



# LOWER HOUSE FARM, MIDDLEBROOK,

# HORWICH, BOLTON

## Archaeological Building Investigation



**Oxford Archaeology North**

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## SUMMARY

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Following an application by Orbit Developments (Manchester) Ltd to re-develop the derelict Lower House Farm for use as a nursery a programme of archaeological building recording was requested by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU). Lower House Farm is Grade II listed (No. 210498) and thought to be of some historic significance.

The investigation was to comprise a detailed survey of the building in order to provide an outline of its form, development, and phases of alteration. A brief documentary study was also undertaken in order to identify any recorded alterations to the building, owners (and their occupations), and known uses and development.

The documentary study was not able to identify any detailed sources about the building itself other than what was available on the Ordnance Survey maps. The earliest direct reference to the building only dates to 1819. It is considered likely that the site would have been part of a series of complex local land transfers beginning in the later medieval period and as a result its early history is not clear. Nearby Sefton Fold was subject to a similarly detailed survey (GMAU 1992), which concluded that it probably formed part of Heaton family lands in Horwich, which were transferred to the Andertons of Lostock in the sixteenth century. It is probable that Lower House Farm came to the Andertons of Lostock through similar means.

The building investigation identified five phases of construction and alteration within the building, as well as evidence, in the form of re-used timber, for an earlier building perhaps on the same site or nearby. The earliest phases comprised the construction of the building itself, probably in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, followed soon after by a minor extension to the rear elevation. A larger extension was then added to the east end and other, more cosmetic alterations were made, probably in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Few of these phases of activity could be related directly to the documentary study, although this is largely because of the lack of early sources, and the seventeenth or possibly sixteenth century date of construction is based on the style of the building and features within it.

Recommendations for further work including a watching brief during the removal of internal fabric, the retention and re-use of as much of the fabric as possible and the collection of samples for dendrochronological analysis as appropriate are also presented.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Orbit Developments (Manchester) Limited for commissioning the project. Further thanks are due to Norman Redhead at the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit for his help and information, and also to the staff of the Bolton Local Studies Library, Lancashire County Record Office in Preston, and Lancaster City Library for their assistance and help with background information. Special thanks are also due to Edmund Heaton for supplying a copy of his book at such short notice.

Chris Wild and David McNicol carried out the building investigation, and Daniel Elsworth, who also carried out the documentary research into the background history, wrote the report. Alison Plummer managed the project and edited the report, which was also edited by Emily Mercer and Alan Lupton.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Following a proposal by Orbit Developments (Manchester) Limited to convert the vacant farmhouse at Lower House Farm, Middlebrook, Horwich (SD 6434 1032; Fig 1) into a nursery a programme of archaeological recording was recommended by the assistant archaeologist at the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU). The farmhouse is Grade II listed (No. 210498) and considered to be of some historical and archaeological significance and as a result of this a comprehensive programme of recording was recommended, as well as a limited amount of historical research aimed at better understanding the development of the building.
- 1.1.2 The project was to consist of a level-III type survey (RCHME 1996), which comprises a detailed descriptive record combined with drawings and photographs.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1.1 A written brief for the project was produced by GMAU (*Appendix 1*), in response to which OA North produced a Project Design (*Appendix 2*). Following the acceptance of the design by GMAU OA North was commissioned to undertake the building investigation. This was carried out in August 2004.

### 2.2 HISTORICAL RESEARCH

2.2.1 A limited amount of historical research aimed at providing information specifically about the development of the building was undertaken. A number of sources were used ranging from primary documents and maps to secondary sources such as local histories.

2.2.2 Several places were visited in order to produce this background information including the Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record, the Bolton Local Studies Library, the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston, Lancaster City Library and OA North's own collection.

### 2.3 BUILDING INVESTIGATION

2.3.1 **Descriptive Record:** written records using OA North *pro forma* record sheets were made of all principal building elements, both internal and external, as well as any features of historical or architectural significance. Particular attention was also paid to the relationship between parts of the building, especially those that would show its development. These records are essentially descriptive, although interpretation is carried out on site as required.

2.3.2 **Site drawings:** architects 'as existing' drawings were annotated to produce plans of all of the main floors, cross-sections and elevations. These were produced in order to show the form and location of structural features and/or features of historical and historic interest. Where necessary these drawings were manually enhanced using hand survey techniques. Additional drawings were also produced with a reflectorless electronic distance measurer (REDM). This comprised a Leica T1010 theodolite coupled to a Disto EDM, which emits a visible laser beam that can be guided around points of detail. The data was captured within a portable computer operating TheoLT software, which allows the survey to be directly inserted into CAD. The hand-annotated field drawings were digitised using an industry standard CAD package to produce the final drawings (Figs 1-11).

2.3.3 **Photographs:** photographs were taken in both black and white 35mm print and colour slide formats. In addition, pictures were taken using a digital

camera. The photographic archive consists of both general shots of the whole building and shots of specific architectural details.

- 2.3.4 **Watching Brief:** following the removal of soft fittings, debris and some wall coverings an additional brief investigation was carried out. This was primarily intended to take additional photographs, where necessary of areas that were not going to be retained. The brick additions to the firehood were examined in particular, and photographed, as it was intended to remove these during the building work, prior to fully restoring them.
- 2.3.5  **Finds:** a number of unstratified artefacts were discovered within and around the building. These were recovered and examined and a brief report produced outlining their significance to the building and their relevance to it.

## 2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full archive of the building investigation has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited with the Bolton Local Studies Library and a copy of the report will be deposited with the GMAU.



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## 3. BACKGROUND

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 A brief historical background of the farm was produced. This was compiled from both primary and secondary sources, and was intended to identify any recognisable periods of alteration to the building, examine the names and occupations of residents and consider evidence from comparable sites.
- 3.1.2 The historical background is intended to provide a general context in which the results of the survey could be placed, and specific information regarding the development of the building, its use and occupants where possible.

### 3.2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.2.1 The surface geology comprises glacially derived boulder clays deposited within the wider Middlebrook valley area (UMAU 1996). These are made up of alluvial silts and clays as well as glacial sands and gravels (*ibid*). These layers are deposited over Westphalian coal measures in association with small areas of Westphalian sandstone (*ibid*). Immediately to the west is a large area of wetland known as Red Moss, which developed towards the end of the glacial period (Hall *et al*, 1995, 99).
- 3.2.2 The site is situated immediately to the south of Horwich and *c*7km to the north-west of Manchester Ordnance Survey 1981). It is currently adjacent to a modern development, the Middlebrook estate, built within the last five years. It is situated at *c*120m OD (*ibid*).

### 3.3 HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 3.3.1 There is little in the archaeological record for the immediate area until the medieval period. The development of mere and woodland in the prehistoric period shows that the area was generally forested although there is evidence for clearance at an early date (*ibid*). An antler pick discovered in Red Moss is thought to be of prehistoric date and a preserved head, possibly Bronze Age, demonstrate that there was activity in the area, although there is little detailed information about it (*op cit*, 86). A Roman Road is thought to run between Manchester and Chorley (*ibid*), along the route of the present A6 (UMAU 1992, 4) but only stray finds otherwise indicate their presence, including a coin and part of a quern (*ibid*).
- 3.3.2 During the medieval period the whole area was within the Hundred of Salford, parish of Deane, and the township of Horwich or perhaps part of Heaton-below-Horwich (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 6-12; see *Section 3.3.3*). Horwich was the forest or chase of the Barons of Manchester (*op cit*, 7) and as such was strictly controlled. It was later used as a vaccary, with at least eight vaccary farms recorded in a survey of 1282, which were still present in a survey of 1320-2 (*ibid*). By the early fifteenth century the Lords of Manchester had

given up their rights to the land, although there is evidence for some granting of land to free tenants as early as the 1330s (GMAU 1992, 3). The initial land divisions at this time appear to have corresponded to the earlier vaccary divisions (*op cit*, 4).

- 3.3.3 The divisions of property in the area following the grants made by the Lords of Manchester are very complex. A number of families appear to have taken them up, including the Heaton of Heaton (immediately to the east), the Bradeshagh of Bradsagh in Horwich, the Greenhalghs and the Radcliffes (GMAU 1992, 3-4). Quite which family held the land including Lower House Farm is not clear, nor is it clear how early a farmstead was established at the there (although there would have been vaccary farms in the area from the thirteenth century). The extent of the Heaton's territory in the area is not clear (*op cit*, 4), and confusingly they also owned a property called Lower House a short distance to the east, also to the south of Chorley New Road (Heaton 2000, 112).
- 3.3.4 Towards the end of the seventeenth century most of the lands in the area passed to the Andertons of Lostock, who had been aggressively expanding their territory from the south (*op cit*, 86-7; Hargreaves 1974). The Andertons retained control over the area until the beginning of the nineteenth century (GMAU 1992, 7). Unfortunately there are no direct references to Lower House Farm at this time, and the earliest sources relating to it in any detail date to the mid nineteenth century. It is not mentioned in the main early history (Hampson 1883) nor is it specifically included in later local histories, even those that include sections on farms (Smith 1988).

### 3.4 LOWER HOUSE FARM

- 3.4.1 Despite there being no direct references to Lower House in the medieval period it is conceivable that the site was occupied from an early date. It may have originally been utilised in the management of the forests of the Lords of Manchester; three foresters are recorded as being maintained in 1320-2 by the inhabitants of six neighbouring townships (GMAU 1992, 3). It is possible too that a vaccary farm may also have been situated on the site at a similar date (*ibid*). It is extremely likely that a building was established on the site before or at the time that it became part of the Anderton estate in the sixteenth century, although what form this would have taken is difficult to ascertain through documentary sources alone. Such a building, perhaps repeatedly modified would probably have remained into the following centuries.
- 3.4.2 The Lostock estate plan of 1819 names the site 'Lower House' and its ownership as 'Fletchers' (Plate 1), a family that is recorded in the Horwich area from the 1790s (Sparke (ed) 1940, 758). The Fletchers seem to have remained at Lower House Farm for some time. Unfortunately, there is also a Lower House in Heaton, which makes it difficult to be sure whether references always relate to the correct house. The map evidence (*Section 3.5.1*) also suggests that the definition of the boundaries of Horwich and Heaton may have been a little confused even into the nineteenth century. The 1841 census

does not list Lower House, although there are three families of Fletchers listed at neighbouring Sefton Fold (HO 107/541/8, 49-50), suggesting a possible mistake in the records. Of these one head of the household is listed as a farmer, while the other two are described as a weaver and wheelwright. The census of 1851 (HO 107/2207, 428) is more clear and lists John and Hannah Fletcher, farmers, and their three children (all apparently from a previous marriage and with the surname Crompton; one is even described as illegitimate) and three general servants. John Fletcher is aged 52, and so could be the same John, son of Thomas and Hannah Fletcher, baptised in Horwich in 1798 (Sparke (ed) 1940, 758), which potentially confirms a family connection to Lower House Farm in the late eighteenth century.

- 3.4.2 By the time of the 1861 census (RG 9/2813, 46-7) John Fletcher has died leaving his widow, son Ellis, six other children, a ploughman and a cow-man resident at Lower House. An indication of the affects of the Industrial Revolution on the area can also be gained from the listing of several silk and cotton weavers living at Sefton Fold, presumably working at the mills in Horwich. Lower House Farm is difficult to trace in the early and mid nineteenth century directories (Worral 1871; Axon 1885) and it is not until 1895 that there is an obvious entry when it is listed as occupied by Margaret Pendlebury (Tillotson and Sons 1895, 422). Even at this date there is confusion between the two Lower House Farms and the Pendleburys are listed as being in Heaton. The farm was evidently soon reoccupied by members of the Fletcher family as a Cornelius and Adam Fletcher are listed there from 1901 to 1907 (Tillotson and Sons 1901, 638; 1907, 591). By 1911 it has reverted to the Pendleburys (Tillotson and Son Ltd 1911), and they remain resident until at least 1943 (Tillotson and Son Ltd 1916; Kelly's Directories Ltd 1924, 269; Kent Services Limited 1943, 115). Early in the twentieth century the farm and Lower House were evidently separated as they are listed with different occupants including John and Thomas Magee (Kelly's Directories Ltd 1913, 275; Kelly's Directories Ltd 1924, 269) and Mrs ME Wilson (Kent Services Limited 1943, 115).
- 3.4.3 During the later twentieth century Lower House Farm fell into a state of some disrepair and was damaged by arsonists in 1998 (Anon 1998). It was feared that the encroaching Middlebrook development and its condition would lead to its demolition (*ibid*), until it was saved by the present re-development scheme.

### 3.5 MAP REGRESSION

- 3.5.1 Lower House is not evidently shown on Yates' map of 1786 and the earliest specific map of the site, dated to 1819 (ZAL/1193), does not show any detail (Plate 1); Lower House is depicted as little more than a point. Lower House Farm does not appear on the Tithe Map for Halliwell and Horwich (DRM/1/47 1851) although this does not include a great deal of information in general. The confused progress of the manor possibly affected the calculation of Tithe Maps in the nineteenth century as not only is the Halliwell and Horwich map incomplete, but both the Heaton (DRM/1/42 1845) and Lostock (DRM/1/67 1849) show only small areas, rather than the entire township, and do not include the area around Lower House.

3.5.2 The Ordnance Survey maps show two main buildings at Lower House Farm; a larger T-shaped one to the south and a smaller L-shaped one to the north. Between them, immediately north of the larger T-shaped building and on the edge of a small enclosure is a small outbuilding. This arrangement remains largely unchanged from 1849 to 1909 (Ordnance Survey 1849; 1894; 1909; Plates 2, 3 and 4). The larger of the two buildings appears to be the one specifically referred to as 'Lower House Farm', but it is the smaller which survives to the present day. The two buildings are essentially little changed even in 1929 (Ordnance Survey 1929; Plate 5), although a significant number of additional outbuildings have been added at this point, perhaps suggesting a change to pig or poultry farming. This basic form survives as late as 1981 (Ordnance Survey 1981) but it would appear that the larger building was swept away in the late 1990s during redevelopment, presumably connected to the construction of the Middlebrook Sports Village (UMAU 1996), leaving only the present building remaining.

