

# Yockings Gate Farm, Whitchurch, Shropshire

## Historic Building Assessment



Yockings Gate Farm, Whitchurch, Shropshire.

**ARS Ltd Report 2016/76**

May 2016

OASIS ID: archaeol5 – 252148

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Archaeological Research  
Services Ltd

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ARS Ltd Report 2016/74

Archaeological Research Services Ltd

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*In May 2016 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Evans to undertake a Historic Building Assessment at Yockings Gate Farm, Black Park Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, which was required in support of a planning application for the re-development of the site which proposes the conversion of farm buildings into residential dwellings.*

*The Historic Building Assessment has provided an account of the developmental history and purpose of the buildings that is deemed to be appropriate to the buildings' significance as well as an appropriate preservation by record prior to the proposed conversion. The majority of the structures proposed to be developed date to the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century with later extensions and considerable repair/rebuilt of the historic fabric. The assessment concluded that the application proposals would have a negligible negative impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the buildings. Considering the present situation of the buildings, a sympathetic programme of work represents an opportunity to secure the future of the building, and will enhance the character and appearance of Yockings Gate Farm and surrounding area.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Evans to undertake a Historic Building Assessment at Yockings Gate Farm, Black Park Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire (centred NGR SJ55129 42218, Fig. 1). The Historic Building Assessment was required in support of a planning application for the re-development of the site which proposes the conversion of farm buildings into residential dwellings.

1.2 Shropshire Council Historic Environment has advised that a Historic Building Assessment should be undertaken to supply information on the special architectural and historic significance of the building and its setting. The Historic Building Assessment has been carried out in accordance with government policy requirements specified in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012).

1.3 The assessment comprised a site visit in order to compile analytical descriptions, documentary research to provide back up evidence of date and function, and an evaluation of architectural and historic significance based on the existence or non-existence of statutory and non-statutory designations and also on the author's professional judgement formulated by a substantial experience of historic building analysis.



Figure 1: General site location (circled).

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## 2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This assessment is carried out under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DCLG 2012). The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government’s requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The purpose of the NPPF is to contribute to the achievement of *sustainable development*, which includes “...contributing to, protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment...” (DCLG 2012, 30).

2.2 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with government policy in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and its role in sustainable development.

2.3 Paragraph 126 states that Local Authorities must undertake to “*recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance*”. In developing their strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

2.4 Paragraph 128 states that, “*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation*” (DCLG 2012, 30).

2.5 Paragraph 129 states that, “*Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or*



*minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal” (DCLG 2012, 30).*

2.6 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.7 Paragraph 135 states that *“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset” (DCLG 2012, 31).*

2.8 Paragraph 141 states the Government requirement for the planning process to contribute to public understanding of the historic environment.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1 The overarching aim of the project was to carry out Historic Building Assessment which consisted of the following:

- The preparation of a Level 2 record as defined by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England’s publication *Recording Historic Buildings – A Descriptive Specification*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (1999).
- A review of printed, or other secondary sources of information, including maps.
- A written and illustrated assessment of the historical and / or architectural significance of the part of the building affected by the proposed works, given in relation to the whole building. This should include a provisional interpretation of the date(s) / periods of features affected by the works.
- A catalogue of all features which contribute to the character of the historic building, and which the proposed works might affect.
- An indication of the appropriateness of the proposals for any proposed new use whilst retaining or enhancing the character of the building.
- An indication of the need for any further work that may be necessary to fully inform the proposed works.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 The Historic Building Assessment was carried out in May 2016 by Alvaro Mora-Ottomano (BA Hons, MSc) of ARS Ltd who is a corporate member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ACIfA 5297) and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (2583AFF).

4.2 The Historic Building Assessment was conducted in line with the relevant guidance stipulated by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist (2014a and 2014b). The records produced were used in order to create an interpretative discussion of the form, function and phasing of the structures concerned. The records consisted of the following.

