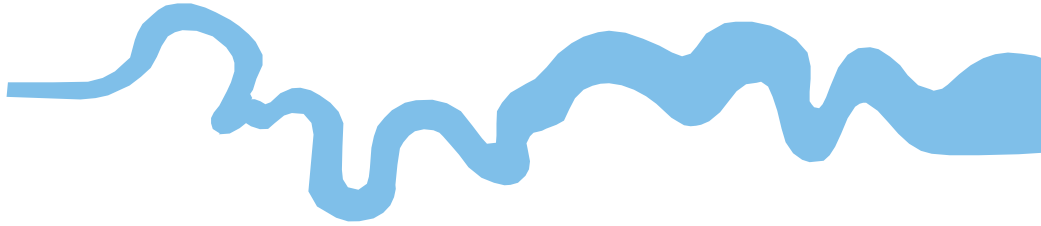


**T V A S**



**NORTH MIDLANDS**

**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire**

**Building Recording**

**by Genni Elliott**

**Site Code: BFS21/251**

**(SJ 9776 6616)**

**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire**

**Building Recording**

**For Mr John Suffolk**

by Genni Elliott

TVAS (North Midlands)

Site Code BFS 21/251

**March 2022**

## Summary

**Site name:** Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire

**Grid reference:** SJ 9776 6616

**Site activity:** Building Recording

**Date and duration of project:** 1st February 2022

**Project coordinator:** Helen Daniel

**Site code:** BFS 21/251

**Summary of results:** The barn forms part of a small-holding and was likely used as a sheep house with hayloft above. It is stone built with a tile roof and externally remains largely unaltered. Internally alterations have occurred to the floor and to the first floor to create a mezzanine. No evidence of animal partitions remain, nor any evidence for a former use, beyond the size and location of the building. Little dating evidence exists but a date in the late 18th or early 19<sup>th</sup> century would fit with the mapping evidence.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent and a hard and digital copy will be deposited with The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery and a digital copy sent to the Archaeology Data Service, in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 01.04.22 Steve Preston ✓ 01.04.22
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

# Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire Building Recording

by Genni Elliott

**Report 21/251**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of building recording at Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire (SJ 9776 6616) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Helen Martin-Bacon of Avalon Heritage on behalf of Mr John Suffolk of Back Barn Farm.

Planning consent (appln no. NP/SM/0721/0807) has been granted by the Peak District National Park Authority for the conversion of a barn to an ancillary bedroom suite. The consent is subject to a condition (10) which requires an historic building recording to be carried out. This report documents the results of the building survey.

This is in accordance with The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the National Park's policies on the historic environment. The fieldwork was undertaken by Helen Daniel on 1st February 2022 and the site code is BFS 21/251.

The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited with The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery and a digital copy to the Archaeology Data Service, in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

Back Forest Farm is located to the north-east of Rushton Spencer and south-east of Macclesfield, surrounded by the smaller villages of Danebridge, Wincle, Allgreave and Gradbach. It lies within the south-east part of the Peak District National Park in South-west Peak to the south of the River Dane which forms the county boundary between Staffordshire and Cheshire. Access is off a track, itself located off an unnamed road from the south-west, south of Danebridge. Its location is remote, surrounded by fields to the east, south and west and trees along the River Dane to the north (Fig. 1). The barn stands immediately to the north-east of the main house (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 241m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Roaches Grit – sandstone (BGS 1978).

## **Historical Background**

Little is known of the history of Back Forest or the area in general due to its remoteness. Back Forest Farm is located within the Leekfrith parish and mentioned in the Victoria County History as a farm in the early 19th century and part of the Leekfrith portion of the Swythamley Estate (VCH 1996).

A range of Ordnance Survey and other historical maps of the area were consulted online in order to ascertain the later history of the building. The earliest detailed map available was the 1837 Ordnance Survey preliminary map (Fig. 3) which shows two buildings in the general area of Back Forest Farm indicating the farm was likely in existence by this point, though no detail of the barn can be discerned. The first available map to show the site in detail is the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1879 (Fig. 4) which shows the approximately square barn to the north-east of the main house. The modern map (Fig. 2) shows this has not altered over the intervening years.

## **Methodology**

The building survey was carried out in accordance with guidelines set out by Historic England for a level 2 record (HE 2016; RCHM(E) 1996), and in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute for archaeologists (CIfA 2020).

The survey comprised a photographic, drawn and written record, paying attention to the methods of construction, chronological development and alterations, and features of special interest. Plans and elevations obtained from the client were checked, modified and annotated on site where appropriate.

Digital images were taken on a Canon EOS 4000D camera with APS-C sensors taking 16-megapixel images. Images for archiving purposes are taken using high quality settings in TIFF format. The building has been recorded photographically as catalogued in Appendix 1. The locations and directions of the photographs are marked on Figure 12.

## **Description (Figs 5-11)**

### *Exterior*

The building is sub-square, located to the north-east of the main house, with a gable end roof. It is built of roughly coursed sandstone blocks of varying sizes with Staffordshire blue tiles on the roof. The rear of the building is built into an earth bank. The building is aligned approximately north-west to south-east but for ease of reference it will be referred to as if it were north-south (Pl. 1).

The main west elevation (Pl. 2) is set back behind a low stone wall and consists of an approximately central doorway with a window to the north-west. Both are located beneath a stone lintel; the one above the doorway being larger than that of the window (Pl. 3). A modern plank door is present and the window is boarded over (Pl. 4).

The north elevation contains two, approximately central openings (Pl. 5); one at ground floor level and a second in the apex of the gable end. Each window is constructed with a narrow stone cill and lintel (Pl. 6).

The east elevation (Pl. 7) is partly built into the bank and contains a single vent hole approximately centrally within the wall. It has subsequently been blocked with a stone (Pl. 8).

The south elevation (Pl. 9) is built into the bank and contains a central doorway that extends into the apex of the gable end. It is accessed via a set of stone steps and is set beneath a narrow stone lintel (Pl. 10).

### *Interior*

Internally the building has a mezzanine level at the south-east end, extending above the main doorway and accessed via the south-east gable end doorway (Pl. 11). In general the walls are exposed stonework though areas of limewashing are apparent (Pl. 12). The floor is flagstone with a central passageway extending to the far wall from the main entrance (Pl. 13). This is denoted to the south by a thin tree trunk laid across the floor, beyond which is a slightly raised area of flagstones (Pl. 14); this has latterly been rendered. The area to the north of the central passage is also raised and rendered with an additional step up in height to the east and this extends across the central passageway (Pls 13, 15). Parts of the raised area appear to have been removed leaving irregular patches within the floor.

The walls in general reflect the external walls, though there are additional fixtures in the form of beam slots to support the mezzanine level (Pl. 16). The beam slots are approximately square but support a tree trunk beam. The slots at the northern end of the building are no longer filled on the eastern wall and those on the western wall support the remainder of the beams (Pl. 15). Within the eastern wall is the internal view of the vent (Pl. 17) which consists of a small, approximately square hole. Further holes are present in the south-west corner (Pl. 18) which may represent missing stones or traces of former divisions; the lack of similar holes elsewhere in the building suggests this explanation is less likely.

The mezzanine level is constructed of tree trunks overlaid by boards (Pls 16, 19), lying slightly beneath the height of the truss.

## *Roof*

Roof construction consists of a collar beam truss supported on a central post, that has been reinforced in more recent times (Pls 11, 20). The truss supports a pair of trenched purlins and a ridge pole. Rafters are laid on edge over the purlins and central ridge pole, seemingly the trunk of a tree. The roof itself is modern with a modern membrane between the rafters and the tiles.

