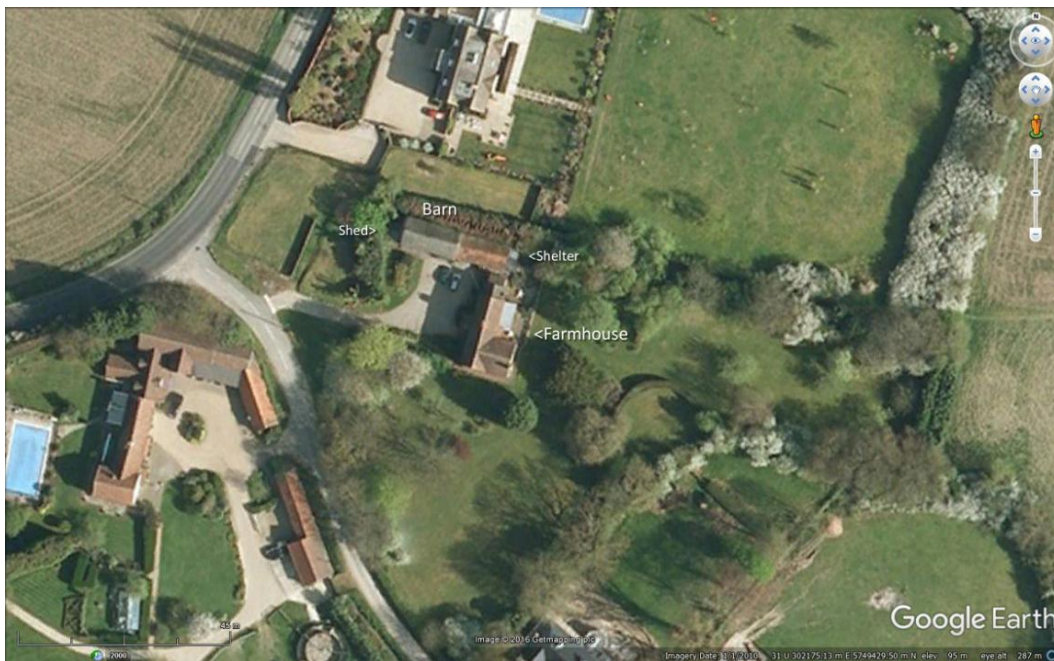


Thorley Houses Farm, Thorley Lane West, Thorley, Hertfordshire CM23 4BN.
Recording and analysis of the thatched barn. Surveyed 05 07 2017.



2017 Google earth. Location of Thorley Houses Farm west of Thorley.



2017 Google earth. Detail of the site showing the building under study.

Location

Planning Ref 3/16/1457/HH

Thorley Houses Farm, Thorley Lane West, Thorley, Hertfordshire CM23 4BN. The Barn forms part of a range of farm buildings west of the farmhouse centred on TL4654420153.

