

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of
Richard & Madeline Walton

Field barn at Stoop Hill
Greenrigg Lane
Mickleton
County Durham

archaeological building recording

report 4398
March 2017

Contents

1.	Summary	1
2.	Project background	2
3.	Landuse, topography and geology	2
4.	Historical and archaeological development	3
5.	The building	3
6.	Conclusions	5
7.	References	5
	Appendix: Catalogue of photographs	6

Illustrations

Figure 1:	Site location
Figure 2:	The site and the building
Figure 3:	Plan
Figure 4:	Elevations
Photo 1:	The barn seen from Stoop Hill
Photo 2:	The field barn and shed seen from the north-west
Photo 3:	The buildings seen from the south
Photo 4:	The north face of the building
Photo 5:	The north end of the barn
Photo 6:	The west face
Photo 7:	Detail of the west wall of the extension
Photo 8:	Detail of the stone roof of the field barn
Photo 9:	A drilled quoin at the north-west corner of the barn
Photo 10:	A notched quoin supports the coping stones
Photo 11:	The south end of the extended barn
Photo 12:	The west face of the barn
Photo 13:	The west face of the old part of the barn
Photo 14:	Detail showing the west face of the extension
Photo 15:	The north face of the shed
Photo 16:	The very plain south face of the shed
Photo 17:	A blocked low window on the east end of the shed
Photo 18:	Looking northwards inside the barn
Photo 19:	Stone flags south of the byre
Photo 20:	Looking towards the south-west corner of the barn
Photo 21:	The east wall of the extension
Photo 22:	The hay loft above the byre
Photo 23:	The rebuilt pitching door on the east side of the hay loft
Photo 24:	The south-west corner of the byre
Photo 25:	Spaces for four cows along on the west wall of the byre
Photo 26:	Detail of the hay rack and stall partition
Photo 27:	The south-east corner of the cow house
Photo 28:	The north-east corner of the byre
Photo 29:	Detail of the sandstone slab partition
Photo 30:	Looking east inside the shed
Photo 31:	The east wall of the barn inside the shed
Photo 32:	The shed's north wall

1. Summary

The project

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological recording project conducted in advance of proposed alterations to a field barn at Stoop Hill, Mickleton, Co Durham.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by Richard & Madeline Walton and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

The project

- 1.3 The isolated field barn has been examined and described and a photographic survey has been carried out. A plan has been prepared and existing elevation drawings have been marked up.

The building

- 1.4 This barn is a typical example of its type, which is distinctive of upland farms in the Yorkshire region. It is shown its existing form on the earliest Ordnance Survey map, which was made in the middle of the 19th century. The building probably dates from the 18th century. It would have been used to house cattle during the winter months and to store hay cut from the surrounding fields. It was also important as a source of manure for spreading on the land. Structural evidence shows that the barn was significantly enlarged to the south to increase the size of the hay store.
- 1.5 The building consists of a barn with a separate cow house for up to six animals, and a small shed that would have housed another cow. In the larger byre there are stall partitions of stone and wood and a wooden hay rack.

2. Project background

Location (Figures 1 and 2)

- 2.1 The building lies 0.7km south-west of the village of Mickleton, County Durham, at grid reference NY 9632 2309. The village and the site were formerly part of the North Riding of Yorkshire.

Development proposal

- 2.2 Planning consent has been granted for conversion of the field barn to a dwelling. The planning application number is DM/16/03632/FPA. Condition 8 on the consent requires that a level 2 survey should be carried out, in accordance with guidance set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).

Objective

- 2.3 The objective of the project was to provide a record of the building in its present state. A brief historical summary is provided as background information. The regional research framework (Petts & Gerrard 2006) contains an agenda for archaeological research in the region, which is incorporated into regional planning policy implementation with respect to archaeology. This project was designed to address agenda item PM7: the North Pennine Dales.

Specification summary

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, reference DS17.40, provided by Archaeological Services Durham University.

Dates

- 2.5 The building was examined on 9th February 2017. This report was prepared for February 2017.

