

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND
WATCHING BRIEF AT
EAST DENSHAM FARM,
EAST WOOLFARDISWORTHY, DEVON**

prepared for Mr. M. Tucker

**by
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1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

This report has been commissioned by Mr and Mrs M. Tucker and presents the results of a programme of historical building recording and watching brief undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) at East Densham Farm, East Woolfardisworthy, Devon (SS 82077 10934; Fig. 1). The recording was undertaken on two of the buildings at the farm, the late medieval farmhouse and an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century linhay and shippon. The work was required by conditions attached to the grant of listed building consent granted by Mid Devon District Council (nos 08/01667/LBC and 07/02094/LBC respectively), as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES).

In February 2008 EA was asked by Edward Holden, chartered architect, to investigate the requirements for archaeological recording on the farm buildings (EA project number 6241). Management of the project subsequently passed to Dunn Marino Associates and initial recording was undertaken in the spring and summer of 2008 on the linhay and shippon (EA project number 6459). In August 2008 an historic building evaluation of the farmhouse was prepared (Passmore 2008; EA project number 6829), with subsequent recording of the farmhouse taking place during the spring and summer of 2009 (EA project number 6829).

2. THE SITE (Fig. 2)

East Densham Farm lies in the parish of East Woolfardisworthy (SS 82077 10934), in a remote location less than a mile to the north-west of the parish church. The farm buildings are approached by a long private driveway from Tridley Foot Cross, near Black Dog, and lie on a south-east-facing hillside above the confluence of two streams. The buildings include a large historic farmhouse, which is medieval in origin and retains a very fine arch-braced roof. The farmhouse is a grade II listed building, but underwent extensive alterations in the 1940s and in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which included replacement of the windows and extensive alterations to the roofs (Listed Building description). Most of the internal fixtures and fittings date to the latter period.

At the rear of the farmhouse is a farm building, identified as a poundhouse, which also has early origins. To the south-west of the farmhouse are a group of farm buildings surrounding a small yard. These include a linhay and shippon, stables and a threshing barn. These farm buildings, are now superseded by modern agricultural buildings lying to the west and north of the site, and are no longer required for agricultural use (Fig. 2).

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (figs 3-5), by A.G. Collings

The earliest mention of settlements at Densham is to be found in the Domesday Survey when it was represented by two small estates. *Donevoldehame* was held by Alured under the Count of Mortain and *Dimewoldesham* was held by an Englishman under William of Falaise (Thorn & Thorn 1985, 15,31; 20,9). Subsequently the former was granted to Montacute Priory in Somerset, in the reign of King Stephen, by another Alured while the latter was granted to the nuns of Polsloe Priory in Exeter. Their property can be identified as that to the north of East Densham, on the opposite side of the valley by virtue of the name Minchindown deriving from *Mynchenaton* meaning the farm of the nuns (Gover *et al.* 1932, 400). In 1332 a Henry Denewoldisham was taxed at the minimum amount of 8*d*, the subsequent entry being that of Gervase de Mynchenaton, also taxed at 8*d* (Erskine 1969, 30).

Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries both estates passed into private hands. Little information appears to survive for the early post-medieval period but a deed is recorded from 1576 when George Pawe, a Winkleigh yeoman, mortgaged one-sixth of what was described as a capital messuage or barton called *Denwoldisham* to Hugh Melhuyse of Witheridge, gentleman. The property was then being sub-let to two others, the division perhaps being reflected in the presence today of Higher Densham and East Densham.

The property appears to have passed to the mortgagee since in the mid 19th century when more detailed information becomes available East Densham was owned by the Reverend Richard Melhuish. The tithe survey of 1840 shows it as a farm of some 175 acres occupied by Mary Gill. Higher Densham was then of only 111 acres and although the Devon County Council Historic Environment Record identifies the latter as the site of the Domesday estate it is not clear why this is so. The tithe map (Fig. 3) suggests that East Densham farm possessed several outbuildings, one of which possessed a semi-circular outline suggestive of the presence of a horse engine.

The 1851 census shows William Norrish at East Densham, farming 170 acres and employing three labourers (TNA HO/107/1886/f90/p9). He died some 15 years later when an auction of his stock and furniture was held (*Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* 28.2.1866 1e). The stock was typical of a mixed farm raising cattle, sheep and pigs, and the implements such as the three ploughs indicated arable cultivation, while the 30 hogsheads of cider were also noteworthy. By 1881 the census shows James Norrish to have been the occupier, farming 270 acres, so he had presumably taken over Higher Densham as well (TNA RG11/2227/f65/p7).

In the following year his tenancy agreement at East Densham expired, the 175 acres being to let, with the notice claiming that 'a considerable part of the buildings are newly-erected, and of the best description' (*Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* 25.5.1881 1b.) The owner was then the Reverend T.B. Melhuish, Rector of Poughill.

In 1888 the area was surveyed by the Ordnance Survey at 1:2500 scale, and the resulting map, published the following year, shows a similar layout to that depicted on the tithe map (Fig. 4). However, the horse engine had been removed and further agricultural buildings constructed to the south-west of the farmhouse. The same layout is depicted on the Ordnance Survey second edition map published in 1905 (Fig. 5).

4. METHOD

Investigation of the farmhouse was undertaken in two phases; an historic building evaluation undertaken in 2008, and detailed recording in 2009. The evaluation was prepared to support the planning application for the alterations to the building, and resulted in the production of a short report that included phased floor plans (Passmore 2008). The evaluation report has been superseded by the present document.

The 2009 recording was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by EA (Passmore 2009). The works required by the local planning authority reflected the recommendations made in the evaluation report and comprised the following elements:

- Recording of the late medieval roof of the cross wing,
- Recording of the exterior elevations following removal of plaster using as-existing architect's drawings as a base plan,

- Recording of other architectural features exposed during the alterations.

Drawings were prepared at scales of 1:50 and 1:20, with mouldings drawn at 1:10 and 1:1. These were accompanied by a written record and a photographic record using black and white negative film and digital formats.

Recording of the linhay and shippon was undertaken in accordance with a brief provided by the DCHES (Reed 2008) and a method statement prepared by EA (Valentin 2008), and comprised the following elements:

- A desk-based study of relevant cartographic, documentary and photographic sources,
- Recording of the buildings prior to alterations, through annotation of as-existing architect's plans and limited new drawings,
- A watching brief during the excavation of services trenches in and around the farm.

Drawings were prepared at scales of 1:100 and 1:20, accompanied by a written record and a photographic record using black and white negative film and digital formats. Observations made during the watching brief were recorded daily on *pro forma* watching brief record sheets.

5. THE FARMHOUSE (Figs 6-14; Pls 1-4)

General description

The farmhouse is a T-shaped two-storey structure, constructed of stone and cob, consisting of a main range (the east range) orientated east-west and, attached to its west end, a cross wing, aligned north-south, which retains part of a medieval roof (Figs 6-7; Pl. 1). Also attached to the main range are a lean-to on its north elevation, containing a pantry, and a porch on its east elevation. The former is possibly of early 19th-century date, whilst the latter is modern. Abutting the northwest corner of the cross wing is a small store, which represents the remains of a mid-19th-century barn, formerly of two-storeys but now reduced to a single storey only. The main range formerly extended eastwards by a further bay and 19th-century maps depict ranges (presumably of agricultural buildings) to the north and south of this demolished room.

The ground floor – east range

On the ground floor the layout of the main range comprises a central cross-passage flanked by a single room on each side (the present kitchen and living room). A third room to the east of the kitchen was demolished, apparently in the 1970s (Richard Bower *pers. comm.*), although it is clear from the fabric of the east elevation that this wall formed the original east end of the building, with the demolished room being a later addition (Fig. 8). This interpretation is also given in the listing description.

The walls of the cross passage have been widened and rebuilt, although an early, possible original, door and frame survive on its lower side, perhaps the only surviving fragment of the screen dividing the passage from the kitchen. The door has ancient graffiti and a broken 17th-century strap hinge. The legible portions of the graffiti read 'John Gi_was Baptised HW' on two lines, with further text of 'John' and 'WH' (Pl. 2). It is worth noting that no suitable candidates for the identification of these initials appear in the outline history of the occupants and owners of the house given above. The door frame appears to be

undecorated, but traces of a possible plain chamfer may survive on the rear face towards the present kitchen.

The kitchen may originally have been heated by an open hearth, because the present chimney stack is an insertion into the east elevation. This chimney incorporates a later bread oven, apparently with its opening in the south side of the chimney stack, opening into the adjoining doorway rather than into the hearth, an unusual location for such a feature. The south elevation contains a modern window, but stripping of the plaster exposed evidence that this window opening was formerly wider, and at some point had been deepened to form a door opening (Fig. 9; Pl. 3). To the east of the window several areas of rebuilding were noted, some of which may relate to initial works associated with the demolition of the room to the east, and appear to predate the major rebuilding of the farmhouse.

The present south doorway of the cross passage has been narrowed from the original opening (Pl. 3). No similar observations were made on the north elevation, since this elevation now forms an internal wall and render was not stripped from the masonry.

As with the kitchen the hall may originally have been heated by an open hearth as the chimney and fireplace in the south elevation of the hall are plainly inserted. This chimney incorporates a blocked-up bread oven, the door of which has apparently been reset here from the kitchen bread oven (Richard Bower *pers. comm.*).

The original open hall has been floored over, and the first floor is supported on two large beams with plain chamfers and stepped run-out stops. The present joists have been set/reset into earlier rebates in the beams.

The modern window to the west of the fireplace is set within an earlier door opening. The lintel of this doorway is a reused, possibly structural, timber, and is decorated with late 17th- or 18th-century scratch moulding. On its outer face are what appear to be two wide mortice sockets with rounded corners. Two grooves have been cut through the moulding, and these appear to have been added when the lintel was set into its current position; these features are probably rebates for vertical wooden mullions associated with an earlier window. In the north elevation is a door opening, partially blocked and with modern shelving on its inner face.

The ground floor – cross wing

The cross wing is divided into two rooms, a family room and a study, both situated within the original part of the house. To the north of this is an utility room in a later extension accessed only from the lean-to pantry to the north of the main range. The medieval roof of the cross wing is smoke blackened, showing that it was originally heated by an open hearth and that the present first floor is a later insertion. The existing fireplace is accommodated within a chimneystack inserted at the centre of the wing, dividing the two existing rooms. The fireplace has a slightly arched wooden lintel with ovolo mouldings suggesting a 16th- or 17th-century date, with later brick masonry inserted within the opening. The ceiling is supported by central beam with a chamfer, running north-south and resting in the chimney stack. The beam must therefore have been set here when the stack was inserted, though it may be smoke blackened, indicating it has perhaps been reused. The joists set into this beam have scars and nail holes relating to a former lath and plaster ceiling, now removed.

The cross wing is lit by three windows, one of which has been converted from an earlier doorway (Figs 9 and 10). The south-west corner of this range has been rebuilt in brick.

The north extension is constructed of stone and may have been constructed in two phases, with the west elevation representing a rebuild of the earlier wall. Much of the fabric of this extension has been rebuilt in the 20th century (Fig. 11).

The first floor – east range

The first floor of the east range was extensively rebuilt in the 1970s, although some cob fabric survives in each elevation along with parts of the chimney stacks (Figs 8, 9 and 12). The layout of the first floor also dates to the same period of alterations, as does the roof structure although some lap-jointed rafters and side purlins of an earlier 19th- or 20th-century roof have been incorporated (some almost certainly reset) within the present roof structure.

The first floor – cross wing

The first floor of the cross wing contains a master bedroom, dressing room, and en-suite bathroom, with the dressing room being entered from the corridor in the main range. The en-suite bathroom is located within the later extension to the cross wing and entered from the dressing room. The current layout is defined by pre-existing structural features. The north side of the master bedroom is partially formed by the stack rising from the ground floor fireplace. The adjacent doorway is set within a studwork partition, and has a door frame with ovolo mouldings and a high, ogee stop. The doorway is possibly of 17th-century date and must presumably have been inserted with the present chimney stack and first floor structure, though the partition appears to extend across the south side of the chimney stack, which is an unusual relationship if the two elements are contemporary.

The cross wing roof (Figs 7, 13 and 14; Pl. 4)

The original late 15th- or early 16th-century roof of the cross wing is exposed in the master bedroom and further elements can be observed in the roof space above the dressing room. All the timbers are extremely slim and elegant, with sophisticated carpentry reflecting a wealthy client.

The roof has three bays divided by two trusses, of which only the southern truss survives intact. The principal rafters are supported on side-pegged jointed cruck posts with curved heads forming the lower arch braces, which extend down at least as far as the floor of the bedroom. The curved crucks terminate just above the level of the lower purlins; their upper extremities are secured to the principal rafters at this point by a single face peg, presumably because extending the cruck tenons any higher would have fouled the sockets for the purlins. Above this level the curved crucks are succeeded by curved arch braces which rise to the underside of the collar beam.

