

**‘Barn’ at
Lane Farmhouse,
Wilby, Suffolk
WBY 020**

Historic Building Record

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(TM 2546 7220)

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This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant farm building within the cartilage of a grade II-listed farmhouse. The building is known for planning purposes as a barn but was last used as a stable and cow-house. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council’s Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 18th November 2010, ref. SpecHBR(EM)LaneFmhse_Wilby_Pre_09), and is intended to inform and accompany a planning application for conversion.

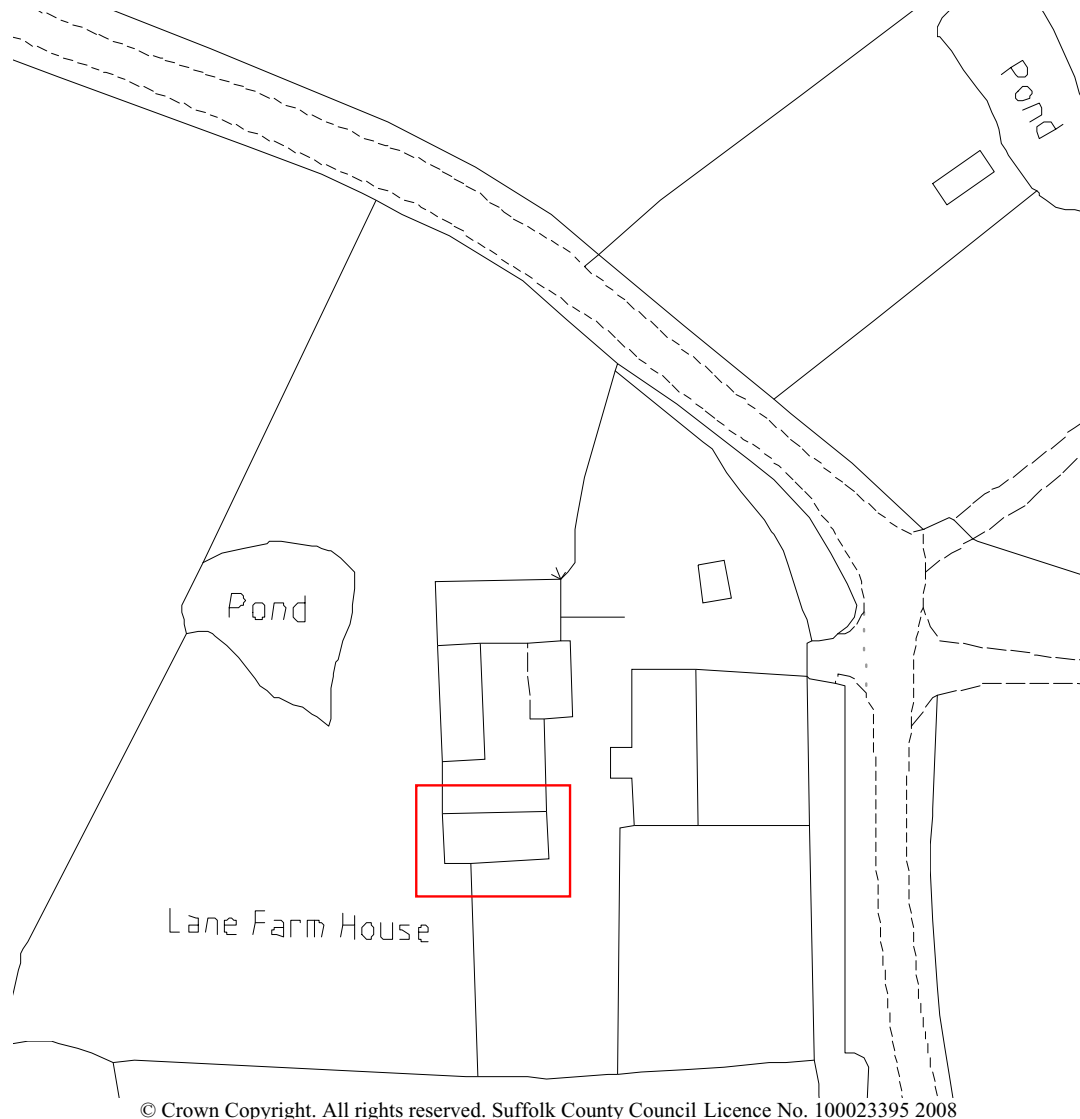
Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 68 digital images (Appendix 1), but also includes 10 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 16th December 2009.

