

# LAND AT BOVISAND LANE, DOWN THOMAS, DEVON

(NGR ST 50217 50278)

Results of historic building recording

South Hams District Council Planning Reference:  
58/0791/15/O, condition 7

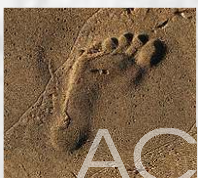
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On behalf of:  
Mr Daniel Lewis

Document No: ACD1513/2/0

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archaeology

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### **Acknowledgements**

The recording was commissioned by Mr Daniel Lewis, and carried out by Andrew Passmore. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Leon Cauchois.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

## Summary

*Historic building recording of a barn and an air raid shelter was undertaken by AC archaeology in November 2016 prior to their demolition. The barn formed part of the adjacent Paige's Farm, and is possibly of 18th-century date. It probably functioned as a cider barn. The air raid shelter was constructed during the Second World War to protect those living and working at and near the farm. It may have been constructed due to the proximity of the farm to a nearby bombing decoy.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 Historic building recording of a barn and an air raid shelter adjacent to Bovisand Lane, Down Thomas, Devon (SX 50217 50278; Fig. 1) was undertaken by AC archaeology on 30 November 2016 prior to their demolition. The work was commissioned by Mr Daniel Lewis and was required under condition 7 of the grant of outline planning permission (South Hams District Council reference 58/0791/15/O) for "demolition of store and shelter and construction of 1no. residential dwelling". Guidance on the scope of works has been provided by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET) in their consultation response to the application.
- 1.2 The application area is located on the northwest edge of Down Thomas and covers an area of 0.08ha. It is located on high ground, just below the ridge line, at a height of around 100m aOD above a combe containing a stream that leads into a larger stream that flows into Bovisand Bay. The underlying geology consists of Devonian siltstone and sandstone of the Meadfoot Group Formation (British Geological Survey online viewer). The recorded buildings are located along the northwest boundary of the application area adjacent to Bovisand Lane.

### 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are no Historic Environment Record (HER) entries within the application area, but a building is shown within the plot on the 1842 Wembury tithe map. The application area forms part of a larger plot (267) including the land to the northwest. On the accompanying apportionment of 1838 the plot is described as under arable cultivation, and named *Notts Quillet*, which probably derives from the surname *Nott* and *quillet* meaning small parcel of land. It formed part of a larger (unnamed) holding including farm buildings on the opposite side of Bovisand Lane owned by the Reverend Robert Hurrell Froude & Sir John Leman Rogers Clerk & Henry Karslake Bt, Executors of The Late Edmund Pollexfen Bastard Esquire, and occupied by Robert Barber.
- 2.2 By 1894 when the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of the area was produced the plot had been combined with land to the southwest to form an L-shaped field. By 1914 the northeast corner of the field had been subdivided, with its southeast boundary forming the northwest boundary of the present application area. The 1950-51 1:2500 map records this new field as having been removed, whilst the 1962-68 revision shows a second smaller structure (the air raid shelter) attached to the southeast corner of the earlier barn.

### 3. AIM

- 3.1 The aim of the investigation was to prepare a record of the buildings prior to their demolition.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The record was prepared to level 3 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016), and carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2016), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (revised 2014), as well as the AC archaeology *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*.

- 4.2 The record comprised the following elements:

- A written description of both buildings, including the fabric of the structures (noting any evidence for later alterations), any surviving fixtures and fittings, and graffiti, etc;
- A photographic record, including a general record, both internally and externally, of the structures along with a more detailed record of surviving *in situ* historic fixtures and fittings. It comprised a colour digital record. Details of photographs taken were made on *pro forma* record sheets; and
- Production of scaled plans showing the relationship of the buildings with each other and the surrounding landscape, and a profile through each building.

