

**Clock House Barn,
Stonham Parva, Suffolk
SVA 017**

Historic Building Record

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1-97125



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Clock House Barn, Clockhouse Lane, Stonham Parva, Suffolk

(TM 115 611)

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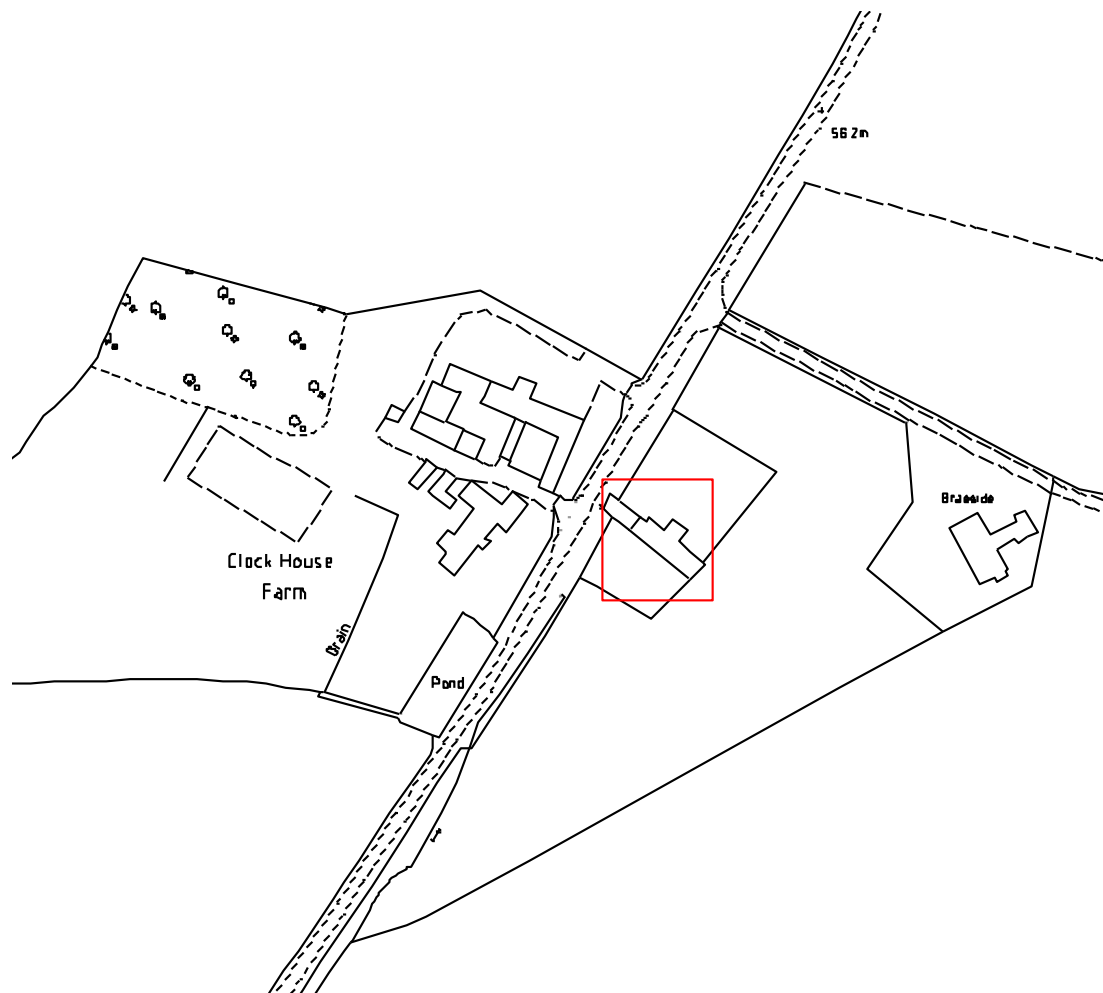
This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant barn in the curtilage of a grade II-listed former farmhouse. It has been prepared to a specification written by Edward Martin of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (ref. SpecHBR(EM)_ClockhoBn_StonhamPva_2873_10, dated 19th January 2011) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council application consent 2873/10, condition 4).*

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 39 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 3rd February 2011.

