
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/169/04

**REPORT ON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF AND
BUILDING RECORDING
PROJECT AT
HOLKER HALL
CARK-IN-CARTMEL
CUMBRIA**

**FOR
HOLKER ESTATES**

**NGR SD 360 773
Planning Application No.
5/04/1166**

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Between November 2004 and January 2005 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological building recording project and maintained a watching brief at Holker Hall, Cark-in-Cartmel, Cumbria. The work was required in response to a planning application for the extension of the former stable block and the redevelopment and extension of the car park, a scheme that affects an area of archaeological potential, recorded on the County Historic Environment Record. As a result, Cumbria County Council produced a brief which required a Level 2 Building Survey of the former Stable Block, and the maintenance of a watching brief of the car park redevelopment.

The work required included a desk-based assessment in advance of any further work. This involved the consultation of the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record in Kendal and the Holker Estate Archives, and consisted of a search of all readily available maps, documents and aerial photographs relevant to the study area. Information was collected regarding the presence of any Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or other designated sites or areas of historic interest. This was followed by a 'Level 2' building survey of the former stable block, which involved the production of a photographic and descriptive record of the buildings in addition to a plan to show the location of each photographed feature. The building survey was followed by a watching brief of all groundworks associated with the car park redevelopment.

Holker Hall is a 19th century country house, the seat of Lord and Lady Cavendish, set within a registered historic park and garden. The origins of the hall date to the 16th century, when the estate was bought by the Preston family from the Priory of Cartmel, following the dissolution of the monasteries. The site had previously been part of the deer park of the nearby Frith Hall. The stable block dates to 1864 and consists of a series of rubble stone buildings with ashlar dressings, set around a central courtyard. The courtyard has undergone several alterations and is at present used as a restaurant, shop and store for estate produce on the ground floor, with offices, meeting rooms and a residential flat on the first floor.

No significant archaeological remains were identified during the watching brief.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the following for their assistance during the undertaking of the project: Mark Carroll of Holker Estates Company, Jo Mackintosh of Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record.

The rapid desk-based assessment and building survey was undertaken by Chris Jones BA, MA, AIFA and the watching brief maintained by Chris Jones and Ken Denham BA.

The report was written by Chris Jones, which was edited by Juliet Reeves BA. Overall responsibility for the project rested with Frank Giocco BA, Dip Arch, AIFA Principal Archaeologist.

1 INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

- 1.1 Between November 2004 and January 2005 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological building recording project and maintained a watching brief of works at Holker Hall, Cark-in-Cartmel, Cumbria. The work was requested in a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service (CCCAS, Parsons, 2004) in response to a planning application for redevelopment of the car park and an extension to the former stable block (Planning Application Ref 5/04/1166).
- 1.2 Holker Hall is situated on the Cartmel Peninsula in the South Lakeland District of Cumbria, approximately 17 miles south-west of Kendal. The Hall is located west of the B5278 Ulverston to Grange over Sands road.
- 1.3 Holker Hall is a 19th century country house, the seat of Lord and Lady Cavendish, set within a registered historic park and garden. The origins of the hall date to the 16th century, when the estate was bought by the Preston family from the Priory of Cartmel, following the dissolution of the monasteries. The site had previously been part of the deer park of the nearby Frith Hall. The stable block dates to 1864, is grade II listed and consists of a series of rubble stone buildings with ashlar dressings, set around a central courtyard. The courtyard has undergone several alterations and is at present used as a restaurant, shop and store for estate produce on the ground floor, with offices, meeting rooms and a residential flat on the first floor.
- 1.4 The purpose of this assessment was to provide an accurate record of the former stable block prior to the construction of an extension to the east range and above the west range, and to maintain a watching brief of groundworks associated with the car park redevelopment. The fieldwork was undertaken in two main phases of between five and seven days duration.
- 1.5 The project was given the unique archive reference NPA 04 HOL-A.

2 PREVIOUS WORK

- 2.1 No previous archaeological work has been undertaken on the site.
- 2.2 In 2001 Oxford Archaeology North undertook an excavation of Bronze Age cremation cemeteries at Allithwaite, approximately 6 miles north of the present site, within the Cartmel Peninsula. This excavation recovered one complete and three fragmentary Bronze Age Collared Urns (Wild 2002).
- 2.3 In November 2004 North Pennines Archaeology undertook an archaeological assessment of land at Cark Airfield, Flookburgh (Jones 2003). The work revealed the site to have existed south of a line of medieval flood defences, within an extensive area of marshland until the land improvements of mid 18th century.

