

**Green Farm,  
Wetheringsett,  
Suffolk  
WCB 065**

**Historic Building Record**  
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*on behalf of*  
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# **Barns at Green Farm, Town Lane, Wetheringsett, Suffolk**

**(TM 1231 6447)**

## **Historic Building Record**

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a group of redundant farm buildings (known for planning purposes as barns but consisting only of a stable and a range of sheds). It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009, ref. SpecHBR(EM)\_GreenFm-Wetheringsett\_2711\_09) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning consent for residential conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council application 27/11/06).*

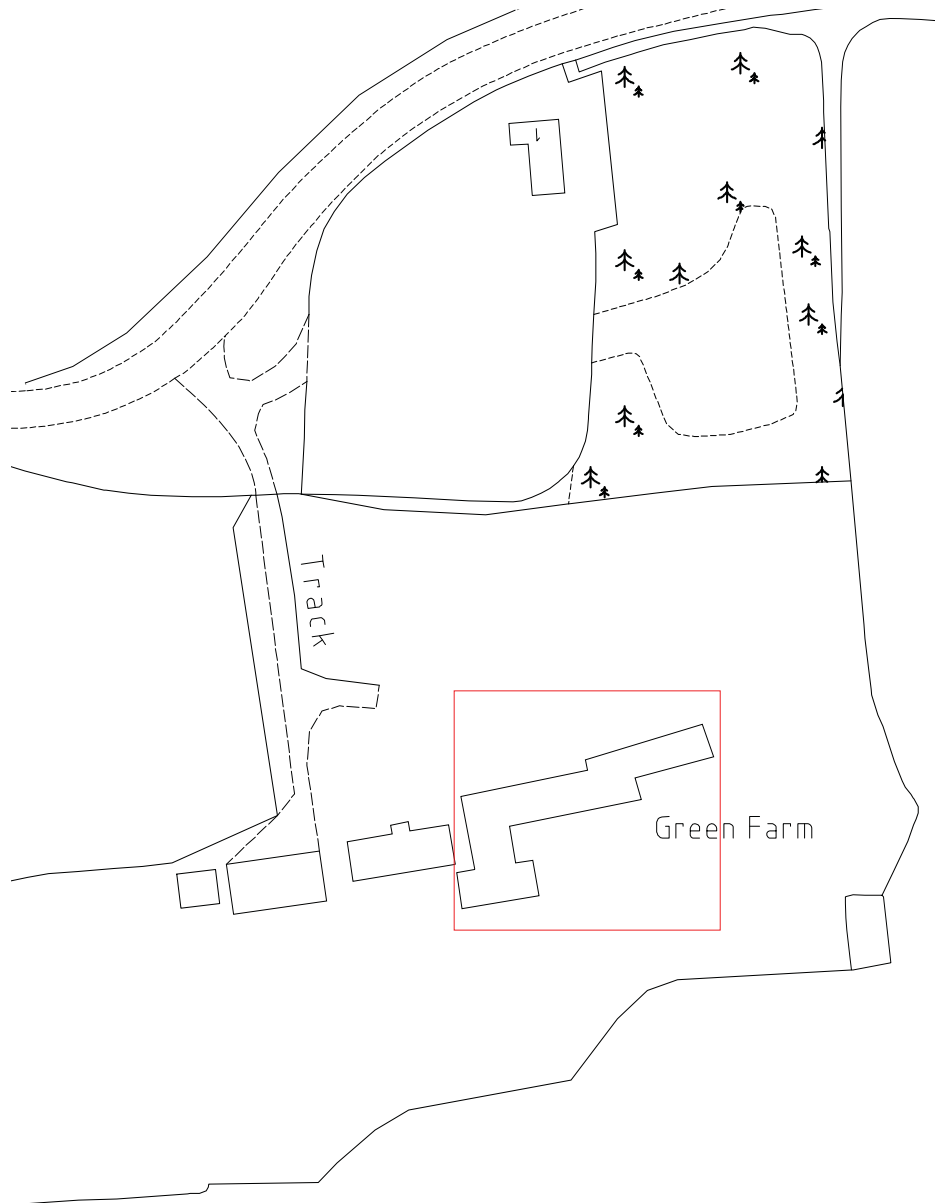
### **Introduction**

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 60 digital images (Appendix 1), but also includes 12 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 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

### **Summary**

Green Farm lies in open arable countryside approximately 2.5 km south of Wetheringsett village and 300 m north of Mendlesham telecommunications mast. The unlisted farmhouse is a rendered brick structure which probably dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and bears the date 1779 and the initials 'S.C'. In 1841 it formed a tenanted holding of 105 acres and adjoined the south-western corner of a large common known as Brockford Green which extended 1 km further to the north. The common was enclosed soon afterwards when Town Lane was built to link the site with the turnpike road 300 m to the west (the modern A140). The paddock between the farmhouse and the lane is now all that survives of the medieval common and is therefore an historically important feature of the local landscape.

