

**Proctor's Barn,  
Walsham le Willows,  
Suffolk  
WLW 098**

**Archaeological Record**

**OASIS Reference: Suffolkc1-56865**



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Crownland Road,  
Walsham le Willows, Suffolk**

**(TM 020 700)**

## **Archaeological Record**

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of an historic building. It has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Edward Martin, 21 January 2009, Ref. PreProctorsWalsham09) and is intended to inform and accompany an application for planning permission to Mid Suffolk District Council.*

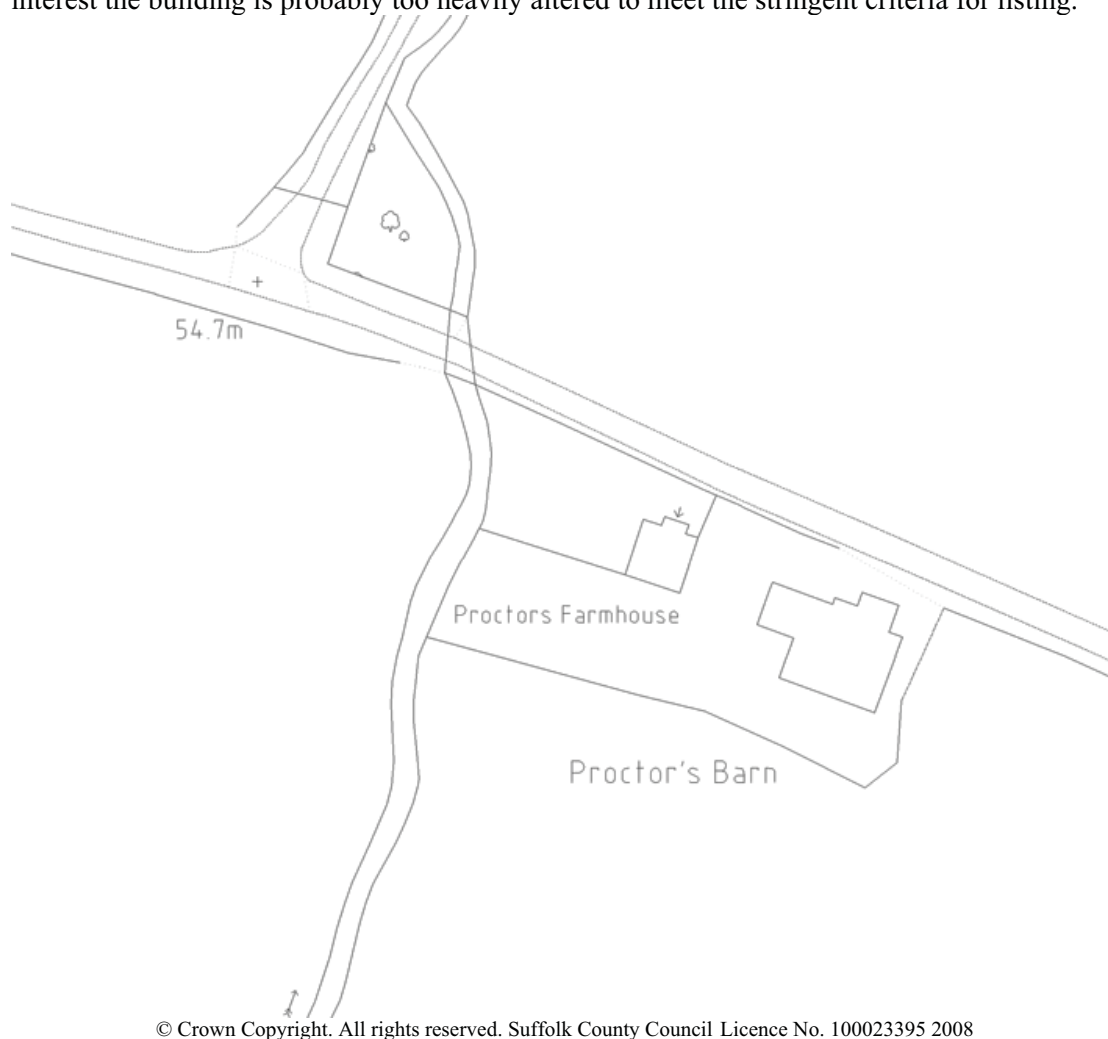
### **Introduction**

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 60 digital images (Appendix 1) but also includes printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text (Appendix 2). Each image is separately described and includes a scale rod with half metre divisions wherever possible. The site was inspected on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

