

**Agricultural Buildings,
White Hall Farm,
Great Waldingfield, Suffolk
WGF 042**

Historic Building Record

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(TL 9036 4290)

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This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of an historic complex of agricultural buildings. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 26th February 2010, ref. SpecHBR(EM)_WhiteHallFm_GtWaldingfield_00588_08), and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Babergh District Council consent B/08/00588, condition 14).

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 57 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 5th August 2010.

Summary

White Hall Farm lies at the southern edge of Great Waldingfield on the eastern side of Valley Road, which forms the boundary with Chilton parish and is marked as a Roman road on Ordnance Surveys. The farmhouse is not listed but is ostensibly a timber-framed and rendered structure of the 18th century or earlier with a 19th century gault brick facade. It appears to have formed the southern wing of a larger U-shaped house shown on the tithe map of 1838, at which time the present farm was a combination of two smaller holdings known as Chilton End and Copt Hall Farms. The hospital complex of the nearby WWII USAF base lay immediately north of the site but was demolished in 1971 to make way for a steel-framed grain store, leaving only a series of concrete floors *in situ*. The present agricultural buildings form a single-phase 'model farm' of *circa* 1870 built to the rear of the remodelled farmhouse on land used as open pasture in 1838. Sale documents of 1929, when the farm was a relatively substantial holding of 298 acres, describe the purpose of each unit but it is no longer possible to identify them with certainty. The red-brick and slate complex extends to an impressive 55 metres in length by 21 metres in width (180 feet by 70 feet) and reflects the standard High Victorian layout with a series of animal yards and shelter-sheds to the south of a 'barn'. The latter, unusually, is a single storied structure of just 2.4 m in height (8 feet) rather than a traditional threshing barn and would have served as a store for mechanically threshed grain. The farm is known to have possessed at last one normal barn elsewhere. The complex would have been a good example of its type but for the extent of its 20th century alterations, which include the application of cement render to the 'barn', the replacement of much original slate with corrugated asbestos, the remodelling of many walls and the removal of all historic fixtures and fittings. While its historic interest has been considerably depleted the general layout of the complex remains largely intact, illustrating the distribution and nature of model farms in the area, and it therefore retains some regional interest while failing to meet the English Heritage criteria for listing.

