

**Building recording at  
Naunton House Farm,  
Naunton Beauchamp,  
Worcestershire**  
Worcestershire Archaeology

*for L A Righton Rural Planning Consultancy*

**May 2020**



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# NAUNTON HOUSE FARM, NAUNTON BEAUCHAMP, PERSHORE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Building recording report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name:	Naunton House Farm, Naunton Beauchamp, Pershore, Worcestershire
Local planning authority:	Wychavon District Council
Planning reference:	20/02539/FUL and 20/02540/LB
Central NGR:	SO 96982 52251
Commissioning client:	Lucy Righton of L A Righton Rural Planning Consultancy
WA project number:	P6052
WA report number:	2920
HER reference:	WSM77506
Oasis reference:	fieldsec1-420253

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# Building recording at Naunton House Farm, Naunton Beauchamp, Pershore, Worcestershire

By Tim Cornah

## Summary

Building recording was undertaken at Naunton House Farm, Naunton Beauchamp, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 96982 52251). It was commissioned by Lucy Righton of L A Righton Rural Planning Consultancy on behalf of her client, in advance of proposed removal of the majority of an unstable 18th century building, with retention of the west internal division. The remaining is to be replaced by a building of a slightly larger footprint and reusing the original tiles together with existing bricks, where possible. A planning application is yet to be decided and is subject to a programme of building recording.

Naunton House Farm comprised a relatively complete set of buildings up until the middle of the 20th century, when a number of these were demolished, most notably the buildings around a yard on the eastern side of the site. This area is likely to have centred around manure production from cows with crop waste from the barn to the north. The majority of the buildings around this yard were removed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The building recorded in this project had some elements of unusual layout and a limewashed interior, potentially suggesting that it was used as both cow house and dairy, though conclusive evidence to this effect was removed by 20th century truncation and coverings. Its broadly 18th century date is likely to reflect a movement in Worcestershire towards dairy herds which continued into the 19th century. Surviving examples of pre-19th-century cow houses are rare in a national context, though it is far from certain that this was the function of this structure, given that so little remains. The interpretation is supported by the structure having been used as a dairy from the late 1950s.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

Building recording was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in April 2021 at Naunton House Farm, Naunton Beauchamp, Pershore, Worcestershire (NGR SO 96982 52251). The project was commissioned by Lucy Righton of L A Righton Rural Planning Consultancy on behalf of Mr S Bowyer, in advance of proposed removal of elements the majority of an unstable 18th century element of the building with retention the west internal division. The remaining is to be replaced by a building of a slightly larger footprint and reusing the original tiles together with existing bricks, where possible. A planning application is yet to be decided by Wychavon District Council (reference 20/02539/FUL and 20/02540/LB) and is subject to a programme of building recording.

The building is a designated heritage asset, within the terms used by the National Planning Policy Framework. The building is grade II listed through its attachment to a 17<sup>th</sup> century dovecote (List Entry Number: 1259831). The dovecote is registered with the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (WSM41891).

A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (2012) and approved by Aidan Smyth of Wychavon District Council.

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 (CIfA 2014a)*, as well as *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire (WCC 2019)*.

## 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' (CIfA 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*

- 1884 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:10,560
- 1903 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 has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2021).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The site reference number used by the Historic Environment Record to record archaeological "events", and site code used in the archive is WSM77506.

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. All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot. 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 photogrammetric survey 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, building recording forms, annotated drawings and photogrammetric survey. 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

The site is located c650m to the east of the village of Naunton Beauchamp within Naunton House Farm. Its surrounded by farm buildings and farmland more generally. The topography is broadly flat with the geology recorded as Charmouth Mudstone Formation overlain by the Wasperton Sand and Gravel Member (BGS 2021).

### 4.2 Historic and archaeological background

The following is largely derived from the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) data, which was searched for a radius of 500m centred on the site.

The area around the farmstead is known to have been part of the wider Feckenham Forest. (WSM42160). The village of Naunton Beauchamp (WSM24090) was established by the medieval period. Medieval and later agricultural activity within the landscape is evident in the form of extensive areas of ridge and furrow (WSM17836, WSM30532, WSM30533, WSM70091, WSM70093, WSM70094, WSM70095, WSM70096, WSM70097), including immediately around Naunton House Farm.

