

Phillips Farm, Edney Common, Chelmsford, Essex.
Description and analysis of a timber-framed barn and outbuildings at
Phillips Farm. Surveyed 05 10 2010.



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Phillips Farm, Edney Common. Google 2006.

Location

Phillips Farm is situated north of Highwood Road, Edney Common, Chelmsford. CM1 3PX. The site is approached by a long drive from the road. Historically, it sat right on the edge of Edney Common. According to the Heritage Gateway there are no listed buildings in Edney Common.

Phillips Farm is listed in the Essex HER:

Name: Phillips Farm, Edney Common
SMR Number: 18061
Type of record: Monument
Grid Reference: TL 655 047
Map Sheet: TL60SE
Parish: HIGHWOOD, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX

Cropmarks of linear features and maculae.

This report considers the historic buildings to the east of the site. These are the timber-framed Barn and its outshot Stables and Piggery. These are recorded to EH Level 3. Also recorded to Level 1 are the C20th Piggery and the Offices converted some 12 years ago.

The Barn is centred on 31 U 319818.23mE, 5732746.47mN. TL 655 047



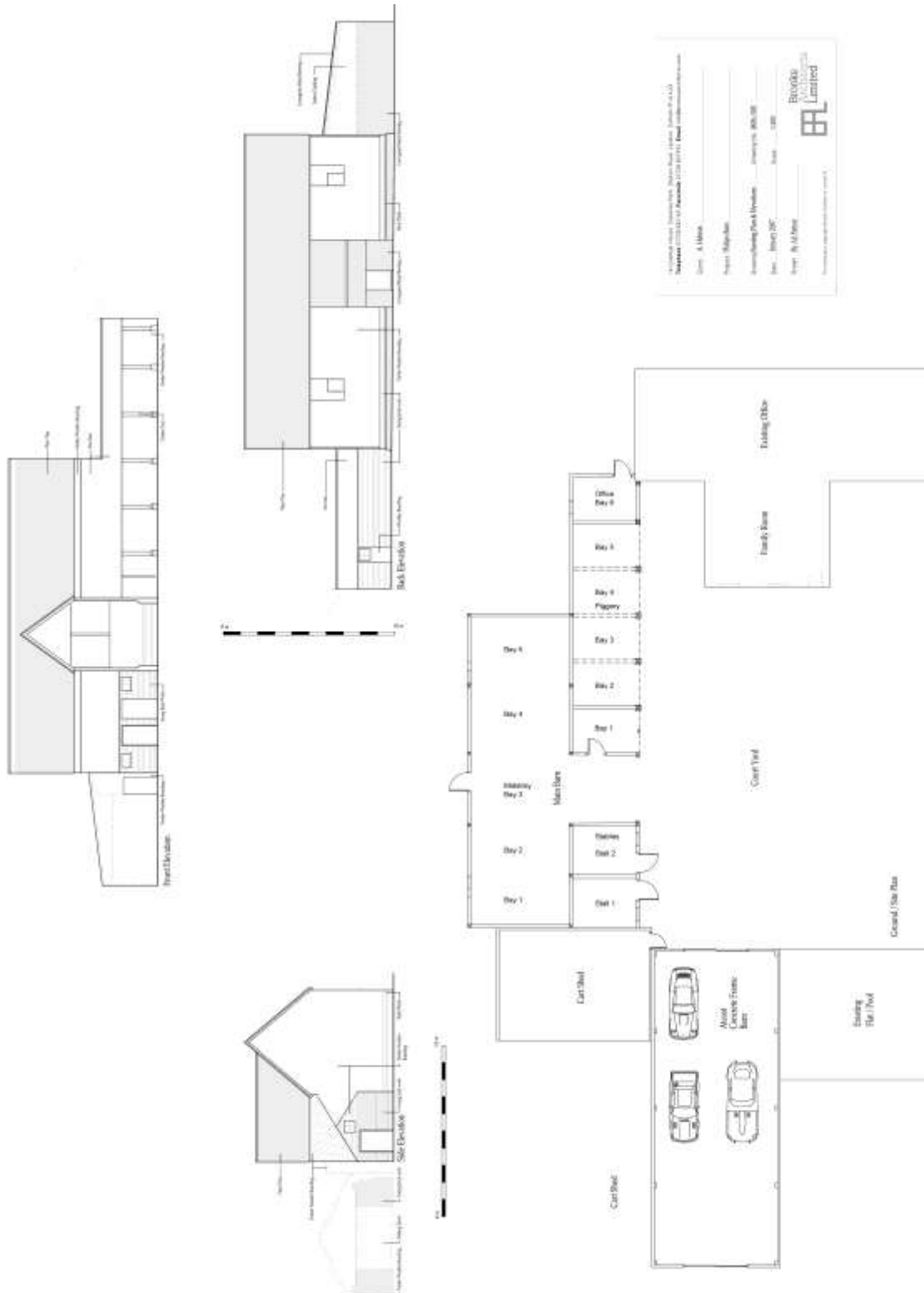
The site with all the current buildings annotated. Google 2006.

General Description

Prior to becoming a private home without a farming use Phillips Farm was a pig breeding unit and there is a large C20th prefabricated piggery to the north of the site. Other buildings have already been converted into modern use including extensions to the Farmhouse and Offices .

The Barn is a timber-framed threshing barn with an off-centre midstrey and porch oriented N-S along its ridgeline. Added as lean-to's to its western flank are a pair of small stables and a long open-sided shelter incorporating concrete partitions and feed troughs for pig-rearing. The southernmost bay of the Piggery has been boarded in and converted to a stable.

Today all the buildings are used to store domestic belongings or act as garaging. The Offices are used for the owner's private business and were converted from a former timber-framed animal shelter.



Existing Plans and Elevation as produced by Brooks Architects. 2010.

The Barn. Description- External Elevations.



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Western elevation of the Barn and the outshot Stables and Piggery.

Western Elevation.