### 5. THE SURVEY (Figs 2-3; Plates 1-16)

#### The barn

- 5.1 The barn is a single-story structure that is terraced into the hillside; the ground within the plot is higher to the southwest, and the barn has been constructed to provide level access from Bovisand Lane, which it fronts (Plates 1-3). Bedrock is exposed under the southwest and northwest walls, rising above the floor level. It is constructed of local rubble siltstone along with slates, bonded with earth containing rare gravel and lime inclusions (Plates 4-5). Slate is also used as small packing between larger blocks of siltstone. Internally, the walls were finished with a thin coat of lime render, painted white, but this has largely come away leaving the masonry exposed. The upper 0.80m of the southeast wall is red cob and smaller patches of cob survive at the top of the northwest wall. The building appears to have originally been slightly higher, and the gable walls have been lowered to create the current slightly pitched roof. The barn measures 7.3m long by up to 3.4m wide internally by up to 3m high; the northeast corner is curved.

- 5.2 In the northeast elevation there is a wide central doorway, under a pair of wooden lintels (Plate 6). Set towards the outside of the opening is part of an early door frame formed by one of the lintels and an upright post. Inside this frame a 20th-century frame has added to support replacement (and now removed) doors. This retains pintles for hanging the doors. To the southeast of this opening is a small high-level window with an inward sloping cill and a wooden lintel (Plates 7-8). The latter has been reused and contains two pairs of wooden pegs. Any original window frame and glazing does not survive.

- 5.3** There are no other original openings; the gable walls contain some holes where the cob has collapsed, and in the southwest wall a water pipe has been inserted through the masonry to feed a trough situated behind the building.
- 5.4** The roof structure is a 20th-century replacement that slopes down to the northeast. It is constructed of corrugated iron sheets laid onto battens that rest on the gable walls and are supported on two beams set into the southwest and northeast walls (Plate 4).
- 5.5** The floor is a thin skim of lime mortar laid over the terraced bedrock. In the centre of the building, in front of the doorway, are two very slightly sunken planks of wood, aligned northeast to southwest; these appear to have acted as a drain (Plate 9). Other than the 20th-century pintles on the door frame there are no internal fixtures and fittings.
- 5.6** To the northwest, the barn is abutted by a drystone wall forming the boundary of the field beyond and Bovisand Lane. To the southwest, is a low bank onto which a drystone wall has been constructed. The latter also abuts the barn, and is set back from the road frontage.

#### **The air raid shelter**

- 5.7** The shelter is located to the southeast of the barn, constructed at the higher level of the plot rather than the lower road level (Plates 1, 3 and 10). It is accessed from a short, unmade path leading up from the road. The shelter is constructed of red brick laid in English bond using cement, and the masonry has been reinforced using thin steel bars (Plate 11). Internally it measures 7.6m square by 2.10m high. The walls are laid onto a 0.18m thick concrete foundation raft that is slightly terraced into the hillside. It is covered with a 0.13m thick flat reinforced concrete roof. Scars of corrugated iron sheeting used as shuttering during its construction are visible internally (see Plates 13-16). To the northeast of the structure is a blast wall, also constructed onto the foundation slab. It is linked to the shelter by the roof creating a covered entrance passage (Plate 12).
- 5.8** The shelter originally contained two separate rooms, entered from the passage (Plates 13-16). The present doors are of a crude plank and batten design without frames, and are instead fixed using hinges to single posts. These are almost certainly post-war replacements, although there is no evidence for any earlier doors or associated frames.
- 5.9** In the southwest wall is a concrete block (Plate 16). Its function is unclear, and there is no evidence (e.g. a blocked opening) that it formed a lintel. Other than this block, internally there are no original fixtures or fittings such as seats or benches.
- 5.10** Post-war the building has been used as an agricultural store. The internal dividing wall has been partially broken through allowing internal access to the two rooms. A doorway has also been created in the southwest wall enabling the store to be entered directly from the plot. To the southeast of this is a small high-level opening, probably inserted to create a vent. Shelves have been added to the northeast room, and hooks for storage in the southeast room.

## 6. COMMENTS

### The barn

6.1 The barn originally formed part of a farm (later recorded as Paige's Farm) that was situated mainly on the north side of Bovisand Lane. The tithe map records, in addition to the recorded barn, three groups of buildings situated on two sides of a yard. By the later 19th century the farm had been extended (or possibly largely rebuilt) around three sides of the yard, and included a large double-pile construction farmhouse and a threshing barn with attached horse-engine house.