### **Summary**

Proctor's Barn lies in open countryside on the southern side of the road to Westhorpe, approximately 2.5 km south-east of Walsham village. The building is shown on maps of 1819 and 1842 as an isolated field barn which served a holding of 34 acres rented from The Grove estate by the eponymous John Proctor, who lived in the village. The present farmhouse to the west of the barn is an addition of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Neither building is listed, but the barn is an unusual multi-phase timber-framed structure of considerable historic interest. It consists of four bays with a roof of glazed pantiles and the remains of tarred weatherboarding beneath its present external cladding of corrugated iron. The two bays to the east date from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and probably formed a neathouse (cow shed) with a narrow doorway to the south and an internal partition. Isolated animal sheds of this period are very rare, and the building survived only because it was converted into a barn in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by adding two further bays of greater height and width to the west. The two structures were uniformly re-roofed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the 17<sup>th</sup> century walls were raised and a new cattle yard was added to the south. With the exception of a clay-lump shelter-shed the buildings associated with this yard have been demolished, and the remaining lean-to sheds date only from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century wall framing of the main barn survives largely intact, but despite its historic interest the building is probably too heavily altered to meet the stringent criteria for listing.



**Figure 1**  
**Existing Ordnance Survey Site Plan**  
**Showing Proctor's Barn adjoining the southern side of Crownland Road to the right (east) and Proctors Farmhouse to the west. The western boundary of the site is defined by South Brook which flows from south to north.**

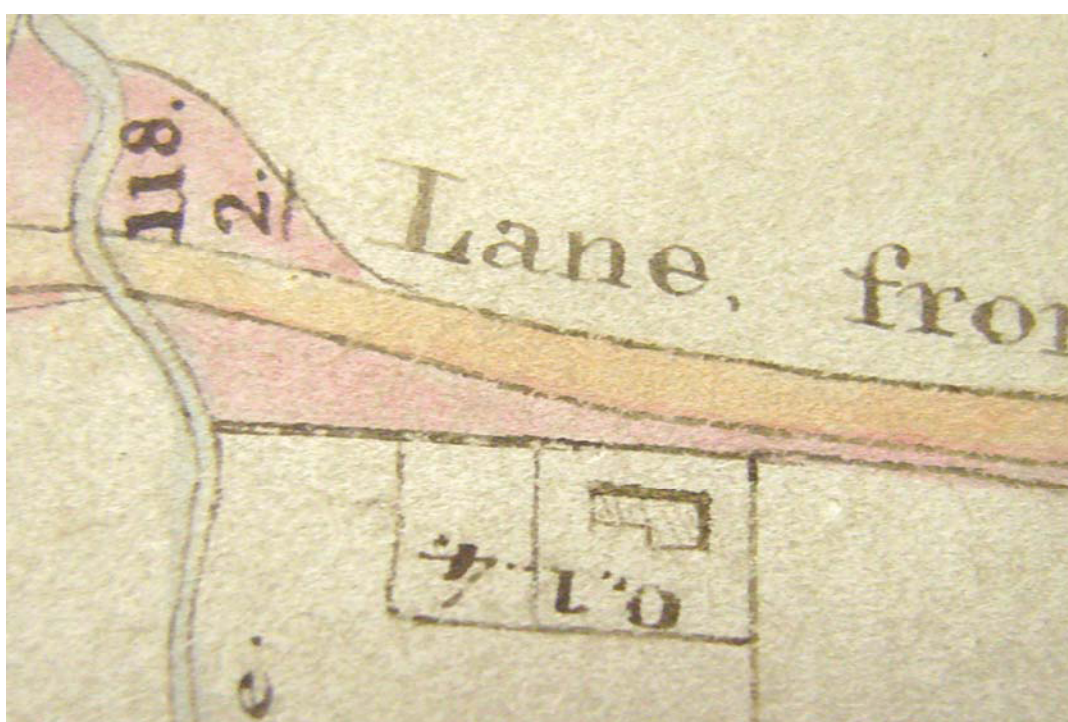
## **Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record**

Proctor's Barn lies in open, arable countryside in the south-eastern corner of Walsham le Willows parish, approximately 2.5 km from St Mary's church. The boundary of Great Ashfield lies just 250 m to the south, and that of Westhorpe 500 m to the east. The site adjoins Crownland Road, leading from Walsham village to Westhorpe, on the north, and South Brook on the west. Neither the barn, nor the adjacent mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Gault brick farmhouse is listed.

