

Ashgrove Farm Ardley Oxfordshire



**Historic Building Recording
and Investigation**

oxfordarchaeology



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Prepared by: Angela Warner
Position: Buildings Archaeologist

Checked by: Jonathan Gill
Position: Project Manager (Historic Buildings)

Approved by: Julian Munby Signed.....
Position: Head of Historic Buildings
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Illustrated by: Markus Dylewski

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Oxford Archaeology

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

e: oasouth@oxfordarch.co.uk

f: (0044) 01865 793496

w: www.thehumanjourney.net

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Ashgrove Farm, Ardley, Oxfordshire

Historic Building Recording and Investigation

Table of Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	2
1.1 Background.....	2
1.2 Aims and objectives.....	2
1.3 Methodology.....	2
2 Historical background	2
2.1 Ardley.....	2
2.2 Ashgrove Farm.....	3
3 General Description	4
3.1 Ashgrove Farm.....	4
4 Open barn 'Barn 1'	5
4.1 General description.....	5
5 Workshop Building 'Barn 2'	5
5.1 External description.....	5
5.2 Internal description.....	6
6 Threshing Barn 'Barn 3'	9
6.1 External description.....	9
6.2 Internal description.....	10
7 Stables 'Barn 4 & Barn 5'	10
7.1 External and General description.....	10
7.2 Internal description.....	10
8 Conclusion	13
Appendix A. Bibliography	14
Appendix B. Listed Building Description	15
Appendix C. Excerpts from the Sale Catalogue Description	16

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Davis Map, 1797

Figure 3: Tithe Map, 1839

Figure 4: Plan associated with the Sale Catalogue, 1894

Figure 5: Barn Numbering Convention

Figure 6: Barn 2, ground floor

Figure 7: Barn 2, first floor

Figure 8: Barn 3

Figure 9: Barns 4 & 5

List of Plates

Plate 1: Main farmhouse building; south elevation

Plate 2: Farmhouse building; detail of first floor addition and pitching door; north elevation

Plate 3: Stable or loosebox to the west of the threshing barn; south elevation

Plate 4: Stable or loosebox to the west of the threshing barn; north elevation

Plate 5: Black barn and modern building to the far eastern end of the site; looking east

Plate 6: Modern building to the far eastern end of the site; north elevation

Plate 7: Silo bases and the bases of removed modern buildings; looking west

Plate 8: Barn 1; north elevation

Plate 9: Barn 1 rear wall; view from cowsheds looking north

Plate 10: Barn 2; north and west elevations

Plate 11: Barn 2; south elevation

Plate 12: Barn 2; west elevation

Plate 13: Barn 2; east elevation

Plate 14: Barn 2; east end of north elevation

Plate 15: Barn 2; central passageway looking east

Plate 16: Barn 2; dividing wall between Shepherd's Granary and void over passageway

Plate 17: Barn 2; Roof truss in Modern Carpenter's Workshop

Plate 18: Barn 2; Roof truss in the General Workshop

Plate 19: Barn 2; fireplace in the Warming Room

Plate 20: Barn 2; Warming Room window

Plate 21: Barn 2; Farrier's Workshop

Plate 22: Barn 2; General Workshop showing blocking of large opening

Plate 23: Barn 2; Oil Drum Store

Plate 24: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, ground floor looking east

Plate 25: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, ground floor looking west

- Plate 26: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, first floor looking east
- Plate 27: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, first floor looking west
- Plate 28: Barn 2; Mill House steps and landing looking west
- Plate 29: Barn 2; drive machinery between the Mill House and Passageway
- Plate 30: Barn 3; south elevation
- Plate 31: Barn 3; north elevation
- Plate 32: Barn 3; east elevation
- Plate 33: Barn 3; blocked doorway in the south wall
- Plate 34: Barn 3; opening for modern machinery in the north wall
- Plate 35: Barn 3; Pigsties to the south of the threshing barn looking west
- Plate 36: Barn 3; Pigsties and associated building looking south west
- Plate 37: Barn 3; truss
- Plate 38: Barn 3; stopped chamfered tie-beam
- Plate 39: Barn 3; threshing floor and storage bay floor looking north east
- Plate 40: Barn 5; south elevation looking north east
- Plate 41: Barn 5; east and north elevations looking south west
- Plate 42: Barns 4 & 5; join between the block and the farmhouse on the north elevation
- Plate 43: Barns 4 & 5; join between the block and the farmhouse on the south elevation
- Plate 44: Barn 5; truss
- Plate 45: Barn 5; manger and hayrack along south wall in the Easternmost Stable/Loosebox
- Plate 46: Barn 5; Tackroom
- Plate 47: Barn 5; Partition dividing the Easternmost and Central Stable/Loosebox
- Plate 48: Barn 5; Central Stable/Loosebox showing makeshift stalls
- Plate 49: Barn 5; Central Stable/Loosebox floor detail
- Plate 50: Barn 4 & 5; Partition of Store at west end of Barn 5 and Large Store of Barn 4
- Plate 51: Barn 4; General Shot looking west



Ashgrove Farm, Ardley, Oxfordshire

Summary

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned to record Ashgrove Farm as it stood in March 2014, ahead of the proposed conversion of several of the agricultural buildings to domestic use, including the demolition of some of the twentieth-century agricultural buildings.

Ashgrove Farm is a fairly small farm, set roughly around a farmyard. The current range of buildings date from the early-mid eighteenth century to the mid twentieth century and briefly consist of limestone threshing barn, pigsties, stables and looseboxes, modern open barns and a brick built early-mid Victorian farmhouse.

The early-mid eighteenth century threshing barn, listed as Grade II in 1988, lacks its original roof covering and barn doors, but retains the roof trusses and brick threshing floor.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In March 2014 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Mrs Rebecca Pickford to undertake a programme of historic building investigation and recording on a number of agricultural structures at Ashgrove Farm, Ardley, Oxfordshire.
- 1.1.2 The buildings included in the study, and those associated structures not included in the planning application, are currently in use as agricultural buildings, workshops and storerooms. It is intended to convert and extend five of the buildings for use as dwellings, with demolition of several of the 20th-century buildings.
- 1.1.3 The threshing barn, referred to in the architectural plans as 'Barn 3', is Grade II Listed.

1.2 Aims and objectives

- 1.2.1 The principal aims of the current work have been:
- To help meet the requirements of Condition 19 of the planning permission;
 - to investigate and record for posterity the areas of the building which will be impacted by the proposed works;
 - to enhance understanding of the nature of the structures;
 - to make the record publicly accessible through a report (a public document) and a project archive deposited with a public institution.

1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 The recording covered five buildings at Ashgrove Farm: the Grade II Listed barn, the open barn, a stable block latterly considered as two 'barns' and a multi-purpose building currently in use as workshops and storage.
- 1.3.2 Architect's drawings supporting the planning application were made available to OA. These drawings were used as a basis for the archaeological recording; locations of features being verified and the addition of further annotations for the purpose of phasing.
- 1.3.3 The work also included photographic and descriptive recording of each of the buildings to explain or interpret them in terms of their construction, history, structural form, development and use.
- 1.3.4 It should be noted that the convention of using the building alignment in the architect's drawings to assume a 'site north' (approximately north-north east) has been followed here in all descriptions.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Ardley

- 2.1.1 Ardley village belongs to the Civil Parish of Ardley with Fewcott, close to the border with Northamptonshire, and lies roughly between the towns of Bicester and Brackley. It is adjacent to the turnpike road between Oxford and Northampton. The church lies to the

far south east of the village centre with the earthworks of a reputed anarchy castle adjacent.

2.1.2 Ashgrove Farm is located approximately one mile south of the main settlement; a limestone quarry lies immediately to the east of the farm (Fig 1).

2.1.3 The area sits directly onto the Jurassic white limestone formation, with no superficial deposits recorded by the British Geological Survey. A palaeochannel immediately to the west of the site records sand and gravel-containing alluvial deposits.

2.2 Ashgrove Farm

2.2.1 The Davis Map of 1797 (Fig 2) shows two parallel ranges of buildings running approximately north east-south west. It can only be assumed that this may have been intended to only represent the presence of buildings on the site, as this does not reflect the layout or alignment of the buildings likely to have been present in 1797.

2.2.2 Two maps available online: the Ordnance Survey *Banbury Union Map, 1803* and the British Library's *William Stanley's Map of Bicester, 1815* both refer to the farm shown in this location on the respective maps as 'Simcox Farm', with 'Ashgrove Farm' nearer to Ardley in the case of the 1803 map, however, no documents available at the Oxfordshire Record Office refer to this, nor does the Sale Catalogue of 1894; coupled with the layout of the buildings not appearing to correlate with the location of the threshing barn, it has not been taken into account for this study. Further research may be considered to clarify this information.

