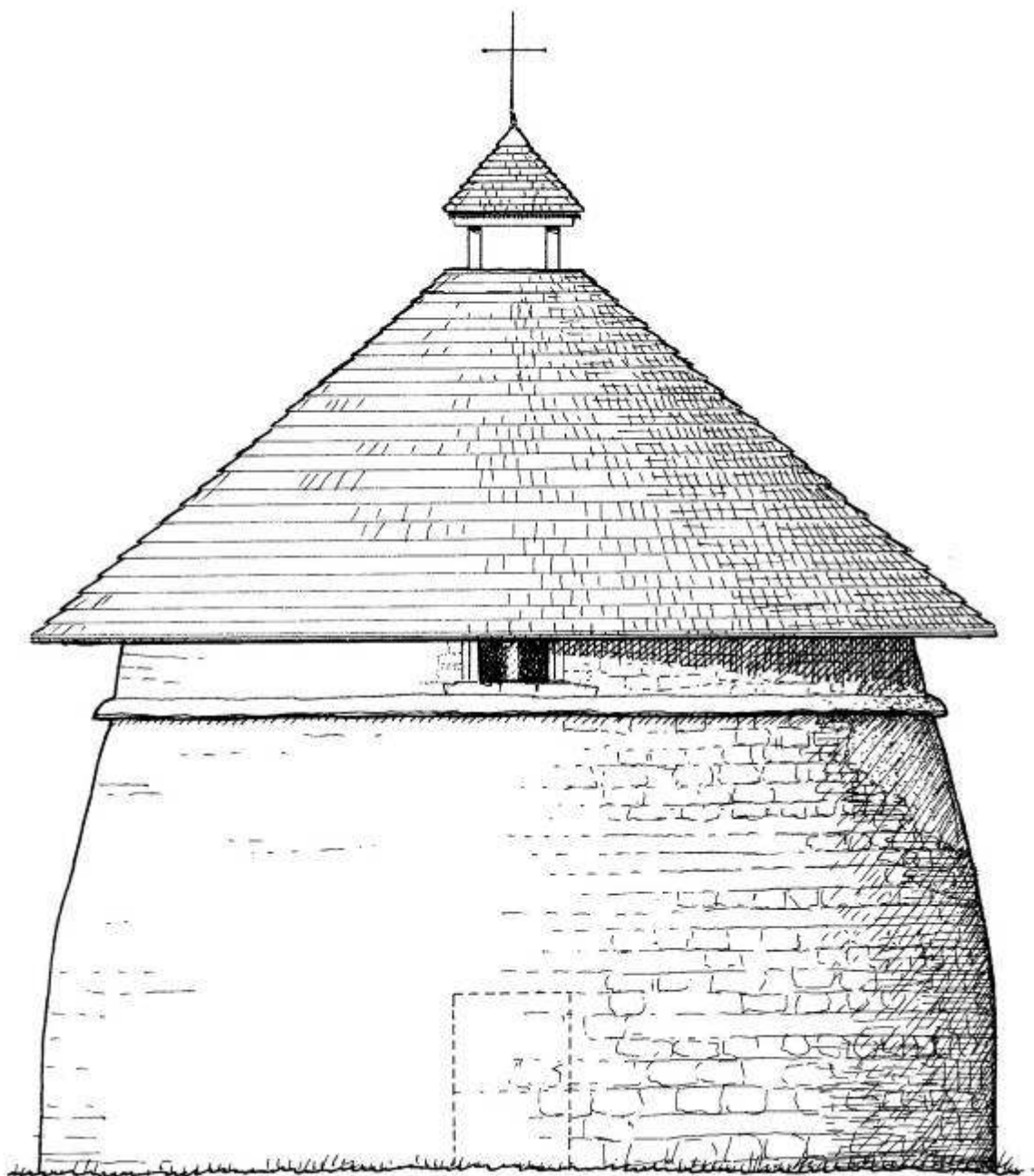


FURTHO DOVECOTE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



BRIAN L GIGGINS
1994

(2011 - Minor corrections plus front page and survey notes added)

FURTHO DOVECOTE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Note - the measured survey extended to the eaves level but above this the dimensions had to be estimated by photographic and other means

TERMINOLOGY

<i>Collar</i>	Horizontal timber joining principal rafters above eaves level.
<i>Cupola</i>	Part of glover - structure with a domed roof, covering the glover opening.
<i>Dufhus</i>	Traditional Northamptonshire name for a dovecote.
<i>Flight ledges</i>	Projection in front of nest box openings to provide access to the nest for the birds and create roosting perches. May be of timber, lath and plaster or stone. Stone ledges also provide a means of scaling the walls to get access to the nests.
<i>Glover</i>	Covered opening at the apex of the roof to let in pigeons but keep out rain and hawks.
<i>Nesting boxes</i>	Openings, usually constructed within the wall of the cote to provide sufficient room for a pair of birds to raise a brood. May be constructed of brick, stone, timber or wattle and daub.
<i>Lantern</i>	Part of glover structure with a pitched roof covering the glover opening.
<i>Potence</i>	Turning ladder within a dovecote comprising a central vertical post pivoted top and bottom. Timber arms project from the post and to these are attached a vertical ladder. The ladder can be turned to any section of the dovecote to allow access to the nest boxes.
<i>Principal Rafter</i>	Inclined main timbers of a roof truss supporting purlins and ridge timber.
<i>Ring beam</i>	A circular arrangement of timbers to support the rafters half way down the span between the glover and the eaves.
<i>Squabs</i>	Young pigeons. They hatch at 17 or 18 days and grow quickly on "Pigeon Milk", a soft cheese-like secretion produced by both the cock and hen. Squabs fully develop in 32-35 days.
<i>Tie-beam</i>	Horizontal timber joining the feet of the principal rafters of a roof truss.
<i>Tower dovecote</i>	Dovecote with square, rectangular or round plan with a pitched roof
<i>Wall Cote</i>	Series of nest boxes built within the wall of a building in the gable or at eaves level with the entrances to the exterior. Usually provided with flight ledges.

LOCATION: SP 773 430 [52.08023739N 0.873456W]

The Dovecote is situated within the parish of Potterspury at the deserted medieval village of Furtho. It is set on the south side of the valley of Dogsmouth Brook about 9m above the floor of the valley at approximately 81.0 m. above O.S. datum. There is a fishpond within 20.0m. Approximately 40m north-west of the dovecote is the site Furtho Manor Farm, which was demolished circa 1900 and 70m north-east is St. Bartholomew's Church. The present Manor Farm farmhouse dates from circa 1910 and has several outbuildings dating from early nineteenth century.

DESCRIPTION

This is a circular stone dovecote with a tiled roof and a tiled lantern over the glover. The present entrance is on the north-west but an earlier blocked doorway with a two light stone mullioned window above occurs on the south side. Internally approximately half of the nesting boxes survive and there is a large timber block set centrally in the floor which could be the base of a potence.

WALLING

The walling forms a nearly circular stone drum approximately 5400mm high and 7400mm diameter which reduces in diameter as it rises. Internally the angle of reduction forms a gentle arc with the top of the wall overhanging the base by approximately 320mm.

Externally there is a string course or drip mould about 3650mm above ground level by the north-west door. This is set back from the base of the wall and the profile of the walling below it is convex. Above the string course the walling continues a further 950mm and has a straight profile which inclines from the vertical. The total external height of the walling is approximately 4720mm above ground level by the north-west door. Ground level varies around the base of the monument. On the west side of the external face is a notably flattened segment of wall.

The base of the walling is 1300-1400mm thick and on the internal face are nesting boxes which commence at ground floor level and intrude approximately 500mm into the wall. The walls are constructed of coursed limestone with variations in the depth of the courses. Some stonework is hammer dressed to form roughly rectangular blocks. There are still areas of lime render adhering to areas of stonework and slight traces of lime-wash on the internal surface.

The string course / drip mould is not perfectly level but drops on the west side. It projects about 150mm and is about 120mm deep. The top is radiused and the underside has a shallow channel cut to form a drip.

It is apparent that the walling has suffered considerably from settlement over the centuries which have caused movement, cracking and collapse. Parts of the east and south sides have been rebuilt and areas of stonework refaced, notably around the blocked south doorway.

