

Archaeological Standing Building Recording



Threshing Barn Upper Hill Farm

Breinton

Hereford

HR4 7PQ

On behalf of

Solomon Property Developments Ltd

August 2022



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Cover: View looking east northeast towards the former threshing barn at Upper Hill Farm

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1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd has undertaken a programme of Archaeological Standing Building Recording to Historic England/RCHME Level 3 in connection with the proposed residential conversion of a Grade II listed threshing barn at Upper Hill Farm Breinton Hereford HR4 7PQ, the results of which are summarised as follows:

The 17th century gable-ended former threshing barn is four bays in length aligned E-W and of timber box framed construction, situated within the farmyard to the immediate south of Upper Hill Farmhouse. It is evident that significant remedial works have been carried out to address its poor structural condition. The masonry plinth supporting the timber-framing of the barn has been replaced with sections of concrete breeze block walling set slightly higher. Timber sill plates and a number of the studs and rails have similarly been replaced or spliced with new oak. However, the upper portions of the framing of the north and south walls, particularly within the eastern two bays, have survived mostly intact, although some of the older timbers show evidence of fire damage.

The principal south-facing barn elevation overlooks the main farmyard and contains a large opening in the second bay representing the original entrance onto the threshing floor. The timber-frame panels comprising the first, third and fourth bays each has three vertical studs set between bay posts with pegs attached to the rails to secure weatherboarding on the north and south elevations and cast-iron hooks for the hinges carrying the double doors inserted in the central bay. The arrangement of the north-facing elevation mirrors that of the south.

The framing of the east gable end appears largely reconstructed with square panel framing up to tie-beam level, except for the gable apex where four vertical struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters appear to represent original fabric. Almost all of the framing in the western gable end has been lost apart from the apex, which has a similar configuration of three vertical struts (the fourth having been removed) connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters. The barn has a floor of bare earth and there is internal evidence of stave holes for wattled panels in several of the historic timbers of the framing of the north and south walls with limited evidence of stave holes and slots for internal sub-divisions between the bays.

The roof is constructed of two pairs of simple trusses with four vertical struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters at the east and west gable ends and three open trusses subdividing the four internal bays which have angled struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters, which in turn are linked by a pair of substantial trenched side purlins. The central truss is carried on straight chamfered braces tied into the wall-posts while the two flanking trusses have angled struts linking the tie-beams to the wall-posts. Carpenters' marks were noted on the west-facing side of the trusses at either end of the tie-beam and at the joints of the struts. The common rafters appear to be machine-cut and therefore presumed to be later than the trusses and purlins.



2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by Mr Gary Snowzell of Solomon Property Developments Ltd to undertake a programme of Archaeological Standing Building Recording (ASBR) to Historic England/RCHME Level 3 in connection with the proposed residential conversion of a Grade II listed threshing barn at Upper Hill Farm Breinton Hereford HR4 7PQ (fig. 1) (NGR SO 47623 40447) (Planning Ref. P210543/L).

Planning condition 3 states: No development to the timber-frame elements of the threshing barn shall commence until a Level 3 Survey drawing (Type 3), as defined in Historic England's guidance 'Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice' of the extant timber framing has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall record the existing form and location of all timber-frame components, including all recent repairs, and all removed timbers stored separately on site. A copy of the approved record survey shall be submitted to the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record within 1 month of approval. Reason: This information is required before development commences to record the historic fabric of the building prior to development in accordance with policy LD4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

3 Site Description

The four-bay threshing barn forming the subject of this ASBR is located immediately S of Upper Hill Farm, an isolated rural farmstead on the W outskirts of Hereford, located c. 3km to the W of Hereford city centre (*fig. 1*).

The farmhouse and an attached timber-framed barn and separate threshing barn to the S of the farmhouse have been dated to the 17th century and are collectively designated as a Grade II listed building (List Entry No. 1393549). The farmhouse and threshing barn stand on the E side of a tarmac lane (also a public footpath) leading to the N of unclassified Breinton Lane (*fig. 2*).

Until 2019, the threshing barn formed part of a larger complex of 19th/20th century traditional farm outbuildings arranged around a courtyard. The buildings included a single-storey two-bay brick barn used for garaging and storage attached to the W gable end of the threshing barn with a 12-bay cowshed of brick construction set at right angles and aligned N-S along the lane (*fig. 2*). The outbuildings appear to have been of early to mid-19th century date and having been built prior to 1948 may be regarded as having formed part of the curtilage of the listed farmhouse and threshing barn.

