

**The Barn,
Pear Tree Farm,
Rumburgh,
Suffolk
RMB 014
Historic Building Record**

OASIS ref: suffolkc1-51564



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September 2008

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**Barn at Pear Tree Farm,
Aldous's Corner,
Rumburgh, Suffolk
(TM 339 810)**

An Archaeological Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a barn and attached stable at Pear Tree Farm. A second stable was briefly surveyed for the purpose of historic context. The report has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Jess Tipper, 13th May 2008, Ref. /PearTreeFarm_Rumburgh2008) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for residential conversion (Waveney District Council application DC/07/0631/LBC).

Introduction

The following report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 70 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 includes the report in MS Word format. Where possible a white metre scale rod with centimetre sub-divisions was included in each photograph. The site was inspected on 19th September 2008.

Summary

Pear Tree Farm lies in open, arable countryside at the eastern edge of Rumburgh, but lay in the neighbouring parish of Wissett until its boundary was altered in the mid-19th century. The farmhouse is a grade II-listed timber-framed structure dating in part from the mid-16th century and in part from the early-17th century. The timber-framed barn is probably contemporary with the later part of the house, and is a typical example of its period with three bays and a central entrance in its eastern elevation. The walls were originally rendered externally, but are now weatherboarded, and its roof is a low-pitched replacement of the 20th century covered with corrugated asbestos. The original barn would have been steeply pitched for thatch at 55 degrees like that of the farmhouse. A 19th century lean-to shed with 20th century alterations extends the length of the rear, western elevation, and a small 19th century brick stable and hayloft adjoins the southern gable. No historic fixtures or fittings survive in the brick stable, but an 18th century timber-framed stable and hayloft which lies between the barn and

farmhouse retains an unusually low hay rack and manger that may be designed for cattle. As a late-Elizabethan or Jacobean structure the barn is of considerable historic interest, particularly as it illustrates the layout of the farm in conjunction with a contemporary house, but it is not sufficiently complete to merit separate listing in its own right.