There are two levels of butt purlins, tenoned into the sides of the principal rafters and secured with pegs. The ridge tree at the apex is diagonally set. Between the upper and lower side purlins there were originally pairs of curved wind braces in each bay. Four wind braces survive, and the presence of the missing ones is attested by vacant sockets in the upper purlins and long slots in the sides of the principal rafters. Both the wind braces and the arch braces have plain chamfers, and all the joints are secured with pegs. All the timbers are smoke blackened, although there is evidence that some of the timbers (at least the purlins either side of the truss) were at some stage ceiled over.

The south end of the roof is currently a straight gable relating to the 1970s phase of alterations. An aerial photograph provided by the client appears to show a hipped roof that existed prior to the alterations. Internally the gable has an unusual hipped arrangement which is of great interest. The roof slopes backwards from the eaves to the level of the upper purlins but then rises vertically to the ridge terminating the roof in a triangular gablet. Although this could well have resulted from the truncation of the original gable, and in this context it is important to notice that the wind braces rising from the foot of the southern truss are not answered by corresponding braces returning southwards, it is also possible that this gablet formed a smoke louvre. At the base of the gablet is a short horizontal timber linking the upper purlins. The timber would have no role in an arch braced roof of conventional form and might be assumed to be a later strut reinforcing the purlins; however, this timber is smoke blackened and must thus be either an original feature or a very early alteration to the roof. It could well have formed the base of an opening in the gable to allow smoke to escape.

The central section of the roof has been removed to allow the insertion of the chimney, which accommodates the northern truss. To the north of the chimney the principal rafters and collar of the northern truss, along with parts of the side purlins and sockets for arch braces survive. The vertical cob gable of the cross wing is covered with smoke-blackened plaster and clearly represents the northern limit of the roof.

Additions to the house

At the rear of the house an extension has been added, abutting the rear wall of the east range and the west wall of the extension to the cross wing (Figs 5 and 12). The surviving historic fabric of the north wall comprises cob laid over a stone footing, and incorporates a three light window with a wooden frame and external security bars. The present apex of the sloping roof appears to reflect the original roofline. Below this is a row of 11 sawn-off joists that supported a ceiling, now removed. Just below these joists a series of three sawn-off timbers were exposed behind the plaster. These were modern and must relate to (mid-) 20th-century fittings.

Historic maps dating from the 19th century depict a second extension at the north-west corner of the building, to the east of the rear doorway. This structure has been demolished and replaced by a modern building, now a lavatory. Within this room and to the east, along the rear elevation of the east range a chase is visible for the roofline or former ceiling of the demolished extension. the chase has been infilled with concrete blocks. Two areas of collapse within the cob wall may relate to former structural features within this extension.

There is also evidence for a small extension attached to the west side of the west wing near the south end of the elevation (Fig. 10). This structure is not depicted on historic maps. Two rows of sockets are visible, a lower row of three, widely-spaced sockets, and a higher level of two, possibly three, closely-set sockets. These sockets would almost certainly have held the collars and rafters of a lean-to roof over this extension.

6. THE LINHAY AND SHIPPON (Figs 15-19; Pls 5 and 6), by R.W. Parker

General description

This large 'L'-shaped linhay lies to the south of the farmyard (Fig. 2; Pl. 5). The building incorporates an enclosed shippon at its eastern end with a loft over, a carriageway and an open-fronted linhay facing south, with an enclosed area, possibly a root store at its western end, and a loft over (Figs 15 and 16).

Study of the tithe map of the parish shows that the eastern, L-shaped portion of the building occupies the site of an earlier structure, part of which has a rounded projection suggestive of a horse engine (Fig. 3). As the existing structure shows no sign of breaks or differences in fabric between the body of the linhay and the L-shaped portion it may be presumed that the earlier building was demolished before the erection of the present structure.

The building is depicted in its present form on the 1889 first-edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4) and the newspaper advert of 1881, cited above (p. 2), describes many of the farm buildings present at that time as 'newly constructed'. This may provide a possible context for the redevelopment of the farm buildings in the late 1870s; however, nothing in the existing building precludes a date of construction in the preceding three decades.

North elevation (Fig. 17)

This elevation is two storeys high and constructed from coursed random rubble incorporating large blocks of stone as quoins as well as generally within the walling. The stone employed is an iron-rich shale and the roof is slated, with black-glazed ridge tiles. At the east end at first floor level there is a hatch to the loft above the shippon. This is a primary feature with stone jambs and a low, hardly segmental arched head of red bricks laid as two courses of headers. The hatch door has a wooden frame and is planked, with spear-headed strap hinges. The latch is operated through a small hole and has a large wooden catch.

On the ground floor the primary doorway to the shippon is very handsome, with stone quoins and a brick head like that previously described, with a timber frame and an internal fanlight, decorated with chamfers and run-out stops. Above the door, which retains one spear-headed strap hinge and one plainer one (which might be a repair), is a four-light fanlight fixed to pivot outwards. Immediately adjoining this and clearly also contemporary with it is a very wide opening with a segmental arch of three courses of headers. The frame has chamfers and run-out stops. The doors, with a variety of strap hinges, are modern replacements. Adjoining this doorway is a smaller doorway communicating with the main body of the linhay. This door has a two-course arch and its door has no fanlight. The door is loose and has strap hinges and a timber latch mechanism operated through a hole. The chamfered doorframe has iron pintles threaded through it and secured with bolts. Roughly at the centre of the elevation is an area of disturbed stonework and mortar. This may be a patch repair of damage caused by a localised failure of the roof covering above.

Towards the western end of the building the loft over the linhay is accessed by a hatch. This has been much repaired, particularly above the timber lintel and below the concrete sill, yet the opening is probably a primary feature. The frame has no chamfers; the door has an array of old strap hinges but has fallen from its frame. The doorway to the loft above the root store also has a timber lintel and no chamfers or wooden latch, and has been partially covered in zinc sheeting. The steps by which this doorway is approached are of modern concrete and it is uncertain what provision there was originally. There is a blocked

ground-floor doorway behind the steps, which may indicate the original steps were wooden or moveable.

West elevation of the root store (Fig. 18)

The east elevation of the building is a gable end with no features other than a wide double door under a sagging but substantial timber lintel. The doors and part of the frame are modern.

South elevation of the root store (Fig. 18)

The south elevation of the root store has fractured quite badly at the corner. This elevation has a small arched opening on the ground floor with a two-header course arched lintel, and no surviving frame. On the first floor is a two-light mullioned window which appears to have been glazed. This opening retains a single iron saddle bar.

East elevation of the root store

The eastern face of the root store, facing towards the linhay, retains an original door with spear-headed hinges and a contemporary latch mechanism and an unmoulded pegged frame. This door provides access to the linhay from the root store.

South elevation of the linhay (Fig. 18)

The south front of the linhay is supported by four posts, three of which rest upon stone 'staddles'. The posts are substantial and probably reused, since they have a number of redundant sockets and contain pintles which appear unrelated to the present structure. The posts rise to clasp the ends of the tie beams supporting the roof trusses, and the first-floor beams are let into their rear faces and secured from the front by bolts. A horizontal timber forming a bressumer to the first floor is housed in a rectangular chase in the front face of each post. The joists are housed in notches cut into the tops of the beams. The fourth post has been removed and has been replaced with a timber prop resting on part of the stone wall dividing the linhay.

Much of the first floor has been removed. A large and rather clumsy manger structure has been constructed within the passage to the double doors. This was made before the removal of the first floor and still incorporates parts of the joists.

West elevation of the shippon (Fig. 18)

The western face of the shippon in the eastern wing faces the linhay and has a series of joist holes (still with the ends of the joists protruding) showing where the first floor structure has been removed. The shippon is entered by a handsome doorway with a chamfered frame, fanlight and two-courses of brick forming the arched head. The door is missing.

South elevation of the shippon (Fig. 18)

The south, gabled elevation of the shippon is almost entirely obscured by ivy and cannot be easily inspected. The only feature visible is a first-floor window with a brick arched head.

East elevation of the shippon (Fig. 17)

The east elevation of the shippon has no openings or architectural features.

Interior of the shippon (Fig. 15; Pl. 6)

The shippon has concrete floors and is divided into five cattle stalls against the eastern wall, separated by concrete partitions. Each stall has a trough and the remains of a water supply.

All these fixtures date from the 20th century, replacing 19th-century furnishings which can be reconstructed from evidence described below. The lower parts of the walls are rendered for hygiene, but the upper parts remain unplastered.

The ceiling is also unplastered displaying both the joists and boards of the floor above. There are four ceiling beams, each chamfered with run-out stops, and each beam has two sockets for vertical posts; one apparently defining a head walk, 0.70m wide; the other marking the end of the stall, approximately 2.60m away from the east wall. Thus there appear to have originally been five stalls. Against the west wall in the second bay from the north door is a small hatch with a chamfered trimmer for a loft ladder. A peg driven into the south wall near the door may have allowed a lamp to be hung well clear of feet and hooves, as a fire precaution. There is a void in the ceiling above the head walk that allowed feed to be dropped down directly into the mangers.

The loft above the shippon

This space is entered by the hatch in the north wall and lit by a small window in the southern gable. It is still in use as a hayloft. The roof is supported by three king-post trusses with bolts through their ties to the base of the post. The posts continue past the apex to support a plank ridge. There is a single level of purlins on each side. To the north a triangular half truss supports the sloping northern plane of the roof at the centre of the truss. The walls are unplastered and the floor badly decayed.

Interior of the linhay (Figs 15, 16 and 19)

There is little evidence of original furniture in the interior of the linhay. It is clear that there were formerly cattle stalls here although these were of 20th-century date, with concrete floors and gulleys. The stalls have been largely removed.

The loft above the linhay

The posts supporting the roof divide the building into five bays, defined by four king-post trusses. These have been mutilated, but notches remain to show where the diagonal braces formerly stretched from the base of the king posts to support the principal rafters.

Interior of the root store

The interior of the root store is a small, plain unplastered square room. The ceiling over the room has apparently been altered. The joists over the eastern part are at a lower level and are apparently original, since they fit into joist sockets in the east wall, yet they are supported at their other ends by a trimmer nailed into the side of an earlier beam. The joists of the western part are significantly higher and laid on top of later timbers inserted above the beam. These joists are supported in the middle by a steel girder. It does not seem likely that the original joists to the east continued across the room unbroken, as might be expected, since there are no signs of redundant joist sockets at this level in the west wall. It is possible the walls have been rebuilt. The blocked doorway in the north wall is enigmatic and appears not to have functioned in relation to either the presence external ground levels or the steps to the loft. This may indicate that the external ground level has been raised in modern times.

In the south-east corner of the room a small enclosure has been created from concrete blocks. The function of this area remains highly uncertain, but it has a plastered interior and a good plank door, possibly reused from a context within the house.

Granary

Above the root store is a granary. This room is of two bays with a roof supported by a single king-post truss which retains its diagonal braces. The walls are plastered and there is a large central partition dividing the raised floor area, presumably for the storage of grain, from the working area. In the eastern area is a hopper, rising high into the roof structure. The hopper has a zinc base sloping downwards to a mouth or vent in the south-east corner where, presumably, the sacks were filled. Given the height to which the hopper rises, it is difficult to see how it was fed with grain without some form of elevator, of which no evidence remains. The door has a wooden lock box bound with surprisingly elaborate metal hasps.

7. THE WATCHING BRIEF (Figs 2 and 15)

Excavation of new service trenches in and around the linhay and shippon were monitored. Underneath the concrete floor of the linhay a cobbled surface was exposed, but had been removed without archaeological monitoring. Within the adjacent farmyard natural bedrock was cut by ceramic land drains, and was overlain by the modern farmyard surface and associated make up. To the south of the farmhouse a terrace cut into the bedrock was observed where there is a break in the adjacent garden wall (511). This may represent the position of a path into the property that has subsequently been landscaped to form the present driveway. Close to the junction of the driveway and farm track a small pit was exposed cut into the natural bedrock (505). The pit measured 0.80m wide by 0.70m deep and had steep sides. Its base was not exposed. The pit was filled with a yellowish grey stony clayey silt (506), and was sealed by a stone driveway surface (504).

8. FINDS

A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the watching brief and as unstratified surface finds during the later building recording. A single nail, one sherd of late medieval North Devon gravel-free ware pottery and 14 sherds of post-medieval pottery, mostly North Devon Wares were recovered. Within this collection, a single piece of post-medieval North Devon gravel-tempered ware was found from context 506, the fill of pit 505.

