

**FORMER PETER KIRK SCHOOL
STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET, ESSEX**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**FORMER PETER KIRK SCHOOL
STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET, ESSEX**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

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NGR: 5131 2495	Report No.3218
Parish: Stansted Mountfitchet	Site Code: SMPK08
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3304
Signed:	Date: November 2008

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Former Peter Kirk School, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex: Historic Building Recording</i>		
Project description (250 words)			
<p><i>In November 2008 Archaeological Solutions carried out a programme of historic building recording at the former Peter Kirk School building in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex. The purpose of the work was to investigate and clarify the origins and development of the existing building prior to residential conversion, as well as accurately recording the building in its current state.</i></p> <p><i>Both historic research and physical analysis has established a good record of the history of the building, which began as a British School. The main range is dated by a foundation stone to 1862 and is a typical of many mid- and later-Victorian school buildings with tall windows lighting spacious classrooms. The building is almost symmetrical, with decorative elements in yellow gault bricks. Later additions include tall chimney stacks and a smaller rear range, which was added in almost identical style.</i></p> <p><i>Comprehensive remodelling of the interior in the recent past makes it difficult to establish the original layout, though the window pattern suggests one or two large classrooms, open to an exposed roof and rooms for the school teachers behind. This is confirmed by extensive documentary evidence which suggest a fluid arrangement with movable partitions. Overall, the materials are robust and decoration fairly restrained, congruous with a building constructed on a modest budget, but adhering to the architectural fashions of the day.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>19th November 2008</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>3304</i>	Site code	<i>SMPK08</i>
Type of project	<i>Historic Building Recording</i>		
Site status	<i>Conservation area</i>		
Current land use	<i>Disused former school</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential conversion</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Mid-19th century structure with later alterations</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>N/A</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Stansted Mountfitchet</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>Not known</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 928m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5131 2495</i>		
Height AOD	<i>c. 65m</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Adam Garwood, Essex County Council</i>		
Project Officers	<i>Tansy Collins / Kathren Henry / Lee Prosser / Matthew Williams</i>		
Funded by	<i>Croft Homes Limited</i>		
Full title	<i>Former Peter Kirk School, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex: Historic Building Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Collins, T., Prosser, L., and Williams, M.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3218</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>November 2008</i>		

FORMER PETER KIRK SCHOOL STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET, ESSEX HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

SUMMARY

In November 2008 Archaeological Solutions carried out a programme of historic building recording at the former Peter Kirk School building in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex. The purpose of the work was to investigate and clarify the origins and development of the existing building prior to residential conversion, as well as accurately recording the building in its current state.

Both historic research and physical analysis has established a good record of the history of the building, which began as a British School. The main range is dated by a foundation stone to 1862 and is a typical of many mid and later-Victorian school buildings with tall windows lighting spacious classrooms. The building is almost symmetrical, with decorative elements in yellow gault bricks. Later additions include tall chimney stacks and a smaller rear range, which was added in almost identical style.

Comprehensive remodelling of the interior in the recent past makes it difficult to establish the original layout, though the window pattern suggests one or two large classrooms, open to an exposed roof and rooms for the school teachers behind. This is confirmed by extensive documentary evidence which suggest a fluid arrangement with movable partitions. Overall, the materials are robust and decoration fairly restrained, congruous with a building constructed on a modest budget, but adhering to the architectural fashions of the day.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2008 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of historic building recording at the former Peter Kirk School, Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex (Location TL 5131 2495; Figs. 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Croft Homes Ltd, as a requirement of a condition of Planning/Listed Building Consent relating to the proposed residential conversion of the building (Uttlesford Planning Approval Ref. UTT/2124/07/FUL). The condition required the implementation of a programme of recording and analysis of the building in advance of the proposed conversionworks.

1.2 The work was conducted according to a specification prepared by AS and dated 20th October 2008, in response to a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch dated 14th October 2008. The recording was carried out to Level 3 as defined in the English Heritage document *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*, 2006. It was also carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (revised 2001).

1.3 As set out in the English Heritage and IFA documents, the objectives of the historic building recording were:

- to compile a comprehensive and high quality record of the structure identified for alteration, with analysis and interpretation of that structure in conjunction with an associated documentary survey;
- to provide a review of the local and regional historical context of the building, adequately detailed to place the findings of the archaeological recording in context, and;
- to produce a high quality, fully integrated archive suitable for long-term deposition in order to ‘preserve by record’ the building in its current form prior to alteration.

Planning Policy Context and Research Priorities

1.4 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effects of development upon cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 ‘Planning and the Historic Environment’ (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 ‘Archaeology and Planning’ (PPG16) (Department of the Environment).

1.5 PPG15 (1994) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to the conservation of the historic environment. This encourages protection of the character and appearance of conservation areas and protection of listed buildings from demolition and unsympathetic change, safeguarding their settings as far as possible. This condition is widely applied by local authorities.

1.6 Research priorities for the region are outlined in the East Anglian regional archaeological research framework which notes that structures of the Industrial Age, dating from 1750 – 1960, face a high rate of loss due to renovation, conversion and redundancy (Brown & Glazebrook 2000). It should be noted that the building falls within this time frame.

2 METHOD OF WORK

2.1 Primary Sources: Documents and Maps

The documentary and cartographic sources were consulted at Essex Record Office (ERO) in Chelmsford and, in one case, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) in Hertford. The sources are all listed in Appendix 1. They are discussed in Sections 4 and 5, the maps being reproduced as Figs. 3-7.

2.2 Secondary Sources

The principal location of secondary sources was ERO. The library resources at AS were also consulted. These sources have been listed in the bibliography and referenced in the text where appropriate.

2.3 Fieldwork

2.3.1 The site was visited on 19th November 2008 in order to compile descriptions of the building and undertake the drawing and photographic work. Tansy Collins and Lee Prosser carried out the written description and analysis. Drawings provided by the client were checked for accuracy and supplemented where necessary by Charlotte Davies and Kathren Henry. These are included as Figs. 8-10.

2.3.2 The photographic recording was conducted by Tansy Collins using medium format (4.5 x 6 cm) black and white film and included all external views and general internal shots. This was carried out using a Zenza Bronica ETRS camera with 62mm lens and Ilford HP5 IOS 400 film. Any relevant supplementary black and white photography of architectural details was carried out using a Minolta Dynax 40 camera and 35mm film. Colour photographs were taken using an Olympus Camedia E20 digital camera, duplicating the principal black and white photography. Supplementary colour photography was carried out using an MZ-M Pentax camera and 35mm Kodak elite slide film. External lighting and weather conditions were good at the time of the survey. A scale was used wherever possible, and a flash was employed for internal shots. A pictorial index of all digital photography, along with a number of selected plates, is included below as well as location plots (Fig. 8).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 and 2)

3.1 The assessment site is located in Stansted Mountfitchet, a large village on the western edge of Essex near the border with Hertfordshire. Approximately 4 km to the south-west is the town of Bishop's Stortford, while the smaller village of Elsenham lies to the north-east. The eastern and south-eastern sides of Stansted Mountfitchet are now dominated by the M11 Cambridge – London motorway, beyond which is London Stansted Airport. To the north and west, however, the village is still surrounded by relatively open countryside. The village is served by a railway, which runs from London to both Cambridge and the airport.

3.2 The assessment building lies on the north side of Chapel Hill, where the road falls steeply to the south-east giving the site a pronounced slope in this direction. To the north-west of the site is St. John's Church and to the south-east is a road junction where the road diverges in several directions. Buildings within the immediate vicinity of the site comprise a 19th century chapel to the east and further school buildings to the north, none of which falls into the scope of this assessment.

4 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

4.1 The building provides its own potted history by a plaque, which proclaims: "Built by voluntary contributions 1862 land given by Wm Fuller Maitland. Esq Established 1835". The *Post Office Directory* of 1882 notes that the "British School" was originally built in 1835 and then rebuilt in 1862 using funds raised from the members of the Society of Friends and those of the adjacent Congregational Chapel. The site of the present building is recorded in the Stansted Mountfitchet Tithe Award of 1843 as having been a "Chapel and Yard" owned by the "Chapel Trustees of Old".

While a school associated with the Chapel is mentioned, the Award and its corresponding map (discussed below) give no evidence that it lay on this site. Apparently the only document to have survived from the pre-1862 school is a loose poster advertising “a public meeting” concerning the school, to “...be held on Friday, July 30th, 1852 in a tent in Green & Marsh’s Field...” There appears to be no record, however, of the meeting itself or of its subject matter.

4.2 Documentation improves from the beginning of the rebuilding process which is recorded in detail in the school’s minute books for 1861 – 1881. At a meeting of the School Committee held on 13th August 1861, “It was proposed by Charles Hicks and seconded by Mr Cowell that the piece of Ground proposed to be given by W F Maitland Esq be accepted.” The minutes go on to say that it was “proposed by C Hicks & seconded by I Fennell that Mr Cowell be employed to make out plans and specification for a Building.” On January 10th of the following year it was proposed “that the plans and contract...for 420 [pounds] be accepted.” The minutes go on to note that “It is the wish of the Committee that George Drew should do the Brick work” but that he was to be allowed to subcontract the work if he became busy. It was then decided to appoint a committee to “superintend the carrying out of the arrangements.”

4.3 The new building appears to have been completed in a short space of time as the full committee reconvened on October 31st 1862 to administer the opening of the new school. Thanks were given to Mr Maitland and other donors to the project while a new committee was appointed to manage the school with the Reverend D. Davies as Secretary, E. Hicks Junior at Assistant Secretary, and C. Hicks Junior as Treasurer. It was also proposed “that any subscribers of 21/ to the school shall be at liberty to send one child to the School free...” The opening of the new school was, however, also a public and celebratory event. Specially printed posters and hand bills advertising the occasion survive in Essex Record Office and read as follows: “Opening of the new British Schools Stansted. The committee have pleasure in stating that a soiree will take place in connection with the above Schools, on Friday, October 31st, 1862. The chair will be taken at half-past six o’clock, by Thomas Chambers, Esq., Q.C., Common Sergeant of the City of London. A number of Gentlemen are expected to address the Meeting. A few short pieces of Music will be sung at intervals during the Evening. The Treat of the School Children will take place at Four o’clock. Tea will be provided for the Company at Five o’clock. Tickets, 1s. each. May be had of Green & Marsh; W.L. Pavitt; and at the Door.”