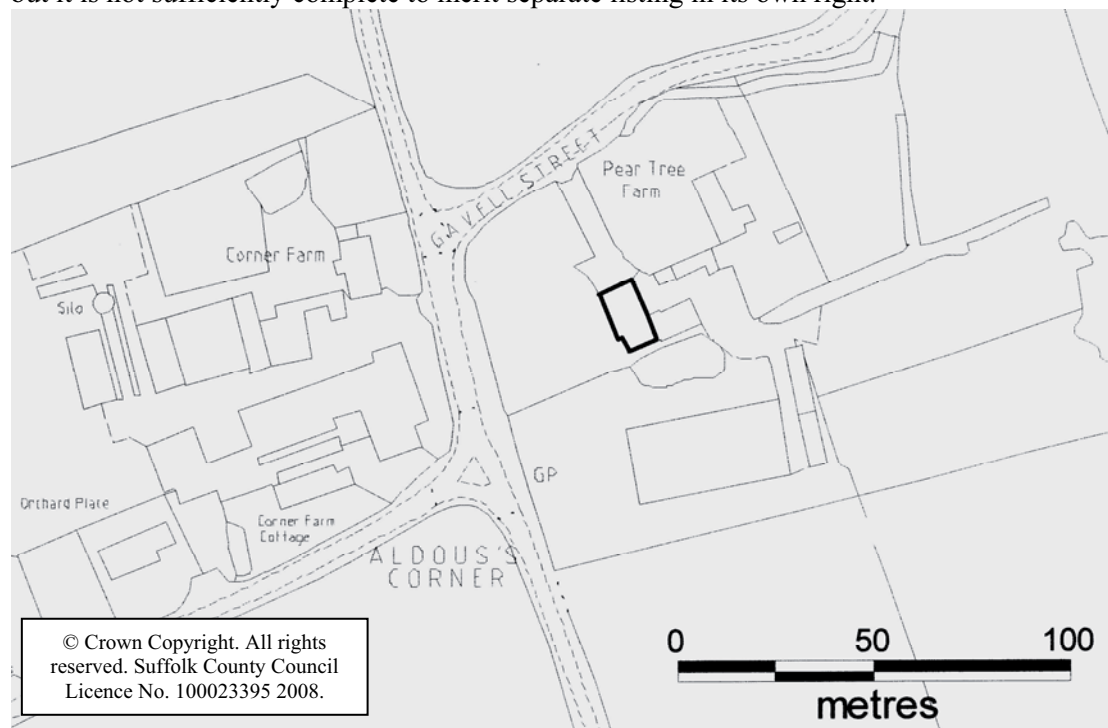


Figure 1
Existing Site Plan, outlining the barn and attached southern stable

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Pear Tree Farm lies in open, arable countryside on the edge of Rumburgh, approximately 2 km east of the parish church and 50 m north-east of the road junction known as Aldous's Corner. The grade II-listed timber-framed and rendered farmhouse is an exceptionally interesting building which contains a mid-16th century 'unit' house with an intact queen-post roof to the north of its chimney. This structure would have adjoined a medieval hall on the site, but in the early-17th century was converted into the parlour of a new farmhouse of normal layout by adding the present chimney, hall and service rooms to the south. The fine hall roof of clasped-purlins with wind-braces and a lower tier of butt-purlins is steeply pitched at 55 degrees for thatch, but its original covering was replaced by the present black-glazed pantiles in the 19th century (information from a personal inspection in 1998).

The farm to the north-west of Aldous's Corner is shown on the Rumburgh tithe map of 1843, but the site of Pear Tree Farm on the opposite side of the road is identified as part of Wissett parish and is not shown. The Wissett tithe survey is unfortunately damaged and lacks the relevant area, which lay at the northern end of a long, narrow strip of land within its boundary. Pear Tree Farm lay 2.5 km north of Wissett church, and was closer to those of both Rumburgh and Spexhall. The farm to the north-west of Aldous's Corner contained 43 acres in 1843 and was owned and occupied by the eponymous Samuel Aldous. The earliest available map of Pear Tree Farm is the First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1884 (figure 2), which shows it in Rumburgh parish with the Wissett boundary approximately 200 m to the south. The layout of the farm buildings has changed little from that shown in 1884, with an entrance from the nearby road to the north and an enclosed yard to the east of the barn and the south of the house (adjoining the latter's service gable). The various buildings are shown more clearly on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1905, which uses broken lines to identify open-

sided structures such as cartlodes and animal shelters. The brick stable attached to the barn's southern gable adjoined a small enclosure which presumably operated as a horse yard with an open-sided shelter shed in its north-eastern corner. The site of this yard is now occupied by a 20th century stable of concrete blocks. The projection of the barn's western lean-to did not extend to its southern gable as it does today, and there is internal evidence of a 20th century block-work extension in this direction. A second shelter shed which no longer survives adjoined the remaining horse pond to the east, and the lean-to shed against the timber-framed stable's southern elevation appears to have moved from its western end to its eastern.