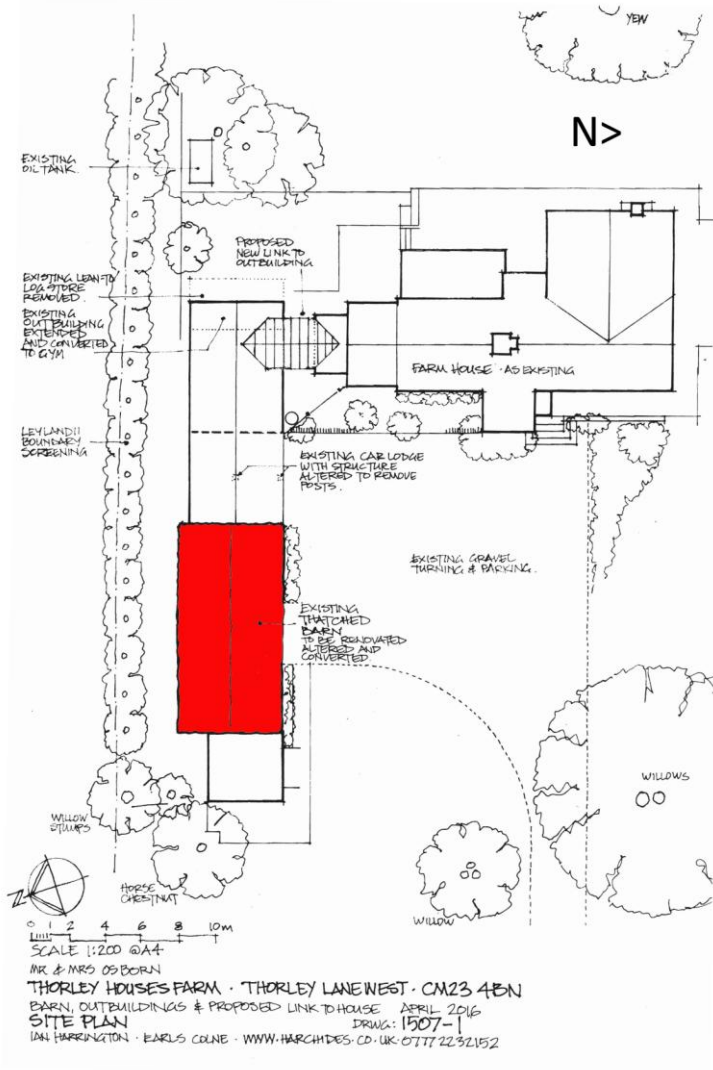


SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Thorley Houses Farm, Thorley Lane West, Thorley, Herts. CM23 4BN.	
Parish: Thorley	District: Bishops Stortford
NGR: TL4654420153	Site Code: N/A
Type of Work: Historic Building Recording	Site Director/Team: Barry Hillman-Crouch
Date of Work: 05 07 2017	Size of Area Investigated: 10x20m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: N/A	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related EHER Nos:
Final Report: Thorley Houses Farm, Thorley Lane West, Thorley, Hertfordshire CM23 4BN. Recording and analysis of the thatched barn. Surveyed 05 07 2017. Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	
Periods Represented: C18th - C20th	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>The elm timber-framed building is of three bays with a thatched roof that was last replaced in 1990.</p> <p>The frame of the roof and the back and end walls, the tie-beams and the bricks in the plinths all appear original to the LC18th. The building is a simple, vernacular frame, designed as a store or stables. It is not big enough to be deemed a barn. The historic mapping shows that the real Essex plan barn was immediately to the west.</p> <p>The primary braced, nailed interrupted studwork, the queen post roof and waney tie-beams are all common features of C18th buildings. The proliferation and style of the ironwork securing the joints, in the place of jowled posts indicates a date at the end of the century. The use of forelock bolts in the top-plates rather than threaded bolts which were the norm after C.1800 would strongly suggest it was built in the last 20 years of the C18th.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	Date of Summary: 10 08 2017.

Listing

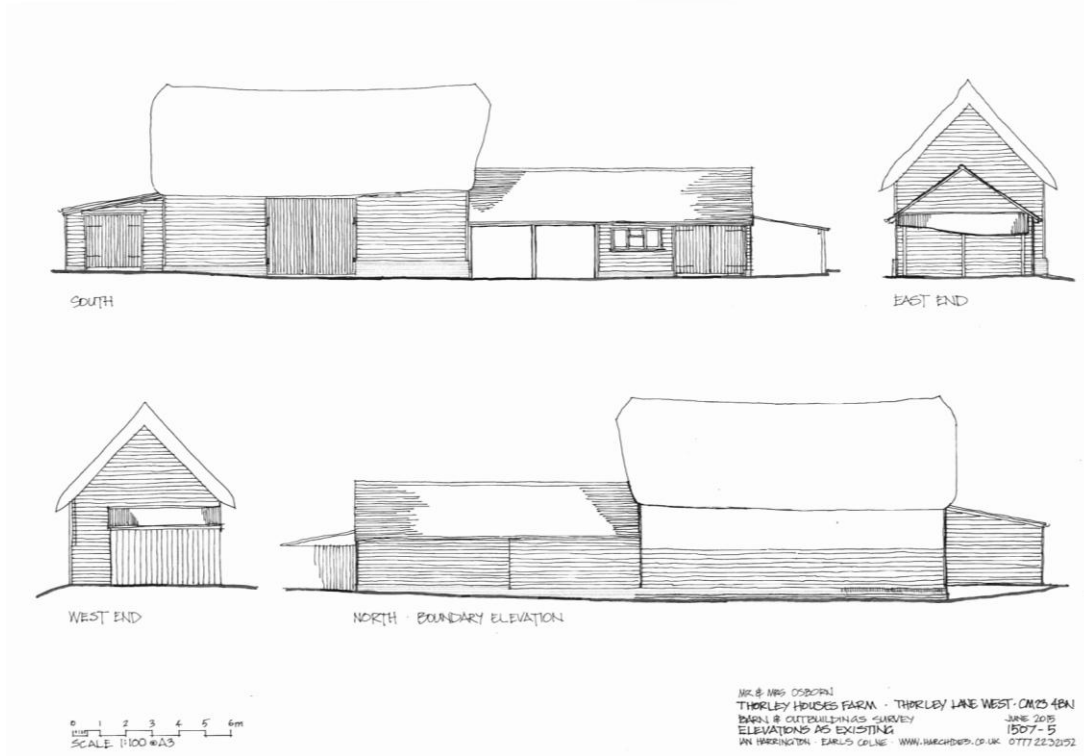
The Barn is included in the Listing for the House as Group Value II. *Weather-boarded and thatched barn to north west of house. Included for group value.* The House is Listed as Grade II and this is presented in Appendix 1.



