

**The Barn,
Yew Tree Farm,
Worlingworth, Suffolk
WGM 027**

Historic Building Record

OASIS Ref: suffolkc1-90873



Leigh Alston MA (Oxon), Architectural Historian
on behalf of
Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

**The Archaeological Service
(Field Projects Team)
Suffolk County Council, Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR
Tel. (01284) 352446**

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The Barn, Yew Tree Farm, Fingal Street, Worlingworth, Suffolk

(TM 218 695)

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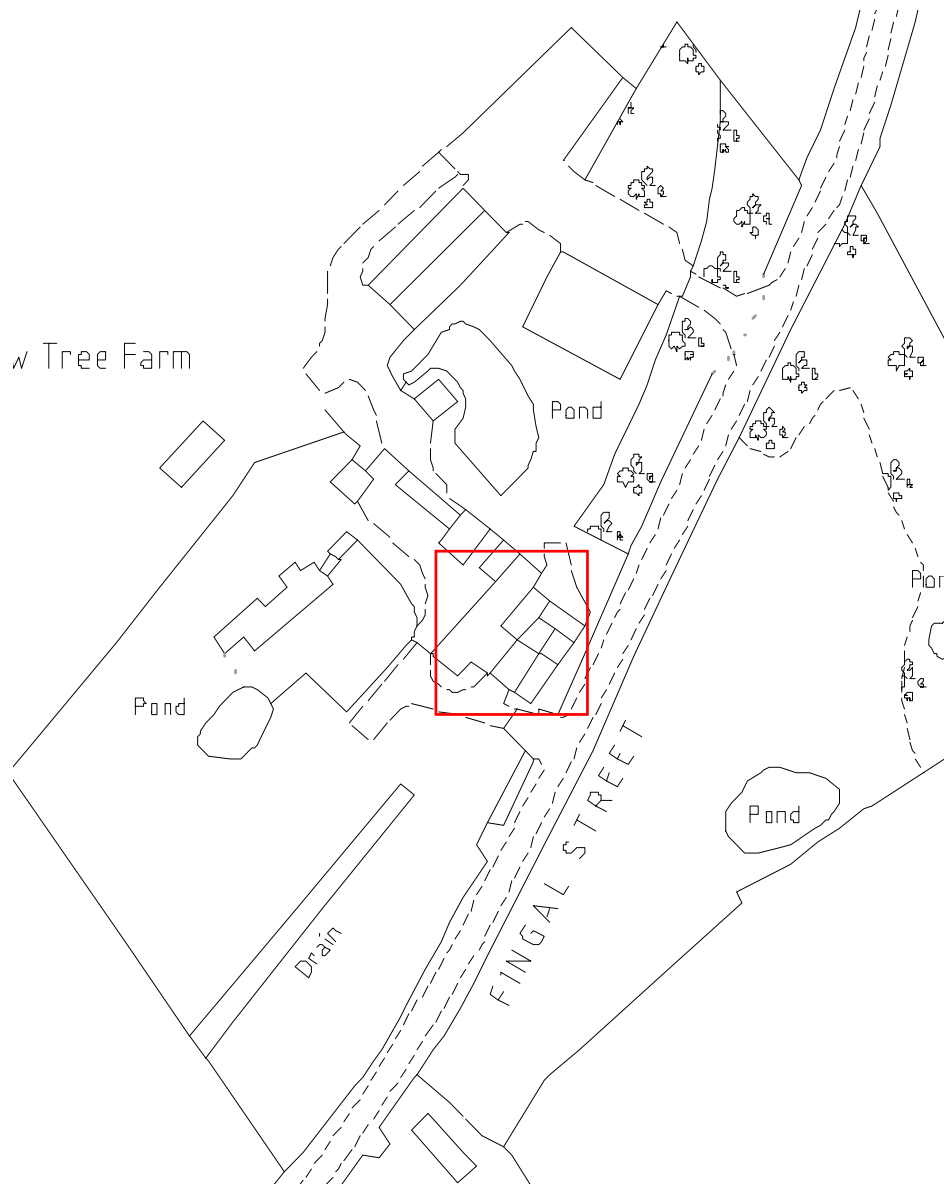
This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant barn in the curtilage of a grade II-listed farmhouse. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (ref. SpecHBR(EM)_YewTreeFm_Worlingworth_09, Edward Martin, 8th October 2009), and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council application applications 0371/09 and 0372/09).

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 70 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 12th March 2010.

Summary

Yew Tree Farm lies in open countryside on the western side of Fingal Street approximately 1.5 km north-west of Worlingworth parish church. The grade II-listed farmhouse is set back from the present road, which until its enclosure in 1832 formed a linear green abutted by the timber-framed barn to the east of the house when it was first built at the beginning of the 19th century. A number of outbuildings were shown here on a manuscript map of 1611, when the farm contained 16 acres of land, but only the barn and house were present at the time of the tithe survey in 1837. By this stage the farm had grown to 37 acres and was a tenanted holding on the estate of Lord Henniker of Thornham Hall. Lord Henniker's ownership probably explains the high quality of the barn on a relatively small farm. It contains three bays with a good roof of staggered butt-purlins that was designed for thatch rather than its present covering of sheet metal, but there is no trace of the re-used timber and poorly finished 'roundwood' often associated with barns of this period. It reflects the cereal boom of the Napoleonic wars and the decades of artificially high grain prices before the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and is of considerable historic interest. It preserves a particularly good brick threshing floor laid in herringbone pattern, and large areas of its original 'two tier' external cladding of roughcast clay daub above a lower section of weatherboarding. This illustrates the appearance of many Suffolk barns before the advent of tar in the late-19th century. A lean-to stable adjoins the north-eastern gable with a lean-to cow-house to the south-west, and while these have been much altered they create a picturesque appearance which is visible from a public highway and contributes greatly to the historic character of the local landscape. A number of additional sheds were built on the site of the enclosed green in the late-19th century to form a typical Suffolk cattle yard, but several of these have since been demolished or substantially rebuilt. The barn pre-dates the 1840 watershed for listing at grade II, but the loss of its thatch and original doors means that it is probably too heavily altered to meet the strict English Heritage criteria. It is nonetheless a good example of a type of barn that is increasingly rare in anything approaching original condition.