Personnel

- 2.6 Research, survey and report preparation work were carried out by Richard Annis, and the illustrations were prepared by Janine Watson.

Archive/OASIS

- 2.7 The project archive is currently held by Archaeological Services Durham University and will be transferred to the Bowes Museum in due course. Archaeological Services Durham University is registered with the Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations project (OASIS). The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-277508**.

3. Landuse, topography and geology

Landuse

- 3.1 The field barn stands in an area of open pasture land divided by dry stone walls. The nearest building is Stoop Hill House, 250m to the south-west.

Site and situation

- 3.2 The building is at an elevation of 278m above sea level. It stands on sloping ground that falls north-eastwards towards the village (Photographs 1 and 2). Its north end is

in line with a field wall. There is another small agricultural building a short distance to the north-east.

Geology and soils

- 3.3 The bedrock at this site is Great Limestone overlain by glacial till. A short distance to the south, the higher ground overlies Stainmore sandstone that has been extensively quarried.

4. Historical and archaeological development

- 4.1 The building is shown in its present form on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1856. A footpath links it to the village and no connection is shown with Stoop Hill House to the south-west. It is just one of several isolated farm buildings; four more are shown within 500m of the study area and each of these is still standing, though one is now roofless. The building appears on subsequent Ordnance Survey maps, the only change being on the 1914 edition which shows a small extension on the north-west corner.
- 4.2 Field barns are common in Yorkshire and the north-east of England, especially where farms included land away from the farmstead. The document *Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement: North East Region* says that these buildings “provided storage for hay in a loft, reducing the need to cart it back to the main farmstead ... cattle could be housed below, allowing for manure to be moved easily onto the surrounding fields in the spring” (EH/CA 2006, 71).
- 4.3 Isolated field barns are regarded as a highly distinctive feature of the region (*ibid.*). They are generally simple stone structures, but they can be prominent landscape features. This is especially true where many appear in a small area, as in Swaledale, or where, as in neighbouring parts of County Durham, they are painted white to show that they are part of the Raby Estate.

5. The building

- 5.1 The building is in two parts. The larger is a typical rectangular barn, aligned roughly north-south. The smaller section is a low shed attached to the north-east side of the barn (Photograph 3). Both are built of local stone and have low-pitched roofs of sandstone slabs; there are sandstone copings on the gables of the barn. Large rough field stones can be seen in the footing courses and both buildings have courses of projecting through stones, a typical feature of vernacular buildings in the region. The north walls of the two parts are in line with the adjoining field walls (Photograph 4). This is the lowest point of the building and there are drains in the lower courses of the walls.

Exterior; the barn

- 5.2 The north end of the barn has four courses of through stones (Photograph 5). Between these, in the upper part of the wall, there are three breather slits providing ventilation to the hay store. At ground floor level there is one old opening, a squarish unglazed window at the middle of the wall. At the west end there is a later window, wide and shallow with three panes of glass.

- 5.3 The west side shows clear evidence that the barn has been extended to the south (Photograph 6). A line of old quoins runs up the face about two-thirds of the way along the wall. In the longer north section there are three well-marked rows of through stones, and no original openings. In the extension (Photograph 7) there are also three courses of throughs, but their heights do not match those to the north, and the stones are less prominent. There are two breather slits in this section of wall. There is a marked slope in the roof ridge near the north gable (Photograph 8). There is a small metal ventilator near the north end of the wall and one of the quoins at the north-west corner has a deep socket (Photograph 9); several more stones with sockets like this were seen in the course of the survey. At the south-west corner there is a notched stone supporting the water table course on the gable (Photograph 10).
- 5.4 The south face (Photograph 11) has two breather slits at half-height and a lower, wider opening at the gable. All of the main openings are in the east face, which has no through stones (Photograph 12). The older section has two doors at ground level, one to the hay store and one to the cow house. Above the latter is a pitching door through which hay would have been loaded into the loft over the cow house (Photograph 13). The upper door has been repaired in recent times, and the large stones around the lower doors have numerous sockets like that in Photo 9. The quoins of the old south-east corner can be seen clearly, as on the other side of the building. The east face of the extension has another pitching door and a pair of breather slits (Photograph 14).

