

**Barn at Burnham Cottage,
Old Newton,
Suffolk
ONW 023**

Historic Building Record

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**Barn at
Burnham Cottage,
Church Road,
Old Newton, Suffolk,**

(TM 0536 6244)

Historic Building Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 3 of a redundant historic farm building. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, dated 23 September 2009, Ref. SpecHBR&Mon(EM)BurnhamCott_OldNewton_09) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council application 0779/06).

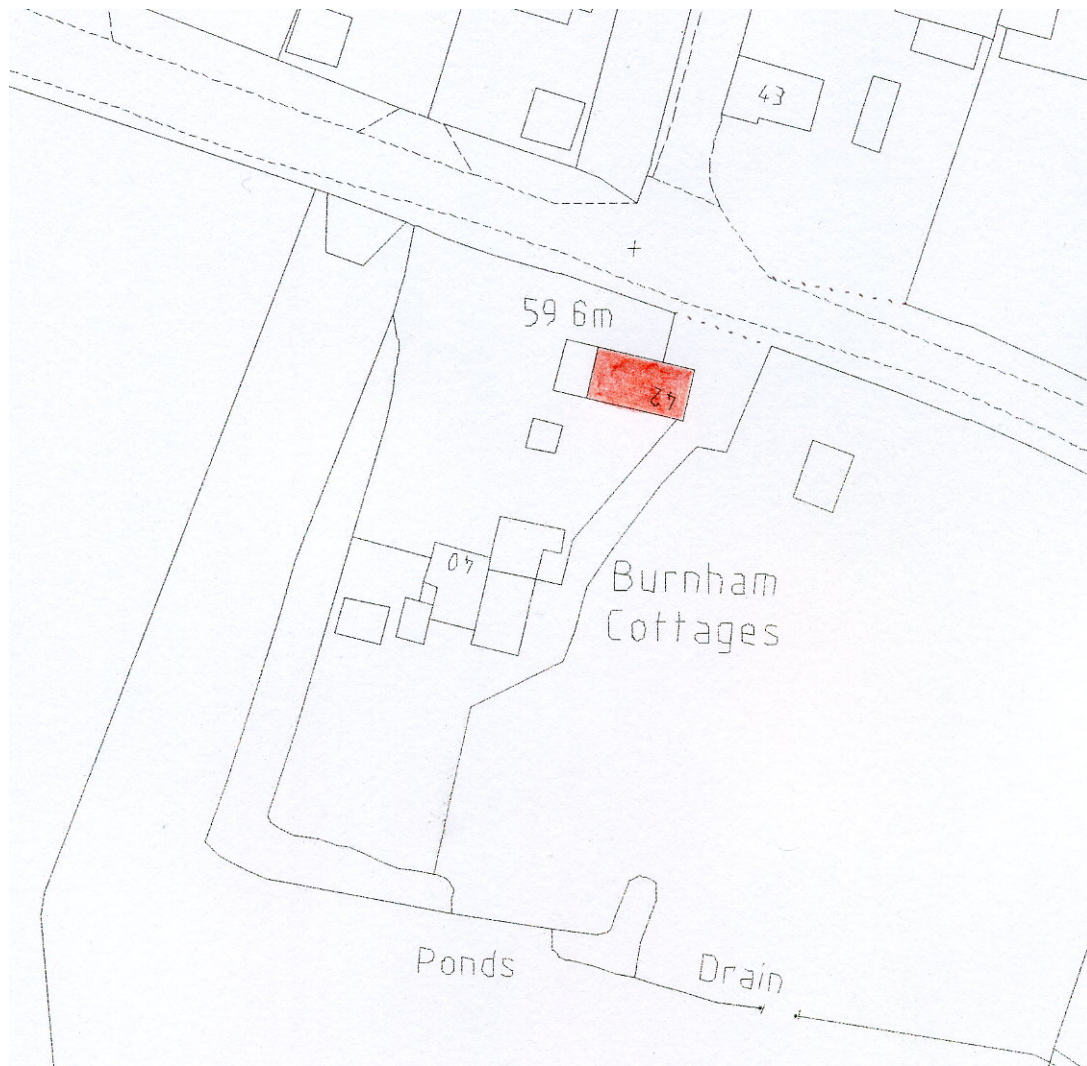
Introduction

This report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 70 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 13th October 2009.

Summary

Burnham Cottage is a grade II-listed open-hall house of the mid-15th century which contains a fine crown-post open truss and lies to the south of Church Road in what appears to be the remains of a medieval moat. The barn is an early-17th century timber-framed structure in three bays which adjoins the road at the entrance to the site, facing south towards the service gable of the cottage, and may overlie the infilled northern side of the moat. By the time of the tithe survey in 1839 the property contained only 2.5 acres and belonged to the neighbouring farm on the west, but it was probably designed as a small farm in its own right. The adjoining field was known as Burman's Piece, suggesting the present name is ancient.

The barn's roof was replaced in the 20th century when vehicle doors were inserted into the eastern gable to convert it into a tractor shed and storage unit, but the framing is otherwise exceptionally complete and retains unusual pairs of tension braces in its outer bays. The central bay contained full-height doors to the south and a low, narrow door to the rear, while the eastern bay was divided by an internal partition (since removed) and formed a stable with a hay loft and a separate entrance to the south. The hay loft was open to the barn. A mid-19th century lean-to shed of clay-lump has protected an area of original external clay daub, but the cladding has been replaced elsewhere with secondary daub and weatherboarding. Most of the storey posts and tie-beams were re-used from an earlier, larger barn of the 16th century, and contain empty mortises for arch-braces that do not relate to the present open trusses (which retain three of their original four braces). It is rare for a barn of this small scale to retain all three original doors, providing evidence of its use as both a threshing barn and a stable. The separately tenoned bracket of the main southern entrance is also an unusual survival, and in my view the building is of sufficient historic value to merit listing in its own right despite the loss of its roof



