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**The Barn,
The Old Rectory,
Thorndon, Suffolk
THD 028**

Historic Building Record

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on behalf of
Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

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**The Barn,
The Old Rectory,
High Street,
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(TM 140 694)

Historic Building Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant barn with attached sheds. It has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Edward Martin, 23 April 2009, Ref. PreOldRectoryThorndon09) and is intended to inform and accompany a planning application for residential conversion.

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 68 digital images (Appendix 1) but also includes printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text (Appendix 2). 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 25th May 2009.

Summary

The Old Rectory lies within an unusually sophisticated complex of moats that reflects the importance of the site in Middle Ages, when Thorndon Rectory formed a small manor in its own right. The present house is a grade II-listed Gault brick building of *circa* 1820 with a 16th century timber-framed rear wing. By 1840 the majority of the 78 acres of glebe land was leased but the Rector held a small arable farm of 25 acres in hand. The barn to the west of the site is an early-19th century timber-framed and pantiled structure which may well be contemporary with the late-Georgian refurbishment of the house, although many timbers show evidence of re-use. Its unusually sophisticated layout combines a normal three-bay barn which adjoined the Rector's fields to the west with a coach house and granary facing his Rectory to the east. The building was provided with its own separate access track from the High Street, approximately 250 metres south of All Saints church.

The present outline of the barn is shown on the Thorndon tithe map of 1840, and its internal layout has altered little. The open barn contained a threshing floor in its central bay but this has been removed in recent years and the northern entrance blocked. A lean-to against its rear, southern elevation incorporates a loose box that adjoined an enclosed cattle yard shown on 19th century maps. The eastern wing of the L-shaped building contains an original ceiling with two vehicle sheds divided by a narrow tack room on the ground storey and two granary lofts above. The tack room has been altered to create a passage to the barn and much of the interior had been stripped of its original cladding at the time of inspection. The exterior was initially rendered and the appearance of the eastern facade is largely original despite the replacement of its shed doors in the 20th century. Areas of clay daub also survive to the south but much of barn is now weatherboarded. The timber frame remains largely intact, including its butt-purlin roof structure with bolted knee-braces, but no historic fixtures or fittings survive and although of some historic interest the building is neither sufficiently well preserved nor of sufficient age to merit listing in its own right.



Figure 1
Existing Ordnance Survey Site Plan
Outlining the barn in red and showing the dedicated grass track which links it to the High Street

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

The Old Rectory lies on the western side of Thorndon High Street approximately 250 m south of All Saints church. The grade II-listed house consists of a Gault (white) brick front range of *circa* 1820 which faces the High Street to the east and a much altered 16th century timber-framed rear wing clad in 19th or 20th century painted brick. This rear wing appears to consist of a floored hall with a high-end chimney flanked by the doors of a demolished parlour which continued further to the west, and suggests the earlier house on the site may have faced north towards the church. The building occupies what appears to be the remains of a medieval moat with a second moat to the north which is now occupied by modern dwellings but is named on the title apportionment of 1840 as an orchard (figure 2). The immediate area contains an unusual number of moat-like features, and of the several scattered about the parish at least one other was described in 1840 as a moated orchard (at Lampl's farm 1 km to the south-east). Moated orchards are normally associated with high social status, and the 1844 edition of White's Directory of Suffolk notes that 'a small manor' belonged to Thorndon Rectory which is described as 'a commodious white brick residence near the church'. As a well-preserved medieval moated Rectorial complex the site of is considerable historic interest.