4.4 This event was given an extensive write-up in the next edition of the Chelmsford Chronicle of November 11th 1862, beginning with a detailed description of the building itself: “A neat and newly erected brick building, in the plain Gothic style, intended for the use of the British schools at this place...It is situated on the north side of the hill leading from Stansted-Street to that part of the parish called Stansted Chapel, and is a very substantial structure. The whole area is 32 feet by 44 feet, having a moveable partition to form a class room; this is exclusive of lobbies and entrance, and a porch 13 feet by 12 feet. At either end are three lancet windows, and corresponding lights in the other walls, which are of solid 14 inch brickwork, with concrete foundation. The gable roof left open in the interior is covered with Gothic and octagon tiles finished with crested ridges and surmounted by a neat campanile.

Near the principal entrance is an inscription...The architect was Mr J. Cowell, of London; the builder Mr. C. Levy, of Stansted Mountfitchet.”

4.5 After a description of the “treat of the schoolchildren”, who were “abundantly supplied with good tea, bread, butter and cake” the article describes in some detail the speeches given during the remainder of the evening, beginning with that by the chairman Rev. Mr. James. This speech is of some interest as it gives an insight into the social and religious context for the foundation of the school. According to the article, Rev. James said that “he took that chair with great pleasure, not only because he should address persons of different denominations and persuasions, but because the subject they met upon, the education of youth, was a great blessing to the community. A universal education was most desirable; and he was very happy to be here surrounded by some members of the established church, by different classes of dissenters, and by many of the Society of Friends.” He went on to claim that “Fifty years ago if their building had been built at all it would not have been erected with the sanction and support of mixed churchmen and dissenters...So [that] none of them [have] surrendered anything except their prejudices...”

4.6 The article goes on to provide extracts from the subsequent speech of Rev. D. Davies, which provides some more information on the history of the school itself. According to the article, Rev. Davies said that the school was “...established in 1829, and was then called the Free School of Industry, and held in the vestry of the adjoining chapel; but in 1835 the old school-house was built, and then it was fully established upon the principles of the British and Foreign School system...From the beginning it was considered too small, and hence arose the necessity of the present school-room, which was delayed for some time on account of the want of a site, but ultimately this quarter of an acre was given by W. Fuller Maitland...”

4.7 Relatively few documents relating to the life of the school survive from the following 25 years. The *Post Office Directory of Essex* of 1874 refers to Henry Parry as the master of the school. One item of interest dating from a few years later is a series of minutes from 25th November 1881 recording a meeting of the managing committee of the school where it was “Proposed by Charles Hicks seconded by Rev. D. Davies and carried that the offer of £60 made by H. Pulteney Esq. for the strip of ground whereon the old British School erected 1835 stood, together with the old playground, be accepted (with the understanding that the end wall continues the property of the Trustees of the British School as agreed)”. For reasons which are not explained, the same document includes a list of the 10 original trustees of the Old British School and their dates of death and places of burial. Mr Fuller Maitland is at the head of the list, having died on February 15th 1876 and been buried in the vault of Stansted Church. Only one trustee, John Tanner, remained alive and living in Stansted Mountfitchet.

4.8 Another short sequence of documents survives from 1881 and records the appointment of a Mr S B Geller as master of the school. This begins with a letter from Mr Geller to the Rev. Davies, which begins: “In reply to yours received today, I write to say that I am willing to undertake the duties of Schoolmaster as Stansted B. School, at a salary of 100£pr. annum, with a dwelling house or its equivalent – my wife also superintending the needlework. This is lower than my arrangements here have been under the Board, but I am chiefly anxious to have a suitable sphere of

labour, which from what I have heard of Stansted + not being altogether a stranger to some of the [Society of] friends, I believe I should find here...” This letter is followed by another dated July 30th 1881 “...to acknowledge receipt of your communicating the decision of your Committee to appoint me a Master, which I herewith accept...” *Kelly's Directory of Essex* of 1882 notes Mr Geller as the Master of the school. It seems that he did not remain in his post for much longer than three years, however, as the final letter in the series dated 12th December 1884 is from P Cummins of the Education Department to J.J. Green of Stansted Mountfitchet awarding “...a pension at the rate of £25 – per annum to W. Samuel Bellhouse Geller...The first half-yearly payment will be due on the 25th March 1885.”

4.9 From 1886 until the end of the 19th century, many more documents survive which trace the social history of the school and portray an institution which had become an important part of the life of its community. A good example is an article published in an (unnamed) local newspaper on 18th June 1887 describing the evening celebrations at the school for the 50th anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria: “On Tuesday a dramatic Cantata, entitled “The Queen’s Jubilee”, was given by the scholars. The Schoolroom was decorated for the occasion with wild flowers, mottoes, and a portrait of the Queen. There was a crowded audience. The characters impersonated were: - Britannia, Soldier, Sailor, Hodge [a builder’s labourer], Commerce, Industry, Music, Liberty, Education, Temperance, Religion, etc...” Other articles describe frequent prize-givings for attendance, a “sociable evening for the young people connected to the chapel”, a “tea for the scholars” and numerous Christmas concerts.

4.10 Two articles, both again from unnamed newspapers, give some insight into the running of the school by quoting from recent Inspector’s Reports, that from 4th May 1889 reproducing the following extract: “This is a very orderly school and the Children’s Institution is satisfactory. Class subjects – English and Geography – have been well taught. The young scholars in the infant’s class room are on the whole well prepared.” The article goes on to note that “the percentage of children...passed nearly approaches 90.” A similar article from 20th October 1891 includes this extract from the Inspector’s Report: “This school is in very satisfactory working order and much commendably good work has been done in it during the past year, despite the prevalence of sickness.” The article then quotes a letter sent in to the newspaper which comments on the finances of the school, noting that “As the funds of the school are not in a prosperous condition, it is hoped that considering its efficiency under the mastership of John Woolley, that those who should take an interest in its welfare will do their utmost to bring about a better financial position.”

4.11 Mr Woolley appears to have remained in charge of the school for many years after this. *Kelly's Directory of Essex* of 1894 names him as the master with Miss Ethel Brown as the assistant mistress. The entry also notes the capacity of the school as 145 children with average attendance of 115. Mr Woolley remains as master in *Kelly's* of 1902 although the assistant mistress is now a Miss Margery Wilson. This edition of *Kelly's* also notes that “A new classroom was added in 1898, & the school now holds 192 children; average attendance, 148.” The final available edition of *Kelly's* dates to 1914 and shows that Mr Woolley was still in charge of the school after more than 20 years. The entry also notes a change of name to the “Council

School” for boys, and records that although the school had been further enlarged in 1912 average attendance remained at around 100 pupils per day.

4.12 The “Council School” was amalgamated with St. Mary’s Church of England Primary School in the mid 20th century. When this school moved premises in 1978 the original British School buildings became the Peter Kirk School for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties, in which use they have remained until the recent closure of the school and the proposals for redevelopment which have led to the production of this report.

5 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Chapman and Andre’s Map of Essex, 1777 (Fig. 3)

5.1 This is the earliest known depiction of the site. At this time the modern village of Stansted Mountfitchet is divided into two quite distinct parts, a linear settlement along the main northward road on Pyners Hill to the west labeled “The Chapel” and a more nuclear settlement labeled “Stansted Street” concentrated in the valley to the south-east. The two junctions which remain at the northern and southern ends of the modern village near the site, discussed above, can already be seen clearly. The site itself appears not to have been developed.

5.2 On this map the name Stansted Mountfitchet is not applied to the two settlements at all but refers instead to a hill to the south-east occupied by Stansted Hall and the small settlement of Button End. Beneath the name Stansted Hall is that of the owner or occupier, Wm. Heath Esq. Just to the south-west of this is a depiction of a church, which is not labeled. Further afield, Elsenham to the north-east, Birchanger to the south, and Hatfield Forest to the south-east are all clearly visible.

Stansted Mountfitchet Tithe Map, 1843 (Fig. 4)

5.3 This map shows very little change from the previous document, the modern village remaining divided into two separate settlements as before. Individual buildings are depicted more clearly, however, and field and property boundaries are shown

5.4 It appears that a building had now been constructed on the site which may correspond to that referred to in the documentary evidence discussed above as having been built in 1835.

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1897 (Fig. 5)

5.5 This map indicates that a great deal of change had taken place around the site in the preceding 50 years. The London to Cambridge railway had been built, with a station, goods yard and sidings in the village. To the west of this lies a gas works and a small development of terraced housing. At the northern end of the settlement is Stansted Brewery. Numerous housing developments have appeared in the village, now extending up the hill between the two settlements, which as a result are now labeled jointly as Stansted Mountfitchet for the first time.

5.6 The assessment site itself is depicted more clearly and shows an approximately “L” shaped building which is labeled “School”. Both the main range and the rear range, discussed below, appear to be present although a small unit can be seen on the main frontage that is not present today. Two small outbuildings are also visible to the rear. Although the plot to the south-east is now occupied by the Congregational Chapel, the land to the immediate north and west of the site remains open. A short distance further to the north-west is the new St. John’s Church.

OS Map 1921 (Fig. 6)

5.7 This map shows further, rapid development in the village including a large number of new terraced houses to the south-west of the site on the south side of Chapel Hill. Numerous semi-detached suburban houses have appeared elsewhere in the village. The previously open ground to the south of St. John’s Church and the west of the site has been enclosed and appears to be a landscaped park of some kind with a central crossing between two paths, one of which runs into the churchyard.

