

**Barn at
Prospect House Farm,
Wilby, Suffolk
WBY 021**

Historic Building Record

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1-87312



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Barn at Prospect House Farm, Worlingworth Road, Wilby, Suffolk

(TM 232 715)

Historic Building Record

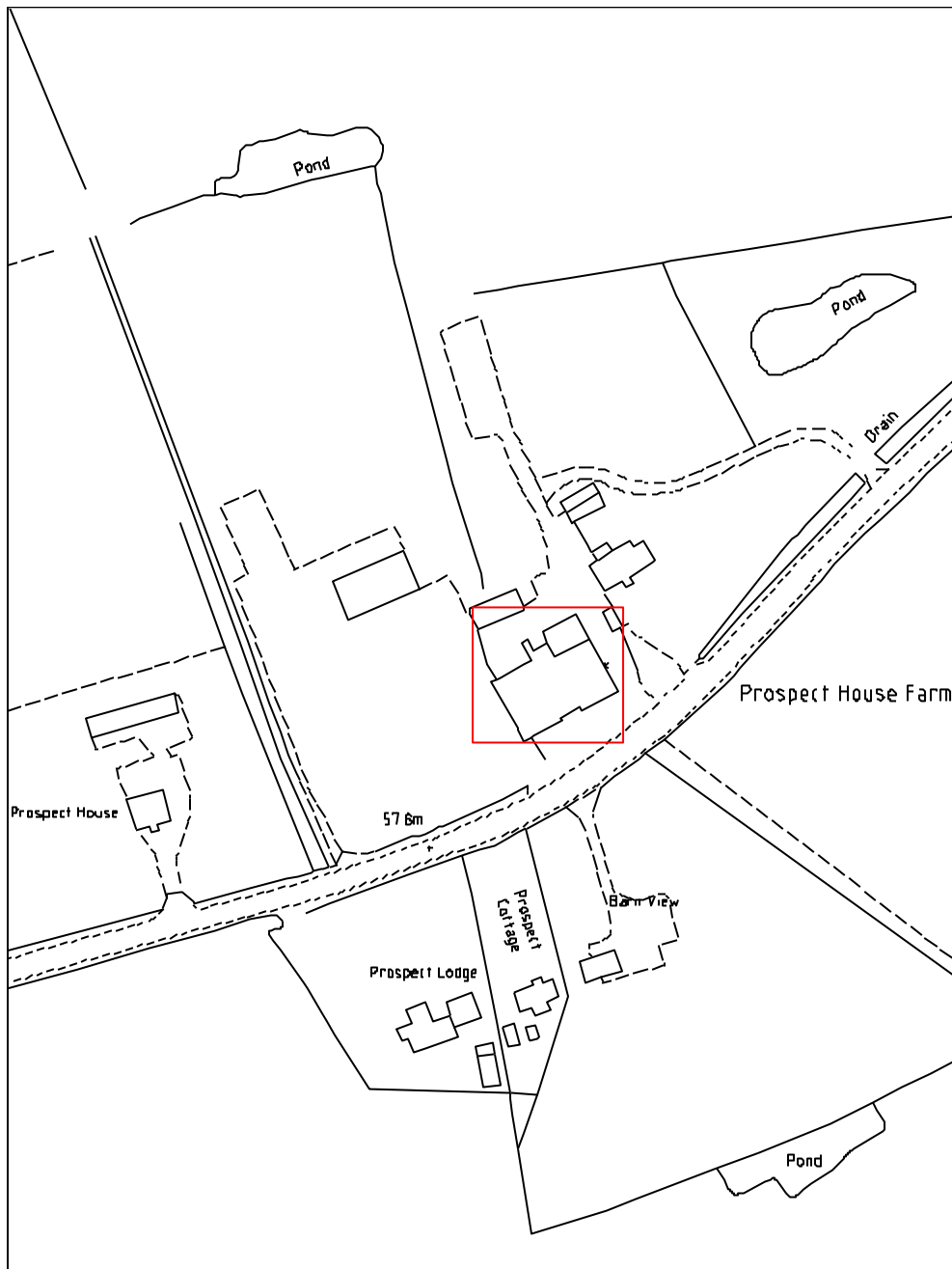
This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant barn with attached sheds. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 20 May 2010, ref. SpecHBR(EM)_ProspectHoFm_Wilby_2228_08), and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk DC consent 2228/08, condition 2).

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 59 high resolution 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 5th October 2010.

Summary

Prospect House Farm lies in open countryside on the northern side of the Worlingworth Road approximately 1 km south-west of Wilby parish church, and as its name suggests commands extensive views over a level landscape to the south. The present farmhouse is a late-19th century unlisted brick building which replaced an earlier house on the same site shown on the Wilby tithe map of 1838, at which time the farm was a middle-sized tenanted holding of 44 acres occupied by Benaiah Bryant. The map shows a rectangular barn at right-angles to the road along with two detached sheds that no longer survive. A series of cattle yards with open-sided shelter sheds had been added to the eastern and western elevations of the barn by 1885 as part of a typical mid-19th century refurbishment, but these were almost completely rebuilt in Fletton brick during the 20th century and are no longer of historic interest. The pantiled barn at the centre of the modern complex, however, is a timber-framed structure of considerable historic significance. It consists of a three-bay 16th century threshing barn with evidence of a distinctively East Anglian queen-post roof (rebuilt in the 19th century) and a central entrance facing a yard in front of the house in the traditional manner. The fourth bay to the south was added to the barn's hipped gable in the early-17th century and formed a stable with a hay loft lit by two diamond mullion windows. One of these windows survives completely intact with three original mullions hidden in the clay daub with which it was later blocked. The framing of the building's eastern elevation and part of its northern gable remains largely *in situ* but the studs of the rear, western elevation were removed in the late-20th century when the barn was united with the adjoining cattle yard and the floors were renewed in concrete (although its roof-plates and storey posts remain). Barns of this relatively small scale are no longer common, but despite its undoubted historic interest the extent of the 20th century mutilation unfortunately means the building probably fails to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing at grade II.



