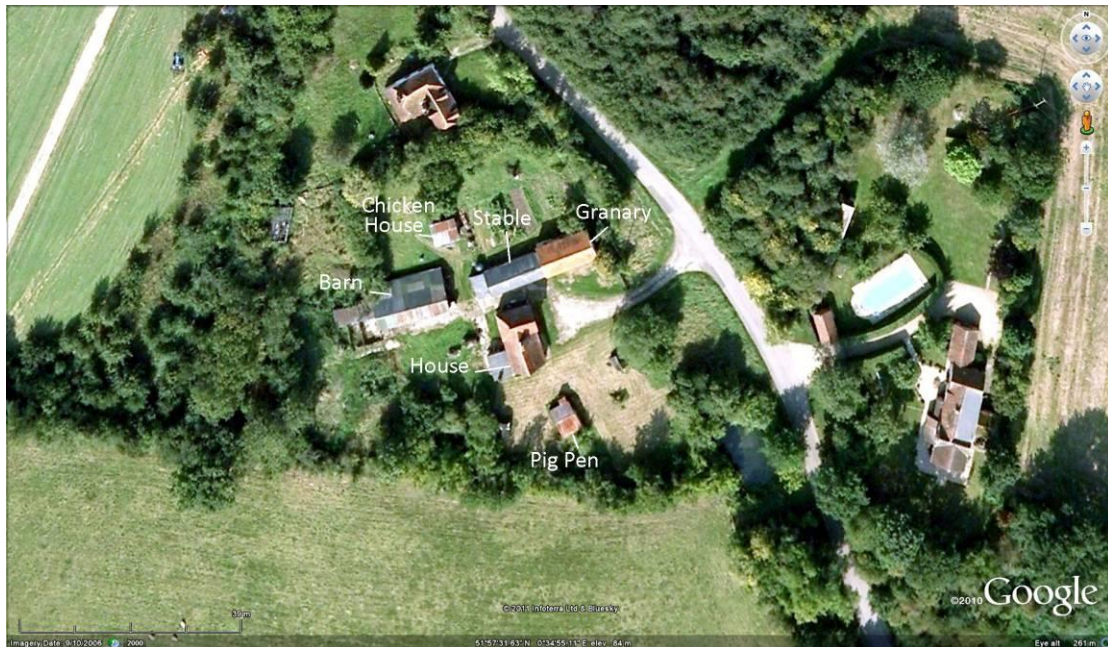


Hill Farm, Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex.
Description and analysis of granary and stables. Surveyed 28 09 2011.



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The location of Hill Farm in relation to Sible Hedingham.

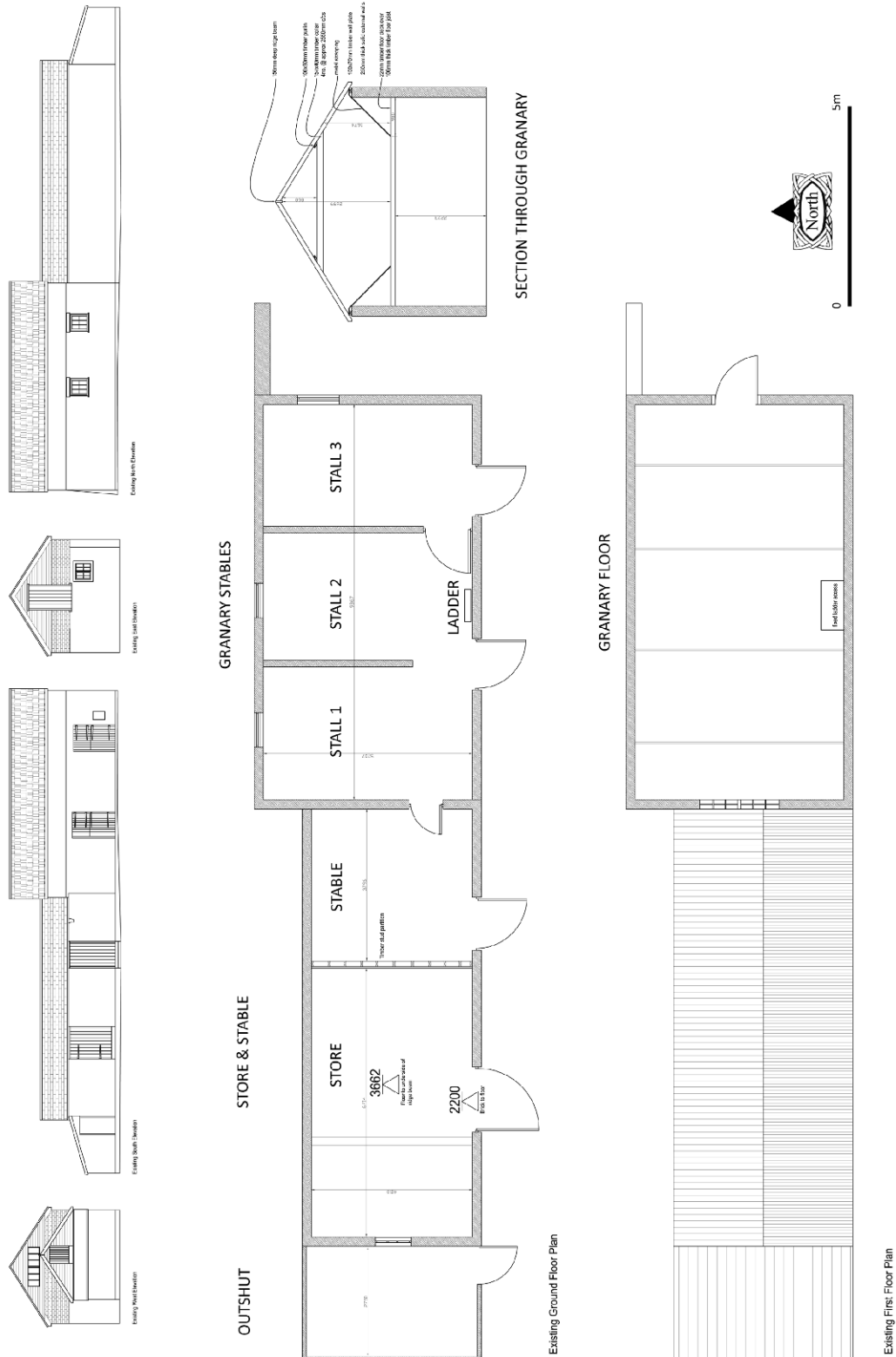


Layout of Hill Farm, Southey Green naming the current buildings.