9. DISCUSSION

The documentary research undertaken as part of the recording has demonstrated that during the medieval period the farm formed part of the lands of Montacute Priory in Somerset. The present building was probably constructed during the ownership of the priory, probably in the late 15th or early 16th century, which may explain the ground plan and the high-quality of the surviving roof, which is comparable with many other good-quality farmhouses and minor gentry houses, and with its slender scantling and arch braces seems to be designed to imitate the ribs of a vault. The building was a variant of the standard three-room and cross passage design, with the parlour or inner room located in a cross wing situated off the hall. This cross wing was clearly, on the evidence of the smoke-blackened timbers and plaster and the ornate roof structure, of one storey and open to the roof. The inserted fireplaces in the kitchen and hall also indicate that the other rooms of the building were originally single storey and open to the roof.

The listing description states that the lower beam in the living room (former hall) was moved from the kitchen to replace 'the internal jetty created by the insertion of a chamber over the passage in the open hall'. If this is taken to mean that the present beam is on the line of the jetty then this would be highly unusual in that the jetty would have projected nearly a quarter of the way into the open hall. It is possible however, that the beam was located between the jetty and the existing western beam. What this probably does illustrate, however, is that the flooring in of the house occurred over a period of time, with the hall remaining open, whilst the kitchen and cross passage, and perhaps the parlour, were floored over to provide first-floor rooms. It is likely that the building was first fully floored in the 17th century. The extension to the cross wing may also date to the 17th century or a little later.

There is little evidence for other alterations until the 18th or 19th century. By 1840 the building had been extended to the east with the addition of a two-storey extension and two single-storey lean-to extensions had been constructed at the rear of the building. One has since been demolished, but the other survives and has been extended during the 20th century.

Although not well documented in the historical records there is some evidence that the house may have been subdivided into separate domestic units. In addition to the probable cross passage, there were many external doorways into the house, all of which were blocked in the 1960s or 1970s. An aerial photograph provided by the client also shows a further door into the now demolished east room. The 1851 census records four members of the Norrish family, a retired farmer, two farm labourers and a servant living at the property and it is possible that these groups had been provided with separate entrances to their private quarters.

During the second half of the 20th century extensive alterations took place. Several of the outbuildings or extensions were demolished, and the upper floors of the east range and the extension to the cross wing were rebuilt and provided with new roofs.

It is clear from the fabric of the surviving structures that the earliest farm buildings were located close to the farm house, probably all on its north side. These included the pound house and another, now derelict, building located to the east. The pound house may be of early date, as it retains wall chases for a jointed cruck roof structure, which does not survive. The building presumably housed an apple crusher to produce cider but nothing now remains *in situ*.

During the 18th and 19th centuries new agricultural buildings were constructed to the south-east of the farmhouse, perhaps as a result of expansion or a move away from arable production towards a more mixed economy. The shippon and linhay (for housing cows) was probably constructed in c.1880, replacing an earlier threshing barn with engine house. These structures formed part of a complex of 18th- and 19th-century farm buildings located slightly further away from the farm than the earlier buildings. In the 20th century new farm (storage) buildings were constructed to the west of these buildings, again further away from the farmhouse and the older buildings fell into their present state of disrepair.

10. ARCHIVE

Material generated for each of the projects at East Densham (EA project numbers 6241, 6459, 6572 and 6829) has been collated into a single archive for deposition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter (accession number 310/2008).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The recording of the linhay and shippon was initially commissioned by Edward Holden, chartered architect, and was subsequently managed by Richard Bower (Dunn Marino Associates) on behalf of Mr and Mrs M. Tucker. The projects were managed for EA by S.R. Blaylock, T.H. Gent and J. Valentin. The fieldwork was carried out by A.J. Passmore (farmhouse) and R. Krakowicz, R.W. Parker and C.S. Wakeham (linhay and shippon). The report was prepared by A.G. Collings, R.W. Parker and A.J. Passmore and the illustrations drawn by S.E. Blackmore. We are grateful to Catherine Marlow of Mid Devon District Council for discussion of the buildings and help with planning the work.

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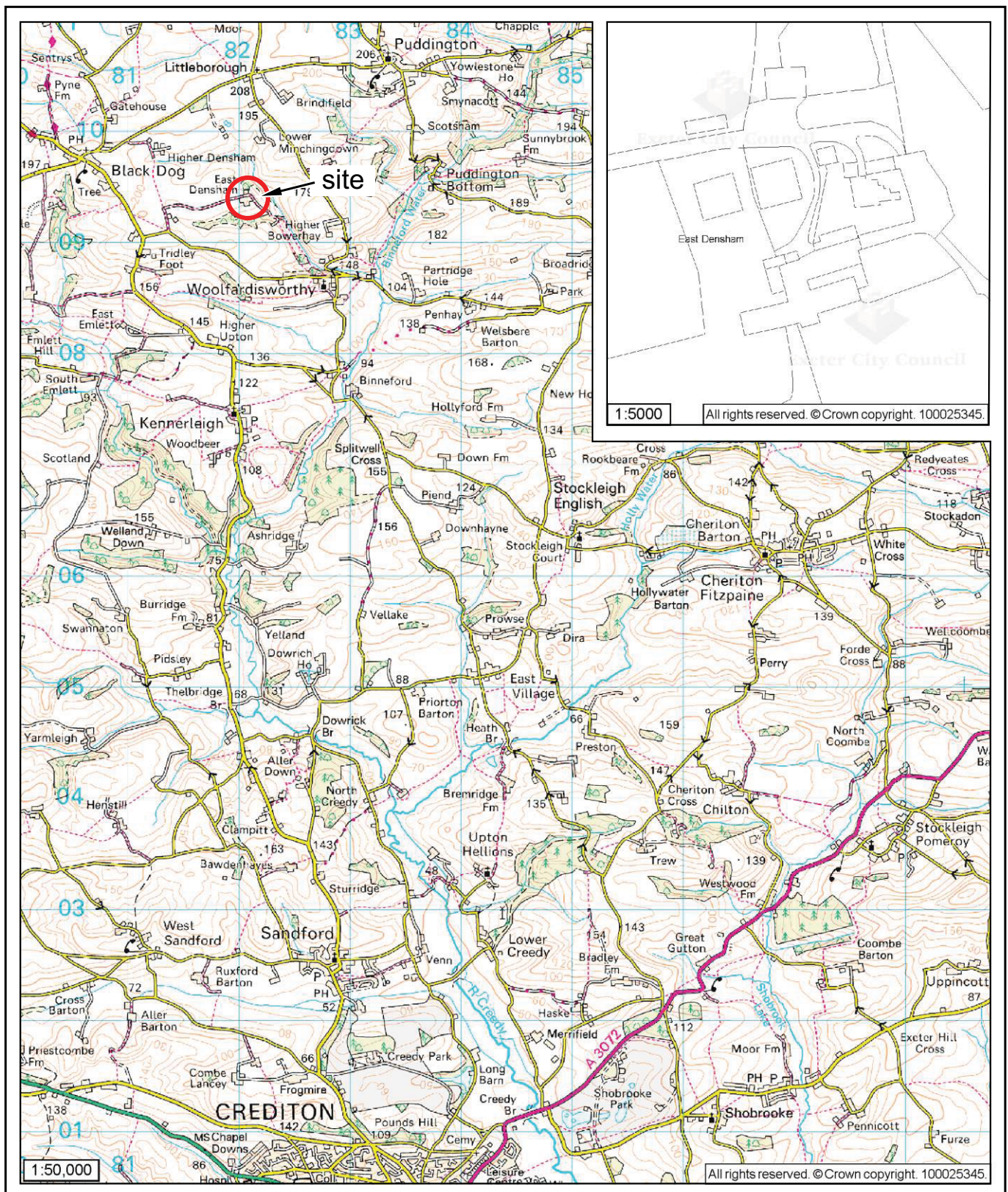


Fig. 1 Location of site.

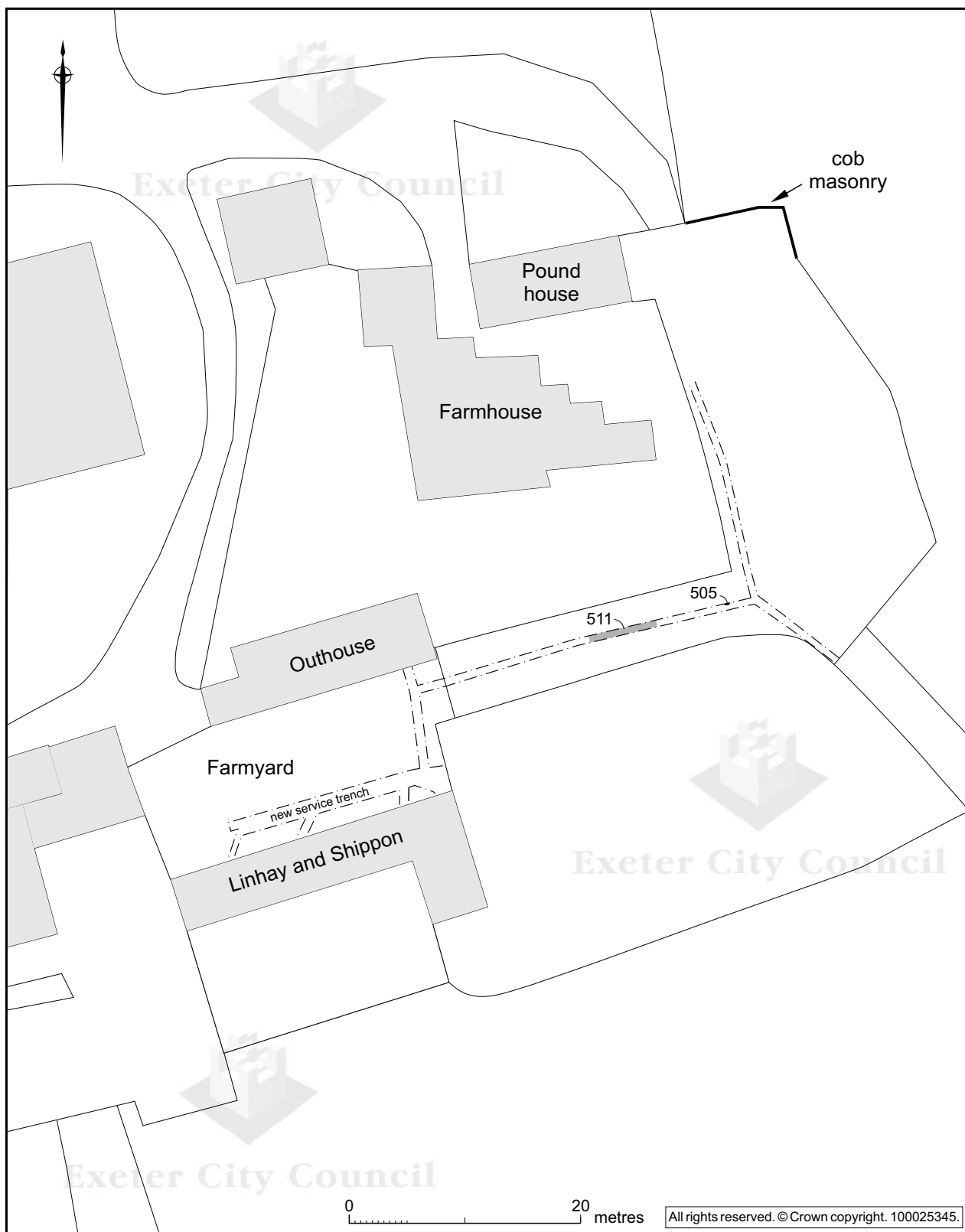


Fig. 2 Plan of the farm.

