



Northamptonshire  
County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

A Building Assessment of the attic space at  
111 High Street Burton Latimer  
Northamptonshire



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September 2008

Report 08/144

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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## QUALITY CONTROL

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	A Building Assessment of the attic space at 111 High Street, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an assessment of the attic space at 111 High Street Burton Latimer. The assessment demonstrated that the surviving thatched roof was in poor condition.	
Project type	Desk-based and building assessment	
Previous work	none	
Future work	unknown	
Monument type and period	Post-medieval building, Grade II listed	
Significant finds	n/a	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	111 High street, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire	
Easting		
Northing		
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Jenny Timothy, KBC	
Project Design originator		
Director/Supervisor	Tim Upson-Smith BA, PGDip	
Project Manager	Iain Soden BA MIFA	
Sponsor or funding body	Griffiths Air Conditioning and Electrical contractors	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	September 2008	
End date	September 2008	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title		
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 08/144	
Author(s)	Tim Upson-Smith	
Page numbers		
Date	2008	

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**A BUILDING ASSESSMENT OF THE ATTIC SPACE AT  
111 HIGH STREET BURTON LATIMER  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

*Abstract*

*Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an assessment of the attic space at 111 High Street Burton Latimer. The assessment demonstrated that the surviving thatched roof was in poor condition.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Griffiths Air Conditioning and Electrical contractors to undertake a survey of the loft space and a basic documentary search on 111 High Street, Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 900 746, Fig 1). The assessment is required by the local planning authority, Kettering Borough Council (KBC) as part of a project for the improvement of the property.

The study area comprises a Grade II listed building which was formerly used as a dairy and before that as a farmhouse.

**2 METHODOLOGY**

A site visit was made on Wednesday 21 May 2008. This assessment complies with the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) Standard and Guidance for desk-based and historic building assessments (IFA 2001). The building recording was undertaken to Level I/II as specified in the relevant English Heritage procedural document (English Heritage 2006) and as required by KBC.

**3 HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

**3.1 Historic maps**

A search of historic maps was made in Northamptonshire Record Office with the following results.

*1803 Inclosure map (Fig 2)*

This map shows the building as a single range with the gable fronting High Street. It lacks the northern wing which today forms part of the street frontage (cover photo). The building is shown at the southern edge of a large open plot.

*1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1886 (Fig 3)*

This map shows the building as it appears on the present map. The building is still at the southern edge of a large open plot, the northern part of which is now filled by a school.

## 4 BUILDING ASSESSMENT

The building was visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 to carry out a photographic and drawn survey of the loft space. Plans and sections supplied by the client were used as a basis for the plan of the loft and the drawing of the principal truss. The drawn record was supplemented by digital and black and white photographs.

### 4.1 Exterior

The building is of two storeys with an attic in coursed limestone with ironstone bands (both the street frontage and the north elevation have been painted see cover photo). The roof is slate and has been raised to cover the original thatched roof. The main block has its gable end fronting the street with a wing added to the north. The map evidence suggests that this was added post 1803, but before 1886. The main block gable end has two modern casement windows with wooden lintels, one each on the ground and first floor and a small attic light. Above the small attic light is a probable date stone which is no longer legible. The north wing has a modern shop style window and modern door.

The south elevation of the main block shows the ironstone banding and has irregular fenestration (Plate 1). There is a modern single storey extension to the rear of the property.

### 4.2 Interior

Only the attic of the main block of the building fell within the scope of the survey.

*Attic (Figs 4 and 5)*

The roof consists of a central collared principal truss, with a ridge piece along the full length of the roof (Plate 2). The principal truss is roughly squared, and pegged at the apex (Plate 3). A collar within the truss appears to be a replacement as this was squared off sawn timber. The purlins are not themselves jointed to the principal truss but rest on small

blocks pegged to it (Fig 4). The secondary rafters consist of either small roughly straight branches, some still wayney edged, or roughly squared off branches. Many have broken and are worm ridden. The ridge piece has broken through adjacent to the principal truss and is supported by a wooden strut (Plate 2).

The thatch from the roof where the rafters are broken has fallen through into the loft space. Where this had not occurred the thatch has been plastered and lime washed (Plate 4). This with the presence of a small window in the street facing gable suggests that the space has at some stage been used as a room. Both gable ends have chimney breasts but there was no evidence of a fireplace in the loft room.

