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RECTORY FARM BUILDINGS,  
MAIN STREET  
LOWER BENEFIELD

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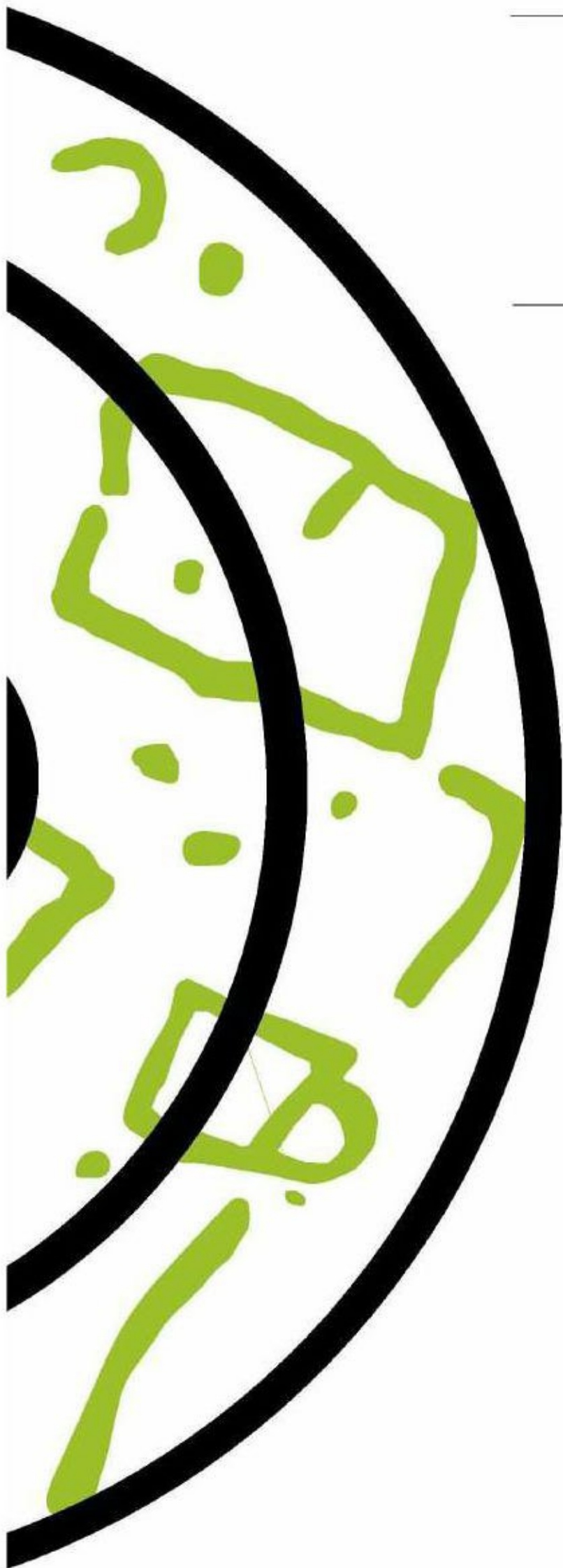
HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY

Grid Ref: SP989886  
Planning Application: 18/02408/FUL  
Oasis ID: contourg1-419435

Prepared for:  
Best Asset Ltd

By Neil Jefferson BSc (Hons) at  
Contour Archaeology  
Edited by Carol Duxbury

April 2021



## Rectory Farm Buildings, Main Street, Lower Benefield

NGR: SP 9888 9564

Planning Application: 18/02408/FUL

Version: 1

Report Number: 256

Site Code: RFUB21

### *Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation*

	<b><i>Contents</i></b>	<b><i>Page</i></b>
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Definition of Historic building Recording	1
3.0	Legislation	1
4.0	Location	1
5.0	Methodology	2
6.0	Archaeological and Historical Context	3
7.0	Map Regression	5
8.0	Results	5
9.0	Discussion and Conclusions	5
10.0	Acknowledgements	7
11.0	References	7
12.0	Site Archive	7

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### ***Illustrations***

Figure 1	General location map
Figure 2	Site location map
Figure 3	Site Layout
Figure 4	Building Plans
Figure 5	Elevations 1-4
Figure 6	Photo direction plan
Figure 7	1885 and 1899 OS maps

### **Appendix A: Colour Plates**

### **Appendix B: Oasis**

## **Summary**

A Level 2 Historic Building Survey was undertaken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 on the farm building at Rectory Farm Buildings, Main Street, Lower Benefield, henceforth called the site. The works comprised the written description and photographic recording of the building, making use of survey drawings independently commissioned by the client. The works were conducted as defined by a brief produced by the Senior Archaeological Officer for Northamptonshire County Council.

### **1.0 Introduction**

Permission has been granted by East Northamptonshire Council for: Conversion of listed farm buildings to create 3 dwellings together with demolition of modern agricultural buildings and construction of 2 new build dwellings at Rectory Farm Buildings, Main Street, Lower Benefield (18/02408/FUL).

This document summarises the results of the historic building recording and the historical research undertaken. It has been prepared by the author in accordance with the agreed written scheme of investigation and relevant regional and national guidance.

### **2.0 Definition of Historic Building Recording**

The definition of historic building recording is 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specific building, structure, or complex and its setting, including its buried components on land or under water.'

Level 2 is a descriptive record, made in circumstances similar to those of Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require any fuller record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and interior will be viewed, described, and photographed. The record will present conclusions regarding the building's development and use but will not discuss in detail the evidence on which these conclusions are based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project.

### **3.0 Legislation**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) states: Local Planning Authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and their impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

### **4.0 Location**

Lower Benefield is approximately 5km west of Oundle, in the County of Northamptonshire and Local Authority District of East Northamptonshire (fig.1).

The site is located north of Causin Way and west of the A427, centred on SP 9888 9564 and is within the confines of the Lower Benefield Conservation Area (figs.2).

The solid geology consists of Mudstone of the Blisworth Clay Formation 166 to 168 million years ago in the Jurassic Period (BGS 2021).

## **5.0 Methodology**

This document has been prepared in accordance with current best practice and with specific regard to:

- National Policy Framework, 2019 (NPPF).
- Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice, English Heritage
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (CIFA) Code of Conduct (2020)
- Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Standing Building Recording (Institute for Archaeologists, 2014)
- Management of Research projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE, 2015).

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the project was to preserve by record the fabric and setting of the building prior to the approved alterations, by:

1. The production of a drawn record
2. The production of a photographic archive
3. The production of a written narrative

## **Site Recording**

The Photographic record was undertaken using digital photography. It included detailed shots of the elevations, interiors, significant constructional elements, and general photography placing the building in its existing landscape setting.

The drawn record was based upon drawings supplied by the client. These were checked for dimensional accuracy and amended to record architectural and constructional details where necessary. These details were further described in accordance with standard architectural and constructional terminology.

The building was inspected internally and externally where safe access was possible. Parts of the building contained stored materials which restricted access in places; the upper storey was not inspected due to unsafe access.