Summary

Clock House Barn lies in open countryside on the eastern side of Clockhouse Lane, immediately opposite the eponymous Clock House – a particularly attractive grade II*-listed timber-framed building of *circa* 1400 which is described at some length in both Pevsner and Sandon's 'Suffolk Houses'. The latter refers to an extensive documentary history from the 15th century including an inventory of 1625 which mentions a clock chamber containing 'one clock with a bell'. At the time of the Stonham Parva tithe survey in 1839 the property formed a substantial owner-occupied arable farm of 182.5 acres. The tithe map shows the present barn, which is a typical early-19th century threshing barn of five bays originally entered from the south but with a contemporary northern porch designed to lengthen the threshing floor. The timber-framed and weatherboarded structure illustrates the cereal boom of the Napoleonic period and may have been built on virgin soil to complement an older farm yard adjoining the house. Its walls survive largely intact, along with three of the original four arch-braces to the tie-beams of the central bay, but the roof was replaced in the 20th century and in consequence the building no longer meets the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in its own right. The steep pitch of the 19th century rafters (of which short stubs survive in both gables) suggests they were designed for thatch instead of the present corrugated asbestos. The walled former cattle yard to the south is shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1886 and incorporates sections of early-19th century brickwork, but its twin shelter sheds had been entirely demolished before inspection. A small section of an additional shed which adjoined the barn's western gable (possibly shown in 1839 and certainly in 1886) remained intact and preserved a good series of circular apotropaic (evil averting) symbols to protect its content – but any historic context had been lost and the shed's layout and purpose was unclear: it may have been built as a stable and later converted to accommodate cattle. Prior to this demolition the barn, sheds and walled yard would have formed a picturesque group of considerable historic interest that complemented the setting of the grade II*-listed former farmhouse.



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Figure 1
Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan

Enclosing the barn and walled yard in a red square and showing the grade II*-listed former farmhouse immediately to the west of Clockhouse Lane. The shed adjoining the western gable of the barn had been demolished before inspection, along with most of the yard's boundary wall.

Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Clock House Barn lies in open countryside on the eastern side of Clockhouse Lane, immediately opposite the eponymous Clock House on its western side and approximately 1 km north of St Mary's church. The site is marked as Clock House Farm on Hodskinson's county map of 1783, and the former farmhouse is a picturesque timber-framed and rendered building of some fame: Listed at grade II*, it contains an open hall with a fine late-14th century crown-post and is heavily featured by both Pevsner and Sandon (in the latter author's 'Suffolk Houses' published in 1977). Sandon refers to an extensive documentary history from at least the 15th century onwards which includes an inventory of 1625 referring to a clock chamber with 'one clock with a bell'.

At the time of the Stonham Parva tithe survey in 1839 the property formed a substantial (by the standards of the day) arable farm of 182.5 acres owned and occupied by John Blomfield, who also owned several cottages in the parish. The tithe map shows the present barn opposite the house with its northern porch and an attached shed projecting at right-angles from the eastern end of its southern elevation. A second shed probably adjoined its western gable as



Figure 2.
The Stonham Parva tithe map of 1839 (Suffolk Record Office).
The unusual bow-shaped pond to the north of the farmhouse adjoins ‘Great Mill Hill’
and probably indicates the site of a former windmill.

