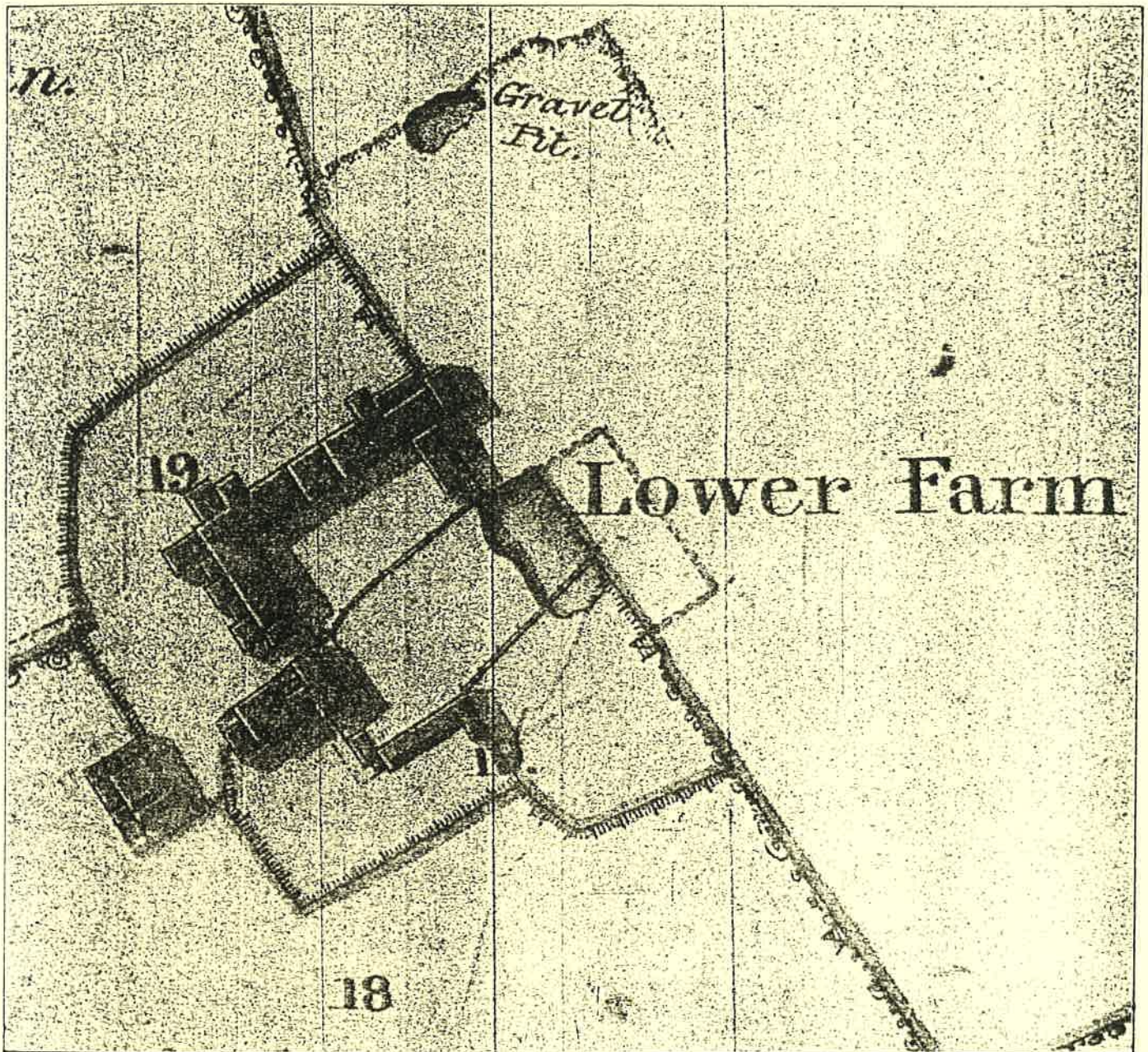




BARNs AT LOWER FARM, NUNEHAM COURTENAY, OXON.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD DURING CONVERSION



OUTBUILDINGS AT LOWER FARM, NUNEHAM COURTENAY, OXON.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD DURING CONVERSION

