



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**An archaeological building record of former barns at
Marstan House Farm, Hannington, Northamptonshire.**

Joe Prentice

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

An archaeological building record of former barns at Marstan House Farm, Hannington, Northamptonshire.

Joe Prentice

Introduction

A group of farm barns located just off the A43 Kettering Road in the eastern part of the parish of Hannington, Northamptonshire has been recorded to Historic England Level 2 by Iain Soden Heritage Services for new owners prior to their proposed conversion for residential use, the work taking place in response to condition 8 of planning consent DA/2018/0967 (NGR: SP 82477 70841; Fig 1).

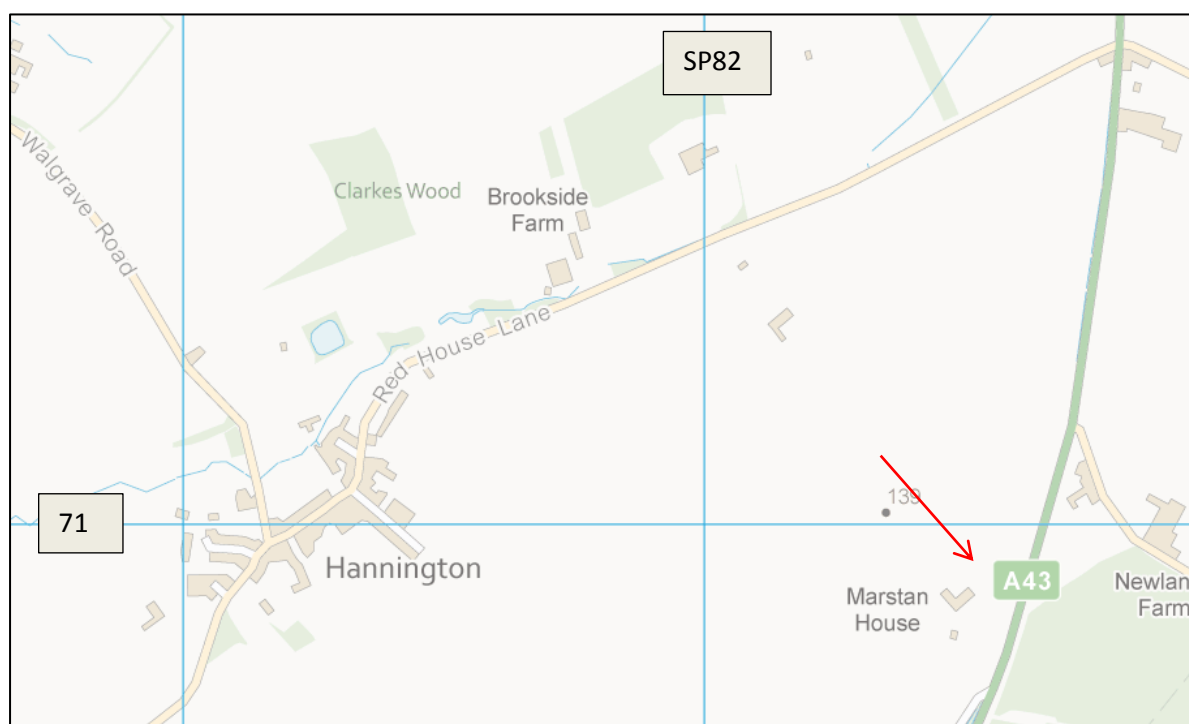


Fig 1: Site location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2019

The farm barns, which are not statutorily listed - but may be considered an undesignated heritage asset, are currently un-used and are associated with a nearby, but separate and later, farmhouse. That farmhouse was not part of the present survey.

The barns comprise an L-shaped group which for ease of reference will be referred to as lying in west and east ranges, although they are strictly aligned south-west to north-east and north-west to south-east. The western range is of two storeys and contains a simple two-up and two-down former farmhouse with a full-height store barn adjoining to its north. The eastern range is of only a single-storey and comprised animal shelters.

The whole group appears to be part of a single-phase farm constructed entirely from red brick with occasional use of stone dressings purely for structural purposes.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

The level of the record is in line with Level II as defined by the Historic England guidelines for the recording of historic buildings (Historic England 2016). The scope of the fieldwork, reporting and archive were set down in an approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

The barns were recorded on 5 December 2019 by Iain Soden and Joe Prentice in cold but dry weather conditions. All parts of the building group were accessible apart from the attic space of the farmhouse portion.

Historical background

The farm is located on the far eastern border of the parish of Hannington close to Hardwick Wood which lies to the east and although it shares the name of the former parish in broad terms, it is too far outside the village to have any real connection with it. In fact it is often associated with neighbouring Walgrave. It appears to have been a typical 'new-gains' farm often constructed during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth-century at a time when increasing financial returns were encouraging such new enterprises to be built. This prosperity was relatively short-lived and by the early years of the 1870's increasing imports, primarily from North America, caused an agricultural depression which saw many farming businesses fail.

No direct documentary evidence has been found which suggests why the farm is so-called or the exact date of its construction. The parish was subject to Enclosure by Act of Parliament in 1802 (Victoria County History 1937).

On the c1810 Ordnance Survey preparatory map of the county the area occupied by the farm buildings is simply depicted as open fields (Fig 2).

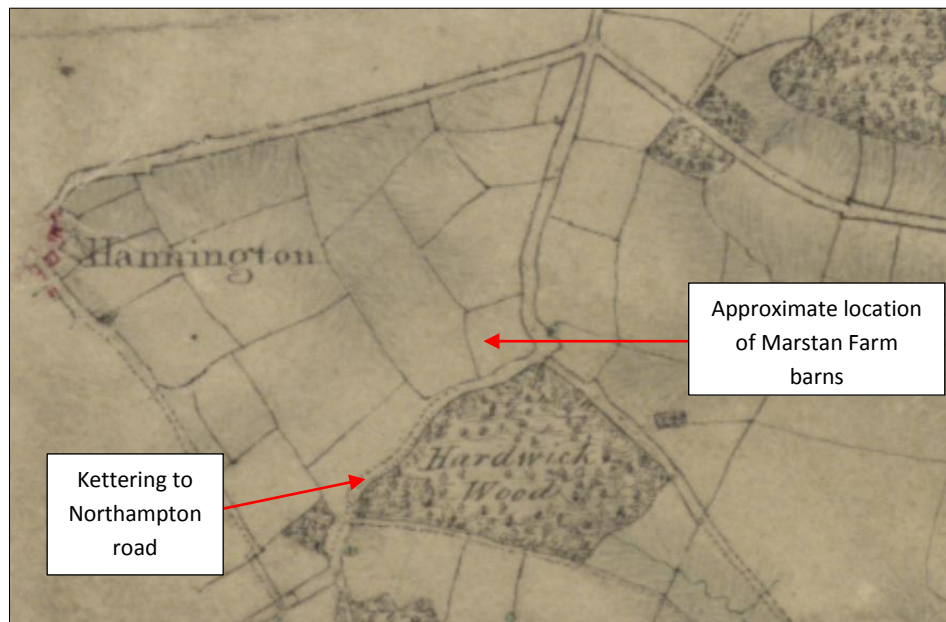


Fig 2: The circa 1810 Ordnance Survey preparatory map. North to top.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

