

**Barns at Vale Farm,
Sutton,
Suffolk,
SUT 216**

Historic Building Record

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(TM 319 453)**

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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 (termed barns for planning purposes but including only one structure of this type). It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, Ref. SpecHBRValeFmSutton09, dated 23 April 2009) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Suffolk Coastal District Council application C/04/1983).

Introduction

This report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 106 digital images (Appendix 1), but also includes printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text (Appendix 2). The record includes 9 photographs taken by the developer in January 2009 prior to the commencement of conversion work, which was well underway at the time of inspection. 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 3rd August 2009.

Summary

Vale Farm lies in open countryside approximately 1.5 km south-east of All Saints church and 200 m north of the Shottisham parish boundary. At the time of the Sutton tithe survey in 1844 it was a substantial tenanted holding of 228 acres on the estate of Lord Rendlesham, although it remained in trust under the famously complicated 1797 will of his ancestor Peter Thelluson until 1859. Despite its size, the farm then contained just 40 acres of arable land and 30 acres of pasture, with the bulk of the holding consisting of rough 'sheepwalk' on Sutton Heath to the north-east. The tithe map shows the site approached only by a track from the east which divided the farmhouse to the south from a group of three farm buildings to the north. A similar arrangement was depicted on the William Haiward map of 1629, which identified the farm as 'Aldams' belonging to Robert Bournur. Haiward also shows an unusually long, narrow pond behind the house. The remains of this pond may survive in the woodland which now occupies the same position, and probably originated as a linear clay pit like a number of similar examples elsewhere in the parish as marked on 19th century Ordnance Surveys.

The farm buildings were entirely rebuilt in *circa* 1860 on the site of those shown in 1844, and now represent an unusually complete mid-Victorian yard complex of considerable historic interest. A new western access road was built at the same time. The timber-framed and boarded structures include a five-bay barn flanked on the west by a large stable with a hay loft and on the east by a pair of loose boxes with a first-floor granary. A smaller stable and a range of shelter sheds adjoins the road opposite the house, and a cart lodge with a second granary at the original eastern entrance to the site may survive in part from the early-19th century. There is little evidence of the extensive cattle sheds and yards found on most Suffolk farms of this period, reflecting the continued importance of cereal production on the holding's sandy soils. Several buildings retain historic fixtures and fittings, such as hay racks and

mangers, but the interiors of the main stable and barn had been stripped shortly before inspection.

