

Name:- Bishopslands Farm.
 Parish:- Eye and Dunsden.

This survey was carried out by kind permission of the May family.



East side of
 Great Barn
 with foldyard

The history of Bishopslands Farm is told in R. Ford's "A Description of Binfield Heath" of which excerpts are included. He ends the list of owners in 1916 when the Palmers died out. The present farmer Mr. Ralph May supplied me with a list of tenants and also told me that the farm was owned by the Ewing family from 1916 to 1940, and has since been in the possession of the Coppid Hall Estate. These are the known tenant farmers since the Samborne family farmed here in Elizabethan days:-

Armstrong	.....	No date
Pottinger ^{x)}	.....	1867 - 1879
Simmons W.	.....	1879 - 1884
W. Ford	.....	1884 - 1929
Ford Bros.	.....	1929 - 1941
R. May	.....	1941 -

Bishopslands Farm comprises circa 365 acres now; 235 acres are arable, 120 pasture, 10 acres farmyards and buildings. The neighbouring Cork's Farm is also farmed by them; (The 2 barns and other farm buildings of Cork's Farm are at present being converted into houses) bringing the total acreage to 500 acres.

^{x)} The 1842 Tithe Map entry names William Pottinger as tenant (see encl. copy)
THE BARN. 1759 Field Book at Berks.R.O.: tenant Ben. Claxton 240.3.25 acres

This great timber framed barn of 9 bays, an old tiled roof and weatherboarding, has grown over the centuries as methods in grain production improved and more space was required. It first consisted of 5 bays (bays 4 - 8 on plan) with central wagon entrance and porch. (This porch was either re-built or added on at a later stage). The sill beam in

this section rests almost on the ground, a very thin layer of tiles is just visible. All the horizontal timbers come to a stop about 0.15m. past the wall posts and principal rafters, with the exception of the sill beam at truss D.I. which extends by half a metre beyond the wall posts. Otherwise this truss seems to have been the end of the barn. The mortises in tie-beam, collar and wall posts all suggest the existence of an end gable wall. The other strange thing about this truss is that on the collar looking south is carved H 1576 S. A date and initial carved on the former outside gable wall? The next bay No. 3 has a door with porch opposite, the porch differs from the one in bay 6 (see enclosed sketches).

Bay 2 has a brick plinth of 0.45m. height, which looks re-built (probably when the next bay (I) was added on). On truss C - C.I. we discovered the date 1751 on the collar looking north which confirmed that this section had been added on. Its end gable plinth at B.- B.I. of random brick and flint, sole plate with several mortises, was left in position, possibly to provide a storage bin. A second tie beam was inserted as well as several diagonal braces. Bay I was added probably at the same time as Bay 9 at the other end. The same type of carpentry was used throughout with a stout middle rail, tall queen struts to the slightly cambered collar, clasping the upper purlins, and raking queen posts supporting the lower purlins.

The overall dimensions are 8m. height, length 40.40m., width 7.70m., including porches. Bay length from 4.50m. to 4.70m.

CONCLUSION.

The construction of the 5 central bays may well have been carried out in Harry Samborne's days as the carved date suggests, but could also be of 17th C. date with the carving added later. The 1751 date certainly fits in with the extension work, the higher brick plinth is typical of the date.

