

**Beech Farm,
The Green,
Bardwell, Suffolk**

Historic Building Record

OASIS Ref: Suffolkc1-54067



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August 2008

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The Farm Buildings, Beech Farm, The Green, Bardwell, Suffolk

(TL 944 738)

An Archaeological Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a complex of farm buildings adjacent to Beech Farmhouse. The report has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Jess Tipper, 25th July 2008, Ref. /BeechFarm_Bardwell2008) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for demolition (Mid Suffolk District Council applications SE/07/1309-10).

Introduction

The following report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 57 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 the photographs include a white metre scale rod with centimetre sub-divisions. The site was inspected on 29th July 2008 at which time demolition had already begun, but Appendix 2 includes four photographs taken by the new owners, Mr and Mrs Peachman, before work commenced.

Summary

Beech Farm lies on the northern edge of Bardwell Green, approximately 500 metres north-east of the parish church. The tithe map of 1839 shows the present house, which dates from the 17th century, and a single outbuilding on the site of the small complex of farm buildings which forms the subject of this report. Less than four acres of land belonged to the property at that time, of which most formed a large orchard, and it was said to contain only a house, offices and yard. The existing farm buildings include a narrow shed and a small two-bay barn of the mid-19th century, the former possibly representing the outbuilding shown in 1839. The shed was heavily altered in the 20th century when a milking parlour was inserted at its southern end and the rest was enlarged to form a stable. A small cattle yard with the remains of a 20th century shelter lies to the north. The barn is largely intact and is of some historic interest as it retains substantial areas of original wattle-and-daub and evidence of an unusual layout with only a single external entrance.

