

THE BARN, TOP O'TH' HILL, RIVINGTON LANE, RIVINGTON, LANCASHIRE



Historic Building Survey

Matrix Archaeology

September 2021

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RIVINGTON LANE,
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Historic Building Survey

Report No. 2021-10
(Project Code: MA810)

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Summary

The five-bay barn at Top o'th' Hill Farm was probably constructed in 1897, as a series of cattle shippens with a hayloft over, replacing an earlier barn. A probable drift house at one end was used to fill the hayloft. An outshut was subsequently added, probably as a tool store. There may have been a pig cote attached to the building. There were a few alterations made later. It seems likely that the building facilitated dairy produce, given the rising demand from the nearby rapidly growing urban centres of Horwich and Chorley. Recommendations are made that further works should be undertaken, including building recording of the farmhouse, and below-ground investigation on the site of the earlier farmhouse.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Level III historic building survey of the barn at Top o'th' Hill, Rivington, Lancashire (OSNGR 363150 413690) was undertaken by Matrix Archaeology during August 2021 (**Figure 1**). This was commissioned by Jack Prescott of Studio SDA, on behalf of the clients, Mr & Mrs Pitalia, who are proposing to refurbish and extend the adjacent farmhouse, as a family home.
- 1.2 The work was undertaken as a response to a letter by Joanne Smith of Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Service, dated 31 May 2016, within the context of planning application no. 16/00173/FUL. This requested a Level III Historic England-type survey of the barn.
- 1.3 The property comprised a farmhouse, a barn, and a large modern agricultural shed. None of these were listed. At the time of the survey work, the barn was in use for domestic storage, whilst the farmhouse was occupied by a tenant. Lever Park is listed on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest; although the farm site was located at the heart of the Park, it is excluded from the Park designation, as it was not sold to Liverpool Corporation in 1902 by Lord Leverhulme.
- 1.3 The work was undertaken in accordance with the guidance and guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa), as follows:

Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (updated 2020).

Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (updated 2019).

Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (updated 2020).

1.4 Acknowledgements

The Historic Background (Section 4), Appendices 1 & 2, and Figures 3 to 6 were compiled by Dr Peter Arrowsmith. The survey and photography were undertaken by Steven Price, and Mark Fletcher. This report was produced by Mark Fletcher.

2. Scope and Methodology

- 2.1 A detailed record of the barn was created, both by drawn elevations, floorplan, and a cross-section, and by photographic means, along with a textual description of features. The existing topographic survey and elevations were utilised as a base for the drawings.
- 2.2 The drawings were then scanned, and drawn up in AutoCAD (Figures 7 & 8). The digital photographs are reproduced as Plates 1 – 33.
- 2.3 Sources consulted for the historical research into the site have included:
 - The Lancashire Historic Environment Record (LHER), held by Lancashire County Council Planning and Environment Service. The search area for the LHER enquiry was of 1 km radius centred on Top o'th' Hill.
 - Historic mapping.
 - Published written sources.
 - Primary documentary sources held at Lancashire Archives.

3. Building Location

- 3.1 The barn was located within the curtilage of Top o'th' Hill Farm, just off Rivington Road, 1km to the south of Rivington village, about 4km to the north of Horwich; and 6km to the south-east of Chorley, in Lancashire. The buildings were no longer related to working farmland, and are within the heart of Rivington Country Park.
- 3.2 Between the high west-facing scarp of Rivington Moor, and the Lower Rivington Reservoir, the existing landscape comprises undulating parkland, with a mixture of pastureland and woodland. The farm site is located at about 166m AOD, and is overlooked by a high bank immediately to the east, whilst to the south-west is a low hillock of 169.50m AOD. From the site, prior to woodland being planted, there would have been good aspects to the north and to the west.
- 3.3 Geologically, the solid hereabouts is the Ousel Nest Grit of the Carboniferous period, which is a coarse sandstone. Numerous small quarries within the Rivington area have exploited this good building stone. Overlying the solid to significant depths, the superficial geology comprises glacial till deposits, specifically boulder clays, of the Pleistocene period.

4. Historic Background

4.1 Rivington

4.1.1 *Manor of Rivington to 1900*

Historically Top o'th' Hill lay within the township of Rivington. From about the 13th century until the early 17th, the principal landowners in this township were members of the Pilkington family. In 1611, however, their manor of Rivington was sold and divided, with one half being acquired by Robert Lever of Darcy Lever and the other by Thomas Breres of Preston. In 1727 the two halves were reunited when John Breres sold his share to John Andrews, the heir to the Darcy Lever estates. Following the death of a later John Andrews in 1865, the manor passed to John William Crompton.¹

Successive owners of the manor of Rivington are known to have constructed residences in the township. Robert Pilkington built a hall and cross-chamber here in the late 15th century,² although a hall can be assumed to have existed at an earlier date. The present Rivington Hall is a Grade II* Listed Building, which includes fabric of the late 17th and early 18th century built by William Breres, but the greater part of the house was constructed by Robert Andrews in the late 18th century (LHER PRN 930). A second hall site, the New Hall, is recorded in 1544 and 1610, and was used by junior members of the Pilkington family. This building, which was located on Sheep House Lane, later became a farmhouse and was demolished in c. 1912 (LHER PRN 928).

4.1.2 *William Hesketh Lever, Liverpool Corporation and Lever Park*

Reservoirs were built at Rivington and Anglezarke between 1850 and 1857 to provide a water supply for Liverpool, although the system also incorporated a smaller reservoir constructed in 1850 to serve Chorley (LHER PRN 15148). In 1899 Liverpool Corporation turned down the opportunity to buy the Rivington Hall estate and manor, and in 1900 these were sold instead to the industrialist William Hesketh Lever, Lord Leverhulme. The sale allowed John William Crompton to remain at Rivington Hall as tenant, while Leverhulme built a new residence for himself on high ground to the east. Known as Roynton Cottage or the Bungalow, it was rebuilt after an arson attack in 1913 by the suffragette Edith Rigby (LHER PRN 37157).³

In 1901 Leverhulme offered to donate c. 160 ha of the estate to Bolton Corporation for a public park. In order to protect the water supply, in 1902 Liverpool Corporation sought the compulsory purchase of the gathering grounds for the reservoirs through an Act of Parliament. Following a challenge by Leverhulme, the final legislation exempted some properties in Rivington village and also the curtilage of his own dwelling. Leverhulme also retained the right to create a public park at his own expense, which once completed was to be managed and maintained by Liverpool Corporation. Lever Park

¹ Farrer & Brownbill 1911, 286-91.

² Farrer & Brownbill 1911, 289.

³ Smith 1998.

(LHER PRN 10219) was opened in 1904. The landscaping was carried out by Thomas Hayton Mawson, who also designed the gardens at the Bungalow (LHER PRN 15038).⁴

The farms at Top o'th' Hill and, to the south, Middle Derbyshire are not part of Lever Park although both are surrounded by it. According to the Historic Park and Garden description, these farms 'were excluded from the sale in 1902 to Liverpool Corporation and they have never been part of the Park'.⁵ However, in a letter of 6 September 1901 in which Leverhulme offered to donate the land for the park to Bolton Corporation, he noted 'Within these boundaries there are other properties which do not belong to myself, and which of course are not included with the lands I am now proposing to give'.⁶ The research for the present report has confirmed that Top o'th' Hill was not part of Leverhulme's estate.

4.2 Top o'th' Hill: Owners and Occupants

- 4.2.1 The barn carries a datestone inscribed with the year '1703' and the initials 'I (ie I or J) B A'. The stone is reused, being nearly two centuries earlier than the present building, and although its precise original position is unknown it can be assumed to have been set within an earlier building at Top o'th' Hill itself. The convention is for the central initial to belong to a family name, with others being the first names of family members, typically a husband and wife. According to local historian D A Owen, the inscription dates from when the farm was in the possession of John and Alice Brownlow. Owen also states that 'the Brownlows had been in the farm since long before 1599, when Margaret Brownlow made her will'.⁷

The present research has not confirmed the identification of the individuals on the datestone. Published Hearth Tax returns for Rivington township show two Brownlow households in the late 17th century, headed in 1663 by Richard Brownlow and George Brownlow, and in 1673-4 by Richard Brownlow and John Brownlow.⁸ Lancashire Archives hold a dozen or so probate records for Brownlows living in Rivington, beginning with the will of Margaret Brownlow which was proved in 1600. They include the will of John Brownlow, which mentions his wife Alice, but this was written in 1683 and proved the following year.⁹ However, another John Brownlow is named in the will of George Brownlow of Rivington, written in 1697 and proved in 1698. In this the testator left to his wife Elizabeth 'my messuage and tenement in Rivington which was my grandfather George Brownlow's', with instruction that after her death this was to pass to his brother John Brownlow.¹⁰

⁴ Cobham Resource Consultants 1988.

⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000948>.

⁶ Smith 1998, 38.

⁷ Owen 2019, 24.

⁸ Irvine 1904, 47, 175.

⁹ Lancashire Archives WCW/Supra/C238A/68; Irvine 1904, 176.

¹⁰ Lancashire Archives WCW/Supra/C269/62; Irvine 1904, 178-9.

4.2.2 *1780-c. 1831: occupants under George Brownlow and Betty Higson*

Although the identity of earlier occupants has not been confirmed, consultation of primary sources for the present report has enabled the owners and occupants to be traced from the late 18th century to the early 20th century.