Structural surveys undertaken in 2018 and 2019 determined the garage/storage shed and cowshed to be in very poor condition and following partial collapse of the W wall of the cowshed both were demolished. The condition of the threshing barn was also assessed as poor evidenced by significant deterioration affecting the masonry plinth wall and sill plates which needed urgent remedial work. A four-bay steel-framed Dutch barn of late 20th century date located to the S of the threshing barn originally extended up to the threshing barn but has been partially truncated.



It should be noted that Upper Hill Farmhouse is in separate ownership and does not form the subject of this ASBR.

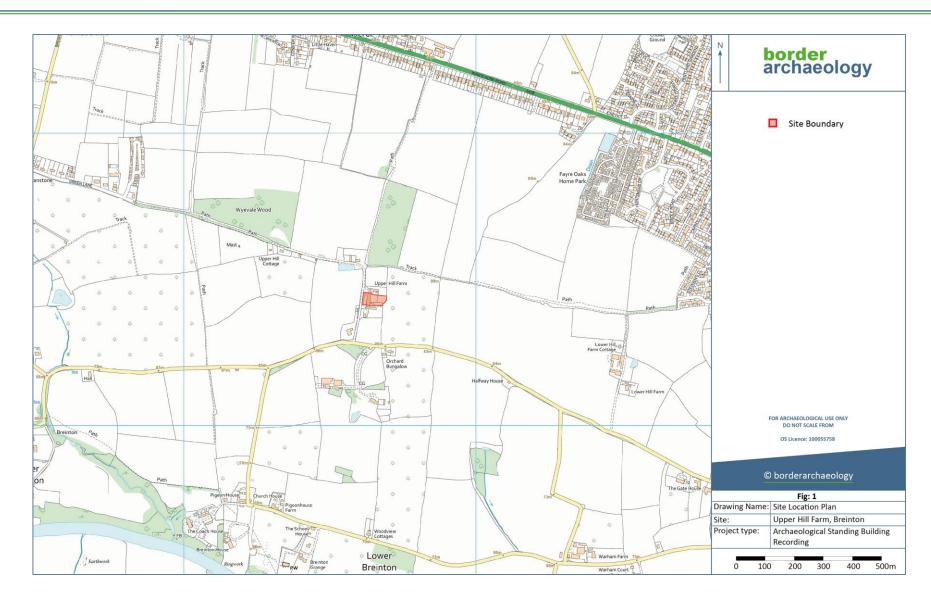
The farmhouse and its attached barn, together with the detached threshing barn to the S, were designated as a Grade II listed building on 2_{nd} December 2009 (List Entry No. 1393549). The full listing description is supplied in Appendix 1 to this report but the section specifically relating to the threshing barn is reproduced as follows:

A 17th century timber framed, four-bay threshing barn. The walls of this building are covered mainly with weather boarding and the roof is of corrugated iron sheeting. The timber framed super-structure is essentially intact, stands three panels high and supports a series of trusses. At either end of the building there are simple trusses with four vertical struts, whilst those in the middle have a pair of raking struts and one has straight braces below which are tied into the main posts. A pair of substantial trenched side purlins, support machine cut rafters with battens and the corrugated iron roof. Several carpenters' marks are clearly visible. A small number of the timber frame panels are filled with broad wattling. The threshing floor occupies the area between the two tall, opposing doorways in the side wall. There are two storage bays to the east and a single bay to the west.

3.1 Soils & Geology

The British Geological Survey (BGS) records sedimentary bedrock geology composed of interbedded siltstone and mudstone of the Raglan Mudstone Formation laid down within a local riverine environment between 419 and 424 million years ago in the Silurian Period (BGS 2020).