5.8 The site itself has expanded and is now named “Schools” reflecting the addition of a further large building to the north of the assessment structure. The two small outbuildings seen immediately to the north on the previous map are now gone. The assessment building follows more closely the footprint of the building seen today. The small unit on the frontage is now absent. A further extension can be seen between the main and rear projecting range, now not present, although the scars of such are evident, see below.

OS Map 1956 (Fig. 7)

5.9 This map shows the village set in a wider landscape which is easily recognisable today. Stansted Airport is visible to the south-east although the M11 has yet to be built. The London – Cambridge railway line is also clearly visible, along with two additional east-bound branch lines which have now been decommissioned. The smaller scale of this map prevents detailed analysis of the assessment building and so no further information is discernable.

6 THE BUILDING

Exterior

6.1 The building is a two-bay single storey structure sitting on a slight terrace and dominating the open slope to the south-south-west (Plate 1). It has a lower and slightly later range, together with a formerly open playground to the rear. The building is orientated west-north-west to east-south-east although for clarity in this report is simplified as west to east in the description below. On the east at the rear, several ephemeral and possibly modern buildings once housing lavatories have been removed, leaving demolition scars on the brickwork. Boundary walls separate the school grounds from the lane, where we see a mixture of 19th century brick with 20th century repairs, while the north is bounded by newer, early 20th century wall contemporary with Edwardian buildings which lie beyond.

6.2 The building is constructed of soft, sandy red brick laid in Flemish bond with decorative bands and window dressings of yellow gault brick. A low plinth extends around much of the structure, though is only now visible on the east façade and areas of the south elevation, the remainder being obscured by later alterations in ground level. The window form is of wide sashes and sashed lancets to the side gables, apart from a single diamond lattice to the rear, though all windows were boarded up at the time of the survey. A stone tablet on the main frontage dates the main range to 1862, entirely consistent with the materials and motifs used.

6.3 From the front the building is almost symmetrical, with a pair of projecting bays with dormer roofs, and a steeply pitched roof of machine-made peg tiles. The documentary evidence suggests that the building was originally roofed with decorative tiles with a campanile, and these clearly replace that arrangement. Later, slender chimneys rise from the eaves and are partly supported by iron rods.

6.4 The red brick is fine and slightly sandy, creased but almost free of inclusions, measuring 9" x 2½" x 4¼" (229mm x 64mm x 108mm). Where these have been dislodged they have a shallow frog and are marked with crude lettering 'S.H.E', a brickmaker as yet unidentified in the literature. The decorative dressings are of the same dimensions but wire-cut yellow gault bricks. These may be identified as the patent brick first produced by Robert Beart from 1852 at Huntingdon, or in this case, with 21 perforations, as the classic Arlesey brick (Plate 2). Large areas of original mortar remain, though some crude, piecemeal repointing has taken place. Occasional decorative iron air bricks are visible.

6.5 The south elevation frames four large windows, each with a wide central mullion and upper transom, dividing the windows into ten panes with chamfered brick sills. The central pair retain apparently timber lintels at eaves level, while the flanking bay windows are supported with a cement-rendered iron lintel and dressed with a pair of pointed relieving arches (also of Arlesey brick) set high in the gable. These arches and others visible around the building show traces of discrete blackening which we do not see on the banding, suggesting that they were originally treated in some way to create a decorative polychrome effect. The banding comprises two courses that cross the building at three levels. The bay gables have robust recessed barge boards fixed to protruding wall plates which terminate in pyramidal caps. Robust tongue-in-groove boarding is similarly visible, extending from the interior.

6.5 The original symmetry is upset by a slender chimney set slightly off-centre rising through the roof pitch, which has been partly rebuilt and is supported by an iron band and rod. Beneath this chimney we see a large nut for an internal tie, perhaps fixing a roof truss to the masonry. A second chimney rises to the west, likewise banded and supported with iron. A central plaque set below window level records the dedication of the building in carved stone:

BUILT
BY
VOLUNTARY
CONTRIBUTIONS
1862
LAND GIVEN
BY
W^M FULLER
MAITLAND.^{ESQ}
ESTABLISHED
1835

6.6 The flanking gable ends, both east and west, are of identical form with three lancet windows. Unlike on the south the jambs here are dressed with chamfered Arlesey brick with chamfered sills, divided by transoms with ten panes as before. Staggered relieving arches in the gable display the blackening seen elsewhere. The gables are also finished with the decorative timberwork seen on the dormer roofs, with protruding wall-plates and two purlins in each flight, all tapering to pyramidal caps and supporting a thick bargeboard which is chamfered in small sections between the purlins.

6.7 A fourth window sits slightly apart from the lancets on both elevations, wider but dressed in the same manner. That on the west has been truncated and the sill raised. The east elevation retains a benchmark on the south end within the plinth course.

6.8 The rear range continues the style and form of the west elevation but displays subtle differences. It has a single slender tall window which rises into the roof as a dormer (Plate 3), all dressed as before although the pointed arch here performs its job as a voussoir and has a steep stone sill. Two thick transoms divide 14 panes. The roof of this range has been replaced with modern cement tiles.

6.9 The range returns to the north with three lancets in the gable end, having a taller central window but similarly treated as the side. The central window has 16 panes and those flanking 12. The east return has seen much disturbance with the removal of modern extensions, leaving extensive scarring. One feature of note is a partly demolished brick pier that originally formed a chimney / flue for an internal fireplace (see below).

6.10 The north elevation of the main range is likewise much disturbed, although to the east we see a single window which differs by having a pointed arch as a voussoir (as on the rear wing) and protrudes into the yellow brick banding, together with a steep sill. There is no evidence however, that this has been inserted. A wide doorway lies to the west displaying bull-nosed brick jambs beneath a cast cement lintel. Iron banding with rod supports a tall chimney on the main range.

Interior

6.11 Documents and maps suggest an original entrance and porch to the south, though there is now no trace of this, and the main entrance remains the wide door from the north, described above. This opens into a vestibule, with a cupboard and office leading to left and right with doorways on the south giving access to two spacious classrooms occupying the main frontage. A further large classroom occupies the rear range, which can be entered from the vestibule, but also has its own external door. All the existing internal partitions are modern and constructed of wide interlocking gypsum panels, although these may follow an earlier layout suggested by the window pattern. A picture rail survives at high level throughout much of the structure and seems to have been reinstated when the current walling was inserted. Several softwood panelled doors surviving in the building, though no longer hung, are consistent with a mid-19th century date. Little of decorative interest now survives, though some disturbance to the external walls has been made good with Flettons.

6.12 The entrance vestibule is fairly plain although original features include the wide external doorway with chamfered and stopped jambs with a large rendered lintel over. This preserves a heavy architrave with recesses in the jambs, suggesting the earlier presence of swinging or folding doors. A door into the rear range to the west preserves chamfered and stopped jambs which clearly once housed a large robust frame, now removed. A full height cupboard to the west preserves a similar, but blocked window aperture with a pointed arched head to the rear wing.

6.13 Room 1 comprises a large former classroom occupying the south-east area of the main range. Exposure of the original flooring in one area reveals widely spaced joists and softwood boards. There is little else of note although the base of a chimneystack survives in the south-west corner, which retains fragments of an original surround.

6.14 The window arrangement is typical for a school, being a mixture of sashes and bottom-hung casements within protective restraining frames. The south wall has two wide windows (Plate 4) displaying chamfered bricks to the jambs. A robust central mullion and an upper transom divide these windows with lower 4-over-4 sashes (with simple horns on both upper and lower sashes). Two-paned bottom-hung casements sit above the mullions. The glazing bars are robust with a simple chamfer and variable Victorian sash catches surviving here and on most other windows. The east wall has three windows, each comprising bottom-hung casements below four-pane fixed lights with further bottom-hung four-pane casements above.

6.15 Room 2 to the west is similarly unadorned although slightly larger than its counterpart. In the south-east corner lies the rear of the chimneystack which is constructed of Fletton brick and confirms it as a later insertion. A companion flue in the south-west corner is of similar form. The windows mirror those seen in Room 1 and here all window furniture similarly survives.

6.16 A doorway in the north-west corner of Room 2 gives access to a small Room 3 now occupied by a copper boiler. This room preserves a window on the west that mirrors the form of the individual windows on the frontage, i.e. a four-over-four sash with a two-pane bottom-hung casement over the mullion.

6.17 Room 4 lies to the east of the entrance vestibule and may originally have been the head teacher's office. A window on the east has a lower sash window with upper casements, while a smaller window on the north is of more gothic style with a latticed iron-framed casement in two sections, the upper section turning on a pivot (Plate 5). Adjoining this window to the west is a small fireplace of Fletton brick construction. The surround and grate is now lost.

6.18 Room 5 occupies the rear wing and is fairly unadorned, though perhaps more of its earlier features survive than are visible elsewhere. The floor is now concrete slab, but the lower section of the walls show traces of boarding or simple wainscoting, with the upper area of painted brick. This internal brick is laid in English bond, by contrast to the exterior. The south wall was originally an external wall of the main range where we see a doorway and a blocked window (Plate 6). Three windows on the north wall and one on the west differ slightly from the main range. On the north we see the two flanking windows divided into three and the central window divided into four sections. Each window has upper and lower four-pane bottom-hung casements with fixed central sections. A central blocked fireplace on the east wall reflects position of the partly demolished flue seen from the exterior. The door to the exterior is clearly modern, and lies adjacent to a blocked aperture with a pointed arch. The original ceiling remains visible above a modern suspended frame and comprises bead-moulded boarding on each pitch to collar level. Boarding is also visible on the south wall above the original eaves of the main range.