A key source from this period are the Land Tax assessments for Rivington for 1780-1831. In 1826-1831 these list Top o'th' Hill by name, enabling the property to be securely traced back in the assessments of earlier years (see Appendix 1). Thus in 1780-2 the owner is given as George Brownlow under whom the occupant is named in 1780 as George Wadington and in 1782 as John Brownlow. The assessments for 1783-7 are missing but in 1788 the owner is named as Mrs Betty Higson. Her association with the property was particularly long-lived, for the name of Mrs Higson, sometimes given as Tyrer Higson, appears as the owner in subsequent assessments until 1830. Other evidence shows that Betty Higson was a daughter of Elizabeth Shaw of Rivington, one of the two sisters and heirs of Hugh 15th Baron Willoughby of Parham who died in 1765 and is commemorated on the Willoughby monument in Rivington Chapel. In 1771 Betty Shaw had married John Higson, of the parish of Deane, at Rivington parish church. She died in March 1823, at the age of 83.¹¹ The significance of the name Tyrer in the Land Tax assessments is uncertain, but may relate to a joint owner.

In 1788 the Land Tax assessment lists Top o'th' Hill as occupied by John Brownlow junior. His name continued to appear until 1802, and he may be the John Brownlow of Rivington whose will was proved in July 1803.¹² Between 1803 and 1809 the occupants are named in turn as Joseph and Emma Sunter, followed in 1810-16 by Thomas Farbrother, in 1817-23 by Robert Hampson, and from 1824 by Peter Hampson who was still named as the occupant in 1831, now under Mrs Higson's executors.

4.2.3 *c. 1834-1861: John Nightingale and John Turner as tenants*

In the tithe award agreement of 1845 the owners of Top o'th' Hill were given as 'Christopher Shaw and others'.¹³ Shaw, who died in July 1853, was a great-nephew of the 15th Baron Willoughby of Parham, and therefore may have been the nephew of Betty Higson.¹⁴ At the time of the 1851 census he was living at Hamers Farm in Rivington, and was described as a farmer and land proprietor. In 1852 he sold part of his estate to Liverpool Corporation for the construction of the Lower Rivington Reservoir.¹⁵ In his will dated December 1851 he named as his heirs his brother-in law Richard Mason of Horwich, Mary Mason who was Richard's daughter, and his nephew John Howarth.¹⁶

¹¹ *Liverpool Mercury* 8 April 1831, p 7 col 1.

¹² Lancashire Archives WCW/Supra/C607C/46.

¹³ Lancashire Archives DRM 1/85.

¹⁴ *Manchester Courier* 30 July 1853, p 11 col 6.

¹⁵ Hampson 1893, 160.

¹⁶ Lancashire Archives WCW/Supra/C1258B/49.

Peter Hampson's occupancy of Top o'th' Hill seem to have ended by 1834 when John Nightingale of Top o'th' Hill was churchwarden of Rivington parish church.¹⁷ Nightingale is also listed as head of the household at the farm in the census of 1841, and is named as the occupant in the Rivington tithe award agreement in 1845. The 1841 census described Nightingale as farmer and stone mason (see Appendix 2). OS mapping surveyed in 1845-7 indicates a quarry (LHER PRN 9617) just to the east of the farm but trees are shown within its interior suggesting that it was not being worked at this date (Figure 3). John Turner and his family were also members of the household in 1841. His occupation is given as agricultural labourer, presumably in Nightingale's employment. Turner is again listed at Top o'th' Hill in the censuses of 1851 and 1861, on the first occasion as a farmer of 28 acres, and on the second as retired. Under both Nightingale and Turner, Top o'th' Hill was also the home of Charles Worsley. He was a farmer's son and is described in the language of the census as an 'idiot', living on independent means.

4.2.4 *c. 1865-1903: Mary and Anne Mason and their tenants*

Details of later ownership are provided by rating valuations for Rivington, commencing in 1865 when the owners are named as 'Mary Mason and others' (see Appendix 1). 'Miss Mason and others' are listed in 1889-1897, and 'the executors of Miss Mason and others' in 1904. Mary Mason was born in 1822, the daughter of Richard Mason of Horwich and Mary Shaw of Rivington, whose marriage took place at Rivington parish church in September 1818. In 1851, as noted above (4.2.3), she was named as a co-heir in the will of Christopher Shaw, the then owner of Top o'th' Hill. Census returns show that by 1871 Mary Mason was living at Foxholes in Horwich with her younger sister Anne, both of whom were described as landowners. Mary died in January 1889, leaving a personal estate valued at £5049. Her heir was his sister Anne Mason who continued to live at Foxholes until her death, aged 78, in August 1903.¹⁸ Her own effects were valued at £22,828. She was described in the press as 'the survivor of two wealthy but parsimonious and eccentric sisters. Their house was poorly kept up, and when the roof became so damaged that the rooms could not be lived in the sisters did the repairs themselves'.¹⁹ Anne Mason's will shows that in Rivington, in addition to Top o'th' Hill, she owned the Higher and Lower Knowle, Middle Derbyshire and Pilkingtons farms. Her portfolio also included Foxholes, Marklands and Claypool farms in Horwich and a half share of Foxholes Mill, as well as properties in Westhoughton and Blackrod.

In 1865 the occupant of Top o'th' Hill was William Ryder, who is also listed as occupant of the neighbouring Crosses Farm and Wards Farm. He appears to have worked these as a single concern, since he was described as farming 72 acres in the census of 1861, the same census which describes John Turner at Top o'th' Hill as retired. Ryder himself lived at Ward's Farm until his death in 1867. He also had a second source of income, as a roller and spindle maker.²⁰

¹⁷ Hampson 1893, 138.

¹⁸ *Bolton Evening News* 2 September 1903, p 4 col 2.

¹⁹ *Northern Times* 10 September 1903, p 6 col 6.

²⁰ Clegg 1883, 227.

By 1871 Top o'th' Hill was held by Thomas Settle, described as a farmer of 25½ acres, implying that the farm was again being worked in its own right. In 1881, however, the farmhouse was vacant, and this may also have been the case in 1889. Such periods of vacancy may have been due to the national agricultural depression which commenced in the 1870s and continued into the 1890s. At the time of the 1891 census, Top o'th' Hill was occupied by Henry Evans, who had a second source of income since he is described as a farmer and coal miner. This last occupation is also given for his eldest son, Samuel, and an 'adopted son', John P Kelly.

In February 1897 the property again seems to have been unoccupied but in August of the same year a rating valuation names the tenant as John Hudson Saul. The 1901 census, which lists him as John H Saul, also places him at Top o'th' Hill. The censuses of 1881 and 1891 give his name as John Hodgson Saul and show that at this period he was living at Shaw Place in Heath Charnock, where in 1881 he was described as farming 186 acres, a fairly substantial holding. At the time of the 1901 census his household included four adult daughters, and two grandchildren. Only one of his three unmarried daughters, Dina Saul, is listed as having an occupation, as a professional singer. Newspapers of the time show that she was a classical soprano. John Hodgson Saul died in 1910 in Southport, presumably in retirement. The overall impression of John Hodgson Saul is of a relatively prosperous individual, and this may be of relevance for understanding the building development of Top o'th' Hill farm (see below, 4.3.2).

4.2.5 *c. 1904 onwards: the Makinsons and Liverpool Corporation*

Saul had left Top o'th' Hill by July 1904, when it was occupied by Evan Makinson. Census returns show that he was born c. 1835, and in 1901 was living at Bradley's Farm in Rivington. He died in December 1905, and the tenancy of Top o'th' Hill passed to his son Noah (born c. 1886). The census of 1911 gives the occupation of Noah Makinson as a poultry and dairy farmer, and that of his sister Margaret as dairy work. Noah was still living here in 1939 but had retired from farming, which was being continued by younger members of the family. The Makinsons were still farming here in the 1960s.²¹

In the early 20th century ownership of the farm passed to Liverpool Corporation. This purchase was presumably made under the powers granted to the Corporation under the 1902 Act but the precise date of this transfer is uncertain. The rating valuation books show that it had occurred by September 1911, while in July 1904 the owners were listed as the executors of Miss Mason.

²¹ Smith 1989, 152-3.

4.3 Building Development

4.3.1 *Pre-1897*

The earliest mapping to depict the farm in any detail is the OS 6in to 1 mile sheet surveyed in 1845-7 (Figure 3). It shows two main buildings which also appear, with greater accuracy, on 1:2500 mapping surveyed in 1892 (Figure 4). The more northerly of these was a roughly L-shaped building (building 06) which was situated to the east of the present house and was almost certainly the earlier farmhouse. To the south was a longer range (building 04), approximately of the same size as the present barn but less regular in plan and with its long axis situated further to the north, showing that this too was an earlier structure. Its form suggests a barn with extensions on the west and north-east. A third, much smaller building (building 08) is indicated between the two. On the 1892 map it is shown at the south-east corner of a possible garden enclosure to the rear of the farmhouse. On same map a smaller yard is marked to the north of the larger outbuilding (building 04), in the north-west corner of which seems to have been a pair of pens, possibly a pigcote.

4.3.2 *The 1897 rebuilding and later*

Comparison of successive editions of OS mapping reveals that the present house and barn were both constructed between 1892 and 1907 (Figures 4 & 5), replacing the earlier buildings on the site. According to M D Smith, the farm was rebuilt in 1898.²² The rating valuation books for Rivington suggest a slightly earlier date. In February 1897, the rateable value of the buildings was assessed at £3 5s, the same amount as in 1894. By August 1897, this figure had risen to £13. It seems highly likely, therefore, that construction took place during that year, perhaps being underway in February when no occupant was listed at the property.