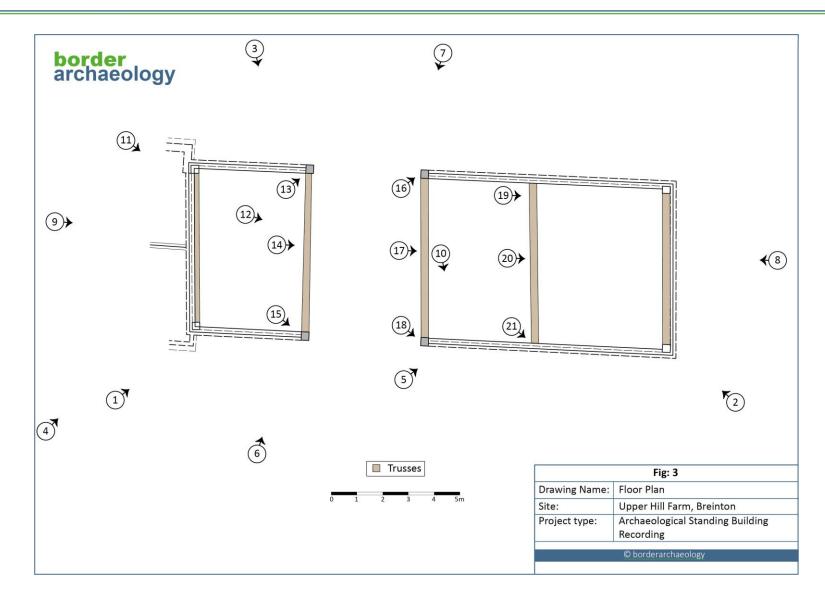




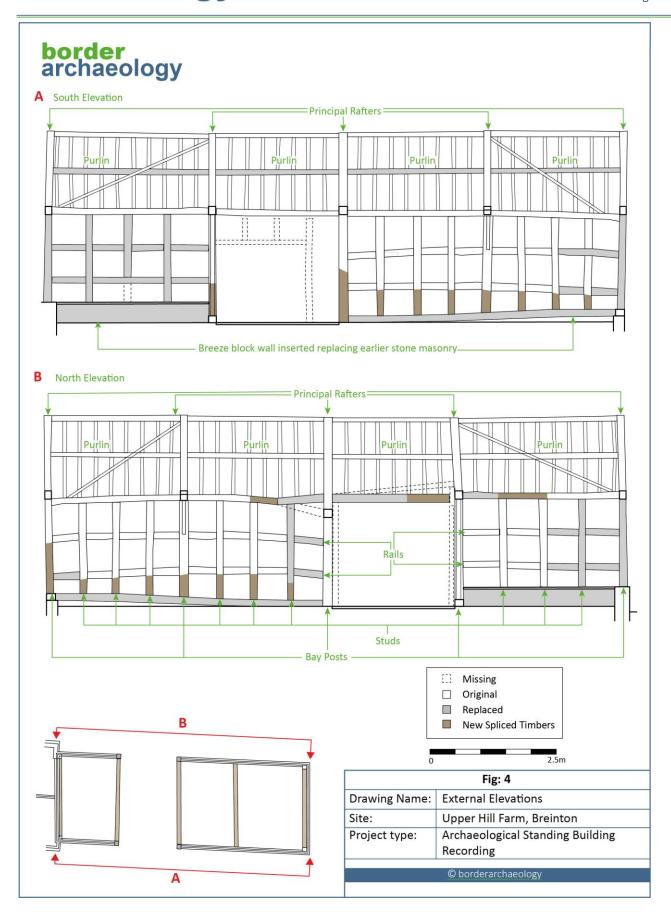




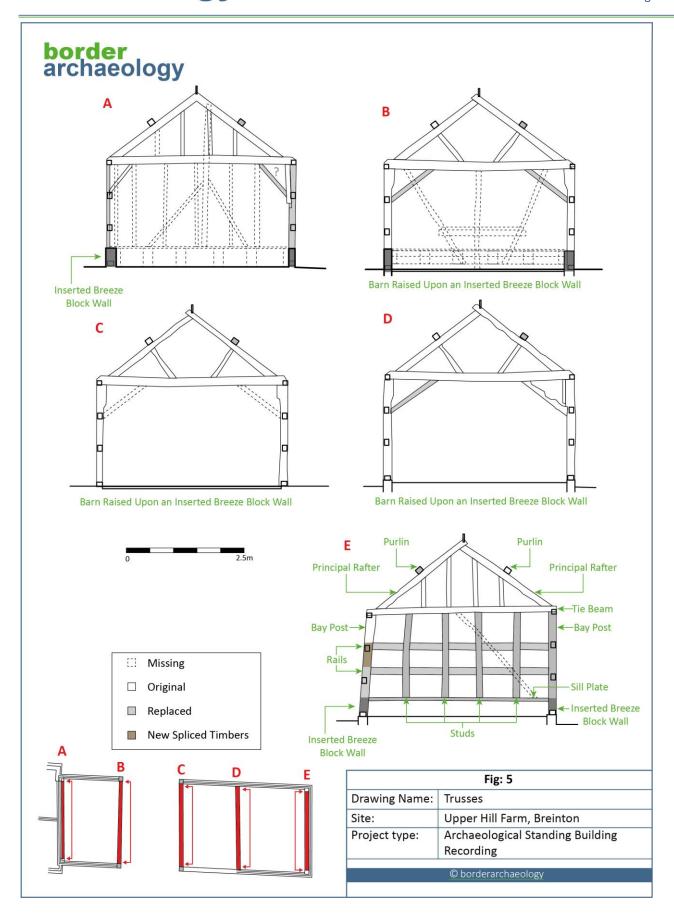




border archaeology



Threshing Barn Upper Hill Farm Breinton Hereford HR4 7PQ August 2022





4 Project Aim

The aim of the project was to make a record of the structure in its present form prior to conversion for ancillary use. The programme of ASBR was carried out to Historic England/RCHME Level 3, as detailed in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (Lane 2016), to allow for the preservation by record of all standing building fabric, fixtures and fittings of historical interest that would be removed or substantially altered by development.

5 Historical & Archaeological Background

A Heritage Statement was previously submitted in connection with the application (Border Archaeology 2020), which provides a summary description of the setting of the property, map regression and a detailed analytical assessment of those heritage assets which will be impacted by the proposals.

Upper Hill Farm is recorded in the Herefordshire HER as representing an early post-medieval farm complex of 17th century date with possible earlier medieval origins (HER 23045). It is situated about 900m N of the small village of Breinton, an historic settlement first documented as *Breuntune* in about 1200 (Coplestone-Crow 2009, 58). The manor of Breinton was held by the canons of Hereford Cathedral throughout the medieval period and the farmstead at Upper Hill was certainly in the possession of the Vicars Choral of Hereford Cathedral in the early 19th century and probably much earlier (Capes 1908).

The 17th century farmstead at Upper Hill consisted of the two-storey timber framed farmhouse (altered in the late 18th and 19th centuries) and a two-storey barn of three bays attached to the E end of the farmhouse, the four-bay threshing barn being situated to the S of the farmhouse (RCHM 1932). The extant group of 17th century structures, comprising the farmhouse, attached barn and threshing barn to the S, are designated as Grade II listed buildings.

