



# Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Archaeological building recording at Mulberry  
Barn, Queen Eleanor Road, Geddington  
Northamptonshire**

**February 2014**



# Mulberry Barns, Geddington

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## Archaeological building recording at Mulberry Barn, Queen Eleanor Rd, Geddington, Northamptonshire

Iain Soden BA MIfA

### Summary

This simple barn, now of two storeys but once single-storeyed, was probably built before 1810. It was gradually surrounded by other farm buildings, related to the former West Farm and West End House. It may have been heightened at some point. The farming link began to dissipate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A garage replaced a farm building on its north side. It was converted to a potential business purpose after 1979 when a first floor was inserted into the existing shell. It is now to be converted for residential use.

### Introduction

Mrs Joanne Wright has received consent from Kettering Borough Council to convert Mulberry Barn into residential accommodation (KET/2013/0548). Although not a listed building, Mulberry Barn began life associated with the former West End House, the Georgian Grade II listed farmhouse of the former West Farm, Geddington. The former curtilage of the farm was broken up long ago as most of the other former buildings of the farm have been converted to residential use.

The barn stands at NGR: SP 8932 8320 and lies midway between the farm's original frontage to the south (West Street) and Queen Eleanor Road on the north, which was until the 20<sup>th</sup> century merely a back lane. Queen Eleanor Road today forms the only access to the barn and another converted farm building on the plot, in the same ownership.

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Fig 1: Site location (arrowed).

Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown Copyright and database right, 2014.

The current report is the result of a programme of English Heritage Level 2 – compliant building recording carried out in accordance with a planning condition and set out in a “Brief for a programme of archaeological building recording at Mulberry Barns, Queen Eleanor Road, Geddington, Northamptonshire” issued by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council and dated 27 January 2014. The scope of the undertaking was set out in an answering Written Scheme of Investigation by I S Heritage (2014). Fieldwork was carried out on 31 January 2014.

## Historic Maps

There is a fine run of historic maps surviving for Geddington. However, while Mulberry Barn is certainly shown with the rest of the farm on the 1886 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey, the scales of all the foregoing maps are so small that it cannot be identified with any certainty on all but one, the 1810 map by J. Eagle. It may be inferred from an almost amorphous ‘blot’ on the 1817 Ordnance Survey Surveyor’s drawing (Kettering sheet on [www.bl.org.uk](http://www.bl.org.uk)), but no more. The Pre-1886 maps are all unhelpful in this case. No documents have been found which relate specifically to the barn.

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Fig 2: The Eagle Map of 1810. The barn, aligned east-west, may just be discerned (arrowed) with farm buildings adjoining to both north and south.

West End Farm is mentioned in a relatively recent history of the village of Geddington (Rayne 1991, 58). At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the farm was worked by Thomas Dainty and comprised 150 acres.

*'There was a thatched cottage at the back of West End House, numerous Barns, Pigsties and other out buildings, stretching back to back Lane. The present cottages [No. 42-46] were also barns and grain stores then, so this area at one time was entirely farm orientated'.*

Rayne goes on to note that farming began to break down c1900. The farmhouse became a guest house and the farm buildings were split between different landed interests.

The barn began life as part of what has been characterised as a Dispersed Plan, to which additions were made which (eventually here) regularised the layout. The barn belongs to the period of greatest English agricultural expansion, 1750-1850 (HELM 2006, 26 and 41).

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## The Barn

Mulberry barn is a single rectangular crop barn constructed of coursed limestone rubble with stressed ashlar quoins in the same stone. It measures c16m x 6.5m in plan.



Fig 3: Mulberry barn from the north side. Note the inserted row of windows at first floor; scale 1m

On the north side is a modern pair of barn doors within an original hay-wain entrance. A corresponding entrance on the south was blocked up in recent decades but can be seen in an aerial photograph taken c1979.



Fig 4: An aerial photo of c1979 from the owner's own collection. Note the barn doors blocked in the recent conversion and the virtual absence of features in the west gable.

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The building has a roof of corrugated asbestos which probably dates to the period c1950-70. All of the trusses and rafters are machine-sawn softwood and all which were seen appear to relate to this roof covering. The floor is concrete. There are owl holes high in each gable which are probably original. The barn formerly had three north-facing ventilation windows at ground-floor level, two of which are blocked where they face into a later adjoining building, and a single one facing south. Two additional south-facing examples were inserted into the stonework which was used to block the former south-facing cart doorway, again after c1979.



Fig 5: The added garage, partly occupying the footprint of an earlier agricultural building; scale 1m

A secondary building was added to the north side of the barn before 1886 (in all probability before 1810) but which was subsequently knocked down. It was replaced after 1979 by a wider, taller example which was designed as a double garage for the bungalow which today forms the other residence on the plot, itself a re-configured footprint of a farming structure. Apart from its east wall, which forms a boundary, the entire garage, which is of stone, blockwork and brick, with a ceramic tile roof, is modern. Above it, a corresponding cross-gable in the barn has had its stonework restored.

