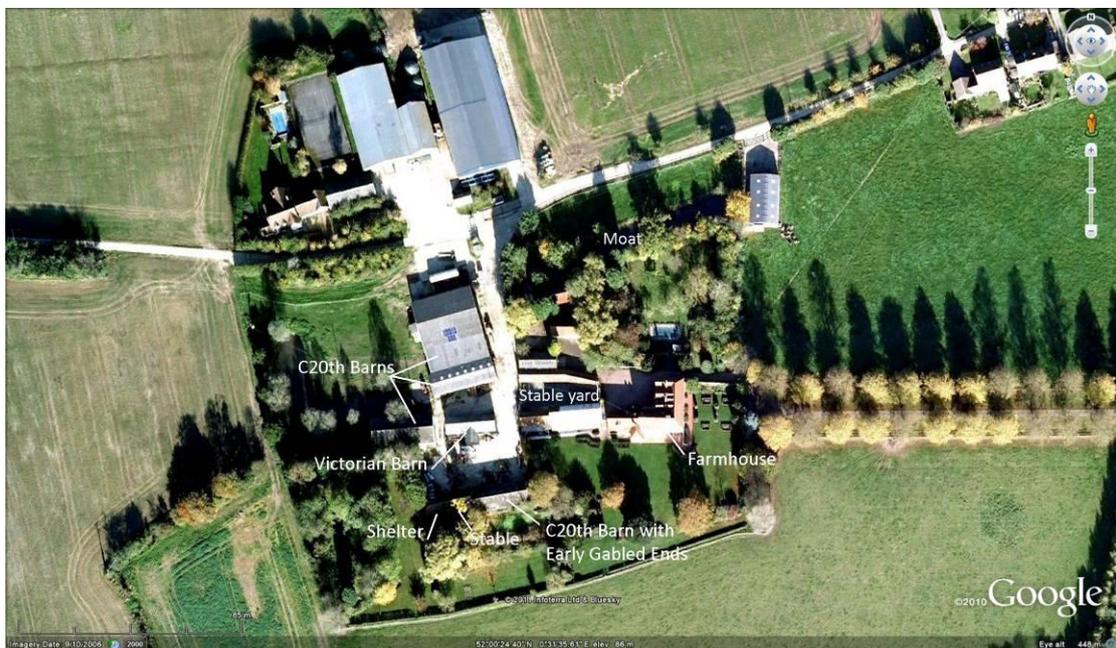


Berwick Hall Farm, Park Lane, Toppesfield, Essex.
Description and analysis of farm buildings at the site.
Surveyed 15 09 2011. BDC 10/01438/FUL



Location of the farm to the west of Toppesfield village centre. Google Earth 2006.



The farmyard under development naming the principal buildings and those under study.

Location

Berwick Hall Farm is placed to the south of a moated site clearly depicted by the Ordnance Survey at the end of Park Lane in Toppesfield, TL 73493723.



Beyond the derelict farmyard is a livery and then the Hall itself. Looking E.

The Farmhouse is in separate ownership to the farm. The buildings to be converted comprise a timber-framed barn built between 1876 and 1896 and a range of connected buildings to the south of the site which may pre-date the 1st edition OS map of 1876. These are a large C20th steel barn incorporating the end gables of an aisled barn, a former stables and an open sided shelter. The site of the farmyard is to the SW and well away from the moated site.

The Hall (HER 6803) is a Grade II listed building dating from the early 17th century and is mentioned in documentary records dating back to 1303. The original house would have been located within the irregular moated enclosure, of which only small sections survive.



© Mr Malcolm Wayne . Images of England. 2003.

IoE Number:114489. Location:BERWICK HALL, THE CAUSEWAY (west side)
TOPPESFIELD, BRAINTREE, ESSEX. Photographer:Mr Malcolm Wayne
Date Photographed:20 January 2003. Date listed:07 August 1952
Date of last amendment:07 August 1952. Grade II.

TL 7337 TOPPESFIELD THE CAUSEWAY, West Side 6/4 Berwick Hall 7.8.1952 GV II House, early C17, altered in C18 and C20. Timber framed, plastered, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. 4 bays aligned N-S, aspect E, with 2 internal rear chimney stacks, and rear wing from S bay, forming an L-plan, with internal chimney stack at the junction, and C18/19 extension beyond, with internal chimney stack.

Page | 3

C18 extension to rear of main range, forming 3 gables to W, and small 2-storey extension in the angle. 2 storeys and unlit attic in main building, single storey with attics in most westerly extension. French window and 3 tripartite double-hung sash windows on ground floor, 4 on first floor, all late C19. Roof hipped to N and S. S chimney stack has recessed panel, now blank, reported by the RCHM to have formerly contained an inscribed date 1635. In upper W elevation, one C18 window of 3 fixed lights.

The interior has beam with lamb's tongue and bar stops, and half-height jowls on the storey posts with decorative serrated fringes, original. One beam is elaborately carved with a foliate design. The staircase has fretted flat balusters, mainly original, with some reproduction work. Clapsed purlin roof with original rebated floor boards and original partitions of wattle and daub in attic. Moated site. RCHM 3.

Description - General

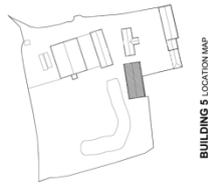


Looking into the site from the north. The Timber Barn forms a quadrangle with the range.

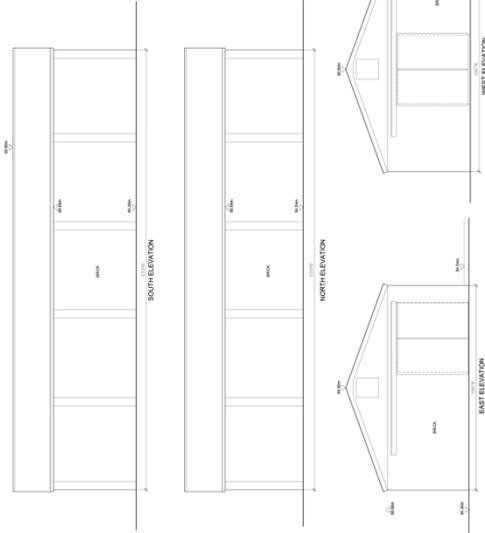
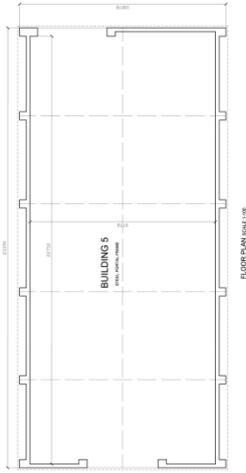
The farmyard is a quadrangle bounded to the south by a range of conjoined buildings. From west to east these are the Shelter, the Stables and the Steel Barn. To the north are the Timber Barn and another MC20th brick built barn which is one of a set currently being demolished. The north of the quadrangle is a brick wall dividing the Hall gardens from the farmyard. This wall is scarred from the removal of some small buildings. The south of the quadrangle was closed off by a high hollow block wall which has recently collapsed.

The Timber and Steel Barns are in good condition although the doors are damaged or missing. The Stables is in very poor condition and the Shelter, currently used for storing wood is in need of care.

