

Building recording at Tower Barn, Broadway Tower Country Park, Broadway, Worcestershire



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Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

Building recording was required to meet a planning condition relating to the redevelopment of Tower Barn at Broadway Tower Country Park, Broadway, Worcestershire.

The planning condition specified that the buildings should be recorded and to Historic England specified standards. This required photographing the exterior and interior of the building and annotating existing survey drawings. This produced an archive of the buildings before any changes were made.

An element of historical research and synthesis was also a condition planning approval. Digitised historic mapping and Historic Environment Record data relevant for the Broadway Tower Barn area was considered.

Analysis of the buildings was based upon the recorded fabric and study of the relevant historic mapping. The development of the buildings was reconstructed and illustrated on a phased ground plan. This has been reproduced at the end of the report along with relevant photographs.

The earliest element of the building is a limestone threshing barn, which is likely to date from the 18th or early 19th centuries. This was probably established as an out farm, although which farm it was associated with is currently unclear. It is of four bays and was probably used for threshing and storage of hay or straw. The users of the barn saw fit to protect it with ritual symbols located around the threshing floor doors on the eastern side.

Within the 19th century two further elements were added, creating a U shaped courtyard on the eastern side of the barn. Only the northern element of these buildings remains and is likely to have been stabling. A number of changes occurred to the buildings in the later 20th century as part of their inclusion in to the Broadway Country Park.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

Recording of a historic building was undertaken at Tower Barn, Broadway Tower Country Park, Broadway, Worcestershire (NGR SP 1113 3613). It was commissioned by Broadway Tower Country Park, who intend the buildings conversion and alteration to provide a visitors Centre and E-Bike Hire Reception, demolition of an existing agricultural building and the erection of a new building to provide E-bike storage and an additional food preparation area in association with the existing country park café. The planning application has been granted by Wychavon District Council (reference W/16/01647PN).

The building is an undesignated heritage asset, within the terms used by the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The building is also registered with the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER; WSM47509).

No brief prepared by for this project but a letter from Adrian Scruby, Historic Environment Advisor for Worcestershire County Council to Heather Pearson (the case officer) of Wychavon District Council dated 12th August 2016 specified the requirement for a level 3 survey. The project conforms to the generality of briefs. A detailed specification was also produced (WA 2016).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (ClfA 2014), *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM68388.

2 Aims

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures, ClfA 2014a).

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons.), MSc); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1884 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560 (Figure 3)
- 1902 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1924 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2016).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 11th January 2017. The site reference number and site code is WSM68388.

Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the buildings, analysis of their development and annotation of existing survey drawings. All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot where possible. The photographic survey was carried out with a Sony α350 digital SLR camera. All photographs were recorded on a pro-forma Photographic Record Sheet. Annotation of existing ground plans and elevations, and completion of pro-forma Building Record, complemented the photographic record.

The project conformed to the specification for a level 3 survey as defined in the Historic England document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016). This level of survey is described as 'an analytical record' comprising of 'an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the buildings origins, development and use' (*ibid.*). This required the following elements of survey.

Survey and drawings

- Plans of all main floors and elevations as existing (provided by client).
- Measured drawings showing the form of any architectural or functional detail not more readily captured by photography.

Photography

- Overall appearance of rooms and circulation areas.
- Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance.
- Any detail, structural or decorative, relevant to the building's design, development and use, which does not show on general photographs.

3.5 Building analysis

Analysis of the building was based on the study of the photographic record, building recording forms and annotated drawings. It was also informed by the documentary sources listed above. This allowed plans to be drawn up showing the structural development of the building.

The building as recorded is depicted in Plates 1-24. A ground and phase plan has been reproduced as Figure 2.

3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 Context

Tower Barn is located to the south of the village of Broadway and to the south-west of Broadway Tower which sits at the top an escarpment with extensive views across Worcestershire and adjacent counties. The outlook of Tower Barns is towards the west, on the escarpments' downward slope. The solid geology of the site is Birdlip Limestone Formation with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2017).

Worcestershire Historic Environment Record holds a number of entries within a 500m radius of Tower Barn. The earliest recorded features are medieval ridge and furrow (WSM47499) and a holloway of the same date (WSM47506) both to the north of the barn. The remainder of the records relate to the period after which Broadway Tower (WSM01293) was built in 1797 as a folly for the Earl of Coventry.

