

# Old Moor Farm, Wombwell (RSPB)



*Figure 1: House (October 2022)*



*Figure 2: Barn (October 2022)*

## Historic Buildings Report

by David Cook (Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group)

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## Introduction

A small team from the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group (YVBSG) comprising David Cook (Archivist) and Mary Cook (Hon. Sec.) were invited to look at the buildings at Old Moor and to give an opinion on how old they are. The visit took place on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022. The YVBSG team took some notes and photos of the main buildings. This was primarily an assessment visit, aimed to discover whether or not the YVBSG should arrange a full historic buildings survey, so no measurements for scale drawings were taken.

The YVBSG team worked with Alvin Hickling, an RSPB volunteer, who kindly provided some documentary evidence for the history of Old Moor, including maps and census returns. There are useful photos from the 1990’s conversion work in “The Story of Old Moor and other things” by Eric Bennett, December 2020. A collection of photos from 1995, 2000 and 2004 was also made available having come to light a couple of months after the visit.

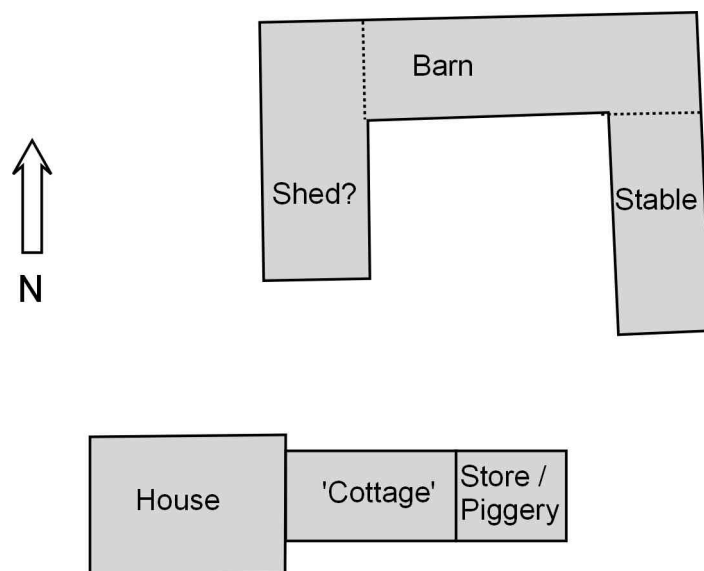
## The Main (Traditional) Buildings

Old Moor Farm is a complex of former farm buildings SE of Wombwell, Barnsley, now used as a base for RSPB Dearne Valley, and public access to the wetlands and viewing areas. The buildings are reused as RSPB offices, cafe, workshops, meeting rooms, shop, etc.

### Identification of former use of buildings and nomenclature

We have no list of the historic names/functions of the buildings. A search for the 1910 Valuation Survey Field Book (which might have given the names) was unsuccessful. Mr. Hickling said that there were people still alive who remembered the last tenants (the Gascoynes) of the farm, and it’s

possible that a list may be found in the documents or be recalled. Eric Bennett refers to the barn and the west wing of it as the cart shed. The main buildings of the farm are arranged in two blocks, north (N) and south (S) of a former main foldyard, with the main domestic accommodation being to the south. The farmhouse and its linear range is offset to the west (W). The barn is part of a 'U' shaped structure to the N.



*Figure 3: Block plan of Old Moor showing the main buildings only and their former functions*

## **The Farmhouse**

The house faces S, away from the farm buildings and foldyard. It has the plan of the 'Georgian farmhouse' with central entry into a wide hall, stair (though a modern replacement) in the middle bay and rear stair window lighting it. The building has a wide span, ample space for rear service rooms. The front and rear walls are of well-dressed coursed coal measures sandstone, and sandstone coping stones. The roof is grey ('railway' or 'Welsh') slate which could be later.

Much of the rest of the building is also altered later or the original features obscured, including all the windows, the two gable chimney stacks (one of red brick, one of yellow) and the internal walls. The exception is the roof structure which appears to be of the same date as the original build of the house.

### **Roof structure**

There are two principal rafters supported on the wall tops with no apparent tie beam (but see photos section). This wide span roof has three sets of purlins, all with tusk tenons, most of purlins reused, most likely from a timber framed building. Many empty mortices are angled on one side indicating that they are for braces but not in this roof structure. A purlin on the east (E) end of the roof in conference room 'Swallows Nest', has one angled for a brace, next to a mortice for stud/post and then another hole for a brace on opposing side, each held by a single peg (See figs. 4 & 5).

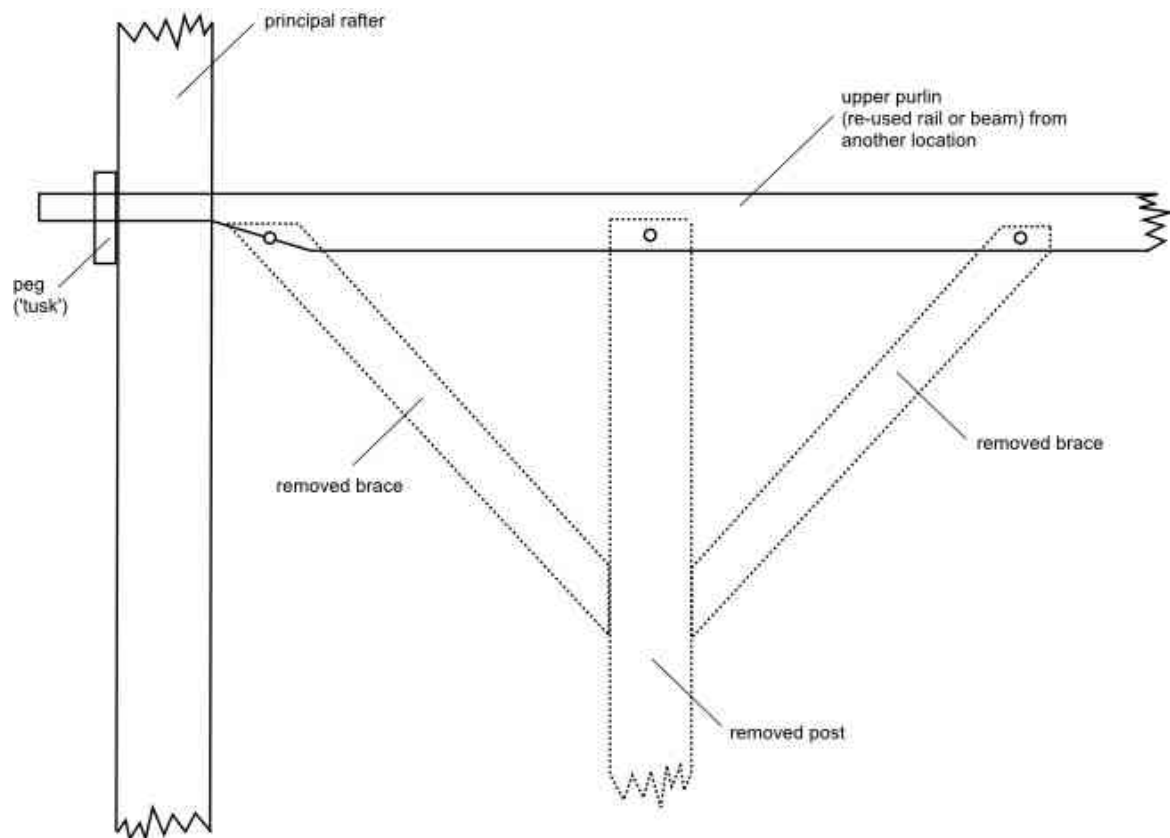


Figure 4: Sketch of timber reused as a purlin in the house E attic. Dotted members show former timbers jointed into this.



Figure 5: Photo of timber reused as a purlin showing empty mortices and pegholes.(October 2022)

Truss no I, (single chisel carpenter's mark) is in the E room; the 'Swallows Nest'. It has a surface that is adzed, not sawn or machine finished. This truss formerly had a morticed collar half way up it, held by two pegs now blocked. (see fig. 6) One purlin has curious empty joint, halving and little angled piece .