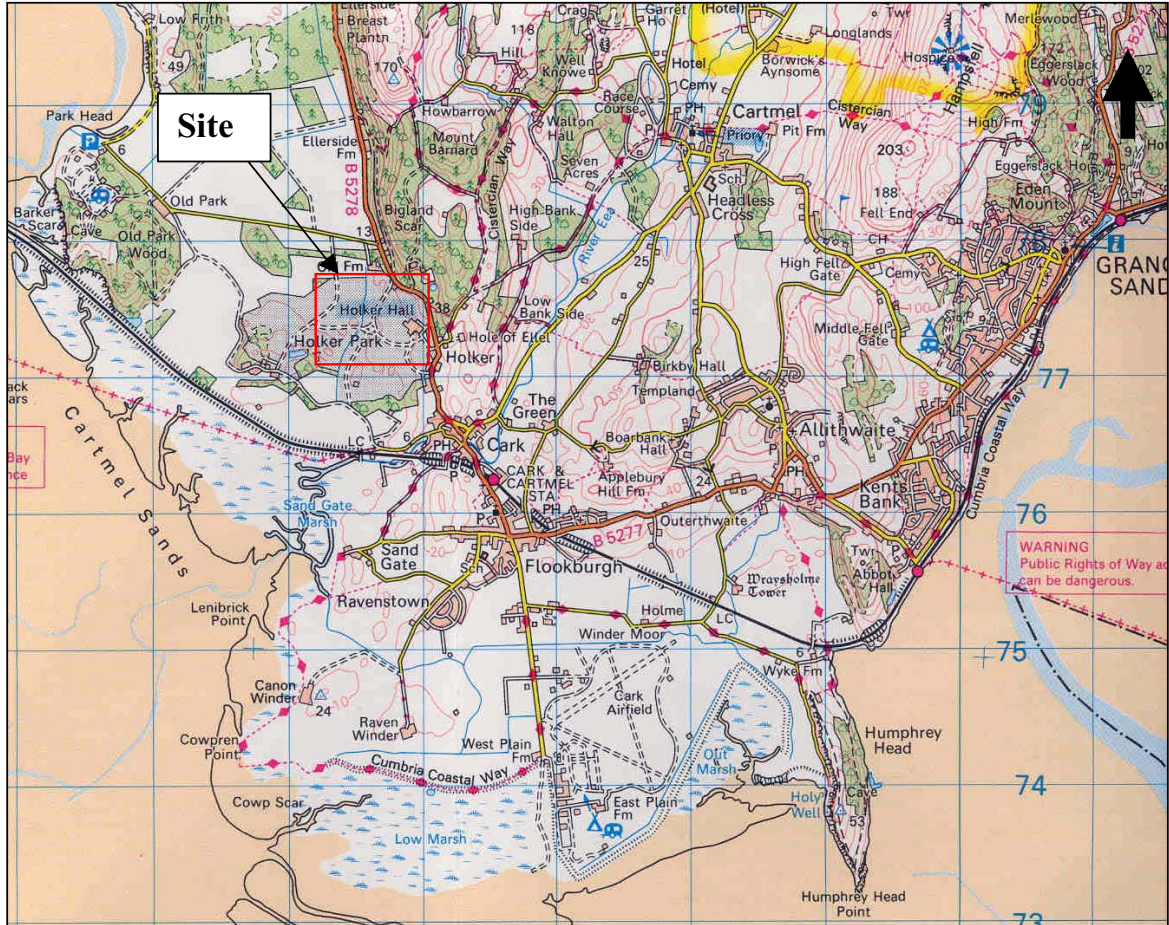


Figure 1: Site Location.

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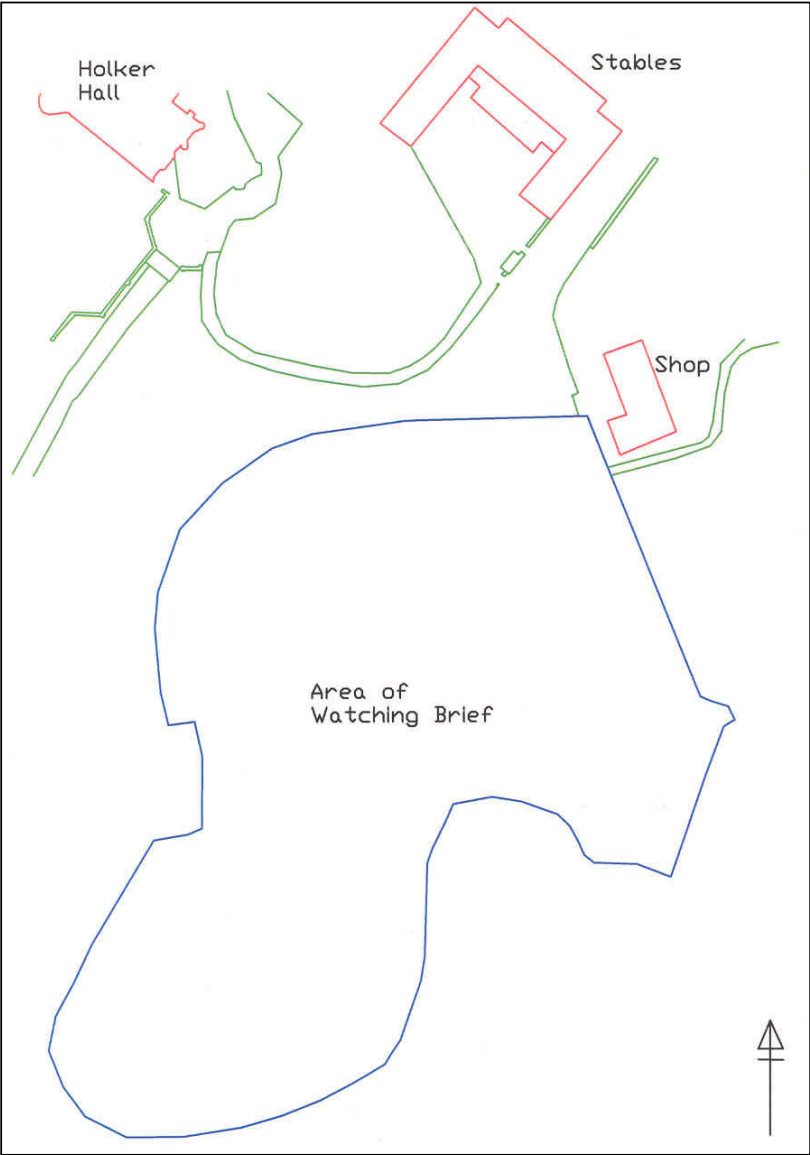


Figure 2: Site Plan. Scale: 1:1250

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 The work undertaken consisted of a rapid desk-based assessment, level 2 building survey and watching brief.