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Figure 1 Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan.

Enclosing the barn and adjoining yard complex in a red square to the east of the farmhouse. The ‘drain’ marks the north-western edge of a linear medieval green which the barn originally adjoined.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Yew Tree Farm lies in open countryside on the western side of Fingal Street approximately 1.5 km north-west of Worlingworth parish church. The house is set back from the present road, which until its enclosure in 1832 formed a linear green of which the western edge is still indicated by a ditch (marked ‘drain’ in figure 1). The barn to the east of the house would have abutted this green and is now separated from the road by the width of an enclosed late-19th century cattle yard. The house is listed at grade II and described in the Schedule as a 16th century structure with 17th century additions. It contains evidence of a central floored hall of the mid-16th century with a pair of service rooms to the north and a parlour to the south – all beneath a queen-post roof; the parlour was enlarged in the early-17th century when the present chimney was built, and a contemporary ‘closet’ was added to its south-western corner.



Figure 2

The site of Yew Tree Farm on the Worlingworth map of 1611 (plot 210 as kindly identified and supplied by local historian Rick Osborn, MA), showing a group of buildings on the western side of Fingal Street with another tenement on the east. North lies towards the top left-hand corner.



Figure 3

Detail of the 1837 Worlingworth tithe map showing only the farmhouse and barn amidst a group of ponds (plot 278). The site of the neighbouring tenement of 1611 is still recognisable. Original in Suffolk Record Office.

The site is clearly shown on a map of 1611 (figure 2) when it was described as a messuage (house) held by Dionisea Garner with 16 acres of land formerly belonging to three other tenements called Procherys, Dookes and Swans. The amalgamation of small medieval landholdings to form more viable larger farms was commonplace in the late medieval and Tudor periods. The buildings are stylised but are arranged in a courtyard in the typical manner of the time, and another property of which no trace now survives lay on the opposite (eastern) side of Fingal Street.

By the time of the tithe survey in 1837 the property contained a total of 37 acres owned by Lord Henniker of Thornham Hall and occupied by Mrs Aldous. The holding was almost entirely arable, with just 5 acres of pasture, and the site was described in the apportionment simply as 'homestead'. The tithe map shows only the house and the present barn with what appears to be a narrow projection adjoining its south-western gable (figure 3). By 1886 a pair of small sheds had been built against its south-eastern elevation, of which the southernmost was probably a lean-to porch adjoining the threshing bay (figure 4). The barn was significantly longer by 1904, having been extended to the south-west where it projected beyond its yard (unlike in 1886), and had acquired two further south-eastern sheds between those shown previously. A new open-sided shelter-shed to the south-east of the yard still survives (structure 8 in figure 6), but all but one of the four sheds against the barn have been removed – leaving only structure 6 intact. Many local barns were remodelled in this manner during the mid- and late-19th century as cattle were introduced to compensate for the falling price of grain after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.

