

**Gissings Farm,  
South Green, Hoxne,  
Suffolk**

HXN 045

**Archaeological Record**

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**(TM 1722 7527)**

## **An Archaeological Record**

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a complex of farm buildings at Gissings Farm. The report has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Jess Tipper, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2007, Reference: /GissingsFarm-Hoxne2007) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning consent for residential conversion (Mid-Suffolk District Council application 0299/07).*

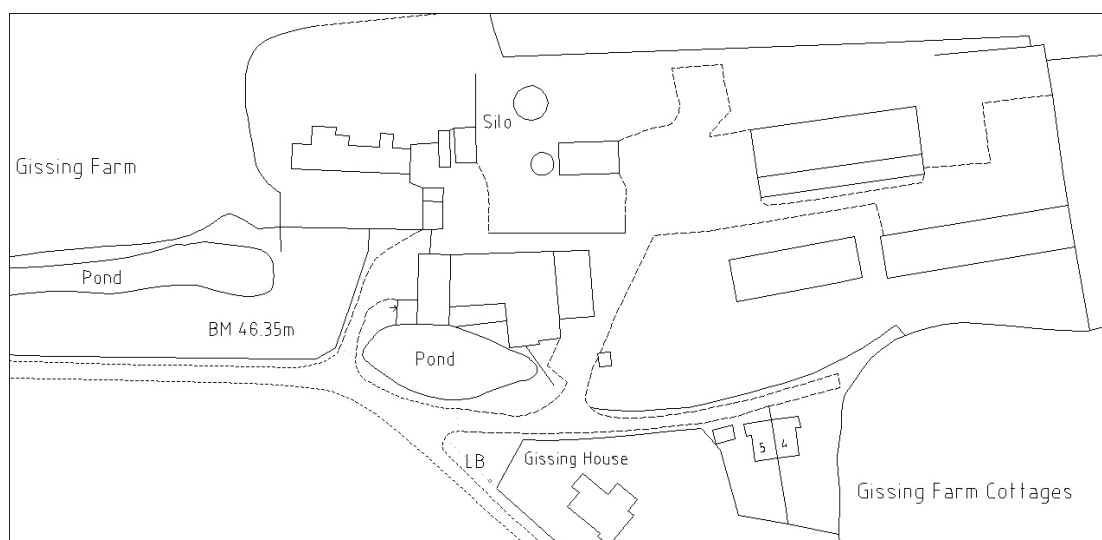
### **Introduction**

The following report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 100 8.2 megapixel digital images (Appendix 1) but also includes printed photographs of key features (Appendix 2). A metre scale with centimetre subdivisions has been included wherever possible. Each image is separately described in the written report, and the CD includes the report in MS Word format. The site was inspected on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008, when the photographs were taken.

### **Summary**

Gissings Farm lies on high ground in open, arable countryside at the southern edge of Hoxne parish, 2.5 km from the church of St Peter & St Paul and within 700 metres of the Eye and Denham parish boundaries. The grade-II-listed farmhouse dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but of the farm buildings shown on the Hoxne tithe map of 1842 (at which time the holding contained a relatively substantial 214 acres) only the barn to the south-west of the site now survives. This barn is a late-16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed structure in five bays which adjoins a large pond at its southern gable, and extends to 15.25 metres in length by 6.4 metres in overall width (50 feet by 21). The framing of the side elevations remains largely intact, with internal wall braces and cranked arch-braces to the tie-beams, but the gable studs and the roof were replaced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The barn contains a well-laid stone threshing floor and a granary storey has been inserted at its southern end. The tithe map shows a porch projecting from the original entrance to the east, but this was removed as part of a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century refurbishment

which appears to have included the insertion of the present western entrance. A small brick cart shed was built against the western wall (shown as building 2 in figure 6) and a pair of enclosed horse or cattle yards with an open-sided clay-lump shelter (building 5) were added to the west. A timber-framed granary with grain bins on its upper storey and cart sheds beneath was erected to the north of the barn (building 4). In the final quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a brick stable or neathouse was built to the south of the enclosed yard adjoining the barn, and the earlier shelter shed was extended. The yards were provided with covers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and were used to house riding horses at the time of inspection. The 16<sup>th</sup> century barn is a fine example, and probably remains worthy of listing despite the loss of its original roof, and the timber-framed granary, brick stable and clay-lump shelter are also typical of their respective periods and remain of some historic interest despite their lack of original fixtures and fittings.



