

**Former Cattle Sheds,  
Dairy & Workshop,  
Abbey Farm,  
Snape, Suffolk  
SNP 098**

**Historic Building Record**

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1-87741



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*on behalf of*  
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# Former Cattle Sheds, Dairy & Workshop, Abbey Farm, Bridge Road, Snape, Suffolk

(TM 3903 5798)

## Historic Building Record

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 3 of a group of redundant farm buildings in the curtilage of a grade II\*-listed barn timber-framed barn of circa 1300. The barn is excluded from the survey area. It has been prepared to a specification written by Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (ref. SpecHBR&Mon(EM)\_AbbeyFarm\_Snape\_09 dated 13th October 2009) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council applications C/07/0917/FUL and C/09/1802 & 1803).*

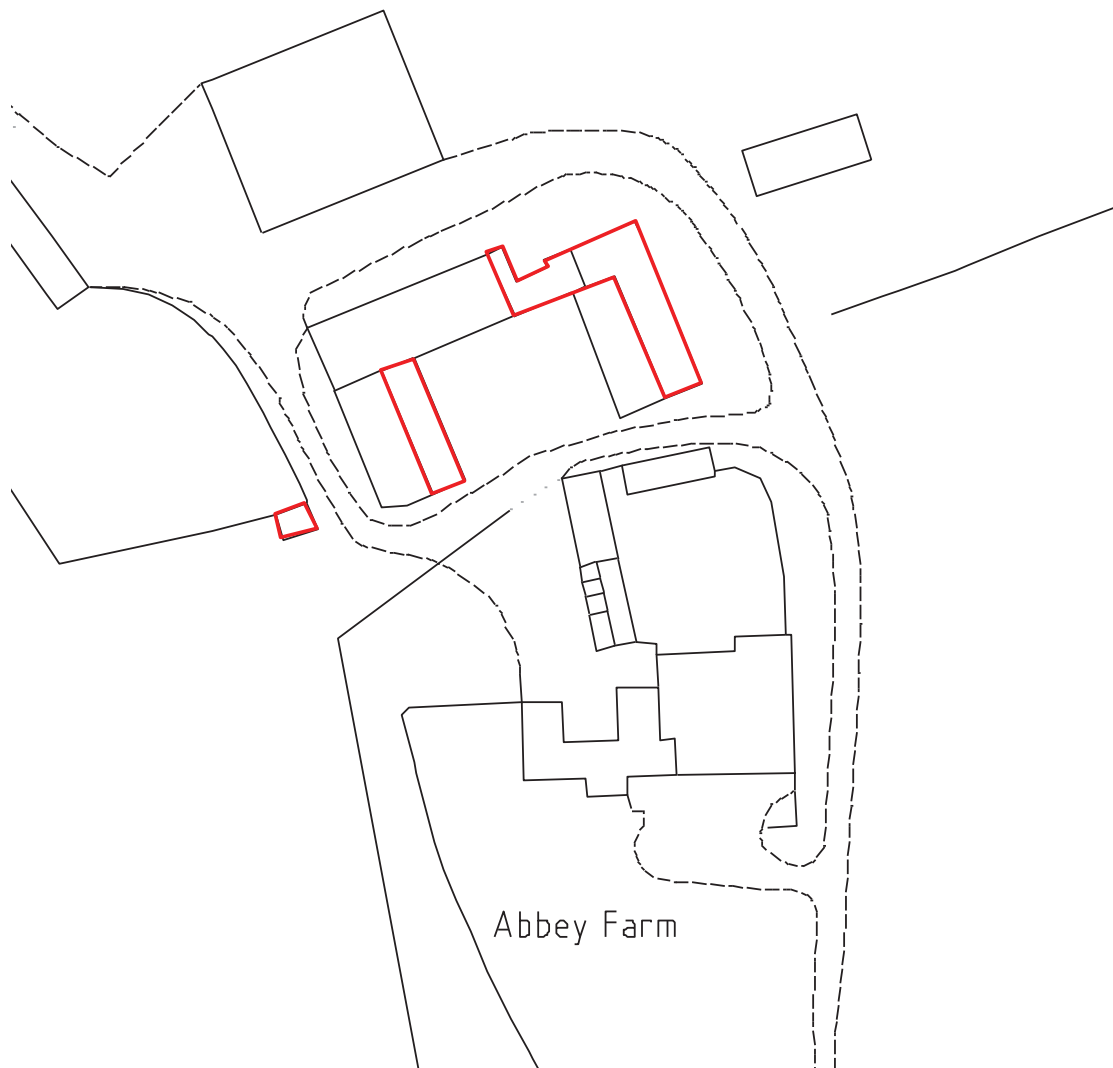
### Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 50 high resolution digital images of 21 megapixels (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 in red and white. The site was inspected on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

### Summary

Abbey Farm lies in open countryside approximately 500 m NW of Snape Bridge and Snape Maltings on the River Alde, some 2.5 km SSW of the parish church. The site is of considerable historic and archaeological importance as it was occupied by Snape Priory between its foundation in *circa* 1155 and its dissolution in the 1520s, and preserves a rare grade II\*-listed timber-framed aisled barn of *circa* 1300. The farmhouse is not listed and is of unknown date. With the exception of the barn, no obvious traces of monastic buildings survive above ground, but White's Suffolk Directory of 1844 notes that many foundations had been dug up in recent years and coins, tiles and skeletons discovered. An early-19<sup>th</sup> century plan of the tenanted 203-acre farm marks the site of the Abbey within a large circular enclosure in Chapel Field to the south-west.

The single-storied, slate-roofed farm buildings adjoining the timber framed barn formed part of a new horse and cattle yard complex of *circa* 1870 as shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1882 but not the tithe map of 1848. They reflect the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural revolution now known as Victorian High Farming which saw cattle reared in yards to maximise the production of manure rather than in open fields as hitherto. A pair of open-sided shelter-sheds flanked a horse yard to the west and a probable cattle yard to the east, suggesting the western end of the medieval barn had been converted into a stable. While these sheds remain substantially intact, the probable cow-shed at the eastern end of the barn was extensively mutilated during its 20<sup>th</sup> century conversion into a dairy and its original form is no longer recognisable. A small, detached brick workshop to the west is broadly contemporary with the yard ranges and adjoined a small yard of its own in the 19<sup>th</sup> century suggesting it was designed as a bull box rather than a vehicle shed (as it might otherwise appear). It too was much altered during the 20<sup>th</sup> century by inserting windows and the renewing its roof. Given the extent of their alterations the 19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings are of limited historic significance in themselves, but may lie above medieval archaeology and serve to provide an agricultural context for the listed barn.