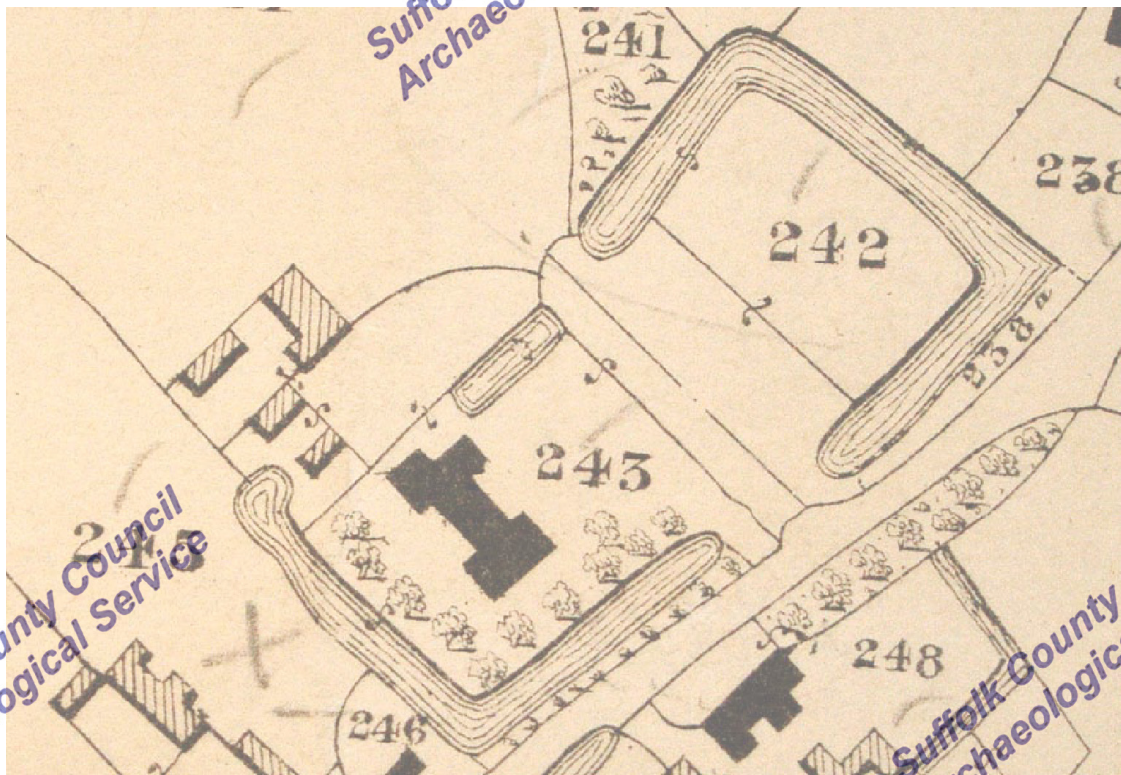
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Figure 2. Thorndon Tithe Map of 1840, showing north and All Saints church to top-right and the Old Rectory (no. 243) bottom left.

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Figure 2a. Detail of 1840 tithe map above, showing the barn with its existing outline outside the Rectory moat (top-left) and adjoining 'First Holmers' field on the north and west. The empty moated site to the north (242) is identified as an orchard in the accompanying apportionment, and the rectangular pond may represent a garden canal.