Location

Hill Farm is located on the west side of the road passing through Southey Green, near Sible Hedingham. TL774792098. The original C15th century timber-framed house sits in the middle of a large plot away from the road which itself follows the course of the historic greenway.

The buildings under study form a range E-W to the NE of the house and comprise a two storey C19th granary, stables and an EC20th store. There is also a makeshift C20th lean-to.



Surveyed drawings of the buildings to be converted.

Description - Granary Stables - External



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Oblique view of the south elevation of the Granary.

Southern Elevation

The Granary presents its main facade to the south into the farmyard. The lower storey is built of brick with a thick rendering of concrete with two reinforced concrete lintels over the stable doorways. The concrete extends around the eastern end of the building and represent a C20th remodelling of the lower wall.



Loose brick from which the granary is made.

Above, there is exposed brickwork composed of red 65x110x225mm hard bricks with smooth, creased faces, sharp arrises set in hard white lime mortar in Flemish bond. A loose brick found in the garden shows they have broad shallow frogs but no makers stamp. The brickwork has queen closers at the quoins and all the visible openings. There is a section of repointed brickwork above the east stable door but no evidence of a window.



The building was refurbished in the LC20th.

The doors are LC20th split stable doors made of tongue and grooved softwood with gate and ledger construction with mild steel furniture and reversible hinges. The rainwater goods are grey plastic. The clay roof tiles are EC20th and inside it can be seen the roof was stripped in the LC20th and relaid. The barge boards appear recent as does the timber soffit which is a C20th feature.



The eastern elevation faces the road.

The Eastern Elevation.

The eastern elevation presents itself to the road and has the gabled end of the Granary. The apex above the brickwork is clad with weather-boards painted white. Inside they can be seen to be circular sawn and fixed to 2x4in studs with French nails and so are C20th.

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There is a central high level softwood door to the grain floor which is made of tongue and grooved vertical boards onto a gate and ledger frame. The fittings are mild steel. Crucially it is French nailed throughout and therefore C20th.

On the ground floor, awkwardly positioned to the north is a horizontally sliding sash window. Inside it can be seen it has been inserted into the wall and is a reused C19th frame now protected with battens on the inside.

There is a large square mild steel pattress plate near the southern edge just below the height of the floor. This retains a mild steel bar which connects to a series of brackets and rods that run the length of the building whose purpose is a little unclear. It seems most likely it is to prevent the floor joists from moving under the weight when the grain floor is loaded.



The rear elevation has been rendered with cement in sympathy with the front.

Northern Elevation

The northern elevation has two timber softwood top-hung 6 pane casements. The latch stays are cast metal and hinges are mild steel. There are asphalt lined pentice boards over the windows. The brickwork has been rendered with grey cement to the height of the pentice boards so it is not possible to tell if the windows have been inserted.

On the NE corner is a large brick buttress made from a variety of red bricks but there are also some Flettons built into it. There must have been a pronounced lean to the east at some point redressed in the C20th. Cracks in the walls have been filled with grey cement.



The western gable end of the Granary.

Western Elevation.

The western elevation is obscured on the ground floor by the Stable built up against it. Above the roof line can be seen weather-boarded studwork similar to the other gable end. There are two top-hung rolled steel casements which are Crittall style windows laid on their sides. Inside the buildings can be seen the solid brick wall which has an internal door between the Granary and the Stable and an external doorway that has been blocked and filled with shuttered concrete in the manner of the front facade that would have lead into the garden.



Hatch from the Granary floor into the Stable. Frame visible from the Granary floor.

There is also a hatch from the Granary floor into the Stable which has been blocked by a sheet of corrugated iron. The fact that it is centred on the Stable and its frame is incorporated into the ridge of the Stable indicates it was put in when the Stable was built. There are no closer bricks.

Description - Internal



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The Granary floor looking E. Note straw chopper from EC20th.

The Granary Floor

The Granary floor is a flat open space with a suspended timber floor boarded with 5in wide tongue and grooved softwood boards except in the NE corner where they are only 90mm wide. There are several hatches for chutes down into the rooms below and an open well for the loft ladder against the south wall. The western end is badly rotted and unsafe but otherwise it is dry and sound. There are various metal rods and bars nailed to the eaves plates that pass down onto the principal joists to support the floor. Typically a load of grain would weigh 30 tons.



Grain floor hatches into stalls below. The Bentall Straw Chopper

The room is devoid of fixings except the ladder. There is a 'CDC Bentalls' straw chopper (or chaff cutter). These hand driven machines were still being used regularly up into the 1960's for cutting straw down for litter or animal feed. The cast iron frame is secured with hex head bolts dating it to the C20th.



Clasped side purlin roof made of machined softwood.

Roof Structure

The roof is a simple clasped side purlin construction made of machined soft wood all cut on an inch module. The rafters are 2x4in set at 2 in centres The four collared rafters are 3x4in and the collars are lapped and French nailed and there are gussets at the apex.

The purlins are 2x4in and the plain scarf is bolted and French nailed. The lower half of the roof is clad with plain 7in circular sawn boards. The north side has been rebattened with LC20th 30x50mm softwood marked 'DEM 226' in blue crayon. The few carpenter's marks are all pencil lines and in general indicate battens or struts tacked to the roof that have been since removed.

The tiles are EC20th clay nibbed tiles quite commonly seen in the village of Sible Hedingham.

The Granary Stables.

The Stables in the bottom of the granary is divided into three stall. Stall 1 and 2 (from the W) have been laid with dark blue 110mm square engineering bricks that are commonly seen in horse stall of the C19th and C20th. The margins and cross-passage along the front of the building are laid with white, red and purple 45x??x230mm paviers set on edge.

