



**Heritage Statement
Whitehouse Farm
Land Way
Higham
Kent
ME3 7JH**

NGR TQ 71782 72219 (centre)

Prepared for Mr Paul Giles

July 2024 V.2

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2019 Groundworks Archaeology was commissioned to produce a Heritage Statement for the farm complex at Whitehouse Farm, Land Way, Higham, Kent ME3 7JH.
- 1.2 The scope of this assessment includes the following:
 - Research of primary and secondary sources
 - Map regression
 - A description of the buildings present within the farm complex
 - An assessment of significance

2. SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 Whitehouse Farm is located within the parish of Higham. The site lies close to the outlying settlement of Lower Higham, which lies north of the main village of Higham, although it is set some distance from the main group of dwellings in the smaller settlement. Land Way, the dog-legged track which leads to Whitehouse Farm, forms two sides of a rectangle of roads which surrounds Higham Station; School Lane forms the western side of the rectangle and Lower Rochester Road forms the northern side. Whitehouse Farm lies to the east of Land Way, the house positioned on a slope leading down from the track and almost hidden from the lane by farm buildings. The site is centred on NGR TQ 71782 72219 at an approximate height of 35m AOD on a moderate slope to the north, where, a few miles to the north of the site the land flattens out in the Higham marshes (see figure 1).
- 2.2 The farmstead comprises of 15 buildings which are numbered individually on figure 2. The farm house is positioned at the north-east corner of the group of farm buildings, its principal elevation facing north, away from the farm yard. There are two historic barns bounding the site to the north and the east, with smaller subsidiary structures positioned between these buildings and Land Way.

3. PLANNING POLICY & LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Any decisions relating to Listed Buildings and their settings must address the statutory considerations of the 1990 Act (Sections 16 & 66) as well as satisfying relevant policies in the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.2 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990:
 - Section 66: In assessing planning applications the Local Planning Authority has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building

or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- Section 16: In assessing LBC applications the LPA shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- 3.3 Section 66 (1) creates a strong presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings and their setting and requires that considerable weight be given to the desirability of preservation.

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

- 3.4 Sustainable Development. There are three mutually dependent dimensions running through the NPPF – social, environmental and economic. There is an overriding presumption in favour of achieving sustainable development. A balanced decision is required and where the development proposals accord with the development plan, they should be approved without delay unless any adverse impacts of doing so, set out within Section 12, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

- 3.5 Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment sets out the planning policy context for assessing proposals that affect listed buildings and other heritage assets.

- Para. 126: LPAs are required to develop a positive strategy for conservation of the historic environment that includes taking account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets by putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

- Para.128: In determining applications LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's significance.

- Para.129: LPAs should use the assessment to consider the impact of a proposal and seek to minimise conflict. Case law has confirmed that where there is an impact this must be assessed and given appropriate weight.

- Para.132: In considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset great weight should be given to its conservation with a greater weight being placed where the asset has greater importance. Significance can be harmed by alteration, destruction or development within its setting. Any proposals that harm heritage assets require clear and convincing justification.

- Paras.133 & 134: set out the circumstances in which harm, substantial or less than substantial, could be considered acceptable.

- Para 134: Less than substantial harm - The harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Setting

- 3.6 Latest guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets is contained within: Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning No.3: Setting of Heritage Assets (2015) and Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning No.2: Managing significance in decision taking in the Historic Environment (2015).

Significance

- 3.7 Guidance on how to assess significance is contained within “Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance” (2008) – Framework for understanding and assessing significance of heritage assets (Historic England). Values can be evidential, historical, aesthetic or communal. The NPPF also includes slightly different definitions of values; archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

4. STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

- 4.1 Within the farm complex, there are two listed structures, the farmhouse and a barn which are both grade II.
- 4.2 Following discussion with the conservation officer (Allan Cox) we have assessed the statutory status of the other buildings within the farmyard complex as curtilage listed. This is where buildings, structures or objects are ‘deemed’ to be listed by virtue of being within the curtilage of a listed building. Curtilage listed buildings, structures and objects are afforded the same protection and restrictions imposed as a listed building with its own listing entry. (Curtilage is defined as the enclosed area of land around a dwelling. It is distinct from the dwelling by virtue of lacking a roof, but distinct from the area outside the enclosure in that it is enclosed within a wall or barrier of some sort. It is typically treated as being legally coupled with the dwelling it surrounds despite the fact that it might commonly be considered "outdoors".)
- 4.3 The list description for Whitehouse Farm: *“C16 or C17 from appearance of brickwork on north front and moulded beams internally. South front probably circa 1800. Two storeys and attic in gable on north front. Three sash windows. Upper floor with glazing bars. Bay on east front with quadrant brick sides. Early C19 stair semi-circular with swept handrail.”* (List entry number 1096337). The farmhouse is Grade II listed.
- 4.4 The list description for the barn *“C16 or C17. Probably contemporary with farmhouse. Weatherboarded. Tiled roof with added lights. Queen post roof.”* (List entry 1350230). The barn is grade II listed.
- 4.5 This latter description relates to the northern most barn which is perpendicular to the road.

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Historic farmsteads and their buildings are an integral part of rural settlement and the landscape and how it has changed over centuries.
- 5.2 Rural settlement in Kent is dominated by isolated farmsteads and hamlets. Very few farmsteads worked the land from villages, which mostly developed as service centres rather than agricultural communities. Most farmsteads can be seen in relation to the fields around them as well as orchards, woodland and other features in the landscape. The size and shape of these fields and their boundaries provide clues to their age. Small, irregular fields with large species-rich hedgerows are typical of ancient enclosure and usually associated with small-scale farmsteads, although in many areas farms and their fields were enlarged and amalgamated in later centuries. Regular fields with thorn hedges represent enclosure or re-organisation of earlier field patterns in the 18th and 19th centuries, often relating to larger scale farmsteads. The landscape around Whitehouse Farm is typical of a remodelled 18th and 19th century field pattern, although the farmstead itself is earlier dating to the 16th or 17th century based on the listed farmhouse and barn.
- 5.3 A critical factor in farmstead planning was the relationship of the farm buildings to the working areas within and around the farmstead and the farmhouse. The major working areas were trackways to surrounding fields and local markets, ponds and cart washes, the areas for the movement of vehicles and animals, the accommodation of animals and the platforms where hay and corn would be stacked, the latter prior to threshing in the barn. The size of the areas for stacking corn (known as rickyards in most of the country) varied according to local custom and the extent of arable crops kept on the farm.
- 5.4 Local tradition and status were the principal reasons for whether the house was accessed through the yard and buildings were attached, or whether the house looked toward or away from the yard. Internal access between dwelling house and farm buildings was a feature of farmyard architecture in much of Europe. However, in England from the 13th century it became much more common to have separate entrances, even where buildings and houses were joined. The role of women in the farmyard was commonly restricted to 'milking cows, feeding pigs and calves, making butter and cheese, tending poultry, and occasionally tending with the hay and corn harvests' (Whetham 1978,p.81). This led to the integration into the house of processes such as brewing and dairying, and a formal separation of the house and gardens from the farmyard, especially in the case of post-1750 remodelling's and larger farms typically over 150 acres. In such instances, the house could face toward its own home close or garden, as is the case with Whitehouse Farm.
- 5.5 Whitehouse Farm is a typical loose courtyard design, characterised by single or double yards flanked by buildings on three or four sides, with or without scatters of other farm buildings close by.