### **3.6 CONCLUSIONS**

3.6.1 Lower House Farm is an historically interesting site. It is not clear in the documentary sources whether the current building is the earliest on the site and there is the possibility that the site was occupied from the early thirteenth century as part of the estate of the Lords of Manchester. It has possible connection with the Heaton family of Heaton and may have formed part of their estate in Horwich, which was carved out of the former lands of the Lords of Manchester. The boundaries of this area were debated on a number of occasions and as late as the nineteenth century it was occasionally listed as being in Heaton. The estate was later acquired by the Andertons of Lostock who owned it until at least the end of the eighteenth century, when it passed into the tenancy of the Fletchers and then the Pendleburys.

3.6.2 The surviving building, now known as Lower House Farm, was part of a larger farmstead, of which it is the only survivor, and was originally known as Lower House. The two parts remained together as part of the same occupancy until the beginning of the twentieth century when they appear to have been separated. This fortunately preserved Lower House, which may have been the earlier building on the site.

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## 4. BUILDING INVESTIGATION RESULTS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 Lower House Farm is a small but complex building with evidence for several phases of alteration and modification. It is based around an extended two-unit cottage form, with additional internal walls dividing up the space to form a number of smaller rooms.

### 4.2 FABRIC

- 4.2.1 The entire building is constructed of coursed local yellow sandstone with dressed quoins at the corners and stone mullion windows. The roof is a modern replacement constructed of corrugated sheet metal over the surviving elements of the timber structure below. A few small later alterations have been made in brick.

### 4.3 ARRANGEMENT OF THE BUILDING

- 4.3.1 The main part of the house comprises a simple two-bay cottage of 1½ storeys. The two main rooms have been sub-divided with timber partitions and additional rooms have been created through the construction of extensions on the north and east sides of the building. The eastern extension has a short flight of stairs linking it to the first floor.

### 4.4 EXTERNAL DETAILS

- 4.4.1 **Front (south) elevation of house (Fig 3):** there is a doorway at the east end with a roughly finished heavy stone lintel decorated with a stop chamfer and hood mould (Plate 6) To the west is a four-light horizontal window with a plain chamfered sill and splayed sandstone mullions and a flagstone label mould. There is a similar, albeit smaller, window to the west (Plate 7). Excavations carried out at the base of the wall, perhaps as part of the current or a previous development, reveal the foundations to consist of a plinth of four courses, which projects c0.13m. There are three inserted windows immediately below the wall head (Plates 6 and 7), all of which are filled with clinker blocks. The easternmost inserted window is situated to the west of an earlier aperture, which has been blocked with stone (Plate 6). A doorway has been inserted between the two ground floor windows, towards the centre of the elevation. This has evidently been narrowed on the east side before being blocked with stone (Plate 7). A tie-rod with a cruciform plate c0.6m across has been inserted above the top left corner of the blocking. The entire elevation has been repointed and the remains of a whitish lime plaster with gravel inclusions are visible in places. The east end has been extended with a later extension (see *Section 4.4.5*).

- 4.4.2 **West gable (Fig 5):** this forms the gable end of the main part of the building (Plate 8). The ground level has been reduced for the entire length of the wall, exposing a projecting rough rubble plinth. There is a square window on the south side of the ground floor with a flush sandstone square dressed lintel and sill, probably a later insertion (Plate 8). There is a horizontal three, possibly originally four, light window in the first floor with narrow splayed mullions (Plate 8). It also has a flat slab sill and lintel and a crude projecting label mould above. This has been damaged at the north end where the jamb has been replaced in stone and brick.
- 4.4.3 **Rear (north) elevation (Fig 4):** this forms a dogleg shape with a re-entrant angle in the centre behind a later outshut. There are two windows at ground floor level at the west end (Plate 9). Both are small and sub-rectangular with flush slab sills. The westernmost has the remnants of a stone jamb and lintel *in situ*, while the easternmost has a thicker lintel and may be inserted. A vertical slab to the east marks the probable position of a further window to the east, which has been blocked. A course of slabs is evident running from the inserted window across the elevation suggesting that there was originally a single low window more than 2m long. The opposing end of the tie-rod seen in the south elevation, again with a cruciform iron plate, is present above the blocked east window (Plate 9). At the wall head there is an additional sub-rectangular window east of the outshut with a flush slab sill and east jamb.
- 4.4.4 **Outshuts to north elevation:** the east side of the north elevation has been extended with the addition of two outshuts (Plates 9 and 10; Fig 4). The earliest of these appears to be contemporary with the main part of the house and comprises a short section of wall at the far east end of the north elevation (Plate 10). Both ends of this are finished with quoins and there is a single, central three-light rectangular window with flush stone surrounds and splayed mullions (Plate 10). The wall height above has been increased slightly with the addition of two rows of bricks in header courses apparently bringing it to the same height as the outshut to the west (Plate 10). The outshut to the west of this fills the re-entrant angle of the north elevation. It is of stone rubble construction, similar to the rest of the building, but slightly more randomly coursed. There is a central square window in the north elevation with a flush sandstone lintel and sill, which has been filled with clinker blocks (Plate 9). The wall construction is more irregular below the level of the windows and slightly thicker; suggesting an earlier phase of building or perhaps an earlier structure, and this appears to continue across the west end of the main elevation (Fig 4). The wall is higher than the original outshut to the west at the junction of the two, which changes the angle of the roof (Plate 10). Two wrought iron S-section brackets have been added to the extension to the wall height to the east to support the rainwater goods. These comprise an ogee moulded timber gutter (which has come away and is lying on the floor) with lead end capping, which may be contemporary with the outshut.
- 4.4.5 **East gable (Fig 5):** a single bay extension has been added to the east end of the original building, which extends to the north as far as the eastern outshut. It is 0.61m higher than walls of the main building on the south side (Plate 6) and 0.92m higher on the north, although the original roofline has been

respected. It is of a similar construction to the main elevations and has the same repointing but has smaller quoins in general and a more sandy, pinkish brown mortar. There is a doorway in the south side of the east extension with a tooled sandstone lintel (Plate 6). To the east there is a vertical window with a flush sill but no stone sill or jambs, which has been filled with clinker blocks (Plate 6). There is a larger central window at the wall head with a long sandstone sill. The east elevation of the extension forms a gable and has a doorway at first floor level accessed by a dogleg flight of flagstone steps (Plate 11). The doorway has a sandstone lintel and jambs. The present door is hung on the south side, which does not fit the stairs and the fifth step is a re-used gatepost with a drilled pintel hole. The stairs are supported by rough rubble stonework on the east side.

- 4.4.6 There are two ground floor windows to the north of the stairs. The southernmost has leaded bolt holes, presumably for shutters, and a slab sill. It has been blocked with stone held by lime mortar. The northernmost has a rougher sandstone lintel and a slightly projecting sill, probably a replacement. This has been filled with clinker blocks. There is another window at first floor level, with a flush sandstone lintel and sill, which has been blocked with re-used mould-thrown bricks in a cement mortar (Plate 11). There has been some collapse at the base of the north-east corner below the level of the quoins above the plinth, which projects slightly to the north.

## 4.5 INTERNAL DETAILS

- 4.5.1 **Arrangement:** the ground floor is divided into two east/west bays forming two main rooms, with further small rooms formed by partition walls in the north-west corner and rooms within the outshuts on the north-east corner and north side (Fig 6). The east elevation has been extended forming a third bay. The first floor plan is similar, although additional partition walls form a central room connected to the staircase and the upper part of the northern outshut is not accessible (Fig 7). The first floor is open to the roof.
- 4.5.2 **Ground floor, Room 1 (Fig 6):** this forms the interior of the eastern extension and is currently two storeys high as the floor is missing, leaving it open to the ceiling. The west elevation is the original east external elevation of the main house and has a slight plinth making up the lower c0.6m. There is an inserted doorway north of centre, with a re-used timber lintel with peg holes and a possible carpenter's mark. The wall thickness is apparently greater at the base of the wall than it is above the doorway, and there is an inserted window above the doorway that has been blocked with stone. At the top of the gable the ends of three purlins from the main house project through the wall, and the wall top has been raised to match the increased height of the extension. A further small blocked aperture is evident in the west elevation, apparently entering the back of the firehood on the first floor. The east elevation has an inserted fireplace and chimney breast near the centre constructed of moulded bricks with a single piece dressed stone surround. This has had later cement rendered blocking inserted. There is an inserted square window to the north of the fireplace.

- 4.5.3 The ceiling beams are east/west aligned, and one has been removed at the north end above the doorway. The southernmost beam is waney-edged with chamfering, while the central one has deep scantling and chamfering up to 0.2m wide. There is a row of joist mortices each pegged above and below centrally on each face, suggesting that there was formerly a timber-frame wall present (Plate 12). The joists above the beams also show signs of considerable re-use and several appear to have originally continued to the north elevation, where further joist sockets survive. One joist has a Baltic timber mark.
- 4.5.4 **Ground Floor, Room 2 (Fig 6):** this is the main room of the original house. The main access is via a doorway in the south-east corner, which forms a baffle entry at a heck wall (which has subsequently been turned into a lobby). A bressumer beam runs from the heck wall, supported by the heck post, which has a joweled and stepped head, to a post forming part of a timber partition along the north elevation, where it is forked (Plate 14). The bressumer beam is lap-jointed into the posts at either end. The short section of stud partition wall at the north end of the bressumer is finished with wattle and daub and has an arched doorway allowing access into the partial outshut in the north-east corner. The framing is chamfered and appears to have a dove lap-tail joint assembly. There is a mullion window in the centre of the south elevation, as per the external elevation. The west side of the room is made up of a stud partition wattle and daub wall, with what appear to be original doorways at the north and south ends. The bressumer beam and western partition wall support the ends of large east/west orientated beams with deep chamfered scantling. The north/south orientated joists are jointed into these and many are original and finished with stop chamfer decoration. In the north-west corner there is a square section trimming the edge of a joist, which appears to be the position of an earlier access hatch into the first floor c0.6m by c1.2m.
- 4.5.5 All of the wall frames forming the stud partition wall appear to sit on rubble sleeper walls. Those forming the division between Rooms 2 and 3 also have sleeper rails, although the northernmost one is very rotten. All have heartwood trimmed top-rails, chamfered on all sides and the posts are tenoned and have a single peg. The horizontal rails are at approximately mid height and are tenoned and held with a single peg into the posts. The staves between the rails are typically blade-cut, with pointed tops into the top-rails and gouged grooves in the lower rails. The lathes have been cut by hand and the daub contains large amounts of straw.
- 4.5.6 The inglenook fireplace forms the majority of the east elevation. The bressumer beam has deep chamfering. The south end meets the timber-frame wall of the baffle entry, which is built onto the heck post. The wall-plate extends beyond the heck post to form a chamfered boss. The fireplace is a later insertion with a dressed flat sandstone surround (Plate 13), probably contemporary with that in Room 1. A modern burner and tiled hearth has also been added (Plate 13). There are re-used bridging joists above the fire surround, which support the blocking of the front part of the firehood above. These re-used timbers may have originally formed the top plate of a partition along the north side of the fireplace.



- 4.5.7 **Ground Floor, Room 3 (Fig 6):** there is a single large window in the south elevation, with a deeply chamfered timber lintel. A c1.75m wide chimney breast projects from the west elevation (Plate 16), which is probably contemporary with the main build of the house. It has a 0.9m wide hearth with chamfered dressed sandstone jambs and a c0.34m deep lintel. The hearth has subsequently been narrowed with brick in a soft grey cement mortar to form a smaller opening with a cast iron lintel (Plate 16). Later blocking with salt-glazed brick has also been carried out, probably to accommodate later heating. The east elevation is a timber-frame partition, with a doorway at the south end. The north elevation is also a timber-frame partition dividing Rooms 3 and 6 (Plate 15). This butts east frame but would appear to be contemporary. There is doorway blocked with brick in the north-east corner (Plate 15) that has later framing on the south face and simple iron pintels in the south face of the east jamb.
- 4.5.8 The central bridging joist, orientated north/south, rests on the top rail of the north timber-frame wall and is lap-jointed into the timber lintel of the window in the south elevation. The eastern joist within the ceiling of Room 3 is half lap-jointed into the bridging joist. The bridging joist also has a smaller north/south orientated bridging joist tenoned and pegged into its north side, immediately to the south of the lap joint. It also has a long shallow rebated soffit, as though it had been propped at some point. The ceiling joists are wider and have larger scantling than those in Room 2 and are orientated east/west, except in the north-east corner, where two are orientated north/south.
- 4.5.9 **Ground Floor, Room 6 (Fig 6):** this is a narrow room in the north-west corner of the original building, formed by the timber-frame wall. There are two windows in the north elevation filled with clinker blocks, as per the external elevation, the westernmost of which has a re-used timber lintel with deep scantling. The easternmost window, which is blocked, is a later insertion, and continues behind the present staircase, which is situated in the north-east corner of the room (Plate 21). Most of the original lintel survives and there is a vertical slab forming the eastern jamb. A change in the floor tiles and a scar in the south wall suggest a former partition wall was present across the room with a doorway on the north end. The lower part of the southern panel of the east timber-frame wall has been in-filled with a mix of machine and hand-made brick, and appears to be a relatively modern repair. There are three timbers projecting from the wall-face in the west and north elevations at c0.6m above the floor, perhaps marking the position of shelving or some other fixing. The joists in the ceiling are aligned north/south, and have large scantling. They are largely re-used and one re-used piece incorporates a post nailed into a soffit. This evidently pre-dates the present staircase and may have been added to strengthen the joist that supports the timber cross frame.
- 4.5.10 **Ground Floor, Room 4 (Fig 6):** this forms the interior of the partial outshut projecting from the east end of the north elevation of the main house (Plate 17). There is three-light mullion window on the north side, as per the external elevation. There is a small alcove to the east of this, with daub in the base of its west corner suggesting that it is original. A doorway has been inserted

though the west elevation into the later outshut (Room 5). The north elevation has been increased in height to fit the later roof, which is supported by a square-section purlin that is exposed within the open height of the outshut. There is an east/west orientated beam at ceiling level, which appears to have been inserted and forms a cupboard under the eaves in Room 1 on the first floor. There is evidence for a broken flagstone and cobble floor.