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Figure 1

Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan

Showing the barn in red adjoining Church Road to the north with Burnham Cottage to the south (now sub-divided into a pair of tenements). The site is defined on the west and south by a shallow linear pond which probably represents the remains of a medieval moat, and on the east by a horse paddock. The barn is likely to adjoin or overlie the northern return of the moat.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Burnham Cottage lies to the south of Church Road approximately 600 m west of Old Newton parish church. The barn which forms the subject of this report adjoins the road immediately west of the entrance to the site, and the Cottage lies at right-angles to it some 14 m to the south. The western and southern boundaries of the site are defined by an inner hedge and a broad, shallow outer pond which may represent a truncated medieval moat. The Cottage is listed at grade II, and described in the Schedule as a 'house, probably mid-16th century or earlier'; the building is in fact an exceptionally well-preserved mid-15th century open-hall house of four bays which retains both half-hipped gables and a fine arch-braced open truss with a chamfered crown-post. It extends to 18 feet in overall width and 40 feet in length, with a parlour and service bay of approximately 10 feet to the south and north respectively and a central hall of approximately 20 feet. The building is currently divided into a pair of cottages

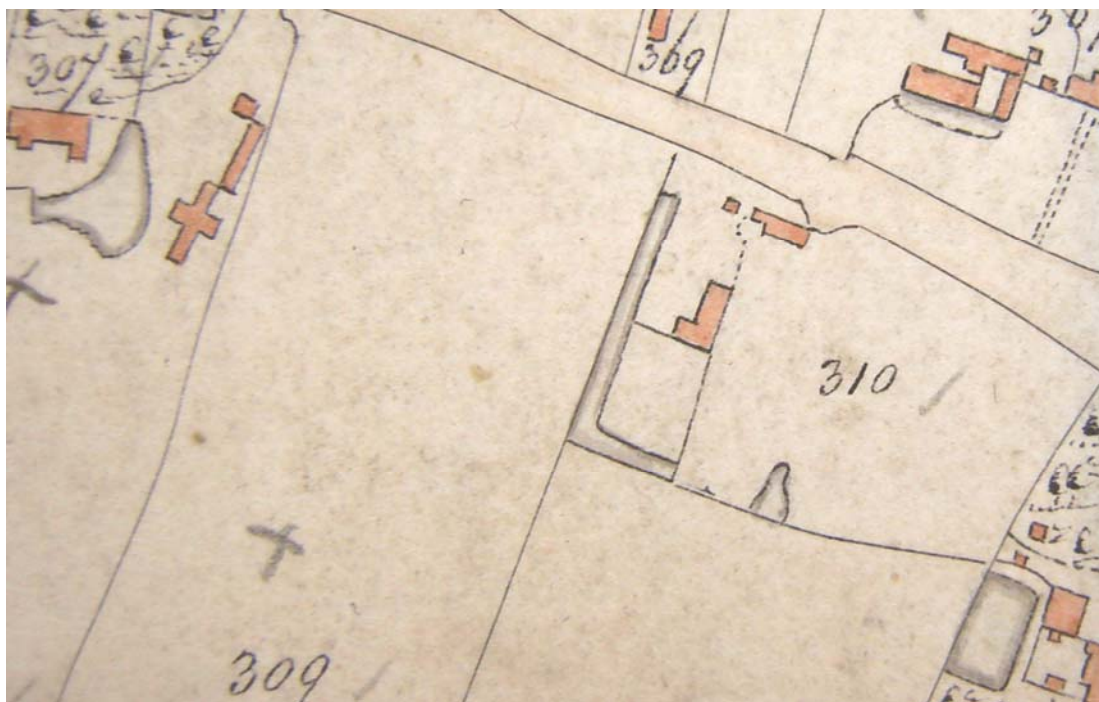


Figure 2

The Old Newton parish tithe map of 1839 (SRO Ipswich), showing the barn and cottage much as they remain today but with a smaller shed against the barn's western gable.

The site (310) was a tenanted 'cottage, garden and orchard' belonging to the neighbouring farm to the west (no. 307). The intervening field (309) was named as Burman's Piece, suggesting the present name (or a variation thereof) may be ancient. The vicarage of Revd. Charles Bridges, who rented the orchard, is shown bottom right.

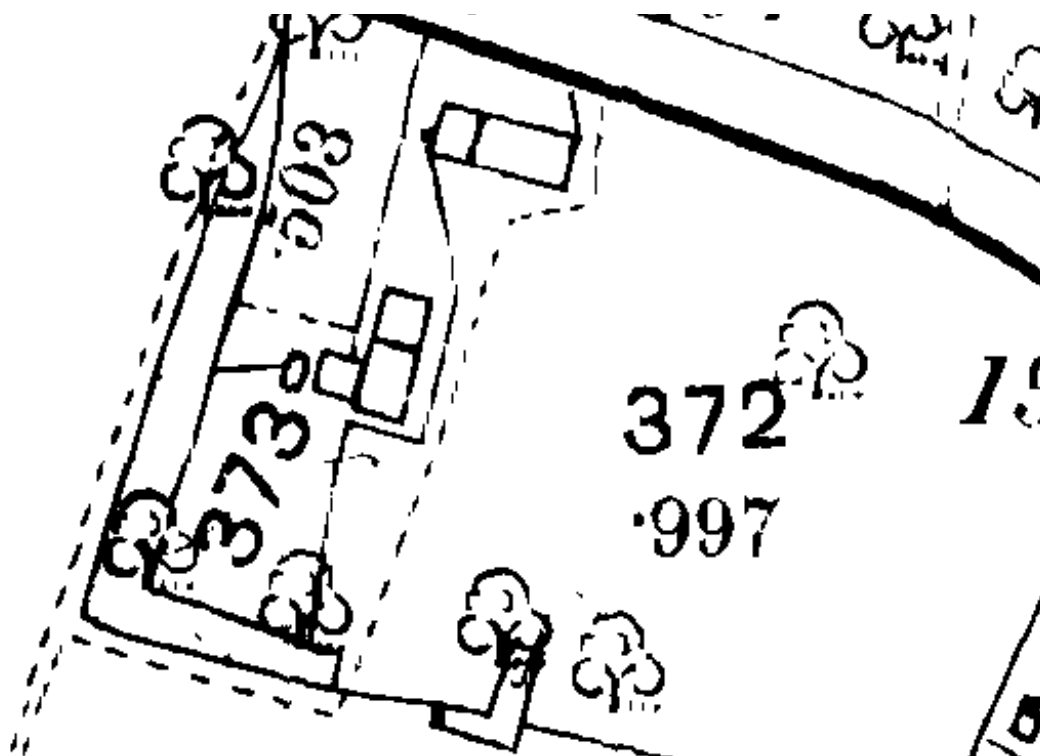


Figure 3

First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886, showing the present western lean-to (B)