Map Regression

- 5.6 The earliest map which depicts the site is Greenwoods map of Kent dated 1821 (figure 3). It shows at least five buildings and that the farm is named Brick House. The detail is insufficient to allow any interpretation of the site.
- 5.7 The earliest detailed map is the Higham Tithe map of 1838 (figure 4). This records the presence of buildings 1,2,11 and 12 along with two further buildings that have since been demolished. It clearly shows the loose courtyard layout. The aisled barn at the south-east end of the farmyard is noticeably absent. The Tithe apportionment for plot 219 shows that the farm was owned by St John's College Cambridge and occupied by William Stuart. The plot is described as house buildings, barns, yards and garden.
- 5.8 The Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1866 (figure 5) shows considerably more detail and depicts individual buildings. The farmhouse (bld 1) appears to have been extended with its main aspect to the north facing away from the farmyard. The two south-eastern most structures present on the Tithe map have disappeared and a new courtyard arrangement created. Additionally, to those buildings present on the Tithe map this survey now shows the presence of buildings 3,4,5,10,13,14 and 15 along with a farmyard pond. A small structure is shown on the north-east gable end of building 5 which is likely to be a precursor to building 6.
- 5.9 The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map of 1897 (figure 6) shows little change to the farmyard layout but includes sufficient detail to show that buildings 12 and 14 were open fronted. Additional buildings are shown to the east of the farmhouse (bld 1) which are no longer present. The 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1908 (figure 7) again shows little change with the farmyard layout, although building 6 is now shown in its final form. By this time the farm has been re-named The White House.
- 5.10 The Ordnance Survey map of 1933 (figure 8) shows the addition of buildings 7 and 9 along with further structures flanking buildings 4 and 15 which are no longer extant. A modern grain store is also depicted beyond the southern perimeter of the site which although still present is no longer part of the existing property.
- 5.11 The Ordnance Survey map of 1960 (figure 9) shows the farmyard largely in its present form with the addition of building 8 against the south-west gable wall of building 5.

6. DESCRIPTION

- 6.1 The complex is a loose courtyard plan farmstead with evidence of incremental development from the 17th century through to the mid-20th century. This time depth and the presence of extensive re-used timbers within the main buildings are of high evidential value; there are few structures that are of a single phase.

Building 1, Farmhouse (plate 1)

- 6.2 The farmhouse has been thoroughly described in a Heritage Statement prepared by Archaeology South East in 2011 which concludes the farmhouse was first built in the late 16th to early 17th century and is not discussed further in this report.

Building 2, Aisled Barn (plates 2-9)

- 6.3 This barn is a timber framed aisled barn of six bays built on a brick plinth (now concrete rendered). The aisles comprise of a main wall post with a jowled head jointed to the wall plate and to the aisle tie which is also tenoned into the main arcade post. The sole plate is supported on a brick plinth. The eastern most two bays are partitioned off with horizontal planking laid on edge supported by half round split trunks. These bays support an upper floor of half round split timber joists supporting oak plank floorboards. This upper floor would have been open to the remaining full height barn but is now divided by a modern partition. The roof is of the Queen post type, although it is not visible for much of its length as modern boarding has been inserted in the roof space. There are now three large entrances, one with double doors and the two easternmost with modern up and over doors. The floor is of poured concrete which is slightly higher than the original.
- 6.4 The barn is weather boarded to the exterior with a peg tiled roof. Unusually there is no evidence for a porch or raised doorway suggesting that the original design was modified at some point when re-roofed. What appears to be a hint of a raised doorway on the middle up and over door is in fact a recent modification with the lower tiles removed and a brace inserted to support the frame for the up and over door. The weatherboarding is in generally poor condition, which is particularly evident on the western gable end. The roof tiling is also in poor condition.
- 6.5 The design of the barn with two lofted bays is typical of a combination barn housing both crop and stock (Martin and Martin 1982:59). Indeed the last agricultural use of this barn was for manure storage in the two eastern most partitioned bays while the western half of the barn was used for potato “chitting” (seeding) storage. The date of late 16th to early 17th century provided by the listing description conforms to the design and construction of the barn and is likely to be accurate.

Building 3, Grain Store (plates 10,11)

- 6.6 This building was constructed as a grain store and is supported on brick piers to protect the grain from damp and rodents. The building is timber framed and weatherboarded to the exterior with a red tiled roof. The interior is clad so that the original wall framing is not visible. The internal framework is of reused timbers that support a roof which has largely been rebuilt with a mixture of old hewn and new machine cut timber. This type of granary design first appears in

the late 18th century, prior to this date grain was customarily stored in an upper floor of the farmhouse. The map regression demonstrates that this particular granary was constructed between 1836 and 1866.

Building 4, Office (plates 12,13)

- 6.7 This structure also dates from between 1838 and 1866 and was designed as a stable. It has been recently refurbished and converted into an office. The interior framework is not visible but is presumably of a standard timber frame. The exterior is weatherboarded with a tiled roof.

Building 5, Aisled Barn (plates 14-17,19,20)

- 6.8 This barn is a timber framed aisled barn of five bays built on a brick plinth. As with the other aisled barn (building 2) the aisles comprise of a main wall post with a jowled head jointed to the wall plate and to the aisle tie which is also tenoned into the main arcade post. This is strengthened by the later addition of iron banding. The sole plate is supported on a brick plinth and there is evidence of timber partitioning between the aisle bays. There is a large raised doorway to the north-west elevation which would allow access for carts, the floor is of concrete. The roof is of the Queen post type and supports a red tiled roof (machine made tiles).
- 6.9 The structure is of a typical late 16th to early 17th century design. However, the map evidence suggests that this building was constructed on the site between 1838 and 1866. The timber framing appears to have been dismantled at some point and reconstructed, which suggests that this barn was moved from another site, a theory supported by anecdotal evidence. The most recent agricultural use for this barn was as a hay barn, and it is likely that this was its original purpose.
- 6.10 The timber framing is in excellent condition; however, the weatherboarding is in poor order with many gaps. The roof is also in poor condition with missing tiles and no longer weathertight.

Building 6, Animal Cover (plates 17-18)

- 6.11 This lean-to structure is of simple construction with machine cut framework supporting a timber shiplap roof and external weatherboarding; the floor is of concrete. A small building is shown in this location on the OS 1st edition map of 1866, which by 1897 extended to the full length of the gable wall. The present structure is much decayed to the point where only the eastern most end survives. The surviving timbers are all machine cut some of which have clearly been replaced recently. The last working use of this structure was as an animal cover.

Building 7, Animal Cover (plates 19-21)

- 6.12 This structure is another simple lean-to built on a breeze block which supports a shallow pitch roof springing from the wall plate of building 5. The roof timbers are modern machine cut and the floor is of beaten earth. This structure was

built as an animal cover in the early 20th century and first appears on the OS map of 1933. It is likely that it was originally an entirely timber construction with the outer wall replaced by breeze blocks in the mid 20th century.

Building 8, Machine Repair Workshop (plates 19,22),

- 6.13 This structure was built in the 1950s as a machine repair workshop; it is of simple breeze block construction built abutting the south-west gable end of building 5. It has a corrugated apex roof and double sliding doors.

Building 9, Winter Animal Cover (plates 23,24)

- 6.14 This building is a lean-to structure built onto the original farmyard flint boundary wall. It is constructed from modern machine cut timber and is open fronted with a beaten earth floor. The upright timbers supporting the open front are set into concrete pads and the roof is of corrugated tin. This building was built as an animal winter cover in the early 20th century, a function that was maintained until the farm ceased operation.

Building 10, Grain Dryer (plates 25-31)

- 6.15 As originally designed, this building was a rectangular structure built in flint with brick reveals and a tiled roof. It was constructed between 1838 and 1866. It was latterly extended to the south-west with the addition of a concrete hopper for offloading of grain, with a further extension to the north-west in fletton brickwork and an asbestos roof (this latter extension post-dates 1960). The building was used for offloading grain and drying.

