

Ambrey Archaeology

Level 2 Historic
Building
Recording of
Furnace Farm
Barns, Shelsley
Walsh,
Worcestershire
WSM 77222

Date 14th May 2021

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Summary

A historic building recording exercise was undertaken by Ambrey Archaeology at Furnace Farm Barns, Shelsley Walsh, Worcestershire (SO 71661 63792). The building recording was required as a condition of planning permission granted by Malvern Hills District Council for the renovation of a disused agricultural barn into a residence. The recording exercise was undertaken in April 2021.

Furnace Farm is located in Teme Valley, about 5km to the north-west of the village of Martley, between Stanford Bridge and Shelsley Walsh. The subject of the building recording was a range of brick barns forming a right angle to the east of a small road. Furnace Farmhouse is located about 15m to the south of the barns.

A tributary of the River Teme (called the 'Furnace Brook' on an early 19th century map) flows about 80m from the barns. It is thought locally that the name of the farm related to an iron smelting furnace located in nearby woods, and there is also a suggestion that it may be related to the proximity of limekilns.

An early 19th century map shows buildings just to the north of where the current barns are located, associated with a smallholding. The same smallholding is called Furnace Farm on the 1839 tithe map. Later map evidence suggests that the current Furnace Farm barns were built between 1839 and 1884 immediately to the north of where previous buildings had stood.

The nature of building construction in the barns is vernacular and local in style and it seems likely that the buildings were constructed by reusing woodwork which may have come from demolished earlier buildings which stood near the site. It is possible that one vestige of an earlier building remains in the centre of the complex. The nature of building construction is vernacular and local in style and slightly ad hoc in nature giving the main element a domestic, house-like appearance.

Contents

Summary.....	1
1. Background.....	4
2. Aims	4
3. Methods	5
4. Context.....	6
4.1 HER Search.....	6
4.2 Site location and topography.....	8
4.3 Historic context	8
5. The buildings	11
5.1 Exterior	14
5.2 Interior.....	16
6. Discussion and phasing	29
7. Sources Consulted	30
7.1 Cartographic sources.....	30
7.2 Aerial photography.....	30
7.3 Bibliography	30
8. Acknowledgements.....	31

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Monuments recorded on the Worcestershire HER within the search area (500m radius from site)

Figure 3: 1803 map of the parish of Stanford (approximate location)

Figure 4: 1813 Ordnance Survey Drawing

Figure 5: 1839 tithe map of the parish of Stanford on Teme (approximate location)

Figure 6: 1884 OS map of Worcestershire

Figure 7: 1904 OS map of Worcestershire

*Figure 8: Site plans showing photo locations**

*Figure 9: Ground floor phased plans**

*Figure 10: First floor phased plans**

*Figure 11: Elevations of the barns**

**(based on Glazzard Architects' drawings no. 1999 2000)*

List of plates

Plate 1 View north-east to Furnace Farm Barns from road

Plate 2 Barns from road with Furnace Farmhouse in foreground

Plate 3 Furnace Farmhouse and barns from south-east

Plate 4 Farm buildings from north

Plate 5 Western elevation of Barn A (1m scale)

Plate 6 Southern gable from south east showing pig sty. Extension to rear also partially visible behind corrugated iron sheds

Plate 7 South-south-east facing elevation of Barn B

Plate 8 Ground floor interior of Barn A

Plate 9 Rear door in Barn A

Plate 10 Wooden stairway in south-west corner Barn A

Plate 11 Lean-to with catslide roof from north-east

Plate 12 Lean-to at rear from south

Plate 13 Curved beam in lean-to shed to rear

Plate 14 Barn C from east

Plate 15 Shelter shed to rear

Plate 16 Central shed in Barn B

Plate 17 King post truss partially obscured by an inserted ceiling, Barn B

Plate 18 King post truss in the western shed in Barn B

Plate 19 Stable door in Barn B

Plate 20 Iron nails on stable door in Barn B

Plate 21 First floor, Barn A. Vernacular king post truss with inserted room or storage space in background

Plate 22 First floor, Barn A. Truss in gable overlooking threshing barn

Plate 23 Inserted floor in threshing barn, Barn A.

1. Background

A historic building recording exercise was carried out at Furnace Farm, Shelsley Walsh, Worcestershire (SO 71661 63792; Figure 1) at the request of Phil Lloyd. Planning permission has been granted by Malvern Hills District Council for the renovation of an existing disused agricultural barn into a residential property (20/00814/GPDQ). Archaeology Advisor to Malvern Hills District Council, Aidan Smyth, requested that a Level 2 historic building recording exercise be undertaken.

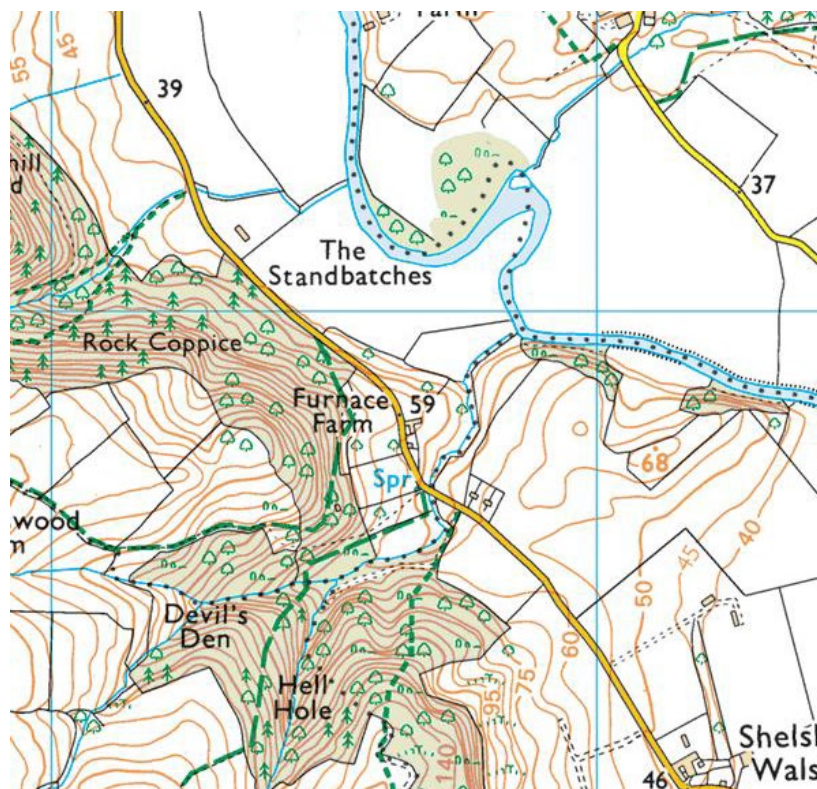


Figure 1 Site location

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2. Aims

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (CIfA 2014, updated 2019).

