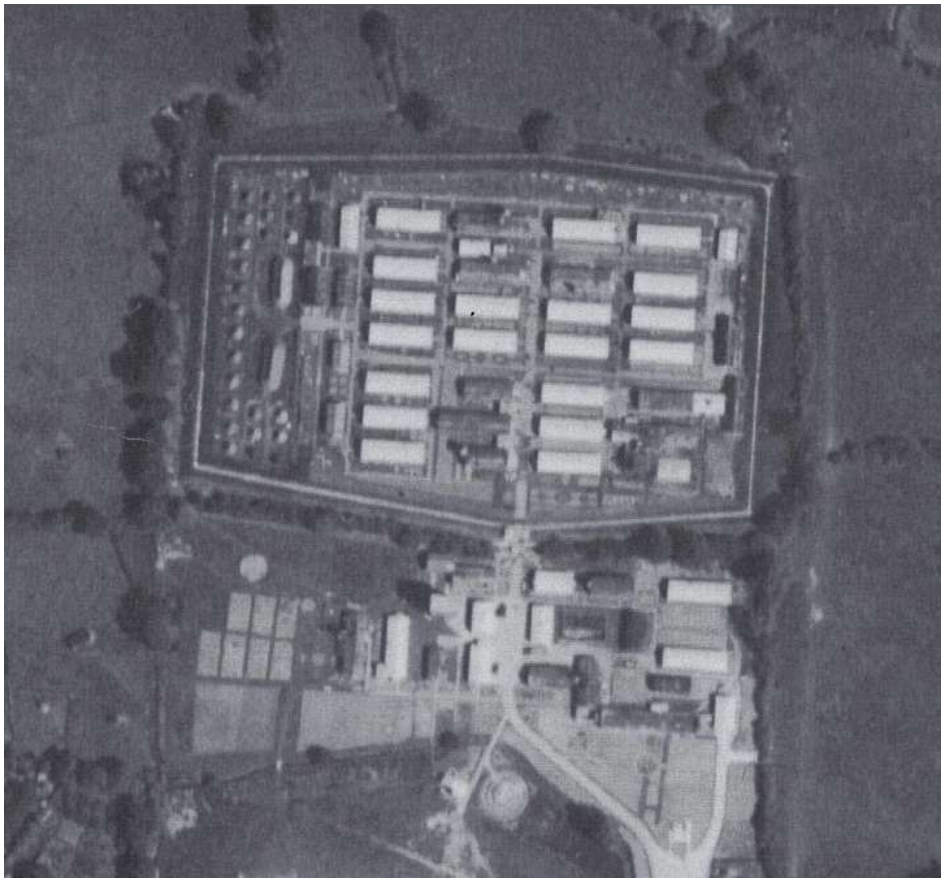
Colchester Archaeological Trust

CAT Report 2096
Issued October 2024

Historic building recording at Camp Poultry Farm, Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath, Essex, CM22 7AA

August 2024



CAT project ref.: 2024/07e
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Historic building recording at Camp Poultry Farm, Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath, Essex, CM22 7AA

August 2024

NGR: TL 51856 15625

Planning district.: Uttlesford
Planning ref.: UTT/23/1688/FUL

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ECC monitor: Katie Lee-Smith
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1 Summary

A programme of historic building recording was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust at Camp Poultry Farm, Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath, Bishops Stortford, Essex in August 2024. Twenty WWII era huts were recorded, which mostly comprised two types: MoWP standard huts (hollow clay block and concrete construction) and MoWP hall huts (sectional timber construction). During the war, the huts formed part of a prisoner of war camp, known as Camp 116. It was a 'standard' camp, with prisoners' huts to the north and officers' huts to the south and was set up initially to house Italian prisoners. The camp was decommissioned in 1955 and in 1969 Greenways Eggs moved into huts in the north of the camp.

2 Introduction (Fig 2)

This is the archive report of an historic building recording carried out at Camp Poultry Far, Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath, Bishops Stortford, Essex. The work was commissioned by Chris Loon (Springfields Planning and Development Ltd) on behalf of Greeenways and was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 29th August 2024. The site is located at NGR TL 51856 15625 (Fig 1).

Plans for the development of this site have been ongoing for a while, with four applications submitted to Uttlesford District Council since 2016. The first application (UTT/16/3697/FUL) was submitted in December 2016 and proposed the '*demolition of existing buildings and the development of 40 new dwellings and associated infrastructure'*. This application was withdrawn and another application (UTT/17/2499/FUL) for the *Demolition of existing buildings and the development of 26 new dwellings and associated infrastructure* was submitted. This application was refused. A third application (UTT/22/19/1947/FUL) was submitted in July 2022 proposing *Site redevelopment involving demolition of buildings (in B8 and ancillary Use) and erection of storage, packing, distribution and ancillary buildings (B8 Use). Erection of 1 no. dwelling with residential garden and related change of use of land. All related works, landscaping and infrastructure*, this application was subsequently withdrawn. The latest application (UTT/23/1688/FUL) was submitted to Uttlesford District Council in July 2023 and proposed the same development as the most recently withdrawn application.

In response to this application, the Essex County Council Place Services (ECCPS) Historic Environment Advisor (HEA) recommended that a Historic England building recording be made of the structures prior to their demolition (ECC 2024). This recommendation was given as the buildings form part of a WWII prisoner war camp. The recommendation was based on the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2023).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the building recording was prepared by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT 2024) and agreed with the HEA. All work was carried out in accordance with this WSI.

In addition to the project brief and WSI, all fieldwork and reporting was undertaken in accordance with:

- *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (*MoRPHE*) (Historic England 2015),
- Professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, including its *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2020a-c, 2022),
- East of England standards and frameworks published by East Anglian Archaeology (Brown & Glazebrook 2000, Gurney 2003, Medlycott 2011) and the recent review updates on https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/
- *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (Historic England 2016)
- Relevant health and safety guidelines and requirements (CAT 2024).

3 Aims

The aim of the building recording was to provide a detailed record and assessment of the buildings prior to demolition. The building recording was carried out to Level 3 (Historic England 2016) which is defined as:

"Level 3 is an analytical record and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis.

The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. The documentary sources used are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record may contain some discussion the building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance. It may form part of a wider survey of a number of buildings which will aim at an overall synthesis, such as a thematic or regional publication, when the use of additional source material may be necessary as well as a broader historical and architectural discussion of the buildings as a group."

In particular, the record considered:

- Plan and form of the site.
- Materials and method of construction.
- Date(s) of the structure(s).
- Original function and layout.
- Original and later fixtures and fittings.
- The significance of the site in its immediate local context.

4 Methodology

The following are included in this report:

- A documentary, cartographic and pictorial survey of the evidence pertaining to the history and evolution of the site.
- A large-scale block plan of the site.
- Annotated and phased floor-plan of the buildings at a scale of 1:100.
- A description of the buildings. The description addresses features such as materials, dimensions, method of construction and phasing.
- A photographic record comprising digital photographs of both general shots and individual features. Selected examples of the photographic record are clearly tied into the drawn record and reproduced as fully annotated photographic plates supporting the text. The photographic record is accompanied by a photographic register detailing location and direction of shot (Appendix 1).

5 Historical background (Fig 2)

The following archaeological background includes extracts of the ECC Brief (ECCPS 2024) and Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk).

The buildings detailed in this report comprise a series of prefabricated huts that formed part of WWII prisoner of war (PoW) camp. The camp, numbered 116, represents a typical example of a 'standard' camp and likely housed a combination of German and Italian prisoners during its time as a PoW camp. It originally comprised over 50 structures, 20 of which are detailed in this report.

The most common buildings used in the construction of standard camps were MoWP[1] standard huts with Laing huts, Nissen huts, British Concrete Federation (BCF) and Orlithuts also frequently used (Thomas 2003). Generally, MoWP huts were reserved for the prison officer's quarters and domestic purposes (such as cookhouses) while the timber huts would have been for prisoner accommodation. At Camp 116, the prisoner's huts occupied the land in the north of the site while the prisoner officer's huts were to the south.

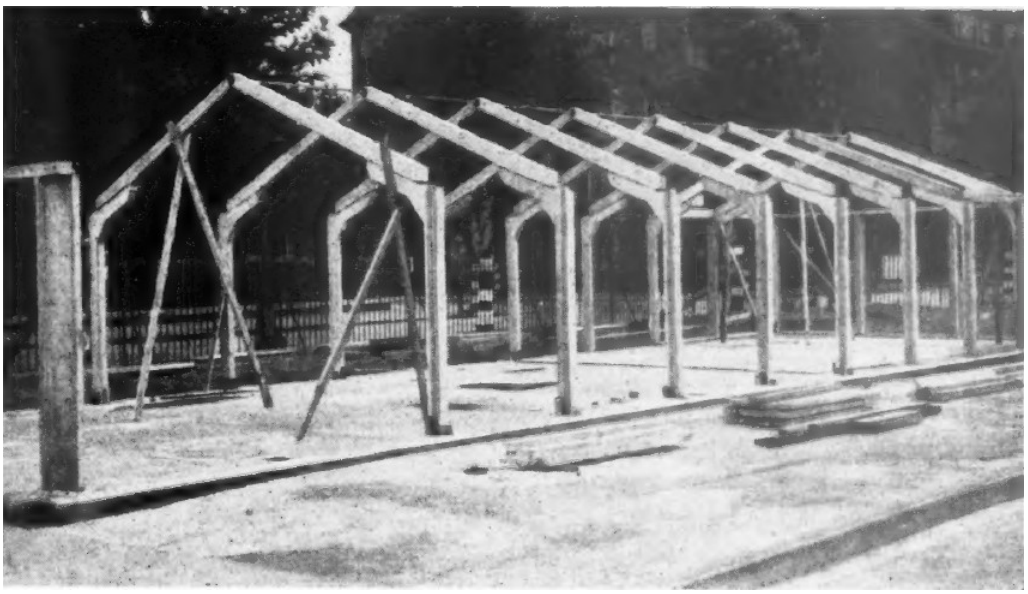
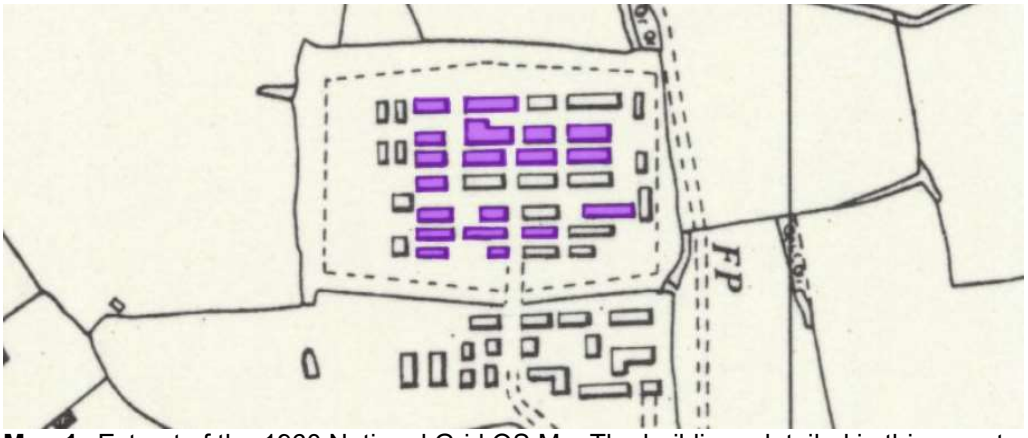


Plate 1 Photograph of a MoWP standard hut frame under construction (reproduced from *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Volume 49, Issue 11, September 1942, pp 193*).



Map 1 Extract of the 1960 National Grid OS MapThe buildings detailed in this report highlighted in purple.

The camp is recorded as comprising a combination MoWP standard huts and timber Laing huts (UDC 2021). However, it seems on closer inspection the huts proposed to be Laing huts are more likely to be MoWP hall huts. It is also noted that camp 116 was 'set up' in 1941, however, the MoWP standard hut wasn't designed and put into use until 1942. If the camp was established in 1941, the prisoners would have been

[1] MoWP has been used to reference both the Ministry of War Production and the Ministry of Works and Planning. Huts have been recorded under the names 'MoWP standard hut', 'Ministry of War Production standard hut', 'Ministry of Works standard hut' and the 'Ministry of War Supply standard hut', but all seeming to reference a hut of the same construction. An article from a 1942 edition of *The Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* references the Ministry of Works and Planning as developing the plans for the standard hut.

supplied with tents until the construction of the huts, which they would have likely built themselves.

The camp was decommissioned in 1955, and the land handed back to original owners, with many of the huts still *in-situ* (RPS 2022). Greenways Eggs purchased the northern portion of the camp, in 1969, to produce and sell eggs and has owned it ever since (https://www.greenwayseggs.co.uk/).

6 Building recording descriptive record (Figs 2-21)

The structures recorded at Camp Poultry Farm mostly fall into two categories: concrete and hollow clay block construction (MoWP standard hut) and sectional timber-framed construction (MoWP hall hut). The huts are all aligned roughly east/west and generally rectangular in shape. Most have a footprint of around 110-130m^2. Each hut has been assigned a number (*see* Fig 2).

The MoWP standard huts (Photograph 1) are constructed from a pre-cast, reinforced-concrete frame with hollow clay blocks (block dimensions: 305 x 220 x 100mm) as infill (henceforth referred to as panels). The panels are in generally in three configurations: entirely hollow clay blocks, half hollow clay blocks with a window surrounded by timber-framing or a doorway surrounded by hollow clay blocks. The corners of the building have a curved detail and original doorways have a concrete lintel. The roofs are gabled and clad in corrugated asbestos sheets.

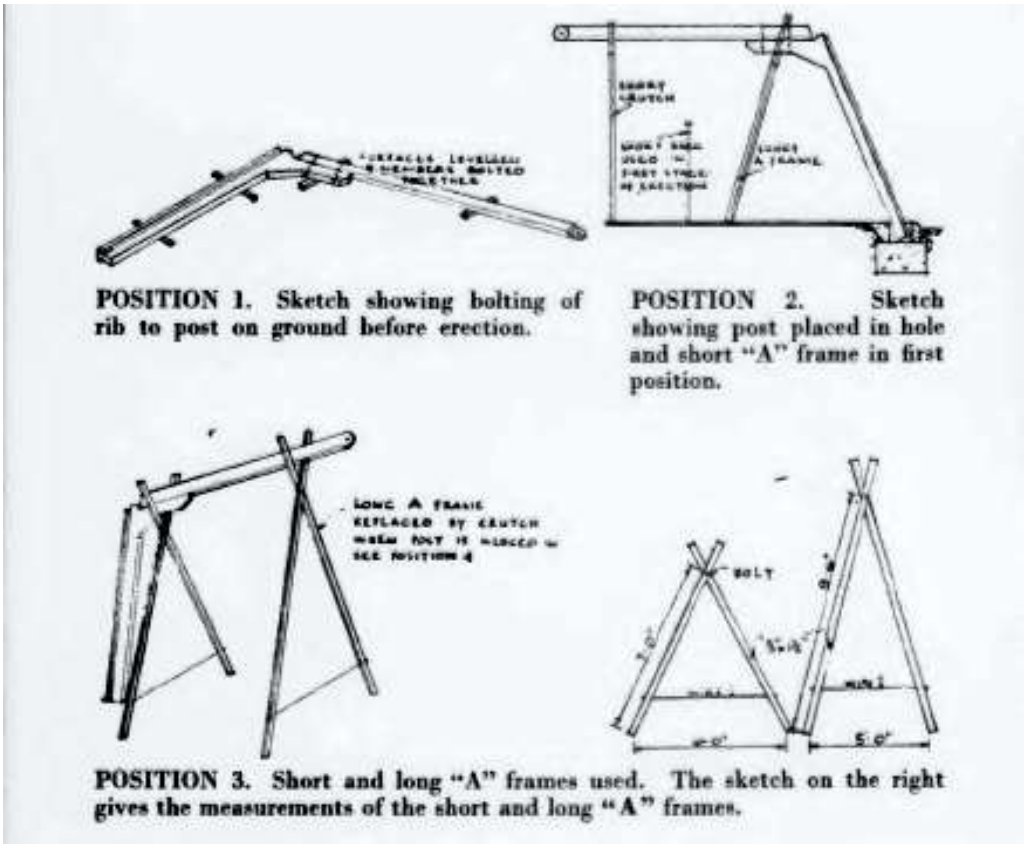


Plate 2 Instructions for the construction of a MoWP standard hut (reproduced from *The Architects Journal, volume 96, September 1942, issue 2483, pp 154*).

The precast concrete structure of the huts (Photograph 2) comprises posts, with concrete braces, from which rafters rise to meet at the apex of the roof. A secondary pair of timber rafters sit on top of the concrete rafters, which interrupt a number of timber purlins. The trusses of the hut are connected along the ridge line using lengths of gas pipe.

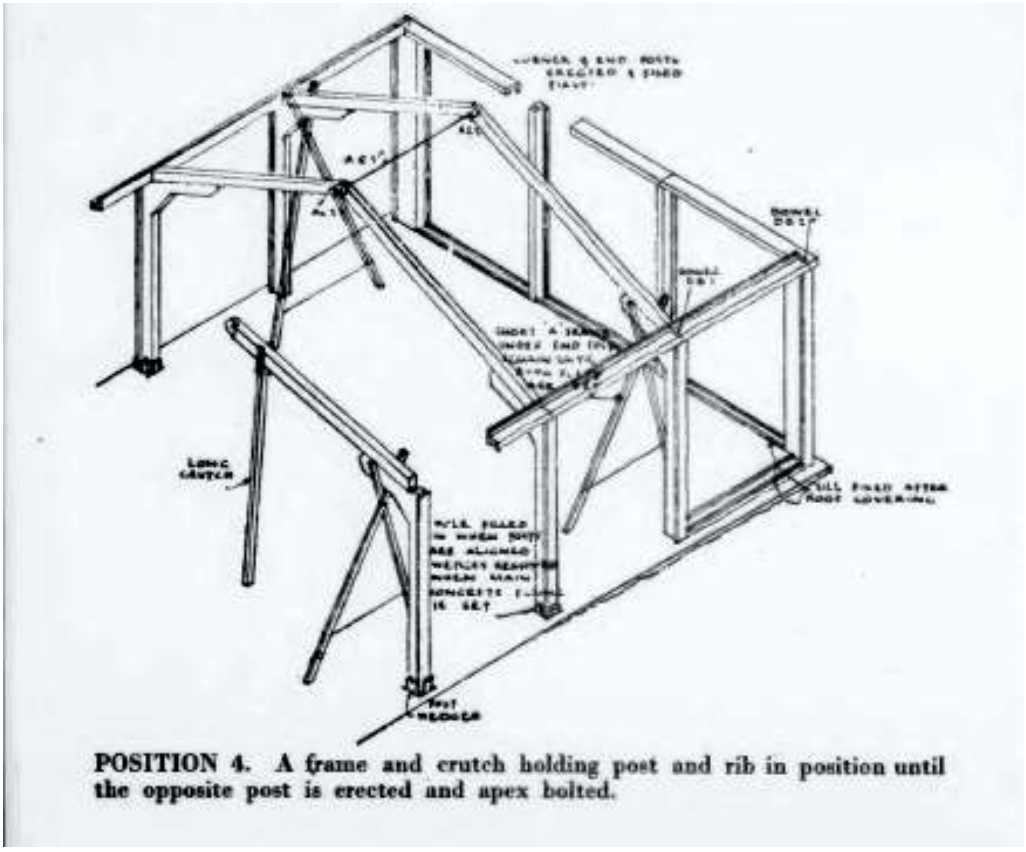


Plate 3 Instructions for the construction of a MoWP standard hut (reproduced from *The Architects Journal, volume 96, September 1942, issue 2483, pp 154*).