The principal beams forming the floor of the attic have empty mortices in a pattern which makes no sense to the building; this would suggest that these beams have been reused (Fig 4). The longitudinal beam is in two parts; the opposite edge of each length had been sawn therefore it may have originally been one short beam which has been sawn in half longitudinally to span the building (Plate 5).

The joists are fixed to the underside of the principal beams but due to space restrictions it has not been possible to ascertain how this fixing was achieved. The area around the loft hatch had been boarded with what appeared to a reused ledged door.

The thatch consisted of traditional long straw which had been tied into bundles with twisted straw ties. The first layer was laid horizontally with subsequent layers placed vertically (Plate 6).

Subsequently a welsh slate roof has been added, which necessitated the raising of the walls as the original thatched roof was retained (Fig 5). Evidence of this raising can be seen on the street facing gable end where there is a visible join in the stonework, which has been partially obscured by paint. The ends of the purlins of the slate roof are visible within this later work.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

From the survey it became clear that the walls of the building had been raised to accommodate the slate roof over the original thatched roof.

The recording of the attic space has demonstrated that the original thatched roof is in very poor condition with many of the secondary rafters having rotted through and the thatch fallen onto the floor of the attic room.

The roof structure was made using what ever timber came to hand it would seem with some of the beams being reused from elsewhere. The roof structure utilised in some cases

roughly squared branches and untrimmed branches. As such the roof is a fairly typical example of a small vernacular building, comparable with others across the county (see for example Prentice 2006).

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings A guide to good recording practise*

IFA 2001 *Standard and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

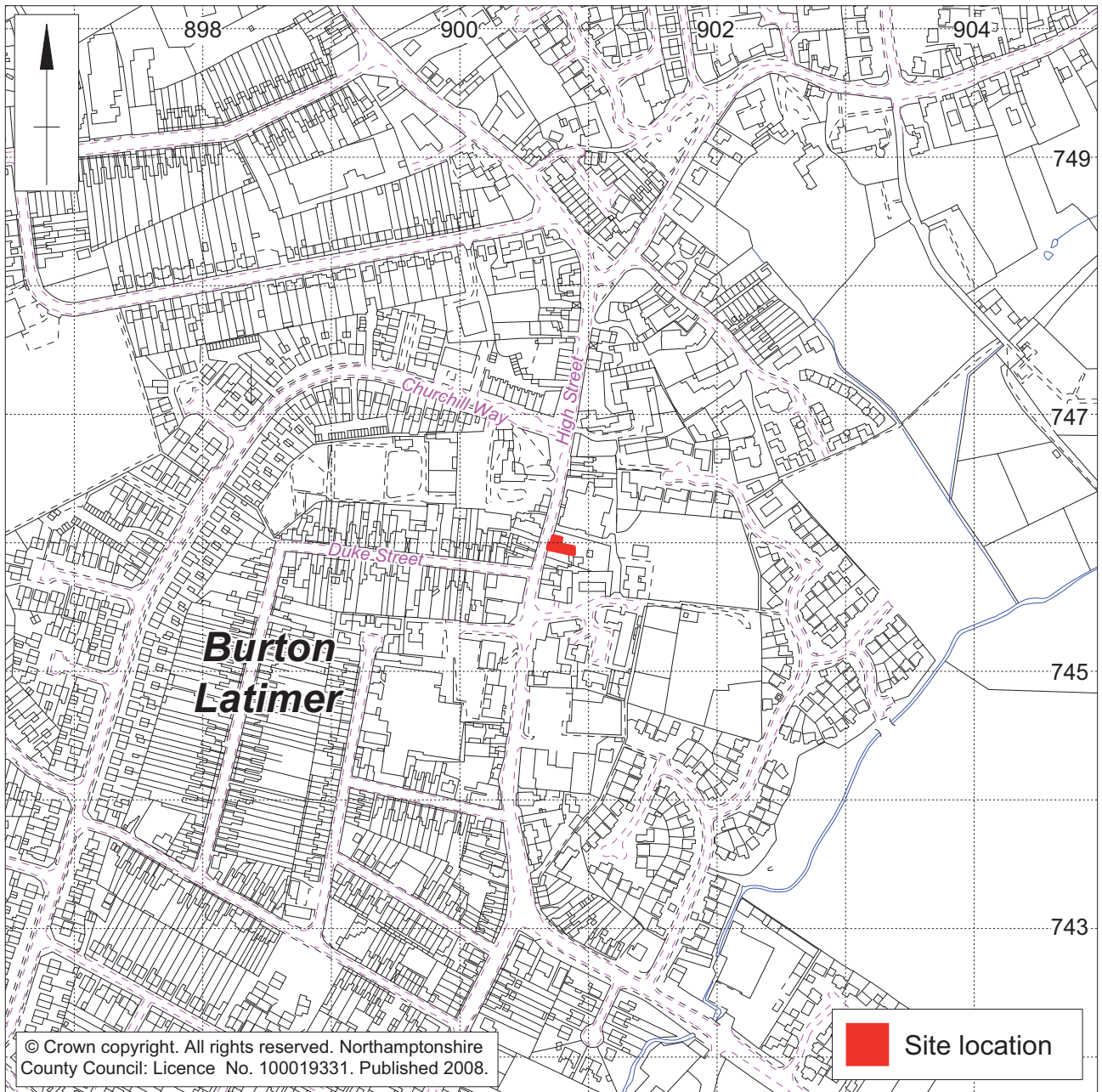
Prentice, J 2006 *Building Recording During Repairs to the roof of 62 Billing Road, Brafield-on-the-Green, Northamptonshire* Northamptonshire Archaeology Unpublished client report

