Historic Buildings Recording

Church Farm
Lewknor
Oxfordshire

Historic Buildings Recording and Investigation

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Regeneration Holdings Limited to undertake a programme of building investigation and recording at Church Farm, Lewknor, South Oxfordshire as part of the development of the site. The investigation covered several farm buildings at the site but was concentrated on the Grade I listed barn believed to have been constructed in the second quarter of the 14th century and recognised as one of Oxfordshire's most important medieval buildings. The significance of the building largely lies in the fact that it was originally constructed as a medieval hall house and was later abandoned and converted to a barn. The fact that it was converted to a barn, rather than adapted and modernised as a house with the insertion of a chimney stack and upper floor, has resulted in the primary fabric of the hall being relatively well preserved.

*The hall would have been a hugely impressive structure richly decorated with extensive cusping and with an open truss that would have been 'hardly paralleled for size in English timber-framed buildings.' (Morrey and Smith,1973). John Fletcher, who noted that the house was most likely built by John of Lewknor (Knight of the Shire in the 1330s-1350s), adds that the building must have been 'one of England's most impressive halls' (*Oxoniensia *XL, 1975)*

The interest of the building is enhanced by a suggestion that its construction may have been interrupted or curtailed by the Black Death. Physical evidence suggests that the building was intended to form part of a larger structure (possibly never completed) and the relatively light smoke blackening to the rafters suggests that although there was an open hearth the hall probably wasn't inhabited for a long period. Dendrochronology has provided felling dates for three timbers in relatively close proximity to the Black Death.

Due to its significance the building has been subject to previous studies and programmes of recording, but these were hampered by difficulties of access and visibility. The current investigation in more favourable conditions has been of value and has increased our understanding of the structure. The principal features identified by the current works have been a series of mortices in the wall plate which have shown that there would have been two large projecting oriel windows to either side of the hall.

The other main area where the current work has advanced understanding has been of the western end of the building. When the main previous studies were undertaken in the 1970s this area was almost entirely obscured by large modern grain bins and it was hoped that the removal of these would reveal further medieval fabric, or at least evidence of the building's original form. The bins have now been removed but unfortunately this has revealed that the west end was completely reconstructed in the post-medieval period, albeit with a small number of re-used timbers. A good record of this end of the building has been made which can be added to the overall archive of the building but it has not been possible to answer the many remaining questions regarding the original form of this end of the building. The building may have had a similar footprint to that surviving or it may have been intended to construct an adjoining range aligned with the point where the primary fabric currently ends.

Other features identified in the current project have included a number of impressive and distinctive carpenters' marks.

Church Farm, Lewknor, Oxfordshire

Historic Building Recording and investigation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Regeneration Holdings Limited to undertake a programme of historic building recording and archaeological investigation at Church Farm, Lewknor, Oxfordshire (Fig 1). Regeneration Holdings Limited were granted planning permission for a development at the site including the conversion of several buildings, the demolition of others and the construction of new dwellings, with the condition that programmes of building recording and below-ground archaeological watching brief be undertaken. The planning permission and current investigation do not cover the recently listed house at Church Farm and the current report only covers the recording of the existing buildings at the site. The listed building description covering the house is however included in this report as Appendix B (together with that of the barn).

1.1.2 The main focus of the investigation and recording at Church Farm was the barn which is believed to have been constructed in the first half of the 14th century and is a Grade I listed building. The recording also included a number of other unlisted buildings at the farm (principally stable range and a granary) but the level of recording for these was much lower than for the barn, reflecting their lesser significance.

1.1.3 In February 2009 a design brief was issued by Richard Oram (County Archaeological Services) to cover the below-ground archaeological watching brief but no similar brief was issued to cover the above-ground building recording. Therefore in April 2009 OA proposed a methodology (detailed in a Written Scheme of Investigation) and this was verbally approved by South Oxfordshire District Council.

1.1.4 The level of recording reflected the fact that the barn has been previously investigated in some detail (particularly by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, RCHM, in the early 1970s) and the new work was intended to complement and add to the understanding of the building rather than to replicate the existing work.

1.1.5 A structural survey of the barn had previously been undertaken by Monson structural engineers and this showed that the building was in a relatively good condition. Therefore the current development will only see relatively minor works to the barn.

1.2 Aims and objectives

1.2.1 The main objectives of the project were:

- to take the opportunity afforded by the current development to produce an archive record of the buildings at the site after the clearance of a thick layer of grain dust from within the building and after the removal of the large grain bins;
- to record any features to be lost by the development;
- to add to the existing understanding of the development, history, use, function and previous form of the barn.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The building recording was undertaken during three visits to Church Farm (21 April, 3 June, 17 July 2009). The initial visit was undertaken before the start of any repair or clearance works while the other two visits were undertaken after the barn had been cleared of considerable grain dust which obscured many of the details of the roof's timber framing.

1.3.2 The recording of the barn was generally undertaken to Level II (as defined by English Heritage in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a Guide to Good Recording Practice*) but when added to previous studies this creates an overall Level III-IV record of the barn.

1.3.3 The recording comprised three principal elements: a photographic survey, a drawn survey and a descriptive survey. The photographic survey consisted of general views and specific details (internal and external) and was undertaken using black and white print film (35 mm) and a digital camera.

1.3.4 The drawn survey utilised existing plans and elevations produced by the RCHME in 1972 as well sketch elevations produced by Monson in their report on the structural condition of the building. The new work added annotation and further details to the existing survey, particularly in areas which have become visible since the RCHM work. For example the west end of the main barn was substantially obscured at the time of the RCHM survey by large grain silos but this area has now been exposed by the removal of the structures. The current work has principally focussed on enhancing the understanding of the building rather than producing a metrically accurate survey although the framing in the previously obscured areas has been added to the RCHM drawings The drawn survey also included the production of several important detail drawings such as the tracing of remarkable carpenters marks. The descriptive survey complemented the other survey and added further information to explain the building. The main recording was undertaken by members of the OA Buildings Department.

1.3.5 The project has not involved new detailed historical research, largely due to the extent of previous studies but it has utilised the principal secondary sources (see bibliography) and copies of the recording undertaken by the RCHM in the 1970s have been obtained from the English Heritage National Monuments Record in Swindon.

1.3.6 A rapid programme of recording was also undertaken on the other farm buildings at the site (excluding the house). The stable and granary were photographically recording to the same methodology as the barn and additional descriptive notes were made on these structures. Rapid photographs were also taken of the modern farm buildings prior to their demolition.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction and previous investigations

2.1.1 The barn at Church Farm, Lewknor is a Grade I listed, medieval building probably dating from the first half of the 14th century. However, its considerable significance has not always been recognised and it was only in 1969 that an indication of the building's interest was raised by Dr Peter Salway of All Souls College, Oxford, who noticed medieval timber framing with ornamental cusping hidden by modern cladding.

2.1.2 In the following years the building was subject to considerable study and investigations and these were reported in three separate articles contained in *Oxoniensia*[1]:

1 *Oxoniensia*: annual journal of the Oxfordshire Architectural; and Historical Society.

- Hilary Turner, 'The Great Barn', Lewknor: The Documentary Evidence, *Oxoniensia* XXXVII (1972), 187-91.
- MCJ Morrey and JT Smith, 'The Great Barn' Lewknor: The Architectural Evidence, *Oxoniensia* XXXVIII (1973), 339-45.
- *The Medieval Hall at Lewknor* by John Fletcher Oxoniensia XL (1975), 247-53.

2.1.3 The 1972 article concentrated on the historical and documentary evidence while the 1973 article concentrated on the architectural evidence and summarised a programme of recording undertaken by the RCHME. The 1975 article attempted to answer remaining questions from a regional and economic perspective but concluded that the building still merited further study. The barn was formally listed Grade I in 1976.

2.1.4 In c.1989 a programme of dendrochronology was undertaken on the barn by Dan Miles for the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. Four samples were taken and three of these provided felling dates of 1339, 1342/3 and 1350/1 (see Appendix C).

2.1.5 In 2002 there was a previous proposal for the site when All Souls College (who had owned the site since the mid 15th century) intended to sell the site for a residential development, thus allowing Mr Graham (whose family had been tenants since 1935) to relocate their farm to the outskirts of Lewknor.

2.2 Documentary evidence

2.2.1 Research undertaken by Hilary Turner in the archives of All Souls College, Oxford (until recently the owners of the current site) has shown that Church Farm was acquired by All Souls College in 1440 together with other land (the advowson, the glebe land and the rectorial tithes) probably associated with Abingdon Abbey. Several particulars of accounts from the 1450s-1480s confirm the farm as then being within the College's ownership and evidence suggests that the acquisition had included an existing set of farm buildings at the site. These buildings must have formed part of the rectorial estate and among the structures was a barn and a 'Great Barn'. Documents of the same period show that a new Parsonage was added to this complex in or around 1440 and it may be that it was constructed to replace the previous house on the site (the building in the current study) which was converted to a barn. Turner's article considers that the barn was therefore probably constructed by Abingdon Abbey which would have had both the money and the skilled craftsmen to erect a building such as that in the current study.

2.2.2 John Fletcher's article cast doubt on this interpretation, and suggested that it was 'particularly unlikely' that the Abbey would have constructed the hall. Due to the cusps and other detailing it is apparent that the building was designed to impress relative to other comparable buildings in the region and based on various stylistic evidence Fletcher considered the building to probably date from c.1325-1350. Comparisons were particularly drawn with other known hall houses constructed in this region in the 14th century including Sutton Courtenay Rectory House (c.1320), South Moreton (c.1330), Harwell (c.1360), Sutton Courtenay Manor House (c.1390), and Marlow Rectory. If the building was built in this period then Fletcher felt that John de Lewknor (c.1316-1360) was the most likely person to have been responsible for its construction. John de Lewknor was of the family who had been hereditary lay rectors of Lewknor, and who may have kept the Rectory Farm after Abingdon had started appointing the rectors. He was a county gentleman, Knight of the Shire (M.P. For Oxfordshire) between 1331and 1354. He was also responsible for rebuilding the east end of the church between 1320 and

1340 (Amery, 2006). Houses of this quality, typical of the last generation before the Black Death, were in general built by people of this status in county society.

2.2.3 The relatively slight smoke blackening on the roof suggests a small number of fires in the hall and Fletcher postulated that it might be that the construction of the hall was interrupted (or not fully completed) due to the Black Death (1348-9). Fletcher's proposed date for the building was subsequently supported by the results of the dendrochronology survey (referred to above). The dendrochronology may also support the theory that the barn's construction or occupation was affected by the Black Death but it cannot confirm this.

2.2.4 A report undertaken by Dr James Moir of Finial Associates in 2002 raises the interesting possibility that in fact the barn was originally constructed elsewhere and that it was dismantled and re-erected at Lewknor, possibly as late as the 18th century. Although Dr Moir does not state firmly that this is his belief he does show that this possibility cannot be discounted and that there are a number of pieces of evidence which tentatively suggest that this could be the case. Further documentary research may ultimately prove or disprove this theory but the current study assumes that although the building has been much altered it has not been moved to Lewknor from elsewhere.

3 BARN DESCRIPTION

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Church farm is located close to the centre of Lewknor and c.40 m west of the village church. The barn is orientated north-west to south-east but for ease of reference in this study the orientation has been taken as east to west. Therefore the main long walls are taken as facing north and south. This follows the orientation used in the RCHME study and in the *Oxoniensia* articles. As referred to above the current recording has been undertaken entirely from the ground (or low ladders) so there will be features (eg carpenters marks) in the upper parts of the roof that have not been identified.

