

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



Historic Building Survey

Matrix Archaeology

July 2023 (revised August 2023)

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Historic Building Survey

Report No. 2023-06
(Project Code: MA856)

Client: Mr & Mrs Pitalia

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Summary

The farmhouse at Top o'th' Hill Farm was probably constructed in 1897, to replace an earlier farmhouse. The adjacent barn was also rebuilt at the same time, probably reflecting demand for dairy products from the nearby rapidly growing urban centres of Horwich and Chorley. The farmhouse was a large three-bay building, with a rear wing to contain a kitchen and milk room. It was constructed in a restrained 'Arts & Crafts' style, using local sandstone; and it was extended sometime after 1974, probably when it ceased to function as a farmhouse. The building fenestration and interior appeared to have been updated in the late 20th century. The only recommendation is that an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken, during any refurbishment or demolition works on the farmhouse.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Level III historic building survey of the farmhouse at Top o'th' Hill, Rivington, Lancashire (OSNGR 363150 413690) was undertaken by Matrix Archaeology during May 2023 (**Figure 1**). This was commissioned by Katie Lewis-Pierpoint of Knightsbridge Planning Ltd, on behalf of the clients, Mr & Mrs Pitalia, who are proposing to redevelop the site to create a new family home.
- 1.2 The work was undertaken as pre-planning project, and requested a Level III Historic England-type survey. The nearby barn had been surveyed to Level III in 2021 (Matrix Archaeology Ltd, Report No. 2021-10).
- 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 part of the land which was sold to Liverpool Corporation in 1902 by Lord Leverhulme.
- 1.4 Matrix Archaeology Ltd was also commissioned to undertake a trial trenching evaluation of the pre-1897 farmhouse site; this work is to be reported on separately (Matrix Archaeology, Report No. 2023-07).
- 1.5 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).

1.6 Acknowledgements

Dr Peter Arrowsmith undertook the Historic Background (Section 4). The survey and photography were undertaken by Steven Price, and Mark Fletcher. This report was produced by Mark Fletcher. Mr Peter Van Schalkwyk kindly provided access to the property.

2. Scope and Methodology

2.1 A detailed record of the farmhouse was created, both by drawn elevations, floorplans, and a cross-section, and by photographic means, along with a textual description of features. The existing topographic survey was utilised as a base for the drawings.

2.2 The drawings were then scanned, and drawn up in AutoCAD (Figures 7 - 10). The digital photographs are reproduced as Plates 1 – 32.

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 farmhouse 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 Mason 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

²² Smith 1989, 152; 1995, 62.

Hodgson Saul, the first occupant of the new farmhouse. As noted above (4.2.4), he appears to have been a man of some wealth. If the owner Anne Mason 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 as a narrow range fronted by two pens projected from the west end of the north elevation, probably a pigcote (building 03). On the same map, the existing farmhouse was shown, although the north-east part was indicated as a subdivision of the building, which suggested that it was then newly added.

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 indicates that the south-west part of the farmhouse was not yet constructed; it also shows a detached building to the north-east of the farmhouse (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 - 10)

5.1 External house 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 west and east, with the gables being towards the north and south. The southernmost bay was broken forward slightly on the west elevation, with a gabled elevation, to give the impression of a cross-wing.

At ground floor level, the plan form of the building was double pile, of three bays length north-south, and two bays east-west. This present form does not appear to be the original one, as rooms G6 and G8 appear to be later additions. At first floor level, the plan form was more representative of the original one, with principal bedrooms (F2 and F4) to either side of the central staircase, and a rear small bedroom (F7), and a possible bathroom (F6).

The building materials comprised a mixture of fine to medium grained local Carboniferous sandstones, with local gritstones (probably Ousel Nest grit) being utilised for the dressings. There were a good number of local quarries where this material could have been obtained. All of the farmhouse roof coverings comprised diminishing courses of Welsh slate, which was being brought into north-west England by train in vast quantities during the late Victorian period. The roof ridges were defined by clay tiles, probably from one of the local tile works, such as that one Winter Hill. Three double chimney stacks rose above the roof; two being central to the gable pikes at the north and south ends of the building, and one over the east elevation.

All of the external windows appeared to have been replaced in hardwood, probably in the 1980s or 90s, so that the original fenestration patterns were now lost, although it seems at least possible that the replacements may have mirrored the original ones. Below ground level window cill level, the external walls were all slightly battered, possibly to suggest a greater massing of the building.

West external elevation (Figure 9; Plates 1 - 3)

The elevation represented the building frontage, and would have once commanded an excellent aspect to the west before woodland was planted to the front of the house. There were three bays, with the south bay breaking slightly forward, to give the impression of a cross wing. The construction of this elevation comprised neat courses of rock-faced ashlar sandstone, with quoins, window cills and lintels of smooth ashlar gritstone.

In the centre of the elevation was an external 'Old English' porch, of timber framed construction. The only protection from weather was afforded by its double-pitched porch roof, as the flanks comprised vertical timber posts with open panels between. The timber framing was raised off timber sole plates, which themselves were carried upon a plinth of rock-faced ashlar sandstone. The whole porch was elevated above the front garden upon two steps. Inside

the porch, the front door comprised a relatively simple late Victorian one of five fielded panels, with mouldings.

The right-hand bay of the frontage was gabled, with a large eight-light window at ground level, over which was a broad segmental relieving arch, probably more decorative than functional. At first floor level was a matching pair of tall but narrow windows, each of three lights. Both of these were surmounted by individual relieving arches, again probably of decorative intention.

Central to the pike of the gable was a pair of apparent vertical breather slits. It was uncertain whether these were of any functional purpose as breathers for the attic, as they appeared to be blocked.

Within the central bay, to the right of the porch, was a small single-light window which provided illumination to the WC located beneath the internal staircase. Above this was the tall stair-light window, of eight lights, which extended up to the building eaves.

Within the northern bay, a five-light window at ground floor level was spanned over by a decorative segmental relieving arch. Directly above this was a three-light window, with a timber-framed gablet over, which extended above the eaves and ran back into the main roof pitch.

Apart from the tall window light and the small WC light, all of the windows in this elevation may have originally contained mullions, as the cills contained integral raised mullion bases; although this may otherwise have been a decorative feature, as it didn't appear to be repeated in the window lintels.

South external elevation (Figure 9; Plates 4 & 5)

The gable end here contained an external chimney stack which broke forward slightly, and was offset at two levels, to rise to the two-flued chimney, which contained a string course, then diminishing courses to the sole surviving pot. This left room for no original apertures, although a rear doorway was formed here when room G8 was added.

The construction comprised rough, irregular courses of rubble sandstone, although the gable returns and the chimney stack were defined by rectangular quoins. The verges were formed of ashlar sandstone slabs, which were laid to overhang the gable walls slightly. Apart from this detail, the gable appearance was quite at odds with that of the house frontage, and may have been intentional, to imply a degree of faux antiquity.