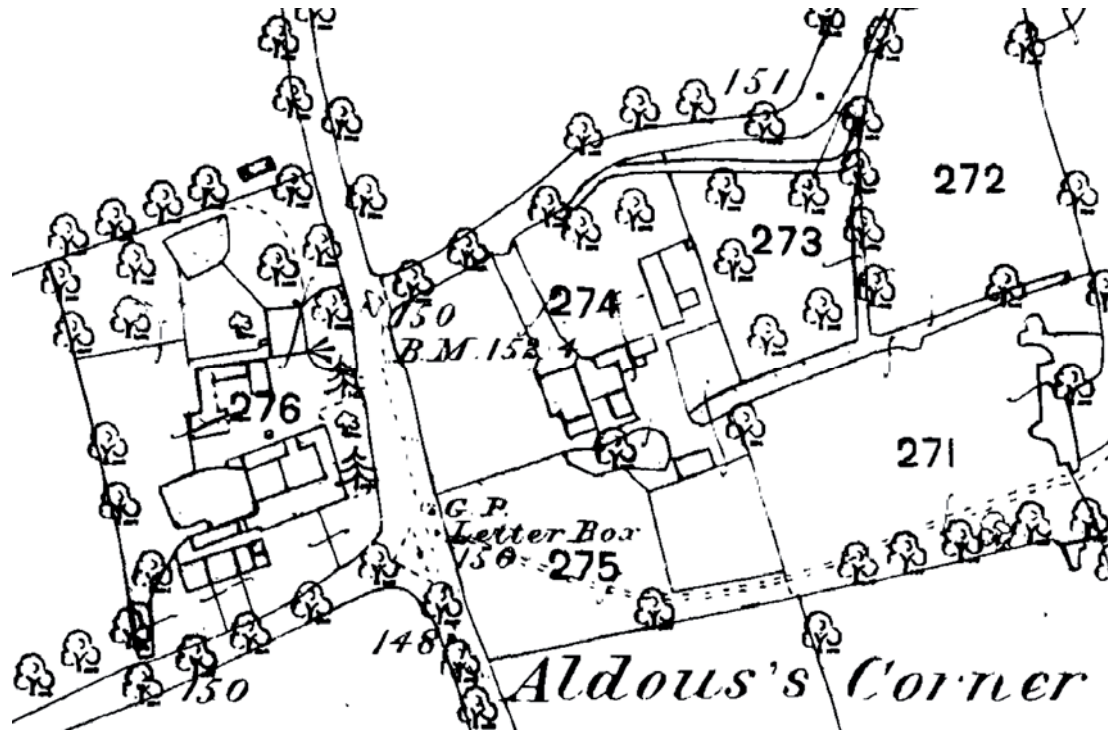


Figure 2
The First Edition 25 Ordnance Survey of 1884, which in the absence of the tithe survey is the earliest map of the site.

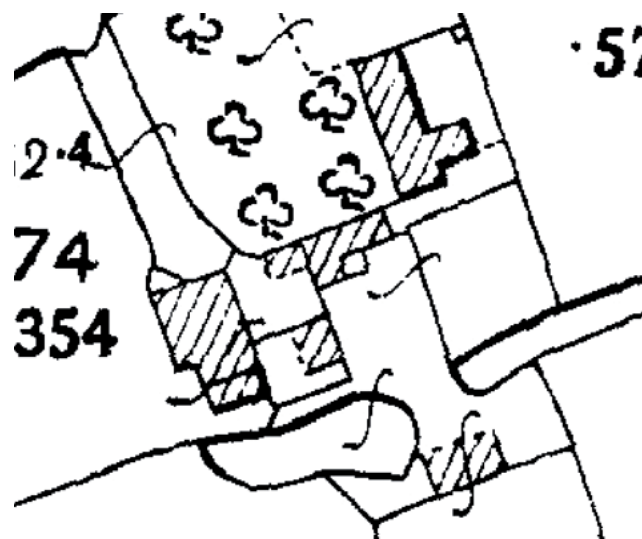


Figure 3
The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1905, showing the buildings in more detail. The barn's western lean-to had yet to be extended to its southern gable, and the small southern brick stable adjoins an enclosed yard with a shelter shed on the east

