

Suffolk County Council  
Archaeological Service

# Brick Kiln Farm, Sibton, Suffolk

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## Historic Building Record

Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1-56002



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**Farm Buildings at  
Brick Kiln Farm,  
Rendham Road,  
Sibton, Suffolk**

**(TM 3590 6728)**

**An Archaeological Record**

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant barn and adjoining yard complex. The report has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Jess Tipper, 3 December 2008, Ref. /BrickKilnFarm\_Sibton2008) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Suffolk Coastal District Council application C/07/1714).*

**Introduction**

The following report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 78 8.2 megapixel digital images (Appendix 1) but also includes printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text (Appendix 2). Each image is separately described in the report, and a half-metre scale rod was included wherever possible. The site was inspected on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

**Summary**

Brick Kiln Farm lies in open countryside in the south-western corner of Sibton parish, and formed a modest tenanted holding of 58 acres in 1840. The site contains an early-17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse and a contemporary or near-contemporary barn to which a cattle yard and various associated brick sheds were added in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The house is listed at grade II, but the timber-framed barn is particularly good example of its type and has been omitted in error from the Schedule of Listed Buildings. Its roof structure of clasped-purlins with a lower tier of butt-purlins survives intact, with an impressive array of wind-braces, and its open trusses and wall framing are also largely complete. The building contained a three-bay barn to the east (towards the house) and a floored bay to the west which operated as a stable. The stable ceiling and partition were removed when a brick extension was added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the entrance passage remains in use and rare evidence of the original doors and windows

survives in the walls. The extension incorporates wasters from an eponymous kiln which lay by the pond to the south of the farmhouse in 1840.



**Figure 1**

**Existing Ordnance Survey Site Plan**

**Outlining the farm buildings to the south-west of the farmhouse in red, and showing the corner of Rendham Road (from which the farm is approached by an unmade track) to the right**

## Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Brick Kiln Farm lies in open arable countryside in the south-western corner of Sibton parish, within 500 metres of its boundaries with Rendham and Kelsale. Until the reorganisation of these boundaries in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century it lay in a detached portion of the parish, and is closer to Peasenhall church (2km to the north) than Sibton church (2.5 km to the north-east). The site is reached by an unmade track from the road between Peasenhall and Rendham.

The timber-framed, rendered and thatched house is listed at grade II, and is typical of the region's many early-17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses with a cross-passage and (originally) twin service rooms to the south of a central hall and a chimney and parlour to the north. The parlour has been rebuilt in brick, but the roof structure of wind-braced clasped-purlins with a lower tier of butt-purlins remains intact and is almost identical to that of the barn. The roof plates of the house contain edge-halved-and-bridled scarf joints of 16<sup>th</sup> century type, however, while those of the barn are of the stylistically later face-halved variety. The two structures are nonetheless contemporary or broadly contemporary, and their relationship is of historic interest: the barn is aligned at right-angles to the house, with the former's north-eastern corner 3.6 metres (12 feet) distant from the south-western corner of the latter's service gable. The farmhouse appears to have been approached from the west, as there is evidence of a blocked stair door to the east of its cross-passage, but instead of facing a yard in front of the house (as usual) the original main entrance of the barn faced south towards the present approach track.

At 5.7 metres in overall width (18 feet 9 inches) the barn is of almost exactly the same width as the house (at 5.6 metres or 18 feet 6 inches).

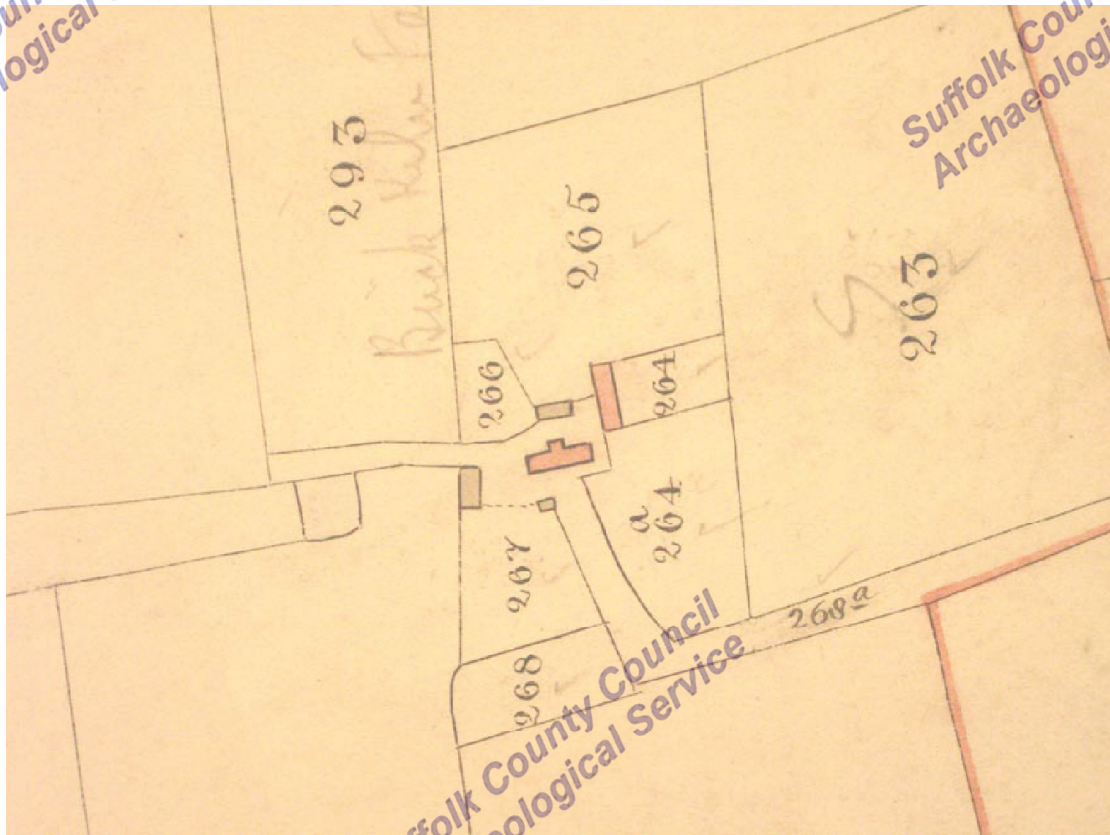


Figure 2 (with detail below)

