

**The Farm Buildings,
Red House Farm,
Elmsett, Suffolk
ETT 020**

Historic Building Record

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The Farm Buildings, Red House Farm, Flowton Road, Elmsett, Suffolk

(TM 066 469)

Historic Building Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a complex of redundant farm buildings in the curtilage of a grade II-listed farmhouse. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 9th September 2010, ref. SpecHAA(EM)RedHoFm_Elmsett_01080_10), and is intended to inform and accompany an application for planning permission (Babergh District Council applications B/10/1080 and B/10/81).

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 77 digital images of 21 megapixels (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 28th October 2010.

Summary

Red House Farm lies in open countryside on the northern slope of a picturesque shallow valley occupied by the Flowton Road and a tributary stream of the Belstead Brook. The farm buildings form an enclosed yard approximately 25 metres north-east of a substantial timber-farmhouse which is listed at grade II and described in the Schedule as a 'medieval hall house' without further elaboration. At the time of the Elmsett tithe survey in 1842 the farm was a relatively modest owner-occupied arable holding of 66 acres.

The yard is flanked on the north by an impressive timber-framed and weatherboarded range with a steeply pitched slate roof of 30.7 m or 100.75 ft in length, and by a pair of open-sided pantiled shelter-sheds to the east and west. The shelter-sheds incorporate enclosed feed-stores to the south, and four additional storage sheds are housed in a narrow integral lean-to of red-brick. The eastern section of the northern range forms a stable with a first-floor granary entered by an external door in its gable, while a five-bay barn with a gabled northern porch lies to the west. The resulting complex of eleven separate units represents a largely intact 'model' farm of *circa* 1860 which illustrates the sophisticated nature of the system of yard-based mixed animal husbandry now known as 'Victorian High Farming'. It replaced a scattered group of farm buildings shown in 1842, but incorporates a four-bay timber-framed barn of *circa* 1820 that appeared on the tithe map and reflects the cereal boom of the Napoleonic era. The complex is accordingly of considerable historic interest as it demonstrates the dramatic change between the two key periods of agricultural revolution in 19th century Suffolk. Despite this local significance, the buildings have been considerably altered, with some rebuilding in cement block-work and the removal of most historic fittings, and they are not of sufficient age, rarity or completeness to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in their own right

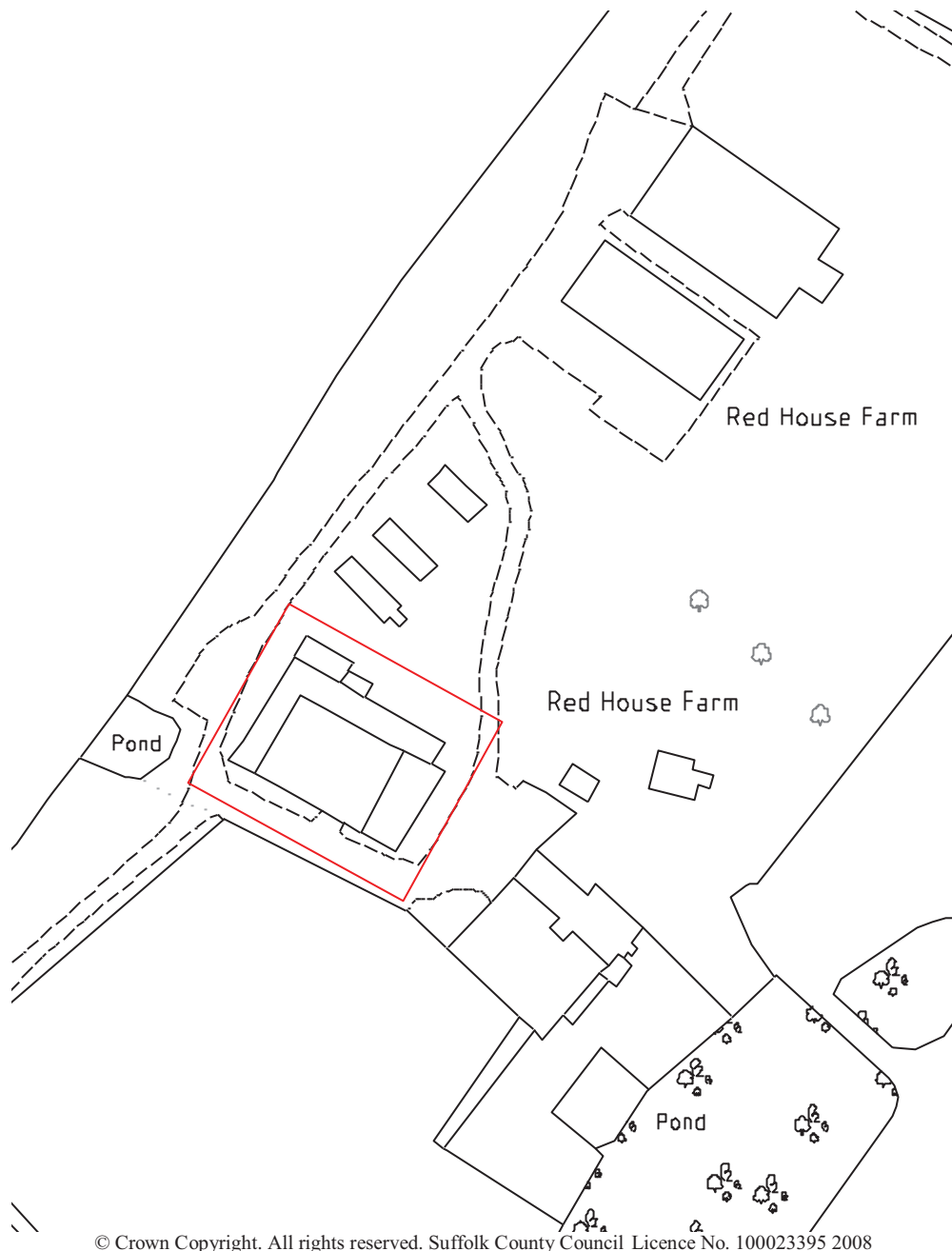


Figure 1 Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan.

