

Bell Hall Farm, Hartle Lane,  
Belbroughton, Worcestershire:

**Historic Building Record and  
Interpretation.  
WSM33743**

2005

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Belbroughton, Worcestershire WSM33743**

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# **Historic Building Record and Interpretation of Bell Hall Farm, Hartle Lane, Belbroughton, Worcestershire (WSM 33743)**

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## **Historic Building Record and Interpretation of Bell Hall Farm, Hartle Lane, Belbroughton, Worcestershire (WSM 32917)**

**March 2005**

### **Summary**

*An historic building record and interpretation was carried out at Bell Hall Farm, Hartle Lane, Belbroughton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9358 7694). The work was undertaken on behalf of Mr A. & Mrs S. Richards in order to discharge a condition attached to planning permission granted by Bromsgrove District Council (B2004/0313) for the conversion of the farm buildings into residential accommodation and the farmhouse into office and ancillary accommodation.*

*Bell Hall Farm was built by the Noel family during the 1860s, and formed part of the Bell Hall Estate. The complex of buildings is made up of four wings and a farm house arranged around a central courtyard. The west wing contained a central barn, with a granary over a cartshed adjoining the north side, and a loose box and Worcestershire cowshed (added later in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century), adjoining the south. The east wing was originally made up of a single building which stood alone, this was likely to have been an animal pen with hen loft above, the gap between this and the south wing was later occupied by a 'parlour'. The north wing was stables and the south wing was used as a cowhouse. The buildings have undergone much alteration since their constructions, many of the original windows and doorways have been blocked or replaced.*

*The farmhouse also dates from the 1860s and is in a nominal Tudor Gothic style. Documentary records show that the farmhouse was occupied by domestic servants employed by the Noel family until the death of Charles Perrett Noel 1908. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century the Bell Hall Estate was sold and from this time onwards Bell Hall Farm was privately owned.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

This historic building record and interpretation, was carried out by Birmingham Archaeology at Bell Hall Farm, Hartle Lane, Belbroughton, Worcestershire. The work has been commissioned by Mr A. and Mrs S. Richards (hereafter known as 'the clients') in order to discharge a condition attached to planning permission granted by Bromsgrove District Council (B2004/0313) for the conversion of farm buildings into residential accommodation and a farmhouse into office and ancillary accommodation.

Because the proposed development may affect a building of intrinsic historic or archaeological interest, registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record (WSM 32917), in line with guidance given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Section 2.11 (Department of Environment 1994), the Planning Authority has been advised that a programme of historic building recording is required.

## **2.0 Site Location (Fig. 1)**

Bell Hall Farm is situated amidst a rural landscape to the southeast of Bell Hall, Hartle Lane, Belbroughton, Worcestershire, at NGR SO 9358 7694. The complex comprises a farmhouse and associated farm buildings, arranged in a quadrangular pattern around a open yard (Fig 2).

## **3.0 Objectives**

The overall objective was to obtain an interpretative record of the buildings prior to redevelopment. More specific aims were to collate a detailed photographic survey of the farm complex, including photographs of all external elevations, internal room spaces and roof structures, details of any architectural or functional fixtures and fittings and photographs illustrating the buildings relationship to surrounding buildings and setting.

In addition to the photographic survey, existing survey drawings were collated and a phased plan of the complex produced. An interpretative written record was compiled on site.

## **4.0 Methods**

The photographic survey was carried out using high-resolution digital photography. Photographs included suitable scales, and were catalogued on *pro forma* index sheets.

The written description comprised information about building types, dates, architectural character, construction materials and techniques, spatial character and phasing. The description was compiled using *pro forma* building and room record sheets.

Structural analysis of the existing buildings was be carried out on site, and existing survey drawing were used for the purpose of producing a phased plan at a scale of 1: 100.

Historical research of readily available published and non-published documentary sources, including local histories, census returns, trade directories, historic maps and photographs, and other documents appropriate to the age of the buildings in question was carried out at Worcestershire Records Office, Worcestershire History Centre, and the library of the University of Birmingham.

## **5.0 Historical Background**

Sir John Conway, son and successor of Edward, together with his son Edward conveyed the ancient manor of Bell Hall to Humphrey Perrott in 1592. It descended in the Perrott family from father to son until 1766, when John Perrott died, leaving a daughter Katherine. By her marriage with Walter Noel of Hilcote the manor of Brian's Bell (Bell Hall) passed to the Noel family. The estate remained in the

possession of the Noel family until the death of Charles Perrott Noel in 1908 (VCH Vol.III p.16). It was during the ownership of the Noel family that the earlier Bell Hall was demolished and replaced by a new mansion in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Plans of the Bell Hall Estate commissioned by J.P. Noel in 1836 (Fig. 3) show the old Bell Hall. This was a large house with gardens on the north and south sides and further outbuildings to the east. At the time that the estate plans were formulated, the tenant of the hall and surrounding land was Reverend Hickman. Also marked on the plan, the lands surrounding those leased by Hickman were occupied by Charles Noel himself. The outbuildings to the east of the hall were of combined occupation. Field number 144, named Horse Close and at this time in the possession of Rev. Hickman later became the site for Bell Hall Farm. The slightly later Tithe Map of 1840 (Fig 4) also shows the arrangement of the old hall. During the following decade the site of the Hall was to be thoroughly redeveloped.

The 1841 census lists Bell Hall and its occupants. These were few and included William Whitacker, a 36 year old game keeper and Job Yates a 35 year old agricultural worker and his wife and two children, it may have been possible that these people were not living within the main hall building, but in the farm buildings to the east of the hall.

The 1851 census shows a completely different degree of occupation. By this time the hall was occupied by Charles Noel, head of the family (aged 48) and his wife Mary Noel (aged 49). They had one child, a daughter, Mary Catherine Noel (aged 18). Alongside the Noel family were an array of domestic staff. Simply listed as house servants in the census these were, Harriet Gully (aged 33), Jane Merrick (aged 23), Jane Nott (aged 23), Thomas Whitmore (aged 26), Edward Clark (aged 18), John Griffiths (aged 21), Eliza Cherrington (aged 26) and John Finch (aged 32). There is no mention of Bell Hall Farm in the 1851 census.

The entries in the 1851 census would suggest that by this time Charles Noel had built the new Bell Hall and himself his family and staff were occupying it. The 1841 census had listed just a game keeper and agricultural labour, this census may have been produced during a period of change at the Hall, perhaps a period of construction. This would explain small number of people living there, the occupations however were vital to the maintenance of the grounds of the estate.

There are no entries for Bell Hall in the 1861 census. Later in the decade, documentation relating to the Bell Hall Estate accounts of 1868, list Bell Hall Farm. This is the first known documentation of the farm. The accounts show that half a year's rent for the farm was £135.

The census of 1871 contains the first record of the occupants of Bell Hall Farm. In this year the head of the house was Alexander W. Falconer, a widower, classed as a domestic servant, and employed on the Bell Hall Estate as a gardener. The other occupier of the farm was Alexander Falconer's unmarried aunt, Hannah Ward, she is listed as being a house keeper. Charles Noel (now a widower) still occupied Bell Hall, he is listed as being a Justice of the Peace for Worcestershire. He lived with his son Charles Perrett Noel (aged 40) and his daughter in law Henrietta Noel (aged 36). The Noel family still employed a large quantity of domestic staff. In 1871, there were

eight women and five men working and living within Bell Hall. They were all unmarried and ranged in aged between 15 and 34. Married members of staff and their families were housed in two lodges on the estate. In 1871 one of the lodges housed the coach man and his family and the other an agricultural worker and his wife.

A year later, in 1872, in a document entitled *Particulars of Rental of Bell Hall Estate in the year 1872*, described Bell Hall Farm and outbuildings as being *In Hand*, this included the farm house, outbuildings and land, two lodges and a cottage. The rental value of this property was £270.

The census of 1881 again lists Alexander W. Falconer (aged 51) as being head of the house at Bell Hall Farm. Alexander was still employed on the estate as a gardener, however by this time he had remarried, his wife being Annie Falconer (aged 40). They had two sons Henry (aged 7), a scholar, and George (aged 2). Alexander's aunt no longer lived at the farm. Changes had also occurred within Bell Hall itself. Charles Noel had died and his son Charles Perrett Noel was now the head of the house, he is described in the census as Magistrate and Land Proprietor. His wife Henrietta also lived at the hall as did a Margaret Barton (aged 43), a cousin. At this time the Hall employed a much reduced quantity of domestic staff. These were six female members of staff and two male members of staff living and working within the main Hall. At this time one of the lodges was occupied by a family of seven. The head of the household and his wife were employed as domestic servants within the hall. The occupations of the family living in the other lodge is not given in the census.