Exterior; the shed

- 5.5 The construction of the smaller building matches that of the barn. There are large unshaped field stones in the footing of the north wall (Photograph 15); near the middle of this face, the drain outlet has partly collapsed. The single door is in the south face (Photograph 16). In the east end there is a small blocked window below the line of a vanished sloping roof (Photograph 17).

Interior of the barn

- 5.6 The barn is open to the underside of the stone roof slabs. The simple roof trusses consist of principal rafters and tie beams, with two rows of butt purlins at each side. The trusses are set directly into the masonry of the side walls. A little more than a third of the ground area is occupied by the cow byre. This is built, like the outer walls, of roughly coursed rubble with whitish mortar (Photograph 18). Its south wall it contains a small window and an internal door; its boarded ceiling forms a hay loft. Immediately south of the byre, the barn floor is paved with stone flags (Photograph 19). These extend to a point just south of the southern door, more or less the position of the south wall before the barn was extended. The rest of the barn floor is beaten earth. There are no projecting through courses or other features on the inner faces of the walls (Photograph 20). In the extension there is a single opening, the upper level hay door, which has a very rough timber lintel (Photograph 21). The joists that support the loft over the byre are built directly into the walls (Photograph 22); the space would have been reached by a ladder from the interior of the barn. The upper door in the east face has been repaired in recent times (Photograph 23).
- 5.7 The cow house is small and its ceiling is low. Such conditions would not be acceptable for housing animals today, but were common in the past; it used to be thought best to limit ventilation to cattle penned in byres like this. The small size of

the byre also attests to the small size of the cows housed in it. This, too, is typical of Dales agriculture in the past.

- 5.8 The west half of the byre has a raised stone floor (Photograph 24). A wooden hay basket and a stall division marks stalls for up to four beasts on this side of the building; tying posts for three survive (Photograph 25). The stall partition is made of stone and timber (Photograph 26). There is a separate raised stone floor at the north-east corner of the byre (Photograph 27) and the lower floor inside the door is surfaced with cement. Between the sections of raised floor is a sloping drain that allowed manure to be led out through the north wall (Photograph 28). The smaller raised area has a stone slab stall divider, too low to be effective (Photograph 29); there is no trace of any timber superstructure.

Interior of the shed

- 5.9 Despite its low roof, the shed was clearly used to house a cow, as there is a tying post made from a piece of steel pipe at the north side (Photograph 30). The blocked window near this has a rough wooden lintel. The west end of the shed is bare and the footing of the larger building is exposed (Photograph 31). As in the byre, the floor has a shallow drain to take waste out through the north wall (Photograph 32).

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 An isolated field barn at Stoop Hill has been recorded. The building is a typical example of its type, which is distinctive of upland farms in the Yorkshire region. It is shown its existing form on the earliest Ordnance Survey map, which was made in the middle of the 19th century. The building probably dates from the 18th century. It would have been used to house cattle during the winter months and to store hay cut from the surrounding fields. It was also important as a source of manure for spreading on the land. Structural evidence shows that the barn was significantly enlarged to the south to increase the size of the hay store.
- 6.2 The building consists of a barn with a separate cow house for up to six animals, and a small shed that would have housed another cow. In the larger byre there are stall partitions of stone and wood and a wooden hay rack.

7. References

- EH/CA, 2006 *Historic Farmsteads. Preliminary Character Statement: Yorkshire and the Humber Region*. Available online at www.helm.org.uk/ruraldevelopment or www.ahds.ac.uk. English Heritage / Countryside Agency.
- Petts, D, & Gerrard, C, 2006 *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment*. Durham.