2.2.3 The Tithe Map of 1839 (Fig 3) is the earliest map available which shows the farm in detail; the threshing barn is clearly shown with the adjoining later stable or loosebox building to its western end. It can also be noted that the pigsties at the south of the threshing barn are not yet built. 'Barn 2', that which now contains the workshops, is also notable by its absence.

2.2.4 Two model cottages were built to the north of the entrance from the road in 1870, but are not included in this study.

2.2.5 The Duke of Marlborough sold the farm in 1894, and it was sold within a couple of decades to the Pickford family who still own it.

2.2.6 The map associated with the Sale Catalogue of 1894 (Fig 4) shows clearly the addition of 'Barn 2' and also the extension of the range of farmhouse buildings to create the stables now referred to as 'Barn 4' and 'Barn 5'. It also shows that the farmhouse has undergone some alteration in this period, namely the addition of the building which forms the main farmhouse and the smaller outhouses.

2.2.7 The Ordnance Survey maps indicate few changes until the mid twentieth century with the construction of the modern agricultural buildings which are now present or have been recently demolished.



3 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

3.1 Ashgrove Farm

- 3.1.1 The farm currently consists of an early-mid Victorian farmhouse, built onto an earlier range of brick buildings. This and the traditional earlier farm buildings are roughly grouped around a farmyard, and have been supplemented by several mid-late twentieth-century agricultural buildings which almost obscure the presence of the farmyard.
- 3.1.2 Several buildings have not been included in the study, but should be mentioned in the wider context of the farm: the *Farmhouse* and associated outhouse are the only brick buildings on the site. The farmhouse comprises two main phases: the 'L' shaped building which appears on the tithe map of 1839, and the early-mid Victorian house (Pl. 1) which is seen on the plan associated with the Sale Catalogue of 1894.
- 3.1.3 The east-west earlier range of buildings are now in domestic use, but would have housed the domestic brewhouse, water pumps, coal sheds etc. listed in the Sale Catalogue. This range has undergone several schemes of alteration, the most extensive being the addition of a first floor which includes a pitching door, although being in such close proximity to the farmhouse was more likely to have been for hauling goods up to the first floor for secure storage (Pl. 2).
- 3.1.4 The later farmhouse evolved from the corner of the 'L' shaped building, although the current brickwork indicates that this was a wholesale rebuilding, rather than simply storeys being added to the existing. The farmhouse briefly consists of three storeys, with the second floor consisting of attic rooms with two gabled dormer windows to the front elevation and four others across the rest of the building. It has twelved-paned sash windows and a fairly large three-sided front entrance porch. There is a blocked window to the rear and a small extension to the east, itself with a blocked door, but overall the house seems little altered externally.
- 3.1.5 The *stable or loosebox* abutting the north-west corner of the threshing barn is not part of this study and was not accessed (Pl. 3). It has doors and windows to both north and south elevations with no internal access to the barn (Pl. 4). A considerable area of rebuilding was observed in the south east corner of this building (Pl. 3); this is later than the rest of the building, abuts the threshing barn and is not reflected on the opposite side of the block and may represent blocking of a larger window or opening.
- 3.1.6 Several mid twentieth-century *agricultural buildings* not in this study are also present; the 'black barn' at the north of the site and the steel- and concrete-framed barns in the centre (Pl. 5 & 6) and to the east of the site appear on the maps during the mid twentieth century. Some modern barns and the silos had already been removed to the north of the threshing barn by the time of the survey (Pl. 7).
- 3.1.7 Staddle stones are located around the farmhouse and there is a threshing barn on site, however, no evidence remains at the current ground level or from documentary evidence to suggest a specific free-standing raised granary building. Although the Sale Catalogue of 1894 describes granaries located within the lofts of the surrounding buildings, it should be considered that a raised granary may have existed prior to the mid-late nineteenth-century additions, although these particular staddles are of several styles and could well be decorative garden items.



- 3.1.8 The 'Barn' numbers as follows use the conventions in the architect's drawings of the proposed scheme (Fig 5).

4 OPEN BARN 'BARN 1'

4.1 General description

- 4.1.1 The most modern of the structures in the scope of the study, the Open Barn is a typical mid-late twentieth-century steel-framed structure aligned approximately east-west. Being 6 bays in size, it is open to the front (north elevation) and currently used to store plant and machinery (Pl. 8).
- 4.1.2 The roof is clad with corrugated sheeting, probably of asbestos cement, with occasional clear plastic corrugated sheets to form roof-lights. The floor of the barn appears to consist of rammed earth.
- 4.1.3 The structure is supported at the rear (its south wall) by the coursed limestone wall which forms the dividing wall to the adjacent modern open cow barn to the south (Pl. 9).
- 4.1.4 The western end of the barn is formed by the gable of Barn 2, which is discussed later.
- 4.1.5 The east end of the barn consists of concrete blocks to approximately 1.5m with the remainder of the frame clad with corrugated sheeting to the apex.
- 4.1.6 A building is shown on the maps of 1839 and 1894 in this location and it should be considered that the limestone wall at the rear of the structure is the remainder of this building.

5 WORKSHOP BUILDING 'BARN 2'

5.1 External description

- 5.1.1 Barn 2 (Figs 6&7) is the most grand of the agricultural buildings (Pl. 10). Appearing at a point between the Tithe Map of 1839 and the Sale Catalogue plan of 1894, the walls are of irregular coursed limestone with rusticated limestone quoins with matching dressings to the original external doors, windows and openings.
- 5.1.2 The original front elevation to the south is now virtually obscured by the modern cow sheds and the doors and first floor windows have been blocked at different times (Pl.11).
- 5.1.3 The north elevation originally contained two open-fronted workshops, one of which is now blocked, and a warming room accessed directly from this side of the building. The interiors of which are discussed in the next section.
- 5.1.4 The west elevation (Pl. 12) features a modern externally mounted rolling steel door to a large opening below a timber lintel with a simple stone arch above: as the infill below the arch to the top of the lintel is consistent with the surrounding stonework, it can be assumed that the arch is for weight distribution and therefore structural rather than a former arched opening. The window to the left of the door, to the warming room, has been boarded over, but the frame survives beneath. To the right of the door is a pitching door at second storey level, although this has been replaced with a modern glazed door.



- 5.1.5 The east elevation is partially obscured by the cow sheds, but appears to lack windows and doors other than the large opening, originally as per the opposite end of the building, but now partially blocked with modern aerated concrete blocks and a secondary timber lintel. The new access door and frame are of modern steel. This work was carried out within the previous decade by the current staff¹. As per the opposite elevation, the arch above the original opening appears to be structural rather than to create extra height (Pl. 13).
- 5.1.6 The 'catslide' of the roof is due to the northernmost rooms consisting of a side aisle, contemporary with the rest of the building. The roof is now covered with new corrugated metal sheeting, but was originally slate, as noted in the Sale Catalogue description; one of the original slates survives as a tally board in the former farrier's shop².
- 5.1.7 The windows are a metre wide, splayed to the internal face, and were originally wooden-framed horizontally sliding sashes, with each sash having eight panes. Many windows have been replaced with frames reclaimed from elsewhere, detailed particularly in the section on the general workshop. Many of the replacements are of Crittall-style metal framed windows; these were common in the mid twentieth century and may be indicative of a scheme of replacement around the time when the farm was expanded with the addition of the modern agricultural buildings (Pl. 14).

5.2 Internal description

- 5.2.1 Internally, the building consists of a variety of workshops accessed internally and/or externally, surrounding a central passageway. The passageway is floored with rammed earth to the easternmost end, where it is open to the roof, and with modern concrete to the westernmost end, where the joists for the floor of the workshop above form the ceiling. This end also contains a modern inspection pit covered with timber, built within the last decade³ (Pl. 15).
- 5.2.2 As previously discussed, the rooms to the north side of the building are constructed as an aisle to the rest of the building and are divided up into a total of six bays and are all single storey, open to the rafters, with the passageway and southernmost rooms divided into eight bays and being of two storeys.
- 5.2.3 The internal walls are of coursed limestone rubble and are uniformly 46 cm thick.
- 5.2.4 The two two-storey compartments to the south side of the building are divided just to the east of the second truss from the east. The wall is constructed from roughly coursed limestone rubble to a height of approximately 2m with brick, in a Flemish garden wall bond, to the remaining height to the apex (Pl. 16). All of this wall apart from the east elevation above the passageway is whitewashed or emulsioned. It is clear from the butt-joint to the limestone walls that the partition wall is later, although it was present by 1894 as the two compartments are clearly described.
- 5.2.5 The roof trusses are of king post construction with through purlins of timber poles. The mortice and tenon joints to the braces are occasionally visible where timbers have been

1 After personal communication with staff on site.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.



removed, with the tie-beam and king post being bolted together (Pl. 17). The rafters and ridge piece appear to be original, however, they are only visible in the Shepherd's Granary where there is no light source. Any original battens have been removed.