To the east of the gable, at ground floor level only, the wall had been extended when G8 was added, and the fabric here, although similar to that of the remainder, had a less weathered appearance, possibly due to being overhung by the extended roofline from the rear wing. The doorway had rectangular quoins, although the door itself was a simple one of vertical timber planks.

East external elevation (Figure 9; Plates 5 - 7)

This long elevation faced onto the rear yard area, and had an irregular appearance, as the two roof gables comprised original elements of the rear building extension. The south pitch of the southern gable was later carried down to ground floor eaves level when room G8 was added; whilst on the north side of the building, the main roof pitch on the east side was swept down to cover the added room G6. These alterations could be identified from the two ragged joints located approximately where the east elevation had been extended each way by the addition of a single bay.

The masonry used comprised irregular courses of sandstone rubble, with crude quoins to the windows and the elevation ends. The southernmost bay included larger stone blocks than the remaining wall, and also pink sandstone blocks indicative of a provenance within the Carboniferous sequence located just below the Triassic unconformity. This matched with the sandstone used in the barn outshut.

At ground floor level, each of the four bays contained an identical three-light casement window. The northernmost window was slightly lower in level, as it had a thinner sandstone cill than the others. The next window to this one appeared to be an insertion, as the fabric beneath the cill appeared to have contained a blocked doorway, of which the doorstep and a single quoin survived. Above the window lintel, which appeared to be an L-section of wrought-iron ('angle iron') was a replaced area of masonry, probably from when the window was inserted.

The remaining pair of ground floor windows, to the south, were identical to the one just described. All three had a plain thick sandstone cill, and all had a concealed angle iron lintel, only visible beyond the limits of the aperture.

At first floor level was a pair of tall two-light casement windows; these had sandstone lintels and cills; the latter being chamfered, each having three mullion bases identical to those on the opposing elevation. The lintels were also underpinned by pairs of shaped sandstone corbels.

The gable pikes above these windows were timber-framed, with a valley at the intersection. All of the verges had timber barge boards, in all likelihood these being modern replacements.

North external elevation (Figure 9; Plates 7 & 8)

This elevation, like that to the south, contained a chimneybreast which was slightly broken forward, rising to a stack topped by a pair of pots, identical to that in the opposing gable. At ground floor level, to the west of the stack was a single-light window, with a plain sandstone cill and lintel. The gable had been extended eastwards by the creation of room G6, and the ragged joint between the two construction phases being fairly clear, as the coursing was more irregular within the newer section, with somewhat larger blocks of stone being used. A single-light window was also built into this extension, at ground floor level.

5.2 Internal farmhouse description, ground floor (Figure 7)

Room G1 (Plate 9)

This comprised an entrance lobby inside the front door. The right-hand wall was formed by a short spere, whilst the inner partition comprised a timber and glazed full-height partition, with a central doorway, with two lower fielded panels, and four glazed panels. This partition and doorway appeared to represent an original feature.

Room G2 (Plates 10 - 13)

This entrance hallway linked all of the original ground floor spaces, and provided access to the staircase on the south side. It contained a deep decorative plasterwork cornice, which terminated in a styled plaster cornice above the staircase. The skirting boards were of bolection-moulded timber.

The link to room G5 comprised a double doorway, of timber with full glass panels, and full height glass panels to both sides. It is suggested that this doorway represented a secondary insertion, possibly of 1980s date, replacing an original single doorway.

The staircase rose on the south wall, and comprised a typical late Victorian dog leg construction, of turned balusters and newel posts. The stairs underside was contained by a panel of vertical boards, and a half-glazed doorway gave access into room G3, which was probably a storage space originally, but was now a WC.

The doorways into G4 and G7 had bolection-moulded architraves, whilst the doors had four fielded panels each.

Room G4 (Plate 15)

This room was probably the original parlour (or living room). The big window in the east elevation allowed good natural illumination. The impressive vernacular stone chimneypiece, with its big monolithic lintel and decorative apertures, took up much of the south wall, and was clearly an original feature.

The shallow undecorated cornice may be a modern feature, although it probably replaced an earlier, deeper, and more attractive one. The bolection-moulded skirting boards were probably an original feature.

Room G5 (Plates 16 & 17)

This room was probably the original dining room. There was a chimneypiece in the north wall, constructed of regular courses of rock-faced ashlar, with a relatively small fireplace, and a black marble hearthstone. All of this appeared to be of 20th century construction; although it clearly replaced an earlier fireplace.

The cornice was deep and moulded, with a late Victorian profile, and could safely be attributed to the original farmhouse construction. Likewise, the bolection-moulded skirting boards appeared to be of primary origin.

The east wall of room G5 had been opened out into room G6, probably during the late 20th century, expanding a doorway which itself related to the secondary addition of room G6.

Room G6 (Plate 18)

This small room was an addition to the original farmhouse, and was probably intended as a parlour, and being on the north-east corner of the house, would have been ideal for use during the summer months. The only access was from the dining room G5. The only features of interest were the bolection-moulded skirting boards, and the moulded cornice; both may well be original features. There was no original fireplace in this room, strongly suggesting a use in summer only.

Room G7 (Plates 19 & 20)

This room was presently in use as a kitchen, although originally it comprised two separate rooms, with a partition having been removed, probably during the late 20th century. A modern kitchen had been fitted, and there was nothing of original origin.

The southern room had been slightly larger, and may well have been the original farmhouse kitchen, being shown on the 1974 photograph (Smith, 1989, 153) as having a large mullioned window on the south-facing return, with the doorway into G8 being an insertion which related to the post-1974 addition of room G8. A two-flued chimney stack rose off the east external wall and it is suggested that there had originally been a fireplace in this corner of room G8, in all likelihood containing a cast-iron cooking range.

The smaller northern room may have originally functioned as a milk room, which was then a common element within a farm where dairy cattle figured prominently. The three-light window on the east wall had replaced an earlier external doorway and four-light window, after 1974 (Smith, 1989, 153).

Room G8 (Plates 20 & 21)

This room was an addition to the original floorplan, and was probably intended for use as a scullery. At present, it was in use as a utility room, and the doorway in the south wall comprised the back door of the farmhouse. The modern flue from the clothes drier in the north-east corner of the room was probably routed into the original chimney stack within the wall above.

5.3 Internal farmhouse description, first floor (Figure 8)

Room F1 (Plates 24 – 26)

Room F1 was a central north-south landing at the top of the stairs, which gave access to all of the bedrooms. A ceiling hatch towards the north end provided access to the main north-south roof space. The bolection-moulded skirting boards, noted at ground-floor level, were continued here; as were the similar moulded door architraves for the first-floor rooms, apart from that which accessed room F5.

Room F2 (Plates 29 & 30)

This bedroom is assumed to have been the original master bedroom, given that the attached room F3 was probably a dressing room. In the north wall was a chimneybreast, although the fireplace here had been blocked and was not visible. The skirting boards and door architraves, including that for room F3, were identical to those noted downstairs. The room height rose above the external eaves level. Room F3 was not accessed.

