

**The Coach House,  
Poslingford House  
Poslingford,  
Suffolk  
PSG 019**

**Historic Building Record**

OASIS REF: suffolkc1-79643



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# **The Coach House, Poslingford House, Poslingford, Suffolk**

(TM 777 502)

## **Historic Building Record**

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a former coach house belonging to a grade II listed building. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010, ref. SpecHBR(EM)\_CoachHo\_Poslingford\_10), and is intended to inform and accompany a planning application to St Edmundsbury District Council (application SE/09/0618).*

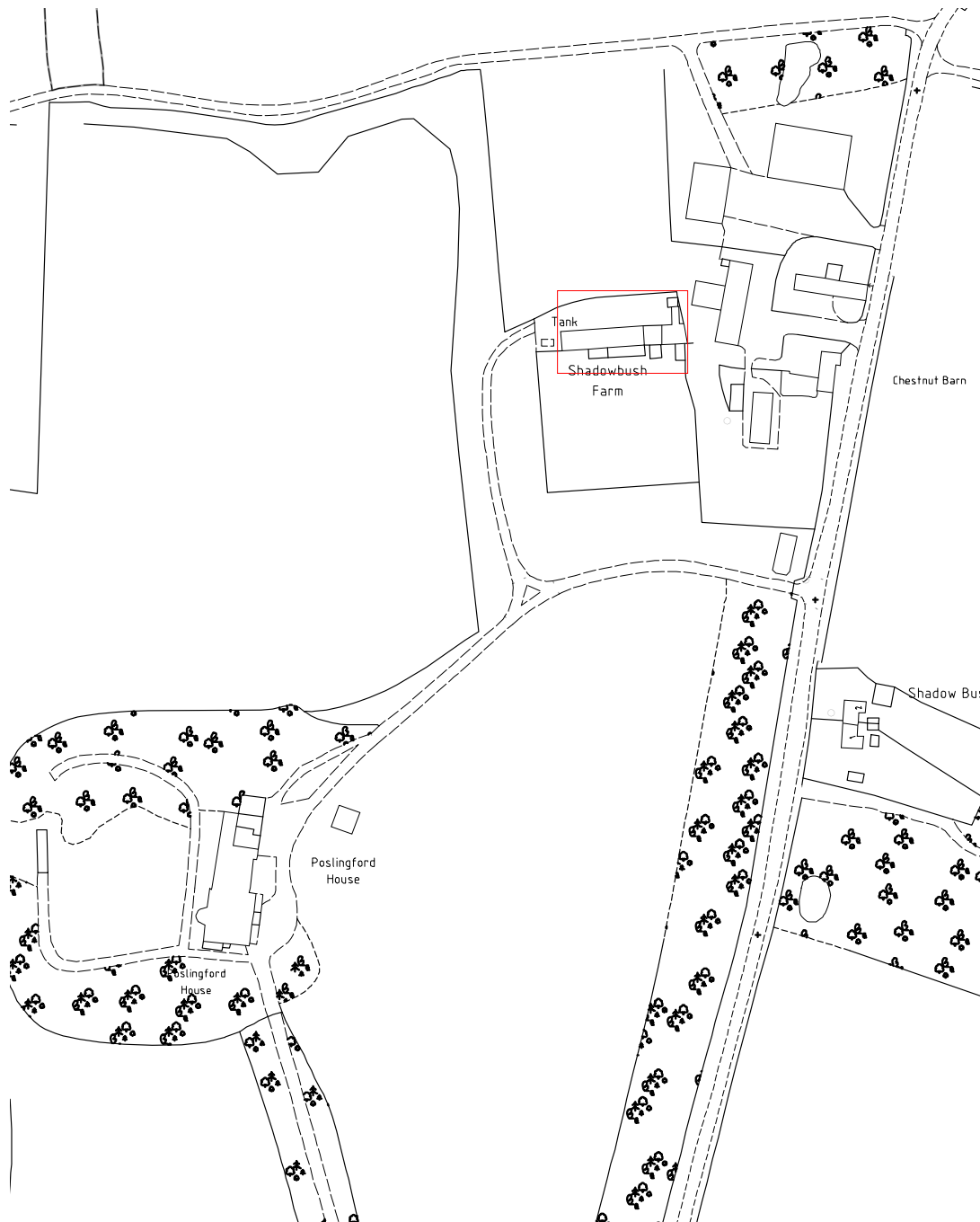
### **Introduction**

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 66 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. The site was inspected on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

