

# Barn and adjacent buildings to the north-west of Golding's Farm, Sotterley, Suffolk

An Archaeological Record



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(TM 4715 8570)

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SCC HER ref: SOT012

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage recording Level 2 of a group of unlisted farm buildings to the north-west of Golding's Farm, Sotterley.*

*It has been prepared on behalf of the client, the Sotterley Estate, to a brief designed by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (reference: SpecHBR(EM)\_GoldingsFarm\_Sotterley\_09). It is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Waveney District Council Planning Application DC/06/1378/FUL).*

### **Introduction**

The following written report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record (listed in Appendix 3) and the CD also includes the report in pdf format. The buildings were inspected on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009, when the accompanying photographs were taken.

The name of this farmstead is unknown. It would appear that it was carved out of former open fields when these were enclosed in the late 1790's [SCC 1990, *A Survey of Suffolk Parish History*]. The straight line that forms the northern boundary is so indicative of an office-bound surveyor's pen and rule, while the house and garden's rectangular plot of exactly 2 roods suggests a specific considered allocation of land, rather than one which grew more 'organically'.

The barn had been set out exactly on an east-west axis. The Tithe map of 1840 [Suffolk Record Office, Lowestoft, 145/C5/2] is the earliest surviving map [Appendix 1]. This shows the barn with additional buildings immediately to the east that turn south and then west to form a sheltered yard. Two separate free-standing buildings stood, one to the east in line with the barn and the other to the west at right angles to the drift or lane leading to Low Barn. Across the drift looking north to the farm buildings was the house. This was a long structure, possibly of 1½ storeys with a porch on the north wall. To the west of this was a building that judging by the name of Sawpit Meadow for the plot on which it stood, was a sawpit.

The immediately surrounding fields were all being used as pasture; their names followed by 'Meadow' suggest that they had been used as grazing land for some time. The enclosed foldyard may well have been surrounded by stables or cowsheds to house the livestock that grazed there. The tenant in 1840, Thomas Goddard, also held 158 acres of arable land, which would have provided wheat for threshing and storing in the barn.

The first two appendices have details from the Sotterley Tithe Map and Apportionment, recorded in 1840, along with extracts from three editions of the Ordnance Survey 25" scale, ranging from 1880 to 1927. The latter maps show a regular rearranging of spaces and rebuilding of structures, indicating a constant change in the way that the farm was being utilised.

The present buildings associated with the barn all have the appearance of later animal linked usage, which implies that grazing on this farmstead continued to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the buildings and adjacent fields went out of use.

Each building has its own identity, being numbered from west to east across the site [see Figure 1]. The photographs included in this report have been identified according to their own numerical sequence in the attached CD, which contains many more photo images. A full list is given in Appendix 3. The scale shown in these images is a 2m surveying pole.