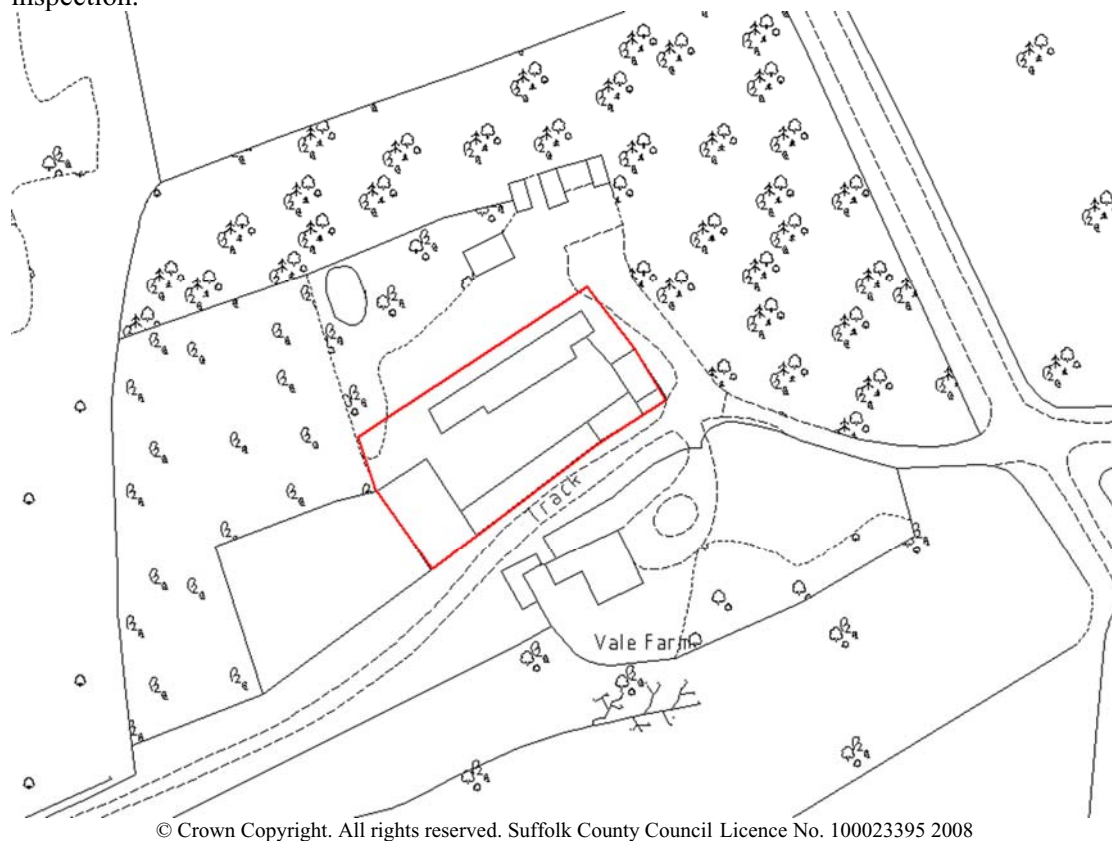


Figure 1
Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan
Outlining the historic farm complex in red, and showing the farmhouse to the south of the unmetalled entrance track

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Vale Farm lies in open countryside approximately 1.5 km south-east of All Saints church and is approached by an unmade track from the B1083 between Woodbridge and Bawdsey to the west. The track divides the ostensibly early-19th century brick farmhouse to the south from a complex of farm buildings to the north, and continues to the east where it joins another unmade track leading north to Sutton Heath.

The William Haiward map of 1629 (figure 2) shows a group of buildings on the site with an unusually long and narrow pond to the south. The buildings are bisected by a track, much as today, but were approached only from the east, and are labelled 'Robert Bournur, Aldams'. Much of the surrounding land also belonged to Bournur, whose name would probably be given today as 'Bonner'. This text is not entirely clear on the poor photographic copy available in the Ipswich Record Office. The pond is no longer apparent but may lie hidden within an area of woodland behind the farmhouse. The map shows the extensive heathland to the north-east (now RAF Woodbridge) divided into common strips.

The layout of the site was still recognisable at the time of the 1844 tithe map (figure 3), with the house divided from a group of three farm buildings by a track approaching from the east. A new pond had been dug to the west, and the area south of the house had become woodland. The farm was a relatively large tenanted holding of 228 acres owned by the trustees of Peter Thelluson, first baron Rendlesham, and occupied by Charles Roper. The name of the property was not recorded. The Thelluson estate was among the largest in Suffolk, held in trust under

the first baron's famously complex will of 1797 until finally inherited by Lord Rendlesham of Rendlesham Hall in 1859 (supposedly the inspiration of Dicken's Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce).



Figure 2

Detail of William Haiward's 1629 survey of Sutton, showing north towards the top right-hand corner. The site of Vale Farm, as detailed below, lies to the right of the number 33. The modern B1083 lies at bottom left and the Heath track at top right, with the stream flowing into Shottisham creek between the two. (From a b/w copy in the Ipswich Record Office, JA1/48/1-2. Original in British Library, temporary deposit 1794 (acquired 2006))



Figure 2a

Detail of 1629 map above, showing north to left. A linear pond lies to the east of a group of buildings apparently marked 'Robt. Bournur Aldams'.



Figure 3

Detail of the Sutton tithe map of 1844, showing north to top. The B1083 lies to the left and the Heath track, from which the farm was reached, to the right. The boundary with Shottisham parish is shown to the south.