Historic England's guidance for building recording describes a Level 2 record as a descriptive record in which both the exterior and interior of the buildings will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use. A Level 2 record will typically consist of a drawn record; photography and a written record (HE 2016, 26).

3. Methods

The building recording was carried out by Elizabeth Connolly MA ACIfA.

Prior to fieldwork a Written Scheme of Investigation was submitted (AA 2021) and approved by Aidan Smyth. A search of 500m radius from the proposed development site was made of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (reference WSM77222). The results of the HER search are presented in Figure 2. A limited number of primary sources were consulted at Worcestershire Record Office under Covid 19 restrictions on 6th May.

The field survey was undertaken on 19th April 2021. Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the buildings and analysis of their development and use. All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot where possible. The photographic survey was carried out with a Nikon D3200 digital SLR camera. Annotation of existing ground plans complemented the photographic record. The results are shown in Figures 8 and 9. Photo locations are shown in Figure 7 and elevations in Figure 10.

Provision has been made to upload the digital archive of the project via OASIS (OASIS Id: ambreyar2-501763). The project conformed to the specification for a level 2 survey as defined by Historic England (HE 2016).

4. Context

4.1 HER Search

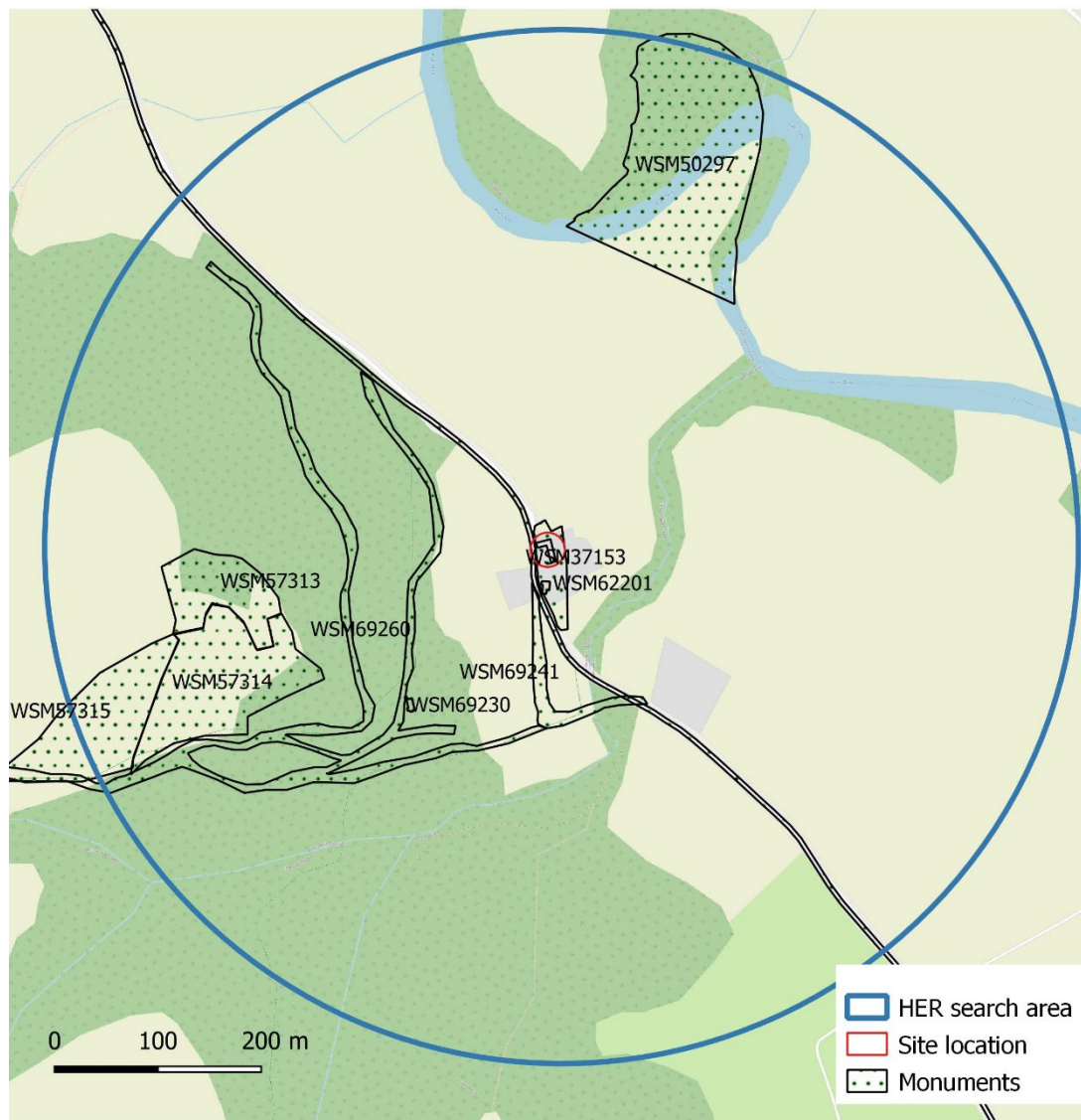


Figure 2 Monuments recorded on the Worcestershire HER within the search area (500m radius from site)