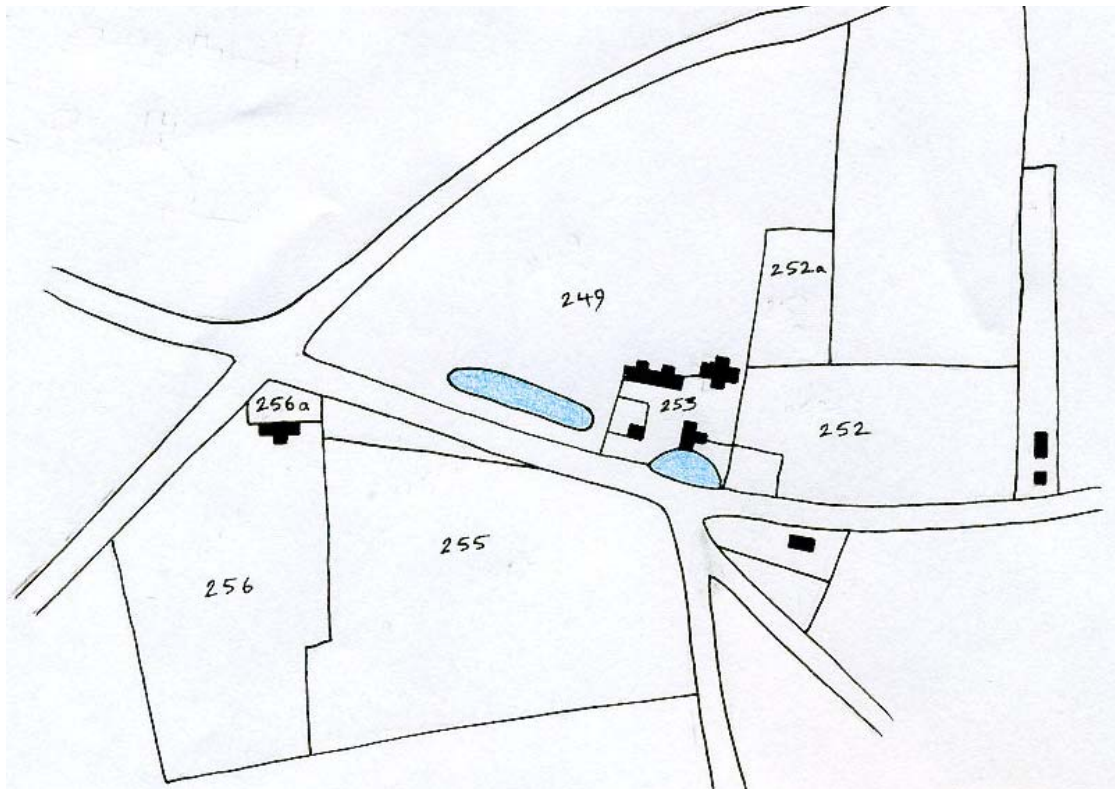
**Figure 1**  
**Existing site plan, showing historic farm buildings to north of central pond and farmhouse to north-west. The remaining farm buildings to the north and east date only from the mid- and late-20<sup>th</sup> century.**

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

Gissings Farm lies on high ground in open, arable countryside at the southern edge of Hoxne parish, 2.5 km south of the church of St Peter & St Paul and to the west of South Green. The boundaries of Eye and Denham parishes lie within 700 metres. The grade II-listed farmhouse is ostensibly a brick structure which bears the date 1794 but this is understood from the Schedule of Listed Buildings to disguise a timber-framed structure with 16<sup>th</sup> century origins. The presence of an ovolo-moulded binding joist in the parlour indicates a major remodelling of the late-16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century, which may well be contemporary with the construction of the barn (building 1 below).

The Hoxne tithe map of 1842 shows the existing farmhouse with its distinctive twin projections to the rear, northern elevation, and the timber-framed barn on the northern bank of the pond in front of the house (figure 2). The tenanted farm contained a relatively substantial total of 214 acres, of which some 40 acres were pasture and the rest arable. The property was owned by Lt. General Sir Edward Kerrison, baronet, of nearby Oakley Park, to whom the greater part of Hoxne parish belonged, and occupied by one Robert Marshall. The numbered fields on the map are named as follows in the accompanying apportionment:

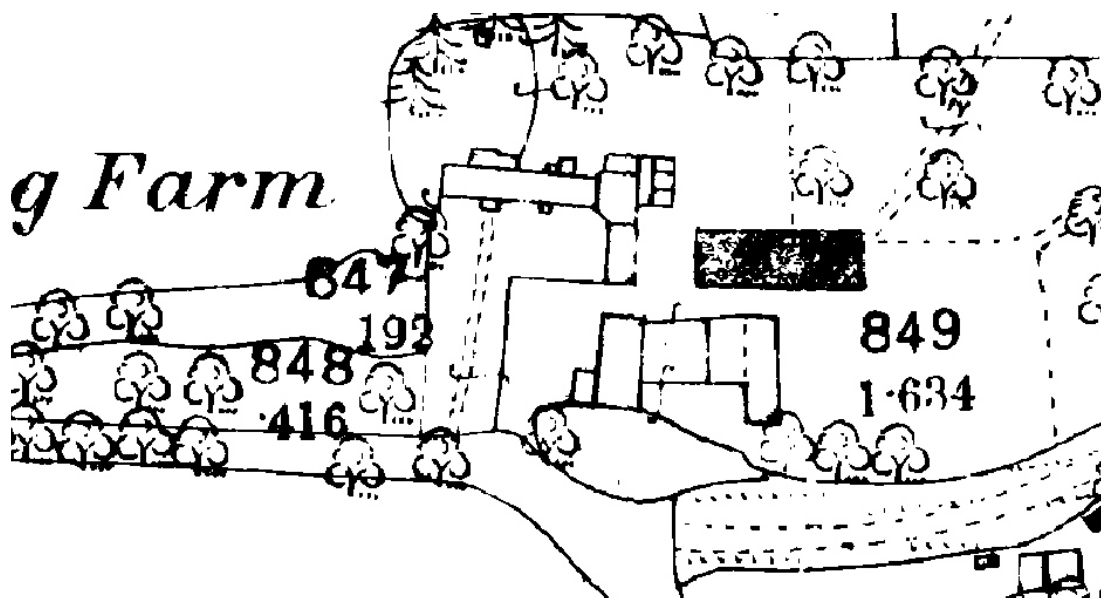
249. Home Meadow.	252. Orchard.	252a. Orchard.	253. Gissings Farm.
255. Home Close.	256. Old Barn Field.	256a. Barn and Yard.	



**Figure 2**

**Gissings Farm in 1842, redrawn from the Hoxne Tithe Map (SRO FDA 139/A1/1b)**

The barn (1) is clearly shown adjoining the northern bank of the roadside pond in front of the farmhouse with a porch projecting from the centre of its eastern elevation. There is structural evidence that the original barn doors opened in this direction instead of their present western orientation. The farm contained a second barn with a south-facing porch at the nearby crossroads to the west (256a), and two other yard buildings of which no trace now remains.



**Figure 3**

**First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885**

The Ordnance Survey of 1885 shows that significant changes had occurred since 1842. Only the farmhouse and barn (1) survived a major refurbishment which saw the removal of the

barn's eastern porch and the construction of two enclosed yards with an open-sided shelter (5 and 5a) to the east. A small shed (2) was built against the barn's western elevation, and a detached first-floor granary with ground-floor sheds open to the east (4) was erected to the north. The small enclosed yards to the east of the farmhouse were probably pig sties. The large rectangular building to the north-east may have been a second barn but does not survive. Similar alterations took place on many Suffolk farms during the 1850s and 1860s as arable farms responded to falling grain prices by diversifying into dairy and beef production, encouraged by new railroad access to urban markets. It is not clear, however, that the new yards at Gissings were designed for cattle rather than the seven to ten working horses that a farm of its scale would require.