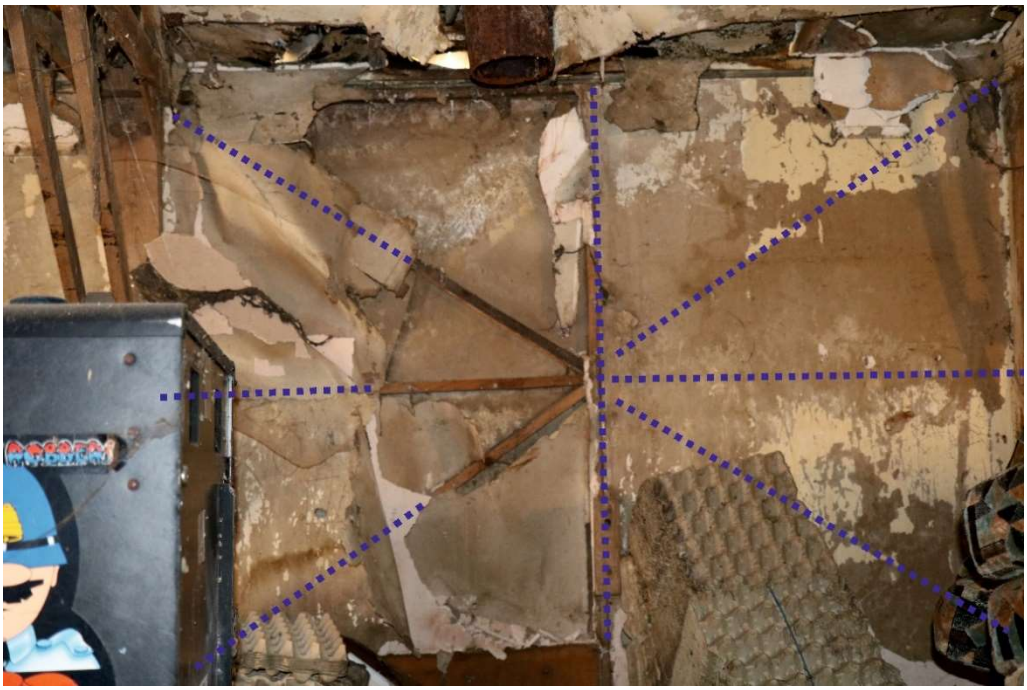
Photograph 1 Example of a MoWP standard hut (building 11). Photograph taken facing north-east.

Photograph 2 Roof structure of a MoWP standard hut (building 18). Photograph taken facing north-east.

The MoWP hall huts (Photograph 3) are constructed from pre-fabricated timber-frames covered with weatherboarding. These huts also have gabled roofs clad with corrugated asbestos sheets. The roof structure (Photograph 4) of the huts comprises pairs of double rafters rising from the wall-plate and meeting at the apex of the roof. The rafters are supported on a series of diagonal struts, with timber gussets, projecting from the tie-beams, arranged in pattern know as a Fink Truss. Between the tie-beams and posts are a series of straight braces. The wall-framing of the timber huts (Photograph 5) can be divided into panels, which are situated between each pair of posts. Each panel comprises a central stud with a horizonal girt, above the girt are diagonal braces, forming an X-shape either side of the stud, with a central horizontal brace. This style of bracing is also repeated beneath the girt.

Photograph 3 Example of MoWP hall huts. Photograph taken facing north-east.

Photograph 4 Roof construction of MoWP hall hut (building 7). Photograph taken facing west.



Photograph 5 Detail of wall-framing in MoWP hall hut (building 17). Obscured bracing projected in blue. Photograph taken facing south.

Buildings 1-4 (Figs 3-5)
Building 1 is a later addition to the complex and as such will not be detailed.

Exterior
Buildings 2,3 and 4 are MoWP standard huts that have been heavily altered. They are joined together with a series of passages, which are original to the structure. The passages are constructed from brick laid in Stretcher bond (brick dimensions: 225 x 110 x 65mm). The eastern elevation (Photograph 6) of these buildings has been painted white.

Photograph 6 Eastern elevation of building 1, 2, 3 and 4. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Photograph 7 Western elevation of building 2. Photograph taken facing east.

The eastern elevation of building 2 has a central metal-framed window surrounded by weatherboard, which has likely replaced a doorway. Above this, the gable has a number of air blocks. The northern elevation of building 2 has 2 blocked window openings and a blocked doorway, as well as a replacement metal-framed window.

A red brick structure, with a chimney, projects from the western elevation of building 2 (Photograph 7), in which a small extension has been built. The brick structure seems to be the remains of a tower for a water tank (the tank no longer surviving). It is built from bricks (brick dimensions: 220 x 110 65mm) laid in English bond, as is the chimney. The extension has two mono-pitched roofs clad with corrugated asbestos. The elevations are rendered and there is a two-light window and a doorway. The southern elevation of

building 2 has a single doorway and metal-framed window, along with a small four-light window on the extension.

Photograph 8 Southern elevation of building 3. Photograph taken facing north-east.

On the eastern elevation, building 3 has a large, inserted doorway adjacent to a single-light timber-framed window. The northern and southern elevations (Photograph 8) of building 3 have a series of openings blocked with plywood while the western elevation has been completely rebuilt in breeze blocks.

Photograph 9 Western elevation of building 4. Photograph taken facing east.

Building 4 has a large doorway on its eastern elevation, that is likely a larger replacement of a previous opening. On the northern and southern elevations, a number of the panels are half clad with plywood, blocking window openings. The

western elevation (Photograph 9) also has openings blocked with plywood along with a central doorway blocked with weatherboard.

On the eastern elevation, passage 1 has central double doors with a brick porch while passage 2 has two Crittall Windows – one six-light and one four-light. Three blocked window openings are present on the western elevation of both passages.

Interior

Building 2 (Photograph 10) has an inserted suspended ceiling and a concrete floor. The concrete braces of the roof structure poke through the ceiling and have been painted black. The walls are exposed hollow clay blocks painted white. There are three windows present – in the northern, eastern and southern walls. There are inserted doorways in the northern and southern walls. A small, inserted room in present in the north-west corner of the building. The extension of building 2 has been divided into two smaller rooms, to form a toilet and washroom.

Photograph 10 Interior of building 2. Photograph taken facing north-east.

The roof of building 3 (Photograph 11) has been mostly covered with plywood sheets and some of the structure has been painted black. The walls have been covered with plywood, painted white, and the floor is concrete. There is an inserted doorway in the eastern wall along with inserted entrances to passages 1 and 2 in the northern and southern walls. The western wall has been rebuilt and is exposed breeze block. A small office has been inserted into the north-eastern corner of the room; this was inaccessible at the time of recording.

Similarly to building 2, building 4 has an inserted suspended ceiling. The walls are covered with plywood sheets and the floor is concrete. There is an inserted opening in the southern wall, leading to passage 2, and a doorway in eastern wall (which appears to replace a smaller door). A small kitchen has been inserted into the south-east corner of the room, which runs into the adjacent passage. This was locked at the time of recording.

Photograph 11 Interior of building 3. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Passages 1 and 2 each have two buttresses in their western walls, which sit between three blocked windows. Passage 1 has a double doorway in the eastern wall.

Building 5 (Fig 6)
Building 5 is a MoWP standard hut that has had the roof raised, using breeze blocks, and has been extended to the east.

Exterior
The western elevation of building 5 appears to have been rebuilt and is dominated by a set of full-height double doors. Either side of the doors, the elevation has been rendered.

Photograph 12 Northern elevation of building 5, with detail of the raised roof. Photograph taken facing south-east.

Four two-light timber-framed windows are present on alternating panels of the southern elevation of building 5, along with a blocked doorway. The rear extension is clad with black weatherboard. The eastern elevation is plain weatherboard.

The first panel of the northern elevation has been rebuilt with breeze blocks and rendered. As with the southern elevation, four two-light timber-framed windows are present on alternating panels (Photograph 12). The modern lean-to is open fronted on this elevation, with a low mono-pitched roof.

Interior

The main roof structure of building 5 has been raised using breeze blocks, with poured concrete between the braces and rafters (Photograph 13). The walls have been painted white and the floor is concrete. A series of windows are present in the northern and southern walls, in opposite panels, along with a bricked-up doorway in the southern wall. There is a large, inserted double doorway that dominates the western wall. The panels of the eastern walls have been replaced with a doorway and timber-framed walling. A vehicle inspection pit has been inserted into the floor.

The rear extension of building 5 has different roof structure (Photograph 14) to the main building. It comprises pairs of rafters rising from the tie-beams to meet at the roof's apex, which are supported on a timber king post and two inclined struts, which project from the tie-beam. There is a timber fish-plate on both faces of the tie-beam, suggesting the beam is formed from two shorter lengths of timber joined together. There are three windows in the southern wall and an inserted doorway in the northern wall. A room has been inserted into the north-east corner of the extension, which was inaccessible at the time of recording.

Photograph 13 Interior of building 5. Photograph taken facing south-east.

Photograph 14 Roof construction of rear extension of building 5. Photograph taken facing north-east.

Building 6 (Fig 7)
Building 6 differs from the rest of buildings recorded as it is smaller, covering an area of only 37m^2, and is constructed from red bricks (brick dimensions: 220 x 110 65mm) laid in Stretcher bond.

Exterior
The western elevation (Photograph 15) of building 6 is relatively plain and only has a pair of centrally located double doors. The northern (Photograph 16) and southern elevations are parallels of one another, with two six-light Crittall windows flanking a brick buttress at one end and a further two six-light Crittall windows at the other end. The eastern elevation of building 6 was not accessible at the time of recording.

Photograph 15 Western elevation of building 6. Photograph taken facing east.

Photograph 16 Northern elevation of building 6. Photograph taken facing south-east.

Interior

The roof of building 6 (Photograph 17) is supported on one timber truss and an internal brick wall. The timber truss comprises a double-stacked tie-beam, from which two rafters rise to meet the top of a king post, which projects from the centre of the tie-beam. There is a single purlin on each roof pitch along with a ridge beam, all of which are supported on timber cleats. The northern and southern walls have a timber wall-plate, both of which have a side-halved scarf-joint.

Photograph 17 Detail of roof construction of building 6. Photograph taken facing south-east.

The walls of building 6 are bare brickwork and the floor is concrete. A doorway is present in the internal wall, which shows evidence of being expanded. Eight Crittall

windows are present, four in the northern wall and four in the southern, along with a double doorway in the western wall.

Building 7 (Fig 8)
Building 7 is a MoWP hall hut.

Exterior
The eastern elevation of building 7 is somewhat dilapidated, with much of the weatherboarding missing. There is a central doorway, with no surviving door, which is flanked by the remains of two timber-framed windows. Both the northern and southern elevations (Photograph 18) have four timber-framed windows, in various states of decay. The western elevation has completely collapsed.

Photograph 18 Southern elevation of building 7. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Photograph 19 Detail of light fitting in building 7. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Interior
The interior of building 7 is largely clad with plasterboard and plywood, while the floor is covered with hay (but is presumably concrete). Along the lower third of the walls, metal sheeting has been added. Several original light fittings are present on the roof, with Bakelite ceiling roses, metal lamp holders and braided cords (Photograph 19).

Building (Fig 9)
Building 8 is a MoWP hall hut.

Photograph 20 Western elevation of building 8. Photograph taken facing east.

Exterior
A large single door is situated in the centre of the eastern elevation (Photograph 20). The southern elevation has five window openings blocked with weatherboard and the lower portion of the elevation is clad with corrugated metal sheets. The northern and western elevations were obscured at the time of recording.

Interior
Building 8 was not accessible at the time of recording.

Building 9 (Fig 10)
Building 9 is MoWP hall hut.

Exterior
The eastern elevation of building 9 has an unequal double door whist the western elevation has a single vertically planked door, which is flanked by two blocked window openings. The northern (Photograph 21) and southern elevations both have five window openings, blocked with weatherboard, and corrugated metal cladding at the base of the elevation.

Interior
Building 9 was locked at the time of recording.

Photograph 21 Southern elevation of building 9. Photograph taken facing north.

Building 10 (Fig 11)
Building 10 is a MoWP standard hut with a concrete water tank on brick supports.

Exterior
The eastern elevation of building 10 has a central timber door with a blocked window opening on either side, one with breeze blocks and the other with weatherboard. In the gable of this elevation are a number of clay air blocks. The southern elevation is largely plain with four window openings, blocked with either weatherboard or plywood.

Photograph 22 Northern elevation of building 10. Photograph taken facing south-west.

In the centre of the western elevation is a wide timber door. To the south of the door is an original doorway, which has been sealed with concrete, an indication that the

central door is inserted. The top half of the northern panel has been blocked with concrete, probably replacing a window opening. In the gable of this elevation are a number of clay air blocks.

The northern elevation (Photograph 22) has a single two-light timber-framed window along with three blocked openings. A concrete water tank is also present on the northern elevation of building 10. It is supported on two rectangular pillars, comprising red brick (brick dimensions: 225 x 110 x 65mm) laid in English bond.

Interior
Building 10 was inaccessible at the time of recording.

Building 11 (Fig 12)
Building 11 is a MoWP standard hut with a concrete water tank on a brick built tower.

Photograph 23 Northern elevation of building 11. Photograph taken facing south-west.

Exterior
The eastern elevation of building 11 is clad with timber weatherboard, rather than being of hollow clay block construction like the rest of the structure. The elevation has a set of off-centre double doors.

A number of panels on the southern elevation have openings blocked with either plywood or concrete.

There is a central original doorway, in the western elevation, which has been sealed. The panels either side of the doorway have weatherboard on the upper half. There are several air blocks in the gable of this elevation.

A blocked original doorway is present on the northern elevation (Photograph 23) of building 11, along with three blocked window openings. Adjacent to the doorway is a brick tower with a concrete water tank. The tower is C-shaped in construction and comprises red bricks (brick dimensions: 225 x 110 x 65mm) laid in English bond.

Interior

The roof of building 11 is covered with plywood while the walls are exposed clay blocks. The floor is concrete. As the building has been utilised for modern storage, closer inspection of the interior was impeded (Photograph 24).

Photograph 24 Interior of building 11. Photograph taken facing north-east.

Building 12 (Fig 13)

Building 12 is a MoWP hall hut.

Photograph 25 Western elevation of building 12. Photograph taken facing north-east.

Exterior

A set of double timber doors are off-centre on the eastern elevation of building 12. Both the northern and southern elevations have five blocked window openings with the lower portion of elevation is covered with corrugated metal sheets. The western

elevation (Photograph 25) has a central timber door, with iron strap hinges, flanked by blocked window openings. Corrugated metal sheets have been added to part of the elevation, preventing the door from opening.

Interior
The walls and roof of building 12 are clad with plasterboard, with areas repaired with plywood, and the floor is concrete. Metal sheets have been added to the lower portion of the walls. The roof structure has been altered by modern repairs, which have adjusted the height of the tie-beams and added a king post (Photograph 26).

Photograph 26 Interior of building 12. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Building 13 (Fig 14)
Building 13 is a MoWP hall hut.

Exterior
Much of the weatherboard has been removed from the eastern elevation of building 13, along with the frame beneath, making the hut open-fronted (Photograph 27). Palettes have been stacked beneath the gable, presumably to support the buildings frame. Weatherboard remains on the gable of this elevation. The northern and southern elevations have five window openings, blocked with weatherboard, with the lower portion of elevation covered with corrugated metal sheets. Some of the boards have come away from the southern elevation and revealed the timber-framing beneath. A central, vertically-planked door is present in the western elevation, with a blocked window to the south.

Interior
In building 13, the walls and roof are clad with plasterboard and with plywood, with a metal sheet covering on the lower third. The floor is concrete.

Photograph 27 Eastern elevation of building 13. Photograph taken facing west.

Building 14 (Fig 15)
Building 14 is a MoWP hall hut.

Photograph 28 Eastern elevation of building 14. Photograph taken facing west.

Exterior
The eastern elevation of building 14 (Photograph 28) has a set of double timber doors, off centre, along with a single blocked window opening. It seems likely the original central door was widened, incorporating a window to create the double doors. Both the northern and southern elevations have five blocked window openings, covered with weatherboarding, with the lower portion of elevation covered with corrugated metal sheets. A number of corrugated metal sheets have been used higher up on the southern elevation, presumably to repair areas where the weatherboard has come away. The western elevation has a central vertically-planked door, although opening it

is prevented by the presence of corrugated metal cladding on the lower portion of the elevation. There is also a single blocked window opening.

Interior
The ceiling and walls of building 14 (Photograph 29) are covered with plasterboard, which has come away in areas. Metal sheets have been added to the lower portion of the wall. The southern wall has had extra timber-framing added. The floor is concrete.

Photograph 29 Interior of building 14. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Building 15 (Fig 16)
Building 15 is MoWP hall hut.

Photograph 30 Southern elevation of building 15. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Exterior
There are double timber doors, off-set from the centre, along with a single blocked window opening in the eastern elevation of building 15. Similarly to building 14, it seems likely the double doors are an expansion of an original single door. The northern and southern elevations (Photograph 30) have five window openings, blocked with weatherboarding. The lower portion of the southern elevation is covered with corrugated metal sheets. In the centre of the western elevation is a vertically-planked door, either side of which is a window opening – one blocked from the interior and the other from the exterior. At the base of the elevation of is some corrugated metal sheeting, preventing the door from opening.

Interior
Building 15 has a mixture of plasterboard and plywood covering the walls, with a concrete floor (Photograph 31). As with many of the previously described timber huts, metal sheets have been added to the walls, which have subsequently been covered with plywood.

Photograph 31 Interior of building 15. Photograph taken facing south-west.

Building 16 (Fig 17)
Building 16 is a MoWP hall hut.

Exterior
The eastern elevation of building 16 has a central vertically-planked door, with iron strap hinges. Either side of the doorway is a window opening, blocked with plywood. The northern and southern elevations have five window openings, some of which are blocked while others still have the frames and glass. A large quantity of weatherboard has come away from the southern elevation, exposing the frame beneath (Photograph 16). The western elevation has a central door, flanked by two windows, both of which have been covered.

Photograph 32 Southern elevation of building 16. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Interior

The walls and ceiling of building 16 were clad with plasterboard, with areas of damage covered with plywood, and metal sheets. The floor is concrete.

Photograph 33 Interior of building 16. Photograph taken facing south-west.

<u>Building 17</u> (Fig 18)

Building 17 is a MoWP hall hut.

Exterior

A single timber door is present in the centre of the eastern elevation of building 17. A window, blocked with weather board, is located to the south of the doorway. Along both the northern (Photograph 34) and southern elevations are five window openings, all

which have been blocked – some from the interior and others from the exterior. The windows blocked from the inside still have their timber-frames along with the remains of external vertical sliding-shutters. The western elevation of building 17 has two blocked windows, either side of a single, partially blocked, doorway.