HER No	Record Type	Name	Summary	Mon Type	Period
WSM54551	BLD	Farm Buildings, Furnace Farm, Stanford with Orleton	Furnace Farm, Stanford with Orleton. Extant 19th century (?) unlisted farmstead with unconverted buildings.	FARM BUILDING	19TH CENTURY AD to 21ST CENTURY AD
WSM62201	LND	Furnace Farm, Stanford with Orleton	Furnace Farm, Stanford with Orleton. Extant 19th century (?) unlisted farmstead with unconverted buildings.	FARMSTEAD	19TH CENTURY AD to 21ST CENTURY AD
WSM77230	BLD	Farm House, Furnace Farm, Stanford with Orleton	Furnace Farm, Stanford with Orleton. Extant 17th century brick and timber frame(?) farmhouse	FARMHOUSE	17TH CENTURY AD to 21ST CENTURY AD
WSM69230	BLD	Wren's Nest, Rock Coppice, Stanford with Orleton	Pair of cottages shown on tithe map and historic maps, still on modern map	HOUSE	18TH CENTURY AD to 21ST CENTURY AD
WSM69260	MON	Network of trackways across Rock Coppice, Stanford with Orleton	Trackways visible on LiDAR coverage, hollow way in places, joins with a bridle way beyond Wren's Nest and the old line of the main road (WSM37153)	TRACKWAY; HOLLOW WAY	POST MEDIEVAL to 21ST CENTURY AD
WSM37153	MON	Line of Road from Stanford Bridge to Ham Bridge	Road clearly present by 1839.	ROAD	Unknown
WSM69241	MON	Route of old road, south of Furnace Farm, Stanford with Orleton	Former route taken by road visible on LiDAR coverage and tithe map (1839)	ROAD	16TH CENTURY AD to 19TH CENTURY AD
WSM57313	MON	Possible site of limekiln - Rock Coppice, Stanford with Orleton	Possible site of limekiln as evidenced by field name of "Rough, Lime Kiln and Quarry" on Tithe Map of 1839 for the Parish of Stanford with Orleton	LIME KILN	18TH CENTURY AD to 19TH CENTURY AD
WSM50297	MON	Meander Loop, South of Riverside Farm, Stanford Orleton	Meander loop	ENVIRONMENTAL DEPOSIT	POST MEDIEVAL
WSM57315	MON	Possible site of limekiln - South-west of Rock Coppice, Stanford with Orleton	Possible site of limekiln as evidenced by the field name "Upper Limekiln Bank" on the Tithe Map of 1839 for the Parish of Stanford.	LIME KILN	18TH CENTURY AD to 19TH CENTURY AD
WSM57314	MON	Possible limekiln site - South of Rock Coppice, Stanford with Orleton	Possible site of limekiln as evidenced by the field name "Lower Limekiln Bank" on the Tithe Map of 1839 for the Parish of Stanford.	LIME KILN	18TH CENTURY AD to 19TH CENTURY AD

Table 1: Details of monuments recorded on the Worcestershire HER within the search area (500m radius from site)

4.2 Site location and topography

Furnace Farm is located in the valley of the River Teme, about 5km to the north-west of the village of Martley, to the east of an unnamed road which connects the hamlets of Stanford Bridge and Shelsley Walsh.

The wider area of the Teme Valley forms the National Landscape Character Area No. 102.

Described as having ‘*a tranquil, rural character*’, the area, ‘*has retained much of its historical built character in dispersed settlements, small villages and traditional building*’. The Teme Valley ‘*is a mosaic of mixed agriculture, cultivated in places but less improved on the steeper slopes. Higher densities of small-scale farmsteads and smallholdings [...] are associated with areas of enclosed common and woodland. Woodlands characterise the steep valley sides*’ (Natural England 2014).

The subject of the building recording is a range of brick barns which stand at right angles to each other to the east of the road on the side of a steep hill the downslope of which continues south-east beyond the farm yard to a brook (called the Furnace Brook on 19th century maps) which is a tributary of the Teme. Modern barns constructed of corrugated iron stand to the rear of the farmyard (the modern barns were not recorded in detail as part of the survey). Furnace Farmhouse (which does not form part of the proposed development) is located about 15m to the south of the barns which were recorded. To the west, the site is overlooked by a steep forested hill and the landscape opens out to the east with good views to the rear of the barns.

Bedrock at the site is Raglan mudstone, which comprises siltstone and mudstone interbedded, with superficial alluvial deposits to the north (BGS 2021).

4.3 Historic context

The earliest known map of the site is the parish map of 1803 (Figure 3). Three buildings are arranged along the roadside approximately to the south of the location of the current buildings. A rectangular building is shown to the north along a field boundary. A cross-shaped building stands in the centre and a squareish building to the south in roughly the same area as the current farmhouse. The field to the north-east of the farmyard is called ?Bean ground. Small fields are depicted on the opposite side of the road identified as ‘Non Pariel’, ‘Hopyard’, ‘Arable’, ‘Wheat’, and ‘Croft’. The waterway which runs to the

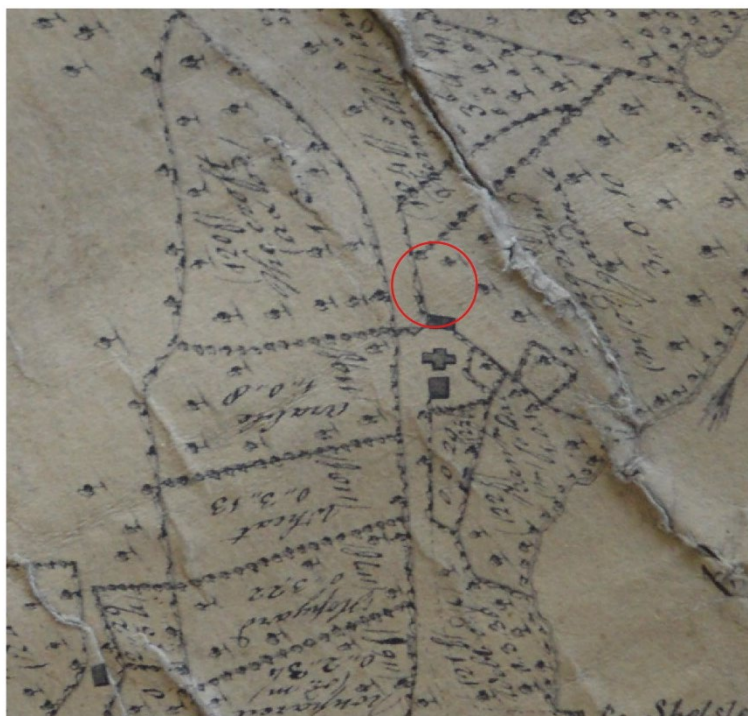


Figure 3: 1803 map of the parish of Stanford

east of the farm is indicated as the Furnace Brook. Small fields to the south east of the farm, are indicated as 'Webb' and 'Bank'. The line of the old road (WSM69241) is evident leading towards Shelsley Walsh.