6.2 There are no surviving datable features, but it is likely that the barn dates to the 18th or early 19th century. The building has no architectural features to indicate a specific use. The presence of a probable drain, along with the window, may indicate that it housed animals, although the wide door may hint at another use, perhaps the storage of apples and production of cider (English Heritage 2006, 56); since there is no evidence for a first floor, this may account for the tall height, allowing room for a press at one end of the building. The building remained in agricultural use – at least latterly as storage – until recently; it presumably ceased to have an agricultural role when Paige's Farm was converted into domestic accommodation. During the 20th century new doors and a new roof were added.

### The air raid shelter

6.3 This building was constructed as a surface shelter during the Second World War, and built using standard techniques for the period and building type. No specific associations have been identified but the shelter was probably used by the local population, in particular those living and working at and in the vicinity of Paige's Farm. The building was accessed from Bovisand Lane. The construction of a shelter here is not surprising given the location on the flight line of bombers towards Plymouth and nearby military installations, in particular the bombing decoy located 400m to the southwest of the site (MDVs 12626, 59228, 59229). These decoys were sites intended to draw planes away from their intended target and bomb the decoy thereby causing no harm to the original target. Methods included lights to replicate airfields and railway goods yards, and 'special fires' to simulate burning towns or military installations. They were usually located in rural areas where the topography reflected the intended real target, but sometimes these could be close to rural populations. Where there was a risk to the local population, air raid shelters were sometimes provided for public use. At Clarendon Park in Wiltshire a shelter was provided to protect the inhabitants of the local farm, and on Woodbury Common in East Devon (where there were two decoys) an air raid shelter was constructed in the garden of the cottage (both now demolished) within the Iron Age hillfort (Fletcher 1998).

6.4 Internally it contained two rooms, entered via separate doors and divided by a brick partition wall. This separation of rooms is a feature of smaller public surface shelters (cf the similarly-sized shelter at Mount Dinham Almshouses, Exeter; Mike Passmore *pers. comm.*). The building must have been designed to standard pattern rather than custom-made (as could have been the case for underground shelters whose plan form often reflected the building or playground above), and has been fitted into the site. The covered passage fits awkwardly with the position of the existing barn, and rather than being entered from both sides could only be entered from the southeast opening.

6.5 Air raid shelters are commonly a forgotten (and often unrecognised) part of the Second World War landscape, but as at Down Thomas surface shelters lend themselves for reuse (often with alterations) into stores. Like the surveyed shelter,

the example at Mount Dinham Almshouses is used as a store with a new entrance providing a ramped access for machinery, whilst the shelter in the grounds of the Imperial Hotel, Exeter, is now used as a beer store (Passmore *et al.* 2008).

## 7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

7.1 The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service within three months of the acceptance of this report. An OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier 272789.

## 8 SOURCES CONSULTED

English Heritage, 2006, *Historic Farmsteads, Preliminary Character Statement: South West Region*

Fletcher, M., 1998, 'Woodbury Castle: an earthwork survey by the RCHME', *Proc. Devon. Archaeol. Soc.* **56**, 165-171

Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire map sheet CXXX.1  
Second edition, surveyed 1860-62, revised 1892, published 1894  
1912 revision, revised 1912, published 1914

Passmore, A., 2016, *Land at Bovisand Lane, Down Thomas, Devon, (NGR ST 50217 50278), Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording, South Hams District Council Planning Reference: 58/0791/15/O, condition 7, AC archaeology document no. ACD1513/1/0*

Passmore, A., Passmore, M., and Passmore, J., 2008, *Second World War Air-Raid Shelter, The Imperial* (privately printed)

### Devon Heritage Centre

Wembury tithe map (1842) and apportionment (1838)