Both Clump Farm to the north (WSM62412, WSM47508) and The Rookery to the south (WSM54755, WSM62405) are farmsteads which are believed to have originated in the 19th century, but earlier origins cannot currently be discounted. Clump Farm no longer remains, having been demolished between 1902 and 1923.

Tower barn (WSM47509) is described as follows. *Partially extant 19th century (?) unlisted outfarm with unconverted buildings. Regular courtyard of U-plan. There has been a partial loss (less than 50%) of traditional buildings. Isolated location.* A water tank (WSM51541) is known to have existed to the west of the barn. Whilst Tower Barn was clearly an out farm, it is not certain with which farm it was associated.

Broadway Tower was used in the 20th century by the Royal Observer Corp as an observation post and further infrastructure installed, most notably a nearby underground monitoring post (WSM29483) and an Orlit Post (WSM25031). Also within the second half of the 20th century, the area including Tower Barn was incorporated into the Broadway Country Park (WSM29030).

5 The building

5.1 Historical information

The first available mapping of the site is the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884. This shows the buildings labelled as Covert Hill Barn, and the building in a U shaped arrangement open on the western side (Figure 3). The buildings are enclosed on the eastern and western side and tracks are visible leading to Clump Farm to the north and the Rookery to the south. To the west of the buildings is a circle, which is marked on the 1924 map with a "Tk" meaning a tank as previously mentioned, presumably storing water for animals. The buildings and tracks are shown as broadly the same on the 1902 and 1924 Ordnance Survey maps, though without the enclosures either side.

5.2 Building development

5.3 Phase 1: 18th to early 19th centuries

The earliest building on the site is the barn (Plate 2 to Plate 6) which forms the eastern side of the courtyard. It is rectangular, of rough limestone construction with a stone tiled roof divided into four bays divided by three roof trusses. The long axis of the barn is orientated approximately north-south. No original floors remained, having been replaced by concrete.

The function of the southernmost bay of the barn is likely to have been the storage of processed straw as triangular ventilation holes, four in the western wall and one in the eastern, would have served to keep the straw dry.

Opposing wide doors are set within the eastern and western walls of the bay to the north which would have originally opened onto a threshing floor.

Next to the southern side of this door was a recess cut into the wall (Plate 7) which may have held a timber partition alongside the threshing floor, although no corresponding recess was visible within the southern wall.

The use of the two northern bays is less obvious given the reduced amount of ventilation holes within the walls. A blocked door was present in the eastern wall, which later became a window which was in turn blocked (Plate 8). It is possible that a window formerly existed in the northern gable at ground floor level, though this was not clear (Plate 9). Above this was a further window (Plate 2 and Plate 5) which may originally have been used as a hatch to allow crop to be placed into the building. This would suggest the presence of a former first floor at the northern end of the building. No clear evidence for floor joists remained, though this may have been obscured by later repointing. The possibility of joists or temporary timbers resting on the walls at wall plate level remains though is speculative. The roof truss type would allow access through the roof space, though the northern truss is a later replacement so will not display wear patterns to suggest this. No such wear was visible on the remaining two trusses.

The two intact roof trusses are constructed of oak and converted by hand. Above the tie beam, raking struts supported the principle rafters, with a high collar above (*Plate 10*). This truss type characteristic of an 18th century date, though a later 19th century date cannot be discounted. This broad range is supported to some degree by other features on the building, such as the slight flare at the base of the roof visible from the exterior. This feature is common of buildings of the region from the late 17th century onwards.

A detail of the carpentry of the roof trusses is that their carpentered faces, as seen partially by the presence of carpenters marks, both faced southwards. It is far more typical for these to both face towards the threshing floor, suggesting that the timber framing cultural norms were being eroded by this point.

The principle rafters supported a single purlin on the western side and two purlins on the eastern side. All of the common rafters are replacements, as they are of machine cut softwood. A layer of roofing felt suggests a 20th century date for these replacements. The stone roof tiles are likely to be the replaced originals. A further area of visible repair to the barn was on the eastern side next to the door (*Plate 11*).

Some interesting details were located around the door onto the threshing floor on the eastern side. These took the form of marks cut into the stone. The first of these (Figure 4) was circular and 0.16m across, with a central indent and at least one arc transecting the middle of the circle. There are likely to have been further of these arcs creating a symbol generally known as a daisy wheel. Above this are another set of even fainter marks (Figure 5). It is possible that that these represent either double inverted V or M symbols. Such marks are not uncommon on the door jambs in threshing barns (Jordan 2006) with the double inverted Vs possibly representing *Virgo Virginum* or *Virgin of Virgins* and M representing *Mary* and invoking her projection.