Summary

Lane Farm lies in open, arable countryside in the north-eastern corner of Wilby parish and adjoins the western edge of a small medieval green known as Wilby Green. At the time of the tithe survey in 1838 the farm was a modest tenanted holding of approximately 44 acres which included the two-acre green and was called Wilby Green Farm. The farmhouse is a grade II-listed timber-framed and thatched building of the 15th century which preserves a plain but impressive queen-post truss in its sooted open hall.

The timber-framed and weatherboarded ‘barn’ to the rear of the house was last used as a stable and cow-house with a hay loft on its upper storey. It contains two boarded mangers and a hay rack of the mid-19th century, but was built in the 15th century as a domestic house. The two eastern bays have been much altered but formed an open hall with evidence of a cross-passage and a parlour door in its western gable. The original timbers are heavily sooted. The two western bays date from the late-16th century and contain a ceiling of finely chamfered joists with evidence of four diamond-mullion windows (of which one mullion remains in situ). This structure replaced the smaller medieval parlour and reflects a similar alteration to the farmhouse. The ceiling in the hall is a slightly later insertion of the 17th century which was supported by a chimney in the medieval cross-passage. The building may have served as a bakehouse before it was converted into animal accommodation by removing the chimney in the mid-19th century. Medieval records often refer to pairs of domestic houses on the same tenement (designed to accommodate the families of the principal tenant’s son or brother, and sometimes known as ‘inset houses’), but surviving examples are exceptionally rare. Given its early origin and historic importance the ‘barn’ is worthy of listing at grade II in its own right. A standard threshing barn of the 17th survives to the north, and the site represents an unusually complete historic farm complex which merits further recording.



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Figure 1
Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan
 Enclosing the ‘barn’ in a red rectangle and showing Wilby Lane to the north and east.
 See figure 5 for more detail.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Lane Farm lies in open, arable countryside in the north-eastern corner of Wilby parish, approximately 1.3 km east of St Mary’s church. The site adjoins the western side of Wilby Lane and a medieval green named on the tithe apportionment of 1838 as Wilby Green (when it contained just 2 acres and 20 perches of pasture land). The grade II-listed thatched and rendered farmhouse faces east towards the green and consists of an early-15th century two-bay open hall with a contemporary service bay to the north and a parlour bay of the late-16th or early-17th century to the south (the original parlour having been rebuilt in the typical manner of the region to accommodate the insertion of a large ‘high-end’ brick chimney). The heavily sooted queen-post open truss of the hall is a fine survival.

The farm is marked as Lane Farm on the Ordnance Survey of 1886 (figure 3) but was formerly known as Wilby Green Farm. It formed a modest tenanted holding of 43 acres 3 roods and 20 perches in 1838 (as recorded on the tithe apportionment) and was occupied by Benjamin Bayles. This acreage may have changed very little since the 15th century, when



Figure 2

Wilby tithe map of 1838, showing Lane Farm in the bend of the eponymous lane and Wilby Green (no. 379) containing two acres of pasture to the east. The field to the west (270) was known as Backhouse Piece.