A. Cottingham has numerous colour slides of the farm buildings.

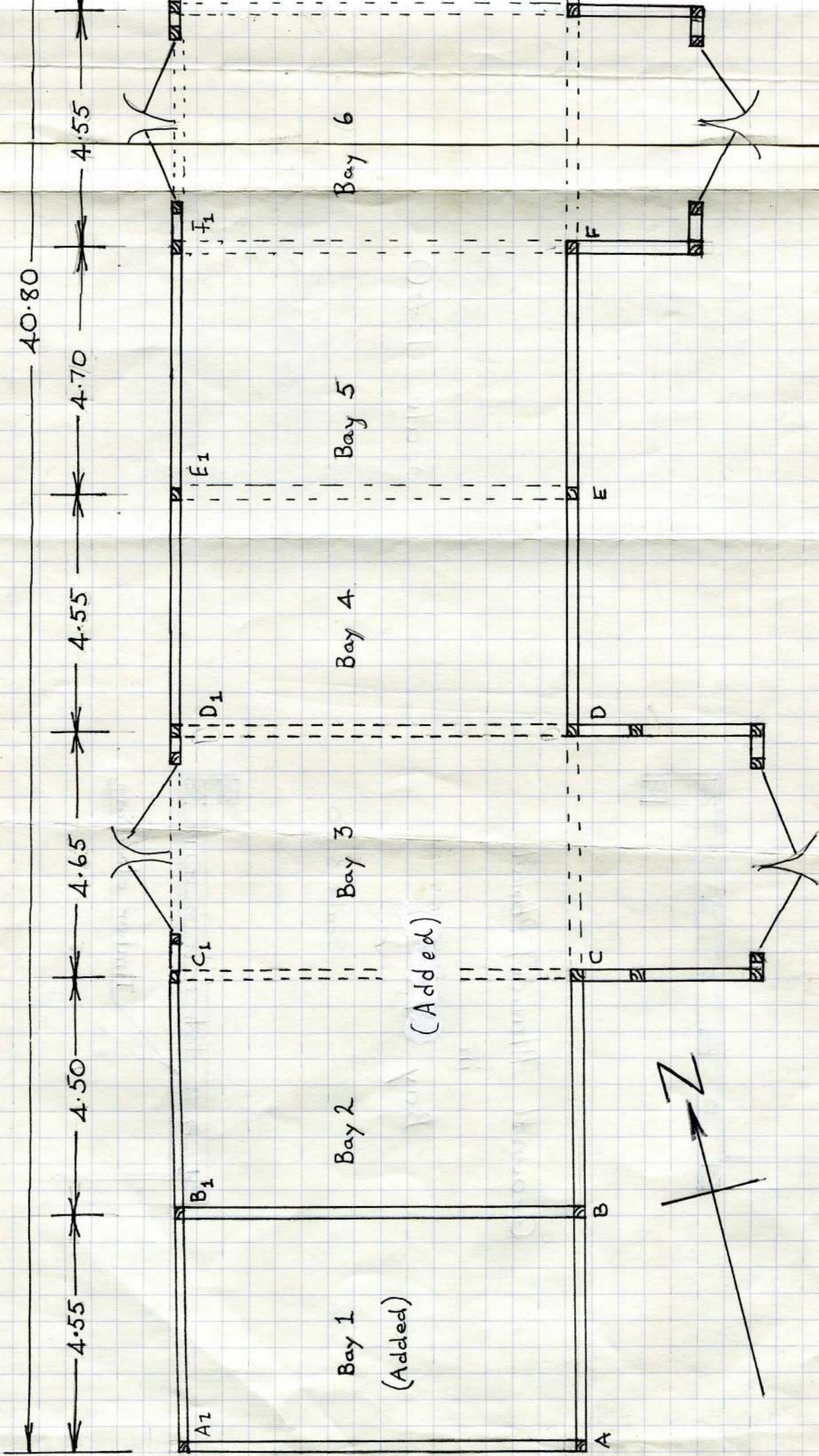
Recorded by members of the Henley Archaeological & Historical Group.

Photographs:- S. Bromilow, A. Cottingham, R. Gibson.

Scale Drawings:- J. Howard, R. Gibson.

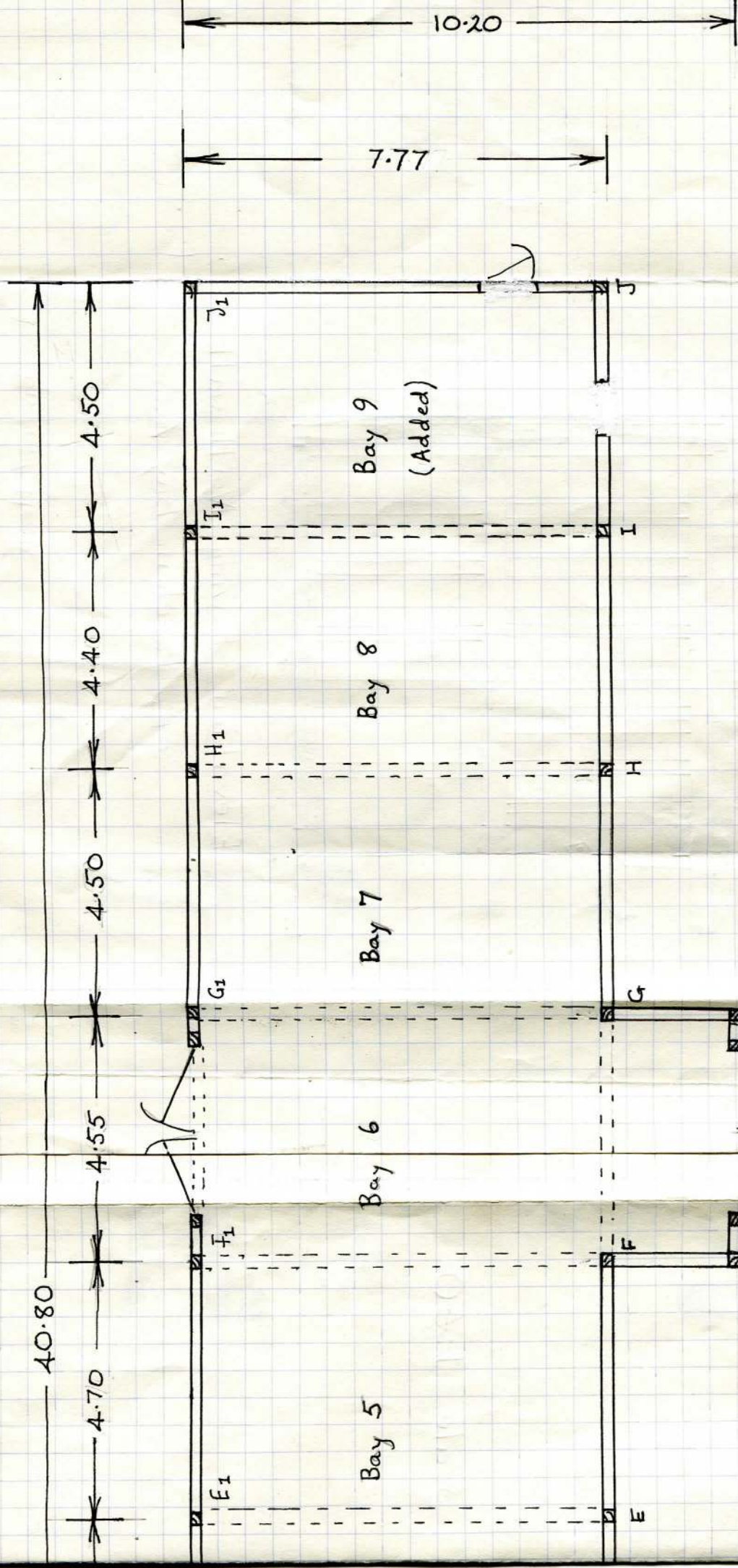
REPORT:- R. Gibson.

