

**Barn at  
East End Road,  
Stonham Aspal, Suffolk  
SAL 031**

**Historic Building Record**

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1-100040



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*on behalf of*  
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**April 2011**



# **Barn at East End Road, Stonham Aspal, Suffolk**

**(TM 152 601)**

## **Historic Building Record**

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant barn and attached sheds in the curtilage of a grade II-listed building. It has been prepared to a specification written by Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (ref. SpecAR(EM)\_BarnEEndRd\_StonhamAspal\_3903\_07, dated 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010) and is intended to partly fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council application consent 3903/07, condition 7).*

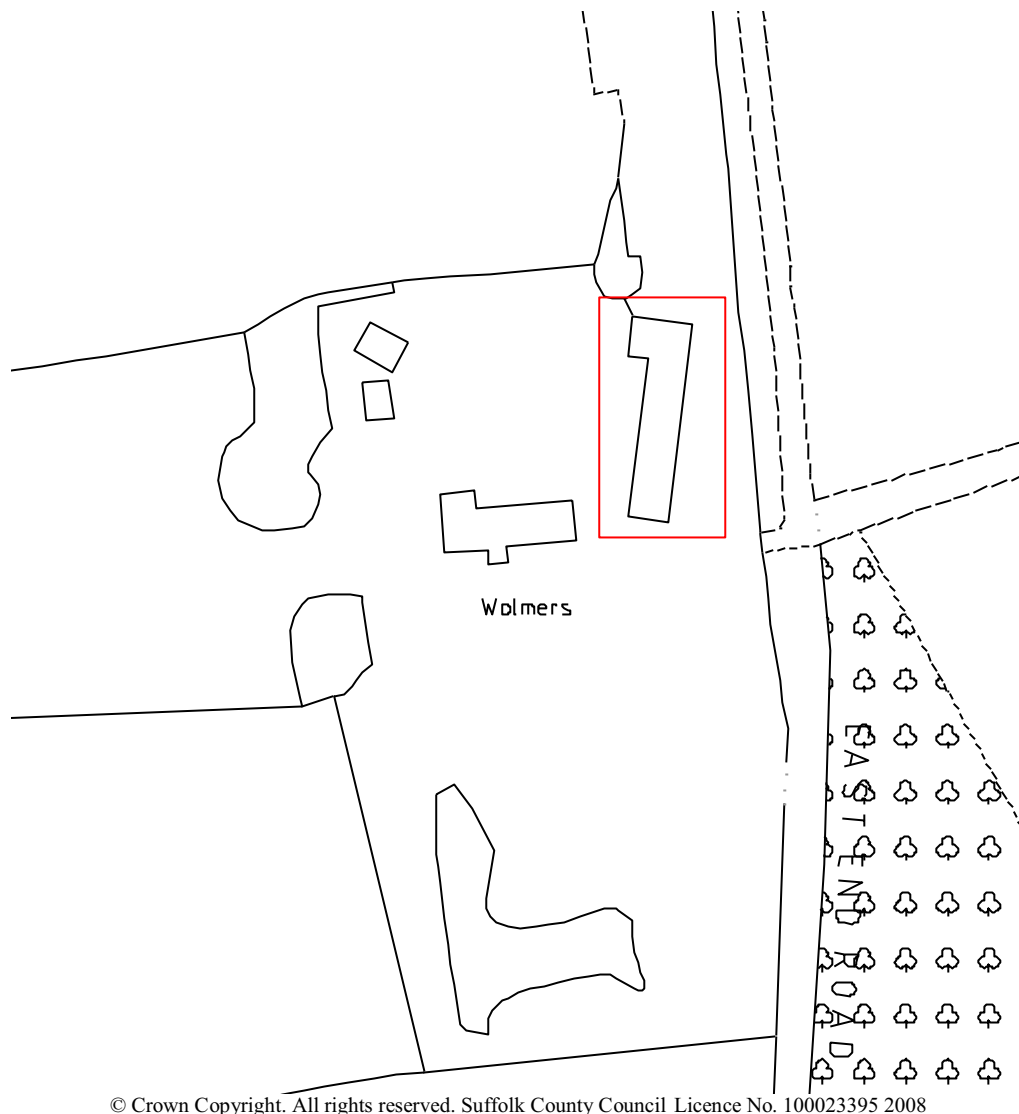
### **Introduction**

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 58 digital images of 21 megapixels (Appendix 1), but also includes 12 printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text (Appendix 2). Each image is described in a separate schedule and wherever possible includes a scale rod with half-metre divisions in red and white. The site was inspected on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

### **Summary**

The timber-framed barn lies in open countryside at the end of a no-through road serving the medieval hamlet of East End near the boundary between the parishes of Stonham Aspal and Winston. Until its recent sale it belonged to the adjacent thatched farmhouse known as Wolmers: a picturesque grade II-listed timber-framed and thatched property of the late-16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century that probably lies within the remains of a medieval moat and bears a name that can be traced to the early-15<sup>th</sup> century. Both the barn and house are substantial buildings of some quality, although at the time of the tithe survey in 1839 the farm was a modest tenanted holding of 42 acres.