Three buildings are shown in the vicinity of the site on the OS Drawing of 1813 (Figure 4).



Figure 4: 1813 Ordnance Survey Drawing

It has been suggested that the 'Furnace' in Furnace Farm may refer to limekilns that stood on or close to the current farm (HA 2019). However, it is thought locally that iron was smelted in the woods above the farm to the west (Phil Lloyd 2021 *pers comm*). Slag found at the bottom of the slope about 230m to the north-east of the site, in the course of a volunteer run excavation, was considered by specialists to be imported (HW 2019).

A network of trackways associated with quarries and limekilns are shown on the 1839 tithe map to the west of the site, in the woodlands on the hill (WSM69260) with a limekiln about 500m to the west of the site (WSM57315).



On the 1839 tithe map (Figure 5) some of the fields across the road have been amalgamated and are referred to as orchards and the layout of the buildings may also have changed with a building possibly being added in the centre.

The farmhouse and land referred to is all stated in the tithe apportionment to be occupied by Mrs Linia Bray. In the 1841 census Lenia Bray, aged 50, and her children Celia and Edward Bray aged 17 and 14 are listed as the occupiers, the owner is Sir Thomas Winnington.

Figure 5: 1839 tithe map of the parish of Stanford on Teme (approximate location)

In the 1851 census a fruitier (George ?Merrels) may be listed as the occupier of Furnace Farm, but it is not clear whether he is the occupier of Furnace Farm or one of the nearby Furnace Cottages.

In 1861 William Smith appears to be listed as the occupier and as a farmer of 20 acres, with his wife Jane, three sons and two servants, a house servant and a carter. One of his sons, William is aged 5 in this census. Twenty years later, on the 1881 census, 25 year old William Smith is the head of the household, with his step mother Anne, a widow and a single servant.

By the OS first edition of 1884 (Figure 6) the current layout of the barns is depicted, the barns in an L-shape in what had previously been the plot to the north of the farmyard. The road layout has changed slightly. The farmhouse is indicated at its current location, which is slightly offset

from its location on earlier maps.

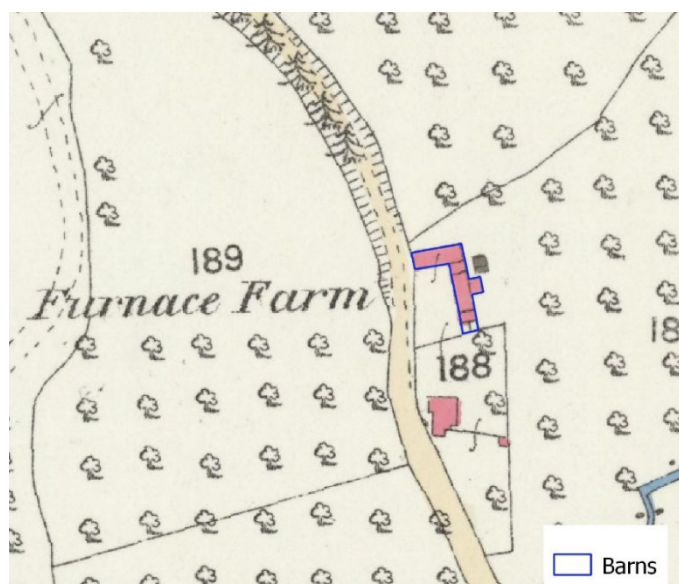


Figure 6: 1884 OS map of Worcestershire

In 1901 Emma Breakwell is the head of the household, living there with her son, daughter and a grandson. She is still the head of the household in 1911, with her son Edward, now 34 working on the farm. There are no changes evident on the 1904 OS map (Figure 7). Until recently the property remained part of the Brockhill Estate, in the ownership of the Winnington family.

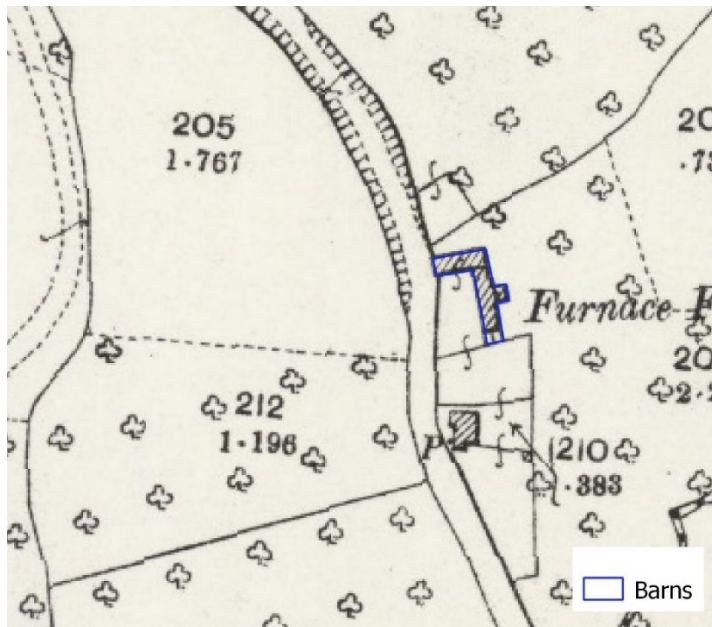


Figure 7: 1904 OS map of Worcestershire

5. The buildings

The HER entry for the site is as follows: 'Furnace Farm (WSM54551) is an extant 19th century (?) unlisted farmstead with unconverted buildings. The farm buildings are arranged in a regular courtyard of L-plan. The farmhouse is detached and set away from the yard.'