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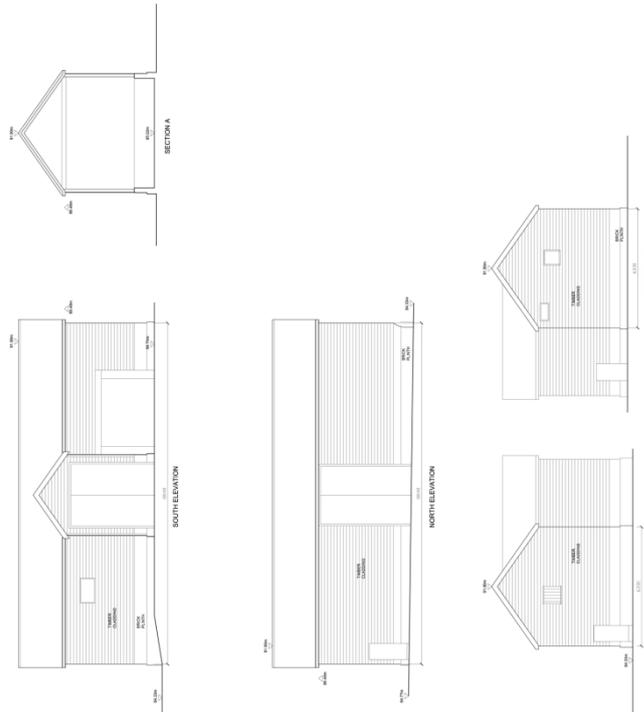
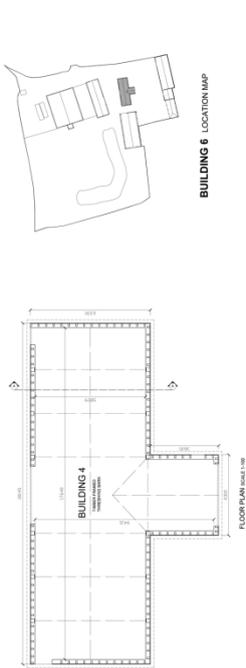
BUILDING 5 SCALE 1:100



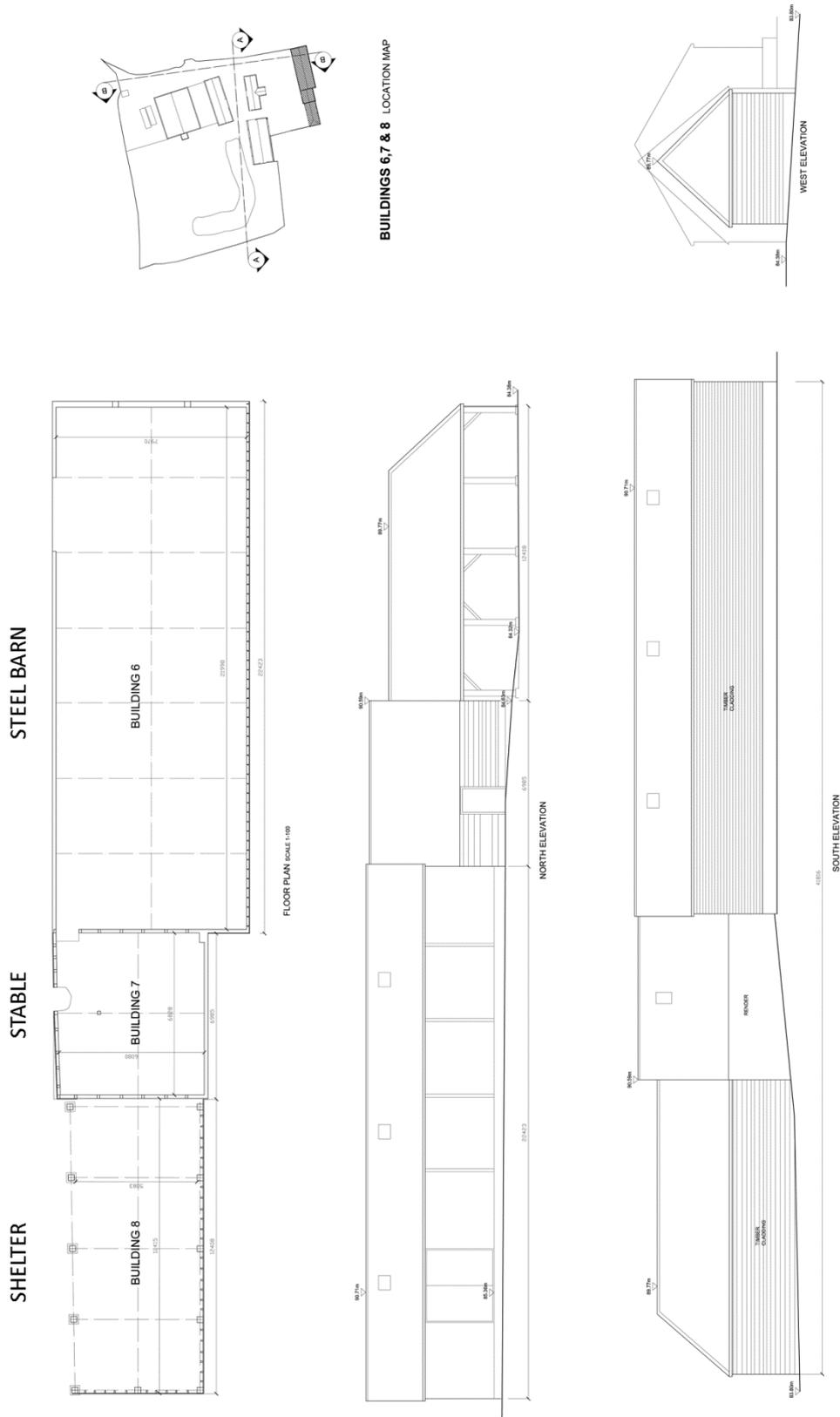
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TITLE	Existing Buildings 4 & 5
DRAWING NO.	03
DATE	21-10-09
DESIGNER	Barry Hillman-Crouch
CLIENT	J C Oak
ADDRESS	Harwood

BUILDING 4 SCALE 1:100



Architects drawings of the Timber Barn with a modern barn for comparison. 2009.



BUILDINGS 6, 7 & 8 LOCATION MAP

Architects drawings of the Shelter, Stables and Steel Barn. 2009.

1. Description - Timber Barn - External



The south elevation has the midstrey porch. Asbestos is from demolition of modern barns.

Southern Elevation

The southern elevation has a full height midstrey porch. Either side the weather-boarded stud walls were originally blank and stand on a tarred plinth of 65x110 x230mm fine red bricks with smooth faces, sharp arrises and shallow regular frogs. The plinth has a double course of coping bricks. The weather-boards are very regular machined timbers fixed with some wrought iron rose-headed nails but comprehensively repaired with French nails. The roof is of 12x24in grey slates at a suitable pitch. The rainwater goods are of painted metal.



Inserted entrance for farm vehicles.

In the east half of the barn a large section has been opened up to insert an entrance reinforced with Fletton brick piers to allow vehicles to be driven in. The tracks are still there.