The meaning of daisy wheels is broadly unknown; they were once thought to represent a setting out of Vitruvian geometry principles but are now commonly thought to also invoke protection and have an ecclesiastical origin (Meeson 2005). On the southern side of the door way was a possible saltire cross (*Plate 12*) the type of which has cropped up on what are known as 'witch-posts' in Yorkshire and there it is associated with an itinerant catholic priest who would use it as a 'secret' mark to identify a place where a church was held. A simpler explanation may be that it was a crude blessing to the barn (Brian Hoggard pers comm). The use of protection marks became common through the 17th century and continued to be used into the 18th century and later. There is an example from Bretforton, Worcestershire, of protection marks continuing to be created into the 20th century (Meeson 2005). Two further sets of marks were also visible on the western door jambs of the threshing barn. A further set of marks (*Plate 13*) are likely to have been tally marks for numbering crop loads.

5.4 Phase 2 19th century

In the 19th Century, a further structure was added onto the north-west side of the barn (*Plate 14* and *Plate 15*). This remains as a five bay east to west aligned structure built of limestone, with a tile roof. However, very little of the original structure remains, potentially only the northern wall. The western and southern walls displayed a more regular coursing and are known to have been at least partially rebuilt and repointed in the second half of the 20th century. The four king post trusses which divide the building into four bays (*Plate 16*) may be replacements of an earlier roof structure. The style of these trusses is broadly consistent with a 19th century date. They were constructed using softwood with metal fixings and show evidence of having been converted mechanically by circular saw. Whilst mechanical circular saws started in use in the late 18th century, they were much more widely used throughout the 19th century (Jones and Simons 1961).

The positioning of the doors and windows on the southern side of the building are entirely consistent with stabling for the eastern three bays. No original internal divisions remained to confirm this and the floor levels had been raised using concrete in the 20th century. A single hole cut into the wall of the threshing barn at the eastern end of this building (*Plate 18*) may have held a longitudinal joist used as part of a ceiling. This arrangement would also be typical of stabling as

horses were considered to require insulation. The ceiled area also provided space for hay fodder storage. The outstanding issue with this interpretation is that it is more normal for stabling to be located next to dwellings, as opposed to on an outfarm. Horses were of high value and required a high level of maintenance.

The use of the western two bays of the building is unknown, but storage for equipment related to the keeping of horses is likely. These bays contained further doors on the western and southern sides (Plate 19).

A hole likely to have held the wall plate of the demolished southern range of building was visible cut into the western side of the barn, immediately next to the door (Plate 20). This would suggest a single storey structure, probably used as animal housing. It is clear that this structure pre-dates the 1884 mapping, but no more accurate date can be suggested.

5.5 Phase 3 20th century

At some point after the time of 1924 Ordnance Survey mapping, the southern range of buildings within U shaped courtyard were demolished and the extant boundary walls constructed.

The presence of a cover over the western door of the threshing barn was suggested by the presence of faint roof outline and timbers inserted into the stonework though remain undated (Plate 21).

Some suggestions of 20th century use of the barn were visible from painted areas of walls, suggesting the former presence of temporary partitions (Plate 22). Timbers inserted in the south-east corner of the building relate to the insertion of a tank at this point (Plate 23).

On the doorway on the western side of the threshing floor (Plate 24) the date "1901" was inscribed with a "D" above, possibly being an initial.

As previously discussed, a significant degree of repointing and rebuilding took place around these buildings during this phase with concrete floors added throughout. The roof of the barn was replaced, along with that of that of the stables.

6 Discussion

The buildings at Tower Barn initially consisted of a single threshing barn, potentially dating to the 18th century. This appears to have been part of an out farm, though to which farm it was associated remains unknown. Neither Clump Farm nor The Rookery are thought to have existed until the 19th century, suggesting that out farm was very isolated. The barn is of Cotswold Stone with a stone tiled roof. Two large opposing doors are set in the eastern and western walls. The barn probably included a threshing floor and triangular ventilation openings suggest the storage of straw. Some interesting marks on the door jambs show that the users of this building sought to protect the building spiritually using a daisy wheel, a cross and invoking the protection of Mary.