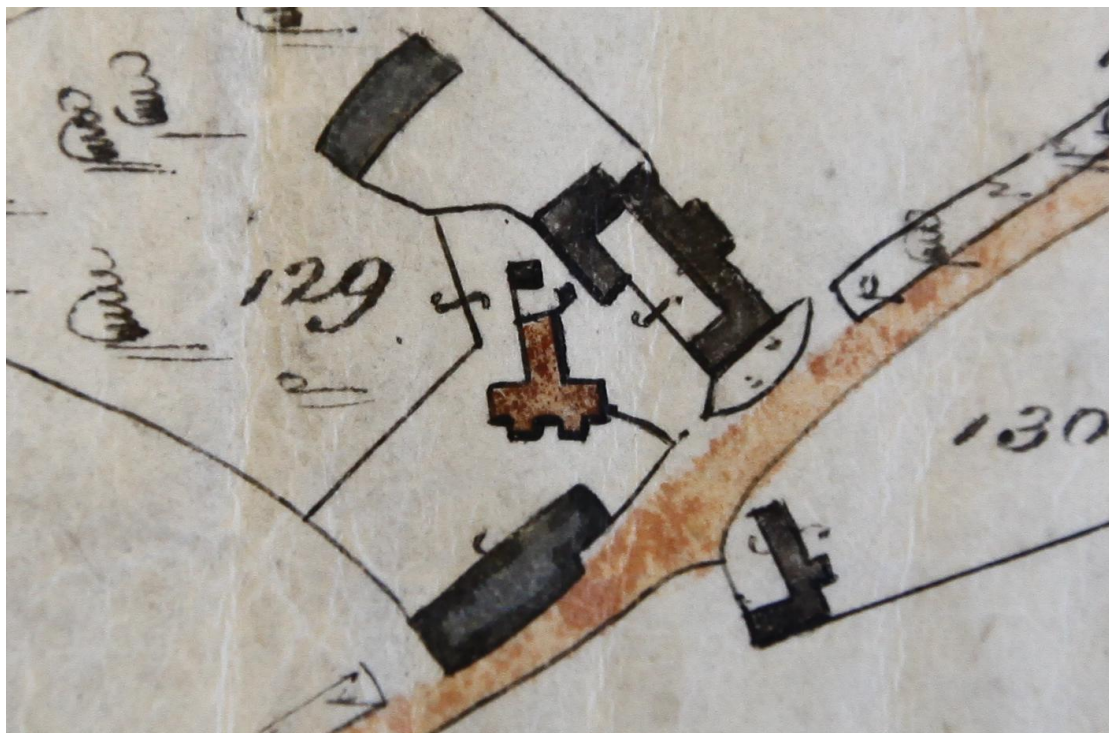


Figure 2a.
Detail of the 1838 tithe map, showing Clock House Barn opposite the red-coloured
farmhouse with its northern porch and a single shed projecting from the eastern end of
its southern elevation. The asymmetry of the porch (which is central to the five-bay
barn) suggests an additional shed was attached to its western, roadside gable.

the porch is off-set to the east. Its site, including the enclosure of one acre to the north (plot 130) was described as 'barn, stackyard, etc.' while the house and the adjoining farm buildings (129) were 'house, yards, etc.' 'Home field' lay to the south (164) and a curious bow-shaped pond to the north (113) was a 'plantation' but presumably marked the former site of a windmill as the adjoining land on the east (112) was 'Mill field' with 'Great Mill Hill' on the west (114). White's 1844 Directory of Suffolk records Blomfield as a farmer but the edition of 1874 has George Croydon at Clock House Farm.

The first edition Ordnance Survey of 1886 shows a similar layout to that of 1839, with little change to either the farm buildings north of the house (which were not investigated for the purpose of this report) or the barn opposite. The yard adjoining the latter had acquired a second shed to the west, reflecting its eastern counterpart, and both were depicted with broken lines as open-sided shelter sheds. The shed adjoining the barn's western gable may have been rebuilt since 1839 as it appears to extend closer to the road and is clearly depicted as narrower than the barn – but this is by no means certain as tithe maps were less accurate than Ordnance Surveys. The layout may have formed a horse yard with two shelter sheds and a stable, or – more probably – a cattle yard with a neat-house and feed store, but unfortunately any detailed analysis was prevented by the advanced stage of their demolition at the time of inspection.

