

Historic Building Record
The Farm, Bessboro, Ballinure, Blackrock, Cork City



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February 2022

1. Introduction

John Cronin & Associates have been commissioned by **Estuary View Enterprises 2020 Ltd** to carry out a historic building record ahead of a proposed development in lands at Ballinure, Mahon, Cork. Cork City Council and An Bord Pleanála have requested the preparation of a historic building record to accompany a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) for the subject lands.



Figure 1: Site location encircled in yellow (© Google)

2. Context

Environmental Context

The site is situated within the townland of Ballinure on lands to the north of the South Ring Road and to the west of the former Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway line. The site consists of the northern range of a cluster of much-altered farm buildings that formed part of the former “Bessboro Farm”. In recent decades much of the former land parcel was the home to “Cork Heritage Park” which is now closed.



Figure 2: Subject site circled in red

Legal Context

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) lists three structures within 250 metres of the subject site. There is a total of three structures included on the list of protected structures for Cork City and County Cork within c.1km of the site. These include Bessborough (or “Bessboro”) House, which is both an recorded monument and a protected structure and is outside the subject area but surrounded by the subject lands. Listed below are the protected structures within 1km of the subject site (**Table 3**):

Table 3: Record of Protected Structures within c.1km of the subject site

RPS No.	Name/Type	Location
00478	Windsor House (Rochestown Park Hotel)	Monfieldstown, Rochestown, Co. Cork
00476	Bloomfield House	Monfieldstown, Rochestown, Co. Cork
PS490	Bessboro Convent (Central Block)	Bessborough, Ballinure, Mahon, Cork City

Historical context and cartographic evidence

Bessborough House is believed to have been built in 1760 as a residence for the Allens, a prominent Cork Quaker family. In 1814 the house and lands were acquired by a Mr J. Spence and changed hands again shortly after to the Bousefield family. In about 1820 the property was bought by Joseph Pike, of Cromwellian planter origin, the Pikes became a prosperous Quaker family whose business interests included the Cork Steamship Company, Pike's Bank, a drapery store and railway development. Bessborough remained in the Pike family until 1920 when the last of two spinster sisters, Ann Emily Pike, died. The property was sold to the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in 1922.



Figure 3: Cork City and eastern suburbs as depicted by George Taylor and Alexander Skinner's *Maps of the roads of Ireland* in 1778. Bessborough is indicated as "Bisboro" and the proprietor as Allen Esq.

The first edition indicates that at that time the house consisted of a central squarish block with a projecting wing to either side (**Figure 4**). The western wing terminated in what appears to be a pavilion. The eastern wing extended to the north forming a long range of buildings, possibly a service wing, which defined the east side of a yard to the rear of the house. The north side of the yard was enclosed by a further range of buildings, presumably out-offices, stables and/or coach-house (at the time, the house lacked a separate farmyard complex).



Figure 4: First edition 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map (Surveyed 1841, published 1845)

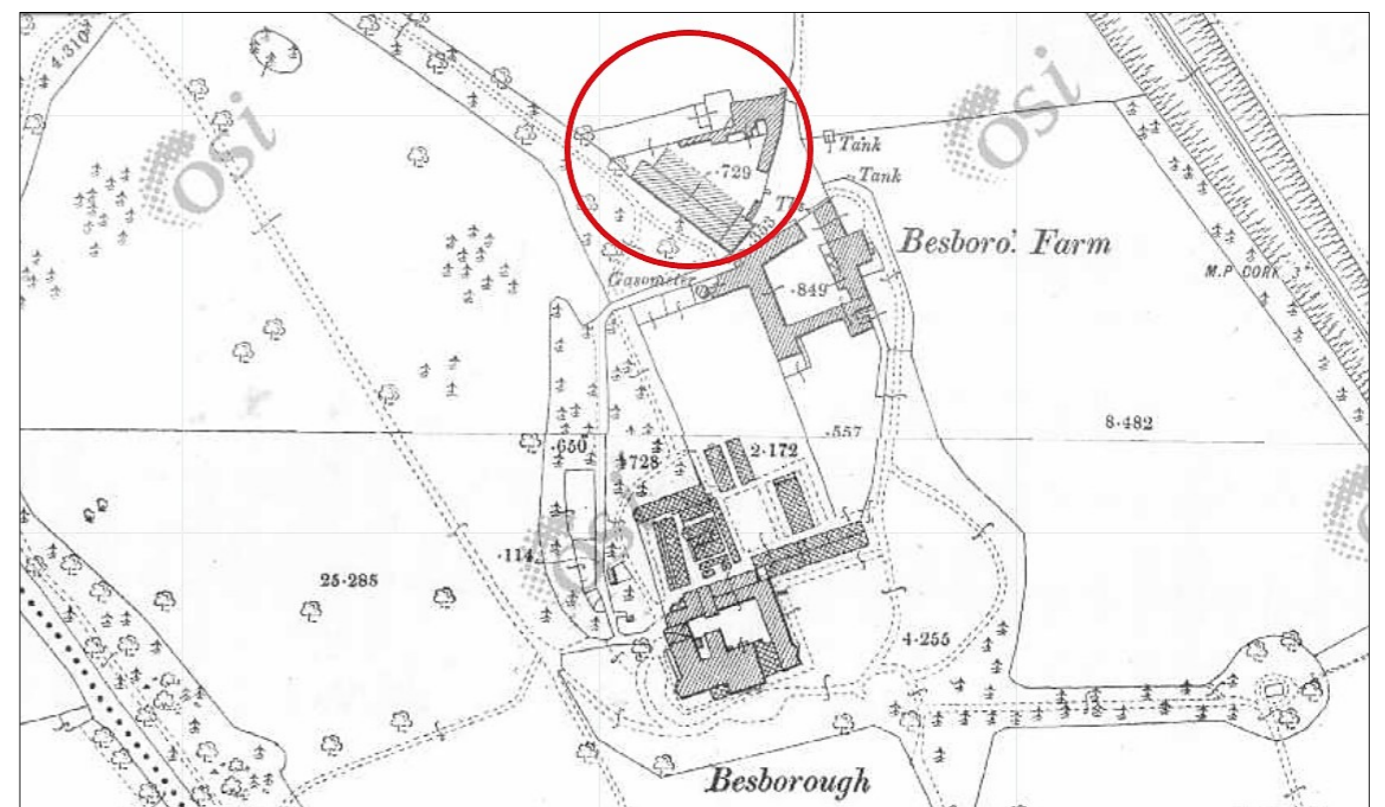


Figure 5: 1:2500 (25"-inch) Ordnance Survey Map (Surveyed 1899/1900, published 1901)

By the time of the 25" inch Ordnance Survey in 1899 (**Figure 5**) the house had been extended and a large number of additional out buildings had been constructed. The other main area of construction was the creation of a complex of farm buildings, indicated as "Besboro' Farm" to the north northeast of the house. These buildings were arranged around two courtyards, a square one to the south and a triangular one adjacent to the north. A major addition to the immediate landscape, although not within the actual historic demesne, was the construction of the Cork to Blackrock railway in 1850 the line of which is clearly indicated to the east of the historic estate.

