

Archaeological Investigations Ltd

# Thurnham Hall Thurnham, LANCASHIRE

*Archaeological survey of the roof.*



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*Hereford Archaeology Series 815*

This report is produced by

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS LTD

Manager : A Boucher BSc, MIFA

UNIT 1, PREMIER BUSINESS PARK,  
WESTFIELDS TRADING ESTATE,  
FARADAY ROAD, HEREFORD  
HR4 9NZ

Tel. (01432) 364901

Fax. (01432) 364900

for: Jennings Barton Henderson  
Commercial Property Consultants  
The Warehouse  
Saxon Street  
Denton  
Manchester  
M34 3DS

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**Cover picture**      *Surveying in Roof 1 at Thurnham Hall, an archaeologist recording the details of Truss "B".*

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# Thurnham Hall Thurnham, Lancashire.

(NGR 3465 4545)

*Archaeological Survey of the roof.*

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**Text**

Dale Rouse

**Illustration**

Dave Doyle, Dale Rouse

**Site work**

Dale Rouse, Simon Mayes

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**January 2009**

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# Thurnham Hall

## Thurnham, Lancashire.

(NGR 3465 4545)

*Archaeological survey of the roof.*

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### **1. Summary**

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*Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Jennings Barton Henderson Commercial Property Consultants to carry out an archaeological survey of the roof at Thurnham Hall in Thurnham, Lancashire.*

*The project was undertaken in response to a requirement of listed building consent for the renovation of the existing roofs at Thurnham Hall. The requirement was for a Level 2 record (English Heritage) of the roof spaces affected by the proposals.*

*The main aim of the project was to locate and identify any in situ or demonstrably original parts of the roof structure that were affected by the proposals. If such timbers were found they were to be recorded through annotated notes to the architect's drawings, and drawn at 1:20 scale, prior to minor structural alterations that were due to be carried out on the roof.*

*The findings from the archaeological survey of the roof showed that no original or in situ timbers of archaeological importance were affected by the proposals.*

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## **2. Introduction**

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Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Jennings Barton Henderson Commercial Property Consultants to carry out an archaeological survey of the roof at Thurnham Hall in Thurnham, Lancashire (Figure 1).

The project was undertaken in response to a requirement of listed building consent for the renovation of the existing roofs at Thurnham Hall. The requirement was for a Level 2 record (English Heritage) of the roof spaces affected by the proposals.

The fieldwork was conducted between 9/12/08 and 10/12/09.

The archaeological survey was carried out because Jennings Barton Henderson intended to repair the roof and replace some of the timber structure with new oak. No archaeological work had been previously undertaken on the site as far as is presently known.

The site is a manor house that has been divided into timeshare apartments. It had formerly been the manorial home of the Dalton family.

The underlying drift geology consists of Alluvium and Landslip.

The site lies at NGR 3465 4545.

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## **3. Historical Background.**

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A tradition says that three brothers, sons of John Dalton, went to the Crusades in the late 1100's. One them Sir Richard Dalton, killed a Saracen in the Holy Land and was given the crest of the coat of arms which the family carried for their services to King Richard. The description of the shield is: a silver lion Rampant Guardant on an azure shield with five gold crosslets. In the Heraldic language it is: Upon a field azure propre, or crussely, a lion rampant, guardant, argent. The crest is a winged dragon's head purfled, vert, mounted upon a helm, a mantling azure and a wreath azure and or.

Thurnham Hall was the seat of the Dalton's of Thurnham for over four centuries, it having been acquired by that family in 1556. The earlier owners had adopted the name of the property as their own and were known as the de Thurnhams. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century William de Thurnham granted land to the hospital of Cockersands Abbey and thereafter there was always a close connection between the Hall and the Abbey. After the dissolution both came under the same ownership.

The estate passed from the Thurnhams, by descent, through the families of Flemmings, Cancerfield, Harrington, Bonvile and Grey. Thomas Grey the Marquis of Dorset, who had fought at the Battle of Tewkesbury, later took up arms against Richard III having sided with the Earl of Richmond. Thomas Grey was imprisoned on suspicion of High Treason. His estates were forfeited to the Crown. However he was later released and had his properties returned to him.

Dorset's son, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquise, is better known to history as Henry, Duke of Suffolk, the father of Lady Jane Grey. With Suffolk, the Grey family connection with Thurnham ended. In 1553 Suffolk sold the estate to a London grocer, Thomas Lonne. Lonne sold the estate, three years later, to Robert Dalton of Bispam in Lancashire. Robert was the grandson of William Dalton of Bispam and his wife Jane who was the daughter of Sir John Townley, one of the oldest families in the country. Robert married Ann Kitchen and through her the Daltons acquired the sequestered lands of Cockersands Abbey.

Robert Dalton had a son, Thomas, who fought on the side of the King in the Civil War, he also had ten, (some say seven) daughters. All of the daughters were renowned for their piety and for their adherence to the Roman Catholic Faith. (The Daltons being well known recusants in the country). These ladies lived in Aldcliffe and were known as the "Catholic Virgins". Their brother, Thomas suffered from his part in the Civil War. Having raised a troop of horses for his King, he was wounded at the second Battle of Newbury and died within a week at Marlborough. His properties, and those of his sisters, were seized by the Cromwellians, but they were afterwards restored to the family.

The Daltons continued at Thurnham until Robert Dalton, grandson of the original purchaser of the estate, died leaving an heiress Elizabeth Dalton. Elizabeth Dalton married into another ancient and staunchly Roman Catholic family, the de Hoghtons. Her husband was William de Hoghton, one of the de Hoghtons of Hoghton Tower. Thurnham Hall appears on a John Speedes' map of 1610 (Figure 2).

The son of this union, John de Hoghton, took the name of Dalton. Like his forbears he incurred trouble by loyalty to the old faith and to the old Royal Family, for in 1715 he joined the first Jacobite uprising when the Scots arrived in Lancaster. For this he was imprisoned in London and his lands confiscated. After his release he walked back to Lancashire and recovered Thurnham after paying a huge fine.

John Dalton, who died in the year of Queen Victoria's accession, married Mary Gage. She was the daughter of Sir Thomas Rockwood Gage, 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet by his wife, Lucy Knight. The Gage Baronetcy eventually became extinct, but the main line of the family, who became Viscounts, are still extant and live at Firlie Place in Sussex. Thurnham Hall, when inherited by John Dalton, was regarded as a little old fashioned so he replaced the mullioned windows and massive bay with Gothic windows. When he completed it, John Dalton put his coat of arms, and those of his wife (Gage), over the door.