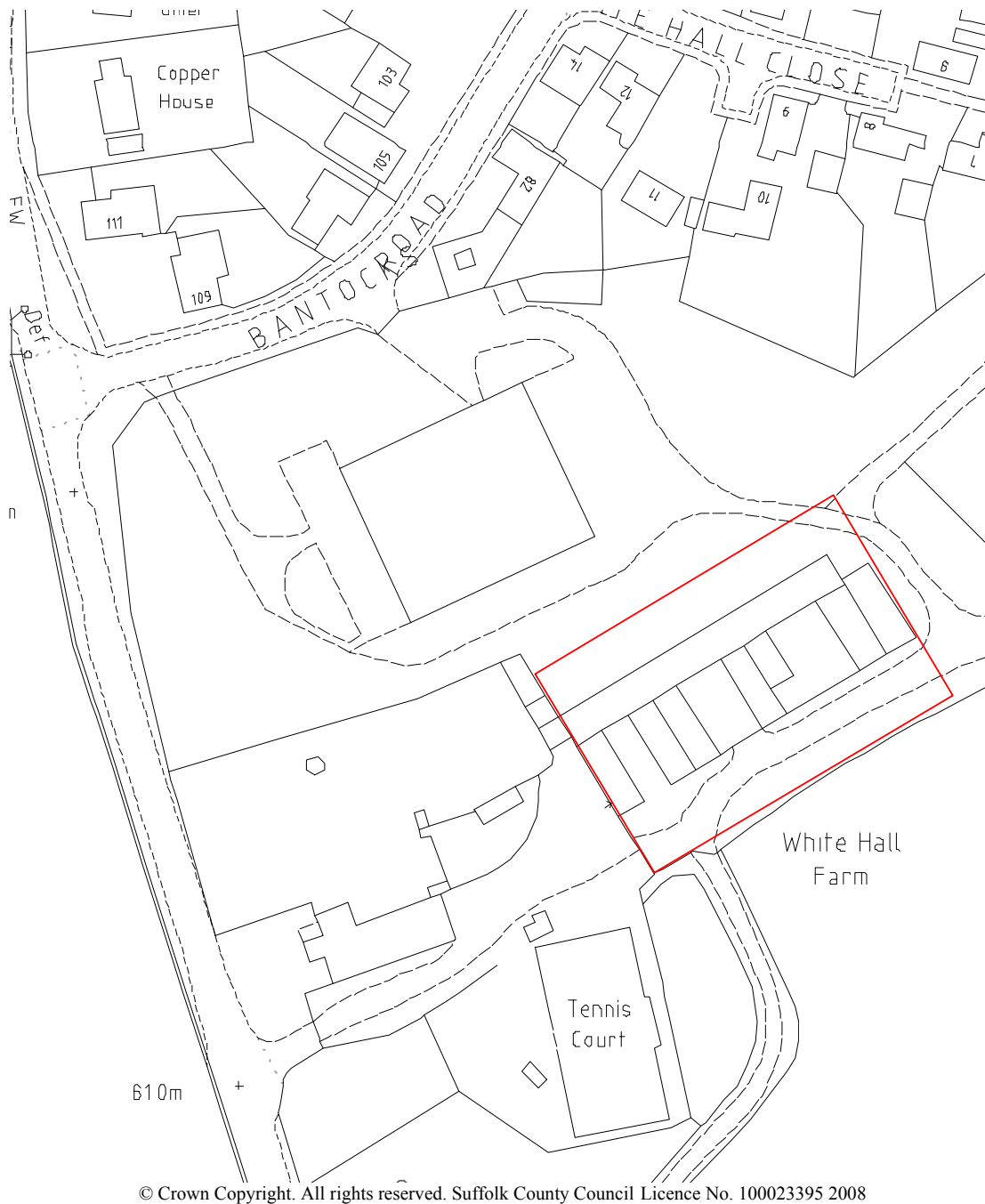


Figure 1 Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan.

Enclosing the complex of agricultural buildings in red and showing Valley Road to the west. The large rectangular building to the north is a grain store of 1971 which occupies the site of the hospital belonging to Sudbury/Acton USAF base in WWII.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

White Hall Farm borders open, arable countryside at the southern edge of Great Waldingfield village, approximately 1.2 km south-west of the parish church. It adjoins the eastern side of Valley Road which forms the boundary with Chilton parish and is marked on the Ordnance Survey as a Roman road. The farmhouse is not listed but appears to be a timber-framed and rendered structure of the 18th century or earlier with a 19th century gault brick facade at right-angles to the road. The historic farm complex lies to the rear (east) of the house with a large steel-framed grain store of 1971 to the north.



Figure 2
The Great Waldingfield tithe map of 1838 showing the southern edge of the village in the top left-hand corner and White Hall Farm (then known as Chilton End Farm) on the right-hand edge of Valley Road to the south. Copt Hall Farm is shown further south on the same side of the road. The area to the left of the road is blank as it lay in Chilton parish. Original in Suffolk Record Office.



Figure 2a
Detail of the 1838 tithe map showing what appears to be a U-shaped farmhouse adjoining the road with a barn to the south (the latter with an eastern porch). The existing farm complex is conspicuous by its absence.

The Great Waldingfield title apportionment of 1838 describes the property as ‘Chilton End and Cop Hall Farms’ (sic) containing 149 predominantly arable acres in the ownership and occupation of Mrs Elizabeth Piper. More land probably lay in adjoining parishes as a sale document of 1929 gives the size of the ‘farm known as White Hall’ as 298 acres in Great Waldingfield, Newton and Chilton (Suffolk Record Office HD526/141/16). The apportionment names the site of the present farm as ‘homestead: yards and buildings’ (no. 570 on the map, as shown in figure 2) but includes a second farm house with the same description approximately 400 metres to the south (no. 565). The latter no longer survives but is marked by an area of hard-standing and is remembered by the present owner as the site of a barn known as Copt Hall Barn – by which name it was marked on the Ordnance Survey of 1886. The same Ordnance Survey gives White Hall Farm its present name, which had presumably been altered from Chilton End when the gault (white) brick facade was added after 1838.