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

**Outlining the buildings included within the survey in red and showing the unlisted Abbey Farmhouse to the south. See figure 7 for a description of the individual buildings. The northern projection from the eastern range of buildings (i.e. from shed 1 in figure 7) had been demolished prior to inspection.**

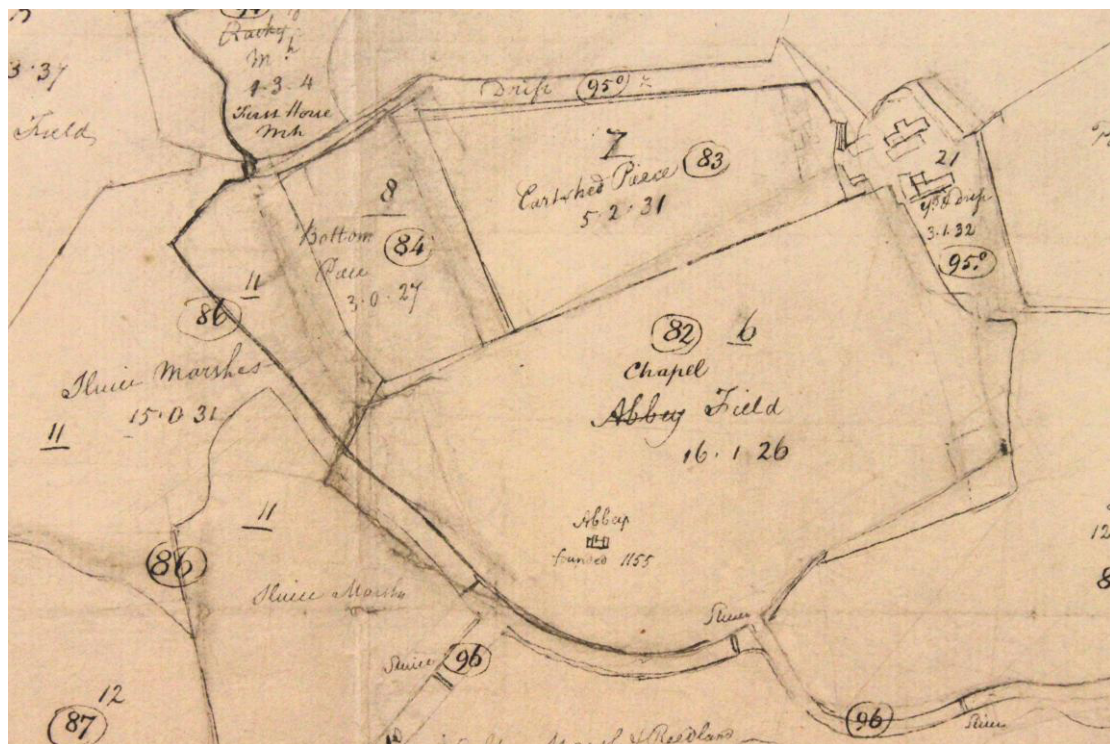
## **Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record**

Abbey Farm lies in open countryside approximately 500 m NW of Snape Bridge and Snape Maltings on the River Alde (which lies on the southern bank in Tunstall), some 2.5 km SSW of the parish church. The site is of considerable historic and archaeological importance as it was occupied by Snape Priory between its foundation in *circa* 1155 and its dissolution in the 1520s, and preserves a rare grade II\*-listed timber-framed aisled barn of *circa* 1300. The farmhouse is not listed and is of unknown date. The priory was a cell of the Benedictine Abbey of St John in Colchester and was well-endowed with the manors of both Snape and Aldeburgh. With the exception of the barn, no obvious traces of the monastic buildings survive above ground, but White's Suffolk Directory of 1844 notes that some of the priory's

stones are visible in the walls and outbuildings of the farmhouse ‘which has been more than seventy years in the occupation of the Groome family, who lately dug up many of the foundations and found some ancient coins, tiles and skeletons’. An early-19<sup>th</sup> century plan of the farm in the Suffolk Record Office shows the present house and outbuildings on the north-eastern edge of a distinctive circular enclosure containing some 23 acres bounded by tracks and watercourses with the site of the ‘Abbey founded 1155’ marked by a building in Chapel Field’ approximately 200 m to the south-west (figure 2). The site of this possible monastic church lay close to the later course of the railway as shown in figure 4.

At the time of the tithe survey in 1848 the farm comprised a large tenanted holding of 203 acres on the estate of Richard William Howard Vyse Esquire, the lord of the manor and descendant of the Duke of the Norfolk to whom the priory passed at the Reformation. Of its 203 acres (occupied by Charles Groome) most were arable but a relatively high proportion of 35% consisted of marsh and ‘wall saltings and reeds’. The site of the farm was described simply as ‘house and field’ on the tithe map (plot 120 figure 3) and ‘barn and farm yards’ (120a). The field to the south-west was still known as ‘chapple field’ (121) with ‘cart shed hill’ (122) to the north-west – the latter apparently named after the adjoining agricultural building which survives today as a recently converted cart lodge to which the remaining farm buildings now belong. The farmhouse to the south is understood to be in separate ownership.

The tithe map shows the aisled barn as a detached rectangular structure on an approximately east-west axis with small projections from its southern and northern elevations. A small building in a rectangular yard is shown on the site of the present workshop to the south-west (i.e. building 5 in figure 7).



