

**LINHAY AT LICKHAM BOTTOM,
HEMYOCK, DEVON**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

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Project LBL262

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF A LINHAY AT LICKHAM BOTTOM, HEMYOCK, DEVON

Summary

A disused detached agricultural building at Lickham Bottom, Hemyock, was recorded prior to its conversion to domestic use. The building, which dates from the second half of the 19th century, is a good example of a traditional Devon lincay, which provided shelter for stock at ground level and fodder storage above. It is built of stone and timber under a tiled roof.

Introduction

This report has been compiled at the request of the building owner, to record the historic fabric which will be affected by the proposed conversion of a lincay at Lickham Bottom, Hemyock, Devon, EX15 3RU. The works comprise the conversion of the building to domestic accommodation and are the subject of a planning consent (ref 16/00390/FULL) granted by Mid Devon District Council in May 2016. It follows a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Devon County Council for an archaeological/historic building survey and recording required in accordance with paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012) and the Local Development Framework Policy on Archaeology.

The building, which is currently disused, is not listed nor within the curtilage of a listed building. While not in a designated conservation area, the building is within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

A non-intrusive site survey was carried out by Martin and Susan Watts on 19 December 2017. The building recording broadly conforms to Level 1-2 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).

Digital copies of this report will be deposited with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Service and uploaded onto the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database under the identification number martinwa1-306194.

This report is intended to be read with the drawings and photographs attached. The drawings are based on plans and elevations prepared by South West Land Surveys of Exeter for Simon Spencer Architect in November 2015.

Location

The lincay stands in an isolated location just below the 205m contour, between Lickham Bottom and Castle Hill, about 1.25km to the south-west of Hemyock, at NGR ST 1298 1234. It is approached along a driveway from the east, which runs downhill from a minor road. The site stands on a lens of Triassic sedimentary rocks (Mercia Mudstone Group), on a junction with Cretaceous sandstone of the Upper Greensand formation to the south (BGS). There are a number of extraction pits and cuttings down the slope to the north of the building, which are visible on aerial photographs from the 1940s onwards (DCC HER MDV115951) and, although overgrown, can also be seen on the ground. It is not clear what was extracted from these workings.

Historical background

No building is shown at this location on the Hemyock tithe map of 1843 (Figure 1). The lincay was built sometime after then, close to the south end of a large, irregularly-shaped field, numbered 1280 on the tithe map, which is called 'Allotment' and its use described as 'Furze' in the tithe apportionment. The described use and location suggest that the field was suitable for rough grazing of livestock. The field was then part of Oxenpark Farm, the main buildings of which are located about 0.5km to the east. At the time of the tithe award, the farm and land were the property of James Thomas Benedictus Notley, and occupied by John Ewins. The lincay is marked on the first edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1888 and published in 1889, where it is shown shaded red, with a dotted line indicating the south-facing open front (Figures 2, 3). It is similarly shown on the second edition map of 1903/4 (Figure 4). Its form and setting do not appear to have changed subsequently.

Description

A lincay is an open-fronted building with a dual function, providing shelter for cattle at yard or field level and storage for fodder on the loft or tallet floor above. It is a distinctive local type of farm building, prevalent in Devon but virtually unknown elsewhere in England (Alcock 1963; Child 1995, 71). The building at Lickham Bottom is a good example of a detached lincay. It is approximately 13m in length by 4m deep, and orientated west-east, its open front facing south. It was built on a level site, possibly either artificially created, or an enhanced natural terrace. A small area of hard standing is visible adjacent to the east gable, but there is no clear evidence of a yard or made-up surface to the south front of the building, where the ground slopes upwards.

The building contains five structural bays, which are defined by four vertical posts and roof trusses. The rear wall and gable ends are built of coursed rubble stone, a chert-like local stone which is bedded in a buff coloured lime mortar. The stonework is generally good, with some squared or squarer stone blocks being used as quoins, particularly visible on the north-east corner. The west and east gable end walls both reduce in thickness slightly above tallet floor level.