- 4.5.11 **Ground Floor, Room 5 (Fig 6):** this is a later extension added to the main house and the earlier extension (Room 4). It has been heavily lime-washed internally and has a lathe and plaster ceiling, which is probably not original. The join between it and the earlier eastern outshut is visible as a row of quoins beneath the plaster (Plate 18). The windows in the west and north walls are situated above flagstone benches. The south slab has been removed but an upright in the south-west corner and a central corbel survives. The northern slab is built into the walls and has a timber post supporting it in the south-east corner. The flagstone floor projects into Room 4 through the threshold of the doorway. There is a small spiral staircase in the north-east corner (Plate 19) allowing access to a small cellar, although this was flooded and could not be fully accessed. A column of hand-made bricks supports the steps and there is an additional skin of stone around the west and south walls to support the flagstone floor. There are two further alcoves in the west elevation, one level with the bench height (Plate 20), and additional shelves at head height, probably of relatively late date are present around the north and south walls.
- 4.5.12 **First Floor, Room 1 (Fig 7):** the south elevation has a large window with splayed reveals that are obscured by render. The decayed remains of an original purlin are present in the east elevation and the lower part of the elevation is covered with daub beneath limewash and horsehair plaster. In the centre of the east elevation the remains of the firehood are present, offset to the south of the ridge (Fig 9-11). This comprises two re-used timbers angled from *c*1.25m at the base to *c*0.65m apart at the top and positioned *c*0.75m from the wall. There are horizontal rails at *c*0.75m and *c*1.8m from the floor, which are tenoned and pegged into the north post and lap jointed to the south (Plates 24-26). Both have grooves for stakes in the upper surface and stake holes in the soffit. The upper one is broken and the lower re-used. Parts of the panelling remain *in situ* at the base and comprise two layers of daub behind lime plaster. There are additional rails between the firehood and the gable at *c*1.2m and *c*2.4m above the floor. The lower rails are lap-jointed on the upper surface, and the uppers lap-jointed on the lower surface. The interior of the hood is coated in soot and scorched in some areas. At the top the brick stack is supported by a pair of cast iron bars and a sandstone pad (Plate 27). The south side has been rebuilt above the upper rail and the north side has been rebuilt above the cast iron base plate, both in brick and with some frogged. There is a small aperture to the north of the firehood leading into the upper floor of the eastern extension, which has been blocked with brick.
- 4.5.13 The west elevation comprises a timber-frame cross wall with wattle and daub panels (Plates 22 and 23; see *Section 4.5.14* for description). There is a timber rail across the outshut in the north-east corner, which has stake holes in the soffit, suggesting there was originally a single panel wall across it at first floor

level. This has now been broken out and replaced by an eaves cupboard. The exposed joist below is pegged to the wall-plate. There is a single large scantling chamfered and trenched purlin, probably a replacement, in the south pitch. There are two smaller purlins in the north pitch of the roof, probably original, supporting sawn rafters. Attached to these is timber sarking and lathes finished with lime plaster, all contemporary with the loft hatch in the centre on the west side. The floor is finished with c0.18m wide floorboards.

4.5.14 **First Floor, Room 2 (Fig 7):** there is a slightly splayed window in the south elevation with a top-hung casement. To the west of this is small void of unclear function. The east elevation is a timber-frame below a truss comprising a pair of principal rafters made from reversed re-used cruck blades supported on slightly projecting pads (Fig 8). It has a chamfered collar lap-jointed and diagonally pegged to the principals. The principals have vacant lap joints either side of the collars and against the walls and there are 'I' assembly marks on the north end of the collar. There are additional angled narrow braces to the principals, which are attached with lap joints. In the centre of the truss there is a further collar, probably a later insertion. A late rectangular-section ridge purlin destroys the relationship between the tops of the principal rafters. There is some wattle and daub infilling between the upper and lower collar and a crescent shaped assembly mark on the north end of the lower collar and adjoining section of the principal rafter. The timber-frame comprises post and rail panelling (Plate 31) with a low narrow doorway at the north end (Plate 28). The west elevation is also constructed of a timber-frame and wattle and daub, with less panelling remaining *in situ* (Plate 29), part of which retains an empty joist slot (Plate 30).

4.5.15 **First Floor, Room 3 (Fig 7):** this is the larger of the two western rooms. The south and west elevations are finished with daub. There is a splayed window in the south elevation with stone jambs forming the reveals and three or four courses of hand-made brick above. There is a chimney breast in the west gable with a single piece, chamfered sandstone jamb and lintel (Plate 33). This is offset to the south of the fireplace below and has been infilled with brick in lime mortar. The stack is rebuilt above the upper purlin on the south pitch and is offset c0.45m at the level of a window to the north. This window comprises a total of three-lights, although it is butted on its north side, leaving one light in into Room 4. This has a large scantling timber lintel and slab sill with vertical stone jambs and a 0.2m deep stone mullion. The northern mullion has an additional slab to the rear (east), which is butted by the wall frame between Rooms 3 and 4.

4.5.16 The north elevation is a timber-frame partition, which comprises five panels at the east end, with the east post rebated on the north side for a doorway into Room 4. There is a mortice hole for a rail to the south but the panel has been replaced with a later rectangular section studs for lathe and plaster panelling. The post also has a groove for mortices suggesting that it may have formed the bottom rail for a timber mullion window. The top rail also has numerous empty peg holes and mortices. The roof structure exposed above survives but has been severely damaged by fire (Plate 32).

4.5.17 **First Floor, Room 4 (Fig 7):** this small room is entirely finished with plaster and is lacking any detail (Plate 34), although the frame of the east wall is jointed to the lower purlin (Plate 35). It was most recently used as a bedroom.

#### 4.6 WATCHING BRIEF

4.6.1 As the intention of the watching brief was primarily to make a photographic record of parts of the building that were not going to be retained during the redevelopment only a limited amount of additional information was gathered about the development of the building. A number of the fireplaces had had their later blocking removed, which allowed their full depths to be ascertained, and to the south of the firehood there was a possible scar for an earlier firehood evident in the wall (Plate 36). This would correspond well with the expect width of such a feature, and would mean that the original firehood would have spanned the full length between the doorway to the north of the fireplace and the heck post to the south (see *Section 5.1.12*).

#### 4.7 FINDS

4.7.1 A small number of unstratified artefacts were recovered from within the building and these are described in Table 1 below.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
U/S	Pottery	1	Large white-glazed white earthenware serving dish rim with monogram initials 'RW' in blue transfer print	Nineteenth – early twentieth century
U/S	Pottery	1	White-glazed white earthenware ashet rim with brown transfer print and red enamel	Late nineteenth – early twentieth century
U/S	Pottery	1	Stoneware jar base	Eighteenth – early twentieth century
U/S	Pottery	1	Brown-glazed red earthenware crock rim	Late seventeenth – early twentieth century

Table 1: Finds recovered during the building investigation

4.6.2 None of these provide a great deal of information about the building, and they probably relate to its later phase of use. The majority of the objects are fairly typical kitchenware-type vessels, which might be expected in a building of this type. The most unusual item is the monogrammed serving dish. It is not known whom the initials 'RW' refer to but it seems unlikely that they would be a resident of the house; they do not appear to relate to anyone named in the historical sources although there is an ME Wilson resident in 1943 (see *Section 3.4.6*). This particular item is perhaps more likely to have been acquired 'second-hand' from a larger, and more wealthy, house or institution.

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## 5. DISCUSSION

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### 5.1 LOWER HOUSE FARM

- 5.1.1 **Introduction:** the building investigation revealed that Lower House Farm, although small, was of remarkable complexity. The documentary research was not able to locate any specific sources earlier than the beginning of the nineteenth century but it is likely that the building predates this by some time, and probably has its origins in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The style and form of the building and elements within it suggests that it is at least seventeenth century in origin (Miller 2002). The original plan was a basic two-room type (Brunskill 2000, 106-7), which was subsequently modified with the addition of an outshut to the rear, alterations to the fireplace and possibly the rearrangement of internal partition walls. Pieces of re-used timber are also present within the earliest surviving parts of the house, suggesting an even earlier building, presumably of at least sixteenth century date, was present on or near the site. The eastern extension is likely to be late eighteenth or early nineteenth century in date, as suggested by the style of the tooling to the lintel and the presence of Baltic timber marks (Greene 1996). Unfortunately, the rather plain splayed mullions are not particularly diagnostic (Alcock and Hall 2002, 38) and there were no other particularly dateable fittings.
- 5.1.2 In total, six phases of activity were identified within the building. These are outlined below, and where possible reference is made to corresponding elements of the recorded history, although the lack of records for the early history makes this difficult for the earlier phases.
- 5.1.3 **Phase 1:** before the present house was built it is likely that there was an earlier structure on the same site or in close proximity. The extensive re-use of timber within the extant building would suggest that this was probably timber-framed with crucks supporting the roof. The remains of at least three cruck blades were identified within the building re-used in the roof and internal walls on the first floor. This would suggest, assuming they all belonged to a single building, that the earlier building would have been of at least three bays.
- 5.1.4 **Phase 2:** the earliest phase of the extant building is represented by the western end and includes the easternmost of the two rear outshuts. This was evidently accessed through a door located at the eastern end of the south elevation, which led into a small lobby. The northern part of this was formed by a timber-framed wattle and daub partition forming the heck wall to a large inglenook fireplace, which spanned the eastern gable. The north end of the bressumer beam was supported by a timber-framed wattle and daub dividing wall, which formed a room within a small outshut to the rear. This small room probably formed a pantry or dairy adjoining the 'house'.
- 5.1.5 Further timber-framed walls divided the ground floor and first floor into smaller rooms, with the main front room (or 'house'), parlour and buttery on the ground floor and bedrooms on the first. The first floor appears to have been accessed by a narrow straight stair, or ladder, located in the north-west corner of the 'house'.

The upper floor had two tie-beam trusses infilled below with timber-framed walls and wattle and daub panelling. These trusses and walls were, unusually, offset from the cross-frames below, and appear to have incorporated considerable amounts of re-used timber, including pieces of cruck blades. The space is further divided up with additional timber-frame walls into bedrooms and other small rooms.

5.1.7 **Phase 3:** the third phase relates to the addition of a further outshut on the northern side of the farmhouse. This created a single small room, which appears to have been used for the preparation of meat, with hooks in the ceiling, flagstone preparation benches, several keeping holes in the walls for cold storage and a cellar.

5.1.8 It is possible that a further doorway was inserted in the south elevation at this time, allowing direct access into the parlour. It is also probable that the staircase was moved to its present location during this phase, allowing access from the outside to first floor without the need to enter what had become the service end (east) of the house.

5.1.9 **Phase 4:** the fourth phase comprised the addition of a bay to the east side of the house; this was of two-storey height. External access to the first floor suggests it was used for agricultural storage with a stable or loosebox below. A doorway was inserted into the farmhouse to the north of the inglenook fireplace connecting the living room to the new extension. The inglenook fireplace itself may also have had a small sandstone chimney breast inserted at this time and the doorway from the parlour to the staircase was also blocked with brick.

5.1.10 Phases 2-4 were probably completed by 1849 as all of these major elements appear to be shown on the Ordnance Survey map of that year, although the detail is not clear (Plate 2). Certainly, the eastern extension had been added, which suggests a late eighteenth or, more likely, early nineteenth century date of construction.

5.1.10 **Phase 5:** this phase comprises a remodelling of the internal space, with the insertion of a fireplace in the eastern extension, suggesting a possible change from agricultural to domestic use. The central doorway in the south elevation was also blocked at this time, leaving two entrances into the domestic part of the southern elevation. This may relate to the mid to late nineteenth century, when the building was probably used in a domestic capacity, associated with agriculture.

5.1.11 **Phase 6:** this comprises twentieth century alterations, which include the insertion of a new fireplace in the inglenook and the reduction in width of the other ground floor fireplaces. These alterations probably belong to the beginning of the twentieth century, at which point this building may have become separated from any former agricultural use and reverted to an entirely domestic one. Following the abandonment of the building the infilling of the windows was undertaken utilising clinker blocks, and a corrugated metal roof was added following a fire in 1998.

5.1.12 **The Firehood:** the form and structure of the firehood is particularly interesting, as compared to other examples from similar cottages it is remarkably narrow (Watson and McClintock 1979; Brunskill 2000, 120). Miller describes a typical firehood associated with an inglenook fireplace as being ‘*almost a room in itself*’ (Miller 2002, 164) and big enough to sit inside, and they typically extend from one wall to the heck post. The narrow firehood at Lower House Farm appears to correspond closely to the existing stone-built fire surround (Fig 9-11), and is likely to be a later alteration. There is little evidence, however, for the position of an earlier, wider, firehood to demonstrate this although a possible scar was visible on the wall to the south of the firehood during the subsequent watching brief (Plate 36). It is therefore difficult to position the construction of the present firehood in the phasing outlined above. It is probable that it fits between Phases 3 and 4, and is most likely to relate to the construction of the eastern extension (Phase 3), which would have required a narrower firehood to allow access between the east end of the original house and the extension.