John Dalton's only son, also called John, died without issue and Thurnham passed, on the death of John senior in 1837, to his daughter Elizabeth who lived in the hall until her death. Elizabeth Dalton was one of several sisters, all of whom predeceased her without children. She was a remarkable woman of stern will and great piety- a throwback to those 17<sup>th</sup> century Dalton Ladies, the "Catholic Virgins". Not only did she build the private chapel in the hall, she also paid for much of the present Thurnham Roman Catholic Church in 1848. Until then there had only been a small chapel. In 1837 her father, John Dalton, had left £100 in his will towards a fund for building a new church commensurate with the religious revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sparked off by the Oxford Movement.

Funds were not readily forthcoming and ten years later there was only £1,000 available, so Miss Dalton came to the rescue and offered to pay the balance. The building was completed in 1848 at a cost of £5,000.

The new edifice was aptly dedicated to St. Thomas More and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the Princess who spent her life in penance and self-denial. Both dedications were apt since St. Elizabeth was the namesake of the benefactor of Thurnham Church and St. Thomas More was succeeded by a distant cousin Sir James Fitzgerald.

Looking back to Robert Dalton whose son married Mary Gage and was responsible for the present west façade. Robert married thrice, his third wife being Bridget, daughter of Thomas More of Barborough Hall near Doncaster. Bridget was the heiress and last linear descendant of St Thomas More, thus re-enforcing the strong Catholic traditions of Thurnham. Her daughter, also Bridget, married Sir James Fitzgerald, the 7<sup>th</sup> Baronet of Castle Ishen, County Cork, Ireland. It was their grandson, the 9<sup>th</sup> Baronet, who inherited Thurnham Hall. On doing so he assumed the additional name of Dalton, becoming Sir James Dalton-Fitzgerald and he quartered the arms of Dalton with his own. Unfortunately Sir James only lived for a further six years and he died in 1867 without issue. His brother, Sir Gerald Dalton-Fitzgerald, succeeded to the title and property but he also died childless so the Baronetcy became extinct.

After Elizabeth Dalton's death there was a sale at Thurnham of most of the contents and from thence forward it remained empty, the Fitzgeralds remaining mostly in their Essex estates. The Daltons portraits and heirlooms which were not sold in 1861 were transferred to Essex.

With the passing of the Fitzgeralds, Thurnham came back into the male line of the Dalton's in the person of William Henry Dalton, a second cousin of the last Fitzgerald Baronet, who was descended from Robert Dalton (died 1785) and his third wife Bridget More. William married an American wife and they had two sons and six daughters. The eldest son, John Henry, succeeded to the estate and was followed by his brother, William Augustus Dalton. Both brothers interested themselves in the excavations then being carried out at Cockersands Abbey. The Chapter House of which had for many years served as a burial place for the Daltons. Many of the finds were kept at the hall and the findings were fully published by the Ancient Monuments Society.

With the death of William Augustus Dalton the Daltons died out of the main line of descent. Thurnham Hall slowly deteriorated through the years of lying empty and disused. After the last war, (1939-1945), it looked as if the dilapidated building would suffer the same fate that had befallen so many of the fine old houses in this century. The building was partly burned out in 1959.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Crabtree purchased Thurnham Hall in the early 1970's and then, assisted by their son David, completely renovated the building and brought the Hall back to its imposing former glory and splendour. Thurnham Hall appears on a Victorian (undated) map as well as the 1850 Tithe map and a later (also undated) map (Figures 2 and 3).

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#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

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The project was considered likely to produce results that would be of local archaeological importance.

The main aim of the project was to establish the presence or absence of archaeologically significant, original or in situ timbers in the roof of the building.

The main objectives of the work were to:

- a. produce a record of the existing roofs through annotations of architect's plans and photographs to English Heritage (RCHME) Level 2.
- b. Liaise with Ian Tyres acting on behalf of English Heritage with respect to dendrochronology of the structure.
- c. Produce detailed drawn records at 1:20 scale on drafting film, of any timbers that are either in situ, or can be demonstrated to be original parts of the roof structure, and that will be removed as part of the proposed alteration.
- d. Produce a bound report of the results of the work and produce an OASIS record for the work. This will include phasing and basic research relating to the structure.

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#### **5. Methodology**

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Research was carried out using the following repository: Thurnham Hall website.

The roof structure was to be examined manually and the details compared with the architect's drawings. If there were discrepancies in the drawings, the amended detail would have been annotated to copies of the architect's original drawings.

Photographs were taken of the general layout of the roof structure using digital photography. Detailed photographs were taken to record features including peg holes, mortices, carpenters marks, tool marks and setting out marks.

Had original or in situ timbers that were to be affected by the proposals been present, colour and black and white 35mm film would have been used for photographs.

Timbers that were to be affected by the development, that were demonstrably original or in situ, would have been drawn in detail at 1:20 scale on drafting film.

Ian Tyres acting on behalf of English Heritage visited the site assessing the timbers for potential dating by dendrochronology.



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## 6. Results

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The main roof (Roofs 1 and 2) were in the process of being stripped when the archaeologists arrived on the site to conduct the survey. It was not possible to gain access to the roof immediately as the roofers who were there to strip the roof had not long started work.

Once access was gained to roofs 1 and 2, the structure was examined and the details were compared with the architect's drawings. The roof plan was a full and accurate representation of the structure, requiring no amendment.

Ian Heald (project architect) provided information on site about details of what was to be altered, how it was going to be done and what materials were being used in the repairs and replacement of the structure that was to be removed.

The areas that required repairs and replacement were confined to the western end of Roof 1, and the south-west angle where roofs 1 and 2 converged. The proposed alterations were relatively minor and did not adversely affect the structure or character of the roof.

Timbers that were to be altered or replaced (see Figure 4) included the following;

- 1.) **Softwood rafters along the north face of Roof 1.** The bottom sections of some of these timbers between the lower purlin and the wall plate required cutting out and replacing with new softwood. The timbers to be repaired had been damaged by water that could not escape from the roof gutter, which had been repaired badly at some time in the past (1979?). The specific repairs involved scarf jointing new, treated softwood to the cut ends of the rafters.
- 2.) **Soft wood rafters in the south-west angle of roofs 1 and 2.** These timbers had been recently (probably part of the 1979 renovation of the building) introduced into the roof and were to be replaced entirely. The replacement timbers were to be of a similar soft wood to that being removed.
- 3.) **The valley truss and valley boards of the south-west roof valley.** The valley truss was to be repaired because there was a large split in the timber causing a structural weakness. The alteration involved cutting out the split section and splicing in a piece of new timber, if possible. If this turned out to be impractical, the timber would have to be replaced entirely, the replacement timber would be new oak.

No formal study of the roof had previously been carried out and the date of the roof structure was not known. It was thought that at least part of the roof could be original to the building.

Ian Tyres (acting on behalf of English Heritage) visited the site to assess the potential of the timbers for dating by dendrochronology. The timber used in the construction of the trusses, although original to the roof (as could be demonstrated by the continuous sequence of carpenters assembly marks on the trusses throughout Roof 1 and into Roof 2), was of little value for dating the building as all the timber was re-used, and had originally been part of another, unknown building.