An Ordnance Survey drawing of Hereford and its environs dated 1815 provides the earliest available cartographic depiction of the site (*fig. 6*), showing the farmhouse and threshing barn to the S, situated on the N side of a courtyard flanked to the E and W by two detached oblong ranges aligned N-S. Another range aligned E-W is depicted on the S side of the courtyard directly abutting the roadway to the W.

The Breinton tithe map of 1839 (*fig. 7*) records a significant change of layout affecting the outbuildings S of Upper Hill Farm. At that time, the farmstead (then marked as 'The Hill') was owned by the Vicars Choral of Hereford Cathedral and occupied by a tenant farmer named John Jones. An extension had been added at the W end of the threshing barn and two oblong ranges aligned N-S are shown as having been erected along the W side of the courtyard, immediately abutting the lane to the W. The building on the E side of the courtyard shown on the 1815 OS map had been demolished by 1839, while the barn to the S had been enlarged and was in separate ownership.



The Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1887 (*fig. 8*) records the layout of farm outbuildings at Upper Hill Farm as largely consistent with their appearance as shown on modern Ordnance Survey mapping. The easternmost two bays of the threshing barn appear to have been slightly altered with the addition of a lean-to extension on the S-facing elevation. The two oblong ranges shown on the 1839 tithe map on the W side of courtyard at right-angles to the threshing barn had been conjoined to form a single long rectangular structure. Extensions had also been added to the N and S of the farmhouse.

The Ordnance Survey 2nd and 3rd edition maps of 1904 and 1928, respectively, both confirm that the farm layout persisted largely unchanged (*figs. 9 & 10*), the most significant addition being the construction of the N-S aligned Dutch barn on E side of the complex to the S of the threshing barn, which is first recorded on the Ordnance Survey National Survey 1:2500 map of 1971.