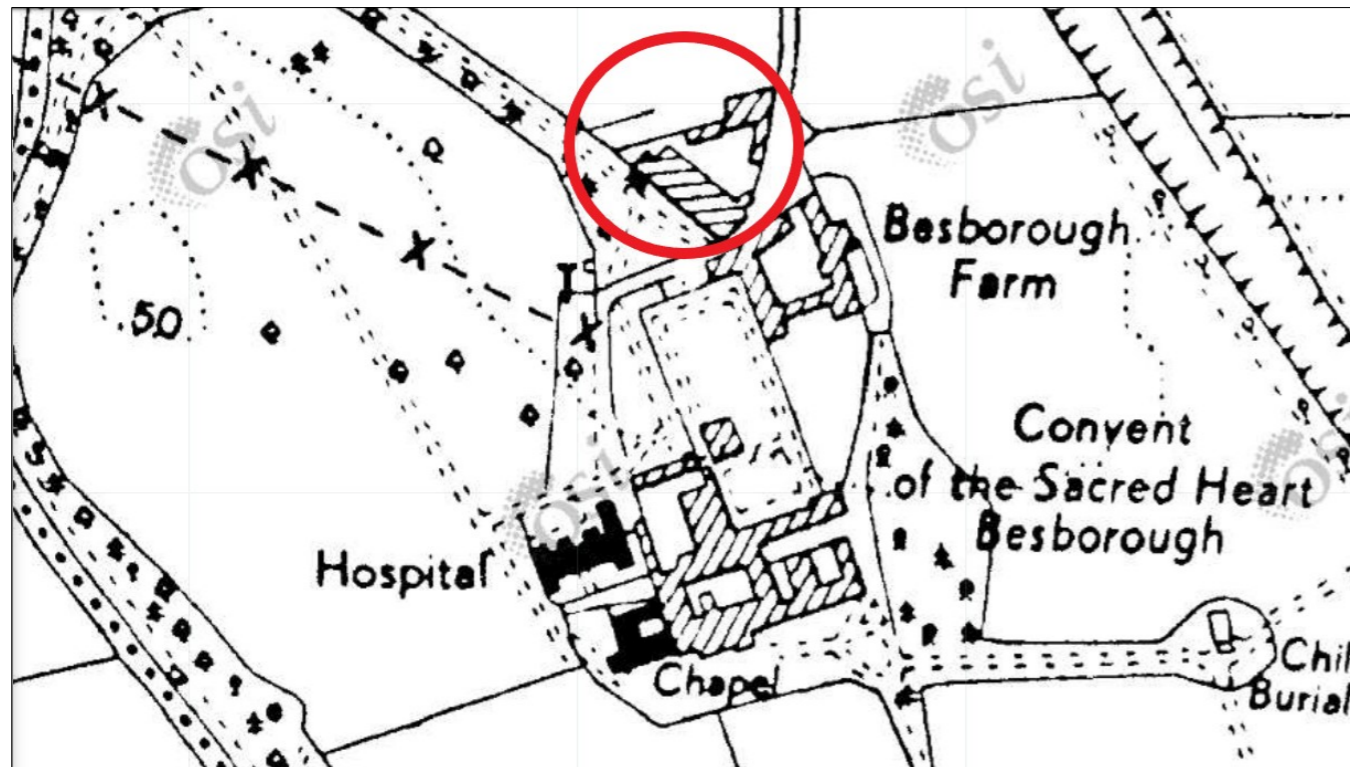


Figure 6: Extract of 1956 Six-Inch-to-One-Mile Ordnance Survey Map. The changes wrought by the establishment of the convent by the Sacred Heart Order. The original Bessborough House has been greatly extended with the addition of a hospital and chapel. A children's burial ground within the enclosure of the folly is named on this map edition

Since 1990 many of the outbuildings comprising "Bessboro' Farm" have been renovated for use as a heritage centre (now defunct) and as office/educational units. In addition, a number of new structures, including a crèche and a meditation centre, have been constructed in the area which originally comprised the walled gardens. As part of the Heritage Park development the former parkland to the north of the house (and west of the northern farmyard) was fenced off and replanted with trees that have diminished the former open parkland quality that was clearly evident on mid-twentieth-century mapping and aerial photographs (see **Figures 6 & 7**). On the aerial photograph in particular, the farm is separated from the parkland area to the west by an estate wall and a tree belt whilst the parkland area itself is remarkably open and largely devoid of trees.



Figure 7: 1951 aerial image showing the subject site (Source: Military Archives, Vertical Aerial Photography, V190 #72; Cork-Douglas/Blackrock, 13 February 1951).

3. Description of subject site

The subject site is located in the townland of Ballinure, to the south of Mahon, a suburb of Cork City with a variety of established and emerging land uses. The site is located approximately 5km to the southeast of the city centre. The lands are located on a gently sloping low hillside that falls towards the Douglas River and Cork Harbour estuary. The subject site (see **Figure 8**) is the more northerly of two ranges/yards of farm buildings associated with Bessborough House. The southern yard is not impacted by the proposed development, and it is not documented in this report.



Figure 8: Aerial view of the former Bessborough Farm – the complex consists of two yards – the northern yard is the focus of this report (Source: Google Maps)

The subject site is the late-nineteenth-century farm complex known as “Bessboro Farm” (NIAH Reference 20872006). The NIAH describe the buildings as follows:

Farmyard complex, built c.1880, to north of Bessborough House comprising two ranges of single- and two-storey outbuildings arranged around central yards. South yard houses stables and two-storey domestic building, north yard incorporates two-storey building, L-shaped barn and open corrugated-iron barn structure. Pitched slate roofs to south yard with dormer windows and corrugated-iron roofs to north yard. Coursed rubble stone walls with remnants of early render to walls of north buildings. Walls to south yard re-rendered in 1993. Square-headed window openings with red brick surrounds c.2000 and replacement windows to north yard. Square-headed window openings with replacement windows to south yard. Square-headed door openings with red brick surrounds c.2000 and replacement doors to

north yard. Cut limestone piers to gateway to south yard. Extensive walled garden to north of house enclosed by coursed limestone walls, c.1880, and possibly incorporating earlier fabric dating to construction of Bessborough House, c.1760. Greenhouses constructed within garden c.1880 with three surviving.

The farmyard complex was built c. 1880 and contained a large variety of functions, including stables, dairy, barns, and accommodation for farm workers. The former farm complex has been recorded by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH Reference 20872006). The northern yard (within the development site) is triangular-in-plan and incorporates a two-storey building, a L-shaped barn, an open corrugated-iron barn structure and a series of modern structures. The southern yard, located outside of the development site, is roughly square-in-plan; this courtyard housed stables, workshops and a two-storey domestic building (possibly a farm manager’s house). Generally, the buildings within the northern yard served more utilitarian functions and are, for the most part, much-altered. There is a greater degree of formality and design intent to the configuration, layout and design of the buildings that form the southern yard. The farm complex appears to have been in active use up until the 1980s.

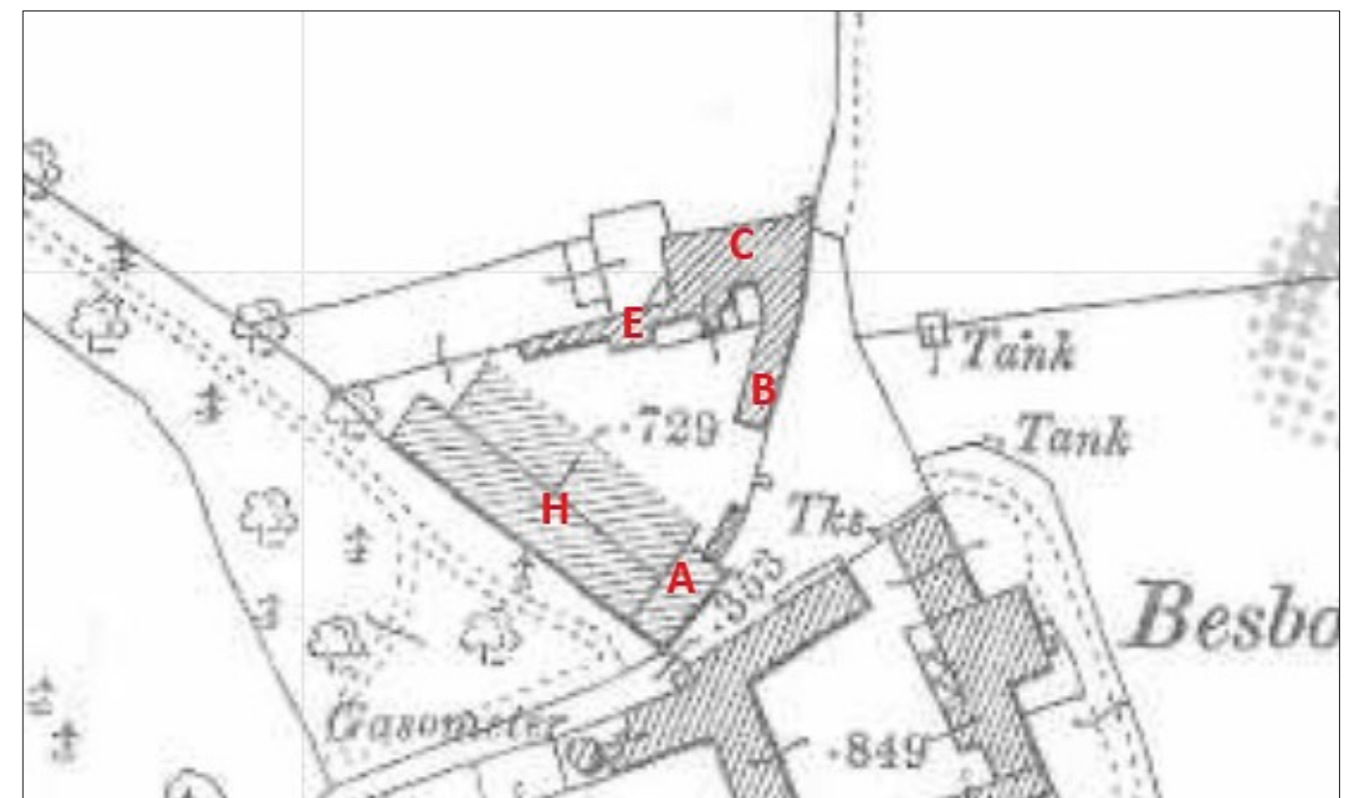


Figure 9: Depiction of the northern yard on the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map (Surveyed 1899/1900, published 1901)

The subject buildings in the northern portion of the farmyard complex and are laid out in a triangular shape around a central courtyard with an entrance to the southeast. The 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1901 (see extract below (**Figure 9**)) shows the complex soon after its construction. The two-storey structure, (hereafter referred to as “**Building A**”), is depicted with a flight of external steps to the northeast elevation which were likely to be of stone construction. **Building B** and **C** are also depicted to the northeast corner. There are some structures adjacent to the southern elevation of **Building C** which are no longer extant. **Building E** is depicted

as a central part of a northern range and connected to Building C, only Building C remains extant. The former barn, **Building H**, forms the western boundary of the complex and is sub-divided longitudinally. The stone wall of the southwestern elevation extends to the northwest as a boundary wall.