Stall 3 is laid entirely with these bricks and has been patch repaired with concrete. It is likely that the blue cobble style bricks were a later addition. The paviers are laid to form gulleys venting through the front wall.

It is known the building was used as a pig sty in the C20th and there are floor level troughs and 'Fordham Selfill' water dispensers originally fed by galvanised steel pipes.



Stall 1 - note the blocked off doorway in the NW corner.



Stall 1. Looking SE. The spine beam has been reused and the mortices are pencil marked.

Stall one has few features but here the brick wall is exposed and seen to be of the same bricks as the rest of the building. There is an inserted doorway into the Stable with an EC20th door (see Stable description). There are three C20th harness trees made of sawn softwood, French nailed together. The 6x7in axial joist is reused and has pencil marked redundant mortices. A LC20th mild steel tie, matching the tie-rods, secures the western end.

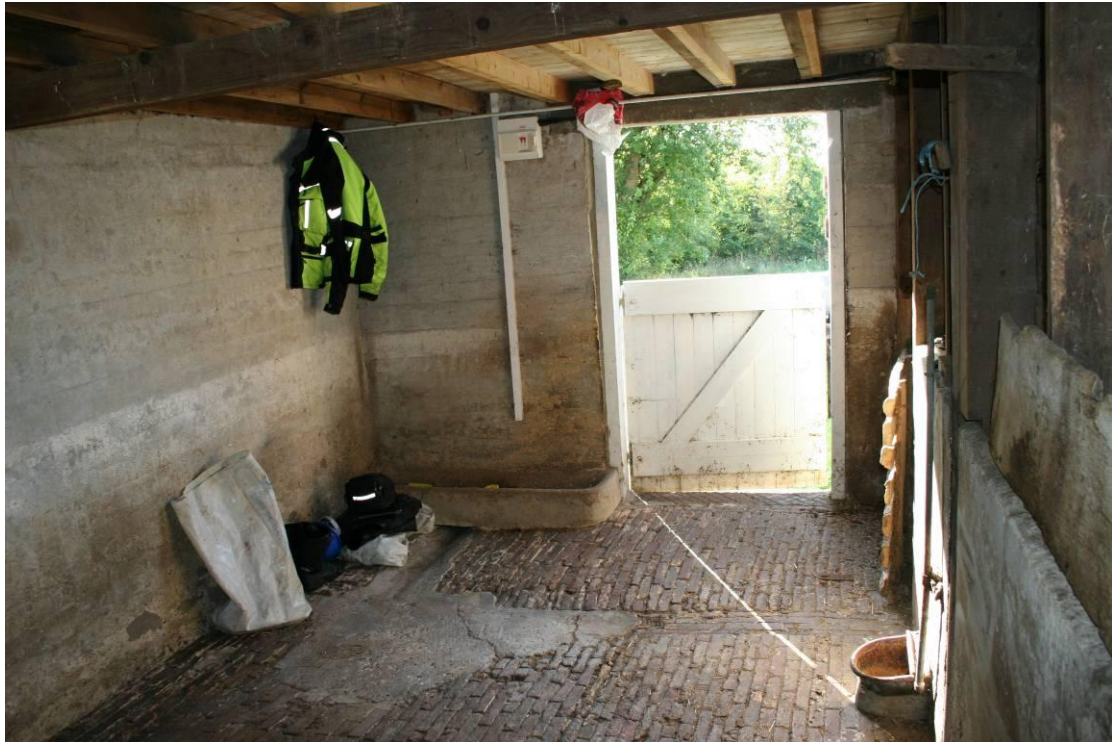


Stall 2 looking E. The partitions are rendered brickwork. Central post supports ceiling.



Stall 2 looking NW. Note grain chute at rear and pig trough.

Stall 2 retains a pig trough and water tray and there are two more C20th harness trees on the south wall. In the NW corner is part of a timber grain chute just below one of the trap doors in the granary floor. The partitions are made of 2x4in softwood studs French nailed to circular sawn weatherboards. The lower sections are cement rendered brickwork.



Stall 3 looking S. Concrete pig trough and Fordham Selfill water dispenser.



Stall 3. The spine beam wasn't quite long enough so it was nailed to another.

Stall 3 was used as a pig sty into the LC20th and it is known the pig used to look over the lower stable door. He was able to do this because the stall wasn't cleaned out leaving a stain almost to the height of the brick partition. The reused spine beam was not long enough for the building so it has been double up and nailed to a joist made of machined softwood.

The Store and Stable - External Description.

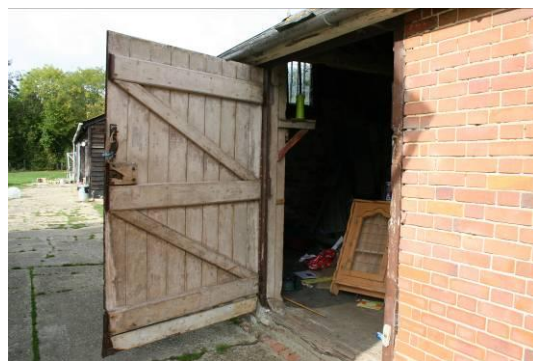


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The Store and Stable is a single building divided with a rough studwork partition.

South Elevation.

The southern elevation faces the farmhouse and like the Granary is the working side of the building - there is no rear access. The building is divided internally by a studwork partition to create a stable to the east and a large workshop or store to the west. The Stable has C20th split stable doors in poor condition hung on mild steel reversible hinges. The tongue and grooved boards are French nailed to horizontal ledgers.



The Stable and Store doors are both C20th in character.

The Store has a 58in wide tongue and grooved, gate and ledger, softwood, French nailed door with mild steel fittings and a wood-stock lock box with a decayed mild steel lock. The machined door frame is of particular interest because it has 'Built June July 1904' written on it in pencil. At the eastern end there is a square patch of black paint on the wall denoting where a water tank used to stand to supply the animal water dispensers.