3.2 Summary general description related to the original form of the hall house.

3.2.1 The barn at Church Farm is 15.25 m (50 ft) long by 9.75 m (32 ft) wide and it has a raised aisle type roof with clasped purlins. As detailed above it is believed to have originally been constructed as a richly decorated end hall house. The eastern two bays would have formed the hall itself and at the centre of this area there would have been an open hearth with smoke allowed to escape through the roof. The hall would have been c.10.3 m (34 ft) long and it would have had a clear span of 8.8 m (29 ft). The smoke blackening on the rafters and other timbers (albeit relatively light) appears to confirm that there was an open fire in the hall but for how long the house was occupied is uncertain. The trusses, frames, walls and roof in the area of the hall would have been richly decorated, particularly with cusping which partially survives, and in these areas the structure is clearly designed for display. The hall would have been illuminated by pairs of projecting bay windows, c.2.6 m wide, in both north and south walls (evidence of these revealed in the current study) and the main entrance into this hall would have been through the central arch of the spere truss (in-situ) via a screens passage. The screens passage was immediately west of the spere truss and beyond this there would presumably have been a service range but this end of the building has been entirely reconstructed, possibly in the 18th or 19th century, so that its primary form is unknown.

3.3 External description

3.3.1 The significance of the barn at Church Farm lies entirely in its internal form and in structural features which are not visible from the exterior. From the outside the building looks like an old but modest sized aisled barn and it is not greatly surprising that the deeper interest of the building remained undetected until 1969.

3.3.2 The barn has a half-hipped roof, clad in clay tiles, and the walls, which are largely clad in weatherboarding of several phases, are now in poor condition (Pl.2-4). The exception to this are the lower sections of the east wall and the eastern end of the north and south walls, which were reconstructed in the later 20th-century in concrete blockwork. The main walls are set on a brick plinth and there are tall double threshing doors in both the north and south walls. The external cladding has been stripped and replaced, some of this prior to the site inspection, so the external timber faces were not inspected.

3.4 Internal description

3.4.1 Introduction

3.4.2 The internal description below details each cross frame (or truss) followed by each of the main walls and roof.

3.4.3 The initial visit of the current recording project was undertaken after the barn had been cleared of silos and other large obstructions which had limited access but before the extensive grain dust was cleared from the timbers by a vacuum cleaner. This phase of cleaning also removed a number of secondary detritus such as various items on the modern gantry but it left the gantry itself in-situ as well as a grain conveyor draped over Frame 2.

3.5 Internal description: LONG WALLS

3.5.1 South wall (recorded by RCHM)

3.5.2 The phasing of the south wall divides into the largely primary eastern two bays and the western bay which has been entirely reconstructed, possibly in the 18th century (Fig 6).

3.5.3 At the base of the roof is a stop-chamfered upper wall plate (or cornice) which supports the bases of each of the rafters and immediately below this is the more substantial principal wall plate. The upper wall plate aligns with curved horizontal braces (or knees) at each corner of the former hall. Thus they secure the west side of the tie-beam from Truss 1 to the upper wall plate and the east side of Truss 3 to the plate. The principal wall plate is scarfed immediately west of the Spere truss (Frame 3).

3.5.4 The main framing in the south wall is entirely secondary but there are a series of empty mortices in the underside of the principal wall plate which provides an indication of the former wall arrangement and this includes some of the most significant features revealed in the current project. Several of the mortices relate to the former wall framing but there are also four horizontal mortices now observed for the first time on the outside of the wallplates, immediately beneath the eaves, two in each of the main bays within the former open hall (central and eastern bays). Located adjacent to vertical mortices for wall posts, the horizontal mortices are chased (i.e. have an angled side) and would have housed horizontal members which projected out from the external walls of the building at an angle rather than at 90 degrees to the wall (Pl. 21).

3.5.5 These could only have been intended for supporting two projecting oriel windows to this elevation. In each bay the pairs of mortices form a mirror image of each other so that the sloped side is on the 'inner' face and thus the former projecting horizontals would have

converged towards each other. These horizontals must have formed uppermost structure of a bay or oriel window and they would have been jointed to a third member parallel to the main wall. Presumably these joints would have been supported by corner posts and each of the whole oriels would have been supported from beneath. The two mortices in each pair are *c*.2.6 m apart; this shows the width of of each window at its widest point.

3.5.6 Projecting oriels such as these would have been a relatively common feature of medieval hall houses such as that at Lewknor and the identification of the evidence relating to it is an important advance in understanding this building. Similar mortices have been noted at the Golden Cross, the medieval (early 16th century) courtyard inn in Oxford. These projecting first floor oriels survive in-situ and refurbishment works in 1986 revealed similar mortices in the vertical face of the wall plate (see South Midlands Archaeology, 1987).

3.5.7 The south wall framing in the western bay is entirely secondary, contemporary with the reconstruction of this end of the building, and it comprises a central post, two raking struts and vertical studs.

3.5.8 North wall (recorded by OA)

3.5.9 The north wall framing (Fig 7) is also broadly similar to the south wall. The eastern bay of the north wall incorporates concrete blockwork (post 1972) to the lower section and secondary elm stud framing above. One of the members in this frame (the sloped eastern bearer or plate) may be a reused medieval member.

3.5.10 The western bay of the north wall again incorporates secondary stud framing but the central post in this area is a reused medieval member with long chase mortice to one side and a deep, tapered trench which re-profiles the same face. The chase mortice and re-profiled face suggest that this member may have been a section from a tie-beam (or possibly collar) and that the chase mortice would have housed an arched brace. The post is 3.43 m long and the uppermost 1.13 m (above the mortice and trench step) is moulded. Assuming this member was a tie-beam the moulded section would have formed the underside of the central part of the truss between the two arched braces. As a comparison the tie-beam in Frame 2 has a moulded central section of almost 4 m long (prior to the 20th-century re-setting of the aisle posts). If this is a surviving, reused tie-beam from the medieval hall it would be of considerable significance and presumably was from the western side of the screens passage (immediately west of Frame 3) or from the service bay beyond this.

3.5.11 Similarly to the south wall the wall plate in the central and eastern bays of the north wall has a number of empty mortices and among these are two pairs of horizontal mortices from former projecting oriel windows. These mortices are the same as those in the south wall (detailed above) with slots to the underside for posts and slots to the outer face for projecting members which would have extended from the wall at an angle to it.

3.6 Internal description: END WALLS AND TRUSSES

3.6.1 East wall and Frame 1 (Fig 3)

3.6.2 The east wall (Frame 1) of the barn would have formed the upper (dais) end of the open hall and it is an attractively decorated frame with cusping and mouldings which were clearly intended to impress visitors to the hall (Fig 3, Pl. 12). The wall divides into two main elements: i) the truss and half hipped gable; ii) the wall beneath the truss.

3.6.3 The truss comprises tie-beam, principal rafters, lower collar (or upper tie), upper collar, raised aisle posts and curved struts between raised aisle posts and lower collar. Unlike in

the other main frames the principal rafters are not diminished. The upper part of the roof (above the lower collar) is half hipped and this section of the roof has been entirely reconstructed with secondary rafters. The upper collar is a smoke-blackened reused primary rafter. The wall was originally entirely gabled and the half hip is a secondary alteration of unknown date. We can see that the wall must originally have been fully gabled through empty mortices in the purlin soffit for a former further bay of cusped windbraces. These would have extended beyond the current half hip. Between the lower collar and the tie-beam are nine studs which are set behind the primary arched brace and these all appear to be secondary (some reused members) probably dating from the same alterations as the half hip. There are two further studs to each side of the truss beyond the raised aisle posts.

3.6.4 The tie-beam is chamfered and it is supported by five posts which divide the main wall into four bays. Three of the posts (central and corner posts) are full height from the plinth while the other two posts are smaller in section and only rise from the mid rail. Within each bay there are two scratched Roman numeral carpenter's marks on the tie-beam's soffit which are different to the unusual primary marks found elsewhere in the barn (see below) but are assumed to be primary.

3.6.5 Below the tie-beam there are pairs of cusped braces in each of the four bays between post and tie. Behind the braces there are three secondary studs (several smoke blackened reused rafters) in each bay between tie and mid-rail. The studs which hold the weatherboarding are fixed with hand-made nails of probable 18th or 19th century date. In the upper face of the mid-rail there is a trench, apparently along the entirely length of the rail, within which the primary studs from the wall would have sat. These would have supported wattle and daub panels. There are also several other small mortices in the upper face, which appear to be secondary and which are inside (ie to the west of) the trench. At either end of the truss there is a curved horizontal corner brace tenoned into the face of the tie-beam which extends around to the north and south walls. These corner braces are found at each of the four corners of the former hall and they are tenoned into upper wall plates in the long main walls.

3.6.6 In the soffit of the mid-rail there are also a series of mortices although at this lowest level the wall has been almost entirely replaced by concrete block which appears to have been constructed since the RCHM recording in 1972. The studs are known to have been intact in 1911 as they are shown in a valuable photograph included in the 2002 report by Dr James Moir of Finial Associates. The three main posts (central and at each corner) survive down to the plinth but the two smaller posts, bracing and studs have all been lost. There are regular mortices for studs as well as two larger ones from the missing posts, and within each bay is a mortice with two pegs which would have housed the upper tenon of a curved brace. It is possible that these braces were cusped similarly to the surviving ones beneath the tie-beam but the photograph from 1911 mentioned above suggests that they were not. The photograph shows plain straight braces but they do not appear to correspond with the existing mortices and smaller posts beneath the mid-rail are not shown suggesting that by 1911 the original arrangement in this area had been substantially altered. Therefore it is still possible that the primary lower braces were cusped but these had been lost before 1911. From the surviving mortices it is apparent that there would just have been a single brace in each bay as opposed to the pair of braces in each bay above the mid-rail. The corresponding lower mortices from the bases of the braces are also apparent with three pegs each in the sides of the the three surviving posts. At the southern end of the wall is a small doorway in the concrete blockwork which leads through into the modern barn (being demolished in the current works). This doorway is clearly modern and would have been blocked by one of the former braces. The plinth is

of rendered brick. There are chase mortices in the west faces of each of the two main corner posts which would have housed braces in the north and south walls.

3.6.7 East central Frame 2 ('Open Truss' Fig 4)

3.6.8 The cross frame on the east side of the central bay (Frame 2) would have formed the central display truss of the original two-bay open hall. It is now superficially similar to the spere truss on the west side of this bay but this is due to a 20th-century alteration and its primary form would have been significantly different. The original frame would have been formed a remarkably wide, clear span below tie-beam level for a building of this date (c.8.8 m) but it has been altered by the repositioning of the arched braces towards the centre in order to provide greater support for the tie-beam. In the original building these braces would have been supported by the outer posts but they are now supported by inserted 20th-century 'aisle posts'. Large empty mortices with sloped shoulders are clearly visible in both main posts (with 6 peg holes) and in the soffits of the slightly cambered tie-beam (7 peg holes). The lower edge of the tie-beam is cut back slightly towards the outer edges and there is a clear step down at the points where the arched braces would have sat. There is now a small block (c.25 cm wide) between the heads of the two braces whereas they would originally have been c.3.75 m apart.

3.6.9 It is known that this alteration was undertaken in the 20th century because the braces are shown in their primary position in the photograph referred to above from 1911 (Pl. 1). The photograph shows the southern arched brace supported at its head by a large temporary prop (apparently a circular section post). The arched braces are each formed from a single very large piece of timber (c.70 cm wide at the widest point) but the southern member has had a new section added towards the upper edge on the east face. The two braces are moulded with a central trench to their undersides and they each incorporate three small mortices which probably held cusping to the underside of the braces and tie-beam. There are two similar small empty mortices to the underside of the tie-beam immediate inside (ie towards the centre) of the point where the arched braces would have been located. These presumably helped to hold the upper parts of the cusping. There are further mortices in the faces of the main posts, immediately below where the braces would have adjoined, which presumably housed the bases of the cusping.