There is no indication that the site was occupied at the time of the two surviving field surveys of Walsham in 1577 and 1695, when the land on which the barn now stands was identified only as 'Sowthe Brooke' and 'South Brook Close' respectively ('Towards a Landscape History of Walsham le Willows, Suffolk', Stanley West and Audrey McLaughlin, EAA Report 85, 1998). The road was then known as the Greene Way or Angrave Way. Given the

proximity of the location to the edge of the parish and manor, however, this lack of evidence is not conclusive.

Proctor's Barn is shown on the Walsham enclosure map of 1819 (figure 2), the earliest pictorial map of the area, and the tithe map of 1842 (figure 3). Both maps show the building as an isolated structure, without an associated farmhouse, which probably explains its absence from the manorial surveys (which would typically record only houses and land). The barn served a holding of 37 acres (34 arable and 3 pasture) rented by the eponymous John Proctor from Samuel Golding, who owned a considerable estate and lived at The Grove (a substantial mansion on the edge of Walsham village, some 300 m south-east of the church). Golding retained much of his land in hand, but leased numerous fields and plots on its margins to a variety of tenants. John Proctor lived in a modest house now known as Fernside, which he leased from another landowner on the eastern edge of the village (approximately 500 m east of the church). The land was let in a similar manner in both 1577 and 1695, and is likely to have required an agricultural building or buildings despite the absence of a recorded domestic residence on the site.



**Figure 2**

**Walsham Enclosure Map of 1819 (Suffolk Record Office)**

**Showing the barn as an L-shaped building, isolated in the landscape and without an associated farmhouse. The barn's outline may not be an accurate depiction.**

The 1819 map shows the barn as an L-shaped structure, but its proportions are somewhat improbable and the depiction may not be accurate. Early manuscript surveys of this kind were rarely concerned with the fine details of agricultural buildings. The outline is more recognisable in 1842, with a northern porch and a narrow projection from the western gable which is reflected in the highly accurate Ordnance Survey of 1886. Three southern yards coincide with the three structural elements discussed below (i.e. the surviving structures 'A' and 'B', as identified in figure 6, and the demolished range on the site of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shed 'F' to the west) suggesting they performed different functions. The narrow eastern structure 'A' is shown as the same width as 'B' and probably possessed a lean-to shed against its southern elevation. The adjacent farmhouse had appeared by 1886, and its appearance is consistent with a date of *circa* 1870. The clay-lump shelter shed (C) was probably added to the eastern side of the yard at the same time, with a counterpart to the west – additions which

reflect the typical alterations to local farmyards in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as cattle were re-introduced to compensate for lower grain prices.



Figure 3

Walsham Tithe Map of 1842, showing the barn with a northern porch and three small yards. The site (646) is described as 'barn and yards' on the accompanying apportionment. The field to the south (645) is 'barn meadow' and to the east 'barn field'