The ground floor is mostly covered with earth and leaf litter, with no clearly visible evidence of a made surface, other than some rough concrete in bay 4.

The four front posts sit on roughly shaped stone bases. Numbering from west to east, P1 and P2 are squared oak timbers which both have a natural curve inwards towards their tops. P3 is a squared timber with a slightly jowled top and P4 a straight squared timber. All of the posts are weathered and there is no clear evidence that any of them have been re-used; they are probably 'as found' timbers, sparingly converted from locally sourced trees. All four posts have a short, north-south aligned, timber plates notched into/over their heads. A single iron spike has been driven down through each pad on the of north side of the post head, presumably to stop it from moving outwards (see photograph).

The cross beams which support the joists carrying the loft or tallet floor, are squared timbers, about 18cm square. From the west, numbers 1, 2 and 3 are marked for assembly with small circular indentations: 'o' 'oo' and 'ooo' close to where they are jointed to the posts (see photograph). No marks were visible on number 4, possibly due to weathering of the face of the timber. The south/front ends of the beams are tenoned through the posts, with a small notched shoulder on underside and the tenons of numbers 3 and 4 are pegged through the

posts. The north ends of the cross beams bear on timber blocks built into inside face of the rear wall. The beam ends pass right through the wall and are exposed on the north elevation.

Secondary timber props have been inserted under the north ends of beams 1 and 2. There are also a number of sawn softwood timbers fixed horizontally across the front of the building, between the posts, in order to retain some stability, and additional vertical supports have been screwed (with modern screws) to the front faces of P1 and P2.

The cross beams have timber plates nailed to both faces which carry the ends of the floor joists. These span west-east and their ends are notched over the plates. The joists are generally simply converted, of about 11cm by 7cm cross-section, spaced at approximately 0.5m centres. There were originally six joists in each bay, but several are missing. In both the west and east bays the outer ends of the joists are carried on full length timber plates built into the walls.

The tallet floor, which was not readily accessible due to decay and some fodder still being in place at the east end, is formed of 16cm by 2.5cm square edged softwood boards. The south front of the floor is very weathered and decayed. There is no evidence of a fixed ladder up to the loft, a feed slot in the tallet floor, or a fixed manger or feed trough along the inside of the rear wall.

The roof is carried on four A frame trusses, set at a pitch of about 45 degrees (Figure 6). The principal rafters are squared timbers which are halved, notched and pegged at the apex, with collars bolted to their east faces. The ridge purlin is a squared timber, set diamond-wise. There is a single row of purlins to each slope, which run over the backs of the principals. The feet of the rear principals sit on timber blocks which are built into the wall head. The blocks to T1 and T4 are aligned north-south and those to T2 and T3 east-west. There are also some intermediate timber blocks aligned north-south on the wall head in bays 2, 3 and 4. The front (south) feet of the principals bear on shaped timber blocks which are aligned north-south and are notched over the tops of the front posts. There are five common rafters per bay, which support battens for tiles on the front slope and more recent secondary timbers on the rear slope. The feet of the front rafters bear on a timber plate which spans between the blocks on the post heads. The front slope is clad with seven courses of triple roman tiles, which are hung on nibs over battens. The rear slope is clad with corrugated metal sheet. Externally, the ridge is clad with inverted V-shaped clay tiles. The roof timbers were not closely accessible for detailed inspection or measurement due to the condition of the tallet floor.

There is a pallet with a quantity of pantiles on the floor of bay 3. One displaced triple roman tile in the building has BROWNE & C^O BRIDGWATER PATENT stamped into it and some displaced clay ridge tiles are stamped W^M THOMAS & C^O L^{TD} WELLINGTON SOMERSET. It is not known if these tiles are original to the site or have been brought in.

