

**Outbuilding at Guildhall Farm,
Long Melford, Suffolk
LMD 244**

Historic Building Record

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(TL 859 438)

Historic Building Record

This report provides a record and analysis at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant farm building and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning consent for conversion (application B/13/01348/FUL). It has been prepared to a specification issued on 27th July 2015 by Dr Richard Hoggett of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service.

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 48 Canon 5D digital images of 21 megapixels (Appendix 1), but also includes 14 printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text. Each image is described in a separate schedule and wherever possible includes a scale rod with half-metre divisions in red and white. The site was inspected on 24th August 2015.

Summary

Guildhall Farm adjoins open countryside at the southern end of the village of Long Melford in the south-eastern quarter of the crossroads known as Rodbridge Corner. This area formed a small hamlet in the Middle Ages, as depicted on a 1613 map of the parish which shows a small structure in the approximate position of the 19th century shed forming the subject of this report. The hamlet was much reduced in size by the time of the parish tithe survey in 1839 which describes Guildhall Farm as a mid-scale tenanted holding of 53.5 acres. The tithe map shows an earlier farmhouse on the site of the current red-brick house, which was built in *circa* 1860 in conjunction with a new complex of farm buildings flanking the site entrance to the south. These buildings survived largely intact until the 1960s but were then replaced by a series of cement-block pig sheds. The only remaining elements of the Victorian complex are the northern wall of the cement-block sheds to the north of the present entrance track and a single shed in close proximity to the house. This shed extends to 9.6 m in length by 6.7 m in width (31.5 ft by 22 ft) and retains an original pair of double doors in its southern gable. It formerly faced a cart lodge on the opposite side of the track and was apparently designed as a large shed for agricultural equipment such as threshing machinery. It may also have served as a feed store and was linked to an enclosed yard on the west that probably held cattle. The southern doors are accordingly of some historic and visual interest, but in other respects the structure has been much altered and is of limited historic significance. An internal ceiling was inserted in the early-20th century, blocking the doors, and the entire roof structure was renewed as part of an extensive refurbishment in *circa* 1980 which included the rebuilding of the eastern wall. There is no evidence that this shed 'probably dates back over 200 years', as claimed in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application for conversion, nor of the 'stable bricks' mentioned in the same source.

Documentary and Cartographic Evidence

Guildhall Farm adjoins open countryside at the southern end of the village of Long Melford. The site is entered from the B1064 on the west and occupies the south-eastern quarter of the crossroads known as Rodbridge Corner. This area formed a small hamlet in the Middle Ages, as depicted on the 1613 map of the parish which currently hangs in Melford Hall (figure 1). This map shows a small structure in the approximate position of the 19th century shed which forms the subject of this report, but both it and the other buildings in the vicinity all possessed chimneys suggesting they were dwellings rather than farm buildings. The barns and stables associated with farms elsewhere on the estate were carefully depicted without chimneys.



Figure 1

The crossroads of Rodbridge Corner on the estate map of 1613 currently in Melford Hall (copy belonging to the Long Melford History Society, with north towards the top right-hand corner). The road to the north of Guildhall Farm is labelled 'Road-Bridge Streate' and the eponymous bridge over the River Stour is depicted on the left.

By the time of the Long Melford tithe survey of 1839 the hamlet was much reduced in size, and Guildhall Farm was a mid-scale tenanted holding of 53.5 acres. The apportionment describes the site of the farm only as 'Guildhall Yards'(plot 711 in figure 2), with 'Guildhall Field' to the south, but a rectangular building shaded in red on the site of the current house probably represents its predecessor. Domestic houses were usually shown in red on tithe maps, with farm buildings in grey. The U-shaped range adjoining the road to the north appears to represent the main barn and other outbuildings of Guildhall Farm, but its grey colouring may be an error as it bears a striking resemblance to the houses shown in both 1613 and 1885 (figure 3). The small detached rectangular structure on the site of Barn 1 to the south (as labelled in figure 8) may instead represent the modest barn that would be expected on a farm of 53 acres. The property's name raises the possibility that it once have belonged to one of the medieval religious guilds in Melford, several of which were endowed with land.