Within the 19th century, the buildings comprised U shaped courtyard, created by probable stabling on the north side and a further now demolished range on the southern side. The southern range was demolished in the 20th century and some work undertaken on the remaining buildings such as changes to roofs and floors as well as a partial rebuilding of the northern range. These changes largely related to their inclusion into the Broadway Country Park.

6.1 Research frameworks

These buildings do not fit into any of the research frameworks outlined with the *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A framework for research* (Watt (ed) 2011).

Out farms of the 18th century and earlier are rare within Worcestershire (Lake, Hathaway and Robson-Glyde 2014) so remain an important source for future research.

7 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

A building record was undertaken on behalf of Broadway Country Park of Tower Barn, Broadway Tower Country Park, Broadway, Worcestershire (NGR SP 1113 3613; HER ref WSM47509).

The earliest element of Broadway Tower Barn was the limestone threshing barn, which is likely to date from the 18th or early 19th centuries. The building is of Cotswold stone with a stone tile roof and divided into four bays probably used for threshing and the storage of straw. The users of this barn saw fit to protect it with ritual symbols located around the threshing floor doors on the eastern side.

Within the 19th century two further elements were added, creating a U shaped courtyard on the western side of the barn. Only the northern element of these buildings remains and is likely to have been stabling. A number of changes occurred to the buildings in the later 20th century as part of their inclusion in the Broadway Country Park.

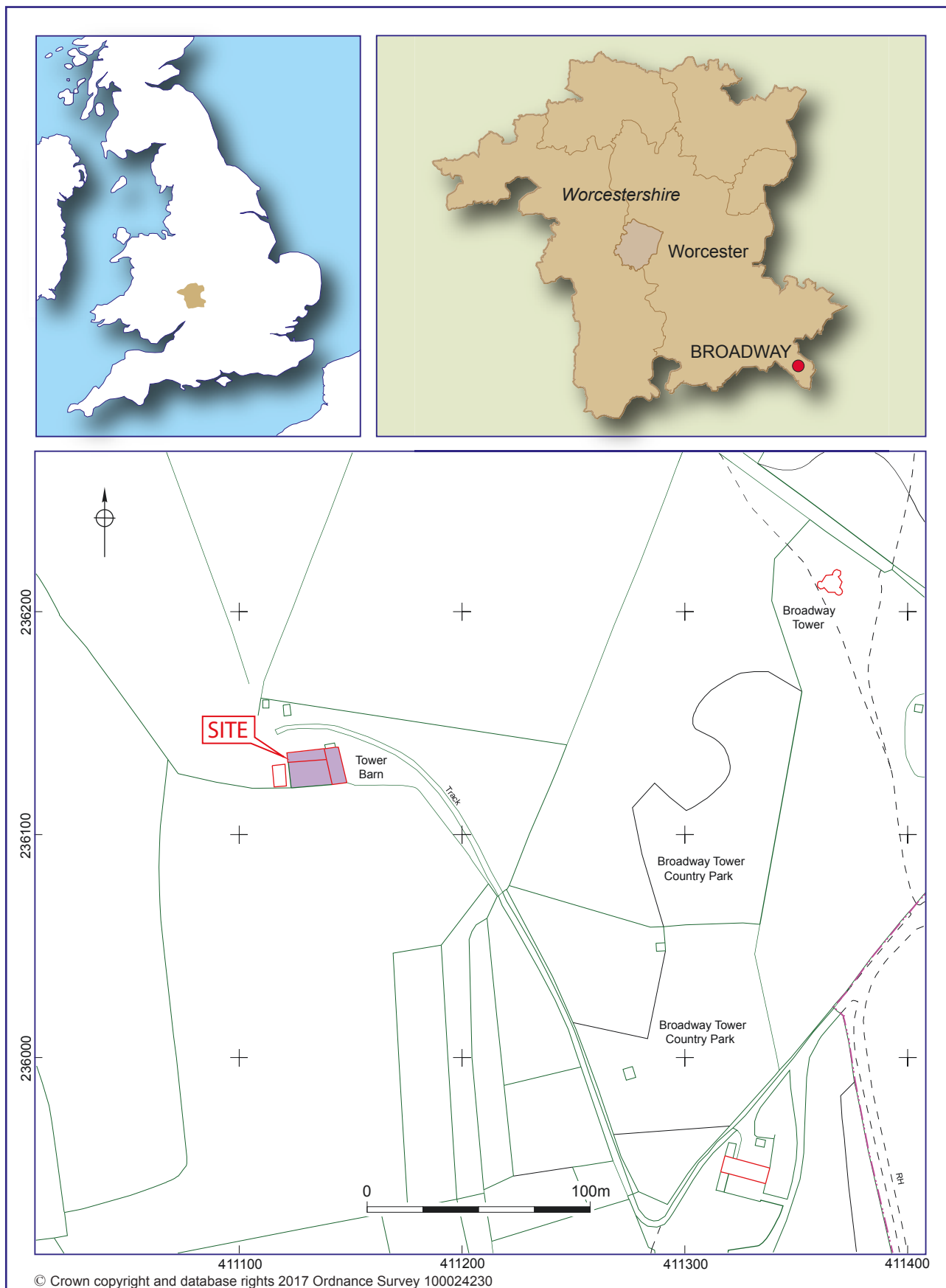
8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Anne Pearson and Annette Gorton of Broadway Country Park and Adrian Scruby of Worcestershire County Council.

