

Welby House and Maltings High Street, Nos 31-33 (odd) Market Deeping Lincolnshire



HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

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June 1992

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ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND

Lincolnshire

Market Deeping

Welby House and Maltings, Nos 31-3 (odd), High Street

NGR: TF 1411 0990 NBR no: 86639

Summary

This maltings complex, built probably between 1828 and 1840, is a good example of the scale and methods of production common in the early-mid 19th century. The works were built by John Perkins, a local man with diverse business interests, including water transport and carriage and processing of bulk items such as corn, coal and feed cake. The site lies adjacent to the navigable River Welland, and it is likely that raw materials and products were transported by river. The buildings are architecturally impressive, with a street frontage made up of offices, warehouse and house executed in Tudor Gothic, and the works buildings being well-built and of substantial size. They comprise a four-storeyed maltings, with characteristic low floors and regularly spaced small window-sized openings for ventilation, and a malt kiln. This has a pyramidal roof, a furnace, and a drying floor of perforated tile supported on an arched brick rib construction. The flow of processes is not entirely clear. Grain was probably brought into the top floor of the maltings and steeped on the ground floor, leaving the middle floors for germination despite the difficulties in moving wet grain which this route entailed. It was then dried in the kiln and finally removed from the first floor of the maltings.

History

The maltings in High Street, Market Deeping, are said to have been built in 1828 by John Perkins, a merchant and maltster who amassed considerable wealth (see Document 4). Perkins owned barges using the navigable River Welland and was involved in the transport of bulk items like corn, coal and timber. Documentary evidence supports but does not confirm the suggestion that the maltings might have been built in or around 1828. John Perkins was not listed as a maltster in a directory of 1826 (information from Lincolnshire Archives), but by 1842 he was listed variously as maltster, timber merchant, coal merchant and corn merchant (see Documentation). Further tenuous dating evidence is derived from the date 1840 carved in a beam removed from the maltings building; the date is well carved in bold figures, but it is not certain that it indicates the date of the building's construction. Later directories list Perkins as corn merchant but not maltster (1849), corn, cake, coal and timber merchant, High Street, and under Gentry in High Street (1855), as corn merchant and maltster, High Street and Mill Lane (1863), and as maltster, coal and corn merchant

(1868 and 1872). John Perkins died in 1879, and a directory of 1882 gives Henry Perkins (no trade) as occupying premises in High Street.

At the time of record (August 1991) the maltings were in course of conversion to residential use, only the kiln remaining unaltered.

The malting process

Malt, used principally in the brewing industry, is produced from barley in a controlled process involving partial germination of the grain. There are various published accounts of the stages of production and of the buildings required (see Documents 1-3,5). Perhaps the most useful for present purposes is the 1860 description published in Ure's <u>Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines</u> (Document 1), since this both discusses the excise arrangements and is probably closest in date to the complex in Market Deeping.

Commercial-scale malting had three principal stages of production in this period. Grain was first steeped in a cistern to allow it to absorb a limited amount of water. It was then couched, that is, spread on a floor to germinate under controlled conditions, ventilation and temperature being critical at this stage of production. On reaching the correct stage of germination, after perhaps two weeks and after numerous turnings, the process had to be arrested, and the third stage of production involved drying the malted grain in a kiln. Manufacturing methods were strictly controlled by the excise officers, who inspected the grain during steeping and germination. This caused great annoyance to the maltsters, who resented the reputedly damaging effects on production of some aspects of this regulation.

Report

The site

Malting involved bulky materials, requiring large quantities of grain and of fuel for drying. Sites with good transport facilities were, therefore, favoured for maltings, which were commonly located on the fringes of towns and close to transport installations. The maltings in High Street, Market Deeping, was very advantageously situated, for the navigable River Welland, just to the south of the buildings, could be used to bring in grain and fuel and transport the finished malt. The known connection of John Perkins, the reputed builder of the maltings, with barge transport on the Welland suggests that the maltings were seen as a logical and potentially profitable extension of Perkins' range of activities. The site is a large one and perhaps only someone with Perkins' capital or credit could contemplate the investment required.

