Wadhays

Devonshire Association
2007

Wadhays

LOCATION

Wadhays is in the parish of Awliscombe two miles from Honiton and nine miles from Cullompton at OS National Grid Reference ST 136032. It is situated a mile and a half from the village at 500ft, just below the spring line on St Cyres Hill, at the southernmost edge of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

HISTORY

It is a very old farmstead, although it does not appear in the Domesday Book. It is first mentioned in 1238 (Gover *et al.*, 1930-31, 609) as *Wadehegh; 1310 Wadehayes juxta Aulscombe; 1339 Wadheghes*; the meaning is Wada's farm. During the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) Wadehegh was conveyed to Reginald de Sweynthill. The Lay Subsidy Roll[1] of 1332 shows that Walter de Sweynthill paid the second highest tax in the village. Its situation suggests it was probably claimed from the waste in the twelfth century. Field names in the 1840 tithe map apportionments: Higher, Path, Middle and Lower Breach[2], (all fields adjoining each other on the top of St Cyres Hill), suggest that this land was also taken from the waste[3]. They do not appear on an indenture dated March 1783[4], and were probably taken in hand when the government encouraged farmers to increase food production during the Napoleonic Wars.

The Grade II* listing (1955/amended 1987) describes the farm house as:
Late medieval origins modernized and probably extended in 1621, some eighteenth century refurbishment, some minor twentieth century alterations. Rough cast, probably stone rubble; red pantile roof, hipped at the left end, gabled at the right end (probably formerly thatched); right end stack and two axial stacks, all with brick shafts.

The farm house is unusual for this area of East Devon as it is built entirely of stone, whereas most of the local houses of the late medieval period are built of cob on a stone plinth. It was an open hall cross passage house built in the late fifteenth century and extended in 1621 (date stone 'John Parris 1621'). We did not record the farm house.

The Grade II listing (1989) of the farm buildings describes them as:
Three farm buildings seventeenth, eighteenth and probably nineteenth century. The two buildings closer to the house are stone rubble, one with a corrugated asbestos roof, the other with a slate roof. Threshing barn constructed of cob on stone rubble footings with a slate roof, half hipped at ends.

The tithe apportionments of 1840 and the 1851 Census show the owner as William Banfield, farming 150 acres. George Neumann, a retired railway engineer, bought the farm in 1875 and it became part of his Tracey Estate. The tenant then was Mr Farmer. The Russell family came as tenants in 1900. Mr W Willmington, father of the present owner, married Eda Russell in 1923 and they continued the tenancy. In about 1927 he bought the farm from Mrs Weldon, a daughter of George Neumann. The present owner Mr R J Willmington took over from his father.

THE BARN

This barn was part of the original farm group with the farm house. The original house was in a simple rectangular form, which had wings added in 1621 at each end, extending towards the barn. At a later date the space between these wings was joined to form a covered outshot. These additions form a continuous wall parallel to the barn, providing a passageway about 7 feet wide. This passage is closed at eastern corners of the house and barn by a wall with an impressive arched opening with well cut limestone blocks; there are large iron hangers in the wall showing that there was originally a door to close off this passage. Outside on the right hand side of the archway is an iron ring where visitors could tie up their horses. At the other end of the passage there had been a gate of wooden palings to keep out the animals.

This building, now called the cider barn, was built of cob on a 5 feet to 6 feet stone base. The barn is of four bays with three jointed crucks, the uprights are within the walls starting at ground level. It is divided into two rooms by a brick wall running across its width. The ground runs east to west with a drop of 3 feet; the western end was extended in the eighteenth century in random stone with brick quoins.

The outside wall on the south side is plastered, but on the north side only the cob is plastered. On the inside both of the side walls of the higher room (east end) have been skinned with brick from the first floor up to the eaves. In the lower room the cob has a good smooth finish. There is a considerable amount of concrete block repair on the eastern end of the north wall. The whole of the southern wall of the extension has been replaced with concrete blocks.

The barn has an upper floor accessed by a wooden staircase from the south side; the door to this staircase is made of pit sawn planks 10 inch wide x 1 inch thick, tongue, grooved and beaded boards with large hand made nails (was this door originally here or has it been taken from the house at some time in the past, as it is so well made) There is an high level doorway in the eastern end wall which provides access to the upper floor, this would have been used to unload from carts or wagons; there is a recess in the end wall of the ground floor room inside, with a wooden lintel suggesting a doorway to the outside but there is no sign of this on the outside, where the ground level is well above that of the floor inside. The ground floor is divided in two by a modern brick wall under a 10 inch x 10 inch beam. The eastern end was originally cobbled, and used as a cellar to store cider barrels; it now has a concrete floor and is used for general domestic storage. The upper story here has a sound wooden floor which was used to store grain, the good 6 inch x 2 inch joists, with their ends supported on to 10 inch x 10 inch beam in the same manner as in the shippon (i.e. on a 3 inch x 2 inch nailed on to the side of the beam to form a ledge). This was probably rebuilt at the same time as the shippon was built, or the idea could have been copied as and easy option.

The lower end of the barn is where the cider was made. Part of this end has an upper floor of wood in very poor condition. The main beam across this room is a partly squared tree trunk and the joists are rough, so we may assume that this is probably original. Where the cider press stood is open to the roof. There is a wooden framed hole through the north wall to take the shaft from the horse engine to drive the apple mill. All the cider making equipment is long gone. We were told that the ground floor was partially cobbled, now some of it is cemented.

When first built this barn was most likely to have been used for cattle. The centre doorway on the north side, which gives access to the lower room, is rounded on its west side (to protect cattle?). This doorway was also rounded on its eastern side before the major repair was made with concrete blocks. At this time an extra door into the upper ground floor room was created. The extension at the western end has a doorway into the main barn and a

doorway opening to the field (not original).

The roof is now of corrugated asbestos sheets, which replaced the slate when a major repair of the whole building took place. Most of the original purlins exist but over the extension there is a lot of replacement timber. As this was one of the original farm buildings it was probably thatched. Did the change from thatch to tiles and slate on the house and farm buildings take place after George Neumann bought the farm in 1875?

THE THRESHING BARN

The threshing barn dates from the eighteenth century. It is built of cob on a random rubble stone base 7-8 feet high. The stone base seems to have been bonded using a soil/lime mortar. The walls are plastered on the inside to about 7 feet.

The roof is now of slate but was most probably thatched when built. It has a hip on the western end and a half hip on the eastern end; all the timbers are original. The truss next to the door on the southern side has dropped due to water leaking onto the cob from the valley between the barn and the horse engine house.

Neither pair of threshing doors remain. On the northern side the doorway has been closed up to 6 feet high using concrete blocks, although the original lintel is still in situ, very much bent owing to the weight of the 6 inch thick cob infill above it. On the southern side there is a galvanised sheet door on a steel box section frame; again the original lintel is bent down as it did have a cob infill above it. This was thought not to be safe, but it proved to be quite difficult to remove.

At present the barn has a concrete floor replacing the wooden threshing floor, which was about 2 feet higher than the ground at each side; it is now used as the farm workshop. In the past it has been used for cattle as there is a concrete manger against the north wall. The cob on the southern side below the door and adjoining the horse engine house is in very poor condition.

THE HORSE ENGINE HOUSE

The horse engine[6] house was built on to the southern side of the threshing barn in the nineteenth century with its eastern wall aligning with the threshing doorway wing. It is built of random stone with limestone quoins. The wall of the south west corner is rounded up to 8 feet high (possibly to protect animals?) There is a wide doorway on the eastern side from the ground to eaves level, with doors on the upper floor; at ground level there are only movable rails as it is now used for cattle. This opening has brick quoins on the southern side, the northern side is formed by the wing of the threshing door. The floor is concrete. The roof is now slate with machine sawn trusses. The south end wall has verge tiles.

None of the machinery exists, only the wheel bearing on the 15 inch x 16inch main beam. The horse engine was last used in early 1930s to power the apple mill in the barn next to it. There is no evidence of an opening into the threshing barn though there are family memories of a root cutter in the threshing barn being driven by the horse engine.

THE SHIPPON

The shippon was built of random stone, mainly local chert in coarse lime mortar[5] in the 1890s. The quoins are of brick. The alterations to the door widths are of concrete blocks. At the northern end there is a large amount of rebuilding using recycled concrete blocks.

The roof tiles came from Brown & Co of Bridgewater. One tile we found had a medallion imprint of the company name surrounding a head of Queen Victoria with VR at the bottom.

The shippon was set up for 19 cows to be tied up facing the back wall, where there would have been passage ('forbay' in Devon dialect) where one could walk along to put hay into the manger which was in front of the cows. There was a division between every two cows with a dung gutter behind them running the full length of the building. The upper floor ('talat' in Devon dialect) was used for hay, which could be pushed through two gaps in the floor at the back into the passage below. The shippon was used originally for hand milking and then progressed to machine milking (the bucket and clusters being moved from cow to cow). It now has the remains of an early type milking parlour and other divisions for storage. As in the stables it now has a concrete floor.

The upper floor is of 1 inch board on 7 inch x 4 inch joists supported at their ends on 3 inch x 2 inch timber nailed on to the side of a 10 inch x 6 inch beam to form a ledge (q.v. the Barn). This would have been a more simple solution than mortising each joist into the beam to produce a level joint. Was this an idea put forward by George Neumann who had been a railway engineer; it is known that he designed his estate cottages in the village and it would have saved a lot work?

THE STABLE

The stable may have been built in the late eighteenth century of random stone, mainly local chert in coarse lime mortar. The roof is of slate on timber work which does not appear to be original, possibly dating from replacement of the thatch. The beams supporting the joists for the upper floor are rough squared tapering tree trunks. It ceased to be a stable in 1947; the ground floor is now of concrete, at some time set up as a standing for six cows to be milked by hand. The upper floor has a gap at the back, which would allow fodder to be dropped into the original hayracks and mangers.

On the back of the building is a lean-to, now following the roof angle; it is narrow without any windows. Unusually it has plastered walls and ceiling. We have been told it was used to store lime to be spread on the land. The southern end shows that at some time the roof line was altered, again this could have been when the slates replaced thatch.

The stable has some unusual features; on the southern end wall at both eaves there are two fine carved Beer stone corbels, as there are on the house but of a different design. The top of this end wall has verge tiles. At the front under the eaves there are six nicely shaped wooden stub ends which do not seem to have any useful purpose, the same occurs on the rear wall of the lean-to. Were these features put there to impress anyone arriving at the farm as they face the main entrance to the farm, or could they have been the ends of earlier trusses?

OTHER BUILDINGS

There was a Granary, 10-12 feet square and of timber construction, with a lath and plaster finish, standing on granite blocks and staddle stones, which stood above the eastern end of the house. It was demolished in 1977 to improve the access for the larger lorries which were beginning to supply the farm. On the northern side of the yard there was a thatched linhay. In poor condition it was replaced by the landlord in the early 1920s by one built of corrugated iron, before Mr Willmington's father would agree to take over the tenancy. This has in turn been replaced by a concrete block structure with a corrugated galvanized roof.

In the past all farms had a manure heap (the midden) in the middle of the farm yard. Behind the horse engine house there is a sunken area with brick walls. This was where all the dirty water and liquid manure from the farmyard was collected before being let out over the field through a system of single ploughed furrows, following the contour line, as a simple way of fertilising the ground.

way of fertilising the ground.

All the modern farm buildings are now to the north and east of the old farm yard. Planning permission was granted in 2007 for the shippon, stables, threshing barn and horse engine house to be turned into holiday lets. The barn is to be restored with help from English Heritage.

CONCLUSIONS

This is the second complete set of farm buildings that we have recorded prior to conversion into dwellings.

The barn in particular, a very old building with its three jointed crucks still intact, was not really adaptable to the changes in farming practice. Therefore using it to make cider was the best option, but even that stopped long ago; having said that, the repairs over the years have kept this interesting barn in reasonable condition.

The threshing barn being a larger, higher, building, was much easier to adapt for cattle, only needing a concrete floor and wooden partitions. When it stopped being used for animals the high doorway made it ideal for use as a workshop for the repair and maintenance of farm machinery. The horse engine house had a concrete floor added, making it suitable for animals, and the floor above was used for fodder.

The shippon, which was built to milk cows, had a longer useful life span for its given purpose. Starting with cows being tied up to be milked by hand into buckets, it then progressed to machine milking. A vacuum pipe line ran the length of the building above the manger, with connection points between each pair of cows. The milking bucket with cluster unit was taken to each cow and connected to the vacuum line by a rubber pipe. The vacuum pump was situated in a galvanised shed attached to the back of the shippon. When a cow had been milked out the cluster was taken off, the bucket emptied into the cooler, and then taken on to the next cow. The next advance was to adapt the building to the parlour system. With this system there were only standings for six cows, who had to step up on to a raised platform. The cluster now sent the milk into the pipe line which fed it directly into a bulk tank. When the cow had been milked out, it walked forward and then out of the parlour, its place being taken by the next cow. This system enabled the milk to be handled in a much cleaner manner. Later a completely new building was erected for easier handling and milking of the cows, making the shippon redundant. Now it is used only for general storage.

