

Thomas Sands

English Farm Nuffield Oxfordshire

Historic Building Assessment



Oxford Archaeological Unit
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CONTENTS

Summary

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 BACKGROUND**
 - 2.1 Site description
 - 2.2 Historical background
 - 2.3 Methodology
- 3 THE HOUSE**
 - 3.1 Summary description and analysis
 - 3.2 Full description
- 4 THE FARM BUILDINGS**
 - 4.1 Building 2
 - 4.2 Area 3
 - 4.3 Building 4
 - 4.4 Building 5
 - 4.5 Area 6
 - 4.6 Building 7
 - 4.7 Building 8
 - 4.8 Building 9
 - 4.9 Building 10
 - 4.10 Building 11
 - 4.11 Building 12
 - 4.12 Building 13
 - 4.13 Building 14
- 5 CONCLUSION**

Bibliography

English Farm, Nuffield, Oxfordshire
Historic Building Assessment

LIST OF FIGURES AND APPENDICES

Appendix A Listed building descriptions

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site plan
Figure 3	1847 Tithe map
Figure 4	1 st edition 25" Ordnance Survey map (1877)
Figure 5	1913 edition 25" Ordnance Survey map
Figure 6	Nuneham Murren parish (from 1 st edition 6" Ordnance Survey map)
Figure 7	Basement plan of house
Figure 8	Ground floor of house
Figure 9	First floor of house
Figure 10	Second floor of house
Figure 11	House elevations

English Farm, Nuffield, Oxfordshire Historic Building Assessment

Summary

English Farm in Nuffield, south Oxfordshire, is a large well-preserved farmstead, largely of mid 18th-century date, whose principal interest lies in the group value of its buildings rather than the intrinsic significance of each individual structure. The Georgian house has undergone a number of alterations but its outline and basic dimensions appear to be unchanged from its original construction. Its external shell contains several types of construction and other inconsistencies which give it character and interest. Internally it retains good period joinery, particularly the large staircase, and a Purbeck Marble kitchen floor. The farm buildings are good examples of the local vernacular being largely constructed of flint with brick dressings. The current assessment is in advance of a planning application for the redevelopment of the farmstead which would include the refurbishment of the house and some of the farm buildings, the conversion of other farm buildings and the construction of several new structures.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) has been commissioned by Thomas Sands (Chartered Surveyors) to undertake an historic building assessment of a complex of buildings at English Farm in Nuffield, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU677 861). The work is in advance of a planning application and listed building consent for the renovation of some of the buildings and the conversion of others. This report aims to provide an indication of the age, development and significance of each building within the proposed redevelopment and particularly of the farmhouse. It is based on several site visits made in November 2000 and on a limited programme of documentary research.
- 1.1.2 The farmhouse and each of the principal farm buildings (Buildings 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) are listed Grade II. The one exception is Building 4 (of later 19th-century date) to the north of the farmhouse which is not listed.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site description

- 2.1.1 English Farm consists of a large collection of buildings arranged around two sides of a long, linear yard. The house is at the northern end of this yard and most of the main agricultural buildings, including the main barn, cartshed, stables and animal shelter are aligned along the east side. The second barn is at the south-west corner of the yard and the main approach to the house, from English Lane, forms the western side of the yard. There is a large pond, immediately to the north of the junction between English Lane and the approach to the house, the walls of which have been built up. A flint and brick wall divides the farm buildings from the house and its approach which extends north from Building 13 and curves around to the east of the house.

2.2 Historical background

- 2.2.1 The farm is within Stoke Row parish and is c.1.5 km south-east from the village of Nuffield in south Oxfordshire. It was historically towards the eastern end of Nuneham Murren parish: a distinctively long, narrow parish whose southern boundary was partly formed by the ancient earthwork of Grim's Ditch (Fig. 6). At its nearest point Grim's Ditch passes about 800 m to the north of the Farmstead of English Farm (Bradley 1968).
- 2.2.2 It has not been attempted as part of this assessment to fully trace the origins and historical background of the farm but a limited amount of documentary material has been consulted. Of particular use was *Dipping into the Wells* by Angela Spencer-Harper and much of the following background is based on information from that source.
- 2.2.3 It is apparent that the farm has ancient origins and Spencer-Harper reports that it dates to the 12th Century. Benet English of English Farm is first referred to in documents dating to the early 14th Century and there is a 14th-century monumental brass in his honour in the Holy Trinity Church, Nuffield. The Englysche family are known to have still been local landowners in the 15th and 16th Centuries and in 1605 the death of Ralph Warcopp of English Farm is documented. The farm is known to have been occupied in the late 18th Century by Thomas Deane and Deane was listed as the owner and occupier of the farm on the Tithe Apportionment of 1847. An 1861 enclosure map shows George Dean as the owner of the farm. From 1924 until his death in 1998 the farm was owned by David Purdie.
- 2.2.4 The 1847 Tithe Map (Fig.3) confirms that the layout of the farmstead was broadly similar to that existing today but it appears to show that the coach house (Building 4) and the east-west range of Barn 11 had not yet been constructed (despite there being a date stone of 1806 on this barn). The map also shows a large building projecting west from the north-west corner of the house and a further northern range projecting from this structure. A small building is also shown between Barns 7 and 8.
- 2.2.5 The Tithe Map shows that the field immediately to the north-west of the farmstead was an orchard and that to the north-east was a paddock while the area immediately to the west was included within the general entry for the homestead. The first edition (1877), second edition (1898) and 1913 editions of the 25" Ordnance Survey maps (Figs. 4, 5) show an east-west strip of land to the north-west of the house (but to the south of the orchard shown on the Tithe Map) with trees which was probably also an orchard. It is proposed to build a tennis court partly over this area.
- 2.2.6 Each of the maps show the surviving fish pond to the south-west of the house and they confirm that the curved farmyard wall which divides the house from the farm buildings, was built after the 1877 map.

2.3 Methodology

- 2.3.1 The assessment of each building incorporates five elements:
- i) a brief description of the building
 - ii) dating or phasing information from map evidence
 - iii) an assessment of its significance
 - iv) a summary of the proposed development
 - v) the impact of the proposed development on the historic fabric or character of the building

- 2.3.2 However due to its length the description of the house has been placed at the rear of the relevant section and sections ii - v are preceded by a summary description and analysis.

3 THE HOUSE (Building 1)

3.1 Summary description and analysis

3.1.1 The historic nature of English Farm would imply that there has long been a farm on the site, and there initially appears to be a wealth of phasing evidence in the external shell of the house. The front elevation appears to be of Georgian brick at second floor above early 20th-century brick at the lower two levels while the rear is of Georgian brick at second floor above flint with apparently pre-Georgian brick dressings below. Both side elevations are pebble-dashed and an easy initial interpretation would be that the original building was a two-storey flint-built structure to which a Georgian brick second floor added and that the lower brickwork in the front elevation was an early C20th refacing of the flint. However little evidence has been revealed within the building to suggest this.

3.1.2 Ostensibly this is a three-storey brick building of mid 18th-century date, which has undergone subsequent alterations but not changed its outline. The structural carpentry of the house is consistent on all floors. The frame is based on the width of the staircase, with a wide ground-floor entry hall in Phase I marked by two large ceiling joists, and similar framing of floor joists on the upper floors. One change may be as old as the building itself: the altered position of the first mezzanine window onto the stair, which almost looks like a change of mind when the joiner came to put in the staircase.

3.1.3 The change in brickwork at second floor is not in itself sufficient evidence that the top floor has been added and the fact that the second floor framing shows no signs of being converted from an earlier attic stage strongly implies that the building was three storied from its original construction. Similarly the use of smaller bricks around windows in the lower two floors of the rear elevation is not conclusive evidence that this was an earlier phase of the building and could be explained by older bricks having been re-used from a previous building.

3.1.4 There is a series of changes consisting of the blocking of side windows in the corner bedrooms, the replacement of fireplaces and the renewal of floors. In one instance the blocked window was covered with plaster, whitewashed and painted green, and then subsequently covered with dry lining (of hessian, newspaper dated 1905, and wallpaper). This would perhaps imply that the window blocking happened around the middle of the 19th century, and could be contemporary with the Victorian grates and reflooring. The major change of refronting the house (probably contemporary with the rendering of the side walls) might then be of c.1905.

3.1.5 It is quite possible that there was an older building on the site, and the older half of the basement may potentially have been reincorporated from this previous structure, but at this stage there is insufficient evidence to believe that anything above ground pre-dates the mid 18th-century house.

3.1.6 The sequence with the minimum number of changes would then be:

Phase I: Brick house of three storeys, c.1750

Phase II: Side windows blocked, grates replaced, floors renewed, c.1850
Phase III: House refronted, c.1900

- 3.1.7 **Map evidence:** The house is shown with its current plan form on each available historic map and thus they are not able to provide any phasing evidence for the development of the house.
- 3.1.8 **Significance:** The house is listed Grade II and is therefore by definition of special historical or architectural interest. Its external shell has some intrinsic architectural merit although it is of interest more due to the variety in its construction and its phasing rather than its elegance or consistency of design. Internally it retains a substantial quantity of Georgian joinery, particularly the staircase, and a number of other features of interest. It is also of particular significance due to its relationship with the yard and the other farm buildings. It is essentially an 18th-century farmstead (although probably on the site of a previous farm) and the house is one of the key elements of that farmstead being located at the head of the large yard.
- 3.1.9 **Proposal:** It is proposed to refurbish the house with a limited number of minor alterations to its layout. At first floor Bedroom 2 and the Dressing Room are to be united and the three rooms at the north-west corner (hall, shower room and bathroom) and also to be combined. At second floor it is proposed to move the partition between Bedrooms 5 and 6 by c.1m to the west.
- 3.1.10 **Impact of development:** no fabric of historical significance would be lost in the minor alterations to the internal layout of the building and the changes at first floor would return the layout closer to its original or historic form.

3.2 Full description

- 3.2.1 **General description:** Three storey (with basement) rectangular-plan, double pile farmhouse. Tile-covered roof secondary with flat area to centre surrounded by narrow, pitched roof on all four sides.
- 3.2.2 **South elevation (front)** (Plate 2): three bays wide with central pedimented doorcase to ground floor. Apparently Georgian brickwork (Flemish bond) facing second floor but later (probably C20th) brick (English bond) facing lower two storeys. Two ground floor windows (paired 8-light) beneath segmental brick arches. Three 12-light sash windows (C19th?) to ground and first floor beneath gauged brick lintels. All windows with stone sills, ovolo glazing bars and probably of late 19th-/early 20th-century date. Straight joints of three bricked-up windows at second floor level immediately to west of each existing window. Projecting string course (3 bricks tall) between each floor. Set on rendered plinth recessed slightly behind the main plane of the elevation.
- 3.2.3 **West elevation** (Plate 3): wall pebble-dashed other than projecting string courses (3 courses C20th? brick) and rendered quoins at both ends. Two four-light sash windows (C19th?) towards north end of elevation at first floor and one at ground floor. Similar plinth as south elevation to southern half of elevation with taller projecting rendered plinth to northern half. Shadow of former two-storey adjoining building with pitched roof towards the north end at first floor level, enclosing window. A strip of pebble dash was removed at 1.5 m above ground level and this revealed that the southern third of wall was formed of (or at least faced with) the same 20th-century brick as the south elevation and that the rest of the visible wall (as far as the adjoining building) was formed of small brick with a beige mortar.