of which only the southernmost was inspected internally, and is named (apparently erroneously) as Burnhams Cottage in the Schedule (IoE no. 2806322). Such a building is typical of late-medieval farmhouses of the middle rank in Suffolk, and would have been appropriate to a holding of some 30-50 acres. The barn lies in the usual position at the service end of the house.

At the time of the Old Newton parish tithe survey in 1839 the site was described as a cottage , garden and orchard containing 2.5 acres owned by John Edgar Rust and tenanted by 'Charles Bridges and others'. Rust owned and occupied the neighbouring farm of 92 acres on the west, along with two additional tenanted farms amounting to 140 acres in the parish. The cottage was probably already sub-divided, as indicated by the plural of 'others', but the Revd. Charles Bridges occupied the vicarage immediately to the east and probably rented only the orchard (i.e. the present paddock) and perhaps the barn. The adjoining arable field on the west belonging to Rust's farm was 'Burman's Piece', suggesting the property's present name may be a variant of something much earlier. The first edition Ordnance Survey of 1886 shows the present clay-lump extension against the barn's western gable, instead of the smaller addition of 1839, but its outline has otherwise remained unaltered.

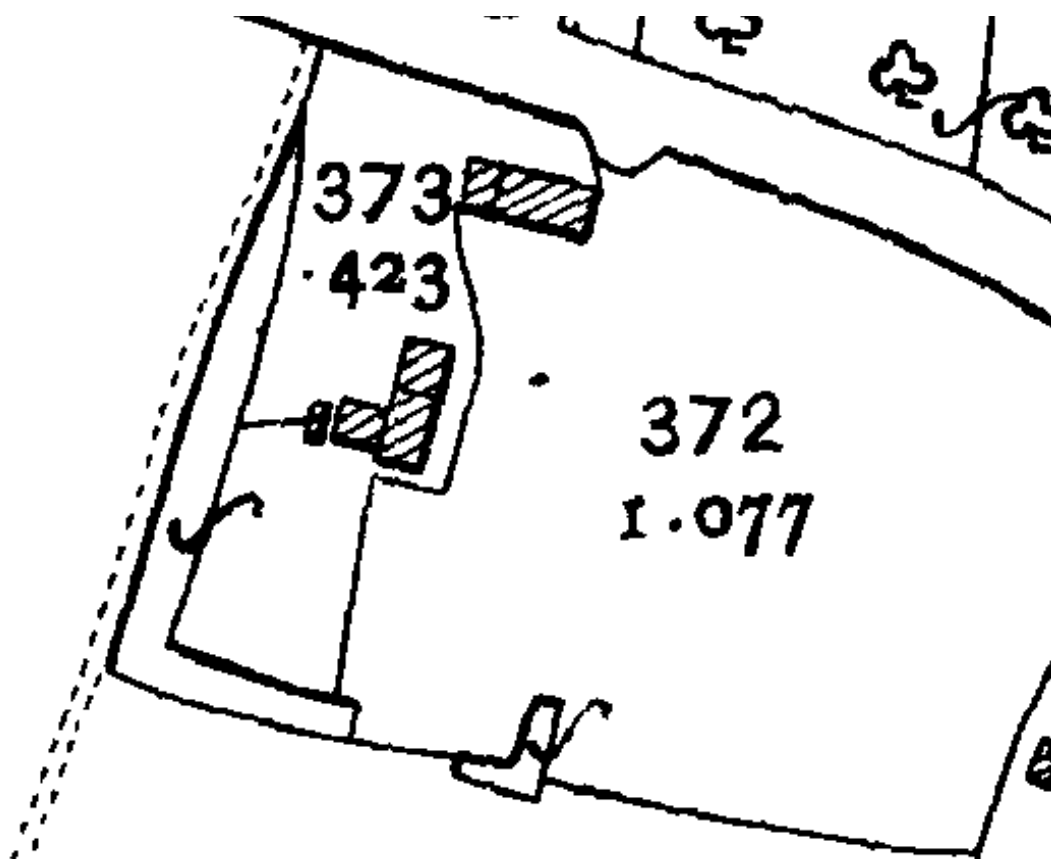


Figure 4
Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing no change since 1886.

