

**BASSMEAD MANOR  
STAPLOE  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING**

**Albion**  
archaeology





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STAPLOE  
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Document: 2013/73  
Version: 1.0

Albion Archaeology Project Code: BM1876  
Museum Accession no. BEDFM: 2012.34  
OASIS ID: albionar1-211345

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Issue date: 29th May 2015

Produced for:  
P. Squire Ltd  
Bassmead Manor  
Staploe  
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## **Preface**

*Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a report as possible, within the terms of the commission. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.*

*The building recording was undertaken by Mark Phillips BA. The photographic survey was carried out by Nigel Macbeth. Mark Phillips is the author of the report and the project was managed on behalf of Albion Archaeology by Jeremy Oetgen BSc, MCIfA.*

*The project was commissioned by P. Squire Ltd. Albion Archaeology would like to acknowledge the assistance of Richard and Cordelia Squire (the owners of Bassmead Manor), Michelle Purnell (Project Architect, Lewandowski Willcox) and Geoff Saunders (Archaeological Officer, Bedford Borough Council).*

*Also, Albion Archaeology was pleased to welcome Emily Hale, SPAB 2012 William Morris Craft Fellow, who accompanied our attendance on site for one day.*

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## **Version History**

<i>Version</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>Reason for re-issue</i>
<i>1.0</i>	<i>29/05/2015</i>	<i>n/a</i>

## **Structure of this report**

Section 1 is an introductory chapter giving the background to the report. A description of the buildings forms Section 2; their chronological development is examined in Section 3. The significance of the buildings and their heritage value are discussed in Section 4. Section 5 is a bibliography. Appendix 1 is a summary of the OASIS entry for the historic building recording section of the project.

Figures and photographic images are included at the end of the report.



## Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
HER	Bedford Borough's Historic Environment Record
HET	Historic Environment Team
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
<i>Procedures Manual</i>	<i>Procedures Manual Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> , 2nd ed., 2001
	Albion Archaeology
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

*NB: on 1st April 2015 The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (HBMCE), a non-departmental public body formerly known as English Heritage, became known as Historic England. The English Heritage brand has now been adopted by a new independent charity, the English Heritage Trust. Any reference herein to 'English Heritage' relates to HBMCE prior to 1st April 2015.*





## Non-Technical Summary

*Planning consent was granted for the conversion, alteration, and extension of existing buildings to form a wedding venue at Bassmead Manor in the Bedfordshire parish of Staploe, c. 3km west of St Neots (Cambridgeshire), grid reference TL 14005 61185. The site is set within a moated medieval enclosure (scheduled ancient monument NHLE no. 1012067) and is therefore archaeologically sensitive. A programme of archaeological works was required by respective conditions of planning permission and scheduled monument consent. The development involved the demolition of a number of modern agricultural buildings and alterations to two historic buildings. This report presents the results of historic building recording on the two buildings which are known as the Bean Barn and the Long Barn.*

*The Bean Barn stands in the south-west quadrant of the moated island to the west of the main entrance. It consists of a timber-framed aisled barn of four bays with a two-storey section in brick on the east end. The barn is aisled on the south side only but empty mortice holes indicate the presence of a former north aisle. The exterior is weatherboarded and the roof is in modern plain tiles throughout. The building was restored from a derelict state in the late 20th century. The surviving elements of the primary timber-framed structure consist of the aisle posts, aisle plates, tie beams, braces and the frame in the western gable end. The braces to the aisle posts are straight whilst those for the tie-beams are very slightly curved. Scarf joins in the aisle plates consist of both side halved and face halved examples. The brick section at the east end of the barn contains remains of earlier brickwork in the lower part of its south wall. The remainder of the brickwork is in Monk bond and matches the latest construction phase of the Long Barn. The earliest structural elements in the Bean Barn are likely to date from the late 17th or 18th century. The modern elements, added during the restoration of the buildings, comprise the whole roof structure, the rebuilt south aisle, a south porch and a range of ancillary rooms along the north side.*

*The Long Barn is a continuous range of brick buildings along the south arm of the moat in the south-east quadrant of the island. The range is framed by two-storey, squared sections at either end. At the time of the survey the single-storey section between was divided into four compartments of differing lengths. Examination of the south elevation indicates three construction phases. The earliest consists of red brick in English bond in the lower part of the 3rd and 4th compartments from the west with a return for a former end wall at its west end. A second phase in yellow, gault brick laid in Monk bond comprises a rebuild of the upper part of phase one and extension to the east that was reinforced with shallow pilaster strips on the interior and exterior of the wall. The last phase, constructed in the late 19th century, resulted in the full-length range with two-storey compartments at the ends. The westernmost compartment contained chutes from grain or feed processing machinery on the first floor, and an open-fronted section below for a cart shed. The eastern gable end contained dove holes at first floor level. The third compartment from the west end contained evidence for former use as a stable with a hay loft above the compartment to its west. The western half of the Long Barn appears to have been a stable range conveniently located close to the main entrance of the site. Historic maps and evidence seen during archaeological works in the area to the north of the Long Barn suggest that this area would have contained stock yards.*



*The surviving historic farm buildings at Bassmead provide evidence for the development of the site from the late 17th or 18th century to the late 19th century. The earlier structures represent piecemeal development of individual buildings with separate functions. The final construction phase represents the large-scale rebuilding of the farm with a continuous range along the south front. The final arrangement is typical of the type of functional buildings produced by the farm improvement movement in the later 18th and 19th centuries. However, an element of design is apparent in the decision to incorporate the small 'towers' to either side of the entrance and on the corner of the moated façade, giving the building something of the appearance of a fortified manor.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 *Background to the Report*

In March 2012 Bedford Borough Council (BBC) granted planning consent (11/02504/FUL) for the conversion, alteration, and extension of existing buildings to form a wedding venue at Bassmead Manor, Staploe in north Bedfordshire. The development is situated within an archaeologically sensitive area and affects the scheduled ancient monument known as ‘Bassmead Manor Farm moated enclosure’ (NHLE no. 1012067). Scheduled monument consent for the development was granted by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, advised by English Heritage, on 22nd November 2011.

On the advice of the Historic Environment Team (HET) of BBC and in line with national and local planning frameworks, planning conditions required a staged archaeological mitigation strategy to be implemented along with a programme of historic building recording. A brief detailing the requirements for the first stage of archaeological mitigation (namely trial trench evaluation) and historic building recording was issued by the HET (BBC 2012). In accordance with the brief a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared detailing the procedures and methods to be employed for the archaeological evaluation and historic building recording (Albion Archaeology 2012).

This report presents the results of the historic building recording. It forms a record of the buildings prior to development works and presents an analysis of their development along with historical background information.

### 1.2 *Site Location and Description*

Bassmead (or Basmead) Manor lies in the Bedfordshire parish of Staploe, *c.* 3km west of St Neots (Cambridgeshire) and the River Great Ouse (Figure 1). The site lies at *c.* 47m OD near the top of a shallow SE-facing slope, which overlooks the hamlet of Staploe and the Duloe Brook, a tributary to the Great Ouse. It is centred on grid reference TL 14005 61185. Access is via a tree-lined drive leading from the entrance causeway to the Staploe to Upper Staploe road.

The 15th-century Grade II\* listed manor house stands in the north-west corner of the moated enclosure, adjacent to late 19th-century and 20th-century farm buildings. A largely grassed garden with several mature trees exists along the west arm of the moat. Much of the south-east quadrant of the island was occupied by 20th-century farm buildings which were demolished during preparatory works for the development (Figure 2).

The historic buildings which form the subject of this report are located on the south arm of the moat, flanking the causeway entrance into the site. They comprise an aisled barn known as the Bean Barn located to the west of the entrance and a range to the east of the entrance known as the Long Barn.

Externally the moat is bordered by Home Wood (to the north and west) and by arable fields (to the south and east).



### **1.3 Historical Background**

The historical background to the site is not included here, because it is already covered in detail in the desk-based heritage assessment (Albion Archaeology 2011) produced in support of the planning application and application for scheduled monument consent.

