

**Paper Mill Farm,
Paper Mill Lane,
Bramford, Suffolk**

Historic Building Record



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(TM 1265 4820)

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This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a group of redundant farm buildings. It has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Edward Martin, 13 March 2009, Ref. SpecHBR_PaperMillFmBramford2009) and is intended to inform and accompany a planning application to Mid Suffolk District Council.

Introduction

This report is accompanied by a CD containing a 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, pp. 13-18). Each image is described in a separate schedule and wherever possible includes a scale rod with half-metre divisions in red and white. The site was inspected on 21 May 2009 in company with the owner's representative Mr Clive Crane.

Summary

Paper Mill Farm adjoins Paper Mill Lane on the west and lies in close proximity to the River Gipping and Bramford Mill, which is known to have specialised in paper production since the 17th century. The farm was a substantial tenanted holding of 102 acres on the Bramford Hall estate in 1847, and its timber-framed farmhouse, granary and barn are shown in their present positions on an estate map of 1782. The three-bay granary is a typical East Anglian example with a cart lodge on its lower storey and an external stair in its southern gable, but its steeply pitched slate roof is unusual. The barn contains 16th century framing in its western elevation, including evidence of a rare arched doorway, but was extensively rebuilt in the 18th century. Both buildings have been much altered and partly rebuilt in recent years, and are not sufficiently rare or well-preserved to merit listing in their own right. The chief historic interest of the site derives from the traditional layout of the farm complex, which has survived from at least the 18th century. The Tudor fabric of the barn is probably contemporary with the unlisted farmhouse, which consists of a timber-framed early-16th century cross-wing that was originally part of a larger house extending further to the north. The site's historic context and archaeology cannot be fully understood without a more detailed analysis of the farmhouse than fell within the remit of this report.



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Figure 1
Existing Ordnance Survey Site Plan
Outlining the farm buildings in red and showing Paper Mill Lane to the west with part of Paper Mill farmhouse to the south.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Paper Mill Farm lies at the northern edge of Bramford parish approximately 150 m south of its boundary with Whitton and 2 km north of St Mary's church. The site adjoins Paper Mill Lane on the west and a former gravel pit which now operates as a major landfill site on the east. The River Gipping flows on the opposite (western) side of the lane, and Bramford Mill, which is marked on the first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1882 as a paper mill, lies immediately to the north-west.

The farmhouse is not listed but is evidently a timber-framed structure of the 16th century or earlier, and is depicted on a plan of the Bramford Hall estate drawn in 1782 (figure 2). It is accurately shown in its existing form, with a central entrance in its southern façade, although it appears originally to have formed only the jettied cross-wing of a larger house which faced the road to the west. The 16th century timber-framed barn in the north-eastern corner of the yard is also shown on the plan, along with a building on the approximate site of the roadside granary (buildings 4 and 2 in figure 6 respectively). The yard and surrounding fields bear numerals, but unfortunately the map is not accompanied by a key. The site then lay in open arable countryside but the mill was already engaged in the commercial production of paper as the field to the south of the farm is named as 'Paper Mill Field' and the meadow on the western side of the Gipping as 'Paper Mill Meadow'. A detailed manorial survey of Bramford survives from 1568, and it may well be possible to establish the 16th century occupant of the house with further research ('The Book of Bramford', Bramford Local History Group, 2003). The mill is recorded in Domesday, and is mentioned in early documents as a fulling mill. It was producing paper by the 17th century, as the parish register for 1688 records the death of an unknown man who drowned at the paper mill ('The Origins of Bramford Street Names', Bramford Local History Group, n.d.).



Figure 2

Detail of the Bramford Hall estate map of 1782 with north to right, showing the yard of Paper Mill Farm (numbered 5 in centre). The farmhouse is depicted in its present form, facing south with a central entrance and adjoining the lane to the west. The barn (4) is also shown, adjoining 'Barn Field' in the north-eastern corner of the yard, along with the roadside granary (2). (The Suffolk Record Office holds only a black and white photograph of the original coloured estate map, ref. P471/1)

The Bramford tithe map of 1847 does not show the buildings on the site in any detail, representing the farm only by a rectangular block against the road. The contemporary tithe apportionment records the site as 'garden and yards' in the ownership of Sir Philip Broke, baronet, of Bramford Hall and tenanted by Robert Mumford with 102 acres of surrounding farmland. The initials 'G.M' and 'I.M' which appear alongside the date 1831 on bricks set beneath the farm house window probably relate to members of the Mumford family. The omission of any reference to the farmhouse on the apportionment suggests that its tenant was not in residence, and White's Suffolk Directory of 1844 records Robert Mumford at the Grove farm approximately 1 km to the south; the house at Paper Mill Farm may have been empty or occupied by farm labourers. It was empty at the time of inspection, but had recently been used as a dwelling.