Of the farm buildings shown on the Ordnance Surveys of 1885 and 1904, which included a large barn, only a clay-lump stable with a pantiled roof now survives. This dates from *circa* 1850 and was not shown on the 1841 tithe map, although it incorporates parts of a late-18<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup> century flint shed. A much altered and partly demolished range of single-storied cattle sheds to the north dates from *circa* 1920 and is not of historic significance. The stable formerly adjoined small horse yard on the south, with an open-sided shelter shed to the west, a pond to the south and the barn to the east. It reflects the usual layout of its period, with a central yard door flanked by two windows and a hay loft with a loading door in the eastern gable. A hay rack and manger lay against the northern elevation beneath a loading vent in the loft floor. The interior was stripped of its fixtures and fittings when a number of block-work stalls for calves or pigs was inserted in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and part of the loft has been removed, but the building is otherwise well preserved and of considerable historic interest. Of particular importance is an unusually extensive array of circular apotropaic circles incised into the internal walls close to the loft window and loading door, and a series of clay drainage pipes which penetrate the rear wall. These pipes were presumably designed to ventilate the hay rack and may be unique survivals. Despite its interest the building does not meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.



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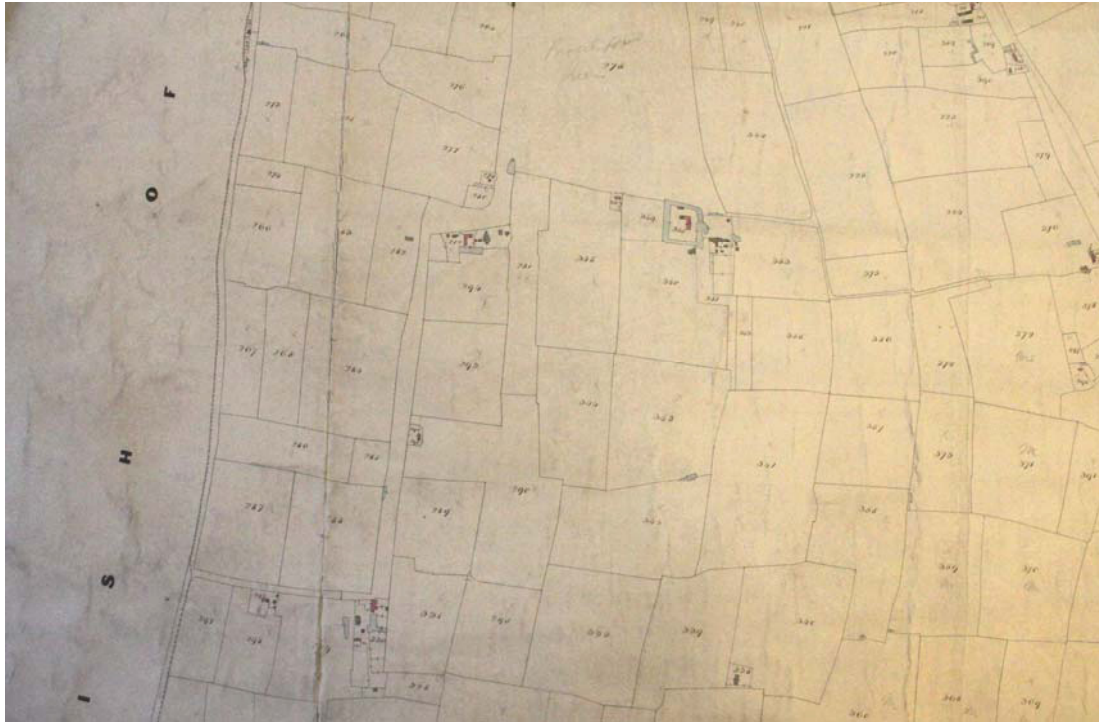
**Figure 1**

**Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan**

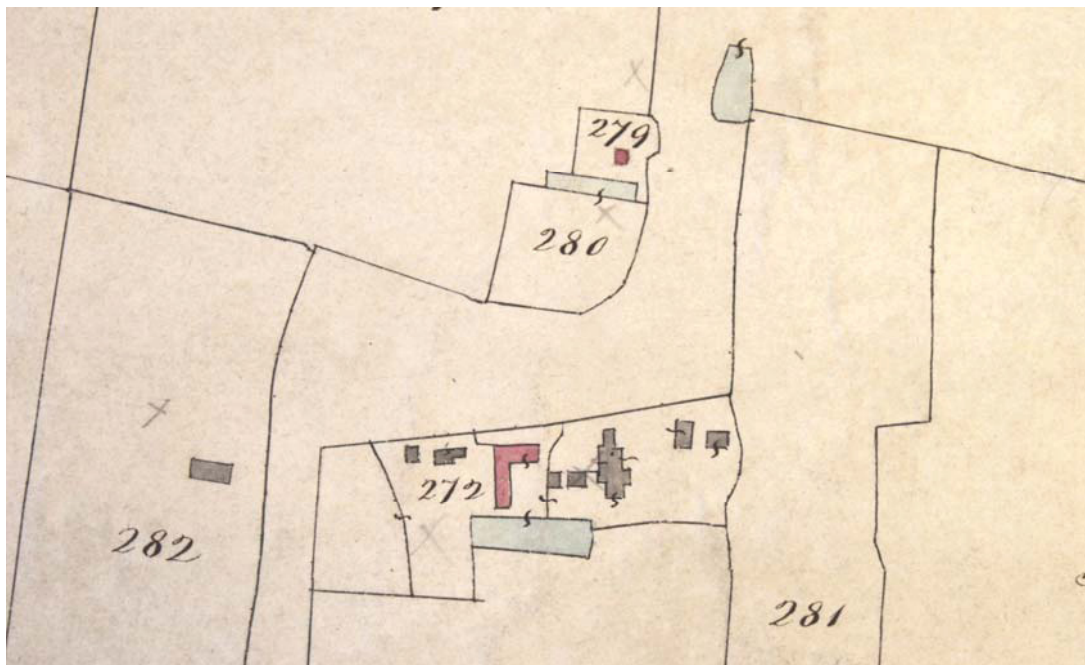
**Outlining the farm buildings in red and showing the farmhouse and a modern garage to left. The farm is approached from Town Lane and Plover Cottage to the north. Note the curved corner of Brockford Green to the east and south of Plover Cottage (marked '1').**

**Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record**

Green Farm lies in open arable countryside 300 m north of the Mendlesham transmitting station and former airfield, and approximately 2.5 km south of Wetheringsett village. The site is reached by a short metalled track or drive from Town Lane, which joins the A140 300 m to the west. Town Lane was constructed during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and is not shown on the tithe map of 1841 (fig. 2), when the farm adjoined the south-western corner of a large linear common known as Brockford Green which extended 1 km north to the modern hamlet of Brockford Green. The farm was approached from the south by a road which followed the course of the modern footpath across the field towards the transmitter. The area of pasture land to the north of the house (and to the east of its drive) is all that survives of the medieval green and is accordingly of considerable importance to the history of the local landscape.



**Figure 2**  
**Tithe map of Wetheringsett-cum-Brockford, 1841 (Suffolk Record Office)**  
 Showing the modern A140 to left. Green farm marks the south-west corner of Brockford Green (top centre), with the moated 'Moat House' at its south-eastern corner. Town Lane is not shown, and the site was approached from the south.



**Figure 2a**  
 Detail of 1841 tithe map above, showing Green Farm adjoining Brockford Green to the north. Town Lane now passes to the north of Plover Cottage (plot 279). The farmhouse (in red) is L-shaped and two small outbuildings occupy the approximate site of the present stable to the east (which incorporates fragments of these buildings). Nothing now remains of the large barn in the direction of Barn Meadow (281) to the east, or of the isolated neathouse (bullock shed) shown in Neathouse Meadow to the west (282).

The farmhouse is not listed and has been much renovated in recent years, but appears to be an 18<sup>th</sup> century red-brick structure with a tall attic storey (but may be of earlier origin). The brickwork is concealed by modern render, which bears the initials S.C. and the date 1779 in the centre of the northern elevation. The title map shows the building with a rear wing which no longer survives and what appears to be a large barn to the east. Only the house remains from this period, together with sections of two small sheds to the south-east that were incorporated into the clay-lump stable (building 1 in figure 5). The farm was a tenanted holding of above average size, with 105 acres of chiefly arable land (25% pasture), owned by Nathaniel James Scott and occupied by Jonathan Baskett. It contained three cottages in addition to the farmhouse (including what is now Plover Cottage to the north – no. 279 on the map) and eight common rights on Brockford Green. The field in the direction of the demolished barn to the east (no. 281) was known as Barn Meadow, with Home Meadow to the south of the pond. The field to the west (282) was Neathouse Meadow and contained a structure that presumably served this purpose (i.e. a bullock shed).

The green had been largely enclosed by the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey in 1885, and Town Lane had been inserted to link the site more directly with the turnpike (the field adjoining the A140 to the north of the new junction was named as Toll-gate field in 1841). The farm buildings had changed little, but the surviving stable was shown for the first time and a new structure with two small yards had appeared to the north (possibly a piggery). The stable formed the northern edge of an enclosed horse yard with an open-sided shelter shed to the west, the pond to the south and the presumed barn to the east. Both the barn and shelter shed have been demolished. The Ordnance Survey of 1904 shows an almost identical layout, with no sign of the existing range of pantiled sheds to the north of the stable.