3.2 Rapid Desk-Based Assessment

3.2.1 This involved the consultation of the County Historic Environment Record in Kendal in the first instance, and the Holker Estate Archives. This included the assessment of all readily available primary and secondary documentary and cartographic material and all available aerial photographs, to achieve as fully an understanding as possible regarding the nature of the geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context of the site.

3.2.2 The desk-based assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (IFA 1994).

3.3 Building Survey

3.3.1 The survey corresponded to 'Level 2' (RCHME 1996) and consisted of three components:

- a written account, which includes information derived from documentary research;
- a measured survey with accompanying drawings;
- a photographic record.

3.4 Written Account

3.4.1 The written account is included in this document together with a selection of photographs, plans and appendix of documentary information.

3.5 Photographic Record

3.5.1 The photographic archive consists of the following:

- a series of 35mm black and white prints, which included general views of the exterior of the buildings, elevations and part elevations, along with specific external details (e.g. doorways);
- a series of 35mm colour prints showing general views of the exterior of the buildings and their setting;
- a series of 35mm transparencies showing general views of the buildings and their settings;
- a series of digital views of the exterior of the buildings, the interior of the buildings and specific internal details (e.g. roof structure) supplied on CD-Rom.

3.6 Watching Brief

3.6.1 The aims of the watching brief were as follows:

- to supervise all topsoil stripping and excavation for footings and/or service trenches and to clean and record any putative archaeological features and produce a stratigraphic record;
- to record archaeological deposits;
- to establish, wherever possible, the depth of archaeological remains;
- to establish, wherever possible, the condition of the remains;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to recover paleoenvironmental material where it survives.

3.7 Project Archive

3.7.1 The full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 2nd Ed. 1991). The archive will be deposited within an appropriate repository and a copy of the report given to the County Sites and Monuments Record, where viewing will be available on request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA 04 HOL-A.

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Place Name Evidence

- 4.1.1 The place name Holker derives from the Old Norse *Hol* and *kjarr*, and ‘means marsh with deep hollows’ (Lee 1998). The shoreline south of Holker still consists of marshland to this day, although much of the former marsh has been reclaimed since the 18th century.

4.2 Prehistoric

- 4.2.1 There has been a significant amount of prehistoric activity within the Cartmel Peninsula and surrounding landscape, although little is known regarding prehistoric settlement of the area. The earliest evidence for human activity was found at Kirkhead Cave (SMR 2415), east of Holker, where Upper Paleolithic (11,000 – 10,000 BC) remains were identified and a Late Mesolithic (10,000 – 4,000 BC) lithic assemblage was identified beneath a buried Bronze Age soil horizon at Levens (SMR 2650). There have been finds of prehistoric axes (Neolithic, 4000-2300 BC) and palstaves (Bronze Age, 2300 – 700 BC) within and close to the study area (SMR 2408, 2413, 2417, 2421, 2423, 2427, 2431, 3573, 4147, 4148, 4375, 15123) and a prehistoric stone hammer (4149) was found from Winder Moor during drainage works close to the town dyke. There are two barrows within close proximity of Flookburgh (SMR 2440, 2441) and two cremation cemeteries at Allithwaite (2442, 19756).

4.3 Roman

- 4.3.1 There is little evidence for Roman period activity within the Cartmel Peninsular. The remains of a possible Roman road outside Flookburgh (at Rack Lane and Flookburgh Bank) are visible as a bank and raised section of modern road on aerial photographs (SMR 5746). Three coins of Tetricus (270-273 AD), Victorinus (268-270 AD) and Valentinian (364-375 AD) were also found within the Cartmel area prior to 1872 (SMR 2418).

4.4 Medieval

- 4.4.1 There is no evidence for medieval or pre-medieval activity on the site of Holker Hall, however, the wider region has a long history dating to the early medieval period. The earliest evidence for Cartmel dates to 677, when the Northumbrian King Egfrid granted the newly conquered district to St Cuthbert, including “... the whole of the lands called Cartmel with all the Britons therein.” (VCH, 234). At the time of the Norman Conquest, the southern part of Cartmel was known as Kirkby, which had 6 ploughlands and was held by Duuan, where the remainder of the parish was part of the Hougun lordship of Earl Tostig (Ibid.).
- 4.4.2 In 1186, Henry II granted the manor (of Cartmel) to William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, who granted the whole territory of Cartmel to the Canons of Cartmel Priory (VCH, 264). There was a market held on Thursdays ‘somewhere within the parish’ at the time of William Marshal, as evidenced from pleadings of 1292, but there is little or no evidence whether it was maintained or not (Ibid.).