The trusses (Appendix 2, Figures 5-8) were recorded using digital photography and annotations to the architects truss elevation drawings. The trusses, though not good for dating purposes, were of interest for the details that were on them. The features recorded on the trusses included mortices, peg holes, chamfers/stop moulded chamfers, setting out marks (such as squaring marks), finishing depth marks, adzed faces (Truss B) and sequential Roman numerals (assembly marks).

Unusual carpenters marks were identified that related to the original structure's assembly, before they were re-cycled for use as truss timbers (see Appendix 2) for the roof of Thurnham Hall.

Though very interesting in their own right, as none of these timbers were affected by the development no further recording was undertaken.

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## **7. Discussion**

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The re-cycled timbers used in the trusses of the roof at Thurnham Hall are interesting, and possibly worthy of further study. They clearly represent part of a high status building/structure, as demonstrated by the stop chamfers that are present on many of the timbers that were re-used, mainly in the principle rafters of the trusses. Further study of the truss timbers could possibly shed some light on what their original purpose was.

One possibility is that the re-used timbers came from an earlier, possibly timber framed Thurnham Hall?

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## **8. Conclusion**

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In conclusion, none of the demonstrably original or in situ parts of the roof structure will be adversely affected by the proposals, and in fact the repair work being carried out is deliberately sympathetic to the style and materials used throughout the building.

The aims of the project can be said to have been satisfied and the methods used were appropriate in this case.

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## **9. Acknowledgements**

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We would like to thank Ian Tyres for additional observations relating to the timber roof structure and the staff of Thurnham Hall and site contractor.

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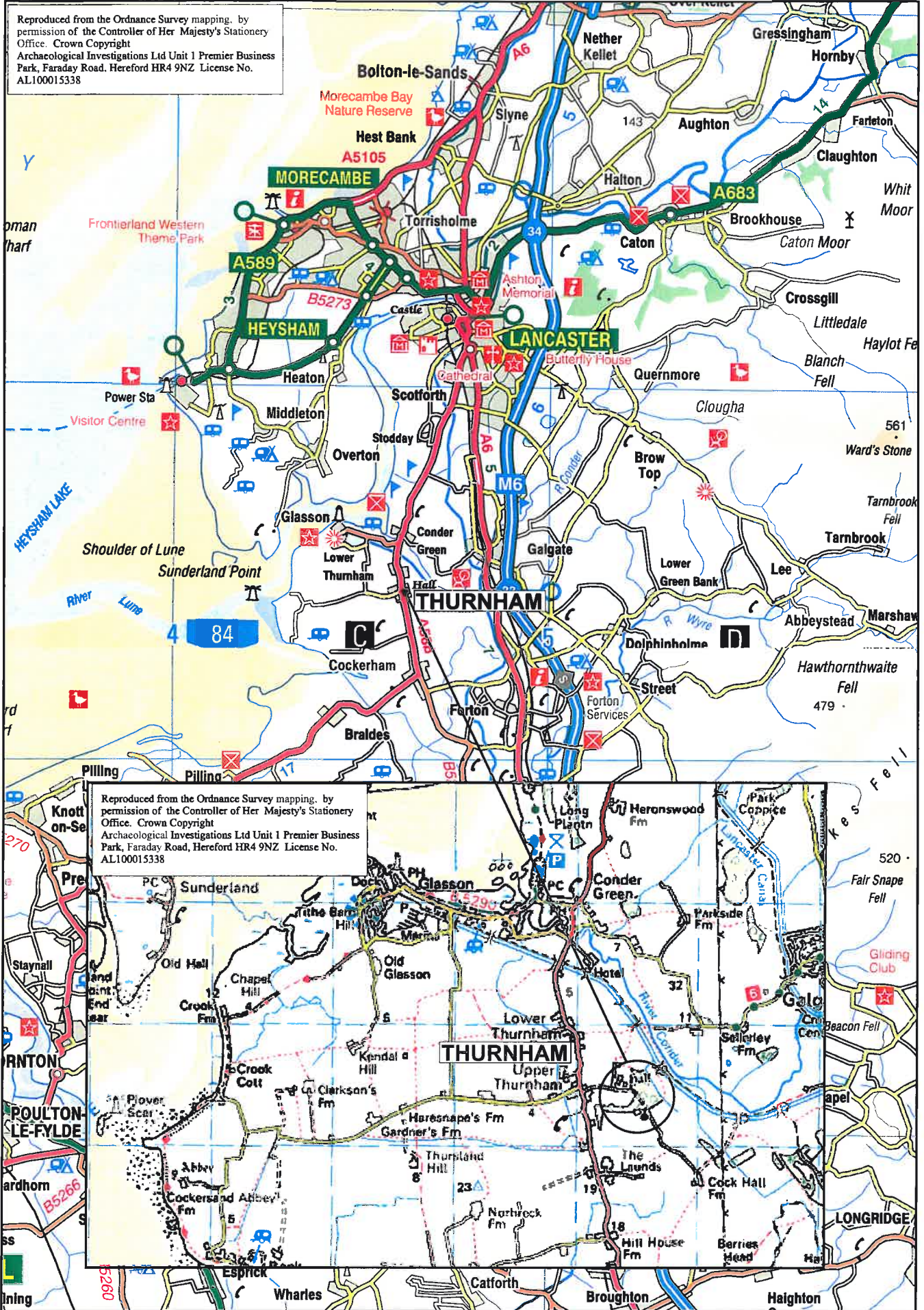
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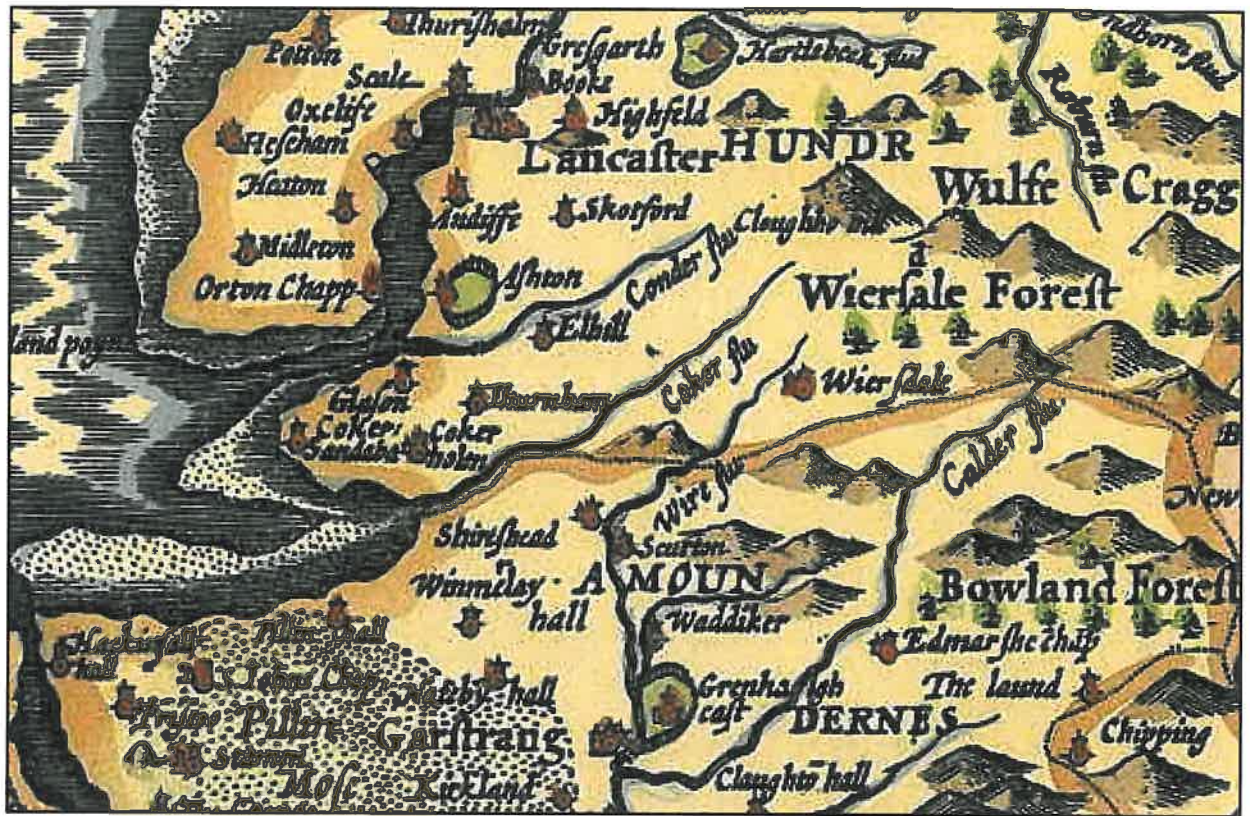
## **Appendix 1. Site archive**

