

Level 2 Building Recording

**Wheathill Riding Centre,
Naylors Road, Knowsley,**



September 2021

Client	Witherslack Group Ltd	
Site name	Wheathill Riding Centre, Naylors Road, Knowsley	
Report type	Level 2 Building Record	
Report reference	P00120.01.01	
Report date	06 September 2021	
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Revision history	V1.0	Client draft



Summary

Heritage Archaeology was commissioned by Witherslack Group Ltd to provide a Level 2 Building Record for a group of disused farm buildings at Wheathill Riding Centre, Naylors Road, Knowsley.

The farm buildings are not listed but do include a range of buildings dating from the 19th century that are recorded on the Merseyside Historic Environment Record as a non-designated heritage asset.

A planning application has been submitted that proposes the demolition of buildings within the former Wheathill Riding Centre and the construction of a secondary school, adjacent to an existing primary school.

The former Wheathill Riding Centre comprises an originally late 18th or early 19th century farmstead that was altered and extended throughout the 19th and 20th century. It went out of use in 2000s and part of the site has been redeveloped as the Lakeside Primary School. The remaining historic buildings of the former farmstead comprise a large combination barn, small storage barn and pigsty that date to the 19th century. There are also a range of modern buildings, including steel framed barns, a round pen and farmhouse.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1. Heritage Archaeology Ltd has been appointed by Witherslack Group Ltd to provide a Level 2 building record for a group of non-designated historic buildings at the former Wheathill Riding Centre, Naylors Road, Knowsley.
- 1.2. A planning application has been made to Knowsley Council for a new secondary school building, multi-use games area, car parking and landscaping at the former Wheathill Riding Centre, adjacent to Lakeside Primary School, Naylors Road, Knowsley. The proposals include the demolition of buildings within the site and construction of new school premises. An application for a residential development on the site was granted following a planning appeal, which established the principle of the demolition of the existing farm buildings and the development of the site for an alternative use.
- 1.3. While the previous application acknowledged that the buildings on site have heritage value, the appeal decision confirmed that the historical value of the buildings was not sufficient for them to be required to be retained on site. The Inspector requested that a condition be added to the planning permission granting consent to demolish the buildings that prior to their demolition a Level 2 record of historic buildings be made and submitted to Knowsley Council. Knowsley Council has confirmed through pre-application advice that a Level 2 building record should be made of the historic buildings within the proposed development site.

Site location

- 1.4. The site is located at the former Wheathill Riding Centre, Naylors Road, Knowsley, L27 2YA. The proposed secondary school is adjacent to a current primary school (known as Lakeside School). The national grid reference is SJ43788938.

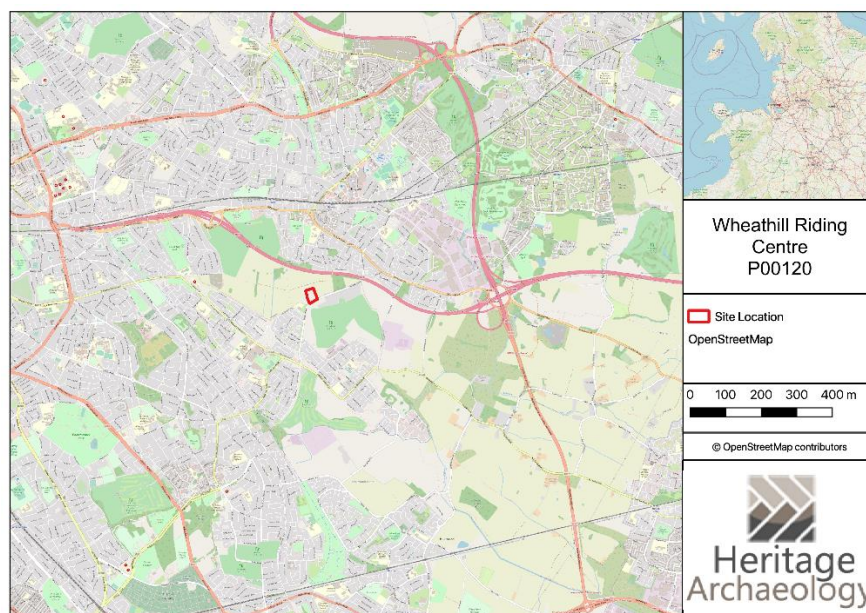


Figure 1: site location

Aims of the building recording

- 1.5. A Level 2 building record aims to provide a record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible (NPPF, paragraph 203).
- 1.6. In this case, the building recording specifically aims to provide a record of the historic buildings on site proposed for demolition.