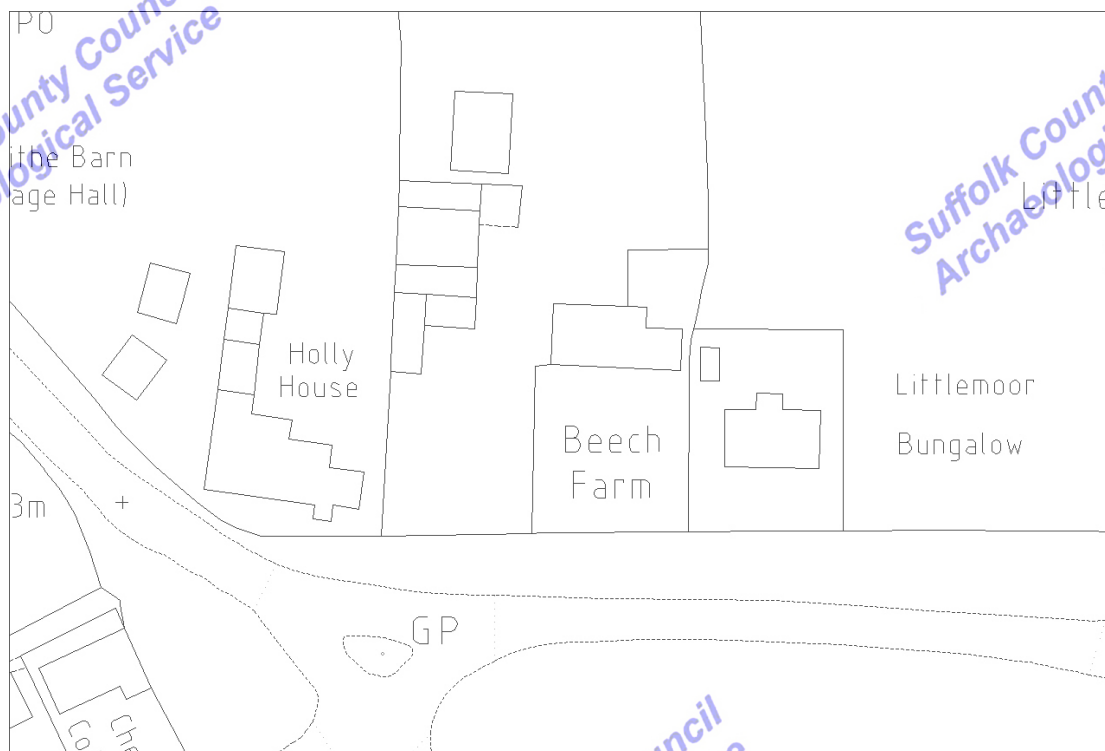


Figure 1
Existing Site Plan, showing the complex of farm buildings to the west of the farmhouse.
The detached building to the north is a modern structure of corrugated iron, and the
buildings at the northern end of the complex had been demolished prior to inspection,
along with the building in its south-eastern corner.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Beech Farm lies on the edge of the village of Bardwell some 500 metres north-east of the parish church of St Peter and St Paul. The unlisted timber-framed farmhouse dates from the 17th century but occupies a site of potential medieval occupation on the northern margin of Bardwell Green. Although it is understood from the present owner to have operated as a small dairy and arable farm in the late-19th century the property is not shown as a farm in the tithe survey of 1839 (figure 2). The house was then owned by one Ann Brett and occupied by herself and Maria Smith, having presumably been divided into a pair of cottages.

Ann Brett also owned an orchard behind the house (no. 145 on the map) which she occupied along with Maria Smith, and three fields at some distance from the house which were occupied by John Smith. This unusual arrangement suggests that Ann and Maria were related to each other. The area of the house (no. 142) is described as 'site of house, offices and yards' on the tithe apportionment and indicates that a business of some kind was operating from the property (the term 'office' was not used to describe agricultural buildings). This business may well have involved the orchard which was of a commercial scale (at 3 acres, 3 roods and 3 perches, including the yards). White's Trade Directory of 1844 makes no reference to Ann Brett or Maria Smith, but more information could be found in the census returns which have not been consulted for the purposes of this report.

The tithe map shows a small outbuilding at the entrance to the yard and another in its north-western corner, immediately west of the house. There is now no trace of the former, but the latter occupies the same site as the surviving shed (numbered 1 in figure 5) and may be equated with it. The present barn and other buildings are not shown.

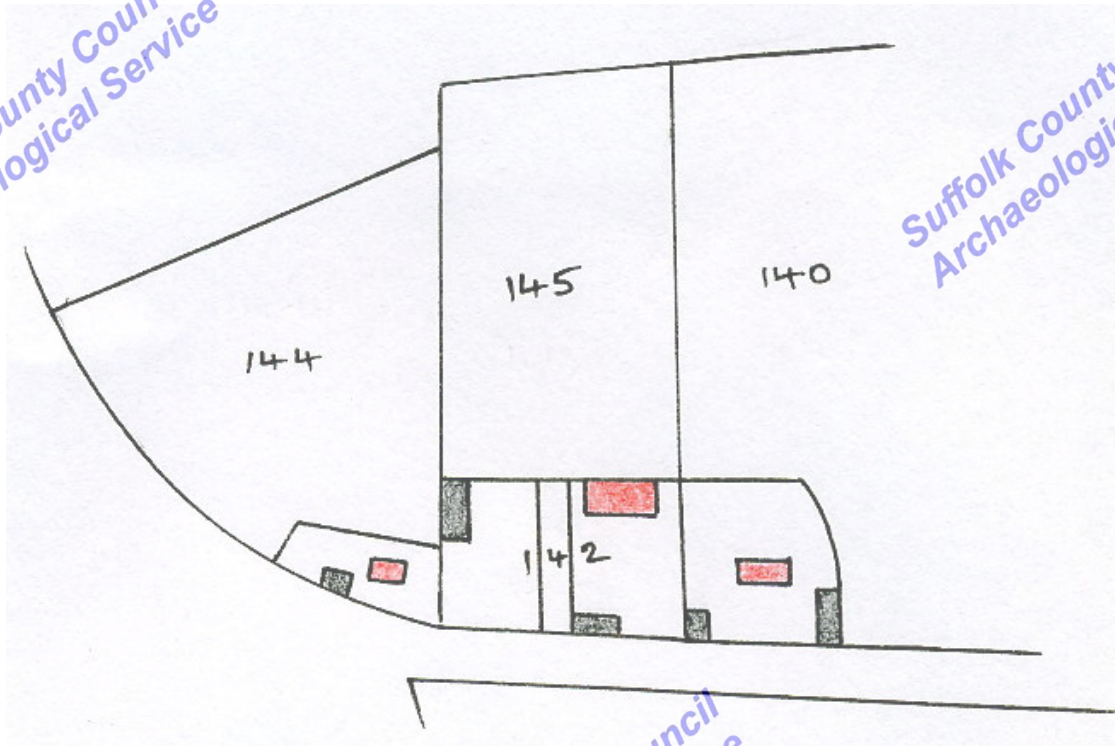


Figure 2
Bardwell Tithe Map of 1839 (Suffolk Record Office)
Showing the house in red and two outbuildings described as offices in grey (142) with a large orchard to the rear (145).

