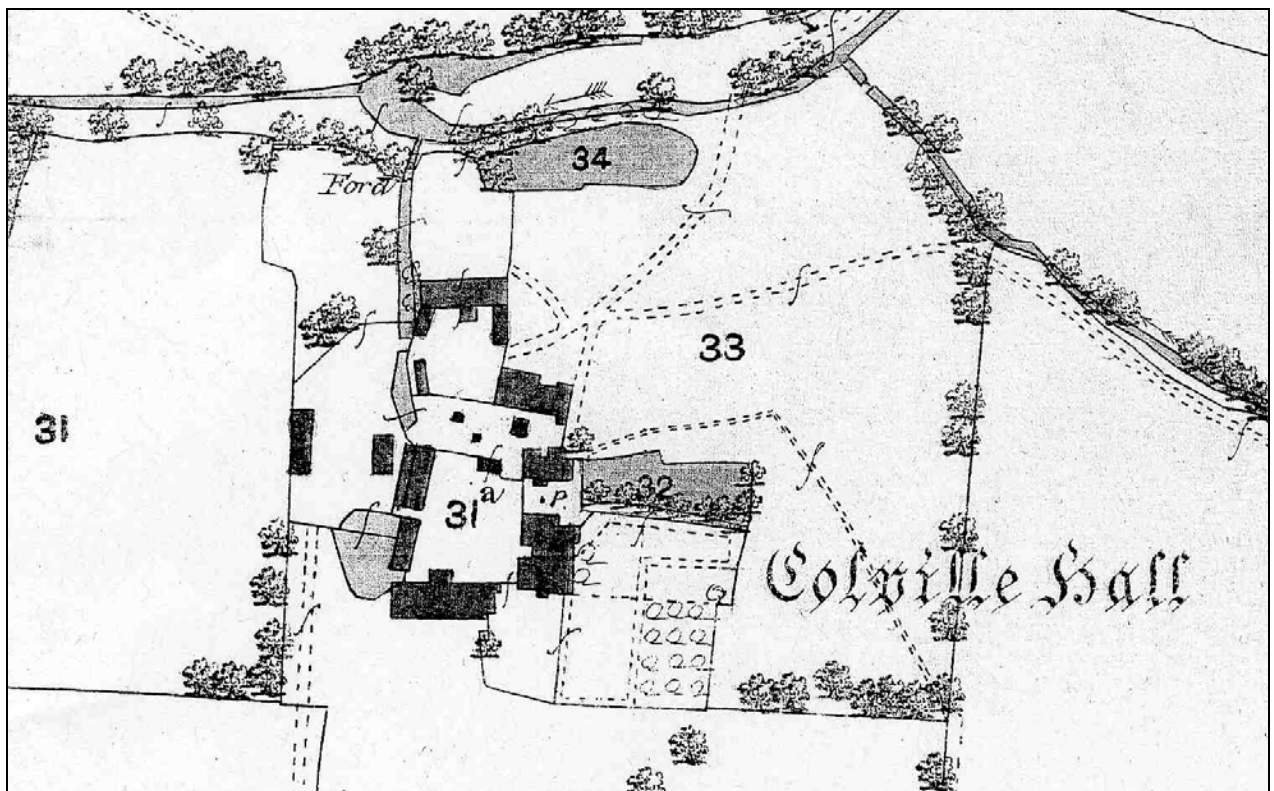


Fig. 3 First edition OS map, 1874 (sheet 42/2)

