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Bunksland, East Anstey, Devon: Historic Building Assessment and Survey

Rebecca Lane

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BUNKSLAND
EAST ANSTEY
DEVON

HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT AND SURVEY

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SUMMARY

Bunksland is a grade II* listed farmhouse, currently on the Heritage at Risk Register. An extensive programme of building recording and investigation was undertaken by Historic England in 2018, in order to provide a record of the building ahead of consolidation and repair work. This has identified that the farmhouse represents a significant survival of a late 14th-century four-bay domestic building, with significant phases of alteration in the 15th, mid-16th and 17th centuries. Subsequently more minor updating has taken place in the 18th and 20th centuries.

CONTRIBUTORS

The report was written by Rebecca Lane. Survey work was undertaken by Rebecca Lane, Olaf Bayer, Helen Winton and Johanna Roethe. Photography is by James O. Davies.

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ARCHIVE LOCATION

The report archive is held in the Historic England Archive, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH

DATE OF SURVEY

The main phase of survey was undertaken in May and June 2018, with additional work in February 2020. Report writing was undertaken in November 2018, with revisions for final publication in September 2021. The report was desktop published in January 2022.

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INTRODUCTION

Bunksland Farm is a grade II* listed (NHLE 1106670) building, sitting in an isolated position in the bottom of the valley of the River Yeo, some 2km west of the village of East Anstey, close to the boundary of the adjacent parish of West Anstey. Unoccupied since 2009, the house is currently on the Heritage at Risk register and has suffered several phases of collapse of some of the external and internal walling. The condition of the building, and the issues surrounding its ownership, led to a request for emergency recording by the Historic England Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas Rhiannon Rhys.

The Historic Places Investigation Team undertook a detailed survey of the building in May and June 2018. This was supplemented by a programme of dendrochronological sampling on the building, which has been reported upon separately (Arnold et al 2020). Further survey work and investigation was undertaken in February 2020 following works to consolidate the building. It should be noted that even following consolidation work, there were still areas of the building which were not safe to access for investigation purposes. Further access following structural repair may be able to resolve some interpretive questions. Where relevant these areas have been noted in the text of this report. In the short term the programme of recording is designed to mitigate against any further loss of elements of the building, but it is hoped in the long term it will inform proposals to restore and renovate the building and bring it back into active use.

This report brings together the results of the survey and investigation of the building to date, together with some limited documentary research into the holding and some consideration of its wider landscape setting. The survey drawings have been used to illustrate the text of the report and a full set has been reproduced as Appendix A.

The names Bungsland and Bunksland appear to have been used interchangeably for the farm throughout its history. The earliest documents (from the 18th century) refer to Bunksland, and this is also the name used in the list description. This has therefore been used as the standard spelling in this report.

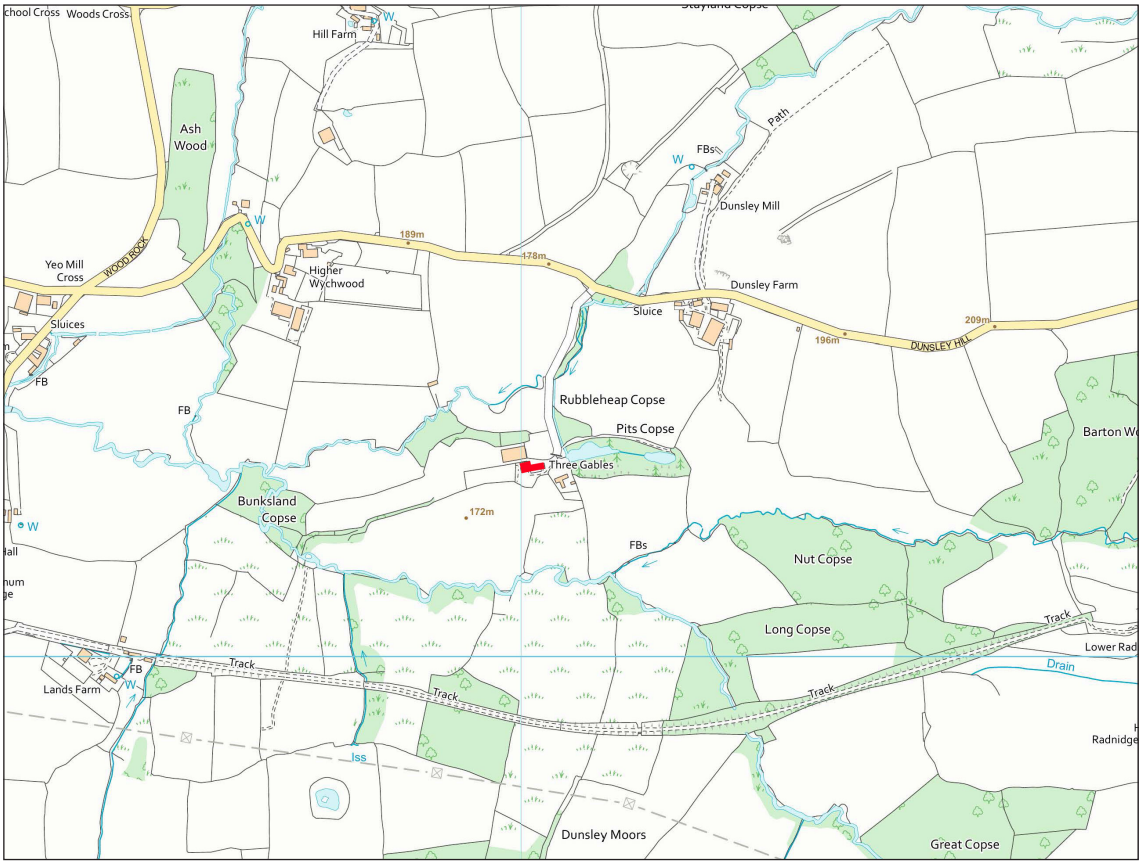

Figure 1 Location map showing Bunksland in red [© Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900]

LANDSCAPE SETTING

East Anstey lies on the eastern edge of Devon, bordering Somerset and the foothills of Exmoor. The parish of East Anstey and its associated neighbour West Anstey appear to have been defined before the Norman Conquest. Unusually for the area they are probably named after a family who held the land in the Saxon period (Siraut 2009, 31). The churches of West Anstey and East Anstey are both identified in the Domesday Book, and appear to have provided a focus for settlement in their respective parishes. Both are known to have manorial centres near the church (ibid, 40).

Bunksland Farm stands some 2km west of the main village of East Anstey (Figure 1). It sits at the bottom of a narrow valley running from east to west with the higher ground of Dunsley Hill to the north and west and Higher Radnidge Moor to the south. It is on the western edge of the parish of East Anstey, and it is occasionally listed as being part of West Anstey instead (an error, but a persistent one). Its position in relation to the parish is unusual, as much of the settlement in the area appears to have been focused in the village, and where there are isolated farmsteads they tend to be on higher ground. Nor is the ground around the house of particularly good quality (David Mair, pers. comm.); Agricultural Land Use mapping classifies it as poor. This is another reason which makes the house's

position somewhat unusual, though the presence of limestone nearby might have been a factor. The farmstead of Bunksland Farm in effect sits over the western end of a narrow finger of limestone that runs in the valley bottom from east to west from the village of East Anstey. Immediately east of the house is an area of former quarrying now woodland, referred to on the modern OS mapping as Rubbleheap Copse and Pits Copse (DCC n.d.). It is still referred to locally as 'Lime Pits' and this name is confirmed by the tithe map, in which the area of the quarrying is referred to as 'Lime Park Rubble Heaps' (ibid).

One notable feature of the landscape around the farm is the number of watercourses which run through the area. The River Yeo runs east to west some 150m south of the farmstead. To the north-east of the farm, a smaller tributary stream runs down from the north and turns westwards just before it reaches the farmstead, running north of the farm and joining the River Yeo to the west. This is a relatively modest watercourse, but was large enough to have supported a small mill slightly further north, where it descends off Dunsley Hill. An apparently man-made ditch also now takes some of the water from this tributary stream and brings it directly south towards the eastern side of the farmstead, running along the side of the current access driveway and into an old quarry area.

A comparison with the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map makes it clear that there have been significant alterations to the arrangements of watercourses in the area north of the farm in the course of the 20th century. Nonetheless it seems that in this low-lying position the farmstead has always been in an area well served by streams. It is tempting to speculate that the house may originally have been positioned to take advantage of the watercourses in some way. However, there is no surviving indication that the watercourses were ever arranged to bring water into the main farmstead, rather than serving the usual stock ponds and fields in the wider area. The mill to the north moreover took advantage of the topography to use the water to create sufficient power to serve the mill – a natural advantage that would not have been available on the flatter land in the valley bottom.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Research was undertaken using documentary sources in the Devon Archives which could be positively identified as relating to Bunksland Farm. These traced the ownership of the farm back to the early 18th century. It is possible that more extensive research of records relating to the parish might yield further information on the farmstead, but this would be a significant undertaking and was beyond the scope of the current project.

A series of deeds survives in the Devon Archives relating to Bunksland. These date largely to the 19th century, but one of them is an abstract of title which lists the deeds to the land that existed in 1849 (DHC 337B/add2/TITLE/1/a). The earliest deeds listed in this document date from the early 18th century and suggest that by this time the holding was split into two 'moieties' or halves, although there is no

evidence as to how extensive either portion was. There were therefore two separate sets of deeds for lands known as Bunksland. For one portion the earliest deed is dated to May 1728 and relates to the transfer of ownership of the 'messuage, farm and lands called Buncksland' from William Clatworthy Senior of West Anstey, yeoman, William Clathworthy Junior of Tawton Bishop, carpenter, and Elizabeth his wife, to John Hynam of Dulverton, yeoman, in consideration of the sum of £80 (ibid). For the other moiety the abstract of title lists a set of deeds dating back to 1713. The earliest mentioned document is a lease between John and Agnes Warren of Swymbridge and John Hampton who undertook to rent the property on a 900-year lease. This lease passed to one Richard Cluffe in 1716 and to a Thomas Clarke in 1720, who left it in his will to a John Courteney who still held it in 1736. In 1736 the freehold of the moiety was sold by Agnes Warren, her son John Warren and John Courteney (who was listed as a yeoman of Twitchen) to John Hinam. At this point therefore the two halves of the holding were reunited under one owner.

The Clatworthy and Warren families are therefore identified as the two earliest owners of the two portions of Bunksland, but it seems almost certain that both families were leasing out the land, as indeed is recorded in the early 18th-century leases for one half of the holding (ibid). It is also possible, given that some of the leaseholders identified in relation to the second moiety are not noted as living East Anstey but in Twitchen and Swymbridge, that they were sub-letting the farm and thus not resident either. It is not clear which portion of the holding contained the house and farmstead itself; the deeds themselves use only standard language regarding the holding of each moiety and what it contained. With these limitations it is difficult to establish much about the nature of the holding at this date.

The fact that none of these deeds saw any need to define which portion of Bunksland related to their respective holdings might be seen to suggest that the subdivision had been in place for some time, and the limits of the two sections were well established by this date. This might suggest that the two families had been in possession of their respective parts for some considerable time by the early 18th century. It is possible that the division and subsequent descent of the two separate holdings related to a family inheritance, although there is no definite evidence for this. However, the evidence that the holding was let and probably sub-let by the 18th century would fit with the history of the site as evidenced by the evolution of the building. There is little evidence of significant investment in the building after the 17th century, which might be seen to correspond to a farm that was sub-divided and tenanted from this date, if not before.

The parish registers for East Anstey survive partially from the late 16th century onwards (DHC B445A). The name Clatworthy appears in them from the late 17th century, although no William Clatworthy is listed at any point and the surname is a relatively common one in Devon and Somerset in this period. Warren is less frequently seen in the East Anstey register, although there is one late 17th-century reference to an Elizabeth Warren of East Anstey. The name Hynam or Hinam similarly appears, but again there is no direct evidence of a connection with the John Hinam who purchased the lands in 1728 and 1736.

Figure 2 Original series Ordnance Survey map of 1809-20, showing Bunksland labelled as Luckworthy [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]

There is a will surviving of a John Hinam of Dulverton who died in 1741, with an estate of £3,000 (Siraut 2009, 91), although it is not clear if this is the same John Hinam that purchased Bunskland. The abstract of title drawn up in 1849 indicates that Bunksland passed down through the Hinam family from John Hinam to his son Richard in 1802 and from Richard to his son John in 1832.

The original series of OS mapping of 1809-20 shows a house in the approximate location of Bunksland, accessed via a track from the road to the north (Figure 2). However, it is labelled as 'Luckworthy'. This is also the case with the original survey drawing for the map, which shows a domestic property south of the road with the same label. Although not in exactly the right location, and with the wrong name, it seems likely that this depicts Bunksland. It is not clear why the farm is labelled thus. The historic documentation relating to Bunksland indicates that the name had been used for some time by the 19th century, and the site is clearly referred to as 'Bungsland' in the tithe apportionment 20 years later. There is a farm in West Anstey called Luckworthy so it is possible that the surveyor had mistakenly duplicated the name (both Luckworthys appear on the map). Alternatively it is possible that there was some connection between Bunksland and the Luckworthy holding in West Anstey at the time, which led to the name being used for both.

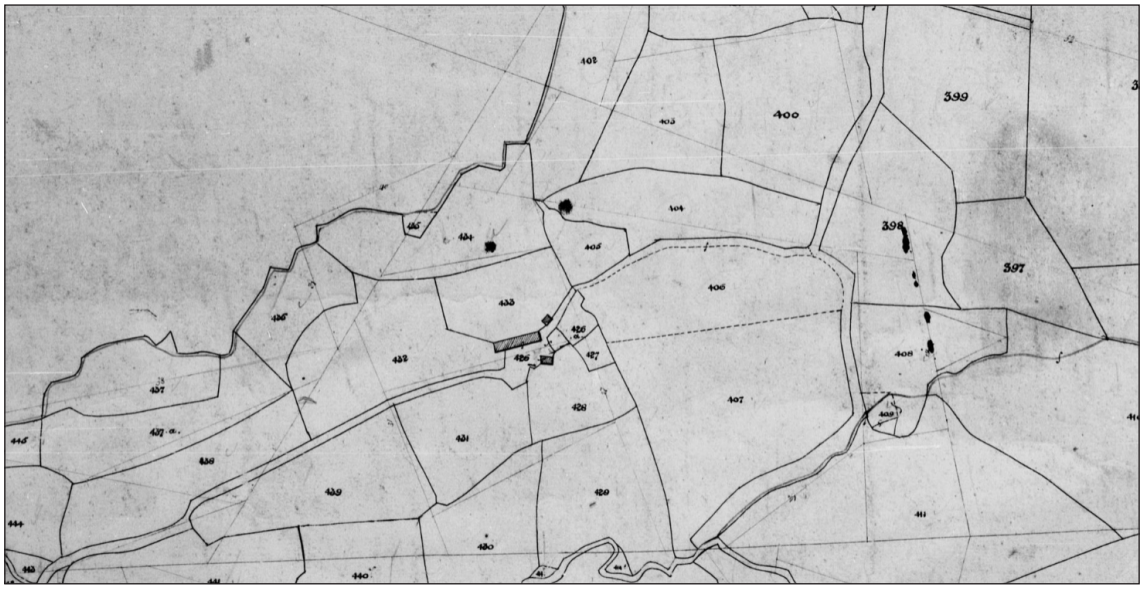

Figure 3 1844 Detail from the 1844 tithe map showing Bunksland [Reproduced courtesy of The National Archives IR 30/9/10].