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Figure 1 Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan.
Enclosing the barn complex in red and showing the farmhouse immediately to the north-east.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Prospect House Farm lies in open countryside on the northern side of the Worlingworth Road approximately 1 km south-west of Wilby parish church. The farm complex adjoins the road 20 m south-west of the former farmhouse, which is a red-brick structure of late-19th century appearance. The site was marked as ‘Prospect House’ on 19th century maps (it commands extensive views across the level landscape to the south) but was re-named Prospect House Farm when a new residence of the same name was built to the west between 1957 and 1980, as shown in figure 1. No buildings on the site are listed.

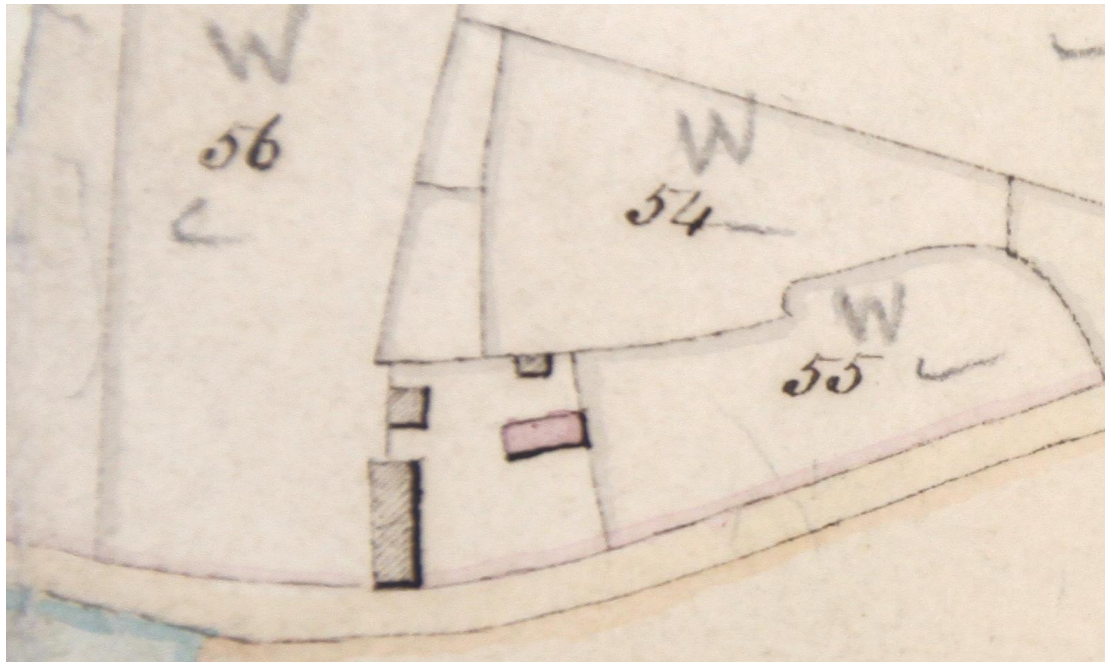


Figure 2.

Prospect House Farm as shown on the Wilby tithe map of 1838 (Suffolk Record Office). The barn (building 5 in figure 5) is shown in grey as a detached rectangular structure adjoining the road at right-angles with a house in red on much the same site as today. The two additional small sheds no longer survive.