Building 11, Cart Shed (plates 32-34)

- 6.16 This structure is an open fronted timber shelter built on a breeze block plinth. The timber framing is entirely modern with weatherboarding to the exterior, a corrugated tin roof and a beaten earth floor. Although the present structure is modern, a building is shown on the same footprint on the Tithe map of 1838. The location, facing out of the yard and located next to the entrance, is typical of an 18th -19th century cart shed. Although the present structure is a rebuild it maintained its original function and was used as a vehicle store until the farm ceased working.

Building 12, Covered Animal Shelter (plates 35,36)

- 6.17 This structure was built as a lean-to against the original flint farmyard boundary wall. The upright timbers supporting the open face are set into concrete pads and support a simple roof structure of modern machine timber rafters secured with screw and nails with a corrugated asbestos roof. This building is present on the Tithe map of 1838, although much of the structure has been replaced. The upright timbers supporting the open front are tree-nailed and appear to be the originals (or at least 19th century).
- 6.18 This building was designed as a covered animal shelter and retained the same function until the farm ceased operation.

Building 13, Cart Shed (plates 37-40)

- 6.19 This open fronted structure is of a similar design to building 12. The machine cut timber frame is supported to the rear on a concrete plinth and is weather boarded externally with a corrugated tin roof. A building is first shown in this location on the 1866 OS map but post dates 1838. The present structure is almost entirely 20th century and was probably entirely rebuilt. Its latter function was a cart/van store, although its position (and design if reflective of the original) would suggest that it originated as an animal cover.

Building 14, Winter Animal Cover (plates 41-43)

- 6.20 This building is of entirely modern construction having been recently rebuilt. However, it was originally constructed as a mirror of building 9 and used as a winter animal cover. The north-east wall is the original flint boundary wall of the farmyard and it was likely open fronted.

Building 15, Coal and Wood Store (plates 44-46)

- 6.21 This structure is again built against the original flint farmyard boundary wall and is constructed in red brick with a tile roof. It is divided into three rooms each with their own separate door to the exterior, narrow slit windows are present to provide ventilation. This building was constructed between 1838 and 1866 and was latterly used as a coal and wood store. Its location facing the farmhouse suggests that this may have also been its original function.

7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 7.1 The basis of this written assessment of significance follows Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008) which are applied to understanding a building and its setting. The Historic England guidelines for assessing significance include the following values, any one or more of which may be contained within a building or historic site: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.

- 7.2 Some buildings or farmsteads have the potential for special significance when compared to farmsteads and their landscapes in other parts of England. Of particular rarity and significance are:

"Any 18th century or earlier buildings, pre-1700 examples including evidence for timber framing (often encased in later brick or stone walling) being extremely rare by national standards." (Historic England)

- 7.3 The group is of **high significance** as there are elements which date from the late 16th to early 17th century, including the farmhouse and barn (building 2).
- 7.4 The group contains buildings with a number of different functions. **The evidence for many different uses contained on the site adds considerably to the significance of the farmstead.** Retention of the early buildings is desirable. removal of some of the later buildings and additions would positively enhance or better reveal its significance.

- 7.5 The presence of both timber and flint/brick farm building represents periods of remodelling from the 19th and 20th centuries. It adds to the texture and historic interest of a site and aids our ease of understanding multiple phases of development.

Historical Value

- 7.6 English Heritage Conservation Principles states:

“Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative ... The perception of a place as a link between past and present people – is different from purely evidential value... Association with a notable family, person, event, or movement gives historical value a particular resonance...The use and appropriate management of a place for its original purpose illustrates the relationship between design and function, and so may make a major contribution to its historical values. If so, cessation of that activity will diminish those values and, in the case of some specialised landscapes and buildings, may essentially destroy them.”

- 7.7 The historical value of the site is as a farm that has been managed for much of the past 100 years by the same family, demonstrating both continuity of use and adaptation to the changing farming landscape. Although the site is no longer a working farm it retains much of its original identity.

Architectural and Aesthetic Significance

- 7.8 English Heritage Conservation Principles states:

“Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Aesthetic values can be the result of the conscious design of a place, including artistic endeavour. Design value relates primarily to the aesthetic qualities generated by the conscious design of a building, structure or landscape as a whole. It embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship”.

- 7.9 The buildings have a certain charm and aesthetic value derived from their loose grouping around their respective courtyards and intrinsic character, exhibiting patterns of successive alteration and adaptation.

Evidential Value

- 7.10 English Heritage Conservation Principles states:

“Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.”

- 7.11 The farm complex embodies evidential value within the arrangement of buildings around the foldyard and the plan form, which reveals how the

buildings functioned together as a complex, and the interrelationships between the various buildings on the site.

Bibliography

English Heritage: 2006 "Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement - South East region"

English Heritage: 2008 "Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance"

Kent Farmsteads Guidance 2003. Part 3: Kent Farmsteads Character Statements

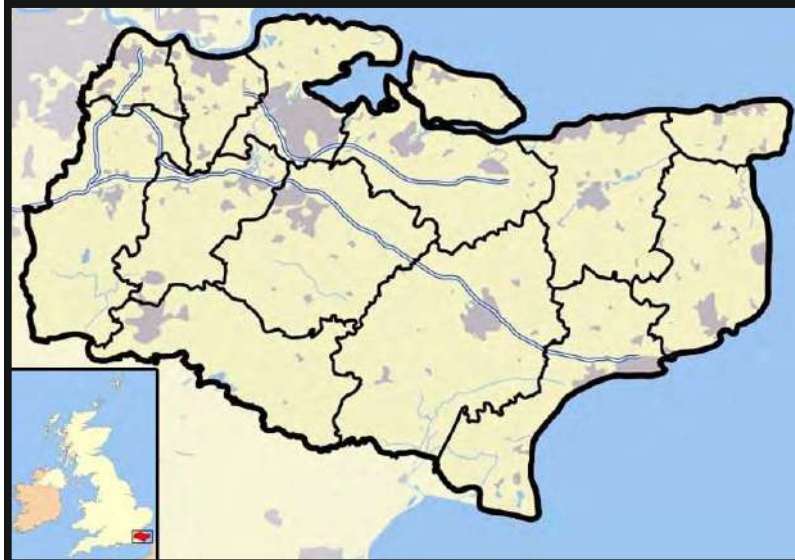
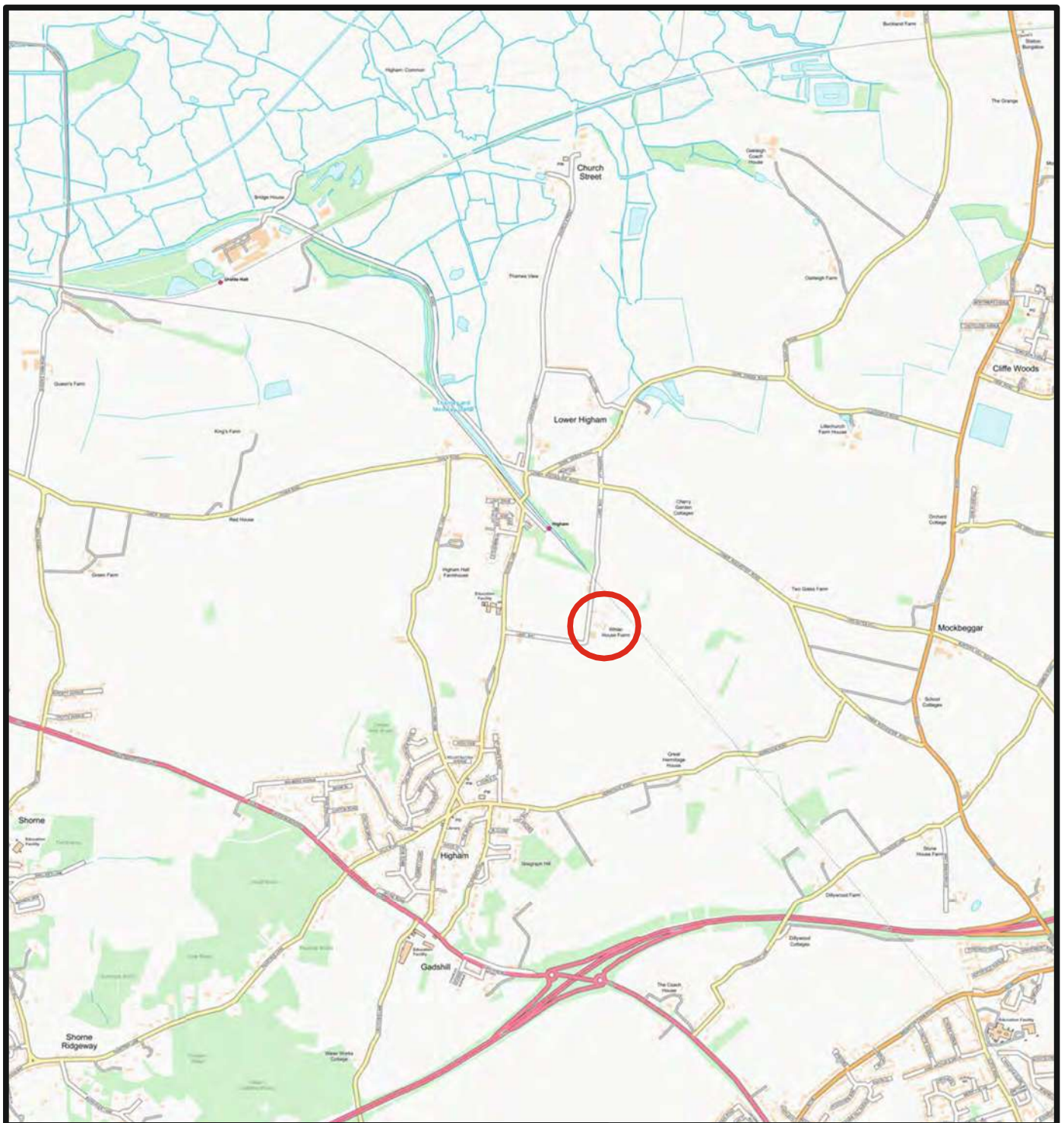