The tithe map and associated apportionment of 1844 records John Hinam as the landowner for 'Bungsland', and the occupier as one Robert Hill (DCC n.d.). The land identified as being part of Bunksland was a mixture of arable and meadow with some coppiced woodland. It covered just over 57 acres, extending north and west from the farm, to the limits of the parish. To the south it was delimited by the River Yeo and to the west by its tributary stream. The tithe map of 1844 provides the first depiction of the farmhouse (Figure 3). It is shown as a rectangular structure, which must reflect both the house and any attached farm buildings extant at the time, but there is no detail to indicate the relative extent of the house and any agricultural provision.

The 1st edition OS map of 1890 (Figure 4) provides more detail, and clearly shows the house as the central portion subdivided from the agricultural sections of the range to the east and west. The stable or hay barn to the west was extant, but as yet the attached northern range (dairy) had not been constructed. The 1890 map also shows a fairly substantial trackway leading to the building from the south-west, parallel with the river. There are still two rows of bushes running along this line today, although the track no longer exists. The track appears to have led into the farmyard to the south of the building range and then out to the north-east, where it skirted the edge of the lime pits and then carried on to the north-east towards Dursley Farm. This is still the route of a footpath today. There is some indication of at least the beginning of a further trackway leading from the western side of the farmhouse north-west up to the valley road, which may reflect the route shown on the Original Series OS mapping (*see* Figure 2). It is of course likely that the farmstead was accessed via various tracks and footpaths of a greater or lesser size, reflecting access to its associated land.

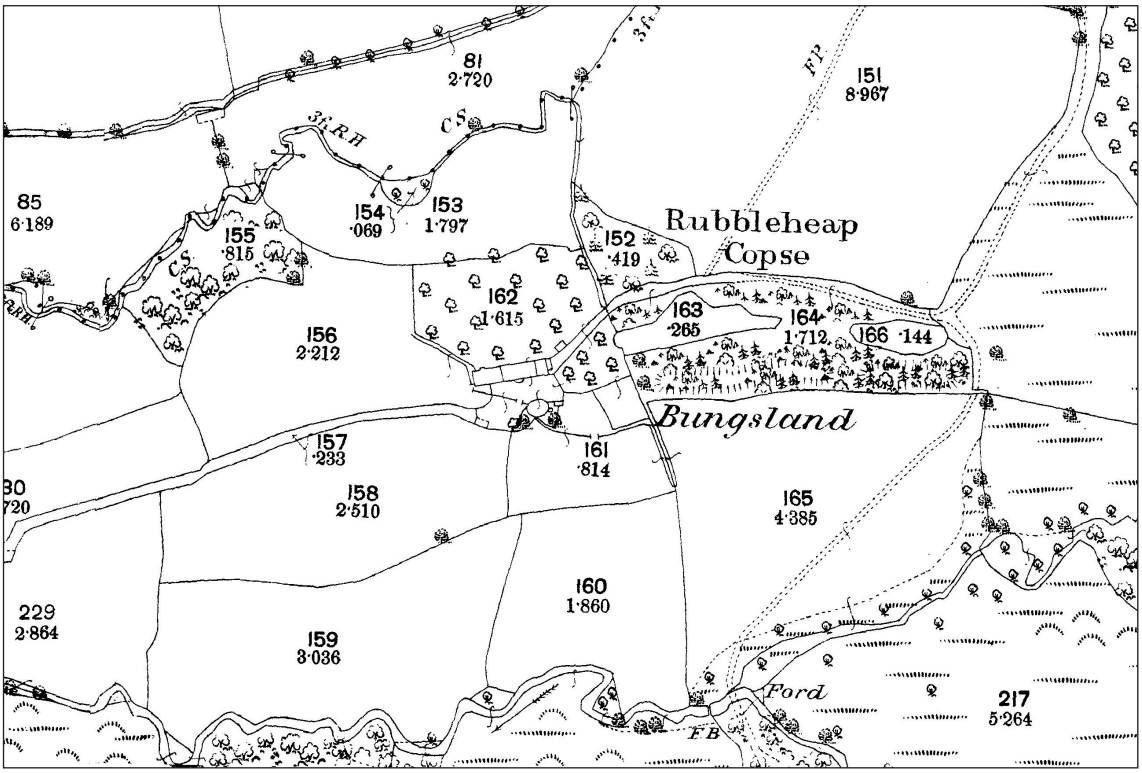

Figure 4 Bunksland depicted on the 1st edtion OS map of 1890 [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]

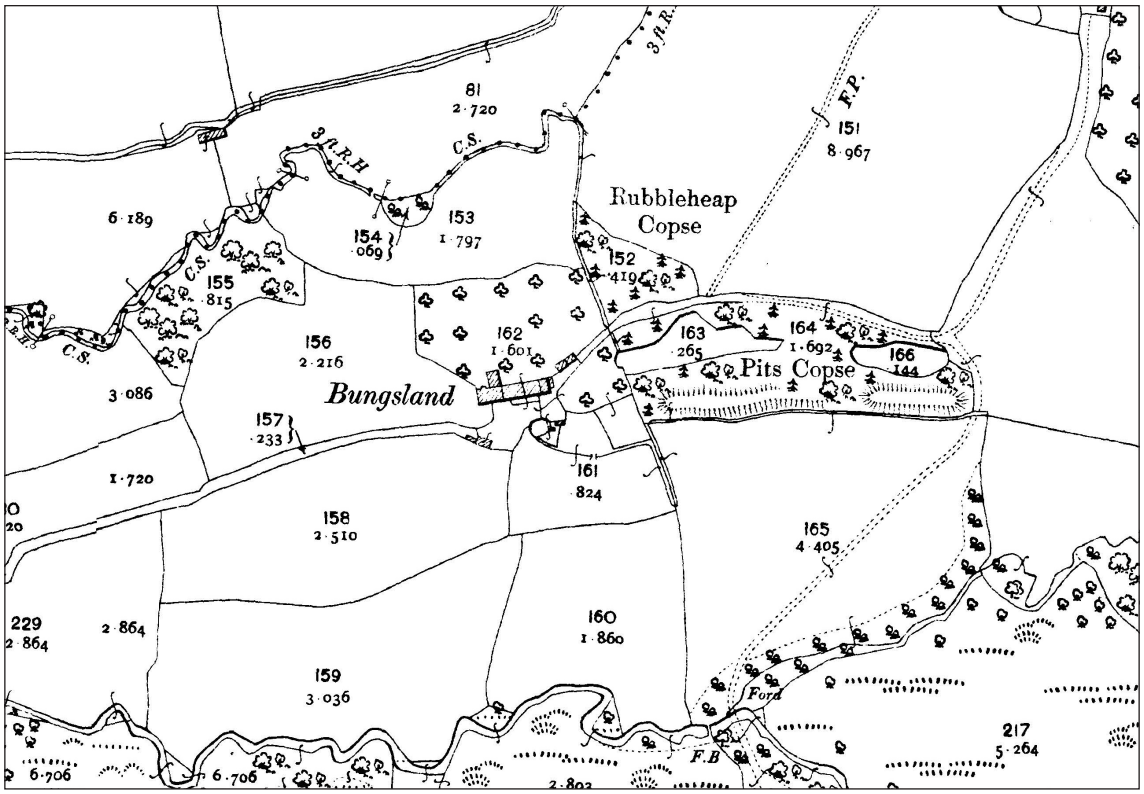

Figure 5 Bunksland depicted on the 2nd edition OS map of 1905 [© and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group (All rights reserved 2022) Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024]

By the time of the 2nd edition OS map of 1905, the dairy had been added on the north side of the stable or hay barn, giving it a date range of 1890-1905 (Figure 5). Given the similarities between the main range of the stable or hay barn and the dairy it seems likely that it had been built not long before 1890. Thereafter there is a gap in the OS mapping until the revision of 1971, by which time the driveway off the road from the north-east had been added and the earlier route from the south-west had fallen out of use. By this date some of the smaller cattle sheds had also been constructed to the north-west of the farmhouse.

In the late 20th century the farm was let to Beryl Rutherford, who was a noted breeder of Dexter cattle and who maintained a milking herd based at Bunksland. Correspondence with the local authority indicates that the farmhouse and the linhay were already considered in poor condition in the 1990s, but no work appears to have been undertaken at the time. Following the death of Beryl Rutherford in 2009 the house became unoccupied and deteriorated yet further. The site was placed on the Heritage at Risk Register in 2017.

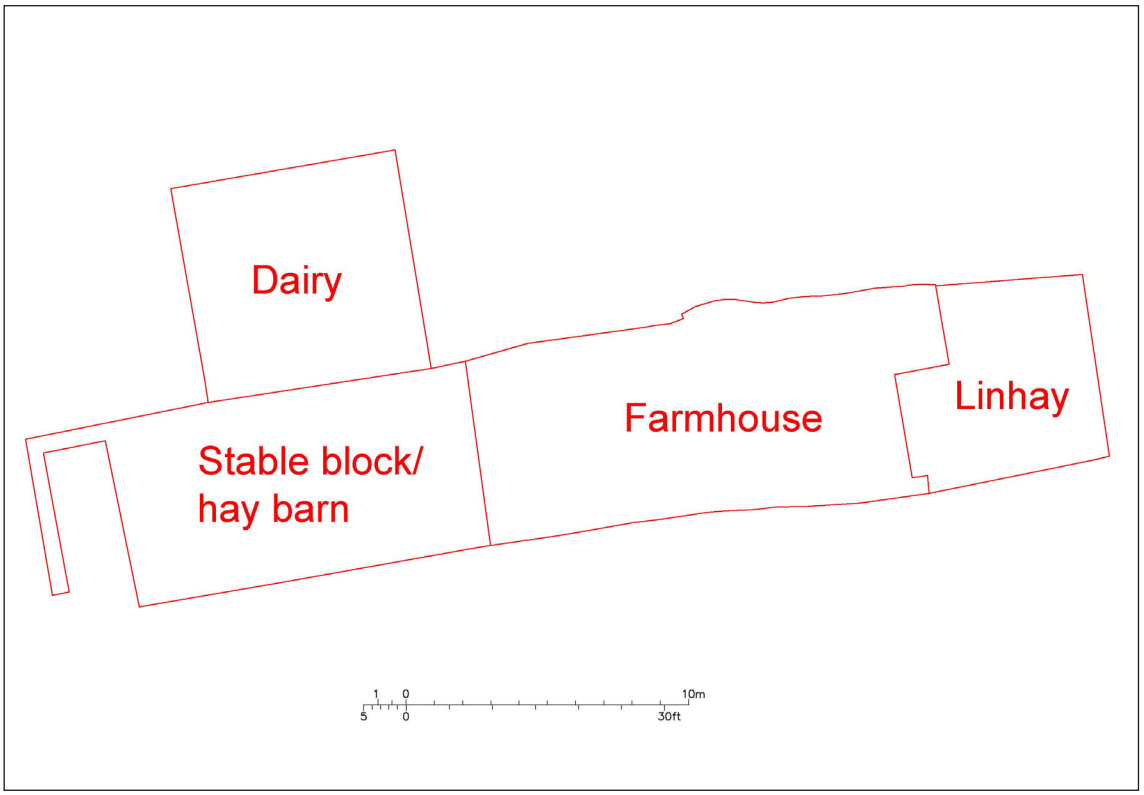

Figure 6 Outline plan of the main range of the Bunksland, showing the main farmhouse with its attached agricultural structures [© Historic England]

BUILDING ANALYSIS

The farmstead now comprises the main farmhouse and attached agricultural buildings, with some 20th-century farm sheds to the north-west. This building analysis encompasses only the main range which contains historic fabric. This comprises three main sections: the house, which now forms the central part of the range; the linhay (an open cattle shed) to the east; and the stable block or hay barn and dairy to the west (Figure 6). These are now three distinct units, with no internal communication between the house and either of the attached agricultural buildings. The main range is orientated south-west to north-east, with the main elevation facing south-west, but for the purposes of the report it has been assumed to be orientated to the cardinal compass points, with the main elevation facing south.

The building analysis below uses annotation shown on the detailed ground-floor plan of the building presented as Figure 7. Smaller schematic drawings have been used to illustrate each phase in turn, although they do not illustrate the extent of surviving fabric in the building.

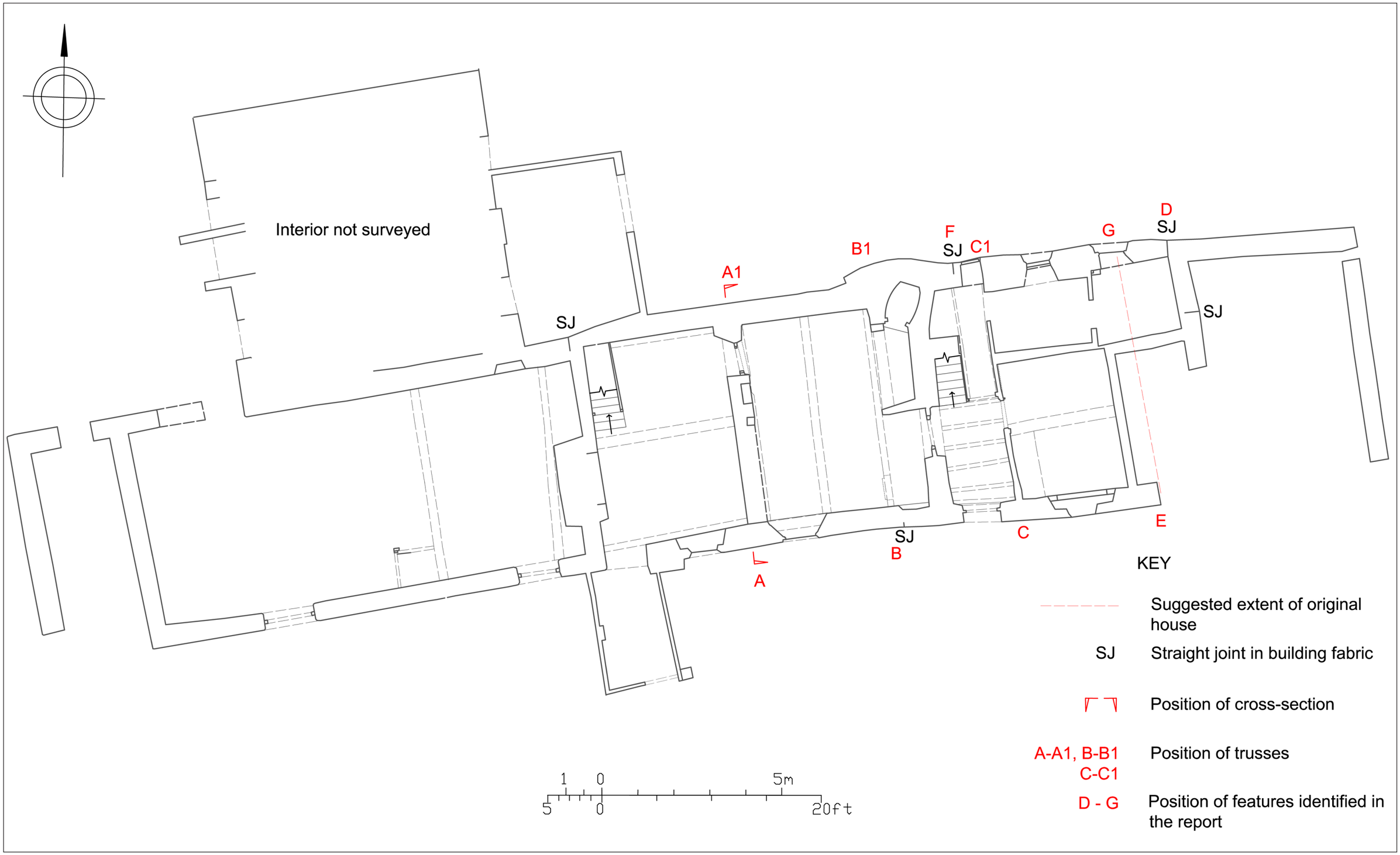

Figure 7 Ground-floor plan showing positions of trusses and other features. Scale 1:100 [© Historic England]