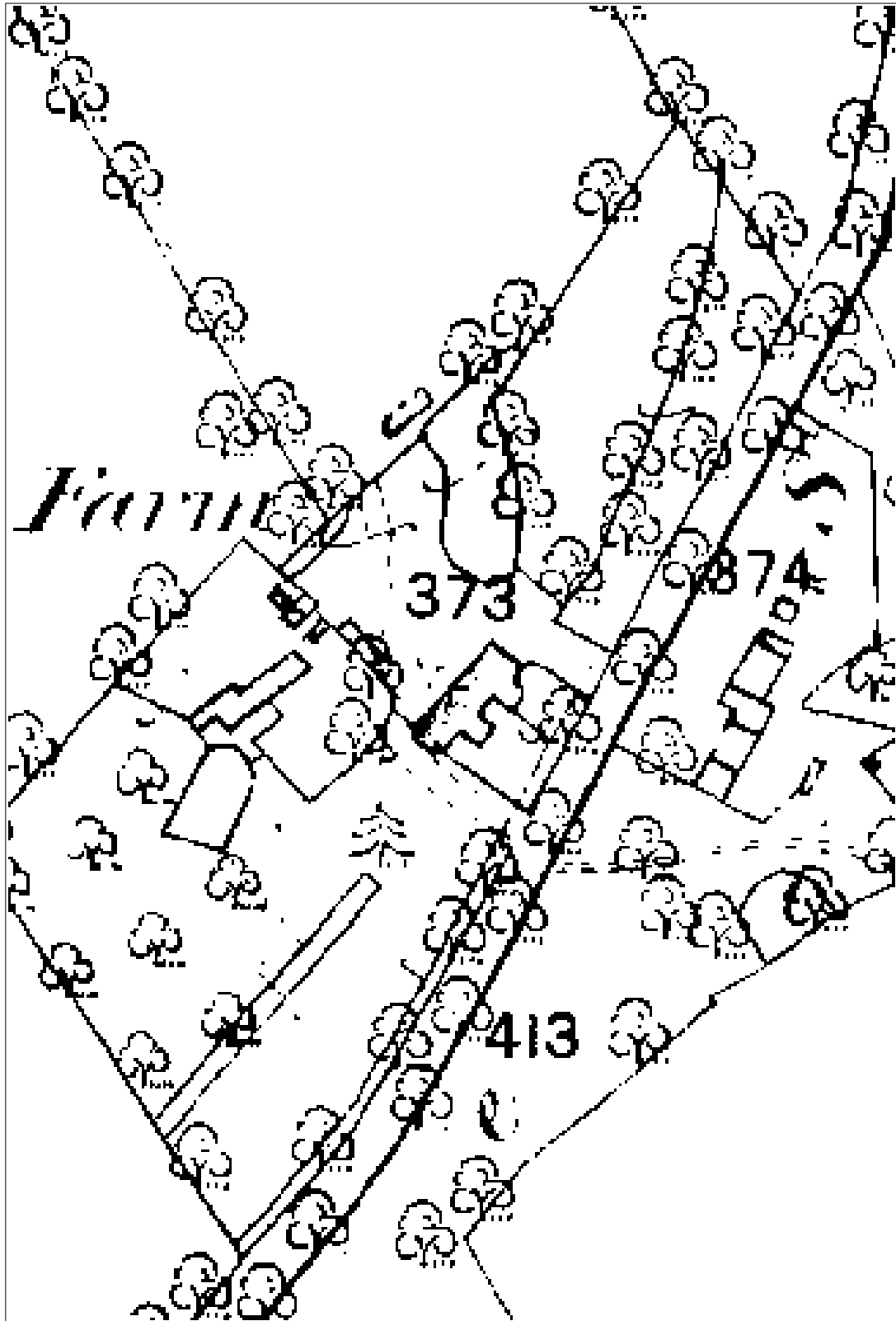


Figure 4

The first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1884, showing two new projections from the barn's south-eastern elevation – the southernmost of which was probably a lean-to porch.