The level of detail is such that it is difficult to accurately locate the position of the barn group since the field boundaries depicted on this and the next available map (see below, Fig 3) are rather different, as is the line of the main road between Kettering (to the north) and Northampton (to the south), the current A43. However, what is apparent is that there are no buildings whatsoever within the whole of the area to the west of that road and the village of Hannington.

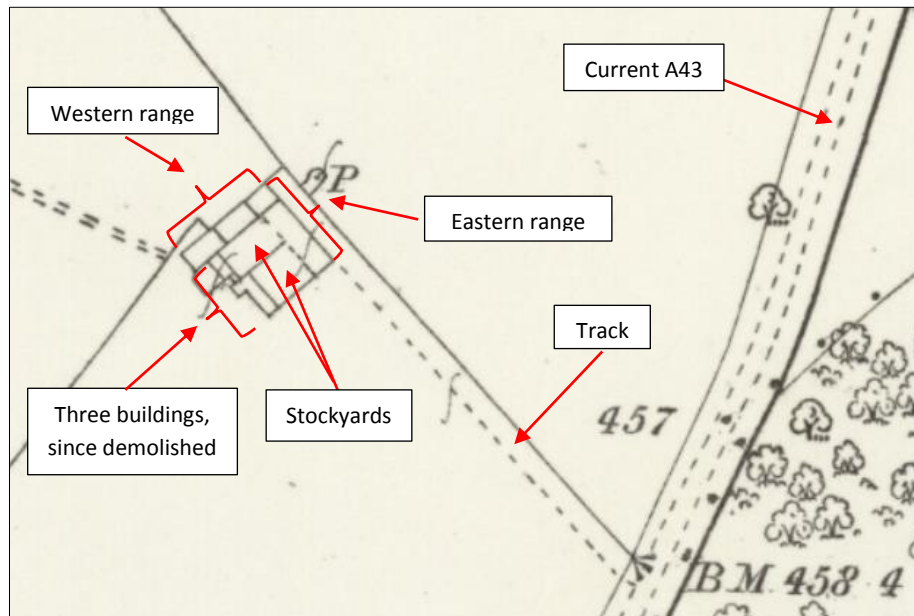


Fig 3: The 1885 Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch series, sheet XXXI.16. North to top.

By the time of the First Edition OS map of 1885 (surveyed in 1884) the farm group is depicted (Fig 3). The western and eastern ranges are depicted in exactly the same form as they remain to this day, the south-west facing side of the eastern range shown as a dashed line indicating the open nature of that side (Fig 3). The western range is divided into three unequal parts; the south-western end - representing the location of the house, the central portion - the store barn and the smaller north-eastern end - a re-built corner section (see below, building descriptions).

To the north of the east range a 'P' marks the location of a pump on the far side of the track which leads to the farm buildings from the western side of the Kettering to Northampton road (current A43). This was the principal water-source for the farmhouse.

On the southern side of the current complex are shown three small buildings which have since been demolished (Fig 3). They comprise a rectangular building adjacent to the farmhouse portion of the western range, a small square building and then an L-shaped range towards the south-eastern end of the group. From the north and south ends of the latter are two lines, most likely representing stockyard walls, extend north-eastwards to the southern side of the eastern range thus opening onto two separate stockyards or pens (see Fig 3). The whole shows a fully self-sufficient complex with all the appurtenances expected for a farm of the period.

The exact date of the current detached farmhouse is uncertain but is reported as being constructed during the 1930's in previous sales particulars (www.howkinsandharrison.co.uk). The present farmhouse is not part of this survey; it is today in separate ownership.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

The building survey

The separate rooms within the two surviving ranges have been ascribed numbers to avoid confusion. Where apparent, what is likely to be former or historic usage of spaces is identified but this should not be assumed to be its only use throughout its history.

The exterior-The western range

A two-storey red brick range aligned north-east to south-west along its long axis, for the purposes of brevity the northern and southern gable ends and the two long elevations will be described by principal cardinal points.