To the west of the north-west doorway there are ends of three timbers exposed at approximately the same level as the lintel of the door at 1740mm below the string course. These exposed timber ends are approximately 75mm x 100mm and 450mm apart. A similar exposed timber end occurs above the first timber about 850mm below the string

course. They are not apparent elsewhere. Presumably they are timbers lacing the thickness of the wall to give additional strengthening.

DOORWAYS

The opening for the north-west doorway is 1050mm wide by 1770mm high on the outside face and 860mm wide and 1580mm high on the inside face. Forming the roof of the opening are large timber lintels which are not laid level with each other and so form an irregular surface. The external lintel projects beyond the face of the wall and appears to be a recent replacement.

The door frame is constructed of 120mm x 100mm wide timbers and is set in 710mm from the front face. It forms an opening 1460mm high by 690mm wide. The plank door is 850mm x 1490mm and each plank has a roll moulding along one edge which is typical of the nineteenth century. A rectangular hole has been cut into the door to allow a cat access for vermin control.

The south door has been blocked externally with stone and the original jambs are no longer visible. On the inside face the jambs survive to form an opening 820mm wide by 1370mm high. This opening is blocked after 600mm but in front of this blocking is a rough timber frame which appears to have been used to block off the entrance at an earlier phase. The timber lintel above the door is chamfered and stopped.

WINDOW

Above the blocked south door is a small stone mullioned window. This was situated immediately above the string course but was not accessible to be measured. It formed an opening approximately 500mm wide with stone flat splay moulded jambs. There was evidence for a central stone mullion of flat splayed mouldings on the head stone and it was apparent that the two openings were formerly glazed. The sides of the window opening are splayed and 930mm apart on the internal face. A wooden frame covered with wire mesh has been erected behind the window opening to keep out the birds. Flat splayed mullioned windows with square heads occur from the mid-sixteenth through to the mid-eighteenth centuries. The use of glazing in such a situation would be unlikely before 1600 and it is doubtful whether the window opening would be earlier.

NESTING BOXES

There are the remains of twenty rows of nesting boxes starting immediately above ground level and finishing just below the top of the wall. At its maximum diameter the walls could house thirty nesting boxes on each row which would suggest that the dovecote contained approximately 550 nesting boxes when first built. This would have been the number expected from a circular dovecote of this size. Today only about half of these nesting boxes survive. Some were lost when the walling on the north side was rebuilt and many in the lower 11 courses have been blocked in.

The nesting boxes were constructed as the wall was built. First the flight ledge was constructed of thin slabs of stone about 30-40mm deep which overhung the wall below by about 60-80mm. The openings for the nesting boxes were built into the next two courses. These were approximately 150-170mm wide and 500mm long. They were built into the wall at a slight angle to the right or left and opened out to become slightly wider at the back. The mortar used was employed to help smooth out the joints between the stones.

Larger stone blocks were then used to construct capping to the openings and above that the next row of flight ledges were constructed. All the openings in a row had the angle going one way e.g. to the right and the rows above and below were angled in the opposite direction. The exterior of the nesting boxes appears to have been treated with lime-wash. The form of these nests differs from most other stone examples which are not as deep and are constructed in an "L" shape. It is also unusual for the nest boxes to start at ground level and the low row of nesting boxes may suggest that the floor level was originally lower.

POTENCE

The only evidence for a potence is a large section of tree trunk approximately 560mm x 455mm which is set centrally into the earth floor and has a round hole cut into it which is 155mm in diameter and 83mm deep. At the base of the hole was a dark substance in which appeared to be a piece of broken brick or pottery.

It is tempting to interpret this as the base for the shaft of a potence but the top face of the timber is at an angle which would jar on a turning timber and shows no signs of wear. On the inside face of the round mortise are a few horizontal striations but these are insufficient to show regular turning within the mortise took place. If this is a potence base then it is of a primitive form as metal bearings would be expected.

Before recent work by the tenant farmer there was a vertical timber set into the base. This was 2410mm long, 190 x 140mm at the base with a circular tenon 100mm diameter and 40-42mm deep. This was heavily wood worm infested and had a rough tin collar near the top. There was no indication of any mortises to take the braced arms holding a ladder. It is likely that this timber was part of a roosting frame erected during the period the dovecote housed chickens.

ROOF

The tiled roof of the building was rebuilt in 1987 for the Trustees of the Edward Arnold Charity. At that time the majority of the roof timbers were replaced and the cross-beams repaired.

The cross-beams are constructed of 200mm square timbers with one timber spanning the interior and the other two timbers mortised into it. The undersides of the timbers have narrow chamfers with stops close to the wall and the centre. The undersides of the timbers are approximately 850mm below the top of the wall. The cross-timbers support four upright timbers which support the ring-beam at the base of the glover and continue up to form the posts of the lantern. Twenty common-rafters approximately 75mm square run radially from the ring-beam to the eaves where they overhang the walls by approximately 500mm. The ends of the rafters are rounded on the underside.

GLOVER

The glover has a circular opening and is surmounted by a lantern of four posts supporting a four sided pyramidal roof of tiles. Although this was reconstructed in 1987 there is a lantern of similar design illustrated on an eighteenth century drawing of the dovecote.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1600 circa Edward Furtho enclosed the parish, depopulated the village, diverted the main through road and rebuilt the church. [*R.C.H.M. vol. IV p. 1191*]
- 1640 Lordship and manor held by Sir Robert Bannestre of Passenham [*Whellan 1849*]
- 1667 Paid for materials & workmanship for repairing Furtho dufhouse £3 1s 7d [*Edward Arnold's accounts - NRO Furtho XIII 2B1*]
- 1668 Mar For my selfe for Dufhouse the rent £6 10s [*Edward Arnold's accounts: NRO Furtho XIII 281*]
- 1668 Sept For my selfe for Dufhouse the rent £6 10s [*Edward Arnold's accounts: NRO Furtho XIII 281*]
- 1669 Mar For my selfe for Dufhouse the rent £6 10s [*Edward Arnold's accounts: NRO Furtho XIII 281*]
- 1669 Sept For my selfe for Dufhouse the rent £6 10s [*Edward Arnold's accounts: NRO Furtho XIII 281*]
- 1670 Sept For my selfe for Dufhouse the rent £6 10s [*Edward Arnold's accounts: NRO Furtho XIII 281*]
- 1676 Edmund Arnold dies and leaves manor for charitable uses after his wife's death including £20 for maintaining poor scholars in Merton College Oxford. [*Whellan 1349*]
- 17?? "Ye tiling of ye dove-house to be put in repair" [*NRO: FXIII 2221*]
- 1835 Map of Furtho shows the dovecote built against the wall of the gardens situated due south of the manor house. [*NRO Map 3332*]
- 1900 circa Manor House demolished apart from an outbuilding on the east side.
- 1907 Architectural drawings of the new farm house produced by W.D. Gibbins, Architect and surveyor, St. Giles St., Northampton
- 1917 Dovecote repaired by the Lord of the Manor
- 1926 Short article on the dovecote in Northamptonshire Notes and Queries, New series Vol. 6, 1926. "Quite recently a good portion of the wall on the southside has fallen down and a piece of adjoining wall is also in a bad condition".
- 1952 It was reported that a number of poles were erected inside to form hen perches, the building being used as a hen house.
- 1972 Recorded that part of the potence survived

1980 circa	Outbuilding to the east of the Old Manor House demolished
1987	Roof renewed under the directions of Merton College Surveyor.
1993	Tenant of farm inserts timber floor joists at approximately 3m above floor level to form the base of a floor for pigeons. This was without Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent.

INTERPRETATION

The building appears to have been a Manorial dovecote which was built to form a feature in the gardens to the south of the farm house. In its original form the dovecote held a maximum of 550 pairs of birds, was constructed of rendered stone and had both the doorway and window in the usual location on the south side.

It is probable that there was a potence but there is insufficient evidence to prove this. There is similarly a lack of evidence to show that the present roof structure is an accurate rebuilding of the earlier form. However it is apparent that the form of the glover is similar to its construction in the eighteenth century.

The form and shape of the walling could suggest that the building is medieval in date which may account for the unusual shape of the nesting boxes. However the only datable features are the window and cross beams, both of which suggest an early seventeenth century date. It is possible that the dovecote has been rebuilt above the string course circa 1600 but no evidence for this was apparent. Unless further information is forthcoming it must be assumed that it dates from the early seventeenth century and is part of the improvements carried out by Edward Furtho.

The building has undergone many repairs which has included the partially rebuilding of the outside face of stonework, the blocking up of the south entrance and creation of the north-west entrance.

