

**Street Farm,
Gislingham,
Suffolk**
GSG 036

Historic Building Record

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Leigh Alston MA (Oxon), Architectural Historian
on behalf of
Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

**The Archaeological Service
(Field Projects Team)
Suffolk County Council, Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR
Tel. (01284) 352446**

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Street Farm, Mill Street, Gislingham, Suffolk

(TM 0727 7180)

Historic Building Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 3 of a grade II-listed barn. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 10th March 2010, ref. SpecHBR(EM)_Pre_StreetFm_Gislingham_2010) and is intended to inform and accompany an application to Mid Suffolk District Council for residential conversion..

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 75 digital images (Appendix 1), but also includes scale drawings and 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.

Summary

Street Farm adjoins the southern side of Mill Street at the western edge of Gislingham village, approximately 350 m from the parish church. The farmhouse to the east of the site is a grade II-listed 16th century structure which was heavily renovated in the late-20th century and now appears modern from the exterior: although named as Street Farmhouse in the Schedule of Listed Buildings it is currently known as 'Mary Rose'. At the time of the Gislingham tithe survey in 1840 the farm formed a modest tenanted holding of 42 acres.

The barn to the west of the site is listed separately at grade II and lies at right-angles to the road between two modern houses known as 'Hector's House' and 'Hensyl House'. It is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of five bays with a central porch of two bays to the west and double-hung principal doors to the east. Originally thatched it is now covered with corrugated asbestos. Although mistakenly dated in the Schedule to *circa* 1700 it is typical of many 'Napoleonic' barns of the early-19th century, rebuilt to exploit the high price of grain caused by restrictions on imports. Despite its relatively late origin, the building remains worthy of listing due to its unusually well preserved timber frame, with a complete series of ten arch-braces to its tie-beams (including the open truss of the porch) and an intact roof of staggered butt-purlins. The external weatherboarding is also of considerable historic significance, retaining large areas of original red ochre pigment within a series of later sheds. Many Suffolk barns were painted red in this manner before the advent of tar as a cheap by-product of town gas production during the second half of the 19th century. The barn also retains an original threshing floor of gault brick and evidence of a stable and hay loft at its southern end.

The present single-storied pantiled and weatherboarded sheds adjoining the barn's eastern elevation are not shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1886 and were added in *circa* 1890. The northern shed adjoins the road and was probably designed as a cart lodge but has been much altered, while its southern counterpart contains a shelter shed and loose box. These sheds are not of particular significance in themselves but illustrate the historic development of the site and visually complement the barn. An open-sided lean-to implement shed in the north-western angle of the barn and porch is not shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 and is an early-20th century addition.