The title map shows what appears to be a U-shaped farmhouse forming a courtyard facing the road, with a roadside barn to the south and two smaller buildings to the rear. A pond and additional structures are indicated on the opposite side of the road. A long, narrow field to the east named as ‘Old Pasture’ (no. 568) opened onto a ‘drift’ or track leading in the direction of Newton Hall to the south-east, with a garden (569) and ‘Lawn Pasture’ (566) to the south.

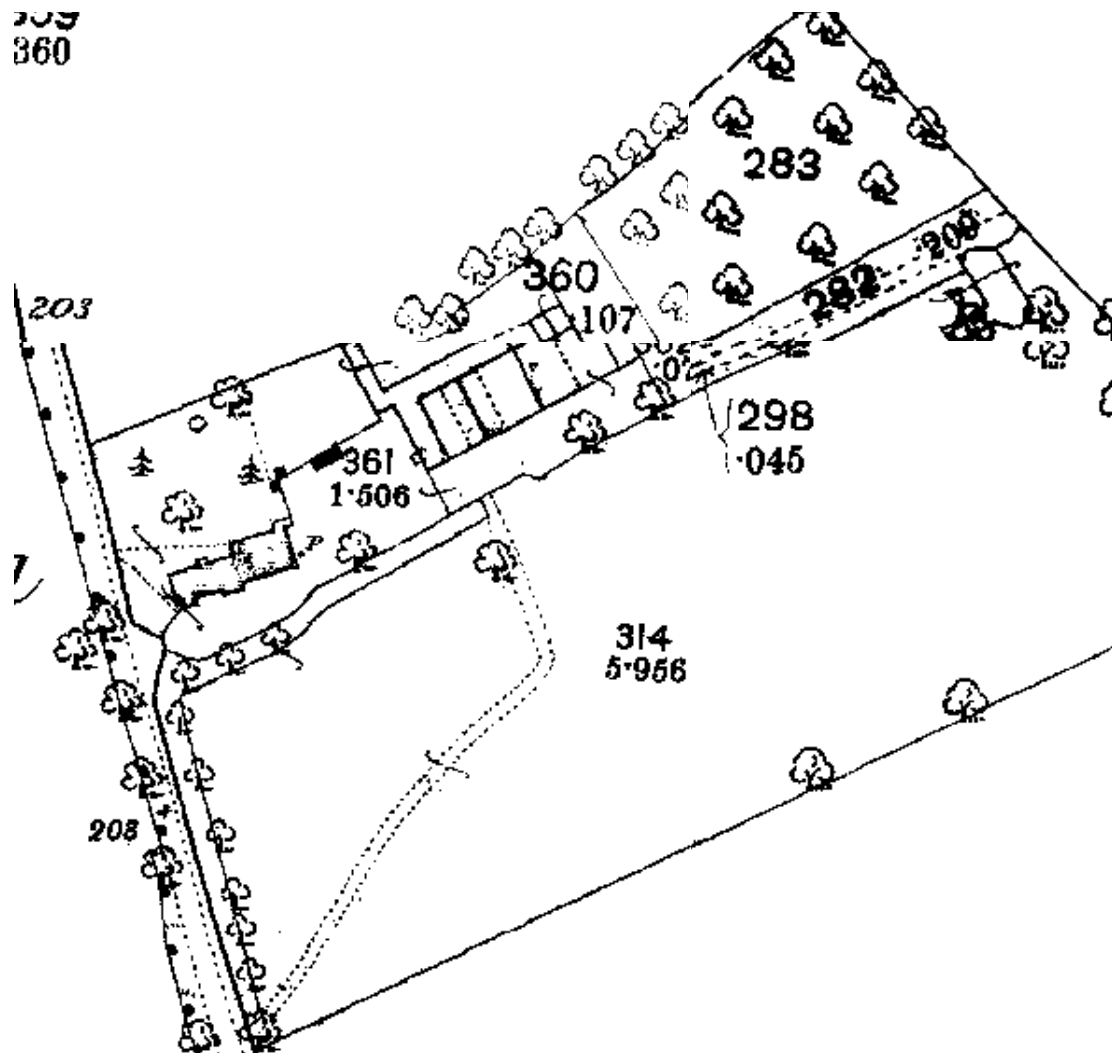


Figure 3
First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886 showing the mid-19th century transformation of the site. The present farm complex had appeared to the east and only the southern wing of the earlier farmhouse appears to survive.