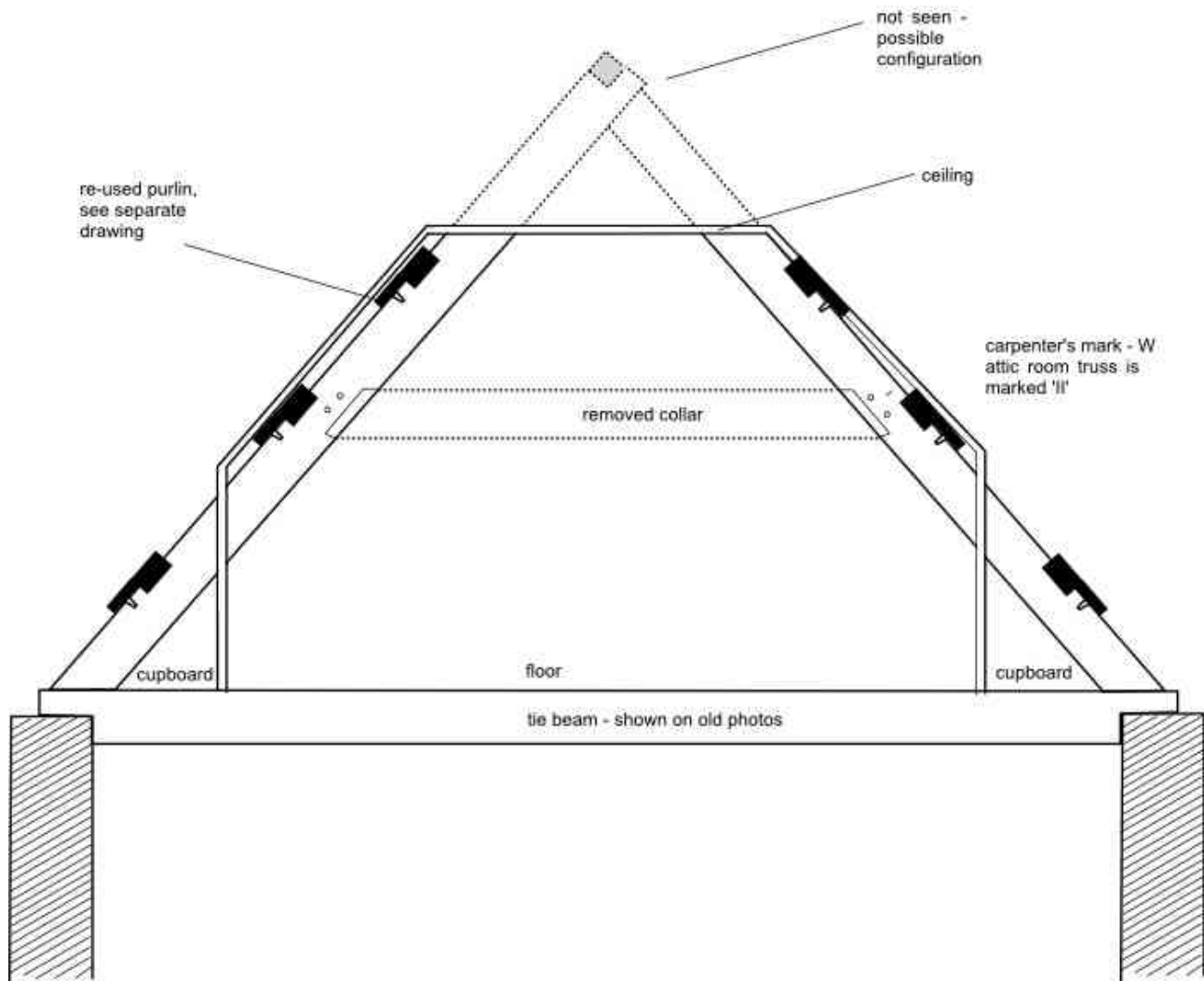


Figure 6: Sketch sectional drawing of the E roof truss (I) of the house viewed from the W.

Truss No. II is in the W room, 'Crows Nest'. It has some purlins reused, and the lower purlins' tenons are threaded through the principals as opposed to sitting on the back. Crows Nest also has blocked collars half way down. There was no access to apex/ ridge of roof so this was not visible. The roof is consistent across the building and the timbers appear to be hardwood: oak. The E and W rooms are separated by thick masonry wall, from bottom to top and a breeze block wall and then a second truss.

## Outside

Outside the back of the house there is a low garden wall with five holes through it in a line. Each hole has a shaped protruding cill like a bottom lip. These must have been for feeding pigs in the yard beyond, with the prepared 'swill' flowing into a trough on the other side of the wall.

### **Photos of the house**

Photos of the house taken before and during renovation show that the walls were wholly rendered over. At the front, the door and window fittings are all 20<sup>th</sup> C and have been replaced along with the lintels (probably) and the cills, but are probably in their former positions. At the rear all the windows are similar replacements except for the ground floor E room which is a horizontal sliding sash of 2 x 6 lights (fig.7).



*Figure 7: House rear window (1995)*



*Figure 8: 'Cottage' rear window (1995)*

Internal photos don't reveal any features earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> C. The fireplaces shown, for example, are blocked. A few features are of interest. The NE ground floor room has meat hooks from the ceiling. This room is plastered. There's also a wooden table and shelves against a chimney breast; the fireplace, obviously not in use. One of the front rooms has a walk-in window with panels below the window and 2-panel shutters in the reveals, possible early 19<sup>th</sup> C (fig.9).

A photo of part of the stair shows it has stick balusters of the late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> C (fig.10). Photos showing the roof reveal tie beams across the 2 principal rafters and a ridge but it's not clear how this engages with the apex of the principal rafters. All the common rafters have been replaced during renovation.





*Figure 9: House walk-in window (1995)*



*Figure 10: House stair (1995)*

### ***The 'Cottage'***

This is attached to the E side of the house. It is a narrower and lower building. The walls are of similar stonework to the house. The roof is also thin grey slate and of a shallower pitch to the house. There is an axial (slightly off centre) brick stack whose fireplace would have heated the W room. The front door is central, like the house, but it faces N. All the windows appear to have been replaced. There is a blocked door (lintel above still in place) on the N side next to the house, and a door opposite on the S side. This appears to have been for a cross-passage (fig.11).



*Figure 11: 'Cottage' cross-passage door from S (left) and N (right) (2022)*

There is also what appears to be a straight joint between the stonework to 2/3rds of the way up the wall, just to the W of the 'front door'. It's clear that this was a 1 ½ storey attached building originally with cross passage giving access into the downstairs room. This was later extended to the E and raised to give the impression of a similar (but much smaller) 'Georgian farmhouse' to the house, but facing the foldyard. However, there are no chimney stacks on the gables, so the E room(s) appear to be unheated (see fig.12). There was no internal access on this occasion.



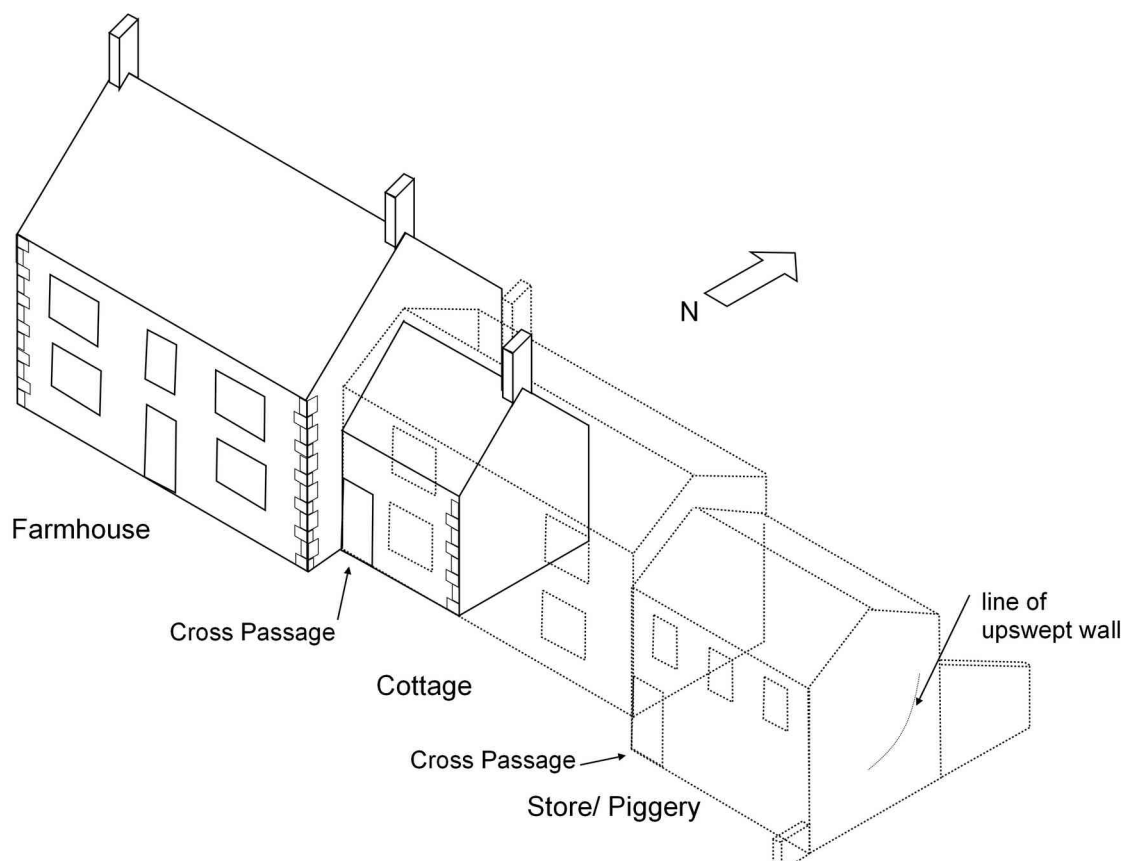
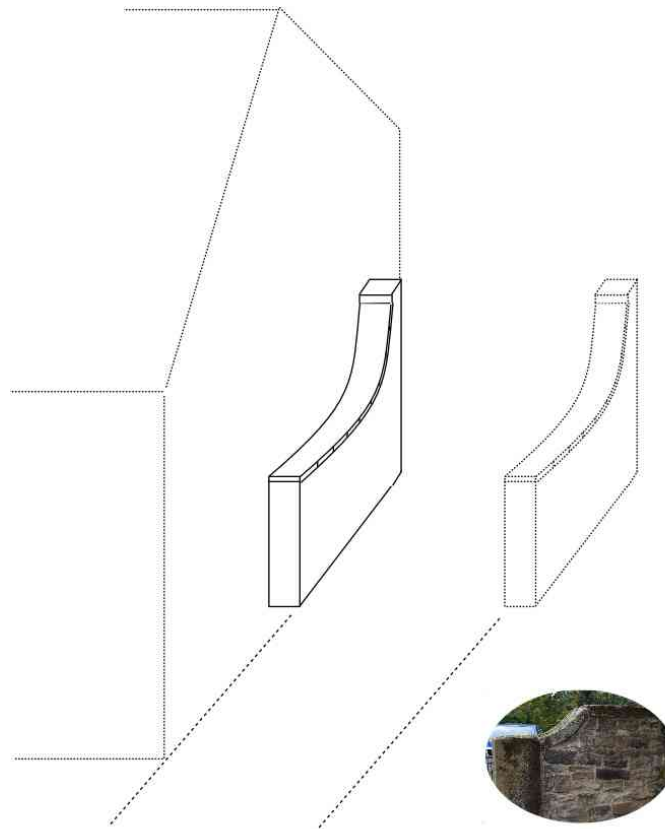