Figure 2: Location of buildings (recorded buildings have a green boundary)

- 1.7. The North West England Regional Research Framework: Research Agenda, Post Medieval includes a number of research questions relevant to this survey, including:
 - *How did the industrial farm evolve and farming practices develop during this period?*
 - *Produce a regional study of farming in the period 1750-1950 that examines areas of continuity and change and highlights areas of rare, regionally specific and innovative practices.*

- *How can we establish a typology of and assess the significance of buildings and other structures associated with country and farming estates?*

Planning context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021

- 1.8. The National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF includes three overarching objectives for the planning system (section 2, paragraph 8), including "*c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment...*".
- 1.9. Paragraph 203 relates to non-designated heritage assets, again directing that "*in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*"
- 1.10. Paragraph 205 states that "*local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible*".

Knowsley Core Strategy, 2016

- 1.11. Core Strategy Policy CS20 relates to the historic environment. Section 4 of the policy states that locally important historic assets which are not subject to statutory designation will be identified in a local list and will be afforded consideration in the decision-making process.
- 1.12. The Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council Historic Environment Strategy, 2013 includes the proposed action:
 - *The Council will (where appropriate) take the opportunity to place conditions requiring the accurate recording of built fabric or landscaping that will be altered, concealed or lost through the implementation of approved works. These records will be deposited on the HER.*

Best practice and guidance

- 1.13. The following guidance documents have been referenced in preparing this report;
 - Historic England, 2016, Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020, Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures; and
 - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 2, Managing significance in decision-taking in the historic environment, Historic England, 2015.

2 Method of assessment

Building recording

2.1. A level two building record, in accordance with the method provided by Historic England, in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016), is a descriptive record that records the exterior and interior of the building (described and photographed). In this case the level 2 record comprised:

- Drawn record: a site location plan, and a site plan relating the buildings to each other;
- Drawn record: a plan identifying the location and direction of accompanying photographs;
- Photographic record: general views of the buildings (individually, as a group and in their wider setting);
- Photographic record: A record of the buildings' external appearance (oblique views), including all available elevations;
- Photographic record: A record of the buildings' internal appearance (oblique views, as far as it is safe to do so, showing overall appearance of rooms)*;
- Photographic record: A record (with scale) of any architectural features that reflect the original use of the buildings or illustrate the architectural details and historic development of the buildings;
- Written record: The site location, a description of its designation status and the date on which the record was made; and
- Written record: A written account that summarises the buildings' form, function, date and sequence of development.

2.2. *The buildings at Wheathill Riding Centre were not considered safe to enter and internal inspection and photography was taken from accessible vantage points only.

2.3. The building record was undertaken in August 2021.

Data sources

2.4. The following data sources were consulted in compiling this report:

- Merseyside Historic Environment Record;
- Online data sources (detailed in the references section below); and
- Historic Ordnance Survey mapping.

3 Historic context

- 3.1. The proposed development site was historically in the township of Roby close to its border with the township of Little Woolton, in the historic parish of Huyton, and historically in the county of Lancashire.
- 3.2. Roby was a medieval manor, it is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, with the entry indicating that there was a small settlement here prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066. It appears to have been a small, agricultural settlement throughout the medieval period, despite attempts to create a market and establish burgesses (merchants and tradesmen) to create a town. Roby is shown on Speed's map of Lancashire, 1610. Wheathill lies close to the boundaries of the townships of Roby, Tarbock, and Little Woolton. It is not annotated on Speed's map but Yate's map of Lancashire, 1786 shows Wheathill, although at the location of Wheathill House. Wheat Hill Farm is not shown on historic mapping until Greenwood's map of Lancashire, 1818.
- 3.3. Roby appears to have been a nucleated village, focused around a crossroads, throughout the medieval period. However following enclosure of the land, small farmsteads became established, to house farmworkers and livestock in closer proximity to the enclosed land and the settlement became more dispersed. In this area, a number of small country estates were also established, these were separate to the older manorial centres and were built to provide country homes for the wealthy industrialists and merchants of nearby Liverpool. Wheat Hill House may have been a property of this type, it was demolished in the 20th century. Later, following the establishment of an improved road and rail network, residential developments were established in the area. Further housing estates were built to help the Liverpool City Corporation to keep up with demand for housing in the early 20th century. The proposed development site continued however to be in agricultural use and then equestrian use in the later 20th century. The Lakeside School was built on land immediately to the south east of, and including some buildings associated with, Wheat Hill Farm in 2001.