- A written record of the buildings was carried out by annotating plans and elevations and by completing ARS Ltd pro-forma building recording sheets. Descriptions and terms used follow Brunskill (2000), Curl (1997) and Lynch (1994) wherever possible.
- A photographic survey, composed of high resolution digital format, was undertaken including detailed and general shots of the buildings being recorded, fixtures, fittings and phase change evidence and general shots of the context and outlook. Where possible, photographs included a graduated scale and cameras were mounted on tripods for extra stability. Details of the photographs were recorded on pro-forma index sheets, which included location, subject and orientation. The location and direction of the photographs were plotted on scaled plans.
- Archive research was undertaken in order to examine the historical and archaeological background of the development site. This included a cartographic regression analysis and discusses the results of documentary studies of the historical evolution of the site based on documents consulted from relevant libraries and archives.

## **5 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

5.1 The historical research of the Yockings Gate Farm yielded limited information. Nevertheless, a summary from a previous desk-based assessment of Whitchurch reveals that the name derives from “white church”, and the town was known from the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century as Album Monasterium and Blancmustier. At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, Whitchurch was held by William de Warenne from Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury; before the conquest it had been a royal manor held by King Harold. It was a large manor, with a number of members and outliers. The manor was held by the de Warennes for the next 200 years, before passing by descent and marriage to the Le Strange and de Bracy families. The High Street (along the line of the former Roman road, Watling Street) will have continued to be the main thoroughfare through the settlement, and domestic and commercial buildings will have occupied the street frontage. These properties will have occupied burgage plots extending back for some distance from the High Street frontage (HER 05919 & HER 05920). It is thought that the laying out of these burgage plots was more or less contemporary with the creation of the town defences in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Post-medieval occupation in the town is principally evidenced by a number of standing buildings along both sides of the High Street (Hannaford 2012).

5.2 The Historic Landscape Characterisation for the area identifies a range of planned and piecemeal enclosure pointing to the informal enclosure of fields developing into the more formalised working of planned enclosures. It is likely that this gradual reforming of landscape commenced during the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> centuries and was largely complete by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this period farming was undergoing a whole series of technological and methodological changes; however, the use of steam power for ploughing and cultivation in the county was less popular.

5.3 Indeed, in *A History of the County of Shropshire: Volume 4, Agriculture*, Cox *et al.* stated that *“Never endowed with a large arable acreage on terrain suitable for steam ploughing, Shropshire was not to witness the complexities of the technique on a widespread scale. The high cost of the necessary engines and ancillary equipment made such a use of steam beyond the means of all but the wealthiest. During the mid-1860s companies were established at Whitchurch, Market Drayton, and Shrewsbury to provide steam ploughing facilities for the interested farmer. The first significant mechanization came with new methods of threshing and winnowing corn. That winter activity centred on the barn where the hinged wooden flail was used to knock the corn from the straw lying on the threshing floor. The winnowing of the newly threshed corn depended on a convenient wind blowing through the barn to remove the chaff and husk from the grain. The unreliability of such a draught encouraged the development of the winnowing fan, comprising sails fitted to four or more radial arms resting on a stand and revolved by hand to create an artificial wind. In Shropshire over 20 per cent of early 19th-century farm sales, where implements were listed, included a fan in their inventory. The number of fans on farms declined with the advent of the more complex winnowing machine, a box-like contrivance of shakers and screens that ensured a cleaner grain; it was initially hand powered. With remarkably little alteration to its basic design it became widely adopted and was to be found at over 60 per cent of farm sales until the 1870s”* (British History Online).