4.4.3 In 1508 the house at Canon or Chanon Winder was held of the Prior of Cartmel by the widow of John Kellet. The house is 16th century in origin, ‘with a very large chimney at the back’ (SMR 3336). Wraysholme Tower, east of Holker, is also a medieval construction, ‘the ruined home of the once powerful Harrington’s’ (Croston 1882, 83) and was described in 1882 as ‘an antiquated building with mullioned windows, now half buried in the ground, which in former times served as a granary for the storage of rich harvests gathered by the fraternity of Cartmel ... hence the name of Grange’ (Ibid.).

4.4.4 In 1536 a survey of the tithes collected by the Cartmel Priory included those collected at the tithe barns of Godderside, Flookburgh and Allithwaite (Croston 1883, 261).

4.5 Post-Medieval

4.5.1 Following the dissolution of the monasteries, the estate at Holker, owned by Cartmel Priory, was bought by the local Preston family. The first house at Holker is thought to date to the early 17th century, built by George Preston. The house was built on a new site outside the village, rather than on the site of a previous building. The house passed through marriage into the Lowther family from 1697, when most of the house was demolished and rebuilt according to the fashionable style of the time. In 1756 the house passed to the Cavendish family, and was held by George Augustus Cavendish, second son of the 3rd Duke of Devonshire. Cavendish added a new east wing which was completed between 1783-89, and prepared a design for a garden temple.

4.5.2 Much of the marshland to the south of the hall was reclaimed and improved by the late 18th century. At nearby Flookburgh, the 1796 Enclosure Act saw the enclosure and improvement of 8,000 acres of common land, roads and bridges were built and “... a long line of embankment was constructed to protect the marsh lands of Wyke, Bank Moor and Winder Moor.

4.5.3 Another large scale rebuild was undertaken in the 1840s, where the existing hall was rebuilt by the 7th Duke of Devonshire. The work was designed by George Webster of Kendal who also introduced substantial changes to the gardens, including a new kitchen garden, arboretum, a conservatory and fountain.

4.5.4 In the 1870s a fire destroyed the west wing, and much of the house was rebuilt by 1873, to a design by Paley and Austin of Lancaster, in an early 17th century Elizabethan-Jacobean hybrid style known as ‘Jacobethan’. The present house is essentially a mixture of the 1840s and 1870s houses.

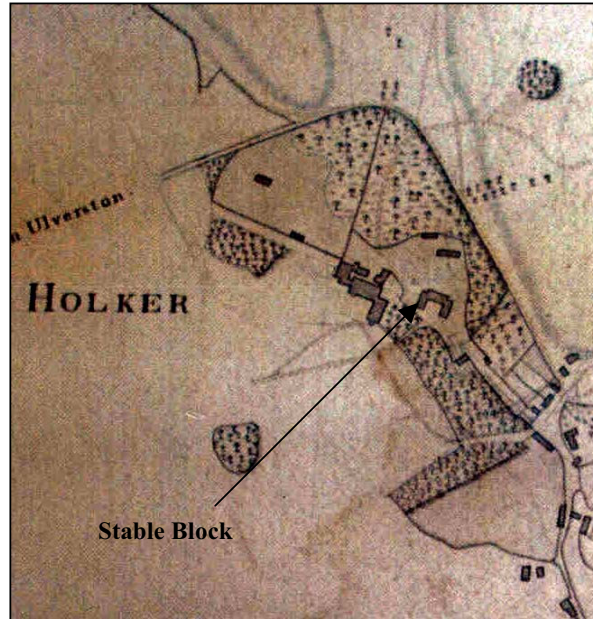


Figure 3. Extract from 1797 Plan of Holker Bank. Not to Scale.

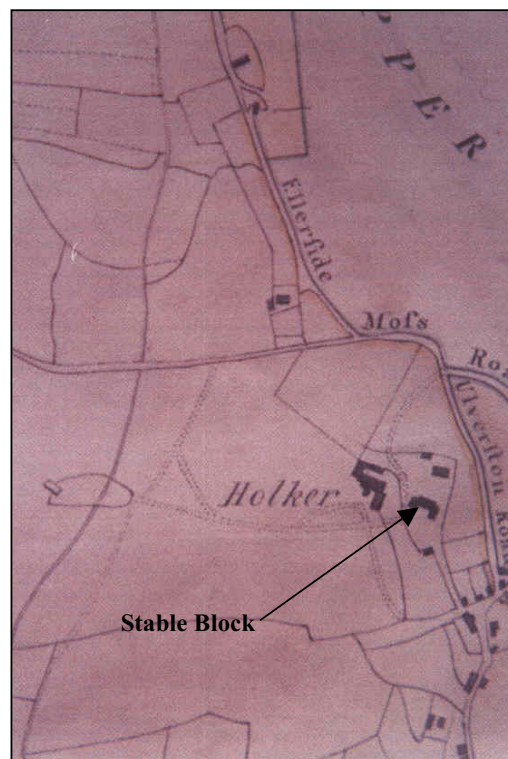


Figure 4. Enclosure map of 1807. Scale: Not to Scale.

