

**LIVINGSHAYES FARM
SILVERTON
DEVON**

HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL

January 2013

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Project LFS219

LIVINGSHAYES FARM, SILVERTON, DEVON

AN HISTORIC BUILDINGS APPRAISAL OF THE FARM BUILDINGS

Generally

This appraisal has been compiled at the request of Nigel Cant Planning on behalf of the site owner. It follows a brief made by Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (reference ARCH/DM/MD/19629) for an archaeological/historic building appraisal to accompany the planning application to Mid Devon District Council for conversion of the buildings to domestic use (planning reference 12/01426/FUL).

The farm buildings which are the subject of this appraisal are not listed.

This appraisal is based on a site visit made on 15 January 2013. The survey was non-intrusive and not all areas, including some of the upper floor levels, were fully accessible due to restrictions of access and fodder storage.

This appraisal is intended to be read with the drawings and photographs attached. The plans are based on survey drawings of the existing buildings prepared by West Country Land Surveys Limited, kindly supplied by Nigel Cant Planning.

Location

Livingshayes Farm is located within Silverton parish, to the north-east of the village, at NGR ST 9631 0360. The farm buildings stand to the north of Livingshayes House, on the east side of the narrow valley of the Heal-eye Stream. The buildings stand a little over 120m above Ordnance Datum.

Historical background

No detailed historical research has been undertaken for the preparation of this appraisal.

The earliest recorded reference to the place-name Livingshayes dates from 1674 (Gover *et al* 1932, 571). It appears to be formed from a combination of the personal surname *Levyng* (*ibid*) with the familiar Devon name *hayes*, denoting a farm or holding (*ibid* 129).

At the time of the tithe award (c.1842) Livingshayes was owned and occupied by Colonel Glover, the range of farm buildings being included (see Figure 1). In 1878-9 and 1889 William Macartney Read is listed as farmer at Livingshayes (White's *Directory* 1878-9, 715; Kelly's *Directory* 1889, 520).

A range of farm buildings shown on the Silverton tithe map of 1842 (Figure 1), backing onto an orchard, occupies the footprint of the east range of the present building group. The open area to the west of this range, which appears on the tithe map as a track or roadway between the buildings and the walled garden on the west side, was subsequently enclosed to form a yard between the east and west ranges. Both the standing buildings and the first edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1890 (Figure 2) suggest that, although the east side of the present group occupies the footprint of the earlier range, the entire complex was newly-built sometime between 1842 and the late 1880s. A level platform to the rear of the east range is shown to have been formed by digging back into the slope of the valley side at the lower end of the orchard on the Ordnance Survey maps. This area is

still visible, though overgrown. There are no apparent differences between the layout of the buildings shown on the first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps (of c.1890 and c.1904-6) (Figures 2 and 3) and the present layout.

General description of the buildings

The present group of buildings comprises two ranges orientated SSE-NNW (simplified to S-N for the purposes of this appraisal), the west range being single storey and the east range two storey. Both of these ranges are about 33m long. At both ends of the east range are two-storey blocks projecting westwards at right angles, the buildings forming an enclosed yard about 21m N-S by 13m E-W, which is surfaced with concrete. At the rear of the east range, towards its northern end, is an octagonal horse-engine house. The buildings generally look inward to the yard, although there are large double doors on the rear side of the barn on the east side (see plans and photographs). There is a concrete loading ramp, faced with concrete blocks, against the wall of the eastern range in the south-east corner of the yard.

West range

The yard is entered from the south, with a single storey range extending along the west side. This is a building of ten bays, divided into six spaces by brick cross walls. At the south end are five doorways with arched heads, three to the first space and one to each of the next two, opening onto the yard. The timber door frames have pegged arched heads; most of the door leaves are missing. There is also a doorway in the south gable end which has a granite threshold and a vertically-boarded door. Each space has a window opening in the west wall, the windows having arched heads with four fixed glazed lights at the top and a sliding timber ventilator below. There are remains of some feeding troughs, indicating that these spaces were latterly used as animal houses.