The buildings within the wider area are post-medieval in date with farmsteads such as at the Elms (WSM29253, WSM29252) and Honeybourne (WSM41889) dating to broadly the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A further 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead stands at Yellow House (WSM53387). All of these farms area located to the north-west of the site, on the eastern side of the village.

The HER data contains seven records within Naunton House Farm itself, see Figure 2. The farmstead (WSM60417) is considered to date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century based in the character of a number of its buildings, though the main house dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (WSM03056), most likely replacing an earlier house. Four metres to the north of the house is a timber framed structure (WSM41891) of 17<sup>th</sup> century date recorded simply as an outbuilding though its function is likely to have been that of a brewhouse, kitchen or other domestic service function. Two metres to the north-west of the house is a further timber framed building recorded as a 17<sup>th</sup> century barn (WSM41890). The current owner of Naunton House found a cider mill stone under the floor within this building, suggesting it was a cider house with internal mill and presumably press. To the west and north of the cider house and possible brew house, further buildings of unknown character and date formerly existed (WSM52767) that remained on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1903, but were demolished later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To the east of the farmhouse is a further set of buildings of increasingly agricultural character. Closest to the farmhouse is the dovecote (Plate 1 to Plate 3) (WSM03057) which is of 17<sup>th</sup> century date and is linked via a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick structure, possibly a forming blacksmiths shed, to the building recorded in this project as discussed below (Plate 4). To the north east of this is a timber framed probable threshing barn (WSM41892). Further buildings formerly existed in this group (WSM52766), the character and date of which are unknown, with the exception of that extending broadly from the building recorded below. These were formerly part of the same structure until around the 1970s.

The layout of the buildings in this eastern group indicate a former farmyard, and it is illustrated as such on the historic mapping with a track leading into the yard from the fields to the north-east. With a threshing barn on the northern side, it is likely that the buildings of this yard were additions later than the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when there was typical of an increasing move towards the rearing of cows in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries on Worcestershire farms. The central area of the yard is likely to have been a central mixing point for cow dung and crop waste which would then be spread back on the fields as manure. The building recorded here is known to have been a dairy in the later 1950s (Mr S Bowyer pers comm). The majority of the buildings of this yard were demolished by later 1970s.

## 5 The building

### 5.1 Building description

The building currently comprises of four walls with no extant roof structure. The walls are timber framed with brick infill, with the exception of the southern wall which is a breeze block rebuild. Running north to south down its centre is a single internal dividing wall. The building links on its western side to a single storey brick and tile east to west aligned building, which in turn links to the timber framed former dovecote. A model of the building can be found here <https://skfb.ly/ontYQ>.

### 5.2 Building development

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

- Phase 1: 18<sup>th</sup> century
- Phase 2: 19<sup>th</sup> century
- Phase 3: 20<sup>th</sup> century

#### 5.2.1 Phase 1: 18<sup>th</sup> century

A partial bay of a timber framed structure remains extant. Its gable end frame (Figure 4, Plate 5) consists of long straight braces running the sill beam to the jowl posts, and originally would have had three vertical posts, though the many changes after the insertion of doors into to the framing made clear confirmation of this difficult. It had four lines of horizontal timbers giving the effect of four high square panel framing, though these are somewhat irregular and are likely to have been Phase 2

insertions when the brickwork panels were replaced. Only part of the tie beam remains, though a 1970s photograph and a further in 2020, though the latter with some deterioration, (Plate 1 and Plate 5) shows four vertical timbers extending broadly to collar level and a further extending from the collar to the apex. The building originally had a single purlin on each side of the roof and a central ridge purlin.

The surviving side wall frame (Figure 4, Plate 6) has three further tall posts extending from cill beam to wall plate, again with horizontal timbers giving the impression of four high square panel framing. These are more likely to be original but have been simply nailed to the posts. The exception to the pattern is at the northern end where one horizontal timber was pegged in place at roughly head height, suggesting a former door position.