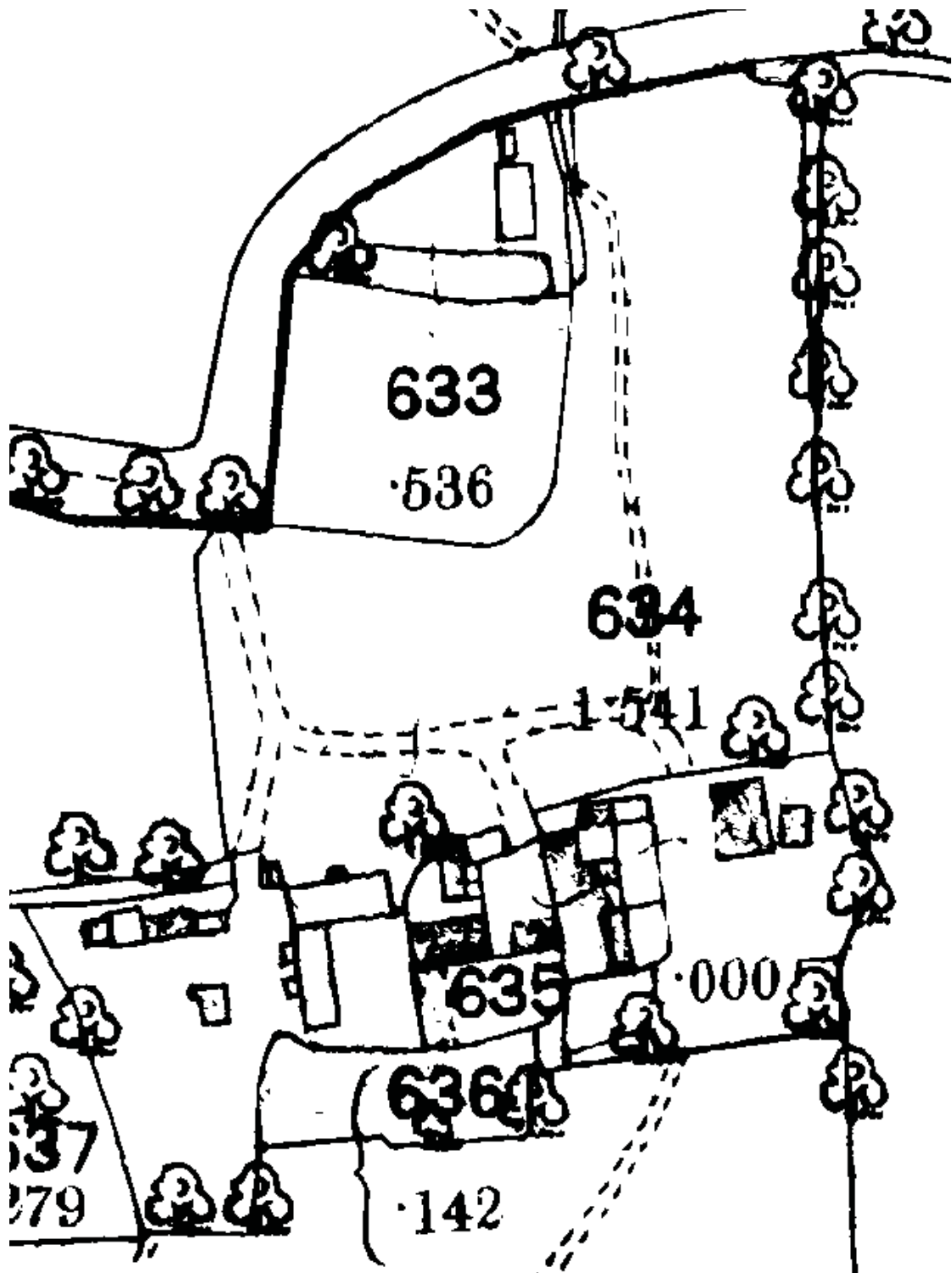


Figure 3

First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885

The shape of Brockford Green in 1844 is still discernable, but Town Lane is now present. The house still possessed its rear wing. The existing stable is shown for the first time with an open-sided shelter-shed projecting towards the pond from the western end of its southern elevation. A large barn lies to the east, but the existing sheds (2 & 3 in figure 5) had not yet appeared.