BARN at BISHOPS LANDS.

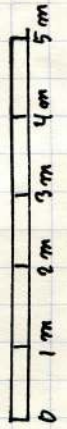


PLAN

BISHOPS ISLANDS.

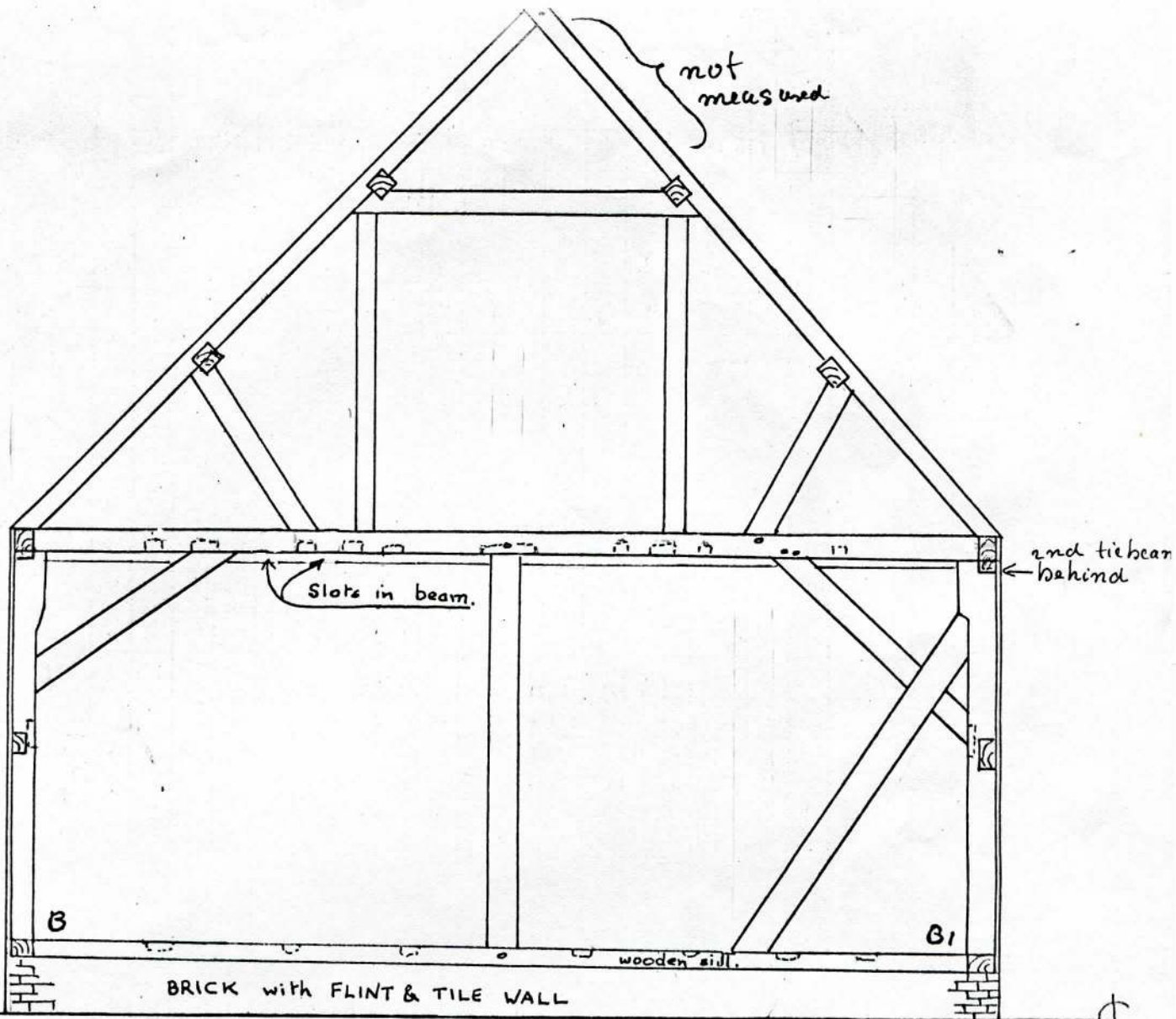


Scale 1:100

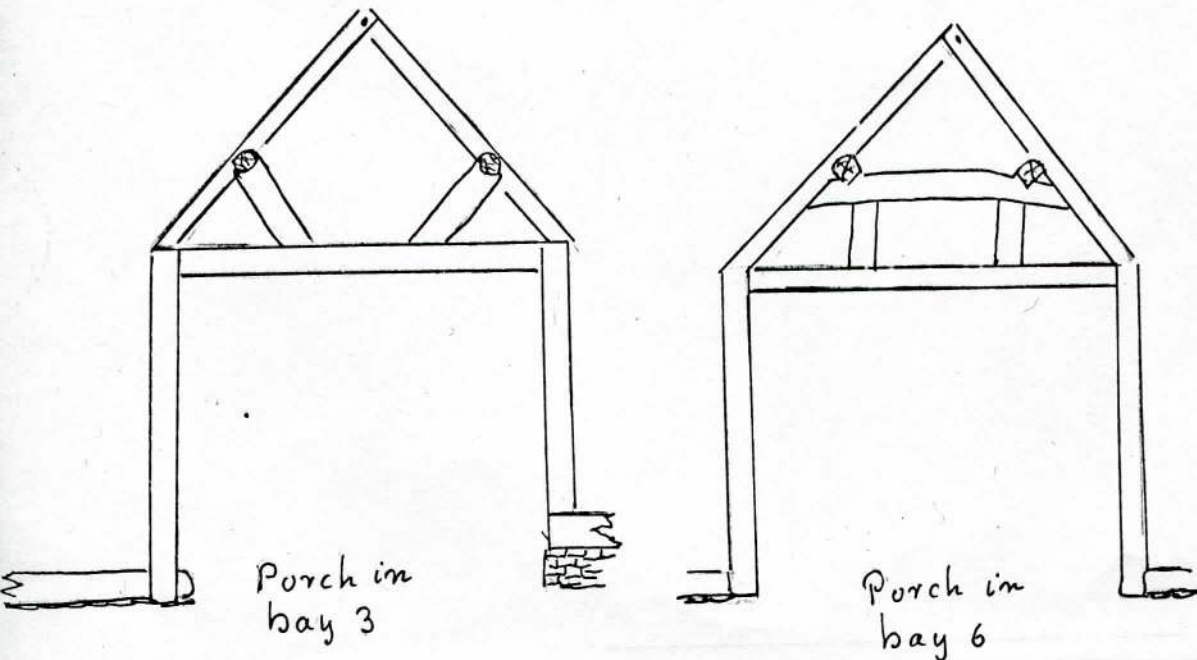


J.H. 1984.