## **Archive creation**

All field notes and drawings were checked for completeness and ordered into a documentary archive based on the requirements of the receiving museum. The basic archive includes:

1. Annotated site plans and elevations
2. 2 no photographic registers
3. 4 no building recording pro-formas
4. The Written Scheme of Investigation
5. The Report

A basic archival study was undertaken to elucidate information to place the building in its historical context. This was undertaken broadly with regard to the Standard and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessment. This comprised the search of published and archival material within a radius of 1km of the site, with data from further afield included where considered relevant to establishing baseline conditions. National and regional archives and collections were examined for relevant historical information, in published and unpublished sources, from the following sources:

- [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)
- [www.listedbuildingsonline.co.uk](http://www.listedbuildingsonline.co.uk)
- [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)
- [www.genuki.org](http://www.genuki.org).

## **6.0 Archaeological and Historical Context**

### **Rectory Farm**

The farmhouse and attached farm buildings are a listed building (II) dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The farmhouse is 2 storeys and is constructed in limestone with limestone mortar and has a Collyweston slate roof. The main house was built in 1877/8.

### **Medieval**

Located 300m to the southwest of the site is Benefield castle, thought to have been built in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century during the civil wars. It appears to have had a short life described in 1298 as an old castle and by 1315 as the site of the castle. The last remaining wall disappeared in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The remains include a rectangular platform upon which are visible slight earthworks thought to indicate the remains of the castle's defensive, domestic and agricultural buildings. The platform is surrounded by a broad ditch, representing the original moat. This in turn is surrounded by an earthen bank. The castle is thought to have originated as a defended manor, later superseded by a manor house constructed a short distance to the north east.

Approximately 300m south of the site earthworks form the remains of a possible medieval/post medieval settlement. The field directly to the north of the site contains ridge and furrow cultivation.

### **Modern**

Approximately 230m southwest of the site is the Church of St. Mary. Although the church has a medieval origin the building was largely rebuilt in 1847 by John Macduff Derick for the Watts-Russell family of Biggin Hall.

## **7.0 Description**

### **Map Regression**

Two historic maps were studied for this report, the 1885 and 1899 Ordnance Survey 25" series. Each map clearly shows the buildings. The 1899 map also shows a building to the south, which appears to have been removed before the current modern building was built.

## **Setting**

For this report the buildings will be referred to as Buildings A, B, C, D, E and F. All the buildings are to the east of the main house.

## **8.0 Results**

This section summarises the observations of the fabric record illustrated in the figures and plates 1-31.

### **Building A Exterior**

This structure is rectangular in plan, single storey in height. The western wall contains 4 red brick (9" x 3") with lime mortar arches, the northern arch infilled later with a red brick (8.75" x 3") and wood barn door. To the south of the arches there is a brick 8.75" x 3" in Flemish bond with lime mortar built wall and open entrance. The remaining three walls are constructed from limestone and lime mortar. The roof is gabled and under slate on the eastern side and a mixture of corrugated cement/asbestos sheeting on the western side. There is no window on the exterior of this structure.

### **Building A Interior**

The main structure comprises of three rooms, southern middle and northern.

The Southern room is 12.00 sqm in area with a badly worn concrete floor and the lower 1m of the wall has a concrete slip over the brick and stone. The roof is constructed with rafters, collars and butt purlin supported on timber king post trusses. The northern wall of this room is built later and is constructed with red brick (8.75" x 3") with lime mortar constructed in Flemish bond. This wall also contains two openings with metal barred gates. In the northeast corner of the room is a concrete triangular trough.

The Middle room is 35 sqm in size with a badly worn concrete floor. The roof is the same as above. The northern and southern walls are both later additions constructed in red brick (8.75" x 3") with lime mortar in Flemish bond. The lower 1.5m of the northern brick wall is covered in a concrete slip and has a small concrete platform.

The northern room is 13 sqm in size with a badly worn concrete floor. The roof is the same as above. All the walls are covered in a layer of concrete up to 1.5m from the ground, with metal rings inset into it. The upper part of the northern wall was a red brick (8.75" x 3") with lime mortar constructed in Flemish bond.

### **Building B Exterior**

This structure is rectangular in plan, single storey in height. Its two external walls are constructed from limestone and lime mortar. The northern wall contains a large 2.5m wide x 2.05 high double wooden door. The altered stonework on this wall indicates that this would have been an extra 0.7m wider before the current door. The roof is gabled and under slate and there is no window on the exterior of this structure.

### **Building B Interior**

Room is 25.00 sqm in area with a badly worn concrete floor and concrete slip (lower 1.5m) over the brick and stone. The roof is constructed with rafters, collars and butt purlin supported on timber king post trusses.

### **Building C Exterior**

This structure is rectangular in plan, single storey in height. The walls are constructed from limestone and lime mortar. The roof is gabled and under slate on the northern side and a mixture of corrugated cement/asbestos sheeting on the southern side. Along the northern wall there is a wooden stable door with two ventilation slits either side. The centre of the southern wall also contained a stable door but had wooden slatted windows on either side.

### **Building C Interior**

Room is 35.00 sqm in area with a concrete floor and concrete slip cover (lower 1m) over the brick and stone. The roof is constructed with rafters, collars and butt purlin supported on timber king post trusses. The room contained modern metal fenced pig pens.

### **Building D Exterior**

This structure is rectangular in plan, single storey c.7.8m height. The walls are constructed from limestone and lime mortar with red brick and cement repairs. The roof is gabled and under Collyweston slate. Six windows have been created in the roof from plastic sheeting. The northern wall contains a large 3.4m wide x 3.5m high sliding wooden door and two ventilation slits. The southern wall has a much smaller sliding wooden door measuring 2.5m wide x 2.5m high. This originally was an arched doorway which was later replaced by a wooden beam with stone in-filling the gap. The western wall contained a small hatch/shoot next to a blocked off doorway, which was infilled with stone and lime mortar.

### **Building D Interior**

Room is 35.00 sqm in area with a badly worn concrete floor. The roof is constructed with rafters, collars and butt purlin supported on timber king post trusses. In the gable end of the western wall there is a small rectangular door, possibly an access point to the covered walkway on the other side. The eastern end of the building had concrete slip coating the walls on the lower c.3m of the wall.

### **Building E and F Exterior**

Buildings E and F are connected on the northern side of building E and both are rectangular in shape. The northern wall is red brick (8.75" x 3") with lime mortar construction with 4 red brick (9" x 3") and concrete pillars. The brick in-filling appears to be of a later date and this wall would have originally been open with just the pillars supporting the roof. On the eastern end of the wall there is a large sliding door, 3.3m to the west of this a single wooden door can also be seen. The remaining three walls are of limestone and lime mortar construction. The western wall of building F contains a wooden door and a sliding metal door. The southern wall contains an open walkway, two stable doors and three wooden slatted windows. The roof is gabled and under Collyweston slate.