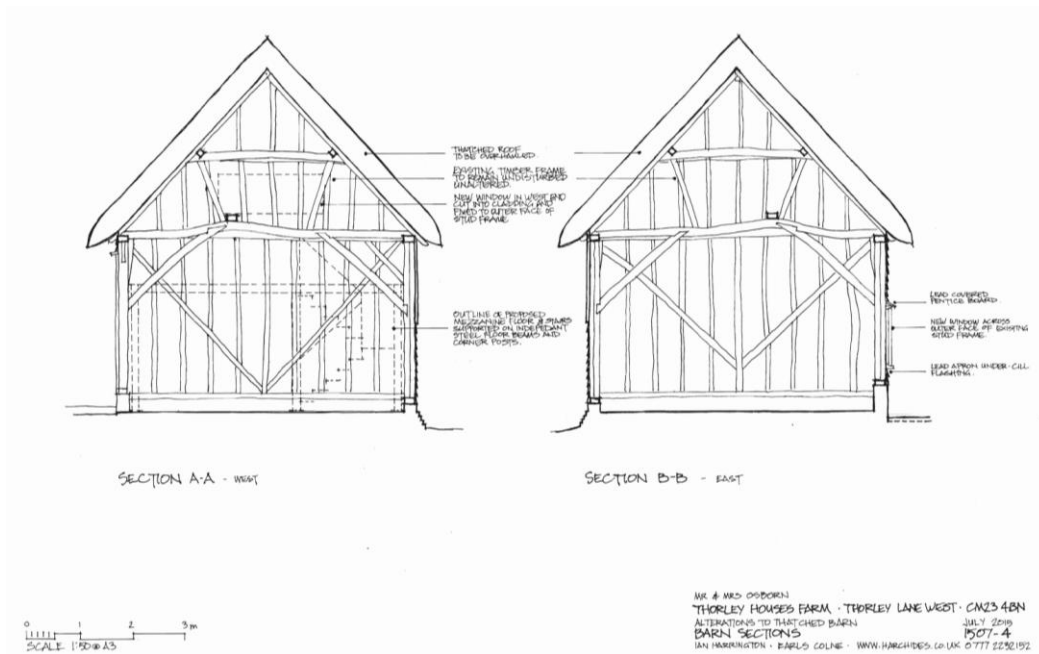
2016. Location of the Barn relative to the Farmhouse. Ian Harrington.

Planning Background

A planning application 3/16/1457/HH was accepted for the erection of a glazed link extension, an extension to an existing workshop, and the conversion of an existing barn to habitable accommodation. Given the impact of the proposed works upon the historic integrity of the buildings, a full archaeological condition was attached to the planning consent.



2016. Elevations of the barn and accompanying buildings. Ian Harrington.



2016. Sections through the Barn. Ian Harrington.

Scope of this Report

The report adheres to Historic England Level 3 as outlined in Historic England. Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice. 2016. Page 22.

Description – External



The Barn relative to the Farmhouse. Looking E.



The southern elevation.

Southern Elevation

The timber-framed Barn is of three bays with a thatched roof that was last replaced in 1990. The present owner met the thatcher who explained that he sat on the roof as John Major was made Prime Minister. It is also evident from inside that most of the machined softwood frame and all the weatherboarding on this side is of the same repair job.

The frame stands on a brick plinth of red 65x11x225mm bricks with long shallow frogs set in beige sandy lime mortar in English Bond. The exception is the eastern plinth which is a separate structure of 50x110x225mm Tudor style bricks undoubtedly robbed from the House.



The main doors are LC20th.



The LC29th main doors are simply constructed.