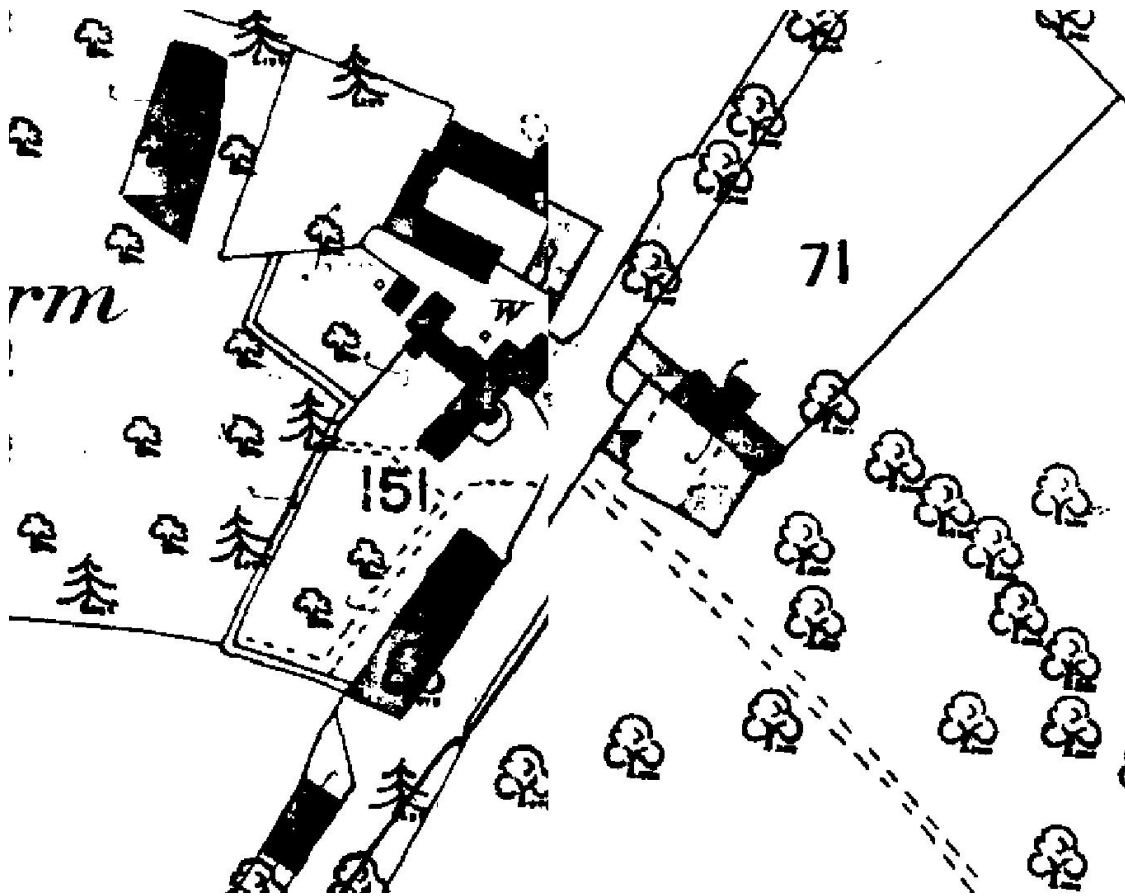


Figure 3

Clock House Farm on the First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1886. The enclosed yard to the south of the barn had acquired a second shelter-shed to the west (both with open sides as indicated by broken lines) and the shed adjoining its western gable is of identical outline to that which was undergoing demolition at the time of inspection.