The opening corresponds in size with those on the modern barns but it has been subsequently reduced in size by inserted 2x4in softwood studs, plain boarded over and two LC20th gate and ledger softwood doors hung on mild steel T-straps secured with Pozidrive screws.



Obscured glass fixed casement in the western half of the barn.

In the western half of the barn there is a C20th high level fixed casement fitted with a pane of obscured glass which gives a little light inside. Random windows like this were often fitted for specific purposes such as lighting gantries for machinery.



The full height doors are paired with those on the north elevation.

The full height split doors are a matched pair with those on the north elevation which at the time of the survey were more accessible. See later description. The midstrete porch has a self-contained toilet block built inside against the doors and so these are no longer used. They have been maintained however as at least one of the pintles has a C20th hex headed bolt.



Western elevation has the flank of the porch with an original pedestrian door. C20th lights.

Western Elevation

The timber-framed and boarded gable end stands on the red brick plinth. The gable has two inserted C20th plain glass lights. One is inserted into the aperture for a former hatch door, the pair of which is in-situ at the other end of the barn. Again the positions of the windows and odd sizes imply they were for lighting areas of modern machinery.



Pedestrian door in the flank of the midstrey may be original. Note socket in the boards.

There is a pedestrian door in the east side of the midstrey made from tongue and grooved edge-moulded vertical softwood boards nailed to gate and ledgers. It is now hung on a mild steel T-strap and a reversible hinge but it is likely it is the original. The finger latch is authentic and the woodstock lock box has been removed from the inside. The construction details match those of the full height doors. Inside the door jambs form storey posts and are integrated into the frame.



The northern elevation is plane with full height central doors and a C20th pedestrian door.

Northern Elevation

The northern elevation has the pairs of full height doors set in the centre and there is an inserted C20th pedestrian door in the NE corner. The NW corner has been damaged by traffic and the plinth can be seen to be 18in thick, narrowing to 9in and the bricks to have shallow frogs and set in a hard white lime mortar. The double coping is also cross-sectioned.



The smashed brickwork on the NW corner of the Timber Barn. Looking E.



The full height doors from outside and inside.

The doors in the midstreych porch and the north wall are identical in scale and construction details. The upper leaves are exactly 10ft tall and 5ft wide while the lower are 44in. They are constructed from vertical edge-moulded softwood boards nailed to ledgers and interrupted gate braces. They are hung on strip milled iron pintles rusty enough to be mild steel but finished traditionally with decorated terminals. The straps are secured with round clouts and square headed carriage bolts to the inside of the doors and are cranked to pass through so the pintles are on the outside. The doors were painted duck-egg green on the inside.



Detail of the midstreych door hinges.



There is an inserted C20th doorway in the NE corner of the Timber Barn.

A LC20th timber gate and ledger door has been fitted in the NE corner in an inserted frame. Inside it can be seen the studs have been removed and the primary brace sawn through. Outside there are no closer bricks in the plinth.



The western elevation seen from inside the C20th barn. Looking ESE.

The western gable end retains its original hatch door set just below the eaves line. This is a simple gate and ledger softwood boarded door hung on wrought iron pintles. Inside the wall is properly framed to receive it. Below is an inserted aperture for a sliding door manufactured by Aldam of London in poor condition and run off its rails.

The plinth is revealed to its full depth here by a test pit set against it. From the top of the double coping to the stepped pressure base is 5ft exactly. There is a further 5 courses of 9in brickwork from the coping to the timber sole-plate.

Description – Internal



The barn is made entirely of fresh, machined softwood.

The 5 bay barn (defined by the tie-beams) has a large central midstrey porch and is made entirely of freshly cut softwood, some of it bearing the timber merchant's marks made with a race knife.



The NW and NE panels. The NE lower studs have been doubled up in the C20th

The 2x4in machined studs are set in panels each with a diagonal primary brace and are interrupted and nailed. In the eastern half the lower studs have been doubled up later on to reinforce the frame to 2x6in studs. Presumably this was done when the grain drying equipment was installed. The principals and mid-rails are 6in square. The doors have separate full height jambs.

The work is mechanical, straight and true. The mortices are pencil marked in places. The Ordnance Survey indicates this building was erected between 1876 and 1896 and it is likely it was later in this bracket than earlier.



Uniform softwood clasped purlin roof. Looking E.

Roof Structure

The roof is a uniform simple clasped side purlin roof with 2x4in common rafters and 3x4in principal rafters secured with lapped and nailed collars every sixth one. The main tie-beams are 4x8in and sit over the principal posts with exception of the one to the east of the main doors which has been moved, possibly to accommodate the steel roller door or the machinery that was once installed.

Carpentry and Timber Marks, Apotropaic Marks and Graffiti



Merchant's mark scored on the underside of the mid-rail. Reads 30. Note pencil marks.

There are two clear merchant's marks on the undersides of the mid-rails and another on a principal post in the north wall. They read 1X25, 6X31 and 30. They are made with a race knife in the same ornate font before the mortices were cut and hence are not carpenter's marks. There were no apotropaic marks and the only graffiti found was some pencil calculations and the initials MA scored on the sole plate near the NE door in a modern hand.

2. The Steel Barn – External Description.



The Steel Barn has an infilled blockwork wall and asbestos roof.

North Elevation

The Steel barn has 7 bays defined by the steel uprights which are the principal posts for complete trusses. Originally the barn was open but the facade has been made up with recent high density 210x210x440mm blockwork set in grey cement. Bay 6 (from the west) has an opening for a rolling shutter door which has been removed leaving only a small part of the mechanism. Now there is one leaf of C20th timber, tongue and grooved, gate and ledger door hung on galvanised pintles. The roof is clad with corrugated asbestos sheets and the rainwater goods are grey plastic and badly broken.



Southern elevation only visible from inside the barn.

Southern Elevation.

The southern elevation is composed of C20th 1.5x3.5in softwood studs spanned with diagonal braces nailed through. The exterior is clad in weatherboards recently reapplied as there is a breathable membrane placed beneath them. The exterior is only visible from a private garden. The softwood is quite greyed with age and probably original to the steel frame.



Eastern elevation has the remnants of the gable of a timber-framed aisled barn.



The western elevation retains the other end of the aisled barn.

The Eastern and Western Elevations.

Both ends of the Steel Barn retain the timber-framed gable ends of an aisled barn. Both ends have been heavily repaired with nailed studwork but retain the original principal timbers.



West gable end. Heavily jowled arcade post, long curving braces and sawn off arcade plate.