Photograph 34 Northern elevation of building 17. Photograph taken facing south-east.

Photograph 35 Interior of building 17. Photograph taken facing north-west.

Interior

The interior of building 17 (Photograph 35) has plasterboard cladding, with a lower covering of metal sheeting. The floor is concrete.

Building 18 (Fig 19)
Building 18 is a MoWP standard hut.

Exterior
The western elevation (Photograph 36) of building 18 is quite dilapidated, with only one full panel remaining, which has a single timber-framed window with no surviving glass. The southern elevation was mostly obscured by vegetation at the time of recording. An original doorway is present in the eastern elevation, along with an inserted door and a blocked opening. A number of the panels in the northern elevation have windows blocked by either timber or breeze blocks.

Photograph 36 Western elevation of building 18. Photograph taken facing east.

Interior
Building 18 was being used to store stacks of boxes at the time of recording, so detailed inspection of the interior was limited. The walls appear to be painted hollow clay blocks, and the floor is concrete. There is an internal dividing wall, which seems to have a centrally located door. The room behind the wall was inaccessible.

Building 19 (Fig 20)
Building 19 is a MoWP hall hut.

Exterior
The western elevation (Photograph 37) of building 19 is largely plain weatherboard with a single vertically-planked door in the centre. Four windows are evident on the southern elevation, presumably with a fifth obscured by the vegetation growing on the side of the building. Two of the windows are timber-framed with three-lights while the others are blocked with weatherboard. The western elevation of building 19 has two covered window openings and a modern metal structure between them. The northern elevation was not accessible at the time of recording.

Interior
Building 19 was only partially accessible at the time of recording as the door could not be fully opened. From what could be gleaned, the walls were mostly covered with plywood while the ceiling was partially covered with plasterboard. The floor was concrete. The space seemed to be dominated by battery hen cages.

Photograph 37 Western elevation of building 19. Photograph taken facing east.

Building 20
Building 20 was a MoWP hall hut but has collapsed, thus making it not possible to be recorded.

Photograph 38 Building 20. Photograph taken facing south-west.

Building 21 (Fig 21)
Building 21 is a MoWP hall hut.

Exterior
A set of double timber-doors is present in the western elevation of building 21, adjacent to a single blocked window. The northern elevation has five window openings, blocked with weatherboarding, and the lower portion of the elevation is covered with corrugated metal sheets. On the eastern elevation (Photograph 39) is a centrally located vertically-

planked door, with strap hinges, and a blocked window opening on either side. The southern elevation, whilst presumably a mirror of the northern elevation, was inaccessible at the time of recording.

Interior
Building 21 was not accessible at the time of recording.

Photograph 39 Eastern elevation of building 21. Photograph taken facing west.

7 Discussion

During the early years of WWII, only a few PoW camps were established in the UK, as the British government were opting to send German PoWs to Canada once they had been interrogated (Thomas 2003). This situation began to change following the success of the 8th Army's North African Campaign against the Italian army, during which a substantial number of Italian PoWs were captured (*ibid*). Initially, the prisoners were held in camps in North Africa but were eventually brought to England to be held in purpose built 'standard camps' (*ibid*).

The PoW camp, known as Camp 116, set up at Hatfield Heath was a 'standard camp' and originally comprised over 50 huts, roughly 34 of which survive today. Twenty of the surviving buildings, in various states of decay, are part of Camp Poultry Farm, an egg processing facility that moved onto the land in the late 1960's. The most common variety of hut type used in PoW camps were MoWP standard huts, although other types of temporary hutting were used in conjunction with these.

As the war progressed, the demand for resources for the war effort necessitated the economic use of building materials and as such an expansive range of temporary huts, utilising a variety of materials, were designed for military use (Draper 2018). The MoWP standard hut was designed in 1942 to '*co-ordinate many unrelated attempts to save time, materials and labour by the use of huts'* (RIBA 1942). The frame is designed in such a way that the constructer may exploit a range of infill materials, dependant on what is locally available and suitable for the buildings intended purpose, this includes both light and heavyweight materials (*ibid*). The standard and prefabricated nature of the hut allows for rapid erection and easy adaption for a range of purposes (The Architects Journal 1942b, Plate 4).

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STANDARD HUT

MOWP has designed a Standard Hut for rapid erection, to speed the construction of army camps, hostels for factory workers, and so on. This hut can be adapted for use as a dormitory, a recreation room, a dining room or a canteen. One of these huts is now on view on a site behind the Tate Gallery, London; the method of erection is illustrated and described here.

Plate 4 Extract from *The Architects Journal* (Volume 96, September 1942, Issue 2483, pp 154)

The sectional timber huts present on the site are most often referred to as 'Laing Huts', however, the timber-framing employed within the structure roof and walls is more akin to a MoWP Hall Hut. Two types of Laing hut were produced during WWII, the Ministry of Supply Laing Hut (Plate 5) and the Air Ministry Revised Laing Hut (Draper 2018). The roof truss of both types of huts uses a king post with straight braces at either end of the tie-beam, not the Fink style truss seen at Camp Poultry Farm. The wall-framing of the Laing huts has close together studs with diagonal bracing, either beneath the windows or in the corners of the panels. The wall-framing of the timber huts detailed in this report comprises one central stud per panel, with diagonal braces arranged in X-shapes, above and below a girt, along with horizontal braces (*see* Photograph 5 above). Both the Fink style truss and X-shaped bracing can be seen in plans for MoWP hall huts (The Architects Journal 1942a, Plate 6). Hall huts would generally use plasterboard as cladding, so the use of weatherboard here may seem irregular, but it is likely due to whatever materials were readily available at the time of construction.

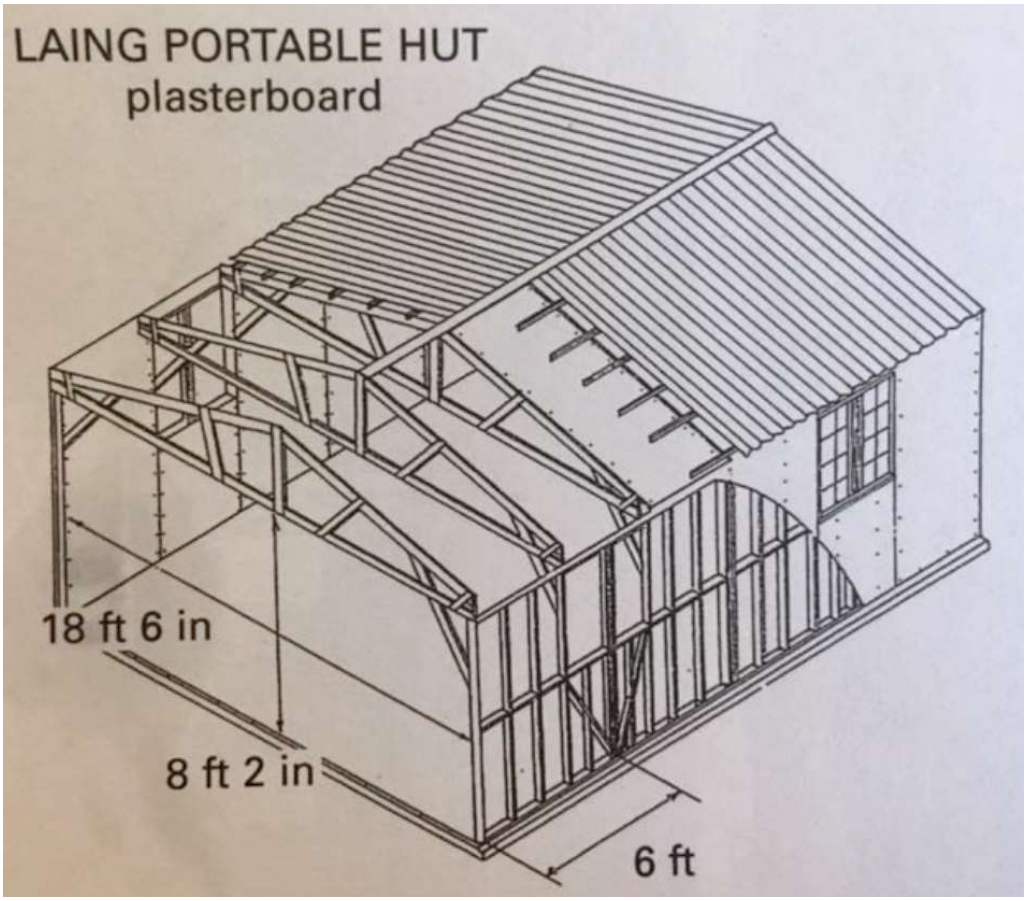

Plate 5 Laing hut framework (image by Paul Francis).

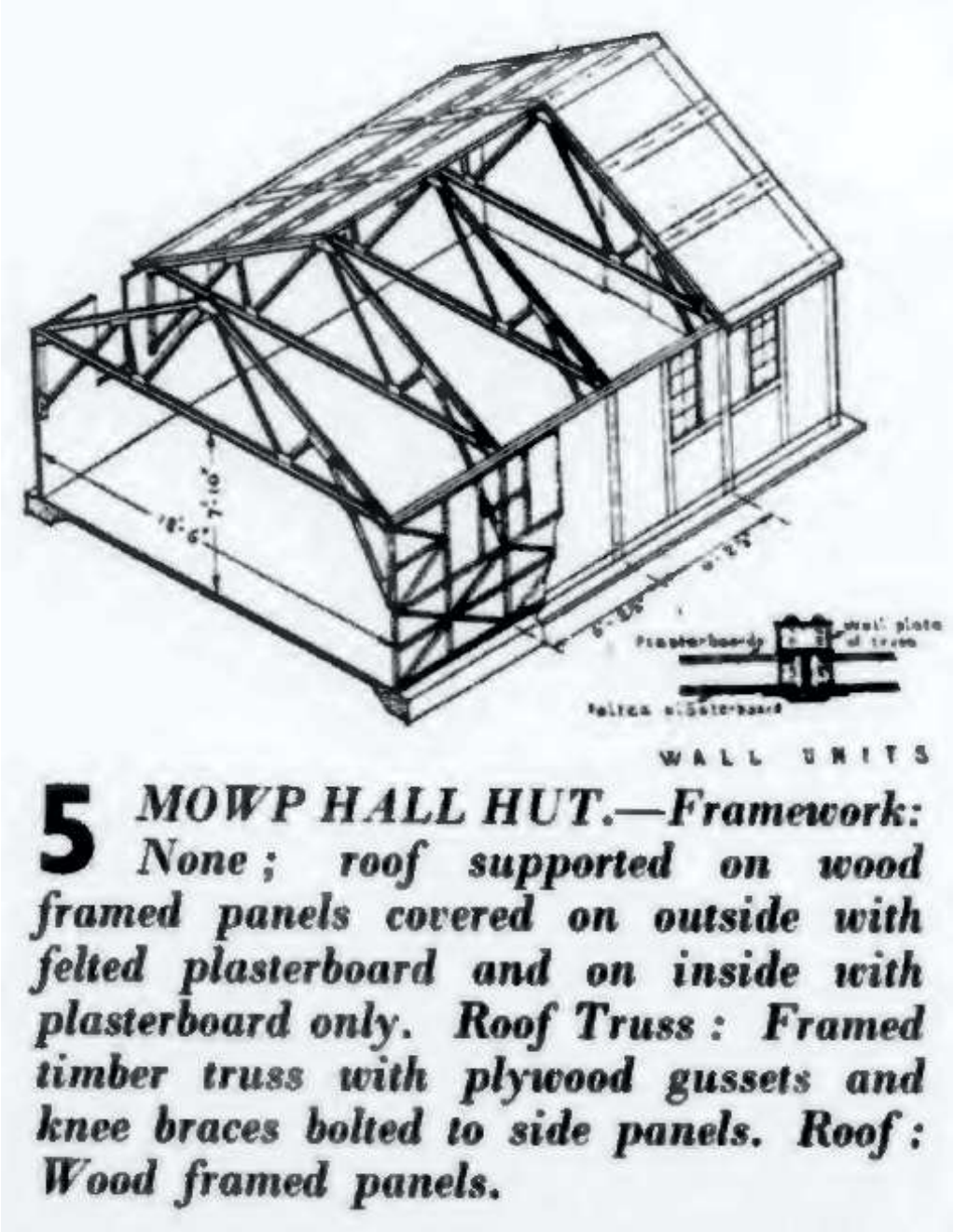

Plate 6 MoWP hall hut framework (reproduced from *The Architects Journal, Volume 96, Issue 2481, August 1942, pp 107*).

The significance of the buildings at Camp Poultry Farm, as a heritage asset, lies not in their architectural merit but in what they symbolise. They provide tangible link to a time which living witnesses are being coming fewer and fewer, but, as with many structures of this era that were intended to have a temporary nature, the buildings are somewhat lacklustre in their appearance and basic in construction. The recording of these structures is paramount due to their historical significance, but their dilapidated state reminds us of the importance of preservation by record. These types of huts were not designed to be long-lasting, so surviving many years beyond their intended lifespan has meant many of the huts have fallen into a state of considerable disrepair and many others altered to allow change in use.

8 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank Chris Loon (Springfields Planning and Development Ltd) and Greenways for commissioning and funding the historic building recording. The recording was carried out by Sarah Veasey. Figures are by Sarah Veasey, based on original architect's drawings by John Finch Partnership and on-site recording. The project was monitored by Katie Lee-Smith for Essex County Council.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at http://cat.essex.ac.uk

The Architects Journal	1942a	'Prefabricated Huts' in *The Architects Journal, Volume 96, Issue 2481*
The Architects Journal	1942b	'Standard Hut' in *The Architects Journal, Volume 96, Issue 2483*
Brown, N & Glazebrook, J	2000	*Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy.* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper **8** (EAA **8**).
CAT	2023	*Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for historic building recording and archaeological evaluation at Camp Poultry Farm, Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath, Bishops Stortford, CM22 7AA* by S Veasey and C Hill
CIfA	2020a	*Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.* Published 2014, revised 2020
CIfA	2020b	*Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.* Published 2014, revised 2020
CIfA	2020c	*Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings and structures*
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Draper, K L	2018	*Wartime Huts: The Development, Typology and Identification of Temporary Military Buildings in Britian 1914-1945*
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Historic England	2016	*Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice*
MHCLG	2023	*National planning policy framework*
RIBA	1942	'The M.O.W.P Standard Hut' in *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Volume 96, Issue 11*
RPS	2023	*Built Heritage Statement: Camp Farm, Mill Lane, Hatfield Heath, Hertfordshire, CM22 7AA*
Thomas, R	2003	*Prisoner of War Camps (1939-1948)*
UDC	2021	*Uttlesford Local Heritage List*

Websites accessed:
https://www.greenwayseggs.co.uk/

10 Abbreviations and glossary

brace	supporting member of a timber-frame
CAT	Colchester Archaeological Trust

CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
EHER	Essex Historic Environment Record, held by the ECC
English-bond	a brickwork bond created from alternate courses of headers and stretchers
ERO	Essex Records Office
Fish-plate	a flat piece of metal or wood used to connect two beams
girt	a horizontal structural member in a timber-framed wall
gusset	a triangular piece of metal or wood used to strengthen joints
HE	Historic Environment
King post	upright post in the centre of a roof truss
lintel	horizontal support of timber, stone, concrete, or steel across the top of a door or window
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	**O**nline **A**cces**S** to the **I**ndex of Archaeological Investigation**S**, http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main
PoW	Prisoner of war camp
rafter	an inclined timber following the slope of the roof
stretcher-bond	a brickwork bond where each curse consists of only stretchers – indicating a cavity wall
stud	in wall frames the upright smaller section timbers between the main posts of the frame
truss	the framework supporting a structure
wall-plate	a timber running horizontally along the top of a wall to receive the ends of common rafters
WWII	global conflict from 1939-1945

11 Archive deposition

The archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with the Archaeological Data Service.

12 Contents of digital archive

The CAT WSI
The report (CAT Report 2096)
Digital plans
Site digital photos and log

Distribution list
Greenways
Katie Lee-Smith, ECCHEA
EHER

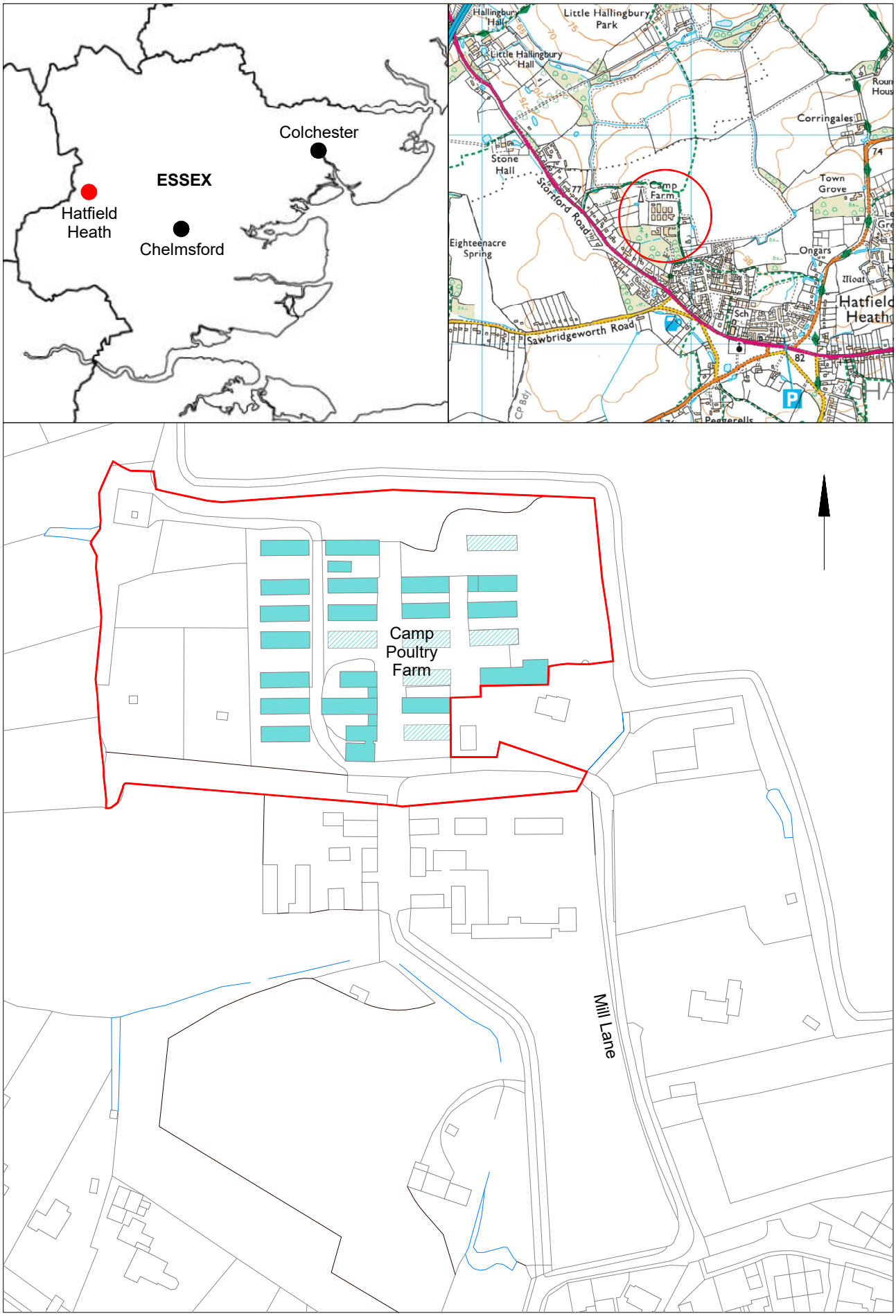


Fig 1 Site location. Recorded buildings highlighted in blue.