### **Building E Interior**

The building is split into three rooms eastern, middle and western.

The eastern room is 19.00 sqm in area with a concrete floor and concrete slip (lower 1.5m) over the stone. The roof is constructed with rafters, collars and butt purlin supported on timber king post trusses. The southern wall contains a single stable door and window.

The middle room is 9.40 sqm in area with a concrete floor. The western wall is constructed in a red brick (8.75" x 3") with lime mortar in Flemish bond and contains a stable door. This wall was a later addition to the building, splitting this room and the western room into two. In the middle of the northern wall a hole has been repaired in a red brick (8.75" x 3") with lime



mortar. the southern wall contained a single wooden slitted window. The roof construction is the same as above.

The western room is 17sqm in size with a concrete floor and concrete slip (lower 1.5m) over the stone and brick. The southern wall contained a wooden stable door and one wooden window. The roof construction is the same as above.

### **Building F Interior**

The building is split into three rooms - eastern, middle and western.

The eastern room is 23.00 sqm in area with a concrete floor. The western wall is of a concrete block construction. The roof is constructed with rafters, collars and butt purlin supported on timber king post trusses. The room contained a modern boiler and sink.

The middle room is 36.00 sqm in area with a concrete floor. The western and eastern wall is of a concrete block construction. the floor had a raised modern concreted area with insets for milking of cattle. The roof construction is the same as above.

The western room is 10.5 sqm in area with a concrete floor. The eastern wall is of a concrete block construction. The roof is the same as above.

## **9.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

The main farmhouse was built in 1877/8 with the farm buildings constructed after. The old maps (fig 7) show the buildings in their current locations indicating they were built sometime between 1877 and 1885.

Looking at form Building A started its life as a cart shed, with the later partitioning of walls to create animal pens and/or stables. Building B and C most likely started its life as a storage area, which was later converted to house animals, most likely pigs. Building D appears to have started its life as a grain storage shed, with the eastern part later converted to house animals. Building D started out as two horse stables and then split into three later. Building F most likely started its life as a cart shed with the northern wall open and no internal wall. The bricked infilled northern wall and partitions were added later to form a boiler room/storage area, milking station and another storage area.

## **8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author of this report would like to thank Best Asset Ltd and Northamptonshire County Council for their support in ensuring that the project was brought to a successful conclusion.

## **9.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Brunskill, R W., 2000 Vernacular Architecture an Illustrated Handbook*

*English Heritage 2006 Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*

*Institute for Archaeologists 2011 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Deskbased Assessment*

*Institute for Archaeologists 2008 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Standing Building Recording*

*Harvey, N., 1984 A History of Farm Buildings in England and Wales. David & Charles, London.*

*Rice, M., 2009 Rice's Architectural Primer. Bloomsbury.*

*Susanna Wade Martins., 1991 Historic Farm Buildings. B. T. Batsford Ltd, London*

### **12.0 Site Archive**

An archive of written, drawn and photographic elements will be retained by Contour Archaeology and uploaded onto Oasis.