- 5.2.6 The roof timbers to the aisled rooms are simply braced between the rafter and the joint of the beam and wall (Pl. 18).
- 5.2.7 The roof timbers are of machine-sawn timber, and do not show signs of reuse other than alteration in-situ according to the changes in use of the rooms.
- 5.2.8 No carpenter's marks or other markings were noted in any of the timbers, however, some rooms lacked a light source and so inspection by torchlight was carried out as far as feasible.
- 5.2.9 Accessed only from the external door at the west end of the north elevation, the **Warming Room** and tool store is possibly the room described in the Sale Catalogue as the 'Coal House and Implement Shed', the later brick fireplace marks an alteration of use, probably as the warming room for workers or customers of the farrier next door, requiring no access to the main building (Pl. 19).
- 5.2.10 The one-bay warming room retains a very small timber mezzanine and shelves which are still used for tool storage. The room is accessed by a later ledged door, but retains a window, boarded externally (Pl. 20). Probably an early replacement due to the extra timber packing around it, the window currently consists of one fixed light and one opening casement, with 12 rectangular leaded panes in each, although a central glazing bar in the fixed light may indicate an earlier glazing scheme. Internally, the window is splayed and below a timber lintel.
- 5.2.11 The one-bay **Farrier's Workshop** is open to the north elevation, although with a run of short vertical planks below the eaves. All that remains of any fixtures or fittings is the brick flue, even the limestone flag floor has since been removed (Pl. 21).
- 5.2.12 The current **General Workshop** was formerly the Blacksmith's Shop described in the Sale Catalogue. Originally, this three-bay room was open to the north elevation, as per the Farrier's Workshop, however, it was blocked approximately thirty years ago by the current staff to form a workshop accessible only from the central passageway⁴ (Pl. 22). The large opening was below a long timber lintel and has been blocked with brick internally with an outer skin of coursed limestone similar to the external walls. The two windows at either end of the wall of the room are original, and the two windows in the blocked area are reclaimed Crittal-style, metal framed, eight paned windows with two opening casements of three and one pane respectively, and match the oil drum store window to the east end of the elevation.
- 5.2.13 The floor in the General Workshop has since been laid in modern concrete and various benches and fittings, including a home-made wood burning stove have been added. There are no signs of surviving features of the Blacksmith's Shop.
- 5.2.14 The current **Oil Drum Store** is by process of elimination, the Carpenter's Workshop mentioned in the Sale Catalogue. A small, one bay room with a simple ledged door leading to the room from the main passageway, the floor is of rammed earth and the

4 Ibid.



- window is a later replacement which matches the reclaimed windows used in the General Workshop, as described previously (Pl. 23).
- 5.2.15 To the south of the passageway, the building is split into two two-storey compartments: the westernmost of six bays and the easternmost of two bays with a brick wall dividing the compartments.
- 5.2.16 **Modern Carpenter's Workshop.** The presence of the pitching door in the upper floor, indicates the six-bay, two-storey compartment is probably the 'chaff house with straw loft over' mentioned in the Sale Catalogue, however, little survives of the original features or layout of these rooms with the exception of the former landing platform at the east end of the ground floor, and this has been re-floored with modern board (Pl. 24). The current dog leg staircase and opening is modern, built within the last couple of decades, and both storeys have been re-floored in chipboard.
- 5.2.17 The ground floor of the compartment has a false floor of chip board, presumably over joists laid onto the original earth floor. The aforementioned platform at the east end of the room spans the width of the room, between the north and south walls, and extends 1.8m out from the east wall. It has been re-covered in modern chipboard and only one support remains, exposing the mortices for the missing supports.
- 5.2.18 The original external doorway has been blocked using concrete blocks to the internal face, but limestone to the external face.
- 5.2.19 The only remaining doorway, to the passageway, is a simple ledged door with a circular recessed latch.
- 5.2.20 The modern staircase, as described, leads to the upper storey (Pl. 25).
- 5.2.21 The upper storey of the compartment consists of coursed limestone rubble walls to the three external walls, with brick to the partition wall to the east. The walls have been roughly plastered up to a height of c 1.2m, with the exception of the south eastern corner between the blocked window and blocked door, indicating the location of the former stairway, as the landing is immediately below in the ground floor room. This was either to provide protection to the straw originally stored here, or to protect the walls from the actions of the later function of the room (Pl. 26).
- 5.2.22 The upper storey contains a blocked window in the south wall. From the external elevation and the materials used, it is apparent that this was blocked when the cow sheds were constructed in the third quarter of the 20th century.
- 5.2.23 The west wall contains a pitching door, now with a modern glazed door (Pl. 27).
- 5.2.24 The two-bay easternmost compartment is the **Mill House**, with the room above described in the Sale Catalogue as the **Shepherd's Granary**.
- 5.2.25 The original steps survive, and the timber landing at the western end of the room also supports a small hopper and mill wheel above and the associated machinery below (Pl. 28), still connected to the drive belt and wheels in the passageway adjacent (Pl. 29).



- 5.2.26 Both storeys contain blocked doors and windows to the south elevation as per the previous set of rooms. The upper storey also contains a former pitching door to the east elevation; partially blocked using limestone rubble to form a window, the remaining opening has now been obscured by the vertical boarding of the cow sheds adjacent. Another doorway, probably for hauling grain, overlooks the passageway in the north east corner of the room (Pl. 16). A simple ledged door hangs here and a similar styled door hangs on the doorway below to the passageway.
- 5.2.27 The partition wall to the adjacent compartment is of brick as previously described. A wall dividing the upper room from the passageway void is constructed from roughly coursed limestone rubble to approximately 2.5m, with the remaining height to the apex being of brick. Whitewash to each face obscures any difference in age and so it is not apparent whether the brick is a later addition or a contemporary necessity due to availability of materials or concerns about weight.

6 THRESHING BARN 'BARN 3'

6.1 External description

- 6.1.1 The only listed building on the site, and the earliest surviving building on the farm, the threshing barn (Fig 8) had its original slate roof covering removed and replaced with corrugated sheeting, now much degraded, at some point before its Listing in 1988 (Appendix B) (Pl. 30).
- 6.1.2 The original barn doors have been replaced with steel doors.
- 6.1.3 Much of the exterior is obscured by the adjoining buildings, particularly the north and south elevations (Pl. 31); only the east elevation is free of obstruction (Pl. 32). The walls are of coursed limestone rubble with triangular vents or owl holes at the top of the gable at each end.
- 6.1.4 The barn is of six bays, with the full-height opposed door openings in bay three with timber lintels over.
- 6.1.5 A later wooden frame remains in the opposed doorways, reused for the steel doors to the north and superseded by the double roller-doors to the south. There are later-inserted doors in each end of the building, a ledge and braced door to the west end and a cut-down, four-panelled Victorian domestic latched door to the east. An opening has been inserted at the west end of the south wall and a blocked doorway under a timber lintel is in the south wall of bay five (Pl. 33). A pitching door is in the east gable
- 6.1.6 In addition to the doorways, later openings have been inserted for the modern machinery: a pipe, presumably a flue, has been inserted within a rectangular opening in the south end of the west wall and two openings have been created at the west end of the north wall for the freestanding machinery which is still in situ (Pl. 34).
- 6.1.7 The four *Pigsties* abut the south-east of the threshing barn and are of coursed limestone, with bricks to each corner and doorway to provide protection from rubbing by the animals. The walls are capped with vitrified coping stones with occasional stone copings, particularly as corner pieces. The low roofs are slate covered (Pl. 35).



- 6.1.8 To the south end of the run of pigsties is a small square building contemporary with the sties. It was not accessed internally, but is probably the boiling house mentioned in the Sale Catalogue (Pl. 36).
- 6.1.9 Four modern attached buildings of concrete block, timber and corrugated sheeting have not been individually recorded.

6.2 Internal description

- 6.2.1 The simple roof trusses consist of a stopped chamfered tie beam with a collar binding the principal rafters at the level of the uppermost of the two rows of butt purlins, which are of fairly roughly shaped timber. No carpenter's marks were observed and additional collars have been added for strength to some trusses (Pl. 37 & 38). Some battening is present in small areas and so the common rafters may be may be original, or at least early, however, observing from floor level was difficult and so closer inspection may be worthwhile.
- 6.2.2 The threshing floor and storage bays are laid to brick; the threshing bay brick (220mm x 70mm) is earlier, indicated mainly by wear, and the storage bay brick (220mm x 108mm) laid at a later time (Pl. 39).