0 100 m

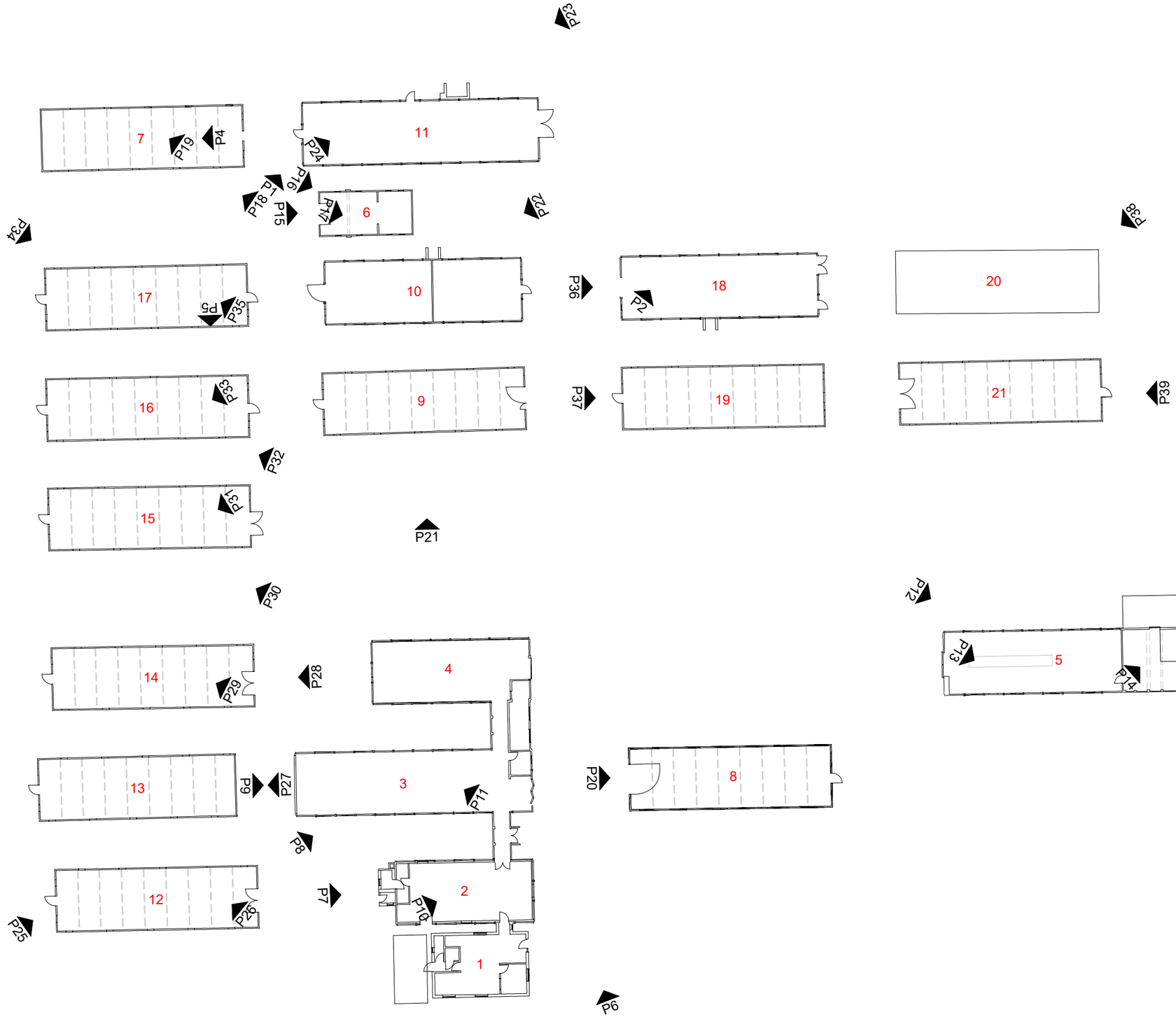


Fig 2 Site layout. Building numbers in red. Location and direction of photographs reproduced in text shown.

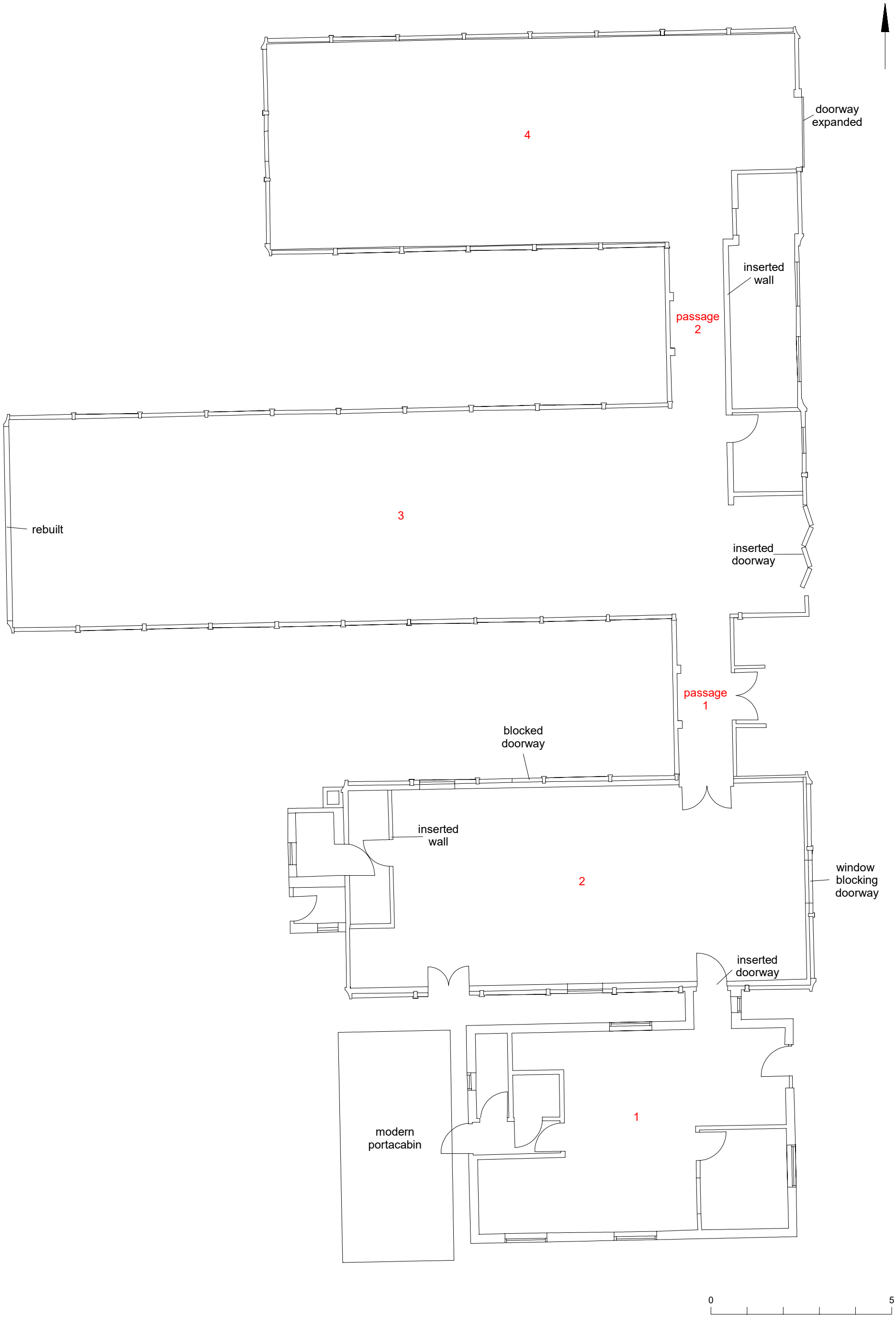


Fig 3 Floor plan of buildings 1-4

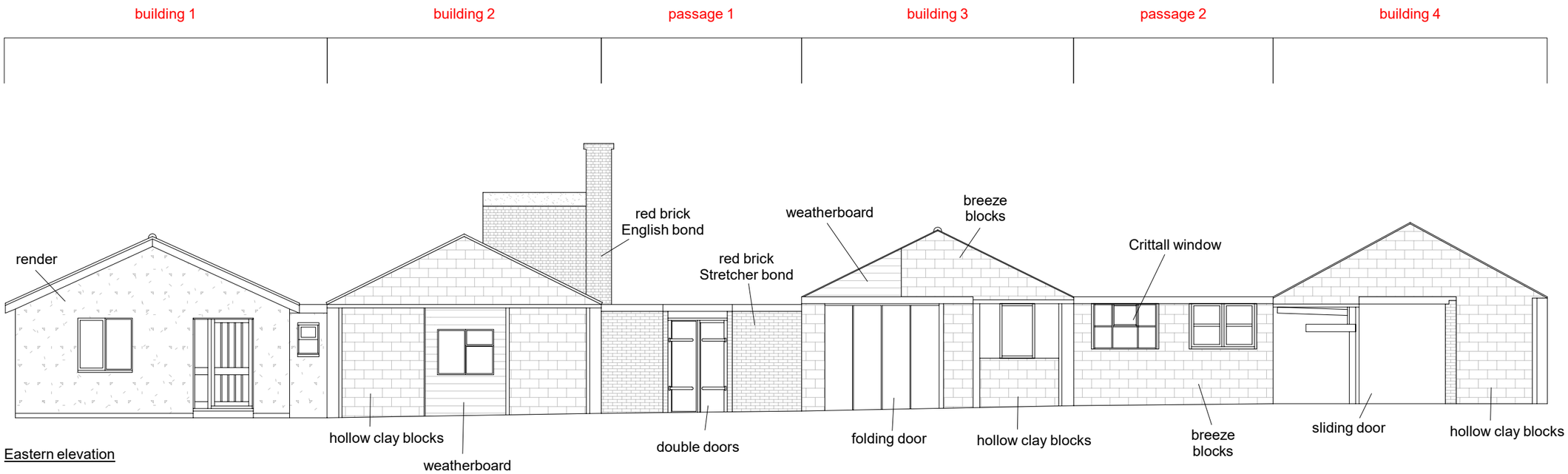


Fig 4 Elevations of buildings 1-4.

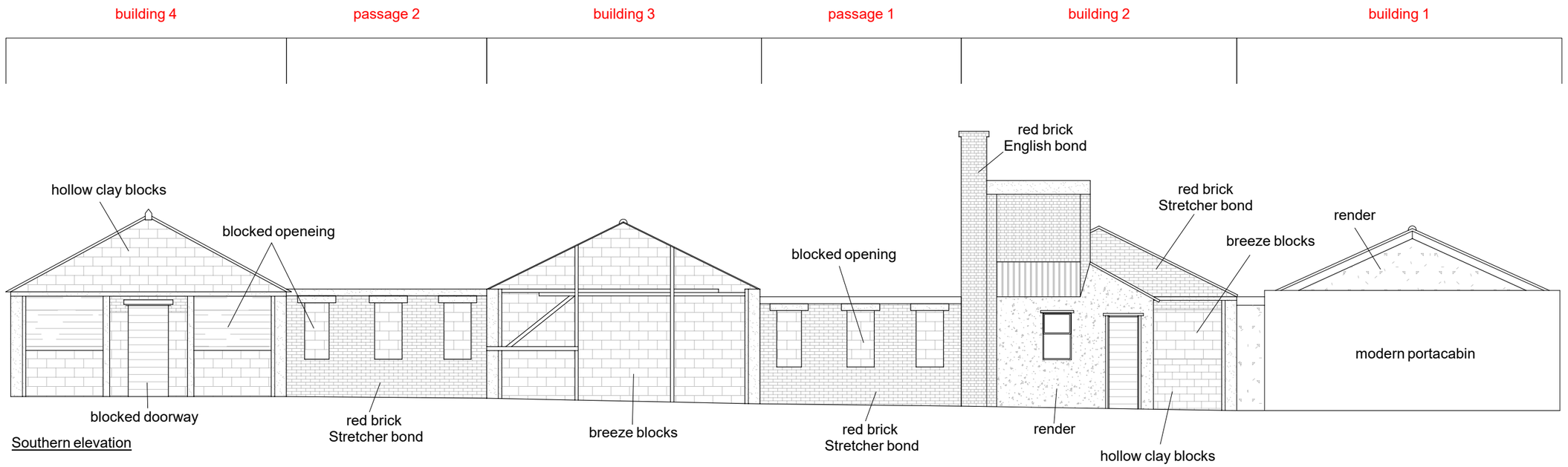
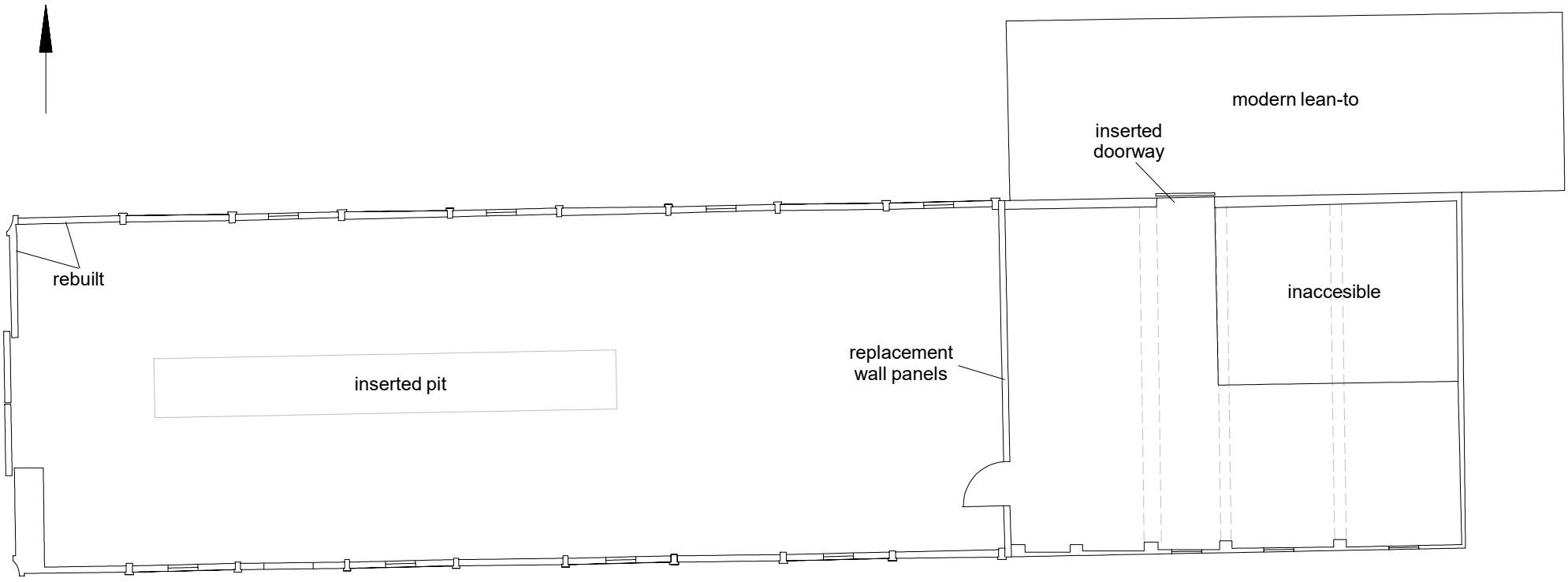
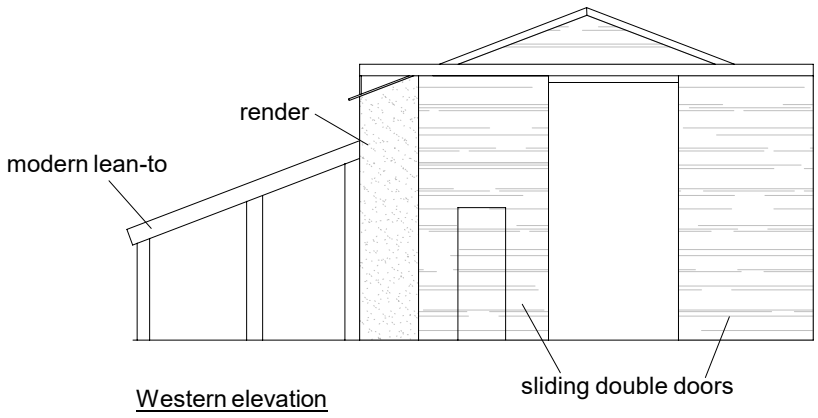
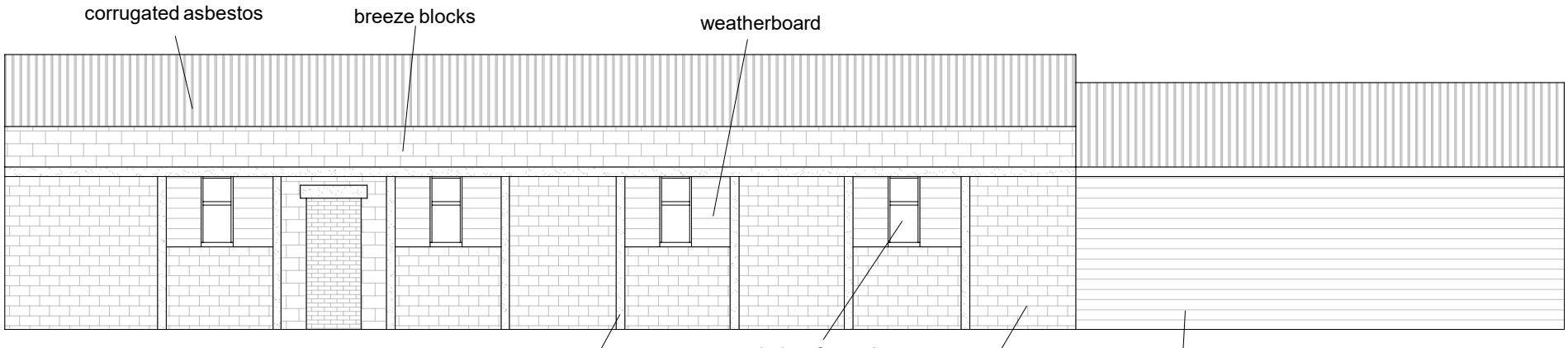


Fig 4 Elevations of buildings 1-4.