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The site archive includes everything from the roof survey and will be held by Lancaster City Museum.

1. 198 digital photographs
2. Copy of this report
3. 1 correspondence file



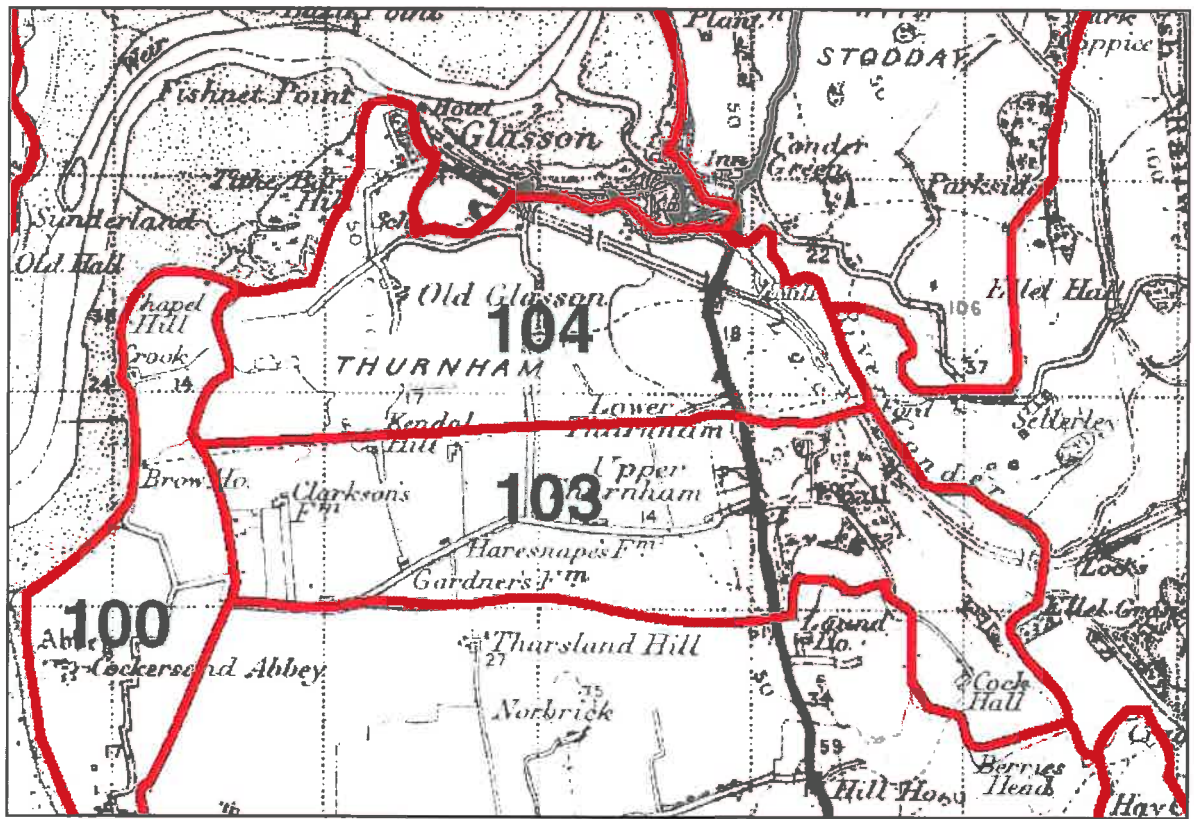


Thurnham on John Speedes 1610 map.