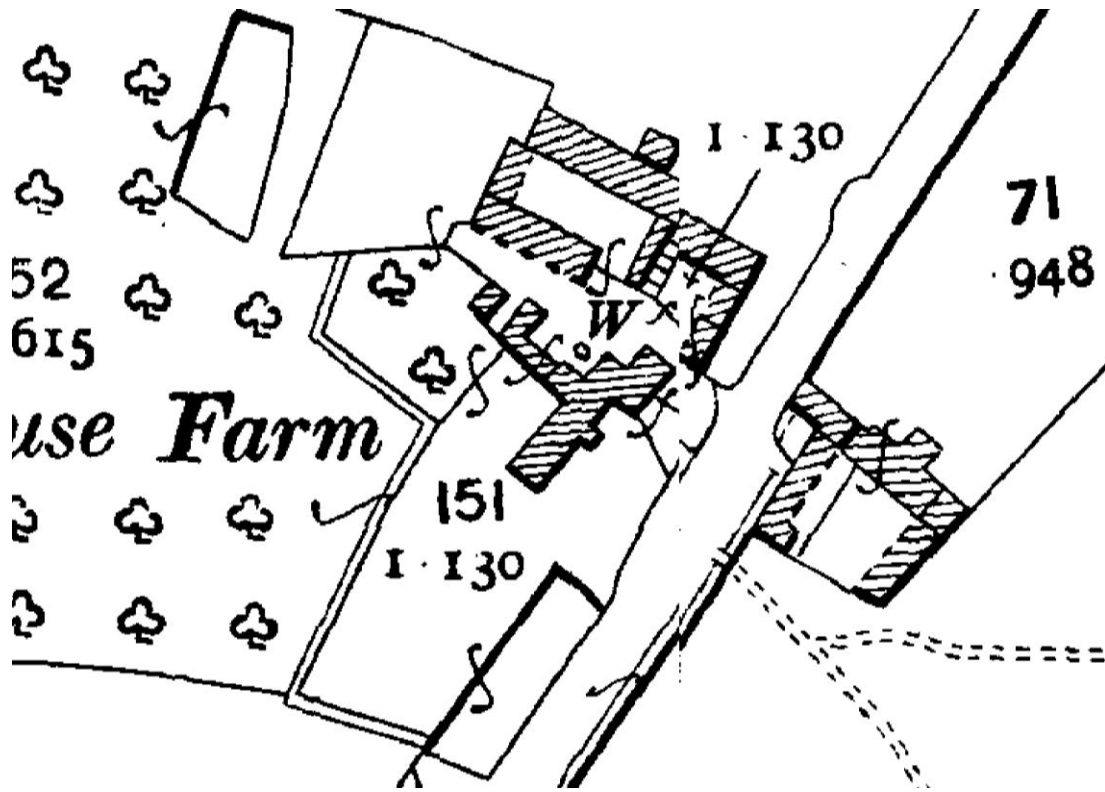


Figure 4

The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing the outlines of the buildings in more detail but without any further change since 1886. The barn and attached buildings probably survived in much the same form as depicted here until their recent demolition, although there is physical evidence of a 20th century roof over the central yard.