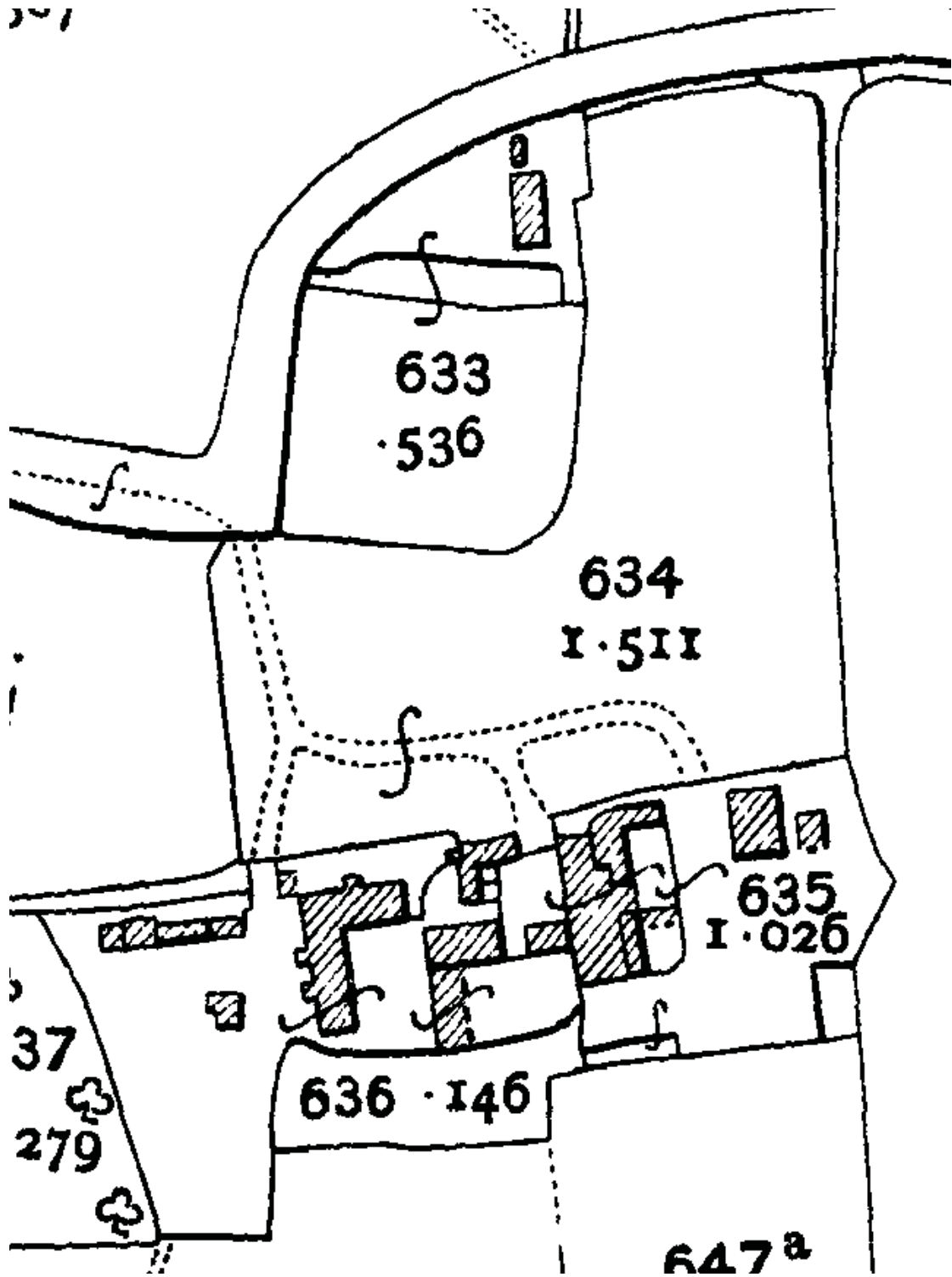


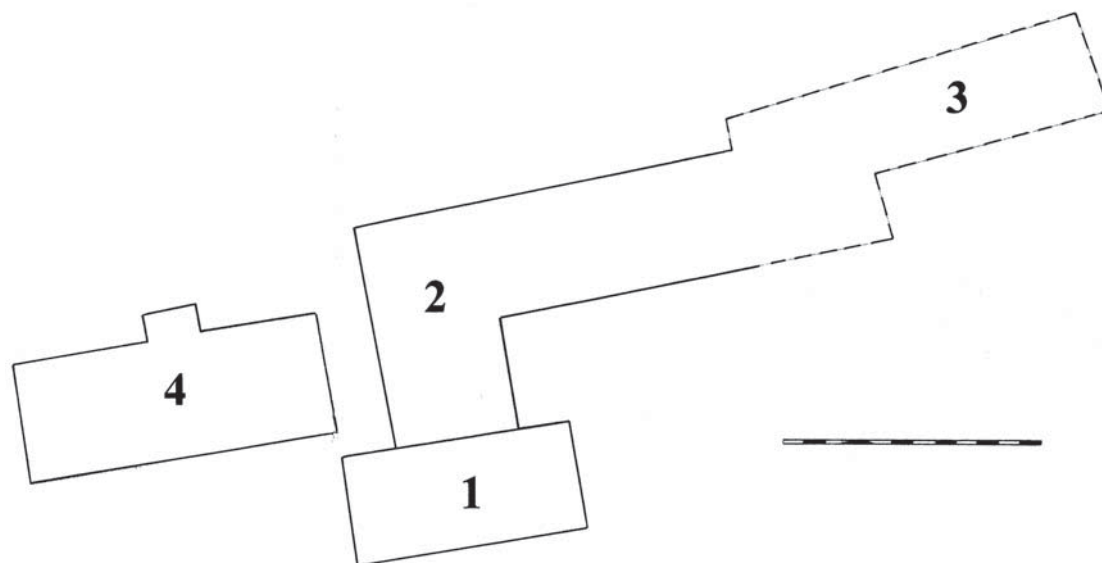
Figure 4

Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1904

The layout of the site had changed little since 1885, but the buildings are shown more clearly. Broken lines indicate open-sided structures such as the shelter-shed adjoining the southern elevation of the stable. A horse yard lay to the south-east, bounded by a large barn on the east and the pond on the south. The present sheds to the north-east of the stable are still conspicuous by their absence.