- 3.2.4 **East elevation** (Plate 7): pebble-dashed other than 3-brick string courses at each floor level. Full height render quoin at north end and similar feature at southern end of second floor; projecting brick quoins beneath at ground and first floor. Recessed rendered plinth to southern half of elevation with projecting rendered plinth to northern half. A strip of the pebble dash was removed at c.1.5 m above ground level together with the northern render quoin beneath first floor which revealed that the external face of the southern half of the wall was formed of the same 20th-century brickwork as the southern facade. Immediately to the north of this was a bricked-up doorway which would have opened onto the side of the chimney stack. The northern half of the wall was formed of old, small bricks with what appeared to be a bricked-up window towards the centre. Beneath the render quoin at the northern edge of the wall the corner was formed of brick but there strongly appeared to be a constructional break between it and the brickwork immediately to the south. The corner brickwork was stepped in and out every 3 courses in a similar form that that immediately to the west of the corner. It therefore appears likely that the east wall was formerly of flint with a brick corner (same as the north elevation) and that this was refaced in brick, possibly in the 18th Century.
- 3.2.5 **North elevation (rear)** (Plate 6): second floor of apparently Georgian brick with lower two storeys of flint with brick dressings to quoins and openings. Brickwork in lower two storeys formed of small bricks (c.5 cm tall) and strongly appears older than that to second floor (possibly reused brick). Two possibly primary windows to each floor (each one 20-light sashes) with slender glazing bars. Two further windows between floors which illuminate the staircase. That between first and second floor the same as other windows to elevation that between ground and first with thicker glazing bars and 12-lights. All windows beneath brick segmental arches. Small, low central ground floor doorway with arched head. Existing door apparently secondary and brickwork to each side of door continues up to landing window suggesting that the doorway may originally have had a fanlight or similar feature. Projecting string courses (3 courses brick) between floors but at slightly higher level than those to side elevations.
- 3.2.6 **General plan**: the house has a rectangular plan based around two internal chimney stacks along the spine of the building and a large staircase at the centre of the rear (north) wall. The staircase appears to be of mid 18th-century date and to be integral to the design of the house. It is therefore believed to be a primary feature although the blocked window in the north elevation would have coincided with the staircase between first and second floor. The most likely explanation appears to be that the blocked window either resulted from a mistake on the part of the builder or that the design of the staircase was changed after the shell of the building had been constructed.
- 3.2.7 **Basement** (Fig. 7): there are two distinct areas of basement in the building which are accessed via a set of stairs (formed of small bricks) against the north wall of the building. Beneath the parlour at the north-east corner of the house is a room with flint walls covered by rough plaster and paint, and a floor above with chamfered principal joist (E-W), common joist and formerly with a lath and plaster ceiling. The floor is of stone flags and there are arched recesses with ledges within the south, west and east walls. Two small stone-lined windows in the north wall provide a small amount of light into the basement. To the south of this, beneath the lounge (small lounge before the reduction in size of entrance hall - see below) is a basement with a wide, shallow brick-vaulted ceiling (Plate 9). The brickwork is painted and the room probably used as a wine cellar.

- 3.2.8 A small piece of phasing evidence is visible from beneath within the passage between the two sections of basement. The original ground floor boards remain in-situ, beneath the existing secondary boards and common joists, within the parlour cupboard. From other evidence (cornice within parlour cupboard) it is apparent that the cupboard was originally part of the lounge and it may be that raising this small section of floor was due to the reorientation of the cupboard or the entire ground floor may have been raised slightly.
- 3.2.9 **Ground floor** (Fig. 8): The building is entered through a central doorway in the west elevation into a narrow **entrance hall** at the centre of the southern half of the ground floor. This was formerly wider on both sides and would have formed a grand hall the same width as the staircase.
- 3.2.10 To the west of the entrance hall is the **Dining Room** (Plate 10) which has plastered walls above possibly primary mid-height panelling which was extended when the hall was narrowed and the room enlarged. Two boxed-in floor joists project beneath the ceiling which suggest that there is an N-S principal joist (at the east edge of the primary room) and an E-W bridging joist. A cornice continues around each of these joists and around the room but that to the east of the N-S joist (originally within the hall) is of slightly different design. The fireplace is a secondary replacement. To the east of the chimney stack there are two cupboards. The dado and panelling continue into the western cupboard to suggest that this formed a doorway through to the kitchen.
- 3.2.11 To the east of the hall is the **lounge** which has plastered walls, a small 20th-century fireplace and a single N-S joist projecting beneath the ceiling. There is no cornice within the room but there is a fragment of surviving cornice, within the adjacent parlour cupboard, which appears to continue through from the lounge. The cornice appears to be slightly higher than the ceiling in the lounge which suggests that the cupboard originally formed part of the lounge and that the existing ceiling in the lounge is a secondary insertion, beneath the primary.
- 3.2.12 The **kitchen** is at the north-west corner of the building and has a Purbeck Marble floor, a dresser against the east wall and a large primary fireplace to the south of the room (Plates 11, 12). The walls have a simple panelling (largely covered by 20th-century boards) beneath plastered walls. The window has probably primary shutters and an E-W chamfered principal joist which projects beneath the ceiling.
- 3.2.13 At the north-east corner of the ground floor is the **parlour** which has a boarded floor (wide possibly primary boards) and plastered walls although in several areas the plaster has been recently removed to confirm the construction beneath (Plate 13). A large patch immediately above floor level has been removed from the north wall which confirms that the inner face of this wall is of flint (same as outer face). Of more significance are two smaller areas of plaster removed from the east wall, one immediately above the floor and the other about 1.5 m above ground which reveal flint construction beneath. Further openings to the north of this, also in the east wall, reveal brick beneath and confirm that the straight joints visible on the outer face continue through the wall. This evidence appears to confirm that the primary construction of the wall was of flint with brick dressings around openings, the same as the existing north wall, and that it was subsequently refaced in brick.
- 3.2.14 Immediately to the east of the chimney stack (within the meat store) there survives the simple architrave of a door off the lobby and primary entrance through the east wall. A small section of the former door recess is visible immediately to the north of a secondary blocking between lounge and parlour. To the west of the chimney stack

is a cupboard. As detailed above it is apparent from a surviving section of cornice that the eastern half of this cupboard formed part of the lounge while in the western half there survives the outline of a former doorway in the north wall.

- 3.2.15 A small lavatory has been created, probably in the 19th Century beneath the staircase
- 3.2.16 **First floor** (Fig. 9): the existing first floor consists of three bedrooms: to the north-east, south-east and south-west corners of the building. There is a dressing room which once formed a single room with the bedroom to the south-east (Bedroom 2). That these were once a single room can be seen by the cornice and mid-height panelling which continue through the wall. In each of these three corner rooms there is a single window within the main (north and south) walls and the controlled removal of small sections of plaster confirm that there would also have been windows in each of the side walls.
- 3.2.17 Several floor boards were lifted within Bedroom 2 and the adjacent dressing room to confirm the first floor construction. In the areas opened there was some contrast in the floor construction between that above the original large hall which had a high ceiling, and that above the lounge which had a deeper floor and consequently a lower ceiling. The floor within Bedroom 2 (above the lounge) consisted of very deep N-S common joists and an E-W principal joist (or possibly bridging joist; both 30 cm deep). The common joists were housed in the principal with double tenons.
- 3.2.18 The floor within the dressing room (above the hall) also consisted of an E-W principal and N-S common joists but the common joists were half the depth of those in the adjacent bedroom (c.15 cm). To the underside of these joists laths and the primary hall ceiling were visible c.8 cm above the existing ceiling. The step within the ceiling was located immediately to the west of the partition between Dressing Room and Bedroom 2 and coincides with a scarf in the E-W principal joist. The scarf is braced with two probably secondary iron plates bolted together. It appears that the principal joist and scarf would originally have been supported by a load-bearing wall at the side of the large entrance hall. This is suggested by the fact that there is no N-S principal joist beneath the partition between Dressing Room and Bedroom 2. There is a beam at this point but it is shallow (c.8cm deep) and runs beneath the E-W principal.
- 3.2.19 In the upper face of the principal joist within the Dressing Room there is a series of empty mortices suggesting that there was formerly a partition at this point. The existing floorboards within both the bedroom and dressing room are secondary and rest on softwood packing pieces.
- 3.2.20 The room at the north-east corner of the building (Bedroom 3) was dry lined with wall paper on a layer of a newspaper (dated 1905) set on hessian on a softwood stud frame. Beneath this frame the wall was plastered
- 3.2.21 There would formerly have been a single room at the north-west corner of the building but it has been divided into a shower room, bathroom and hall. The large fireplace from the room survives within the small hall. The original window opening (and possibly the window itself) survives in the north wall of this former room but the historic window arrangement has been lost from the west wall in this area and replaced by two 4-light sashes which relate to the existing room arrangement. The removal of external render and/or internal plaster from the west wall in this area would be very informative.

- 3.2.22 Between Bedroom 1 and the small secondary hall there is a large cupboard, immediately to the west of the chimney stack, which encloses a door-shaped alcove in the external wall of the building. It is known that there was a two storied building adjoining the west wall of the house but the other evidence has suggested that it was to the north of this blocked doorway. At this stage the blocked doorway remains unexplained and it can only be assumed that either the adjoining building was larger than previously supposed or there was a small external staircase to this doorway. The removal of plaster and external render from around the doorway would assist in explaining the doorway.
- 3.2.23 **Second floor** (Fig. 10): the second floor consists of five bedrooms and the staircase around a central landing. Bedroom 7 (at south-east corner of building) has two windows, facing south and east, and there is strong evidence to suggest that each of the other corner rooms also formerly had a window in each of their two external walls. In each of these three rooms (Bed 4, 6, 8) there survives one window and the removal of sections of plaster have revealed straight joints within the brickwork suggesting windows. The removal of further small sections of plaster from the south wall also confirmed that the straight joints visible on the external face carried through the wall and were visible on the internal face. The blocked openings suggest that there were originally three windows immediately to the west of each existing window. To ensure the compositional balance of the elevation it can be assumed that there would also have been a fourth window at the east end of the floor although there are no straight joints to confirm this.
- 3.2.24 A section of floor boards were lifted within and adjacent to the doorway between Bedrooms 5 and 6 to confirm the second floor construction. It contrasts with the first floor construction and consists of a N-S primary joist (26 cm high x 29 cm wide; directly beneath the partition between Bedrooms 5 and 6, E-W bridging joists and N-S common joists. The floorboards within Bedroom 6 appear to be primary while the primary boards within Bedroom 5 have been overlain by later joists thus forming a small step between the two rooms. The primary boards abut the upper corners of the principal joist but overly both the common joists and bridging joists. The primary boards have been overlain (or possibly replaced) throughout the rest of the second floor with narrow secondary boards.
- 3.2.25 A small gate has been added at the head of the stairs (possibly of late 19th/early 20th date) (Plate 17).
- 3.2.26 **Roof** (Plate 18): it has not been possible to make a full assessment of the roof structure but a limited inspection was possible through a hatch in Bedroom 4. The roof appeared to be largely of secondary softwood with some oak and elm and was probably rebuilt in the late C19th/early C20th). It consisted of simple raking struts resting on simple ties and supporting a single purlin to each slope with notched common rafters. A fuller investigation of the roof should reveal evidence of the primary roof.

4 THE FARM BUILDINGS

4.1 Building 2 (Figs 2, 8; Plate 4, 5)

- 4.1.1 **Description:** Small extension to north-west corner of house. Washroom immediately to north of house, built of flint with brick dressings and with single-pitch roof sloping to north. Log store of brick and also with single-pitch roof sloping to north but west wall of southern corner of Building 2 formed of later brick and with lean-to roof

sloping west. This is clearly the reformed, truncated stub of a formerly much larger building although the washroom was added later.