The OS Map of 1889 (Fig 5) shows the appearance of Bell Hall Farm for the first time. The layout and structures of the courtyard complex appear almost the same as they are today. All the ranges are complete apart from the east range. In 1889 this was made up of a single building, with smaller 'outbuildings' to the rear. There was a gap between the building of the east range and the south range. At this time a long narrow building aligned N-S extended to the south from the west end of the south range.

In 1891 Bell Hall Farm was occupied by the Paiton family. The head of the household was Charles (aged 55), the farm bailiff, who lived with his wife Elizabeth (aged 54). Together they had two children, William Paiton (aged 16), employed by the hall as a gardener and Helen Paiton (aged 9). The numbers of staff living and working within the hall had also declined, in this census only five women and one man lived in the hall. Only one of the two lodges at this date was occupied by domestic staff. Charles Fryer employed by the hall as a coachman and his wife and three children lived in one of the two lodges. One of his children, Edward Fryer aged 16 was also employed by the hall, he was a page.

By 1901 Bell Hall Farm was referred to as Home Farm. Living at Home Farm were John Hallam (aged 27) and his wife Alice Hallam (aged 27). John Hallam worked on the estate as a gardener. Also living in the farm house was Frank King, a boarder, aged 17 at the time of the census and also employed as a gardener on the estate. At this time Charles Perrett Noel and his wife Henrietta still occupied Bell Hall. They employed six female domestic staff and one male domestic staff, who lived and worked within the hall. At this time both of the lodges were occupied by domestic



servants. The then East Lodge was occupied by Thomas Baylis (aged 75), an agricultural labourer, employed by the Noel family, whose son, James Baylis, was employed as a carter on the farm. James' wife Francis (aged 30) and their daughter Minnie also lived in the East Lodge. The West Lodge was also occupied by staff of the farm. George Skinner (aged 70), the head of the household, was a herdsman on the farm and lived in the lodge with his wife Eliza a laundress and May Carter aged 12, a boarder.

Charles Perrett Noel died in 1908 leaving the Hall and estate to his widow for life, with reversion to Sir Neville Lyttleton and the remainder in default of heirs male to Lord Cobham (VCH Vol.iii p.16). It was on the death of Sir Neville, within the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that an auction took place at Bell Hall Farm (then Home Farm). The auction took place due to arrangements having been made to lease Bell Hall for use as a private hotel. The auction catalogue provides an insight into the fixtures and fitting of the farmyard complex and the quantity and type of livestock which were being farmed at that time (see Appendix 1 for full listing). It appears that the farm may have been involved in the keeping of rare breed animals.

The 1904 OS map (Fig 6) and the 1924 OS Map (Fig 7), again show the incomplete east range of the farmyard complex, no additions or alterations seem to have been made since the first edition OS Map of 1889 (Fig 5).

## **6.0 Description of the buildings (Figs. 8 to 10)**

The Bell Hall Farm complex comprises a farmhouse and four ranges of farm buildings, arranged in a quadrangular pattern around an open yard. Each of the north, south, east and west ranges and the farmhouse will be discussed individually, other subsidiary buildings of the farm complex, which fall outside the nucleus of this complex, will also be discussed in order to fully record the character of Bell Hall Farm. Finally an analysis of how the farmyard complex developed will also be given.

### **6.1 The West Range**

The west range is aligned N-S, it is characterised by a large, central, two-storey, three-bay barn facing east and west, a cartshed at the north end facing west, with a granary above, and a single-storey, west-facing block comprising (from north to south) feed room, loose box and Worcestershire cowshed. The west range is constructed of red brick laid in English Garden Wall bond, with occasional use of flared headers, and has a plain tile roof.

#### The Barn (Plate 1)

The east facing elevation, towards the courtyard, has central, full height, barn doors under a 3-centred arch. Each of the barn doors is subdivided again, into two tiers of wooden doors on each side. The doors are supported by four pairs of decorative sandstone ashlar hinge blocks (Plate 2). The central barn doors are flanked by lozenge-shaped arrangements of air vents in two sizes. The segmental-arched

doorway to the centre of north bay giving access to a stone staircase leading to the granary at the far north end of the west range. The segmental-arched window to the south bay, which contains a wooden cross-window frame.

The west facing elevation of the barn (Plate 3) is also characterised by air vents of the type seen on the east elevation, and central full height wooden barn doors under a 3-centred arch. Four pairs of sandstone hinge blocks are present, however the bottom ones are mostly covered by the concrete yard surface, and the middle pair are not in use, due to the original doors having been replaced. The south bay of the barn has an inserted 20<sup>th</sup>-century sliding door and adjacent to this, an inserted 20<sup>th</sup>-century window. To the north bay there is an inserted 20<sup>th</sup>-century window under a segmental arch.

### Interior- Ground Floor

The ground floor of the barn is of concrete in the south and central bays and of brick in the north bay. The north bay contains an inserted concrete trough set into the floor, to the north of which is a concrete plinth, possibly for a piece of machinery. The bays are separated by stub walls, which support the ends of the roof trusses. Between the centre and south bay these are extended into low walls with a narrow opening in between, gated at time of survey. A similar arrangement also existed to the north, but has been modified, with only a short section on the west side remaining. The east wall of the north bay projects to accommodate the sandstone staircase on the other side. There is an inserted wooden staircase in southeast corner of north bay (Plate 4). The timber floor above the north bay appears to be original. The floor above south bay is less likely to be original, and has certainly undergone some modification with the insertion of I-beams. The 'bridge' across the central threshing bay appears to be an insertion.

### Interior- First Floor

The upper storey is floored with wooden boards. In the south bay, a large metal water tank is situated in the southwest corner. In the north bay there is a large wooden hopper against the west wall, it blocks the air vents so is unlikely to be original (Plate 5). Another hopper is located in the northwest corner of the room, the hoppers drained to ground floor. In the north wall of this bay is a doorway with segmental head, this appears to be an original opening which leads into the granary above the cartshed. In the west wall of the bay is an inserted window.

There are four timber roof trusses supporting the roof of the barn. The two situated over the north and south bays are of **king-post** construction, the king posts are bolted rather than pegged. The two trusses over the bay divisions comprise tie beam supporting the lower purlin, short principals and collar supporting the upper purlins, and raking struts from tie beam to collar. The trusses are supported on brick columns except in the north bay, where a stone-corbelled impost carries the end of the beam over the stair.

### Cartshed and Granary

Beyond the barn at the north end of the west range is a two-bay cartshed with granary above. The cart shed has open entrances beneath a wooden beam, either side of a square pillar with bullnose brick corners (Plate 6). The upper part of this bay is obscured by the roof of a later shelter extending to the west.

The granary above the cartshed is accessible from the first-floor level in the barn. The floor is of wooden boards, with a trapdoor in north part of the room. Over the trapdoor is a hoist (Plate 7). The granary was also originally accessible from the courtyard, by means of the stone steps (Plate 8). In the north wall of the store there is a segmental-arched window containing a tripartite frame. A king-post truss supports the roof.

### Loose Box and Worcestershire cowhouse

To the south of the barn is a row of single-storey, west facing structures. These are made up of a feed room and loose box (of the same structure, and a continuation of the south range) to the north (Plate 9), each with a segmental-arched doorway. The loose box has a concrete and brick floor and an inserted feeding trough with an inserted window/trap above in its northeast corner. There is a blocked segmental-arched doorway in the south wall of the loose box formerly giving access to the cowhouse to the south .

A Worcestershire cowhouse is situated to the south of the loose box (Plate 10), it comprises three-bays between square piers with bullnose brick corners. The cowhouse was formerly open fronted, and is an addition to the farmyard complex dating to the later-19<sup>th</sup> century. It has been subject to alteration during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it was fitted with gates, and the internal space subdivided by an inserted concrete block wall between the centre and south bay. The short principal roof trusses of the cow house are bolted rather than jointed. The southern gable end of this cowhouse has a circular pitching eye.

## **6.2 The North Range**

The north range is aligned E-W, it is a single-storey structure facing north and south. The range is split into two compartments and was probably originally intended for use as stables. More recently the east end of the range has been reused as a garage, the west section remaining in use for housing livestock. The north range is constructed of red brick laid in Flemish stretcher bond, and has a plain tile roof.

### Exterior

The south facing elevation (Plate 11) is of roughly six bays. There are segmental-arched windows to the west and centre, both with cross-pattern wooden frames, and a window with contemporary frame at the east end within a blocked doorway with segmental head. The doorway at the west end of the range also has a segmental-head.