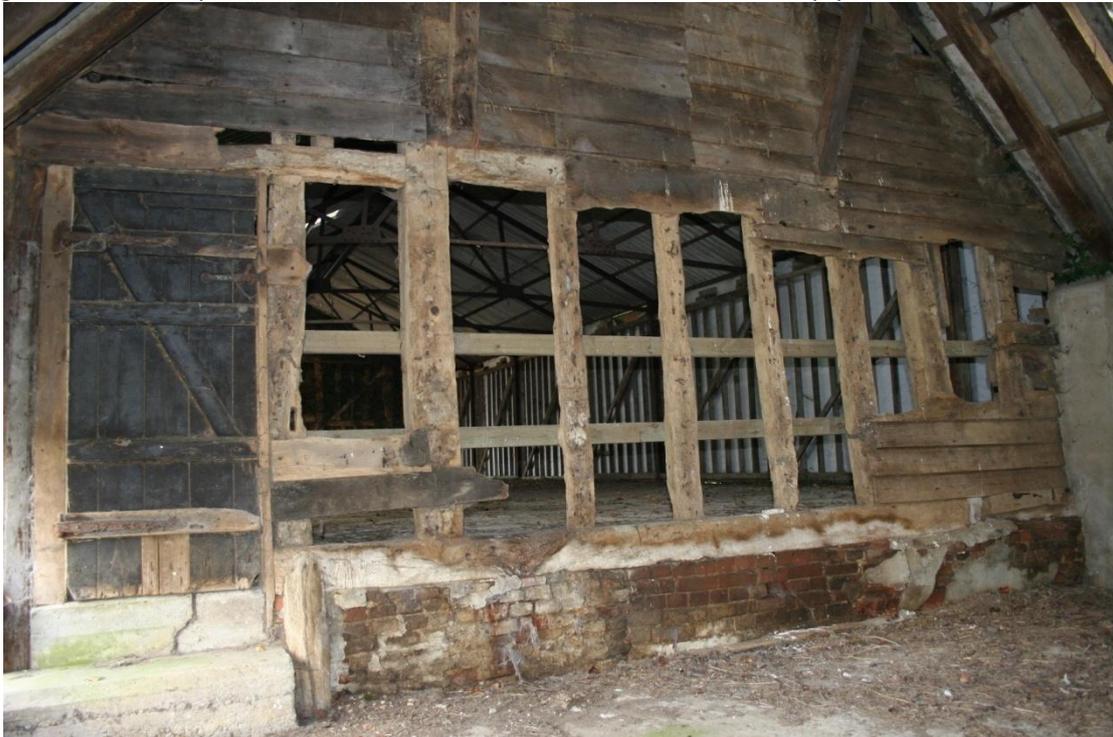
The frame consists of heavily jowled arcade posts with long sinuous down-braces onto the mid-rails. The mid-rails are offset about the storey post which itself is offset to the south of the frame. The arcade plates have been sawn off leaving cubes of timber retaining the tie-beam. One is missing completely in the SW post revealing the underside of the dovetail.



Offset mid-rails. Post head revealing dovetail and main tenon. Both in west gable.

The arcade ties are set at the same height below the 9x6in mid-rails but are only 6x6in in section. The larger mid-rail is in better repair than the other timbers and appears axe finished. The 8x7in corner posts retain mortices for up braces to the now removed arcade plates. The original studs (still pegged in position) are cut to 6x4in and set on the flat and have mortices and darts for wattle and daub panels. Many of the other studs are nailed in place and are reused or ¼ poles.

In the western gable the southern aisle is open for a former doorway into the now private garden. Presently this is blanked off with a modern sheet of marine ply.



Exterior of the west gable end.

The exterior of the western gable end can be seen inside the Stable where it has been boarded in several episodes many of which have fallen off due to the failure of the fixings. Here the frame can be seen resting on a brick plinth of red 65x110x225mm poor quality bricks set in a beige sandy lime mortar and skimmed with grey cement. The plinth is disrupted and the sole plate is white with rot caused by water ingress from the concrete floor in the Steel Barn which is much higher than that of the Stable.

In the NW corner is C19th softwood, tongue and grooved, gate and ledger door with a mild steel Suffolk latch and pintle hinges. It is hung with the exterior facing into the barn suggesting it was not in place until the Stable was built. Two shuttered concrete steps drop down into the Stable.

The exterior of the western gable visible from the private garden is clad in EML rendered with cement. Up in the apex is a panel of lime render on riven and nailed laths that has been pargetted with stippled panels.

The exterior of the eastern gable can only be seen from the grounds of Berwick Hall and is clad in weather-boards nailed to the interrupted studwork.

Roof Structure.

The roof is composed of 5 steel stressed trusses made from angle iron and bolted with hex head bolts. There are 4 steel purlins on either side to which the asbestos sheets are bolted through. The ridge is covered with galvanised iron. A slotted rail for a cable operated shutter door is suspended above the doorway. Rectified photograph follows.



The roof is a C20th steel trussed construction. Looking E. Note rail for sliding shutter.

The timber-framed gable ends have been altered to accommodate of the pitch of the steel framed roof. The original roof would have been much higher and the principal rafters would have run from the wall plates to the top of the aisle posts and then on up to the apex. The aisle ties give an idea of where the original wall plates would have been. The pitch of the earlier roof can be seen in the NW corner of the barn where it coincides with that of the Stables. Most of the timber above the tie-beam is machine sawn C20th work including the rafters. This means that the small section of pargetting must also be C20th. See also the photograph on page 13.

Carpentry and Timber Marks, Apotropaic Marks and Grafitti.

No identifying marks were found. The gable ends have studs cut with darts and ledger mortices on the inside edges for wattle and daub but there are no grooves in the soffits of the mid-rails or tie-beams. There are several 1.5in holes (commonly called fixture holes) and numerous standard peg holes for attaching racks and mangers. The long braces bear the marks of a pit saw. All the joints are scribed.

Description - The Stable - Exterior



The Stable is set between the Steel Barn and the Shelter.

North Elevation

The north elevation has a poor quality scantling timber frame clad in waney weather-boards many of which have fallen off due to the failure of the wrought iron nails. The lower boards - highlighted a bright mouldy green - are C20th sawn softwood. The off-centre doorway has also lost its door which has fallen off its hinges and rests against the wall.

The door is a vertically boarded, tongue and grooved, edge moulded simple nailed ledger type which appears to have been widened by the addition of two boards. All the fixings are lost but the pintles and broken strap hinges remain in the frame.

The stud wall is stood on a red brick plinth of 65x110x225mm poor quality bricks. The wall is only 6ft tall so the sole plate has been cut through to insert the door. Inside the floor is of poured concrete which has broken away through the doorway.

The roof is clad with corrugated asbestos. The gutters are missing but were likely of the grey plastic type lent against the end of the building. The gutter brackets however are for a more heavy duty type.

South Elevation.

The south wall has been under-built with 220x220x440mm blockwork work set in grey cement to the same pattern as that in the Steel Barn. The exterior is rendered in cement and painted. It is only visible from the private garden.

East Elevation.

This is the wall common with the Steel Barn.



The west elevation of the Stables is visible in the Shelter.

West Elevation.

The western elevation was evidently the exterior of the Stables for some time as there are two external doors fitted in the frame. The high level door would have been for a grain loft which has subsequently been removed. The two doors are of the same construction details as the main door and both have seen plenty of service having been repaired with large nailed ledgers.

They are both reused in this position. Each has keyholes and shadows where Woodstock locks have been removed but there are no corresponding mortices or notches in the frames. The upper door is cut down and has a wrought iron hasp for a padlock. It could be supposed that they were all old doors modified for use in the Stables. There is a stray timber sticking out of the frame below the upper door and it is likely there was a set of stairs there.