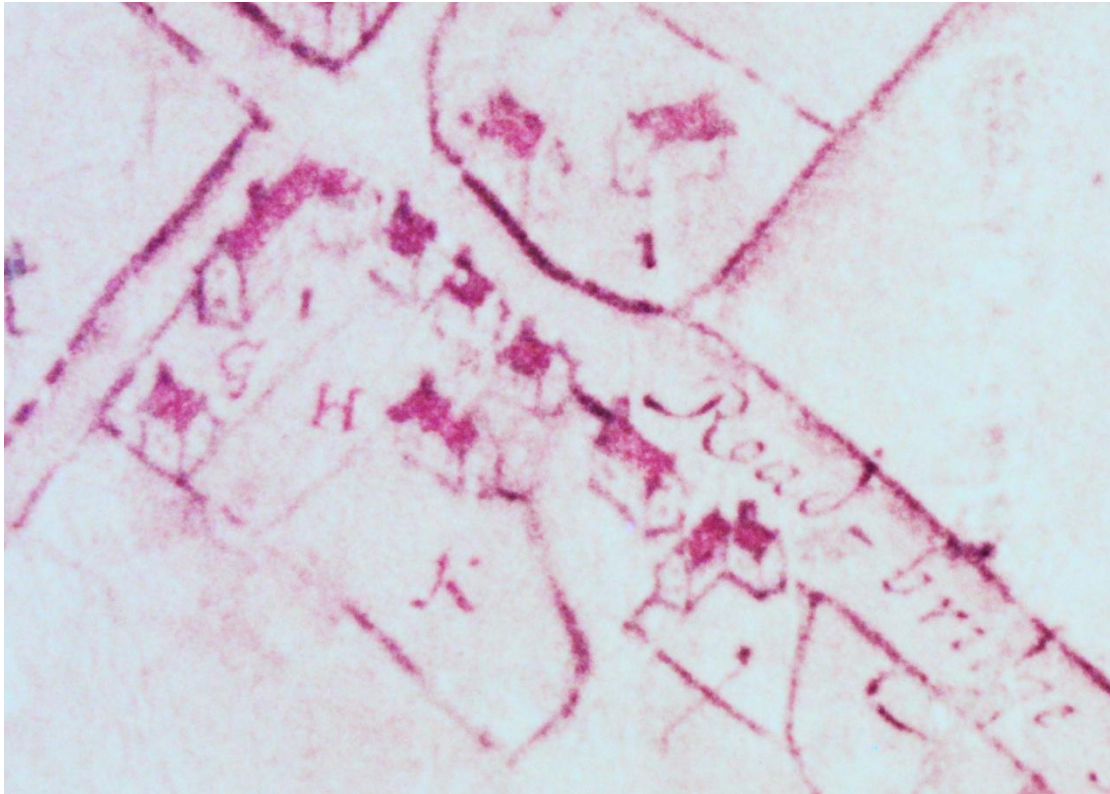


Figure 1a. A detail of the 1613 Melford Hall estate map. The L-shaped range of houses in the south-eastern angle of the crossroads equates to the existing terrace of cottages with a single small house below the letter G on the approximate site of the 19th century shed which forms the subject of this report (building 1 in figure 7).

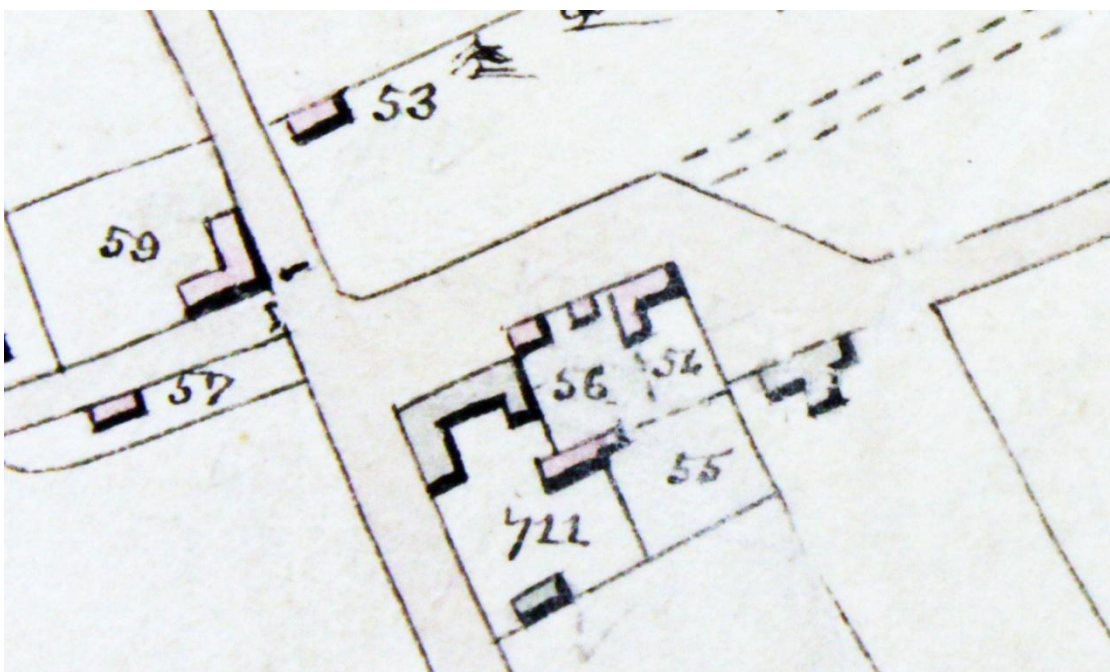


Figure 2. The Long Melford tithe map of 1839. Plot 711 is described as ‘Guildhall Yards’ in the apportionment, but the rectangular building in the centre is coloured red and was probably the farmhouse. A small rectangular outbuilding lies on the approximate site of sheds 1a and 1b in figure 7 but the principal subject of this report (shed 1) is conspicuous by its absence.