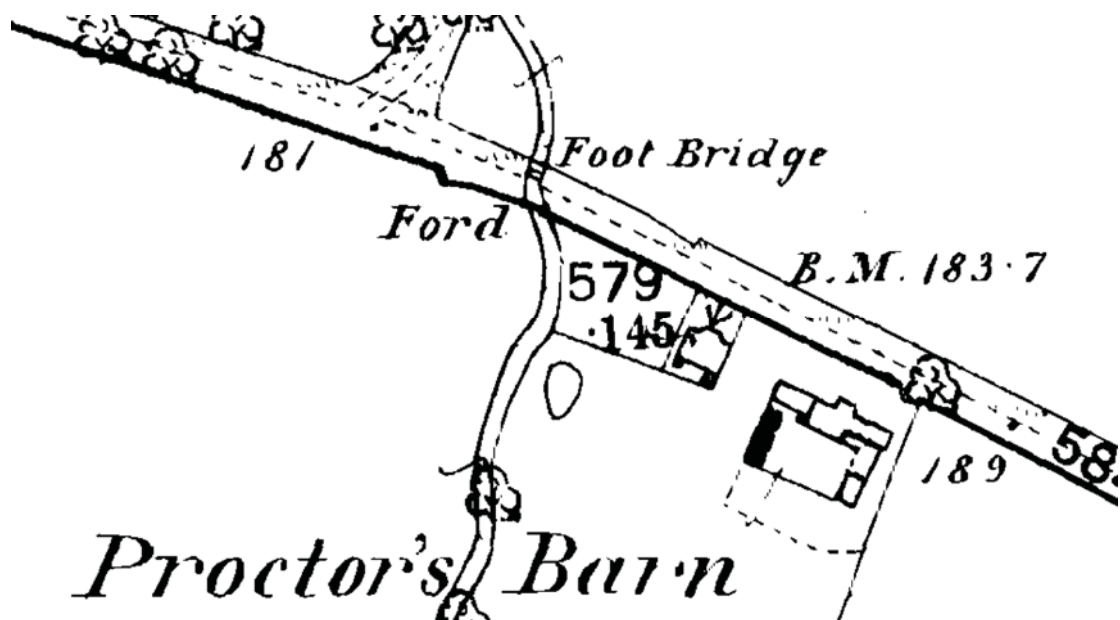


Figure 4 (with detail below)

First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886, showing the present house for the first time but labelling the entire site 'Proctor's Barn'. The profile of the barn, with its northern porch and narrower eastern end, is highly accurate. The shelter shed (C) is newly shown to the east, with a similar but demolished building to the west of the southern yard.



**Figure 4a**

**Detail of Figure 4, showing the barn and yard layout in 1886. The eastern shed (C) is divided into two compartments, with an enclosed shed to the south and an open-sided shelter to the north (as indicated by broken lines). The dark colouring of the western shed indicates that it was of brick or flint rather than timber or clay-lump**



**Figure 5**

**Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904. The northern lean-to shed (E) has appeared since 1886. The western shed is more clearly shown as an open-sided cattle shelter, and an additional building has appeared to the south (neither of which survives). The new small enclosures to the east were probably calf pens, and the resulting complex is entirely typical of local barns and cattle yards in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century.**