Building Analysis

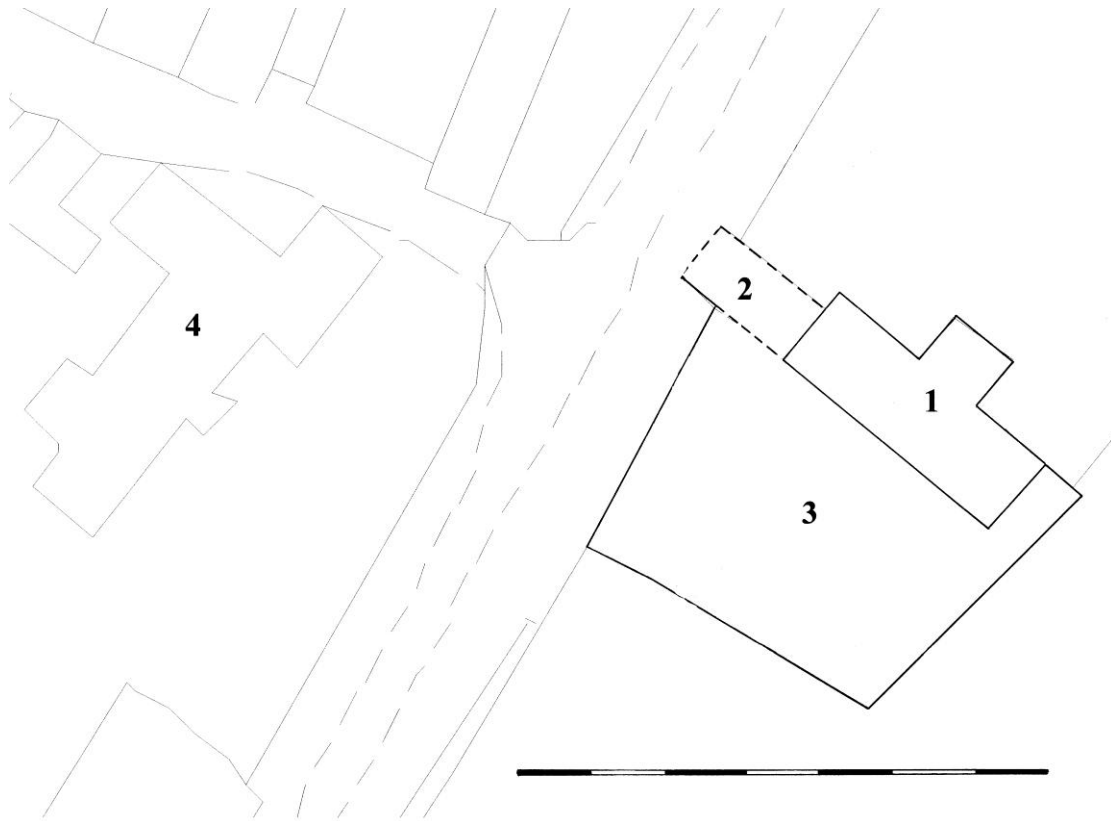


Figure 5

Block plan of the site identifying each area of the farm complex with a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Scale in units of 5 metres.

Key

1. A timber-framed and weatherboarded early-19th century threshing barn of five bays, originally entered from the south but with a gabled porch to the north of the central bay. A red-brick lean-to shed formerly adjoined its eastern gable but had been demolished prior to inspection.
2. A red-brick shed adjoining the western gable of the barn. Probably mid-19th century and built as either a stable or a neat-house & feed store. Almost entirely demolished at the time of inspection but retaining good internal apotropaic circles to the surviving fragment of its southern elevation.
3. A walled stable or cattle yard, formerly with open-sided shelter-sheds to east and west and entered from the south. The shelter-sheds and much of the perimeter wall had been demolished at the time of inspection. A scar on the weatherboarding of the barn suggests a 20th century roof once covered the central yard.
4. Clock House (formerly Clock House Farm). An unusually well preserved and picturesque timber-framed hall-house dating in part from *circa* 1400. Listed at grade II* and described at length in Pevsner and Sandon's 'Suffolk Houses'.

The Barn

The barn opposite Clock House is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure in five bays on an ESE-WNW axis (simplified to east-west for the purpose of this analysis) which extends to 16.2 m in length by 6.5 m in overall width (53 ft by 21.25 ft). Its walls rise to 4 m (13.25 ft) above its internal floor of 20th century concrete (with a section of bitumen in the central bay) including a shallow red-brick plinth, with an additional 0.6 m (16 ins) to the external ground-level of the southern yard. A gabled porch projects by 3.8 m (12.5 ft) from the northern elevation of the central bay, the walls of which are integral to the main barn but 0.9 m (3 ft) lower in height.

The building forms a typical threshing bay of the early-19th century, and was probably built in response to the high grain prices of the Napoleonic wars (which prompted the cultivation of large tracts of former pasture land). The old farm buildings to the north of the house may have been unable to cope with the resulting increase in demand, although the presence of an earlier barn on the same site cannot be ruled out. The walls contain diagonal ‘primary’ braces which interrupt the studs but are tenoned and pegged at both ends, unlike the nailed examples of the mid-19th century, and the central threshing bay is flanked by tenoned arch-braces in combination with bolted knee-braces to the outer trusses (a transitional stage between the two forms of bracing which is associated with the first quarter of the century). The roof structure is a shallow-pitched replacement of the mid-20th century covered in corrugated asbestos, but both gables retain the truncated feet of original rafters which appear to be steeply pitched at approximately 55 degrees for thatch (rather than the lower pitches of between 45 and 50 degrees required for peg and pantiles). There is some evidence of re-used timber, such as the tie-beam of the easternmost open truss (with mortises for two series of arch-braces) and the eastern roof-plate of the porch (with empty stud mortises).

With the exception of its roof the frame survives largely intact, with three of its four original tie-beam braces, but the tie-beam of the westernmost open truss has been removed. The barn was initially entered by full-height doors to the south of the central bay, as indicated by tenoned jambs and a lack of original stud mortises in the roof-plate, but this entrance was subsequently reduced in height and new doors inserted in the northern porch, destroying the original gable (which probably possessed a smaller door). Similar alterations occurred in many local barns and probably took place in the mid-19th century when the yard was enclosed to accommodate cattle (which reappeared in the area as the price of grain fell after the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846).