## **Interpretation**

The barn is part of a small-holding and consists of a simple, stone-built structure with a hayloft above. The small dimensions and reduced height of the building coupled with the geographic area suggest originally this may have been a sheep house. Though it is possible it may have been a pig house given the proximity to the main house. There is no evidence for the mezzanine floor being a former hen house in the form of nesting holes, though a temporary structure can not be excluded. It is likely the mezzanine was used as a hayloft, granary or storage area. The building contains little in the way to specifically date it; farm buildings generally changing little over long periods of time. There is no reason to doubt it is the same building as that shown on the 1837 map therefore dating it to a period prior to that, most likely in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ambiguity over the former purpose of the building means the buildings' contribution to the local research framework in terms of form and function of former buildings is limited though it can add to local construction techniques of small farm buildings in general.

## **Conclusion**

The barn is likely to have been a small sheep house with hayloft above. Externally the building has largely remained unchanged. Internally the floor has been altered and the first floor reduced in size to a mezzanine. There is no indication of any divisions within the building. Such a survival is rare within the Peak District, though the lack of any specific evidence beyond the size and location of the building could cast some doubt on the interpretation. Little evidence is available for a specific date but sometime in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century would seem appropriate and fit with the mapping evidence.

## **References**

BGS, 1978, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 111, Solid Edition, Keyworth  
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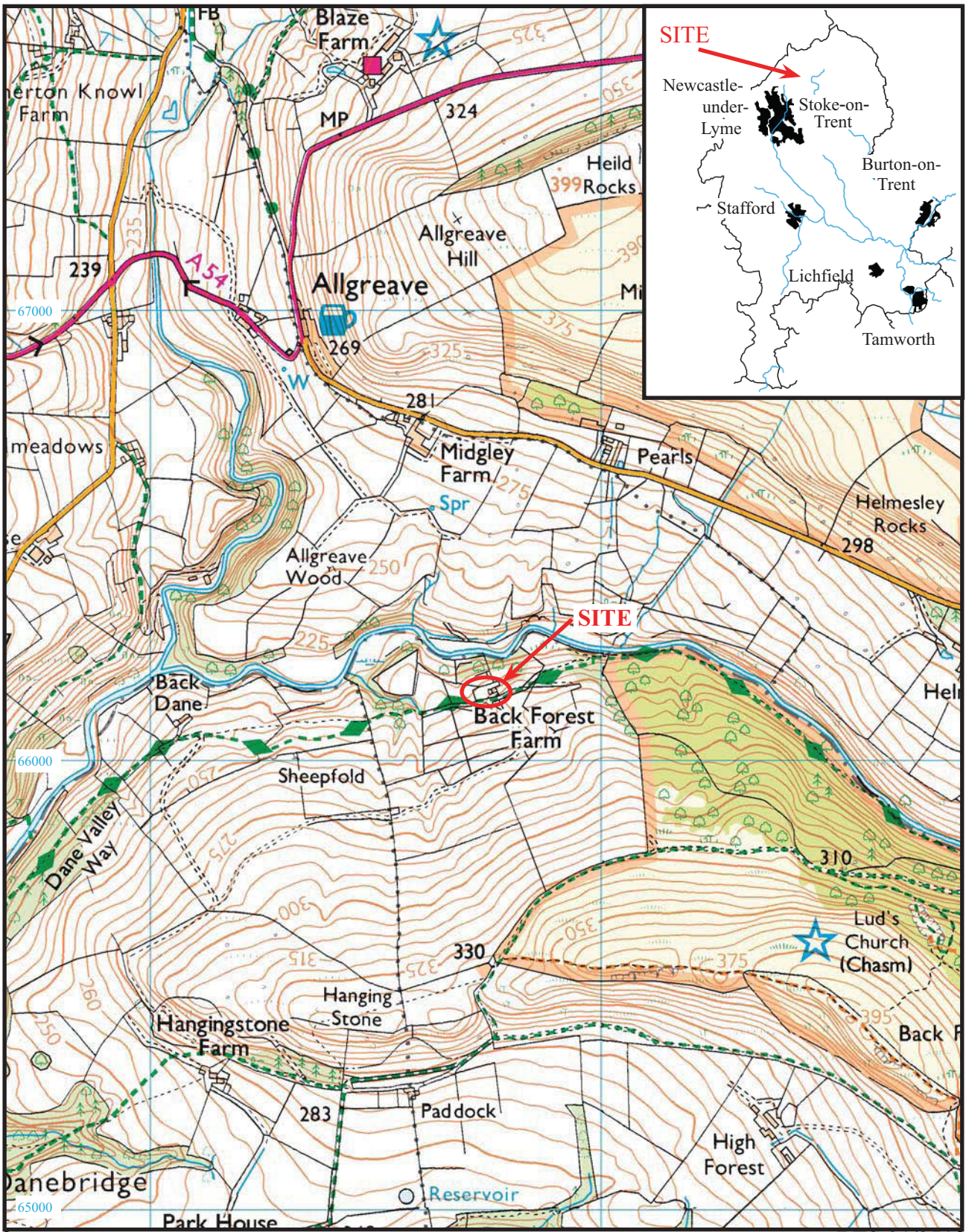


**APPENDIX 1: Photographic Catalogue**

<i>Cat. No.</i>	<i>Scales</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	North elevation
1a	1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	North elevation <b>[Pl. 5]</b>
2	1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	Window detail <b>[Pl. 6]</b>
2a	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	Window detail, oblique
3	1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	North elevation
3a	1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	North elevation
3b	1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	North elevation detail
3c	1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	North elevation detail
4	1x1m, 1x2m	External	W	East elevation <b>[Pl. 7]</b>
4a	1x1m, 1x2m	External	W	East elevation detail <b>[Pl. 8]</b>
5	1x1m, 1x2m	External	SW	North and east elevation, oblique
6	1x0.3m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	N	South elevation <b>[Pl. 9]</b>
6a	1x0.3m, 1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	NE	South elevation, oblique
6b	1x0.3m, 1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	NE	South elevation, oblique
6c	1x0.3m, 1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	NW	South elevation, oblique
6d	1x0.3m, 1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	N	Door detail <b>[Pl. 10]</b>
7	1x0.3m, 2x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	E	West elevation <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
7a	1x0.3m, 2x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	E	West elevation
7b	2x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	E	Window detail <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
8	1x1m, 1x2m	External	SE	North and west elevation, oblique
8a	1x1m, 1x2m	External	SE	North and west elevation, oblique <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
9	1x0.3m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	Barn frontage
9a	1x0.3m, 1x1m, 1x2m	External	S	Barn frontage
10	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	E	Barn floor
10a	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	E	Barn floor, detail <b>[Pl. 13]</b>
11	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	S	Floor construction
12	1x0.5m, 1x2m	Ground floor	S	Floor construction detail <b>[Pl. 14]</b>
12a	1x0.5m, 1x2m	Ground floor	S	Floor construction detail
12b	1x0.5m, 1x2m	Ground floor	S	Floor construction detail
13	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	S	General view to south <b>[Pl. 12]</b>
13a	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	S	View to south <b>[Pl. 18]</b>
13b	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	S	South wall, oblique
14	1x0.1m, 1x0.3m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	E	Vent detail <b>[Pl. 17]</b>
14a	1x0.1m, 1x0.3m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	E	View to east wall <b>[Pl. 16]</b>
14b	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	E	East wall, oblique
14c	1x0.1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	E	East wall detail
15	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	N	View to north wall window
15a	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	N	View to north wall
15b	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	N	Window detail
15c	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	N	North wall detail
16	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	W	View to door <b>[Pl. 15]</b>
16a	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	W	View to door, oblique
16b	1x1m, 1x2m	Ground floor	W	Doorway detail <b>[Pl. 4]</b>
17	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	N	View across mezzanine <b>[Pl. 11]</b>
17a	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	E	Roof detail <b>[Pl. 19]</b>
17b	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	W	Roof detail
17c	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	N	Roof detail <b>[Pl. 20]</b>
17d	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	N	Roof detail
17e	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	N	Roof detail
17f	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	N	Roof detail
18	1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	N	View to north window
19	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	S	View to doorway
19a	1x0.5m, 1x1m, 1x2m	Mezzanine	S	View to doorway
20	-	External	SE	Setting of the barn
21	-	External	SW	Setting of the barn