LEGAL

The dovecote is owned by the Trustees of Edward Arnold's Charity c/o Browne & Wells, 60 Gold Street, Northampton and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of the building is that it is the sole survivor of the farmhouse and gardens that were erected after the depopulation of Furtho village and forms an interesting group with the church. It does not have a particularly good fabric survival with the early timber work restricted to the cross beams. It is only the shape of the walls, string course/ drip mould and form of the nesting boxes that singles this building out from other dovecotes. Historically the building has suffered considerably from movement and it is probable that these problems will continue.

MEASURED DRAWINGS

1. A4 sheet - plan scale - 1:50, BLG 1993
2. A4 sheet - South elevation scale - 1:50, BLG 1993
3. A4 sheet - Section - scale 1:50, BLG 1993
4. A4 sheet - Nesting boxes - scale 1:10 BLG 1993
5. A4 sheet - Reconstructed site plan circa 1675 - scale 1:300 BLG 1993
6. Plan, elevations and sections at 1:48 by Merton College Surveyor dated 1985 and deposited with South Northants District Council.

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1 North-west elevation.
- 2 West elevation.
- 3 South-west elevation.
- 4 East elevation showing redering.
- 5 North-west door
- 6 Blocked south-west door.
- 7 Modern inserted floor timbers.
- 8 Roof structure & glover.
- 9 Internal view showing rebuilt walling.
- 10 Internal view showing blocked nesting-holes.
- 11 Stone-mullioned window.
- 12 Lantern.
- 13 Central timber block.
- 14 Central timber block and detached post.

CLIENT

Northamptonshire County Council, County Hall, Northampton NN1 1AX

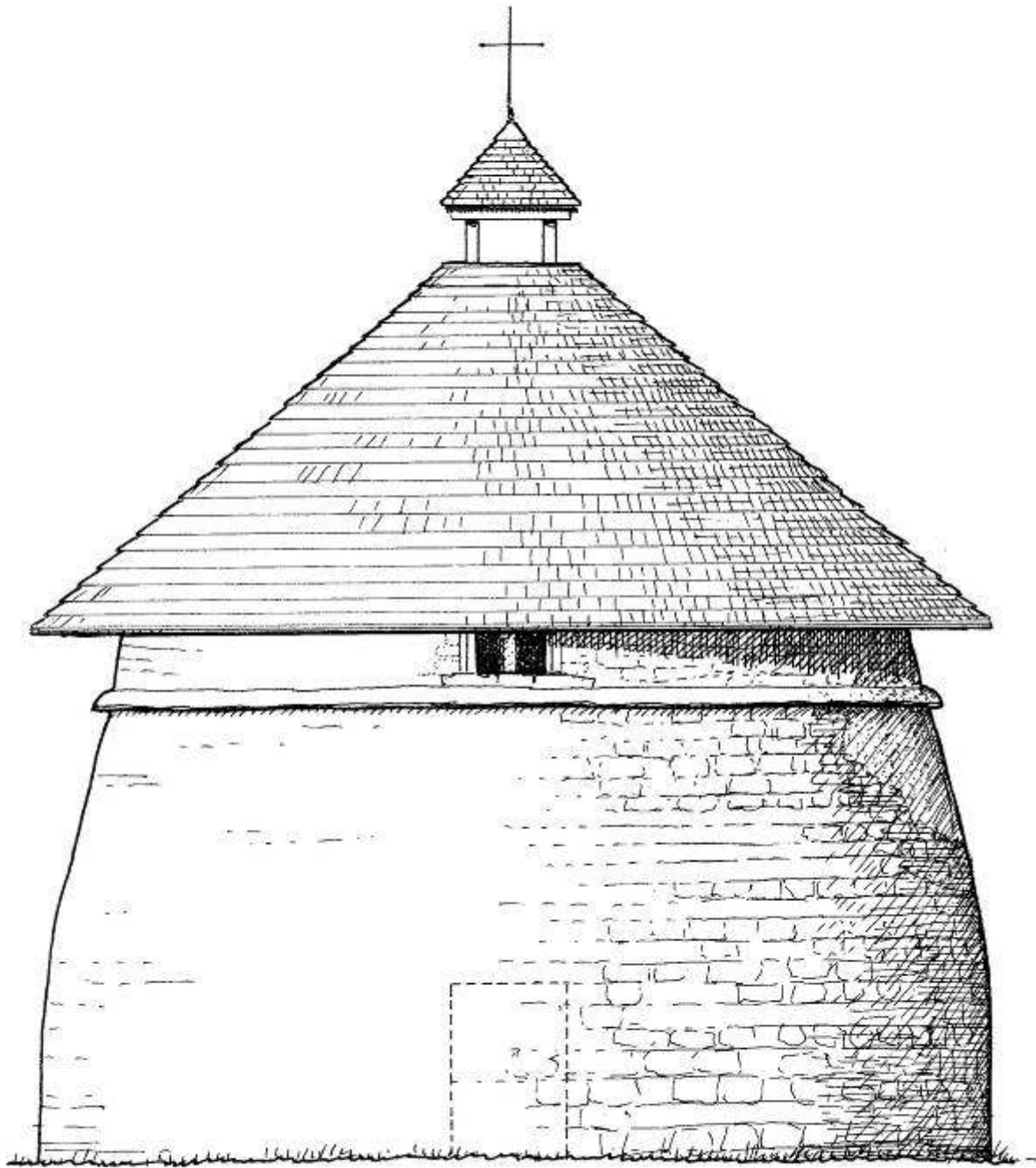
AUTHOR

Brian L. Giggins, 1 Orchard Close, Towcester, Northants NN12 6BP
May 1993

Report revised in April 2011 with minor revisions to the text plus the addition of survey notes, one photograph and a new cover.

