



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Archaeological building recording of former
farm buildings at Dovehouse Barns, formerly part of
Stanwick Hall Farm, Stanwick, Northamptonshire**

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Introduction

Part of a group of former farm buildings is being converted to residential use by the current owner Mrs I S Beeston. The remainder of the former complex is now under separate ownership and has previously been converted to similar usage. The range under consideration here comprises a single storey group which lies on the eastern side of the former complex (NGR: SP 9763 7110; Fig 1).

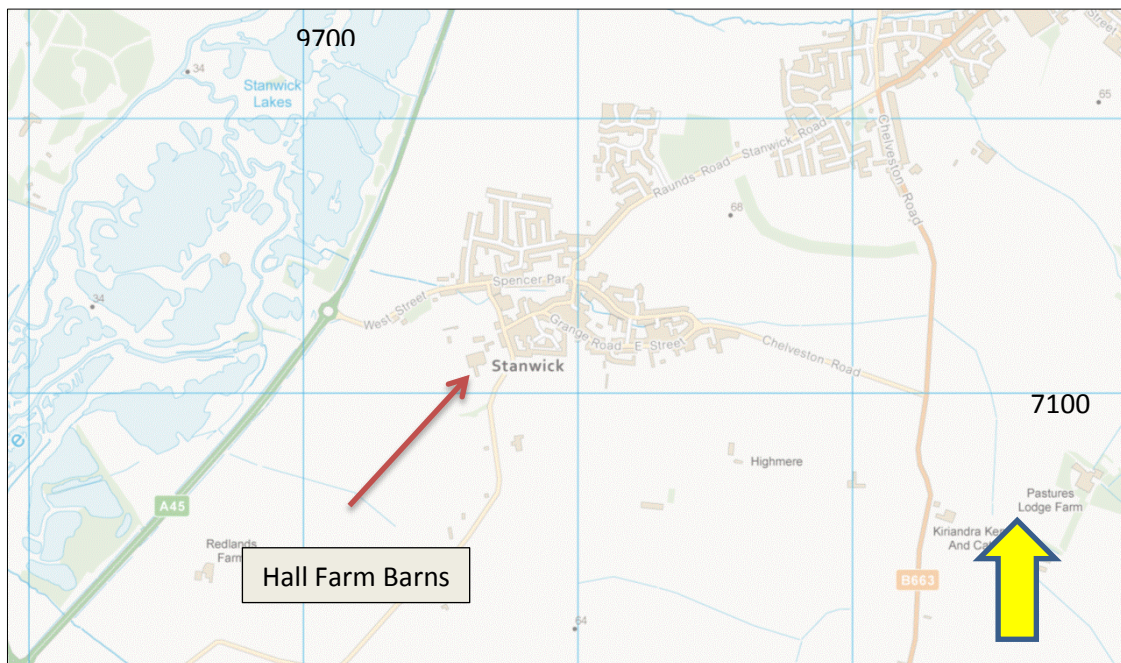


Fig 1: Site location. Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown Copyright and database right, 2017.

The buildings are not statutorily listed but are considered to be both a Heritage Asset and as they are historically related to a nearby Listed building may be considered as curtilage structures. The definition of what is covered by such a term is defined as:

'Any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948'

(Historic England guidelines notes).

Level 2 building recording (as defined by Historic England 2016) and related research was required by East Northamptonshire Council in a condition of planning consent advised by the Assistant Planning Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council.

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The aims and scope of the work were set out mirrored in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd and dated December 2017.

Fieldwork took the form of:

- Separate colour (digital) and black and white (film/negative) 35mm photographic records.
- Annotation and interpretation from verified architect's plans at 1:50 scale. (Internal measurements on site were verified for archaeological purposes using a Leica Disto-pro laser measurer. External measurements were verified by tapes and folding rule).
- Free-text notes.

Background

At the middle of the 19th century farming in Northamptonshire was reported to be in dire straits, with little care and attention paid to its farm buildings, even by most of the large estates. There were few notable exceptions, the Duke of Grafton's estates near Towcester being the only ones meriting praise (Bearn 1852, 85; Wade Martins 2002, 118).

The buildings of Stanwick Hall Farm comprise a complex of 19th-century Model Farm barns which describes in simple terms a Regular Courtyard E-plan, of which the following is said authoritatively of the type, with specific reference to the East Midlands:

'[They] were recommended from the mid-18th century and many are documented from this period, though no surviving examples can be dated before the 1790s. The earlier examples are courtyard or U-plan with the barn forming the central block and shelter sheds, stables and enclosed cow houses the two side wings. The fourth side was no more than a wall with a gateway, or contained further sheds or smaller buildings such as pigsties, or was distinguished by a house (usually looking away from the yard). From the 1820s and 1830s, extra yards made E or even double-E plans.'