The heritage assessment collated the existing information available from the following sources:

- Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Record (HER)
- The Heritage Gateway online database
- English Heritage's National Heritage List for England (NHLE)
- Cartographic data and historical records, principally those held by Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service (BLARS)

A site walk-over survey was also undertaken.

### **1.4 Aims and Objectives**

The requirements for historic building recording were to English Heritage Level 3/4 (English Heritage 2006).

The principal aims of the investigation and report were to:

- produce a detailed record of the buildings prior to conversion works
- provide a summary of the buildings' form, function, date and sequence of development with supporting evidence
- provide a summary of the buildings' historical background based on documentary and cartographic evidence
- place the buildings within their historical context

In addition, the analysis of the buildings has provided information that can be used to assess their significance and to inform possible future conservation decisions.



## 2. BUILDING RECORDING: DESCRIPTION

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### 2.1 *Building Recording Methodology*

Throughout the project the standards set in the *CIfA Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* (2014) and English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings* (2006) have been adhered to. All work has been done in accordance with the *CIfA Code of Conduct*.

The survey followed English Heritage recommendations for a Level 3 survey, comprising a detailed examination of the buildings and a photographic record. Field records comprised notes and measurements added as annotations to the architect's plans and elevations, in addition to dimensioned and annotated drawings of the internal elevations of the Bean Barn to record the timber frame. The photographic records comprise both high resolution digital images and medium format monochrome prints. The selected digital images which accompany the text have been reproduced at a lower resolution in order to ensure digital versions of the report are of a manageable size.

Details of recent alterations and restoration of the building were corroborated by information from the current owner (Richard Squire, pers. comm.)

### 2.2 *The Bean Barn*

The Bean Barn is a timber-framed barn in the south-west quadrant of the island (Figures 1 and 2).

#### 2.2.1 *Plan*

The main part of the building consists of a four-bay timber-framed barn with an aisle on the south side (Figure 3). Attached to the east end is a two-storey brick end bay. A porch on the south side of the barn and rooms on the north side were added during the late 20th century when the barn was restored and extended to form a wedding venue.

The barn is 19.7m long internally with a 4m-wide main section and a 1.5m-wide south aisle. The brick end bay has internal dimensions of 3.9m N-S and 3m E-W.

#### 2.2.2 *Exterior of the bean barn (Images 1–3)*

The roof of the barn was rebuilt when the building was restored in the late 20th century. The barn and the brick end bay are covered with regular, machine-made plain grey tiles. As part of the rebuild, the south slope of the barn roof was raised slightly at the eaves. The roof of the brick end bay was unaltered, resulting in a difference in pitch between these two sections (Image 2).

The south wall of the barn was re-built during the 20th-century restoration and a porch was added. It consists of a brick plinth made of re-used brick in stretcher bond with weather boarding above (Images 1 and 2). The west gable end is weatherboarded. The north side of barn is obscured by a 20th-century extension.



### 2.2.3 Exterior of brick end-bay

The brick-built bay at the east end of the barn incorporates some earlier brickwork in the lower two-thirds of the south elevation (Image 3). This consists of a brick plinth and English bond brickwork in red bricks measuring 220mm x 105mm x 65mm. The earlier brickwork abuts the later masonry in an irregular, nearly vertical join close to the east end of the wall. A crack between the two sections of brickwork has been repaired with cement and four bricks have been cut-in across the crack at intervals to form a stitch repair.

The rest of the masonry consists of pinkish-red brick in Monk bond. Moulded bricks are used to form a rounded north-east corner with brick corbelling at the top to support the eaves. The south-east corner is squared with a shallow pilaster strip on the south elevation.

In the east gable end there is a first-floor window with a cambered brick arch and stone sill. The opening contains a wooden louver. A single row of bricks are set lengthwise below the tile verge.

### 2.2.4 Interior of the Bean Barn

#### 2.2.4.1 General characteristics (Images 4 to 6)

The barn is in four bays with an aisle on the south side. In the following description and the accompanying figures the bays have been numbered 1 to 4 from west to east.

The roof and the south wall were replaced when the barn was restored in the late 20th century. The north arcade carries a lightweight stud wall with exterior timber cladding, presumably installed following the removal of an aisle on this side. Surviving primary structure consists of the arcade posts, aisle plates, tie-beams and the majority of the braces to the aisle plates and tie-beams.

#### 2.2.4.2 Roof (Figure 4)

The roof is a modern (late 20th-century) construction above the level of the tie-beams (Image 5). It is made with machine-sawn softwood assembled with bolted lap joints and scarf joints. A traditional form of construction has been used, with clasped purlins supported by collar beams and raking struts rising from the tie-beams to just below the level of the purlins. The apex uses a more modern form, with common rafters fixed to a ridge plank. A gap between the rafters and the arcade plate shows that the roof has been raised above its original level on this side, presumably to increase headroom in the south aisle.

#### 2.2.4.3 South aisle (Image 6)

The south aisle was rebuilt during the modern restoration of the barn. In the process the height of the aisle was increased. The wall along the south side of the aisle is a modern timber construction. It stands on a low sill-wall of re-used brick and consists of close-set studs with long diagonal braces that run across the interior face of the studs.



#### 2.2.4.4 *South arcade (Figure 4)*

The south arcade consists of five aisle posts, the aisle plate and braces between them.

The aisle posts have expanded (jowled) upper ends. In bays 2 and 3 the bases of the posts stand on modern plinths made from re-used brick.

The aisle plate has one scarf joint that is visible from ground level. This is located at the west end of bay 3 and is face halved with bladed abutments. A slight change in the line of the aisle plate between bays 1 and 2 suggests another join is obscured by the aisle post at the bay division.

The braces beneath the aisle plate carry assembly marks (Image 9). Incised Roman numerals on the rear (outer) face at the lower end of each brace run from I to VII, starting at the western end of the barn. Nothing is visible on the easternmost brace, but the surface of this timber is heavily eroded.

Curved lower and straight upper braces attached to the rear of the aisle posts were added during the recent restoration of the building. The roof on this side was raised during the restoration and as a result it is not directly supported on the aisle plate. New timbers have been attached to the ends of the tie-beams to bridge the gap between the arcade and the modern roof.

#### 2.2.4.5 *North wall (Figure 5)*

The north wall appears to be a former arcade with framing for an external wall that was inserted at some point following the removal of a north aisle. The primary frame here mirrors the arrangement seen in the south arcade.

Slight evidence for the presence of a former structure on the north side of the barn is visible on the aisle posts at either end of bay 3. Shallow empty mortises on the eastern faces of these posts indicate the location of timbers that would have sloped downwards towards the north, probably supporting an aisle on this side.

The aisle plate is made up of at least three parts with two visible scarf joins. In bay 3 it is edge-halved with bridled abutments with two additional pegs inserted vertically through the central part of the scarf (Image 7). In bay two the scarf join is face halved with bladed abutments (Image 8).

The lower half of the frame in the bay 1 and part of bay 2 has been infilled with rendered masonry up to a height of 1.5m, leaving a single vertical post exposed. The rest of the frame to the east stands on a low, brick sill-wall. This appears to have been rebuilt from reused bricks during the modern restoration of the barn. The sill beam in bay 4 is made from a re-used timber. It has mortise and stave holes, indicating that it was a horizontal timber in a building with wattle-and-daub infill.

The wall itself consists of lightweight studs with primary bracing that would have once supported external weatherboarding (now gone). The upper end of the studs appear to have been nailed to the outer face of the aisle plate. Horizontal rails



define possible former openings in the upper half of bays 3 and 4. The framing of the wall includes modern machine-sawn timbers used for repairs and modifications.