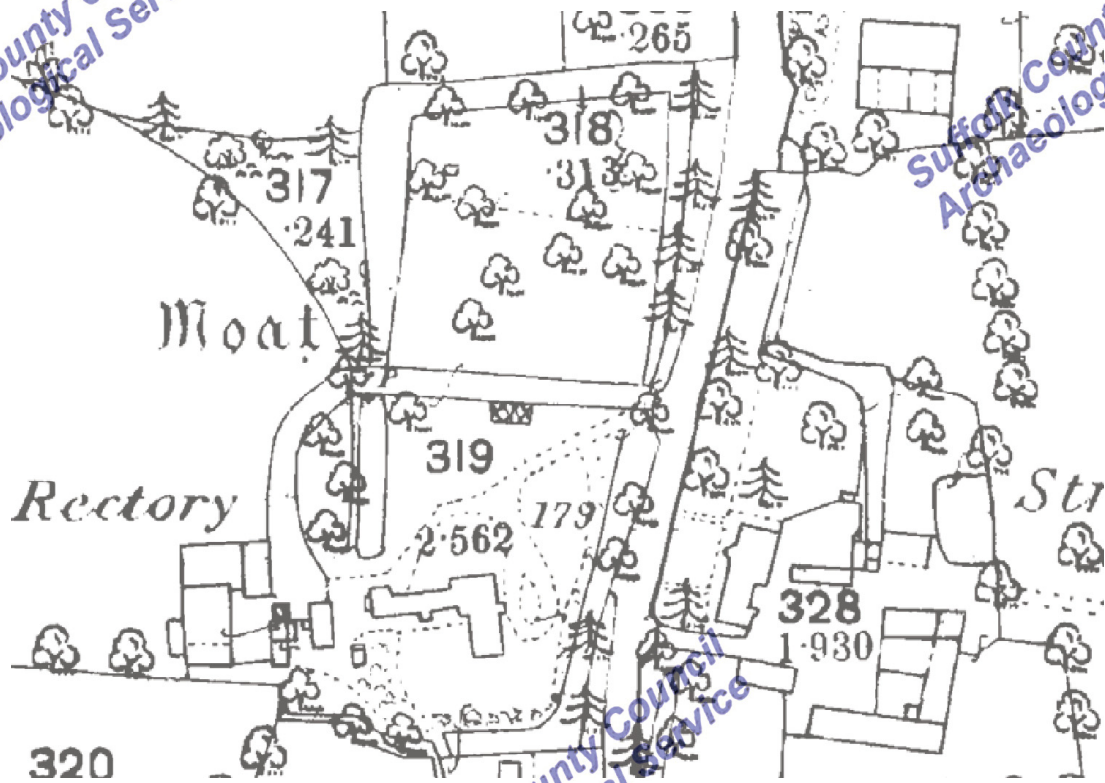


Figure 3

First edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886, showing the barn to left with an enclosed yard attached to its southern elevation. The track which allows direct access to the barn from the High Street is also shown

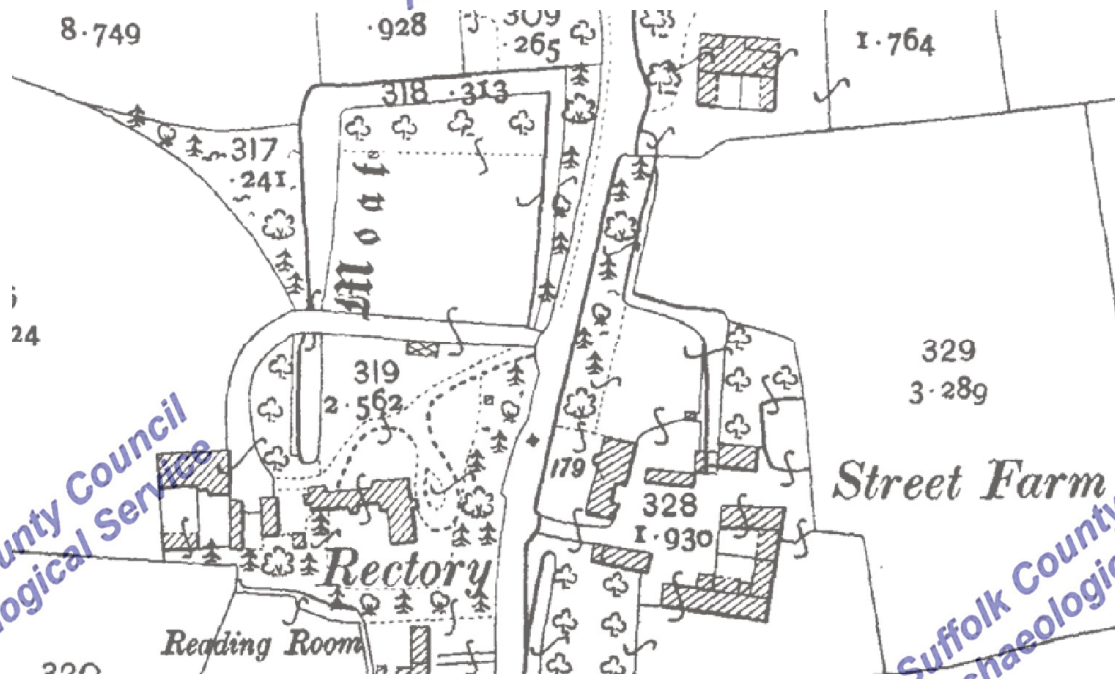


Figure 4

Second edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing the unusual moat complex