LAN



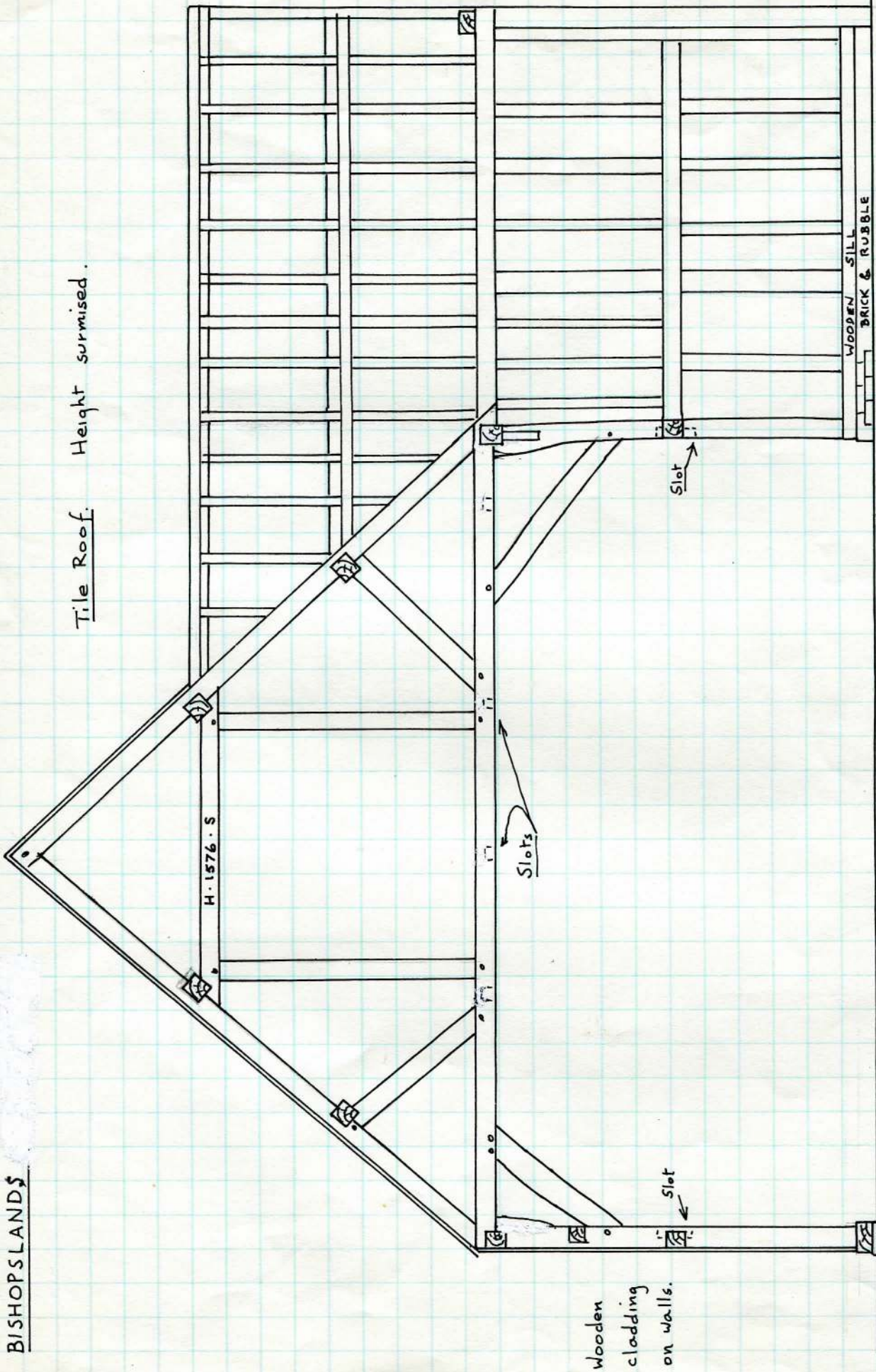
SECTION thro' end of BAY 1 .. Bishopslands Barn Scale 1:50 J.H. 84



Sketches of the two porches - not to scale - 84/R.G.
Bishopslands - Great Barn

BISHOPS LANDS

Tile Roof Height surmised.

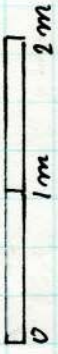


Wooden cladding on walls.

CONCRETE FLOOR.

