

Treskilling Farm Barns, Luxulyan, Cornwall

(NGR SX 0387 5781)

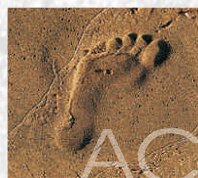
Results of an historic building survey

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archaeology

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Summary

An historic building survey of barns at Treskilling Farm Barns, Luxulyan, Cornwall, was carried out by AC archaeology during August 2011. Treskilling is a medieval settlement surrounded by strip fields. The present farm was constructed sometime between 1840 and 1882 on the site of earlier houses. The buildings are arranged in a U-shaped plan around a courtyard with one- and two-storey ranges on three sides of a large yard. The barns include a Cornish chall barn with shippen and threshing floor above, cowhouses, dairy, piggeries and a cart shed. Former threshing machinery had been powered by a detached horse engine located in the field to the west.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 This document presents the results of a historic building survey of Treskilling Farm Barns, Luxulyan, Cornwall (SX 0387 5781; Figure 1). The survey was commissioned by Mr Clive Coney and carried out by AC archaeology on 23 August 2011. The work was undertaken to discharge condition 2 of Full Planning Consent 10/00522 for the conversion of the barns.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Figs 2-4)

- 2.1 The settlement of Treskilling is recorded from the 12th-century (as Roschillin and variants), and historical mapping such as a plan of 1695 (CRO FS/2/32/3/24) and the Luxulyan tithe map of 1840 depict medieval strip fields around the settlement, with open ground and larger, presumably later, enclosure beyond. The 1695 plan (Fig. 2) describes the area of the present farm as Town Place forming part of Richard Stodden's tenement. The 1840 tithe map (Fig. 3) shows a much-expanded settlement with numerous new structures. The site of the present farm formed part of the paddy's tenement within Treskillen that was owned by the Honourable Mrs Agar. The site was split into two tenements. One (plots 1704 and 1712) was leased by Humphry Kean and occupied by William Brent, and described as dwelling house, mowhay, waste and road. The other (plots 1703 and 1713) was leased by Joseph Bennett and occupied by William Brent, and described as dwelling house, outs, garden and waste.
- 2.2 By 1882, when the Ordnance Survey first edition map (Fig. 4) was produced, the settlement had contracted and Treskilling Farm formed the northernmost property within the hamlet. The farm buildings are situated to the northeast of the farm astride a medieval routeway. The farm had been completely rebuilt since 1840, and some of its land impinged on the earlier medieval fields.
- 2.3 Sales particulars of the farm in 1960-1 (CRO AD904/54) describe the holding as comprising a farmhouse, 3 ranges of farm buildings, 70 acres of arable and pasture land with about 6 acres of rough moorland grazing. The agricultural buildings, constructed of stone and slate, were described as a shippen to tie 16 with Alfa Laval milking equipment, a stable, yearling pens with large loft over, a block of four piggeries, a tractor and implement shed, and a galvanised iron Dutch barn.
- 2.4 The site was visited by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) in 1990 as part of their survey of the St Austell China Clay area (Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record number 20183). The barns were described as being of mid to late-19th-century date, although a reused 17th-century chamfered window mullion was noted. The barns were described as cowhouses, with the west range being used for threshing on the first floor. The remains of a horse engine were also recorded, located in the field to the west of this barn. A mid-20th-century aerial photograph held by the owner shows the location of this horse engine as being in the south-west corner of the field.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of, and requirements for, the investigation was set out in a brief (Ratcliffe 2010) provided by the Cornwall Council Historic Environment Advisor (Archaeology). Post-medieval farm buildings are recognised as a significant archaeological resource, providing information on building techniques, architectural styles and the changing social and economic nature of agricultural life. The development had the potential to remove or obscure archaeological evidence. The aim of the project was therefore to record the buildings to an appropriate level before works commence, and to make the results available to interested parties.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the brief and a Written Scheme of investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2011).
- 4.2 Prior to commencement of site works records held by the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record, the Cornwall Record Office in Truro and the Cornwall Centre in Redruth were consulted and collated.
- 4.3 The fieldwork comprised a photographic, written and drawn survey, carried out to 'Level 3', as set out in the English Heritage 2003 document *Understanding Historic Buildings*. The north and west ranges of buildings are covered by the planning application. At the request of the owner a record of the south range was also prepared. The record considered:
- Site layout and organisation,
 - Function,
 - Materials and method on construction,
 - Fenestration,
 - Internal arrangements,
 - Original fixings and fittings,
 - Subsequent fixtures and fittings, evidence of use and status,
 - Ephemeral evidence of occupation and use, particularly any evidence of historic graffiti, and
 - Date/period of initial building and subsequent alterations.
- 4.4 The photographic record included general views of the building, both internally and externally, as well as details of architectural features and fixtures and fittings. Items 1-9 outlined in *Understanding Historic Buildings* were represented. The record was made using black-and-white print film, supplemented the use of a colour high-quality digital camera, with details of photographs taken made on *pro forma* record sheets.
- 4.5 The drawn record comprised measured floor plans and a site plan annotated with shot number and direction of photographs. A representative cross section of each range, including details of the roof trusses, was also prepared. The drawings were based on architect's *as existing* drawings with additional information added.