The first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1882 shows a continuous range of roadside buildings linking the surviving granary (2) to the brick shed (3) which forms the northern boundary of what appears to be an enclosed cattle yard. Broken lines are used to indicate the southern elevation of the shed as an open-sided structure which probably operated as a cattle shelter, while a series of small yards at the southern end of the barn (4) resemble pig sties. The lean-to shed against the western elevation of the barn is not shown until the third edition Ordnance Survey of 1920, and the present block-work structure may represent a slightly later reconstruction. The existing detached block-work shed to the east of the farmhouse was not present in 1920 and appears to have replaced an earlier group of structures lying immediately to its north, of which no trace now remains.

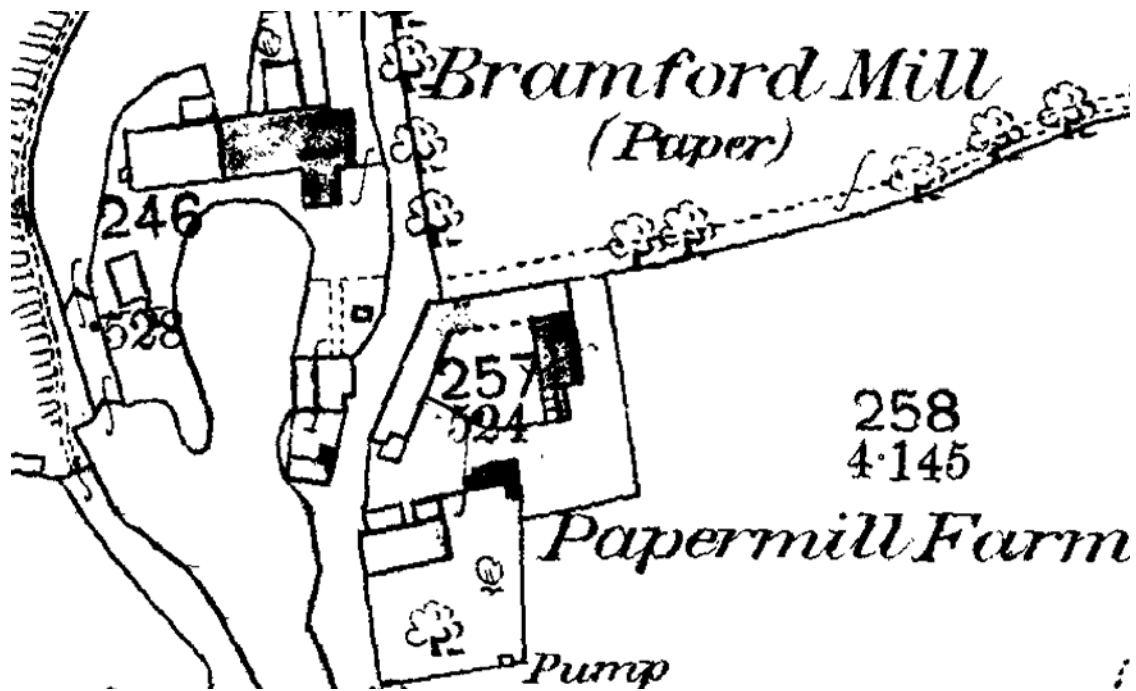


Figure 3
 First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1882, showing the existing farm buildings with a roadside structure linking the granary to the brick shed and a series of probable pig sties against the barn's southern gable. A detached shed, since demolished, lies to the north-east of the farmhouse, and the yard is fenced to form a probable cattle enclosure with an open-sided shelter shed to the north.