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## 6. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 THE BUILDING

- 6.1.1 Despite recent damage, particularly by fire, Lower House Farm retains some well-preserved historic fabric. In particular, the rare survival of features associated with the inglenook fireplace including, and of most interest, the timber-framed firehood, and also the bressumer beam, heck post, and timber-framed, wattle and daub-panelled heck wall. Other, similarly constructed partition walls survive, in varying degrees of preservation. Original window and door apertures also survive, with those in the northern, and more especially, southern elevations retaining their original mouldings. Many original timbers survive within the fabric of the structure, including trusses, bridging joists, floor joists, and lintels. A number of these timbers show evidence of re-use.
- 6.1.2 It is therefore recommended that as many original features as practicable, should be retained, and incorporated within the future re-use of the structure. Unfortunately, several of the timber-frame walls, and the upper parts of the roof structure, are badly damaged, and are, therefore, beyond reasonable repair. A short list of features recommended for retention is presented in *Appendix 3*.
- 6.1.3 Any substantial timbers, particularly those showing signs of re-use in the roof structure, should also be assessed for potential to supply samples for dendrochronological analysis. Both the documentary sources and the investigation of the building have been unable to provide an accurate date of construction or a good estimate of the age of the re-used timber. Such information would be useful not only in understanding its physical development, but also in identifying suitable further sources for documentary research.
- 6.1.4 It is also recommended that further archaeological investigation is undertaken during the alterations to the fabric of the building, in the form of watching briefs. These would be particularly useful after the removal of the first floor floor covering, to allow examination of carpentry techniques used within the original construction, and may also provide more information on the original position and form of the original access to the first floor and its later replacement. It is understood that all of the ground floor surfaces are also to be removed, allowing the possibility to examine the space below. This may not only elucidate the construction techniques of the original structure, but may also demonstrate whether there was an earlier structure on the site.



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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### FIGURES

Figure 1: Location map

Figure 2: Site plan

Figure 3: Front (south) elevation

Figure 4: Rear (north) elevation

Figure 5: East and west gables

Figure 6: Ground floor plan

Figure 7: First floor plan

Figure 8: East-facing cross-section

Figure 9: West-facing cross-section

Figure 10: West-facing cross-section showing fireplace

Figure 11: North-facing cross-section through fireplace

### PLATES

Plate 1: Part of the Lostock estate plan of 1819 (ZAL/1193) showing Lower House in the centre

Plate 2: Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1849 showing the two main buildings at Lower House

Plate 3: Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1894 showing the two buildings at Lower House Farm

Plate 4: Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1909 showing the two buildings at Lower House Farm

Plate 5: Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1939 showing Lower House Farm and the new outbuildings to the north and south

Plate 6: East end of the front (south) elevation

Plate 7: West end of the front (south) elevation

Plate 8: West gable

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- Plate 10: Detail of partial outshut in rear elevation
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- Plate 35: Joints of timbers to roof in east wall of first floor Room 4

Plate 36: Possible scar showing the line of an earlier firehood in the east elevation of First Floor Room 1



Figure 1: Location Map





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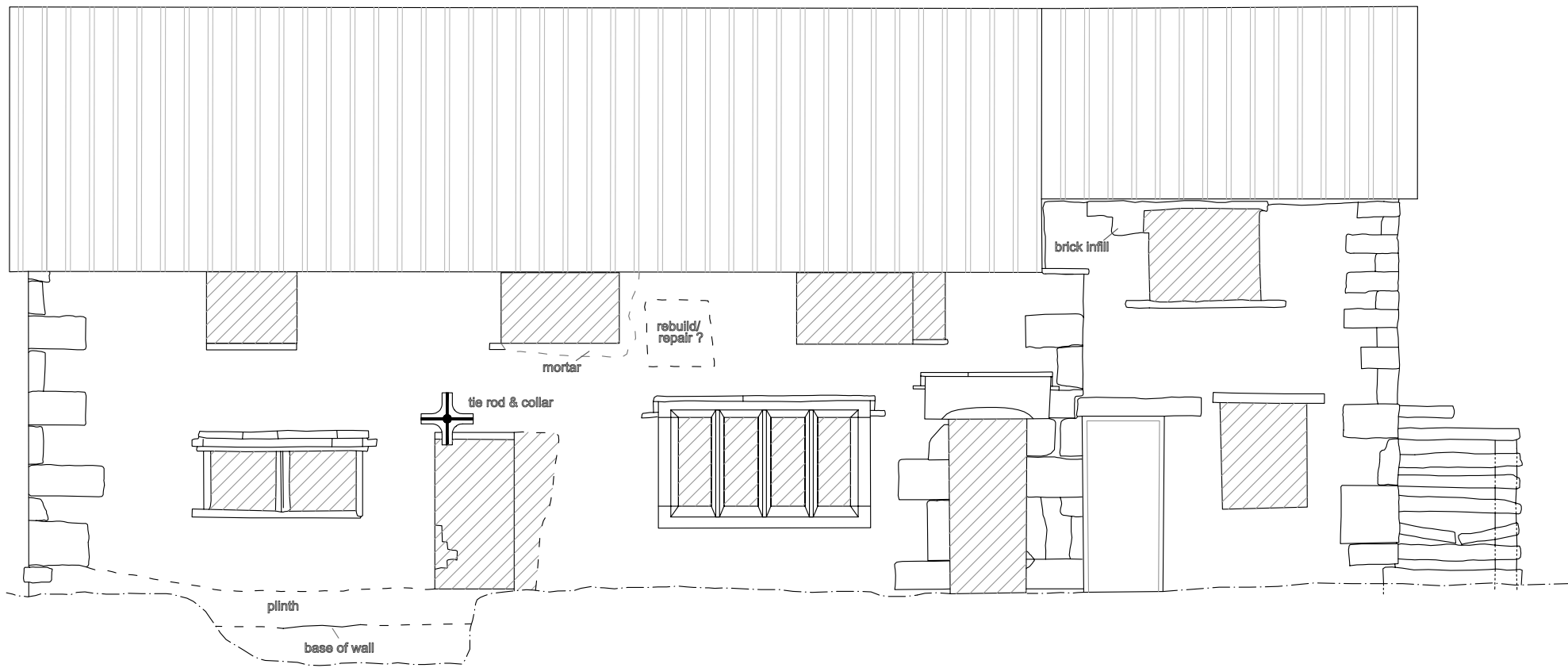
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Figure 2: Site plan

**Key**

- principal building material
- blocking
- fe



0 3  
metres  
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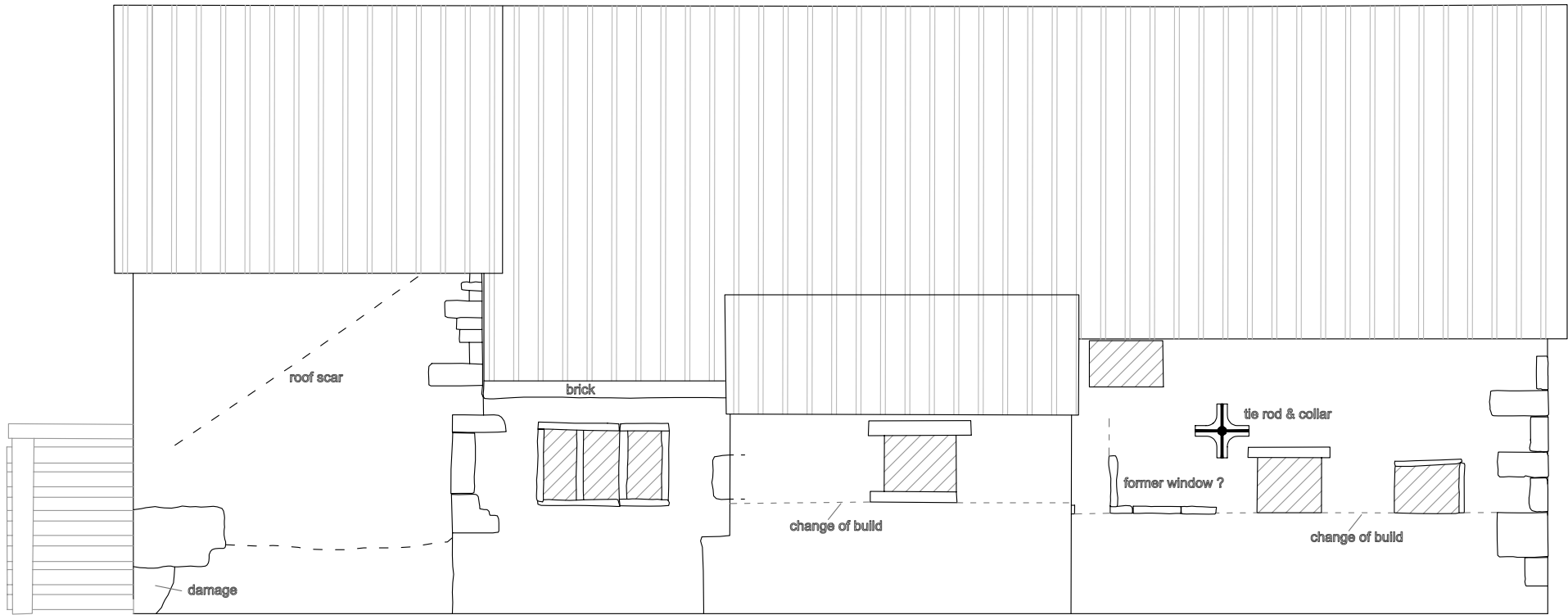


Figure 3: Front (south) elevation



**Key**

- principal building material
- blocking
- fe







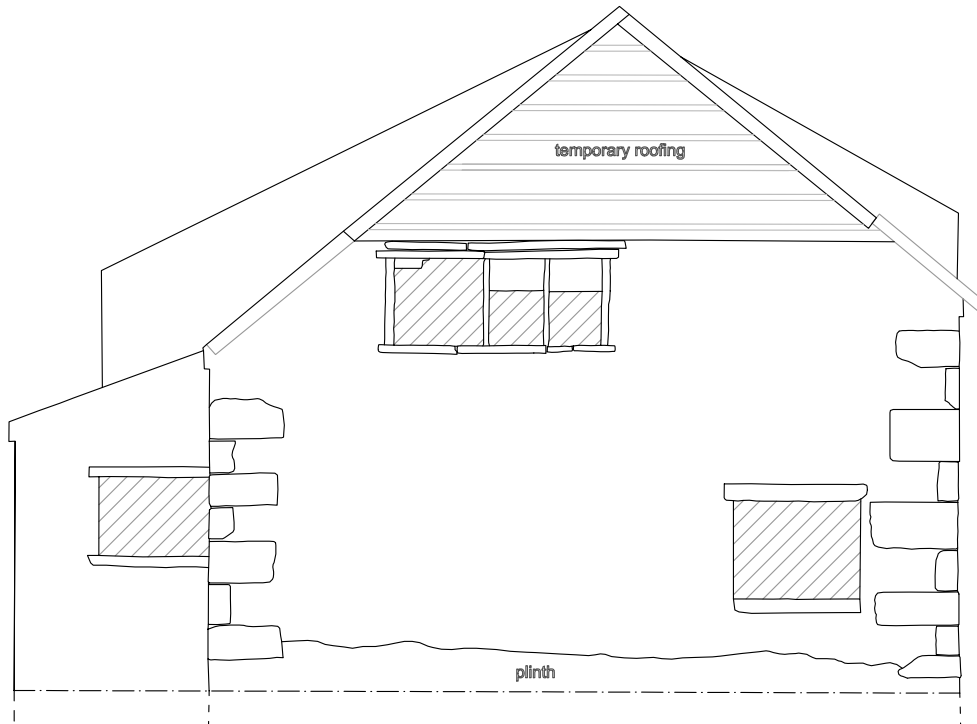
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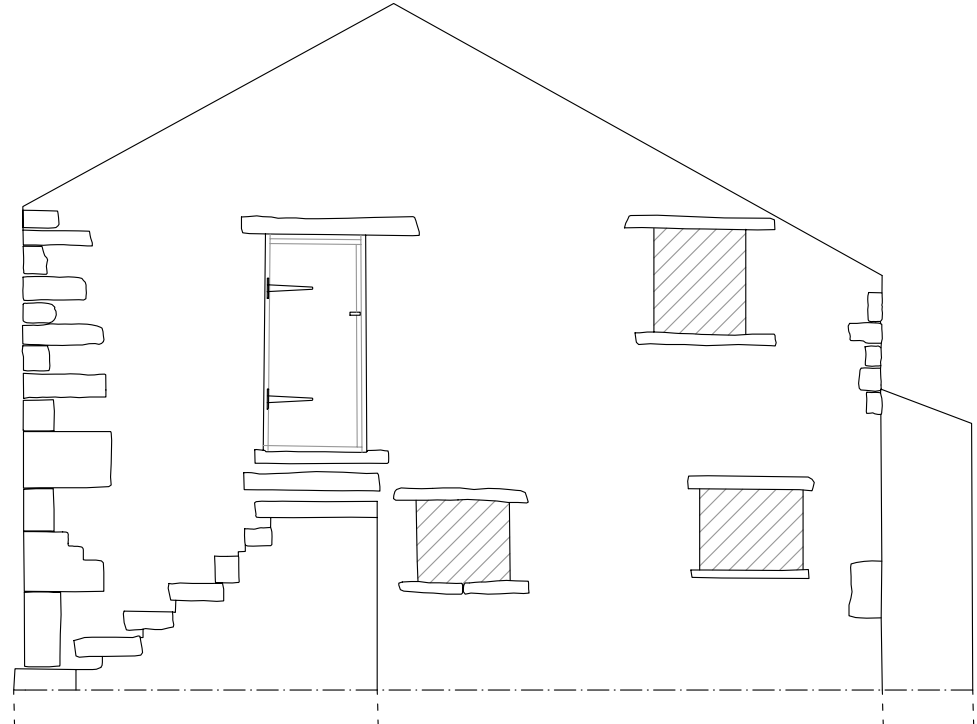
Figure 4: Rear (north) elevation