## Building Analysis

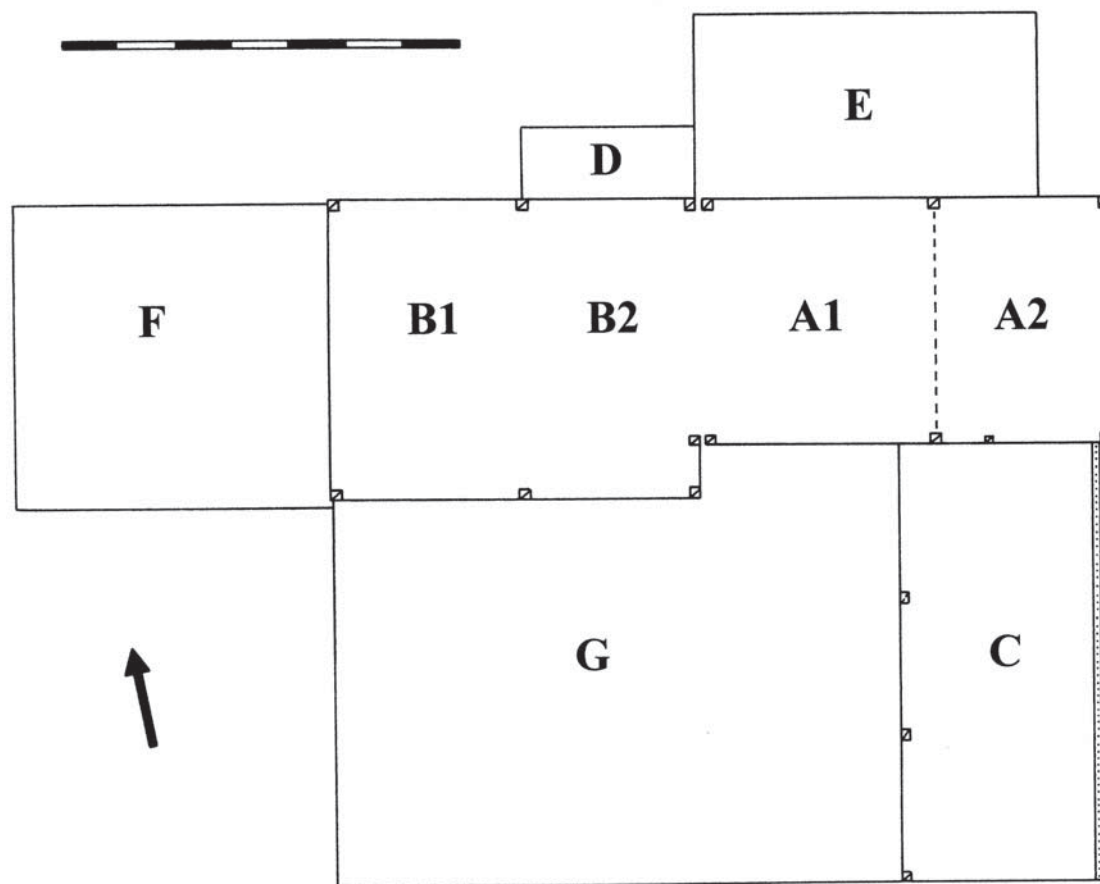


Figure 6

Block plan of the barn complex, identifying its various historic components for ease of reference in the text and photographs. Scale in metres

### Key

- A. Mid-17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed structure in two bays, originally with a central partition (shown by the dotted line) and a southern door in its shorter eastern bay (A2). Walls largely rebuilt in 18<sup>th</sup> century and raised in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Re-roofed in mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century (glazed pantiles). Probably designed as a field neathouse (cow shed). Formerly rendered externally, but now clad in weatherboarding and metal sheeting.
- B. Mid-18<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed barn in two bays, with entrance in eastern bay (B2). Re-roofed in late-19<sup>th</sup> century (glazed pantiles). Formerly rendered externally, but now clad in weatherboarding and metal sheeting.
- C. Late-19<sup>th</sup> century open-sided cattle shelter with clay-lump eastern elevation. Formerly with enclosed section to south. Pantiled
- D. 20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to porch on site of earlier porch shown on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps. Corrugated iron roof.
- E. Early-20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to vehicle shed with double doors to east. Post and rail walls, now clad in corrugated iron and with a corrugated iron roof.
- F. 20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to shed on site of earlier, narrower shed shown on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps. Clad and roofed in corrugated iron.
- G. 20<sup>th</sup> century covered cattle yard, roofed in corrugated iron.



## 1. Timber-Framed Barn (A-B)

### Proportions

Proctor's Barn is a timber-framed structure in four bays with a roof of glazed pantiles. Its external walls are now clad largely in corrugated iron but retain sections of earlier tarred weatherboarding, particularly to the western gable and the eastern end of the northern elevation. The building extends to 13.7 m in overall length (45 ft) and is aligned on an east-west axis parallel to the adjacent road.

### Roof Raise

The present barn is an amalgam of two entirely different structures, each consisting of two bays as shown in figure 6. Structure A to the east is ostensibly the earlier of the two, and is significantly smaller in both height and width than structure B. Its two bays extend to 7.1 m in length (23 ft 4 ins) and 4.4 m in length overall width (14 ft 4 ins) – 90 cm or 3 ft narrower than structure B. The original roof-plate lies 3.1 m (10 ft) above the existing ground level, but the northern wall was later raised by 50 cm (20 ins) to its present height – to match that of structure B – by the usual method of raising a new plate on a tier of short studs. This raising of the walls appears to be contemporary with the present roof, which is a clasped-purlin structure with nailed collars and a ridge board of typical mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century form. The present roof is not contemporary with Structure B, however, and the two halves of the barn formerly lay beneath separate roofs of differing height. The walls of the southern elevation were raised by approximately 1 m (40 ins), i.e. by twice as much as the northern elevation, in order to compensate for the projection of the walls of structure B. The asymmetry of the resulting arrangement is highly unusual.