Enclosed Yard and Sheds

The walls of the enclosed yard to the south of the barn incorporate both early and mid-19th century brickwork of some quality, but had been largely demolished prior to inspection as shown in the accompanying photographs. A small surviving section of the red-brick shed which projected towards the farmhouse from the barn’s western gable retained good examples of circular apotropaic marks intended to protect the contents from harm, but the building’s original layout and purpose is a matter for speculation. Stables often adjoined the gables of barns in this way, but the yard had probably been converted for cattle by the 1880s and the shed may have been similarly adapted. A similar apotropaic ‘daisy-wheel’ is visible on the exterior of the barn’s internal boarding, but this is likely to have been removed from elsewhere. Of the open-sided shelter-sheds shown on the Ordnance Surveys only a series of concrete arcade-post pads remained intact (to the west of the entrance gate in the centre of the yard’s southern boundary). A lean-to shed against the barn’s eastern gable had been similarly demolished, leaving only its rafters and northern elevation intact, and there is evidence of a broad roof which formerly spanned the central yard between the shelter sheds (in the form of a scar on the barn’s southern exterior). Cattle yards were normally roofed in this manner to preserve their manure during the early- and mid-20th century.

Historic Significance

The barn is typical of the region's many 'Napoleonic' examples of the early-19th century, and is accordingly of some historic interest, but has lost its roof and therefore fails to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in its own right. The adjoining red-brick sheds and the Georgian walls of the yard would have enhanced the historic value and rarity of the complex as a whole but had been lost before inspection. It is understood that certain elements had collapsed some years ago and that others were rendered unsafe in consequence. The several apotropaic marks are unusually complicated, particularly as they were incised into brick rather than daub, but are now of limited significance in the absence of any historic context.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from Clockhouse Lane to south showing house (4) to left and barn (1) to right.
2. General view of site from Clockhouse Lane to north showing barn (1) to left and house (4) to right.
3. Eastern facade of grade II-listed house (4) seen from yard (3) on opposite side of lane. Included for site context.
4. Clock House chimney shafts from yard (3) to east. Included for site context. The brick courses below the shafts are recent.
5. General view of site from east showing walled yard (3) and barn (1) to right with house (4) in rear to left.
6. Clock House from east showing southern entrance to walled yard to right.
7. General view of site from corner of modern fenced property boundary to north-east.
8. Exterior of barn and yard complex from Clockhouse Lane to south-west.
9. Exterior of yard (3) from Clockhouse Lane to south-west showing largely demolished red-brick yard walls.
10. Exterior of yard (3) from west showing door linking demolished western shed with lane and farmhouse.
11. Exterior of largely demolished shed (2) adjoining western gable of barn (1) from Clockhouse Lane to west.
12. Exterior of walled yard (3) from south showing central entrance with barn (1) in rear.
13. Southern external corner of walled yard (3) from south-east showing split in brickwork.
14. Interior of walled yard (3) from east showing concrete pads of demolished shelter shed with barn (1) to right.
15. Interior of walled yard (3) from west showing concrete pads of demolished shelter shed with barn (1) to left.
16. Interior of walled yard (3) from barn (1) to north showing southern entrance and concrete pads of demolished shelter shed.
17. Interior of walled yard (3) from southern entrance showing concrete pads of demolished shelter shed to left.

18. Internal north-western corner of walled yard (3) showing remains of demolished shed (2) adjoining western gable of barn.
19. Exterior of demolished shed (2) adjoining western gable of barn showing roadside stream in culvert to left.
20. Interior from gable of barn (1) to east of demolished shed (2) showing standing wall with apotropaic circles.
21. Remains of southern interior of shed (2) adjoining western gable of barn showing apotropaic circles to right.
22. Detail of apotropaic circles to southern interior of demolished shed (2) adjoining western gable of barn.
23. Western external gable of barn (1) showing scar of demolished adjoining shed (2).
24. Exterior of barn (1) from north-west showing northern porch with scar of demolished shed (2) to right.
25. Detail from west of half-hung doors to northern porch of barn (1).
26. Northern exterior of barn (1) showing porch to right and remains of lean-to brick shed to left.
27. Eastern external gable of barn (1) showing rafters of demolished lean-to shed and wall of yard (3) in foreground.
28. Exterior of barn (1) from south-west showing remains of lean-to shed adjoining eastern gable.
29. Southern exterior of barn (1) showing scar of central covered yard with concrete pads of demolished shelter shed to left.
30. Detail of eastern end of southern exterior of barn (1) showing scar of demolished eastern yard shed to right.
31. Detail of western end of southern exterior of barn (1) showing door to demolished shelter shed.
32. Detail of tarred weatherboarding to southern exterior of barn (1) showing door to demolished shelter shed to right.
33. Detail of apotropaic 'daisy wheel' to exterior of internal boarding of southern exterior of barn (1).
34. Interior of barn (1) from east showing rebuilt roof with re-used tie-beam and original knee-braces in foreground.
35. Interior of barn (1) from west showing three of four intact original arch-braces flanking threshing bay.
36. Internal eastern gable of barn (1) showing straight primary wall braces.