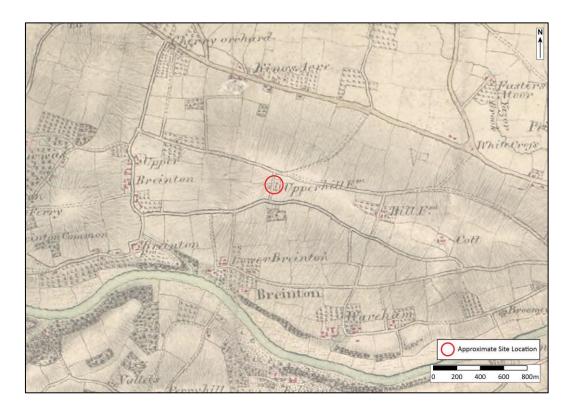


Fig. 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Surveyor's Drawing of 1815 (Reproduced by courtesy of the British Library)



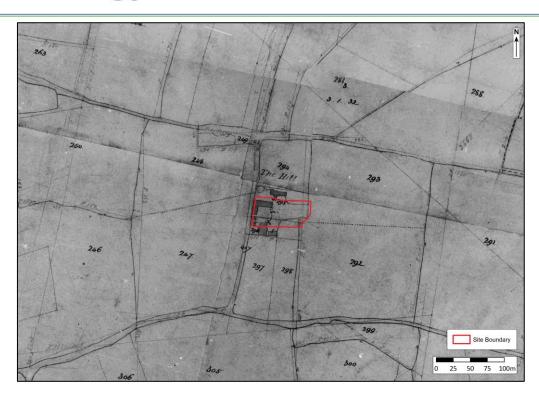


Fig. 7: Extract from the Breinton tithe map of 1839 (Reproduced by courtesy of the National Archives)

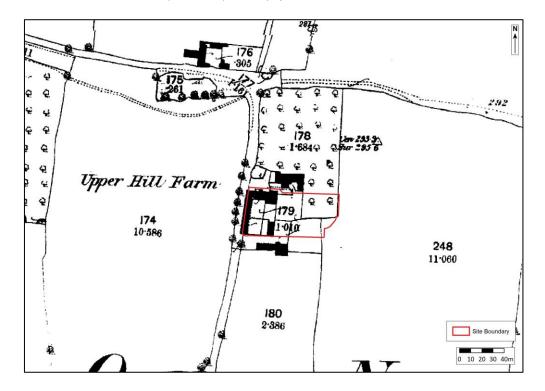


Fig. 8: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25-inch map of 1887 (Reproduced by courtesy of the National Archives)

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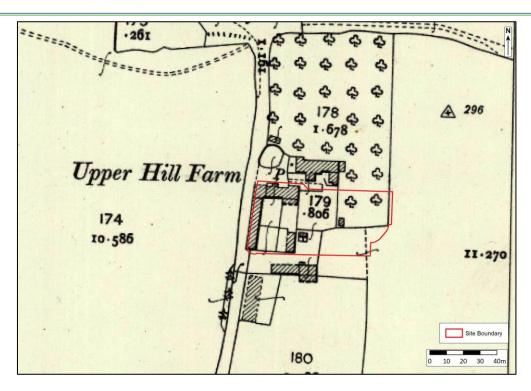


Fig. 9: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map of 1904 (Reproduced by courtesy of the National Archives)

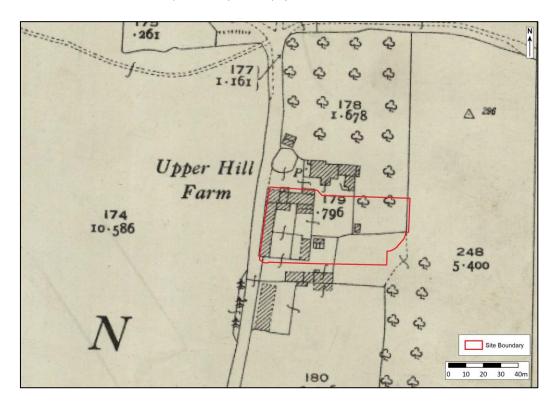


Fig. 10: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25-inch map of 1928 (Reproduced by courtesy of the National Archives)



6 Methodology

Recording reflects Historic England/RCHME guidance and was undertaken in accordance with standards set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), namely, Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (CIfA 2020a) and Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (CIfA 2020b). BA adheres to the CIfA Code of conduct: professional ethics in archaeology (CIfA 2021) and to project management advice set out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide (Lee 2015).

The specific recording methodology is based on a Historic England/RCHME Level 3 record as detailed in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (Lane 2016), which sets out guidance on the recording of historic buildings for the purposes of historical understanding and is a revised and expanded version of *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification* (RCHME 1996).

Level 3 is defined as follows:

... an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the buildings appearance and structure to support an historical analysis (Historic England 2016).