Enclosing the farm complex in red and showing the entrance track from Flowton Road to the south-west and the grade II-listed farmhouse to the south-east (aligned on an NW-SE axis with a central porch north of the southern pond).

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Red House Farm lies in open countryside on the northern slope of a shallow valley occupied by the Flowton Road and a tributary stream of the Belstead Brook. The picturesque site is approached by a track which crosses the stream and continues to neighbouring Hill Farm to the south-east. The historic farm buildings form an enclosed yard approximately 25 metres north-east of a substantial timber-framed and rendered farmhouse which is a highly conspicuous feature of the local landscape. It was not inspected for the purpose of this report but is very briefly described in the Schedule of Listed Buildings as a ‘medieval hall house’ with additions and alterations of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.



Figure 2
Red House Farm as depicted on the Elmsett tithe map of 1842, showing the stream dividing the site from Flowton Road to the south.

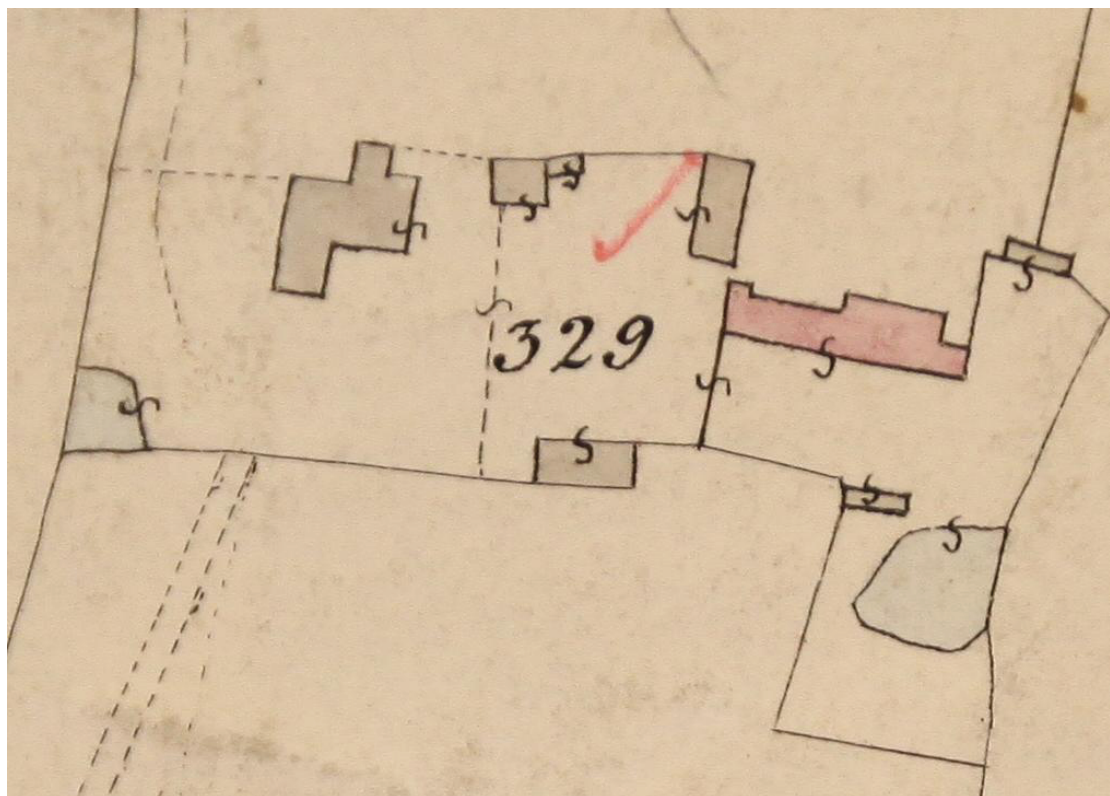


Figure 2a
Detail of the 1842 tithe map showing the farmhouse without its central porch in red to the right. The largest of the four detached farm buildings to the left represents the earliest part of the barn (building 1 in figure 6) but the others no longer survive.

At the time of the Elmsett tithe survey in 1842 the farm was a modest owner-occupied arable holding of 66 acres (of which just 14 were pasture despite the proximity of the watercourse) belonging to William Jacobs. The site of the farm was described as 'Red House, Yards, etc.', while the fields to the south and north were named as 'The Bottoms' and 'The Ley' respectively (both laid to pasture). The tithe map shows a scattered group of farm buildings of which the largest must represent the earliest part of the surviving barn (area 1 in figure 6) with its northern porch (1a) which is accurately depicted as non-central (it adjoins the penultimate eastern bay of a four-bay structure). Additional sheds and lean-to structures appear to adjoin its southern elevation but neither these nor the three detached buildings in the yard adjoining the farmhouse survived a major refurbishment of the mid-19th century.