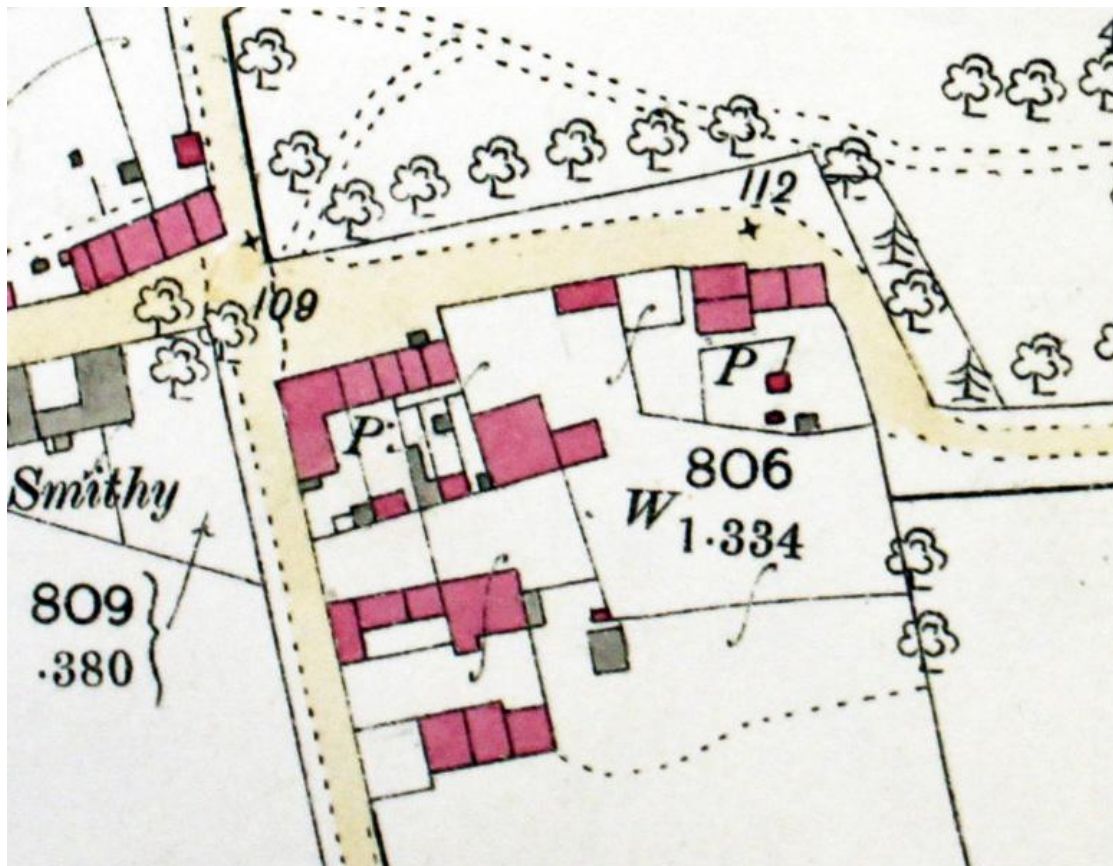


Figure 3

The First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885.

The existing square farmhouse had been built since 1839 along with the red-brick vehicle shed in the north-eastern corner of an entirely new complex of farm buildings.

The site was extensively refurbished between 1839 and the First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885 (figure 3). The existing double-pile farmhouse was built in red brick on the site of the rectangular house of 1839 (the large square building to the right of the Pump), and the small building to the south was replaced by a range of new farm buildings in brick or flint (as indicated by their red colouring). The vehicle shed (building 1 in figure 7) is all that now survives of this complex, which reflected the new Victorian preference for keeping animals in yards rather than abroad in fields. The present owner, Mr Pearson, reports that until the 1960s cattle were driven into these buildings on a daily basis from the meadows by the river, but they were replaced in the 1960s by the various cement-block pig sheds and Dutch barns labelled Barns 2-7 in figure 8. The original purpose of the vehicle shed is not known, but the building was re-roofed and partly rebuilt by his parents in *circa* 1980. Only five acres now remain with the property, which currently supplies firewood and is used as the base for a contract farming business.

