

**Hill Farm,
Swefling,
Suffolk**

Archaeological Record



**Leigh Alston MA (Oxon)
Architectural Historian
4 Nayland Road
Bures St Mary
Suffolk CO8 5BX**

September 2007

Leigh A. Alston MA (Oxon)
Architectural Historian

**4 Nayland Road
Bures St Mary
Suffolk CO8 5BX**

Tel. (01787) 228016
E-Mail: leigh.alston@ntlworld.com

Farm Buildings, Hill Farm, Swefling, Suffolk

(TM 3365 6360)

An Archaeological Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a complex of unlisted farm buildings at Hill Farm. It has been prepared to a brief designed by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Jess Tipper, 20 June 2007) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for domestic conversion (Suffolk Coastal District Council Application C/06/1411/FUL).

Introduction

The following written report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 8.2 megapixel digital images (Appendix 1) but also includes printed photographs of key features (Appendix 2). Each digital image is separately described in the written report, and the CD also includes the report in MS Word format. The buildings were inspected on September 19th 2007, when the accompanying photographs were taken (wherever practical a white metre rod with centimetre subdivisions has been included for scale purposes).

Summary

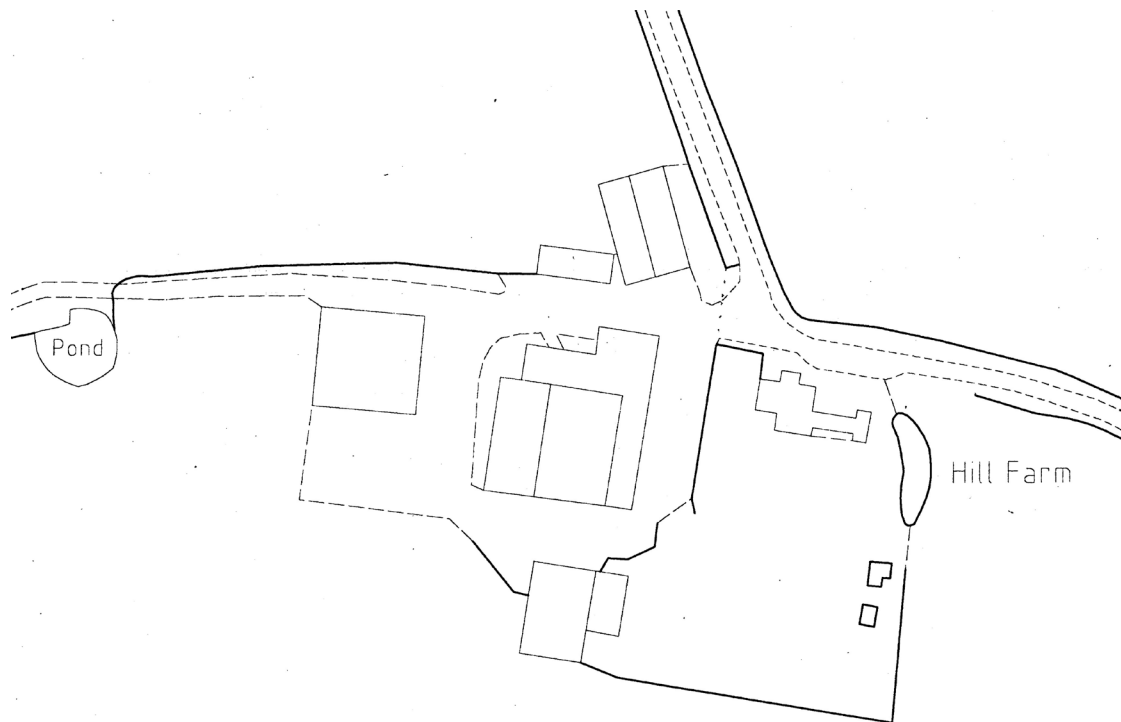
Hill Farm occupies an exposed hill-top site in arable countryside 1.2 kilometres west of the parish church of St Mary. The farm originally lay in a more sheltered position at the end of a track approximately 200 metres to the north-west, as shown on the parish title map of 1842, but was entirely

relocated to the edge of a nearby road in the mid-19th century. The earlier site is now lost without obvious trace in a ploughed field. A stone above the present farmhouse porch bears the date 1839, which questions the accuracy of the title map upon which the building is not

shown. The property was known as Gull Farm until the early-20th century, and is marked as such on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 (but as Hill Farm in 1928). The tributary of the River Alde which flows in the valley some 400 metres to the north is still known as The Gull.