The site is irregularly planned, having a relatively narrow street frontage but broadening out at the rear. The arrangment of buildings probably respects contemporary property boundaries. The maltings comprises five principal buildings (see Block Plan, drawing no.1). On High Street are disposed domestic, administrative and reception buildings; these are Welby House (1), probably

always including offices and with a rear wing, and a three-storeyed office and warehouse (2). A covered entrance leads into a narrow yard bordered on the east side by the principal working building of the complex, a four-storeyed maltings range, L-shaped on plan (3). The east end of the northern arm of the maltings terminates in a two-storeyed malt kiln (4). On the northern perimeter of the site is a coach house block (5). All buildings are of limestone and appear to be either contemporary or built in stages within a short period and to a single plan.

The buildings

The High Street frontage of the maltings complex is treated as a display elevation and comprises buildings with residential, administrative and/or goods reception functions. To the west of the entrance is **Welby House** (1), a symmetrically-disposed building in Tudor Perpendicular style. It has a central entrance in a narrow gabled bay, flanked by slightly projecting bays with crow-stepped gables. The doorway opens into a hall decorated with a compartmented plaster ceiling and with a niche with crocketed canopy. Heated rooms flank the hall. To the west is the best reception room, with a Tudor Gothic

fireplace and a plaster cornice with crocketed pendants. To the east are two rooms, connecting by a wide arched opening. The existence of a window in the rear wall overlooking the yard and of a narrow doorway out to the covered entrance passage demonstrate that these rooms served as offices. Domestic accommodation was provided in a rear range, plainer in style but still with Tudor Gothic detail, and on the first floor. The lack of a straight joint on the west wall between the rear range and the front part of Welby House indicates that both parts were built together. The wing provided a pantry, a kitchen and a laundry.

To the east of the covered entrance is an office and warehouse (2), three bays long and of three storeys. The building is plainer in style than Welby House, reflecting rather its function than a difference of date. It has a central doorway to the street and a further doorway into the covered entrance passage. The ground floor originally provided two offices, the western room formerly heated by a corner stack. The offices are otherwise featureless and were perhaps always plain, acting as works offices rather than as rooms for the proprietors or for receiving visitors to site. Their position and access both to the street and to the covered passage allowed them to control access to the site. There is no evidence for original communication with the maltings range to the north nor with the first floor, indicating that this was treated as a secure area isolated from the works. The upper floors, however, did connect with the rear range, having an original doorway at first-floor level. There is also a wide doorway opening from firstfloor level into the covered passage, a feature which suggests that the upper floors of the building were used for the storage of grain unloaded in the shelter of the entrance. The roof of the building has principal rafters with scissor braces, the joints either bolted or halved.

Behind the office and warehouse building is the L-shaped maltings (3 on Block Plan). There is a straight joint between the two structures, with the front range clearly built earlier, but the apparently original communication between the two ranges at first floor level indicates that they were at least planned together even

if built at slightly different times. The maltings is of four storeys and of nine bays on both west and north elevations. The building is impressive in size and of good architectural quality. Both fronts have slightly projecting gabled bays towards the ends of the elevations, the projections having quoined angles, copings and gable finials. Each floor is lit mainly by low, regularly-disposed two-light mullioned windows. The window sizes and positions have in some cases been altered during modern conversion, but elevations drawn beforehand may be taken to represent the original form of the openings. The low floor heights revealed by the windows and the small size of the window openings are characteristic features of maltings buildings. The windows were originally fitted with shutters and slats rather than with glazing; this provided the ventilation needed during germination. Internal features have been largely removed, but beams removed from the building show that floors were of wooden construction with deep heavy joists. Roof trusses were of queen-post and truncated principal rafter form except in the area of the gables, where trusses with full principal rafters were employed.

The maltings building provided both storage space and an area for processing the grain. Just inside the entrance to the site, at the south end of the maltings, is a wide low doorway with a broad chamfered surround and a square lintel. The lintel is painted with the words 'JOHN PERKINS LICENSED MALTSTER'. It is not clear why this doorway, sited within the complex and therefore not effective as a public advertisement of the business, should be so marked. It is possible that the lettering was required by the strict excise legislation in force during the early and mid 19th century. The doorway may have been used as access for excise inspection, probably of the steeping stage of production.