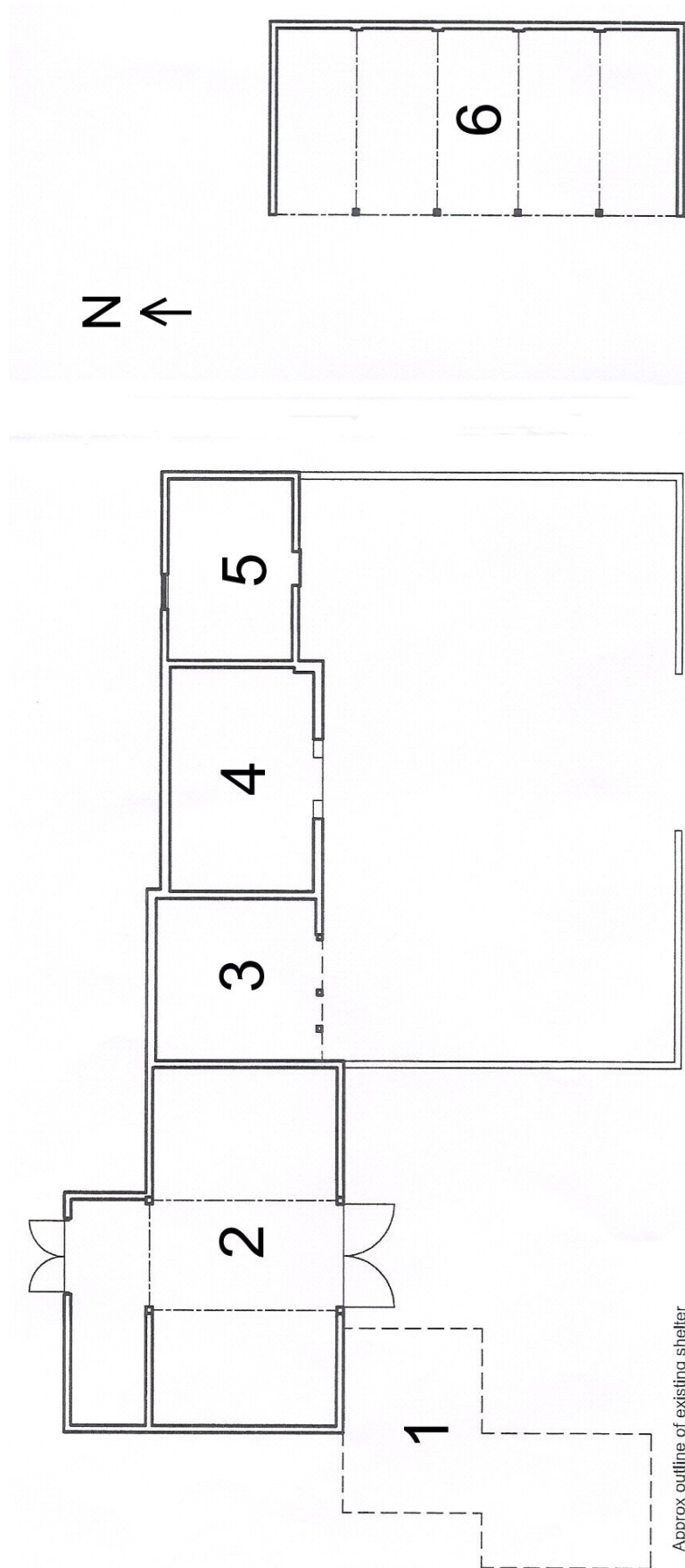


Fig 1: Block Plan of the site taken from the measured survey by Bidwells, October 2006. The Analysed Buildings have been numbered 1 to 6 to identify them in the report. Scale: approximately 1:200



## Description of the Buildings

### **Building 1      The Western Shelter**      [photos 1.1 – 3]

The irregular shaped sheltered area immediately to the west of the barn is a modern late 20<sup>th</sup> Century construction, consisting of a flat corrugated iron roof supported on re-used telegraph poles and softwood joists. Its plan consists of two rectangles set at right angles to each other and joined at one corner. It abutts the barn at its north-east corner. The dilapidated state of this structure reflects the quality of its construction.



Photo 1.3      The southern part of the Western Shelter from the east

Along part of its southern edge, it makes use of the south wall of a former brick building that once stood at right angles to the barn. Nothing else of this earlier building survives. It is not shown on the Tithe Map of 1840 [Appendix 1], but it may well have existed before the 1880 survey for the first edition 25" Ordnance Survey map [Appendix 2].



## Building 2      The Barn      [photos 2.1 – 23]

This is a three-bay timber-framed barn with a later brick lean-to at the rear. Its structure and documentary evidence suggests that this barn was built sometime between 1800 and about 1820. Construction after this date is unlikely, because like many other parishes in this area, Sotterley was very badly hit by the agricultural depression that followed the fall of corn prices after about 1814 [SCC 1990, *A Survey of Suffolk Parish History*].

The three bays are of unequal length with the western bay being 12ft [3.66m], 11ft [3.35m] in the centre while the eastern one has 13ft 9" [4.2m] between the primary framing timbers. This irregular arrangement is unusual, but the reason for it is unclear. This gives a total internal length above the plinth wall of 37ft 3" [11.65m] with a width of 20ft [6.1m].