Dating and discussion

The map evidence indicates that the building dates from between 1843 and 1888. Its construction and layout are fairly typical of a traditional Devonshire linhay dating from the second half of the 19th century. There are some individual features of interest, however, including the shaped blocks on the heads of the front posts, which support the feet of the principal rafters, and the curved timber posts P1 and P2. While it is possible that these post timbers may be re-used, surface weathering and lack of other evidence, such as redundant mortises or peg holes, make this inconclusive. Generally the construction of the tallet floor

and the roof trusses, using locally sourced and simply converted timbers, is considered to be consistent with a building date in the second half of the 19th century. The manufacturers of the roof and ridge tiles are also in line with this dating.

Martin Watts
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Minor amendment: February 2018

Acknowledgements

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References and sources

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

BGS: British Geological Survey
www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html accessed 12.12.2017

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

DCC: Devon County Council: tithe maps and apportionments; Environment Viewer
<https://new.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment/tithe-map/>
<http://map.devon.gov.uk/dccviewer/>

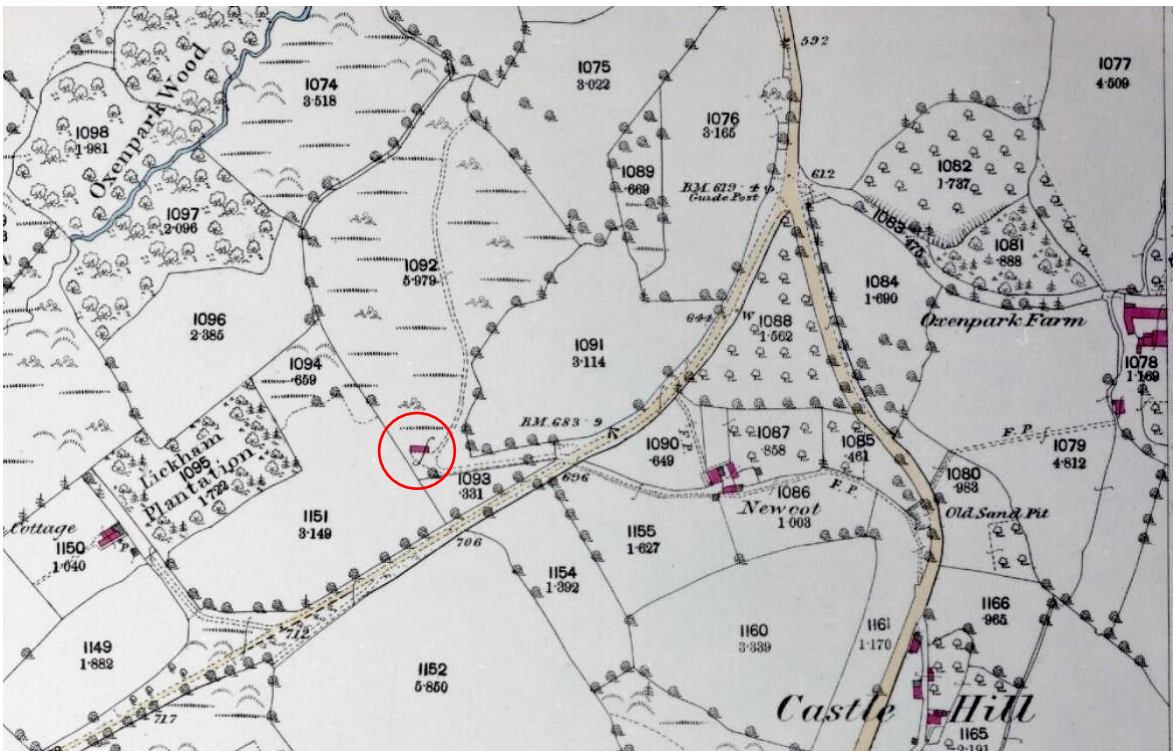
NLS: National Library of Scotland
<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/#zoom=8&lat=51.4301&lon=-2.0197&layers=101&b=1&point=0,0>