## **Websites**

[www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)

## **Acknowledgements**

Historic map extracts are used here with the permission of the Northamptonshire Record Office but should not be reproduced from this report without prior permission from the County Archivist.



Scale 1:5,000

Fig 1





Fig 2: 1803 Inclosure Map

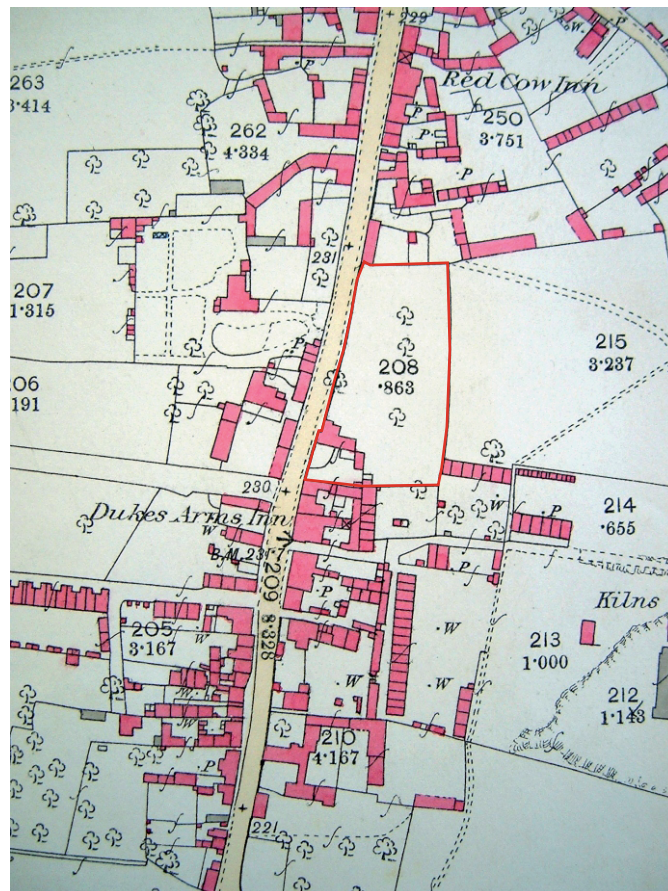
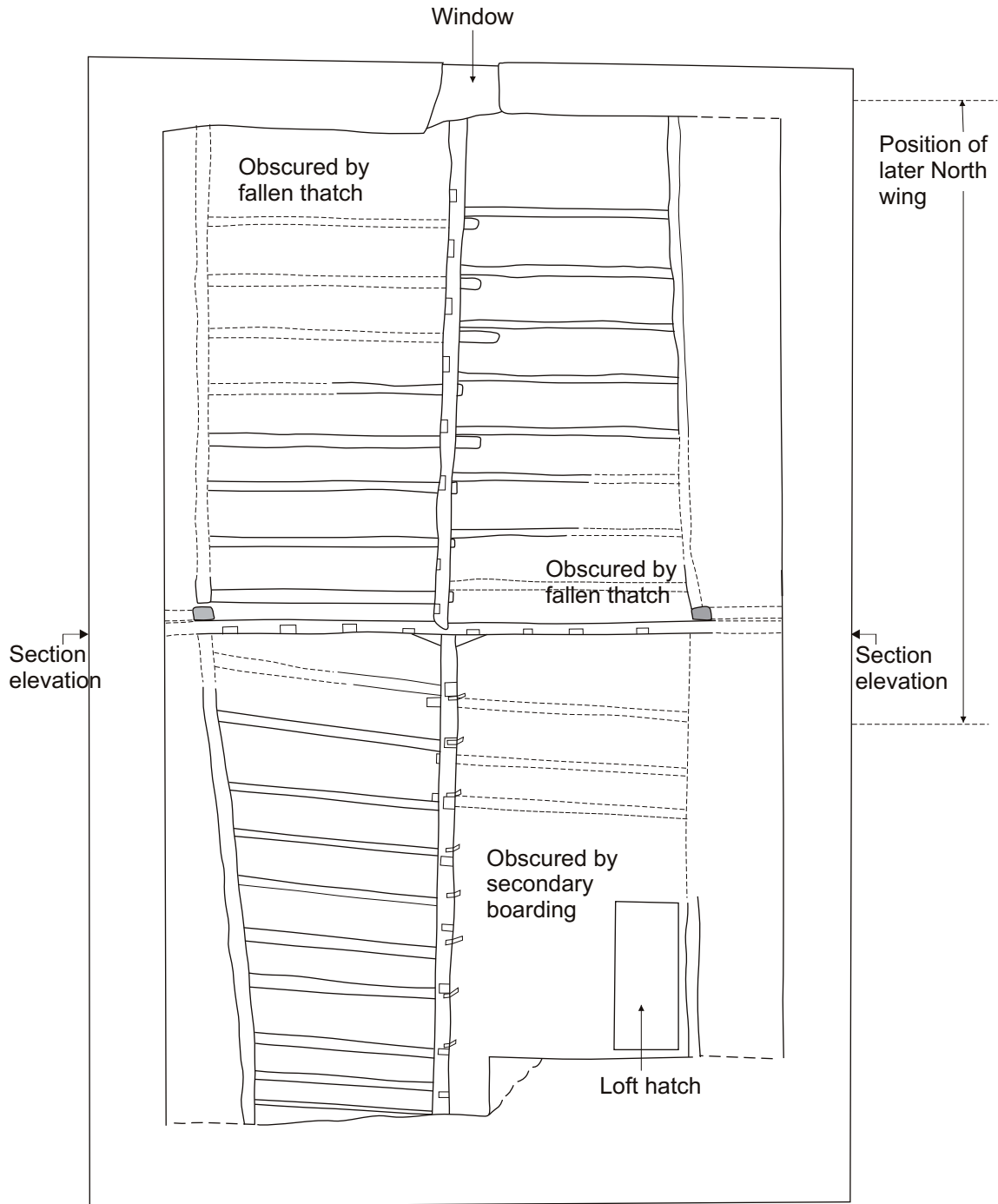
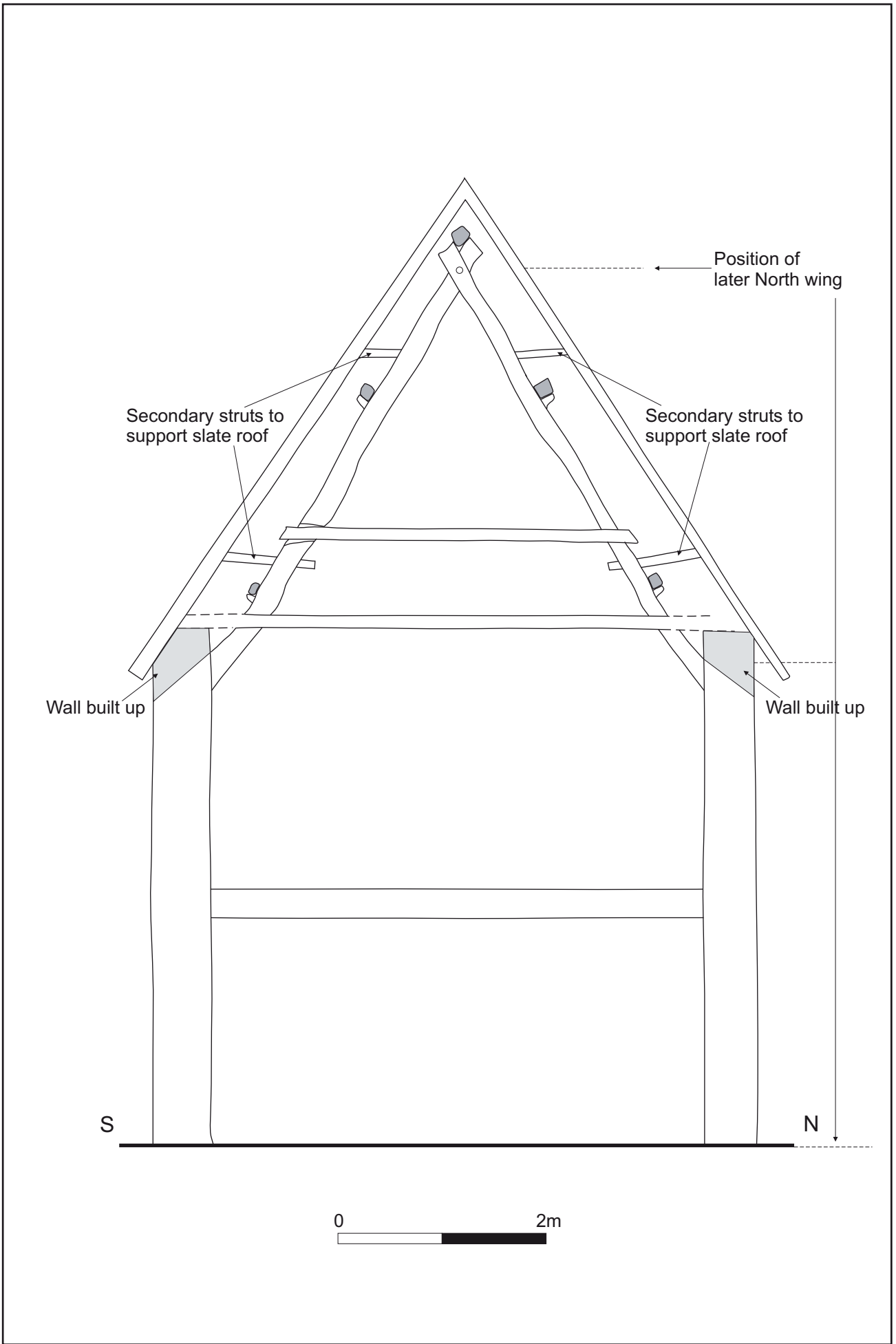