Upstanding buildings on site

The subject buildings form the northern range of part of a complex of farm buildings located to the north of Bessborough House. They consist of a cluster of buildings laid out around a central triangular courtyard with an entrance to the southeast. The buildings are currently unoccupied. The buildings have been labelled as follows for the purpose of this description and a photographic record is included in the appendix to this document:

- A. A late nineteenth-century, two-storey stone-built building with a replacement pitched metal profile roof.
- B. A late nineteenth-century double-height stone-built former store building with a replacement corrugated metal barrel roof.
- C. A late nineteenth-century, double-height stone-built former store building with a replacement corrugated metal barrel roof.
- D. A modern detached, single-storey concrete block-built building with a modern metal roof.
- E. A late nineteenth-century, single-storey, three bay stone-built building with a pitched corrugated metal roof.
- F. A modern, three-bay, single-storey modern concrete-built structure with stone facing and a pitched corrugated metal roof.
- G. A modern, single-storey concrete-built structure previously in use as a toilet block with stone facing and a shallow pitched metal roof.
- H. A late nineteenth-century, double height stone-built former barn, open to eastern elevation. Replacement pitched metal profile roof to western section, damaged barrel corrugated roof to eastern section.

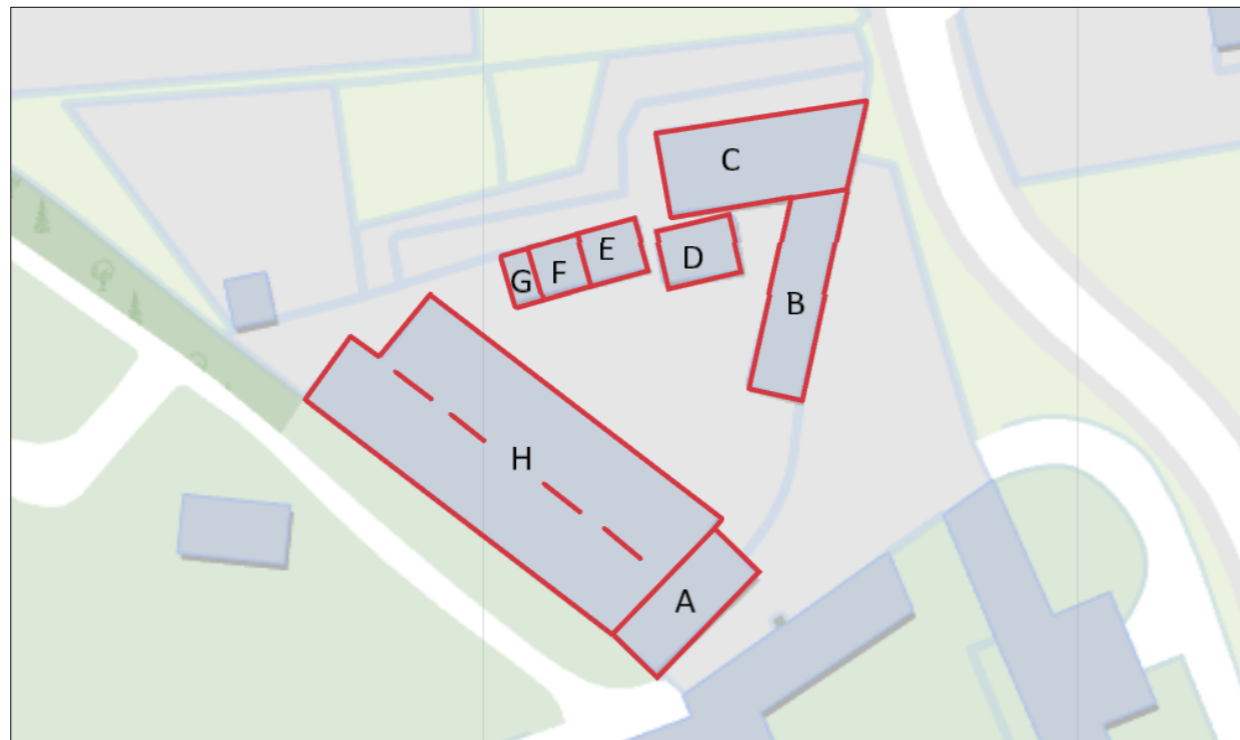


Figure 10: Upstanding buildings within the development site (labelled A through to H)

Building A (see Appendix: Photographic Record - Plates 1 – 8)

A late nineteenth-century, two-storey stone-built building with brick detailing to windows which are replacement uPVC frames. Sections of render to first floor and a replacement pitched metal profile roof. External metal staircase on the north-eastern elevation accesses the first floor. The rear elevation is much altered with a number of blocked up original openings and later insertions.

Interior much altered and modernised with modern joinery and plastered and painted walls and ceiling. Open plan rooms to ground and first floor, a modern internal stair leads to the first floor.

Interior

The ground floor is occupied by three rooms A-GF01—A-GF03

Hallway-A-GF01 is accessed via a doorway on the southern elevation with a modern roller door. The ceiling and walls are plastered and painted with plain modern skirting. The floor is concrete with a carpet covering. A modern staircase leads to the first floor.

A-GF02 is accessed via a modern painted timber door with glazed panel in the eastern elevation. The room is lit from the south by two windows with replacement uPVC window frames. The ceiling and walls are plastered and painted with plain modern skirting. The floor is concrete with a carpet covering. There are no internal features of architectural heritage interest. A-GF03 is a small WC off the hallway A-GF01. Walls and ceiling plastered and painted with modern fittings.

A modern door at the top of the stairs leads to an open plan hall A-FF01. The ceiling and walls are plastered and painted with plain modern skirting and carpet floor covering. The room can be sub-divided by a modern folding partition. The room is lit by five windows with replacement uPVC window frames. A modern painted timber door with glazed panel in the eastern elevation leads to a modern metal external staircase.

Building B (see Appendix: Photographic Record - Plates 9-12)

A late nineteenth-century, double-height stone-built former store building with a replacement sheet metal barrel roof. The building shares its northern wall with Building C forming an L-shaped structure. The western elevation has been extensively rebuilt and has a number of blocked-up openings using a mixture of stone, brick and render.

Interior

The building is accessed via a modern doorway in the eastern elevation. The ground floor is sub-divided into three rooms by stone-built walls. The floors are concrete and the ceiling is a modern replacement. The walls have been clad with insulation and rendered, the western wall has a number of openings blocked up with modern blockwork and brickwork. The rooms are interconnected by centrally located openings in the internal stone walls. A modern timber staircase in B-GF02 leads to the first floor.

The stairs leads to a small landing with a WC, a doorway leads to B-FF03. B-FF03 has exposed painted stone walls, a modern timber floor and replacement roof joists. B-FF04 is an attic space accessed via a hatch in the ceiling from B-GF03 and has exposed painted stone walls, a modern timber floor and replacement roof joists.

Building C (see Appendix: Photographic Record - Plates 13-14)

A late nineteenth-century, double-height semi-coursed, rubble stone-built former store building with a replacement sheet metal barrel roof.

Interior

The building is accessed via a modern opening in the southern wall and is occupied by a single open-plan room. The interior has a modern timber floor, painted stonewalls and a replacement metal truss roof supported on internal H steel beams. A chamber-headed brick vehicular entrance with a modern sheet metal double door is located in the western elevation with a replacement window to the upper section. The building is also accessed via a modern timber door in the eastern elevation which appears to be inserted into a blocked-up former opening.

Building D (see Appendix: Photographic Record - Plates 15-16)

A modern detached, single-storey concrete block-built building with a modern metal roof of no architectural heritage significance.

Building E (see Appendix: Photographic Record - Plates 17-18)

A late-nineteenth-century, single-storey, three bay semi-coursed ashlar stone-built building with a pitched corrugated metal roof. Brick detailing to windows, probably originally camber-headed but later altered when replacement uPVC frames were inserted. Internally, the building is modernised and has no original features.

Building F (see Appendix: Photographic Record - Plates 19-20)

A modern three-bay, single-storey modern concrete-built structure with stone facing and a pitched corrugated metal roof of no architectural heritage significance.

Building G (see Appendix: Photographic Record - See Plate 21)

A modern single-storey concrete-built structure previously in use as a toilet block. The walls have modern stone facing and cement render and a shallow pitched metal roof of no architectural heritage significance.

Building H (see Appendix: Photographic Record - Plates 22-27)

A late nineteenth-century, double height stone-built former barn, open to eastern elevation. It is sub-divided into two sections with a replacement pitched metal profile roof to western section and a badly damaged barrel corrugated roof to eastern section. The western wall is of exposed rubble stone and extends to the north forming part of the western boundary wall. Some sections have two courses of brickwork at the eaves level.