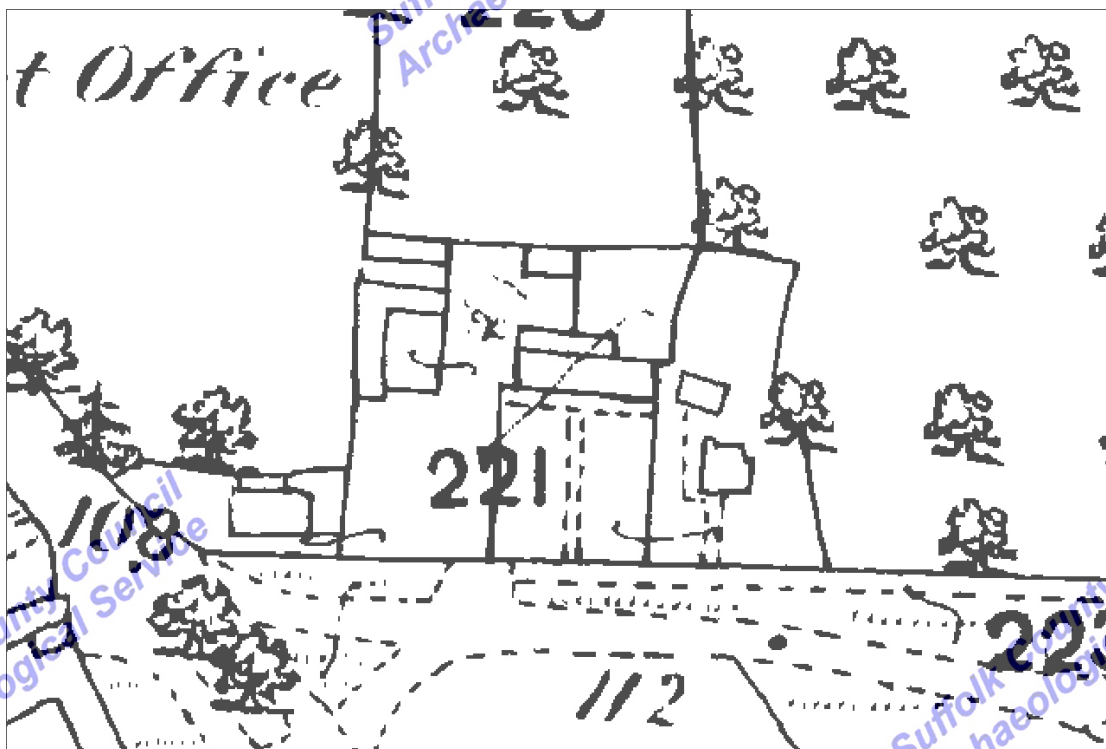


Figure 3
First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1883 showing a new complex of buildings including the present shed and barn (1 and 3 in figure 5) to the west of the house.

The single building shown on the tithe map had been either rebuilt or incorporated into a small complex of buildings by the time of the Ordnance Survey of 1883. This redevelopment, which included the present barn, may have coincided with the creation of a more substantial farm. An enclosed yard occupies the south-eastern angle of the barn and the shed (3 and 1 respectively in figure 5). By 1904 (figure 4 below) the existing enclosed yard had been added to the barn's northern elevation, apparently replacing the southern yard. The eastern elevation of the southern shed (1) is shown by broken lines as an open-sided structure (a technique not used on earlier Ordnance Surveys) and may have been designed as such. The enlargement of the same shed to create a stable had not yet occurred. The farm is understood to have come into the present owner's family at the beginning of the 20th century and to have operated as a mixed dairy and arable concern.