The scattered layout of the farm in 1842 was typical of the 18th and early-19th centuries and probably included a separate stable and granary. The unified yard complex shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1886 reflects the mid-19th century movement towards intensive mixed animal husbandry known today as 'Victorian High Farming'. The old, inefficient disorder was swept away in favour of newly fashionable integrated farm complexes containing a barn, animal yards, stable, granary, shelter-sheds and feed-sheds in a single block. The maps of 1886, 1904 and 1926 use broken lines to indicate the new open-sided shelter sheds of the yard much as they remain today (although the yard was divided in two by a central partition which no longer survives), while a separate building adjoining the track to the west was probably a cart lodge but has been demolished.

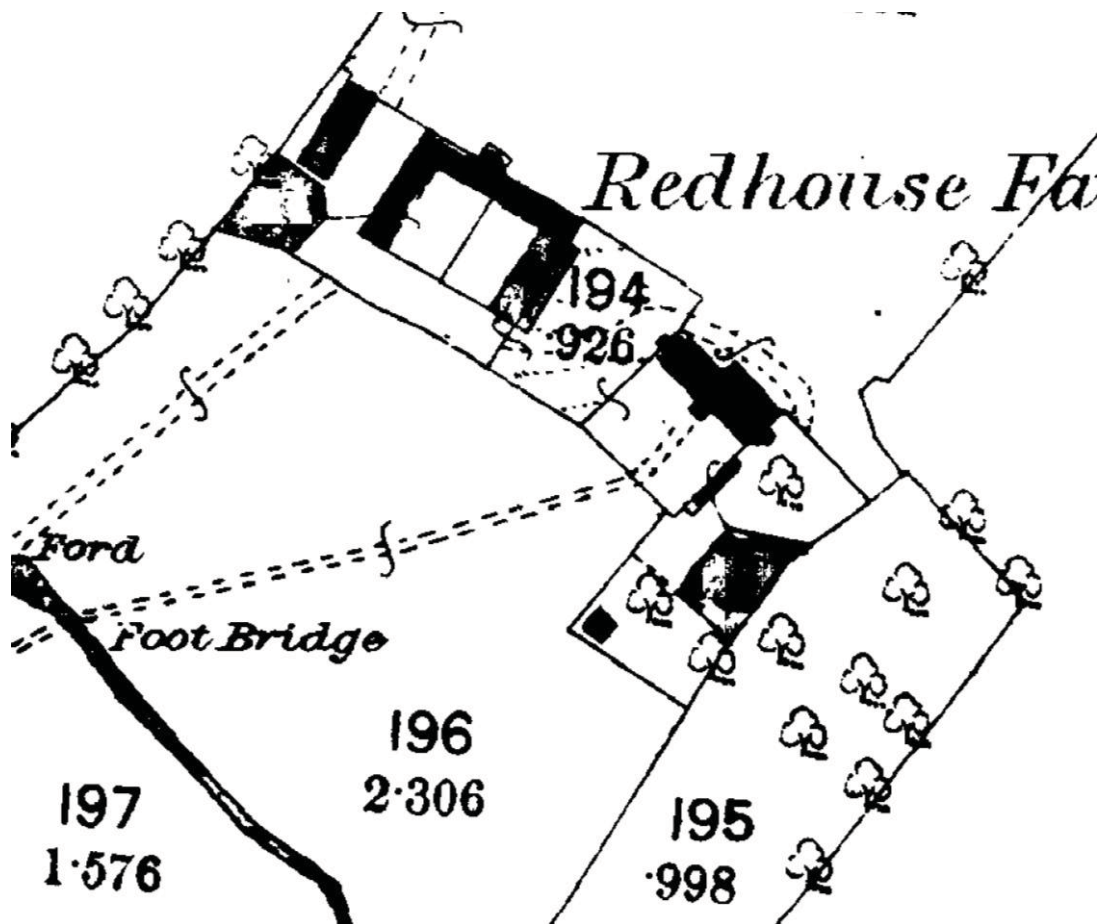


Figure 3

First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886

The new unified yard complex of the mid-19th century is shown much as it remains today, and the farmhouse had acquired its porch.