Roof

6.19 The roof structure of the main range is now obscured beneath a modern ceiling, but is visible at a distance through a hatch, and was clearly once exposed, having decorative chamfers and stops, and preserving a varnished appearance. This is confirmed also by the documentary evidence. The feet of five rafter couples are, however visible, with a raised tie-beam, supported by long, straight braces, springing from the base of the rafters which meet at the centre of the tie-beam. The tie beam in turn supports a king-post with raking struts (confirming that this member performs as a tie-beam and not a collar). There appears to be two purlins per pitch, cogged over the back of the principal rafters with seven slender common rafters per bay, in turn slightly cogged over the purlins, with a ridge board and heavy under-boarding to the roof.

6.20 The roof form of the rear wing was not accessible for inspection.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 The building is an interesting example of its type and date, because as a fairly late example of the British School system it anticipates the later forms of architecture which are so common in Victorian and Edwardian schools; large classrooms and a fondness for gables which allowed high ceilings and tall windows, for example.

7.2 The architect was probably Jasper Cowell, of Islington, who does not seem to have achieved much prominence, but was a pupil of John Thomas, who in turn was a

sculptor and architect associated with Charles Barry and Edward Blore. Cowell seems to have drawn on a series of typical Victorian motifs, building a restrained Gothic structure with economy (as was required by the endowment), but still able to use decorative touches, and good materials to give it the typical Victorian appearance which is preserved today.

7.3 The building makes an interesting comparison with its neighbours, the Congregationalist Chapel and the later school buildings to the west in the context of the materials used. The former is built in a more classical idiom and entirely of Arlesey brick, at a time when the fashion for yellow brick was waning and new influences taking over. The school retains these as dressings, but the newer buildings to the west, erected at the turn of the 20th century have dispensed with yellow brick altogether and adopted more Arts and Crafts motifs. So here we see three buildings expressing the transition in style and materials. Many similar examples survive. The Sunday School in Maldon, built in 1843 is an earlier precursor, constructed as a British School adjacent to a chapel. The use of red brick with gault brick dressings is fairly prevalent throughout Essex, such as the school buildings at Wicken Bonhunt and Ulting School. Latticed iron-framed casements can be seen on examples such as Wicken Bonhunt and the village school at Debden, which was built in the same year as Peter Kirk School.

7.4 Although it has undergone substantial remodelling, we can retrieve its likely earlier appearance and interior layout by comparing the physical and documentary evidence. The external richness has been diminished by the loss of the original decorative tiling, perhaps arranged in the typical pattern of alternating bands of octagonal and square-ended peg tiles. Similarly the campanile is lost. The rear wing was probably added shortly after construction, perhaps as late as the 1890s when there is a documentary reference, and this may have been a classroom for infants which is spoken about in the record.

7.5 The interior was a fairly Spartan affair, initially given no source of heating (though stoves may have been present), which was open to a decorative roof, and having exposed but painted walls, certainly at the upper level. Superficial investigations into the paintwork on the windows and doors suggests a series of off-whites, punctuated by an episode of green in the 20th century.

7.6 The idea of movable partitions within the main range is interesting, but no trace of this remains today. The presence of two fireplaces suggests the subdivision of the building into two large classrooms before the end of the 19th century, with a third heating the small office to the rear. The chimneys must have been added some time after construction, as the lower parts are built of salmon-pink Fletton bricks, which were not produced before 1882, and in any case they sit awkwardly with the symmetry of the exterior.

7.7 Overall the structure remains recognisably Victorian, with no doubt as to its former function as a school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr John Seabrook of Croft Homes Limited for funding the works and for his kind assistance, and their architects, Michael Sierens Associates Chartered Architects Ltd for assistance. AS would also like to thank the builder, Mr Dave Hunter for his assistance.

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank the staff of Essex SMR, Essex Record Office and Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies for their help.

AS would also like to acknowledge the assistance, input and advice of Mr Adam Garwood of Essex County Council Historic Environment management Team.

DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE

An archive of all materials produced by the report has been created and listed. Copies of the final report will be lodged with the client, the local planning authority, Essex HER, ERO and the National Monuments Record, Swindon. The archive will be lodged with ERO.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, N. & Glazebrook, J. (eds.) 2000 *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 8

Uttlesford District Council 2007 *Stansted Mountfitchet Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals, Draft for Consultation*

Directory of British Architects 1834 – 1900. The Royal Institute of British Architects

APPENDIX 1 PRIMARY SOURCES CONSULTED

Documentary Sources

Date	Description	Location	Reference
1843	Stansted Mountfitchet Tithe Award	ERO	D/CT/328/A
1852	Loose poster advertising meeting concerning the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
13/08/1861	Minutes of meeting of the managers of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
10/01/1862	Minutes of meeting of the managers of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
01/10/1862	Minutes of meeting of the managers of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
11/11/1862	Newspaper article from the <i>Chelmsford Chronicle</i> describing the opening of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
1862	Loose poster advertising the opening of the new British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
05/06/1863	Minutes of meeting of the managers of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
1874	<i>Post Office Directory of Essex</i>	Online	historicaldirectories.org
21/07/1881	Letter from Mr S B Geller to the Rev. D Davies	ERO	T/P 68/21
30/07/1881	Letter from Mr S B Geller to the Rev. D Davies	ERO	T/P 68/21
25/11/1881	Minutes of meeting of the managers of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
1882	<i>Kelly's Directory of Essex</i>	Online	historicaldirectories.org
12/12/1884	Letter from P. Cummins to J. J. Green	ERO	T/P 68/21
25/12/1886	Article from unnamed newspaper on Christmas concert at the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
18/06/1887	Article from unnamed newspaper on celebrations of Queen Victoria's 50 th anniversary at the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
04/05/1889	Article from unnamed newspaper on recent inspection of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
04/06/1889	Handbill advertising evening event at the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
12/10/1889	Article from unnamed newspaper on scholars' tea at the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
17/12/1889	Handbill advertising the annual concert of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
21/12/1890	Article from unnamed newspaper on the Christmas concert of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
24/01/1891	Article from unnamed newspaper	ERO	T/P 68/21

	on evening event at the British School		
04/07/1891	Article from unnamed newspaper on prize-giving at the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
20/10/1891	Article from unnamed newspaper on recent inspection of the British School	ERO	T/P 68/21
1894	<i>Kelly's Directory of Essex</i>	Online	historicaldirectories.org
1902	<i>Kelly's Directory of Essex</i>	Online	historicaldirectories.org
1914	<i>Kelly's Directory of Essex</i>	Online	historicaldirectories.org

Cartographic Sources

Date	Description	Scale	Location	Reference
1777	Chapman & Andre's Map of Essex	-	ERO	Sheets 6 & 7
1843	Stansted Mountfitchet Tithe Map	-	ERO	D/CT 328
1897	Second Edition Ordnance Survey map	25":1 mile	ERO	Sheet 22 / 8
1921	Ordnance Survey map	25":1 mile	ERO	Sheet 23 / 15
1956	Ordnance Survey map	1:25,000	HALS	Sheet TL52

APPENDIX 2 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	Former Peter Kirk School, Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex
County: Essex	District: Uttlesford
Village/Town: Stansted Mountfitchet	Parish: Stansted Mountfitchet
Planning application reference:	UTT/2124/07/FUL
Client name/address/tel:	Croft Homes Limited, Takeley Manor, Upland Road, Epping, Essex
Nature of application:	Residential conversion
Present land use:	Disused former school
Size of application area: c. 928 m ²	Size of area investigated: c.928m ²
NGR (8 figures):	TL 5131 2495
Site Code:	SMPK08
Site director/Organisation:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Historic Building Recording
Date of work:	November 2008
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Essex Record Office
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: 19 th century
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	None
Summary of fieldwork results:	<p>In November 2008 Archaeological Solutions carried out a programme of historic building recording at the former Peter Kirk School building in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex. The purpose of the work was to investigate and clarify the origins and development of the existing building prior to residential conversion, as well as accurately recording the building in its current state.</p> <p>Both historic research and physical analysis has established a good record of the history of the building, which began as a British School. The main range is dated by a foundation stone to 1862 and is a typical of many mid and later-Victorian school building with tall windows lighting spacious classrooms. The building is almost symmetrical, with decorative elements in yellow gault bricks. Later additions include tall chimney stacks and a smaller rear range, which was added in almost identical style.</p> <p>Comprehensive remodelling of the interior in the recent past makes it difficult to establish the original layout, though the window pattern suggests one or two large classrooms, open to an exposed roof and rooms for the school teachers behind. This is confirmed by extensive documentary evidence which suggest a fluid arrangement with movable partitions. Overall, the materials are robust and decoration fairly restrained, congruous with a building constructed on a modest budget, but adhering to the architectural fashions of the day.</p>
Author of summary: Tansy Collins	Date of Summary: 01.12.2008

APPENDIX 3 ARCHIVE CONTENTS FORM

Site Details	
Site Name: Former Peter Kirk School, Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet	NGR: TL 5131 2495
County: Essex	Museum Collecting Area: Essex Record Office – Saffron Walden Branch
Site Code: SMPK08	Project Number: 3304
Date of Work: November 2008	Related Work:

Brief/s		Specification/s	
Date	Present	Date	Present
14/10/2008	Yes	20/10/2008	Yes

Site Records (Description)		
10 sheets A4 notes		
Site Drawings (Give Details of Formats & Size)		
Drawn Plans & Sections: 1 sheet A3 drawing film		
Architect's Drawings: 7 sheets A3 drawings - annotated		
Digital Drawings		
Printouts of Drawings	Printouts of Data	Digital Data
In report		Digital photographs and drawings in digital format on CD

Reports		
Report No	Report Type	Present
3052	Historic Building Recording	Yes

Site Photographs							
Black & White Contact Prints					Colour Slides		
Film No	Film Type	Negs	Negs Present	Contacts Present	Film No	Negs	Present
1	120mm	1-15	Yes	Yes	1	19-36	Yes
2	120mm	1-15	Yes	Yes	2	1-10	Yes
3	120mm	1-9	Yes	Yes			Yes
Photographic Location Plans Present? (Give Details)							
Printed in report and separate printout in archive folder							
Digital Photographs (Give Details):							
Digital photography duplicates black and white photography. Index and selected plates printed in report. Separate printout of index included in archive folder and digitally on CD							