3.6.10 A number of sections of iron strapping have been added to strengthen the cross-frame including plates between arched braces and tie beam and a long iron strap bolted to the northern post. The west side of this post head has been cut back and re-profiled to the allow the insertion of the ironwork; the east side is jowled. A modern horizontal bearer has been added between the 20th-century 'aisle post' and the main primary post.

3.6.11 The truss within Frame 2 (above the tie) is of raised aisle type and it appears to survive largely intact from its original arrangement. It comprises upper collar, lower collar, principal rafters (diminished above the upper collar), raised aisle posts, lower principals with arched heads supporting the aisle posts, arched braces beneath the lower collar and cusping beneath the upper collar. There are a series of mortices in the soffits of the two braces which presumably would have supported further ogival cusping within the truss.

3.6.12 The eastern end of a 20th century gantry structure rests on the tie-beam of Frame 2 and extends to the corresponding tie of Frame 3. The gantry is a simple structure which formed a walkway to the former grain bins at the west end of the building. There is an opening in the guard rail on the south side of the gantry suggesting that a ladder would have extended up to this point.

3.6.13 West central Frame 3 (spere truss, Fig 5)

3.6.14 The frame on the west side of the central bay (Frame 3) comprised the spere truss, that is the division between the cross-passage at lower end of the building and the main hall to the east. The spere truss would also have formed the main entrance into the hall. This cross frame remains very close to its original arrangement with very few secondary alterations. The truss is similar to that in Frame 2 with cambered tie-beam, lower collar (also cambered), upper collar, principal rafters (diminished above the upper collar), raised aisle posts, arched braces and lower principals. The upper section of the lower principals curves to meet the face of the raised aisle posts. There is cusping extant below the upper collar and against the adjacent section of the principals and it appears there would have been similar cusping to the arched braces below the lower collar. Each of these braces has a number of peg holes and empty mortices which would almost certainly have supported cusping. The uppermost pair of mortices from the former cusping are in the underside of the lower collar. The lowest sections of each of the two principal rafters is supported by a secondary raking strut, the lower end of which is wedged between tie-beam and the base of the raised aisle post, and a contemporary inserted purlin. The primary lower principal is cut in this area to allow for the insertion of the secondary purlin.

3.6.15 The tie-beam is chamfered to its underside with stops immediately either side of the two main aisle posts. Adjacent to each of these posts is an unusual carpenters mark in the tie-beam's soffit (detailed further below). At either end of the tie-beam there are curved corner braces fixing the upper wall plate (which rests on top of the main lower wall plate) to the tie-beam. The two arched braces beneath the tie-beam each appear to be constructed from two sections of timber and the soffits have three empty mortices which presumably would have held cusping. There are also similar mortices in the inner face of each of the aisle posts below the arched braces and these probably would have held the base of the cusping. Cusping survives within each of the aisles between main post, aisle post and tie-beam. Beneath this cusping is a horizontal spreader within each aisle (c.3 m above ground level) and further mortices beneath this suggesting that there was another similar member between main post and aisle post in each aisle at c.1 m above ground. These former members would not have been structural and their function would presumably have been to emphasise the central entrance to the hall beneath the arched braces. They were presumably removed to allow a more practical use of the space as a barn.

3.6.16 West end Frame 4

3.6.17 The west end wall has been entirely reconstructed (together with the western ends of the north and south walls) and we know very little about the original form of this end of the building (Fig. 8). The primary structure may have had a similar footprint to that existing today or it may have extended further west. Alternatively it may have ended further east, a short distance west from Frame 3 if the construction of the building was unexpectedly curtailed at this point (possibly for example by the Black Death) or it may have adjoined a separate (or proposed) building at this point.

3.6.18 The west wall now comprises a central post, two further intermediate main posts and four raking struts (between these three and the corner posts). The wall between these posts comprises vertical studs almost all of which appear to be of 20th-century date.

3.6.19 The central post is formed from a reused medieval post or tie-beam 3.65 m long by 28 cm wide by 18 cm deep. There are three mortices along the northern edge which would have been the underside (if this was a tie-beam) and two smaller mortices for former studs on the southern (formerly upper) side. The larger mortices along the northern side include

two 50 cm long chase mortices and a 30 cm long square-edged mortice towards the centre.

3.6.20 Immediately to the north of the southern intermediate post is a further re-used medieval member with mouldings along its full length. This is 3.4 m long and its one flat face (to the outside) is 25 cm wide. The central part of this timber is 20 cm deep but to either side of this there are chamfers (not aligned with each other) which reduce the size of the post's cross-section. There are three mortices in the flat face of the member: two chase mortices and one flat-edged (similarly to the other reused member in this wall referred to above).

3.6.21 Above the tie-beam in Frame 4 the wall framing is similar and includes three reused members which appear to be of medieval date.

3.7 Internal description: THE ROOF

3.7.1 General

3.7.2 The unusual roof was well described by Morrey and Smith in 1973:

Above the tie-beam the roof was of raised-aisle type that is to say, it is in effect an aisled hall raised high above the ground. The aisled frame thus formed has square posts, chamfered on the inner edges, which support plates and a slightly cambered tie-beam and which are themselves propped by braces, tenoned into the ends of the tie-beam below. In the arch-braces which join the raised-aisle posts to the tie-beam are a series of peg-holes and tenons which must have been intended for applied cusping like that below. The topmost part of the truss comprises short principal rafters into the top of which purlins are slotted; the principals are linked by a collar-beam which is supported by cusped arch-braces and there are cusped wind-braces from principals to purlins. The topmost tie thus forms a clasped-purlin roof. [Note also that the upper principals are truncated or diminished and are, above the purlin, of similar size to the common rafters.]

3.7.3 Roof trusses

3.7.4 The individual roof trusses have been described above, each having a different character according to its place in the roof, but all giving support to a unified roof structure (subject to later changes).

3.7.5 South side of the roof

3.7.6 The roof comprises an aisle plate, supported by the raised aisle posts and pairs of arched braces, and a purlin immediately above the upper collars of the trusses and also above pairs of cusped wind braces. There are two pairs of wind braces within each full bay extending between the main trusses and intermediate upper collars. The intermediate upper collars also have cusping the same as that on the main trusses. At the eastern end there is an empty mortice in the underside of the purlin from where a former further windbrace would have continued eastwards when the end of the building was gabled (or continued further west). There are 11 rafters in the eastern bay and nine in the central bay; all of these appear primary and smoke blackened. Immediately west of the spere truss (Frame 3) the three first rafters appear to be primary above the aisle plate but the separate rafter sections below are secondary. The aisle plate at this junction is scarfed immediately to the east of this junction, with an iron strap bracing the two sections, and a secondary member now continues to the half-hipped west end. The roof structure at the western end (beyond the three primary rafters mentioned above) entirely comprises secondary members which are relatively easy to identify by the lack of smoke blackening. The secondary rafters are more slender than the primary ones and their lower

sections are supported by an additional secondary purlin. The rafters are waney edged and of possible 18th or 19th century date.

3.7.7 North side of the roof

3.7.8 The wall framing and roof construction on the north side of the building is very similar to that on the south side. The central and eastern bays survive substantially from the original construction with primary rafters and principal roof members in-situ. The western bay was again reconstructed in the post-medieval period (possibly 18th or 19th century) with waney-edged members and an additional straight brace from the western corner to the purlin. One minor difference with the southern side of the roof is that there are no cusped wind braces to the west of Frame 3.

3.7.9 The rebuilt West End of the roof

3.7.10 The reconstructed western third of the roof is additionally supported by a frame formed from machine-sawn softwood members which appear to be of 19th-century date. The frame has similarities to a king-post truss with a tie-beam, king-post, principal 'rafters' and various raking props which support the arcade plates and purlins. The 'tie-beam' extends east to west between the tie of Truss 3 and a small raised frame on the tie of Truss 4. The 'tie-beam' supports a post (fixed to the tie by an iron strap) which extends up to the height of the roof's upper collar and upper purlin. At its head the post supports a horizontal bearer which itself supports the secondary purlins in this part of the roof. The 'tie-beam' also supports two raking props which project at right angles to the tie and whch support the arcade plates in the main north and south roof slopes. The post is braced close to its mid point by two angled members (like the truss's principal rafters) and the heads of these 'rafters' are secured to the post by an iron strap. The base of the two 'rafters' are fixed to the tie. Immediately above the junction between these 'rafters' and the post is another raking prop which is supported by the main post and which supports the upper purlin in the west slope. This large frame could be contemporary with the rest of the reconstructed west end but it is more likely to have been added after the reconstruction to prop the sagging roof.

3.8 Internal description: CARPENTRY DETAILS

3.8.1 Carpenters marks

3.8.2 Among the interesting features of the barn identified during the current works have been a number of unusual and distinctive carpenters marks (Fig 9). At the east end of the building there are a series of Roman numeral marks (Fig. 3) scratched to the underside of the tie-beam and these are interesting but conventional setting out marks whereas on the two main trusses of the hall (particularly the spere truss) there are a number of more individual marks which may have had symbolic value or formed a carpenter's 'signature'.

3.8.3 Setting-out (or assembly) marks are the most recognised form of carpenters mark. The marks are made during the initial framing process where the frame would be made in the framing yard which may be adjacent to or some distance from the construction site. Once the frame has been made the joints would be marked in order to facilitate the final assembly on site. The assembly marks upon the frame enable the carpenter to identify individual joints - an important process as each joint would be made to fit exactly and often the final frame may have been constructed by itinerant workers led by a master carpenter as opposed to a team of carpenters. There are several different types of assembly mark, the most common being Roman numerals scribed into the face of the timber (such as those at the east end). Symbolic markings made using the circular race knife to form patterns are less common. Examples of these have been found in the roof

of the Chapter House at York Minster (late C13th), the undercroft of the Merchant Adventurers Hall in York (mid C14th), Astley Hall in Lancashire (*c*.1600) and Chichester Cathedral (C13th).

3.8.4 The marks at Lewknor include a *Fleur-de-lys symbol* on the soffit of the northern arched brace of the spere truss (Frame 3). This had been scribed with a circular race knife with approximately 40mm diameter on the circle. The central point can clearly be seen on photographs (Plate 19 and Fig 5). This is an unusual mark and probably an individual piece of decorative graffiti or with some symbolic purpose rather than forming part of a series of assembly marks.

3.8.5 On the corresponding soffit of the southern arched brace in the spere truss is an unusual *V shaped mark with half circles (two to one side and three to the other)* and again this was scribe-cut with a race knife (Fig 5). It is likely that the race knife had a central point that enabled the user to make circular shapes of approximately 40mm diameter. This central point is not found on post 18th century race knives. It is again unlikely that this is an assembly mark and is probably a graffito or decoration.

3.8.6 Also on the spere truss a number of similar marks were identified with *half circles and lines* and these do form part of a pattern of assembly marks (Fig 5, Pl 20). Each mark includes a straight central line and half circles branching to either side from this line. On one set of marks there are two half circles to either side while another set has a single half circle to one side and two to the other. Corresponding marks are found to either side of the truss on the tie beam soffit and side of the post. This mark is very similar to arrow style markings seen elsewhere (eg. moulded roof truss in the Chapel Royal Hampton Court Palace c. 1536). It would appear that the lower two half circles denote whether the frame goes on the left or right with only one half circle on one side of the barn and two on the other. This appears to be made with the same size (40mm) circular race knife as the two marks above suggesting they are all of a similar date.

3.8.7 The formerly open truss (Frame 2) also has some marks but they are smaller and less distinctive. They included a small looped shape on the western arch and an 'r' shape to the east (Fig 4).