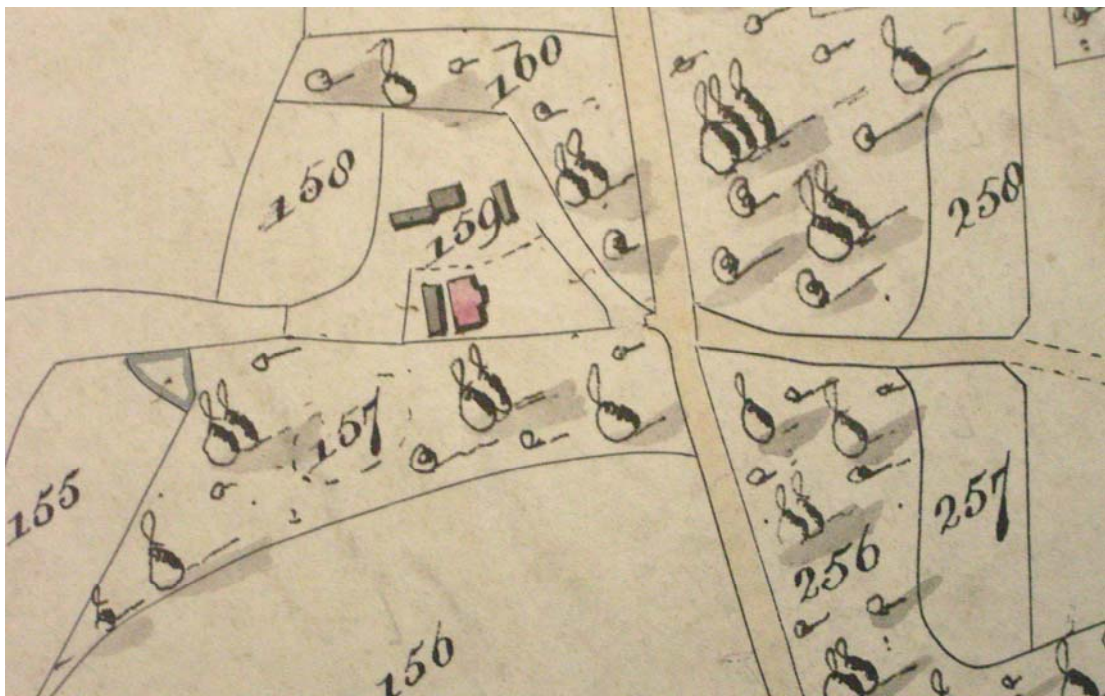


Figure 3a

Detail of 1844 tithe map above, showing the site of Vale Farm (159). The farmhouse to the south (in red) is aligned on a north-south axis with a central porch (like the present house) but lacks its existing western wing). The three farm buildings to the north probably represent a central barn with a stable to the west and a cart lodge to the east (in the typical pattern of the early-19th century) but only the cart lodge appears to have

survived the mid-19th century rebuilding of the site. The pond of 1629 may lie hidden in the southern woodland.

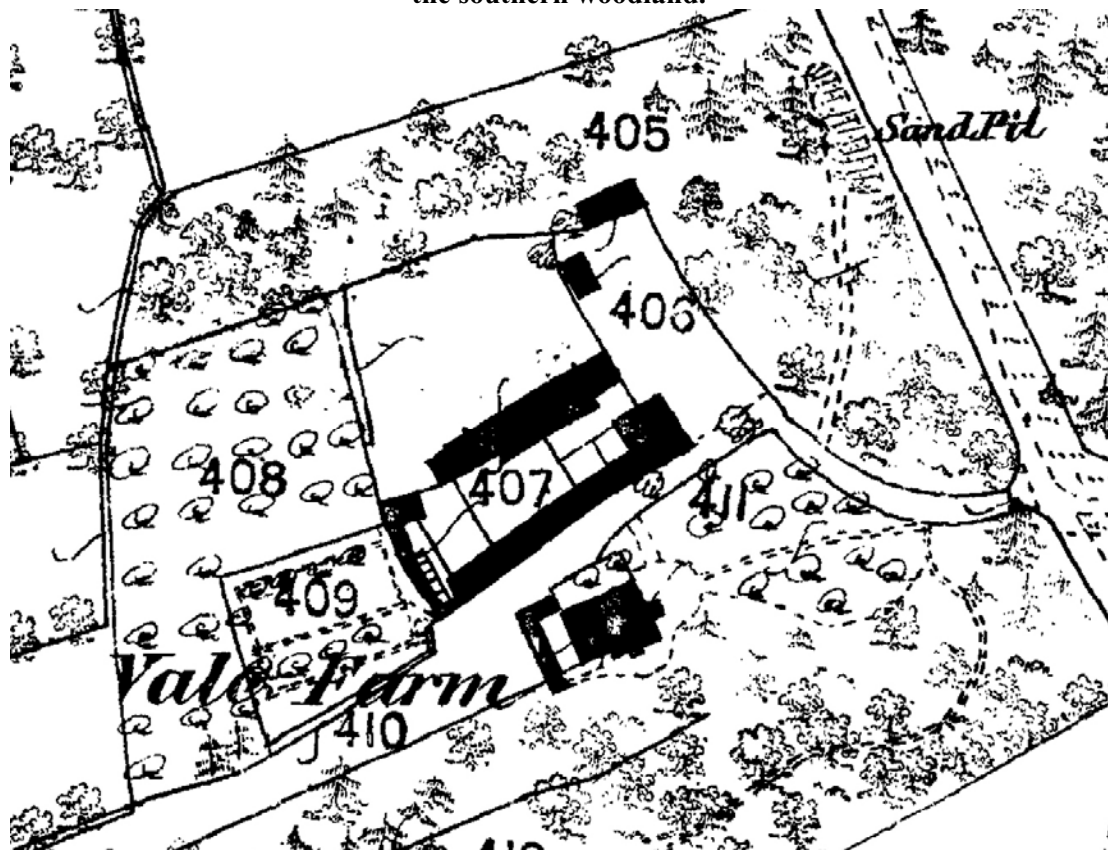


Figure 4
First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1881, showing the farm complex and extended farmhouse much as they remained at the time of inspection