COLOUR PLATES



Plate 1 View of the assessment structure, taken from the south-east (14)



Plate 2 Brick banding on the rear range with typical Arlesey brick characteristics, taken from the north-east (20)



Plate 3 Detail of rear range dormer window and gable detail of the main range, taken from the south-west (19)



Plate 4 South wall of Room 1, taken from the north-east (22)



Plate 5 Gothic style window on the north wall of Room 4, taken from the south (33)



Plate 6 South wall of Room 5 (rear range), taken from the north (35)

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*South elevation of the main range,
taken from the south*



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*South elevation of the main range,
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*South side of the assessment
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*West and south elevation of the
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*West elevation of the main range
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*North gable and west elevation of
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North elevation of the assessment structure, taken from the north



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East and north elevation of the rear range, taken from the north-east



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North elevation of the main range, taken from the north



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East elevation of the rear range, taken from the east



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East elevation of the main range, taken from the south-east



12

East side of the main range with boundary wall, taken from the north-east



13

View of assessment structure with boundary wall, taken from the north-east



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View of the assessment structure, taken from the south-east



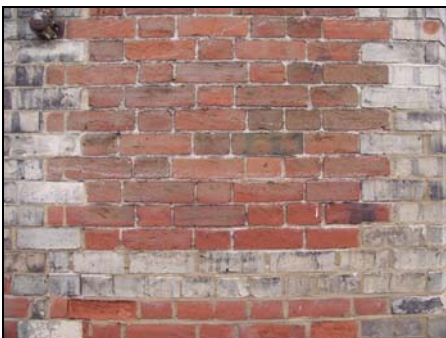
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Dedication plaque on the south elevation, taken from the south



16

Dedication plaque on the south elevation, taken from the south



17

Typical example of brickwork with Arleseey brick dressings on the main range, taken from the west



18

Typical example of brickwork with Arleseey brick banding and iron ventilation brick on the rear range, taken from the west



19

Detail of rear range dormer window and gable detail of the main range, taken from the south-west



20

Brick banding on the rear range with typical Arleseey brick characteristics, taken from the north-east



21

Detail of window on the north elevation of the main range, taken from the north-east



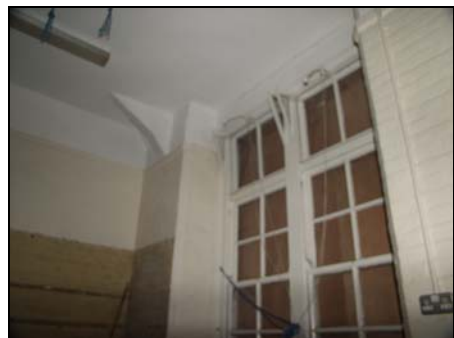
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South wall of Room 1, taken from the north-east



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North-east corner of Room 1, taken from the south-west



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Detail of the east window on the south wall of Room 1, taken from the north-west



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Detail of the freestanding 19th century door in Room 1, taken from the south



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South and west wall of Room 2, taken from the north-east



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West and north wall of Room 2, taken from the south-east



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North wall of Room 2, taken from the south



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South-east side of the entrance vestibule, taken from the north-west



30

North side of the entrance vestibule, taken from the south



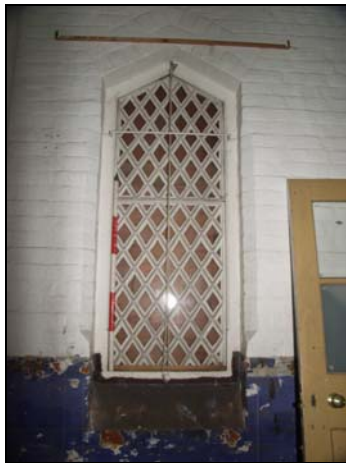
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Formerly external doorway in the entrance vestibule, now giving access to the rear range, taken from the south-east



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North and east walls of Room 4, taken from the west



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Detail of gothic style window on the north wall of Room 4, taken from the south



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Detail of fireplace in the north-west corner of Room 4, taken from the south-east



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South wall of Room 5 (rear range), taken from the north



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South and west walls of Room 5, taken from the north-east



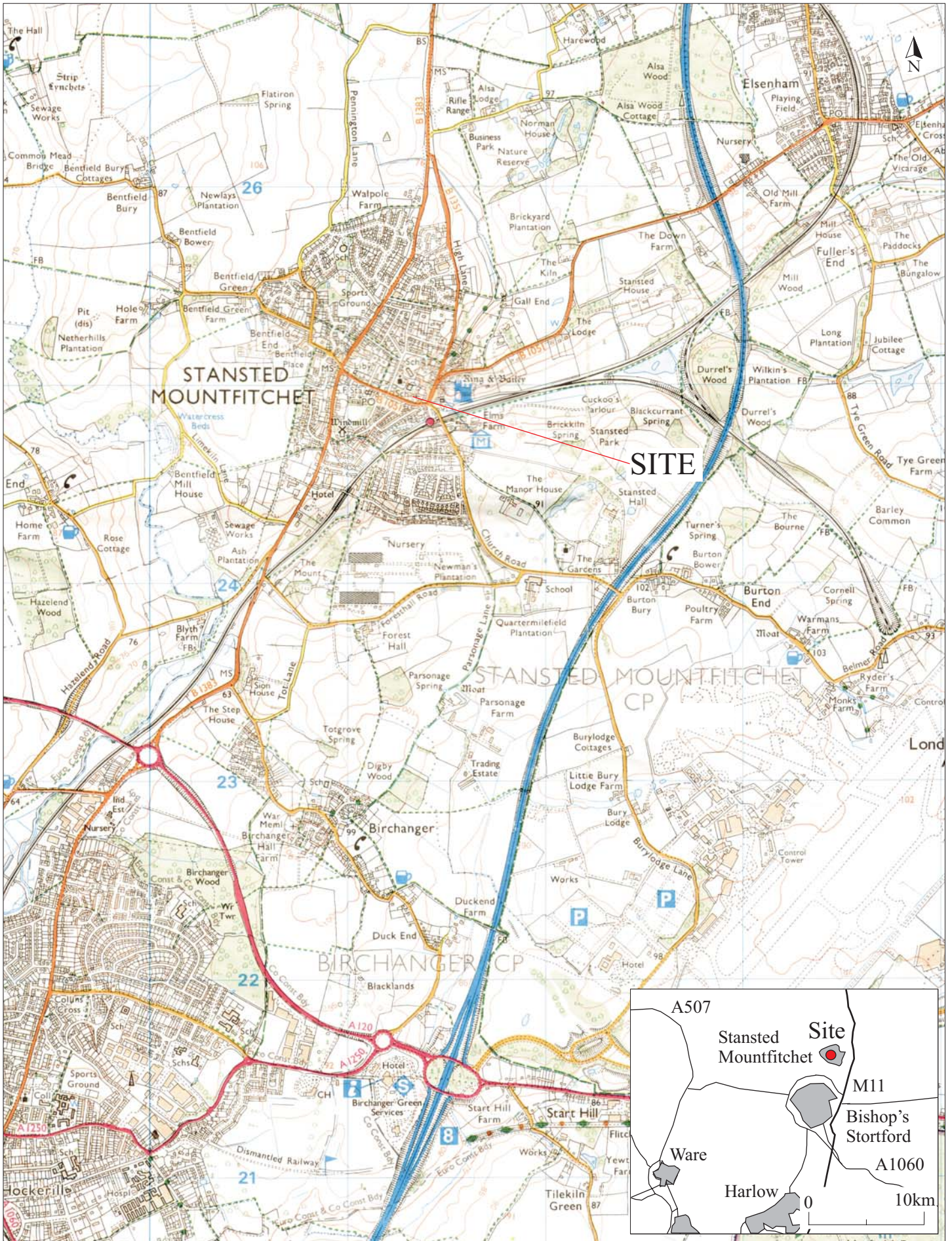
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North and east walls of Room 5, taken from the south-west