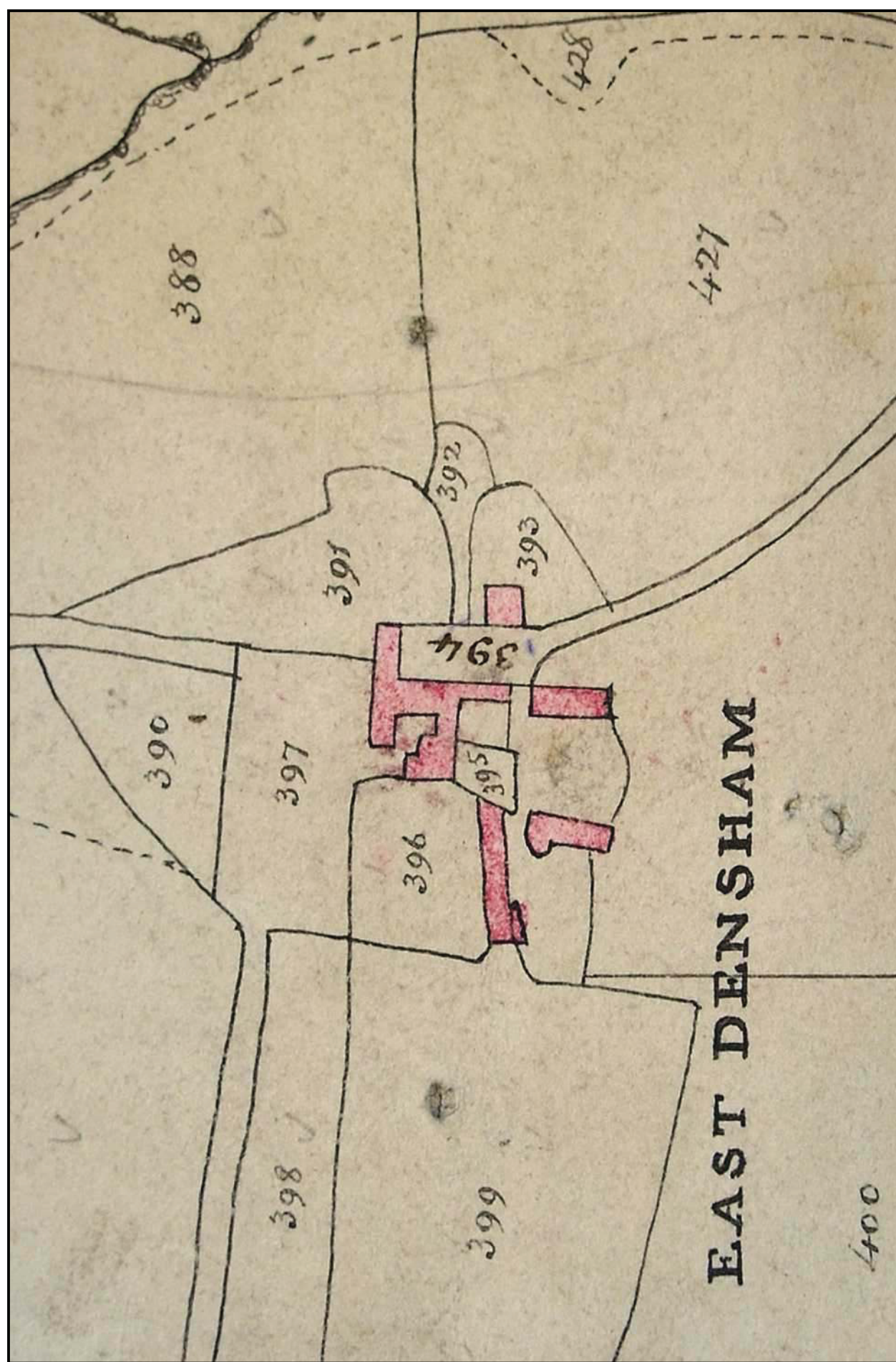


Fig. 3 Extract from the 1840 tithe map of Woolfardisworthy (East), enlarged to 1:1250.

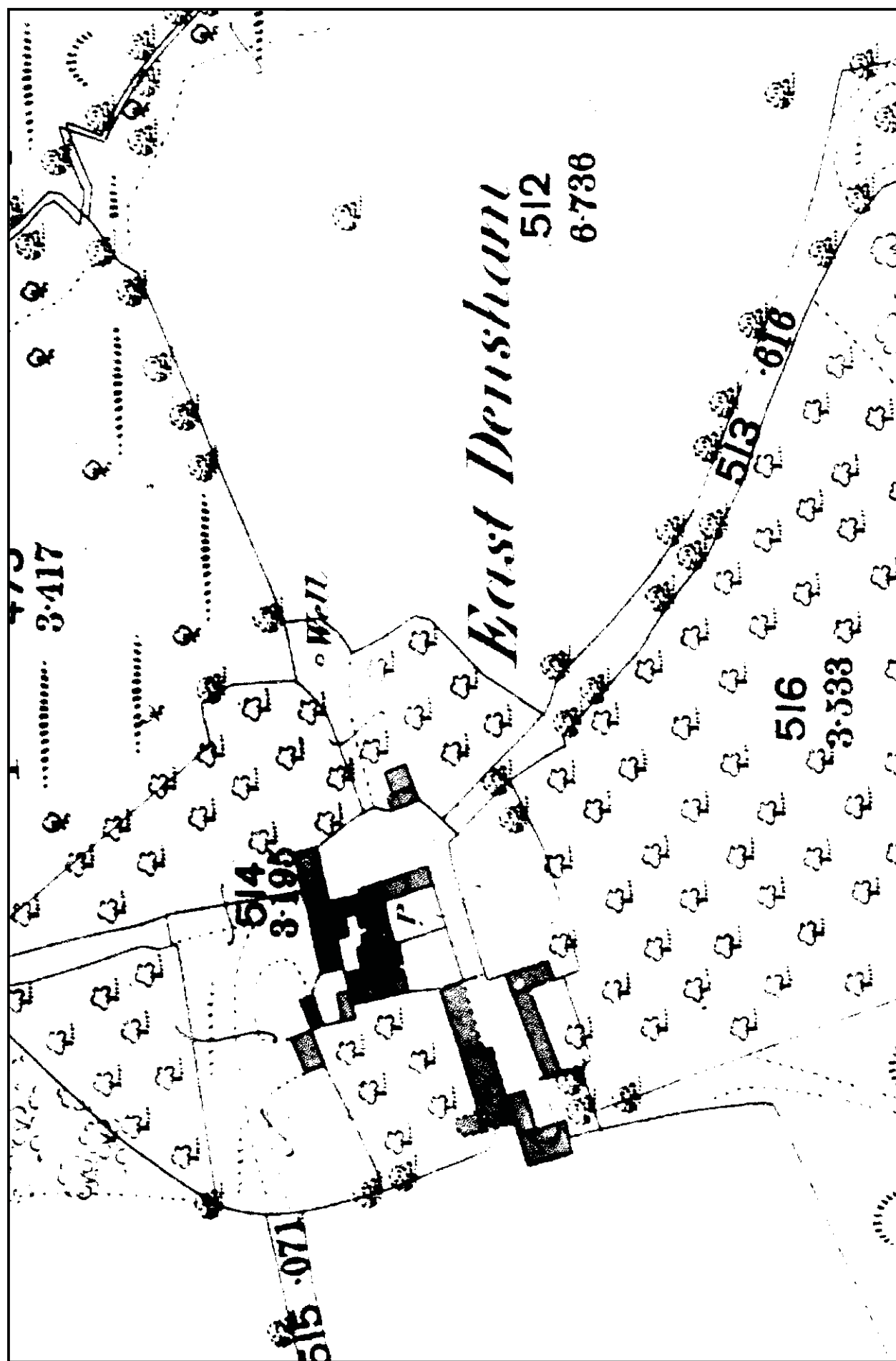


Fig. 4 Extract from the 1889 Ordnance Survey first edition 1:2500 map sheet Devonshire XLIV.14, enlarged to 1:1250.

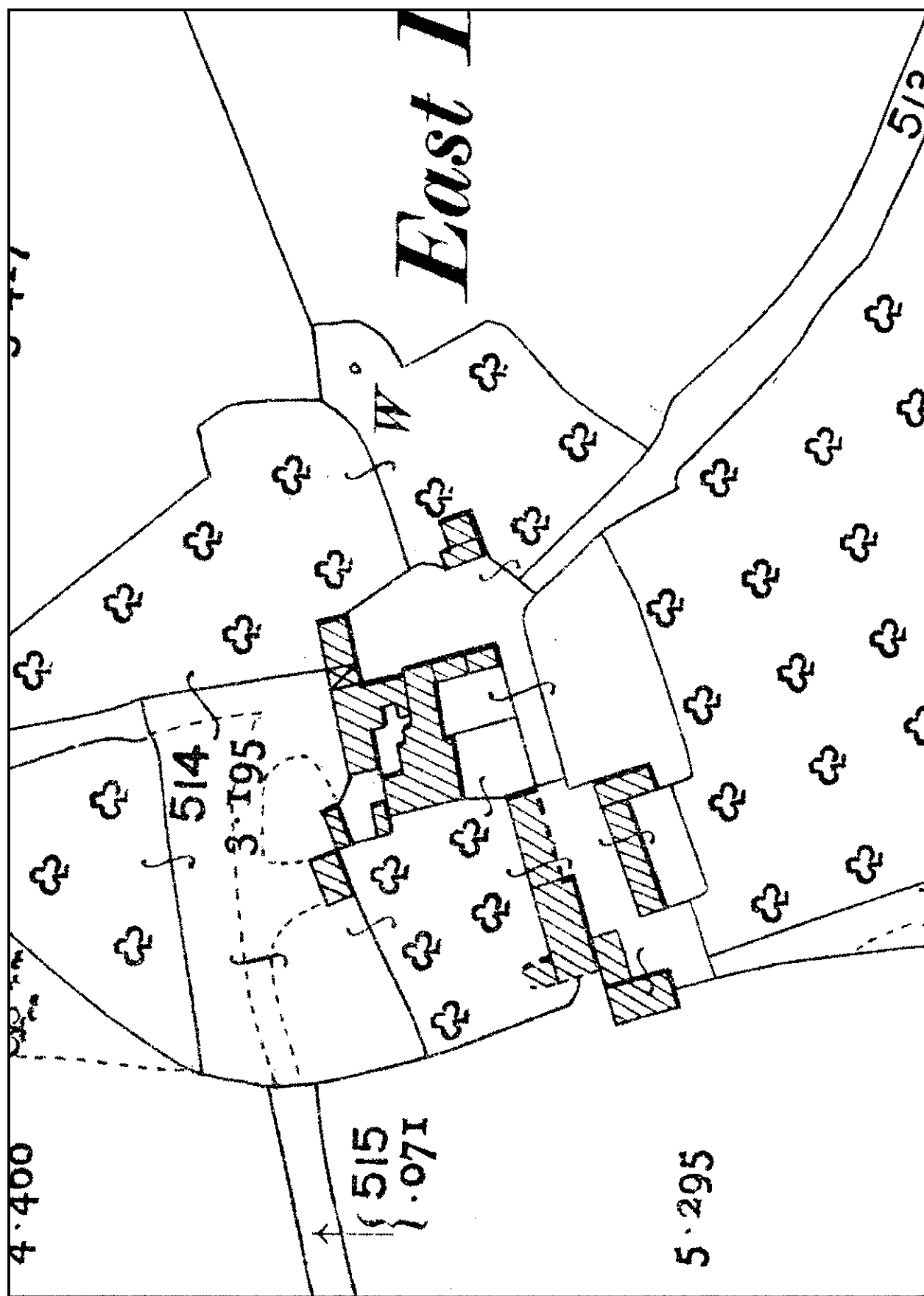


Fig. 5 Extract from the 1905 Ordnance Survey second edition 1:2500 map sheet Devonshire XLIV.14, enlarged to 1:1000.

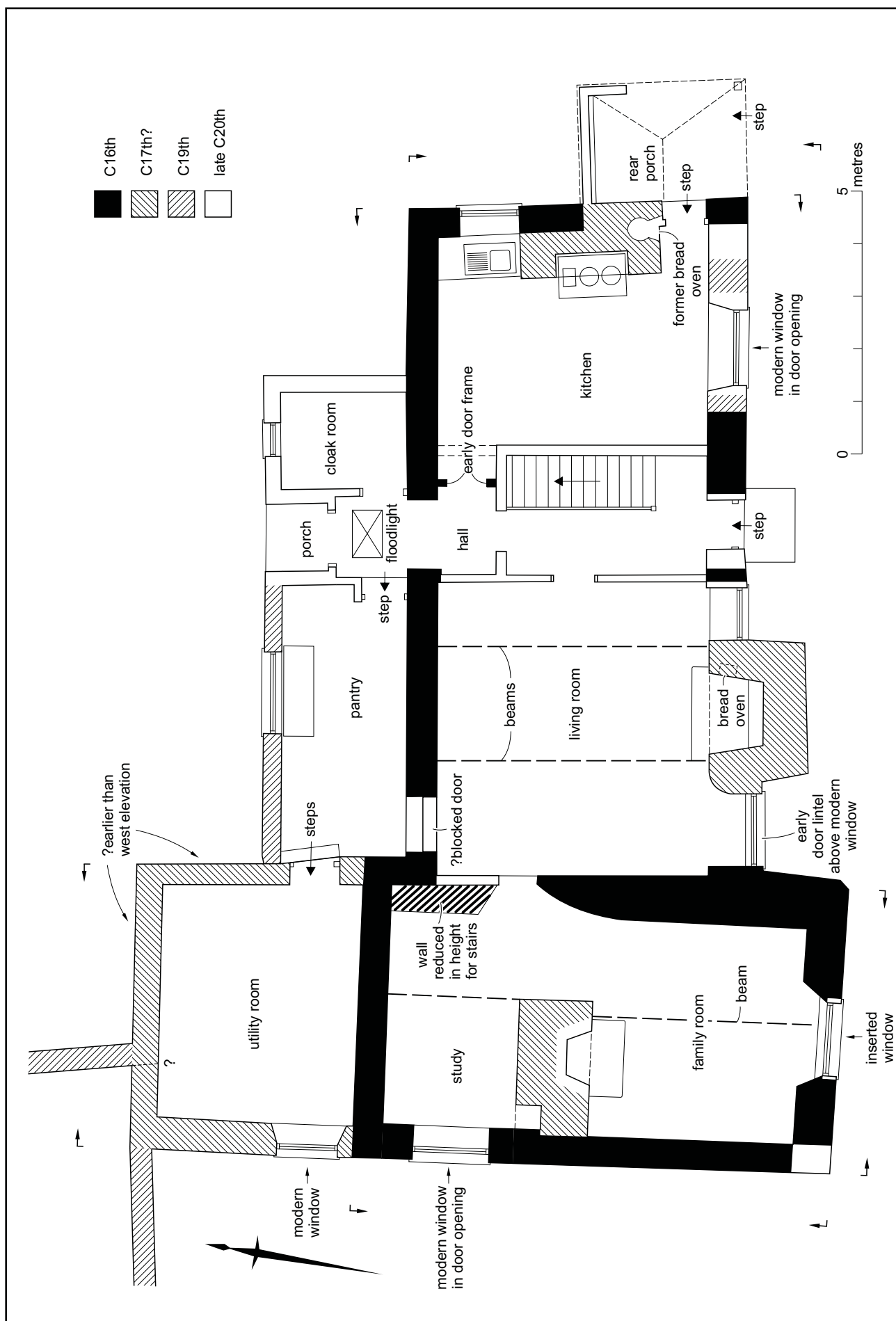


Fig. 6 East Densham Farmhouse, ground floor phase plan. Scale 1:100.

