

**Barn at  
Warren Hill Farm,  
Brome, Suffolk  
BRM 016**

**Historic Building Record**

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# **Barn at Warren Hill Farm, Warren Hills, Brome, Suffolk**

**(TM 144 777)**

## **Historic Building Record**

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant barn. It has been prepared to a specification written by Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (ref. SpecHBRWarrenHillFarmBrome09, dated 8th May 2009) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council application 0926/07).*

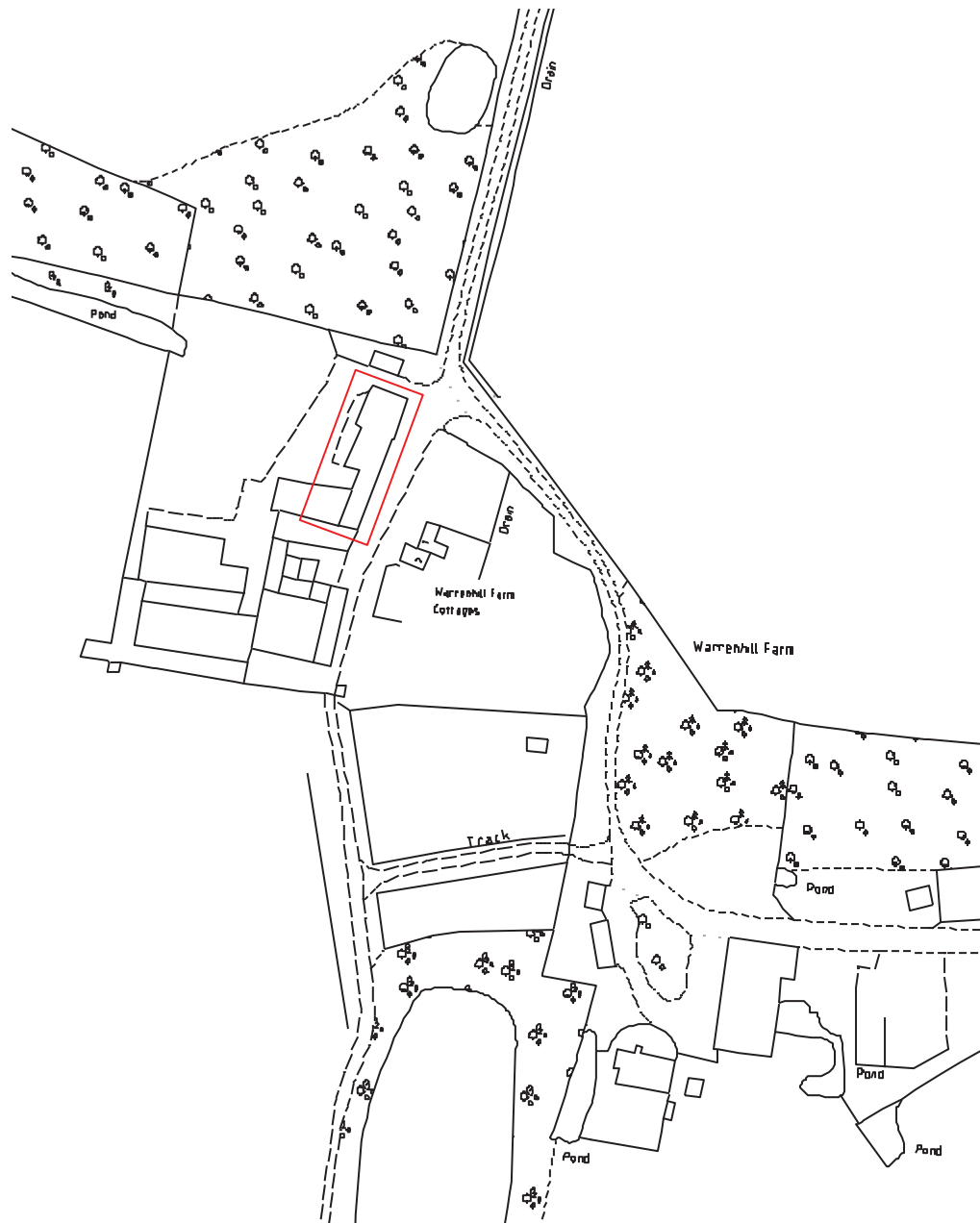
### **Introduction**

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 56 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 in red and white. The site was inspected on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010.

