

**WELLAND DOWN FARM,
SANDFORD, DEVON**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING
OF LINHAY**

December 2013

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Project 236

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Summary

Historic building recording of a detached linhay - a traditional form of Devon farm building - was carried out prior to its conversion to domestic use. The first building on the site, which stands remote from the main complex at Welland Down Farm, appears to date from the early 19th century and has some unusual features as a linhay. The upper parts of the stone walls, however, have been substantially rebuilt and a new first floor and roof structure put on within the last fifteen years.

Introduction

This report has been compiled at the request of Nigel Cant Planning on behalf of the building owners, to record the historic fabric likely to be affected by the proposed conversion of a detached linhay at Welland Down Farm, Sandford, Devon, EX17 4EN, to domestic use. It follows a Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording submitted to the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Devon County Council, for building recording in support of a planning application to Mid Devon District Council (reference 13/01272/FULL).

The building is not listed.

A non-intrusive building survey was carried out on 6 December 2013 by Martin and Susan Watts. The building recording broadly conforms to Level 2-3 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).

Copies of this report will be deposited with the Devon County Historic Environment Service and a digital copy will be uploaded onto the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database under the identification number martinwa1-166039.

This report is intended to be read with the illustrations and photographs attached. The drawings are based on survey plans prepared by Architectural Services, Copplestone, Crediton, in April 2013.

Location

Welland Down Farm is situated at the north end of Sandford parish close to the parish boundary with Kennerleigh. The linhay is a detached building on a secluded site some 300m north-north-east of the main farm group, at NGR SS 813 066, standing at about 91m above Ordnance Datum (Figure 1). The underlying geology is a sedimentary mudstone of the Bude formation, Carboniferous period, comprising grey, thick-bedded somewhat argillaceous and silty sandstones (British Geological Survey materials: www.bgs.ac.uk/data, accessed 18.12.2013).

Historical background

The place-name Welland is not recorded in *The Place-names of Devon* under Sandford parish, but the name is given as meaning wild or uncultivated land elsewhere in the county (Gover *et al* 1932, 385). No building is shown at the location of the linhay on the 1805 Ordnance Survey drawing (<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/>, accessed 18.12.2013) but two buildings are shown on the Sandford tithe map (north sheet) (Figure 2), one in the position of the linhay, with a smaller building to the west. In the accompanying apportionment, dated 1839, the farm is entered as 'East Wooland Down' and was owned by William Kitson and occupied by William Cousins. The land extended to just over 130 acres (about 53 hectares). The small plot containing the two buildings is listed as 'Barn & Courtlage', its land use being described as waste. On the first edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of c.1880-90 only a building on the site of the linhay is shown (Figure 3). This building scales at approximately 16.3m west-east by 3.8m deep at the west end, projecting a further 1.8m to the north at the east end. The building shown on the second edition 1:2500 OS map of 1904-6 occupies a smaller area than that shown on the earlier map (Figure 4), being approximately 8.1m west-east by 5m north-south. The field boundary to the south-east is also slightly different.

On both the first and second edition OS maps the building is named *Westercombe*, apparently taking its name from West Coombe Coppice, a nine acre field to the west of the site recorded in the tithe apportionment.

Description of the linhay (see Figures 5 & 6 and photographs)

A linhay is an open-fronted building with a dual function, providing shelter for cattle at ground level and the storage of fodder on the upper floor or tallet above. It is a distinctive local type of agricultural building, prevalent in Devon but virtually unknown elsewhere in England (Alcock 1963; Child 1995, 71). A linhay most often forms an integral part of a complex of agricultural buildings and is usually alongside an open yard or enclosed space, where cattle can be gathered. The linhay at Welland Down Farm represents a slight variation on the traditional form, having stone walls closing the fronts of the two end bays and standing isolated from the main farm group.

The present building occupies an area of about 64 square metres. It is orientated approximately west-east, with its open front facing south. Its west end is built into the natural slope of the ground, giving access to the upper floor at higher ground level through the west gable. The ground falls about 2.5m from west to east along the rear (north) wall.

The building has been substantially repaired and partially rebuilt in the last 15 years or so, in particular above tallet floor level. It formerly comprised five structural bays of about 2.4m width. As rebuilt it has a wider central bay, 3m between the front posts.

Exterior:

The south fronts of the two end bays are closed in random rubble stonework up to the tallet floor level. The stonework at the west end has been almost completely rebuilt from about 0.76m upwards and the upper 0.6m at the east end has also been rebuilt. The random coursed rubble walls, which are of local sandstone, are about 0.46m thick.