5.4 Yockings Gate Farm is located 2 miles north-east from Whitchurch in an area known as Black Park. Information obtained from Kelly’s Directory of 1885 states that *“Black Park is a township, 2 miles east-north-east from the town: there are two considerable meres or small lakes, called Blackmere and Ossmere, in the township. Earl Brownlow is the sole proprietor of the land and lord of the manor. The land is undulating; soil, various; subsoil, clay and gravel. The chief crops are wheat, barley, oats and turnips”* (Kelly 1885, 987). Historical cartographic records were consulted in order to gain a better understanding of the farmstead’s sequential development. This established that the farm may have its origin in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. John Rocque’s Map of Shropshire produced in 1752 does not depict the site although the map itself is not very detail. Robert Baugh’s Map of Shropshire issued in 1808 shows a generic building shape representing Yockings Gate Farm. Of note is the fairly legible name ‘Yockings Gate’ noted along the current Black Park Road but assigned to a different building. This could have been a different site of perhaps a cartographic error (Fig. 2). The Tithe map issued in 1841 shows the farmstead considerably developed and labelled as ‘Yockings Gate’. The complex consists of several buildings including the L-shaped cross wing range (Fig. 3). The Ordnance Survey map issued in 1892 is slightly more detailed than the Tithe map although with a comparable outline of the farmstead which is labelled as ‘Yockingsgate’. Of note is the inclusion of the railway in the vicinity of the Farm.



Figure 2: Extract of the 1808 Robert Baugh's Map of Shropshire showing the site (red circle) and the name 'Yockings Gate' further towards the east (yellow rectangle).



Figure 3: Extract of the 1841 Tithe Map of Shropshire showing the site.