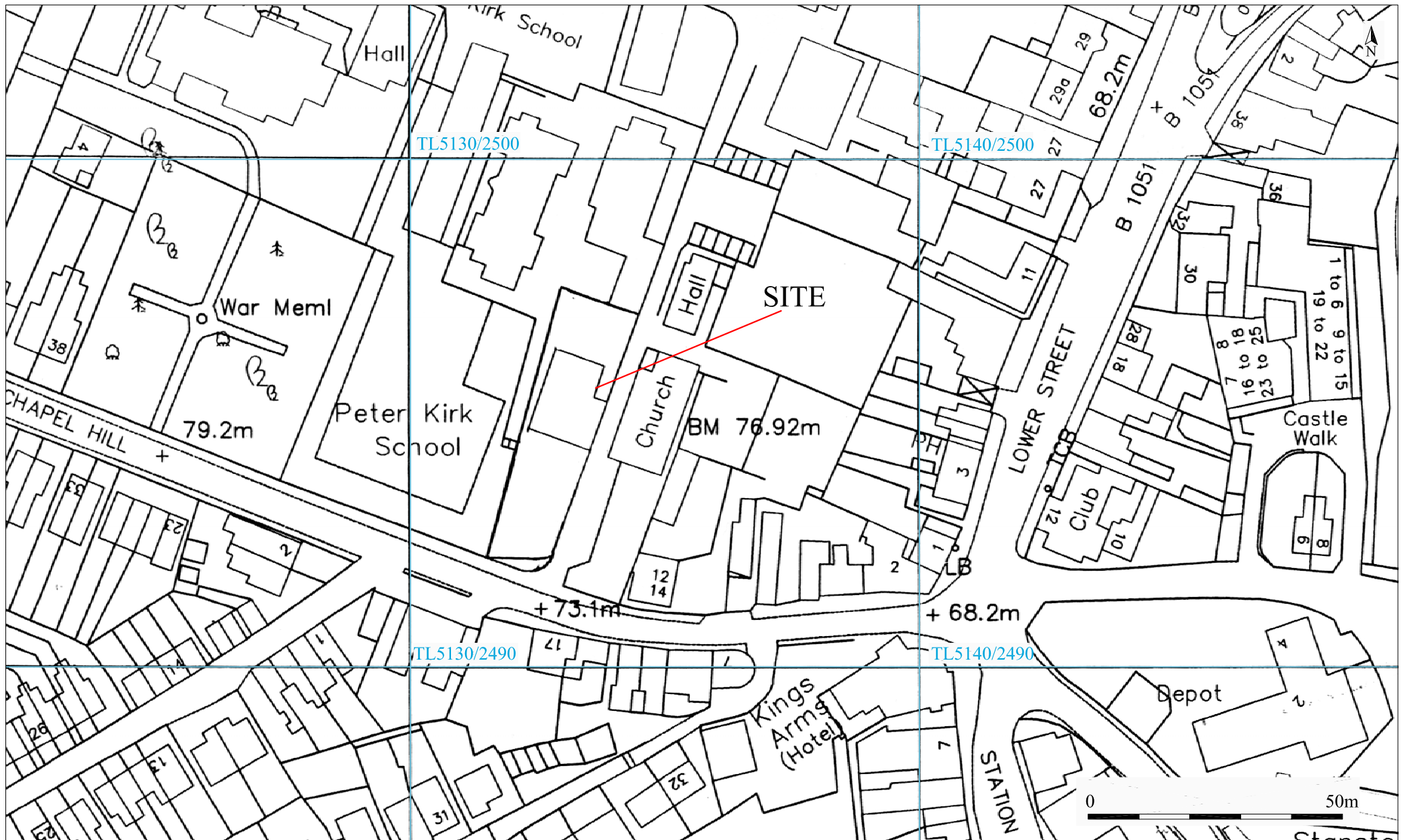
38

Details of two blocked apertures on the east wall of Room 5, taken from the west



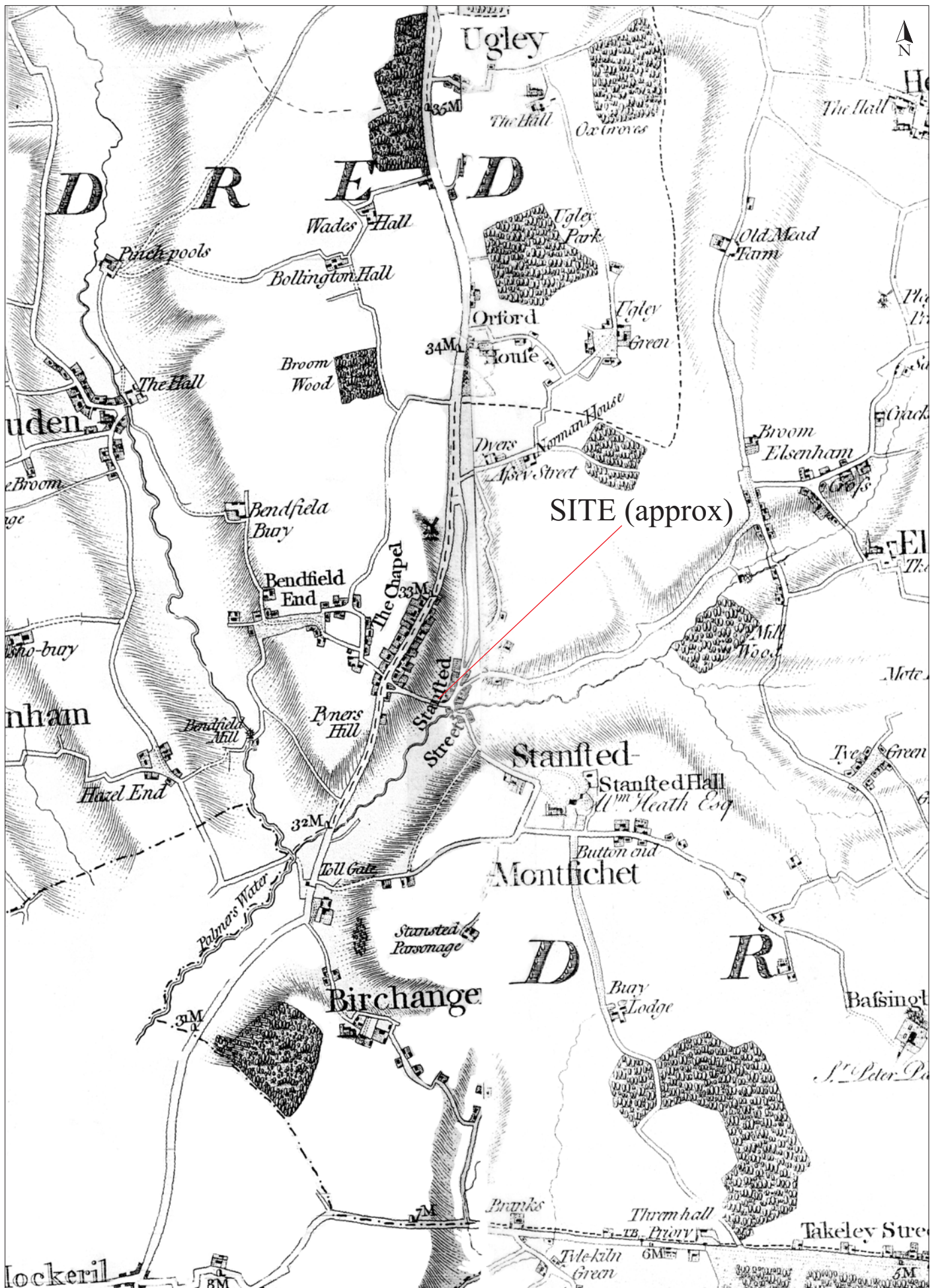
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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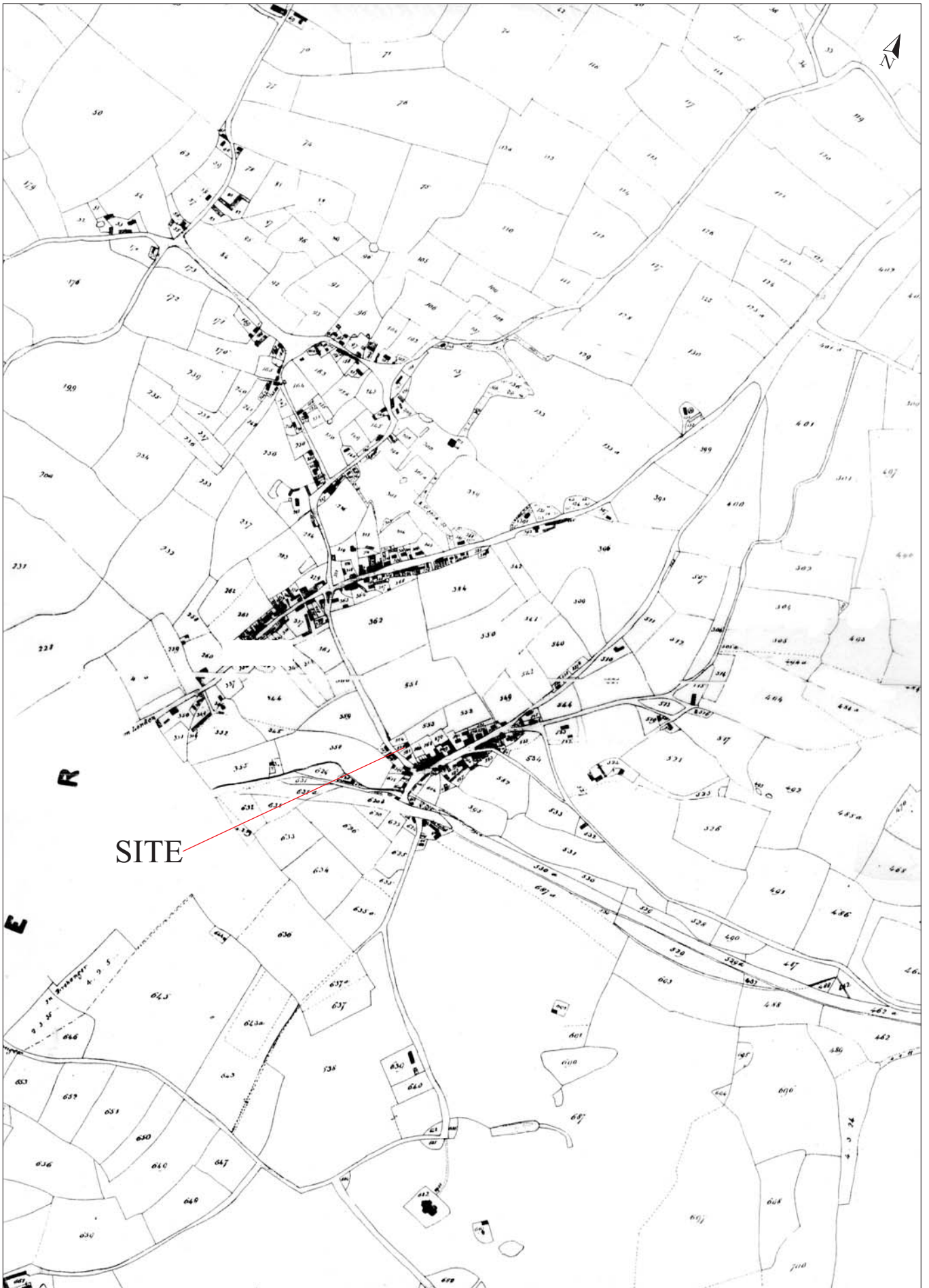
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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:1000 at A4