7 STABLES 'BARN 4 & BARN 5'

7.1 External and General description

- 7.1.1 The stable block to the south of the site (Fig 9) is not present on the 1839 Tithe Map, but by the sale of 1894 it is shown, butting up to the earlier brick range attached to the farmhouse. Externally, the block has undergone little structural alteration, however, the north pitch of the roof has lost its original slates which have been replaced with corrugated sheeting, and most of the original windows and doors have been lost or replaced.
- 7.1.2 There are no features to the south wall other than terracotta vents with circular sets of piercings (Pl. 40). There are no features to the east gable end (Pl. 41).
- 7.1.3 The walls are of irregularly coursed limestone with limestone quoins and window and door dressings to match Barn 2.
- 7.1.4 The west end of the range meets the brick range of the farmhouse with a door and weather boarding to the north elevation (Pl. 42) and a curved limestone return to the south elevation (Pl. 43).
- 7.1.5 Although the range is referred to in the planning documents as two barns, this description covers the original configuration.
- 7.1.6 The Sale Catalogue descriptions detail more than one stable block and so the rooms are described according to their location as well as current useage.

7.2 Internal description

- 7.2.1 The roof construction is of machine sawn timber, with no carpenter's marks apparent. The trusses include iron bars as king posts, bolted between the tie and ridge beams. Struts sit



between the principal rafter and tie beam (Pl. 44). Through purlins support the common rafters, but the battens do not survive as the slates to the south pitch have been refitted, or replaced like for like, and a layer of felt obscures any view between the rafters.

- 7.2.2 The arrangement of the internal doors provides a feeding and manure passage along the north side of the block, with the manger and racking along the south wall, requiring the cattle to be fed from behind (Pl. 45). The passage includes access to the single bays at each end of the building which are divided from the rest by means of a coursed limestone rubble wall.
- 7.2.3 Beginning at the east end of the building, albeit 'Barn 5', the first single-bayed compartment is a **Tack Room** which has been abandoned as it was left since the horses were sold in the 1960s⁵. It was inaccessible during the survey, however, it could be seen that the partition wall with the adjoining stable was constructed of coursed limestone rubble to the apex (Pl. 46).
- 7.2.4 One six-paned sliding sash survives in the window frame, and a ledge and braced door hangs in the full-height door opening (Pl. 41).
- 7.2.5 The next three bays form the **Easternmost Stable or Loosebox** with the manger and hayrack surviving to the south wall, albeit with the hayrack removed in the central bay (Pl. 45). It may have been a loosebox, as it is currently, as no indication of partitions for stalls is visible on the wall or manger, however, access to the floor was not possible due to thick straw and manure, and this is the most likely place to display signs of a frame for the partitions.
- 7.2.6 The floor was obscured by deep, wet straw and manure, however, it appears to be cobbled as per the following stable.
- 7.2.7 There are two splayed window openings, to either side of the door opening, neither door nor windows remain, but the majority of the frames survive. It is unlikely that the windows would have been glazed due to the usage as stabling, and the door would most likely have recently been a two-piece stable door as per the majority of the building. A reused horseshoe is still attached to the door frame, having been used as a makeshift latch.
- 7.2.8 The partition wall to the tack room to the east is of coursed limestone rubble, as aforementioned, with a timber door to the northern edge.
- 7.2.9 The partition to the west consists of a timber frame clad with timber planks to tie-beam height. The planks have been worn smooth from years of contact with the horses or cows using the stable. A ledged door to tie-beam height is to the northern edge of the partition (Pl. 47).
- 7.2.10 The following three bays form the **Central Stable**. It is laid out identically to the easternmost stable, including the surviving manger and hayrack, although makeshift stalls have been created from modern plywood and steel posts (Pl. 48).

5 Ibid.



- 7.2.11 The floor is visible and consists of sub-rectangular cobbles laid north-south, with a drainage channel created from narrower cobbles along the front through passage and towards the door (Pl. 49).
- 7.2.12 The timber partition to the western end of the compartment has less signs of animal wear and so it may be concluded that this stable was laid out as stalls originally, allowing the animals less freedom to rub against the timber cladding.
- 7.2.13 The next single-bayed compartment to the west is currently a **Store Room**. No fixtures indicate its former use.
- 7.2.14 Modern ply and chip boarding has been attached to the truss up to the apex above the partition with the previous stable.
- 7.2.15 The floor is made up of pieces of broken flags over a thick mortar-based screed, mostly obscured by the stored items.
- 7.2.16 One window and ledge and braced stable door, as per others in the range, are present.
- 7.2.17 A timber partition as per the previous two partitions, albeit missing its door, divides the bay from the room to the west (Pl. 50).
- 7.2.18 The remainder of the range is currently used as a **Large Store Room** and a **Small Store Room** and is referred to as 'Barn 4' in the architect's drawings.
- 7.2.19 The larger of the two stores is of six bays and is divided from 'Barn 5' by a timber partition as described previously.
- 7.2.20 No original fittings are visible to indicate the original use of this part of the building and the floor consists of modern concrete with a 12cm change of level within the fourth bay from the east (Pl. 51).
- 7.2.21 Of the two windows in the room, the easternmost window retains the two original wooden beaded sliding casements, each of four panes. The doors in the dividing walls are missing, but the external stable door is as the others in the range.
- 7.2.22 The final bay is divided from the larger store room by a roughly coursed limestone wall, reflecting the final bay at the opposite end of the range. The dividing door is missing.
- 7.2.23 The rear of the room is entirely taken up with a modern partitioned-off store room.
- 7.2.24 If the walled bay at the opposite end of the range is a tack or harness room, then it is feasible that this would be the feed room, but the partitioning and concrete flooring has obscured any features to give an indication of this.



8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1.1 Ashgrove Farm in its current form displays four distinct phases of development. The earliest phase is now represented only by the early-mid eighteenth-century threshing barn.
- 8.1.2 The brick range associated with the farm house and the stable block attached to the threshing barn lack distinct features for dating, however, they were present by the drawing of the tithe map in 1839.
- 8.1.3 At some point between 1839 and 1894, the farmhouse, mainly in its current form, the workshop building and the southernmost stable block had been constructed under the ownership of the Duke of Marlborough.
- 8.1.4 By the mid twentieth century, modern agricultural buildings had been erected, reflecting the industrialisation of farming seemingly more than the development of the farm in the nineteenth century.
- 8.1.5 During the later years of the twentieth century, the farming processes had moved towards the modern buildings, leaving the traditional buildings to be used increasingly for storage and resulting in the neglect and decline of the threshing barn. The threshing barn was listed in 1988, but has since lost large areas of the mortar and stonework is degrading due to the breakdown of the replacement roofing material. Few of the original windows or doors to each building survives.
- 8.1.6 The intention is to move the farming processes to the east of the site, converting the farm buildings in the scope of this study to domestic use. Some of the twentieth-century agricultural buildings have already been removed, and it is intended to remove the modern open barn during the works.
- 8.1.7 This building recording has attempted to capture the farm buildings and their uses before the next phase of development occurs.

Angela Warner

March 2014



APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lobel MD (ed) *Victoria County History: A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 6* (1959)

Maps

Tithe Map of Ardley 1839 [Oxfordshire Record Office Document Reference: 14/m]

Plan of the Freehold Estate situate at Ardley associated with the Sale Catalogue of the 3rd July 1894 [Oxfordshire Record Office Document Reference: J.XII b/3]

Websites

www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html?src=topNav

Accessed 7 March 2014



APPENDIX B. LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

ARDLEY A43 SP 52 NW (West side) 3/1 Barn approx. 30m N of Ashgrove Farmhouse (not included).

Grade: II

Date first listed: 26-Feb-1988

Barn. Early/mid C18. Coursed limestone rubble with wooden lintels; corrugated-sheet roof. 6-bay plan with opposed full-height doors in bay 3. Other bays have blocked slits, there is a blocked lower doorway in bay 5, a pitching door in the right gable, and both gables have triangular vents. Bay one and both end walls have small inserted doorways.

Interior: Trusses have tie beams, collars, and they support 2 rows of butt purlins. (VCH: Oxfordshire, Vol VI, p8)

Listing National Grid Reference: SP 53623 26212



APPENDIX C. EXCERPTS FROM THE SALE CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Title Page Begins:

By Order Of His Grace The Duke Of Marlborough

Oxfordshire,

The Outlying Portions of the Blenheim Estates.

Selected paragraphs of Page 14:

Ardley.

Lot 10

The Desirable Freehold Property, known as Ashgrove Farm (free of Land Tax).

Superior and Well-Arranged Homestead, conveniently placed, a short distance from the main road; approached therefrom by a private carriage road, with a pair of cottages at the gates forming an Entrance Lodge.