D₁

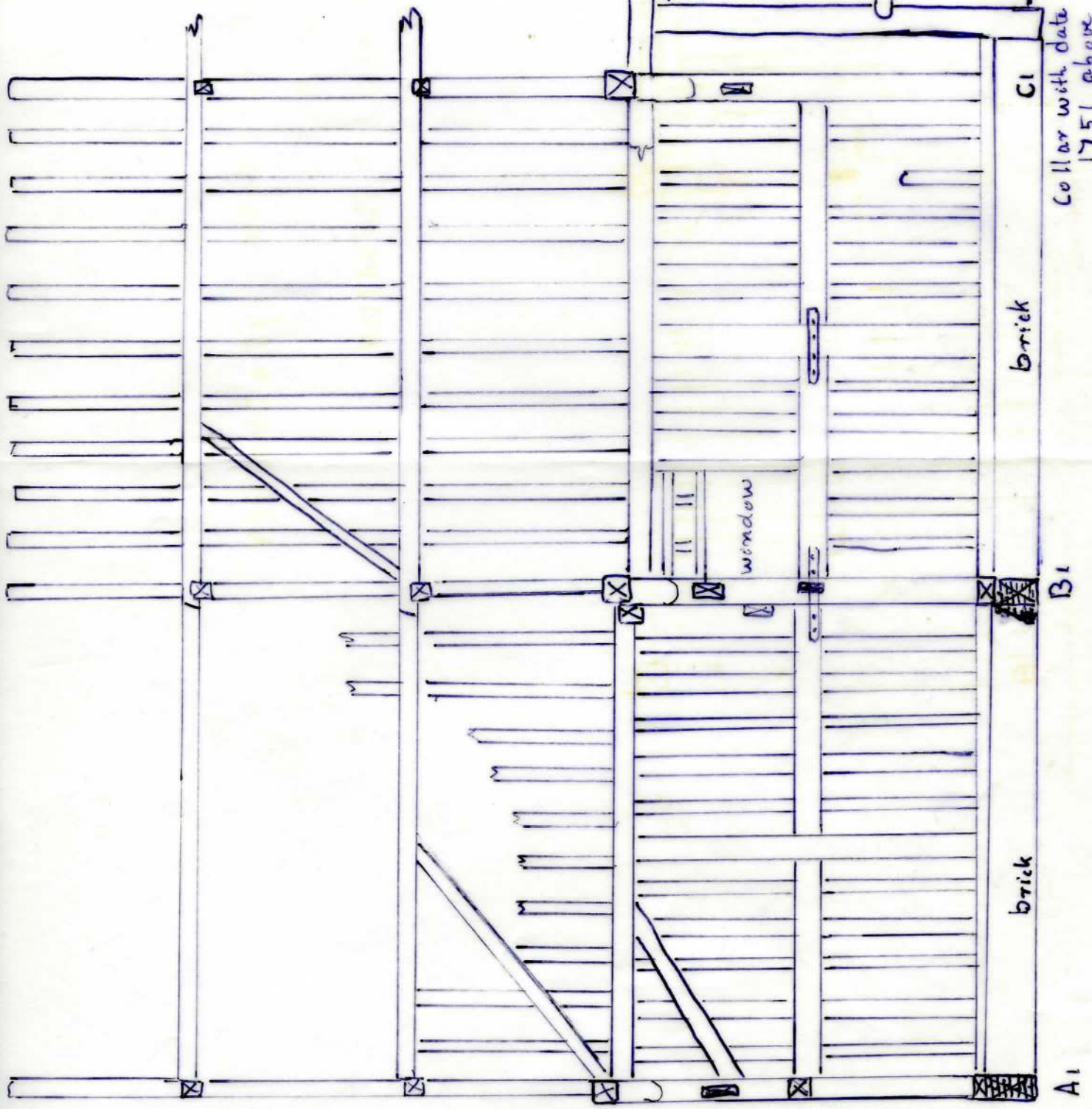
D



SECTION Thro' N. Side of Bay 3 (D-D₁).