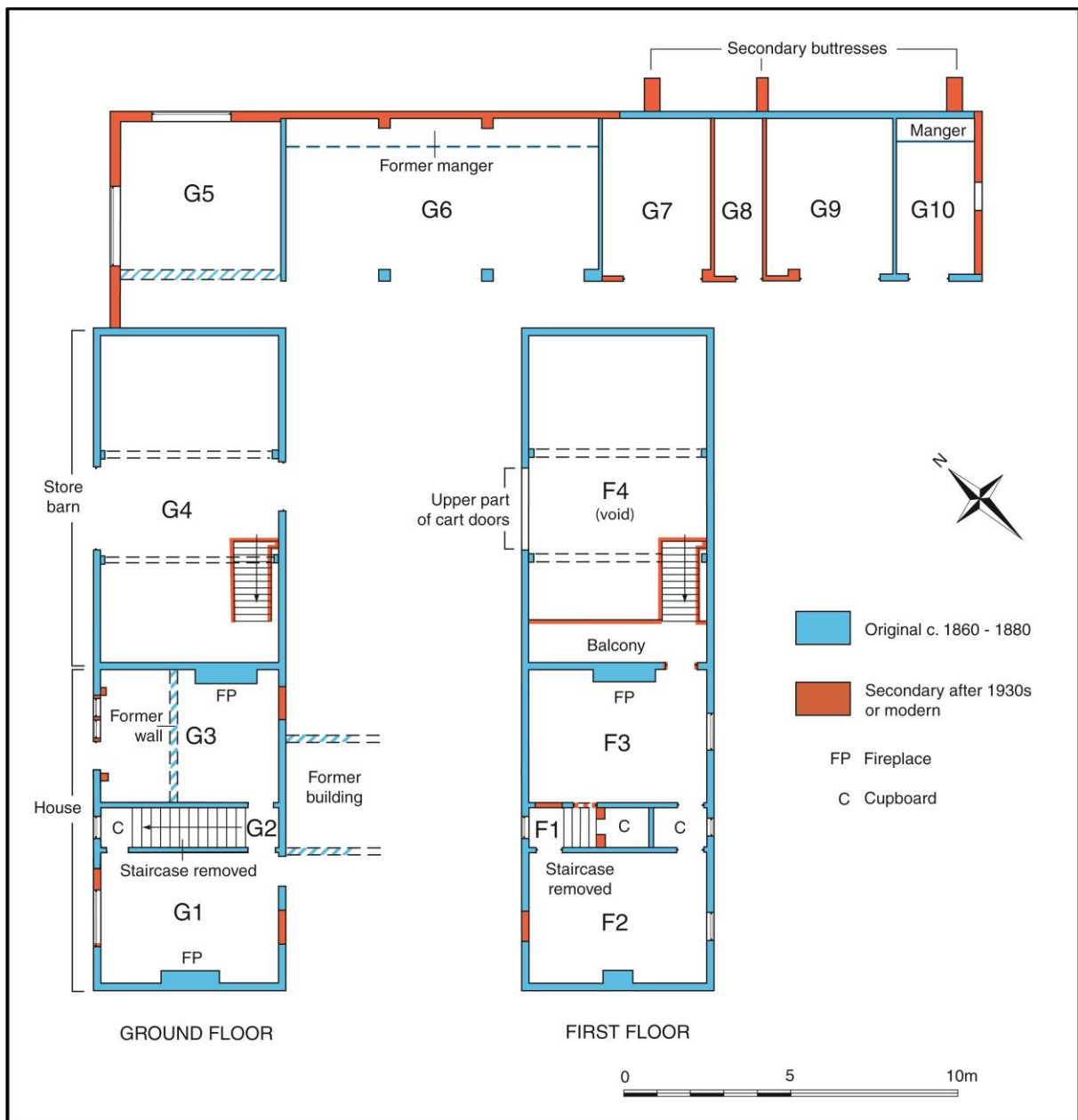


Fig 4: Plan of the two ranges (Andy Isham, after Berry's).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

The north gable wall

This comprises an entirely plain brick gable with bullnosed bricks at each of the external corners (Fig 5). There are currently no openings nor are there any indications that historically any were present, perhaps unsurprisingly since this gable faces north-east, a particularly cold direction and would not have benefitted from sunlight. The bricks are laid somewhat erratically in an approximation of Monk bond, but much less regular with sometimes three, but up to six, stretchers between each header.



Fig 5: The north gable (left) and west elevation of the western range, looking south-east.

The verges are plain and there are no gable springers, the whole roof line being simply finished with modern Portland cement, apparently added when the range was re-roofed.

A modern (unfinished) single-storey replacement of the corner building is constructed against this gable (Fig 5). It appears to occupy the same footprint as its predecessor (see below).

The east elevation

This is the principal frontage facing onto the former stockyards (Figs 3, 4 and 6). It comprises a two-storey elevation with the farmhouse occupying the southern half and the full-height store barn the northern (Fig 6).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington



Fig 6: The east elevation of the western range, looking west. 2m scale rod.

The façade is divided into two almost equal halves with an internal cross wall which separates the two separate areas and functions of the building (Fig 4). Each will be described from south to north.

The former farmhouse was served by an off-centre door facing east to the south of the former building (possibly a wash-house or laundry) which was constructed against this elevation (see Figs 3 and 4) but has since been removed. However, the scar of the roofline and poor-quality patching with hard cementitious pointing suggests the locations of the north and south walls (Fig 7).

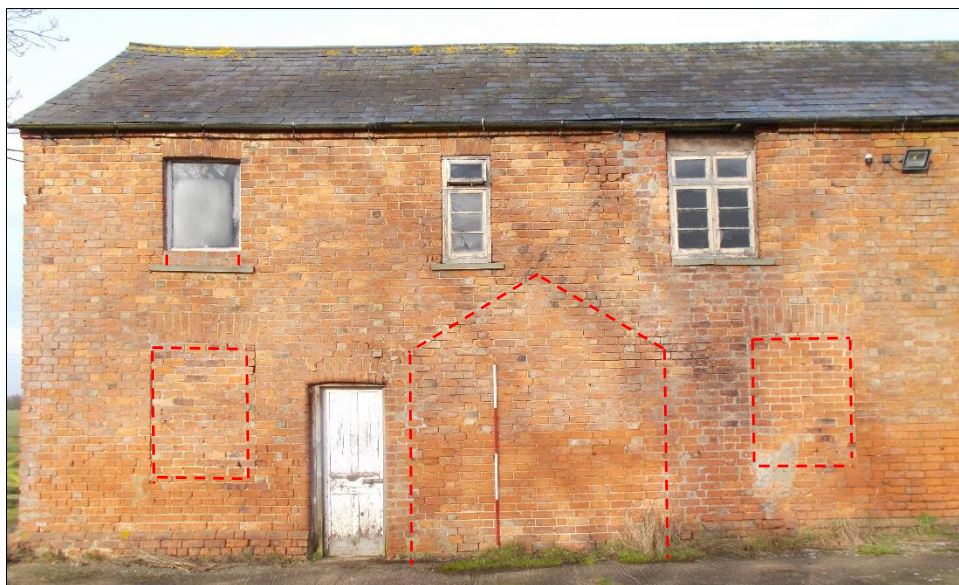


Fig 7: The farmhouse showing scar of former single-storey range, infilled ground-floor windows and reduced first-floor window (red dashed lines), looking west. Note stone sills to first-floor windows. 2m scale rod.

Both the door and the two windows are set beneath very shallow, almost flat, segmental arches made from the same brick used in the walling and there are no sills to the latter, although stone sills do survive to the windows of the first-floor suggesting that the ground-floor examples were similarly finished. The current front door is a secondary addition and the jambs have been narrowed by the

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

introduction of thin timber battens to either side to make the opening fit the later door, although the original frame does remain. The jambs and the arch of the doorway are formed using bullnose bricks, the window jambs and lintels from plain walling brick.

Although they now appear to be unequally spaced, the positions of the ground-floor windows makes perfect sense since the southern example would have allowed views eastwards across the fields on that side whilst the northern example would have allowed the farmer to see into the adjoining stockyards. Thus, he would therefore be able to keep an eye on his (penned) livestock at all times from the house. It also indicates that while the supposed wash-house was –at least structurally, apparently secondary, it was also originally intended to be present and influenced the farmhouse design.