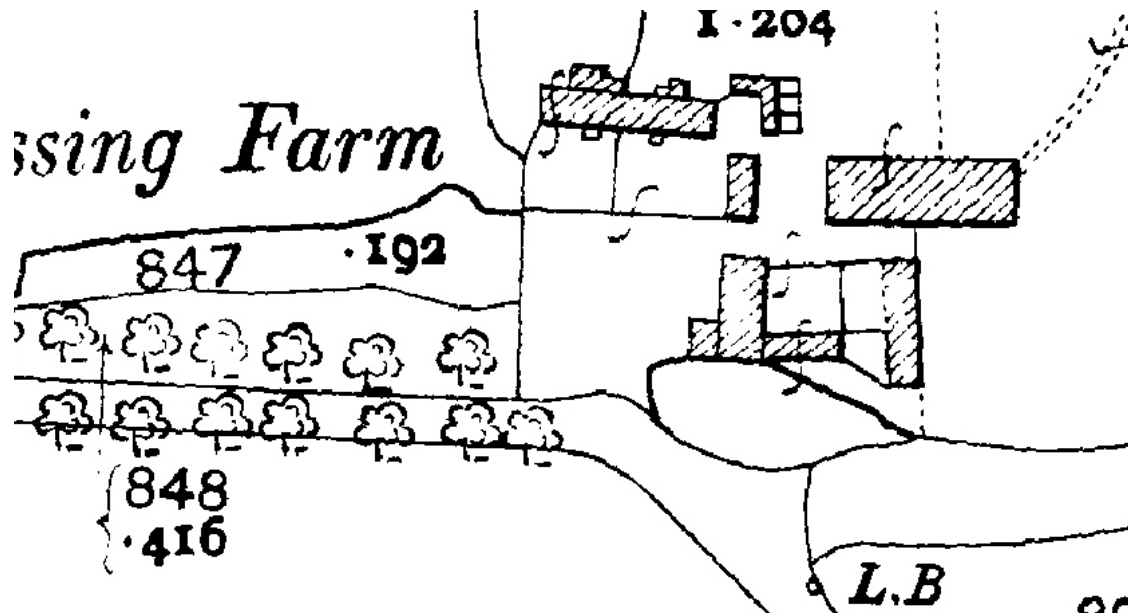


Figure 4  
Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1905

The Ordnance Survey of 1905 shows the new addition of the brick stable (3) to the south of the enclosed yard adjoining the barn, and a small brick extension to the southern gable of the brick and clay-lump shelter shed to the east (5b). The eastern elevation of the granary is no longer shown as open-sided (i.e. delineated by broken lines) and had presumably been enclosed by doors to form vehicle or equipment sheds. The situation remained unchanged in 1927 (figure 5 below).

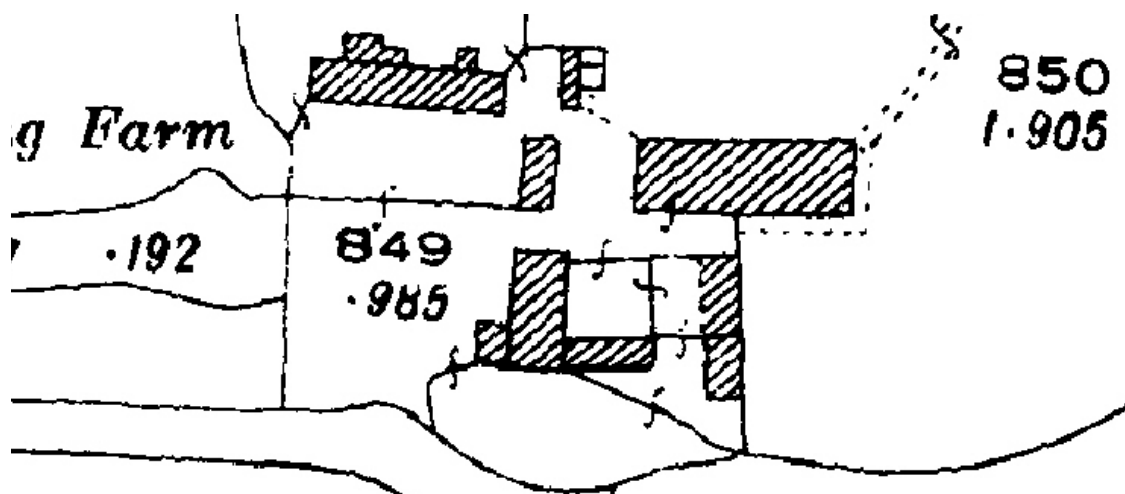
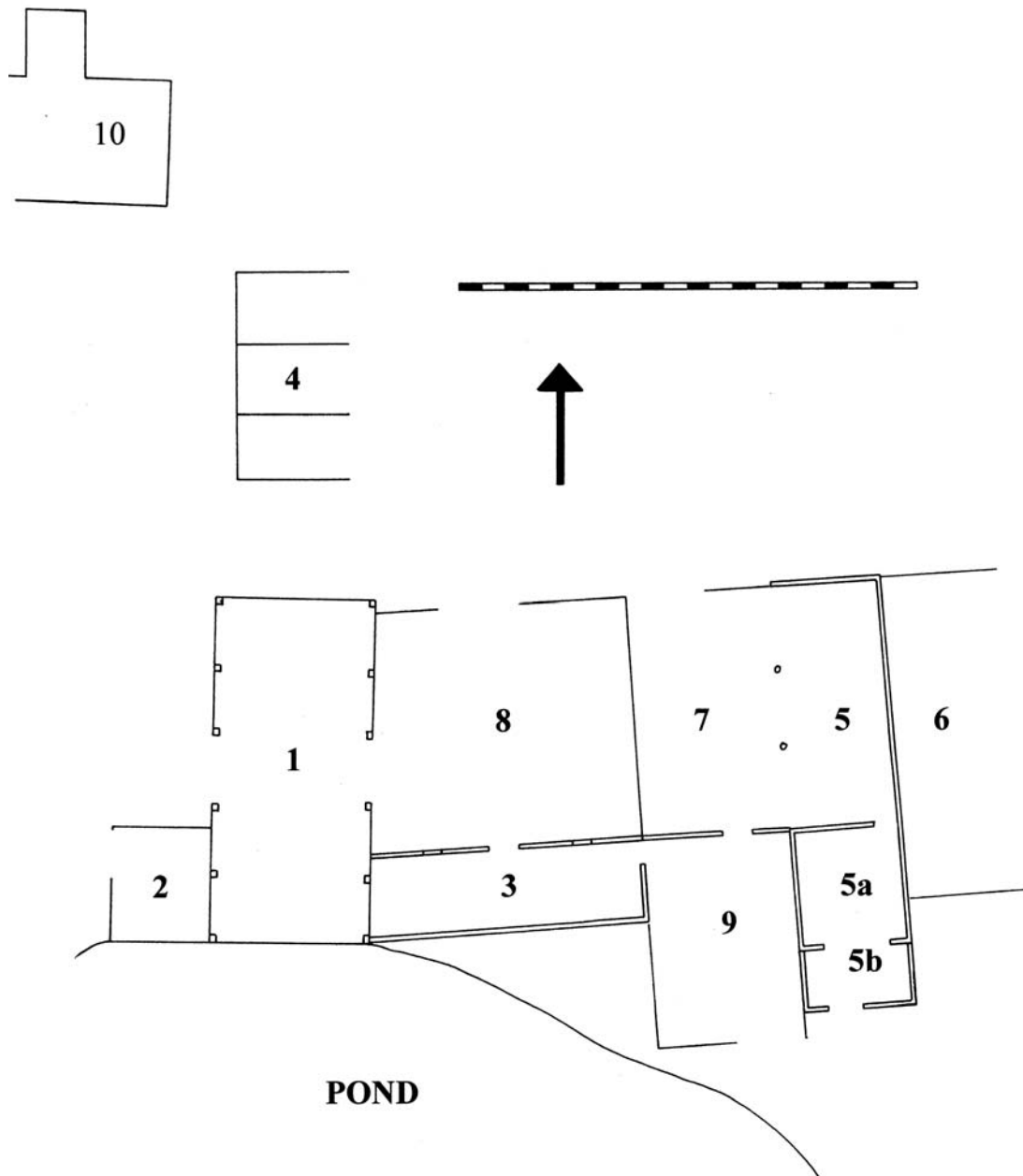