Photo 2.1      The front of the Barn from the south

The frame is a mixture of oak and elm with a predominance of the latter. Primary braces run diagonally across the walls, cutting the studs into short lengths. It is covered with weatherboarding, which is now softwood, but some original elm boards survive along the north-west wall. The frame shows signs of long-term neglect not long after its construction, which also could be an indicator of the serious nature of the post-1814 recession.

The primary timbers all show saw marks. In the 1840 Tithe assessment, a sawpit is shown immediately to the west of the house [Appendix 1]. It is most likely that the timbers of the barn were sawn here and that the timber was produced locally.

Knee braces support the tie-beams. These curved timbers are frequently found having

been inserted into older barns in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century to allow free circulation of high stacked wagons, but here there are no mortices for earlier sweeping braces, so these knee braces must be part of the original construction.

All of the sole-plates are set on a brick plinth. At around 3ft 9" [1.14m] above the present internal floor level this is very high for the traditional plinth and should perhaps be classed as a low wall. This indicates either a shortage of timbers of a suitable length or more likely a deliberate decision to keep the sole-plate well above the wet heavy soils that dominate this site.

An alternative idea is that the wall was deliberately set high to prevent animals, which occasionally could be held here, from destroying any timber frame that may be in reach. The lower portion of the wall is 1½ bricks thick and has been built in alternating courses of headers and stretchers [English Bond] topped by a quarter-round beaded brick. The wall above this is built in the style of 1 header with 2 stretchers [Flemish Garden Wall Bond] for three courses and is finished with a row of headers to support the 8" [20cm] square timber sole-plate.

The primary timbers that flank the front barn entrance to support the main doors stand directly on the ground. At one time, the rear pair must have done the same, but they have been curtailed and set onto the sole-plate. This in turn has had to be extended and then cantilevered to support them. This is a very rare if not unique detail. It is structurally quite unsuitable and excessive loading is being placed on the cantilevers.



Photo 2.15 Altered primary timber post and rear sole-plate by the rear central bay



When the carpenter constructed the roof, he made no attempt to set the principal rafters on the primary timber posts of the frame below, which previously had been the usual practice. The consequence of later building the lean-to is that some studs were removed and there has been some sagging of the wall-plate over the rear central bay where it is unsupported. This has put some strain on the face-halved scarf joint [see photo 2.22]

The roof is of a good quality staggered butt-purlin type with irregular sized bays. It is still coated in a horizontal layer of reed. Perhaps this was originally thatched, the pitch is steep enough, but now the roof has a pantile covering.



Photo 2.22 Butt-purlin roof with sagging rear wall-plate over the rear central bay

The rear lean-to is an addition that dates to around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is shown on the first edition 1880 25" Ordnance Survey map but not on the 1840 Tithe map [Appendices 2 + 1]. It runs the length of the two western bays but is only open to the barn in the centre. It has brick walls that butt up to the back of the barn, even riding over the original elm boarding. There is serious decay at the western end of the roof. The slate-covered softwood rafters have pushed the walls apart, especially in the north-east corner [see photo 2.12].

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century rear doors are set in a surrounding frame of re-used oak and covered in corrugated zinc sheeting.

### **Building 3      Infill Building**      [photos 3.1 - 3]

This is a smallest building on the site. It was inserted between Building 4 and the barn where once there had been a gap. Three re-used oak posts support the front wall-plate. Three portions of the front wall were at one time completely open to the yard, but have been partially filled in with iron bars and concrete. The eastern, fourth portion is filled with brickwork. However, this is butt-jointed to Building 4, showing that they were not created at the same time.



Photo 3.1      Later building inserted between the barn and Building 4

Flemish Garden Wall Bond has been used for this building. The north wall is butt-jointed to the plinth of the barn and was constructed after the softwood boarding had replaced the original elm boards. Surprisingly, this north wall also appears to have been built later than the eastern wall of this building, because the latter has been extended to the north by 4½" [11.5cm] to form a bonded junction.