The windows of the first-floor are equally spaced to the width of the farmhouse section of the range, with one each to the bedrooms and a central narrow window lighting a connecting space (see below, interior). The southern and central examples retain their edge-laid brick voussoir segmental arches, the northern example has lost this, and is now simply infilled with plywood. The central and northern windows retain timber frames of similar configuration which appear to be original. Both are made from pine and comprise three fixed rectangular panes in the lower part with a top-hinged opening casement in the upper section. Each retains a cream-coloured paint surface. The southern window has been replaced by a modern steel-framed single pane window which has required the lower part of the original opening to be infilled to allow it to fit.

Immediately beneath the eaves is a single course of plain brick laid slightly proud of the wall plane to provide the simplest of cornices. The rainwater goods are modern polyurethane and the roof has been re-laid relatively recently, apparently using the original slate and ridge tiles.

Where the demolished single-storey building was located there is no chamfered plinth which otherwise extends around the whole range. This allowed the supposed wash-house to butt closely gable-end-on against the main house.

The northern half of the elevation contains the store barn which is accessed from this stockyard side by a single doorway (Figs 4 and 6). Although not large enough for carts, it is also larger than the door serving the house and may therefore have been made to allow livestock entry from the stockyard. Both the jambs and segmental arch are formed using bull-nosed brick and the hinge pins for the stable doors are set within carefully-cut blocks of limestone for additional strength. A single block set in the wall to the south provides the setting for a catch to hold back the upper leaf of the two-part stable door. The door comprises two vertically planked doors, internally ledged and braced. Each is hung on two plain iron strap hinges and closed with draw-bolts.

The elevation is otherwise plain and there are no further openings or ventilation slits. The same simple cornice extends the whole length of the building as does the chamfered plinth. The wall is composed of a mixture of Flemish and an approximate Monk bond.

The south gable wall

An entirely plain wall laid in a correct Flemish bond throughout, perhaps a result of the additional strength which this would have incorporated (Fig 8).



Fig 8: The south gable wall, looking north. 2m scale rod.

Apart from the simple chamfered plinth close to the ground, there is no additional detail and the verge appears to have been re-pointed in much the same way as the north gable when the roof was re-laid. There must have been a chimney stack at the apex of the gable originally though nothing now remains externally (see interior). This was presumably removed at the same date as the re-roofing, the apex of the gable shows indications of similar re-pointing. The external corners are finished with plain, not bull-nosed, bricks.

The west elevation

This elevation presents the 'field' side of the farm group and mirrors the eastern elevation with the house located at the southern end with the store barn at the northern (Fig 4).

The southern end which contained the former farmhouse has been significantly altered by removal of sections of walling and infilling of former openings (Fig 9).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington



Fig 9: The west elevation, looking north-east. 2m scale rod.

The southern half retains only one original opening, a tall, narrow window which formerly lit an under-stairs cupboard; it is situated directly beneath a similar window at first-floor level and currently blocked with a sheet of modern plywood (see Figs 4, 9 and 10). The window retains its stone sill.

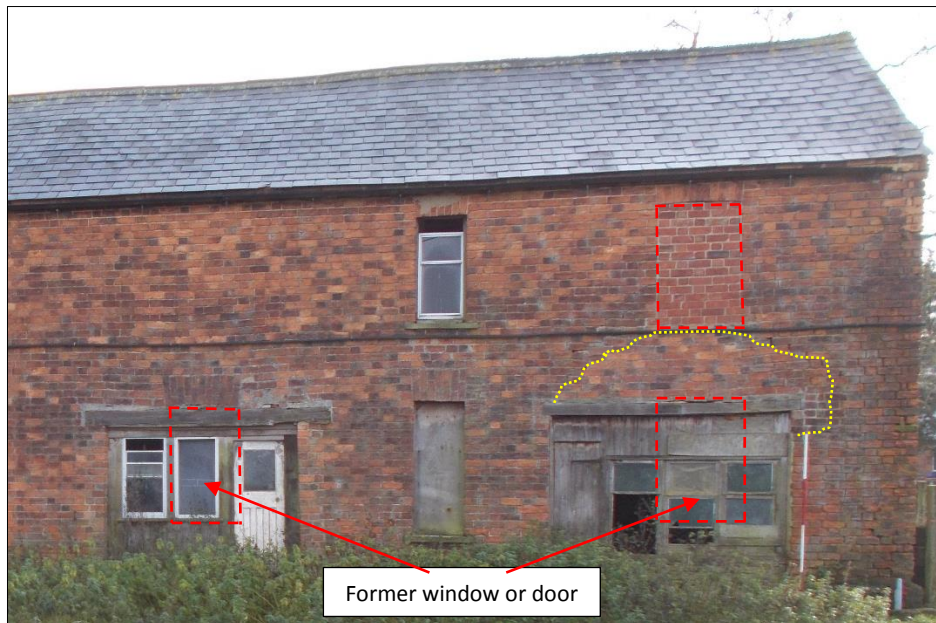


Fig 10: The former farmhouse, west elevation, looking east showing alterations. Red dashed lines indicate former openings, yellow dotted line indicates re-built walling. 2m scale rod.

To the north and south large openings have been created which have removed the majority of the ground-floor walling when the lower floor rooms were used to house chickens. Both openings have had crude and sagging timber lintels inserted which have removed all traces of the original

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

construction but the edge-laid bricks forming the lintel of a ground-floor window or doorway remains to the north (see Fig 10, left side). The fact that the surviving voussoir section is wider than the narrow window lighting the under-stairs cupboard, but narrower than the surviving window voussoir, might suggest it was for a doorway. The southern opening has caused even more damage to the original brickwork and there are no surviving indications of any former openings, though it seems likely that there was a similar window beneath that which survives at first-floor level (see Fig 10, right side).

Each of the enlarged openings is fitted with pieces of re-used plywood sheeting, window frames and doors to partly enclose whilst allowing some light and ventilation to the interior. None of the reused infill has any historic value.

At first-floor level only the central, narrow, window remains in an un-altered state although it does not contain the original window frame but has had a modern, smaller frame inset. The opening retains the only stone sill present on this level, identical to those on the eastern elevation. The southern first-floor window is infilled and retains only the brick voussoirs; the sill has been removed.

The northern part of the range - containing the store barn - retains the central full-height cart door in un-altered form (Figs 4 and 11).



Fig 11: The northern part of the western range, the store barn, looking east. 2m scale rod.

Otherwise plain, the walling is constructed in a mixture of Flemish and Monk bond as on the eastern elevation. The jambs of the cart door are formed with bull-nosed bricks as is the lower of three courses of the bricks of the compressed segmental arch (Fig 11). On either side two large limestone blocks have been inset to hold the hinge pins of the large vertically planked doors. A detached block retains a small catch to hold back the doors on both sides. The latter are ledged and braced internally (see below, interior). Externally the hinges are simple forged iron strap hinges and there is currently no form of external fixing. The lower ends of either door finish above sill level; this may be part of the original design or a result of rot. If original, the gap would have been infilled, as at

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

present, by moveable boards which could be inserted or removed as necessary to provide some ventilation.