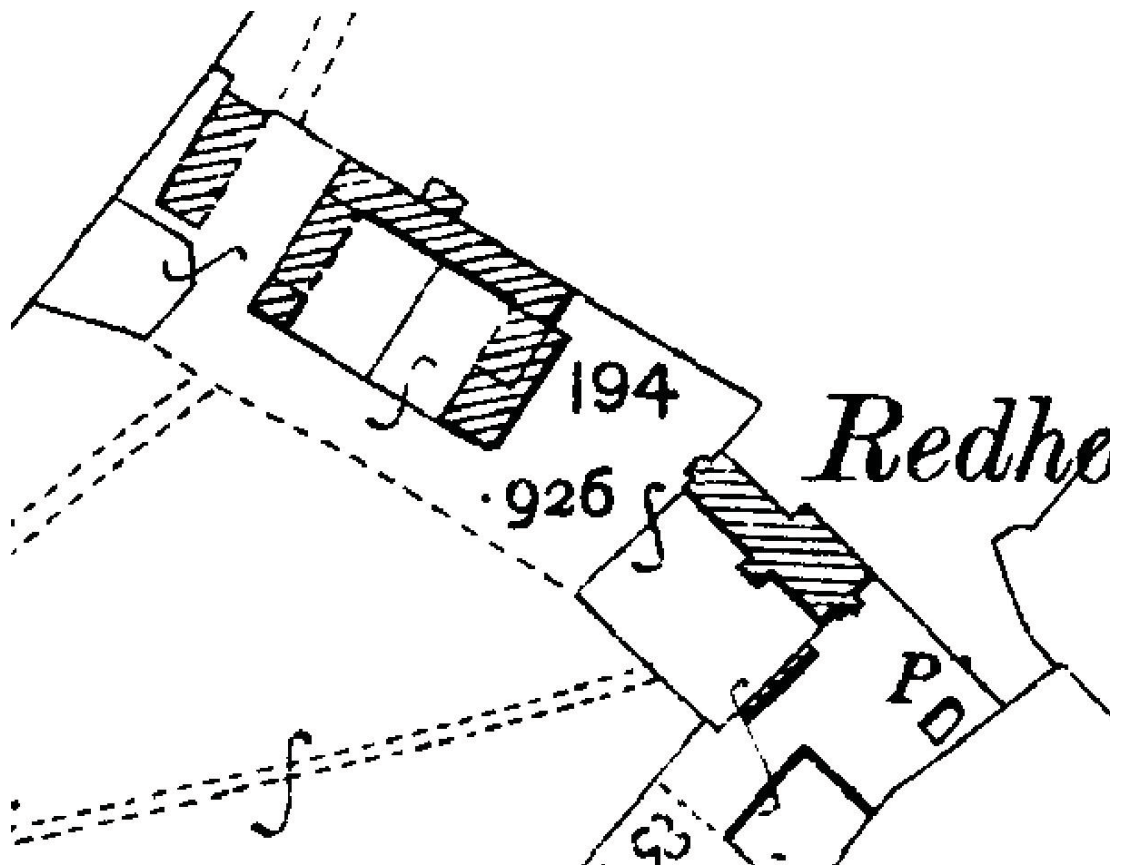


Figure 4. Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904

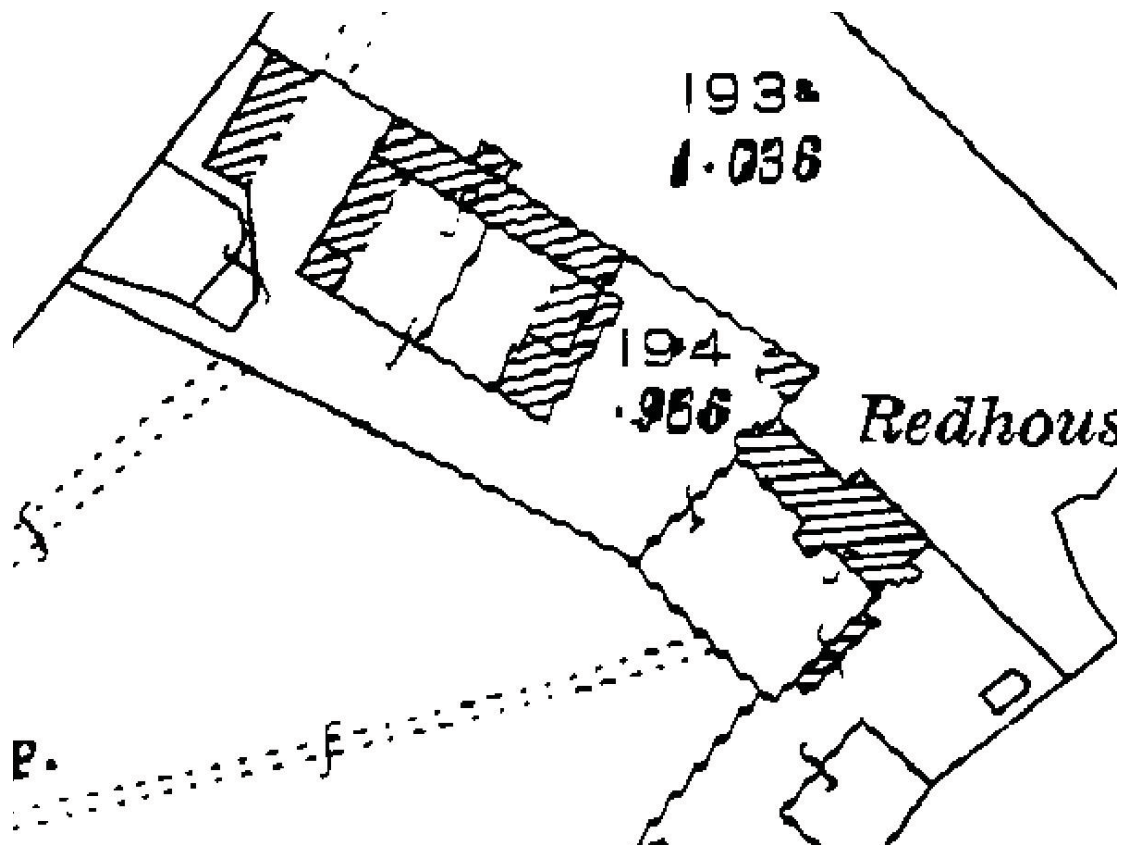


Figure 5. Third Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1926

Building Analysis

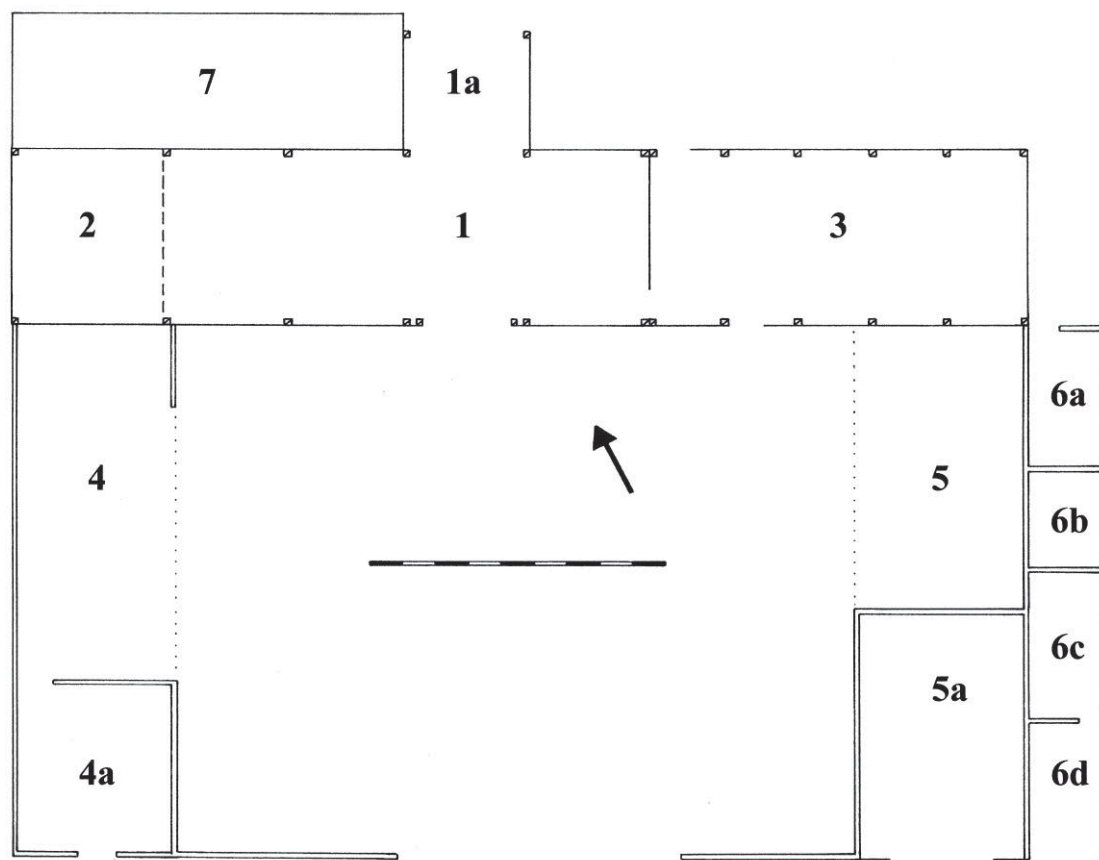


Figure 6

Block plan of the site identifying each historic building or compartment with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Scale in metres.

Key

1. Early-19th century timber-framed and weatherboarded barn in four bays with pegged clasped-purlin roof structure and bolted knee-braces. *Circa* 1820. Original gabled porch to northern elevation of penultimate eastern bay. Probably designed for thatch but now with mid-19th century covering of slate. The porch with raised walls and corrugated iron roof. Modern concrete floors throughout.
2. Mid-19th century timber-framed and weatherboarded extension of one bay to western gable of original barn.
3. Mid-19th century timber-framed and weatherboarded stable in five narrow bays with first-floor granary entered by external first-floor door in eastern gable. The granary floor probably a late-19th century alteration (replacing an earlier hay loft). Boarded walls to granary and boarded mangers to northern interior of stable, with evidence of removed hay rack above. 20th century concrete and bitumen floor with fragments of earlier brickwork. Nailed clasped-purlin roof covered with slate - uniform with barn (1 & 2).

4. **Pantiled timber-framed and weatherboarded open-sided shelter-shed with tall brick plinth and enclosed feed shed to south. Mid-19th century.**
5. **Pantiled timber-framed and weatherboarded open-sided shelter shed with tall brick plinth and enclosed shed to south. The shed once partly floored and probably designed as a feed mill and store. Mid-19th century.**
6. **Red-brick lean-to range of enclosed sheds adjoining eastern elevation of yard shed (5). Mid-19th century. Probably designed as feed sheds but the northern shed (6a) with a late-19th or early-20th century hay rack and a secondary entrance in its northern gable.**
7. **Mid-20th century open-sided lean-to implement shelter with corrugated iron roof (not discussed further below).**

The farm buildings at Red House Farm form a single-phase integrated 'model' farm complex of circa 1860 which incorporates a four-bay timber-framed barn of circa 1820. The following analysis describes each element in more detail.