### **Summary**

Warren Hill Farm lies in open countryside approximately 1.2 km north of St Mary's church and some 25 m from the boundary with Oakley parish, which follows the farm track to the north-east. The former farmhouse to the east of the barn probably dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century but is not listed and represents only a fraction of the building shown on early-20<sup>th</sup> century maps. The neighbouring farmhouse 150 m to the south-east is listed at grade II, however, and has also been known as Warren Hill Farm since the 19<sup>th</sup> century: one lying in the parish of Brome and the other in Oakley. At the time of the tithe survey in 1839 the Brome farm was a substantial tenanted arable holding on the estate of General Sir Edward Kerrison of Oakley Park in Hoxne, with 156 acres in Brome and more in Oakley.

The timber-framed and rendered barn to the west of the farmhouse consists of a linear range of 30.5 metres (or 100 feet) in length beneath a uniform pantiled roof. It contains a threshing barn of four principal bays and a rear porch to the north and a contemporary stable to the south. The stable was built with a hay loft but most of this has been removed – although its louvered windows remain. The framing is typical of the early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and probably reflects the enclosure of local heathland in response to the high price of grain during the Napoleonic wars. The porch and a small section of the barn's eastern wall survive from a mid-17<sup>th</sup> century predecessor which appears to have flanked a courtyard in front of the farmhouse in the usual manner of the period. Although it is accordingly of some historic significance, the building has been extensively mutilated, having lost its original roof when the walls were raised by 0.6 metres (2 feet) and the present shallow-pitched roof was built in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century or early-20<sup>th</sup> century. Much of the lower storey has also been rebuilt in brick or cement block-work, and the chief point of interest now lies the surviving sections of 17<sup>th</sup> century fabric and the original whitewashed external render preserved in an adjoining shelter shed to the west (illustrating the appearance of local farm buildings before the advent of tar as a by-product of town gas production in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century). Given its alterations the barn does not meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.



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**Figure 1 Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan.**  
**Outlining the historic farm building in red and showing the unlisted farmhouse known as Warrenhill Farm Cottages to the east. The grade II-listed Warrenhill Farmhouse in Oakley parish adjoins the turning circle 150 m to the south-east.**

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

Warren Hill Farm lies in open countryside approximately 1.2 km north of St Mary's church and some 25 m from the boundary with Oakley parish, which follows the farm track to the north-east. The house to the east of the barn is not listed, and is marked as 1 and 2 Warrenhill Farm Cottages in figure 1, but formed a single unoccupied dwelling at the time of inspection and appeared to have undergone a recent restoration. The building was severely truncated in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, as shown on the historic maps below, but probably formed a 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse on an east-west axis of which only a much altered fragment now survives. The house would have faced north towards a yard flanked by the barn on the west in a typical 17<sup>th</sup> century manner.



**Figure 2. Warrenhill Farm as depicted on the Brome tithe map of 1839 (Suffolk Record Office). The barn is shown with its western porch in close proximity to the L-shaped farmhouse (in red). The adjoining fields were not named on the tithe apportionment and the site of the farm was described only as ‘premises’.**

At the time of the 1839 tithe survey the farm was a substantial tenanted arable holding on the extensive estate of General Sir Edward Kerrison, baronet, who owned much of the parishes of Oakley and Hoxne in addition to Brome and lived at Hoxne Hall. Warren Hill Farm contained 156 acres in Brome parish with more land in Oakley, and was occupied by John Marsh. White’s Directory of Suffolk for 1844 names the farm as Warren Hill (as opposed to ‘Warrenhill’ by which it appears on the Ordnance Surveys) and its tenant as Thomas Taylor. Curiously, the neighbouring farm in Oakley parish bore exactly the same name but was a separate entity as its tenant was Samuel Gowing. The situation became yet more confusing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Brome and Oakley were united into a single parish. The tithe apportionment does not name individual fields and gives the site of the Brome farm (plot 1 in figure 2) only as ‘premises’. The accompanying map shows the house in red with its western gable within a few feet of the barn, which is depicted with a rectangular outline and a western porch. A group of scattered additional farm buildings lay to the south and may include the second barn on the site which lies outside the area of inspection but seems to date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