The rebuilding of the farmhouse and barn thus occurred during the ownership of Miss Anne Mason. It also preceded by several years the acquisition of the neighbouring Rivington Hall estate by Lord Leverhulme, and the creation of Lever Park. Precisely why the rebuilding was carried out is not recorded but several suggestions can be made. It may have been necessitated by the property falling into neglect. For over a hundred years the farm had been let to tenants, and probably since at least the death of Betty Higson in 1831 it had changed ownership through inheritance rather than purchase. If the assertion that the sisters Mary and Anne Higson were 'wealthy but parsimonious' was accurate, any neglect on the part of the owner may have been exacerbated in recent years. Periods in which the property was vacant may also have contributed to its decline. A second possibility is that the rebuilding of the farm represented an investment during recovery from the national agricultural depression. Certainly from the evidence of the 'barn', it would seem to be part of a regional shift to specialization in milk production to supply the growing urban and industrial communities. Finally, there is the person of John Hodgson Saul, the first occupant of the new farmhouse. As noted above

²² Smith 1989, 152; 1995, 62.

(4.2.4), he appears to have been a man of some wealth. If the owner Anne Higson was not responsible for the rebuilding, the natural conclusion is that this was funded by Saul himself to provide a new home for his family.

- 4.3.3 As shown on the 1907 OS mapping (Figure 5), when the barn was originally built a narrow range fronted by two pens projected from the west end of the north elevation, probably a pigcote (building 03).

By 1927 (Figure 6) an extension (building 02) had been added against the west end elevation of the barn, and another (building 01) against the west end of the south elevation. A range now butted against the north-east corner of the house (building 05), where a row of wooden sheds can be seen on a photograph of 1974 published by M D Smith.²³ The 1927 mapping also shows a detached building to the north-east (building 07), and another to the south of the barn (building 09).

A large building on the site of the shed to the south of the barn is shown on a published photograph dated 1961.²⁴ OS 1:2500 mapping of about the same date suggests this to have been a Dutch barn.

²³ Smith 1989, 153.

²⁴ Smith 1989, 152.

5. Building Description (Figures 7 & 8)

5.1 External barn description

General

The building was aligned approximately from south-west to north-east, but for the purposes of this report, it will be described as if the long elevations were facing north and south, with the gables being east and west.

The construction comprised four internal bays, with the eastern pair of bays being narrower than the pair to the west. At the upper level, the space comprised a single open hayloft. A construction date of around 1900 is assumed, on both existing documentary evidence, and on the features of the building itself. The barn walls were of local sandstone, but variations were identified.

South external elevation (Plates 3 – 7)

The south-facing wall was neatly constructed of rectangular slabs of local fine-grained sandstone, in regular courses, with larger rectangular blocks defining the quoins at the wall corners. This was in contrast to the other three elevations, which comprised sandstone blocks set in fairly irregular courses. This may well reflect a desire to present a more impressive elevation to public scrutiny, given that this elevation is most obvious when the farm is viewed from the trackway located to the south-east.

Bay 1 comprised the probable drift house, hence a large double doorway was located here. The sliding timber doorway could not be moved, although the door surround on the west side was formed of large sandstone blocks. At ground floor level, each of the remaining three bays were illuminated by small single light windows, with sandstone slabs for both cills and lintels.

At first floor level, giving access to the hayloft, was a small taking-in door, over bay 2. A tall chamfered buttress, probably original, defined the boundary between bays 3 and 4.

Between the taking-in door, and the west gable, there was a high-level line which may have indicated a rebuild of the uppermost courses, although this was more noticeable internally. Additionally, the western part of the elevation, including the buttress, had not been pointed, as opposed to the eastern part, which had. This suggested that a long-demolished outshut had previously protected the western part, obviating the need for pointing here.

There was no evidence for any breather slits at the upper level, to ventilate the hayloft, and nor did the other elevations contain any. It was difficult to explain such absences.

East external elevation (Plate 8 - 10)

This gable comprised irregular coursing of both sandstone blocks and slabs, in contrast to the neater 'public' face of the south elevation. At the upper level of the gable was a large two-light window, intended to illuminate the workings of

the probable drift house. The window lintel was of particular interest, as it comprised an ex-situ datestone of 1703, probably taken from the doorhead of the farmhouse which preceded the existing one. The window cill was a rectangular block of sandstone with a rusticated finish. To either flank of the window was a small rectangular hole, possibly a combination of both ventilation and owl hole, to reduce the rodent population.

The appended outshut, on the north side, was bonded in by a vertical ragged joint, requiring the removal of the original quoins. The outshut comprised rectangular blocks of pink-buff coarse sandstone, laid in neat courses, which contrasted with the earlier gable. An eight-light window illuminated this single-storey structure.

North external elevation (Plates 11 & 12)

This long elevation seems to have been most altered by later changes. Bay 1 was obscured by the addition of the later lean-to, although this may well have obscured an original double-doorway. A pair of doorways gave access into bays 2 and 3, these both had three-light windows over, and quoins to define the architraves, with rectangular sandstone lintels over.

Bays 3 and 4 were illuminated by a pair of six-light windows, with neat rectangular machine-cut sandstone lintels and cills. At the western end of bay 4 was a broad but low blocked doorway, more obvious from the interior. On the exterior here was a ragged joint, which linked to the lintel of the nearby window. This may possibly have indicated a former door position.

West external elevation (Plate 12)

This elevation contained no significant features other than three small rectangular holes in the pike of the gable, which may represent ventilation and/or owl holes. The west elevation of the outshut contained a doorway with monolithic gritstone lintel and architraves, as well as an eight-light window with a cast-iron frame. There was a straight joint which indicated the boundary with the barn, but this joint was offset, which suggested that this face of the barn may have had a vestigial porch.

Roof covering

The double-pitched barn roof had a covering of blue Welsh slate laid in diminishing courses, which was probably original. There were four window lights in the north pitch, and a single one in the south pitch. These features may have been later inserts.

The outshut cat-slide roof was covered by asbestos sheets, which were probably a late C20 replacement.

5.2 Internal barn description, ground floor

Bay 1 (Plates 21 - 23)

This bay took the form of a drift house, open to the roof, with a tall double doorway providing access through the south wall. In the north wall was a

much lower blocked doorway, offset slightly to the west, which itself had two smaller rectangular blocked apertures. The floor was flagged, with a pair of distinctive runs of flagstones indicating the use of wheeled traffic. The internal (west) wall of the drift house was raised only to the loft floor level, leaving the loft open to the drift house.

Bay 2 (Plates 18 - 20)

Bay 2 comprised a self-contained shippon with a pair of boskins, which seem to be original features. A continuous feed passage extended along the south wall into the drift house, with a doorway into the bay 3/4 feed passage to the west. Within this bay, a thick timber rail defined the boskin end; although the steel rail which divided the boskin pair had been removed, leaving a socket on the rail, and another in the concrete floor. The tie-posts for tethering of the cattle were contained by metal brackets affixed to the east and west walls. The former drain at the 'tail' side of the boskins had been infilled by concrete.

The ceiling over this bay was carried upon a substantial pair of east-west timbers, both of which appeared to have been reused from an earlier building, one containing jointing suggesting a timber-framed building.

Bays 3 & 4 (Plates 13 - 17)

Bays 3 and 4 were open as a single large space, containing four pairs of boskins, with a cross passage at the east end, which linked the doorway with the feed passage. The boskins were constructed by a series of four pairs of vertical posts linking between the floor and the timberwork of the ceiling. Thick, slightly angled side rails were then added between the pairs of posts, and these panels were infilled with flagstones, to define the boskin pairs.

On the feed passage side, the vertical posts were then linked by a continuous horizontal rail of steel pipe, which restricted the cattle within the boskin ends. Then each pair was subdivided by curved sections of steel piping, which linked to both the horizontal rail and to the floor. Finally, against the flagstone panels, vertical timber tie-posts, 50mm in diameter, were affixed, to tether the cattle. Within the concrete floor, a broad east-west drain extended between the walls, and presumably vented itself out through the base of the west gable.

The timber ceiling over these two bays was supported by an axial east-west beam, with flooring joists carried upon this at 420mm centres. Within the ceiling, and over the feed passage, were a pair of hatches intended for dropping hay down from the loft into the passage.

Outshut (Plates 24 & 25)

The outshut contained a single room, with no features. The south internal wall had been rendered over, hence it could not be determined if the possible blocked door could be seen here. The monopitch roof was supported upon a pair of machine-cut purlins.

5.3 Internal barn description, loft level (Plates 26 - 29)

At the upper floor level, there was a single space over bays 2, 3 and 4; whilst the drift house (bay 1) was open to the roof, without a floor here. The roof was carried upon No.3 collared trusses, of lightweight composite design, the timber components all being machine-converted. The collars were doubled, with wrought-iron tie rods being inserted as king posts and angled struts to offset any lateral thrust. The trusses supported a ridge piece and a single purlin per roof pitch, which in turn supported common rafters.

The loft floor comprised softwood boards 120mm in width, and against the south side were a pair of original hinged hatches, which would have allowed hay to be dropped into the feeding passage beneath.

A modern partition had been raised at the east end of the floor to protect against the drop into the drift house, and there was no evidence for an original access to the loft, although there may once have been a 'Jacob's Ladder' affixed in the position of the existing ladder, at the north end of the probable drift house.