The partially open south front has two short posts which stand on the heads of the walls closing the two end bays and two longer posts which stand on rubble stone bases. The two short outer posts are both re-used timbers, which appear to have been cut down from the original front posts. They both have through mortises with angled shoulders (although now positioned upside down), to which the outer ends of the main cross beams carrying the loft floor would have been joined. The tenons on the ends of the original beams presumably passed through the mortises and were pegged across the faces rather than through the posts. The two taller inner posts are of different character, but are also reused timbers, having a number of redundant apparently random peg holes in them. Some of the faces of these timbers show evidence of hewing. Both of the taller posts sit on new rubble stone bases, which are about 0.75m square by 0.8m high with concrete capping.

The east gable is of rubble stone to full height, with repairs to the masonry at the top of both corners at eaves level. There are remains of the stone footings of the walls of a small building about 2.3m square in the ground adjoining east gable. About 1.3m of stonework along the top of the north wall has been rebuilt, with three window openings and a 1.3m wide doorway to the rear of the first bay from the west. The outer rubble stone walling has also been rebuilt with an inner skin of rendered hollow concrete blocks. Because of the extent of rebuilding it is not possible to tell if the openings in the north wall are original (see discussion below).

At the west end, where the linhay is built into the slope, some stonework remains above the higher ground level, but the existing gable end is of rendered hollow concrete blocks, the outer stone skin having not been rebuilt. There is much stone, presumably from the north wall and west gable, lying on the ground to the north-west of the building. As well as the wide doorway in the north wall of bay 1, there is another doorway through the west gable; both give access directly onto the loft floor. Again the amount of rebuilding makes it difficult to tell if these are new or reflect original openings.

Interior:

The ground floor has been partially excavated in the two bays at the west end, presumably to form a solid base for the concrete block inner skin that lines the insides of the walls. The internal south, west and north walls in bay 1 (from the west) are of rendered concrete block and the north wall in bay 2 has also been lined and rendered. The floor is highest in the central bay, apparently due to the level of the bedrock. The two bays at the east end are set slightly lower and still retain a cobbled floor surface.

The first floor structure has been completely renewed and is set at a higher level than the original. There is some vestigial evidence of the original construction, with the ends of some of the principal cross beams which spanned from the front posts to the rear wall and defined the structural bays still built into the north wall. There is also some patching visible in the stonework where others were located. There are eight joist sockets in the stonework of the east gable wall, the tops of which are about 0.36m below the present floor level at that end. The new floor is carried on sections of telegraph pole which form two cross beams, one on either side of the central bay, and softwood beams and joists. The joists run north-south in the two end bays and west-east in the two inner bays, the central bay being open. The joists are of standard treated softwood, with noggings nailed between them at mid-span. All of the floor timbers are modern with the exception of a small area at the front (south) end of bay 4, where there are five reused joists. The floor is formed with sheets of OSB [oriented strand boards] laid on the joists. The west, north and east walls at

first floor level have been fully lined with an inner skin of concrete blocks, which is rendered.

Roof:

The roof is also new, being constructed of standard section treated softwood timbers nailed together. There are full length wall plates, of 190 by 50mm section, all round the heads of the walls and on the tops of the front posts and four lightweight trusses. The tie beams are 190 by 50mm section, the principal rafters 150 by 50mm section, with two rows of 100 by 50mm purlins on each slope and a vertical ridge board. Both the west and east ends of the roof are fully hipped and the slopes and hips are clad with corrugated metal sheets, some modern, some of older profile and finish.

Lean-to:

A single storey lean-to, about 4.1m wide (north-south) and 3.1m deep (west-east) projects from the south wall of bay 1. Its west wall is built into the bank and it has an open front to the east. Internally the west wall contains some massive stone blocks and has been substantially rebuilt, with cement pointing and some concrete repairs. The south wall is formed of corrugated iron sheets and wooden boards supported on timber posts, including a reused telegraph pole. The lean-to roof is of corrugated metal sheets on a lightweight timber structure.

Dating and discussion

From the map evidence given above, the first building to occupy this site was built between 1805 and the late 1830s. The larger building shown on the tithe map occupies much of the footprint of the surviving linhay, although it is unclear whether it was originally built as a linhay or as a barn, making use of the natural slope of the ground to give level access to the upper floor. Some aspects of the layout of the building are considered unusual for a linhay, such as its being built into the slope at the west end and the two end bays being closed at ground floor level. However, its orientation, with the open front facing south, and the presence of a small enclosure in front and a spring that rises to the south-west and feeds a small pond against the southern boundary of the enclosed area, suggests it was planned as an animal shelter remote from the main farm complex. The tithe apportionment records the fields surrounding as being in mixed use, both pasture and arable. The tithe map (Figure 2) shows a second, smaller building against the field boundary to the south-west of the linhay, which had gone by the time of the first edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of c.1880-90 (Figure 3). This map shows the building extending further to the west, into the slope of the hill, and to be deeper (north-south) at its east end. By the time of the second edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1904-6 the building appears to have been truncated at its west end and to be smaller in area (Figure 4). It therefore appears likely that some substantial remodelling took place at the end of the 19th century. From its present appearance, with stonework repairs and rebuilding evident in the upper parts of the walls, above the tallet or upper floor level, and the complete renewal of the timber floor and roof structures, it is evident that the building has been substantially rebuilt. This is understood to have taken place during the present ownership, within the last fifteen years (R. Huxter, pers comm), presumably after many years of disuse and decay.