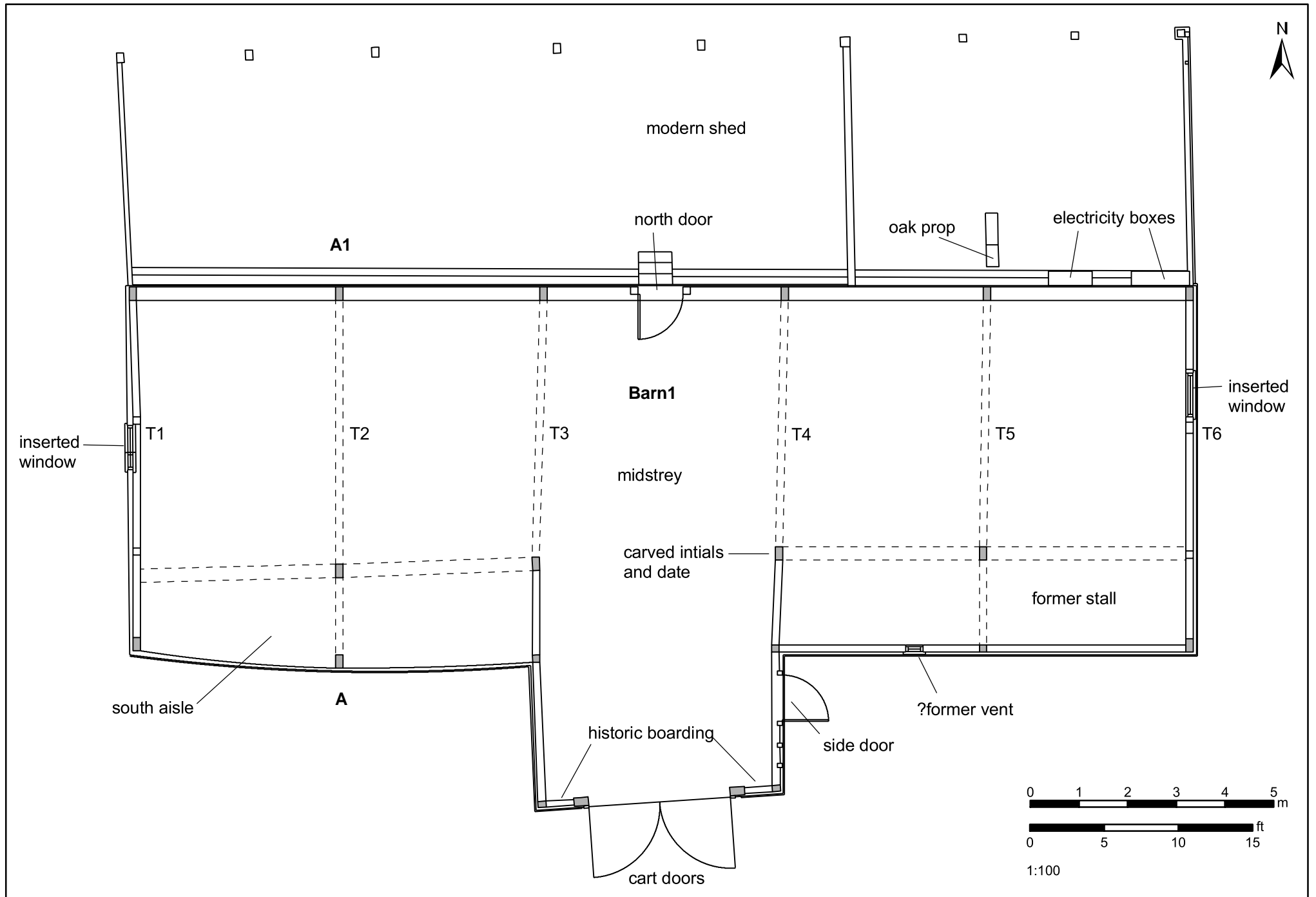


Fig.4. Floor plan of barn

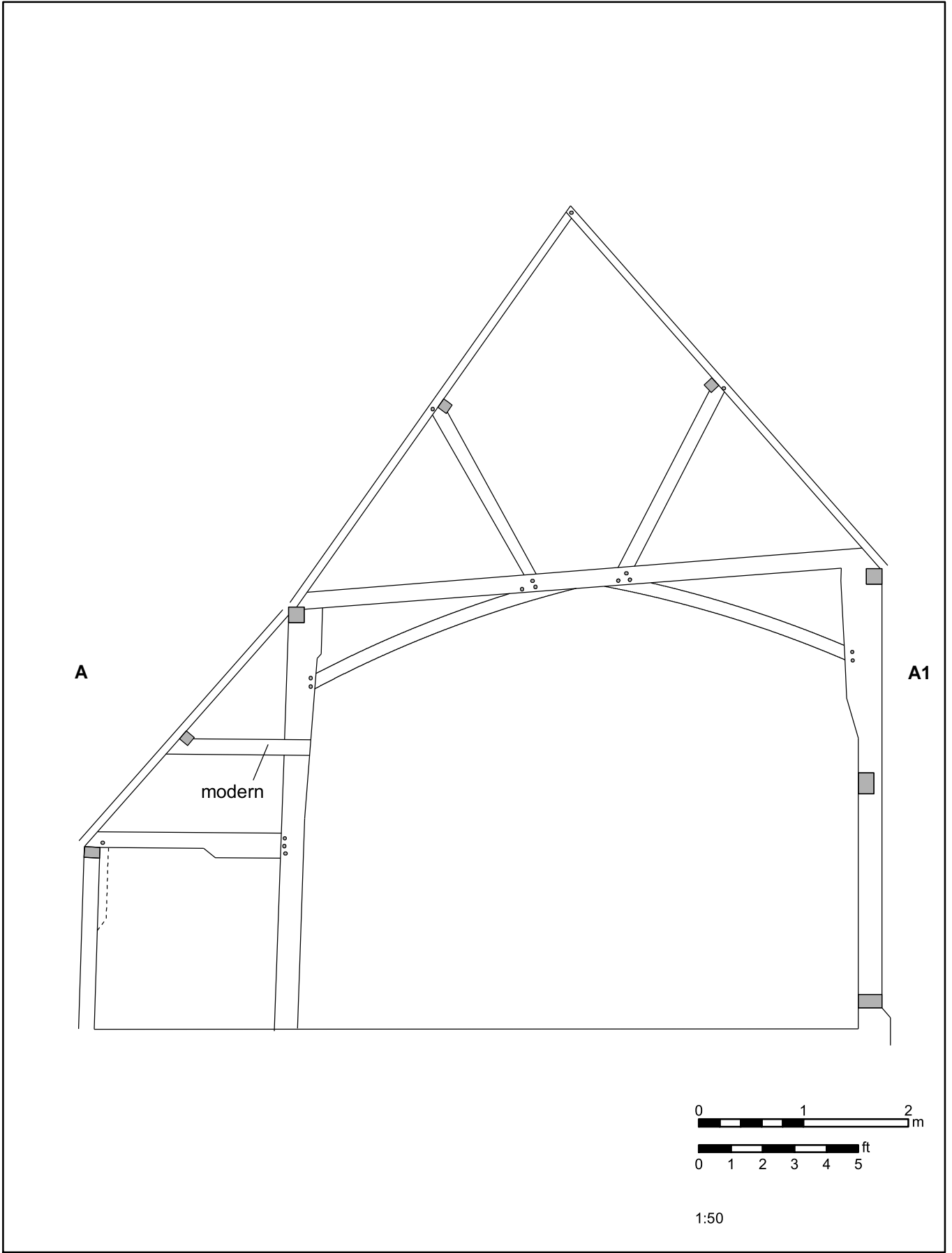