This means that the present roof is a replacement of a narrower one. The roof is made of square sawn softwood consisting of common rafters held by two collars and a double row of purlins. A long round pole has been later set across the bottom of the roof to prevent it spreading. A small portion of vertical reeding survives underneath the pantiles.

The south wall is set in line with that of Building 4, but this building projects some 15" [38cm] further north in line with the north wall of the barn. It appears to have existed in its present form to be recorded by the Ordnance Survey of 1927.



## **Building 4      Animal Building      [photos 4.1 - 3]**

A brick building constructed with alternate courses of headers and stretchers [English Bond]. Externally it is 26ft 1" [7.95m] long and 19ft 1" [5.82m] wide. It is not shown on the 1904 Ordnance Survey but is drawn on the 1927 map. As it clearly pre-dates Building 3, which is also drawn in 1927, a construction date of around 1910-20 is most likely.



Photo 4.1      The south front of Building 4

This building has a rounded south-eastern corner, showing that animals were still being quartered here – a square brick corner was regarded as dangerous, especially for costly horses. The yard in front of this building was probably being used as a winter stockyard.

The wide doorway and high windows to provide continuous light even if the door was shut, suggest that this may have been used either as a milking parlour, a place for sick animals or somewhere for them to give birth under supervision.

The inner corners of the doorway are made of chamfered brick, which have been rounded further by a later application of cement plaster. This plaster has been added to all the walls up to wall-plate level. The inner face of the west gable shows that the roof line has been raised, which means that the roof has been replaced.

The structure of the roof is a mixture of traditions with raking king struts rising from the tie-beams to purlins, which are braced by three collars nailed to common rafters. Oak has been used for the door and window surrounds and throughout the roof. Many timbers show signs of being cut by a large circular saw. Softwood battens support the pantiles, but there is no sign of laid reeds here.



## **Building 5**      **Southern Annex**      [photos 5.1 - 3]

This is the second smallest building on the site. It is 20ft 6" [6.25m] long and 15ft 11" [4.8m] wide. It is constructed in brick in alternately placed headers and stretchers [Flemish Bond]. The east gable is covered with weatherboarding. This building is not shown on the 1927 Ordnance Survey map and clearly post-dates the one shown to be then standing on this spot. A date of around 1935 would fit the evidence.



Photo 5.1      The southern annex, Building 5, from the south

The present door, clearly not original, is a sliding variety, though it looks as if this may well have replaced one of a similar form. There is a single large window, which is in the centre of the back wall. The opening is original but the earlier frame has been replaced with a softwood one and corrugated plastic 'glazing'. This suggests that the latest use of this building was just for storage.

The roof has four raking king post trusses in softwood. The construction is very simple and very modern. It may have been effective, but it lacks any sense of jointed carpentry. Above these, purlins supports modern corrugated sheeting.

An earlier use of this building, perhaps the original one, is indicated by the evidence for timber rails across the building on the left just inside the doorway. The brick floor is raised in this portion of the building and there is a central oak post that clearly has had timber rails fixed to it. Photo 5.2 shows this post and the mortices in the front brick wall for the rails. They are matched on the rear wall, suggesting a continuous barrier. There must have



been a gate somewhere within these rails to allow the movement of livestock, but it is not clear exactly where this was. Also in the photograph, there is a blocked hatch with oak jambs. Presumably, this was there to allow the passing of straw or feed through from the adjacent building into this fenced off area.



Photo 5.2 The remains of the fence with the blocked hatch in the west wall

Curiously, the west wall is built in Flemish Garden Wall bond, which is different to the front wall of this building and also to the English bond used in Building 4 next door. This suggests that this wall and its hatch is a survivor from an earlier phase. The front wall appears to butt up against the western one, which supports the idea of it being later. The 1927 Ordnance Survey [Appendix 2] shows the buildings in a continuous line here and in a different arrangement to the present one. The needs of this farm were never static and the frequent alterations to the buildings reflected this.