THE FARM HOUSE

Is built of brick with slate roof; occupies a pleasant position, overlooking the park like meadows in front, having a southern aspect, and is approached through a Swing Entrance Gate by a carriage sweep leading to the Porch Entrance. The accommodation is as follows:-

On the Top Floor – Four good Attic Bedrooms; Cupboard on landing.

On the First Floor – Principal Bedroom, fitted with two Cupboards; Dressing Room adjoining; another Principal Bedroom, panelled in oak on two sides; two other best bedrooms; Cupboard on landing.

Front and Back Staircases.

On the Ground Floor – Entrance Hall; Dining Room, fitted with French casement windows opening on to Garden; Drawing Room, similarly fitted with French casement windows; large kitchen, stone paved; Pantry, fitted with shelves; Dairy, fitted with shelves; Store Room; Lavatory Cupboard; two Beer Cellars and Wine Cupboard.

Covered way in rear leading to Brew House, fitted with two coppers, brick oven, and sink. In covered way are two pumps of soft and hard water; Wood and Coal Houses, and three Fowl Houses at side.

THE FARM BUILDINGS

Are very commodious and well arranged. They are most substantially built of stone, with slate and Stonefield slate roofing, and consists of:



RANGE OF NAG STABLING,

Comprising Two Stall and One Loose Box, Stone paved and fitted with Mangers; Saddle Room, match boarded and fitted with Grate; Coach House, enclosed by folding doors; and Boot House, with passage way to front, and Granary over the whole range.

Range of Three Loose Boxes, stone paved; Harness Room; Cart Horse Stable to tie 8 horses, fitted with Mangers and Racks; Chaff House; another Stable for 8 horses, fitted with Mangers and Racks; another Ditto for 8 horses similarly fitted; Harness Room; Loose Box fitted with Mangers and Racks; 14-bay Wagon Shed; 2-bay Barn, paved with bricks; Stackyard; Range of Three Cattle Sheds, fitted with Mangers, and with Three Yards, enclosed by high Rail Fencing, having Galvanise Iron Cisterns, with water laid on to each; Mill House, with Shepherd's Granary over; Chaff House, with Straw Loft over and Yard; Carpenter's Shop; Blacksmith's Shop and Shoeing House; Coal House and Implement Shed; Paved Path leading to Range of Four Piggeries, with enclosed Brick-paved Runs; Boiling House, fitted with Copper and Stove, with water laid on; another spacious Barn, paved with brick, and enclosed by two pairs of folding doors; Two Piggeries; Cowhouse to tie Six Cows, brick-paved and fitted with Manger, Calf Pen at end; another Cowhouse, now divided into Three Calf Pens, paved with bricks and fitted with Manger; spacious enclosed Yard, with folding doors to Meadow.

Water is laid on to several of the Buildings from a pond near the house, and is pumped up by a ram.

The Yards and Buildings are all drained into a liquid manure tank.

There is a Sheep-wash in Meadow.