Appendix: Catalogue of photographs

No	Description
1	The barn seen from Stoop Hill
2	The field barn and shed seen from the north-west
3	The buildings seen from the south
4	The north face of the building
5	The north end of the barn
6	The west face
7	Detail of the west wall of the extension
8	Detail of the stone roof of the field barn
9	A drilled quoin at the north-west corner of the barn
10	A notched quoin supports the coping stones of the south gable
11	The south end of the extended barn
12	The west face of the barn
13	The west face of the old part of the barn
14	Detail showing the west face of the extension
15	The north face of the shed
16	The very plain south face of the shed
17	A blocked low window on the east end of the shed
18	Looking northwards inside the barn
19	Stone flags south of the byre
20	Looking towards the south-west corner of the barn
21	The east wall of the extension
22	The hay loft above the byre
23	The rebuilt pitching door on the east side of the hay loft
24	The south-west corner of the byre
25	Spaces for four cows along on the west wall of the byre
26	Detail of the hay rack and stall partition
27	The south-east corner of the cow house
28	The north-east corner of the byre
29	Detail of the sandstone slab partition
30	Looking east inside the shed
31	The east wall of the barn inside the shed
32	The shed's north wall

Figure 1: Site location



site location

0 1km

scale 1:20 000 for A4 plot

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
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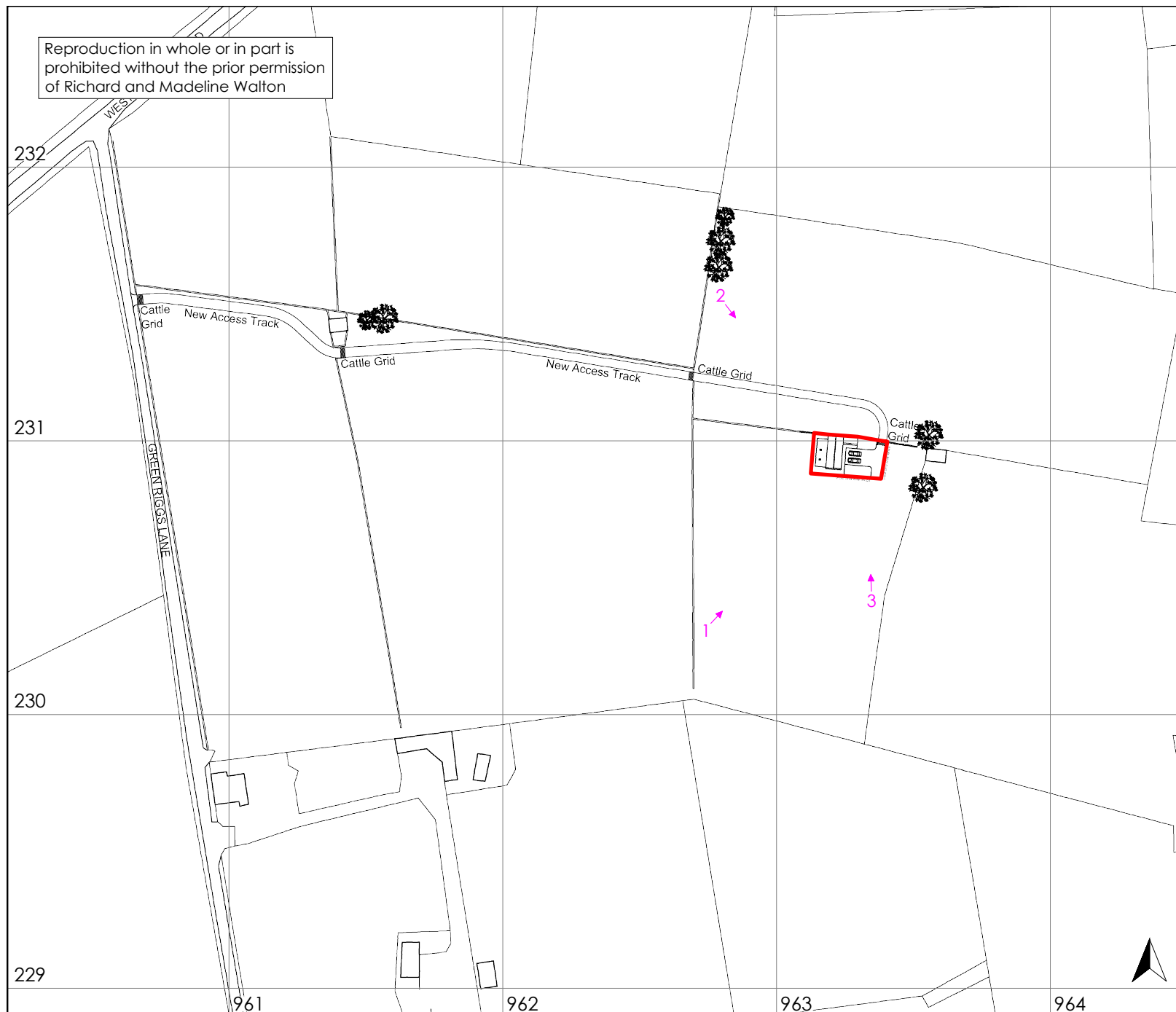
Field barn at Stoop Hill
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Figure 2: The site and the building