Figure 1 Site Location

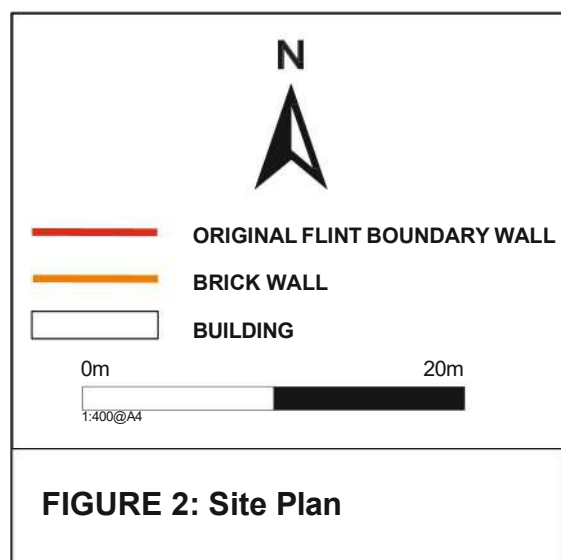
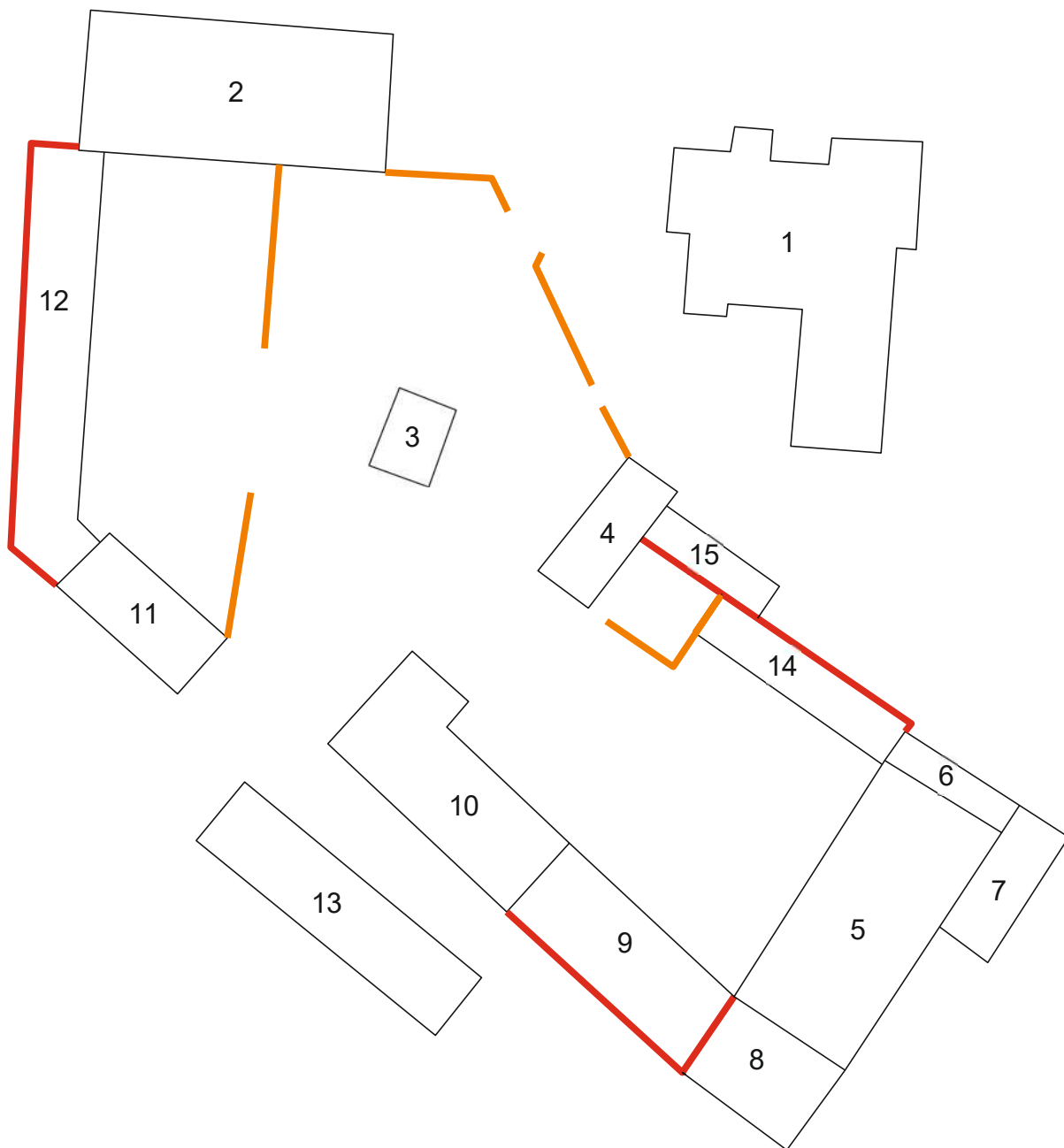