# Summary for thamesva1-505757

OASIS ID (UID)	thamesva1-505757
Project Name	Descriptive Buildings Record (Level 2) at Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire
Sitename	
Activity type	Descriptive Buildings Record (Level 2)
Project Identifier(s)	BFS 21/251
Planning Id	NP/SM/0721/0807
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	TVAS North Midlands
Project Dates	01-Feb-2022 - 01-Feb-2022
Location	Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire NGR : SJ 97760 66160 LL : 53.1925209253092, -2.03498273311977 12 Fig : 397760,366160
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Staffordshire District : Staffordshire Moorlands Parish : Leekfrith
Project Methodology	The survey comprised a photographic survey, paying attention to the methods of construction, chronological development and alterations, and features of special interest. Plans and elevations obtained from the client were checked, modified and annotated onsite where appropriate. Digital images were taken on a Canon EOS 4000D camera with APS-C sensors taking 16-megapixel images. Images for archiving purposes are taken using high quality settings in TIFF format.
Project Results	The barn is likely to have been a small sheep house with hayloft above. Externally the building has largely remained unchanged. Internally the floor has been altered and the first floor reduced in size to a mezzanine. There is no indication of any divisions within the building. Such a survival is rare within the Peak District, though the lack of any specific evidence beyond the size and location of the building could cast some doubt on the interpretation.
Keywords	Sheep House - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Hayloft - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	
HER	Peak District National Park Authority - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	G, Elliott
HER Identifiers	
Archives	



SI 97000

98000

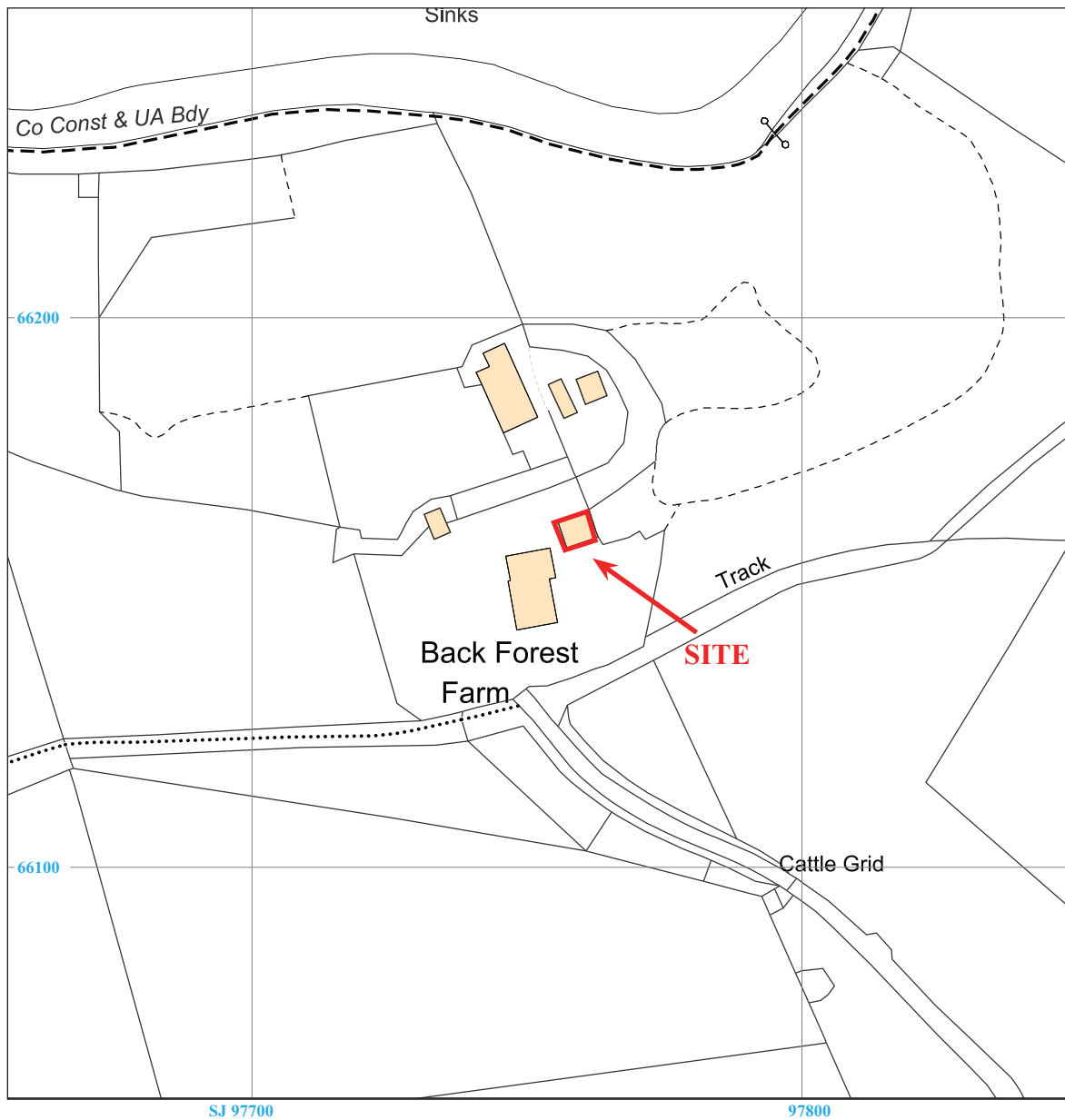
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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording**

Figure 1. Location of site within the Peak District National Park and Staffordshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site

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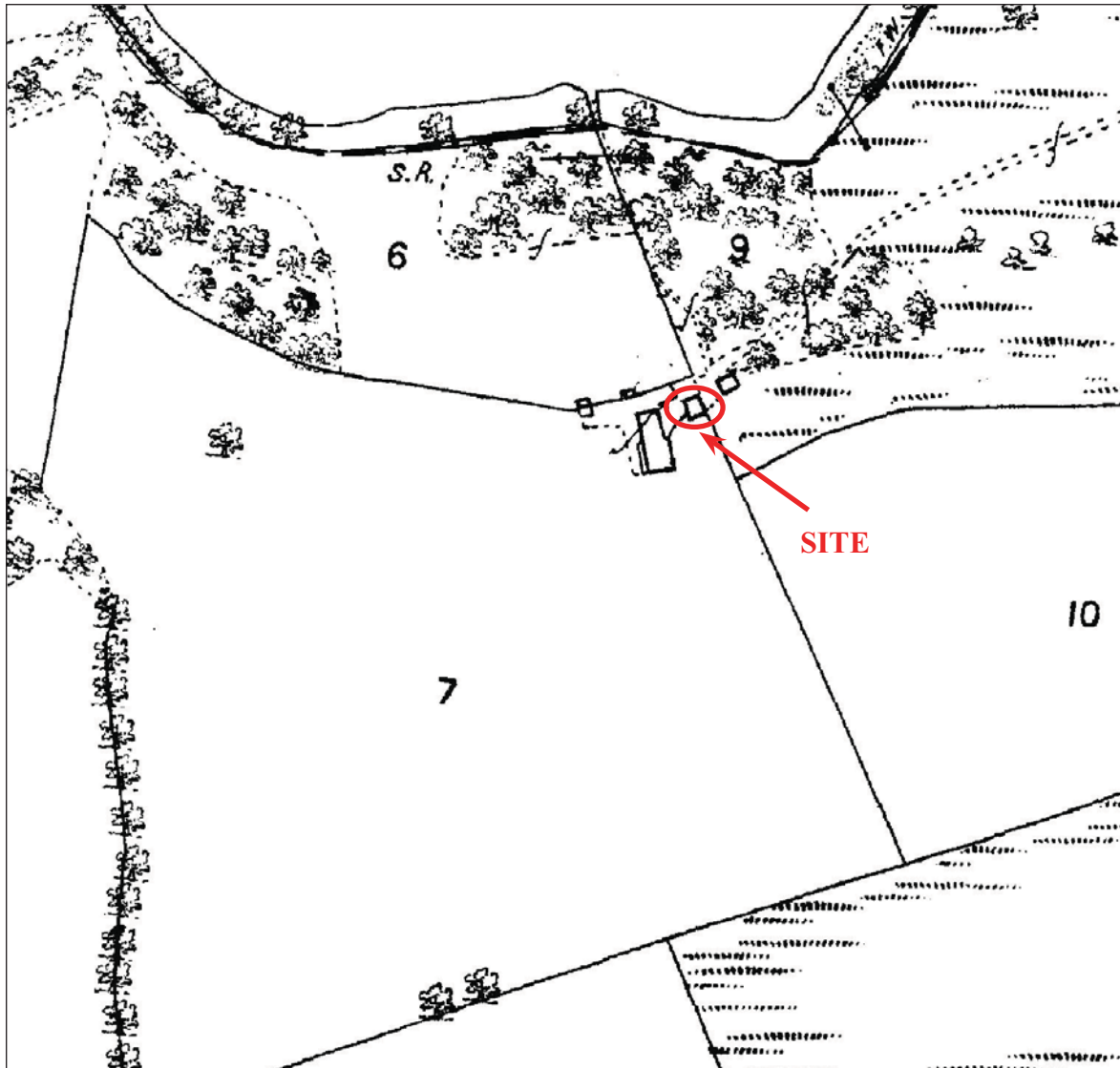