Interior

Internally the western section is subdivided by random rubble stone walls and later concrete-built divisions with concrete floors. The eastern section is open to the east and north with the southern end built up against the rear elevation of Building A. A flat-roofed concrete structure has been constructed within the eastern section of the building.

6. References

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<http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer/#V2,591271,743300,1,10> (Maps)

http://spatial.dcenr.gov.ie/imf/imf.jsp?site=GSI_Simple (Bedrock)

<https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>

<https://www.logainm.ie>

Appendix 1: Photographic Record



Plate 1: View to subject site from gateway to east



Plate 3: South-eastern and north-eastern elevation of Building A



Plate 2: General view to northern range with Building A on left and Building B on right



Plate 4: South-western elevation of Building A



Plate 5: South-eastern corner of Building A



Plate 6: Modern steps to first floor on northeast elevation of Building A



Plate 7: Blocked up brick arches in boundary wall to east of Building A



Plate 8: Modern boiler house and north-western elevation of Building A



Plate 10: Ground floor room A-GF02 Building A



Plate 9: Blocked-up openings in north-western elevation of Building A



Plate 11: First floor room A-FF01 Building A



Plate 12: Eastern elevation of Building B



Plate 14: Northern end of western elevation of Building B rebuilt with modern brick and stone finishes



Plate 13: Western elevation of Building B. Note upper section rebuilt



Plate 15: Southern elevation of Building B



Plate 16: Entrance on eastern elevation of Building B



Plate 18: Modern floor joists in Building B



Plate 17: Interior of western wall of Building B with blocked-up openings



Plate 19: Interior of western wall of Building B with blocked-up openings



Plate 20: Modern staircase in ground floor room B-GF Building B



Plate 22: First floor room B-GF Building B



Plate 21: First floor room B-BF Building B



Plate 23: Eastern elevation of Building C



Plate 24: Northern elevation of Building C



Plate 26: Interior of Building D with modern blockwork and joinery



Plate 25: Southern elevation of modern structure Building D



Plate 27: Southern elevation of Building E



Plate 28: Window detail on southern elevation of Building E with replacement uPVC frame



Plate 30: Interior view of Building E with modern floor, ceiling and wall finishes



Plate 29: Cut stone detail to wall on southern elevation of Building E



Plate 31: Southern elevation of Building F



Plate 32: Interior of Building F with modern floor, ceiling and wall finishes



Plate 33: Southern elevation of Building G



Plate 34: Detail of modern stonework and render on corner of southern elevation of Building G



Plate 35: Interior of Building G with modern finishes



Plate 37: Western elevation of Building H



Plate 36: Eastern elevation of Building H



Plate 38: Northern elevation of Building E and boundary wall



Plate 39: Interior of eastern portion of Building H looking to Building A



Plate 41: Modern concrete built addition to northern portion of Building H



Plate 40: Interior of eastern portion of Building H looking north with modern concrete addition



Plate 42: Interior of western section of Building H



Plate 43: Interior of western section of Building H



Plate 45: Interior of western section of Building H

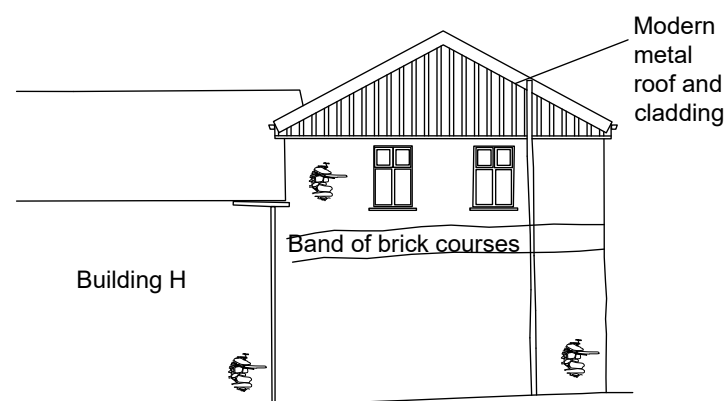
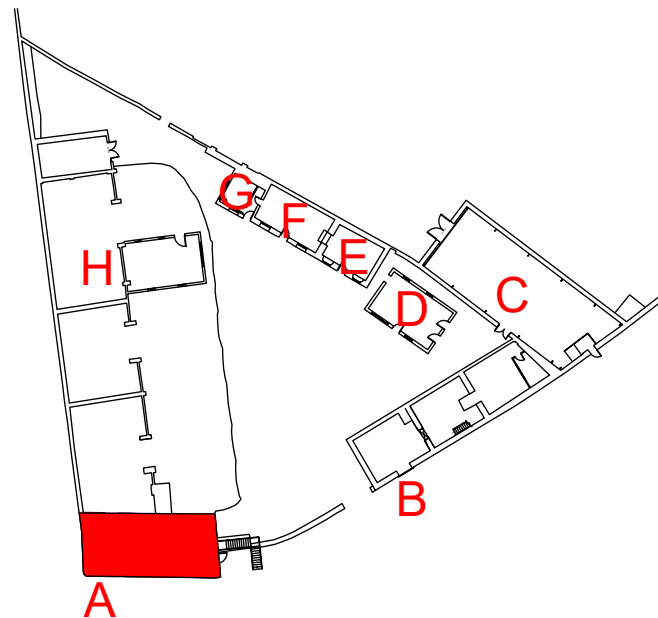