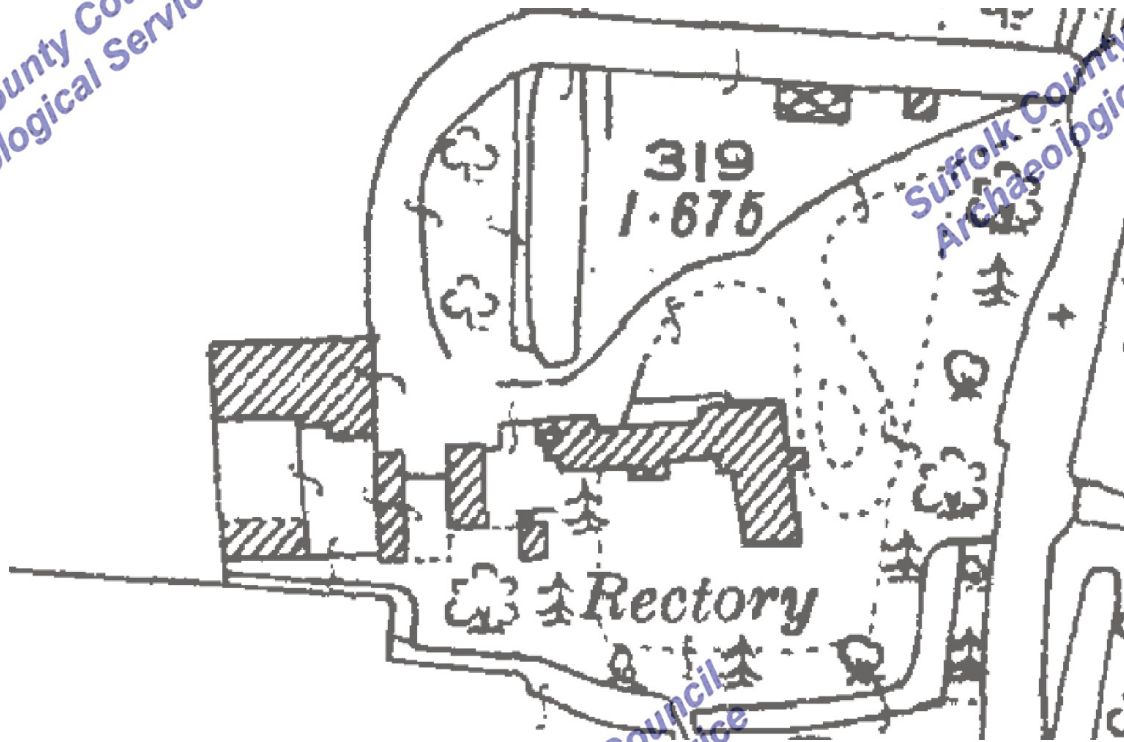


Figure 5

Detail of the third edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1926, which uses a broken line to indicate the open-sided northern elevation of the shelter-shed forming the southern side of the yard adjoining the barn. Of the three substantial rectangular sheds to the west of the house only the easternmost still survives. The two access tracks to the house and barn remain unaltered.

The house is currently approached by a gravel drive, but a separate grass track passes between the two moats and links the High Street directly with the barn to the west of the. A similar arrangement is shown on the tithe map, and evidently provided an independent entrance to the barn and its attached sheds for farm and service vehicles. A rectangular pond in the north-western corner of the Rectory garden may represent the remains of the house moat, truncated by the construction of the barn, but does not follow the same alignment and is more probably a decorative 17th century garden feature known as a canal. The tithe apportionment describes the site (no.243) as 'house, buildings, etc.' in the occupation of the Reverend Thomas Henry Howes, who owned it as glebe land in his capacity as Rector of the parish. The glebe extended to 78 acres (including the churchyard of 1 acre 38 perches), which can be equated with the manor mentioned by White, but Howes held only 25 acres in hand and sub-let the rest to Ellen Carter as a separate farm of 52 acres known as Glebe Farm in the northern corner of the parish (1 km to the north-west). Of the 25 acres held in hand, 15 were arable in 1840 (including the moated orchard of 1 acre 32 perches) and lay in a group of four contiguous fields which adjoined the barn on the west and north.

The tithe map shows the barn with its existing profile in the corner of 'First Holmers' field (244) which was then laid to pasture. 'Second Holmers', Great Holmers and 'Far Holmers' formed a linear strip of ground extending to the north-west in the direction of Glebe Farm. 'Holme' is a common field name in East Anglia which usually refers to islands of land alongside water, but in this instance (where no rivers or streams are apparent) may relate to the isolation of the land from the main Rectorial farm. The barn abutted an enclosed yard on the south with separate sheds to the west and east, while the eastern elevation adjoined a wide turning area with direct access to the High Street, much as today. The sheds flanking the yard

no longer survive, but a third, which lies closer to the house, remains intact and appears to be contemporary with the barn; it forms a single-storied structure divided into three small storage units (Appendix 1.4). The rear wing of the house extended further to the west than at present, and was evidently truncated during the 20th century. By the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey in 1886 a new open-sided shelter had been built to the south of the enclosed yard (as indicated the broken line used to depict its northern elevation) but the layout was otherwise unchanged. A shelter shed of this type suggests the enclosure operated as a small cattle yard, and the central shed may have formed a stable, but in the absence of the buildings themselves any precise analysis must remain speculative.