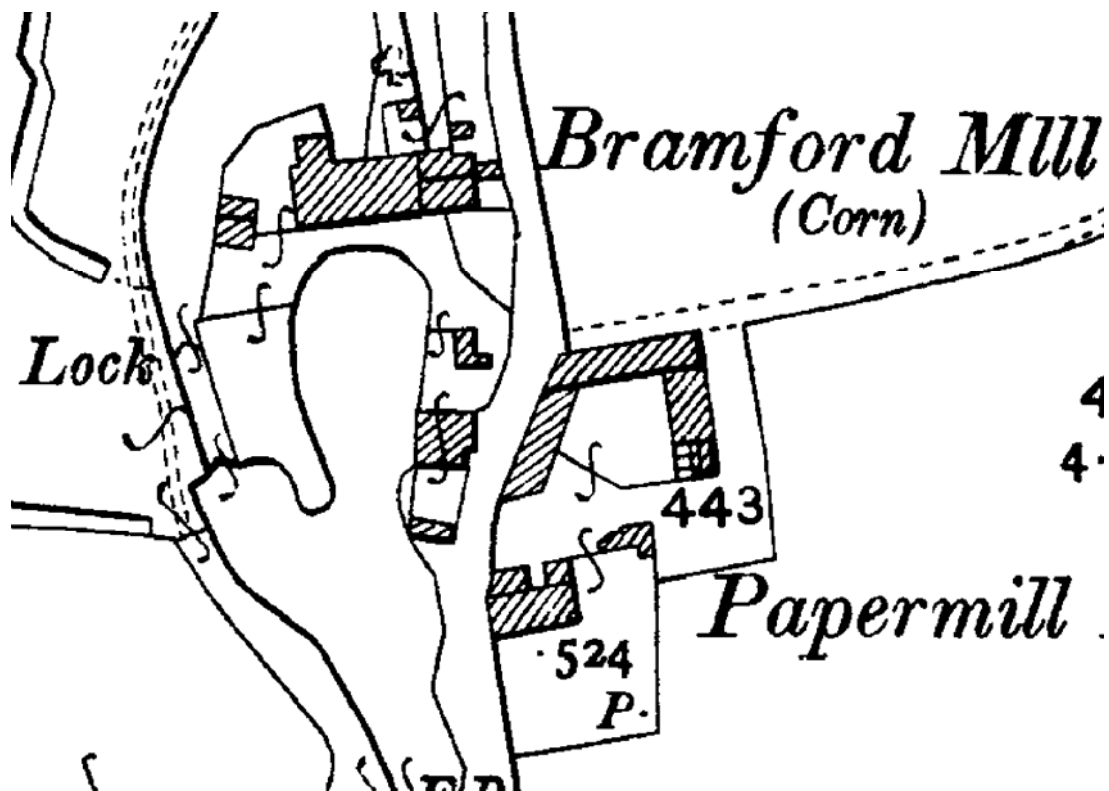


Figure 4
 Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1890, showing the same layout as in figure 3