Sibton Tithe Map of 1840 (SRO FDA 218/A1/1b), reoriented with north at top. The farmhouse is shown in red to the right and the barn in red to the left with three detached outbuildings that no longer survive (probably including a cartlodge and granary). A central porch projects from the barn's northern elevation, for which evidence still survives, although it was originally entered from the south. The fields are named as follows in the accompanying apportionment:  
263 Garden Meadow; 264 House and Garden; 264a Kiln and Yard; 265 Orchard; 266 Garden; 267 Stackyard; 268 Hempland; 268a Private Road; 293 Horse Meadow.

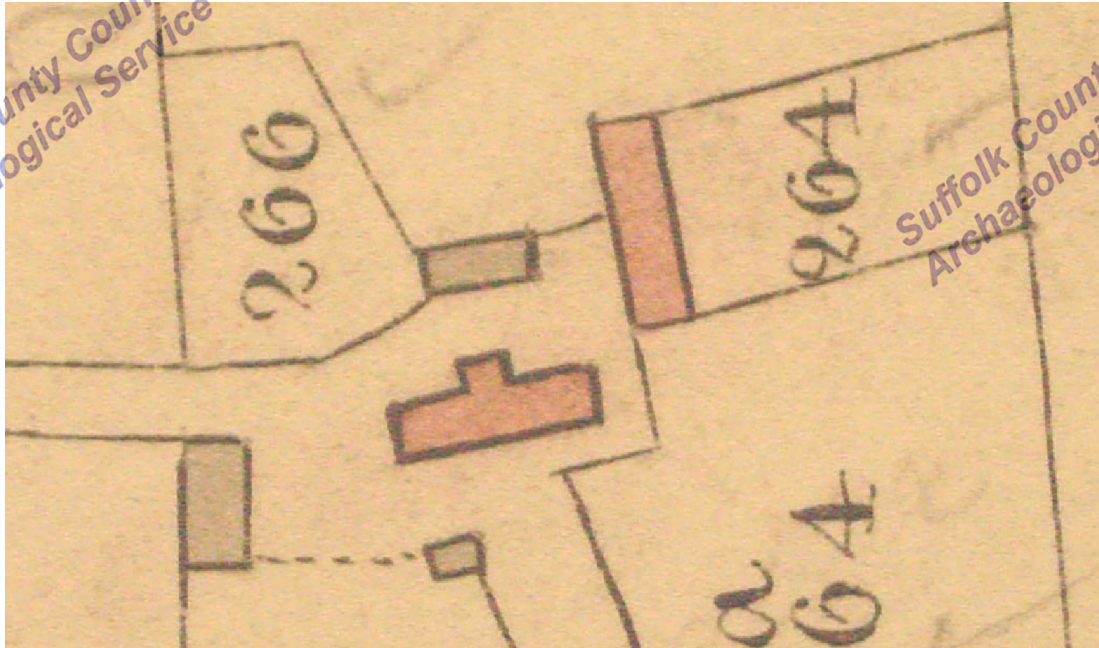


Figure 2 shows the layout of the site in 1840, when the farm was a modest tenanted holding of 58 acres owned by the executor of John Woolnough and occupied by William Wright. Its scale is appropriate to the quality of the house and had probably not changed since the early-17<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the land was arable, with approximately 10 acres (or 17%) of pasture. Wright is named only as a farmer in White's Suffolk Trade Directory of 1844, and no brickmakers are listed, but the area of half an acre to the south of his house is described as 'kiln and yard' on the 1840 tithe apportionment. Figure 2 shows no structures on the site, but the small-scale manufacture of brick to supplement the farm's income presumably explains the long pond which now divides the yard from the approach track (photo A2.1) - in addition to the farm's name and the presence of brick wasters in the 19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to shed against the barn's western gable.