4.1.2 **Map evidence:** Washroom shown on neither 1847 Tithe Map (Fig. 3) nor 1877 1st edition 25" OS map (Fig 4) but is shown on 1913 25" OS map (Fig 5). Much larger building shown on each map immediately to west and overlapping rest of current Building 2.

4.1.3 **Significance:** Building 2 is not of great significance but the older part, which appears to partially survive from a formerly larger building, is of some historical interest and provides evidence of the former building within this area.

4.1.4 **Proposal:** small existing extension to be demolished and replaced by large single-storey extension within Area 3 (see below).

4.1.5 **Impact of development:** the small extension is of limited historical significance and its removal will not significantly detract from the complex's historic value. Its replacement should return this part of the ground plan closer to its historic form.

4.2 Area 3

4.2.1 **Description:** Area immediately to west of house. Walls survive on each side of substantial building which formerly adjoined house. S wall of brick with several bricked up openings (one beneath gauged brick head and one beneath segmental arched head to south face). Scars of several cross walls visible. Ledge at head height on which feet of rafters or first floor joists would have rested. West wall of flint and beneath small asbestos panel roof. North wall a combination of areas of random flint and brick with areas of plastered brick and areas of unplastered brick infilling. East end of building replaced by small existing Building 2 adjacent to house. Previous building appears to have been at least partly two storied and with a pitched roof, strongly suggested by visible line of former roof and cut-off end of gutter on west wall of house.

4.2.2 **Map evidence:** A building is shown standing within Area 3 on each of the available historic maps (1847, 1877, 1898, 1913).

4.2.3 **Significance:** although the building has been lost and the walls are of a very rough, patched-up nature the walls do provide evidence of the building's former character and form. The architectural detailing of the gauged brick voussoirs confirm that it would have been a part of the house rather than a utilitarian farm building.

4.2.4 **Proposal:** to construct a single storey building (*living room*) in Area 3 with northern projection (*kitchen*). The existing walls would be largely retained and incorporated in the development, albeit with some modification.

4.2.5 **Impact of development:** The construction of the living room within Area 3 would return the ground plan of the building to that which it appeared to have in the mid 19th Century although not to its original plan or historic form. The incorporation of the existing walls into the development would minimise loss of historic fabric.

4.3 Building 4: Coach House (Plates 19, 20, 21)

4.3.1 **Description:** Rectangular plan building with short secondary projection towards western end of north elevation. Gabled tile-covered roof. South elevation (facing house) of brick with diaper work at first floor and dentil course at eaves. Three large

double doors towards east end of elevation. A door and two windows beneath segmental brick arches. Most of northern elevation of flint with brick dressings and clearly incorporated from older building. To allow its incorporation the wall was extended vertically and towards the east in brick. Four bricked-up openings in older flint wall beneath brick segmental arches. East wall of brick. West wall of brick above low level of flint (with brick piers) incorporated from earlier building. Gabled northern projection with flint and brick west wall and brick north wall. Ground floor divided into two main areas. Stables to west and coach house (no access possible) to east. Three small horse boxes towards east end of stables with cast iron posts and ornamentation. Two larger boxes at west end. Groom's accommodation on first floor with skirting boards, plastered walls/ceilings and panelled doors with architraves. N secondary projection has domestic fireplace, tongue and groove panelled walls, plastered ceiling and boarded floor.

4.3.2 **Map evidence:** Building shown on neither 1847 Tithe Map nor 1877 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey map but must have been constructed soon after and it is shown on the 1898 25" OS map.

4.3.3 **Significance:** although the building is a relatively late addition to the farmstead (apparently of late 19th-century date) it is a prominent and attractive building which contributes to the overall character and form of the farm complex. The first floor was accommodation.

4.3.4 **Proposal:** Building to be retained and refurbished in development as coach-house and stores with staff flat over. The eastern half of the ground floor plan (garage and central stables) will remain little altered but the stables at the west end of the ground floor and the existing plan of the northern projection will be lost to allow the area's conversion to a utility room and staff flats. The first floor plan will also be substantially altered to allow its conversion.

4.3.5 **Impact of development:** the building is not listed and no significant historic fabric will be lost. The more attractive stabling will be retained. The use of the upper floor as a staff flat will be a continuation of its original use.

4.4 Building 5

4.4.1 **Description:** Mid-20th-portal frame shed with walls of concrete block at lower level and corrugated iron above. Concrete floor, 3 trusses.

4.4.2 **Map evidence:** The shed clearly post-dates the historic maps consulted and no other previous building is shown on its footprint on the maps.

4.4.3 **Significance:** of no historical significance.

4.4.4 **Proposal:** to be demolished and replaced by 2-storey extension (staff flat) to Building 4.

4.4.5 **Impact of development:** the current building obscures the gabled projection of the more significant adjacent building (Building 4) and its unsympathetic design also detracts from Building 4. The new building in the proposed development would also obscure the gabled projection but its more sympathetic design should enhance (or at least not detract) from the historic building.

4.5 Area 6 (Plate 22)

- 4.5.1 **Description:** small walled garden to north-east of house. Low walls to east and west (flint with brick coping) with tall flint and brick wall at north end which clearly formed one side of a small single pitch structure. Some roof tiles survive on sloped wall at west end and along the ridge of the rear (north) wall. Small shelter survives at south end of area with gabled tiled roof and weatherboarded walls. Very poor condition and roof almost collapsed towards east end.
- 4.5.2 **Map evidence:** a small building is shown at the north end of the area on the 1847 Tithe Map but not on the 1877 25" OS map. The building at the southern end appears to be shown on all of the available historic maps (1847, 1877, 1898, 1913).
- 4.5.3 **Significance:** area of limited intrinsic significance but of interest as part of the overall farm complex.
- 4.5.4 **Proposal:** create glass house at north end of area, renovate shed at southern end (as potting shed) and use area between as a cutting garden.
- 4.5.5 **Impact of development:** It appears that the proposed development would incorporate the existing garden wall and would not involve the removal of any significant historic fabric.

4.6 Building 7 (Plate 24)

- 4.6.1 **Description:** Two storey farm building immediately to east of house with half-hipped corrugated iron-covered roof. Six bays wide. W wall of weatherboard over base of flint with brick piers (c.1.2 m tall); Other walls wall of flint with brick piers (and quoins) to eaves height; weatherboard above to each end wall up to half hip of roof. Beige mortar in brickwork. Simple stables and feeding boxes against east wall on ground floor. 14 N-S common joists tenoned into principal joists. 2 replacement principal joists inserted. Underside of joists painted. Only very limited access into upper floor but roof apparently entirely/largely rebuilt - some parts reused but mostly modern. Trusses with collar, tie-beam, principal rafters and additional raking struts parallel to the rafters and sandwiching the purlins (1 to each slope).
- 4.6.2 **Map evidence:** the building is shown on each of the available historic maps.
- 4.6.3 **Significance:** an attractive farm building which contributes to the group value of the farm complex. Listed Grade II.
- 4.6.4 **Proposal:** to be converted to a 'guest barn' (accommodation). The external shell will not be radically unaltered although the openings within the west elevation will be rearranged and new openings will be formed in the two end walls. The interior will be converted to modern living space.
- 4.6.5 **Impact of development:** the original use of the building will be lost but the most significant element of the building (its vernacular construction, external shell and relationship with the rest of the complex) will largely remain. The replacement of the existing iron roof with more appropriate reused clay tiles will enhance the historic character of the building.

4.7 Building 8 (Plate 25)

4.7.1 **Description:** Animal shelter. Six bays wide, clay tile covered gabled roof (tiles fixed with nails). East elevation: flint with brick quoins, 5 brick piers, corbelled brick eaves and 3 courses of brick c.0.5 m above ground.

South elevation: flint within main part of wall and brick to roof gable.

West elevation: bays 3, 4, 5 (from S) primary flint with brick surrounding openings and brick corbelling at eaves; bays 1, 2, 6 secondary brick (C19th?).

Interior: single space with feeding stalls along east wall. Plain pegged queen post trusses with a single purlin to each slope, much reused timber. Many primary rafters appear to remain in-situ but modern battens and reused old tiles.

4.7.2 **Map evidence:** the building is shown on each of the available historic maps.

4.7.3 **Significance:** Probably C18th farm building of limited intrinsic significance but of similar construction as other buildings and contributes to the interest of the farm complex.

4.7.4 **Proposal:** the be refurbished and either retained as stables or converted to small workshop/garden storage area.

4.7.5 **Impact of development:** no fabric of historical significance will be lost

4.8 Building 9 (Plates 27, 28, 29)

4.8.1 **Description:** Eight bay aisled barn with half-hipped clay tile covered roof.

West elevation: weatherboard above brick plinth (header bond bricks) with beige mortar. Most bricks c.6 cm tall but some low courses of smaller bricks (4-5 cm tall) presumably reused. Two large non-projecting gabled porches (bays 2 and 5 from S) with wall between porches rebuilt to accommodate concrete block animal pens which project outside from the within the barn.

North elevation: similar to west elevation - weatherboarded above brick (header bond) on flint base - flint only visible due to lower ground level to this elevation.

East elevation: brick (header bond) on flint base up to eaves. Two half-hipped porches; that furthest north bricked up below porch (Flemish bond); two windows inserted into elevation (conc lintel rendered jambs and sills) probably removing vertical slit vents. Two such vents remain intact - one towards each end of elevation - and four similar bricked-up vents remain between porches.

South elevation: weatherboard to c.1.25 m above ground with lacing bands of flint and brick below.

Interior: formerly threshing floors within bays 2 and 5 (from S) and separate area containing granary at first floor within northernmost bay. Building now divided into three areas: i) 5 bays to S with modern concrete block animal pens in bays 3 and 4 which extend into the building to provide shelter. Some older feeding boxes against east wall; ii) bays 6 and 7, divided from main barn by C20th-century partition; iii) northernmost bay (with granary above) divided from rest of barn by apparently primary stud partition on brick plinth.

Roof: Nine aisled queen-post trusses (pegged, elm?). Modern ridge piece, many rafters replaced towards northern end but most primary rafters (with modern covering) appear to survive to main body of building and towards southern end. Mortices in underside of tie and collar of Truss 3 suggest that there was a partition immediately to N of southern threshing floor.

4.8.2 **Map evidence:** the building is shown on each of the available historic maps.