3.8.8 Unfortunately it is very difficult to date carpenters' marks purely on style and execution as they were often individual to the carpenter, or on large projects assigned by the master carpenter., however true assembly marks will usually date to the period of the frame construction. Graffiti is inaccessible locations will probably date to this period as well. Recording of the marks found on timbers will enable comparison with other local buildings of similar date and possibly allow researchers to trace the work of carpenters.

3.8.9 As referred to above the current investigation did not form a comprehensive record of the building and the work was almost entirely undertaken from the ground. Therefore it is likely that there are additional carpenter's marks in the upper sections of the roof which were not identified and recorded. Indeed the carpenter working on the building indicated that he had seen a number of interesting marks on the roof timbers.

3.9 Evidence of the modern use of the barn

3.9.1 The barn remained in agricultural use until recent years and as referred to above the large grain silos had obscured access to the western end of the barn when the previous recording was undertaken in the 1970s. These silos and other features had been removed prior to the current project but evidence of them remained in the floor. There is a 10 cm tall step across the barn, c.3.75 m in from the west wall, and immediately east of this step there are four cement-lined recesses within the concrete floor. These recesses are c.__ cm

deep and have the approximate shape of an upturned pyramid. Adjacent to the western side of each recess is a small slope in the edge of the main step across the building and presumably this would have a chute from the four large silos on the raised platform to the west.

3.9.2 Also immediately to the east of this step there are two modern post sockets: one adjacent to the north wall and one adjacent to the south wall. Presumably these would have held steel posts from the main frame across the building supporting the silos. There are also two further modern post sockets along the central line of the barn's central bay which presumably would also have held raised structures relating to the modern use of the building.

3.9.3 In the eastern bay there are two further modern features in the floor each lined with a brick edging flush with the surface. The eastern feature is a plain square hole (c.1 m^2) which has now been infilled with concrete while the western feature is larger, with an irregular shape and retains its sunken form (c.23 cm deep; pl 18). Along the north edge of this feature there remains a sloped, cement-lined surface which presumably held the base of a chute. There is also a sloped cement-lining to the western edge and part of the southern edge but a low brick wall divides the recess into two sections.

3.9.4 Other evidence of the 20th-century use of the barn includes a raised gantry supported by the tie-beam of the spere truss and open truss (Pl. 7) as well as surviving belts from a grain conveyor.

4 OTHER FARM BUILDINGS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Although the main barn is by far the most significant building at Church Farm a record was also made of the other structures

4.2 Stables

4.2.1 Adjoining the western edge of the south side of the barn is a range of stables which extend c.24 m along one side of a yard. This range is not shown on the 1815 Enclosure map (reproduced in the Finial Associates 2002 report) and the structure all appears of later 19th and 20th century date.

4.2.2 The stable range divides into two distinct elements (a southern half and a northern half) which were probably of the same phase but the northern half has undergone major alterations in the 20th century including the insertion of internal concrete block walls and the construction (or rebuild) of the east wall. The evidence suggests that the northern half may originally have been formed a cart shed or a similar building open-fronted to the east and with an open-plan interior. The roofs of both halves of the range were then re-covered, possibly at the same time as the conversion of the north block, with diagonally set tiles typical of the inter-war period or mid 20th century.

4.2.3 The ***northern half*** of the stables comprises a secondary concrete block east wall (Pl. 25)and a brick west wall with a variation Flemish bond (generally three stretchers to each header but inconsistent). The west wall (Pl. 26) comprises three doorways and one 6-light window, each of which is below a concrete lintel and other than the northernmost door they all appear to have been inserted, probably at the time as the wider alterations to the north block referred to above. The door at the northern end of the west wall was probably the only original entrance into the building from the west, when it is thought to have been an open-plan range; this opening has a sliding door. The concrete block east wall

comprises three doorways and two windows each of which are probably of the date as the openings in the west wall.

4.2.4 The interior of the northern half is now divided into three rooms by two secondary concrete block walls. The northern room is two bays long while the southern rooms are each of a single bay. The southern end wall was of brick but this has been recently removed to link the room with the adjacent space (in the southern half of the range). The roof of the northern range is supported by three trusses typical of the later 19th century (Pl. 27) although two of these are now immediately above the inserted concrete block walls. These trusses each comprise a tie beam, two principal rafters, two raking struts and a vertical tie-rod at the centre. The principal rafters are overlain by three purlins which directly support roof boards. There are no common rafters and the purlins are supported by wedge-shaped blocks resting directly on the principals. The walls and roof structure of this larger northern room are all painted white and the west end of the truss in this area is supported by a brick corbel within the brick wall.

4.2.5 The ***southern half*** of the stable range comprises four rooms although as referred to above the party wall at the north end has been recently removed. The internal and external walls are all of brick (variation Flemish bond similar to the northern walls). The west wall comprises three stable doors while the east wall contains two stable doors and two windows (although some of these have been recently removed). Unlike in the north range there are no trusses and the internal walls directly support the roof, which comprises a three-purlin structure similar to the northern structure. There are two ridge vents in the roof.

4.3 Granary

4.3.1 The granary (Pl. 23-24) is a rectangular plan, single-storey building (7 x 4.5m) with a slate-covered gabled roof and walls clad in weatherboarding. The condition of the building is now very poor and it is being substantially rebuilt in the current project reusing materials from the existing building.

4.3.2 The floor of the building is raised above ground level but secondary works have altered the arrangement of primary staddle stones, particularly to the north wall. To this side of the building the staddles have been replaced by a solid plinth comprising three brick piers with flint infill between. The weatherboarding in the north wall shows evidence of patching and alteration. This wall has a central doorway and two small windows, one to each side, which have each been infilled with boarding. The east wall includes a set of double doors at the northern end and there is a single door at the western end of the south wall. The south wall is particularly overgrown and the condition of the weatherboarding is very poor.

4.3.3 The ***interior*** is a single room with a crude common rafter roof braced by two evenly spaced tie-beams which divide the room into three bays. There are no trusses and the roof is further strengthened by four straight brace, one at each corner. Each of these braces spans from the ends of the ridge to the junction between the tie-beams and wall plate. The timber members all appear to be softwood and none of the visible fabric appears older than the 19th/20th century. The walls are generally clad in horizontal boarding but the crude framing (vertical studs) is visible in the upper parts of the gable ends.

4.3.4 The granary retains a number of grain bins or bays and it has clearly been used as a general store. The interior was unsafe to enter and the only visual access was from the doorways.

4.3.5 The modern farm buildings which are being demolished in the current works include a large single phase concrete frame barn which wraps around the southern and eastern sides of the main barn constructed with pre-cast concrete members. The corrugated panel roof is supported by concrete posts with jowled heads on which principal rafters sit.

5 Conclusion

5.1.1 The Grade I listed barn at Church Farm, Lewknor is one of Oxfordshire's most interesting and significant medieval buildings. It has been well researched and investigated since its potential importance was first recognised in 1969 but the current programme of building recording has highlighted previously unknown features and it has increased our understanding of the building's original form.

5.1.2 The significance of the building partly lies in its considerable age with both stylistic evidence and dendrochronology suggesting it was probably constructed in the second quarter of the 14th century but the interest is greatly enhanced by the fact that the barn appears to have been originally constructed as an important, high-status hall house. The conversion of the hall to a barn meant that it avoided the fate of most medieval halls of having an upper floor and chimney stack inserted. Therefore, although the building is greatly altered from its original construction it is still able to provide a greater impression of the historic form of the hall than most comparable converted halls.

5.1.3 Even without the interest of its partial preservation as a barn the building would have been of considerable significance due to its unusually large size, relative to other halls of the same period, and the highly impressive nature of its prominent cusping and other decorative detailing. The Lewknor hall is an excellent representative of high-quality domestic buildings built in the generation before the Black Death, with profligate use of timber (e.g. secondary wallplates), elaborate design (e.g. raised aisle construction), and decorative features such as cusping. These kinds of buildings have often been associated with county gentry, and there is every likelihood that John of Lewknor was indeed responsible for its construction.

5.1.4 There is also an added interest created by the suggestion that the completion of the building may have been interrupted by the Black Death of 1348-9 or that it may have resulted in the building never being fully occupied.

5.1.5 The current programme of building recording has provided a good archive record of the building prior to the current conversion works but it has also significantly enhanced our understanding of the original form of the building. Of particular interest has been the identification of mortices in the wall plates which show that there were four projecting oriel windows from the north and south walls. Despite the building having been previously investigated no evidence had been found prior to the current project regarding the original arrangement of windows and doors. Also of interest have been the remarkable carpenters marks which have been identified and recorded. These had previously been obscured by the thick layer of grain dust in the building which was removed prior to the current recording.

5.1.6 The upper roof has not been examined in detail (and is not being altered), but there is no doubt that close examination from a scaffold tower would reveal further details of interest.

5.1.7 The current project has also allowed a close examination of the west end of the building, which was obscured by grain bins when the RCHME undertook their investigation in the early 1970s. This has shown that the west end of the structure was entirely reconstructed in the post-medieval period (albeit reusing a small number of medieval timbers) and this leaves a number of questions unanswered regarding the primary form of the west end. The reconstructed bay does not incorporate a large quantity of reused timber as may have been expected if a large timber-framed structure to the west of the spere truss and cross passage

was dismantled and then reconstructed. The fact that the condition of the main building is relatively good also suggests against the possibility that a large existing structure at the west end was dismantled.

Oxford Archaeology
October 2009

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APPENDIX B. LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS FOR CHURCH FARM BARN AND HOUSE

Building Name: Church Farm, Barn Approximately 30 Metres East South East Of Farmhouse (not Included)
Parish: Lewknor District: South Oxfordshire
LBS Number: 248940 Grade: I
Date Listed: 19 November 1976

National Grid Reference: SU7150697658

LEWKNOR CHURCH ROAD GV I
SU7197 (East side) 10/94 Church Farm, barn approx. 30m.
19/11/76 ESE of farmhouse (not included) (Formerly listed as The Old Barn at Church Farm)

House, now barn. Mid/late C14. C20 weatherboarding over heavy timber framing on brick base; half-hipped roof, old tiles to left and C20 tiles to right. Aisled 3-bay hall. C20 plank double doors. Interior: left end wall has 8 panels of which top 4 are cusped. Left truss: arch braces from wall to tie beam were reset to centre when aisle posts were inserted to support long tie beam; queen-post truss with tension-braced collar and arch braces to tie: arch-braced collar above with clasped purlins, diminishing principals and wind braces. Right spere truss: of similar construction, but lower aisled part has arch-braced aisle posts flanked by trefoil-cusped aisles. Probably built by John de Lewknor, who rebuilt the east end of the church (q.v.) in the Decorated style c.1320-40.
Church Farm was acquired by All Souls College from Abingdon Abbey in 1340. Morrey and Smith date the barn to between 1350 and 1440. (Buildings of England: Oxfordshire, p.684; J.M. Fletcher, The Medieval Hall at Lewknor; Oxonensia, Vol.40 (1975); M.C.J. Morrey and J.T. Smith, The Great Barn Lewknor, the architectural evidence; Oxonensia, Vol.38 (1973), pp.339-349; Eric Mercer, English Vernacular Houses, 1975, p.194; National Monuments Record).

Building Name: Church Farm
Parish: Lewknor District: South Oxfordshire
LBS Number: 504424 Grade: II
Date Listed: 15 February 2008
National Grid Reference: SU7145397674

1696/0/10007 Church Farm
15-FEB-08 GV II

Farmhouse with perhaps later C16 core, cased in brick and partly rebuilt in later C18; some C20 rebuilding and additions.