No original infill panels remain, though a groove around the interior of some of the visible framing indicate a mortar key for brick or masonry. The timbers of the building are almost entirely elm, with a few rafters previously removed from the building of oak. All the pegging was of oak, as is typically the case in traditional timber framed buildings. All timber conversion was pit sawn by hand, with only occasional evidence of hewing. The style of long posts from cill beam to wall plate was typical of the later 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as is the increasing use of nails in the place of wooden pegs

The function of this building is difficult to surmise given that so little remains, though the likelihood of it being a threshing barn is small given one exists on site already and the unusual position of the doorway close to its northern end. Given its 18<sup>th</sup> century date and its position forming the western side of the yard, a cow house seems most likely. This is supported by the Phase 2 evidence.

### 5.2.2 Phase 2: 19<sup>th</sup> century

Probably at around this time, a central spine beam was added, creating a first floor space. It is likely that the two door positions within the gable end date to this time, along with the dividing wall that runs below the spine beam. The brickwork panels of the wall frames are likely to be of this period, with the former doorway blocked also. These hand-made bricks were typically 230mm by 110mm by 70mm in dimension, with some small variations and laid in a stretcher bond pattern.

Within the northern end of the western room, a small area of split lath is attached to the wall that had been plastered and lime washed (Plate 7). This indicates a change of use of the space to a more domestic function. Such lime washing was typical of food preparation areas, and with the likely presence of cows, a dairy is probable.

### 5.2.3 Phase 3: 20<sup>th</sup> century

Between the 1950s and 1978, the building was truncated substantially to leave only the northern part bay of the structure, and a breeze block wall constructed at the point of truncation.

The interior walls of the two rooms (Plate 8 to Plate 11) were thickened with brick and painted and the doors and windows replaced. It is probable that these rooms continued in use as a dairy.

## 6 Discussion

Naunton House Farm comprised a relatively complete set of buildings up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when a number of these were demolished, most notably the buildings around a yard on the eastern side of the site. This area is likely to have centred around manure production from cows with crop waste from the barn to the north mixed with cow dung by hooves in the yard.

The building recorded in this project had some elements of unusual layout and a limewashed interior, potentially suggesting that it was used as both cow house and dairy, though conclusive evidence to this effect was removed by 20<sup>th</sup> century truncation and coverings. Its broadly 18<sup>th</sup> century date is likely to reflect a movement in Worcestershire towards dairy herds which continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Surviving examples of pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century cow houses are rare in a national context (Lake, Hathaway, and Robson-Glyde, 2014), though it is far from certain that this was the function of this

structure, given that so little remains. The interpretation of the building is supported by it having been used as a dairy from the late 1950s.

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

## 7 Project personnel

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

## 8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Lucy Righton of L A Rural Planning Consultancy for commissioning the project and the landowner for providing access and their help during the fieldwork. The project was monitored by Aidan Smyth, archaeological planning officer at Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank him for his advice.