0 100m
scale 1:2000 for A4 plot

-  field barn
-  location of photographs



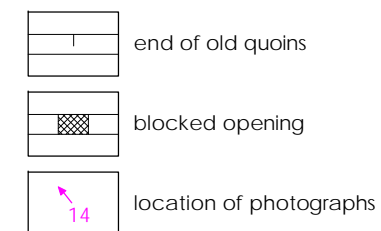
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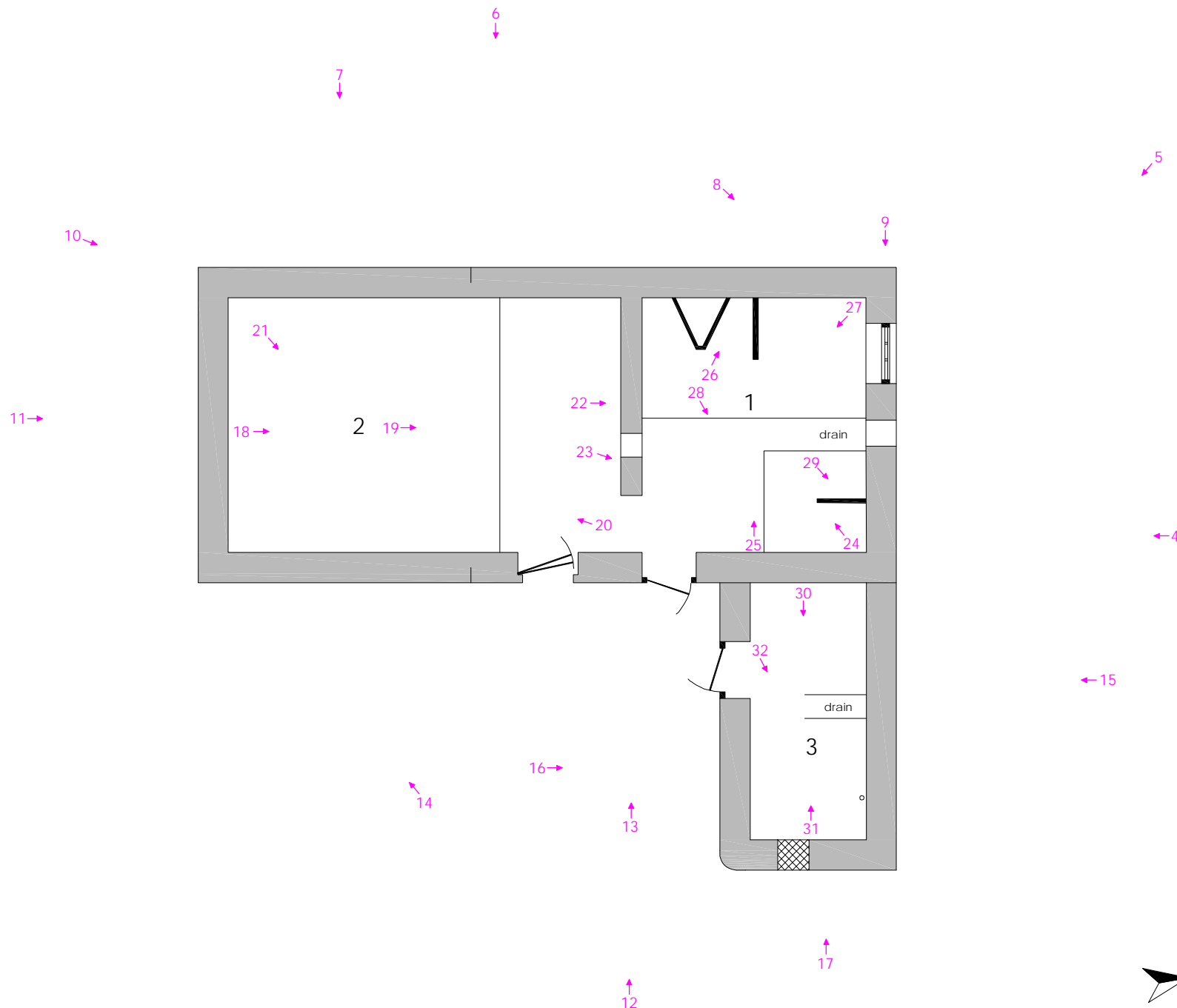
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Figure 3: Plan