The stable was used for horses until 1947. It was then used for milking cows for a while. Poultry were the next inhabitants, now it is the kennel for the farm dog.

As with so many farms, whilst adaptations and improvements have been carried out over the years, the time had come when only new, purpose designed buildings would service the reduction of available labour and efficient farming practices. The buildings now serve no useful purpose so that conversion into holiday accommodation is the only option to make additional income for the farm, and to ensure their continued existence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

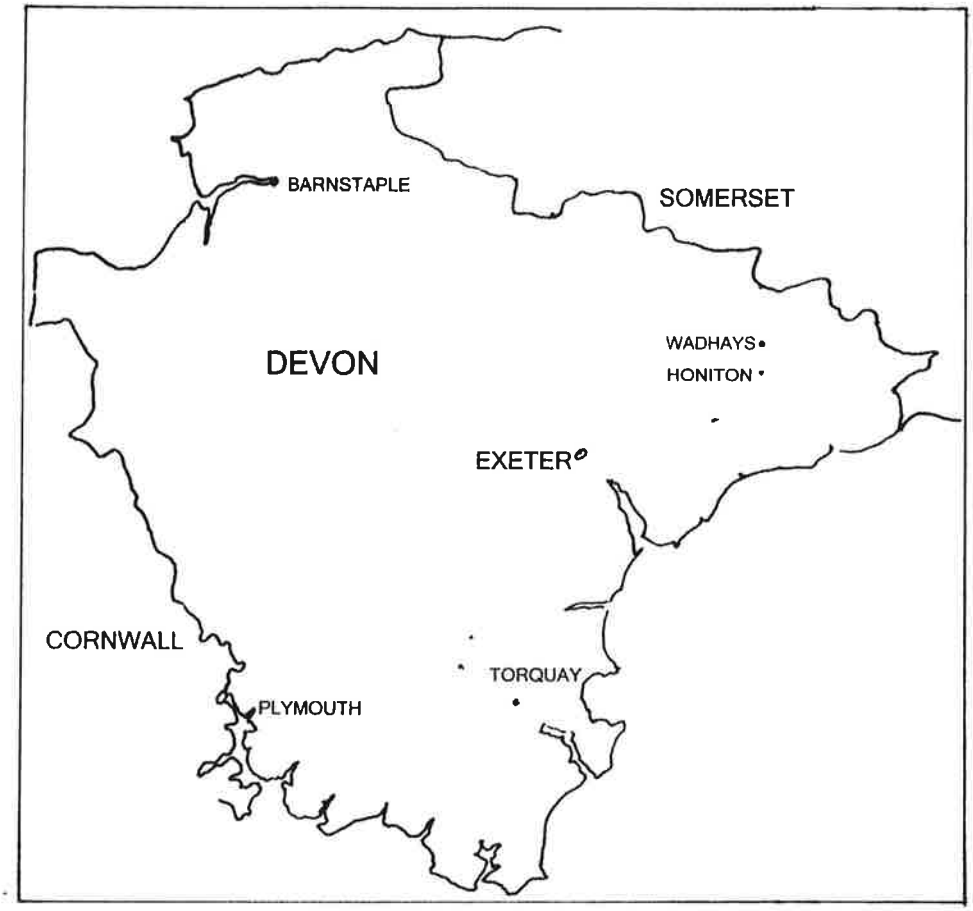
The Recorders are indebted to Mr and Mrs Willmington for allowing us access to the farm buildings.[7]
Recorders: John Cann: survey, drawings, maps and photography. Brian Rolf: survey. Valerie Cann: research, proof reader. Brian Hall, Sue Spurr and Jonathan Aylett: surveying assistance.

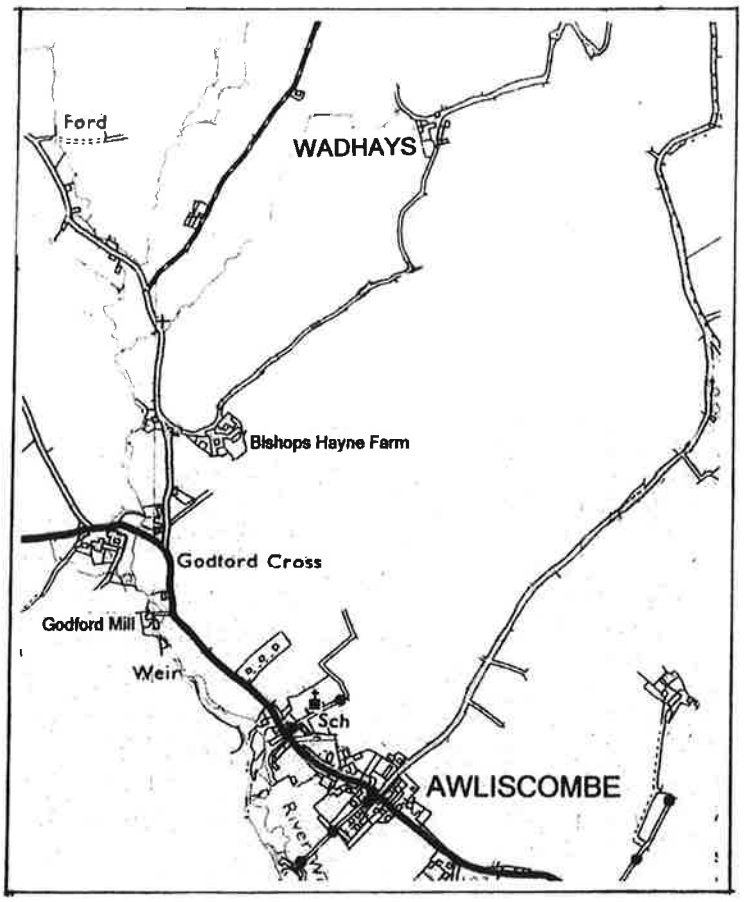
NOTES AND REFERENCES AND UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

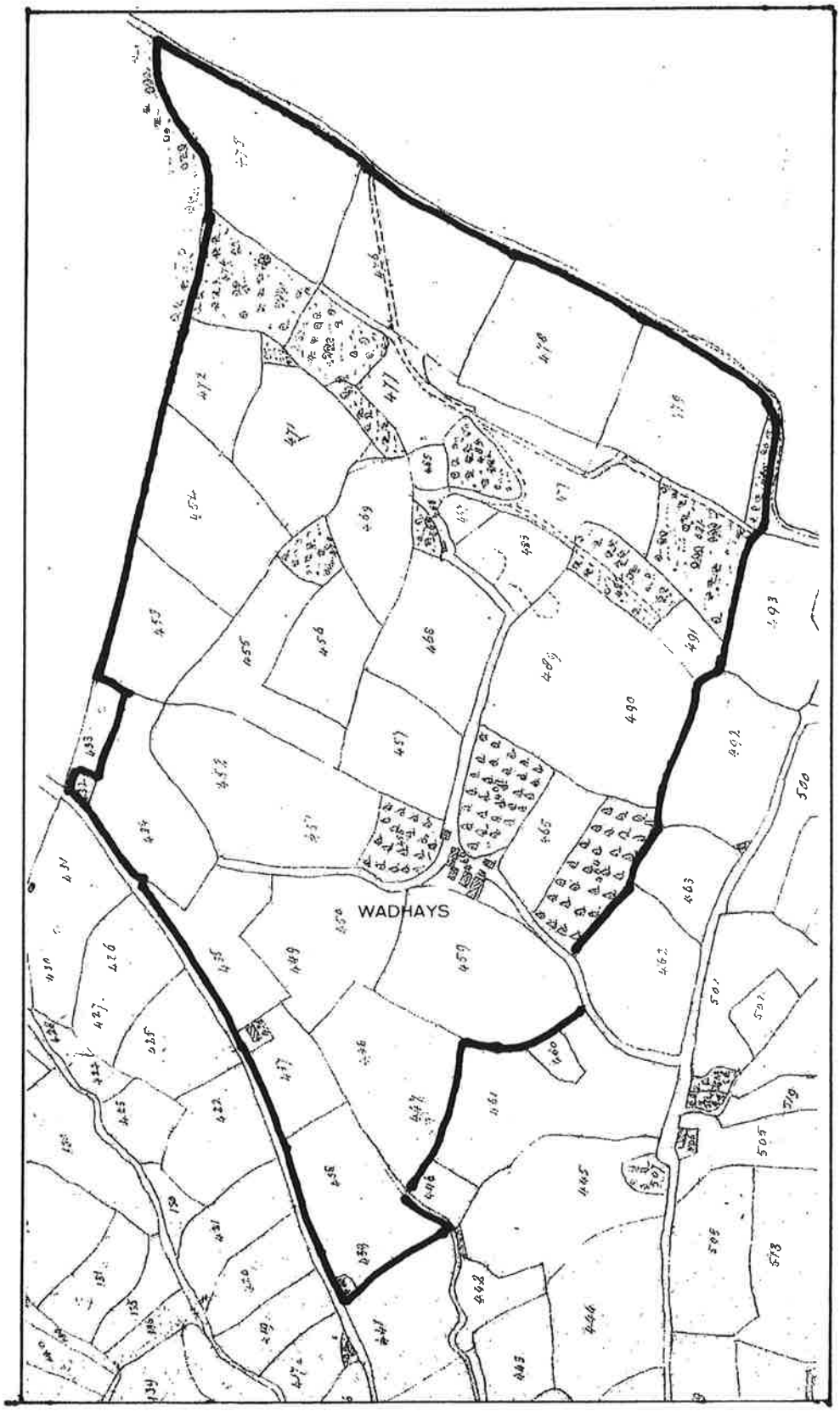
1 DRO Awliscombe Lay Subsidy Roll 1332.
2 Breach: a term used to describe agricultural land taken in hand from the waste.
3 Waste: the existing uncultivated bracken and gorse of the Blackdown Hills.
4 A document in the possession of Mr R J Willmington.
5 Anecdotal: Shortly after taking over the tenancy Mr Russell met the mason who had built the shippon. When he remarked on the quality of the building, the mason said that 'he had to dig the sand out of the hillside and cart it to the farm before he could start work'.
6 An 'horse engine' is one where a horse is harnessed to an arm projecting out from a vertical column, pivoted at its top and bottom. The horse is able to walk in a circle around this shaft. At the top of the rotating central column is a large gear wheel which engages a pinion on a horizontal shaft, which will then connect to whatever machinery needs to be driven.
7 Wadhays is private property. It is still a working farm and is not accessible to the general public.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 Gover, Mawer and Stenton, 1931-2. *Place Names of Devon* (C.U.P.), 2 vols.
2 W.G. Hoskins, 1993. *Devon* reissued by Devon Books.
3 Robin Stanes, 1990. *The Old Farm* Devon Books


BARNSTAPLE
SOMERSET
DEVON
WADHAYS
HONITON
EXETER
CORNWALL
TORQUAY
PLYMOUTH


Ford
WADHAYS
Bishops Hayne Farm
Godford Cross
Godford Mill
Weir
Sch
AWLISCOMBE



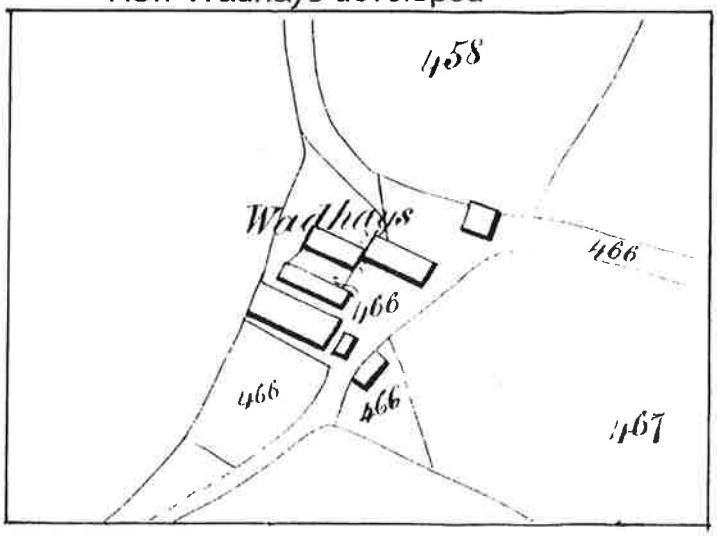
1880-1890 Hand drawn copy ½ scale
copy of the Tithe Map showing Wadhays land.