The rear of the building has no features.

North Elevation

The rear of the building has no windows or doorways. The roof is clad with 12x24in grey slates and the rainwater goods are grey plastic. The brickwork at the western end is disrupted near the quoins and although the wall is properly closed it looks as if originally the building was open or had a timber-framed wall at the western end.



The western elevation of the Store and the Outshot.



Unusual 'homemade' window with overlapping glass panes greenhouse style.

West Elevation

The western elevation is largely obscured by the tin shack that is the Outshut. The lower wall, inside the Outshut has the exposed brick wall. Here and inside the Store it can be seen the bricks are reused with a random pattern of red and whitewashed bricks. This also explains the scars on both the end corners.

The upper wall is weather boarded with C20th French nailed band and circular sawn boards. There is a strange central window with full height mullions and no horizontal muntins. The window is glazed with strips of overlapping glass set in putty like a greenhouse. The shape of the opening suggests there was previously a hatch door here.

The roof has barge boards and a small simple pendant finial very much C20th in style.

Description - Store and Stable - Internal.

Although the Stable is a separate room from the Store it would be difficult to say with certainty when it came into being. This is because the body of the building is in solid brickwork while the internal partition is a rather shoddy timber-frame made from reused timbers nailed together in an unorthodox way.

The studs have been halved and nailed against the west side of the tie-beam (see photo following) rather than skew nailed or set into rebates as one might expect of C19th work. The conclusion must be that the design is EC20th, borne of necessity rather than design.

The tie-beam is from a very old building having redundant mortices, a wattle groove and a notched lap joint with refined entry for a missing brace. The weatherboards are bandsawn.



The partition between the Stable and the Store. EC20th interrupted studwork.



Interrupted studs pass behind the tie-beam. Note the notched lap joint near the central post.



The Stable has a brick pavior floor. The doorway is inserted and C20th. Looking SE.

The Stable has a brick pavior floor very similar to Stall 3 of the Granary Stable but the bricks are larger at 50x11x210mm and there are no drainage gulleys. The room is connected to Stall 1 through an inserted doorway. The door is tongue and grooved softwood with horizontal ledgers, all French nailed with mild steel fittings and strap hinges. The eastern side has been plated with a galvanised iron sheet to prevent the animals from destroying it.

The walls have been whitewashed and lower down the brickwork has been rubbed to remove it by the animals kept inside.



The timber partition wall visible in the Store. Note also the reused tie-beam. Looking E.



Inside the Store looking W. Machined timber roof. Reused bricks in the end wall.

The Store is a featureless room with a concrete floor. The walls were lined with an asphalt membrane which remains fixed to the north wall. Apparently this was to contain grain in large bins against the walls. There is a homemade shelf along the SW wall French nailed to the doorframe with the date 1973 written on it and the wall.



Pulley wheel and bevel drive hung in the roof.

At the eastern end of the Store there is a wooden pulley wheel with a bevel drive suspended from the rafters on two French nailed battens. The pulley appears to be a reused nave from the centre of a cartwheel with the spokes sawn off.



Roof structure in the Stable. Looking W.



Roof structure in the Store. Looking NE.

Roof Structure

The roof is a machine softwood side purlin design with a single lapped and nailed collar in the centre of the Store. The purlins are lodged in the end walls and the partition. The 2x4in rafters are set at 17in centres and the principal rafter is 3x4in. The tie-beams are reused ancient timbers. All the joints are pencil marked.



Southern elevation of the Outshut. Note donkey shoe over the door.



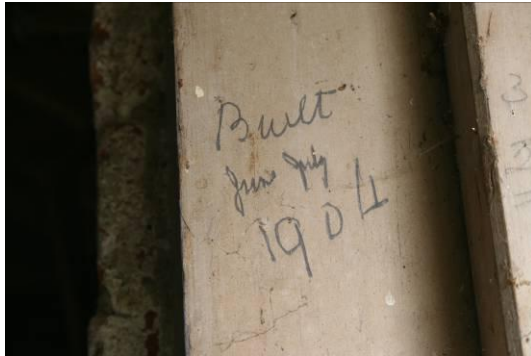
The interior is as inspiring as the exterior. Currently used as a cat's den.

The Outshut

The Outshut is a makeshift shelter made of machined softwood clad with corrugated iron sheeting. The floor is concrete. The current door is a C20th softwood vertically boarded laedger door fastened with French nail and with C20th mild steel fittings. The frame indicates there once was split stable doors and nailed to the frame is a donkey horseshoe which may explain its original purpose. Now it is home to the farm cats.

Carpentry and Timber Marks, Apotropaic Marks and Graffiti

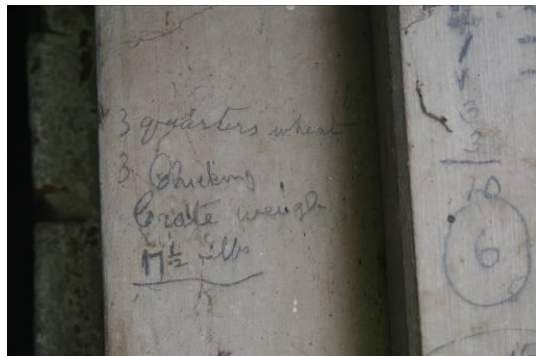
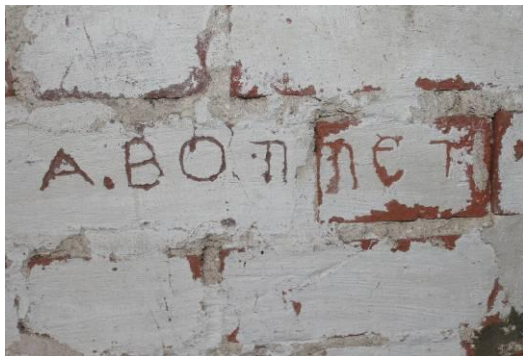
This section covers all the marks found in the buildings of which there are many. All appear to be EC20th or later, particularly from 1904 and 1973. There are no carpenter's marks.



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Pencil marks for the date of the building and the conversion to a LC20th grain store?