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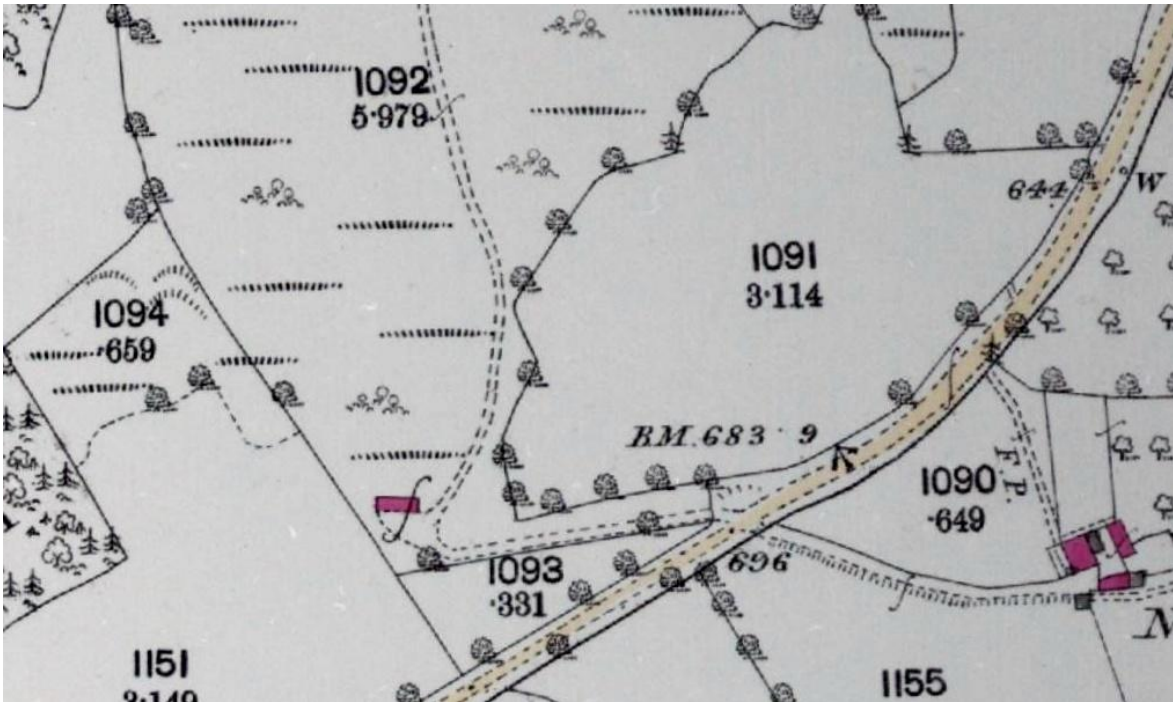
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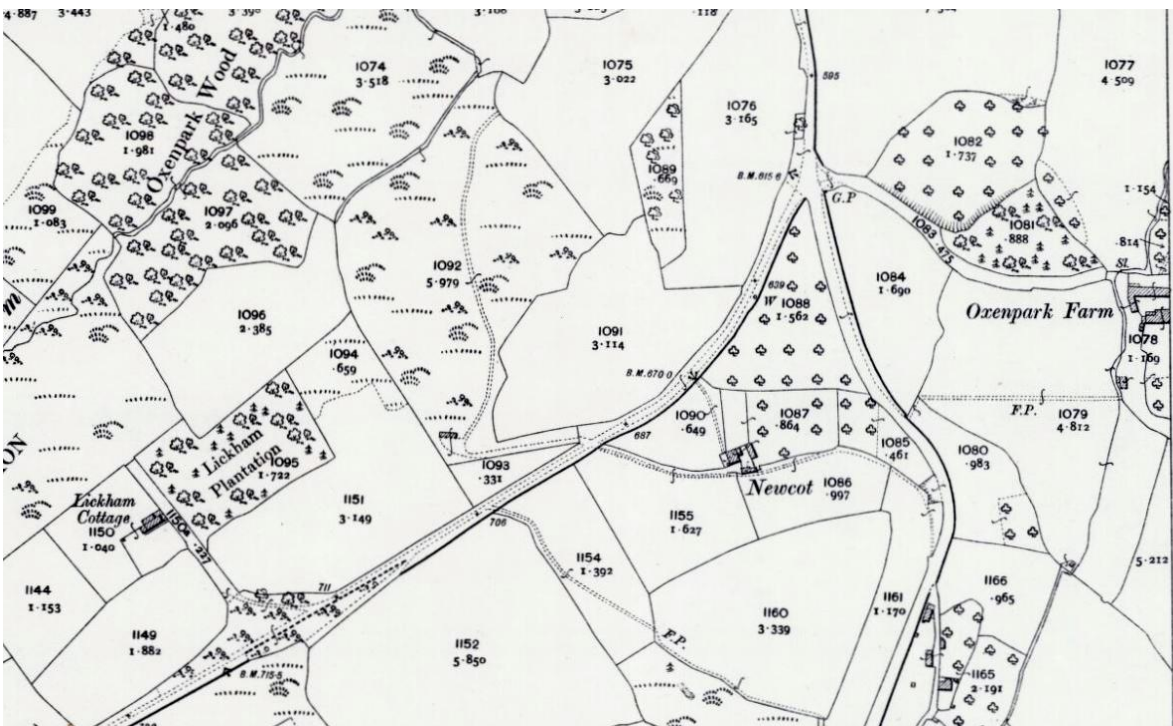
1. Extract from the Hemyock tithe map, 1843 (DCC)
 The location of the linhay is shown in red