'The ultimate examples of courtyard farmsteads are the planned and model farms of the late 18th- and 19th-century estates, the ideas for which were widely disseminated in textbooks and journals (Wade Martins 2002) they are generally associated with holdings over 150 acres, and are far less likely than the other plan types to be associated with other loose scatters of buildings' (HELM 2006, 42 [section 5.1.5]).

The farm is not depicted on the 1817 Ordnance Survey Surveyors Drawing (Wellingborough sheet; British Library), which is otherwise of sufficient scale to show such a complex. Nor does it appear on Bryant's map of Northamptonshire of 1827.

The first larger-scale survey of the parish of Stanwick is the Inclosure Map of 1838, formalising its 1834 parliamentary Inclosure. The village is well depicted but there are clearly no farm buildings of any sort at the appropriate location, which is the corner of a large 26-acre field in 'Nether Field' (the pre-Inclosure name) noted as an allotment to George Gascoyen Senior, Esq, at its junction with a plot attached to Stanwick Hall, called *Cherry Orchard* (NRO: Map 3020). Therefore the construction of the farm buildings may be safely dated after 1838.

No map depiction shows the farm before 1885. The farm is first depicted on the 1885 First edition Ordnance Survey map at 1:2500 scale, sufficient to show all the buildings, and the depiction is

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repeated again in 1900 (OS XXXIII.14; detail in Fig 2) and 1926. By the 1970s the two stockyards had become in-filled with a variety of lean-tos and free-standing farm sheds, since lost.

Most of the original farm ranges have now been converted to domestic accommodation and are divided up into different ownerships, and include new-build houses. The range of buildings surveyed for this report was originally connected to the rest of the complex but was separated from it relatively recently (see Fig 2, yellow section).

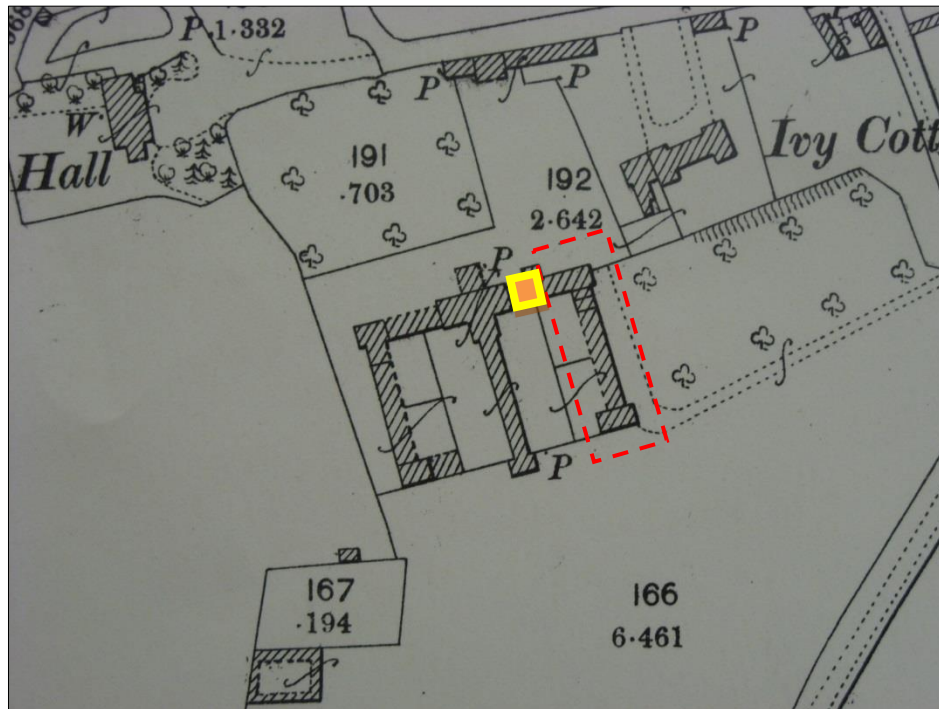


Fig 2: The 1900 Ordnance Survey map (the same detail is depicted on the 1885 ed.). The portion which is the subject of the current survey is boxed in red, the demolished section outlined in yellow.