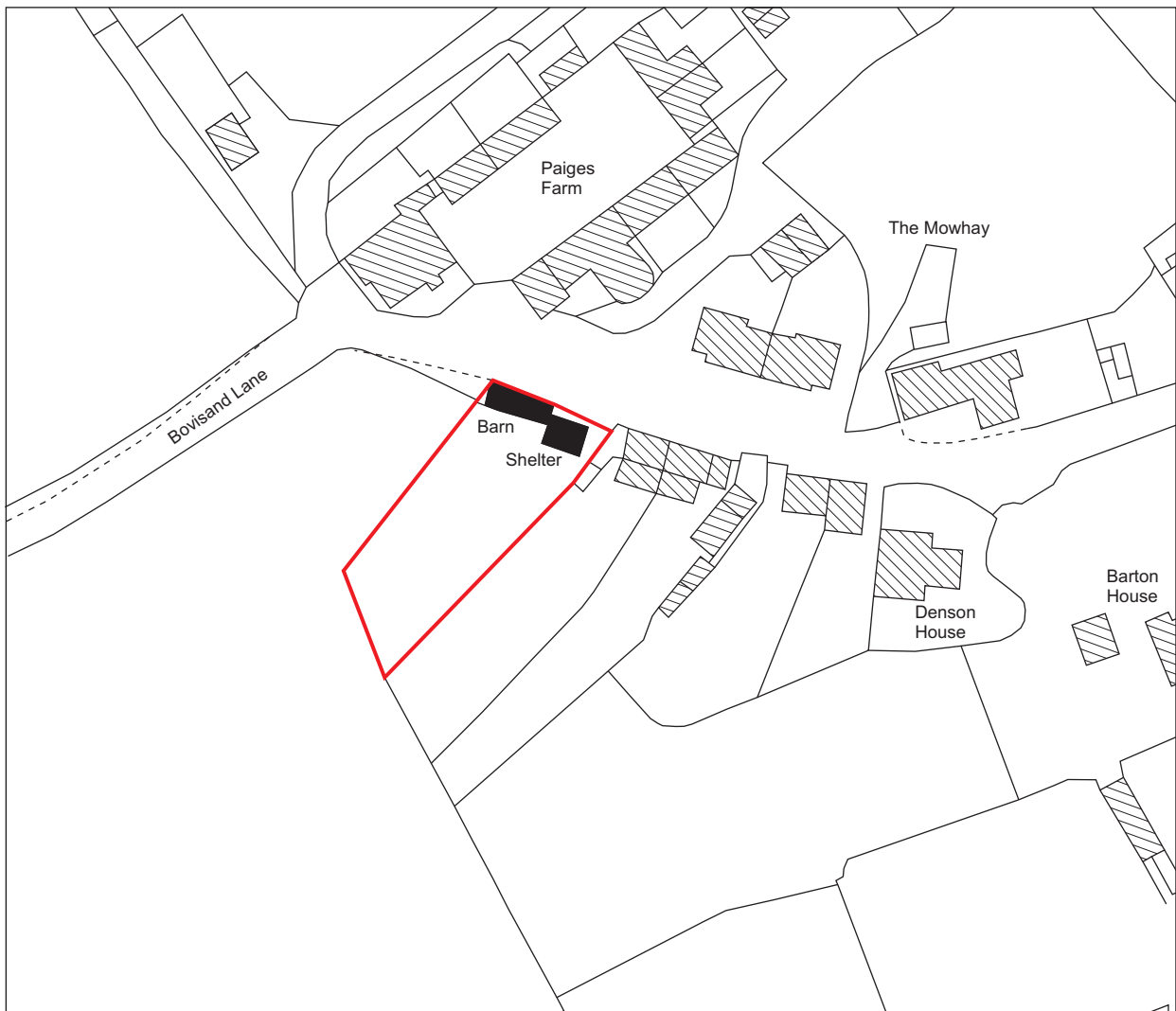
### Website

British Geological Survey on-line viewer  
[www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)