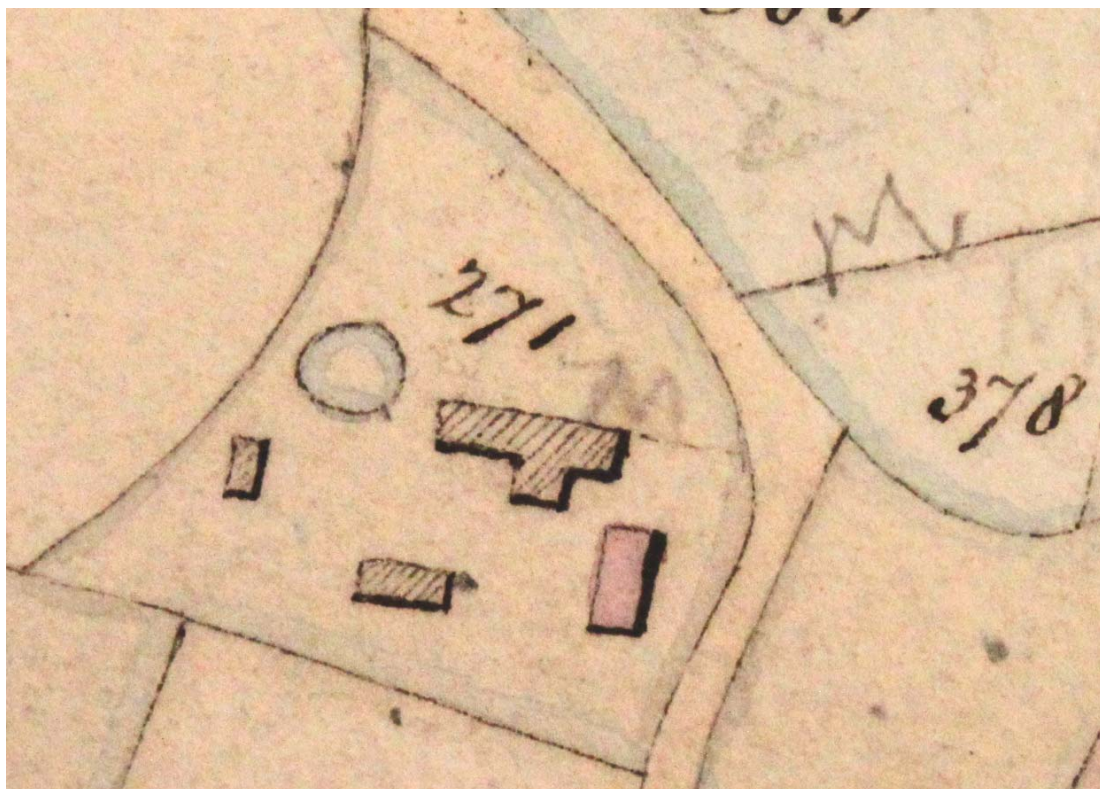


Figure 2a

Detail of the 1838 tithe map showing the farmhouse in red. The site was named as 'house and yards' on the accompanying apportionment. The precision of this map is questionable as the 'barn' to the south is shown further west than at present.

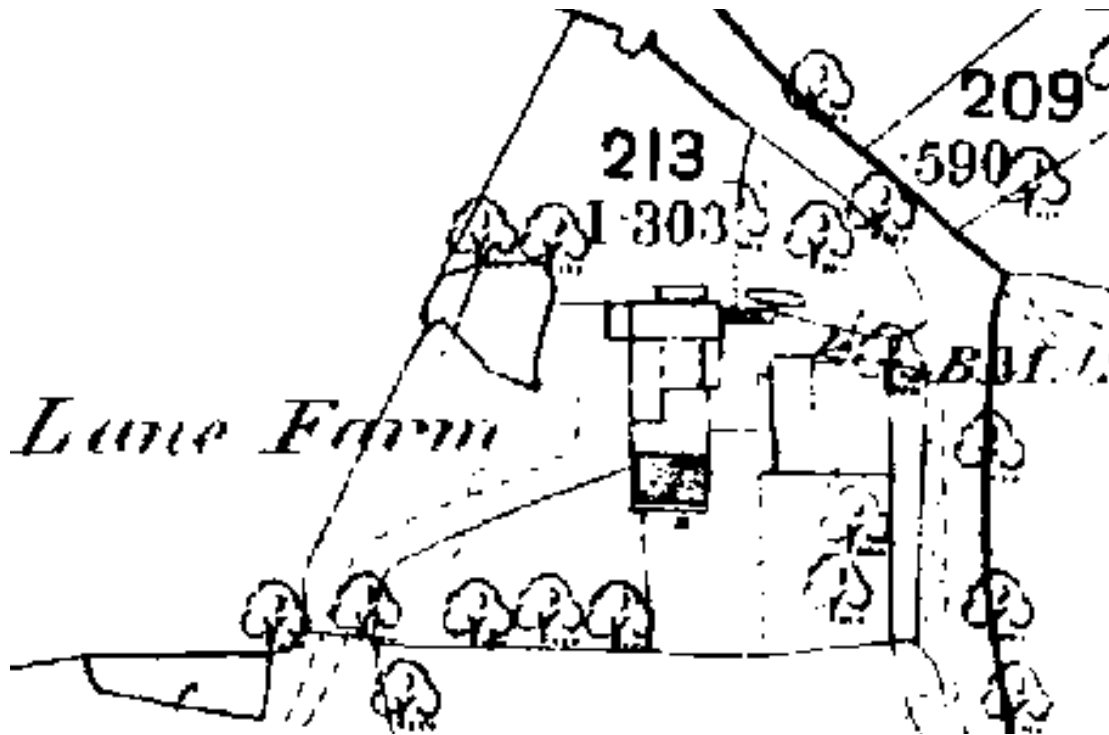


Figure 3
 First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886, showing the buildings much as they remain today with the 'barn' forming the subject of this report immediately to the south of the actual barn.