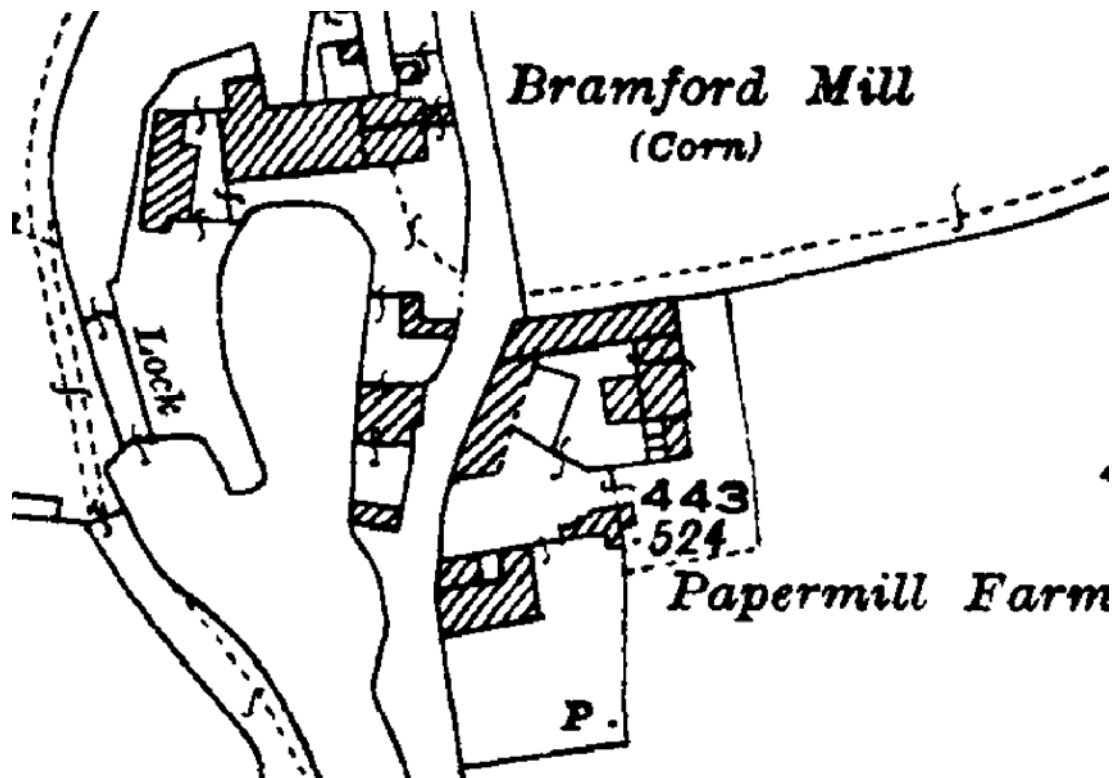


Figure 5

Third Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1920, showing the addition of a shed against the western elevation of the barn (building 5 in figure 6). The detached shed (6) had not yet appeared.

Building Analysis

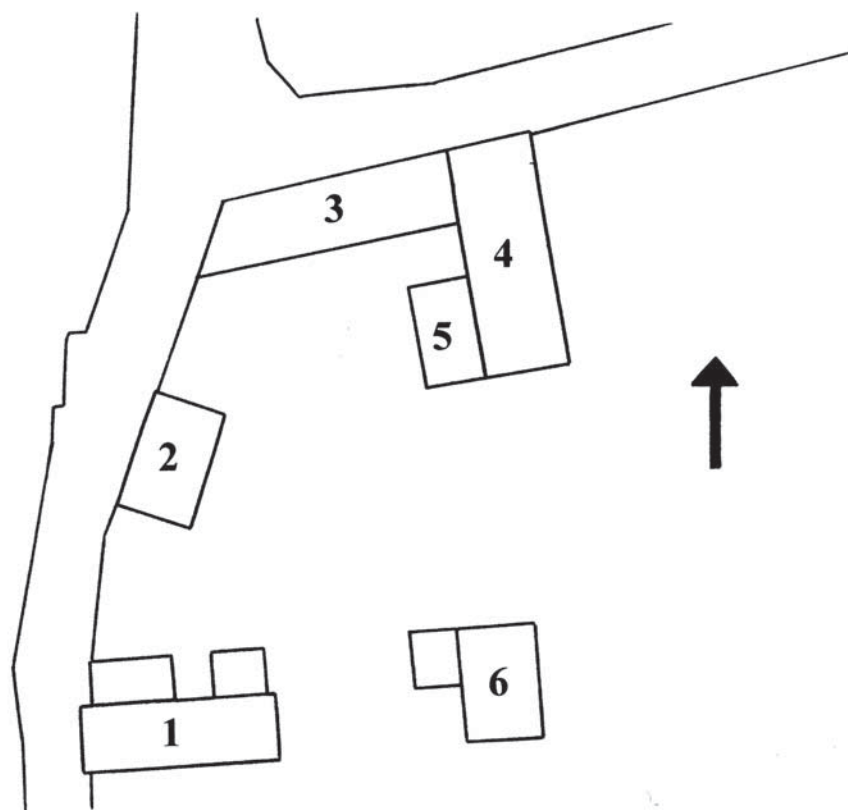


Figure 6
Schematic block plan of historic buildings, numbering each
for ease of reference in the text and photographic record