### **Summary**

Poslingford House is a substantial grade II-listed early-19th century country house lying in its own park to the west of the road between Clare and Stansfield, approximately 1.5 km north of Poslingford village. The single-storied red-brick coach house belonging to the property lies on the northern side of a walled garden 200 m north-east of the house and is reached by a dedicated unmade track which branches from the drive. It lies immediately to the west of Shadowbush Farm, formerly the estate's home farm, which is also a grade II-listed building of the 17th century or before. The main house, garden and coach house were probably built for Colonel Thomas Weston in *circa* 1820 and the property was formerly known as both Shadow Bush and Poslingford Park.

The coach house has been much altered but appears to have contained a pair of stables with arched windows divided by a central tack room or chaff house to the west and a pair of vehicle sheds to the east. It was shown with its original rectangular outline on the tithe map of 1842 but had acquired a lean-to conservatory to its southern (garden) elevation by the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1885. The present conservatory is an early-20th century replacement that was in a dilapidated condition at the time of inspection. The present hipped roof of corrugated asbestos is an addition of the mid-20th century which probably replaced slate. The interior of the stable was stripped of its partitions at the same time and its northern were doors blocked, while new sliding doors were inserted to the western gable and the western end of the southern elevation adjoining the garden. These alterations suggest the space was adapted for the storage of garden produce. The two original vehicle sheds were provided with new doors, and a third shed of corrugated iron was added to the eastern gable (4). The building is of historic interest given its link with the grade II-listed mansion but its integrity has been considerably depleted and is now confined to its profile and the external appearance of its northern façade (which retains its original pattern of doors and arched windows). The attached conservatory and walled garden are also of significance insofar as they illustrate the management of a large garden in the Edwardian heyday of the country house, but the building fails to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in its own right.



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**Figure 1 Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan.**

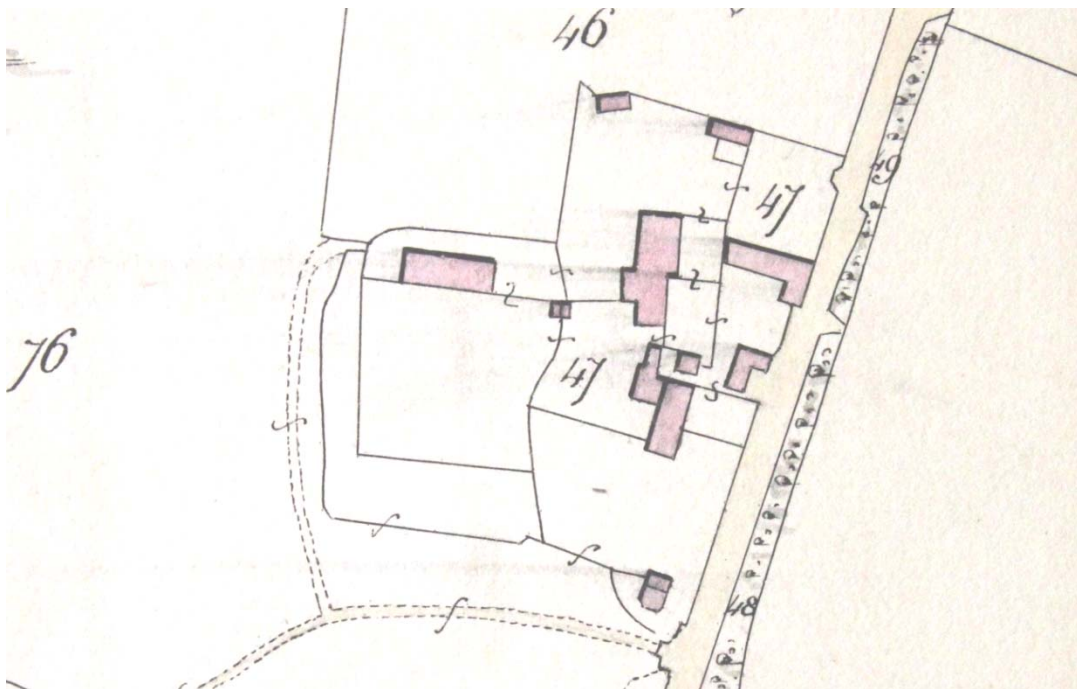
**Enclosing the coach house in red and showing Poslingford House to the south-west and the converted farm buildings of Shadowbush Farm immediately to the east.**