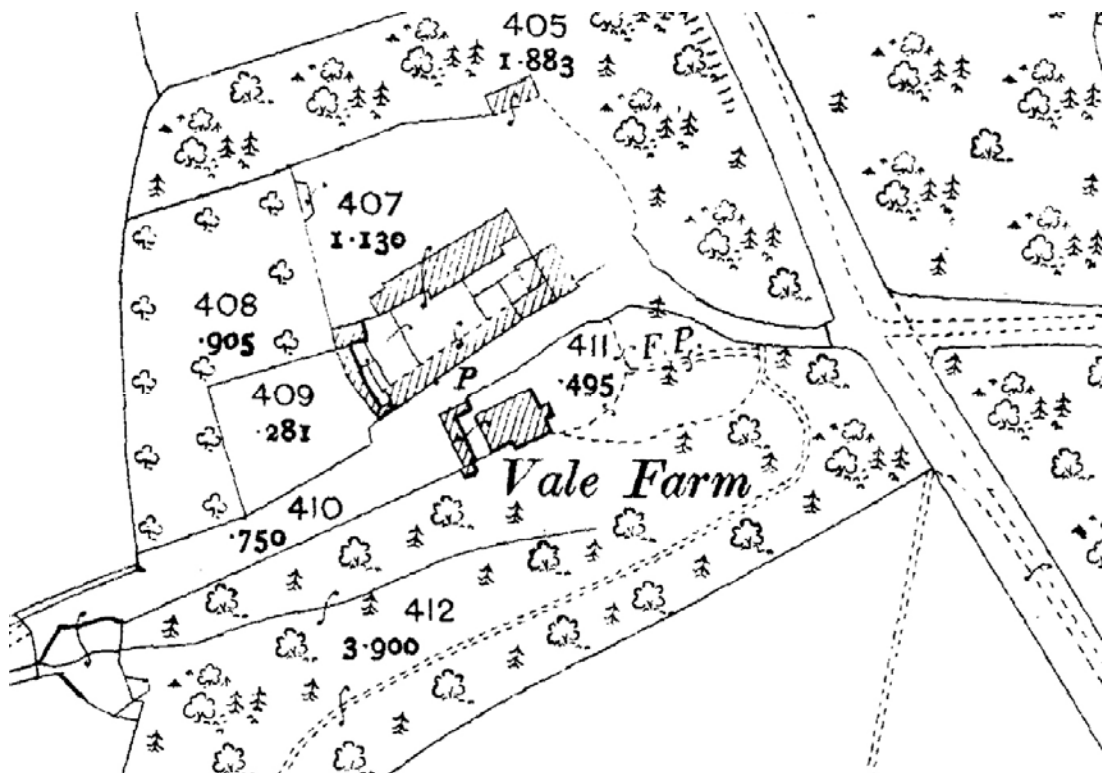


Figure 5

Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing little change since 1881. Note the parallel ditches in the woodland south of the farmhouse (the pond of 1629?).

Despite its large scale, the farm of 1844 contained only 40 acres of arable land (17%), with 30 acres of pasture (13%) and approximately 150 acres of rough heath used as a sheepwalk (66%). The site of the farm (plot 159 in figure 3) was named on the tithe apportionment as 'farm house and yards', with the enclosure to the west (158) as 'garden and orchard'. Much of the land to the west was divided into several 'fens' (i.e. wet pasture) and the woodland behind the house (157) was held in hand by the trustees and did not form part of the farm.

The site underwent a major transformation between 1844 and the first edition Ordnance Survey in 1881, possibly coinciding with the settlement of the Thelluson inheritance in 1859. Major investment may have been impossible prior to this date. The farm complex appears to have been rebuilt entirely, and the house substantially extended to the west. Many local farms were similarly altered during the 1850s and 1860s as mixed animal husbandry replaced the intensive cereal production which dominated the region prior to the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The large scale of the new barn and stable, coupled with the lack of cattle accommodation, suggests cereals remained important on the sandy soils of Sutton and that much of the sheepwalk had been ploughed since 1844. The first edition Ordnance Survey also shows a number linear pits that are strikingly similar to that shown behind the farmhouse in 1629; identified as 'old clay pits' they congregate in the vicinity of a 'brickkiln' north-west of Sutton Hall.