**Appendix 1: Colour Plates**



**Plate 1:** Building A elevation 1.



**Plate 2:** Building A, looking Southeast



Plate 3: Building A, southern room, looking east



Plate 4: Building A middle room, looking north



Plate 5: Building A middle room, looking south



Plate 6: Building A, northern room, looking east



**Plate 7:** Building A and B elevation 2, looking southwest



**Plate 8:** Building A and B elevation 2, looking northeast



**Plate 9:** Building B, looking north.



**Plate 10:** Building C and D elevation 4, looking south.



**Plate 11:** Building C, looking north.



**Plate 12:** Building C and D elevation 2, looking north.





**Plate 13:** Building D, elevation 4, looking southwest.



**Plate 14:** Building D, elevation 3, looking northwest.



**Plate 15:** Building D, elevation 3, looking northeast



**Plate 16:** Building D, looking northeast



**Plate 17:** Building D, looking southwest



**Plate 18:** Building D, looking northeast



**Plate 19:** Building D, looking northwest.



**Plate 20:** Building D, elevation 3, looking northwest.



**Plate 21:** Building D, looking northeast



**Plate 22:** Building E, elevation 3, looking northwest.



**Plate 23:** Building E, eastern room, looking northeast.



**Plate 24:** Building E, middle room, looking northwest.



**Plate 25:** Building E, western room, looking northeast.



**Plate 26:** Building E, western room, looking northeast



**Plate 27:** Building F, looking west



**Plate 28:** Building F, elevation 4, looking south





**Plate 29:** Building F, eastern room, looking southwest



**Plate 30:** Building F, middle room, looking southwest.



**Plate 31:** Building F, western room, looking northwest

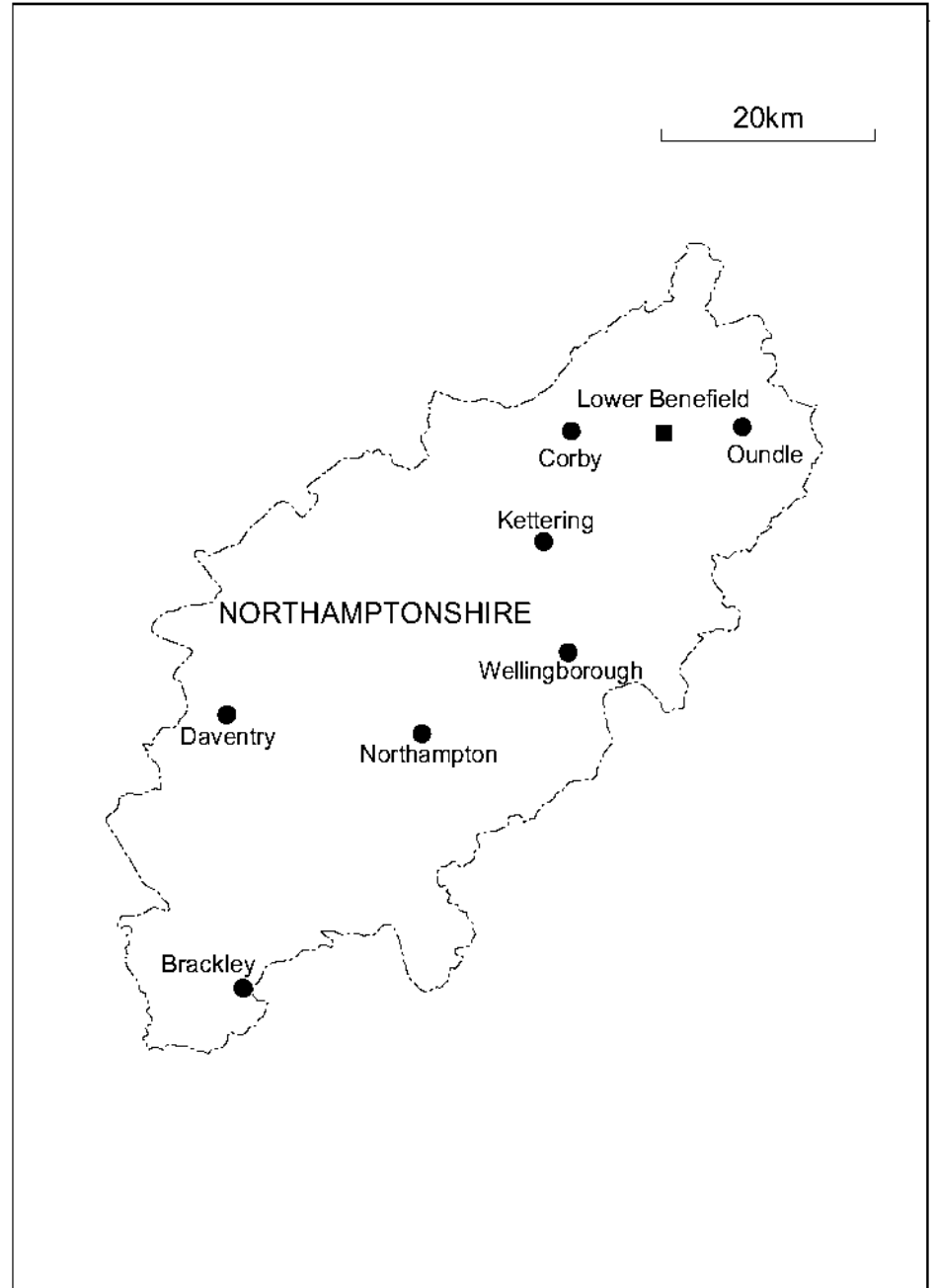
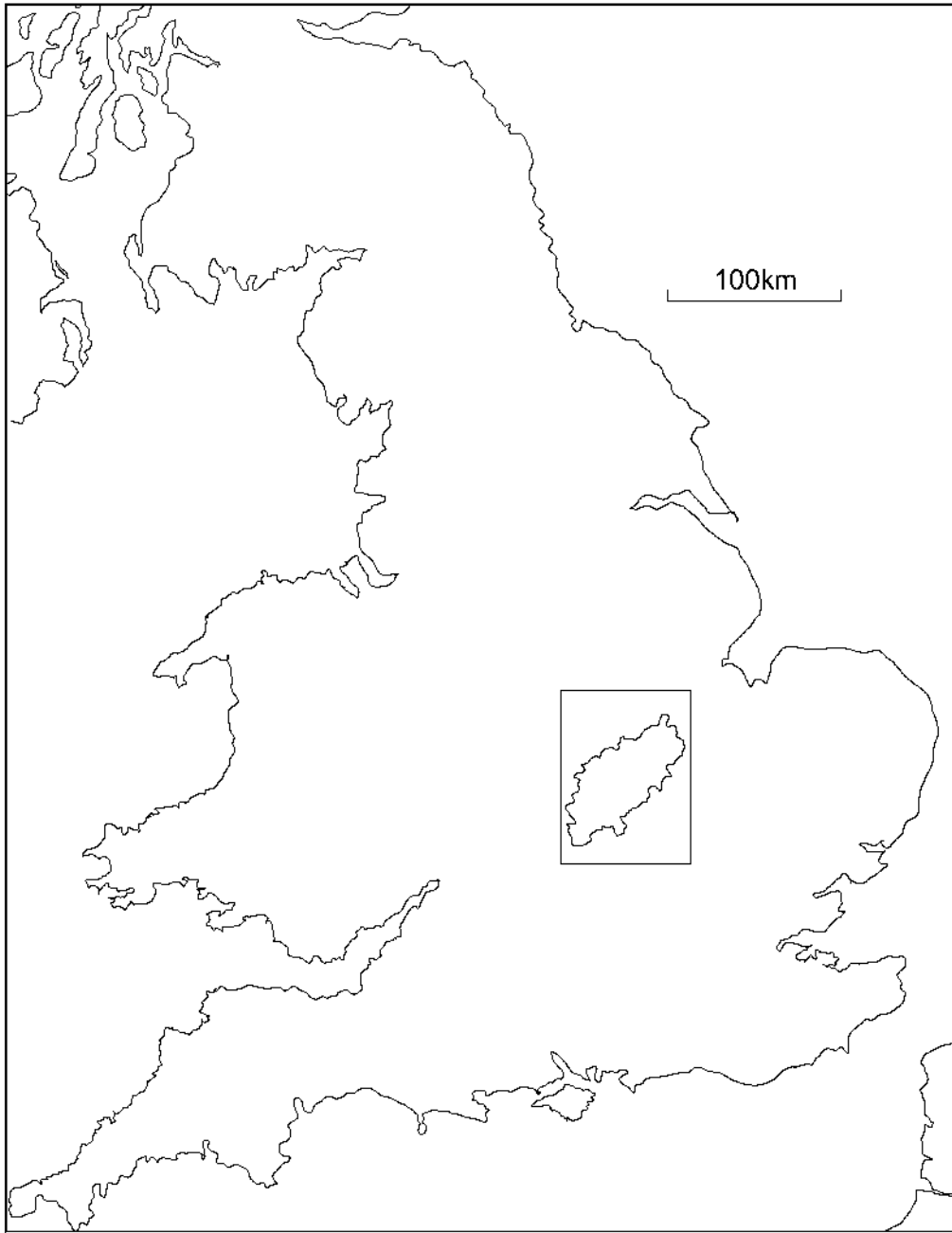
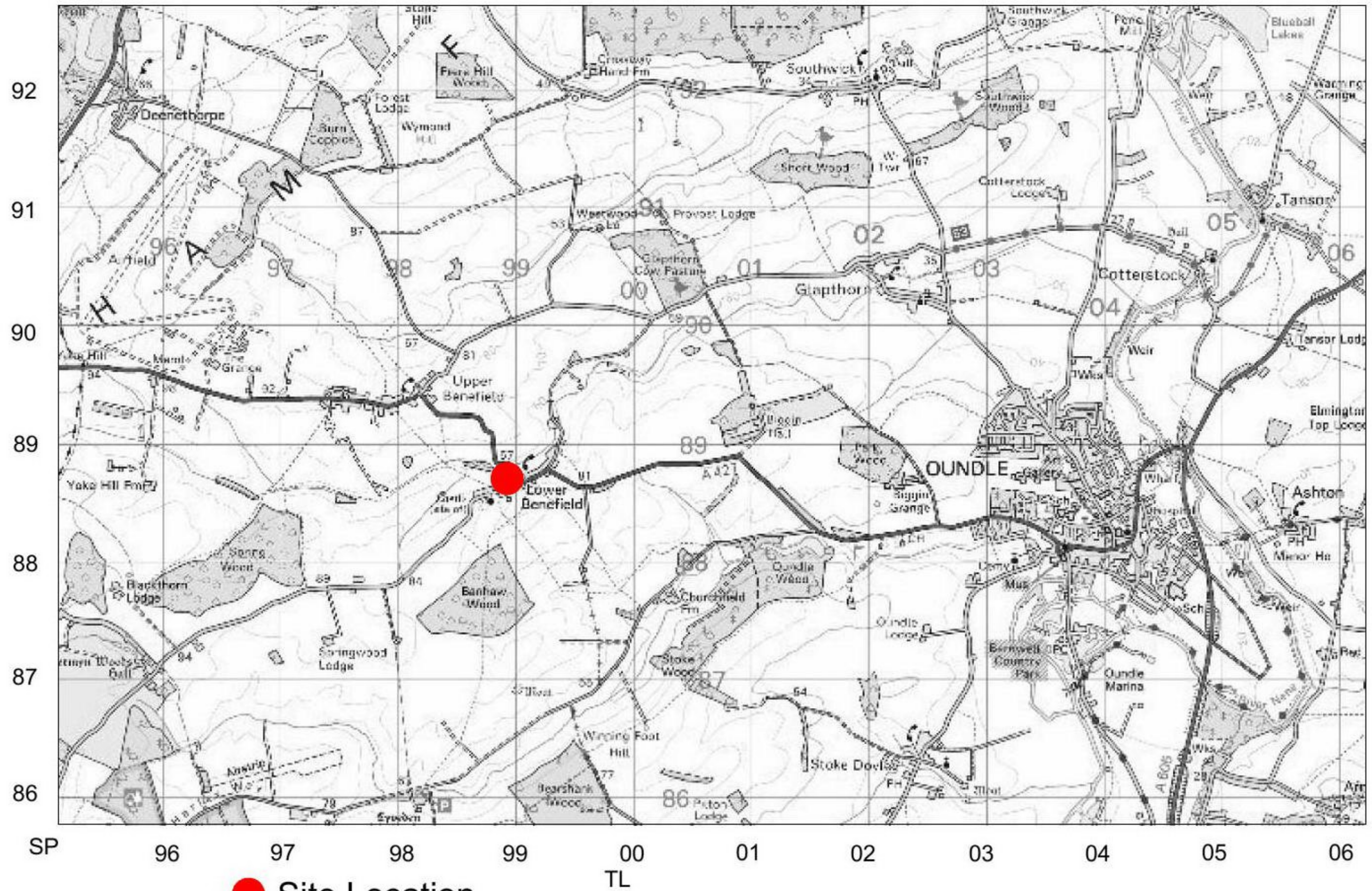


