

# Building Recording at Upper Norton Farm, Craven Arms, Shropshire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for ADS Architects*

May 2019



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# UPPER NORTON FARM, CRAVEN ARMS, SHROPSHIRE

Building recording report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: Upper Norton Farm, Craven Arms, Shropshire  
Local planning authority: Shropshire Council  
Planning reference: 17/04988/FUL  
HER reference: IR0925\_DSA  
Central NGR: SO 46059 81555  
Commissioning client: ADS Architects  
WA project number: P5201  
WA report number: 2698  
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-351013

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## **Building recording at Upper Norton Farm, Craven Arms, Shropshire**

Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

### **Summary**

Building recording was undertaken at Upper Norton Farm, Craven Arms, Shropshire (NGR SO 46059 81555). It was undertaken on behalf of ADS Architects and HPB Assurance Ltd, who intend to convert four agricultural buildings for holiday lets and leisure use for which a planning application has been submitted to Shropshire Council.

The buildings at Norton Farm were considered to date to the 19th century and whilst this was broadly the case, a single timber framed hardwood truss within one of these structures demonstrated the presence of a structure potentially dating to the middle of the 16th century. The features of this timber indicated that it was an internal truss and most likely of domestic nature. The remaining elements of the buildings were of stone, tile and softwood construction and of 19th century origin. The function of these ranged from the housing of cattle to crop storage and a cart shed.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

Building recording was undertaken at Upper Norton Farm, Craven Arms, Shropshire (NGR SO 46059 81555). It was undertaken on behalf of ADS Architects and HPB Assurance Ltd, who intend to convert four agricultural buildings for holiday lets and leisure use, for which a planning application has been submitted to Shropshire Council (reference number 17/04988/FUL).

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets with architectural and archaeological interest (HER refs. PRN 02613, 03198 and 03541), the significance of which may be affected by the application. A watching brief of groundworks associated with the construction of the new access road into the site has been reported on separately (Arnold and Vaughan 2019; 16/01527/FUL).

No brief was provided but a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (2018) and approved by Shropshire Council. The project also conforms to the Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014a) and the Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (ClfA 2014b).

## 2 Project 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' (ClfA 2014a).

A Level 1 building record and photographic record was created of the two historic barns.

The Curator indicates that the barns, although not listed, are of early 19th century date, are constructed of local stone, with clay tiled roof, timber doors and windows, and some sections of timber frame, so are classed as heritage assets.

## 3 Methods

### 3.1 Documentary sources consulted

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

#### *Cartographic sources*

- 1st edition 1883 Ordnance Survey Map, 6":1 mile / 1:10,560
- 1903 Ordnance Survey Map, 6":1 mile / 1:10,560
- 1953 Ordnance Survey Map, 6":1 mile / 1:10,560

#### *Documentary sources*

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

### 3.2 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 21 March 2018. The site reference number used by the Historic Environment Record to record archaeological "events", and site code used in the archive is IR0925\_DSA. The Worcestershire Archaeology project number is P5201.



Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the buildings. 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. The project conformed to a Level 1 record and photographic record (HE 2016).

A Level 1 record is essentially a basic visual record supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type.

The record will include the following elements of survey, where available:

#### Photography

- General view or views of the building in its wider setting or landscape
- External appearance of the building, using oblique and right angle shots
- Views showing the original design intentions (where appropriate)
- Overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas
- External or internal detail relevant to the building's design, development or function
- Machinery, or plant, or evidence of its former existence
- Dates or other inscriptions, signage, maker's plates or graffiti relevant to an understanding of the building, its fixtures or machinery
- Building contents or ephemera that have a bearing on the history of the building
- Copies of maps, drawings, views or photographs present in the building that illustrate its development

#### Drawings

- Roughly dimensioned sketched plans, sections, or elevations

#### Written account

- A summary of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and date (where possible)

### 3.3 Building analysis

Analysis of the building was based on the study of the photographic record. It was also informed by the documentary sources listed above.