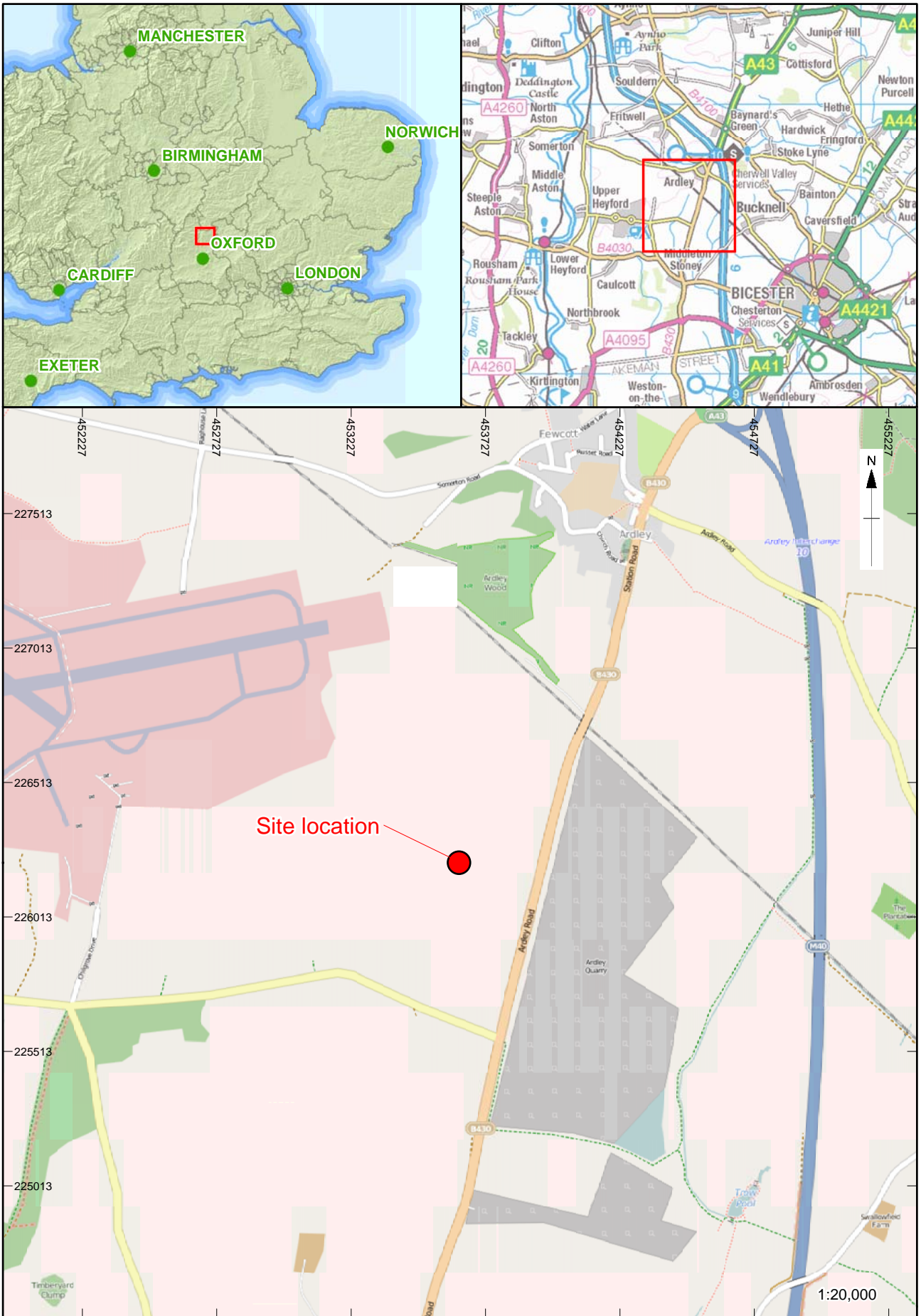


Figure 1: Site location

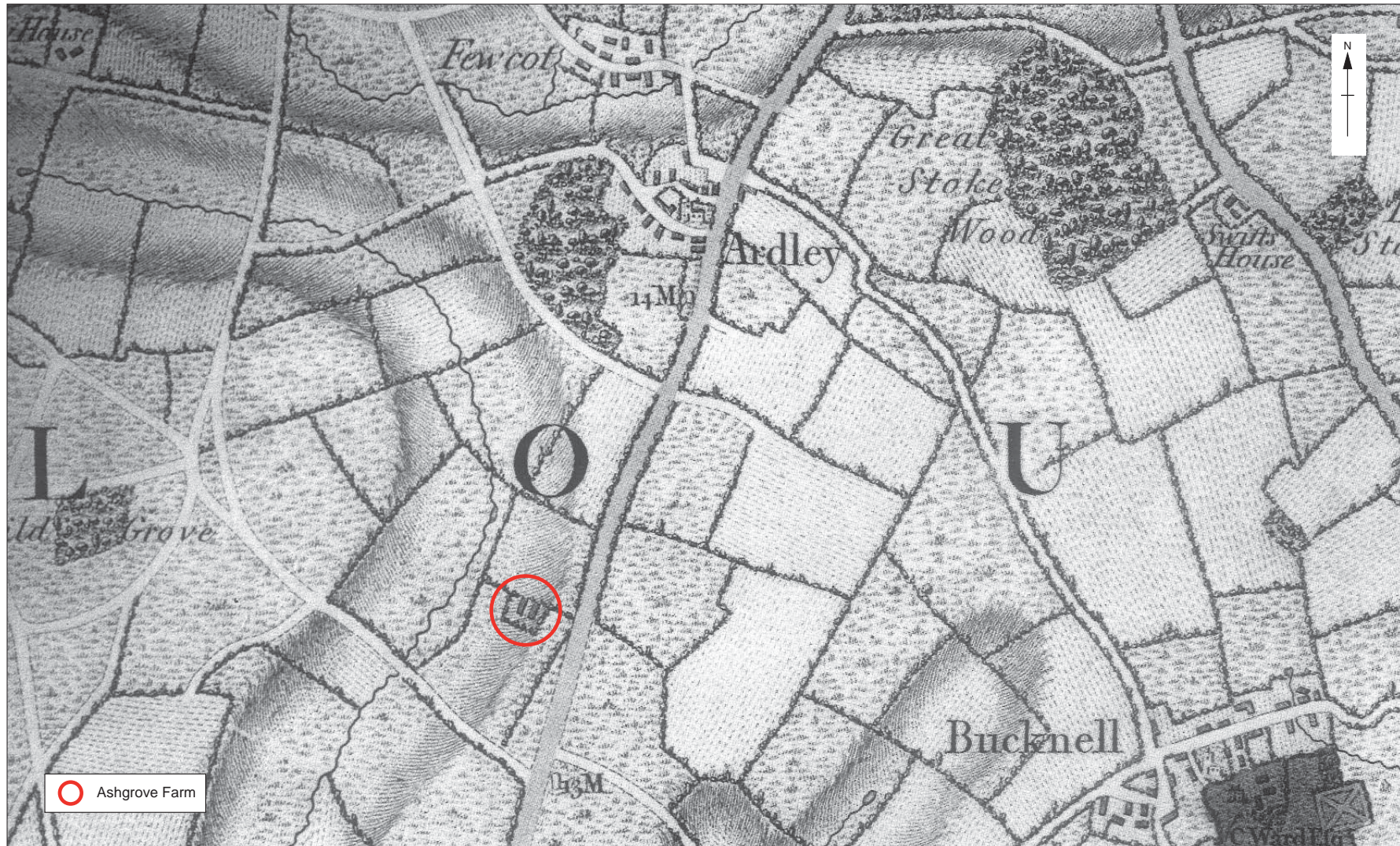


Figure 2: Davis Map, 1797

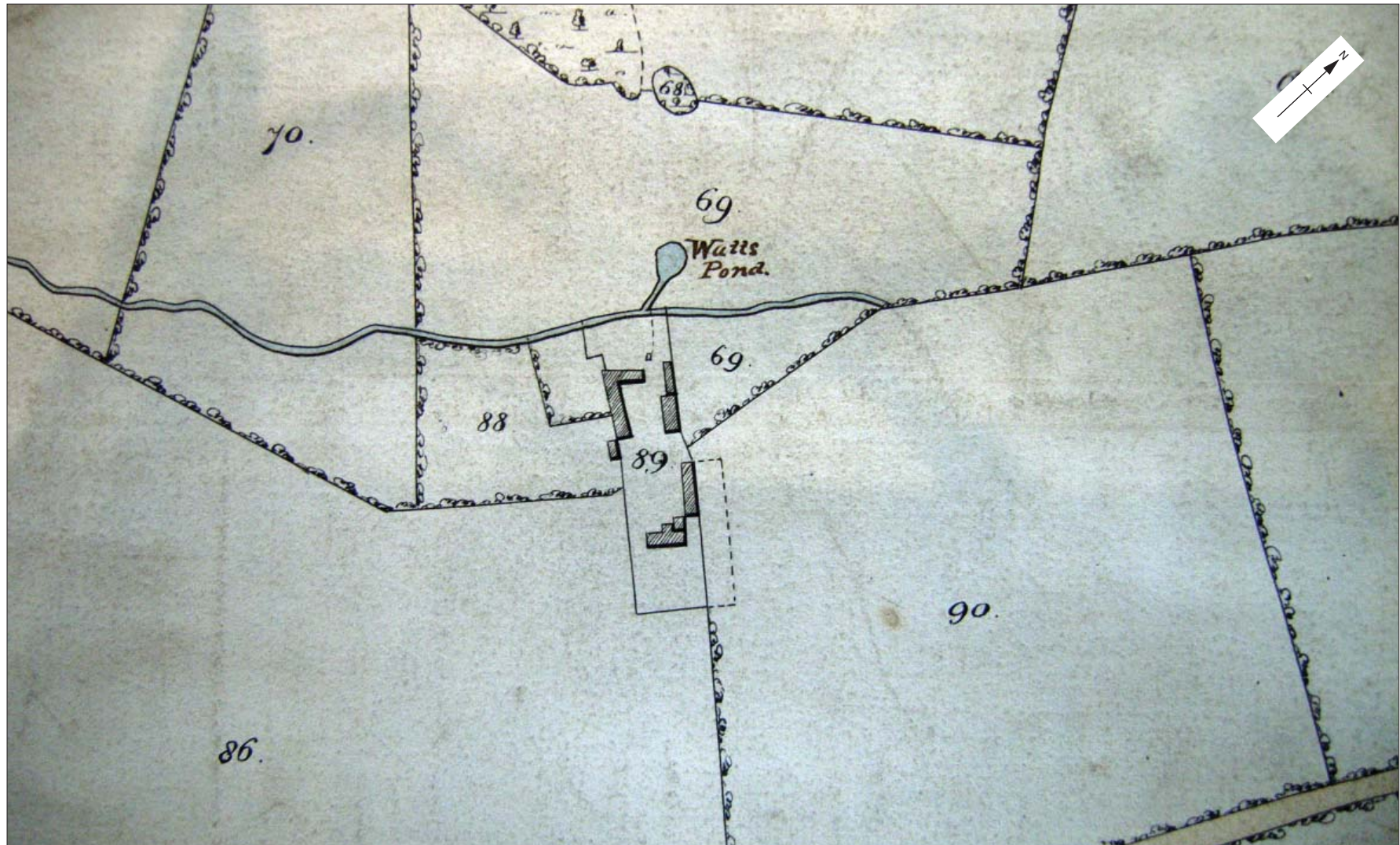


Figure 3: Tithe Map, 1839



Figure 4: Plan associated with the Sale Catalogue, 1894

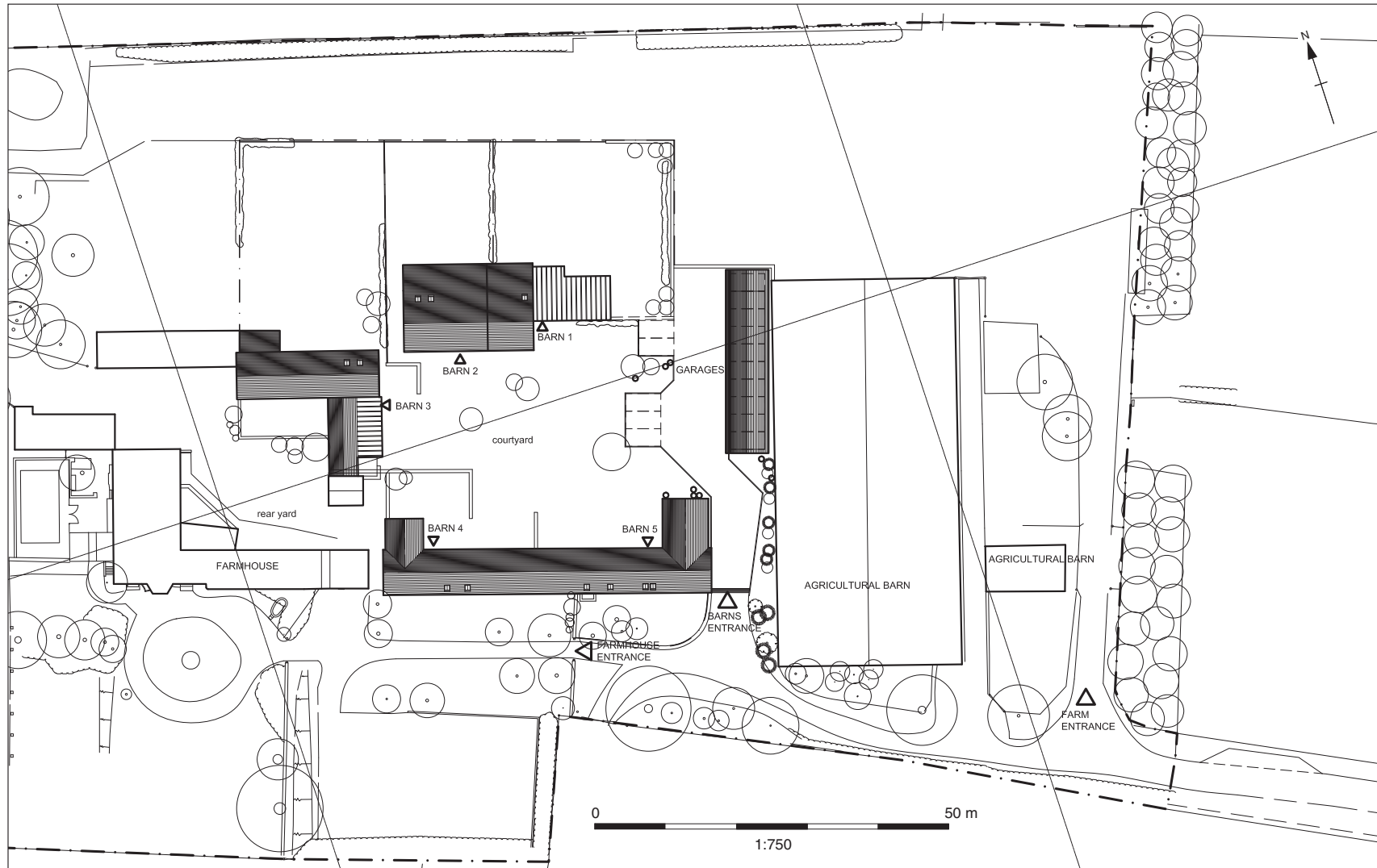


Figure 5: Barn Numbering Convention (taken from the architect's plan of the proposed layout)