### Structure A

The original studs of structure A were tenoned and pegged to the roof-plates and the tie-beam of the eastern gable in the standard manner of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A gap of 75 cm (30 ins) in the mortises of the southern elevation (to the west of bay A1) indicates the position of a contemporary doorway which is not matched in the opposite elevation. The tie-beam between the two bays, which has been raised and is now secured by bolted knee-braces, also contains mortises for a removed partition which divided the interior into two unequal halves with a connecting door to the south – the eastern chamber 2.9 m long (9.5 ft) and the western 3.9 m (13 ft). There is no evidence of windows, but the walls were largely rebuilt with diagonal primary bracing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Substantial areas of wattle-and-daub infill survive from this reconstruction. The original building was probably a cow shed, but has been too heavily altered to identify with confidence. Such sheds were commonly placed in isolated fields to shelter stock, particularly in the vicinity of well-watered pasture as here, but examples of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are extremely rare. Most were demolished during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries when cattle grazing was replaced by cereal production in response to high grain prices (a trend that was eventually reversed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) and this example survived only because it was converted into a barn.

### Structure B

Unlike structure A, with its low, narrow proportions, structure B was clearly built as a barn. It extends to 6.3 m in length by 5.3 m in overall width (20.5 ft by 17 ft 4 ins) and rises to 3.1 m (10 ft) at its roof-plates. It contains separate corner posts which abut those of structure A, and its two bays were originally divided by an arch-braced open truss (the arch-braces replaced by bolted knee-braces in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). This tie-beam also contains empty stud mortises (in addition to the arch-brace mortises, corresponding with those of the storey posts) and a splayed and nailed scarf joint close to its northern end. Tie-beams are not normally joined in this way, and the timber has been re-used from elsewhere. The wall framing is typical of the mid- to late-18<sup>th</sup> century with pegged and tenoned primary braces interrupting the studs (which are tenoned but not pegged to the roof-plates), and incorporates many re-used timbers

including an ovolo-moulded early-17<sup>th</sup> century window mullion in the gable. The two bays are of approximately equal length, but the eastern bay (B2) is slightly shorter and appears to have been designed as an entrance bay (as it remains) although its roof-plates were renewed along with the roof structure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An elegantly shaped knee-brace to the east of the 19<sup>th</sup> century northern entrance was probably re-used from the 18<sup>th</sup> century original. A pair of apotropaic concentric circles have been incised into a panel of daub immediately east of this entrance (in bay A1) and a horseshoe nailed to the opposite storey post – with its terminal pointing to the ground. Circles of this kind were believed to protect the contents of a barn or house from evil, and were popular from the Middle Ages until the late-19<sup>th</sup> century; horseshoes were similarly employed, but are more usually found with their terminals directed upwards.

## **2. Secondary Sheds (C-G)**

Of the various sheds added to the 18<sup>th</sup> century barn in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as shown on the Ordnance Surveys above, only the pantiled eastern cattle shelter (C) still survives – albeit in a state of partial collapse. This extends to 7.6 m in length from the barn to the southern yard boundary, and to 3.5 m in overall width (25 ft by 11.6). Its southern elevation is now completely open to the 20<sup>th</sup> century covered yard (G), with its roof-plate supported by a single (secondary) post, and there is no trace of the enclosed area shown in figure 4. The clasped-purlin roof structure is identical to that of the barn, and the two features probably formed part of the same phase of refurbishment. The fabric of the eastern elevation is largely hidden by modern boarding and shuttering (serving to prevent collapse) but where exposed at the southern gable it consists of clay-lump. The present lean-to porch is a 20<sup>th</sup> century corrugated iron replacement of the example shown on the tithe map of 1842, while the adjoining shed (E) is a post-and-rail addition of the early-20<sup>th</sup> century which is now clad and roofed in corrugated iron. It is shown on the 1904 Ordnance Survey but not that of 1886, and appears to have been designed as a vehicle shed with double doors to the east. The corrugated iron shed which projects from the barn's western gable (F) is a 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement of the narrower shed on the same site shown on all 19<sup>th</sup> century maps. With the sole exception of a hay loft of wire mesh suspended on the tie-beams of the shelter shed (C), the complex has been entirely stripped of its historic agricultural fixtures and fittings.

## **Historic Significance**

Proctor's Barn is a multi-phase building with 17<sup>th</sup> century origins and is accordingly of considerable historic interest. Its 18<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed walls remain substantially intact, despite the replacement of its roof structure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its eastern bays preserve the key elements of an older building that probably formed a rare 17<sup>th</sup> century neathouse (cattle shed). The porch and various attached sheds are chiefly of recent origin and are not of historic interest in themselves, although most occupy the sites of earlier structures. The 19<sup>th</sup> century clay-lump shelter-shed to the south retains its original roof but its yard elevation has been removed and it may be beyond repair. Despite its historic interest the barn has probably been too heavily altered to meet the stringent criteria for listing.