## 4 Context

### 4.1 Location, topography and geology and archaeological context

The site is located at a height of approximately 167metres AOD and slopes relatively gently downwards towards the east. The bedrock geology is recorded as Downton Castle Sandstone Formation, with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2019)

The archaeological context given below derives from the Shropshire Historic Environment Record data.

The road that passes the western side of Upper Norton farm is suggested to follow the line of a Roman road from Marshbrook to Ashton (PRN 02613), though this remains largely conjectural.

Approximately 60m to the north of the barns, a pit containing a number of human skeletons was discovered in the 1950s (PRN 03198). These have been suggested to relate to either a Roman burial

ground or to the Battle of Stokesay in 1645. It is also possible that they relate to a former chapel (PRN 03541) which is said to have existed at Norton but its exact location remains unknown.

Norton Farm itself (PRN 24051) is considered to date to the 19th century with an E-plan courtyard to the north of the house. The barns recorded during this project are also registered within the HER data (PRN 24052) forming a regular U shape courtyard of 19th century date, though it is not clear from the mapping as to which farm they and farmhouse they relate. On the immediate north-east corner of the barns, an area of quarrying is recorded (PRN 30262), with a further area to the west of the road (PRN 30261).

## 5 The building

### 5.1 Building development

The buildings are illustrated, with the photolocations on (Figs 2-4) as well as Plate 1 to Plate 32.

#### 5.1.1 Phase 1 Mid-16th century

This consisted of a single hardwood timber framed truss (Plate 4 and Plate 5; north end of Barn 1) with V struts above the collar, as became the style in the second half of the 16th century onwards. It was constructed with clasped purlins, a joint type which had largely ceased to be used by c1550 in Shropshire (Moran 2003, 114). It was at least partially an open truss below the tie beam, so was internal. An agricultural function is not considered likely as the timbers have been hacked for plaster at first floor level, which is more common in domestic buildings. Though not part of the original frame, the mid-rail has evidence of having been used to hold floor joists and was of a relatively rare form where the common floor joists ran parallel to the principle floor joists, with the floor boards likely to be laid between the common joists, again parallel (Plate 6). This method would have been labour intensive and not employed in an agricultural setting. The chamfers on its base also indicate an original domestic use.

Inspection of the face of the frame was hampered by the presence of the metal cladding on the eastern side. Its removal may reveal more detail.

#### 5.1.2 Phase 2 19th century

The Phase 1 building was mostly removed and a stone built crop storage barn with softwood roof trusses and ceramic tile roof erected. It was constructed over ground, with first and second floors, with access doors at each level on its eastern end (Plate 4 to Plate 8; north end of Barn 1).

#### 5.1.3 Phase 3 Mid to second half of the 19th century

Two parallel buildings were constructed, the first (Barn 2) being an open fronted shelter shed for cows, later partially converted for stabling (Plate 9 to Plate 17), the second (Barn 1) being an enclosed cow house with doors facing the yard and shelter shed (Plate 18 to Plate 23). On the southern end of the shelter shed was a two storey building that contained a stable and cart shed on the ground floor with a crop storage area above (Plate 24 to Plate 31). These were all stone constructed with softwood roof structures which were circular saw converted, in turn covered in ceramic tiles.

## 6 Conclusion

The buildings at Norton Farm were considered to date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and whilst this was broadly the case, a single truss within one of these structures demonstrated the presence of a structure potentially dating to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The features of this indicated that it was an internal truss and most likely of domestic nature. The remaining elements of the buildings were of 19<sup>th</sup> century date and of agricultural nature.

## 7 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Tim Cornah and the project managed by Tom Vaughan. The report was produced and collated by Tim Cornah. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

## 8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Gessica Salerno and Franco Scimeca (ADS Architects), Brian Beaumont (Onny Developments), and Charlotte Orchard (Archaeological Advisor, Shropshire Council), Trystan Williams (Planning Officer, Shropshire Council) and Helen Tipton (Area Planning and Enforcement Officer, Shropshire Council).