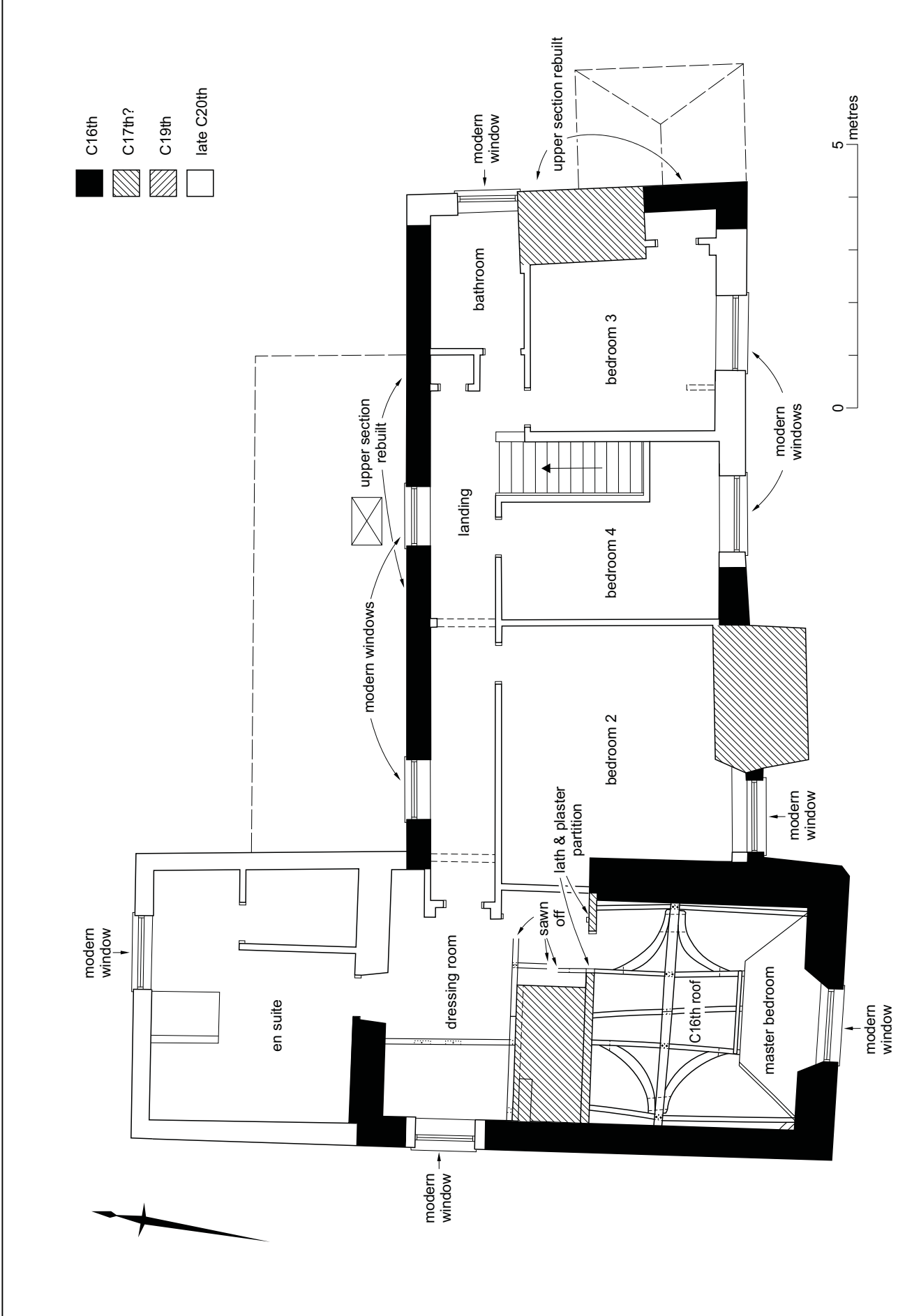


Fig. 7 East Densham Farmhouse, first floor phase plan. Scale 1:100.

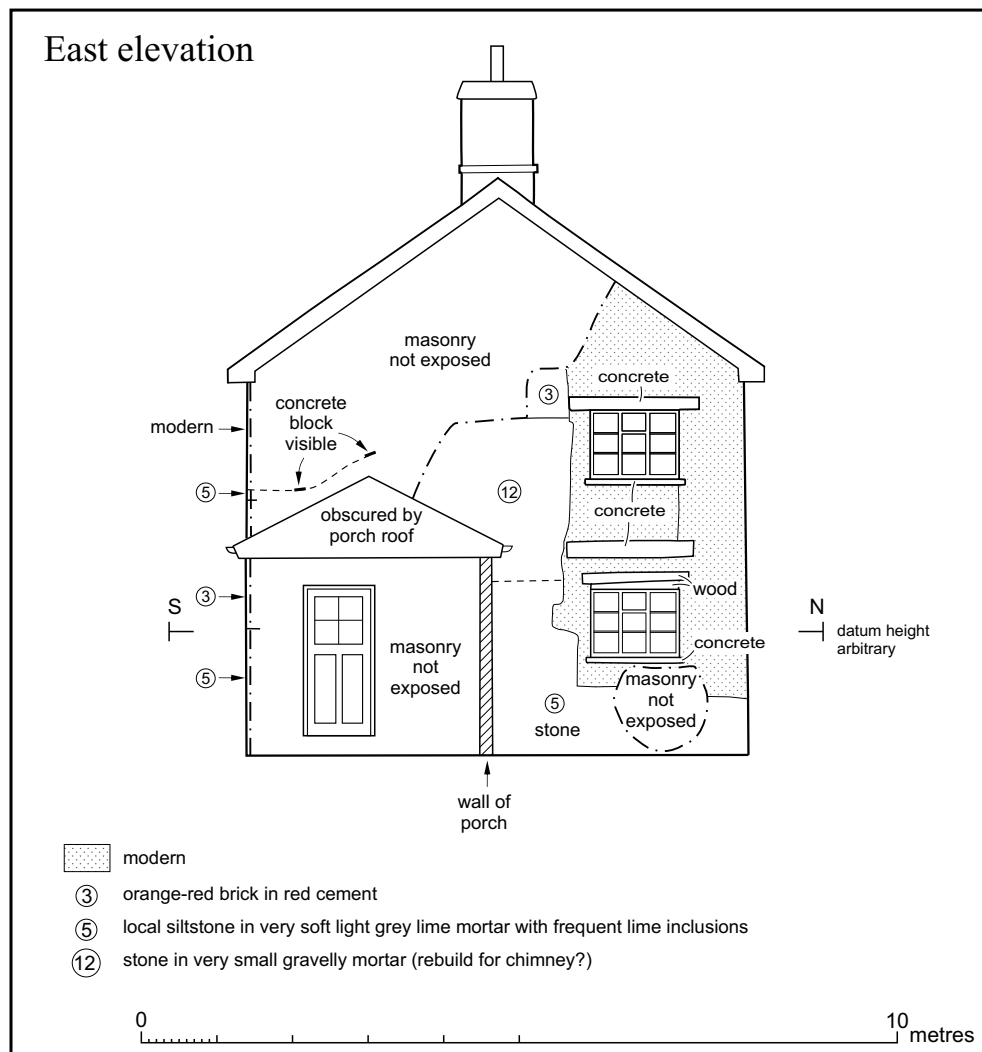


Fig. 8 East elevation. Scale 1:100.

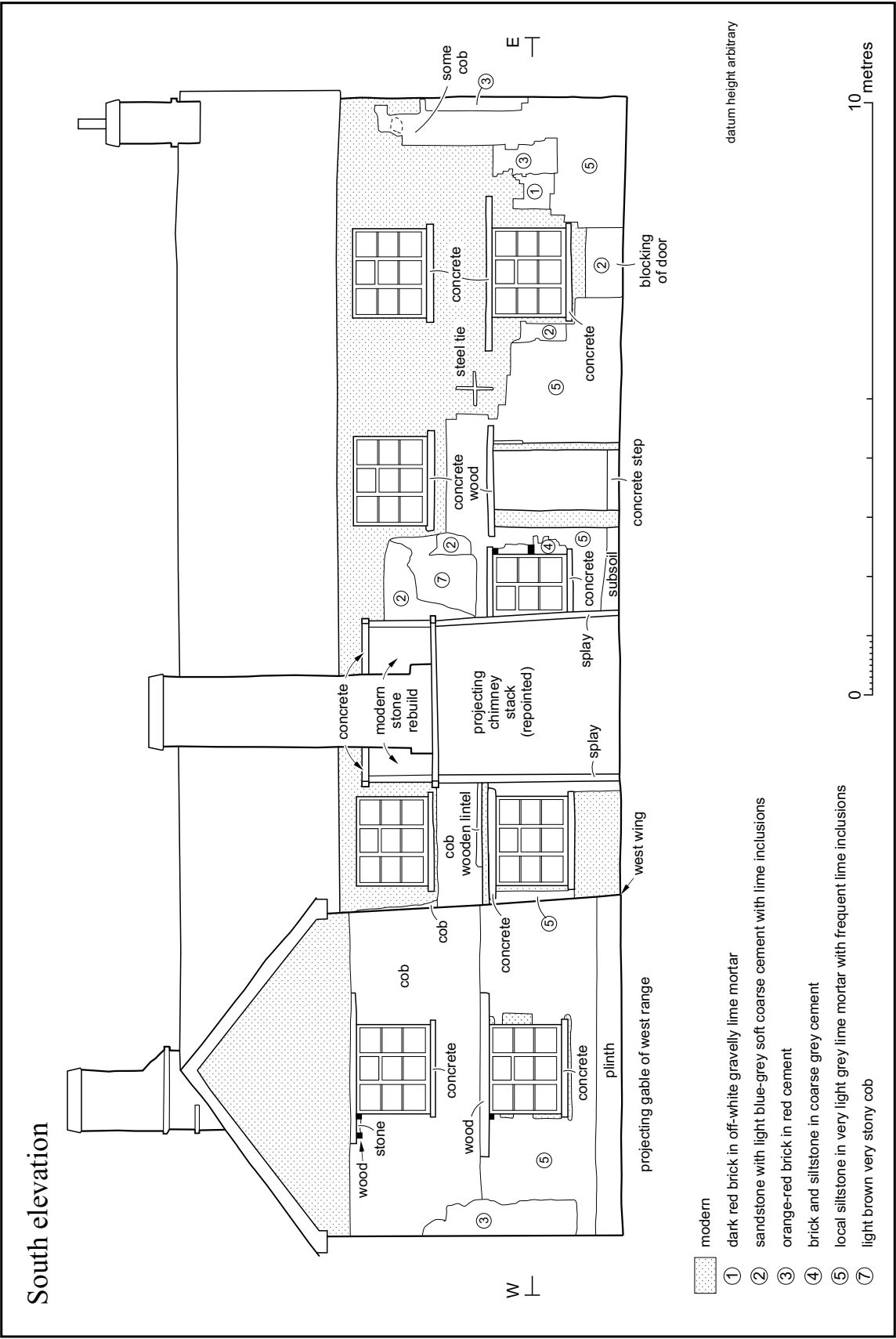


Fig. 9 South elevation. Scale 1:100.