This Level 3 record comprises the following specifics:

6.1 Drawn Record

The drawn record consists of the following:

- A plan of the building, with photo locations clearly marked, and a location plan related to the national grid. It should be noted that due to the prior replacement of elements of the timber-framing, removal of the external weatherboarding and internal features and fixtures within the threshing barn (including remains of the foundation plinth), it has not been possible to produce a detailed phased plan of the structure.
- Annotated elevation drawings with original surviving elements of the timber framing and roof trusses identified;
- Appropriate additional illustrations that help support findings and the interpretation of the building;
- Additional illustrations of dateable fixtures and fittings (mouldings, catches, hinges, latches etc.);

6.2 Photographic Record

A high-resolution colour digital photographic record, with suitable scales, was made of the following:



- All external elevations:
- All internal room spaces (where accessible);
- Details of any architectural or functional fixtures, fittings and features relating to either the function or development of the building;
- General photographs illustrating the building's relationship to the surrounding buildings and setting.

6.3 Written Account

The written record comprises the following:

- The structure's National Grid Reference (NGR) and address;
- A note of any statutory & any non-statutory designations, such as inclusion on the local list;
- The date of the record, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and, if an archive has been created, its location;
- A table of contents and a list of illustrations or figures;
- Where considered appropriate, a summary account of the building's form, function, date and sequence
 of development. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners will be given if known;
- An introduction detailing the project background, together with a statement of objectives, methods, scope and limitations, and any constraints which limited the achievement of objectives;
- Acknowledgement of copyright, where applicable;
- A discussion of the published sources relating to the building and its setting, an account of its history as
 given in published sources, an analysis of historic map evidence (map regression) and a critical evaluation
 of previous records of the building, where these exist;
- An appropriately detailed account of the building's overall form (structure, materials, layout) and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis;
- Full bibliographical references

6.4 Recording Methodology

Records have been made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2021) and Historic England conventions as detailed in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (Lane 2016).

The photographic record was produced using a digital camera. Photographs were taken of all the external elevations where possible with an appropriate scale.

General views of the building and its setting (for contextual purposes) and additional photographs of relevant architectural details were also taken. Individual features were photographed as separate items and in detail. Each feature was photographed and placed into a wider context (i.e., the surrounding elevation). Each photograph (both external and internal) contains an appropriate scale and all photographic images were indexed and cross-referenced to a written photographic register, which includes full details concerning subject and direction of view. The site visit and building recording took place on the 11th July 2022.



7 Results

The subject of this programme of building recording comprises a 17th century gable-ended former threshing barn of four bays and timber box-frame construction aligned E-W within the farmyard to the immediate S of Upper Hill Farmhouse (*figs. 3-5, Plates 1-3*).

The barn stands in the NE corner of a former courtyard (*Plate 4*) and formerly had a two-bay gabled-brick structure attached to its W gable-end (which was later used as a garage and storage shed), at right-angles to which was a N-S aligned brick-built single-storey cowshed of 12 bays extending along the W side of the courtyard adjacent to the lane (*fig. 3*). Both structures appear to have been of early to mid-19th century date and are first shown on the 1839 tithe map (*fig. 7*). Structural surveys undertaken in 2018 and 2019 concluded that these two outbuildings were at imminent risk of collapse and following a partial collapse of the W wall of the cowshed into the adjacent lane, both were demolished.

The barn is of a simple box-frame construction on a base of breeze blocks along the N and S elevations which replaced an earlier and lower-set masonry plinth (*figs. 4 & 5, Plate 5*). The external weatherboarding, battens and doors have been removed in their entirety as has the corrugated metal roof cladding thus exposing a set of common rafters which have remained intact, although a significant proportion have been subject to renewal. It is evident that since the listing description was produced in 2009, the threshing barn has undergone significant remedial works (following the building surveys of 2018 and 2019) to urgently address its poor structural condition (*figs. 4 & 5*).

The principal S-facing elevation (*fig. 4, Plates 1, 2 & 6*) overlooks the main farmyard and has a large opening in the second bay representing the original entrance to the threshing floor. The timber panel frames that comprise the first, third and fourth bays each has three vertical studs set between bay-posts. Two rails between each of the vertical timbers form an arrangement of three by four to each bay. Slight variation occurs where timbers have been replaced but the overall form is consistent. The arrangement of the N-facing elevation matches that of the S (*fig. 4, Plates 3 & 7*), both having new sill beams, and a number of the timbers have been replaced or spliced with new oak. The replacement oak in the studding has been spliced-in using diagonal scarf joints and the bay-posts have horizontally cut butt-joints (*Plate 5*). Several of the historic timbers show evidence of fire damage. All joints appear to have wooden pegs and there are further pegs and nails attached to the studs for the weatherboarding on the N and S barn elevations, as well as cast-iron hooks for the hinges carrying the double-doors in the central bay.