## 9 Bibliography

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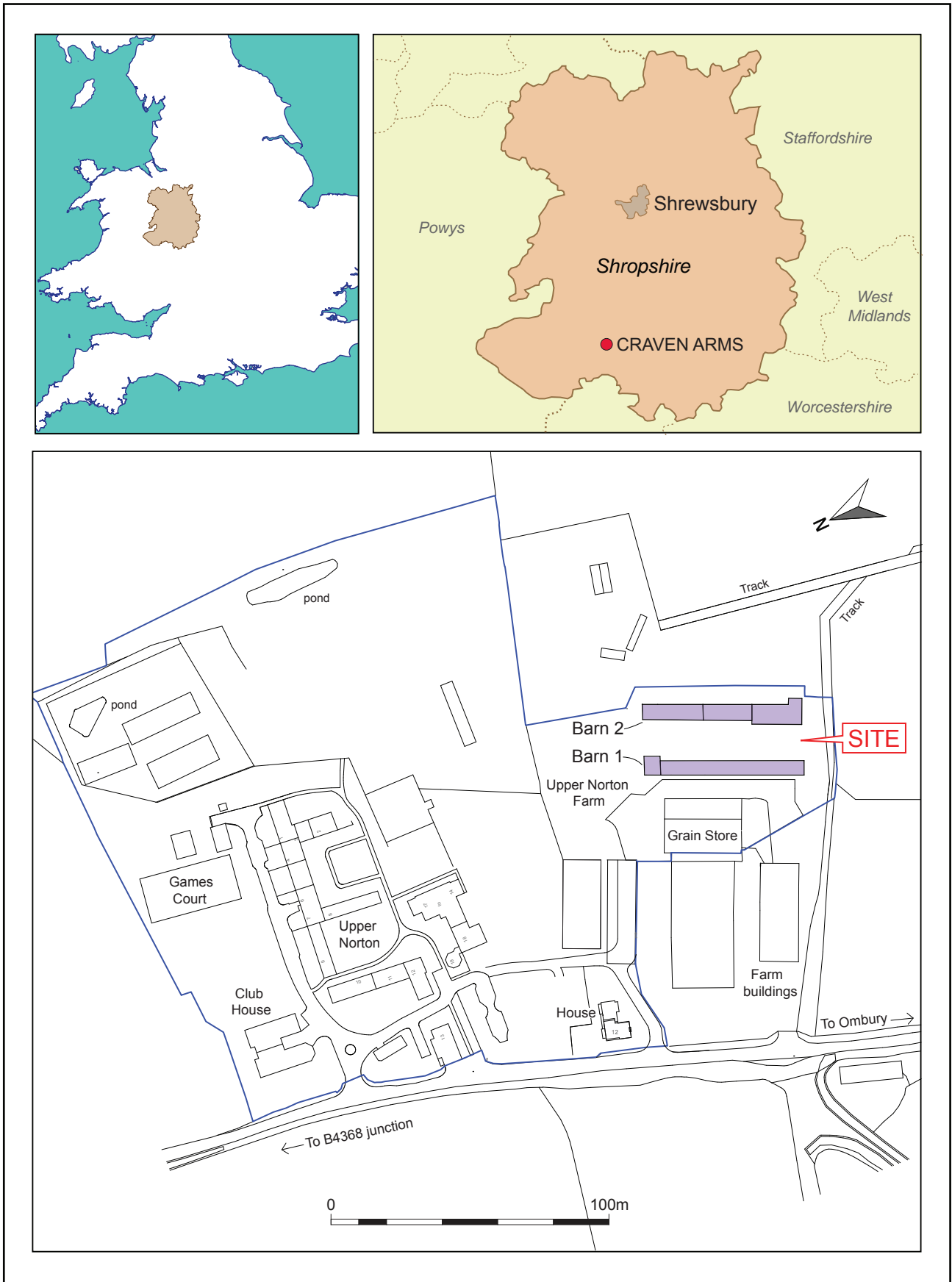