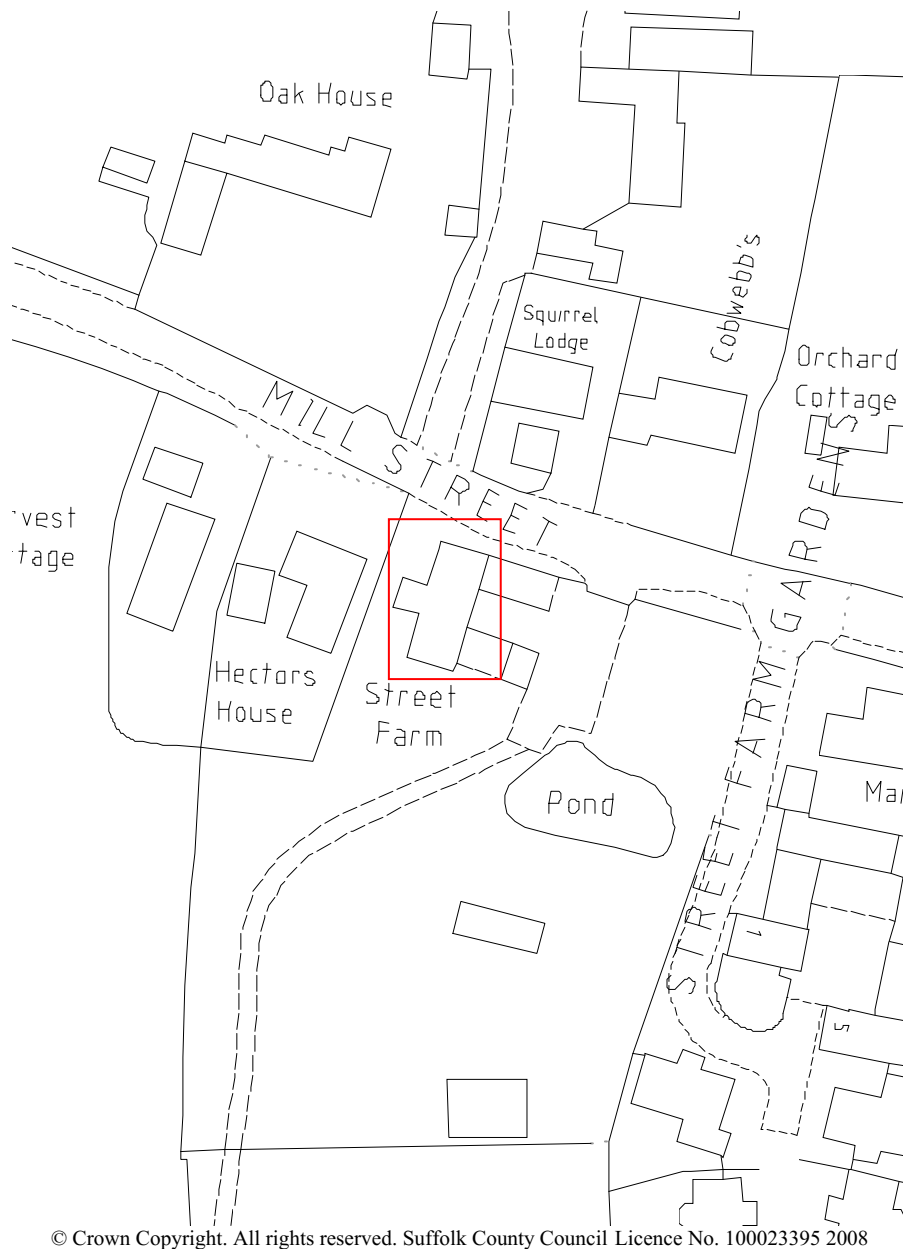


Figure 1
Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan
Enclosing the barn in red and showing the former farmhouse (now re-named ‘Mary Rose’) to the extreme right. A new house known as ‘Hensyl House’ had been built immediately north of the pond to the east of the barn shortly before inspection.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Street Farm lies at the edge of Gislingham village, approximately 350 m west of the parish church, and adjoins the southern side of Mill Street which leads towards Walsham le Willows. The farmhouse to the east of the site is a grade II-listed 16th century structure which was heavily renovated in the late-20th century and now appears modern from the exterior: although named as Street Farmhouse in the Schedule of Listed Buildings it is currently known as ‘Mary Rose’. The barn to the west of the site lies between two modern houses known as ‘Hector’s House’ to the west and ‘Hensyl House’ to the east. The latter is a new red brick building erected within the last two years and is not shown in figure 1. The barn is separately listed at grade II and is dated in the Schedule to *circa* 1700.



Figure 2

Gislingham tithe map of 1840 (Suffolk Record Office) showing the T-shaped farmhouse in red to the right and the cross-shaped barn to the left. None of the remaining scattered farm buildings survive.

The 1840 tithe map of Gislingham shows the barn and farmhouse much as they remain today (figure 2 above). The farm was a modest tenanted holding of 42 acres (of which 8 were pasture and the rest arable) owned by Mrs Sarah Ion, who owned a number of other farms in the parish, and occupied by John Simpson. The site of the farm (numbered 336 on the map) is described on the accompanying apportionment as ‘house, buildings and yard’ with the field to the south named as ‘cartshed pightle’ (339). The barn has a distinctive cross-shaped outline suggesting the presence of an eastern porch or lean-to of some kind which no longer survives. A detached building on the same north-south axis lies in the south-eastern corner of an enclosed yard adjoining the eastern elevation, but the present single-storied sheds had not yet appeared.

The first edition Ordnance Survey of 1886 shows the same detached building in the south-eastern corner of the yard, and uses a broken line to indicate that its western elevation was open-sided. This building probably represents a shelter shed in the corner of an animal yard, and relates to the door and ceiling at the southern end of the barn. A similar shelter shed, open to the south, had been newly built at the northern end of a second animal enclosure (probably a cattle yard) on the site of ‘Hensyl House’ between the barn and farmhouse. The eastern porch or shed which adjoined the barn’s eastern elevation in 1840 had been removed. The existing single-storied pantiled sheds which project from the same elevation were built between 1886 and the second edition Ordnance Survey of 1904, replacing the earlier shelter shed.

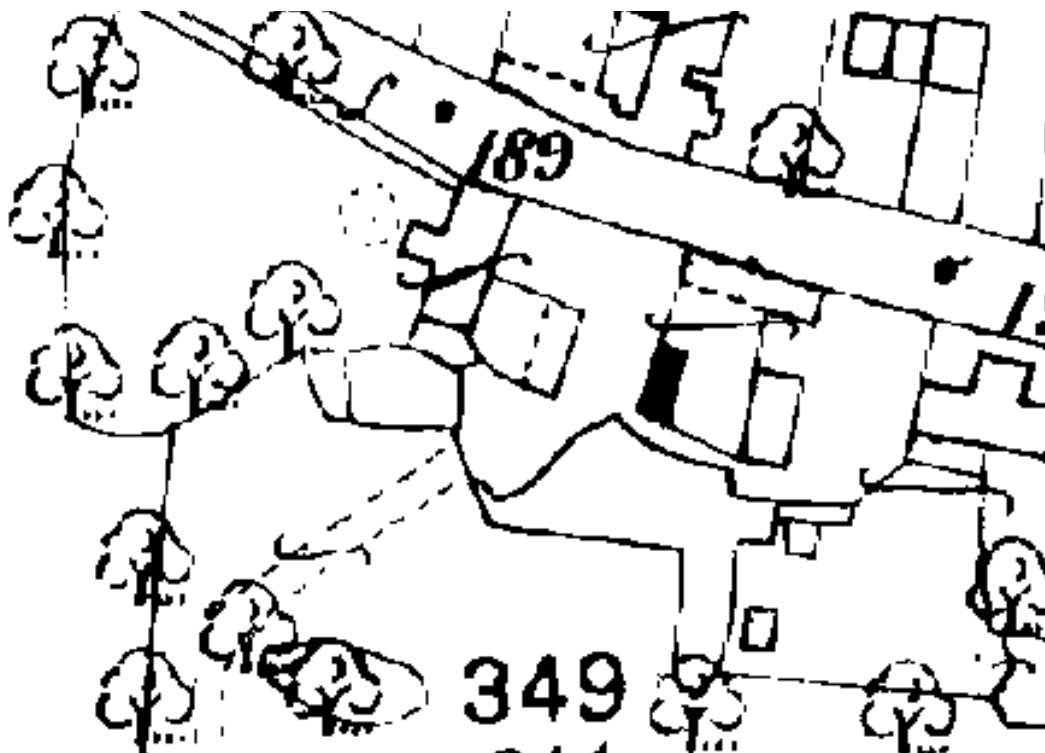


Figure 3

First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886 showing the barn to left with its central western porch but lacking the present sheds to the east. An open-sided circular shed (as indicated by broken lines) lay to the west of the porch and probably covered a horse mill. The T-shaped farmhouse is shown to the right, with a separate yard complex to the north of the pond (on the site of Hensyl House). An enclosed yard with an open-sided shelter to the east adjoins the southern end of the barn's eastern elevation (serving the stable at the southern end of the barn).