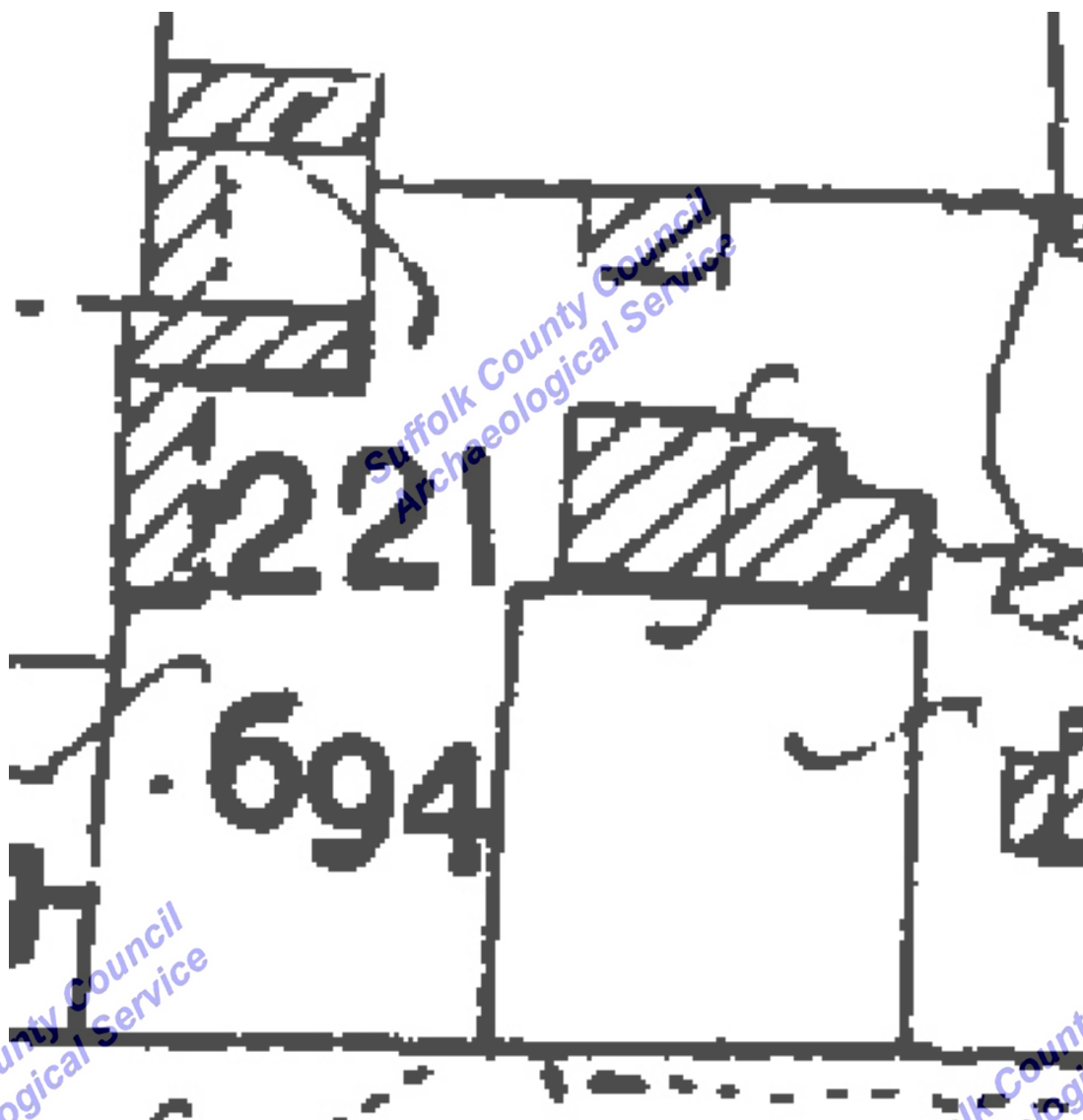


Figure 4

Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904 showing the existing layout with a newly enlarged yard to the north of the barn.