Figure 5  
Third Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1927

## Building Analysis



**Figure 6**  
**Schematic Block Plan of Farm Complex (Scale in metres)**  
Showing the various buildings and functional units discussed in the text and illustrated in the photographic record. The numbers follow those used in the architect's plans.

### Key to Figure 6

1. A late-16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed 5-bay barn without mid-rails, originally with a side-purlin roof and a central entrance to the east. Roof and gables rebuilt in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Retaining a 20<sup>th</sup> century granary floor and milling machinery to the south of its existing western entrance.
2. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century brick shed, probably designed as a vehicle shed.
3. Late-19<sup>th</sup> century brick single-storey stable or neathouse with central northern entrance flanked by windows.

4. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed first-floor granary retaining fragmentary boarded grain bins on each side of an axial passage with entrance in southern gable; open cart sheds on ground floor.
5. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century clay lump open-sided shelter shed with enclosed brick shed (5a) to south entered from gable. A further brick shed (5b) added in late-19<sup>th</sup> century.
6. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century open vehicle sheds of Fletton brick.
7. Enclosed yard with mid-20<sup>th</sup> century roof.
8. Enclosed yard with mid-20<sup>th</sup> century roof.
9. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century block-work shed.
10. Grade II-listed 16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse with brick façade dated 1794 (not inspected and not discussed below).

## 1. Timber-Framed Barn

### Structure and Date

The barn at Gissings Farm is aligned on a north-south axis and extends to 15.25 metres in length by 6.4 metres in overall width (50 feet by 21). It contains six approximately equal bays and its individual studs rise 3.4 metres (11 feet) between the ground sills and roof-plates, although the sills are later replacements and the walls may have been slightly higher initially. Cranked arch-braces rise from the jowled storey posts to the tie-beams which lack mortises for queen- or crown-posts and probably formed part of a side-purlin roof. Internal plank-sectioned and trenched wall braces rise from all four corner posts (to both gable tie-beams and roof-plates) and radiate outwards from the central threshing bay. The tenoned and pegged frame consists of mixed oak and elm timbers which are waney and unweathered to their external surfaces yet lack infill notches; the building was evidently designed for external cladding of weatherboarding (as at present) or, more probably, of render. The presence of edge-halved-and-bridled scarf joints in the roof-plates (as opposed to the face-halved joints of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) combines with the high quality of the frame, cranked (i.e. angular) braces and posited side-purlin roof to indicate a date in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The roof and gables were rebuilt in softwood during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when the present pantiles and much of the tarred boarding were applied, but the remaining frame is largely intact: of 8 original tie-beam braces, for example, all but two still survive. Parts of the wall structure were hidden by the internal cladding of the granary storey at the time of inspection.