Building Analysis

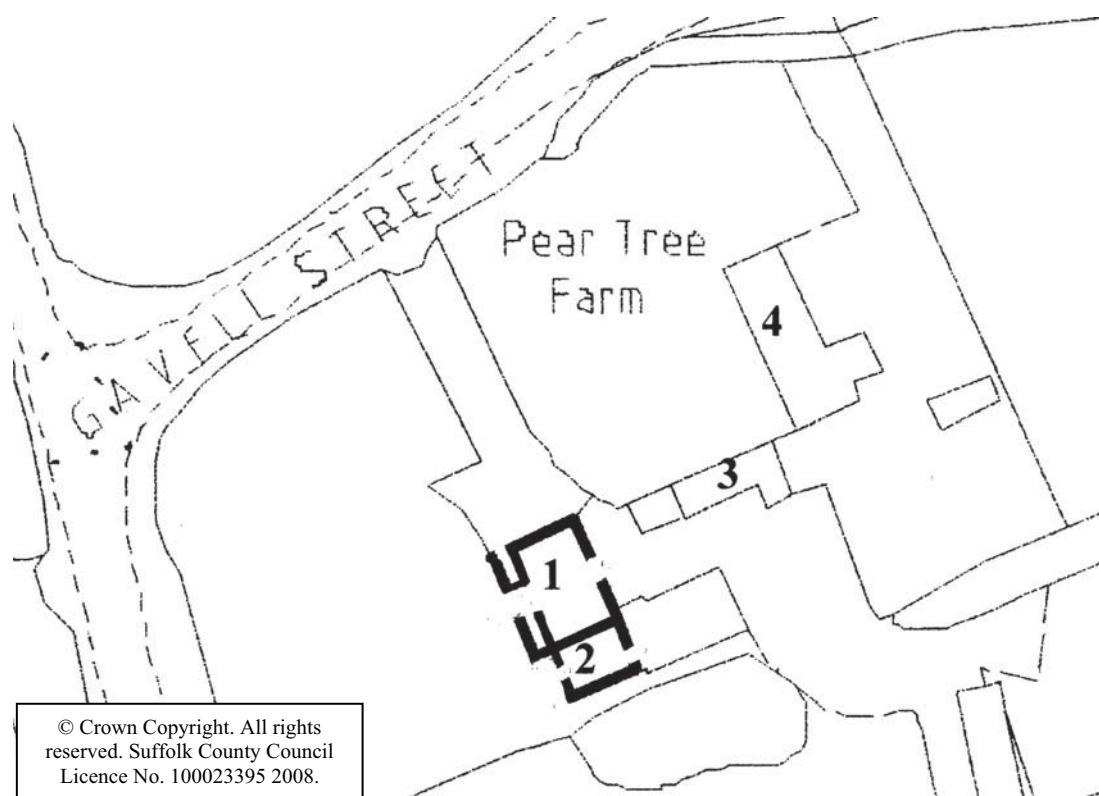


Figure 4

Schematic Block Plan of Farm Buildings

Identifying each building for ease of reference in the text and photographic record
(derived from the existing site plan shown in figure 1)

Key to Figure 4

1. Early-17th century timber-framed barn of three bays with central eastern entrance facing the contemporary farmhouse and a smaller door in the rear wall to west. 19th century lean-to sheds with a 20th century southern extension adjoin the western elevation. Roof replaced in 20th century.
2. Mid-19th century small stable of brick rubble with hayloft and doors to both the western paddock and a 20th century stable on the site of a former horse yard to the east.
3. 18th century timber-framed stable and hayloft. Much altered but retaining a series of stalls at its western end with unusually low mangers and hay racks. Entered from the paddock to the north. (Included for site context.)
4. Grade II-listed timber-framed and rendered farmhouse of 16th and early-17th centuries with evidence of an earlier house on the site (the earliest structure was ancillary to another dwelling).

1. Barn

Structure and Date

The barn at Pear Tree Farm is a well-framed oak structure of three bays which extends to 12.8 m in length by 6.5 m in overall width (42 ft by 12.5 ft) and is aligned on an approximately north-south axis. Its walls contain studs of 3.2 m (10.5 ft) in height between the roof-plates and ground sills (without mid-rails), with two internally trenched braces rising from all four

corner posts to the gable tie-beams and roof-plates. These braces form inverted arches in the typical manner of northern Suffolk (i.e. their upward curves are convex rather than concave). All timbers are pegged and tenoned in the medieval tradition, and the jowled storey posts were linked by tenoned arch-braces to the tie-beams of the open trusses flanking the central bay. The arch-braces were replaced by bolted knee-braces in the 19th century but their empty mortises remain. The scarf joints in the roof-plates are of the face-halved-and-bladed variety associated with the 17th century (rather than the edge-halved-and-bridled form of the 16th century) and the barn can be dated to the period 1600-1650. Closer dating is hampered by the absence of the original roof structure, but the lack of re-used timber and the quality of the frame is more consistent with the early part of this range, and the barn may well be contemporary with the southern half of the farmhouse.