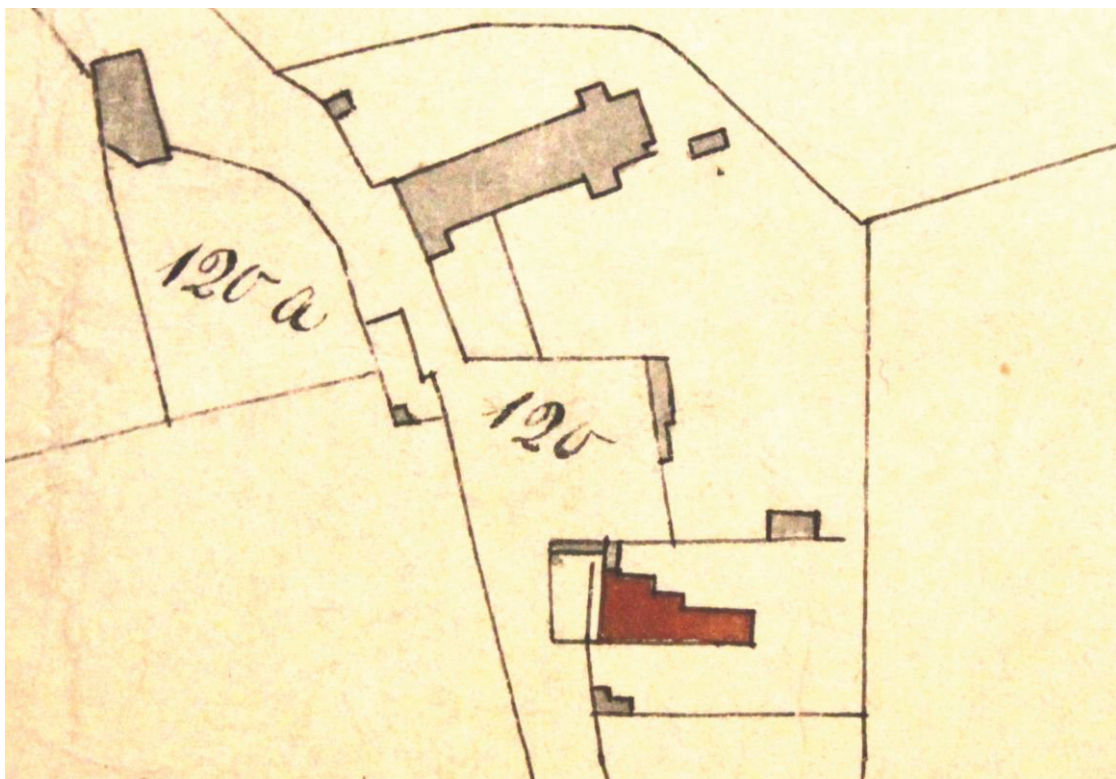
**Figure 2. The Site as depicted on an undated early-19<sup>th</sup> century plan of ‘Abbey Farm’, showing the site of the medieval Abbey ‘founded 1155’ in ‘Chapel Field’. ‘Cartshed Piece’ adjoins the converted cart lodge to the north. The timber-framed barn is shown to the right, together with an L-shaped building on the site of the present farmhouse, but the site is marked only as ‘yards and drift’. The roughly circular enclosure may relate to a medieval monastic precinct. SRO Ipswich 475/162.**





**Figure 3**

**The same distinctive circular enclosure on the Snape tithe map of 1848, showing no trace of any building in Chapel field. SRO Ipswich FDA 219/A1/1b. Snape Bridge is visible to bottom right and the hamlet of Snape Street top right.**

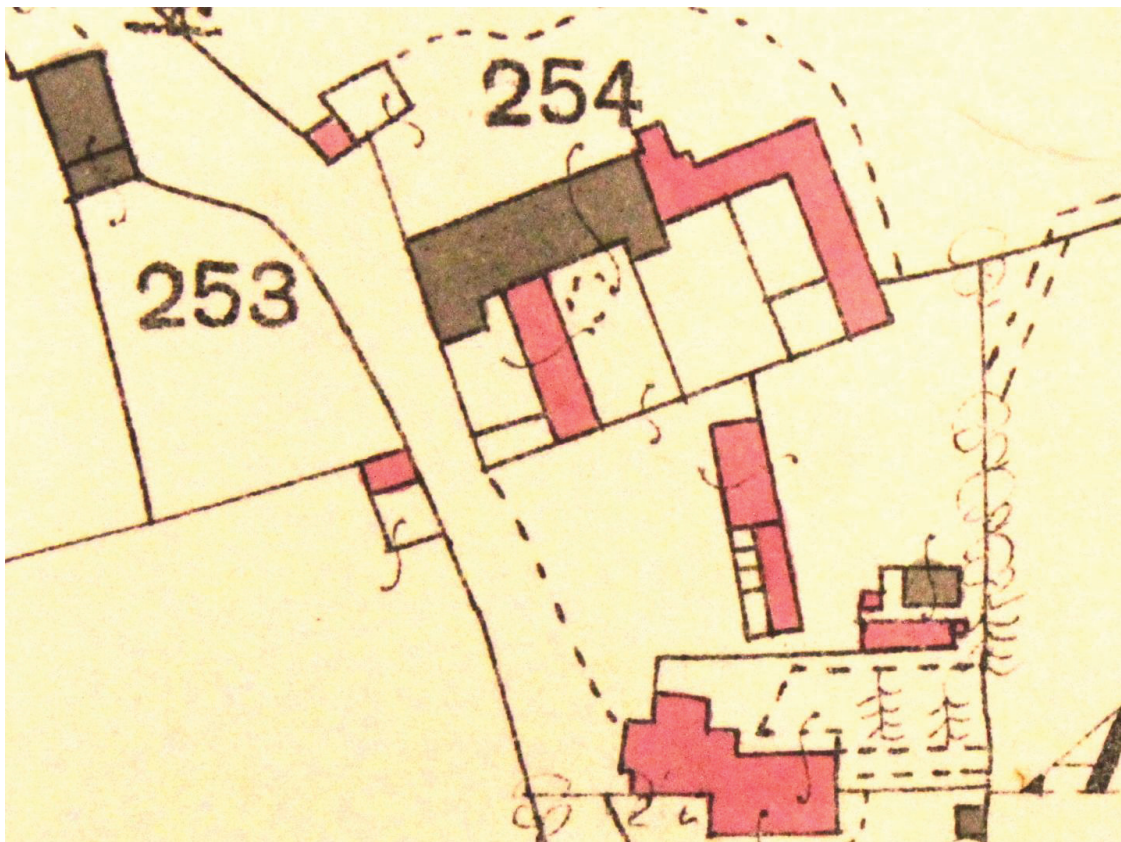


**Figure 3a. Detail of the 1848 Snape tithe map showing a smaller shed slightly to the south of the workshop with the medieval barn to the north-east and the farmhouse in red to the south-east.**





**Figure 4. The first edition Ordnance Survey of 1882 showing the circular enclosure with Abbey Farm to the east and the new railway cutting directly across the site of the medieval abbey as marked in figure 2.**



**Figure 4a. Detail of the first edition Ordnance Survey of 1882 showing the present brick sheds adjoining the barn and the workshop adjoining a small yard on the south.**

The present red-brick sheds were added between 1848 and 1882 to create a new series of enclosed animal yards to the south and east of the barn (figure 4). They reflect a standard local development of the mid-19th century as the new fashion for intensive mixed animal husbandry now known as Victorian High Farming favoured the keeping of cattle in enclosed yards (to maximise manure production), rather than abroad in the fields as had occurred previously. An open-sided circular feature in the yard immediately west of the western shelter-shed (building 4 in figure 7) was a horse mill reached by the door at the shed's northern end and suggests the western yard served horses with cattle to the east. The western end of the medieval barn probably housed a stable in the usual manner of the period. The open western elevation of the eastern shelter-shed (3) is shown as a solid wall on the Ordnance Survey of 1904, which indicates the open elevation of the western shed with a broken line, and it was presumably converted into loose boxes when a new shelter-shed that no longer survives was built in the central yard. The detached workshop adjoined a small yard on the south, suggesting it accommodated animals rather than vehicles as might otherwise have been supposed.