**Key**

-  principal building material
-  blocking
-  fe
-  timber



West Elevation










East Elevation



Figure 5: East and west gables

**Key**

-  principal building material
-  sectional timber
-  timber
-  blocking
-  beam over
-  Wattle & Daub
-  room number

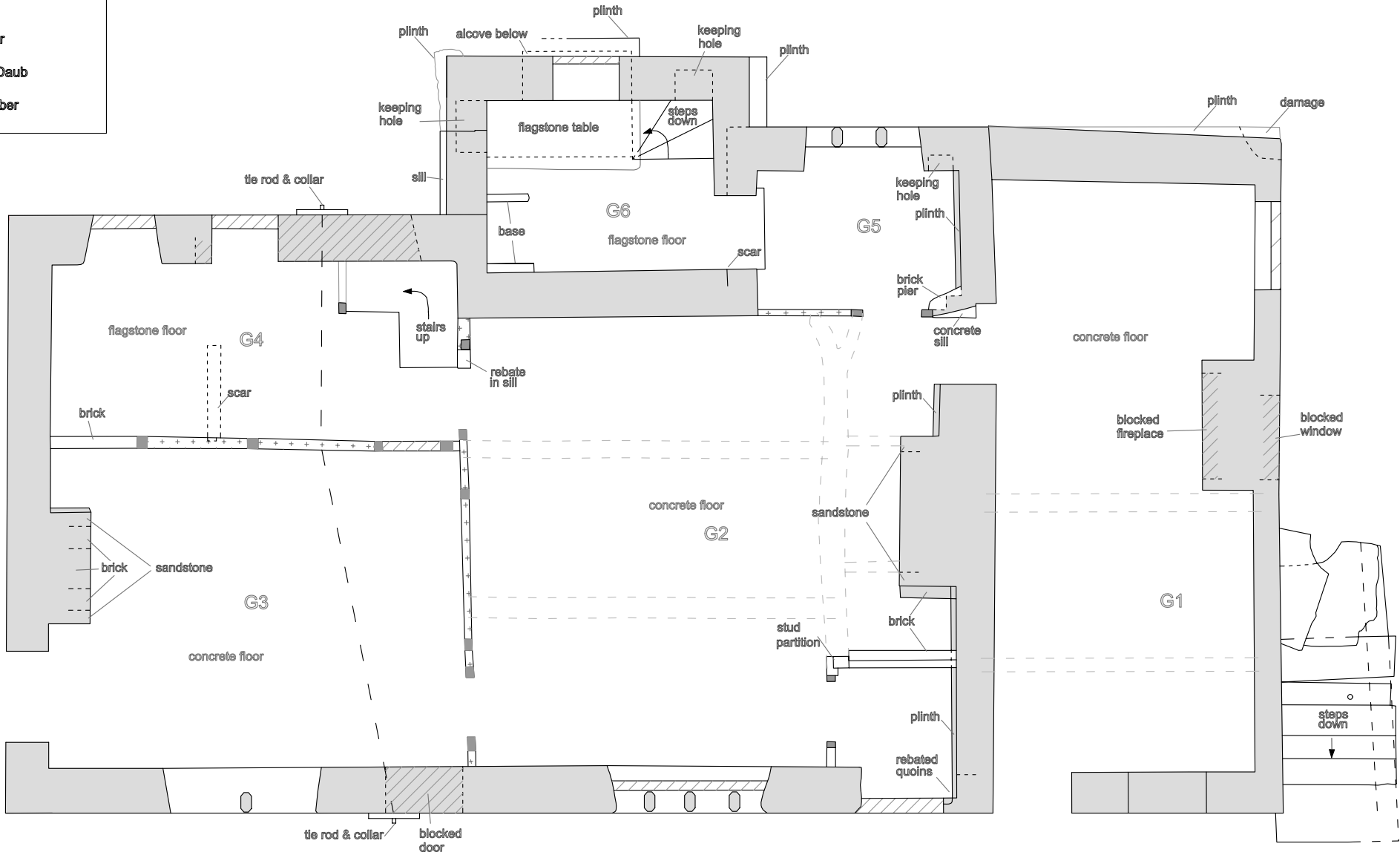







Figure 6: Ground floor plan

**Key**

-  principal building material
-  sectional timber
-  timber
-  blocking
-  beam over
-  Wattle & Daub
-  room number

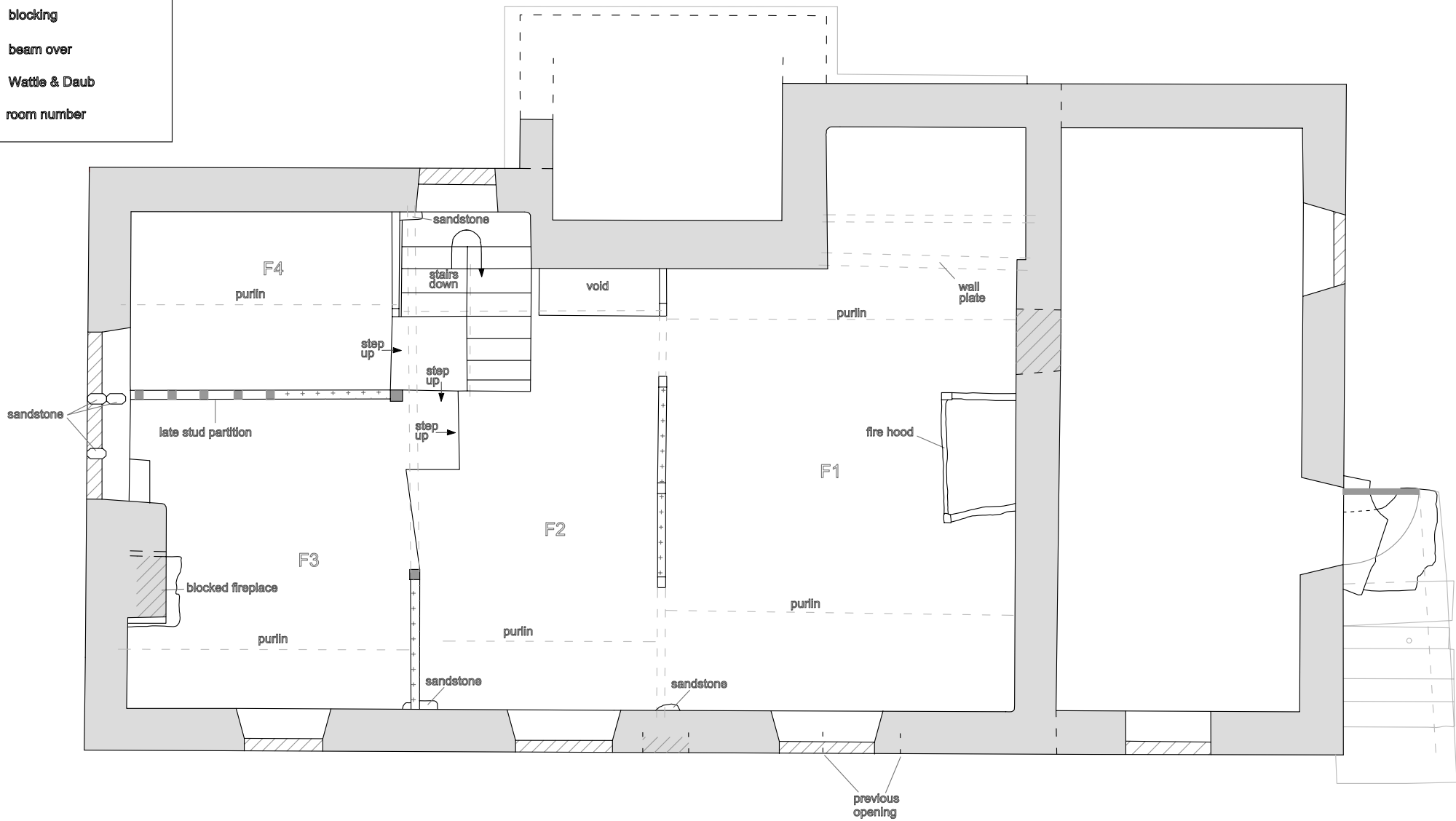





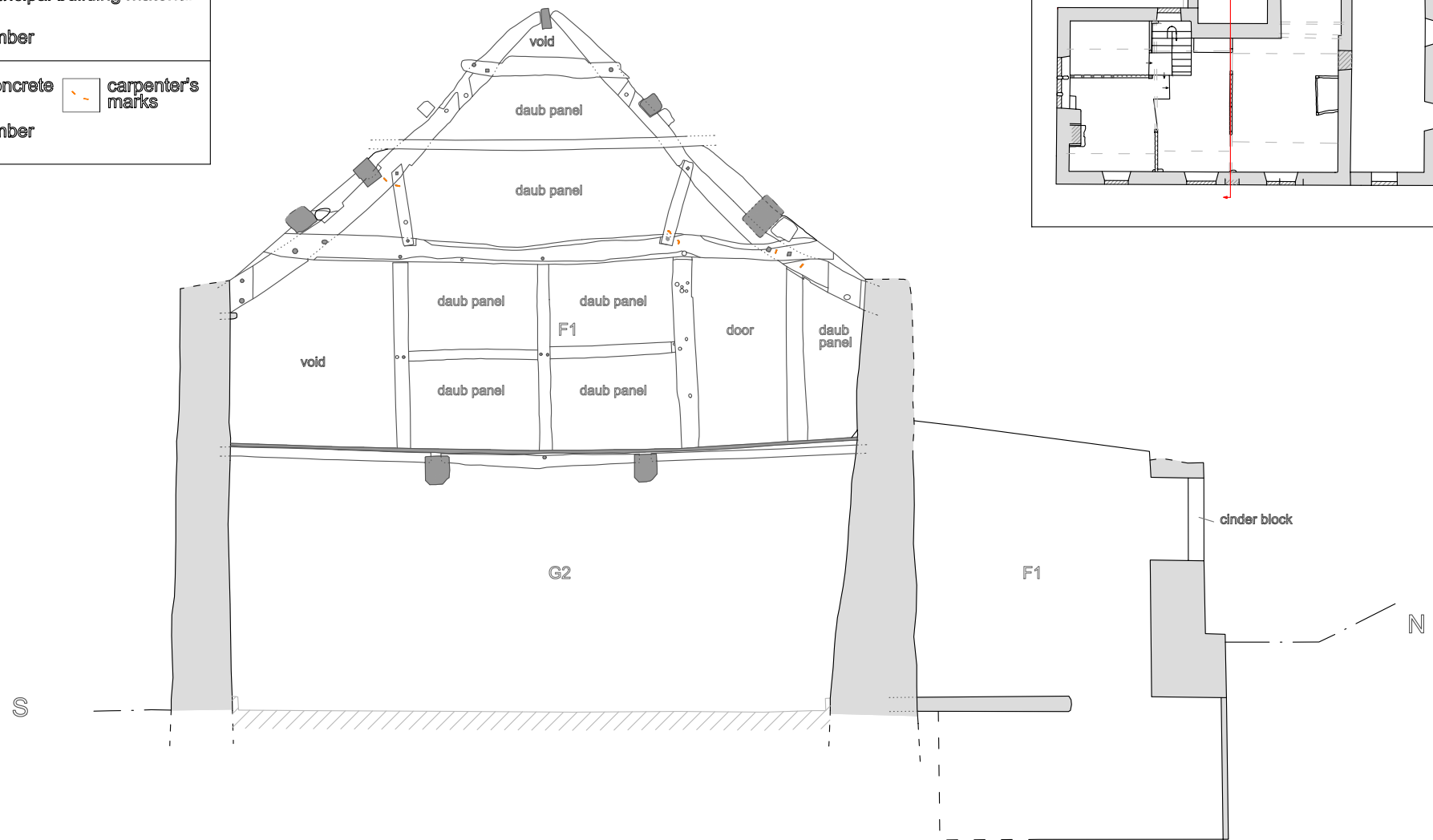
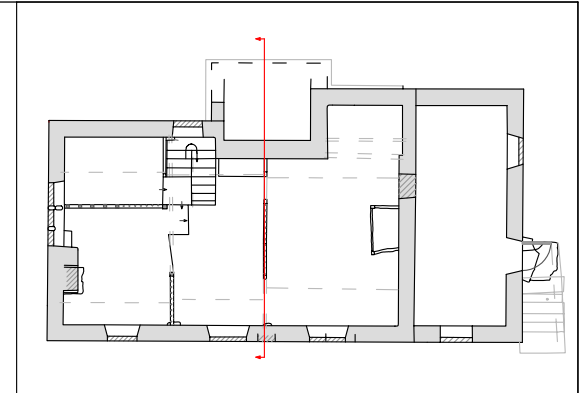


Figure 7: First floor plan

**Key**

(sectional)

-  principal building material
-  timber
-  concrete
-  timber
-  carpenter's marks



0 3  
metres  
Scale 1:50 @ A4



Figure 8: East-facing cross-section

**Key**

(sectional)

- principal building material
- timber
- concrete
- decoration
- chamfer
- timber
- chamfer

br = brick. pl = plaster. fe = iron. ss = stone.