Room F3

This room was not accessed; it is believed to have been an original dressing room to room F2.

Room F4 (Plates 27 & 28)

This large bedroom had a fireplace in the south wall, which was obscured by modern shelving and cupboards. The skirting boards and door architraves were probably original, identical to those noted elsewhere. As for room F2, the ceiling was located above external eaves level. The floorplan of the room appeared to have been reduced by the creation of a later storage space, described as room F5, probably during the 20th century.

Room F5

This appears to have been a storage space of relatively modern origin, formed within the eastern part of room F4.

Room F6 (Plate 31)

This room had been an original, unheated bedroom, at the back of the house. It did not appear to contain any original features.

Room F7 (Plate 32)

This room, presently in use as a bathroom, was originally a heated bedroom. An offset in the thickness of the east external wall suggested the position of a fireplace linked to the chimney above this corner of the building. Where skirting boards survived, the bolecion profile matched that of original boards noted elsewhere within the farmhouse.

5.4 Attic space

The only access into the main north-south attic space was from a hatch located within the ceiling of room F1. Due to the depth of insulation, the view into the space was fairly restricted. Timber common rafters could be seen supporting a central north-south ridge piece, and the whole was of fairly lightweight construction.

6. Building Interpretation

- 6.1 The existing farmhouse was clearly a replacement for an earlier one, which was located a short distance to the west, beneath the hard standing (Building 06, Figure 2).
- 6.2 The existing building was erected in 1897, at or about the same time as the nearby barn was rebuilt. This exact year is suggested on the basis of the rateable value of the buildings, which increased from £3 5s in February 1897, to £15 in August 1897.
- 6.3 The architectural style of the building is probably best described as a restrained version of the then-popular 'Arts & Crafts Movement'. As the farmhouse was constructed several years before the Rivington Hall estate was acquired by Lord Leverhulme, any resemblance to other local buildings erected by Leverhulme in this style may be dismissed as merely coincidental. There were plenty of provincial architects who practiced in the Arts & Crafts style, and it seems unlikely that the individual who designed the farmhouse could now be identified.
- 6.4 In 1897, the then landowner, Anne Mason, owned a considerable amount of property, both in Rivington and in neighbouring townships. There can be little doubt that she was responsible for initiating and funding the construction of the new farmhouse. As suggested within Section 4.3.2, the rebuilding of both the farmhouse and the barn may have been initiated by the demands of the rapidly developing urban areas for dairy produce.
- 6.5 **Suggested phasing and interpretation**

Phase 1 – 1897

The original farmhouse was demolished, and was then rebuilt on a site slightly further to the west. In form, it was a large two-storey three bay house, the southernmost bay being articulated as a gabled cross wing, as against the main range which included the central and northern bays. A two-storeyed rear wing was intended to house a kitchen and milk room, with a pair of additional small bedrooms over. Externally, it had an 'Arts & Crafts Movement' appearance, which included a timber-framed porch and timber-framed gablets to front and rear. The only noteworthy internal 'Arts & Crafts' feature was the chimneypiece in G4; the other surviving internal details were standard for the late Victorian period for such a property. The 1974 photograph (Smith, 1989, 153) showed the east facing elevation in what was probably its original condition, with a heavy stone mullion within each of the three four-light windows, and a doorway (now infilled), adjoining a window without a mullion. This strongly suggests that the windows on the west elevation would have also contained heavy mullions.

Phase 2 – pre. 1907

The O.S. map sequence (Figure 5) indicated that a series of timber sheds were erected, contiguous with the rear of the farmhouse, infilling the space later

occupied by room G6. These sheds were shown on the photograph of 1974 (Smith, 1989, 153).

Phase 3 – post 1974

Sometime after 1974, the spaces to the north and south of the rear wing were infilled, to create the existing rectangular building ‘footprint’. The timber sheds at the north-east end of the building were demolished, and room G6 added at ground floor level. Ragged joints on the building’s east and north elevations indicated how the walls had been extended here to form this extension. The eastern pitch of the main north-south roof was extended to cover over this space. Room G6 appears to have been intended as a summer parlour.

Room G8 was also a late 20th century addition, intended to provide the farmhouse with a utility room, and it seems likely that the east-west partition wall within room G7 was removed at this time, to form a larger kitchen space. The south pitch of the rear extension room was swept down to ground floor eaves level, which also allowed room F7 to be expanded slightly to the south.

It seems likely that all of this work coincided with the loss of farmland, allowing the house to function as a home, as opposed to a working farmhouse.

7. Recommendation

In the event that the farmhouse is to be significantly altered or demolished, then an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken, in order to add detail to the existing building survey, to mitigate against the loss of historic fabric and features.

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, 8, 9 & 10 as DWG files (AutoCAD 2021)

Plates 1 – 32 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.

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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

BD	Blocked Doorway
EW	Enlarged Window
H	Hatch
FP	Fireplace
ID	Inserted Doorway
RJ	Ragged Joint
SJ	Straight Joint
WC	Water Closet