Wheat Hill Farm/ Wheathill Riding Centre

- 3.4. The proposed development site is noted on historic mapping from 1818, when it is depicted on Greenwood's map of Lancashire as 'The Farm' immediately south of Wheat Hill. It is annotated as Wheat Hill Farm on the historic Ordnance Survey sequence. On the 1849 Tithe Map it is within land owned by F H Froes Esquire (who also owns the land, house and garden at Wheat Hill House). Wheat Hill Farm homestead and garden, and the surrounding fields, are occupied by Ann Gore. Ann Gore is listed in the 1841 census as 'farmer' and in the 1851 census as the head of the household for Wheat Hill Farm, Naylor Lane and her occupation is listed as 'farmer of 100 acres employing 1 labourer'; she lives with her widowed sister-in-law, nephew and five male servants (farm servant being listed as their profession).
- 3.5. By 1861 Wheat Hill Farm is in the ownership of A Blain, timber merchant and farmer and his wife Laura. Laura Blain is listed as the head of the household and a farmer in the 1871 census. However by 1881 Wheat Hill Farm has passed to a Thomas Dobell 'gentleman farmer'. He is

- listed in the 1891 census as a 'Retired Saddler' (his sons are a corn broker and solicitor) and in the 1901 census (when he was aged 72) as a 'retired gentleman farmer'. The household listed throughout the 19th century sequence of censuses include a number of servants. The 1911 census lists the occupants of Wheat Hill Farm as Robert Webster, Farmer, with one farm labourer at the same address. The 1939 Register lists William R Rimmer, farmer, as living at Wheat Hill Farm with his wife, mother in-law and one domestic servant.
- 3.6. Wheat Hill Farm appears to have been a large and wealthy farm dating from the late 18th or early 19th century. It was a working farm into the later 20th century after which it became a riding school and livery. The fields surrounding the farm are listed in the tithe apportionment as a mixture of arable and pasture. The western part of Lancashire, from the limestone of Morecombe Bay southwards towards Liverpool, contains high-grade agricultural land, between the Rivers Ribble and Mersey the soils are lighter, resulting in highly productive arable land.
- 3.7. The buildings at Wheat Hill Farm date to the period of high farming, when farming techniques, land enclosure and the improvement of transport networks were among factors that made farming more productive and profitable. The period saw a significant increase in the number of farmsteads being built and older farm buildings being rebuilt in local brick.
- 3.8. Wheat Hill Farm appears to have originally had a U-shaped plan arranged around a courtyard to the south of the main barn range. Buildings are shown to the north of the main barn from the late-19th century at which point the main farm courtyard appears to be to the north of the main barn with a more formal garden and orchard to the south. This coincides with the occupation of the farm's head of household being described in the census as 'gentleman farmer'. By the mid-20th century the farm appears to have developed to a regular courtyard with yard to the north of the main barn range. The buildings within the farmstead indicate both arable and livestock production. The farmhouse was adjoined to the main barn range in the area now occupied by the Lakeside School buildings.