The farm is isolated with large modern sheds to the rear.'

The Furnace Farm barns comprise brick buildings roofed with ceramic tiles, named in this report as Barn A, Barn B and Barn C (Figures 8 and 9, Plates 1 - 4).

Barn A, the largest barn, is a four-bay, two-storey building oriented north-north-west by south-south-east. The building has several subdivisions and two additions, one with a catslide roof, as well as a shed with full height opposing doors in disrepair at the northern end.

Barn B is a single storey building divided into three sheds. That to the east probably functioned as a shelter shed leading to an orchard and the other two sheds to the west may have been stables or housed stock.

Barn C connects Barns A and B and has a wider opening in the west elevation, suggesting that it may have housed carts or farm machinery on the ground floor with a loft over, possibly for hay. The roofline on this building is in a different orientation to Barn B and is lower than that of Barn A.

The brickwork is mostly the same throughout the buildings, comprising red bricks of various hues but of uniform size laid in a stretcher bond interspersed with stretchers and headers every fourth row.

None of the woodwork of the windows appears to be original throughout the buildings.



Plate 1: View north-east to Furnace Farm Barns from road



Plate 2: Barns from road with Furnace Farmhouse in foreground



Plate 3: Furnace Farmhouse and barns from south-east



Plate 4: Farm buildings from north

5.1 Exterior

The west-facing elevation of Barn A (Plate 5) contains four windows, two on the ground floor and two on the first floor with a door centred between them. The windows and door have segmental arches each of a of single row of brick headers.

The arrangement of windows and door in the front elevation gives the impression of a domestic building and would be symmetrical within the building were it not for the full height opposing doors on the left-hand side of the elevation.

The ground floor window frames contain reused wooden casement windows of varying styles and the upper storey windows are casements with metal frames which have been inserted into wooden frames.

A window in the southern gable is partially blocked with plywood. The rear exterior of the building was mostly obscured by later corrugated sheds.

A single storey lean-to built to the south-south-eastern gable of the larger barn probably functioned as a pigsty (Plate 6). This building was not closely investigated as it was considered unsafe to enter.



Plate 5: Western elevation of Barn A (1m scale)



Plate 6: Southern gable from south east showing pig sty. Extension to rear also partially visible behind corrugated iron sheds

Barn B (Plate 7) is a single storey building at a right angle with a gable facing the road. There are three doorways and two windows in the southern elevation none of which have arches over. The doorways are filled with wooden plank doors one of which is a stable-type door.

Barn C joins Barns A and C (Plate 1).



Plate 7: South-south-east facing elevation of Barn B

5.2 Interior

Ground floor

The ground floor interior of Barn A has been used recently possibly for housing birds (Plate 8). There are cages or enclosures walled with chicken wire in the northern half of room No 1. The floor is partially earthen with cobbles and some bricks close to the rear door.



Plate 8: Ground floor interior of Barn A

Two substantial carved beams run east-west on which sit what appear to be modern machined joists and floorboards of the first floor.



Plate 9: Rear door in Barn A

The doorway to the rear has a segmental arch with a wooden lintel inserted beneath (Plate 9). It is filled with a wooden plank door with what may be blacksmith forged ironwork (similar to that in other doors in the buildings, see plate 19).

A modern wooden stairway in the south western corner accesses the first floor.



Plate 10: Wooden stairway in south-west corner Barn A

The brick-built shed at the rear of Barn A (Plates 11 and 12) has a catslide roof held up by a truss (Plate 12), with a tie beam of a curved length of wood used in a vernacular style similar to woodwork on the first floor.



The brickwork of the southern wall of the lean-to is not tied in with that of the main building suggesting that the building may be later. A large doorway with a wooden lintel has been partially narrowed with wooden planks.

Plate 11: Lean-to with cat slide roof from north-east



Plate 12: Lean-to at rear from south



Plate 13: Curved beam in lean-to shed to rear

The rear wall of Barn A is currently partially obscured by the corrugated iron sheds built against it. The interior of the threshing barn was inaccessible. Internally a first floor has been inserted. It is likely that this shed would have had other functions in addition to threshing, given the size of the smallholding. The barn is smaller and less well-ventilated than a threshing barn would be expected to be.

Barn C has a plain interior with a brick floor (Plate 14). The doorway to the front elevation was originally wide suggesting perhaps that this functioned as a cart shed. The ceiling joists are rough-hewn.



Plate 14: Barn C, ground floor, from

The shed to the north-east in Barn B is open to the rear and may have functioned as a shelter (Plate 15). Until recently it has housed sheep.

A roof truss between the shed and Barn C, is similar in form to that which may have been reused in the southern gable of the threshing barn. There is a boarded wall behind the truss with a brick wall beneath in Barn C.

A machined kingpost truss holds up the roof in the shelter shed.



Plate 15: Shelter shed to rear

The western part of Barn B is divided into two sheds. The most western of these is accessed by two doors to the front, and by a door in the east wall which links to the eastern shed. Both have brick floors on two different levels and the concrete base of a probable animal feeder runs along the north wall of the east shed and the remnants of a wooden partition remain here as well (Plate 16). The roof trusses in both sheds are also machined, and an inserted ceiling obscures some of the roof truss (Plates 17 and 18). These may have originally been used for stabling or housing stock. A stable door in the eastern of the two sheds displays ironwork which may have been locally forged rather than mass produced (Plates 19 and 20).



*Plate 16:
Central shed in
Barn B*



Plate 17: King post truss partially obscured by an inserted ceiling, Barn B



Plate 18: King post truss in the western shed in Barn B



Plate 19: Stable door in Barn B



Plate 20: Iron nails on stable door in Barn B

Barn A - First Floor

The first floor is accessed by the stairway in the south west corner of the main shed in Barn A.

Plaster survives in places on the brick walls and the interior slope of the roof has been lined with heavy paper lining sheets. An inserted storage space in the southern corner is formed by brick walls about 1.1m high upon which a wooden floor sits, with a lathe and plaster wall over, supplemented by recent boarding with chipboard/ply.