This is the main elevation viewed from the courtyard. It consists of the midstrey porch with the lower doors removed, the Stables to the north and the Piggery to the south. The Stables and Piggery are described separately. The Barn walls are visible inside the outshots.

The timber-frame is clad externally with C20th machine sawn weather-boards painted with clad brushing tar. Inside the outshots the boards are original 10in pit sawn clap boards fastened with wrought iron nails. Those on the sides of the midstrey porch are 7in deep. These are all untreated.

The lower sections are rendered in grey cement over EML (Expanded Metal Lath) to about 1500mm. The whole Barn is raised on a plinth of red bricks, 65x110x220mm with creased faces, sharp arrises and some have horizontal pressure marks. There are 4 courses set on a coped plinth of at least 6 courses set in a 15mm bed of gritty white mortar. There is also a plain tile levelling course beneath the cill plates. The brickwork is clearly visible inside the midstrey porch and elsewhere.

The midstrey porch has lost its lower doors but the large pintles are in place. The upper doors are C20th vertically boarded, tongue and grooved, gate and ledger softwood doors on the original pintle straps. The door jambs have an entasis at ground level and are slotted for the leap boards. There are also mortices for drop bars to secure the doors.

The roof is a recent replacement with concrete plain tiles while the Stables and Piggery have LC20th double roman tiles.



Southern elevation is featureless save for an owl hole.

Southern Elevation.

The southern elevation is clad mostly in planed LC20th 7in weather-boards with some showing the marks of a circular saw. The brick plinth is evident. The gabled end has a dry verge and is featureless save for a small hole near the apex which must be an owl hole.

To the west is the flank of the Piggery roof where it changes profile and here a few earlier 10in boards remain. The lower SW corner of the Barn is connected to the brick wall that forms the eastern side of the Piggery.



The eastern elevation has modern windows and an inserted panel with pedestrian door.

Eastern Elevation



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Inserted panel to replace upper and lower doors demarcated by pintle hinges.

The eastern elevation has an inserted panel to replace the original barn doors. This is a LC20th softwood frame clad with corrugated iron sheets. There is a pentice board 2/3rds of the way up and a single pedestrian door. This is a LC20th tongue and grooved, gate and ledger door with mild steel strap hinges and bolt all screwed on. It has an aluminium handle and a small maker's plate 'Edward Green Doors- Ingatestone'.

Like the midstrety porch the door jambs have the pintles for the original doors and the slotted entasis for the leap boards.



Both modern lights are set in boarded up openings for hatch doors.

There are two plain glass fixed casements that have been set in the boarded up openings for high level hatch doors.. A few of the upper weatherboards appear older but the rest are LC20th and all are fastened with galvanised French nails. Many are warped from water damage from leaking gutters. The rainwater pipes and gutters are plastic.



The northern elevation is shrouded in a LC20th tin shed.

Northern Elevation

The northern elevation is a reflection of the southern one except that the lower half is mostly shrouded by a makeshift LC20th shelter composed of oddments of machined timber and a corrugated iron roof. The southern wall of the outshot Stables has been rebuilt in Flettons set in grey cement. The weather boards are LC20th.

Description - Internal

The building is a 5 bay threshing barn where the midstrey porch is offset slightly north of centre. The floor is poured concrete in the midstrey but asphalt in the bays either side. The walls are composed of primary braced, interrupted nailed studwork 3-4in deep by 3-5in wide, mostly cut from reused oak, with some elm and softwoods. The principal posts, cills, mid-rails and top-plates are all pit sawn from fresh elm.

Some of the storey posts still have the bark remaining. The mid-rails are offset to reduce the amount of weakening at the joints with the storey posts. The straight sawn diagonal bracing drops from the storey posts to the mid-rails and cill plates except in the eastern wall where they have been displaced to the mid posts to allow the framing of two high level doors.

The gable end top-plates are secured with wrought iron L-ties while the four tie-beams are held with timber hanging knees. These are held with four wrought iron threaded bolts with square heads and two clout nails. The hanging knees on Truss 4 (from the north) are much later and better made replacements using the original iron work.

Photographs of the internal elevations follow:



Northern wall. Note offset mid-rail.



Bays 1 and 2 looking east. Note brace displaced to accommodate hatch frame.



Bay 3, the midstrey looking east. The Barn doors have been replaced with a modern panel.



Bays 4 and 5 looking SE. The bays are wider in the southern half of the Barn.



The southern wall has been rebuilt in the LC20th with some modern machined timbers.



Bay 5 looking west.



Bay 4 looking west.



Bay 3 the midstrey looking west.



Bays 1 and 2 looking NW.



Midstrey porch with framed doorway, leap slot and mortice for drop bar. Note the inserted post to support the front plate of the Piggery.

The midstrey is framed in the same way and also has a fully framed pedestrian door in its southern flank with jambs pegged into the midrail. The door is a C19th vertically boarded tongue and grooved, gate and ledger softwood door with mild steel pintle straps with spooned terminals nailed on. It has a mild steel finger latch and slide-bolt both slot head screwed. A lock box has been removed and there are two redundant keyholes. The lower part has been sheathed in galvanised steel sheet on the Piggery side.

The plinth brickwork has been painted in hot tar up to the cill plate and up some of the studs and this is a common feature of these barns where frost has caused the brickwork to spall. There is also a short section that has been rendered with hair plaster.

On either side of the midstrey adjacent to the door jambs, short posts have been nailed beneath noggins to support the front wall plates of the Stables and the Piggery. Besides the midstrey door is a circular cat hole now blocked with rendered EML (Expanded Metal Lath). There are a few rat holes patched with metal plates and small blocks of brickwork.



The roof has been largely replaced in the LC20th. Looking south.

Roof Structure

The roof structure is a simple clasped side purlin truss-less construction where the principal rafters do not sit on the tie-beams. The rafters are paired onto a ridge-piece and secured with small gussets at the apex. The roof has been completely rebuilt with a blue plastic membrane and all the rafters in the southern half are new. The others are reused, some on the flat and others are quarter poles.