EXTERIOR: Church Farm farmhouse is a brick-cased, south-east facing building of three front bays and two storeys, with dormer windows lighting converted attics. The brick casing to the front is typical of the area in that it exhibits the decorative use of blue headers; it is of two phases, probably fairly close in date and of the later C18. The left-hand two bays are the older, the brickwork irregularly bonded with reddish bricks with dark blue headers. This is a refronting, later in date than the narrow-bricked gable wall to the left which is probably of the late C17 or early

C18 (projecting early C20 ground-floor window bay not of interest). The right-hand front bay is of a more orangey brick, in a regular Flemish bond with blue brick headers producing a chequered pattern. This probably represents a rebuilding of this end of the property (shown with an end-jetty on an illustration of 1764), extending to include a short, integral, single-storey range to the rear. Front door to the centre (immediately against the right edge of the older two bays); C20 brick porch (not of interest). The windows give an approximate symmetry to the front: three-light casements to the end bays (those to the ground floor slightly longer than those above) with a small two-light casement to the centre of the first floor, and a small pair of four-pane casements to the left of the front door lighting the staircase within. Most of the windows have been renewed in uPVC.

To the rear-right a large external chimney stack with flint and stone lower part and brick above is recognisably that shown on the illustration of 1764. A similar (but presumably rebuilt) chimney rises from the rear-left. C20 brick lean-tos against the rear of the house and against the c.1800 rear range are not of interest, nor is the C20 brick extension to the c.1800 rear range.

The roof is of red tile, relaid when the roof was partly replaced in the early C20; two brick stacks of this date rise from the centre of the older two bays and from the right-hand gable.

INTERIOR: The front door opens into a hall which extends the full depth of the property, and which extends left of the door (as entered) where a simple staircase of c.1800 leads off at right angles against the outside wall. Front room with kitchen behind in right-hand bay; dining room in left-hand bay; and small office in centre bay with bathroom behind. Upstairs the plan is roughly replicated, and there are some surviving planked doors, perhaps C18. There is also a curved brace visible in the centre-rear first-floor bedroom relating to the possible crown post roof above. The staircase continues to the attic floor with a bedroom in each end bay (only that to the right with fireplace) and a store room to the centre. The attic rooms are set within the probably later C16 roof; this survives largely intact in the older two bays with tie beams, collars and common rafters (and thus possibly of crown-post type), as seen most clearly in the closed attic space over the collars. Over the newer bay is a replacement roof of the early C20.

HISTORY: Church Farm is identified by the Victoria County History as the rectory farm, the living being in the possession of All Souls College from 1440. It was therefore either the college, or its tenants by agreement, which successively built and rebuilt the farmhouse. The Church Farm complex stands immediately west of St Margaret's church (listed Grade I) on the north edge of Lewknor. The complex includes, on its east edge, a Grade I listed building, a mid-C14 aisled house which was later converted to a barn.

SOURCES: Victoria History of the County of Oxford 8 (1964), 98-115; J M Fletcher, 'The medieval hall at Lewknor', Oxoniensia 40 (1975), 247-53; A Quiney, The Traditional Buildings of England (1990), 54.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION: Church Farm farmhouse, Lewknor, is listed for the following principal reasons:
* its core is essentially of the later C16, as shown on an illustration of 1764
* two-thirds of the roof of this date is extant
* for its attractive external brick casing of the late C18
* for its setting: its buildings include a Grade I listed C14 barn, beyond which is the parish church (Grade I) with which Church Farm was associated tenurially.

Appendix C. Brief Report on Tree-Ring Dating

Source: Website http://www.dendrochronology.com/

List of dated Buildings in England and Wales [downloaded September 2009]

LEWKNOR, Church Farm, The Great Barn (SU 715 976)

Felling dates: Summer 1339, Winter 1342/3, Winter 1350/1

Lower collar 1350 (30C); Principal post 1319 (H/S); Tiebeam of open truss 1338(17½C); Rear wall plate 1342 (22C). *Site Master* 1188-1350 LEWKNER (t=10.5 READING; 7.4 OXON; 7.1 EASTMID; 5.8 ZACHS)

The Great Barn at Lewknor was formerly the principal residence on the rectorial farm belonging to Abingdon Abbey. The timber framing is all that survives of this hall, the wall filling having gone, and the building is now used as a barn. The roof is of raised-aisle type with clasped purlins and diminished principals, with ogival cusped bracing, It was dated by John Fletcher to 1325-50 on stylistic grounds, and attributed to the Abbey's hereditary tenant John de Lewknor (*c*. 1316-1360; Knight of the Shire, 1331-1354). Fletcher's suggestion that the house was not completed, as a result of the Black Death, or never fully occupied, might at first seem to be corroborated by the range of dates given here. It is perhaps just as reasonable to postulate the use of old or partially seasoned timber.

VAG Spring Conference Programme (1987), 7; M. C.J. Morrey & J. T. Smith, *Oxoniensia* 38 (1973); 339-45; J.M. Fletcher, *Oxoniensia* 40 (1975); 247-5. E. Mercer, *English Vernacular Houses* (1975), 338. Core samples taken by D. H. M. Notes by J. T. M. (Haddon-Reece, Miles, and Munby 1990, *VA* 21, list 38)