Fig.5. Cross section A-A1



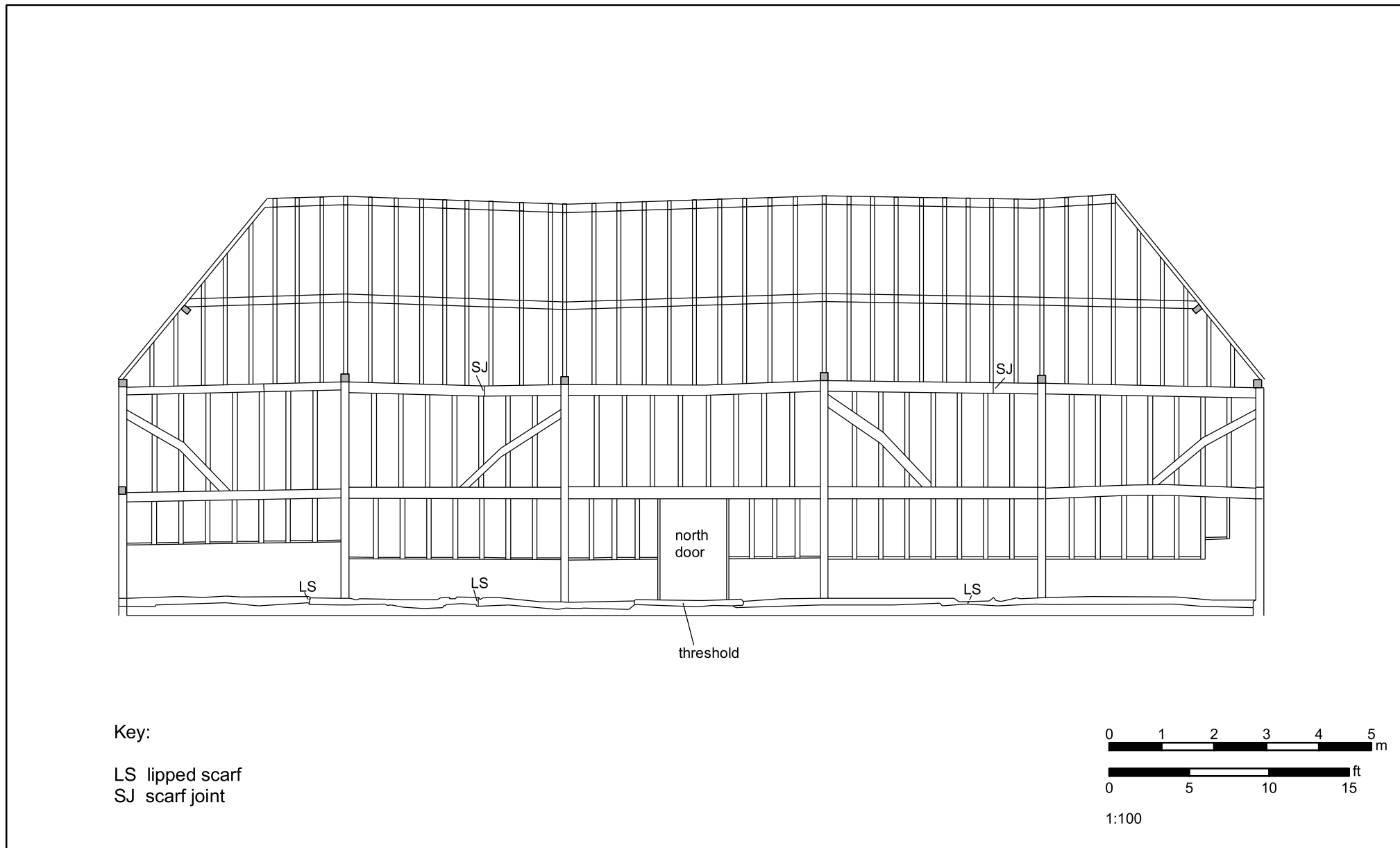


Fig.6. North wall of barn