NMR DATA	
SITE NAME	LOWER FARM
ADDRESS	
TOWN	N/A
PARISH	NUNEHAM COURTENAY
COUNTY	OXON.
NGR	SP 5370 0064
LISTED STATUS	II
VISIT/SURVEY DATE	& OCT. 1996
OAU SITE CODE	NUCLFB.BS 96

BARNS AT LOWER FARM, NUNEHAM COURTENAY, OXON.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY DURING CONVERSION

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BARNs AT LOWER FARM, NUNEHAM COURTENAY, OXON.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY DURING CONVERSION

Summary

A photographic record was made of the group of Grade II listed agricultural buildings at Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay during their conversion to residential use. The range of buildings surveyed included three barns and a granary arranged in an L-shaped plan to the east of Lower Farmhouse. The group are of particular interest in the continuity of use of curved inner principals in their roof construction and includes examples from the 18th century through to the mid 19th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Malcolm Griffiths Renovations to undertake a programme of archaeological recording at Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay, Oxon. (SP 5370 0064) during the conversion of a series of Grade II Listed agricultural buildings to residential use. Although planning consent was originally granted in 1989, the present archaeological record was appended as a condition of consent renewal in 1994, in accordance with the provisions laid down in PPG15/16. The survey was undertaken as specified in a brief set by the Deputy County Archaeologist (Historic Buildings). Full procedural details for the recording work undertaken can be found in the initial *Specification for Building Investigation* (OAU, May 1996).

2 TOPOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The parish of Nuneham Courtenay lies on the east bank of the River Thames c.8km SSE of the centre of Oxford. Over half the area of the parish comprises enclosed parkland related to Nuneham Park. The present village of Nuneham Courtenay is a rare example of a 'transplanted' village and dates to around 1760 when Nuneham Park was created by the first Earl Harcourt (VCH: *Oxon.* V, 234-6).
- 2.2 The name 'Lower Field' occurs on a map of 1707 (*ibid.*, 235) and it would appear to represent one of four medieval open fields within the parish. The original Lower Field was subdivided into smaller units around 1760, contemporary with the formation of Nuneham Park, at which time the present Lower Farm was established.
- 2.3 Lower Farmhouse (Grade II listed) is located close to the parish boundary at the northern limit of the former 'Lower Field', c.1km south of Sandford-on-Thames. It is of mid 18th-century date, possibly incorporating fragments of an earlier building (in particular the rear, southern wing).
- 2.4 Davis' map of the County of Oxford (1797) depicts an L-shaped ?farmhouse with a single outbuilding immediately adjacent to the east. It is not immediately apparent how these buildings relate to the extant structures, but the style of mapping does not necessarily indicate the precise location of structures.
- 2.5 The complex of agricultural buildings which form the subject of the present study comprises

three barns and granary forming an L-shaped plan, and is located to the east of Manor Farmhouse. All are classified Grade II in the DoE List of Buildings of Architectural or Historical Interest: South Oxon 101:1/53 (see appendix B). The buildings are described in more detail below (§.4).

3 RECORDING STRATEGY

- 3.1 The site was visited on two occasions during the course of work. A rapid visual appraisal of the barn buildings was made and was supplemented by a photographic survey of general views and specific constructional details (see Appendix C).

4 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 *The principal barns consist of an L-shaped range of timber, brick and stone buildings, with clay tiled roofs. For the purposes of this survey they have been named A-D from north to south.*

- 4.2 *Barn A* (4 bays; overall dimensions: 17m E/W x 7m N/S) *(see plates 1 - 6)*

- 4.2.1 At the north end, nearest the farmhouse, is an L-shaped barn of which the north range (A) and the east return (B) appear to be contemporary. The walling is of timber frame and weatherboarding between stone piers with brick quoins, all on a stone plinth; the walls of the north and east porches are of brick. The timber is mostly of elm, with many waney edges; the framing is of plain studs rising to the wallplate, with irregular downward bracing.

- 4.2.2 The roof of four bays, half-hipped to east and west, and is carried on large elm tiebeams resting on single wallplates and has two purlins supported by curved inner principals. (These are secondary rafters between the tiebeam and collar which are curved to clasp the lower purlin against the outer rafter; the upper purlin is clasped against the rafter by the notched collar). The tie beams coincide with the stone and brick piers, but there is residual timber framing in the form of wall posts below the ties that are braced to the tiebeams. The purlins are not scarfed together, but housed over the collars and butted against each other; on the upper face a substantial strap of (blacksmith's) iron has been nailed to join the purlin ends.