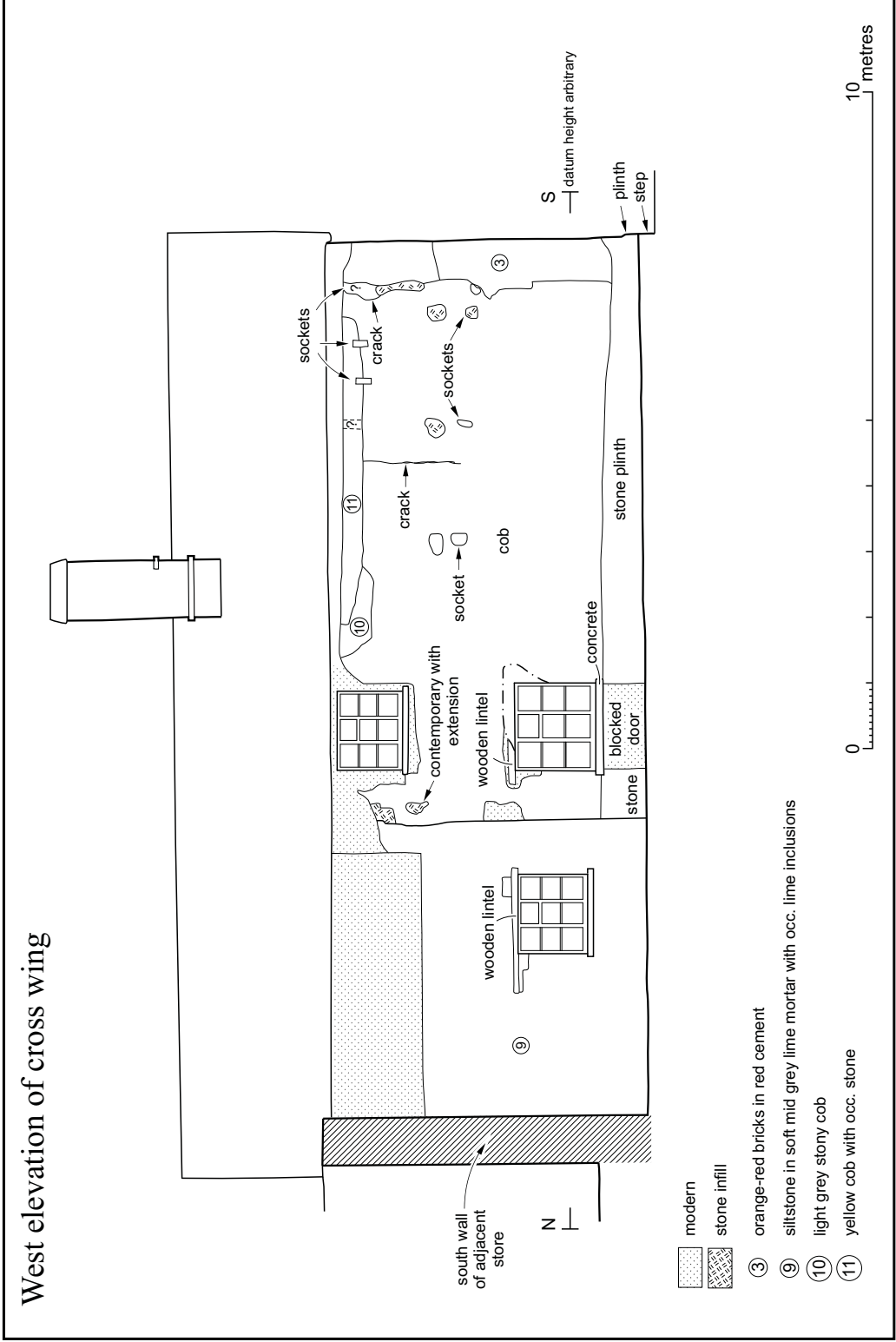


Fig. 10 West elevation of the cross wing. Scale 1:100.

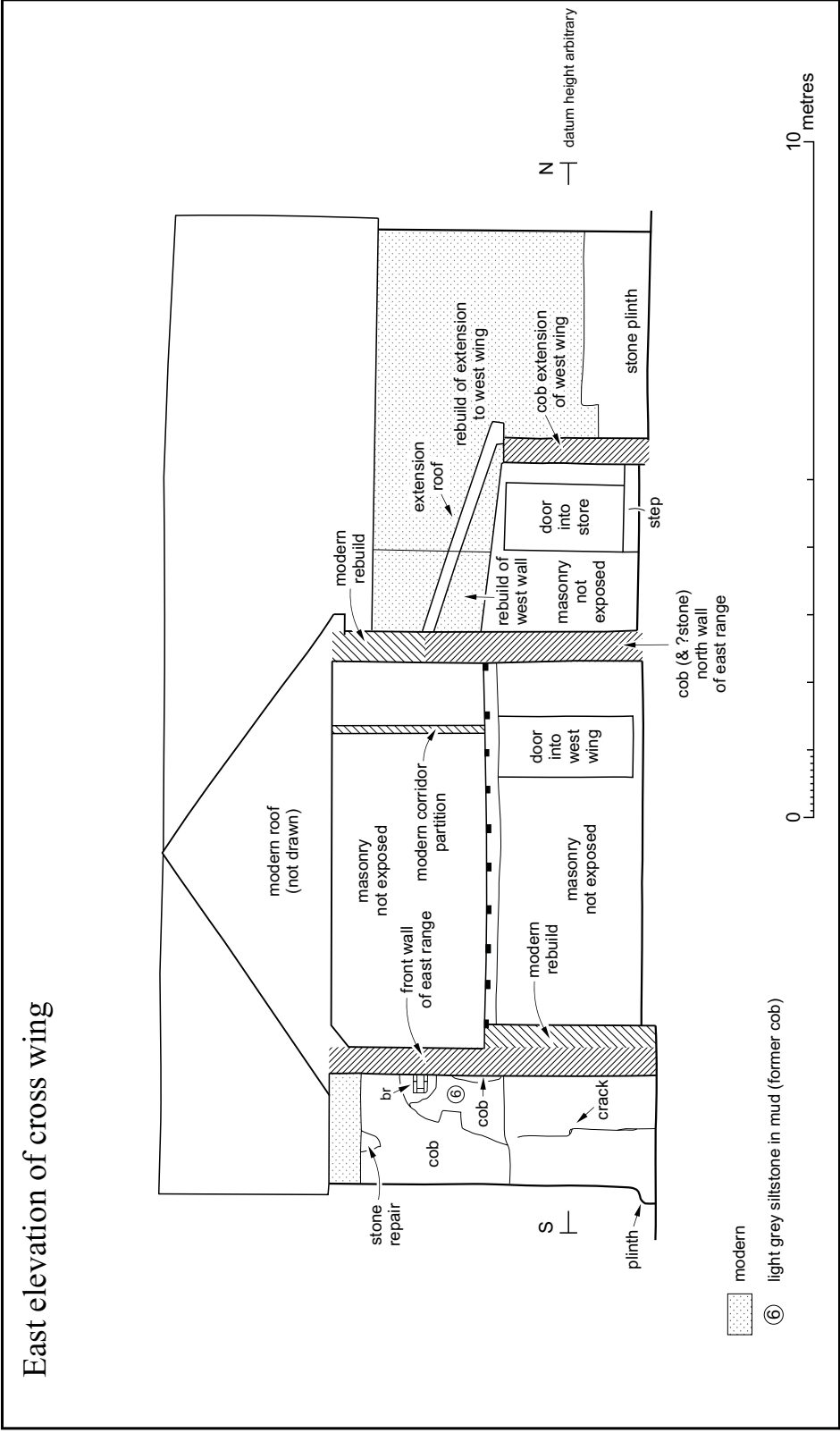


Fig. 11 East elevation of the cross wing. Scale 1:100.

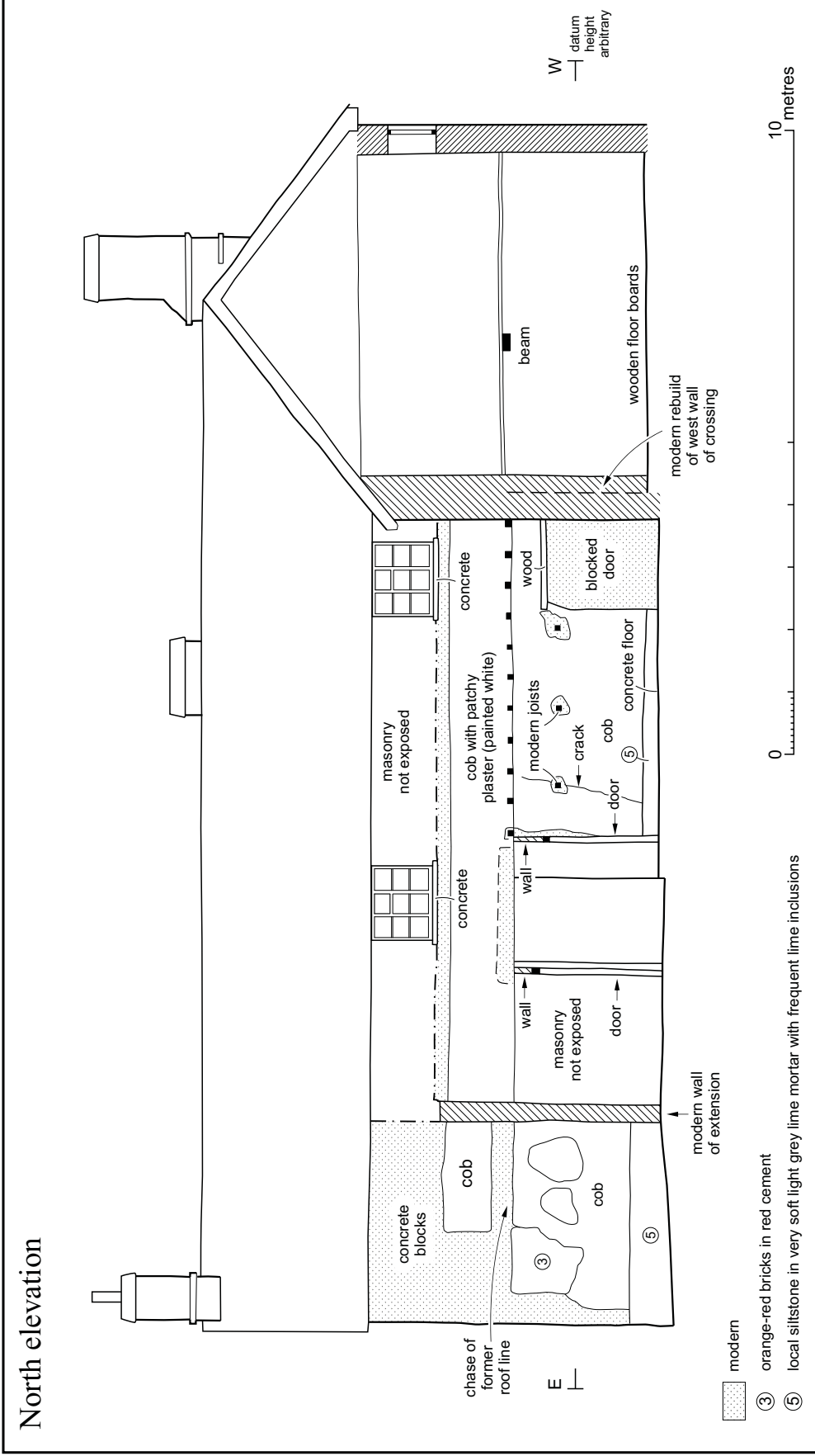


Fig. 12 North elevation. Scale 1:100.