The redundant farm buildings form a complex 17 metres west of the house. A brick-built single-storied shed adjoins the eastern gable of a timber-framed barn of five bays, both of which structures follow an east-west alignment and are consistent with the mid-19th century date suggested by the documentary evidence. The shed extends to 6 metres by 10 and was probably designed as a cow-shed (or neathouse) rather than a stable. An open-sided cart-lodge to the north is of the same period. The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1880 shows two ranges of open-sided

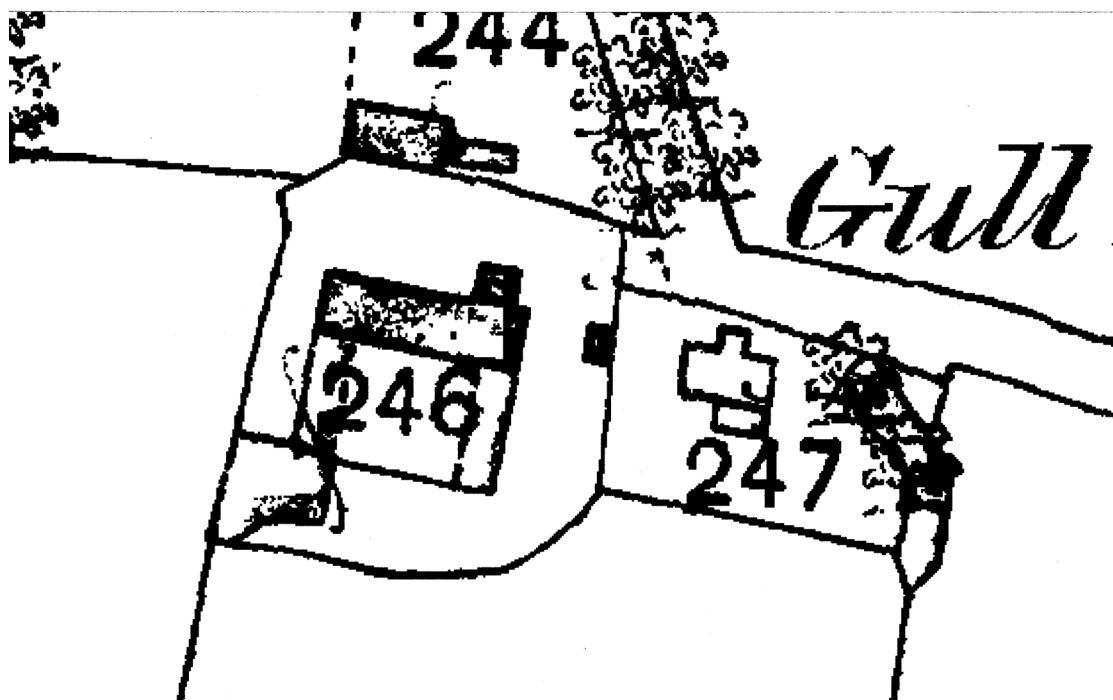
shelter sheds flanking a yard to the south of the barn and cow-shed in a typical 19th century pattern, but the western range has been demolished. The roof and southern gable of the eastern range still survives, but its walls were completely rebuilt in brick during the mid-20th century when it was extended and remodelled to form a pair of loose boxes. A third loose box was added to its southern gable at a later date. The cow-shed was sub-divided to create a calf pen and a small milking parlour, and these various changes neatly illustrate the changing nature of dairy farming during the 20th century. The report includes a description of the purpose of each unit in the complex based on the account of Mr David Woolnough who farmed the site from the early 1960s until recent months.



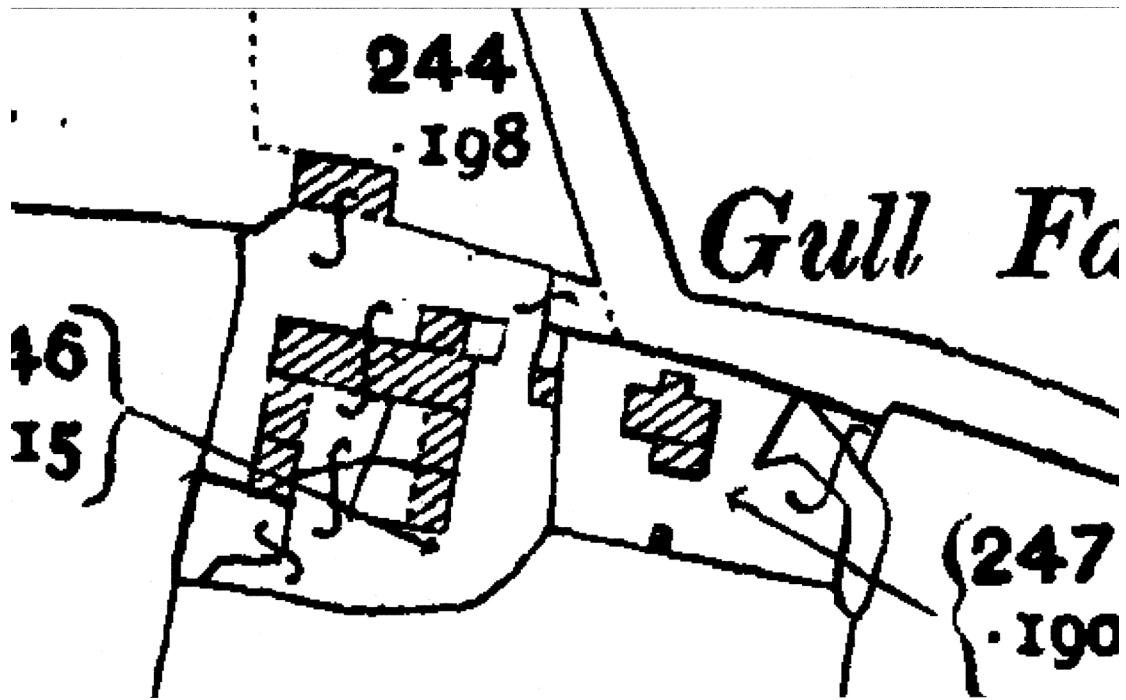
**Plan of Site as Existing (farmhouse to right and 19th century yard in centre).
The pond to the left is shown on the tithe map below, but the buildings are not.**



