

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

**Local Authority No.100019340**

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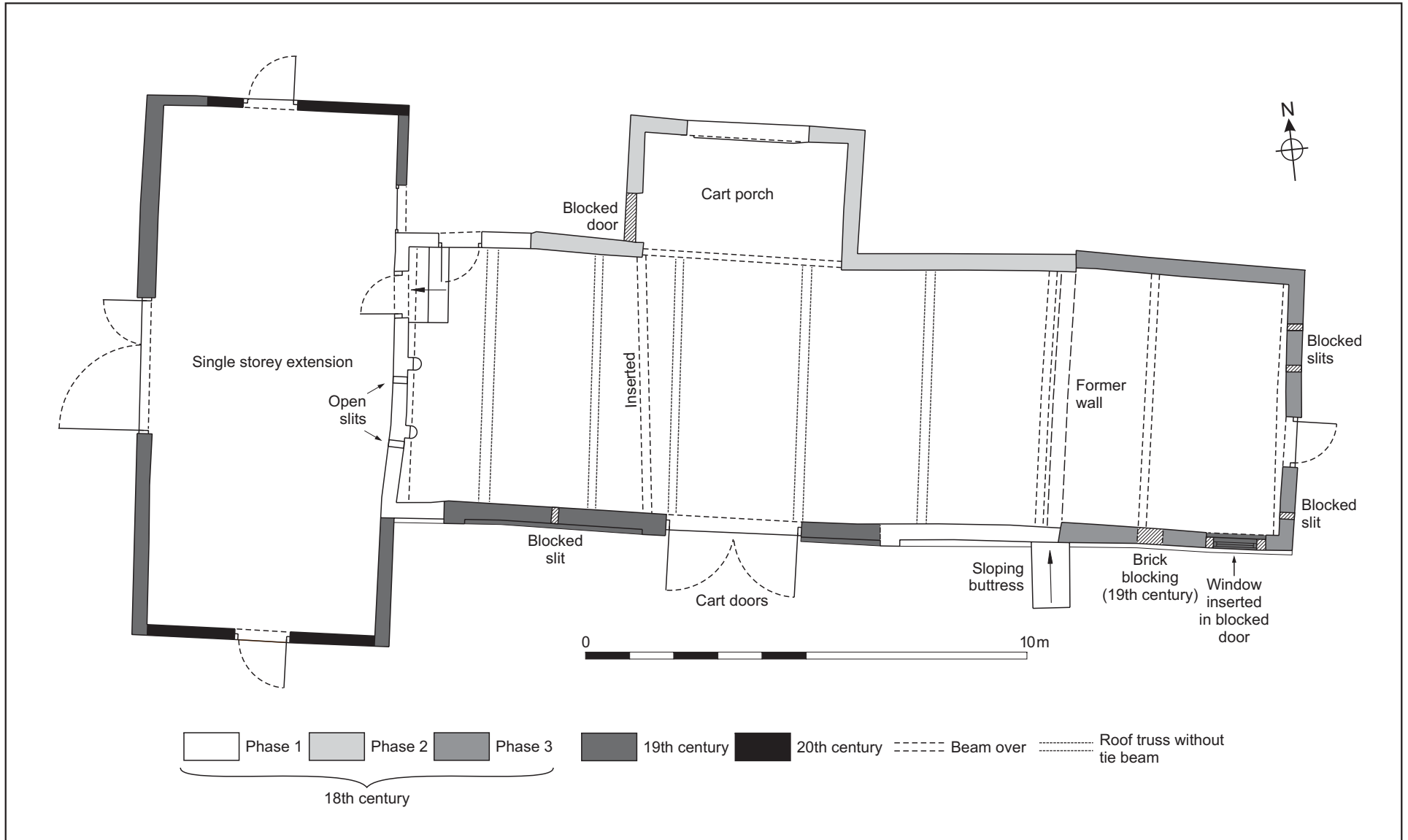
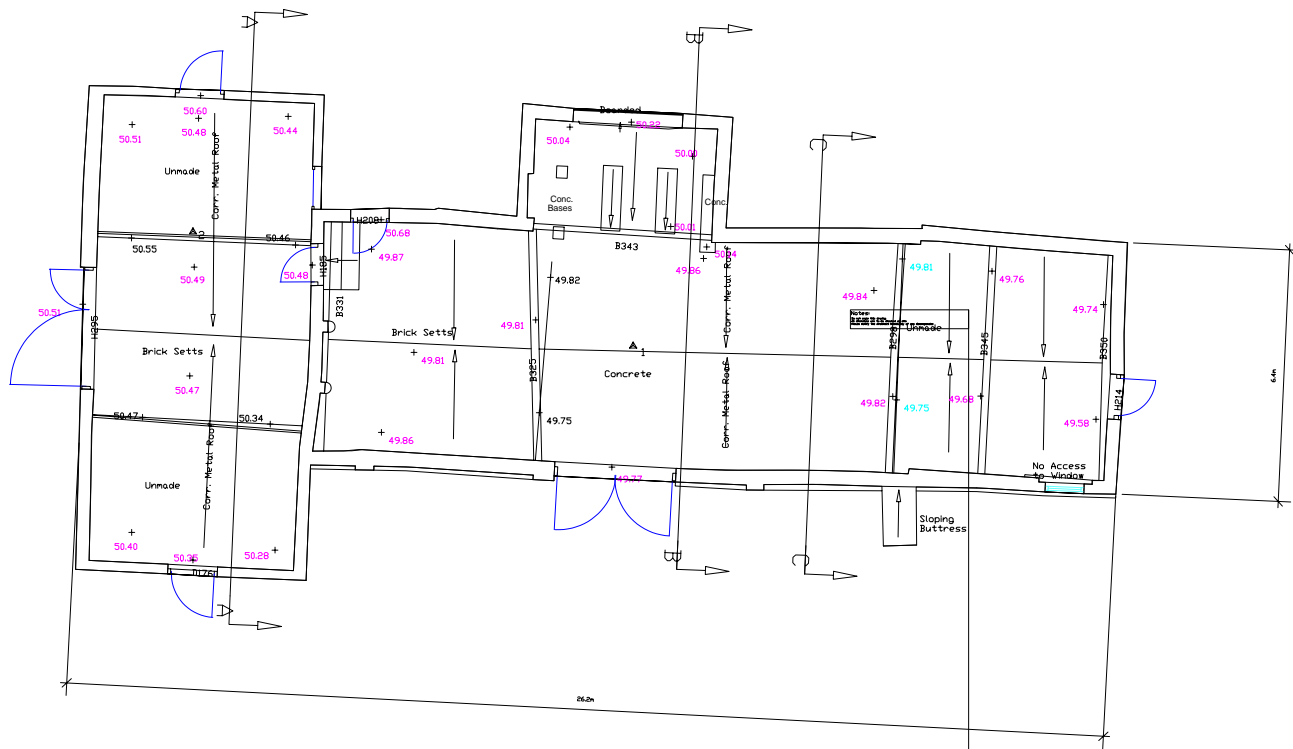