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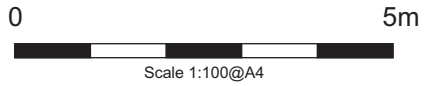
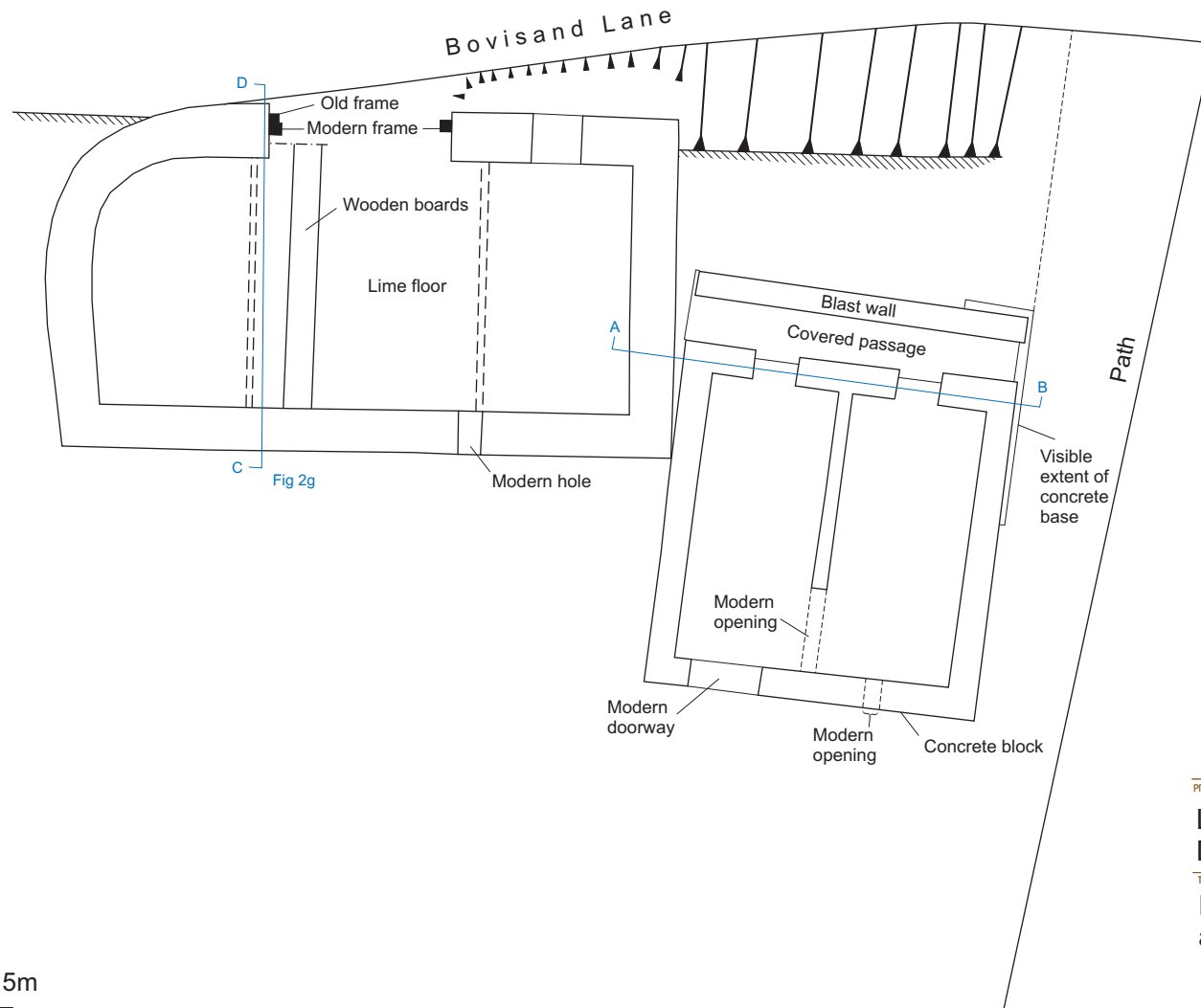
PROJECT

Land at Bovisand Lane, Down Thomas, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location and site plan