## **Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record**

Poslingford House lies in its own park to the west of the road between Clare and Stansfield, approximately 1.5 km north of Poslingford village. The house is listed at grade II and described in the Schedule as an early-19<sup>th</sup> century country house of stuccoed brick, but was not inspected for the purpose of this report. The remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century lodge mark the entrance to the site from the Stansfield Road. The red-brick coach house belonging to the



**Figure 2**  
**Poslingford tithe map of 1842 (Suffolk Record Office)**  
**Showing Poslingford House (labelled Shadow Bush) set in a 40-acre park to the south-west of the coach house with Shadowbush Farm to the east.**



**Figure 2a**  
**Detail of 1842 tithe map above, showing the rectangular coach house reached, as today, by a drive from the south-east and the walled garden to the south. The building adjoins the park on the west (76), a paddock on the north (46) and Shadow Bush farmhouse and garden (47) on the east.**

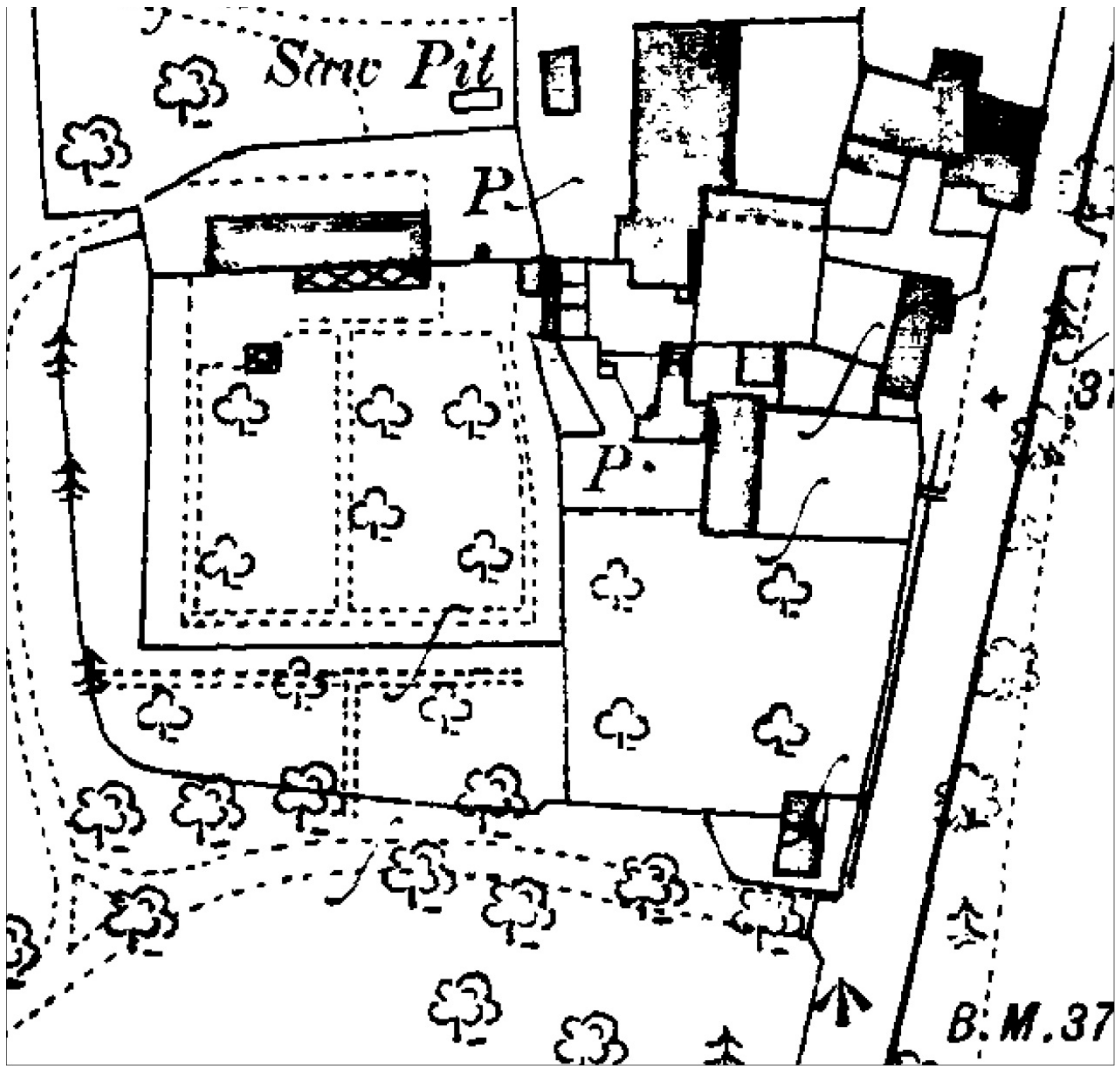


Figure 3  
 First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885.  
 The coach house is shown much as in 1842 but a new glass-roofed conservatory had  
 been added to the eastern end of its southern elevation.