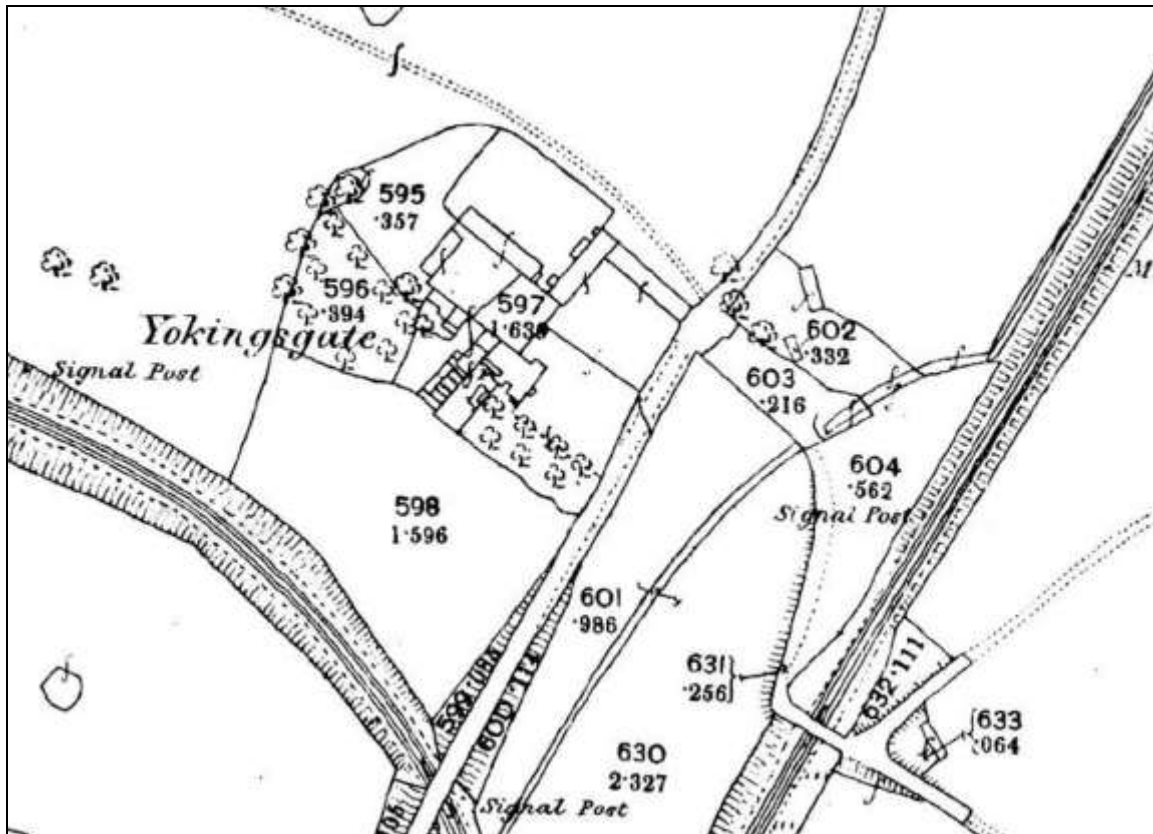


Figure 4: Extract of the 1892 Ordnance Survey map.

5.5 Trade directories of Whitchurch provide a summary of former registered farmers who were tenant of Yockings Gate Farm. An outline of the pertinent entries has been tabulated below (Table 1). Of note is the name of the farm which changed slightly through time.

Directory	Date	Description
Kelly	1856	Edward Dicking farmer Yorkings Fate
Harrod	1861	Edward Dicking farmer Yorkings Gate
Kelly	1870	Edward Dicking farmer Yorkings Gate
Cassey	1871	Edward Thomas Dicking farmer Yockings Gate
Cassey	1874	Edward Thomas Dicking farmer Yockings Gate
Kelly	1879	Edward Thomas Dicking farmer Yorkings Gate
Kelly	1885	Richard Jones farmer Yorkings Gate
Porter	1888	Richard Jones farmer Yorkings Gate
Kelly	1891	Philips Thomas farmer Yorkings gate
Kelly	1909	Maddocks John farmer Yorkings gate
Kelly	1917	Brown Archibald farmer Yorking's Gate farm
Kelly	1934	Lutton Wm. C. farmer Yockings gate
Kelly	1941	Lutton Wm. Jas. farmer Yockings gate

Table 1: Relevant trade directory entries for Yockings Gate Farm.

## 6 BUILDING RECORDING

The farm buildings were recorded at Level 2 standard prior to the proposed conversion. The buildings concerned are an amalgamation of several ranges creating an L-shaped configuration. For the purpose of this Historic Building Assessment the definition ‘building’ is used to describe a built structure within the confines of the site boundary, which is identifiable as a single construction, and may have more than one phase of use or alteration. All buildings were analysed individually and the results are included below. The photographic record comprised 270 high definition colour digital images, which is also included in the project archive with scaled plans showing their location and direction as well as an accompanying photographic register with their descriptions. A selection of photographic plates is included in the report with detailed captions indicating the viewpoint of the camera. Building’s codes were assigned which are shown on plan (Fig. 5). The L-shaped complex may be divided into two principal wings. The NW/SE wing (Buildings A, B, C, D and E) is located along the main lane that provides access to the farmstead. The NE/SW wing (Buildings F, G, H and I) is a perpendicular return creating the L shape facing onto a central courtyard (Plates 1 – 3).



Plate 1: NW/SE wing along the central lane of the Farm, looking west.