By 1886 (figure 3) the barn appears to have acquired the lean-to shelter-shed to the north of its western porch (as the outline of the latter is far wider than shown in figure 2) and the southern buildings had been wholly or largely rebuilt to create a series of enclosed yards in the normal style of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. These changes reflect the introduction of more cattle to compensate for the lower price of grain and the Victorian fashion for keeping animals in efficient, factory-like yard complexes to maximise the production of valuable manure rather than abroad in open fields as hitherto (a system now known as Victorian High Farming). The open elevation of the shelter-shed is distinguished by a broken line on the 1904 Ordnance Survey, which shows little change since 1886 (figure 4), but by 1927 the adjoining yard had

been provided with a roof and the farmhouse had been dramatically reduced in size. Farms called Warren Hill continued to appear with different tenants in the trade directories of both Brome and Oakley throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but while the name was attached to the Brome farmhouse on the 1886 Ordnance Survey it subsequently switched to its neighbour in Oakley confirming the change in the relative status of the two sites suggested by the former's partial demolition.

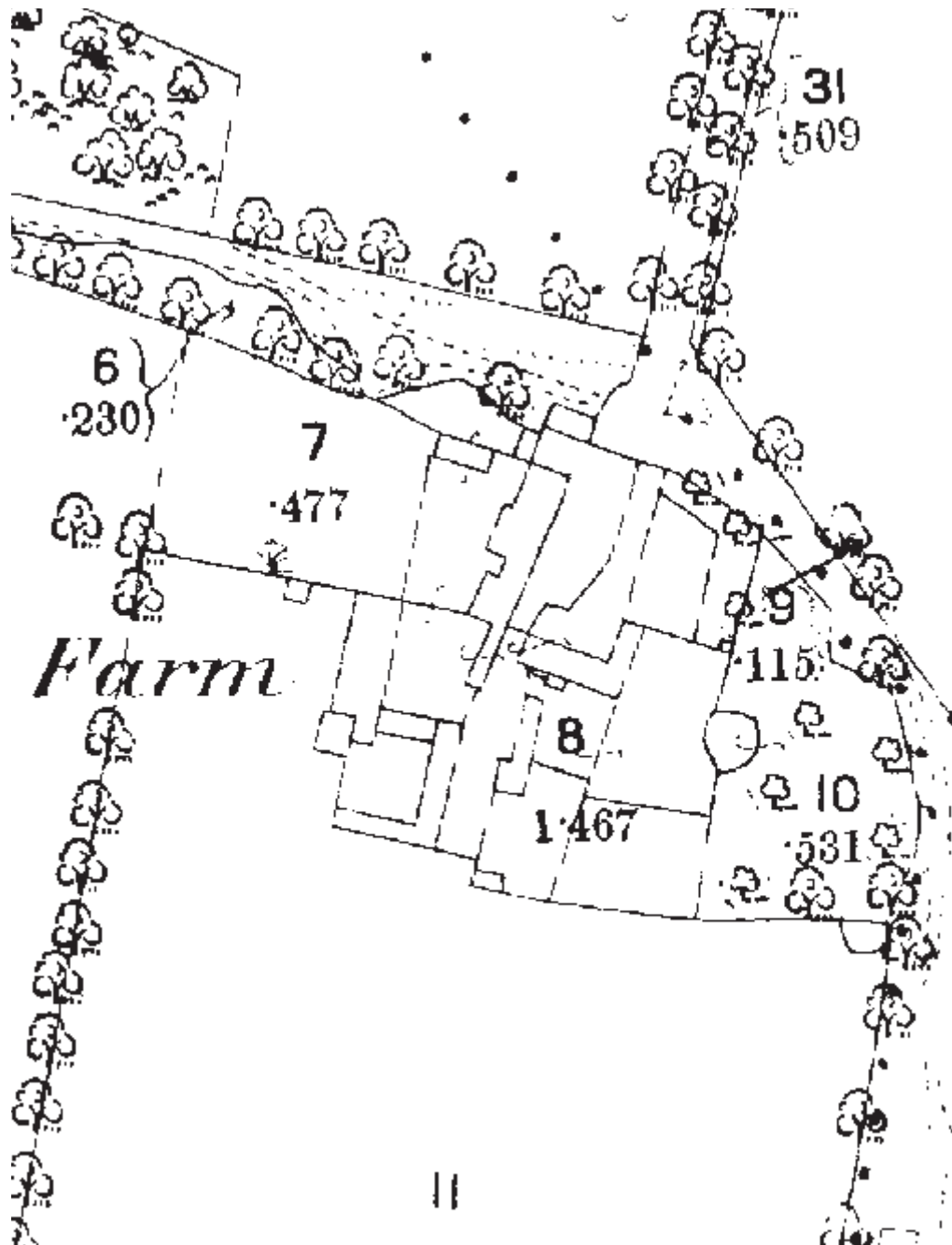


Figure 3

Warrenhill Farm on the first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886, showing the L-shaped farmhouse unchanged since 1839 but a new yard complex to the south. The outline of the northern barn had altered slightly, with a wider porch to the west (suggesting the present shelter-shed had been added). The Oakley parish boundary is shown by a dotted line to the north-east.

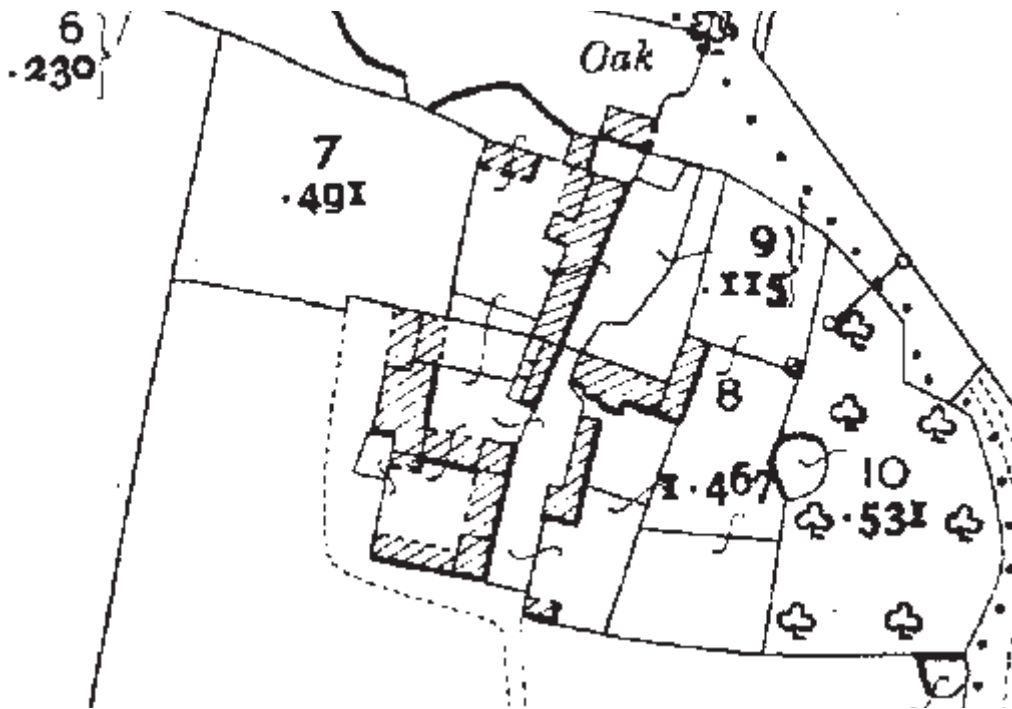


Figure 4  
 The second edition Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing the buildings in more detail and distinguishing the western porch from the adjoining shelter-shed.