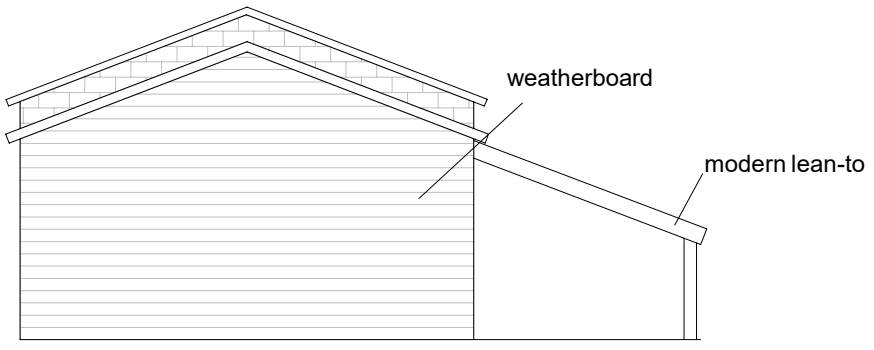




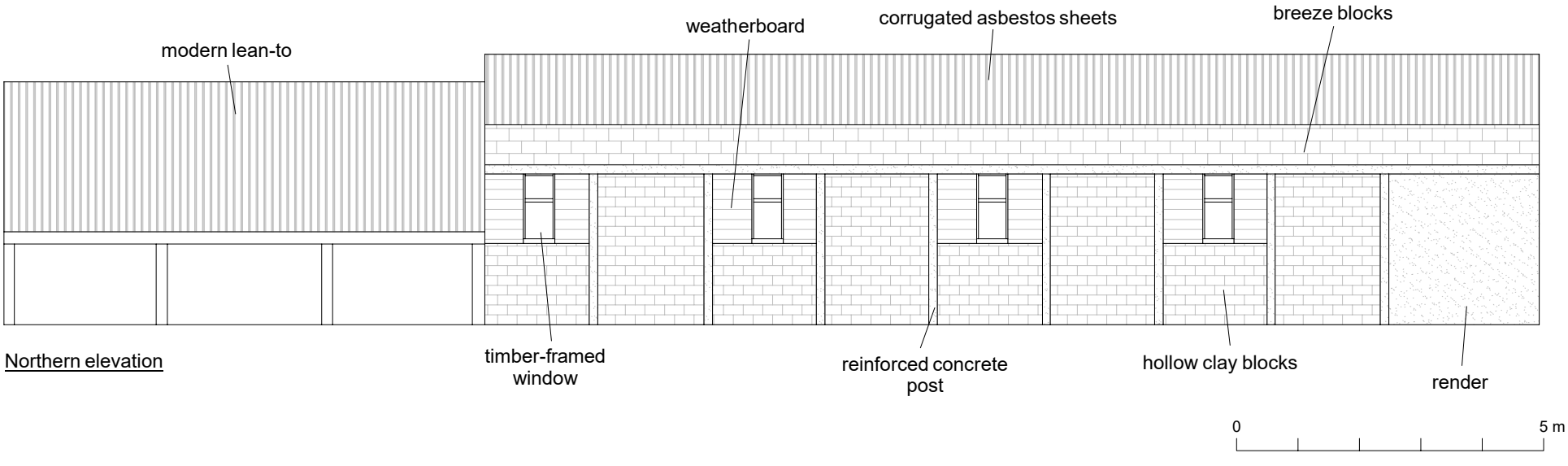
Western elevation



Southern elevation



Eastern elevation



Northern elevation

Fig 6 Building 5 floor plan and elevations.

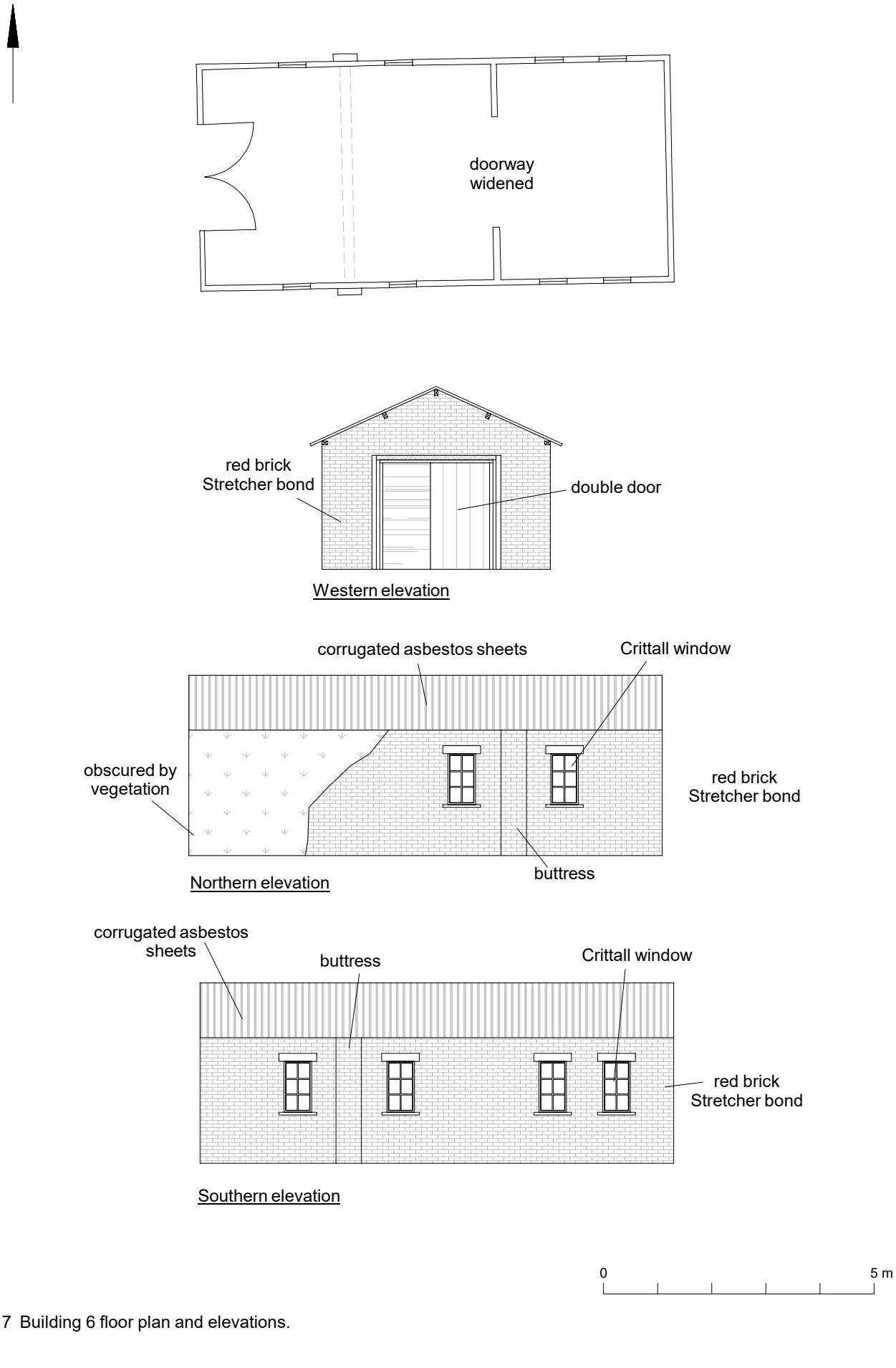
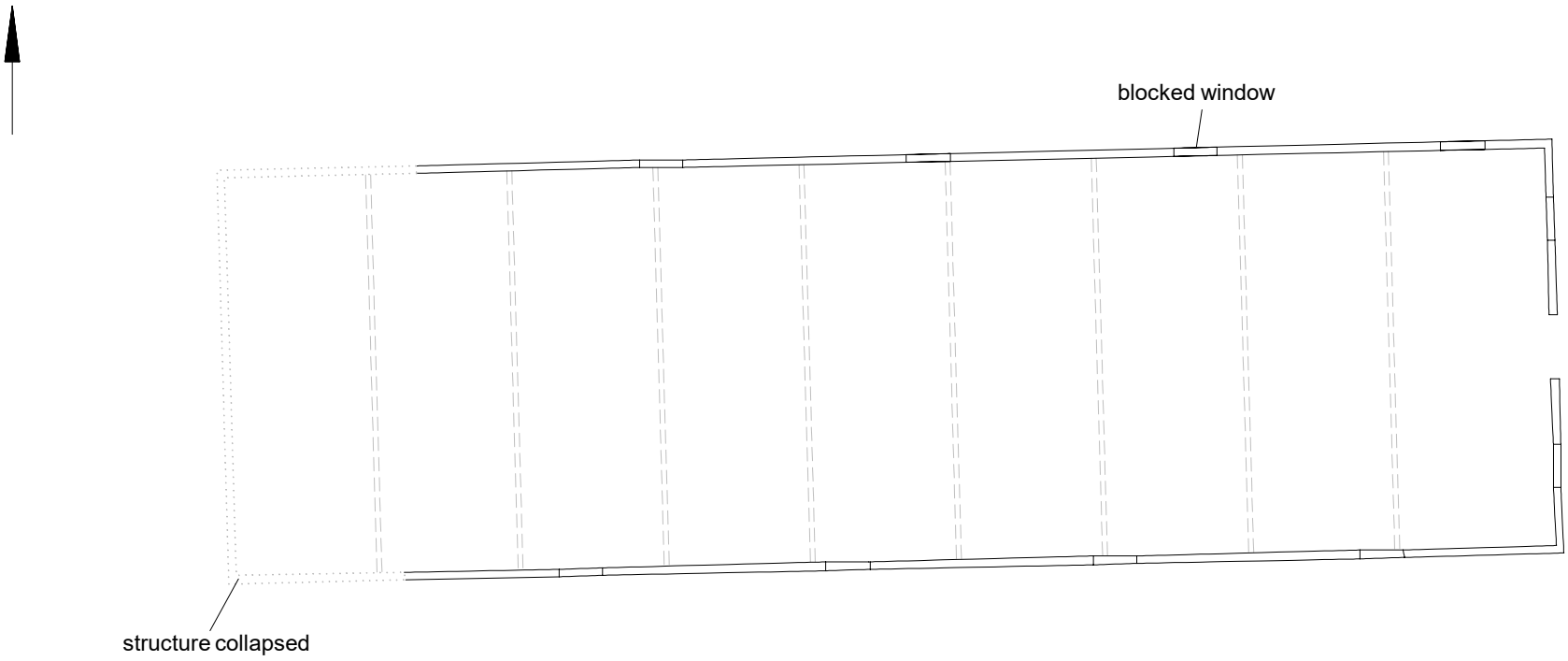
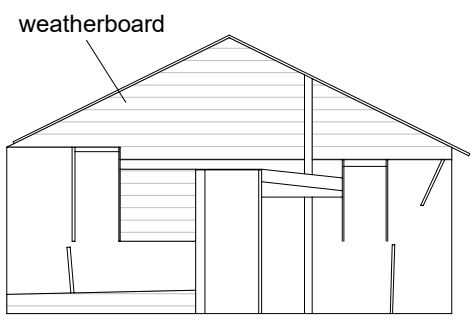


Fig 7 Building 6 floor plan and elevations.





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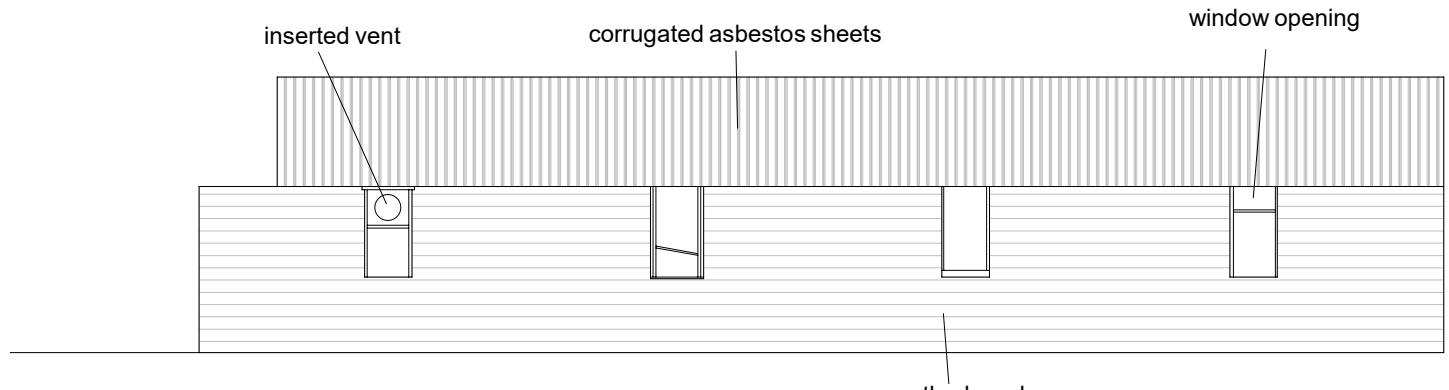

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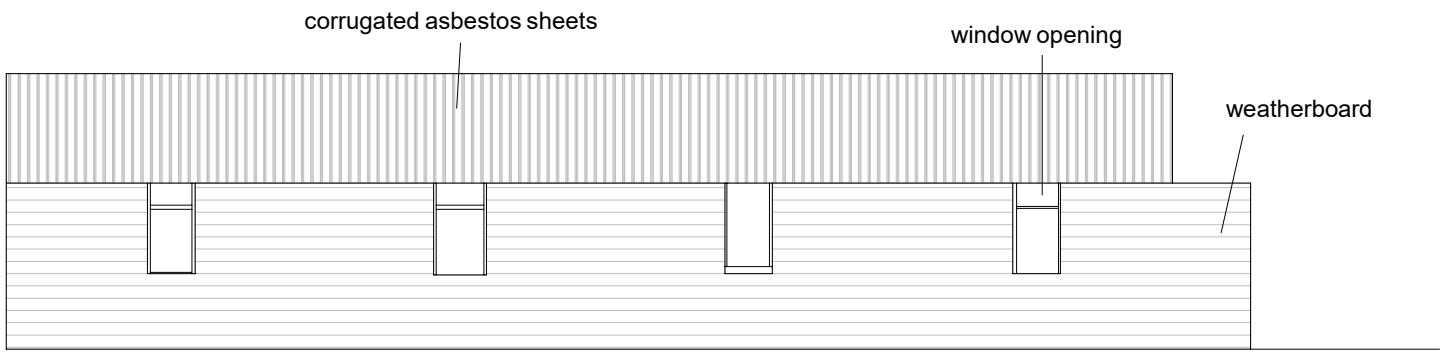

Northern elevation

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Fig 8 Building 7 floor plan and elevations.

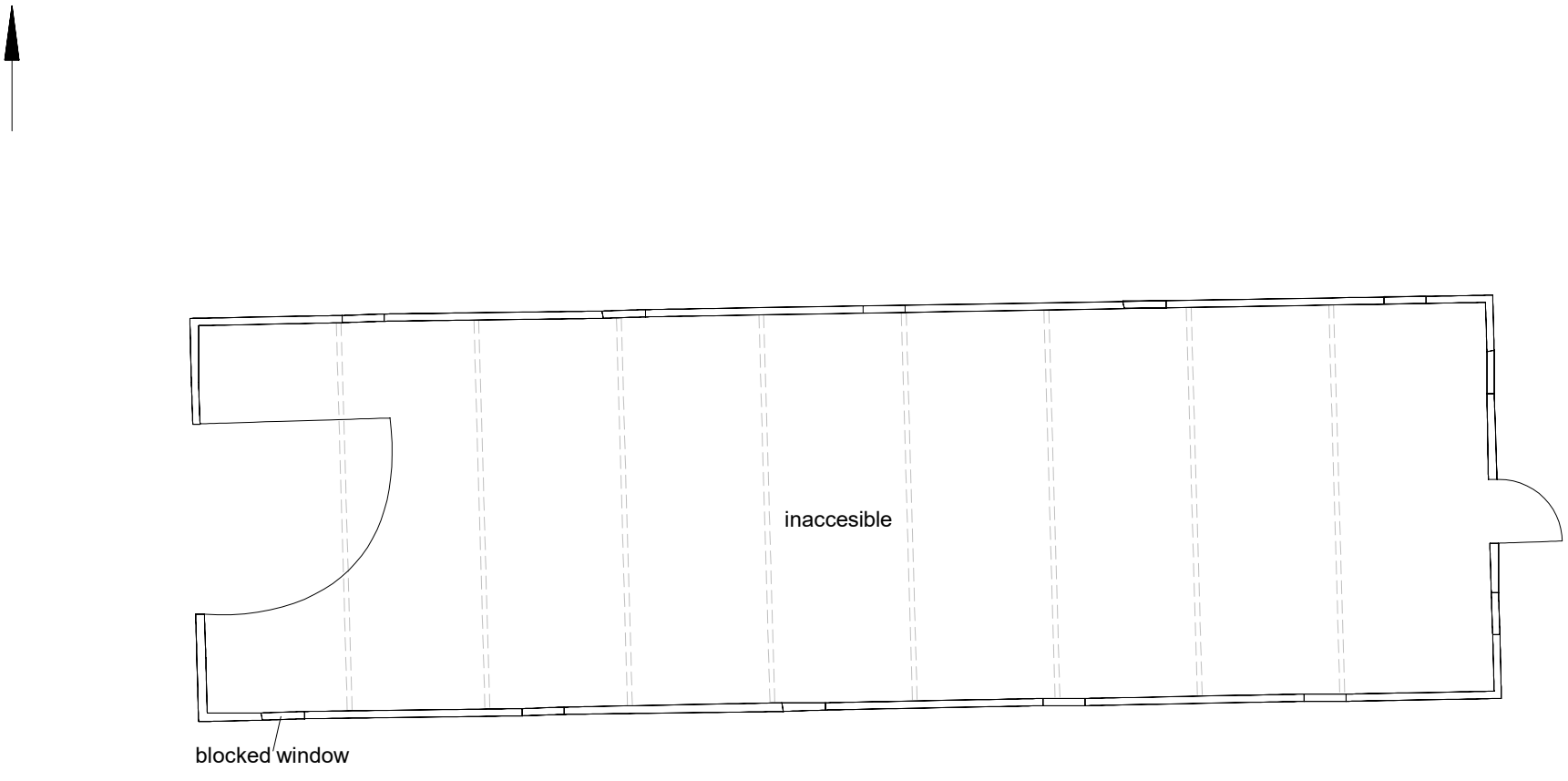


Fig 9 Building 8 floor plan and elevations.