Building Analysis

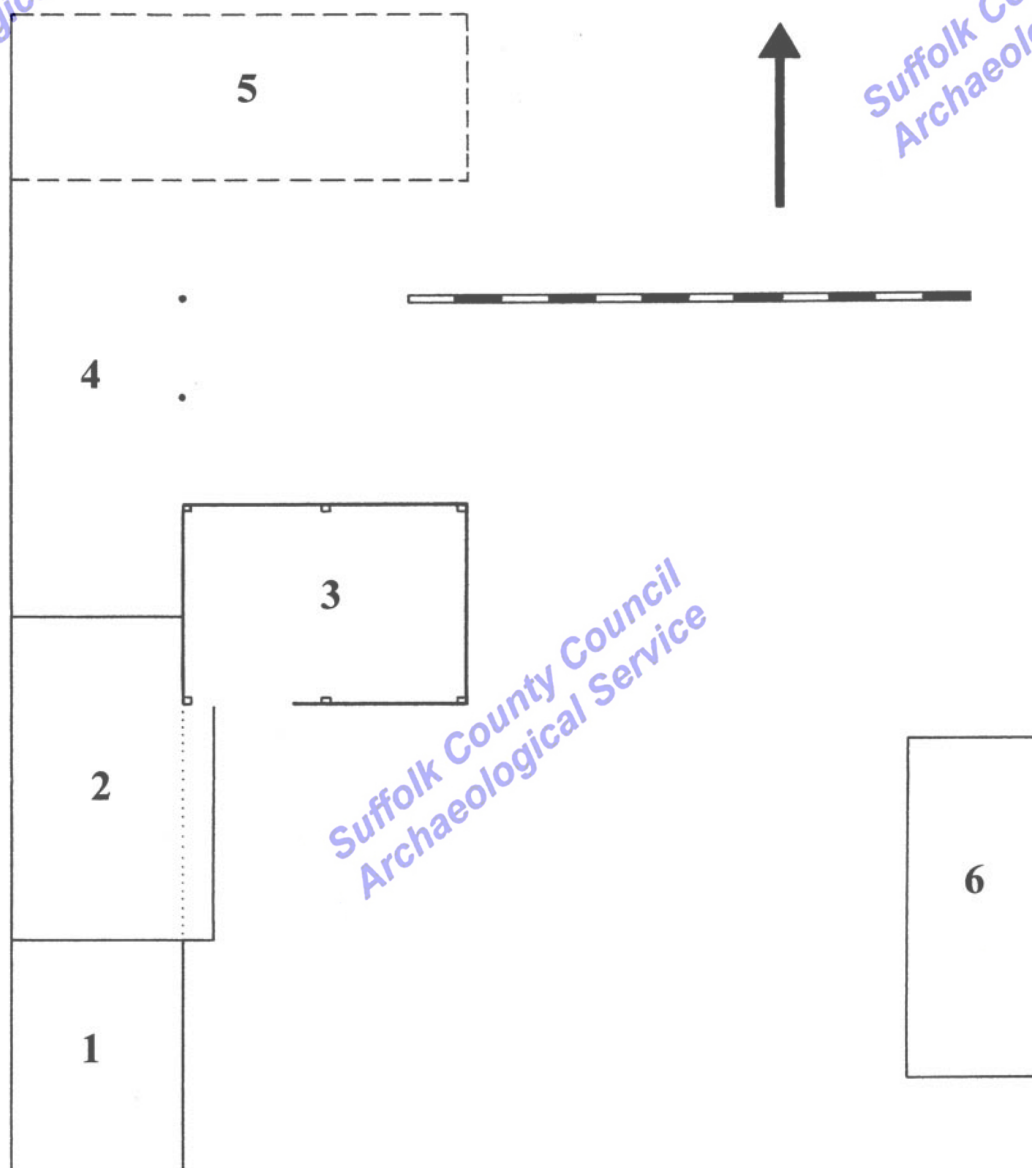


Figure 5
Schematic Block Plan of Farm Complex
 Showing the timber buildings discussed in the text and illustrated in the Appendices.

Key to Figure 5

1. Mid-19th century shed, originally extending to the northern gable of building 2. Possibly designed as an open-sided yard shelter but subsequently enclosed and used as a milking parlour (largely demolished by the time of inspection).
2. Mid-20th century stable, partly on the site of a demolished section of building 1 (the original outline of which is indicated by a dotted line).
3. Mid-19th century two-bay barn or feed store.
4. 20th century open-sided cattle shelter.

5. Site of an enclosed cowshed probably of the early-20th century but demolished prior to inspection.

6. Western gable of 17th century farmhouse.

Shed (1) and Stable (2)