servergo*1LEWCFBS*1Lewknor Church Farm Barn*jm*16.09.09

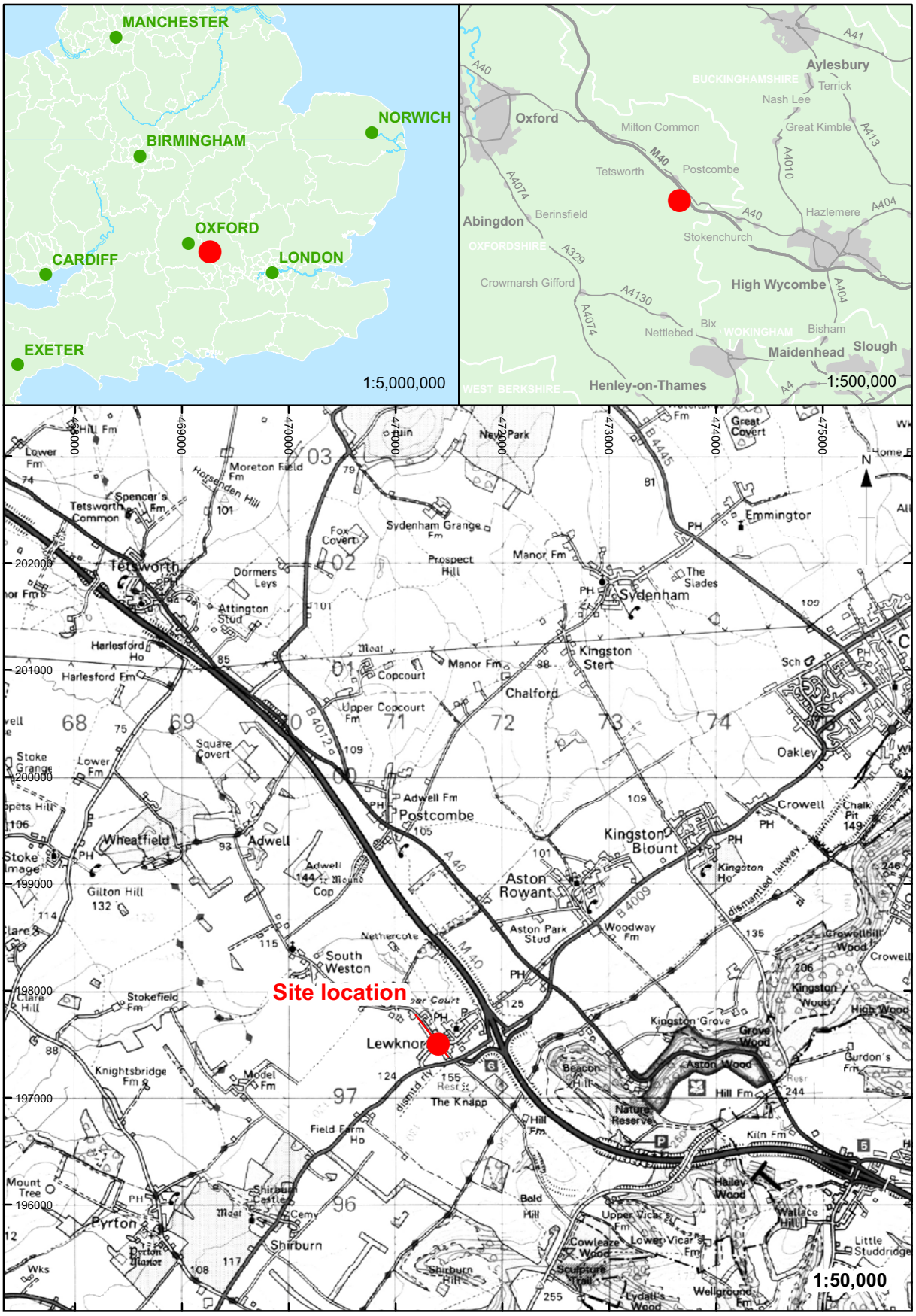

Figure 1: Site location

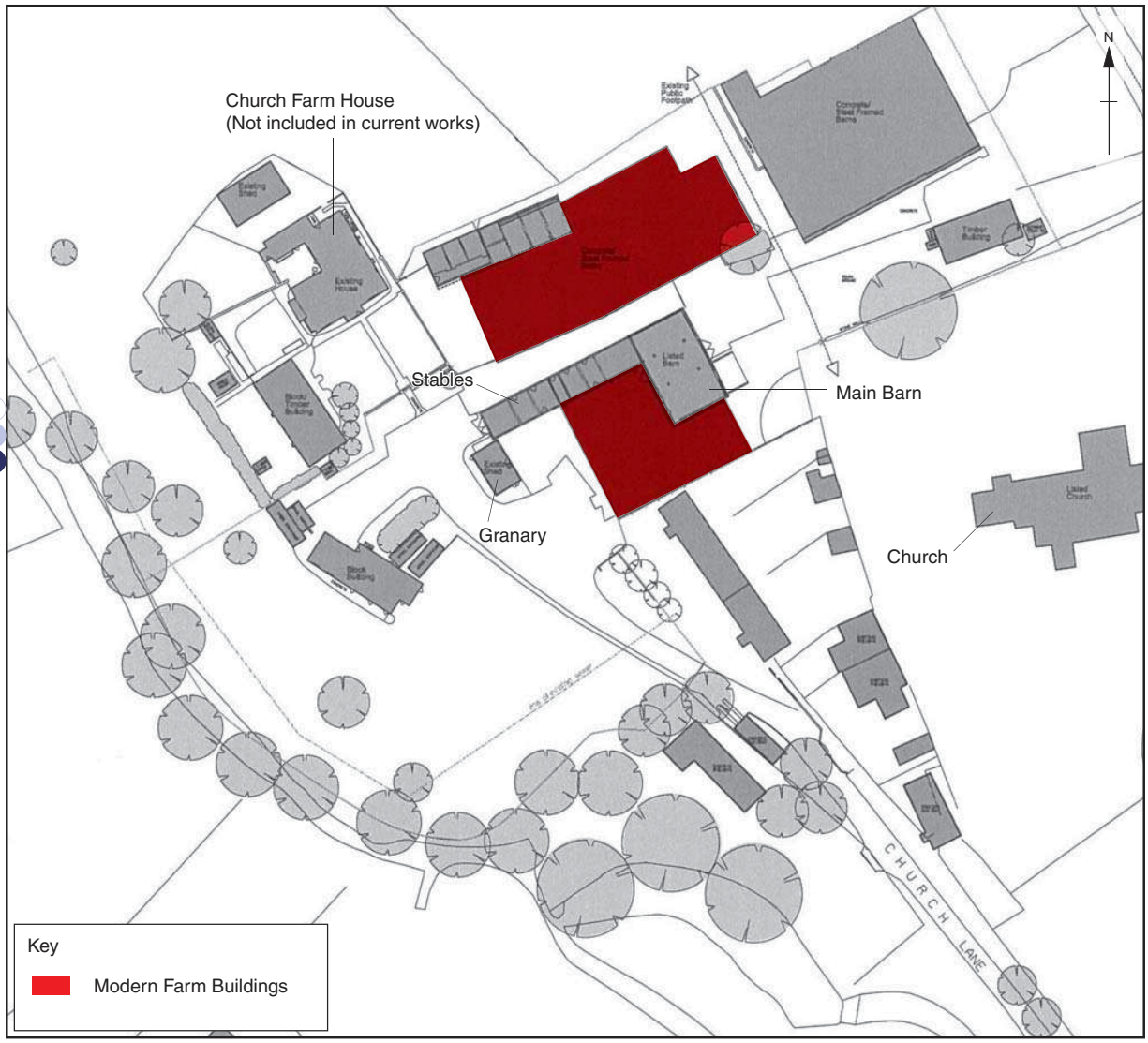

Figure 2: Site plan

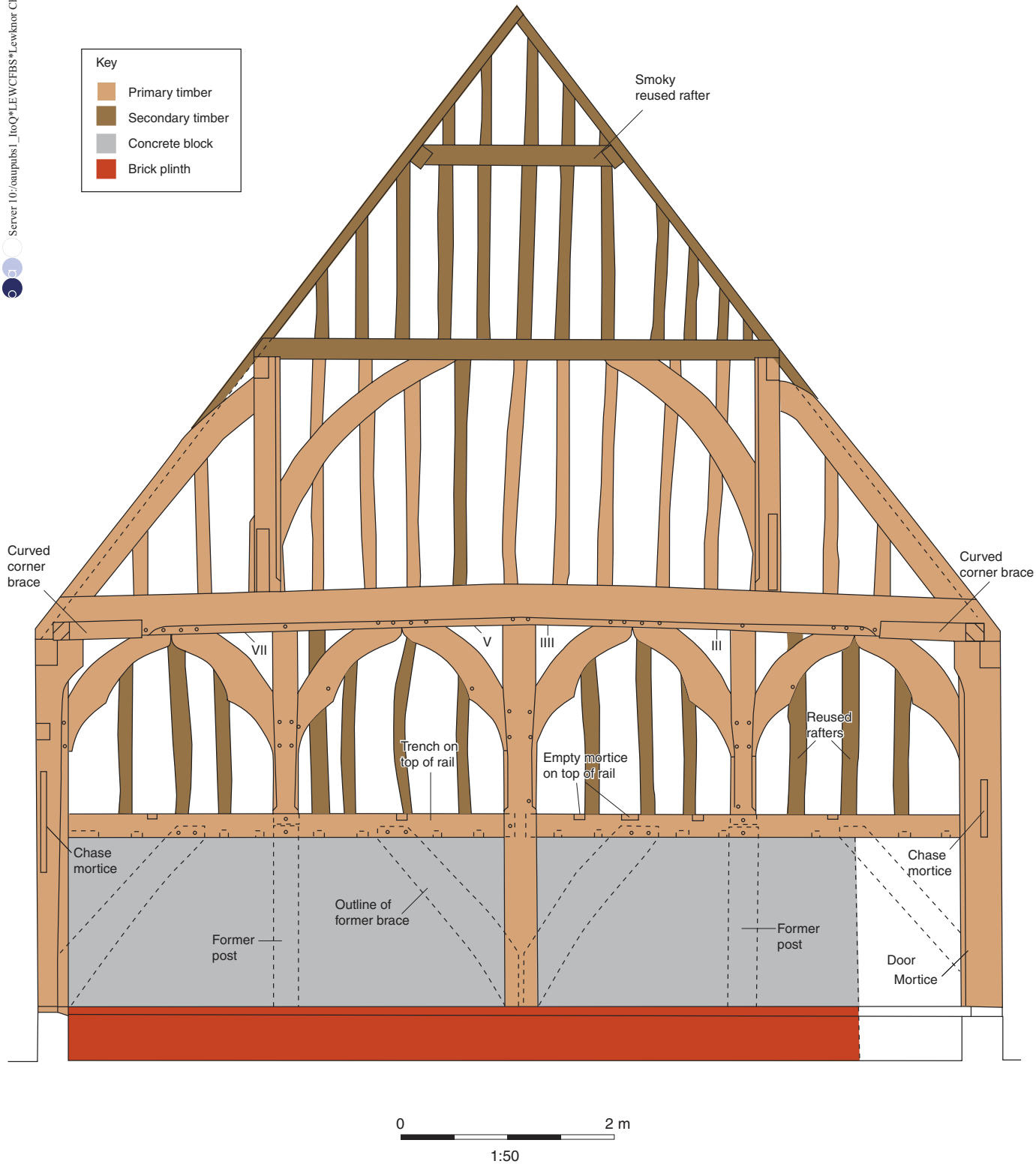

Figure 3: East end wall, internal elevation

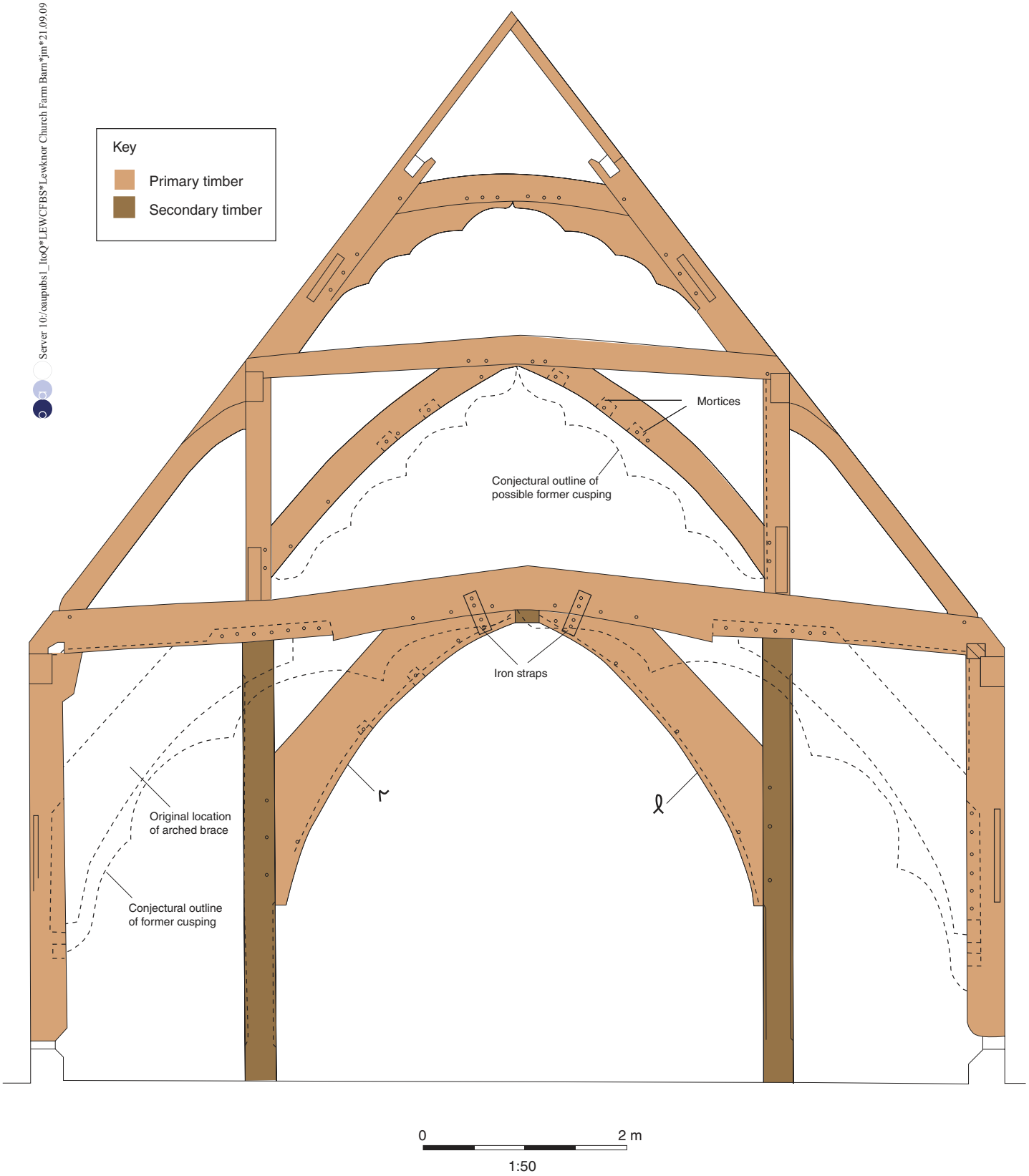

Figure 4: East central truss from west