**Figure 5. The farm complex on the second edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904 showing a new, central shelter-shed that no longer survives to the south of the barn. The western elevation of the eastern shelter-shed (3) is not shown as open-sided having perhaps been enclosed to form loose-boxes.**



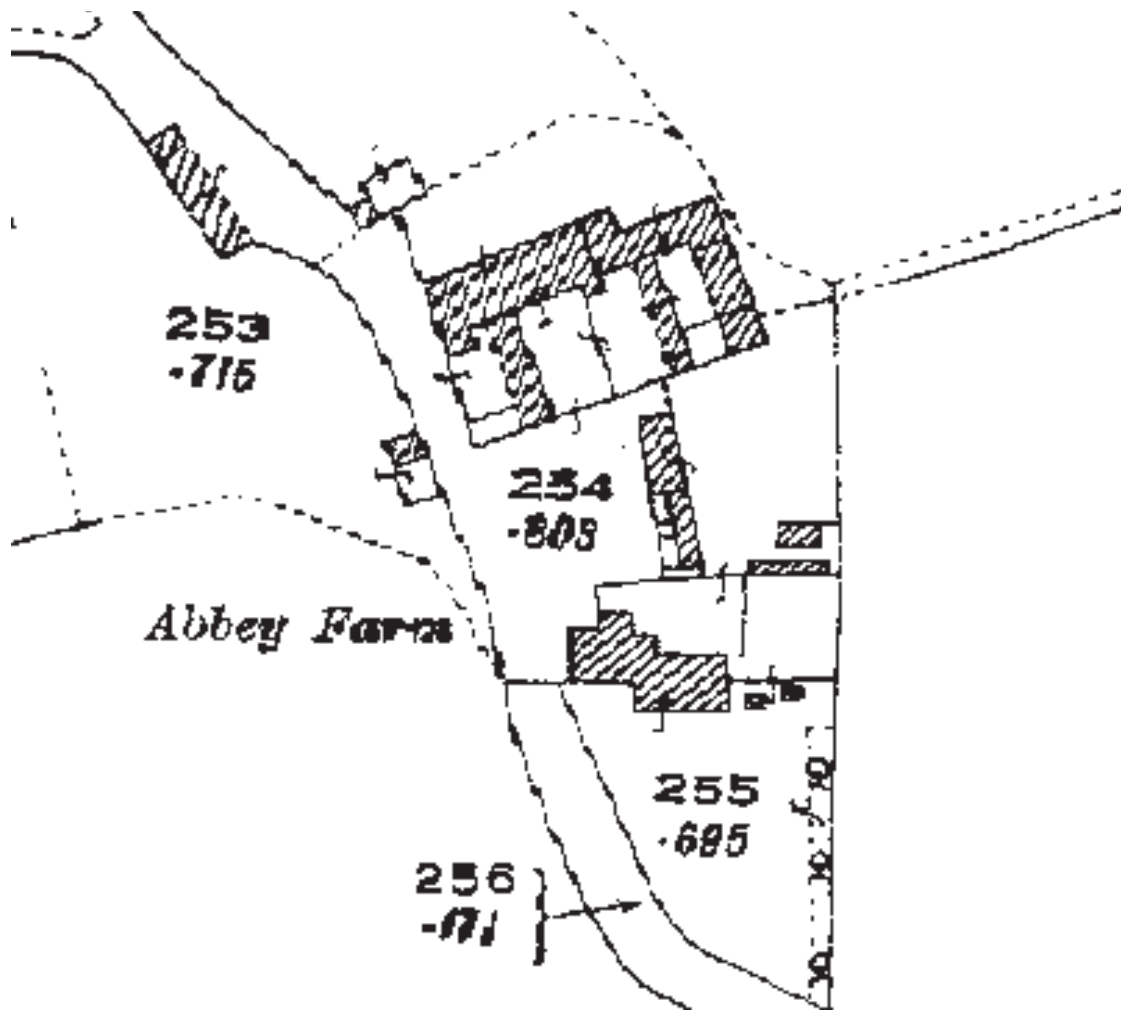


Figure 6. Third edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1926 showing little change since 1904.