The roof is supported by a king post truss with additional struts supporting the main rafters beneath the purlins (Plate 21). The tie beam is carved from a long, curved piece of wood, similar to the beam in the ground floor rear extension.

The roof truss in the north gable towards the threshing bay is of a different structure to the king post truss, and may be reused (Plate 22). In addition to three central struts, two diagonal struts which connect the tie-beam to the principal rafters are slightly offset from the purlins. A wall of horizontal boards completes the height of the gable from the brick wall to the apex of the truss.



Plate 21: First floor, Barn A. Vernacular king post truss with inserted room or storage space in background



Plate 22: First floor, Barn A. Truss in gable overlooking threshing barn

An inserted floor at first floor level in the threshing barn, is boarded out with old doors and ply and was not considered safe to walk on (Plate 23). Roughly shaped beams act as lintels over both opposing doorways, and at about this height a narrow wooden lintel runs along the width of the

gable to the north, which forms the southern wall of the loft of Barn C. The bonding on the brickwork of this gable is generally more random than elsewhere in the building.



Plate 23: Inserted floor in threshing barn, Barn A.

The loft in Barn C was not considered safe to enter but a photograph was taken through a small door or window in the southern brick gable (Plate 24). Roofing batons are visible through the common rafters. Currently used for storage of old tyres, its original function may have been for storage of hay or animal feed. The apex of the northern gable of this shed is a wall of wooden planks with an offset window within it. This sits on a brick wall of similar construction to the majority of the walls in the barn complex.



Plate 24: Loft, Barn C.