Building Analysis

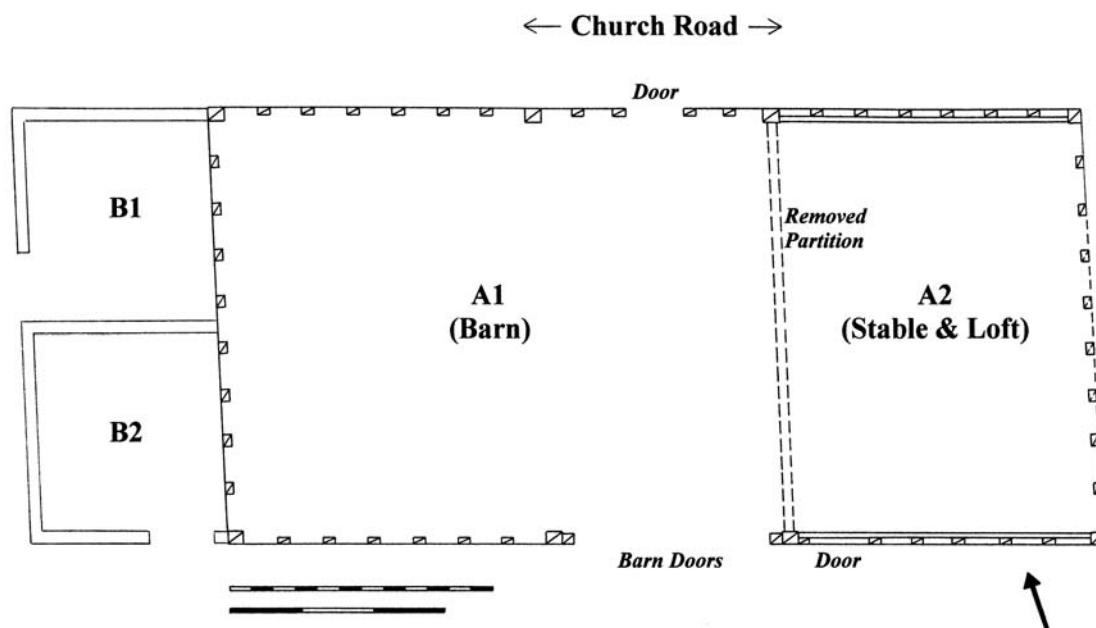


Figure A
Ground Plan of the barn showing its original layout.

The original timber-framed structure (A) contained three bays with full-height barn doors in the southern elevation of the central bay (facing the house) and a smaller door in the rear elevation immediately opposite. There is evidence of a ceiling and separate door to the eastern bay (A2), which was originally partitioned to form a stable and hay loft (the latter open to the barn). A clay-lump lean-to shed (B) of 2.75 m (9 ft) in length with a central partition and a slate roof was added to the western gable in the mid-19th century. Note the building's unusual skewed outline.

The barn's elevations and internal trusses are shown in figures B, C & D below, all with scales in feet (top) and metres.

Proportions and Structure

The barn at Burnham Cottage adjoins the southern side of Church Road 14 m north of the 15th century house. The original timber framed structure of three bays extends to 12.2 m in length by 6.1 m in overall width on an east-west axis and its roof-plate rises to 3 m above the internal floor of 20th century concrete (40 ft by 20 ft by 10 ft). The wall studs extend to 2.6 m in height (105 ins) between the roof-plates and ground sills, and the latter rest on a low brick plinth of approximately 20 cm (8 ins). The entire building is skewed as shown in figure A above, forming a parallelogram rather than a rectangle; this is highly unusual in an isolated barn but probably reflects an older property boundary which is no longer obvious. The studs are tenoned and pegged to the plates and sills, and trenched externally for paired wall braces as shown in the drawings.

The low-pitched softwood roof structure dates only from the late-20th century and is covered by corrugated iron. The tie-beams of the two open trusses lack mortises for crown or queen-posts, and the original roof probably contained clasped purlins; the absence of stud mortises from the upper surfaces of both gable tie-beams suggests it was hipped to reflect the house, but the thin studs of the present gables pre-date the roof and indicate these hips were 'pushed-out' in the 18th or 19th century. The wattle-and daub infill of the western gable appears to be

original, with vertical coppice poles between the studs and external laths nailed and trenched to their exteriors. The external daub has remained unpainted where it is protected by the western lean-to (B), revealing the barn's original appearance. A single panel of wattle-and-daub also survives in the northern elevation of the central bay, but the remaining daub of this elevation was replaced in the 18th or 19th century and does not fill the panels. The daub has been entirely lost from the southern elevation which is currently clad chiefly in late-20th century weatherboarding with earlier boards of the 18th or 19th century in parts of the western bay.

The tie-beams of the open trusses contain additional mortises for arch-braces that do not relate to the present structure and have clearly been re-used from an earlier barn of wider span, as have all but one of the storey posts (including the corner posts). The tie-beam of the western gable is also re-used, but the roof-plates and the tie-beam of the eastern gable were cut for the present barn and bear neat chamfers with run-out stops.

Date

The barn can be dated to the first half of the 17th century on the basis of the face-halved-and-bladed scarf joints in its roof-plates and its trenched external braces: scarf joints of this type were not introduced until *circa* 1600, while 'primary' braces which interrupt the studs became the norm during the second half of the century). The tie-beams and storey posts have been re-used from an older and larger barn of the 16th century, and the wall framing may have been recycled from the same source: the paired tension braces of the outer bays are more consistent with a 16th than a 17th century origin, and differ in colour and quality from the 17th century roof-plates. The lean-to shed of clay-lump and slate against the western gable was added between 1839 and 1886 as demonstrated by figures 2 and 3, and is likely to date from *circa* 1850.

Layout and Original Function

The barn was typical of smaller 16th and 17th century examples in Suffolk with a full-height entrance in the southern elevation of its central bay, a small door in the rear (roadside) elevation immediately opposite and a stable in the eastern bay with a separate entrance. The jambs of the southern entrance still survive, along with one of two solid corner brackets which created the semblance of an arch, and the jambs and tenoned lintels of the rear door and adjacent stable door also remain intact. The lintel of the northern door has been raised by 20 cm (8 ins) to increase its height from the original 1.5 m (5 ft) above the sill. Both this door and the southern stable entrance are 82 cm (32 ins) in width, and the lintel of the latter lies 1.6 m above the sill (63 ins) and has not been raised. The stable was divided from the rest of the barn by a missing partition as indicated by the remaining pegged tenons of a lateral rail in the storey posts of the eastern open truss. This rail lay 1.2 m below the roof-plates (43 ins) and would have supported an axial joist to which the common joists of a hay loft were tenoned or (more probably) lodged. The pegged clamps which supported the outer ends of these joists still survive (with empty dowel holes suggesting re-use) 92 cm (36 ins) below the plates. The internal partition rose only the missing rail, and the loft was open to the barn. There is no evidence of another original door in the stable, although a secondary door was at some time inserted at the eastern end of the northern elevation, but the central part of the eastern gable was lost when the present vehicle entrance was inserted in the 20th century. It is therefore unclear whether the animals were stalled against the northern elevation or (as is more likely based on evidence elsewhere) against the gable. The eastern stable bay extends to 4 m (13 ft) between its corner posts, and the two-bay open barn to 7.4 m (24.5 ft) with an entrance bay of 3 m and a western bay of 4.25 m (10 ft and 14 ft respectively). These proportions are consistent with a respectable but modest 17th century holding of 30-50 acres, as suggested by the quality of the medieval house, and the site probably formed an independent farm before being absorbed by its neighbour to the west (see figure 2). The purpose of the 19th century