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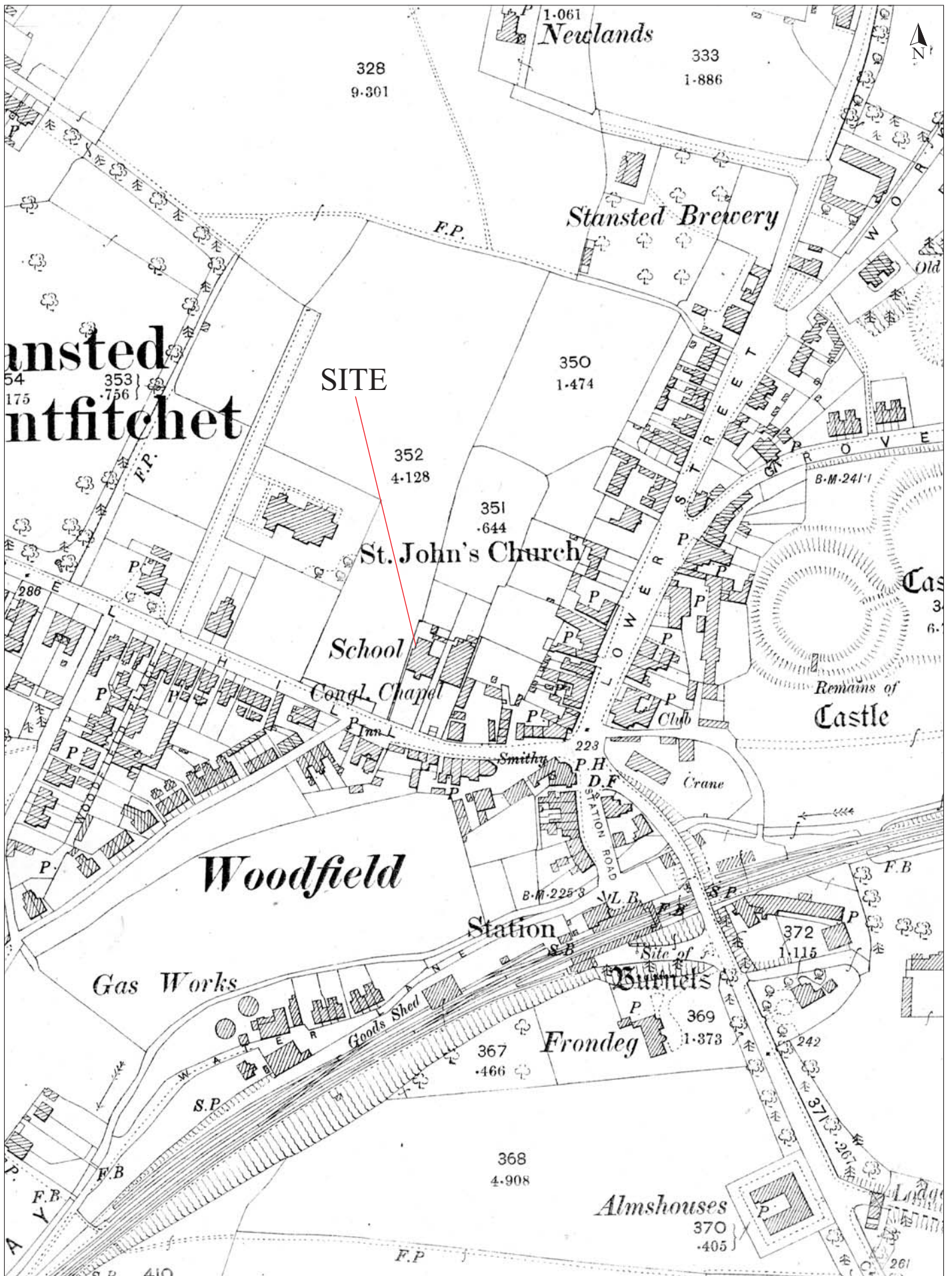
Fig. 3 Chapman & André's map of Essex, 1777

Scale unknown



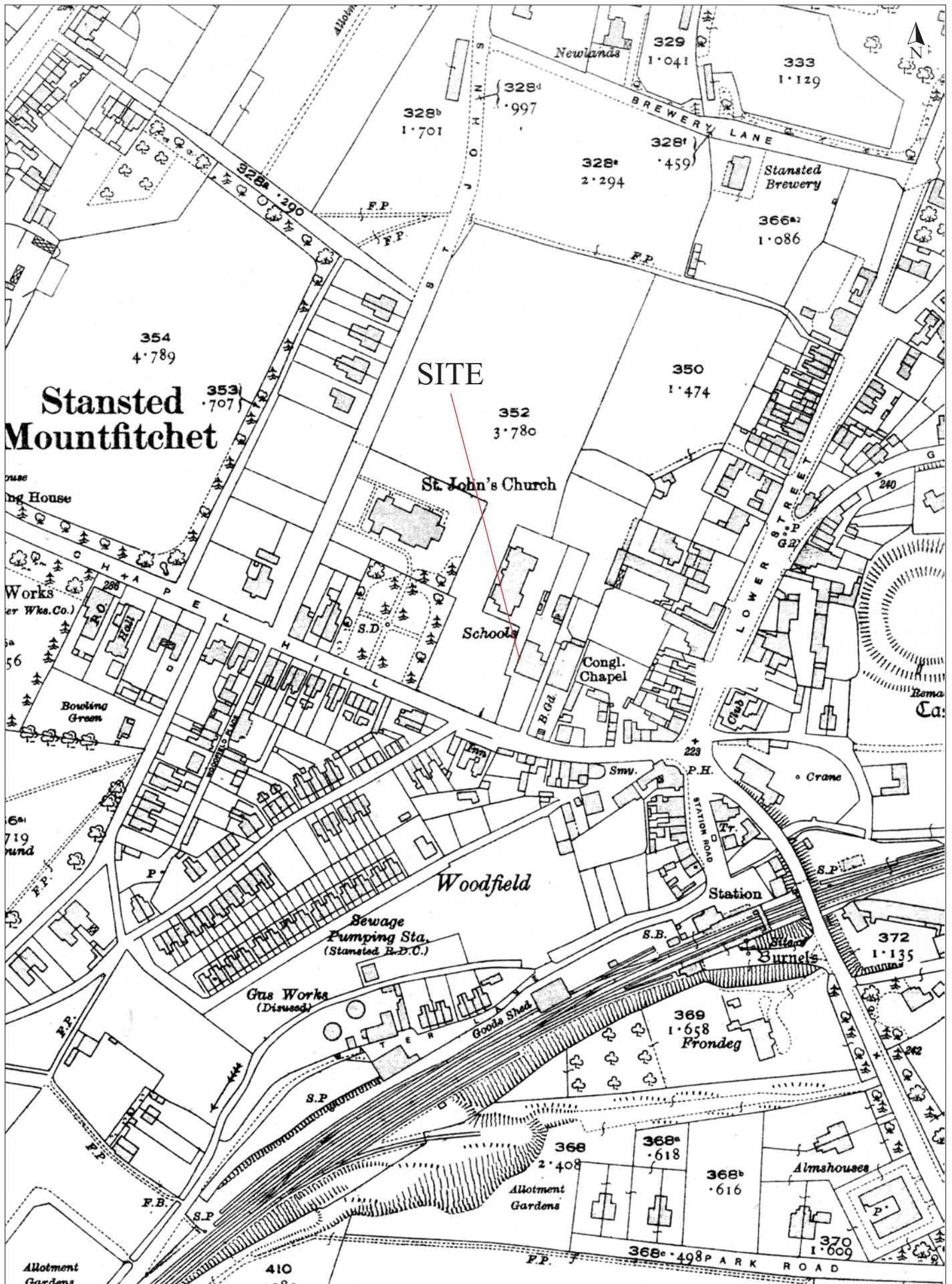
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Fig. 4 Stansted Mountfitchet tithe map, 1843
Scale Unknown



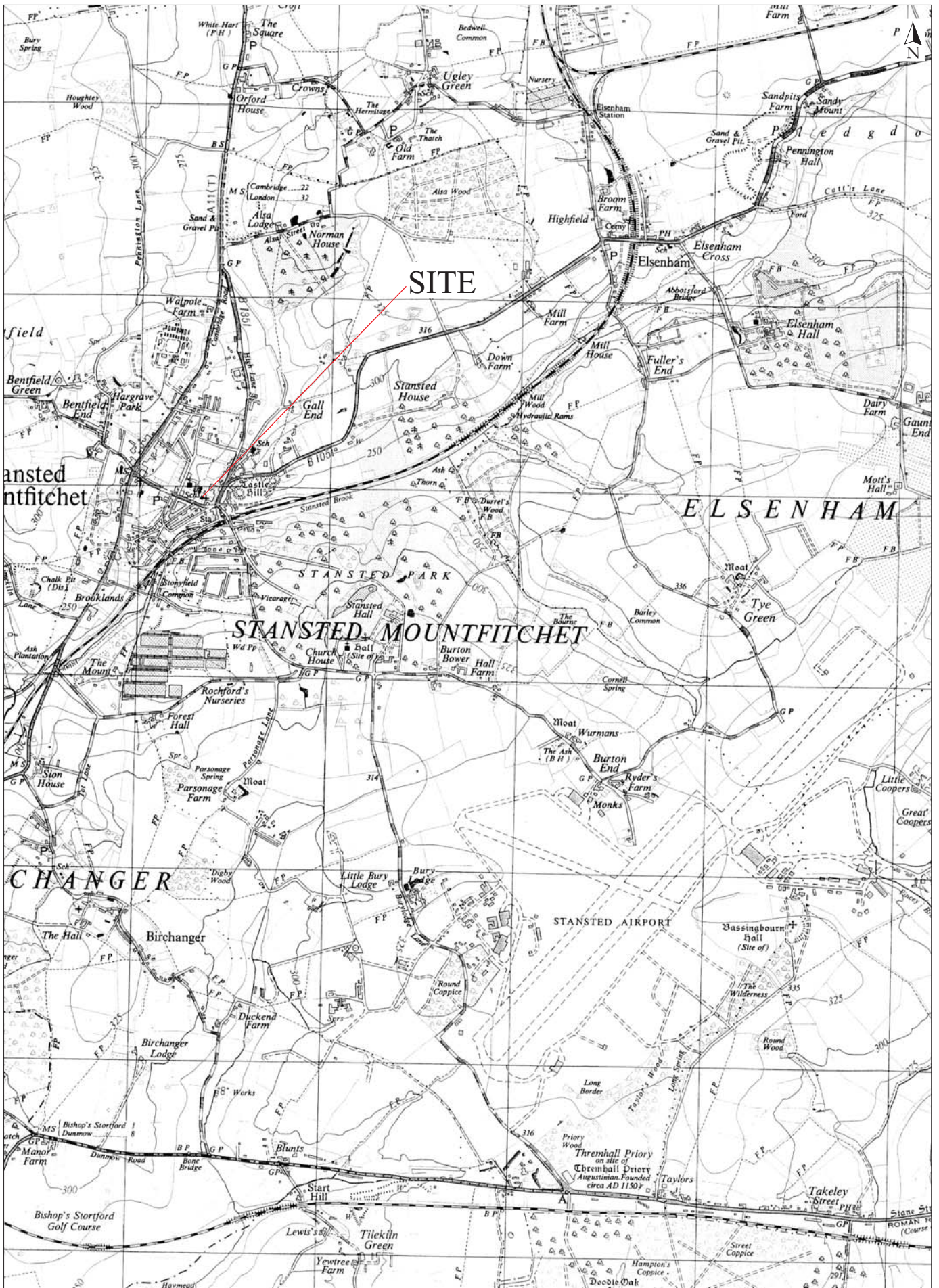
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Fig. 5 2nd edition OS map, 1897
 Scale 25" to 1 mile at A4