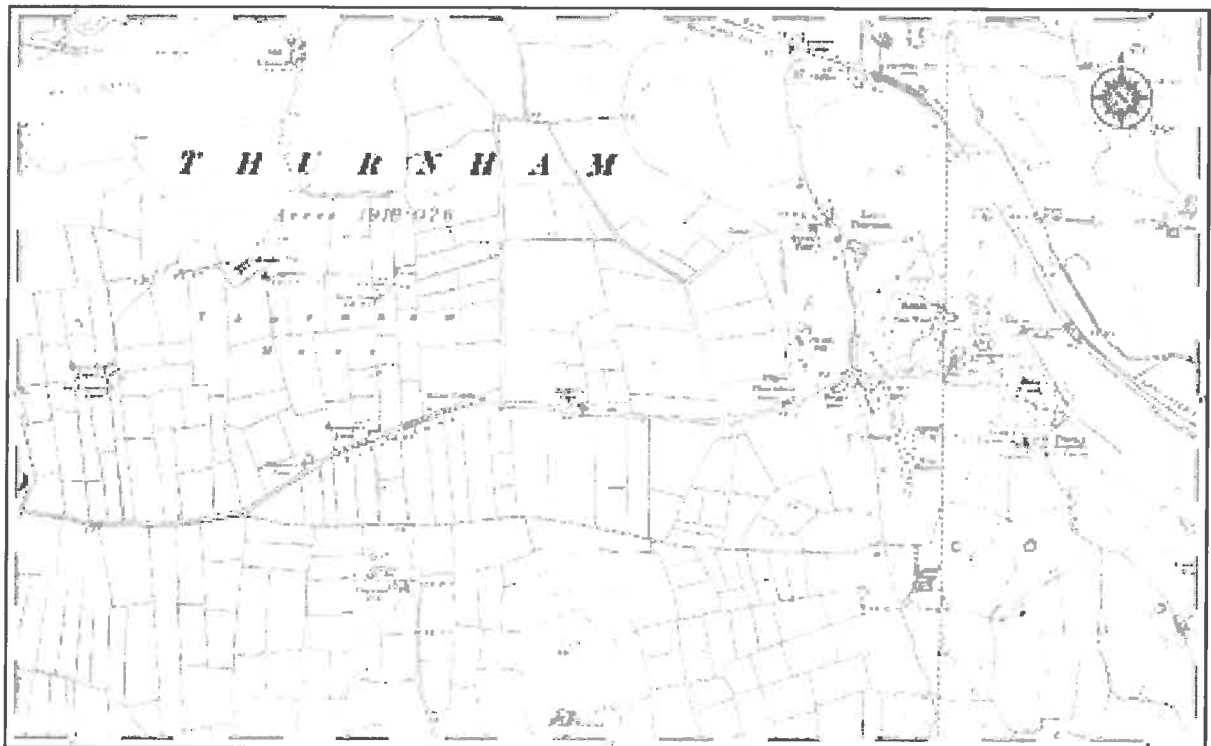


Thurnham Hall on an undated Victorian map.

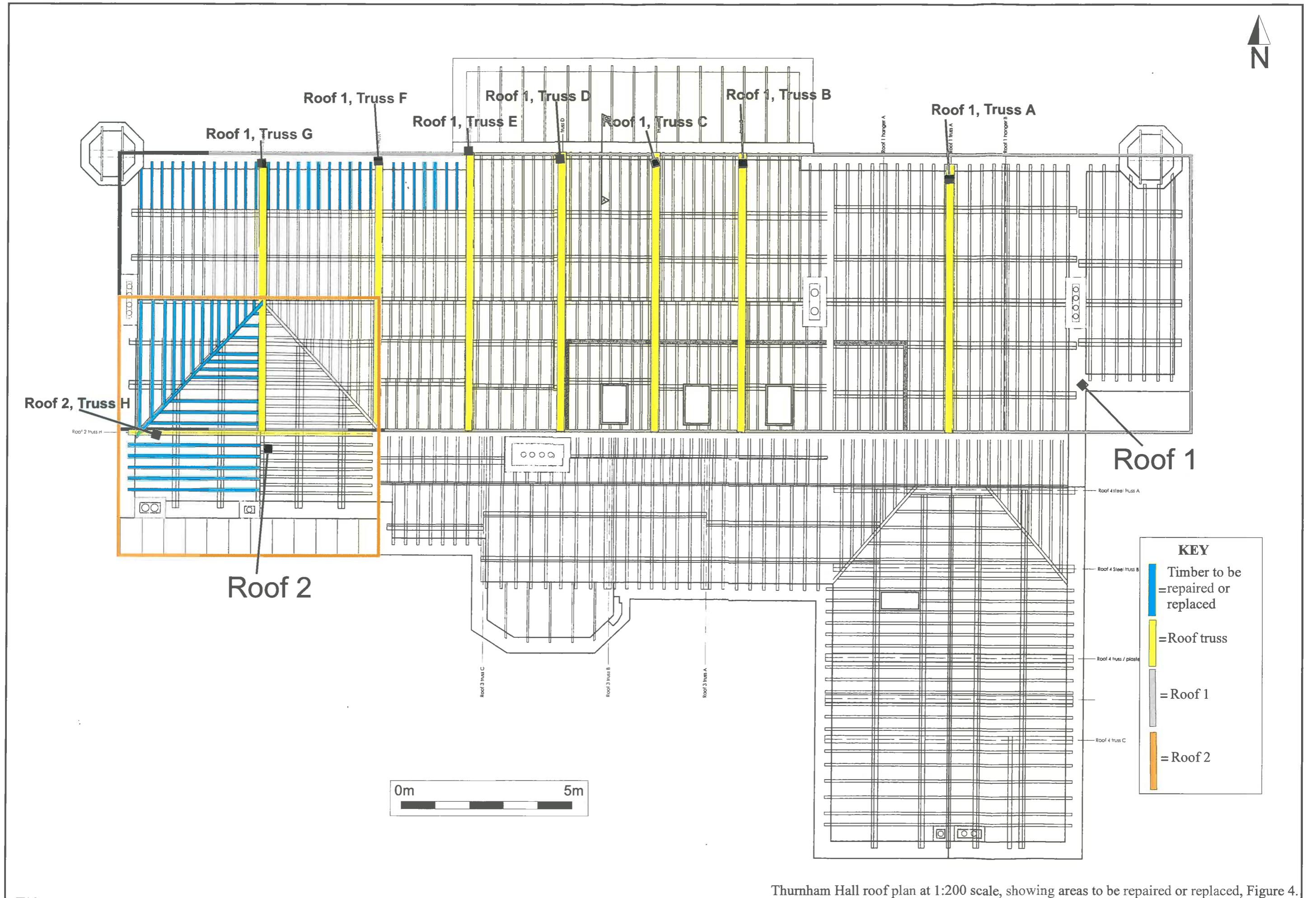
Historical maps showing Thurnham and or Thurnham Hall, Figure 2.



Thurnham and Thurnham Hall on 1850 Tithe map.



Thurnham and Thurnham Hall on an undated map.



Thurnham Hall roof plan at 1:200 scale, showing areas to be repaired or replaced, Figure 4.