A full height, double door opening in bay 2 is formed by comparatively lightweight door posts. A block with a mortise at top centre would have held a latch or draw. A mortise to the left-hand door post and a bracket on the right-hand door post are fitted for a drop bar (Image 12). The base of each door post is fitted with a block of wood with a vertical slot (Image 13). A set of removable boards called a lift could be fitted in the slot to form a low barrier across the door opening. The lift is usually described as a means of keeping livestock out of the barn or to prevent the loss of grain during threshing.

#### **2.2.4.6 West wall (Image 10)**

The west wall is timber-framed with brick infill. Below the tie-beam it is framed with straight braces with six studs and a broader central post. There are six studs below the collar-beam and two above. The cut-off end of a purlin is visible at the northern end of the collar-beam indicating a clasped purlin construction.

Additional modern timbers have been added to form angled supports for the modern replacement roof structure.

#### **2.2.4.7 East wall (Image 11)**

Much of the lower part of this wall is occupied by an inserted modern door opening. The studs have been truncated at their lower ends and a new timber lintel inserted in the face of the wall. The section of the wall above the tie-beam is a modern timber partition.

The frame below the tie-beam consists of a post towards the south end of the wall connected to the tie-beam with a short, straight brace and six closely spaced studs. The upper ends of the studs are nailed to the lower edge of the tie-beam on its western face. The infill of the frame is in brick, mostly gault bricks.

The position of the post in this wall could indicate the south-west corner of a former building attached to the east end of the barn that has since been replaced by the present brick structure.

### **2.2.5 Brick compartment at the east end of barn**

This is a two-storey structure. The walls have a modern finish, lined or plastered, and a modern winder stair has been inserted in the south-east corner. The floorboards in the upper floor are modern replacements.

Visible historic features comprise a heck door in the north wall and the framing for the upper floor. The door is ledged and braced with braces forming an inverted V-shaped pattern. It is hung on strap hinges with spearhead shaped terminals. The heavily framed floor for the upper storey consists of a bridging beam supporting the west end of an east-west aligned axial beam (Image 14). The joists are fixed to the axial beam with bare-faced soffit tenons.





## **2.3 The Long Barn**

This building is located next to the southern arm of the moat in the south-east quadrant of the island (Figures 1 and 2).

### **2.3.1 Plan and general arrangement**

The long barn is aligned east-west and is 40m long by 5m wide (Figures 6 and 7). Internally it is divided into six compartments which, for the purposes of the following description, have been numbered C1 to C6, starting at the west. It consists of a single range of buildings with two-storied end sections at either end (C1 and C6).

### **2.3.2 Exterior: north elevation (Figure 7; Images 15 and 16)**

The north slope of the roof at the time of the survey consisted of plain clay tiles on the two-storey end sections with modern concrete tiles in the central section.

Apart from later modifications the north elevation is in red brick laid in Monk bond. The two-storey section at the west end (C1) retains its original openings with two wide doors separated by a brick pier on the ground floor and a high-level door on the first floor in a gabled dormer (Image 16). All of the other openings in the north elevation are either modern or have been blocked or modified in the 20th century.

Whitewash on the two-storied section at the east end of the range (C6) (Figure 7; Image 15) indicates that this was formerly an internal wall. It would have formed the south end of a demolished range extending along the east arm of the moat. Evidence for the demolished range includes a vertical wall scar consisting of cement-filled holes where bricks have been removed and a short return and valley gutter in the roof over C5.

### **2.3.3 Exterior: east elevation (Figure 6)**

The two-storied gable end is of red brick laid in Monk bond. It is disrupted by a more irregular section of brickwork in the lower part of the wall marking a possible former window opening approximately 1.3m wide and 1.4m high.

A triangular area of brickwork in the top of the gable is formed by rows of blocked doveholes. Two courses of headers were used to form the sides of the doveholes. These have subsequently been filled with matching brick to form continuous header courses. Chamfered plinth-bricks laid upside down were used to form two landing ledges between the lower rows of doveholes. Thinner, cement-filled strips between the upper rows of doveholes indicate ledges of a different type which have not survived.

### **2.3.4 Exterior: south elevation (Figure 6; Images 17 and 18)**

The roof on this side is in plain clay tiles throughout. A modern, metal-framed window inserted in the eastern part of the wall forms the only opening in this elevation.

At least three construction phases are evident in the brickwork:



1. The earliest brickwork is red brick laid in English bond. It is located in the lower part of the wall corresponding to the south side of compartments C3 and C4. The base of this wall (which is visible in one area above the moat) has an offset plinth which has been refaced with gault bricks. This phase of brickwork appears to represent a single building, 17.5m long. A straight join at its west end corresponds to a cross-wall in English bond between compartments C2 and C3 forming the original west end of the building. The wall meets a later section of brickwork to the east in a straight join, with closers indicating that this was originally the end of the wall.
2. The subsequent construction phase is in yellow gault brick. It includes two distinct sections which meet in a straight join. The eastern section, corresponding to compartment C5, has five shallow pilaster strips extending part-way up the wall and is in monk bond with two rows of headers in its upper part. The section of wall immediately to the west, corresponding to compartments C3 and C4 is also in Monk bond. It is built above the English bond wall and probably represents a rebuild of the earlier structure. A bow in the wall suggests that the wall has been affected by subsidence at some point, possibly resulting in the need for rebuilding.
3. The latest phase of construction is made from a pinkish red brick in Monk bond, which matches the brickwork used in the east, west and north elevations. This latest construction phase corresponds to compartments C1, C2 and C6 and also a strip of masonry above the gault brick in C3, C4 and C5. Modern additions to this masonry comprise the metal-framed window in C5 and a series of ventilation holes located close to the eaves in C5 through to C3. The holes have been filled with brick on the external face but are still clearly visible on the interior.

### **2.3.5 Exterior: west elevation (Figure 7)**

The west end is a two-storey gable end. It is in Monk bond in pinkish red brick throughout. Moulded bricks are used to form a rounded north-west corner. A single opening at first-floor level has a cambered brick arch and contains a wooden louver.

The construction of this end of the Long Barn matches that used in the later brickwork in the brick bay at the east end of the Bean Barn.

### **2.3.6 Interior: C1 (Images 19 to 21)**

This is a two-storied section at the west end of the Long Barn. The upper part was not accessed during the survey for reasons of safety.

It is approximately square in plan, 5m N-S and 4.3m E-W. The room is open on the north side with a central pier of moulded brick between a pair of large wooden doors (Image 20). The first floor is supported by N-S aligned joists with a single row of herringbone strutting and a metal tie-bar (Image 19). Two wooden chutes down from the first-floor level emerge in the centre of the ceiling (Image 21).



The presence of the chutes indicates the former presence of grain or feed processing equipment at first-floor level. The open-fronted ground floor would have served as a cart shed.

### **2.3.7 Interior: C2 (Images 22 and 23)**

This is the second room from the west end of the range.

The room is 4.7m long N-S and 3.7m wide. It is accessed internally via a door from C1. A former external door opening in the north wall has been blocked with brick and a metal-framed window inserted in the upper part.

The wall forming the east side of the room extends to eaves height and the space above is filled with boards on timber studs (Image 22). Brickwork exposed in the lower part of this wall is a red brick in English bond. An irregular, roughly blocked section in the upper right-hand side may represent a former arch-shaped opening. A doorway inserted in the left-hand side of the wall with a jamb of pinkish red brick has been blocked in the modern period.

A series of cut-off joist ends in the east wall and matching, filled holes in west wall show that the room was previously floored over to form a loft space above. The roof structure consists of common joists on purlins supported by the west wall and raking struts above the east wall.

No functional evidence remained to suggest a possible former use for the room. The former loft over could have served as a hayloft for the stables in C3. The presence of an internal doorway connected to the adjacent stables in C3 could suggest a likely use as a tack room and store.

### **2.3.8 Interior: C3 (Images 24 to 26)**

This room is 6.5m long. It is accessed via a modern metal door in the north wall. The door frame is set within a larger, earlier opening that has been reduced in size with re-used bricks. Two internal doorways located at the north end of the east and west walls had been recently blocked using construction blocks. The east and west cross-walls extend up to eaves height. Above the west wall the apex is filled with a boarded partition. Separate boards in the centre of the partition appear to block an access to the loft which formerly existed above C2. The roof is in two bays, with king post trusses.