5. THE BARNs (Figs 5-6; Plates 1-8)

5.1 The buildings are constructed of randomly-coursed granite blocks with larger dressed blocks of granite used for quoins, and door and window surrounds. More recently repairs in granite are not coursed (Plate 1). The buildings are of mid to late 19th-century date having been constructed between 1840 and 1882. The phasing of the buildings is based entirely on the physical relationships between the structures due to the lack of any diagnostic architectural features within the buildings.

5.2 The south range (Fig. 5)

The entire range is oriented E-W and arranged around three single-storey conjoined buildings that face north towards the farmyard. None of the roof structures survive.

The earliest part of the range is located to the west and was probably a piggery. The plan is basic in form and was not included with a feeding passage or individual yards to the rear of the building. The principal north-facing elevation contains two separate entrances (Plate 2). The majority of this elevation has been recently consolidated and rebuilt utilising granite blocks and internally concrete blockwork, and as such the dimensions and positions of original openings may have altered. Within the upper courses of the west gable is a primary ventilation opening. Internally, no surfaces survive, and there is no indication of the position of any primary partitions.

The central part of the range consists of the secondary phase of development and is incorporated into the primary western building providing additional animal accommodation. This extension is divided into two rooms. The principal northern elevation contains three entrances with two of them seemingly grouped as a pair. Internal subdivision by way of low-lying ephemeral partitioning is likely but no evidence of these was noted. Additionally no surfaces survive to highlight any subdivision. The room at the eastern end was possibly a meal house for the preparation of fodder.

During its final phase of development the range was further extended to the east with the addition of a cart shed. This consists of a wide, single-celled room with indication of a former large double door opening within the eastern gable (onto the access track). Both the north and south walls indicate they were formerly attached to a low-lying boundary wall as depicted on historic mapping.

5.3 West Range (Fig. 6)

This range is aligned north-south along the west side of the farmyard, and comprises two conjoined two-storey buildings partially built into the hillside to the west primarily to allow easy access to the first floor. To the rear of the building is a near full-length channel or void between the barn and the field. The 1990 survey recorded a ramp and granite bridge spanning the channel and providing entry to the first floor. Neither of these features survive. The building is a version of a bank barn, known in Cornwall as a chall barn (Lake and Edwards 2006, 50, figure 22). None of the presumed timber frames to the openings survive but a number of door pintels are present.

The primary part of the range is located in the southern portion of the building (Plate 3). It has an irregular fenestration within the principal eastern façade containing three ground-floor entrances with a single 'pitching' doorway and smaller window or pitching hole to the left on the first floor. Within its rear western elevation is a blocked window opening at ground-floor level, whilst at first-floor level is a doorway and two further smaller blocked openings, one of which would have allowed the drive shaft from the horse engine to pass into the barn (Plate. 4). On its

interior elevation is a semi-circular recess associated with gearing for the former threshing machinery (Plate 7). In the north elevation is a splayed ventilation slit (Plate. 5).

Within the ground floor are a number of distinct areas of the former shippon highlighted by divisions within the existing cobbled surface. The most prominent of these are a series of former feeding troughs along the western half of the area each delineated by low granite partitions with only the lowermost levels of these surviving (Plate 6). Other areas delineate a feeding passage (to the west) and standings for cattle to the east nearest the yard. A drain into the yard is also partially visible.

The first floor has been removed, although the original level of this floor is indicated by a series of empty joist recesses. The principal access was via the single doorway in the west elevation. There is a corresponding entrance in the east elevation that was used for light and ventilation and also to create a through draught during winnowing.

The roof structure is formed from a series of trusses, each arranged with principal rafters and a high collar. The inclusion of high collars was probably incorporated so the use of a flail could be included within this area during the processing of cereals. All the components of each truss are fixed with wrought iron nails. Upon the paired principals of the trusses are two tiers of treenched purlins extending the entire length of the roof. The roof covering is slate with ceramic ridge tiles.

