

**Bridge Farm,
Hacheston,
Suffolk
HCH 031**

Historic Building Record

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Bridge Farm, Lower Hacheston, Hacheston, Suffolk

(TM 3089 5656)

Historic Building Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant timber-framed barn and attached granary. It has been prepared to a brief written by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Edward Martin, 26 February 2009, Ref. SpecHBR_BridgeFmHacheston_09) and is intended to inform and accompany a planning application for conversion.

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 82 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 28th May 2009.

Summary

Bridge Farm lies in the hamlet of Lower Hacheston, 200 m east of the bridge over the River Deben which forms the boundary between Hacheston and Wickham Market. At the time of the tithe survey in 1839 the farm formed part of an exceptionally large tenanted holding of 365 acres on the Glevering Hall estate, which holding included two additional farmyards elsewhere and probably represented the amalgamation of at least three smaller farms. The farmhouse is a grade II-listed structure of the 17th century or earlier.

The barn on the site is an impressive timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of almost 30 m (100 ft) in length with a steeply pitched roof of corrugated asbestos that was formerly thatched. Although currently a single space, it contains evidence of an unusually complicated and historically interesting evolution. It began life in the second quarter of the 17th century as a three-bay structure with an entrance in the northern end-bay of its eastern elevation, which now forms part of the rear wall, and was evidently built as an extension to an older barn. The clasped-purlin roof structure of this earliest phase survives intact, complete with curved wind-braces, although most of its wall studs were renewed during the 19th century. The barn was extended by one bay to the north in the mid-17th century, presumably when the older barn was demolished, and by three bays to the south at the beginning of the 19th century when much land in the vicinity was cultivated for the first time.

The farm complex was considerably enlarged during the mid-19th century, when extensive cattle yards were added, and a formerly detached early-19th century granary was linked to the barn's southern gable. This granary retains an unusually complete series of boarded grain bins on its upper storey. Given the barn's early-17th century origin and intact roof, together with the historic interest of its unusual layout and development, it merits listing at grade II in its own right.



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Figure 1
Existing Ordnance Survey Site Plan
Outlining the historic yard buildings in red and showing the adjoining farmhouse to the west and an extensive complex of 20th century farm buildings to the east

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Bridge Farm lies in the hamlet of Lower Hacheston at the southern end of Hacheston parish, approximately 2 km from All Saints church and 200 m east of the bridge over the River Deben which forms the boundary of Wickham Market. The site adjoins the eastern end of a triangular road junction which may well represent the remains of a medieval green, and Pevsner notes the discovery of Roman kilns on the farm in 1964. The grade II-listed main farmhouse is aligned on an east-west axis at right-angles to the barn which forms the subject of this report, and appears to have faced north towards a yard which was enclosed on the west by a formerly detached late-17th century ‘dairy wing’ and by the barn on the east. The house was not inspected, but is said to ‘probably’ date from the early-17th century in the Schedule of Listed Buildings. (The photograph which purports to show Bridge Farmhouse on the English Heritage Images of England website is of a completely different property.) The house is now approached from Ash Road to the south, but the farmyard is entered from the B1078 to the north (known as Main Road). Two 19th century brick sheds at the northern end of the yard have previously been converted and their original purpose is unclear. An extensive range of 20th century brick and sheet-metal agricultural buildings lies to the east of the historic site.