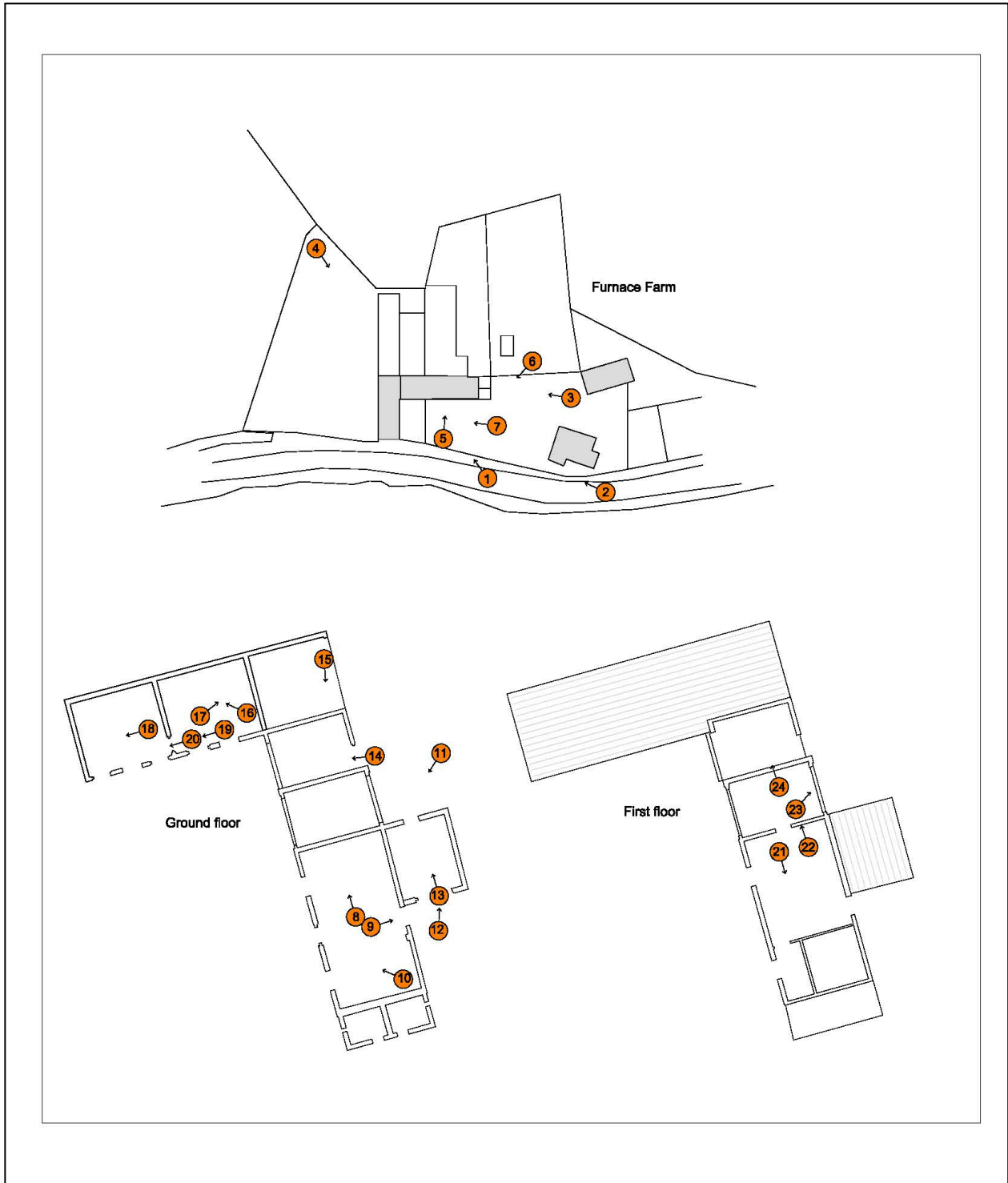


Figure 8: Site plans showing photo locations

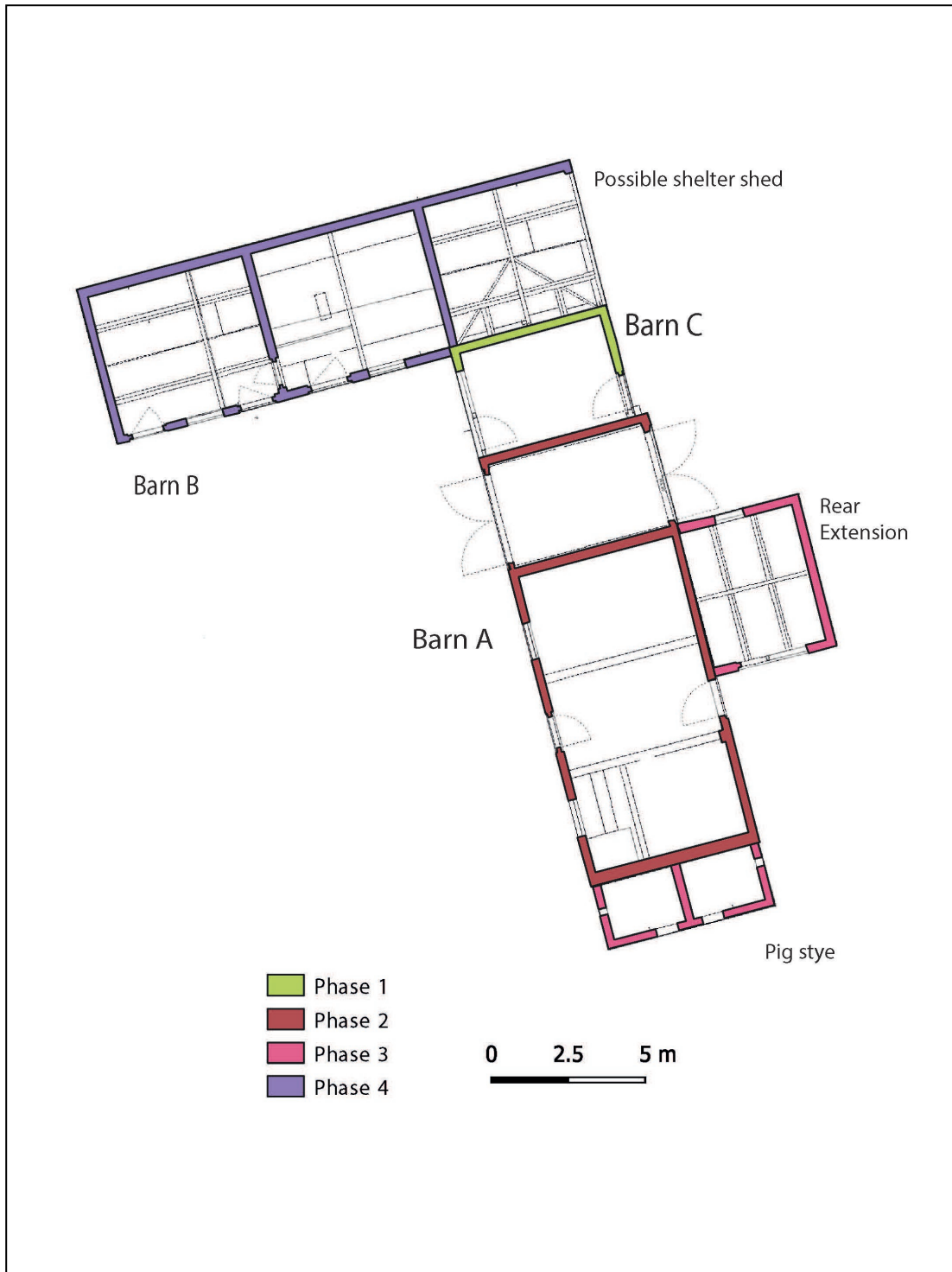


Figure 9: Ground floor phased plans

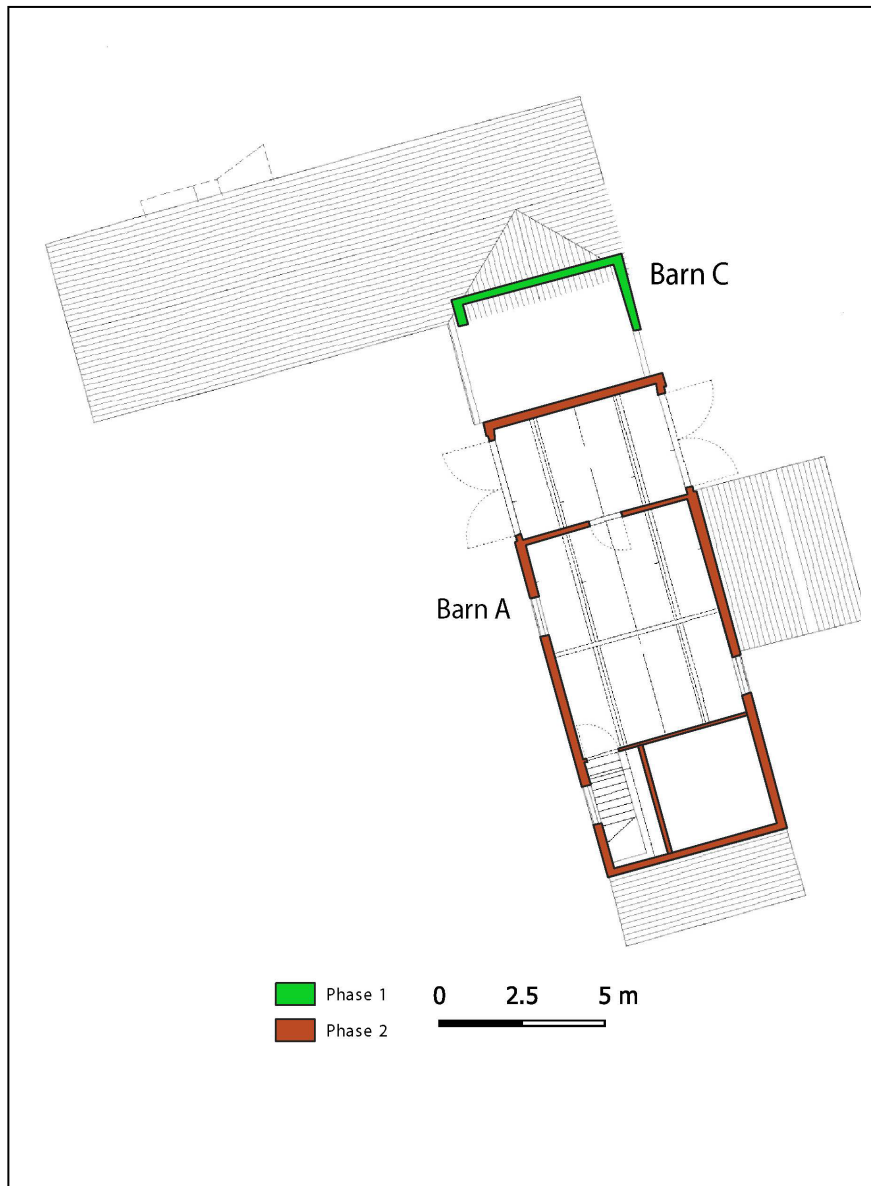
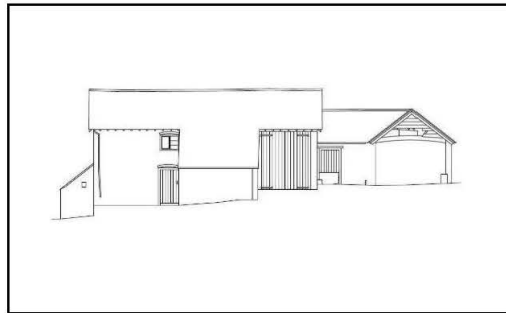