Figure 12: Isometric view of the house showing the extensions (dotted) to the E.

**Photos of the cottage** show the S elevation rendered over and with the same windows as the house at the front. There is no window to the ground floor E room. The rear is also rendered over. Only the ground floor W window could be original with vertical sashes between 2 timber mullions (see photo above). The current window is a fair copy.

### ***The 'Store' / Piggery***

This building is attached to the E side of the 'Cottage'. On the N side there is a door (not inspected internally) leading into another cross passage, then a stone stairway up to an upper door with a generous stone wall to the left. Though the coping stones on the wall are well dressed, the stonework of the wall is coursed rubble. Two small yards each with a door in under a thin lintel were said to be for the pigs, originally. A higher wall with a different coping stones screens off the pig yard from the E. The internal diving wall is machine-made brick. But the E stone wall has a strange curved joint in it with finer stonework below, and this is replicated externally but with the line of coping stone sweeping up to a high level. This E wall appears to have been a garden wall, sweeping up to a gate into the main yard, which was later built on to form the gable wall of the Store/Piggery (see fig. 13).



*Figure 13: Sketch of part of wall curving up to gate?  
Inset shows similar arrangement at Old Moor, but  
with wall in line with gateway, not perpendicular.*

The gable wall isn't much better than the N wall, the S wall is well dressed stonework. The two cells for the pigs have a high ceiling – a lower ceiling would have been expected. Strangely, there are no feeding holes in the wall in front of the little yard. Upstairs rooms (the 'Store') was not inspected.

**Photos of this building** show that the S elevation as rendered over. It has a line of three small openings (ventilation?) and three vertical sash shape upper openings with sills as today, filled with a combination of louvres below and 4 small fixed lights above. The cross-passage door is there. The N elevation is mostly as it is today, except for the rendered area extends to the upper door, and the upper window was formerly a combination of louvres below and 4 small fixed lights above (fig.14).



*Figure 14: Store / Piggery N elevation (1995)*

At the E end there is a low, single storey stone building with a hipped roof at the E end next to it. Another photo shows that it was hipped at the W end, also. The map evidence and other photos though indicates that there was a gap for a path or track between the two. There are no openings in the S or E walls. This building no longer exists. An old photo of the gable wall of the store / piggery shows the line of the former wall very clearly. There is a small opening, presumably for ventilation.

### ***The Barn***

This is of six bays and forms the N side of the foldyard. Its walls are laid in courses of coal measures sandstone. There is a thin grey slate roof with coping stones and kneelers. In the centre of the S elevation is a wide but relatively low door. It has a very shallow arch lintel made up of a stone either side and keystone with the monogram 'W' (which presumably stands for 'Wentworth') and date of 1755. It has fine ribbed tooling with margins (fig. 15).



Figure 15: Barn datestone of 1755 (October 2022)

The W end seems to have evidence a bothy with its door and mullion windows lower and upper, though there is no chimney stack. To the E of the upper floor window is a taking-in door blocked by machine-made brick. The right hand jamb of this door marks the line of an internal stone cross wall. Further along are two long ventilation slits. At the E end the stable wing adjoins. The E gable has another possible taking-in door re-purposed as access to upper decking for cafe customers. There is a clear straight joint with the stable wing, but with the quoins on the stable side of it.

The N elevation has many modern openings (windows and doors) in the same consistent walling as the front. The only certain original opening is a mirror image of the central door, but without the inscriptions. Old photos (see below) tell us more. The W gable has an owl hole in the upper gable with single storey extension below. The barn has some stones that have animals carved in sunk or low relief. These are mainly placed in the second course down from the eaves on the S elevation. For example, there is a depiction of a bat in sunk relief on a stone that is surface-blackened by historic air pollution.

**Internally** there are four principal rafter trusses with tie-beams and thin collars. The beams are numbered I and II at the W end but the members at the S end that would have had marks III and IIII have been replaced. Two sets of purlins are trenched along the backs of the principals. There is no evidence of re-use, unlike in the house. At the ridge the S principal is tenoned into the N principal and a diamond-set ridge sits in the 'V' shaped 'cradle' at the ends of the rafters (see fig.16). The timbers, except where replaced, appear to be oak. There is a stone cross wall between the first and second bays at the W end.



The walls are exposed but no historic features are visible, except a few through stones near the top of the walls. There are also one or two short beams set in the walls, possibly lintels over now blocked doors. The ground floor appears to have been completely re-flagged and the first floor is modern.

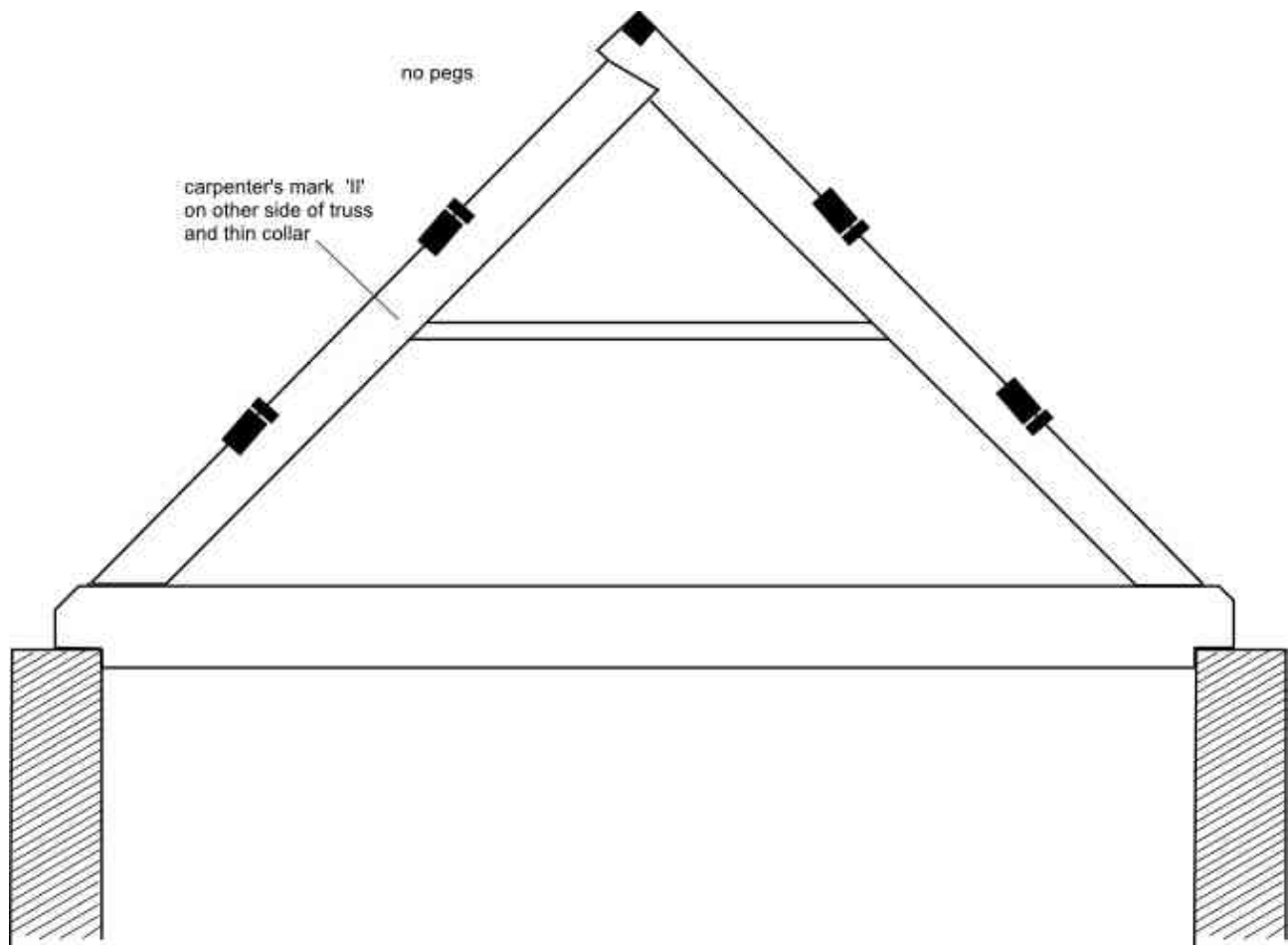


Figure 16: Sketch sectional drawing of the barn roof truss II, viewed from the W.