6. Building Interpretation

- 6.1 The existing building appears to have replaced an earlier barn, on approximately the same site (Building 04, Figure 2). The exact nature of this earlier building cannot be determined, although the protruding bay in the south elevation may suggest that it was a traditional Lancashire threshing barn, perhaps with a shippon attached.
- 6.2 The existing building was erected in about 1897, at or about the same time as the farmhouse was rebuilt. It seems likely that materials would have been reused from the earlier buildings, and two floor beams identified within the barn were definitely from earlier structures. Sandstone blocks and slabs were probably reused, including the datestone over the window in the east elevation. New sandstone could have been quarried locally, the construction of the south-facing barn wall using thin slabs of fine sandstone is reminiscent of much of the high-quality masonry undertaken on the various structures in the Rivington Gardens, constructed by Thomas Mawson under the instructions of Lord Leverhulme. It is worth noting that the west-facing farmhouse frontage is also constructed of slabs of fine-grained sandstone, whereas the remaining elevations were of coarse-grained blocks laid in crude courses. Photographic evidence shows that in 1961, this elevation was clearly visible from the road to the west, as might be expected (Smith, 1989).
- 6.3 The Ousel Nest Grit, which underlies the site, was a highly competent construction material, and the blocks of coarse sandstone in the barn walls would have been derived from this deposit. However, the ashlar blocks of the lean-to, with their distinctive pinkish tinge, were derived from a Carboniferous gritstone unit which lay somewhere just beneath the Permo-Triassic New Sandstones.
- 6.4 **Suggested phasing and interpretation**

Phase 1 – 18th century?

The original barn was probably constructed as a combination threshing barn and shippon, on approximately the same site as the present one. The reused timbers within the present barn may have been derived from the earlier one.

Phase 2 – 1897

The replacement of the earlier barn, with the existing one, may in part reflect upon the increasing demand for dairy products, as urban centres expanded massively within the last decades of the 19th century. This effect has been noted across parts of the north-west, and could reasonably be expected to have occurred within the rural hinterlands of local towns such as Horwich, Chorley, and Bolton. New construction of dedicated shippons has been noted elsewhere, such as on the Dunham Massey estate, near Altrincham.

The bulk of the building was occupied by five pairs of cattle boskins, where livestock could be firmly secured for milking. The long feed passage was linked to the hayloft by a pair of hatches in the ceiling; and a broad drain extended along the other end of the boskins, for removal of animal waste.

The drift house comprised a useful covered space for unloading of carts into the hayloft. However, the lack of breather slits in the external walls at hayloft level seems to be an oversight, good ventilation was deemed essential in order to prevent organic breakdown of stored hay.

Phase 3 – pre 1907

Cartographic evidence, within the 1907 and 1927 O.S. plans (Figures 5 & 6), indicates that there may have been a pig cote attached to the west end of the north barn elevation (Building 03, Figure 2). Such a feature would explain the low blocked doorway within the north wall in bay 4. Although the farm seems to have specialised in dairy production by then, the keeping of pigs was a concession to the previous regime of mixed farming, and would have provided an occasional seasonal bonus for the tenant farmer.

Similarly, the appended lean-to was first indicated on the 1907 O.S. plan, and was probably always used as a tool store.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Although clearly not an element of the Leverhulme architectural legacy, the farmhouse is an interesting example of the 'Arts & Crafts' style which began to permeate the local domestic housing stock in the last decade of the 19th century. It is suggested that before any refurbishment works are undertaken, the building should be subjected to a Level III survey to mitigate against loss of any historic fabric and features.
- 7.2 The available historical evidence suggests that the farm site may well have been occupied as a farmstead during the early post-medieval period, as there were two Brownlow households at Rivington in the late 17th century. A programme of trial trenching on the site of the earlier farmhouse may well expose deposits and features of some archaeological significance (Site 06, Figure 2). A positive result may result in further works, potentially involving a 'strip and record' exercise.

Appendix 1: Owners and Occupants of Top o'th' Hill, 1780-1939

<i>Date</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Occupier</i>
1780	George Brownlow	John Wadington
1782	George Brownlow	John Brownlow
1788	Mrs Betty Higson	John Brownlow junior
1789-92	Mrs Betty Higson	John Brownlow
1793-1802	Mrs Higson	John Brownlow
1803-1806	Mrs Higson	Joseph Sunter
1807-1809	Mrs Higson	Emma Sunter
1810-1816	Mrs Tyrer	Thomas Farbrother
1817-1818	Mrs Tyrer	Robert Hampson
1819	Mrs Tyrer or Higson	Robert Hampson
1820	Mrs Higson	Robert Hampson
1821-1823	Mrs Tyrer Higson	Robert Hampson
1824	Mrs Tyrer & Higson	Peter Hampson
1825	Thomas Tyrer &c	Peter Hampson
1826-1830	Mrs Tyrer Higson	Peter Hampson
1831	Heirs of late Mrs Higson	Peter Hampson
1834		John Nightingale
1845	Christopher Shaw & others	John Nightingale
1851-1861		John Turner
1865	Mary Mason & others	William Ryder
1871		Thomas Settle
1881		Unoccupied
1889	Miss Mason & others	Unoccupied?
1891		Henry Evans
1894-1897	Miss Mason & others	Henry Evans
1897	Miss Mason & others	John Hudson (Hodgson) Saul
1901		J H Saul
1904	Exors of Miss Mason & others	Evan Makinson
1911-1929	Liverpool Corporation	Noah Makinson
1939		Noah Makinson

Appendix 2: Top o'th' Hill in Census Returns, 1841-1911

1841

<i>Name</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
John Nightingale		35	Farmer & stone mason	Lancashire
John Turner		40	Agricultural labourer	Lancashire
Elizabeth Turner		40	Servant	Lancashire
Martha Turner		11		Lancashire
Charles Worsley		15		Lancashire

1851

<i>Name</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
John Turner	Head	49	Farmer of 28 acres	Horwich
Elizabeth Turner	Wife	50	Farmer's wife	Clayton, Yorkshire
Martha Turner	Daughter	20	Farmer's daughter	Manchester
Charles Worsley	Lodger	28	Landowner's (farmer's) son	Abram

1861

<i>Name</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
John Turner	Head	59	Formerly a farmer	Horwich
Elizabeth Turner	Wife	59		Clayton, Yorkshire
Martha Turner	Daughter	30		Manchester
Robert Turner	Grandson	5		Rivington
Charles Worsley	Boarder	38		Abram

1871

<i>Name</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
Thomas Settle	Head	55	Farmer of 25½ acres	Lancashire
Eliza Settle	Wife	47		Lancashire
Thomas Settle	Son	15		Lancashire
Caroline Settle	Daughter	12		Lancashire
Robert Settle	Son	10		Lancashire

1881

Unoccupied

1891

<i>Name</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
Henry Evans	Head	51	Farmer & coal miner	Cheshire
Hannah Evans	Wife	41		Staffordshire
Samuel Evans	Son	21	Coal miner	Staffordshire
Mary Evans	Daughter	20		Staffordshire
John Evans	Son	13		Staffordshire
Martha Evans	Daughter	11		Staffordshire
Joseph Evans	Son	9		Lancashire
Henry Evans	Son	7		Lancashire
Betsy Evans	Daughter	5		Lancashire
Hannah Evans	Daughter	3		Lancashire

Kate Evans	Daughter	5mths		Lancashire
John P Kelly	Adopted son	21	Coal miner	Manchester

1901

<i>Name</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
John H Saul	Head	75	Farmer	Cumberland
Charlotte Saul	Daughter	37		Cumberland
Bessy Saul	Daughter	30		Cumberland
Dina Saul	Daughter	26	Professional singer	Cumberland
Mary J Fletcher	Daughter	35		Cumberland
Joseph S Fletcher	Grandson	3		Aintree
Henry G J Fletcher	Grandson	1		Aintree

1911

<i>Name</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>
Noah Makinson	Head	41	Farmer poultry & dairy	Horwich
Elizabeth Makinson	Mother	74		Horwich
Margaret Makinson	Sister	44	Farmer's sister dairy work	Horwich
Fred Makinson	Nephew	13	Farm labourer	Rivington

Appendix 3: Contents of digital archive (forwarded to ADS, with report to OASIS)

Report as PDF

Text as Wordfile

Figures 1, and 3 to 6 as TIFF files

Figures 2, 7 and 8 as DWG files (AutoCAD 2021)

Plates 1 – 33 as TIFF and RAW files

SOURCES

Primary

Lancashire Archives

DRM 1/85 Plan of Lands in the Township of Rivington in the Parish of Bolton-le-Moors and County Palatine of Lancaster, 1850; copy of apportionment of 1845.

QDL/S/80 Land Tax assessments for Rivington, 1780-1831.

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WCW/Supra/C607C/46 Will of John Brownlow of Rivington, proved 12 July 1803.

WCW/Supra/C1258B/49 Will of Christopher Shaw of Rivington, gentleman, proved 30 August 1853.

Other

Will of Anne Mason of Foxholes, Horwich, spinster, proved 19 November 1903.

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Published Maps

Ordnance Survey 6in to 1 mile Lancashire sheet 86, surveyed 1845-7, published 1849.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 First Edition 1894, surveyed 1892, published 1894.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 Edition of 1908, revised 1907.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 Edition of 1929, revised 1927.

Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 287 (West Pennine Moors: Blackburn, Darwen, Accrington & Bolton North), 1:25,000 scale, revised 2015, published 2015.

Websites

[Geology of Britain viewer | British Geological Survey \(BGS\)](#)

Key to Figures

BA	Blocked Aperture
BD	Blocked Doorway
BO	Boskins
BU	Buttress
FP	Feed Passage
H	Hatch
ID	Inserted Doorway
OH	Owl Hole
RJ	Ragged Joint
SJ	Straight Joint
TD	Taking In Doorway



Figure 1. Site location map, derived from O. S. 1:25,000 series. Crown copyright, O.S. Licence No. AL100032621 (Matrix Archaeology Ltd).