## Building Analysis

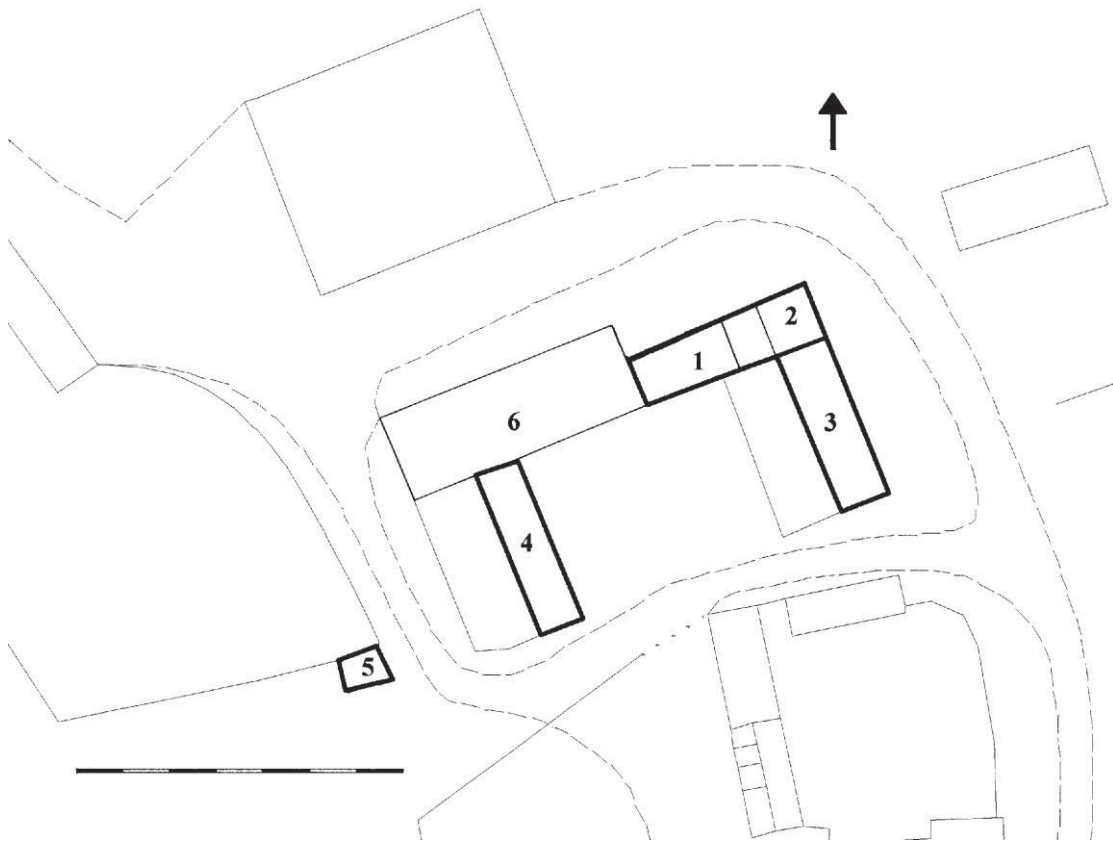


Figure 7

**Block plan of the site identifying each historic building described below with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record.**

**Adapted from the current Ordnance Survey.**

**35 metre scale in blocks of 5 metres**

The farm buildings adjoining the grade II\*-listed timber framed barn (6) are contemporary single-storied structures of red brick laid in Flemish garden-wall bond with clasped-purlin slated roofs of nailed softwood (where they survive). They rise to 2.25 m in height at their eaves and the bonding of the L-shaped eastern range (1-3) contains three stretchers between each header while the western shed (4) contains two. These buildings formed part of a new horse and cattle yard complex of *circa* 1870 as shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1882 (figure 4 above). The small detached workshop (5) is built in the same bond as the western shed and is probably a contemporary addition on the approximate site of an earlier shed shown in figures 2 and 3; the pantiles of its rebuilt roof reflect those of the barn, which was re-roofed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and may have replaced slate. The layout and purpose of each unit is described below.

### **1. Enclosed shed (formerly a dairy)**

This section of the L-shaped eastern range is understood to have been used as a dairy in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century and extends to 5 m in overall width by 11 m in length from the weatherboarded gable of the barn to a cement-block partition that is clearly a late-20<sup>th</sup> century insertion. The building has been stripped of any historic fittings and extensively altered, rendering its original late-19<sup>th</sup> century layout and purpose unclear. There is evidence of a blocked original door at the western end of its northern elevation, which is otherwise lacking

in apertures. This door opened into an additional shed shown in figure 4 and on the most recent Ordnance Survey (figure 1) but demolished and replaced by a fuel tank by the time of inspection. The present double doors at the western end of the southern elevation are secondary insertions which interrupt the brickwork, but a vertical joint in the same brickwork to the east suggests a major alteration. The eastern half of the southern elevation has been replaced in cement-blocks, and there is evidence of a missing lateral partition at this end of the shed (a scar in the brickwork of the northern interior). The eastern shed formed by this partition probably continued to the corner shed (2) but was truncated to form the present through-passage between the southern and northern yards. The building was probably a cow-shed but may have operated as a pair of stables – each linked to a tack room to the north and east respectively. It now contains a recent plasterboard ceiling which obscures its roof structure.

## **2. Open Corner Shed**

Like its neighbour to the west, this section of the yard range has been extensively mutilated. It originally formed a small enclosed shed of 3.5 m in length and 5 m in overall width at the corner of the L-shaped range, with an external door at the western end of its northern elevation. This elevation has been crudely demolished to create an open storage area with a jagged pier of broken brick to the east, but the straight joint of its western pier suggests it formed the jamb of an original external door. A second door at the northern end of its western internal elevation opened onto the adjoining shed. The shed may have been designed either as a cattle feed store (such as a turnip house) or possibly a tack room.

## **3. Open-sided Eastern Shelter-shed**

The southern wing of the L-shaped eastern range extends to 18 m in length by 5 m in overall width and formed a single shelter-shed with an open elevation to the yard on the west. Its roof structure is a modern replacement and the northern end of its western elevation has been enclosed with corrugated iron and plastic sheeting. The western roof plate has also been renewed and no relevant fittings or original arcade posts appear to survive. There is no evidence of an original internal partition or features to the east (i.e. doors or windows), and the range was almost certainly designed as a shelter-shed for cattle or (possibly) horses. It appears to have been enclosed to form loose-boxes at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as it is depicted as an enclosed building rather than an open-sided shed on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 – by which time another shelter-shed had been built to the west.

## **4. Open-sided Western Shelter-shed**

The western shelter-shed extends to 16.5 m in length by 5 m in overall width and rises to 2.5 m at the eaves of its open-sided western elevation – slightly higher than its counterpart to the east suggesting it was intended to accommodate horses rather than cattle (which function it still performed at the time of inspection). An original doorway lies at the northern end of its eastern elevation allowing horses to access the circular horse-driven feed-mill with an open-sided roof shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1882 (but demolished with the advent of machine milling by 1904). Its clasped-purlin roof of machine-sawn softwood with nailed collars and a ridge-board remains intact (and is typical of *circa* 1870) but its arcade posts have been renewed – retaining some original lintels beneath the roof-plate. A series of wooden blocks embedded in the brickwork of the eastern elevation would have secured a boarded manger with a hay rack above, and the location of a horse yard here indicates the presence of a stable in the western bays of the barn where the weatherboarded wall has been recently rebuilt.



## **5. Workshop**

The workshop is a small gault and red-brick shed with a hipped pantiled roof which extends to 6.4 m in length by 4.25 m in width and rises to 2.6 m at its eaves. The roof structure was entirely renewed in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century and its pantiles may have replaced slate as in other respects the fabric is uniform with the slated yard sheds adjoining the barn. It is entered by original double doors of 2.1 m in width in the centre of its southern elevation and was initially unlit: the present windows in its southern, western and northern elevations are 20<sup>th</sup> century insertions which interrupt the brickwork. It has been used as a farm workshop in recent years but its original purpose is unclear. The width of its entrance suggests it was designed as a vehicle shed but the 1882 map shows a small enclosed animal yard to the south and it was probably built as a bull box or bullock shed. A small section of flint-work which may survive from the earlier yard wall on the site (as shown in figures 2 and 3) has been incorporated into the eastern gable.