## **Building 6      Shelter Shed**

[photos 6.1 - 6.13]

This is the second largest building on the site. It is formed by three brick enclosing walls without windows leaving the west side completely open. The roof is covered in pantiles, some of which have recently been renewed.

It stands facing west with its back to, but quite close to, the public road in the south east corner of the site. Normally, such a structure with this design was used as an animal shelter. However, this one stands quite independent of the other buildings and their associated fold-yard, which suggests that its use was limited to the housing of carts and mobile machinery. A wall once connected the northern end of this building with the adjacent buildings to the west. Shown on the 1904 and 1927 Ordnance Surveys, [Appendix 2], this has long since gone.



Photo 6.1      Shelter Shed from the south west

This shed was constructed sometime at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century sometime before the 1904 Ordnance Survey was carried out [Appendix 2]. It replaced an earlier building that stood almost on the same footprint, but which is shown on the first edition O.S. map that was surveyed in 1880 with dashed lines down either of the long sides. This pattern was used to indicate open sided walls, which shows that this earlier building was a hay barn with plenty of essential ventilation. In turn, the 1880 building itself had been preceded by another structure of an unspecified use and of a smaller size drawn on the 1840 tithe map [Appendix 1].



The brick walls use English Garden Wall bond for the lower courses and a chamfer 1.22m [4ft] high and Flemish Garden Wall bond above. The internal dimensions above plinth level are 13.3m [43ft 8"] long and 6.05m [19ft 10"] wide. This strong wall is 9" [225mm] wide at its narrowest. At the top immediately below the wall-plate, it has an alternating pattern of half bricks that form a dentil decoration. Additional brick supporting piers are set along the back wall at around 2.3m [7ft 6"] intervals.



Photo 6.8 Inner face of brick eastern wall with pier, dentil decoration and roof

The west side is completely open except for four oak posts, that have large timber pads at their top to support the wall-plate. Each post sits on a cast iron pedestal, shaped rather like an inverted bucket with a broad top, to prevent rot of its foot. A tenon projects into a mortice in the top of the pedestal, which stops the post from slipping off the smooth surface. This has not been the best of details as the timber that touches the iron is unable to dry quickly after rain and has clearly decayed in places [See photo 6.7 overleaf].

Each pedestal bears the legend, 'S F Field, Beccles'. This local company had its original iron foundry at Bungay, [SCC 1990, *A Survey of Suffolk Parish History*, p160] but was successful enough in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to establish centres in other nearby towns.





Photo 6.7 Iron pedestal supporting one of the western oak posts. 20cm scale.

The roof is built of oak rafters and purlins with king post trusses and raking struts. Iron tie rods hold them together. To prevent the wind from blowing between the ill-fitting pantiles, their undersides have been plastered onto reeds laid vertically and held by the tile battens.



Photo 6.11 The plaster and reed undercoating of the pantiles

This detail and the brick decoration at the top of the walls suggest that the late 19<sup>th</sup> century owners felt that the equipment stored here was of sufficient value to justify the expense of full protection from the elements as well a little flamboyance.

## **Summary**

This collection of agricultural buildings has seen much alteration, particularly during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and no longer form a cohesive historical group. The barn and the shelter shed are the two most important buildings amongst them. They all have been unused for many years, but it would be a loss to the countryside if they were allowed to collapse or were to be demolished. The group represent the changes in agriculture shaped by national politics from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when this land was first enclosed by Act of Parliament. The proposed conversion of these structures would become part of that unceasing change.



## Appendix 1

## Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1840

The layout of the buildings and some of the farm shown on part of the Tithe Map of 1840 [Suffolk Record Office, Lowestoft, *Tithe Map 145/C5/2 and Apportionment 145/C5/3*].



This shows a compact arrangement of fields on the eastern boundary of Sotterley parish. To the east of the road, Golding's Farm [numbers 142 -145] is clearly in a different occupancy.