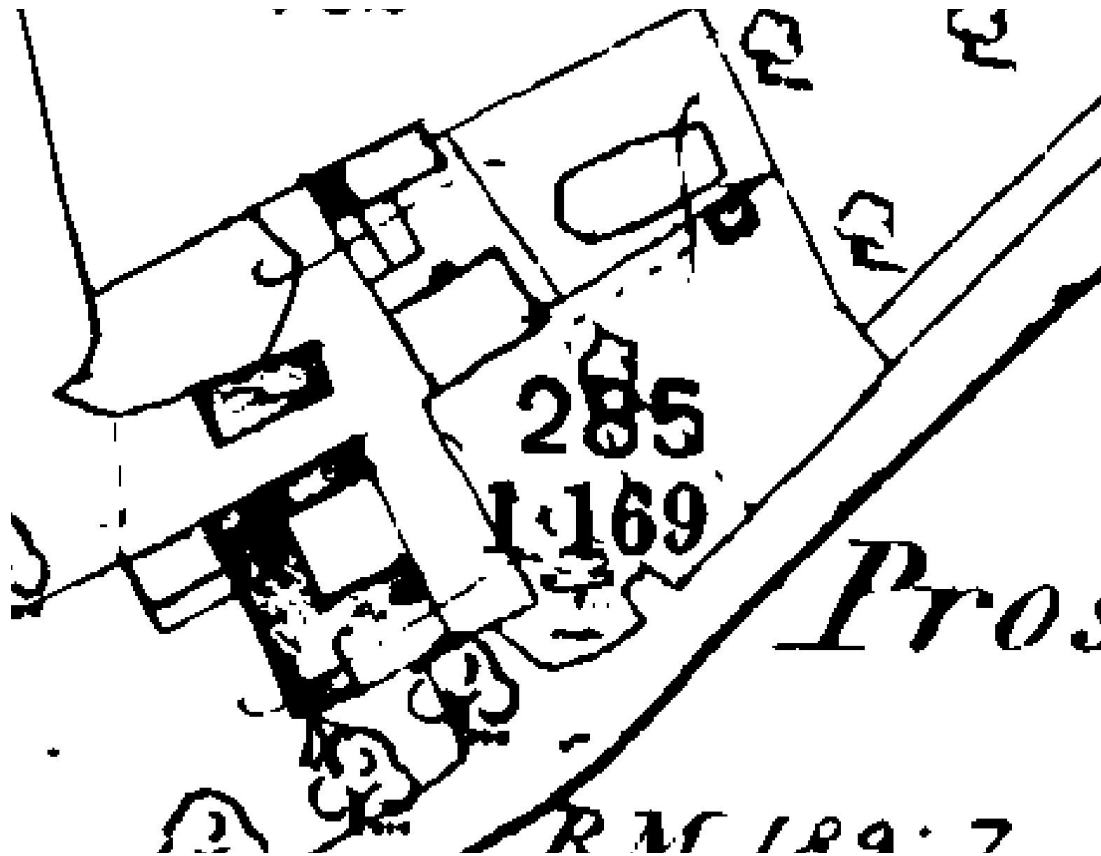


Figure 3. 'Prospect House' as shown on the First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885 with two shelter-sheds now adjoining the barn to the east. The wider outline of the farmhouse suggests it had been rebuilt since 1838.

At the time of the Wilby tithe survey in 1838 the farm was a middle-sized tenanted holding of 44 chiefly arable acres (including 9 of pasture) owned by the Reverend Jeremy Day and occupied by the exotically named Benaiah Bryant. Benaiah was King David's General and chief bodyguard in the Book of Samuel. The tithe map (figure 2) shows an earlier farmhouse on the present site, with a rectangular barn at right-angles to the road and two small detached sheds. The area was described only as 'house, yards, etc.' on the apportionment (plot 55) but the adjoining field on the west (plot 56) was a pasture known as 'barn pightle' (pightle is an early term for a small enclosed pasture or paddock). 'Orchard pightle' adjoined the farm on the north (54).

A number of animal yards and open-sided shelter-sheds had been added to the east and west of the barn by 1885 (figures 3 and 4), reflecting the mid-Victorian fashion for enclosed yards to maximise the production of cattle manure (rather than keeping livestock in open fields as hitherto). The outlines of the sheds and yards to the east still survive in some degree but the structures were rebuilt in Fletton brick during the early to mid-20th century and the open yards provide with roofs. A large complex of late-20th century buildings housing pigs lay to the west of the site but was demolished prior to inspection.

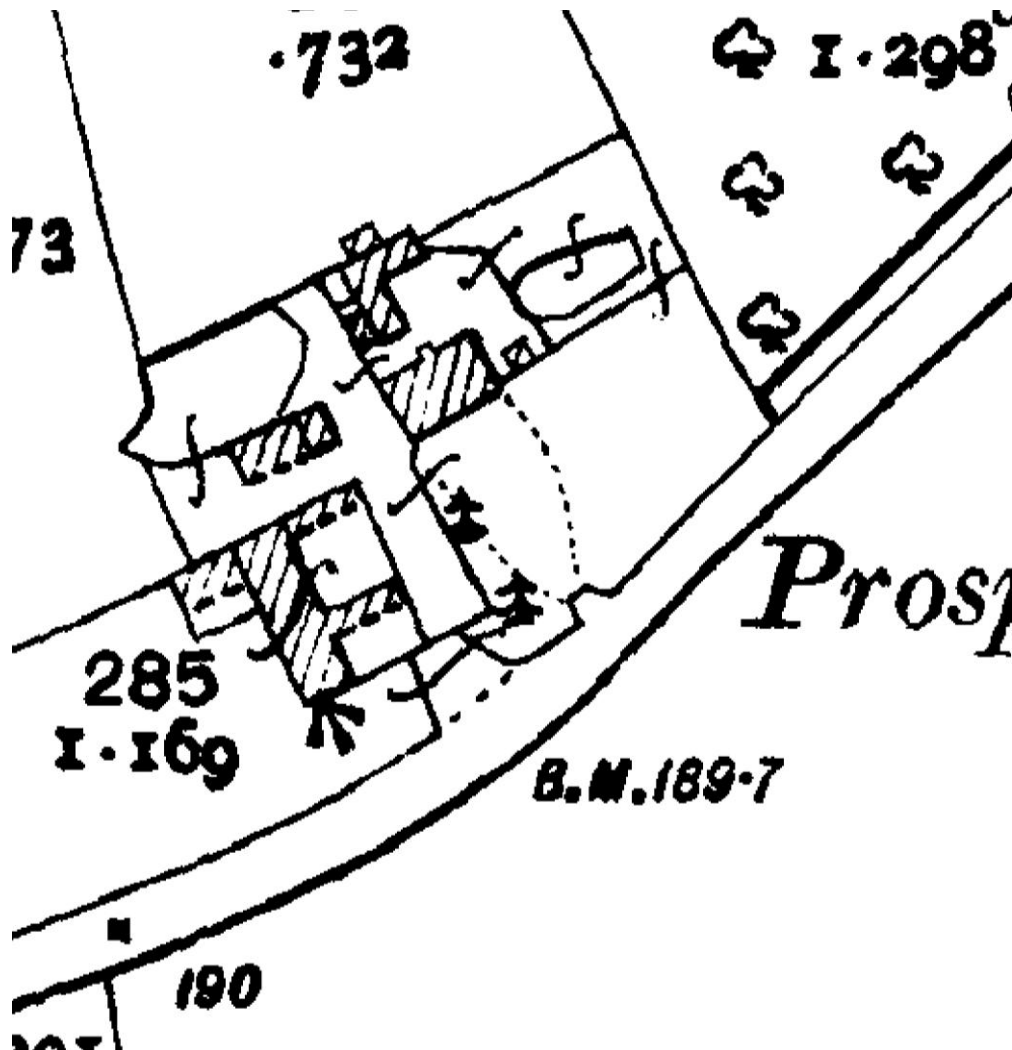


Figure 4. Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing the two shelter-sheds to the east of the barn more clearly: their open-sided southern elevations are indicated by broken lines. Both were rebuilt later in the 20th century and their replacements (buildings 1 and 3) are visibly wider. Nothing now survives of the western shed and the probable detached cart lodge to the north.