The need for further cattle accommodation necessitated a subsequent extension of the range to the north. This extension is two storied and comprises three rooms on the ground floor. The north range (described section 5.3 below) is contemporary with this extension. In the eastern elevation there are doorways into each room, these being slightly taller than those in the earlier barn. Above two of the doorways are windows. In the west elevation are two blocked windows or ventilation openings on the ground floor, and a doorway on the first floor. In the north elevation there is a ground-floor window and is a ventilation opening within the uppermost coursing in the gable.

All three rooms have cobbled surfaces. Within the largest, northern room the cobbled floor incorporates a standing for cattle, a feedwalk and a single longitudinal drain.

None of the timbers for the first floor survive, although its position is indicated by empty joist sockets. The floor would have continued to have been used as a threshing barn, and the north elevation of the original barn at first-floor level has been removed to accommodate this large open space.

The roof structure is the same type as within the primary part of the building but without the inclusion of any purlins; a sequence of longitudinally positioned common rafters have instead been utilised.

5.3 North Range (Fig. 6; Plate 8)

This range comprises a single-storey barn, formerly divided into two rooms although the partition wall has been partially removed. It is contemporary with the extension to the north range.

The principal south-facing elevation (onto the yard) incorporates a number of openings. There is an off-central doorway, flanked by window openings. The west opening has been converted into a doorway, whilst the masonry below the east window has been rebuilt, possibly when the building was used as a dairy. Adjacent to the window is a cast-iron pipe. At its west end there is a window opening into the western room that has been converted into a doorway.

The north elevation incorporates a single window lighting the west room, as well as a double door opening that has been partially blocked. Within the eastern gable elevation is a doorway. No floor surfaces are visible.

Internally the eastern part of the building comprises a large open space, with the walls rendered to mid height. This remainder of the walls are painted white. With the exception of four roof trusses at the eastern end of the building the roof structure does not survive. These trusses are original, with each one being arranged with two principal rafters lapped at the apex, and are set upon a tie beam. They are supported by a pair of raking struts. The slate roof is attached to batons applied directly onto the rafters.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1** Treskilling Farm lies within the medieval settlement of Treskilling surrounded by strip fields, and occupies the site of what was probably the medieval farm. During the later post-medieval period area became a hamlet, but this had contracted by the later 19th-century, perhaps brought on by changes in land ownership including the break-up of the large manorial estate. The present farm buildings date from a thorough rebuilding in the middle to late 19th-century (between 1840 and 1882). The farm buildings were set around a courtyard and a new farmhouse constructed away from these buildings. The land around the farm is characterised by four rectangular plots set within the earlier field system. Three main phases of construction have been identified, all of which had taken place by 1882. The initial phase comprised the south range piggery and the west range chall barn that incorporated a shippon with threshing floor above. During the second phase the piggery was extended to the east and the chall barn extended to the north providing further accommodation and winnowing space, whilst at the same time the north range was also added. The final addition was the cart shed added to the east end of the south range.
- 6.2** Overall, the buildings display very few primary fixtures and fittings associated with the highlighted mixed husbandry role of the farm during the 19th century, the main surviving features being the cobbled surfaces in the west range. The barns are however typical vernacular Westcountry agricultural buildings, and in particular types found in West Devon and Cornwall in the 19th century. It is clear from the 1960s sale particulars that the farm had been upgraded to include a Dutch barn, and a dairy, and the finishes of the north range indicate that the latter was located here. This is confirmed by the 1990 CAU survey. With the exception of the dairy there is no evidence that the existing buildings were upgraded during the mid-late 20th century (as commonly took place on other Westcountry farms) and it is likely that the farm was in a general state of decline with limited investment expended.

7. OASIS ENTRY AND ARCHIVE

- 7.1** An entry to the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database has been completed, and has the identifying code 112537.
- 7.2** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, in Unit 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, Nr Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ, and will be deposited at the Cornwall Record Office.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The project was commissioned by Mr Clive Coney, and managed for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The documentary research draws on research undertaken by Marie Leverett, formerly of Exeter Archaeology. The site visit was undertaken Paul Jones and the report illustrations prepared by Cain Hegarty.