The barn is a three-bay structure of the late-15<sup>th</sup> or early-16<sup>th</sup> century that belonged to the previous house on the site and may overlie the eastern arm of the moat. It contains evidence of a central entrance facing the yard adjacent to the house in the typical manner of the period, and originally possessed massive arch-braces to its tie-beams and an unusual pattern of internal wall braces. The northern end of the building is formed by a single-bay stable that was added to the threshing barn at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and may well be contemporary with the present farmhouse. This stable contained a hay loft lit by a window and an unusual entrance in the centre of its gable. Despite their early origin and considerable historic interest these two timber-frames are now somewhat fragmentary and unfortunately they probably fail to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in their own right. While the barn's front (western) elevation remains largely intact its rear wall was rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its corrugated asbestos roof (which also spans the stable) is modern. The tie-beams and arch-braces have also been lost together with most of its two gables. The stable is more complete, but its loft and the studs of its rear wall were apparently removed in recent years when a new vehicle entrance was inserted (the original entrance having been blocked when the barn ceased to belong to the house). The interiors of both the barn and stable now form a single large space with only a fragment of the former internal partition remaining at roof level.



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**Figure 1**  
**Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan**

**Enclosing the barn and attached sheds in red and showing the grade II-listed former farmhouse known as Wolmers on an approximately east-west axis to the south-west. The two small buildings to the north-west are modern, but the western ponds may represent the remains of a medieval moat.**

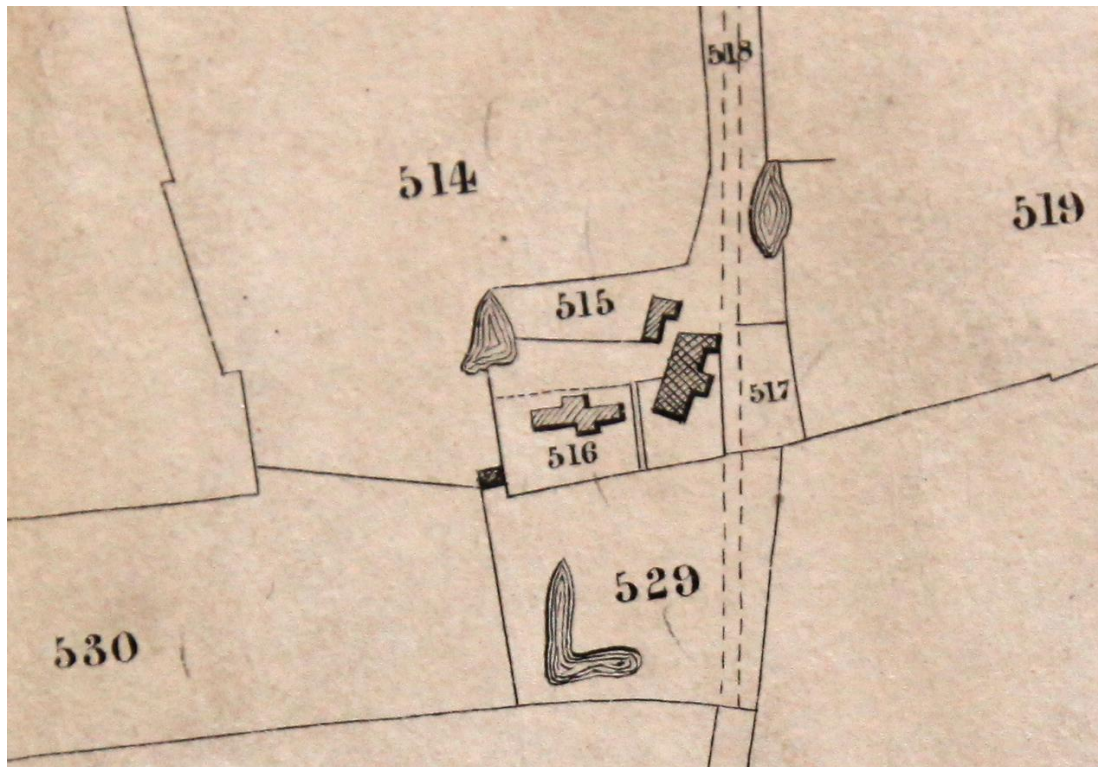
## **Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record**

The barn lies in open countryside immediately to the east of a grade II-listed former farmhouse known as Wolmers at the northern end of East End Road, approximately 2 km north-east of the parish church and 600 m west of the boundary with Winston. An unmade track continues past the site as far as Old East End Hall, to the owner of which the barn currently belongs. Wolmers is a substantial timber-framed, thatched and rendered structure with ovolo-moulded ceiling joists dated in the Schedule of Listed Buildings (which mistakenly names the property as ‘Woolmers’) to the early-17<sup>th</sup> century. It consists of a central hall with a service bay to the west and a parlour to the east (contrary to the normal opposite orientation) and its south-facing entrance porch is dated to the same period but is said not to be original. It is possible that the house was designed to face north towards its farm yard in the typical manner of the period. A series of ponds may represent the remains of a medieval moat (possibly extending beneath the barn) and there is documentary evidence of an

earlier property on the site: the name 'Wolmer' first appears in a court roll of 1414 according to the 'Survey of the Houses of Stonham Aspal' by Penrose & Hill (Suffolk Review, Autumn 1971). The same authors date the present house to the late-16<sup>th</sup> century, and suggest that the cluster of four timber-framed houses in the vicinity are all that survive of a larger medieval hamlet known as East End.



**Figure 2** The area on the Stonham Aspal (sic) tithe map of 1839 (Suffolk Record Office) showing Wolmers to the south-west and Old East End Hall to the north-east.



**Figure 2a.** Detail of the 1839 tithe map showing the barn with chequered shading to the east of the farmhouse. A rear (eastern) porch appears to project from the threshing bay with a smaller projection (perhaps a lean-to tack-room) from the northern stable bay.