413750N

363100E

363150E

0 50 Metres



413700N

413650N

363150E

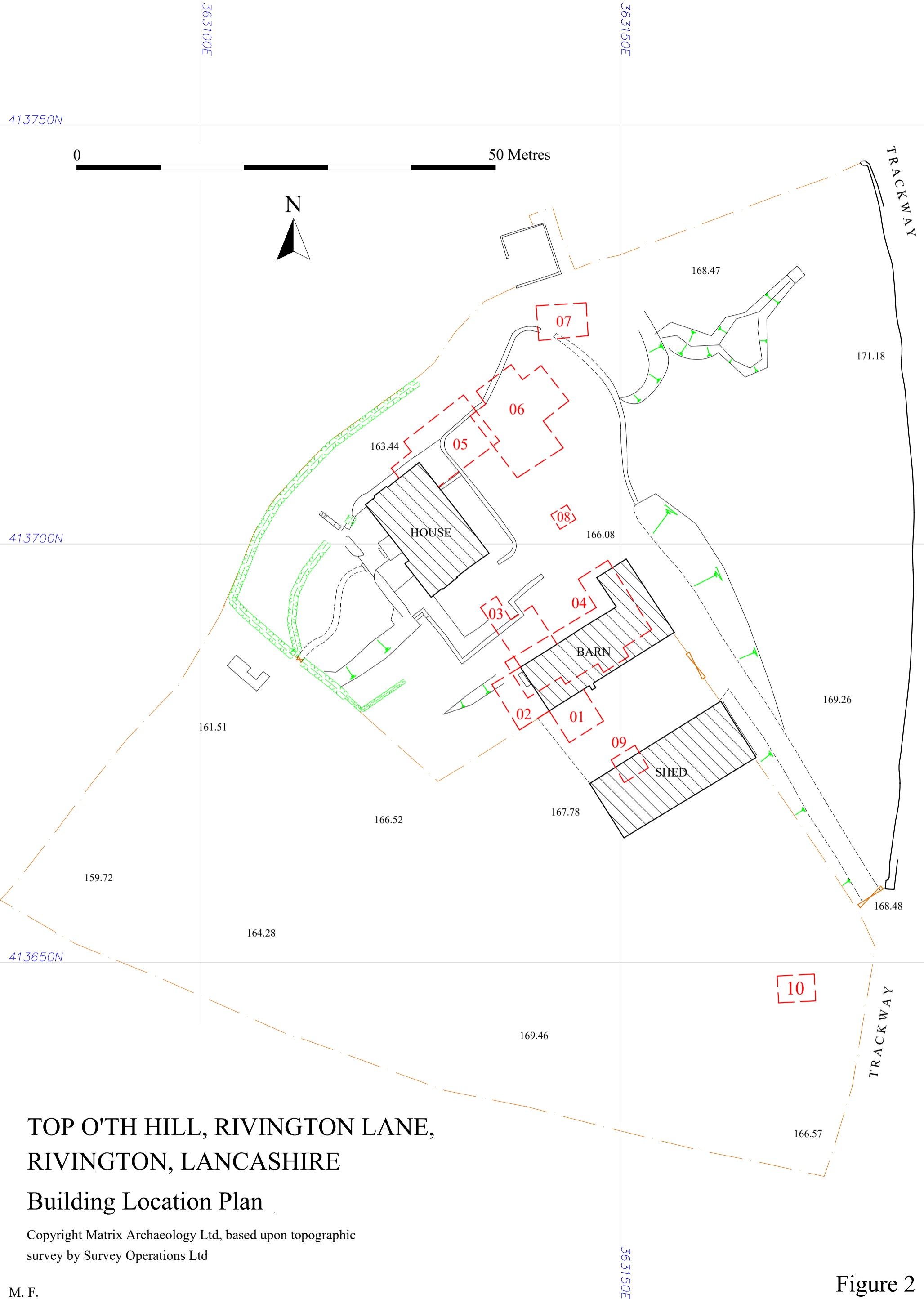
TOP O'TH HILL, RIVINGTON LANE, RIVINGTON, LANCASHIRE

Building Location Plan

Copyright Matrix Archaeology Ltd, based upon topographic
survey by Survey Operations Ltd

M. F.

Figure 2



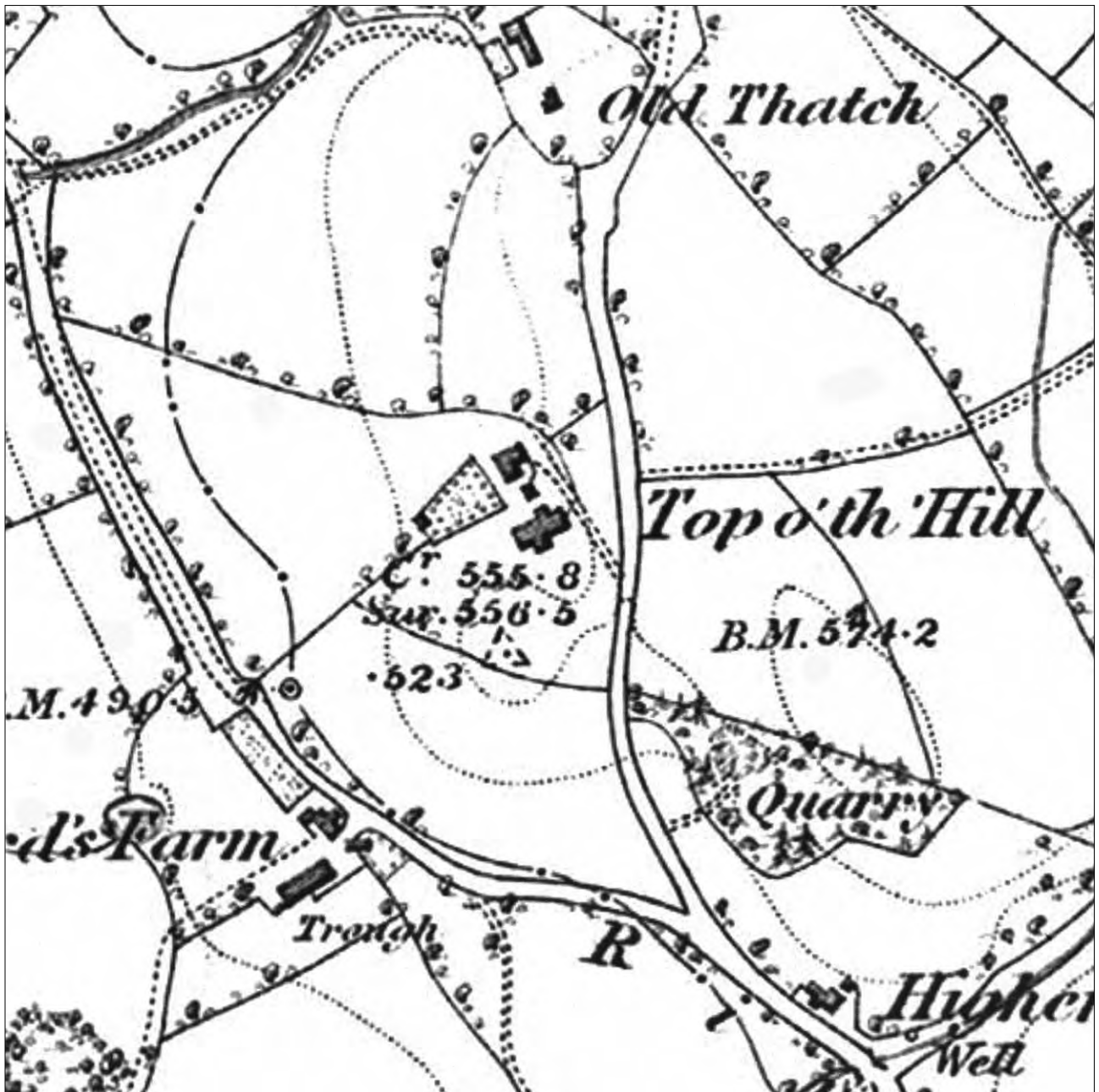


Figure 3: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 6in to 1 mile Lancashire sheet 86, surveyed 1845-7, published 1849. Reproduced at 1:2500.

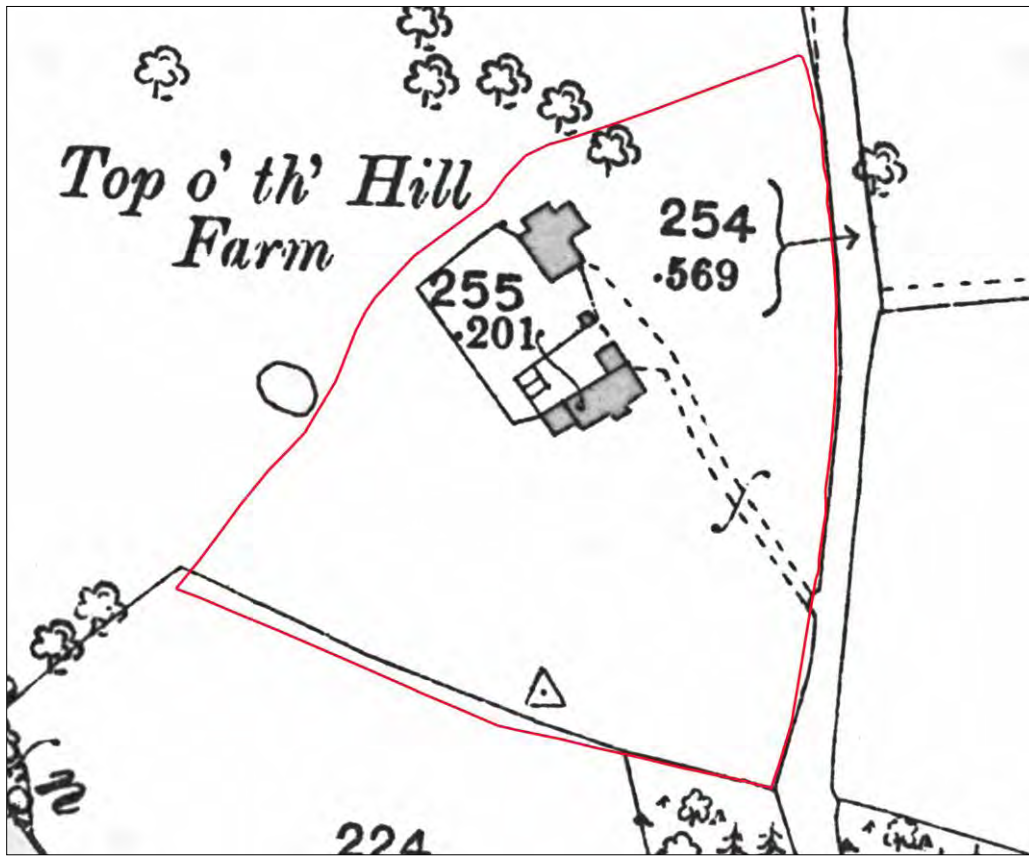


Figure 4: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 First Edition 1894, surveyed 1892, published 1894. Reproduced at 1:1250.