External Appearance and Layout

The outer surfaces of the wall studs are waney and unfinished, and were not exposed externally. The present weatherboarding is secondary as the storey posts contain notches for the horizontal staves of wattle-and-daub. These notches lie close to the posts' outer edges, and are not reflected in the common studs, demonstrating that the staves and wattles spanned their external surfaces. The principal posts may have been exposed externally, with only the common studs rendered. At 3m in length (10 ft) the central bay is narrower than the outer bays (of 4.25 m or 14 ft to the north and 4.4 m or 14.5 ft to the south), and contained full-height entrance doors in its eastern elevation. The eastern roof-plate lacks stud mortises, but contains circular housings at both ends for the original barn doors which swung on wooden pin hinges; hinges of this kind were cheaper than iron hinges and are a particular feature of barns in northern Suffolk, found only rarely in the civilised south. The western roof-plate, in contrast, contains empty mortises for two studs on both sides of a central gap of approximately 1 m (39 ins); this gap framed a doorway of normal proportions with a separate lintel at a lower level in the usual pre-19th century manner; such doors were designed to create sufficient through-draughts for threshing and winnowing but not for the vehicle thoroughfares required in the 19th and 20th centuries. The present floor in the barn is of concrete with no evidence of a brick or timber threshing floor.

Later Alterations

The wall framing is reasonably complete, and contains all the necessary evidence to reconstruct the barn's original arrangement as described above. As usual, the arch-braces of both open trusses were replaced with bolted knee-braces in the 19th century to increase headroom, and the studs and doorway of the central, western bay were removed to permit vehicle access. The present eastern entrance is considerably smaller than the original, which spanned the entire length and height of the bay. The entire northern gable was rebuilt in softwood and concrete blocks during the mid-20th century, and the roof structure was entirely replaced at the same time. A tall plinth of shuttered concrete was also inserted, and this is likely to have destroyed any ground sills and framing buried within it. With a small number of exceptions the original studs of the southern gable and outer bays are intact, but the internal braces survive only in the eastern wall and in the eastern corner of the southern gable; their former positions are indicated elsewhere by empty trenches in the studs.

The present 20th century roof is covered with corrugated asbestos. There is no evidence of the original roof structure, but the tie-beams contain no mortises for queen-posts and it is highly likely to have possessed clasped purlins and wind braces in much the same manner as the farmhouse. The barn is relatively wide, and a lower tier of butt-purlins may have been provided (as in the house). The visibly steep, 55 degree pitch of the two remaining historic roofs on the site (the timber-framed stable and house) was considered necessary for thatch, and the barn would undoubtedly have been roofed in the same way. The original thatch may

have been replaced with glazed black pantiles in the 19th century like those of the house and the timber-framed stable.

A lean-to was added to the barn's rear, western elevation in the late-18th or early-19th century. The northern half of this lean-to now forms an enclosed shed with an entrance in its northern gable, but the southern shed remains open. Detailed analysis of the northern shed was impossible as it was locked at the time of inspection, but the report includes internal photographs taken from the barn through holes in the dividing wall. The weatherboarding of the barn's western elevation has been protected by the lean-to and probably survives from the 18th century; it consists of overlapping planks of approximately 30 cm (12 ins) in width, which lack tar or paint in the northern shed (but may retain traces of whitewash). Similar boards at the southern end of the open, southern shed are tarred, and were clearly external before the lean-to was extended to its present length in block-work during the mid-20th century. The tarred weatherboarding to the eastern elevation is of smaller section and was renewed during the late-19th or early-20th century. Tar was typically applied during the late-19th century when it first became cheaply available as a by-product of the town gas industry, and weatherboarded buildings were previously left untreated or coated with whitewash – sometimes tinted with red ochre. The barn was originally rendered with clay daub and was probably whitewashed.

2. Brick Stable

An unusually small stable of 4 m (13 ft) in length adjoins the southern gable of the barn. Its walls consist of brick rubble, including flint and bricks of varying types and periods, with an eastern door of 1.2 m (4 ft) in width against the southern gable and a central western door to the adjoining paddock. The eaves are 72 cm (28 ins) lower than those of the barn, and the roof is covered with red pantiles. The brick fabric has been much altered and the external walls were extensively overgrown at the time of inspection, hampering any precise analysis. Despite the presence of some early brickwork the stable is probably an addition of the mid-19th century, albeit possibly on the site of an earlier stable. It was usual in the 17th century and earlier for stables to adjoin barns in this way.