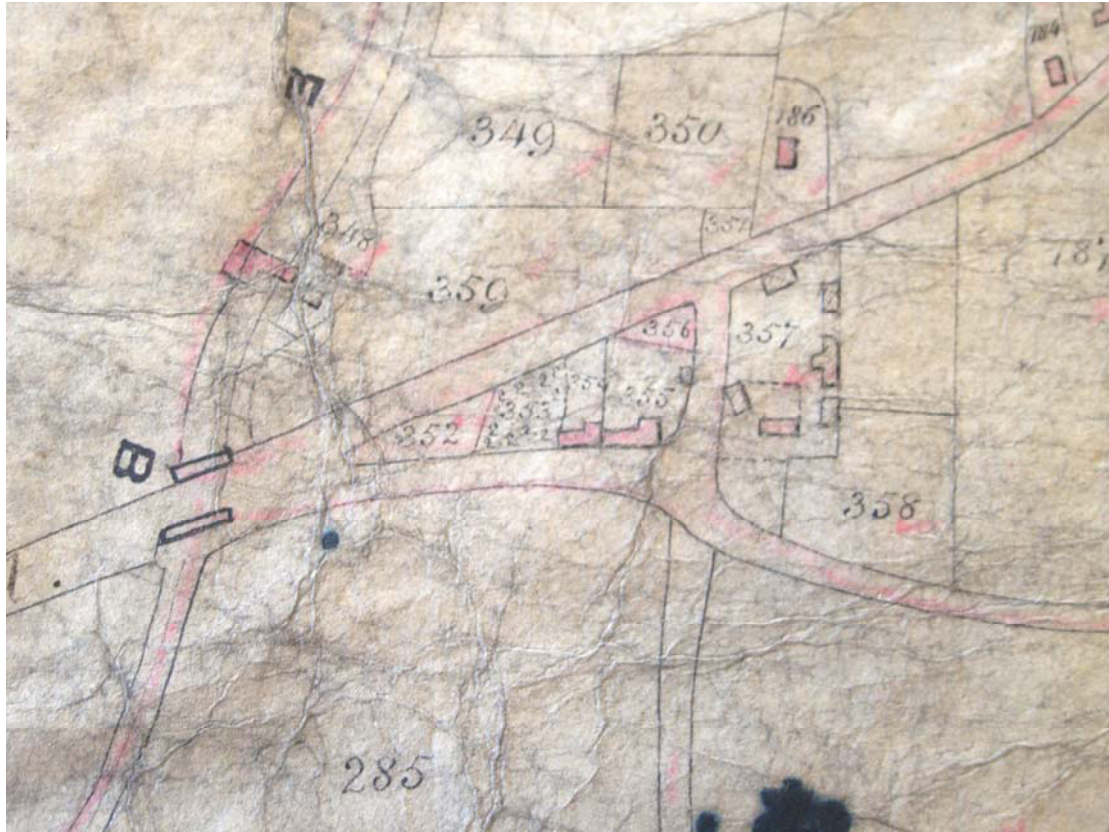


Figure 2. Hacheston tithe map of 1839, showing the site on the eastern boundary of a triangular road junction with the River Deben to the west.



Figure 2a. Detail of 1839 tithe map above, showing the house in pink to the south and the detached 'dairy' wing at an angle to the east. The map is not fully accurate, as indicated by the exaggerated degree of this angle, but the barn is clearly shown with a central porch or lean-to against its eastern elevation, and the granary is a detached structure to the south. The two buildings at the northern end of the site no longer survive.