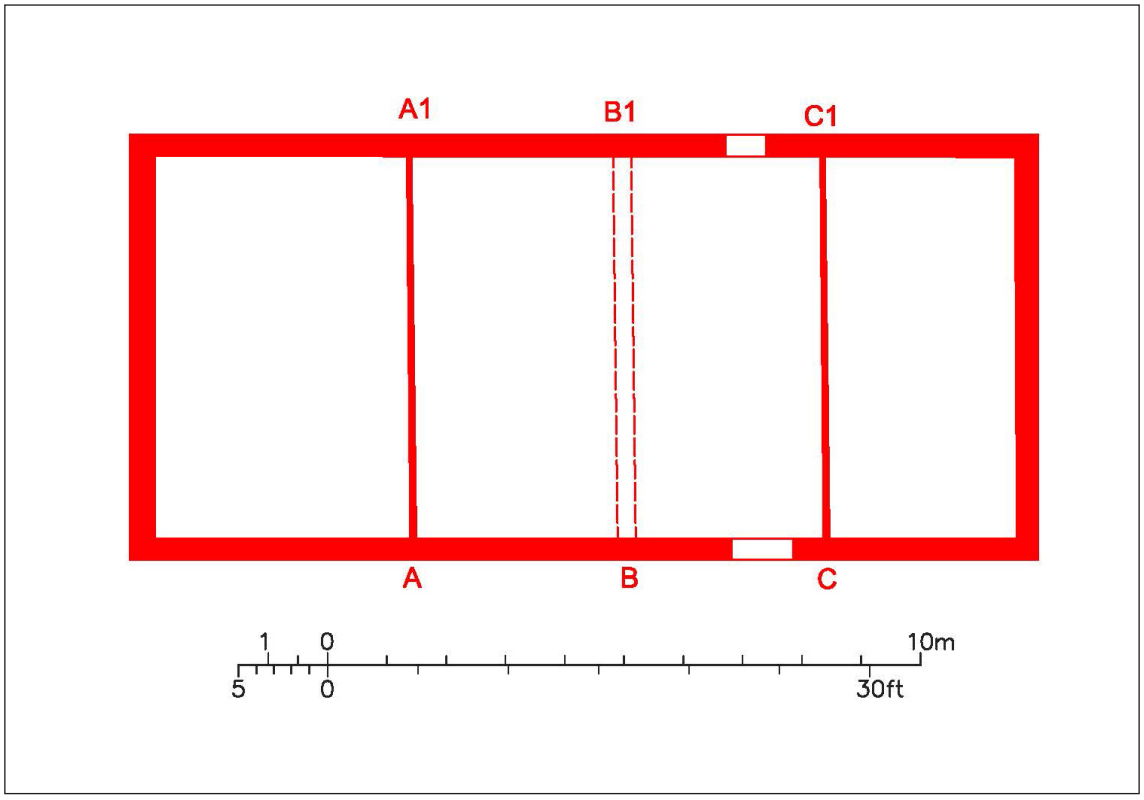

Figure 8 Suggested plan form of Bunskland in Phase One - late 14th century [© Historic England]

Phase One – Late 14th Century

The earliest phase of building fabric identifiable in the present building is the surviving elements of a hall house. Dendrochronological dating indicates that the timber used in the construction of the house was felled in 1396-97 (Arnold et al 2020, 6), and the building was probably constructed within a year or two of the felling date. This comprised a four-bay house, represented by the three and half bays which now form the farmhouse, with a probable further half bay of the original building in what now forms the western portion of the linhay. The building is formed of a stone plinth of varying height, with cob walling above this. A frame, principally of jointed-cruck trusses, rises from the walls to support the roof structure. Three original trusses survive, with indications that the roof structure continued to both the east and west of the surviving trusses as far as two gable end walls, the western of which survives in a modified form. The original eastern end of the building is much altered and the original extent of the building is unclear, but the most likely position is slightly further east than the current extent of the farmhouse, although the gable wall has been completely removed (*see* Figure 7).

The building originally comprised a two-bay open hall in the centre of the house, with a single-bay room at the high end to the west and a further single-bay room serving as a low (service) end to the east (Figure 8). A cross passage appears to have run across the lower (eastern) side of the hall. The position of the original front (south) door appears to have corresponded with that surviving today. There

Figure 9 North elevation, showingbathroom window inserted into the former north doorway of the cross passage, looking south [DP220572]

are also traces of an aligned doorway to the north, with one jamb of this doorway identifiable in the north elevation, although the rest of the opening has been modified by later changes including the insertion of the current bathroom window (Figure 9). Traces of smoke blackening on the surviving roof timbers (where unpainted) indicate that the hall was originally heated by an open hearth. Very small amounts of surviving smoke-blackened thatch around one of the trusses indicates the original roof covering.

The external walling of the building has been substantially altered, but some of its original features can still be discerned. Immediately adjacent to the south doorway is a recess visible internally in the south wall of the building, partially obscured by the inserted cross wall (Figure 10; *see* Phase Three below). The most likely interpretation of this feature is that it is an original window position. However, externally there is a slight off-set and a short straight joint in the stone plinth, corresponding to the western side of this feature, although sitting below the recess.

Figure 10 Recess visible in the south elevation in the hall, possibly an original window opening, looking south [DP220535]

Figure 11 Earlier timber window sill visible underneath the later sill in the surviving hall window [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

Figure 12 West gable wall, from the first-floor western room, looking west [DP220547]

The interpretation of this feature therefore remains uncertain, as the straight joint could suggest that this was a doorway, although some form of window remains most likely.

No other window openings that are definitely original could be identified, although it is notable that, even in later phases, the window openings for the principal rooms are only on the south side of the house, which appears to reflect the original arrangement. It is likely, therefore, that the window openings for the high-end (west) room and the low-end (east) room were in the positions of the surviving ground-floor window openings for these rooms, although these have been heavily modified. It is also possible that the surviving window in the hall represents an original opening. This window opening has an early timber sill surviving underneath a later one (Figure 11). It is possible that this sill is an original feature, although equally possible that it was inserted in one of the phases of alteration to the hall area. Closer examination of this feature may resolve this.

There are three surviving trusses of the roof structure (*see* Figure 7; A-A1, B-B1 and C-C1). The gable end of the building to the west cannot be closely examined due to the collapse of the floor in this area, but has been at least partially rebuilt (*see* below). It was probably originally a solid cob or stone gable rather than comprising a further truss. However, one timber post is visible at first-floor level rising into the gable (Figure 12). The timber sits slightly to the north of the centre of the gable wall. It is not clear whether this post is original; it may relate to a later change in this area of the building, but it remains possible that this wall was originally timber-framed,

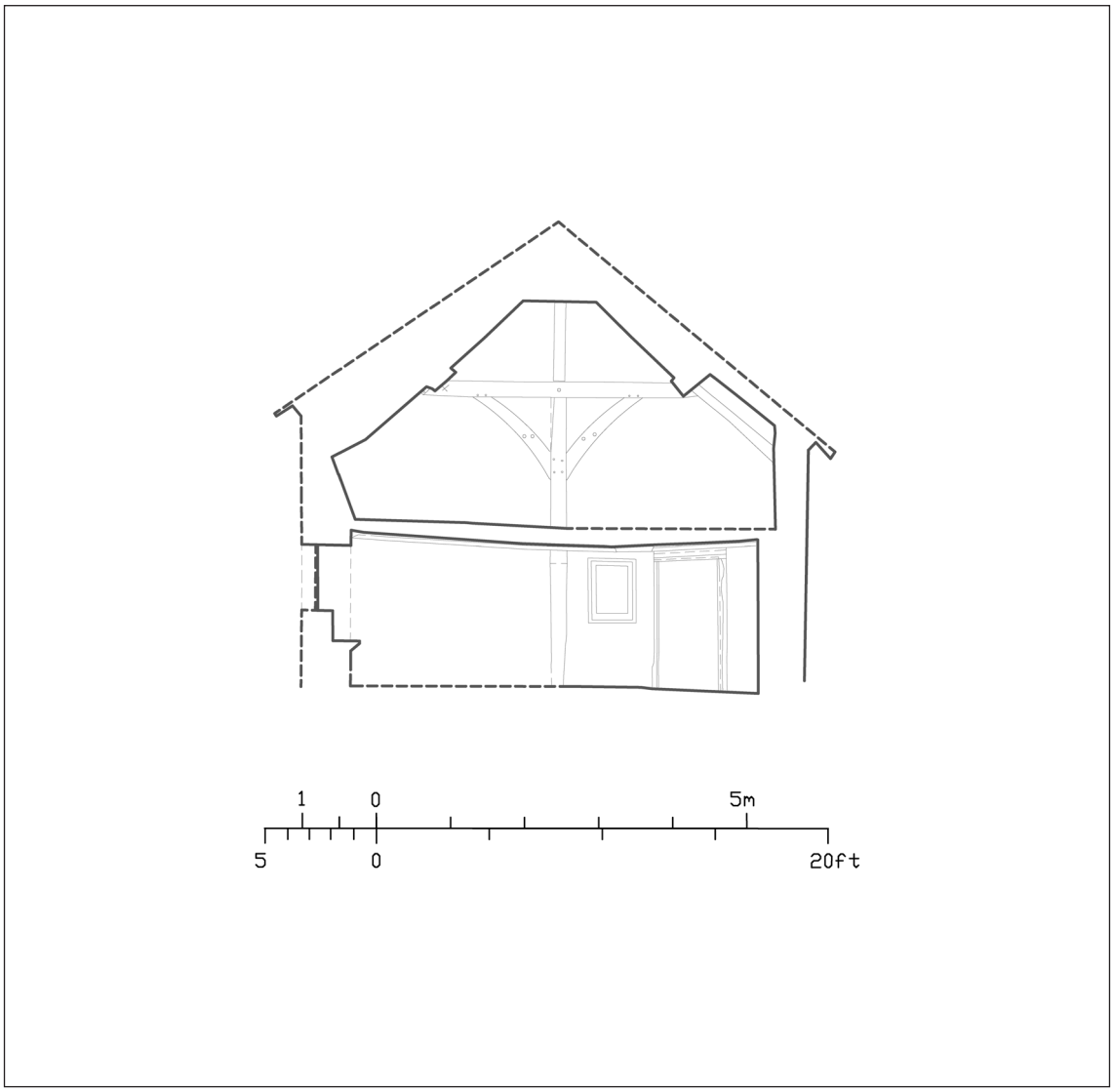

Figure 13 Cross section through the building showing the form of the original partition and truss at A-A1, looking west [© Historic England]

or perhaps more likely a combination of some timber elements with stone or cob. It may also relate to a stair position in this corner of the building, as is currently extant, although the current stair is a later feature. A closer examination of this post in future may be able to resolve this.

The truss and associated timber framed partition at A-A1 form the original partition between the high-end room and the hall to the east. The western side of this partition and truss cannot be examined in detail at present, but from the east it is clear that it is formed of a timber frame of an unusual form in Devon, although some comparable examples are known (Figure 13; *see* Conclusion). It comprises a central post rising the full height of the building to support the ridge piece, although the very top of the post and the ridge piece are not currently visible. This gives the appearance of a king-post arrangement to the truss. A large empty recess on the post, just below the later first-floor level, indicates that there was originally a

Figure 14 View of the southern side of the central post of the partition under truss A-A1, looking north, showing the joint for an original mid-rail with a smaller, later timber now in the same position [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

horizontal beam, or mid-rail, running across the partition (Figure 14). This rail must have been halved onto the post and supported in the north and south walls at either end. The surviving collar, which sits lower than the collars of the other trusses, is similarly halved onto the eastern side of the post, with a large single peg centrally placed in the junction of the two timbers (Figure 15). The collar runs into the principal rafters at either end.

Curved braces rise from the central post to support the collar, echoing the arrangement of wind-bracing in the lower part of the sides of the roof structure. They are pegged into the collar, and double pegged to the post. Both curved braces also have a pair of pegs visible towards their centre. It is tempting to speculate that these might relate to further braces which could have extended down from the brace to the now removed mid-rail. No associated mortice could be observed in the underside of the southern brace however, although a close examination was not possible. The reason for this pegging therefore remains uncertain. The truss

Figure 15 Eastern side of truss A-A1, looking west, showing the junction of the central post and the collar, with a large single peg joining the two [DP220759]

form is different from the jointed-cruck arrangement of the other surviving trusses, comprising straight principal rafters which run into the wall at high level. The partition has been incorporated into a later cob wall (now partially collapsed), but stave holes visible on the underside of the southern principal rafter and the southern curved brace suggest that the partition was originally closed, at least up to the collar, probably by some form of wattle and daub arrangement.

Around the southern end of this truss, where the later cob wall has collapsed, small fragments of smoke blackened thatch are identifiable, still adhering to the back of the principal rafter (Figure 16). It would seem plausible – given the evidence of the truss being closed below the collar – that it was closed above the collar right up to the ridge. However, the surviving smoke-blackened thatch sits to the west of this partition (*see* Figure 7) and, together with other smoke-blackened elements to the roof structure over the western bay (*see* below), suggests instead that the top section of the truss was open, presumably including the whole section above the collar. This would have allowed the smoke from the open hearth in the hall to percolate through

Figure 16 Surviving fragment of smoke-blackened thatch adjacent to the southern principal rafter of truss A-A1 [DP220570]

Figure 17 Scratch carptenter's mark on the eastern side of the southern principal rafter of truss A-A1, looking west [DP220566]

Figure 18 Upper part of truss B-B1, looking east, partially built into the later chimney breast [DP220564]

into the upper end of the house. A close examination of the top of the collar would confirm whether this was the case. Alternatively the form of the original partition at this end may have allowed some smoke through despite being closed. A carpenter's mark was observed on the eastern side of the collar, in the form of a scratched cross (Figure 17). This was the only truss which could be closely examined, so it is not clear if this formed part of a sequence or whether the trusses were identified with non-sequential marks.