The sill is formed from large blue engineering bull-nosed bricks such as are often seen on industrial sites. They were introduced with the expansion of the railway network from the 1840's-50's and became widely used due to their hardwearing properties on farms. The low plinth continues to either side of the cart door.

The exterior-The eastern range

Part of the original farm complex depicted on the first edition OS map, this portion of the surviving farm group has undergone significant alteration both externally and internally (Figs 4 and 12).



Fig 12: The south elevation of the eastern range, looking north. 2m scale rod.

The western part of the range retains three arched stock-hovels whilst the eastern part has been much altered and now contains enclosed sheds. It is likely that originally there were three further arched openings in-filling the eastern portion since the spacing as far as the far-eastern original enclosed shelter is the same as the three remaining arches. If this were the case, each half would be served by a separate stockyard to the south.

The western end shows the construction of the original arrangement (Fig 13).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington



Fig 13: The three-arched western section of the eastern range, looking north. 2m scale rod.

Each bay is divided by a slender brick pier with all corners finished with bull-nosed brick. These bricks were primarily used to help prevent livestock harming itself on the sharp corners of standard bricks. The tops of the arches are sprung from limestone impostes, also with rounded edges to match those of the bull-nosed bricks beneath in the piers and within the arched spans between.

Although out of sequence with the preceding text, the corner room is included here since it is an entirely modern re-build and has relevance to the adjacent hovel (see Figs 4 and 5).

An internal wall once formed a corridor between the stockyard and the fields to the west. Its former location is present both as a scar in the floor and the east wall of the current corner room (see below).

The corner room, shown on the early mapping, has been partly re-built but remains incomplete (see Fig 3). The original configuration of doors and windows is now unknown since both the north and west walls have been entirely re-built, but it must be assumed that at least one was present. The line of the former corridor can be seen in the wall line still present in the floor and the east wall (Fig 14).



Fig 14: The corner room, looking south-east. Note scars of former corridor wall and breeze block re-build to right. 2m scale rod.

The current north and west walls have an internal blockwork skin with a brick exterior (see Figs 5 and 14). The floor is of concrete. The frame of the door at the east end of the corridor remains with a slatted over-door for ventilation, but the door is missing (Fig 14). The western end of the corridor must have been similarly closed since there is a limestone block set into the south wall which retains a catch for holding the door open (fig 14).

The roof structure and coverings are modern but may re-use some of the original timbers.

The eastern portion of the eastern range is entirely rebuilt and has a series of Fletton or common brick piers infilled with modern planked doors to form three enclosed shelters (Fig 15).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington



Fig 15: The south elevation of the eastern end of the eastern range, looking north. 2m scale rod.

As mentioned above, it is possible that this part was also arched though the extent of the rebuilding precludes certainty. From the west the shelters are as follows: a single shelter enclosed by modern timber planked double-doors, a partly open bay with blockwork walling, a further enclosed bay with similar timber double doors and the easternmost bay which appears to be an original fully enclosed room.

The last of these has a single, central timber single leaf vertically planked door set beneath a flat (gauged brick) lintel.

The rainwater goods along this elevation are modern polyurethane and the roof has been re-laid relatively recently but apparently reusing the original slates and ridge tiles.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

The eastern range east gable wall

A simple brick gable wall with a central window facing east (Fig 16).



Fig 16: The eastern range, east gable wall, looking west. 2m scale rod.

It appears that the upper part has been re-built, although using the original bricks, since there are no closers above sill level (Fig 16). This also explains why the window has no real lintel, simply a row of edge-laid headers across the top of a replaced window frame. Above this two circular iron plates suggest there has been structural difficulty, as do buttresses along the north elevation (fig 17).



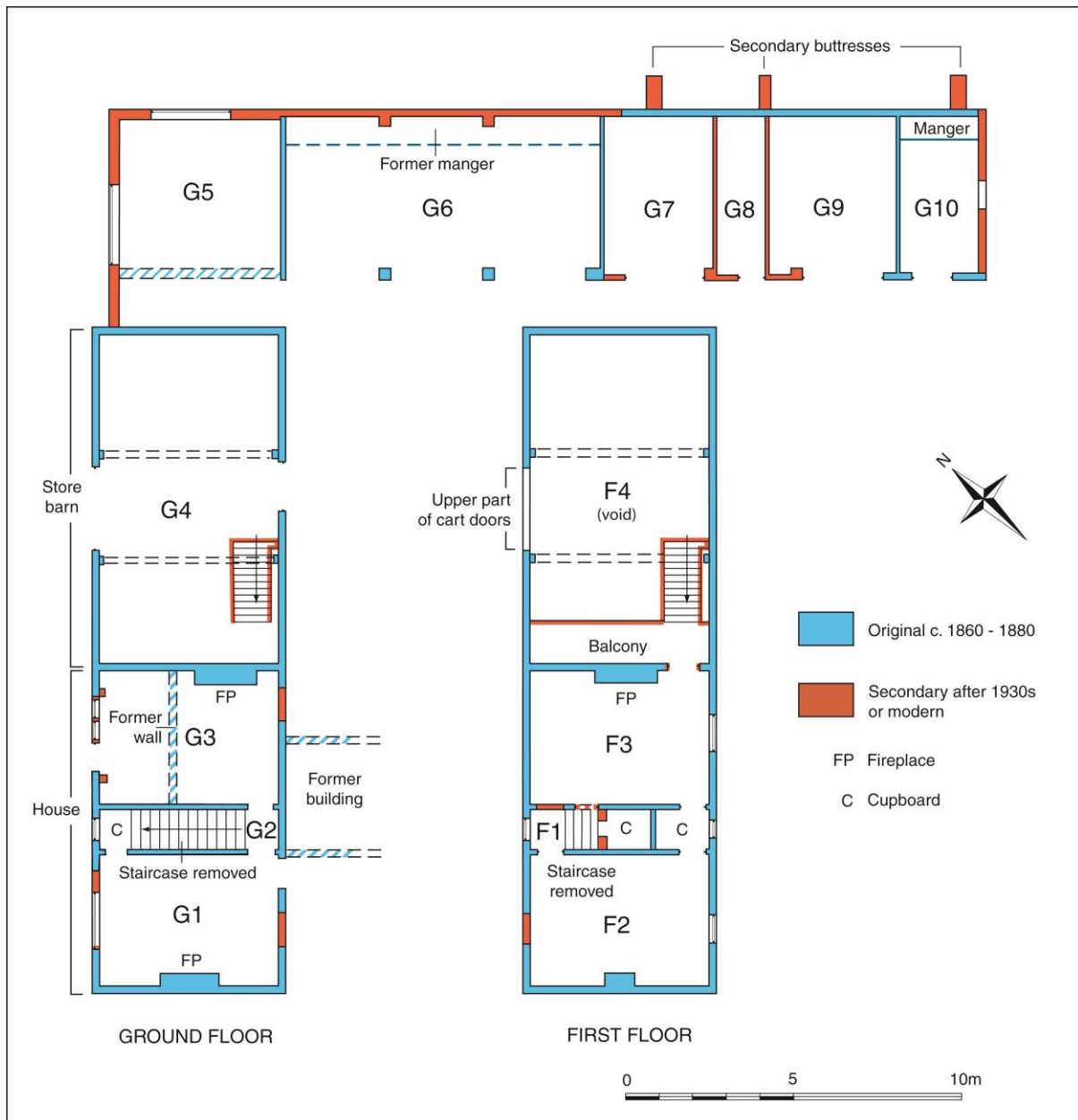
Fig 17: The north elevation of the eastern range, looking south-west. 2m scale rod.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