THE TITHE APPORTIONMENTS FOR AWLISCOMBE

Parish	Awliscombe		Tithe Map date	2.9.1840			
Name of Recorder			Date Recorded		A	R	P
Banfield William	William Banfield	432	Nursery	Nursery			30
Banfield William	William Banfield	434	Bare Meadows	Meadows	4	1	18
Banfield William	William Banfield	435	Long Close	Pasture	3	3	8
Banfield William	William Banfield	424	Hill Brook Meadows	Meadows		3	10
Banfield William	William Banfield	436	Ridgeway Linhay & Close				23
Banfield William	William Banfield	437	Linhay Close	Pasture	2	1	38
Banfield William	William Banfield	454	Middle Sheeplands	Arable	5	-	26
Banfield William	William Banfield	455	Great Pitlands	Pasture	4	2	8
Banfield William	William Banfield	456	Little Pitlands	Arable	3	-	30
Banfield William	William Banfield	457	Lower North Park	Pasture	3	3	25
Banfield William	William Banfield	458	Great Orchard	Orchard	1	2	26
Banfield William	William Banfield	459	Great Meadows	Meadows	7	1	32
Banfield William	William Banfield	464	Common Orchard	Orchard	2	3	34
Banfield William	William Banfield	465	Croft	Pasture	2	2	25
Banfield William	William Banfield	466	Wadhays House Outbuildings Garden & Mow Plot	Garden	1	2	36
Banfield William	William Banfield	467	Young Orchard	Orchard	2	2	9
Banfield William	William Banfield	468	Higher North Park	Arable	4	3	15
Banfield William	William Banfield	469	Three Acres	Arable	3	2	2
Banfield William	William Banfield	470	Coppice	Coppice		3	35
Banfield William	William Banfield	471	Great Sheeplands	Arable	5	-	23
Banfield William	William Banfield	472	Yonder Sheeplands	Pasture	3	-	2
Banfield William	William Banfield	473	Plantation	Plantation			36
Banfield William	William Banfield	474	Plantation	Plantation	3	3	8
Banfield William	William Banfield	475	Higher Breach	Arable	7	3	4
Banfield William	William Banfield	476	Path Breach	Pasture	7	1	14
Banfield William	William Banfield	477	Common Orchard	Furze	11	1	25
Banfield William	William Banfield	478	Middle Breach	Arable	7	-	15
Banfield William	William Banfield	479	Lower Breach	Arable	6	2	37
Banfield William	William Banfield	480	Plantation	Plantation		2	7
Banfield William	William Banfield	481	Plantation	Plantation	3	2	7
Banfield William	William Banfield	482	Plantation	Plantation	1	3	13
Banfield William	William Banfield		Holmbush	Arable	1	3	6
Banfield William	William Banfield	483	Pit in Holmbush	Pit		2	
Banfield William	William Banfield	484	Plantation	Plantation	1	2	6
Banfield William	William Banfield	485	Burch Close	Arable		2	4

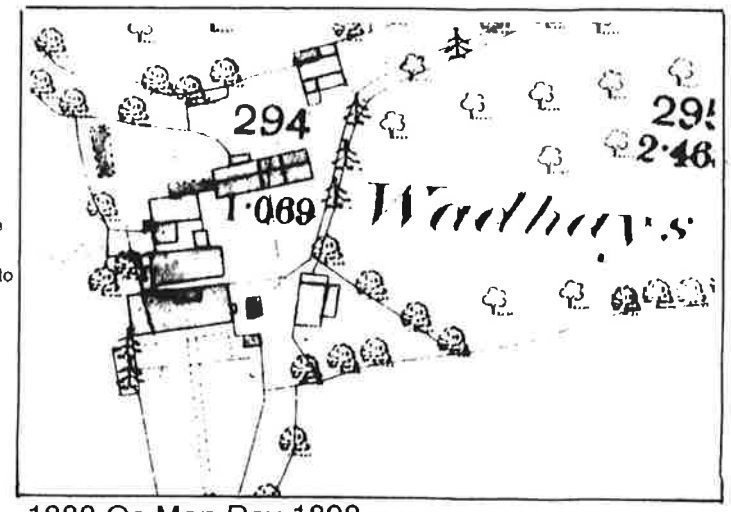
Parish	Awliscombe		Tithe Map date	2.9.1840			
Name of Recorder			Date Recorded		A	R	P
Banfield William	William Banfield	485	Burch Close	Arable		2	4
Banfield William	William Banfield	486	Plantation	Plantation		1	5
Banfield William	William Banfield	487	Linhay Plot	Arable		1	29
Banfield William	William Banfield	488	Linhay Road & Waste			2	16
Banfield William	William Banfield		Higher Barns Close	Arable	4	2	35
Banfield William	William Banfield	489	Pit in Higher Barns Close	Pit		1	-
Banfield William	William Banfield	490	Great Commins	Arable	4	3	16
Banfield William	William Banfield	491	Moorlands	Arable	1	-	21
Banfield William	William Banfield	438	Higher Four Acres	Meadows	3	2	18
Banfield William	William Banfield	439	Lower Two Acres	Meadows	1	3	36
Banfield William	William Banfield	440	Pit				25
Banfield William	William Banfield	441	Lower Four Acres	Arable	4	-	7
Banfield William	William Banfield	450	Surles Meadows	Meadows	3	1	23
Banfield William	William Banfield	451	Shut Close	Pasture	3	2	34
Banfield William	William Banfield	452	Five Acres	Arable	4	3	14
Banfield William	William Banfield	453	Lower Sheeplands	Arable	3	3	25
					157	2	21