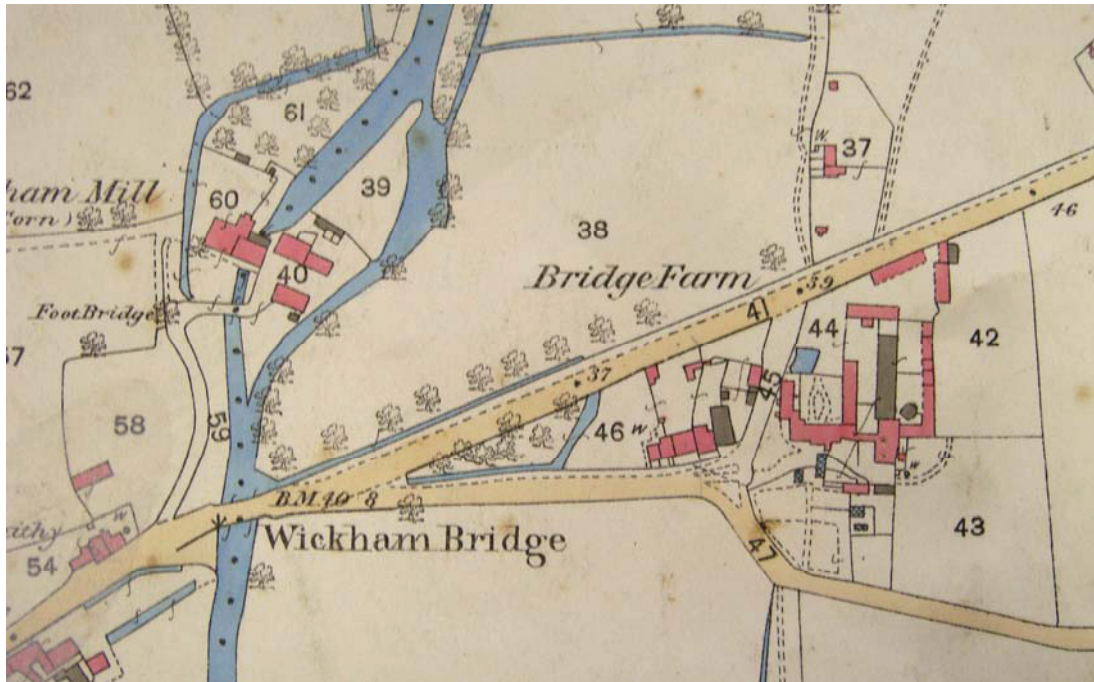


Figure 3
First edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1883, showing the proximity of Bridge Farm to Wickham Bridge and Wickham Mill on the Deben.



Figure 3a
Detail of the first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1883 above, showing the much enlarged mid-19th century farm complex. Red is used to depict domestic and masonry structures as opposed to utilitarian and timber buildings, and reflects the brick external walls of the southern granary. The cattle yards and sheds to the east of the timber-framed barn no longer survive.

At the time of the Hacheston tithe survey in 1839 Bridge Farm was an unusually large tenanted holding of 365 acres owned by Andrew Arcedeckne Esquire of Glevering Hall (1.5 km to the north-west) and occupied by Robert Bond. The tithe map shows the house as a detached rectangular structure of modest proportions, with the 'dairy' to the west and the barn

and granary to the east (figure 2); the site (numbered 357) is described as ‘farm yards’ without reference to the house, and it seems likely that Robert Bond lived elsewhere. The holding was primarily arable and included two additional farm yards (1 km to the east and 1.5 km to the north-east), suggesting it represented the amalgamation of a least three older farms, but no farmhouse is mentioned. An enclosure to the south-east of the site (numbered 358) is named as a ‘drying ground’, indicating, in conjunction with ‘wretting pit piece’ further to the east, that the farm was involved in the production of flax.

The farm complex underwent extensive refurbishment during the mid-19th century, as shown by the first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1883 (figure 3). The farmhouse had been considerably enlarged and linked to the ‘dairy wing’, and several new buildings, including the present shelter shed (D) had been erected to form a series of yards to the east and west and north of the barn. The formerly detached granary had been linked to the barn’s southern gable. Many local farms were similarly refurbished or entirely rebuilt during the 1850s and 1860s in response to the rapidly changing nature of agriculture after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 (which saw the introduction of cattle to compensate for falling grain prices) and in this instance extensive reconstruction may have been prompted by a relatively recent process of amalgamation. The enlarged house would certainly have been more appropriate for a tenants of 365 acres. The circular feature at the southern end of the new eastern yard was probably a horse mill, and evidence of an inserted loft at the same end of the barn suggests it may have been converted into a stable.