PROJECT

Land at Bovisand Lane,  
Down Thomas, Devon

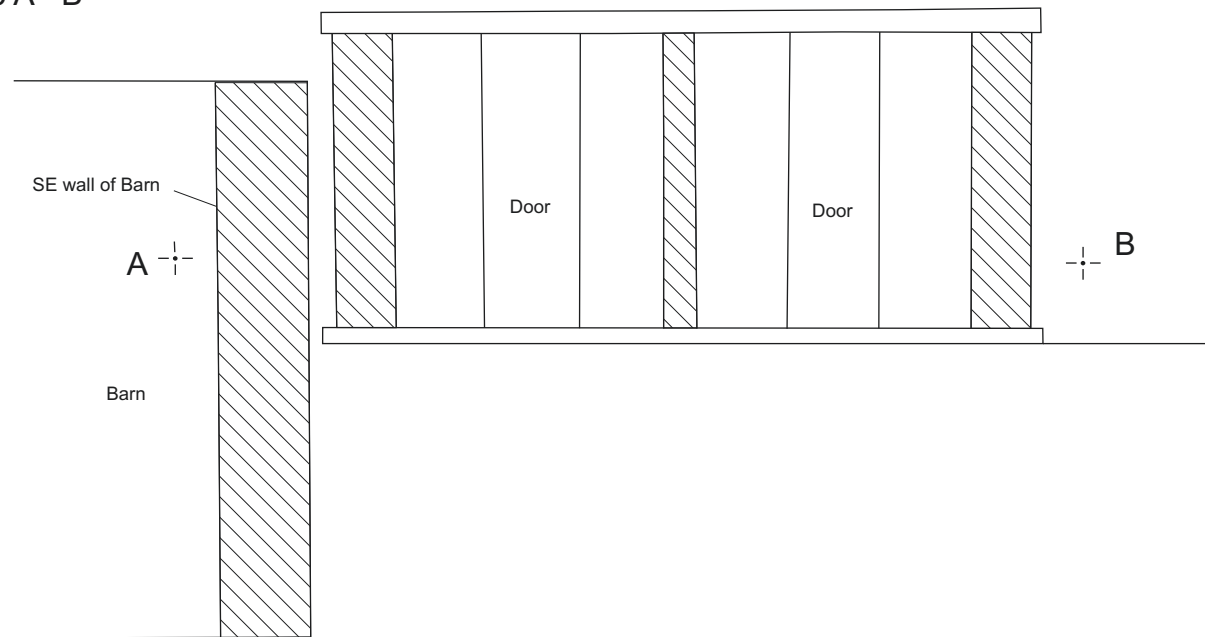
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Fig. 2: Plan of barn and  
air raid shelter