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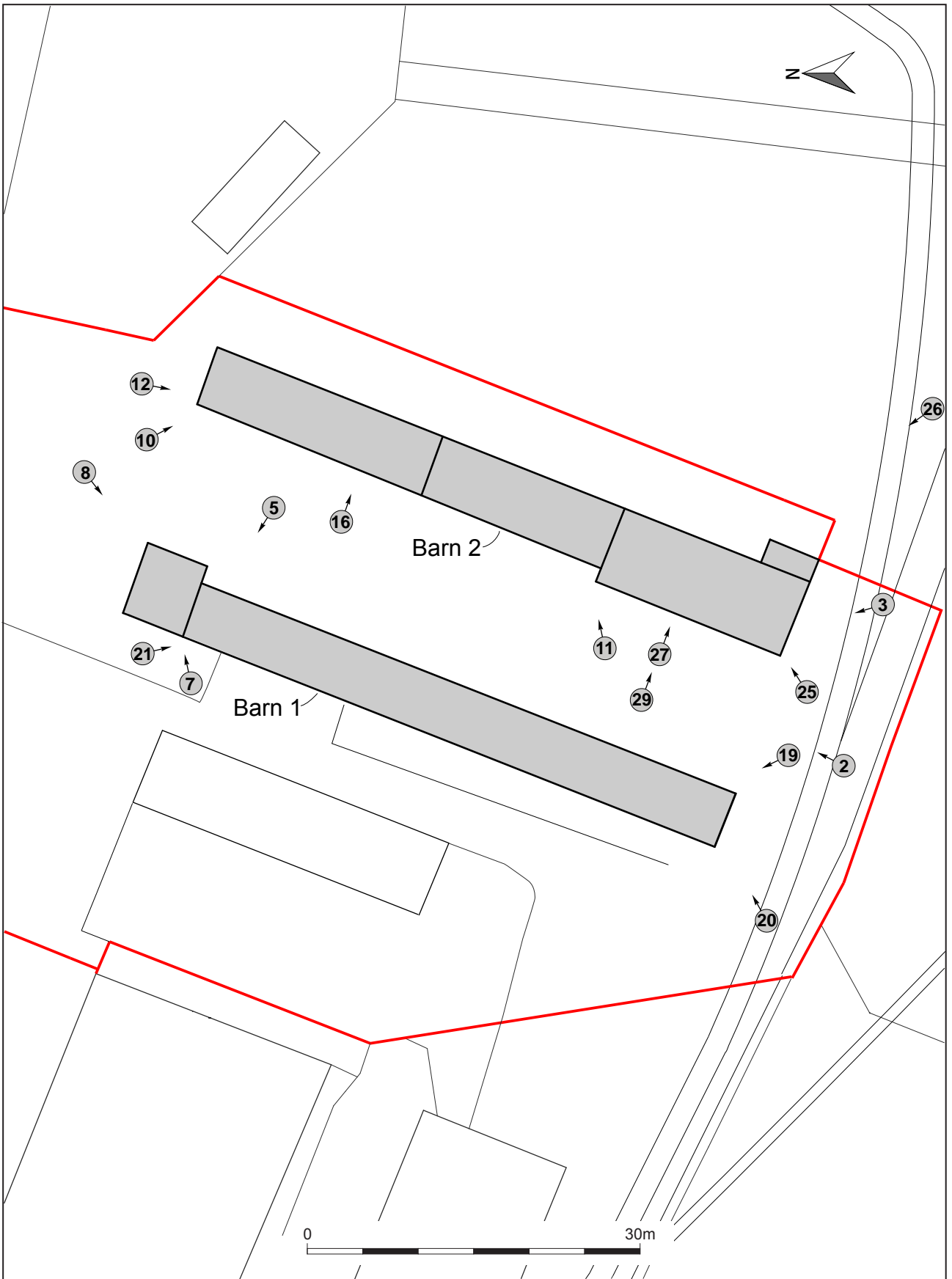