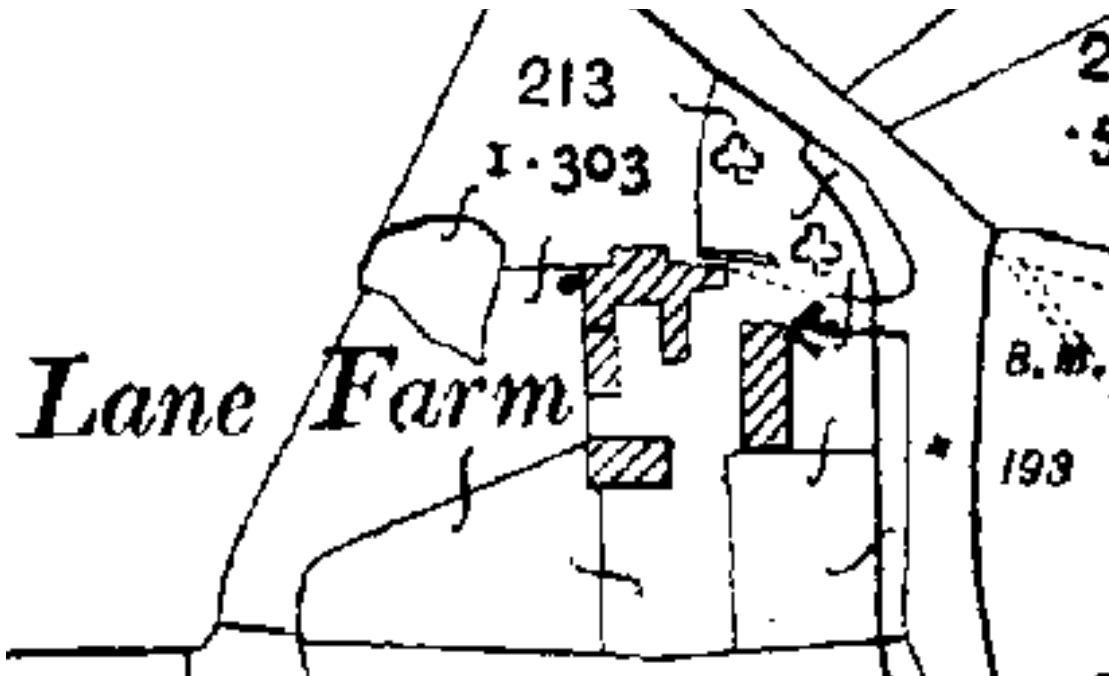


Figure 4
 Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing the site in more detail. The southern 'barn' appears to have narrowed since 1886 and may have possessed a lean-to shed against its rear (southern) elevation.

holdings of one virgate were common (i.e. approximately thirty acres, or one quarter of the Domesday carucate), and consisted of 12 acres or 27% of pasture, including the green, and 32 acres of arable. The farm was owned by Charles and George Cordy as executors of a deceased individual of the same name, and while the property was not named on the 1838 apportionment Bayles was listed as the tenant of 'Wilby Green Farm' in White's Directory of 1844.

The historic maps (figures 2-4) show the farmhouse as a simple rectangle and its present rear (western) lean-to is an addition of the 20th century. The 'barn' which forms the subject of this report is shown on its present site in 1886 and 1904 (although its apparently greater width in 1886 suggests it may have lost a southern lean-to between these dates) but ostensibly lay further to the west in 1838. This may represent an error on the part of the cartographer, but it is possible that the entire building was moved to its present location as part of the major mid-19th century refurbishment of the farm buildings which included the construction of the present sheds adjoining the threshing barn (buildings 4 and 5 in figure 5). Many local farmyards were similarly redeveloped during the 1850s and 1860s as intensive arable production was replaced by mixed animal husbandry (i.e. the introduction of cattle in response to falling grain prices). Additional structures adjoining the barn were removed as part of the same process (perhaps including a southern porch) and a detached building to the west of the site was demolished. The name of the field to the west of the pond may refer to the function of the 'barn' beyond which it lay: Backhouse Piece. Fields were often named after the household building in which direction they lay, and the term 'backhouse' normally referred to a detached service building with an oven and coppers for baking, brewing and washing.