The central part of the west range is three bays wide and has an open-front, formerly with two posts with decorative bracing to the wall plate on the yard side, the posts supporting the east ends of the roof truss tie beams. The northern post has gone. The tie beams bear on brick pilasters against the west wall, and there are no window openings on that side. This was presumably used as a cart house or linhay. Beyond this are two further enclosed animal houses, the southern one with a wide doorway with a flat lintel and an improvised corrugated iron door, the northern with an arch-headed door. Both spaces have arch-headed windows and ventilators in the west wall and there is a similar window and ventilator in the north gable end. The floor of the west range is level with the yard and, when viewed from the sloping field below (formerly a walled garden), the building appears to sit on partly made-up ground, with a random rubble stone wall built up from ground to floor level and brickwork above.

The roof is carried on some timber trusses and also on the brick cross walls (see Figure 4). The trusses are all of similar construction, with king posts bolted through the tie beams and angled struts rising from shoulders on the feet of the king posts to the underside of the principals. There is a single row of purlins on each slope, the purlins being located on cleats on the backs of the principals, carrying common rafters, battens and slates. There are remains of half-round metal guttering and cast-iron down pipes on the yard elevation.

East range

The east range, with its north and south wings, is two storey, under slated roofs. The ground floor doorways and windows have arched heads. The first floor windows also

have arched heads with timber louvred ventilators, and all the window openings have dressed granite cills.

The ground floor of the north wing is tiled with stable paving bricks. The first floor is carried on joists spanning N-S, of interest in that the joists alternate thick and thin, with herringbone strutting. There are wrought iron hangers, for tack, on the south and west walls and the remains of a cat ladder which gave access to the first floor in the south-west corner. This space was presumably used for stabling. The roof of the north wing is of three bays, with bolted king post trusses with struts, the details being visually the same as those found elsewhere in the complex.

The ground floor of the centre and northern parts of the main east range is covered with a thick layer of dung and straw. The centre of the range is of three structural bays, with two deep cross beams spanning W-E, with joists running N-S between them. There are two rows of herringbone struts between the joists. The southern end of this range has a wide central gutter with raised areas, for animal stalls, on both sides at ground level, with the first floor joists spanning W-E above.

The central section of the east range has the appearance of a threshing barn, with wide openings at first floor level. These were closed with double sliding timber doors, which survive. It would appear that sheaves were pitched in at this level to feed the threshing machine, which would have been located at the north end of this range. There is a short flight of steps giving access through a smaller doorway on the east side.

The roof of the north and centre part of the east range is a seven-bay structure. The six trusses are of the same design as that used elsewhere in the complex, with the feet of the king posts bolted to the tie beams, angled struts rising from shoulders near the feet of the king posts to the underside of the principals and a single row of purlins carried on cleats on the backs of the principals. The roof slopes are clad with slates on battens fixed to common rafters. The ends of the truss tie beams are built into the brick walls, some distance below the wall heads, on both sides. There is a double width bay over the area served by the wide doorways, the purlins that span this greater distance being braced from the tie beams on both sides.

The ground floor of the south wing is divided into three stalls by timber partitions, each stall being entered through its own arch-headed doorway on the north (yard) side. There is access for feeding along the south side, with a built-up feed trough running W-E across the space. The first floor is carried on joists running W-E, with two rows of herringbone struts. The first floor window openings have arched heads and timber louvres, with granite cills. There is a first floor loading door in the west gable of this wing. The roof, which was not inspected in detail, is of similar construction to those seen elsewhere in the complex.

Roundhouse

The roundhouse which contains the horse engine is located on the shaded side of the threshing barn. It is octagonal on plan, with five openings. The columns supporting the horse gear and roof structure are of brick, with nosed bricks to the openings. The polygonal roof is slated. There is a massive timber cross beam running S-N across the roundhouse, which appears to be of circular-sawn softwood. This carries the top bearing of the horse gear, which is incomplete. The vertical shaft is a substantial tapering timber shaft with four pairs of compass arms mortised through it near the top. A timber 'ring' (of

straight rather than curved sections) is bolted to tops of arms, which has an iron toothed gear, made up of sections each with 15 teeth, forming the gear. There are empty mortises in the vertical shaft below the arms, but the traces for harnessing the horse or horses have gone. The horizontal shaft that took the drive from the gear into the barn has also gone, only a plumber block (bearing) surviving in the barn wall.