The building recording survey

Recording took place on 1 December 2017. Full access was possible both internally and externally to the range under consideration. The buildings at this time had been scaffolded externally but an excellent series of digital photographs taken before this were available from the owners which provided a baseline record. The complex can be described as having three principal components. At the northern end a cross range which was truncated at the west as part of a previous conversion (see Figs 2 and 3). At the south end of the complex a short east-west two-room component terminates the range at that point. The eastern range is aligned almost north-south along its long axis, largely open on the western side.

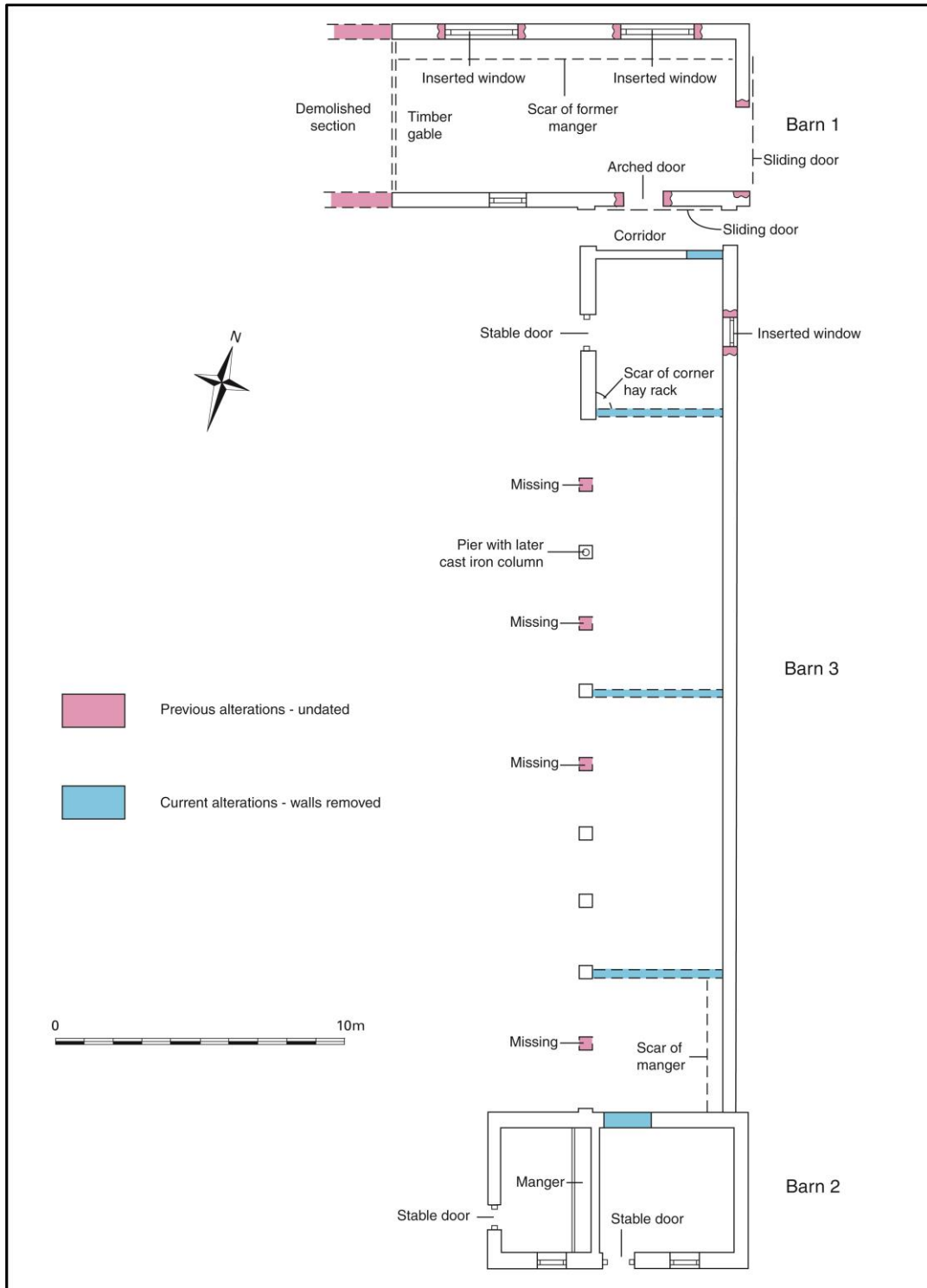


Fig 3: Plan of the (eastern arm) buildings under consideration (Andy Isham).