The framing at the E gable-end (*fig. 5*) (which appears to have consisted of a series of vertical studs) appears to have been largely reconstructed with square-panel framing to tie-beam level except for the apex of the E gable, which has four vertical struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters, which appear to be original fabric (*Plates 2 & 8*). The W gable-end of the barn (*fig. 5*) has had almost all framing removed except for the apex of the W gable which has a similar configuration of three vertical struts (the fourth having been removed) connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters (*Plates 1 & 9*).

The interior of the barn is of bare earth and there is evidence of stave-holes for wattled panelling in several of the historic timbers in the framing of the N and S walls, as well as limited evidence of stave-holes and slots for internal



subdivisions between the bays of the barn (*Plate 10*), where the unthreshed and processed crop and straw would have been stored separately.

The most notable internal feature is the roof structure (fig. 5, Plate 11) comprising two pairs of simple roof-trusses with four vertical struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters at the E (Plate 8) and W gable-ends (Plate 9) and three open trusses subdividing the four internal bays, which have angled struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters, which, in turn, are connected by a pair of substantial trenched side-purlins (Plate 12). The central truss is carried on straight chamfered braces which are tied into the wall-posts while the two flanking trusses have angled struts connecting the tie-beams to the wall-posts.

Carpenters' marks were noted on the W-facing side of the roof-trusses (*Plates 13-21*). These appear to have been chiselled and were seen towards the end of the tie-beam on each truss, with corresponding marks visible on the principal rafters and at joints connecting tie-beam and struts. Each truss has a different mark which varies depending on which joint it is against. The common rafters were evidently machine-cut and are therefore presumed to be later than the trusses and purlins.

8 Conclusions

The programme of ASBR undertaken by Border Archaeology with regard to a Grade II listed Threshing Barn at Upper Hill Farm Breinton Hereford HR4 7PQ has reached the following conclusions:

The subject of this programme of building recording is a 17th century gable-ended former threshing barn of four bays and timber-box framed construction. The barn is aligned E-W and stands in the farmyard to the immediate S of Upper Hill Farmhouse. Significant remedial works have been carried out since the listing description was compiled in 2009 to address the poor structural condition and which included replacing the masonry plinth previously supporting the timber-framing with sections of slightly higher-set concrete breeze-block walling and replacement of the timber sill-plates. Similarly, a number of the studs and bay-posts have been replaced or spliced with new oak. However, the upper portions of the framing of the N and S walls, particularly within the eastern two bays, have survived largely intact, although there is more evidence of the replacement of framing with new rails and studs towards the W end of the barn. Some of the older timbers exhibit evidence of fire damage.

The principal S-facing elevation overlooks the main farmyard with a large opening in the second bay representing the original entrance to the threshing floor. The timber-frame panels of the first, third and fourth bays each has three vertical studs set between bay-posts with pegs attached to the rails to support weatherboarding on the N and S elevations and cast-iron hooks for the double-door hinges in the central bay. The construction of the N-facing elevation reflects that of the S.

The framing at the E gable-end appears largely reconstructed with square-panel framing to tie-beam level except for the apex of the E gable which has four vertical struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters, which appear to be original fabric. The W gable-end has had almost all the framing removed except for the apex of the



W gable which has a similar configuration of three vertical struts (the fourth having been removed) connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters.

The barn has a bare earth floor and internal evidence of stave-holes for wattled panels was visible in several of the historic timbers of the framing of the N and S walls, as well as limited evidence of stave-holes and slots for internal subdivisions between the bays of the barn.

The roof structure may be regarded as the most notable internal feature. This comprises two pairs of simple roof-trusses with four vertical struts connecting tie-beam and principal rafters at the E and W gable-ends and three open trusses subdividing the four internal bays. These have angled struts connecting the tie-beam to the principal rafters, which, in turn, are connected by a pair of substantial trenched side-purlins. The central truss is carried on straight chamfered braces tied into the wall-posts while the two flanking trusses have angled struts linking the tie beams to the wall-posts. A series of carpenters' marks are present on the W-facing side of the trusses at either end of the tie-beam and at the connection of the struts. The common rafters appear to be machine-cut and are thus probably later than the trusses and purlins.