Furtho Dovecote

South Elevation

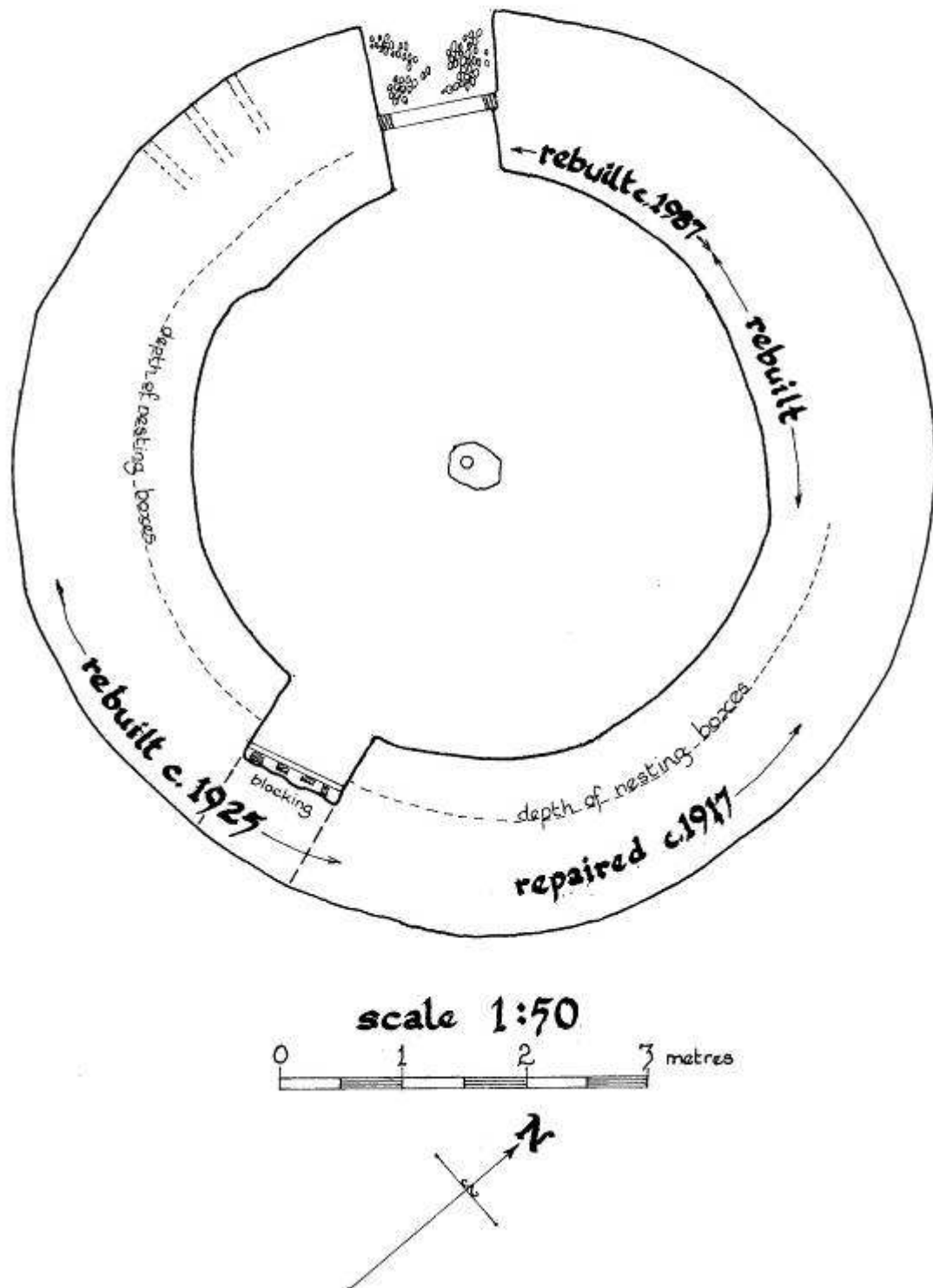


scale 1:50

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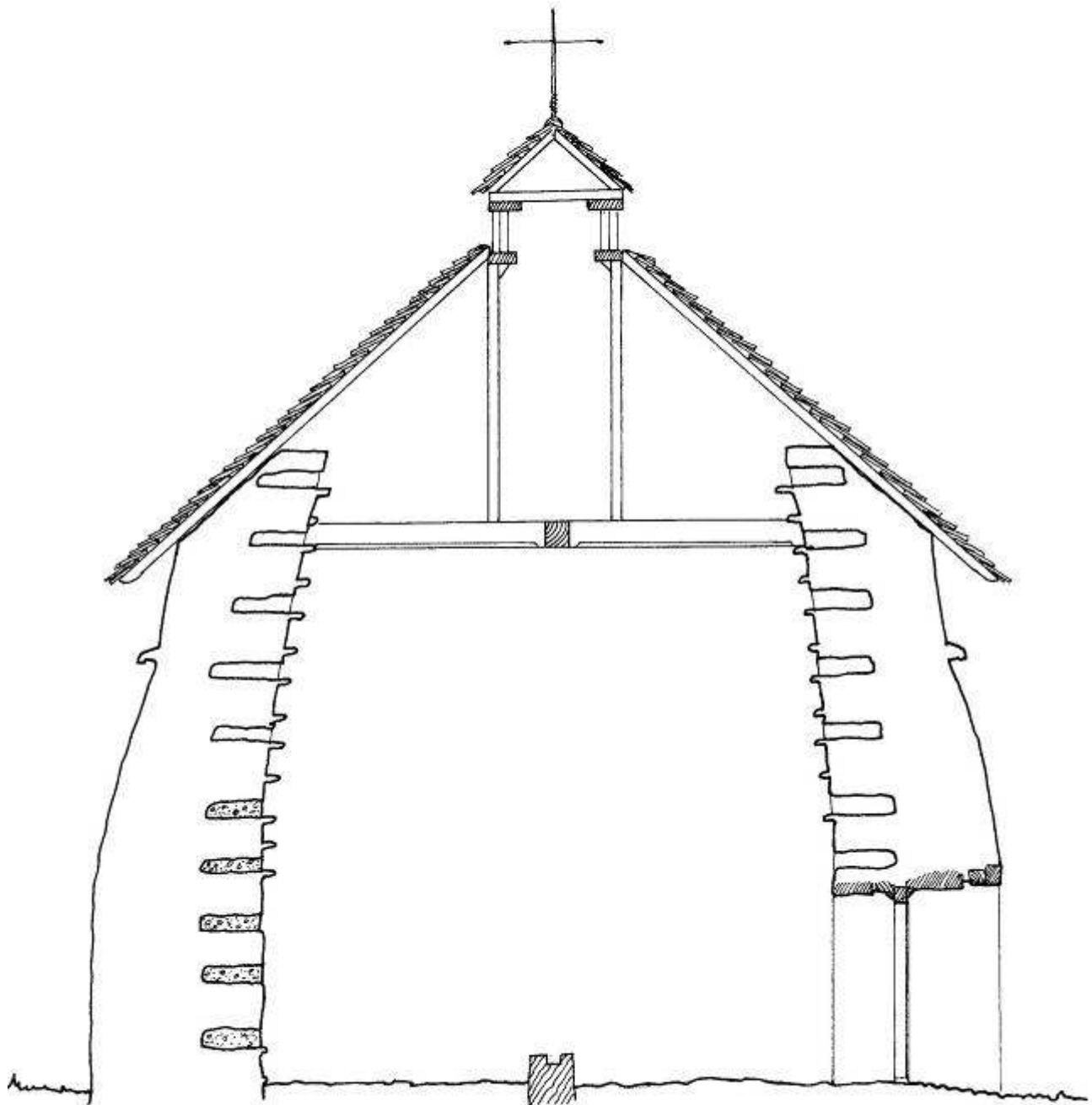
Furtho Dovecote.