Fig 3: Ordnance Survey First Edition 1886, 25" Series



Plan of attic Fig 4



Sectional elevation Fig 5





Plate 1: The exterior showing the ironstone banding on the southern elevation



Plate 2: The attic interior



Plate 3: Joint detail of the principal rafter



Plate 4: The attic interior showing the whitewashed plastered thatch





Plate 5: The attic floor

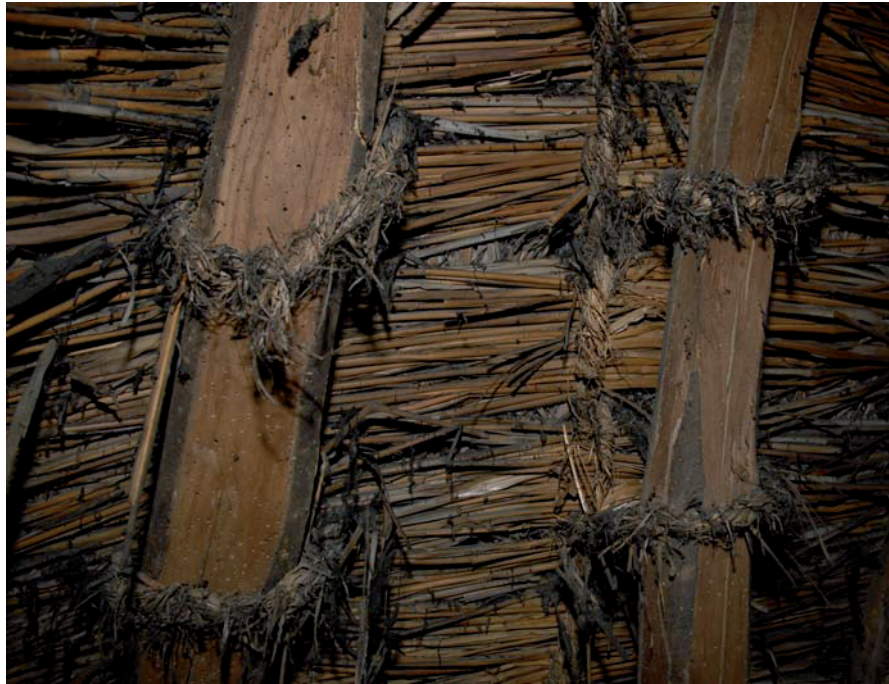


Plate 6: Detail of the thatch ties