Building Analysis

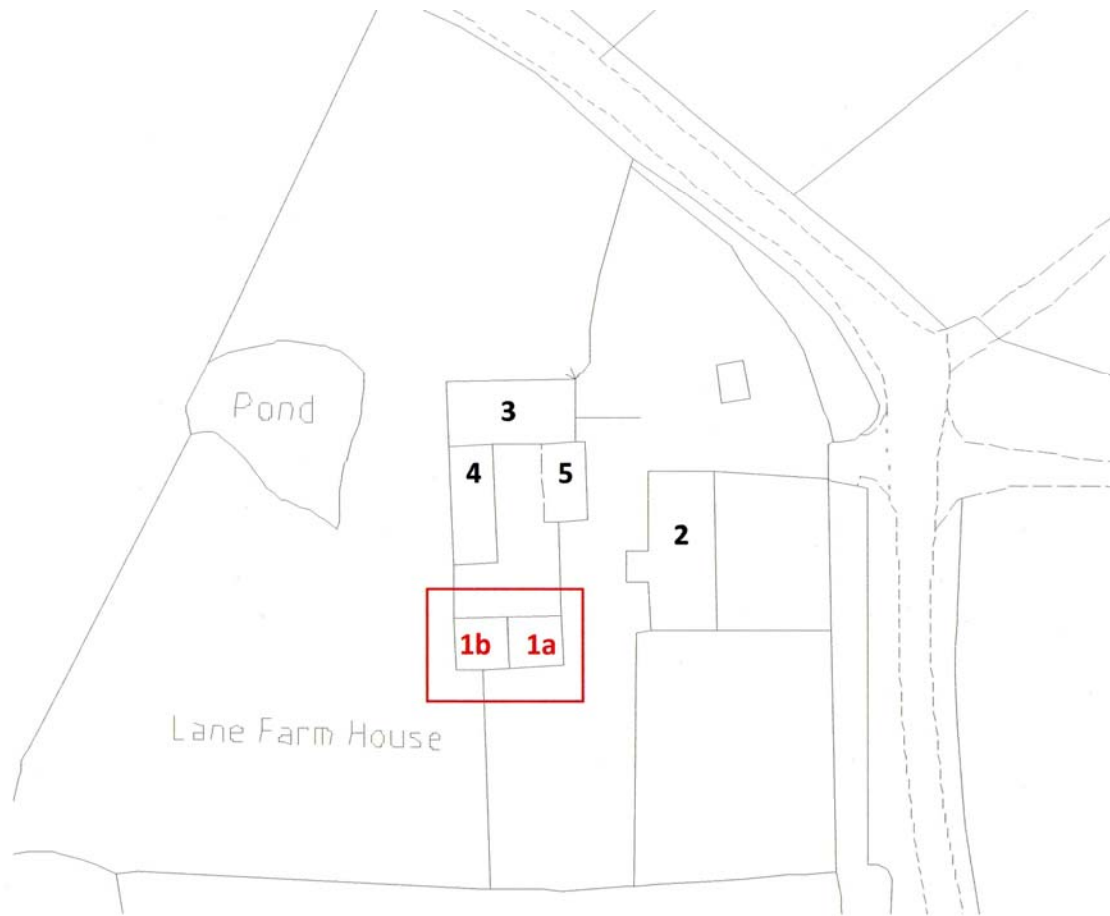


Figure 5

Block Plan of site, identifying each historic building with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record.

Key

1. Timber-framed and weatherboarded structure with a hay loft divided by a central partition into a cow-shed to the east (1a) and a stable to the west (1b). 20th century roof structure. The cow-shed originally a 15th century open hall of two-bays with heavily sooted timbers; evidence of a cross-passage to the east and a parlour door to the west suggesting it may have formed a rare and historically important domestic 'unit' house at right-angles to the broadly contemporary present farmhouse. The parlour to the west was rebuilt in the late-16th century as an unheated two-bay structure with a chamfered ceiling and diamond-mullioned windows (of which one mullion survives intact). A ceiling was inserted into the open hall during the 17th century when a chimney abutted its eastern gable (obstructing the former cross-passage). Much of the medieval frame was rebuilt in the 20th century but the 16th century structure remains largely intact. The building probably operated as a bakehouse in the 18th century but was converted into an animal shed during the 19th century.

2. Mid-15th century open hall house with intact queen-post roof. Timber-framed and rendered with a thatched roof. Two-bay central hall with service bay to north and parlour bay to the south; the latter rebuilt to accommodate a high-end chimney in the early-17th century.