**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022**

**Building Recording**

Figure 3. Ordnance Survey, 1837





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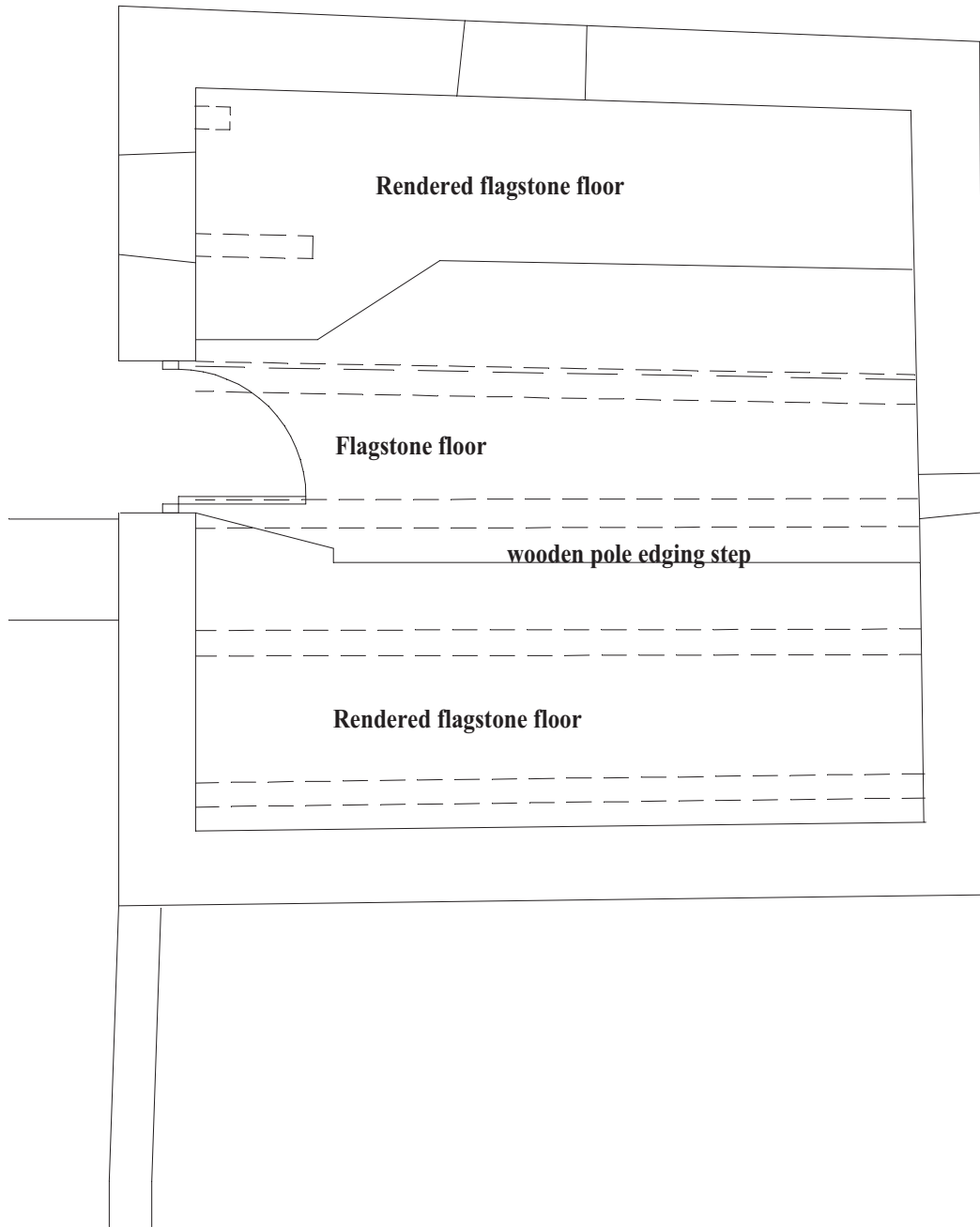
Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022

**Building Recording**

Figure 4. First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1879



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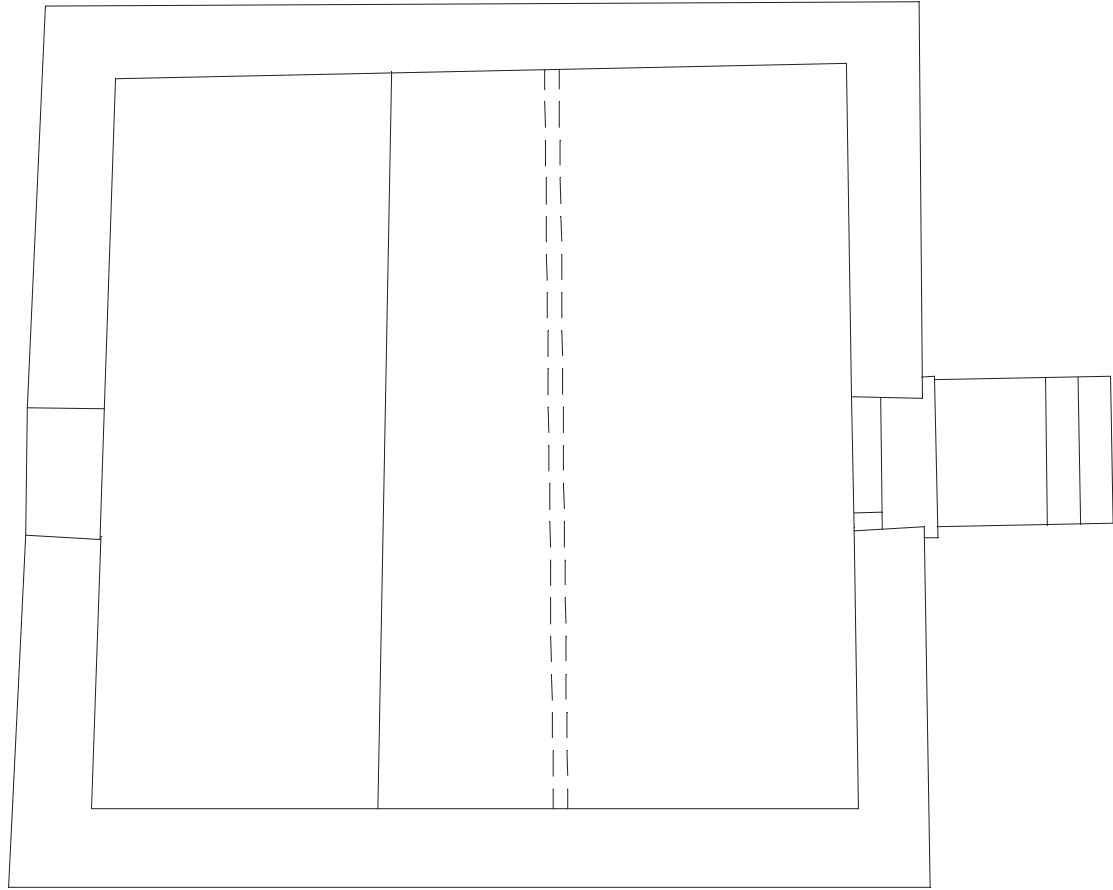


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Figure 5. Ground Floor Plan.