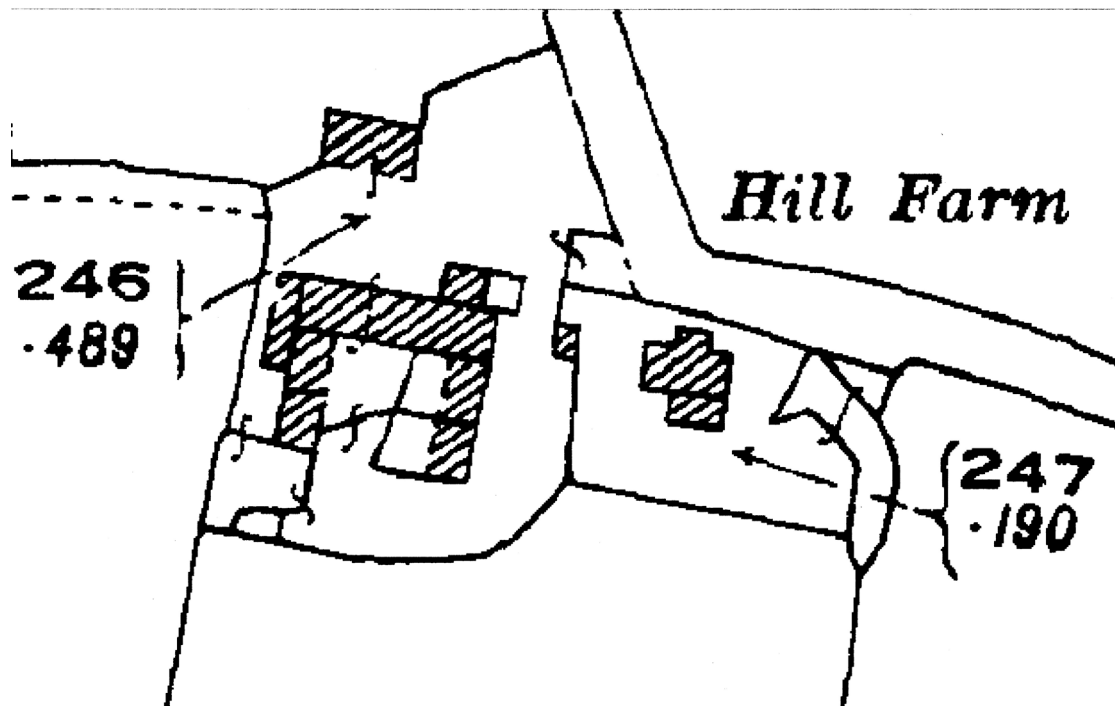
The Sweffling Tithe Map of 1842 (Suffolk Record Office), showing the farm in an entirely different location to the north-west of the pond which still survives at the end of the farm track. The present farm lies on the bend of the road to the right.