The northern boundaries of fields 41- 42 and the straight lines used to separate areas 44, 45, 48 and 49 from their neighbours suggest that these fields were all laid out immediately after the enclosure of Sotterley's common fields by a private Enclosure Act of 1799 [SCC 1990, *A Survey of Suffolk Parish History*].

The house, set in plot 44, sits separately from the agricultural buildings on the south side of the lane leading to Low Barn [plot 34 to the north-west].

Source: *Suffolk RO Lowestoft, Sotterley Tithe Map, 1840, ref: 145/C5/2*

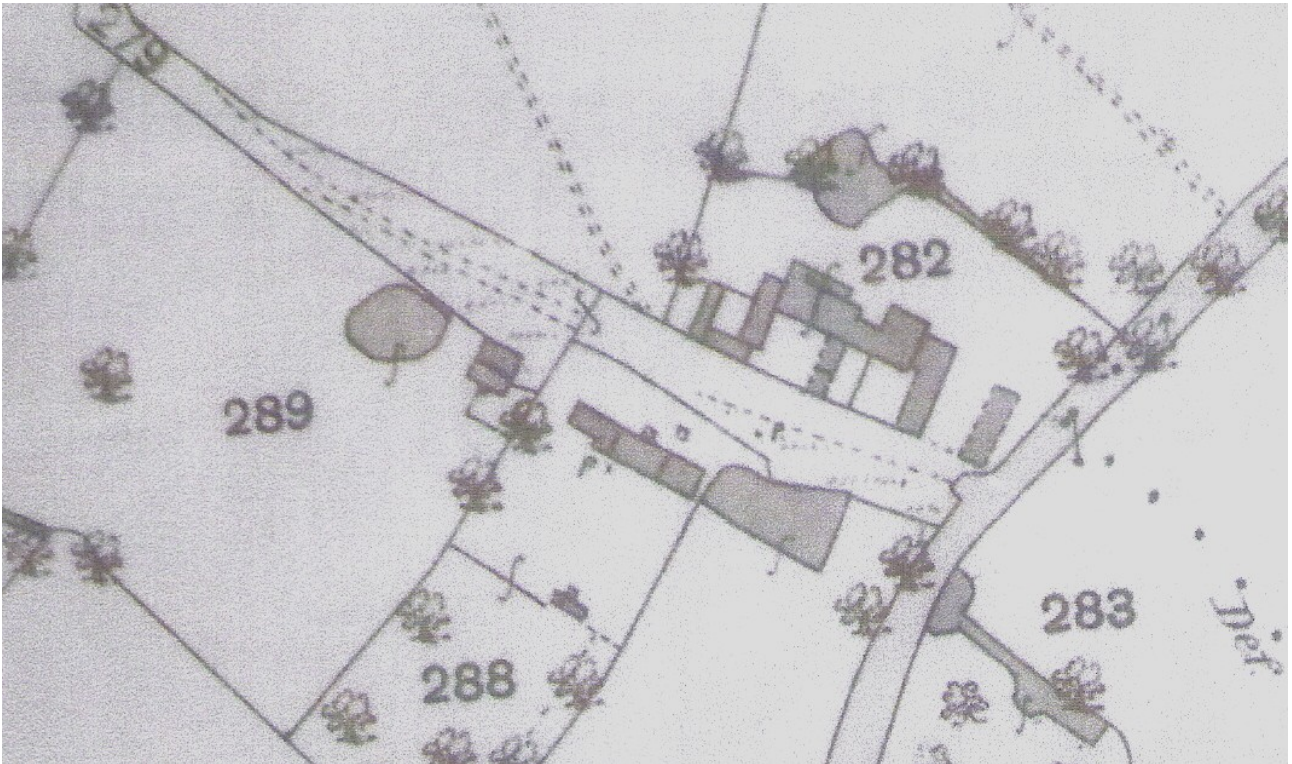
Source: *Suffolk RO Lowestoft, Sotterley Tithe Map Apportionment, 1840, ref: 145/C5/3*