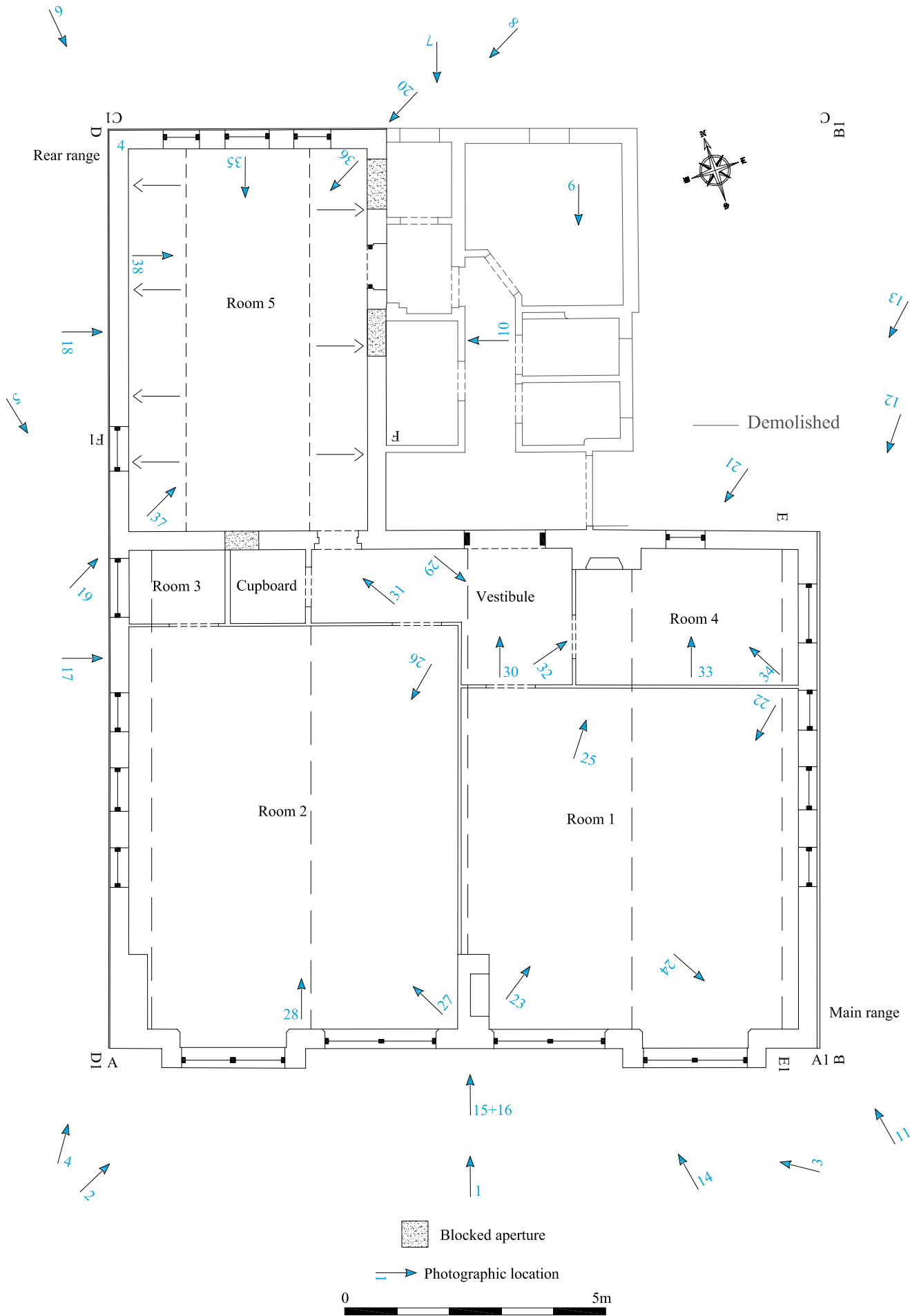
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 Fig. 6 OS map, 1921
 Scale 25" to 1 mile at A4



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 Fig. 7 OS map, 1956+
 Scale 1:25000 at A4



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Fig. 8 Plan and photographic locations

Scale 1:100 at A4



South-west elevation
A

A1



South-east elevation
B

B1



North-east elevation
C

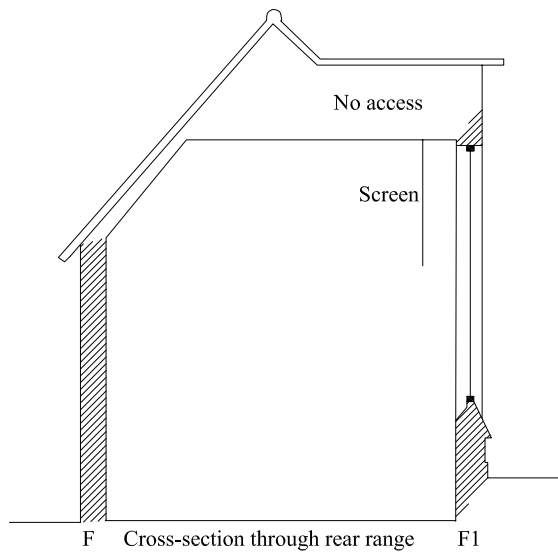
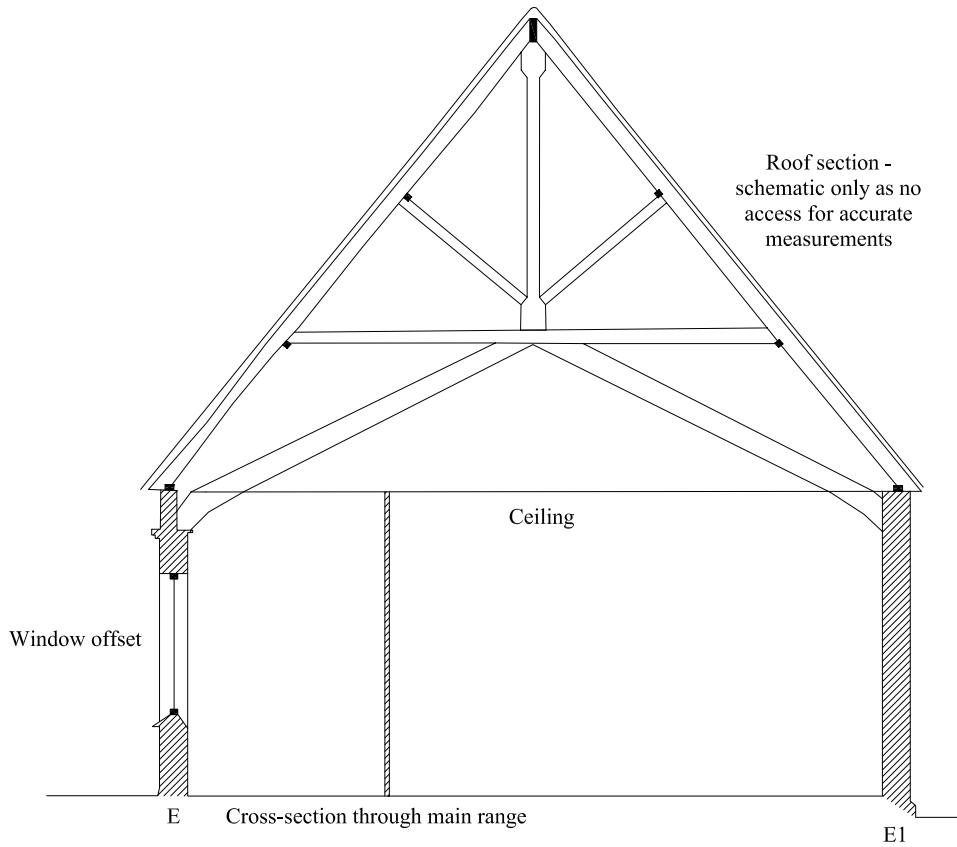
C1



North-west elevation
D

D1





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Fig. 10 Sections
Scale 1:100 at A4