9. REFERENCES

Unpublished sources

Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record
Record number 20183 – Treskilling

Cornwall Record Office

CRO AD904/54 Trevail and Angilly, estate agents, valuers, auctioneers and surveyors of
St Columb file 1934, Treskilling Farm, Luxulyan
CRO FS/2/32/3/24 A scheme of the village of Treskillion in the Manor of Luxulion
Luxulyan tithe map and apportionment 1840

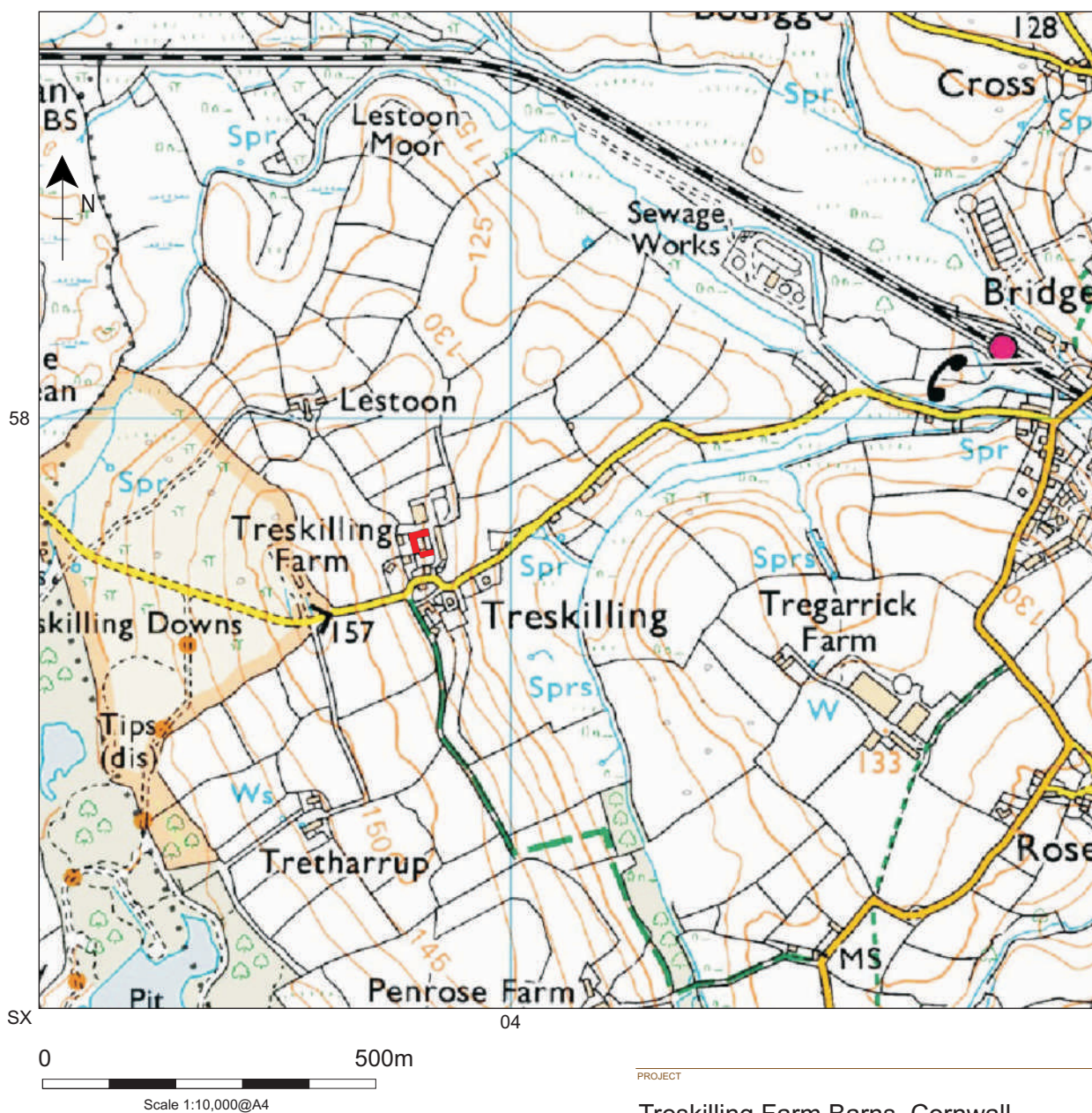
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 Farm buildings

PROJECT

Treskilling Farm Barns, Cornwall

TITLE

Fig.1: Location of site.