At the time of the Stonham Aspal tithe survey in 1839 the farm was a modest tenanted arable holding of 42 acres (of which approximately 10 were pasture) owned by John Freeman Esquire and occupied by Edward Freeman – neither of whom were of sufficient import to warrant mention in White’s Suffolk Directory of 1844. The tithe map shows the house and barn much as they remain today with an additional L-shaped building near the barn’s north-western corner. A projection to the east probably represents a lean-to porch intended to lengthen the threshing floor rather than shelter the principle entrance as this has always faced the house to the west. The buildings were collectively described in the apportionment as ‘farmhouse, yards and premises’ (plots 515 and 516 in figure 2) but the small piece of ground to the east (517) was a ‘stackyard’ and the northern track a ‘drift’ (518). Old East End Farm (as it was named on the 1886 Ordnance Survey), containing 77.5 acres, was owned by John Beddingfield Esquire and occupied by John Mulliner who was listed as a farmer in 1844. This house is also dated to the early-17<sup>th</sup> century in the Schedule of Listed Buildings but said to lie in the remains of a medieval moat.

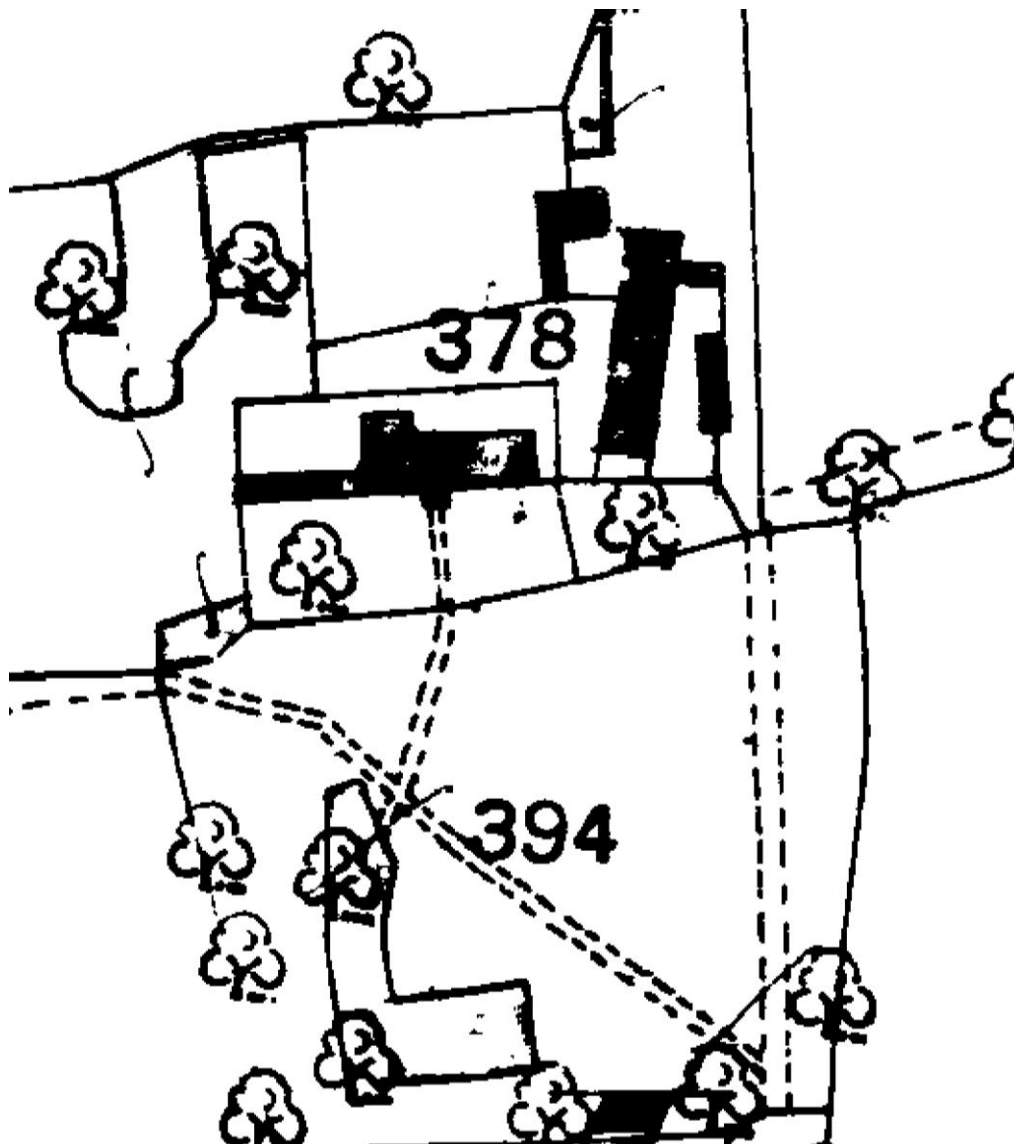


Figure 3

The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1886.

The possible porch had been removed since 1839 and a new shed had been built to the east of the barn. An extension also appears to have been added to its northern gable.