property lies on the northern side of a substantial walled garden 200 m north-east of the house and is reached by a dedicated unmade track which branches from the drive. It lies immediately to the west of Shadowbush Farm, which adjoins the road and contains a group of converted farm buildings and a grade II-listed farmhouse dated in the Schedule to the 17<sup>th</sup> century but possibly earlier. This farm is shown on Hodskinsons map of Suffolk in 1783, and is labelled 'Shadow Bush', but Poslingford House is conspicuous by its absence and had evidently not yet been built. At the time of the tithe survey in 1842 the main house was labelled Shadow Bush and described in the apportionment as 'Shadow Bush Mansion House' set in a 40-acre park. The adjacent farm was named as 'Shadow Bush Farm, homestead and garden' (no. 47 on the map) and both were owned and occupied by Thomas Weston. The park and farm contained 186 acres but Weston owned an additional 500 acres in the parish divided into four tenanted holdings. White's Suffolk Directory of 1844 refers to Lt. Colonel Thomas Weston's seat as Poslingford Park and describes it (accurately) as a handsome mansion 1 mile north of the village.

The 1842 title map appears to show the present rectangular coach house on the northern side of the walled garden (with which it is integral) but there is no indication of the southern projection indicated by the brickwork and the conservatory was not present. The latter had appeared by 1885 and had been truncated by 1904, as shown in figure 3 and 4, and the eastern vehicle shed is an addition of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (i.e. building 4 in figure 5).