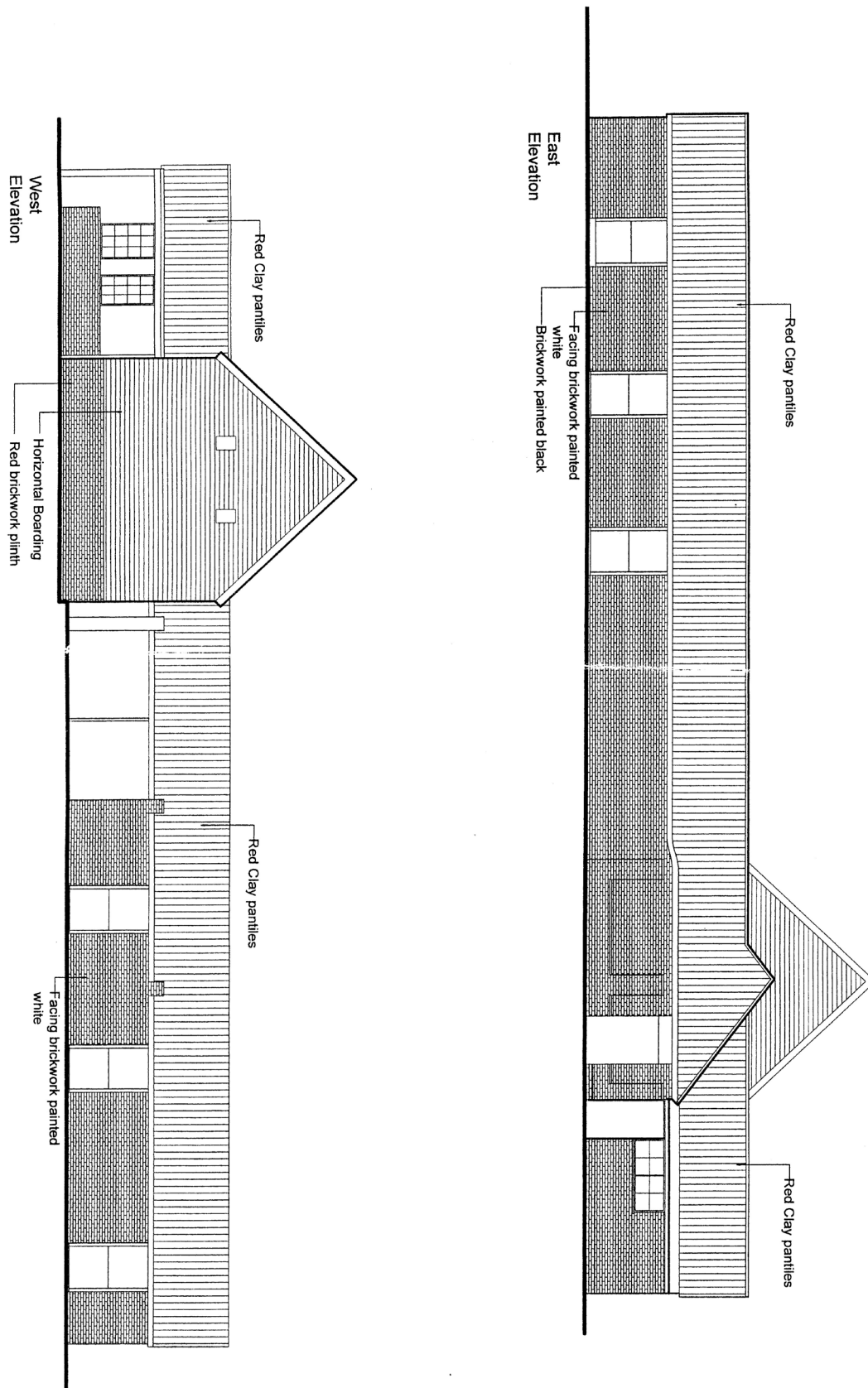
Hill Farm (marked Gull Farm) on the 1880 First Edition Ordnance Survey, showing the present barn and shed with cart-lodge to north and enclosed yard flanked by open-sided shelter sheds to south. Note the horse pond at the south-western corner.



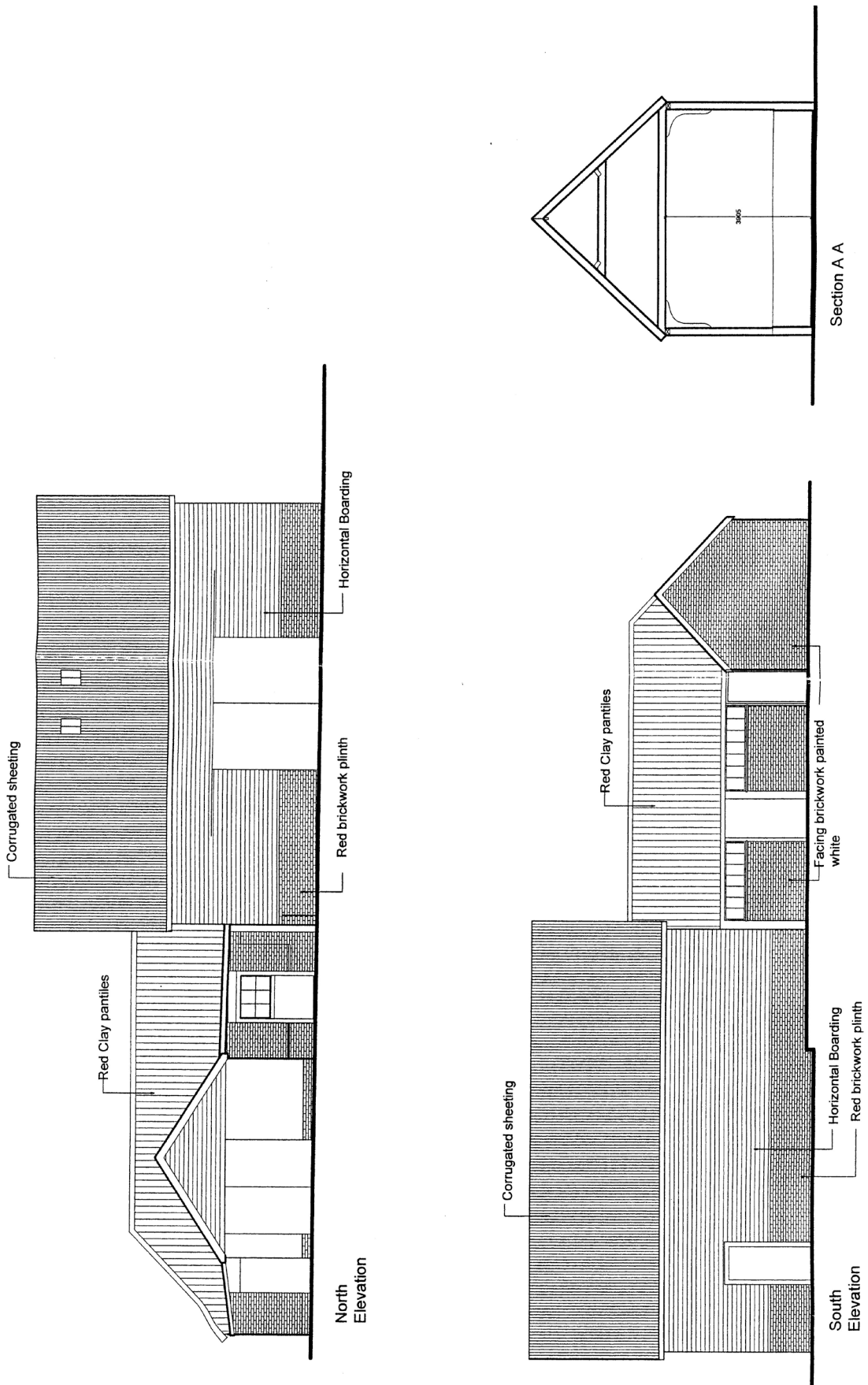
Hill Farm (still marked as Gull Farm) on the 1904 Second Edition Ordnance Survey, showing sub-divided yards to the south of the barn and shed. The building in the south-western corner, adjacent to the horse pond, appears to be enclosed and is probably a stable.