## Building Analysis



**Figure 5**  
**Block plan of site based on Ordnance Survey. Scale in metres**

### Key

- 1** Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pantiled clay-lump stable and hay loft. *Circa 1850*
- 2** Early-20<sup>th</sup> century L-shaped timber-framed and weatherboarded animal shelter-shed, formerly open-sided to east and south but enclosed in late-20<sup>th</sup> century. Pantiled Roof. *Circa 1920*
- 3** Early-20<sup>th</sup> century enclosed shed. Recently demolished to leave only brick plinth *in situ*. Probably designed as a cow shed.
- 4** Farmhouse. Two-stored with tall attic storey. Red brick with 20<sup>th</sup> century render. Initials S. C. and date 1779 incised in render of front (northern) elevation. Not inspected internally.

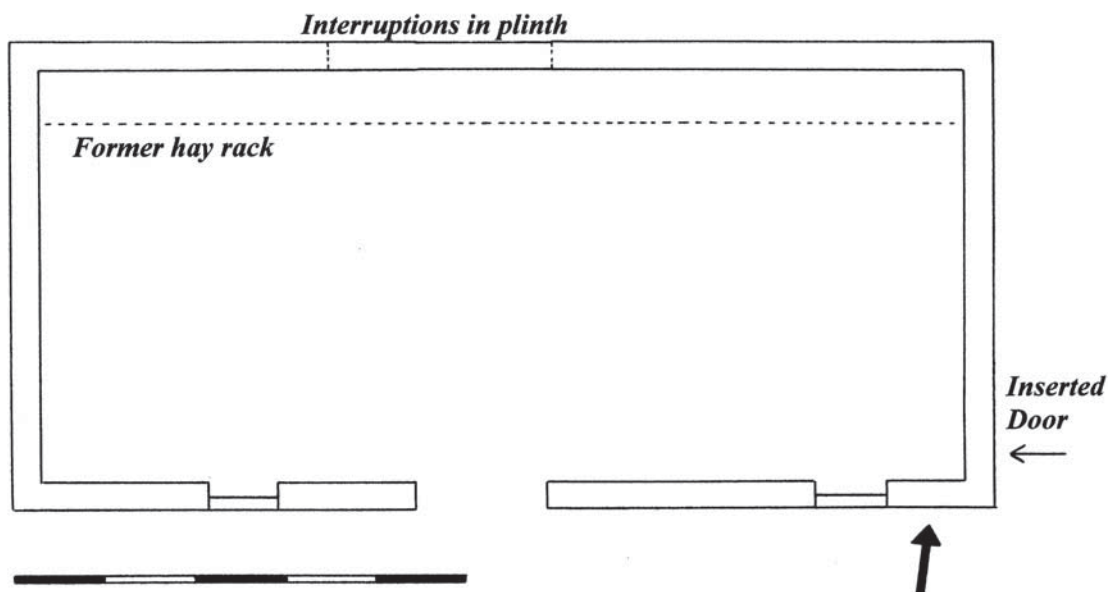
### 1. Clay-Lump Stable

The building to the south-east of the farmhouse is a clay-lump structure with a low-pitched pantiled roof that extends to 10.8 m in length by 4.9 m in overall width on an east-west axis (35.5 ft by 16 ft). Its walls rise to 4.4 m (14.5 ft) at their roof-plates on a flint plinth of variable height, although the internal floor is approximately 45 cm (18 ins) higher than the surrounding ground. The wall fabric is largely concealed externally by 20<sup>th</sup> century cement render and internally by original clay daub; the size of the individual clay blocks is therefore difficult to determine, and it is possible that sections consist of shuttered clay or 'cob'.

The original layout of the building is typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century stables, with an entrance door between two windows in the southern elevation, a featureless northern elevation which accommodated a hay rack and manger, and a hay loft at a height of 2.3 m (7.5 ft) throughout. The existing glazed windows in the gable and the eastern door are 20<sup>th</sup> century insertions. A

third original window lit the hay loft in the eastern half of the southern elevation, and an area of brick infill to the west of the same elevation may relate to a fourth. The loft window retains its wooden frame with a central mullion but those of the lower storey have been removed. The ceiling consists of tall-sectioned common joists lodged on two binding joists embedded in the walls; many joists contain empty mortises and were re-used from one or more older buildings. The loft has been removed from the eastern bay, which is now open to the roof structure of clasped-purlins with a ridge-board (which also incorporates re-used material); it is reached by an internal wall ladder at the northern end of the western gable and by an external loading door in the eastern gable. With the exception of the loft ladder no original fixtures and fittings survive, but the ceiling contains the usual aperture of 60 cms in width (2 ft) against the northern elevation to allow the hay rack to be loaded from above.

The stable is not shown on the tithe map of 1841, when two smaller structures occupied the same site, but appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1885 with a shelter shed projecting from the western end of its southern elevation (which adjoined a small horse yard facing the pond). While the roof and upper walls are uniform throughout, the flint plinth is approximately 1 m higher in the western gable and at the western end of the northern elevation than elsewhere; it terminates in a straight joint (dressed with brick) 3.5 m (11.5 ft) from the gable and the wall continues eastwards in clay-lump. A second straight joint appears in the lower plinth 4.9 m (16 ft) from the eastern gable. These anomalies have no obvious relevance to the present building and suggest the plinths were retained from the smaller structures shown in 1841.