Building Analysis

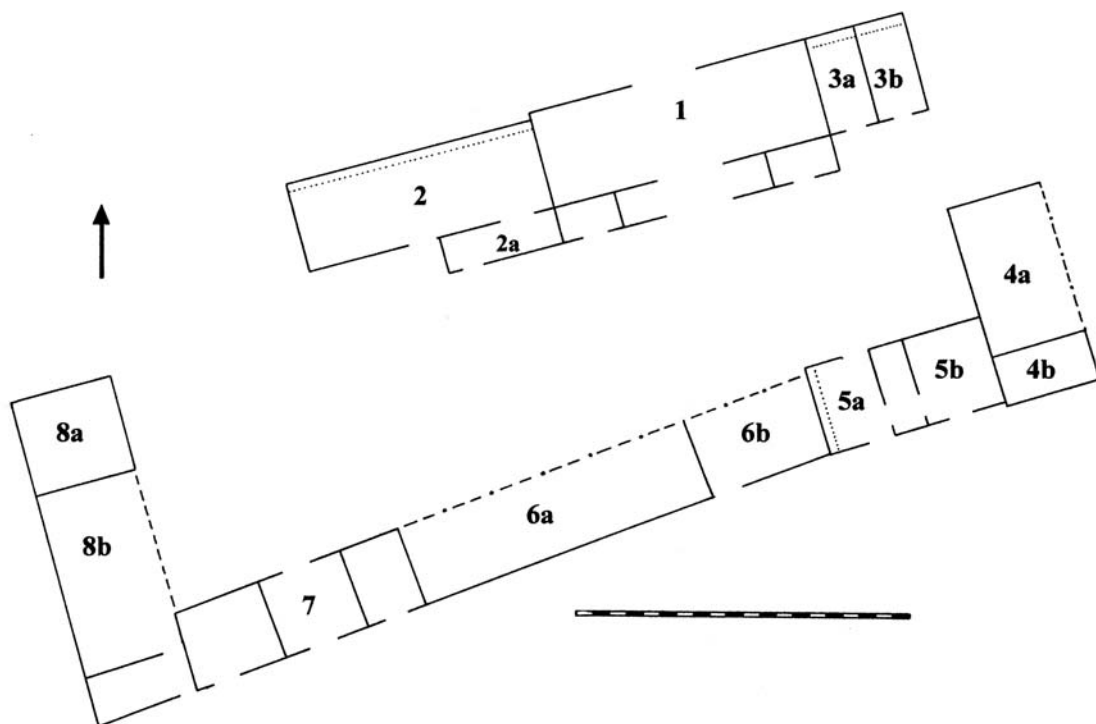


Figure 6

Block plan of the farm complex, identifying each unit with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. (Scale in metres). All buildings *circa* 1860 except an early-19th century cart lodge (4).

Key

- 1 Timber-framed and weatherboarded five-bay barn with central northern entrance and lean-to porch flanked by grain bins and feed sheds to southern yard. Tall brick plinth and slate roof.
- 2 Timber-framed stable and lay loft with slate roof and lapped vertical boarding to external walls. Southern entrance and lean-to tack room (2a), with remains of hay rack to northern elevation.
- 3 Timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of two bays with loose boxes on ground storey and granary above. Loose boxes retain mangers and mucking out hatches to north. Boarded grain bins survive in granary. Slate roof. Of identical profile to adjoining barn and probably an early extension.
- 4 Timber-framed and weatherboarded cart lodge and first-floor granary of five bays. Probably early-19th century but re-roofed and remodelled in mid-19th century. Originally open to east but southern bay (4b) later enclosed to form vehicle shed. Now with corrugated asbestos roof.
- 5 Pair of single-storied stables divided by narrow tack room or chaff box. Slate roof. Clad in lapped vertical boarding (like stable 2 above) and retaining boarded troughs and hay racks. Probably for driving horses.
- 6 Timber-framed and weatherboarded shelter shed in two sections, open-sided to yard to north. Octagonal arcade posts and pantiled roof.
- 7 Timber-framed and weatherboarded single-storied range of loose boxes and sheds. Pantiled roof. Much altered and lacking original fittings. Possibly for cattle.
8. Single storied red-brick and pantiled shed. Much altered in 20th century but now open-sided to yard to east.

N.B. Conversion work was already well underway at the time of inspection and historic analysis was hampered accordingly. The historic interiors of the barn and main stable (2) had been stripped out, and the external walls were hidden by scaffolding. Several roofs had also been stripped but their materials were identified from a number of external photographs taken prior to the commencement of building operations (included in the photographic record).

The farm buildings enclose a linear yard that was originally sub-divided, as shown in figures 4 and 5, but now forms a single expanse of grass. A 20th century Dutch barn has been inserted at its western end (adjoining building 8).