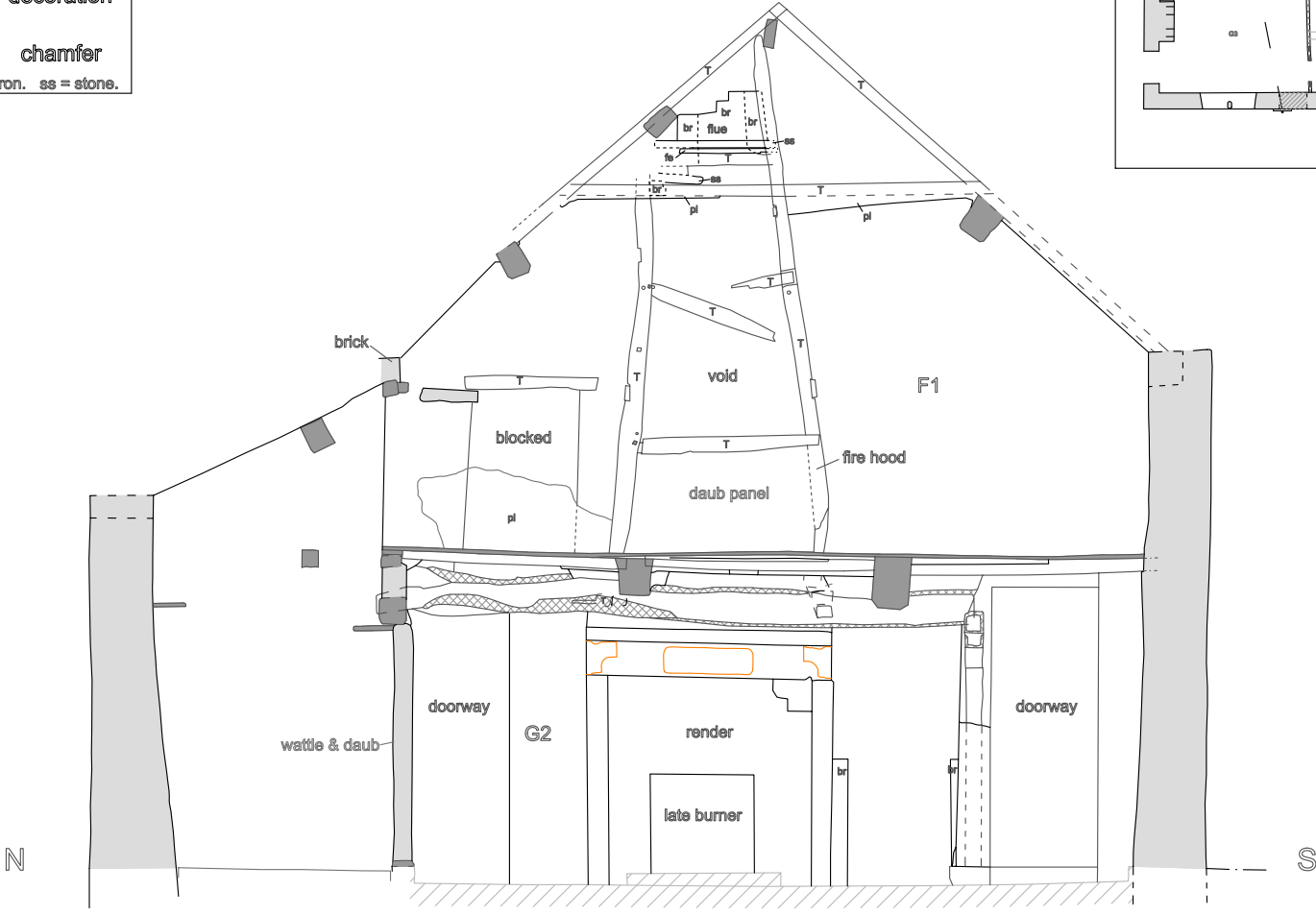
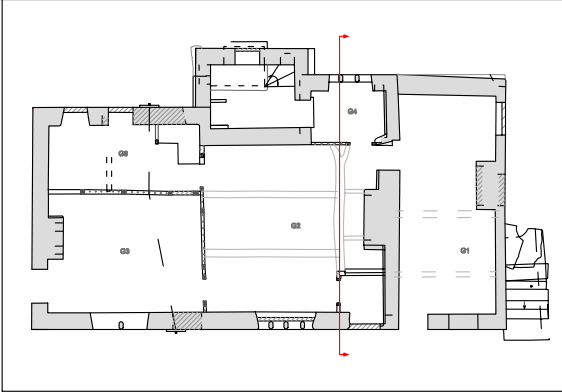
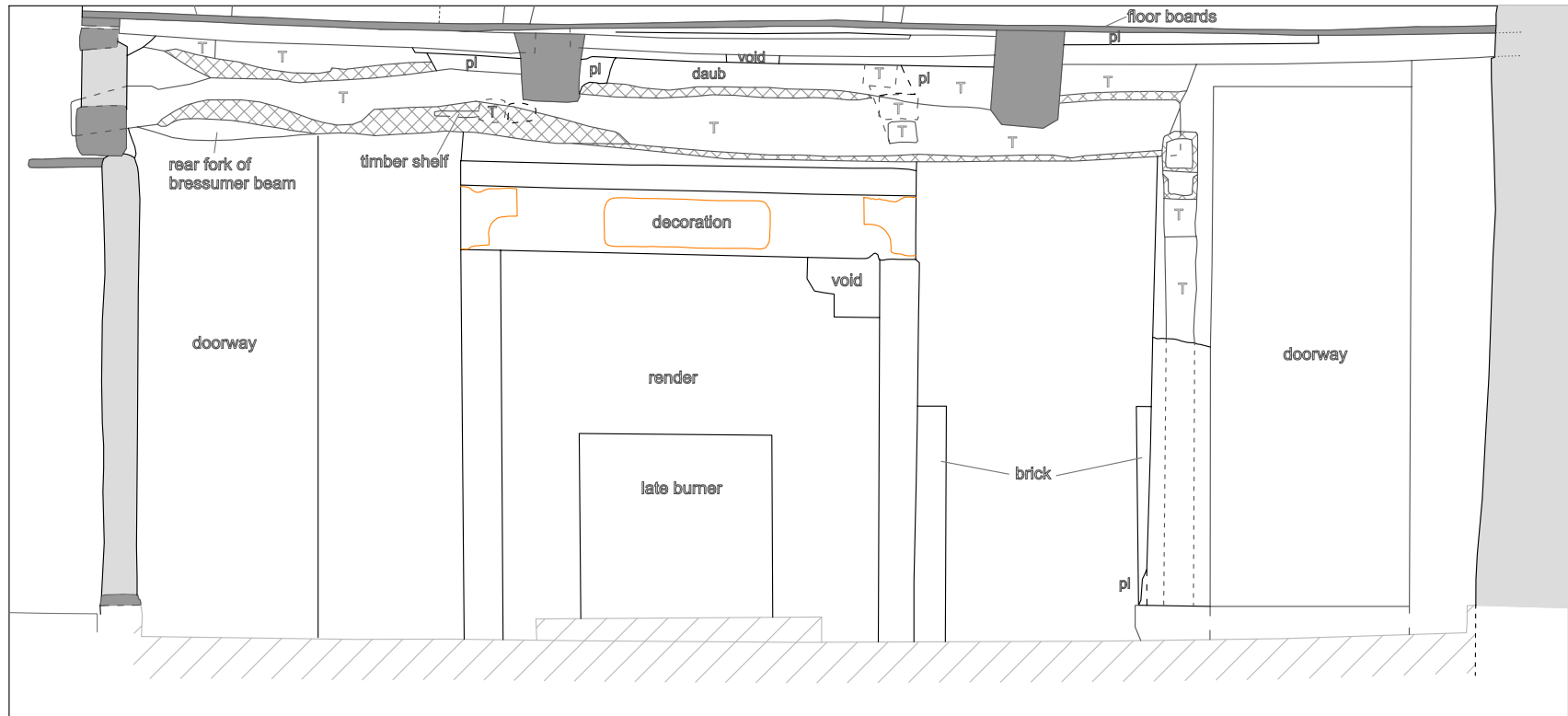


Figure 9: West-facing cross-section

**Key**

- sectional principal material
- sectional timber
- timber
- chamfer
- plaster
- concrete



0 1  
metres  
Scale 1:20 @ A3

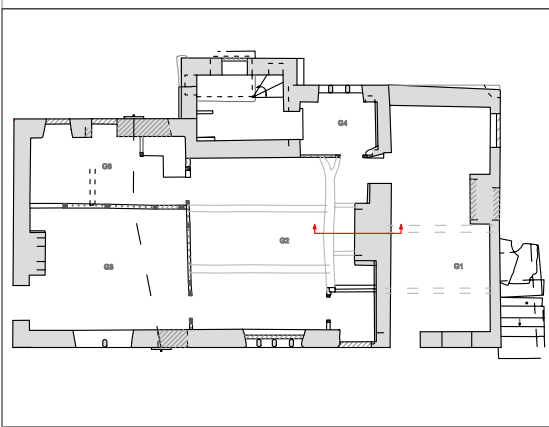
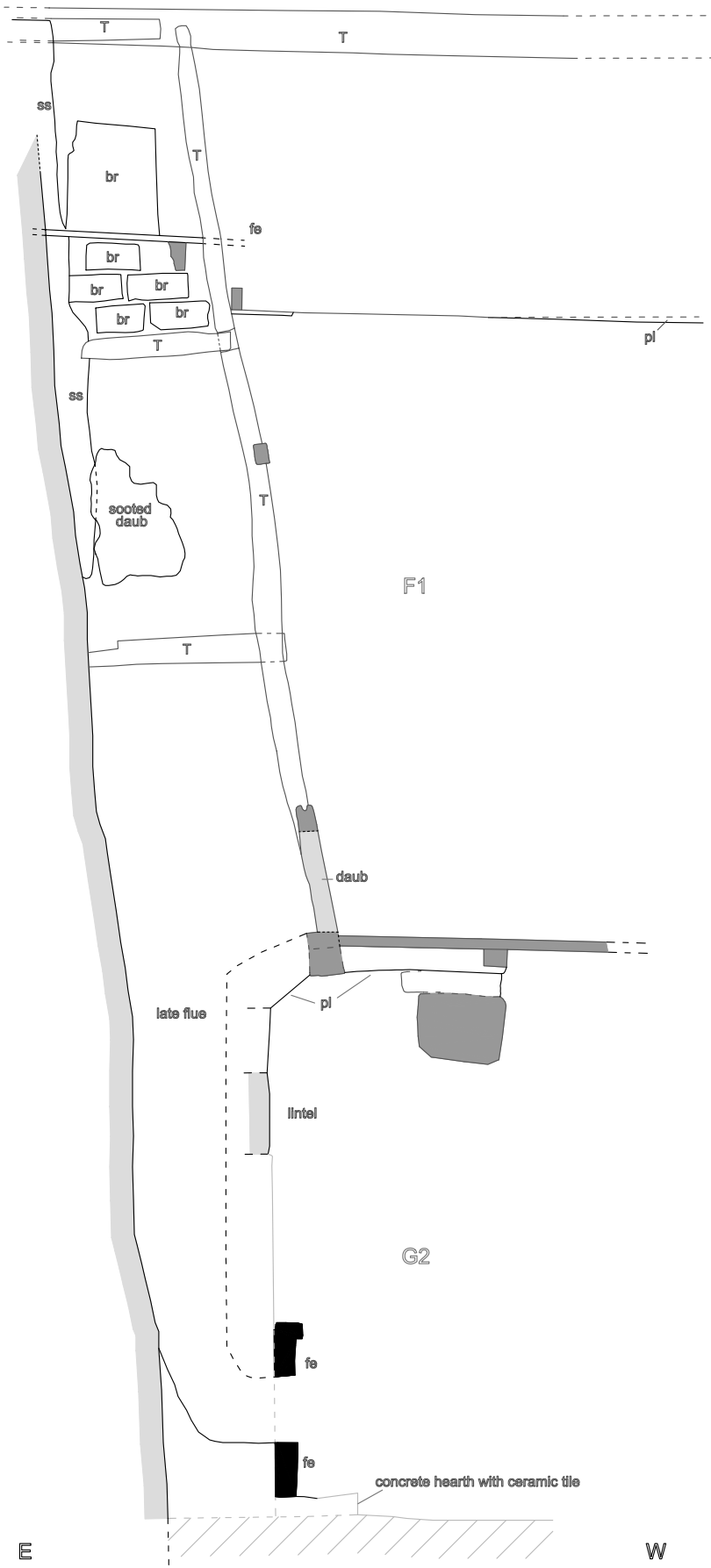


Figure 10: West-facing cross-section showing fireplace

**Key**

- principal building material
- sectional timber
- timber
- chamfer
- concrete

pl = plaster. br = brick. fe = iron.