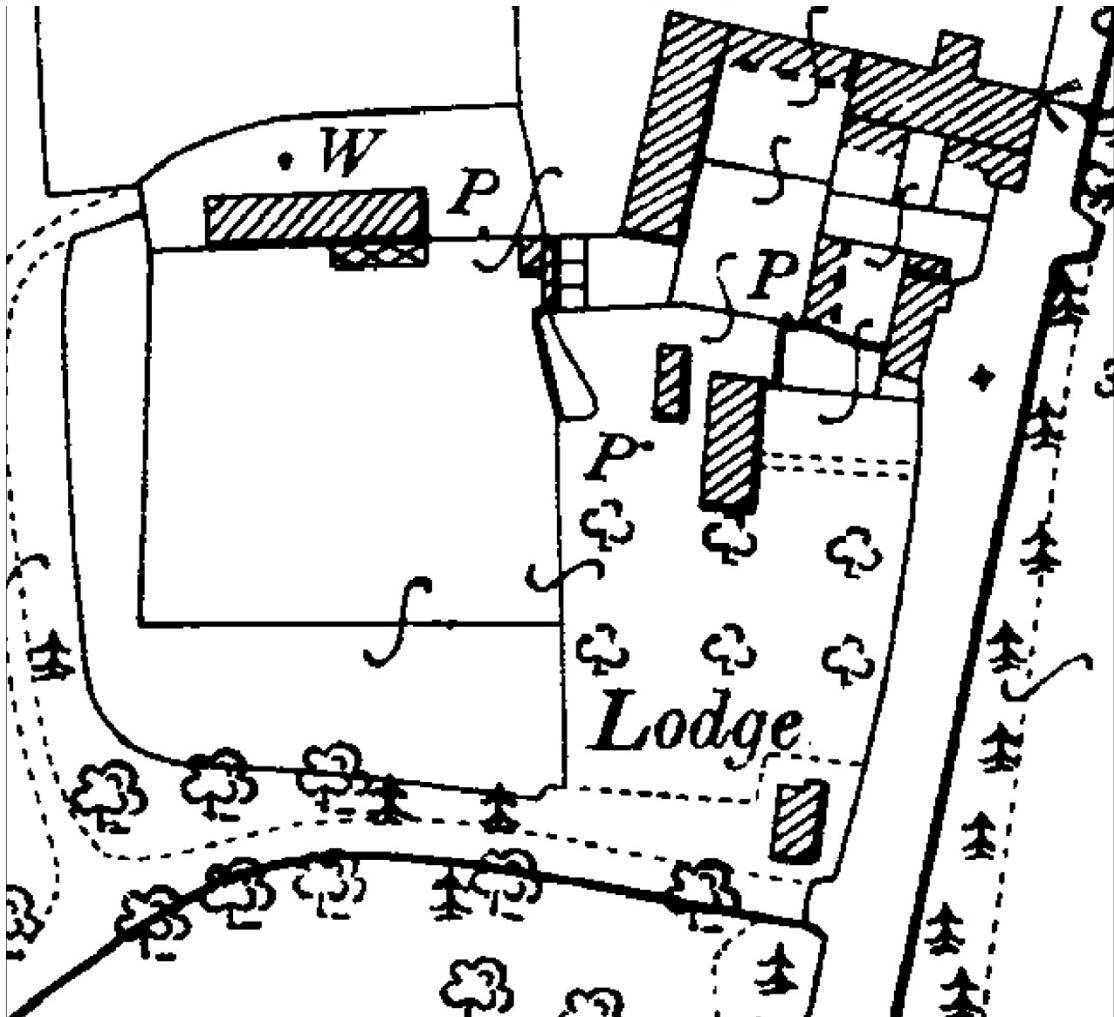


Figure 4  
Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1904.  
Little had changed since 1885 but the conservatory appears to have been truncated to the west.



## Building Analysis

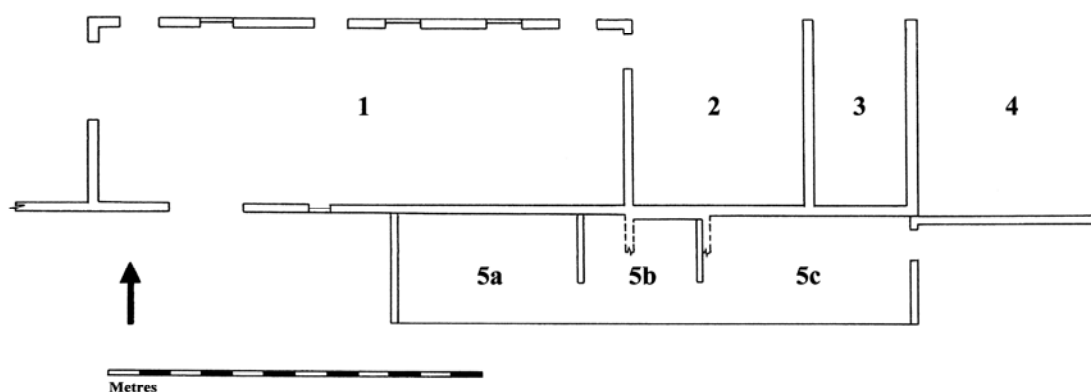


Figure 5  
Block Plan of Coach House

Identifying each area of the building with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. The original building is an early-19<sup>th</sup> century single-storied red-brick structure with a hipped roof of 20<sup>th</sup> century corrugated asbestos represented by areas 1, 2 and 3.