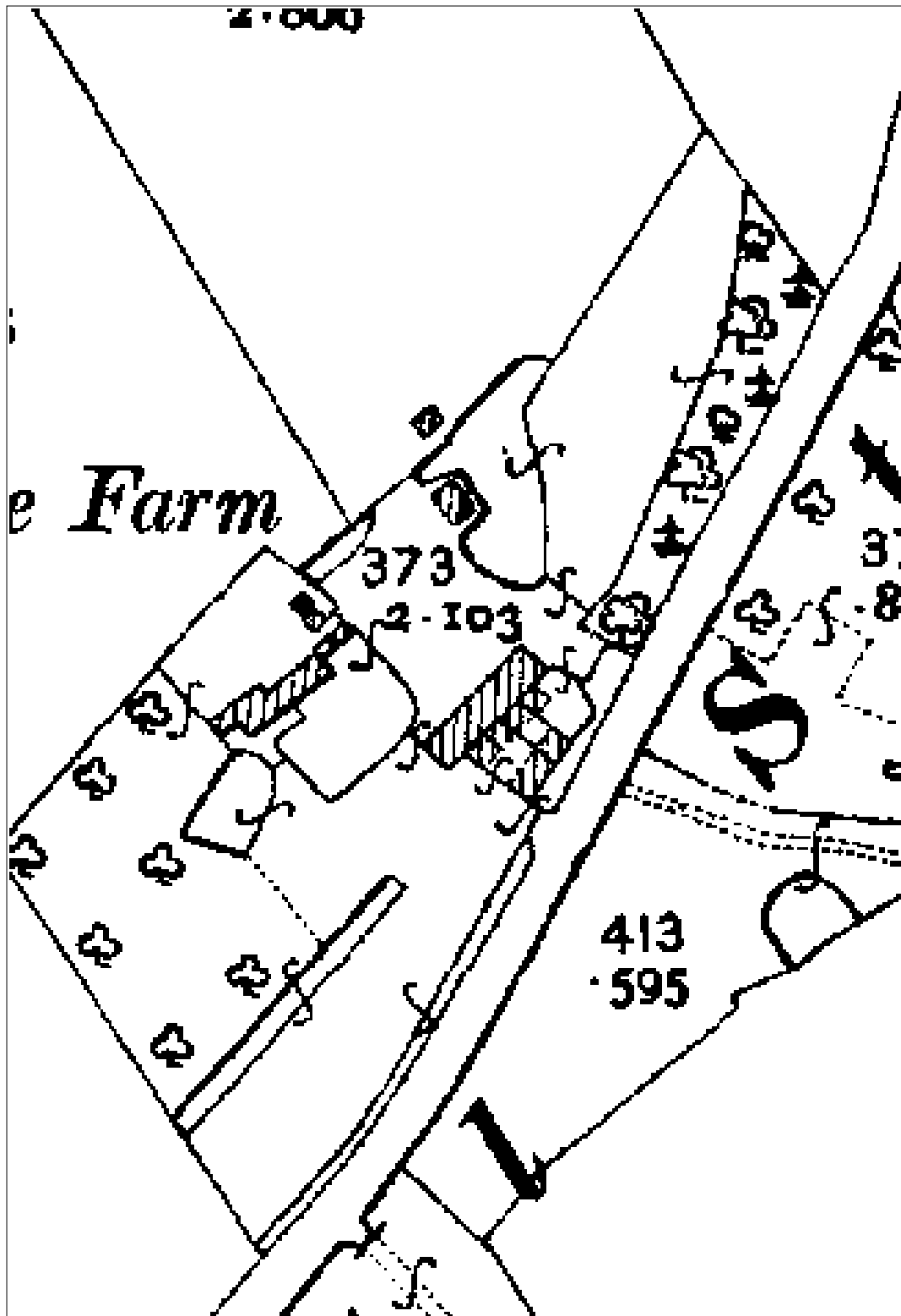


Figure 5

The second edition Ordnance Survey of 1904. The south-eastern shelter shed (building 8 in figure 6) had been built since 1884 and the barn had been extended to the south-west (by adding structure 4). A pair of shelter sheds seems to have been added to both sides of what was probably a lean-to porch adjoining the barn's central bay – of which only structure 6 now remains). The tenement on the opposite side of Fingal Street had been demolished since 1884.

Building Analysis

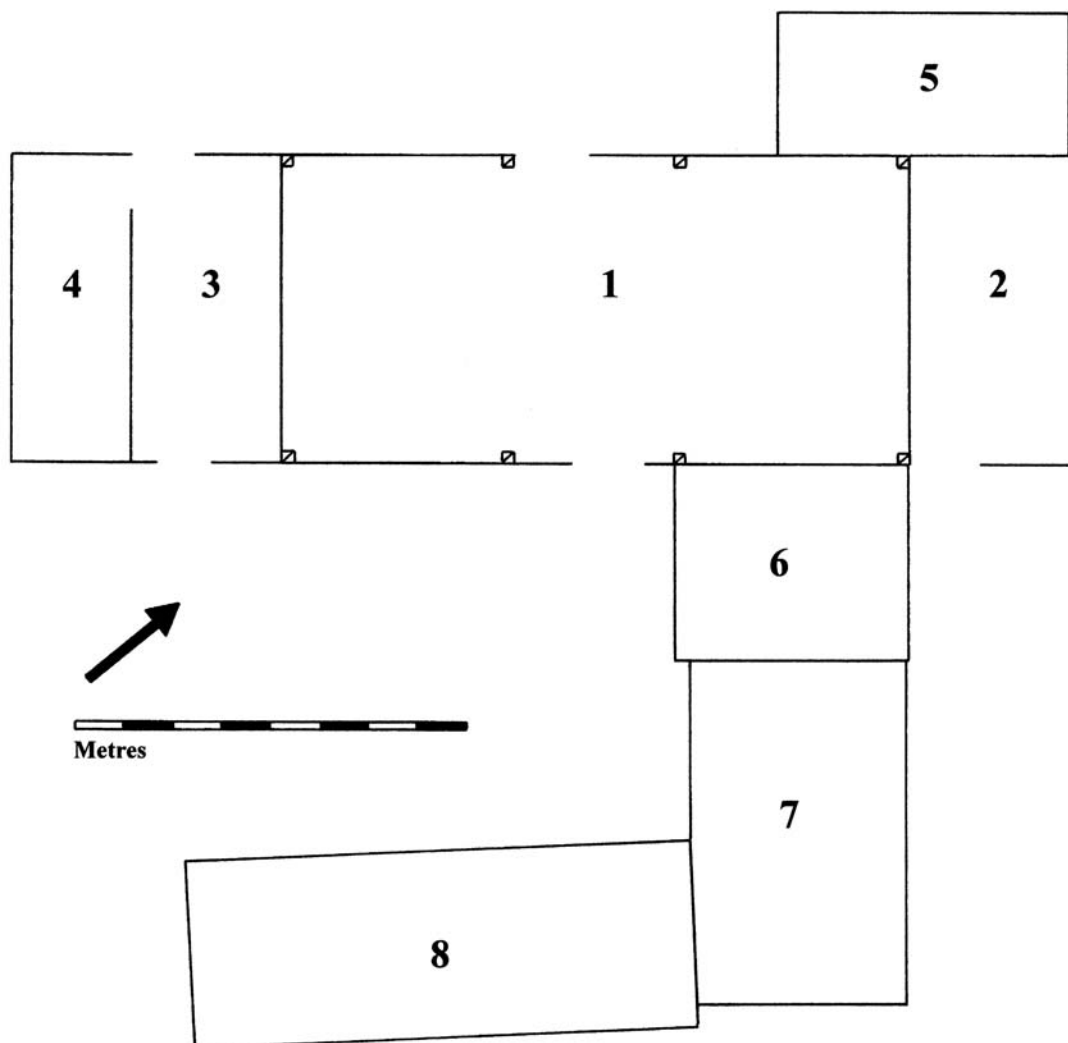


Figure 6

Block Plan of site, identifying each area of the farm complex with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record.

Key

1. Timber-framed and weatherboarded early-19th century threshing barn of three bays with intermediate storey posts to the outer bays and an unusually well-preserved herringbone pattern brick threshing floor in the central bay. *Circa* 1830. Originally with full-height doors to the north-west (facing the farmhouse) and a narrow door to the rear. Steeply pitched roof structure designed for thatch but now covered by late-20th century metal sheeting; two-tiers of staggered butt-purlins with bolted knee-braces to the tie-beams. 'Two tier' external cladding with roughcast wattle-and-daub above a lower 'wainscot' of weatherboarding. The timber frame and much of the original cladding remain intact.
2. A narrow lean-to stable of 3.6 m (11 ft) in length adjoining the north-eastern gable of the barn. The present roof of metal sheeting dating only from the late-20th century and with evidence of an earlier loading door in a vertical gable. Much altered,

with the majority of its loft joists renewed in the 20th century but probably contemporary with the barn. A wall-mounted internal loft ladder at the eastern end of its north-eastern elevation also indicates the presence of a gable prior to its remodelling as a lean-to (the present rafters of which afford no headroom above the same ladder). An area of graffiti inside the entrance door includes the date 1897 but earlier examples may be hidden at a lower level.