The interior contains a number of features indicating its former use as a stable. The interior has been whitewashed in the past. The location of a feed trough is indicated by a 'shadow' in the whitewash on the south wall with one end visible on the east wall (Image 25). Tile pavements form a textured floor with a drain leading towards the north wall. A linear bump in the floor marks the location of a probable stall divider aligned N-S, corresponding with the west end of the feed trough 'shadow'. In the north wall, to the west of the doorway, a horizontal timber 1.2m above the floor has stubs for at least four sawn-off wooden pegs, probably to store horse harnesses.



### 2.3.9 Interior: C4 (Images 27 and 28)

This room is 6.4m long. It is accessed via double metal doors located towards the west end of the north wall. The door frame is set in a modern opening which is cut-in to the brickwork. A slightly narrower opening to the west of the current doorway has been blocked with re-used brick and a metal-framed window with a concrete lintel has been inserted in the upper part. Internal doors at the north end of the east and west walls had been recently blocked using construction blocks. The roof is in two bays with king post trusses.

During the 20th century this section of the Long Barn was adapted for use as a sack-drying area. The room has a low concrete shelf around the base of the walls and vents cut into the upper part of the south wall. A blocked opening in the base of the east wall would have contained ducting for a blower situated in C5, blowing air beneath a drying floor supported by the concrete shelf.

### 2.3.10 Interior: C5 (Images 29 to 31)

This section of the building is 12.4m long. It is accessed via a wooden, four-panel door in the north wall. The door is set within a larger opening that has been reduced in size with Fletton common bricks and a concrete lintel. To the east, another door opening has been blocked with Fletton brick in Monk bond to match the surrounding brickwork.

An internal doorway at the west end through to C4 has been blocked with modern construction blocks. An opening in the east wall leads into the two-storey section (C6) at this end. A blocked opening in the east wall with a sill 2.3m above ground level would have formed the access for the first floor in C6 (Image 31).

In the south wall, five shallow pilaster strips in brick extend a little over half-way up the wall. The east and west end walls in C5 meet the pilasters in straight joins, showing that the cross-walls post date the south wall.

The roof is in four bays supported by king post trusses.

The only evidence for the former use of this compartment is a blocked opening in the west wall and marks on the concrete floor, which indicate where a blower was located to serve the sack-drying floor in C4.

### 2.3.11 Interior: C6 (Image 32)

This two-storey compartment forms the east end of the range. It is almost square in plan, measuring 4.3m E-W by 4.6m N-S.

The room is accessed by an internal doorway from compartment 5. Blocked openings visible in the exterior face of the walls relate to a ground floor window in the centre of the east wall and a doorway located towards the west end of the north wall. The doorway would have connected with a range of buildings that extended along the east side of the farmyard.

The floor to the upper storey has been removed, leaving only the ends of the E-W aligned joists in the walls. A blocked doorway at first-floor level indicates that the



upper level would have been accessed via a stair or ladder in compartment 5. Rows of blocked holes in the eastern apex indicate the former use of the upper storey as a dovecot.



### 3. CONSTRUCTION PHASES

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The following section summarises the chronological development of the buildings.

#### 3.1 *Phase 1: Later 17th or 18th Century*

Earliest surviving elements of the buildings, though not necessarily contemporary, are: the Bean Barn timber-framing and sections of brickwork in its eastern end bay; and parts of the Long Barn.

In the Bean Barn the whole of the south wall and roof were replaced during modern renovation work. The north wall appears to be a modification of the original structure. The earliest surviving section is the central aisle, comprising the aisle posts, aisle plates, tie-beams and braces. The aisle plates are assembled with two different types of scarf joint: side-halved and bridled; and face halved and bladed. The first type has a very long currency whilst the second was in use throughout the 17th century and later. The straight braces and scarf joints suggests a possible later 17th- or earlier 18th-century construction date for the barn.

Brickwork identified as part of this phase is noticeably more weathered than that in the later phases and consists of red brick laid in regular English bond. The bricks are of fairly regular dimensions, *c.* 65mm thick and evenly fired. In the Bean Barn it forms the lower part of the south elevation. In the Long Barn it forms the lower, central section in the south elevation with a return at its western end. The return was probably an external end wall but is now an internal wall following the extension of the building in the 19th century. The brickwork is not closely dateable but is consistent with a later 17th- or 18th-century date.

#### 3.2 *Phase 2: 19th Century*

During this phase the Phase 1 structure which makes up part of the Long Barn was rebuilt and extended eastwards.

The Phase 1 brickwork in the south elevation was reduced to a height of 0.8–1.1m and rebuilt using gault bricks laid in Monk bond. It seems likely that movement of the wall due to its moat-edge location could have been the reason for rebuilding. Another 12.7m-long section of brickwork in the same gault brick abuts the east end of the rebuilt wall. This section incorporates five pilaster strips. The remains from this phase provide little evidence to suggest their possible function. It is possible the section with pilaster strips was a free-standing boundary wall rather than part of a building with the pilasters used to support the wall.

#### 3.3 *Phase 3: Later 19th Century*

The farmyard buildings were the subject of a major phase of rebuilding at this time. The buildings of this phase are in the red brick in Monk bond. The brickwork incorporates moulded bricks with bullnose bricks used to form rounded edges on the inner corners of the main entrance into the farmyard.

The buildings on the south side of the moat were extended to form a continuous range. The level of the existing brickwork in the Long Barn was raised to form a new eaves level and two-storey extensions were added at the east and west ends.



Brickwork on the east end of the Bean Barn was extended to form a two-storied brick end bay. The result was a continuous range along the south side of the moat with the two-storey end bays defining the entrance into the farmyard. These buildings retained some evidence for their former use. The gable wall at the east end of the Long Barn contains blocked openings for a dovecot. Internal fittings in compartment 3 of the Long Barn indicate its use as a stable with access to a former hay loft above compartment 2 to the west. The lower part of compartment 1 was open-sided at the north, indicating a probable use as a cart shed with chutes through the floor above indicating a former feed or grain processing function for the upper storey.

The farmstead produced in this phase is typical of the type of functional buildings produced by the farm improvement movement in the later 18th and 19th centuries. However, an element of design is apparent in the decision to incorporate the small 'towers' to either side of the entrance and on the corner of the moated façade, giving the building something of the appearance of a fortified manor.

### **3.4 Phase 4: 20th Century**

During this period all of the openings apart from those in compartment C1 were modified, either by blocking or partially infilling to fit smaller doors or windows in former door openings. Towards the centre of the range, a double doorway was cut-in to compartment C4. A sack-drying floor, since removed, was installed in C4 with the blower in C5.

In the late 20th century the Bean Barn was restored and converted for use as a wedding venue. This involved pulling the frame back into a vertical position and installing metal reinforcements to the junctions around the heads of the aisle posts. The roof was completely renewed, slightly altering the pitch of its south slope to accommodate a new south aisle wall. Additional structures were built along the north side as well as a porch which was added to the south of the barn.

### **3.5 Changes to the Buildings a Result of the Development Works**

The building recording was undertaken in accordance with an archaeological condition during alterations and extensions to extend the wedding venue.

A number of 20th-century farm buildings including a grain store, vehicle sheds, and workshops were demolished. A new timber-framed structure was linked to the Long Barn which was converted as part of the new venue. Limited alterations undertaken on the Bean Barn included removal of some of the modern additions, including the south porch.



#### 4. HERITAGE VALUES AND SIGNIFICANCE

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The buildings comprise the remains of an aisled barn and a range of brick buildings along the southern arm of the moat. The buildings contain no medieval elements. The earliest parts date from the 18th or possibly the late 17th century.

The Bean Barn was restored from a derelict state in the late 20th century. It retains the structure of the central aisle but the entire roof and a large proportion of the walls have been replaced. The Long Barn is a late 19th-century range of farm buildings that incorporates the fragmentary remains of earlier brickwork in the south elevation and one cross-wall.