There are several **photos of the barn** taken in the mid-1990's.

#### North elevation

Near the E end of the N elevation is a jagged vertical crack in the masonry which follows the line of a straight joint. Although care has been taken to maintain the courses of stones, in one or two places, this hasn't been followed. It appears that the barn has been extended to the E by at least one bay (see fig.17). (This is backed up by the evidence from the E elevation where the adjoining stable block has the quoins on its side of the joint not on the barn side, fig.18).





*Figure 17: Barn N wall joint/crack (1995)*



*Figure 18: Barn - Stable joint and quoins E elevation (1995)*

This crack is covered by the 'shadow' of a very wide wing which even extends over half of the central door. There are big holes in the stonework for purlins and a groove cut for flashing. This shadow also covers an upper window, presumably for taking-in which itself has been partially blocked to leave a large ventilation slit. There are blocked slits lower down possibly for drive shafts or belts. There is no blocked door at ground floor level into this wing.

A block is shown on the 1849/50 and 1890 maps which must have been a horse engine house due to its size and position. However, this shadow building is much larger, so it seems likely that the engine house was demolished and replaced by an open sided shed with a roof running N to S. There doesn't seem to be any evidence for masonry walls. A photo shows a similar structure to the E gable of the barn, now demolished. There was a also free-standing Dutch barn to the W which probably would have served the same purpose, now demolished.

At the W end of the barn, the photo shows openings in the same place as today, but the surrounds have been replaced. On the upper part of the W end it looks like what was a window was lengthened to make a taking-in door and then returned in the conversion to a window again, this time with a stone mullion.

South elevation.

At the W end, the oldest photo shows the taking-in door blocked by brick and the entrance door blocked by breeze block. This was probably done when the open shed front was extended E into the foldyard. It was supported by square section machine cut brick piers (fig.19).



*Figure 19: W end of barn and cart shed (1995)*

## Roof

One or two photos show the roof timbers as they are today. The purlins are scarf jointed over the backs of the principal rafters with a simple splay.

Much detail that would have told us about how the barn was use is lost. Clearly hay was stored in there – hence the ventilation slits, and there may have been stalls for cattle. It's possible some threshing was done (as there are some arable fields to the farm) in the centre space between the two doors, though the winnowing door (if that's what it was) in the rear wall is usually narrower. A **photo** in the 'Story of Old Moor' shows a **dilapidated mobile threshing machine** of the type that would be hooked up to a steam engine, presumably used at Old Moor in the past after the horse engine (walk) became redundant.

## **The Stable Block**

This forms the E side of the foldyard. The external walls and roof are similar to that of the barn. Most external features (window, doors, etc) have been renewed. One assumes that the four doors on the W elevation are in their original positions, so this would indicate the building was a stable block, with storage over (see comments on old photos). There are three original lintels, highly weathered. There is a flight of stone steps to the upper floor against the S wall of the barn. On the E



elevation facing away for the fold yard the courses of sandstone are less regular than the 'front', particularly at the S end, though the lower courses are regular. There is a straight joint where the stable wall meets the gable of the barn, which has very regular courses of stone. The stable block was not inspected **internally** except for the upper floor (briefly). There are three bays formed by two roof trusses of a similar type to those in the barn. There is also a dividing stone cross wall.

### **Old photos of the stable block:**

The W elevation at the N end is as it is today, though the windows and doors have been replaced. The window above the first stable door at this end had a wooden cill and 9-light casement window with narrow glazing bars. The window next to the door was of the louvre type seen in the store / piggery building. The door had a 2-part stable door as has its modern replacement. The dog house was under the steps up to the first floor. At eaves level the kneeler for what would have been a free standing gable is still in place. The second door has been blocked by stone except for a small opening. The third door has a cracked lintel which has now been replaced. Above it is a small taking-in door, now blocked. The fourth door is also partially blocked. It has a very weathered lintel, now replaced. Above is a small window: a tiny 9-light casement, now blocked.

The S gable has a small gable window with large (owl) resting ledge. Two six light casement windows are set in the inner wall opening.

The E elevation had an attached short wing at the S end and the shadow of it can be seen in the old photo. An older photo shows this to be a mainly open structure but with some stone walls and monolithic stone piers (fig.20). It had a pantile roof with stone slates for the last two courses. Above this was a window (blocked), then next to it a door (blocked, now open again). Then an upper floor window (blocked, new one inserted to the N of it) and a ground floor window with wooden lintel and sill (now much wider, part of a pair of doors). Beyond that there are no ground floor openings and only one more (blocked) upper floor opening.



*Figure 20: Stable block viewed from SW (1995)*

Roof: a photo from March 1997 shows it with the tiles off and the caption 'new oak principals'. A photo from 1995 shows the tie-end of one of these principal rafters (fig.21).



*Figure 21: Stable block: tie beam of principal rafter (1995)*

**The 'Shed'** was not inspected, though the back wall is of coursed rubble sandstone. This structure was extended into the foldyard with a brick S wall and brick piers providing more open fronted shelter (see fig. 19). This has now been demolished. A wing running S from the barn (shown on the 1901 but not the 1856 OS map) had been demolished prior to that.

Old photos of the shed, show that it was quite a sophisticated structure. The foldyard (E) side was open, with the roof of king-post trusses held up by curved stone piers. The king posts also have angled struts up to the rafters. A further 'L' shaped stone-built closed range also had king-post roof trusses.

The other standing minor buildings were not inspected.

There are many carvings of animals and objects in or on wall tops around the farmstead. These are mainly in high relief.

# Maps and Documents

## 1776 Survey

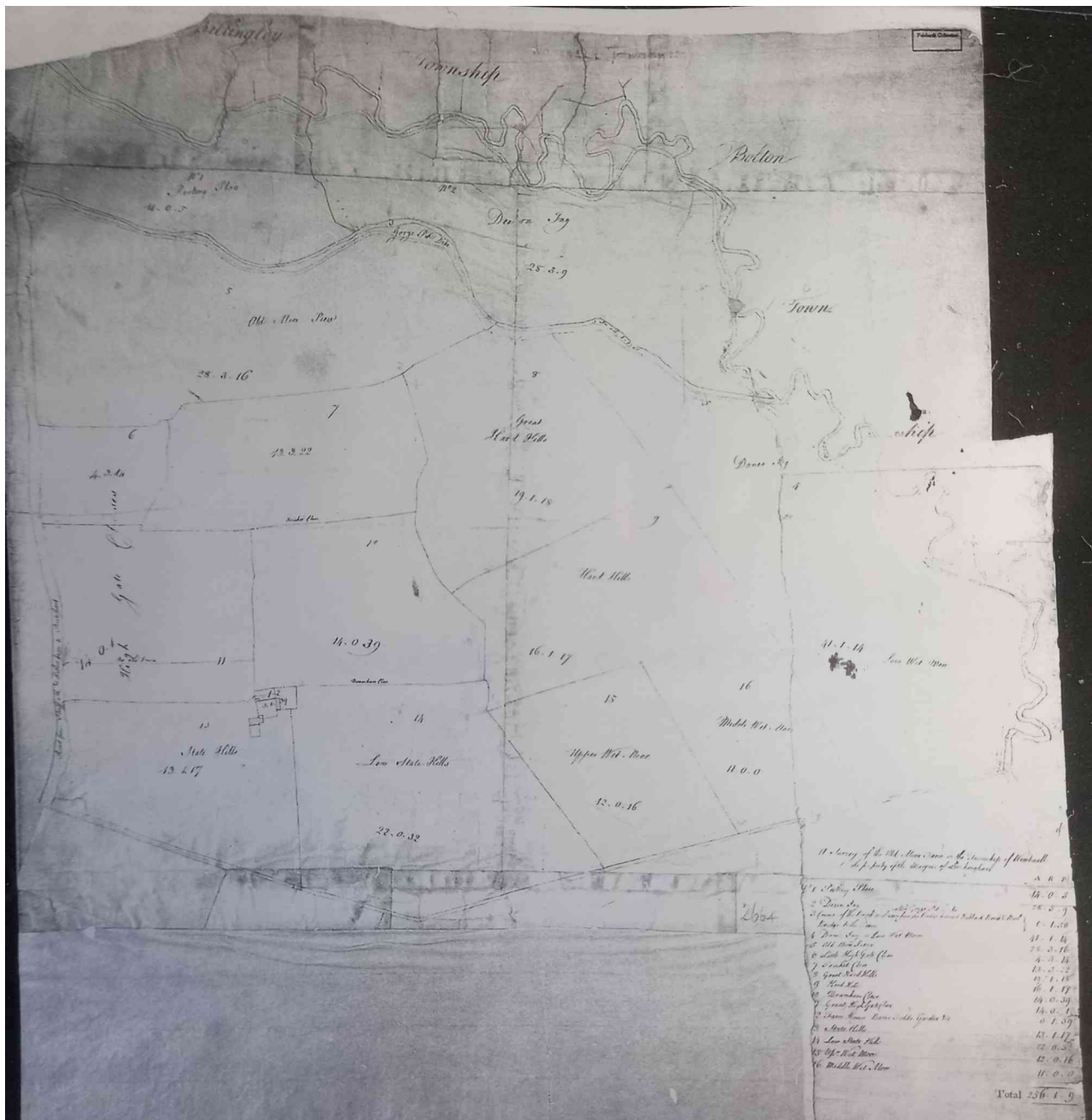


Figure 22: A Survey of the Old Moor Farm in the Township of Wombwell (1776?) Sheffield Archives Fairbank DAR 6L