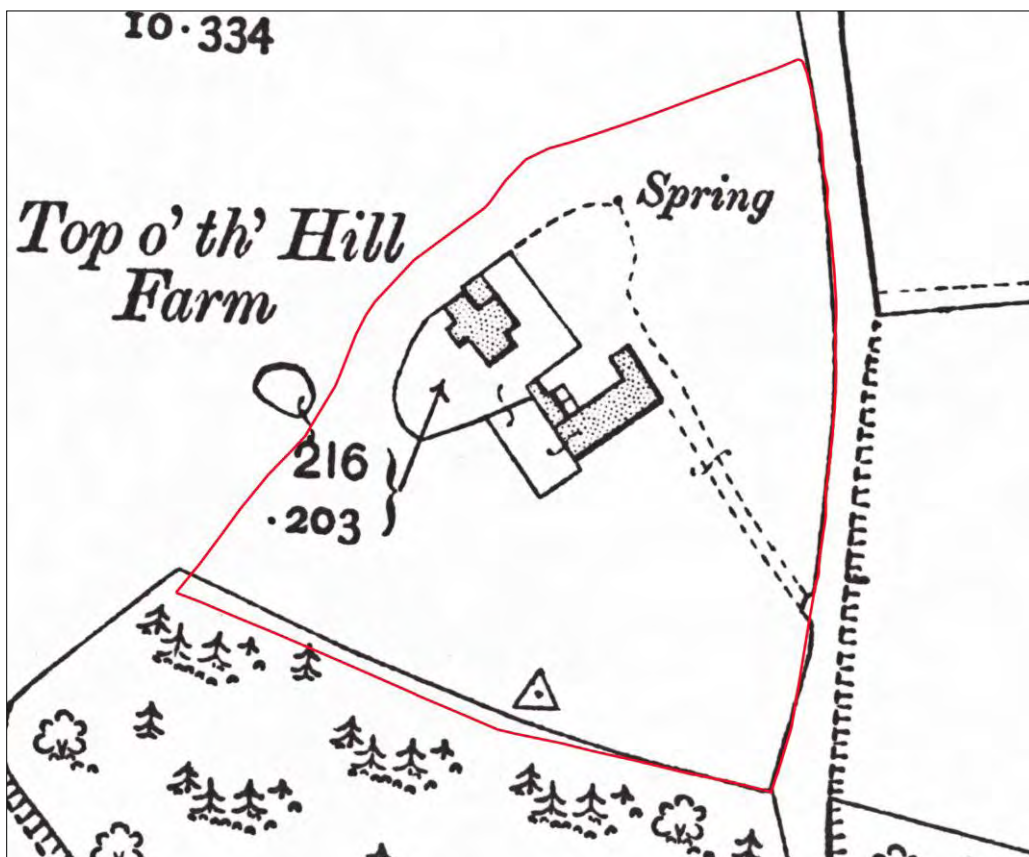


Figure 5: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 Edition of 1908, revised 1907. Reproduced at 1:1250.

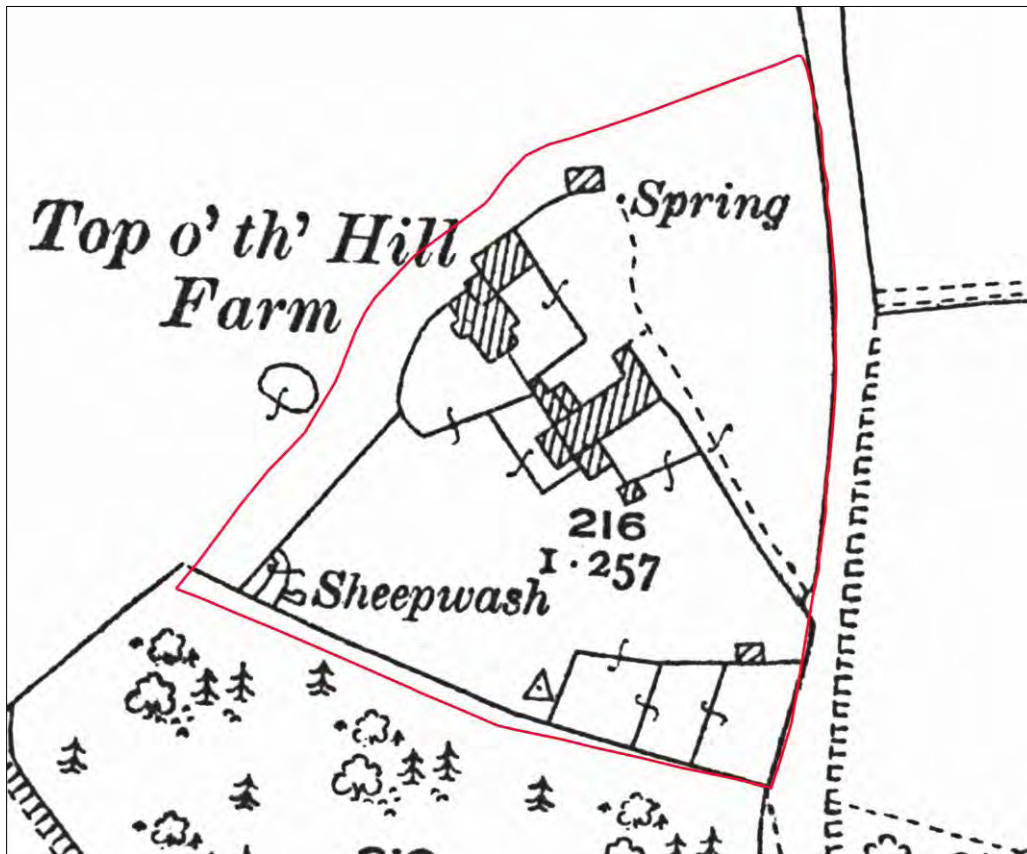
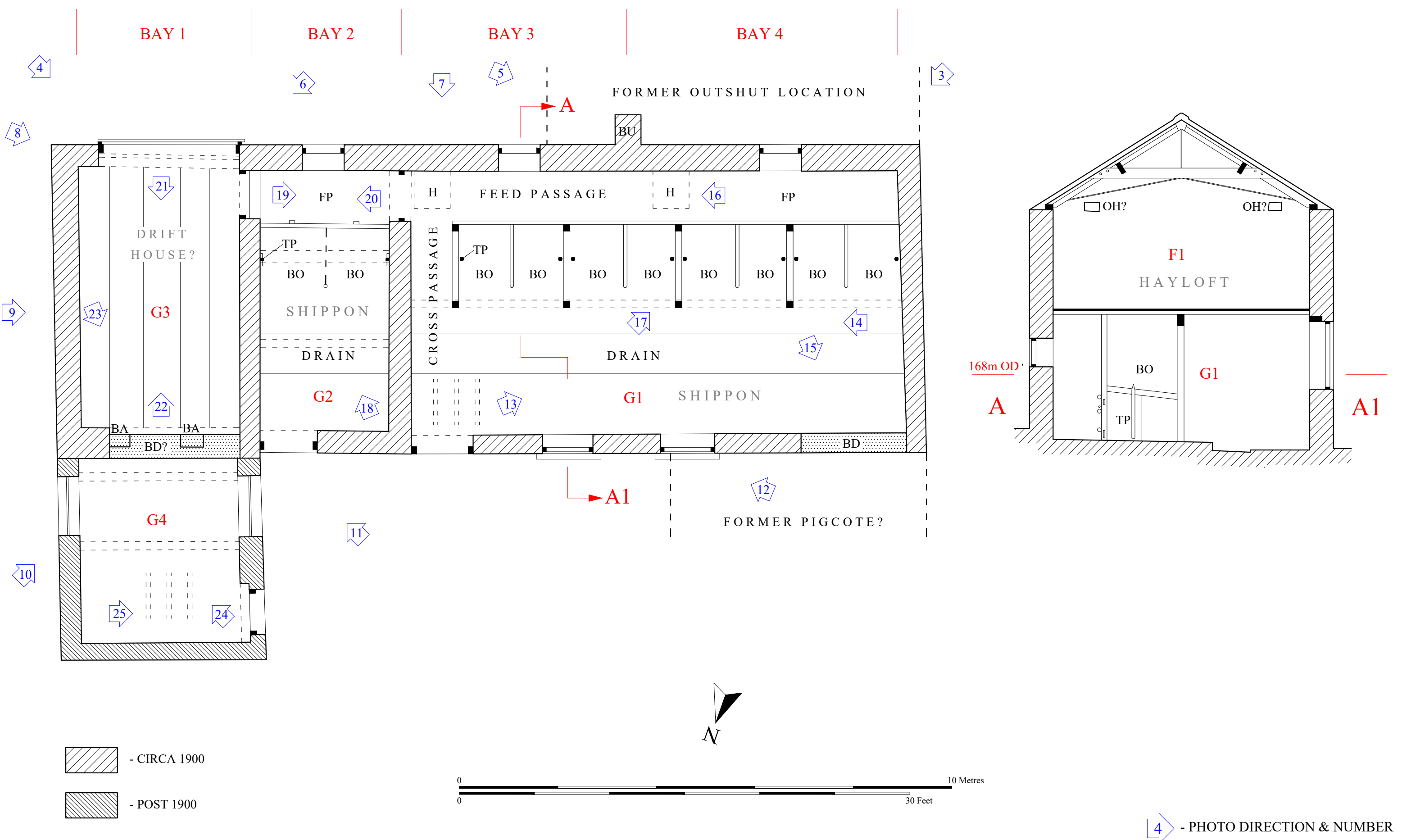
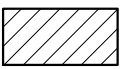
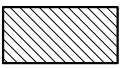


Figure 6: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 Edition of 1929, revised 1927. Reproduced at 1:1250.