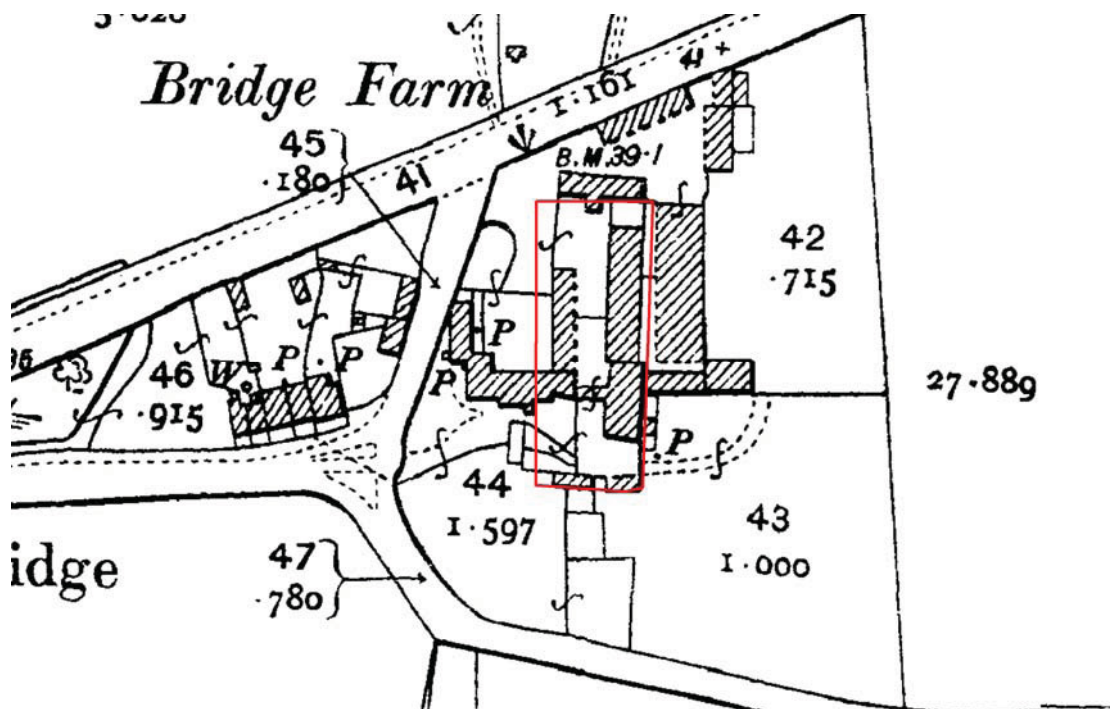


Figure 4

Second edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing a large new covered cattle yard to the east of the barn. The eastern elevation of the western shed (D) is depicted by a broken line, demonstrating that it was an open-sided structure as today. The present linear yard to the east of the barn is divided into two enclosures which probably formed cattle yards.