The collars are machined planks and are French nailed in pairs over the tie-beams and singly in the centre of the bays. They are painted black on one side only and this suggests that they too are reused. The collars pegged into the gable walls are original and much deeper.

The Stables. Description- External Elevations.



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The western elevation facing the courtyard.

Western Elevation

The low fronted outshot is divided into two stables each with split stable doors and plain glass fixed casements. The doors are vertically boarded, tongue and grooved, gate and ledger softwood with mild steel strap on cast hinges of the type very popular in the 1930's onwards. The latches and bolts are mild steel. There is a horse shoe nailed over the right hand door.

The front wall, partition and the lower part of the northern wall are made from Flettons, a type of brick that was used extensively from the 1920's to the 1970's. No brand name was visible but they are probably Phorpres by the London Brick Company.

The other elevations are formed by the westernmost flank of the Barn, its midstrey and a fletton wall built up with C20th blockwork to the north. All more easily seen from the inside.



Illegible name on a loose roof tile found in the yard.

The roof is clad with concrete double roman tiles. There is a name stamped on the underside but it is illegible. It may contain the letters 'ville' and is suspected of being French.

Description- Internal Elevations.



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Northern wall. Tie-beam sits on the Fletton and blockwork inserted wall.

Northern Elevation

The northern elevation is composed of a Fletton wall bonded in grey cement and then finished with two courses of 220x220x440mm hollow blockwork. The tie-beam rests on the blockwork and is retained with two corroded iron L-ties. Above the wall is finished with C20th weather boards. The tie-beam is morticed on its soffit for a stud wall.



The southern elevation is the midstrety porch.

The Southern Elevation

The southern elevation is the boarding of the midstrey porch and this differs from the main wall of the barn in that the boards are only 7in deep rather than 10in. The boards are bandsawn replacements. Below is a 1400mm high skirt of EML (Expanded Metal Lath) rendered with grey cement to match that visible in the Piggery.

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Simple lean-to roof with single raking strut. Looking N.

Roof Structure

The roof structure is a simple lean-to with the rafters supported on a central purlin held in place with single raking struts off the tie-beams which are all in elm. The tie-beams sit on the front plate but are clamped with iron ties to the storey posts of the Barn. The rafters are reused with some on the flat and some quarter sawn. There is a blue reinforced membrane.

The Piggery. Description- External Elevations.



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The Piggery with enclosed stable at the southern end. Looking SE.

Western Elevation.

The western elevation presents an open-fronted 6 bay building to the courtyard with an enclosed stable in its southernmost bay. The roof structure changes in line with the end of the barn and it is evident that it is two buildings remodelled into a unit. The whole is roofed with concrete double roman tiles and drained with plastic gutters.



Post head with nailed brackets and strapwork. Reverse (left) shows scarf joint over post.

Each bay is defined by a strong post supporting the front-plate and stiffened with brackets clout nailed in place. The joints are further reinforced with wrought iron L-ties to the tie-beams and short straps nailed and stapled in place.

The front-plate is scarfed using a variant of a scarf described by Hewitt as 'a straight bridling of three quarter depth with squinted abutments and over lipped face, edge pegged'

(Hewett. C, P270, F274). Although it is upside down according to his reasoning of being lipped to prevent water ingress. This is actually a common scarf in C19th buildings and is placed over the post to prevent deflection and secured with a short strap to prevent it pulling out.



Detail of C20th brick pedestal and (left) slot for drop bar in Bay 2.

Each post is stood on a brick pedestal composed of C20th bricks a set in grey cement and sheathed in plain roof tiles stamped FRANCE on the undersides. Post 2 (from the north) has a mortice for a drop bar. The southern door jamb for the barn doors has a second set of pintles to support a door that would have closed across Bay 1. Post 3 has a mortice in its outer face, probably for a fence.



Bay 6 has been boarded in the LC20th.

Bay 6 at the southern end has been boarded in with LC20th machined softwood weatherboards and the interior converted into an office space (now abandoned). Here the posts are stood on concrete columns.



Southern elevation of the Piggery Stables showing inserted doorway.

Southern Elevation

The southern elevation is a weather-boarded gable end over a brick wall with an inserted doorway for split stable doors. The brick wall is composed of red/orange 65x110x225mm facing bricks with smooth faces, sharp arrises, faint horizontal pressure marks and shallow rectangular frogs. These are set in a 10mm bed of white gritty lime mortar.

The quoins are correctly closed but the doorway has jambs formed from London Stock bricks set in grey cement and are closed on the western jamb only. The brickwork is of poor quality because although layed in Flemish bond the courses do not follow through vertically. The interior brickwork, visible inside the Piggery is of very inferior quality and is described later.

The doors are identical to those in the Stables and have mild steel straps with cast hinges of the type very popular from the 1930's onwards. Above there is a four light fixed timber C20th casement. The weather-boarding is C20th, fastened with galvanised French nails and overlaps the roof tiles which must lead to water ingress.



The roof is topped with a decorative moulded ridge finial.



Eastern elevation of the Piggery stable.

Eastern Elevation.

The eastern elevation is composed of red/orange 65x110x225mm facing bricks the same as the southern elevation and is properly closed at each end. There are many pale purple bricks in the upper half as well as a large number of headers that look as though they have been burnt in a chimney. It is certain that the wall is built of reused bricks.

To the south is an inserted doorway into the closed stable/ office. The opening is full height to the top-plate and has no closer bricks either side. The doorway has been blocked with modern studwork and weather-boarding. There is an opening casement to match that on the gable end with mild steel hinges and aluminium stays - put in to serve the office.



Low level water dispenser.

Near the ground besides the opening is a low-level water dispenser of the type used to serve pigs. The plumbing fittings suggest it was in use until recently although more likely for the farm dogs.

The Piggery. Description- Internal Elevations.



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The rear wall of the Piggery is lined with troughs and partitions.



Stall in Bay 1 showing steel tubing in partition. Right - pig restraint chain on slide bar.