There are two inserted garage doors in this elevation, one in the centre and one at the east end. The north facing elevation (Plate 12) has two blocked segmental-arch windows on the east and centre of the range. There is an inserted doorway at the west end.

The north gable end of the west range adjoins the west end of the north range (Plate 13). The gable has a blocked segmental-arched window at ground and first floor levels. There are several tiers of brick banding decorating the gable, the lowest is stepped over the first floor window, forming a dripstone band. Butting against the west side of this gable end is a low wall of reused sandstone blocks with herringbone tooling, the blocks were probably first used during the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup>-century.

### Interior

The east end of north range has a concrete floor and brick and plaster walls. There is a blocked doorway with segmental-arch in the west wall which would have given access to the other room of the range. There is a blocked window in the north wall of the room and a further blocked door in the south wall (Plate 14), both of these blocked features are set within a raised brick frame. The room has a suspended, hard board ceiling, with king-post roof truss above. The interior of the west end of the range is very similar to that of the east end but it has undergone fewer changes, retaining its original windows and doorways (Plate 15). The area does not have a suspended ceiling, the king-post trusses of the roof can be seen. The room has an arrangement of 20<sup>th</sup>-century metal stalls.

## **6.3 The South Range**

The south range is aligned E-W. It is a single-storey structure facing north with a later covered yard constructed against its south side. It has again been extended to the east. At the west end of the range are the alley way and loose box covered in the discussion of the west range. The main body of the range is divided three areas which would have been used for a similar purpose as the north range, probably a cowhouse. The south range is constructed of red brick laid in Flemish stretcher bond, it has a plain tile roof.

### Exterior

The north facing elevation has a segmental-arched doorway at its east end. Following this, towards the east end of the range is a sequence of five windows with segmental-arches at a slightly higher level. The first three windows have at some point had their sills raised and the bottom of the original window opening blocked up. The fourth and fifth window may have replaced doorways. There is a further blocked window between the second and third window of the range.

The south facing elevation originally had three segmental-arched windows, the centre one is now blocked. The later shelter shed of the covered yard has been built against this wall and a feeding trough inserted along the full length of it.

## Interior

The west end of the south range is made up of a long narrow room fitted with metal stalls dating from the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup>-century (Plate 16). The floor is of concrete and the walls are plastered. Two windows at the west end of the room in the north wall and a blocked window towards the east end of the room are set within raised brick surrounds (as seen previously in the north range). The roof was constructed of two king-post trusses above the raised brick surrounds, with two intermediate steel queen-post trusses.

Further to the east was a smaller room, possibly used as a feed store. The room has a concrete floor and lime-washed, plaster walls. This room had opposed segmental-arched entrances on each side, leading into the northeast corner of the courtyard and the south side of the farmyard complex. There were further entrances inserted into the east and west walls. The range continues to the east with another room which may have also been used as a store, this has a single, segmental-headed window, in the south wall. Adjoining this room was a small addition to the range, which was probably added soon after the construction of the main body of the farmyard complex. This room had a segmental-headed window in its north wall and a doorway in its south wall. This part of the range had a lower roofline than the main body of the range.

Adjoining the east end of the north range are a pair of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century pigsties (Plate 17). These have undergone some alteration during the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, including the blocking of the feeding system. They are brick built with a plain tile roof. The pigsties appear on the 1889 OS map.

## **6.4 The East Range**

The east range is aligned N-S and faces west onto the courtyard. It is made up of two main parts. These are a single-storey 'parlour' building at the south end, butting against the south range, and a two-storey building to the north (Plate 18). There is also a group of very small brick buildings to the north and east of the north end of the range. The purpose of the two main buildings is not clear. Access to interior of the 'parlour', as it is marked on the existing ground plan, was not possible. The two-storey structure alongside may have been used as pens for small livestock, with a hen loft above.

## Exterior

The two-storey building is constructed of red brick laid in Flemish stretcher bond and has a plain tile roof. The west facing elevation has a segmental-arched door with stone hinge blocks to the south. There are four tiers of blocked air vents in the elevation, and a further lozenge-shaped arrangement of blocked vents in gable. There is an inserted loft door in the centre of the elevation, at second floor. The north facing elevation (Plate 19) has two segmental-arched doorways and four tiers of blocked air vents.

The single-storey 'parlour' building alongside is also constructed of brick, with a shallow pitched roof. It has two segmental-headed windows either side of a segmental-arched door. This building is a later addition to the farmyard complex, and is likely to date from the mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

### Interior

The two-storey building is divided into four rooms at ground floor level. The two interconnecting rooms in the southern half of the building are accessible through the small door in the west facing elevation and the other two rooms in the north half of the building have individual entrances from the north facing elevation. Due to the low entrances of the rooms to the south it is assumed that they were used for animals, possibly geese. There are two blocked segmental-arched openings in the south wall in this room (Plate 20). Map evidence shows that before the adjoining building was constructed in the later 20<sup>th</sup>-century the gap was occupied by pens accessed from the ground floor of this two-storey building. The second-storey or loft is divided into two rooms by an interrupted brick wall.

## **6.5 The Farmhouse**

The two-storey farmhouse is located in the northeast corner of the farmyard complex (Plate 21). It is L-shaped with entrance range, and is aligned E-W facing east, away from the courtyard. It is in a nominal Tudor Gothic style, constructed of red brick, laid in Flemish Stretcher bond with sandstone ashlar dressings. The house has a plain tile roof with octagonal chimney.

### Exterior

The east facing elevation (Plate 22) is characterised by a porch with four-centred arch doorway and stone coped gable corbelled out at the sides. A two-light casement window beneath a chamfered stone lintel is situated above the porch. The west wing of the house is set back on the south side of this elevation, there is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century kitchen extension in front of the west wing.

The gable end of the west wing is a prominent feature in the north elevation (Plate 23), and is situated on its west side. The rest of the elevation is taken up by the east wing. The west wing has a two-light casement window at ground floor level and an identical window directly above. The east wing has a single three-light casement window at ground floor level. All the windows in this elevation have stone sills and lintels. At first-floor level above the ground floor window of the east wing, is a plain stone block, perhaps intended for an inscription.

The west facing elevation has three small windows (Plate 24). The window at ground floor level on the south side of the elevation has a segmental-arched casement. The south elevation of the farm house has a single storey late 20<sup>th</sup>-century entrance porch, along side the later porch is a segmental-arched casement window, a similar window of larger proportions is situated directly above at first-floor level.

## **7.0 Analysis and Significance of the buildings**

Bell Hall Farm was built during a period known as 'High Farming'. This period spanned the years between 1840 and 1880 and was a prosperous time for agriculture (Martins 1991:60). Many farms were built during these years and Bell Hall Farm, which was a dual purpose farm, is typical of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Very few farms in Britain before the 20<sup>th</sup>-century were ever purely arable or purely pastoral (Brunskill 1999: 15). The range in function of the buildings of Bell Hall Farm reflect this, there are provisions for the accommodation of crops and animals. The arrangement of these buildings around a closed courtyard is a common layout of farmsteads.

The barn would have originally been used for the storage and processing of crops such as corn. The features of the barn were essential to the efficient processing and proper storage of the products of the farm. All barns required a tall unobstructed area within which the threshing floor would be located. Threshing was carried out during the winter months, so it was essential that barn had large openings, which would bring light to the threshing floor (Brunskill 1999: 40) It was typical that these doors to open outwards (so not to obstruct the threshing process), it was also common for the barn to have two sets of doors either side of the threshing floor, this allowed carts to enter the building with their loads of corn (*ibid*). On either side of the threshing floor at Bell Hall Farm are bays, these would have been used for the storage of the sheaves of corn. The barn was later re-used to pen animals at ground floor level, and a bridge inserted to provide access across to both bays at first floor level.

Adjoining the barn to the north is a cartshed with a granary above. This was a popular arrangement in 19<sup>th</sup> century farms. It was important that grain be stored in an area which was raised above the ground and this in turn complemented the need for the cartshed to be an open fronted roofed structure (*ibid*: 91). The trap door and hoist fitted in the granary allowed sacks of grain (processed on the threshing floor of the adjacent barn) to be lowered directly onto carts and transported off the farm (*Ibid*: 93). Bell Hall farm cartshed has at some point been converted for use as a cowshed, and a long trough inserted along the north wall.