Historic maps show the development of the farmstead from the late 17th century onwards (Albion 2011). It is clear that earlier buildings were replaced during the late 19th-century redevelopment of the farm and a similar process occurred in the mid-20th century. The surviving remains illustrate changes in farming brought about by the agricultural improvement movement. Such evidence is relatively common in Bedfordshire and the wider region and is of only local significance. However, the buildings' location on a scheduled moat and association with the Grade II\* listed farmhouse neatly illustrate the diachronic change from higher-status medieval manor into modern 'industrial' farmstead.





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## 6. APPENDIX 1: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

**OASIS ID: albionar1-211345**

### Project details

Project name	Bassmead (or Basmead) Manor, Staploe – Building Recording
Short description of the project	Planning consent was granted for the conversion, alteration, and extension of existing buildings to form a wedding venue at Bassmead (or Basmead) Manor. The development involved the demolition of modern agricultural buildings and alterations to two historic buildings, the Bean Barn and the Long Barn. The Bean Barn stands in the south-west quadrant of the moated island. It is a timber-framed aisled barn of four bays with a two-storey section in brick on the east end. The building was restored from a derelict state in the late 20th century and the roof and south aisle are modern replacements. The barn has straight or very slightly curved braces. The aisle plates have a mixture of side halved and face halved scarf joins. The earliest structural elements in the Bean Barn are likely to date from the late 17th or 18th century. The Long Barn is a continuous range of brick buildings along the south arm of the moat in the south-east quadrant of the island. Three phases of brickwork are visible in the south elevation of the Long Barn. The third phase in the late 19th century produced the continuous range with two-storey sections at either end. The surviving historic farm buildings at Bassmead provide evidence for the development of the site from the late 17th or 18th century to the late 19th century.
Project dates	Start Date 27-03-2013 End Date 27-03-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	BM1876 - Contracting Unit No. BEDFM 2012.34 - Museum accession ID 1012067 - NHLE No. albionar1-193654 - OASIS form ID albionar1-131861 - OASIS form ID 11/02504/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Building Recording
Monument type	AISLED BARN – Post Medieval Combination Farm Building - Post Medieval BARN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Annotated Sketch", "Photographic Survey", "Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE BEDFORD STAPLOE Bassmead Manor building recording
Study area	350 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 14005 61185 Point

### Project creators

Name of	Albion Archaeology
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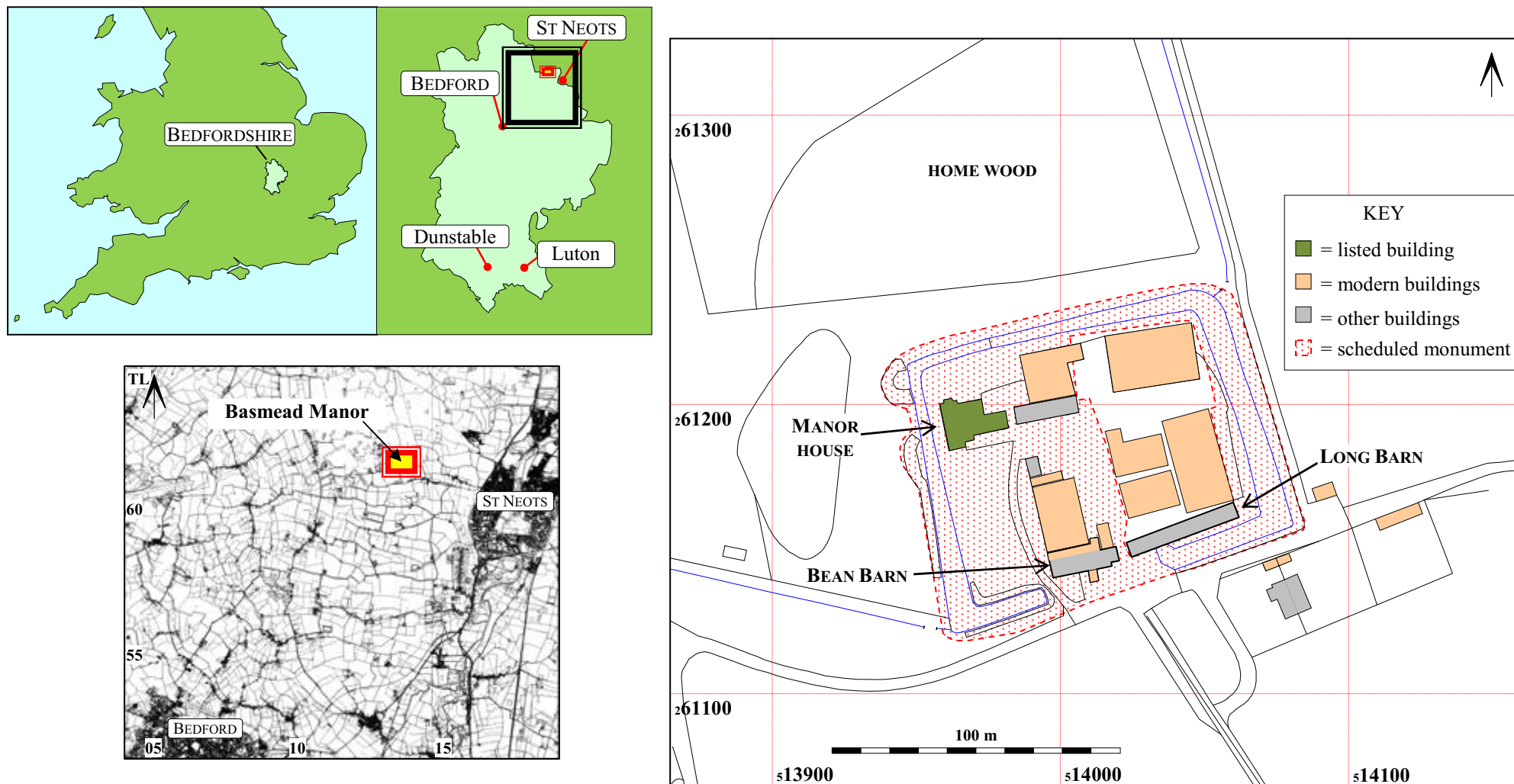
Organisation	
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Albion Archaeology
Project director/manager	Jeremy Oetgen Mark Phillips

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Albion Archaeology
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Paper Archive ID	BEDFM 2012.34
Paper Media available	"Correspondence", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Report"
Paper Archive notes	To be combined with other elements of the project for archiving.

#### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Bassmead Manor, Staploe, Bedfordshire: Historic Building Recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	'Phillips, M'
Other bibliographic details	2013/73
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Albion Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Bedford
Entered by	Helen Parslow (hl.parslow@albion-arch.com)
Entered on	26 May 2015