The rear wall of the open section is outfitted for feeding pigs. There is a low cement trough lined with a ceramic half pipe. This is divided by thin concrete partitions fixed on a frame made of steel piping (visible in Bay 1). Where the partitions have been broken out the EML (Expanded Metal Lath) can be seen in the cement render on the Barn wall. The floor is poured concrete and there were concrete retaining walls between the posts shown by scars on the ground.

Each partition has a slide bar for a tether and one piece of restraint chain remains. Above there are hanging brackets for pipework. Bay 1 has been caged with wire netting and heavy duty galvanised grid to form a dog compound and there is a makeshift wooden kennel - no longer in use.



Post 3, Bay 3 has a double tie-beam and studwork partition. Looking SE.

The roof changes character in line with end of the Barn and it is evident that the Piggery has been extended. There is a double tie-beam. The northernmost one has weather-boarded studwork above and signifies the end of the earlier build. The tie-beam is secured with iron L-ties which are so corroded they may be mild steel. The beam also has mortices in its flank indicating it has been reused.

The wall beneath the double tie-beams has been rebuilt with grey cement pointing and an interesting concrete corbel. The rest of the wall is built of a variety of 60x110x210mm reds with creased faces and soft arrises set in white mortar and are limewashed. The southern part of the pig troughs below the brick wall was abandoned and filled with concrete to make a level raised platform.

The tie-beams on Posts 2 and 3 have a series of triangular rebates on the underside to nail studwork for partitions. The remaining nails are all C20th wire nails.

Roof Structure.

The roof structure of the Piggery parallel to the Barn is identical to that of the Stables with a central purlin supported on raking struts from the tie-beams. Additional support has been inserted by resting a timber on the tie-beams forming Bay 3 and raising a vertical strut to the purlin (see photo above).

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The roof structure in the southern section of the Piggery. Looking S.

The southern section incorporating the stable/ office is a newer construction with a clasped side purlin roof entirely in elm. The deep collars are halved and nailed to the rafters which are paired onto a ridge piece. The tie-beams are independent of the rafters of which most are quarter sawn.



The collar in the stable/ office. Looking SE.

The roof structure in the stable/ office has been obscured by a layer of rockwool insulation clad with hardboard sheet. The walls are likewise treated and painted white. The room is no longer habitable.

The Office



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Office and gatehouse looking N.



Office and gatehouse looking E. Flank of modern store.



Modern store with Office and gatehouse behind. Looking S.

The Office was converted about 12 years ago when it was completely reclad in modern weather-board and reroofed with the original clay pan-tiles. At the same time a completely new timber-framed gatehouse was added. Little of the original structure is visible save for some tie-beams and some internal studwork.



Most of the interior is clad and insulated. Looking E.



Hanging knee construction on the tie-beam. Wrought iron bolts and L-tie.

The tie-beams are secured with wrought iron L-ties and strengthened with pit sawn and adzed hanging knees held with four square headed bolts. The vernacular quality of the knees is typical of low caste Essex farm buildings. Each tie-beam has a pegged mortice for a central post and there was an open gutter the length of the floor before renovation. (Owner -pers comm.)

The north wall has visible primary diagonal braces to the main posts. The roof is a simple clasped side purlin construction similar to the Piggery.

The Atcost Barn



The Atcost Barn from the courtyard. Looking N.



East flank of the Atcost Barn



Southern elevation of the Atcost Barn.



Interior of the Atcost Barn. Looking S.

The Atcost Barn (name given by the owner) is a part brick built and prefabricated concrete building built as a pig feeding unit. There are two 750mm wide by 100mm deep gulleys running the length of the floor and 100mm raised platforms 2500mm wide along the walls. There are 18 feed troughs either side with ceramic half pipe troughs. Every other one is segregated with a steel rail.

The walls have precast concrete pillars supporting the reinforced concrete trusses. The trusses are held with steel gussets. All fastenings are hex headed bolts. The wall panels are LC20th Flettons set in a 15mm grey cement bed in English bond.

The corrugated asbestos roof is supported on concrete purlins and has clear plastic rooflights. There are no windows. There are unbranded softwood sliding doors at either end. The building is used as store.

According to Atcost which is still trading 'Atcost concrete is tough and highly durable. Unlike other buildings which require regular repainting, due to its high resistance to environmental and chemical attack, Atcost buildings require little or no maintenance.'

Carpentry and Timber Marks

There are no carpenter's assembly marks visible in the Barn except for the scribed lines for every mortice. This is not a surprise as frames of this type are always marked on the outside.



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Modern mark on tie-beam 5 of the Piggery.

The fifth tie-beam of the Piggery is marked with the numeral 5 between two lines presumably to aid reassembly when the building was reroofed. It is upside down.

Apotropaic Marks and Grafitti



There is a well defined apotropaic mark in the form of VV on the outside of the cladding within the outshot Piggery and this must relate to the function of the outshot as an animal shelter. The well defined letters have also been hatched in with further lines.