Building Analysis

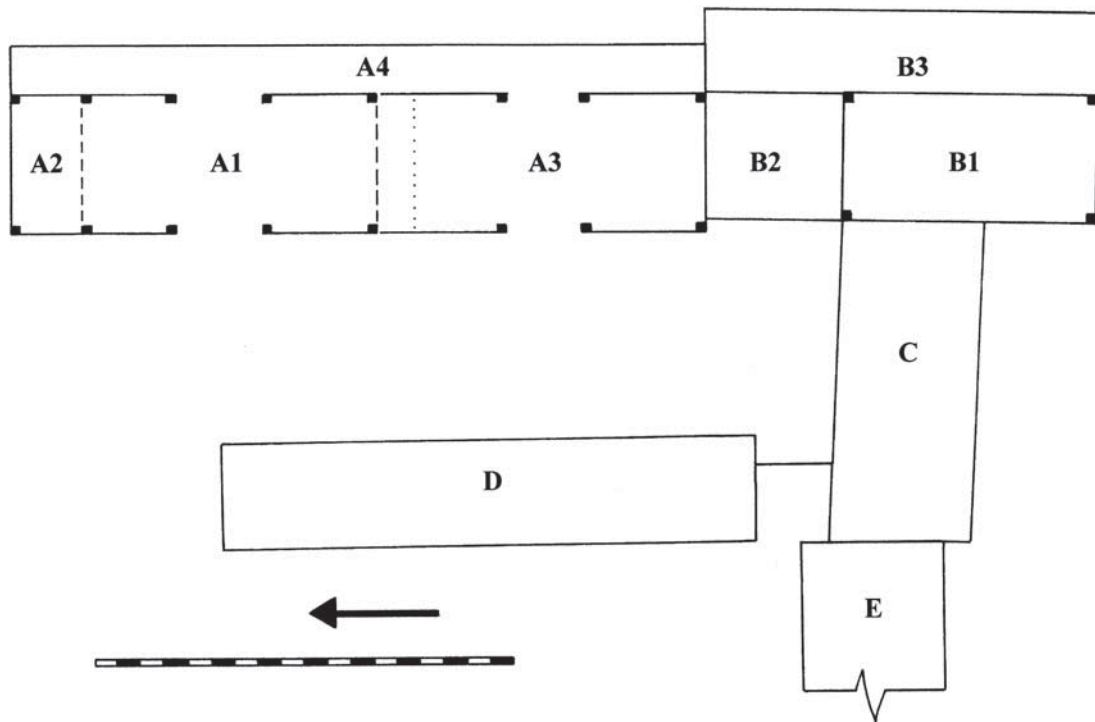


Figure 5

Schematic block plan of the farm buildings identifying each unit with a letter for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Scale in metres.

Key

- A. Timber-framed and weatherboarded barn, formerly thatched. Now a single space but built in four stages as follows:
- A1: A three-bay barn of *circa* 1630. Intact clasped-purlin roof structure with wind braces at both gables. Originally entered by full-height doors in the eastern elevation of its northern bay with a smaller, low door in the western elevation. The vertical northern gable was open framed and must have abutted an earlier barn of which no trace remains, while the closed southern gable was hipped (indicated by a broken line). Now with secondary entrances in its central bay.
- A2. A single-bay extension of *circa* 1650 with a hipped northern gable and internally trenced corner braces. Presumably built when the earlier barn on the site was demolished. The hipped gable was replaced by the present vertical gable in the 19th century.
- A3. A three-bay barn of the early-19th century with central entrances to east and west. Intact roof structure of staggered butt-purlins. Divided from the older barn by an internal partition indicated by a dotted line and at some time provided with a loft (the partition and loft later removed).
- A4. Lean-to pantiled shed extending along the entire length of the barn. Probably mid-19th century but possibly contemporary with A3.
- B1. A late-18th or early-19th century detached timber-framed and pantiled shed with first-floor granary entered by an external door in its southern gable. The ground storey probably a cart shed but much altered and of uncertain layout. Intact grain bins and roof structure of butt-purlins.

- B2.** A mid-19th century vehicle or animal shed built to link the barn (A) and granary (B1).
- B3.** A mid-19th century lean-to shed. Probably contemporary with B2.
- C.** A 20th century brick shed and garage on the site of a narrower 19th century shed.
- D.** A mid-19th century brick cattle shelter shed with clasped-purlin roof and open arcade to east. The entire eastern elevation and much of the roof rebuilt in the late-20th or early-21st century.
- E.** Eastern end of farmhouse (listed as probably early-17th century but not inspected).

A. The Barn

Proportions

The barn at Bridge Farm is an impressive timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of 7 principal bays which extends to 29.8 m in length on a north-south axis by 5.8 m in overall width (97.5 ft by 19 ft). The roof-plates rise to 4 m (13 ft), including a brick plinth of 80 cm (32 ins), and the width is increased to 8 m (26 ft) by a lean-to shed which extends along the entire rear (eastern) elevation. The roof is steeply pitched at approximately 55 degrees, suggesting its present covering of corrugated asbestos replaced thatch.

Multiple Phases: 17th Century Barn (A1)