### Layout

The barn is now entered by half-hung full-height doors in the central bay of its western elevation, but empty stud mortises in the roof plate reveal this entrance to be secondary. The barn was originally entered from the east, where there are circular holes for pin-hung doors in the roof-plate and no stud mortises. External pegged mortises in the flanking storey posts suggest the porch shown on the 1842 tithe map was an original feature. The rear, western elevation would have contained a small door, sufficient only to create a draught for threshing purposes, but no evidence of this survives. The present floor is of concrete with a threshing floor of neatly-laid flag stones which may possibly have been designed as a vehicle standing rather than a true threshing floor but is of historic interest nonetheless. An early-20<sup>th</sup> century deal granary floor has been inserted into the southern part of the barn and its walls lined with corrugated iron; it retains a boarded silo which funnelled grain into a mill on the ground floor. There is no evidence of the usual gable loading doors as the southern gable – most unusually - adjoins the farm pond.

## 2. Brick Shed

A single-storied brick and pantiled shed with a floor of bricks laid on edge was added to the western elevation of the barn (1) adjoining the pond between 1842 and 1885. The

arrangement of the front gable has been altered and it appears to have been designed with a wider entrance than at present; its location at the entrance to the yard in front of the farmhouse is consistent with such an entrance, and suggests the building was designed as a vehicle shed. It has most recently been employed as a general storage shed.

### **3. Brick Stable**

Between 1885 and 1905 a brick and pantiled structure was added to the southern side of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century yard adjoining the eastern elevation of the barn (1). This extends to 12 metres by 4.4 (40 feet by 14.5) in overall length and width and rises to 2.1 metres (7 feet) at its eaves. A central door of 1.2 metres (4 feet) in width, flanked by windows with modern vertically-hinged hatches, opens onto the yard and a second door lies in its eastern gable. The building currently serves as a stable and was probably designed as such but it contains no relevant fixtures or fittings and may have been a neathouse (cowhouse); the site is used at present for breeding riding horses but their presence does not necessarily indicate the historic use of the buildings.

### **4. Timber-Framed Two-Storeied Granary**

A detached timber-framed granary, clad with tarred weatherboarding and roofed with black-glazed pantiles, was built to the north of the barn between 1842 and 1885. This building extends to 9 metres by 5.6 in overall length and width (30 feet by 18.5) and rises to 3.3 metres (11 feet) at its eaves. The granary lies on the upper storey of 1.2 metres (4 feet) where the softwood wall framing was infilled with brick. It retains fragments of boarded grain bins arranged on both sides of a central axial passage entered by a door in the gable which has since been blocked – as has a window in the northern gable. A central floor trap appears to be a secondary feature, perhaps inserted when the gable door was blocked, but may be an original sack hatch. The lower storey was divided into three compartments that were open to the east, the northernmost of which is now provided with double doors and a boarded ceiling, and probably operated as shelter sheds for vehicles and equipment (i.e. a cart lodge). A number of wooden yokes (designed to rest on leather collars) hung on nails in the southern compartment at the time of inspection.

### **5, 5a & 5b. Clay Lump Shelter Shed**

The eastern side of the historic yard complex is formed by a clay-lump shelter shed (5) with pre-fabricated king-post roof trusses which includes an enclosed shed (5a) with a brick gable and front (western) elevation at its southern end. The shed is 4.8 metres in length and was entered by wide double doors in its gable and linked by a narrow door to the shelter as shown in figure 6. Built between 1842 and 1885 the entire structure originally extended to 16 metres in length by 4.9 in overall width (52 feet by 16) and rose to 2.3 metres at its eaves (7.5 feet), but was extended by 2.75 metres (9 feet) when a further brick shed was added to its southern gable before 1905. These sheds presumably operated as loose boxes. The clay lump northern gable has been tarred, but the eastern elevation, protected by a range of 20<sup>th</sup> century brick vehicle shelters, retains evidence of its original red ochre pigment beneath layers of secondary whitewash.

### **6-9. 20th Century Additions**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century additions to the site are numbered in figure 6 only for ease of reference and are not of historic interest in themselves. The open sheds of Fletton brick to the east of the site were designed as vehicle shelters and now contain a later kennel, while the two mid-19<sup>th</sup> century animal yards (7 & 8) were provided with 20<sup>th</sup> century roofs of corrugated iron. A mid-



20<sup>th</sup> century shed of concrete blocks (9) was built between the stable (3) and the brick sheds in the south-eastern corner of the complex.