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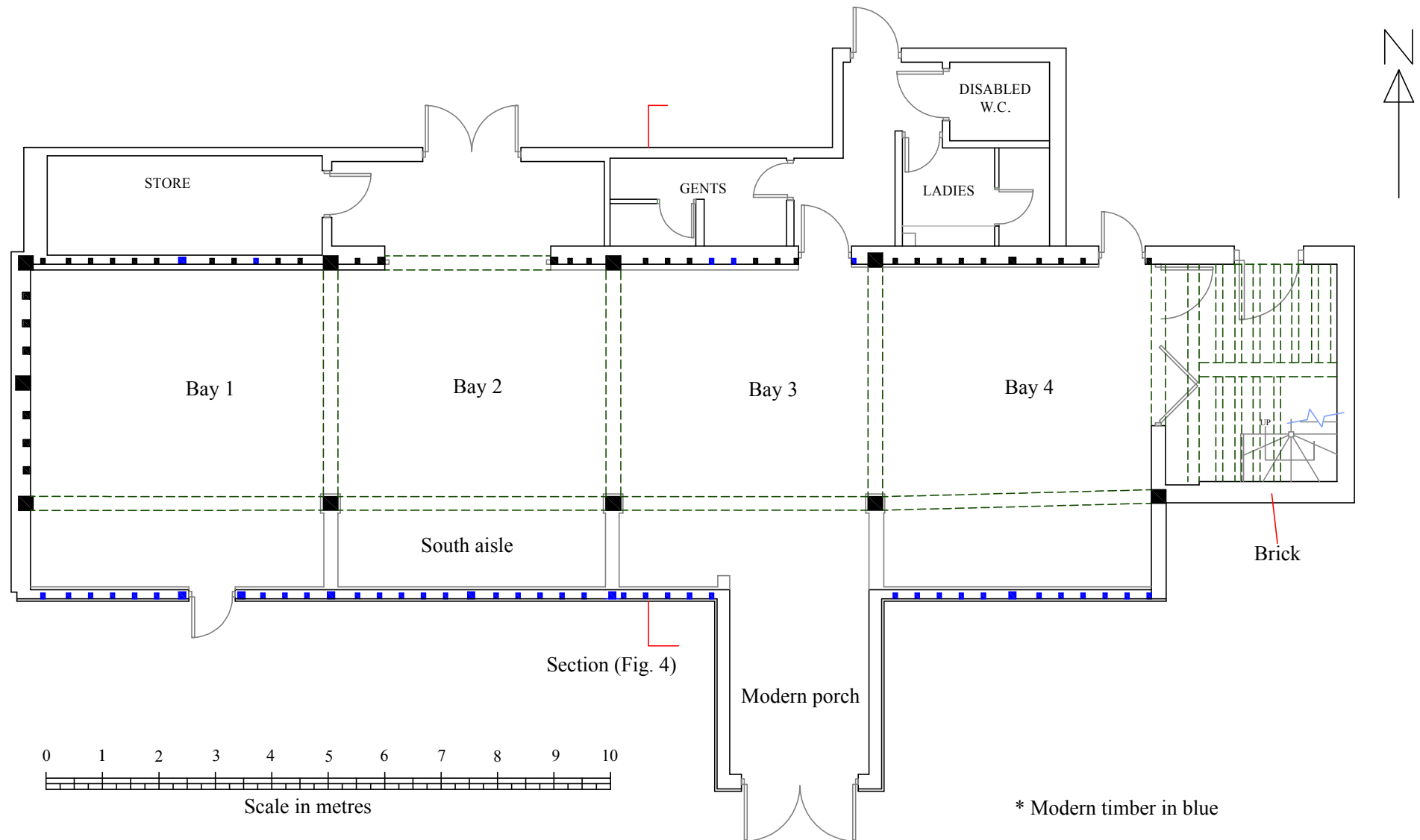