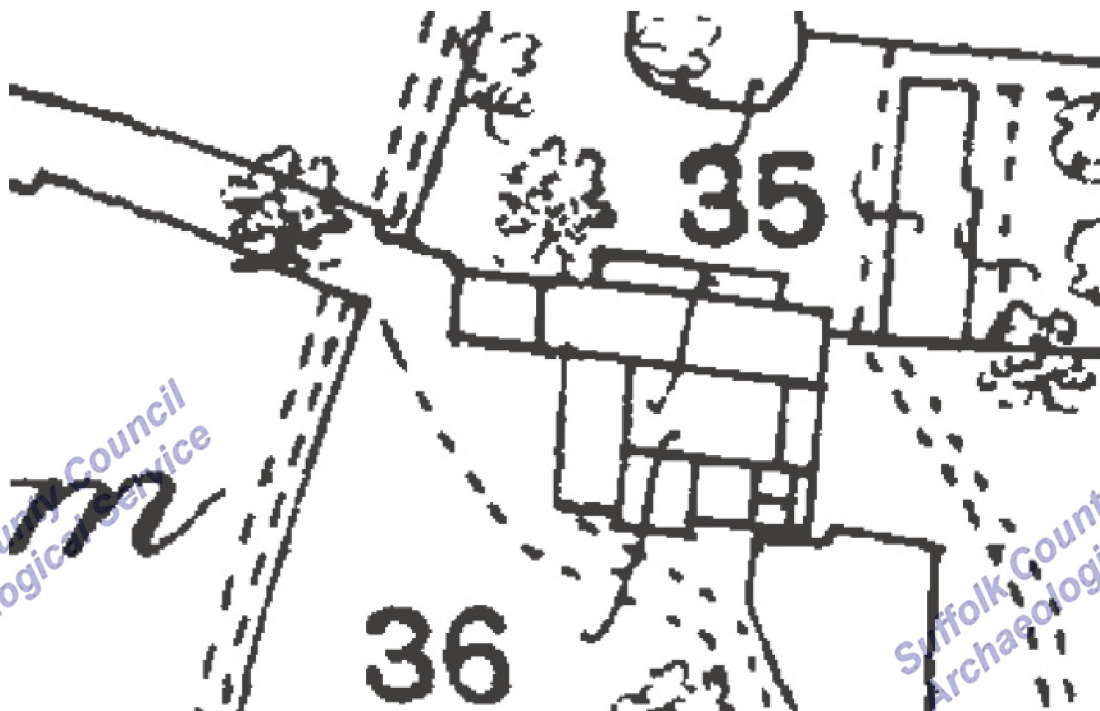


Figure 3  
First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1883

The site has undergone the usual mid-19<sup>th</sup> century transformation, with the addition of various sheds enclosing a series of animal yards to the south of the barn. With the exception of the westernmost example (building 5 in figure 6) which has been rebuilt, these survived largely intact at the time of inspection.

By the time of the first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey the layout of the farm buildings had been transformed almost beyond recognition, in the typical manner of the region during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As the price of grain fell after the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 local farmers were obliged to diversify into mixed animal husbandry, assisted by the opening up by the railways of new urban markets for beef and dairy produce; the introduction of cattle demanded new yards, shelter sheds and loose boxes which were typically placed, as here, to the south of an older barn to afford maximum protection from the weather. The second and third edition Ordnance Surveys of 1904 and 1927 respectively use broken lines to indicate open-sided buildings such as animal shelters and cart lodges, and show the northern end of the western yard range in this way (building 6). This shelter seems to have served a horse yard adjoining the stable, while the northern end of the eastern range probably formed an enclosed cow shed and still contains the fixtures of a milking parlour. The small enclosures to the south are likely to have separated calves and bulls from the main herd, but no trace of these now remains. The yard was still open to the air in 1927, and the present corrugated iron roof is an addition of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

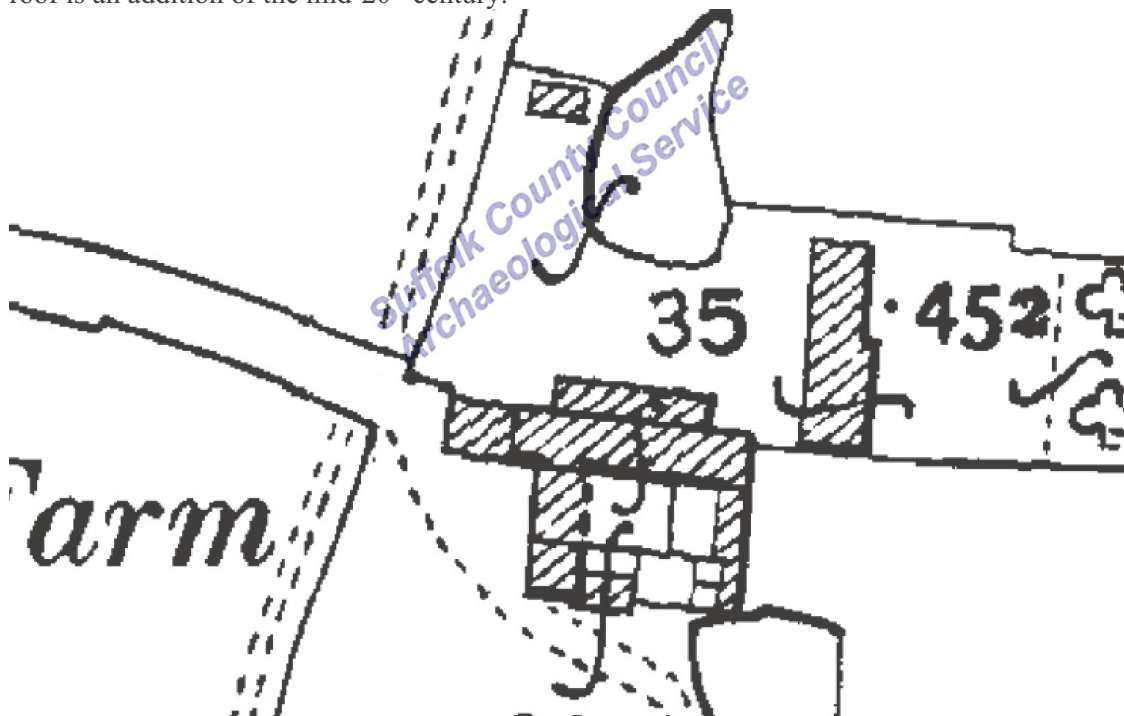


Figure 4

Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904

The buildings of 1883 are shown in more detail, but are otherwise unchanged.