The weather-boarding is piecemeal, fastened with wrought iron nails and there are two small sections that were probably openings beside the lower door. The boards on the north side are hot-tarred against the rain and so are the doors.

The brick plinth is exposed to at least 9 courses and is much taller to take into account the slope.

Description - The Stables- Interior



Page | 21

The western wall is a reused timber-frame from a much earlier building.

The western wall is composed of a reused frame from an earlier building with heavy jowled principal posts and long straight up-braces to the tie-beam. Most of the 6in wide syds appear original to the frame but the braces are wedged in place implying it has been reassembled. The low wall height of only 6ft reinforces this idea. There is also an added curving brace between the northern corner post and the door jamb. By contrast all the studs above are nailed in place and the whole frame weather-boarded to skin it for strength.



Although there is a high level hatch door above the tie-beam there was no real evidence for a hay loft although the likelihood is very high. The rear wall has been replaced with blockwork and the central tie-beam is very flimsy and supported a reused top-plate, full of mortices and in very poor condition. The northern end of the tie beam has a hanging knee clouted into place against the jowled post of the doorframe.



The northern wall has a reused frame and a feed trough.

The northern wall is also composed of parts of an old frame retaining the reused 6in studs and a long straight brace from the corner post to the top-plate. There are also narrower nailed in studs with bleed marks from old nails showing they have been turned. A poor quality timber feed trough has been nailed together and fixed to the western side of the wall indicating that at one time there was a stable here. All the other fixtures one might expect like tethering rings, hay rack or a split stable door are not present.



Poor quality scantling roof. Looking E and then S.

The Roof Structure

The roof is a poor quality clasped side purlin roof with raking queen struts cut from old collared rafters. Many of the rafters have the redundant collars lap joints from a collar purlin roof while the others are elm scantling. A few of the collars are probably original to the rafter pairs while the others are concomitant to the build. The roof is battened as clad with asbestos.

Carpentry and Timber Marks, Apotropaic Marks and Grafitti.

No marks of any kind were found.

Description - The Shelter - Exterior



Northern elevation of the Shelter.

North Elevation.

The Shelter is a four bay timber framed building open on the northern side with a corrugated asbestos roof and asbestos rainwater goods. The top-plate is supported on 5 rectangular posts now stood on concrete plinths. Each post has an added modern softwood brace to prevent racking but also prevents vehicles from entering easily. One brace is just a heavy plank nailed across the westernmost bay.



The southern wall is clad with older weatherboards on the exterior.



Interrupted studwork frame.

South Elevation.

The exterior of the southern elevation is only visible from the private garden. The timber-framed interrupted stud wall is clad with older weather-boards finished with hot tar. Most of the studs are $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ poles while the principal posts are of reused oak. The tie-beams are roughly finished trees of which one has the reddish grey hue of elm while the others are less distinct. The hanging knees are gnarly roots heavily clouted but not bolted to the beams.



Many of the timbers are cut straight from the tree. Note bolt in scarf joint.

The halved and bladed scarf joint in the top-plate has four face pegs but has also been reinforced with a square headed nut and bolt. The top-plate is machine finished.



The SW corner of the Shelter. The walls have been boarded to contain the logs.

West Elevation.

Like the south wall the exterior can only be seen from a private garden and is similarly clad in older, hot-tarred weather-boards. The frame is of the same interrupted nailed scantling studwork. The inside of the Shelter has been clad with a variety of LC20th boards, including plywood and doors. This has been done so the large pile of logs does not push the weather boards off the frame.



The western wall is protected with C20th doors.



The hipped end of the roof over the western wall.



Side purlin roof with raking struts.

The Roof Structure.

The roof is a simple clasped side purlin design with raking struts to the tie-beams which are secured with iron ties. The straight machined collars are lapped and nailed to the rafters which are nailed to a ridge-piece. Most of the rafters are $\frac{1}{4}$ poles but there are several simple poles cut from the hedgerow. Nearly all still have the bark on. The roof is neatly hipped at the western end obviating the need for windbraces.



The rear roof has EC20th machined clay tiles.

While the front has an asbestos roof, the rear and hip has EC20th machine made clay nibbed tiles hung on reasonably fresh battens. There are also sections of cotton threaded asphalt underlay which was in use from the 1960's to the late 1980's.

Carpentry and Timber Marks, Apotropaic Marks and Grafitti.

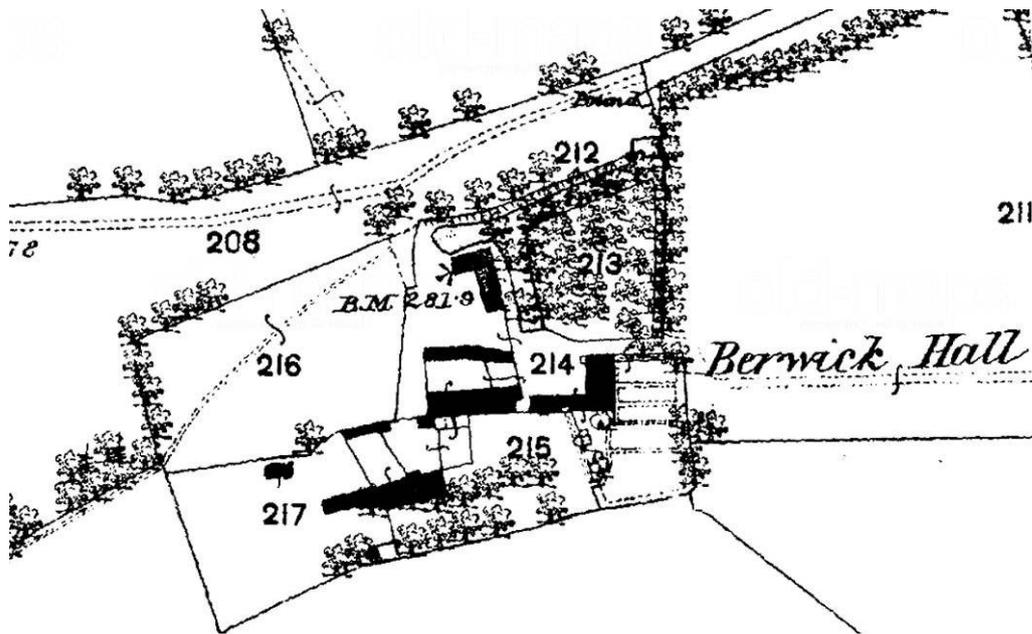


Inverted heel tap used as a good luck charm. Large suspension hook on the same post.

No marks of any kind were found in the Shelter. However nailed to one of the posts is a heel tap from an old boot. These are quite commonly found in farm buildings and nearly always in an inverted position. Contrary to popular modern belief the luck does not fall out of them. Shoes are quite often associated with luck and are stored away in houses or hidden in the chimney piece to bless the house.