### Key

1. Open shed with three original doors and three arched windows in its northern elevation. Now forming a single space with 20<sup>th</sup> century internal render and ceiling, but formerly divided into at least three compartments and probably designed as a stable with a hay rack and manger to the southern elevation. Secondary doors to both gables and to the western end of the southern elevation. Softwood clasped-purlin roof structure with ridge-piece.
2. Vehicle shed for carts or traps with replaced 20<sup>th</sup> century doors to north. Secondary 19<sup>th</sup> century internal door to stable compartment (1).
3. Narrow vehicle shed with replaced 20<sup>th</sup> century doors to north.
4. Lean-to corrugated iron vehicle shed of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century adjoining the eastern gable of the original coach house and a separate 19<sup>th</sup> century brick garden wall to the south.
5. Lean-to glass conservatory or greenhouse of late-19<sup>th</sup> or early-20<sup>th</sup> century with three internal compartments and pierced cast-iron brackets. Incorporating parts of an earlier glasshouse shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904, and concealing evidence of a narrow original projection from the southern elevation of the coach house.

### Structure and Date

The building known as the coach house is a red-brick structure with a shallow-pitched hipped roof which extends to 26.5 m in length by 6.4 m in overall width on an east-west axis (87 ft by 21 ft). Its walls rise to 2.4 m internally (11 ft) and are laid entirely in Flemish bond to the front (northern) elevation but partly in English bond to the rear, but the upper courses of the external facade are obscured by the boxed eaves of the 20<sup>th</sup> century corrugated asbestos roof. The roof structure is largely concealed, but where exposed consists of tall-sectioned rafters with a ridge-piece, clasped-purlins and nailed collars; this was probably designed for slate, to match that of the mansion house, but may be a replacement of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The



south-western corner of the building is integral with the adjoining garden wall, although its continuation to the east is separate (the wall and the eastern gable of the conservatory apparently built together and overlapping the corner as shown in figure 5); both the walled garden and the coach house were depicted on the tithe map of 1842 and are probably contemporary or near-contemporary with the house of *circa* 1820.

### **Layout and Function**

The interior of the building was largely gutted in the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century, removing the original partitions to which the three doors of the northern facade related. The central door is slightly taller than its neighbours and was provided with a rectangular fanlight, suggesting it opened onto a tack room or chaff box dividing a pair of stables entered at each corner. The rear (southern) elevation lacks windows and would have secured hay racks and mangers in the usual manner. No relevant fixtures or fittings survive, and the roof is concealed above a modern flat ceiling. The surface of a cobbled northern yard some 10 cm beneath the present concrete yard was partly exposed at the time of the inspection. The two sheds to the east were always open to the north, although the existing doors are 20<sup>th</sup> century replacements, and would have accommodated vehicles such as carts and traps alongside the stable (one of 5.5 m in length (2) and one of 2.75 m (3), or 18 ft and 9 ft respectively). The structure was reached from the carriage drive to the south and was evidently built as a carriage stable and coach house.

There is evidence of an additional original projection from the southern external elevation, as indicated by the scars of two vertical walls now exposed within the conservatory. The main wall here is slightly thicker than elsewhere, and contains evidence of a secondary window that appears to have been crudely inserted into the brick fabric. This feature was just 2.2 m in width and must have formed a narrow shed entered from the walled garden. It is not shown on the tithe map of 1842, however, and had presumably been demolished prior to this date.