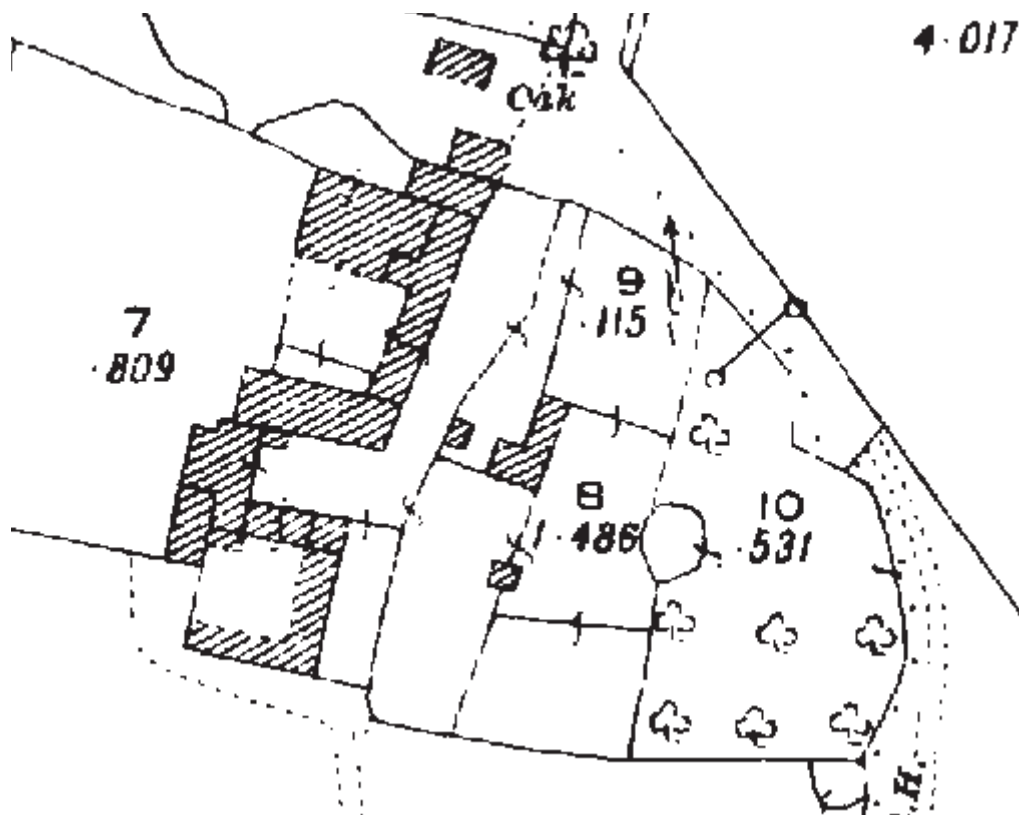
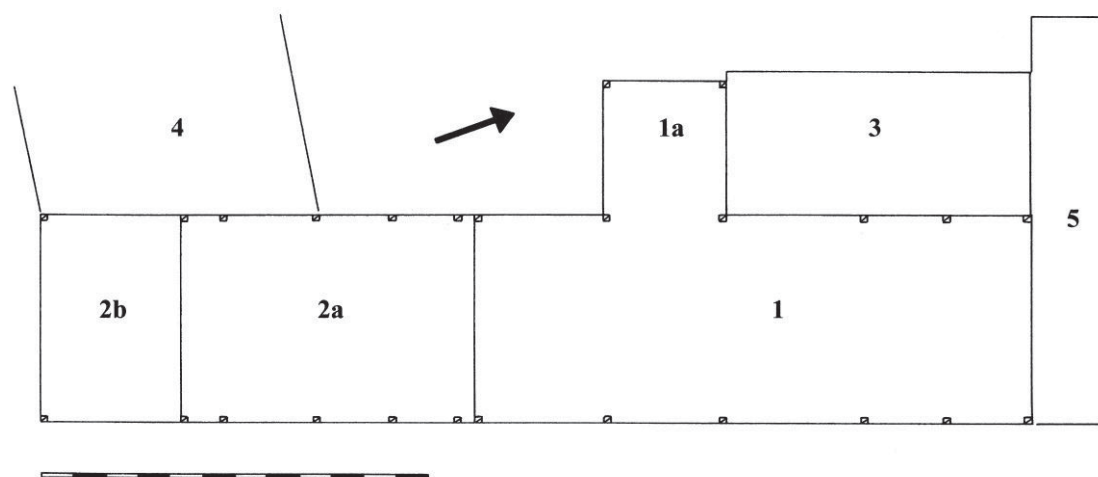


Figure 5  
 Third Edition Ordnance Survey of 1927. A covered cattle yard had been built to the west of the barn and the farmhouse had been dramatically truncated.