Figure 2. Plan of barn. Scale 1:125



Scale	1:100
Drawn by	DDM
Checked by	DDM
Date	10/10/2010



**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No. 1035

**Report on Historic Building Recording at  
Holly Farm Barn, Reedham, Norfolk**

11580 RED

Simon Underdown

January 2005

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Location: Holly Farm, Holly Farm Road, Reedham  
District: Broadland  
Grid Ref: TG 4270 0155  
HER No: 11580 RED  
Date of work: 17th October 2004

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## **Summary**

*Building recording was undertaken on a barn at Holly Farm, Reedham prior to its proposed demolition. The barn was originally constructed before 1770 and later extended to the east. A cart porch was added to the north and various sections of wall rebuilt. Most recently an extension was added to the west end.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

(Fig. 1)

Historic building recording in advance of proposed demolition of a barn at Holly Farm, Reedham was commissioned by Knox Bhavan Architects, London in response to a brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: AH/20/04/04).

The work was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: AS/1863), and was designed to create a record corresponding to RCHME Level 2 (RCHME 1996).

The barn is not listed but lies within the curtilage of Holly Farm, the house of which is Grade II listed. It is proposed that the barn is replaced with a new building.

## **2.0 Methodology**

(Appendix 1)

The objective of this survey was to create a written, drawn and photographic record to RCHM (1996) Level 2.

The written record includes notes of the building's plan, form, function, age, and developmental sequence, and some observations on its relationship to its setting and its visual importance as a landmark. Detailed description of the elevations, interior and roof will be followed by an attempt to interpret the developmental phases of the building in the concluding section of the report.

The drawn record consists of a scaled floor plan which includes the form and location of structural features of historic significance such as blocked openings and masonry joints.

The photographic survey consists of a full exterior record and significant details of the interior. The photographic record was created using black and white 35mm film. Digital photography was used to record a selection of images for the purposes of illustrating this report. A photograph index (Appendix 1) can be found at the back of this report.

### 3.0 Building Survey

(Figs 1 and 2; Plates 1 to 14)

Holly Farm barn lies beside the 5m contour on the eastern outskirts of Reedham. The site overlooks the marshland of the Yare and Waveney valleys at the confluence of the Yare and the New Cut, which shortened the route along the Yare and Waveney rivers from Lowestoft to Norwich.

The barn is aligned east-to-west and lies on the northern side of Holly Farm Road, immediately east of the farmhouse. It is a red brick structure measuring 21m x 6.5m in plan (Fig. 2) with a later north-to-south aligned brick extension measuring 12m x 6m at the western end and a projecting cart porch measuring 5.5m x 3m on the northern side. There is a large cart door west of centre in the south wall which is in line with the cart porch at the north. The timber roof is of steep pitch and currently clad in corrugated asbestos sheets. The western gable is of brick with brick coping and the east gable is weatherboarded.

#### South elevation

(Plates 1 and 2)

A later single-storey extension on a north-to-south alignment is attached to the western end of the barn. This measures 12m x 6m, abuts the original western wall and extends 3m to the north and south. The south wall of the extension has been rebuilt in modern flettons in English bond and contains a single door opening.

The first metre of wall at the west end of the main south elevation is of English bond, the bricks having diagonal skintlings. This piece of wall appears to be continuous with the west wall. Abutting this and extending to the main double cart door is a later build of wall with shallow buttresses at either end, a plinth and a blocked central ventilation slit. This wall is of English bond and the bricks exhibit horizontal skintlings. East of the doors is a 2m long section of wall of Flemish bond composed of bricks with horizontal skintlings, with a plinth and a shallow buttress at the east end. This abuts a 3m long section of wall of an irregular version of English bond with diagonal skintlings. The east end of this wall is abutted by a large sloping brick buttress 1m wide x 1.5m deep, rendered on its upper surface.

East of the buttress is the 5m long wall of the east end extension (Plate 2) which abuts the wall to the west (the evidence for this is internal). This wall is of English bond with diagonal skintlings. There is a patch of brick blocking 0.65m wide by 1m high 2m east of the buttress which probably indicates the position of a small window opening. At the east end is a square window which has been inserted into an original door opening. The lower blocking is of Flemish bond abutting the original door jambs. The window jambs have been bonded into the upper door jambs. Above the window is a wooden lintel beam below a segmental arch of gault brick.

#### East elevation

(Plate 3)

The east end wall is 6.5m long and is of the same build as the east end of the south elevation, *i.e.* of Flemish bond with diagonal skintlings. The gable end above the wall is clad in timber weatherboarding. The wall contains a single door opening off centre to the south and three blocked ventilation slits. The door has a flat lintel

of a single course of gault bricks on edge. The major part of the lower jambs of the door have been rebuilt for some reason. However the original sections of upper jamb and the spacing of the door and slits show this is an original opening and not an insertion. Differential weathering of the bricks reveal the ghost of a single storey pitched roof structure abutting this end, the south wall of which was aligned with the south elevation of the barn, the north wall being 1m south of the barn's north wall. This structure was not bonded to the east wall and was probably of light timber construction.