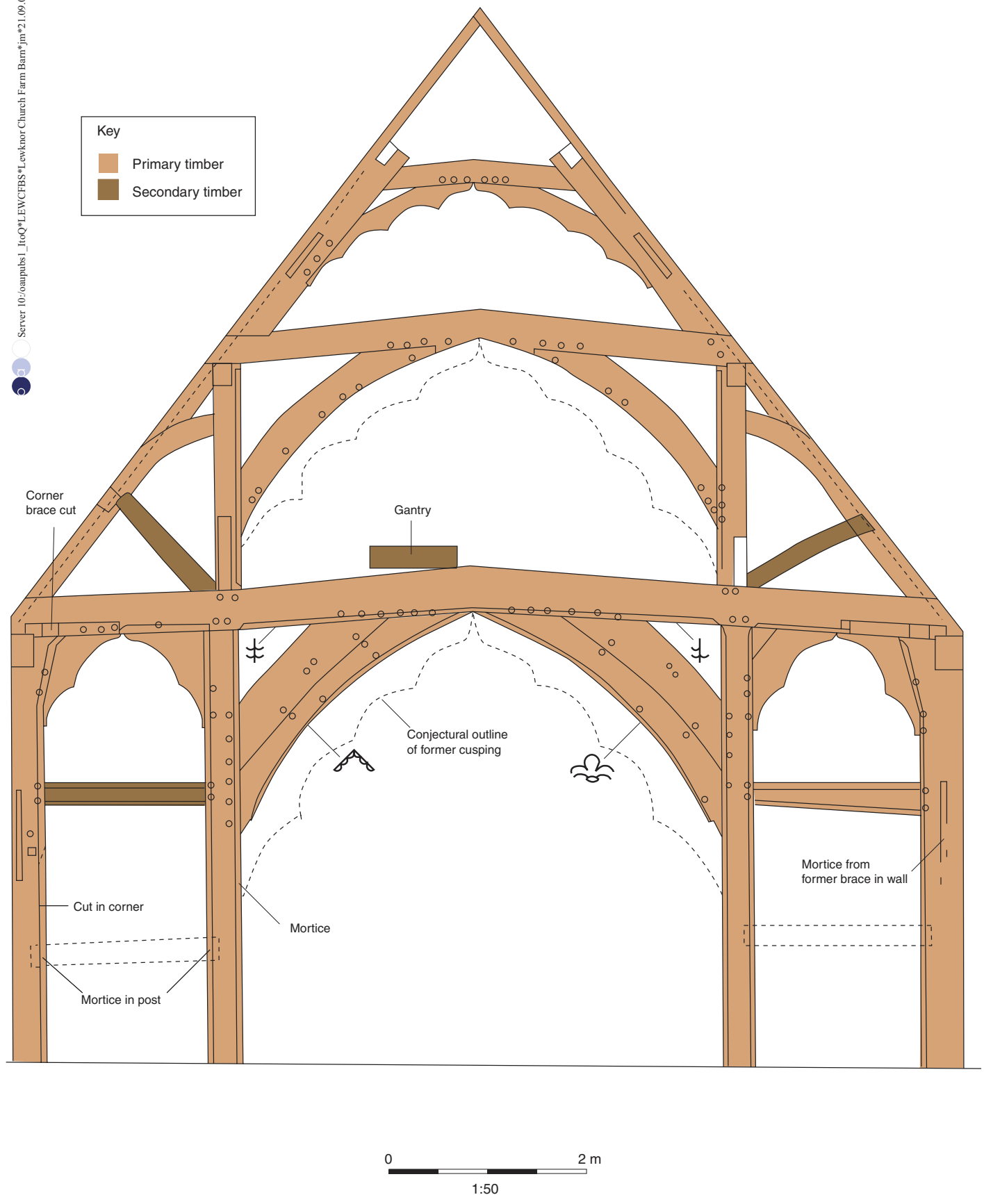

Figure 5: West central truss from east

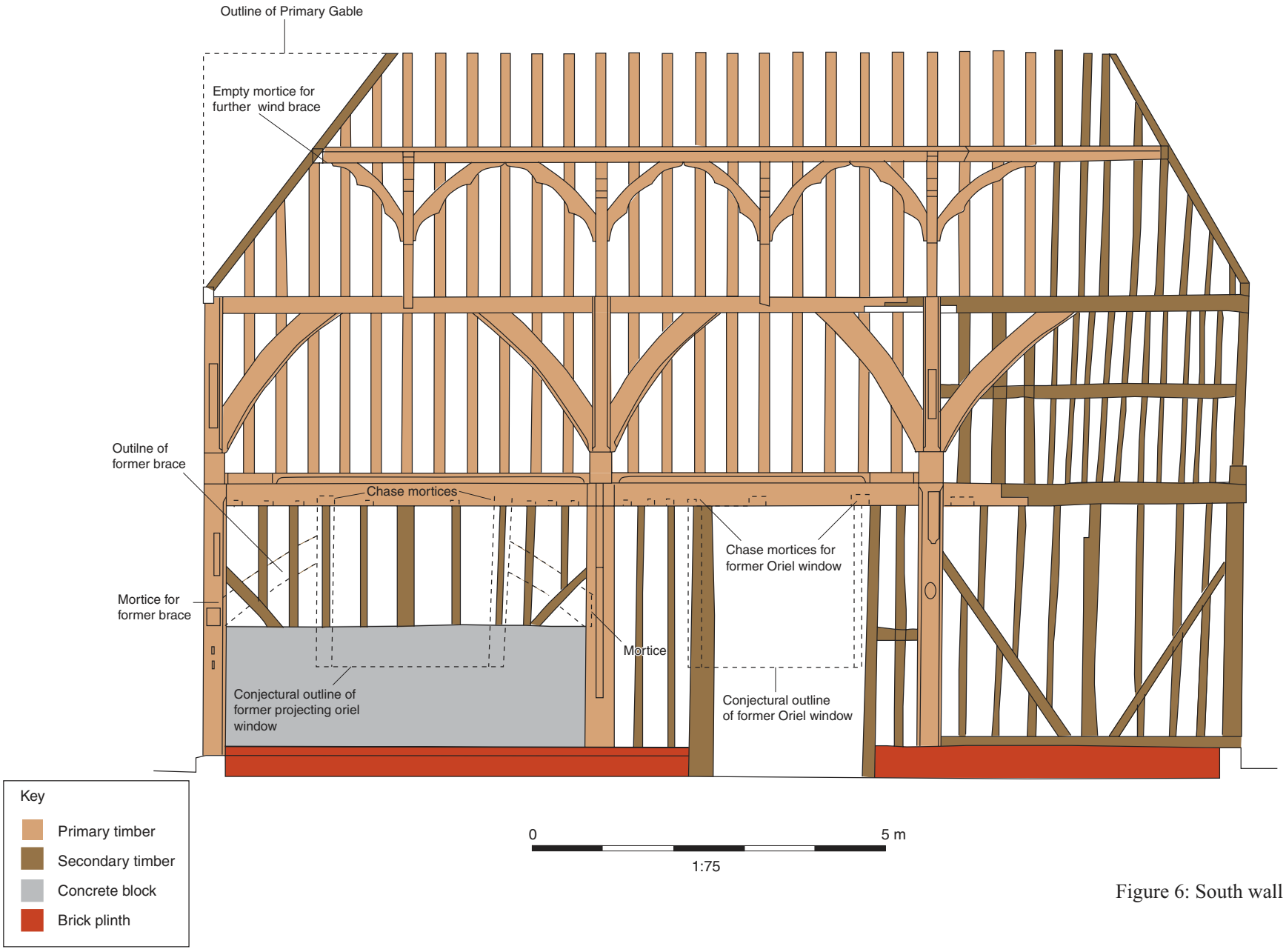

Figure 6: South wall internal elevation

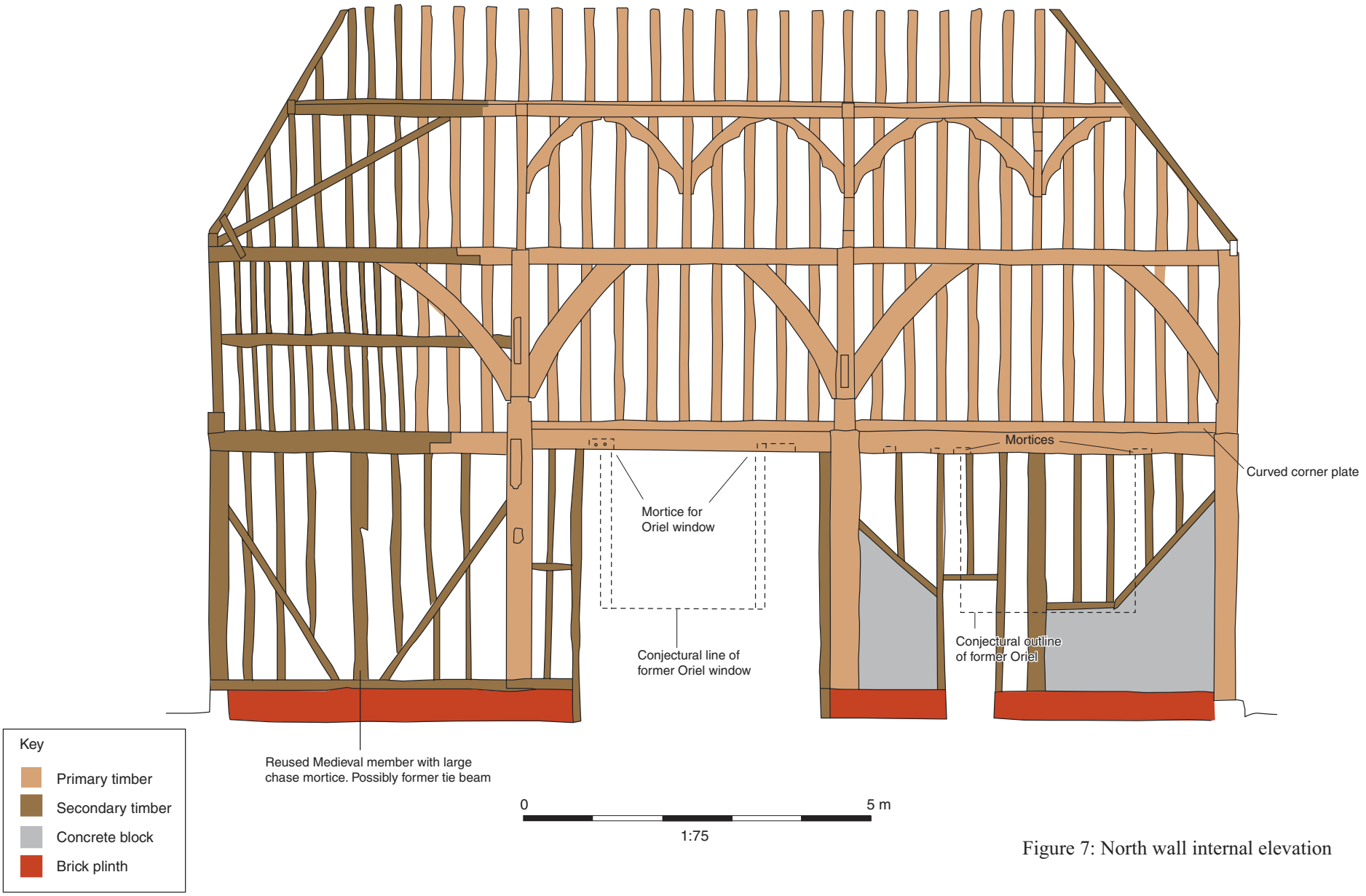

Figure 7: North wall internal elevation

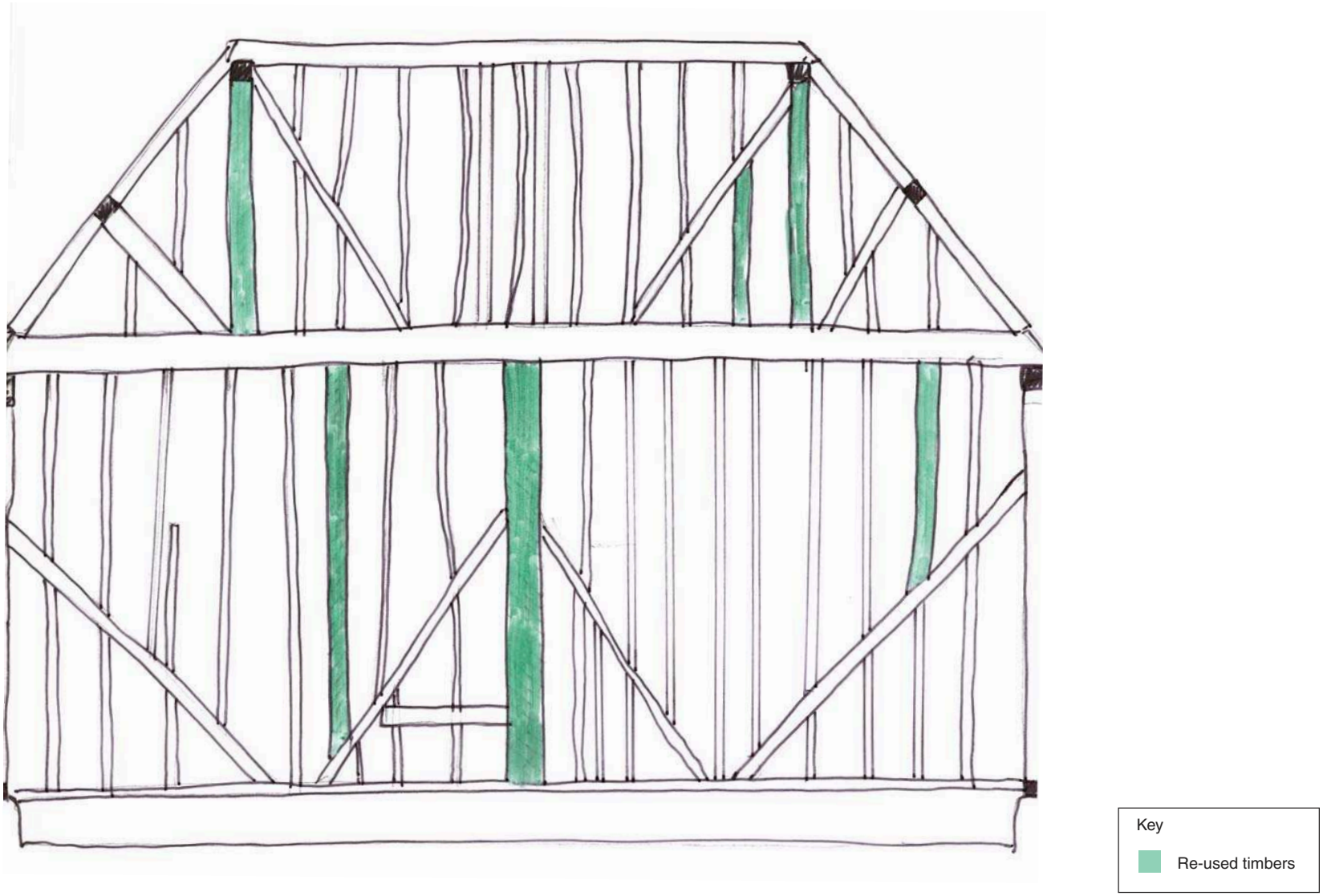

Figure 8: Sketch elevation of west wall showing re-used medieval timbers, (approx 1:50)