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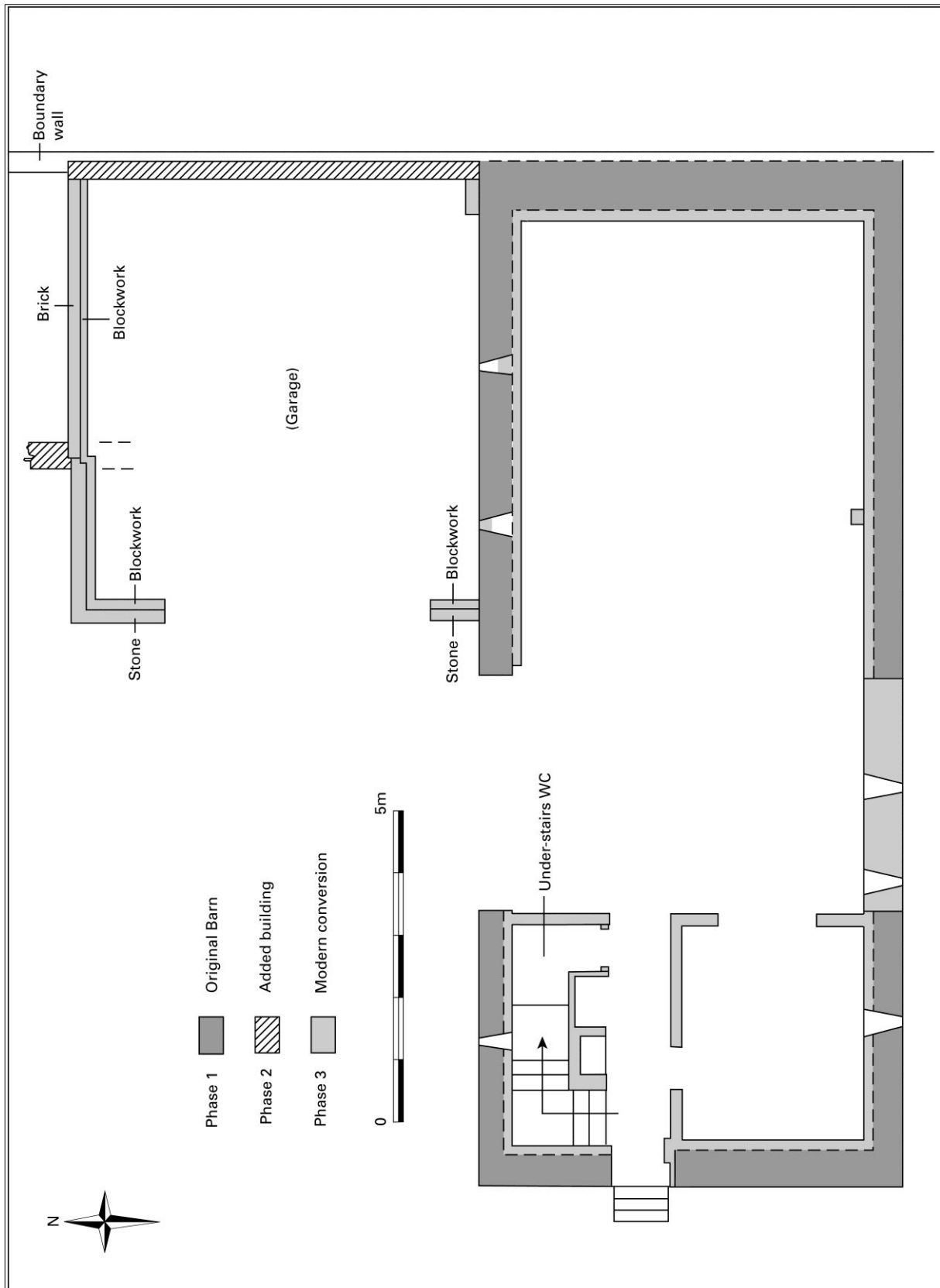


Fig 6: The barn, plan with ground floor insertions (Andy Isham)



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The barn was converted after 1979 for business/commercial use and the entire interior is modern. No historic fabric is visible anywhere inside. At the west end, conversion involved the piercing of three circular oculi in the gable, which light a discrete first floor room there. Elsewhere the majority of first floor space is dimly lit by insertion of a row of mock ventilator windows. This conversion is accessed at ground level via a doorway piercing the west gable.



Fig 7: The modern interior at first-floor level. Note one of the inserted oculi visible in the end gable.

At first floor level, in common with the ground floor. There is no historic fabric visible.

On the north side of the barn part of a course of ashlar at high level may denote an early raising of the roof. It may be argued that the long walls under the eaves have been raised, as the prominent ashlar quoins change size markedly at that point, but no change is apparent in the gable so the evidence is equivocal.

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Fig 8: An ashlar course may denote a previous change. The west gable doorway is modern as are the gable windows; scale 1m

## Conclusions

This simple crop barn retains minimal historic significance or detailing, although it probably dates before c1810 and may be contemporary with the former farmhouse it once served at West End House. It is a visually-imposing structure on the outside, but a previous conversion to commercial premises has removed any interior space relating to its intended function.

## Bibliography

HELM 2006 *Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement: East Midlands Region*.

I S Heritage, 2014 *A Written Scheme of Investigation for level 2 building recording and analysis at Mulberry barns Geddington, Northamptonshire*.

Mordue L, 2014 *Brief for a programme of archaeological building recording at Mulberry Barns, Queen Eleanor Road, Geddington, Northamptonshire*.

Rayne M, 1991 *Geddington as it was: a social history of a rural community*



I S Heritage, 14 February 2014

# Mulberry Barns, Geddington

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## Appendix 1: OASIS data

Project Name	Mulberry Barns, Geddington
OASIS ID	Iainsode1-232659
Project Type	Building recording
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	None
Current land use	Converted to office use
Development type	Conversion to residential
Reason for investigation	Planning condition
National grid reference	SP 8932 8320
Start/end dates of fieldwork	January – February 2014
Archive recipient	-
Study area	-