Barley was brought into the building by means of the tier of taking-in doors which were formerly located in the gabled projection at the north end of the west elevation. It is likely that the grain was hoisted first to the top floor for storage; spacing between the different window levels suggest that the top floor was taller than the lower floors, an indication that it may have been used for storage rather than for the malting process itself. Whether the building was also used for storage of other commodities in which Perkins dealt cannot be determined, although the absence of substantial warehouses on the site, always, it appears, Perkins' chief centre of operations, makes this possible. Recent internal alterations have obliterated evidence for any flow of materials by means of trapdoors or hoists from floor to floor within the building, but the former existence of taking-in doors on every floor suggests that only external communication was provided. Steeping in a cistern, involving large vessels and large quantities of water, was probably a ground-floor operation, leaving the middle two floors for the malting process itself. There is no evidence for how wet grain was moved within the building.

After germination the grain was removed to the kiln (4) at the east end of the northern arm of the maltings building. This is contemporary, being bonded in to the maltings building and having similar architectural detail. The kiln is of two storeys and has a pyramidal roof, with two gables on the north elevation. The upper part of the roof is in newer and different materials, showing the extent of the original louvered cap ventilating the kiln. Windows are small and were originally shuttered. The kiln is entered externally from a doorway in the west

wall, and there is internal connection with the maltings building at both ground and first-floor levels.

The kiln is very similar in layout and form to that illustrated in the 1860 account of the building type (see Document 1, p.23). The ground floor is occupied by a central furnace fired from the west and surrounded on all sides by a brickvaulted passage (see sections and plans). The furnace is a low brick structure rising c1 metre from the floor level. Exhaust gases from the furnace must have been conveyed to a chimney by pipes, but there is no sign of these nor, more surprisingly, of the chimney, presumably attached to a side wall. The heat chamber over the furnace allowed hot air to rise to the drying floor over, which is made up of perforated tiles on tile joists, supported by arched ribs. These have seatings for a disperser plate which distributed the hot air evenly throughout the kiln to give uniform drying conditions. The drying floor is square in plan but rises to a circular coved plaster cone within the pyramidal roof. The form of the louvred cap which ventilated the kiln is not known. Grain was brought into the kiln and removed from it by means of the first-floor doorway linking with the maltings. It may have been bagged up and taken out by means of the first-floor doorway which formerly occupied the central bay of the maltings' north elevation (see drawings).

The last building in the group was a detached stables and coach house (5) on the north side of the site. A central section has a wide depressed-arched opening for carriages, and flanking two-storeyed gabled sections were probably used for stables on the ground floor and fodder storage over.

List of documents illustrating account

- 1. Extract from <u>Ure's Dictionary of Arts</u> etc, 1860
- 2. Extract from Adams, J, The Maltster's Guide, 1871
- 3. Extract from <u>Journal of the Institute of Brewing</u>, 1907
- 4. Extract from Day, F A, <u>History of the Deepings</u>, 1972
- 5. Extract from Brown, J, Steeped in Tradition, 1983

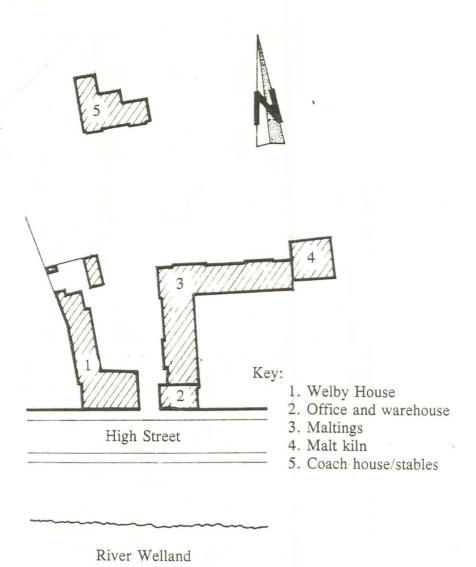
Documentation

- John Perkins, maltster, timber merchant, coal merchant, corn merchant (White's <u>Directory of Lincolnshire</u>, 750-1)
- John Perkins, corn merchant (Hagar's <u>Directory of Lincolnshire</u>, 127)
- John Perkins, corn, cake, coal and timber merchant, High Street, (also listed under Gentry) (Kelly's <u>Post Office Directory of Lincolnshire</u>, 172-3)
- John Perkins, corn merchant and maltster, High Street and Mill Lane (Morris and Co., <u>Commercial Directory of Lincolnshire</u>, 192)
- John Perkins, maltster, coal and corn merchant, High Street (Kelly's Commercial Directory, 229)
- John Perkins, corn and coal merchant and maltster, High Street (White's <u>Lincolnshire Directory</u>, 696)
- John Perkins not listed, no maltsters listed in High Street; Henry Perkins, High Street (no trade given) (White's <u>Directory of Lincolnshire</u>, 268)

Visited: Colum Giles, Garry Corbett, 5 August 1991

Report: Colum Giles

Plans and sections: Garry Corbett, Colum Giles Large-format photography: Keith Findlater



Maltings, 31-33 High Street, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire.