How Wadhays developed



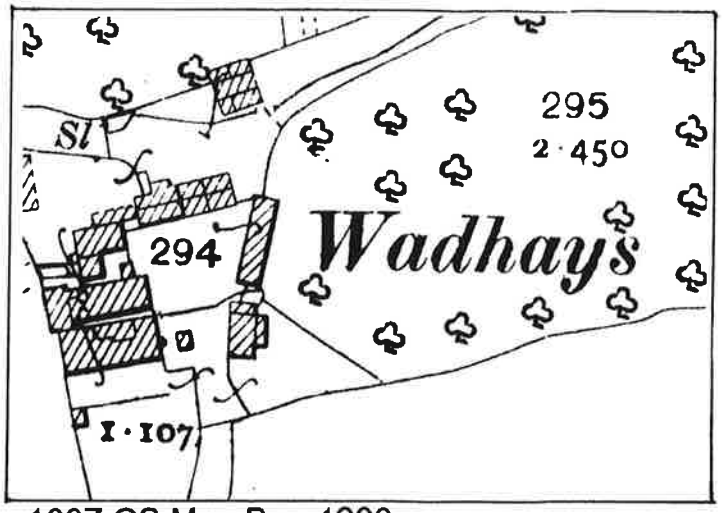
1840 Tithe Map

The Horse engine house has been built and the lean-to behind the stable



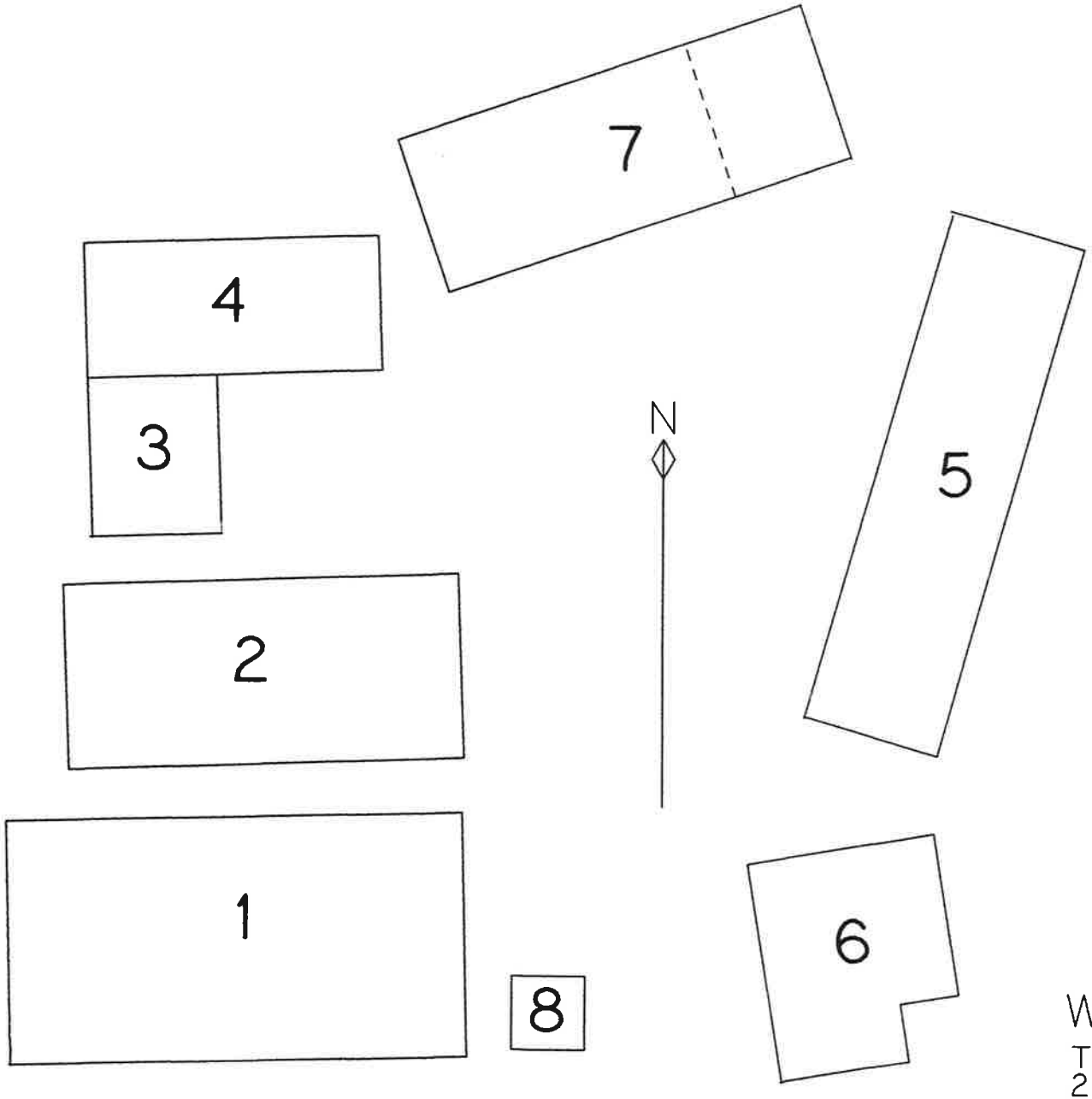
1888 Os Map Rev.1890

The shippon has been built



1887 OS Map Rev. 1903

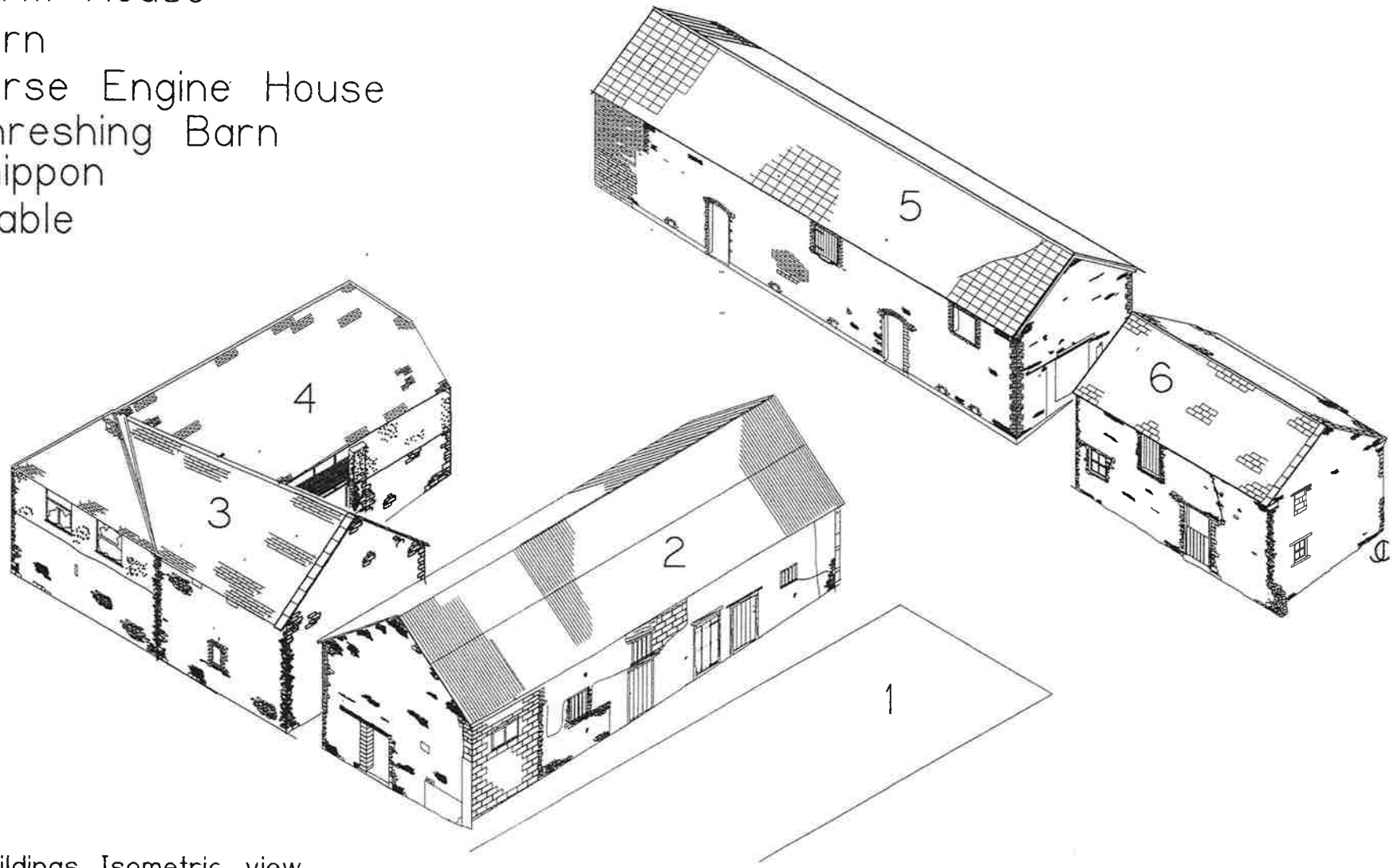
YARD LAYOUT NOT TO SCALE



1 Farm House
2 Barn
3 Horse Engine House
4 Threshing Barn
5 Shippon
6 Stable
7 Concrete block cattle shed
Site of thatched linhay
8 Site of Granary
Demolished 1977

Wadhays. Awliscombe
The Devonshire Association
2007

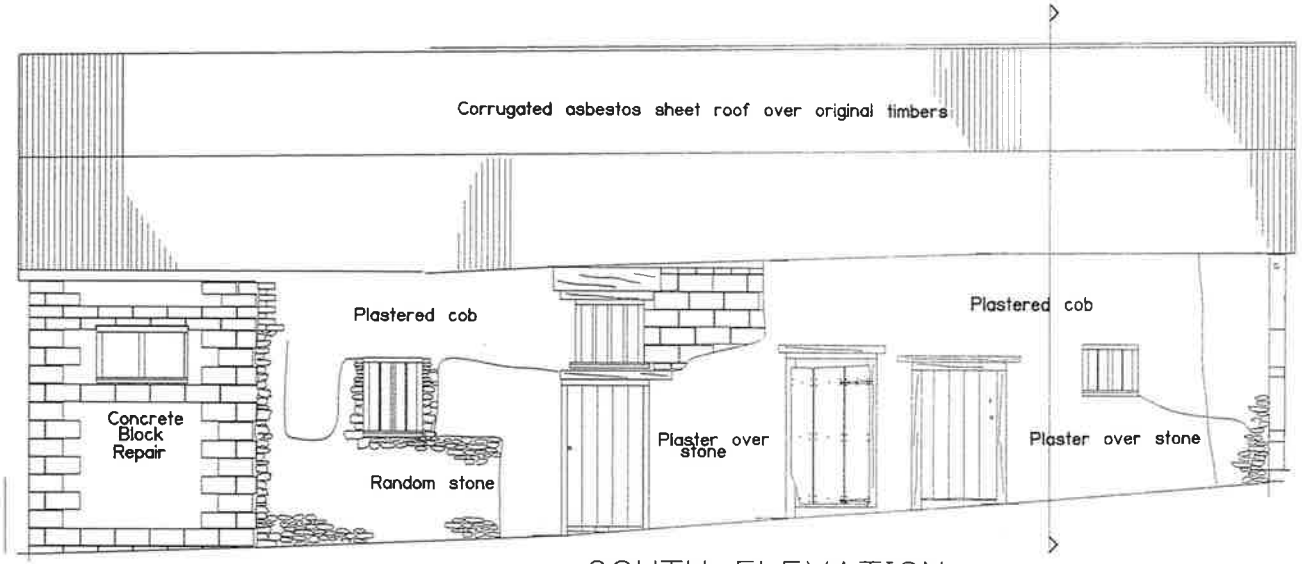
1 Farm House
2 Barn
3 Horse Engine House
4 Threshing Barn
5 Shippon
6 Stable



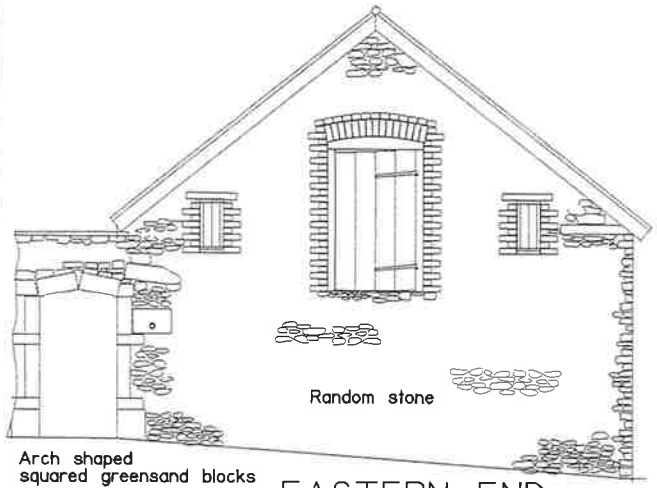
Recorded buildings Isometric view
Wadhays. Awliscombe

Surveyed by The Building Section
The Devonshire Association 2007/8

18.01.08



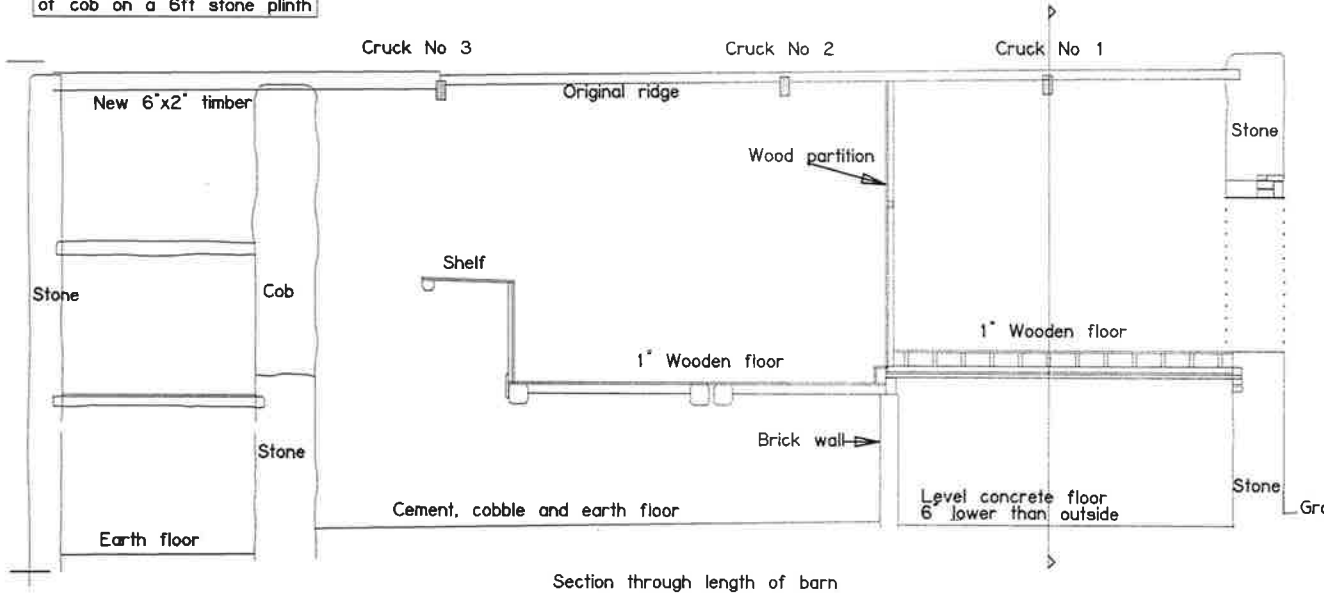
SOUTH ELEVATION



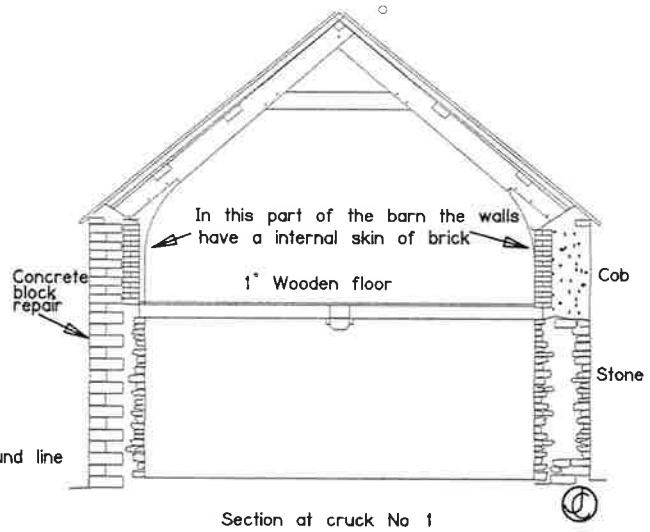
EASTERN END

The Barn is built of cob on a 6ft stone plinth

NB
There is a degree of estimation at roof level as it was unsafe to take actual measurements

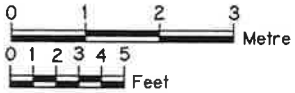


Section through length of barn



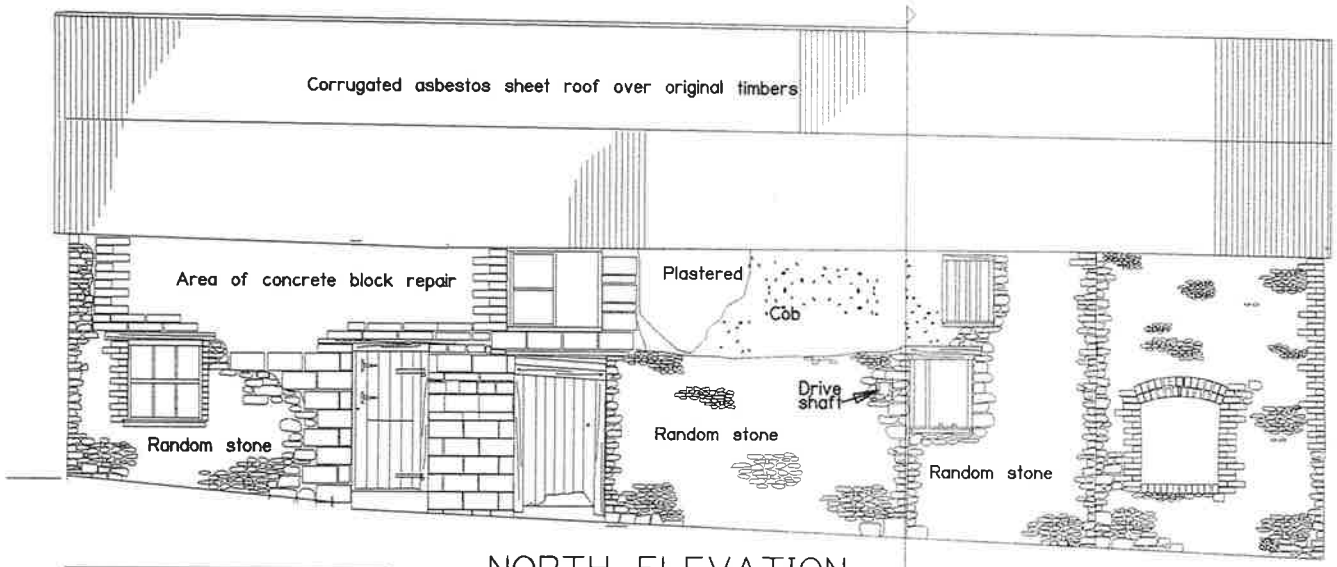
Section at cruck No 1

The Barn
Wadhays. Awliscombe



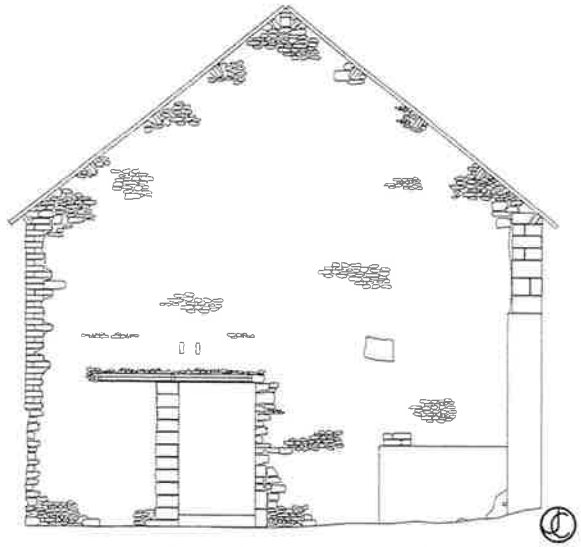
Surveyed by John Cann, Brian Rolf and Brian Hall
The Devonshire Assocation 2007