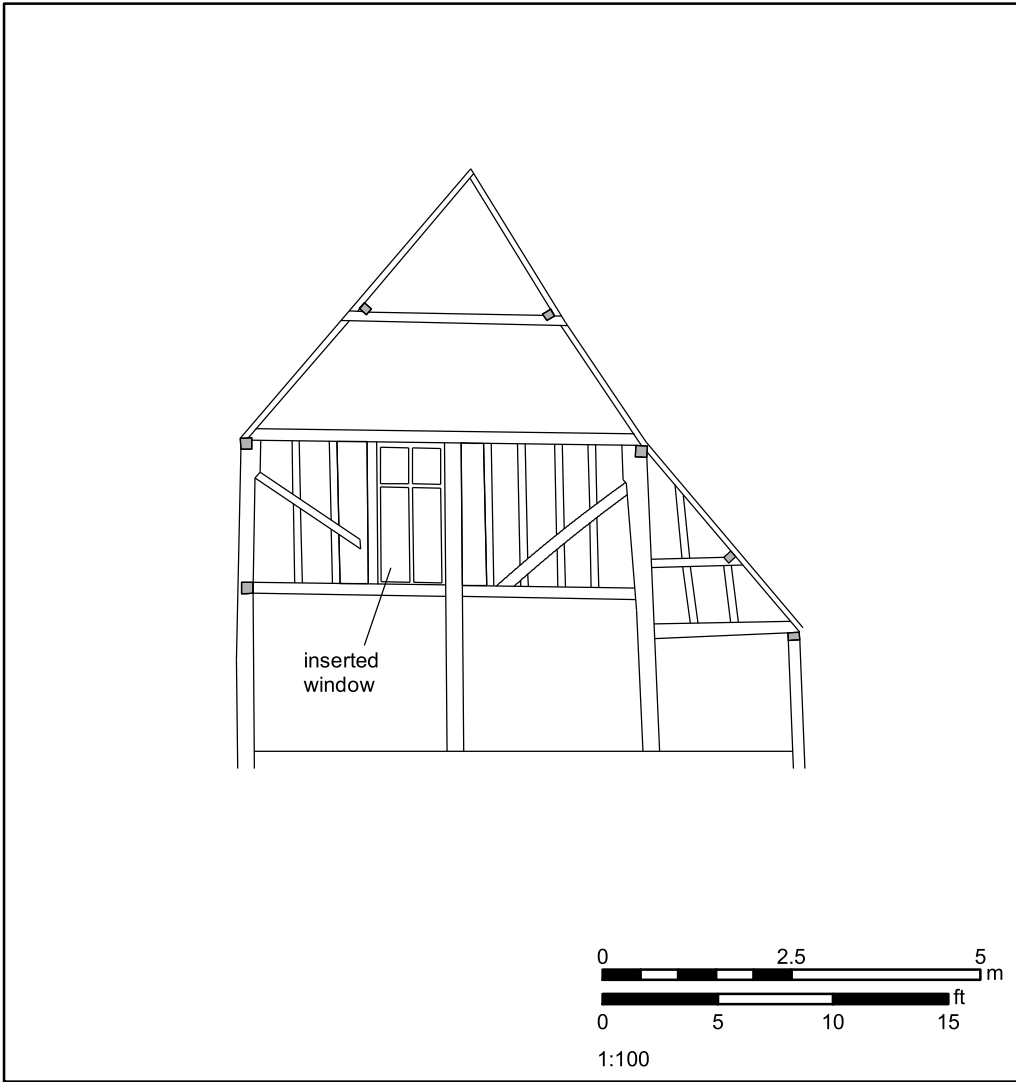


Fig.7. East wall of barn

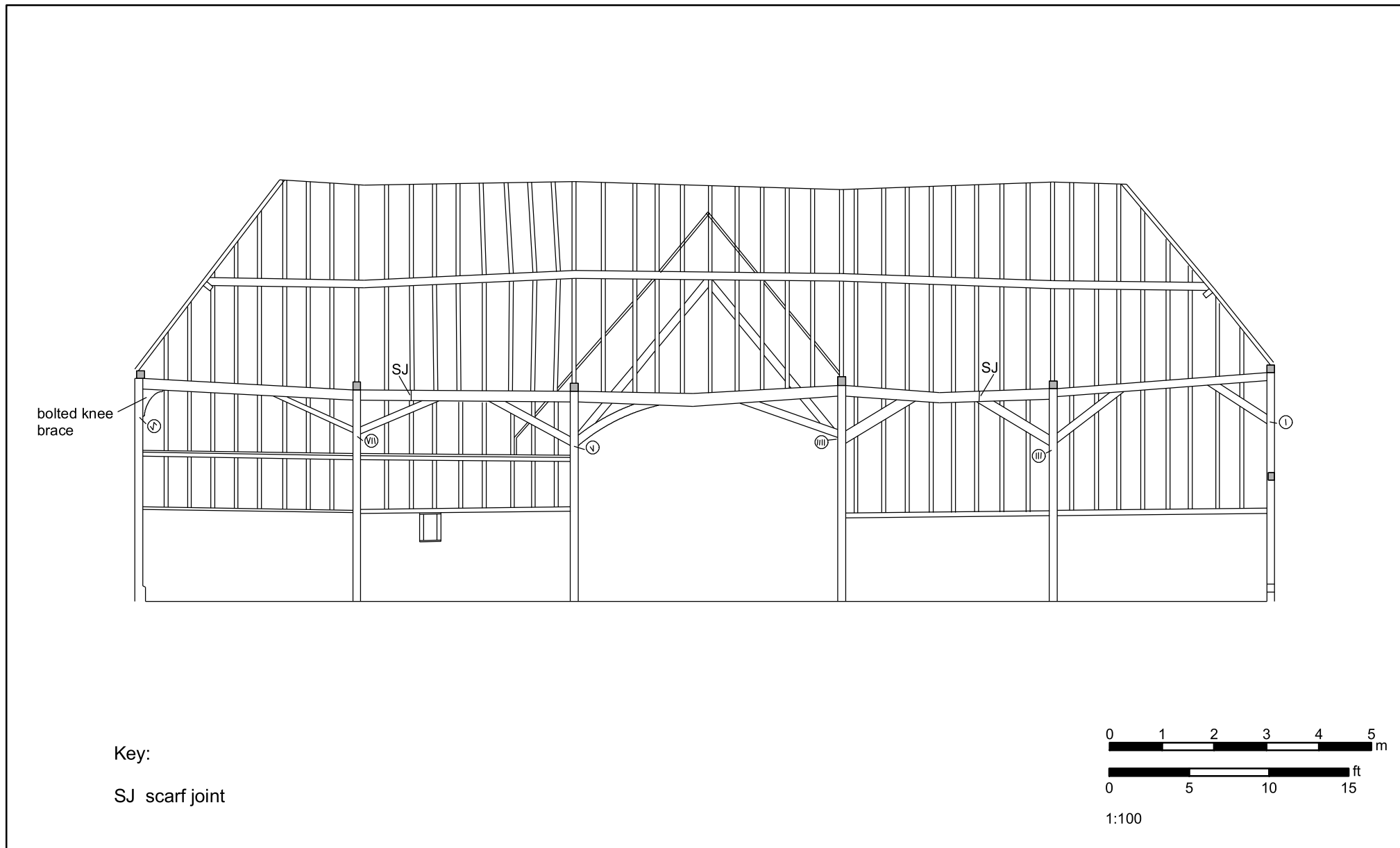