Figure 3: Greenwood's Map of Kent 1821

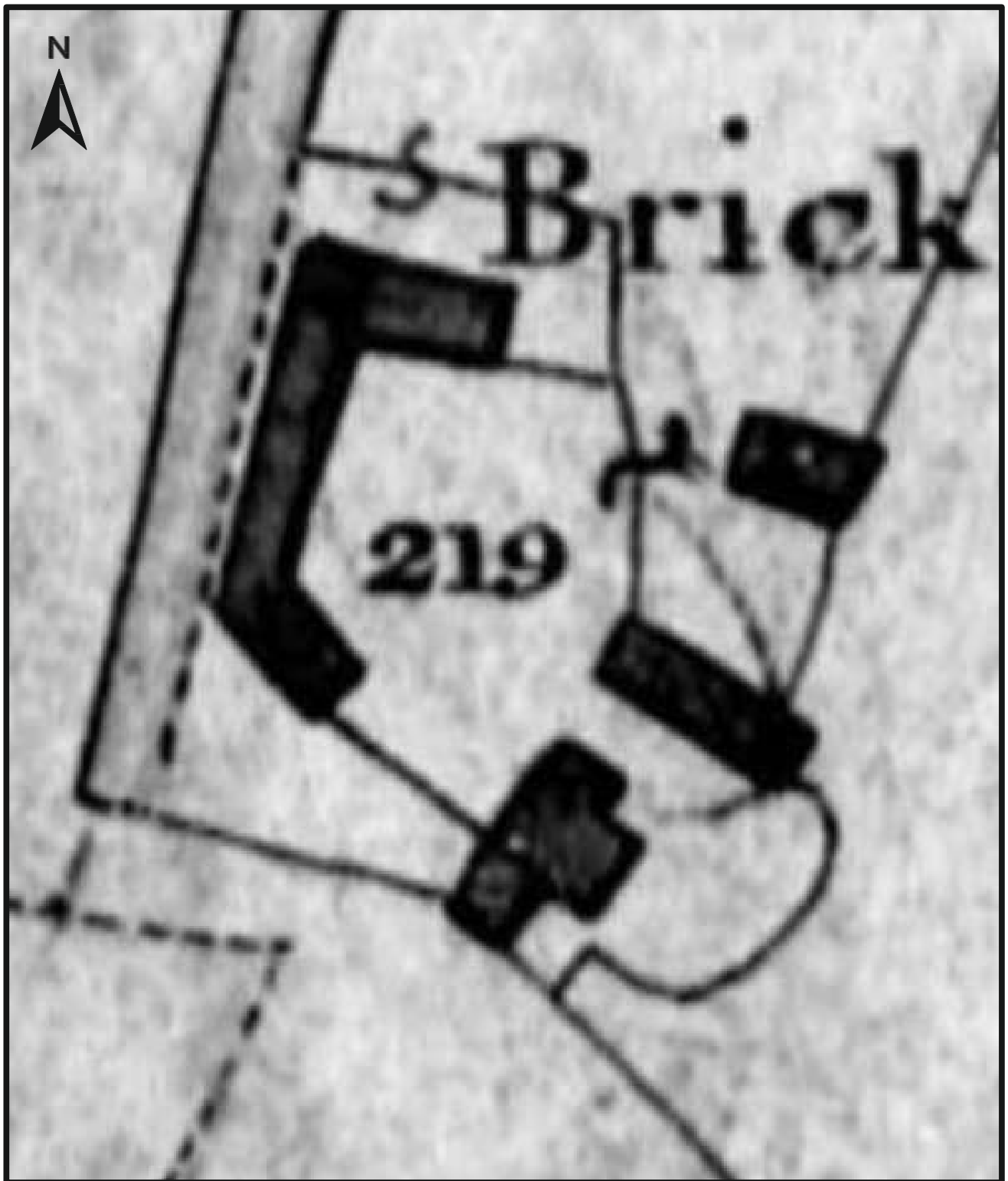


Figure 4: Higham Tithe Map 1838

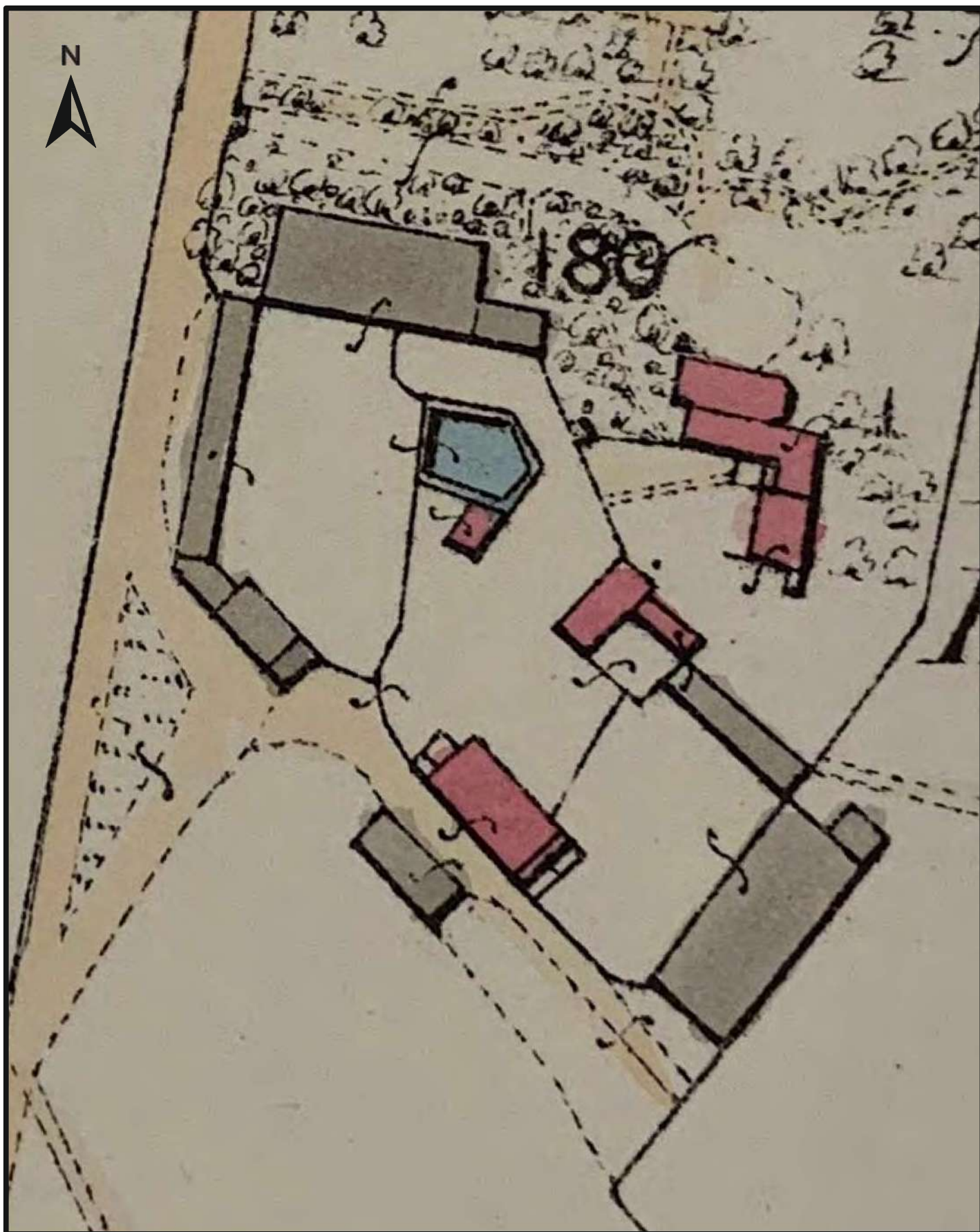


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey 25"1st ed map 1866, sheet XI.9