These three large Fletton buttresses have been added along the eastern portion of the north elevation to hold the wall up, but in the western part this has had to be entirely re-built (see Fig 17). That re-built section includes the north-western corner room and the window contained in the north wall there.

The interior-the western range farmhouse

On Fig 4, rooms have been numbered to avoid confusion; G1 etc = ground-floor, F1 etc = first-floor. Fig 4 is re-introduced here for ease of reference.



Plan of the buildings (Reprise of Fig 4).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

Room G1-former parlour

Entered through the east-facing front door, this room occupies the southern end of the former farmhouse (Fig 4). Most recently used as a chicken-shed there are few remains of the former decorative scheme. The south wall contains a centrally positioned fireplace (Fig 18).



Fig 18: Room G1, the former farmhouse, looking south. 2m scale rod.

The room has either lost, or had removed, the majority of the plaster so that the brick structure is now exposed, apart from the chimney breast. This also contains scars of the fireplace jambs, perhaps like those present in room G3 (see below). The grate is no longer present.

There is no flooring visible and it was not possible to determine beneath a thick layer of chicken droppings whether this was of timber, brick or stone. As noted above, the former window in the east wall is infilled and the majority of the west wall has been removed. Apart from the main part of the ceiling which retains the plaster over split laths, there is little surviving detail.

A cupboard was formerly present accessed via a doorway in the north-west corner of the room which would have been located beneath the staircase; it was lit by the tall window in the west wall (see Fig 4 and below).

Room G2-former stairwell lobby

This was a former small foot-of-the-stairs lobby which gave access to the staircase and which also allowed access to the adjoining room (Figs 4 and 19).



Fig 19: The former stairwell, looking west. Note timber string batten to left. 2m scale rod.

The staircase has been entirely removed although the scars of the strings can be seen in the north and south walls and on both sides a timber batten remains too (Fig 19).

The removal of the staircase has opened the stairwell and the under-stairs cupboard to create a single, but narrow, space, formerly lit by the narrow window in the west wall. That window is currently covered with plywood and does not retain any of the glazing bars although the outer frame and architrave remains.

The floor was not visible. The original ceiling, at only the eastern and western ends remains, though without the plaster covering. Secondary flooring has been inserted when the staircase was removed to provide additional floor space above at first-floor level.

Room G3-former kitchen

Accessed through a doorway on the north side of G2, what was originally a small room occupying the eastern side of this end of the building and formerly paired with an adjoining room to the immediate west (Fig 4). The door frame appears to be original but the current door is a later insertion, probably dating to the 1930's. The former north-south dividing wall has been almost entirely removed to create a single space, most likely when the room was used for chickens and at the same time that the majority of the west wall was removed.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington



Fig 20: Room G3, looking north showing former fireplace and dividing wall. 2m scale rod.

Since the majority of that dividing wall has been removed, it is not possible to determine where a connecting doorway was located and since the floor has been re-laid to concrete no sill is now visible.

It appears that the western half was most likely the house kitchen since the fireplace is larger than in G1 and probably contained a small cast-iron range. To the immediate west, between the chimney breast and the former dividing wall would have been a cupboard, ideal for the storage of dry goods which would have been kept from becoming damp from the radiated heat of the fireplace. The fireplace opening retains a brick hearth and the jambs remain in situ and appear to be simple un-moulded slips of stone, possibly York stone.

An H-section RSJ (rolled steel joist) has been added to support the joists of the flooring above, perhaps following the removal of the dividing wall (see Fig 20). To the east of this steel joist the majority of the current joists are of modern Far-Eastern timber, many stamped with 'F D KERUING PRODUCT OF MALAYSIA' and a series of numbers, perhaps batch numbers. Keruing is a type of timber (*Dipterocarpus*), a medium hardwood much used in construction. Its use here most likely results from leakage before the roof was re-covered, although an exact date is unknown.

The currently infilled window in the east wall would have allowed views into the stockyard on that side.

The smaller room to the west was probably a scullery and store, and the door in its west wall gave direct access to the fields. Connection between it and the former kitchen could be closed off to keep the heat of the kitchen in, and the cold of the elements out. Complete loss of the dividing wall leaves no indication of where that connecting door stood.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

The demolished ranges

Known only from Ordnance Survey map depictions (Fig 3) and scars on the eastern elevation, these former buildings are no longer visible. As such, it is impossible to make any accurate assessment of their character or function but it is possible to speculate using experience of other, similar, farm groups of similar age.

There is no surviving provision within the farmhouse portion of the western range for any form of water heater (a copper) or bread making. Given the relatively isolated location, it seems that the former was essential and the latter most likely. Every household, even those within villages, relied upon a water heater to not only supply hot or warm water for washing both themselves and clothes, but also for other activities such as boiling hams, puddings, animal feed and even brewing. A bread oven seems likely at a time before delivered or long-lasting loaves for such a stable foodstuff. It therefore seems likely that these facilities would have been provided in the demolished range closest to the farmhouse.

The small, square, building between the two larger ranges of the demolished group would seem to be most likely the privy since, again, there is no provision for such an essential structure within the remaining structure. Its location, backing onto one of the stockyards, is also typical since the resulting human waste could be incorporated with the animal waste before spreading on the fields.

The third, L-shaped, range may have been a store, additional animal shelter or stable; there is no obvious provision for the latter amongst the surviving group.