Conclusion

The former linhay at Westercombe, Welland Down Farm, retains some interesting features, in particular with regard to its detached location and its west end being built into the natural slope of the ground. While such features are not considered to be typical of linhays, it is not uncommon for barns to be built in isolated locations on Devon farms (P. Child, pers comm). However, the south-facing aspect and the adjoining fenced or hedged enclosure with a water supply are more typical. The first building to occupy the site appears to have been constructed between 1805 and c.1840, possibly built as a bank barn which was subsequently remodelled to turn it into a linhay. Changes to the plan form and the enclosure took place in the late 19th century and the building appears to have assumed its present form, at least in general terms, in the early 20th century. The present structure was substantially repaired and partially rebuilt with a new first floor and roof in late 20th or early 21st century. Consequently, with the exception of its location and the lower parts of the stone walls, little original historic fabric now survives.

Martin Watts

Draft: December 2013

Minor amendment: January 2014

Sources

Alcock, N.W. 1963: Devonshire linhays: a vernacular tradition. *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 95, 117-30

Child, P. 1995: Farm Buildings, in P. Beacham (ed) *Devon Building*, 60-94

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

Tithe map and apportionment held by the Devon Heritage Centre, Exeter

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the farm owner for providing access and background information about the site and building, to Peter Child for his insights, and to Sue Watts for her help with the site survey, map work and in the preparation of this report.