Fig.8. South wall of barn

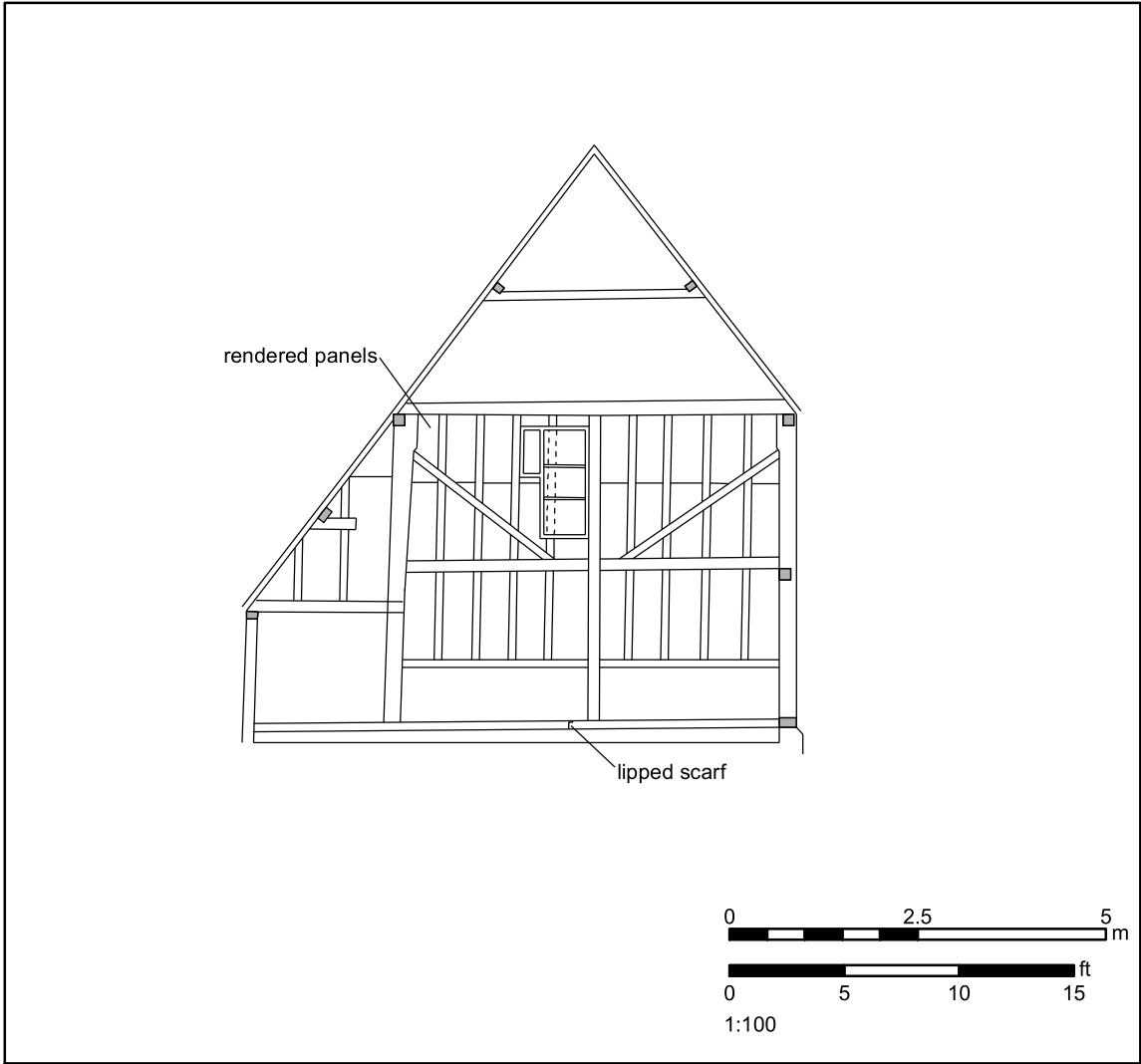


Fig.9. West wall of barn