- 4.2.3 The braces below the ties are sawn planks, and the curved inner principals are of sawn timber, and of regular form (notably long and straight, and only turning at the lower end); by contrast the purlins are squared and chamfered, and the tiebeams only roughly squared, and waney. On the tiebeams west of the central area are the initials *AW*; other carpenter's marks are chiselled numbers on the trusses, running I, II, III from west to east.

- 4.2.4 In the west gable there is a queen post and interrupted collar. Above the door of the north porch are holes for a dovecote, though little remains of any other structure associated with this. The porch is opposite a door in the rear wall and was thus a through way for carts (the adjacent trusses are faced towards the centre)

4.3 *Barn B* (5 bays; overall dimensions: 20m N/S x 7m E/W)

4.3.1 This is of similar construction to A, and presumably contemporary with it, since the junction of the two barns was not a wall, but a single timber post (beneath the end of the tiebeam of the first truss); the barn runs from the north gable wall to a stone wall at its south end. The roof is of five bays, the central bay containing the porch and a door in the rear wall. The roof is the same as that of Barn A (it has a ridge plank at the apex of the rafters, a feature not visible in Barn A at the time of inspection).

4.4 *Granary C* (3 bays; overall dimensions: 8.5m N/S x 7m E/W)

4.4.1 The centre of the east range of barns is taken up with a brick granary that is clearly later than the buildings on each side of it, and probably contemporary with the mid-Victorian brick wall on the west side. However, it is built on the base of an earlier building: the west wall is built on a low stone plinth; an earlier south wall can be seen inside Barn D; while the east wall is of brick above a stone base that is continuous with the walling of Barn B and has brick quoins next a former opening. The west wall is of yellow and red brick, with doors and windows having segmental curved heads. (For the south wall see §4.5.2 below.)

4.4.2 The granary was on the first floor above a stout floor of elm (?and softwood), divided by principal and secondary joists into nine divisions. The stair opening is modern, and the granary was originally reached by the door in the west wall. There are two roof trusses, having curved inner principals, all of neatly finished elm, and with red pencil marks rather than punched carpenter's marks. The scarfs to wall plates and purlins are simple lapped joints, and the purlins are small and square. The roof is thus likely to be later than that of Barns A-B, and continues the traditional pattern but in a more ordered Victorian manner.

4.5 *Barn D* (5 bays; overall dimensions: 21m N/S x 7m E/W)

4.5.1 At the south end of the range is a barn that is older than the others. It is timber framed on a stone base, with weatherboarded walls, and has five bays, with a central porch on the east side opposite an opening in the west wall. Some lean-to outshots had been removed at the time of survey. The barn is mostly built of elm, though there is oak amongst the numerous items of reused timber forming the wall studs. The walling is of straight studding between the sill beam and wallplate, with straight downward bracing. The posts have square-cut jowls at their heads next the tiebeams (suggestive of a late date), and thin arch braces below the tiebeams, which are themselves of large waney timbers. The roof has two purlins carried by curved inner principals, which are of naturally curved elm timber. The purlins have bladed scarfs with two edge pegs, and there is a ridge plank nails inside the rafter apex.

4.5.2 The south wall has later timber framing, but the north wall has a queenpost and interrupted tiebeam construction, and remnants of weatherboarding outside the profile of the stone gable of the precursor of Granary C; this was of stone with a large opening surrounded by brick quoins (similar in character to Barns A & B, but not necessarily preceding the construction of Barn D).

4.5.3 There are a series of carpenter's numbers on the ties and rafters, of interest in being different on each side of the building:

II	CC	IIV	III	(East)
III	CCC	IV	II	(West)

4.5.4 This barn is hard to date with certainty, but is possibly as old as the mid 18th-century, from when the earliest curved inner principal roofs are known.

5 Discussion

5.1 *Phasing*

5.1.1 The earliest of the extant buildings at Lower Farm, dating to the mid 18th century, would appear to be the timber framed barn (D) at the south of the east range. However, evidence in the south wall of the granary (C), visible from within barn D suggests an earlier structure on the site of, and predating, the extant granary. This evidence takes the form of a former stone gable wall, of shallower pitch than the extant building, with a central window with brick reveals. The presence of this opening in the gable wall implies that the structure related to this wall predated the extant barn D.