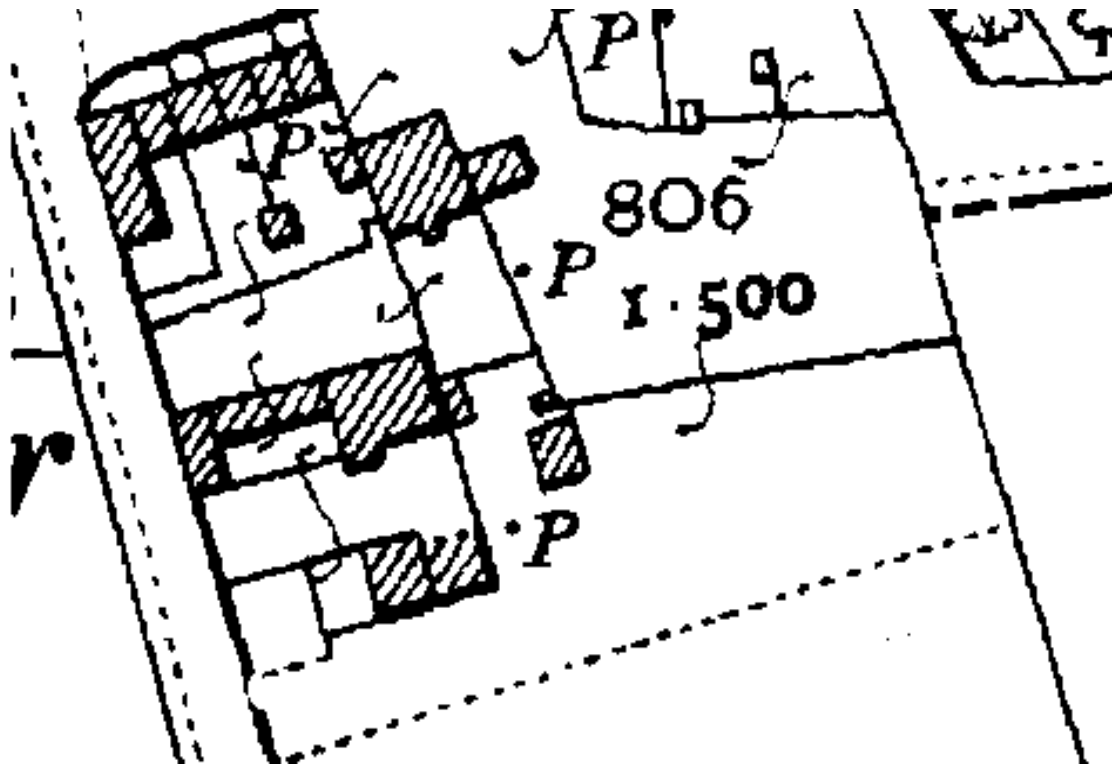


Figure 4. The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904. The building in the south-eastern corner of the new complex is depicted with an open-sided northern elevation and evidently operated as a cart lodge immediately opposite the surviving vehicle shed.

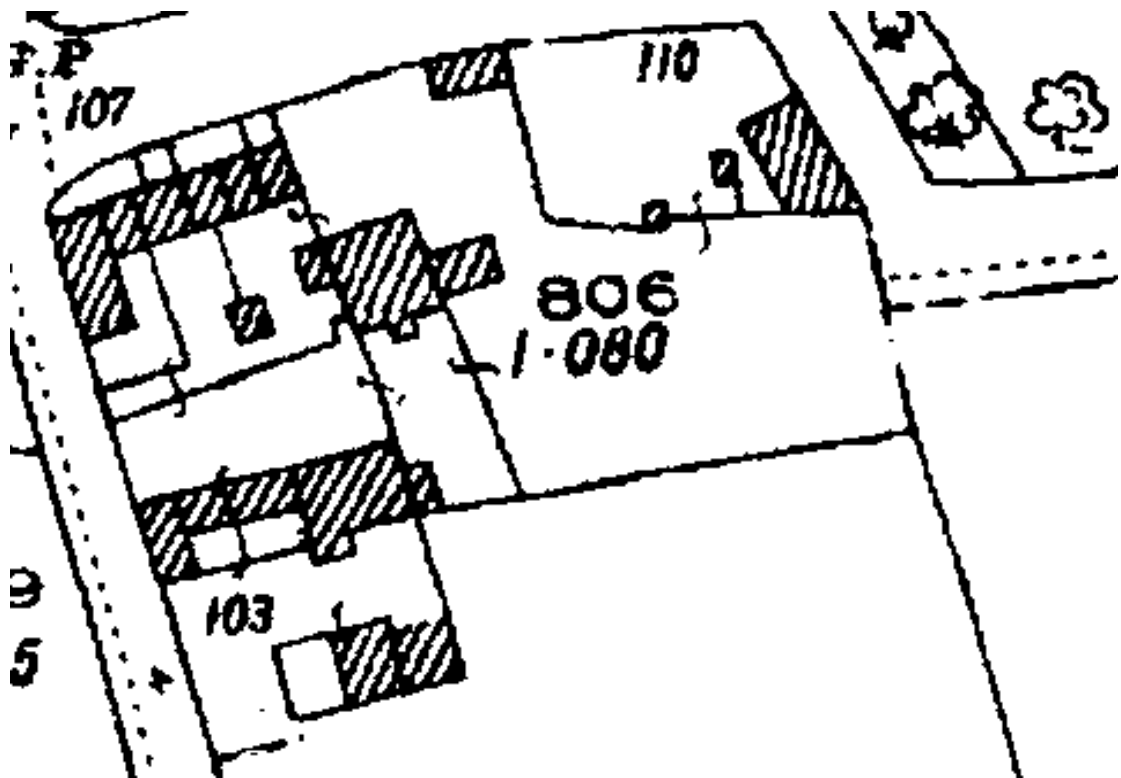


Figure 5. The Third Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1926 showing little change since 1904.