The site had been transformed by 1886, when the highly accurate first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey showed the present outline of the farmhouse which apparently occupies the site of the southern wing of its U-shaped predecessor. The roadside barn had been demolished, as had the farmhouse at Copt Hall, and the present agricultural complex had been erected in 'Old Pasture' to the east. Many local farms were rebuilt in much the same way during the third quarter of the 19th century as the system of intensive mixed animal husbandry now known as Victorian High Farming was introduced. The old, scattered timber-framed barns, stables and neat-houses of the 17th and 18th centuries were no longer considered efficient and new, unified brick complexes known as 'model farms' were built to house cattle, horses and corn in the same location. The layout at White Hall Farm is entirely typical of these mid-Victorian 'farming factories', with a series of three animal yards and shelter-sheds in the to the south of a barn, although the long, low proportions of the barn are unusual and suggest a relatively late date shortly before the Ordnance Survey of 1886.

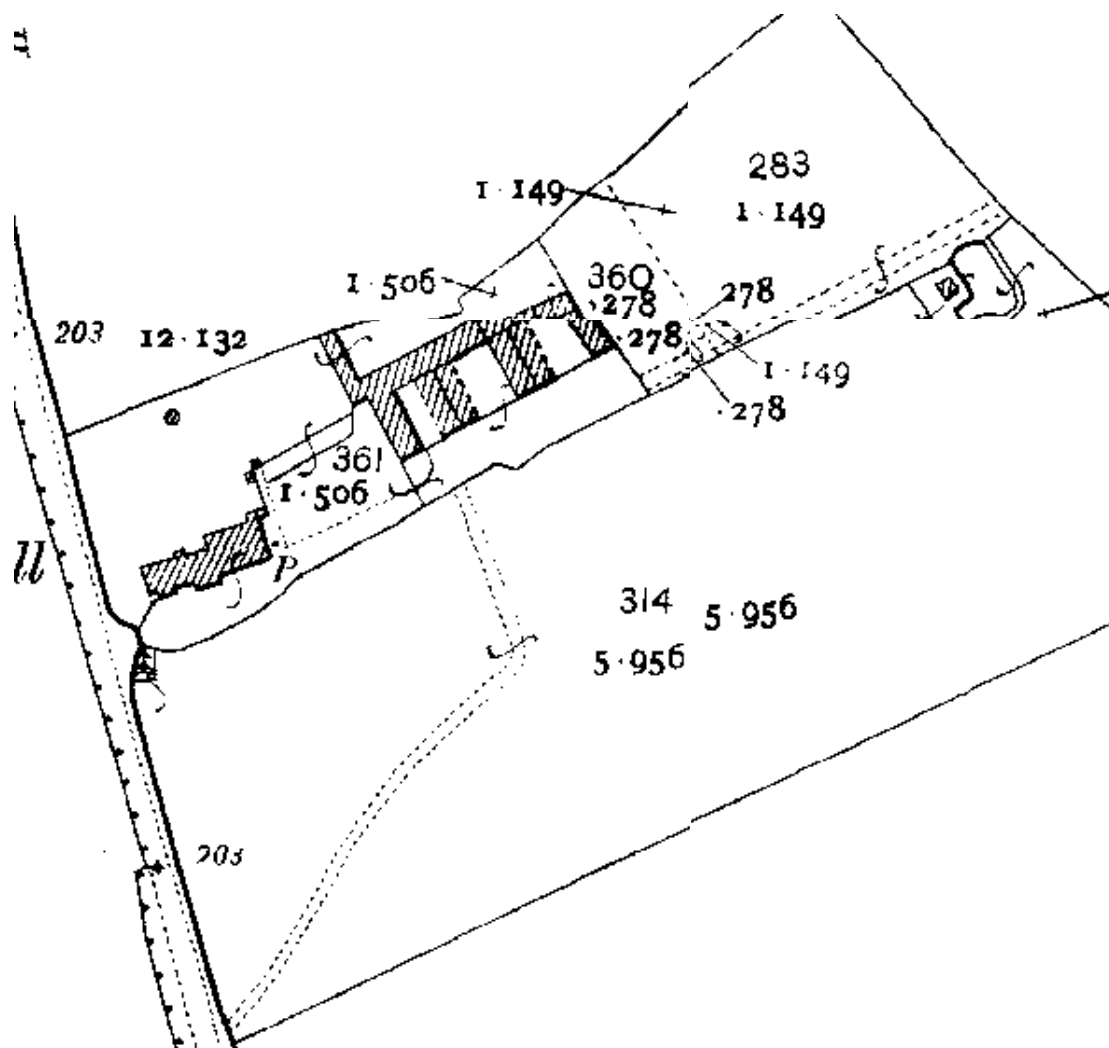


Figure 4

Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing the farm buildings in more detail (with a horizontal flaw in the reproduction where two sections joined). The open sides of the shelter sheds are indicated with broken lines and the eastern implement shed (no. 2 in figure 5) had not yet been added

The sale document of 18th July 1929 describes the farmhouse as an 'extremely attractive residence' with an older portion containing 'considerable old oak' and 'pleasure grounds including two tennis courts'. It describes the farm buildings as follows: 'The agricultural premises are compact and exceptionally well built, all being of brick and slate or tile