Room F1-former landing

The former small top landing to which the now-removed staircase would have risen (Fig 4). Originally a doorway to the immediate north led into the room on that side, but this has since been infilled and a new doorway created slightly further to the east after the former stairwell was floored.



Fig 21: Room F2 looking north-west into the former top stairs landing.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

There is no door surviving within the doorway between F1 and F2 although part of the architrave survives (Fig 21).

Room F2-former bedroom

A former bedroom at the south end of the western range (Fig 4). Currently lit by the single window in the east wall, there was originally another in the west wall which has been infilled (see above, Fig 10). The room retains most of the original floorboards though in varying states of decay, and has been partially covered by modern ply sheet.



Fig 22: Room F2, looking south showing chimney stack from G1 below. Note modern RSJ.

Much of the wall plaster has been removed and replaced, though most of the ceiling-plaster remains. For reasons which are not obvious, a modern RSJ has been positioned across the ceiling, presumably due to failure of the joists there (see Fig 22).

The room is otherwise featureless apart from a narrow chimney breast against the south wall which rises from the fireplace beneath in room G1. The chimney breast clearly contains just a single flue since it is too narrow to contain a second and there was obviously no fireplace in this first-floor bedroom.

In the north-east corner of the room a second doorway leads into what seems to have been a cupboard, accessible from both sides (Fig 4). It is located above the ground-floor lobby at the base of the former staircase. Neither the door on the south or north side remains but the architrave is present in both openings. The cupboard recess has, unaccountably, a modern stainless-steel sink unit with draining boards though not plumbing, so it must simply have served as a re-used shelf; quite why a simple plank top was not used is unclear. The cupboard is lit by the narrow central window previously described (see Fig 7 above). Since it was original to the layout it may well always have been a wash-room where a jug and basin stood.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

Room F3-former bedroom

This, the second bedroom is located on the north side of the former central staircase and is very slightly larger than F2 (Fig 4). As noted above, the room was previously accessed from a doorway at the top of the staircase, though this opening has been infilled. A second opening now connects to the floor section above the former staircase and a further cupboard created, back-to-back with the original one to the east.

The room is lit by the original window in the east wall; no evidence was seen for a counterpart in the west wall.

On the north side of the room a fireplace survives with the stone jambs, lintel and cast-iron grate, though any mantelpiece has gone (Fig 23). The hearth slab also survives and the brick stack continues up to the ridge of the roof where it has been truncated when the building was re-roofed. Many of the roof timbers (the common rafters) are clearly also new, though the purlins appear to be original. The slates laid are laid over a modern membrane.



Fig 23: Room F3, showing original fireplace and grate and secondary doorway in the north wall.

The entire plaster ceiling has been removed, presumably as part of the re-roofing process, although wall plaster still indicates its former location.

A secondary doorway is located in the east end of the north wall which allows access from this room into the adjoining (and originally entirely separate) store barn (G4).

Room G4-store barn

The double-height store barn located at the northern end of the western range is accessible from the east and west (see Figs 4, 6, 9 and 11).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

Internally this was originally one open space and was not used as a threshing barn since there are not two large opposing doors, but one large cart door and a smaller, pedestrian or livestock door.

The internal walls are entirely plain and have no other openings than the two doorways described, apart from two internal buttresses located to either side of the doorways. Each buttress not only provides additional strength to the long side walls but also helps support the two roof trusses (Figs 4, 24 and 25). Each has bull-nosed bricks on all internal edges, even to eaves level.



Fig 24: Room G4, looking south showing south wall with secondary stairs, balcony and doorway. Note also roof truss configuration and buttressing.

The buttresses support a pair of identical roof trusses of broadly Queen-post form, though the principal rafters only rise to the level of the collar (Fig 24). Iron bolts are fixed through the tie beam into the base of each post and the half-rafters support a single purlin on each side with substantial cleats. The common rafters appear to be original and this roof, like all the others, is laid over a modern membrane. There is a thin ridge plank at the apex of the roof.

The large cart door in the west wall appears to be original and shows internally the ledges and long, diagonal bracing (Fig 25). As noted above, the lower portion is either missing or was never present.

The floor of the barn is concrete and the walls have been painted with a bituminous material, presumably for waterproofing (Figs 24 and 25).



Fig 25: Room G4, the store barn showing the inner surface of the cart door, looking south-west.

A secondary timber staircase has been inserted against the east wall to the south of the pedestrian doorway, after the farmhouse portion became redundant (presumably, therefore, circa 1930's), rising to a balcony the full width of the south wall (Fig 24). The reason for this arrangement is unclear but must have served some purpose. It has been suggested that the timber staircase is that removed from the farmhouse portion of this range. However the lower tread is wider than the upper treads and must have therefore projected into open space (Fig 26). The narrow space present between the ground-floor rooms of the farmhouse portion of this range does not allow for such a projecting lower tread since there is neither the width nor need for such a feature.



Fig 26: The inserted staircase in G4, looking south. Note rounded and projecting lower tread (left) and the paint scheme for a stair runner.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

What is also clear is that it came from some better-appointed space (within a house), since the white paint with which it is decorated forms the double strip either side of a stair-runner!

The door set within the secondary opening leading through the south wall of the barn into Room F3 is a simple vertically planked door, ledged and braced with an oak rim lock. It is hung on simple butt hinges fixed to a plain pine frame set within the chopped-through opening.

Apart from a modern water header tank supported on RSJ's at the northern end of the barn at eaves level and occasional other modern wiring, water pipes, light fixings and switches the barn retains no historic features.

Room G5

The modern re-building of the north-west corner room, previously described (see Fig 14).

Room G6-the livestock hovel

This is the open-fronted, arched three-bay animal shelter formerly facing onto the westernmost of the two stockyards (Fig 4). As noted above, the whole north wall is a relatively modern re-build, apparently due to collapse or significant failure. However, the outline of a former manger can be seen at the opposed ends against the lime-washed brick gable walls, indicating that one had existed along the whole length of this hovel (Figs 4 and 27). A surviving section of what is assumed to be an identical manger remains in room G10 (see below).



Fig 27: Room G6: The former livestock hovel, showing scar of former manger (red dotted line) and roof truss. Looking west. 2m scale rod.

It is likely that there was also a hay rack along the same wall above, but due to the re-building of the north wall any fixing points have been removed.

The roof trusses are supported one to each pier which form the south side of the hovel and comprise a simple A-frame with raking struts rising from the tie beam (Fig 27). A single purlin on each side is attached at the level at which the struts meet the principal rafters, supported on cleats. The roof timbers, including the common rafters, appear to be original and the roof is re-laid over

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

modern membrane. The floor to the hovel is concrete and there are no other surviving historic features.