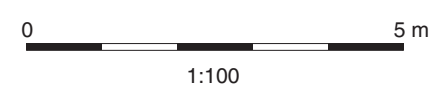
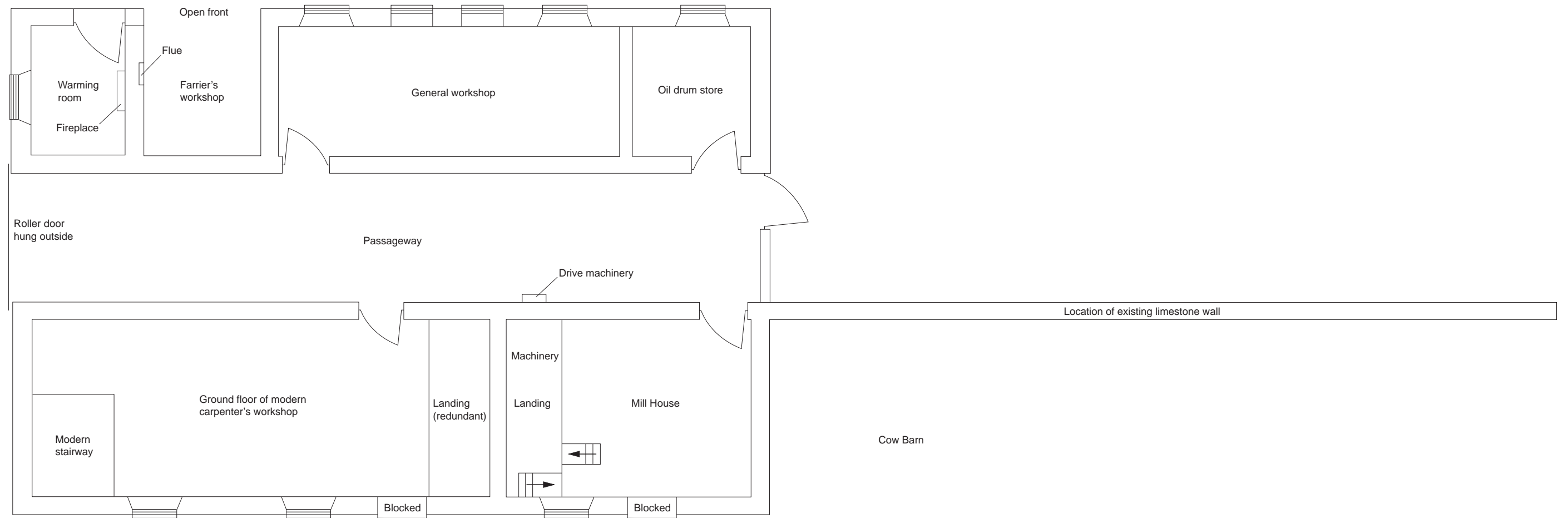


Figure 6: Barn 2, ground floor

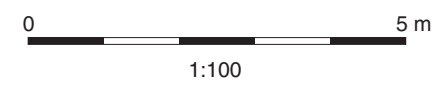
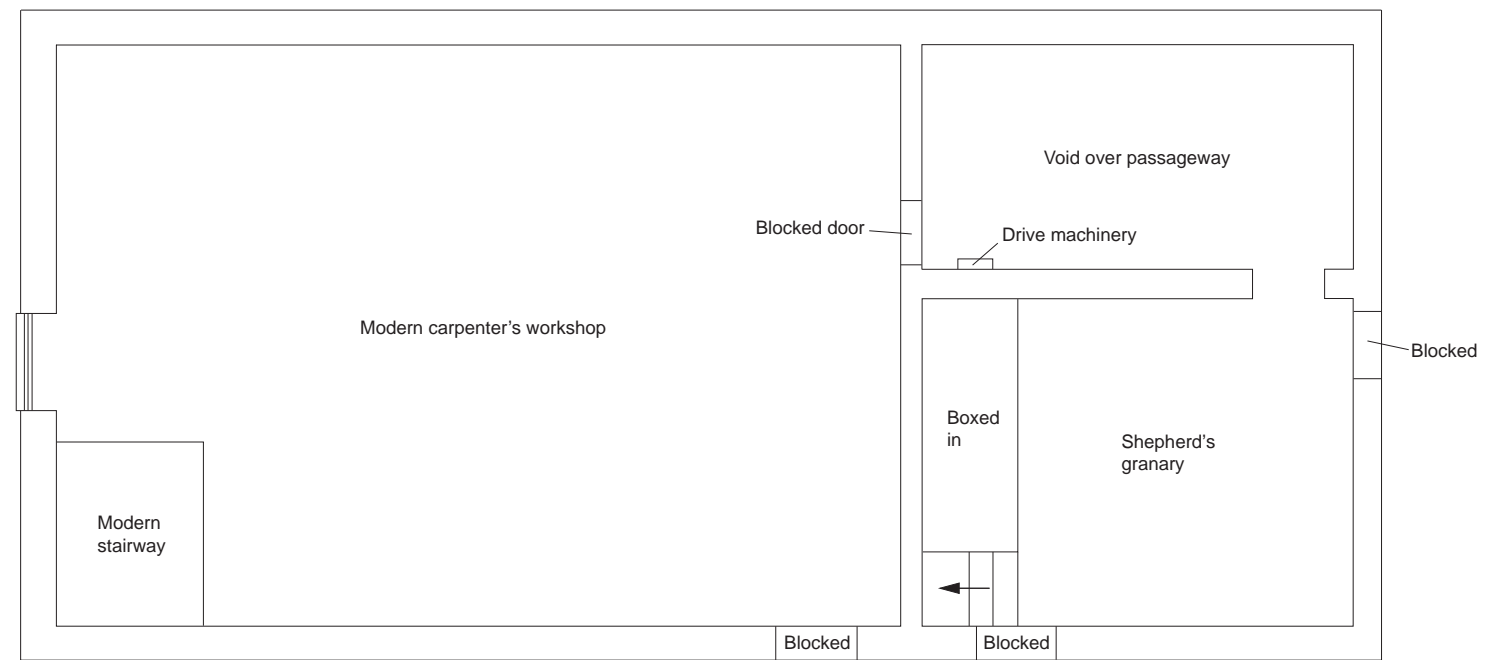