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

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363100E

363150E

0 50 Metres



413700N

413650N

363150E

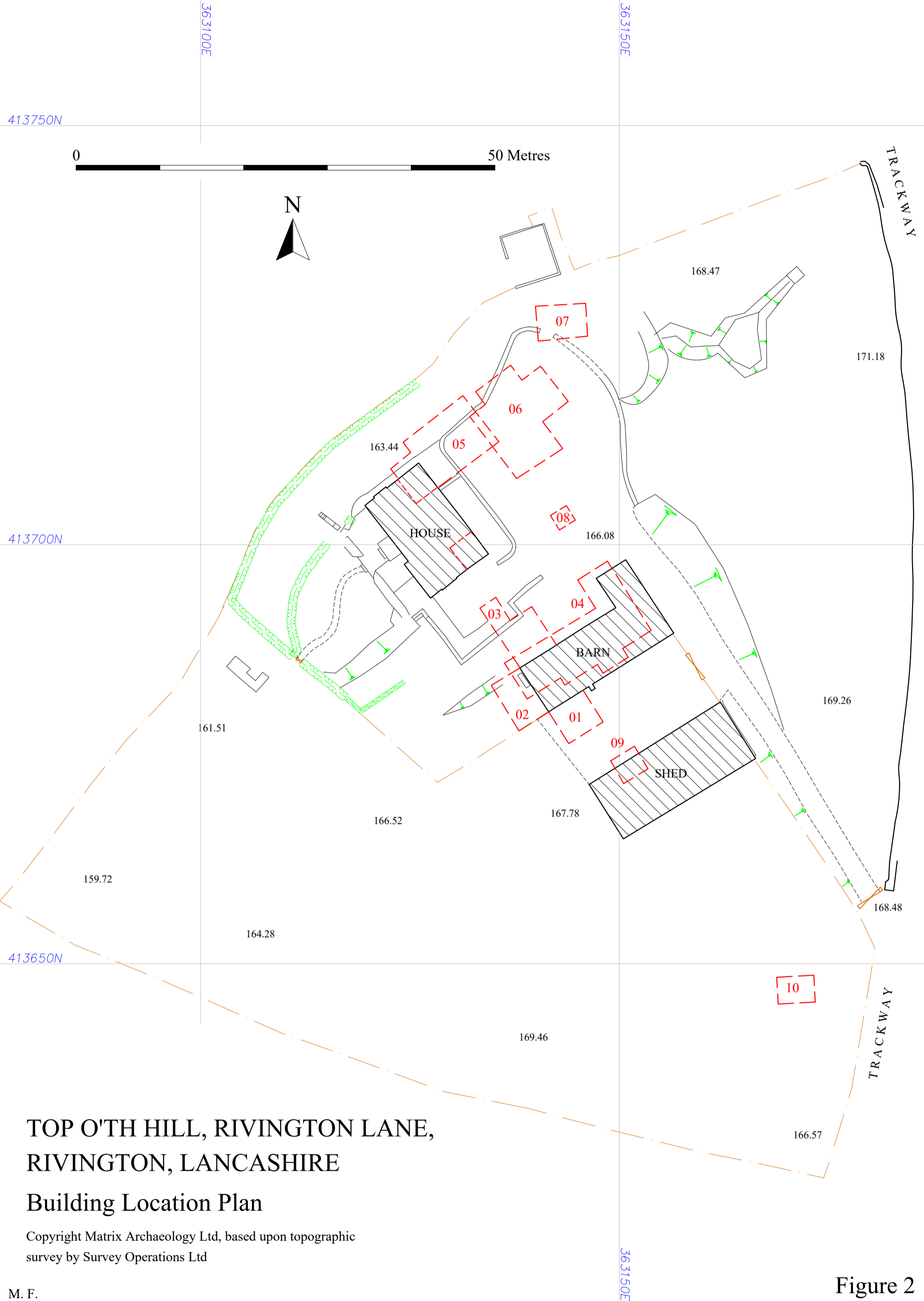
TOP O'TH HILL, RIVINGTON LANE, RIVINGTON, LANCASHIRE

Building Location Plan

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Figure 2



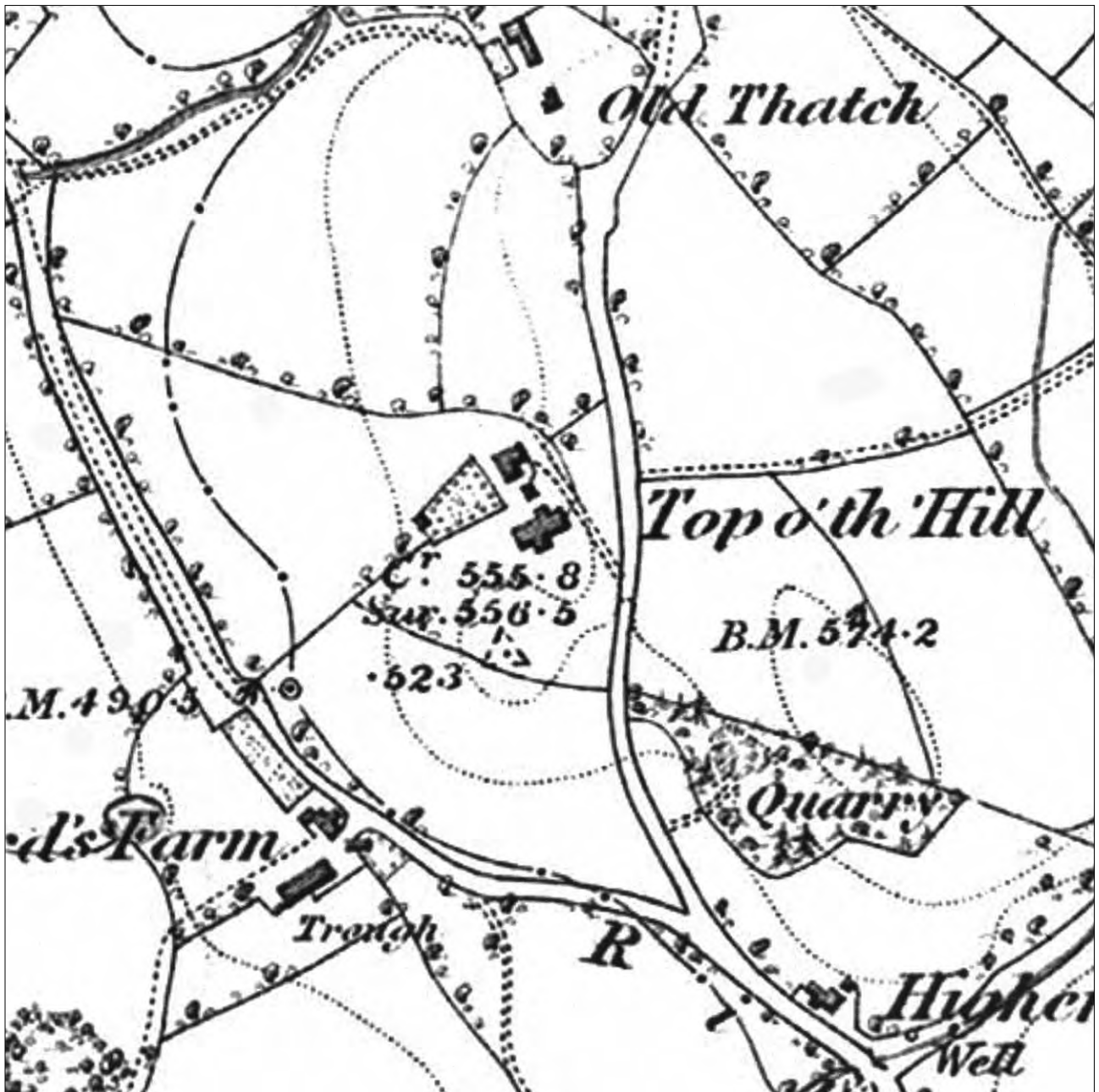


Figure 3: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 6in to 1 mile Lancashire sheet 86, surveyed 1845-7, published 1849. Reproduced at 1:2500.

