Building recording at Pye Hill Farm, Hartlebury, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology for Pieter van Zyl

February 2021







PYE HIL FARM HARTLEBURY WORCESTERSHIRE

Building recording report





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SITE INFORMATION

Site name:	Pye Hill Farm, Hartlebury, Worcestershire
Site code:	WSM42184
Local planning authority:	Wychavon District Council
Planning reference:	20/02849/FUL, 20/02850/LB, 20/01303/FUL, 20/01304/LB
Central NGR:	SO 85883 71066
Commissioning client:	Pieter van Zyl
WA project number:	P5883
WA report number:	2886
HER reference:	WSM73696
Oasis reference:	fieldsec1-412594

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Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
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Building recording at Pye Hill Farm, Hartlebury, Worcestershire

By Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Tim Cornah

Summary

Building recording was undertaken at Pye Hill Farm, Hartlebury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 85883 71066). It was commissioned by Pieter van Zyl, in advance of proposed conversion of the farm buildings to visitor accommodation for which a planning application has been submitted.

The buildings display a number of the traditional elements of a small 18th to 19th century farm, though with a clear indication that elements of the barn existed before the extant farmstead, potentially as early as the 16th century. The construction of the barn as remaining probably coincided with that of the house in the early 18th Century, and was used as a threshing barn for crop processing and storage.

A stone and brick dovecote was constructed in the 19th century, a building type fairly typical of Worcestershire farmsteads of the 18th to 19th century. This was converted to be used as a stable, with significant later alterations in the form of its roof and upper stage being replaced. The north of this was a 19th century shelter shed for cows, with a garage added to the south, probably in the early 20th century

1

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

Building recording was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) from 16 September 2020 to 6 January 2021 at Pye Hill Farm, Hartlebury, Worcestershire (NGR SO 85883 71066). The project was commissioned by Pieter van Zyl, in advance of proposed conversion of the farm buildings to visitor accommodation. Planning applications have been submitted to Wychavon District Council (20/02849/FUL, 20/02850/LB, 20/01303/FUL and 20/01304/LB).

The farm buildings consisted of a stable, cow shed and garage, along with a further timber framed barn. These buildings were considered to be integral to the development of the farmstead and within the curtilage of the grade II listed farmhouse (List Entry Number: 1215540) which is described as follows:

Farmhouse. Early C18. Brick, tile roof, gable end stacks. Three storeys on cellar, dentilled brick cornice, two bands; four windows: timber cross windows under rubbed brick heads with painted keystones; second floor: 2-light casements with timber lintels; ground floor: entrance left of centre, 6-panelled door in panelled reveals.

The timber framed barn is recorded within the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (WSM05852) as well as being grade II listed (List Entry Number: 1215676). It is described as follows:

Barn. Late C17 and early C19. Timber-frame, partially with brick infill, part weather boarded, slate roof. Three framed bays aligned east/west with central threshing floor. Framing: three square panels high, roof early C19 with two raking struts to each truss.

No brief was provided but the project conforms to the scope as indicated by Aidan Smyth of Wychavon District Council. A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (2020).

The building recording conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (ClfA 2014a)*, as well as *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2019)

2 Project Aims

2.1 Building recording

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).

3 Project methodology

3.1 Documentary sources consulted

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER) covering a search area of 500m around the building.

Cartographic sources

- 1838 Tithe Map of Hartlebury and Elmley Lovett (Figure)
- 1883 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1903 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560

- 1929 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1947 Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.2 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) and approved by Aidan Smyth of Wychavon District Council

Fieldwork was undertaken between 16 September 2020 and 6 January 2021. The site reference number used by the Historic Environment Record to record archaeological "events", and site code used in the archive is WSM73696.

Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the buildings, analysis of their development, annotation of existing survey drawings and measured survey. Photogrammetric survey was also undertaken of the exteriors, with selective interior survey. All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot where possible. The photographic survey was carried out with a Canon EOS 200D 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'. 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.

3.3 Building analysis

Analysis of the building was based on the study of the photographic record, photogrammetric record, annotated drawings and measured 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.

4 Site context

4.1 Site location, topography and geology

Pye Hill Farm is located approximately 1.8km east of the historic core of the village of Hartlebury, between Worcester and Kidderminster. It is bounded to the north and west by agricultural land, with quarrying to the south and a private residence to the east.

The site is situated on ground that slopes downwards towards the north and west, with the local geology recorded as Helsby Sandstone Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed in the Triassic period. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2021)

4.2 Historic and archaeological background

A search was commissioned of Worcestershire Historic Environment for a radius of 500m centred on Pye Hill Farm, the results of which are summarised below.

The archaeological character of the area is largely unknown, due to the low level of investigation. A small number of crop marks are recorded within the vicinity along with a single Roman coin and a medieval copper object of unknown function.

The data is more useful in highlighting the wider landscape relevant to the farmstead. Six other farmsteads dating to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries are recorded within the data, most notably Walton Farm (WSM61711) immediately to the east of Pye Hill which is also considered to date to the 18th century. Walton (WSM54022), to the south may be a little older in dating to the 17th century. Saxon Meadows (WSM54062) to the south east is considered to be 19th century in date, along with Whitlenge (WSM54001) and Old Whitlenge (WSM54102) at the northern extremity of the search area. Within these farmsteads, five of the buildings were listed, including two at Pye Hill farm itself.

Pye Hill Farm was mapped in 1838 for the purposes of tithe apportionment (Figure 2). Whilst the buildings as mapped at this time will be discussed in section 5.2, information on the wider farm was also present. The same tenant farmer, William Williams, and owner, Thomas Lakester, were listed for the house as well as a number of fields (Table 1). The land use data gives a picture of mixed use arable and pastoral farming, with some of the fields around the farmstead illustrated with trees likely to have been orchard that would also have been grazed. The total area of the farm at this point was approximately 14.8 hectares (37 acres). It is unclear as to why no tithes were being paid. By the point of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1883, a number of fields had been amalgamated, though it is not clear that they still related to the farm.