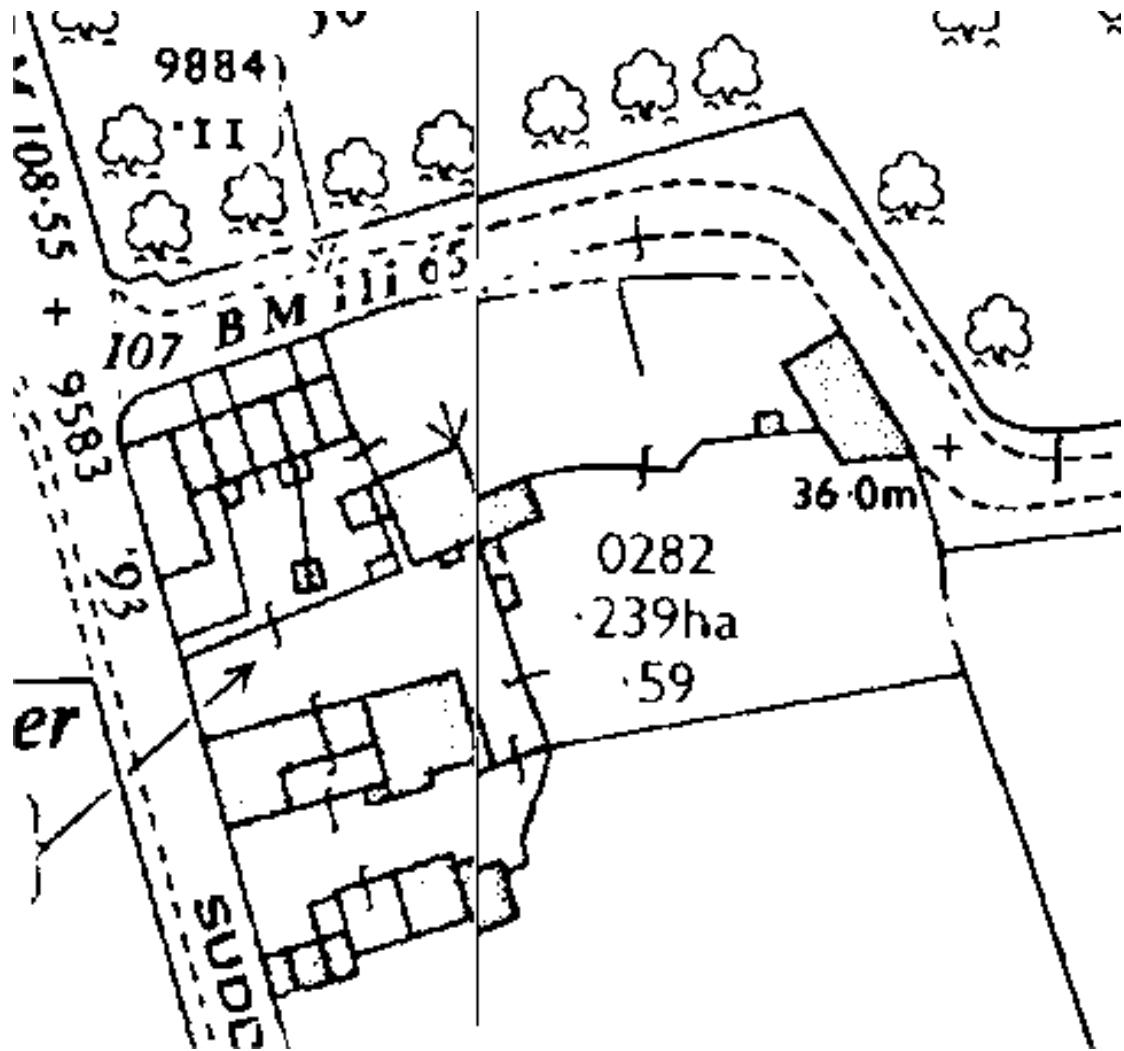


Figure 6
 The 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1958.
 The buildings still remained much as they were in 1885 but were soon to be demolished
 and replaced by the cement-block outbuildings that survive today.

Building Analysis



Figure 7
Ground plan of ‘Barn 1’ highlighting the 19th century vehicle shed (1) in grey with the late-20th century cement-block lean-to (1a) and workshop (1b) adjoining on the west.

Guildhall Farm consists of a mid-19th century ‘double-pile’ farmhouse of pantiled red-brick which has been extensively renovated in recent years, and a series of agricultural outbuildings wrongly described as barns on the current site survey (figure 8). The ‘barns’ to the south of the farm’s entrance from the B1064 were built in or after the 1960s and consist of single-storied cement-block pig sheds (nos. 2, 3 & 5) and steel-framed Dutch barns or vehicle shelters (4, 6 & 7). Barn 1 to the north of the entrance is the principal subject of this report, and consists of three distinct structures as shown in figure 7: a mid-19th century rectangular building of brick and flint-rubble (1) on the east with a lean-to shed of 4 m in width adjoining its western elevation (1a) and a large agricultural workshop against the road (1b). All three components are roofed with late-20th century treble tiles which are probably contemporary with the cement-block and Fletton-brick wall fabric of the two westernmost structures. In their present form the latter date from a refurbishment of *circa* 1980 (as reported by the present owner, whose parents were responsible for the work), but they incorporate a mid-19th century northern wall of red-brick and flint-rubble which is integral to the eastern shed (1). This wall survives from a series of Victorian sheds of unknown form and purpose as depicted in figures 3-5 (illus. A2.6 below).

The eastern shed extends to 9.6 m in length by 6.7 m in total width on an approximately north-south axis, and rises to 3.4 m above its floor of 20th century concrete (31.5 ft by 22 ft by 11 ft). This building is not shown on the title map of 1843 (figure 2) but had appeared by 1885 (figure 3) and probably dates from the 1860s. There is no evidence that it ‘probably dates back over 200 years’, as claimed in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application for conversion, nor of the ‘stable bricks’ mentioned in the same source.

The shed’s red-brick southern gable (illus. 3) is laid in regular Flemish Bond and contains an original central entrance of 3.7 m in width by 3.4 m in height (12 ft by 11 ft) which is

respected by closers (quarter bricks) in both jambs and retains a pair of ostensibly original double doors. The western wall also consists of red brick and contains a second original door of 1.3 m in width by 2 m in height beneath a timber lintel (illus. A2.11). This door was reduced in width during the late-20th century by inserting a pier of Fletton brick on the north. A third door in the brick and flint-rubble northern gable appears to be a later insertion as its red-brick jambs interrupt the plinth and are laid in cement mortar (illus. A2.5).