The two most important pieces of graffiti are in the Store. Written in pencil on the door frame is 'Built June July 1904'. Scratched on the wall beneath the shelf is '1973'. It is most likely these date the erection of the building and later the conversion to a grain store by lining it with asphalt sheets. A. Bonnet may have done this work.



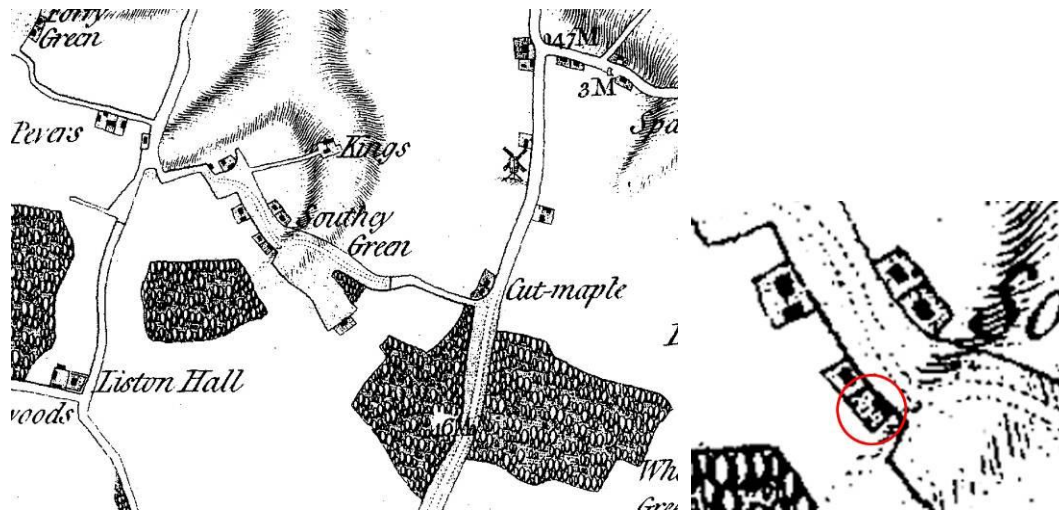
A. Bonnet scratched through the white wash. Pencil list shows wheat and chickens



Tally marks with a date of 1978. Calculations show crop yields written for or by Bob Wright.

The graffiti is from two distinct periods. The earlier lists dating from 1904 onwards give details of produce such as '3 quarters wheat - 3 chickens - Crate weigh 17 1/2 lbs' and '1 sack of oats - 1 bus(hel) of Barley - 3 bus of peas - 3 bus of' The latter is either from or for 'Bob Wright. The more modern is largely tally marks with the date 3/8/1973 marked twice.

Topographical Survey from Maps



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1777 Chapman and Andre's Map of Essex

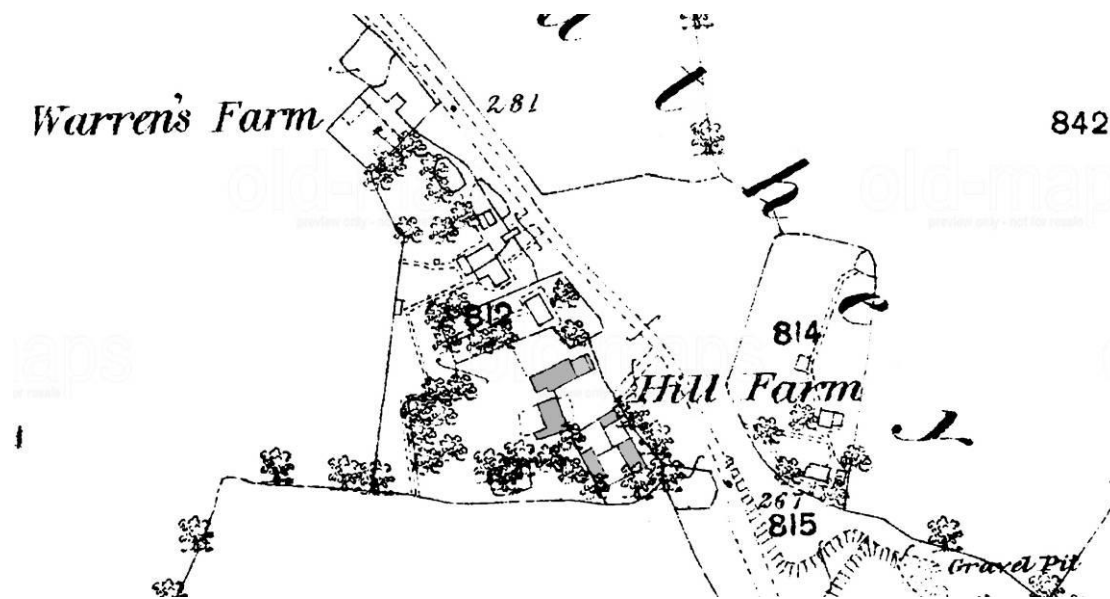
In 1777 Southey Green is thriving with five properties edging the greenway. It is only by comparing with later maps that Hill Farm can be identified. Only the house appears to be pictured.