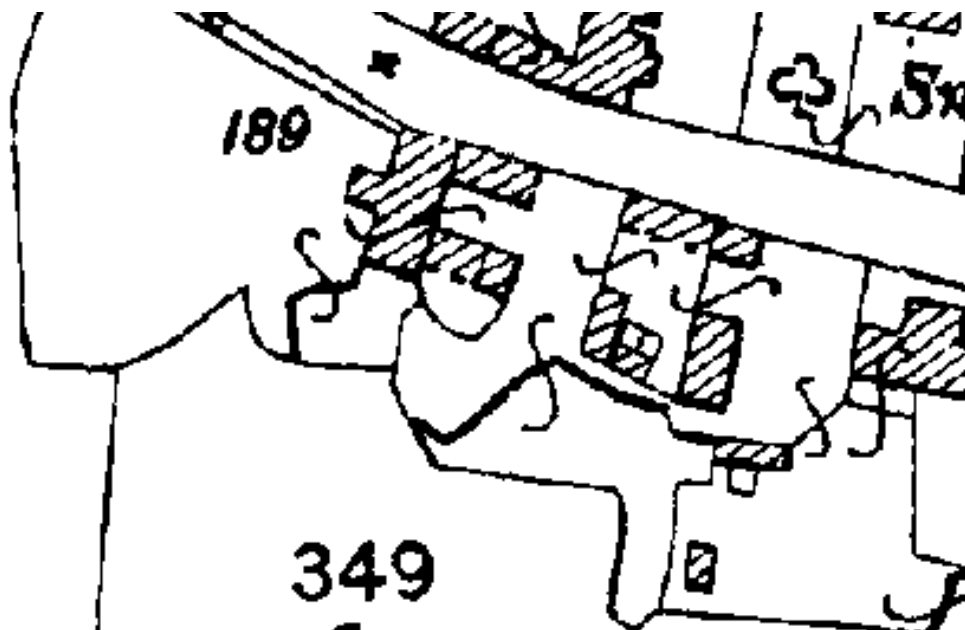


Figure 4

Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904 showing the existing sheds (3 & 4) against the barn's eastern elevation for the first time. The horse mill had been removed. The shed in the north-western return of the barn and porch (2) had not yet been built.

Building Analysis

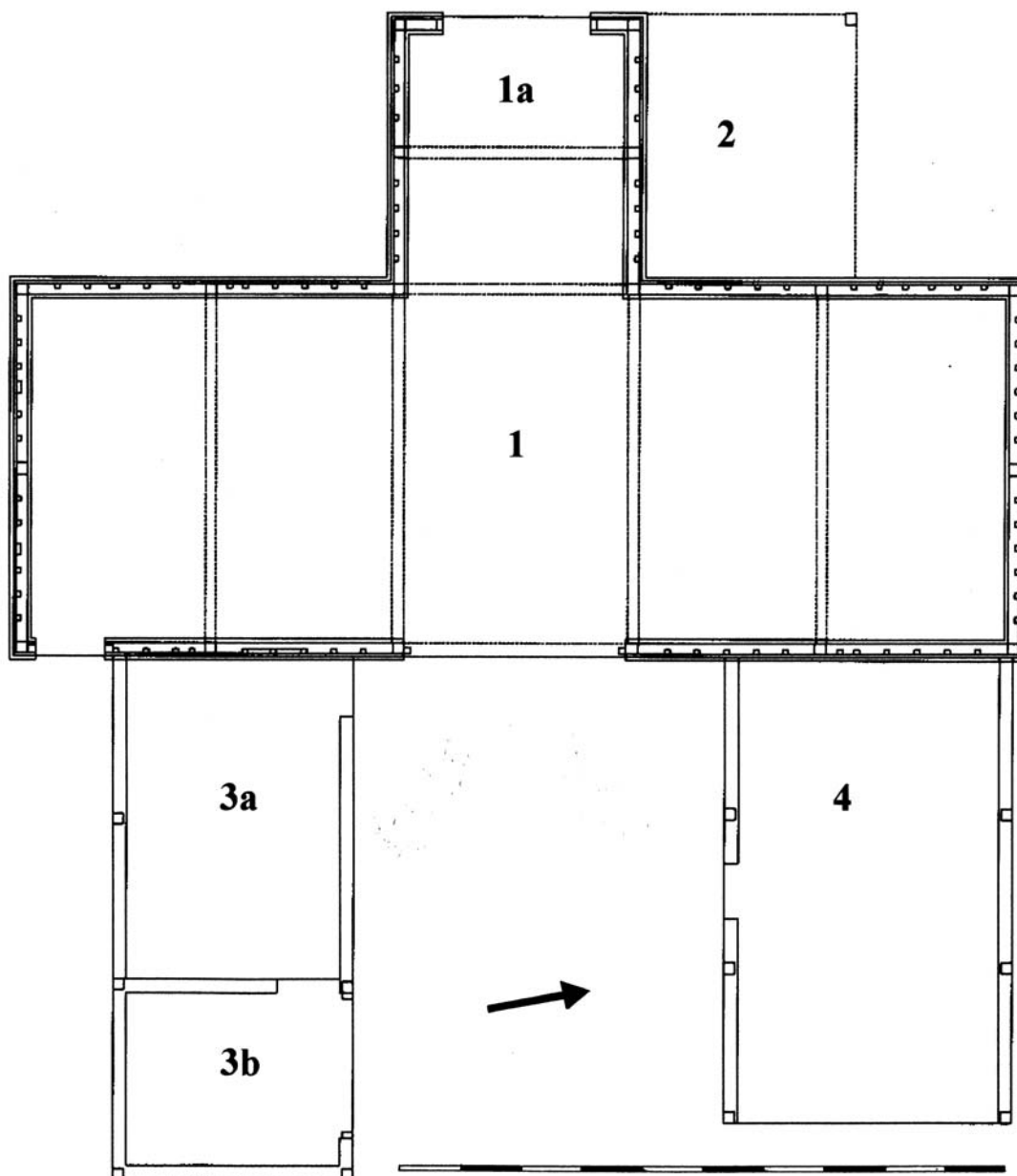


Figure 5

Block Plan of Barn, numbering each area for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Scale in metres. Based on a drawing by Gorniak and McKechnie.