Dating and discussion

The farm buildings at Livingshayes were deliberately planned and their construction represents a single building phase. It appears that the range of buildings shown on the tithe map was demolished and the building platform extended both to the east, by cutting back into the slope of the ground at the lower end of the orchard, and to the west, by building up a stone revetment wall, above the former walled garden. The surviving buildings reflect the traditional mixed husbandry found in many parts of Devon, with provision for livestock at ground floor level and the storage and processing of arable crops on the floors above. The buildings date from the period in the 19th century when agricultural improvement incorporated practice with science (see Wade Martins 2002, 112ff).

The appearance and structural details of the buildings, which all have brick walls and slated roofs, are generally consistent with a single building phase which, from map evidence, took place sometime between c.1842 and 1890. Stylistically, a date of 1860-70 would seem acceptable. A detached brick stamped W. THOMAS & C^o WELLINGTON, is likely to date from between 1842 (when William Thomas took over from his father, Francis, who died in that year) and 1866 when the business became a limited company. Its regular shape and even colour and texture probably place it towards the upper end of this date range (Brian Murless, pers comm.). The other building details, including the use of circular-sawn timber for the floor joists, roof timbers and the supporting structure in the horse-engine house, would seem to corroborate this date. The consistency of the building construction and detailing, with granite cills and arched window heads, is of good quality. This is also seen in the joinery, with arched and pegged hardwood door and window frames, and in the carpentry of the floor and roof construction.

The roundhouse illustrates the requirement for motive power to drive a threshing machine and probably other barn machinery, for processing animal feedstuffs. Although such structures were a relatively common feature on farms in those parts of Devon where arable was significant in the 19th century, very few now retain their horse-driven gears (for a general discussion, see Child 1995, 66-8). The timber structure that supports the horse gear in the roundhouse is typically robust and well engineered.

Requirement for further recording

The overall layout and external appearance, including door and window openings, the surviving roof structures and the roundhouse with the remains of its horse-engine, are considered to be the significant elements of the surviving agricultural buildings at Livingshayes Farm. It is understood that these features are to be retained and respected in the proposed development and, as they have been described and illustrated in this assessment, it is considered that no further recording is required.

Martin Watts
January 2013

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Nigel Cant, for supplying details and copies of survey drawings; Brian Murless, for his informed comments on bricks, and to Sue Watts, for her help with the map work and in the preparation of this report.

References

Child, P: 1995: Farm Buildings, in P. Beacham (ed), *Devon Building*, 61-72; 89-94

Gover, J.E.B, Mawer, A & Stenton, F.M. 1932: *The Place-Names of Devon* 2

Wade Martins, S. 2002: *The English Model Farm*



Figure 1: Livinghayes Farm. Extract from the Silverton tithe map, 1842 (DCC HES)

1138 House, stables etc. (owned and occupied by Colonel Glover)

1139 Lawn (owned and occupied by Colonel Glover)

1140 Orchard (owned by Colonel Glover, occupied by James Row Hewett)

1141 Home Gratton (owned by Colonel Glover, occupied by James Row Hewett)

1143 Walled Garden (owned and occupied by Colonel Glover)

(Extract from the Silverton tithe apportionment)