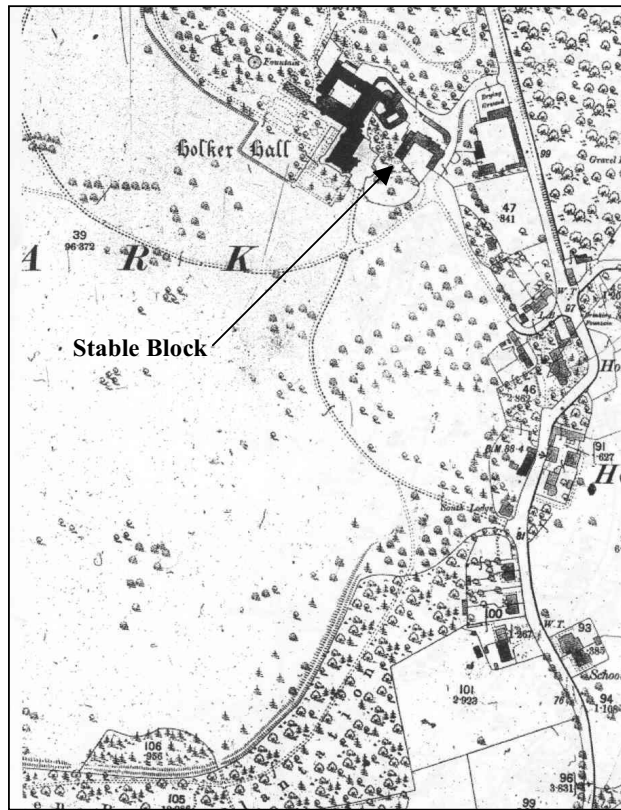


Figure 5. Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition (1889). Scale: 6 inch to 1 mile

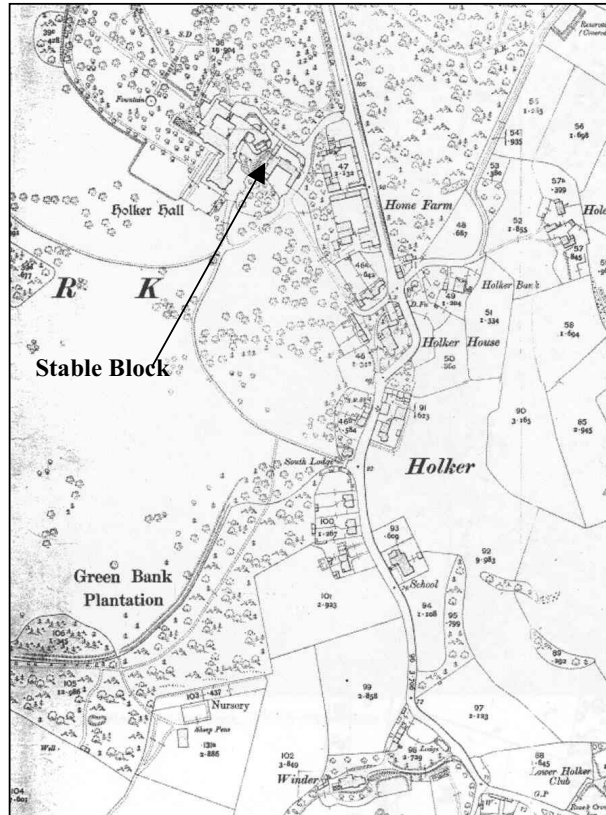


Figure 6. Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition (1913) Scale: 6 inch to 1 mile.

5 BUILDING SURVEY



Plate 1: The Stable Block, looking north. (Photo: C.Jones)

5.1 THE STABLE BLOCK

- 5.1.1 The buildings which form the subject of the present survey consist of three wings of buildings, around a central courtyard and comprised the former stable block, now used as a restaurant, shop, offices and residential units. The buildings are two storey and the focus of the range is a clock tower at the centre.
- 5.1.2 The stable block dates from 1864 and is a grade II listed building. The ranges appear to be of a single-phase construction around a courtyard approximately 30m², although several later 20th century alterations had been made, as the requirement for stabling on the estate declined. These alterations included the construction of several small extensions (see plate 2 and 8) and the infilling and alteration to several original windows (see plate 8, 12 and 13). The buildings are of rubble stone construction, with ashlar dressings, with a welsh slate low-pitched roof. The central range, with its open bell and clock tower, is the primary range with two flanking ranges.
- 5.1.3 The side wings have arched openings at ground floor level facing into the courtyard, with timber and glass infill to the restaurant, planar glazing to the shop and two timber doors to a store. The end gables have stone mullioned arch topped windows at first floor. The end bay of the northern side wing is single storey. The central gable has a single storey lobby at the junction of the wings each side, with a contemporary slate canopy between providing sheltered seating. The windows to the central wing are taller than those at the sides, with gablets over three of the five bays at first floor level.
- 5.1.4 The interiors of the range have been converted into a restaurant and foodhall. The alterations made have been sensitive to the architectural character of the building, as well as its historical association with the hall. To the rear, a number of blocked up apertures betray its former use as stables, opposite which is an ancillary block of former horse-bays, now converted into storage units.