Key

- 1 Five bay timber-framed and weatherboarded barn with staggered butt-purlin roof structure (originally thatched but now clad in corrugated asbestos). Full-height entrance doors in central bay to east. Two-bay gabled porch to west with clasped-purlin roof and smaller doors. Extensive areas of original red ochre pigment survive on the external weatherboarding where they are protected within later sheds. Tall red-brick plinth. Listed as *circa* 1700 but in fact typical of the early-19th century.
- 2 Open-sided 20th century lean-to implement shed with corrugated asbestos roof.

3 Single-storied timber-framed, pantiled and weatherboarded shed consisting of an open-sided animal shelter shed (3a) to the north and a probably loose box now converted to a vehicle shed (3b) to south. Circa 1890.

4. Single-storied timber-framed, pantiled and weatherboarded shed with open southern gable now used as a garage. Wide, low doors to south. The northern (roadside) elevation probably open-sided originally to form a cart lodge but now enclosed with 20th century shuttered concrete. Circa 1890.

1. The Barn

The barn at Street Farm is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of five bays which extends to 16.5 m in length by 6.1 m in overall width (54 ft by 20 ft). It rises to 4 m at its roof-plates and is aligned on an approximately north-south axis adjoining Mill Street to the north. A contemporary gabled porch of two bays projects by an additional 4.3 m (14.25 ft) from the central bay of the western elevation, but the barn is entered by double-hung full-height doors of 3.4 m in width (11 ft) in the eastern elevation of the same bay. The porch doors are considerably smaller at 2.2 m in width by 2.4 m in height (7 ft by 8 ft).

The walls contain horizontal mid-rails 1.7 m below the roof-plates (5.5 ft) with tall red-brick plinths of 0.75 m (2.5 ft) laid in Flemish bond. The studs are interrupted by diagonal primary corner braces both above and below the mid-rail. These braces are nailed rather than tenoned to the storey posts, and the studs are of variable scantling with much evidence of re-use from earlier structures. The frame consists of mixed timber but is principally of oak, and a number of deal studs probably represent late-19th century repairs.

The roof contains a single tier of staggered butt-purlins with pegged and tenoned collars (also re-using numerous timbers) and the jowled storey posts are arch-braced to the tie-beams. The porch is a clasped-purlin structure with an arch-braced central tie-beam. At approximately 55 degrees the roof was designed for thatch, and retains many thatch battens beneath its present covering of corrugated asbestos. A gap in the rafters immediately above the eastern entrance probably indicates the point at which the roof abutted that of the additional porch (whether gabled or lean-to) shown on the tithe map of 1840.

The external weatherboarding preserves unusually extensive areas of original red ochre pigment within the various attached sheds, although many individual boards have been renewed. Until the advent of tar as a cheap by-product of town gas production in the mid-19th century many local barns were painted in this way, and Red Barns are common in the documentary record (e.g. Maria Marten's famous murder in the Red Barn at Polstead in 1827). The northern yard shed (4 in figure 5) preserves the most complete section, perhaps as it partly replaced the earlier porch or shed shown in 1840. A good threshing floor of gault brick survives in the central bay, but a ceiling in the southern bay has been lost. This ceiling appears to have been a secondary feature as its axial joist was supported by a nailed bracket on the central post of the gable and the remains of its internal partition rail are crudely nailed to the storey posts. The space almost certainly formed a stable with a hay loft above, and was entered by a secondary door at the southern end of the eastern elevation. Many local barns were provided with stables in this manner, and the interpretation is confirmed by the presence of an adjoining yard and shelter shed on the tithe map and first edition Ordnance Survey. A grain floor in the porch is a 20th century addition.

The structure, brickwork and cladding of the barn is entirely typical of the early-19th century, and the date of *circa* 1700 ascribed in the Schedule of Listed Buildings is approximately a century too early. Many Suffolk barns were rebuilt in the same style between 1800 and 1820 in response to the high price of grain during the Napoleonic wars, and are often termed

‘Napoleonic Barns’ in consequence. Identical examples elsewhere are conspicuous by their absence from late-18th century enclosure maps.