NBR no: 86639 Drawing 1 of 6

(reproduced, with permission, from architect's plans)

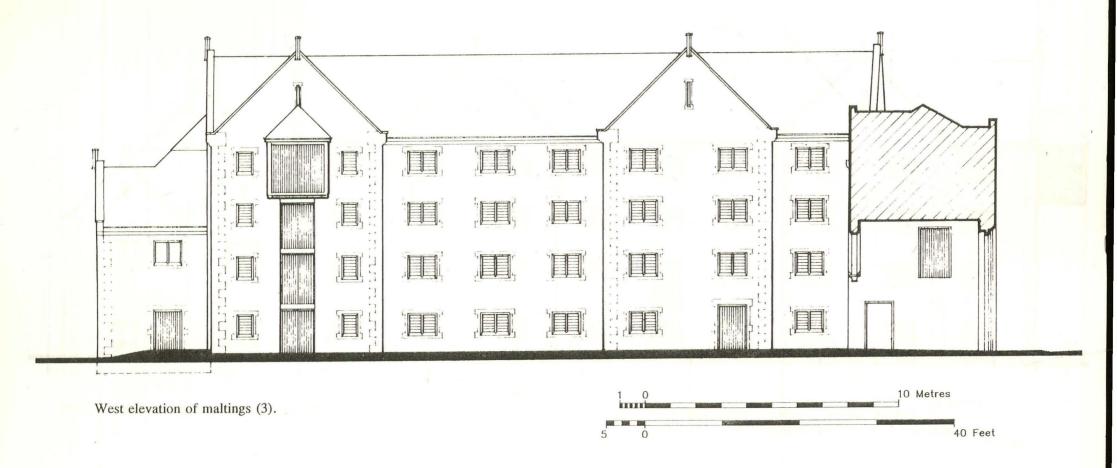


High Street elevation with Welby House (1) to left, office and warehouse (2) to right.

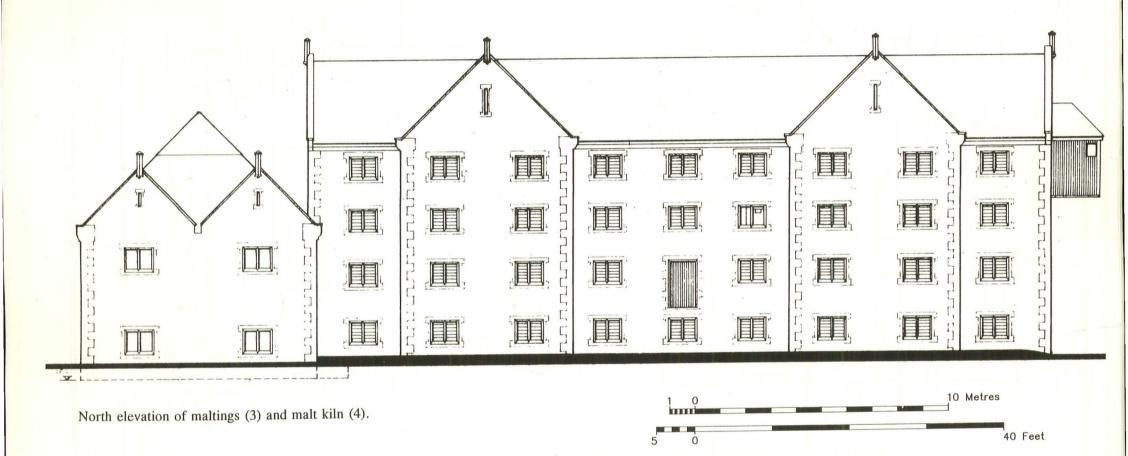
Maltings, 31-33 High Street, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire.