Truss B-B1 originally formed the open truss over the hall, although it is now partially built into the later chimney breast (Figure 18). This is of a jointed-cruck form, with the joint between the two timbers forming each blade pegged from the side (Figure 19). There is a high-level cranked collar. Truss C-C1 is also of jointed-cruck form. It is now built into a later partition, but the upper section of the truss is visible above the current ceiling level and part of the eastern side of the northern cruck blade can be seen from the adjacent linhay, although it cannot be closely inspected at present. This is the only truss for which the form of the apex of the truss can be seen (Figure 20). Although damaged by the later post which is resting on top of the ridge, the apex can be seen to be formed by a diamond-set ridge piece, resting on a small block (or yoke) which is pegged into the blades to either side and which therefore acts to bond the blades together. Cruck apexes are a useful way to classify cruck forms by age and region and have been classified. This is considered a 'type L1' – a form which is seen over a broad date range of the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries and over the western half of the country, with concentrations in Devon and Lancashire, although it also seen further afield (Miles 2019, 34-38).

Figure 19 Western side of the southern cruck blade of truss B-B1, looking east, showing the junction of the two parts of the blade and the side pegging [DP220562]

Figure 20 Apex of the eastern side of truss C-C1 as viewed from the linhay looking west, showing the yoke which joined the two blades together. The original truss is distinguished from the later timber by the surviving smoke blackening on the timbers. Also visible are smoke-blackend common rafters on the souther side of the roof [DP220553]

Figure 21 Ground-floor eastern room, looking south west, showing the profile of the post surviving in the partition between the room and the cross passage, adjacent to the current doorway [DP220542]

The visible portion of the upper part of truss C-C1 is heavily smoke-blackened on the eastern side, away from the open hall. This indicates that this truss did not form the eastern limit of the building, but that it continued beyond this point. It also must have been at least partly open to the hall, allowing the smoke to blacken the eastern side of the truss. Situated beyond the cross passage, this eastern bay must have formed the low end of the house, typically where service provision was located. In a farm context this sometimes formed accommodation for animals, to create a longhouse arrangement, although there is no evidence of this here.

The original collar in truss C-C1 appears to have been removed, although its likely position is now largely obscured. There is no evidence on the truss for any closed partition arrangement; no stave holes are visible on the undersides of the blades, although they may have been cut back in some way, as the soffits are not smoke-blackened as the sides are. This may be the result of later alterations, rather than a sign that there was originally a built-in partition along this truss.

Originally there may have been some form of partition at a lower level under truss C-C1, such as a timber screen, which would have left little trace in the surviving structure. One possible feature that may relate to this, however, is a post surviving in the east wall of the cross passage (Figure 21). This is largely papered over, but its outline can be discerned. It may form part of the later full-height partition inserted under the truss (*see* Phase Three below), but it is considerably larger than the timber studs typically used for the later partition. It remains possible therefore that it is part of an original low-level screen arrangement at this end. Any work which uncovered elements of the post would probably resolve this question.

It has been suggested (John Thorp, pers. comm.) that the original eastern extent of the building is indicated by the full-height straight joint in the north wall of the building, which roughly coincides with a surviving section of stub wall running north to south within the linhay (*see* Figure 7; Point D). This would have created a long low end, as there is a distance of 5m between the position of the surviving truss C-C1 and the point indicated by the straight joint. This would be extremely large for a single bay in the structure, and would have necessitated a further truss over the eastern end of the building, creating a two-bay low end. There is, however, no evidence surviving of such a truss. Detailed analysis of the current plan form suggests in fact that the straight joint relates to the construction of the linhay (*see* Phase Five below).

Instead the east end of the farmhouse building appears more likely to have originally coincided with the current eastern extent of the south wall of the farmhouse – that is, a point around 3.8m east of truss C-C1 (*see* Figure 7; Point E). This also coincides with the surviving change in roof level between the farmhouse and the linhay. This would create a low-end bay of the same proportions as the bays to the west, meaning that there were originally no further trusses east of that at C-C1. This means, however, that the original gable wall has been completely removed. Any work in this area of the building is likely to reveal further evidence which may help in clarifying this suggested original form – particularly close

Figure 22 Upper part of hall, looking south west towards truss A-A1, showing purlin and wind brace arrangement to either side of the truss [DP220757]

Figure 23 First-floor eastern room, looking south east, showing southern purlin which may be part of the original roof structure, with other later timbers [DP220551]

analysis of what appears to be a surviving purlin visible in the collapse in the south side of the first-floor east room (*see* below).

Spanning the trusses are purlins of relatively large scantling (Figure 22). These extend from the west wall to truss A-A1, with further sets in the next two bays (A-A1 to B-B1 and B-B1 to C-C1). Extending further east from truss C-C1 one possible original purlin survives in the southern part of the roof (Figure 23). This could not be closely examined, and is now sitting at an angle within the eastern first-floor room. A detailed examination of this may confirm whether it is original and could provide more detail of its form. The purlins are seated on the back of trusses B-B1 and C-C1, but clasped between the collar and the principal rafters of truss A-A1.

Below the purlins run a series of curved wind-braces (*see* Figure 22). Originally, these appear to have formed a pair in each bay of the roof structure, rising from the trusses to the purlin towards the centre of the bay. Only the two pairs on the southern side in the central two bays survive, with a single further brace on the southern side of the western bay. Where they survive the wind-braces are lapped onto the back of the purlins and all three of the trusses. There is no evidence of a further tier of wind braces above the purlins, although there has been some alteration in this area, and no investigation of the upper part of the roof structure was possible.

Much of the remainder of the roof structure is currently concealed by plasterwork and by the later roof covering. In the small areas that are currently visible, however, there are some notable survivals. Immediately west of truss A-A1, a pair of common rafters is visible in the gap left by the collapse of the later cob wall. This pair is smoke-blackened, and it seems likely that there are further original elements of the roof surviving in this area, currently concealed by the later plastering over of the underside of the roof structure. Adjacent to truss A-A1 there is also the small fragment of surviving smoke-blackened thatch already described (*see* Figure 16). This appears to represent a surviving portion of the base layer of the thatch, which sat immediately above the rafters. This base layer was often left in situ when the upper levels of the thatch were replaced or renewed, ensuring the survival of the smoke-blackening from the earliest phase of its use. There also appears to be at least one surviving smoke-blackened batten, onto which the base layer of thatch would have been applied, although other battens appear to have been replaced as they are clean.

Further to the east, between trusses B-B1 and C-C1, a series of smoke blackened common rafters have also survived, currently visible at a distance from inside the linhay (*see* Figure 20). Some of these also appear to have smoke-blackened battens adhering to their outer sides, although any thatch has apparently been stripped off at this end of the building. All these features must represent survivals from the earliest phase of the house, prior to the insertion of the chimney (*see* Phase Three). It is highly likely that further elements of the original roof, including further common rafters and possibly other sections of thatch, survive in areas that are currently inaccessible.

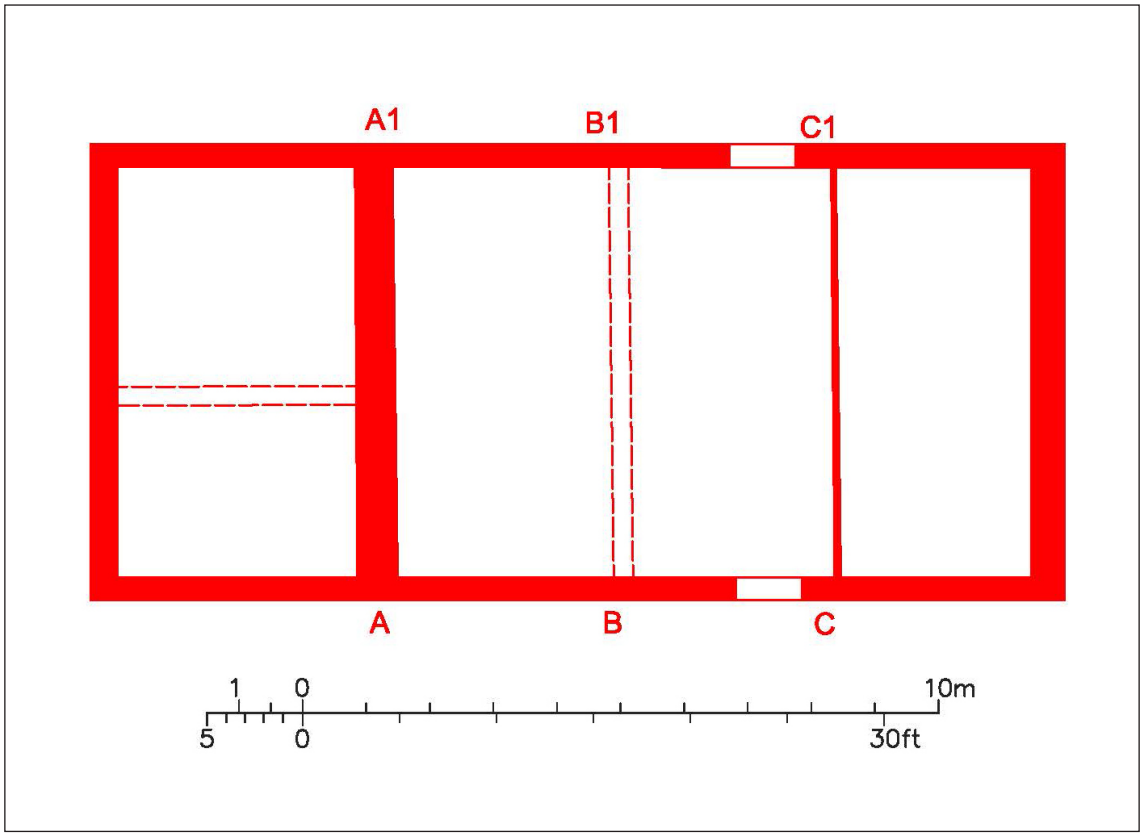

Figure 24 Suggested plan form of Bunksland in Phase Two - 15th century [© Historic England]

Phase Two – 15th Century

A relatively early alteration appears to have been the insertion of a ceiling over the high-end room, to create an upper chamber (Figure 24). This would have extended the accommodation for the owner of Bunksland and his family, and reflects the growing importance of privacy at this time. This area of the building is currently difficult to access due to the collapse of the floor; however, a number of features can be observed. The inserted floor was supported by a large central spine beam, with two half beams to the north and south, chased into the external walls (Figure 25). The two half beams are chamfered on their inner edges and the central spine beam is chamfered on both sides, with run out stops at its eastern end (Figure 26). There are no stops currently visible at the western end. The beams all have seatings for close-set joists, around 0.14m wide, with only a gap of about 0.15m between them. Some of these seatings have been reused for the current joist arrangement but this does not appear to use any original joists, as even where the original seatings have been reused the joists are generally smaller than the timbers they were originally designed for.

To the west the beams run into the (partially reconstructed) western gable wall. To the east they were originally supported by the inserted cob wall which ran the full height of the building. This cob wall has been inserted against the earlier high-end partition, formed of timber framing – replacing the original infill of the timber-

Figure 25 Ground-floor west room, showing the floor inserted as part of Phase Two, looking south [DP220539]

Figure 26 Detail of the east end of the inserted spine beam visible due to the collapse of the inserted cob wall, looking north west [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

Figure 27 View of collapsed cob wall, built up against the earlier partition under truss A-A1, looking west [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

framed panels which appears to have been formed of wattle and daub (*see* Phase One). This wall has recently partially collapsed, showing that the wall composition was similar to the external walls of the building, with a stone plinth providing a base for the cob walling (Figure 27).

The eastern end of the spine beam is currently visible, where the cob wall collapse has left it exposed (*see* Figure 26). There is no indication of any mortice or other jointing in the end of the spine beam to engage it with the original timber partition, suggesting that the beam is more likely to be secondary and contemporary with the cob wall, rather than relating to the original construction of the building. The cob wall was presumably therefore built to support the floor structure and to completely separate the upper room from the hall, which may have been open at high level prior to this (*see* Phase One).

The precise date of this phase of work remains uncertain. The only diagnostic feature is the chamfer stops, and these are of a form that continues in use throughout the medieval and into the post-medieval period. It is tentatively suggested that it is likely to be earlier than the alterations to the hall and low end (*see* Phase Three). It is possible that they are contemporary, however, or even that the insertion of the high-end floor was later than the insertion of the fireplace. Dendrochronology on the inserted ceiling structure has unfortunately been unable to provide a date to help resolve these questions (Arnold et al 2020, 8).

Figure 28 Detail of the chamfer and associated chamfer stop on the bressumer of the fireplace in the ground-floor west room [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

Another feature which may possibly belong to the same phase is the fireplace in the western gable wall of the house. This projects into the former high-end room (now kitchen), and the rear of the chimney stack projects westwards from the original end wall of the building, in the area that now forms part of the (later) stable or hay barn (*see* Figure 7). Within the house the stack is now plastered and the fireplace itself is blocked by a modern panel. The timber bressumer of the fireplace is still partly visible, however. It is chamfered along its lower side, with a stepped and run-out stop visible at the southern end (Figure 28).

It is unlikely that this fireplace is an original feature of the building, although the plastered stack means it is not possible to *see* whether there is any phase relationship with any surviving original fabric in the gable end. It is most likely to have been added in order to upgrade the high-end room, in line with typical heating and other developments of the time. This could have happened at any point in the 15th or 16th centuries, but it may be that this was undertaken at the same time as the insertion of the high-end ceiling and creation of the first-floor room. Further investigation of this area of the building may clarify the exact phasing and date of these features.

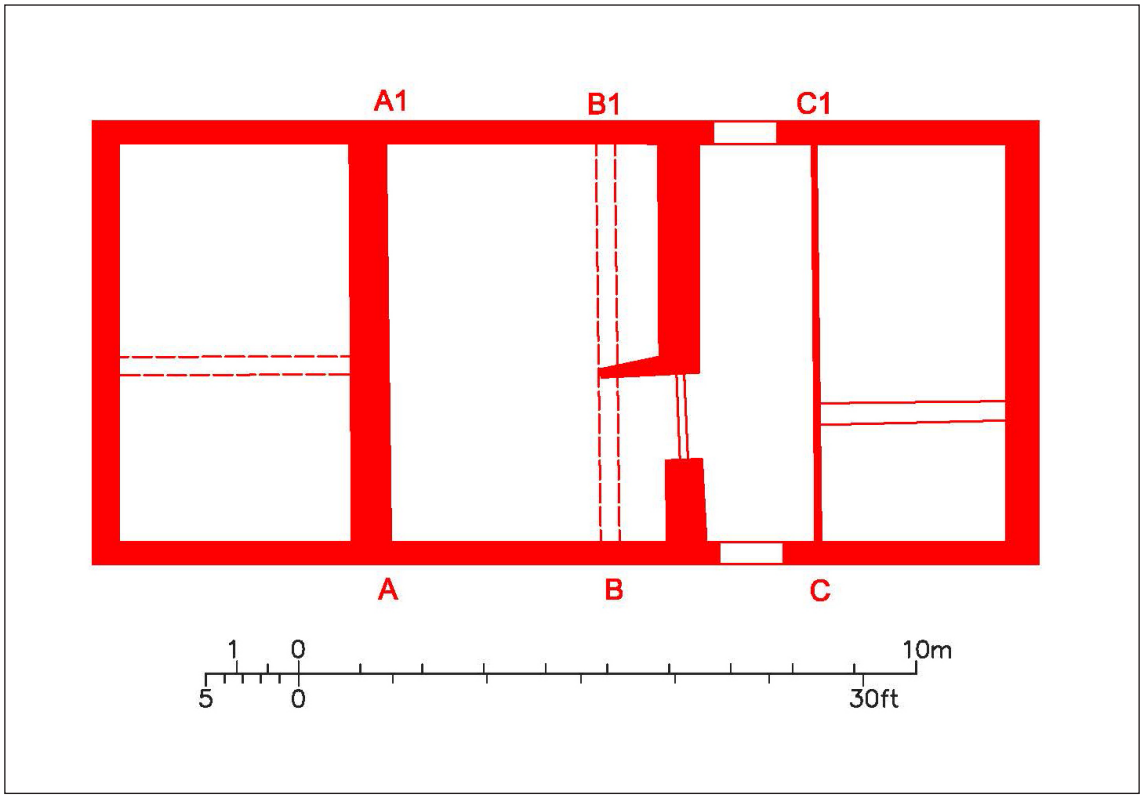

Figure 29 Suggested plan form of Bunksland in Phase 3 - Early 16th century [© Historic England]

Phase Three – Early 16th Century

A significant phase of alteration to the building dates to the early 16th century. This phase has been dated by dendrochronology on the survivng door frame and fireplace bressumer, which have provided date ranges of AD 1507-32 and AD 1515-19 respectively (Arnold et al. 2020, 3). These overlapping date ranges make it likely that the two features are contemporary, giving a date of around 1515-20 to the phase. This involved the construction of the large stone cross wall and chimney in the lower bay of the hall, dividing the cross passage from the hall (Figure 29). The chimney is built against, and partially incorporates, truss B-B1, which originally would have been the open truss in the centre of the hall (*see* Figure 18). Thus its construction effectively reduced the size of the hall to a single bay – though it had the advantage of formalising the division between the hall and the low/service end in a way typical of the time.