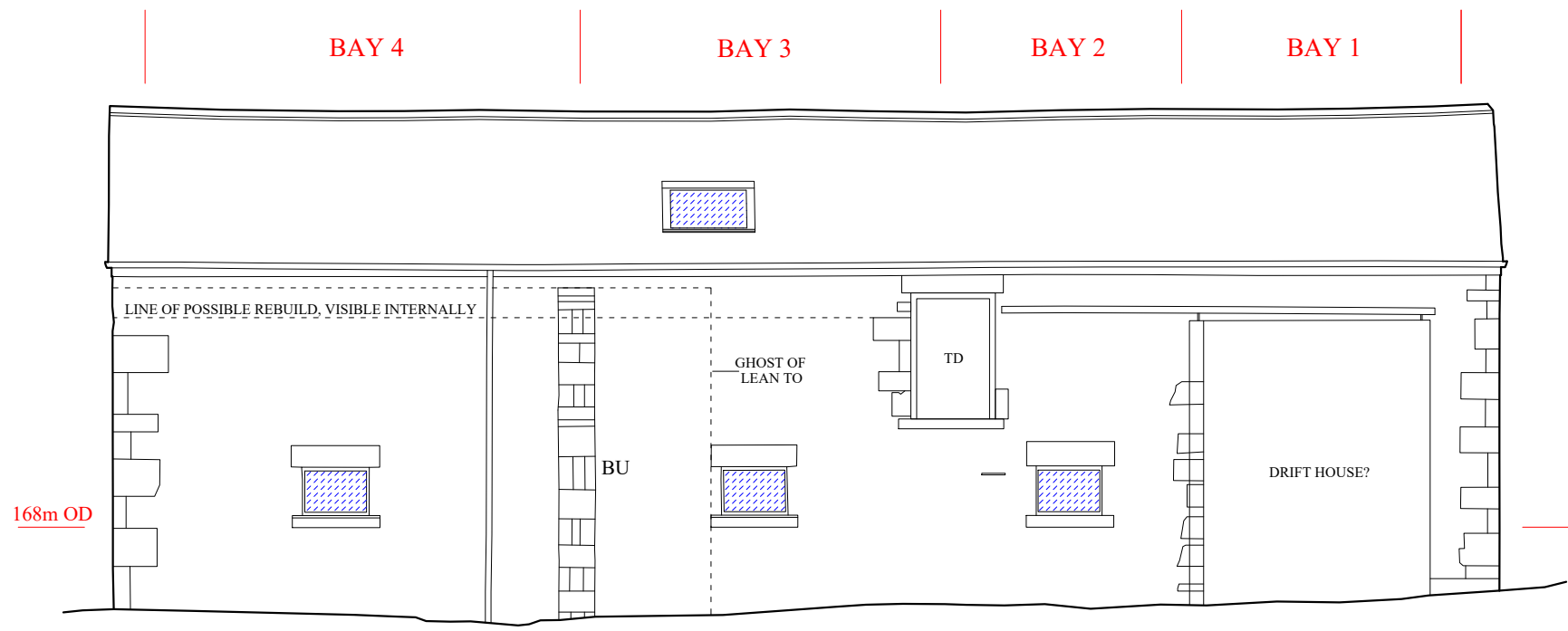


 - CIRCA 1900
 - POST 1900

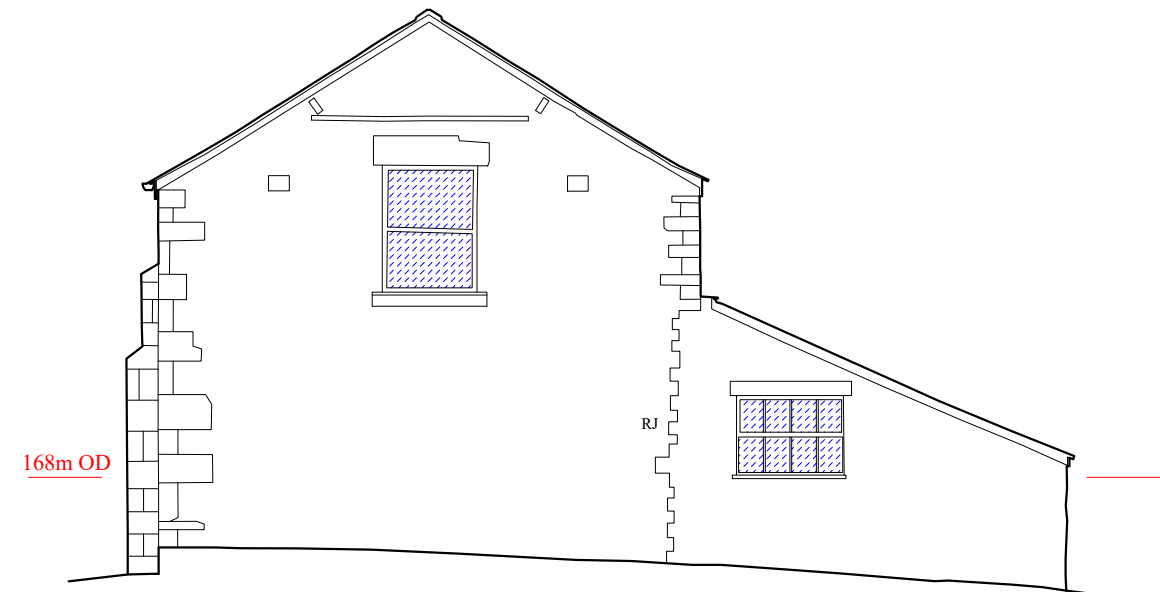


 - PHOTO DIRECTION & NUMBER

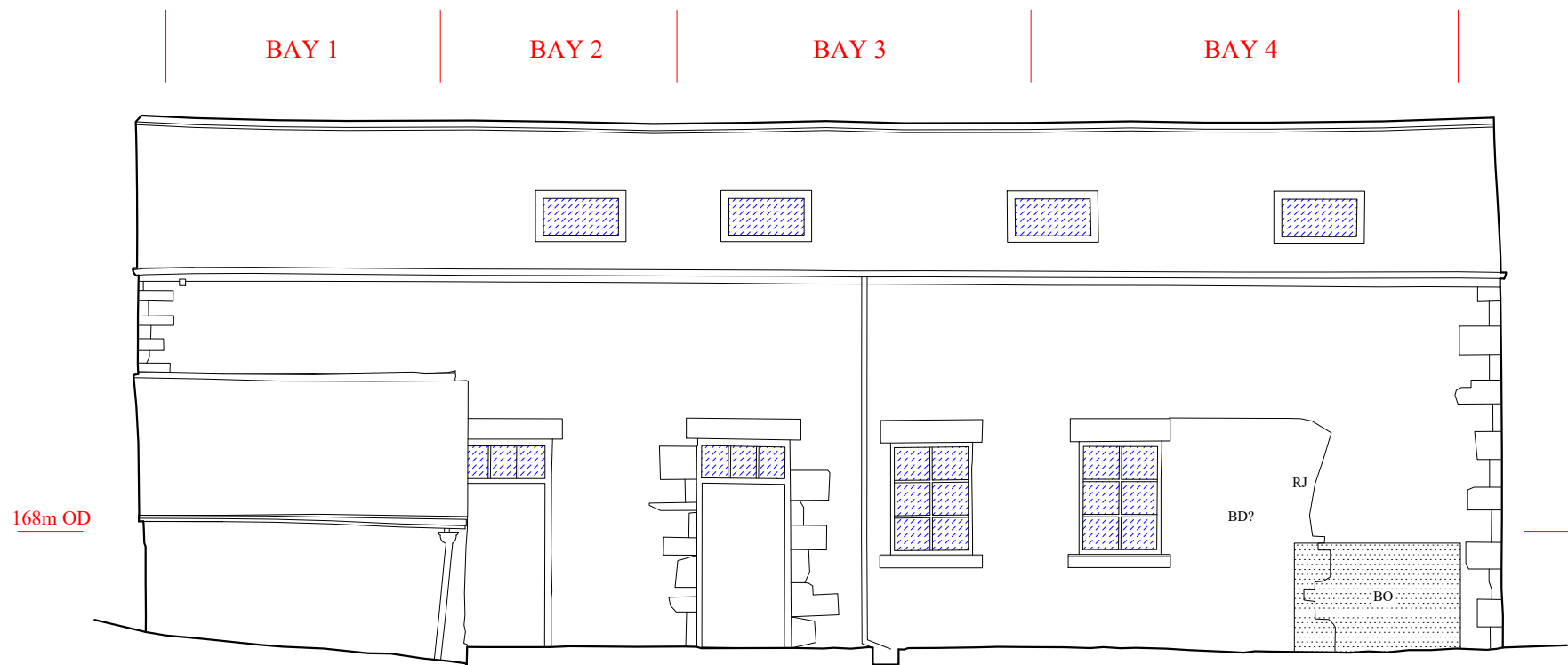
<p>Matrix Archaeology Ltd 36 Highfield Road Stretford Manchester M32 8NQ matrixarch@btconnect.com</p>	<p>Site: TOP O'TH' HILL FARM, RIVINGTON LANE, RIVINGTON, LANCASHIRE (OSNGR 363126 413699)</p>	<p>Title: BARN FLOOR PLAN AND CROSS SECTION A - A1</p>	<p>Date: Sept 2021</p>	<p>Field Recorder: M. F. & S. P.</p>	<p>Sheet 1 of 2 Sheets</p>
			<p>Scale: As for scale bar</p>	<p>CAD Illustrator: M. F. & S. P.</p>	<p>Figure 7</p>