3. A late-19th century lean-to timber-framed and weatherboarded shed adjoining the barn's south-western gable. Formerly with a loft and probably incorporating elements of an early-19th century gabled shed of narrower proportions as shown on the tithe map of 1837. Pantiled. Probably designed as a neathouse for bullocks and calves and with doors to both the north-west and south-east.

4. An early-20th century narrow lean-to storage or vehicle shed with eaves of just 1.5 m in height (5 ft) which extended the earlier lean-to (3). Pantiled.

5. A lean-to shed adjoining the north-western elevation of the barn. Post-and-rail construction with cladding of vertical boards and a corrugated iron roof. Not shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904.

6. A late-19th century open-sided shelter-shed with pantiled roof. Built as a lean-to against the south-eastern elevation of the barn and protecting its original external daub. Tall-sectioned softwood rafters and single arcade post with chamfered lintel.

7. Mid-20th century lean-to shed of cement blocks with corrugated iron roof.

8. Late-19th century open-sided cattle shelter-shed with pantiled clasped-purlin roof with raking queen struts and two arcade posts with chamfered lintels. Post-and-rail construction with cladding of vertical boards. Shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 but not that of 1886.

N.B. The various ancillary sheds (2-8) are reconstructions or additions of the late-19th and 20th centuries that form a traditional and picturesque cattle yard complex adjoining a public highway but are of little historic significance in themselves and are not discussed further below.

The Barn (1)

Structure and Date

The barn at Yew Tree Farm is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of three bays on a south-west/north-east axis. It extends to 12.8 m length by 6.25 m in overall width (42 ft by 20.5 ft) and its internal walls rise to 3.5 m at their roof-plates (13 ft), including a shallow plinth of red-brick. The external walls are up to 45 cm higher (18 ins) where they adjoin the lower ground of the southern yard. The well-framed roof structure is steeply pitched at *circa* 55 degrees (suggesting it was designed for thatch) and contains two tiers of staggered butt-purlins with tenoned collars. It is now covered by late-20th century metal sheeting. The outer bays contain intermediate posts but lack tie-beams.

The walls contain diagonal primary braces which are nailed to the frame and interrupt the studs, but the latter are tenoned and pegged to the roof-plates and ground-sills. There is no obvious evidence of re-used material. The storey posts lack jowls and are secured to the tie-beams by original bolted knee-braces. The building did not contain arch-braces, as would have been expected in a barn of the 18th century or the first two decades of the 19th, and the

structure is consistent with a date of *circa* 1830. Barns of this type are common in Suffolk, although many have lost their roof structures, and reflect the agricultural boom of high cereal prices during and immediately after the Napoleonic wars (which restricted grain imports). They are often known accordingly as ‘Napoleonic barns’. The enclosure of the adjacent green and other land in the parish in 1832 may be relevant to the construction of this example.

Original Layout and Function

The barn is a typical threshing barn with an exceptionally well-preserved threshing floor of gault (white) brick laid in a herringbone pattern in its narrow central bay (of 3.3 m or 11 ft). It was initially entered by full-height doors from the direction of the farmhouse to the north-west, with a low, narrow door in its rear south-eastern elevation. The central stud of this elevation is not pegged and indicates the width of the door, but the present yard door lies further to the north. Most early barns contained small rear doors in this manner, sufficient to create a through-draught for threshing and winnowing but not to admit vehicles. There is no evidence of an integral stable as often found elsewhere in the region and the mutilated lean-to stable (2) is probably an original feature.

External Cladding

The present external walls are clad in tarred and stained weatherboarding of the 20th century but substantial areas of original ‘two-tier’ cladding have been preserved within the later sheds adjoining both gables and the northern end of the south-eastern elevation. The upper walls were roughcast with clay daub secured to externally nailed laths with vertical coppice poles between the studs, while the lower walls were weatherboarded to a height of 1.5 m (5 ft). Cladding of this form was common in early-19th century Suffolk but most was destroyed by the advent of tar as a cheap by-product of the town-gas industry in the late-19th century. The boarding of the north-eastern gable extends to the height of the loft ceiling (2.4 m or 8 ft) to protect the walls from damage by animals – providing further evidence that the stable is a contemporary feature. Several sections of daub survive internally in other locations, secured by random horizontal laths of the late-19th century (made necessary by the stripping of the external laths to accommodate new boarding), but most has been lost.

Historic Significance

The barn at Yew Tree Farm is an unusually well-preserved early-19th century threshing barn which retains a particularly good brick threshing floor and a well-framed original roof structure. Its original ‘two tier’ external cladding of daub and weatherboarding is of special historic interest as it illustrates the appearance of many Suffolk barns before the advent of tar in the late-19th century. Its various lean-to sheds and yard shelters form a picturesque cattle yard and stable complex which is also of local historic value and of considerable visual appeal. The building is shown on the tithe map of 1837 and pre-dates the 1840 watershed for listing at grade II, but the loss of its thatch and original doors means that it is probably too heavily altered to meet the strict English Heritage criteria. It is nonetheless a good example of a type of barn that is increasingly rare in anything approaching original condition.