Figure 1 General location map

Ordnance Survey Licence No: 100058440



● Site Location

0 1000m

Figure 2 Site location map

Scale 1:50,000 @A4



0 20m

Figure 3: Site layout

1:500 @A4

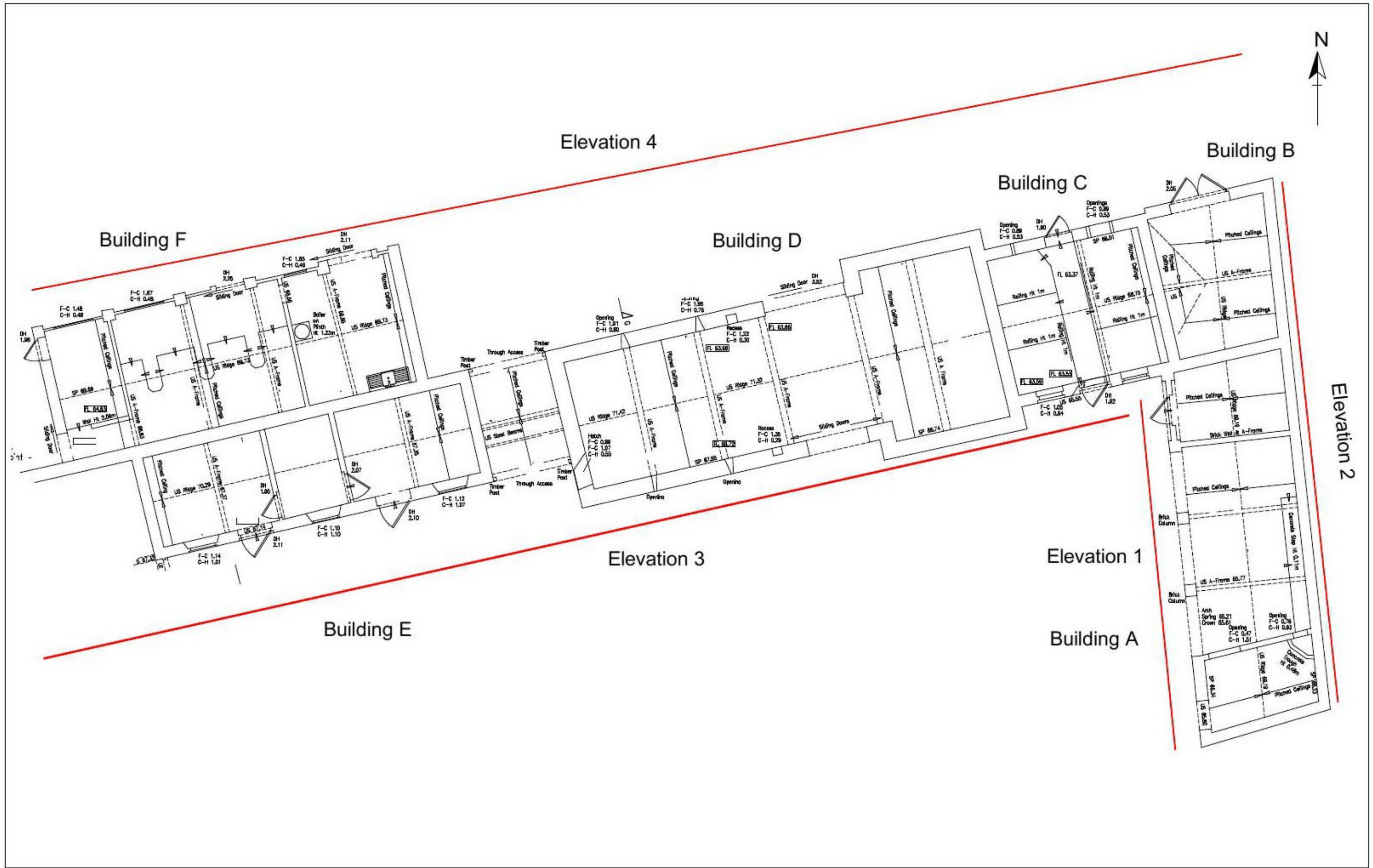
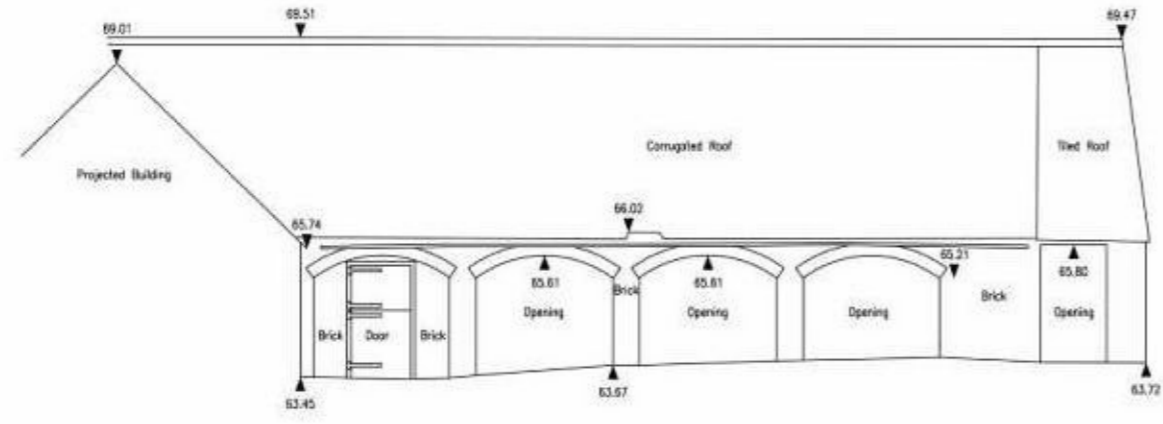
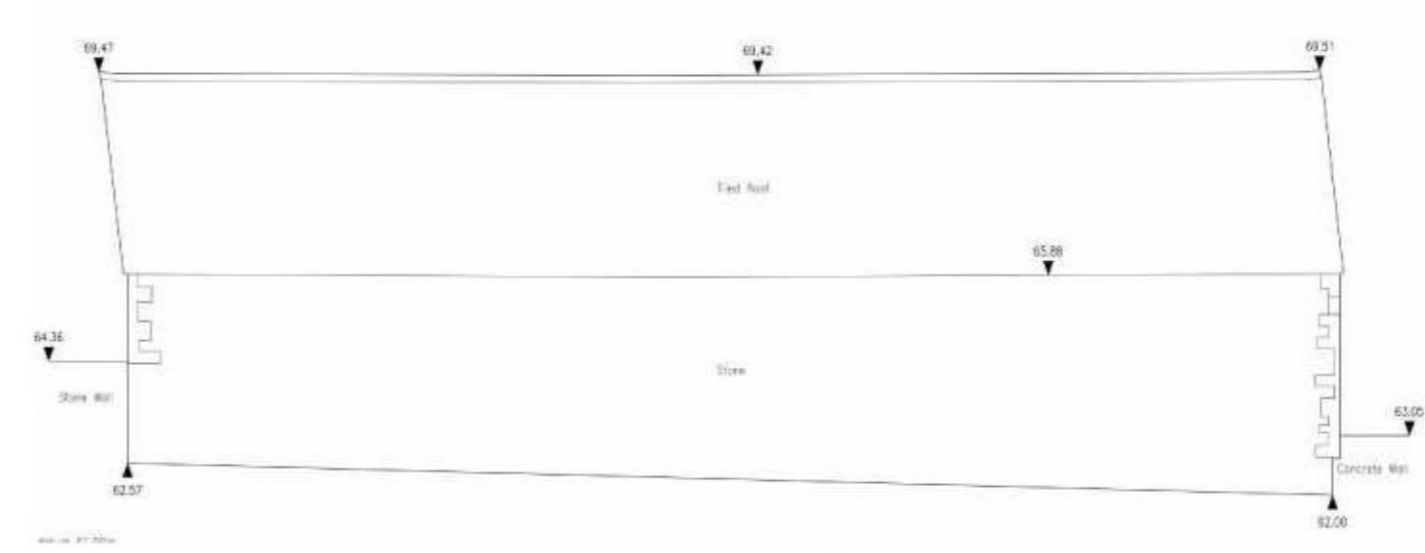