← Extent of mezzanine floor →

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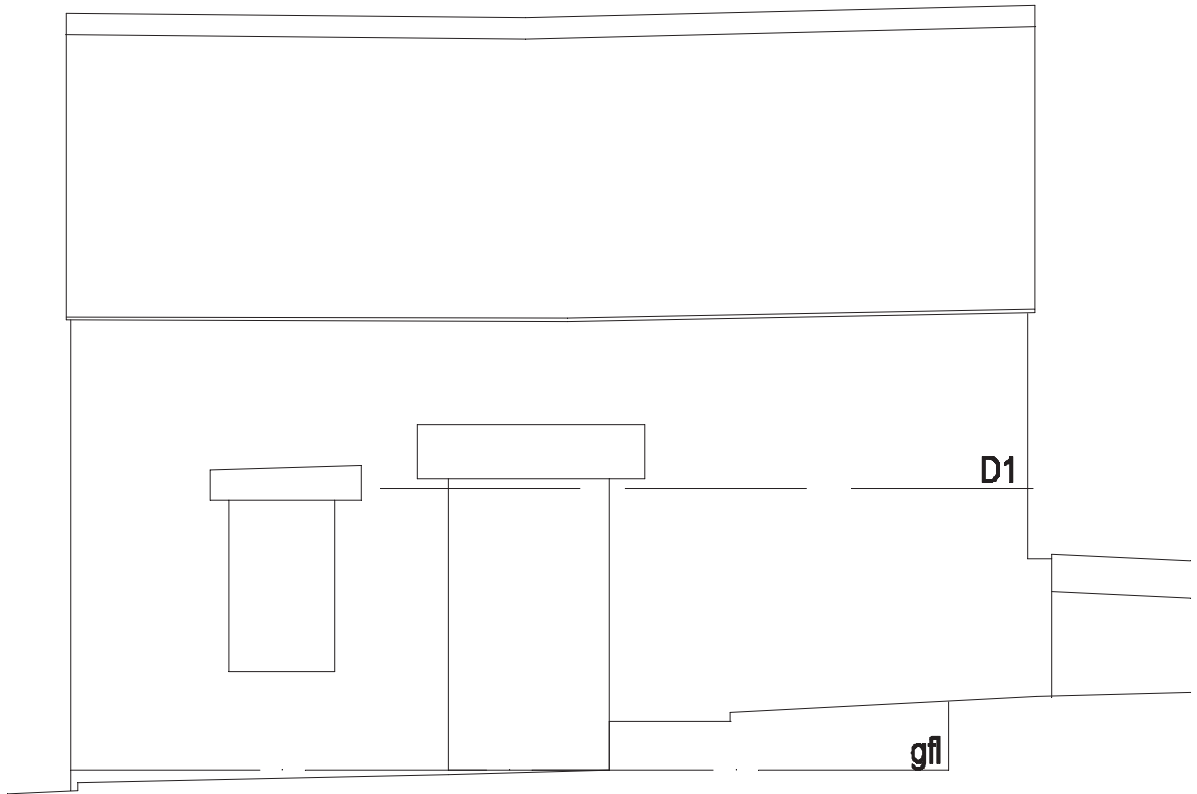