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Figures



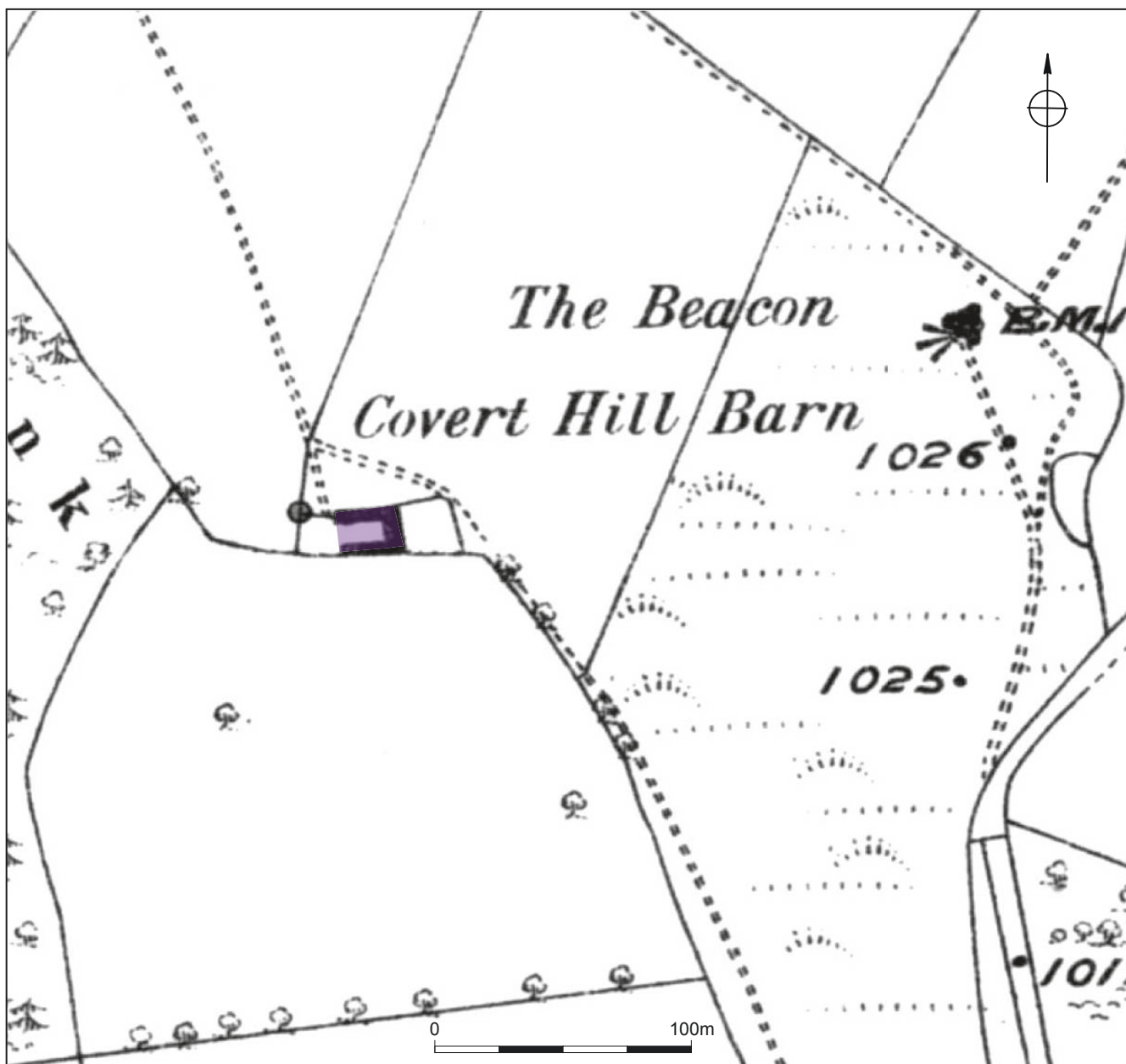
Location of the site

Figure 1



Phased floor plan (based upon AIN Designs Drg AIN077/007) with photolocations

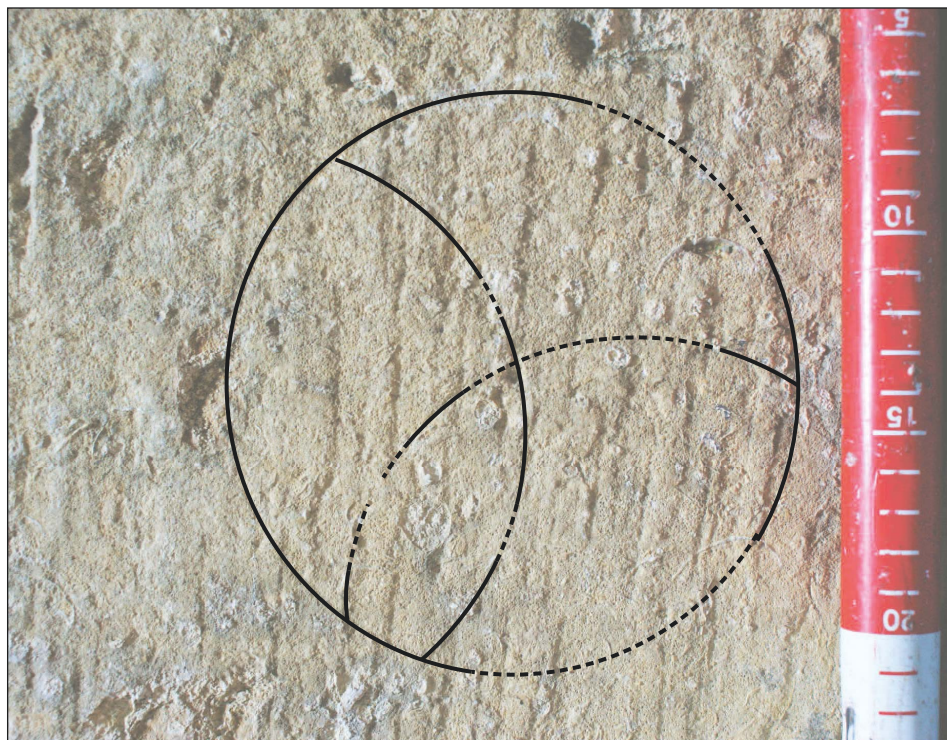
Figure 2



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Extract of 1884 OS

Figure 3



Traces of 'daisywheel' inscription on masonry

Figure 4



'M' inscription on masonry

Figure 5

Plates



Plate 1 View of the buildings, looking north -east



Plate 2 Phase 1 barn, looking south-west