Figure 4: Building plans

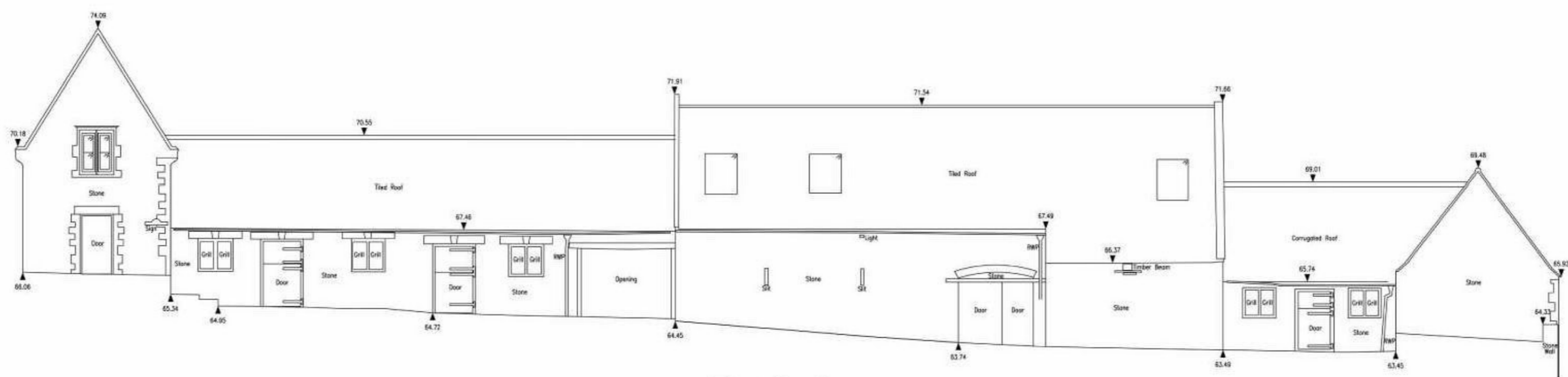
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Elevation 1