Key

- 1. Farmhouse.** The unlisted farmhouse consists of a timber-framed cross-wing of the early-16th century with a jettied western gable and was originally part of a larger house with a hall and possibly a second cross-wing to the north. The historic and archaeological understanding of the site would benefit from a more detailed analysis than fell within the remit of this report.
- 2. Granary with cart lodge beneath.** A timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of the late-18th century with a clasped-purlin roof, probably designed for thatch but roofed with slate in the 19th century.
- 3. Single-storied brick shed** of the mid-19th century, much altered and partly collapsed. Probably built as a cattle shed and yard shelter.
- 4. Barn.** Timber-framed and weatherboarded with a late-20th century roof structure. Substantial areas of early-16th century framing in the western elevation, including evidence of an arched door head, but the eastern elevation largely rebuilt in the 18th century. A mid-19th century lean-to extension against the northern gable.
- 5. Lean-to shed** of 20th century concrete blocks.
- 6. Detached shed** of 20th century concrete blocks.

N.B. The farmhouse was briefly investigated in order to establish the historic context of the farm buildings, as required by the specification, and is not discussed further below. The detached block-work shed (6) was not accessible internally, but is of little historic significance as it does not appear on the Ordnance Survey of 1920.

Granary and Cart Lodge (2)

The granary adjoins Paper Mill Lane 9 m north of the farm house and is aligned on an approximately north-south axis as shown in figure 6. It extends to 9.1 m in length by 5.5 m in overall width (29.75 ft by 18 ft) and the roof-plates of its western (roadside) elevation rise 3 m (10 ft) above its internal concrete floor. The timber-framed structure of three bays is typical of the late-18th century, with tenoned but unpegged studs and neatly chiselled carpenters' numerals, and is probably shown on the Bramford Hall estate plan of 1782 which indicates a building of similar proportions on the same site.

The structure contains a ceiling of tall-sectioned joists lodged on binding joists 60 cm (2 ft) beneath its roof-plates and supported from the storey posts by bolted knee braces. The upper storey contained a granary with boarded sides entered by an external stair in the southern gable (since removed). The northern bay is divided from the two southern bays by a full-height partition with an internal door, and the eastern elevation is open to the farm yard beneath its mid-rails in the typical manner of an East Anglian cart lodge. The external weatherboarding to the upper section of the same elevation is heavily tarred and may be original, but the external boarding to the gables is secondary. The relatively steep pitch of the original clasped-purlin roof suggests it was designed for thatch but now supports 19th century slate; slate is rarely found on steeply pitched roofs, however, even in secondary contexts, and it is possible, given the site's proximity to a navigable river, that it represents a rare early use of the material. The covering of the western roof slope has been replaced by corrugated iron.

The building has been considerably mutilated and is leaning by up to 75 cm (2.5 ft) from west to east. The entire western elevation has been recently rebuilt beneath its roof-plate in metal sheeting, the granary floor has been removed from the southern bay, and the mid-rails of the eastern elevation are lacking or renewed. Both gables have been wholly or partly rebuilt and the Ordnance Survey's of the late-19th and early-20th centuries show another structure adjoining the northern gable and continuing to the brick shed (i.e. building 3 in figure 6). The external cladding of the eastern elevation extends by 40 cm (15 ins) beyond the principal corner post and suggests the building may have been extended in the 19th century to meet the demolished structure to the north.

Brick Shed (3)

The northern side of the farm yard is formed by a single storied shed of mid-19th century red brick which has been so extensively altered and rebuilt that its original layout and purpose is no longer recognisable. The western half of the structure lacks a roof and has partly collapsed, while the roof of its eastern half is of modern corrugated metal sheeting. The southern elevation is largely open to the yard, and is shown as such on the Ordnance Survey of 1882, suggesting it was designed as an open-sided shelter shed adjoining a cattle yard.

Barn (4)

The barn in the north-eastern corner of the yard is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of four bays on a north-south alignment which now possesses a modern low-pitched roof of corrugated metal sheeting. The original building extended to 13 m in length by 5.8 m in width overall (43 ft by 19 ft), but was extended to its present length of 16 m by the addition of a red-brick lean-to shed against its northern gable in the mid-19th century (integral with shed 3 above). The roof-plates rise to 3.2 m (10.5 ft) above the concrete floor, including a brick plinth of 60 cm (2 ft). In recent years the barn has operated as a vehicle or storage shed with double doors in its southern gable, and the external weatherboarding has been renewed; earlier boarding of 19th century appearance survives within the 20th century lean-to shed (5) against its western elevation.