## Tithe Map 1838<sup>i</sup>

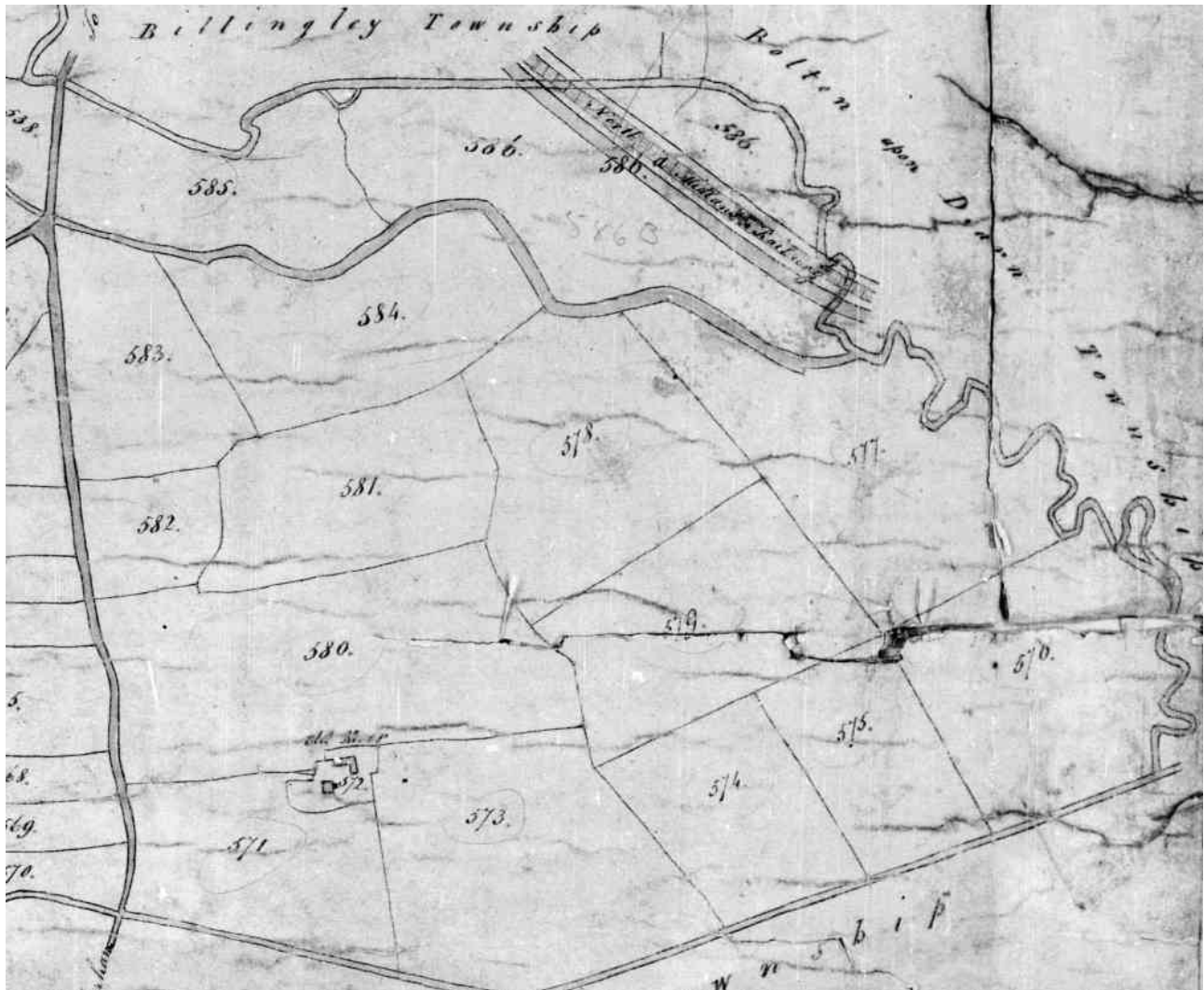


Figure 23: Extract from the Tithe Map 1838 IR 29/43/440

The earliest maps we have seen are the 1776 survey done by the Fairbank surveyors and the 1838 Tithe map. Both are reproduced above. The earlier map(s) held by Trinity College have not been seen.

Both the 1776 and 1838 maps show the same field boundaries so it's possible to compare the buildings as they are shown. Both maps show the house, stables and barn, but there are changes by 1838.

Of particular use and interest is the boundary shown on the 1776 map (but not 1838) which runs S from the W end of the barn. This aligns with the E end of the house. This also also shown in 1849/50. It looks like the original W boundary of the yard.

The house is narrower on the 1838 Tithe Map than shown in 1776, almost square. It seems unlikely that the footprint of the house diminished in 1838 from what appears to be its current size in 1776 to return to its current size again by 1849/50. This must be a cartographic error or limitation of scale.

The house is shown on all three maps as having a smaller building attached to the E end – this must have contained the cross passage with a small room to the E. By 1849/50 there's also a small building attached to the W end of the house.

The depiction of the barn in 1776 is not as expected. It is shown not to extend over the N gable of the stable as it does today. In fact the two buildings are separated. This ties in with the evidence seen in the photos and buildings today. By 1838 the barn and stable are shown as a single 'L' shaped block, as today. So between 1776 and 1838, the barn was extended E. At the W end there is a recess in the front wall shown. It's not clear what purpose this would have served. This is not shown in 1838. By 1849/50, the barn appears to have been widened at the E end (perhaps a lean-to added) and a horse engine house built on to the N wall. It also appears to have been extended at the W end (beyond the original W boundary of the yard) and the 'shed' wing added. So perhaps the N wall has been rebuilt.

The stable block has an E wing added, which itself has a S wing added by 1849/50

### **1<sup>st</sup> ed OS map 6" 1849/50**

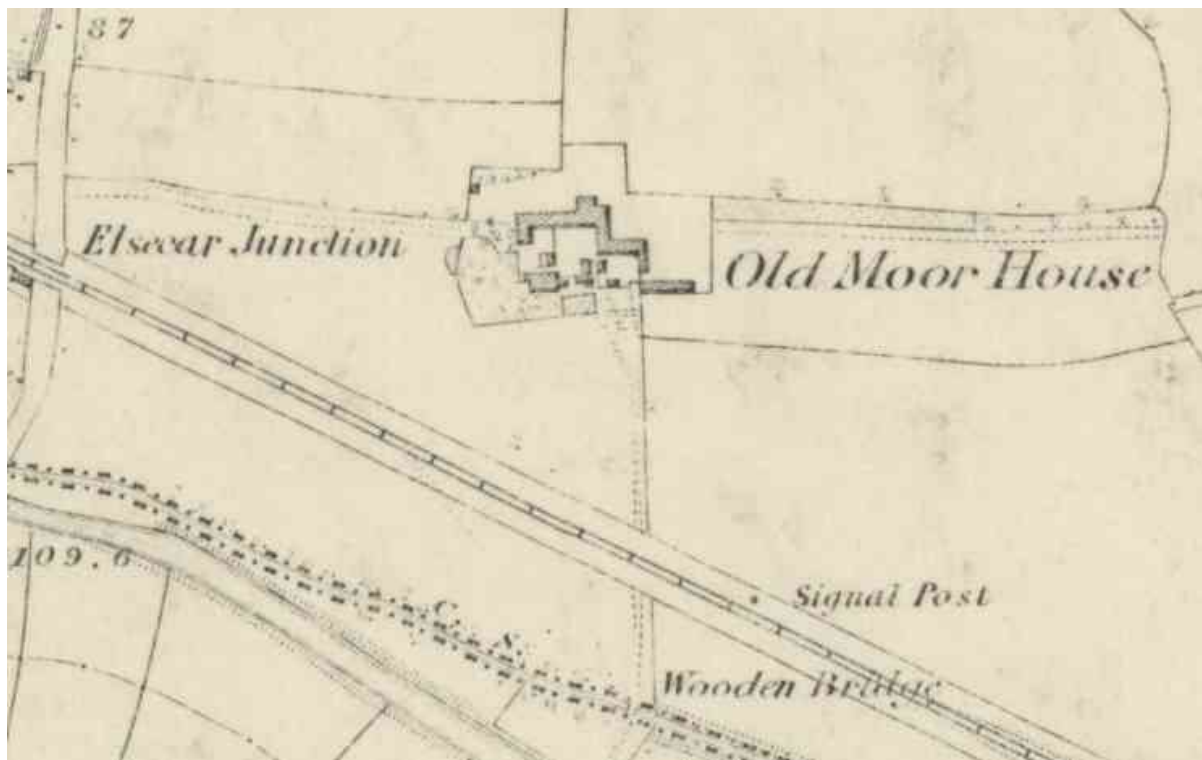


Figure 24: Extract from Yorkshire Sheet 283 Surveyed: 1849 to 1850, Published: 1855