construction comprising a range of two large store places, garage, open shed, stabling in two boxes and two stalls, coach house, harness room, mixing house and store place, a six-bayed double open shed, one bay enclosed to form a loose box, a range of barn with asphalt floor (sic), chaff house, coal house, six-bayed implement shed, one side in four loose boxes the other an open horse shed with manger throughout, cart stable, chaff place and loose box, three warm yards'. This remarkable description clearly relates to the present complex with its 'double' shelter sheds (i.e. single structures divided by axial partitions into separate sections) but it is unfortunately no longer possible to determine the precise location of every unit in the list.

The American heavy bomber base known alternatively as RAF Sudbury or Acton was built on the level land to the north-west early in 1944 and was the home of the 486th Bomb Group until the end of the war. A plan of the airfield in its published history labels the area immediately north of White Hall Farm as the 'sick quarters' and refers to it elsewhere as the 'sick bay' 'War Stories of the O.W. A History of the 486th Bomb Group', Wood & Bee, 1986, p.52). This complex of Nissen huts survived until 1971 when the present owner replaced them with a large grain store and the site was further altered when a housing estate was constructed to the north and north-east in the 1980s. Of the huts shown in aerial photographs of the 1960s in the possession of the owner only rectangular concrete floors now survive to the east and west of the grain store (illustrations 1 & 2 of Appendix 2 below).