The timber frame contains elements of at least two different periods. The two southernmost bays of the western elevation ostensibly date from the early-16th century and contain original mid-rails some 91 cm (3 ft) beneath its roof-plate, although the latter has been renewed. The jowled storey post between these bays contains the empty mortise of an arch brace which is reflected by its counterpart in the eastern elevation and in the soffit of the tie-beam. This open truss appears to be *in situ*, but the eastern post lacks mid-rail mortises and the adjacent framing of this elevation has been rebuilt. Several common studs in the western elevation have been moved, and the ground sill renewed, but most appear to be *in situ*. A gap of 90 cm in the stud mortises at the southern end of the mid-rail (66 cm or 26 ins from the southern gable) reveals the position of an original doorway with a 'Tudor' arched head, as indicated by a corresponding mortise and chamfer on its northern jamb; the southern jamb has been replaced, but the external edge of the mid-rail is also chamfered. The lack of mid-rail to the rear, eastern elevation is consistent with the building's present orientation, as late-medieval structures often directed more expensive and ostentatious framing towards public roads. The remaining tie-beams lack mortises for arch braces, and appear to be contemporary with the framing of the eastern elevation which contains a face-halved scarf joint and primary diagonal bracing in the style of the 18th century. In its present form the barn is essentially a mid or late-18th century structure which incorporates substantial elements of a 16th century predecessor that may be contemporary with the farmhouse. The presence of arched door heads in early barns is rare but not unprecedented.

Block-work Sheds (5 & 6)

Buildings 5 and 6 in figure 6 consist of 20th century concrete blocks and form respectively a lean-to workshop against the western elevation of a barn and a detached vehicle shed to the north-east of the farmhouse. The former appears to be shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1920 but the latter is not.

Historic Significance

The brick and concrete structures of the 19th and 20th centuries at Paper Mill Farm (i.e. buildings 3, 5 and 6) are either too heavily altered or of insufficient age to be of historic interest. The granary and barn have also been subjected to extensive alteration in recent years but appear to be shown on the Bramford estate map of 1782 and form a traditional Suffolk farm complex in conjunction with the farmhouse. The granary remains a good example of an increasingly rare type, particularly given its unusual and attractive roof of steeply pitched slate, but is not sufficiently well-preserved or of sufficient age to merit listing in its own right. The barn is of considerable historic interest given its 16th century fabric and arched doorway, but was largely rebuilt in the 18th century and recently re-roofed; in consequence it too fails to merit listing in its own right, although its significance is increased when related to the early-16th century farmhouse with which it is probably contemporary.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from south-east showing the farmhouse (1) to left, block-work shed (6) in centre and the barn (4) to right.
2. General view of site from south-east showing farmhouse to left and Bramford Mill in rear to right.
3. General view of site from Paper Mill Lane to south, showing farmhouse to right.
4. General view of site from west showing the granary (2) to left and farmhouse to right.
5. General view of site from west showing proximity of River Gipping in foreground & landfill site in rear.
6. General view of site from Paper Mill Lane to north, showing brick shed (3) to left.
7. General view of site from north-east showing farmhouse to right and block-work shed (6) to left.
8. General view of site from east showing farmhouse to left and granary to right.
9. General view of site from east showing granary to left and timber-framed barn (4) to right.
10. General view of site from south showing granary to left and barn to right.
11. External elevation of farmhouse from south, showing Paper Mill Lane to left (included for site context).
12. External elevation of farmhouse from north-east (included for site context).
13. Detail of 1831 dated bricks beneath window in western roadside elevation of farmhouse (included for site context).
14. Western elevation of granary from Paper Mill Lane to north-west, showing corrugated iron roofing.
15. Southern external gable of granary seen from farmhouse to south.
16. Eastern external elevation of granary showing slate roof covering.
17. Northern external gable of granary (right) showing proximity of farmhouse to left.
18. External eastern elevation of granary from north-east showing detail of tarred weatherboarding.