1840 Tithe Award Map for Sible Hedingham.

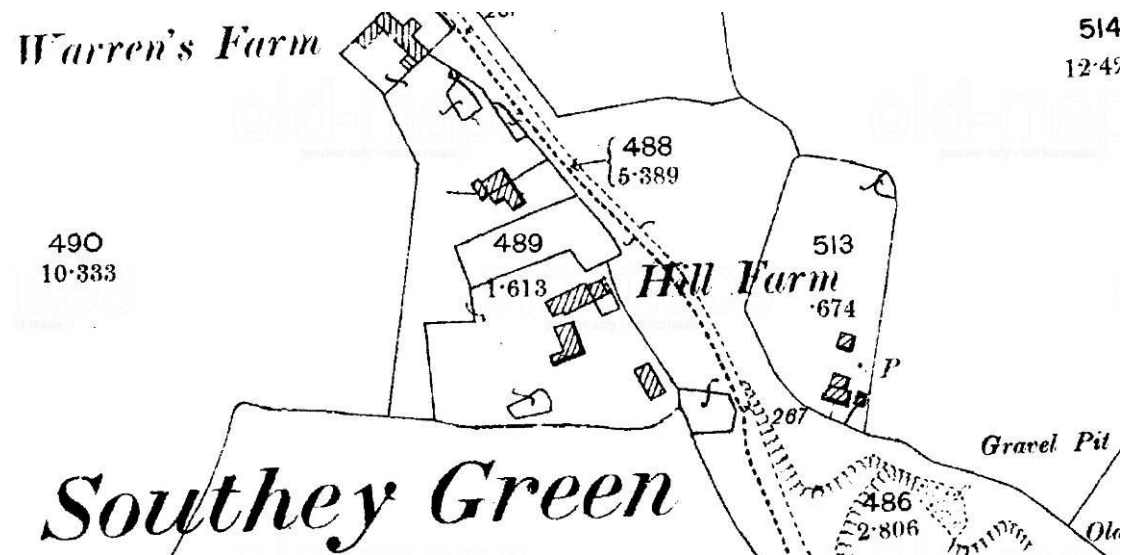
By the time of the 1840 Tithe Award the other roadside properties have vanished and a new copse (Light Foot Wood) grown up. Hill Farm is the sole remaining property and is identified as Plot 863 Brick Yard belonging to Daniel Smith and occupied by John Parish who is listed in White's Directory of Essex for 1848 as a Brick and Tile Maker. Only the house is shown and as a plain rectangle. There is another small building away from the road.

By 1863 White's Directory of Essex lists William Corder as the 'brick and tile maker, Southey Green and it is very likely he took on the business on the same site.



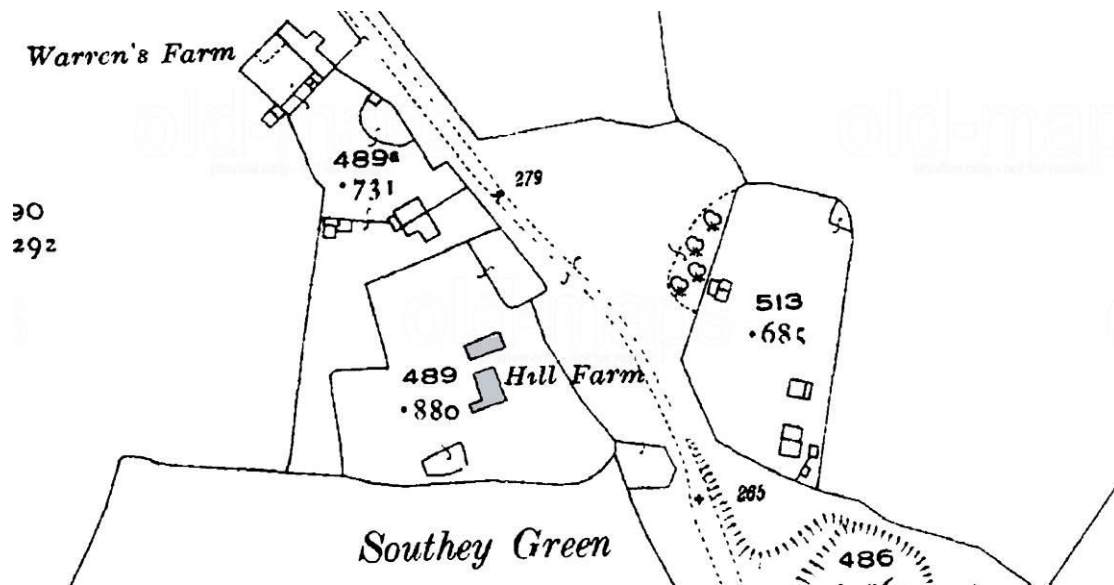
1876 First Edition OS Map

In 1876 there are buildings on the footprint of the current ones but their disposition is different. The space occupied by the Granary today has a narrower footprint than that of the Store which is the reverse of the current buildings. These are most likely predecessors of the range today. There are also fenced yards and open buildings to the SE of the house. The house has a rear outshot on the SW corner. The Post Office Directory of 1874 lists William and John Corder as brickmakers.



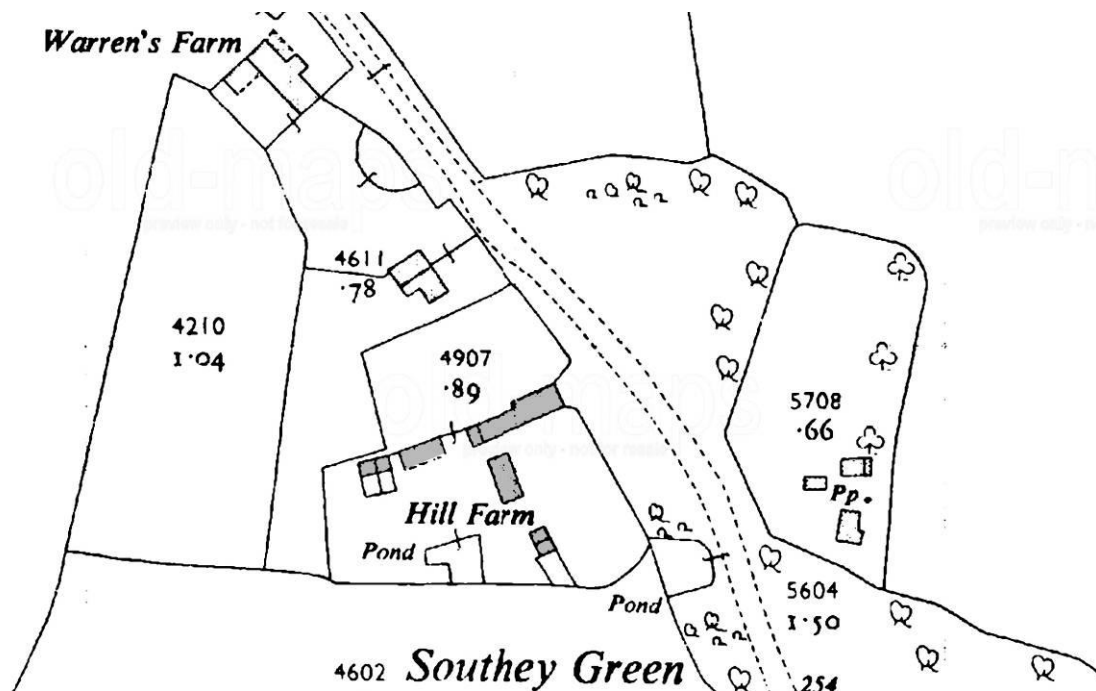
1897 Second Edition OS Map

By 1896 the fenced farmyard has been removed leaving only one building as big as the house (perhaps a barn) near the road. There is now a corral outside the building corresponding to the Granary and a little outshot on the eastern end is shown as open to the east.