## Figures



Location of the site (based upon ADS Architects Limited Dwg. 891-LB-01)

Figure 1

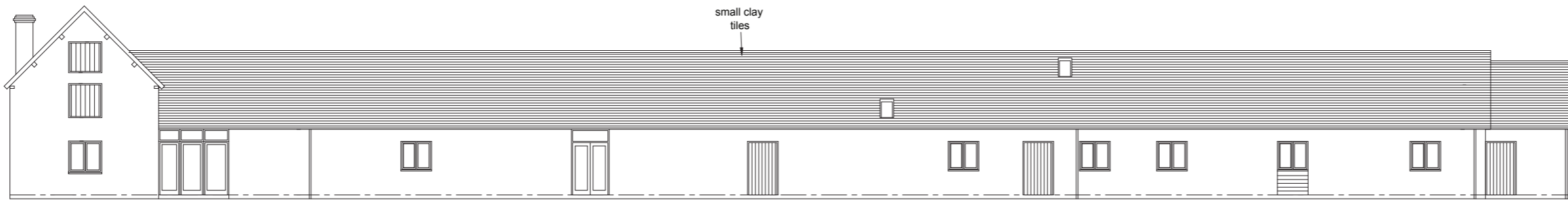


Location plan with photolocations

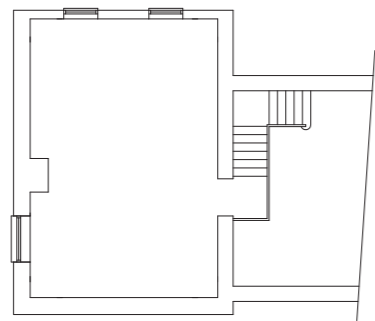
Figure 2



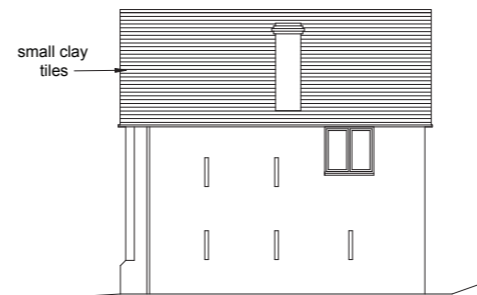
BARN 1: EAST ELEVATION



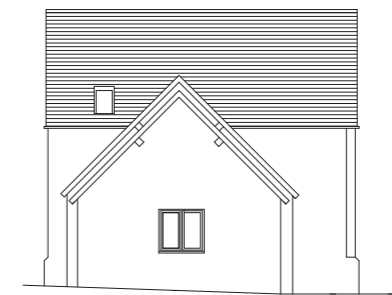
BARN 1: WEST ELEVATION



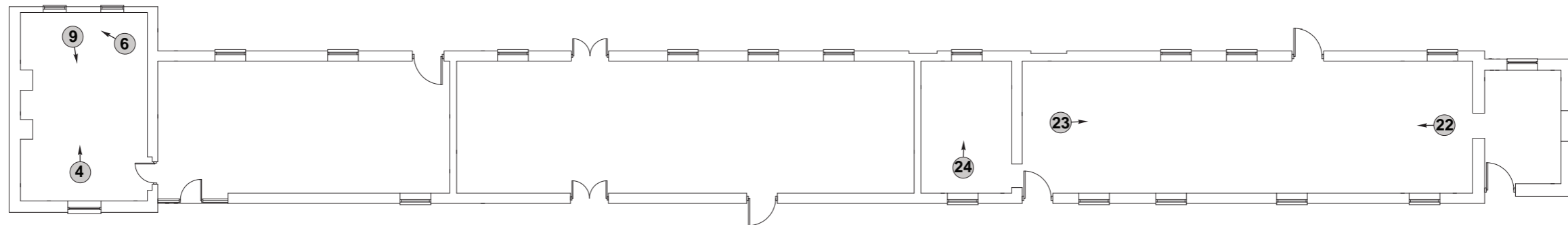
BARN 1: FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BARN 1: NORTH ELEVATION