### **North elevation**

(Plates 4, 5 and 6)

The eastern 5m of the north elevation is of the same build as the remainder of the east end and abuts the section of north wall to the west. It also respects a plinth at the base of this wall, this can be seen both externally and internally. This next section of wall is of random bond and extends for 5m westwards to the corner of the cart porch, which itself extends north for 3m and appears to be of the same build (Plate 5). The cart porch is 5.5m wide with a 2.75m central opening with double doors in the low north wall. The roof slopes down to the north. The west wall of the cart porch is partially rendered and partially clad in corrugated tin sheeting. Internally a blocked doorway is visible at the south end of this wall. The westernmost section of the main north wall (Plate 6) runs for 5m from the cart porch to the corner of the later west extension. The lower 2m of this wall is rendered, and above this the brickwork displays two builds. The first appears to be of random bond and extends 2m west of the cart porch. This abuts or is abutted by a build of English bond which extends for 3m to the end of the main elevation and contains a single door opening. The later west extension extends 3m north from the corner of the main elevation, and its north wall then runs for 6m westwards. The first 4.5m of this stretch is a later rebuild in flettons laid in English bond, and the western 1.10 m is of older red brick also laid in English bond.

### **West elevation**

(Plates 7 to 8)

The lower part of the west elevation comprises the later, possibly 19th-century, red brick extension. This is aligned north-to-south but the ridge of the roof is aligned east-to-west as the main barn. There is a large central door opening, and the gable above the door is boarded and glazed. The wall to the north of the door is of random bond, whilst that on the south is of English bond up to eaves level. Above that the gable is more random. Above and behind the extension is the west gable of the barn, which is of red brick laid in English bond. The gable is coped with a single course of headers. There is a central lozenge shaped ventilation constructed of spaced headers. Four iron strengthening straps are bolted through the gable wall to attach to the roof purlins. The gable is leaning in towards the barn at a noticeable angle.

### **Interior**

(Plates 9, 10 and 11)

On entering the west extension the original exterior lower west wall of the barn is seen, with the extension walls abutting its north and south corners (Plate 9). There

is a door opening in the north end of the wall and two unblocked ventilation slits south of this. These have a short central bar like the slits in the east end but are placed higher in the wall. The plinth is laid in English bond, and from the plinth up to the top of the slits the bricks are laid in Flemish bond. Above this the brickwork reverts to English bond again.

Inside the main structure the sequence of builds largely reflects what has been described on the outside. The roof is discussed below. The west wall has two halves of a tree trunk placed vertically against it with their apexes against an inserted tie beam (Plate 10). These were probably used for strengthening the wall and were perhaps placed here after the gable leaned in.

The porch shows several different builds on the inside and has three small niches in the east wall. The west wall of the cart porch has a blocked door at its south end.

The north and south walls of the east end of the barn abut the north and south walls to their west. Originally there was a north-to-south aligned cross wall at this point. This was an exterior wall as it had a plinth which can be seen fossilized in both the north and south walls (Plate 11). This wall was probably the end wall of the barn at one time. However, the plinth on the north side looks as though it may have been added to an existing wall base and a wider wall then built on top of it.

## **Roof structure**

(Plates 10, 12, 13 and 14)

Although the roof is externally clad in modern corrugated asbestos sheeting the steep pitch indicates it was probably originally thatched.

The roof is of eight bays, the eastern two of which are above the eastern extension. The main roof has trusses consisting of principal rafters with slightly arched collars and two orders of staggered butt purlins (Plate 10). There is only one tie beam (besides that at the west end) in this part of the roof, this lying to the west of the doors. This is not in line with a truss, nor perpendicular to the walls and is probably therefore a later insertion.

The trusses above the east end have tie beams and straight collars. The truss above the removed east wall has empty mortices in the principal rafters and in the tiebeam. Those in the tiebeam were probably for arched braces, thus suggesting it is re-used from a fully timber-framed structure. The principal rafters are possibly also re-used, as the two empty mortices in the west side of each member are close together and were possibly for purlins and/or windbraces. There are also mortices for a collar just above the present collar. The purlins which are supported by this truss sit on the backs of the principals and are not morticed to them as with all the other trusses. The purlins from the west side project for a distance east of the truss which seems odd if the roof originally stopped at a brick gable here corresponding to the west gable. However these purlins perhaps extended well into the gable wall for support. The roof is also racked to the east, and if this occurred before this truss was inserted it may explain the projecting purlins.