**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording**

Figure 6. Mezzanine Floor Plan







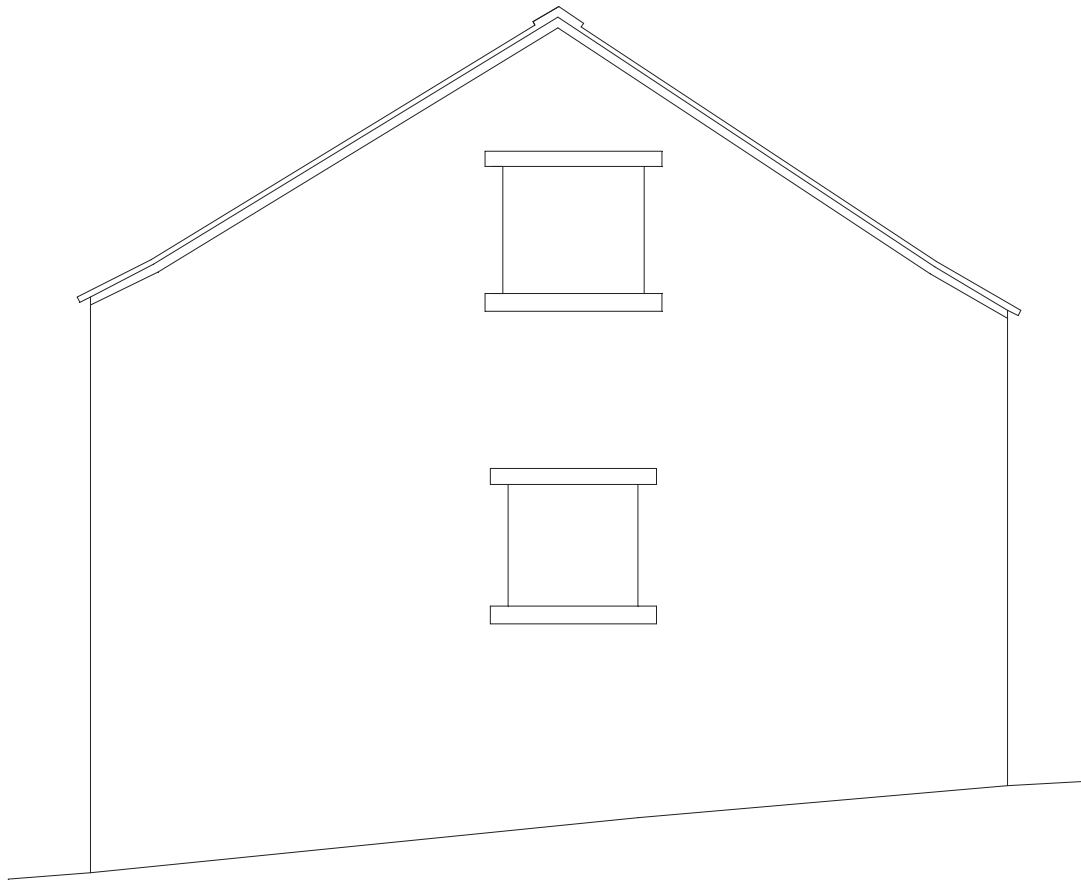
## West Elevation

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording**

Figure 7. Elevations





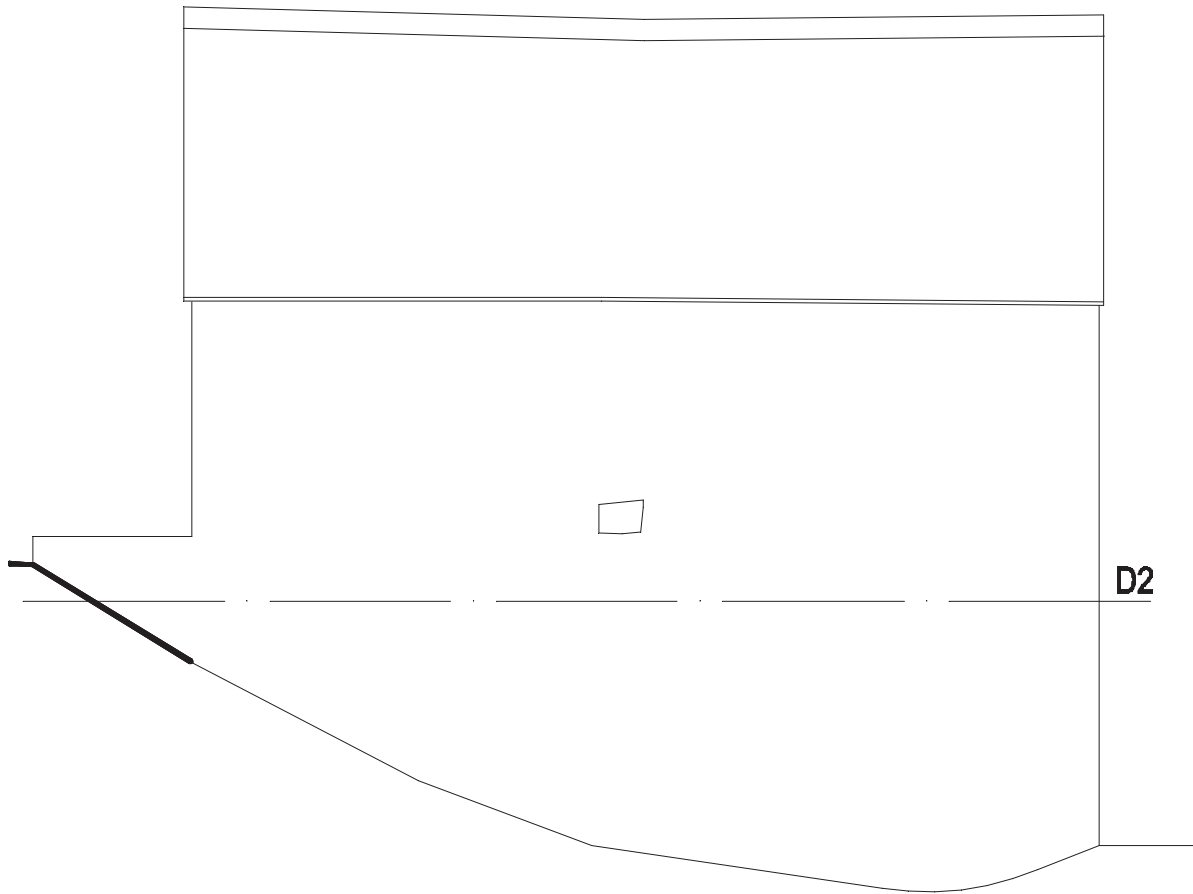
## North Elevation

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording**

Figure 8. Elevations





## East Elevation

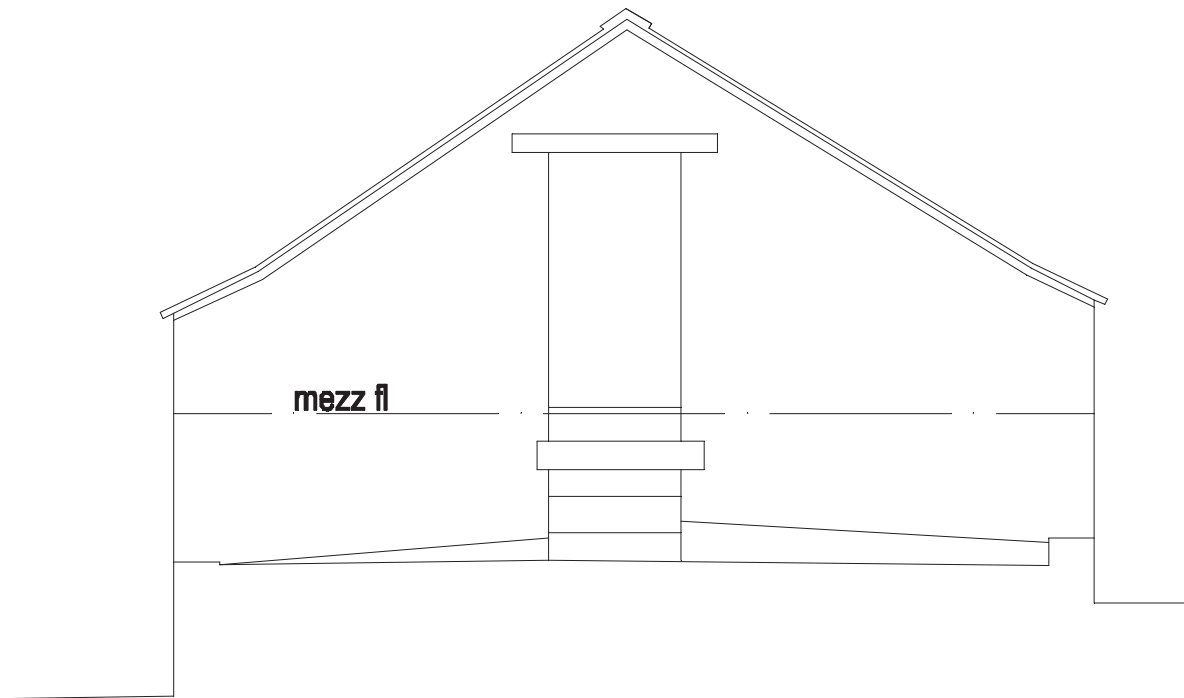
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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, 2022  
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Figure 9. Elevations



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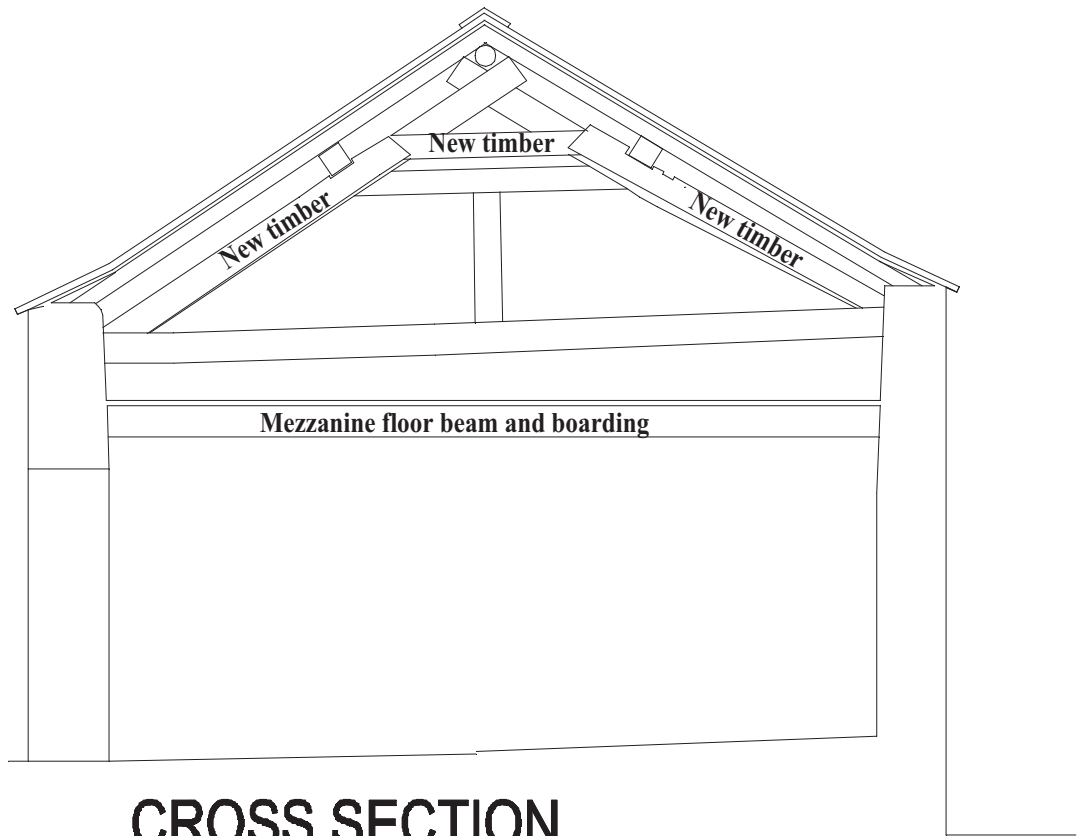
## South Elevation