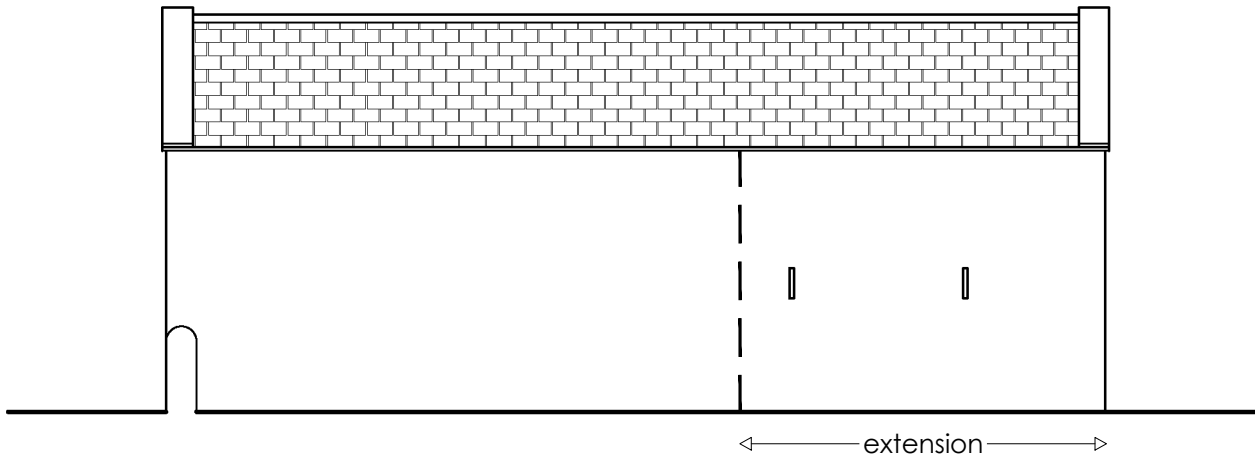
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scale 1:100 for A4 plot



