

10.6 West



Plate 16. The Barn (Area 1), west elevation facing east



Plate 17. The Barn (Area 1), West Elevation, 1st Floor, Internal, Small Window (facing west)

A small single casement window is located on the first floor of the west elevation just below the wall plate and between the studs; it may be a later addition, as it has no

definitive surround. A second modern window has been installed on the ground floor, with the construction of the workshop.

The bay division to the north is in good condition. Although it has been repaired over time, the repairs have been sympathetic and the overall appearance is a fair indication of what it would once have been.



Plate 18. The Barn (Area 1), 1st floor, east section of the central bay division, facing north



Plate 19. The Barn (Area 1), 1st floor, central section of bay division, facing north

10.7 The Ancillary Building (Area 2)



Plate 20. The Ancillary Building (Area 2), South Elevation, External (facing north)



Plate 21. Ancillary Building (Area 2) - Brick floor, facing west



Plate 22. The Ancillary Building (Area 2), West Elevation, Internal (facing west)

Plate 12. The Ancillary Building (Area 2), The Brick Floor (facing west).

The Ancillary Building to the north elevation is known by the current owner as 'The Cattle Shed'. The name may have some connection to its historical use. It measures 15 ft. x 40 ft. and would have been large enough for ten cattle. It is a timber-framed structure built in the same fashion as the Barn, with a brick floor and thatched roof that was replaced in the 1950's with an asbestos sheet roof. It is open to the east and south, where the yard would have been. The yard boundary is still maintained with hedges and trees. The Ordnance Survey maps show that this building has been significantly reduced from its former size and the current owner has memory of it being dismantled and rebuilt. Therefore, the construction has little historical merit.

10.8 Conclusion

The Barn has been largely altered to suit various stages of occupation and use and has been maintained in the fashion of an external working farm building with the use of recycled materials crudely fit to purpose. The Ordnance Survey map shows that the Barn may have been renewed or dismantled and reconstructed between 1838 and 1874 to suit the new farmyard layout and this may have been the time when the brick plinth was added. The brick plinth is a feature of both barns but was probably constructed in stages as Strelley Barn and Barn (Area 1) meet at a butt-joint. Luckyn's Bricklayer's Shop and Aylett's Carpentry Shop were both within the grounds and were probably responsible for the construction of the brick plinth and the alterations to the Barn. At the time of the current owners occupation, the area that contains the manger was divided in two by a screen wall to create two stalls.

The Barn, at one time joined with buildings on the west elevation (cartsheds and a pigsty: Murray) but around 1954, during the conversion of Crodons Barn to a residential dwelling, these buildings were demolished and the barn was partitioned from Strelley Barn.

The result of these changes is that though the timbers may be older, the existing frame of the Barn probably dates from between 1838 and 1874 and the north elevation has probably suffered the least structural change.

10.9 Additional Information

The current owner supplied photographs and recollections detailing the construction of the buildings in the 1950's, which assisted in discovering the original farmyard layout. While the other buildings that made up the farmyard are not nominated structures in this building recording, it is worth noting some points for historical reference.

Crodons Barn, west gable end is constructed entirely of brick and three brick buttresses support the building to the south; a feature also found to the rear of the brick built barn that sits opposite. The owner believes that Crodons Barn had double doors to the north elevation and the south midstrey had a cat slide roof on each side. There was evidence of holes in the posts to support the building during the brick plinth construction. Staddle Stones still survive as garden ornaments and may have supported an earlier granary.

There is a clear division in ground level between the garden area and the area that borders Strelley Barn partly created by a gravel/hardcore base that lies beneath the lawn but also defined on the OS Maps as a boundary; whether the gravel base is a remnant of the yard or from military occupation is unknown. The shallow brick foundations and brick floor of the long rectangular buildings that ran alongside the east boundary wall are still in situ. Between these buildings and Crodons Barn is an arched opening in the boundary wall that would have accessed the garden sited behind the stable buildings. On the other side of the east boundary wall was a glass house with a vine and the remains of small box-hedges and just beyond this were the foundations of a 'Tudor' building (there is no documentation to date this).

The original southern brick garden wall is the property boundary and beyond this were the remains of the rectangular sections that made up the gardens.

The brick built barn, known as "the Tudor Barn" sits opposite and also has buttresses to the north elevation. The floor is part brick, part cobble and it contains a loose box to the west and a 'manger' that could have accommodated some sixteen animals. Construction scars on the external west elevation are from a building that once extended towards the west.