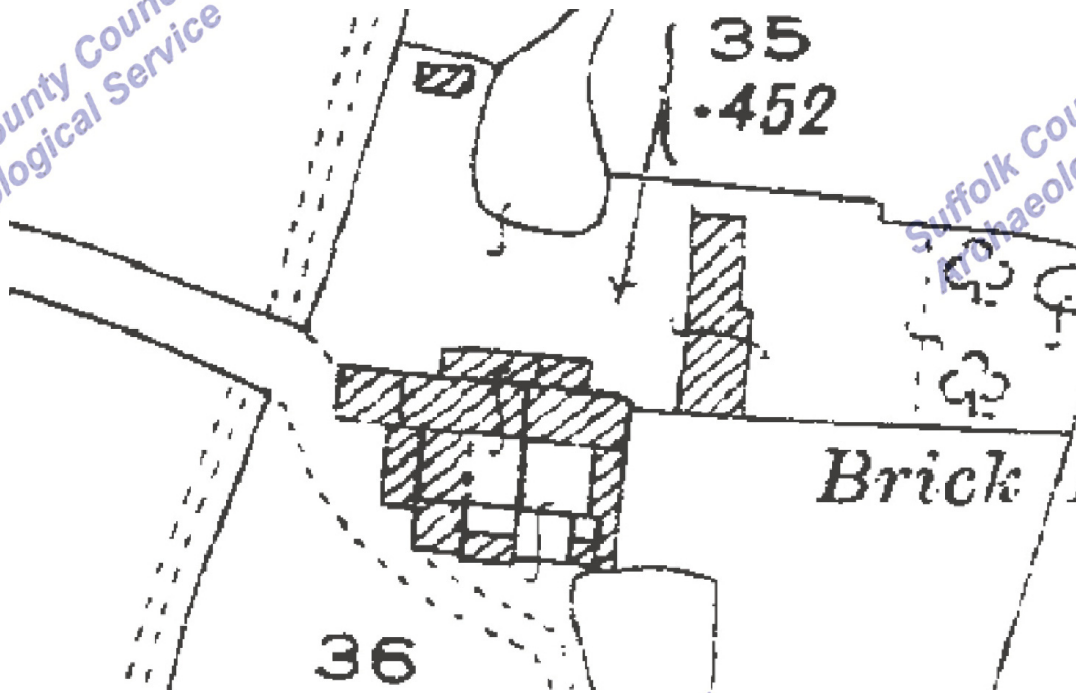


Figure 5  
Third Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1927  
Showing a new shed against the western elevation of the western shelter shed (6) which has since been demolished. The small sheds to the south of the yard no longer survive, and the yard itself now forms a single area, but the layout is otherwise unaltered

### Building Analysis

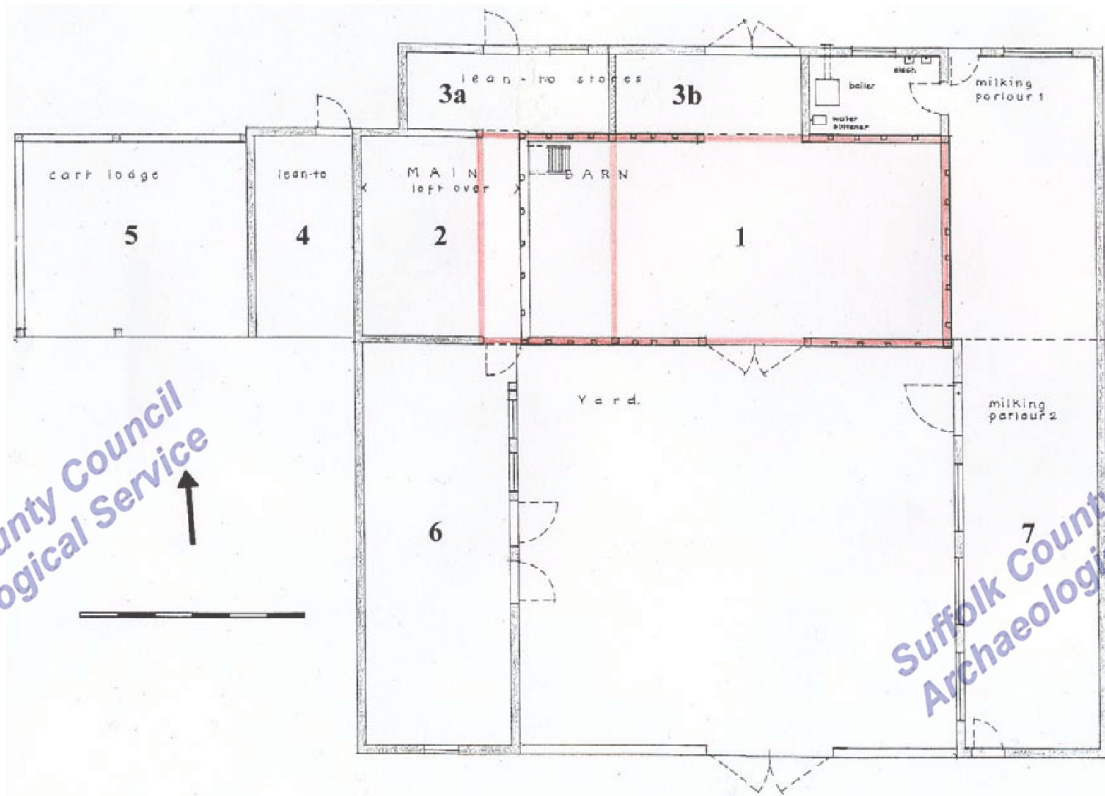


Figure 6

As Existing Ground plan of Historic Buildings

Numbering each element for ease of reference in the text and outlining the original 17<sup>th</sup> century structure of the barn and stable in red. Adapted from a plan provided by Graham Hussey architect. Scale in metres.

Key

1. Early-17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed barn of four bays with integral stable and 'crog' hay loft in its western bay. Roof structure of wind-braced clasped purlins with lower tier of butt-purlins (as in nearby farmhouse). Originally thatched and externally rendered, with southern entrance and narrow door to rear. The stable with opposing doors against its gable and small windows beside each (horses stalled to east).
2. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century brick stable and hay loft, built as an extension to the 17<sup>th</sup> century stable and retaining its entrance passage; the rest of the earlier stable was incorporated into the barn at the same time. Now with replacement early-20<sup>th</sup> century hay rack and manger to western gable (lowered for cattle). Horses stalled to west. Hay loft with loading door to south and ceiling vent above rack. The wall fabric incorporates brick wasters that probably relate to the contemporary kiln on the site.
3. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century brick lean-to shed incorporating the remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century porch. Built in two phases, of which the eastern (3b) is the earlier. The later phase (3a) was probably designed as a tack room.
4. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to brick shed (secondary to stable).
5. Recently rebuilt timber shed on the site of a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century structure of similar footprint
6. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century single-storied brick shed, originally with enclosed shed to south and open-sided shelter shed to north but fully enclosed during 20<sup>th</sup> century.
7. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century single-storied brick shed with western yard elevation rebuilt in 20<sup>th</sup> century brick. Now containing mid-20<sup>th</sup> century iron cattle stalls, trough and hay rack having apparently operated as a milking parlour. Probably designed as a cow shed with loose boxes to the south.