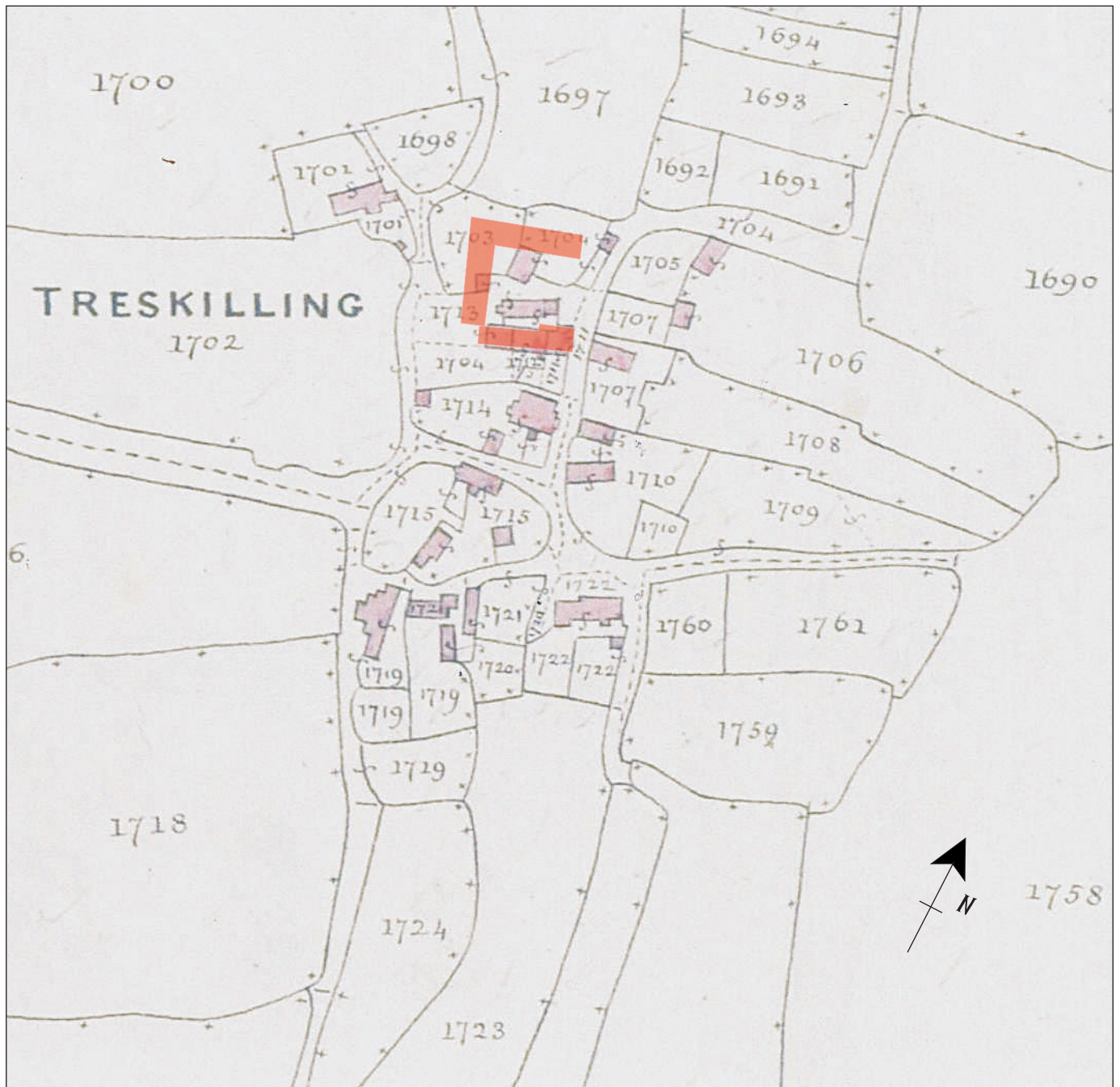
Archaeology

PROJECT

Treskill Farm Barns, Cornwall

TITLE

Fig. 2: Treskill in 1695 (CRO FS/2/32/3/24)
Note that the map has been rotated to face north - the original arrow is wrong.