Plate 44: Steel truss roof in eastern section of Building

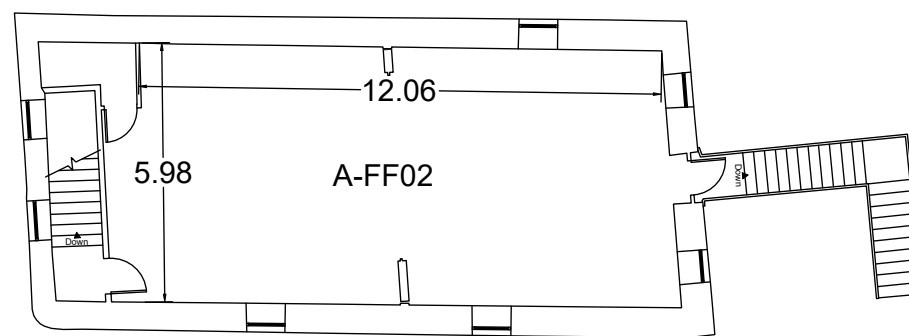


Plate 46: View from eastern section of Building H looking west

Appendix 2: Annotated record drawings



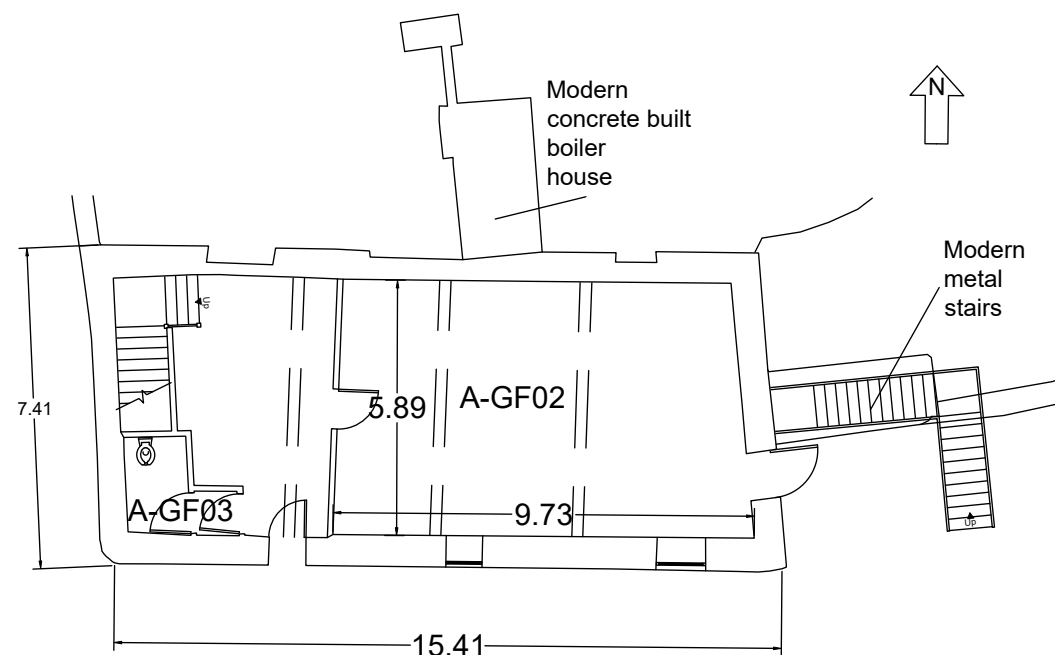
South-western elevation



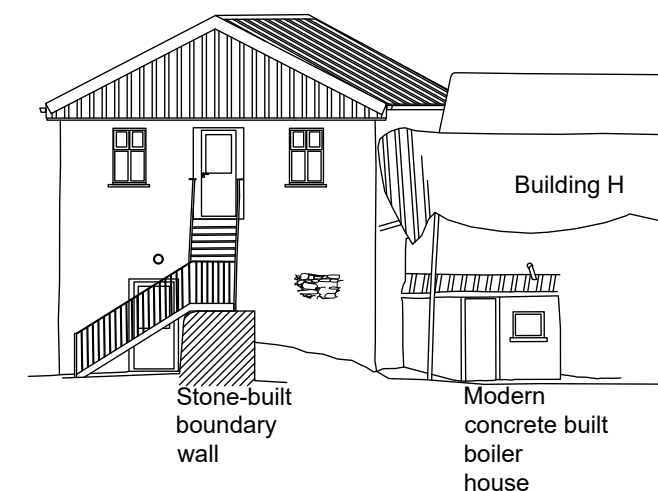
First floor plan



First floor room A-FF01



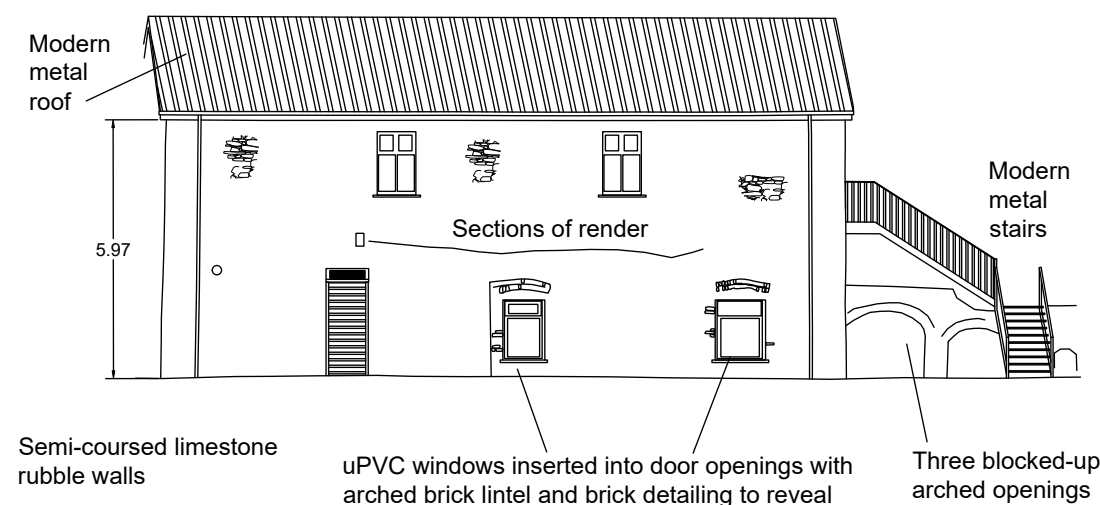
Ground floor plan



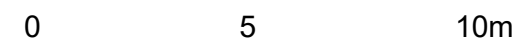
North-eastern elevation



South-eastern and south-western elevations of Building A



South-eastern elevation

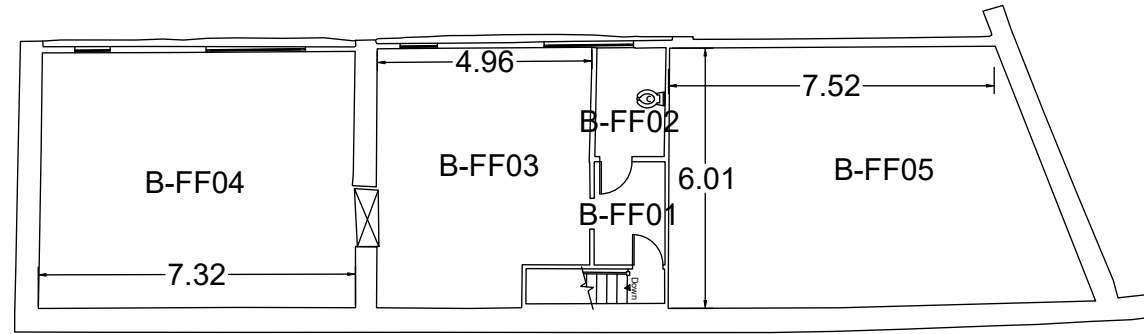
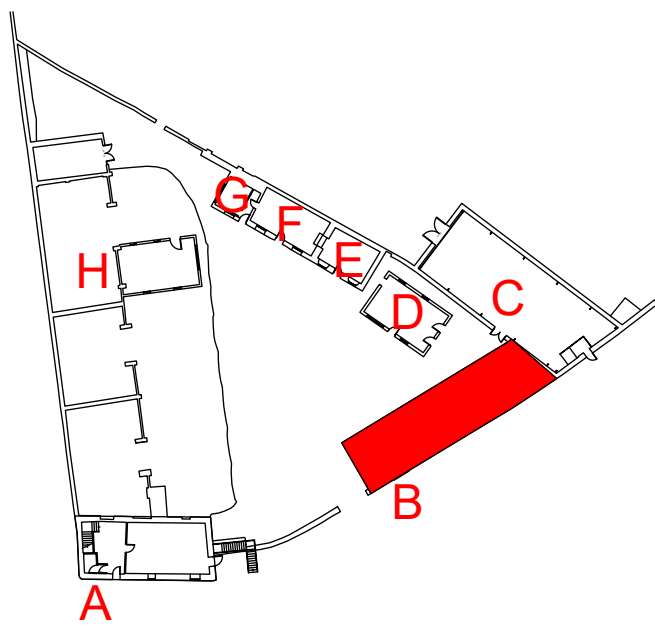


South-eastern elevation of three original blocked-up arched openings under stairs

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PL	Planning
A	Approval
PR	Preliminary
Stage	Description

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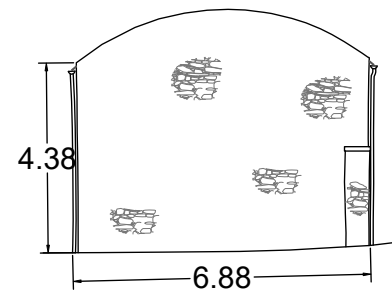
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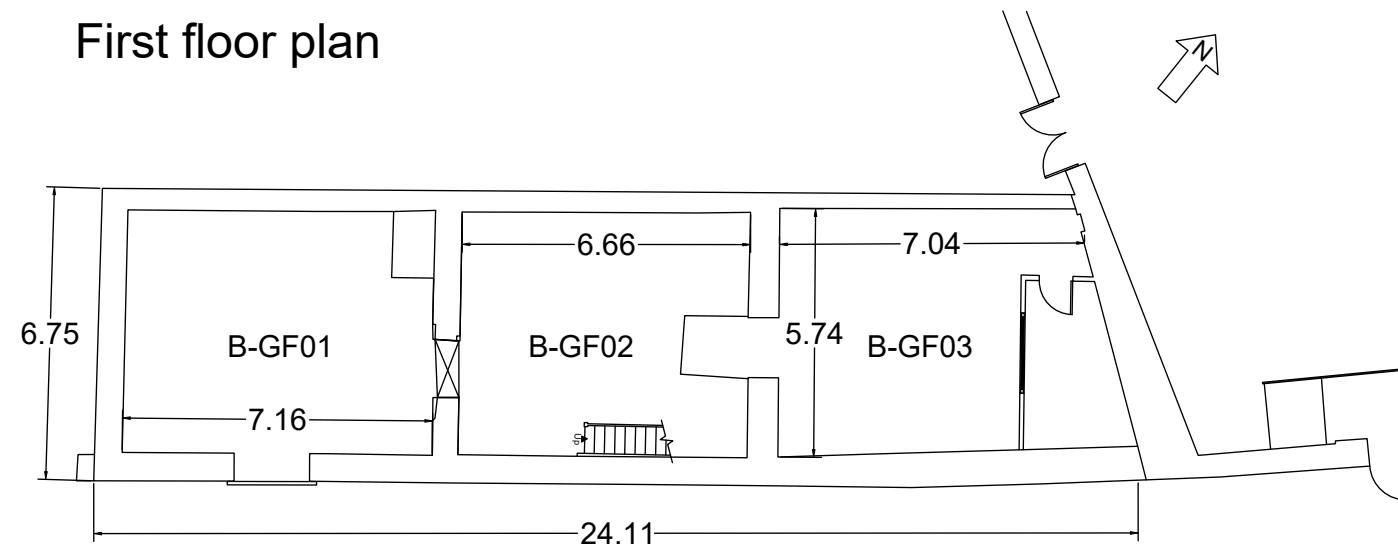
First floor plan