Plot number	Owner	Tenant	Plot name	Land use	Area	Tithe
90	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	The Hill	Arable	6,0,27	£0 Os Od
91	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Old Orchard	Pasture	4,2,33	£0 0s 0d
92	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	House Fold and Buildings	Non- agricultural	0,1,32	£0 Os Od
92	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	House Fold and Buildings	Non- agricultural	0,1,32	£0 0s 0d
93	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Cow Pasture	Pasture	3,2,10	£0 Os Od
94	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	The Gore	Pasture	2,2,21	£0 Os Od
95	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Little Meadow	Pasture	2,0,1	£0 0s 0d

96	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Thistly Close	Arable	3,3,34	£0 Os Od
97	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Bartland Orchard	Pasture	3,0,39	£0 Os Od
98	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Quarry Pece	Arable	2,3,37	£0 Os Od
99	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Broomy Hill	Arable	4,2,26	£0 Os Od
100	Thomas Lankester Esquire	William Williams	Part of Broomy Hill	Pasture	1,0,33	£0 Os Od

Table 1 Apportionment data of 1838 relating to Pye Hill Farm. To be read in conjunction with Figure 2

5 The buildings

5.1 Building description

The buildings currently comprise two separate structures, with four build phases. A model of the buildings can be viewed here https://skfb.ly/6VpLA.

The largest element is a broadly east to west three bay timber framed barn (Plate 1 and Plate 2) with brick infill panels, large central doors and tiled gabled roof. To the south-west of this was a single storey stone built range with tiled gabled roof aligned broadly north-east to south west with three double doors facing to the south-east (Plate 3). This was built at a slightly offset angle onto a further stone and brick built broadly square structure which again had a door facing to the south-east with a hatch door above (Plate 4). Its main gabled and tiled roof ran north-west to south-east, but with an extra smaller gable the south-west and two gabled windows to the north-east. On the south-west end of the this element was a brick built single storey lean-to structure with a single pitch corrugated metal roof (Plate 4 and Plate 5). To the south of these buildings was the three storey brick farmhouse with tile roof with and front facing towards the east along with a projecting wing to the rear. Historic information

The owners and occupiers of the property in 1838 are listed above in relation to the tithe map and apportionment. The mapping (Figure 2) illustrates that of the standing buildings, only the barn, Phase 2 as outlined below, was present in 1838. The map shows the house linked to the barn by a bounded yard, and to the south-west of the barn was a small building on the edge of this yard. A further square building was present to the west of the barn, but neither of these relate to the current position of the Phase 3 buildings. The first time the Phase 3 elements were illustrated was in 1883, which shows the extant block plan for the structures, apart from the lean to structure at the southern end. The Phase 3 elements are shown around a new yard arrangement that ran along close to the north side of the house, as it remains.

5.2 Building development

Six phases were identified during the investigation of the building, which are described as follows:

- Phase 1: 16th to 17th century
- Phase 2: late 17th to early 18th century
- Phase 3a: 1838 to 1883
- Phase 3b: later in 1838 to 1883

Phase 4: 20th century

5.2.1 Phase 1: 16th to 17th century

Elements of a structure earlier than the house were evident within the fabric of the Phase 2 barn (Plate 6 and Plate 7). This was in the form of reused timbers. There was no clear indication that the structure that these timbers represent was within its original setting, it is possible that they were brought in from a redundant building.

These timbers were primarily recognised by the presence of carpenters marks entirely separate from those of Phase 2 (Figure 4 Plate 8). The carpenters marks of this phase were cut using a race knife and were in the forms of lines and circles that did not make a pattern, due to the timbers having been moved out of original context in Phase 2. Most of these were visible on the northern elevation (Figure 4), along with the carpenters marks of Phase 2 which were chisel cut and numbered the posts consistently.

The clearest sense of the Phase 1 building came from the east end truss of the barn (Figure 6), within which the two jowl posts and the tie beam were reused elements. The mortices on these timbers suggested the missing Phase 1 framing of this truss would have consisted of fairly typical three high square panel framing with braces running down from the jowl posts to the sill beam, as reconstructed (Figure 6). The panels would have been infilled with wattles, as shown by wattle stave holes (Plate 8). On top of the tie beam were two redundant mortices for posts, and the Phase 2 principal rafters were set within Phase 1 mortices. These latter were set close to the end of the tie beam, as was more typically the case in earlier 17th century framing or earlier. This should be compared to the other two trusses of the barn (Figure 7 and Plate 10), the principal rafters of which were placed slightly further from the end of the tie beam. The two jowl posts of the west end truss were of Phase 1 and contained redundant mortices on the western side which show they taken from an internal truss. They had no evidence of internal bracing.

It is clear from the surviving framing that the Phase 1 structure, wherever it may have originated, was of the same width as the Phase 2 barn. It was probably broadly the same height, but is likely that it had a slightly steeper pitch roof which may have raised it slightly. Its timbers were converted both by axe and sawing, the latter having been pit or double trestle sawn, a method which is thought to have been adopted from around 1540 in the area (James 2012). Its style of carpenters marks cut with a race knife are more typical of 16th century or earlier date, though exceptions to this are known in the 17th century. There is no clear evidence that this was a domestic structure.

5.2.2 Phase 2: late 17th to early 18th century

It is evident that the barn as rebuilt in this phase followed many of the dimensions of the earlier structure. It also followed its style to a large degree with the use of three high square panel framing and braces running from posts to sill beam.

It was arranged into three bays with the central door positions being original, though the actual doors were of Phase 4. The two internal frames (Figure 7) faced onto the space between the two doors and consisted of braces running from the posts to sill beam on a low sill wall. Above tie beam level were two angled struts which ran to the principal rafters. These were not peg fastened, but simply placed into the mortices to transfer downward force. This style and method is more typical of the early 18th century date than the 17th century, as oak pegging became less used, with a higher reliance on nail fastening.

The end frame trusses were of the same arrangement with raking struts between tie beam and principal rafter either placed in mortices without pegging, or more simply nailed in place (Figure 7 Plate 10). The western end frame truss had bracing from post to sill beam with four posts running vertically from the base of the tie beam. The two central of these posts were nailed in place, the outer two fastened by a single peg at into the tie beam. At the opposing eastern end, only the two nailed central posts remained. This general lack of framing and evidence for wattle stave holes or tie

grooves for brick suggests that these end frames were always intended to be weather boarded, and many handmade nails remained on the timbers.