Strelley barn had a threshing floor with full height double doors to both east and west elevations and a roof projection to the west. A lean-to building on the west elevation, built on brick pad-stones was probably a granary. In photographs taken in 1950's, several lean to buildings could be seen on the west elevation of the Barn (Area 1) and Strelleys Barn. The main barn roofs were peg tiles but the lean-to buildings were slate and one of the buildings to the west of Strelley Barn was a tiled hip roof. According to notes kept by the previous owner this building measured 9 yds x 7 yds.

The Barn (Area 1) had a brick floor and a full height opening to the west that mirrored the midstrey. This is still visible in a break in the plinth. The area that contains the manger was divided into two stalls. The buildings to the west were cart sheds and a pigsty and were probably thatched.

A Well is sited within the yard area of the Ancillary Building Area 2 and the owner is still in possession of the yard pump that was sited to the south of the brick built barn. The small building adjacent and to the west of the Ancillary Building (Area 2) is still standing

and is timber construction, weather-boarded, but without a brick plinth. The area adjacent to the entrance gate that is shown on the OS Map as a square yard was known as the village 'pound'.

To the rear of the main house was a kitchen, which may have been the site of the brew house and the gun room and kennels.

10.10 The arrangement of the yard and use of the buildings

The main principle of farming in the 18th and 19th Century was that buildings whose usefulness depended on each other, be sited close together to minimize the waste of labour and resources. It was also suggested that working cattle should be kept away from the cows of the domestic dairy and these in turn should be kept separately from the feeding stock. Pigs and poultry should have their own area and there should be a working yard to store the working implements of the farm e.g. tools, carts etc. The tallest building should be placed to give shelter from the wind but not so that it interfered with the rays of the sun. Animal shelter was encouraged to improve the quality of the stock but also the quality of the manure as the roof prevented the rain from watering it down and the most important constituents being flushed away.

11.0 DISCUSSION

11.1 The Manor of Woodham Mortimer has seen over one thousand years of change in society, farming and agriculture. At the time of Robert de Mortimer, farmsteads began to nucleate, villages formed and the familiar landscape of village, manor house and church appeared. Markets attracted merchants and crafts and skills developed and prospered. Sheep populations increased for wool and cloth production and rabbits, pheasants and deer were introduced; commercial rabbit warrens continued for over 800 years. In farming, the open field system, developed by the Saxons, grew popular due to its social and economic advantages, encouraging experimentation with crop rotation. Farm buildings were for the preparation and storage of crops and the housing of oxen and were re-used and repaired and sited for convenience. Woodland was largely coppiced. The Mortimer family would have prospered from the export of cloth and grain and the sale of timber from their lands.

11.2 Three hundred years later, the rise in population meant that corn prices were high and labour was cheap. Wool exports had risen to a peak and in 1561, when Andrew Corbet sold the Manor to Leonard Sandel of Hatfield Peverel. The need for produce put

the farming system under huge pressure and lands went years without a fallow break. Horses became common and replaced oxen, leading to the emergence of stables in the yard. At this time the Manor passed into the Talbot family.

11.3 Within one hundred years the farming economy had collapsed. The famine of 1315-22 and the plague in 1348-50 decimated the population and led to vast areas of land returning to pasture or reverting to scrub or woodland. The Manor went through several Lords as many died without issue and it invariably passed down the female line. Following the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, changes in society meant that lords who had previously been direct producers, became landlords, renting their land to tenant farmers.

11.4 By 1600 the Manor had passed from the Harris family to the Mildmays by marriage and farming had recovered, although it was largely subsistence and efforts were directed towards improving yields through enclosure and enhanced fertility. Crop rotation was employed with intervening years providing fodder for the livestock in the form of peas, beans and vetch, increasing the production of manure and so the fertility of the land. Fields were enclosed for sheep grazing to produce more manure.

11.5 The 17th century saw dramatic changes in farming. The manor passed to the Tyrells by marriage and clearly prospered, as we find the first reference to Woodham Mortimer Place, the 100 Sq ft. mansion, built to extend the medieval building that still survives as the east wing of the house. Stock and fertility had improved and Britain had become a net exporter of food. The seed drill was invented reducing waste and the four course crop rotation developed by Turnip Townsend provided fodder for wintering livestock and manured the ground. Farmers took advantage of their topography and regional specialties began to emerge. Small farmers, unable to compete, sold out to larger landowners. The animals were housed according to their use and dispensability; the working animals, oxen and horses are well fed and dry housed and sheep and pigs are free-range.