Profile of south truss

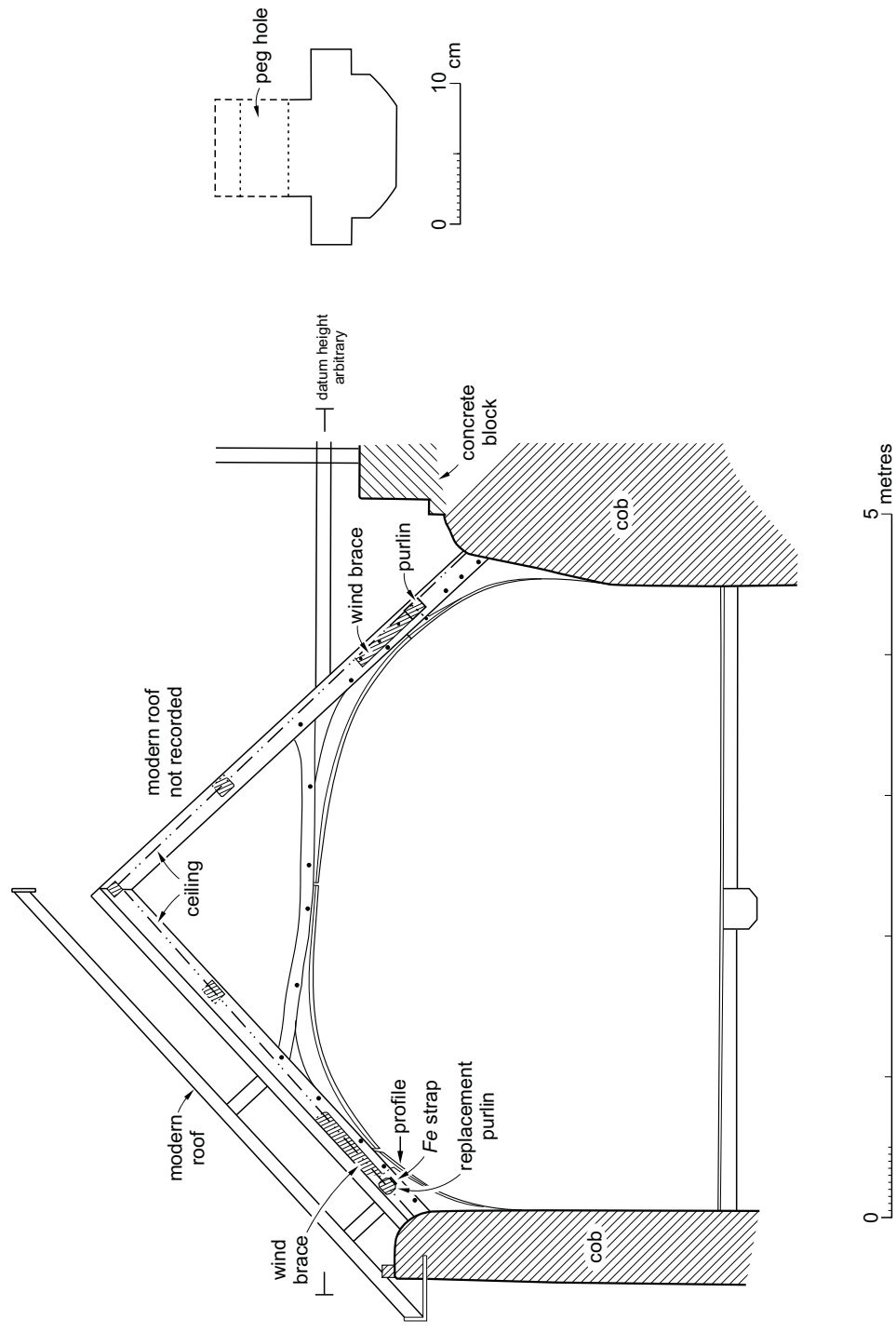


Fig. 13 The south truss in the cross wing. Scales 1:50 and 1:5.

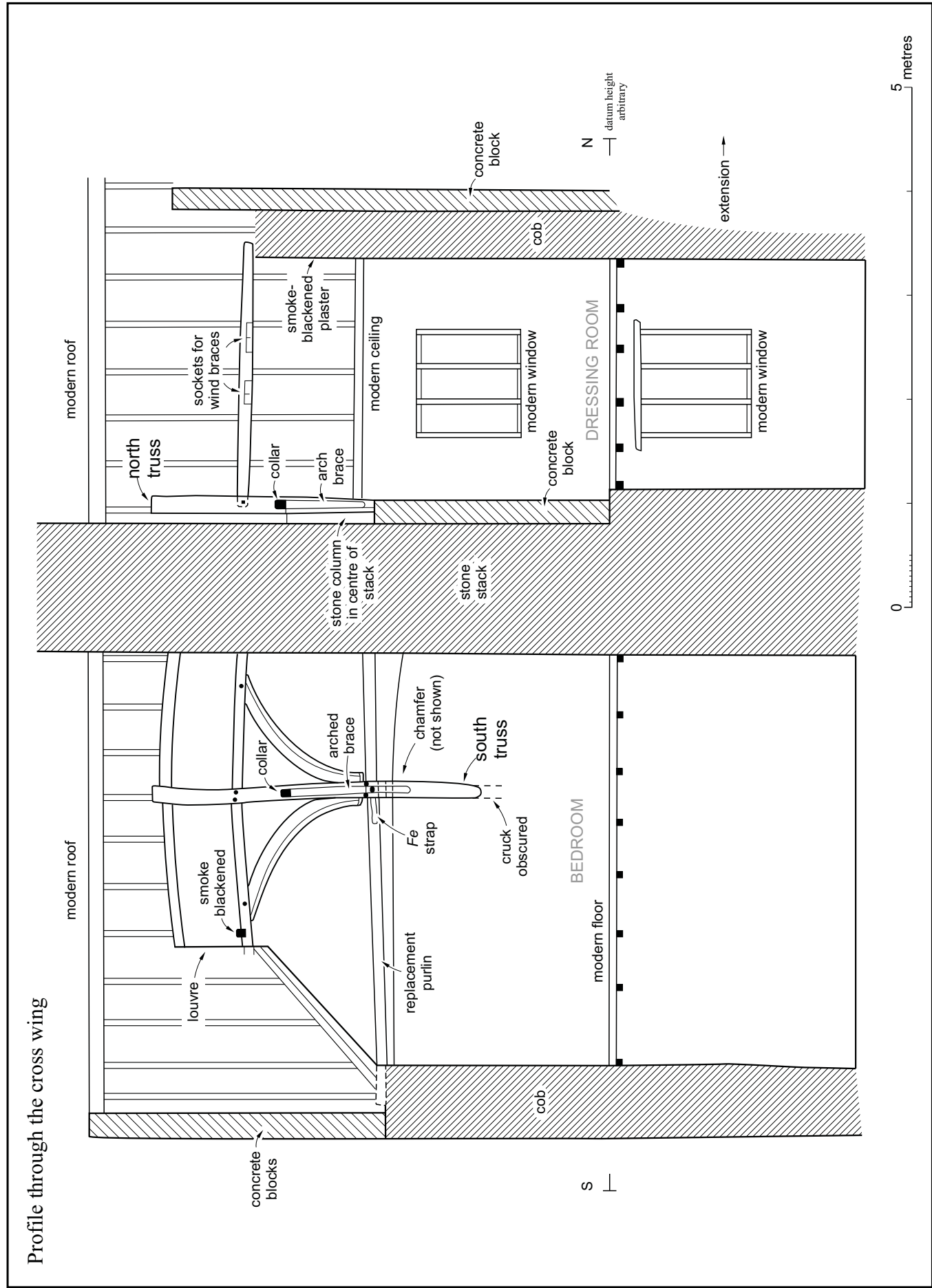


Fig . 14 Profile through the cross wing showing late medieval roof. Scale 1:50.

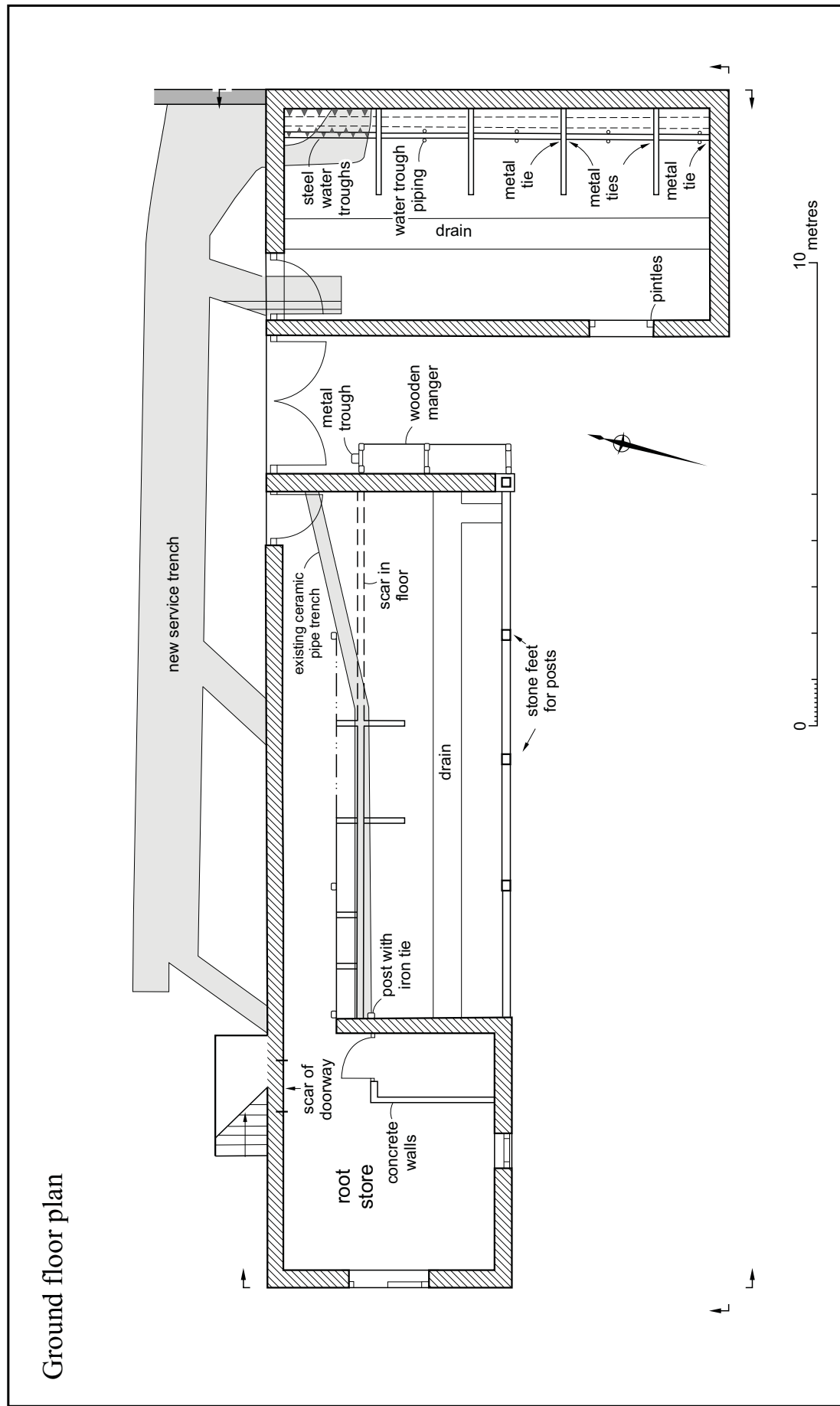


Fig. 15 Ground floor plan of the linhay and shippon. Scale 1:125.