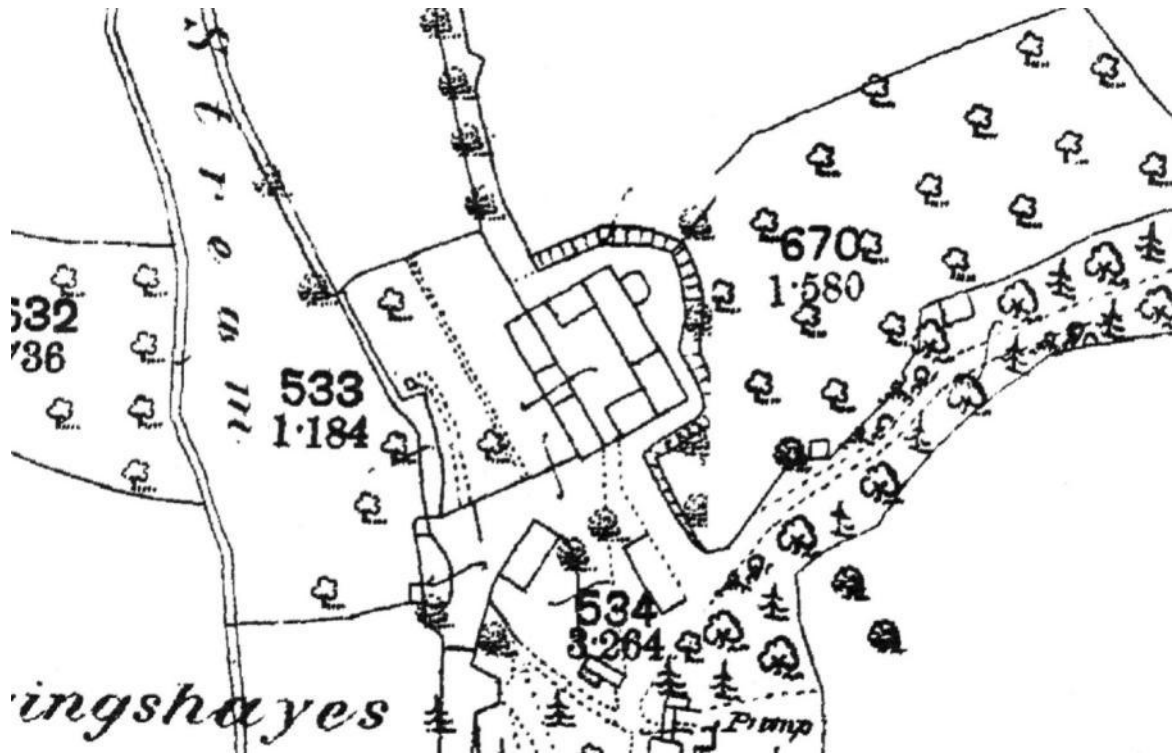


Figure 2: Livingshayes Farm. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, first edition, c.1890