- 4.8.3 **Significance:** largest and most impressive of the farm buildings despite it having partially lost its original internal layout and form. One of the key elements of the mid 18th-century farmstead; contributes to group value of the complex.
- 4.8.4 **Proposal:** to be retained and used as a multi-function barn. Only a minimum of alterations to be undertaken to ensure its stability and security. Concrete block animal pens to be removed.
- 4.8.4 **Impact of development:** Historic character and integrity of barn to be retained as one of most important features of new development. Open nature of aisled barn to also be retained. No significant historic fabric will be lost.
- 4.9 Building 10** (Plates 31, 32)
- 4.9.1 **Description:** Five bay wide cart shed adjoining to the south of aisled barn (building 9). Gabled roof with clay tiles to west and corrugated iron cover to south and east.
West elevation: open fronted and supported by timber posts (post 2 replaced by brick pier).
South elevation: random flint and brick '50-50' (ie all mixed in).
East elevation: southern two-thirds the same as south wall (with 2 brick buttresses) but northern one-third weatherboarded (supported by secondary studs - ie northern two bays probably originally open to both faces to allow carts to pass through).
Interior: 4 trusses, northernmost 4 of distinctive form with tie-beam, collar, king-post (secured to tie by iron strap), slightly arched braces between tie and king-post and two queen struts cut through by the arched braces. Sections of arched brace within Trusses 2 and 3 removed to create doorways. Southernmost truss a conventional partition formed by vertical members but without arched braces. Two purlins to each slope, the upper one clasped, the lower abutting principal rafter. No ridge-piece, primary rafters almost entirely in-situ. Quality of joinery and current condition of timbers good. Many members chamfered including purlins chamfer stops either side of principal rafters. There was a first floor relatively recently in bay 2 and there was almost certainly also a first floor in bays 3 and 4 (suggested by 'door' openings in trusses). Although the condition of the roof members is relatively good the posts and sections of the walls on which they are supported lean perilously and are in need of strengthening.
- 4.9.2 **Map evidence:** the building is shown on each of the available historic maps.
- 4.9.3 **Significance:** Although the cartshed is not the oldest or largest of the farm buildings and externally it is amongst the least impressive, the distinctive form of the roof trusses and the good quality of the joinery give it a significance and interest. The joinery, particularly the chamfered edges of such a large proportion of the members, is suggestive of the work of a cartwright. It also contributes to the group value of the complex of farm buildings. It was almost certainly constructed no earlier than the 18th-century and may even be of early 19th-century date.
- 4.9.4 **Proposal:** to be stabilised and retained as open cart shed.
- 4.9.5 **Impact of development:** stabilisation of structure will ensure the buildings preservation. No historic fabric will be lost.

4.10 Building 11

- 4.10.1 **Description:** L-shaped barn with N-S range predating E-W range. Both ranges with half-hipped clay tile-covered roof and weatherboarded walls on plinth of brick in some areas and flint in others. Brick in N-S range in header bond. Several simple lean-to structures constructed adjoining barns. One at east end of E-W range; one at north end of east elevation of N-S range containing a C20th electric drying unit and one at the east end of the north elevation of the E-W range which encloses a date stone on the barn. The stone is inscribed 'TD 1806' which presumably stands for Thomas Deane who is known to have owned English Farm in this period (see historical background). Interior: internal layout and function substantially altered in recent decades by construction of 3 large concrete block-lined grain bins, two within N-S range and one within E-W range. The bins are tall and obscure much of the interior of the barns. Six queen-post trusses in N-S range with single purlin to each pitch. Roof possibly rebuilt in C19th. Chiselled carpenter's marks on main members; ridge piece, many rafters replaced. Four trusses in E-W range, each one consisting of tie-beam, collar, queen posts, queen struts and horizontal spurs. There are two purlins to each slope, the upper clasped by the collar and the lower clasped by the spur. The principal rafters are of only slightly larger section than the common rafters. Many of the main members are of reused elm, the rafters appear to be almost entirely replaced. Inserted first floor towards SE corner of building.
- 4.10.2 **Map evidence:** the north-south range is shown on each of the historic maps but the east-west range is not shown on the 1847 Tithe map but is shown on the 1877 OS map together with both of the small lean-tos on the east and north walls of the east-west range. The evidence of the Tithe map contradicts the 1806 datestone referred to above on the N-S range and either of these pieces of evidence could be unreliable. The date stone strongly appears to be primary to the building and is clearly not a case of someone carving his initials onto a building long after it was built but such date stones are notoriously unreliable in dating buildings. Tithe maps can also be misleading but it appears to be most likely that the date stone was reused from a previous building and that the E-W range was constructed soon after the 1847 map.
- 4.10.3 **Significance:** The 2-phase, L-shaped barn is among the most prominent buildings at English Farm and as such it has an importance to the complex despite it not being the oldest of the farm buildings and not of great intrinsic architectural significance. The north-south range is of greater significance due to its greater age, probably having been constructed in the 18th Century. The E-W range is almost certainly of 19th-century date either having been constructed in 1806 (suggested by the date stone) or soon after the 1847 tithe map.
- 4.10.4 **Proposal:** at the time of writing it is intended to retain and restore the barns. It is anticipated that the large modern concrete bins would be removed.
- 4.10.5 **Impact of development:** the development would be of limited impact to the barns and no significant historic would be lost. The removal of the modern concrete structures within the barn would significantly improve the visual appreciation of the existing structure.

4.11 Building 12

- 4.11.1 **Description:** Large portal frame shed (mid to late C20th) outside main group of buildings towards south-west. Eight steel trusses (including those at each end); walls of concrete block at lower level and vertical boards above. Corrugated panel-clad roof. Most recently used as animal shelter.

- 4.11.2 *Map evidence*: the shed clearly post dates each of the historic maps consulted.
- 4.11.3 *Significance*: Modern shed of no historical interest or significance.
- 4.11.4 *Proposal*: there appear to be no proposals for the barn in the proposed development.
- 4.11.5 *Impact of development*: no impact

4.12 Building 13

- 4.12.1 *Description*: Rectangular plan, single storey 20th-century shelter with corrugated asbestos-covered pitched roof. Low roof height. Walls of concrete block and modern brick with small areas of older brick and flint. Probably a chicken house or other small animal shelter. Very poor condition, much of roof collapsed.
- 4.12.2 *Map evidence*: the existing building is not shown on any of the available historic maps and it was clearly built in the 20th Century replacing several narrow structures.
- 4.12.3 *Significance*: Building 13 is of no historical significance or interest.
- 4.12.4 *Proposal*: to be demolished and replaced by swimming pool.
- 4.12.5 *Impact of development*: the setting of the listed and historic farm buildings will be enhanced by the removal of Building 13.

4.13 Building 14

- 4.13.1 *Description*: Small shed formed of stud walls (weatherboard-clad) and corrugated iron pitched roof. Flint south wall. Probably of 20th-century date.
- 4.13.2 *Map evidence*: the shed was constructed after the 1877 OS map and apparently after the 1913 OS map. A building is shown on this later map at its approximate location but it appears to be smaller than the current building.
- 4.13.3 *Significance*: very limited historical significance.
- 4.13.4 *Proposal*: to be retained in proposed development and used as a chicken house.
- 4.13.5 *Impact of development*: no impact.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 English Farm is a fine collection of mainly 18th-century farm buildings whose principal importance lies in its group value and survival rather than due to the intrinsic significance of its individual buildings.
- 5.1.2 The external shell of the house suggests a complex history with substantial alterations including the addition of a second floor but the evidence so far revealed from the interior of the building tends to contradict this. It appears to be essentially a Georgian house which has had various internal alterations and refacings of its external shell but which retains its original dimensions.

- 5.1.3 As part of the current assessment a number of floorboards were lifted and areas of plaster and render removed to confirm the structure beneath. These allowed a substantially more informed assessment than would have otherwise been possible but a number of unexplained features and uncertainties remain which could possibly be answered by the observing more substantial works in the house when/if the refurbishment is undertaken. One specific area is around the first floor doorway in the west wall.
- 5.1.4 The principal significance of the farm buildings is their group value as a well-preserved farmstead constructed largely in the local vernacular of flint and brick. None of the buildings are of great age or particular individual significance but each one was an important part of the farmstead and contributes to its overall aesthetic impact.
- 5.1.6 The proposed development would appear to respect the overall significance of the farm complex and nothing of great historical significance would be lost in the proposals. Indeed in some areas, particularly in the area to the north-west of the house and the internal layout of the house, the development would return some parts of the plan closer to their historic form.

Jonathan Gill and Julian Munby
Oxford Archaeological Unit
November 2000

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Bradley R (1968) 'The South Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch and its Significance'
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Maps

- 1847 Tithe Map
1877 First edition Ordnance Survey map
1898 Second edition Ordnance Survey map
1913 edition Ordnance Survey map

SU68NE
5/159
24/10/51

STOKE ROW

ENGLISH LANE
(North side)
Barn and shelter shed approx.
90m. SE of English Farmhouse
(Formerly listed as English
Farmhouse and barns to south
and east under Crowmarsh Civil
Parish)

GV

II

Barn. Probably late C17. Red brick base; timber framing with weatherboarding; old plain-tile half-hipped roof. 7-bay barn with aisles to both sides. Gabled midstreys to left and right of centre with plank doors. Queen-post roof. Shelter shed to right. Forms part of a good group of farm buildings.

SU68NE
5/160
24/10/51

STOKE ROW

ENGLISH LANE
(North side)
Two barns approx. 90m. S of
English Farmhouse
(Formerly listed as English
Farmhouse and barns to south
and east under Crowmarsh Civil
Parish)

GV

II

Barn. Probably late C17, datestone to rear 1806. Flint base with red brick dressings; timber framing with weatherboarding; old plain-tile half-hipped roof. 4-bay barn. Double plank doors to right of centre. Double queen-post roof. Barn at right-angles to left; probably late C17 with C19 roof structure. Forms part of a good group of farm buildings.

SU68NE
5/161

STOKE ROW

ENGLISH LANE
(North side)
Cattle shed and shelter shed
approx. 40m. SE of English
Farmhouse

GV

II

Cattle shed. Probably early C18. Knapped flint with brick dressings; old plain-tile roof. Single storey, 5-window range. Plank doors to all openings. Queen post roof. Shelter shed to right with some C20 rebuilding. Forms part of a good group of farm buildings. Included for group value.

Appendix A: listed building descriptions

SU68NE
5/162

STOKE ROW

ENGLISH LANE
(North side)
Stables approx. 20m. E of
English Farmhouse

6V

II

Stables. Probably early C18. Knapped flint base with brick dressings; timber framing with weatherboarding; old plain-tile half-hipped roof. Single storey and attic; 5-window range. Stable doors to left and right of centre. Irregular fenestration of windows. Gabled dormer with plank door to centre. Interior: Stalls, trough and rack. Forms part of a good group of farm buildings. Included for group value.

SU68NE
5/158
24/10/51

STOKE ROW

ENGLISH LANE
(North side)
English Farmhouse
(Formerly listed as English
Farmhouse and barns to south
and east under Crowmarsh Civil
Parish)

6V

II

Farmhouse. Probably late C17, refronted late C18. Red brick; old plain-tile hipped roof with lead ridges; brick internal stacks. Double-depth plan. 3 storey, 3-window range. 6-panel door to centre with probably early C18 fanlight and arched surround flanked by Doric wood half-columns supporting a triangular dentilled pediment with pulvinated frieze. Paired 8-pane sashes with segmental brick heads to left and right. Flat brick band between ground and first floor. Three 12-pane sashes to first floor. Flat brick band between first and second floor. Three 12-pane sashes to second floor. Rear: Flint with brick dressings to ground and first floor; brick to second floor. Irregular fenestration of sashes. Interior not inspected but likely to be of interest. Forms part of a good group of farm buildings.