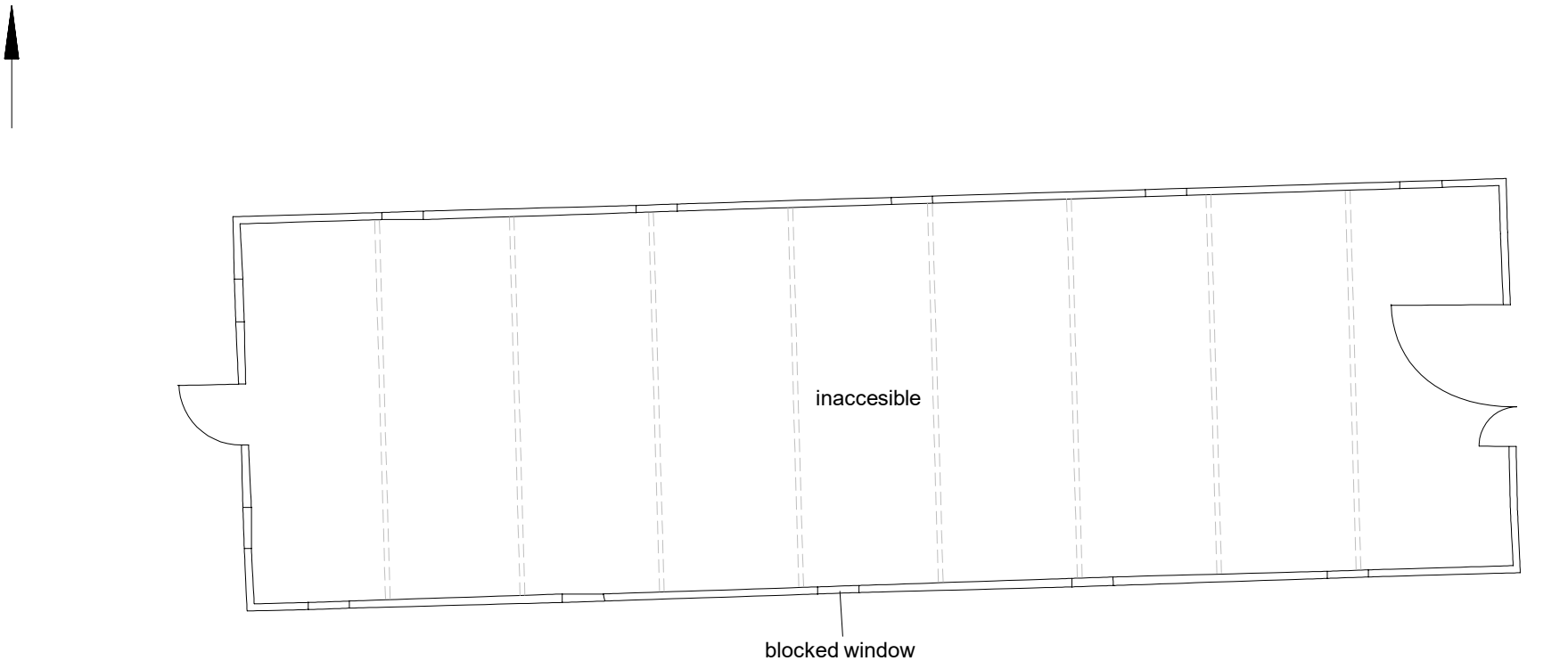


Fig 10 Building 9 floor plan and elevations.

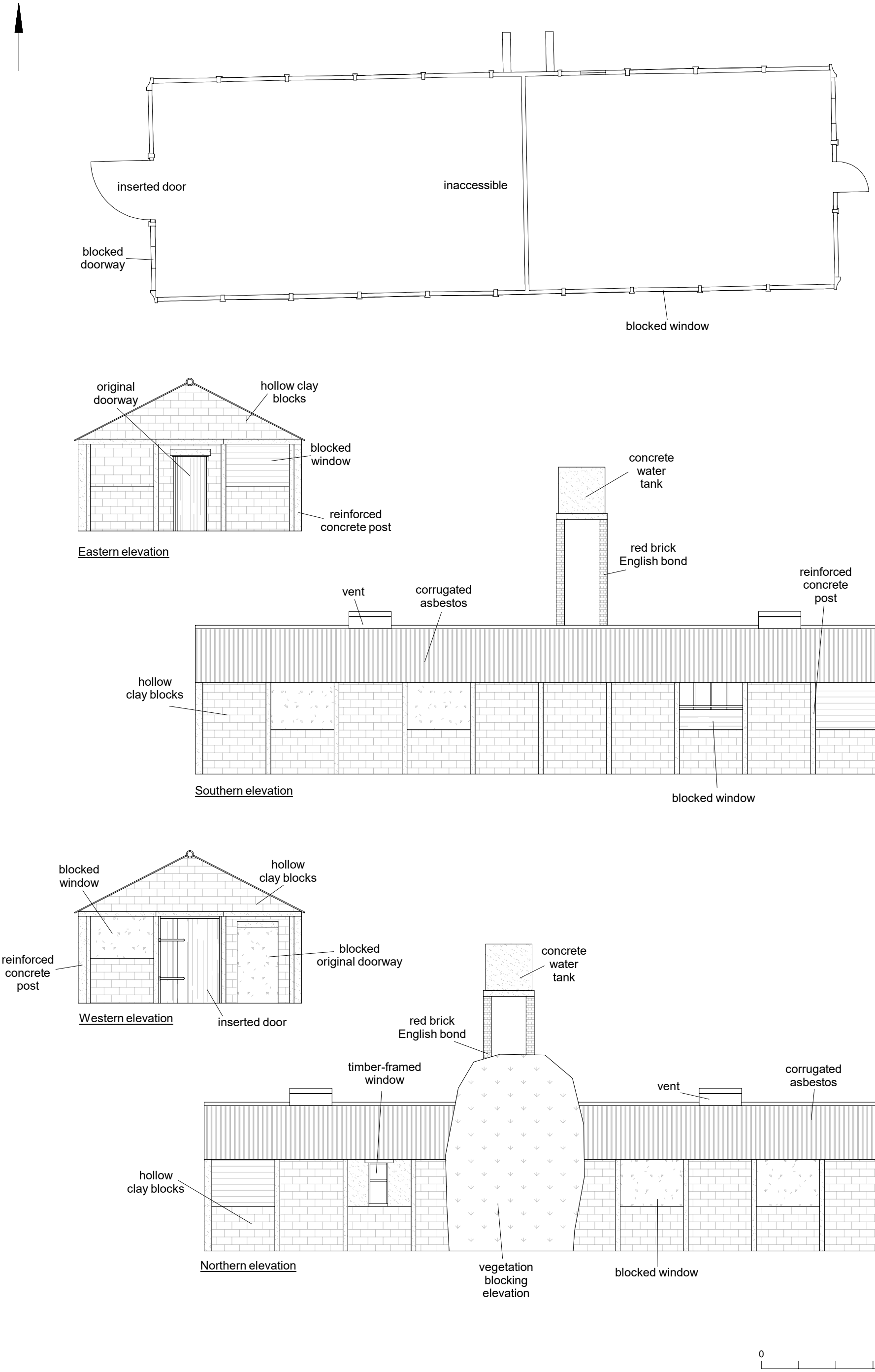
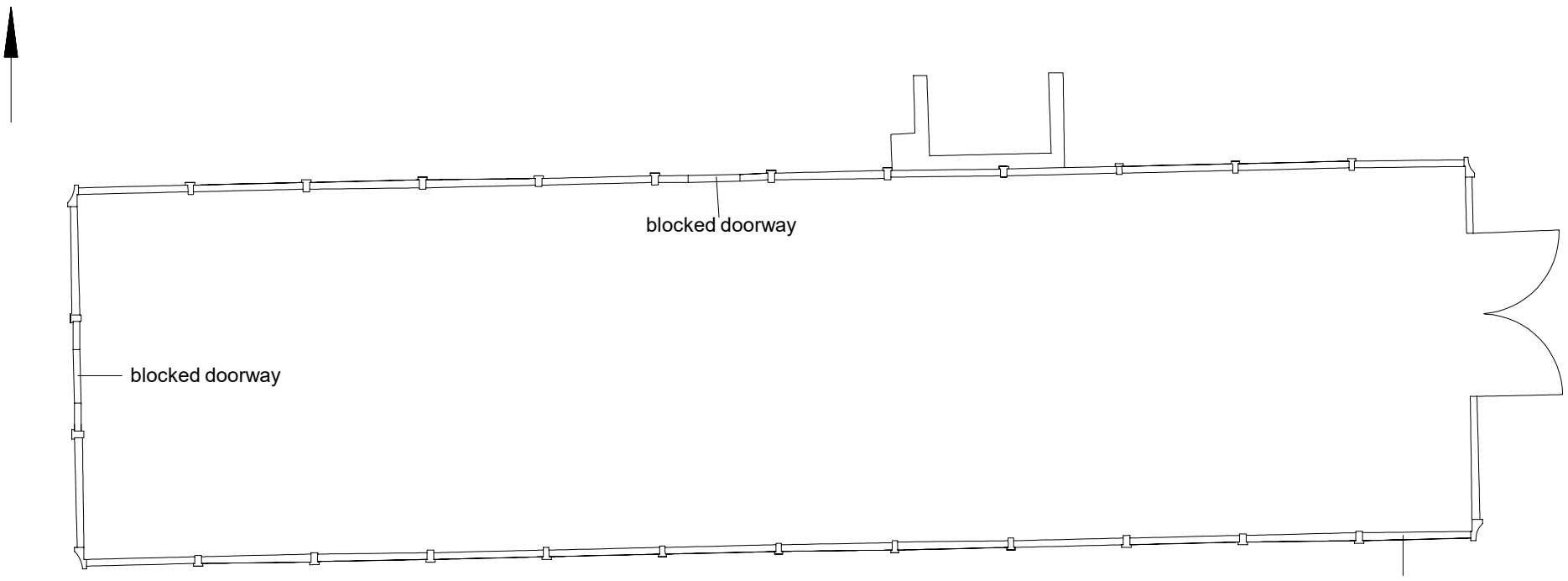
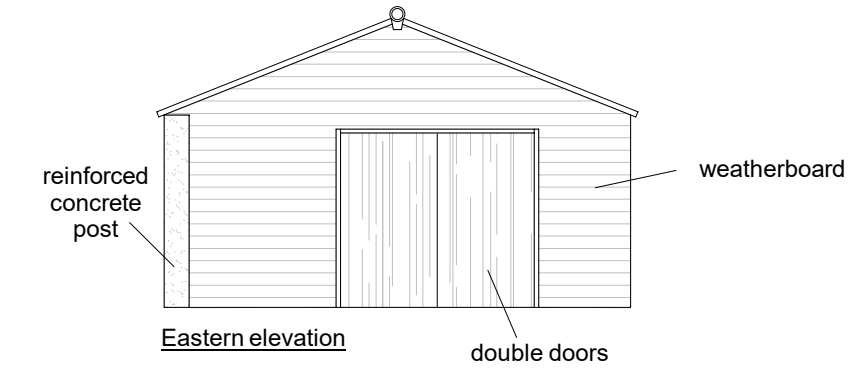
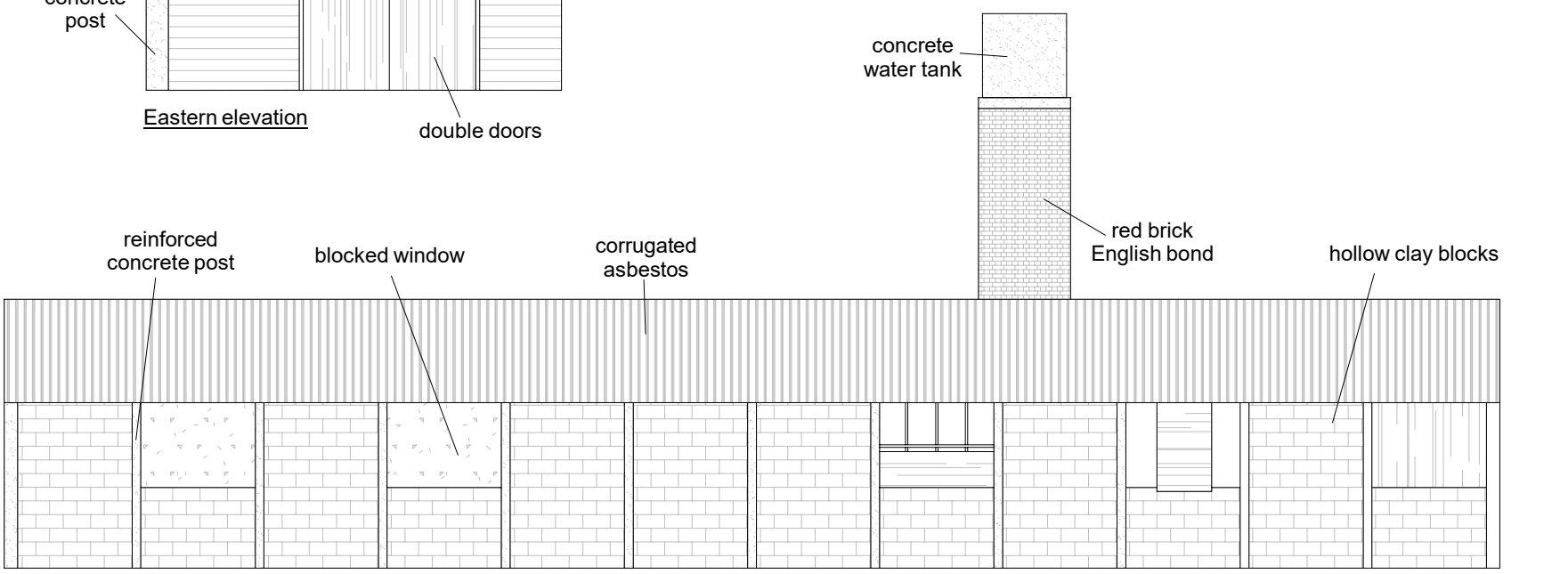


Fig 11 Building 10 floor plan and elevations.







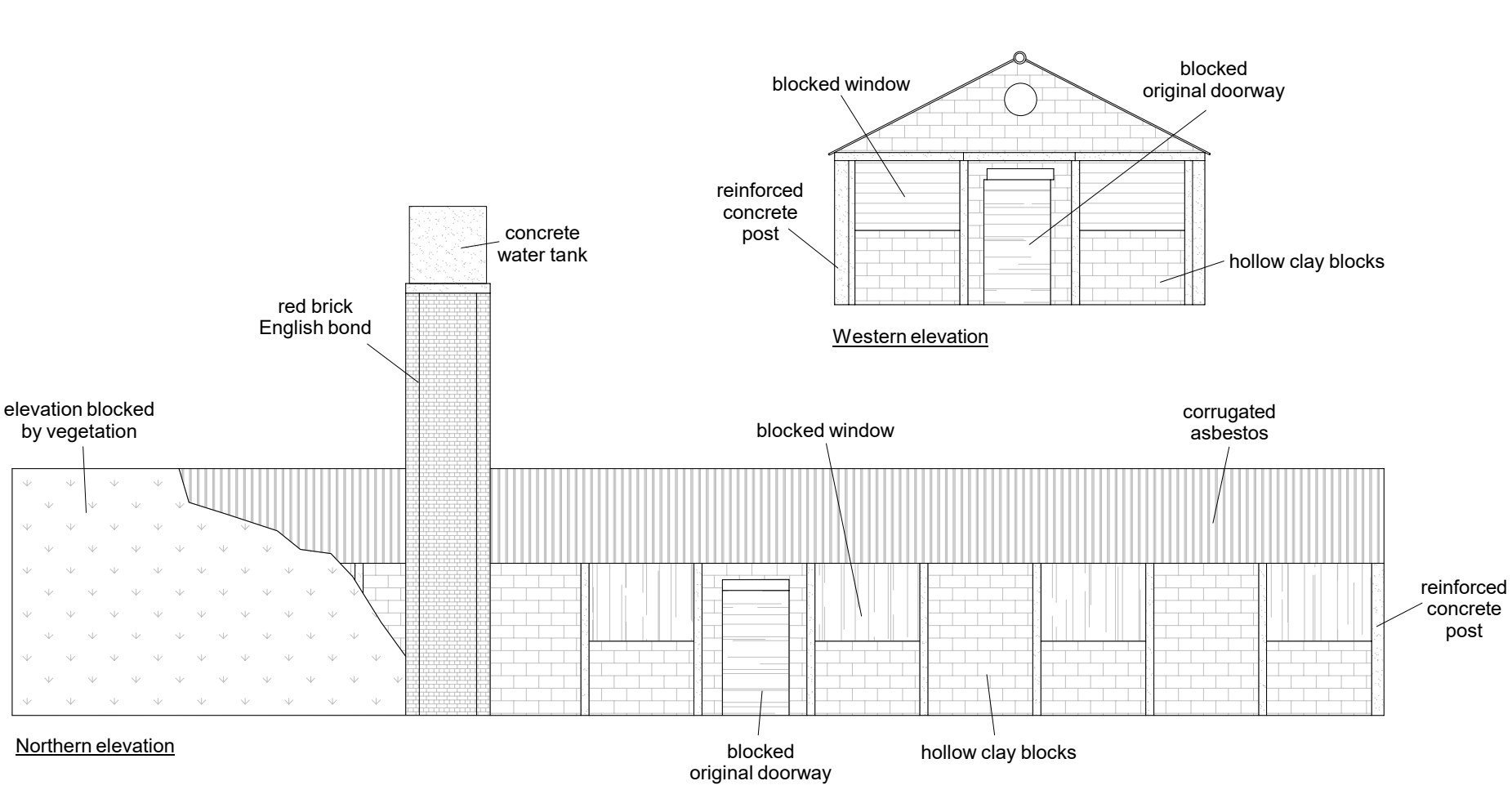


Fig 12 Building 11 floor plan and elevations.