22.11.07



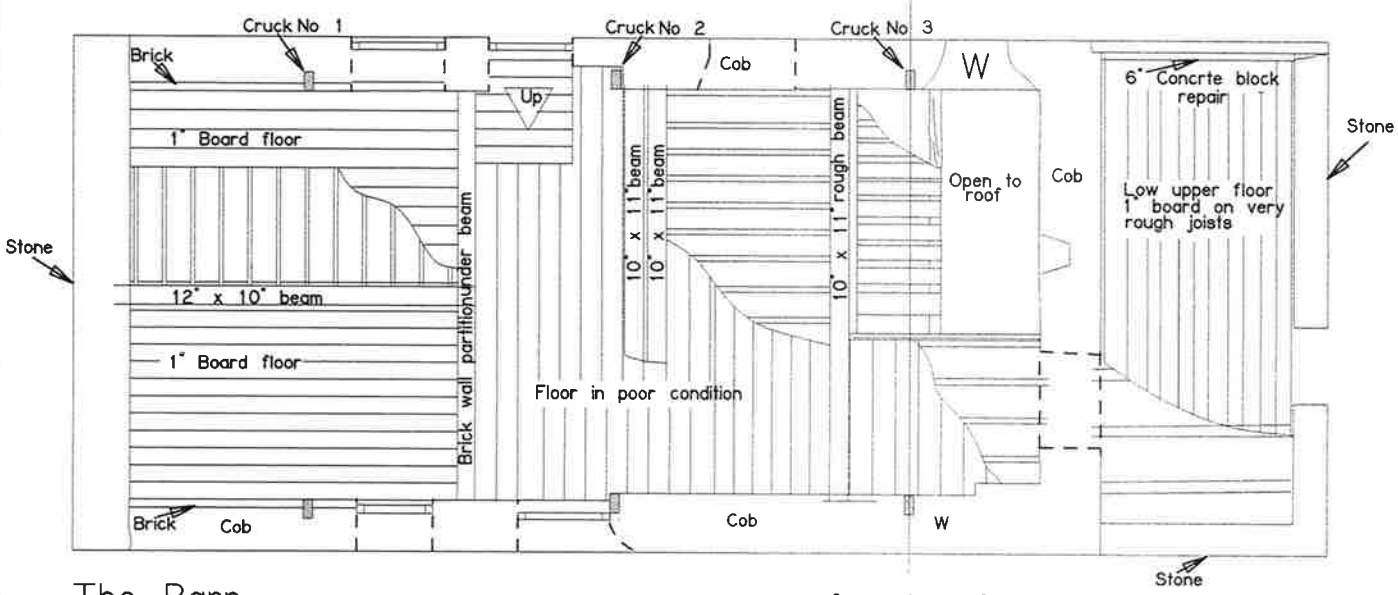
NORTH ELEVATION

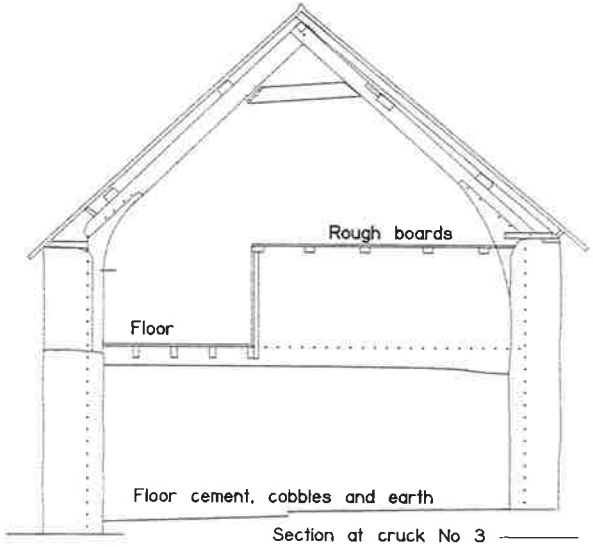
The Barn is built of cob on a 6ft stone plinth
The extention at the western end is built entirely of stone



WESTERN END

Section





Section at cruck No 3

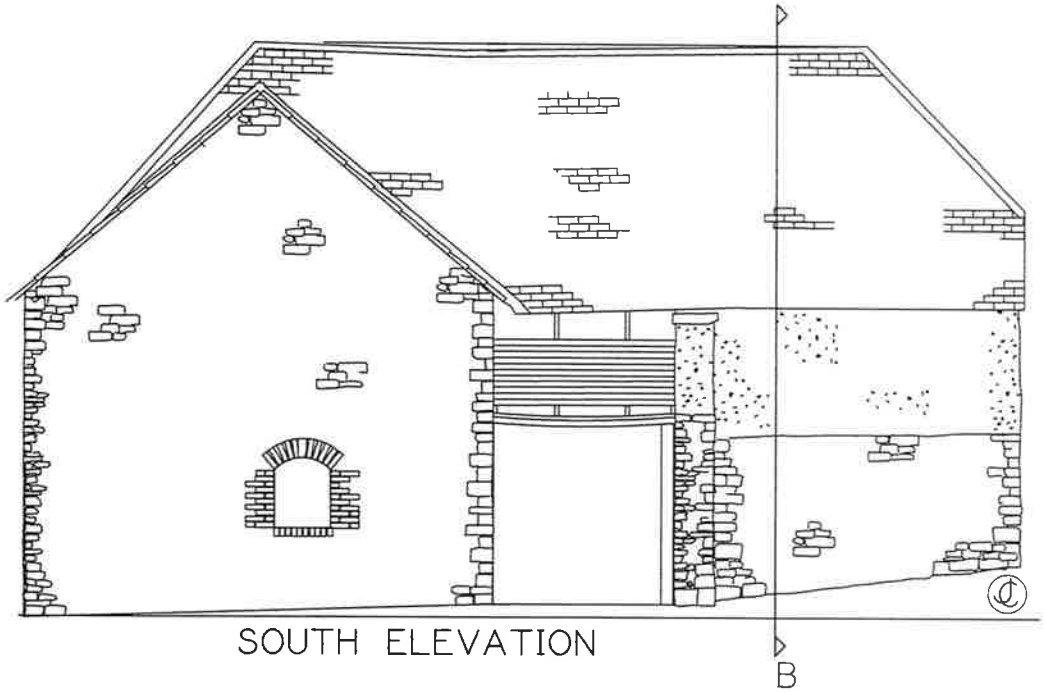
The Barn
Wadhays. Awliscombe

0 1 2 3 Metre

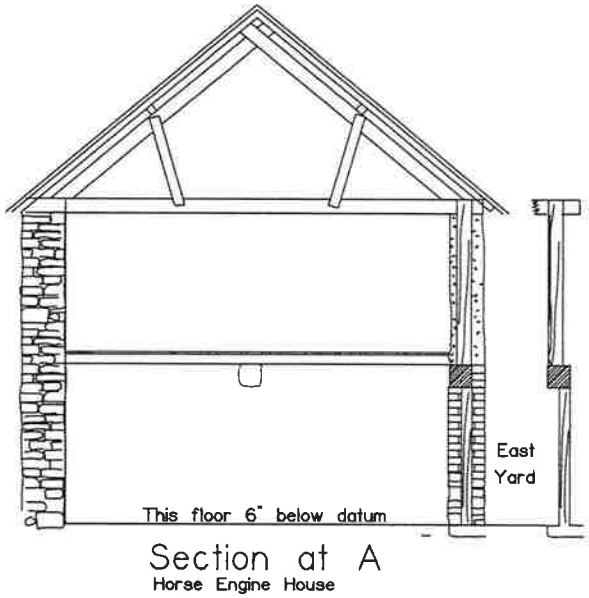
0 1 2 3 4 5 Feet

NB
There is a degree of estimation at roof level as it was unsafe to take actual measurements

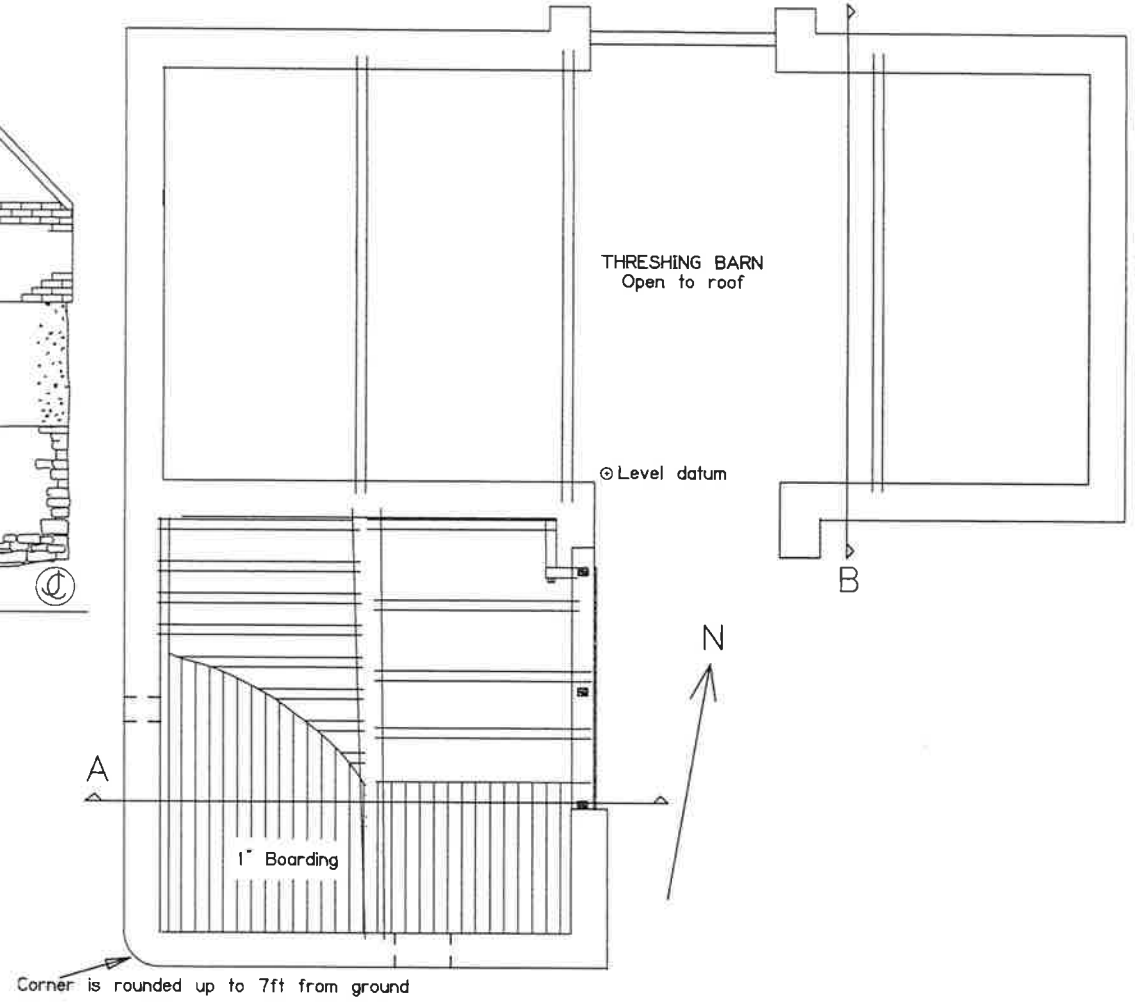
Surveyed by John Cann, Brian Rolf and Brian Hall
The Devonshire Assocation 2007 17.11.07



SOUTH ELEVATION



Section at A
Horse Engine House



THE THRESHING BARN IS BUILT OF COB
ON A 7'-8' RANDOM STONE PLINTH.
THE HORSE ENGINE HOUSE IS BUILT OF RANDOM STONE.
BOTH BUILDINGS HAVE A SLATE ROOF.