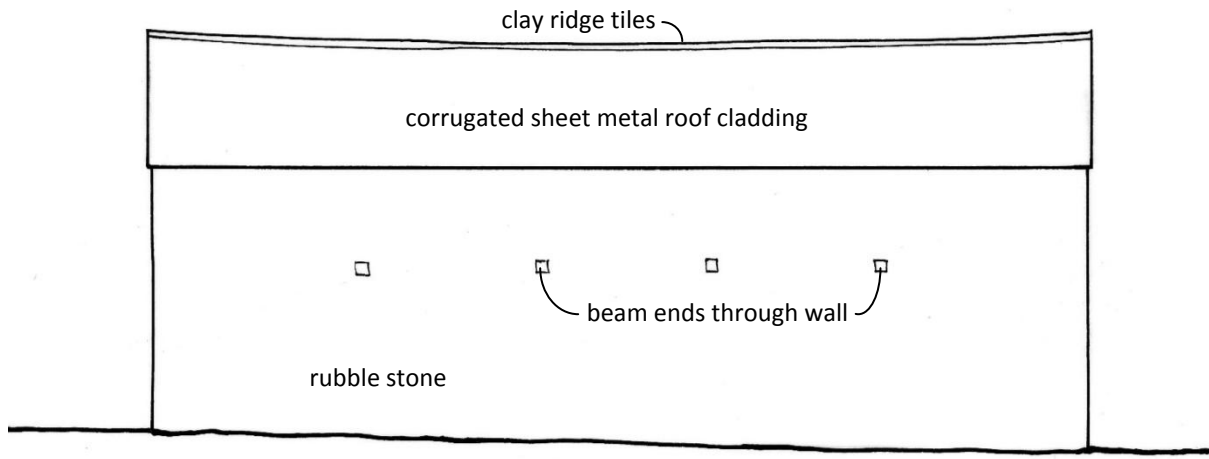
2. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, 1st edition, surveyed 1888, published 1889 (NLS)
 Showing the location of the linhay and Oxenpark Farm to the east