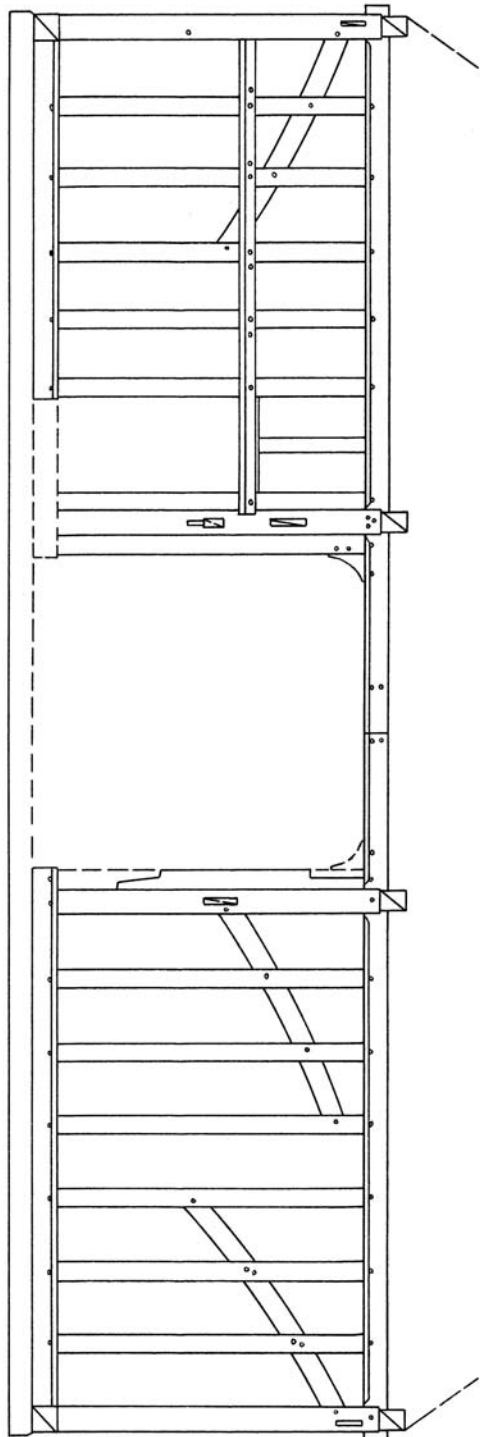
clay-lump sheds against the western gable is not certain; both were entered by double-hung doors and may have accommodated house cows belonging to the cottagers.

Later Alterations

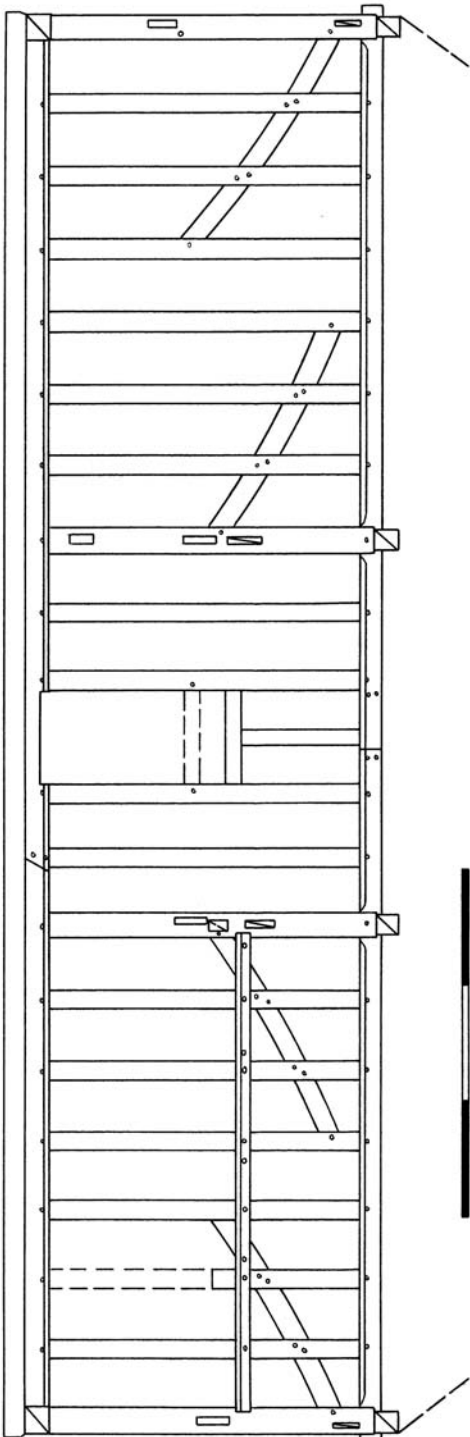
The barn is understood to have been used as a tractor garage in the 20th century, when it still belonged to a farm in the parish, and in recent years as a storage shed for the tools and materials of a local builder. The vehicle doors of the eastern gable date only from the mid 20th century, and replaced a pair of 19th century double-hung barn doors in the central bay of the southern elevation; only one of the four hinged doors survived the recent re-cladding of this elevation. The stable and northern doors of the original barn were probably blocked in the 19th century, and the internal partition and loft removed at the same time. The present roof and concrete floor also represent alterations of the mid or late-20th century, and the partial removal of two panels of original daub in the western gable is understood to have been caused during a recent burglary. Where it is protected by the 19th century lean-to, and previously by the addition shown in figure 2, the roughcast clay daub of this gable reveals the barn's original external appearance, and the tarred daub of the northern elevation and the weatherboarding of the southern are secondary. The timbers are not weathered externally, and the wall bracing would not have been visible in the original barn.