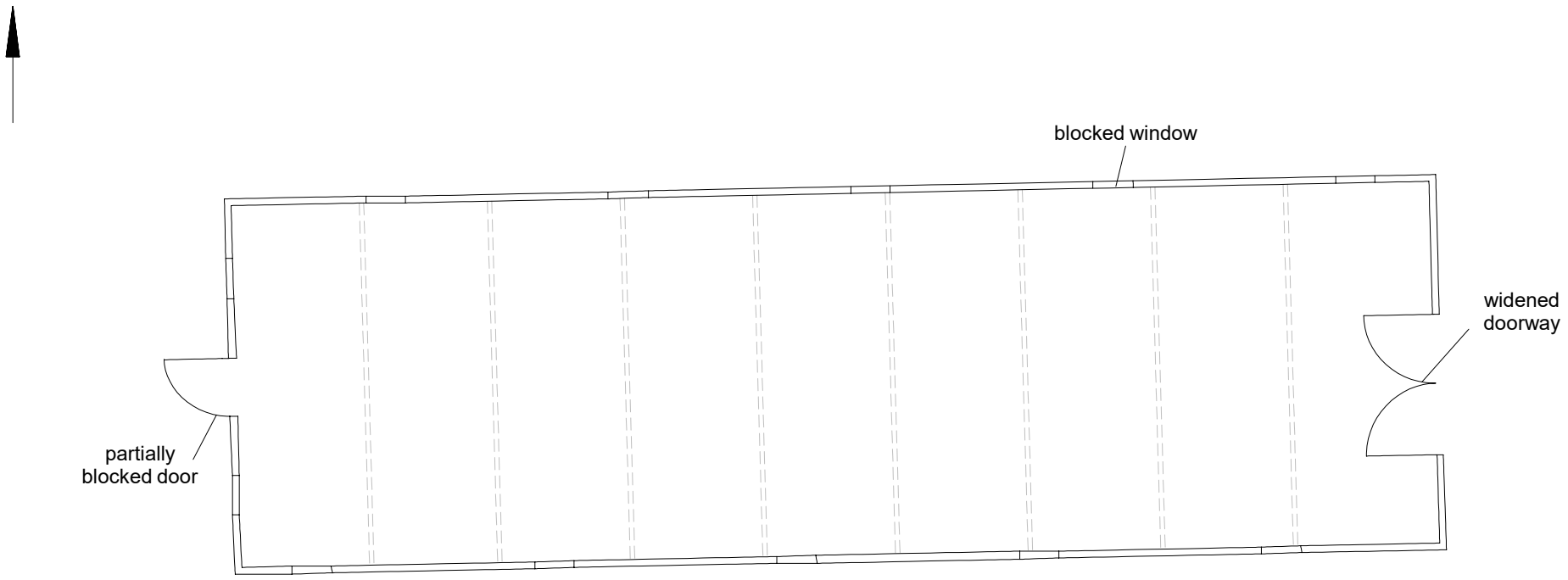
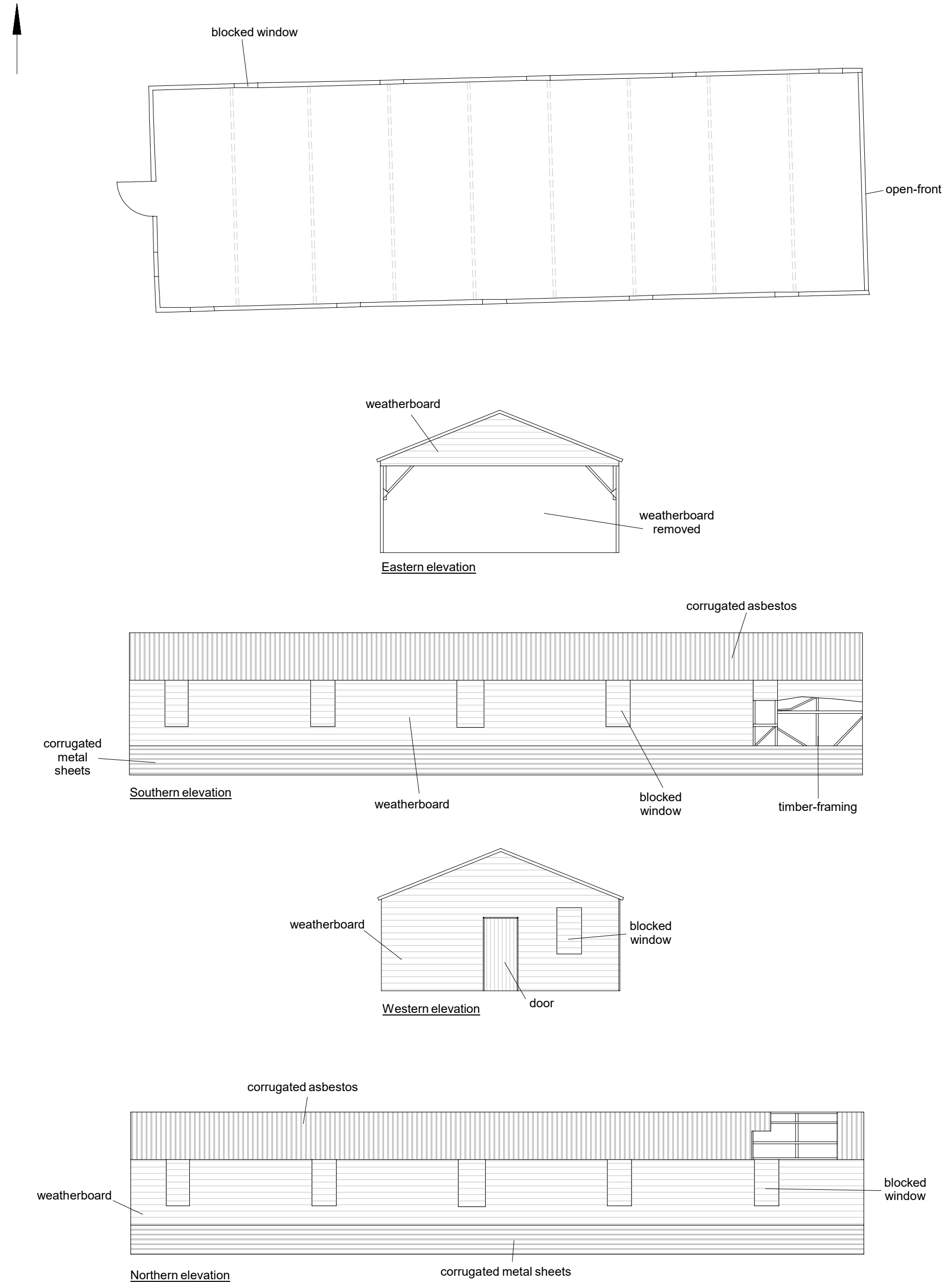


Fig 13 Building 12 floor plan and elevations.



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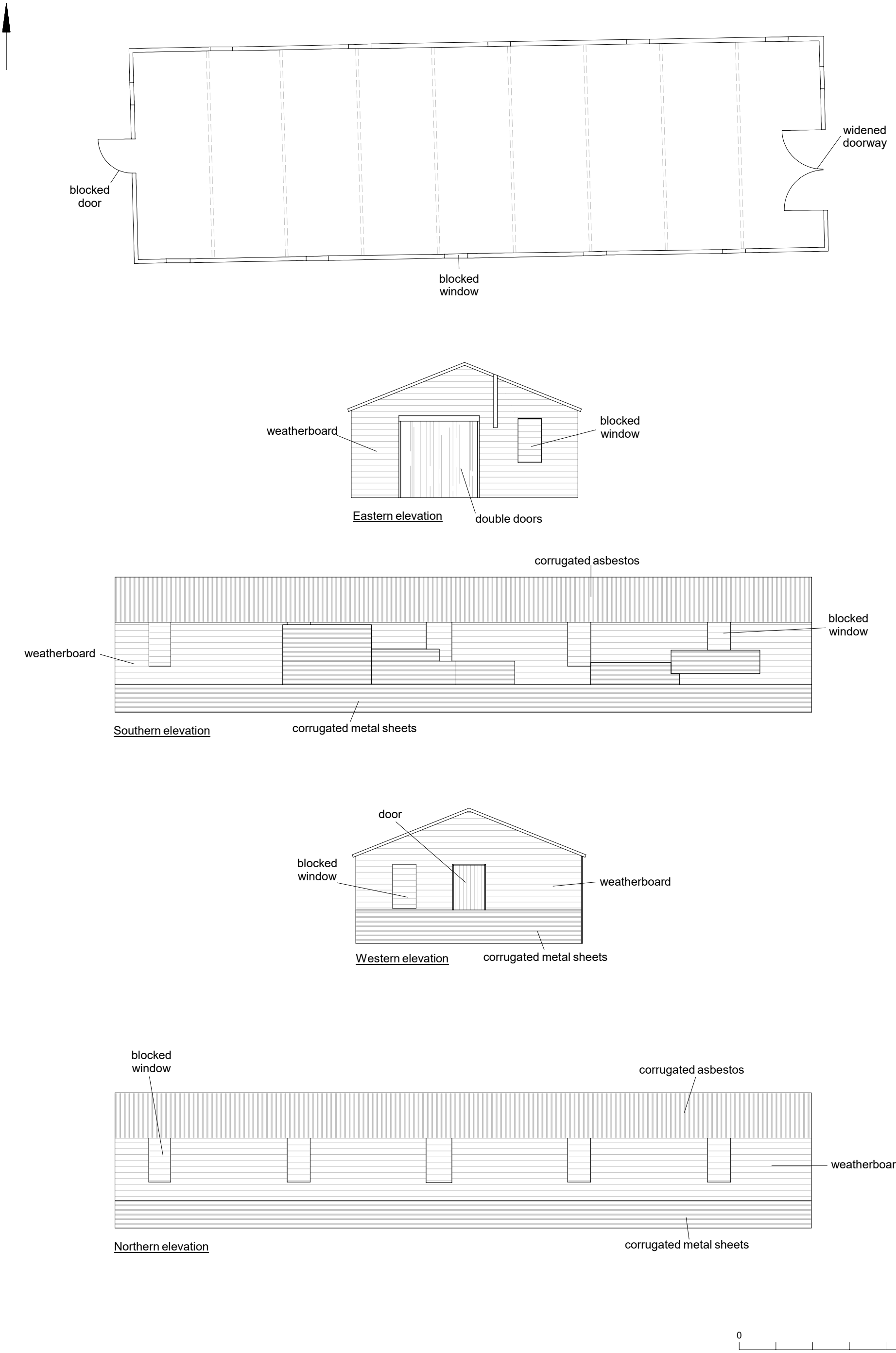

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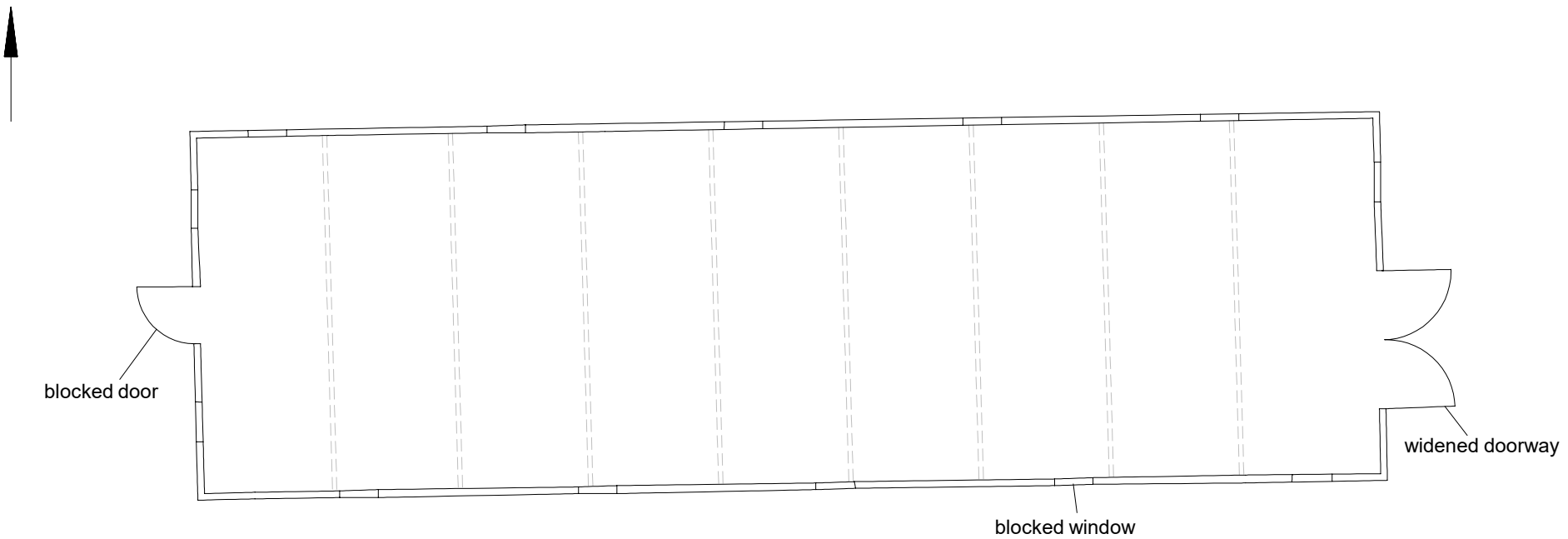
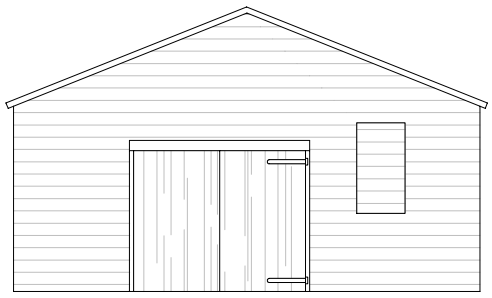
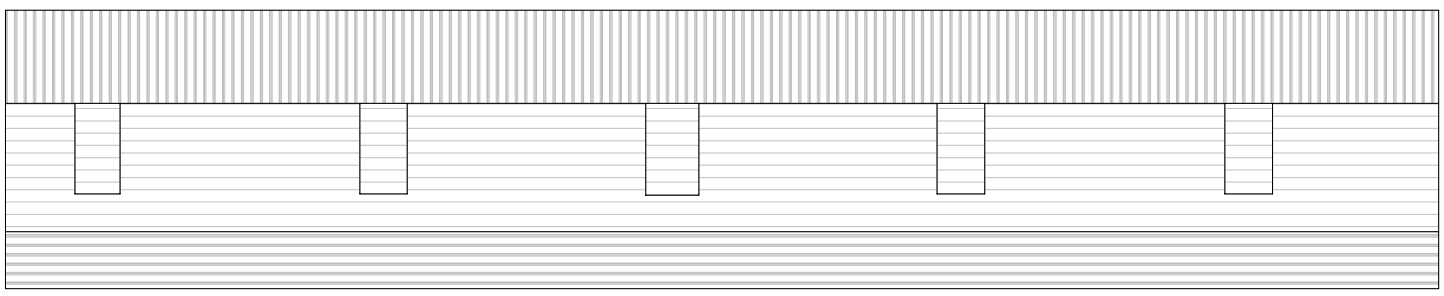




Eastern elevation



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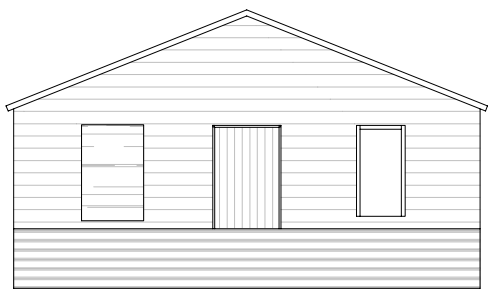
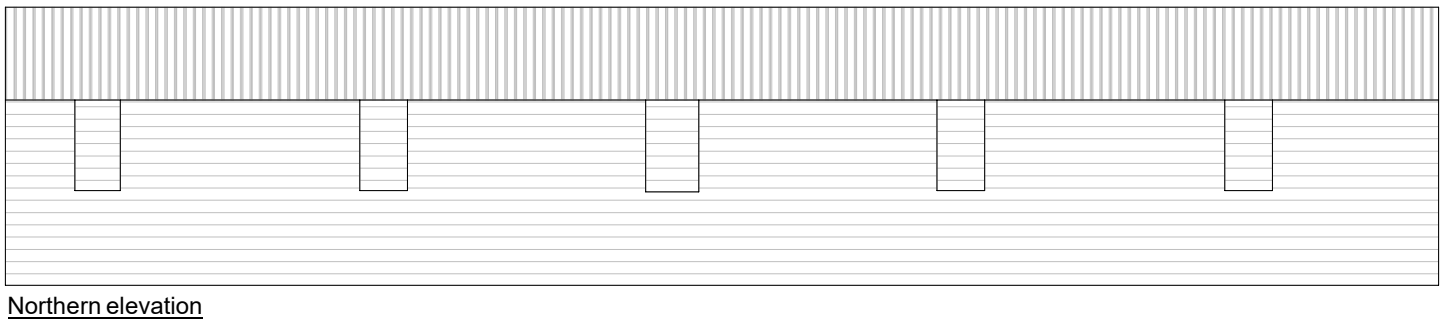


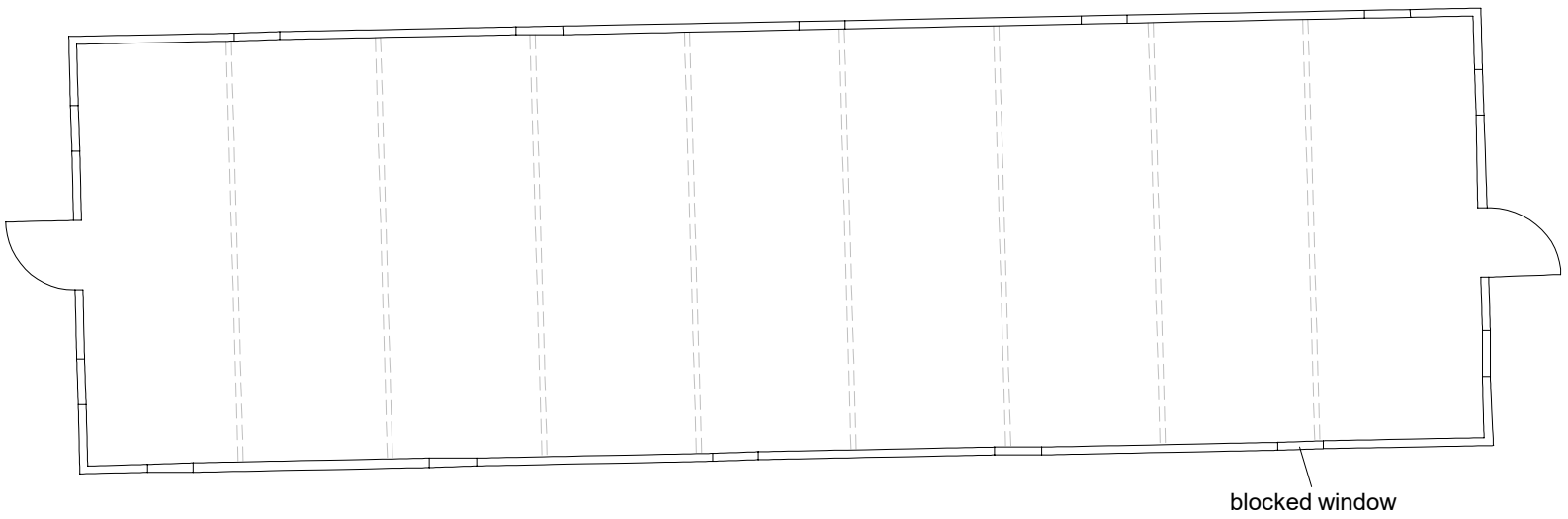
Western elevation

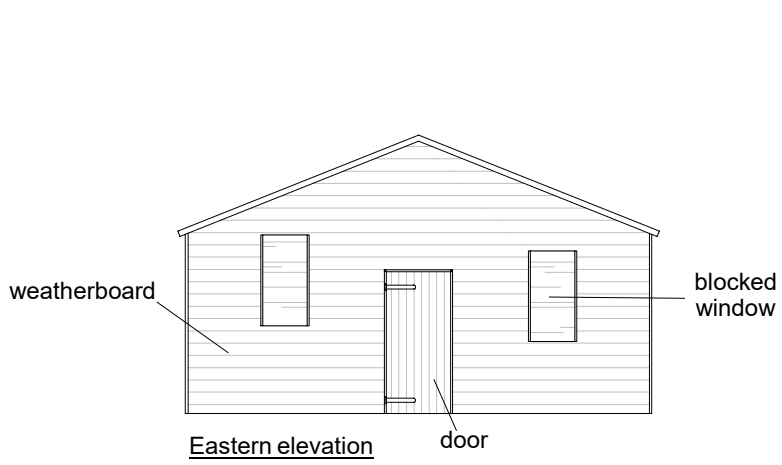


Northern elevation

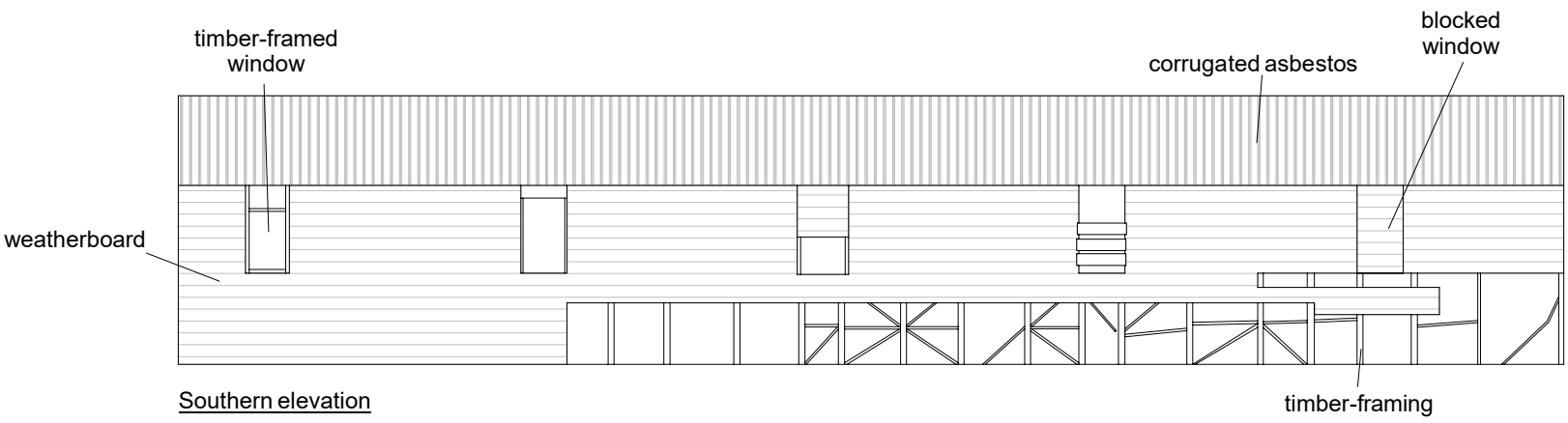
0 5 m

Fig 16 Building 15 floor plan and elevations.