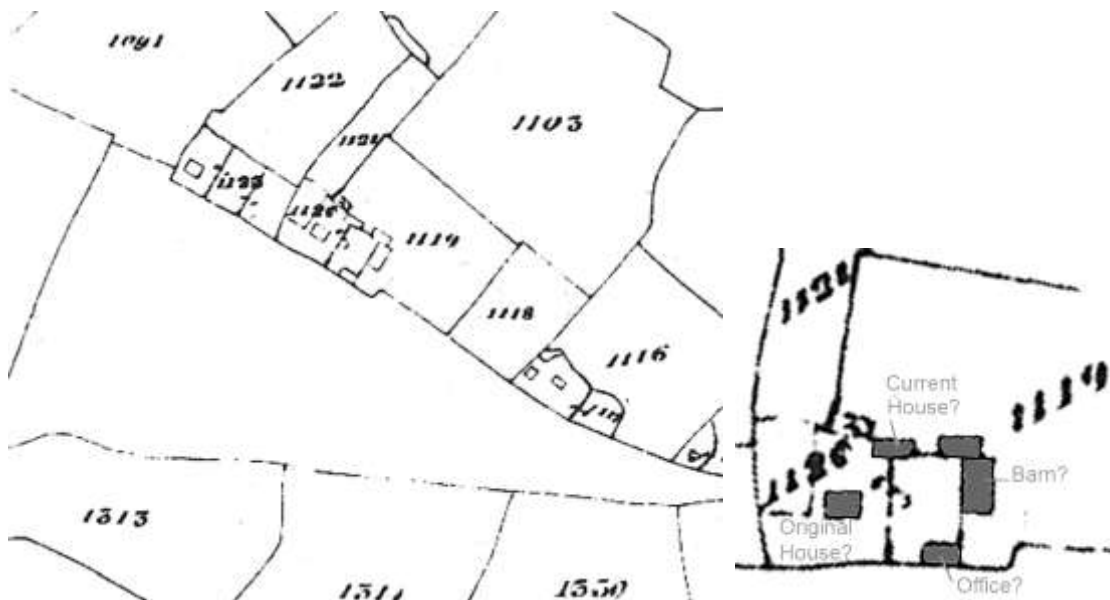
Topographical Survey from Maps



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1777 Chapman and Andre with inset.

The Chapman and Andre Map of 1777 shows Edney-philips farm west of Edney-childrens farm forming the northern boundary of Edney Green. In comparison to the other local dwellings the fenced area is much larger and compares only with Lee Farm. The plan is typically vague but appears to show a building on the position of the current farmhouse and two large structures to the east. In a separate compound to the west is another building or buildings.



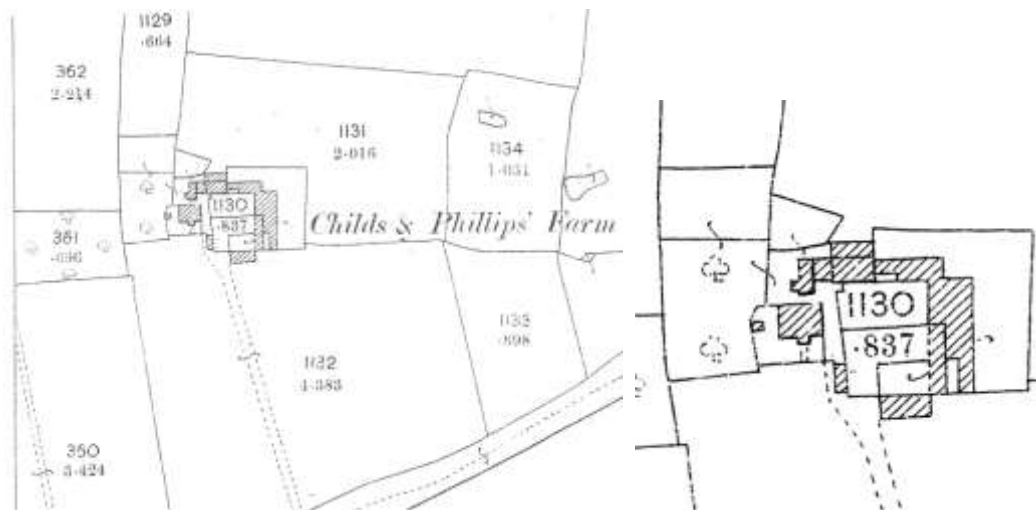
1843 Tithe Map of Writtle. Phillips Farm is Plot 1126. Inset oriented to north.

Phillips Farm is difficult to identify on the Tithe Map because the plot is not oriented to north and the field boundaries have changed considerably. The house can be identified and there are buildings that correspond with the Barn and the Office.



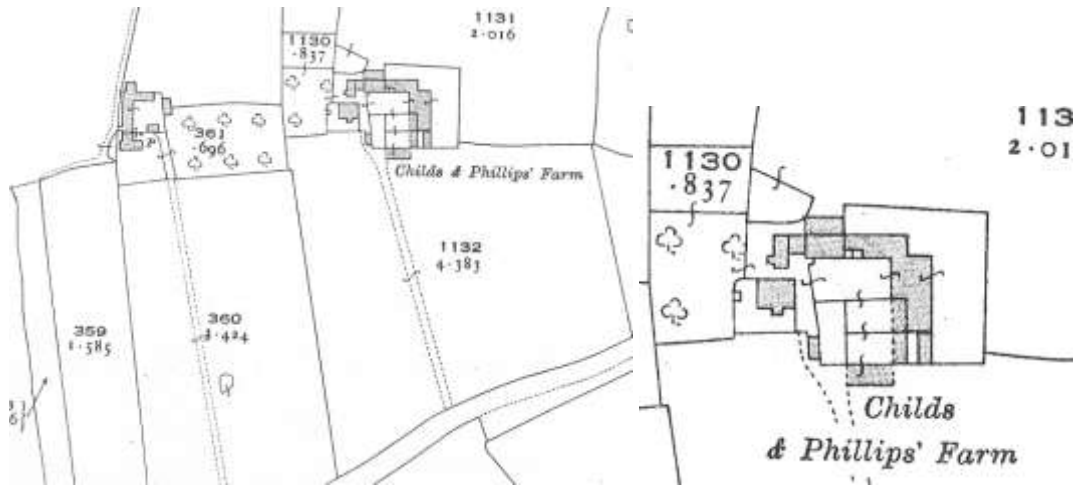
1874 1st Edition Ordnance Survey

By 1874 Edney Phillips's Farm has massively expanded joining all the buildings together in a format characteristic of High Farming forming a courtyard corralled for animals. The land use has been reassigned and the Edney Common has been subsumed into the farm. Two buildings have been added to the south of the Barn, one corresponding to the stables but shown open sided to the east. Childs Farm (Plot 1166) has vanished. The original farmhouse is shown to the SE with paths and an orchard.