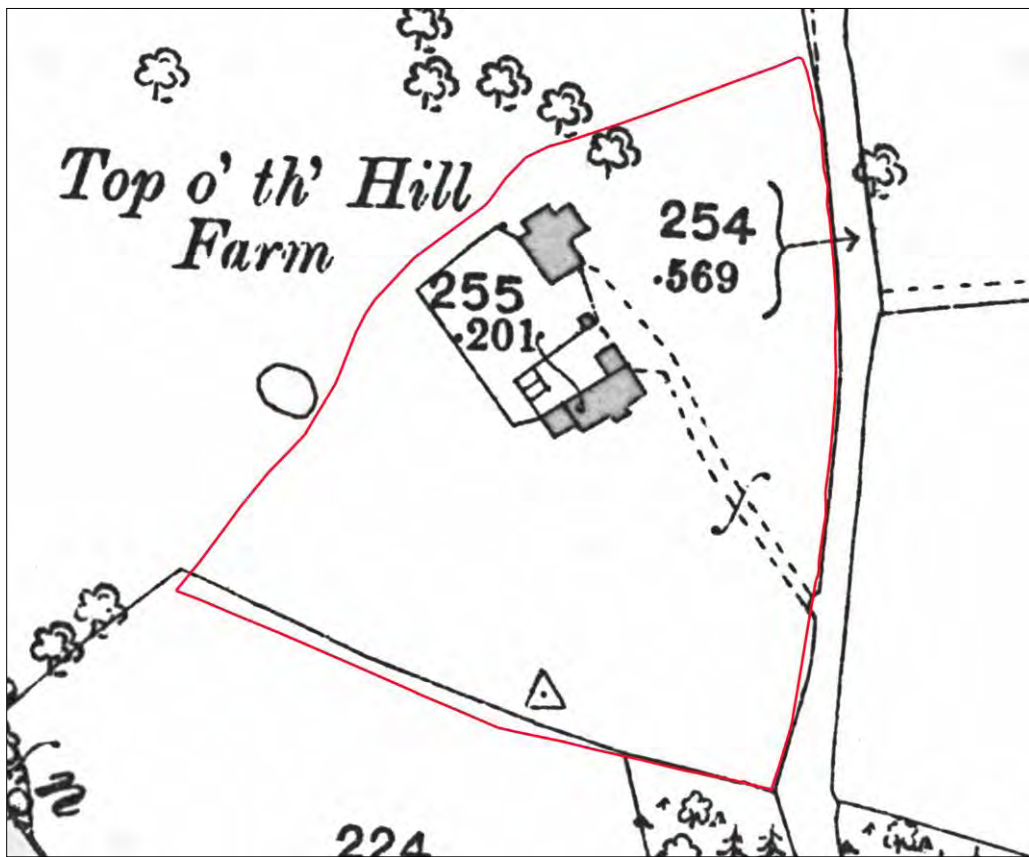


Figure 4: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 First Edition 1894, surveyed 1892, published 1894. Reproduced at 1:1250.

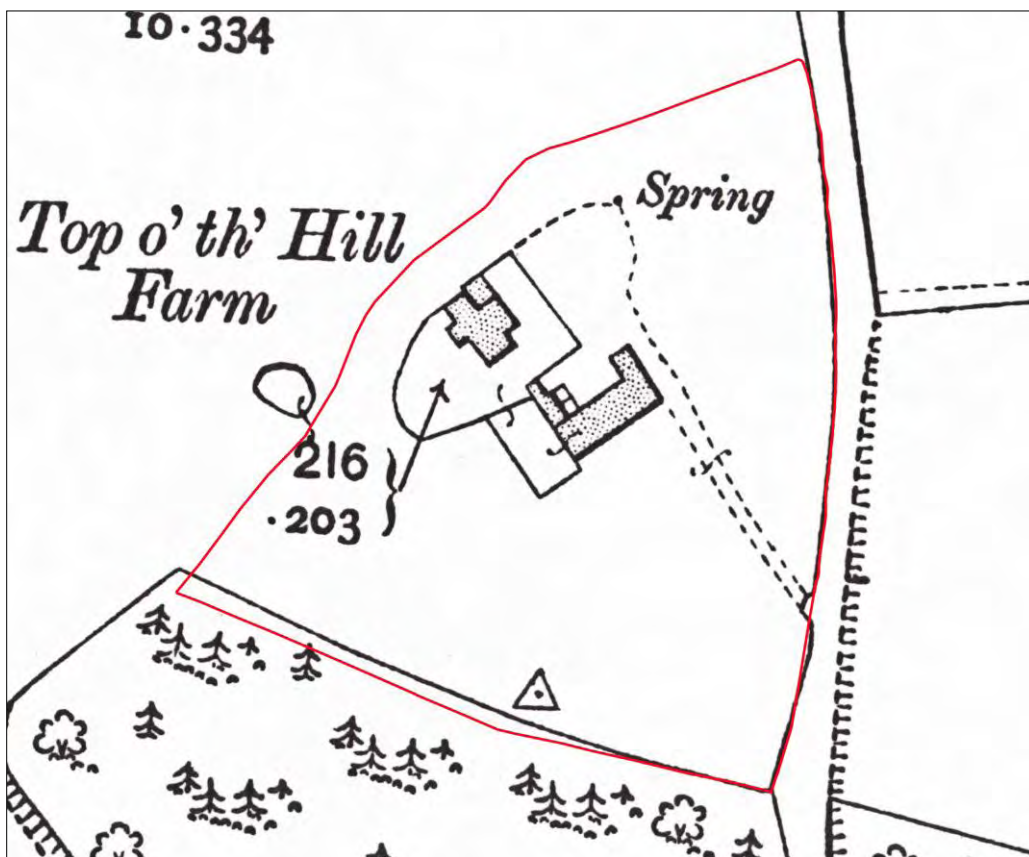


Figure 5: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 Edition of 1908, revised 1907. Reproduced at 1:1250.