Figure 3: Bean Barn: plan

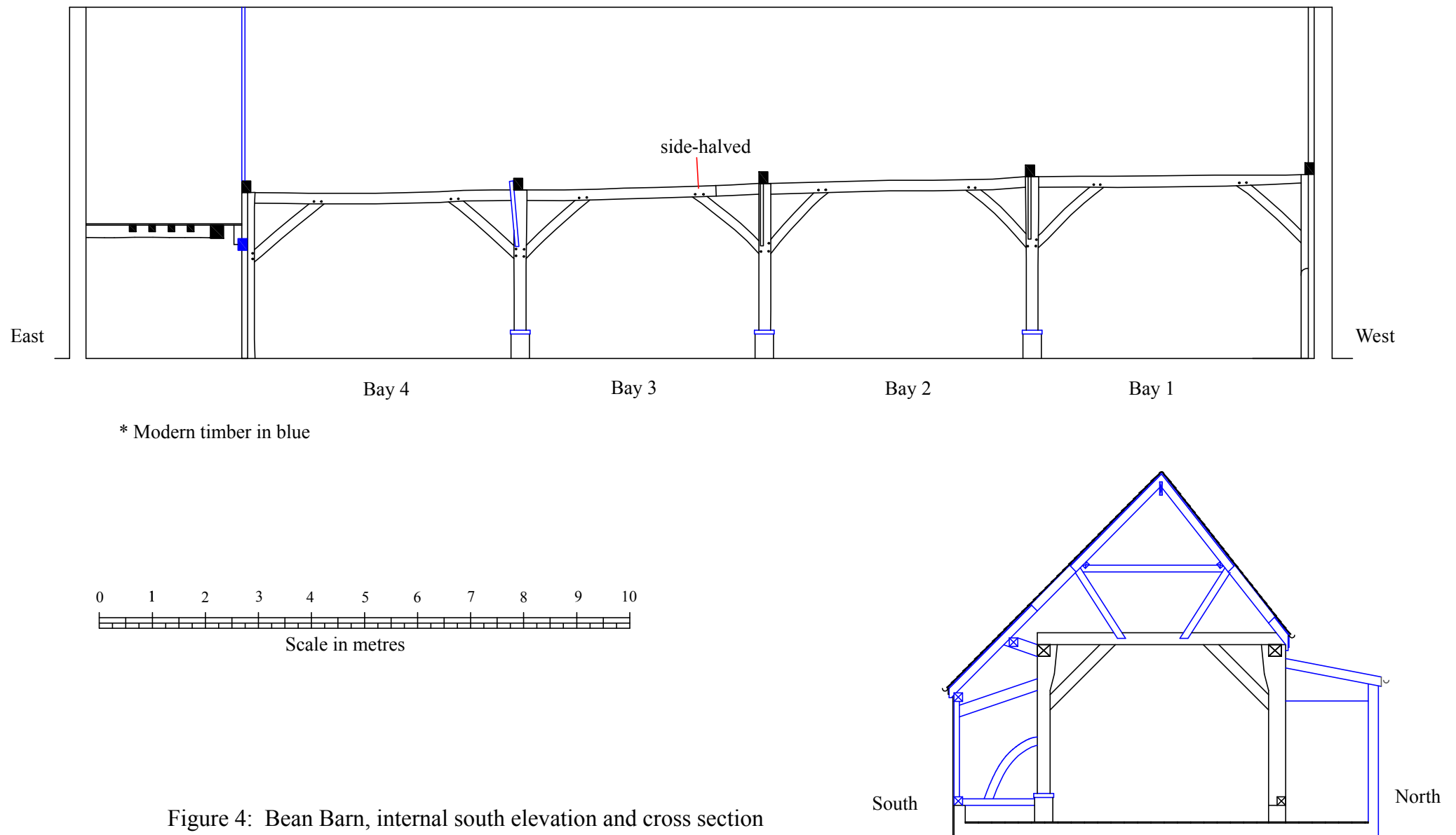


Figure 4: Bean Barn, internal south elevation and cross section

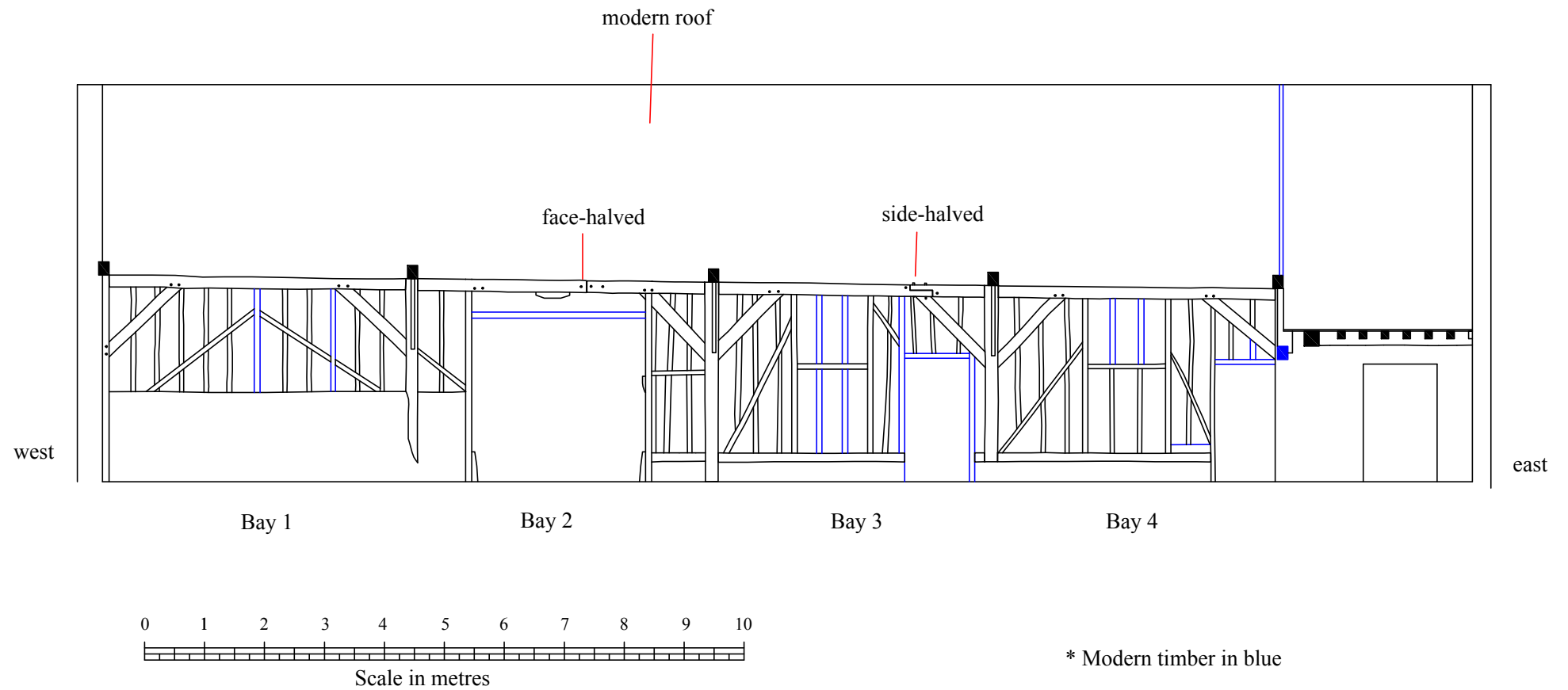


Figure 5: Bean Barn: internal north elevation



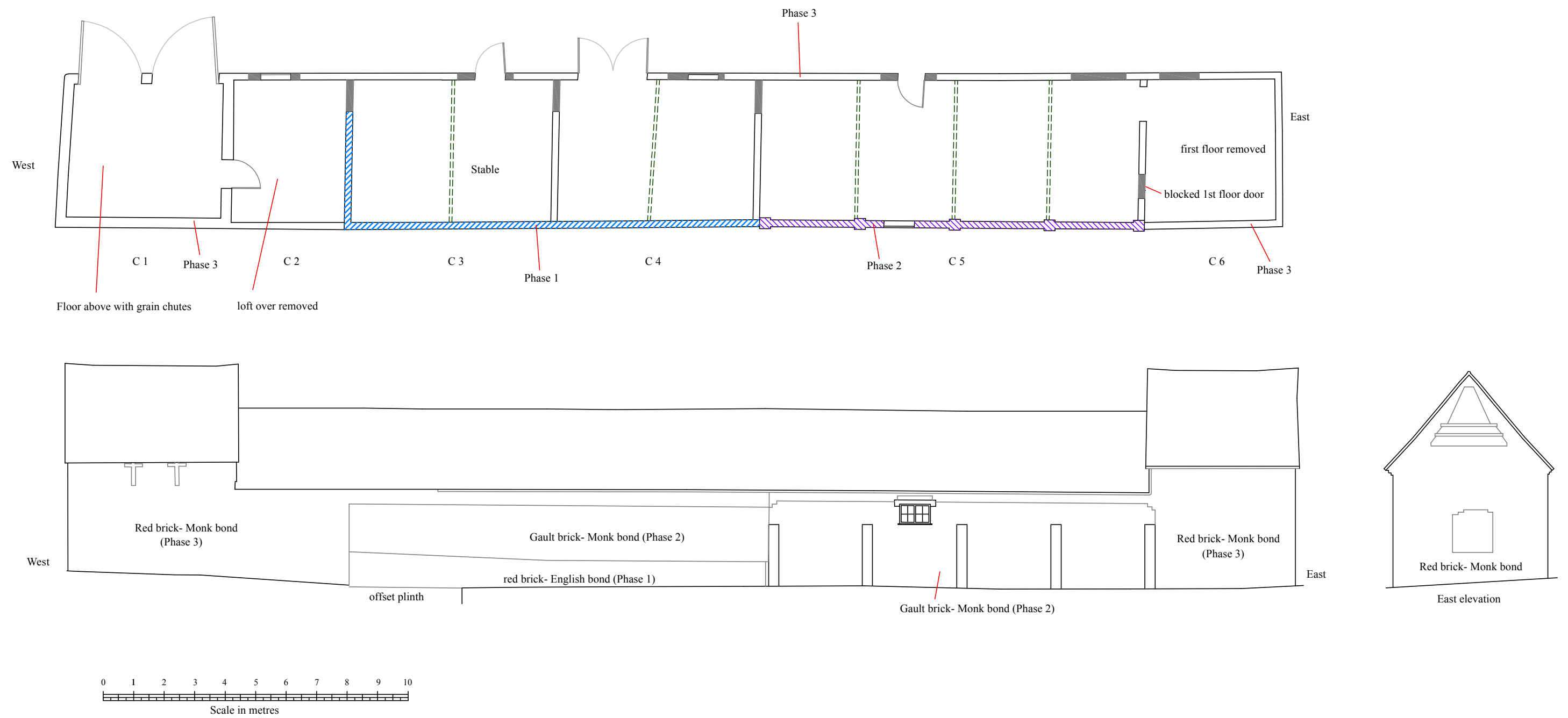


Figure 6: Long Barn: plan and south elevation

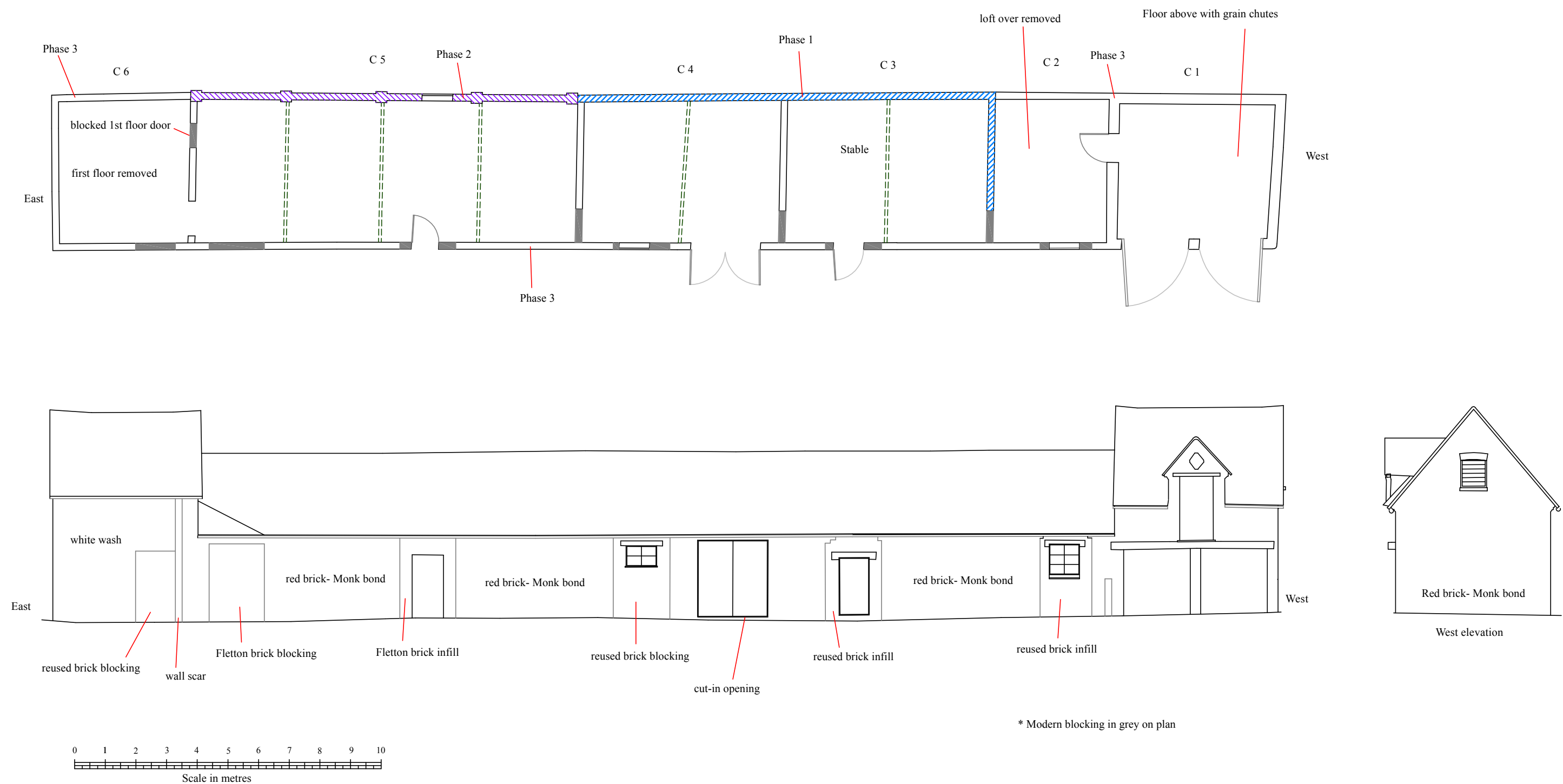


Figure 7: Long Barn: plan and north elevation



**Image 1:** Bean Barn, south elevation

Shows modern porch and roof lights (scale 2m)



**Image 2:** Bean Barn, exterior from south-east

Shows modern porch added to south aisle and brick end bay  
(scale 2m)

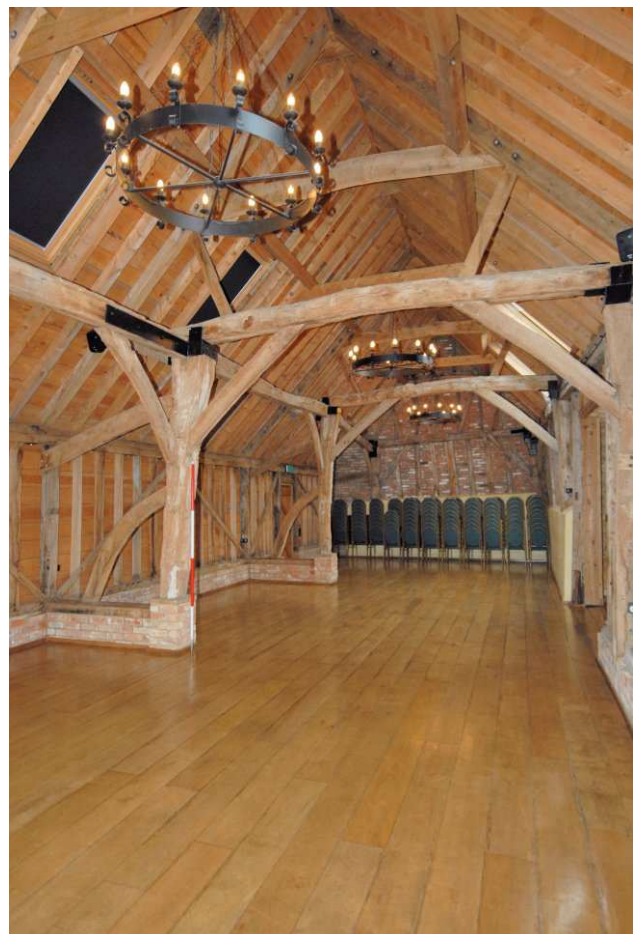


**Image 3:** Bean Barn, south elevation of brick end bay

Shows red brick in English bond forming lower part of wall with lighter brick above and in the pilaster strip on the south-east corner (scale 2m)

**Image 4:** Bean Barn, interior looking west

View shows south aisle and modern roof structure (scale 2m)







**Image 5:** Bean Barn from first floor of brick end bay

View shows the south aisle and the north wall with primary bracing (scale 2m)



**Image 6:** Bean Barn, south aisle

Shows aisle post and braces to the aisle plate and tie beam with modern braces at the rear of the post in the south aisle (scale 2m)



**Image 7:** Bean Barn, scarf joint in north aisle plate

Showing the underside of an edge-halved scarf located towards the east end of bay 3



**Image 8:** Bean Barn, scarf joint in north aisle plate

View showing the underside of a face-halved scarf joint in bay 2





**Image 9:** Bean Barn, assembly mark

Detail view of assembly mark at lower end of brace (scale 10cm)



**Image 10:** Bean Barn, west end

West end wall showing original frame with brick filling and additional raking struts and collar beam supporting modern roof (scale 2m)



**Image 11:** Bean Barn, east end

East end wall showing frame with brick infilling between modern doorway and roof structure (scale 2m)

**Image 12:** Bean Barn, east jamb of north door

Detail view of wooden bracket nailed to door jamb (scale 10cm)







**Image 13:** Bean Barn, west jamb of north door

Detail showing fitting attached to door jamb. The vertical slot (now infilled with wood) was designed to support a set of horizontal boards, to form a temporary barrier called a lift (scale 10 cm)