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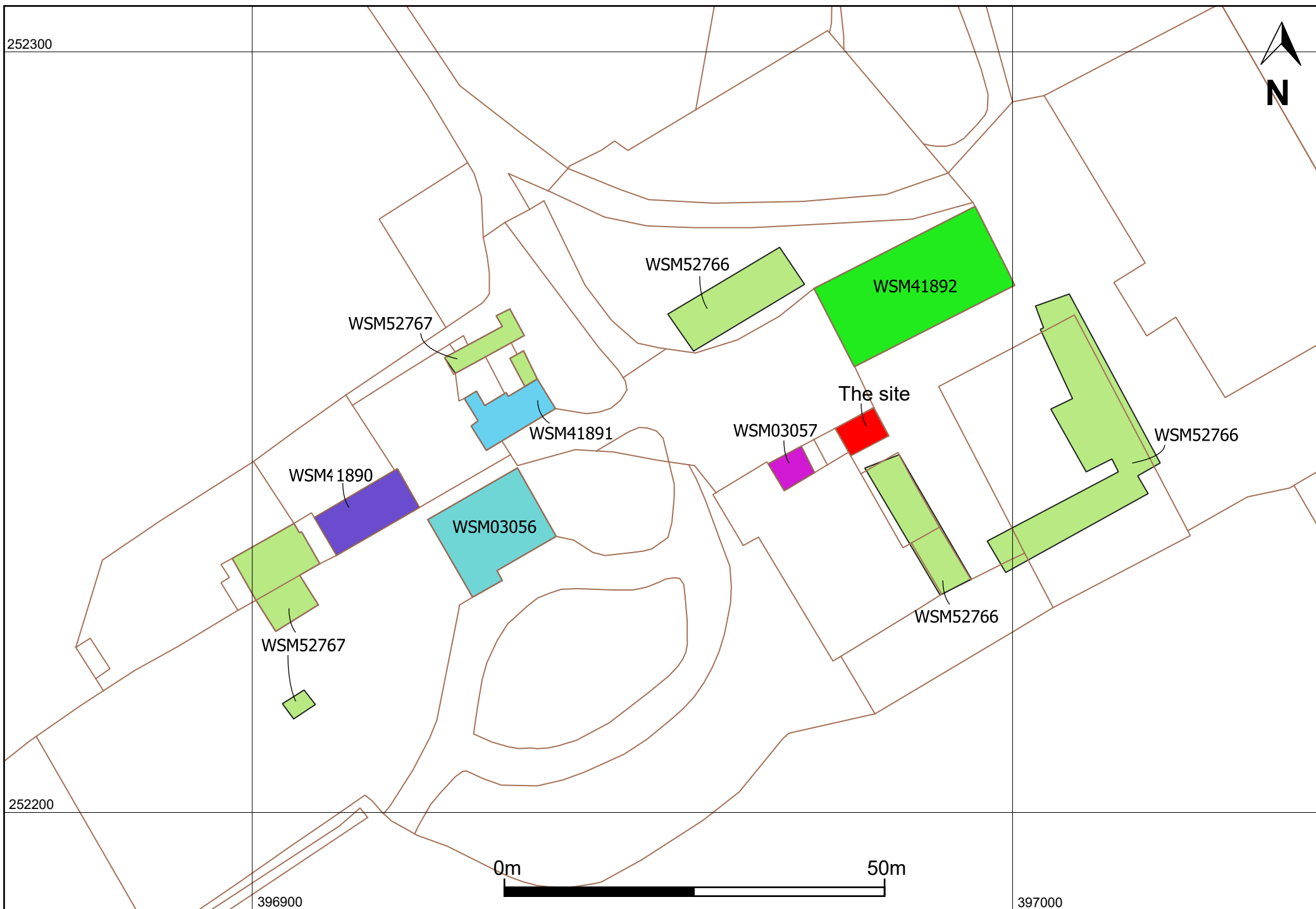