1. Barn

The barn is a timber-framed, slated and weatherboarded structure of five bays on an approximately east-west axis which extends to 17 m in length by 6 m in overall width (56 ft by 20 ft). Its walls rise to 4.75 m (15.5 ft) at their roof-plates, including a tall red-brick plinth of 1.4 m (4.5 ft), and a lean-to shed projects by an additional 2 m (6.5 ft) against the southern elevation. The barn was entered by full-height doors in the central bay of its northern elevation with wide yard doors in the lean-to porch flanked by granaries (the vertical groove of a retaining board survived against the eastern door jamb at the time of inspection). Additional feed sheds lay to the east and west of the lean-to, as shown in figure 6, but the internal partitions had been removed. The largely intact framing is typical of the mid-19th

century, with bolted knee-braces to the tie-beams, diagonal primary bracing to the walls and a clasped-purlin roof structure with a ridge-board and nailed collars. The weatherboarding of the eastern gable is protected within the granary extension (3) and preserves grey pigment which may be original; many mid-19th century barns were colourwashed (usually in grey/blue, red or white) before the advent of tar as a cheap by-product of town gas plants in the late-19th century.

2. Stable

The timber-framed and slated stable is an unusually large example in six narrow bays which extends to 16.5 m in length by 5.4 m in overall width (54 ft by 17.5 ft). Its walls are clad in vertical boarding with each board overlapping both its neighbours (i.e. board-on-board), and the interior contains a ceiling 2.75 m (9 ft) above the floor. The hay loft is accessible by an internal wall ladder adjacent to the southern entrance, and a loading vent extends along the northern elevation with the remains of a hay rack still attached to the ceiling. The building also preserves two windows with original vertical slats. A lean-to tack room projects from the eastern end of the southern elevation as shown in figure 6, and there is no evidence of internal partitions. The structure is open-framed against the western gable of the barn (1) and is probably contemporary with it. A building of similar scale and location is shown on the title map of 1844 but the external cladding is identical to the single-storied stable to the south-east (6) which is not shown.

3. Barn Granary

The timber-framed, weatherboarded and slated granary extends to 6 m in length and at first sight appears integral to the barn, but is a slightly later addition to its eastern gable. It contains a ceiling 2.3 m (7.5 ft) above its floor and is divided into a pair of loose boxes with a granary above. The latter is reached by an external stair adjoining the eastern gable, and lit by louvered windows flanking its door. The fragmentary remains of boarded grain bins with an axial passage still survive, together with boarded mangers to the northern interiors of the loose boxes. A pair of mucking-out hatches in the same elevation may be secondary insertions. The low height of the ceilings and mangers (at 90 cm or 3 ft above the floor) suggest the loose boxes were designed for cattle rather than horses.

4. Cart Lodge and Granary

The timber-framed and weatherboarded cart lodge of five bays at the eastern entrance to the site extends to 13.5 m in length by 6 m in width (44ft by 20 ft) on an approximately north-south axis. It was originally entirely open to the east but the southern bay was later partitioned to form a vehicle shed and the upper storey retains fragmentary boarded grain bins with an axial passage. The granary was reached by an external stair against its southern gable but this no longer survives, although the first-floor door flanked by louvered windows is intact. The neatly shaped corbel blocks of the binding joists, coupled with the heavy scantling of the common joists and sections of the wall frame, suggest a date in the early-19th century, but the building was extensively remodelled and its roof structure replaced in the mid-19th century. The present roof was probably slated but this was replaced by corrugated asbestos in the 20th century.

5. Roadside Stable

A single-storied stable adjoins the rear (western) elevation of the cart lodge and extends to 11 m by 5 m (36 ft by 16 ft) on an approximately east-west axis. Its wall fabric is identical to the larger stable (2) with vertical board-on-board cladding and a slate roof. The whitewashed interior is divided into two compartments divided by a narrow tack room or chaff box (feed store), each entered by separate doors from the farm track to the south. The southern elevation

preserves two original windows with vertical slats and a hay rack adjoins the western gable; this rack has been lowered to accommodate cattle, with secondary corner mangers in both compartments, and the stables were probably designed for cart and trap horses. The Ordnance Surveys show small yards to the north with an open-sided shelter shed adjoining the western elevation of the cart lodge.

6-8. Range of Pantiled Sheds

The southern and western boundary of the yard is formed by a uniform but much altered range of single-storied pantiled sheds. The eastern end of the southern range is an open-sided shelter shed in two compartments with unusual octagonal arcade posts (6), while the western end (7) is divided into a series of sheds that may have been designed for cattle. The western range is a red-brick structure that is now open-sided to the east but is shown as an enclosed shed on the Ordnance Surveys with a series of small yards that may represent a piggery.