Barn (1, 1a & 2)

The earliest part of the yard complex is a largely intact four-bay barn of the early-19th century. It extends to 14.7 m in length by 5.3 m in overall width and rises to 2.75 m at its internal roof-plates (48 ft by 17.5 ft by 9 ft), although its concrete internal floor adjoins the feet of the storey posts and the original floor is likely to have been up to 0.5 m lower. These modest proportions reflect the equally modest scale of the 66-acre farm described in the 1842 tithe apportionment. The building is aligned on an approximately ESE-WNW axis (simplified to east-west for the purpose of this analysis), matching that of the farmhouse, and its threshing floor lay in the penultimate eastern bay which retains a contemporary northern porch of 3.6 m in both length and width (12 ft). The walls of this porch were raised in height when the complex was remodelled in *circa* 1860, leaving its original roof-plates *in situ*. The roof-plate of the southern doorway was also raised to increase headroom and no evidence of the proportions of the original doors or the nature of any threshing floor now survives.

The framing of the barn is typical of the first quarter of the 19th century, with a clasped-purlin roof (steeply pitched for thatch) incorporating pegged collars and diagonal primary wall braces that are also pegged and tenoned at both ends. Many individual timbers show evidence of re-use. The tie-beams are secured to the jowled storey posts by bolted knee-braces rather than the plank-sectioned arch-braces of the 18th century and before. Much of the wall framing is original but several areas have been replaced and the ground sill is now hidden beneath concrete and brickwork; the studs of the western gable are intact above the tie-beam (together with external weatherboarding) but have been removed beneath and the interior is now open to a mid-19th century extension of 4.5 m or 15 ft in length (area 2 in figure 6). The studs of this addition are significantly smaller in section than those of the earlier barn, with no evidence of re-used material, and joints are visible in both the roof-plates and the brickwork of the external plinth where it remains exposed to the north.

Sections of tarred 19th century weatherboarding survive to the northern exterior and within the yard sheds to the south, but much of the cladding was replaced in the 20th century and now blocks the southern yard entrance (with the exception of a narrow door). The roof structure appeared to remain largely intact but was partly hidden at the time of inspection by a platform of corrugated iron associated with a grain conveyor pipe above the tie-beams. An axial

concrete trench in the floor adjoining the northern elevation was also associated with late-20th century grain storage.

The Stable and Granary (3)

The stable and granary at the eastern end of the barn was added to the earlier four-bay building in *circa* 1860 to form an impressive uniform range of 30.7 m or 100.75 ft in overall length (including the western extension, 2). The slate roof was probably added at this time, replacing the thatch of the original barn (as suggested by its steep roof pitch of approximately 55 degrees). The new structure contained five narrow bays and extended to 11.5 m in length (37.5 ft) with narrow studs, nailed primary braces and nailed collars in its clasped-purlin roof – all features characteristic of the second half of the 19th century. The present ceiling of tall-sectioned softwood with cross-bracing is more typical of the later 19th and early-20th centuries and may be a replacement: many stables were provided with hay lofts in the mid-19th century but were later converted into granaries and their floors required strengthening accordingly. The ground-floor stable retained a boarded manger against its northern interior at the time of inspection, with the remains of a missing hay rack above (indicated by a diagonal strut attached to its western gable). The lip of the manger lies 1 m above the floor (39 ins) and the lower edge of the rack 1.5 m (5 ft), while the ceiling affords clearance of 2.3 m (7.5 ft) – proportions appropriate to horses rather than cattle. A number of horse collars still hung in the south-eastern corner at the time of inspection but the interior appeared to have been most recently used for cattle or pigs given its sub-division into stalls with an axial passage to the south. The present entrance from the yard in the penultimate western bay is an original feature with an area of 19th century floor bricks amidst the 20th century concrete and bitumen elsewhere, and the only rear door lay at the western end of the northern wall. The stable was also linked internally to the barn, as shown in figure 6. The sloping walls of the granary were lined with narrow softwood boarding suggesting the presence of sacks rather than loose grain (there is no evidence of bins) and the interior was entered by an external door in its eastern gable.

The Yard Sheds (4, 5 & 6)

The two pantiled shelter-sheds which project by 16.3 m (53.5 ft) from the southern elevation of the barn and stable flank an enclosed yard that was formerly divided in two as shown in figures 3-5 above. The eastern yard may have accommodated horses and the other cattle, but the exceptional height of the two sheds at 3 m (10 ft) suggests both may have been designed for horses – although the scale of the farm in 1842 scarcely justifies their size. Both buildings are open to the north but contain enclosed sheds to the south with walls of weatherboarded studwork on tall red-brick plinths of 1.5 m (5 ft). The western shed (4) of 4.9 m in width by 5.3 m in length (16 ft by 17.5 ft) is entered by an original central doorway in its southern gable and linked internally to the open-sided shelter by a blocked doorway that may be secondary; its eastern elevation has been rebuilt in cement blocks and sections of the building's western plinth have been similarly repaired. The timber arcade posts of the open sheds have been replaced with piers of the same block-work but retain shaped lintels and empty stud mortises in their roof-plates – suggesting an early phase of alteration or an error on the part of the carpenters. The enclosed section of the eastern shed is slightly larger at 5.2 m in overall width by 7.6 m in length (17 ft by 25 ft) and its southern gable has been replaced by 20th century studwork incorporating a pair of vehicle doors. There is evidence of a blocked original door onto the yard in the centre of its western elevation, and of a removed platform or partial loft in its north-eastern corner (i.e. an ostensibly original binding joist with mortises for common joists to the north and a series of iron hooks to the south). Both sheds were probably designed to store animal feed, with a feed mill or possibly a water tank in the larger of the two.