The main doors are simple frames skinned with corrugated iron sheets. The frame has been strengthened with bandsawn brackets because the original door jambs have been removed to widen the opening. Again 1990 is a likely time for this alteration.



The western elevation.



The western elevation inside the Shed.

Western Elevation

The western elevation is clad with LC20th weather-boards fastened with French nails. A number of repairs are evident and there is shadow formed by hot tar to show a smaller building was once adjacent. Hot tarring of timber buildings only ceased in the 1960's due to health and safety legislation.



The northern elevation is obscured by trees.



The northern elevation looking E.

Northern Elevation

The northern elevation is clad with bandsawn C20th weather-boards to about 6 feet high. Above is a section of hard cement render on EML. However, looking inside large sections of lath and daub and haired plaster render still remains in-situ in very poor condition.



The eastern elevation. The exposed section has LC20th boards clearly bandsawn.



The eastern elevation inside the Shelter.

Eastern Elevation

The eastern elevation retains some MC19th circular sawn weather-boards fixed with wrought iron nails. The adjacent structure is LC20th but it can be seen the boards were always undercover except where they have been tarred.



Looking at the eastern elevation through the recent structure.



Detail of the weather-boards showing the circular saw marks and wrought iron nails.

Description – Internal



Looking W inside the Barn.



Looking E inside the Barn.

The Barn has three bays composed of primary braced nailed interrupted studwork, pitsawn from elm with some reused oak and elm timbers. The tie-beams are halved waney trees.



Detail of the eastern wall.



Detail of the NE corner post. Note the applied jowl piece.

The primary braces are cut very straight except for one in the eastern wall which is supported by an added jowl piece at the post head. Most of principal posts have no jowls and the joints are held with LC18th style wrought iron ties. The SW corner post is a reused post with swept jowl.



Detail of the principal post in Truss 2 (from W).

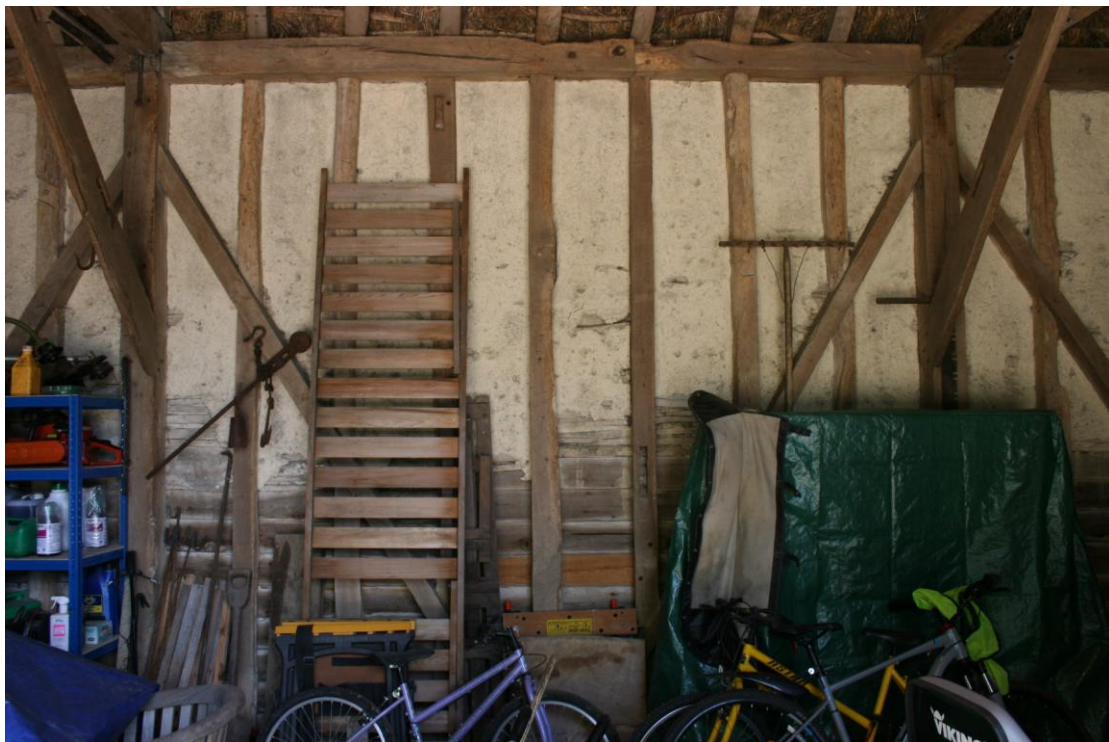


Detail of the forelocked scarf joint.