## **6. Medieval Barn**

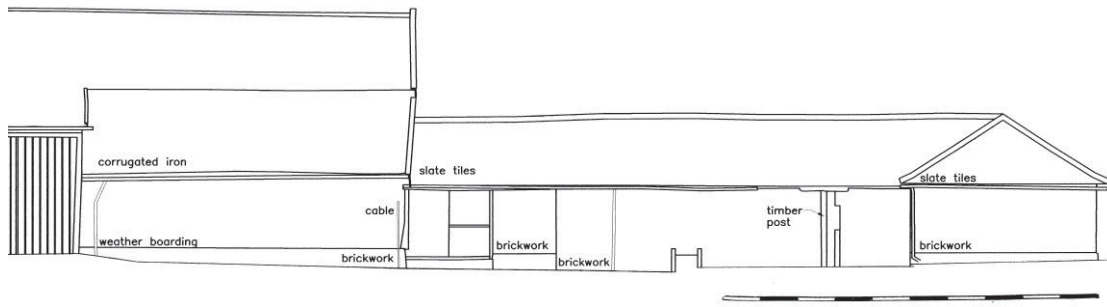
An aisled timber-framed barn of *circa* 1300 with passing braces, splayed scarf joints and matching wall braces to its original eastern gable. Listed at grade II\* but not included in the present survey area.

### **Historic Significance**

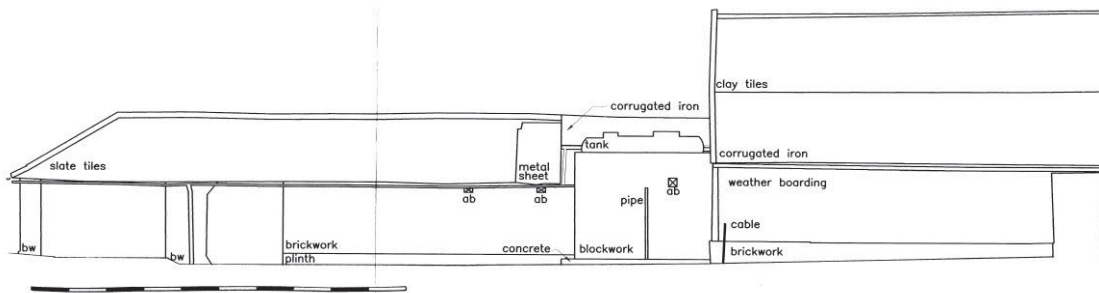
While the medieval barn and the site of Abbey Farm are of great historic interest, the late-19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings are not. Had they survived intact they would have been of some significance insofar as they illustrated the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century yard-based agricultural revolution which swept East Anglia, with numerous similar yard complexes built elsewhere, but all have been mutilated to one degree or another and the original form of the probable cattle shed is no longer recognisable. Their chief interest now lies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century visual context they afford the timber-framed barn, which lost its medieval profile with the replacement of its roof.

*Building elevations by Clarke and Simpson follow on pp. 11-13. All scales in metres.*

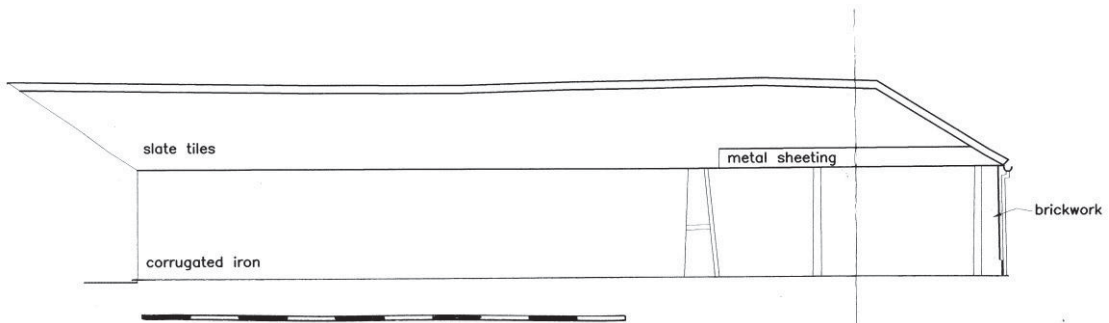
*The Schedule of Photographs in Appendix 1 follows on pages 14-16*



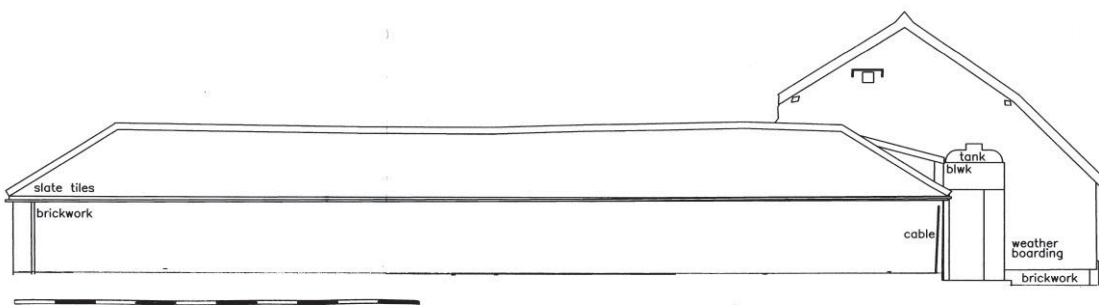
**Figure 8. Southern external elevation of the enclosed shed (1) showing the eastern shelter-shed (3) to the right and part of the barn (6) to the left**



**Figure 9. Northern external elevation of the enclosed shed (1) and the corner shed (2)**



**Figure 10. Western external elevation of the eastern shelter-shed (3)**



**Figure 11. Eastern external elevation of the eastern shelter-shed (3)**

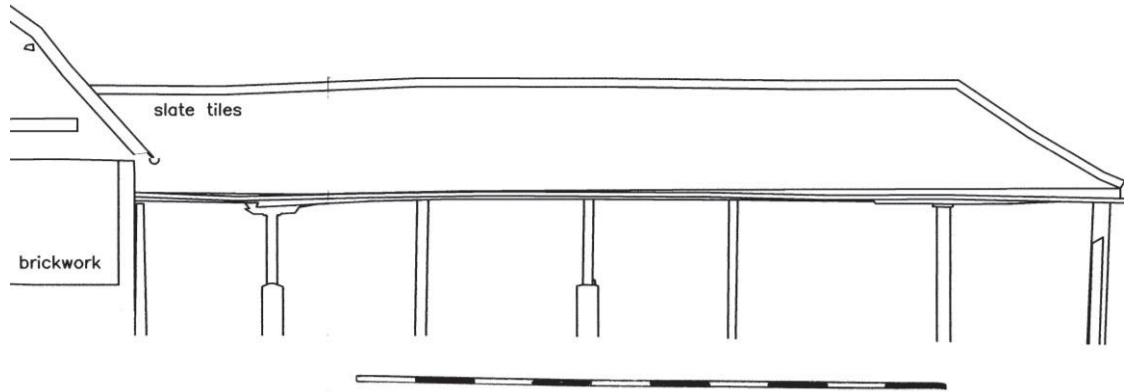


Figure 12. Western external elevation of the western shelter-shed (4)