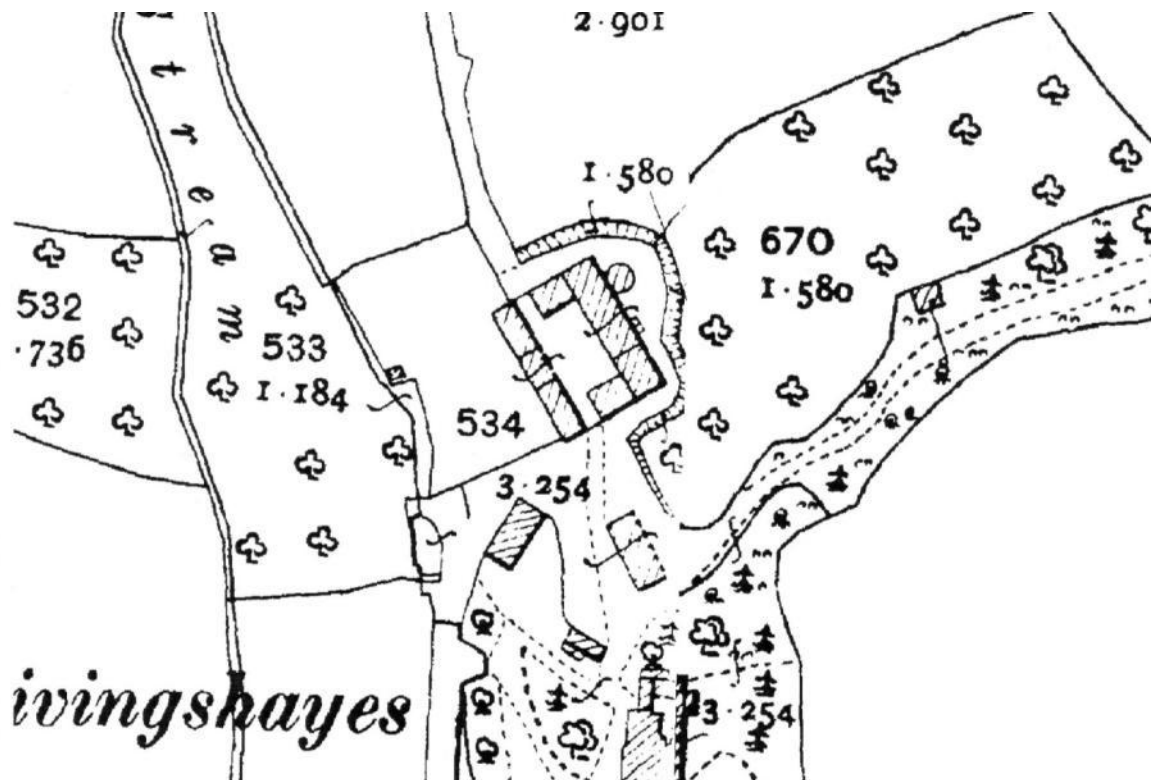


Figure 3: Livingshayes Farm. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, second edition, c.1904-6

Maps courtesy of Devon County Council Historic Environment Service
Not reproduced to scale