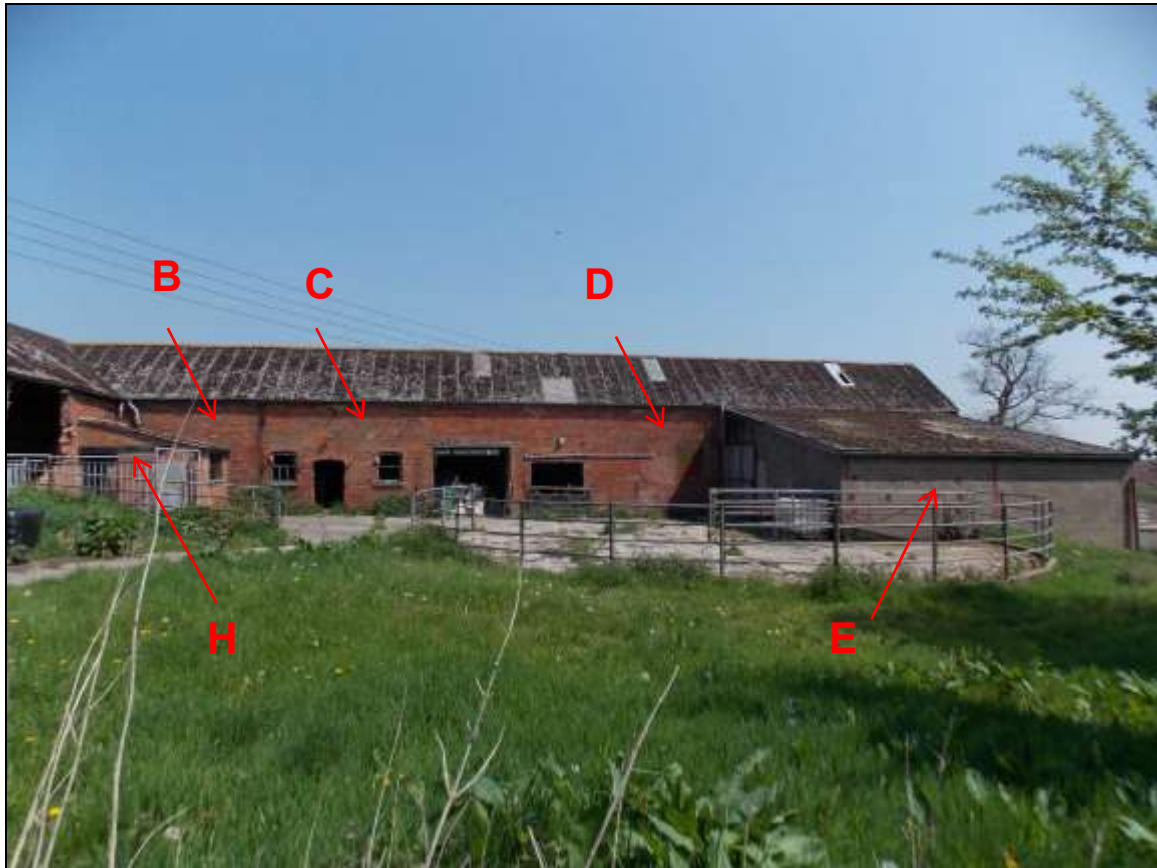


Plate 2: NW/SE wing facing onto the courtyard.



Plate 3: The courtyard with both wings, looking north-east.

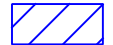

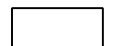


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Site Code: YGFW\*16  
Drawing Ref:  
Date: 20-05-2016  
Drawn: AMO  
Scale: 1:200@A3