Historic Significance

The barn at Burnham Cottage is an exceptionally intact smaller barn of the early-17th century which preserves all but a small section of its original wall framing complete with unusual paired tension braces in its outer bays. It is rare for a barn of this scale to retain all three original doors, providing evidence of its use as both a threshing barn and a stable; small rear doors were the norm in early East Anglian barns, designed only to create a through-draught for threshing and winnowing, but were typically destroyed by the insertion of vehicle thoroughfares in the 19th and 20th centuries. The separately tenoned bracket of the main southern entrance is also an unusual survival, and in my view the building is of sufficient rarity and historic interest to merit listing in its own right despite the loss of its roof.



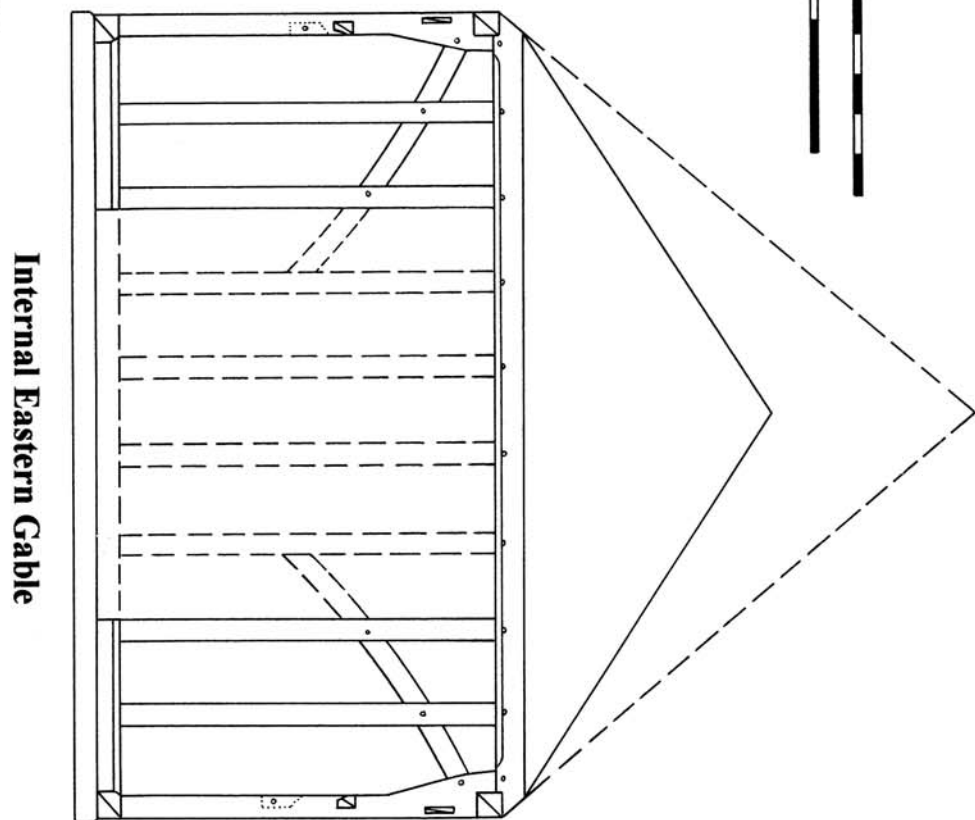
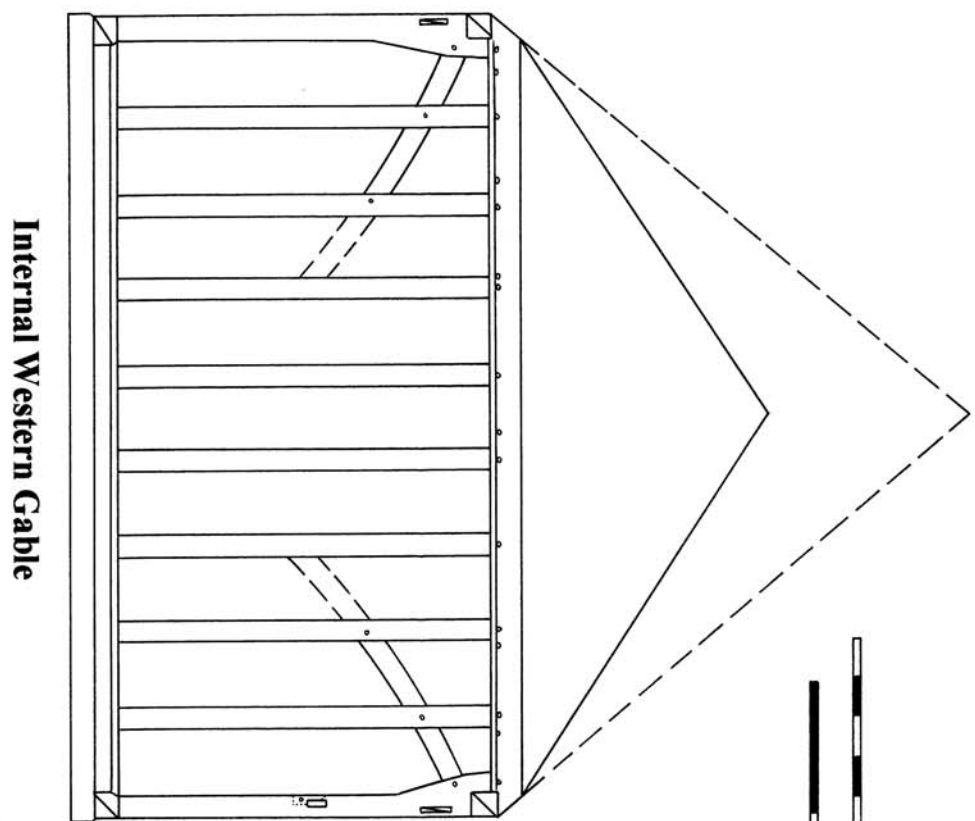
Southern Internal Elevation