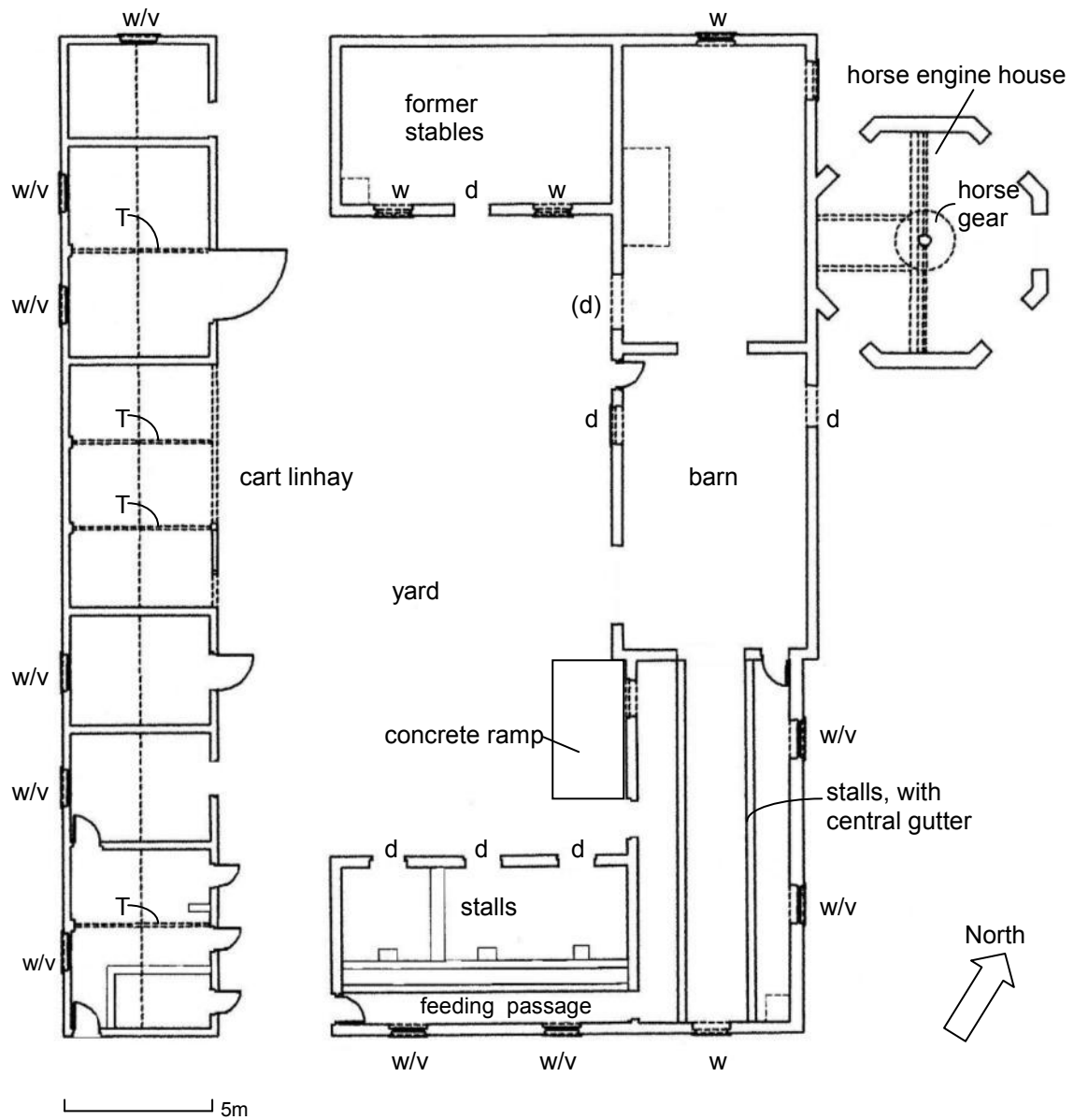


Figure 4: Livingshayes Farm. Ground plan

T = position of roof truss
l/d = loading door
l/v = louvred vent

d = door
w = window
w/v = window/vent

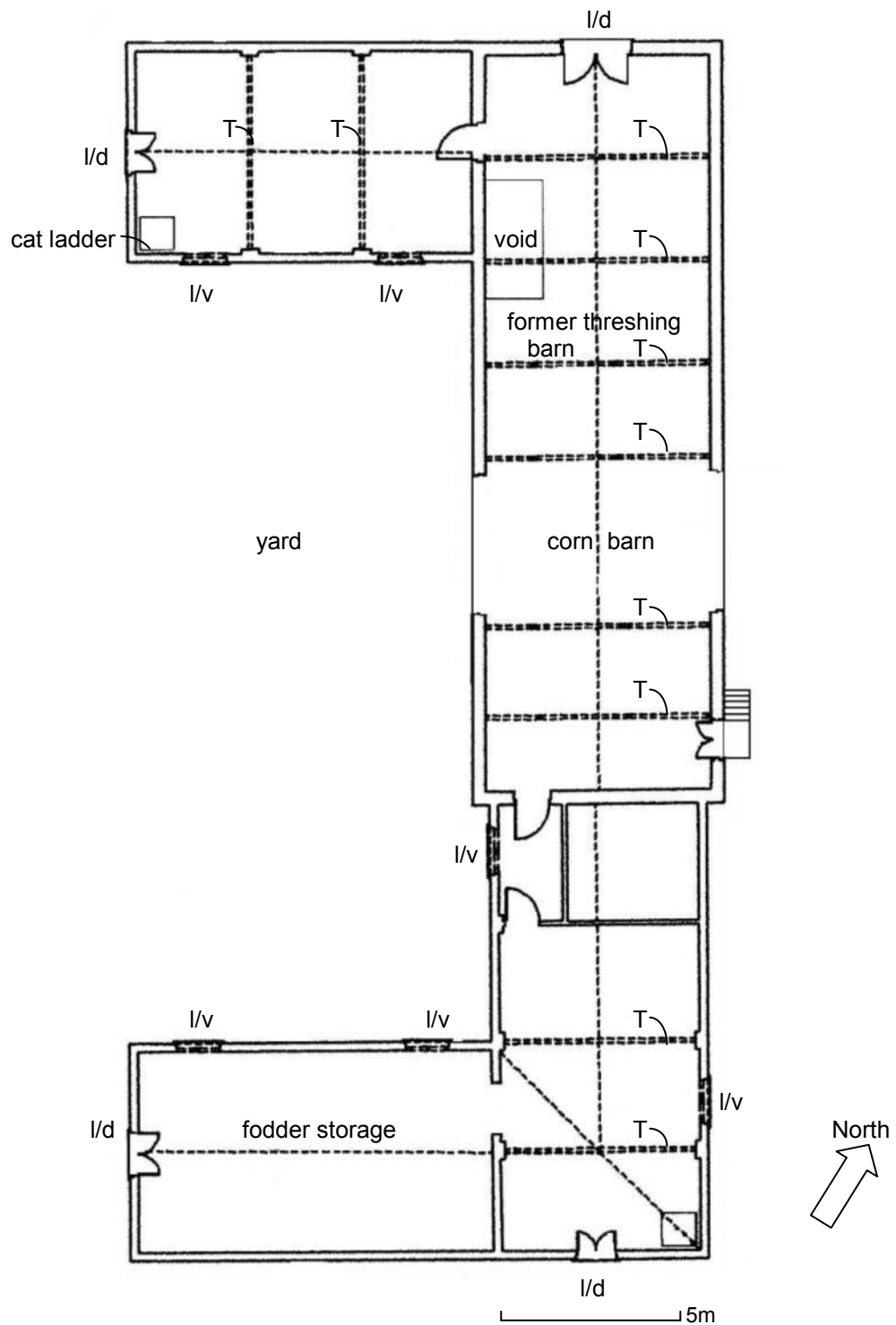


Figure 5: Livingshayes Farm. First floor plan, east range

For key see Figure 4



West range and entry to yard from south



Doorways at south end of west range



Detail of arched head of door frame



Cart linhay and north end of west range



Detail of decorative bracing to head of linhay post



Interior north end of west range



Detail of window and ventilator, west range



Roof truss and roof construction, west range



North end of west range



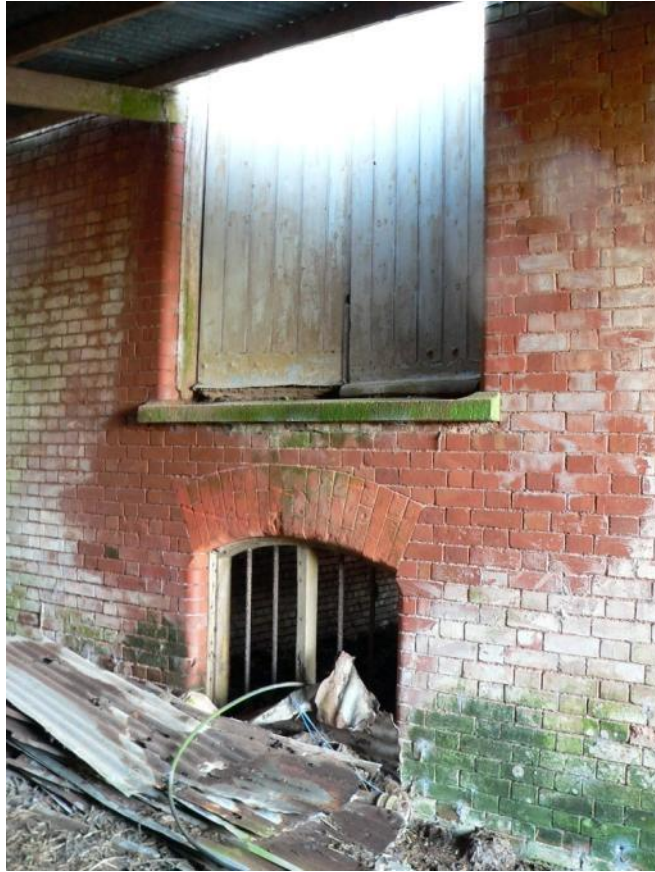
West elevation of west range, showing stone revetment below brickwork



North end of west range and north wing of east range



South elevation of north wing



Loading door and window, north end of east wing



Yard elevation of east wing, looking north, showing double sliding doors



Yard side of south wing, with concrete loading ramp to left



West end of south wing and yard entrance



Looking to north along rear (east) of east range



Double sliding doors on rear of east range



Horse engine house



Brick by W. THOMAS & C^o, WELLINGTON



Roof structure in roundhouse



Remains of horse gear in roundhouse



Roof structure in former threshing barn, east range



Roof structure at junction of east range and south wing



Alternating joists and herringbone strutting in north wing



Interior of north wing (former stables) showing hangers



Stable paving bricks, ground floor, north wing



First floor loading door, west gable, south wing



Ground floor doorway, west gable, south wing



First floor louvred ventilator



Ground floor window and sliding ventilator



Stall division and feed trough, ground floor, south wing