The lower portions of two principal rafters on the north side have been removed for the insertion of the cart porch and a plate inserted to bridge the gap above the opening into the porch which is wider than the original bay (Plate 12). The opening for the cart doors on the south has been similarly widened beyond the original bay

width and a re-used timber beam or post has been laid on the backs of two principal rafters to support the common rafters above the opening (Plate 13).

Wall plates on the north and south walls to the east of the main doors have possibly been re-used. That on the north exhibits some empty rebates and peg holes, and that on the south has some carpenter's marks (I, II & III) which do not have corresponding marks on the nearest rafters and do not line-up closely to the rafters.

The east gable wall has holes for joists for a loft and the truss above the removed wall has the remains of boarding indicating a loft space separated from the main barn (Plate 14). The truss above the east end wall is externally weatherboarded.

The west gable wall leans noticeably to the east at about the same angle as the roof is racked. It is possible that a failure of the east gable caused this racking and initiated the construction of the east end, or conversely the extension of the barn to the east and deliberate removal of the gable caused the racking and leaning of the west gable.

#### **4.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

(Fig. 2)

Holly Farm Barn is an example of a fairly typical 18th-century barn built for the storage and threshing of crops. Over the course of its life it has undergone a number of alterations, additions and partial rebuilds. The precise dating of the phases of development is difficult to establish but the overall sequence may be as follows.

The barn was originally a symmetrical structure with central threshing floor with bays either side for storage of threshed and unthreshed crops. The existing west gable and the section of south wall immediately west of the removed wall are possibly the earliest surviving parts of the standing structure, both being constructed before 1770. The removed north-to-south wall which lay towards the east end of the barn probably marked the position of an earlier east gable wall. This had a plinth against which the existing east end was built against. The majority of the north wall and the porch appear to be one build externally, although parts of this are obscured by render *etc.* This and the east end were probably also constructed before 1770, as they exhibit diagonal skintlings. The east end abuts the north wall, and is probably later. The north wall also abuts the north return of the west gable. Two principal rafters on the north side of the roof have been truncated to insert the porch.

The remaining parts of the south wall are probably of 19th-century date. The southern double doorway has been rebuilt to make it wider than the original, and it is now slightly wider than the roof bay above. A re-used timber has been inserted to support the common rafters.

The west gable leans at a noticeable angle to the east and the roof is similarly racked in that direction. There is a large sloping brick buttress supporting the south wall at the point where the removed wall would have met it at the original south-east corner. The later rebuilt sections of the south wall also incorporate shallow buttresses. This all suggests either that the earlier east wall was demolished which caused the racking and other structural problems or that the east gable failed, causing the west gable and roof to rack. Thereafter the opportunity was taken to

rebuild with an extended east end. However, the east end had a loft storey as evidenced by surviving joist holes in the east wall and wooden boarding on the truss above the removed wall. There is no obvious surviving evidence for the support of the west ends of these joists. Therefore it is possible that the lower part of the earlier east wall was standing after the construction of the present east end and was used to support floor joists and was only demolished at a later date.

The present east end was originally constructed with ventilation slits similar to, but lower and greater in number than those in the west end. This suggests the east extension was originally for crop storage, perhaps with a loft for threshed straw or hay above. The blocking of the slits and blocking and insertion of a window into the door opening on the south side suggest a later change of use for this part of the barn.

The porch, which was possibly added to the barn before the east end was constructed, would have been useful as an extension of the area of the threshing floor. It could also have been used as a cartshed if a separate one did not exist. The laden wagons would enter through the high doors in the south wall, and if necessary could exit *via* the lower door in the north porch wall. Two doors were necessary to create the through draft for threshing. The niches or cupboards in the east porch wall have parallels in some other brick and stone barns. These were probably used for housing the grease horn for lubricating the joint in the threshing flail and, perhaps, also a lamp (Peters 1991).

The extension at the west end of the barn is probably of 19th-century construction with its north and south walls rebuilt in the 20th century. This single storey construction was possibly used for housing livestock.