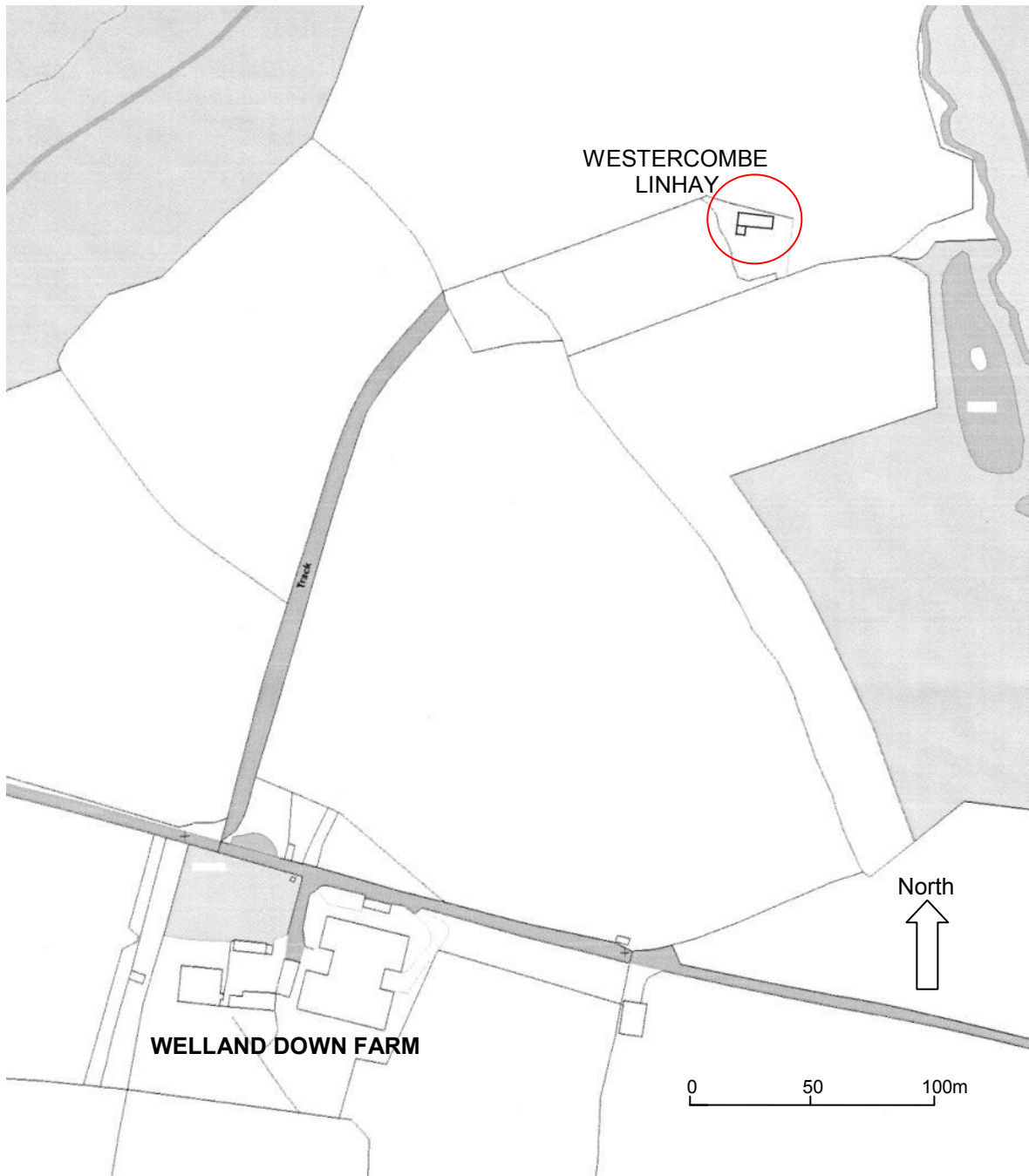


Figure 1: Welland Down Farm, Sandford, showing the relative location of the linhay