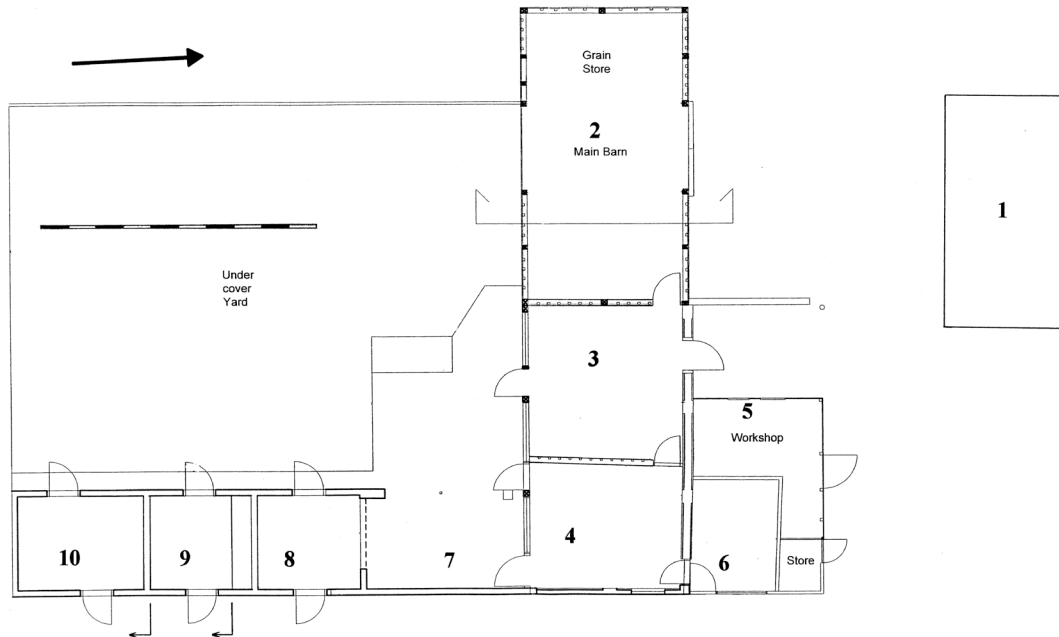
Hill Farm on the 1928 Third Edition Ordnance Survey. An apparent lean-to has been added to the western gable of the barn (which lean-to no longer survives) but the open sided sheds to the east remain unaltered. The present loose-boxes were evidently created in two phases at a slightly later period, but prior to the arrival of Mr Woolnough in the early 1960s.