Building Analysis

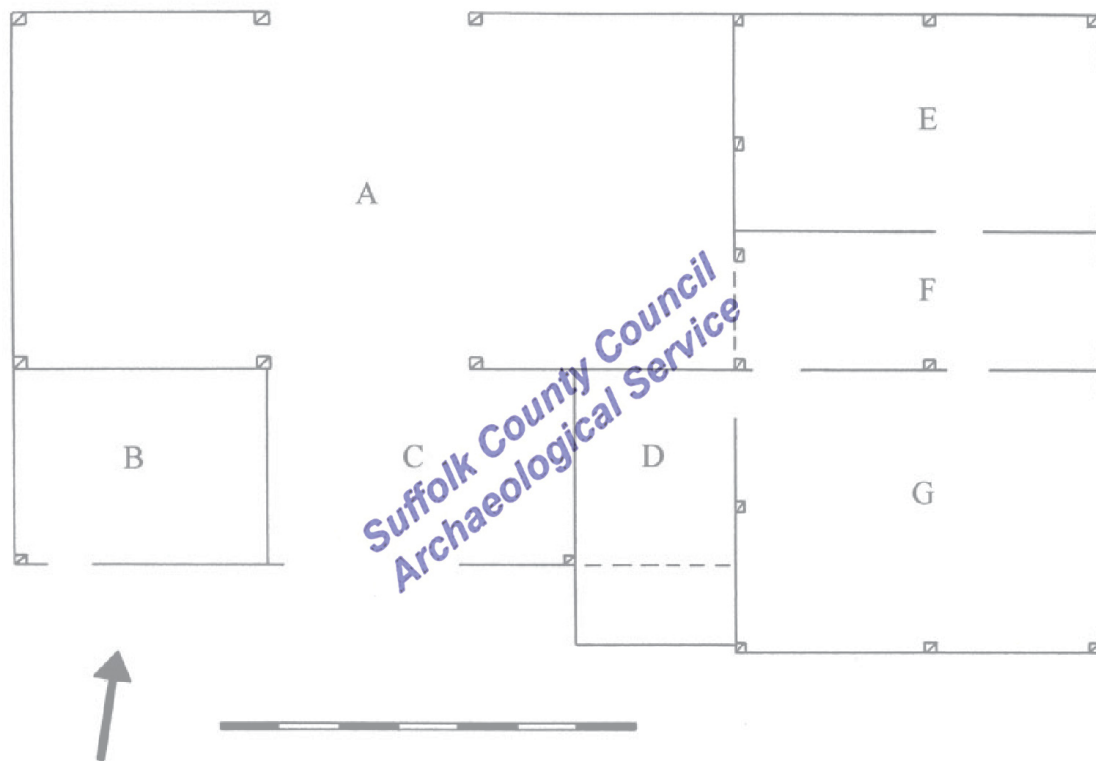


Figure 6

Schematic block plan of the early-19th century timber-framed barn and shed complex showing its original layout and identifying each unit with a letter for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. A loft extends above the eastern range, which forms a cross-wing to the barn. The partition between the central passage (F) and southern shed (G) extends to the roof and divides the loft into two areas, each of which was originally reached only by an external loading door in the eastern elevation. Area B-C-D forms a lean-to against the southern elevation of the main barn. Scale in metres.

Key

- A. Three bay barn with principal entrance in central bay to north.
- B. Lean-to loose box entered from south. Formerly adjoining an enclosed cattle yard to the south.
- C. Lean-to porch with double doors to south. Formerly adjoining an enclosed cattle yard.
- D. Shed or loose box. Partly rebuilt in 20th century block-work (south of the broken line). Possibly designed as a bull box outside the enclosed southern yard.
- E. Enclosed cart shed entered by double doors to east. Original ceiling in north-west corner raised, presumably to accommodate a tall vehicle.

- F. Narrow central shed between northern and southern vehicle sheds, entered from east and with secondary access to barn. Probably designed as a tack room, but now forming a passage between the eastern entrance and the barn.
- G. Enclosed cart shed entered by double doors to east.

N.B. Much of the internal cladding had been stripped from the building, and a possible threshing floor of stone and brick had been removed prior to inspection. Any original fixtures and fittings in the various sheds had been similarly removed. These alterations are understood to have occurred before the present owner acquired the property. The building is not separately listed but lies within the curtilage of the former Rectory, which is listed at grade II.