The fabric of the eastern wall is recessed behind the brick piers of its corners and was rebuilt as part of the *circa* 1980 refurbishment (A2.4). The foundation of the thicker original wall, which is reported to have consisted entirely of flint rubble, is now covered at ground level by a series of pantiles. The lower storey of the new wall consists of cement blocks and the upper of vertical studs infilled with brickwork. The roof structure including its gables was rebuilt in softwood at the same time. The internal ceiling at a height of 2 m (6.5 ft) consists of tall-sectioned machine-sawn softwood joists notched into a pair of principal joists and supported by iron posts. A blocked trap in its south-eastern corner indicates the position of a former stair, and the present stair in the opposite north-western corner is a modern insertion. The north-eastern quarter of the ceiling consists of lateral common joists but appears to have been rebuilt as there is evidence of earlier axial joists in the adjoining principals. The character of the timber in this ceiling identifies it as an early-20th century insertion, probably of the 1920s or 30s, as does the fact that it interrupts the original southern entrance (A2.9 & 10).

The building was evidently designed as a large vehicle shed entered by double doors adjoining the farm's entrance track immediately opposite a cart lodge. Sheds of this scale first appear on local farms in the mid-19th century and were designed to house the new agricultural technology of the period: threshing machines and the traction engines which drew and powered them. The modest size of the farm in 1839 would not have justified the possession of expensive equipment of this kind, but its occupant may have contracted to his neighbours much as the present owner does today. The shed was linked to a small cattle yard on the west, as depicted on the historic Ordnance Surveys (of which only the northern wall of the two sheds which framed the yard now survives), and probably also operated as a store and mill for animal feed. The flint-rubble plinth of the northern wall may represent a fragment of earlier yard wall, but there is no obvious evidence of this on the tithe map. The ceiling was probably inserted to increase the storage and milling area when access for large vehicles was no longer required.

Historic Significance

The eastern part of Barn 1 is of the same or similar date to the nearby farmhouse and would have been of considerable interest as a mid-19th century shed for threshing equipment had it survived in good condition with its original fixtures and fittings *in situ*. Given the extent of its 20th century alterations, however, which saw the insertion of a ceiling and the complete rebuilding of its roof and eastern wall, its historic significance must be considered minimal. No other buildings on the site pre-date the 1960s.

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Leigh Alston is a building archaeologist and architectural historian who lectures in the Department of Archaeology at Cambridge University but also undertakes commissions on a freelance basis for the National Trust and various county archaeological units. Publications include 'Late Medieval Workshops in East Anglia' in 'The Vernacular Workshop' edited by Paul Barnwell & Malcolm Airs (Council for British Archaeology and English Heritage, 2004) and the National Trust guidebook to Lavenham Guildhall (National Trust 2004).