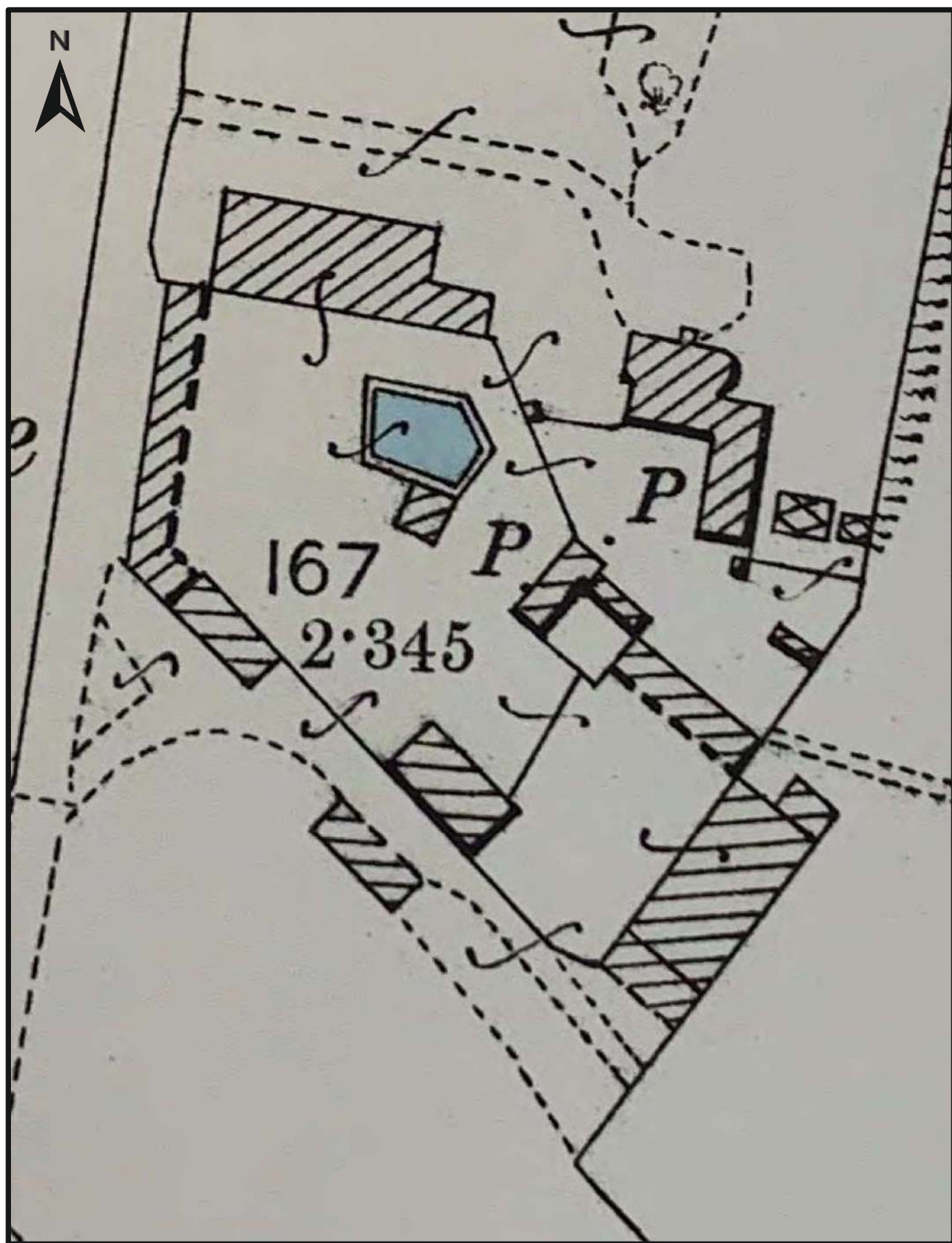


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey 25" 2nd ed map 1897, sheet XI.9