The partition wall is of stone at ground-floor level and the chimney appears to be of stone for its full height, although later rebuilt in brick where it projects above the roof. At first-floor level the lower section of the partition wall may also be of stone, but the upper portion (as viewed from the ceiling hatch to the east of the partition) is of timber studs with lath and plaster laid on the western side only (towards the hall). It is unclear how high up the partition the stone walling extends and where the junction between this and the stud wall is. It is possible that the upper section is later, and that originally the stone wall acted as a partition which did not reach the

Figure 30 Early 16th century fireplace inserted into the hall, looking east [DP220538]

full height of the building. This is difficult to establish with any certainty, however, and for the purposes of this report they have been phased together.

The principal surviving features of this phase of alteration are at ground-floor level, comprising the fireplace in the hall and the doorway between the hall and the cross passage. The fireplace is made of stone, with a large timber bressumer forming the top of the opening (Figure 30). This is of very large proportions, with a suggestion of a narrow chamfer on its lower edge, although this is not very pronounced. The northern end of the bressumer appears to run into the original external wall, although the junction between the two is currently concealed behind later plaster. The bressumer is supported on a short projecting stone wall to the south. It seems likely that originally the fireplace opening extended the full width of the bressumer – that is, from the north external wall to the southern projecting wall – with the current, slightly narrower proportions a later modification (*see* below).

The fireplace must have replaced the original open hearth arrangement – a change made in households all over the country in the early to mid-16th century. Frequently the process of inserting the chimney is associated with the addition of the ceiling over of the hall. In this case, however, both the hall and cross passage appear to have remained open to the roof, even after the construction of the fireplace (*see* Phase Four).

Figure 31 Doorway between the cross passage and the hall, looking west [DP220533]

Figure 32 Partition between the former east first-floor room and the cross passage, looking west. Note the plaster visible on the eastern side of the partition wall immediately adjacent to the original northern cruck blade, on the right-hand side of this photograph [DP220519]

To the south of the fireplace is the doorway – set back beyond the projecting side wall of the fireplace – leading to the cross passage, with a surviving timber door surround (Figure 31). This comprises three pieces of timber: two posts forming the jambs of the doorway and a single piece of timber worked into a four-centred arch forming the head. These are pegged together and the inner edge has a continuous chamfer running around the opening.

One possibly contemporary alteration is the creation of a first-floor room over of the eastern or lower end. The original form of this end of the building is somewhat uncertain, due to the extent of later changes, but a clear phase of alteration can be identified in the full-height partition inserted below truss C-C1. The lower portion of this partition is currently largely concealed, but one central post can be observed adjacent to the entrance to the surviving ground-floor low-end room. This is papered over, so no detail can currently be observed, but its general form is clear (*see* Figure 21). It is possible that this represents part of an original low-level screen, partitioning the low end from the hall (*see* Phase One). Alternatively it may form part of an inserted full-height partition. Closer investigation of the feature by removing the later covering may resolve this.

At upper-floor level the partition is fully plastered to the west, but to the east its construction form is partially visible, with the northern section visible from the linhay (Figure 32). This shows that the partition is formed of upright timber studs,

Figure 33 Cross beam in the partition between the eastern room and the cross passage, viewed from the current first-floor landing, looking north east. Note the residual mortices for the studs of the partition, which indicate the doorway is later [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

which rise from a cross beam up to a horizontal timber stretching from the northern blade of the truss. A portion of the cross beam is also visible in the (later) doorway between the landing and the upper room. The visible portion of the cross beam has two residual holes for timber studs which have been removed for the insertion of the later doorway (Figure 33).

This seems to indicate that originally this partition was solid at first-floor level, with no communication between the eastern first-floor room and the upper part of the cross passage. The most likely reason for this is that, with the hall, the cross passage remained open to the roof until a later phase (*see* Phase Three). Where visible from the linhay the timber studs forming this partition can be seen to have laths attached, onto which plaster has been applied (*see* Figure 32). Crucially, it is clear that the laths and plaster have been applied to both sides of the partition, suggesting a domestic use for the spaces to both the east and the west, so there is no suggestion that this end of the farmhouse was altered to form part of the linhay at this stage. Instead it must have formed a first-floor chamber at the low end of the house, plastered on the inside, and probably extending as far as the original eastern wall of the farmhouse building. This new space was probably provided for family rather than service accommodation (*see* below).

Figure 34 Encased spine beam in the eastern ground-floor room, looking south east. Note the residual plasterwork on its northern face [DP220560]

The inserted floor itself is largely concealed, but a large spine beam can be observed running west to east through the ground-floor room. This is supported on the post within the inserted partition at its western end, and runs into the (later) partition between the house and the linhay at its eastern end (Figure 34). The beam is currently concealed by plaster, and it is impossible to tell whether it is contemporary with the partition or was changed as part of the later alterations. Its relatively large size and its relationship with the post suggest it is possible that it is contemporary with the partition.

On the northern side of the spine beam some residual decorative plasterwork can be observed. This is the only element surviving within the ground-floor room, and it is absent from the southern side of the same beam. Dating this feature is extremely difficult but enriched plasterwork was a feature of late 16th- and early 17th-century farmhouses in Devon and it might be tentatively suggested that this could form a residual part of such a scheme (Thorp 1990, 131). If so, it would suggest that this end of the building became much higher in status following the creation of the upper floor. This again is a common feature of the way that older farmhouses were upgraded in the period, with first one end and then another receiving investment and becoming the higher-status rooms in the house. Such suggestions remain extremely tentative however, as there is so little evidence surviving.

Notwithstanding the uncertainties over the status and precise form of the rooms provided at the building's low end, the basic process of creating ground-floor and first-floor rooms in this area is likely to have taken place at some stage prior to the ceiling over of the hall and cross passage (*see* below). The insertion of this floor over the lower end may not be exactly contemporary with the insertion of the fireplace and its associated walling, but it is notable that the form of partitioning – using laths attached to vertical timber studs – is the same in the upper part of the inserted cross wall and much of the upper section of the partition wall at the low end. On this basis they have been placed in a single phase, and both would be typical of the type of upgrading of houses seen in the 16th century. It is, however, possible that they were undertaken in separate phases, as part of a more piecemeal process of upgrading the house's accommodation.

Once these alterations had been made the house would have functioned with two first-floor rooms at the upper and a further two at the lower end. These must have had separate access points via stairs or ladders in the ground-floor rooms. In the centre of the house the hall and the cross passage appear to have remained open to the roof.

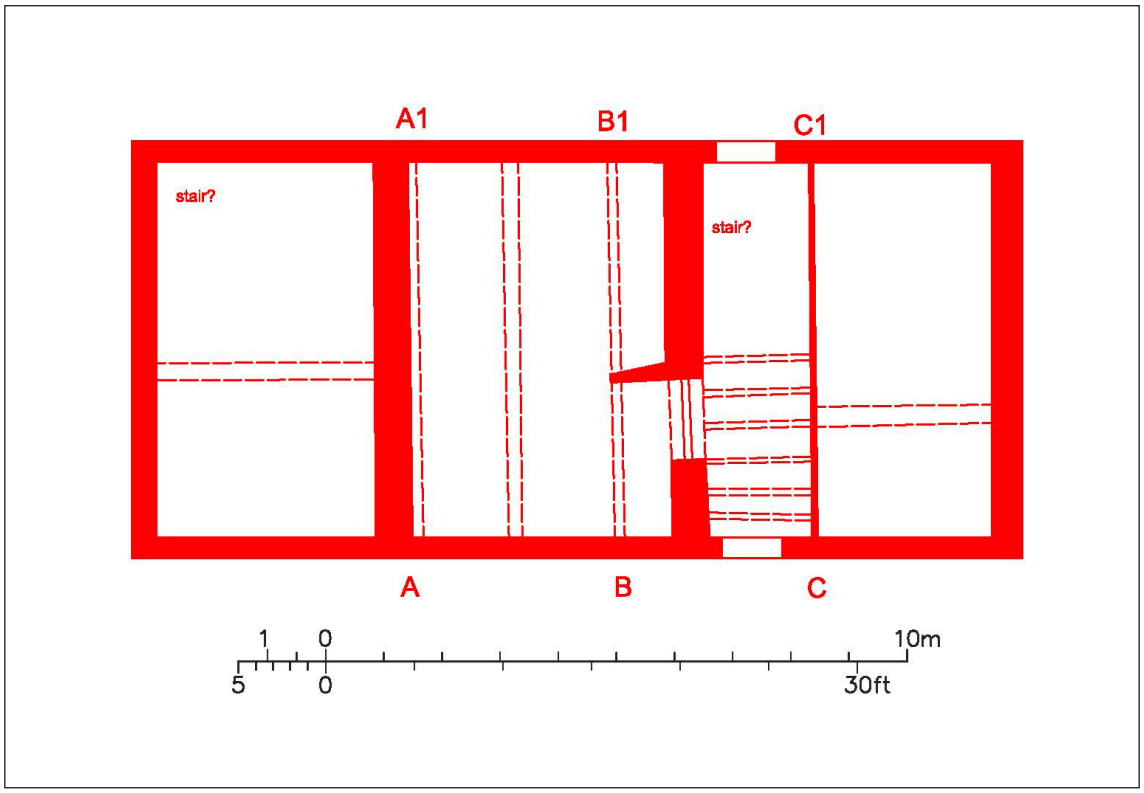

Figure 35 Suggested plan form of Bunksland in Phase Four - 17th century [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

Phase Four – 17th Century

The most significant phase of alteration to the building appears to relate to a substantial remodelling probably undertaken in the early 17th century. The main feature of this phase is the ceiling over of the hall and cross passage by inserting a floor (Figure 35). In the hall this was done by inserting three cross beams to run transversely through the building, with some associated alteration of the north and south external walls. The central, and largest, of these cross beams is visible in the exterior of the north wall (Figure 36). The insertion of this beam obviously necessitated intervention into the north wall, and at the same time the stone plinth of this wall was built up at a point underneath the inserted beam to provide additional support for it. This presumably represented a substantial remodelling of the north wall of the building, and must have allowed the insertion of the other cross beams through the wall as well. The two smaller cross beams were inserted to either side of the main cross beam – one immediately adjacent to the fireplace and the other against the partition between the hall and the high-end room. All three cross beams are chamfered, with a keel stop which is typical of the early 17th century (Figure 37). Although sampled as part of the dendrochronology, the cross beams failed to produce a date (Arnold et al 2020, 8), so the stylistic evidence of the chamfer stops is the main evidence to support a date range for this phase of alteration. This type of alteration is typical of 16th- or 17th-century improvements to houses with open halls, providing additional first-floor accommodation and a greater degree of comfort and privacy for the house's occupants.

Figure 36 Northern end of the central cross beam inserted into the hall, visible externally in the north elevation, looking south [DP220537]

Figure 37 Southern end of the central cross beam in the hall, showing the keel chamfer stop, looking south east [DP220753]

Figure 38 The early 16th-century fireplace, with later cross beam supported on timber brackets attached to the bressumer, looking north east [DP220537]

Figure 39 Offset section of the eastern cross beam in the hall, looking south east [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

The cross beam nearest the fireplace is partly braced against the fireplace bressumer by means of secondary brackets (Figure 38). The two larger brackets are supported on curved timber corbels which sit to either side of the fireplace opening. The bracket to the north sits against the northern jamb of the fireplace, supported on a timber post and projecting back into the fireplace. That to the south has been inserted into the earlier stone wall supporting the southern end of the fireplace, presumably because it was relatively easy to displace some of the earlier stonework at this end. It also has a timber post rising to support it. The form of the two corbels is also typical of the 17th century, supporting the stylistic evidence of the chamfer stops. Two further, smaller brackets are pegged into the bressumer and similarly rise to support the beam. As well as the stylistic evidence of the chamfer stops and the form of the corbels, this awkward arrangement of secondary brackets and beams proves that the floor was inserted in a separate phase from the construction of the chimney and associated walling. If they had been contemporary it would have been much easier (and stronger) to build this beam into the fireplace itself.

An offset is visible in the beam to the south of the fireplace, just to the west of the doorway from the hall to the cross passage (Figure 39). The positioning of this offset makes it unlikely to relate to a stair or ladder, as it would have blocked the doorway. It may relate to some form of partition or feature which screened the doorway from the hall, perhaps to reduce drafts.

Figure 40 Door between the first-floor landing and the room over the hall [DP220569]

It could be assumed that the ceiling over the cross passage was contemporary with the ceiling over of the hall, but there is no certain evidence of this. Most of the current fixtures in the cross passage relate to later phases of alteration (*see* below), but the floor over the southern part of the passage is supported on a series of transverse beams running from the (earlier) stone partition wall to the low-end partition. These are mostly of squared timber, with no fine finish, so there is little to help specifically date them. To the north, built into the later stair, is a timber trimmer beam running from the north wall into the northernmost of the short cross beams. The trimmer beam has chamfers on its lower edges but no stops, and again is relatively undiagnostic in terms of date, although the chamfered finish perhaps indicates a relatively early date. The trimmer beam appears to indicate that when it was ceiled over the cross passage included a stair to access the first floor. The position of the trimmer beam suggests that the stair was provided against the north wall. It might either have been of a narrow ladder form, occupying perhaps the area to the west of the beam, or there may have been a more substantial stair taking up a greater part of the northern part of the cross passage.