Figure 3: 1849 Ordnance Survey County Series, Lancashire, 1:10,560

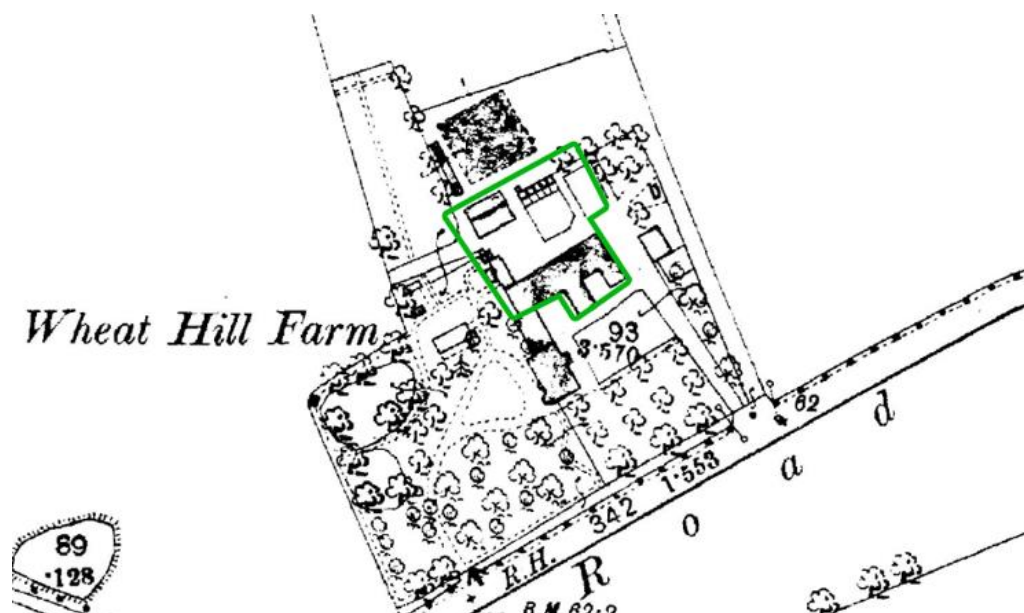


Figure 4: 1892 Ordnance Survey County Series, Lancashire, 1:2,500

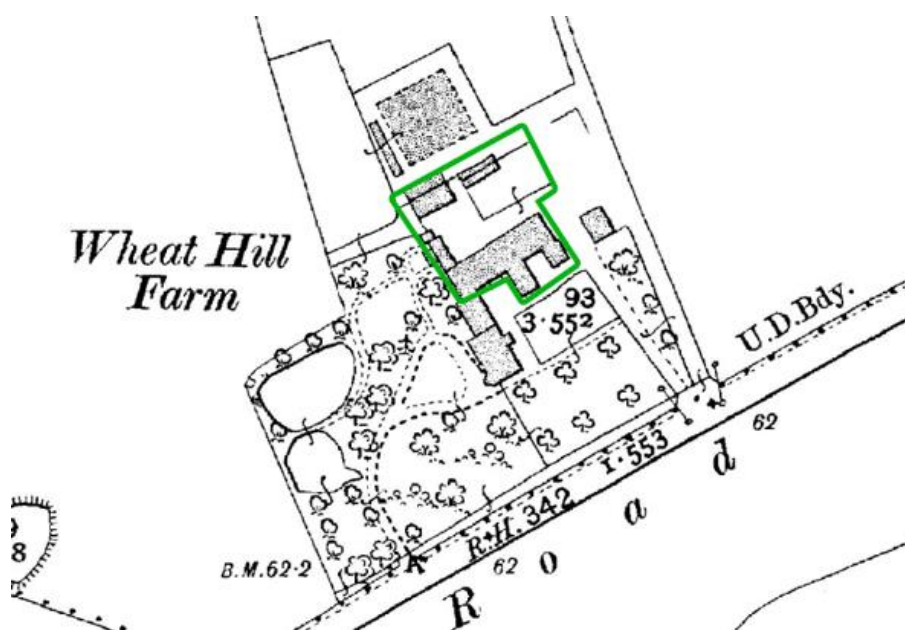


Figure 5: 1907 Ordnance Survey County Series, Lancashire, 1:2,500



Figure 6: 1927 Ordnance Survey County Series, Lancashire, 1:2,500

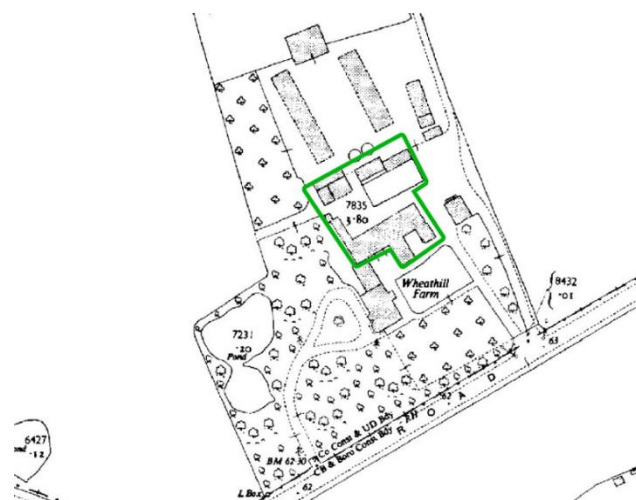


Figure 7: 1952 Ordnance Survey County Series, Lancashire, 1:2,500

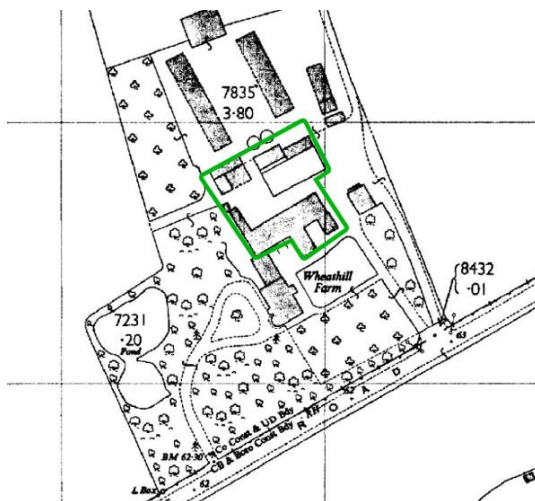


Figure 8: 1961 Ordnance Survey County Series, Lancashire, 1:2,500

4 Description of the buildings

Summary description and phasing

4.1. The proposed development site comprises buildings F3 – F9; comprising:

- Building F3 is a modern barn (steel frame structure), used as the riding school, it appears on historic mapping after 1990.
- Building F4 is a single storey modern brick structure with steel roof trusses, it first appears on the 1965 mapping.
- Building F5 is a modern stable block (corrugated concrete fibre board construction with steel frame), it appears on historic mapping after 1990.
- Building F6 is a brick barn with a north side lean to extension. The original structure has timber roof trusses and slate roof. It is shown on the 1892 mapping.