3. **Pantiled threshing barn consisting of two timber-framed bays to the east and a clay-lump bay to the west. The framing originally of the early-17th century but much rebuilt and raised in height and re-roofed in the mid-19th century.**
4. **Collapsed mid-19th century animal shelter and shed.**
5. **Timber-framed and pantiled mid-19th century open-sided animal shelter.**

Proportions

The ‘barn’ to the south of the former farmyard at Lane Farm is a timber-framed and weatherboarded building with a 20th century corrugated iron roof. It overlaps the southern end of the farmhouse by 1.5 m (5 ft) at a distance of 8.5 m (28.5 ft), and extends to 10.75 m in length by 4.9 m in overall width on an east-west axis (at right-angles to the house). The roof-plates rise to a height of 3 m (10 ft).

15th Century Hall (1a)

The structure consists of two frames of different periods, each of approximately the same length and divided by a central partition as shown in figure 5. The eastern frame is 5.6 m in overall length (18.5 ft) and consists of a 15th century open hall of two bays with heavy sooting to the original timbers. The eastern gable and the southern elevation were completely rebuilt in softwood of narrow section during the late-19th or early-20th century, but part of the northern elevation and much of the western gable remain intact. The building appears to have formed a domestic house of standard layout, with a cross-passage at the eastern end of the hall and a parlour to the west. The central storey post of the northern elevation contains a mortise for the arch-brace of a missing open truss and an original door lintel is tenoned to the north-eastern corner post; the lintel contains an empty mortise for a separate door jamb against the post. The western gable resembles a normal ‘high-end’ with evidence of a parlour door to the north. This evidence takes the form of an empty lintel mortise in the north-western post and the lack of any wall brace from the northern side of the same gable to reflect that which survives to the south: braces were sometimes omitted in this way to compensate for the asymmetry of parlour doors. The rebuilding of the eastern gable and the replacement of the roof-plates has destroyed any evidence of service doors and windows respectively. At 3.6 m (10 ft) the western bay is significantly longer than the eastern of 2 m (6.5 ft), as would be expected of a domestic house with tall windows in its high-end bay, but an alternative function cannot be ruled out; medieval bakehouses are notoriously similar in layout to domestic halls, although relatively few contain ‘parlours’. The building is best interpreted as a rare late medieval ‘unit house’, i.e. an ancillary domestic house on the same tenement for the accommodation of semi-independent members of an extended family – such as the household ‘unit’ of a brother or son of the chief tenant. ‘Unit houses’ of this kind were probably known locally in the Middle Ages as ‘inset houses’ (structures ‘set into’ a pre-existing tenement) – a term which occurs in several East Anglian manorial records. The open hall of the main farmhouse was only slightly larger with an overall width of 5.3 m (18.5 ft) and a low-end bay of 3 m (10 ft).

16th Century Parlour (1b)

The western half of the building also consists of two bays and extends to 5 m in overall length (16.5 ft) with a gap of some 7 cm (3 ins) between it and its earlier neighbour to the east. This gap is now spanned by weatherboarding and the adjoining tie-beams are secured by iron straps of 19th century appearance. The western frame is largely intact, with the exception of its

roof, and preserves an original ceiling of domestic quality with neatly chamfered and step-stopped joists of typical late-16th century form. The binding joist is supported by well-cut corbel blocks on the storey posts, which lay beneath the principal rafters of an A-frame roof without a central tie-beam. The two bays are of almost identical length (2.3 m or 7.5 ft) in contrast to those of the medieval hall, and the structure was probably designed to replace the smaller medieval parlour on the same site. A similar development occurred in the farmhouse at much the same time, as ever-larger parlours were required during the Elizabethan period to accommodate their new ‘withdrawing room’ purpose and associated furniture (including large ‘posted beds’). There is no evidence of heating in the new parlour, however, unlike that of the farmhouse, and the domestic chimney evidently lay at the low-end of the hall as discussed below. The new addition was provided with internal corner braces and diamond-mullioned windows in its western gable (both above its tie-beam and beneath its mid-rail) and in both elevations of the western bay. The gable mid-rail retains the groove of an internal shutter and the lintel of the northern window now lies above the entrance door to the yard. A single original mullion survives *in situ* in the southern elevation, which also contains the lintel of an external door against its eastern storey post. This lintel is not fully pegged and may be an early insertion, but is consistent with the late-16th century when many parlours possessed separate entrances in this way.