The principal posts are of variable sections, 8x7in, 5.5x6.5in, 6x6.6in and 6x6in. The studs vary more so but are cut on a 3in module. The face halved and bladed scarves are secured with forelock bolts which are original (not repairs) dating the joints to the LC18th.



Detail of the north wall showing the layers of EML and lath and daub.



Large areas of lath and daub remain but are very friable. Central bay looking N.

The northern wall was originally rendered with horizontal lath and daub and later repaired with haired plaster. This format is very common in C.1800 farm buildings into the C19th.

Roof Structure



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Looking upwards to the SW at the queen post roof.



Detail of the thatch over the central bay/ Looking S.



The tie beam in Truss 2 (from W).

The roof is a queen post roof with paired elm rafters of near square section of varying size. Some are obviously quarter sawn and retain the bark. The roof is supported on two waney elm tie-beams that appear cut from the same tree. They are morticed for spandrels that have been removed and side nailed braces put in their place. The side purlins are supported by collars with queen posts pegged into the tie-beams. The assembly remains complete in Truss 1 (from W) but has been altered in Truss 2 in the 1990 works. Here the pole purlin has been dropped and supported on raking struts birdsmouthed onto the purlin. These are supported on an axial beam rested on the tie-beams.



Bay 1 from the west compared to Bay 2 (central). The riven laths are still fresh.

The thatching is LC20th and was largely done in 1990. However the laths are of different qualities, some being machined softwood and some being riven laths and rods, pointing to an incremental approach to repairs. In particular the central bay has a different character to the end bays where the thatch is darker and so presumably older but not by many years. The split rods and riven laths are still fresh.



The spandrel has been slotted for a hay rack.

Fixtures and Fittings

The Barn retains no historic fixtures or fittings. Of note however are several round ended mortices which would align to support a hayrack. Although termed a barn the building is more likely a stable.



Carpenter's mark denoting 34.



Apotropaic marks on the principal post of Truss 2.

Carpenters Marks, Apotropaic Marks and Graffiti

It is most likely the frame is marked throughout on the outside under the boards. A single stud displays a carpenter's mark XXVIII made with a race knife and must be a reused timber. Truss 2 is marked III but the tie-beam is marked N (9) suggesting reuse. Apotropaic marks representing M (Mary) and VV (Virgins of Virgins) are scratched on the principal post guarding the doorway. These are very common and were revived in the MC19th despite the scientific enlightenment of the age and were being reported in the 1840's as a device by which the 'Cunning Men' made money for blessing the buildings.



LC20th metal work repairs.



Original wrought iron tie.

Pair of forelock bolts securing the scarf joint.

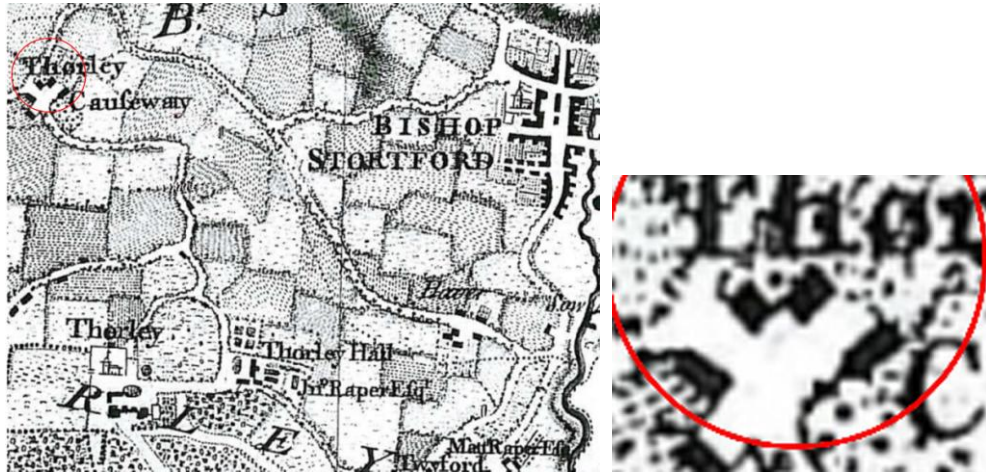
Metalwork Joints and Repairs

The frame was built with wrought iron reinforced joints in the form of L-ties and forelock bolts. The L-ties are placed over the principal posts and alongside the tie-beams to prevent them from pulling out. This was done because the posts have no jowls to form a tenoned joint.