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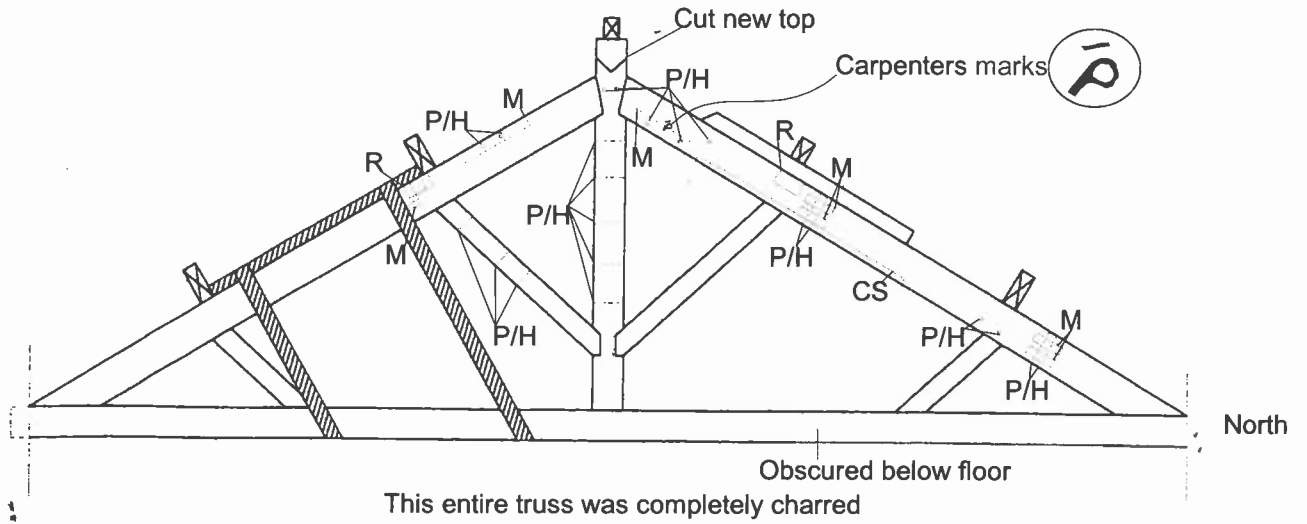
**Appendix 2. Annotated architects truss drawings**

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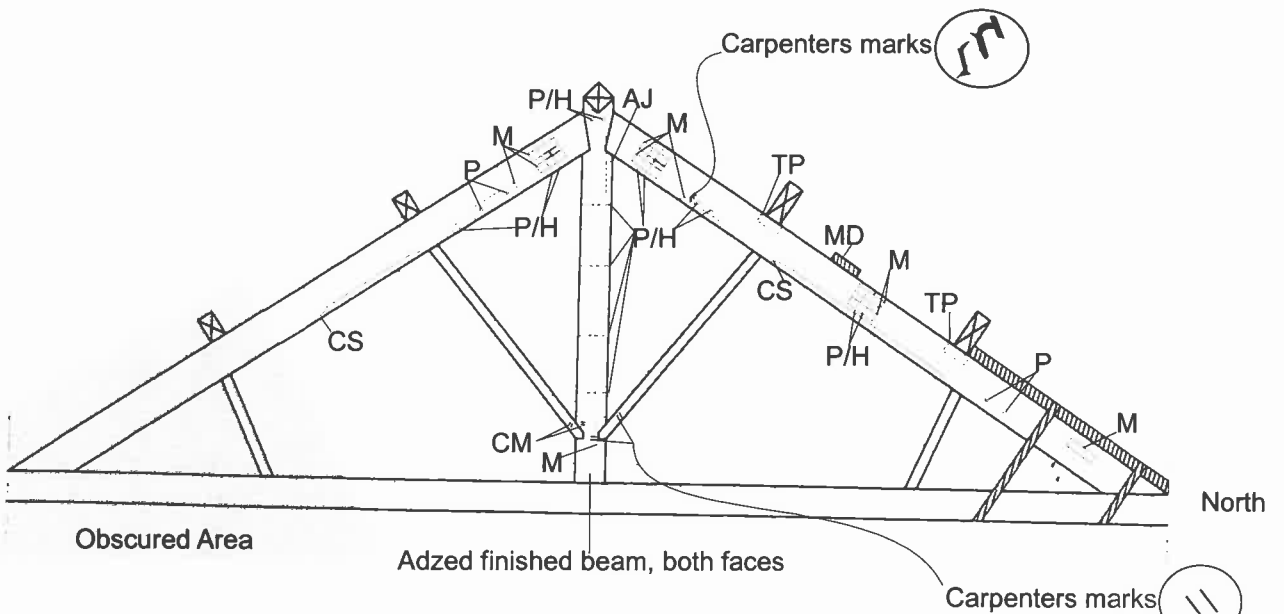


KEY

Angle Joint	AJ
Carpenters Mark	CM
Metal Brace	MB
Mortice	M
Peg Hole	PH
Pegs	P
Rebate	R
Chamfer stop	CS
Trenched purlin	TP
Hidden detail	.....