Historic Significance

The outbuildings at Vale Farm represent an unusually complete mid-Victorian farm complex and are accordingly of considerable historic interest. The scale and quality of the individual structures, with expensive slate roofs, reflects the wealth of the Rendlesham estate with which the farm was re-united after the settlement of the famous Thelluson case in 1859. The lack of provision for cattle, when compared with many other contemporary farms in the region, indicates the continued importance of cereal production on light soils that had been used only as sheepwalks in 1844. The roadside stables, loose boxes and granaries all retained original fixtures and fittings, but the main stable had been stripped shortly before inspection and the opportunity to record what might have been an exceptionally complete interior was lost. Despite the historic and visual interest of the complex, which contains an unusual variety of roofing materials and types of external cladding, no individual buildings on the site meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from access road to south-west showing farmhouse to right & farm buildings left.
2. General view of site from track to east showing granary (4) in centre.
3. General view of site from west showing barn (2) to right.
4. General view of site from north showing stable (2) to left.
5. General view of central yard from west showing shelter shed (6) to right.
6. General view of central yard from east showing shelter shed (6) to left.
7. Northern facade of farmhouse to south of farm buildings (included for site context).
8. Barn (1). Northern external elevation from north-west.
9. Barn (1). Exterior from east showing lean-to shed and granary (3) in foreground.
10. Barn (1). Exterior from south-west showing stable (2) to left.
11. Barn (1). General view of interior from west showing central lean-to yard porch to right.
12. Barn (1). Internal western gable showing original tall brick plinth & primary bracing.
13. Barn (1). Internal southern elevation of central bay showing original lean-to yard porch & door.
14. Barn (1). Internal northern elevation of central bay showing original entrance door.
15. Barn (1) Detail of original roof structure from west showing bolted knee-braces & clasped-purlins.
16. Barn (1). Interior of south-eastern corner showing yard porch to porch.
17. Barn (1). Interior of lean-to yard porch from central bay.
18. Barn (1) Interior of western lean-to shed from east showing remains of removed internal partition.
19. Barn (1). Interior of eastern lean-to shed from east showing bin groove to right.

20. Barn (1). Detail from north-west of groove for grain bin in lean-to shed to east of yard door.
21. Northern external elevation of barn (1 to left) and stable (2 to right).
22. Stable (2). Exterior from north-west showing farmhouse in rear to right.
23. Stable (2). Exterior from south-west showing barn (1) to right.
24. Stable (2). Detail of original vertical lapped boarding to southern exterior.
25. Stable (2). Detail of original vertical lapped boarding to southern interior.
26. Stable (2). Interior of vertical cladding showing southern roof-plate and fillets between boards.
27. Stable (2). Interior from west showing ceiling vent above former northern hay rack to left.
28. Stable (2). Detail from west of hay rack rail adjoining ceiling vent.
29. Stable (2). Eastern end of southern interior showing original doorway to lean-to tack room (2a).
30. Stable (2) Interior of eastern gable showing fragment of hay rack to left.
31. Stable (2). Interior from east showing southern yard entrance to left & hay rack evidence right.
32. Stable (2). Detail of ceiling from east showing chalk graffiti dated 1922.
33. Stable (2) Original vertical slat window in southern internal elevation of lean-to tack room (2a).
34. Stable (2). Eastern end of southern interior showing original entrance, loft ladder & vertical slat window.
35. Stable (2). Detail of yard door, loft ladder & slatted window in southern interior.
36. Stable (2). Detail from beneath of internal loft ladder against southern interior.
37. Southern external yard elevation of granary (3) showing doors to loose boxes.
38. Granary (3) Detail of southern exterior from east showing entrance doors to loose boxes (3a & 3b).
39. Granary (3). Interior of loose box (3b) from southern entrance showing boarded manger.
40. Granary (3). Interior of loose box (3b) from north showing yard entrance.
41. Granary (3). Interior of loose box (3a) from south showing intact manger.
42. Granary (3). Interior of loose box (3a) from north showing door to yard.

43. Granary (3). Boarded eastern exterior of barn (1) from loose box (3a) showing grey pigment.
44. Granary (3). External gable door & louvers to first-floor granary from north-east.
45. Granary (3). Axial passage from east showing grain bins & door with cat hole to right.
46. Granary (3) Axial passage from eastern entrance showing boarded bins to left and right.
47. Granary (3). Interior from east showing boarded grain bins against northern elevation to right.
48. Granary (3). Interior from east showing boarded grain bins against southern elevation to left.
49. External southern gable of cart lodge (4) showing external door to first-floor granary.
50. Cart Lodge (4). Eastern exterior showing open arcade with enclosed shed (4b) to left.
51. Cart Lodge. Interior from south showing chamfered deal binding joists.
52. Cart Lodge (4). Internal rear (western) elevation showing shaped corbel blocks.
53. Cart Lodge (4). Detail of shaped corbel block to binding joist in western elevation.
54. Cart Lodge (4). Detail of re-used stud with unusual carved decoration in western elevation.
55. Cart Lodge (4). Interior of first-floor granary showing remains of grain bins.
56. Cart Lodge (4). Internal rear (western) elevation of first-floor granary.
57. Cart Lodge (4). Internal southern gable of first-floor granary showing external door.
58. Cart Lodge (4). Interior of secondary enclosed shed (4b) from east.
59. Cart Lodge (4). Detail of original lath-and-plaster between ceiling joists.
60. Roadside Sheds (4-7) from east, showing cart lodge (4) to right.
61. Roadside Stable (5). External southern elevation showing twin entrances.
62. Stable (5). External detail of slatted window and tarred vertical boarding.
63. Stable (5). Internal northern elevation of eastern stall (5b).
64. Stable (5). Original roof structure of eastern stall (5b) from south.