First floor attic space B-FF05



South-western elevation



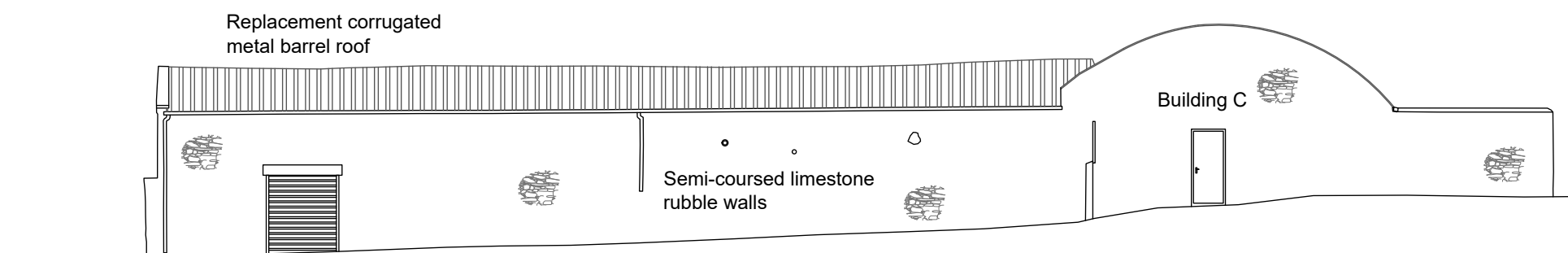
Ground floor plan



North-western elevation



Northern end of north-western elevation



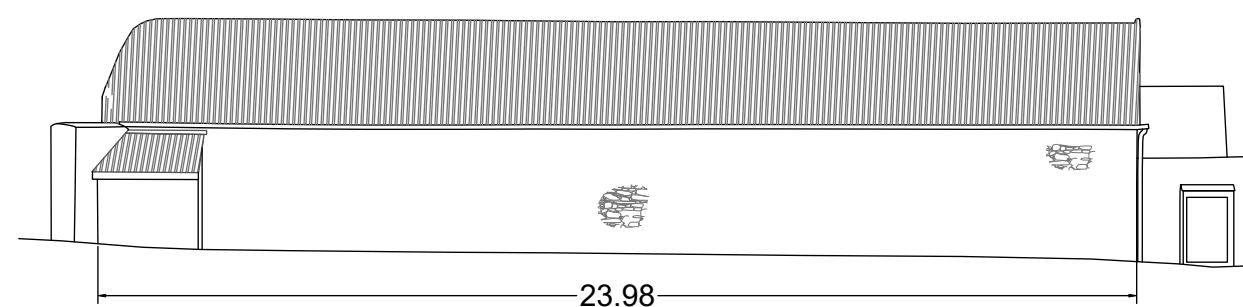
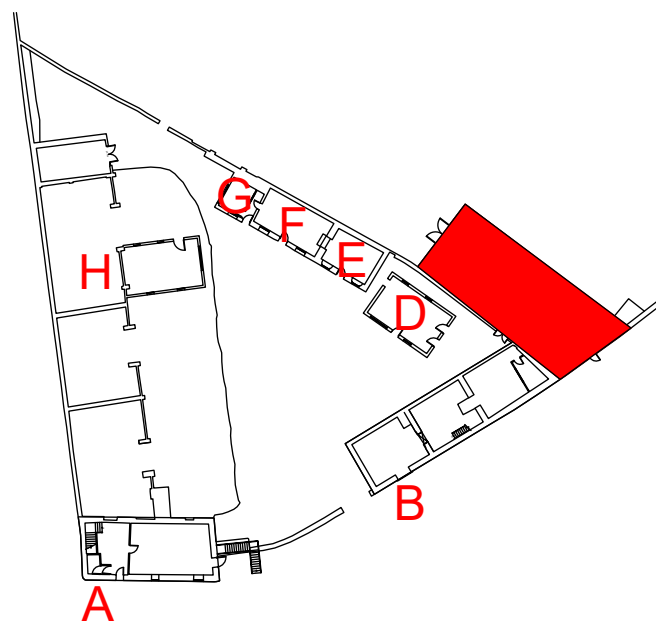
South-eastern elevation

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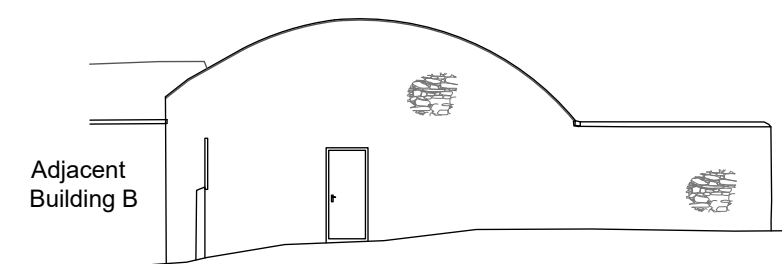
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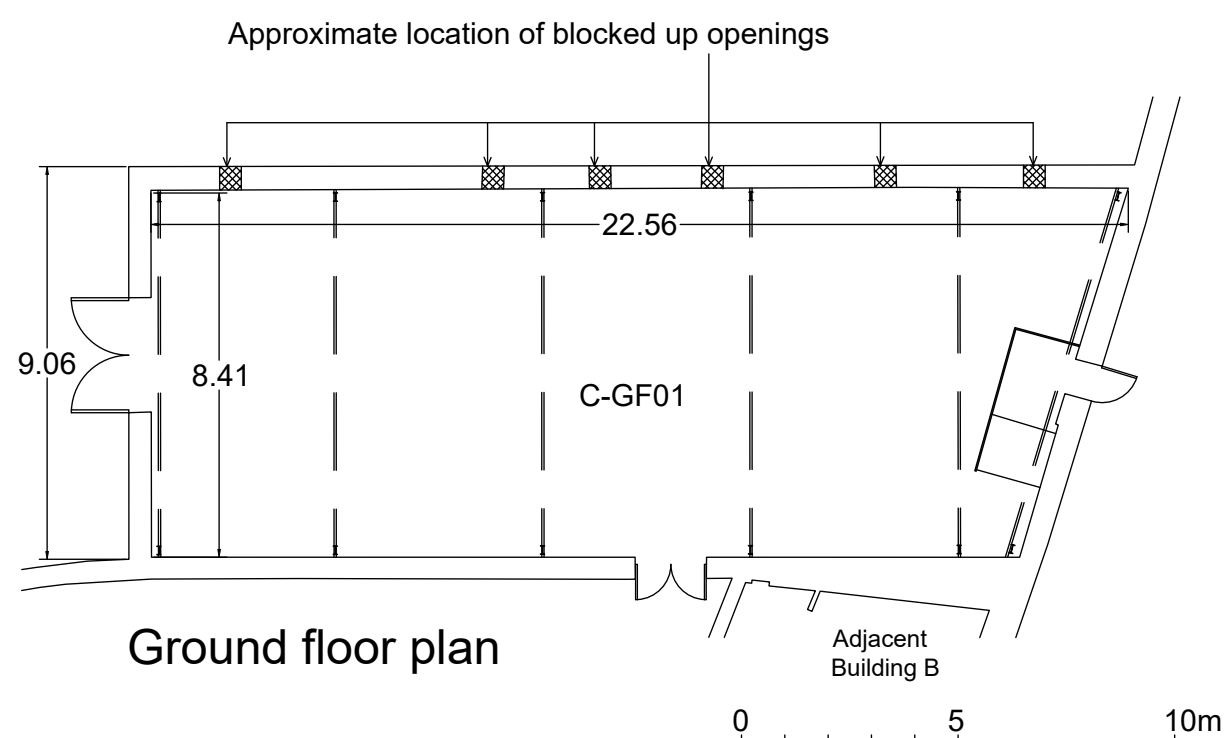
North-eastern elevation