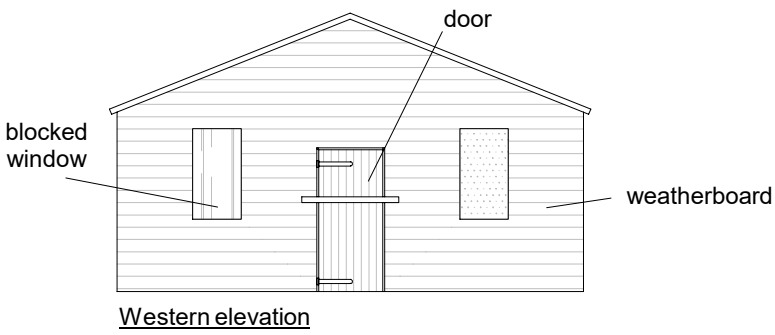




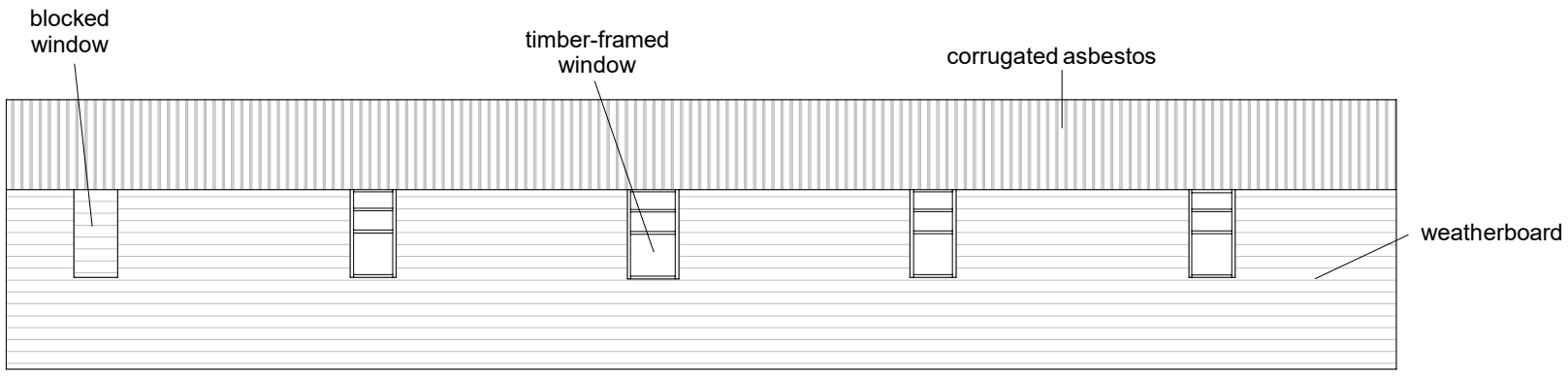
Eastern elevation



Southern elevation



Western elevation



Northern elevation

0 5 m

Fig 17 Building 16 floor plan and elevations.

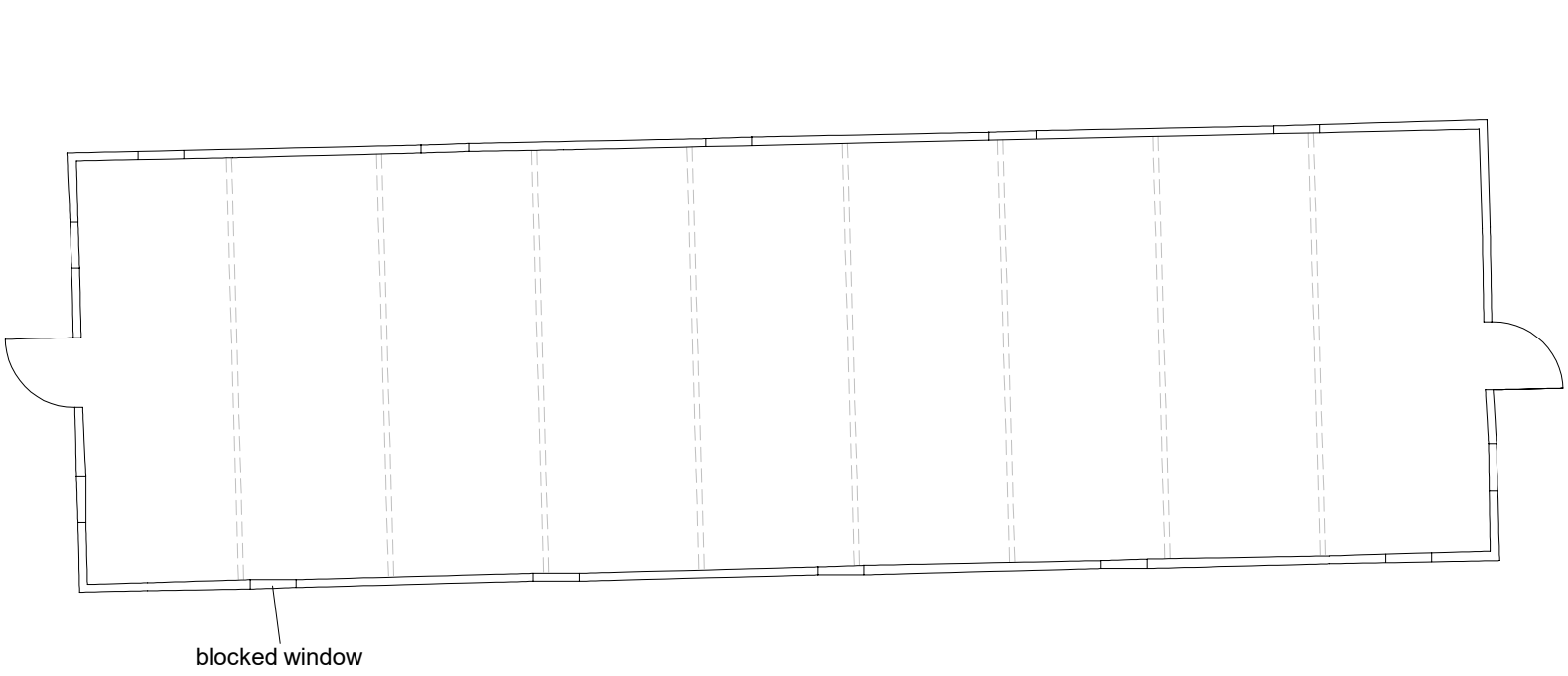


Fig 18 Building 17 floor plan and elevations.

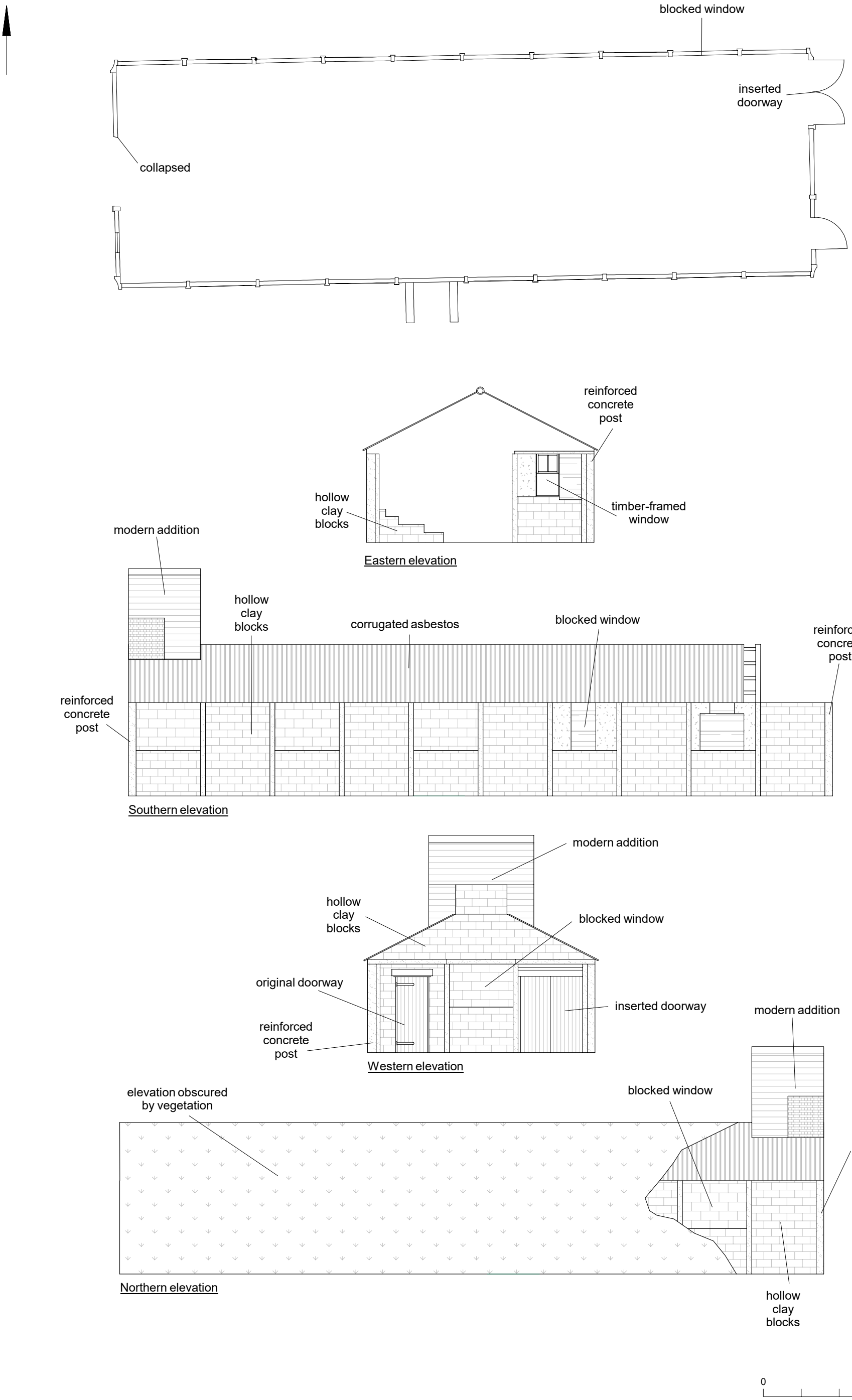


Fig 19 Building 18 floor plan and elevations.

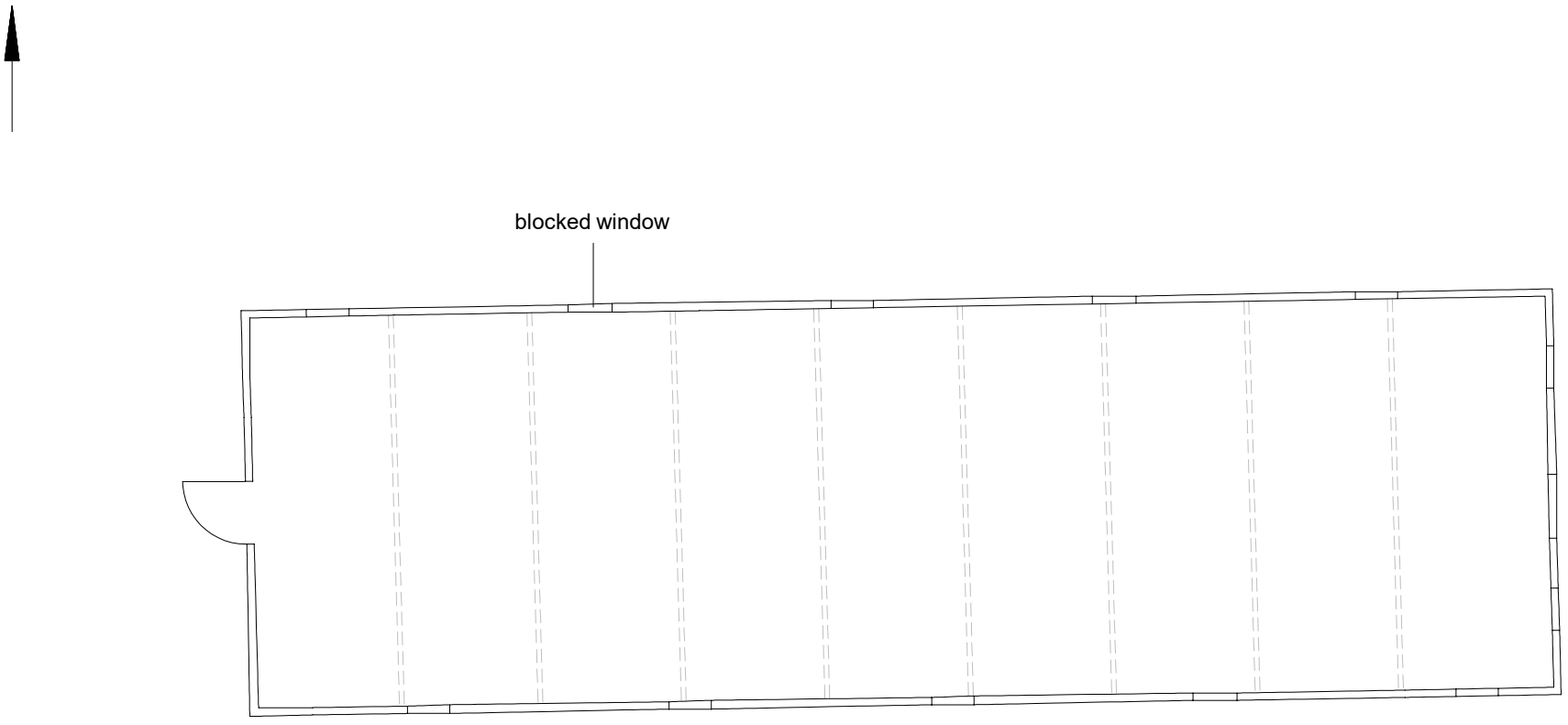


Fig 20 Building 19 floor plan and elevations.

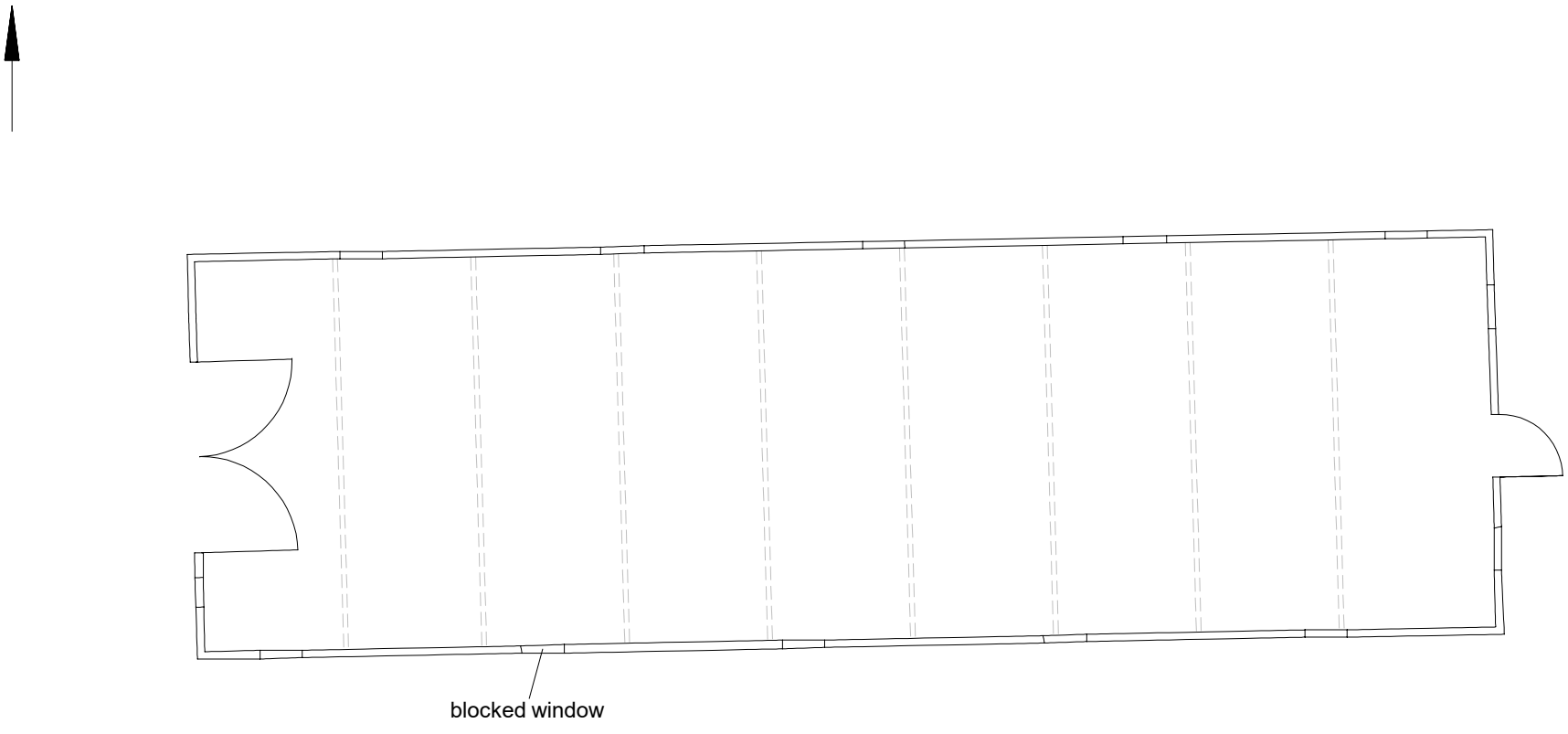


Fig 21 Building 21 floor plan and elevations.