Plan at ground level



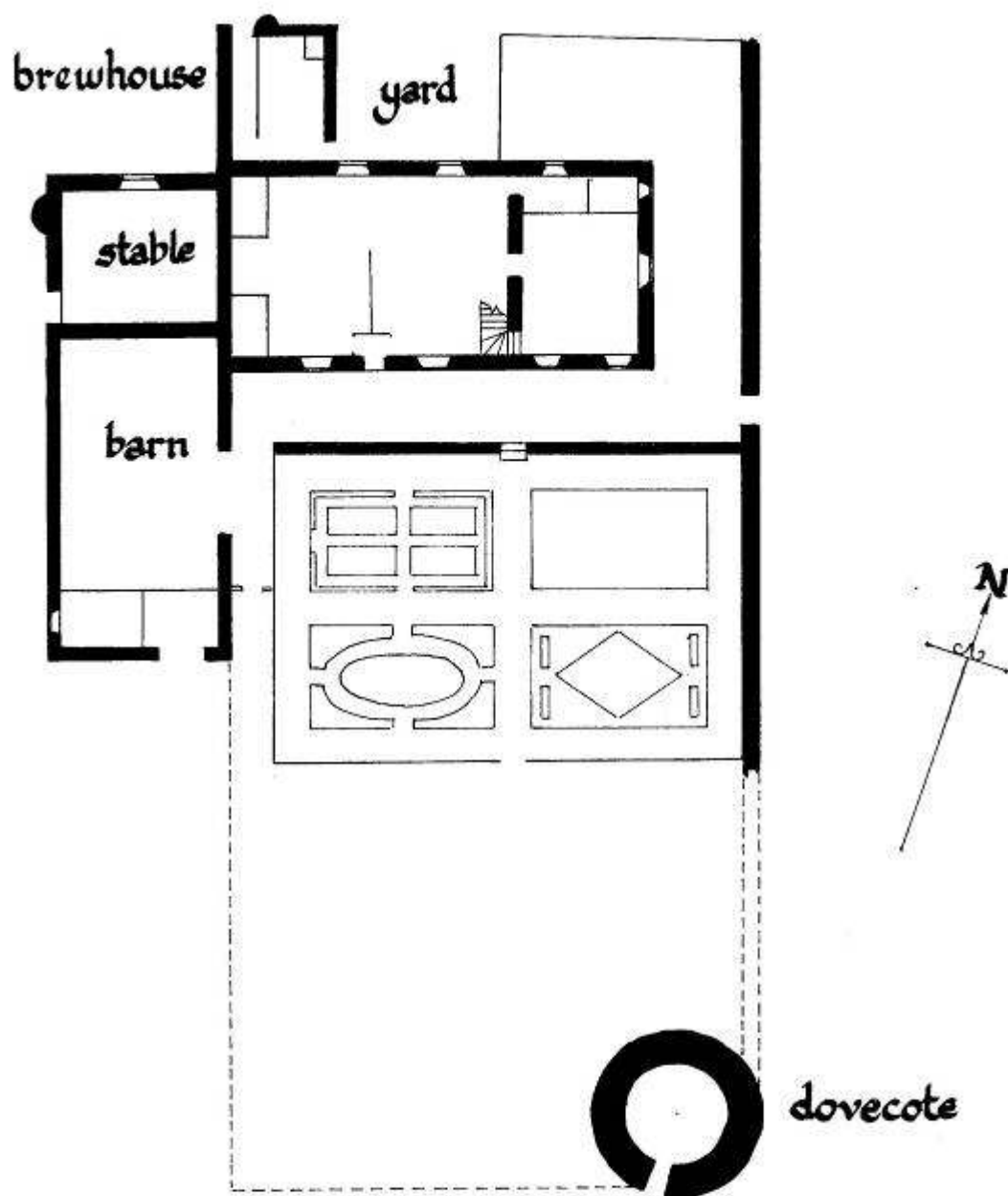
Furtho Dovecote

NW-SE section



scale 1:50

0 1 2 3 metres



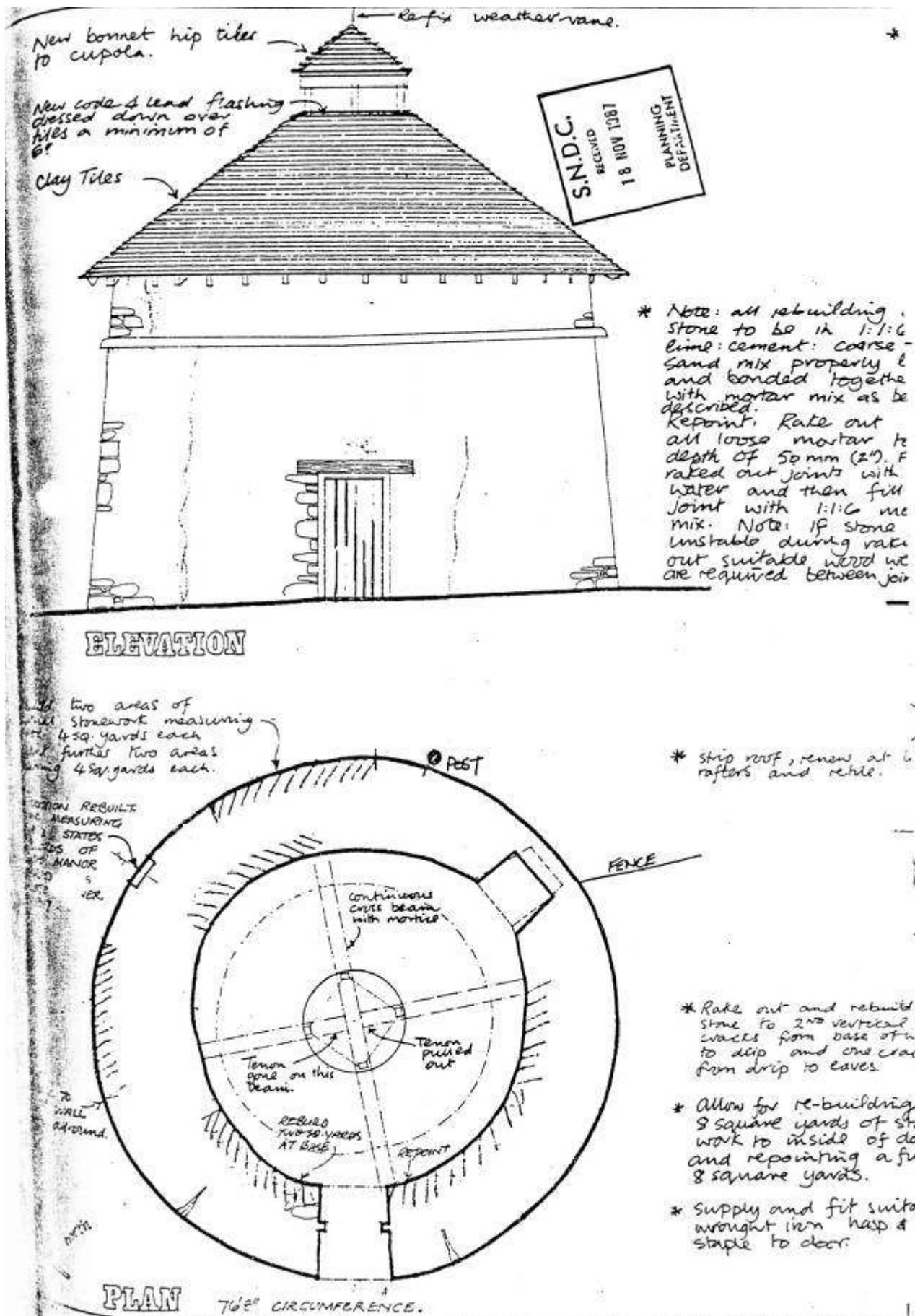
scale: 1:300 (approximately)

Furtho Manor Farm circa 1675
based on Furtho XII no. 59

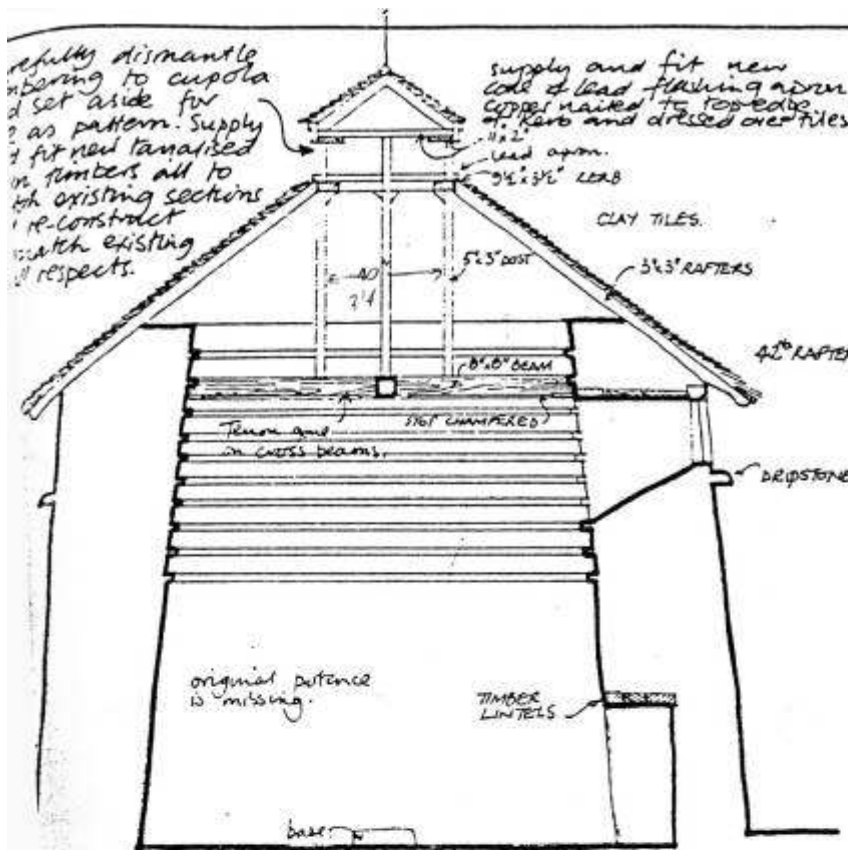
BLS

1993

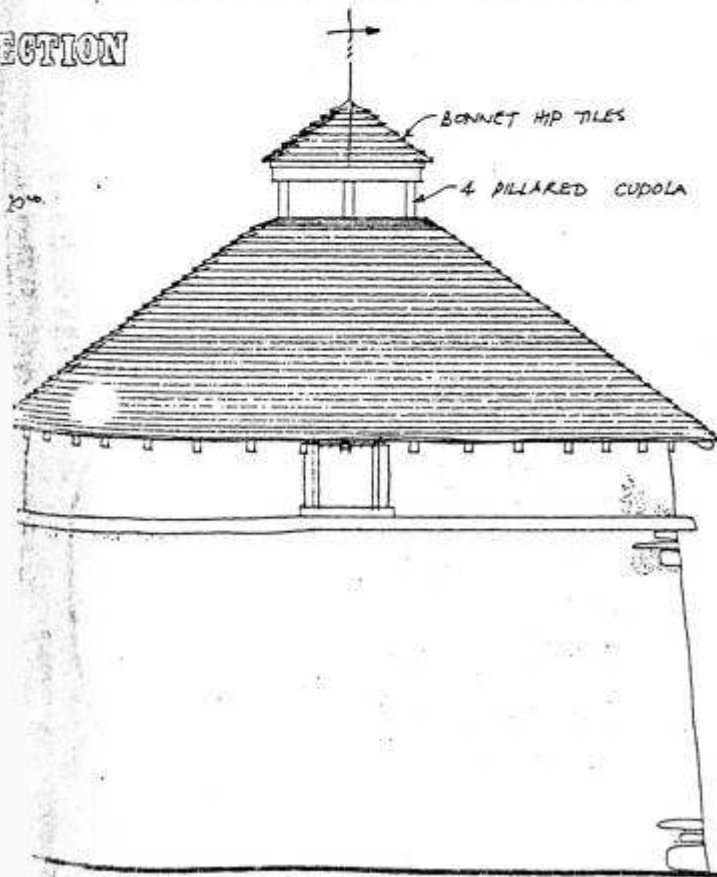
1985 MERTON COLLEGE PLANS



1985 MERTON COLLEGE PLANS



SECTION



ELEVATION

Notes:

All dimensions must be checked on site and not scaled from this drawing.