Later Alterations

The ‘new’ parlour is open-framed against the medieval hall, with neither arch-braces nor studs beneath its tie-beam and mid-rail. The tie-beam was cut to form a first floor door in the 17th century when the present ceiling was inserted into the hall which may have remained open to its sooted roof until that time. Most of the original chamfered common joists survive, together with the axial joist which bears distinctive ‘notched’ chamfer stops usually associated with second quarter of the 17th century. It terminates 1.2 m (4 ft) from the eastern gable, where it is now supported by a re-used oak post on a 19th century brick pier. The ceiling was clearly supported by a large chimney which had been inserted into the hall to adjoin its eastern gable and block the cross-passage – a common alternative to ‘high-end’ insertions but less usual in northern Suffolk than in the southern half of the county. The opposite (western) end of the axial joist was attached to the mid-rail of the parlour.

The structure and development of the building is entirely consistent with a domestic origin, but in later years it may have served as the bake-house of the present farmhouse. Its most recent conversion into a pair of animal sheds and hay lofts seems to date only from the mid-19th century. The two halves of the frame were fully partitioned and provided with separate entrances with double-hung doors to an enclosed animal yard on the north. A low cattle manger was inserted against the western ‘high-end’ wall of the eastern compartment while a much higher hay rack and manger for horses was added to the southern elevation of the western compartment. Two ceiling joists were removed to form a hay drop above the latter. The two mangers survive intact, as does the hay rack in the stable, but any rack which might have existed above cattle manger has been removed. The tithe map of 1838 (figure 2) suggests the entire building may have been moved nearer the farmhouse as part of this conversion, but while this cannot be ruled out the frames retain their original pegs and have not been dismantled. The parlour was initially rendered externally (as shown by the waney outer surfaces of the common studs and the presence of lath notches in the outer edges of the storey posts) but was weatherboarded as part of the conversion. The present roof structure and corrugated iron covering is a mid-20th century alteration.

Historic Significance

The ‘barn’ at Lane Farm was last used as a stable and cow-house but was ostensibly built as a domestic open-hall house in the 15th and 16th centuries. Its close proximity to another slightly larger hall of the same or similar period strongly suggests it represents a rare ancillary ‘unit

house' or 'inset house' and is accordingly of considerable historic importance. Medieval documentary evidence indicates that two houses were commonly found on the same tenement but very few pairs now survive. Given its rarity and historic value the building is worthy of listing at grade II in its own right, despite the loss of its roof and several sections of wall fabric. The 17th century barn to the north lends additional significance to the building group, and the site merits detailed recording.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from west showing stable (1) to right, house (2) in centre & barn (3) left.
2. General view of site from south-west showing stable (1) to right and barn (3) to left.
3. Eastern facade of farmhouse seen from north-east (included for site context).
4. Western (rear) elevation of farmhouse showing stable (1) to right.
5. Sooted queen-post open truss of farmhouse (2) from north-west. Included for site context.
6. Southern exterior of barn (3) showing cattle sheds (4 & 5) to left and right. Included for site context.
7. Interior of barn (3) from east showing clay-lump wall fabric to west of entrance bay. Included for site context.
8. Interior of barn (3) from west showing raised walls. Included for site context.
9. Exterior of stable (1) from south-west showing loft loading hatch in western gable.
10. Exterior of stable from north-east showing half-hung entrance doors to yard.
11. Exterior from north-east showing entrance door in eastern gable towards farmhouse.
12. Northern external elevation showing yard doors & loft loading hatch to left.
13. Interior of eastern loft gable (rebuilt in 20th century).
14. Interior of eastern loft from east showing sooted medieval 'high-end' partition.
15. Detail of sooted wall brace in south-western corner of eastern loft.
16. Detail of iron strap linking central tie-beams of the eastern and western frames.
17. Southern interior of eastern loft showing 20th century softwood studs.
18. Northern interior of eastern loft showing loading hatch with original storey post to right.
19. Studs above original door at eastern end of northern interior (seen from loft).
20. Detail of curved 'high-end' tie-beam seen from east.