The forelock bolts are in pairs in the scarf joint, with one inserted from inside and the other from outside.

The modern repairs are easily identified as angle iron, threaded rods and milled mild steel strip which has rusted where not painted. Most of the work can be attributed to the 1990 re-thatching.

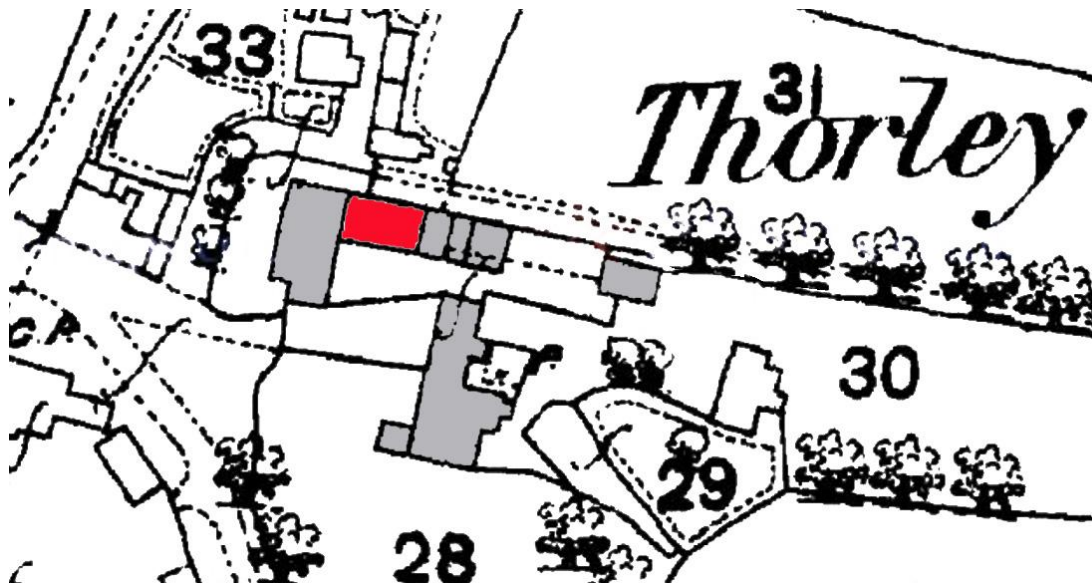
Topographical Survey from Maps



1766 Dury and Andrews. The site is called Thorley Causeway.