Building Analysis

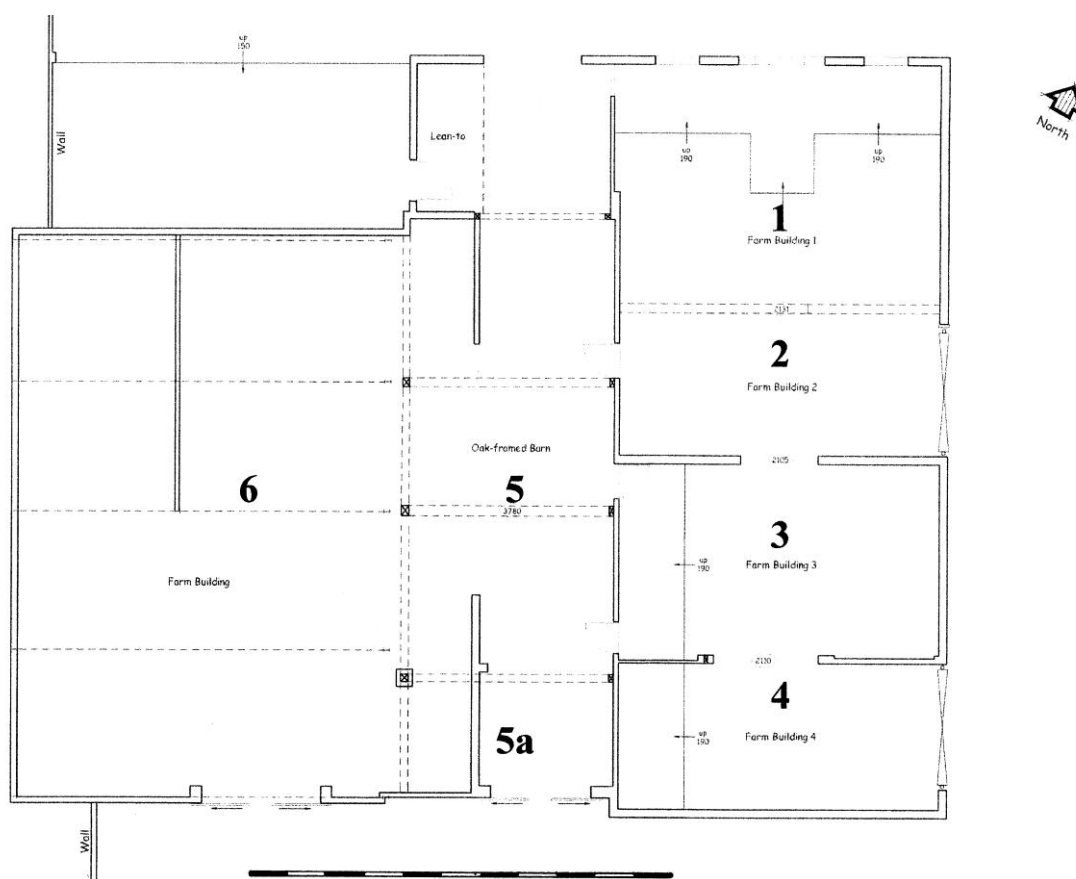


Figure 5

Block plan of the barn complex identifying each structure with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Scale in metres.
Adapted from an anonymous supplied survey drawing.

Key

1. Early-20th century Fletton brick shed on the site of a narrower mid-19th century shelter-shed shown on the Ordnance Surveys of 1885 and 1904. *Circa* 1930. Original louvered windows to north and blocked door in eastern gable. Probably designed as an enclosed cattle shed but now open-sided to the south beneath a modern RSJ. Later central door inserted to north. Roof and parts of brickwork collapsed.
2. Cattle yard with late-20th century roof of corrugated iron.
3. Cattle shelter-shed with early-20th century northern elevation of Fletton brick and open-sided southern elevation. Much altered, with a wide aperture inserted into its northern elevation and the northern slope of its roof covered in corrugated asbestos, but with pantiles to the southern slope which possibly survive from the mid-19th century shelter-shed shown in 1885. Remains of shaped lintels to southern roof-plate but arcade posts removed.
4. Cattle yard with late-20th century roof of corrugated asbestos and southern elevation of boarded post-and-rail construction.
5. A late-16th century timber-framed barn of three bays. Originally with a central entrance bay facing east towards the farmhouse and a hipped queen-post roof. A fourth bay to the south was added in the early-17th century as a stable (5a) with a hay loft lit by

two diamond mullion windows (of which one remains intact). The roof rebuilt over both structures in the mid-19th century and covered with pantiles. The eastern elevation largely intact but the studs removed from the western elevation leaving only the storey posts *in situ*. Modern concrete floors throughout and cement-block axial partition to south.