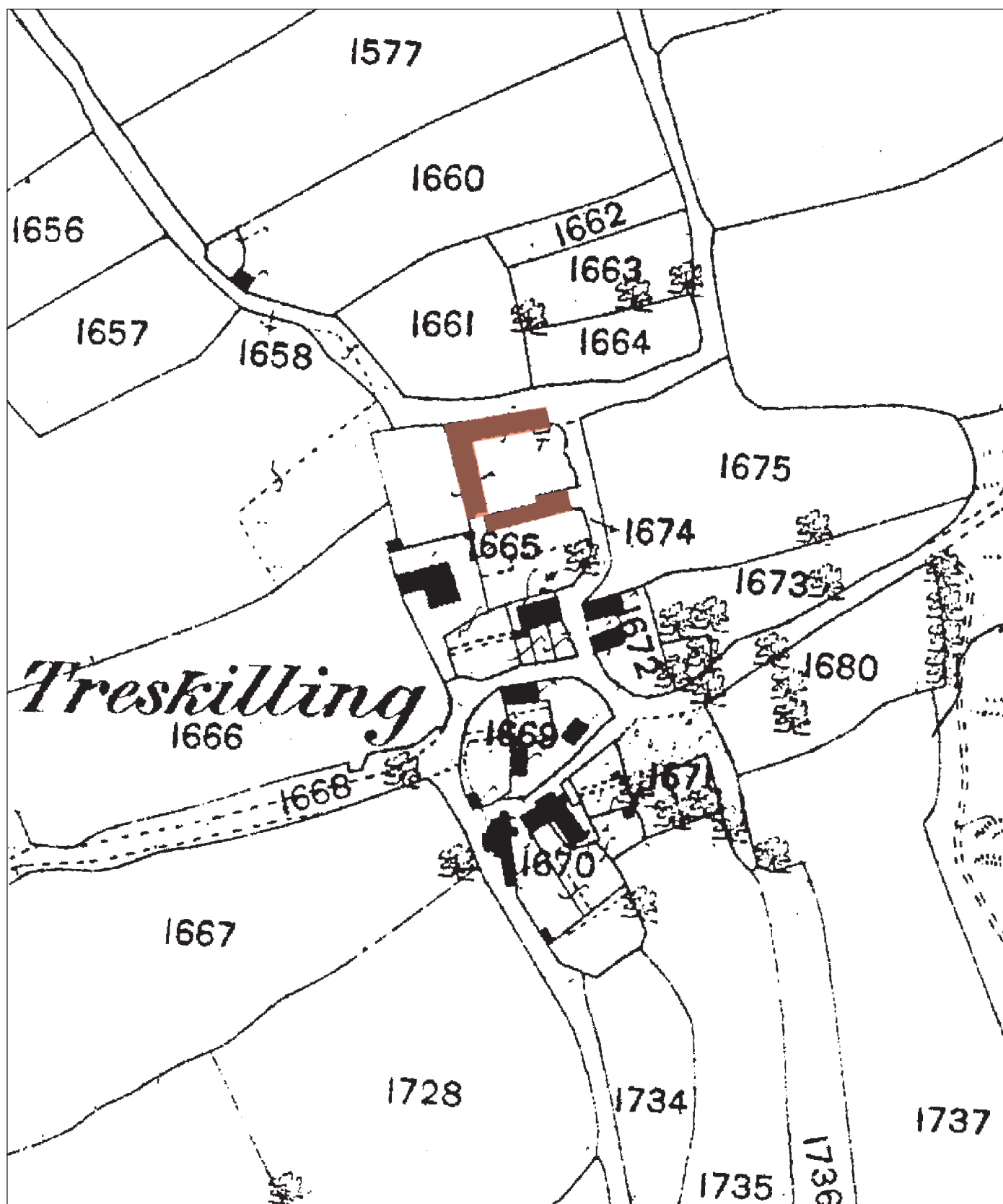
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Treskillling Farm Barns, Cornwall

TITLE

Fig. 3: Treskillling in 1840 (Luxulyan tithe map).
The positions of the barns are highlighted in red.