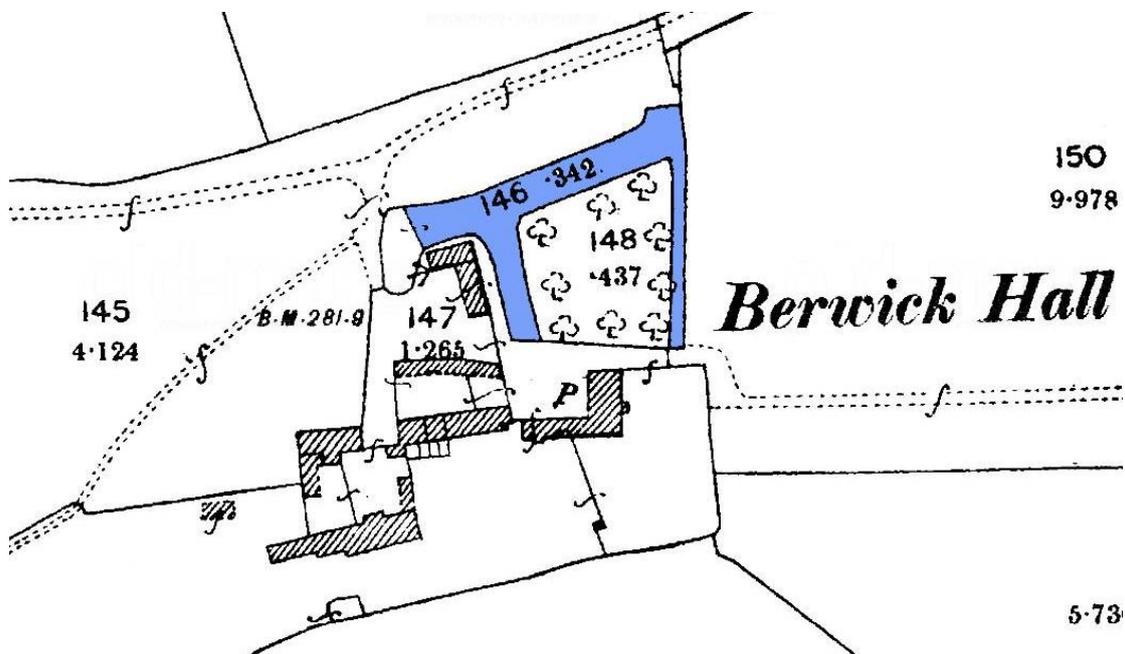
Fixings.

There were a number of large hooks on the front top-plate probably for suspending bags.



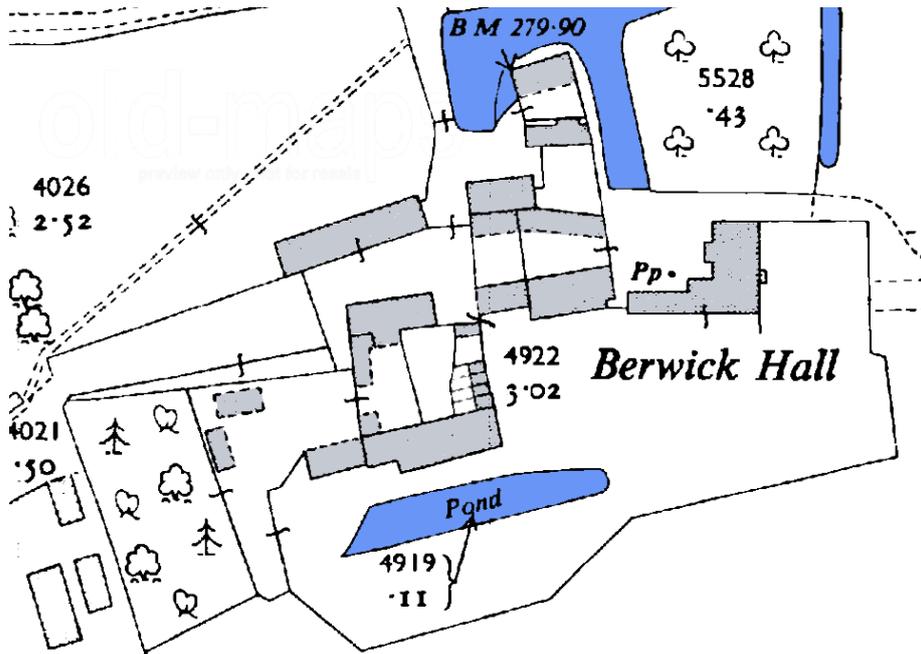
1876 1st Edition OS map

By 1876 there is a range of buildings that correspond to the Steel Barn, Stable and Shelter. The Steel Barn is shown with a possible midstrete porch. Directly to the west of Berwick Hall are buildings which correspond with the modern day livery, barn and shelters and there is a further larger structure to the north with an OS bench mark placed on it. The yards are divided up by fences indicating livestock. The Timber Barn is not shown.



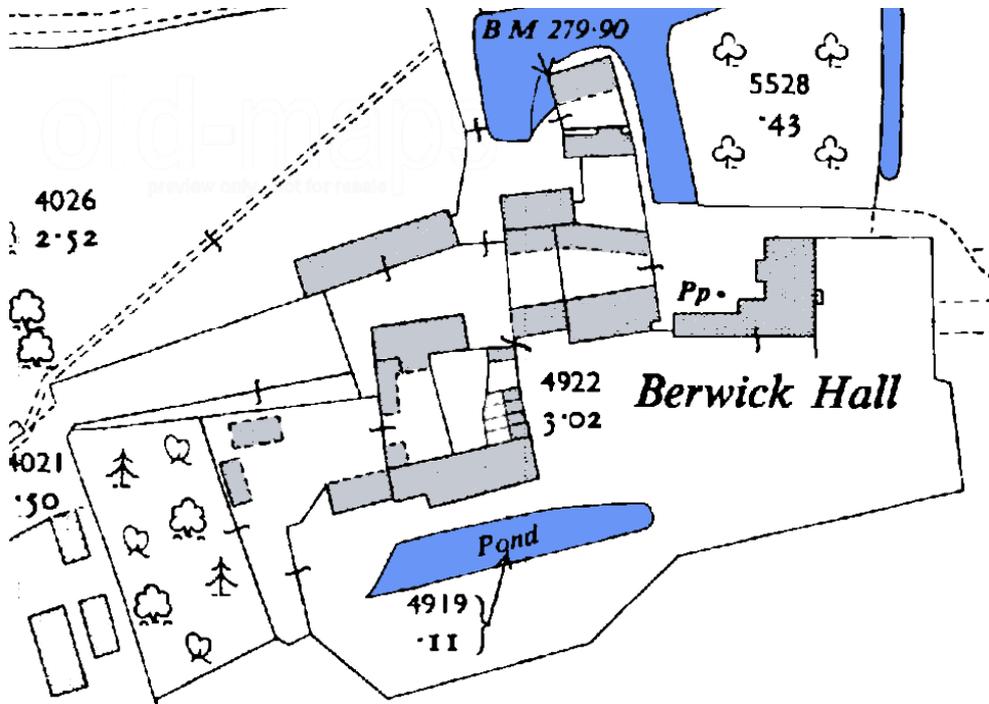
1896 2nd Edition OS Map

By 1896 the Timber Barn has appeared connected to an open-sided building off its SW corner. The range appears the same but there is also an open-sided building along the line of the garden boundary wall to the east. The smaller fenced pens usually indicate piggeries.