37. Detail of north-eastern internal corner of barn (1) showing foot of original gable rafter and tenoned primary wall braces.
38. Southern interior of barn (1) showing low doors of central threshing bay.
39. Detail from east of original arch-braces to tie-beams flanking central bay of barn (1).
40. Roof-plate of central southern bay of showing jambs of central bar mortise of partly blocked original full-height doors.
41. Detail of face-halved scarf joint of roof-plate of southern internal elevation of barn (1).
42. Western bays of southern interior of barn (1) showing missing tie-beam and diagonal primary wall braces.
43. Western internal gable of barn (1) showing modern boarding.
44. Northern interior of barn (1) from south-western corner showing central porch.
45. Western bays of northern interior of barn (1) showing missing tie-beam and primary diagonal braces.
46. 20th century rebuilt roof structure from west showing missing arch brace to left.
47. Western interior of original northern porch of barn (1) showing roof-plate tenoned to storey post of main structure.
48. Interior of original northern porch of barn (1) from south showing 20th century concrete and bitumen floor.
49. Eastern interior of northern porch of barn (1) showing 20th century concrete plinth and blocked side-door to right.
50. Detail of re-used eastern roof-plate of northern porch of barn (1) showing empty irrelevant stud mortises.
51. Detail from west of Roman carpenter's numeral to foot of arch brace adjoining northern porch of barn (1).
52. Detail of face-halved and bladed scarf joint in northern roof-plate of barn (1).

Photographic Appendix follows on pp. 12-17

Appendix 2 (pp. 12-17): Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. General view of site from Clockhouse Lane to south showing grade II*-listed Clock House (4) to left and barn (1) to right.



Illus. 2. General view of site from field to east showing the walled yard (3) and barn (1) to the right with Clock house (4) in rear to the left.



Illus. 3. The exterior of the barn and yard complex from Clockhouse Lane to the south-west, showing the extent to which the yard walls had been demolished at the time of inspection.



Illus. 4. The interior of the walled yard (3) from the east, showing the concrete pads of a demolished shelter-shed with the barn (1) to the right and the southern gate to the left.



Illus. 5. The interior of the walled yard (3) from its southern entrance, showing the concrete pads of the demolished shelter-shed to the left and the scar of a central yard roof on the barn (1).



Illus. 6. Detail of the apotropaic circles to the southern interior of the largely demolished shed (2) which adjoined the western gable of the barn.



Illus. 7. Exterior of the barn (1) from the north-west showing its 20th century corrugated asbestos roof and northern porch with the scar of the demolished shed (2) adjoining its western gable to the right.



Illus. 8. The eastern external gable of the barn (1) showing the hanging rafters of a demolished lean-to shed with the wall of the yard (3) in the foreground.



Illus. 9. The interior of the barn (1) from the east showing its 20th century rebuilt roof with the re-used tie-beam and original knee-braces in the foreground.



Illus. 10. The southern interior of the barn (1) showing the low doors of the central threshing bay to the right (replacing original full-height entrance doors in the same position).



Illus. 11. The northern interior of the barn (1) from its south-western corner showing the original porch of the central bay and the straight, diagonal primary wall braces.



Illus. 12. The interior of the original northern porch of the barn (1) seen from the south and showing its 20th century concrete and bitumen floor. The porch was designed to increase the length of the threshing floor rather than as a principal entrance.