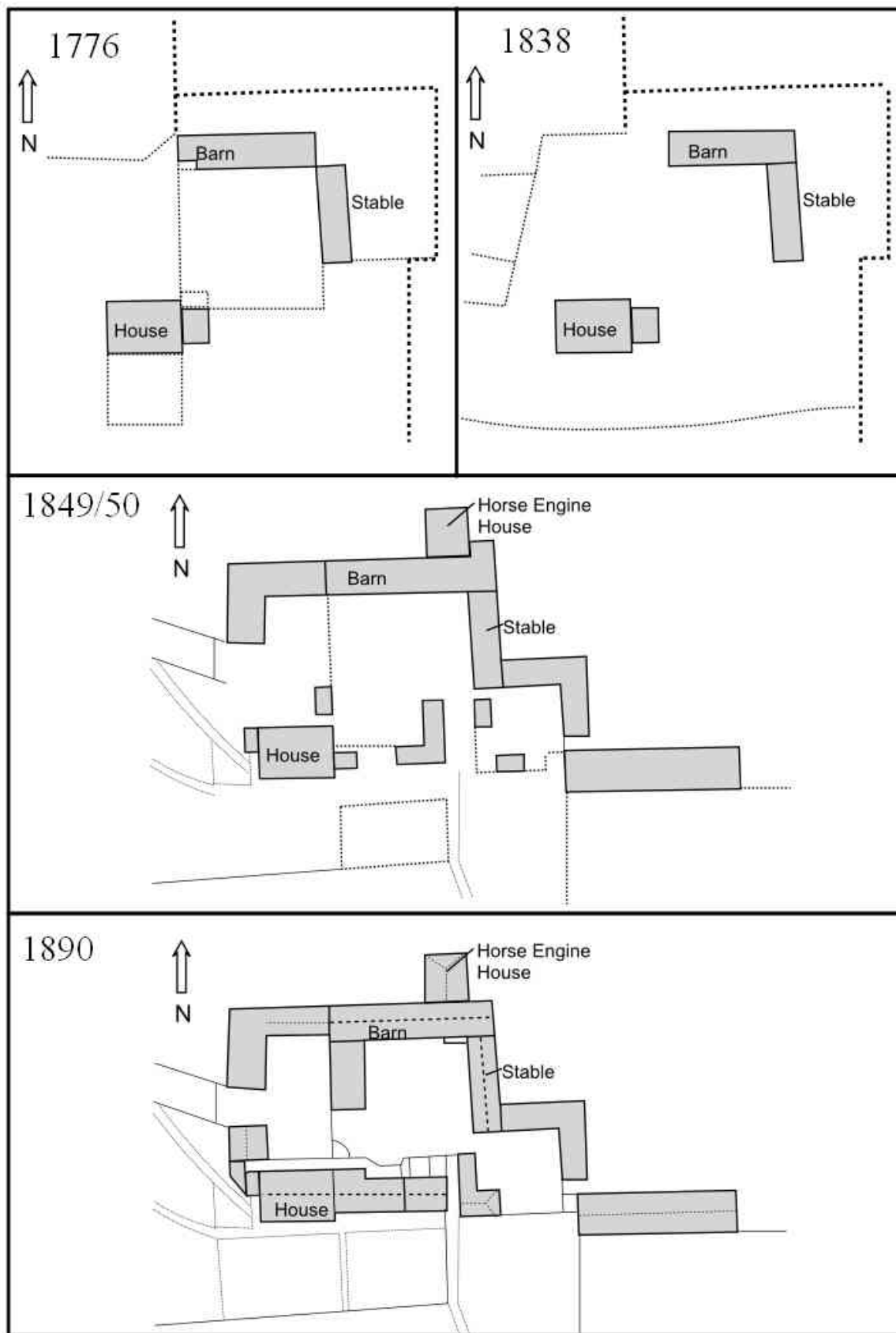


Figure 25: Old Moor phases of development based on map evidence.

## 1910 Valuation Survey

There is no plot annotation for Old Moor farmhouse or farm buildings on IR 134/3/344

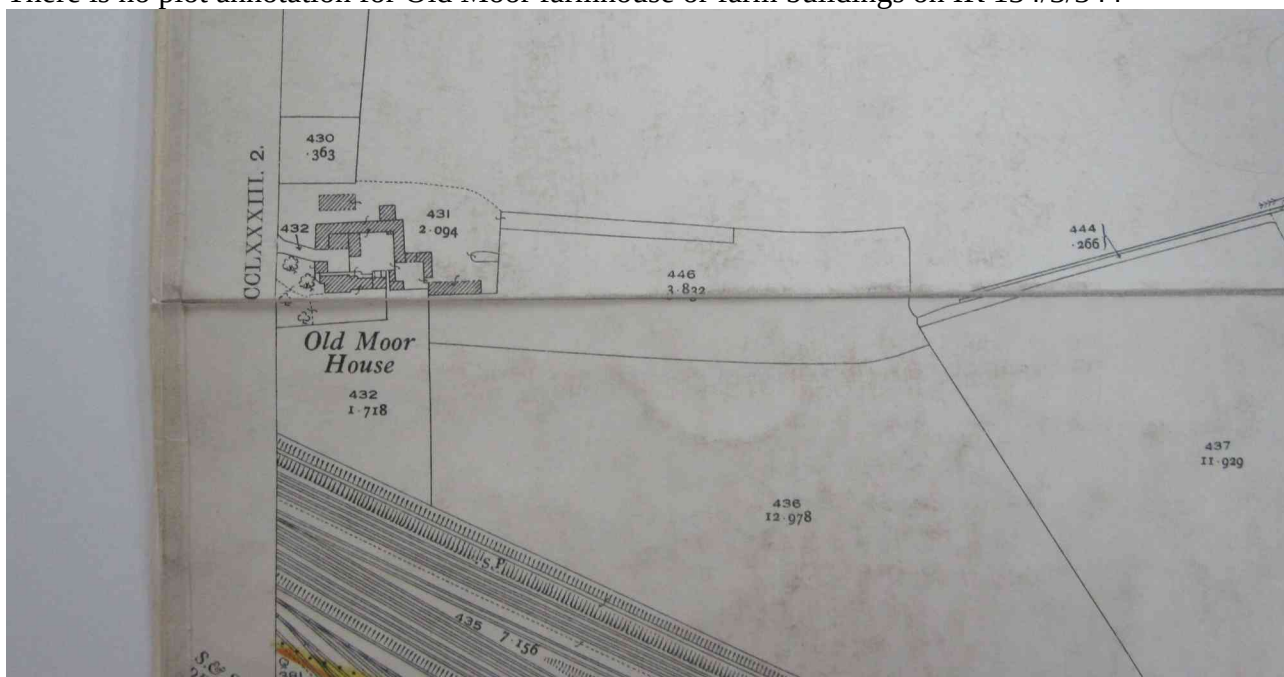


Figure 26: Extract from OS Sheet Reference: Yorkshire West Riding CCLXXXIII 3 c.1910 at National Archives, Kew.

Wombwell is listed under the Barnsley Valuation Office.

There are 37 field books for Wombwell. Hence, without a plot number, it's not feasible to go through the field books which can only be consulted at a rate of 3 at a time.