19. External elevation of granary from south-east showing granary floor and removed mid-rail.
20. Detail of granary binding joist from south showing mid-rail mortise in post to right.
21. Internal western elevation of granary showing modern fabric.
22. Internal southern gable of granary showing brick plinth.
23. Internal southern gable of granary showing blocked granary door.
24. Clasped-purlin roof structure of granary from south.
25. General internal view of granary from south, showing renewed western elevation to left.
26. Internal eastern elevation of granary showing free-standing post to left.
27. Boarded granary floor from south, showing original doorway to northern compartment.
28. Detail of granary floor construction from south, showing eastern elevation to right.
29. Detail of granary floor construction from south, showing western elevation to left.
30. Internal eastern elevation of northern bay, showing secondary mid-rail.
31. Internal eastern elevation of central bay showing mid-rail tenons to studwork.
32. Detail from south of original storey post and knee-brace to eastern elevation of granary.
33. Detail from south of carpenters' numerals to internal granary partition.
34. Detail from south of internal granary partition, showing door jamb pegged to binding joist to left.
35. Northern external elevation of granary showing internal partition through exposed studwork.
36. Northern external elevation of brick shed (3) from north-east, showing barn (4) to left.
37. Southern external elevation of brick shed (partly collapsed).
38. Southern external elevation of brick shed from south-east, showing modern roof to right.
39. Interior of brick shed from east.

40. Interior of brick shed 3 from west showing modern roof and block-work partition adjoining barn (4).
41. Western external elevation of barn (4) showing brick shed (3) to left & block-work lean-to shed (5) to right.
42. Exterior of block-work lean-to shed (5) from north-west, showing barn in rear.
43. Exterior of barn from south-east showing vehicle doors in southern gable & block-work lean-to shed to left.
44. Interior of lean-to shed (5) from north showing earlier external weatherboarding of barn to left.
45. Interior of lean-to shed from south showing earlier external weatherboarding of barn to right.
46. Western external elevation of barn from within lean-to shed showing boarding and brick plinth.
47. General internal view of barn from south.
48. Barn roof structure from south showing 16th century tie-beam with arch-brace mortises in foreground.
49. Internal western elevation of barn showing 16th century framing with mid-rails.
50. Detail of 16th century framing of western elevation showing arch-brace mortise in storey post.
51. Detail of mortise for arched door head at southern end of western elevation (right).
52. Detail of door head mortise and externally chamfered mid-rail in western elevation.
53. Internal western elevation of barn showing 16th century framing to left.
54. Block-work partition to shed 3 at northern end of barn's western elevation.
55. Brick lean-to extension at northern end of barn's eastern elevation.
56. Brick lean-to extension at northern end of barn, showing stud mortises in former gable tie-beam.
57. Roof structure of barn from north showing tie-beams without arch-brace mortises.
58. Southern end of eastern elevation of barn showing 16th century post without mid-rail mortises.
59. Eastern internal elevation showing later framing with primary wall braces.
60. Detail of eastern roof-plate showing face-halved scarf in roof-plate behind bolted secondary plate.

Appendix 2 (pp. 13-18): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 General view of site from south-east showing the farmhouse (1) to left, 20th century block-work shed (6) in centre and the timber-framed barn (4) to right. Bramford Mill is visible in the rear



A2.2 General view of site from River Gipping to west showing the granary (2) to left



A2.3 General view of yard from the farmhouse to south showing the granary (2) to left with the brick shed (3) in centre and barn (4) to right



A2.4 Western external elevation of the granary seen from Paper Mill Lane to north-west, showing corrugated iron roof and cladding with farmhouse in rear



A2.5 Northern external elevation of granary showing internal partition through exposed studwork and open eastern elevation, with farmhouse in rear to left



A2.6 Detail of external eastern elevation of granary from north-east showing tarred weatherboarding to granary storey and removed mid-rails to central and southern bays



A2.7 Interior of granary from south showing original clasped-purlin roof structure and boarded granary floor with doorway to northern compartment (floor removed from southern bay in foreground)



A2.8 Detail from south of granary floor showing carpenters' numerals to internal studs



A2.9 Western external elevation of timber-framed and weatherboarded barn (4) showing brick shed (3) to left & block-work lean-to shed (5) to right



A2.10 General internal view of barn from south showing modern roof structure with 16th century timber-framing of western elevation to left



A2.11 Internal western elevation of barn showing 16th century framing with intact mid-rails but lacking roof-plate and evidence of arched doorway to left (diagonal braces are secondary)



A2.12 Detail from south of door head mortise and external chamfers beneath mid-rail in western elevation of barn