Figure 41 Back of the door between the first-floor landing and the room over the hall [DP220567]

Without any dating evidence it is difficult to be certain about when the flooring over of the cross passage took place. The use of a chamfer on the trimmer beam however, has been taken to imply that it happened relatively early, given the lower quality of much of the later work to the building. If this was the case then that the stair would have provided access to a landing leading to the newly-created chamber over the hall. It is likely that the doorway giving access between the eastern first-floor room, and the landing area, was created at the same time.

One further piece of evidence which perhaps supports a 17th-century date for the flooring over of the cross passage is the pair of doors which provide access from the landing over the cross passage into the room over the hall and the low-end room (Figures 40 and 41). These are both of a simple plank construction, with strap hinges which are typical of a 17th-century date. Although the heavy overpaint makes the doors look relative plain, where the paint has flaked away there is some evidence for a strip of decorative grooves incised onto the edge of the planks (Figure 42).

Figure 42 Detail of the door between the first-floor landing and the room over the central hall, showing a decorative moulding visible on the edge of the door plank where the paint has fallen away and the end of the decorative strap hinge [DP220765]

Figure 43 The south and east elevations of the linhay, looking north west [DP220513]

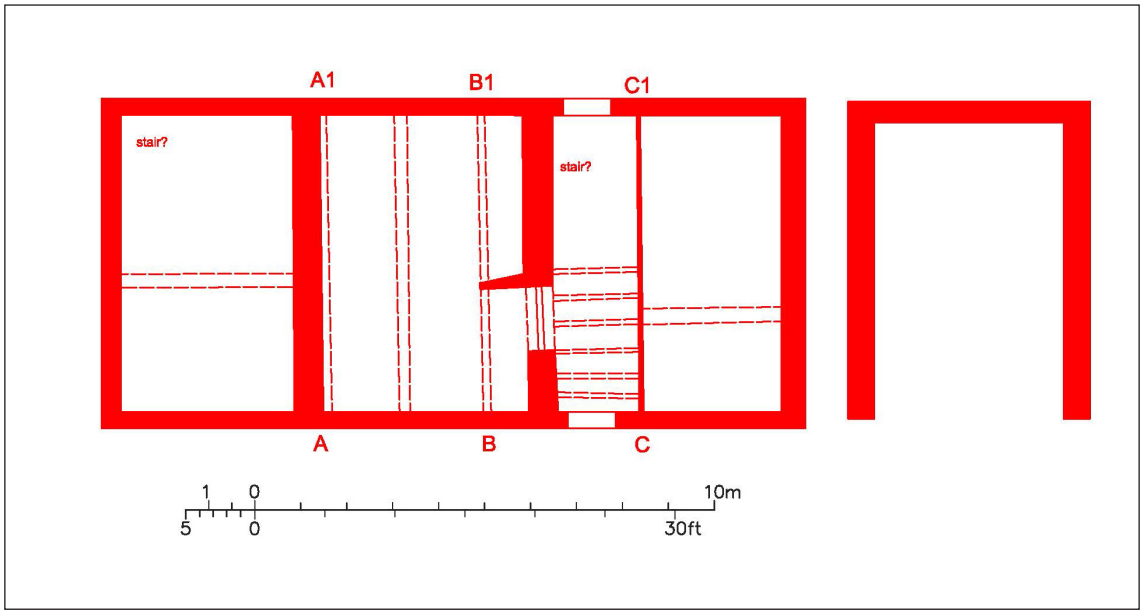

Figure 44 Suggested plan form of Bunksland in Phase Five - 17th or 18th century [© Historic England]

While there is evidence that both doors have been altered at some stage, the fact that they appear to fit their respective openings without having been cut down suggests that they be may in their original locations. That would strongly suggest that the cross passage was floored over at the same time as the hall.

Phase Five – 17th or 18th Century

The construction of the linhay marks a further phase of significant investment in the farmstead (Figure 43). The precise date of construction is unknown, and the form of the structure is relatively undiagnostic in terms of date. It may date from the 17th century – although as a distinct structure it has been phased separately from the alterations to the house at this date. Linhays were built to provide accommodation for cattle, with storage for hay on the tallet above. They are one of the characteristic features of the Devon farmyard, and were typically built from the 17th century onwards (Child 1990, 72).

As constructed the linhay appears to have been a small detached building, built in line with – but separate from – the main farmhouse (Figure 44). The principal evidence for this is the straight joint on the north elevation and the associated stub of the former west wall running north to south within the linhay. It has been suggested that this wall is evidence for the original eastern extent of the farmhouse, with the linhay added to the east (*see* Phase One). However, the plan of the buildings produced as part of this project indicates that in fact the straight joint in the north wall sits to the west of the surviving stub of north-south running wall, not to the east (*see* Figure 7; point D). Although modified by later changes, the north-south running stub wall appears to be bonded into the north wall just east of the straight joint, forming a corner to the linhay building rather than to the main farmhouse (Figure 45).

Figure 45 View of the former west wall of the linhay, looking west. The section to the south (left-hand side) appears to be formed of stone and cob, with the section further north formed of stone, the upper part iof this is probably a later reconstruction [DP220520]

Figure 46 The north elevation of the linhay and farmhouse, looking south. Note the straight joint between the wall of the linhay and the wall of the farmhouse, and the significant difference in the height of the stone plinth between the two [DP220511]

Figure 47 Former west wall of the linhay, looking north east. The west wall is on the right-hand side of this photograph, with the spine beam of the linhay resting in the upper cob section. The stone walling on the left-hand side of the photograph is a later insertion [DP220526]

There is also a significant difference in the quality and height of the stone plinth to either side of the straight joint. In the north wall of the linhay, east of the straight joint, the plinth is significantly higher than it is in the area immediately to the west of the straight joint (Figure 46). To the west in fact there is a section of the north wall around 3.5m in length where the stone plinth is very low and almost non-existent, which contrasts with the plinth in the main farmhouse further west and in the linhay further east. Although modified, the plinth height of the stub wall appears more consistent with the north wall of the linhay, rather than the walling of the farmhouse immediately to the west. It is suggested therefore that the linhay was built before this short section of the north wall, thus originally forming a detached building.

Further examination in this area may help to confirm this theory, but two small pieces of evidence seem to support it. One is that the main transverse beam running east to west in the linhay (*see* below) terminates over the stub of the north-south wall rather than running further west (Figure 47). The second is that there is no evidence of residual plasterwork or other internal finishes on the western side of this wall, which one might anticipate if it had originally formed part of the farmhouse. Other explanations for both of these observations could be set out, but together they may support the theory that the linhay was originally separate from the house.

Figure 48 Spine beam in the linhay supporting the joists of the tallet, looking north west [DP220522]

As constructed the linhay formed the typical open-sided form of shelter, with no wall to the south. The surviving north and east walls are both formed of a stone plinth, rising to around 1.3m from the ground, with cob walling above. The cob of the east wall rises to form the lower part of a gable end, but does not rise to form the apex of a gable end – instead stopping below the surviving gable apex and finishing with a horizontal top (*see* Figure 43). This may suggest that as originally constructed the linhay had a half-hipped roof on the eastern end. The original form of the roof at the west end is unknown.

Internally a first-floor tallet, or hay loft, is supported by means of a spine beam running from the east wall to the surviving stub of the west wall (Figure 48). The lower portion of the west wall has been left in situ within the later enlarged linhay, presumably partly in order to continue to support the beam (*see* Figure 47). The beam supported a series of alternating joists which run to the north and south of the transverse beam. Both sets are resting on top of the beam rather than being jointed

Figure 49 South-east corner of the linhay, looking north. Note the remains of the timber beam which formerly supported the southern end of the tallet [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

into it. To the south the joists were probably supported by a further transverse beam running from east to west across the front of the linhay, although only a short section of this beam appears to survive. This projects out from the east wall at the top of the stone plinth, and now only supports the two joists immediately adjacent (Figure 49). To the north the joists ran into the north wall of the building. The movement in this wall means that these joists have now collapsed from their original positions, but the sockets for the joists are still visible in the inner side of the north wall (Figure 50).

It is unclear how the linhay was originally roofed, as the surviving roof is probably part of the later alterations to the building. However, the suggestion of the half-hipped eastern end would indicate that none of the current roof structure relates to the original arrangement.

Figure 50 North wall of the linhay showing the sockets for the joists of the tallet (DP220517).

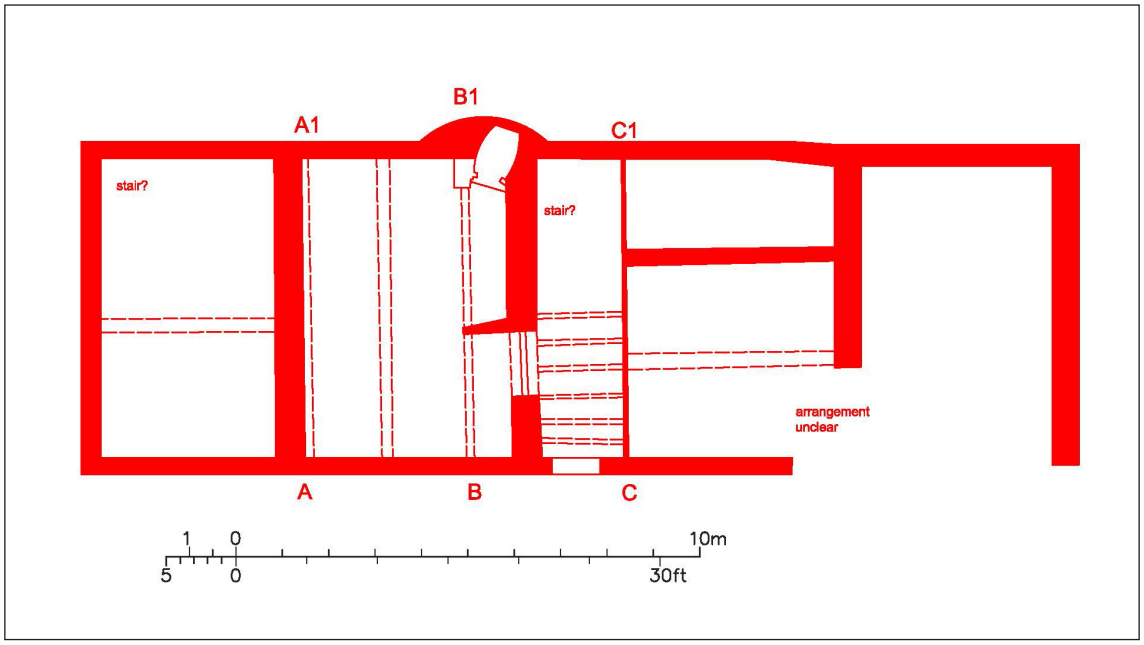

Figure 51 Suggested plan form of Bunksland in Phase Six - the 18th century [© Historic England]

Phase Six – 18th Century

At some stage, perhaps in the 18th century, there appears to have been a significant reorganisation of the low (east) end of the farmhouse and the linhay, joining the two structures together to form one continuous range (Figure 51). This is principally characterised by the relatively low quality of the carpentry employed in this stage. The original east gable wall of the farmhouse appears to have been completely removed, although it is possible that elements of it were reused in the walling that currently forms the dividing wall between the house and the linhay. In the north elevation the additional section of wall required to link the two structures is characterised by an extremely low stone plinth, of which only a course or two is now visible above ground level (*see* Figure 46). This extends for a distance of around 3.5m from the clear straight joint with the linhay to a junction with the original north wall of the farmhouse.

The junction between the two is very uneven, with a straight joint visible in the cob walling just east of the ground-floor bathroom window (*see* Figure 7; point E, and Figure 52) and a corresponding drop in the plinth level which begins directly under the straight joint, but then drops more gradually to the east, finishing underneath the window (*see* Figure 7; Point F). The junction therefore begins within what must have originally been part of the farmhouse, and must represent a partial reconstruction of the earlier north wall. This is not surprising given the removal of the east end gable wall must also have necessitated considerable disruption to the farmhouse wall structure at this eastern end.

The purpose of this merging of the two buildings appears to have been, somewhat surprisingly, not to extend the accommodation within the farmhouse, but instead to

Figure 52 North wall of the farmhouse, looking south east. The uneven junction between the fabric of the original north wall and the later infill section of walling is marked with a red line [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

utilise the former low-end, first-floor room to increase the space available within the linhay. It may be that there was some associated increase in the floor space available in the farmhouse at ground-floor level, although at present this is not entirely certain.

At ground-floor level, following removal of the original east gable wall, a new partition between the farmhouse and the linhay must have been created, although it is not clear exactly where this may have sat. The southern part of the present division appears to be later (*see* below), but the northern section may have been extended as far as the stub of the west wall of the linhay, as it is in the current arrangement. The two small ground-floor rooms which now form the northern part of the low end are lit by small, low windows in the north elevation. These have timber window lintels of similar form and both windows sit at the same low level (*see* Figure 52). These windows therefore may have been original to the construction of this section of wall, although at present this is not certain and it is possible that they relate to a later phase.

At first-floor level the alterations of this phase appear to survive. This area cannot be closely examined at present, however, so much of its detail remains unexplored. As currently visible from the linhay, the removal of the east gable wall of the

Figure 53 Interior of the linhay, looking south west. Note the former west wall of the linhay has been reduced to the height of the tallet, to allow the extension of the hay loft over the former low end of the farmhouse [DP220515]

farmhouse, and the upper part of the west gable wall of the linhay, appear to have allowed the flooring of the former low end of the farmhouse to be extended out to rest on the remains of the west gable wall of the linhay (Figure 53). This created additional upper-level storage, supplementing that provided in the upper level of the earlier linhay, which was presumably accessed via the linhay rather than from the house.

It appears that as part of this alteration the original roof over the linhay was replaced, and an additional truss added over the former east end of the farmhouse (*see* Figure 48). Access to these trusses is relatively limited at present, and there has been a great deal of subsequent alteration, but three trusses appear to survive from this phase. As well as the addition of the truss supporting the eastern end of the farmhouse, the linhay appears to have been re-roofed with a pair of relatively crude trusses. These are roughly worked, with sections of bark surviving on some of the principal rafters. Both linhay trusses are formed of a simple A-frame, with a crossed apex where the north principal rafter is shaped to fit through a wide mortice in the south rafter, fixed with a single peg through the centre of the crossing. The crossed rafters support a ridge piece. Although only partly visible, the truss over the former eastern end of the farmhouse appears to be formed of wood with a similar overall form and finish, although the apex cannot be seen. On the basis of the visible evidence it appears that it is probably of the same date.

Figure 54 North elevation of the farmhouse, looking south west, showing the curving external wall of the bread oven [DP220577]

At some stage, probably in the 18th century and possibly at the same time as the reorganisation of the low end of the building, the hall area fireplace was also modified by the insertion of a bread oven into its northern side. This necessitated significant reconstruction of the north wall of the house in the area to the north of the fireplace. This was rebuilt in stone and curves outwards from the main wall line, rising to a height of around 2m (Figure 54). Internally the insertion of the bread oven narrowed the hall fireplace from its original extent, and may have necessitated some reorganisation of the arrangement of brackets supporting the 17th century cross beam (*see* Figure 30). The oven is lined with brick and its opening into the side of the fireplace also has a crude segmental-arched brick head (Figure 55). This is the first known use of the material within the building. The character of the brickwork suggests an 18th-century date rather than anything earlier, and it is quite different from the bright red brick used in the late 19th-century alterations to the farmstead. A precise date for this alteration is very difficult to establish, however, and it may have taken place over a broad date range from the 18th into the early 19th century.