## Building Analysis



**Figure 6**  
**Block plan of the site identifying each historic building with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record.**  
**Scale in metres.**

*The ‘barn’ at Warren Hill Farm consists of a linear range of 30.5 m in length (100 ft) beneath a uniform pantiled roof on a NNE-SSW axis (simplified to north-south for the purpose of this analysis). It contains a threshing barn of four principal bays to the north with a stable to the south and these are discussed separately below.*

### **1. Early-19<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed barn incorporating part of a 17<sup>th</sup> century predecessor.**

The threshing barn to the north of the linear range is a timber-framed and rendered structure in four principal bays with intermediate storey posts in the centre of its northern bay. It extends to 17.25 m in length by 6.4 m in overall width (56.5 ft by 21 ft) and a gabled porch extends by a further 4.1 m (13.5 ft) from the western elevation of the entrance bay (the penultimate southern bay). The walls originally rose to 3 m at their roof-plates (10 ft) but were raised by a further 0.6 m (2 ft) in the late-19<sup>th</sup> or early-20<sup>th</sup> century when the present shallow-pitched pantiled roof was built. This heightening of the walls consists of a series of short studs with brick infill between the old plate and the new, and the roof contains through-purlins supported on prefabricated A-frames with iron struts. Much of the framing is typical of the early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with nailed primary braces interrupting the studs (many of which have been re-used from older structures) and bolted-knee braces to the tie-beams. A single arch-brace survives to the south-west of the entrance bay but this does not appear to have been replicated elsewhere. The porch, however, is fully-framed with pegged mortises and an externally trenched stud brace to its western gable in the style of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century – although its tie-beam contains superfluous mortises and was also re-used from elsewhere. The barn was entered from the east (the direction of the farmhouse) and the porch contained a smaller rear door (the louvered eastern doors now dating from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the lower section of the porch also renewed). The floors are of modern concrete and there is no trace of a brick threshing floor. 17<sup>th</sup> century framing with an externally trenched wall brace, a jowled storey post with an arch-brace mortise and a re-used roof-plate also survives in the northern bay of the eastern elevation. The barn has been much altered, with its northern gable replaced



in cement block-work and its eastern exterior cement rendered (with unusual brown colourwash), but sections of original 19<sup>th</sup> century lath-and-plaster are protected within the lean-to shelter shed to the west. A 20<sup>th</sup> century grain milling floor or platform has been inserted into the entrance bay and retained an iron grain chute at the time of inspection.

## **2. Early-19<sup>th</sup> century stable and hay loft.**

The southern end of the barn was originally a stable with a hay loft extending to 13 m in length (46 ft). Its framing is identical to that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century barn, with nailed primary braces and copious re-used timber, and its walls were also raised when the present roof was built over both structures. With the exception of a small section of original joists lodged on an axial beam in its south-eastern corner the loft has been removed, but its louvered windows remain in the eastern elevation along with two external doors. A secondary partition of vertical boards separates a small compartment of 4.1 m to the south and the interior probably contained a hay rack and manger to the west, but no historic fittings remain and the lower walls have been largely rebuilt in brick (destroying any evidence of its original layout).

## **3. Open-sided lean-to shelter-shed. (19<sup>th</sup> century origins but rebuilt in 20<sup>th</sup> century).**

A pantiled lean-to shed lies in the northern angle of the barn and porch. This was shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1886 (figure 3) but was probably rebuilt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the adjoining covered cattle yard (figure 5) was removed. Tall-sectioned softwood rafters and crudely finished timber arcade posts. This building is notable for the extent to which it has preserved the original whitewashed roughcast lath-and-plaster to the western exterior of the barn and the secondary two-tier cladding of roughcast render above boarding to the porch.

## **4. 20<sup>th</sup> Century brick shed**

A mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Fletton-brick shed with steel-framed roof. Possibly designed as a milking parlour but stripped of any relevant fixtures and fittings.