Along the wall framing, oak pegging was more consistently used, probably due to the presence of existing mortice and peg holes, though with nails used for fastening some of the smaller posts around the bracing. The carpenters marks systems were only visible on the northern elevation (Figure 4), with Roman numerals cut with a chisel, with number I on the post of the eastern truss, and the numbers increasing to the west. I to IIII were visible with the V not visible on the door post, but VI visible on the opposing door post. No further marks remained, though the numbering would have continued to X on the post of the western truss.

The rafter roof structure was supported on a purlin on each side of the roof and a central ridge board, with the bases of the rafters on the wall plate. On the north side a secondary wall plate on top of the wall plate was present. This was clearly an error, potentially in order to incorporate the Phase 1 principle rafter position closer to the end of the truss, or it could have been from the tie beam with a large bend within it on the western truss (Plate 10) which had the effect of pushing up the principal rafter and purlin at that point. On one of the rafters were two burn marks at 90 degrees to the timber (Plate 11), suggesting it was put there before the rafter was put in place. Such marks are considered to be ritual protection against the devil (Hoggard 2019) and presumably protecting the stored crop.

The three bay layout of the structure was typical of a small threshing barn, with the space between the Phase 4 double doors for threshing crop. It is probable that the stone flags of the threshing floor and other bays was original. Once threshed, the grain would have been stored elsewhere on the farm, with the stalks of the crops stored in the two end bays. Holes through the brick work panels would have allowed a constant ventilation to the stored crop. It is probable that crop was brought in from the north on carts, with waste crop stalk being composted in the farm yard to the south of the barn, the re spread on to the fields. These arrangements are entirely typical of the threshing barn of the region (Lake, Hathaway and Robson-Glyde 2014).

5.2.3 Phase 3a: 1838 to 1883

The farmyard was reorganised as shown on the mapping, presumably fairly early within this phase. The first of the buildings was a square sandstone stone and brick built structure (Plate 4 Fig 9). It seems likely that some of its stone was reused from the reorganisation of the earlier farmyard walls, as buildings of this period were more typically entirely brick built.

The structure had a door on the south-east side and two small windows facing to the north-west (Plate 13). It possibly had further facing to the north-east and south-west, though these were not clear due to a high degree of internal rebuild. Within the walls were some empty holes suggesting that the floor was originally slightly lower than as remaining, along with evidence suggesting that the door was also slightly lower (Plate 14). The door and floor were heightened to convert the structure into a stable in Phase 3b or 3c, suggesting it was not a stable before this point. A suggestion as to its function was degradation in the brick work just above the height of the former floor position (Plate 15). This evidence was not present all the way around the structure due to it having been entirely rebuilt from above the height of the brick string course visible on the south-east facing elevation, including the removal of the roof. This degradation is typical of the presence of pigeon excrement, suggesting use as a dovecote.

This function would be entirely consistent with the square form and low doorway, features seen on many Worcestershire dovecotes, the majority of which date to the 18th and 19th centuries (Lake, Hathaway and Robson-Glyde 2014).

5.2.4 Phase 3b: later in 1838 to 1883

A single storey structure was added to the north-east side of the likely dovecote at a slight angle (Plate 3, Plate 16 and Figures 8 and 9. It was sandstone built, though with a brick end gable above wall plate level. Internally it was split into four bays, as divided by three machine-converted softwood

king post trusses with the central post bolted to the tie beam and raking struts between the principal rafters and tie beam (Plate 17). Such trusses were typical of much of the 19th century, but more typical in the second half of the century.

The building had three low and wide openings on the south-eastern yard side, typical of a shelter shed for cows, though no original features relating to this use remained as a brick skim had been added internally to the rear wall and the floor replaced with concrete.

It is possible that the brick of the gable (Plate 18) was a later rebuild as a it had a hatch into which straw or hay could be added to a temporary floor above tie beam level internally, though no clear evidence of his remained. This may have represented a change of use as crop was not traditionally stored above cows due to their high level of perspiration.

A door was also added leading into the dovecote, though it is possible that the first floor and door had been raised in order to convert the dovecote into a stable by this point.

5.2.5 Phase 4: 20th century

On the southern side of the newly converted stable was a single pitch brick structure (Plate 4 and Plate 5) which appears to be on the mapping of 1883, though this is not clear, and the style of the structure suggests a date within the first half of the 20th century. It is possible that this replaced this replaced an earlier structure within this location.

It had a single rectangular wooden frame window facing the yard, with a wide entrance to the south suitable for vehicle access, suggesting a garage close to the house. Its single pitch corrugated roof was supported on purlins set into the wall. A door was added between the garage and stable, though this may have previously existed.

The upper stage of the stable was largely rebuilt with the roof replaced in modern softwood timbers and the south-western gable and the north-eastern gablet windows added. A number of changes were made to flooring, most notably the concrete flooring within the former cow shed and the stable, suggesting a move away from being a working farm.

6 **Discussion**

The buildings recorded here represented a number of the traditional elements of a small 18th to 19th century farm, with a clear indication that the barn existed before the extant farmstead, potentially as early as the 16th century. Whether the barn existed on the site before the farmhouse was built in the early 18th century was not clear but it is possible that its major rebuild coincided with the construction of the house, as suggested by its method of construction such as its truss arrangement and an increasing use of nails as opposed to oak pegging.

The barn form highlighted the typical arrangement of the farmstead with its threshing doors opening onto the farmyard as illustrated on the mapping of 1838. This would have allowed for processing and storage of crop within the barn, as well as the essential manuring process within the yard, which would in turn be spread back on the fields. A wider sense of the farmstead was possible in 1838 with the tithe apportionment mapping and data. This documented that the farm was 37 acres in size with a mixture of arable and pastoral usage, as well as likely orchards.

A dovecote was constructed in the 19th century, at the point at which the farmyard was reorganised to some degree. Dovecotes are fairly typical of Worcestershire farmsteads of the 18th to 19th century, though it has been suggested that their presence was an indicator of increasing gentrification of such farmstead, whereas previously they would have been the preserve of larger estate houses. The buildings were typically built fairly close to the house and would have provided both eggs and meat as well as manure for a kitchen garden.