Archaeology

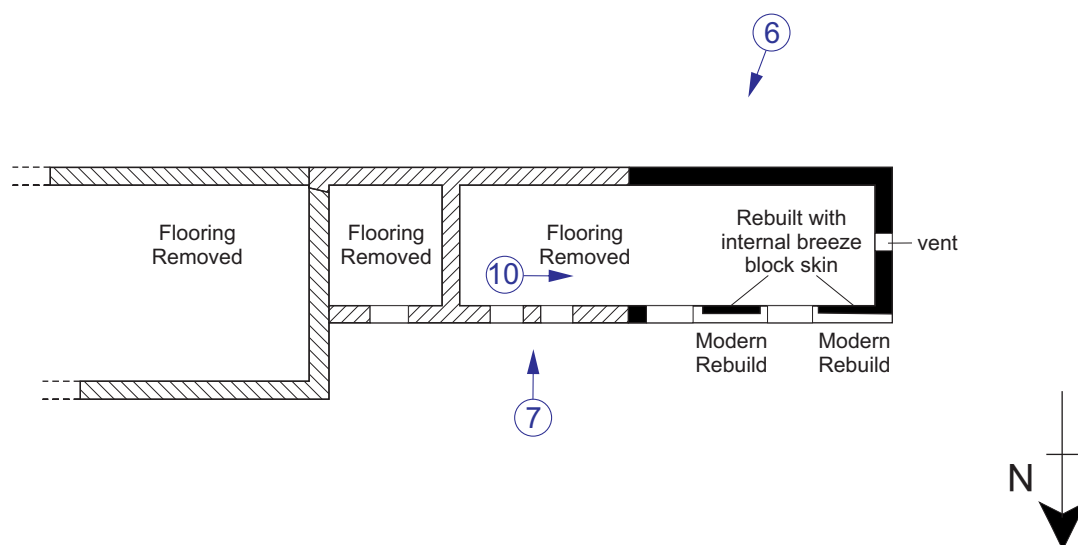
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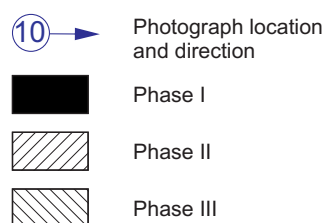
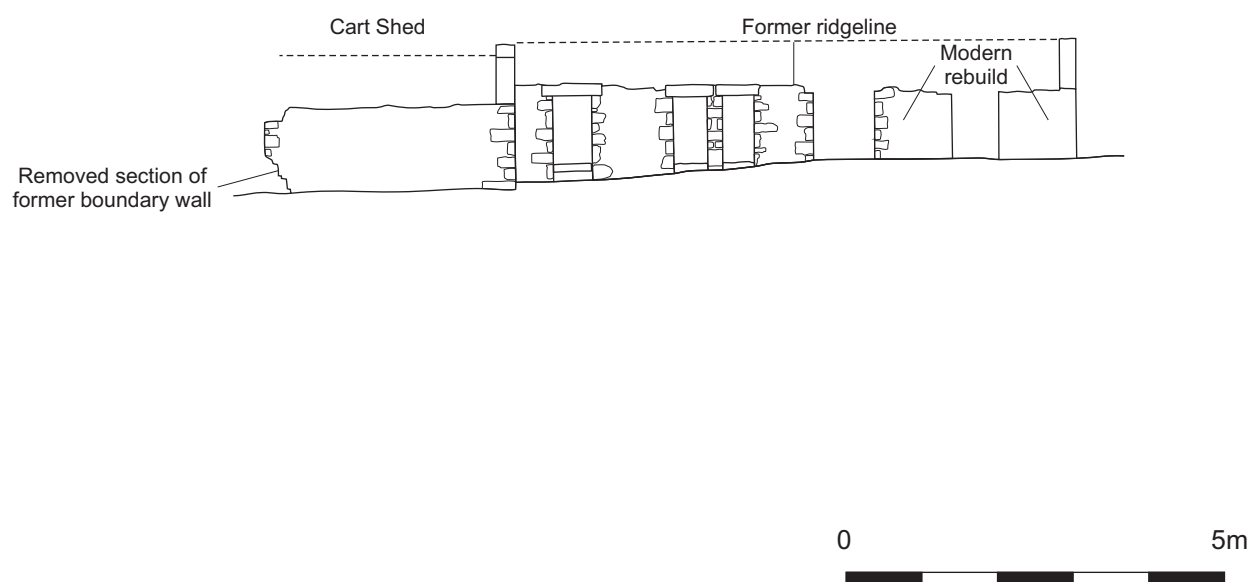
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Fig. 4: Treskill in 1882 (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map). The barns are highlighted in red.