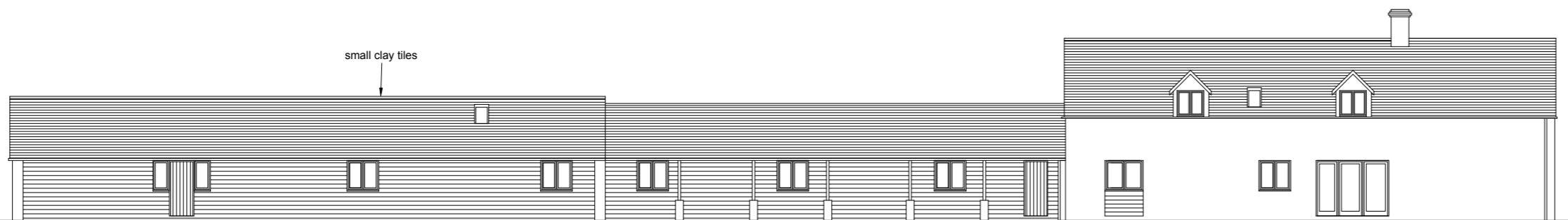
BARN 1: SOUTH ELEVATION



BARN 1: GROUND FLOOR PLAN



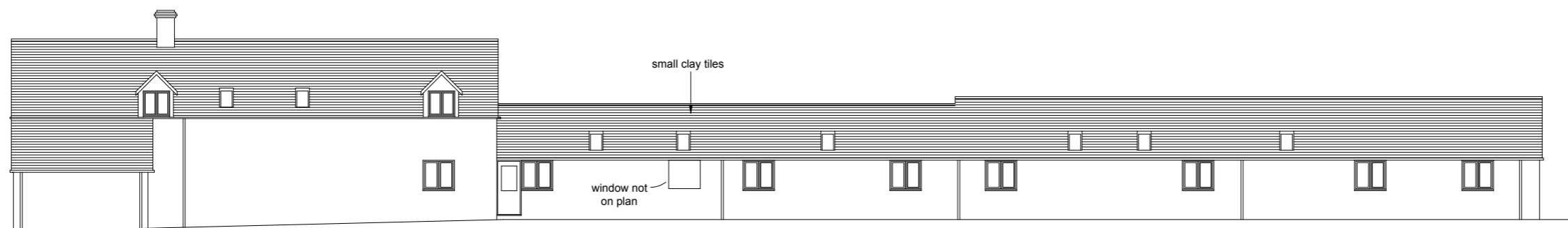




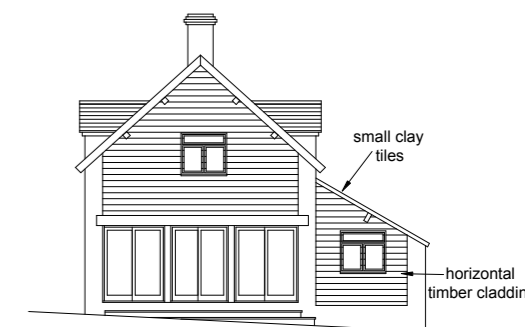
BARN 2: WEST ELEVATION



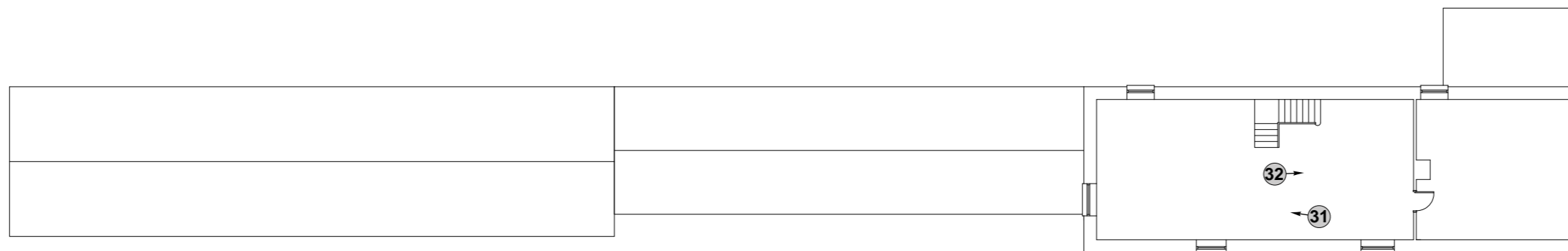
BARN 2: NORTH ELEVATION



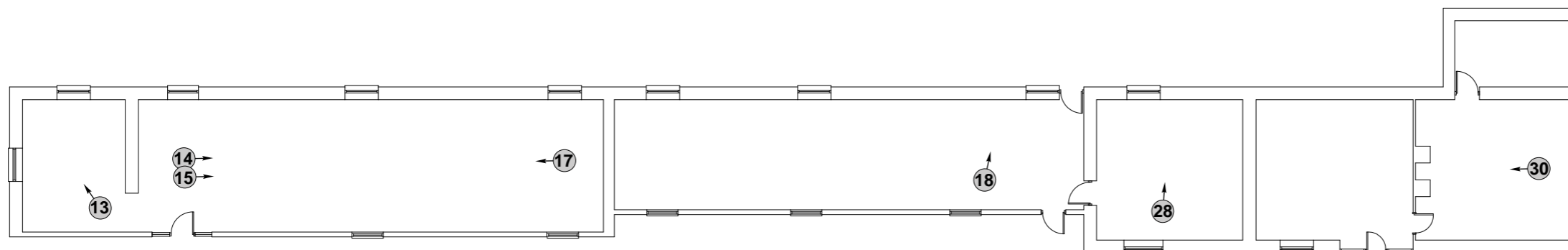
BARN 2: EAST ELEVATION



BARN 2: SOUTH ELEVATION



BARN 2: FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BARN 2: GROUND FLOOR PLAN



## Plates



Plate 1 General view of Barn 1, looking south (1m scale)



Plate 2 General view of the buildings, Barn 1 left, Barn 2 right, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 3 General view of the buildings, Barn 1 left, Barn 2 right, looking north-west (1m scale)



Plate 4 Phase 1 truss, looking east in north end of Barn 1 (1m scale)



Plate 5 Phase 1 truss position, looking north-west, at north end of Barn 1 (1m scale)



Plate 6 Phase 1 reused domestic floor joist, looking north-east, at north end of Barn 1 (no scale)



Plate 7 Phase 2 barn, looking north-east, at north end of Barn 1 (1m scale)



Plate 8 Phase 2 barn, looking south-west, at north end of Barn 1 (1m scale)



Plate 9 Phase 2 barn, looking west, in north end of Barn 1 (1m scale)





Plate 10 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, looking south-east (1m scale)



Plate 11 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 12 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, looking south (1m scale)



Plate 13 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 14 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, looking south-west (1m scale)



Plate 15 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, carpenters marks on the roof trusses, numbered from 1-10 in Roman numerals starting with truss number 1 southern end of the building, looking south (no scale)