## 1. Timber-Framed Barn and Stable

*The timber-frame and layout of this building is shown in detail in figures 7 and 8 on pages 11 and 12.*

### Proportions and Structure

Building 1 in figure 6 (as outlined in red) is a timber-framed structure of four bays on an east-west axis which extends to 12.5 m in overall length and 5.7 m in width (41 ft by 18 ft 9 ins). The roof-plates lie 3.6 m (12 ft) above the ground, with uninterrupted studs of 2.9 m (116 ins) in height between the plates and sills, but the latter are not original and rest on brick plinths of 75 cm (30 ins) as the entire building was raised by between 30 and 45 cm (12-18 ins) in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Timber-framed structures were often lifted by increasing the height of their plinths in this way. The building is framed in the medieval tradition with internally trenched braces rising from all four corner posts to both the roof-plates and gable tie-beams; the studs, which average 14 cm by 9 cm (5.5 ins by 3.5), are pegged and tenoned to the plates and are not interrupted by mid-rails.

The roof is an impressive and completely intact clasped-purlin structure with a full complement of wind-braces and a lower tier of butt-purlins (identical to that of the contemporary or near-contemporary farmhouse). It is now covered by corrugated iron but its



pitch of *circa* 55 degrees indicates it was designed for thatch, and thatch battens still survive on the rafters along with the inner layer of straw. The roof-plates are linked by face-halved-and-bladed scarf joints with housed blades (i.e. the blades do not penetrate the full depth of the plate). The open trusses are formed by arch-braced tie-beams and jowled posts, with all but one brace remaining intact. The frame contains no notches for wattle-and-daub, but the external surfaces of the timbers are waney and would have been rendered externally from the outset. A small section of external daub survives to the north of the western bay (preserved above the stable entrance within a 19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to shed, 3a) but this respects a number of alterations and appears to be secondary; it is secured by horizontal laths nailed to the exterior in the probable manner of the original.

### **Original Layout**

The three eastern bays formed an open barn with a full-height central entrance to the south. The roof-plate of the entrance bay lacks stud mortises but contains circular holes at each end for the pin hinges of the doors in the usual manner of northern Suffolk. The present half-hung doors are 19<sup>th</sup> century replacements, as is the tarred weatherboarding to the southern yard elevation. The northern roof-plate of the same bay contains four empty stud mortises with a central aperture of 90 cm (3 ft) which would have formed a narrow, low door as shown in figure 8. This arrangement is typical of 17<sup>th</sup> century and earlier barns, which did not require vehicle thoroughfares. The bays are of unequal length, with the entrance bay extending to 2.75 m (9 ft), the eastern bay to 3 m (10 ft) and the western to just 2.3 m (7.5 ft).

The bay at the western end of the structure was originally partitioned from the body of the barn to form a stable and hay loft, but the internal partition was removed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to increase the barn's length. Empty mortises for the horizontal rail of the missing partition are visible in the dividing storey post, along with matching mortises in the western corner posts. These rails would have supported the joists of the stable ceiling, but their mortises now lie an improbable 2.75 m (9 ft) above the ground. The internal partition did not rise to the tie-beam, which was arch-braced from the storey-posts (the northern brace still *in situ* but the southern lacking), and the hay loft would have been accessible from the barn by ladder in the manner of a 'crog' loft. This feature may explain the absence of any apparent windows to light the loft.

The stable bay extends to 3.5 m (11.5 ft) in length, and was entered by opposing doors against its western gable. Each door was a little over 1 m in width (41 ins) with a small window attached to its eastern jamb as shown in figure 8. The sills and lintels of these features have been removed, but their pegged joints are fully exposed in the frame (which in other respects remains intact). The windows were each 53 cm in height and 58 cm in height (21 ins by 23) and probably contained diamond mullions, but no evidence of these now remains. The horses would have entered by the through-passage against the western gable and faced a hay rack and manger against the missing eastern partition.

### **Date**

The structure is almost identical to that of the farmhouse, which contains edge-halved-and-bridled scarf joints, and can be dated with confidence to the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The housed blades of the barn scarfs are found elsewhere at this period, and appear to represent a transitional phase between the standard face-halved scarfs of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the edge-halved versions that dominated 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century carpentry. The Schedule of Listed Buildings dates the house to the late-16<sup>th</sup> or early-17<sup>th</sup> century, but the latter is more likely.

## **2. Brick Stable**

The present stable against the western gable of the timber-framed barn is a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century extension of red brick which incorporates flint rubble and a number of brick wasters which

presumably originated in the farm's own kiln (as mentioned in the tithe apportionment of 1840). The new walls are 3 m (10 ft) in length, but the interior extends to 4.2 m (14 ft) as it includes the original entrance passage of the 17<sup>th</sup> century stable, having been divided from the newly enlarged barn by a boarded partition at this point. The space represents a slight improvement over the 3.5 m (11.5 ft) of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and having entered by the same passage the animals were stabled to the west rather than the east. The entire western gable of the timber-framed structure was removed as part of this process, excepting only its tie-beam (which contains empty mortises for six studs as shown in figure 7).