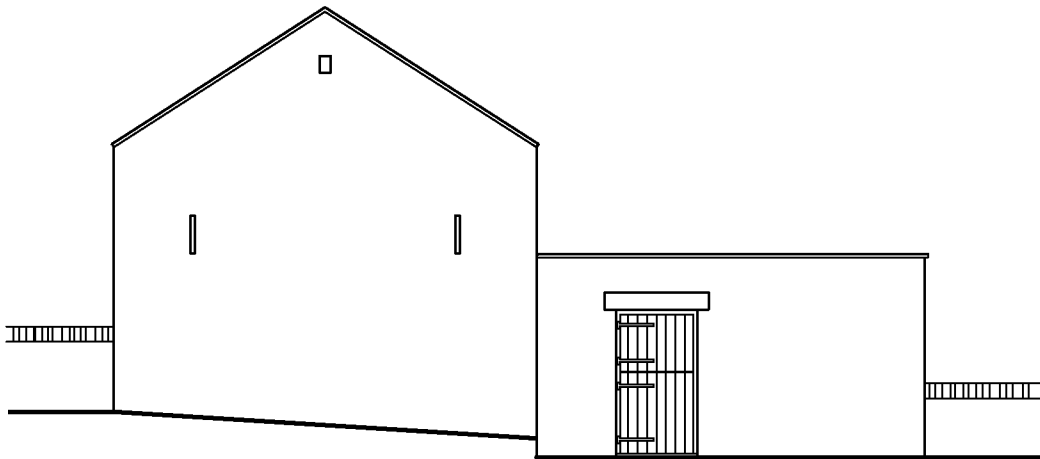
1 old barn
2 extension
3 shed



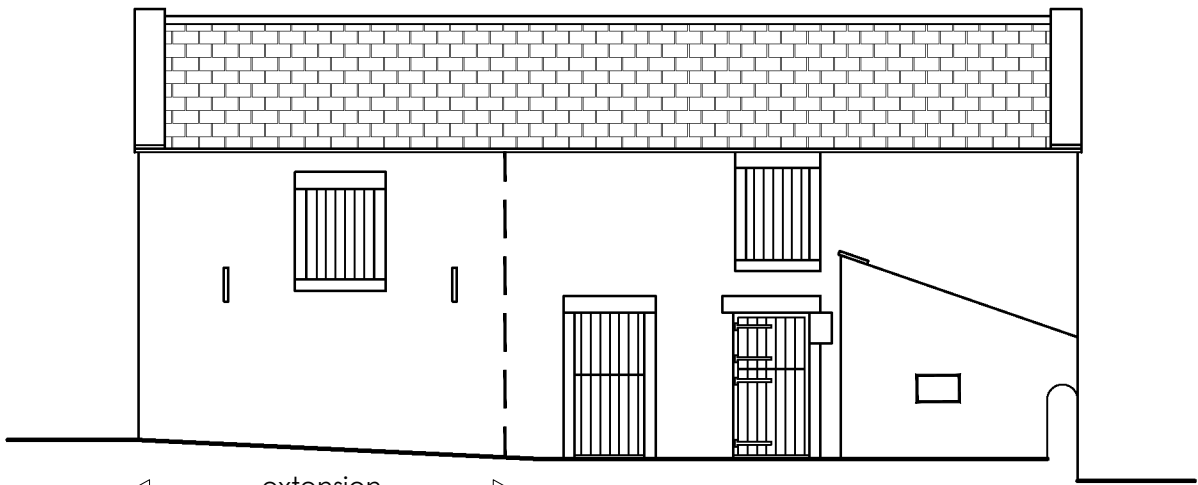
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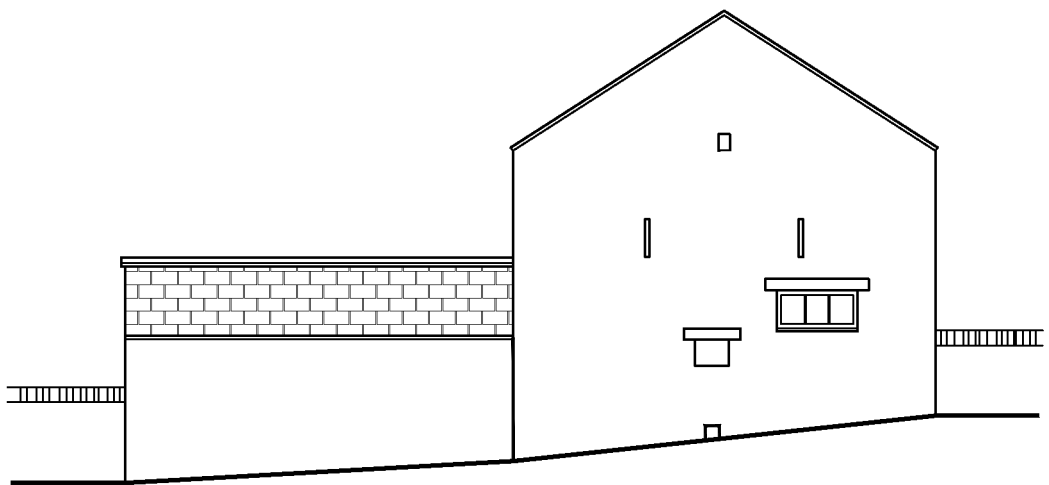
West elevation