The continued agricultural use of the yard area was documented with the addition, probably in the second half of the 19th century, of a low shelter shed for cows, whose hooves would have aided the

composting and manuring process within the yard. On the mapping of 1883, a possible small pond is illustrated to the rear of the structure, a common feature for cattle, which consume a large amount of water. At around this point, the dovecote was also converted to be used as a stable.

The move away from traditional agriculture was first seen with the addition of a garage on the southern end of the buildings and confirmed with the addition of concrete floors within a number of the structures. Their agricultural use ended when the current owners bought the property in the 1970s.

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

6.1 Research frameworks

The Worcestershire Historic Farmsteads Project, part of a country-wide English Heritage project to categorise farm buildings, has allowed farmstead sizes and layouts as well as their buildings to be tied to the landscapes in which they sit, for example (Lake, Hathaway and Robson-Glyde 2014). These allow comparison between farms in Worcestershire to take place and to identify areas where further research is needed.

7 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Tim Cornah, who collated the report. The project was managed by Tom Rogers.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Pieter Van Zyl for commissioning the project and his help during the fieldwork. The project was monitored by Aidan Smyth of Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank him for his advice.

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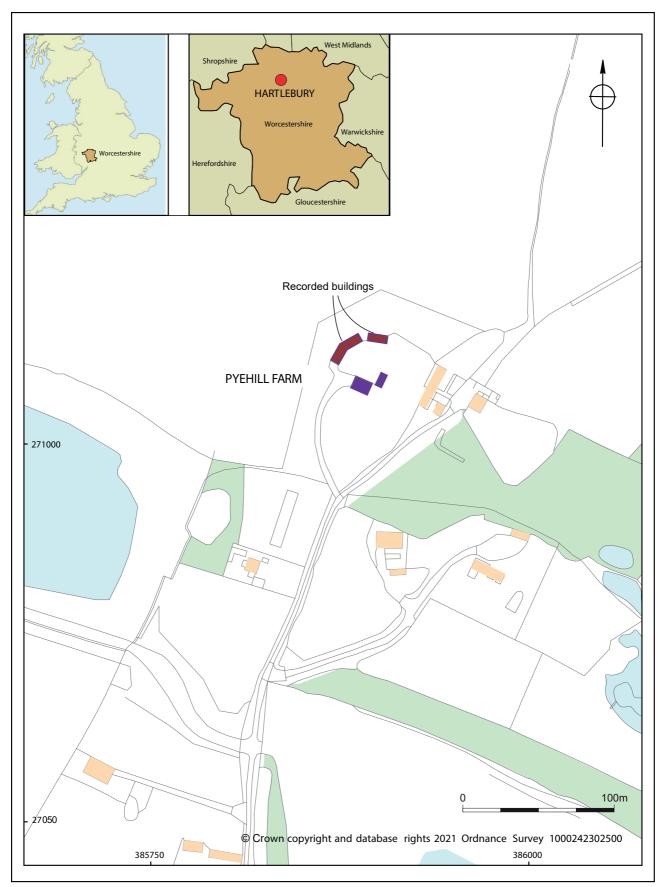
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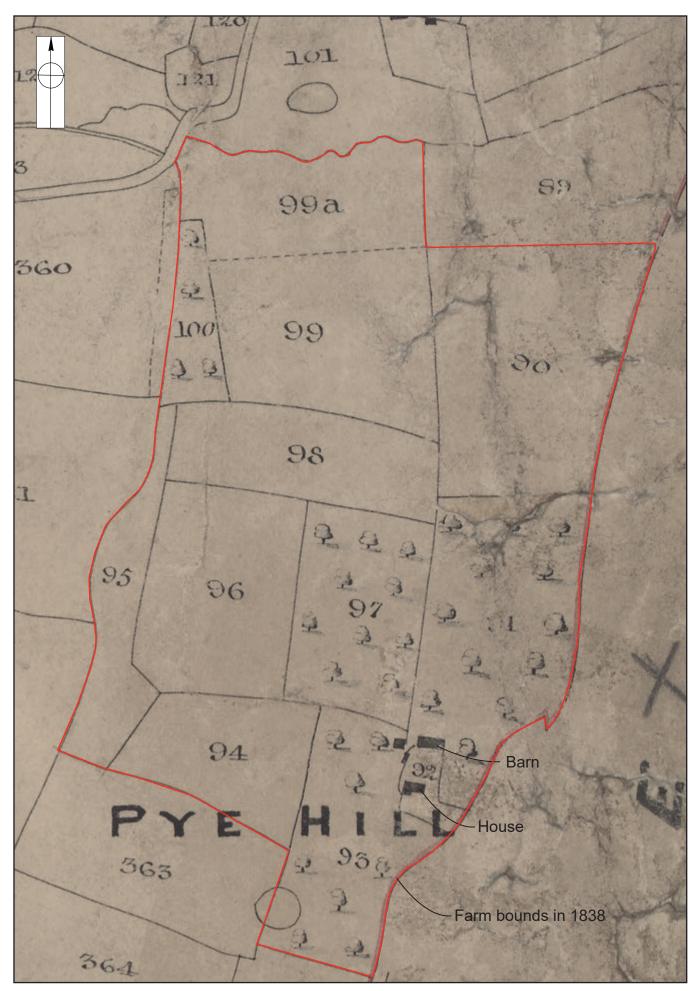
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Figures