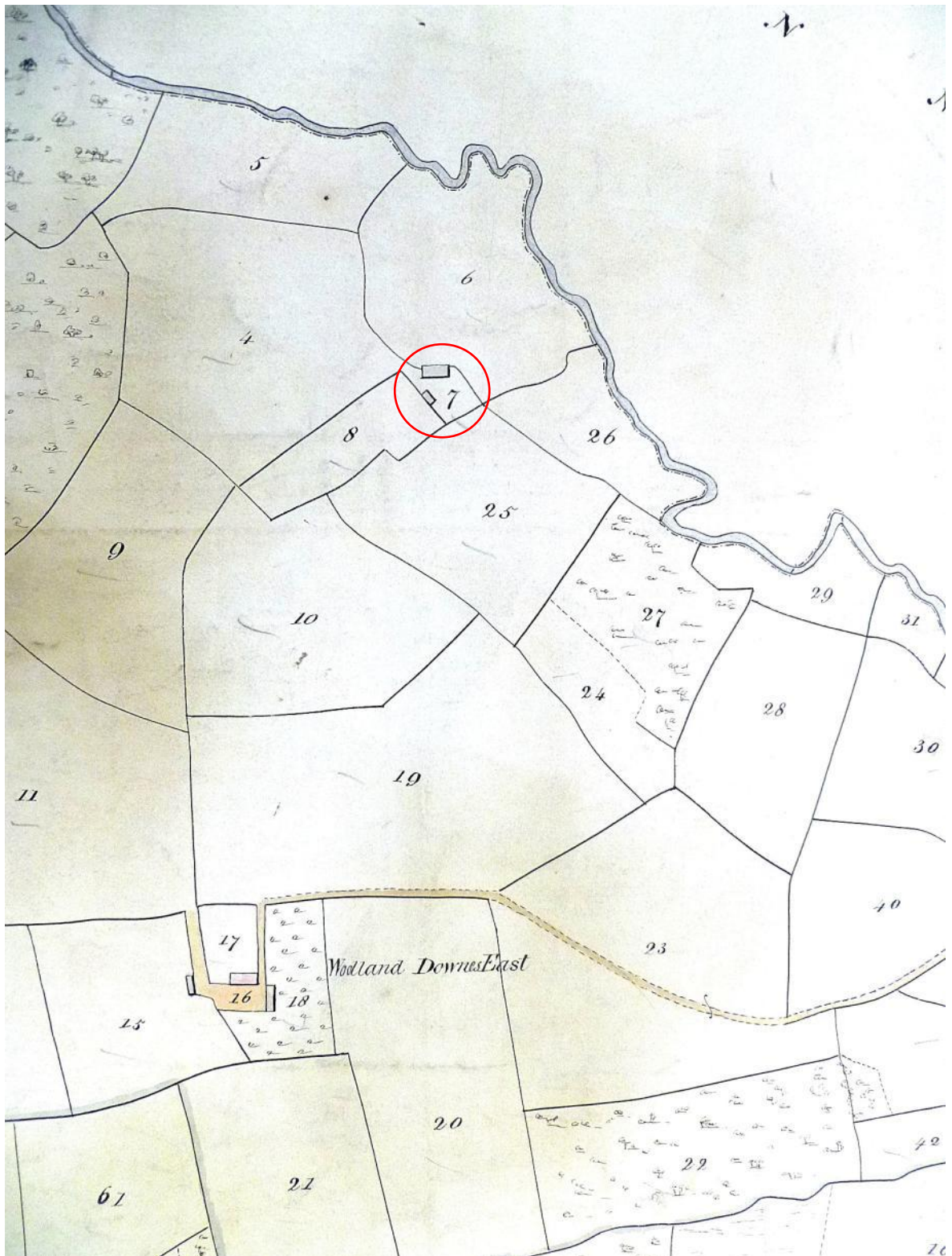


Figure 2: Welland Down Farm, with the isolated location of the linhay indicated
Extract from the Sandford tithe map, north sheet, c.1839 (*Devon Heritage Centre*)

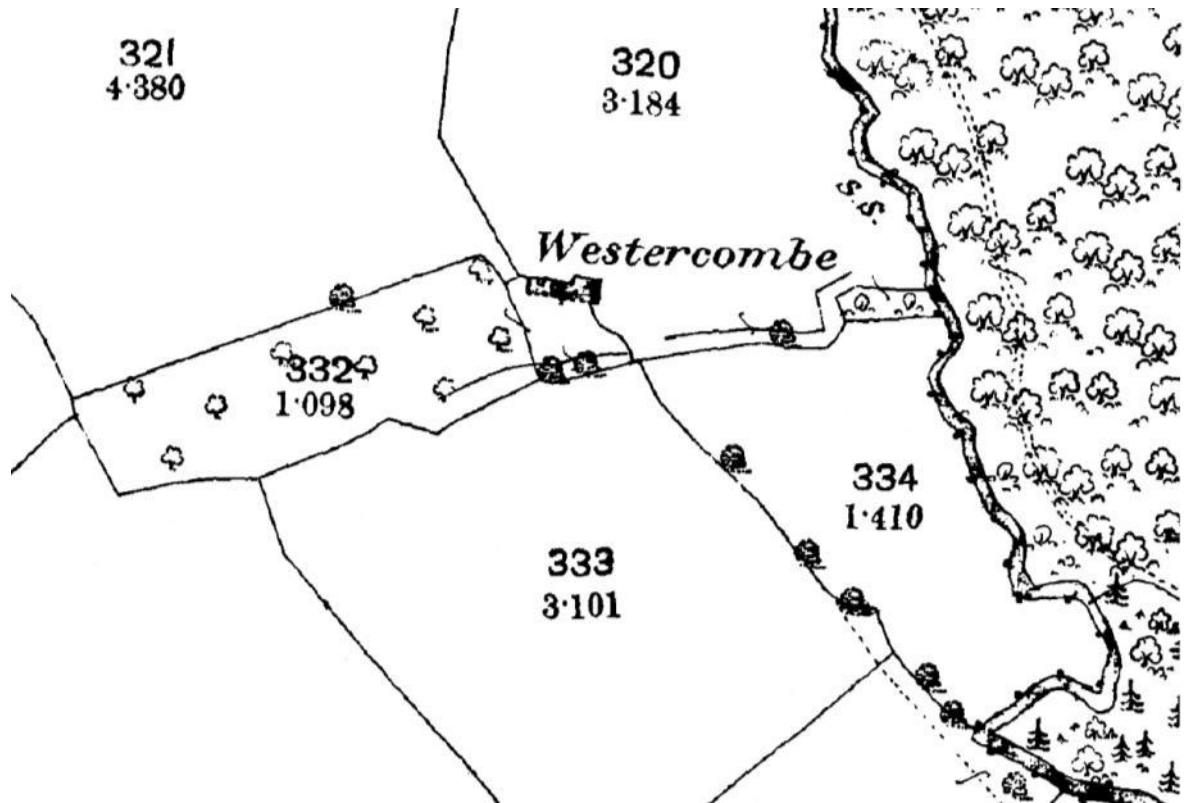


Figure 3: Westercombe linhay. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, first edition c.1880-90