The whole complex, of which this was originally the integrated eastern portion, bears all the hallmarks of being constructed at the same time as part of a carefully designed farm. For ease of reference the separate elements have been numbered for identification with the two small east-west ranges being described first and the long north-south open-sided hovel last since that has suffered the most structural alteration.

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Barn 1

Located at the north-east corner of the complex this currently single space is a truncated surviving section of the original north range (Fig 3). The walls, both internally and externally, are constructed of coursed roughly dressed limestone with brick dressings around window and door openings and at the corners where they have been laid to give the appearance of quoins (Fig 4).



Fig 4: The north elevation of Barn 1 showing brick quoin dressings at corner and inserted window openings, looking south-west.

There is currently no west wall to this section which was originally linked to the remainder of the building group but which is now separated from it due to previous alteration. A former timber partition which temporarily closed-off this end was recently removed in anticipation of the construction of a new west gable wall. The north wall contains two inserted long and low windows set beneath timber lintels, probably trimmed re-used former railway sleepers, which have been utilised elsewhere throughout the complex where alterations have occurred (Fig 4).



Fig 5: Barn 1, the inserted east window of the north wall, looking north-east. 2m scale.

The window openings are both of the same shape and size and each has dressings at either side of red brick, but of modern hard brick similar to Flettons rather than the soft deep orange brick used originally. Internally the whole interior wall surface was limewashed, apart from a lower level skirting formed from modern cement render (Fig 5). Externally each has a sloping sill made from red clay tiles and internally a cement sill. The frames to each are of pine painted white, divided into eight, each with fixed panes.

Beneath was formerly located a manger positioned against the north wall, only the scar of the profile of which can now be seen against the east wall (see Figs 3 and 5).

The east wall of the barn has had a large opening inserted into it, possibly replacing an earlier opening or perhaps entirely new. It, like the windows has modern red brick dressings to the jambs and has a re-used sleeper as a lintel. From that lintel formerly hung an external sliding door, the only remnant of which is now a narrow groove in the sill of the opening.

The south wall of the barn contains one original window opening towards the west end. It has brick dressings to either side with a gauged brick lintel. The current frame and glazing is modern. Towards the eastern end of the same wall is a semi-circular arched opening, hung on the south side with a sliding door (Fig 6).



Fig 6: The sliding door closing the arched door from Barn 1 (left) into the corridor (right), looking north-east; 1m scale.

The archway, although constructed in a similar method to those which form the openings at either end of the corridor into which it leads, is constructed of different brick to that used in the original elements of the building. The original brick is of a rougher texture and a more consistent colour whereas the bricks used here contain pale pink bands, similar to Flettons (see Fig 6, left jamb). The sliding door on the south side within the adjacent corridor is hung from an iron rail but has been made from two smaller hinged doors fixed open to create one wider door. The lower half on the south side has had a metal plate fixed to it.

The roof of the range is of simple construction and is formed by closely set rafters reaching from the eaves to the ridge in a single length (see Fig 5 above). There are no purlins and the upper surface is covered by sarking boards laid horizontally. Each rafter is fixed to its pair by a single collar with a simple half-lap joint nailed together. The roof is protected by blue, probably Welsh, slates and has a blue clay ridge tile along its length.

There are two galvanised iron roof ventilators which have no internal grilles or coverings (see Fig 4). The vents are simple plate metal constructions with four broad slots on the sides capped by a conical roof. Such ventilators along the roof line were common features of nineteenth-century farm buildings as the supply of plenty of fresh air was considered to be essential for the healthy accommodation of livestock (ventilators were considered equally essential for children and are common features on school buildings of a similar date).

At the time of the site visit the floor had been replaced with concrete.

Barn 2

The southern barn group is also aligned east-west and terminates the barn group at the south-eastern corner of the complex (see Figs 2 and 3). Where this short east-west range is linked to the long north-south range the roof of Barn 2 underlies that of Barn 3. This is most evident in the surviving section of sarking boards which remain above the rafters on the north slope of the roof (Fig 7).



Fig 7: The north roof slope of Barn 2 covered with sarking boards, beneath the roof of Barn 3, looking south.

The same configuration exists where Barn 3 abuts Barn 1 at the north end. Here the south slope of the roof of Barn 1 is covered with sarking boards now concealed beneath the roof of Barn 3. It appears that it was easier to create the enclosed rooms of barns 1 and 2 by inserting the sarking boards rather than build separate internal gables at the north and south ends of Barn 3 since timber would have been cheaper than stone, and much quicker to build. When Barn 3 was roofed it was easier to simply leave off the slates on these two sections but leave the roof structure in place which formed enclosed rooms in the north and south cross ranges.