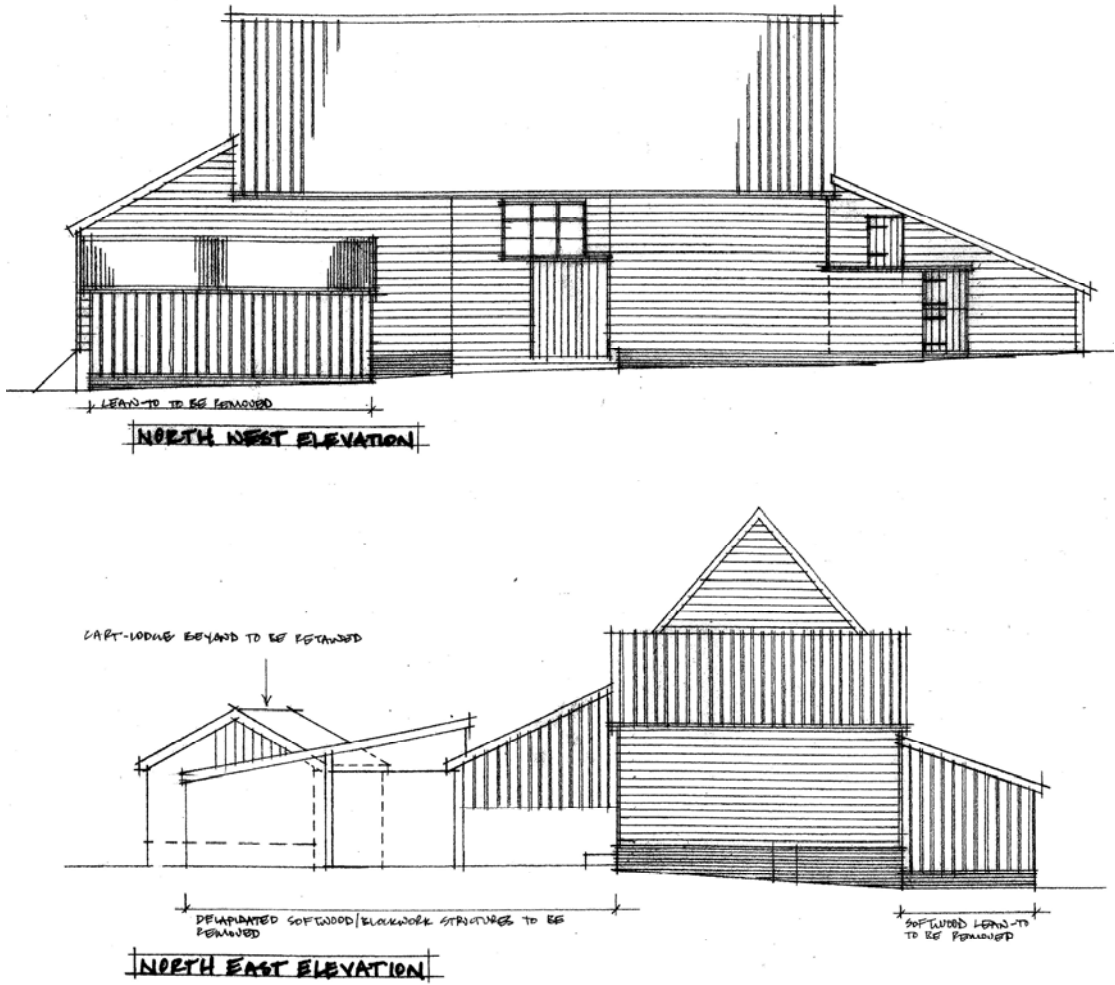


Figure 7
External elevations by Gorniak and McKechnie Ltd.

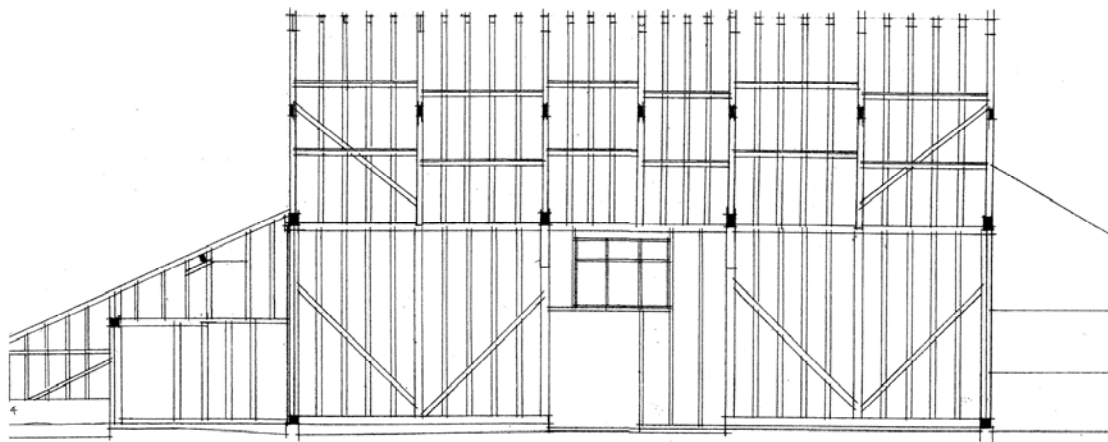


Figure 8
Internal south-eastern elevation by Gorniak and McKechnie Ltd.