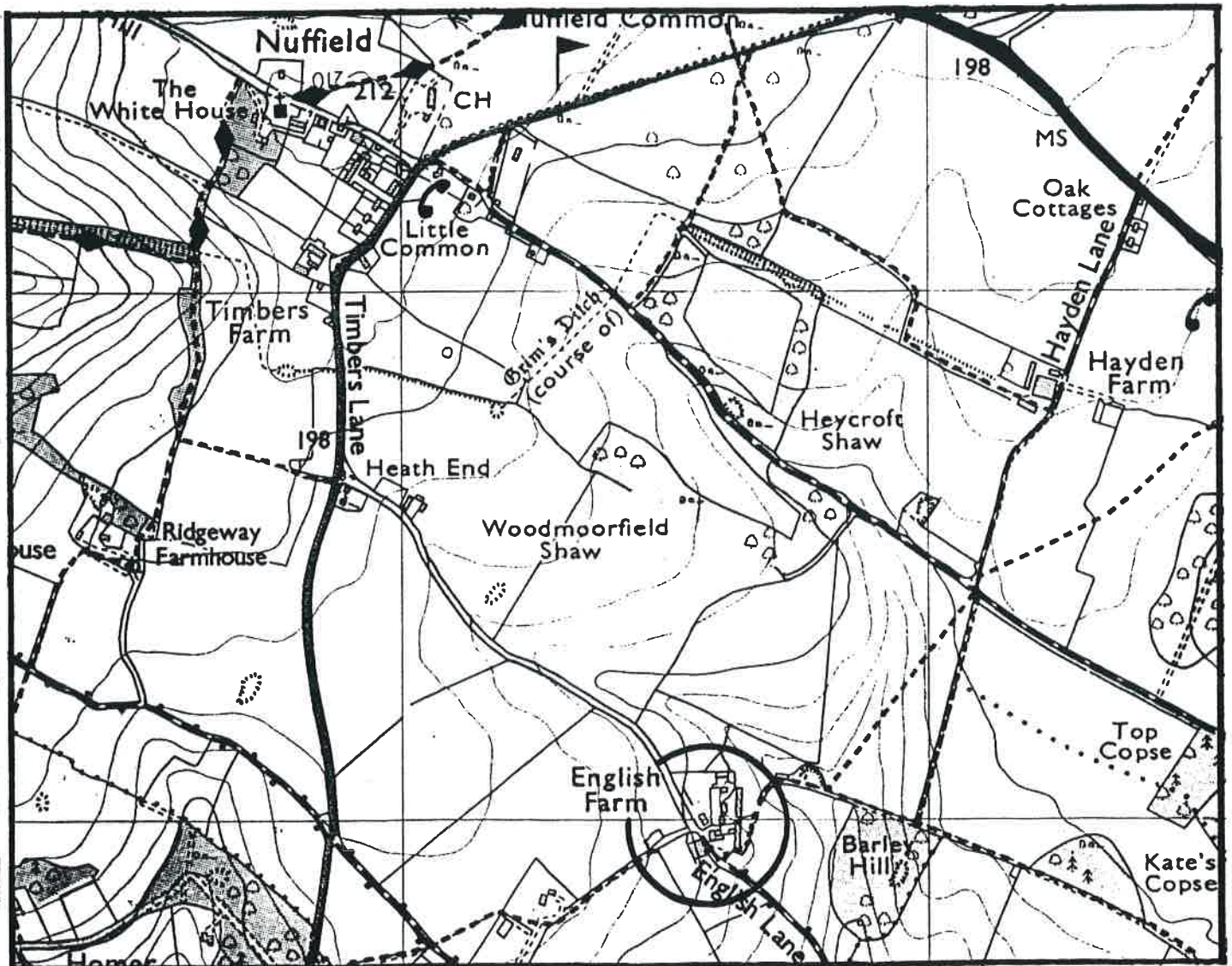
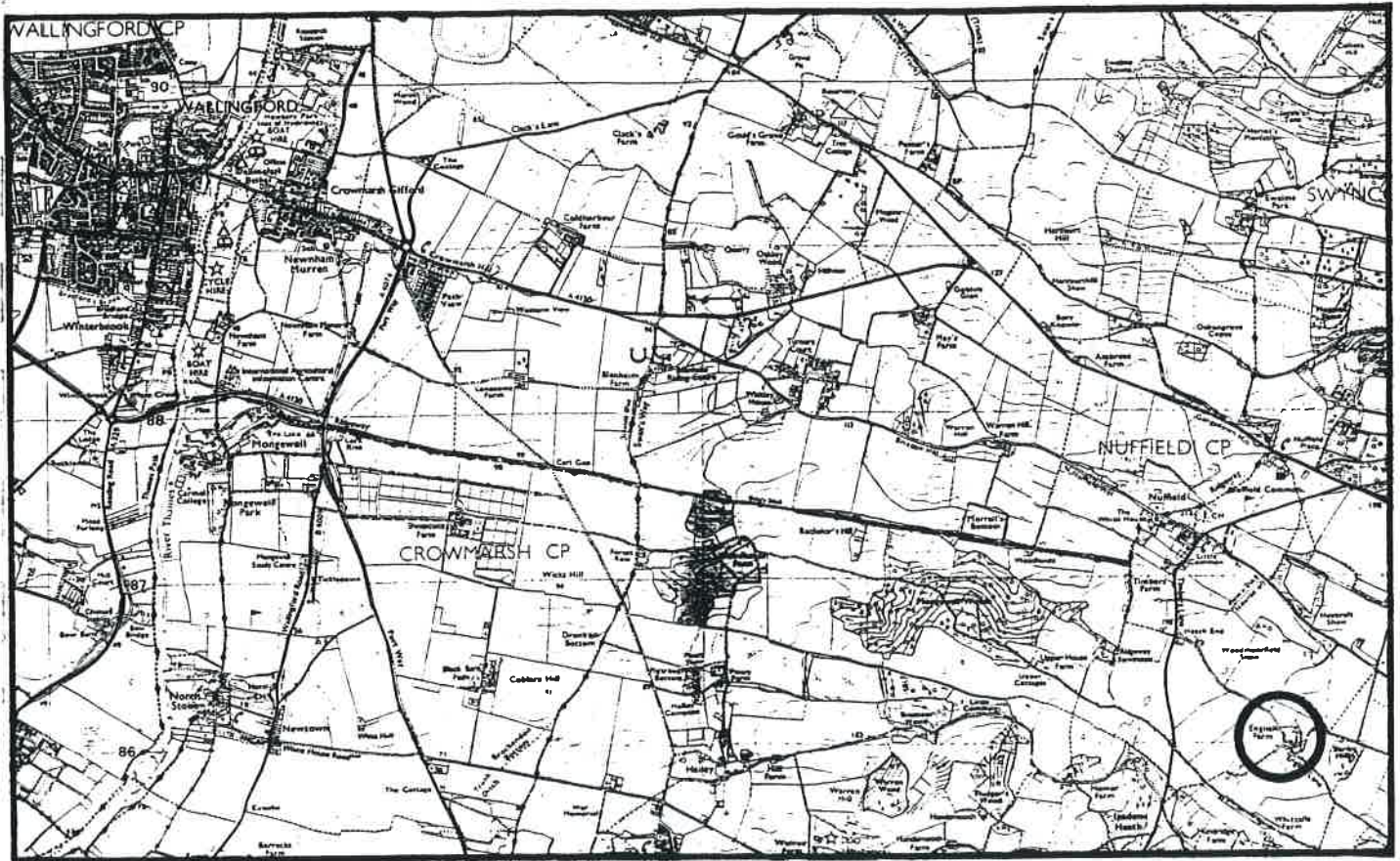