NBR no: 86639 Drawing 2 of 6

(reproduced, with permission, from architect's plans)



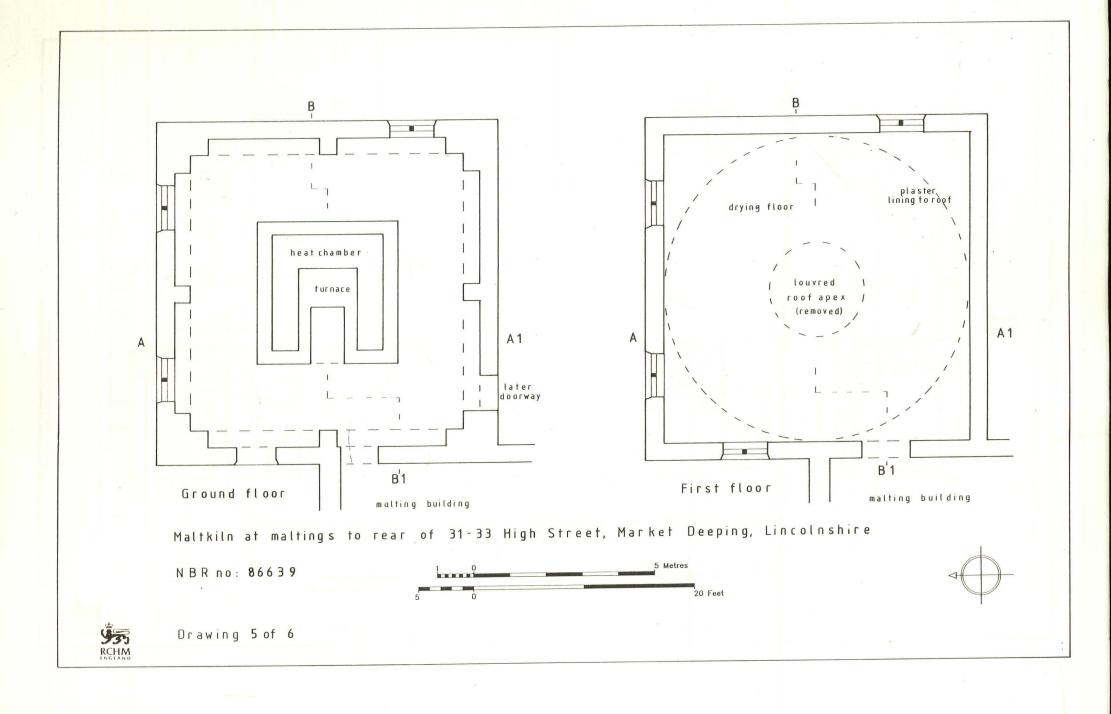
Maltings, 31-33 High Street, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire. NBR no: 86639 Drawing 3 of 6 (reproduced, with permission, from architect's plans)