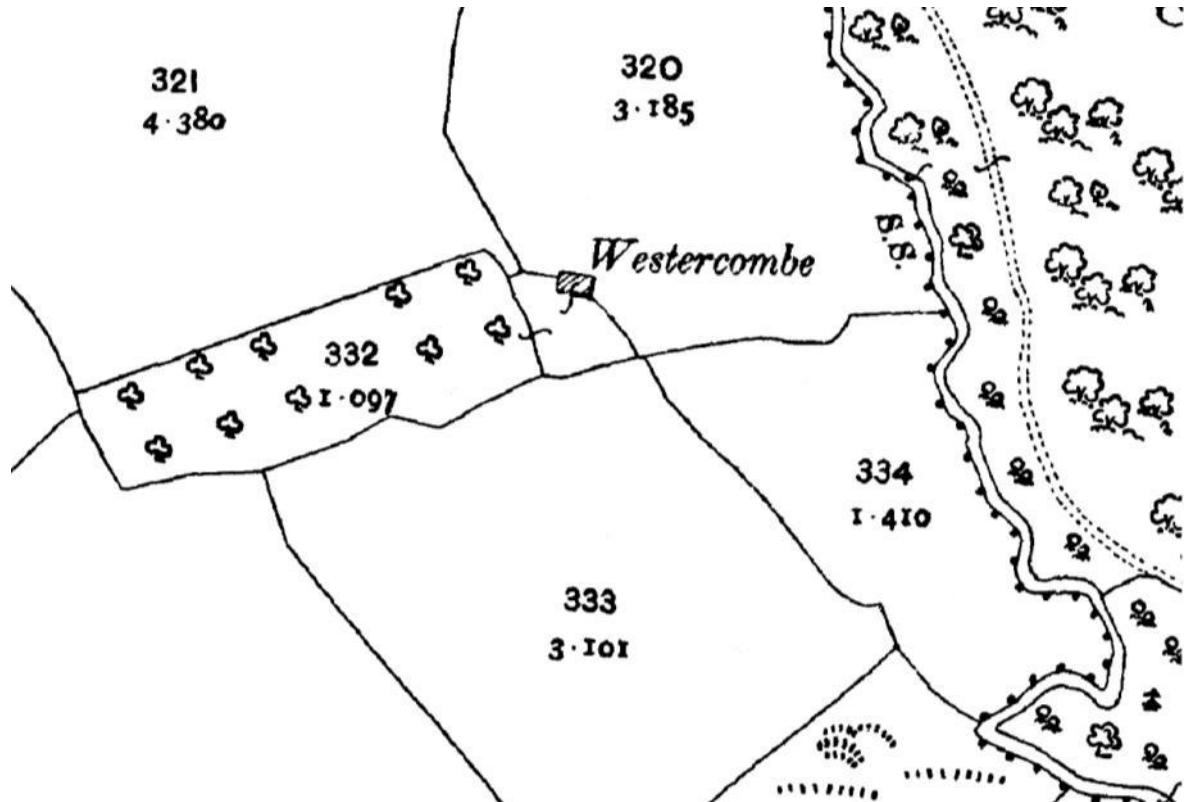


Figure 4: Westercombe linhay. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, second edition c.1904-06