The interior is currently open from gable to gable, and at first sight appears to be a single structure, but on closer inspection the frame reveals an unusually complex process of evolution. The earliest structure (A1 in figure 6) contains three bays as shown in figure 5, and extends to 12.2 m in length (40 ft). Its clasped-purlin roof remains completely intact, with arch-braced tie-beams and wind-braces at both gables, while its walls were fully framed with pegged joints internally trenched wall-braces. These features suggest a date in the second quarter of the 17th century, as wind-braces and trenched braces were rarely used during the second half of the century and additional roof braces would be expected during its first quarter. The present entrance doors of the central bay are later insertions, and there is evidence of an original full-height entrance in the eastern elevation of the northern bay with a smaller rear door in the opposite western elevation. (The eastern roof-plate lacks stud mortises but contains jamb mortises against both storey posts, while the western storey posts contain mortises for a missing mid-rail with short studs above.) The northern gable alongside the entrance bay was open-framed in a highly unusual arrangement (i.e. it consisted of an arch-braced tie-beam without studs), and the structure presumably designed as an extension to an older barn which it abutted. The southern gable was hipped, and retains a hip collar with empty stud mortises in its tie-beam, while the northern gable was vertical. Symmetrical internal wall braces rose from the storey posts of the entrance bay and southern gable to the roof-plates and (in the case of the gable) to the tie-beam.

Northern Extension (A2)

Within a quarter of a century the presumed earlier barn to the north was demolished, and the extension (i.e. structure A1) was itself extended to the north by a single bay of 3.2 m (10.5 ft). The present entrance may well have been inserted at this point, as the layout of the new, complete barn was normalised, although it is unclear when its orientation altered from east to west. The additional bay was hipped (as shown by an empty trench for a hip collar in its roof) but subsequently converted into a vertical gable, and its fully-framed walls contained internally trenched braces rising from both corner posts.

Survival of 17th Century Frame

Although the roof structures, roof-plates, tie-beams and storey posts of the 17th century phases remain intact, the only wall-framing to survive lies in the eastern elevation of the extension (A2). The remaining studs were replaced with narrow studwork interrupted by diagonal 'primary' braces during the mid-19th century refurbishment of the site, which probably

included the addition of the eastern lean-to (A4), and bolted knee-braces replaced the tie-beam arch-braces. Vehicle doors were inserted into the northern gable during the 20th century.

Napoleonic Extension (A3)

The southern end of the barn is an early-19th century structure of 3 bays that was designed with its present central entrance from the outset and retains most of its original structure with bolted-knee braces to the tie-beams and primary bracing to the studwork (A3). The roof of staggered butt-purlins is typical of the area's 'Napoleonic barns', built to accommodate the increase in grain production stimulated by high prices and the resulting enclosure of common land. The extended barn was divided internally by a boarded partition which now survives only at roof height approximately 2 m south of structure A1, and there is evidence that its southern end was partly floored and may have operated as a feed milling area or even as a stable (its timbers are whitewashed, unlike those of the northern area, and the southern gable contains a high loading door that now opens into the loft of the adjoining shed (B2).

B. The Granary and 'Infill Shed'

The southern gable of the barn is adjoined by a slightly lower timber-framed and weatherboarded shed with a pantiled roof (glazed to the west and plain to the east). This extends to 16.75 m in length (55 ft) and 5.5 m in width (18 ft) excluding a brick rear lean-to of 3.65 m (12 ft). The southern part of the structure was originally a detached building of 11 m in length (36 ft) with a granary on its upper storey (B1). Its butt-purlin roof structure survives intact, along with much of its ceiling plaster (between the rafters) and suggests a date in the early-19th century – it is probably contemporary with the southern bays of the barn (A3). The granary preserves a series of low boarded bins with an axial passage that are probably original, with a blocked external loading door in the southern gable. The northern gable contains a blocked window above its tie-beam, with evidence of a window and door on the ground floor. The granary is currently reached by a 20th century stair from the rear lean-to. The ground storey has been converted into a modern workshop and its external western elevation has been largely rebuilt in brick, leaving little evidence of its original layout and function, but it is likely to have operated as a cart shed in the usual manner.

The distance of 5.8 m (19 ft) between the barn and granary was filled during the mid-19th century by a timber-framed and boarded shed (B2) which also appears to have operated as a vehicle shed with double doors to the west. The rear lean-to was probably added at the same period.