5.1.2 At a later date, probably in the late 18th century an L-plan range (barns A and B) was added to the north of Barn D.

5.1.3 The addition of the present granary (C) in the early 19th century saw the continued utilisation of construction techniques common to the pre-existing barns, with the notable use of curved inner principals. At this point the pitch of the granary roof was altered to correlate with the buildings to north and south, and the south wall of the granary, visible within barn D was raised in brick and the former opening blocked.

5.2 *Date and context*

5.2.1 The dating proposed above is on stylistic grounds and thus necessarily general in terms. An historical context for the construction of the barn is the enclosure and reorganisation of landuse around the landscaped park in the 1760s. Unless Barn D was a pre-existing field barn, it is most likely to date from then. The later barns A and B are shown on the tithe map of 1838 (including a building on the site of the granary) and must have been built by then.

5.3 *Roof type*

5.3.1 These barns are of some interest for their roof construction, having curved inner principals (i.e. secondary rafters or braces) that carry the purlin in the mid-height between the tiebeam and collar. These cleared space from the centre of the roof (more so than their precursors, the interrupted collar truss seen in the gable end trusses). A preliminary impression gained by asking those with knowledge of vernacular buildings in the region is that these roofs are not uncommon in the 18th and 19th centuries, but that they have a distinct and possibly quite localised distribution. This is reported as follows:

Oxon: Cherwell	<i>not reported</i>
Oxon: West	<i>not reported</i>
Oxon: Vale of White Horse	<i>sporadic</i>
South Oxon	<i>common</i>
Bucks: Chilterns	<i>common</i>
Bucks: Vale of Aylesbury	<i>common</i>

5.3.2 In this instance it is of especial interest that the same roof type was used in its 18th-century vernacular form (Barn D), repeated in the early 19th century in a slightly more regular form (Barns A & B) and then used again in almost a different idiom later in the century (Granary C) with well prepared timbers.

JT Munby & R Tyler
 Oxford Archaeological Unit
 November 1996

[R@R: C:\WS\RIC\BLDGS\NUCLFB.REP]

Appendix A Sources Consulted

Archival Sources

- Centre for Oxfordshire Studies
- Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record

Documentary Sources

- Victoria County History: Oxon. vol. V: Bullingdon Hundred (1957)

Cartographic Sources

- Sketch map of Nuneham Courtenay in 1707 (*VCH; Oxon, V*)
- Davis' Survey of the County of Oxfordshire (1796)
- Tithe Map of 1838 (PRO copy on microfilm in COS)
- Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1:2500 map of 1876 (Oxfordshire sheet: XXXIX.16)
- Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 1:2500 map of 1899 (Oxfordshire sheet: XXXIX.16)
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 1913 edition (Oxfordshire sheet: XXXIX.16)
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 1971 edition

Appendix B
Copies of DoE List Entries

NUNEHAM COURTENAY

SP50SW
1/53
18/07/63

Lower Farmhouse, barn range
approx. 20m to E
(Formerly listed as Barns at
Lower Farm)

GV

II

Barn, stable and cowhouse. Mid C18. Limestone rubble with brick dressings and weatherboarded timber framing; old plain tile roof. L-shaped plan. L-plan barn is in rubble with the upper parts of the walls rising as broad piers between weatherboarded panels. Both ranges (4 bays and 5 bays) have double doors facing the internal angle and opposed doors in later brick porches. 5-bay range continues as a 2-bay stable with loft, in C19 brick, and then as a 5-bay weatherboarded cowhouse with lean-to C19 and C20 feeding passages and a further weatherboarded porch on the rear. Roofs are half-hipped. Interiors: barn and cowhouse have clasped-purlin roofs with curved inner principals. (VCH: Oxfordshire, Vol V, p.234)

Appendix C
Photographic Register

Site Name: Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay **Grid Ref:** SP 5370 0064
Film No: 1 **Film Type:** Black and White.