21. Fragment of original sooted tie-beam in northern elevation of eastern loft.
22. Detail from loft of heavy sooting to eastern surface of 'high-end' tie beam and brace.
23. Secondary central door linking two lofts seen from west.
24. Internal western gable of western loft showing secondary loading hatch.
25. Detail of re-used window sill or lintel in western loft gable.
26. Secondary hay drop against southern interior of western loft (seen from west).
27. Detail of hay rack against southern interior seen from western loft.
28. Detail of original diamond mullion window in southern interior of western loft.
29. Internal south-western corner of western loft showing corner braces & window to left.
30. Detail of housing for A-frame principal rafter above central storey post of southern elevation.
31. Internal north-western corner of western loft showing corner braces & jowl-less A-frame storey post to right.
32. Northern interior of western loft showing original roof-plate and studs.
33. Soffit of open truss tie-beam of western frame showing medieval high-end to left.
34. Detail of hay drop in western loft showing diminished shoulder joint of removed ceiling joist.
35. Detail of 20th century roof structure over both frames, seen from south-west.
36. Internal partition from east showing low cattle manger and axial stall divider.
37. Eastern internal gable showing door towards farmhouse and 20th century framing.
38. Post supporting eastern end of axial joist in eastern compartment (replacing chimney).
39. Detail of notched chamfer at eastern end of axial joist.
40. Northern interior of eastern compartment showing replaced studs.
41. Detail of northern post of 'high-end' showing mortise of original lateral door lintel.
42. Door in northern interior of eastern compartment showing original door lintel to right.
43. Detail of original door lintel of northern interior showing jamb mortise to right.

44. Detail of low manger in eastern compartment seen from south-east.
45. Renewed studs of southern interior of eastern compartment, with eastern gable to left.
46. Southern interior of eastern compartment showing low manger to right.
47. Western end of axial joist from north (attached to binding joist of western ceiling).
48. Detail from east of sooted original stud in central 'high-end' partition.
49. Detail of chamfered 17th century ceiling joists of eastern compartment.
50. Western internal gable showing hay rack and manger to left.
51. Detail of empty diamond mullion mortises in mid-rail of western gable.
52. Detail of window shutter groove in mid-rail of western gable.
53. Northern interior of western compartment showing door with original window lintel above.
54. Detail of original diamond mullion mortises in present northern door lintel of western compartment.
55. Step-stop chamfers and corbel block to northern end of binding joist in western frame.
56. Detail of original step-stopped common joists in western frame.
57. Central partition seen from western compartment with harness hook to left.
58. Open truss of western frame showing lack of stud mortises beneath mid-rail.
59. Original chamfered ceiling of western compartment seen from south.
60. Southern interior of western compartment showing original door lintel with central partition to left.
61. Detail from north of apparently original door lintel at eastern end of western compartment.
62. High horse trough and hay rack at western end of southern interior, showing western gable to right.
63. Detail from west of boarded trough and hay rack to south of western compartment.
64. Internal south-western corner of building showing trough and hay rack.
65. Detail of window in southern interior showing later hay rack & original mullion to left.

66. Detail of original diamond mullion in southern elevation of western compartment.
67. Exterior of stable (1) from north-east showing proximity to farmhouse (2) to left and shelter shed (5) to right.
68. Exterior of stable (1) from north showing proximity to farmhouse (2) to left

Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 14-18

Appendix 2 (pp. 14-18): Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. General view of site from west showing stable (1) to right, farmhouse (2) in centre & barn (3) left.



Illus. 2. The queen-post open-truss of the 15th century open hall in the farmhouse (2) seen from the low-end to the north-west. The whitewash conceals heavy sooting. Included for site context.



Illus. 3. Exterior of stable (1) from south-west showing loft loading hatch in western gable to left and farmhouse to right.



Illus. 4. Exterior of stable from north-east showing half-hung entrance doors to yard, loading door to eastern loft and door in eastern gable to left.



Illus. 5. Interior of eastern loft from east showing the upper part of the sooted medieval 'high-end' partition which divides the building into two halves. Note the original wall brace to the left and the bow in the tie-beam to right. This bow would have reflected an original doorway beneath, which explains the absence of a right-hand wall brace. The central door is an insertion of the 17th century and the roof is modern.



Illus. 6. Internal 'high-end' partition from east showing the low cattle manger and axial stall divider on the ground floor.



Illus. 7. Eastern internal gable showing 20th century framing with a door opening towards the farmhouse. The central post is an insertion of the 19th century which supports the end of the 17th century axial ceiling joist where it would formerly have abutted a chimney.



Illus. 8. Internal south-western corner of western loft showing corner braces & original diamond-mullion window to left. The left-hand mullion (not visible here) is the only original mullion to survive in situ. The western half of the building dates from the late-16th century in contrast to the 15th century eastern half.



Illus. 9. Detail of the original diamond mullion mortises in the lintel of the northern door of the western stable. The step-stop chamfered binding joist with a neatly-cut corbel block is visible to the right.



Illus. 10. The feeding trough and hay rack at the western end of the southern internal elevation (at horse height), showing the western gable to the right. Note the original diamond mullion window behind the rack, and evidence for additional mullions in the gable. The boarding to the left is a stall divider.