Building Analysis

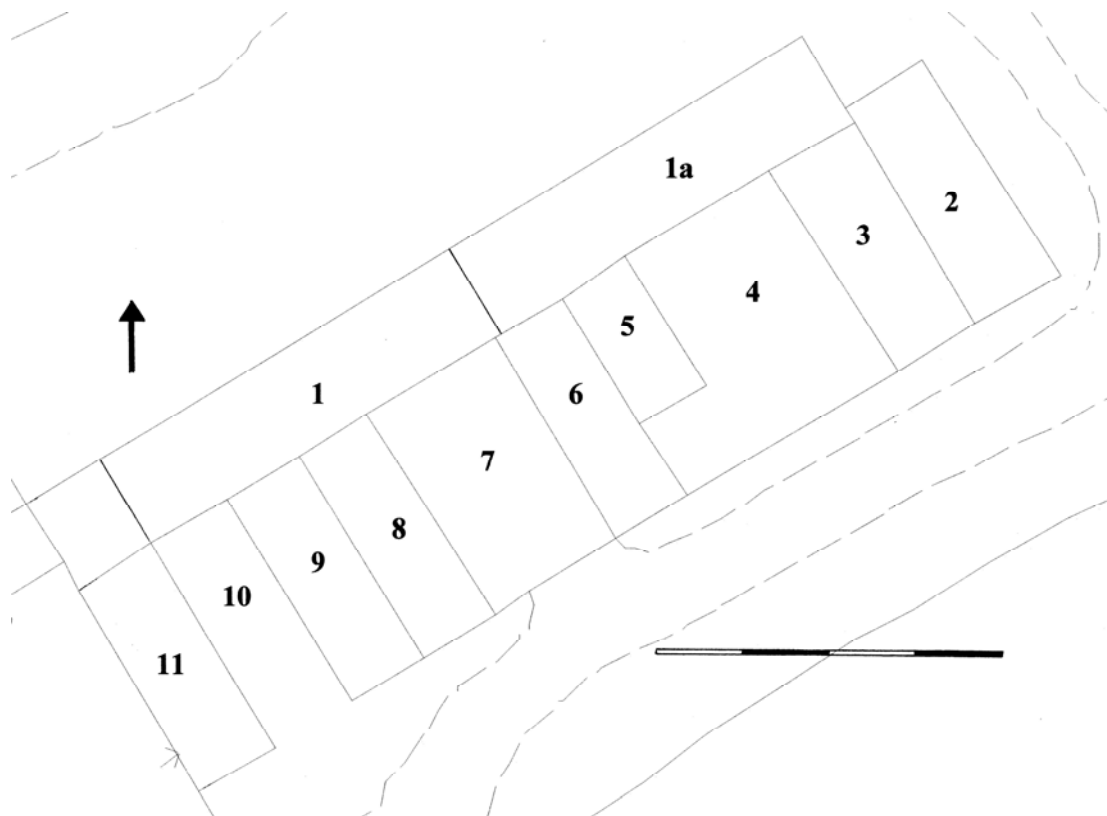


Figure 5

Ground plan of agricultural buildings identifying each area of the complex with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Adapted from the Ordnance Survey. 20 metre scale in blocks of 5 metres.

Key

1. Single-storied grain store in lieu of a threshing barn with ostensibly modern central partition. Described in sale particulars of 1929 as a 'range of two large storage places' and designed for the storage of grain threshed mechanically elsewhere on the site. Roof of pre-fabricated softwood king-post trusses now with corrugated asbestos covering. The walls largely rendered in cement both inside and outside obscuring original features, but with modern doors to central and eastern yards (7 and 4 respectively) and modern windows and door at eastern end of northern elevation.
2. Early-20th century gault brick implement shelter of which only the northern and southern gables survive, each with a pair of blocked window apertures. Open sided to east. Roof and arcade posts rebuilt in concrete during late-20th century and covered with corrugated asbestos.
3. Enclosed shed with clasped-purlin roof now covered with corrugated asbestos. Original glazed windows and evidence of two blocked original doors to the eastern yard. Now with a secondary door in its gable and a 20th century raised section of roof to the north above the remains of a concrete grain silo. Probably designed as a stable but currently used as a tractor store.

4. **Open yard, now with mid-20th century corrugated asbestos roof and southern wall. Probably designed as a horse yard.**

5-6. **'Double' shed with axial partition and original slate roof. Decorative roundel with dressing of gault brick in centre of southern gable. Both sides probably designed as open-sided shelter sheds but the northern end of the eastern elevation enclosed in brick during mid-20th century to form a sack drying shed (with evidence of sunken floor beneath missing grills). Remains of chamfered lintels of original timber arcade posts. The western elevation enclosed in 20th century brick to form a cow-house or stable but most recently used as a workshop. Heavily overgrown at time of inspection and detailed analysis hampered accordingly.**

7. **Open cattle yard.**

8-9. **'Double' shed with axial partition and original slate roof. Decorative roundel with dressing of gault brick in centre of southern gable. Evidence of original timber arcade posts to both sides but now enclosed to form loose boxes to east (8) and a poultry house to west (9).**

10. **Open cattle yard.**

11. **Single shed with access from west and blind wall to adjoining yard (10). Now used as a garage and probably designed as a service range with coach house, coal house, wash house, etc. Internal inspection unavailable as this part of the complex lies outside the development area, along with a small enclosed shed at the western end of the linear barn (1).**