NB
There is a degree of estimation at roof level as it was unsafe to take actual measurements

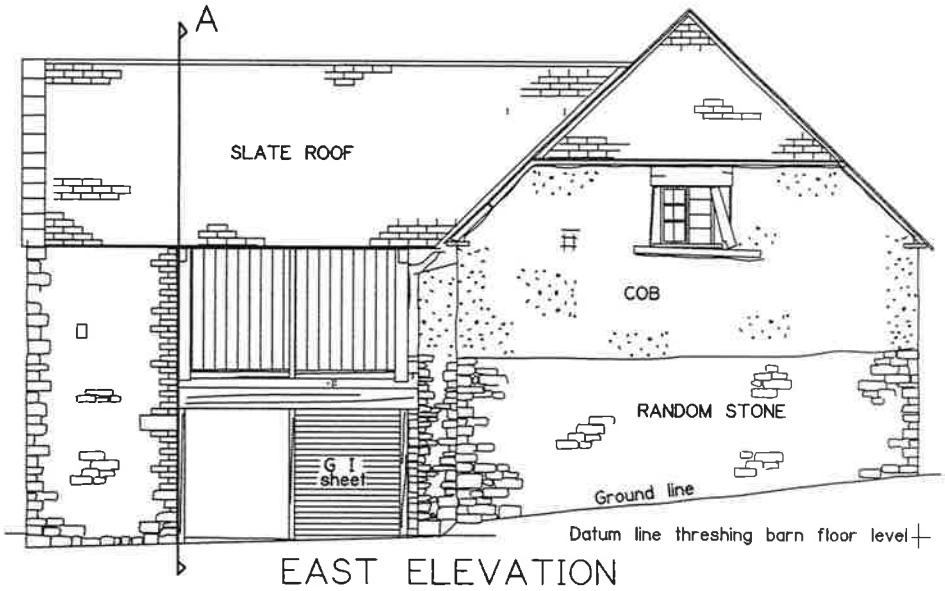
0 1 2 3 Metre

0 1 2 3 4 5 Feet

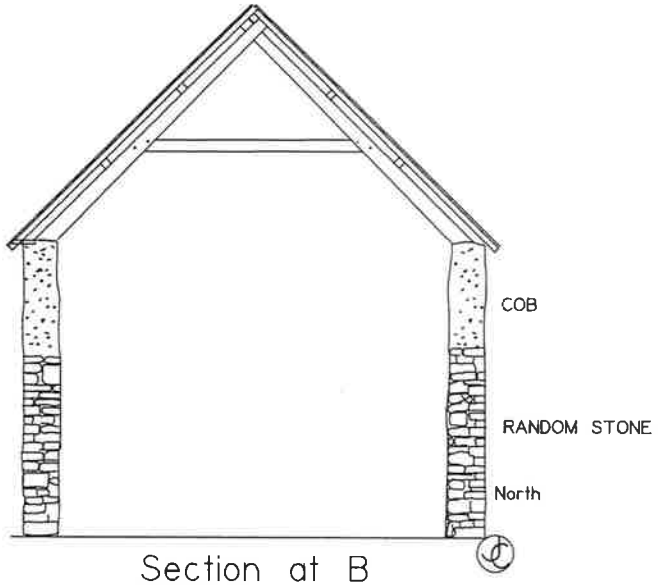
Threshing Barn and Horse Engine House
Wadhays. Awliscombe

Surveyed by John Cann, Brian Rolf
and Jonathan Aylett
The Devonshire Association 2007

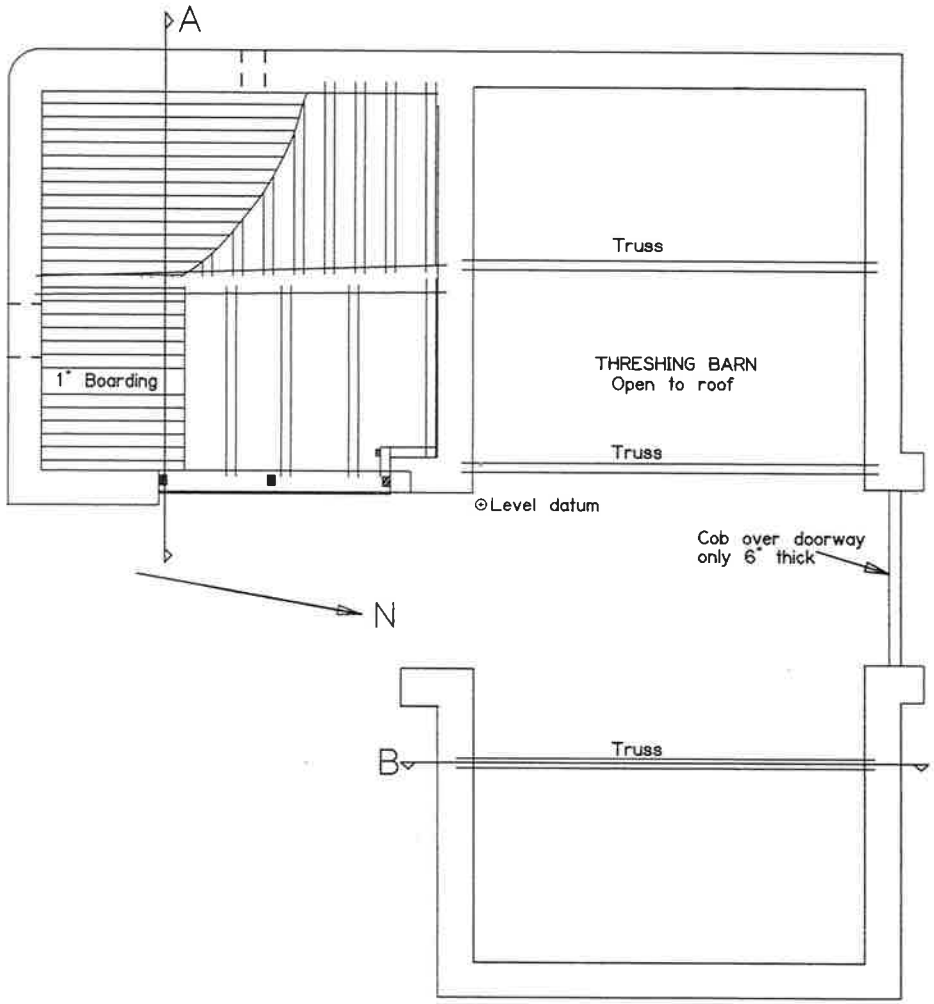
17.11.07



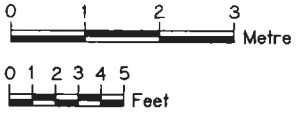
EAST ELEVATION



Section at B
Threshing Barn



THE THRESHING BARN IS BUILT OF COB
ON A 7'-8' RANDOM STONE PLINTH.
THE HORSE ENGINE HOUSE IS BUILT OF RANDOM STONE.
BOTH BUILDINGS HAVE A SLATE ROOF.

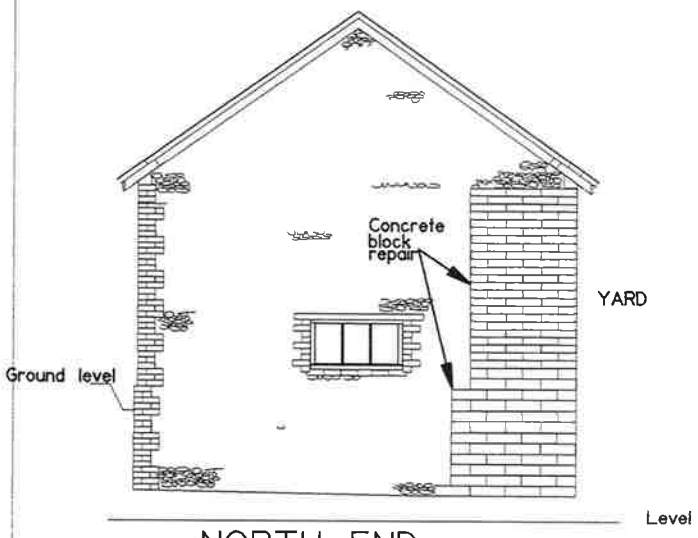


NB
There is a degree of estimation at roof level as it was unsafe to take actual measurements

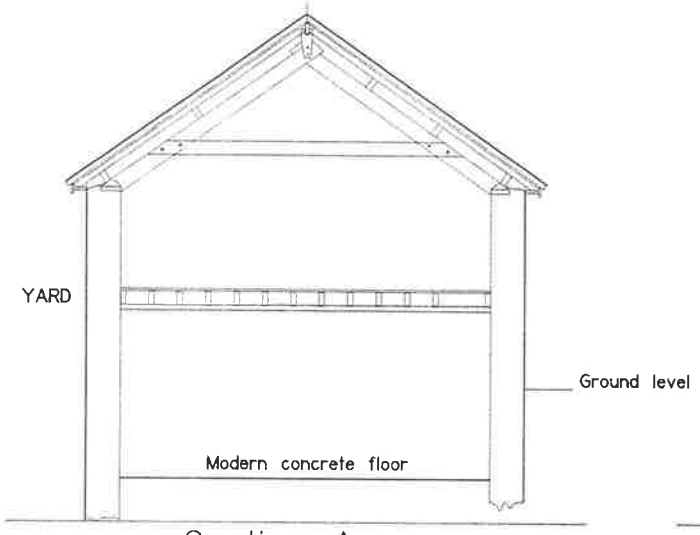
Threshing Barn and Horse Engine house
Wadhays. Awliscombe

Surveyed by John Cann, Brian Rolf
and Jonathan Aylett
The Devonshire Assocation 2007

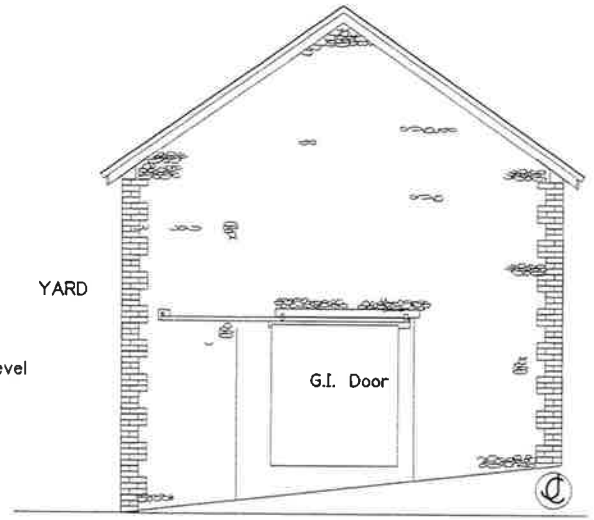
17.11.07



NORTH END



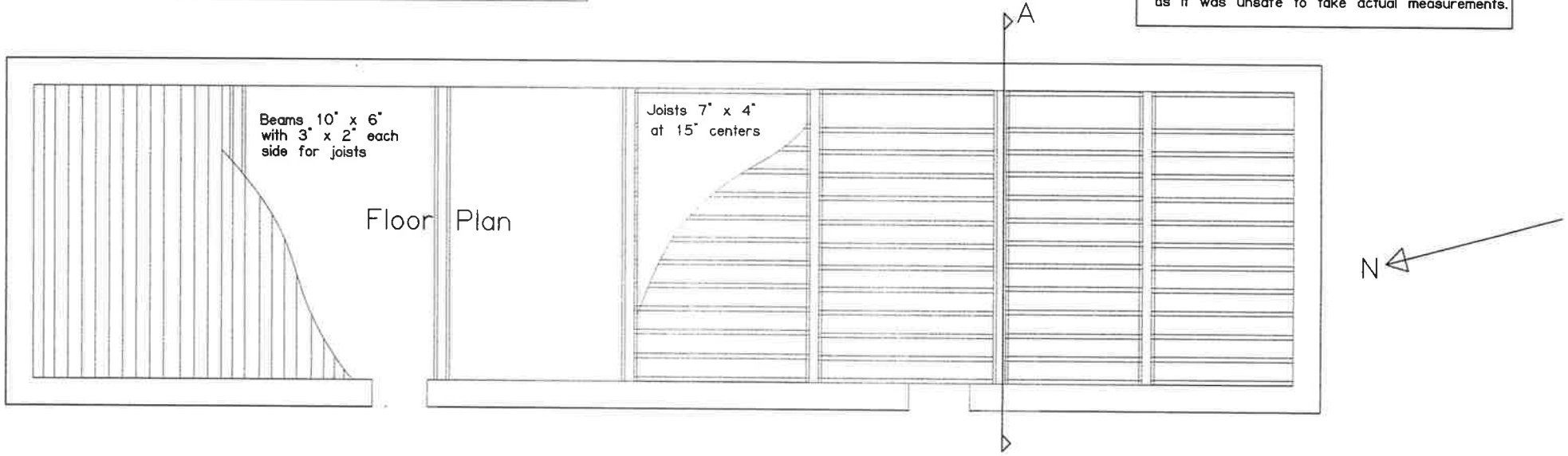
Section A



SOUTH END

WALLS RANDOM STONE, WITH BRICK QUOINS.
REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS IN CONCRETE BLOCKS AND CEMENT RENDER

NB
There is a degree of estimation at roof level as it was unsafe to take actual measurements.