Plate 3 Phase 1 barn, looking east



Plate 4 Phase 1 barn, looking north-west



Plate 5 Phase 1 barn, looking north



Plate 6 Phase 1 barn, looking south

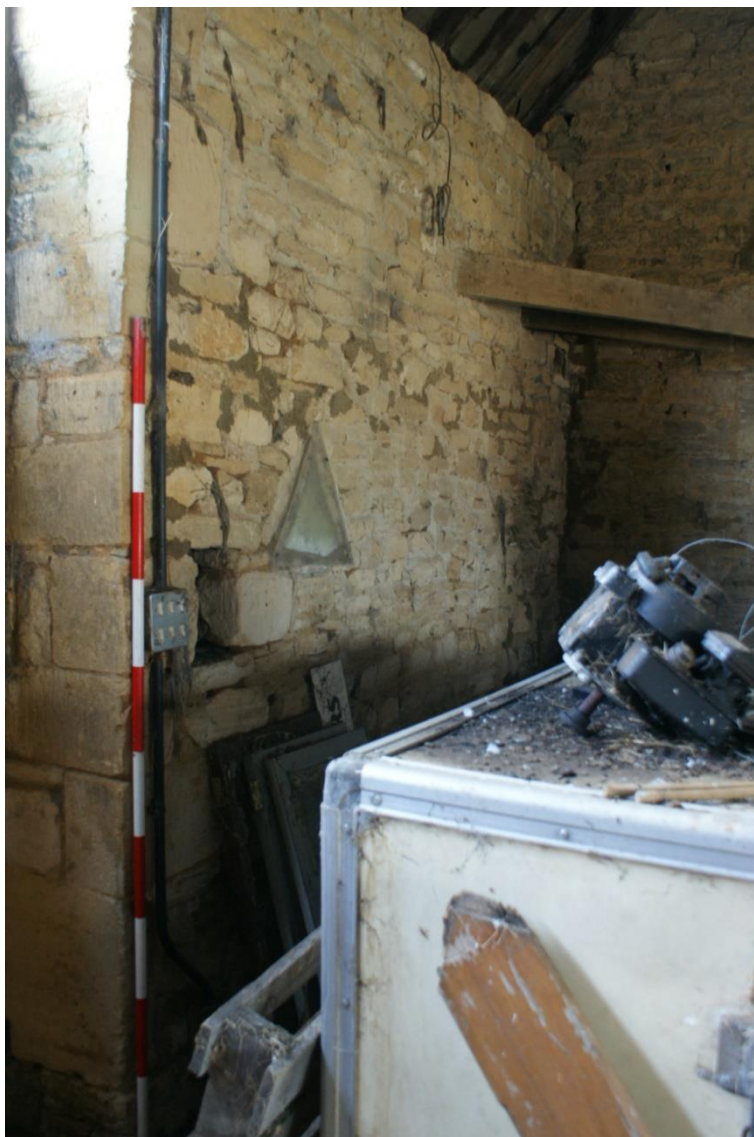


Plate 7 Phase 1 barn partition evidence, looking south-east



Plate 8 Phase 1 barn blocked window and door, looking east



Plate 9 Phase 1 barn possible blocked window, looking north



Plate 10 Phase 1 barn roof trusses, looking north



Plate 11 Phase 1 barn repairs at wall plate level at the top of the door jambs, looking west