The hay rack of the new stable rose to the joists of its ceiling, which are lodged on an axial joist 2.2 m (7 ft 3 ins) above the original brick floor which is supported in turn by a roughly hewn Sampson post. This rack was replaced by a lower example of wooden slats in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the stable was converted for cattle. The upper edge of the present rack is 1.6 m (5 ft 6 ins) above the floor, and the top of the boarded manger just 60 cm (2 ft). The height of the original rack is indicated by scars in the brickwork. The ceiling contains a loading vent above the rack, and the stable was lit by a large window, now blocked, in its southern elevation. The hay loft was lit by a gable window which is also blocked (and obstructed by a later lean-to shed, 4) and reached by an external loading door to the south in addition to a ladder stair against the rack in the stable's north-western corner (the latter probably a secondary feature given its unlikely location). The loft is also accessible from the barn.

The new stable does not appear to be shown on the 1840 tithe map, which indicates a porch in the approximate centre of the northern elevation, and was probably built during the 1840s or 1850s. It appears, however, to pre-date the sheds of the southern yard which interrupt its window and loading door.

### 3-7. Mid-19th Century Brick Sheds

The layout of site was transformed in the usual manner during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by the addition of various single-storied pantiled brick sheds to accommodate cattle and provide additional feed storage space. The northern shed (3) was built in two phases, both of which were seemingly complete by the Ordnance Survey of 1883, with the earlier (3b) preserving evidence of the northern porch – or a successor thereof – shown in 1840. The side-walls of the present northern entrance are jagged where they were reduced in height by the present lean-to roof. A similar lean-to adjoins the western gable of the slightly earlier brick stable, with a recently rebuilt shed beyond. The yard ranges (6 and 7) extend to 10.1 m (36 ft) from the barn's southern elevation but have been much altered, with their yard elevations largely rebuilt in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The northern end of the western shed (6) is shown as an open-sided shelter on the Ordnance Surveys, and may have served a horse yard adjacent to the stable. Part of an iron arcade post remains embedded in its 20<sup>th</sup> century infill. The eastern shed was enclosed from the outset and divided into several loose boxes, but now forms a single milking parlour with mid-20<sup>th</sup> century concrete troughs, iron stalls, automatic drinkers and slatted hay racks (similar to those of the former stable) against its eastern elevation.

### Historic Significance

The barn at Brick Kiln Farm is a particularly fine and well-preserved early-17<sup>th</sup> century example which has been omitted in error from the Schedule of Listed Buildings. Its impressive roof structure is completely intact, as is most of its wall framing and five of its six original tie-beam braces. The structure is of special historic interest as it retains rare evidence of the window and door pattern of its integral stable, permitting a complete reconstruction of its original layout. While evidence of contemporary stabling is not uncommon in local barns (in marked contrast to the rest of Britain) it is highly unusual for subtle evidence of this kind

to survive. The brick stable extension is also a good example of its type, which illustrates the need for more space to accommodate the increasing size of working horses during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the remaining sheds have been heavily altered and are not of special interest in themselves.

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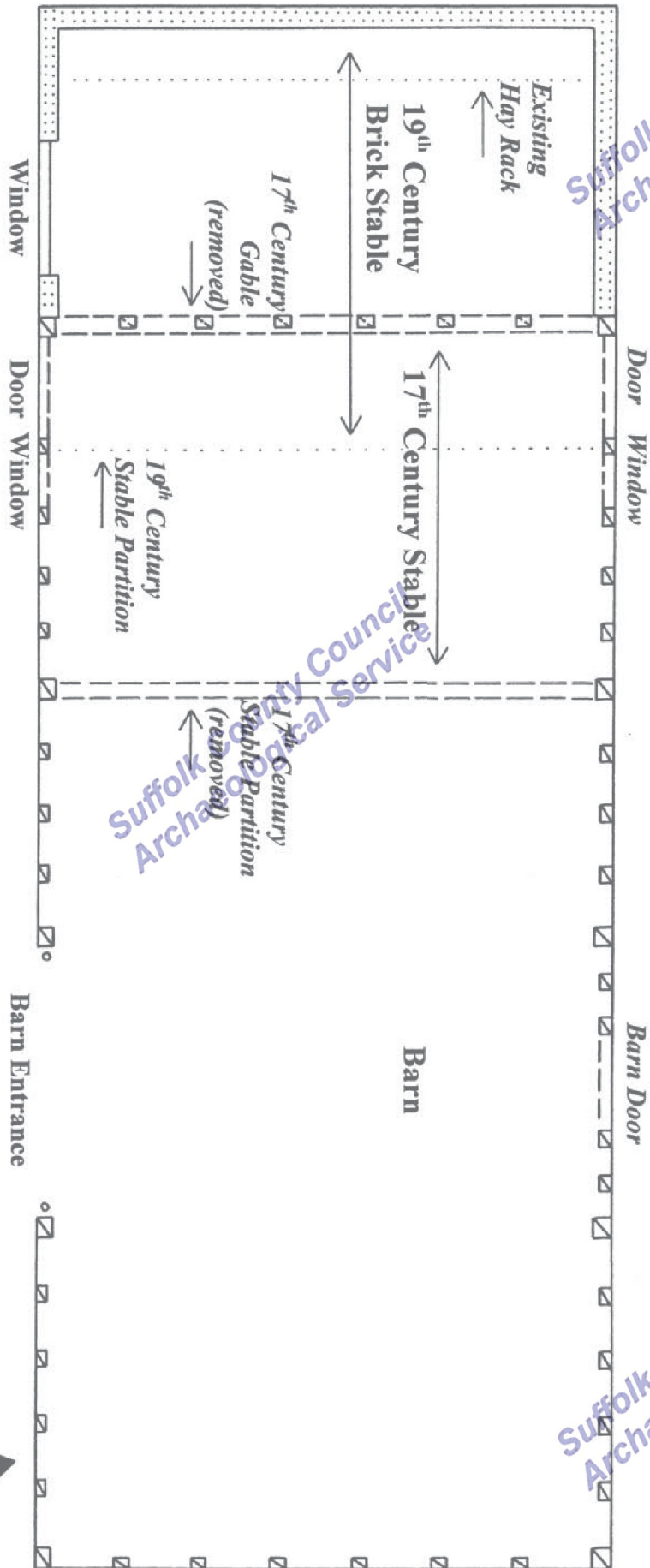