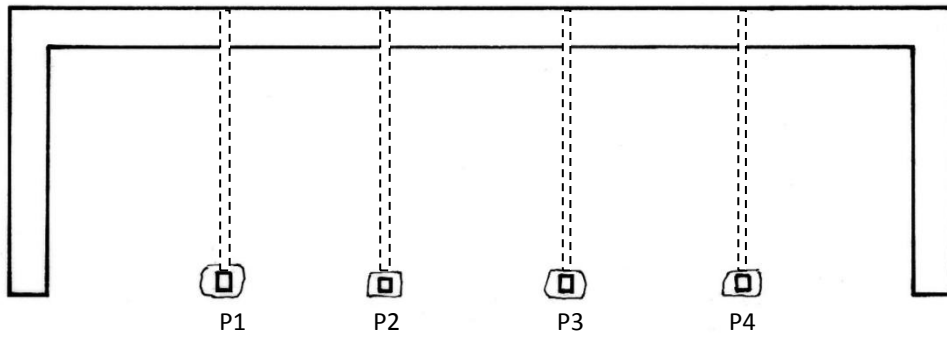
3. Detail from OS 1:2500 1st edition, showing linhay, with track down from the minor road



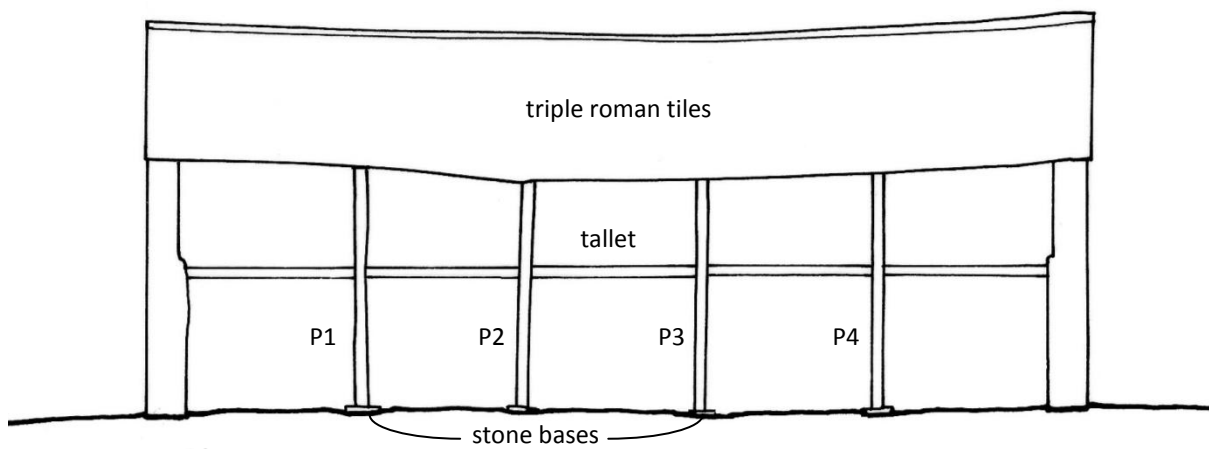
4. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 2nd edition, revised 1903, published 1904 (NLS)