Another element of the farmyard complex is the loose box on the south side of the west range. Loose boxes were common and found on practically every farm. A loose box consists of a room or compartment with a door and a window, the animal was able to move about freely (Peters 1981: 71). Loose boxes could be used for single cows when sick or calving; they could serve as a hospital ward for a sick or foaling mare; they could accommodate small groups of bullocks or heifers in bad weather (Brunskill 1999: 75). The Worcestershire cowhouse alongside the loose box is a type found across Worcestershire, and on occasion in other counties (Peters 1981: 69). Nearly all examples of Worcestershire cowhouses are single-storey, and are of a design which dates from c.1800 (*ibid*). The north and south ranges provided further space to house animals, it is possible that the north range may have originally been used for stabling horses, and the south range was used for cattle.

The original east wing building may have incorporated a hen loft above pens for other small livestock. The farm is known, from the auction catalogue to have kept a large amount of chickens. The building shows many of the characteristics of a hen loft

above pens, including small blocked doorways, an opening at first floor height and ventilation. It was very common for hen lofts to occupy a loft space (Peters 1981:73). Hens were an important part of the livestock of a farm, providing eggs, meat and feathers.

The covered yard, which is located on the south side of the south range may have been used for the storage of midden. Covered middens were quite popular during the second half of the nineteenth century, but fell out of favour as they required plenty of labour to fill and empty, and were relatively less important as imported or artificial fertilizers became available (Brunskill 1999: 72). It may have been due to this reason that the yard was reused to house animals. Common features of covered yards were a high containing wall, and a simple roof on piers to protect the midden (*Ibid*).

## **7.1 Phasing (Fig 11)**

There are three main phases of construction at Bell Hall Farm. Phase 1 occurred during the 1860s, Phase 2 took place in during the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century and additions and alterations made during Phase 3 in 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

During Phase 1, the majority of the buildings forming the courtyard complex were built. These buildings included the farmhouse, the north, west and south ranges and the two-storey building of the east range.

The second phase of development took place at the site during the later 19<sup>th</sup>-century. The Worcestershire cowshed at the south end of the west range, which uses the external wall of the loose box as its north wall, was added during this phase, this caused the blocking of a doorway in this wall. The covered yard which is built against the south wall of the south range was a new addition. This development caused the blocking of the windows in the south wall of the south range. The building adjoining the end of the south range, filling the gap between this and the pigsties, was also built, in order to provide access to this room from the south range, a fireplace and internal part of a chimney were removed. The small outbuilding to the east of the area between the east range and the farm house was also added during Phase 2. During Phase 2 a wooden staircase was inserted into the north bay of the barn.

The third phase of development took place in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century. This phase included the addition of single-storey structures to the southeast side of the farmhouse. The 'parlour' building, located between the south range and the east range building completing the east range, is also a 20<sup>th</sup>-century addition. Also during the 20<sup>th</sup>-century the function of some of the farmyard buildings were altered. The east end of the north range was re-used as a garage, new doors were inserted and original doorways blocked, or converted to windows. The cartshed at the north end of the west range had a trough fitted and was re-used as a cattle shed. The Worcestershire cowshed was fitted with gates and its internal space was subdivided. Areas of the barn were also re-used for different purposes and doors and windows were inserted on the west side. The south range also underwent further alteration, doors and windows in its north wall were partially blocked and replace with smaller windows at a higher level.



## **8.0 Acknowledgements**

This report was written by Leonie Driver and edited by Dr Malcolm Hislop. The fieldwork was also undertaken by Leonie Driver and Dr Malcolm Hislop, who also monitored the project on behalf of Birmingham Archaeology. Nigel Dodds prepared the illustrations. Thanks are owed to the staff of Worcester Local History centre and Worcestershire Record Office.

## **9.0 Sources**

### **9.1 Primary Sources**

#### Census Returns for the Parish of Belbroughton

For the years: 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901

Plans of the Bell Hall Estate belonging to J.P.Wood. 1836 (WRO: r899:395)

1868 Bell Hall Estate accounts (WRO 705:260)

1872 Particulars of rental of Bell Hall Estate (WRO 705:260)

Auction Catalogue for fixtures and fittings of Home Farm (WRO 705:260)

### **9.2 Secondary Sources**

Brunskill R.W. 1999. *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain and their Conservation*. Victor Gollancz: London

Martins S.W. 1991. *Historic Farm Buildings*. B.T. Batsford Ltd: London

Page. W. (ed). 1913. *The Victoria History for the County of Worcestershire*. Volume.III.

Peters J.E.C. 1981. *Discovering Traditional Farm Buildings*. Shire Publications Ltd