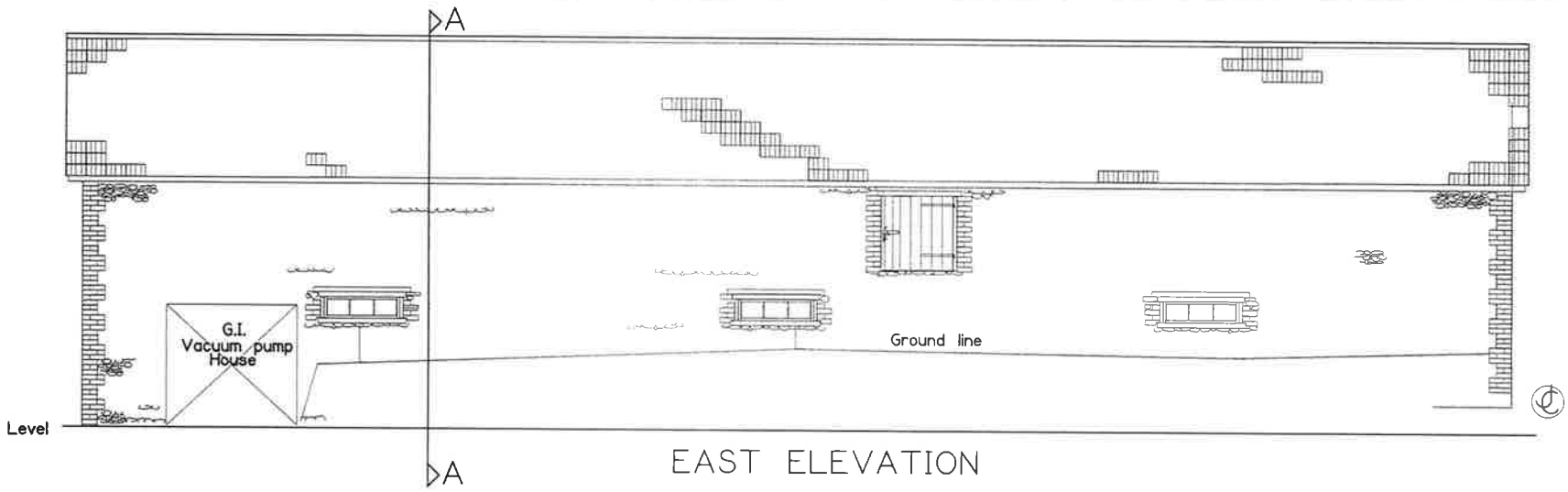


Shippon
Wadhays. Awliscombe

0 1 2 3 4 5 Feet
0 1 2 3 Metres

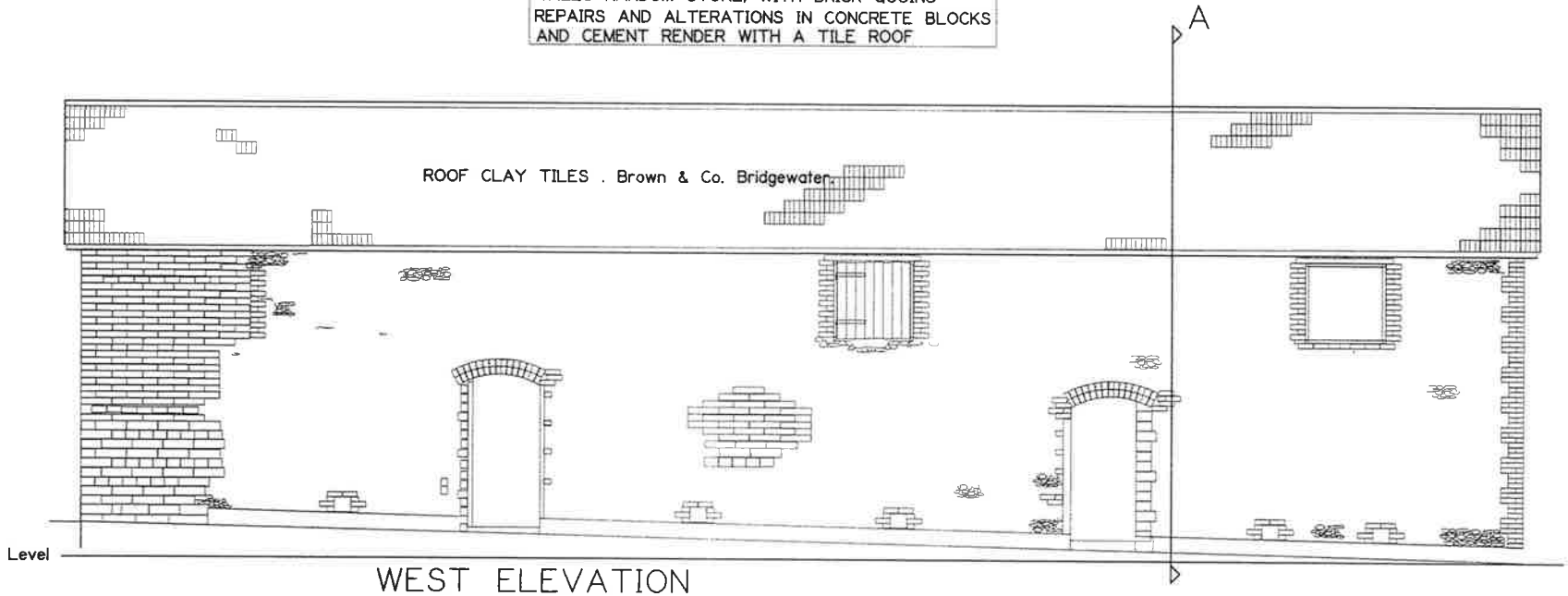
Surveyed by John Cann and Brian Rolf
The Devonshire Association
2007

17.11.07



EAST ELEVATION

WALLS RANDOM STONE, WITH BRICK QUOINS
REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS IN CONCRETE BLOCKS
AND CEMENT RENDER WITH A TILE ROOF



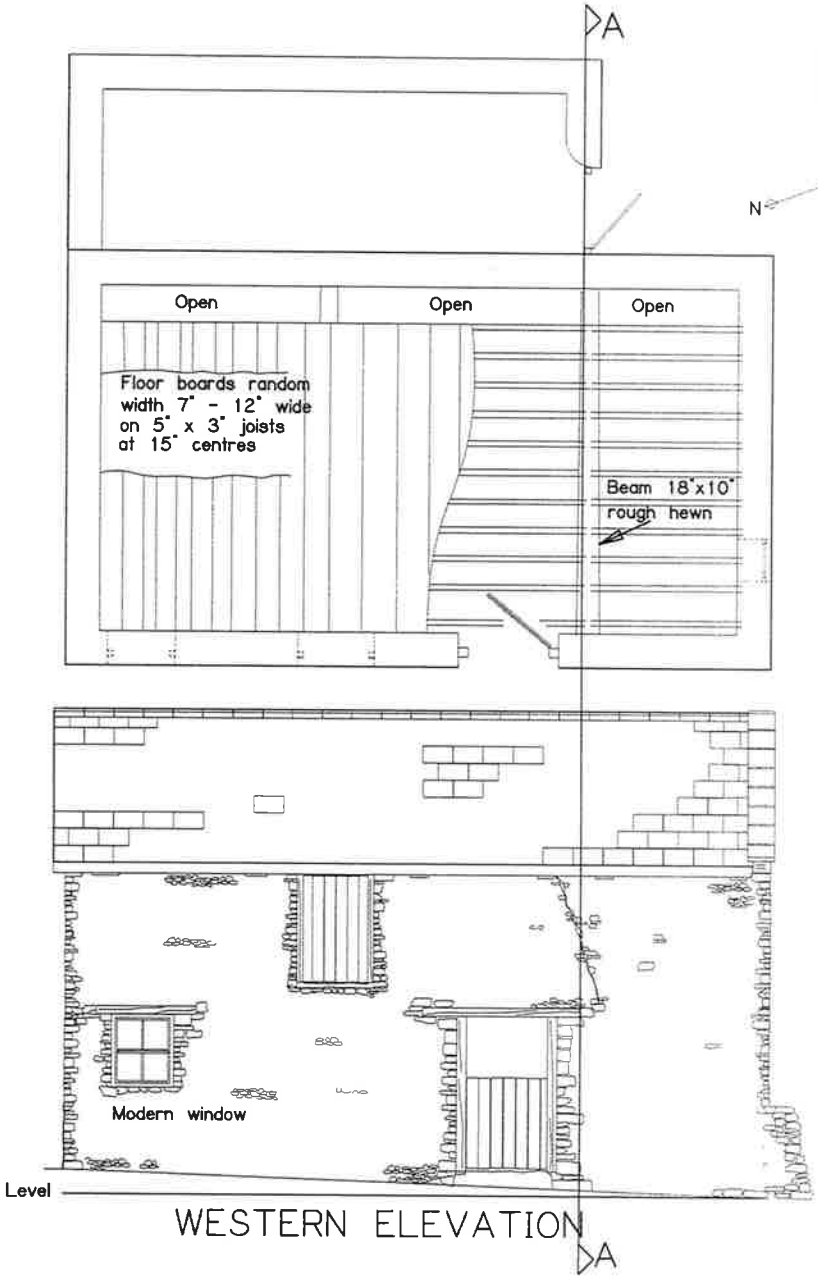
WEST ELEVATION

Shippon
Wadhays. Awliscombe

0 1 2 3 4 5 Feet
0 1 2 3 Metres

Surveyed by John Cann and Brian Rolf
The Devonshire Association
2007

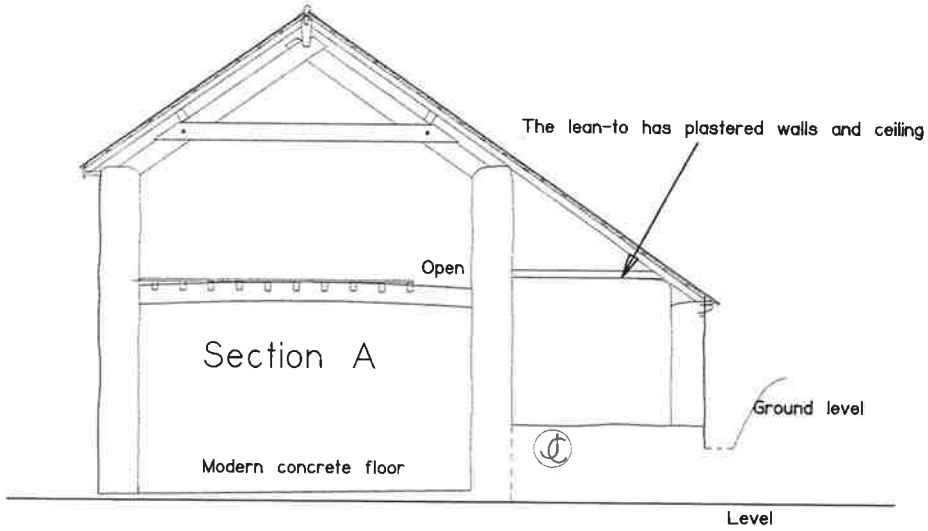
17.11.07

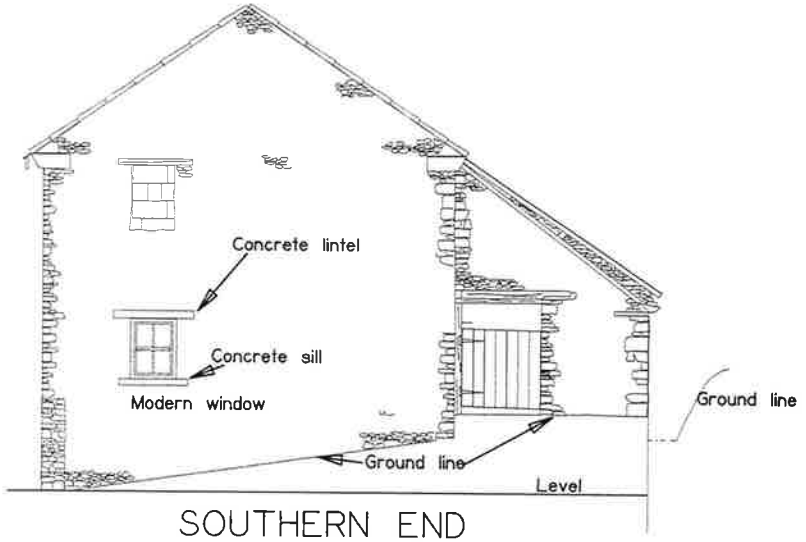


WESTERN ELEVATION

The stables are built of random stone with a slate roof

NB
There is a degree of estimation at roof level as it was unsafe to take actual measurements