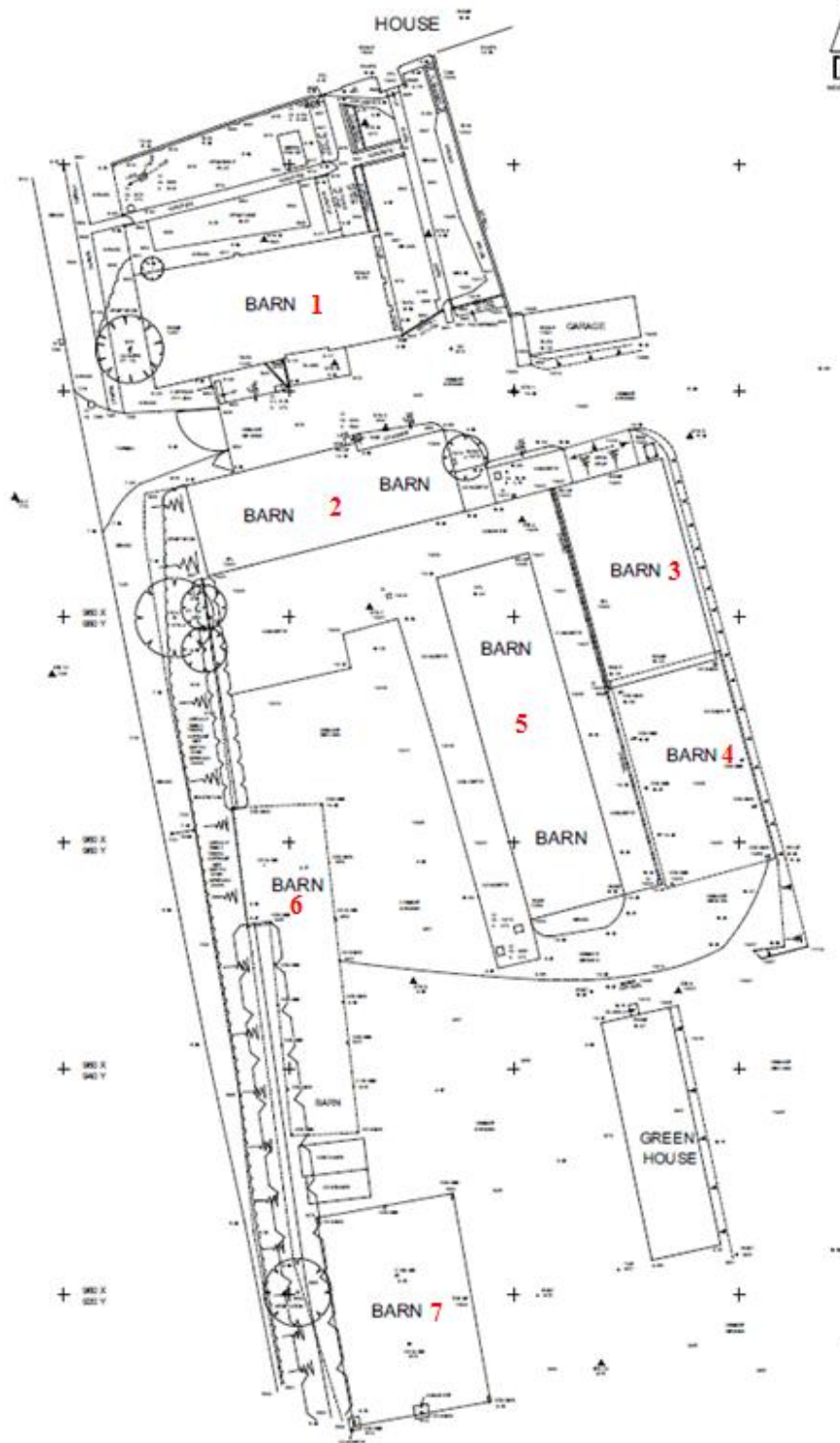


Figure 8

Plan of entire site showing 20th century farm buildings to south of entrance with farmhouse to north. Structures 2-7 consist of single-storied cement-block pig sheds and steel-framed Dutch barns, but all were described as barns for the purpose of this survey (by East Anglian Land Surveys Ltd). The numbers serve to identify the buildings in the photographic record.

Photographic Schedule and Appendix follows on pp. 10-19

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from B1064 to south showing Rodbridge Corner in rear to left and farm entrance on right.
2. Farm Entrance from south showing late-20th century cement-block storage shed (1b) to left with 19th century vehicle shed (1) to right.
3. Farm entrance from south-east showing red-brick farmhouse in rear to right with vehicle shed (1) in centre and Barn 2 on left.
4. Site entrance from east showing B1064 in rear with late-20th century cement-block Barn 2 on left and Barn 1 to right.
5. Exterior from south-east of mid-19th century vehicle shed (1) showing adjoining 20th century sheds (1a & 1b) to left.
6. Southern external gable of vehicle shed (1) showing double doors with 20th century lean-to (1a) on left.
7. Detail of southern external gable of vehicle shed (1) showing ostensibly original double doors respected by closers in the brickwork.
8. Cement rendered eastern exterior of vehicle shed (1) rebuilt in circa 1980 and recessed behind original brick corners to left and right.
9. Detail of circa 1980 eastern exterior of vehicle shed (1) showing ends of secondary joists and supporting rail.
10. Detail of circa 1980 recessed eastern exterior of vehicle shed (1) showing tiles covering remains of original flint-rubble wall.
11. Northern external gable of vehicle shed (1) showing 20th century window and ostensibly secondary door.
12. Detail of ostensibly secondary door with Portland cement pointing to jambs in northern external gable of vehicle shed (1).
13. Eastern exterior of vehicle shed (1) from south-east showing its close proximity to the mid-19th century red-brick farmhouse on the right.
14. Northern exterior of Barn 1 showing vehicle shed (1) to left & 20th century cement-block sheds sharing same flint-rubble plinth to right.
15. Northern exterior of Barn 1 showing its flint-rubble plinth possibly surviving from an earlier yard wall.
16. Yard to north of Barn 1 viewed from west with 19th century red-brick wall to left and double-pile farmhouse in rear.

17. Interior of vehicle shed (1) from north showing secondary ceiling of deal joists supported by two axial iron posts.
18. Detail from north of lateral joist of deal ceiling in vehicle shed (1) showing empty rebates for rearranged joists to left.
19. Interior of vehicle shed (1) from east showing painted deal ceiling joists with late-20th century inserted stair to right.
20. Interior of vehicle shed (1) from west showing eastern wall entirely rebuilt in cement block-work in circa 1980 & northern door to left.
21. Interior of vehicle shed (1) from north-west showing two axial iron posts supporting ceiling with southern gable doors in rear.
22. Northern internal gable of vehicle shed (1) showing rebates for rearranged joists above ostensibly secondary door.
23. Western interior of vehicle shed (1) showing original brickwork and doorway with later infill on right.
24. Southern internal gable of vehicle shed (1) showing secondary ceiling and central post interrupting original entrance.
25. Interior of vehicle shed (1) from west showing blocked trap for earlier stair in south-eastern corner of ceiling.
26. Concrete floor of vehicle shed (1) viewed from north with southern entrance doors in rear.
27. Late-20th century stair in north-western corner of vehicle shed (1) with rebates for removed joists to left and right.
28. Interior from north of loft above vehicle shed (1) showing entirely new roof structure of circa 1980.
29. Interior of southern gable of vehicle shed (1) from loft showing floor interrupting original entrance with new studwork of circa 1980 above.
30. Interior of northern gable of vehicle shed (1) from loft showing original brickwork with new window & studwork of circa 1980 above.
31. Eastern interior of vehicle shed (1) from loft showing boarding concealing new wall fabric of circa 1980.
32. Western interior of vehicle shed (1) from loft showing original brickwork and modern stair.
33. Western exterior of vehicle shed (1) from adjoining 20th century lean-to (1a) showing original door to left.
34. Detail of original doorway in western exterior of vehicle shed (1) showing later brickwork reducing width on left.