Proportions

The barn is a timber-framed building with a number of integral sheds, as shown in figure 6. It consists of a three-bay open barn on an east-west axis with a contemporary rear lean-to against its southern elevation and a floored cross-wing to the east. The cross-wing is fully hipped to the north and gabled to the south. The area of the barn (A in figure 6) extends to 12.2 m in length by 6 m in overall width (40 ft by 20 ft) and the lean-to extends by a further 3.2 m (10.5 ft) to produce a total width of 9.2 m (30.5 ft). The cross-wing is 6 m in width by 10.8 m in length (20 ft by 35.5 ft) and projects beyond the southern elevation of the lean-to to produce the distinctive L-shaped profile shown on the site map of 1840. The roof-plates of the main structure rise to 4.25 m in height (14 ft) and those of the lean-to 2.75 m (9 ft) on uniform red-brick plinths of 0.75 m (30 ins).

Structure and Date

The timber walls contain diagonal primary braces which interrupt narrow, variable studs, and in general the timbers are nailed rather than tenoned to the frame. The tie-beams of the open barn are secured to the storey posts by bolted knee-braces and the roof structures of both ranges contain two tiers of butt purlins with nailed collars and ridge-boards. These features suggest a date in the first half of the 19th century, and the building may well be contemporary with the 'new' Gault brick front range of the house (added to an older rear wing in *circa* 1820). The external walls were probably designed to be rendered with clay daub and sealed internally with lime plaster between the studs, but this has been replaced by weatherboarding to the northern elevation and corrugated iron to the vertical gables. A section of original daub with chevron pargeting is exposed to the south (shed B) along with vertical coppice poles and horizontal laths. The existing pantiles are also likely to be original, with glazed black tiles to the principal northern and eastern elevations (facing the church and house) but plain examples to the west and south. Many principal timbers were re-used from older structures of the 17th century or before, and bear numerous empty mortises that are not relevant to their present positions. These may have been salvaged from an earlier barn or house on the site when the present Rectory was remodelled, but only one timber can be firmly associated with a domestic source: the south-eastern corner post of the lean-to porch (C) bears an ogee moulding and formed part of a late-15th or early-16th century ceiling.

Original Layout and Function

The western range of the building is a typical three-bay barn of modest proportions that would have been appropriate to the 25 acre 'home farm' belonging to the Rectory in the early-19th century. It contained the usual full-height entrance doors in its central northern bay, as indicated by the absence of original framing beneath the northern roof-plate, and a wide but low door to the southern yard immediately opposite. The present studwork and boarding which blocks the northern entrance is an insertion of the late-20th or early-21st century, and the

brick and stone threshing floor has been removed to leave bare soil between the concrete rafts of the outer bays; it is not clear whether the brick and stone slabs now piled in a corner of the barn formed an original threshing floor or a later vehicle standing. At some time the eastern bay of the barn appears to have been partitioned from the rest and clad internally with whitewashed boarding which extended to the roof, perhaps to form a dairy, but much of this had been stripped out before inspection. The westernmost shed of the southern lean-to (B) is entered only from the exterior and probably formed a loose box in the adjoining animal yard, while the upper walls of the easternmost shed (D) have been rebuilt in block-work and its entrance doors renewed; it lay outside the yard and may have been a bull box or possibly a vehicle shed. The building has been stripped of any original fixtures or fittings which might have allowed a more precise analysis of the sheds' various purposes.

The eastern range of the building contains a ceiling which forms two lofts on the upper storey reached by a pair of original external loading doors in the eastern elevation (and by a secondary ladder trap from within). The northern door contains – unusually - two cat holes side-by-side instead of the usual single aperture (both now blocked by external boarding). The partition between the central and southern sheds on the lower storey continues upwards to the roof and divides the two lofts. No evidence of grain bins survives, but these lofts probably operated as granaries rather than hay lofts as there is no evidence of loading vents to suggest the presence of a hay rack. The lower storey is divided by original partitions into three sheds of unequal size: the northernmost 3.5 m in width, the southernmost 4.5 m and the central shed just 2.1 m (13 ft, 15 ft and 7 ft respectively). All three are entered by external doors in the eastern elevation but were originally linked internally as shown in figure 6; the central shed now forms a passage to the barn but the access between the two areas (A and F) is secondary, created by removing original studs, although it is not clear whether a smaller connecting door may have existed in the same position. The existing eastern doors are also secondary, but the original entrances were of similar width and the two largest sheds were probably designed as cart sheds. A section of ceiling in the north-western quarter of shed E was raised by approximately 60 cm (2 ft) in the late-10th or early-20th century, presumably in order to accommodate a tall vehicle of some kind. The central shed (F) is likely to have operated as a tack room. There is no evidence that either shed accommodated horses, although such a possibility cannot be ruled out, and a detached stable probably lay to the south (as shown in figures 2-5 above but since demolished).