- Building F7 is a barn and pigsty. It is single storey and of brick construction. The attached barn to the north of the pigsty is first shown on the 1952 historic mapping; the pigsty is first shown on the 1892 mapping.
- Building F8 is the main barn and comprises a brick built double height barn with timber roof trusses and slate roof. The southern elevation of the barn has three single storey attached storage barns. The main barn range is shown on the 1849 tithe map, at which point it comprises a rectilinear barn forming a 'U' shaped courtyard with the attached barn and farmhouse to the west and a small, attached barn to the east, a separate barn is also shown to the east. By 1892 the attached single storey storage barns (one to the north and three to the south) are also shown.
- Building F9 is a modern house and garage, it appears on historic mapping after 1990.

4.2. Building B1 comprises the former farmhouse and the westernmost of the three adjoining single storey storage barns attached to the main barn range, and a small modern wooden shelter (B1A). These are within the existing school premises.

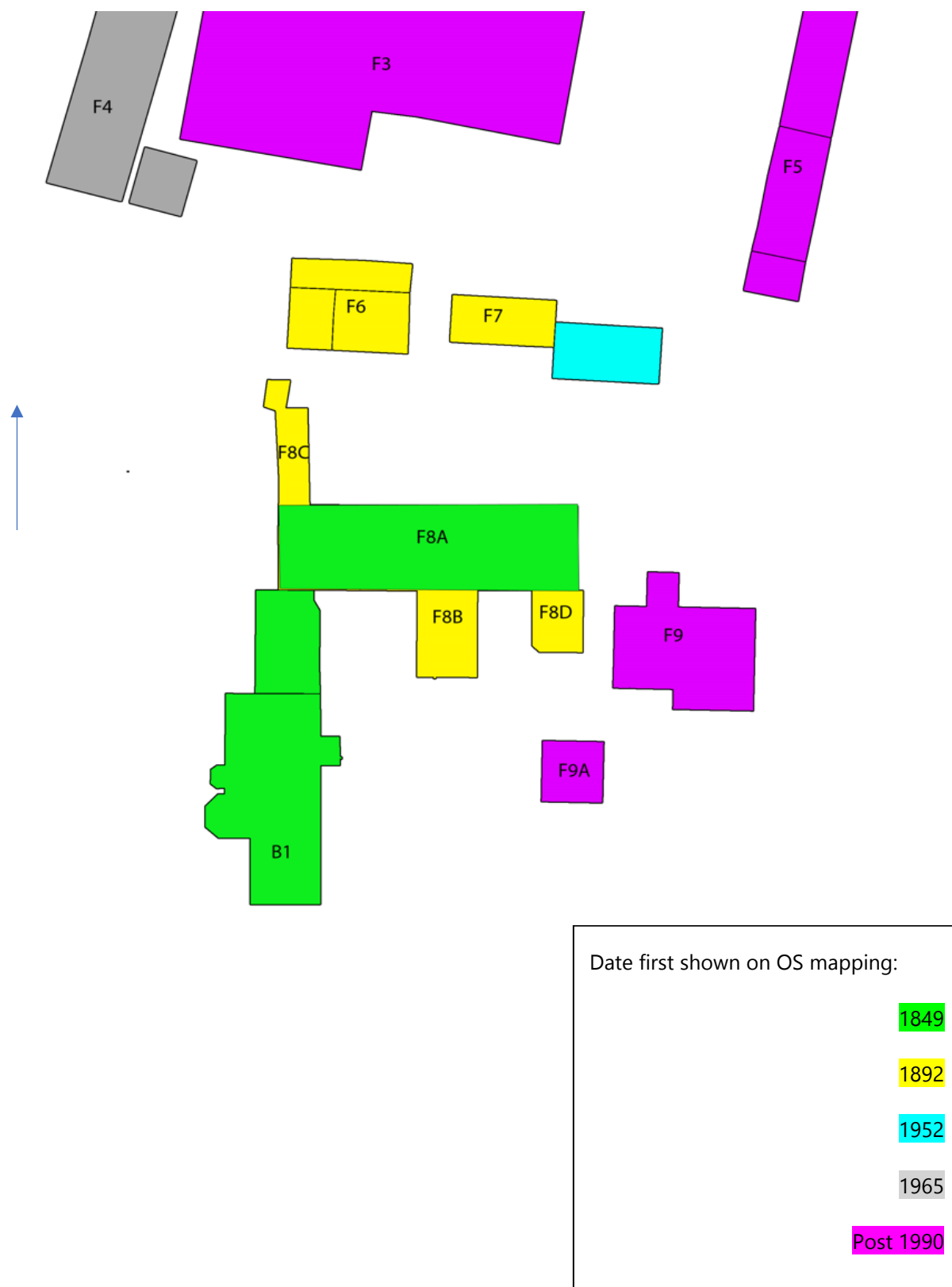


Figure 9: Phasing plan

Storage barn (Building F6)