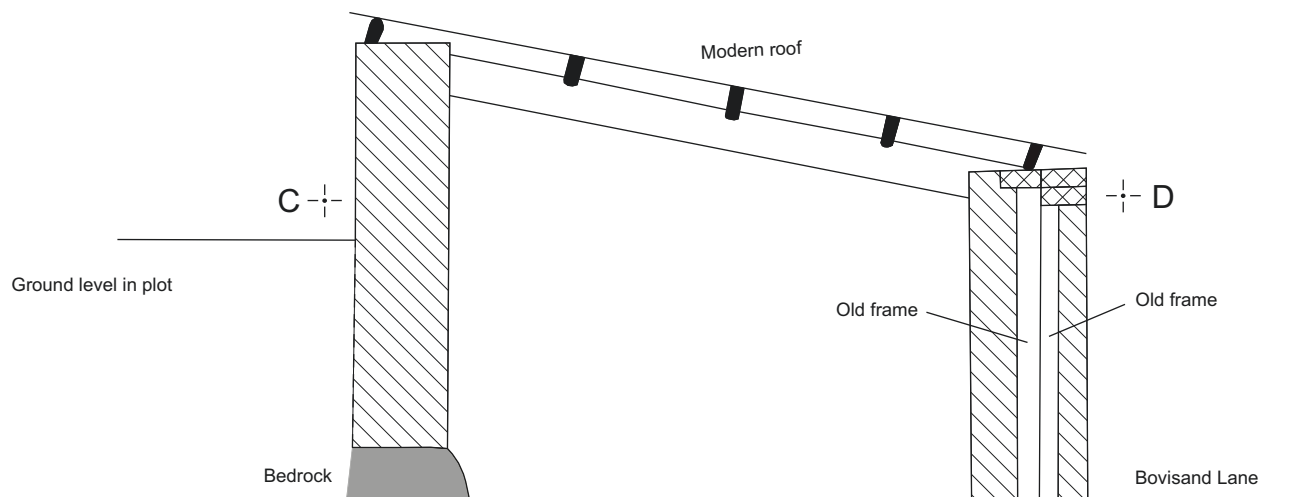


AC archaeology

Profile A - B



Profile C - D



PROJECT

Land at Bovisand Lane, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 3: Profiles through the buildings





Plate 1: The barn looking southeast along Bovisand Lane. (1m scale)



Plate 2: The barn and air raid shelter (foreground) looking west along Bovisand Lane. (1m scale)



Plate 3: The rear of the barn and air raid shelter looking northeast showing the higher ground level within the plot. (1m scale)



Plate 4: The interior of the barn, looking west-northwest. (1m scale)



Plate 5: The interior of the barn, looking east-southeast. (1m scale)



Plate 6: The entrance to the barn, looking north-northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 7: The window in the barn, looking north-northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 8: The window lintel showing the pegs, looking northeast



Plate 9: The wooden boards in the barn floor, looking west-northwest. (1m scale)



Plate 10: The shelter looking southwest from Bovisand Lane. (1m scale)



Plate 11: The modern rear opening to shelter showing the reinforced brickwork, looking east-northeast. (1m scale)

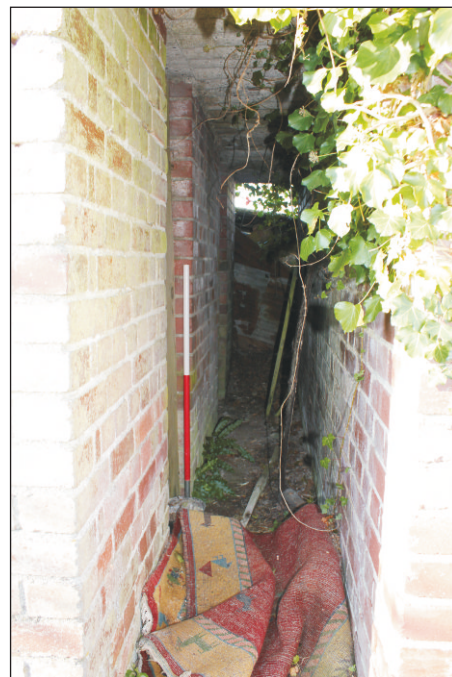


Plate 12: The passage to the shelter, looking west. (1m scale)



Plate 13: The west room of the shelter, looking north-northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 14: The west room of the shelter, looking south-southwest. (1m scale)

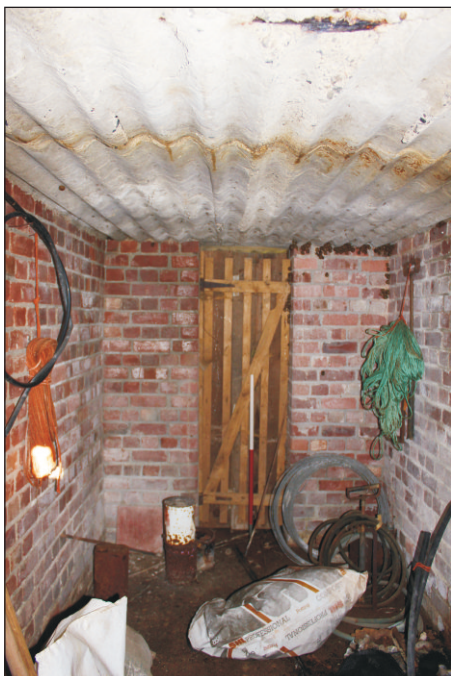


Plate 15: The east room of the shelter, looking north-northeast. (1m scale)



Plate 16: The west room of the shelter, looking south-southwest. (1m scale)

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