Historic Significance

The barn at Thorndon Old Rectory is an unusual and historically interesting combination of an early-19th century barn with a coach house and granary that reflects the gentry status of the site; a normal farmer of just 25 acres would not have been able to justify the expense of such a structure, and would not have felt the need of separate access from the road. The site is also of historic significance, and may preserve archaeological evidence of medieval occupation. The external appearance of the barn is largely original, particularly when viewed from the house to the east, as is most of its frame, but the interior has been stripped in recent years and the building is neither sufficiently well preserved nor of sufficient age to merit listing in its own right.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of High Street from north showing entrance to site on right.
2. Entrance to site from High Street to east showing barn track to right & house drive left.
3. General view of site from drive to north-east showing house left & service shed to right.
4. General view from west showing service shed to left & barn in rear to right.
5. General view of barn track from north, showing northern elevation of barn to right.
6. General view of barn track from west, showing High Street in rear.
7. Western channel of former orchard moat from south.
8. Western channel of house moat or canal from north-west, showing house in rear.
9. General view from north showing barn to right with house and possible canal to left.
10. Old Rectory house from north-east (included for site context).
11. Brick clad 16th century rear wing of house, seen from north (included for site context).
12. Western external elevation of barn showing doors to sheds and lofts.
13. Western external elevation from north-east, showing doors to lofts and sheds.
14. Detail of door to southern shed (G) in western external elevation.
15. Detail of southern loft door in western external elevation.
16. Detail of doors to northern shed (E) and loft in western external elevation.
17. General view of exterior from field to north-west, showing corrugated cladding to western gable.
18. Northern external elevation showing blocked central entrance to barn (H).
19. General view of site from south-west showing barn to left and service shed to right.
20. Southern external elevation from south-east showing lean-to shed (B) to left.

21. Southern external elevation from south-west showing lean-to shed (B) and porch (C) to left.
22. Southern external elevation showing doors to lean-to shed (B) and porch (C).
23. Detail of wattle-and-daub infill to southern external elevation.
24. General view of interior of barn (A) from east showing original central entrance bay to right.
25. General view of interior of barn (A) from west showing lean-to porch (C) to right.
26. Internal western gable of barn (A).
27. Internal eastern gable of barn (A) showing secondary access door to passage (F).
28. Detail of storey post in eastern internal elevation of barn showing nailed rails and empty joints.
29. Internal southern elevation of eastern bay of barn (A), showing boarded roof.
30. Detail of boarded roof in eastern bay of barn (A).
31. Internal southern elevation of barn (A) showing access to lean-to porch in central bay.
32. Detail of arch-brace mortises in re-used upside-down storey post in southern elevation of barn (A).
33. Interior of northern elevation of barn (A) showing original entrance bay to right.
34. Interior of northern elevation of barn (A) showing original entrance bay to left.
35. Re-used tie-beam of barn from east showing empty arch-brace mortises.
36. Re-used tie-beam of barn from west showing empty arch-brace mortises & boarded eastern bay.
37. Position of removed threshing floor in central bay of barn (A) from south.
38. Remains of brick and stone threshing floor stacked in corner of barn.
39. Interior of lean-to porch (C) from barn (A) to north.
40. Interior of southern barn doors from porch (C).
41. Interior of lean-to shed (B) from porch (C) to east, showing external door to left.
42. Interior of lean-to porch (C) from north-west showing southern doors to right.
43. Detail of ogee-moulded re-used post in south-western corner of porch (C).
44. Interior of lean-to porch (C) from east showing partition to shed (B).