Figure 55 North jamb of the fireplace in the hall, looking north east, showing detail of the opening to the bread oven [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

Phase Seven – Late 19th Century (pre-1890)

The farmstead, including the farmhouse, appears to have undergone some further modifications in the 19th century, although within the house itself these are relatively modest. The most significant alteration was at the western end of the farmhouse range, where a hay barn or stable was constructed (Figure 56). This is attached to and of the same width as the earlier farmhouse. It was, at least partially, of two storeys, with a ground-floor area accessed via two doorways in the south elevation. Above this was a hay loft with a taking-in door, also on the south elevation. The range is largely built of stone, but with brick dressings which make a distinct contrast with the other buildings on the site. Around the inner side of the openings bull-nosed bricks have been used. Internally the surviving section of the hay loft is built of roughly hewn timber, with some machine-cut pieces interspersed. The surviving elements of the roof are of machine-cut timber, although much of this has collapsed. The surviving central truss has a king post arrangement with raking struts, a standard type seen in late 19th-century farm buildings.

Figure 56 Hay barn or stable, looking north east [DP220512]

Projecting from the west end of the north elevation of this range was an apparently contemporary outshut. This appears to have been open to the south, with a lower wall to the west and possibly an opening in its northern face. It is unclear what function this served.

The hay barn or stable range appears on the 1st edition OS map of 1890, so must have been built at some point prior to that date (*see* Figure 4). Its stylistic similarities with the later dairy (built sometime between 1890 and 1905; *see* Phase Seven below) perhaps suggests that it is likely to have been in the years immediately prior to 1890 rather than a date significantly earlier.

As part of the building of the hay barn, the west wall of the farmhouse appears to have been partially reconstructed, although it is possible that some elements of the earlier gable wall were retained. As noted under Phase One above, there is some evidence of a timber post surviving in this gable wall (*see* Figure 12). It is unclear whether this represents a residual element of an earlier gable end or is part of this reconstruction phase. Closer examination of this element once access to this part of the building is possible may resolve this.

The reconstruction of the west gable end certainly included some rebuilding of the chimney serving the western room. This had formerly been the high-end of the house. At this stage, however, the reconstruction of the chimney appears to have allowed the installation of a range, possibly suggesting that this had become the kitchen by at least this point, a use it certainly had in the latest stages of the farmhouse (*see* below).

Figure 57 Window of the first-floor western room,looking north. Note the rebuilt western jamb in red brick with bull-nose profile [DP220528]

As well as the western wall, a short section of the western end of the south elevation of the farmhouse was also reconstructed at the same time, as far east as the window lighting the western first-floor room (Figure 57). This window has a western jamb of the same bull-nosed brickwork used in the openings of the adjacent barn block. At ground-floor level there may have been some associated reinforcement of the earlier walling at this end, although this is now partly obscured by the later porch.

Possibly at the same time as the construction of the western block, the east end of the house and linhay appears to have been altered again. The construction of the current stone wall between the farmhouse and the linhay appears to date from this period. This is formed of two stretches of walling, one forming the eastern wall of the east room of the main farmhouse. This is bonded into the stretch of walling that forms the southern wall of the ground-floor room to the north-east, and runs up to and abuts the stub of the earlier west wall of the linhay (Figure 58). As noted under Phase Four, it is possible that the two small rooms on the north of the building's low end had been created at the time of the extension of the linhay and farmhouse, but if so then this area was further modified at this point.

The evidence of a relatively late date for this stone wall, rather than it being part of the phase of alteration in the 18th century, is that the walling contains some residual brickwork of the same bright red type seen in the stable block or hay barn to the west. This is not used to form any specific features and instead appears to have been used with the stone as a useful infill material. It seems likely therefore that these alterations are contemporary with, or later than, the brick used in the western block,

Figure 58 Rebuilt section of walling abutting the former west wall of the linhay, showing inclusions of bright red brick at low level, looking north east [DP220525]

otherwise it is hard to explain how small amounts of such brickwork would be available to use within the wall.

In the south face of the linhay immediately adjacent to this wall are the remains of a timber door frame. This is formed of two timbers with a square head and a chamfered inner face. The timbers are pegged together, suggesting a relatively early date, although it is unclear whether it is in situ. This may relate to the alterations that took place in this part of the building at this stage, or possibly to the arrangement that was created in the 18th century (*see* Phase Four), although the earlier arrangement is unclear.

Phase Eight – 20th Century

Minor modifications were undertaken to the house and farmstead in the 20th century. The most significant construction in the main farmstead range was the addition of the dairy building to the north of the earlier stable block or hay barn (Figure 59). This is a tall single-storey block with a pitched slate roof. Much of the detailing around the original doorways is of the same bright red brick as the earlier stable block or hay barn. However, this time all the brick is of a standard rectangular form, rather than including the bull-nosed brick used for the openings in the slightly earlier range. The dairy building does not appear on the 1890 OS mapping, but does appear on the 1905 revision, indicating it was built at around the turn of the 20th century (compare Figures 4 and 5). The interior of the diary is not currently accessible.

Figure 59 The north wall of the diary, looking south west [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

Within the farmhouse some minor upgrading was carried out, although it is clear that very little money was invested and much of the work involved patching or very poor-quality repairs to keep the building watertight and provide basic plumbing and other modern requirements. This work appears to have been undertaken on a piecemeal basis and it is difficult to be certain of the sequence of these repairs.

At some stage, probably relatively early in the 20th century, the northern end of the cross passage was modified, with the original northern door blocked and a window inserted to create an indoor toilet (*see* Figure 9). It seems likely that this work was carried out at the same time as the insertion of the current stair, which almost certainly replaced an earlier one in the same position (Figure 60, and *see* Figure 7). At a later stage the room adjacent to the toilet was panelled out in plywood and a sink and bath inserted to form a bathroom arrangement.

Figure 60 The current stair, probably in the location of an earlier stair arrangement, looking north [© Historic England Rebecca Lane]

Most of the windows in the building also appear to have been replaced in this period, again in various stages. Some have left elements of earlier timber windows in situ around them, and others represent more wholesale replacements (*see* Figure 11). In some cases it is possible that the window openings themselves were also modified – particularly to the ground-floor eastern room, which has a splayed opening and window seat lined with what appear to be relatively modern timber boards.

At first-floor level the only significant 20th-century alteration to the building appears to have been the creation of a small bedroom, taking up part of what had earlier been the eastern first-floor room and reclaiming part of the area which had been used to extend the linhay. This room now largely sits within the linhay, and is formed by a basic square frame of reused timber onto which panels of plywood or possibly in some cases packing cases have been applied, to create a rudimentary box room (*see* Figure 32). This is accessed via a doorway through the partition

between the room and the first-floor landing above the cross passage. It may be that this doorway was originally created for the earlier room in this location (*see* Phase Three) and was reopened to serve this later room. Possibly at the same time, or perhaps earlier, similar timber boarding has been used to line much of the first-floor roof structure and the north wall of the ground-floor hall.

Another notable alteration was the removal of the original thatch covering and replacement with corrugated iron of the roof over the farmhouse and, perhaps at the same time, the linhay. This re-roofing clearly involved the relatively wholesale stripping out of the original thatch, although small elements have survived (*see* Phase One and *see* Figure 16). Much of the corrugated iron roof is supported on modern timbers, which have been rested or fixed to the earlier roof structure in an ad hoc way (*see* Figure 20). This appears to have taken place in the later 20th century.

Other minor repairs and alterations in the late 20th century include the construction of a porch to the doorway into the ground-floor western room (now kitchen), which is built of breeze blocks. Patch repairs to the external walling are also visible in various places, utilising cement and other renders. Ultimately, however, it is clear that these low-level repairs were not sufficient to maintain the structural integrity of the building, and that it slowly fell into disrepair in the later years of the 20th century.

CONCLUSION

The significance of Bunksland in its wider context

Bunksland Farm represents an important survival of a late 14th-century hall house, for which considerable evidence of the original form of the building survives. It is clear from this evidence that the building as originally constructed must have represented a relatively high-status dwelling, as its carpentry is of some quality. The jointed-cruck frame and purlins with wind-braces are typical of farmhouses of the period in this region (Alcock and Laithwaite 1973, 100), although the relatively early postulated date and the relatively intact survival of much of the framing makes the house one of the more significant survivals.

The precise dating provided by the dendrochronology allows the roof to be placed in the context of the evolution of this form of roof in Devon in the 14th and 15th centuries. The timber provided a felling date of 1396-7, and the roof is likely to have been constructed within a year or two of that date (Arnold et al. 2020). John Thorp's recent analysis of the cruck form in Devon has suggested that there was a clear evolution in the form of crucks in the late 14th century, which led ultimately to an established 'Devon' cruck form by about 1500 (Thorp 2019, 260). This saw a process whereby the features of early crucks – including using larger timbers, the

use of a yoke to link the top of the blades and the use of face pegging for the joint in the cruck blade – were gradually superseded by timbers of a more consistent, smaller scantling, the use of side pegging and a change in the typical apex form. Thorp notes, however, that there was a considerable transition phase in which older and newer practices could be used together (ibid, 262). The date for Bunksland places it firmly in this transitional phase, and it displays the mixture of older and newer practices described by Thorp in the use of the yoke at the apex (older), but the side pegging of the main joint in the crucks (newer).

One notable feature of some of the contemporary (i.e. *c.* 1400) roofs that Thorp describes is that there is a variation in the apex form and associated ridge piece of the trusses at the low and high ends. In this context it should be noted that only the apex form of the easternmost truss (C-C1) is visible, and it is possible that the other cruck (B-B1) has a different apex form. This may be revealed during any work on the building in the future. Despite the incomplete nature of the form of the Bunksland roof, however, it is clear that the form of its cruck trusses is comparable with other early dated roof examples, containing a number of similar features.

More unusual is the form of the truss at the upper end of the hall (A-A1; *see* Figure 13). This is of principal-rafter form, with a timber-framed partition below formed of a single post rising to support the roof apex, with a collar and (originally) a mid-rail running across the elevation and curved braces rising to support the collar – a type which has been described by John Thorp as a 'Devon kingpost' (Thorp, pers. comm.). This is part of a small regional group of such features. Thorp has identified two: one at Lower Woodbeare, Kennerleigh, and one at Little Harford, near Tedburn St Mary (Crediton Hamlets). A further example is known from work in Silverton (Alison Bunning, pers. comm.). At least four others have also been identified (Barry Honeysett, pers. comm.), mainly in mid- or south Devon. These include Lower Furzeland in Sandford, The Old Post Office, Thorveton, Little Thatch, Pinhoe, and Perky Pool Cottage in Whimple.

Unfortunately, at present little is known of the detail of some of these other survivals. The example at 4 Fore Street, Silverton, has been examined in detail as part of restoration works on the roof of the building. That building has a full-height post rising to the apex, with a collar and the purlins clasped inside the principal rafters. There appears to be no evidence for braces rising from the centre post to support the collar, however (Alison Bunning, pers. comm.). The example at Lower Woodbeere, Kennerleigh is similar in the configuration of the collar, principal rafters and purlins. The upper part of the post is currently obscured by plaster, so the presence of any braces to support the collar is unknown. This example also has a surviving mid-rail, halved onto the central post, which is probably similar to the one which originally existed at Bunksland (where the evidence is the surviving joint in the central post just below the level of the inserted first floor). At Lower Woodbeare the mid-rail is also halved onto the post, and forms the top of a high-end screen which divided the hall from the high-end room. It is possible that a similar arrangement was originally provided at Bunksland, and that the mid-rail was integral to some form of screen, although we also know (from the surviving stave holes) that the partition continued above the mid-rail using wattle and daub.

Figure 61 Timber plank found within the cob walling under truss A-A1 (Investigator photograph)

It is likely that there are further examples surviving in Devon, as yet unidentified. Further research would be needed to establish the various forms and any similarities and differences. It is notable, for example, that thus far it appears only the house at Little Harford near Crediton is reported to have 'raking struts' which rise from the post to the collar in a method similar to Bunksland's curved braces (Barry Honeysett, pers. comm.). John Thorp has also noted the relatively thin scantling of the timbers at Lower Woodbeare and Little Harford, in comparison to those at Bunksland. In this context it might tentatively be suggested that Bunksland represents a relatively elaborate example of the form. Further research would be required to establish this with more certainty.

Other Surviving Features

One notable survival has emerged from the programme of consolidation undertaken on the building in late 2019. During the removal of the collapsed cob walling (the southern part of the cob wall built under truss A-A1), a large plank was discovered and has been retained in the building (Figure 61). It is not clear exactly where it sat within the cob wall prior to the collapse. This measures 2.68m by 0.55m at its widest extent, although one end appears broken or slightly narrowed. It has several holes, some of which look like deliberately cut peg holes. The two smallest holes sit towards one edge of the plank. It seems unlikely that these peg holes relate to its use within the wall, which suggests that the plank was reused within the cob wall.

As the cob wall is secondary to the building (*see* Phase Two), it is therefore possible that this plank formed part of the original fixtures of the building in some form.

Given its considerable size it is unclear exactly what its original use or location might have been. The most obvious would be as part of some form of timber partition. The interpretation of the original building suggests that there may have been partitioning at both the high and low end of the hall. Screens were often used within open hall arrangements to divide the hall from the upper or lower areas of the house. These were often of stud and panel form (Beecham 2004, 36), with the panels and studs arranged vertically. However such partitions were typically only head height (6ft or 1.8m), which means that the surviving panel would be considerably taller than the standard arrangement. Given that the context and interpretation of this feature are so uncertain, it has not been placed within the analysis of the building, but wider contextual research might be able to provide an interpretation.

Recommendations for Further Work

The condition of the Bunksland Farm, and the concealment of some important elements behind later plaster finishes, means that a number of important features have not been fully examined as part of the investigation of the building to date. Any future work on the building is therefore likely to reveal further evidence which may resolve some of the remaining questions regarding date and phasing.

Important features identified in the text, which certainly require further investigation include:

- The timber post in the west gable wall;
- The fireplace at ground-floor level in the western ground floor room;
- The evidence for survival of early window elements, including the timber sill visible underneath the later sill in the south hall window;
- The apex form of truss B-B1;
- The extent of the survival of original common rafters (as indicated by smoke blackening) throughout the whole of the roof;
- The partition at ground-floor level between the cross passage and the eastern room, particularly the large central post currently concealed by later wallpaper and plaster;
- The boxed-in lateral beam in the centre of the ceiling in the ground-floor eastern room;
- The purlin in the first-floor eastern room, running from the southern blade of truss C-C1.

This list is not exhaustive and other features of note may also reveal more information.

Any plan for remedial structural work on the building should take place with a full written scheme of investigation for recording work following the guidelines laid out by Historic England in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2016). It is suggested that any work should be at level 3 as a minimum, including full photographic coverage of features, updated survey drawings and a full report on the findings of any investigation work.