## **5. 20<sup>th</sup> Century steel-framed tractor shed**

A large steel-framed vehicle shed of the late-20<sup>th</sup> century with cement-block walls (integral with the rebuilding of the barn's northern gable) and open to the farm lane to the east.

## **Historic Significance**

The timber-framed barn consists of a combined threshing barn and stable of the early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and probably reflects the expansion of the farm when the local heathland of Warren Hills was enclosed in circa 1812 (in response to the high price of grain during the Napoleonic wars). The threshing barn incorporates parts of a mid-17<sup>th</sup> century predecessor that appears to have flanked a courtyard in front of the farmhouse. Although it is accordingly of some historic significance, the building has lost its original roof (which may well have been steeply pitched for thatch) and was extensively mutilated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its chief point of historic interest lies in the surviving sections of 17<sup>th</sup> century fabric and the original external render preserved in the adjoining shelter shed (illustrating the appearance of local farm buildings before the advent of tar as a by-product of town gas production in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The building does not meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.

## **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 barn to right.
2. Exterior of farmhouse viewed from barn to west. Included for site context.
3. General view of site from south showing farmhouse to right and barn to left.
4. General view of site from west showing barn in centre with 20th century sheds (4 & 5) to right and left respectively.
5. General view of site from south-east showing barn to right and 20th century open shed to left.
6. Southern farm buildings from east showing 19th century barn in centre with stable (2b) to right. Included for site context.
7. Interior of southern barn from south-west. Included for site context.
8. Interior of southern barn from north-west. Included for site context.
9. Exterior of barn from east showing 20th century open shed to left.
10. Eastern exterior of barn (1) showing pantiled roof and cement render with vehicle shelter (5) to right.
11. Eastern exterior of 20th century vehicle shelter (5) showing northern gable of barn (1) to left.
12. Northern external gable of barn (1) showing cement-block reconstruction from adjoining vehicle shed (5).
13. Exterior from east of 20th century louvered doors to threshing bay of barn (1).
14. Eastern exterior of stable showing louvered windows with doors to northern section (2a) to right & southern section (2b) to left.
15. Exterior of brick shed (4) from west showing southern gable of stable (2b) in rear and southern barn to right.
16. Southern external gable of stable (2b) from east, showing cement block reconstruction and angle of brick shed to west (4).
17. Exterior of 20th century brick shed (4) from north-west showing barn (1) in rear to left.
18. Western exterior of gabled porch of barn (1a) showing modern weatherboarding with open-sided shelter-shed (3) to left.

19. Western exterior of open-sided shelter-shed (3) showing pantiled roof with porch (1a) to right.
20. Western interior of shelter-shed (3) showing timber arcade posts.
21. Western exterior of barn (1) from shelter-shed (3) showing original lath-and-plaster with brick infill to studwork beneath.
22. Northern exterior of porch (1a) from shelter-shed (3) showing original two-tier cladding of render above boarding.
23. Detail of original roughcast render to northern return of barn (1) left and porch (1a) to right seen from shelter-shed (3).
24. Interior of lean-to shelter-shed (3) from south showing rebuilt 20th century roof.
25. Interior of barn (1) from south showing milling floor and chute in original threshing bay.
26. Internal roof structure of barn (1) showing late-19th or early-20th century A-frame trusses supporting through-purlins.
27. Internal northern gable of barn (1) showing A-frame roof trusses with evidence of raised walls to right and left.
28. Fragment of 17th century framing of barn (1) in northern bay of eastern interior showing externally trenched brace to left.
29. Detail of trenched brace at northern end of eastern interior of barn (1) showing re-used roof-plate with empty stud mortises.
30. Northern end of eastern interior of barn (1) showing 19th century framing without mid-rails and 17th century studs to left.
31. Eastern interior of threshing bay showing 20th century entrance with grain floor above.
32. Interior of barn (1) from north showing grain floor in entrance bay.
33. Detail from north of grain floor and chute in entrance bay of barn (1).
34. Eastern interior of southern bay of barn (1) showing partition to stable (2a) to right.
35. Southern interior gable of barn (1) forming partition to adjoining stable (2a) with clay daub above re-used tie-beam.
36. Western interior of southern bay of barn (1) showing porch (1a) to right.
37. Detail from south of pegged and tenoned arch-brace to re-used tie-beam to south of entrance bay of barn (1).
38. Interior of porch (1a) from body of barn (1) to east.