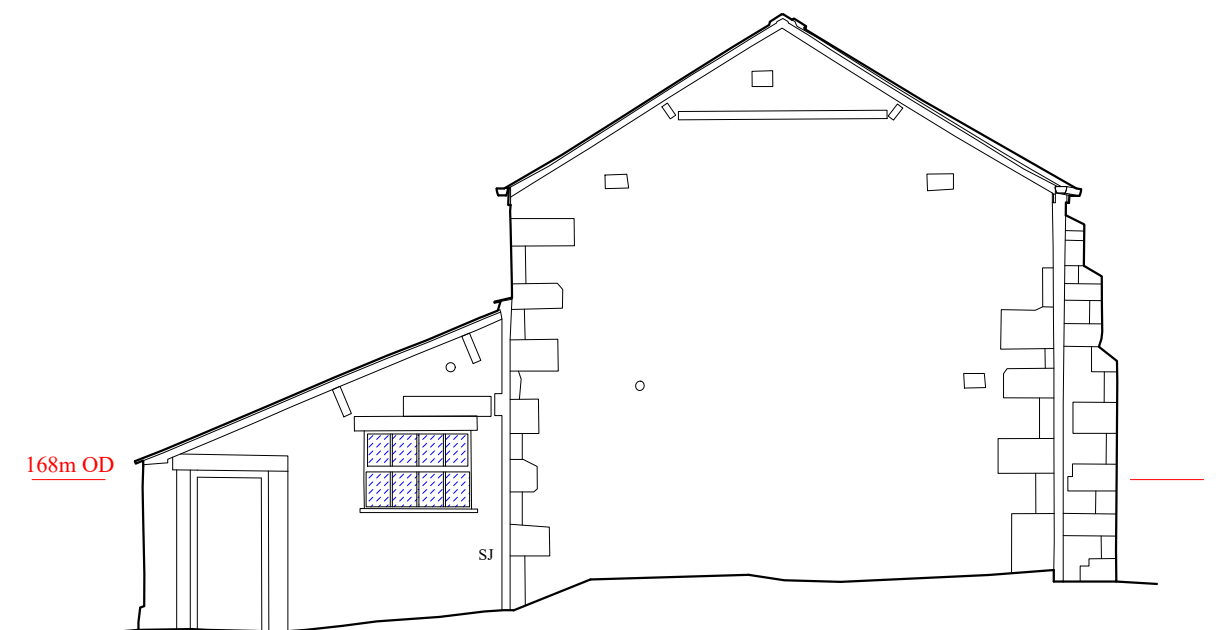
SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION





Plate 1. Site viewed from east, barn in centre.



Plate 2. Site viewed from north-east, barn in centre.



Plate 3. Barn south elevation, viewed from south-west.



Plate 4. Barn south elevation, viewed from south-east.



Plate 5. Buttress in barn south elevation, viewed from east.



Plate 6. Doorway to drift house, in barn south elevation, viewed from south-west.



Plate 7. Taking in door in barn south elevation, viewed from south.



Plate 8. Barn, viewed from east.



Plate 9. Pike of barn east elevation, viewed from east, showing ex situ datestone over window.



Plate 10. Barn, east elevation, viewed from north-east.



Plate 11. Barn, added lean-to, viewed from west.



Plate 12. Barn, viewed from west.



Plate 13. Barn, room G1, viewed from north-east, showing boskins.



Plate 14. Barn, room G1, viewed from south-west.



Plate 15. Barn, room G1, south west end, showing blocked doorway, viewed from east.



Plate 16. Barn, room G1, view along feed passage, from south-west.



Plate 17. Barn, room G1, boskins, viewed from north.



Plate 18. Barn, room G2, viewed from north-west.



Plate 19. Barn, room G2, feed passage, viewed from north-east.



Plate 20. Barn, room G2, feed passage, viewed from south-west.



Plate 21. Barn, room G3, viewed from south-east.



Plate 22. Barn, room G3, viewed from north-east.



Plate 23. Barn, room G3, blocked doorway, viewed from south-east.



Plate 24. Barn, room G4, viewed from west.

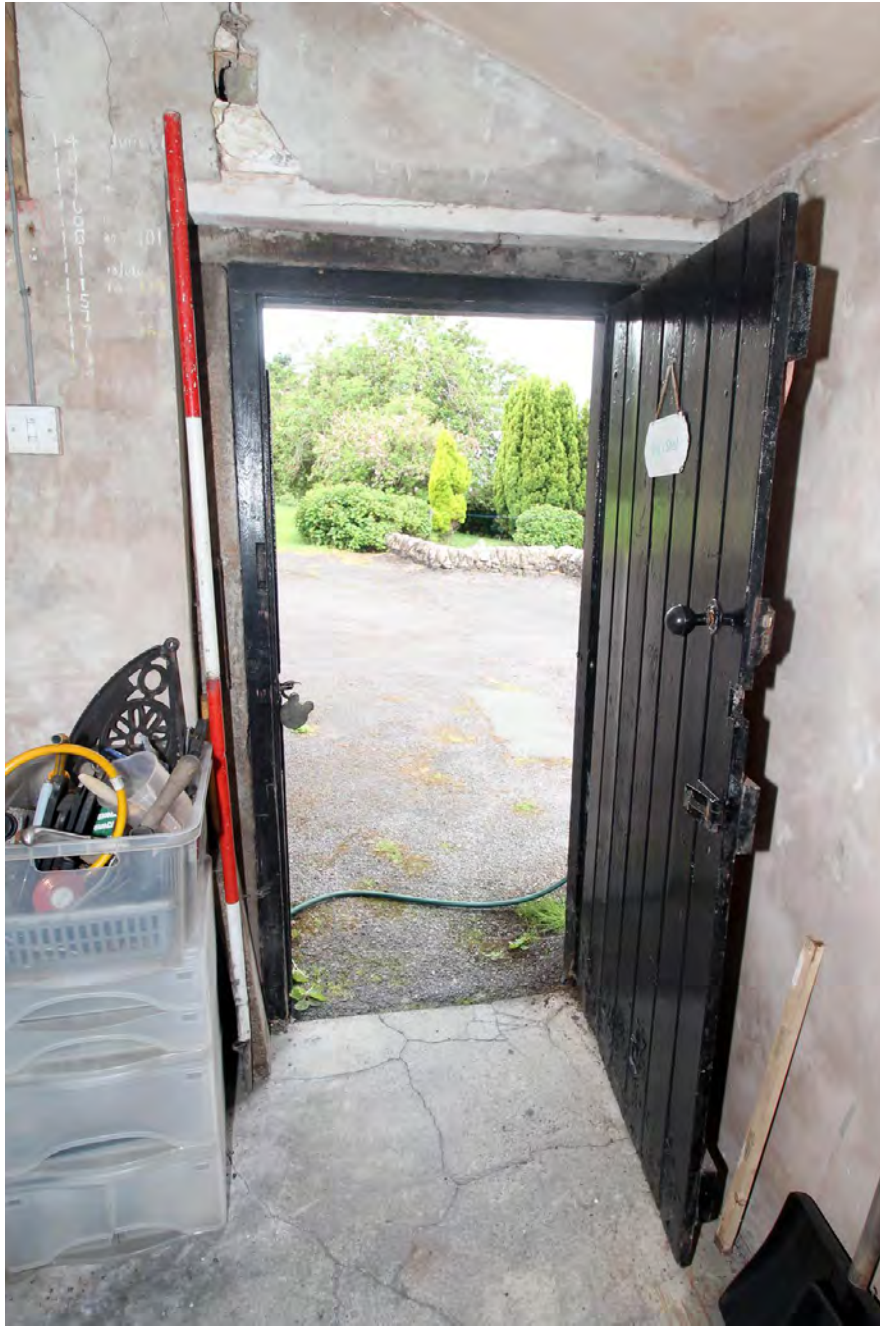


Plate 25. Barn, room G4, viewed from north-east.



Plate 26. Barn, hayloft, viewed from south-west.



Plate 27. Barn, hayloft, viewed from north-west, pitching eye to right.



Plate 28. Barn, hayloft, viewed from north-east, pitching eye to left.



Plate 29. Barn, hayloft, viewed from north-east.



Plate 30. Farmhouse, viewed from south-west.



Plate 31. Farmhouse, viewed from south.



Plate 32. Farmhouse, viewed from south-east.



Plate 33. Farmhouse, viewed from north-east.