Scale 1:50 J-H 198

BISHOPSLANDS FARM
GREAT BARN
4 BAYS of WEST ELE



Collar with date
1751 above

Collar
date 19

gap

window

brick

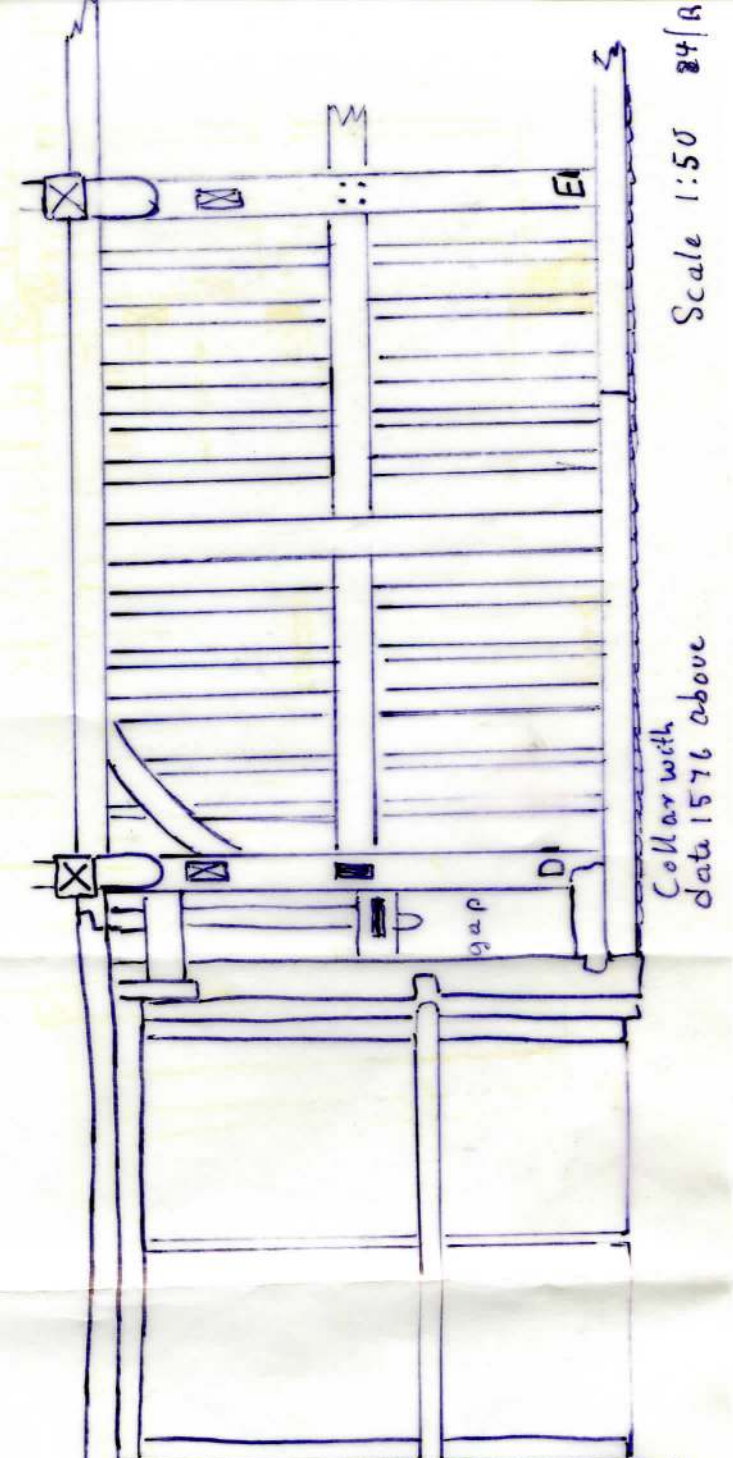
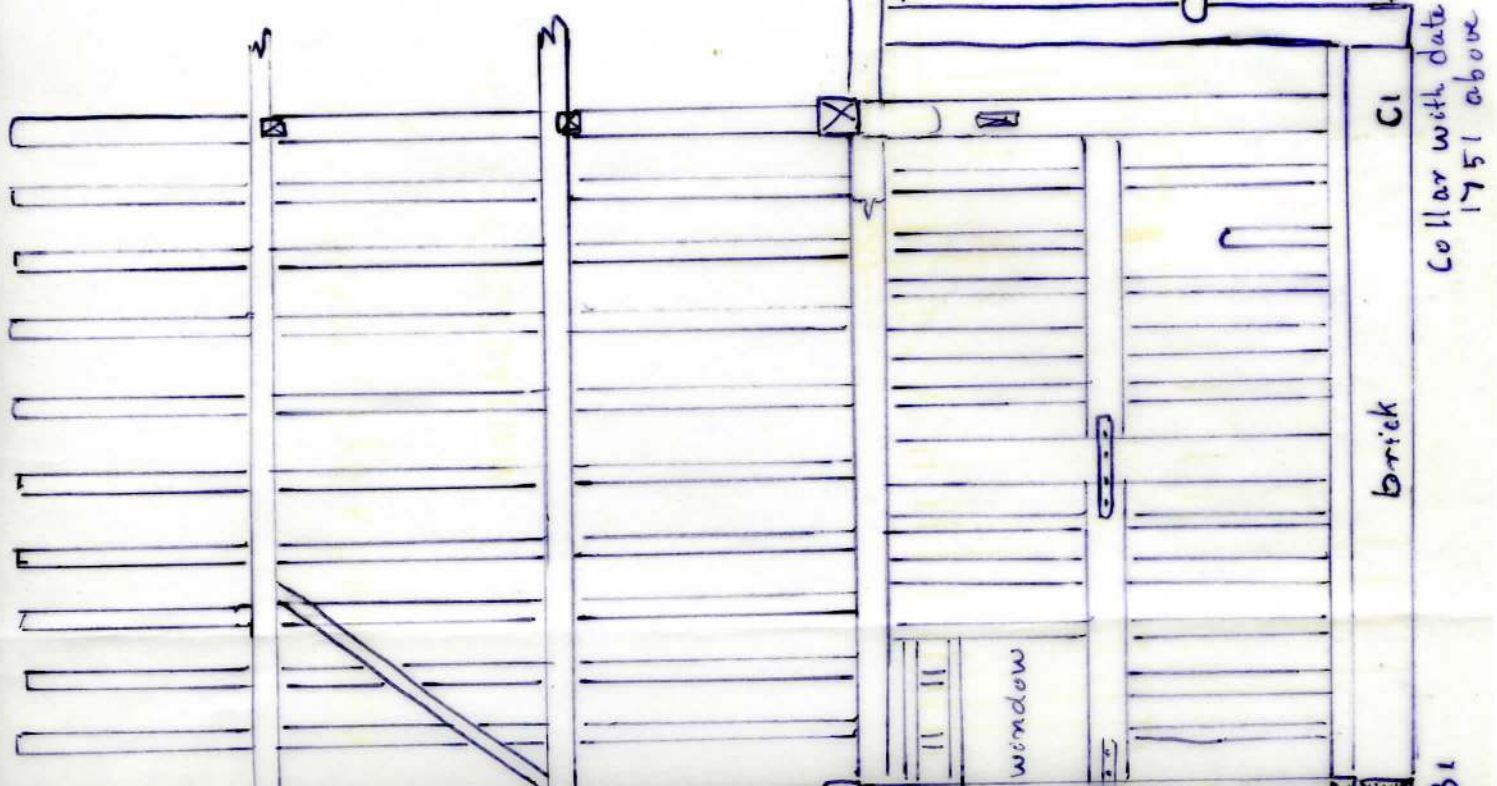
brick

C1

B1

A1

BISHOPSLANDS FARM, EYE & DUNSDEN
 GREAT BARN
 4 BAYS of WEST ELEVATION



Scale 1:50 24/11

Eye a Dunsden



Bishops lands
Farm house
East side



Water Reservoir
next to Barn



Great Barn, west side



Buildings I on plan (left), 3 granaries & cartshed



East side of barn looking south



Truss B-B1 showing former outside wall with brick & flint off-set plinth.