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording**

Figure 10. Elevations





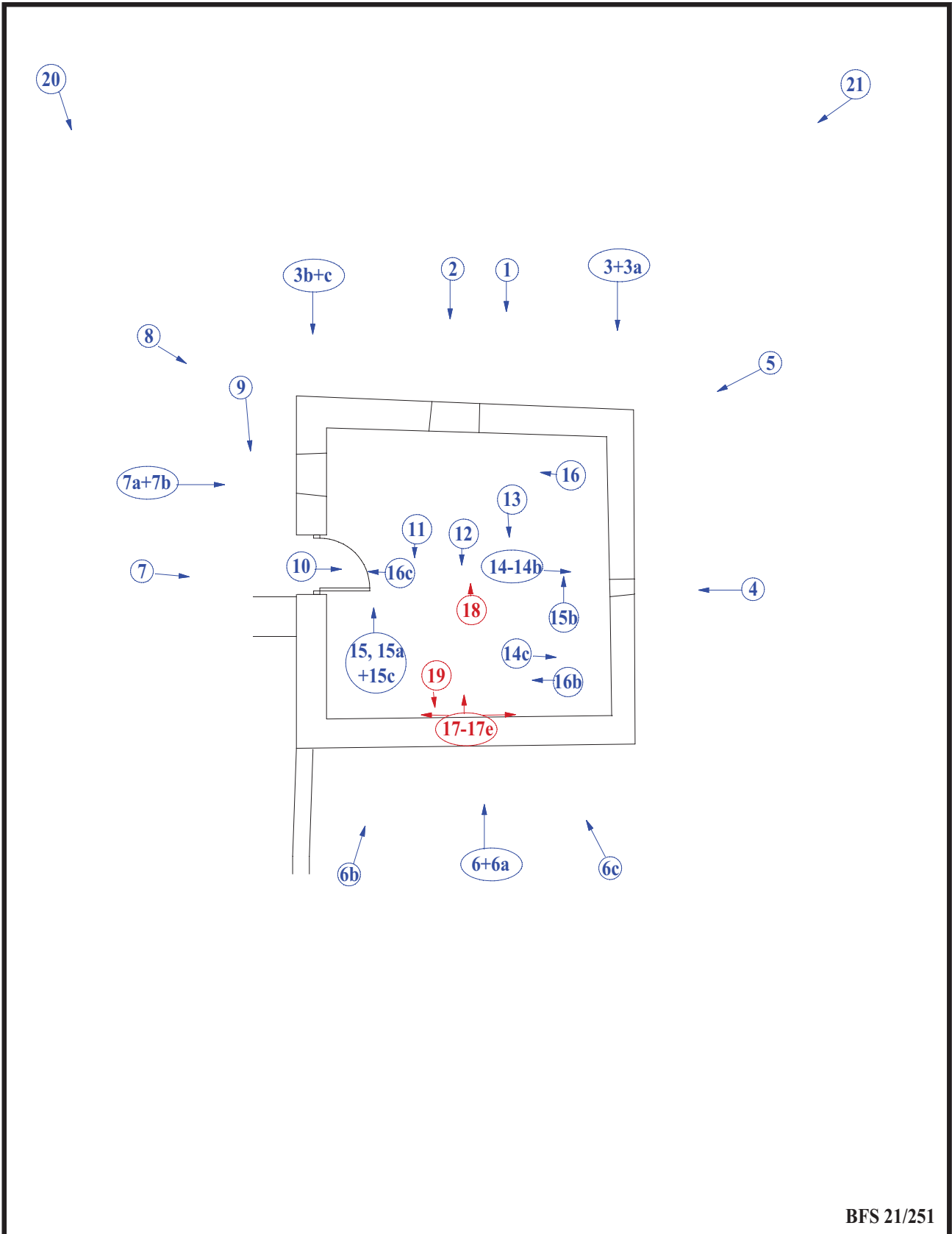
## CROSS SECTION

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording**

Figure 11. Cross-section through the building





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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley,  
Rushton Spencer, Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording**

Figure 12. Photograph Location Plan.  
(ground floor blue, mezzanine red)

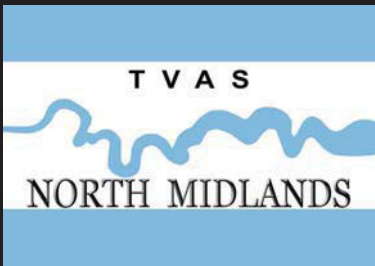




Plate 1. North and west elevation, oblique.



Plate 2. West elevation.

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
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Building Recording  
Plates 1 and 2.**

T V A S  
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Plate 3. Window detail.

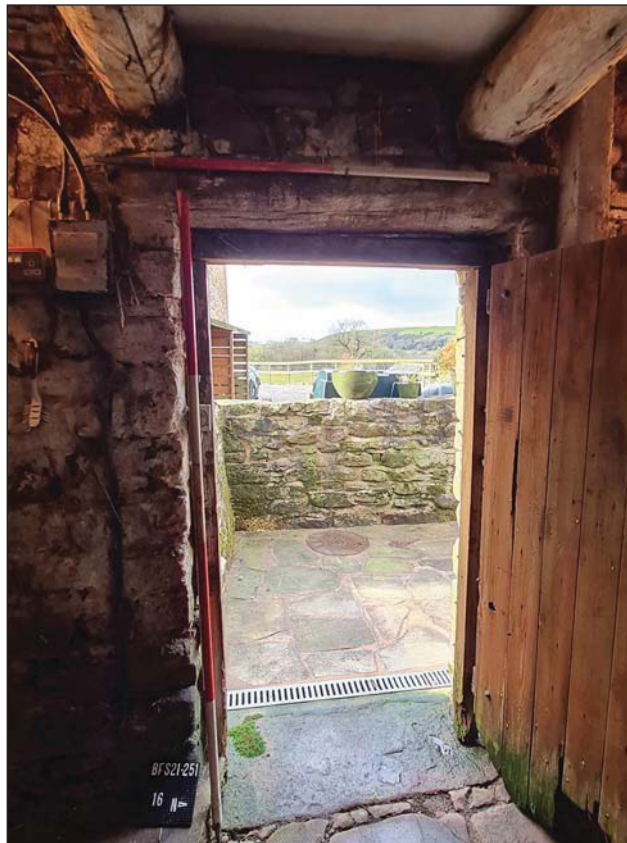


Plate 4. Doorway detail.

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 3 and 4.**







Plate 5. North elevation.



Plate 6. Window detail.

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 5 and 6.**





Plate 7. East elevation.



Plate 8. East elevation detail.

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Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 7 and 8.