Figure 7: Ordnance Survey 25" 3rd ed map 1908, sheet XI.9

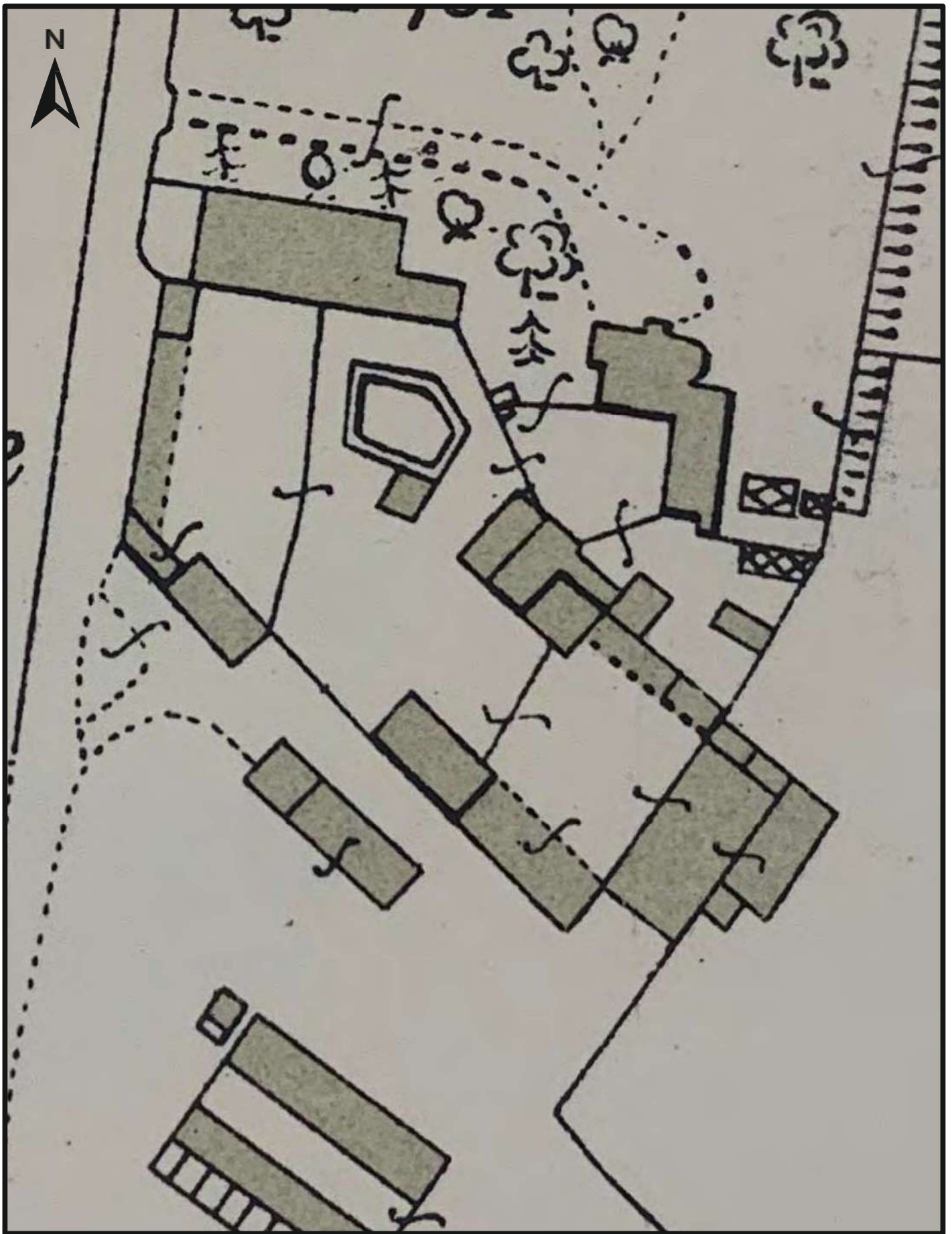


Figure 8: Ordnance Survey 25" map 1933, sheet XI.9

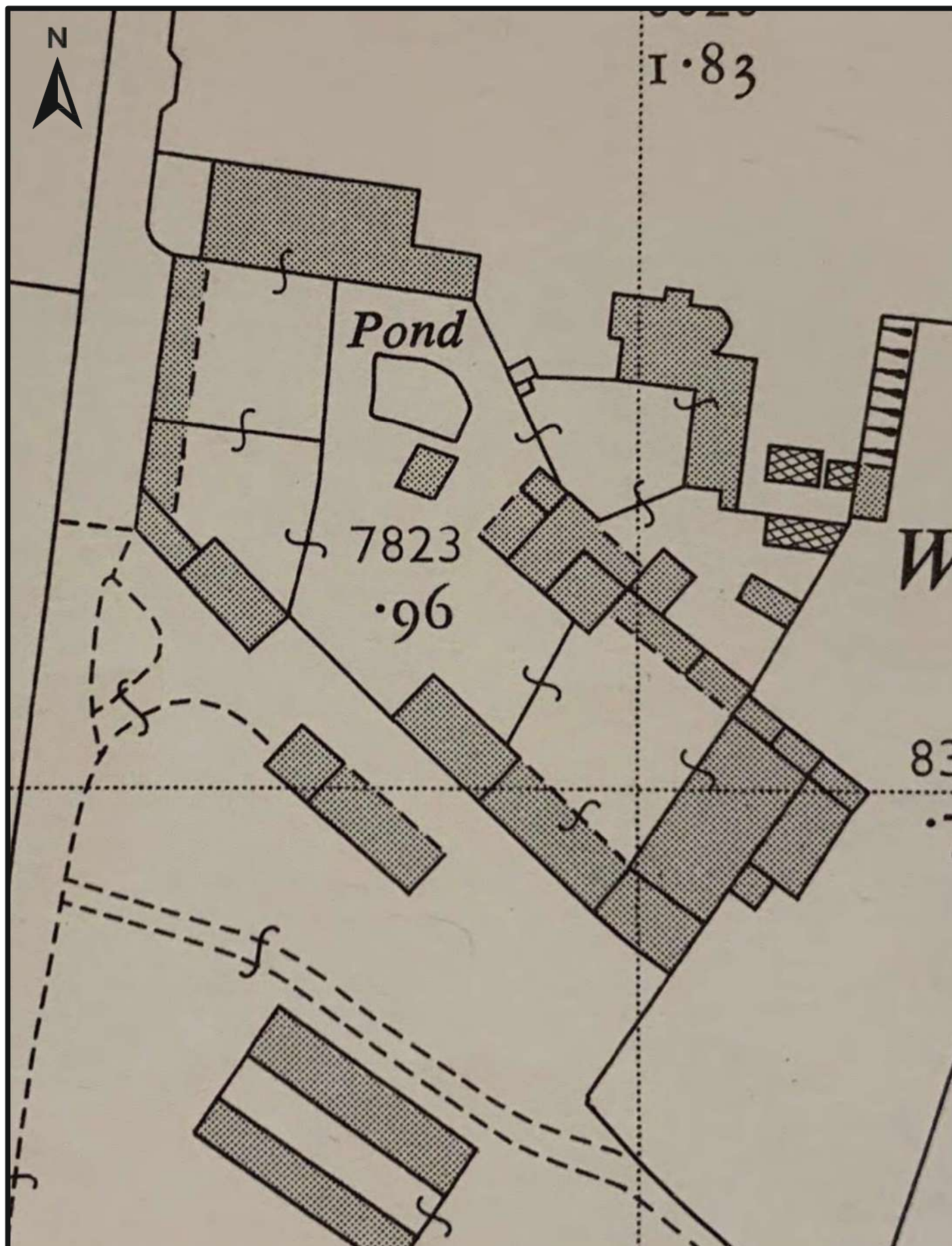
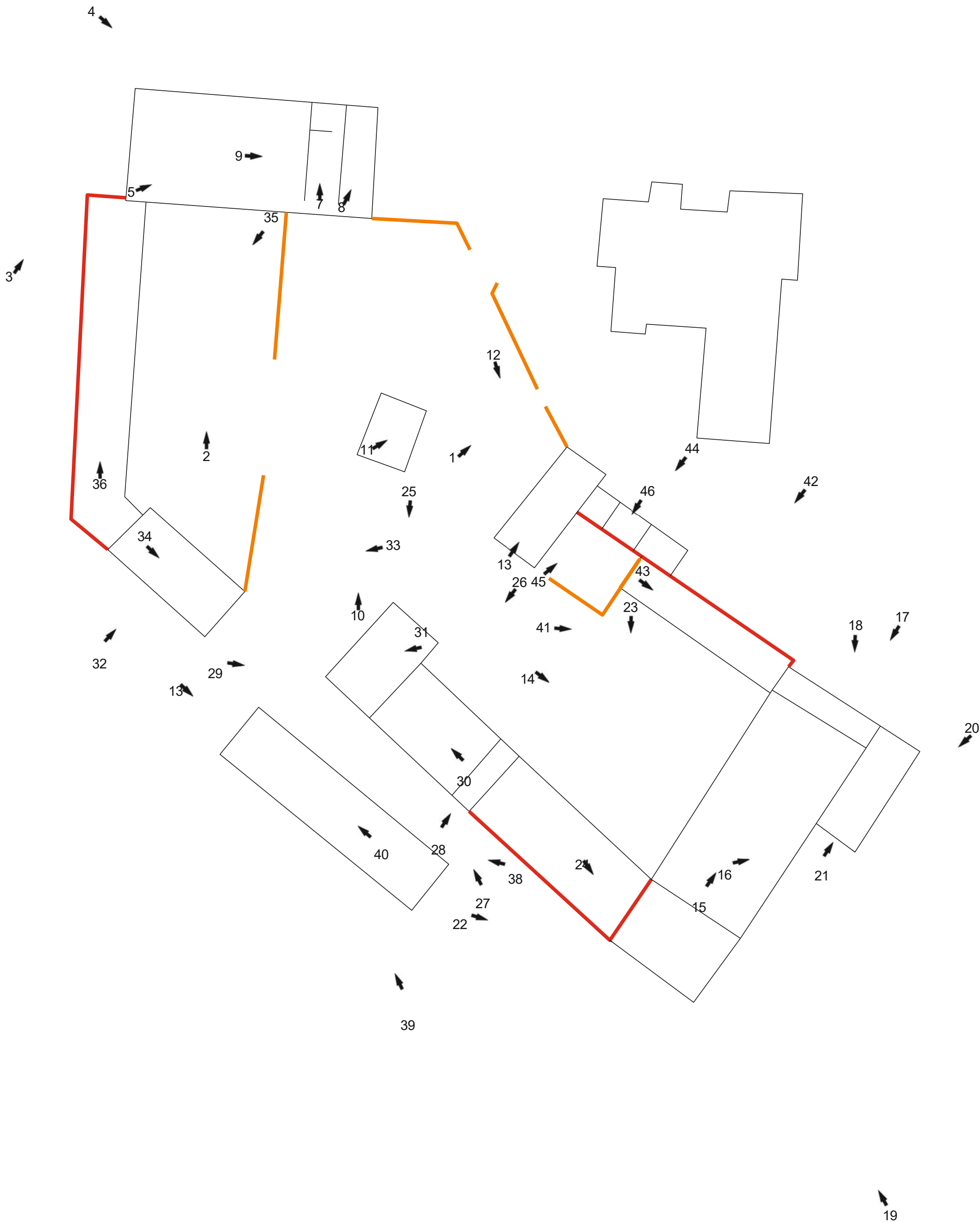