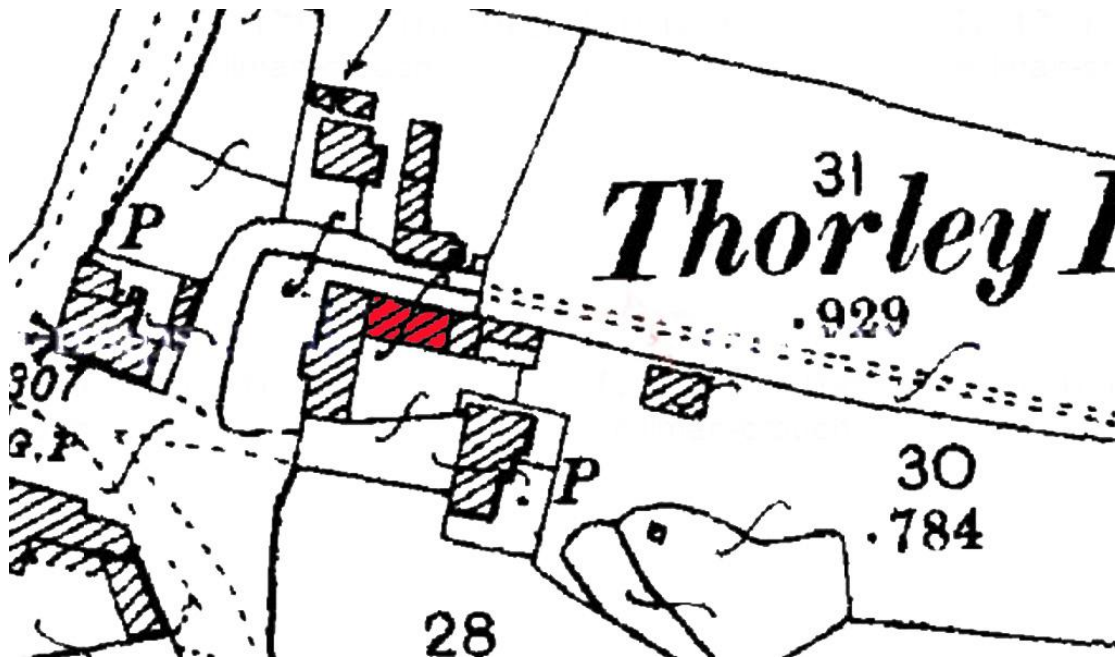


1845 Thorley Tithe Award Map.

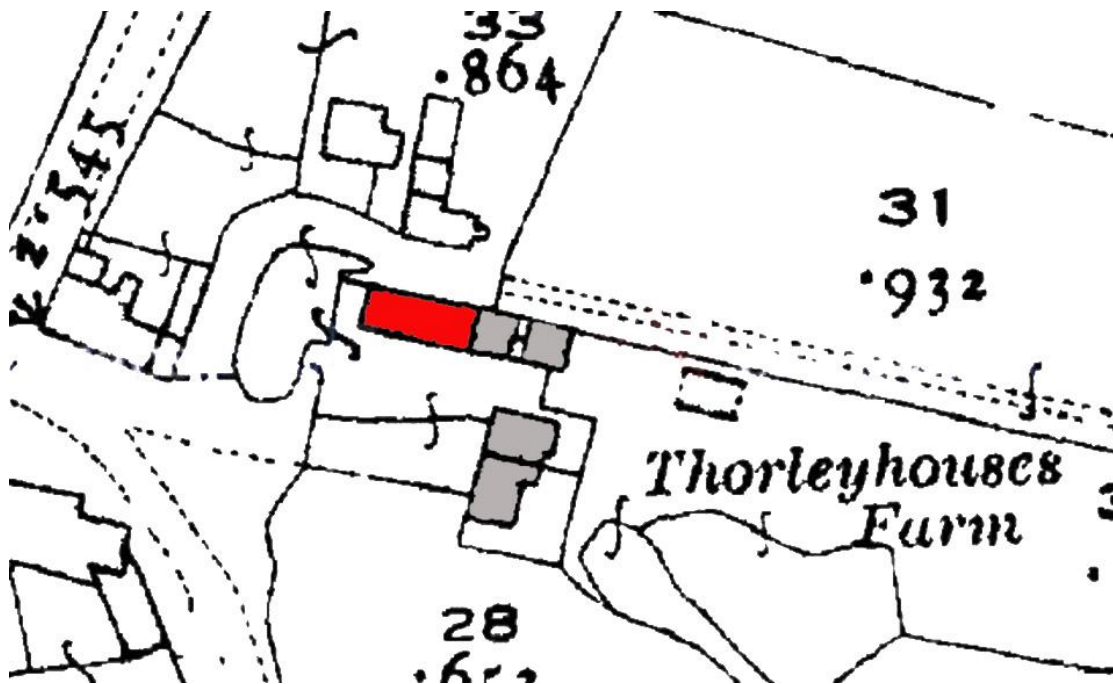


1879 First Edition Ordnance Survey.

The site is shown on the 1766 Dury and Andrews map but only two buildings are visible. They are likely to be the original barn (demolished) and the farmhouse. The 1845 Tithe Award shows the building in its present position surrounded by other farm buildings.