a) South range of buildings, ground-floor plan



b) North-facing elevation



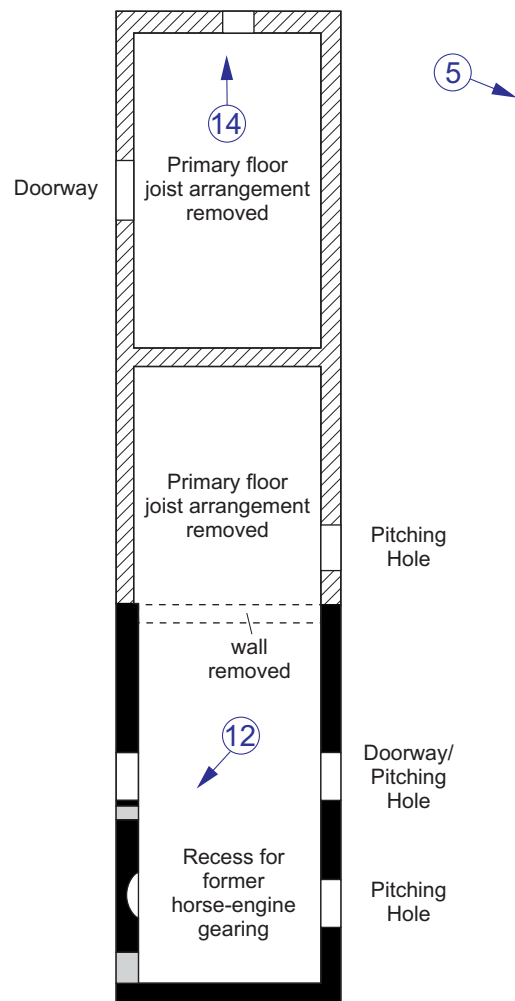
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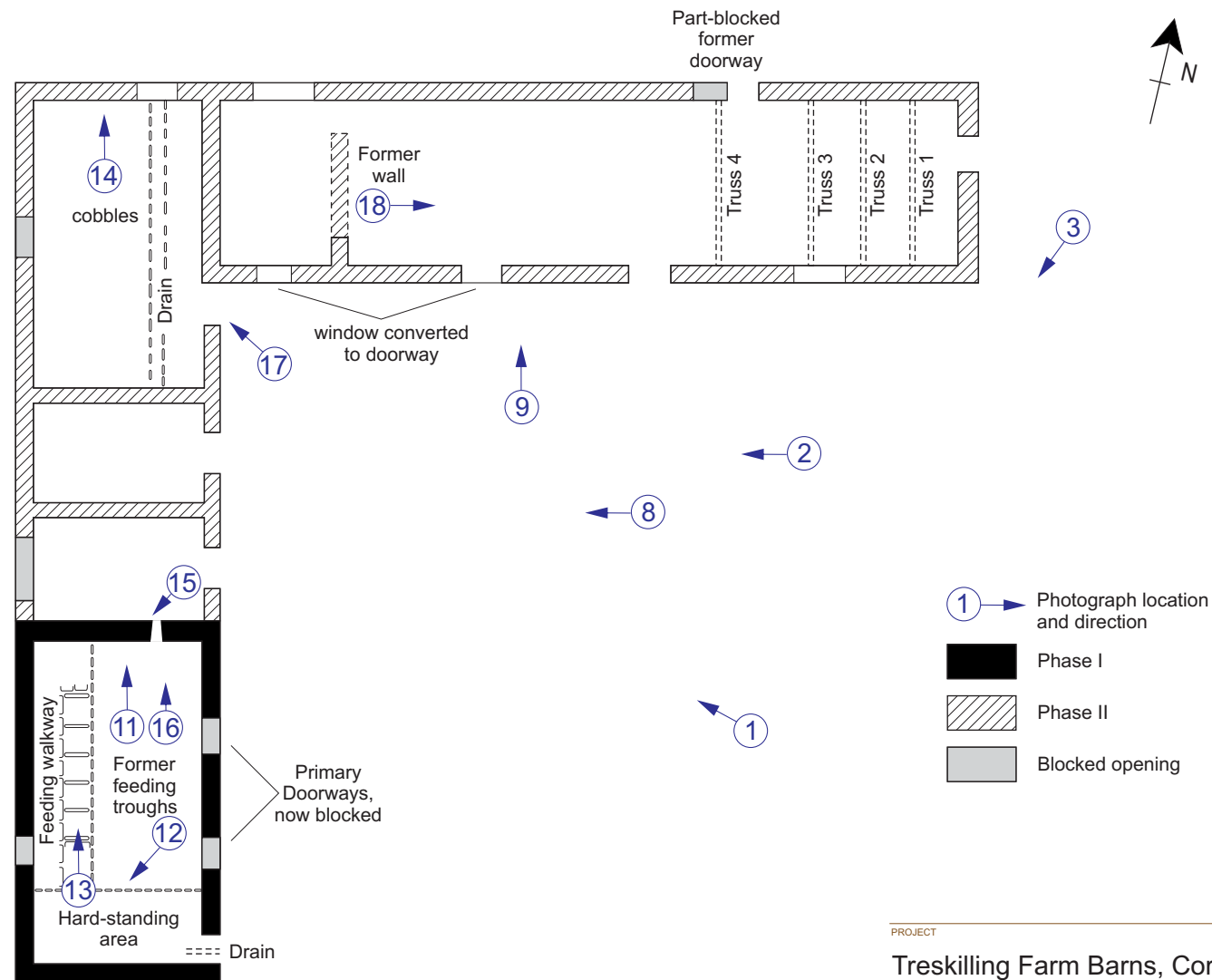
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Figure 5: Plan and elevation of south range

a) First-floor plan



b) ground-floor plan



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Figure 6: Plan of west and north ranges



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