**Figure 6**

**Original layout of stable (1).**

**The door lies slightly west of centre as it respected a demolished shelter shed which projected from the western end of the southern elevation (as shown in figures 3 and 4).**

**The anomalies in the flint plinth relate to earlier sheds shown in figure 2.**

Two features of the stable are of particular historic interest. Several groups of well-preserved incised apotropaic (evil-averting) circles survive on the internal walls of the loft. These were intended to protect the contents of the building from harm, and focus on the original apertures through which evil spirits might enter: to the left of the southern window and to both sides of the loading door in the eastern gable. Several also cluster at the eastern end of the northern elevation. Most appear to be concentric circles, but at least one example to the left of the gable contained 'petals' in the form known as a 'daisy-wheel'. While such features are not uncommon in agricultural buildings the row of pipes which penetrates the wall behind the

missing hay rack is unique in my experience. A total of six horizontal red-clay pipes, each 19 cm in diameter (7.5 ins) pierces the 30 cm (12 in) depth of the wall at intervals of 1.1 m (3.5 ft) and at a height of 2 m (6.5 ft) above the floor. They are spaced equally from the western gable but terminate 3 m from the eastern gable where an area may have been partitioned from the body of the stable to form a tack room. Each pipe remains open at both ends, and was presumably intended to ventilate the hay in the rack to prevent rot.

A series of calf or pig stalls of cement blocks with ground-level troughs was inserted in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, reached by a corridor against the southern elevation, and the eastern end of the hay loft was removed. The floor was also largely renewed, although some 19<sup>th</sup> century floor bricks still remain, and windows were inserted in both gables together with a new door to the east. Despite these alterations, and other minor repairs, the profile and layout of the stable is substantially original, and the building is relatively well preserved for its size; while two-storied clay-lump structures of this height and scale were once common in the region, most have decayed beyond recognition.

### **2-3. 20th Century Cattle Sheds**

The L-shaped range of single storied sheds to the north and east of the stable is not shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 and dates from *circa* 1920 (structure 2). Their machine-sawn softwood, external weatherboarding and pantiled roofs are entirely consistent with this period, as are the distinctive Fletton bricks of their plinths. Several roof-plates and tie-beams display Baltic timber marks. The eastern and southern elevations were originally open-sided with an arcade of timber posts, but in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century the posts were replaced by brickwork and the walls infilled to create an enclosed shed. The low height of the roof-plates, at 2.1 m (7 ft) suggests the building was designed as a cattle shelter. The range initially continued further to the east, albeit on a slightly different alignment, to form a series of enclosed sheds and loose boxes (structure 3) but this had been demolished prior to inspection leaving only its Fletton brick plinths intact. Given their late date and the extent of the alterations these buildings are not of historic significance.

### **Historic Significance**

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century clay-lump stable at Green Farm is a relatively well-preserved example of an increasingly rare building type. In the absence of its original fixtures and fittings the structure does not meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing, but is nonetheless of considerable historic value. The extensive apotropaic circles are among the best examples in the region, and the pipes which ventilated the hay rack may be unique survivals. The single-storied sheds to the north are much altered additions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are not of historic significance, but the adjoining paddock is all that remains of a medieval green and is an important feature of the local landscape.

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

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

#### **Photograph no.**

1. General view of site from Town Lane to north showing proximity of Mendlesham mast to right.
2. General view of site from Town Lane to west showing road bend to left and farmhouse to right.
3. General view of site from drive to north showing remains of Brockford Green to left.
4. Remaining section of Brockford Green from drive to west showing sheds 2 & 3 to right.
5. General view of site from east showing stable to left and remains of Brockford Green to right.
6. General view from east showing Mendlesham mast to left & site of demolished barn in foreground.
7. General view from east showing stable to left and demolished shed (3) to right.
8. General view from east showing stable to left, house in centre and shelter shed (2) to right.
9. General view from south showing house to left and stable to right.
10. General view from south-west showing house to left and stable in rear to right.
11. Northern facade of farmhouse showing shelter shed (2) to left.
12. Detail of incised plaster initials & date (S.C. 1779) in northern facade of farmhouse.
13. Exterior of enclosed shelter shed (2) from south.
14. Exterior of enclosed shelter shed (2) from east, showing three types of pantiles.
15. Exterior of shelter shed (2) from Brockford Green to north.
16. Exterior of shelter shed (2) from north-west.
17. Exterior of demolished shed (3) from north-west.
18. Exterior of demolished shed (3) from south.
19. Demolished shed (3) seen from shelter shed (2) to west.
20. Internal southern elevation of shed (2) showing brick piers replacing posts of open arcade.