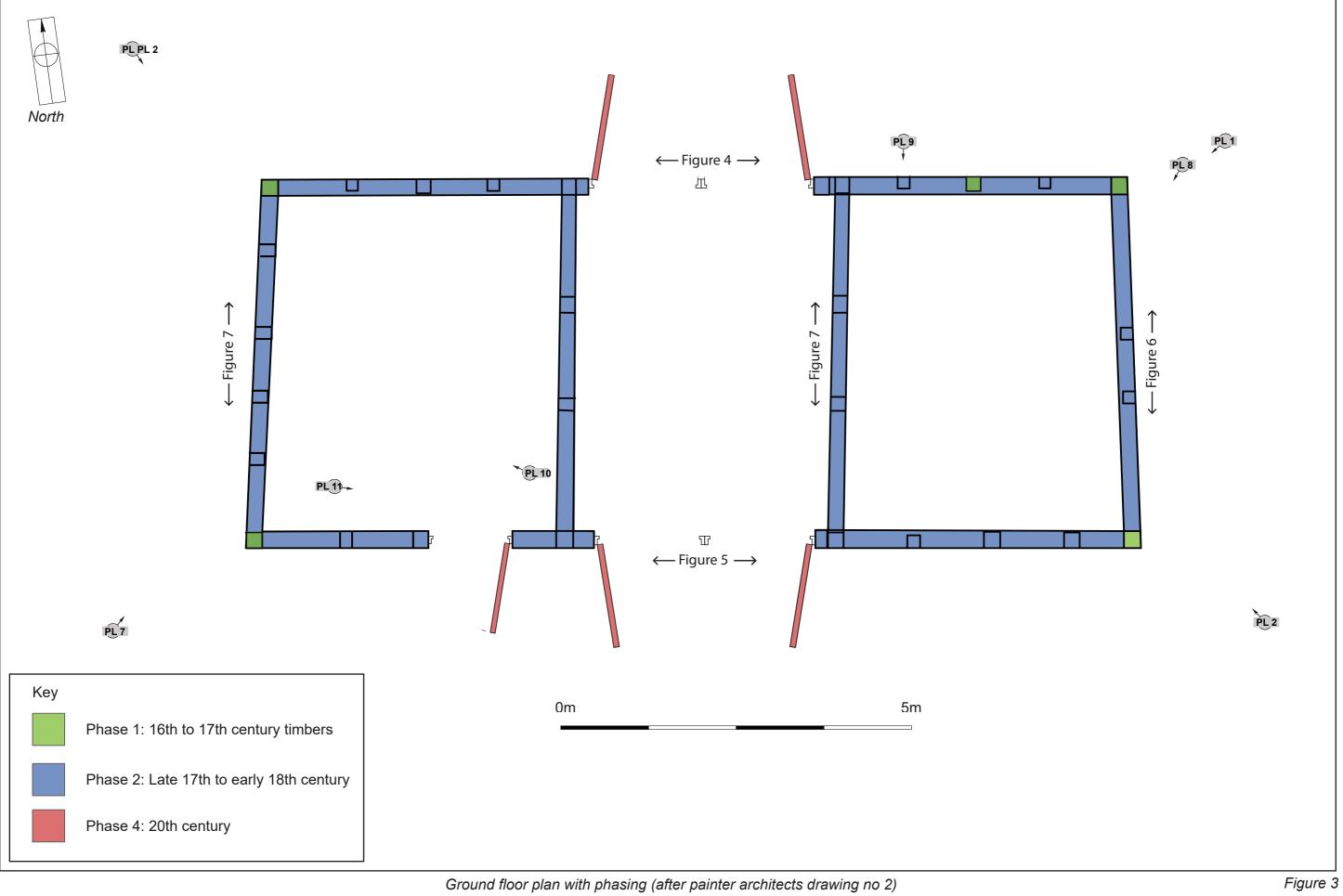
Location of the site

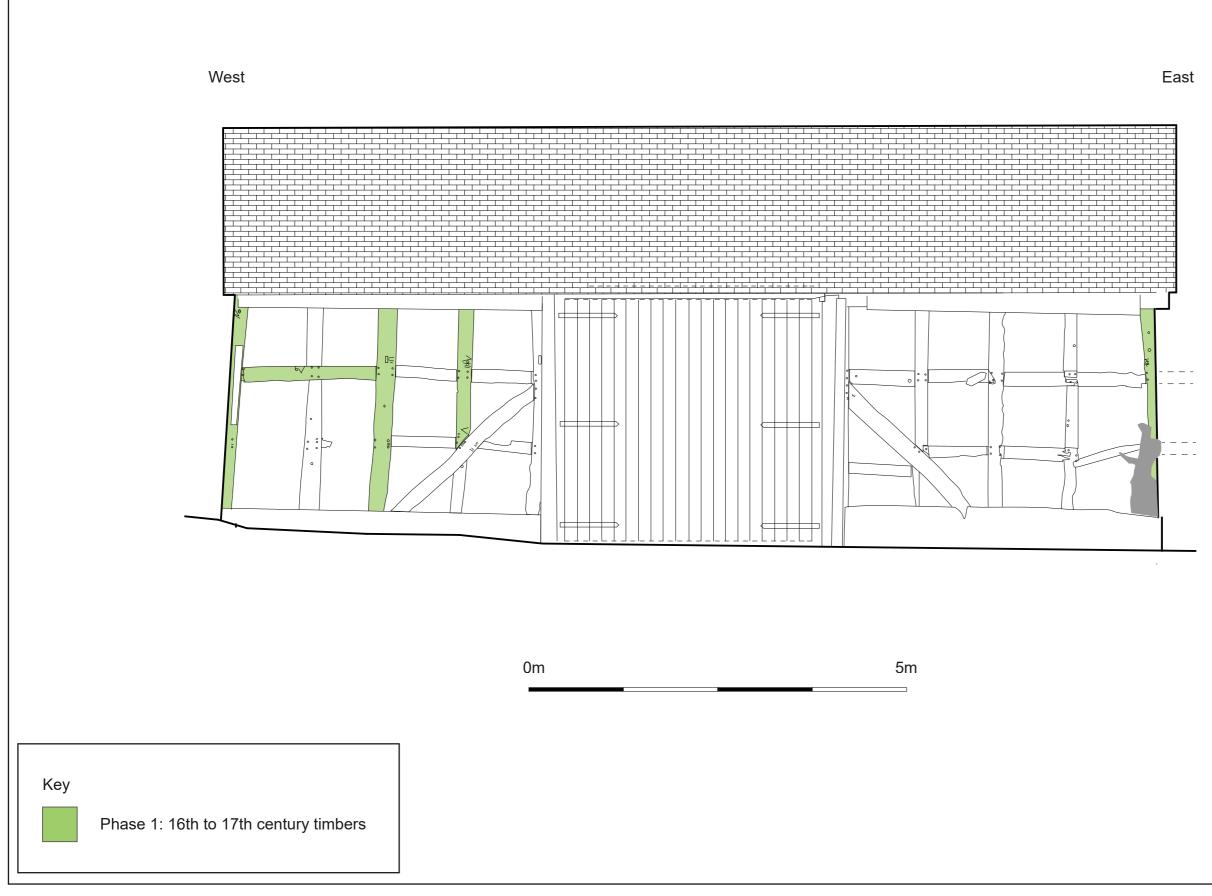
Figure 1



1838 Tithe Map of Hartlebury extract