Figure 1: Site location

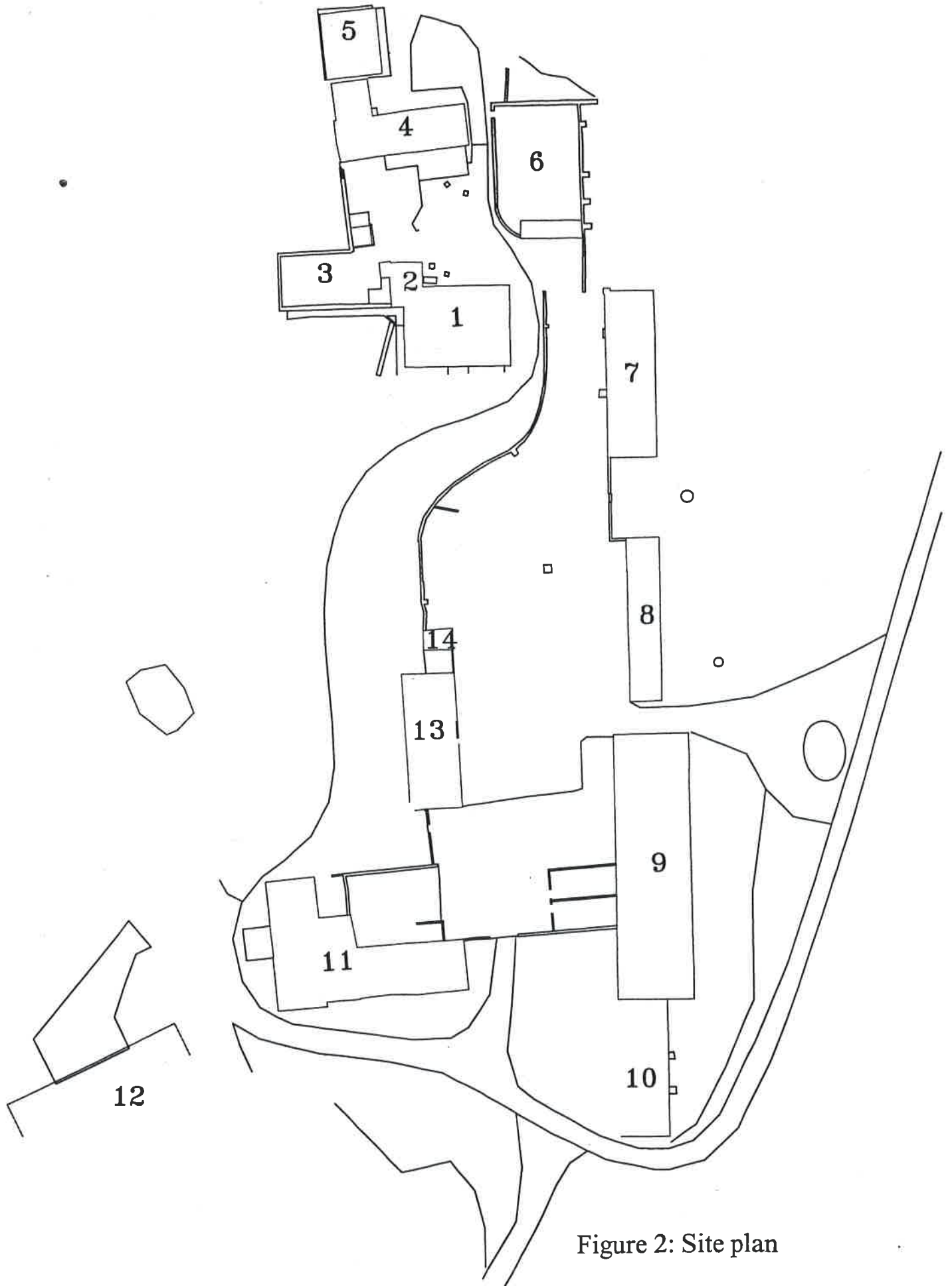


Figure 2: Site plan

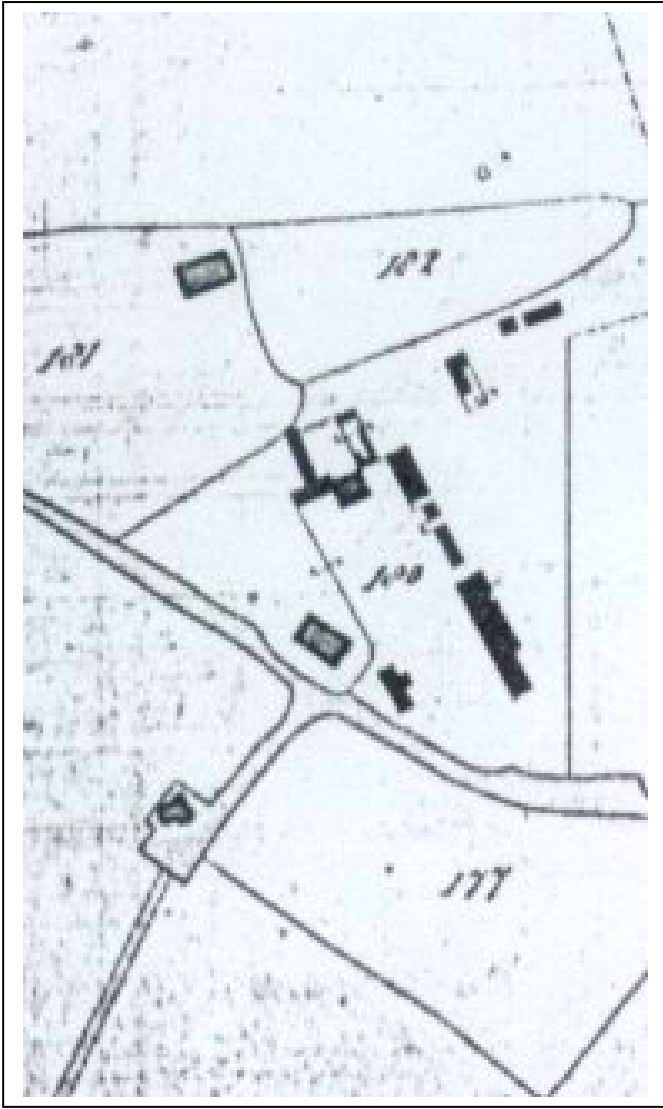


Figure 3: 1847 Tithe Map

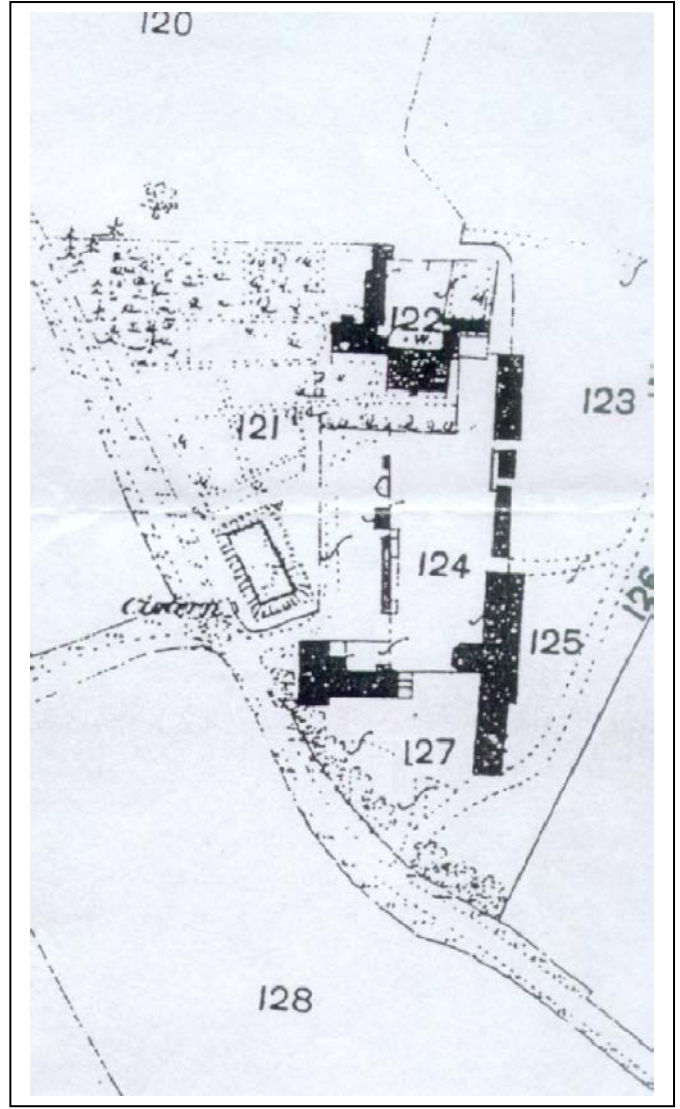
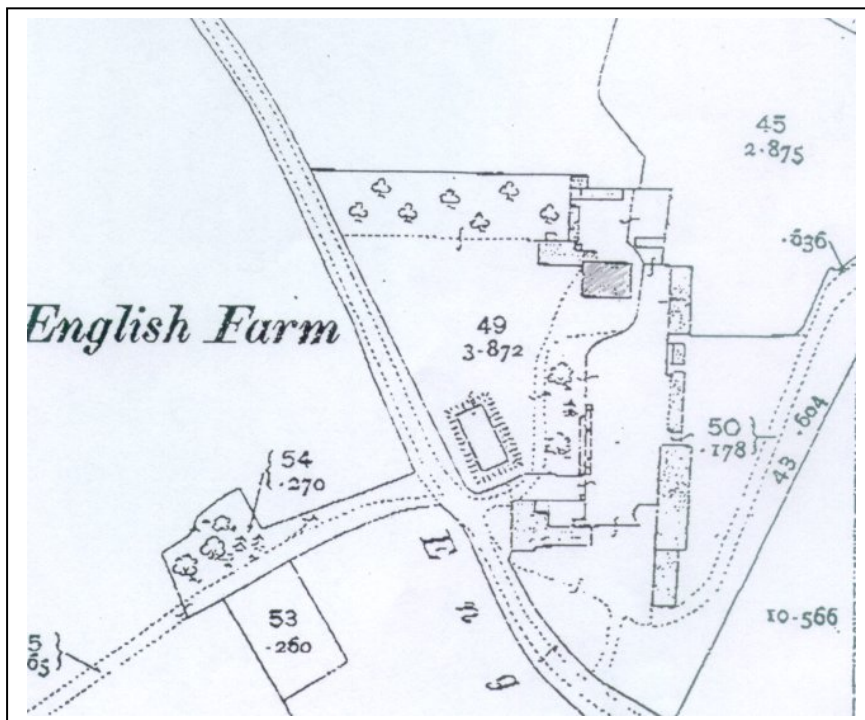
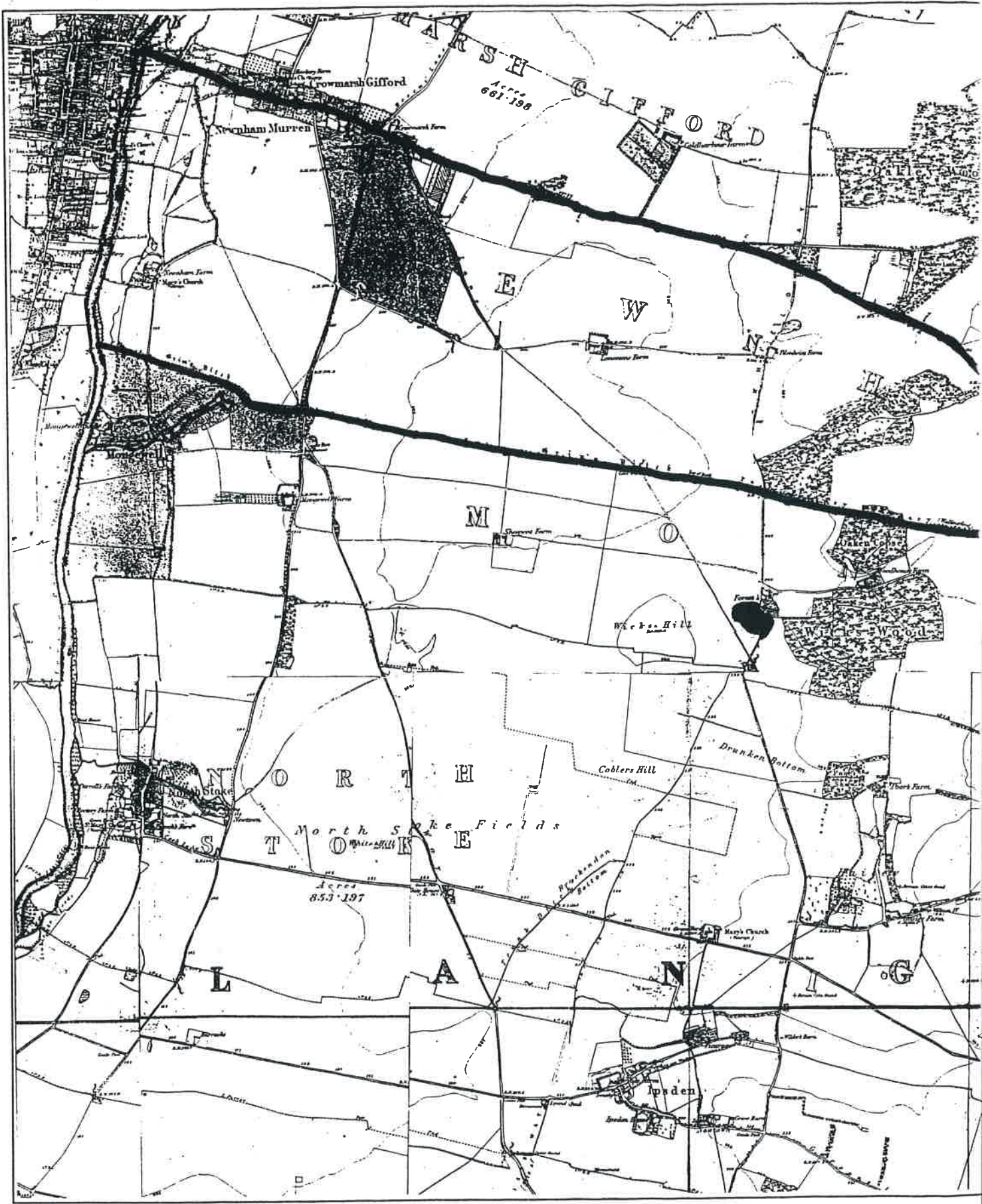


Figure 4: 1st ed Ordnance Survey map (1877)