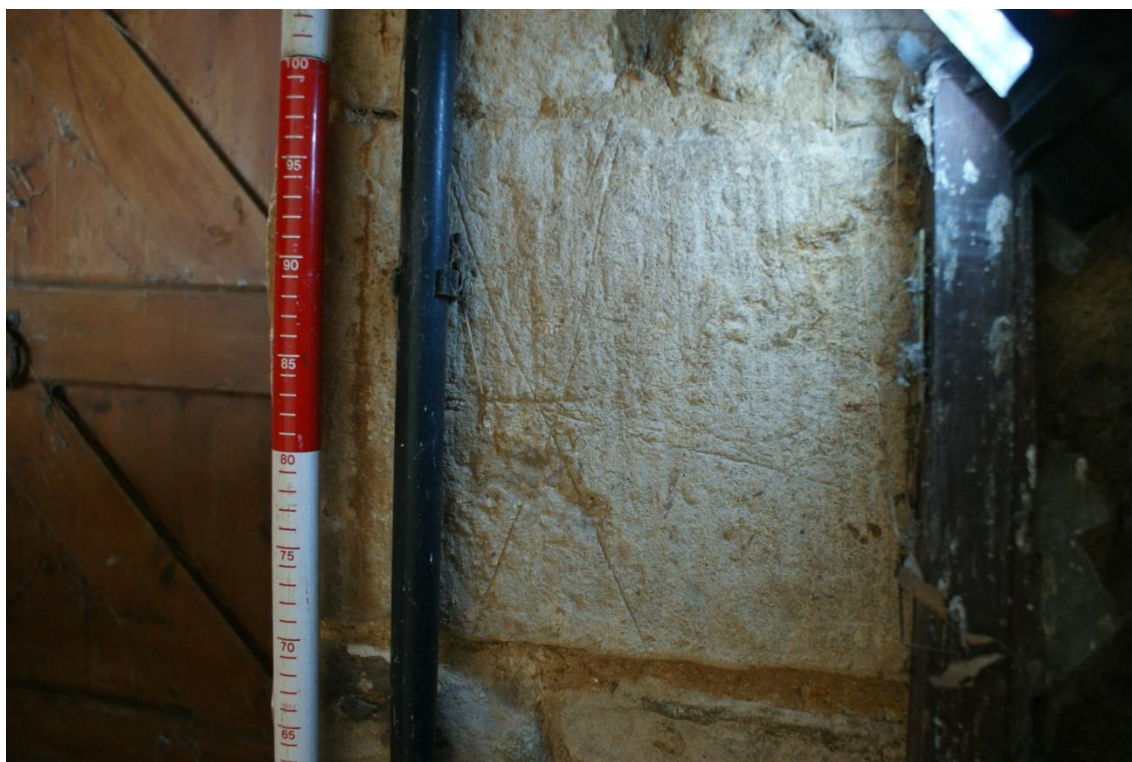


Plate 12 Phase 1 barn possible saltire cross, looking east



Plate 13 Phase 1 barn possible tally marks, looking east



Plate 14 Phase 2 possible stabling, looking south-east



Plate 15 Phase 2 possible stabling, looking north



Plate 16 Phase 2 possible stabling, looking east



Plate 17 Phase 2 possible stabling, looking south-west



Plate 18 Phase 2 possible stabling with a scotch for a ceiling beam, looking east



Plate 19 Phase 2 possible stabling, looking west



Plate 20 Phase 2 with sotch form a wall plate of a former building next to the threshing door jamb, looking east