SOUTHERN END

Stables
Wadhays. Awliscombe

0 1 2 3 4 5 Feet
0 1 2 3 Metres

Surveyed by John Cann, Brian Rolf and Sue Spurr
The Devonshire Association
2007

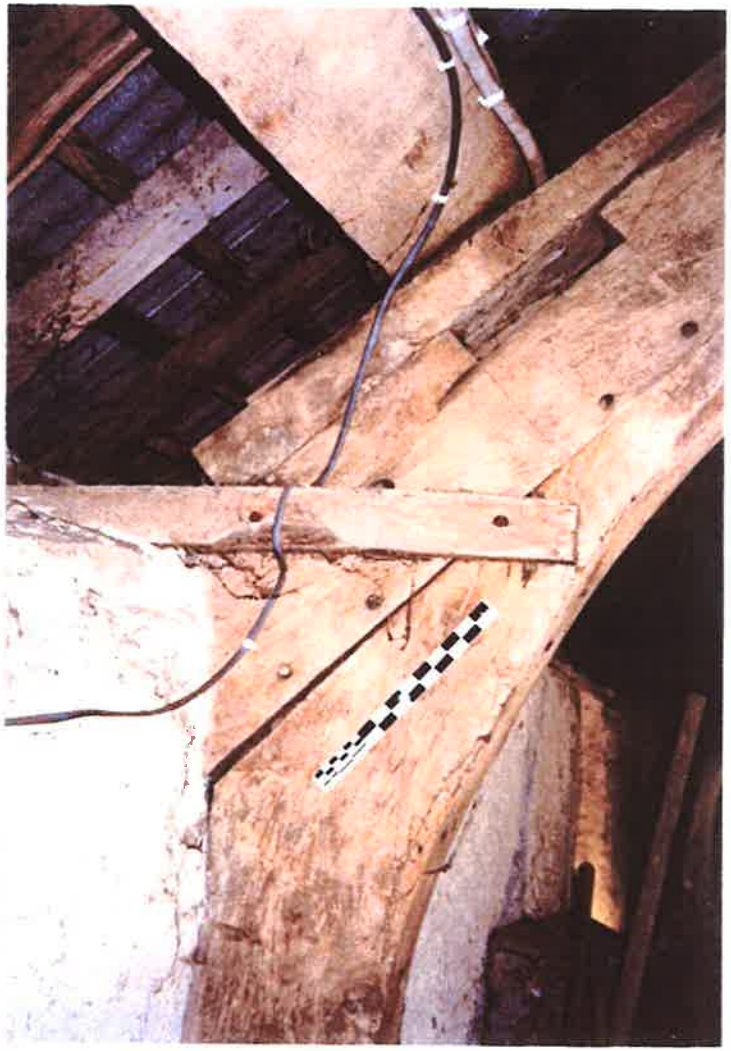
17.11.07

House and barn

Barn and Threshing barn

The barn No 2 cruck

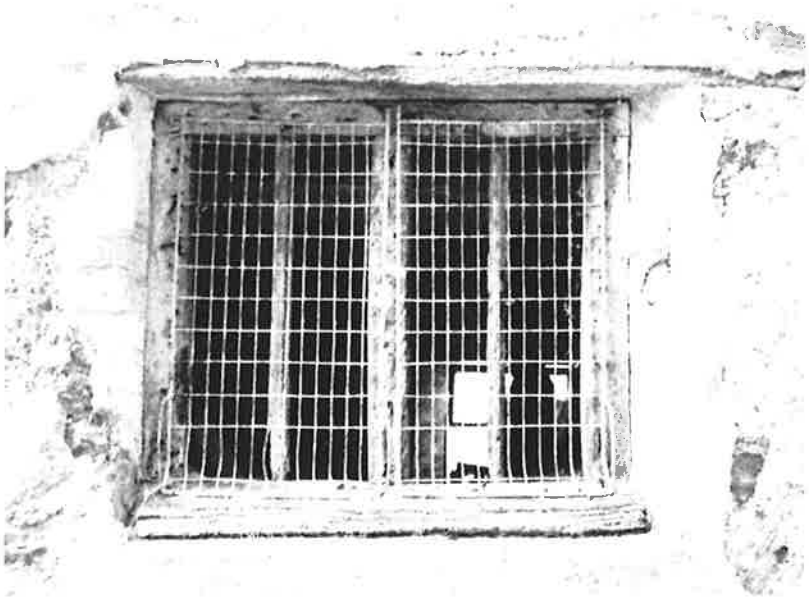
The barn No 3 cruck the tie beam has dropped



No 2 Cruck South side

No 2 cruck North side

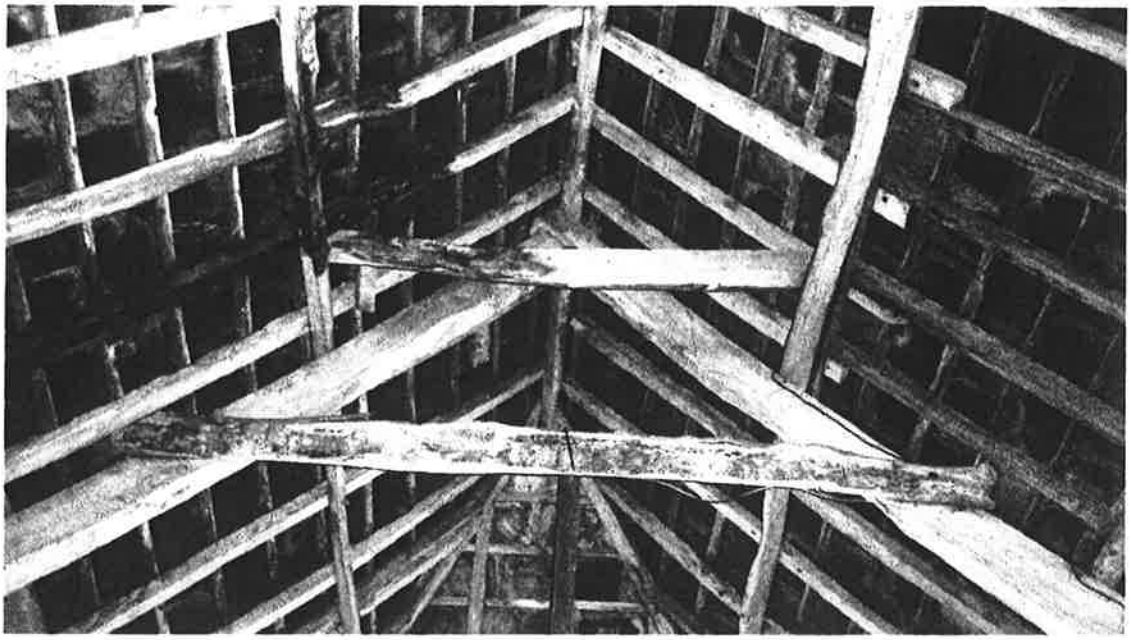
Tongue, grooved and beaded door reused probable from the house



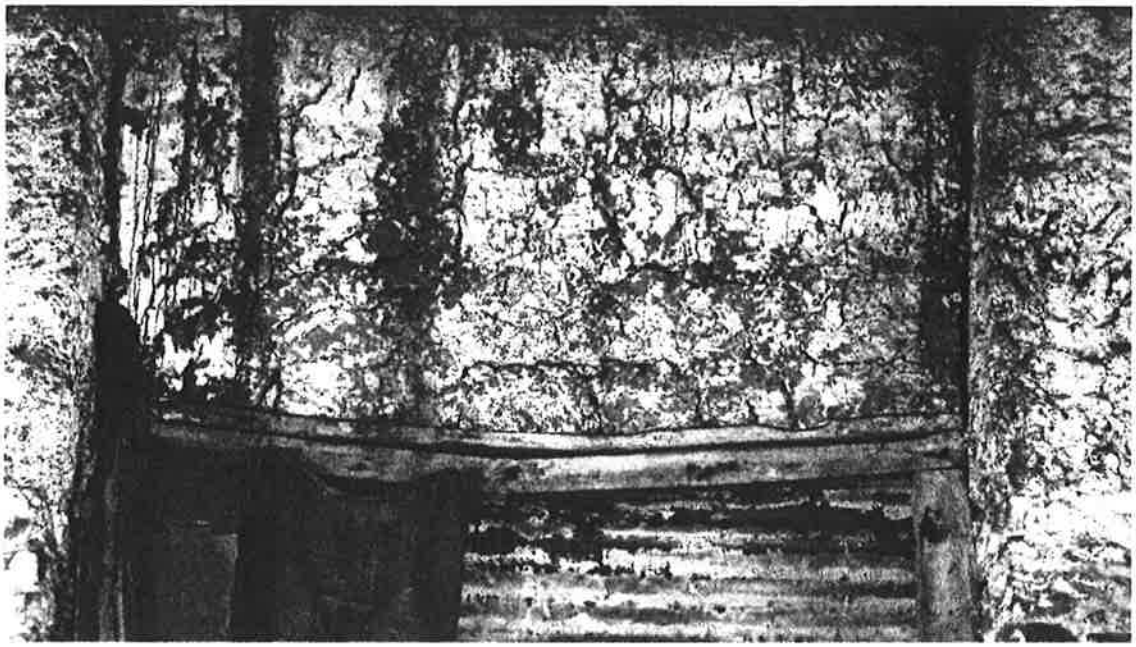
Original window

The Threshing barn and Horse Engine house

The shippon



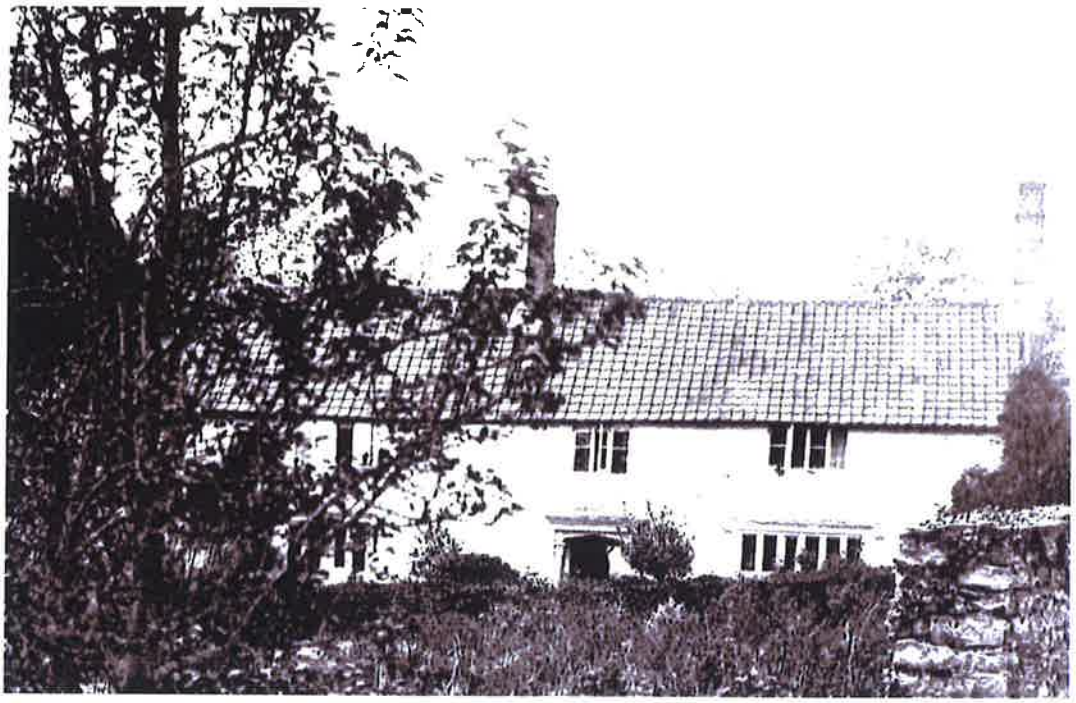
The roof with 'A' frame truss in the threshing barn



Cob infill over northern doorway in threshing barn

The stable

One of the Beer stone corbels on the stable, behind it one of the shaped wooden stubs which have no structural use.



Wadhays house about 1880

The porch c1900

The Granary c1900
Demolished in 1977