The shed at the southern end of the complex had been largely demolished shortly before inspection, leaving only its rear (western) elevation and part of its roof *in situ*. The structure extends to 4.9 m in length by 3.7 m in overall width (16 ft by 12 ft 3 ins) and is shown as an enclosed tarred and weatherboarded shed with an eastern door and window in photographs taken by the new owners prior to demolition (Appendix 2.1). Its roof was covered with 20th century treble tiles. The concrete floor contains an axial drain that is consistent with information from the previous owner (whose family has owned the farm since the early-20th century and who continues to reside in the farmhouse) that it formerly operated as a milking parlour. The timber-framed rear wall consists of diagonal primary braces and nailed studs (some of which are tenoned and pegged to the roof-plate) and is typical of mid-19th century construction. The remaining roundwood rafters rest on a side-purlin and ridge board. The same framing appears in the northern gable of the adjacent stable and the building evidently continued to this point before its northern half was widened in the 20th century to form the stable. The original structure would have extended to 11.75 m (38.5 ft) in length. The exterior of the northern gable retains a fragment of wattle-daub-infill with roughcast, unpainted clay render. This building occupies the same plot as that shown on the tithe map of 1839 and may have been recently erected at that time; alternatively it may have replaced an earlier building on the same site shortly afterwards. The eastern elevation is shown as open-sided on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 (figure 4) and adjoined an enclosed yard in 1883 (figure 3). Although no evidence remained at the time of inspection, as that section of the eastern wall which survived the construction of the stable had been demolished, it seems likely it was designed as an open-sided cattle shelter. The striking similarity of the framing to that of the adjacent barn suggests it formed part of a mid-19th century refurbishment when the holding became a farm rather than the 'office' described in 1839.

The stable consists of machine-sawn and nailed softwood under a single-slope roof and was built on the northern half of the 19th century shed in the mid-20th century. The northern gable and rear wall probably remained intact but the latter was later rebuilt in block-work. The new stable extended to 6.9 m in length by 4.3 m in width (22.5 ft by 14 ft) and blocked a door in the adjacent barn. A small area to the north was partitioned to form a tack room. No original fixtures or fittings survived at the time of inspection but the previous owner recalled its use for working horses in the 1950s.

The Barn (3)

The barn adjoins the northern end of the 19th century probable shelter shed (1) and is aligned on an east-west axis to form what is shown in figure 3 as an enclosed yard to the south. The building contains two bays and extends to 6.1 m in length by 4.3 m in overall width (20 ft by 14), rising to 10 ft at its eaves (including its brick and flint plinth of 45 cm or 18 ins). The timber-framed walls are similar to those of the adjacent shed, with nailed diagonal primary bracing and infill of wattle-and-daub with thin coppice poles and external clay daub. The northern elevation survives largely intact, although hidden beneath a later coat of tar, but the southern elevation and eastern gable are now tarred and weatherboarded. The roof retains its original red pantiles.

The original layout is not typical, with only a single external door of 2.3 m in width (7.5 ft) at the western end of the southern elevation and a second door of normal width at the southern end of the western gable. The latter opened into the corner of the adjacent shed. The existing additional doors in the southern and northern elevation are later insertions which interrupt the

original frame. Given the absence of any thoroughfare or through-draught for threshing purposes, and its relatively late mid-19th century origin (it is not shown on the 1839 tithe map) the barn was probably purpose-built as an animal feed store. A loading door in the eastern gable suggests the former presence of a milling platform, but extensive vegetation obscured any further evidence of such a feature – whether original or secondary.

Cattle Shelter (4) and Cow Shed (5)

The area adjoining the barn's northern elevation is remembered as a cattle yard by the previous owner, and is shown as such on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 with an open shelter to the west and an enclosed shed to the north. A different arrangement is shown in 1883. The shelter (4) had been stripped of its roof at the time of inspection, and its surviving arcade posts were of machine-sawn softwood of mid- or late-20th century appearance, suggesting the shelter of 1904 had been rebuilt. The enclosed northern shed, remembered as a cow shed and termed a 'neat house' by the previous owner, had been demolished to leave only the outline of its concrete floor remaining. The yard had been 8 m in length (26 feet) from north to south and the shed approximately 3.5 m in width (11.5 ft).