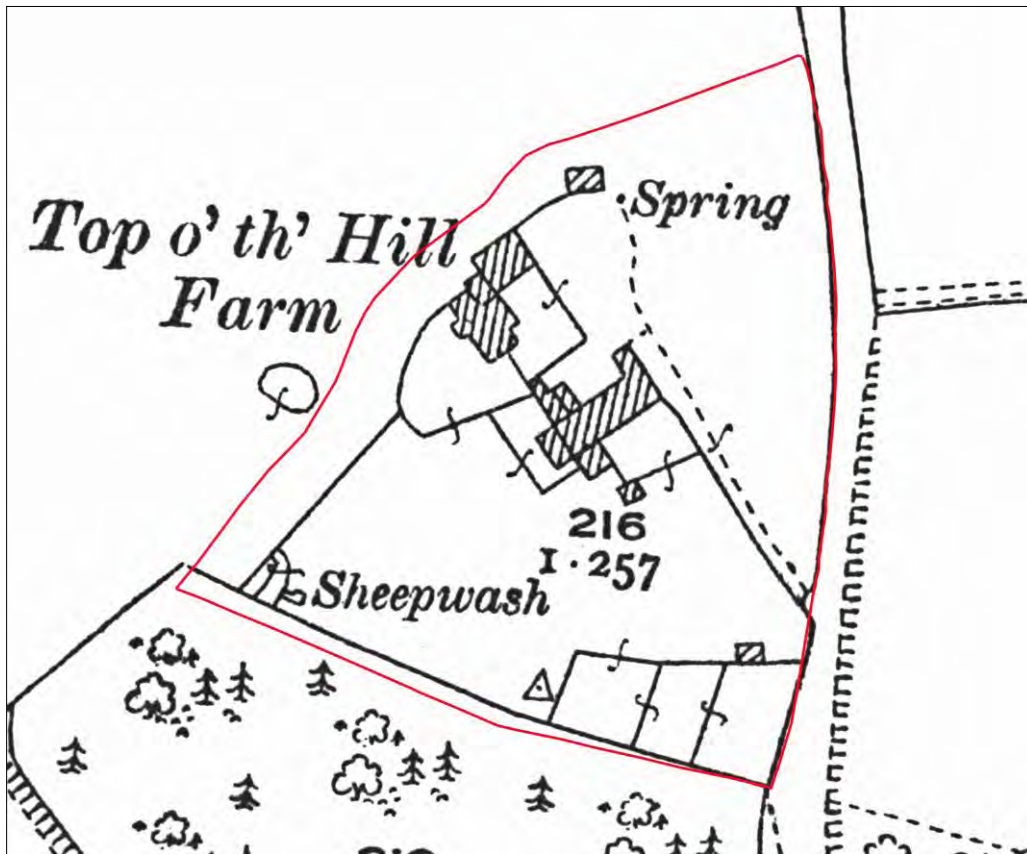
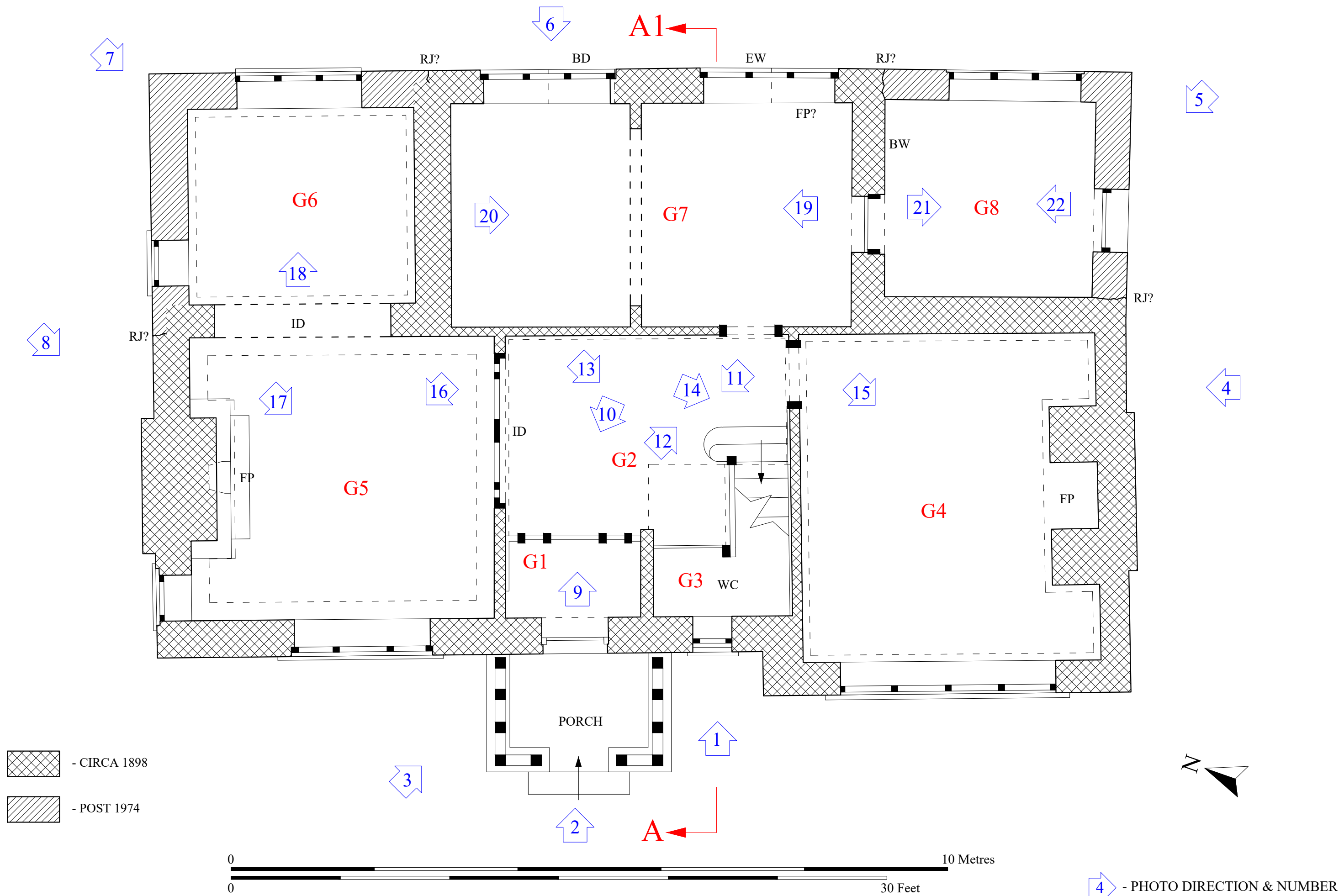


Figure 6: Top o' th' Hill on Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Lancashire sheet LXXXVI.2 Edition of 1929, revised 1927. Reproduced at 1:1250.