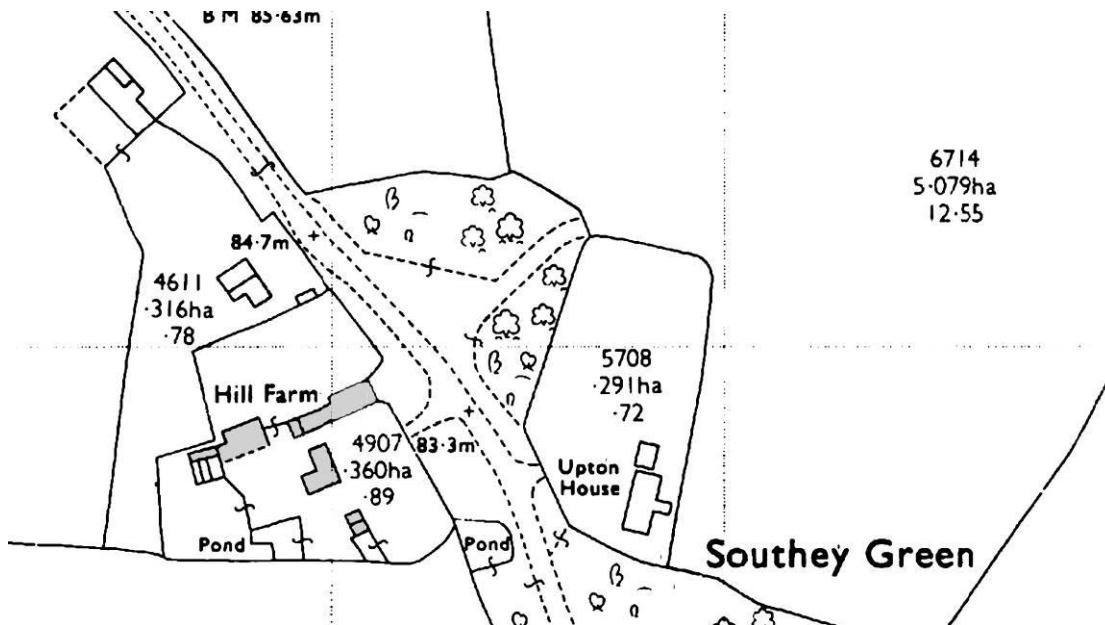
1923 OS Map

In 1923 the OS shows no building at all in the place of the Granary while the other building could represent the Store. The barn sized building near the road has been removed. Although still called Hill Farm there are no farm buildings.



1954 OS Map

In 1954 the site plan is much the same as today in regards to the range of buildings. The house has lost its rear extension and there is an open shelter to the east along with small buildings with pens outside. That to the south still exists and was a stable (still containing a manger) later used to house pigs. (Owner pers.comm).