6. Late-20th century covered cattle yard with cement-block walls and corrugated asbestos roof.

N.B. The following account discusses the historic timber-framed barn and stable in more detail but does not refer to the 20th century sheds described above.

Timber-Framed Barn (5 & 5a)

The historic barn at the centre of the farm complex is a timber-framed structure on a NNW-SSE axis (simplified to north-south for purpose of this analysis) which extends to 15.5 m in total length by 6 m in overall width (51 ft by 19.5 ft) and rises to 3.6 m at its roof-plates (12 ft). It lies beneath a single pantiled roof structure which contains many re-used timbers but dates only from the mid-19th century refurbishment of the site, with a low pitch of 38 degrees, fully hipped gables, linear butt-purlins, pegged collars, a ridge-piece and a sealing layer of lath-and-plaster between its rafters and tiles. A number of modern roof lights have also been introduced using transparent corrugated plastic. The timber frame beneath this single roof, however, contains two distinct phases of construction: a traditional threshing barn of three bays with a central entrance to the north and a single-bay to the south that was added as a slightly later extension and originally formed a stable with a hay loft. The stable bay (5a in figure 5) has since been united with the earlier framing to form a single barn of four bays and has lost its loft. The two structures are described separately below and illustrated in figure 7.

Three-bay 16th century barn (5)

The earlier of the two structures is a traditional oak-framed threshing barn of three bays and 12.5 m in length (41 ft) by 6 m in overall width (19.5 ft). Its walls consist of uninterrupted studs of 3.3 m in height (10 ft 9 ins) between the roof-plates and ground sills with internally trenched braces rising from all four corner posts to the gable tie-beams and roof-plates. The roof-plates contain edge-halved and bridled scarf joints of a type rarely found later than the end of the 16th century and the original arch-braced tie-beam to the north of the central bay contains pegged mortises for a queen-post roof structure that is also consistent with a 16th century origin. A range of 1550-1600 can be assigned with confidence, but the relatively narrow scantling of the studs suggests a date in the final quarter of the century. Queen posts are of particular historic interest as they were rarely used outside northern central Suffolk and southern Norfolk as mapped and described in the Historical Atlas of Suffolk which shows Wilby at the heart of their distribution (Suffolk County Council, 1999, p.180). Their presence here confirms the barn's 16th century origin as they were quickly superseded by side-purlin structures at the beginning of the 17th century. The tie-beam of the southern gable contains notched housings for hip rafters which were probably reflected to the north, as indicated in figure 7, although evidence was lost when the northern tie-beam was replaced in the 19th century. There is no evidence of notches for wattle-and-daub and the external surfaces of the extant timbers are not weathered, indicating the barn was externally rendered from the outset.

At 3.2 m in length (10.5 ft) the central bay is narrower than its neighbours (of 4.25 m or 14 ft) and contained full-height entrance doors to the east – now blocked and indicated only by the lack of stud mortises to the roof-plate – with a smaller rear door to the west indicated by a central gap of approximately 1 m between two stud mortises on each side. The eastern storey

posts are rebated to form the jambs of the doors, and the barn evidently formed the western side of a courtyard between the farmhouse and the road in the usual manner of the 16th century (the previous farmhouse shown on the tithe map occupied the same site as its replacement).

Single-bay Stable (5a)

The southern bay of the present barn extends to just 3 m in length (including its corner posts) and was built as an extension to the southern gable of the barn. It was common for stables to adjoin the gables of Suffolk barns in this manner (but rare elsewhere in the country), and many contemporary barns were built with integral stables from the beginning. The remains of a wattle-and-daub internal partition in the roof lies approximately 0.5 m to the north of the barn's original gable and suggests the stable intruded into the barn – perhaps by the width of its hay loft and manger which probably adjoined its northern gable. It is not clear whether the stable bay was hipped as its gable tie-beam was replaced in the 19th century. The same gable contained a mid-rail to secure the joists of its missing loft, which was lit by two diamond mullion windows at the southern end of both elevations. Medieval and Tudor windows typically contained square mullions set diagonally in this fashion. The sill and three mullions survive intact to the east (blocked by clay daub) but have been removed to the west where empty mullion mortises are visible in the underside of the roof-plate. There is no evidence of shutter grooves or rebates. Empty mortises immediately beneath the eastern window held the lintel of either a similar ground-floor window or a doorway as shown in figure 7 (the lower part of the jamb has been cut away along with any evidence of a sill). Both the front and rear walls also contained wide gaps of 1.1 m (44 ins) to the north, as indicated by the distribution of pegged mortises in the roof-plates: the northernmost stud of the eastern elevation is a nailed insertion. These gaps do not correspond with any obvious evidence of sills or lintels and probably related to loft hatches but may also indicate the positions of doors on the ground floor. As the arrangement of the external walls is uncertain, the original layout of the stable is also unclear: it probably contained a through-passage to the south with a hay rack to the north as the presence of either a door or window against the south-eastern corner post would have obstructed a rack at this end of the interior. However, a hay rack against the rear (eastern) interior is also possible. The stable bay is difficult to date with any accuracy but cannot be any later than the mid-17th century and may well have been added to the late-16th century barn within a matter of years and an early-17th century origin is most likely.

Later Alterations

The original frame of the eastern elevations of the barn and stable remain substantially intact, as shown in figure 7 (where broken lines indicate missing or hidden timbers), but the western wall was extensively mutilated in the 20th century when it the barn was effectively incorporated into the covered yard (6): its studs were entirely removed leaving only its storey posts and roof-plates *in situ*. The northern and southern gables were also lost when vehicle doors were inserted, although a small section of the former still survives and preserves an internally trenched curved wall brace. The tie-beam to the south of the barn's central bay is a 19th century replacement (along with the entire roof) but its counterpart to the north is original. The joists and internal partition of the stable have been removed along with the arch-braces to the tie-beams (replaced in the 19th century with bolted knee-braces) and the floors are of modern concrete throughout. The areas of roughcast wattle-and-daub to the northern gable and eastern elevation are secondary but reflect the barn's original appearance, although their coating of tar is a 19th century addition. Much of the exterior is now clad with miscellaneous materials including cement block-work and asbestos sheeting.