The eastern and western external elevations of the yard buildings (top and bottom respectively) drawn by Clarke & Simpson of Framlingham for Mr Woolnough in 2006



The northern and southern external elevations of the yard buildings (top and bottom respectively) with a section through the barn as drawn by Clarke & Simpson of Framlingham for Mr Woolnough in 2006



Block Plan of farm buildings showing historic elements numbered as follows:

1. Mid-19th century timber-framed cart-lodge
2. Mid-19th century timber-framed barn
3. Mid-19th century brick shed (later sub-divided to form a calf house)
4. Mid-19th century brick shed (later sub-divided to form a milking parlour, formerly with loft above).
5. 19th century timber-framed extension (latterly a workshop)
6. Mid-20th century dairy
7. Part of mid-19th century shelter shed (walls rebuilt in mid- 20th century)
8. Part of mid-19th century shelter shed (walls rebuilt to form a loose box in mid-20th century)
9. Brick loose box added to 19th century shelter shed gable in mid-20th century when its remaining walls were rebuilt
10. Brick loose box added later in the mid-20th century (c.1960)

**Based on a plan drawn by Clarke & Simpson of Framlingham
for Mr Woolnough in 2006**

The Site

Hill Farm occupies an exposed hill-top site in arable countryside 1.2 kilometres west of the parish church of St Mary. The farm originally lay in a more sheltered position at the end of a track approximately 200 metres to the north-west, as shown on the parish tithe map of 1842, but was entirely relocated to the edge of a nearby road in the mid-19th century. The earlier site is now lost without obvious trace in a ploughed field. Many local farm buildings

were rebuilt or extensively altered to accommodate cattle and dairy production at this period as the falling price of grain forced farmers to diversify, and the opportunity was presumably taken to adopt a site with easier access to the highway. A stone above the present farmhouse porch bears the initials WAS and the date 1839, which questions the accuracy of the tithe map upon which the building is not shown. This stone is not

obviously *in situ*, however, and may have been imported from elsewhere, or commemorate the beginning rather than the completion of building operations. The farm was known as Gull Farm until the early-20th century, and is marked as such on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 (but as Hill Farm in 1928). A tributary of the River Alde which flows in the valley some 400 metres to the north is still known as The Gull. The tithe map appears to show a building on the approximate site of the barn, which may represent either the newly-built present structure or an earlier building on the site.

The farm buildings were associated with a farm of 95 acres until their recent separation and sale for domestic conversion. Mr David Woolnough, who continues to occupy the farmhouse, acquired the property in the early 1960s, at which time the older buildings were already in their present form. Mr Woolnough kept approximately 90 cattle but sold his dairy herd around 1971 to specialise in beef production. Initially the process was largely self-sufficient with the majority of his grain production milled in the barn and used as animal feed, but latterly he exchanged an increasing proportion for specialist feeds. The barn was both a granary and feed store, and until recently contained modern bins at its western end. Dairy cattle entered the milking parlour from the east and left by the enclosed yard where a swing gate was used to separate individual animals. The parlour could accommodate four animals at one time, facing the wall to the west with a drain and passage to the east, and the milk passed via a pipe through the southern wall into a small dairy where it cooled before collection. Mr Woolnough, whose family previously farmed in nearby

Marlesford, notes that dairy cattle were previously milked together in large cow-sheds that could hold up to thirty cows and were often known locally as neathouses, but that mechanisation in the mid-20th century saw the introduction of small parlours into which the animals entered by relay (the relative expense of the equipment restricted the number of milking stalls). The traditional local terms of 'cow-shed' or 'neathouse', referring to large sheds where animals stood together to await milking in turn, were accordingly replaced by 'milking parlour', referring to smaller, mechanised sheds. This change appears to be reflected in the large size of the original cow shed at Hill Farm which was subdivided in the 20th century into a milking parlour and calf shed where the youngest calves were kept in pens (numbered 4 and 3 respectively on the above plan). The three loose boxes along the eastern side of the yard (known as calf boxes by Mr Woolnough) were used to house calves and bullocks that were kept separately and fed as beef stock, replacing the open yards and shelters shown on the Ordnance Surveys of 1928 and earlier. These boxes contain half-hung doors in both front and rear elevations and resemble stables but have always been used for cattle; Mr Woolnough did not know the farm when it contained working horses, but suggests the stables lay along the western side of the yard and have been demolished. This analysis is supported by map evidence, which shows the yard to the south of the barn and cow-shed divided into three irregular areas, where the largest adjoins the missing western range which contains an enclosed, stable-like building abutting a pond at its southern gable.

1. Cart-lodge

A five-bay timber-framed cart-lodge lies on the northern side of the track which passes through the yard. The timber posts of its open southern elevation have been replaced by metal poles, but survive to the gables and to the rear where contemporary rails and primary braces indicate the presence of solid walls. These walls are now of corrugated iron but probably once consisted of weather-boarding. The nailed collars of the side-purlin roof, which retains its

original pan-tiles and reed flecking, suggests a date in the mid-19th century and the building is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1880.

2. Barn

A five-bay timber-framed barn on a tall red brick plinth lies on the southern side of the track which passes through the yard. The barn extends to 11 metres in length by 6 metres in overall width and rises to 4 metres at its eaves. There is evidence in the central bay of original full-height doors to both north and south, but the southern door to the cattle yard has been blocked with 20th century brickwork and the barn is now entered from the north by sliding doors of corrugated iron. The roof structure of side-purlins with nailed collars and a ridge board was probably designed for pan-tiles, like the contemporary cart-lodge and shed, but is now covered with corrugated iron. The framing of the walls is typical of the mid-19th century, with primary braces, bolted knees, and some evidence of re-used timber in the form of empty mortises. A number of grain bins has recently been removed from the western bay, where a metal hopper still remains, but the interior preserves no other features of historic significance.