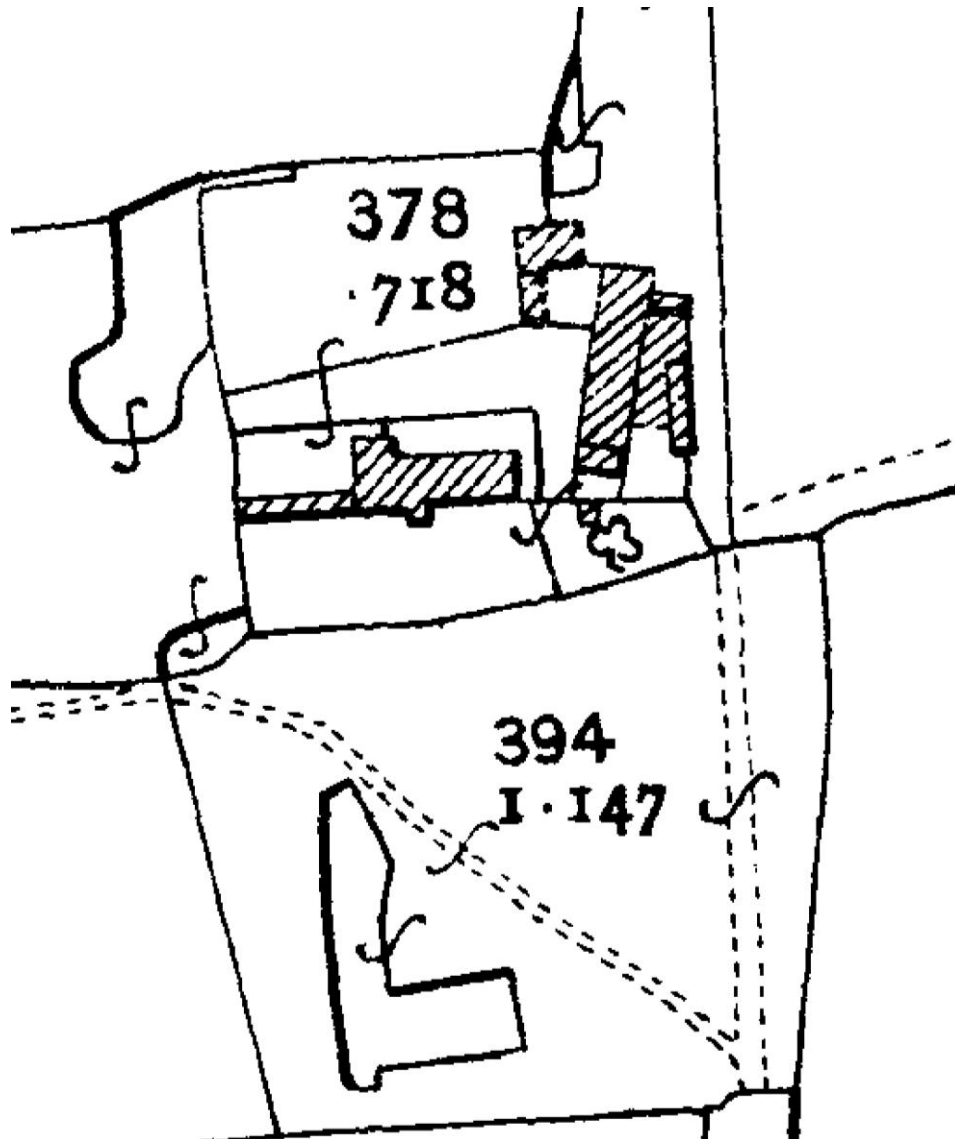


Figure 4

The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904.

The southern lean-to shed (area 3 in figure 5) is clearly shown, but its northern counterpart (2), which projects to the west, had not yet been built. A covered yard appears to link the barn to the eastern shed but this had been demolished along with the detached shed to the north-west before the Ordnance Survey of 1957.

The farm underwent relatively few alterations during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (compared to most in the region) but a narrow shed to the east of the barn was built between 1839 and 1886 and was probably a cow shed serving a new cattle yard. The possible porch was removed during the same interval, but the present northern shed seems not to have been added until after the Ordnance Survey of 1904. Both the cattle shed and the detached L-shaped shed to the north had been demolished before 1957 and site has since altered very little.