### **Later Additions and Alterations**

A glass-roofed conservatory had been added to the eastern end of the southern elevation by 1885, as shown in figure 3, but this had been truncated by 1904 and the present lean-to conservatory is a reconstruction of the 20th century. It incorporates a series of pierced cast-iron brackets that may have been re-used from its predecessor and retained a louver mechanism by Boulton and Paul at the time of inspection but was badly dilapidated. The interior is divided into three sections by poorly-built brick partitions as shown in figure 5. The interior of the stable was stripped of its partitions during the mid-20th century and its northern doors blocked, while new sliding doors were inserted to the western gable and the western end of the southern elevation adjoining the garden. These alterations suggest the space was adapted for the storage of garden produce. The two original vehicle sheds were provided with new doors at the same time, and a third shed of corrugated iron was added to the eastern gable (4). Some of these doors are reputed to have been purchased from a nearby military base and retain hinges bearing the stamps of the Henderson sliding door factory at Barking, Essex. The narrow door linking the stable to the larger vehicle shed (2), which retains its brick floor, is an insertion of the 19th century which interrupts the original brickwork and while the small window at the western end of the southern elevation may be an original feature it is probably also an insertion of the late-19th century. The frames of the arched windows to the former stables appear to have been renewed but their arched profiles are respected by the brickwork; they may have contained Mock Gothic tracery in the fashion of the early-19th century when first installed.

### **Historic Significance**

The coach house at Poslingford House is an early-19th century combined stable and coach house that is probably contemporary with the grade II-listed mansion and is accordingly of considerable historic interest. It has, however, suffered extensive alteration during the 20th century, including the replacement of its roof with corrugated asbestos, the complete gutting of its stables and the insertion of new sliding doors. In consequence, its historic integrity has been considerably depleted and is now confined to the external appearance of its northern façade which retains its original pattern of doors and arched windows (the latter partly hidden by the modern roof). In its present form the secondary conservatory in the walled garden dates only from the early-20th century and is in poor repair, but is also of some historic value as it illustrates the management of a large garden in the Edwardian heyday of the country house. As a result of these various alterations the building fails to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in its own right.

**Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record**

## **Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1**

### **Photograph no.**

1. General view of site entrance from road to south-east showing Shadowbush Farm in rear to right.
2. General view of site entrance from road to north showing Shadbowbush farmhouse to right.
3. Exterior of Shadowbush farmhouse from road to east (included for site context).
4. General view of site entrance from west showing remains of lodge to left & gate to right.
5. General view of entrance to site from east showing walled garden to right and house drive to left.
6. Decorative wooden gate at entrance to site from road to east.
7. General view of site from south-east showing walled garden with coach house in rear to right.
8. General view of site from south-west showing junction between tracks to coach house (left) and house (right).
9. General view of site from south-eastern corner of walled garden showing coach house with conservatory in rear.
10. General view from coach house to north showing hilltop location with Stansfield church in distance.
11. General view from west showing proximity of coach house (left) to Shadowbush farm in rear to right.
12. Exterior of Shadowbush farmhouse from walled garden to west (included for site context).
13. Exterior from south-east showing conservatory to right.
14. Southern exterior from walled garden showing hipped roof of corrugated asbestos with conservatory to right.
15. Exterior of walled garden (left) from north showing approach track from Poslingford House.
16. Exterior from west showing north-western corner of walled garden to right and western gable of coach house to left.
17. Exterior from north-west showing northern facade to left and secondary door in western gable to right.
18. Exterior from north-east showing northern facade with doors to vehicle sheds (2, 3 & 4) to left.

19. Northern facade from north-east showing re-used doors to vehicle sheds (2 & 3) to left.
20. Detail of hinge to re-used doors of vehicle sheds (2 & 3) cast with 'Henderson Tangent Door Gear'.
21. Eastern end of northern exterior showing lean-to addition (4) and ancillary corrugated iron sheds.
22. Northern exterior of corrugated iron sheds to east of coach house showing walled garden in rear and shed 4 to right.
23. Detail of secondary sliding doors in western external gable.
24. Detail of original door and arched window at western end of northern facade.
25. Detail of original arched window at western end of northern facade (interrupted by 20th century eaves board).
26. Detail of central door to northern facade with original light above and arched windows on both sides.
27. Detail of cobbled yard beneath modern concrete adjoining northern facade.
28. Detail of arched windows and doors at southern end of northern facade.
29. Detail of original door at eastern end of northern facade with entrance to vehicle shed (2) to left.
30. Detail of doors to original vehicle sheds at eastern end of northern facade, showing shed 2 to right and shed 3 to left.
31. Western end of southern exterior showing secondary sliding doors to left and conservatory to right.
32. Western end of southern exterior showing ostensibly secondary window with conservatory to right.
33. Junction of secondary conservatory and western end of southern exterior seen from south-west.
34. Exterior of conservatory from south-west showing farm buildings in rear to right.
35. Exterior of conservatory from south-east showing door in eastern gable and separate wall of eastern vehicle shed (4).
36. Junction of conservatory and wall of vehicle shed (4) showing integral brickwork with separate coach house corner top-right.
37. Walled garden from east showing conservatory to right.
38. Interior of coach house (1) from west showing modern ceiling and render stripped of original partitions.