11.6 Christopher Oxley- Parker would have seen the most rapid change in technology, with the advent of new canals, roads and railways.

Financial sophistication allowed the landowner to take a new perspective in farming and to invest in reaping and threshing machines, ploughs and drills. These new machines were expensive and needed housing, either by changing the use of an existing building or by building new purpose-made structures. The farm buildings would have undergone a change of use or the farmyard adapted to suit the direction the farm was taking.

We know from records that early on, under Christopher's direction, the farm relied on rent from tenant farming, wood and wheat crop from the Manor's own lands.

This changed through his lifetime to a profit share from the tenant farmers and a diversion into the breeding and trading of livestock.

John Oxley-Parker continued this trend and it seems that the livestock farming took precedent and the crop was produced for fodder and subsistence.

Christopher Oxley-Parker continued to breed livestock, but for reasons unknown, he made the decision to stop farming at the Manor; the livestock and equipment were sold off and the Manor continued purely as a residence.

The Oxley-Parkers were large employers within the local community, employing up to 75 people in a population of some 300. They were of local and County importance, with an influence that stretched to Suffolk, London and Devonshire; personally invested in the church, school and local village, as well as its inhabitants and the wider agricultural community. They had a hands-on approach to farming and were well-respected agriculturists, agents and landlords.

It is difficult to establish from earlier maps the accurate layout of the farmyard. Our first real glimpse is in the 1838 Tithe maps and although several adjustments take place in the angling of the existing buildings, the division of yards and the growth and reduction of small outbuildings the farmyard retains its original plan. It is probable that the early farmyard was primarily designed for the production of wheat and corn and the housing of working animals and was later adapted by Christopher Oxley-Parker for the breeding of livestock and by John Oxley-Parker for the stabling and breeding of horses.

Elizabeth Oxley-Parker was a keen beekeeper and we know from records that she grew plants that were attractive to bees. Old Smee, was a dedicated gardener, successfully participating in local shows, therefore it is probable that between them they developed the gardens and glasshouses.

12.0 CONCLUSION

12.1 The farmyard has lost over 50% of its original form and the buildings that survive have been continually adapted and no longer make any sense as a working part of the farmyard, without the benefit of the maps and historical documents.

The south elevation of the Barn (Area 1) is hidden behind a modern concrete wall that forms the partition from Strelley Barn. The west elevation must have undergone a considerable amount of reworking in the 1950's to remove the buildings that joined it, close the opening and install a new window. The north elevation is probably the best-preserved section of the building with areas of brick floor and the later manger still in situ.

From the maps it is possible that the barn was either, dismantled and completely rebuilt, or it was renewed some time between 1838 and 1874; the OS map of 1838 shows that it is a timber/iron building, however the OS map of 1874 shows it as a brick/stone building set at an angle, therefore it is probable that it was rebuilt with the new brick plinth between these times. There was much emphasis at that time in farming books regarding the placement of buildings to benefit from the sun for light and thermal energy, and the wind for shielding and airflow, and this may have prompted the adjustments to the layout. The maps also confirm that the cattle-shed has been significantly reduced and is now no more than a third of the size that it was in 1838, and no more than a half of what it was in 1874. The present owner has memory of it being dismantled and reconstructed. The construction of the Barn still retains areas of originality and interest; the manger is a good example of the type and style popular in the 19th century and suggests that the barn held livestock rather than crop.

The importance of the buildings is not in their construction, which is partly modern and re-configured, but their place in the history of the Woodham Mortimer Estate. The PDA has not only seen the general development of farming and agriculture and the rise and fall of families over a period of 1000 years, but also the specific reactions of one small village estate to those changes and the steady rise of the Oxley-Parker dynasty that resided there and personally ensured that Woodham Mortimer Place remained the hub of a small community over a period of nearly three-hundred years.