## Building Analysis

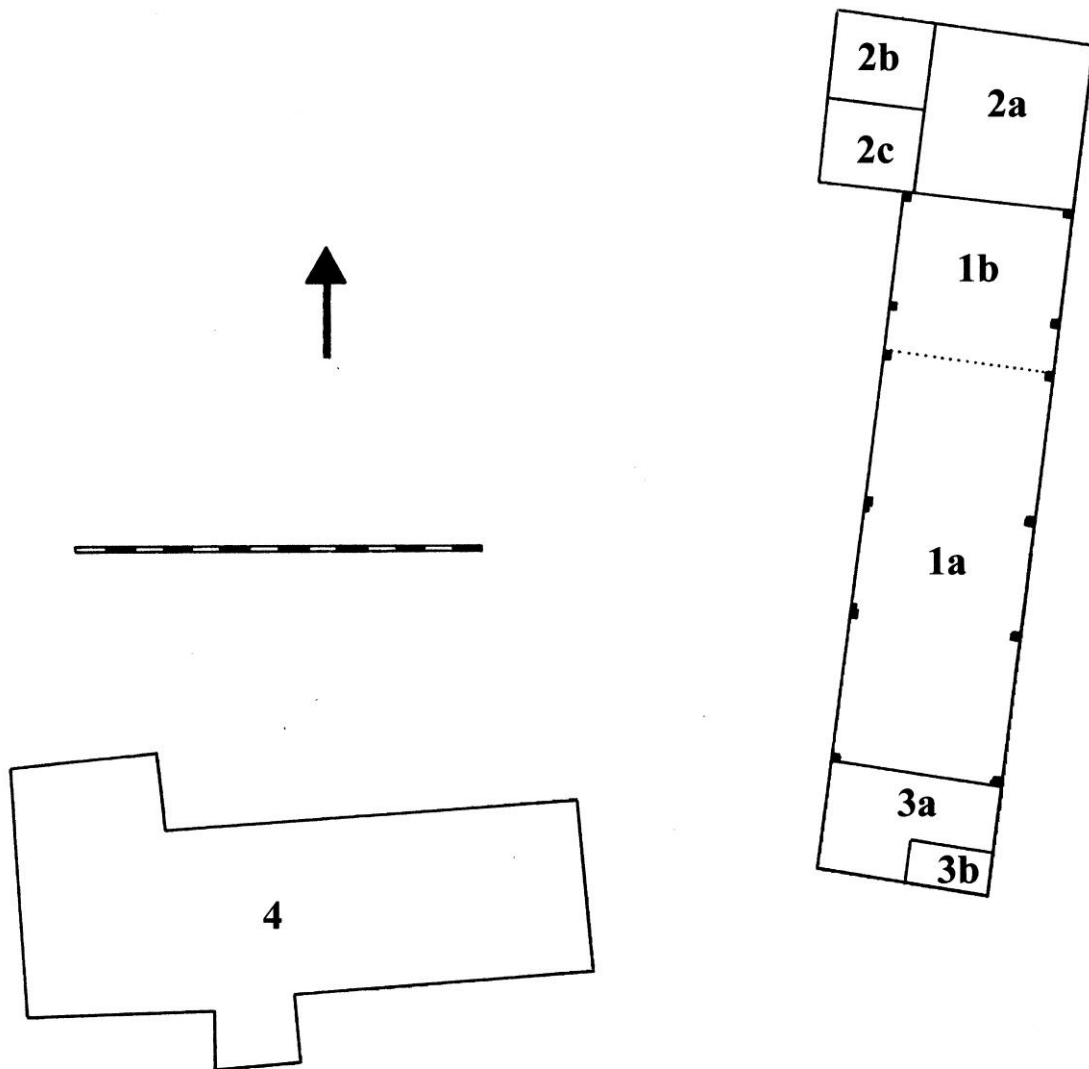


Figure 5

Block plan of the barn and attached sheds identifying each area with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Adapted from Ordnance Survey. Scale in metres.

### Key

1a. An early-16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed threshing barn of three bays with a central entrance to the west. Originally with large arch-braces to the tie-beams and infilled with wattle-and-daub but now weatherboarded. Edge-halved and bridled scarf joints and good sequences of carpenter's Roman numerals. The western elevation largely intact with internally trenched braces and an original 'durn' door jamb (i.e. with an integral curved bracket at its head). The rear, eastern elevation rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with re-used timber. All tie-beams replaced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and provided with bolted knee-braces. The roof structure renewed in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century and covered with corrugated asbestos. The southern gable originally with a mid-rail (presumably to create a more impressive appearance when viewed from the approach) but its studs rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The studs of the northern gable removed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to create a single interior with the stable bay (1b) but retaining a boarded partition with a loft hatch above the tie-beam. Modern concrete floors throughout.



1b. An early-17<sup>th</sup> century stable bay added to the northern gable of the earlier barn. Probably contemporary with the present farmhouse. Originally with a hay loft supported on pegged clamps (rails) of which some fragments survive. Probably with an original external door in the position of the existing door in its south-western corner and (unusually) another in the centre of its gable. The frame of the western elevation and gable largely intact, along with one arch-brace of the open truss adjoining the barn, but the studs of the eastern elevation were removed in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century to create a modern vehicle entrance (probably when the original barn doors facing the farmhouse were blocked). The roof rebuilt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century together with that of the barn.

2. A 20<sup>th</sup> century weatherboarded lean-to shed with a corrugated iron roof adjoining the barn's northern gable and projecting to the west. Not shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904. Partly converted into office accommodation during the late-20<sup>th</sup> century with two small storage sheds to the west (2b and 2c).

3. A weatherboarded and pantiled lean-to shed adjoining the barn's southern gable. Shown on 19<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Surveys but rebuilt in the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century in softwood studwork. Incorporating a small late-20<sup>th</sup> century boarded shed lined with shelves in its south-eastern corner (3b).

4. Grade II-listed timber-framed, thatched and rendered farmhouse of the late-16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century. A two-storied entrance porch apparently facing south away from the rear yard flanked by the barn, but the porch is said to be a later feature and the present orientation may be secondary. The building is a substantial farmhouse of Yeoman status containing ovolo-moulded ceiling joists with a central hall flanked by a service bay and possible kitchen bay on the west and a chimney and parlour bay on the east. Not inspected internally.

*N.B. The 20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to sheds are not of historic interest and are not discussed further, while the farmhouse falls outside the scope of this analysis.*

### **The 16<sup>th</sup> Century Barn (1a)**

The barn at East End Road (formerly belonging to Wolmers) is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of four bays with a late-20<sup>th</sup> century shallow-pitched softwood roof structure covered with corrugated asbestos. It extends to 6.7 m in width by 20.5 m in length overall (22 ft by 67 ft) on a north-south axis at right-angles to the adjacent farmhouse, and its walls rise to 3.2 m (10.5 ft) above the modern concrete floor. While the barn now contains a single internal space it consists of two structures that were probably separated by an internal partition until its sale away from the farmhouse and the blocking the original western entrance in recent years.