1896 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey

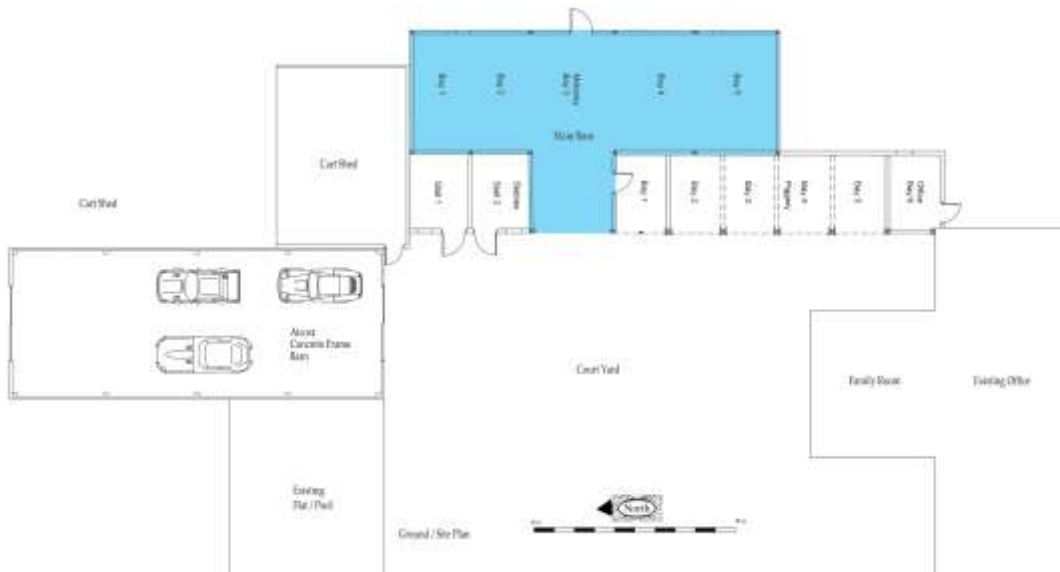
By 1896 the farm is known as Childs and Phillips' Farm, the two adjoining properties having coalesced. There are minor changes to the layout but significantly the Outshut is shown as it is today with its western side open its whole length. The original farmhouse now has a path to its front door from the edge of the property.



1921 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey.

By 1921 minor changes in the layout of the fences have been made and the Outshut is shown divided down the centre. The Office is now shown as open at each end - a format suitable for a milking parlour.

Phasing and Discussion



Phase 1. Early C19th. C 1800. Building the Barn.

The barn has all the components of a Napoleonic war Era barn built to capitalise on the grain embargoes enforced during the wars between England and France and then England and the USA between 1799 and 1815. The carpentry relying on reused timbers and bespoke ironwork is typical of the period but this barn has some refinements that others lack.

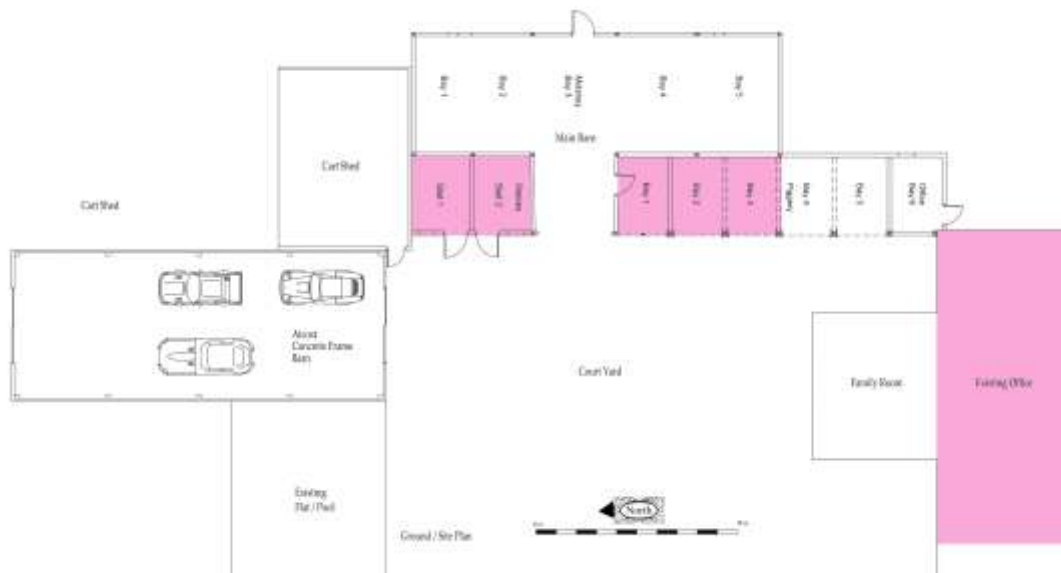
For example the builders had the foresight to put a fully framed door in the side of the midstrey to allow pedestrian access on the side that was later developed into the outshot Piggery. In many barns of this era this door is broken through the original fabric as an afterthought. The door was originally put there to allow easy access without opening the main doors and vaulting the leap.

The bays are not symmetrical about the midstrey, a feature also recently recorded in Sexton's Farm Barn, Gt Braxted built 1799. (Hillman-Crouch, BJ. 2010(1). It must be that the farmers worked out that the product from the field had far greater volume before it was threshed than after and adjusted the bays to allow for this.

The interrupted studwork with its primary diagonal bracing has been jiggled to allow for two high level hatches in the eastern wall. This implies that there were haylofts at both ends although there are no other signs to indicate them. Despite a thorough search there were no carpenter's marks to show where the bearers might have been as was evident at Norton Hall Farm Barn surveyed recently. (Hillman-Crouch, BJ. 2010(2).

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The barn had a much prized asphalt dressing floor and from that its primary purpose can be divined as being for threshing.