### **Historic Significance**

The timber-framed barn at Gissings Farm is a well-built late-16<sup>th</sup> century structure that represents an excellent example of its type and remains better preserved than most, despite the loss its original roof and gable studs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of the eight original tie-beam braces, which are usually removed to increase headroom in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, all but two survive, and most of the wall studs and internal braces also remain *in situ*. The building probably merits listing at grade II in its own right, particularly given the historic interest of its relationship to the adjacent listed farmhouse (with which it is probably contemporary).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century granary (4) is also a good example of its type, albeit significantly altered, and the shelter shed (5) is an unusually large and sophisticated example of a clay lump structure which incorporates brick sheds at its southern end. The red ochre pigment to the eastern clay lump elevation provides interesting evidence of the appearance of Suffolk farm buildings before the advent of tar in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The complex does not represent a complete 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead as the substantial building shown on early maps to the north of the remaining yards no longer survives, and its historic significance is diminished accordingly.

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

### **Description of Photographs in Appendix 1**

#### **Photograph no.**

1. General view of entrance to site from south-west showing house (10) left and barn (1) right.
2. General view of site from east showing house (10) to right and farm complex to left.
3. General view of site from south-east showing pond & barn (1) to left.
4. Southern facade of house (10) with date plaque T.M. 1794 (included for site context).
5. General view of barn complex across pond from south-west, showing shed (2) left.
6. 20th century grain silos to north of site, viewed from south-west.
7. General view of barn complex from north-east showing barn (1) to right.
8. External southern gable of barn (1) showing house (10) to left.
9. Western external elevation of barn (1) from south-west showing granary (4) to left.
10. External western elevation of barn (1) from north-west.
11. Western external elevation of barn (1) from west showing entrance doors.
12. Northern external gable of barn (1) from north-east showing covered yard (8) to left.
13. Barn (1). External detail of entrance doors from south-west.
14. Barn (1). General view of interior from north.
15. Barn (1). General view of interior from south.
16. Barn (1). Interior showing 20th century granary floor in southern bays.
17. Barn (1). 19th century roof structure from north showing original arch-braces.
18. Barn (1) Detail from south of rebuilt roof above original tie-beams without post mortises.
19. Barn (1). Stone threshing floor from south-east showing entrance top-left.
20. Barn (1). Detail of stone flags forming threshing floor.

21. Barn (1). Interior of rebuilt northern gable showing original corner posts and tie-beam.
22. Barn (1). Northern end of eastern elevation showing northern gable to left.
23. Barn (1). Northern end of eastern elevation showing original braces to left and right.
24. Barn (1). Central bay of eastern elevation showing blocked original entrance.
25. Barn (1). Detail of barn door pin-hinge housing in roof-plate of central eastern bay.
26. Barn (1). Southern end of eastern elevation showing arch-brace beneath granary floor.
27. Barn (1). Interior of rebuilt southern gable beneath granary floor.
28. Barn (1). Southern end of western internal elevation showing southern gable to left.
29. Barn (1). Interior of entrance in central western bay showing radiating internal braces.
30. Barn (1). Edge-halved-and-bridled scarf joint and stud mortises in roof-plate above west entrance.
31. Barn (1). Detail of incised carpenter's numeral to wall brace at northern post of entrance.
32. Barn (1). Northern end of western internal elevation showing entrance to left.
33. Barn (1). Northern end of western internal elevation showing missing corner braces to right.
34. Barn (1). Underside of 20th century granary floor from north showing bottom of arch-brace to left.
35. Barn (1). Granary floor from north showing top of cranked arch-brace to left.
36. Barn (1). Granary floor from south showing cranked arch brace and tie-beams.
37. Barn (1). Boarded milling funnel in north-western corner of granary floor.
38. Barn (1). Detail of boarded milling funnel from east showing chute to right.
39. Shed (2). Western external gable showing barn (1) in rear.
40. 40. Shed (2). Exterior from south-west showing southern elevation adjoining pond to right.
41. Shed (2). Internal western gable showing blocked original entrance.
42. Shed (2). Internal western elevation showing existing entrance to right.