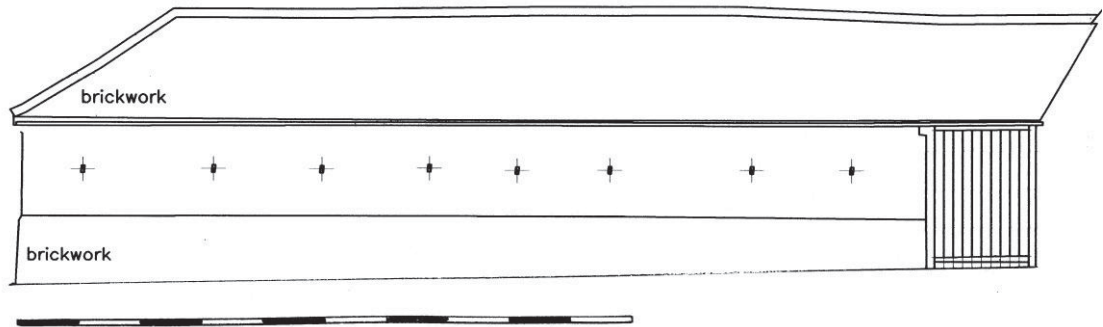


Figure 13. Eastern external elevation of the western shelter shed (4)

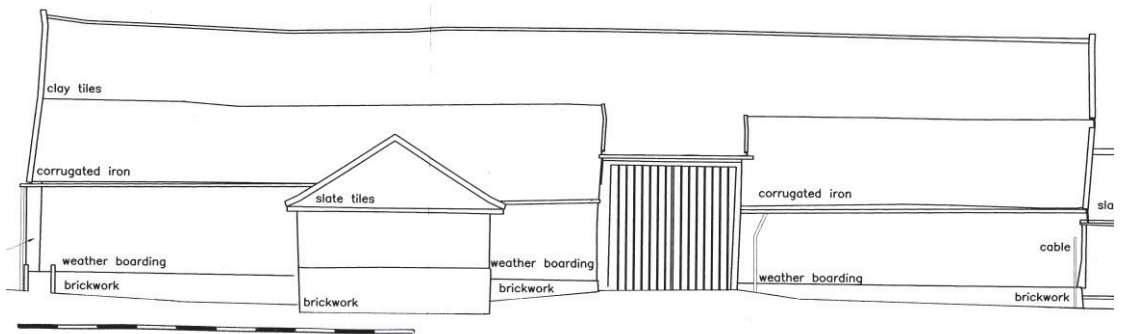


Figure 14. Southern external elevation of the western shelter shed (4) showing the barn (6) in the rear



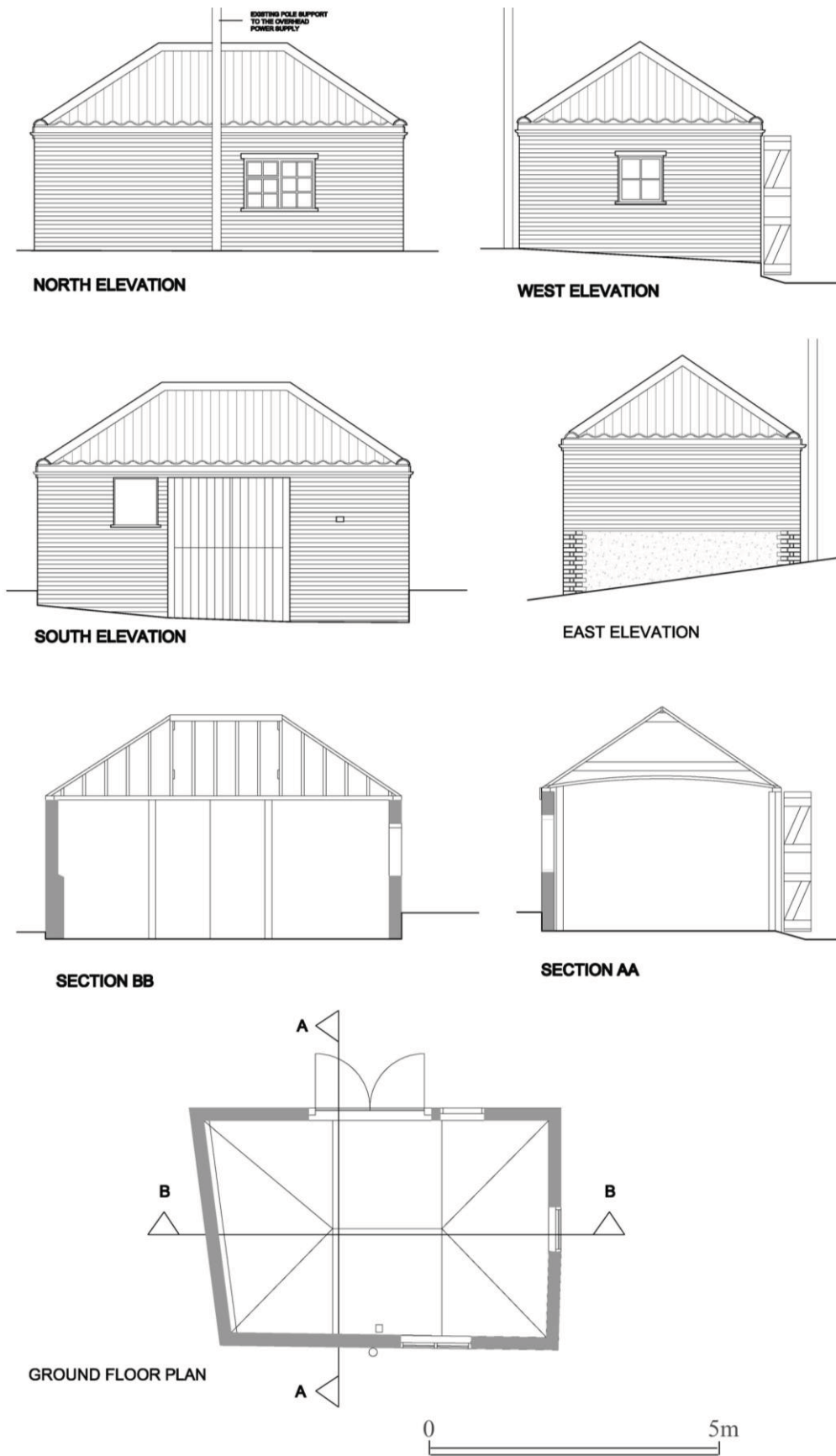


Figure 15. Elevations and plan of the workshop (5). The plan shows north towards the bottom left-hand corner