First floor plan

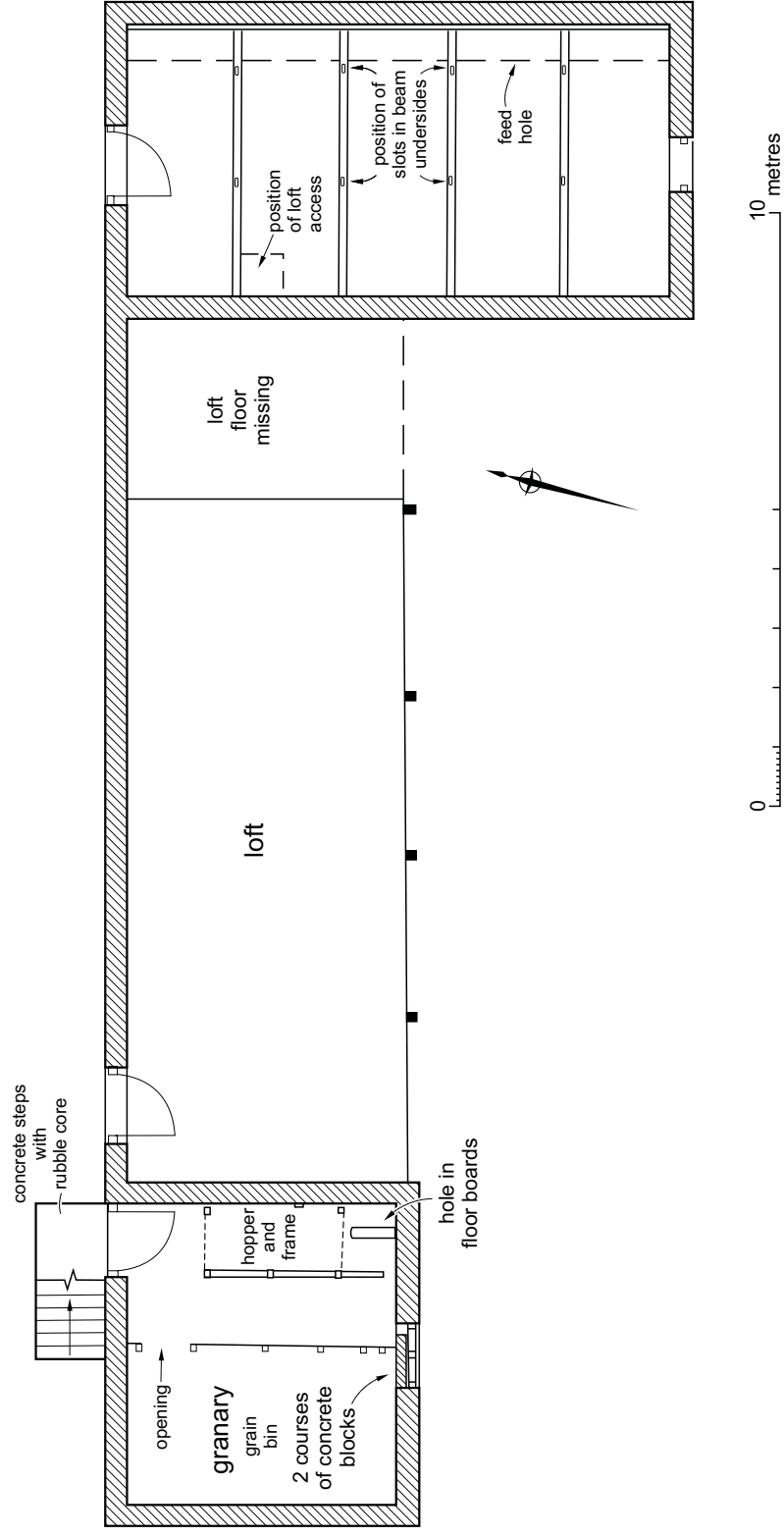
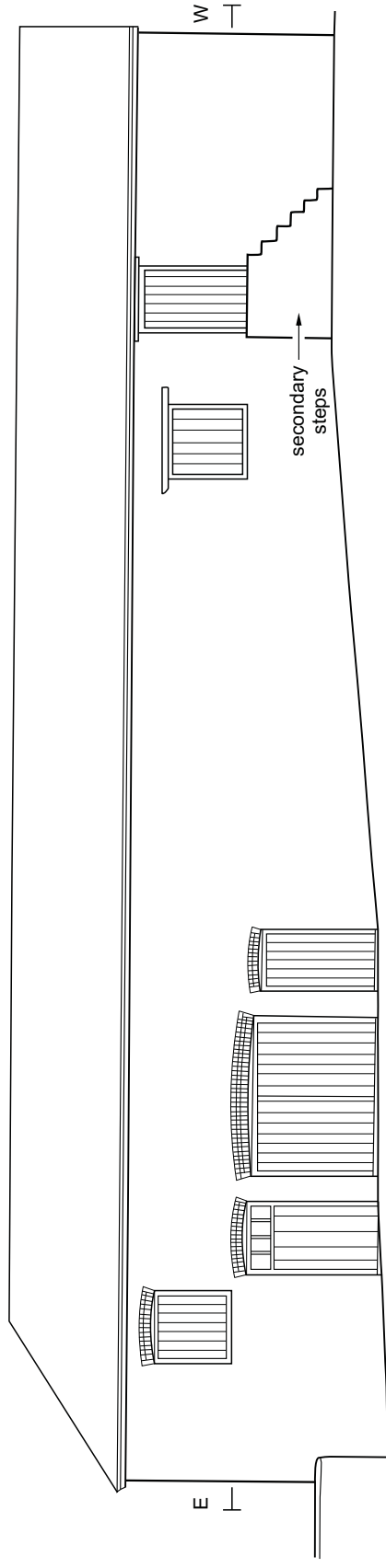
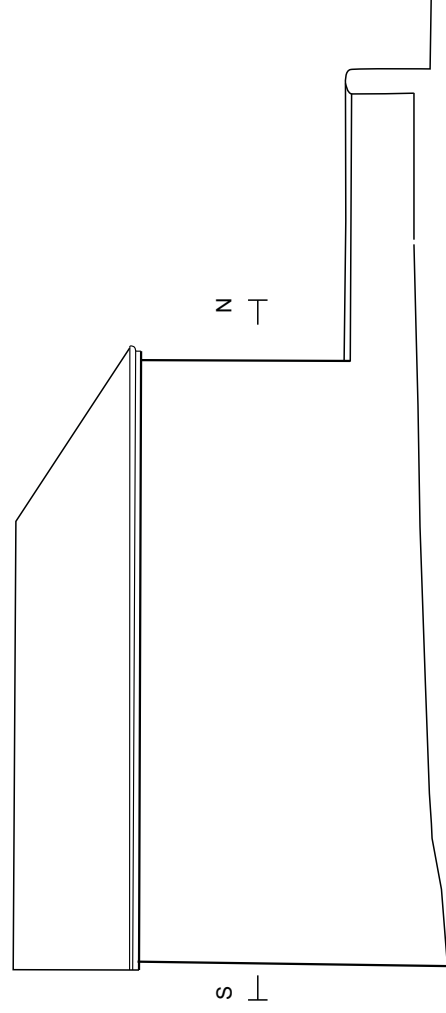


Fig. 16 First floor plan of the linhay and shippon. Scale 1:125.

North elevation



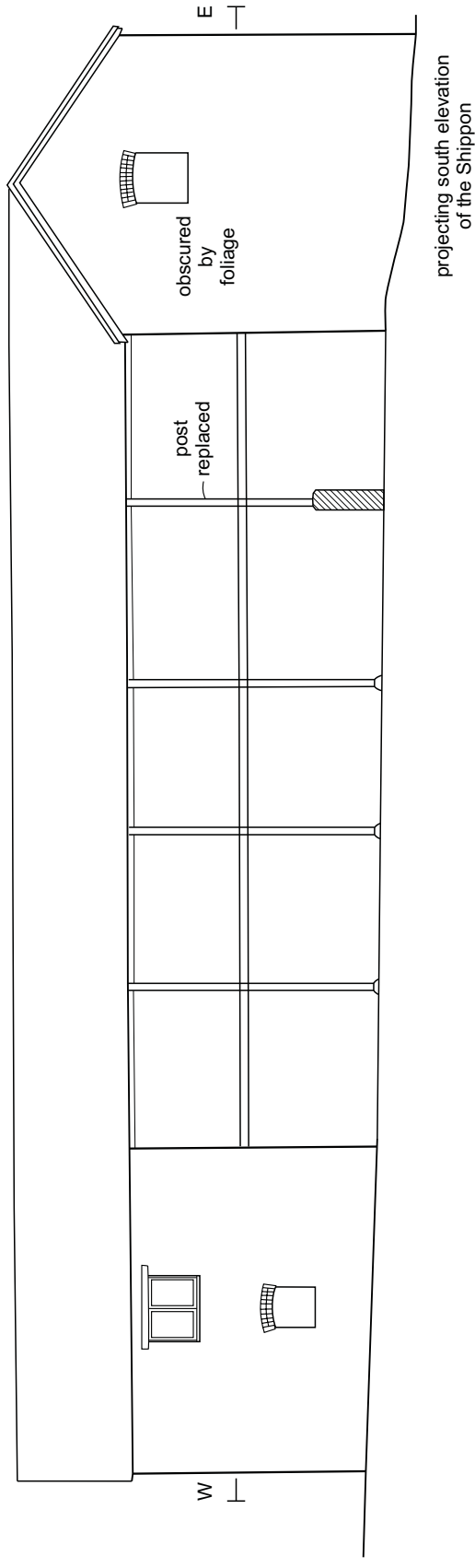
East elevation



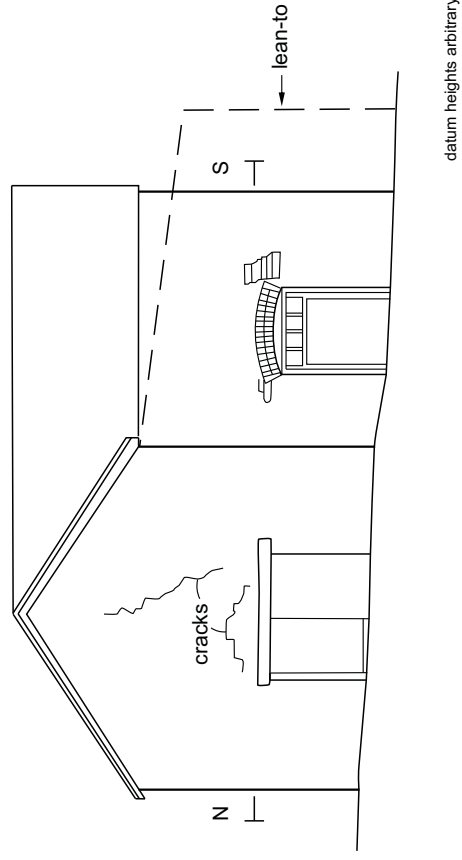
datum heights arbitrary 0 10 metres

Fig. 17 North and east elevations of the linhay and shippon. Scale 1:125.

South elevation



West elevation



0 10 metres

Fig. 18 South elevation of the linhay and west elevation of the shippon. Scale 1:125.

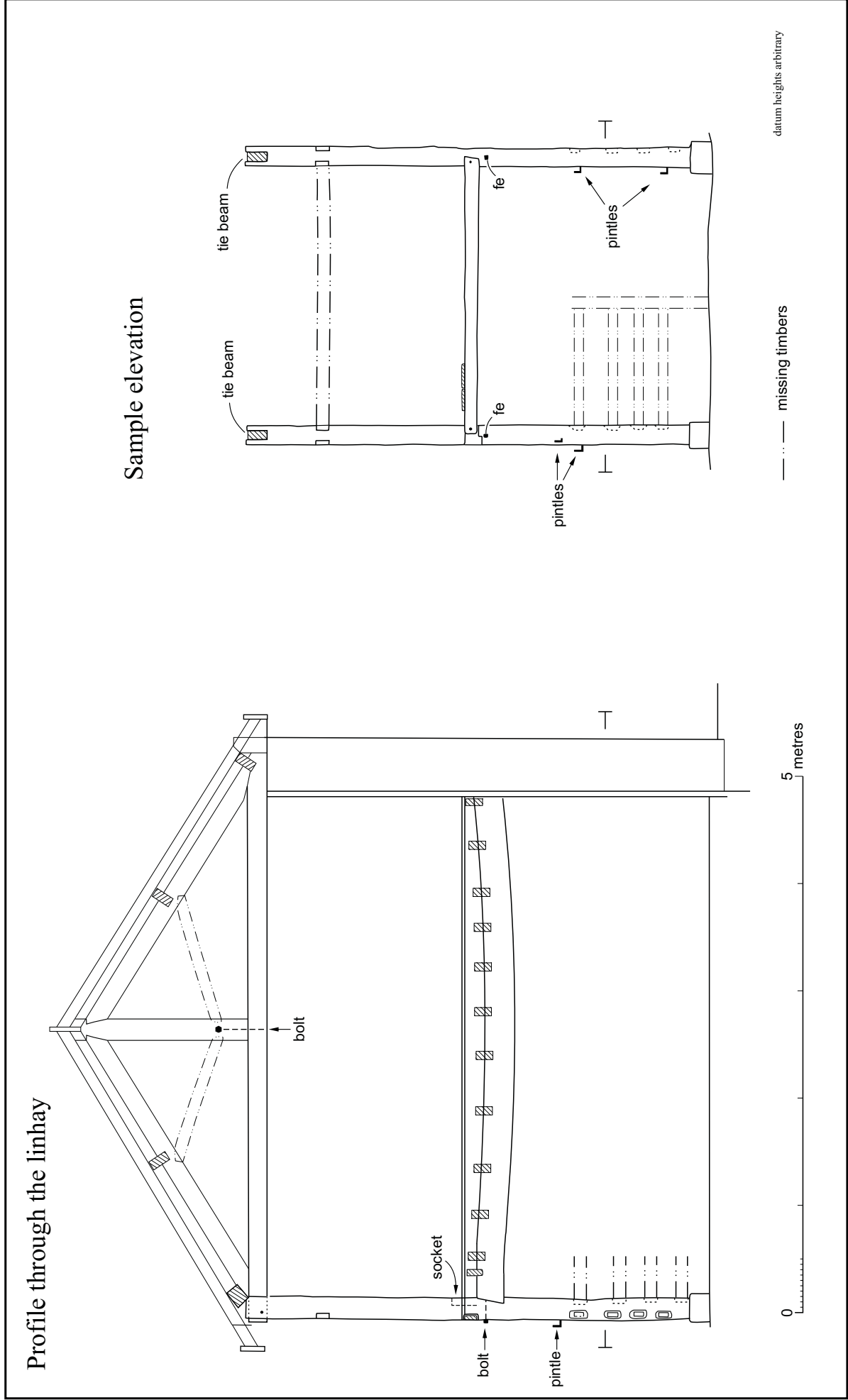


Fig. 19 Profile through the linhay and sample elevation of a bay within the linhay. Scale 1:50.



Pl. 1 The farmhouse prior to renovations, looking north-west.



Pl. 2 The graffiti on the kitchen door, looking north-west.



Pl. 3 The east range of the farmhouse, south elevation, showing narrowed cross passage and other alterations, looking north. 1m scale.



Pl. 4 The medieval roof of the cross wing, showing the south truss and wind braces on the east side of the roof, looking south-east.



Pl. 5 The linhay and shippon, looking north-west. 1m scale.



Pl. 6 The inside of the linhay, looking east. 2m scale.