35. Interior from south of lean-to shed (1a) adjoining vehicle shed (1) showing cement block-work to left.
36. Interior from north of lean-to shed (1a) adjoining vehicle shed (1) showing cement block-work to right.
37. Interior from south of storage shed (1b) showing 19th century northern wall in rear.
38. Interior from east of storage shed (1b) showing late-20th century softwood and cement block fabric with original northern wall to right.
39. Eastern interior of storage shed (1b) showing low door in cement block wall adjoining lean-to shed (1a).
40. Detail of original 19th century northern internal wall of storage shed (1b) showing secondary window.
41. Barn 2 from east showing cement-block fabric with vehicle shed (1) to right.
42. Barn 5 from north showing cement-block fabric with Barn 3 on left and Barn 2 on right.
43. Barn 3 from north showing fabric of cement block-work and boarding with Barn 5 to right.
44. Garage from south-west showing Barn 3 on right and farmhouse in rear to left.
45. 1960s southern section of farm buildings from south showing Barn 5 to right and Dutch Barn 6 to left.
46. Western exterior of Barn 5 from south-west showing cement-block fabric of much altered 1960s pig sheds.
47. Southern section of farm yards from north showing Barn 5 to left and steel frame of Barn 7 in rear to right.
48. Dutch Barn 4 from south showing Barn 5 to left with farmhouse in rear.

Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 13-19

Appendix 2 (pp. 13-19): Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. A general view of the site from the B1064 to the south showing Rodbridge Corner in the rear left and the farm entrance with 'Barn 1' on the right.



Illus. 2. The farm entrance from the south-east showing the red-brick farmhouse in the rear to the right, Barn 1 in the centre and the cement-block wall of Barn 2 on the left.



Illus. 3. The southern exterior of Barn 1 showing the original double doors of the mid-19th century vehicle shed (1) respected by closers (quarter bricks) in both brick jambs. These doors are interrupted internally by the secondary ceiling, and the gable window dates from the alterations of *circa* 1980. The lean-to shed adjoining on the left (1a) and the yellow-painted workshop beyond (1b) were built on the site of the 19th century sheds depicted on the Ordnance Survey of 1958 (figure 6).



Illus. 4. The cement-rendered eastern wall of the vehicle shed (1) rebuilt in *circa* 1980 and recessed behind its original brick corners to left and right. The original wall is understood to have consisted of flint-rubble, and the pantiles at ground level protect the remains of its foundation. The treble-tiled roof also dates only from *circa* 1980.



Illus. 5. The northern external gable of the vehicle shed (1), showing its 20th century window and an ostensibly secondary door with cement-mortared brick jambs interrupting the flint-rubble plinth.



Illus. 6. The northern exterior of Barn 1 showing the vehicle shed (1) to the left and the surviving red-brick and flint-rubble wall of the contemporary buildings on the site of the lean-shed (1a) and storage shed (1b). The rest of these two structures dates only from the second half of the 20th century. The flint-rubble plinth may have been retained from an earlier yard wall, although there is no obvious sign of this on the tithe map.



Illus. 7. The interior of the vehicle shed (1) from the north showing its early-20th century secondary ceiling of painted deal joists supported by two axial iron posts. The lateral joists to the left have been altered as the principal joist is rebated for earlier axial joists. The stair to the right is a late-20th century insertion.



Illus. 8. The interior of the vehicle shed (1) from the north-west showing its two axial iron posts with the southern gable doors in the rear and the cement-block fabric of the eastern wall on the left. The floor consists entirely of 20th century concrete.



Illus. 9. The original entrance doors in the southern gable of the vehicle shed (1) now partly blocked by the later ceiling and its central supporting post.



Illus. 10. The top of the original entrance doors in the southern gable of the vehicle shed (1) as seen from the loft. The window and studwork above the original brickwork are part of the alterations of *circa* 1980, as is the entire roof structure.



Illus. 11. The interior from the north of the 20th century lean-to shed (1a) showing the original side door of the vehicle shed (1) on the left. This doorway is respected by closers in the brickwork but has been reduced in width by inserting a new brick pier to its left. The right-hand (western) wall of this shed consists of cement block-work.



Illus. 12. A detail of the original 19th century northern internal wall of the workshop (1b) showing its secondary window. The rest of the shed consists of cement block-work and represents a 20th century reconstruction on the site of the 19th century sheds to which this wall belonged.



Illus. 13. The mid-20th century farm buildings to the south of the site entrance, viewed from the south. An open-sided steel-framed Dutch Barn (Barn 4) is shown to the right of the much altered single-storied range of cement-block pig sheds (Barn 5). Included for site context.



Illus. 14. The mid-20th century farm buildings to the south of the site entrance, viewed from the north. Barn 5 is shown in the centre with Barn 3 on the left and Barn 2 on the right. These cement-block structures were built to house pigs in the 1960s and are not of historic significance. Included for site context.