Barn 2 is constructed of the same materials and in the same way as Barn 1 (Figs 3 and 8).



Fig 8: Barn 2, looking north-east.

The south elevation has a central doorway flanked by two windows, one to each side. All openings are set beneath almost-flat segmental arches, more akin to gauged brick lintels, made from red brick which is used to form the dressings to the door jambs and quoins. High in the east and west gable walls are simple vertical slot air vents, also dressed with brick (see Figs 8 and 10). The roof is of slate over sarking boards (see above) and the ridge is covered by blue clay tiles. On this barn there are no ridge-mounted ventilators.

Internally the barn is divided into two almost equal parts (Fig 3). That on the eastern side was accessed through the door in the south wall and was lit by the window to its east. Nothing now remains internally to indicate its former use but it was most likely an animal shelter. The internal door and window jambs are all finished with bullnose bricks, a common usage where livestock was housed. The floor is modern concrete and the walls are lime-washed. An opening has been created in the north wall to connect this range with the adjoining one to the north.

The western room of Barn 1 is essentially the same though accessed via a doorway in the west gable wall (see Figs 3 and 8). The present door is modern but the frame is original and indicates that it originally supported a two-leaf stable door as two sets of hinges and latches survive in the frame. Against the east wall of the interior is a low trough or manger (Fig 9).



Fig 9: The manger in the west room of Barn 2, looking north-east. 2m scale.

The manger is constructed of red brick cement, rendered externally and internally for ease of cleaning. The outer rim is formed of large blue engineering brick blocks to provide a hard-wearing edge. Set along this rim are a series of iron tethering rings set into the joints between the blocks for tying livestock to. The height of the trough suggests that this room was designed to house calves since it appears to be rather low for cattle, much too low for horses, but at the same time too high for sheep or pigs. There is no indication that there was a hayrack above it on the same wall.

The floor is of modern concrete and the walls are lime-washed.

Barn 3

This long range spans between Barns 1 and 2 and forms the east side of the entire former complex (Fig 3). It is constructed of the same materials as the two other barn groups. Where the two ranges abut it can be observed that the coursing of the three separate groups is different; in Barns 1 and 2 the courses of stonework are distinctly horizontal as these buildings are located across the natural slope, whilst in Barn 3 the courses of the long east elevation fall with the natural slope of the ground (from south to north) on which the range is built (Fig 10).



Fig 10: The east gable of Barn 2 (left) and elevation of Barn 3 (right) showing disparate levels of stone courses, looking north-west.

The west side of the range originally comprised ten arched bays, formed by nine brick piers, facing onto a stockyard on that side at the southern end, one enclosed room at the north end and a narrow corridor immediately south of Barn 1 (Fig 3).

The corridor allowed access from the stockyard on the west side through the building to the eastern side. It does not appear to have had doors at either end, both openings being arched with no indications of frames.

The enclosed room at the north end was accessed from the west via a two-leaf stable door and does not appear to have originally had any windows, or if it did, only a small one in the east wall. There currently exists a window there today, but its jambs, sill and lintel indicate that it is modern, perhaps replacing an earlier version. The lack of windows might not be entirely surprising since sometimes rooms were designed to afford shelter for sick or injured animals where darkened spaces were considered to offer less stressful environments. Such rooms were often referred to as loose-boxes.

The original south wall has been removed as part of the present alterations but in the south-west angle of the room the scar of a corner hayrack survives in the cement render of the west wall which covers the lower portion of the interior wall surface (Fig 11).



Fig 11: The former room in Barn 3 with the scar of the corner hayrack, looking north-west.

The floor has been removed as part of the present alterations.

To the south of this room the remainder of the east range (Barn 3) was an open-sided hovel with nine free-standing brick piers and two engaged piers at the north and south ends which supported a series of ten shallow red brick arches (Fig 12). The bays were formerly divided into two four-bay sections and one two-bay section although the internal brick walls have been removed as part of the current alterations; the scars at the east and west ends reveal their former locations (Fig 3).

Four of the brick piers have been removed and which this has occurred the arches were removed also and replaced by timber lintels which spanned the wider openings. In all instances the lintels were re-used railway sleepers.

Towards the northern end of the range one brick pier had been replaced by a cast iron column although the brick plinth remained (Fig 3).



Fig 12: Barn 3, showing surviving brick piers and arches, looking north.