NORTH ELEVATION

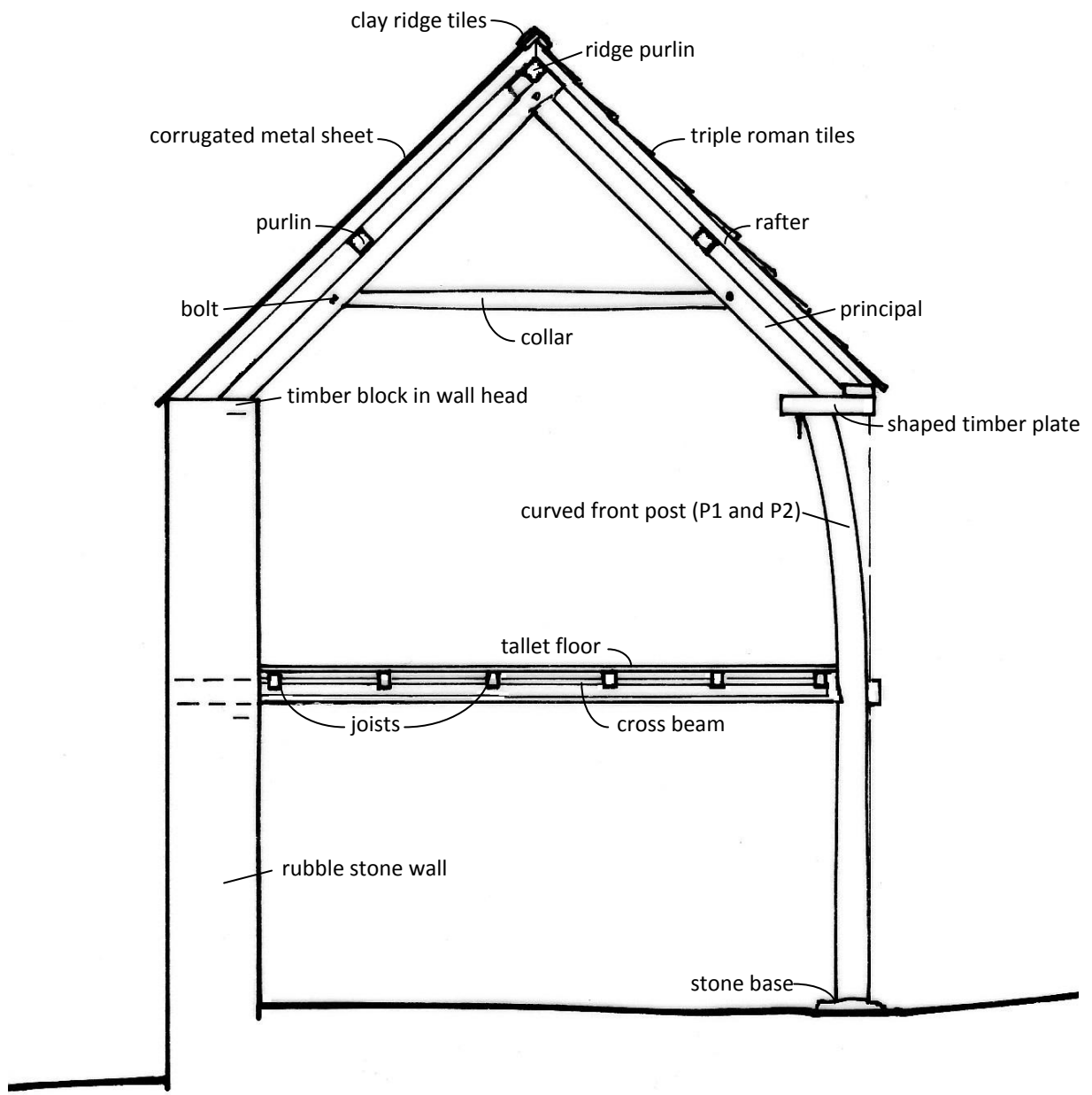


GROUND PLAN

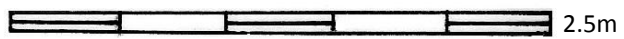


SOUTH ELEVATION

5. Principal elevations and plan



NORTH - SOUTH SECTION, LOOKING TO EAST



6. Sketch section, showing tallet floor and roof construction



Lickham Bottom linhay, from the south east



South elevation. 1m scale



East gable and north wall, from the north east



North elevation. 1m scale



North wall and west gable, from the north west. 1m scale



South front of linhay, looking west, showing modern bracing timbers



South front of linhay, looking east, showing curved tops to P1 and P2



Ground floor interior, looking west, showing tallet floor structure



Interior looking east, showing tallet floor and secondary props under cross beams to left



Roof structure, looking west



Tallet and roof looking east



Cross beam and joists on timber plates built into walls in north-east corner



Stone bases under feet of posts



Detail of cross beam to front post joint, P1, east side



Cross beam / post joint, pegged, P3, showing assembly marks



Curved head of post P1, east side, showing shaped timber plate carrying foot of principal



Detail of timber plate carrying foot of principal, P2, showing metal spike to left of post



Roof construction, north slope, bay 3