Figure 5:  
Plan of the site with  
buildings' code and  
proposed block phasing

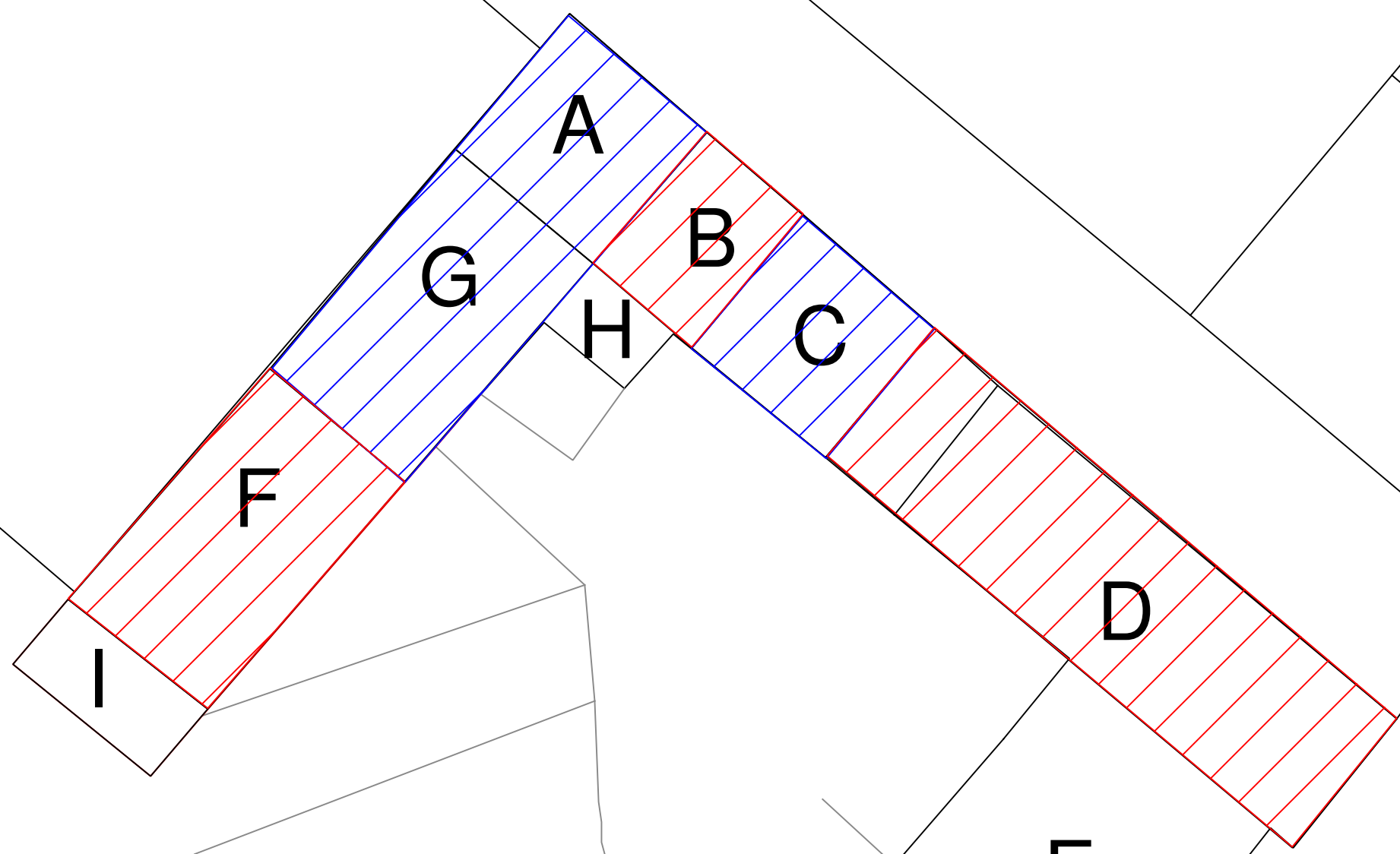
Key:

	L18/E19th C
	19th C
	20th C

Notes:  
Later alterations not considered

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# Yockings Gate





## 6.1 Building A

### *Exterior*

6.1.1 Building A is located at the junction of the two wings making the L-shaped farm range. It is a two-storey range with a plain pitched roof clad with asbestos corrugated sheeting. It is built with machine-made orangey bricks (8¾" x 4½" x 3") bonded with whiteish lime mortar and laid in English Garden Wall bond. The front elevation facing onto the access lane of the farm contains a gable wall creating the beginning of a cross wing of the merged complex. The brick wall, although aligned with the entire wing along the lane, projects slightly (c.100mm) outwards. This masonry appears to be a later reface applied over earlier brickwork as observed within the lower section of the brickwork adjacent to Building B (Plate 4).