Contractor to allow for supply and erection of scaffolding, complete with guard rails, toe boards and ladders; also for the provision of tarpaulin sheets, materials and for the clearance of rubbish on completion REROOFING

Strip existing roof slopes sort, clean and stack sound tiles for re-use. Strip lead from flashing. Strip battens, removing old batten nails from rafters.

Allow for supplying and fitting 20 no. replacement rafters to the main roof, all to match existing section and pattern. For the total re-construction of the 4 pillared cupola and for propping the existing cross beams to original alignment and securing with new ironwork. Coach bolted to same as detail. Supply & fit reinforced roofing felt laid with 6" laps, cloth nailed to rafters. Supply & fit 19 x 38mm tanalised batten, fixed to 4" gung. Refix sound tiles and supply clay tiles to replace deficiencies. Nail all tiles at laps, top edges and every 3rd course.

Client TRUSTEES OF EDWARD ARNOLD'S CHARITY
CLERK:- W.G. GEE,
BROWNE & WELLS,
60 GOLD STREET,
NORTHAMPTON.

Drawing Title

SURVEY PLAN
AS EXISTING.

**DOVECOT
MANOR FARM,
FURTLO,
NORTHANTS.**

Scale 1/4 in = 1 ft

Date 23RD APRIL 1985 Drawn by Michael Joffe
College Surveyor

THE ESTATES BURSARY,
MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD

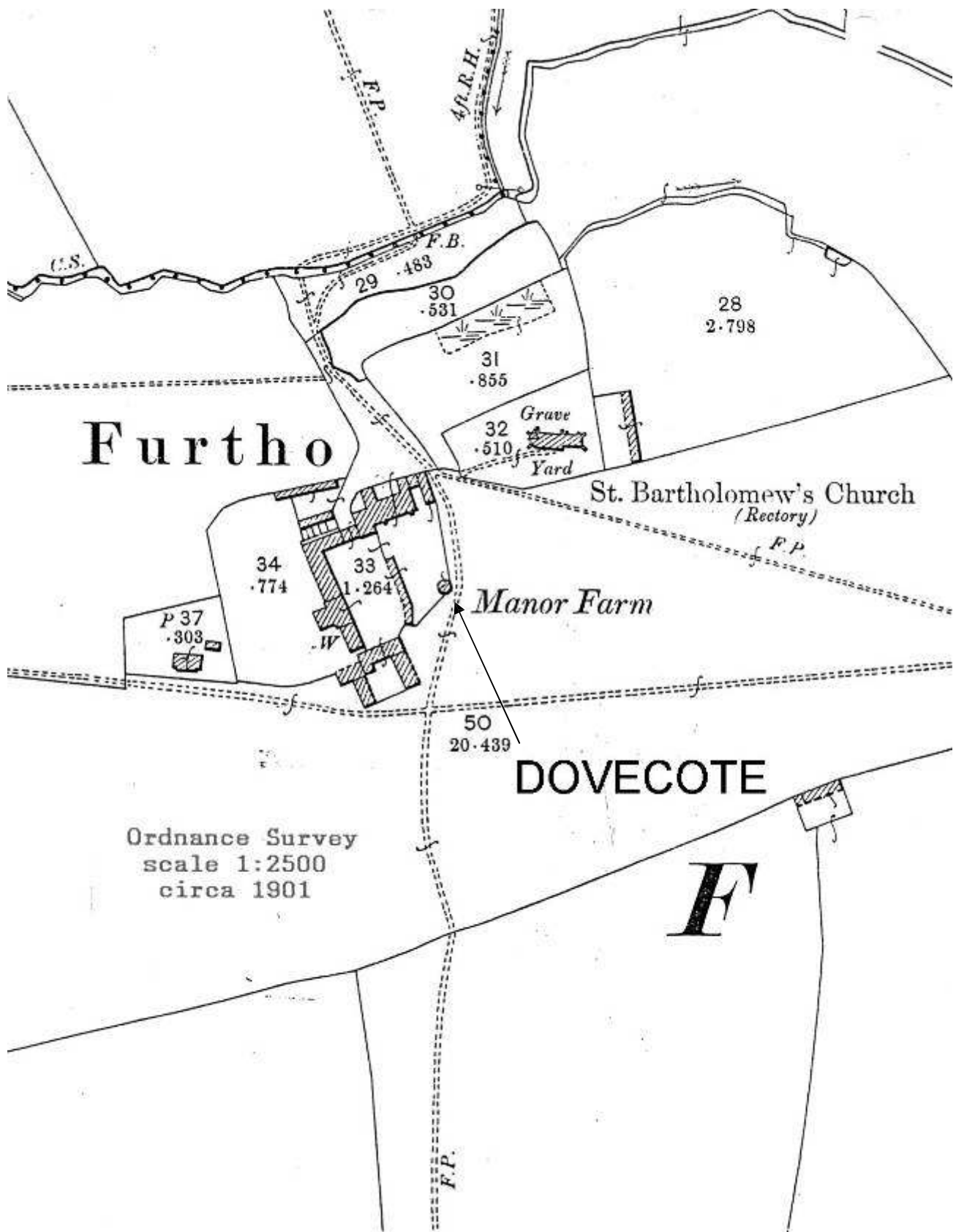
Drg. No.

F185

Rev.

420 x 594mm A2

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF FURTHO CIRCA 1910



The tiny village of Furtho lies close to Potterspury, being half a mile from, and on the west side of, the main road between Northampton and Stony Stratford, from which it is approached by a field road.

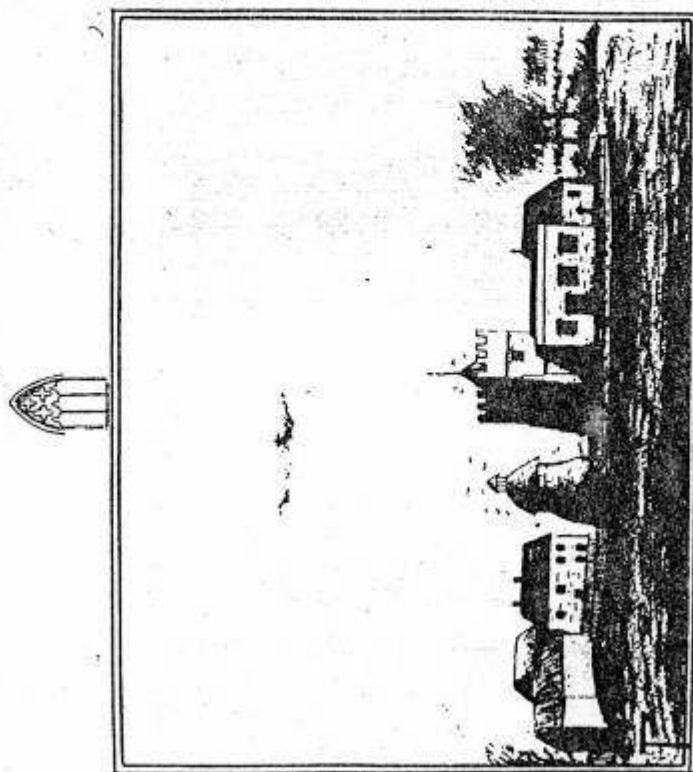
The dove-cote here stands in the field to the south-west of the Church, and is a circular building of local lime stone, the walls having a considerable batter, the diameter outside at the ground level is about 18 feet 8 inches, the walls being about 4 feet 3 inches thick; the height to the string course is 11 feet 3 inches, and from there to the eaves about 3 feet. The moulding of this string course is bold and well designed, and is undercut to form a drip round the building. The roof has been renewed, and is covered with red tiles which are of a beautiful colour. The cupola at the top is formed of four wooden posts, the sides being open, and it is also covered with red tiles. There are two doorways: that on the west being 5 feet 5 inches high and 3 feet 4 inches wide, with a modern door; on the south there is a second doorway 4 feet 9 inches high and 2 feet 7 inches wide, there is no door, and the entrance is blocked by debris. Almost over this doorway there is a large opening or window into the building. Inside there appear to have been some 330 nests, but many of these were closed in 1917, when a large part of the wall was rebuilt. To commemorate this, a stone tablet has been inserted on the east side, bearing the legend:—

THE LORDS OF FURTHO MANOR
REPAIRED THIS DOVE-COT TOWER A.D. 1917.
R. S. MYLNE, B.C.L., RECTOR.