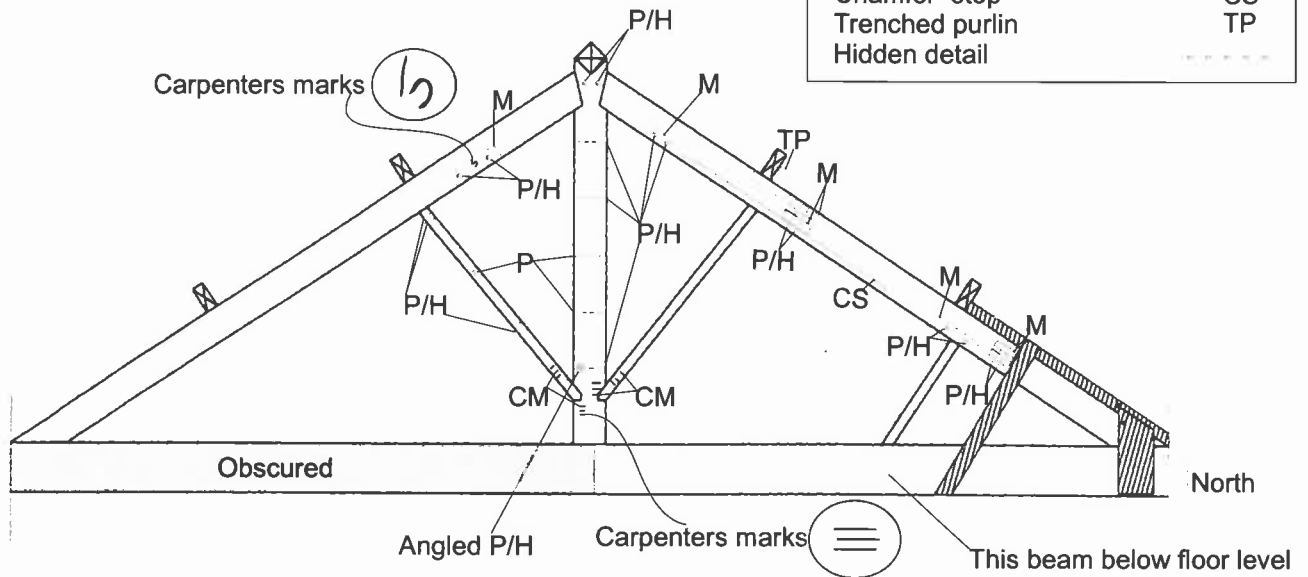


ROOF 1, TRUSS A

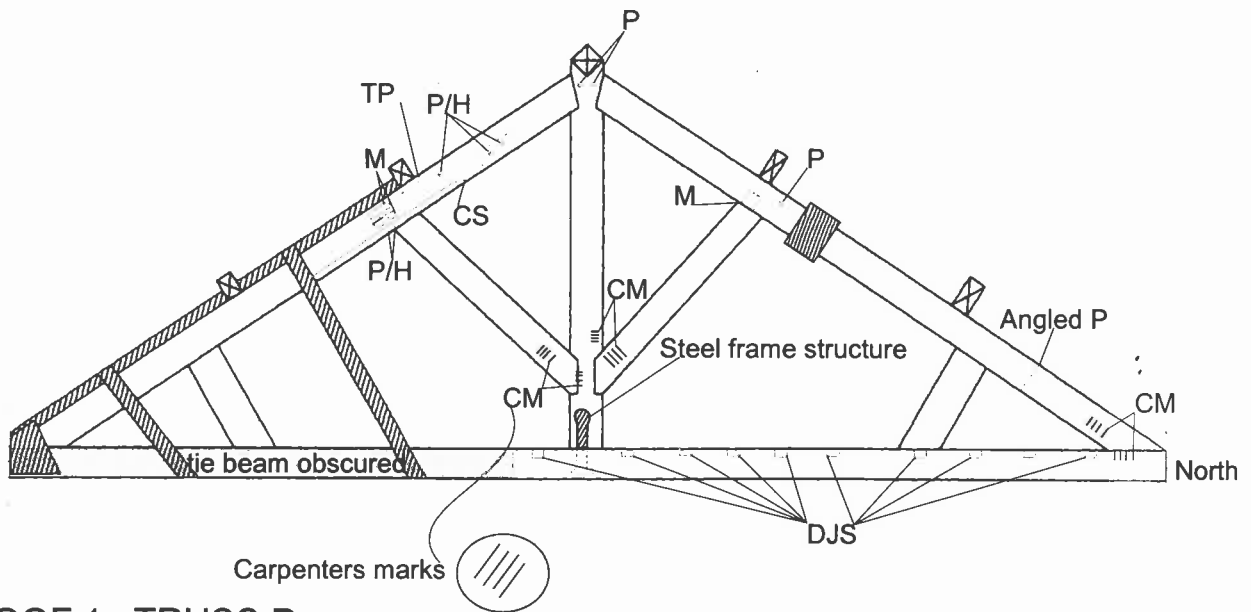


ROOF 1, TRUSS B

KEY	
Angle Joint	AJ
Carpenters Mark	CM
Dovetailed joist sockets	DJS
Metal Brace	MB
Mortice	M
Peg Hole	P/H
Pegs	P
Rebate	R
Chamfer stop	CS
Trenched purlin	TP
Hidden detail	.....

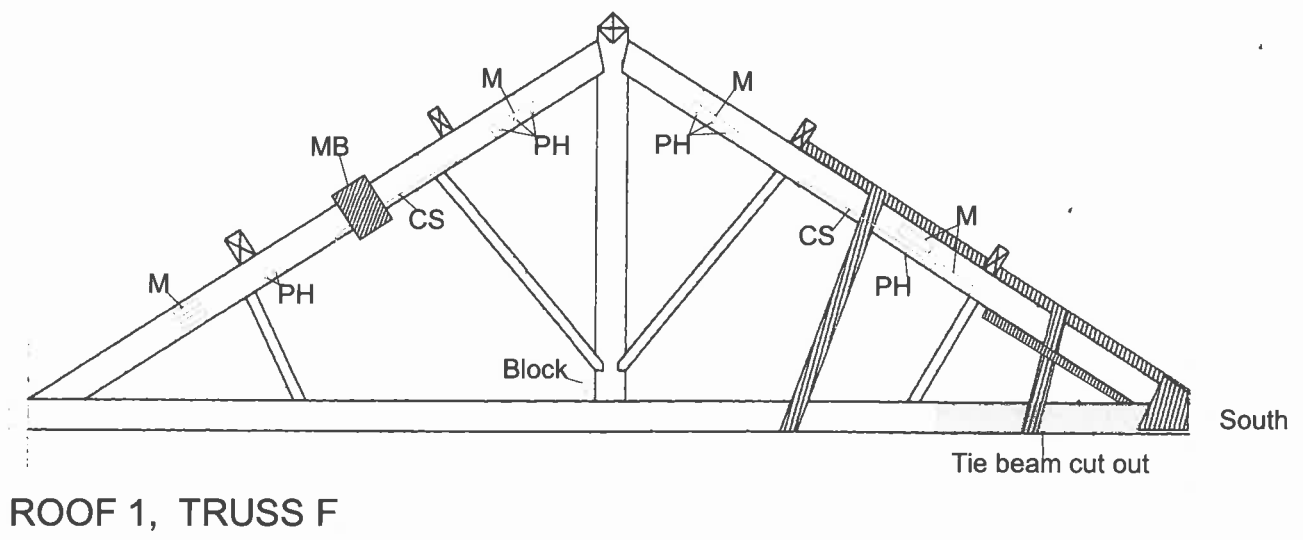
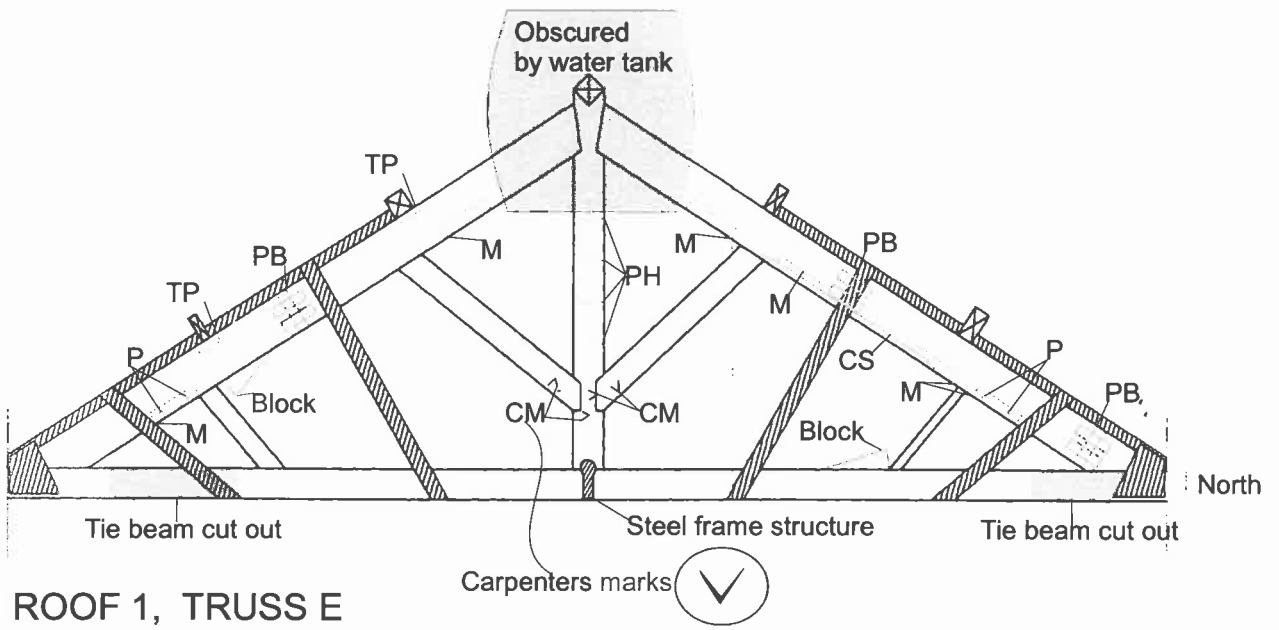