39. Western interior of northern bays of barn (1) showing uniform 19th century framing.
40. Internal western gable of 17th century porch (1a) showing asymmetrical externally trenched wall brace.
41. Northern interior of 17th century porch (1a) showing brick infill beneath wattle-and-daub.
42. Detail of external trenched brace and re-used tie-beam in western internal gable of 17th century porch (1a).
43. Interior of northern section of stable (2a) from north showing raised walls and removed loft.
44. Vertically boarded partition at southern end of northern stable (2a) showing arch-braced tie-beam to left.
45. Western interior of northern stable (2a) showing clamp for missing loft and narrow bay to left.
46. Roof structure of stable (2a) uniform with barn (1) showing raised walls to left and right.
47. Internal northern gable of stable (2a) showing wide connecting doorway to barn (1).
48. Northern end of eastern interior of stable (2a) showing narrow gap between storey posts at junction with barn (1) to left.
49. Eastern interior of northern stable (2a) showing raised walls largely rebuilt in 20th century brickwork.
50. Detail of western interior of stable (2a) showing raised walls, ceiling clamp and daub infill.
51. Interior of southern stable (2b) from east showing section of original ceiling to left.
52. Internal northern gable of southern stable (2b) showing boarded partition and arch-braced tie-beam to northern stable (2a).
53. Internal south-eastern corner of southern stable (2b) showing original lodged ceiling joists.
54. Southern internal gable of southern stable (2b) showing substantial studs with mid-rail and ceiling to left.
55. Interior of 20<sup>th</sup> century western brick shed (4) showing exterior of stable (2) in rear with door to southern stable (2b) to right.
56. Interior of 20<sup>th</sup> century western brick shed (4) from east.

*Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 11-15*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 11-15): Selected Printed Photographs**



**Illus. 1. General view of site from northern approach showing the unlisted former farmhouse to the left (marked as Warrenhill Farm Cottages in figure 1 but unified and unoccupied at the time of inspection) and the pantiled barn to the right. The right-hand wing of the house was severely truncated to widen the farm track in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century**



**Illus. 2. The eastern external elevation seen from the former farmhouse, showing the colour-washed cement render and the entrances to the threshing barn (1) to the right and the two stables (2a and 2b) to the left.**





**Illus. 3. The western exterior of the gabled porch of the barn (1a) showing its modern weatherboarding and brickwork with the open-sided shelter-shed (3) to the left.**



**Illus. 4. The western exterior of the barn (1) protected within the shelter-shed (3) showing its original whitewashed lath-and-plaster with brick infill to the studwork beneath. The porch (1a) to the right is clad in horizontal boarding with render above – a common ‘two-tier’ technique of the early-19<sup>th</sup> century.**





**Illus. 5.** The interior of the barn (1) from the north showing the 20<sup>th</sup> century grain floor and hopper in the entrance bay and the raised walls to right and left (short studs infilled with brick above the original roof-plates).



**Illus. 6.** The fragment of 17th century framing at the northern end of the eastern internal elevation of the barn (1), showing the mid-rail with an externally trenched brace to the left and a central storey post with an empty arch-brace mortise. The 19<sup>th</sup> century studwork to the right lacks mid-rails and contains diagonal primary braces that interrupt the studs.





**Illus. 7. The internal western gable of the 17th century porch (1a) showing its asymmetrical externally trenched wall brace with the remains of wattle-and-daub infill.**



**Illus. 8. The western interior of the northern stable (2a) showing its raised walls and primary bracing with a horizontal rail or clamp which supported the joists of a missing hay loft.**





**Illus. 9. The eastern interior of the northern stable (2a) showing the raised walls which have been largely rebuilt in 20th century brickwork.**



**Illus. 10. The interior of southern stable (2b) from the east showing a surviving section of the original ceiling of lodged joists to the left. The door to the right opens onto the 20<sup>th</sup> century western shed (4).**