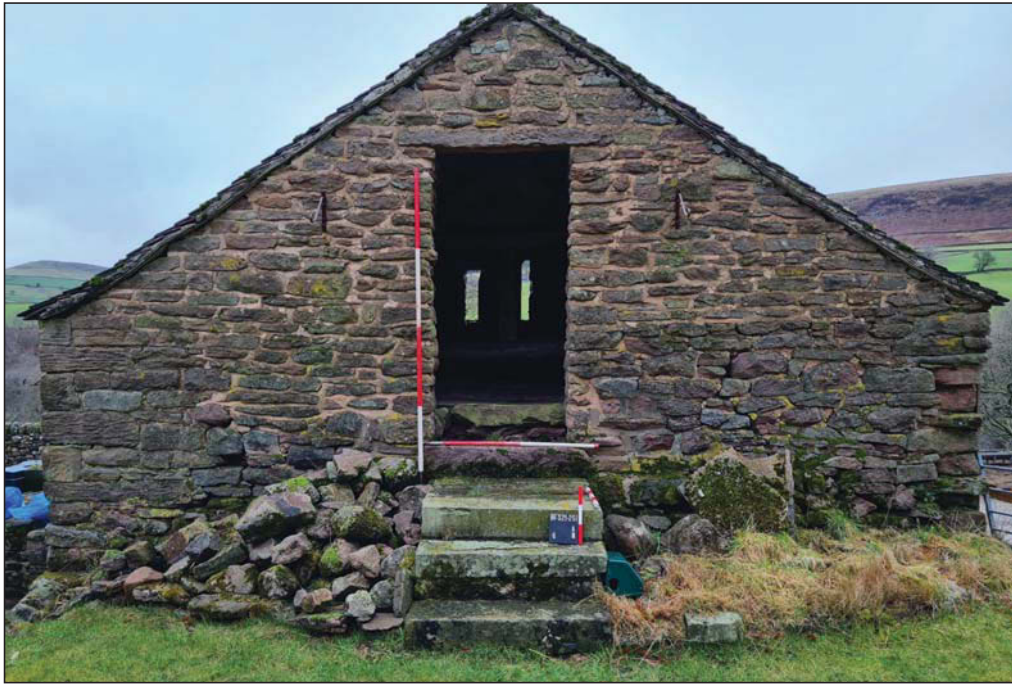


Plate 9. South elevation.

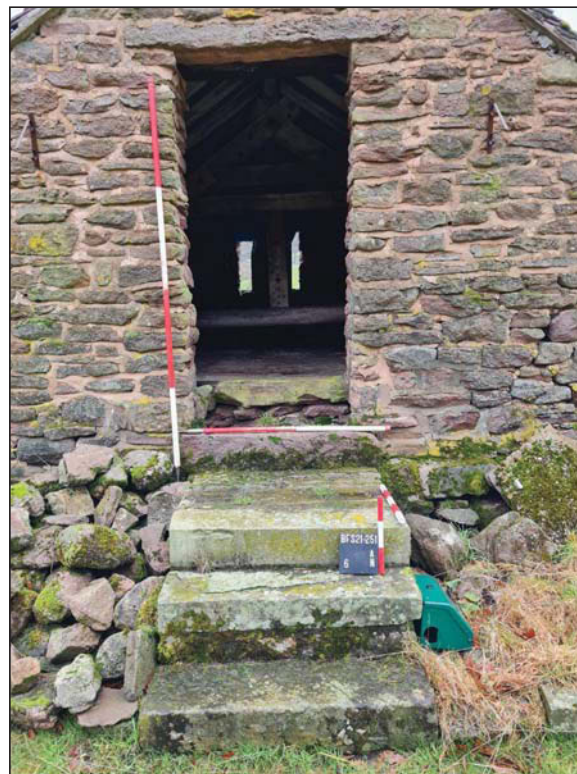


Plate 10. Door detail.

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 9 and 10.**

T V A S  
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Plate 11. View across mezzanine.

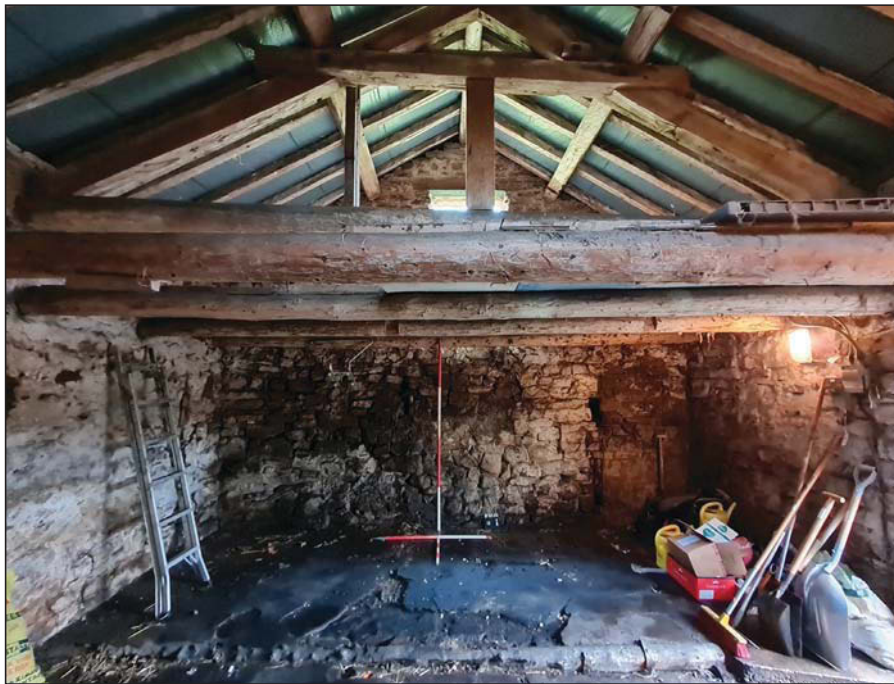


Plate 12. General view to south.

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Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 11 and 12.

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Plate 13. Barn floor, detail.



Plate 14. Floor construction detail.

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 13 and 14.**





Plate 15. View to door.



Plate 16. View to east wall.

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 15 and 16.**





Plate 17. Vent detail.



Plate 18. View to south.

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**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 17 and 18.**



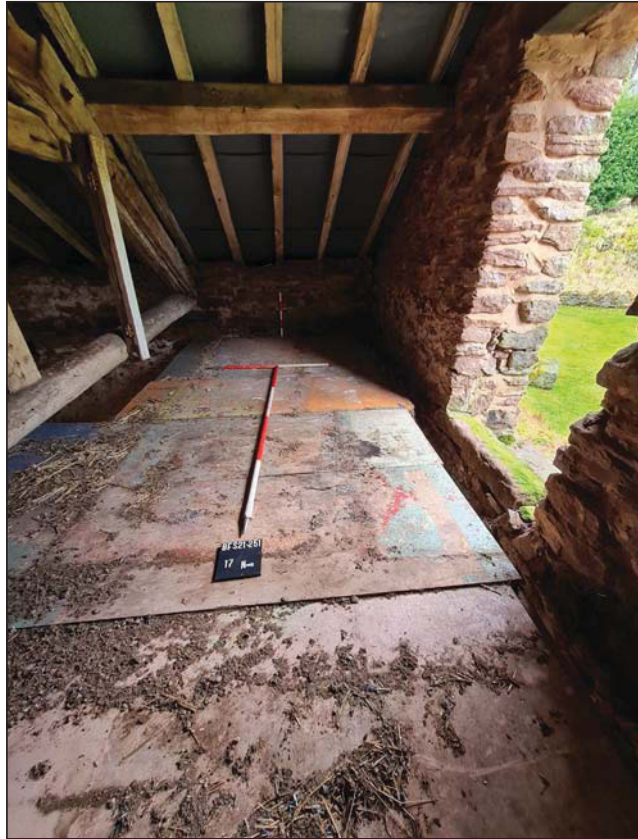


Plate 19. Roof detail.



Plate 20. Roof detail.

BFS 21/251

**Back Forest Farm, Swythamley, Rushton Spencer,  
Staffordshire, 2022  
Building Recording  
Plates 19 and 20.**

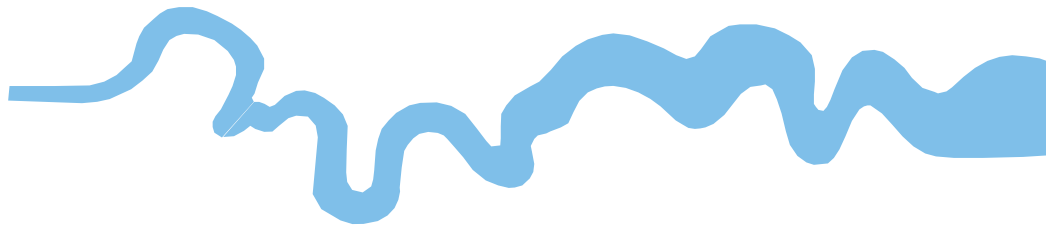




## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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