Rooms G7, G8 and G9

These three rooms are re-configured spaces and contain modern block-work dividing walls and modern brick piers along the south side, all fitted with contemporary timber doors or, in the case of G8, a partly open block-work wall (see Fig 15). None contains any historic detail apart from the roof structure which is the same as that visible and previously described above G6. This is partly supported on a breeze-block pier in G9 where the north wall has fallen outwards (see far right in Fig 28).



Fig 28: Rooms G9 (foreground), G8 (between breeze-block sloping walls) and G7 (beyond far sloping breeze-block wall). Looking west.

Room G10-animal shelter

A single enclosed stall or animal shelter, perhaps intended for pregnant, nursing or sick livestock so that they could be tended in isolation (Fig 4). Its location at the far end of the eastern range supports this view.

The room is a simple fitted stall but does retain a manger along the north side constructed from red- and blue-brick with blue engineering brick moulded rim pieces forming the front edge of the manger (Fig 29).



Fig 29: Room G10 showing the brick-built manger, looking north.

This form of brick-built manger is a common feature of farm complexes of the period since they were hard-wearing and easy to keep clean. The blue engineering brick rim pieces were particularly popular since they were almost indestructible and easily produced.

It is possible that there was a hay rack above, though no clear indications survive; the east wall (right in Fig 29) has been largely re-built. As described above (exterior, Fig 16), the window in the east gable wall is a modern replacement. The floor is of concrete and the roof timbers are original with a modern roof covering.

Discussion

Marstan Farm barns appear to be the surviving portions of a formerly larger complex, all apparently constructed in a single phase. The exact date for that construction from architectural detailing and from the fact that the complete complex is present by 1885 suggests a date between c1860 and c1880. This was also a period when such 'New Gain' farms were being widely built in response to the flourishing farming economy. Unfortunately, just as many had been built, a deep agricultural depression started which did not finally end until after the First World War.

The surviving elements, all much altered apart from the store barn, suggest a self-sufficient farm providing living space for a small family and livestock. There is no evidence for any arable farming since no stables remain, though these may have existed within the demolished ranges. There is also no surviving cart- or machinery hovel which would be expected if arable was the primary focus. All the surviving evidence suggests cattle- or sheep-farming. The fact that the large barn was clearly not designed to be used as a threshing barn further supports this view.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

Subsequently, a new farmhouse was built, probably in the 1930's. From this date it seems that the farmhouse portion was much depleted and simply used for the additional housing of livestock, most recently chickens. Almost no interior detail now survives. All, apart from one, of the ground-floor windows have been infilled or removed by twentieth-century alterations as has one of the first-floor windows. The staircase has also been removed entirely.

The relatively recent re-roofing has, unfortunately, resulted in the original roof-scape being denuded and therefore it is no longer possible to visually distinguish the two functionally separate portions of the western range; the domestic farmhouse from the agricultural store-barn.

The large store barn has had a balcony added though this addition has done relatively little damage to the structure. Provided with a stair introduced from somewhere else, this first-floor access was created at (or subsequent to) the loss of the farmhouse's own internal stair.

The eastern range has suffered both from structural difficulty and functional change, resulting in significant alteration. There is, however, sufficient evidence to determine that the arch-fronted hovel was for livestock as was the room at the far eastern end. It seems likely that the space between was similarly utilised, both hovels serving the now-lost stockyards.

A former contemporary range of buildings enclosing the south side of those former stockyards has been demolished, although their footprint has been established from OS mapping and the mass of at least one building can be gauged from the scar on the farmhouse front.

Bibliography

Historic England, 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings; A Guide to Good Recording Practice*

Victoria County History, 1937 *A History of the County of Northampton, Vol 4*

Glossary of architectural and other terms mostly, but not exclusively, taken from The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, The Penguin Dictionary of Building, The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture, The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, A Companion to the English Parish Church.

Arris - The edge at the corner of a block of stone, brick or piece of timber.

Ashlar (stonework) – Walls or facings of stonework laid in courses with usually flat, plain faces finely dressed.

Ashlaring (carpentry) – A series of short vertical timbers shutting off the lower angle of a pitched roof. The face of the short vertical timbers (ashlar pieces) may be boarded over or plastered.

Bressumer – A long heavy lintel, usually timber, across an opening to carry the wall above.

Bullnose – A brick with one or more rounded corners, principally at the header. Sometimes also along one edge of the stretcher if used ornamentally or to form a plinth.

Casement – A window in which individual lights are hinged either at the side or along the top and which in England usually open outwards (on the Continent usually inwards).

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

Chamfer - A cut corner between two surfaces at right angles, made by removing the arris at a 45-degree angle.

Collar – A horizontal tie beam set between two rafters.

Coping – A flat or carved stone slab or shaped clay moulding, usually set on top of a wall to throw off water.

Eaves - The underside of a sloping roof overhanging a wall.

Flemish bond – Alternate headers and stretchers used in each course; considered to be more decorative, but less strong, than English bond. Ironically, rarely seen in Flanders.

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

Gable springers – An overhanging stone (or brick or tile) corbel at the base of a gable.

Header – The narrow end of a brick.

Impost – The capital, moulding or pier from which an arch springs; the impost is generally held to be the actual point from which the arch springs.

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

Lath/s – Thin layers of flattened river reeds, rushes or thin strips of split or sawn timber to which plaster is affixed to provide a smooth wall or ceiling finish.

Ledged and braced (doors) – A ledge is the horizontal structural timber on the inner face of a door to support the vertical timbers or planks. The hinges are normally set onto these ledges. A brace is a diagonally set timber, usually between one or more ledges to add additional strength, rising from the hanging side.

Light/s – A window. It can be fixed or opening and can be separated from other lights by transoms and mullions. A light can have one or several panes held on glazing bars.

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

Monk bond – A variation of Flemish bond with two stretchers in place of one between each header.

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

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.

Reveal – The side of a door or window opening.

Stretcher – The long side of a brick.

Strings (carpentry) – Sloping timbers carrying the treads and risers of a stair.

Truss - A framework of timbers supporting a roof.

Verge – The sloping edge of a pitched roof above the gable.

Voussoir – A tapered (wedge-shaped) stone used to form an arch. The topmost voussoir is commonly called the keystone and can be larger, decorated and may project from the wall plane.

Marstan House Farm barns, Hannington

Appendix *OASIS data*

Project Name	Marstan House Farm barns
OASIS ID	378714
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 conversion
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 82477 70841
Start/end dates of fieldwork	5 December 2019
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire County Archive
Study area	0.2 ha



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

20 December 2019