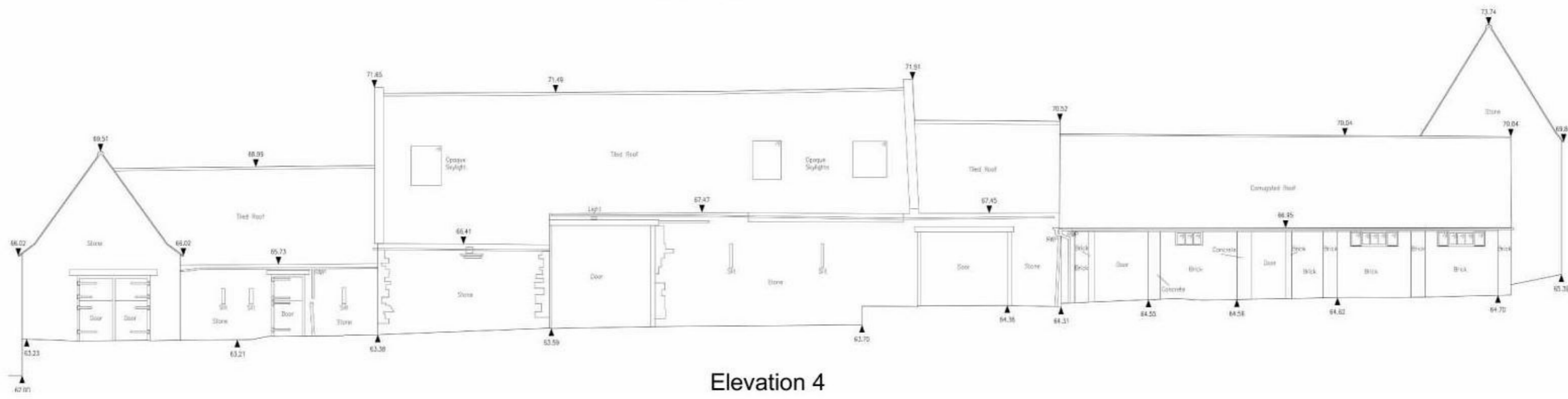


Elevation 2



Elevation 3

Scale Bar : Metres



Elevation 4



Figure 5 Elevation 1-4

1:200 @A3

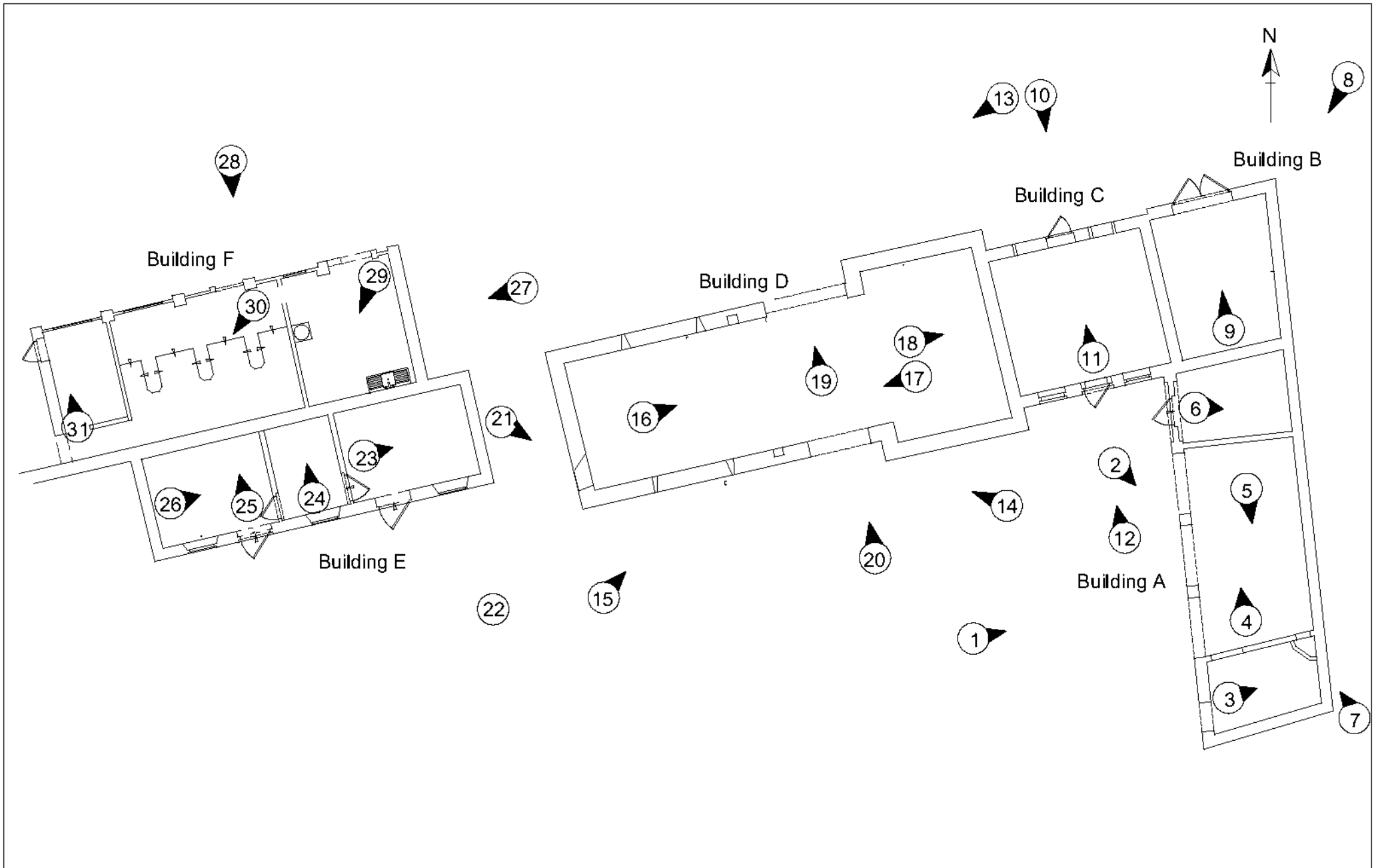
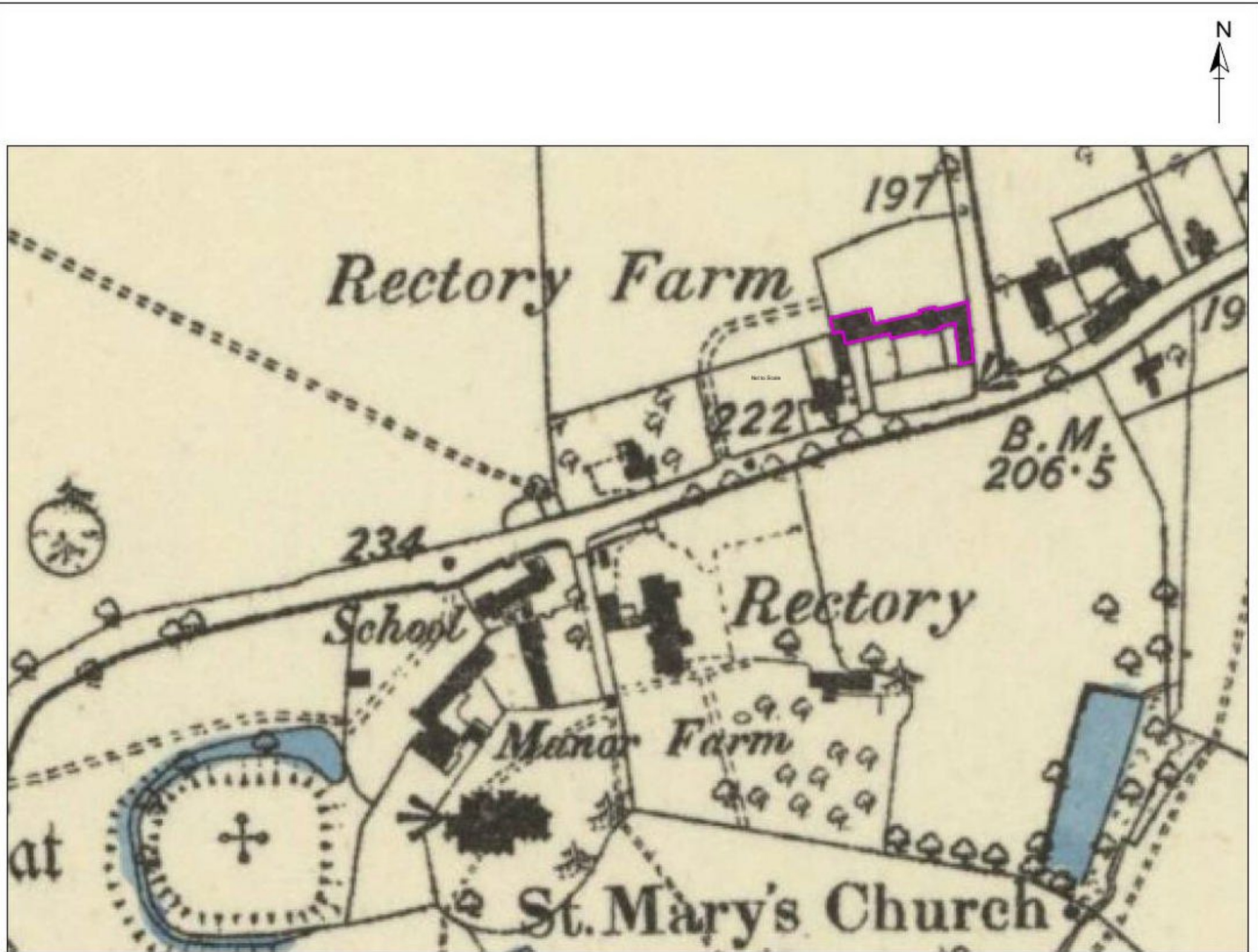