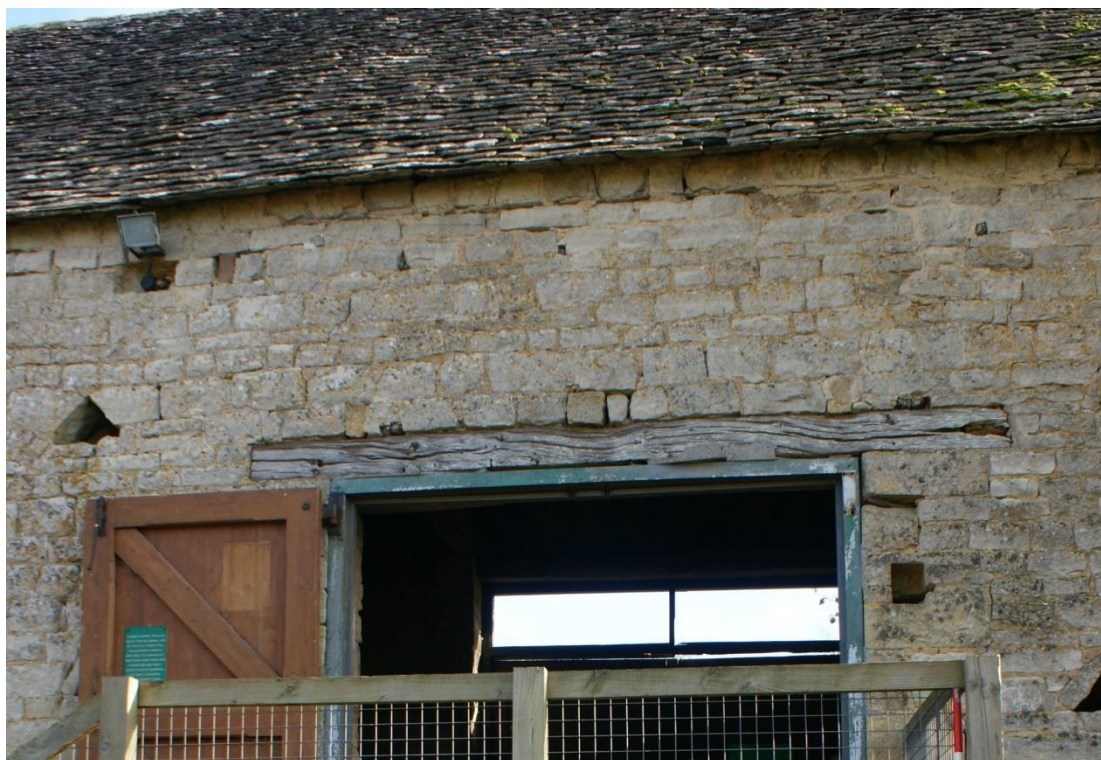


Plate 21 Phase 2 former doorway cover evidence, looking east



Plate 22 Phase 3 partition evidence, looking east



Plate 23 Phase 3 tank support, looking south-east



Plate 24 Phase 3 marks on door jambs, looking north

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM68388)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 3 Photographic records AS3
- 204 Digital photographs
- 2 Building Record Sheets
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Museums Worcestershire
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416