## Figures



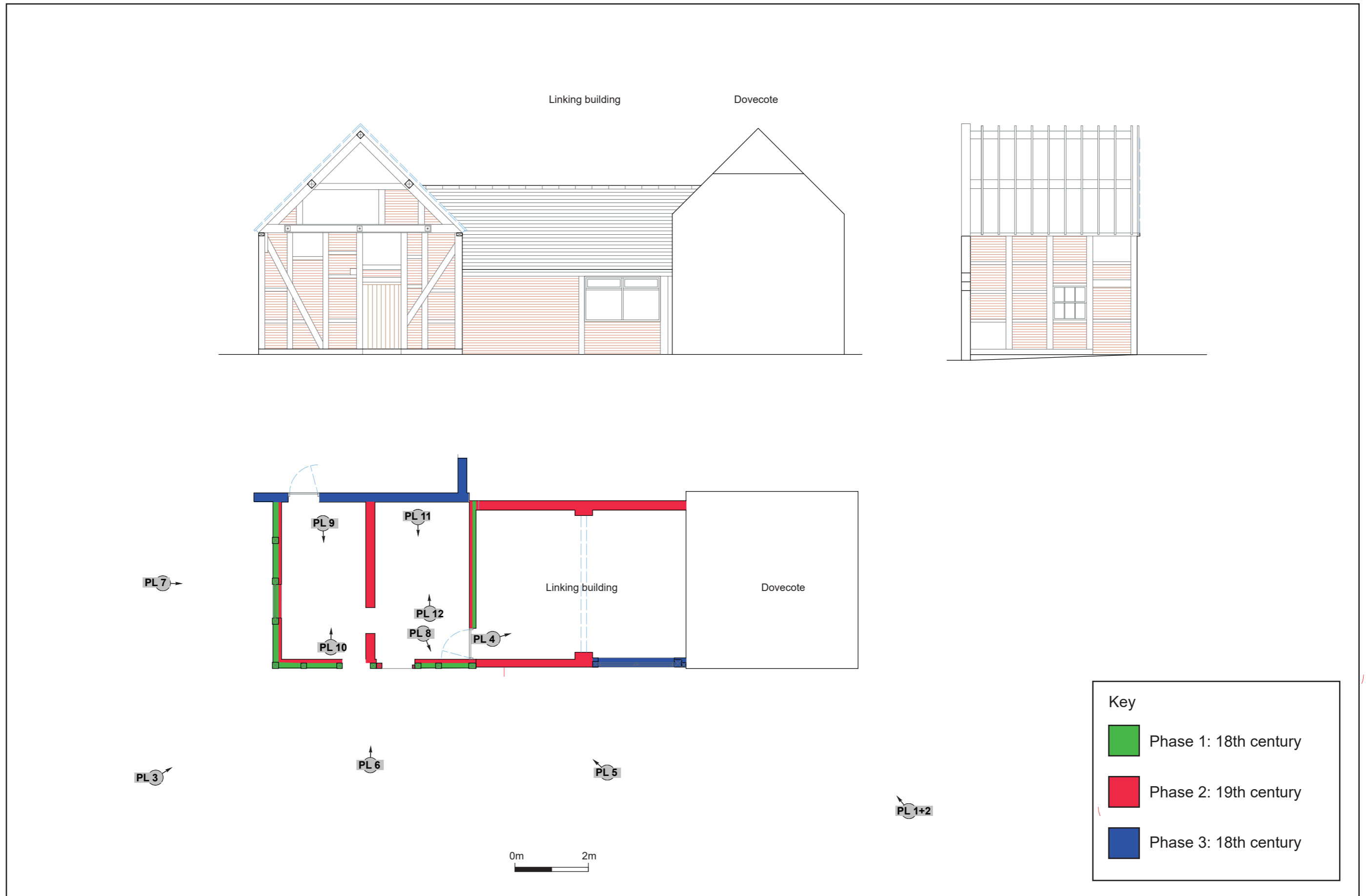
Location of the site

Figure 1



*The wider farmstead with HER numbers*

*Figure 2*



The building and linking structure as drawn in 2020 (After Lett and Sweetland Architects drawing no 1181.A02) with phasing added

Figure 3

E

W



S

N



Photogrammetric elevations of the exterior timber framed walls

Figure 4

## Plates



*Plate 1 The building, linking structure and dovecote as photographed in 1978, looking south-east*



*Plate 2 The building, linking structure and dovecote, looking south-east*



*Plate 3 The building, linking structure and dovecote, looking south-west*



*Plate 4 The 19<sup>th</sup> century linking structure interior, looking south-west*





*Plate 5 The building as photographed in 2020, looking south east*



*Plate 6 The building former gable, looking south-east, scale 1m*



*Plate 7 The building former side wall, looking south-west, scale 1m*



*Plate 8 Split lathe and lime washed interior wall covering below 20<sup>th</sup> century coverings, looking north-west, 0.50m of a 1m scale*



*Plate 9 The eastern room, looking north-west, scale 1m*



*Plate 10 The eastern room, looking south-east, scale 1m*



*Plate 11 The western room, looking north-west, scale 1m*



*Plate 12 The western room, looking south-east, scale 1m*

## Appendix 1: Summary of project archive (WSM77506)

TYPE	DETAILS*
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.