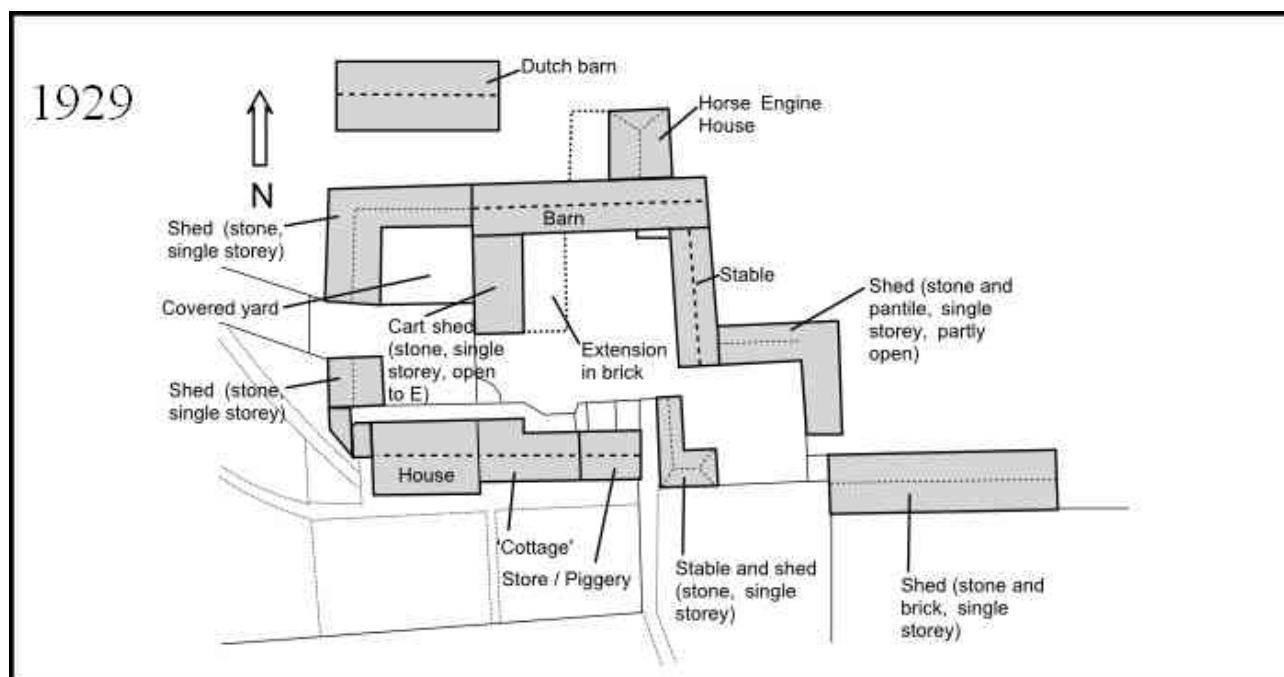


Figure 27: Old Moor in 1929 based on OS Yorkshire CCLXXXIII.3 rev 1929 with building types taken from old photos



## **Census returns**

Census returns retrieved by Alvin Hickling show that Old Moor was occupied by members of the Brooke family continuously between 1841 and 1911. In 1841 the head of the household was Ann Brooke, described as a farmer. She was the widow of George Brooke born 25<sup>th</sup> May 1769 in Braithwell, Yorkshire. He had been dead for 23 years in 1841. The descendants of this George Brooke have been tracked by Alvin Hickling.

In 1841 Ann is sharing Old Moor with a son, George and a daughter, Bertha. George's wife Susanna and his two daughters, Emma and Charlotte are also resident. There are also 3 male servants and 2 female servants.

In 1851 Ann is still head and described as a farmer of 266 acres and with 5 labourers. She has 2 female (?) servants. Her son George is head of another household at Old Moor with his wife Susanna. He is described as a Land Agent and Auctioneer. They have 4 daughters, 3 visitors and Agricultural Labourer and a servant.

By 1861, Ann Brooke has presumably died. The head of the household at Old Moor is now George Brooke, a nephew of George Brooke who was the Land Agent in 1851. This nephew is described as a farmer and grazier of 245 acres, employing 3 labourers. He is married to Cassandra born in 1826. They have 3 sons and 2 daughters staying at Old Moor. He has a manservant and 2 servants. They also have a dairy maid, a nurse maid and a house maid.

In 1871, Old Moor is not named, but the Brooke family is at no.83 with George Brooke a farmer of 250 acres, employing 3 labourers. A son and a daughter are still there. There is one farm servant resident.

In 1881 Old Moor Farm is under 'Broomhill' with George Brooke a farmer of 260 acres, employing 3 labourers. 2 sons and a daughter are at home. They have a general servant, a farm servant foreman, and 2 other farm servants. All are described as 'indoor'.

In 1891 George and Cassandra are still there. George is described as a farmer. A daughter, 2 grand daughters, 2 grandsons, and a daughter in law are present. There are 2 farm servants.

By 1901 it's all change. George and Cassandra have gone; possibly they have died. One of their sons, Joseph is head of the farm with his wife, Elizabeth. They have 3 daughters and 2 servants described as agricultural horse workers.

Finally in 1911, Joseph and Elizabeth are still there – he is described as a farmer. The 3 daughters are still there, but there is only one servant resident, described as a horseman on the farm. 2 of the daughters are engaged in house work, and one in dairy work.

### **Notes on the census returns.**

The farm stays in the family throughout the period. The acreage seems to stay about the same. It's possible the 'cottage' was occupied by one household and another in the farmhouse in 1851, but this is the only time when two households are recorded. But perhaps George and his family were also in there in 1841 when the record wasn't as detailed. By 1861 and thereafter, there is only one household at Old Moor, so was the cottage redundant or used as an agricultural building? None of the servants or farm workers are married, so they are not likely to have lived there. It seems that the number of servants and agricultural labourers actually living on the farm declines after 1881. There are a few hints about the type of farming. In 1861 George Brooke is a farmer and grazier and dairy occupations are mentioned more than once. The hierarchy of those employed on the farm is apparent only once, in 1881, when there is a foreman listed. Later on the servants are specified as horsemen.

## ***Railway Acts***

1847 – plans and sections ...books of reference containing names...have been deposited with the Clerk of the Peace of the West Riding (Section XX)

1850 Section III

## ***Tracks and access***

Access to Old Moor seems to have been from the Rotherham to Pontefract Road which runs to the W of the farmstead, though this isn't shown on either the 1776 or 1838 plans. Access from the S seems to have been an issue. To the S is Knoll Beck which on both maps appears to have been straightened into some form of drain. To the S of that is the Dearne & Dove Canal and then, finally, there is the 'Hollow Gate' to Wath upon Dearne. By 1849/50, the railway has also been built to the S of the farmstead, and the farm track is shown passing under this, then over a 'wooden bridge' over Knoll Beck. There's nothing shown over the canal, though. In 1890 there is still a clear track from the W. To the S, there are tracks leading to the fields then to bridges over the canal: to the Factory Bridge just NW of Wath and the Old Moor Bridge on the Rotherham to Pontefract road. By 1929 the Wath Concentration Yard (a mass of railway sidings) has been built to the SE of Old Moor and the track to the S of the farmstead is not shown, clearly the fields have been obliterated and access also to Factory Bridge and Old Moor Bridge.

## ***Field Names<sup>ii</sup>***

572 – Homestead Foldyard and Garden

571 - State Hills – Grass

573 - Lower State Hills - Arable

574 – Upper Wet Moor - Arable

575 – Lower Wet Moor - Arable and grass

576 – Melton Piece – Grass (*Melton* cf West Melton)

577 – Dearne Ing - Arable and grass

578 – Great Hard Hills - Arable

579 – Little Hard Hills - Arable

580 – Great High Gate and Bramhall Close – Arable (*Bramhall* possibly a place where broom grows, or *Bramald*?)