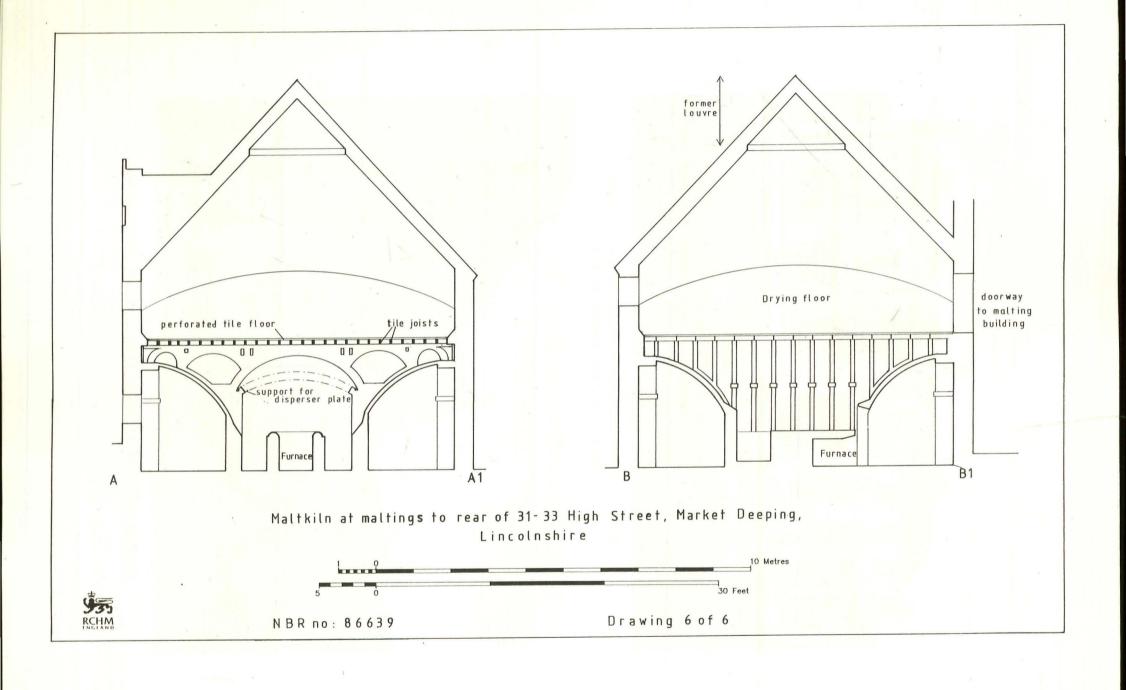


Maltings, 31-33 High Street, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire.

NBR no: 86639 Drawing 4 of 6

(reproduced, with permission, from architect's plans)







High Street frontage, with Welby House to left and warehouse/office to right



View to south in yard, with maltings building to left



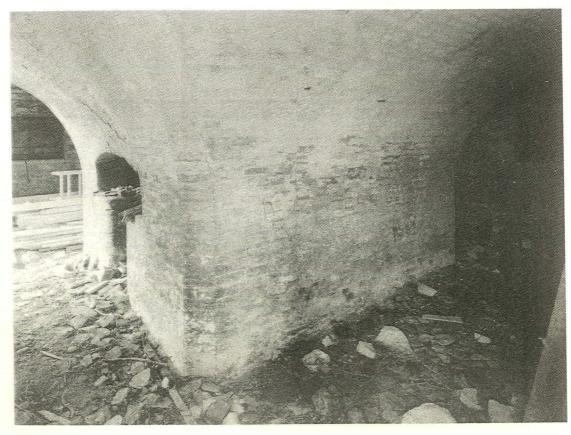
Painted lettering on door lintel, south end of maltings building



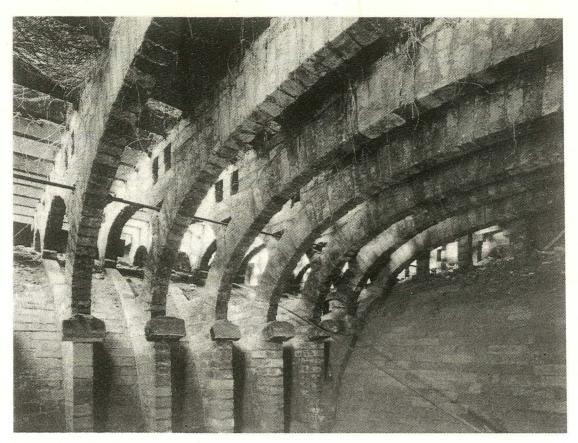
Maltings building, north elevation, with malt kiln at far end



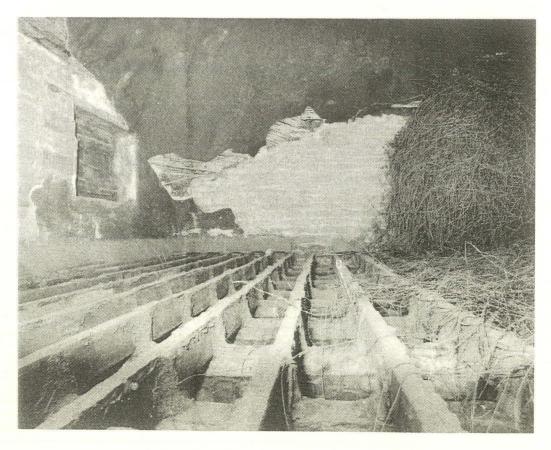
Malt kiln, north elevation



Malt kiln, ground floor, passages around central furnace, with entrance to furnace to left



Ribbed structure supporting drying floor over furnace



Drying floor, showing tile joists (perforated tile floor removed)