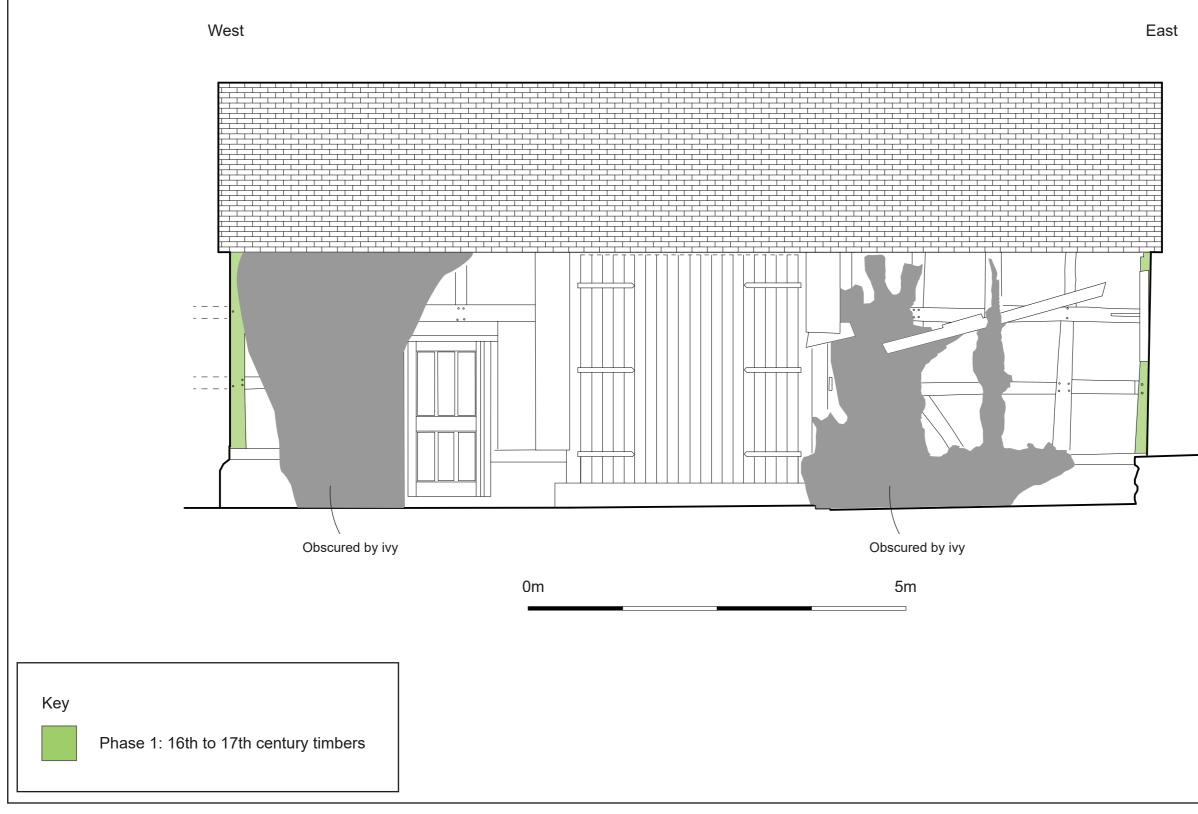
Figure 2



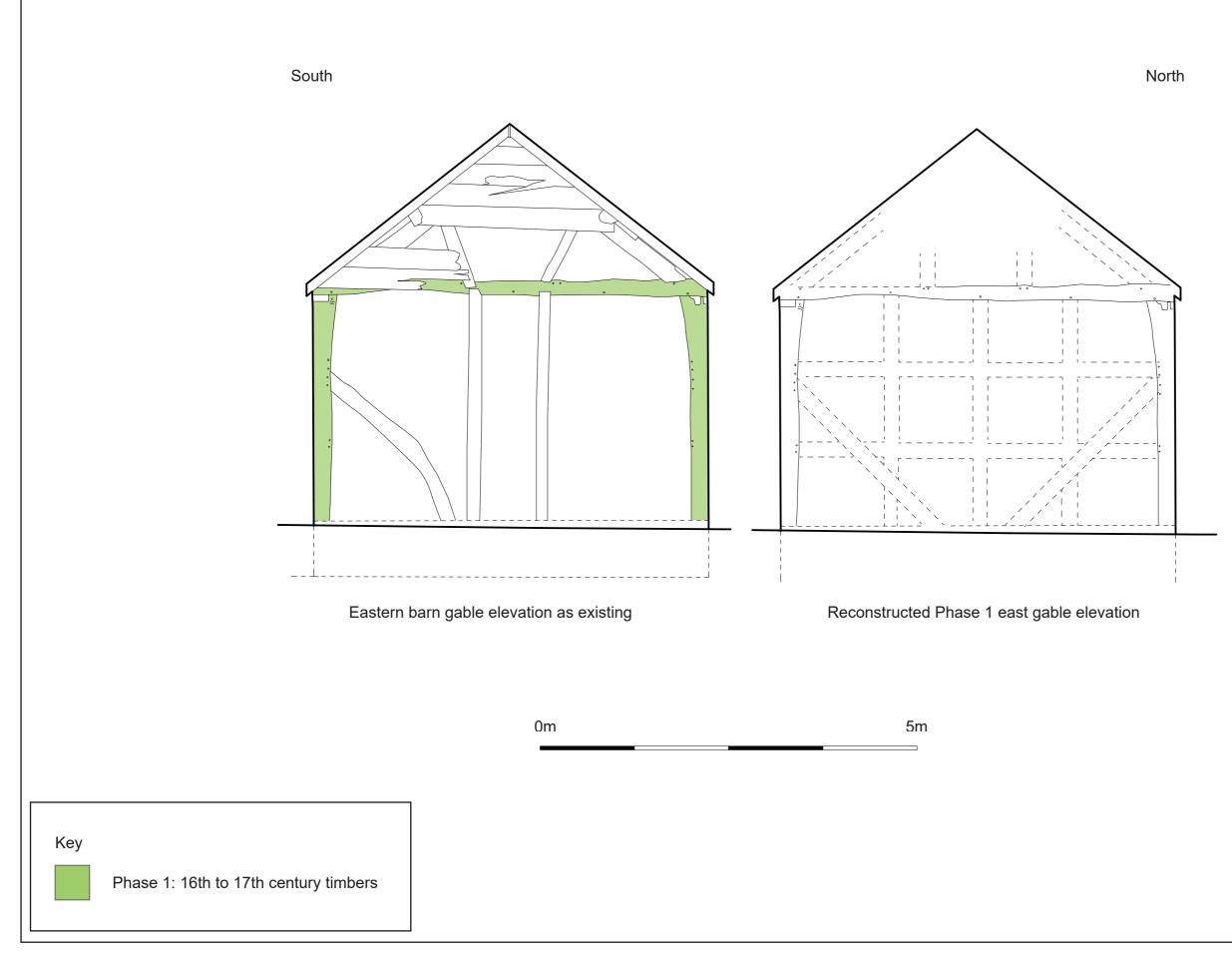


North facing elevation (after painter