C. Shelter Shed

The western side of the narrow yard alongside the barn is formed by a long, single-storied pantiled brick shed which is open-sided to the east. This building is not shown on the title map of 1839 but was present in 1883 and its clasped-purlin roof of machine-sawn softwood is consistent with a date in the 1860s. The building adjoined a pair of small enclosures in 1883 and is a typical shelter shed for cattle, but its western elevation and much of its roof has been recently rebuilt and no historic fixtures or fittings survive.

Historic Significance

The barn at Bridge Farm is an impressive building in full view of the nearby road which retains the entire roof structure and the key historic timbers of a fine early-17th century barn of unusual layout. Despite the replacement of all but a small section of its original 17th century wall framing in the 19th century the building is in my view sufficiently intact and of sufficient historic interest to merit listing at grade II in its own right. The attached early-19th century granary is also of interest given the survival of its grain bins, and enhances the historic context of the barn.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from main road (B1078) to west, showing barn to right.
2. General view of entrance to site from main road (B1078) to north-west.
3. General view of site from north showing farmhouse in centre and barn to left.
4. General view from main road (B1078) to north-west showing converted brick shed left & barn centre.
5. Exterior of farmhouse from north showing barn to left (included for site context).
6. Exterior of farmhouse from north-west showing barn in rear to left (included for site context).
7. Exterior of farmhouse from north-east showing 17th century wing (included for site context).
8. Exterior of farmhouse from lane between B1078 & Ash Road to north.
9. Exterior of farmhouse from south-west showing granary in rear to right.
10. General view of site from 20th century yards to east, showing barn and granary in rear.
11. General view of yard from north showing shelter shed (D) to right and barn (A) left.
12. General view of yard from south showing barn (A) to right & shelter shed (D) left.
13. Eastern external elevation of shelter shed (D) from yard to north-east.
14. Interior of shelter shed (D) from north showing original roof structure to right.
15. Southern end of shelter shed (D) from east showing access to farmhouse in rear.
16. Western external elevation of barn from yard to south-west, showing infill shed (B2) to right.
17. External detail of southern doors in western elevation of barn (A3).
18. External detail of northern doors in western elevation of barn (A1).
19. Exterior of barn from north-west showing northern gable and rear lean-to.
20. External elevation of rear lean-to (A4) from north-west.

21. Eastern external elevation of barn from east showing junction with granary to left.
22. Junction of barn (left) and granary (right) from west showing doors to infill shed (B2) in centre.
23. Junction of barn (left) and granary from yard to north-west.
24. General internal view of barn from south showing midstrey of structure A3 in foreground.
25. General internal view of barn from north showing modern bracing straps.
26. General internal view of rear lean-to (A4) from north.
27. General internal view of rear lean-to (A4) from south.
28. Detail of external boarding and brick plinth of barn (A1) from lean-to to north-west.
29. Internal northern gable of barn (A2) showing removed framing and 20th century doors.
30. Internal eastern elevation of northern extension bay of barn (A2) showing corner brace to left.
31. Detail of original internal corner brace in eastern elevation of northern extension bay (A2).
32. Northern end of roof from west showing wind braces of original gable (A1) right & extension (A2) hip left.
33. General view of original 17th century roof structure from north, showing wind braces of in rear.
34. Interior of original 17th century entrance bay (A1) showing later eastern entrance to right.
35. Detail of original roof structure above original entrance bay (A1) showing wind brace to left.
36. Internal eastern elevation of secondary midstrey in 17th century structure (A1).
37. Internal eastern elevation of rebuilt southern bay of 17th century structure (A1).
38. Tie-beam showing empty stud mortises of original southern gable (structure A1).
39. Southern end of 17th century roof from west, showing original hip collar in centre.
40. Junction of structures A1 (left) and A3 in eastern internal elevation.
41. Eastern internal elevation of northern bay of structure A3, showing midstrey to right.