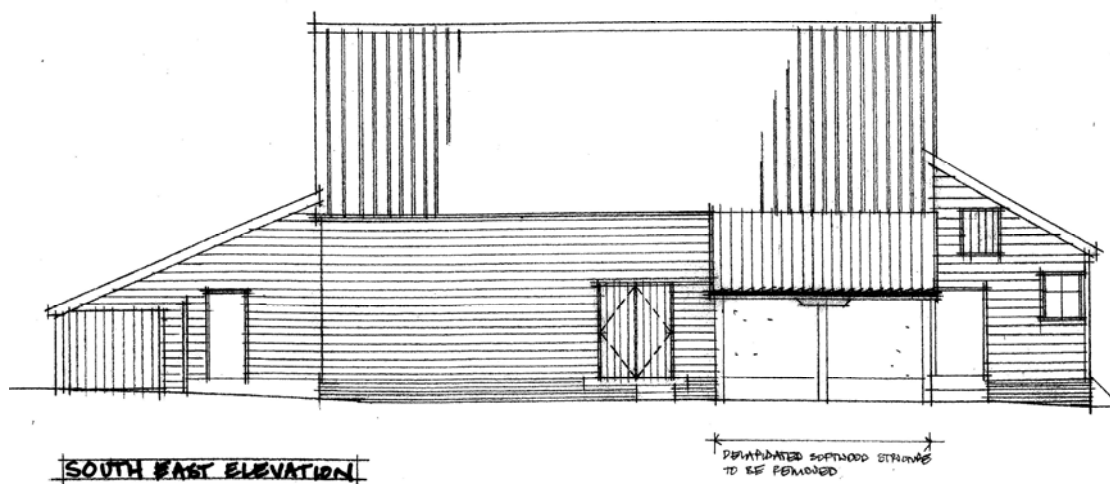
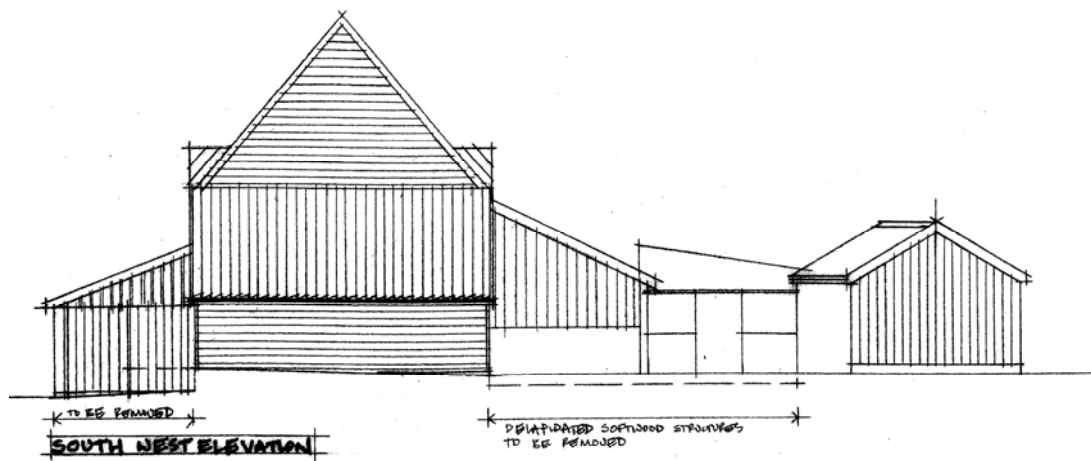


Figure 9
External elevations by Gorniak and McKechnie Ltd.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from Fingal Street to south-west showing site entrance and barn to left.
2. General view of site from Fingal Street to south-east showing farmhouse to left and barn to right.
3. General view of site from north-west showing farmhouse to right with barn in rear to left.
4. General view of site from farmhouse to west.
5. Exterior of barn complex from north-west showing mobile shepherd's hut in foreground.
6. Exterior of barn complex from south showing barn to left and shelter shed (8) to right.
7. Exterior of barn from north-west showing sheet-metal roof with lean-to sheds (3 & 4) to right and stable (2) to left.
8. Exterior of northern lean-to shed (5) from south-west showing entrance to barn to right.
9. North-western exterior of barn showing lean-to sheds (3 & 4) to right.
10. North-western exterior of lean-to sheds (3 & 4) showing loading hatch and entrance door to northern shed (3).
11. Exterior of lean-to sheds (3 & 4) from south-east showing entrance to northern shed (3) to right.
12. South-eastern exterior of barn from south, showing lean-to shelter (6) to right.
13. North-eastern end of yard showing from left to right the barn, lean-to shelter (6), lean-to shed (7) and pantiled shelter (8).
14. Exterior of pantiled shelter shed (8) from south showing barn in rear.
15. Open-sided north-western exterior of pantiled shelter-shed (8) showing modern block-work infill.
16. Interior of pantiled shelter-shed (8) from north showing vertical cladding and raking queen-struts to roof.
17. Internal south-western gable of pantiled shelter-shed (8) showing post-and-rail wall construction.
18. Detail of chamfered lintel to arcade post of pantiled shelter-shed (8).