65. Stable (5). Internal western elevation of eastern stall (5b) showing door to central chaff box.
66. Stable (5). Internal southern elevation of western stall (5a) showing roadside door.
67. Stable (5). Internal northern elevation of western stall (5a) showing yard door.
68. Stable (5). Internal western elevation showing low hay rack and corner mangers.
69. Stable (5). Detail of boarded manger in south-western internal corner.
70. Stable (5). Interior of western stable from west showing door to chaff box.
71. Stable (5). Northern external elevation showing slate roof.
72. Northern elevations of roadside sheds (5-7) from yard to north-east.
73. Cart Lodge (4). Exterior from north-west showing stable (5) to right.
74. Shelter Shed (6). Northern external elevation showing open arcade.
75. Shelter Shed (6). Detail of open arcade from yard to north-west.
76. Shelter Shed (6). Interior from west showing roof and wall framing.
77. Shelter Shed (6). Detail of side-purlin roof structure showing reed fleaking between battens.
78. Shelter Shed (6). Detail of octagonal arcade posts to yard.
79. Shelter Shed (6). Interior from west showing yard and northern barn to left.
80. Shelter Shed (6). Interior of eastern section from west with rebuilt southern elevation to right.
81. Shelter Shed (6). Junction of shed and stable (5) from west showing octagonal post.
82. External northern elevation of stable (5) showing cross entry of western stall (5a).
83. Exterior of shelter shed in northern corner of site seen from south.
84. Interior of shelter shed in northern corner of site seen from east.
85. Clapped-purlin roof structure of stable (2) from south-west.
86. Southern external elevations of roadside sheds (8-5) from entrance track to south-west.
87. Shed (7). Southern external elevation showing entrance to central stable.
88. Shed (7). Northern external elevation showing entrance to central stable.
89. Shed (7). Exterior from north-east showing entrance to central stable to left.

90. Shed (7). Internal northern elevation of central stable.
91. Shed (7). Internal western elevation of central stable.
92. Brick Shed (8). Exterior from site entrance to south.
93. Brick Shed (7). Exterior from yard to east showing northern compartment (8a) to right.
94. Brick Shed (8). Interior from north showing narrow southern shed in rear.
95. Brick Shed (8). Detail of arcade post from west showing octagonal section.
96. Brick Shed (8). View of yard to east beneath 20th century Dutch barn.
97. Interior of Dutch barn from north showing brick shed (8) to right.
98. Jan 2009. Exterior of granary, barn and stable from north before work commenced.
99. Jan 2009. Northern external elevation of stable (2) showing barn (1) to left.
100. Jan 2009. Northern external elevation of barn (1) showing stable (2) to right.
101. Jan 2009. Northern external elevation of granary (3) showing barn (1) to right.
102. Jan 2009. Eastern external elevation of granary (3) showing first-floor door.
103. Jan 2009. Southern external elevation of barn (1) showing lean-to yard sheds.
104. Jan 2009. Southern external elevation of stable (2) showing tack room (2a) to right.
105. Jan 2009. Southern external elevation of northern yard range showing barn (1) right.
106. Jan 2009. Southern elevation of yard range showing double doors to barn (1) to left.

Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 16-22



A2.9 Cart Lodge (4). Interior of first-floor granary showing remains of grain bins with axial passage to left



A2.10 Roadside stable (5a). Detail of boarded manger in south-western internal corner with low hay rack to right and slatted window to left.



A2.11 Roadside shelter shed (6). Interior from west showing wall framing with octagonal arcade posts abutting central yard to left.



A2.12 Jan 2009. Exteriors of granary (3), barn (1) and stable (2) from left to right, seen from north before conversion work commenced. Note original slate roofs.



A2.13 Jan 2009. Northern external elevation of stable (2) showing vertical boarding with barn (1) to left.



A2.14 Jan 2009. Southern external elevation of barn (1) showing lean-to porch and sheds adjoining central yard with stable and lean-to tack room (2) to left and granary (3) to right.