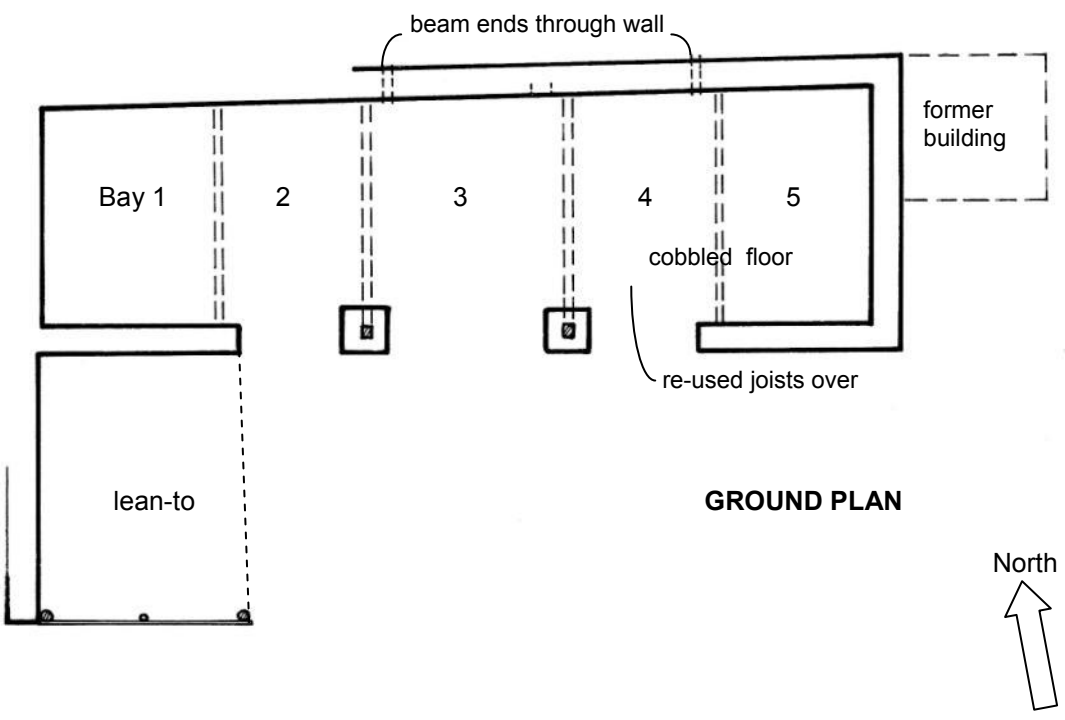
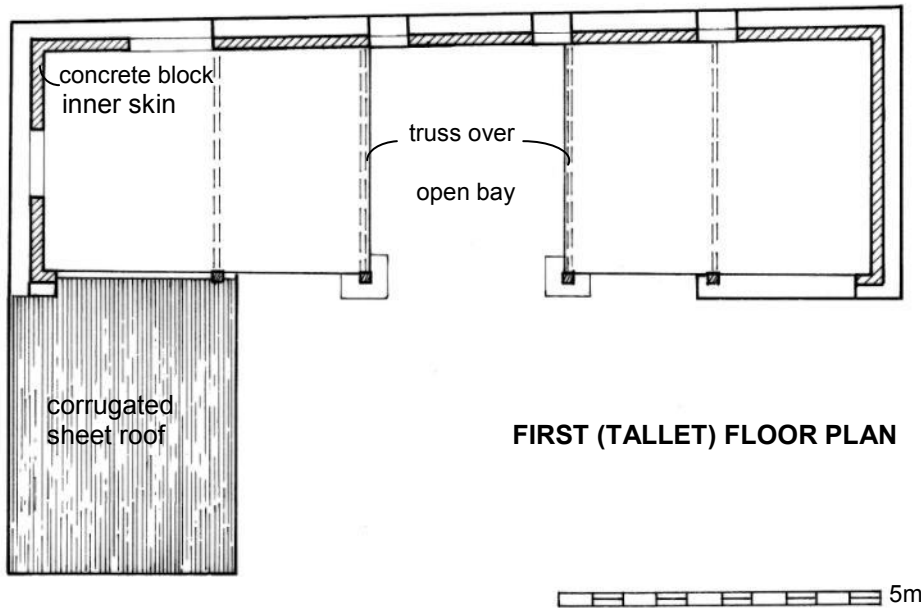