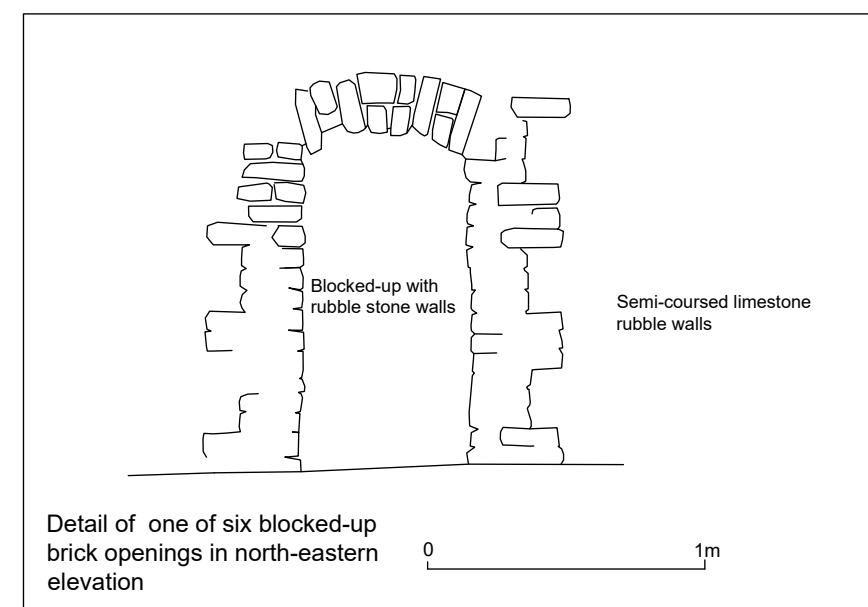
South-eastern elevation



Interior looking south-west



Ground floor plan



Detail of one of six blocked-up brick openings in north-eastern elevation

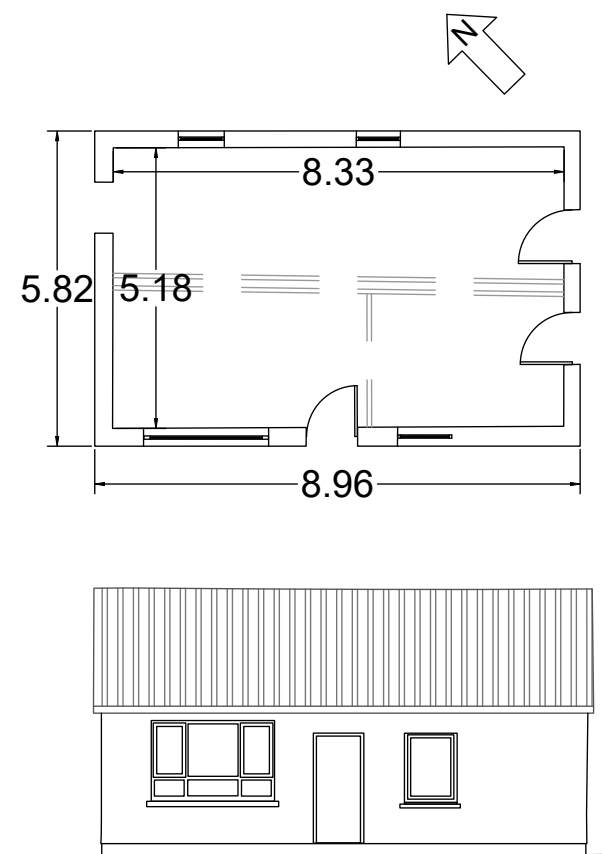


Interior looking north-east



North-eastern elevation

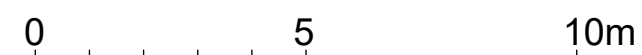
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Corrugated pitched
metal roof

uPVC windows and door

Concrete blockwork walls
with cement render

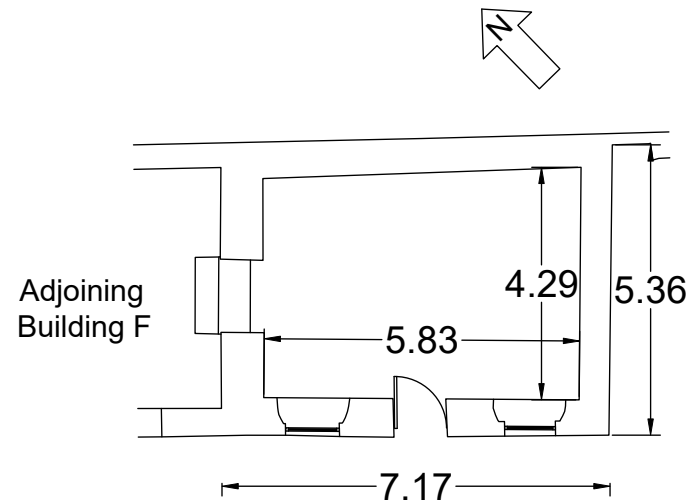
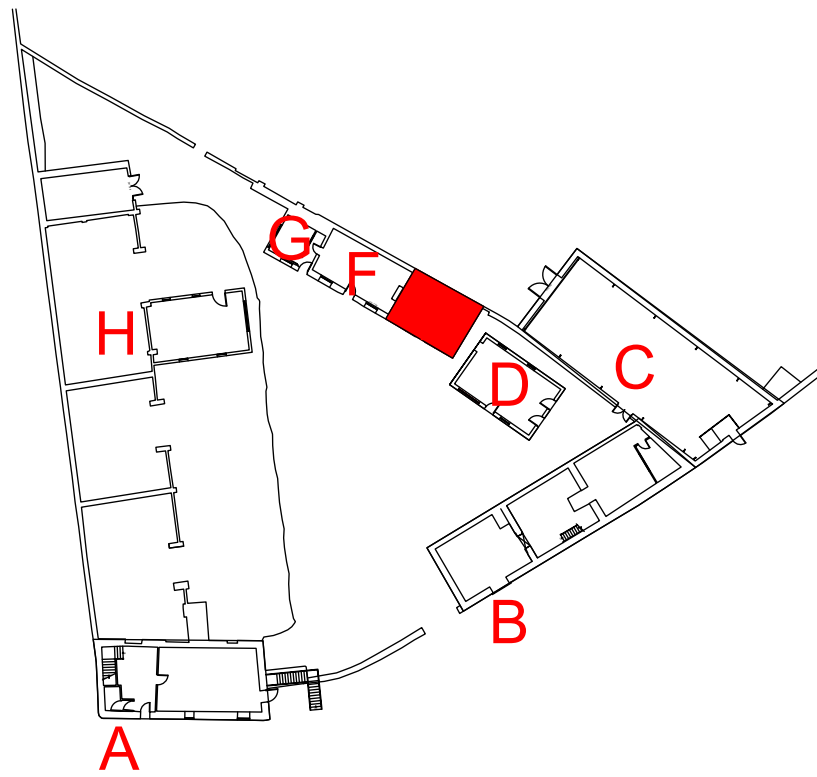


South-western elevation



Interior

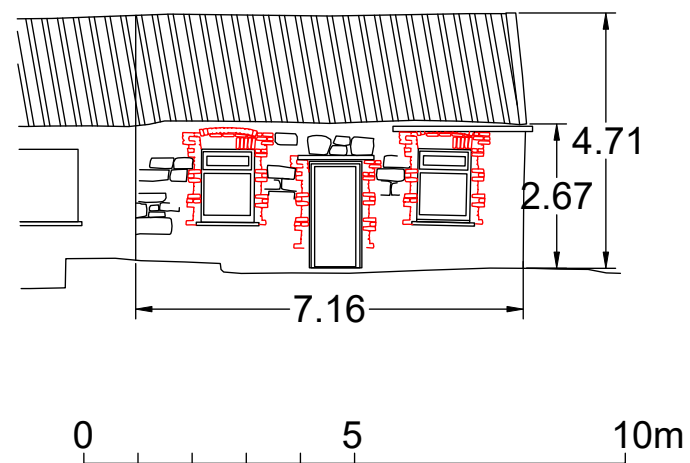
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Detail of window and ashlar wall



South-western elevation

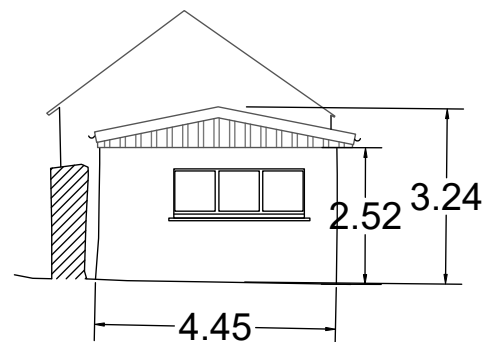
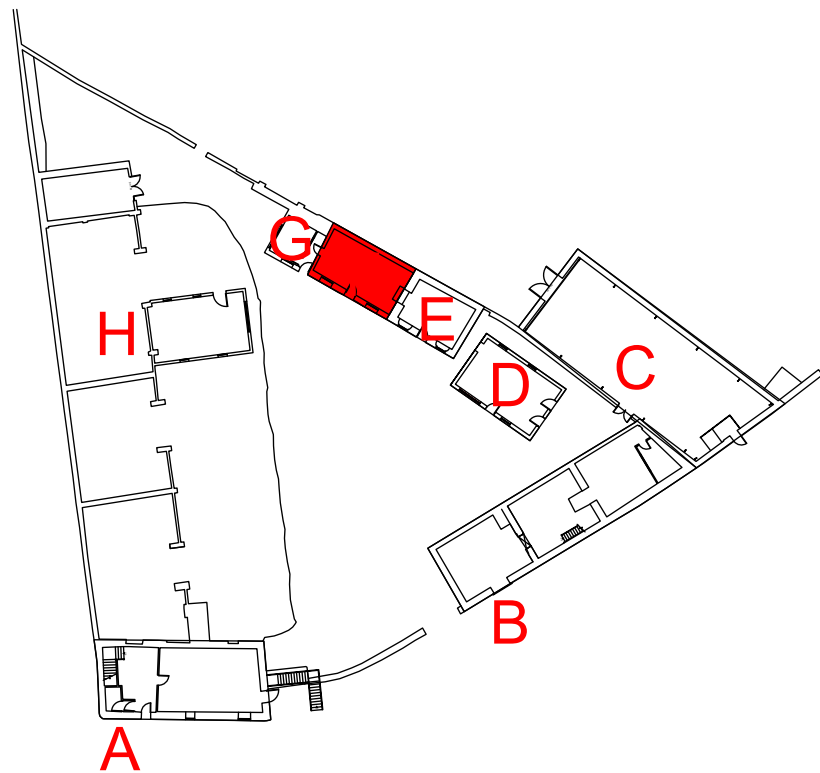