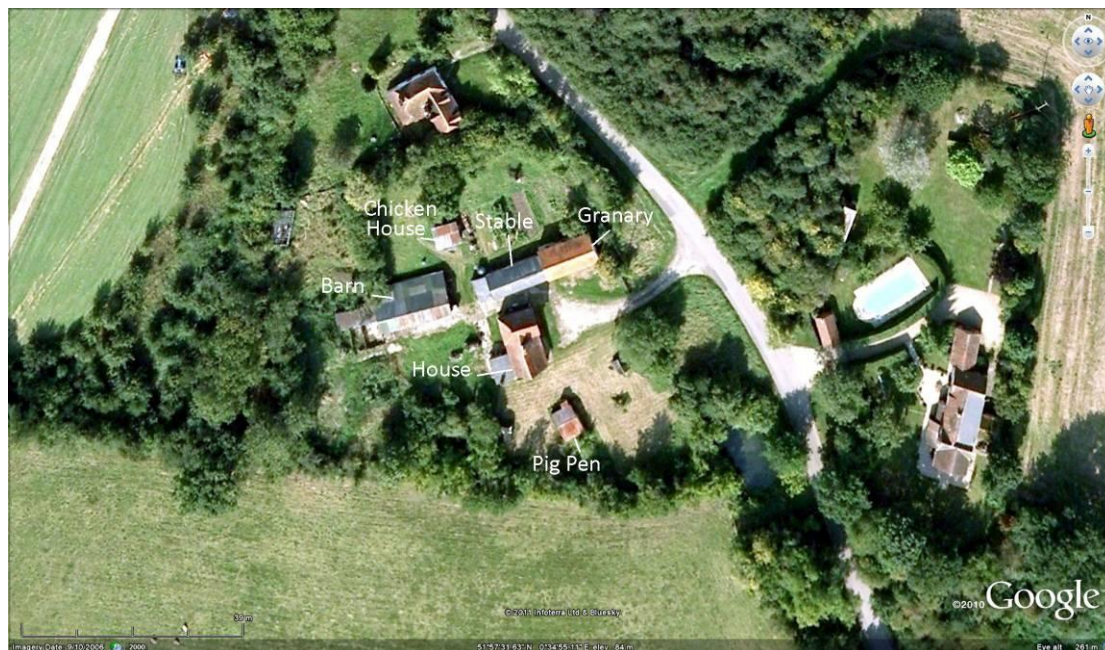


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1969-71 OS Map

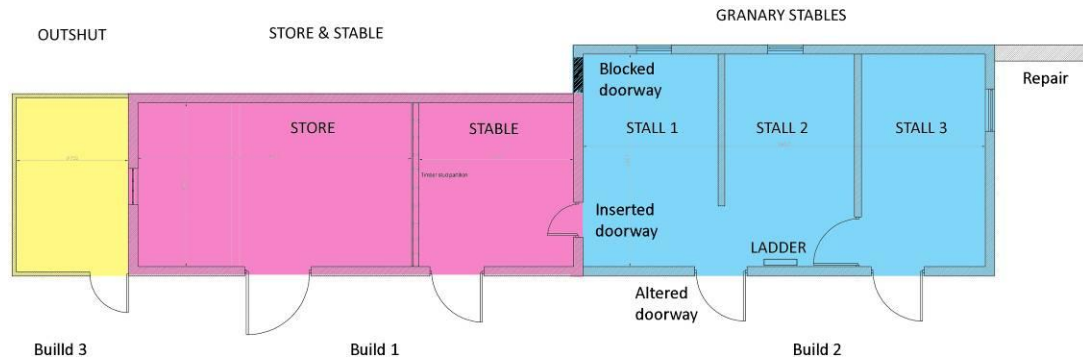
By 1971 the rear of the house has been extended and the open shelter made larger. The range is shown as it is today. Upton house has appeared across the green.



Google Earth 2006

Comparing the previous maps with the Google Earth aerial photo of 2006 gives life to the buildings.

Phasing and Discussion



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The order of build and subsequent changes.

Phase 1 - EC20th.

There is no fabric or construction detail that could place the original erection date of the Store much before the 1904 date written on the door-frame of the store. It may be supposed that the Store was built first and then the Granary but the brickwork and particularly the mortar is so similar in both buildings it would be expected they must have been built very close together. The brickwork in the Store is fully closed on all quoins but unfortunately the join with the Granary is masked by cement.

The brick floors are also very similar in pattern although the bricks in the Store Stable are of a different size. The roofs are of a similar pattern and all made of 2x4in machined softwood rafters. All the joints are pencil marked - a sure sign of a LC19th or C20th construction.

There is a peculiar problem with the historic mapping in that the 1923 OS map does not show the Granary. It may seem very unlikely that a granary and stables would be built in this style as late as this when the automobile would be taking precedence. Also by now the availability of cheap, good quality timber would mean that the reuse of old timbers has fallen by the wayside. The Granary has a reused axial floor joist that is not quite long enough to do the job. Farmers were traditionally mean but this would be stretching it.

However, in 1924, Rippers, a large carpentry company, built a huge number of good quality workers houses in and around Sible Hedingham. These buildings, largely of cinder block and Flettons, have good quality softwood roofs of similar design to the Granary. Notably they had steel reinforced lintels over the windows and doors just as in the Granary Stables. They also had machine made interlocking nib tiles of the same type.

Having lived in one of these houses for 15 years the author concludes that the Granary *was* built after 1923 using similar materials and techniques. Small scale Granaries were still in use up until the late 1960's after which the safe loaded weight became smaller than that of a single lorry and they went out of use. One good recorded example of this is at Bentfield Bury Farm where the safe weight of the floor was only 30 tons.

Map evidence shows the Outshut was built between 1923 and 1954.

Of interest are the names associated with the site. John Parish and William and John Corder were Victorian brickmakers living and working at Hill Farm, formerly known simply as the Brick Yard (Tithe Award 1848). Sible Hedingham has a strong tradition of brick and tile making and was one of the foremost centres of local production until the blackouts of the Second World War ended most of the manufacturing. Today only the Bulmer Brick and Tile Works remains solely because it had a fully covered kiln which is still in use.

Adrian Corder-Birch, a direct descendent of the Corder family has written 'A Pictorial History of Sible Hedingham' which gives a good insight into life in the village at the turn of the C20th and some detail on the brick and tile industry. Page 74 shows two photographs of the Brick and Tile Works at Southey Green just before the First World War and in 1937.

Hill Farm did not become a farm until the later part of the C19th and even then it appears to be more of a small holding than a proper farm. It had no large thrashing barn like that of Warren's Farm just to the north and the farmyard is penned for animals.

In the later C20th pigs were kept in the stables and the doors destroyed as a result. Apparently it was a common sight to see the pig leaning on the half door looking out. The reason it could do this is because it was living in a mire 3 feet deep!

Significance

It is unusual to record a site where the buildings have little or no significance simply because they are modern. The buildings occupy a footprint which can be traced back to between 1840 and 1876 and has varied ever since. The buildings are utilitarian agricultural units which have long outlived their original purpose. Converting them to living space would restore their fabric, encourage preservation and re-energise them.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Mr and Mrs Mallet, the owner of Hill Farm for engaging me through their agent Mr David Snaith for whom I also thank for the architectural drawings. I also acknowledge Maria Medlycott of Essex County Council HEM Team and Natalie Drewett of ECC Historic Buildings for their involvement in the project.

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ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD/ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Hill Farm, Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex.	
Parish: Sible Hedingham	District: Braintree
NGR: TL774792098	Site Code: SFHF11
Type of Work: Historic Building Recording	Site Director/Team: Barry Hillman-Crouch
Date of Work: 28 09 2011	Size of Area Investigated: 10x60m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: N/A	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related EHER Nos:
Final Report: Hill Farm, Southey Green, Sible Hedingham, Essex. Description and analysis of granary and stables. Surveyed 28 09 2011. Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	
Periods Represented: C20th	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: 1. Store used as a grain processing house built in 1904 - pencilled date on door frame borne out by map evidence and construction details. 2. Granary with three stables below built after 1923 using local bricks, concrete lintels and machine made roof-tiles in the style of Rippers houses built commencing 1924. Buildings occupy footprint of former agricultural buildings associated with the formation of the farm in the LC19th. Site was previously a residence for local brick making magnates William and John Corder.	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	Date of Summary: 25 10 2011.

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