The agricultural buildings form a single-phase yard complex of typical mid-19th century type and would have represented a utilitarian but fashionable 'model' farm when first erected in an empty field in *circa* 1870. Their general layout has altered little, and is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1886, but the individual structures have been considerably altered and mutilated. Unusually, even for a complex of this relatively late date, it lacks a traditional threshing barn - perhaps as such a barn already existed on the site of Copt Hall Farm to the south. The single-storied walls rise to 2.4 m (8 ft) and are of red-brick laid in Flemish bond with low-pitched roofs of slate. The entire complex extends to 55 metres in length by 21 metres in width (180 ft by 70 ft) and the linear 'barn' to the north is 6.25 metres in overall width (20.5 ft). The latter has been much altered, with cement render to both the interior and exterior of its walls, and its precise original layout and entrance pattern is unclear: small areas of brickwork are exposed within the adjoining sheds and at the eastern gable, while the roof of the western section is hidden by a tarpaulin. Precise analysis of the yard sheds is hampered by the extent of their alterations but the eastern shed (3) is the only building clearly enclosed from the outset with doors and windows to the yard and may therefore be presumed to have been designed as a stable. The present owner remembers the last horse on the farm in the mid-20th century who resided in a loose box in shed 8 (a cart horse called Violet), but this represents a conversion of an open-sided shelter shed.

Historic Significance

The complex is of impressive scale and would have been a good example of a late Victorian single-phase 'model farm' before its mutilation during the mid-20th century. The extent of the alterations, which include the application of cement render, the replacement of much original slate, the remodelling of the walls and the removal of all historic fixtures and fittings, has severely depleted the buildings' historic interest. The general layout of the complex remains largely intact, however, illustrating the extent and nature of model farms in the area, and it

therefore retains some regional interest while failing to meet the English Heritage criteria for listing.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. Aerial photograph of 1965 taken from south-west showing military hospital to left and farm buildings to right.
2. Aerial photograph of 1960s taken from south-west showing WWII airfield hospital complex to left.
3. Aerial photograph of 1970s from south-west showing new grain store of 1971 on site of hospital complex.
4. General view of site from south-east showing grain store of 1971 to left and housing estate of 1980s to right.
5. Grain store of 1971 from north-east showing concrete floor of WWII hospital shed in foreground & farm complex to left.
6. General view of site from arable field to east showing pasture land adjoining farm complex in rear.
7. General view of site from north-east showing barn (1) to left, farmhouse in centre rear and grain store of 1971 to right.
8. Exterior of linear barn (1) from north showing cement render and corrugated asbestos roof.
9. Exterior of linear barn (1) from west showing corner of walled farmhouse garden to right.
10. Detail of northern exterior of linear barn (1) showing late-20th century cement render and window.
11. External eastern gable of linear barn (1) showing implement shelter (2) to left.
12. Interior of 20th century implement shelter (2) from south showing blocked windows in northern gable.
13. Interior of 20th century implement shelter (2) from north.
14. Exterior of enclosed brick shed (3) from implement shelter (2) to east showing brick rubble bond and ventilation grill.
15. Southern exterior of yard sheds from east showing farmhouse in rear to left & implement shelter (2) in foreground.
16. Southern external gables of yard sheds 6, 4, 3 & 2 from left to right.
17. Southern exterior of yard sheds from south-west showing cart shed (11) to left.

18. External southern gable of enclosed yard shed (3) showing secondary double doors.
19. External southern gable of 20th century covered yard (4).
20. External southern gable of double shed (6 & 5) showing circular window and scar of small demolished shed.
21. Exterior of double yard shed (9 & 8) from south-west showing original slate roof & open arcade now enclosed for poultry.
22. Detail of circular window in southern external gable of double yard shed (9 & 8).
23. Exterior from south-east of western yard (10) and rear exterior of cart shed (11 - outside survey area).
24. Western yard (10) from south showing linear barn (1) in rear and sheds 11 and 9 to left and right.
25. Central yard (7) from south showing entrance to linear barn (1) in rear with sheds 8 and 6 to left and right.
26. Southern exterior of linear barn (1) from overgrown central yard (7).
27. Eastern exterior of shelter-shed (8) from central yard (7) showing open arcade enclosed to form loose boxes.
28. Western exterior of shed (6) from central yard (7) showing secondary gault brickwork and entrance door.
29. Interior of modern poultry shed (9) from south.
30. Interior of shed (8) from south-east showing rubble bond of linear barn (1) to right & door to adjoining shed (9).
31. Interior of shed (8) from east showing brick and timber axial partition of double shed (8 & 9).
32. Detail of chamfered lintel of arcade post to open-sided shelter shed (8).
33. Interior from north of shed (6) showing secondary brickwork to central yard (7) to right.
34. Interior of shed (6) from south showing axial partition to adjoining shed (5) to right.
35. Interior of linear barn (1) from west showing cement render of 20th century grain store.
36. Interior of linear barn (1) from east showing door to central yard (7) to left and northern window to right.
37. Southern interior of linear barn (1) showing door to central yard (7) to left.