Figure 7: Barn 2, first floor

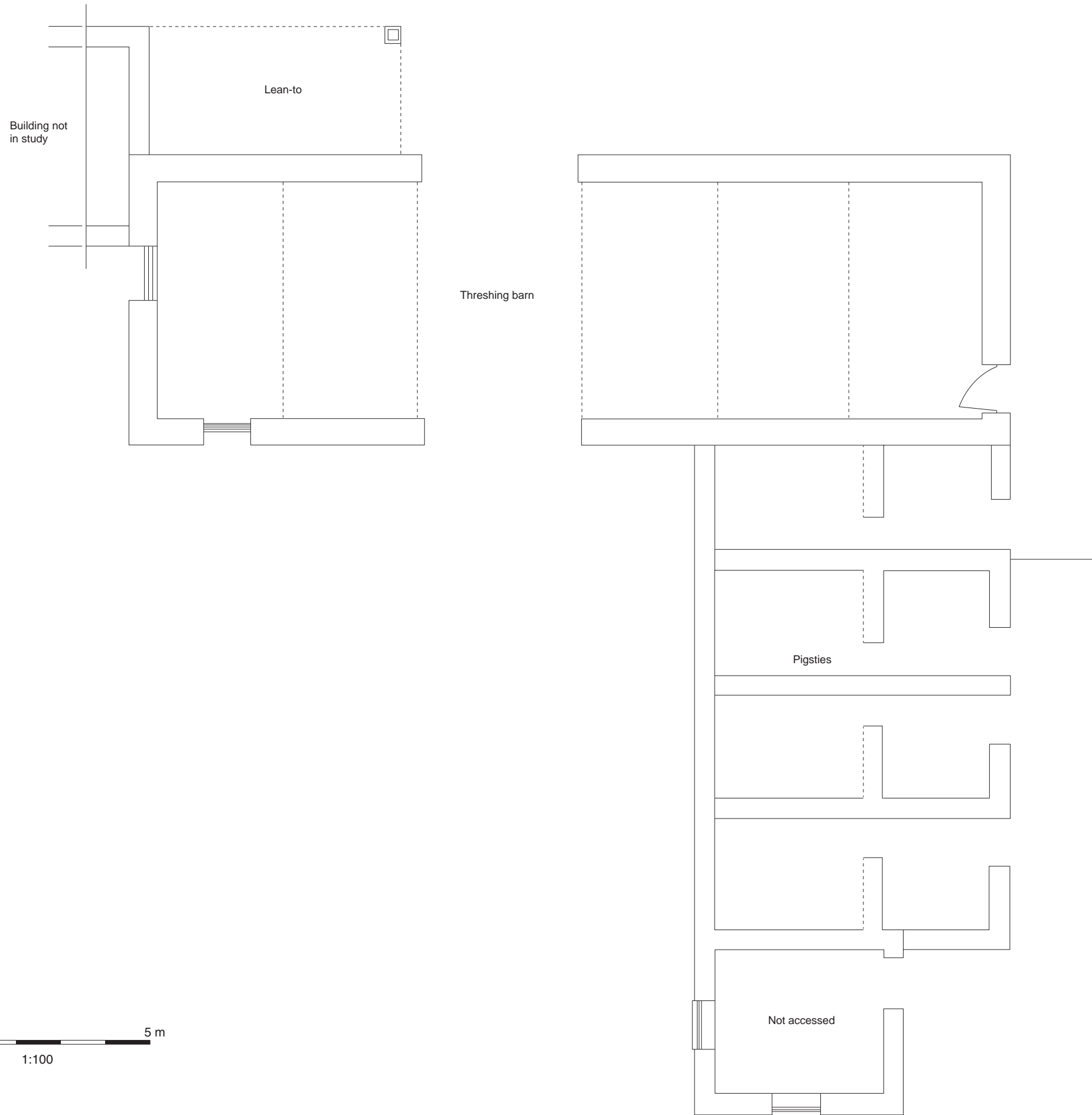
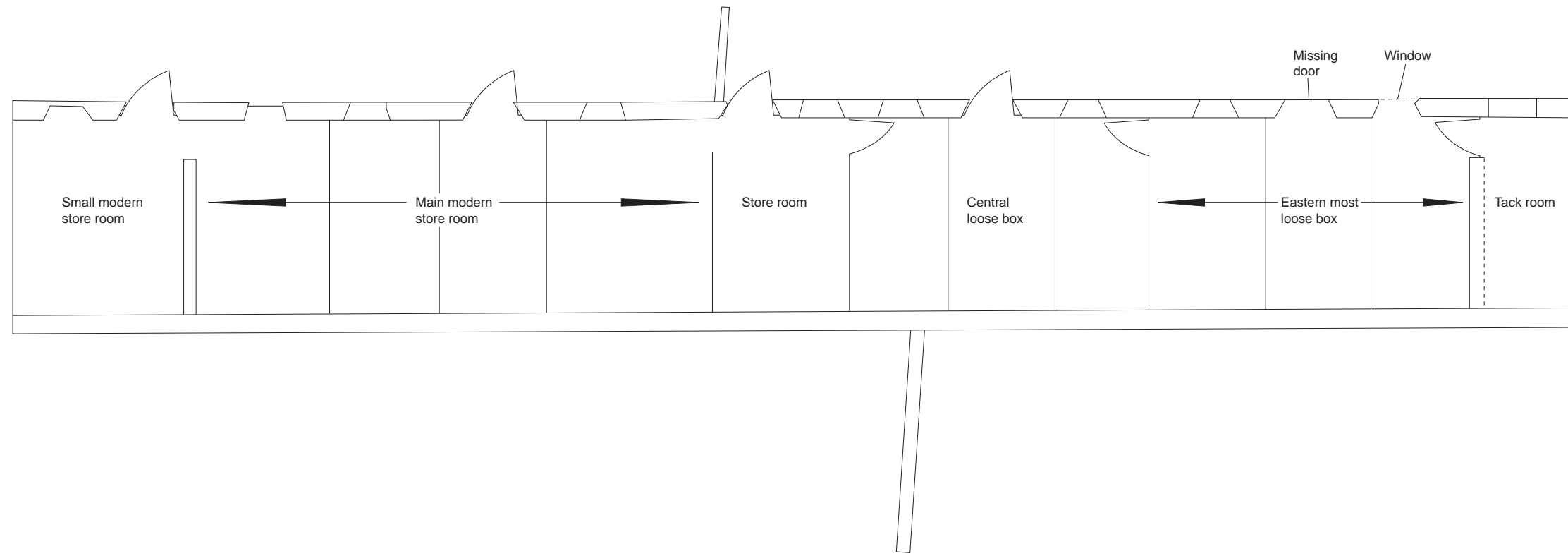


Figure 8: Barn 3



0 5 m
1:150

Figure 9: Barn 4 and Barn 5



Plate 1: Main farmhouse building; south elevation



Plate 2: Farmhouse building; detail of first floor addition and pitching door; north elevation



Plate 3: Stable or loosebox to the west of the threshing barn; south elevation



Plate 4: Stable or loosebox to the west of the threshing barn; north elevation



Plate 5: Black barn and modern building to the far eastern end of the site; looking east



Plate 6: Modern building to the far eastern end of the site; north elevation



Plate 7: Silo bases and the bases of removed modern buildings; looking west



Plate 8: Barn 1; north elevation



Plate 9: Barn 1 rear wall; view from cowsheds looking north



Plate 10: Barn 2; north and west elevations



Plate 11: Barn 2; south elevation



Plate 12: Barn 2; west elevation



Plate 13: Barn 2; east elevation



Plate 14: Barn 2; east end of north elevation



Plate 15: Barn 2; central passageway looking east



Plate 16: Barn 2; dividing wall between Shepherd's Granary and void over passageway



Plate 17: Barn 2; Roof truss in Modern Carpenter's Workshop



Plate 18: Barn 2; Roof truss in the General Workshop



Plate 19: Barn 2; fireplace in the Warming Room



Plate 20: Barn 2; Warming Room window



Plate 21: Barn 2; Farrier's Workshop



Plate 22: Barn 2; General Workshop showing blocking of large opening



Plate 23: Barn 2; Oil Drum Store



Plate 24: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, ground floor looking east



Plate 25: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, ground floor looking west



Plate 26: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, first floor looking east



Plate 27: Barn 2; Modern Carpenter's Shop, first floor looking west



Plate 28: Barn 2; Mill House steps and landing looking west



Plate 29: Barn 2; drive machinery between the Mill House and Passageway



Plate 30: Barn 3; south elevation



Plate 31: Barn 3; north elevation



Plate 32: Barn 3; east elevation



Plate 33: Barn 3; blocked doorway in the south wall



Plate 34: Barn 3; opening for modern machinery in the north wall



Plate 35: Barn 3; Pigsties to the south of the threshing barn looking west



Plate 36: Barn 3; Pigsties and associated building looking south west



Plate 37: Barn 3; truss



Plate 38: Barn 3; stopped chamfered tie-beam



Plate 39: Barn 3; threshing floor and storage bay floor looking north east



Plate 40: Barn 5; south elevation looking north east



Plate 41: Barn 5; east and north elevations looking south west



Plate 42: Barns 4 & 5; join between the block and the farmhouse on the north elevation



Plate 43: Barns 4 & 5; join between the block and the farmhouse on the south elevation



Plate 44: Barn 5; truss



Plate 45: Barn 5; manger and hayrack along south wall in the Easternmost Stable/Loosebox



Plate 46: Barn 5; Tackroom



Plate 47: Barn 5; Partition dividing the Easternmost and Central Stable/Loosebox



Plate 48: Barn 5; Central Stable/Loosebox showing makeshift stalls



Plate 49: Barn 5; Central Stable/Loosebox floor detail



Plate 50: Barn 4 & 5; Partition of Store at west end of Barn 5 and Large Store of Barn 4



Plate 51: Barn 4; General Shot looking west



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1QD

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



Director: Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MIFA
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