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

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

#### **Photograph no.**

1. Distant view of site from east showing isolated roadside location.
2. General view of site from east.
3. General view of site from road bridge to west, showing barn to right.
4. General view of site from north-west showing proximity of brook to right.
5. General view from road to north-west showing Proctors Farmhouse to right and barn to left.
6. Northern facade of Gault brick farmhouse (included for site context).
7. Exterior from north-east showing farmhouse in rear to right.
8. Exterior from north-west showing 20th century shed F adjoining western gable to right.
9. Northern external elevation from road showing 20th century lean-to shed E left and porch D right.
10. Eastern external elevation showing clay-lump shelter shed C to left.
11. External eastern gable of barn showing sheet metal cladding.
12. Exterior from south-east showing 20th century covered yard G to left.
13. Exterior of shelter shed C showing boarding to clay-lump eastern elevation.
14. External southern gable of shelter shed C showing clay-lump construction to right.
15. Southern external elevation showing entrance to 20th century covered yard G to left.
16. Exterior from south-west showing 20th century shed F to left & covered yard G right.
17. Interior of covered yard G from south showing entrance to barn in bay B2.
18. Interior of covered yard G from north-east showing southern entrance to left.
19. Interior of covered yard G from north-west showing shelter shed C to left.
20. Interior of covered yard G from west showing northern end of shelter shed C.
21. Interior of covered yard G from west showing southern end of shelter shed C.

22. Interior of shelter shed C from south showing hay net & boarded external elevation of barn.
23. Roof structure of shelter shed C seen from west.
24. Open-sided western elevation of shelter shed C from north.
25. Interior of lean-to shed E from west showing entrance doors to east.
26. Interior of lean-to shed E from east showing entrance to porch D to left.
27. Northern elevation of barn from interior of lean-to shed E to north-east.
28. General view of barn interior from west.
29. General view of barn interior from east.
30. Interior of western gable showing curved primary bracing and original wattle-and-daub infill.
31. Detail of original wattle-and-daub in northern half of western gable.
32. Detail of western gable showing re-used ovolo-moulded 17th century window mullion.
33. Detail of jowled south-western corner post showing pegged & tenoned primary braces.
34. Internal northern elevation of western bay B1 showing original wattle-and-daub.
35. Late-19th century rebuilt clasped-purlin roof structure from south-west.
36. Internal northern elevation of bay B2 showing principal entrance & 20th century lean-to porch D.
37. Tie-beam between bays B1 & B2 from south-east showing stud and arch-brace mortises.
38. Detail of tie-beam between bays B1 & B2 showing nailed & splayed scarf joint.
39. Detail of secondary knee brace to northern storey post between bays B1 & B2 with porch D right.
40. Detail of junction between phases B (left) and A, showing shaped knee-brace to northern entrance.
41. Northern internal elevation of structure A from south-west showing roof raise & circles to left.
42. Detail of apotropaic circles in daub of northern internal elevation of bay A1.
43. Detail of northern storey post between bays A1 & A2 showing scarf joint and roof raise.

44. Northern internal elevation of structure A from south-east.
45. Internal elevation of eastern gable showing asymmetrical roof raise.
46. Internal eastern gable showing blocked loading door.
47. Internal southern elevation of eastern bay A2 showing original door position to right.
48. Central post in southern elevation of structure A showing roof raise.
49. Southern internal elevation of bay A1.
50. Southern internal elevation of structure A from north-west.
51. Southern internal elevation showing junction of bays A1 (left) and B2, showing entrance to right.
52. Detail of western wall post of bay A1 showing horse shoe adjacent to entrance (opposite circles).
53. Southern entrance in bay B2 from north-west showing projection of structure B beyond structure A.
54. Southern internal elevation of structure B from north-east.
55. Internal southern elevation of western bay B1.
56. Roof structure from west showing greater height of roof raise to south.
57. Roof structure from east.
58. Detail of tie-beam between bays A1 & A2 from west showing empty stud mortises.
59. Detail of tie-beam between bays A1 & A2 showing apparent door gap in studs mortises to right.
60. Detail of central open truss of structure B from north-west showing arch-brace mortise & lap joint.