The ceiling consists of tall-sectioned common joists lodged on a pair of axial joists to form a hay loft reached from the barn and lit by a low vent, formerly with a wire grill, above the eastern door. The loft is spanned by a softwood tie-beam and raking queen struts that support the roof purlins, and contains a redundant grain bin and boarded feeding trough that have been moved from elsewhere. The tie-beam may well be an insertion of the late-19th or early-20th century, but the entire roof cannot pre-date mid-19th century. The loft has preserved unpainted weatherboarding (possibly of the 18th century) on the barn's southern gable, but the lower section of the same gable is hidden by corrugated iron and concrete and there is no evidence of the hay rack and manger that was probably attached to it.

The stable formerly adjoined a small enclosed yard to the east, with its own shelter shed (figure 3), but now abuts a block-work stable of the 20th century on the same site.

3. Timber-Framed Stable

The timber-framed and weatherboarded stable which divides the farm yard to the east of the barn from the paddock in front of the farmhouse was briefly inspected for the purpose of historic context. Its presence may explain the small scale of the brick stable adjoining the barn, and illustrates the steeply pitched thatched roofs found on the site. The crudely framed structure with primary braces dates from the 18th century, and has been much altered on the ground floor, but retains a good set of boarded mangers and a hay rack at the western end of its southern elevation. A vent in the ceiling above the hay rack allowed it to be loaded from

the hay loft above, and a door opens onto the northern paddock. While the presence of the hay loft is normally associated with stables rather than neathouses, the low height of both the mangers and rack suggest they were designed for cattle (at 58 cm and 1.1 m above the ground respectively – instead of the 1 m and 2 m found in typical working-horse stables). The building may have been converted into a neathouse, either wholly or partly, when the brick stable was built in the mid 19th century, but whatever their origin the low fittings are rare and interesting survivals.

Historic Significance

The barn is of considerable historic interest as a reasonably complete early-17th century structure which illustrates a standard regional type. Its original scale and layout can be fully reconstructed, despite the loss of its roof and northern gable. It is also of interest for its relationship to a contemporary or near-contemporary farmhouse, suggesting the presence in the 17th century of a farmyard adjoining the service end of the domestic residence but apparently discretely separate from its main façade. A medieval or 16th century house, in contrast, might well have been approached through its farmyard. The 19th century brick stable is not of particular historic significance in itself, given its late origin and lack of early fittings, but the low manger and rack of the timber-framed stable are rare. The barn has been too badly degraded to merit separate listing, but all four historic buildings on the site nonetheless form a valuable group that is highly representative of the region's smaller traditional farms.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from west showing barn (1) in foreground with farmhouse (4) in rear.
2. General view of site from north showing farmhouse to left & barn right with timber-framed stable (3) in centre.
3. Western facade of listed farmhouse showing structure of mid-16th century to left of chimney and early-17th century to right.
4. Exterior of timber-framed stable (3) from north.
5. Exterior of timber-framed stable (3) from south-west showing later shed to left.
6. Exterior of timber-framed stable (3) from south showing barn to left.
7. Western external gable of timber-framed stable from later shed.
8. Interior of timber-framed stable showing low hay rack and manger with western gable to right.
9. Interior of timber-framed stable showing western gable.
10. Interior of timber-framed stable showing door to northern paddock.
11. Interior of timber-framed stable showing mangers and hay rack against southern elevation.
12. Detail of low manger to south of timber-framed stable.
13. Detail of ceiling vent above hay rack in timber-framed stable from east.
14. Interior of timber-framed stable from west showing partition to central open shed.
15. Roof structure of timber-framed stable from east.
16. Southern gable of c1600 farmhouse showing roof pitch with open shed of timber-framed stable left.
17. Exterior of barn from yard to east showing timber-framed stable to right & block-work stable left.
18. Exterior of barn from east showing central entrance with block-work stable to left.
19. Exterior of barn showing central eastern entrance.
20. Detail of tarred external weatherboarding to eastern elevation of barn.