Historic Significance

The cattle yards and shelter-sheds adjoining the barn reflect its mid-19th century refurbishment but were almost entirely rebuilt in the 20th century and are not of historic significance. The timber-framed barn and stable, however, date from the 16th and early-17th centuries and remain good examples of their types despite extensive 20th century mutilation. The framing of the eastern elevation remains largely intact, allowing the structure's original appearance and layout to be reconstructed with some accuracy, and there is evidence of an East Anglian queen-post roof which remains of historic interest despite its replacement in the 19th century. The intact diamond mullion window to the former hay loft is a particularly rare survival. Despite its undoubted quality and historic interest, however, the extent of its alterations unfortunately means the building is unlikely to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.

*Elevation drawings (figures 6 and 7) follow on pages 9 & 10
The Schedule of Photographs in Appendix 1 follows on pages 11-14*

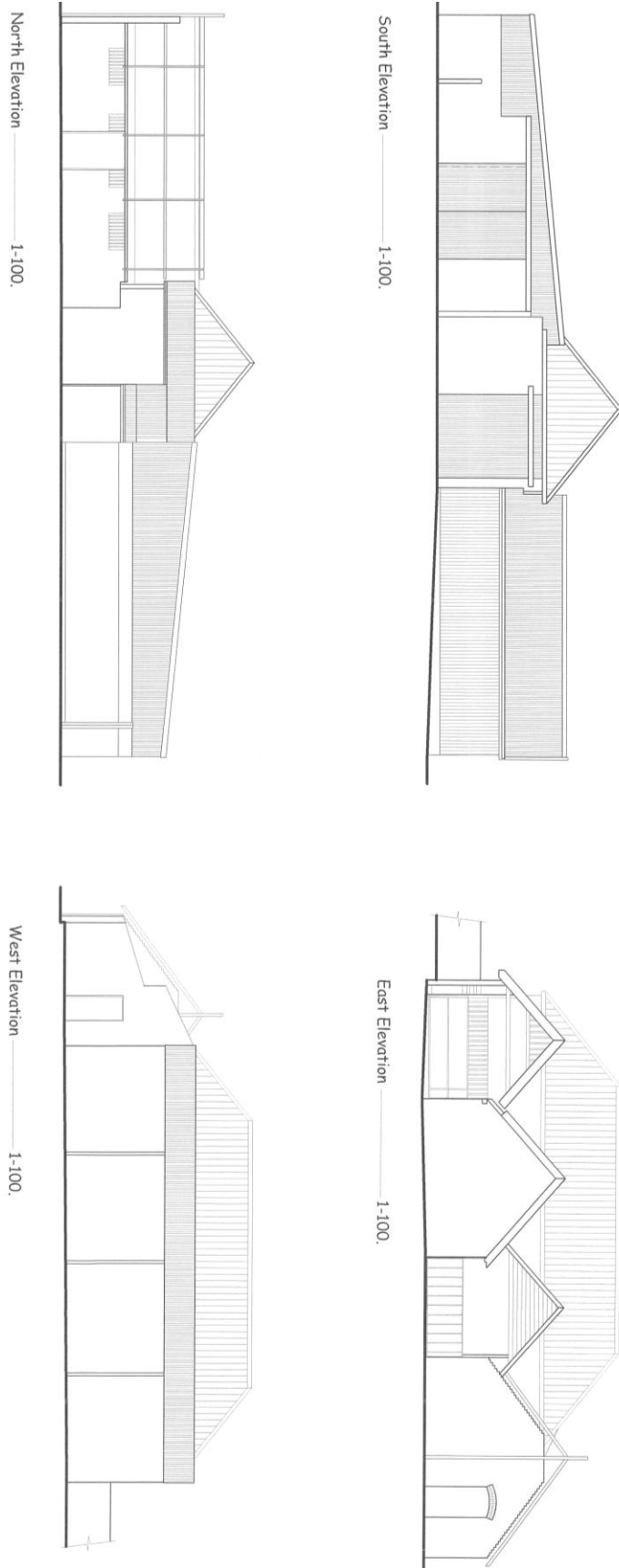


Figure 6
‘As existing’ external elevations of the barn complex
(from supplied anonymous drawings)