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

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

#### **Photograph no.**

1. General view of site from south-east showing the unlisted Abbey Farmhouse to left and farm complex in rear to right.
2. General view of site from north-west showing barn (6) to left and farmhouse in rear to right.
3. General view of site from south-west showing workshop (5) to left, barn (6) & western shelter-shed (4) in centre & eastern shed (3) right.
4. General view of farm complex from south-east showing brick shelter-shed (3) in centre.
5. General view of farm complex from east showing western shelter-shed (4) to left, barn (6) in centre and eastern shelter-shed (3) to right.
6. Exterior of enclosed shed (1) from south-west showing barn (6) to left and shelter-shelter shed (3) to right.
7. Southern exterior of enclosed shed (1) showing inserted door to left, brick junction in centre and new block-work to right.
8. Southern exterior of enclosed shed (1) showing through-passage adjoining corner shed (2) to right.
9. Detail of southern exterior of enclosed shed (1) showing junction in brickwork.
10. Detail of cement-block reconstruction to southern exterior of enclosed shed (1).
11. Northern exterior of enclosed shed (1) from north-west showing corner shed (2) to left.
12. Western end of northern exterior of enclosed shed (1) showing tank on site of demolished shed.
13. Northern exterior of enclosed shed (1) from north-east showing converted cart lodge in rear to right.
14. Exterior of secondary access to corner shed (2) from north showing blocked original entrance to right.
15. Detail of from north-east of blocked original entrance to corner shed (2).
16. Internal south-western corner of corner shed (2) showing junction with roof of shelter shed (3) to right.
17. Internal southern gable of corner shed (2).

18. Interior from south of secondary passage between enclosed shed (1) left and corner shed (2) right showing blocked door to right.
19. Interior of secondary passage showing corner shed (2) to left and block-work partition of enclosed shed (1) to right.
20. Interior of enclosed shed (1) from west showing cement-block partition to secondary through-passage in rear.
21. Internal north-eastern corner of enclosed shed (1) showing scar of removed original partition in wall to left.
22. Interior of enclosed shed (1) from east showing boarded gable of barn (6) in rear.
23. Internal north-western corner of enclosed shed (1) showing door to barn (6) to left and blocked door to the demolished northern shed to right.
24. Interior of eastern shelter-shed (3) from south showing rebuilt modern roof structure.
25. Interior of eastern shelter-shed (3) from north.
26. Western exterior of eastern shelter-shed (3) showing modern corrugated iron left.
27. Eastern exterior of eastern shelter-shed (3) showing uninterrupted brickwork and slate roof covering.
28. Southern external gable of eastern shelter-shed (3) showing rebuilt yard wall to left.
29. Southern external gable of western shelter-shed (4) showing barn (6) in rear to right.
30. Eastern exterior of western shelter-shed (4) showing original door and barn (6) to right.
31. Original door at northern end of western exterior of eastern shelter shed (4) showing wood lugs of manger in brickwork to left.
32. Western exterior of western shelter-shed (4) showing open arcade to modern horse yard.
33. Detail of northern end of open arcade of western shelter-shed (4) seen from west.
34. Detail of southern end of open arcade of western shelter-shed (4) seen from west.
35. Interior from south of western shelter-shed (4) showing barn (6) in rear.
36. Interior from north of western shelter-shed (4).
37. Detail of original lintel to open arcade of western shelter-shed (4) showing softwood timber.
38. Southern exterior of workshop (5) showing original entrance doorway & inserted window.



39. Exterior of workshop (5) from south-west showing pantiled roof and mixed red and gault brickwork.
40. External western gable of workshop (5) showing inserted window.
41. External eastern gable of workshop (5) showing flint plinth.
42. Northern exterior of workshop (5) partly hidden by vegetation.
43. Internal western gable of workshop (5) showing inserted window.
44. Internal eastern gable of workshop (5) showing 20th century shelving.
45. Southern interior of workshop (5) showing 20th century work bench and inserted window.
46. Southern interior of workshop (5) showing original doorway with inserted window to right.
47. Detail of recently rebuilt softwood roof structure of workshop (5).
48. Northern exterior and western gable of 13th century aisled barn (6). Included for site context.
49. Interior of 13th century aisled barn from west. Included for site context.
50. Interior of 13th century aisled barn showing replaced roof structure. Included for site context.

*Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 17-21*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 17-21): Selected Printed Photographs**



**Illus. 1. General view of the site from the south-west showing the brick workshop (5) to the left, the grade II\* listed barn (6) and the western shelter-shed (4) in the centre with the eastern shelter-shed (3) in the rear to the right.**



**Illus. 2. General view of the site from the north-west showing the grade II\*-listed timber-framed barn of *circa* 1300 (6) in the foreground with the corner shed (2) to the left and the unlisted farmhouse to the right.**





**Illus. 3. The southern exterior of the enclosed shed (1) showing the secondary through-passage adjoining the corner shed (2) to the right and the barn (6) to the left. This elevation was extensively altered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with new doors to the left and cement-block rebuilding to the right.**



**Illus. 4. Exterior of the corner shed (2) from the north showing its secondary access (breaking the original brickwork) with the eastern elevation of the adjoining shelter-shed (3) to the left. The blocked original internal entrance is visible to the right.**





**Illus. 5. The interior of the heavily altered enclosed shed (1) from the west showing the cement-block partition adjoining the secondary through-passage in the rear with the scar of a missing original lateral partition to the left.**



**Illus. 6. The interior of the enclosed shed (1) from the east showing the boarded gable and door of the barn (6) in the rear with a butt-joint in the brickwork of the southern elevation to the left. The ceiling consists of modern plasterboard.**





**Illus. 7.** The rebuilt western exterior of the eastern shelter-shed (3) showing its enclosing wall of modern corrugated iron to the left.



**Illus. 8.** The interior of the eastern shelter-shed (3) from the south showing its rebuilt roof structure of modern softwood with the solid wall adjoining the corner shed (2) in the rear.





**Illus. 9.** The interior of the western shelter-shed (4) from the north, showing its original softwood roof and replaced arcade posts to the right. The building was in use as a horse shelter at the time of inspection.



**Illus. 10.** The exterior of the workshop (5), which probably originated as a bull box or possibly a vehicle shed with its present double doors but without windows.