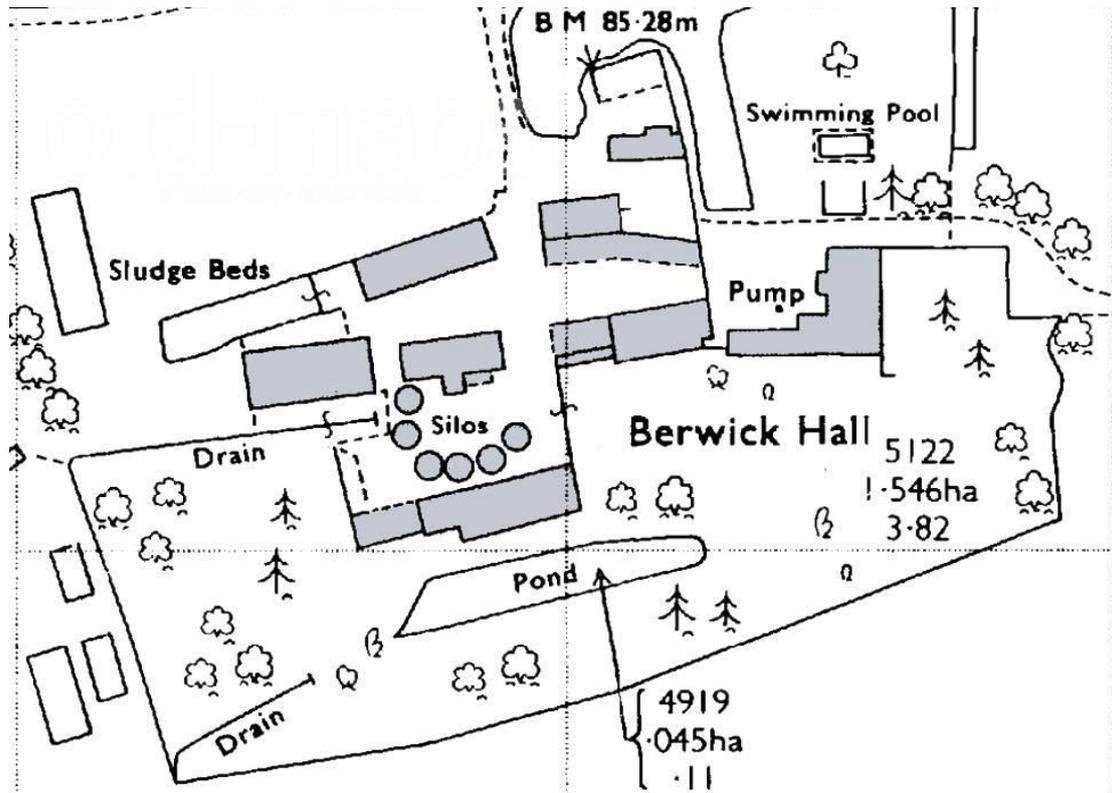
1922 OS Map

By 1922 another building has been erected parallel to the Steel Barn and Stable. The Steel Barn is shown with a separate porch. The building with the benchmark has disappeared and been replaced with pig sties.



1955 OS Map

By 1955 two large buildings have been erected to the north of the site. The pig sties appear to have moved next to the Steel Barn and been replaced with larger buildings.



1974 OS Map

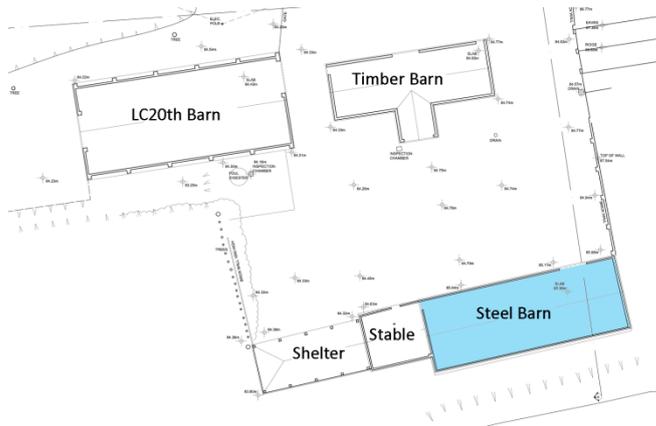
In 1974 it can be seen the farm has been given over to grain storage and a suite of silos have appeared in the farmyard. To the west of the Timber Barn one of the large modern storage barns has appeared. Noticeably all the fences and the pig sties have disappeared so it is likely that most of the animal husbandry has been moved elsewhere.

Phasing and discussion of the development of the buildings.

In phasing the development of the buildings the fabric and design of the structures has been considered and then compared to the map evidence. It can be stated that the farmyard did not exist before the Tithe Map of 1840 was made. The Tithe Map does not show any of the current buildings except perhaps one corresponding to the position of the Steel Barn.

Although the buildings have elements of ancient timber buildings incorporated in them there is nothing to suggest that they were erected any earlier than 1840 and that the Tithe Map is correct. It could be that the timber-framed gables of the Steel Barn are indeed the remnants of the barn shown on the Tithe Map in which case they predate the other buildings.

The Hall was owned by Thomas Eley who was renting the land of the Great and Little Park from the estate of one Hart late Naphale. Eley is mentioned in the list of voters in the 1847 elections and in the 1848 White's Directory of Essex as a farmer of Berwick Hall. In the same directory of 1863 he has been replaced by Susan Eley.



Phase 1 - EC19th

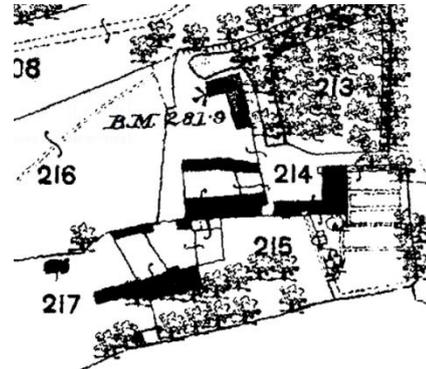
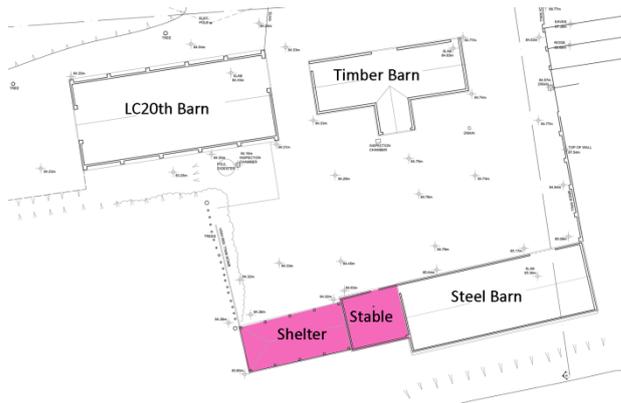
1777 Chapman and Andre.

The historic mapping indicates that only a building corresponding to the Steel Barn was in place in 1840. The Chapman and Andre map of 1777 does not indicate a building in that position at all. This map is subject to vagueries of scale and detail so it must be the fabric of the buildings that determines the erection date.