21. Exterior of northern gable of barn showing lean-to shed to right.
22. Western exterior of barn showing brick stable (2) to right.
23. Exterior of lean-to shed against western elevation of barn.
24. Exterior of brick stable (2) from west.
25. Exterior of brick stable from south-east showing pond in foreground.
26. Interior of Barn. General view from north showing entrance in central bay to left.
27. Interior of Barn. General view from south showing lean-to shed to left.
28. Interior of southern gable showing access to hay loft above brick stable.
29. Internal western elevation of southern bay showing brace trench to left.
30. Internal western elevation of central bay showing entrance in lean-to.
31. Detail of southern open truss showing bolted knee-braces replacing original arch-braces.
32. Western roof-plate showing empty stud mortises flanking position of original narrow door.
33. Detail of face-halved-and-bladed scarf joint in western roof-plate of central bay.
34. Internal western elevation of northern bay showing early boarding and brace trench to right.
35. Detail of internal western elevation showing trench and mortises for internal corner braces.
36. Interior of rebuilt northern gable.
37. Internal eastern elevation of northern bay showing original wall brace.
38. Internal eastern elevation from north showing central bay to left.
39. Internal eastern elevation of central bay showing position of original entrance doors.
40. Detail of eastern roof-plate in central bay showing lack of stud mortises.
41. Detail of roof-plate in eastern central bay with scarf peg & hole for pin hinge of original door.
42. Detail of roof-plate to southern of eastern central bay with hole for pin hinge of original door.
43. Internal eastern elevation of southern bay showing original corner braces.
44. Detail of original internally trenched wall braces in south-eastern corner of barn.

45. Detail of north-western corner post showing external stave notch.
46. Detail of western elevation showing waney stud exteriors & lack of infill notches.
47. 20th century roof structure of barn from south, showing 19th century bolted knee-braces.
48. Interior of rebuilt western lean-to from north showing tarred boarding to left.
49. Detail of tarred weatherboarding to barn at southern end of western lean-to.
50. Interior of 19th century western lean-to from south showing weatherboarding of barn to right.
51. Detail of clean barn weatherboarding to northern bay of western elevation.
52. Eastern external elevation of brick stable from block-work stable showing door left & barn right.
53. External elevation of brick stable from north-east showing door to left.
54. Detail of eastern door to brick stable from north-east.
55. Eastern internal elevation of brick stable showing ceiling with hay loft above.
56. Internal southern gable of brick stable showing central window with western door to right.
57. Internal southern gable of brick stable showing central window to right & eastern door to left.
58. Internal northern gable of brick stable showing southern external gable of barn.
59. Interior of brick stable from west showing barn to left and southern external gable to right.
60. Eastern internal elevation of brick stable showing vent to hay loft above entrance door.
61. Detail of hay loft vent in brick stable above door lintel from block-work stable to east.
62. Western internal elevation of brick stable showing southern gable to left.
63. Roof structure of brick stable from south showing tie-beam and raking struts.
64. Roof structure of brick stable from north showing grain bin to left.
65. Internal southern gable of brick stable from hay loft.
66. Eastern internal elevation of brick stable showing grain bin to left and vent over door to right.

67. Interior of hay loft above brick stable from north showing western elevation to right.
68. Grain bin in hay loft above brick stable showing southern gable to barn to left.
69. External boarding to southern gable of barn (beneath grain bin in hay loft of brick stable).
70. Boarded manger on floor of hay loft above brick stable from north-west.

Appendix 2 (pp. 13-17): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 General view of site from west showing barn (1) in centre with later lean-to in foreground; brick stable (2) to right and listed farmhouse (4) to left



A2.2 Exterior of barn (centre) from yard to east showing timber-framed stable (3) to right & modern block-work stable to left



A2.3 Interior of timber-framed stable (3) showing low hay rack and manger with western gable to right



A2.4 Interior of Barn. General view from south showing rebuilt northern gable with western lean-to shed to left



A2.5 Internal eastern elevation of barn from north showing original entrance in central bay to left and southern gable to right. The knee-braces replace original arch-braces



A2.6 Detail of roof-plate at southern end of central eastern bay showing circular housing for pin hinge of original door



A2.7 Detail of original internally trenched wall braces in south-eastern corner of barn, showing southern gable to right



A2.8 Eastern external elevation of brick stable (2) from block-work stable showing original entrance door to left & southern bay of barn to right



A2.9 Interior of brick stable from west showing hay loft ceiling and eastern entrance to right. The southern gable of the barn is shown to the left



A2.8 Internal southern gable of brick stable (2) from hay loft showing softwood roof-structure