### **9.3 Cartographic Sources**

1840 Tithe Map for the Parish of Belbroughton

1888 25" OS Worcestershire sheet XI.15

1903 6" OS Worcestershire sheet IX.S.E

1924 25" OS Worcestershire sheet XI.15



Fig.1



**Fig.2**

1836



Fig.3

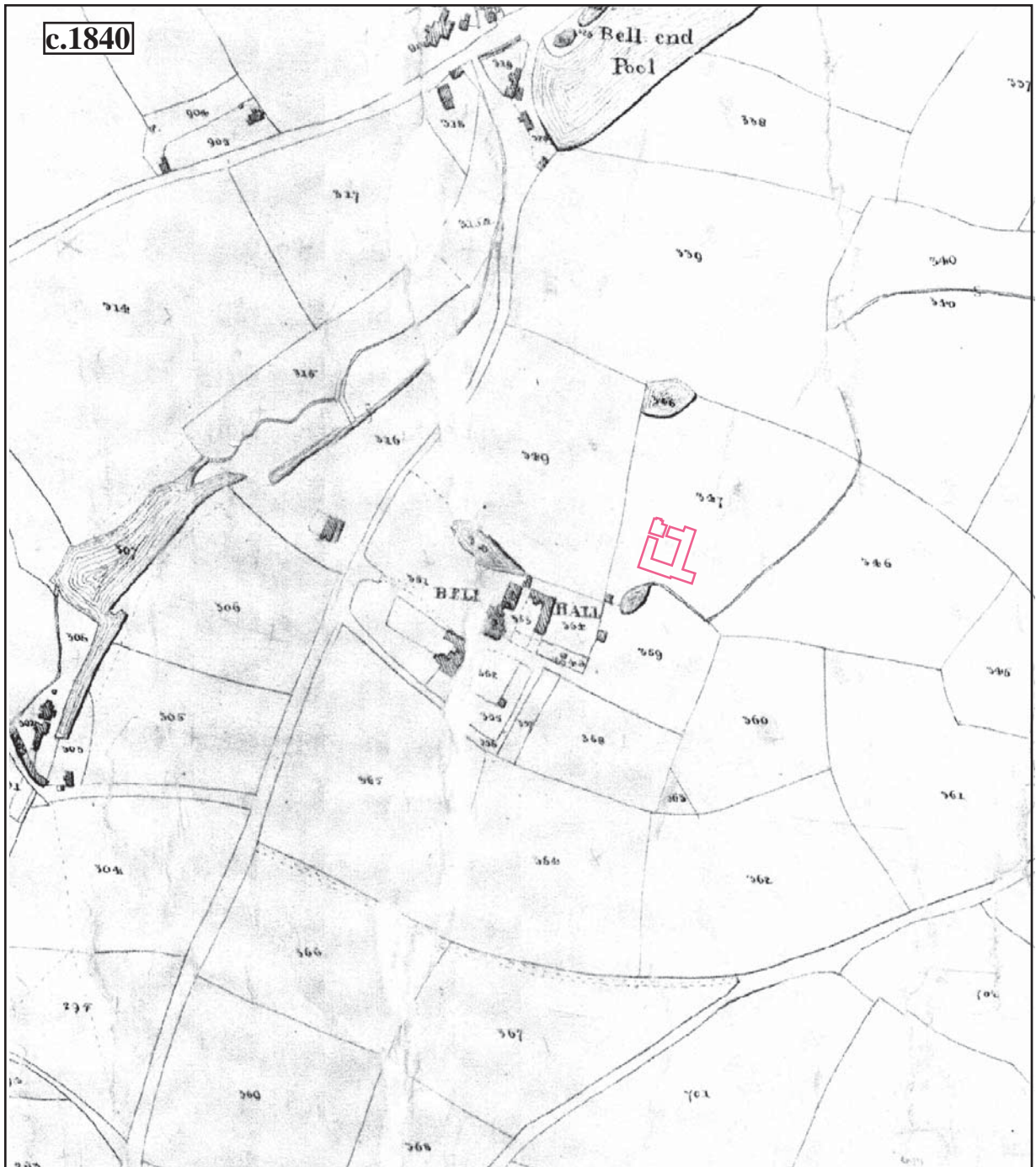


Fig.4



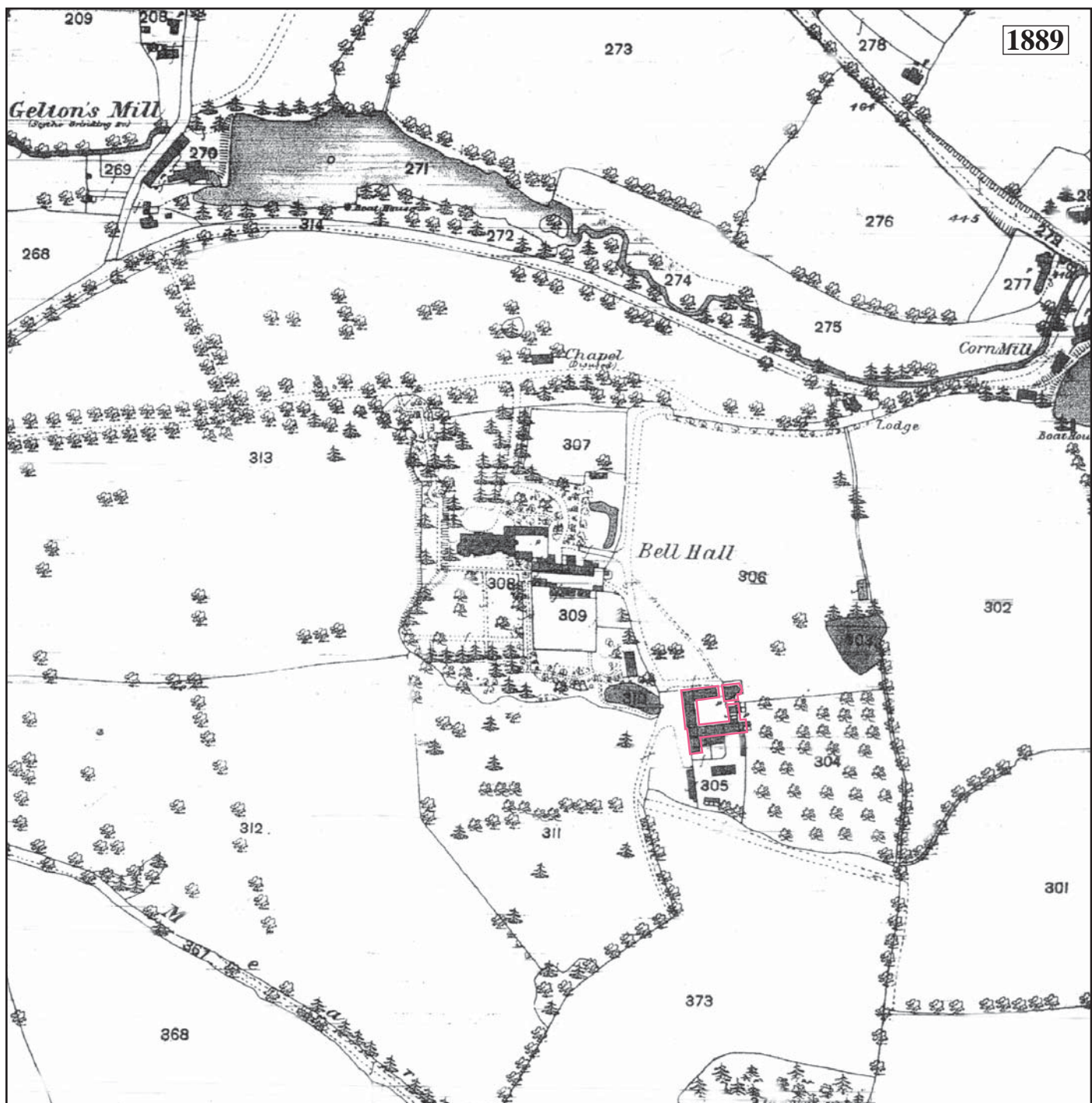


Fig.5

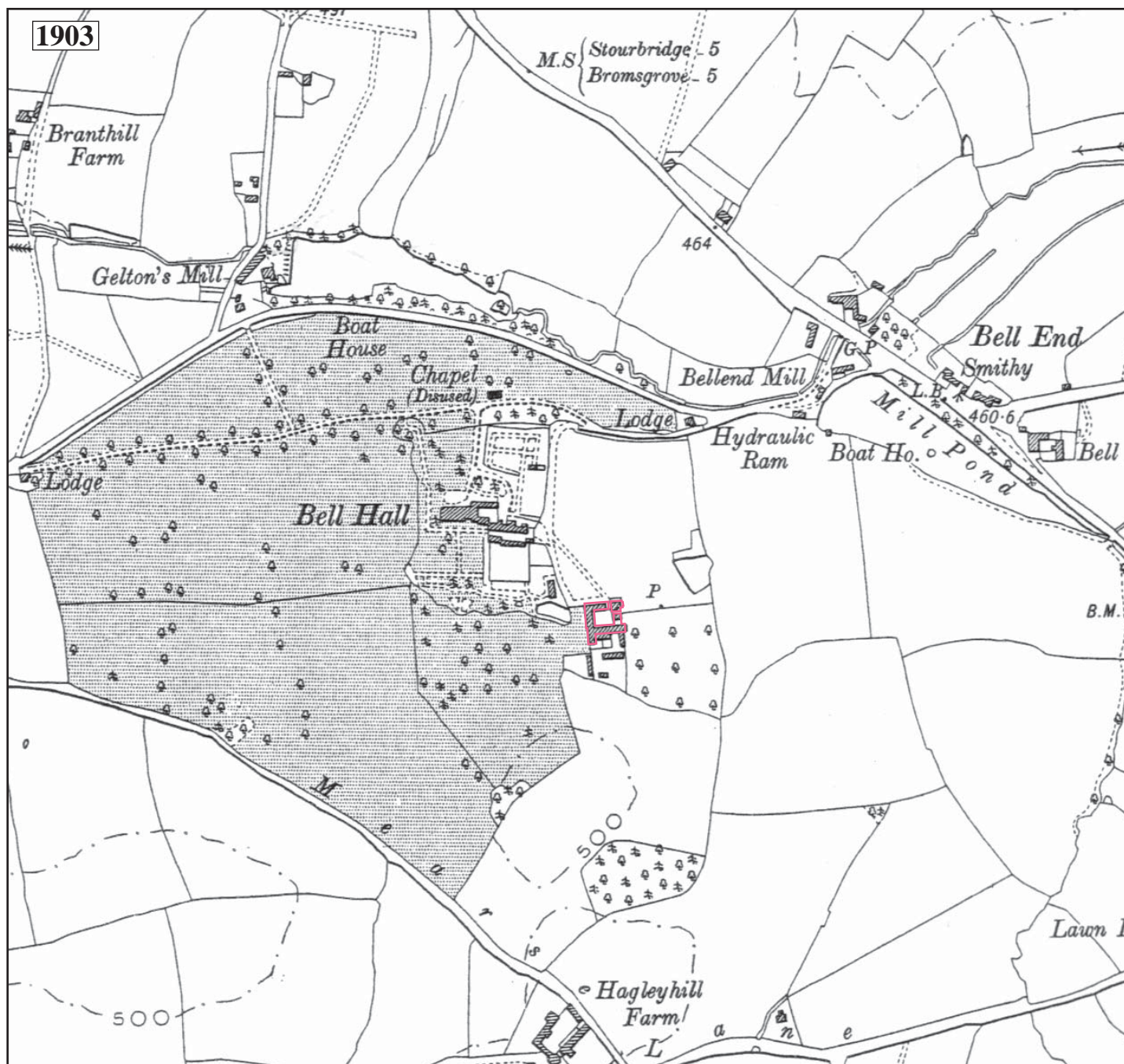


Fig.6



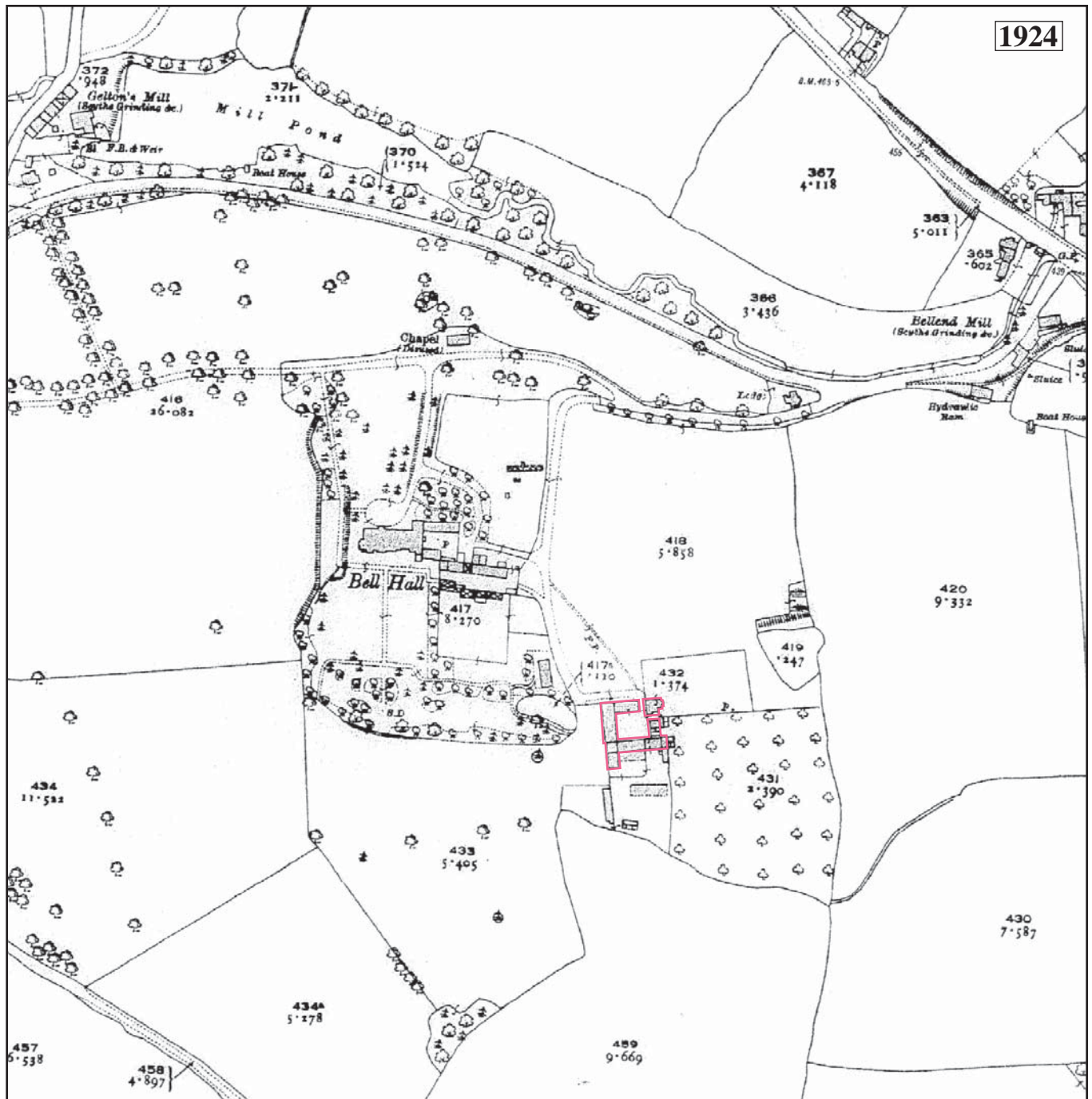


Fig.7



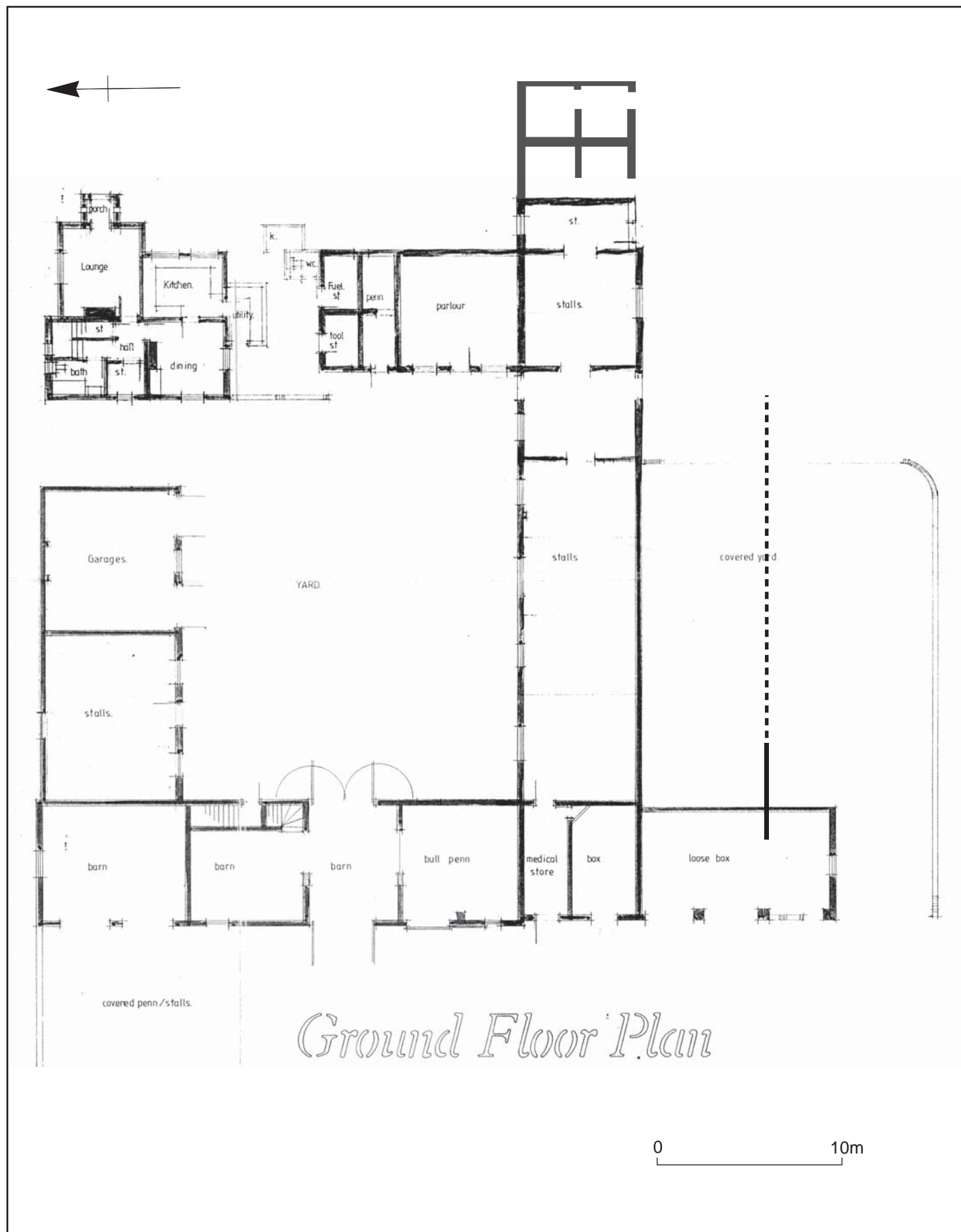


Fig.8



*First Floor Plan*

0 10m

Fig.9



Fig.10

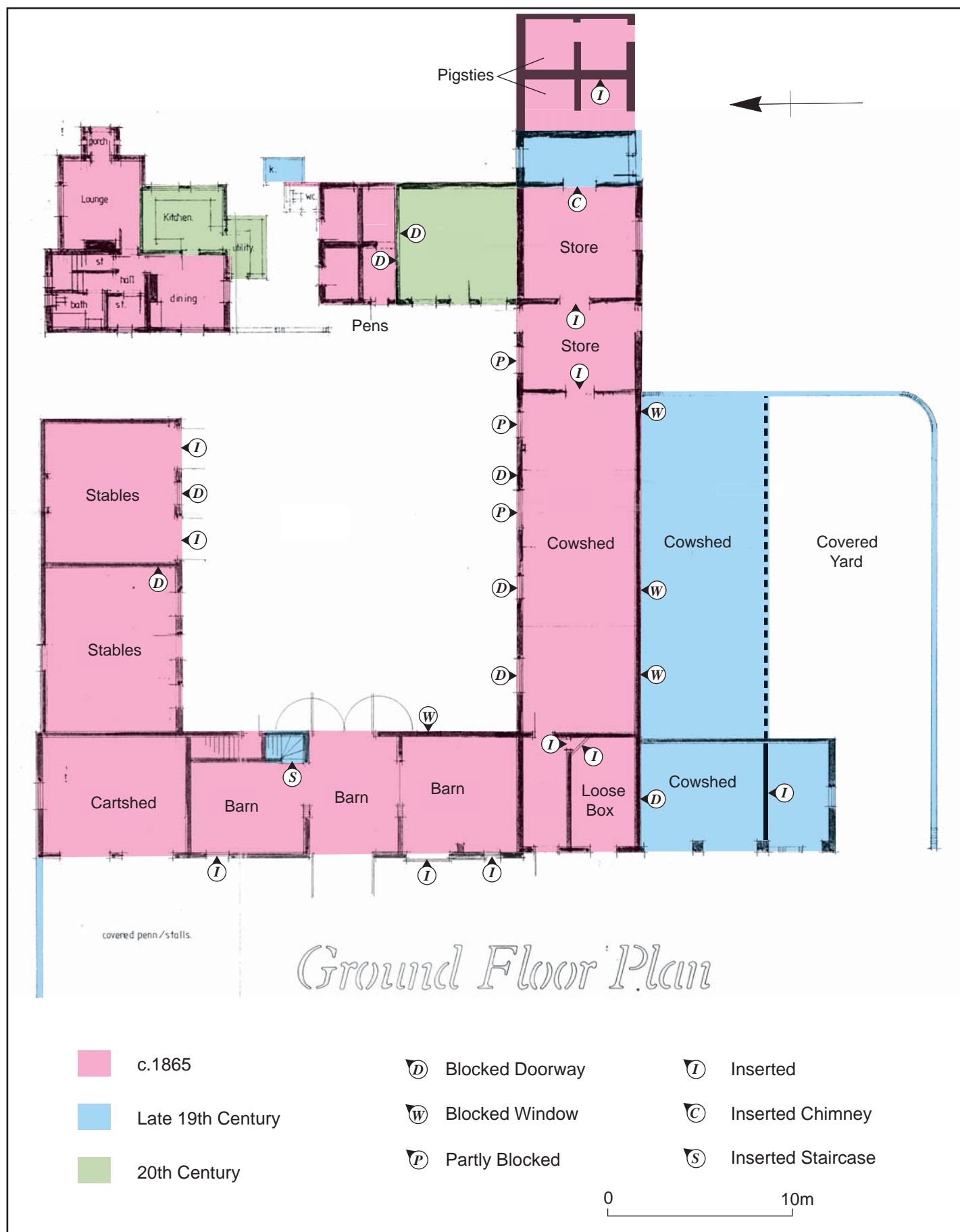


Fig.11



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



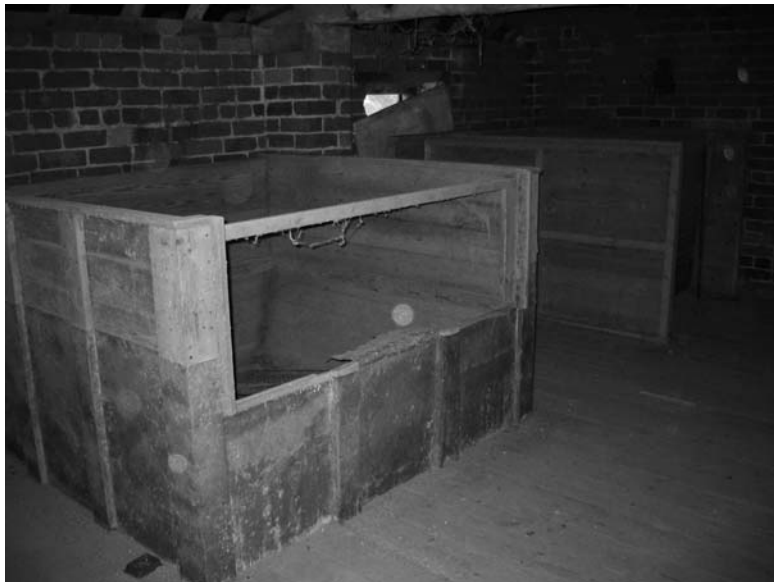


Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7

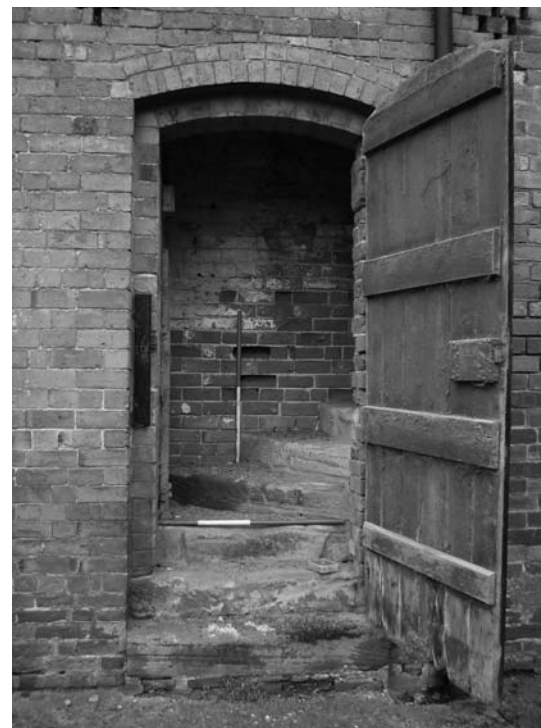


Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16





Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19

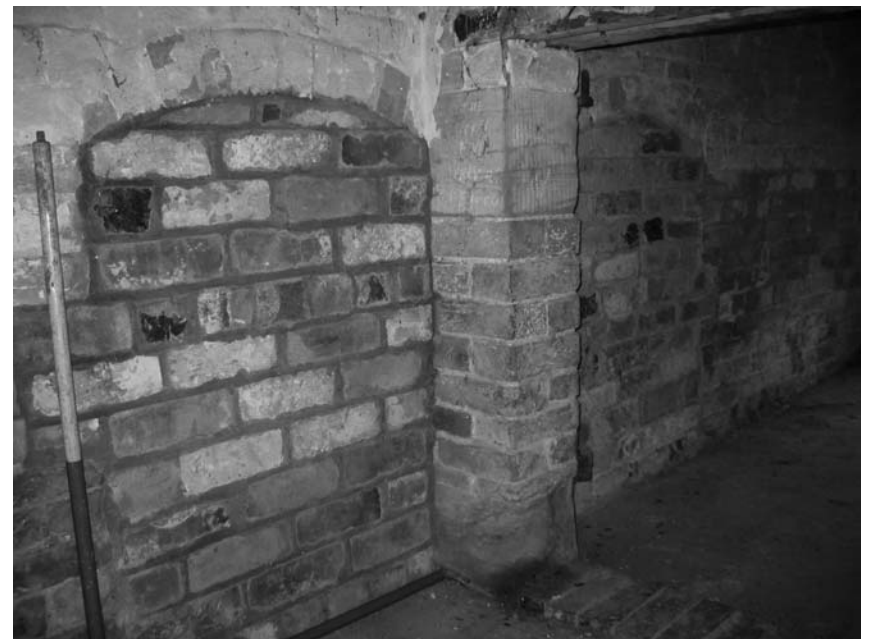


Plate 20



Plate 21



Plate 22



Plate 23



Plate 24

## APPENDIX 1

Lot numbers 1-75 had been taken up by fixtures and fittings from the loft and coach house. It is thought that these were located in the complex of domestic outbuildings close to the hall itself.

### Home Farm

76. Quantity old iron
77. Six-division iron pig trough
78. Short ladder
79. Hay forks
80. Ditto
81. Hay Knife
82. Water can and iron pot
83. Water butt
84. Wheel barrow
85. Two dung forks and mud scraper
86. Heel rake and muck drag
87. Shovel brooms, etc
88. Two chicken coops
89. Two ditto
90. Two ditto
91. Two ditto
92. Two ditto
93. Two ditto
94. Two ditto
95. Four rat traps
96. Two flour bins
97. Two iron furnaces
98. Three wooden tubs
99. White wash sprayer on carriage
100. Flour barrel and pig bench
101. Four buckets
102. Skip, iron trough, &c
103. Intensive span roof poultry house, 9ft x 4ft  
With floor and laying boxes, in good condition
104. Iron bar and sheep marker
105. Beehive and skips
106. Garden lights
107. *Bentall and Co.*'s unchokable root pulper (for hand)
108. *Bamford's* two-knife chaff cutter
109. Hay forks and rick tester
110. Empty sacks
111. Two milking stools
112. Bucket tripod and four lettered plates
113. Set of steelyards
114. Two calf muzzles
115. Hand-pump on stand
116. Two hand saws, riddle and hand tools
117. Scythe and snead

- 118. Two benches
- 119. Four-wheel hay lorry
- 120. Rustic hay cart
- 121. Pair 6ft. iron gate pillars
- 122. 36" water tub