0 3  
metres  
Scale 1:50 @ A3



Figure 11: North-facing cross-section through fireplace





Plate 1: Part of the Lostock estate plan of 1819 (ZAL/1193) showing Lower House in the center

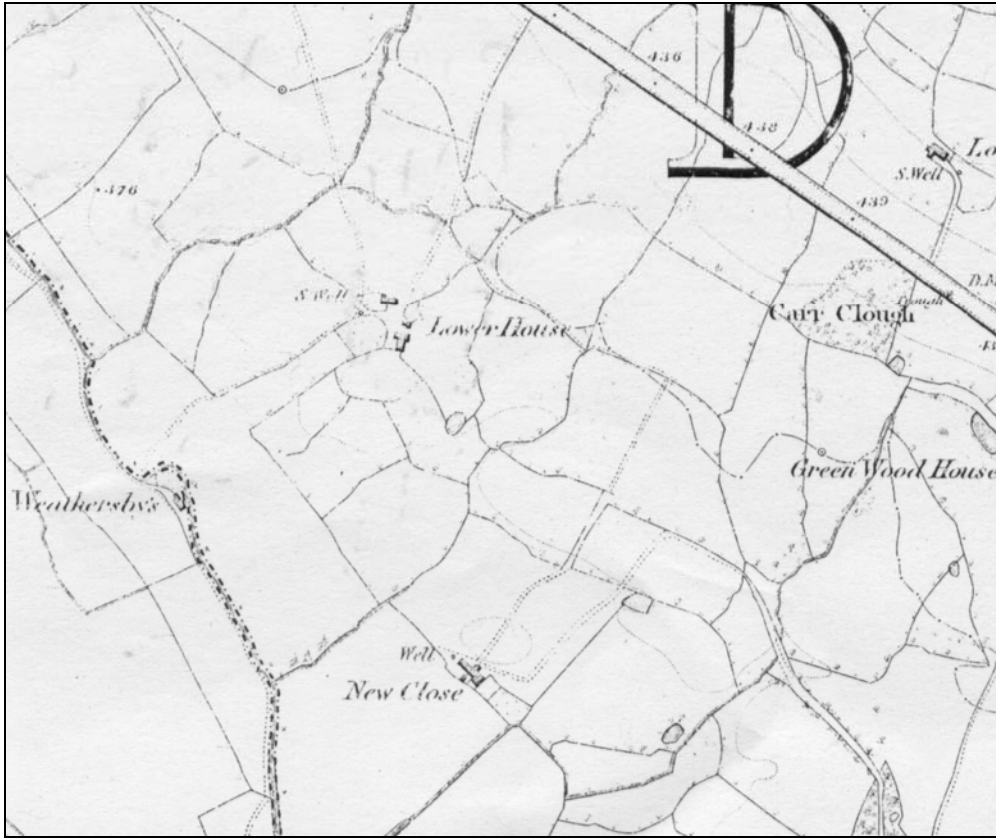


Plate 2: Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1849 showing the two main buildings at Lower House

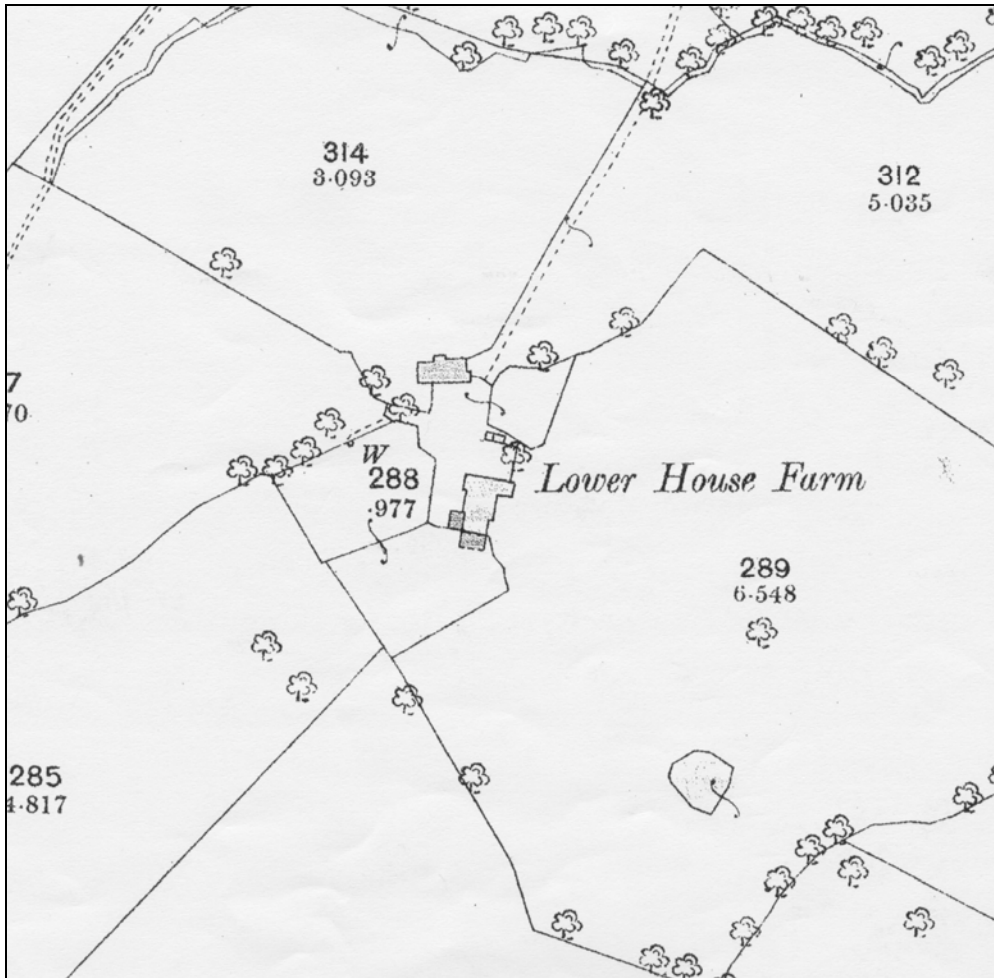


Plate 3: Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1894 showing the two buildings at Lower House Farm

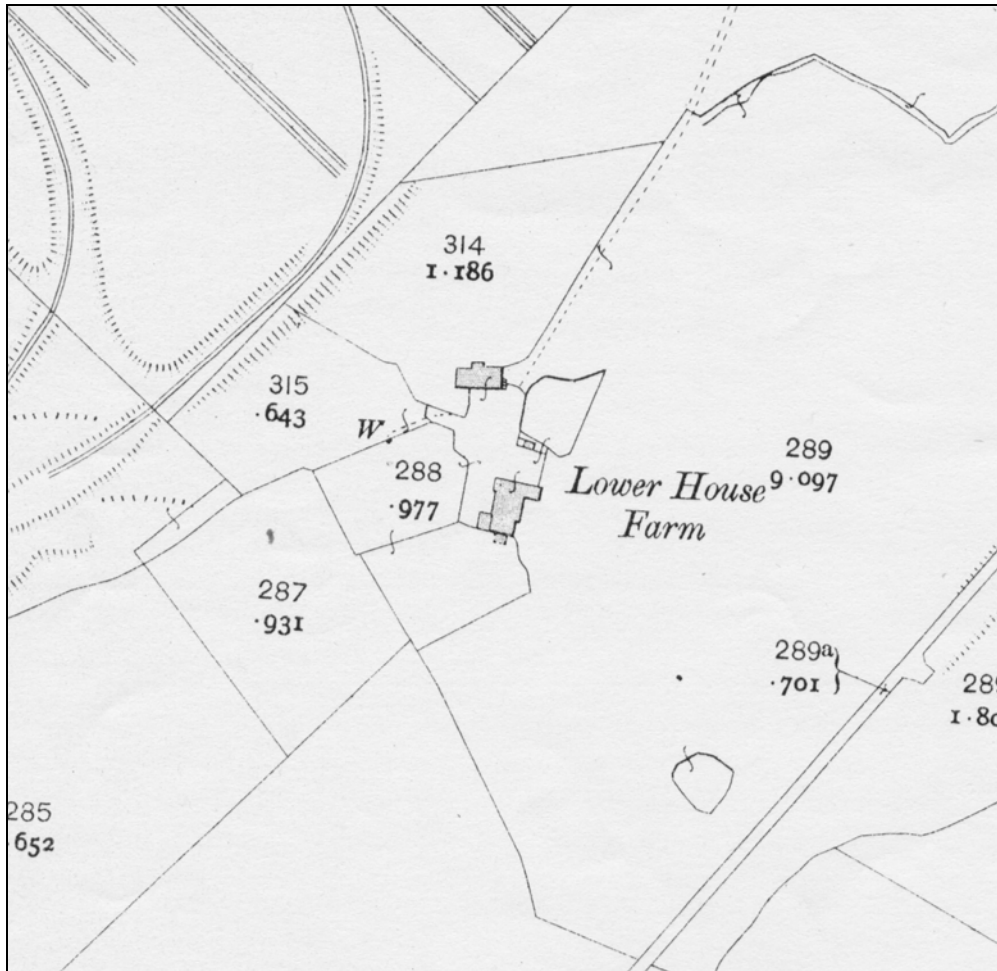


Plate 4 : Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1909 showing the two buildings at Lower House Farm

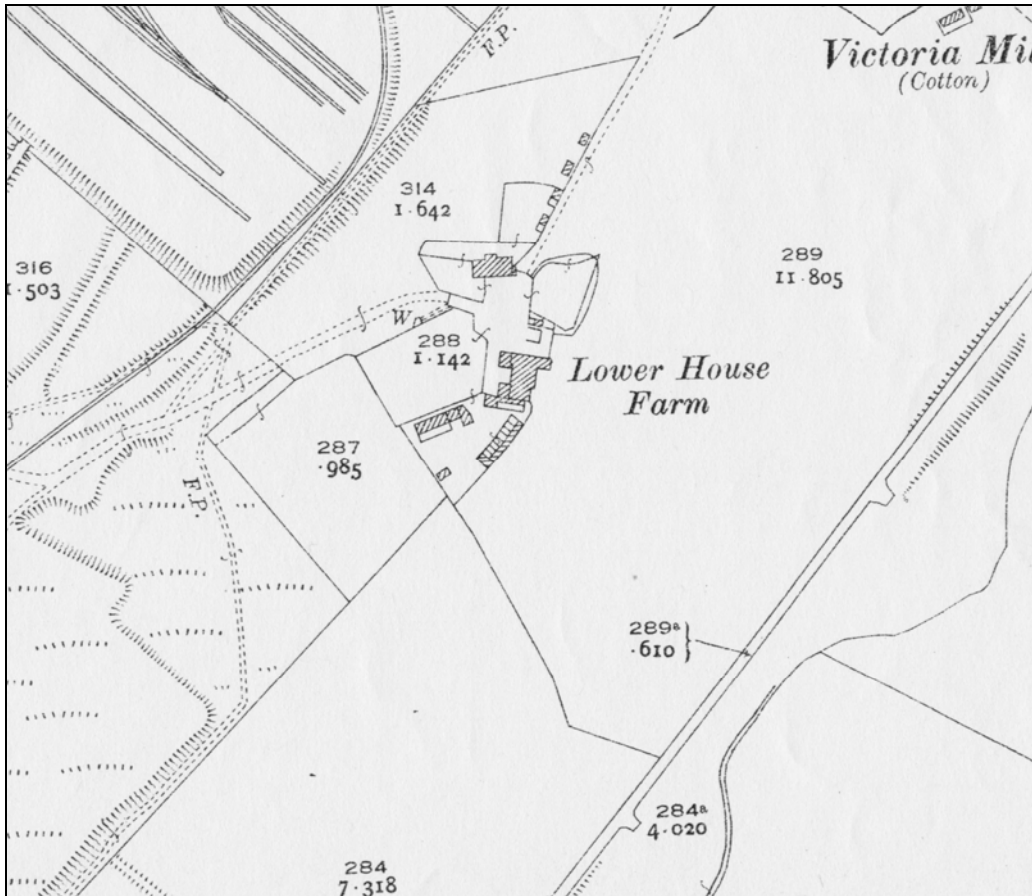


Plate 5: Part of the Ordnance Survey plan of 1939 showing Lower House Farm and the new outbuildings to the north and south