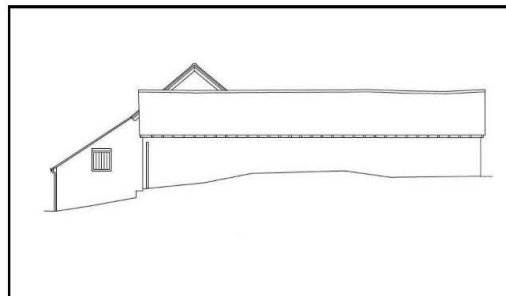
Figure 10: First floor phased plans



South-west elevation



North-east elevation



North-west elevation



South-west elevation

Figure 11: Elevations of the barns

6. Discussion and phasing

Cartographic evidence suggests that the Furnace Farm barns were built between 1839 and 1884 immediately to the north of where previous buildings, depicted on the 1803 and 1839 maps, had stood. It is probable that the building phases followed rapidly from each other and therefore no dates given for the phases themselves.

The road layout and the layout of the buildings shown on the 1803 map, 1813 map and the 1839 tithe map had changed by 1884. The location and plan of Furnace Farmhouse on these maps appears to differ from the depiction on later maps, but timber frame elements of the farmhouse itself are likely to have been extant by 1839, as timber was largely replaced as a building material by brick and old red sandstone by the mid to late 18th century in the Teme Valley (HE 2020).

The outlines depicted on the tithe map do not correlate with the extant buildings but it is considered likely that vestiges of an earlier building (Barn C, Phase 1) have survived within them. The truss visible within the gable between Barn C and the shelter shed to its north is of an early 19th century type (Lake 1989, 52) and does not appear to be reused in this location, which suggests that an extant building may have been modified and added to at this point.

A similar truss appears to have been reused within Barn A. The large vernacular trusses as well as substantial beams also evident in Barn A suggest that earlier woodwork was reused within the building. Some of the structural woodwork in Barn A is substantial in size and indicates bespoke carpentry, which may have been carried out on site, with the elements reused from timber-framed buildings which were demolished soon after 1839. This is likely to have been the earliest building built following reordering of the farmyard after 1839 and is assigned Phase 2 for this reason. The walls of the large space on the first floor were plastered and the internal roof was papered giving this the appearance of a domestic room. This may have been used as farmworkers accommodation during the summer. The function of the inserted room in the corner is unknown but may have been for cold storage.

The nature of building construction is vernacular and local in style and slightly ad hoc in nature. Barn A has a domestic, house-like appearance. There are examples locally of farm buildings which share some of these characteristics, such as Lower Berrington near Tenbury Wells. The buildings may be the work of a local builder or built in a local style.

The outshot to the rear is supported by a truss incorporating a large vernacular curved beam strikingly similar to one used upstairs. However, the brickwork in this building is not tied into that of the main barn to the west, suggesting that it was a later addition (Phase 3), and that the cat slide roof was added when the extension was constructed.

Buildings such as stock shelters and pig styes are generally thought to have been added to farmyards in the later 19th century (Lake 1989). The roof trusses of Barn B are mass-produced unlike the other roof supports throughout the remainder of the barns. The style of building is more utilitarian, with fewer decorative elements and is thought to be later than other elements (Phase 4).

Medium to small scale loose courtyard farmstead plans are very common in the Teme Valley usually with working buildings flanking one to three sides of the yard, with L- and U-shaped plans often the result of the linking of earlier buildings to enclose two or more sides of a yard (HE 2020).

The purposes of the various buildings are difficult to ascertain as little survives in the way of mangers or harness fixings on the walls. The ground floor Barn A retains some brickwork and cobbling. Bricks

on the floor of Barn B suggest that this building was used for housing livestock or for dairying. The possible shelter shed to the rear as shown on the 1884 and 1904 maps would have led out to orchard, which suggests that it may have been used for housing sheep or storage of fruit.

When the site was surveyed in 1803 the names of small fields across the road were shown to be associated with Furnace Farm in 1839 although some of the fields were amalgamated by this time. Census evidence indicates that Furnace Farm remained a smallholding of about 20 acres at least to the middle of the 19th century. The general outline in plan of the fields of this croft to the west of the road is still evident on modern satellite mapping.

Furnace Farm was a smallholding and it is likely that the farmers during the 19th century may have kept a small number of cows, (for dairy or beef), sheep, pigs and horses as well as growing crops. The barns would have had multiple uses or functions and during the 20th century were much extended with more temporary structures in order to increase productivity.

7. Sources Consulted

19th and 20th century census records for the parish of Stanford on Teme were consulted on Ancestry.com in May 2021.

7.1 Cartographic sources

1803 Plan of the parish of Stanford (WRO S899:57/709/12)

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7.2 Aerial photography

1945 aerial photograph layer on Google Earth Pro

7.3 Bibliography

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