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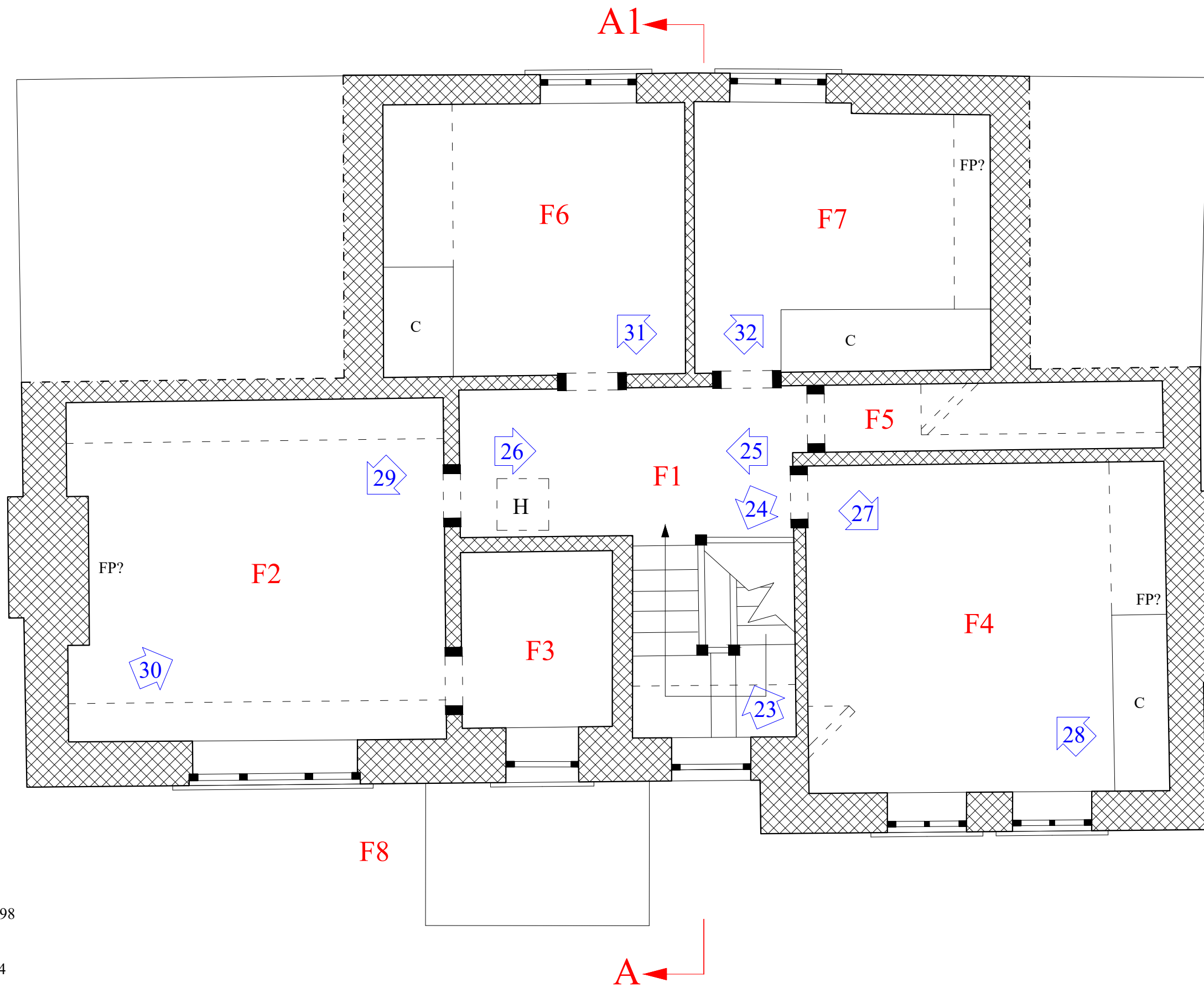
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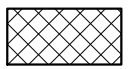
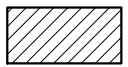
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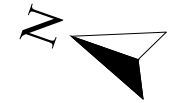
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 Figure 7



 - CIRCA 1898
 - POST 1974



 - PHOTO DIRECTION & NUMBER

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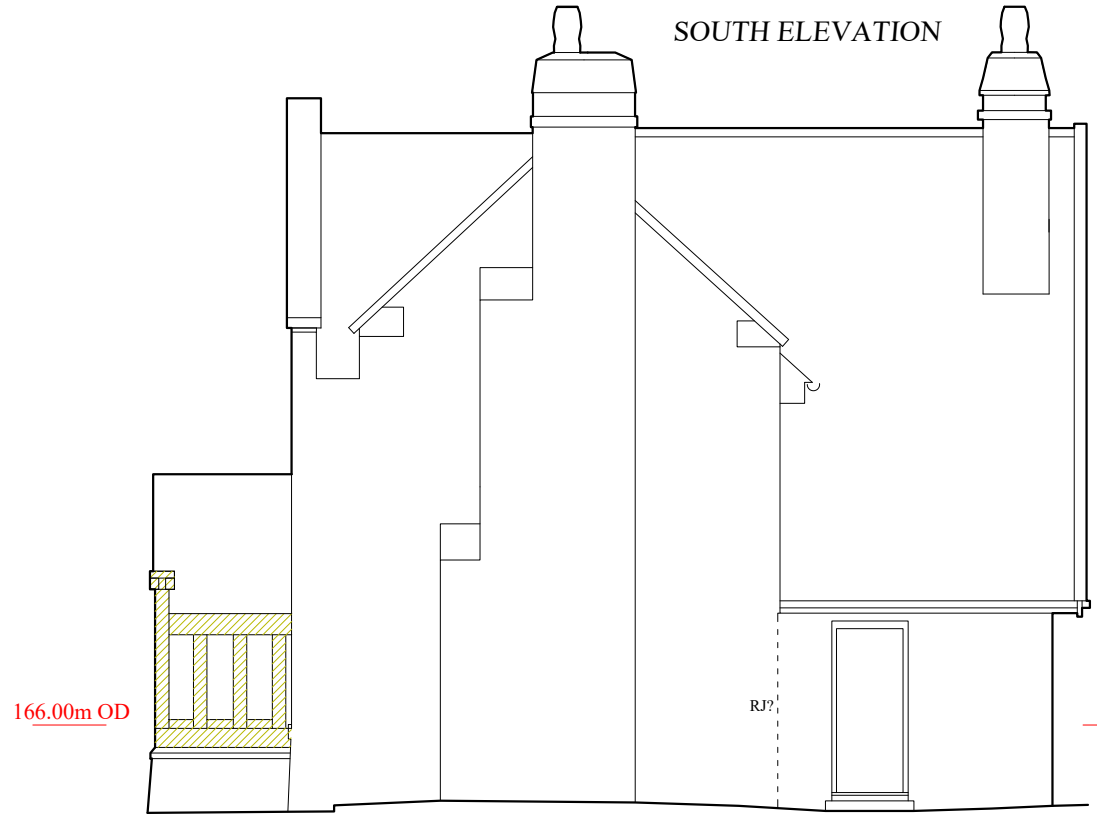
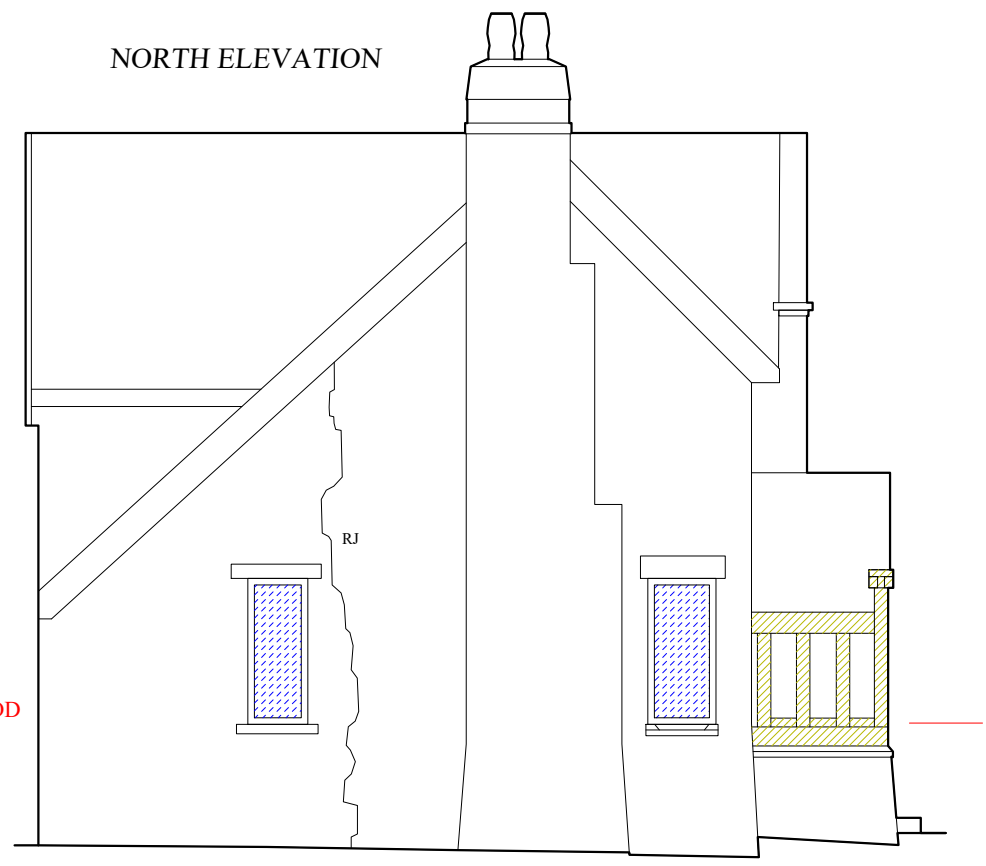
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Figure 8