Figure 7. Ground Plan of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Barn and Stable

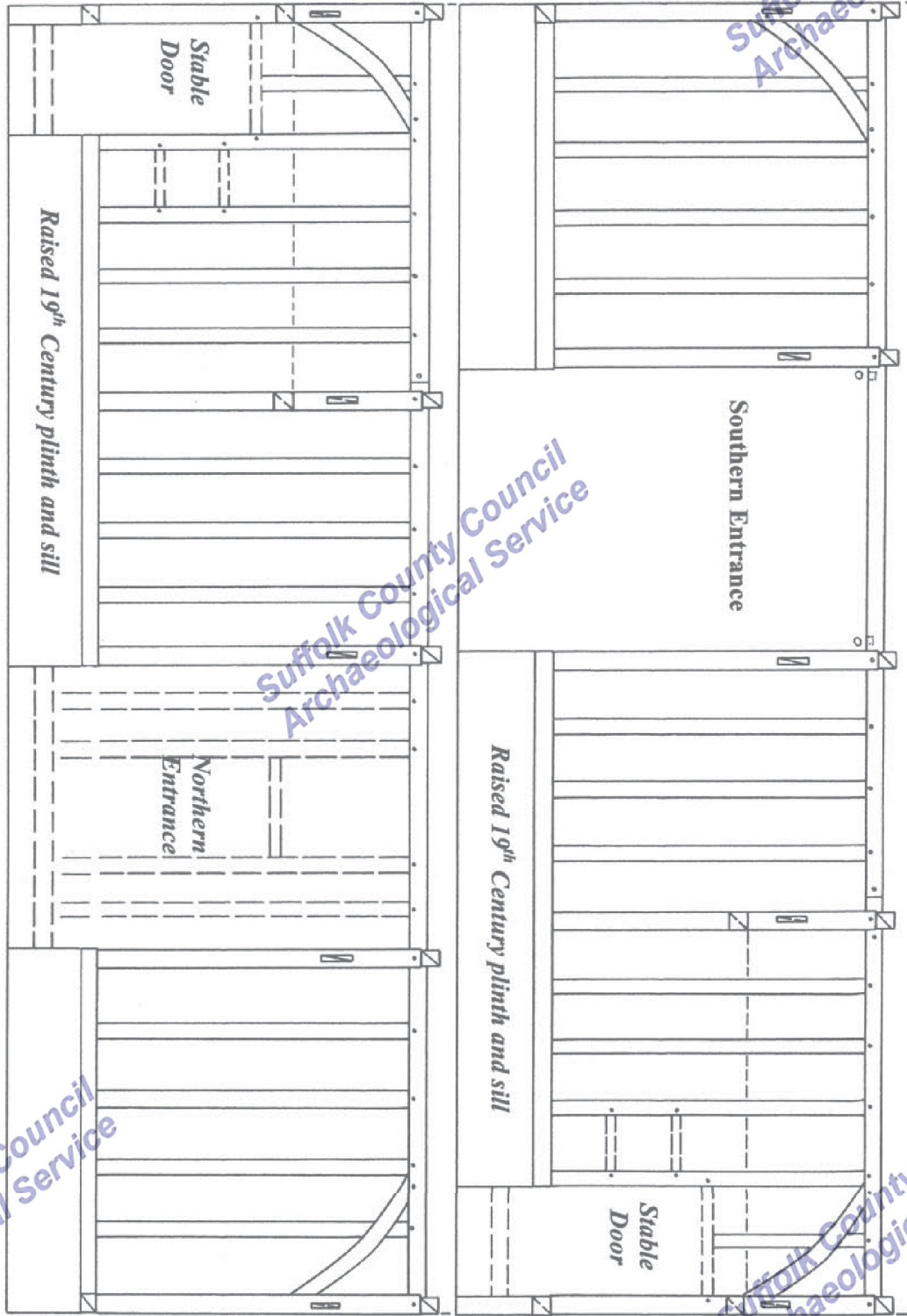


Figure 8. Internal Southern (top) and Northern Elevations of Barn

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

### Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

#### Photograph no.

1. General view of approach to site from south showing pond and house to right with farmyard to left.
2. General view of pond to east of southern approach, showing house to right & barn to left.
3. General view of site from south-east showing 20th century shed to left, barn centre & house right.
4. General view of site from west showing house to left and barn to right.
5. Exterior of yard complex from west showing house in rear to left & shed 5 in foreground.
6. Exterior of yard complex from south showing shed 6 to left & shed 7 to right.
7. Exterior of yard complex from south-east showing house to right.
8. Western elevation of farmhouse showing proximity of barn to right.
9. Northern elevation of barn from north-west showing 19th century lean-to sheds 3 left and 4 right.
10. Northern external elevation of barn showing brick lean-to shed 3 in foreground.
11. Eastern end of northern lean-to shed 3b showing corner of house to left.
12. Exterior of northern lean-to shed showing western extension 3a.
13. External eastern elevation of shed 7 showing gable of barn to right.
14. Detail of eastern external elevation of shed 6 showing window in barn gable.
15. External southern gable of shed 7 showing covered yard to left.
16. External western elevation of shed 6 showing lean-to shed 4 to left.
17. Covered yard from south showing southern elevation of barn in rear.
18. External elevation of shed 6 from covered yard to east.
19. Southern end of shed 7 from covered yard to west showing 20th century brick infill.
20. Northern end of shed 7 from covered yard to west.