Figure 5: 1913 edition Ordnance Survey Map





MARSH GIFFORD
Acres
661.198

Newham Murren

E W

M

Wicks Hill

Wicks Wood

N O R T H
S T O K E F I E L D S
Acres
853.197

Coblers Hill

Drunken Bottom

L

A

N

G

Spuden

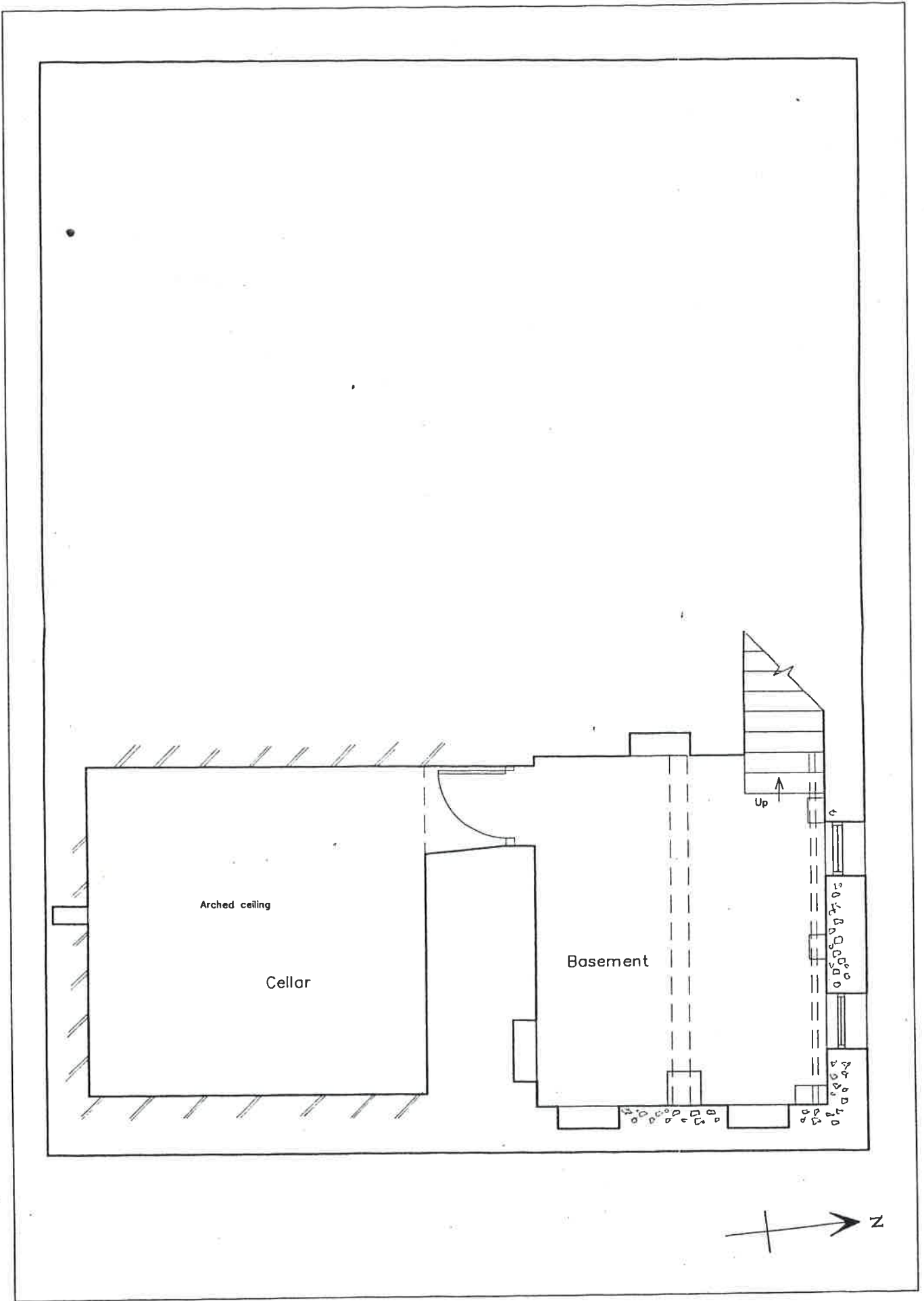


Figure 7: Basement plan

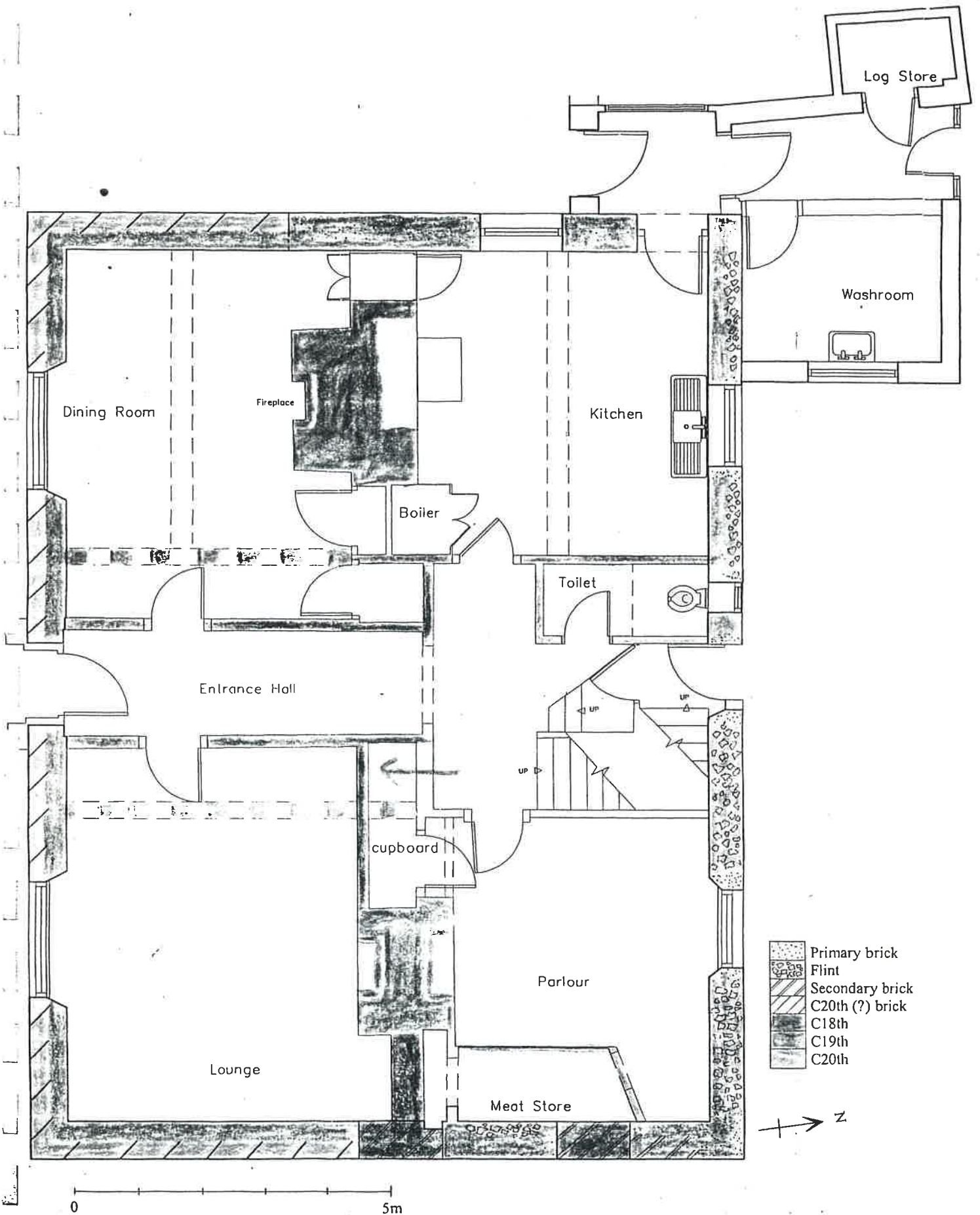


Figure 8: Ground floor plan of house

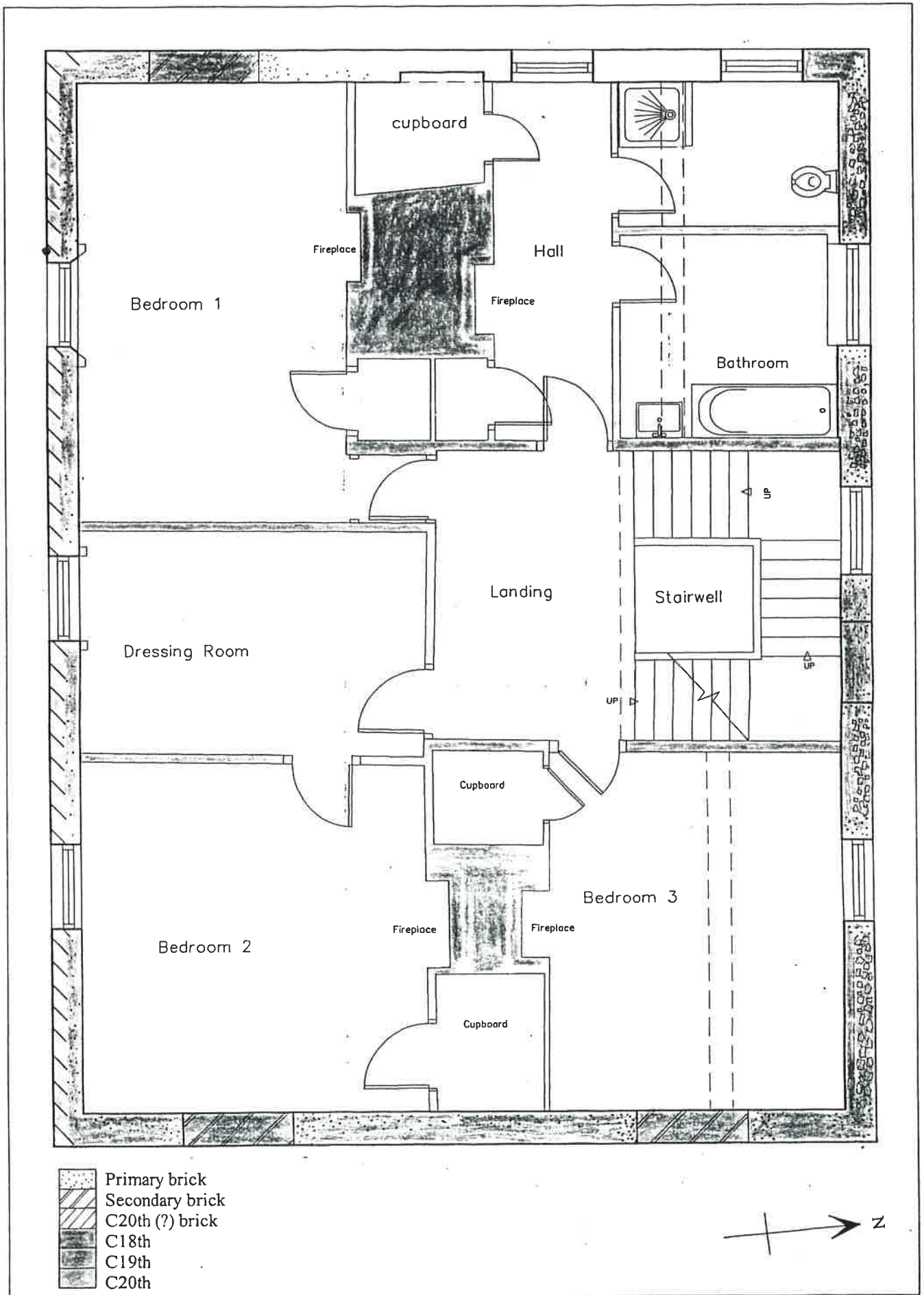
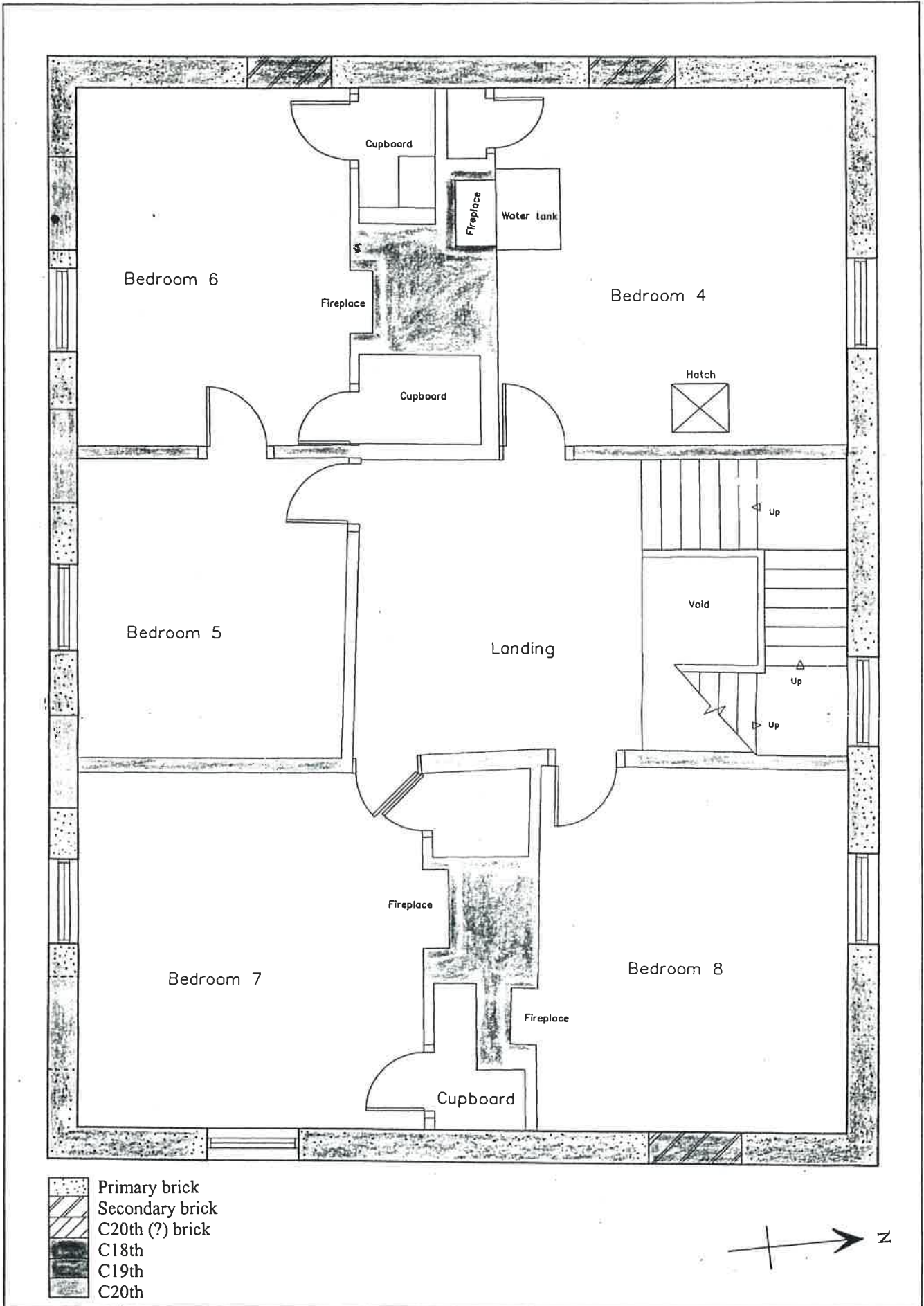