43. Shed (2). Detail of softwood roof structure from east.
44. Shed (2). Interior from west showing 20th century brickwork to exterior of barn (1).
45. Shed (2). Interior from west showing weatherboarding to exterior of barn (1).
46. Shed (2). Detail of brick floor within western entrance.
47. Shed (2). Interior of southern side elevation to pond.
48. Shed (2). Interior of northern side elevation showing entrance to left.
49. Stable (3). External southern elevation across pond showing barn (1) left.
50. Stable (3). Northern external elevation from yard (8) showing eastern elevation of barn (1).
51. Stable (3). Northern external elevation showing central door and western window.
52. Stable (3). Northern external elevation showing central door and eastern window & horse.
53. Stable (3). External eastern gable with corner door seen from 20th century covered yard (9).
54. Stable (3). Detail of door in eastern external gable.
55. Stable (3). Interior from west showing gable door and window to yard (8) left.
56. Stable (3). Interior from east showing door and window to yard (8) to right.
57. Stable (3). Detail of roof structure from east showing barn (1) in rear.
58. Stable (3). Detail of western hatch window in northern internal elevation.
59. Granary (4). Exterior from east showing barn (1) left and house (10) right.
60. Granary (4). Western external elevation showing stable yard (8) right.
61. Granary (4). Eastern external elevation showing three ground-floor sheds.
62. Granary (4). Detail of eastern elevation showing secondary doors.
63. Granary (4). Interior from east of northern compartment showing northern gable to right.
64. Granary (4). Interior of northern compartment from west showing entrance doors.
65. Granary (4). Detail of softwood construction in north-western corner.
66. Granary (4). Interior from east of central compartment showing original ceiling trap.

67. Granary (4). Interior from west of central compartment showing eastern entrance.
68. Granary (4). Interior from east of southern compartment showing suspended wooden horse yokes.
69. Granary (4). Interior of southern compartment from east showing southern gable.
70. Granary (4). Detail of tarred bracket in south-eastern corner from north.
71. Granary (4). Detail of wooden horse collar yokes on northern wall of southern compartment.
72. Granary (4). Interior of granary floor showing northern gable and remains of bins to both sides.
73. Granary (4). Southern gable showing blocked granary loading door interrupting tie-beam.
74. Granary (4). Detail of brick infill to eastern elevation of granary.
75. Granary (4). Detail of boarded grain bin in north-eastern corner of granary.
76. Granary (4). Detail of boarded bin in north-western corner showing blocked gable window.
77. Shelter shed (5). Northern external gable showing tarred clay lump construction.
78. Shelter shed (5). Western external open-sided elevation from yard (7) to west.
79. Shelter shed (5). Western external open-sided elevation from yard (7) to north-west.
80. Shelter shed (5). Detail of open-arcade post in western elevation.
81. Shelter shed (5). Interior from south showing northern gable & king-post roof trusses.
82. Shelter shed (5a). Interior from south of shed at southern gable showing door to shelter.
83. Shelter shed (5a). Interior of southern shed showing wide door to extension (5b).
84. Shelter shed (5b). Interior of southern extension looking north to original gable door.
85. Shelter shed (5b). Interior of extension from west showing southern gable to right.
86. Shelter shed (5b). Exterior of southern gable.
87. Shelter shed (5b). Eastern external elevation.
88. Shelter shed (5a). Clay lump eastern elevation from southern end of shelter (6).
89. Shelter shed (5a). Detail of clay lump eastern external elevation.

90. Shelter shed (5). Detail of whitewash over red ochre to exterior of clay lump.
91. Shelter shed (5). Detail of clay lamp eastern exterior showing remains of red ochre pigment.
92. 20th century shelter (6). Exterior from south-east showing shelter shed (5b) to left.
93. 20th century shelter shed (6). Northern elevation (left) showing shelter shed (5) to right.
94. Covered yards (7 & 8). External elevation from north.
95. Yard (7). Interior from north showing dividing wall to 20th century shed (9).
96. Yard (8). Interior from south showing barn (1) to left.
97. Shed (9). Exterior from south (centre) showing gable of shed (5b) to right.
98. Shed (9). Interior from south showing eastern gable of stable (3) to left.
99. Shed (9). Interior from west showing shelter shed (5a) left 7 extension (5b) right.
100. General view of area to east of site showing Gissings Farm Cottages to right.

**Appendix 2 (pp. 15-18): Selected Printed Photographs**



A2.1 General view of entrance to site from south-west showing house (10) to left and barn (1) to right with granary (4) in centre



A2.2 General view of barn complex across pond from south-west, showing from left to right shed (2), barn (1), stable (3), block-work shed (9) and shelter shed (5)



A2.3 General view of barn complex from north-east showing barn (1) to right and 20<sup>th</sup> century brick shelter (6) to left.



A2.4 Barn (1). General view of interior from north showing largely intact 5-bay late-16<sup>th</sup> century timber frame beneath 19<sup>th</sup> century roof, with blocked original eastern entrance to left and 20<sup>th</sup> century granary and milling floor to south





A2.5 Barn (1). Eastern elevation from south showing original cranked arch-brace and tie-beam above granary floor



A2.6 Granary (4). Exterior from east showing barn (1) to left and house (10) to right



A2.7 Granary (4). Interior of granary floor showing blocked window in northern gable and remains of boarded grain bins with central passage from external entrance in southern gable



A2.8 Stable (3). Interior from west showing gable door and window to yard (8) left