Four small enclosed sheds were housed in a narrow red-brick lean-to adjoining the eastern shelter-shed. These vary in length, as shown in figure 6, but all extend to just 2.1 m in internal width (7 ft) with low eaves of 1.5 ft at their roof-plates (5 ft). The southern shed (6d) was open to the south and probably formed either a feed store or possibly a trap shed with an internal link to its neighbour (6c). The remaining sheds are likely to have performed similar functions, each with a narrow external door to the east, but the northern shed was later converted to a small stable for a trap horse and retains a late-19th or early-20th century wooden hay rack against its southern gable. This rack is 1.7 m from the floor (5.5 ft) and its owner must have entered via a secondary door in the northern gable rather than the original eastern door of 1.5 m in height by 0.8 m in width (5 ft by 32 ins).

Historic Significance

The farm buildings at Red House Farm form a mid-19th century 'model' farm complex which survives largely intact and presents a picturesque facade to the nearby road which complements that of the listed farmhouse. The scale of the slate roof of the main range is a particularly impressive visual feature. The latter incorporates a four-bay threshing barn of the early-19th century and the complex is of considerable historic interest as it illustrates the dramatic change between the two key periods of agricultural revolution in 19th century Suffolk: the cereal boom of the Napoleonic wars and the move towards intensive, yard-based animal husbandry after the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. Despite this local significance, the buildings have been considerably altered, with some rebuilding in cement block-work and the removal of most historic fittings, and they are not of sufficient age, rarity or completeness to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in their own right.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from Flowton Road to south-west showing farm entrance to left and farmhouse in rear.
2. General view of site from Flowton Road to south showing grade II-listed farmhouse to right and barn complex to left.
3. General view of site from entrance track to south-west.
4. General view of site from higher ground to north-east showing farmhouse to left and barn complex with 20th century sheds to right.
5. Farm complex from entrance track to south-west showing yard sheds (4 & 5) to left and right with farmhouse to far right.
6. Farm complex from south-east showing yard sheds (4 & 5) to left and right.
7. Farm complex from south-west showing yard entrance with barn (1) in rear.
8. Southern exterior of barn (1) from yard showing blocked original entrance to left & later stable (3) with original doorway to right.
9. Western external gable of barn (1) showing 20th century lean-to (7) left and yard shed (4) to right.
10. Exterior of barn (1) from north-west showing porch (1a) to left & 20th century lean-to shelter in foreground.
11. Northern exterior of barn (1) showing uniform slate roof with gabled porch (1a) & stable (3) to left.
12. External eastern gable showing loading door to first-floor granary above stable (3) with porch (1a) to right.
13. Detail of eastern external gable of stable (3) showing loading door to first-floor granary.
14. Northern exterior of barn (1) and extension (2) with lean-to shelter (7) showing junction of two brick plinths in centre.
15. Interior of 20th century lean-to (7) showing side-door of porch (1a) to left and barn (1) to right.
16. General view of barn (1) interior from west showing original bolted knee-braces to tie-beams.
17. Southern interior of barn (1) from porch (1a) showing blocked entrance door to left and 20th century axial grain conveyor in roof.

18. Interior of barn (1) from west showing 20th century concrete floor with grain channel to left.
19. Internal eastern gable of original barn (1) showing clasped-purlin roof and door to later stable (3).
20. Detail of pegged & tenoned primary wall braces in south-eastern internal corner of barn (1).
21. Detail of eastern internal gable of barn (1) showing original clasped-purlin roof structure with pegged collars.
22. General internal view of barn (1) from east showing porch (1a) to right.
23. Southern interior of eastern bay of original barn (1) showing raised roof-plate of blocked entrance bay to right.
24. Southern interior of barn (1) showing blocked entrance to left and two western bays in centre with extension bay (2) to right.
25. Interior of original western gable of barn (1) showing boarding and studs above tie-beam with empty stud mortises beneath.
26. Detail of empty stud mortises in tie-beam of original western gable of barn (1).
27. Northern interior of western bays of original barn (1) showing modern brick plinth and porch (1a) to right.
28. Eastern section of barn (1) showing eastern interior of porch (1a) with raised walls to left.
29. Western section of barn (1) showing western interior of porch (1a) with raised walls to right.
30. Interior of porch (1a) from barn (1) to south showing modern entrance without doors.
31. Interior of western extension bay (2) from west showing boarding of original external western gable of barn (1).
32. Northern interior of extension bay (2) showing narrow studs with western gable to left.
33. Southern interior of extension bay (2) showing western gable in rear to right.
34. Interior of stable (3) from east showing later pens to right with entrance passage against southern elevation to left.
35. Internal eastern gable of stable (3) showing horse collars hanging to right and northern window to left.
36. Southern interior of stable (3) showing braced granary ceiling with yard door to right.