ROOF 1, TRUSS C



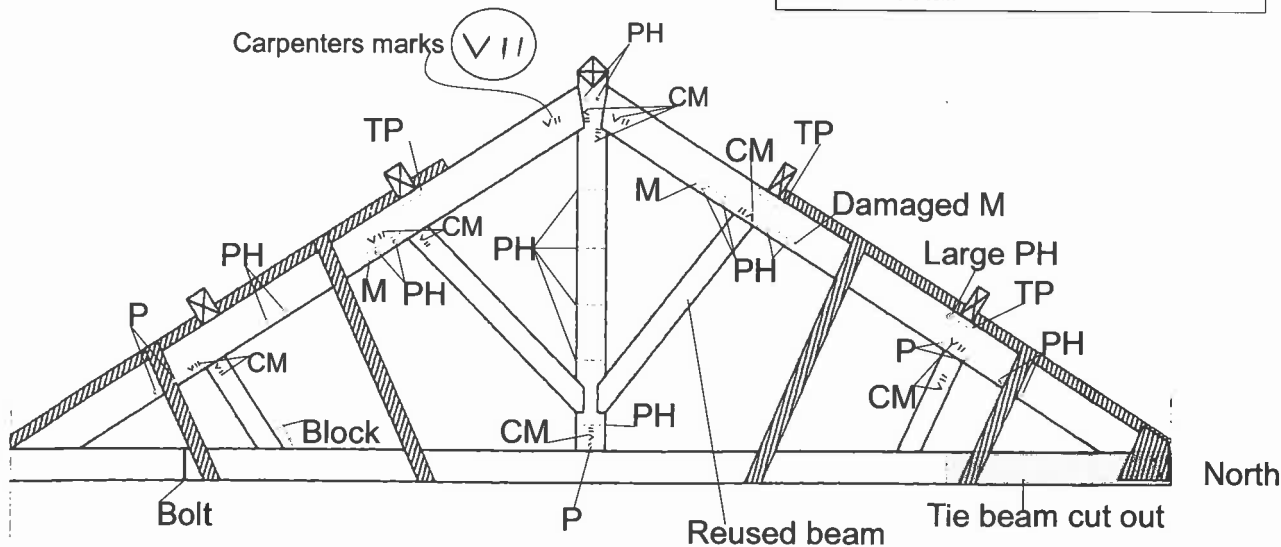
ROOF 1, TRUSS D

KEY	
Angle Joint	AJ
Carpenters Mark	CM
Metal Brace	MB
Mortice	M
Peg Hole	PH
Pegs	P
Rebate	R
Chamfer stop	CS
Trenched purlin	TP
Hidden detail	.....

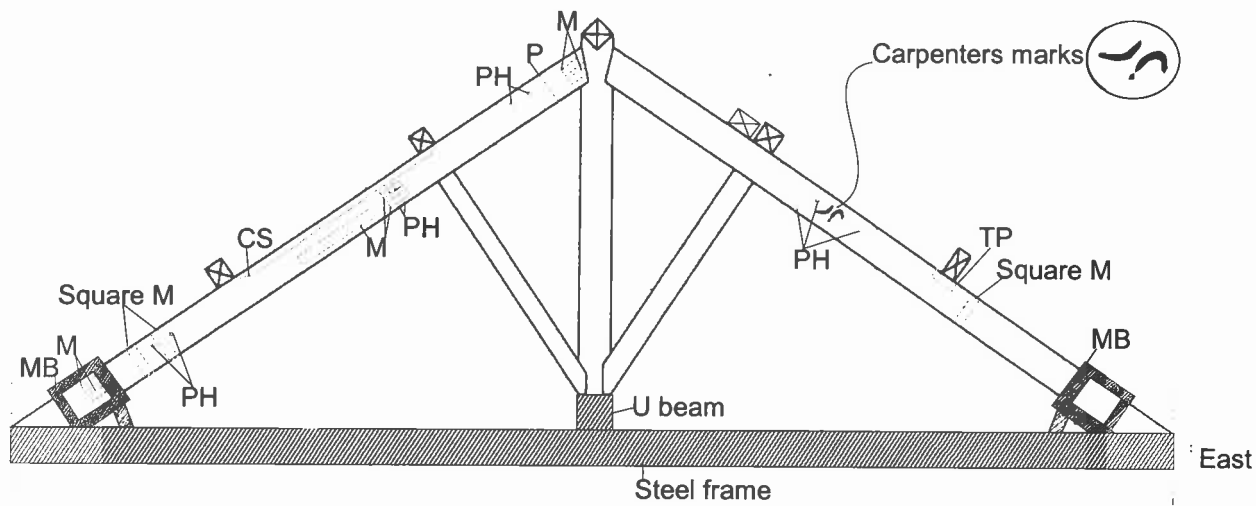


Roof 1, Truss' E and F, Figure 7.

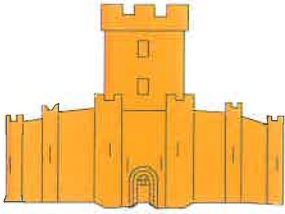
KEY	
Angle Joint	AJ
Carpenters Mark	CM
Metal Brace	MB
Mortice	M
Peg Hole	PH
Pegs	P
Rebate	R
Chamfer stop	CS
Trenched purlin	TP
Hidden detail	.....



ROOF 1, TRUSS G



ROOF 2, TRUSS H



Archaeological Investigations Ltd  
Unit 1, Premiere Business Park  
Westfields Trading Estate  
Faraday Road  
Hereford  
HR4 9NZ  
Tel:01432 364901  
[www.archaeologists.tv](http://www.archaeologists.tv)