Each pier comprised a low square plinth topped by a stone block with chamfered upper edges on which the slightly narrower pier was built. All of the plinths and piers were constructed with bullnose bricks on all corners, as were the undersides of the shallow segmental soffits of the arches. At the time of the survey four of the plinths and piers were missing, having been previously removed although their locations could be observed in the ground.

No internal features survived in any of the formerly separate sections but a faint scar against the east wall of the southern portion indicates that there had been a manger against the wall in that location (Fig 3).

The roof is of the same configuration as those of Barns 1 and 2. The floor had been removed throughout and no other internal features were identified.

Conclusion

The three barns which comprise the former eastern components of the once integrated Model Farm at Stanwick Hall Farm are typical of agricultural buildings of the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century in both layout and materials. They are surprisingly like a similar group, albeit entirely built of red brick, known to the author of this report who grew up at Manor Farm, Stevington, Bedfordshire which was built by the Duke of Bedford in 1876. That complex had almost identical ranges of open-sided animal hovels facing onto stock yards with additional looseboxes, stables, cart hovels, food stores and a granary.

Such architect-designed agricultural buildings were hugely popular with wealthy landowners at that time but were relatively short-lived due to the dramatic fall in food prices caused primarily by the dramatic increase of imports from North America during the 1870's. The subsequent collapse in

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British farming took almost forty years to recover. That recovery was ironically prompted by the appalling consequences of the First World War including dreadful losses of farm workers in battle along with the isolation from foreign exports caused by enemy blockades which encouraged an increase in home-grown food.

A previous report on adjacent portions of the building complex has detailed other sections of the group which retained a greater proportion of the internal features (Soden 2013). That report revealed that the internal arrangements comprised features typical of the agricultural practises of the period and would have served a mixed arable and pastoral farming regime.

The degraded survival of this section of the complex has revealed little that can be ascribed specific function. However, it should be remembered that many farm buildings were considered multi-purpose spaces to be utilised as necessary throughout the farming year in whichever way was required at the time. The surviving structural elements remain largely as built in their overall plan with changes to the interiors along with some newer window and door openings. The date of those alterations is not clear but the use of materials suggests a mid-late twentieth-century date.

Their conversion for residential purposes is perhaps the most likely method of preservation in largely un-altered form, at least externally. Continued use for modern farming practises, particularly with the current use of very large machinery, makes their survival as farm buildings unlikely unless significantly altered.

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Glossary of architectural terms (taken mostly from Curl, Brunskill, Maclean and Scott, Friar)

Bullnose brick – A brick with one (though occasionally two) rounded edge/s. Used primarily in agricultural buildings on corners, door and window jambs to prevent livestock damaging itself on sharp corners.

Collar – In a roof, a horizontal member tying together a pair of inclined members, usually a principal rafter, common rafters or sides of a truss.

Eaves – Lowest part of a pitched roof projecting beyond the wall plane below.

Flettons – Common bricks made from the Oxford clays of the Peterborough area and widely used in the London and Midlands areas.

Gable – The triangular upper part of a wall supporting the end of a ridged roof.

Jamb – The side of a doorway, window or fireplace.

Lintel – A horizontal stone or timber beam spanning an opening and supporting the wall above.

Loosebox – A box or stable to house livestock, either cattle or horse, individually and untied.

Pier – A detached construction generally acting as a support from which arches spring.

Plinth – The low plain block under the base mouldings of a column, pedestal, pilaster or pier.

Purlin – A horizontal beam running parallel to the ridge of a roof and carrying the common rafters.

Quoin – At the external angle of a wall or building, quoins or quoin stones are the dressed stones forming the angle. Where brick and stone is used in combination the bricks can be laid in regular patterns to form the same.

Rafter - A sloping timber beam within the framework of a roof rising from the eaves to the ridge. Principal rafters are those which carry the purlins. Common rafters rest on the purlins and carry the laths supporting slates or tiles.

Sarking boards – Timber boards, not unlike floorboards, which are laid on top of rafters parallel to the eaves and ridge which take the place of roofing laths onto which slates or tiles are fixed.

Soffit – Visible underside of an arch or any exposed architectural element.

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Appendix *OASIS data*

Project Name	Stanwick Hall Farm Barns 2017
OASIS ID	iainsode1-304120
Project Type	Building Recording
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	In use as a building
Development type	Residential
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 9763 7110
Start/end dates of fieldwork	01-12-2017
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	500 sq m



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

15 December 2017