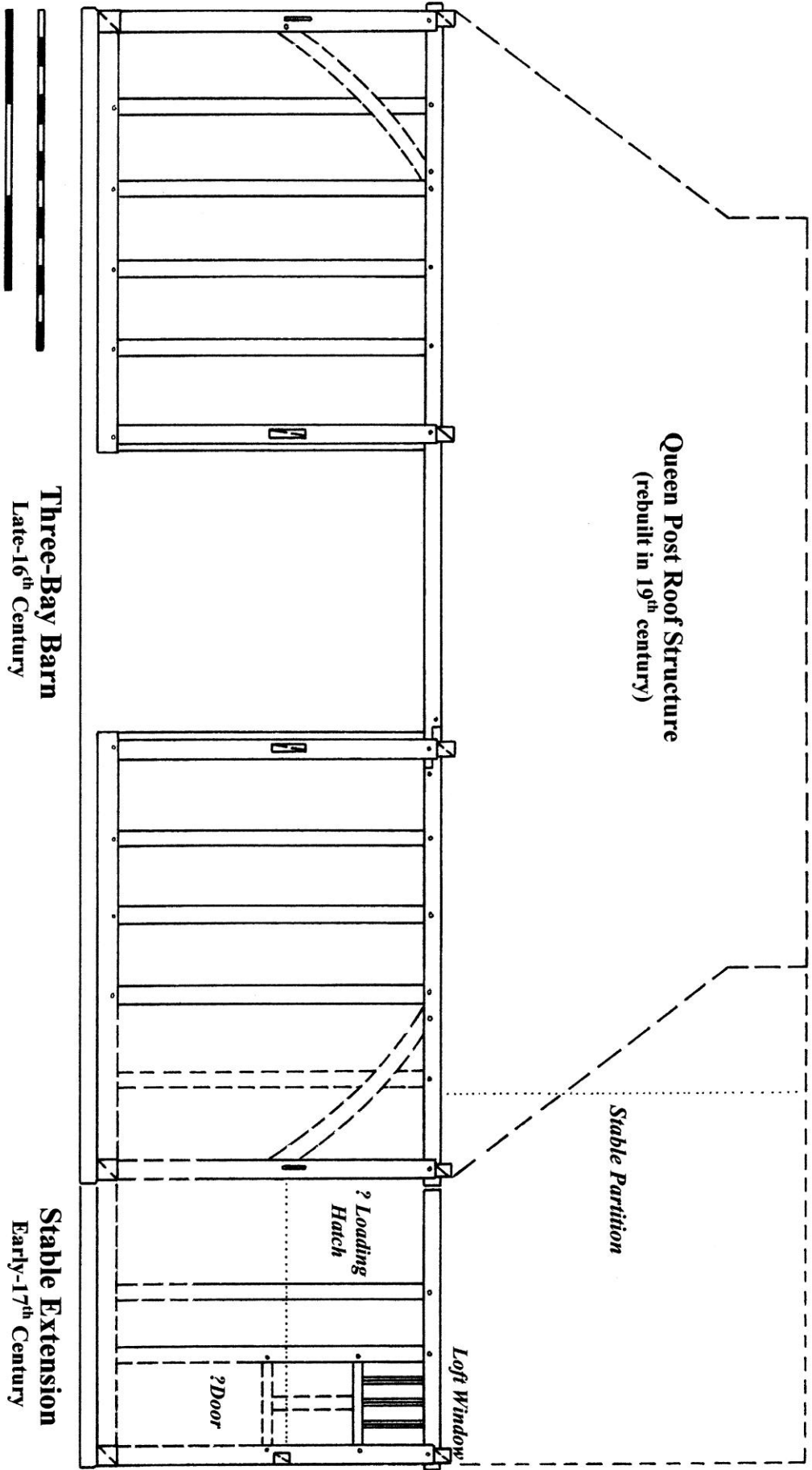


Figure 7. Internal Eastern Elevation of Barn (5 & 5a)

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from north showing farmhouse to left and farm complex to right.
2. General view of site from north-east showing detached cement-block shed to north of complex to right.
3. Southern facade of ostensibly late-19th century red-brick farmhouse. Included for site context.
4. General view of site from Worlingworth road to south showing house to right and farm complex with pantiled barn in centre.
5. General view of site from Worlingworth road to west showing site of recently demolished 20th century piggery to left.
6. Exterior of complex from Worlingworth road to south-east showing 20th century covered yard (6) to left of 16th century barn (5).
7. Exterior of complex from east showing gables of yard sheds (1-4) to right.
8. External southern gable of timber-framed barn (5a) showing covered yards (4) to right and (6) to left.
9. External eastern gable of brick shelter shed (3) showing covered yards (4) to left and (2) to right.
10. External eastern gable of covered yard (2) showing brick shelter sheds (1) to right and (3) to left.
11. Northern exterior of northern brick shed (1) showing the inserted central door which interrupts the brickwork.
12. Exterior of northern brick shed (1) from west showing northern gable of barn (5) to right.
13. Northern yard from east showing 20th century cement-block shed to right and brick shed (1) to left.
14. Northern external gable of barn (5) showing 20th century covered yard (6) to right and shed (1) to left.
15. Interior of northern brick shed (1) from east showing collapsed roof structure and north-eastern corner of barn (5) in rear.
16. Interior of northern brick shed (1) from north showing barn (5) to right and open southern elevation with RSJ to yard (2).

17. Interior of northern shed (1) from west showing original doorway in eastern gable & open elevation to covered yard (2) to right.
18. Southern exterior of northern shed (1) from covered yard (2) showing open elevation supported by RSJ.
19. Detail of internal north-eastern corner of northern shed (1) showing Fletton brickwork & closers respecting gable door to right.
20. Interior from east of covered yard (2) showing inserted door in southern shelter shed (3) to left.
21. Eastern exterior of barn (5) from covered yard (2) showing tarred clay daub with block-work infill to entrance to left.
22. Interior of covered yard (2) from west showing northern shelter-shed (1) to left and southern shelter-shed (3) to right.
23. Northern exterior of southern brick shelter-shed (3) showing inserted doorway interrupting brickwork.
24. Interior of southern shelter-shed (3) from east showing asbestos sheet cladding to barn (5) in rear.
25. Interior of southern brick shelter-shed (3) from west showing secondary aperture in northern wall to left.
26. Interior from east of southern covered yard (4) showing barn (5a) in rear and open-sided elevation of shelter-shed (3) to right.
27. Interior of southern covered yard (4) from west showing brick shelter-shed (3) to left.
28. Detail of lintel to missing arcade post in southern exterior of southern shelter-shed (3).
29. Interior of 20th century covered yard (6) from south showing barn (5) to right.
30. Western exterior of barn (5) from covered yard (6) showing intact storey posts without studs.
31. General internal view of barn (5) from north showing daub partition to stable bay (5a) in rear.
32. General internal view of barn (5) from stable bay (5a) to south.
33. Northern interior of barn (5) showing inserted vehicle entrance in gable with original framing to left.
34. Detail of original framing with internally trenched brace to northern internal gable of barn (5) showing re-used replaced tie.
35. Eastern interior of barn (5) showing original framing to left and blocked original entrance to right.