Northern Internal Elevation



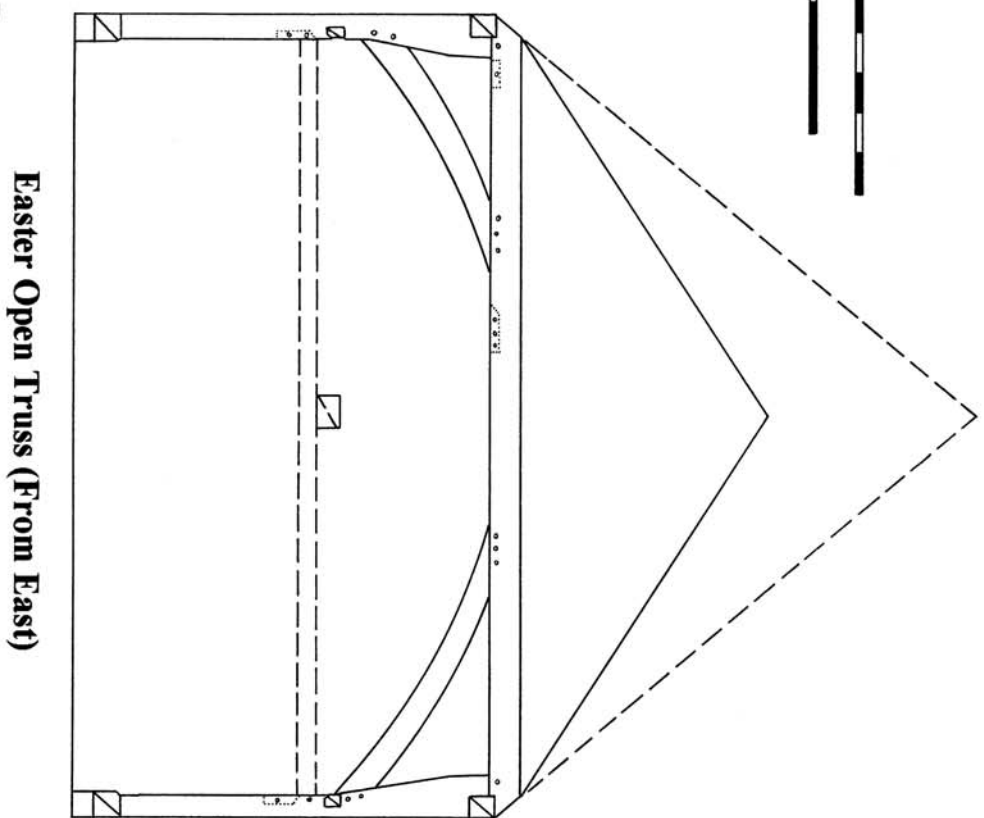
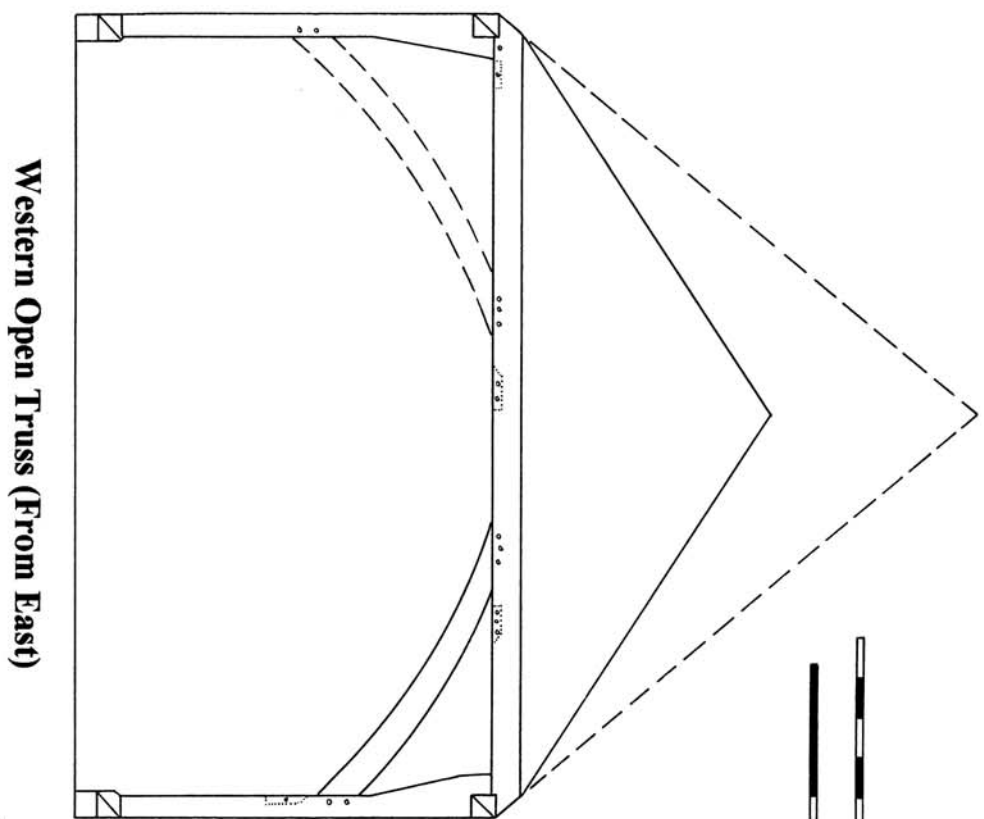
Figure B



Internal Western Gable

Figure C

Internal Eastern Gable



Western Open Truss (From East)

Figure D

Easter Open Truss (From East)