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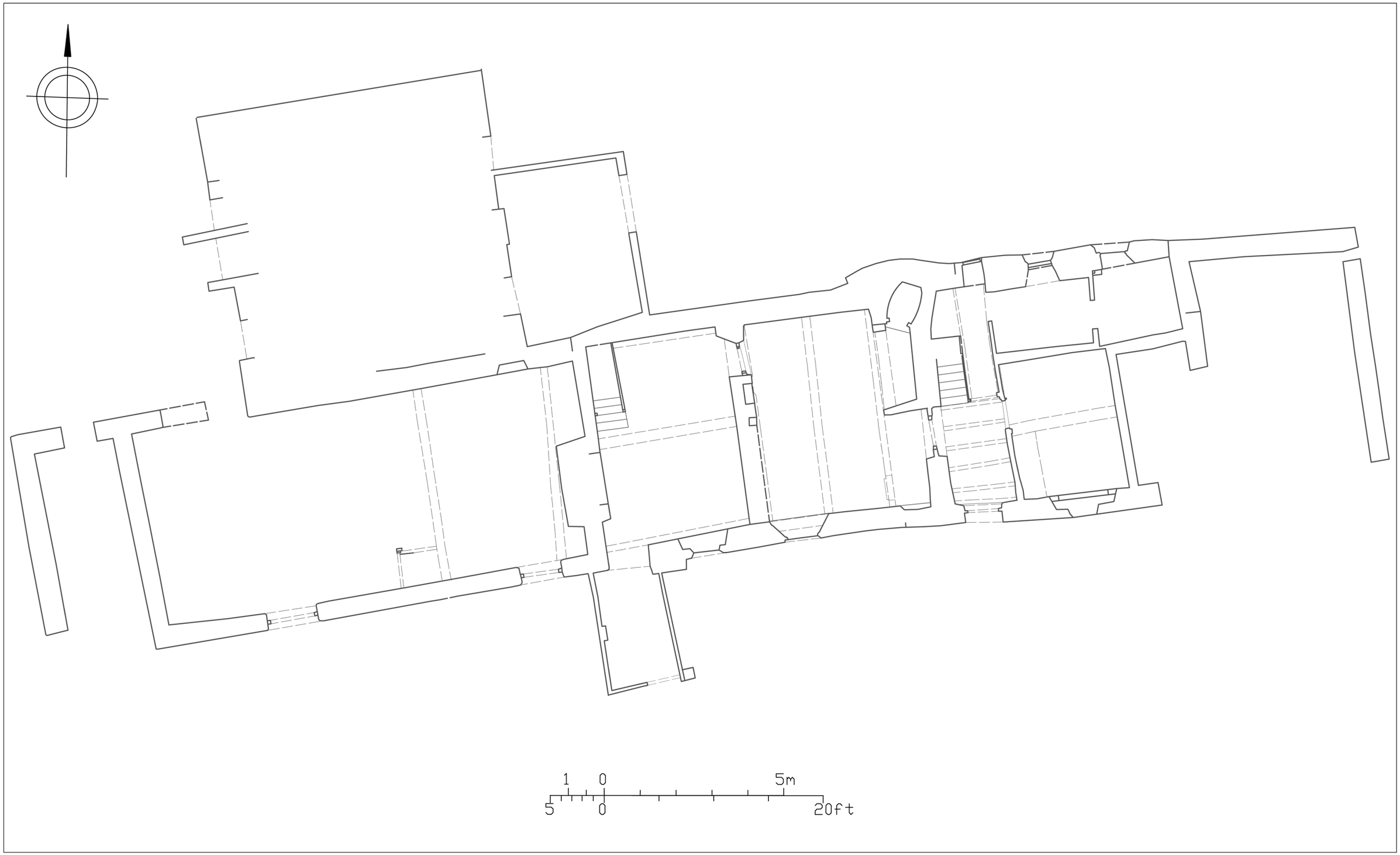
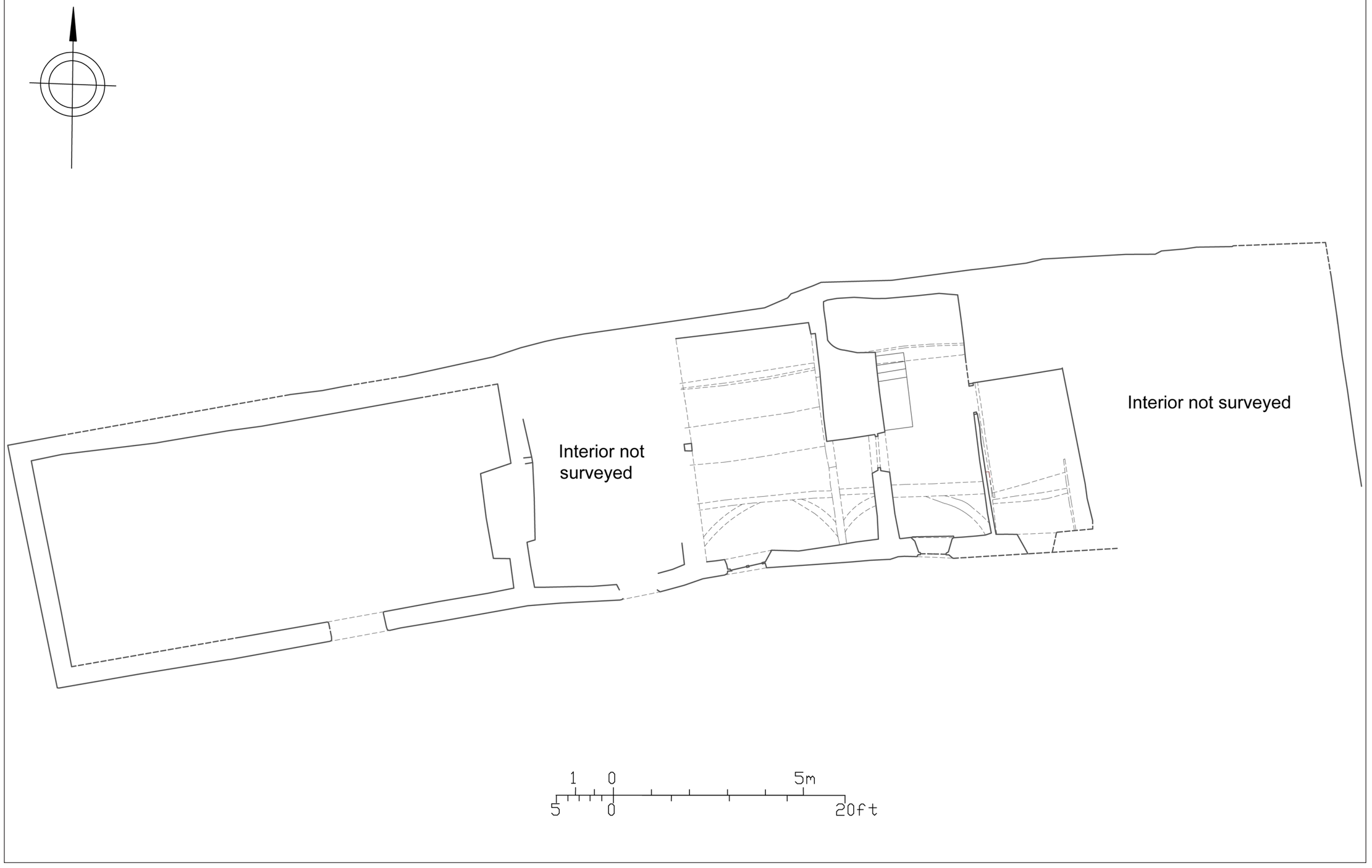
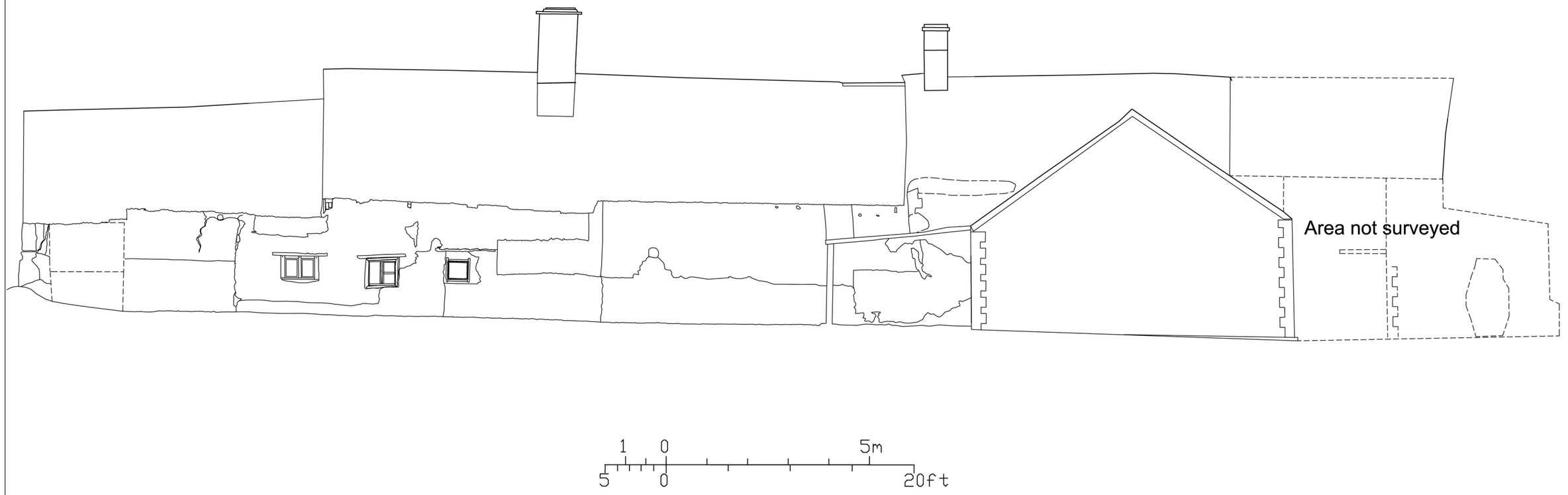
APPENDIX A : SURVEY DRAWINGS



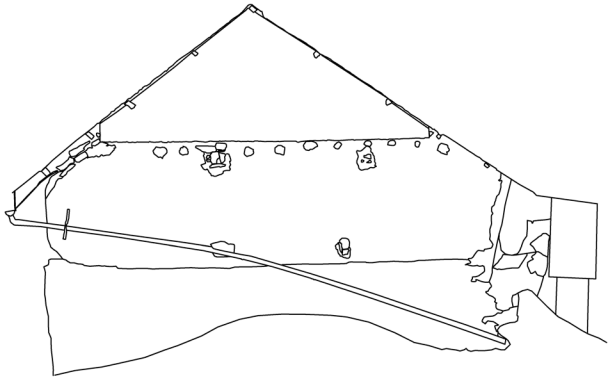
Appndix Figure 1 Bunksland. Ground-floor plan. Scale 1:100 [© Historic England]

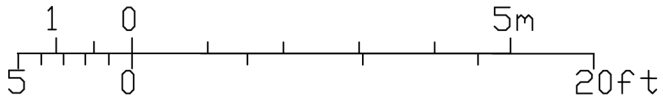


Appendix Figure 2 Bunksland: First-floor plan. Scale 1:100 [© Historic England]



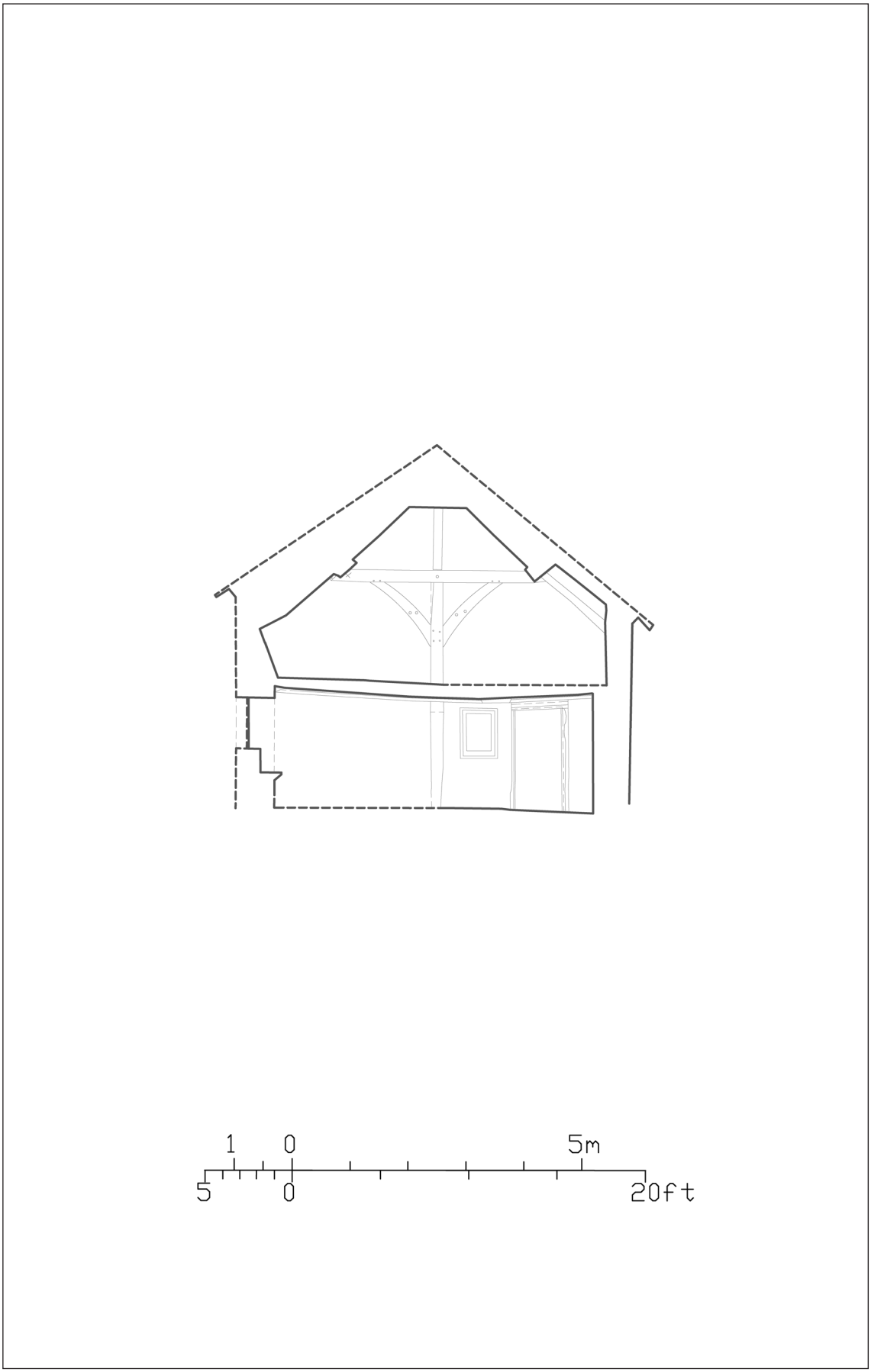
Appendix Figure 3 Bunksland: North elevation. Scale 1:100 [© Historic England]





Appendix Figure 4 Bunksland: East elevation. Scale 1:100 [© Historic England]

Appendix Figure 5 Bunksland: South elevation. Scale: 1:100 [© Historic England]



Appendix Figure 6 Bunksland: Cross section at A-A1. Scale 1:100 [© Historic England]

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