Plate 16 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, bay post with carpenters marks visible on the wall plate that correspond to the internal roof truss, looking south-east (1m scale)



Plate 17 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 18 Barn 2, Phase 3 shelter shed feed racks, looking south-east (1m scale)



Plate 19 Barn 1, Phase 3 cow house, looking north-west (1m scale)



Plate 20 Barn 1, Phase 3 cow house, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 21 Barn 1, Phase 3 cow house, looking south (1m scale)



Plate 22 Barn 1, Phase 3 cow house, looking north-east (1m scale)





Plate 23 Barn 1, Phase 3 cow house, looking south-west (1m scale)



Plate 24 Barn 1, Phase 3 cow house, looking south-east (1m scale)



Plate 25 Barn 2, Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 26 Barn 2, Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking north-west (1m scale)



Plate 27 Barn 2, Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking south-east (1m scale)



Plate 28 Barn 2, Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking south-east (no scale)



Plate 29 Barn 2, candle burn mark on the interior of the door into the Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking south-east (no scale)



Plate 30 Barn 2, Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 31 Barn 2, Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking north-east (1m scale)





Plate 32 Barn 2, Phase 3 cart shed, stable and storage building, looking south-west (no scale)

## Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	none
Paper	Diary (Field progress form), Drawing,
Digital	Images raster/digital photography

\*OASIS terminology