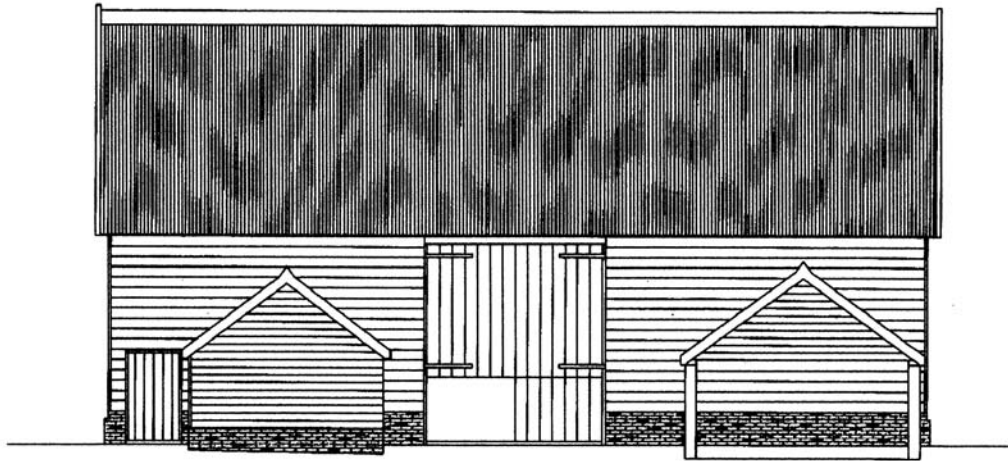
2-4 The Ancillary Sheds

The two pantiled and weatherboarded single-storied sheds which project by 8.7 m (28.5 ft) from barn’s eastern elevation are shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 but not that of 1886, and date from *circa* 1890. Each rises to 2 m at its eaves (6.5 ft) but the southern shed is narrower than its counterpart to the north at 3.8 m as opposed to 4.6 m (12.5 ft and 15 ft). The studwork and clasped-purlin roof structures with nailed collars and ridge-boards consist of machine-sawn softwood and are typical of the late-19th and early-20th centuries. The northern shed is now open at its eastern gable and operates as a vehicle garage, but contains a wide, low door in its southern elevation and evidence of an open arcade (now filled by walls of shuttered concrete) to the north. It probably formed a cart lodge. The southern shed is divided into two sections by an original partition with a doorway to the north; the western end is open to the south and was designed as a shelter shed (serving a small curved yard in 1904) while the small enclosed shed to the east was a loose box or feed store. The latter is now entered by 20th century vehicle doors from the north. The shed in the north-western angle of the porch and barn is an early-20th century addition that was not shown in 1904; its lean-to roof of corrugated asbestos slopes downwards from south to north and appears to have been open to both north and west. It probably formed an implement shelter adjoining a stack yard.

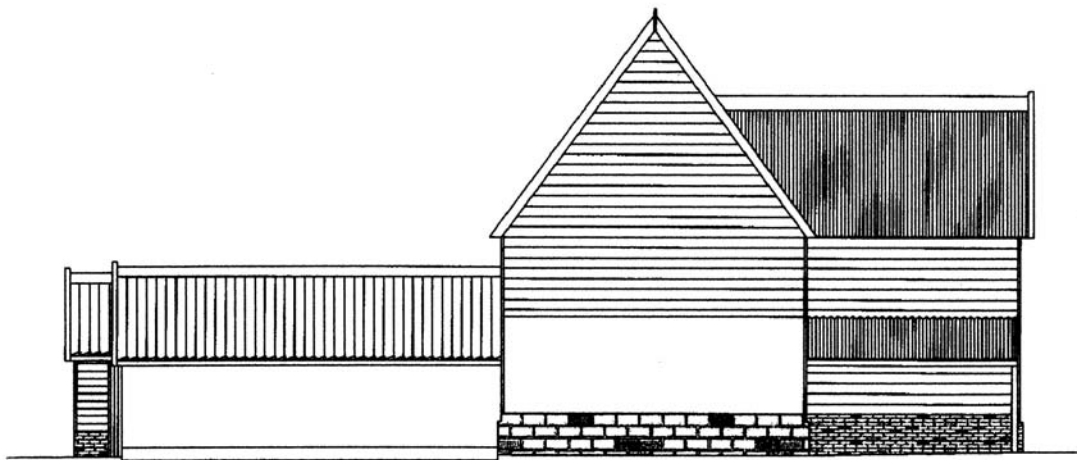
Historic Significance

The barn is a well-preserved East Anglian threshing barn of the early-19th century, and does not date from *circa* 1700 as stated in the Schedule of Listed Buildings. Given its exceptionally complete timber frame, however, with the entire roof and all ten arch braces intact (including those of the porch) the structure is still worthy of listing at grade II – although many such barns have been omitted from the Schedule. The extensive survival of original red ochre to the external weatherboarding is also of considerable historic interest, illustrating the appearance of local farm buildings before the arrival of tar in the later 19th century, as is the presence of an intact brick threshing floor. The attached sheds date only from the late-19th and early-20th centuries, and are not of particular interest in themselves, but are also of traditional appearance with original pantiles and they contribute significantly to the barn’s historic context.