External elevations

- 4.3. The barn is of brick construction with timber frame and slate roof. It has two bays, the southernmost is of late 19th century date, the northern lean-to extension is also in brick but is of a later date of construction. The barn is shown throughout the historic map sequence (from 1892) as comprising two bays, but the style is similar to the 1960s buildings on the site.
- 4.4. The southern elevation has three doors and three windows. There are two distinct styles of brick, with a greyish brick in the western end and pillars in the same brick running through the eastern end of the building. On historic mapping, it is depicted as having a half-open front from 1951; it would appear that half of the barn was opened at that point but then later bricked up.
- 4.5. The western gable as a door and window and shows the profile of a former lean-to extension that was later extended to the current modern extension. The eastern gable end has a single door into the southern bay and the brick infilled cart door into the northern extension.
- 4.6. The northern lean-to extension is in modern brick with a single door and concrete composite roof.

Internal description

- 4.7. Internally, the barn is subdivided into the northern and southern bays. There is also an internal wall between the eastern and western ends of the southern bay (as shown in historic mapping).

The pigsty and barn (Building F7)

External elevations

- 4.8. The building comprises a single storey loose box style pigsty with attached modern barn. The pigsty is brick with slate roof. The rear part (northern bay) would have formed the animal stall, with an arch giving access to an open yard to front (southern bay). The yard has a tall wall. That yard has subsequently been roofed with a corrugated metal roof, possible for reuse as a dog kennel.
- 4.9. Externally there is evidence for a further a yard surrounding the pigsty and attached barn. There is evidence for this on the ground although any surrounding wall is no longer extant. The yard surface is concrete suggesting that was used in conjunction with the modern barn, although a previous yard is shown on historic mapping from the late 19th century.

Internal description

- 4.10. Internally, metal feeding troughs are still evident. The walls subdividing the stalls are also in situ and are formed of slabs with metal pins and brick.

The main barn range (Building F8)

External elevations

- 4.11. The main barn range (Building F8A) appears to have been a combination barn providing a cow house, hayloft, and cart shed, it may have also housed a granary and stables. The north facing elevation (facing into the main farm courtyard) has a near central cart door, to the left (east) there is a door at ground floor and at first floor level and two pitching eye windows (round openings) at first floor level. The western section to the right of the cart door has a small square pitching hole, a pitching eye, ventilation holes a first-floor door and a ground floor door. The layout would appear to be typical of the 'Lancashire Barns' dating from between 1750 and 1850.
- 4.12. There is an attached single storey lean to projecting at 90° from the western end of the north facing elevation (Building F8C). It has three doors and a small extension at its northern end.
- 4.13. The south facing elevation has the attached single storey barns; a further pitching eye is evident in the eastern end of this elevation and a door into the cow house.
- 4.14. The easternmost barn (Building F8D) is single storey with a window in the gable end and a door and window in the west facing elevation. The corner to the south west of the barn is curved.
- 4.15. The central barn (Building F8B) is single storey with two bricked up cart doors, and appears to have been a cart shed. Both cart doors have been bricked and later doors inserted. The curve on the adjacent barn appears to be to accommodate turning carts into the middle barn.
- 4.16. The gable ends are plain, other than a further pitching eye in both the east and west facing gable end near to the roof ridge and two windows in the east facing gable end.

Internal description

- 4.17. There is some timber frame structure evident, although there are also structural steel beams in situ. The westernmost end has internal evidence for brick arches and may have been open ended. The barn is formed of several bays, with internal brick walls, and has internal doors at first floor level.

Statement of significance

- 4.18. The farmstead at Wheat Hill Farm includes a range of buildings dating from the late 18th or early 19th century to later 20th century. The buildings have been through a number of periods of building and reuse, and they are currently in poor condition, having been subject to anti-social behaviour and fire damage since the closure of the riding school.
- 4.19. Despite the number of modern changes, the farmstead illustrates the development of farming through the high farming period and later and includes buildings that are typical of the regional building styles and materials.

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- 4.20. The 19th century buildings at Wheat Hill Farm (Wheathill Riding Centre) therefore have a degree of heritage interest, primarily historical but also architectural (historic and aesthetic heritage value). These are common building types in this part of Lancashire and these are in poor condition and have seen a significant degree of change over time. They are therefore considered to be locally significant.
- 4.21. This record of the buildings at Wheat Hill Farm could contribute to regional research framework objectives, particularly to contribute to regional studies of the development of farming practices in the period 1750 – 1950 and to contribute to the development of typologies of regional farm buildings.