45. Interior of lean-to shed (D) from north showing external doors.
46. Interior of lean-to shed (D) from south showing door to southern shed (G) right.
47. Interior of lean-to shed (D) showing partition to porch (C) & block-work addition to left.
48. Interior of northern shed (E) from east, showing raised section of ceiling to right.
49. Detail of secondary raised ceiling in northern shed (E) seen from south-west.
50. Interior of northern shed (E) showing eastern entrance doors.
51. Interior of central passage (F) from west showing secondary trap to loft.
52. Interior of central passage (F) from east, showing doors to sheds (G & E) to left & right.
53. Southern internal elevation of central passage showing doors to southern shed (G).
54. Detail from north of empty mortises in re-used central post of passage (F).
55. Interior of southern shed (G) from east showing door to shed (D) in rear.
56. Interior of southern shed (G) from west showing eastern external doors.
57. Internal southern elevation of southern shed (G).
58. Secondary ceiling trap to loft seen from central passage (F) to south.
59. Interior from northern gable of lofts above eastern range, showing partition & roof structure.
60. Secondary stair trap to rear of central passage (F) seen from loft to north.
61. Internal southern gable of loft above shed (G) in eastern range.
62. Internal northern gable of loft above shed (E) & passage (F).
63. Detail of raised ceiling in north-western corner of loft above northern shed (E).
64. Internal eastern elevation of loft above northern shed (E) showing external door.
65. Internal eastern elevation of loft from north-west showing butt-purlin roof structure.
66. Internal western elevation of loft above southern shed (G).
67. Roof structure of barn (A) seen from loft to east.
68. Interior of barn (A) seen from loft of eastern range.

Appendix 2 (pp. 13-17): Selected Printed Photographs

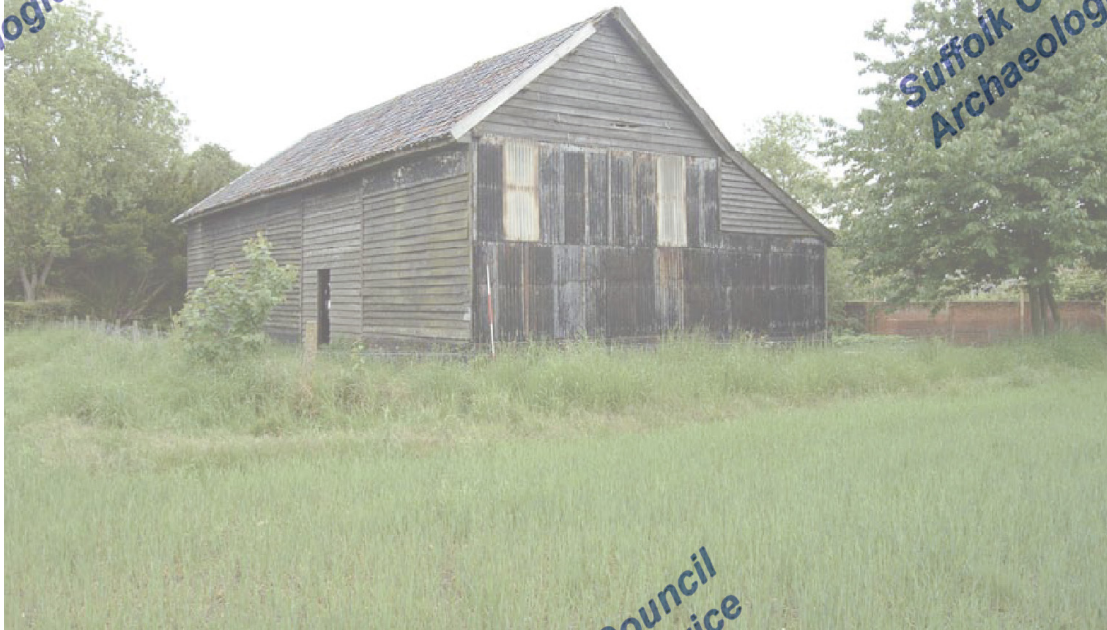


A2.1 Southern external elevation from south-west showing doors to lean-to shed (B) and porch (C) to left with gable of floored eastern range to right



A2.2 Western external elevation of eastern range seen from north-east, showing doors to lofts, sheds and central passage.

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A2.3 General view of exterior from field to north-west, showing corrugated cladding to western gable and blocked northern entrance to left

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A2.4 General view of site from north showing barn to right with house and remains of moat or canal to left

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A2.5 Interior of three-bay barn (A) seen from loft of eastern range, showing blocked central entrance in northern elevation to right and lean-to porch to left.

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A2.6 Roof structure of barn (A) from west, showing original bolted knee-braces to re-used tie-beam and two tiers of butt-purlins. Note boarded ceiling to eastern bay

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A2.7 Interior of northern shed (E) from east, showing raised ceiling to right

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A2.8 Interior of central passage (F) from eastern entrance, showing doors to sheds (G & E) to left & right with secondary access to barn (A) in rear

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A2.9 Interior from northern gable of lofts above eastern range, showing partition & roof structure with two tiers of butt-purlins. Note secondary ceiling trap to right

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A2.10 Internal eastern elevation of loft above northern shed (E) showing external door with two cat holes instead of the usual one