Figure 5: Westercombe linhay, Welland Down, Sandford. Plans

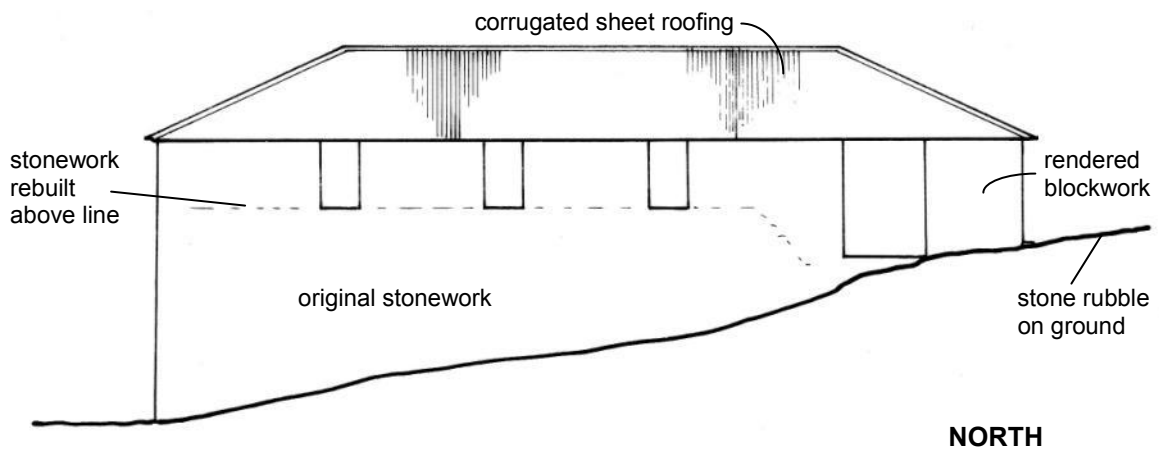
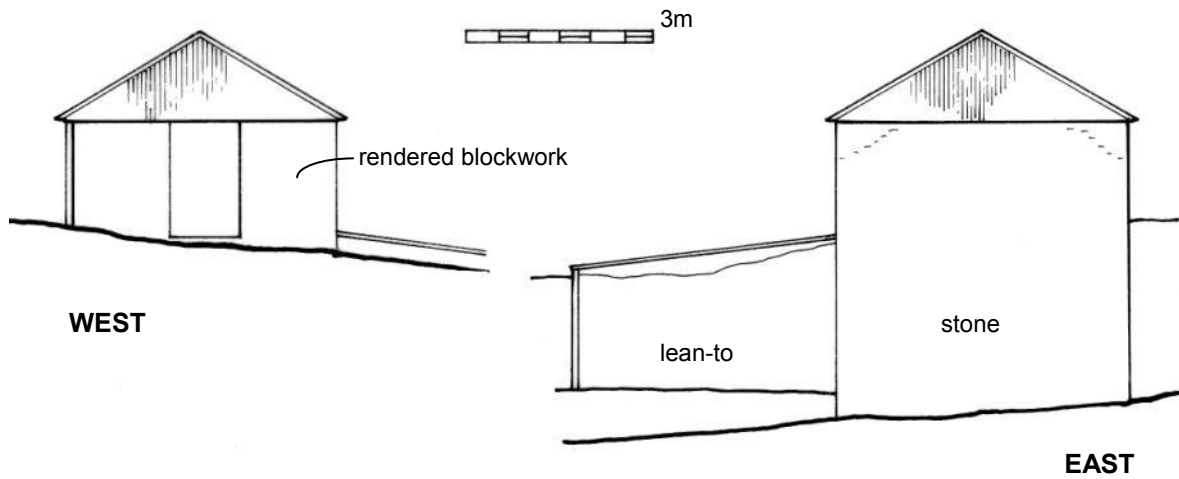
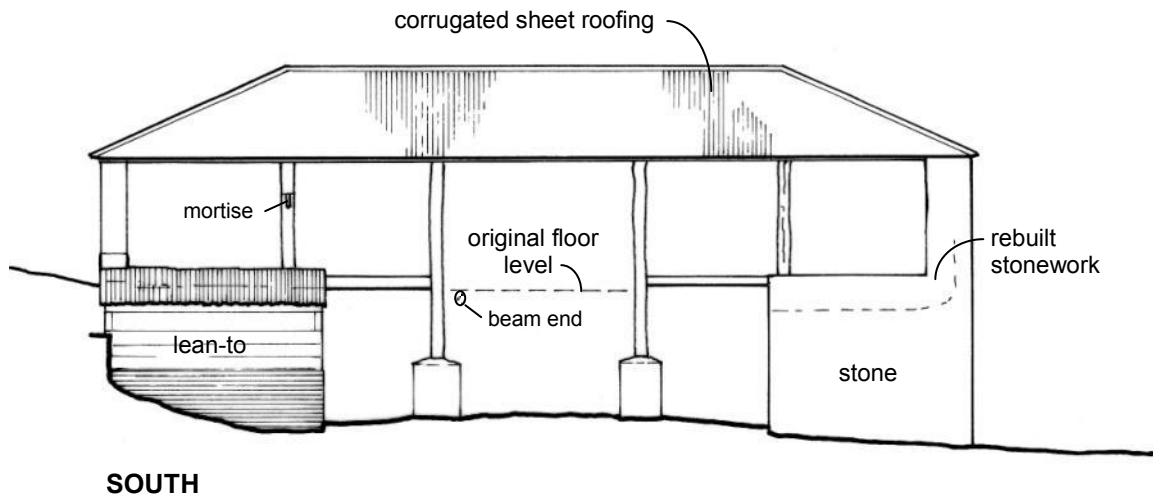


Figure 6. Westerdale linhay, Welland Down, Sandford. Elevations



Westercombe linhay from the south east. Note areas of rebuilt masonry



Linhay from the north west, showing extent of rebuilt rendered concrete block walling



Linhay, looking north-west through centre bay, showing rebuilt and new stonework and rendered interior walls



Linhay from rising ground to south-west, looking over lean-to roof



Lean-to extension at south-west end of linhay



General view from the south



East gable end; note rebuilt masonry



Lean-to, left, and linhay south front



North wall - top of stonework rebuilt - and west gable, rebuilt in rendered concrete block



South front and east gable



Extension footprint by east gable



Lean-to extension, with rear (west) wall built into bank



Ground floor interior, looking west



Reused floor joists in bay 4 from west



Bedrock exposed in rear wall of centre bay



Original cross beam end and replacement first floor beam in rear wall of centre bay



Cobbled floor surface at east end



Joist sockets in east gable wall



Centre bay, looking north-west, showing front posts and rendered concrete blockwork internal wall lining



Doorway in north wall, bay 1 from west



Re-used front post between bays 1 and 2



General view of first floor looking south-east



Detail of shoulder and mortice (upside down) on re-used front post



New roof structure, looking to west end



General view of linhay from rising ground to the south-west