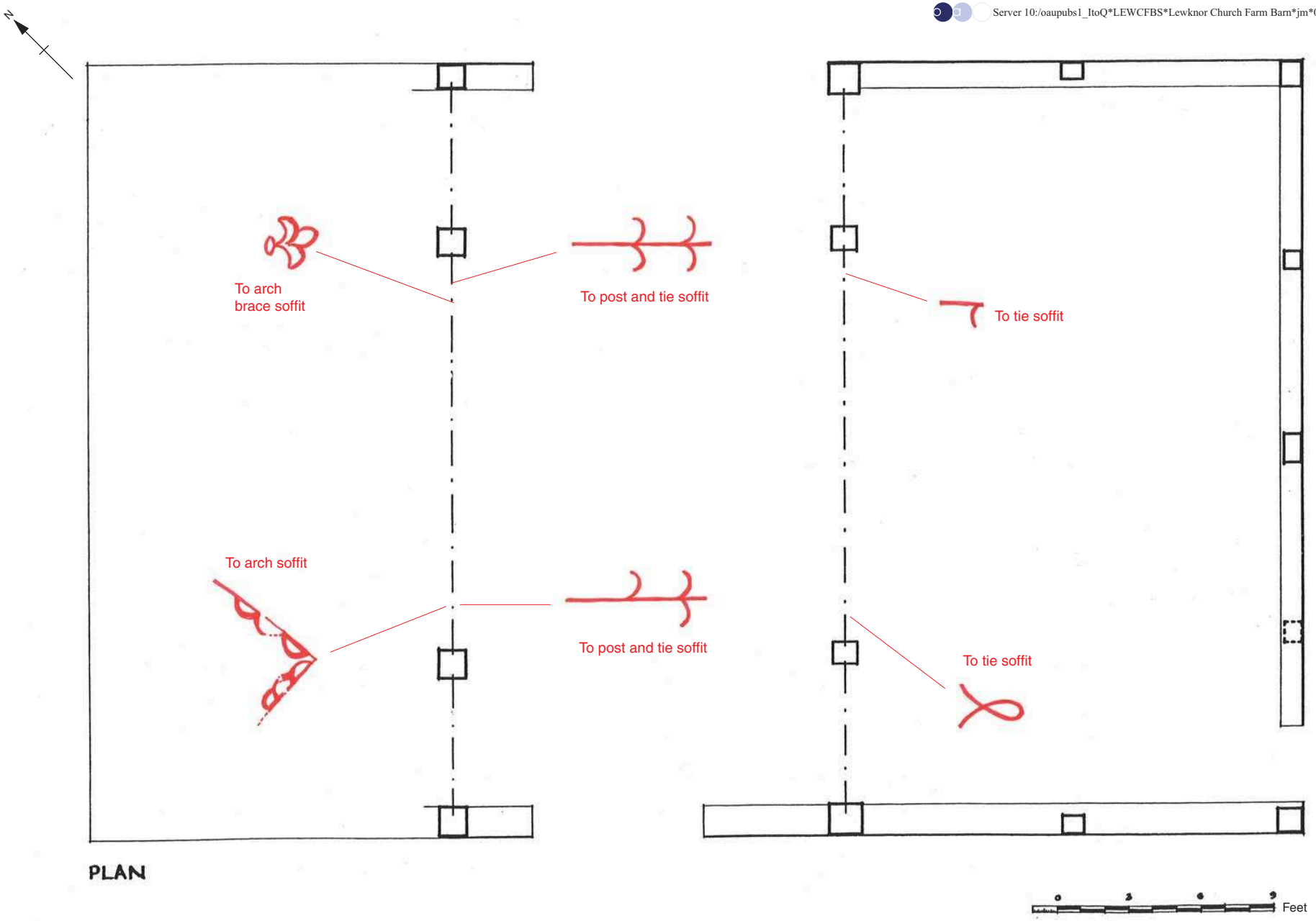

Figure 9: Plan of barn showing carpenters marks (based on RCHM survey)

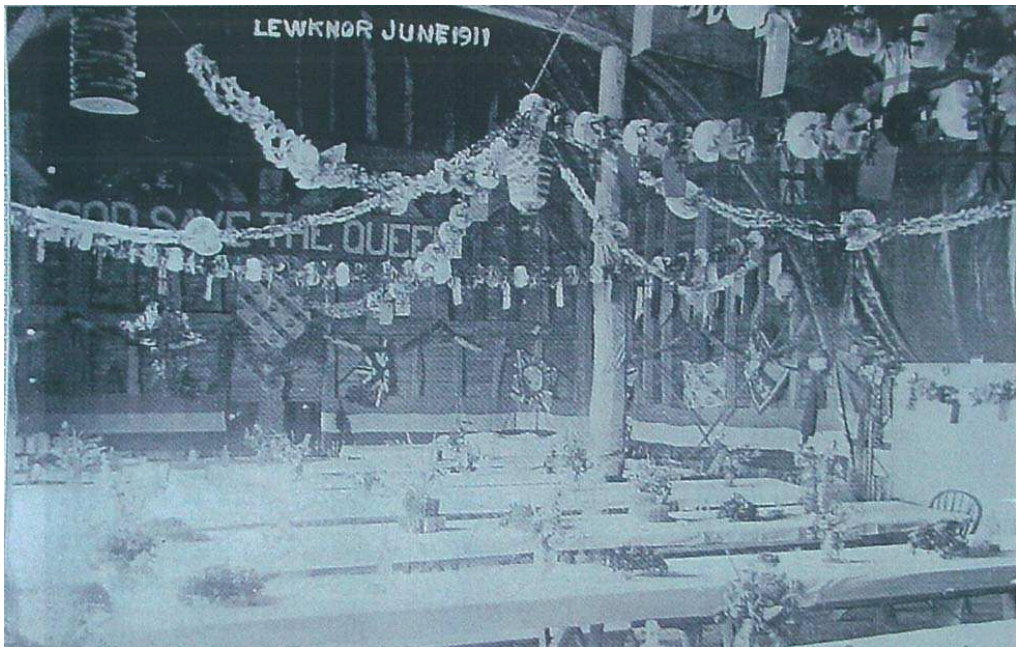

Plate 1: Interior of barn

Plate 2: Exterior of barn from north

Plate 3: Exterior of barn from SE during demolition of adjacent modern structure

Plate 4: Exterior of barn from NW

Plate 5: Detail of east elevation during removal of weather boarding

Plate 6: General internal view of barn from east

Plate 7: Roof in east half of barn

Plate 8: Roof in east half of barn

Plate 9: Detail of Frame 2 and 20th-century gantry

Plate 10: View of roof at east end of barn

Plate 11: Detail of framing in Frame 3

Plate 12: East end of barn (Frame 1)

Plate 13: Secondary framing and possibly reused tie at W end of N wall

Plate 14: Roof at W end. Rafters to left secondary. Primary smoke blackened rafters to right

Plate 15: Secondary frame at W end of barn

Plate 16: Secondary west end of barn

Plate 17: Secondary west end of barn

Plate 18: Modern trough/chute in floor of barn

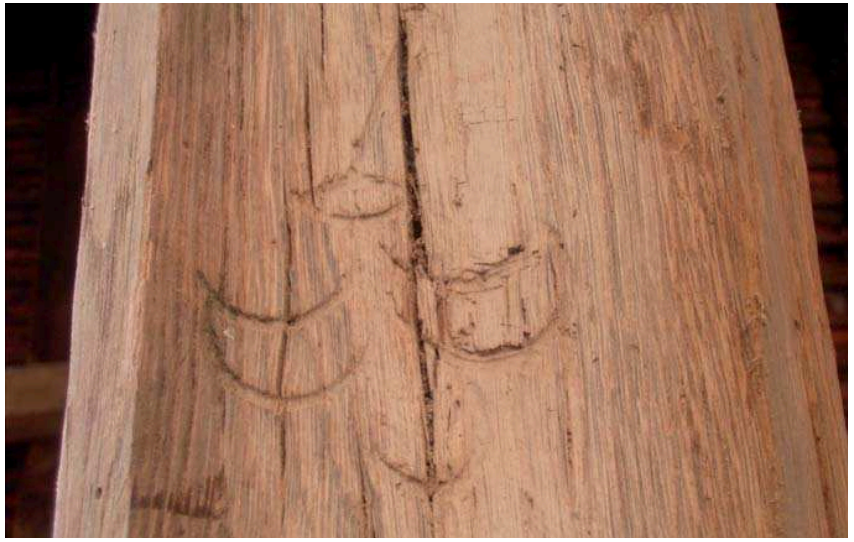

Plate 19: Fleur de Lis carpenters mark

Plate 20: Carpenters mark on Frame 3 (W central)

Plate 21: Chase mortice in face of wall plate, under eaves, from former projecting oriel

Plate 22: Curved corner brace and end of tie beam at E end of barn

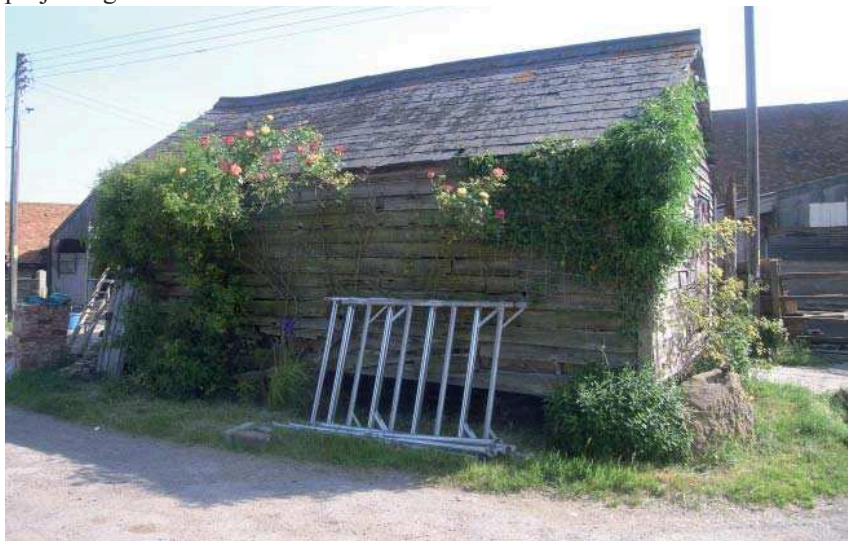

Plate 23: Granary from south

Plate 24: Granary from east

Plate 25: East wall of stables. Right side formerly open fronted

Plate 26: West side of stables range

Plate 27: Interior of north room of stable range