37. Western end of southern interior of stable (3) showing original door to yard and internal door to barn (1) to right.
38. Detail of boarded manger with tethering ring against northern interior of central stall of stable (3).
39. Northern interior of stable (3) showing boarded manger and 20th century stall partitions.
40. Detail of boarded manger with tethering ring against northern interior of western stall of stable (3).
41. Eastern external gable of barn (1) seen from stable (3) showing diagonal rail of missing hay rack in top right-hand corner.
42. Granary above stable (3) from west showing gable entrance, boarded walls and nailed collars of clasped-purlin roof.
43. Interior of granary above stable (3) from east showing grain hopper and boarded partition of barn (1).
44. Northern interior of granary above stable (3) showing western gable adjoining barn (1) to left.
45. Northern interior of granary above stable (3) showing eastern gable to right.
46. Detail of 20th century bitumen and concrete floor of stable (3) showing 19th century floor bricks inside southern entrance.
47. Southern external gable of yard shed (4) showing original doorway to enclosed shed (4a) with integral yard wall to right.
48. Eastern exterior of western yard shed (4) showing enclosed shed (4a) to left and open shelter to right.
49. Interior of western yard shed (4) from south showing 20th century cement block repair to brick plinth to left.
50. Interior of western yard shed (4) from north showing blocked doorway to enclosed shed (4a) in rear to right.
51. Interior of enclosed section of western yard shed (4a) from south showing blocked door to open section (4).
52. Internal southern gable of western yard shed (4a) showing central entrance & rebuilt eastern elevation to left.
53. Eastern interior of enclosed shed to south of western yard shed (4a) showing 20th century cement-block rebuilding.
54. Western exterior of eastern yard shed (5) showing enclosed southern shed (5a) to right & open shelter shed to left.
55. Detail of western exterior of eastern yard shed (5) showing notched and nailed primary braces of enclosed shed (5a).

56. Southern external gable of eastern shed (5a) showing modern entrances to sheds (5a left and 6d right).
57. Internal southern gable of eastern yard shed (5a) showing 20th century framing of enlarged vehicle entrance.
58. Interior from south of enclosed shed (5a) showing altered principal joists of original partial loft.
59. Internal northern corner of enclosed shed (5a) showing blocked doorway to yard to left.
60. Eastern interior of enclosed shed (5a) showing loft rail & common joist mortises in binding joist.
61. Interior from south of eastern shelter shed (5) showing weatherboarding of stable (3) in rear.
62. Interior from north of eastern shelter shed (5) showing rebuilt pier to yard to right & wall of enclosed shed (5a) in rear.
63. Open western interior of eastern shelter shed (5) showing lintels of two original arcade posts with modern cement-block replacement.
64. Detail of lintel of replaced arcade post to western interior of eastern shelter shed (5) showing empty stud mortises in roof-plate.
65. Eastern exterior of eastern shed (5) showing integral range of brick lean-to sheds (6) with gable of stable (3) to right.
66. Northern external gable of lean-to shed (6a) showing secondary entrance and junction with stable (3) to right.
67. Northern end of eastern exterior of lean-to shed (6) showing original entrance to northern shed (6a).
68. Interior from north of northern lean-to shed showing hay rack attached to southern elevation and entrance to left.
69. Detail of wooden hay rack to southern interior of northern lean-to shed (6a).
70. Internal northern gable of northern lean-to shed (6a) showing existing secondary entrance.
71. Eastern exterior of lean-to shed (6) showing original door and light to penultimate northern shed (6b).
72. Interior of lean-to shed (6b) from south showing external light to right.
73. Interior of lean-to shed (6b) from north showing entrance to left.
74. Eastern exterior of lean-to shed (6) showing original doorway to penultimate southern shed (6c).

75. Interior of penultimate southern lean-to shed (6c) showing original entrance to left and door to southern shed (6d).
76. Interior from south of penultimate southern lean-to shed (6c).
77. Interior of southern lean-to shed (6d) from south showing original door to penultimate shed (6c) in rear.

Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 15-20

Appendix 2 (pp. 15-20): Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. General view of site from Flowton Road to south showing grade II-listed farmhouse to right and 19th century barn complex to left.



Illus. 2. The farm complex from the south-west, showing the slate-roofed barn and stable (1-3) in rear with the yard sheds (4 & 5) to left and right respectively. The vehicle doors in the gable of the eastern shed (5) are insertions of the 20th century.



Illus. 3. Southern exterior of barn (1) from yard showing blocked original entrance with raised roof-line in centre & original doorway of later stable (3) to right.



Illus. 4. Northern exterior showing early-19th century barn (1) and gabled porch (1a) with 20th century open-sided lean-to shed (7) to right and mid-19th century stable (3) to left.



Illus. 5. External eastern gable showing loading door to first-floor granary above stable (3) with porch (1a) to right and range of brick lean-to sheds (6) adjoining eastern yard shed (5) to left.



Illus. 6. General internal view of barn (1) from east showing original bolted knee-braces to tie-beams and contemporary porch (1a) to right.



Illus. 7. Interior of original western gable of barn (1) showing boarding and studs above tie-beam with empty stud mortises beneath and mid-19th century extension bay (2) in rear.



Illus. 8. Interior of barn from west showing later doorway to stable (3) in eastern gable with blocked southern entrance to right and raised wall of porch (1a) to left (the original porch rose only to the horizontal rail).



Illus. 9. Northern interior of stable (3) showing boarded manger and 20th century stall partitions with cross-braced joists of granary floor above.



Illus. 10. Granary above stable (3) from west showing external loading door in eastern gable entrance, boarded walls and nailed collars of clasped-purlin roof.



Illus. 11. Eastern interior of enclosed shed (5a) showing binding joist of partial loft (probably for a feed mill or water tank) with rail against studwork and & common joist mortises.



Illus. 12. Interior from north of northern lean-to shed (6a) showing hay rack attached to southern elevation and original entrance to left.