5 Photographs

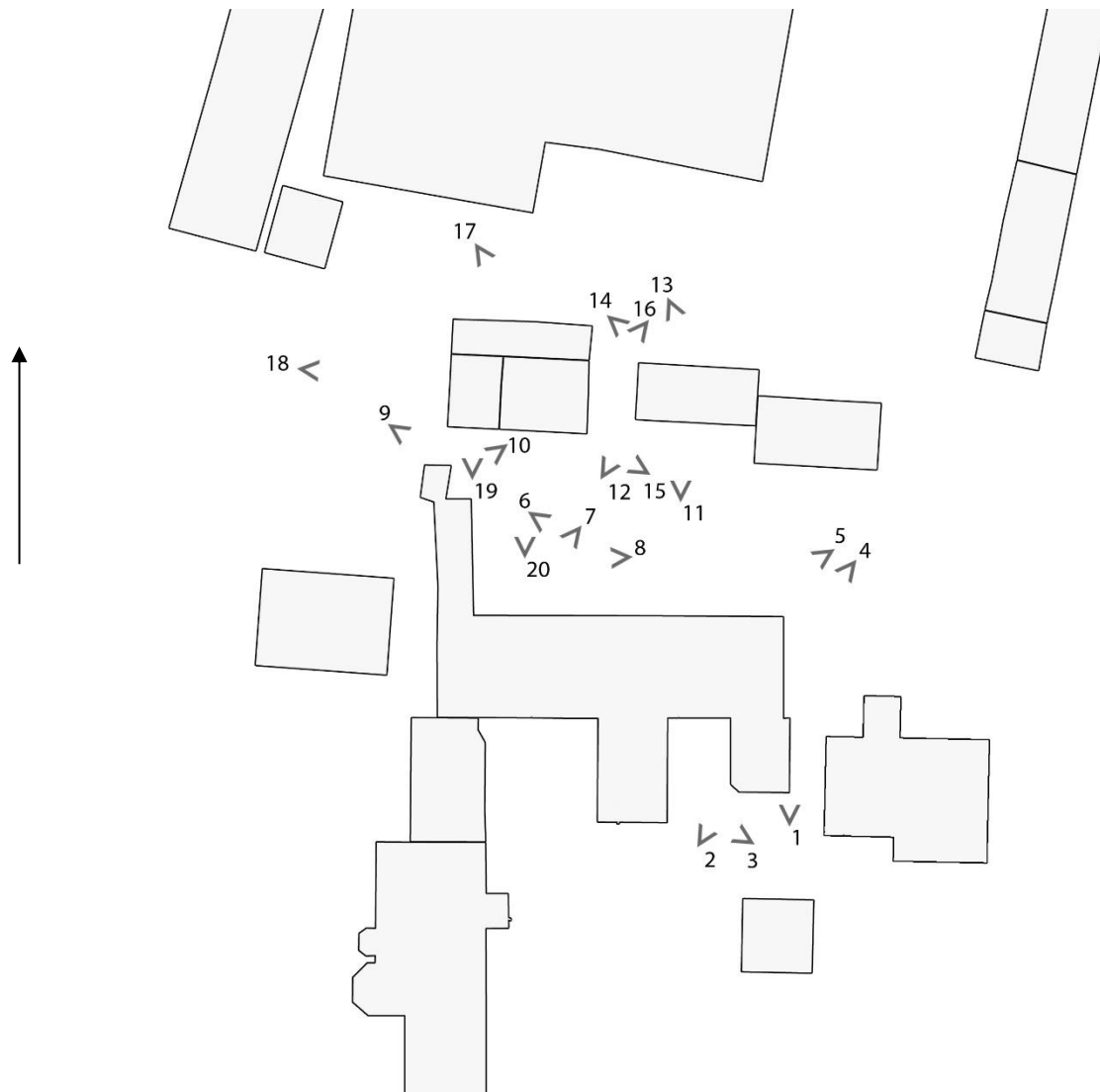


Figure 10: Photograph direction plan

The main barn range (Building F8)



1. Main barn, south facing elevation of south-eastern adjoining single storey barn (F8D)



2. Main barn, west facing elevation of south-eastern adjoining single storey barn (F8D)



3. Main barn, east facing elevation of middle adjoining single storey barn (F8B)



4. East facing elevation, and north facing elevation (eastern end)



5. North facing elevation



6. North facing elevation



7. North facing elevation, western end and attached barn (F8C)



8. Attached barn (north side of main barn) (F8C)



9. Main barn, north facing elevation and northern end of attached barn (F8C)



10. Northern end of attached barn (F8C)

The pigsty and barn (Building F7)



11. South facing elevation of pigsty



12. South and west facing elevations of pigsty



13. North facing elevation of pigsty



14. West facing elevation of pigsty

Storage barn (Building F6)



15. East facing elevation of storage barn



16. East facing elevation of storage barn with modern lean to



17. North facing elevation of storage barn (modern lean-to extension)



18. West facing elevation of storage barn



19. South facing elevation of storage barn



20. South facing elevation of storage barn



Interior, pigsty (south facing elevation)



Pigsty trough and wall between stalls



Interior main barn (showing bays and arches in east facing elevation)



Interior main barn, showing internal dividing wall and first floor door

6 Archive and publication

- 6.1. The site archive consists of digital photographs. This archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Services (ADS) *ADSEasy* archive facility within 12 months.
- 6.2. A copy of this report will be provided to the Merseyside Historic Environment Record and will be added to the Archaeological Data Service Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database within 12 months.