Survey Drawings
By Gorniak and McKechnie

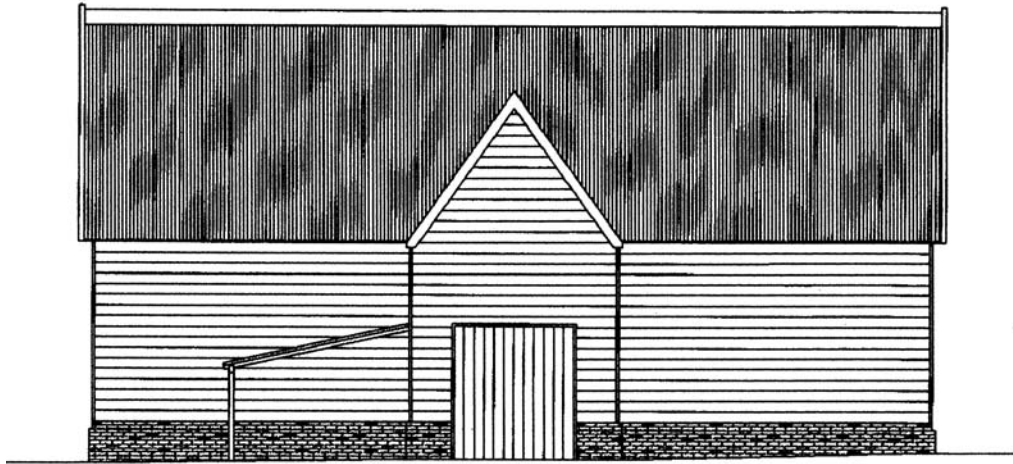


East elevation

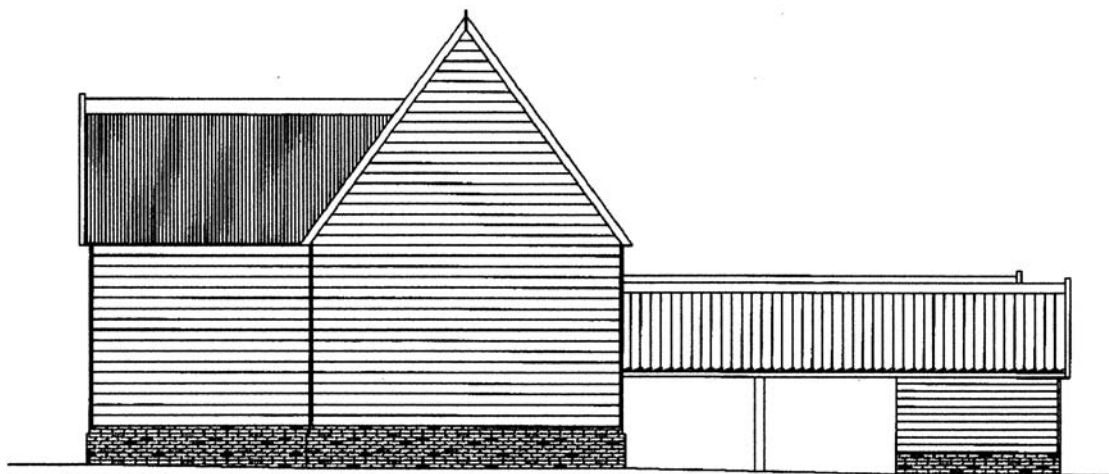


North elevation

Figure 6
External eastern and northern elevations



West elevation



South elevation

Figure 7
Western and southern elevations

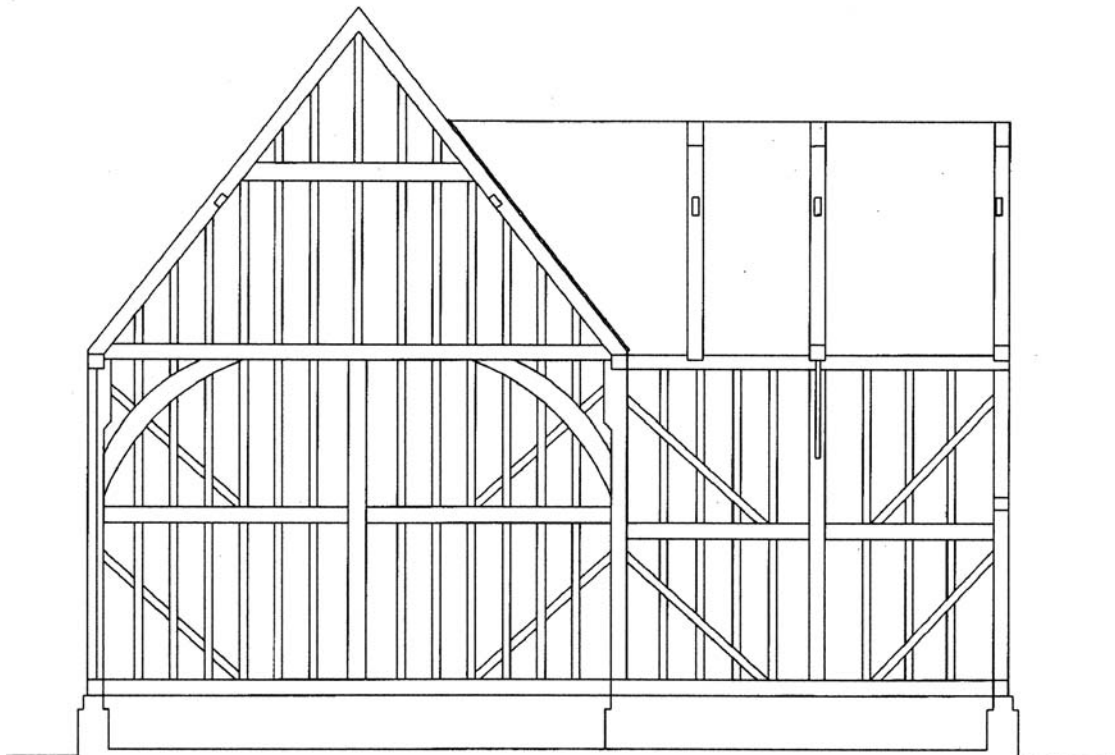
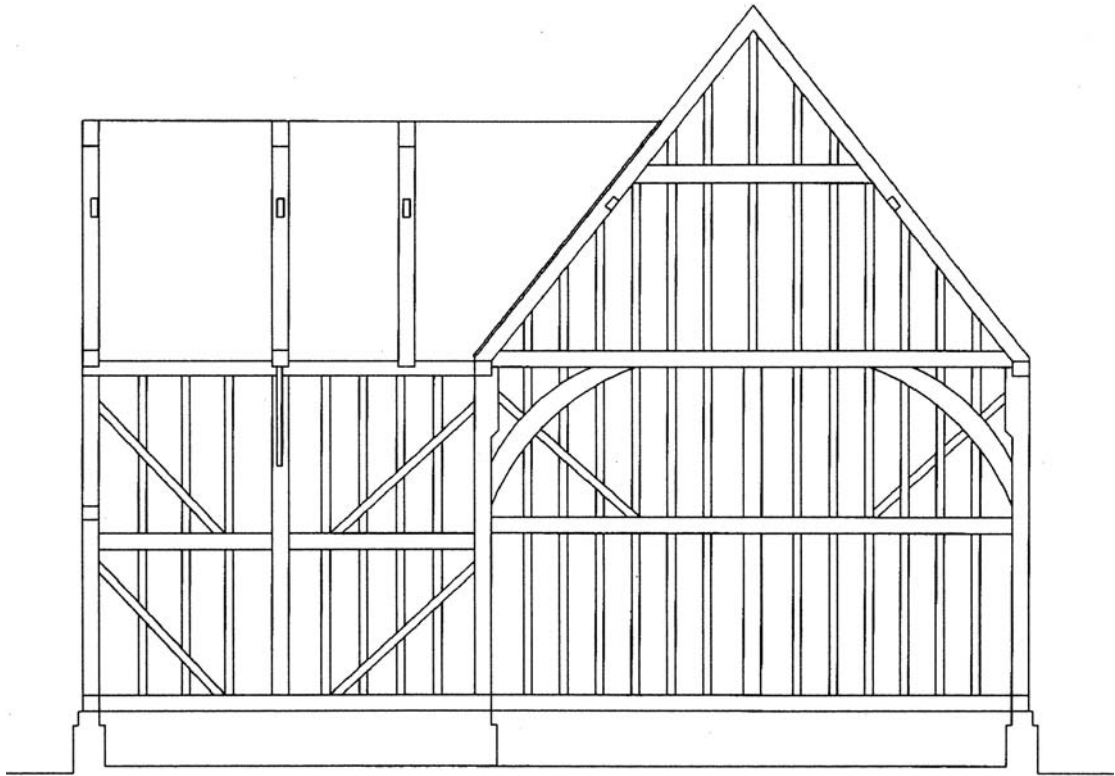