21. Northern end of shed 6 from covered yard to east showing 20th century brick infill.
22. Interior of shed 6 from south showing loading door to hay loft & blocked window of stable 2.
23. Interior of shed 6 from north showing 20th century internal partition with yard to left.
24. Interior of shed showing 20th century infill of open arcade to covered yard.
25. Detail of iron arcade post in eastern elevation of shed 6.
26. Interior of shed 7 from south showing former open arcade to yard to left and 20th century cattle stalls to right.
27. Interior of shed 7 from north showing 20th century cattle stalls trough and hay rack to left.
28. 20th century iron cattle stalls with concrete trough and hay rack against eastern wall of shed 7.
29. Detail of 20th century automatic cattle drinker against eastern wall of shed 7.
30. Northern end of shed 7 from south showing eastern gable of barn to left.
31. Eastern external gable of barn seen from lean-to shed 7, showing internal brace to left.
32. Southern external elevation of barn from covered yard showing sliding central doors to left.
33. Southern external elevation of barn showing sliding central door to right & stable door to left.
34. Interior of lean-to shed 4 from south showing western external gable of stable 2 right.
35. Interior of lean-to shed 4 from north showing western gable of stable 2 to left.
36. Detail of blocked central hay loft window in western gable of stable 2 from lean-to shed 4.
37. External western gable of stable 2 from shed 4 showing flint rubble fabric.
38. Western external elevation of lean-to shed 4 from modern shed 5.
39. Interior of stable 2 from northern door showing 19th century brick floor & southern door to left.
40. Low manger and hay rack for cattle against western gable of stable 2.
41. Internal southern elevation of stable 2 showing door to left & blocked window.

42. Internal southern elevation of stable 2 showing scar of original hay rack above lower cattle rack.
43. Internal northern elevation of stable 2 showing loft ladder and entrance.
44. Hay rack against western gable of stable 2 from south showing loading vent in ceiling.
45. Interior of stable 2 showing boarded partition to barn from south-west.
46. Interior of stable 2 showing ceiling prop & boarded partition to barn from north-west.
47. Southern internal elevation of hay loft above stable 2 showing loading door & corner of barn.
48. Northern internal elevation of hay loft above stable 2 showing corner of barn to right.
49. Western internal gable of hay loft from south showing loading vent above hay rack.
50. Interior of hay loft 2 from north-west showing boarded partition to barn to left.
51. Roof of hay loft 2 from south showing western gable of barn roof to right.
52. Roof of hay loft 2 from north showing western gable of barn roof to left.
53. Interior of barn from east showing boarded partition to stable 2.
54. Northern entrance to stable 2 from shed 3a showing early external daub of barn above.
55. Detail of external daub to barn above door of original stable seen from shed 3a.
56. Detail of external daub of barn from shed 3a showing external nailed laths.
57. Northern external elevation of barn within shed 3a showing stable door to right.
58. Detail of original stable window mortises in northern external elevation of barn (from shed 3a).
59. Interior of shed 3a from west showing gable of shed 3b in rear & stable window mortises to right.
60. Interior of shed 3b from east showing external northern elevation of barn to left.
61. Northern external elevation of barn from shed 3a showing barn entrance to left.
62. Northern lean-to shed seen from barn to south-west showing eastern brick wall of former porch.
63. General view of barn interior from west showing original arch-braces to tie-beams.



64. Boarded internal eastern gable of barn.
65. Internal southern elevation of eastern bay of barn showing original studs and brace.
66. Internal southern elevation of central bay of barn showing doors to covered yard.
67. Internal southern elevation of western bay of barn showing original stable bay to right.
68. Southern elevation of original stable bay now in barn, showing partition mortise in post to left.
69. Detail of original stable window mortises in southern internal elevation of barn.
70. Internal northern elevation of barn showing stable partition moved to left from central post.
71. North-western corner post of original barn & stable showing daub of northern elevation to right and empty mortises of removed western gable to left.
72. Internal northern elevation of barn showing inserted entrance in central bay.
73. Original roof structure of barn from west showing intact wind braces and two tiers of purlins.
74. Roof structure of barn from west showing intact open trusses flanking central bay.
75. Intact roof structure and tie-beams flanking central northern bay.
76. Detail of pin hinge housing of original entrance doors in central southern bay of barn.
77. Detail of face-halved-and-bladed scarf joint in southern roof plate of barn.
78. Detail of scarf joint in southern roof plate of barn showing housed blade to left.

Appendix 2 (pp. 17-21): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 General view from south-east showing pond in former brick kiln yard in foreground, early-17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse to right and contemporary barn to left



A2.2 General view of site from Horse Meadow to west showing house to left and barn right

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A2.3 External eastern elevation of barn showing 19<sup>th</sup> century brick shed (7) in foreground

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A2.4 Interior of brick shed to east of yard (7) south showing former open arcade to left and 20th century cattle stalls, hay rack and trough to right



A2.5 Internal northern elevation of 19<sup>th</sup> century stable (2) showing hay rack and manger against western gable to left (lowered for cattle), loft ladder and entrance to right. The entrance is in the same position as that of the 17<sup>th</sup> century stable



A2.6 Southern internal elevation of hay loft above 19<sup>th</sup> century stable (2) showing loading door & corner of 17<sup>th</sup> century barn & stable to left

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A2.7 Original roof structure of barn from west showing intact wind braces with upper tier of clapsed-purlins and lower tier of butt-purlins

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A2.8 Intact roof structure and arch-braced open trusses tie-beams flanking central northern bay of barn

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A2.9 General view of barn interior from west showing original arch-braces to tie-beams with internally boarded eastern gable in rear

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A2.10 Southern elevation of original stable bay, now within barn, showing mortise of removed partition rail in storey post to left with arch-brace mortise above