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Title: FARMHOUSE EXTERNAL ELEVATIONS

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 CAD Illustrator:
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 Figure 9

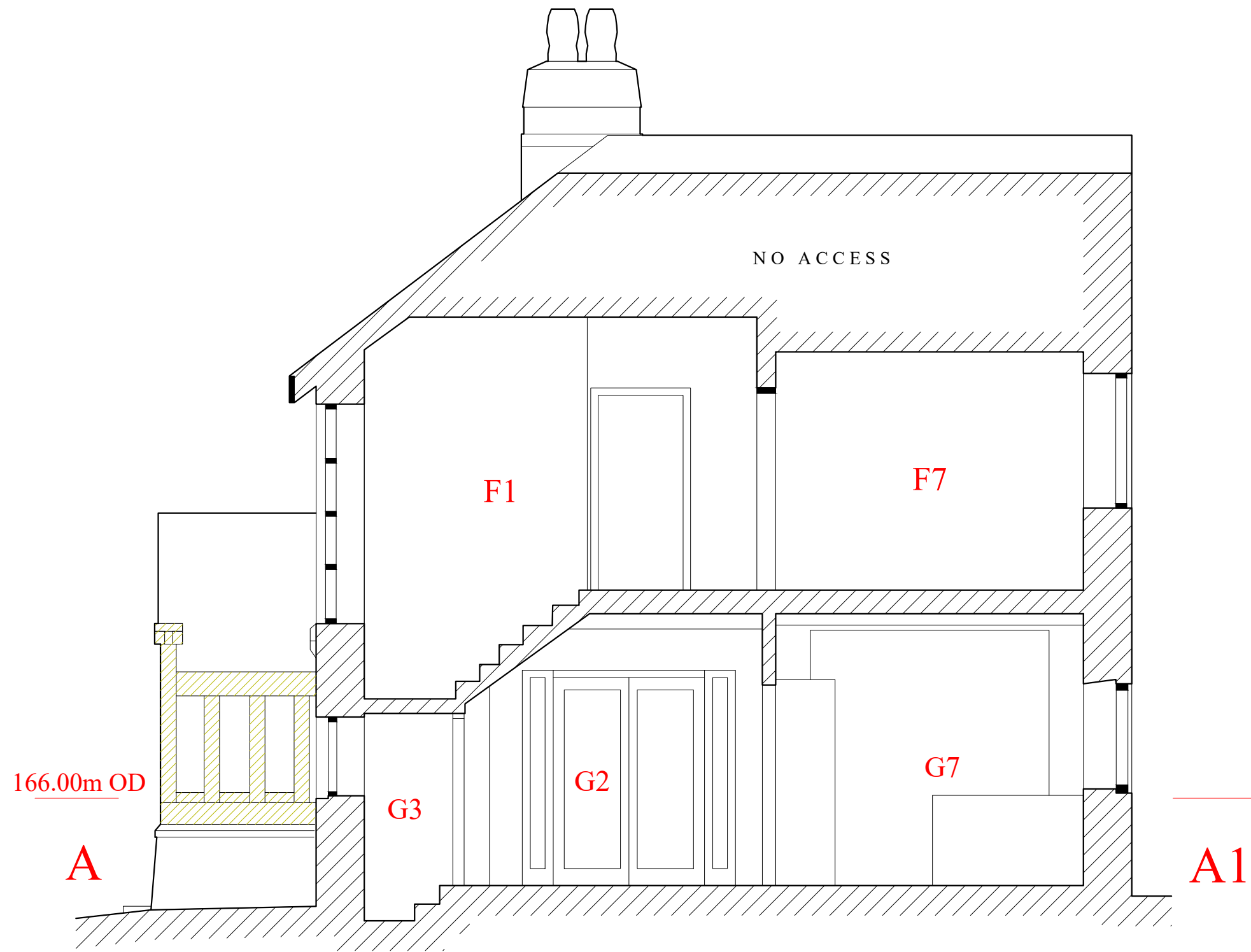




Plate 1. West elevation, viewed from west.



Plate 2. External porch on west elevation, viewed from west.



Plate 3. External porch, viewed from north-west.



Plate 4. South elevation, viewed from south.



Plate 5. South and east elevations, viewed from south-east.



Plate 6. East elevation, viewed from east.



Plate 7. East and north elevations, viewed from north-east.



Plate 8. North elevation, viewed from north-east.



Plate 9. Ground floor, room G1, viewed from west.



Plate 10. Room G2, viewed from east.



Plate 11. Room G2, viewed from south-east.



Plate 12. Room G2, viewed from north-west.



Plate 13. Room G2, viewed from north-east.



Plate 14. Room G2, viewed from north, showing detail on cornice.



Plate 15. Room G4, viewed from north-east.



Plate 16. Room G5, viewed from south-east.



Plate 17. Room G5, viewed from north-east.



Plate 18. Room G6, viewed from west.



Plate 19. Room G7, viewed from south.



Plate 20. Room G7, viewed from north.



Plate 21. Room G8, viewed from north.



Plate 22. Room G8, viewed from south.



Plate 23. Room F1, viewed from west.



Plate 24. Room F1, viewed from east.



Plate 25. Room F1, viewed from south.



Plate 26. Room F1, viewed from north.



Plate 27. Room F4, viewed from north-east.



Plate 28. Room F4, viewed from south-west.



Plate 29. Room F2, viewed from south-east.



Plate 30. Room F2, viewed from north.



Plate 31. Room F6, viewed from south-west.



Plate 32. Room F7, viewed from north-west.