Figure 8
Internal elevations from south (top) and north showing internal gables, arch-braced open trusses of central bay and side-elevations of porch

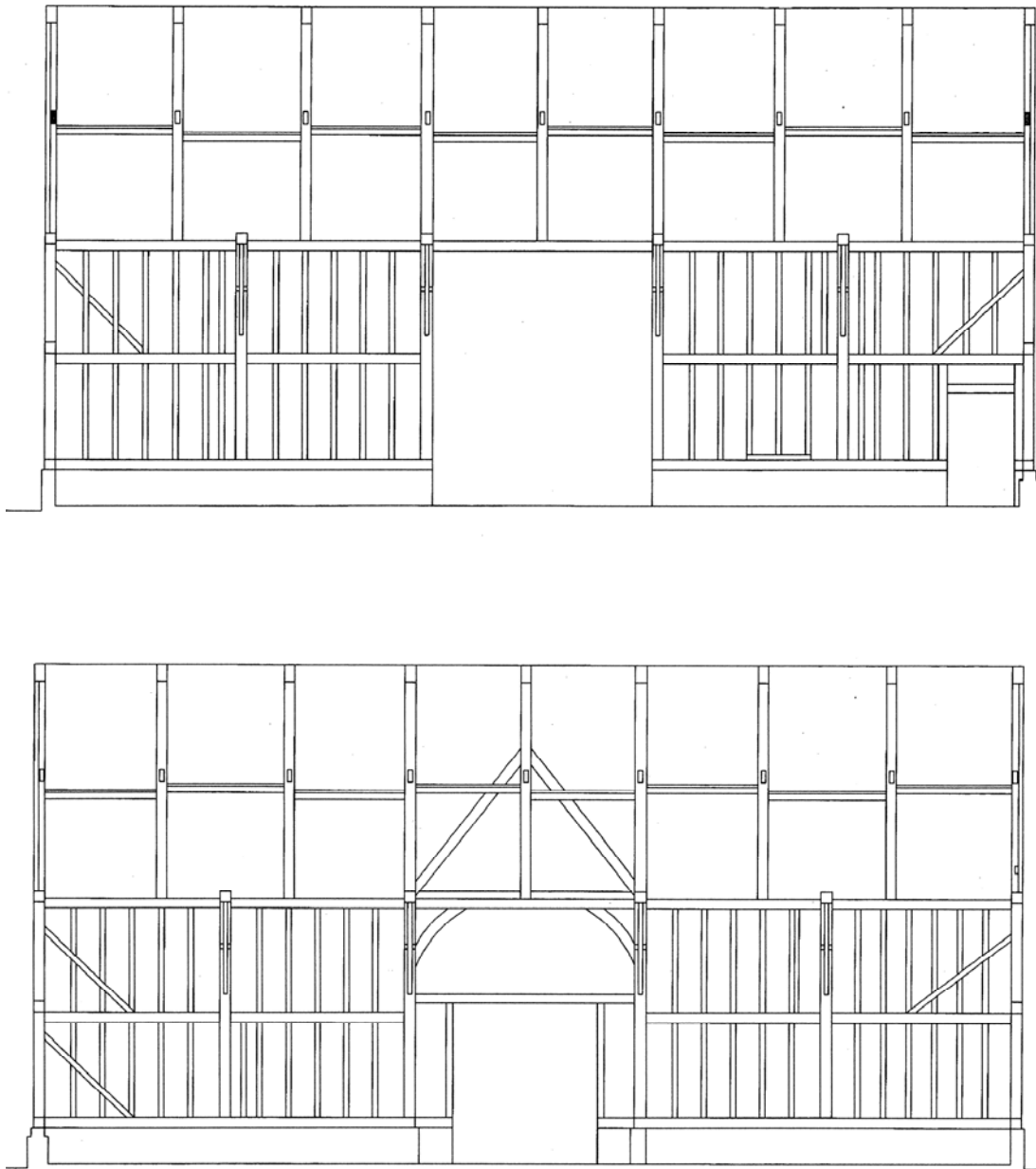


Figure 9
Internal eastern and western elevations (at top and bottom respectively) showing the roof structure of staggered butt-purlins. Note the stable door at the southern end of the eastern elevation and the arch-braced open truss of the porch.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from Mill Street to east showing barn in rear & Street Farm Gardens to left.
2. General view of site from Mill Street to east showing 'Mary Rose' to left & barn in rear.
3. 'Mary Rose' (originally Street Farm) from Mill Street to north-west. The original grade II-listed farmhouse but heavily 'restored' in recent years.
4. General view from Mill Street to west showing overgrown barn to right & 'Mary Rose' in rear.
5. General view from west showing barn to left & 'Hectors House' to right.
6. General view of site from south showing barn to left & Nissen hut to right.
7. General view from south showing barn to left and newly built 'Hensyl House' to right.
8. Exterior from Mill Street to north showing overgrown roadside elevation.
9. Exterior from Mill Street to north showing roadside shed (4) to left.
10. Exterior from Mill Street to north-east showing yard entrance to left.
11. Exterior from east showing single-storied sheds 3 to left and 4 to right.
12. Exterior from south-east showing single storied yard sheds to right.
13. Exterior of southern gable showing porch (1a) to left & shelter shed (3a) to right.
14. Exterior from south-west showing southern gable to right & porch (1a) left.
15. Southern exterior of shelter shed (3a) showing open elevation and pantiled roof.
16. Eastern elevation of barn showing single-storied sheds 3 and 4 to left and right.
17. External eastern elevation of barn showing barn doors.
18. Detail of half-hung barn doors from east showing hinges of lower door.
19. Detail of external western tarred weatherboarding to yard shed (4).
20. External western elevation from open shed (2) showing red ochre to weatherboarding.
21. Northern exterior of porch (1a) from shed (2) showing red ochre to weatherboarding.

22. Detail of red brick plinth of porch (1a) from shed (2) showing barn plinth to left.
23. Interior of open shed (2) from east showing porch (1a) left.
24. Detail of softwood rafters of lean-to open shed (2) from west.
25. Interior of open shed (2) from south-east showing corrugated iron cladding to right.
26. Exterior of northern yard shed (4) from south-east.
27. Open eastern gable of northern yard shed (4) now used as garage.
28. Southern exterior of northern shed (4) showing original low door to left.
29. Internal southern elevation of northern yard shed (4) showing narrow softwood studs.
30. Softwood clasped-purlin roof structure of northern shed (4) seen from east.
31. Northern internal elevation of northern shed (4) showing 20th century shuttered concrete.
32. Detail of low door in southern internal elevation of northern shed (4).
33. Detail of harness attached to southern interior of northern shed (4).
34. Eastern exterior of barn from northern shed (4) showing extensive red ochre pigment.
35. Detail of red ochre and red-brick plinth to eastern exterior of barn (within shed 4).
36. Detail of red ochre to external boarding of eastern exterior (within shed 4).