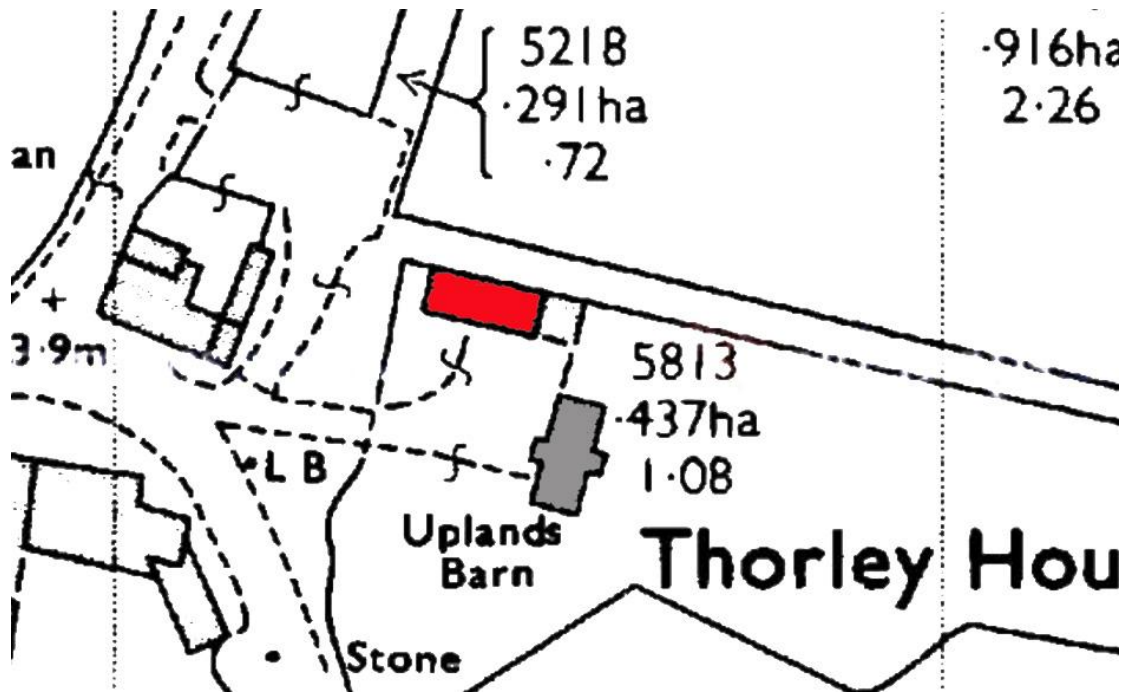


1898 Ordnance Survey.



1921 Ordnance Survey.

The Ordnance Survey consistently plots a building on the site of the Barn. It can be seen that most of the other farm buildings were demolished or replaced between 1898 and 1921.



1975 Ordnance Survey.

By 1975, only the building on the site of the Barn remains of the original farmyard.



2017 Google earth.

Phasing and Discussion

Phase 2. LC18th. 1780-1800. Original build.

The frame of the roof and the back and end walls, the tie-beams and the bricks in the plinths all appear original to the LC18th. The building is a simple, vernacular frame, designed as a store or stables. It is not big enough to be deemed a barn. The historic mapping shows that the real Essex plan barn was immediately to the west.

The primary braced, nailed interrupted studwork, the queen post roof and waney tie-beams are all common features of C18th buildings. The proliferation and style of the ironwork securing the joints, in the place of jowled posts indicates a date at the end of the century. The use of forelock bolts in the top-plates rather than threaded bolts which were the norm after C.1800 would strongly suggest it was built in the last 20 years of the C18th.

Phase 2. MC19th repairs.

The weather-boarding on the eastern end is not original as it is circular sawn and fixed with wrought iron nails. This makes it MC19th in character. The wall framing has been altered in this wall and round ended mortices cut to support rails for a hay rack.

Phase 3. LC20th. 1990. Rethatching and extensive repairs.

The owner spoke to the man who last thatched the building in 1990 when John Major was made Prime Minister. (November 28, 1990). The building also received a new front frame of machined softwood, was reclad with bandsawn weather-boards and rendered with hard cement on EML on the back wall. The original door jambs were removed and lightweight framed corrugated doors added with decorative brackets stiffening the frame.

Significance

The building represents the last remnant of a LC18th farm that was a template of a layout that would have been recognised by any Napoleonic era farmer responding to the grain embargoes imposed during the war.

After the French Revolution of 1789 there was a long period of instability culminating in the Napoleonic Wars of 1799 to 1815. Britain and France declared outright war in 1803. England also went to war with the USA who in 1807 declared the Embargo Act preventing European vessels from trading with America. War was declared in 1812 and ceased in 1815.

The Barn is a typical building of the Napoleonic War Era which ignited the rush for farms to convert to grain production to capitalise on the grain embargo imposed during the hostilities from AD1799 to AD1815. It would have been ancillary to the threshing barn and later became a stable.



Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the owner Mr and Mrs Osbourne for engaging me to record the building and to Ian Harrington for recommending me and supplying the architect's plans. Thanks are due to Alison Tinniswood for her help with the project.

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Appendix 1 – Listing of the Farmhouse.



2017 BJHC. Thorley Houses Farmhouse.

There is no Images of England image. 160974

1.5253 THORLEY LANE
(East Side) Thorley Houses Farmhouse
TL 42 SE:6/81. II GV

2. C17 timber frame. Pebbledash and steep old red tile roof. Two storeys, 3 windows. Modern porch and casements. Central old brick chimneystack. Weather-boarded and thatched barn to north west of house. Included for group value.

Listing NGR: TL4655620133