The earlier of the two structures lies to the south, as shown in figure 5, and forms a three-bay threshing barn of standard layout with a central entrance to the west. This extends to a relatively modest 14.5 m in length (47.5 ft) and probably reflects the small scale of the farm which may have remained unchanged in 1839 when it contained just 42 acres. The size and quality of the house and the unusually great width of the structure (at 22 ft where most small barns vary between 17 and 20 ft) indicate that normal agriculture may not have been the builder's sole source of income. The frame is also of high quality, with neatly chamfered and shaped jowls to the storey posts and mortises of 0.75 m (2.5 ft) in length for massive arch-braces to the tie-beams (both the tie-beams and arch-braces now lacking). These and other features of the carpentry indicate an origin during the early part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century or possibly

the late-15<sup>th</sup> century, but close dating is impossible in the absence of the roof (which probably contained crown-posts or queen-posts and would have been steeply pitched for thatch). The edge-halved and bridled scarf joints of the roof-plate were replaced by face-halved and bladed joints in the late-16<sup>th</sup> century and the deeply incised carpenter's Roman numerals to the soffit of the plate are also characteristic of late medieval framing. The timbers were probably exposed externally and were certainly infilled with wattle-and-daub as indicated by notches in the sides of the studs. The central entrance was flanked by individual jambs with curved heads forming an arch, of which the southernmost still survives – another sign of quality. This entrance is now blocked with recent studwork and boarding, but retains external pintles for the hinges of secondary doors. The central bay would have contained a threshing floor but the present floors are of modern concrete throughout. The structure contains a number of unusual features, such as the absence of internal wall braces in the southern bay but the presence of two in the northern bay forming an elegant arch: one brace rising from the corner post, which remains *in situ*, and one from the storey post of the central bay (the latter now missing and indicated by empty mortises and trenches in the studs). Similar braces rose from the corner posts to both gable tie-beams but the southern gable alone possessed a mid-rail – a feature associated with high quality carpentry and presumably intended here to create a display gable to impress visitors approaching the site. A series of dowel holes penetrate the studs approximately 30 cm (12 ins) beneath the roof plates – a rare feature that may indicate the presence a decorative moulded rail to the exterior (of a kind typically found only on high-status buildings). The rail may also have secured the rafters of an external lean-to, but such features would not be expected on the front elevation of a barn.

While the front (western) elevation is largely intact and is of considerable historic interest, the rear elevation was completely rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with re-used timber and diagonal primary braces which interrupt the studs. A series of glazed windows was inserted between the timbers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Face-halved and bladed scarf joints are visible in the roof-plate, and a small doorway lies opposite the western entrance. Most barns possessed similarly small rear doors until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (sufficient to create a through draft for threshing and winnowing but not to admit carts) but most were subsequently destroyed to accommodate vehicle thoroughfares. This rebuilding is probably contemporary with the tie-beams and bolted knee-braces. The southern gable has been rebuilt in the same style, including a tall red-brick plinth, and the northern gable has been removed entirely, although both retain their tie-beams. The northern gable retains a section of 19<sup>th</sup> century boarding above its tie-beam, with a hatch that probably served the missing hay loft of the stable bay (1b), and appears to have been demolished in recent years to create a new entrance when the original was blocked.

### **The 17th Century Stable (1b)**

The northern bay of the barn is an extension of the early-17<sup>th</sup> century with straight, narrow braces to the tie-beam of its open truss, small, straight internally trenched corner-braces and other features characteristic of that period. It may be contemporary with the present farmhouse. The structure extends to 6 m in length (19.5 ft) including a gap of 1.5 (5 ft) between its open truss and the barn's gable (designed to maximise its internal length) and originally contained a ceiling of joists supported by an axial joist and chamfered rails (known as clamps) pegged to the outer walls. Mortises for the ends of these clamps can still be seen in all four storey posts, and short sections survive to the south of both elevations. This arrangement is typical of the stables with hay lofts that adjoin the gables of many barns in the region. The loft was lit by a window above the tie-beam of its northern gable as indicated by original pegged mortises for its lintel slightly beneath the present lintel in the same position. The loading hatch beneath the tie-beam (now blocked by the northern lean-to shed) is a later insertion and the loft would have been reached by an internal stair when first built. A central gap in the studs and mortises beneath the mid-rail of the same gable was almost certainly for a door rather than a window (as there are no sill mortises in the flanking studs) – an unusual arrangement as stables were typically entered at their ends, but possibly serving a lean-to tack

room. The existing western door against the southern storey post occupies a more standard position and its lintel appears to conceal the mortises of an original but slightly lower lintel. Unfortunately any complete reconstruction of the 17<sup>th</sup> century layout is now impossible as the eastern studs have been removed to accommodate a vehicle entrance (presumably required as the western doors were blocked when the barn was sold away from the farmhouse). The loft was probably lost at the same time.

### **Historic Significance**

The barn at East End Road (formerly belonging to Wolmers) is of considerable historic interest as a late-15<sup>th</sup> or early-16<sup>th</sup> century threshing barn with a high quality timber frame and an equally good stable extension of the early-17<sup>th</sup> century. Barns and stables of this early period are not common, especially in association with contemporary houses that reveal the layout of their adjoining farm yard. Unfortunately, however, the building is somewhat fragmentary, having lost its roof and much of its rear wall, and probably fails to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in its own right. It appears that the loss of the ceiling in the stable and the studs of its eastern wall occurred very recently, until which point the building would have merited listing given the special rarity of intact early stables.