### **Horned Stock, &c.**

- 123. Black Polled new milch cow and her twin heifer calves
- 124. Red and white in-calf Ayreshire White polled in calf cow
- 125. Roan polled in calf cow
- 126. Her heifer calf
- 127. Red Lincoln Cross barren cow
- 128. Red Lincoln Cross in calf cow
- 129. 4". Wheel TIP CART with gearing
- 130. Set of chain harrows
- 131. Pig crate
- 132. Two pig crates
- 133. Coke barrow
- 134. Double 4ft barrel iron two-horse roll
- 135. Patent hay maker
- 136. Horse rake
- 137. Iron cart jack
- 138. Rick poles and flag pole
- 139. Saw bench on wooden frame, 15" pulley for power, and cover
- 140. Two circular saws for same
- 141. Stack of faggots
- 142. Tump of hay
- 143. Four tinned milk-pails
- 144. Strainer and two measures

### **Poultry**

- 146 to 166. About 40 couples of well-bred White Wyandottes and Leghorn laying fowls, in lots of two couples
- 167. Young White Leghorn Cockerel from prize laying strain
- 168. Young White Leghorn Cockerel from prize laying strain
- 169. Young White Leghorn Cockerel from prize laying strain
- 170. Ten young chicks
- 171. Ten young chicks
- 172. Six young chicks

## APPENDIX 2

### Index and Description of Photographs

Photograph Number	Description	Orientation
<b>Exterior of buildings</b>		
<b>1</b>	West elevation of parlour (in east range)	East
<b>2</b>	North elevation of south range (east end)	South
<b>3</b>	North elevation of south range (east end)	South
<b>4</b>	North elevation of south range (mid)	South
<b>5</b>	North elevation of south range (mid)	South
<b>6</b>	North elevation of south range (mid)	South
<b>7</b>	East elevation of west range/barn (door open)	West
<b>8</b>	East elevation of west range/barn (door closed)	West
<b>9</b>	Detail in east elevation of west range/barn (south end)	West
<b>10</b>	Detail in east elevation of west range/barn (barn doors)	West
<b>11</b>	Detail in east elevation of west range/barn (north end)	West
<b>12</b>	South elevation of north range	North
<b>13</b>	West elevation of farm house	Northeast
<b>14</b>	South and west elevations of farm house	Northeast
<b>15</b>	South elevation of farm house	North
<b>16</b>	North elevation of east range	Northwest
<b>17</b>	East range of courtyard complex	Northeast
<b>18</b>	Area between farm house and east range	East
<b>19</b>	West Elevation of west range (south end)	East
<b>20</b>	West elevation of west range (mid section)	East
<b>21</b>	West elevation of west range (north end)	East
<b>22</b>	West elevation of west range (north end)	East
<b>23</b>	West elevation of cart/cow shed (far north end of west range)	East
<b>24</b>	West elevation of cart/cow shed (far north end of west range)	East
<b>25</b>	Entrance to alleyway and adjoining loose box	East
<b>26</b>	Entrance to alleyway and adjoining loose box	East
<b>27</b>	Further loose boxes/Worcestershire sheds (south end of west range)	East
<b>28</b>	Entrance to covered yard	East
<b>29</b>	South gable end of Worcestershire sheds	North
<b>30</b>	West elevation of west range	East
<b>31</b>	South side of perimeter wall of covered yard	Northeast
<b>32</b>	East elevation of covered yard buildings	West
<b>33</b>	South elevation of south range	North
<b>34</b>	Two small pigsties to east of south range	North
<b>35</b>	Two small pigsties to east of south range	Northeast

36	North elevation of farm house	South
37	North elevation of farm house	South
38	North elevation of farm house	South
39	East elevation of farm house	West
40	East elevation of farm house porch	West
41	North elevation of farm house porch	South
42	South elevation of farmhouse	Northwest
43	Small store behind gap between farmhouse and east range	West
44	East elevation of east range	West
45	west elevation of north range, with lower pitched building and pigsty in the foreground	West
46	East elevation of east range and adjoining south range.	West
47	north elevation of narrow building adjoining east end of south range	South
48	north elevation of Pigsties	South
49	Small outbuildings between east range and farm house	North
50	North elevation of north and west ranges	South
51	North elevation of north range	South
52	North elevation of west range	South
53	North elevation of north and west ranges and farmhouse	Southeast
54	North elevation of north and west ranges and farmhouse	East
55	Entrance to court yard in northeast corner	Southeast
56	Entrance to court yard from within the courtyard	Northwest
<b>Interior of Buildings</b>		
57	Trap door, north end of west range on first floor	North
58	Blocked doorway in west wall of east room of north range	West
59	Opening in south wall of east room in north range	
60	East room of north range	Southwest
61	Hoist/winch, north end of west range on first floor	Southeast
62	Opening in north wall of east room in north range	North
63	Interior of west room in north range	Northwest
64	Interior of west room in north range	Southeast
65	Roof structure of west room in north range	Southeast
66	Base of stone staircase on north side of west range	West
67	Stone staircase on north side of west range	Northwest
68	Top of stone staircase looking towards base	South
69	Interior of south bay of barn (west range, ground floor)	Southeast
70	Interior of south bay of barn (west range, ground floor). View towards central entrance	Northeast
71	Centre area of barn (west range)	Northeast
72	Centre area of barn (west range)	Northwest

73	View through the barn into the courtyard	East
74	Interior of north bay of barn (west range)	Southeast
75	Interior of north bay of barn (west range)	Northwest
76	Blocked doorway in north wall of north bay in barn (west range).	North
77	Interior of cart/cowshed, north end of west range	Northeast
78	Interior of cart/cowshed, north end of west range	Southwest
79	Inserted trough along north wall of cow/cart shed	Northeast
80	Blocked window in north wall of cart/cow shed	North
81	Blocked doorway and under stairs access in south wall of cow/cart shed	South
82	Alley way adjacent to barn, leading to south range	East
83	Barn interior, Central bay (first floor)	Southeast
84	Barn Interior, south bay (first floor)	Northwest
85	Barn Interior, south bay (first floor)	Southeast
86	View through barn at first floor level	East
87	Roof trusses of south bay of barn	South
88	Roof trusses of north bay of barn	North
89	Barn Interior, north bay (first floor)	Northwest
90	Barn Interior, north bay (first floor)	Northeast
91	Room above cow/cart shed at north end of west range	Northwest
92	Hoppers in north bay of barn (first floor)	Northwest
93	Hopper in north bay of barn (first floor)	Southwest
94	Loose box in west range, south of barn and alleyway	East
95	Roof Structure of loose box in west range,	East
96	Blocked doorway in south wall of loose box	South
97	Worcester sheds south end of west range. East wall	East
98	Blocked doorway of north all of Worcester sheds	North
99	Brick pillar of Worcester shed	Northwest
100	Brick pillar of Worcester shed with inserted trough	Northwest
101	Interior of covered yard	Northeast
102	Brick perimeter wall of covered yard	East
103	East exterior wall of Worcester sheds from covered yard	West
104	Covered yard towards entrance to West	West
105	East exterior wall of Worcester sheds	Northwest
106	Blocked window in south exterior wall of south range, from within covered yard	East
107	East wall of covered yard	Northeast
108	South exterior wall of south range from within covered yard	Northwest
109	Pigsty (west) located to the east of the south range	Northeast
110	Pigsty (east) located to the east of the south range	Northwest
111	Interior of south range	West
112	Interior of south range	East
113	Partitioned bay at end of south range with two doors	Southeast
114	Partitioned bay at end of south range with two doors	Northwest
115	Continuation of south wing towards the east, this	Southeast

	section is located on the end of the east range	
<b>116</b>	Small pitched roofed extension on the east end of the south range, window in north wall	North
<b>117</b>	Small pitched roofed extension on the east end of the south range, door in south wall	South
<b>118</b>	Interior of north part of east wing.	
<b>119</b>	Small door between cells on ground floor of east wing	East
<b>120</b>	Blocked doorway in south wall	South
<b>121</b>	Hatch at first floor level opening on to courtyard	West
<b>122</b>	Second blocked doorway in south wall of west wing building	South
<b>123</b>	Both blocked doors in south wall	Southwest
<b>124</b>	View through door of east wing building towards west range	West
<b>125</b>	Fireplace in farm house (ground floor)	North
<b>126</b>	Fireplace in farm house (first Floor)	West
<b>127</b>	West and north ranges of the farmyard complex	Northwest
<b>128</b>	West range of the farmyard complex	Northeast
<b>129</b>	Barn forming part of West range	Northeast
<b>130</b>	North elevation of north and West ranges	South
<b>131</b>	North elevation of north and west ranges	South
<b>132</b>	Farm house	Southeast
<b>133</b>	Detail of sandstone hinge blocks (barn)	Southwest
<b>134</b>	Detail of sandstone hinge blocks	East
<b>135</b>	Detail of sandstone hinge blocks	Northeast
<b>136</b>	Stone and brick outbuilding to the south of the courtyard complex	Southwest