**Image 14:** Bean Barn, ground floor of brick end bay

View looking upwards at framing of floor



**Image 15:** Long Barn, north elevation  
(scale 2m)



**Image 16:** Long Barn, west end  
Looking south-east (scale 2m)





**Image 17:** Long Barn, south elevation  
(scale 2m)



**Image 18:** Long Barn, south elevation  
Looking north-west (scale 2m)



**Image 19:** Long Barn C1, looking south-west

Showing floor joists with herringbone strutting and metal tie-bar (scale 2m)



**Image 20:** Long Barn C1, north wall

View looking north showing doors and central brick pier (scale 2m)





**Image 21:** Long Barn C1, detail  
Wooden chutes in centre of ceiling



**Image 22:** Long Barn C2, east wall

View looking east showing blocked door in north side of wall, irregular area of brickwork and cut-off joists in upper part of wall (scale 2m)



**Image 23:** Long Barn C2, looking north-west

Shows metal-framed window inserted into larger opening in north wall  
(scale 2m)



**Image 24:** Long Barn C3, east wall

View looking east showing blocked door to 3 and whitewash 'shadow' of feed  
trough against south wall (scale 2m)





**Image 25:** Long Barn C3, south wall

View looking south showing 'shadow' left by feed trough against south wall and vents in upper part of wall (scale 2m)



**Image 26:** Long Barn C3, looking north-east

Showing paved floor with drain (scale 2m)



**Image 27:** Long Barn C4, looking south-east

Showing blocked door to 5, concrete shelf at base of wall for sack drying floor and vents in south wall (scale 2m)



**Image 28:** Long Barn C4, looking north-west

Showing modern double door opening in the corner and blocked former opening with metal-framed window to the right (scale 2m)





**Image 29:** Long Barn C5, looking south-west

General view showing pilaster strips and high-level vents in south wall  
(scale 2m)



**Image 30:** Long Barn C5, west wall

Showing blocked door to 4 and blocked low-level vent (scale 2m)



**Image 31:** Long Barn C5, east wall

Showing blocked first floor door. This wall abuts the south wall (at the right of the photograph) in a straight join where it meets the pilaster strip (scale 2m).



**Image 32:** Long Barn 6, west wall

Showing blocked first floor door  
(scale 2m)



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