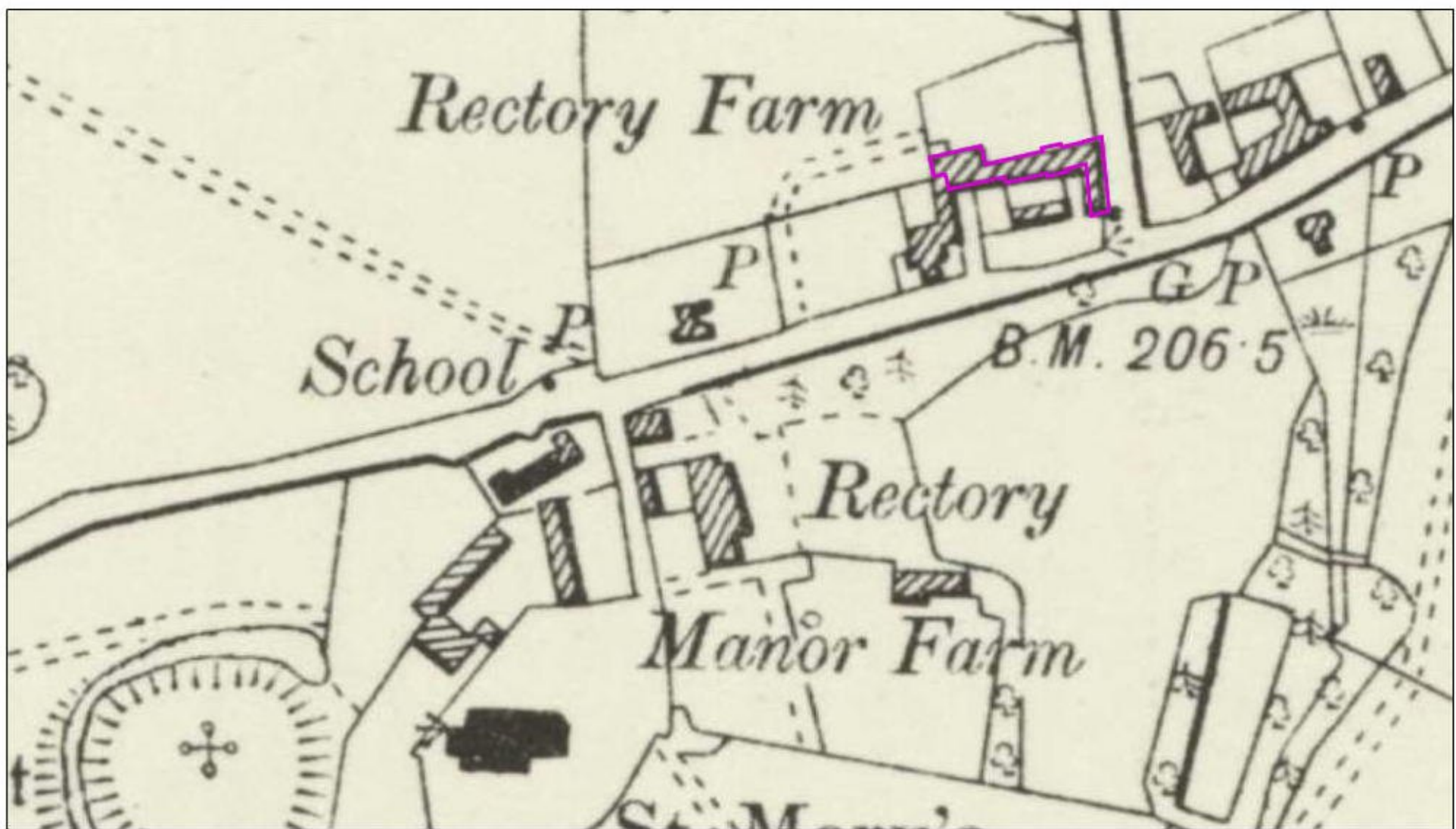
Figure 6: Photo direction plan

1:200 @A4





1885 OS map



1899 OS map



Figure 7: 1885 and 1899 OS maps 1:2500 @A4

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### Project details

Project name	Rectory Farm Buildings Main Street Lower Benefield
Short description of the project	A Level 2 Historic Building Survey was undertaken on the 2nd April 2021 on the farm building at Rectory Farm Buildings Main Street Lower Benefield,
Project dates	Start: 02-04-2021 End: 15-04-2021
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Type of project	Building Recording
Methods & techniques	"Photographic Survey"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE BENEFIELD Rectory Farm Buildings Main Street Lower Benefield
Postcode	PE8 5AF
Study area	450 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 98967 88649 52.486397138361 -0.542364624749 52 29 11 N 000 32 32 W Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Contour Archaeology
Project brief originator	Contour Archaeology
Project design originator	Contour Archaeology
Project director/manager	Neil Jefferson
Project supervisor	Neil Jefferson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Entered by	Neil Jefferson (info@contourarchaeology.com)
Entered on	15 April 2021

# OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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