Fig.10 Plan of Site

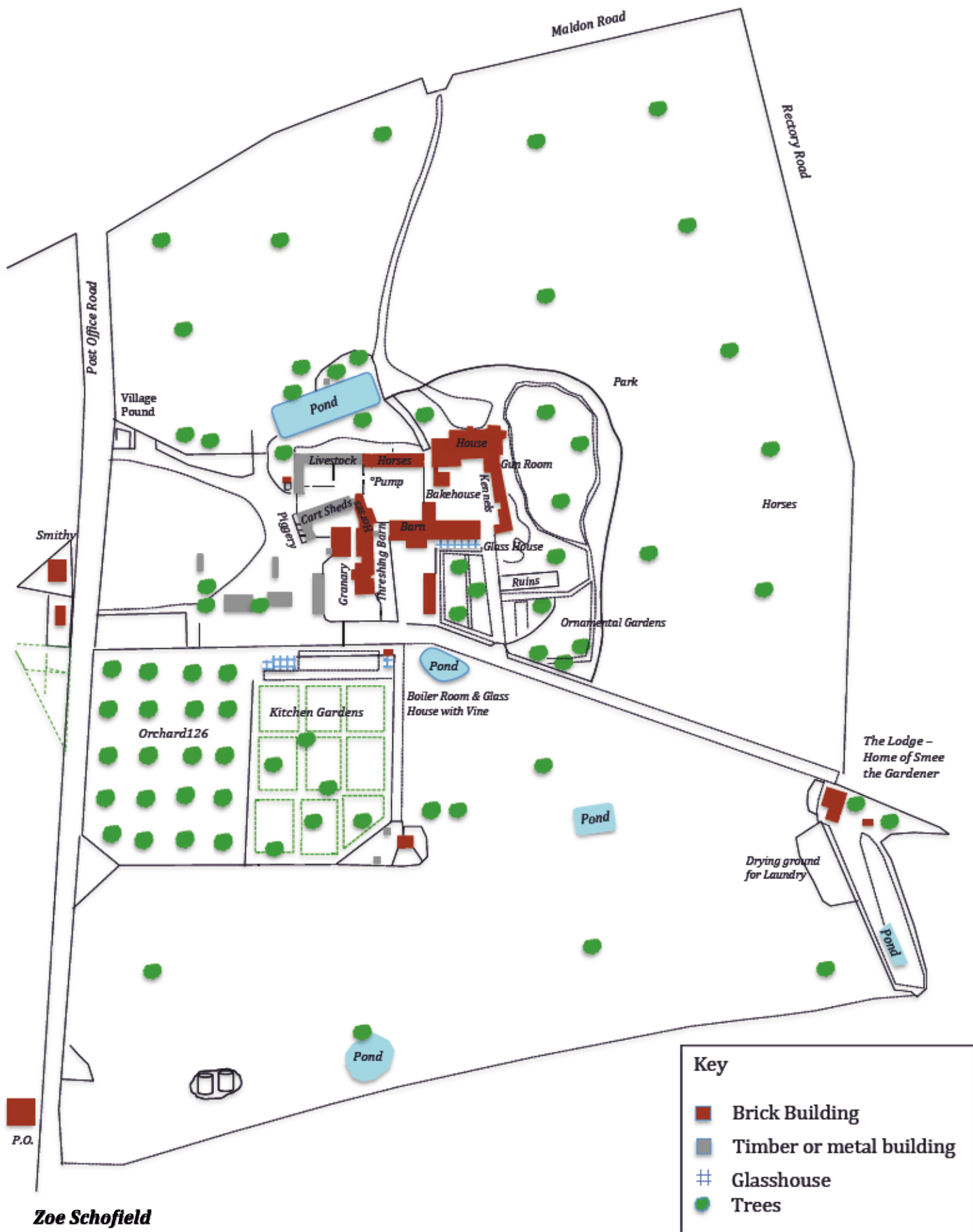
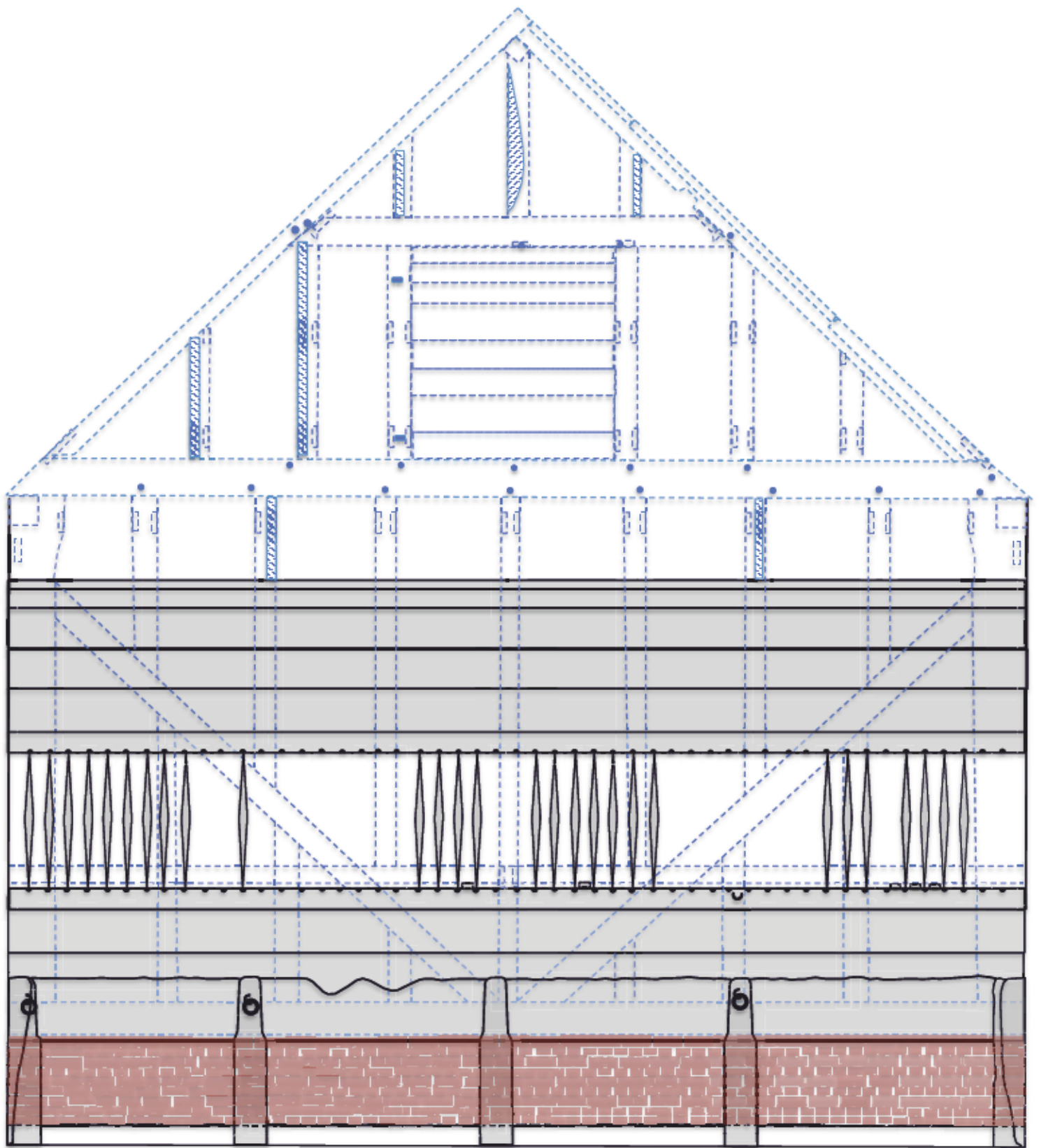


Fig.9

Drawing 1: Crodons Barn - North Elevation - Internal view - Facing North



Blue - Timber frame construction of Barn (Area 1) on brick plinth
Black and Grey -Manger and feeder

Scale 1:100
Zoe Schofield
November 2015

13.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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14.2 Maps

Chapman and Andre Map of Essex 1777

Tithe Award map of 1838 26.6 " to 1 mile

Robert Baker Surveyor, Writtle 1838 13.3" to 1 mile

1st Edition OS Map 1874 25"

2nd Edition OS Map 1897 25"

Dudley Stamp's Land Utilization Survey 1931 - 35

County Series OS Map 1:2500, 1922

County Series OS Map 1:2500, 1962

County Series OS Map 1:2500, 1968

County Series OS Map 1:2500, 1989 – 1993

County Series OS Map 1:2500, 1993

15.0 ARCHIVE

15.1 The archive is held at The Ridings, White Elm Road, Danbury, Essex CM3 4LR. The photographs, maps, historical documents and report are digital; the drawings are both paper and digital. This report has also been uploaded to the OASIS site.