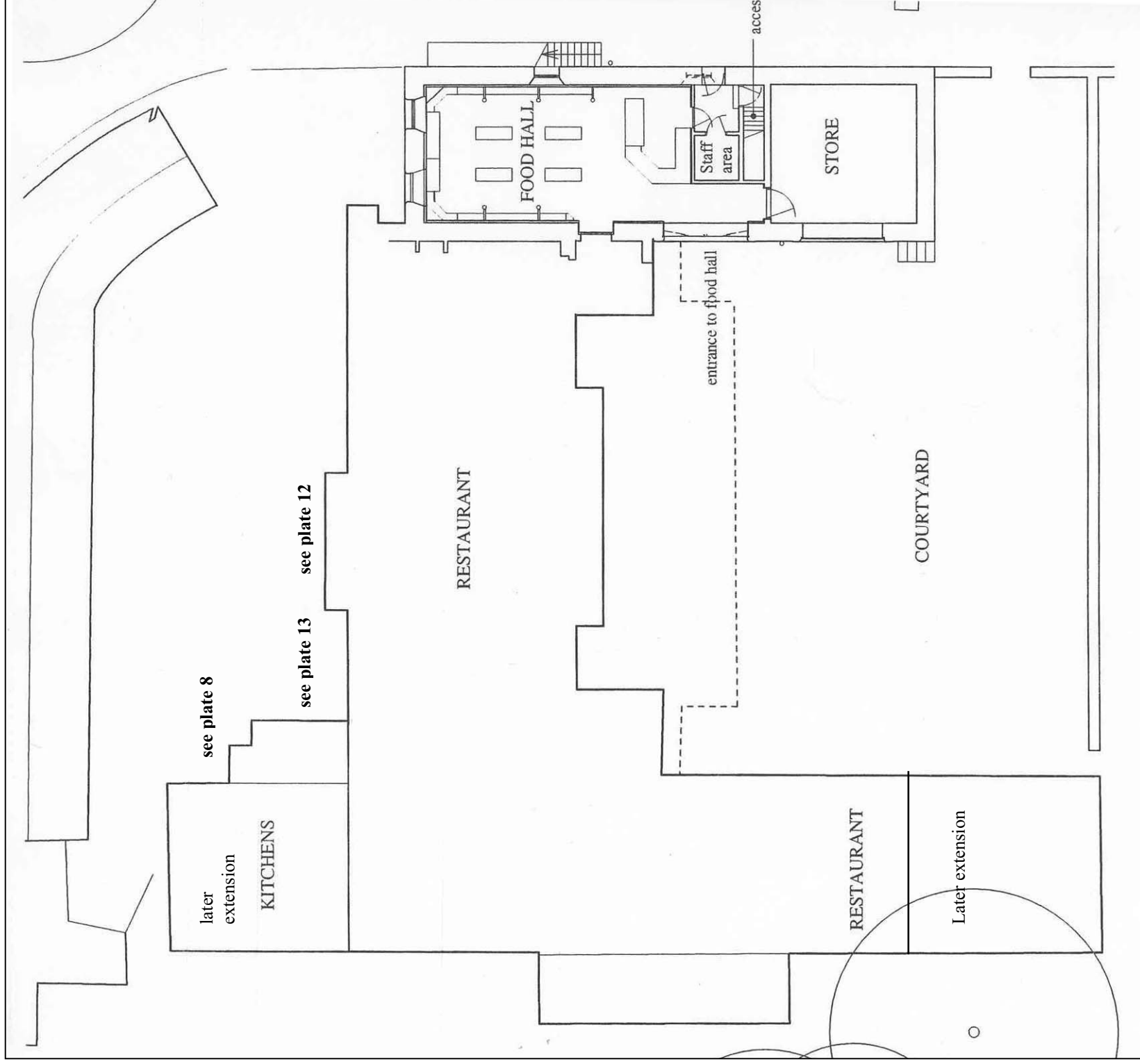


Figure 7: The Stable Block: General Site Plan. Scale: 1:200

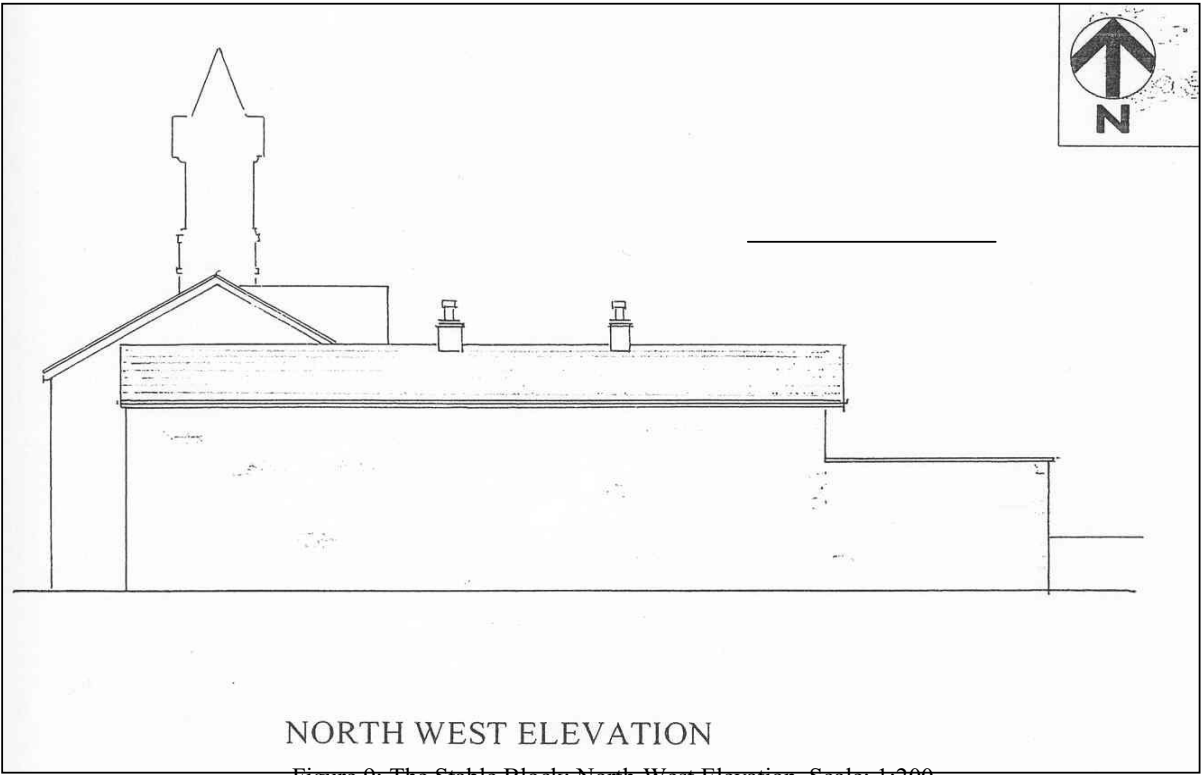




Plate 2: Later extension to the Stable Block: Internal Elevation looking North-West



Plate 3: Detail of straight joint between later extension and primary Stable Block: Internal elevation looking North-W

Client

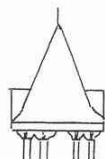


Figure 10: The Stable Block: Internal Elevation looking South-East. Scale: 1:200