South elevation



East elevation



North elevation



Photograph 1: The barn seen from Stoop Hill. The village of Mickleton can be seen in the background. A view looking north-east



Photograph 2: The field barn and shed seen from the north-west. There are numerous old quarries on the high ground behind the buildings



Photograph 3: The buildings seen from the south. The scale at the near corner is 1m long



Photograph 4: The north face of the building. Note the large unshaped field stones in the lowest courses



Photograph 5 (left): The north end of the barn, showing the courses of through stones. There is cement mortar around the later window near the scale

Photograph 6 (below): The west face. The row of large quoins, right of centre, shows where the south end of the building was before the extension was added





Photograph 7: Detail of the west wall of the extension, with large quoins marking the existing and former south-west corner. Note the disparity between the height of the through courses



Photograph 8: Detail of the stone roof at the north-west corner of the field barn



Photograph 9: A drilled quoin at the north-west corner of the barn, extreme left in Photo 6



Photograph 10: A notched quoin supports the coping stones of the south gable



Photograph 11: The south end of the extended barn



Photograph 12: The west face of the barn has a row of old quoins, left of the open door. Note the absence of through courses, and the difference between the two upper pitching doors



Photograph 13: The west face of the old part of the barn. Note the renewed masonry and pointing around the upper door. There are numerous drilled holes like the one shown in Photograph 9 in the jambs of the left-hand door



Photograph 14: Detail showing the west face of the extension



Photograph 15: The north face of the shed. The loose stone, low centre, marks the outlet of the manure drain



Photograph 16: The very plain south face of the shed



Photograph 17: A blocked low window can be seen below the sloping cement roof line on the east end of the shed



Photograph 18: Looking northwards inside the barn; the window and door open into the low byre



Photograph 19: Stone flags south of the byre



Photograph 20: Looking towards the south-west corner of the barn. The walls are plain and the simple roof trusses are set directly into the upper courses of masonry



Photograph 21: The east wall of the extension, with two ventilation slits and the southern pitching door



Photograph 22: The hay loft above the byre. A view looking north



Photograph 23: The rebuilt pitching door on the east side of the hay loft



Photograph 24: The south-west corner of the cow byre, showing the raised stone area for the stalls



Photograph 25: There are spaces for four cows along on the west wall of the byre. Note the low ceiling over these stalls



Photograph 26: Detail of the hay rack and the stone and timber stall partition seen in the photograph above. The cow's halter was tied to the vertical post beside the scale (0.5m long)



Photograph 27: The south-east corner of the cow house, showing the external and internal doors. The wide channel, bottom centre, is the muck drain leading to the north wall



Photograph 28: The drain and the small raised stone area at the north-east corner of the byre



Photograph 29: Detail of the sandstone slab partition between the two stalls shown in the previous photograph



Photograph 30: Looking east inside the shed. The timber lintel for the blocked window is at the top of the scale. The steel tube attached to the wall plate was the tying post for the cow that was housed here



Photograph 31: The east wall of the barn inside the shed



Photograph 32: The muck drain is just visible right of the scale in this view of the shed's north wall