6.1.2 The front façade contains a large central doorway with segmental arched head and recessed jambs and arch *intradors*. Each jamb contains two sandstone blocks with iron hinge pintles which would have sustained a double door. The central doorway is flanked by single doorways with flat arched heads although these have been blocked with bricks (Plate 5). The upper storey, which in effect corresponds to a loft space, contains a central doorway (formerly used as a lucam) flanked by two window openings creating a symmetrical composition. The windows have flat arched heads and projecting chamfered sills. The central doorway of the upper storey has an equivalent head and flush sandstone sill. Above the head there is a small aperture within the wall from where a girder would have projected outwards carrying a hoist to load goods into the loft through the central lucam.

6.1.3 The north-west elevation is built with equivalent bricks and consists of an arcaded wall with wide openings topped with segmental heads constructed with two courses of headers. The arches are supported by projecting brick pillars. Traces of a removed wall projecting perpendicularly towards the north-west can be seen c.1m from the lane (Plate 6). The dismantled wall is an integral construction with the present masonry of Building A, and appears to have been part of a small extension depicted on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map and subsequent editions. Above the south-westernmost pillar the wall is also truncated and evidence of an additional arch was discerned suggesting that this wall would have extended further towards the south-west forming a longer elevation with the adjacent Building G (Plate 7).



Plate 4: Front elevation of Building A covering earlier brickwork (arrow), looking north-west (scale 2m).



Plate 5: Detail of central doorway flanked by blocked-up side doorways, looking south-west (scale 2m).



Plate 6: Arcaded elevation of Building A, looking south-east (scale 2m).



Plate 7: Detail of truncated arcade, looking north-east (scale 2m).

### Interior

6.1.4 Access to the ground floor is gained from the door along the lane, the arcades and an inserted crude opening with an RSJ lintel within the gable wall which divides Buildings A and G which is built equivalent brickwork. This wall also contains two primary doorways although they are concealed with concrete blocks. The north-western one has a flat timber lintel whereas the south-eastern doorway contains a segmental arched head (Plate 8). Internally it consists of a single room which appears to have been used to keep cattle. The north-eastern wall contains projecting pillars comparable to the ones within the arcade although with bullnosed edges. These are positioned between the blocked-up side doorways and the central archway (Plate 9).

6.1.5 The south-eastern wall is built with earlier type of bricks and contains two blocked-up doorways which might have provided access to the adjacent Building B. On the contrary, it is also possible that they may have been blocked up when Building B was erected as the survey identified that Building B was a later infill between Buildings C and a longer perpendicular range currently constituted by Buildings A and G. A distinctive scar of a former staircase was identified within the lime-washed masonry of this wall which would have provided access to the upper storey (Plate 10). It has a low ceiling composed of a timber bridging beam with thin flat chamfer edges, supporting a series of exposed joists from where timber floor boards are attached to. The bridging beam contains an incised symbol which appears to be a shipping mark used to denote the quality and origins of sawn timber often from Nordic or, more commonly, Baltic countries (Plate 11). The marks may also represent ownership, order numbers or other such information, but are not marriage or assembly symbols produced by carpenters who marked out the joints during pre-fabrication of the frames to enable subsequent re-assembly of timber members.

6.1.6 The first floor is in essence a loft storey although in this case with windows and a lucam or loading bay within the gable wall facing onto the main lane of the Farm. The openings contain timber lintels and the central lucam has bullnosed brick jambs (Plate 12). The current access to the loft is from a plain doorway inserted within the gable wall dividing Buildings A and B. The former stairwell can be seen against the dividing wall. Of interest is the presence of a timber wall plate half way up this brick wall which appears to be *in situ* supporting the south-eastern end of the roof truss (Plate 13). The roof structure consists of a sawn timber king-post truss with raking struts which carries two tiers of trenched side purlins. The joints are pegged and the upper face contains several carpenter's assembly marks (Plates 14 and 15). The truss is not symmetrically located within the internal space as it appears to have form part of a longer building extending towards the south-west. Indeed, some of the structural fabrics Building A (the south-eastern brick wall up to the timber wall plate and most of the roof structure) appear to have originally been the north-eastern bay of a longer Building G prior to its substantial alteration.