Figure 9: First floor plan









-  Primary brick
-  Secondary brick
-  C20th (?) brick
-  C18th
-  C19th
-  C20th



Figure10 Second floor plan



North elevation

West elevation

East elevation

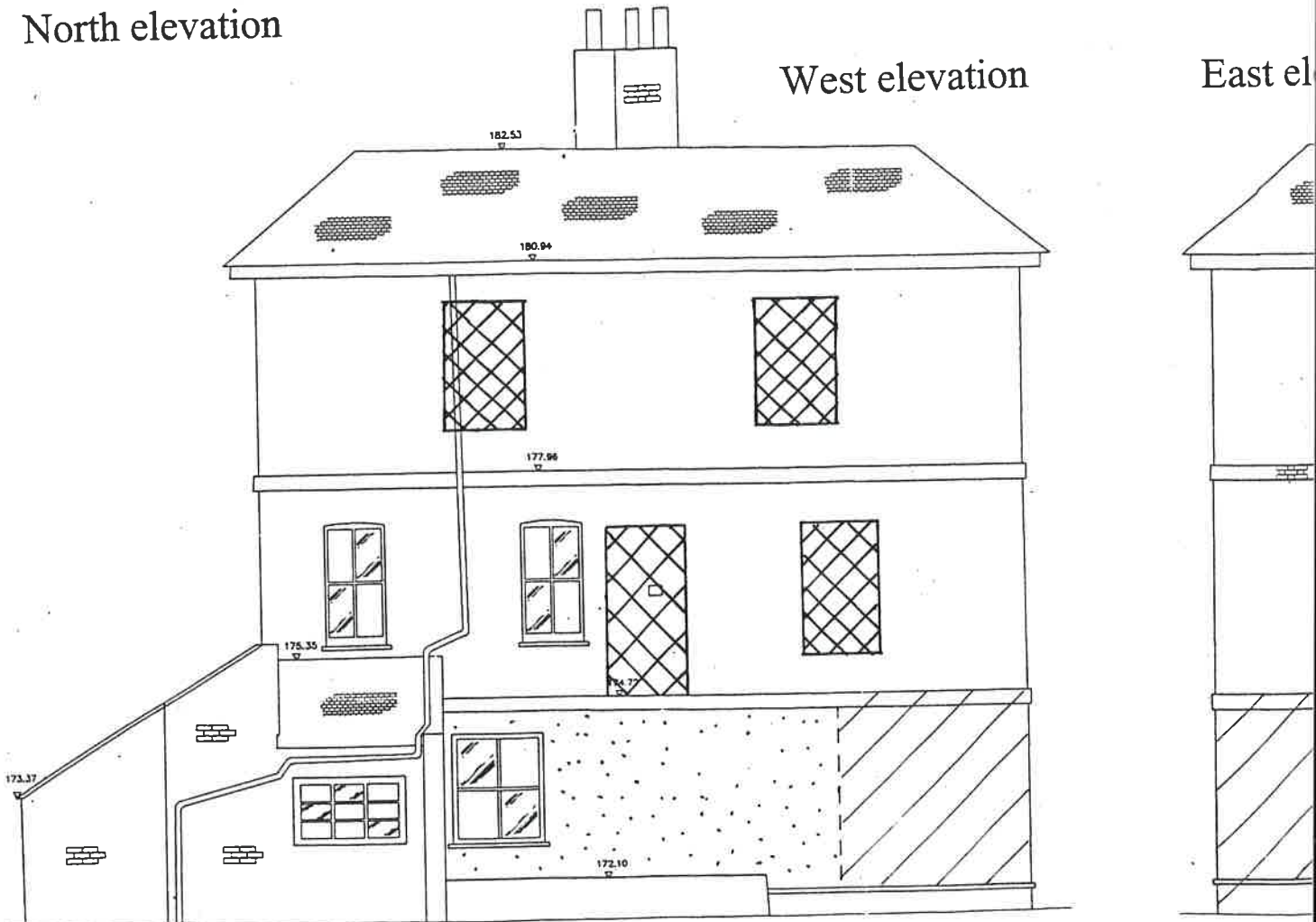




Plate 1: House from south-west



Plate 2: South front of house



Plate 3: West elevation of house



Plate 4: Building 2 and west side of house



Plate 5: Building 2 from north-east



Plate 6: North elevation of house



Plate 7: East elevation of house



Plate 8: Underside of ground floor within basement



Plate 9: vault within later basement



Plate 10: dining room



Plate 11: dresser within kitchen



Plate 12: fireplace within kitchen



Plate 13: Flint in north wall of parlour



Plate 14: base of staircase



Plate 15: Staircase between first and second floor



Plate 16: Bedroom 7 at SE corner of second floor



Plate 17: Landing at second floor level



Plate 18: Roof above Bedroom 4



Plate 19: South elevation of Building 4



Plate 20: North elevation of Building 4



Plate 21: Stables within Building 4



Plate 22: Area 6 from south



Plate 23: Shed at south end of Area 6



Plate 24: Building 7 from north-west



Plate 25: Building 8 from west



Plate 26: Interior of Building 8



Plate 27: Aisled barn (Building 9) from north-west



Plate 28: Truss within Building 9

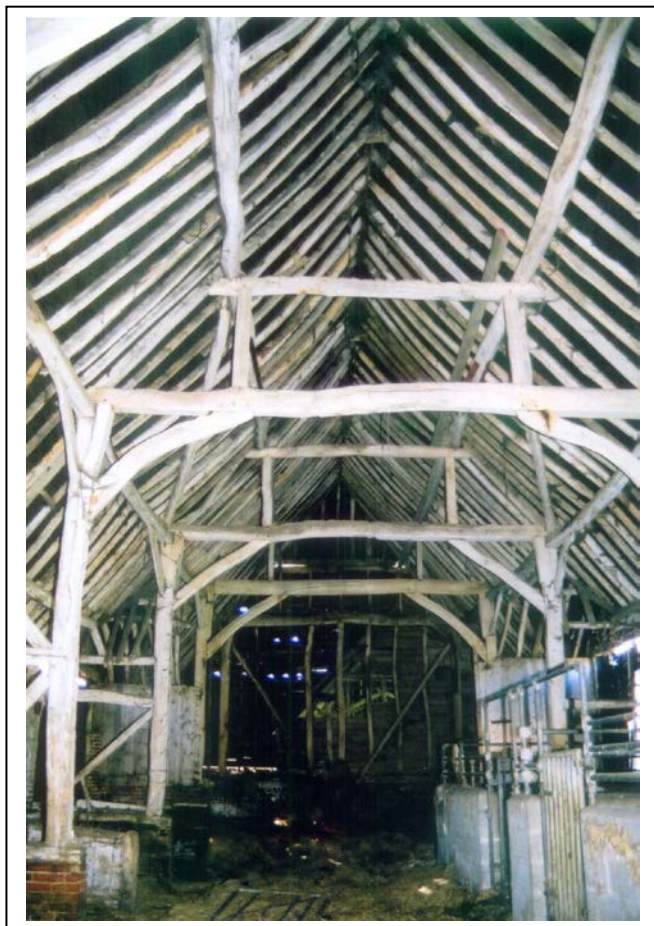


Plate 29: Interior of aisled barn (Building 9)



Plate 30: Building 10 from south-east



Plate 31: Roof truss in Building 10



Plate 32: Interior of cart shed looking east



Plate 33: Farm yard viewed from south



Plate 34: Building 11 from south-east



Plate 35: Building 11 from north-east



Plate 36: Truss in N-S range of Building 11



Plate 37: truss in E-W range of Building 11

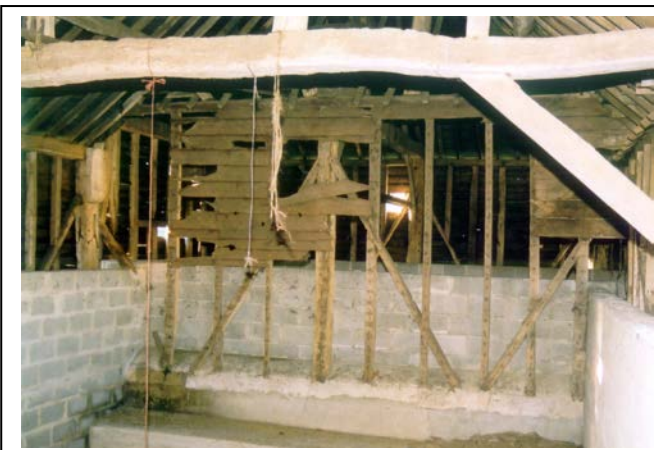


Plate 38: Formerly external E face of N-S range of Building 11



Plate 39: N wall (and datestone) of E-W range Building 11