9 Archive

Both paper record and digital files will be deposited with the Museum Resource and Learning Centre (MRLC), 58 Friar Street, Hereford. The deposition will include a copy of the final report, and this archive will include all written, drawn, survey and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken and Museum and archive compilation will be consistent with specific deposition guidelines set out in *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (CIfA 2020b). Digital archiving will be via the Archaeology Data Service. A copy of the digital archive only will also be lodged with the Herefordshire HER.

Archiving will be consistent with advice detailed in *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (Walker 1990), *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections* (Paine 1993), *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2011a) and *Safeguarding Archaeological Information: Procedures for minimizing risk to undeposited archaeological archives* (Brown 2011b).

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11.1 Cartography

(All historic mapping was obtained from the National Archives unless otherwise stated)

- 1815 OS Surveyor's drawing of Hereford and district
- 1839 Breinton Tithe Map
- 1887 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25-inch map
- 1904 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25-inch map
- 1928 Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25-inch map
- 1952 Ordnance Survey provisional edition 6-inch map
- 1971 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map



12 Appendix 1 Photographic Record



Plate 1: External view ENE of the S and W facing elevations



Plate 2: External view NW of the S and E elevations





Plate 3: External view SSE of the N-facing elevation



Plate 4: External view NE looking across the former courtyard towards the threshing barn





Plate 5: External view NE of the easternmost bays within the S facing section – showing low breeze block walls replacing the former masonry plinth, replacement sill plate, and butt and scarf joints within the spliced timber frames

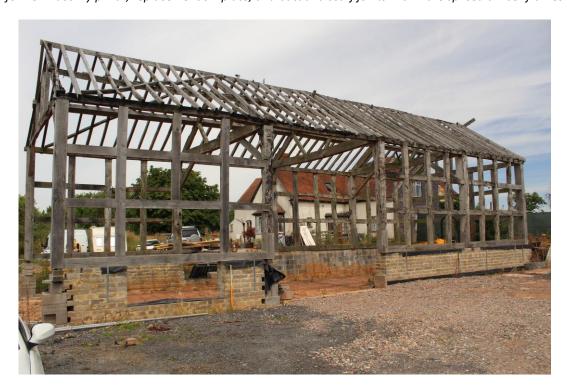


Plate 6: External view NNE showing the principal S-facing elevation





Plate 7: External view S of the N elevation



Plate 8: External view W showing the E gable-end





Plate 9: External view E showing the E gable-end



Plate 10: Representative internal view SSE showing stave-holes and slots within the historic timbers for internal subdivisions





Plate 11: External view ESE showing the roof structure



Plate 12: Internal view ESE of the roof-trusses





Plate 13: Internal view NE showing the carpenters' marks on the N end of the W roof-truss



Plate 14: Internal view E showing the carpenters' marks on the central portion end of the W roof-truss





Plate 15: Internal view ESE showing the carpenters' marks on the S end of the central roof-truss



Plate 16: Internal view NE showing the carpenters' marks on the N end of the central roof-truss





Plate 17: Internal view E showing the carpenters' marks on the central portion end of the central roof-truss



Plate 18: Internal view ESE showing the carpenters' marks on the S end of the central roof-truss





Plate 19: Internal view ENE showing the carpenters' marks on the N end of the E roof-truss



Plate 20: Internal view E showing the carpenters' marks on the central portion end of the E roof-truss



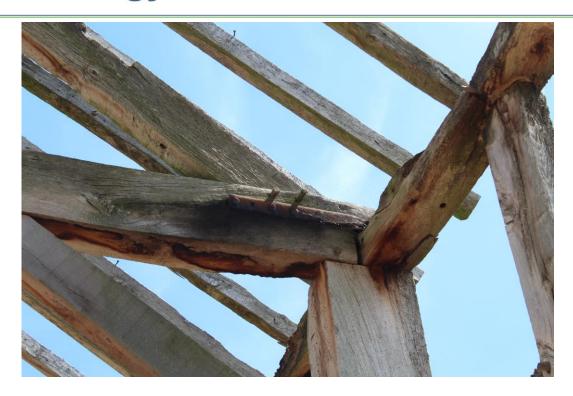


Plate 21: Internal view ESE showing the carpenters' marks on the S end of the E roof-truss



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