This dove-cote, which is probably over three hundred years old, is a most picturesque building, and it seems a thousand pities if it be allowed to collapse, as there are none too many of these relics of the past remaining in England. Quite recently a good portion of the wall on the south has fallen down, and a piece adjoining is also in a bad condition.

The Trustees of Arnold's Charity are the principal landowners and Lords of the Manor of Furtho, and as such this dove-cote belongs to them.

Northamptonshire Notes & Queries
New Series Vol 6, 1926



*Furtho.
New? Hay R. - Jesus Coll. Oxon?*

Drawing of the Eighteenth Century?

FURTHO DOVECOTE PHOTOGRAPHS 1993



1. North-west elevation



2. West elevation

FURTHO DOVECOTE PHOTOGRAPHS 1993



3 – South-west elevation



4 – East elevation showing rendering

FURTHO DOVECOTE PHOTOGRAPHS 1993



5. North-west door

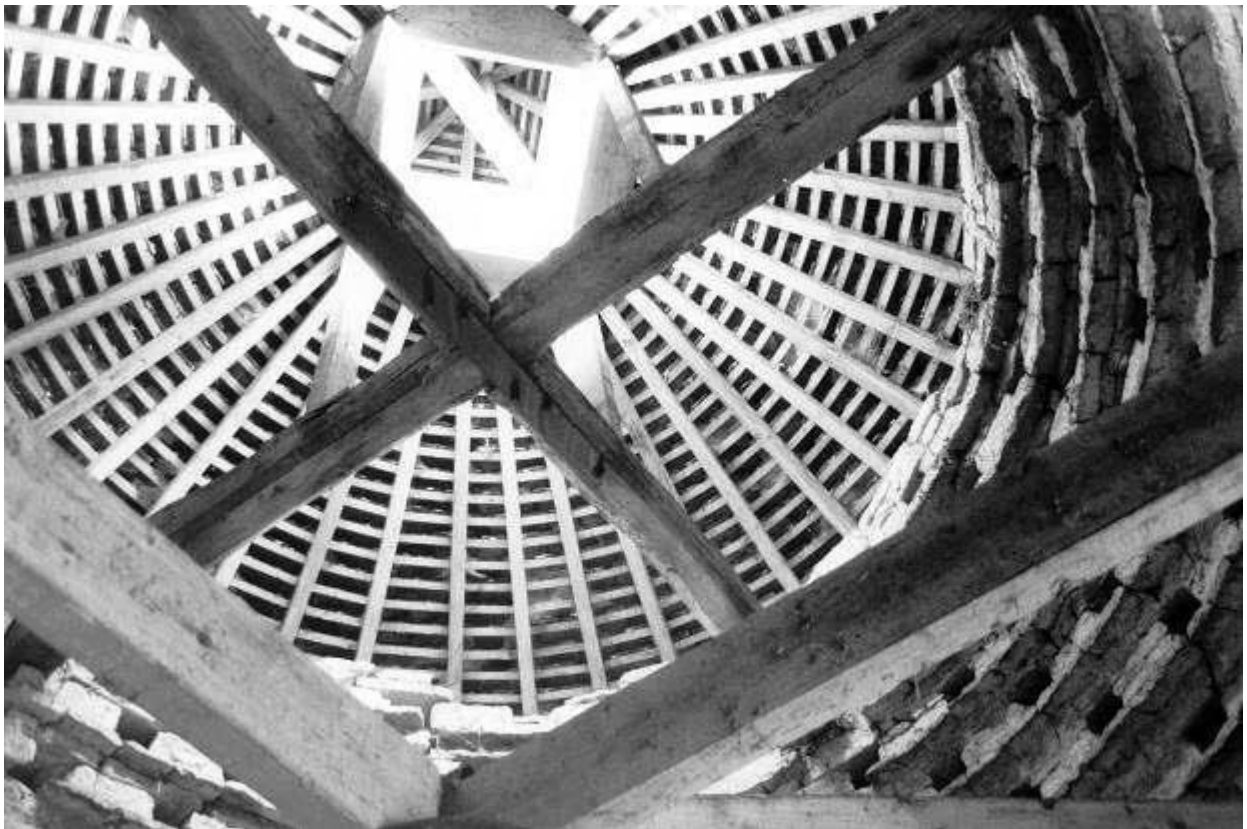


6. Blocked south-west door

FURTHO DOVECOTE PHOTOGRAPHS 1993



7. Modern inserted floor timbers



8 – Roof structure & glover

FURTHO DOVECOTE PHOTOGRAPHS 1993



9 – Internal view showing rebuilt walling



10. Internal view showing blocked nesting boxes

FURTHO DOVECOTE PHOTOGRAPHS 1993



11. Stone mullioned window



12. Lantern

FURTHO DOVECOTE PHOTOGRAPHS 1993

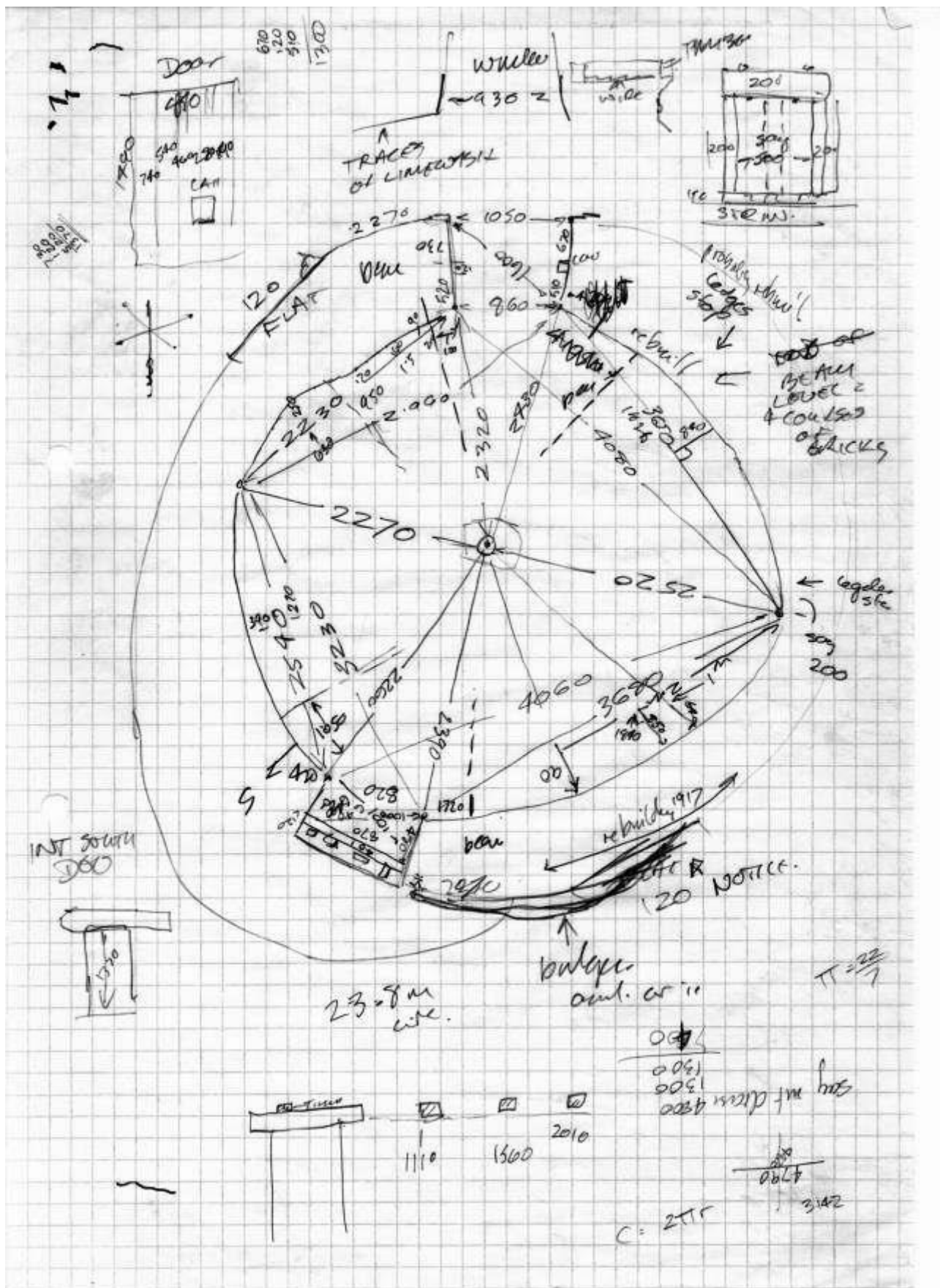


13. Central timber block

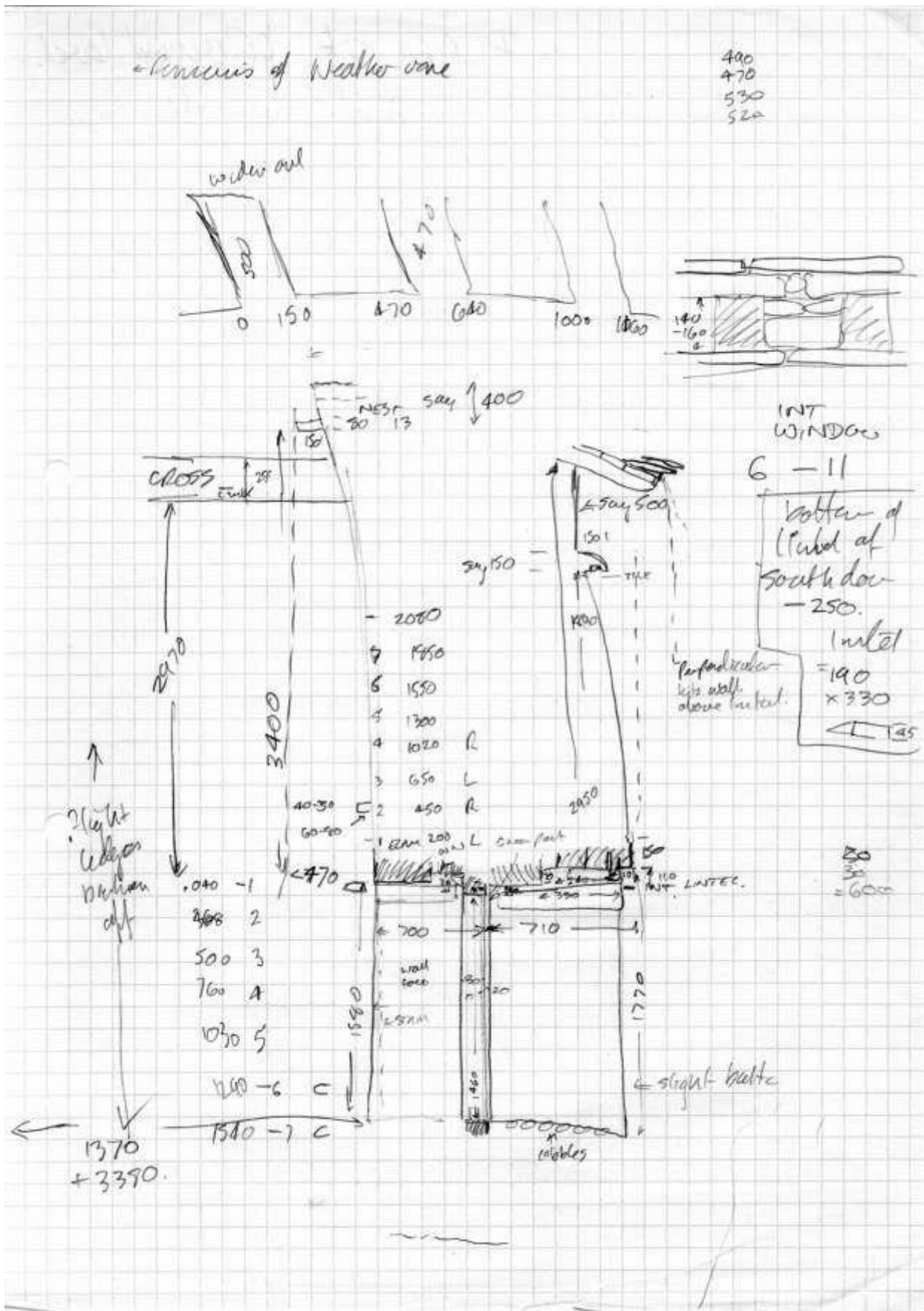


14 Central timber block and detached post

FURTHO DOVECOTE SURVEY NOTES 1993

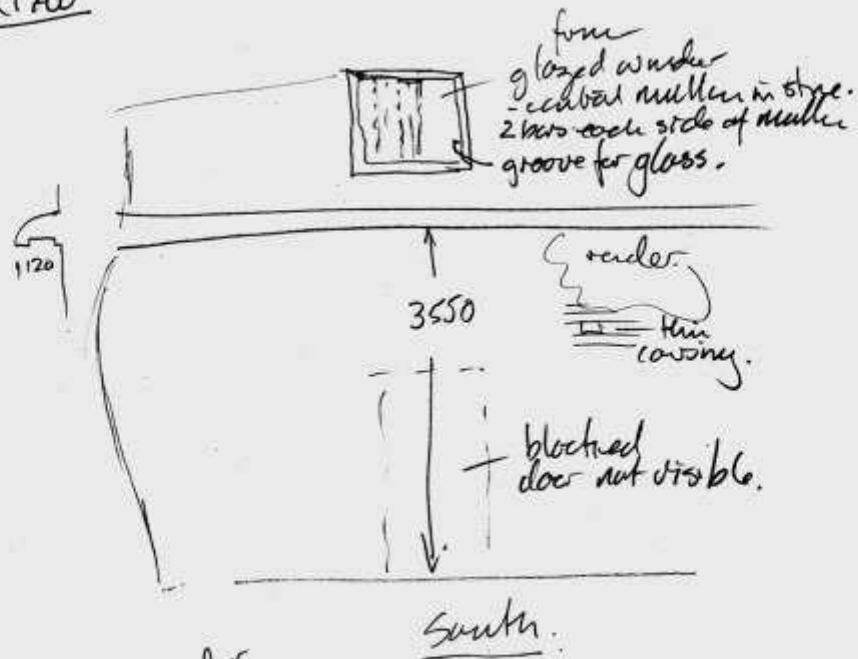


FURTHO DOVECOTE SURVEY NOTES 1993



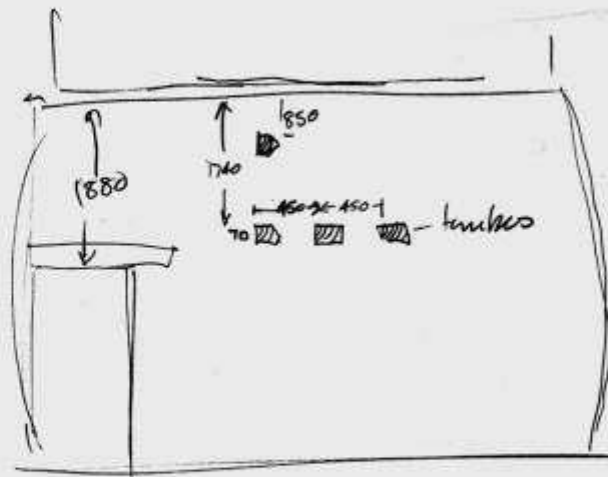
FURTHO DOVECOTE SURVEY NOTES 1993

Furt 760



render
flat face

Feb '93.



west side.

FURTHO DOVECOTE SURVEY NOTES 1993