Historic Significance

Despite their partial demolition the buildings retain considerable historic interest as an example of a small, utilitarian cattle yard complex of the mid-19th century. The size of the contemporary farm is uncertain as it extended to less than four acres at the time of the tithe survey in 1839 and was enlarged during the ensuing decades. At just 20 feet by 14 the barn is an exceptionally small and rare example of its kind, with evidence of an unusual layout suggesting it was purpose-built as a feed store rather than a traditional barn. Most earlier barns were converted for a similar function during the mid and late-19th century, as mechanisation took the place of threshing floors and animal husbandry became as important as cereal production, but relatively few purpose-built examples of any scale were erected. Both the shed and barn are also of interest for their late use of traditional and inexpensive wattle-and-daub.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from Bardwell Green to south.
2. General view of entrance to site from south showing shed (2) to left.
3. General view of site from north showing barn (3) to right and house (6) to left.
4. Exterior of Green Farmhouse from south (included for site context).
5. Before Inspection. Exterior of shed (1) from south-east showing barn (3) to right.
6. Before Inspection. Southern external gable of shed (1).
7. Before Inspection. Eastern external elevation of shed (1).
8. Before Inspection. Eastern external elevation of shed (1) showing stable (2) to right.
9. General view from south showing shed (1) to left, stable (2) in centre & barn (3) to right.
10. General view from north-east showing barn (3) to left.
11. General view from east showing barn (3) in centre and shelter (4) to right.
12. Shed (1) & stable (2), left to right, from east showing barn (3) to right.
13. Shed (1) from south-east during demolition showing rear internal elevation & roof fragment.
14. Shed (1) from south-east showing detail of surviving original roof structure.
15. Shed (1). Detail of rear roof-plate showing face-halved scarf joint and pegged studs.
16. Shed (1). Detail of peg hooks in rear internal elevation.
17. Shed (1). Detail of floor showing draining channel of 20th century milking parlour.
18. Shed (1). Northern internal gable showing roof scar and broken tie-beam.
19. Shed (1). Detail of broken tie-beam in northern gable adjoining stable (2).
20. Exterior of stable (2) from south-east showing window to left and door to right.

21. Stable (2). Interior of southern gable showing window to left.
22. Stable (2). Internal eastern elevation showing farmhouse in rear.
23. Stable (2). Interior showing eastern elevation obstructing earlier door to barn (3).
24. Stable (2) from south, showing entrance to left blocking earlier door to barn (3).
25. Stable (2). External northern gable original belonging to shed (1), showing barn (3) to left.
26. Stable (2). Detail of original clay daub to northern external gable.
27. Stable (2). Detail of wattle-and-daub to northern external gable.
28. Open-sided shelter (4) from east showing barn (3) to left.
29. Open-sided shelter (4) from south-east showing site of demolished northern return (5) to right.
30. Open-sided shelter (4). Interior from north showing barn (3) to left.
31. Open-sided shelter (4). Interior from south showing site of northern return (5) to right.
32. Site of demolished northern return of open-sided shelter (5) from yard to south.
33. Barn (3). Exterior of northern elevation showing secondary entrance to right.
34. Barn (3). Detail of original tarred external daub to northern elevation.
35. Barn (3). Detail of wattle-and-daub construction to northern external elevation.
36. Barn (3). Detail of northern external elevation showing brick plinth, brace and wattle infill.
37. Barn (3). Exterior of eastern gable showing upper loading door.
38. Barn (3). Exterior from south-east showing stable (2) to left.
39. Barn (3). Southern external elevation showing original wide door to left and later door to right.
40. Barn (3). Detail of door hinge with jamb of stable entrance to right.
41. Barn (3). Exterior of western gable from within stable (2).
42. Barn (3). Exterior of western gable from shelter (4) showing northern gable of stable (3) right.
43. Barn (3). General view of interior from east.
44. Barn (3). General view of interior from west.

45. Barn (3). Interior of western gable showing door to stable (2) to left.
46. Barn (3). Detail of western internal gable showing roof structure.
47. Barn (3). Detail of clasped-purlin roof structure from west.
48. Barn (3). Interior of northern elevation showing later door interrupting primary wall brace.
49. Barn (3). Interior of northern elevation showing eastern gable to right.
50. Barn (3). Detail of framing to northern internal elevation.
51. Barn (3). Detail of daub and internal render to northern elevation.
52. Barn (3). Detail of brick and flint internal plinth to northern elevation.
53. Barn (3). Internal southern elevation showing later door to left.
54. Barn (3). Interior of southern elevation showing original wide door.
55. Barn (3). Detail of original door jamb in southern elevation interrupting ground sill.
56. Barn (3). Internal southern elevation showing original door lintel pegged to left-hand jamb.
57. Barn (3). Interior of south-western corner showing original door to left.

Appendix 2 (pp. 12-15): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 Before Inspection. Exterior of shed (1) from south-east showing barn (3) to right



A2.2 General view from south showing remains of shed (1) to left, stable (2) in centre & barn (3) to right



A2.3 Open-sided shelter (4). Interior from north showing barn (3) to left.





A2.6 Stable (2). External northern gable originally belonging to shed (1), showing remains of original external clay daub and barn (3) to left



A2.7 Barn (3). Interior of northern elevation showing later door interrupting primary wall brace



A2.8 Barn (3). Interior of south-western corner showing original wide door in southern elevation to left