**Appendix 2 (pp. 13-16): Selected Printed Photographs**



A2.1 Distant view of site from east showing isolated roadside location.



A2.2 General view from road to north-west showing Proctors Farmhouse to right and Proctors Barn to left



A2.3 Exterior of barn from north-east showing farmhouse in rear to right, showing 20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to porch and sheds to right and 19<sup>th</sup> century clay-lump shelter shed (C) to left



A2.4 Exterior from south-west showing 20<sup>th</sup> century shed (F) to left & covered yard (G) to right

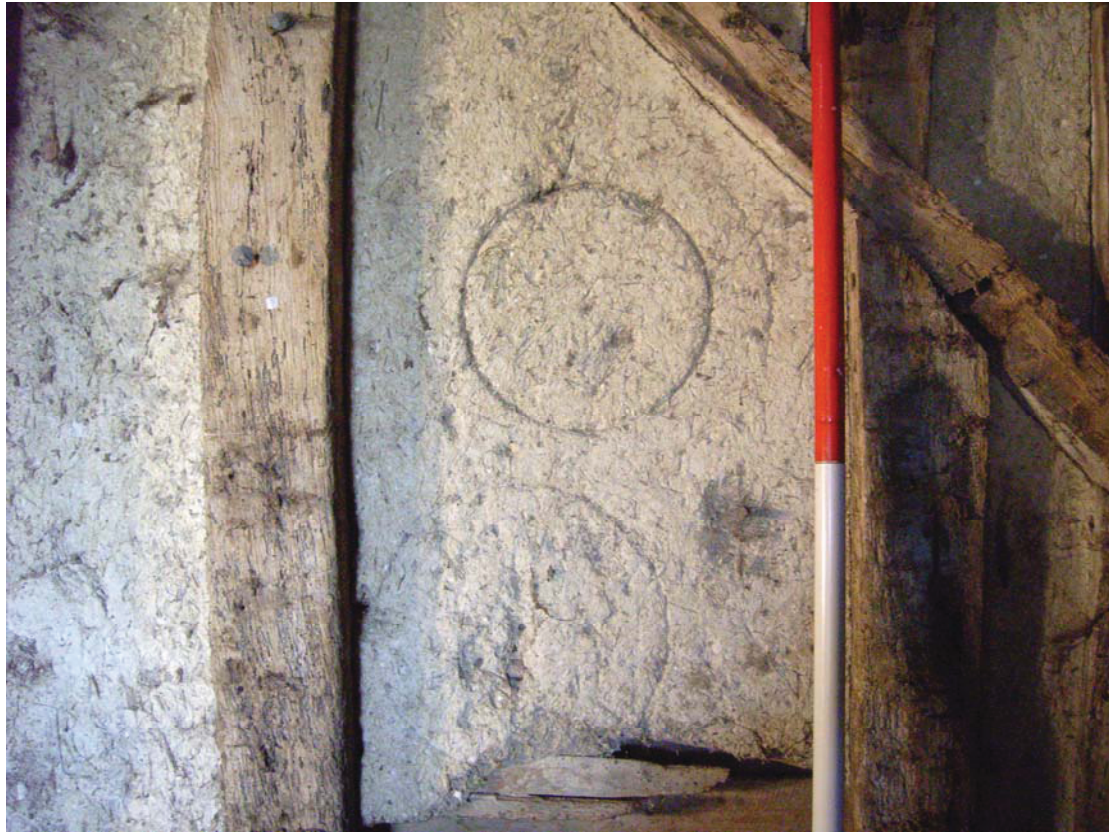




A2.5 General view of barn interior from west showing narrow 17<sup>th</sup> century structure (A) with raised walls in rear and wider 18<sup>th</sup> century structure (B) in foreground



A2.6 Internal northern elevation of western bay (B1) showing original wattle-and-daub infill with entrance bay to right (B2) and re-used ovolo-moulded window mullion in western gable to left



A2.7 Detail of apotropaic (protective) circles in daub of northern internal elevation of bay A1



A2.8 19<sup>th</sup> century roof structure from west showing greater height of roof raise in structure A to south (right). The raised tie-beam contains pegged mortises for a missing partition.