7 References, glossary and abbreviations

Time periods used are as follows:

- Prehistoric: 500,000 BC - AD 43
 - Neolithic: 4,000 BC – 2,200 BC
 - Bronze Age: 2,600 BC – 700 BC
 - Iron Age: 800 BC – AD 43
- Roman: AD 43 – 410
- Early medieval: 410 - 1066
- Medieval: 1066 – 1540
- Post Medieval: 1540 - 1901
- Modern: 1901 - present

Abbreviations used are as follows:

- HER – Historic Environment Record
- LB – Listed Building (LB Gd I – Grade I, LB Gd II – Grade II listed)
- NDHA – Non-designated heritage asset
- NHLE – National Heritage List for England
- NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework

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www.pastscape.co.uk

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<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>

<https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>

<https://maps.nls.uk/>

Appendix A: Relevant HER entries

HER Number: MME12829 **Record Type:** Building

Site Name: Barn of Wheathill Farm, Naylor's Road, Roby

Summary: Barn of Wheathill Farm, Naylor's Road, Roby, an early 19th century building.

Monument Types and Dates

BARN (GEORGIAN to 21ST CENTURY - 1818 AD? to 2050 AD)

Description

Barn Wheathill Farm, Naylor's Road, Roby. (1-2)

The property does not seem to be shown on Yates' map of 1786 (3), and seems to first appear on Greenwood's map of 1818. (4)

The building is shown on the Tithe map of 1849, and according to its apportionment the 'Homestead and Garden' at Plot No. 21 was owned by F.H. Froes Esq. and occupied by Ann Yore. (5-6)

The property is labelled 'Wheat Hill Farm' on the 1st edition 6" OS map of 1850.

A site visit was carried out in 1991 and photographs of the property at that time were produced. (2)

The building was photographed in 2015 ahead of proposed demolition. (7)

HER Number: MME5552 **Record Type:** Building

Site Name: Lakeside, Naylor's Road, Roby

Summary: Lakeside, former farmhouse of Wheathill Farm, Naylor's Road, Roby, an early 19th century building.

Monument Types and Dates

HOUSE (GEORGIAN to LATE 20TH CENTURY - 1818 AD? to 2000 AD?)

SCHOOL (LATE 20TH CENTURY to 21ST CENTURY - 2000 AD? to 2050 AD)

Description

Lakeside (farmhouse of Wheathill Farm), Naylor's Road, Roby. (1-2)

The property does not seem to be shown on Yates' map of 1786 (3), and seems to first appear on Greenwood's map of 1818. (4)

The building is shown on the Tithe map of 1849, and according to its apportionment the 'Homestead and Garden' at Plot No. 21 was owned by F.H. Froes Esq. and occupied by Ann Yore. (5-6)

The property is labelled 'Wheat Hill Farm' on the 1st edition 6" OS map of 1850.

A site visit was carried out in 1991 and photographs of the property at that time were produced. (2)

HER Number: MME12831 **Record Type:** Site

Site Name: Site of an Outbuilding at Wheathill Farm, Naylor's Road, Roby

Summary: Former site of an outbuilding at Wheathill Farm, Naylor's Road, Roby, an early 19th century building.

Monument Types and Dates

OUTBUILDING (GEORGIAN to LATE 20TH CENTURY - 1818 AD? to 2000 AD?)

Description

Former site of an outbuilding at Wheathill Farm, Naylor's Road, Roby. (1-2)

The property does not seem to be shown on Yates' map of 1786 (3), and seems to first appear on Greenwood's map of 1818. (4)

The building is shown on the Tithe map of 1849, and according to its apportionment the 'Homestead and Garden' at Plot No. 21 was owned by F.H. Froes Esq. and occupied by Ann Yore. (5-6)

The property is labelled 'Wheat Hill Farm' on the 1st edition 6" OS map of 1850.

A site visit was carried out in 1991, in advance of a planning application for the conversion of the building into a private dwelling, and photographs of the property at that time were produced. (2)

At some time between that visit, and when Google imagery (air photos) dating to 2000 was produced, that outbuilding was pulled down and replaced with the modern house currently on site.