The list of fields in the immediate vicinity of the farmstead and their use is set out below:

| Tithe no | Owner           | Occupier      | Name                  | size<br>a r p | land use |
|----------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------|
| 41       | Earl of Gosford | Thomas Garrod | Footpath<br>Meadow    | 6 1 37        | pasture  |
| 42       | " "             | " "           | Stackyard<br>Meadow   | 4 0 26        | pasture  |
| 43       | " "             | " "           | Barn, Yard<br>& Drift | 1 1 5         |          |
| 44       | " "             | " "           | House &<br>garden     | 0 2 0         |          |
| 45       | " "             | " "           | Orchard               | 0 2 3         | pasture  |
| 46       | " "             | " "           | Sawpit<br>Meadow      | 2 0 23        | pasture  |
| 48       | " "             | " "           | Home<br>Meadow        | 1 3 0         | pasture  |

Thomas Garrod, the tenant farmer, held a total of 176 acres, 3 roods and 24 perches of which 18 acres were pasture. Most of this pasture lay around the farmstead. The rest of his fields were arable.

The landowner, the Earl of Gosford, who had been created Baron Worlingham of Beccles in 1835, owned 186 acres of land in total in Sotterley parish. He leased most of this to tenant farmers, but retained 10 acres of woodland or plantations for his own use.