36. Detail of internal brace trench and mortise to eastern interior of northern bay of barn (5).
37. Interior of eastern entrance bay of barn (5) showing original door rebates in posts and central mortise for door retaining post.
38. Western interior of barn (5) showing removed studs with later door post housing in central bay.
39. Western roof-plate of entrance bay of barn (5) from east showing stud mortises & nailed housing for central post of later doors.
40. Detail from west of edge-halved and bridled scarf joint in western roof plate of entrance bay of barn (5).
41. Western interior of barn (5) showing junction with southern stable extension (5a) to left.
42. Daub secondary partition dividing former hay loft (5a) from open barn, seen from north.
43. Roof of stable bay (5a) from south showing original tie-beam of southern gable of barn (5) in foreground.
44. Detail from south-east of original southern tie-beam of barn (5) showing hip rafter notches and stud mortises.
45. Detail from south-west of original southern tie-beam of barn (5) showing remains of secondary stable partition in rear.
46. Western roof-plate of stable (5a) showing diamond mullion mortises to left & lack of stud mortise above door position to right.
47. Detail of three diamond window mullion mortises at southern end of western roof-plate of stable extension (5a).
48. Detail of crude butt-joint in western roof-plate at junction of stable (5a) left and barn (5) right.
49. Internal southern gable of stable (5a) showing replaced studs and tie-beam with re-used hip rafters.
50. Eastern interior of barn (5) showing intact studs of southern bay to left and stable extension (5a) to right.
51. Eastern interior of stable bay (5a) showing intact diamond mullion window top right and unpegged stud above probable door to left.
52. Detail of intact original diamond mullion window of hay loft above stable (5a) now blocked with clay daub.
53. Eastern interior of stable bay (5a) from south showing window sill above & mortise for ground-floor window or door lintel beneath.

54. Detail of edge-halved and bridled scarf joint in eastern roof-plate behind southern storey post of blocked central entrance door.
55. Rebuilt 19th century roof structure of barn (5) from south showing butt-purlins later tie in foreground with original in rear.
56. Detail of tie-beam from south showing mortise for missing arch-brace and peg for original queen post above.
57. Detail of western end of original tie-beam from south showing peg for original queen post above arch-brace mortise.
58. 19th century roof structure of barn (5) from north showing later windows and sealing of laths beneath pantiles.
59. Chalk labels for cattle feed on block-work internal southern gable of barn (5a). Molassine and Fishmeal.

Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 15-20

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



Illus. 1. General view of site from Worlingworth road to south showing farmhouse to right and farm complex to left with late-20th century covered yard (6) to left, pantiled 16th century barn (5) in centre and early-20th century covered yard (4) right



Illus. 2. Southern facade of ostensibly late-19th century farmhouse. Included for site context.



Illus. 3. Exterior of complex from east showing the gables of the brick shelter-sheds (1 & 3) and covered yards (2 & 4) to the right with the barn (5) and late-20th century covered yard to left.



Illus. 4. Interior from east of the southern covered yard (4) showing stable bay of the barn (5a) in the rear and the open-sided elevation of the southern shelter-shed (3) to the right.



Illus. 5. General internal view of the barn (5) from the north showing the missing studs of the rear (western) elevation to the right and the largely intact studs of the eastern facade to the left. The remaining section of the daub partition against the stable bay (5a) is visible in the rear.



Illus. 6. Eastern interior of barn (5) showing the original framing and secondary wattle-and-daub of the northern bay to the left (with evidence of a removed internally trenched brace) and the blocked original full-height entrance to the right. The storey posts flanking the entrance are rebated for its doors in an unusually sophisticated manner.



Illus. 7. Detail of the original framing with internally trenched brace in the western section of the northern internal gable of the barn (5). The tie-beam is a re-used replacement of the 19th century which relates to the present hipped roof.



Illus. 8. Western roof-plate of the entrance bay of the barn (5) seen from the east and showing empty stud mortises with a central gap for a narrow rear door. The wooden housing for a door bar is a later addition. An edge-halved and bridled scarf joint is visible to the left (partly hidden by a bolted repair).



Illus. 9. Detail from the south-east of the original tie-beam of the southern gable of the three-bay barn (5) showing its hip-rafter notches and empty stud mortises. The tie-beam and remaining partition of the stable (which intruded into the barn by 0.5 m) is shown in the rear to the right.



Illus. 10. The eastern interior of the added stable bay (5a) showing the intact diamond mullion window of its hay loft top right and the unpegged stud which probably indicated the position of the original entrance door to the right of the central post which marks the original gable of the barn (5).



Illus. 11. Detail of the intact original diamond mullion window of the hay loft above the stable (5a), now blocked with clay daub but appearing to retain all three mullions.



Illus. 12. Detail of the only original open truss tie-beam to survive in the barn (5) – to the north of its entrance bay – showing a pegged mortise for a missing arch-brace in its lower surface and the peg of a queen-post mortise in its upper. Queen post roofs were largely confined to the northern half of central Suffolk in the 16th century.