38. Interior of eastern section of linear barn (1a) showing partition to western section (1) and king-post truss roof.
39. Interior from west of eastern section of linear barn (1a) showing door to yard shed (5) to left.
40. Detail of softwood king-post roof truss in eastern section of linear barn (1a).
41. Eastern internal gable of linear barn (1a) showing brick fabric and king-post roof structure.
42. North-eastern internal corner of linear barn (1a) showing northern door and window positions to left.
43. Eastern internal gable of linear barn (1a) showing brick fabric.
44. Southern interior of eastern end of linear barn (1a) showing adjoining yard shed (3) to left.
45. Eastern end of linear barn (1a) seen from north-east and showing modern workshop partition in rear.
46. Interior of eastern enclosed shed (3) from linear barn (1a) to north showing door and windows to yard (4) right.
47. Interior of covered yard (4) from south showing blocked door of enclosed shed (3) to right.
48. Interior of covered yard (4) from south-east showing enclosed section of shed (5) to right.
49. Open arcade of shed (5) from covered yard (4) to east showing 20th century enclosed section to right.
50. Detail of original chamfered lintel to secondary arcade post of shelter shed (5) seen from south-east.
51. Interior of 20th century enclosed shed (5) from north showing door to covered yard (4) to left.
52. Interior of 20th century enclosed shed (5) from south showing door to linear barn (1a) in rear.
53. Interior of covered yard (4) from north showing eastern shed (3) to left.
54. Roof structure and platform at southern end of shed (5) seen from east.
55. Western exterior of enclosed eastern shed (3) showing blocked original doors.
56. Detail of blocked door & windows at northern end of eastern shed (3) seen from covered yard (4) to west.
57. Detail of blocked central door to eastern shed (3) seen from covered yard (4) to south-west.

Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 14-18

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



Illus. 1. Aerial photograph of 1960s taken from south-west showing WWII USAF airfield hospital complex to left, farmhouse bottom centre and farm buildings in rear to right.



Illus. 2. Aerial photograph of early 1970s from south-west showing new grain store of 1971 on site of hospital complex to left and farm buildings in rear to right.



Illus. 3. General view of site from north-east showing single-storied linear barn (1) to left, farmhouse in centre rear and grain store of 1971 to right. The concrete floor of a WWII hospital Nissen hut is visible in front of the latter's entrance.



Illus. 4. Southern exterior of yard sheds from east showing farmhouse in rear to left & 20th century implement shelter (2) in foreground to right. Note the 20th century section of raised roof in the enclosed shed (3) above a grain silo.



Illus. 5. Southern exterior of yard sheds from south-west showing cart shed (11) to left and the open-sided shelter-shed now converted into a poultry house (9) in centre.



Illus. 6. Interior of linear barn (1) from east showing door to central yard (7) to extreme left and northern window to right. The internal walls have been cement rendered to operate as a loose grain store and the roof structure hidden by a tarpaulin to trap falling dirt and debris.



Illus. 7. North-eastern internal corner of linear barn (1a) showing northern door and window positions to left with red-brick eastern gable to right. The softwood king-post roof trusses are original to the building.



Illus. 8. Interior of eastern yard with 20th century roof (4) seen from the south and showing the enclosed shed with two blocked doors & original windows to right (3) and the open-sided shelter shed now partly enclosed to accommodate a grain dryer (5) to left.



Illus. 9. Detail of blocked door & original windows at northern end of enclosed eastern shed (3) as seen from 20th century covered yard (4) to west.



Illus. 10. Western yard (10) from south showing linear barn (1) in rear with cart shed (11) and open-sided shelter shed now enclosed to form a poultry house (9) to the right.