42. Eastern internal elevation of original midstrey in southern structure of barn (A3).
43. Detail of staggered butt-purlin roof of structure A3 from west.
44. Interior of south-eastern corner of structure A3 showing southern gable to right.
45. Staggered butt-purlin roof structure at southern end of barn, seen from north.
46. Interior of south-western corner of barn showing entrance to right and gable to left.
47. Roof structure at southern end of barn (A3) from south, showing remnant of internal partition.
48. Internal western elevation of southern entrance bay (A3).
49. Internal western elevation of northern bay of structure A3, showing corner post of A1 to right.
50. Internal western elevation of northern entrance bay (A1).
51. Internal western elevation of original entrance bay (A1) showing present entrance to left.
52. Internal western elevation of northern extension bay (A2), showing original open-framed gable to left.
53. Detail of original western entrance bay (A1) showing stud & mid-rail mortises.
54. Roof of northern bay from east showing original vertical gable (A1) left and later hipped gable (A2) right.
55. Exterior of granary (B) from south-east, showing barn in rear to right.
56. Southern gable of granary (B) showing house to left.
57. Exterior of granary (B) showing western elevation and modern garage to left.
58. Original external northern gable of granary (B1) from infill shed (B2).
59. Detail of blocked door (left) and window in northern external gable of granary (B1).
60. Blocked window in northern gable of granary (B1) seen from roof of infill shed (B2).
61. Boarded external northern gable of granary (B1) above ceiling of infill shed (B2).
62. Roof structure of infill shed (B2) showing southern gable of barn to left.
63. External southern gable of barn from loft of infill shed (B2), showing door to former barn loft.
64. Southern external gable of barn from infill shed (B2), showing blocked window and hatch.

65. Interior of infill shed (B2) from west showing gables of barn (left) and granary (right).
66. Internal western entrance of infill shed (B2).
67. Ceiling joists of infill shed (B2) from south-west.
68. Internal northern elevation of granary (B1), showing entrance to infill shed (B2).
69. Interior of granary (B1) from south, showing conversion into workshop.
70. Interior of granary (B1) from north, showing window in southern gable.
71. Internal western elevation of granary (B1) showing secondary brickwork.
72. Interior of first-floor granary (B1) from south showing grain bins and butt-purlin roof structure.
73. Detail of boarded grain bins of first-floor granary (B1) from south.
74. Interior of first-floor granary (B1) from north.
75. Interior of southern gable of first-floor granary (B1) showing blocked loading door.
76. Interior of northern gable of first-floor granary (B1) showing blocked window.
77. Detail of butt-purlin roof structure of granary (B1).
78. Interior of lean-to shed (B3) from south, showing infill shed (B2) to left.
79. Eastern external elevation of infill shed (B2) from rear lean-to (B3).
80. Interior of lean-to shed (B3) from south showing granary (B1) to left.
81. Interior of lean-to shed (B3) from north showing boarded eastern exterior of granary (B1) right.
82. Existing stair to first-floor granary (B1) from lean-to shed (B3) to east.

Appendix 2 (pp. 14-19): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 General view of entrance to site from main road (B1078) to north-west, showing barn to right with converted brick shed and 20th century buildings to left



A2.2 General view of yard from north showing barn (A) to left and much rebuilt shelter shed (D) to right.



A2.3 Exterior of barn from north-west showing northern gable with steeply pitched roof (formerly thatched) and rear lean-to (A4) to left



A2.4 Junction of barn (left) and granary (B) from yard to north-west, with modern brick shed to right



A2.5 General internal view of barn from north showing modern bracing straps.



A2.6 Northern end of roof from west showing wind braces of original 17th century open-framed gable right (A1) & former hipped gable of mid-17th century extension bay (A2) left



A2.7 Southern end of original 17th century roof (A1) seen from west, showing wind braces and original hip collar in centre



A2.8 Detail of staggered butt-purlin roof of early-19th century structure (A3) from west



A2.9 Detail of original internal corner brace and studs in eastern elevation of mid-17th century northern extension bay (A2). The northern gable to the left has been rebuilt



A2.10 Exterior of granary (B) from south-east showing the rebuilt western elevation to the left with blocked loading door in the gable



A2.11 External southern gable of barn from loft of infill shed (B2), showing ladder and door to former loft in barn



A2.12 Interior of first-floor granary (B1) from south, showing 19th century grain bins with central passage and butt-purlin roof structure