Plate 6: East end of the front (south) elevation



Plate 7: West end of the front (south) elevation





Plate 8: West gable



Plate 9: West end of north (rear) elevation





Plate 10: Detail of partial outshut in rear elevation



Plate 11: East gable





Plate 12: Empty socket holes in ceiling of ground floor Room 1



Plate 13: Fireplace in east elevation of ground floor Room 2





Plate 14: Forked north end of bressumer beam in ground floor Room 2



Plate 15: Timber-framed north wall of ground floor Room 3





Plate 16: Fireplace in west elevation of ground floor Room 3



Plate 17: General view of ground floor Room 5



Plate 18: Quoins revealed in ground floor Room 6





Plate 19: Stairs and alcove in ground floor Room 6



Plate 20: Alcoves in west elevation of ground floor Room 6

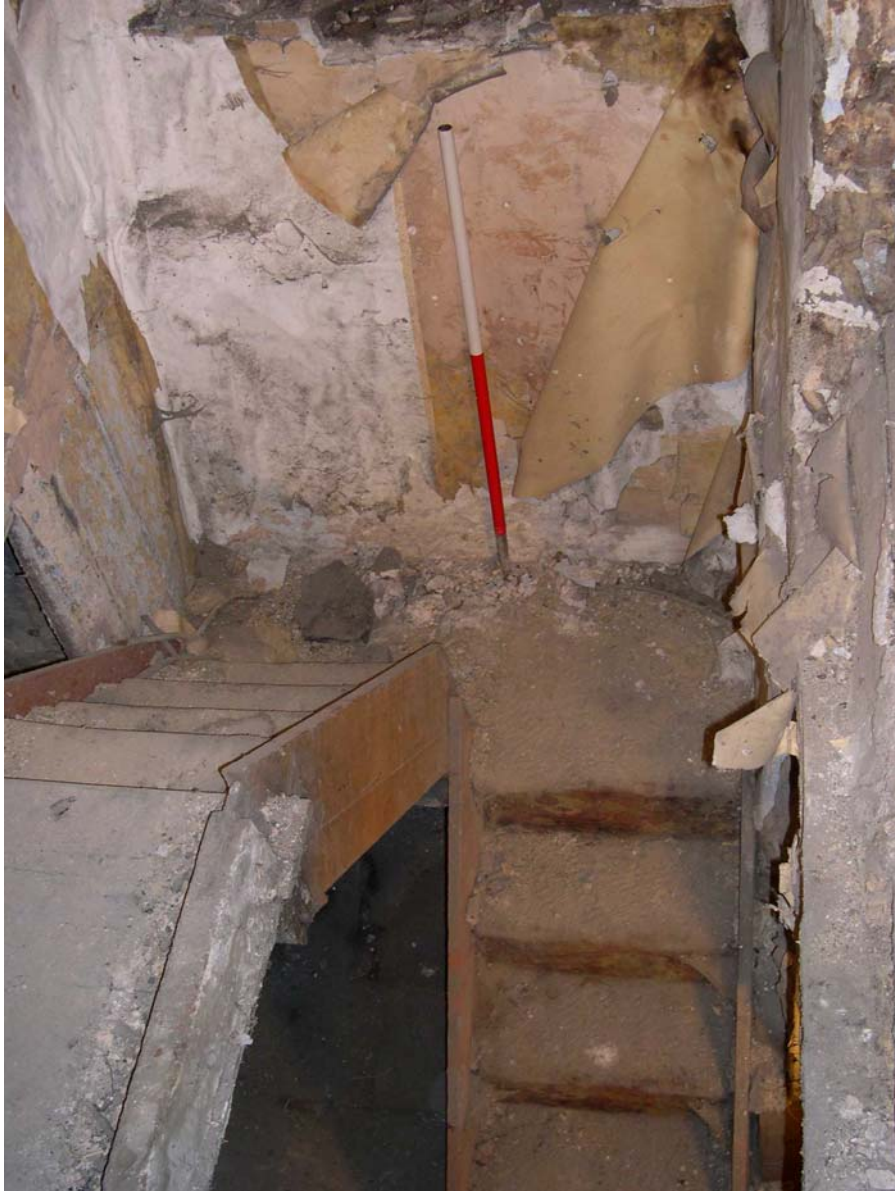


Plate 21: Present staircase in ground floor Room 4





Plate 22: West wall of first floor Room 1, south end



Plate 23: West wall of first floor Room 1, north end





Plate 24: South side of firehood in first floor Room 1



Plate 25: North side of firehood in first floor Room 1





Plate 26: Front of firehood in first floor Room 1



Plate 27: Chimney stack above firehood in roof space, supported by iron plates and sandstone pad





Plate 28: East wall of first floor Room 2



Plate 29: North end of west wall of first floor Room 2



Plate 30: Empty joist slot in west wall of first floor Room 2





Plate 31: Detail of peg holes and joints in east wall of first floor Room 2



Plate 32: Remains of fire damaged roof over first floor Room 3



Plate 33: Fireplace in west elevation of first floor Room 3





Plate 34: West elevation of first floor Room 4



Plate 35: Joints of timbers to roof in east wall of first floor Room 4



Plate 36: Possible scar showing the line of an earlier firehood in the east elevation of First Floor Room 1

## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT BRIEF

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## APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN

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**Oxford  
Archaeology  
North**

**August 2004**

**LOWER HOUSE FOLD, MIDDLEBROOK, HORWICH, BOLTON**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING INVESTIGATION  
PROJECT DESIGN**

***Proposals***

*The following project design is offered in response to a request by Orbit Developments for an archaeological building investigation in advance of conversion of Lower House Fold, Bolton.*

- 1.1 This project design has been compiled for Orbit Developments with reference to the brief issued by the Assistant County Archaeologist at Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit (GMAU) for an archaeological building investigation of Lower House Fold, Middlebrook, Bolton ( SD 6434 1032). Section 2 of this document states the objectives of the project, Section 3 deals with OA North's methodology. Section 4 addresses other pertinent issues including details of staff to be involved, and project costs are presented in Section 5.
- 1.2 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment and investigation of historic buildings of all periods and a range of types, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Building investigations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.
- 1.3 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, **registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

## **2 OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The objectives of the building investigation are to provide an outline analysis of the plan, form, function, age and development of the farmhouse, and to investigate the presence of buried archaeological remains on site.
- 2.1.2 To achieve the objective outlined above the following listed specific aims are proposed.
  - (i) A rapid desk-based assessment will precede a programme of fieldwork to place any findings that are made in context;
  - (ii) To provide a drawn and textual record of the buildings to RCHME Level III-type survey;
  - (iii) To produce a report and archive in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991).

## **3 METHOD STATEMENT**

### **3.1 RAPID DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1.1 The scope of the assessment will not extend beyond the provision of an historical background relating to the development area and the building on site.
- 3.1.2 ***Documentary and Cartographic Material:*** this work will comprise a rapid desk-based assessment of the existing resource, paying particular attention to the historic map resource. It will include an appraisal of the data in the SMR, appropriate sections of County histories, early maps (printed and manuscript),

and such primary documentation (tithes and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. All available published and unpublished documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The Bolton Local Studies Library will be consulted, as will the Conservation Officer for Bolton.

- 3.1.3 **Physical Environment:** a rapid desk-based compilation of geological (both solid and drift), pedological, topographical and palaeoenvironmental information will be undertaken in order to set the archaeological features in context. Any engineering and/or borehole data relating to the site will also be examined.

## 3.2 BUILDING INVESTIGATION

- 3.2.1 **Photographic Archive:** a photographic archive will be produced utilising a 35mm camera to produce colour slides and a high-resolution digital camera (4 megapixels). The archive will comprise general shots of the building (both internal and external) and its surroundings, and detailed coverage of architectural features, which illustrate both function and phasing. Detailed views of features of especial architectural interest, fixtures and fittings will also be taken. All photographs will include a photographic scale. A full photographic index will be produced and the position of photographs will be marked on the relevant floor plan/elevation.

- 3.2.2 **Site Drawings:** the following architect's drawings will be annotated for the building:

- (i) plans of both ground and first floor to be annotated to show form and location of any structural features of historic significance and recording the form and location of any significant structural details (1:50 scale);
- (ii) existing external elevations (1:50 scale);

**Additional drawings:** to be produced during the building investigation:

- (iii) one section through the building to include details of the principal timber-framed partition and roof truss (1:50 scale);
- (iv) a section of the inglenook fireplace comprising (a) a right angle section through the bressumer, fireplace, smokehood, and chimney flue (b) an internal elevation to show the fireplace, heck wall and baffle entry, and the smoke hood/chimney flue which rises through the first floor (1:20 scale).

- 3.2.3 The drawings will be used to illustrate the phasing and development of the buildings. Detail captured by the instrument survey/annotation will include such features as window and door openings, an indication of ground and roof level, and changes in building material.

- 3.2.4 **Additional drawings:** the proposed sections of the building will be surveyed by means of a reflectorless electronic distance measurer (REDM). The REDM is capable of measuring distances to a point of detail by reflection from the wall surface, and does not need a prism to be placed. The instrument to be used will be a Leica T1010 theodolite coupled to a Disto electronic distance meter (EDM). The disto emits a viable laser beam, which can be visually guided



around points of detail. The digital survey data will be captured within a portable computer running TheoLT software, which allows the survey to be directly inserted into AutoCAD software for the production of final drawings.

3.2.5 **Interpretation and Analysis:** a visual inspection of the building will be undertaken utilising the OA North buildings proforma sheets. An outline description will be maintained to RCHME Level III-type survey. This level of survey is fully analytical and will provide a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. It will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based. The visual inspection will utilise OA North building *pro forma*. Feature numbers will be allocated where appropriate to architectural elements to enhance the recording, and act as an aid for interpretation and presentation. Group numbers will be allocated to common features repeated throughout the building. A feature list will be appended to the report.

3.2.6 The written record will include:

- (i) An analysis of the building's plan, form, fabric, function, age and development sequence and of the evidence supporting this analysis;
- (ii) An account of the building's past and present use and of the uses of their parts, with the evidence for these interpretations;
- (iii) An account of the fixtures, fittings associated with the buildings, and their purpose;
- (iv) Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or processes associated with the building;
- (v) An analysis of the alterations to the farmhouse to determine the extent of modifications;
- (vi) Identify areas that are currently obscured or inaccessible which might hold key information to inform our understanding of the building's origin and development and where an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken during stripping out and demolition;
- (vii) From historical research and physical evidence, identify areas that have a potential below ground archaeological interest;
- (viii) A discussion of the structure in its local and wider context, comparing it with comparative buildings.
- (xi) A catalogue of archive items, including a list of photographs.

3.2.7 **Access and Attendances:** the client will be required to arrange access to the building.



### 3.3 REPORT/ARCHIVE

- 3.3.1 **Report:** a draft copy of the report will be submitted to GMAU and the Conservation Officer at Bolton Planning for comments. Two copies of the final report will be submitted to the client and one each to the following: Assistant County Archaeologist at GMAU, the Conservation officer at Bolton MBC and the Bolton Local Studies Library.
- 3.3.2 The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological/architectural features identified in the course of the project, with an assessment of the overall plan, form and function, together with appropriate illustrations, including detailed plans and sections indicating the locations of archaeological/architectural features. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived. Recommendations will be made for a watching brief during stripping out/demolition/refurbishment works as appropriate.
- 3.3.3 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section/elevation drawings, and plans. This report will be in the same basic format as this project design; a copy of the report can be provided on CD-ROM, if required.
- 3.3.4 Provision will be made for a summary report to be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork, if relevant results are obtained.
- 3.3.5 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.
- 3.3.6 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the SMR (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office, and a full copy of the record archive (microform or microfiche) together with the material archive (artefacts, ecofacts, and samples) with an appropriate museum. In this instance the archive will be submitted to the Bolton Local Studies Library. Wherever possible, OA North recommends the deposition of such material in a local museum approved by the Museums and Galleries Commission, and would

make appropriate arrangements with the designated museum at the outset of the project for the proper labelling, packaging, and accessioning of all material recovered.

#### **4 OTHER MATTERS**

- 4.1 **Monitoring:** monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the GMAUSMR Archaeologist, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.
- 4.2 **Time Table:** an outline timetable if presented below:
- 4.3 The desk-based assessment data collection is expected to take in the region of two days to complete. The building investigation will take approximately five days in the field.
- 4.4 A draft copy of the report will be submitted to the Assistant County Archaeologist at GMAUSMR and Wigan Planning Authority.
- 4.5 The client report will be completed within eight weeks following receipt of comments on the draft report.
- 4.6 **Staffing:** the project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 4.7 The desk-based assessment will be undertaken by **Daniel Elsworth MA** (OA North Project Supervisor). Daniel has a great deal of experience in documentary research, and in particular for the north of the country. Daniel is also very experienced in the interpretation and analysis of historic buildings. Chris Wild BSc (OA North project Officer) who is very experienced in the recording and interpretation of historic buildings throughout the North West will undertake the building investigation.

## 5 COSTING

The item below is a fixed price cost, inclusive of all management, overheads, and other disbursement costs (travel and expenses), to undertake the programme of work as defined in this project design; the third item is a fixed price day rate. Any other variations from this programme of work at the clients' direction will require recosting. All staff costs are inclusive of holiday entitlement, as well as NI and Superannuation.

Normal OA North working hours are between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, though adjustments hours maybe made to maximise daylight working time in winter and to meet travel requirements. It is not normal practice for OA North staff to be asked to work weekends or bank holidays and should the client require such time to be worked during the course of a project a contract variation to cover additional costs will be necessary.

### Notes:

1. Salaries and wages inclusive of NI, Superannuation and overheads
2. Total costs exclusive of VAT
3. All costs at 2004/2005 prices

### APPENDIX 3: LIST OF FEATURES RECOMMENDED FOR RETENTION

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Phase 1 ground floor apertures in southern elevation.	<b>G2/G3</b>	Diagnostic mouldings. In need of repair
Inglenook fireplace, incorporating heck wall, Heck post and bressumer beam.	<b>G2</b>	Well preserved group of original features
Timber-framed daub panelled firehood	<b>F1</b>	Rare survival. Preserved in current condition or with minor repairs
Ground floor timber-framed wattle and daub panelled cross frame	<b>G2/G3</b>	Well preserved wattle and daub panelling. Appears to fit with proposed development
Bridging joists and floor joists	<b>G2</b>	Well preserved. Group value with inglenook features. Those in <b>G3</b> may be too badly damaged for retention
Original fireplaces	<b>G3/F3</b>	Diagnostic original fabric. Could be retained behind partitions/wall finishes if not required in future usage plans
Keeping holes	<b>G4/G5</b>	Good preservation of early features. May be covered over if not required
Trusses (crucks, collars and lower purlins)	<b>F1-F3</b>	Diagnostic and re-used timbers. Poorly preserved above late ceiling level, at which point too badly damaged to be re-used
Timbers (general)	-	Many timbers show evidence of re-use, especially wall-frame member and the large bridging joist in <b>G1</b> . Where possible this practice should be continued, with their incorporation into the proposed structure

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## APPENDIX 4: LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

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Building Name: Lower House Farm

Address: Chorley New Road, Horwich, Bolton, Greater Manchester, BL6 7QJ

Date Listed: 24/11/1966

Listed Building Number: 210498

Grade: II

Description: Farmhouse. C17. Dressed stone with quoins, slate roof. 2 storeys, 4 bays, the 4<sup>th</sup> bay higher. Ground floor has single-chamfered-mullion windows with label moulds, the 1<sup>st</sup> has lost 2 mullions. 4<sup>th</sup> bay has C20 casement. 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows have casements, that to 4<sup>th</sup> bay is small paned. Entrance has large lintel and label mould. Right return has stone stair to 1<sup>st</sup> floor entrance. Gable-end and cross-axial stacks. Rear has outshut under cat-slide roof and 3-light window. Interior has chamfered beams, one with forked end, probably a bressumer.