21. Interior of shelter shed (2) from east showing enclosed open arcade to left.
22. Internal northern elevation of enclosed shelter shed (2).
23. Detail of internal northern brick plinth of shelter shed (2) showing 20th century Fletton brick.
24. Interior of shelter shed (2) from north-west showing stable (1) to right.
25. Interior of western wing of shelter shed (2) from north showing stable (1) in rear.
26. Detail of original deal arcade post lintel in southern elevation of shelter shed (2).
27. Detail of Baltic timber marks to tie-beam of shelter shed (2).
28. External eastern gable of stable 1 showing inserted door and window with original loft door above.
29. External southern elevation of stable (1) showing original central door flanked by windows.
30. External western gable of stable (1) showing inserted window.
31. Northern exterior of stable (from shed, 2) showing pipes and brick abutments in flint plinth.
32. Detail of brick corner abutments in northern external plinth of stable (1).
33. Stable interior from east showing 20th century stalls and original loft to west.
34. Stable interior from east showing roof structure and remnant of loft to west.
35. Stable interior from west showing 20th century block-work stalls to left.
36. Internal eastern gable of stable showing loft door and scars of missing ceiling joists.
37. Detail of incised circular apotropaic marks to north of loft door in eastern gable.
38. Detail of internal apotropaic circles to south of loft door in eastern gable.
39. Internal northern elevation showing apotropaic circles & eastern gable to right.
40. Detail of apotropaic circles at eastern end of northern internal elevation.
41. Internal southern elevation showing original door and loft window to left.
42. Internal southern elevation showing eastern gable and original window to left.
43. Detail of re-used timber lintel of eastern window in southern internal elevation.
44. Detail of apotropaic circles to east of original loft window in southern internal elevation.

45. Internal southern elevation from north-west showing 20th century block-work stalls in foreground.
46. Interior of western gable showing loft ladder and inserted window.
47. Northern internal elevation showing pipes behind former hay rack with western gable to left.
48. Detail of northern interior showing tall flint plinth to left and clay lump to right.
49. Detail of red clay pipe penetrating northern wall behind former hay rack.
50. Detail of tall flint plinth and brick dressing at southern end of western internal gable.
51. Detail of ceiling trap of loft ladder against western internal gable.
52. Detail of original loft ceiling from south-east, showing re-used common joists.
53. Detail of original loft ceiling from south-west (joists removed to right).
54. Detail of original hay rack loading aperture in ceiling seen from west.
55. Detail of original hay rack loading aperture in ceiling seen from east.
56. Detail of mixed floor bricks in stable passage from west.
57. Detail of clasped-purlin roof structure above southern internal elevation of loft.
58. Southern internal elevation of loft seen from north-west.
59. Interior of hay loft from west.
60. Detail of loft floor from west showing loading vent above former hay rack.

*Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 14-19*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 14-19): Selected Printed Photographs**



A2.1 Northern facade of brick farmhouse bearing initials S.C. and date 1779 in modern render. Showing 20<sup>th</sup> century shelter shed (2) and fragment of Brockford Green to left.



A2.2 General view of site from east showing stable to left and remaining fragment of medieval Brockford Green to right.



A2.3 General view from site of demolished barn to east showing clay-lump stable (1) to left with farmhouse (4) and enclosed 20<sup>th</sup> century shelter shed (3) in centre. The brick plinth of the demolished 20<sup>th</sup> century animal shed (3) is visible to right. The ground-floor door and window of the stable are secondary but the hay loft door above is original.



A2.4 External southern elevation of stable (1) showing modern render with original central door flanked by ground-floor windows to right and left. The left window (obscured by vegetation) is also original.





A2.5 Northern exterior of the stable (1) within the later shelter shed (2). Note the change in height of the flint plinth to right, and the abuttal of two corners in the centre. The series of pipes which penetrate the painted clay-lump wall adjoining the internal hay rack is visible above.



A2.6 Stable interior from east showing original roof structure and remains of original hay loft to west (joists removed from foreground). The window in the western gable is a secondary insertion.



A2.7 Interior of eastern gable showing original loft door scars of removed ceiling joists. Groups of circular apotropaic marks have been incised into the internal daub to the left and right of the door and to the northern elevation visible to the left (see A2.8 below). Similar marks lie to the east of the loft window in the southern elevation (top-right).



A2.8 Detail of incised concentric apotropaic circles at the eastern end of the northern internal elevation, showing pantiles and rafters above.



A2.9 Internal southern elevation from north-east showing 20<sup>th</sup> century block-work cattle or pig stalls in foreground. Note clay-lump wall fabric. The door and loft window are original features, but the hay loft has been removed to the left.



A2.10 Interior of western gable showing loft ladder and inserted window with position of removed hay rack against northern elevation to right. The wall of a 20<sup>th</sup> century stall with low feeding trough is visible to left.



A2.11 Western end of northern internal elevation showing pipes penetrating wall behind position of former hay rack. Note tall flint plinth to left, terminating in brick dressing to right with clay lump fabric beyond. These features were probably retained from an earlier structure on the site.



A2.12 Detail of original original loading aperture above former hay rack (seen from east). Note the pipes which penetrate the northern elevation to the right