<u>Neg No.</u>	<u>View</u>	<u>Description</u>
1A	---	----- void
2A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, exterior
3A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, exterior
4A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, exterior
5A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> west elevation, south end, exterior
6A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> west elevation, south end, exterior
7A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> west elevation, north end, exterior
8A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> west elevation, north end, exterior
9A	> E	<i>Barn D/Granary C:</i> west elevation, exterior
10A	> E	<i>Barn D/Granary C:</i> west elevation, exterior
11A	> E	<i>Barn B/Granary C:</i> west elevation, exterior
12A	> E	<i>Barn B/Granary C:</i> west elevation, exterior
13A	> NE	<i>Barn A/Barn B:</i> south elevation, exterior
14A	> NE	<i>Barn A/Barn B:</i> south elevation, exterior
15A	> NE	<i>Barn A/Barn B:</i> south elevation, exterior
16A	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> south elevation, exterior
17A	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> south elevation, exterior
18A	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> south elevation, exterior
19A	> S	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, interior
20A	> S	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, interior
21A	> S	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, interior
22A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> bays 4/5 (E), interior elevation
23A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> bays 4/5 (E), interior elevation
24A	> W	<i>Barn D:</i> bays 4/5 (W), interior elevation
25A	> W	<i>Barn D:</i> bays 4/5 (W), interior elevation
26A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> interior, looking north
27A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> interior, looking north
28A	> NW	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 2 (W): detail of tie/post/brace
29A	> NW	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 2 (W): detail of tie/post/brace
30A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 2 (E): detail of tie/post/brace
31A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> E porch, interior
32A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> E porch, interior
33A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> E porch, interior
34A	> E	<i>Barn D:</i> E porch, interior
35A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, exterior
36A	> N	<i>Barn D:</i> south elevation, exterior

Photographic Register

Site: Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay

Grid Ref: SP 5370 0064

Film No: 2

Film Type: Black and white.

<u>Neg No</u>	<u>View</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	> N	<i>Barn B:</i> north elevation, interior
2	> N	<i>Barn B:</i> north elevation, interior
3	> NE	<i>Barn B:</i> truss 1 ((E): detail of tie/brace
4	> NE	<i>Barn B:</i> truss 1 ((E): detail of tie/brace
5	> W	<i>Barn A:</i> west wall, interior; detail of timber frame panel
6	> W	<i>Barn A:</i> west wall, interior; detail of timber frame panel
7	> W	<i>Barn A:</i> west wall, interior
8	> W	<i>Barn A:</i> west wall, interior
9	> SW	<i>Barn A:</i> bays 1/2 (S), interior void
10		
11	> SW	<i>Barn A:</i> bays 1/2 (S), interior
12	> NW	<i>Barn A:</i> bays 1/2 (N), interior
13	> W	<i>Barn A:</i> west wall, interior
14	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> north porch, dovecote over
15	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> north porch, dovecote over
16	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> north porch, dovecote over
17	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> porch dovecote (underexposed)
18	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> porch dovecote (underexposed)
19	> S	<i>Barn A:</i> bay 4, exterior elevation
20	> S	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation, exterior
21	> S	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation, exterior
22	> S	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation (E), exterior
23	> S	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation (E), exterior
24	> SW	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation (W), exterior
25	> SW	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation (W), exterior
26	> SW	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation (W), exterior
27	> SW	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> north elevation (W), exterior
28	> S	<i>Barn A/Barn B:</i> north elevation (general view)
29	> S	<i>Barn A/Barn B:</i> north elevation (general view)
30	> SE	<i>Barn A:</i> north elevation exterior with lean-to
31	> SE	<i>Barn A:</i> north elevation exterior with lean-to
32	> SE	<i>Barn A:</i> north elevation exterior with lean-to
33	> SE	<i>Barn A:</i> north elevation exterior with lean-to
34	> E	<i>Barn A:</i> north elevation exterior with lean-to
35	---	----- void
36	> N	<i>Barn A:</i> south elevation (W), exterior

Photographic Register

Site: Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay

Grid Ref: SP 5370 0064

Film No: 3

Film Type: Black and white.