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from paddock to south-east, showing barn to right & Cottage to left.
2. General view of site from west showing proximity of barn (right) & Burnham Cottage.
3. Facade of Burnham Cottage showing the position of the open truss between the roof dormers (included for site context).
4. Sooted 15th century crown-post open truss of former open hall in Burnham Cottage seen from apparent high-end bay to south-west (included for site context).
5. Rear (western) elevation of Burnham Cottage showing barn to left.
6. General view of barn from south showing Burnham Cottage to left.
7. General view of barn from north showing probable service gable of Burnham Cottage to right.
8. General view of site from Church Road to east, showing barn to left.
9. General view of site entrance from Church Road to north-east, showing barn right & Cottage left.
10. General view of site from Church Road to west, showing boundary hedge to right.
11. Western Boundary hedge of site from adjoining field to north-west.
12. Linear pond or medieval moat to west of site, seen from north.
13. Eastern external gable showing 20th century vehicle doors & tarred external clay daub.
14. Detail of 20th century vehicle doors in eastern external gable.
15. Northern (roadside) external elevation showing scar of blocked central door.
16. Detail of tarred external clay daub to northern elevation.
17. Boarded southern external elevation showing 20th century lean-to shelter to left.
18. Southern external elevation showing 20th century corrugated iron roof.
19. Detail of southern external elevation showing extant top half of western double-hung barn door.

20. Detail of 19th century weatherboarding at western end of southern external elevation.
21. Western external gable from south-west showing clay-lump lean-to shed (B).
22. External western gable showing 19th century clay-lump and slated lean-to shed.
23. Detail of clay-lump lean-to showing external door to northern shed (B1).
24. Detail of half-hung door to northern lean-to shed (B1).
25. Detail of door to northern lean-to shed (B1) showing red ochre pigment beneath tar.
26. Exterior of barn from north-west showing cement blocks to north of lean-to shed (B).
27. Central partition of western lean-to from northern shed (B1) showing individual clay blocks.
28. Daubed exterior of barn's western gable from northern lean-to shed (B1).
29. Top of central partition of lean-to shed from north.
30. Central partition of lean-to from southern shed (B2) showing clay blocks.
31. Southern internal elevation of lean-to showing door to southern shed B2.
32. Internal south-western corner of lean-to showing clay lump walls and remains of ceiling.
33. External clay daub of barn's western gable from southern lean-to shed (B2).
34. North-eastern corner of southern lean-to shed (B2) showing original external daub of barn to right.
35. Detail of original external daub to western gable showing vertical poles and external laths.
36. Detail of brick plinth and nailed laths of original external daub to western gable (in shed B2).
37. Detail of nailed external laths of original clay daub to western gable.
38. General internal view of barn from eastern gable showing original arch-braces.
39. General internal view of barn from western gable showing original arch-braces.
40. 20th century rebuilt roof structure seen from west.
41. Northern internal elevation showing intact external wall braces.
42. Southern internal elevation showing original framing behind plastic sheeting.
43. Internal western gable showing original wattle-and-daub infill.

44. Detail of original wattle-and-daub infill of western internal gable.
45. Detail of north-western internal corner showing empty mortise of re-used tie-beam to left.
46. Detail of empty mortises in re-used north-western corner post with modern board to right.
47. Internal elevation of western bay of northern elevation showing paired externally trenched braces.
48. Detail of empty arch-brace mortise in re-used northern storey post of western open truss.
49. Central bay of northern internal elevation showing blocked original narrow door with raised lintel.
50. Raised lintel of northern door in central bay with original pegged mortises beneath.
51. Detail of face-halved scarf joint in northern roof-plate of central bay.
52. Detail of truncated lateral rail in northern post of eastern open truss.
53. Internal northern elevation of eastern bay showing clamp of removed hay loft.
54. Eastern half of northern internal elevation showing central door to left & ceiling clamp to right.
55. Internal eastern gable showing 20th century vehicle doors.
56. Interior of south-eastern corner showing externally trenched braces.
57. Internal southern elevation of eastern bay showing loft clamp and stable door to right.
58. Detail of internal southern elevation showing original door at western end of eastern bay.
59. Detail of truncated lateral rail in southern post of eastern open truss.
60. Internal southern elevation of central bay showing original entrance.
61. Detail of tenoned brace to original door jamb of central southern bay.
62. Detail of tenoned door arch and jamb to east of southern central bay.
63. Detail of empty brace mortise and original jamb to west of central southern bay.
64. Internal southern elevation of western bay.
65. Northern end of re-used tie-beam of western open truss showing empty arch-brace mortise.

- 66. Southern end of re-used eastern tie-beam showing empty arch-brace mortise.
- 67. Empty mortise at southern end of re-used eastern tie-beam.
- 68. Southern end of re-used western tie-beam showing empty arch-brace mortise.
- 69. Re-used eastern tie-beam showing absence of post mortises in upper surface.
- 70. Re-used western tie-beam from north showing absence of post mortises in upper surface.

Appendix 2 (pp. 16-21): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 General view of site from paddock to west showing proximity of roadside barn to right & Burnham Cottage to left



A2.2 General view of site entrance from Church Road to north-east, showing barn to right & Burnham Cottage to left



A2.3 Weatherboarded southern external elevation showing corrugated iron roof covering and remnant of central double-hung barn doors



A2.4 Western external gable from south-west showing 19th century clay-lump slated lean-to shed (B)



A2.5 General internal view of barn from eastern gable showing original arch-braces and tie-beams beneath rebuilt 20th century roof structure.



A2.6 General internal view of barn from west showing rails of former hay loft in eastern bay and 20th century vehicle doors in eastern gable



A2.7 Northern internal elevation showing unusual double wall braces in outer bays (externally trenched) and narrow door of central bay



A2.8 Eastern half of northern internal elevation showing central door with raised lintel to left & clamp of removed stable ceiling to right



A2.9 Detail of internal southern elevation showing eastern storey post of central bay flanked by jambs of blocked stable door to left and main barn doors to right. The post contains the truncated rail of a removed lateral partition.



A2.10 Detail of tenoned corner bracket and jamb of main barn door to east of southern central bay



A2.11 Southern end of re-used eastern tie-beam showing empty arch-brace mortise to right of existing brace (seen from east)



A2.12 Detail of original wattle-and-daub infill of western internal gable