19. Interior of lean-to shelter (6) from south-east showing cement render to barn with original roughcast daub above.
20. Original render to south-eastern exterior of barn seen from the lean-to shelter (6).
21. Interior of lean-to shelter (6) from north showing arcade post to left and yard to right.
22. Interior of lean-to shelter (6) from west showing arcade post to right.
23. Interior of block-work lean-to shed (7) from north-west.
24. Wagon of K. Coulson & Son seen from lean-to shed (7) to south-west.
25. Exterior of lean-to stable (2) from north-east showing overlap to barn (formerly hidden by thatch).
26. Exterior of lean-to stable (2) from south-east showing loft loading hatch and entrance with lean-to shelter (6) to left.
27. Exterior of lean-to stable (2) from north showing lean-to storage shed (5) to right.
28. Interior of lean-to storage shed (5) from south-west showing vertical cladding with barn to right.
29. Interior of stable (2) from south-east showing 20th century ceiling joists with boarded gable of barn to left.
30. Interior of stable (2) from north-west showing remaining original ceiling joists and entrance door.
31. North-eastern internal corner of stable (2) showing wall ladder to hay loft.
32. South-western internal corner of stable (2) showing hatch in boarded gable of barn.
33. North-eastern external gable of barn from lean-to stable (2) showing boarding beneath original roughcast daub to loft.
34. Roughcast daub to upper section of barn's north-eastern gable seen from lean-to stable (2).
35. Detail of external daub to north-eastern gable of barn seen from lean-to stable (2).
36. Detail of interruption for loading door in north-eastern interior of stable (2) suggesting a former vertical gable.
37. Interior of hay loft above stable (2) from south-east showing 20th century lean-to roof structure.
38. Internal south-eastern corner of stable (2) showing position of graffiti to right of entrance.

39. Detail of dated initials to external boarding of barn's north-eastern gable adjacent to stable entrance GF 1897.
40. Interior of lean-to shed (3) from north-west showing original two-tier cladding to south-western gable of barn to left.
41. Interior of lean-to shed (3) from south-east showing original two-tier cladding to south-western gable of barn to right.
42. Detail of loading hatch to removed loft in north-western interior of lean-to shed (3).
43. Internal south-western elevation of lean-to shed (3) showing re-used timber with loft ladder to left.
44. Detail of 20th century softwood rafters of lean-to shed (3).
45. Internal south-western corner of lean-to shed (3) showing entrance to later lean-to (4) to left.
46. Original two-tier external cladding of south-western gable of barn seen from lean-to shed (3).
47. Detail of original roughcast daub above weatherboarding to south-western exterior of barn.
48. Interior of lean-to shed (4) from north-west, showing softwood rafters and wall studs.
49. Interior of lean-to storage shed (2) from southeast.
50. General view of interior of three-bay barn from south-west showing central entrance bay in foreground.
51. General view of interior of barn from north-east showing bolted knee-braces to tie-beams flanking central entrance bay.
52. Roof structure of staggered butt-purlins seen from south-western gable.
53. Roof structure of staggered butt-purlins seen from north-west.
54. Interior of north-eastern gable showing original wattle-and-daub adjoining stable (2).
55. Detail of original wattle-and-daub to interior of north-eastern gable.
56. Interior of northern end of south-eastern elevation showing original two-tier cladding of daub above boarding.
57. Interior of central bay from north-west showing rear door to yard.
58. Interior of southern end of south-eastern elevation showing south-western gable to right.

59. Interior of south-western gable showing intact original cladding of daub above boarding.
60. Detail of rail at junction of daub and boarding to interior of south-western gable.
61. Southern end of north-western interior of barn showing remnants of original daub infill.
62. Internal central bay of north-western elevation showing small modern door in position of original entrance.
63. Northern end of north-western interior showing fragment of daub infill to left.
64. Detail of fragment of original daub infill to north-western interior secured by horizontal rails.
65. Original herringbone threshing floor of gault brick in central bay seen from north-west.
66. Detail of original gault brick threshing floor of central bay.
67. South-eastern external doors of central threshing bay showing lower ground level of yard.
68. Detail of original bolted knee-brace to south-eastern interior showing lack of jowl to storey post.
69. Detail of nailed primary brace to storey post of south-eastern interior.
70. South-eastern roof-plate of central bay showing face-halved scarf joint and two pegged studs flanking original door position.

Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 16-20

Appendix 2 (pp. 16-20): Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. General view of site from Fingal Street to south-east showing farmhouse to left and barn to right.



Illus. 2. Exterior of barn from north-west showing sheet-metal roof with lean-to sheds (3 & 4) to right and lean-to stable (2) behind Nissen hut to left. The barn doors in the central bay of this elevation were reduced in size during the 20th century.



Illus. 3. Exterior of barn complex from south showing barn to left and pantiled shelter shed (8) to right.



Illus. 4. The unusually well preserved original herringbone threshing floor of gault brick in the barn's central bay, as seen from the north-west.



Illus. 5. Exterior of lean-to stable (2) from north-east showing overlap to roof of barn (formerly hidden by thatch).



Illus. 6. Interior of lean-to stable (2) from north-west showing the remaining original ceiling joists in the rear with the loft ladder to the left. The joists in the foreground are modern replacements



Illus. 7. The original two-tier external cladding of the barn's south-western gable preserved in the adjoining lean-to shed (3). The lower tier of weatherboarding is partly hidden by 20th century render, but the roughcast clay daub remains intact above.



Illus. 8. General view of interior of barn from north-east showing the original bolted knee-braces to the tie-beams which flank the central entrance bay.



Illus. 9. The intact original roof structure of staggered butt-purlins seen from the north-west. It is steeply pitched at approximately 55 degrees for thatch but is now covered by late-20th century sheet metal.



Illus. 10. Interior of northern end of south-eastern elevation showing the intermediate central post with primary diagonal wall braces and the original two-tier cladding of daub above boarding. The horizontal rail is one of many designed to secure the infill panels. The late-20th door and weatherboarding of the central bay is visible to the right.