581 – Trickett Close – Arable

582 – Little High Gate – Arable

583 – Top Old Moor Piece – Grass

584 – Bottom Old Moor Piece – Arable and Grass

585 – Resting Piece – Grass

586 – Dearne Ing – Grass

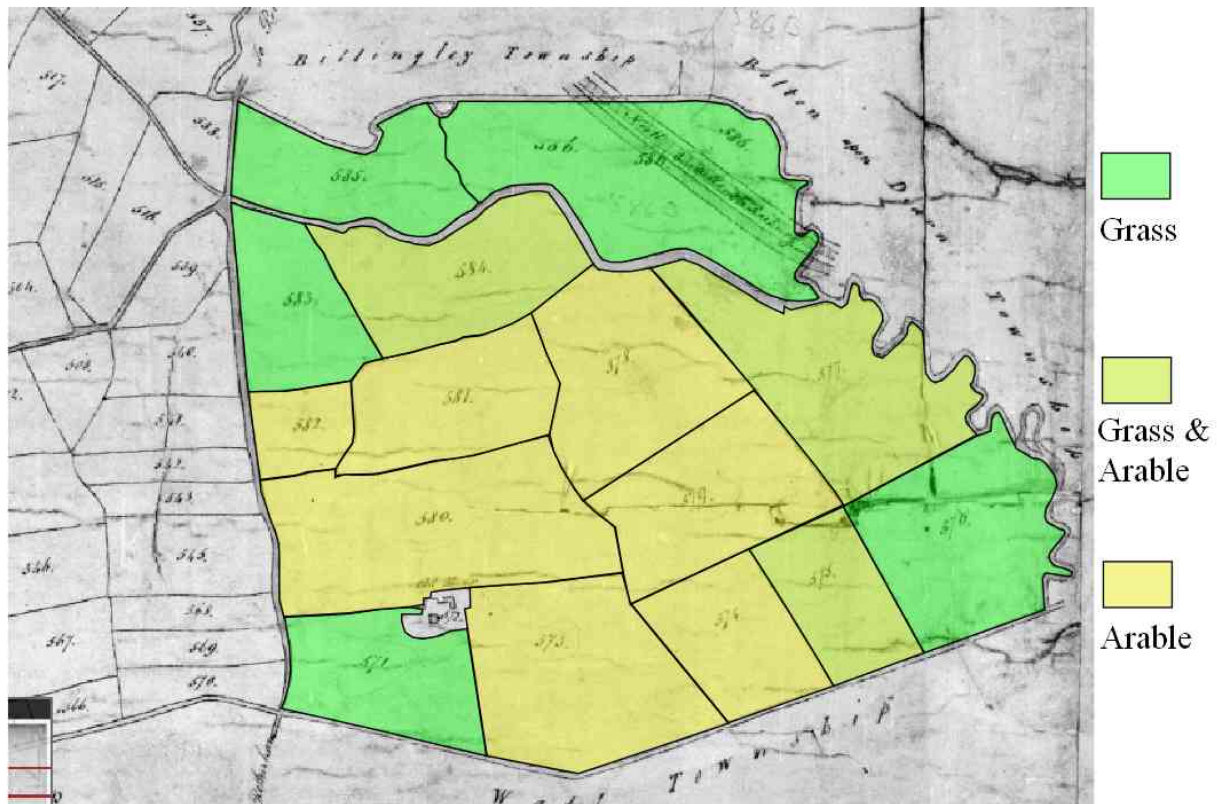


Figure 28: Cultivation of fields at Old Moor, taken from Tithe Apportionment, 1838

## Secondary Sources

In their paper on the historic landscape of Wombwell (2006)<sup>iii</sup>, David Hey and John Rodwell mention Old Moor Farm in various places and contexts. Commenting on the ‘Survey and Map of Darfield townships’ made in 1757 and added to in 1795, they say that:

To the east of the Rotherham Pontefract road the moors ings and common pastures had already been enclosed as Old Moor Farm by the time of the survey, though some of the field boundaries were altered between 1757 and 1776 when this 256 acre property was owned by the Marquis of Rockingham.

The barn is dated 1755. It seems that the authors intended to mean that some Old Moor field boundaries were altered between 1757 and 1776 and not that the dates are those of ownership by the estate. If so, it seems that the barn was built when or just after the fields were enclosed, and represents a substantial investment, probably based on improved yields or anticipated improved yields from the land.

Only two years after the date of the barn, in 1757, a news snippet appeared in the *Leeds Intelligencer* announced that a black mare had been stolen out of a pasture called Old-Moor in Wombwell. A reward of one guinea was offered by the owner, Edward Bramald.<sup>iv</sup>

Old Moor – ‘moor’ indicates land less productive for agriculture: marshy ground. Prior to enclosure:

Fields on the flood plain were farmed in common in the Middle Ages and for much of early modern period. Records indicate much was managed as ungrazed meadow mown to provide summer hay crop. In medieval times meadows valued at 3-4 times arable land, as hay was winter fodder. Enclosures known (in the late 18th C) as the hills, ings and moors of Old Moor estate were also originally divided into furlongs [blocks of open field strips]. Both Tudor surveys (1516, 1620) refer to Old Moor in its unenclosed state.

This gives us a picture Old Moor pre-enclosure. There is no mention of any buildings.

Post enclosure the fields were under arable cultivation, but again, there is no mention of any buildings, though we know that the farmhouse, barn and stable had already been built.

It is clear that even by 1840 almost half of the enclosures along the Dearne flood plain with some particularly substantial blocks of fields on Wombwell Ings and at Old Moor, were actually under arable cultivation. Natural flooding must have been prevented by embanking and drainage.

Between about 1840 and 1850 the map and buildings evidence shows an explosion of building activity at Old Moor. Several single storey sheds are built, and 3 foldyards appear to have been formed by the end of the century. The horse engine house is added to the barn. After 1850, the cottage is built and this range extended further E by the creation of the store / piggery building, possibly incorporating an earlier structure and wall.

Hey and Rodwell’s observation that:

1840-1942 [there was a] shift from prevailingly arable to a more evenly balanced mix of cereal growing and stock rearing. Changes on the flood-plain were less clear and consistent. At Old Moor, where arable was a little more extensive than grassland in 1840, a considerable loss of ploughland occurred [railways and mining?] .

The extra buildings perhaps are required to service this more evenly balanced mix, and perhaps an increase in production as even with what one might assume to be a reduction in the number of arable fields, the horse engine house was added between 1840 and 1849/50 to process cereal crops.

Generally in Wombwell they note that:

Cereals are most important among arable crops in Wombwell. In 1866, wheat and to a lesser extent barley were far the most extensive crops; with oats insignificant. In 1801 oats more important. After 1866, barley declined to almost nothing by 1914, with wheat halved. After 1866, the finishing of dales lambs disappeared. By 1942, oats accounted for 2/3rds cereal crop, with wheat 1/3rd. Root crops significant, turnips early on then potatoes later. Within the increase in grassland total, the proportion of pasture as opposed to meadow rose considerably between 1914 and 1942. There was no change in cattle between 1866 and 1914, but had increased 2 ½ times to 1942, almost half the herds in milk. This was to sustain growing population of Wombwell.



## Conclusion

We think that enough information has been gathered to present a good account of the development of the buildings at Old Moor without the need for measured survey.

The three standing buildings of the S side of the complex appear to represent a sequence of linear extension up to a low building at the E end which appears on the map but has been rebuilt.

Architecturally, the main difference is in the steeper pitch of the house roof and use of principal rafters of a type which puts the date of the house well before 1849. The house has few other datable features, but appears to be the earliest of the three in the sequence. It has re-used timber in the roof structure. The cottage appears to have been extended to the E then the gap between the low building and the E of the cottage filled in by the store/piggery.

The house appears on the 1838 Tithe Map and the 1776 map in more or less its current form and position. It appears to be roughly contemporary with the 1755 barn, and clearly part of the enclosure of Old Moor. Both 1776 and 1838 maps show a narrow structure on the E end of the house which may be part of the building with the cross passage evident today (the 'cottage'), with nothing further to the E on this line.

By 1849/50, buildings forming a rough 'L' shape have been added to the E. But there is still a gap between the house and these buildings so the 'cottage' had not been built at this time.

By 1890 the 'cottage' is shown.

The evidence we have seen indicates that the barn block started off with a single building, the barn, and the date, 1755 fits for its style of construction. It was a shorter barn than present, perhaps of four bays only, using three of the current roof trusses. According to the 1776 map there appears to have been a narrow lean-to on the W gable end.

It is possible the stable block was contemporary, or added not much later, and before 1776. The replacement roof trusses are similar to those in the barn and are likely to be a copy of the originals, of which we do not have a photo, other than a view of the end of a tie-beam.

Before 1838, the barn appears to have been extended by a bay to the E to form a gable which is now flush with the stable block. The old stone gable would have been demolished and the stone probably re-used. An extra truss would have been required for the roof, making up the current four in number. The lean-to on the W gable has gone.

After 1838 the barn is extended a further bay to the W, but the masonry cross wall is retained. There is a rash of single storey open and closed sheds built of stone at Old Moor. Nearly all of these buildings have been demolished, but photographic evidence remains. Not much can be said about their purpose and use on current evidence, however, the block attached to the back of the barn on the N elevation was probably a horse engine house to drive a threshing machine, and this appears to be borne out by the 1995 photo which seems to show holes in the barn wall for drive shaft/belt, etc.

The expansion in the number of farm buildings between 1838 and 1849/50 is probably a result of changes to the type of farming, improvements in production and yields. Even in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> C, more farm buildings are added, and there are changes to the configuration of the buildings to the SW of the stable S gable end.

The story told by the buildings about the domestic arrangements at Old Moor is one where there are at least two households in two dwellings (the house and the 'cottage') in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. Unfortunately, the census returns seem to tell a very brief story of occupancy. In 1851 Ann Brooke is head and described as a farmer of 266 acres and with 5 labourers. She has 2 female (?) servants. Her son George is head of another household at Old Moor with his wife Susanna. He is described as a Land Agent and Auctioneer. They have 4 daughters, 3 visitors and Agricultural Labourer and a servant. Was the structure to the E of the house's cross passage, enlarged to become the 'cottage' to house George Brooke and his family? If so, it was a short tenure, because by 1861, George and his family have left, and there are no census records for other occupants after that.

Research into the oral history of the use of the farm buildings and farming practice would improve our understanding of the Old Moor.

- i        Reference:        IR 30/43/440 [TheGenealogist](#) . Tithe map of Wombwell (township in the parish of Darfield). Tithe file: IR 18/12953 Tithe apportionment: IR 29/43/440  
Landowner Charles William Fitzwilliam (Earl of), Occupier Ann Brooke, Parish Wombwell, Original Date 18th September 1838, Plot 572. Reference IR 29/43/440.
- ii       IR 29/43/440
- iii      David Hey & John Rodwell (2006) *Wombwell: The Landscape History of a South Yorkshire Coalfield Township*, Landscapes, 7:2, 24-47, DOI: 10.1179/lan.2006.7.2.24
- iv       *Leeds Intelligencer*, Tuesday 10 May 1757