Figure 9: Ordnance Survey 1:2500, 1960, sheet TQ7072-7172



Appendix 1: Plates



Plate 1: View of building 1 farmhouse looking north-east



Plate 2: Building 2 looking north



Plate 3: Building 2 looking north-east



Plate 4: Building 2 looking south-east



Plate 5: Interior of building 2 looking north-east



Plate 6: Interior of building 2 looking north-west



Plate 7: Interior of building 2 looking north

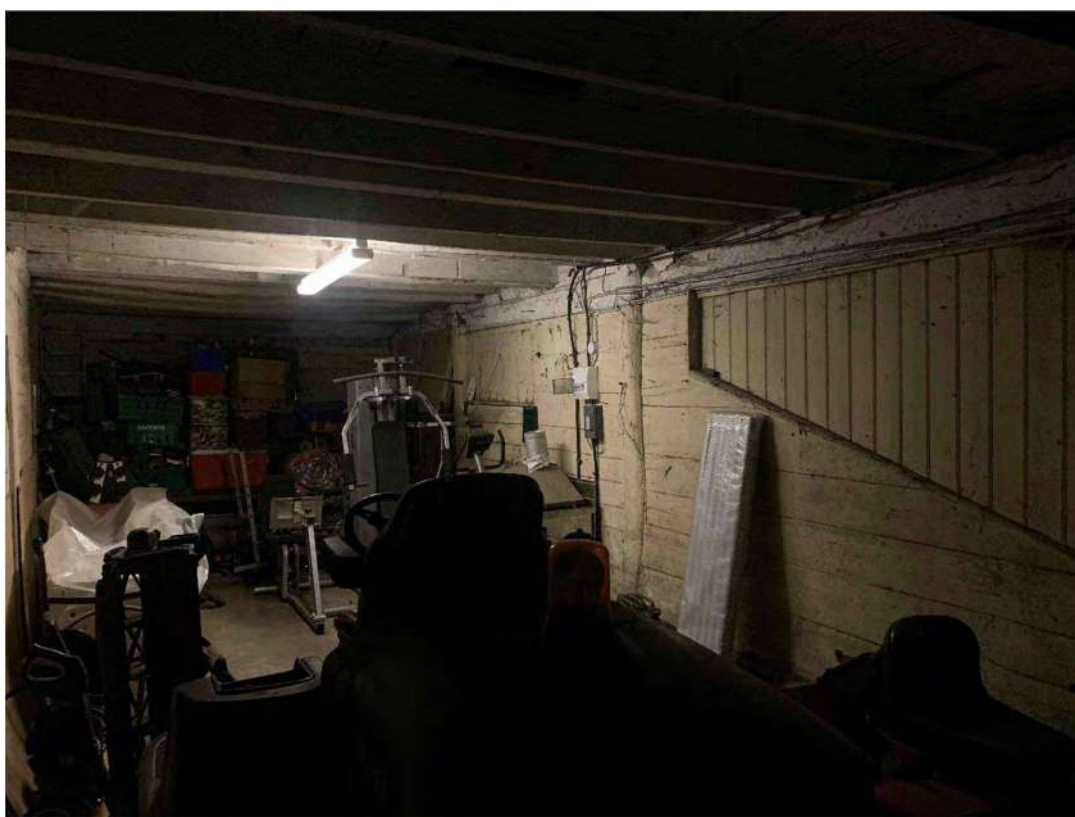


Plate 8: Interior of building 2 looking north-east



Plate 9: Roof structure of building 2 looking east



Plate 10: Building 3 looking north



Plate 11: Interior of building 3 looking north-east



Plate 12: Building 4 looking south-east



Plate 13: Interior of building 4 looking north-east



Plate 12: Building 5 looking south-east



Plate 15: Interior of building 5 looking north-east



Plate 16: Detail of building 5 timber framing



Plate 17: Building 6 looking south-west



Plate 18: Building 6 looking south



Plate 19: Building 7 and 8 looking north



Plate 20: Building 7 looking south-west



Plate 21: Interior of building 7 looking north-east



Plate 22: Building 8 looking south-east



Plate 23: Building 9 looking south



Plate 24: Interior of building 9 looking south-east



Plate 25: Building 10 looking south



Plate 26: Building 10 looking south-west



Plate 27: Building 10 looking north



Plate 28: Detail of hopper at rear of building 10



Plate 29: Building 10 looking east



Plate 30: Interior of building 10 looking north-west

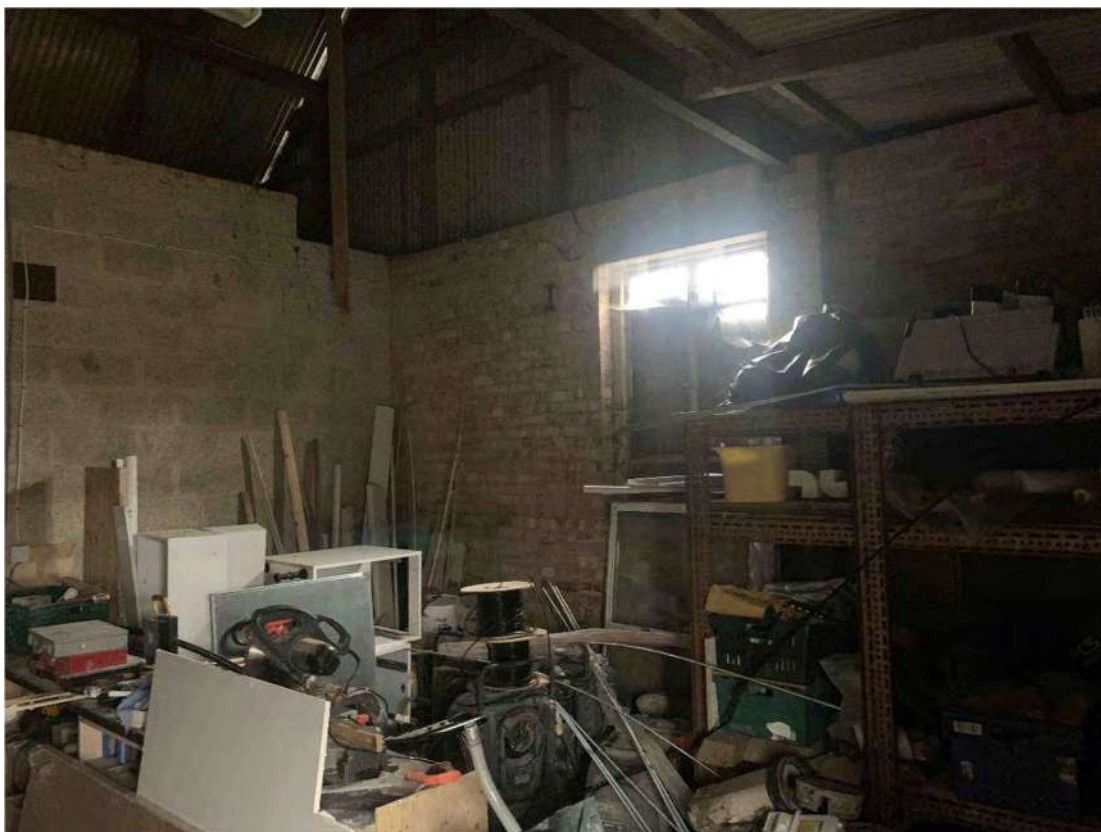


Plate 31: Interior of building 10 looking west



Plate 32: Building 11 looking north-east



Plate 33: Building 11 looking west



Plate 34: Interior of building 11 looking south-east



Plate 35: Building 12 looking south-west



Plate 36: Interior of building 12 looking north



Plate 37: Building 13 looking south-east



Plate 38: Building 13 looking west



Plate 39: Building 13 looking north-west



Plate 40: Interior of building 13 looking north-west



Plate 41: Building 14 looking east



Plate 42: Building 14 looking south-west



Plate 43: Interior of building 14 looking south-east



Plate 44: Building 15 looking south-west



Plate 45: Building 15 looking north-east



Plate 46: Interior of building 15 looking south-west