Interior

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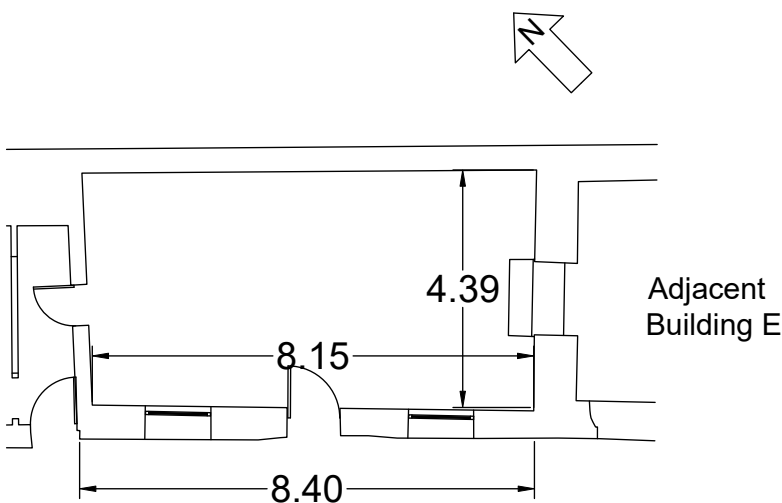
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Scale :		Bessboro Farm Building E		Rev				
Date : 08/02/2022		Ballinure Blackrock County Cork		Project No. JCA IE21 272				
Drawn :IOB	Checked :JC			Stage R		Drawing No. 005		
<div>JOHN CRONIN & ASSOCIATES</div> <div>ARCHAEOLOGY CONSERVATION HERITAGE PLANNING</div>								

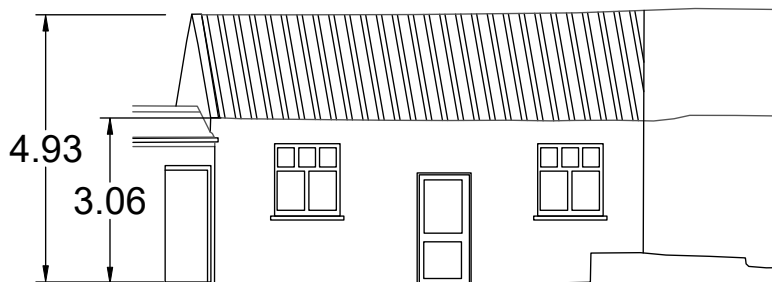


Cement render to walls with modern stone facing to front elevation

Adjacent Building G



Adjacent Building E



Corrugated pitched metal roof
Modern painted timber windows and door
Concrete blockwork walls with modern stone facing



South-western elevation

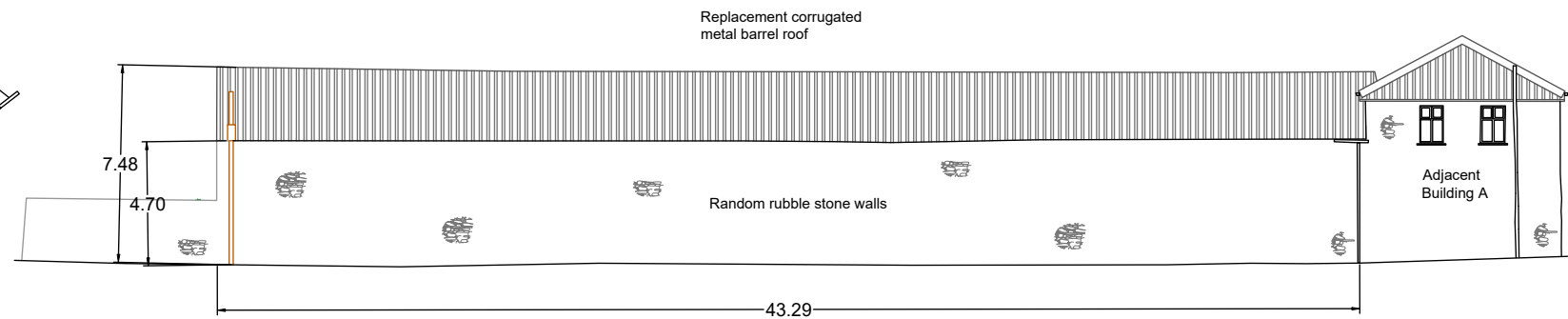
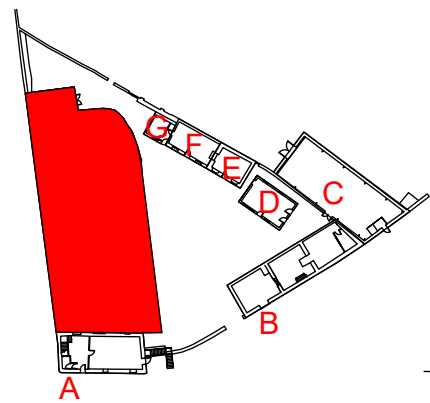


Interior

	R	Record						Scale :	Bessboro Farm Building F				Rev				
	C	Construction															
	T	Tender							Date : 08/02/2022	Ballinure Blackrock County Cork				Project No. JCA IE21 272			
	PL	Planning							Drawn :IOB					Checked :JC	Stage Drawing No.		
	A	Approval									R 006						
	PR	Preliminary															
	Stage	Description			Rev Mark	Revision		Date	By	<div>JOHN CRONIN & ASSOCIATES</div> <div>ARCHAEOLOGY CONSERVATION HERITAGE PLANNING</div>							



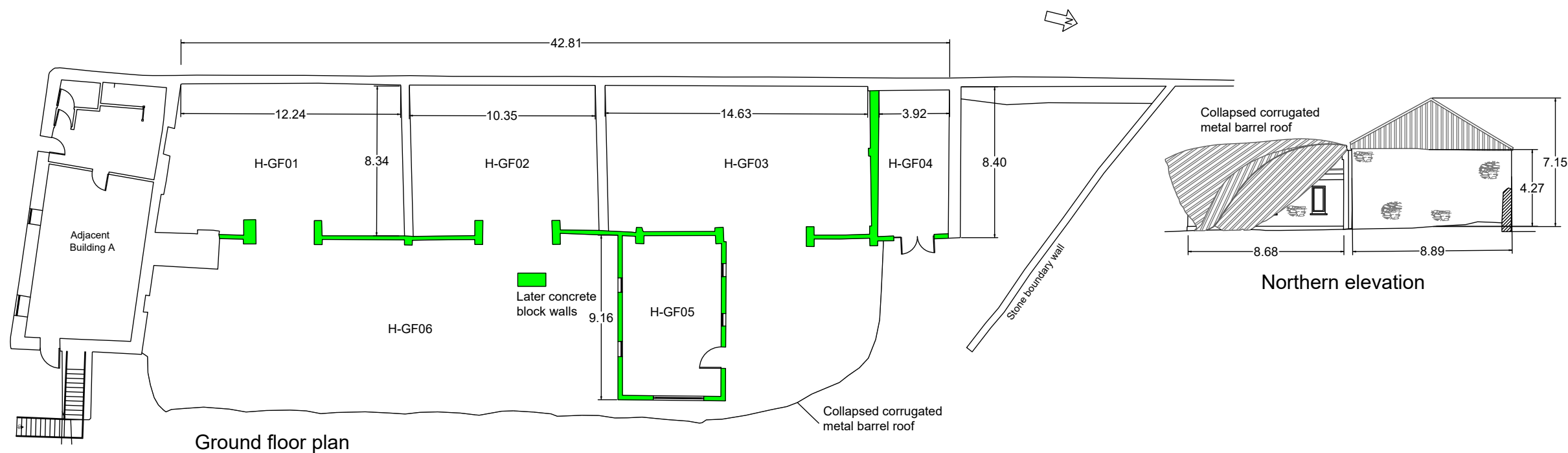
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PL	Planning									County Cork			R007				
A	Approval							JOHN CRONIN & ASSOCIATES ARCHAEOLOGY CONSERVATION HERITAGE PLANNING									
PR	Preliminary																
Stage	Description							Rev Mark	Revision								
								Date									
								By									



Western elevation



Western elevation



0 5 10m

All measurements in metres



Eastern elevation



Interior H-GF01



Interior H-GF02

R	Record					Scale :	Bessboro Farm Building H	Rev				
C	Construction					Date : 08/02/2022	Ballinure					Project No. JCA IE21 272
T	Tender					Drawn : IOB	Blackrock					Stage
PL	Planning					Checked : JC	County Cork					Drawing No.
A	Approval											R
PR	Preliminary											008
Stage	Description					Rev Mark	Revision					
						Date	By					