In the case of the Steel Barn the two gable ends are from an aisled barn with the characteristics of the C16th or C17th. It is unlikely to be earlier for a number of typological reasons. 1. The mid-rails are offset - this is a feature common in LC18th and C19th barns but not seen in early buildings. 2. The aisle ties are offset from the mid-rails. 3. The storey posts are offset to the south. 4. The braces are very long and sinuous and of different lengths.

Early frames are seldom asymmetric - there is a calculated beauty in their symmetry not dependent on the function of the building. These gables come from structures designed for a specific purpose. However there is no evidence to actually tie these structures to the site. They have been heavily rebuilt using nailed interrupted studwork in the style of the LC18th or EC19th and so can only represent this period of development.



Phase 2. 1840 - 1876.

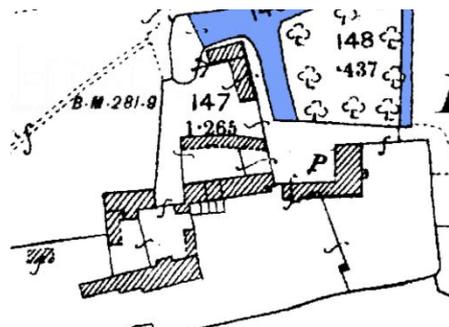
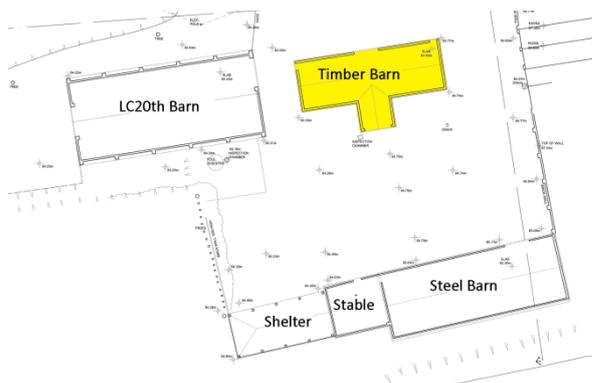
1876 OS Map

Between 1840 when the Tithe Map was made and 1876 the Stables and the Shelter appeared. The fabric of the Shelter is more typical of this period being largely scantling timbers, nailed interrupted studwork and a pole rafter side purlin roof. The Stables is made out of another reused frame which most definitely did not come from the site. The rafters come from a collar purlin roof normally associated with crown posts the last of which is dated to AD1575 by the Essex Historic Buildings Group.

This illustrates most clearly that that the recycling of old buildings was at its height in this period quite often referred to as the era of High Farming. According to G.E Mingay in *Victorian Countryside* (2000) High Farming 'was the achievement of high production by the widespread application of new knowledge and equipment. Land was drained to grow more grain and other food for more and fatter stock, yielding in turn more manure and heavier crops.'

At Berwick Hall Farm in 1876 we see a fully developed farmyard system fully corralled for animal husbandry. As Mingay says 'To house valuable stock, preserve its manure and promote greater efficiency in the working of the greater complexities of the system, new buildings in new configurations were required. Implements of unprecedented complexity and dedication to single tasks became increasingly common and steam power invaded, first the barn and eventually the field.'

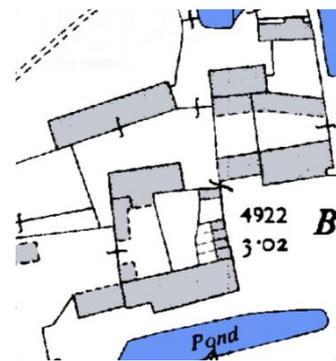
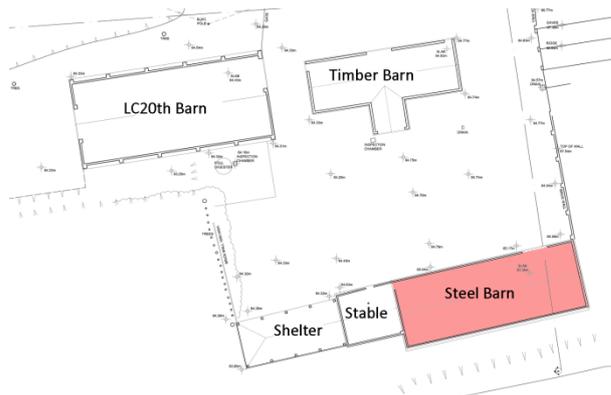
The other buildings outside of this study were undoubtedly all part of this new factory system of farming.



Phase 3 - 1876 -1896

1896 OS map.

The Timber Barn appears between the mapping of the second and third edition OS maps. Its construction details are radically different from the other buildings. All the timber is machine sawn softwood on a module of 2x4in - a modern standard that still persists. The quality of the doors is much higher than the knocked together boarded doors of even 50 years earlier and the door furniture is of high quality mild steel. The quality implies a date nearer 1896 than earlier.



Phase 4 - 1896 -1955

1955 OS Map

The buildings have remained largely unchanged since they were built. The exception is the frame of Steel Barn which the mapping implies was put in place before 1955. The steel frame and asbestos roof could have been constructed at any time from the early C20th when the use of hex head nuts became common in fabrication. As with any pre-fabricated building it is impossible to tell from its fabric when it was actually put on the site.

Significance

The farm buildings under study at Berwick Hall Farm are actually poor specimens of their type being highly altered almost from the point of their original inception. In general they are made from recycled materials which cannot be tied to the actual site. The exception is the Timber Barn which is a good quality late building of the Victorian Era showing the transition from vernacular architecture to machine made, precision engineered design.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the owners of Berwick Hall farm who engaged through their agent Mr Paul Belton who also kindly supplied the architect's drawings. I also acknowledge the help of Richard Havis, Adam Garwood & Maria Medlycott of the ECC HEM team for their help with the application.

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G. E. Mingay. Victorian Countryside. New Edition 2000.



ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD/ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Berwick Hall Farm, Park Lane, Toppesfield, Essex.	
Parish: Toppesfield	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 73493723.	Site Code: TPBW11
Type of Work: Historic Building Recording	Site Director/Team: Barry Hillman-Crouch
Date of Work: 15 09 2011	Size of Area Investigated: 40x100m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: N/A	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related EHER Nos:
Final Report: Berwick Hall Farm, Park Lane, Toppesfield, Essex. Description and analysis of farm buildings at the site. Surveyed 15 09 2011. Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	
Periods Represented: LC18th - C20th	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Four buildings were recorded as part of a C19th farmyard.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timber Barn. Victorian 7 bay barn made from machined 2x4in softwood between 1876 and 1896. Laid out as a typical thrashing barn. 2. Steel Barn. C20th steel framed barn with the timber-framed gabled ends of a C17th? aisled barn partially preserved but heavily altered in the LC18th or C19th. 3. Stables - 1840 - 1876. Poor quality 2 bay timber-framed building using the structural elements of an heavy studded and braced earlier frame. Built up against the Steel Barn and not shown on the 1840 Tithe Map. 4. Shelter - open fronted 4 bay shelter built between 1840 and 1876. Typical of the period with scantling frame of nailed interrupted studwork. 	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	Date of Summary: 12 10 2011.