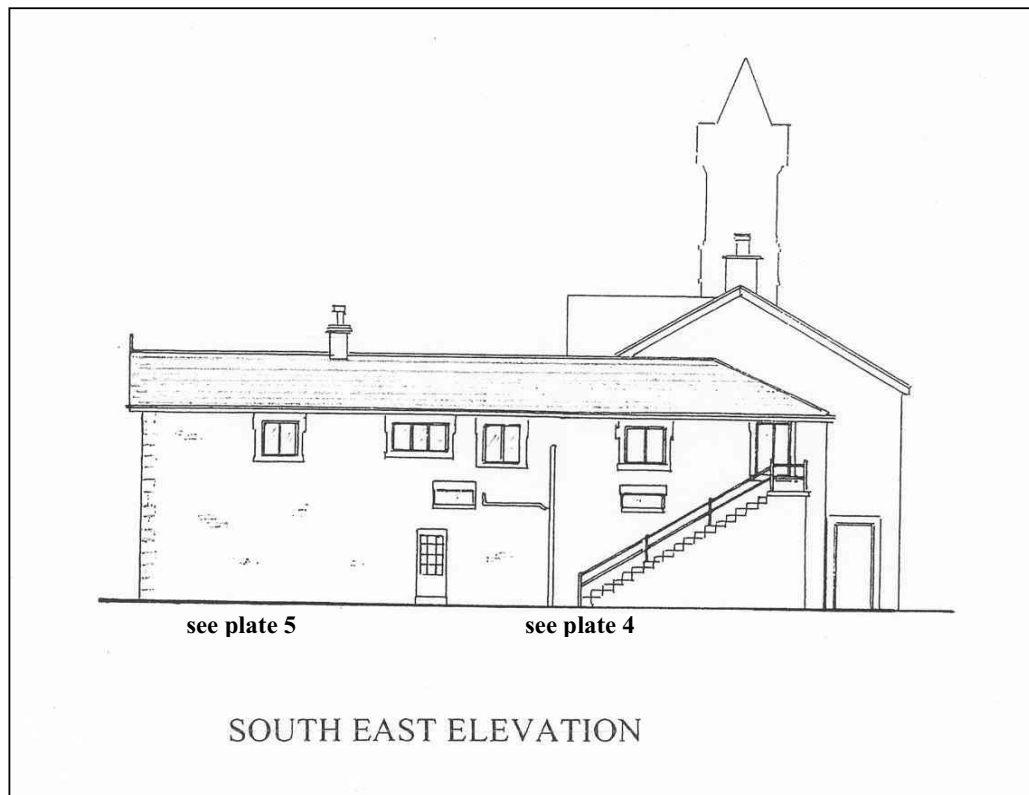


Figure 11: The Stable Block: South-East Elevation. Scale: 1:200



Plate 4: The Stable Block: South-East Elevation



Plate 5: The Stable Block: South-East Elevation (southern end)



Plate 6: The Stable Block: Southern gable end of eastern range



Plate 7:View of the Eastern range, taken from the south east



Plate 8: North west corner of main northern range.



Plate 9: Detail of door surround .