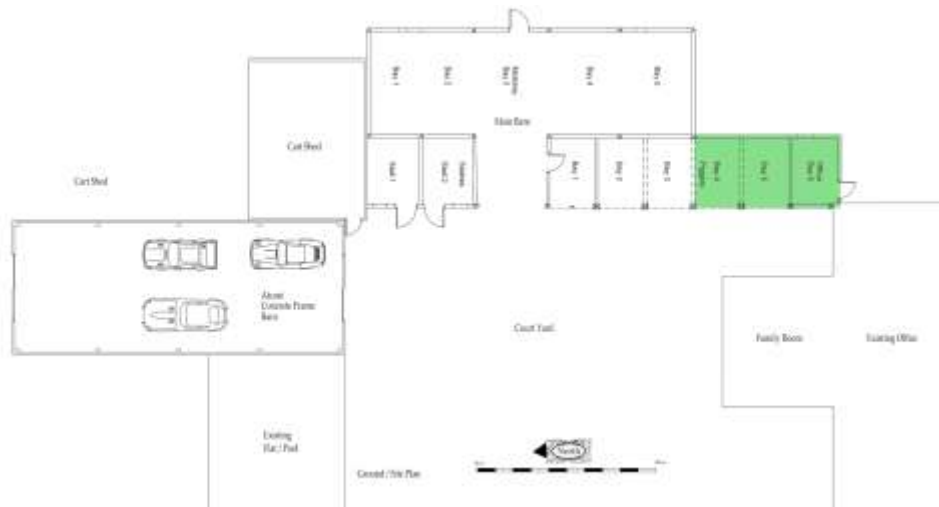


Phase 2. 1800-1843. Addition of the Outshots and Office.

In common with most of the barns built at this time a single storey outshot (Piggery) was added to the flank of the barn south of the midstrey. This was connected to the Barn through the midstrey door which was kept locked, hence the box locks and keyholes in the C19th door.

The structure is a simple lean-to held in place with tie-beams passed through the weather boards and secured with wrought iron L-toes to the Barns' principal posts. At the same time and to the same design another outshot (Stables) was added north of the midstrey accessed from outside.

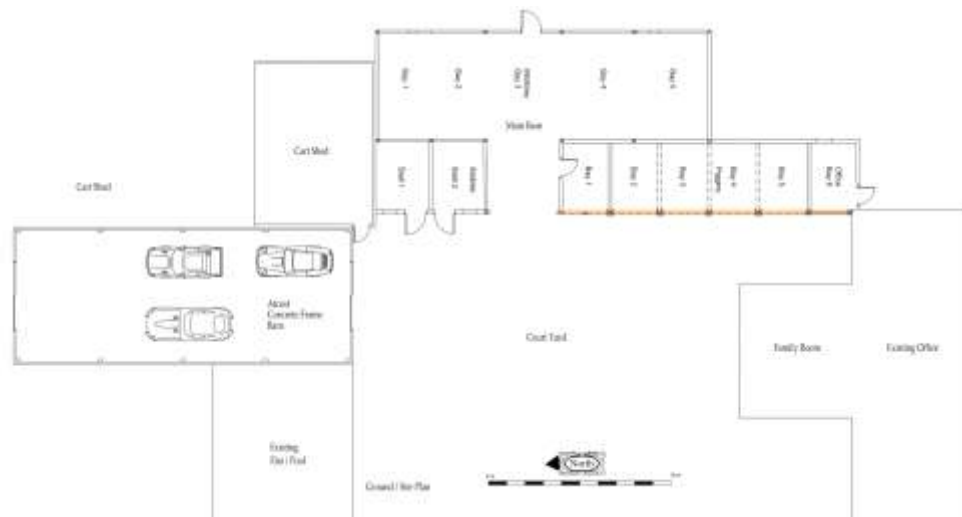
To the south of the farmyard the building now called the Office was erected. This was probably a double sided animal shelter divided by posts down the middle from the tie-beams. The mapping implies it was a closed building until the C20th. The carpentry is basic with interrupted studwork, hanging knees securing the tie-beams and a clasped side purlin roof.



Phase 3. Extension of the Piggery. 1843-1876.

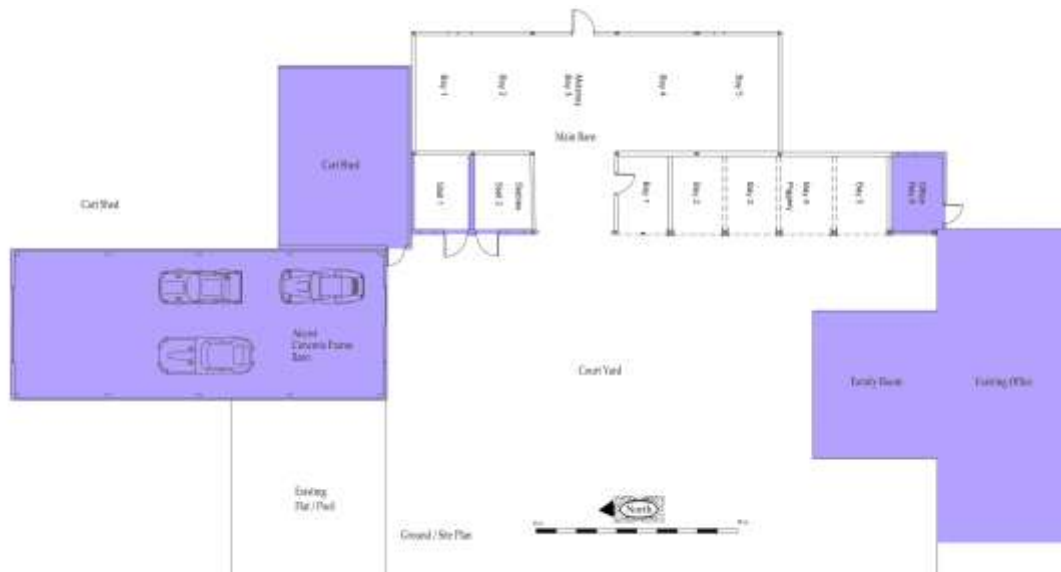
The southern part of the present day Piggery was erected as a separate building with a clasped side purlin roof and closed sides. It must be assumed that originally it was all timber-framed as the mapping of 1876 shows it open to the east, facing another now removed building of the same footprint.