East side, porch in bay 6



West side, bay 6 looking south



East side, bay 4 showing low plinth of tiles



Truss I - I', former outside gable

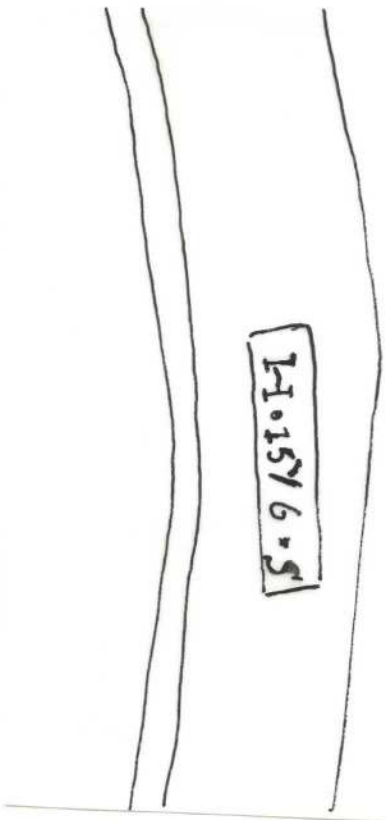


Porch in bay 3



Collar
of
Truss
D-D1

This date is not clearly readable



Collar
of
Truss
C-C1



Bishopslands - The Samborne family

Of the origins of this group of buildings and its lands nothing is certainly known. The name clearly perpetuates the overlordship of the Bishops of Sarum (The Domesday Book entry of 1086 says that Dunesdene belonged to the Bishop of Sarum) The house has been extensively altered over the years, but some sixteenth century and possibly earlier work survives beneath the incongruous Victorian casing. But if we cannot be sure about the beginnings we are at least vouchsafed a few names of people and glimpses of their dealings with one another in the farming of these fields through the centuries. First we have one, Geoffrey de Dunesdon, who in the reign of Henry I was engaged in a dispute with Roger, Bishop of Sarum, over property in Sonning and Dunsden, and in 1246 a certain Gilbert, son of that Daniel de Dunesdon who witnessed Walter Fitzpain's little gift of land to Missenden Abbey, held Sonning Manor. Later there are records of fines for the straying, accidental or otherwise, of tenants' livestock on to the lands of their lord, as for example in 1363 :

"Denesden. Many tenants fined for trespass in the Lord's meadows, the Lord's cornfields, the Lord's stubbles.
John Batt fined for 14 bullocks caught on the down."

In the large, churchlike barn, 120 feet long, are the initials and date H. 1576 S carved on a beam. If this is the date of its erection the initials probably refer to Henry Samborne, who inherited from his grandfather Henry, lessee of the farm in 1549. Henry Samborne's will is extant. He desired to be buried before Our Lady's Altar in Sonning Church, and his wife Elizabeth to enjoy the farms of Eye and "Byschoppe's Lands" as long as she be widow and to pay £ 40 to his son Thomas who is 'to mind his farming .. and she not to meddle with him therein'. If Thomas died before Henry's lease expired it was to go to his son Harry.

In 1574 the Bishop's Manor was exchanged with the Crown, Elizabeth I becoming the new Lord, acting through her High Treasurer, Lord Burghley.

After leasing the manor to be farmed by the Barker family, who had long been associated with it, the Crown disposed of it in 1628 to Lawrence Halstead and Abraham Chamberlain, from whom it passed about 1650 to the Rich family and in 1795 to the Palmers, who became extinct in 1916, and lie together with all their manorial predecessors in the vaults of Sonning Church.

1842 Eye and Dunsden Tithe Map

Owner	Occupier	No.	Field Name	Acerage
Robert Palmer	William Pottinger	92	Further Grounds or Home Field	arable 14. 2. 5
		96	Orchard Ground	" 14. 2. 22
		102	Youngs Field	" 25. 1. 29
		101	Picked Heather	" 5. 2. 32
		103	Road and Waste	waste 1. 0. 8
		107	Little Wells Field	arab. 12. 2. 35
		109	Great Shilder	" 33. 3. 35
		110	Grove	" 17. -. 3
		111	Woody Pit	wood .38
		112	Bishopsland Farm Homestead	
		112a	Barn pightle	pasture 1. -.32
		113	Picked field	" 14.1.30
		114	Woody Pit	wood . 35
		115	Great Wells Field	arable 24. 2.22
		116	Woody Pit	wood 1.16
		119	Broad Field	arable 19. 1.10
		120	Camp Field	" 23. 2.27
		121	Shingletons	" 27. -. 6
		122	Home Emmits field	" 33. 1.25
		123	Part of Caversham shilders	" 1.35
		124	Woody Pit	wood -. 2.-
		419	Great Game Meadow	meadow 11.2.38
		420	Coopers Mead	" 6.1.2
		441	Little Game	" 8.3.16
Total Acerage				<u>307.-.38</u>
Total Tithes £				78.16.3

W. Pottinger 108 Cottage and Garden

Copy of part of 1842 Tithe Map of
the parish of Eye & Dunsden
Original in Berkshire Record Office

109

114

113

110



Bishopslands Farm

307 acres

112 a

112

owner : R. Palmer
tenant : W. Pottinger