<u>Neg No</u>	<u>View</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	---	void
2	>	<i>Barn A:</i> west wall, interior
3	>	<i>Barn A:</i> truss 3 (north); graffiti (<i>AW</i>)
4	>	<i>Barn A:</i> truss 3 (south)
5	>	<i>Barn A:</i> truss 3 (south)
6	>	<i>Barn A:</i> truss 4 (south)
7	>	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 5 (east)
8	>	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 5 (west); detail of purlin
9	>	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 3 (west)
10	>	<i>Barn D:</i> north wall, interior
11	>	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 2 (west)
12	>	<i>Barn D:</i> north wall, interior
13	>	<i>Barn D:</i> truss 3 (west)
14	>	<i>Barn D:</i> east porch
15	>	<i>Granary C/Barn B:</i> general view from south-east
16	>	<i>Barn B:</i> detail of curved inner principal/purlin
17	>	<i>Barn B:</i> truss 3 (east)
18	>	<i>Barn B:</i> detail of curved inner principal/purlin
19	>	<i>Barn B:</i> truss 3 (west)
20	>	underexposed
21	>	underexposed
22	>	underexposed
23	>	<i>Barn D/Granary C:</i> joint in footings
24	>	<i>Barn B/Barn A:</i> keying in of stonework
25	>	<i>Barn B/Granary C:</i> east wall, exterior
26	>	
27	>	underexposed
28	>	undreexposed
29	>	<i>Barn A:</i> south elevation
30	>	<i>Barn B/Granary C:</i> west elevation
31	>	<i>Granary C/Barn D:</i> east elevation
32	>	<i>Barn D:</i> east elevation
33	>	<i>Barn complex:</i> general view from south
34	>	<i>Granary C/Barn D:</i> east elevation
35	>	<i>Barn D:</i> east elevation
36	>	