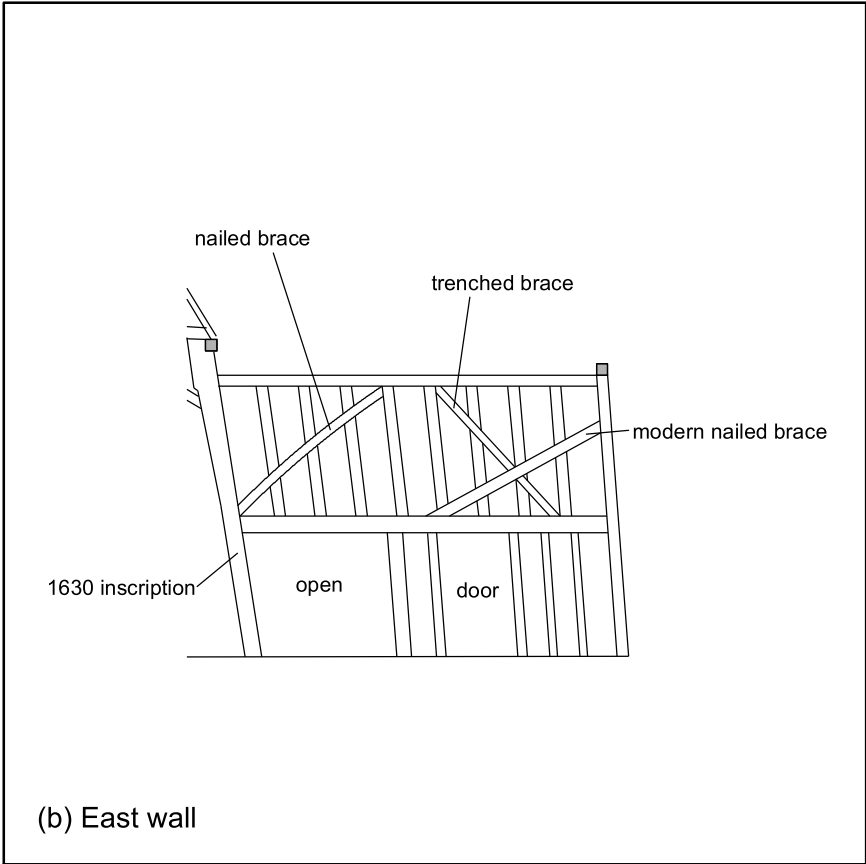
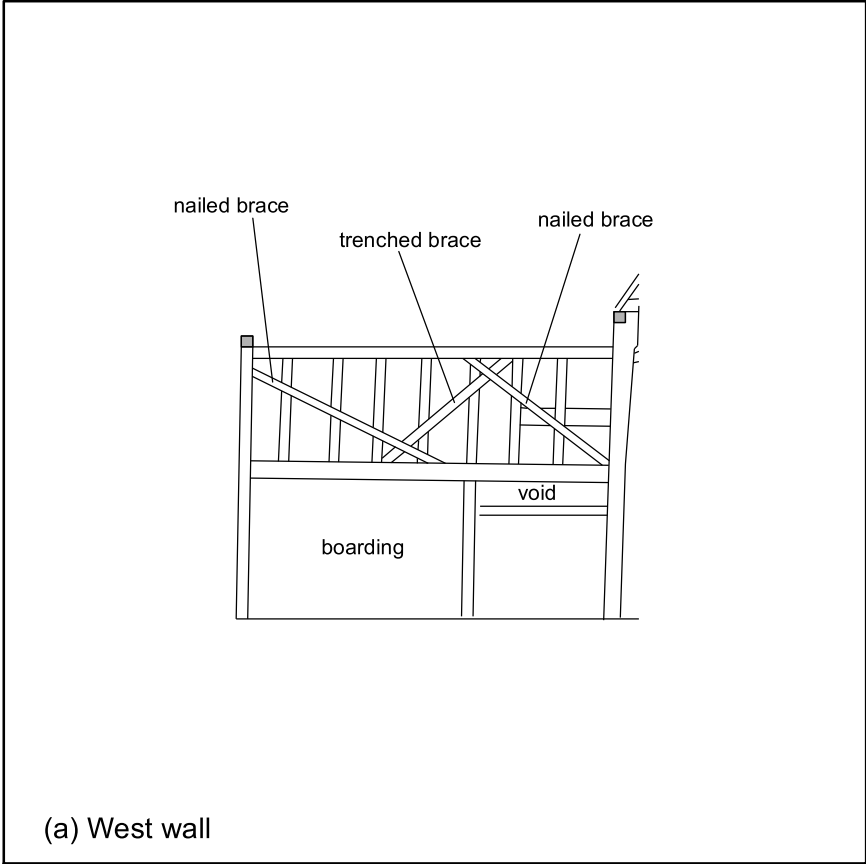
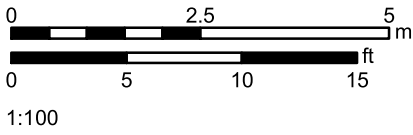