architects drawing no 3)

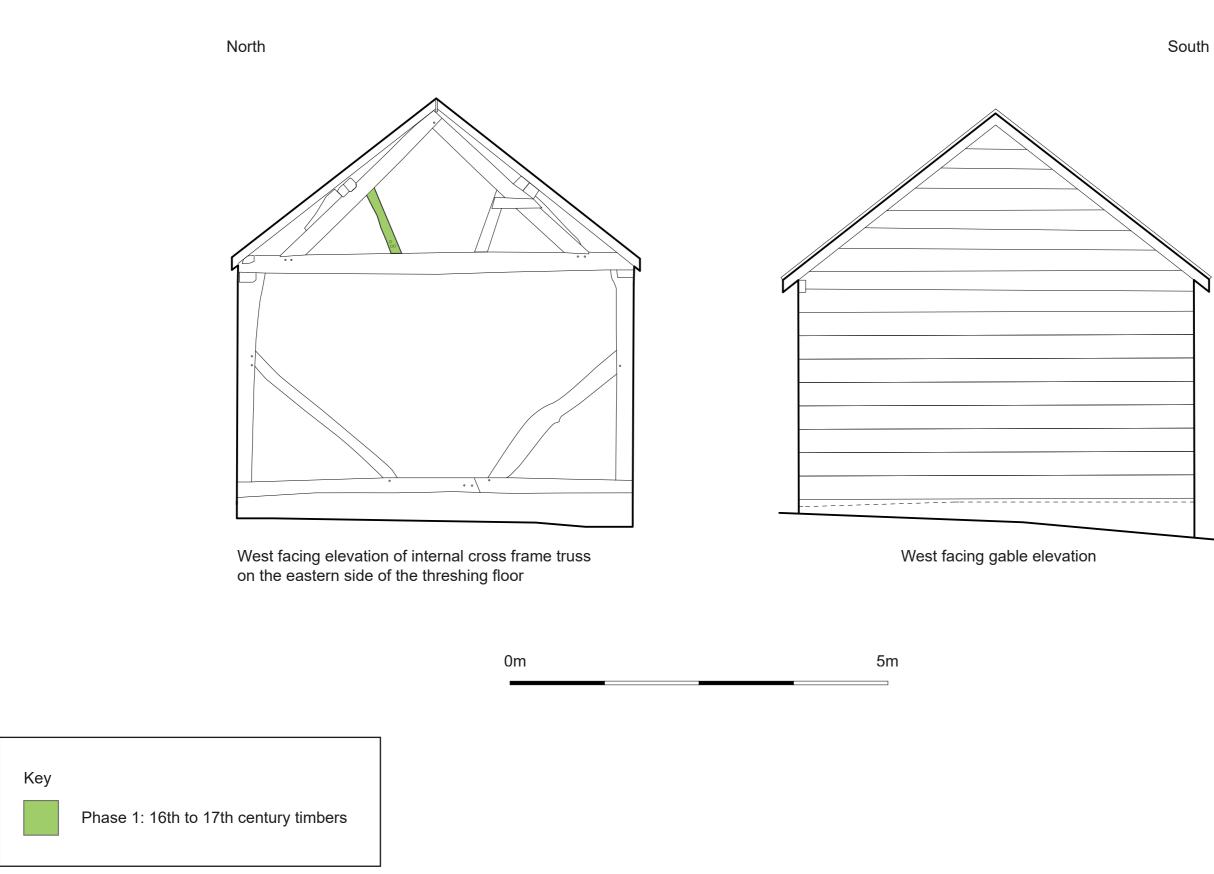




South facing barn elevation (after painter architects drawing no 3)