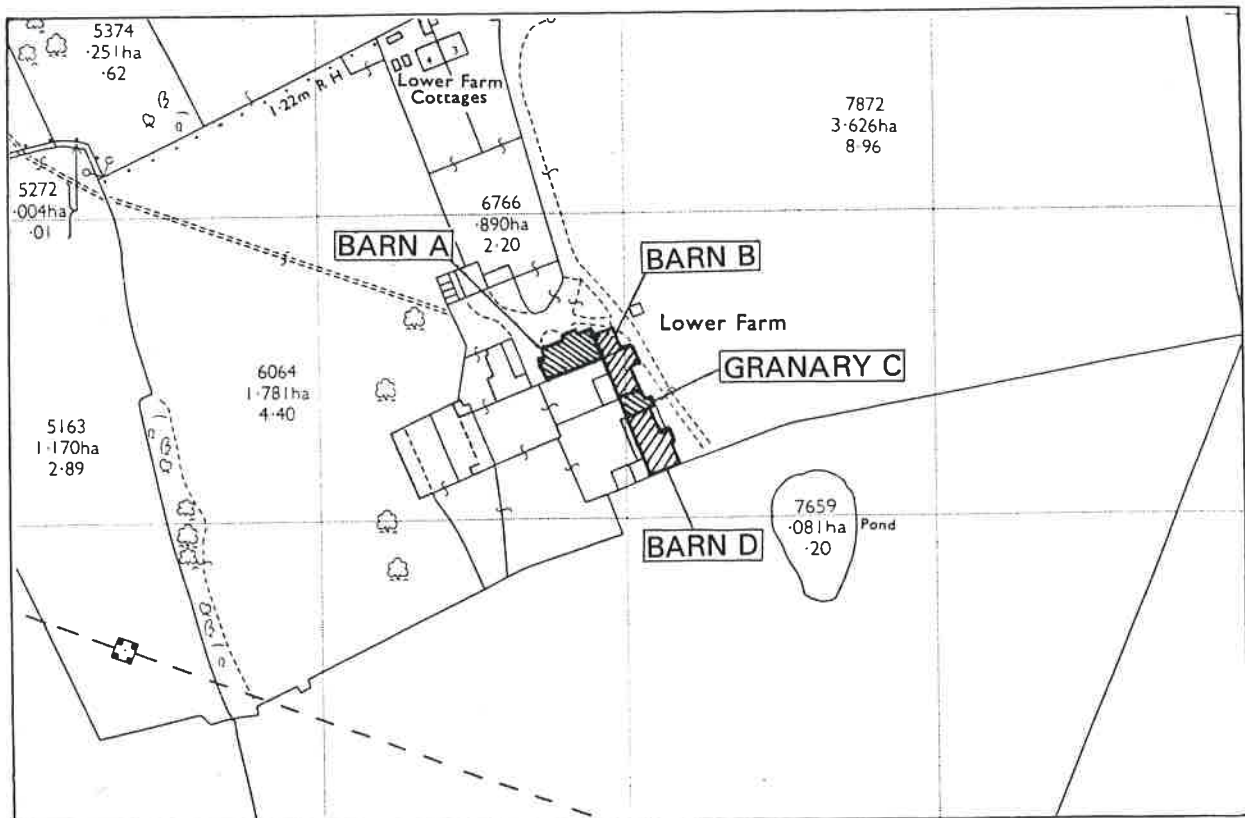
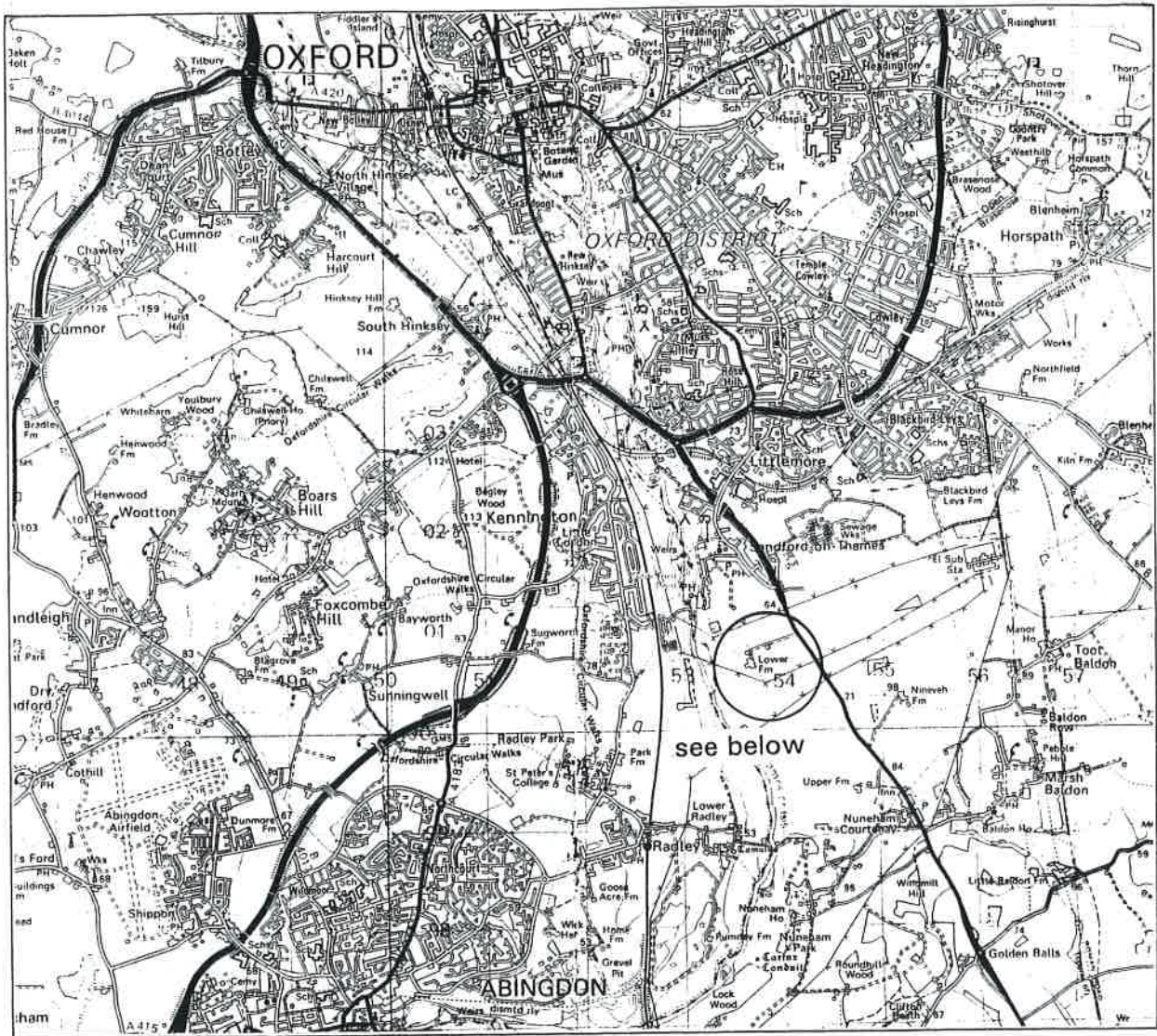
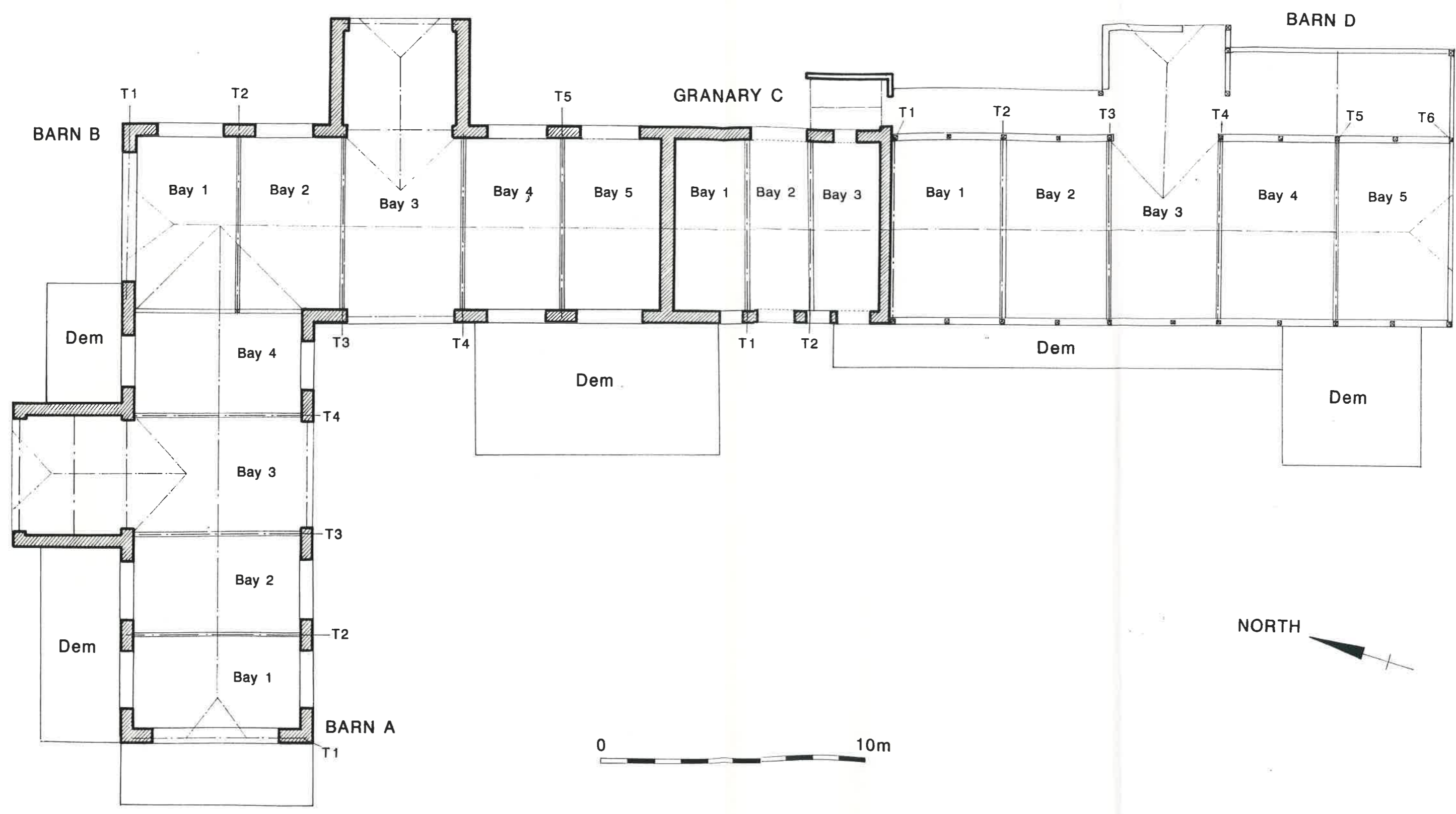


Figure 1: Site location and layout



Dem=demolished at time of survey

Figure 2: Key plan for plates



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