It is likely that now was when the apotropaic mark was made denoting an almost insane resurrection in the belief of witches fuelled by the 'Cunning Men' who were essentially well educated middle class shysters. Two such local men were James Morrell of Hadleigh and George Pickingill ready to capitalise on the superstition. Reports of witchcraft were making the newspapers as late as 1858 when Murrell was reported as charging 3s 6d for a cure.



Phase 4. 1876 - 1896.

The Piggery was remodelled to the form it is today and reinforced with a solid brick wall composed of various handy reused bricks. It is possible therefore that the building was actually turned through 180 degrees and the open side brought to the western elevation. This would explain the lack of mortices on the undersides of the top-plates and the No 5 carved upside down on the tie-beam.



Phase 5. The C20th.

There appears to be two main phases of development to the farm indicating changes in its management. The three stables are inserted into the existing buildings. The mild steel fittings especially the straps with cast hinges were very popular in the 1930's but had a long shelf life. The Flettons used to build the front walls and partition were very common from the 1920's onwards and the hollow blockwork is a product of the 1980's.

It seems likely the conversion was an incremental process that started after the 1921 OS map was made as this shows neither. It does show however that the Piggery is open-sided and that the Office is open at both ends and is therefore likely to be the dairy.

In the 1960's or 70's the farm was converted to a piggery and the Atcost Barn brought in to house a feeding unit. The Outshot was also converted into a Piggery with sties, troughs and partitions.

At some point the main farmhouse was demolished and the remaining buildings converted to the current dwelling with an indoor swimming pool.

In 1998 the Office was created with a brand new extension used as a family room and an added gatehouse.

Discussion.

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.

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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.

‘Napoleonic Barns’ sprung up all over Essex. They are built to a pattern, one that does not reflect the earlier barns and their intrinsic dimensions based on rods. It is significant that the Barn is measured in exact dimensions of feet and inches. It is composed of simple frames using primary bracing with nailed in interrupted studs.

At the same time wrought iron fixings, in the form screw threaded bolts and the traditional ‘blacksmith’s joints’ were being incorporated in the build as part of the original design and removed the need for heavy jowelled posts. Spandrels were replaced with hanging knees bolted into place which were economic on space as well as materials. They also allowed free movement in the haylofts which had become a feature of the barns.

Eventually the wars came to an end and trade resumed its old pattern which was disastrous for the newly improved farmsteads. There was an exceptional harvest in 1813 which drove the prices down due to over-supply. The farmers had borrowed heavily to build their new buildings and the resulting decline in prices led to a recession.

The economic climate would have been reflected in the farm buildings whose function may have been changed when the farmers used increasing mechanisation in the production of grain to reduce their labour costs. The Outshuts may have been added as a result of these improvements and changes of process.

By the 1840’s the concept of Victorian High Farming emerged. 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 Phillips’s Farm in 1874 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 Outshuts were closed buildings but others were open sided animal shelters for cattle and horses.

By 1896 the farm is stabilised. Lord Ernle wrote that, “Land deteriorated in condition. The counties which suffered most were the corn-growing districts, in which high farming had won its most signal triumphs. On the heavy clays of Essex, for example, thousands of acres



which had formerly yielded great crops and had paid high rents, had passed out of cultivation into ranches of cattle or temporary sheep-runs”

In the C20th the farm changed its layout and the 1921 OS shows that more buildings have been opened up as shelters. The Office was probably a dairy and this indicates the type of farming practiced. In the LC20th the farm became a piggery before being sold off as a private house and its farming functions transferred elsewhere.

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Significance

The site has several levels of significance. The Barn itself is an interesting building with the economy of re-used timber present in most of the Napoleonic War Era barns that appear in Essex but the foresight of the new design and layout to suit improving farming practices.

The other buildings show a gradual progression towards the pinnacle of ‘High Farming’ which set the format of the farm well into the C20th.

Significant to the study of witchcraft and apotropaic marks is the VV mark made on the outside of the barn. It shows without doubt that a lot of apotropaic marks are in fact modern, made by superstitious locals preyed on by well documented ‘Cunning Men’ whose rise coincides exactly with this period.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Mr Andy Hebron, the owner of the site for engaging me to record the buildings. I also acknowledge Teresa O’Connor of Essex County Council Heritage Environment Team for her help and advice. The survey drawings were kindly provided by Tim Hannon of Brooks Architects.

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ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD/ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Phillips Farm, Edney Common, Chelmsford, Essex.	
Parish: Writtle	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 655 047 31 U 319818.23mE, 5732746.47mN. (UTM)	Site Code: DNBF10
Type of Work: Historic Building Recording	Site Director/Team: Barry Hillman-Crouch
Date of Work: 16 10 2010	Size of Area Investigated: 100x100m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: N/A	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related EHER Nos:
<p>Phillips Farm, Edney Common, Chelmsford, Essex. Description and analysis of a timber-framed barn and outbuildings at Phillips Farm. Surveyed 05 10 2010. Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.</p>	
Periods Represented: c1800 - C20th	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Farmstead shown on Chapman and Andre 1777.</p> <p>C.1800 timber-framed 5 bay threshing barn with asphalt dressing floor. Outshots added EC19th either side of midstre porch. Animal shelter added in same period to south of site.</p> <p>Additional buildings added between 1843 (Tithe Map) and 1874 (1st Ed OS) converting farm to a layout recognised as High Farming. Changes in layout to complement animal husbandry effected by 1896 and carried through to 1921 with minor changes to buildings indicating dairy farming.</p> <p>Farm converted to a Piggery in 1970's with addition of Atcost Barn and conversion of outshots to sties and stables.</p> <p>Farming abandoned LC20th, buildings converted to luxury house, storage and office buildings. Addition of gatehouse and large store in 1998.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
Author of Summary: Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND.	Date of Summary: 04 11 2010.

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