Fig.10. Porch



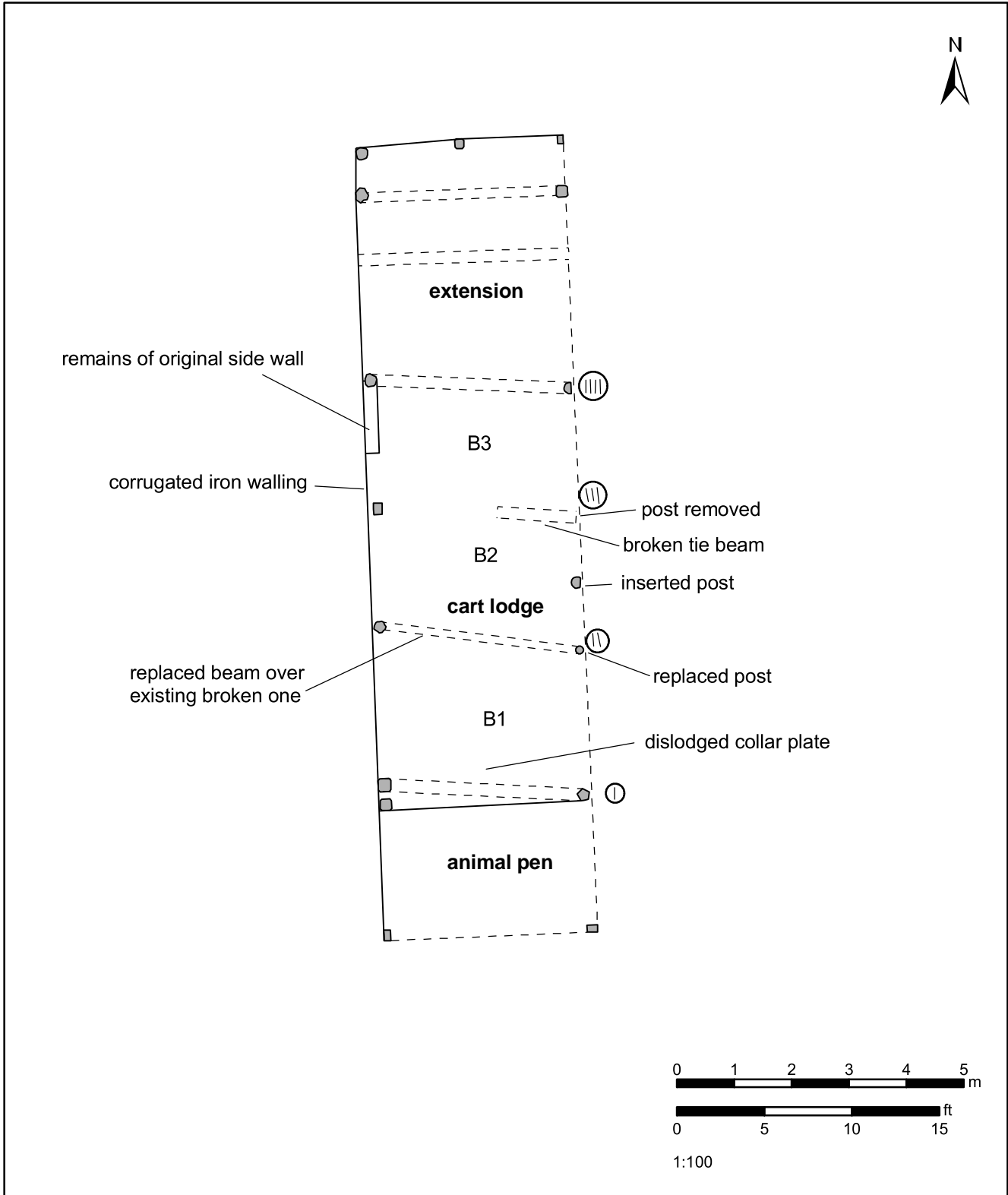


Fig.11. Floor plan of cart lodge

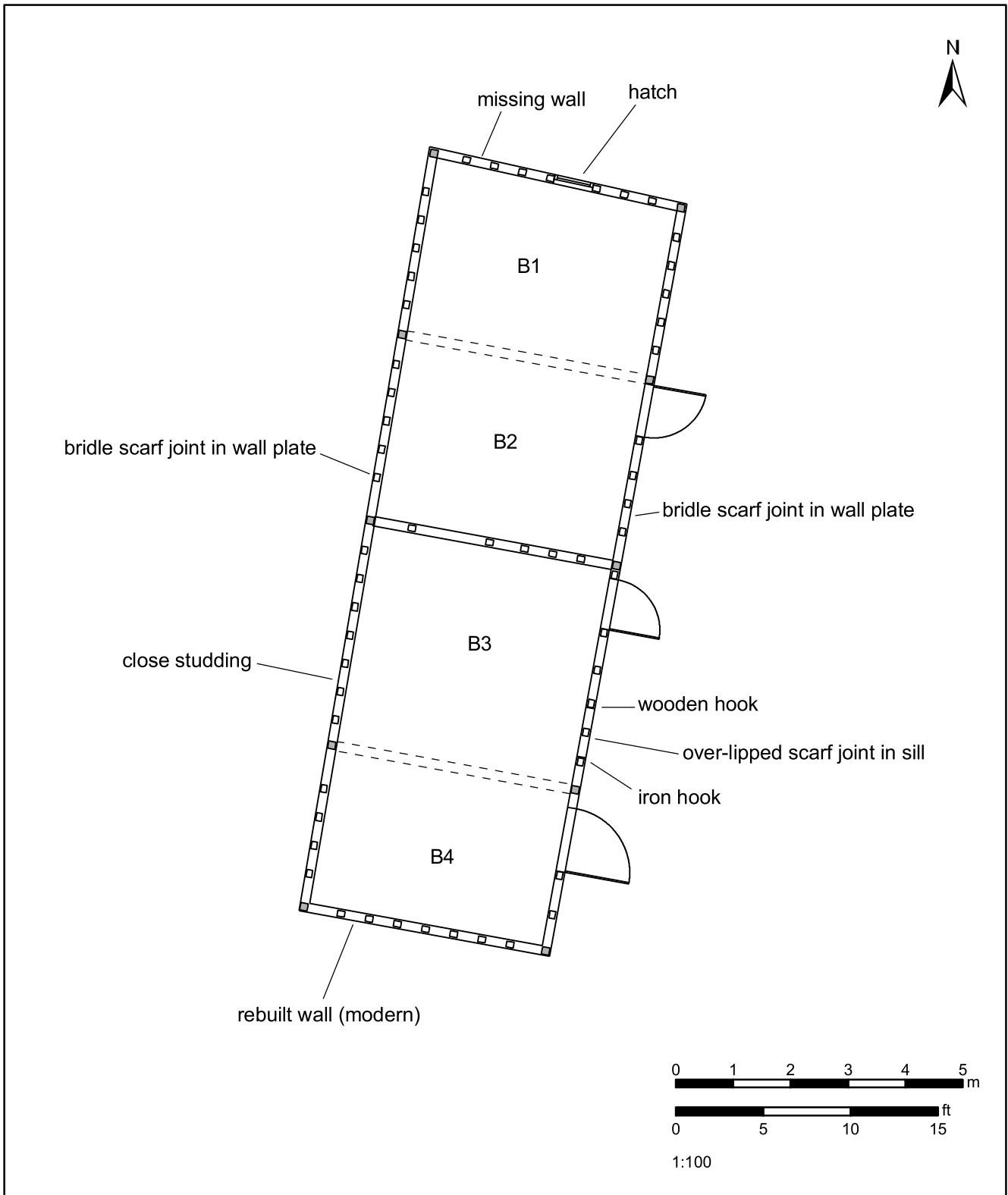


Fig.12. Floor plan of byre

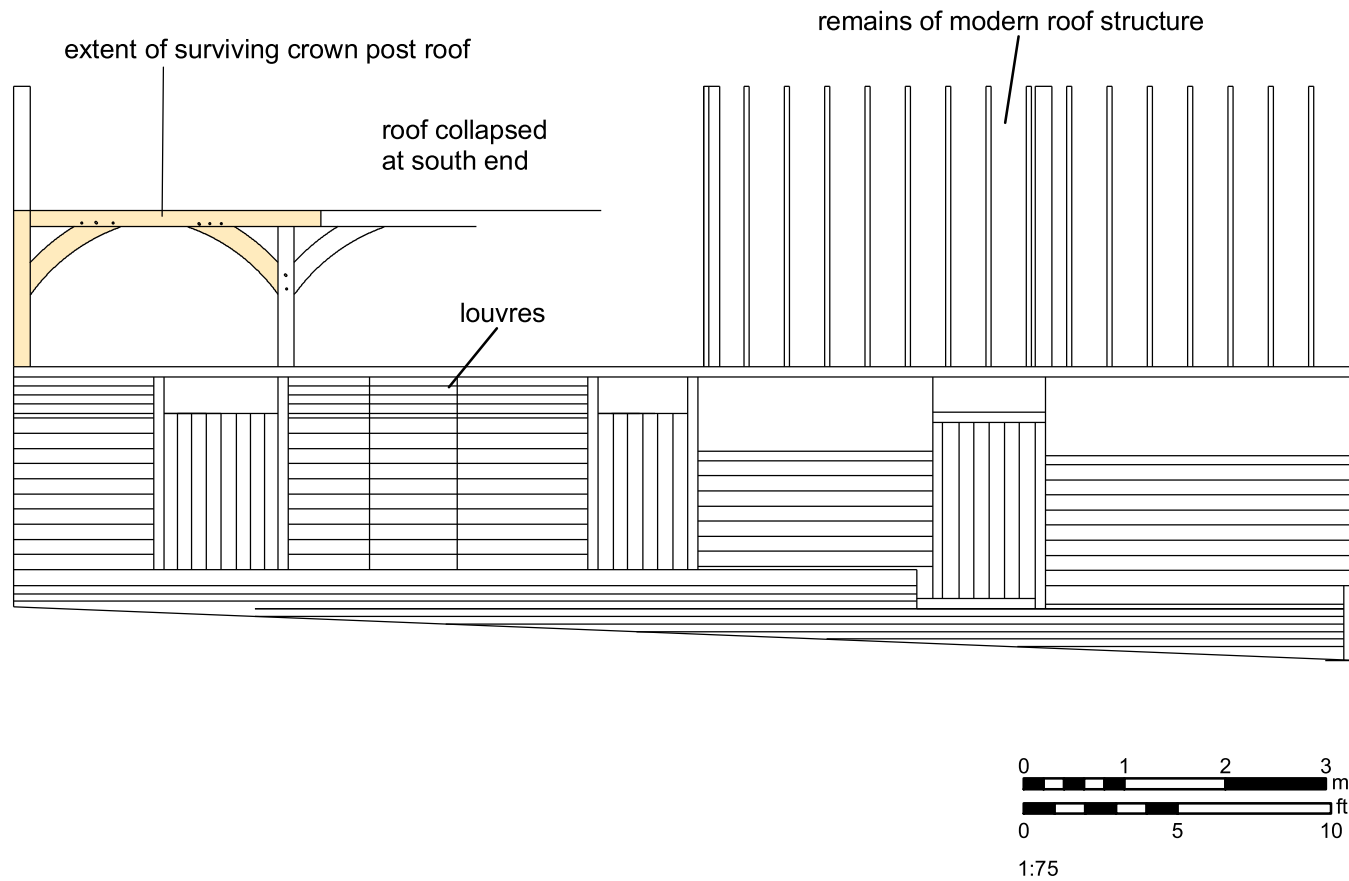


Fig.13. East elevation indicating remains of crown-post roof





Plate 1 South elevation of barn



Plate 2 Barn viewed to north-west



Plate 3 Barn and modern shed viewed to south-west



Plate 4 North elevation of barn within modern shed





Plate 5 Detail of north door into barn



Plate 6 Barn viewed to north-east



Plate 7 Interior of barn viewed to east



Plate 8 Interior of barn viewed to west





Plate 9 Six-pegged edge-halved and bladed scarf joint along aisle plate



Plate 10 Iron strap in connecting sill plates in north-west corner of barn



Plate 11 Carved initials and date on T4 southern bay post



Plate 12 Typical internally-braced studwork in barn





Plate 13 North door and pitching hatch



Plate 14 Dating evidence for rendering of north internal wall



Plate 15 East gable of barn



Plate 16 West gable of barn





Plate 17 View through porch, to north



Plate 18 East elevation of cart lodge





Plate 19 Cart lodge viewed to south-west



Plate 20 Cart lodge viewed to north-east





Plate 21 Interior of cart lodge viewed to south



Plate 22 Daub walling inside cart lodge





Plate 23 Hipped bay on south side of cart lodge



Plate 24 Byre viewed to south-west





Plate 25 Byre viewed to north-east between stable/courtroom and Orchard Barn



Plate 26 North part of byre viewed to south





Plate 27 South part of byre viewed to north (Morton partnership 2012)



Plate 28 face-halved and bladed scarf joint along east wall of byre





Plate 29 Close-studding along west wall of byre



Plate 30 Collapsed south gable and remains of crown post roof





Plate 31 Modern stable viewed to north-east



Plate 32 Modern stable viewed to north-west





Plate 33 Typical stall on east side of stable



Plate 34 Stall in south-east corner with feed bin