The barn forms part of the historic and social landscape of Reedham, occupying a prominent site on the edge of the high ground overlooking the river and marshland and therefore visible on the skyline from the river. The position at the confluence of the River Yare and the New Cut was a landmark for American Pilots during World War II (pers. comm. Mike Barnes).

Although demolition of the barn will remove a locally well known building from the village, the construction of a new building of similar size on its footprint will ensure some continuity.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Thanks to Knox Bhavan Architects who commissioned this report on behalf of their client Mike Barnes, who was very helpful during the fieldwork stage of this project.

The fieldwork and photography was undertaken by the author on behalf of NAU.

The report was formatted and produced by David Dobson. Alice Lyons edited the report which was read by Andy Shelley.

### ***Bibliography***

Peters, J.E.C., 1991 *Discovering Traditional Farm Buildings*. Princes Risborough: Shire Publications

RCHME 1996 *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification*. Third Edition. Swindon: RCHME

## Appendix 1: Photographic Index

Black and white (35mm), film 1				
Frame	Description	Looking	Scale	Date
01	South elevation	North		17.10.04
02	Oblique shot from Holly Farm Road	North-east		
03	West elevation	East		
04	West elevation	East		
05	Lower part of west wall with slits	East	0.5m	
06	Lower part of west wall with slits	East	0.5m	
07	Interior shot	East		
08	unused			
09	unused			
10	Interior shot	West		
11	Interior -main cart door	South-east		
12	Interior showing roof truncated for insertion of cart porch	North-west		
13	South-west corner showing blocked slit and change in build	South-west		
14	Oblique shot of south elevation	North-east		
15	General view from Holly Farm Road	North-east		
16	East end of south elevation	North	1.0m	
17	East elevation	West	1.0m	
18	General view including farmhouse	South-west		
19	North elevation	South		
20	North elevation	South		
21	North elevation- oblique view	South-west		
22	North elevation- oblique view	South-west		
23	North elevation- oblique view	South-west		
24	West elevation	East	1.0m	
25	West elevation	East	1.0m	
26	West gable, close-up	East		
27	West gable, close-up	East		
28	East elevation with house and yard to left	West	1.0m	
29	East elevation with house and yard to left	West	1.0m	
30	Door and blocked slits in east elevation	West	1.0m	
31	Door and blocked slits in east elevation	West	1.0m	
32	Cart porch	South-west		
33	Join of builds at east end of south elevation	North		
34	West end of south elevation	North	1.0m	
Black and white (35mm), film 2				
01	West elevation	East		18.10.04
02	South elevation –oblique view	North-east		
03	South elevation –oblique view	North-east		
04	West end of south elevation	North		
05	East end of south elevation	North		
06	East end of south elevation	North	1.0m	
07	General view with farmhouse to right	South-west		
08	North elevation	South-west		
09	North elevation, oblique view	South-east		
10	West elevation	East	1.0m	
11	East gable with house and yard to left	West	1.0m	
12	Door and blocked slits at east end	West	1.0m	
13	Cart porch	South-west		
14	Conjunction of builds east end of south elevation	North	1.0m	
15	West end south elevation	North	1.0m	
16	Unused			

17	Cart porch	South-east	1.0 m	
18	Lower part of west gable with slits	East	0.5m	
19	Interior- scar of removed wall south wall	South	0.5m	
20	Interior- scar of removed wall north wall	North	1.0m	
21	Interior- east end	East		
22	Interior- west end	West		
23	Niches in east wall of cart porch	East	0.5m	





Plate 1. South elevation



Plate 2. East end of south elevation



Plate 3. East elevation (1m scale)



Plate 4. North elevation



Plate 5. Cart porch looking south-west



Plate 6. West end of north elevation (1m scale)



Plate 7. West elevation (1m scale)



Plate 8. West gable



Plate 9. Lower West wall with ventilation slits. (0.5m scale)



Plate 10. Interior looking west



Plate 11. Scar of north-to-south wall with plinth looking south (0.5m scale)



Plate 12. Roof trusses on north side truncated to insert cart porch



Plate 13. South cart door with inserted reused timber



Plate 14. Roof truss at east end above removed wall