37. Northern exterior of southern yard shed (3) showing doors to vehicle shed (3b) to left.
38. Interior of vehicle shed (3b) from south showing modern vehicle doors.
39. Internal western elevation of vehicle shed (3b) showing internal door to right.
40. Internal eastern gable of vehicle shed (3b) showing softwood wall fabric.
41. Internal southern elevation of vehicle shed (3b).
42. South-western corner of eastern yard showing door to shelter shed (3a).
43. Interior of shelter shed (3a) showing red ochre to eastern exterior of barn.
44. Detail of eastern exterior of barn (from shed 3a) showing unpainted secondary boarding.
45. Interior of shelter shed (3a) showing door to vehicle shed to left.

22. Detail of red brick plinth of porch (1a) from shed (2) showing barn plinth to left.
23. Interior of open shed (2) from east showing porch (1a) left.
24. Detail of softwood rafters of lean-to open shed (2) from west.
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37. Northern exterior of southern yard shed (3) showing doors to vehicle shed (3b) to left.
38. Interior of vehicle shed (3b) from south showing modern vehicle doors.
39. Internal western elevation of vehicle shed (3b) showing internal door to right.
40. Internal eastern gable of vehicle shed (3b) showing softwood wall fabric.
41. Internal southern elevation of vehicle shed (3b).
42. South-western corner of eastern yard showing door to shelter shed (3a).
43. Interior of shelter shed (3a) showing red ochre to eastern exterior of barn.
44. Detail of eastern exterior of barn (from shed 3a) showing unpainted secondary boarding.
45. Interior of shelter shed (3a) showing door to vehicle shed to left.

73. Internal eastern elevation of barn showing northern gable to left.
74. Central open truss of porch (1a) seen from east.
75. Internal eastern elevation of barn showing arch-braces with southern gable to right.

Photographic Appendix 2 follows

Appendix 2: Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. General view of site from Mill Street to east showing the barn to right with the much restored grade II-listed former farmhouse now known as 'Mary Rose' to left. 'Hensyl House' is a new built red brick structure on the site of a former cattle yard between the two.



Illus. 2. Exterior from Mill Street to north showing the overgrown porch and lean-to shed (1a and 2) to the right. 'Hector's House' is shown in close proximity to the extreme right.



Illus. 3. Exterior of barn from east showing late-19th century single-storied sheds 3 and 4 to left and right respectively.



Illus. 4. Eastern exterior of barn exposed within northern shed (4) showing the extensive and apparently original red ochre to the weatherboarding.



Illus. 5. Detail of gault brick threshing floor in central bay of barn seen from eastern entrance.



Illus. 6. General view of barn interior from north showing eastern entrance in central bay to left and intact arch-braces to tie-beams.



Illus. 7. Interior of barn from south showing central porch (1a) to left.



Illus. 8. Original roof structure of staggered butt-purlins seen from north-west, showing thatch battens and gap above eastern entrance to left which may relate to the additional porch shown on the title map.



Illus. 9. Central open truss of two-bay porch (1a) seen from east.



Illus. 10. Detail from west of nailed bracket on central post of southern gable for axial joist of removed stable ceiling, showing secondary stable door in eastern elevation to left.