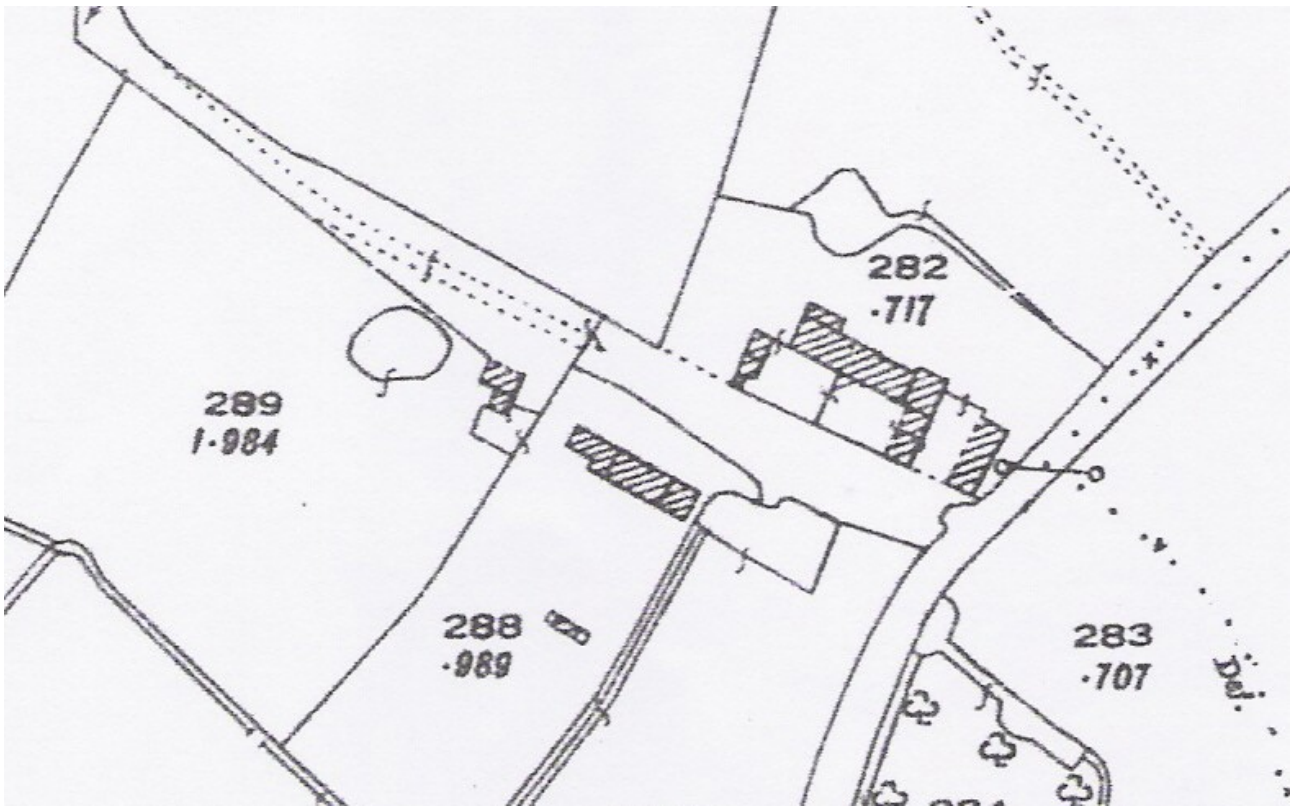


First edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale, surveyed in 1880



Second edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale, surveyed in 1904





Third edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale, surveyed in 1927

## Appendix 3

## Complete list of photographic images stored on the attached CD

### Building 1 The Western Shelter

- 1.1 **Exterior** from the south
- 1.2 North part from the south-east
- 1.3 South part from the east

### Building 2 The Barn

- 2.1 **Exterior** from the south
- 2.2 From the south, the entrance
- 2.3 From the south, entrance detail
- 2.4 Doorway fastening plate
- 2.5 From the south-south-west
- 2.6 From the south-west
- 2.7 From the west, the barn gable
- 2.8 From the west, the lean-to
- 2.9 **Interior**, the south-west area
- 2.10 Part of the barn's north wall and lean-to
- 2.11 The lean-to, the north doorway
- 2.12 The lean-to, the north-east corner, showing the major cracks in the brickwork
- 2.13 The lean-to, the west wall with part of the roof missing
- 2.14 The north wall of the barn, original elm weatherboarding on original exterior now protected by the lean-to
- 2.15 The north wall east of lean-to, showing the altered sole-plate and post
- 2.16 The east wall of the barn
- 2.17 The south wall, east of the main entrance
- 2.18 The east side of the entrance, the main supporting post
- 2.19 The north-west corner of the roof and frame with lean-to behind
- 2.20 The north wall-plate and tie-beam assembly with supporting knee brace
- 2.21 The north wall-plate scarf joint
- 2.22 The roof, north central portion, the purlins and reed covering above the sagging unsupported wall-plate
- 2.23 The roof, south-east portion

### Building 3 The Infill Building

- 3.1 **Exterior** from the south
- 3.2 The butt junction between Buildings 3 and 4
- 3.3 **Interior**, the roof and north-west corner

### Building 4 The Animal Building

- 4.1 **Exterior** from the south
- 4.2 The window east of the entrance, original oak sill with later softwood frame
- 4.3 **Interior**, roof looking west

Building 5 The Southern Annex

- 5.1 **Exterior** from the south
- 5.2 **Interior**, the south-west corner showing the raised area and pen post
- 5.3 The west end with the blocked hatchway

Building 6 The Shelter Shed

- 6.1 **Exterior** from the south-west
- 6.2 From the west
- 6.3 **Interior**, looking south
- 6.4 The east wall, detail of brick pier
- 6.5 Looking north
- 6.6 The head of one of the western oak posts, with its long support pad
- 6.7 Iron pediment supporting one of the western oak posts
- 6.8 The roof and wall assembly, showing the dentilled top of the wall
- 6.9 The roof structure
- 6.10 The roof, with reeds laid over the rafters
- 6.11 The roof, with plaster adhered to the underside of the reed covering
- 6.12 The roof and wall in the south-east corner
- 6.13 The roof in the south-east corner

Group Exterior Views

- 7.1 Buildings 2 to 5 from the east
- 7.2 The rear of the main range from the north-east
- 7.3 The rear of Buildings 3 and 4
- 7.4 The rear of Buildings 2, 3 and 4