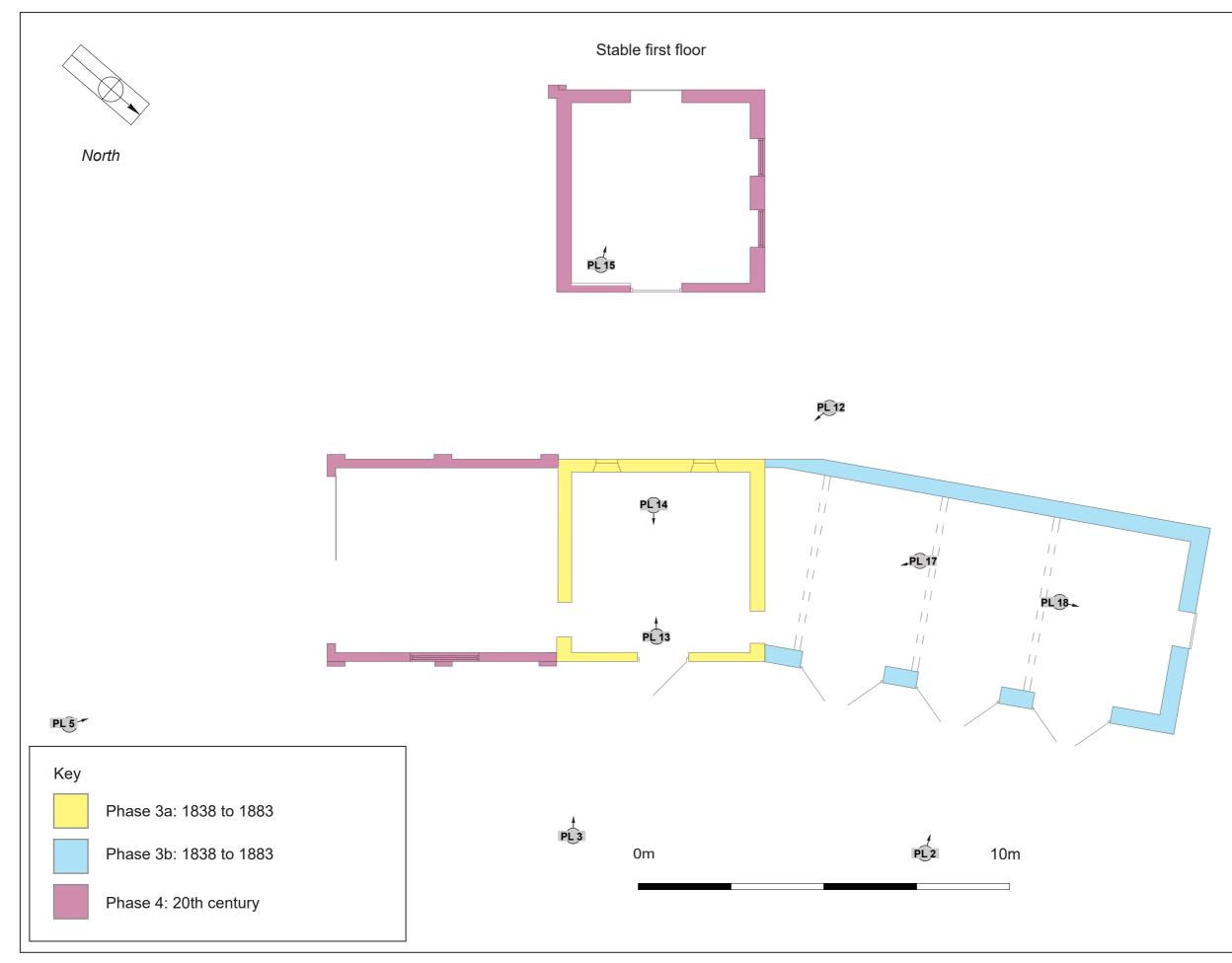


Easth facing barn elevation (after painter architects drawing no 3)



Cross frame and gable elevations (after painter architects drawing no 3)





Stable, coshed and garage phase plans with plate location and phasing (after John Anthony Architechterural services drawings 789-5 and 789-9)



Figure 8



Stable, coshed and garage phase plans with plate location and phasing (after John Anthony Architechterural services drawings 789-6 and 789-10)

Plates



Plate 1 Phase 1 barn, looking south-west

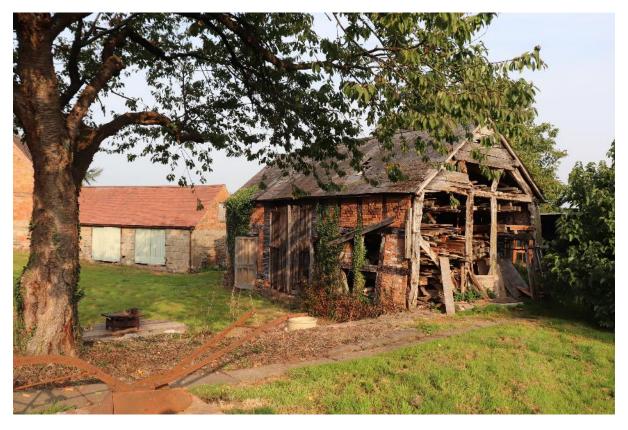


Plate 2 Phase 1 barn, looking north-west



Plate 3 Phase 3b cow shed, looking north-west



Plate 4 Phase 3a dovecote and Phase a garage, looking north-west, 1m scale



Plate 5 The buildings, looking north



Plate 6 Phase 1 barn, looking south-east



Plate 7 Phase 1 barn, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 8 Phase 1 barn with empty mortice and stave holes under the tie beam, looking south-west



Plate 9 Phase 1 and 2 carpenters marks, looking south



Plate 10 Phase 2 west end truss, looking west



Plate 11 Phase 2 burn marks, looking east



Plate 12 Phase 3 a dovecote, looking south, scale 1m



Plate 13 Phase 3a dovecote, looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 14 Phase 3a dovecote with evidence for the door and floor beam having been raised, looking south-east

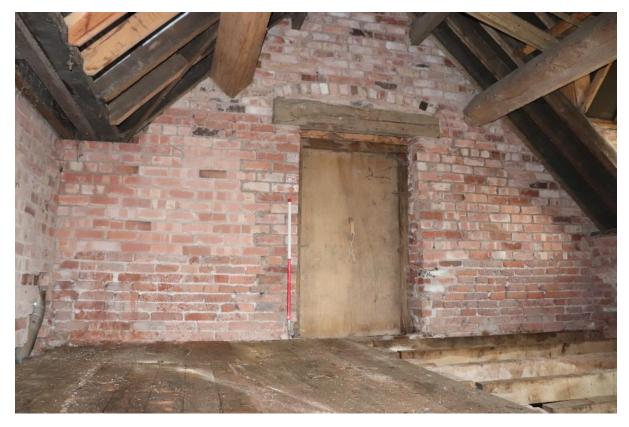


Plate 15 Phase 3a dovecote with floor level brick degradation , looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 16 Phase 3b cow shed, looking south, scale 1m



Plate 17 Phase 3b cow shed roof truss, looking south-west



Plate 18 Phase 3b cow shed, looking north-east, scale 1m

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (WSM73696)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Paper	Photograph, Plan, Report, Section, Survey
Digital	Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text
*OASIS terminology	

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Worcestershire County Museum.