3 & 4. Brick Shed

A substantial single-storied brick-built shed with integral wall buttresses adjoins the eastern gable of the barn with which it appears to be contemporary. It extends to 10 metres in length by 6 metres in width and rises to 2.3 metres at its eaves. The interior is now sub-divided into two unequal areas (3 and 4) as shown on the plan, but appears originally to have been open to its roof and undivided. The existing doorways in its northern wall and eastern gable are later insertions which interrupt the pattern of brickwork and the shed was presumably entered from the yard to the south, but this elevation was completely rebuilt in the mid-20th century (to incorporate large glazed windows). Given its large size on a relatively small farm (which would not have required a stable of these proportions) the building was almost certainly designed as a cow-shed (or neathouse). Area 3 was used in recent decades as a calf pen and retains an automatic drinker on its eastern wall. Area 4 was converted into a milking parlour with four pens formed by metal bars and a pipe which passed through a hole in the southern wall into the dairy; each animal faced west while it was being milked with its feet adjacent to a surviving concrete drain which divided the stalls from the entrance passage. The pipe hole and a number of stall bars bear witness to this arrangement. The partition of boarded studwork between areas 3 and 4 is of early 20th century appearance and retains a doorway in its roof gable that evidently opened from area 3 into a loft above area 4. No trace of this loft, which presumably contained hay or feed, now remains, and it was presumably removed when the most recent milking equipment was installed.

5 & 6. Workshop and Dairy

A timber-framed extension (5) was added to the northern side of the cow-shed soon after its construction, and is shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1880. Its walls were extensively remodelled in the mid-20th century and it latterly housed a workshop, but its original pan-tiled roof structure survives. A doorway was inserted to link the new extension with the shed, and it may have served to house calves. Such an interpretation is supported by its apparent possession of a small enclosed yard to the east, as shown on the Ordnance Surveys of 1904 and 1928 (but not 1880). This yard was removed in the mid-20th century and the resulting indented corner filled by a brick extension that contained a store-cupboard reached from the exterior and a new dairy (6) where milk from the adjacent parlour was allowed to cool. The western and northern walls of this dairy consisted only of studwork and intruded into the area of the earlier extension (5).

7 – 10. Shelter Shed and Loose Boxes

The hipped eastern gable of the cow-shed (4) is linked to the contemporary roof of a narrow wing that projects to the south and so forms a neat corner. The wing is 2.7 metres in width and originally extended to 7.5 metres from the shed, where its southern gable is still preserved within the box numbered 9 on the plan. Its western elevation was initially open to the cattle yard, as shown on the Ordnance Surveys, but, remarkably, its walls have been rebuilt in brick to create the enclosed boxes numbered 8 and 9 while leaving the original roof and roof-plates intact. This combination of extension and remodelling is particularly apparent in box 9 where the brickwork continues without interruption beyond the 19th century gable. The alterations left only area 7 open to the yard as before, and occurred after the Ordnance Survey of 1928 which shows the entire western elevation still open as it was designed. Box 10 was added later still, and the junction of its new brickwork remains clearly visible (at the point marked by the left-hand arrow on the plan, where the first extension is shown by the right-hand arrow). The resulting series of loose boxes resemble stables but were intended to separate beef cattle for fattening, for which purpose they continued to be used by Mr Woolnough until recently. The provision of loose boxes (also termed calf boxes by Mr Woolnough) reflects the development of this more intensive system of beef production during the mid-20th century, and all three were present when the farm was acquired in the early 1960s. With the exception of concrete water and feed troughs, which also pre-date the 1960s, and a swing gate to separate stock, few fixtures and fittings remain *in situ*.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from south showing farmhouse to right.
2. General view of site from east showing farmhouse to left.
3. Hill Farmhouse from north-east (included for site context).
4. Farmhouse from north showing detail of stone above porch door inscribed WAS 1839.
5. General view of site from east showing Dutch barn to west of farmyard and site of original farm in field to right.
6. General view of farm buildings from east showing cartlodge to right behind 20th century sheds.
7. Exterior of cartlodge from south-east.
8. Exterior of cartlodge from north-west.
9. Exterior of cartlodge from west.
10. Interior of cartlodge from west.
11. Interior of cartlodge from east.
12. Interior of cartlodge. Detail of post junction in rear (northern) elevation.
13. Interior of cartlodge. Roof structure viewed from north-east.
14. Interior of cartlodge. Detail of reed flecking.
15. Interior of cartlodge. Detail of renewed post junction in front (southern) elevation.
16. Exterior of barn from north.
17. Exterior of barn from north-west.
18. Exterior of barn and covered yard from west.
19. Exterior of barn from covered yard to south.
20. Exterior of barn from south showing blocked entrance.
21. Interior of barn from east.