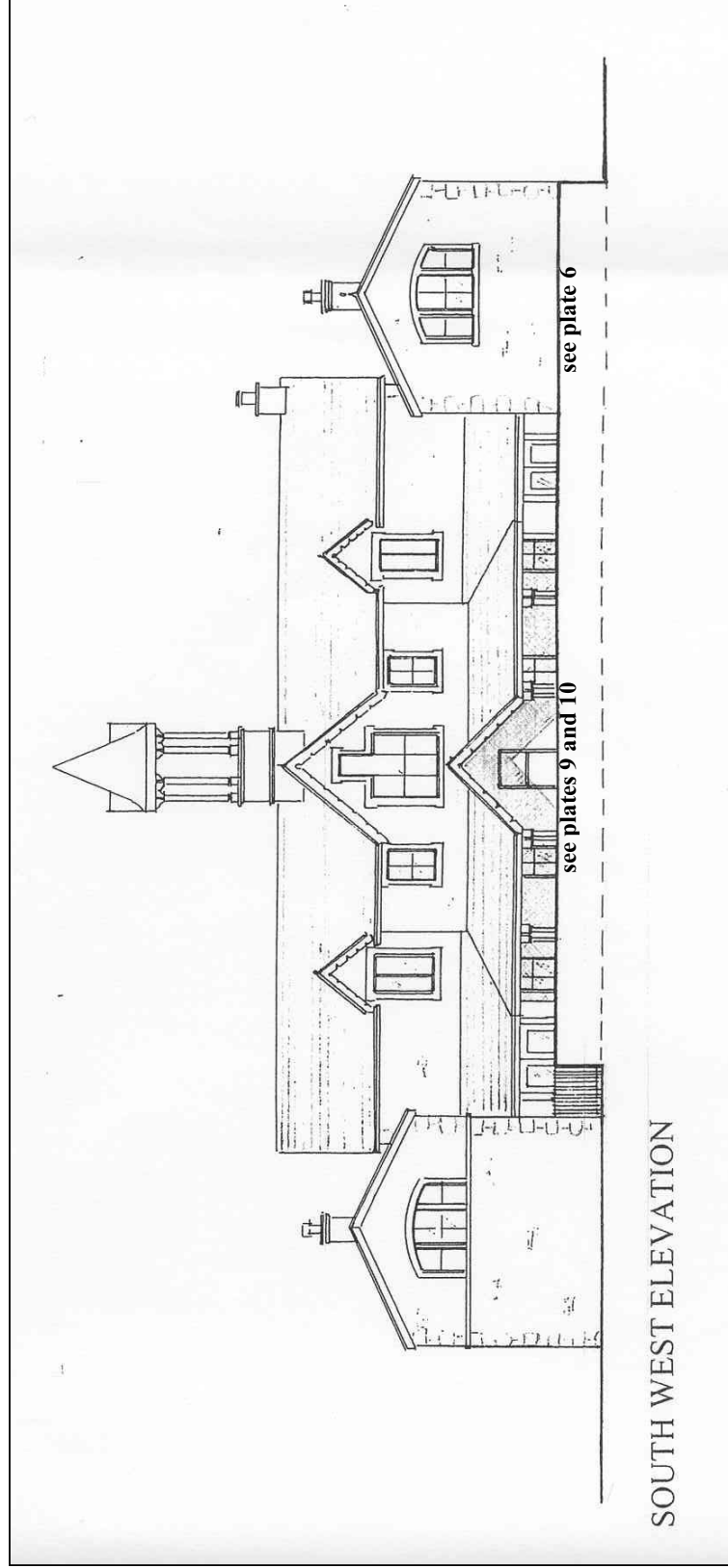


Figure 12: The Stable Block: South-West Elevation. Scale: 1:200



Plate 10: The

Bay of the South-West Elevation

Stable Block: Central



Plate 11: The Stable Block: General View of the South-West Elevation



Plate 12: View of central bay of north facing elevation of central range, illustrating reduction in size of window



Plate 13: View of western bay of north facing elevation of central range, again illustrating later reduction in size of window

6 WATCHING BRIEF

- 6.1 The watching brief was maintained for a total of 8 days by Chris Jones BA, MA, AIFA and Ken Denham BA. This consisted of the monitoring of all groundworks associated with the redevelopment of the car park. These works consisted of a topsoil strip and ground reduction of areas presently within parkland and the excavation of drainage trenches.
- 6.2 The earliest recorded deposit consisted of a mixed gravelly sand (101), which was observed at a depth of 0.30m – 0.50m below current ground level. This was sealed by a thin loamy topsoil (101). No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief.



Plate 14: Section of service trench cut into natural (context 101).

7 THE FINDS

- 7.1 Finds recovered during the watching brief consisted entirely of late 19th and 20th century material, including fragments of blue and white transfer printed porcelain and vitrified stoneware. None of the finds were retained.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The first Holker Hall was built in the early 17th century, although the present hall dates primarily to the 19th century. The stable block dates to 1864 and consists of a series of ranges which appear to be of single-phase construction around a courtyard measuring approximately 30m² in area. Several alterations have been made to the fabric of the building, particularly as the requirement for horses on the estate declined. The buildings are of rubble stone construction, with ashlar dressings, with a slate low-pitched roof. The central range, with its open bell and clock tower, is the primary range with two flanking ranges.
- 8.2 There is no evidence of archaeological remains which predate the mid 19th century stable block from documentary sources, and no evidence was observed during the watching brief of construction works.

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c.1775 Survey of the Estate and Park
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Plate 15: General shot of site stripping, looking North-East. Photo C.Jones



Plate 16: General shot of site stripping, looking west. Photo: C.Jones



Plate 17: General Shot of drainage trenches, looking South-West. Photo: C.Jones



Plate 18: General Shot of drainage trenches, looking North. Photo: C.Jones