39. Interior of coach house (1) from west showing blocked doors of northern facade to left.
40. Detail of nailed softwood roof structure of coach house (1) above modern ceiling.
41. Interior of coach house (1) from east showing blind wall adjoining conservatory to left.
42. North-eastern internal corner of coach house (1) showing secondary door to vehicle shed (2) to right and blocked door to left.
43. Internal northern elevation of coach house (1) showing arched windows and blocked doors.
44. Internal detail of arched window in northern elevation of coach house (1).
45. Internal western gable of coach house (1) showing secondary sliding doors.
46. Interior of vehicle shed (2) from east showing secondary door to coach house (1) interrupting brickwork.
47. Internal southern elevation of vehicle shed (2).
48. Interior of vehicle shed (2) from west showing entrance doors to left.
49. Internal northern elevation of vehicle shed (2) showing secondary doors.
50. Detail of original brick floor of vehicle shed (2) from south showing secondary entrance doors.
51. Interior of narrow vehicle shed (3) from northern entrance, showing eastern gable to left.
52. Interior of narrow vehicle shed (3) from south showing secondary entrance doors with eastern gable to right.
53. Interior of eastern vehicle shed (4) from east showing original external gable of coach house.
54. Interior of eastern vehicle shed (4) from west showing corrugated iron construction.
55. Interior of eastern vehicle shed (4) from south showing re-used doors of northern entrance.
56. Exterior of conservatory from east.
57. Interior of conservatory (5c) from east showing cast-iron decorative brackets.
58. Interior of conservatory (5c) from east showing doorway to central section (5b).
59. Interior of central section of conservatory (5b) showing door to western section (5a) with wall scar to right.

60. Interior of western section of conservatory (5a) showing junction with coach house to right.
61. Interior of central section of conservatory (5b) from west showing eastern section (5c) beyond.
62. Northern interior of central section of conservatory (5b) showing scar of demolished projection from coach house wall.
63. Detail of scar of demolished original wall projecting at right-angles from coach house in central section of conservatory (5b).
64. Scar of demolished original wall in internal north-western corner of eastern section of conservatory (5c, right).
65. Roof louver mechanism in western section of conservatory (5a).
66. Detail of handle to louver mechanism in conservatory cast with maker's name Boulton and Paul.

*Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 13-17*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 13-17): Selected Printed Photographs**



**Illus. 1. General view of site from south-eastern corner of walled garden showing coach house with lean-to conservatory in rear.**



**Illus. 2. Southern exterior of coach house from walled garden showing hipped roof of corrugated asbestos with conservatory to right and inserted sliding door to left.**





**Illus. 3. Exterior from north-west showing northern facade to left and secondary door in western gable to right. The barn of Shadowbush Farm is visible in rear to left.**



**Illus. 4. Exterior from north-east showing northern facade with doors to vehicle sheds (2 & 3) to left with 20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to shed (4) to extreme left.**





**Illus. 5. Detail of original arched windows and doors at southern end of northern facade.**



**Illus. 6. Interior of coach house (1) from west showing modern ceiling and render. The space has been stripped of its original partitions, fixtures and fittings.**





**Illus. 7. Interior of coach house (1) from west showing blocked doors of northern facade to left.**



**Illus. 8. Detail of nailed softwood roof structure of coach house (1) above modern ceiling.**





**Illus. 9. Interior of conservatory (5c) from east showing doorway to central section (5b) with decorative cast iron brackets to left.**



**Illus. 10. Northern interior of central section of conservatory (5b) showing scar of demolished original projection from coach house wall.**