22. Interior of barn from west with inserted door to cattle shed in rear and 20th century grain hopper to right.
23. Interior of barn roof from west.
24. Interior of barn. Detail of bolted knee brace and re-used timber.
25. Interior of barn. North-western corner showing primary wall bracing.
26. Interior of barn. Northern central entrance.
27. Interior of barn. North-eastern corner showing primary wall bracing.
28. Interior of barn. Detail of inserted door to shed (3) in north-eastern corner.
29. Interior of barn. South-eastern corner.
30. Interior of barn. South-western corner showing blocked central entrance to left and inserted door.
31. Interior of shed (3) from south, with inserted doors to barn to left and northern yard.
32. Interior of shed (3) looking west to barn gable.
33. Interior of shed (3) from north looking towards covered yard (wall rebuilt).
34. Interior of shed (3) looking east to former loft.
35. Interior of shed (3) looking east. Detail of 20th century cattle tap.
36. Interior of shed (3). Roof structure from south.
37. Interior of shed (4) looking south to yard (wall rebuilt).
38. Interior of shed (4) looking north to dairy with remains of 4 recent milking stalls to left.
39. Interior of shed (4) showing door to former loft and area recently occupied by 4 milking stalls.
40. Interior of shed (4) showing hipped roof from north.
41. Interior of shed (4) showing inserted sliding door to yard in eastern gable.
42. Exterior of shed extension (5) from west showing barn to right.
43. Exterior of shed extension (5) from north-east with 20th century dairy (6) in foreground.
44. Northern external wall of shed (3) from lean-to with extension (5) to left. Showing apparently inserted door.
45. Detail of irregular bricks in original southern external wall of shed (3).

46. Interior of shed extension (5) looking to external wall of shed (3 from north with dairy wall to left.
47. Interior of shed extension (5) looking to west.
48. Interior of shed extension (5) looking to 20th century dairy partition in north-eastern corner.
49. Interior of 20th century dairy (6) looking south to shed (5). Note hole in wall for modern milk pipe from parlour.
50. Interior of dairy (6) looking east.
51. Interior of dairy (6) looking west to area where milk cooled.
52. Exterior of inserted door to dairy (6) from east.
53. External gable of shed (4) showing inserted door and rebuilt brickwork of cattle sheds to left.
54. Exterior of original shed and rebuilt loose boxes from north-east.
55. Exterior of rebuilt loose boxes from south-east with covered yard to left.
56. Exterior of covered yard from south.
57. Interior of covered yard from south.
58. Interior of covered yard from north.
59. Interior of covered yard looking to north-eastern corner, with concrete water trough in foreground.
60. Exterior of open area (7) in north-eastern corner of covered yard with cattle gate to left and concrete feeding trough.
61. Interior of open area 7 from south-west showing half-hung door to milking parlour (shed 4).
62. Interior of open area (7) from south with covered yard to left.
63. Detail of arcade post in western elevation of open area (7) seen from covered yard.
64. Interior of open area (7) looking south into loose box (8). The dividing wall has been removed.
65. External southern wall of shed (3) from covered yard.
66. Detail of hinge to half-hung door in southern wall of shed (3).
67. Detail of 20th century brickwork in southern external wall of shed (3) seen from covered yard with barn to left.
68. Western external elevation of loose boxes from covered yard to north-west.

69. Western external elevation of loose boxes from covered yard to south-west.
70. Interior of loose box (8) from north showing earlier gable in rear (wall in foreground removed).
71. Interior of loose box (8) showing detail of roof structure and earlier gable.
72. Interior of loose box (9) showing earlier gable from south-west. The brickwork beneath the roof-plates has been renewed.
73. Interior of loose box (9) showing earlier gable from south-east.
74. Detail of western door to loose box (9) showing groove for vertical hatch barrier.
75. Interior of loose box (10) showing southern gable and late-20th century roof.
76. Exterior of loose boxes from west showing junction in brickwork between box 9 to left and later box 10 to right.
77. Exterior of loose boxes from east showing junction in brickwork between box 9 to right and later box 10 to left.
78. Detail of 20th century hinges to loose box half-hung doors.
79. General view of covered yard from south-west showing site of demolished western range in foreground.

Appendix 2 (pp.16-18): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 General view of hilltop site from south showing farmhouse to right and redundant farm buildings to left



A2.2 Interior of barn from west with inserted door to cattle shed in rear and 20th century grain hopper to right.



A2.3 Interior of 19th century shed (4) looking south to open area (7) in corner of covered yard (wall rebuilt in 20th century). This shed operated until recently as a milking parlour with stalls for four animals facing the wall to the right with floor drain and entrance passage to left.



A2.4 Exterior of covered cattle yard from south with 20th century loose boxes for cattle to right which replaced the open-sided shelter indicated on the Ordnance Survey of 1928. A similar open-sided shelter lay to the left in 1928 but has been demolished.



A2.5 Interior of covered cattle yard from the south with mid-19th century barn and shed in background.



A2.6 Interior of open area (7) in north-eastern corner of covered yard with entrance to shed (4) recently used as milking parlour to right. The gate to left was used to control the passage of cattle. Note concrete trough to right.