## **Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record**

### **Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1**

#### **Photograph no.**

1. General view from site entrance to south-east showing Wolmers to the left and the barn to the right.
2. General view of the site from the north showing the entrance track with the barn and Wolmers to the right.
3. General view of the site from the north-west showing Wolmers to the right & the front elevation of the barn to the left.
4. General view from the north showing Wolmers to the right and the blocked original entrance of the barn to the left.
5. General view from the south showing Wolmers to the left and the barn to the right.
6. Rear (eastern) exterior of the barn showing the later lean-to sheds (2 & 3) to right and left respectively.
7. Detail of the eastern exterior showing the 20th century window and the rear door of the threshing bay.
8. Exterior from north-east showing the northern lean-to shed (2).
9. External northern gable of the barn showing the corrugated iron roof of the lean-to shed (2) in the foreground.
10. Exterior from the north-west showing the lean-to shed (2) projecting beyond the barn's front elevation to the left.
11. The northern lean-to shed (2) from the south showing the door to its south-western compartment (2c) to the left.
12. The northern end of the barn's western exterior showing the lean-to shed (2) left & door to the stable bay (1b) right.
13. Detail of the tarred weatherboarding to the western exterior of the stable bay (1b).
14. The door to the stable bay (1b) at the northern end of the western exterior.
15. The western exterior of the barn from the yard to the north of Wolmers showing the blocked original central entrance.
16. Detail of the blocked original entrance in the western exterior showing pintles for secondary barn doors.
17. The southern end of the western exterior showing the blocked entrance to the left and hatch to the southern bay right.

18. The western exterior seen from the south, showing the undulating wall fabric.
19. The southern external gable showing the central door of the lean-to shed (3).
20. Interior of the northern lean-to shed (2a) from the east showing the doors to the two western storage areas (2b & 2c).
21. Interior of the northern lean-to shed (2a) from the west showing its partial conversion into office space.
22. Interior from west of southern storage shed (2c) showing corner of stable bay (1b) to right.
23. Interior from east of southern storage shed (2c) showing corner of stable bay (b) to left.
24. Interior of northern storage shed (2b) from east showing northern window and modern shelving to left and right.
25. Interior of northern storage shed (2b) from west showing entrance from converted office (2a).
26. Interior of southern lean-to shed (3a) showing gable of barn (1) to right.
27. Interior of southern lean-to shed (3a) from west showing gable of barn (1) to left and corner shed (3b) to right.
28. Boarded external southern gable of barn (1) seen from lean-to shed (3a) to south-west.
29. Interior from eastern entrance of boarded shed (3b) in south-eastern corner of southern lean-to (3a).
30. General view of interior of barn (1) from north showing intact arch-brace of stable extension (1b) to right.
31. Interior view of barn (1) from south showing intact 16th century western wall to left & rebuilt rear wall to right.
32. Rebuilt southern internal gable of barn (1) showing mortises in tie-beam and corner posts for studs and mid-rail.
33. View of western interior showing three-bay barn (1) with blocked central entrance to left and stable bay (1b) to right.
34. Western interior of southern bay of barn showing original studs without wall brace & later tie-beam & knee-brace.
35. Detail of edge-halved and bridled scarf joint and carpenter's numerals to western roof-plate of southern bay.
36. Western interior of central bay showing jamb of original entrance with arched durn head to left.

37. Detail of studs of western interior of southern bay showing notches for missing wattle-and-daub infill.
38. Western interior showing mortise for large arch-brace & later knee-brace to left with original door jamb to right.
39. Western interior of northern bay of barn (1) showing intact wall brace to right and trench for missing brace to left.
40. Western interior of early-17th century stable bay (1b) showing corner post and tie-beam of original barn (1) to left.
41. Original arch-brace of stable bay (1b) seen from south and showing the corner post of the barn (1) to left.
42. Detail of western interior of stable bay (1b) showing remains of original ceiling clamp.
43. Internal detail of western door to stable bay (1b) showing mortises for original door lintel beneath modern lintel.
44. Detail of taper burn to western interior of stable bay (1b).
45. Western interior of stable bay (1b) showing internal trenched corner braces to right.
46. Detail of internally trenched braces of north-western corner of stable bay with pegged ceiling clamp mortise beneath.
47. Interior of stable bay 1b showing mortises of original hay loft window beneath present lintel in northern roof gable.
48. Mid-rail of northern gable showing lack of central stud mortise for original central door or possibly window.
49. North-eastern internal corner of stable bay (1b) showing mortises for wall brace and ceiling clamp in post.
50. Eastern interior of stable bay (1b) with mortises for missing studs & corner brace in original roof-plate.
51. Detail of original ceiling clamp attached to southern post of eastern interior of stable bay (1b).
52. View of eastern interior of barn (1) showing renewed studs and roof-plate of 19th century.
53. Eastern interior of northern bay of barn (1) showing rebuilt framing with re-used studs and primary wall braces.
54. Eastern interior of central threshing bay of barn showing rebuilt framing and small rear door of 19th century.
55. Eastern interior of southern bay of barn (1) showing rebuilt framing with face-halved and bladed scarf joint in plate.

56. Detail of south-eastern corner post of barn (1) showing empty mortise for missing mid-rail.
57. Remains of internal northern gable of barn (1) showing mortises for missing studs and braces but no mid rail.
58. 20th century roof structure of barn (1) from south showing 19th century replaced tie-beams with bolted knee-braces.

*Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 14-19*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 14-19): Selected Printed Photographs**



**Illus. 1. General view from the site entrance to the south-east showing the farm drift in the rear to the right with Wolmers to the left and the barn in the centre.**



**Illus. 2. General view of the site from the north-west showing Wolmers to the right & the front elevation of the barn to the left. The barn was originally entered from this direction and may have formed part of a courtyard in conjunction with the house and other buildings that no longer survive.**





**Illus. 3. The western exterior of the barn from the yard to the north of Wolmers showing its blocked original central entrance.**



**Illus. 4. The exterior from the north-west showing the 20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to shed (2) projecting beyond the barn's front elevation to the left.**



**Illus. 5. General view of the interior of the barn from the north showing the intact arch-brace of the early-17<sup>th</sup> century stable extension (1b) to the right. The left-hand brace has been removed. The right-hand (western) wall retains most of its original framing while the left-hand wall was largely rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.**



**Illus. 6. The western interior of the southern bay of the 16<sup>th</sup> century barn (1) showing its intact original studs without wall braces & an inserted 19<sup>th</sup> century tie-beam & knee-brace. The central loading hatch is secondary but the original door jamb with its arched top is visible to the right**



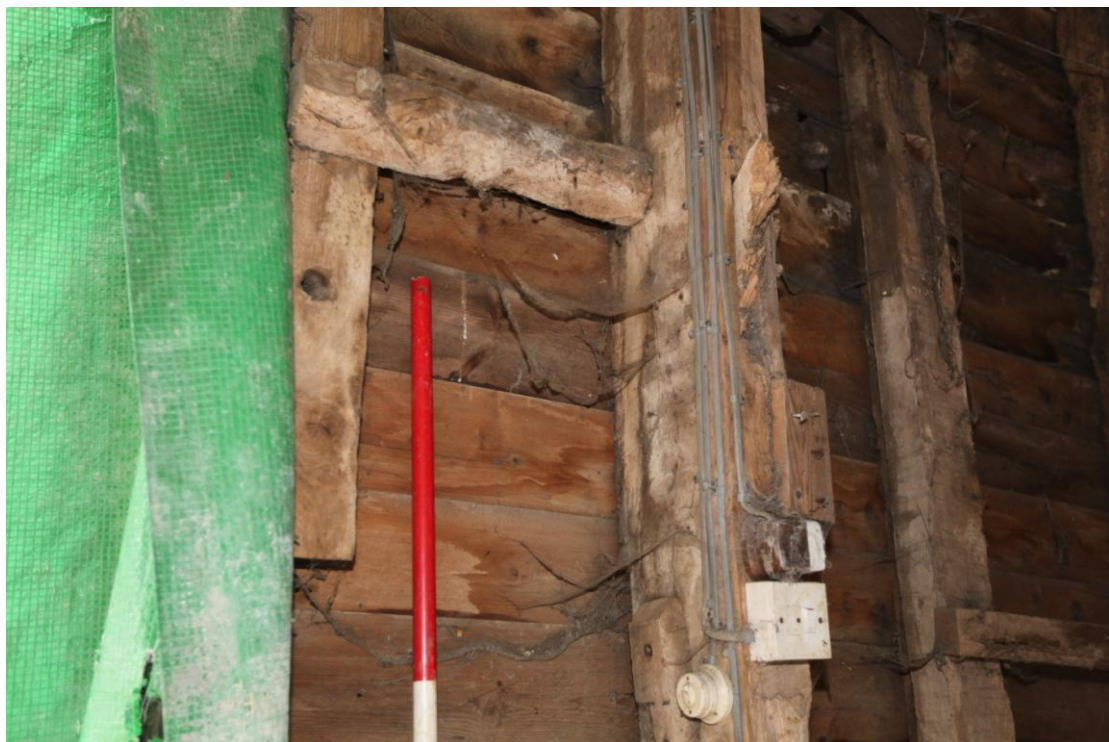
**Illus. 7. Detail of the 16<sup>th</sup> century type 'edge-halved and bridled' scarf joint and carpenter's Roman numerals to the western roof-plate of the barn's southern bay.**



**Illus. 8. The northern end of the western interior showing the early-17th century stable bay (1b) to the right and the corner post and tie-beam of the 16<sup>th</sup> century barn (1) to the left. The internally trenched corner braces of the original barn are far larger than those of the stable. The position of the stable door appears to be original but this is not certain.**



**Illus. 9. The internal northern gable of the stable bay (1b) showing the mortises of an original hay loft window beneath the present lintel immediately beneath the apex of the modern roof structure. The central gap on the lower storey is an original feature and relates either to a door or a window.**



**Illus. 10. Detail of the south-eastern corner post of the stable bay (1b) showing a short surviving section of the original pegged 'clamp' or rail which supported the floor joists of the removed hay loft. The post preserves a fragment of the eastern arch-brace to the tie-beam.**



**Illus. 11.** The eastern interior of the central threshing bay of the barn (1) showing its rebuilt framing, including many re-used timbers, and a small 19<sup>th</sup> century rear door. A similarly small doorway would have existed here in the original 16<sup>th</sup> century structure.



**Illus. 12.** The remains of the internal northern gable of the 16<sup>th</sup> century barn (1) showing empty mortises for missing studs and corner braces but no mid-rail. The southern gable, in contrast, contained a mid-rail. The boarding above the tie-beam retains a loading hatch that served the missing hay loft of the stable bay (1b) beyond.