Plate 8: Doorways within the south-western gable wall, looking north-east (scale 2m).



Plate 9: General view of the ground floor, looking north-east (scale 1m).



Plate 10: Scar of former staircase (arrow) against the south-eastern wall, looking north-east (scale 1m).



Plate 11: Inscribed shipping marks within the bridging beam.



Plate 12: First floor of Building A, looking north-west.



Plate 13: Primary wall plate (arrows) within the gable wall dividing Buildings A and G (scale 2m).



Plate 14: King-post timber truss with pegged joints, looking south-west.



Plate 15: Upper face of truss with peg's heads and associated carpenter's assembly marks.



## **6.2 Building B**

### *External*

6.2.1 Building B is the north-western end of the NW/SE wing along the lane adjoining the cross wing corresponding of the gable wall of Building A. The entire wing is a single storey brick-built merged range with a loft space. The roof consists of a plain pitched structure clad with asbestos corrugated sheeting. The masonry of Building B is built with hand-made orangey bricks (9" x 4½" x 2¾") bonded with whiteish lime mortar and laid mostly in stretcher bond although with occasional double header bricks crating a somewhat irregular Flemish Garden Wall bond.

6.2.2 The front elevation facing onto the access lane of the Farm contains two inserted window openings (one on each level) of which the upper opening includes a projecting chamfered sill equivalent to the types present within the adjacent Building A (Plate 16). Towards the south-east there is an almost vertical construction break/joint which demarcates externally the division between Building B and adjacent Building C. The joint is inadequately keyed in with several connecting bricks although the upper section steps into Building C creating a more stable arrangement (Plate 17).

6.2.3 The opposite elevation facing onto the courtyard is built with brickwork comparable to the machine-made brick of Building A. It contains a doorway and a window opening with fat arched heads also equivalent to the construction observed within Building A (Plate 18). These openings are blocked with bricks as they may have become obsolete when the small lean-to structure Building H was erected sometime around the mid-20th century as indicated by cartographic records.



Plate 16: North-eastern wall of Building B along the central lane of the farm (scale 2m).



Plate 17: Vertical construction joint (arrow) between Buildings B and C, looking south-west (scale 2m).



Plate 18: South-western wall of Building B, viewed from inside Building H (scale 2m).

### *Internal*

6.2.4 Access to the ground floor is gained from an inserted door within the dividing wall between Buildings B and C. The north-western wall contains two matching primary doorways with segmental arched heads although they are blocked with bricks (Plate 19). This wall appears to have been an external façade of a longer perpendicular range currently constituted by Buildings A and G. The general fabrics consist of lime washed brick walls which are partially rendered, a concrete floor and timber exposed beams and joists. There is a fixed timber ladder for the upper storey and a further blocked-up doorway within the south-eastern wall adjoining Building C (Plate 20). The south-western wall contains blocked-up openings which would have originally faced onto the courtyard. This wall also comprises a later small opening between the former window and doorway as well as small troughs and a cast-iron plate with holes designed to slide a manger with the aid of a chain (Plates 22 and 23). The loft is entered from the fixed ladder which in turns provides access to the entire loft of this wing. The roof structure of the wing appears to be a later repair/rebuilt supported by a series of king-post trusses; however, the division between Buildings B and C comprises an improvised timber arrangement supporting the roof purlins which would have formerly been held by a brick gable wall which has been mostly removed except for the edges (Plate 24). The north-western wall is currently a gable wall although, despite truncation by an inserted doorway, a longitudinal wall plate half way up the wall indicates that this wall was originally an external side wall of a range currently composed of Buildings G and A (Plate 25).



Plate 19: Ground floor of Building B with blocked-up doorways within the north-western wall (scale 2m).



Plate 20: Ground floor with fixed timber ladder for the upper storey, looking north-east (scale 2m).



Plate 21: South-western wall with blocked-up openings (scale 2m).

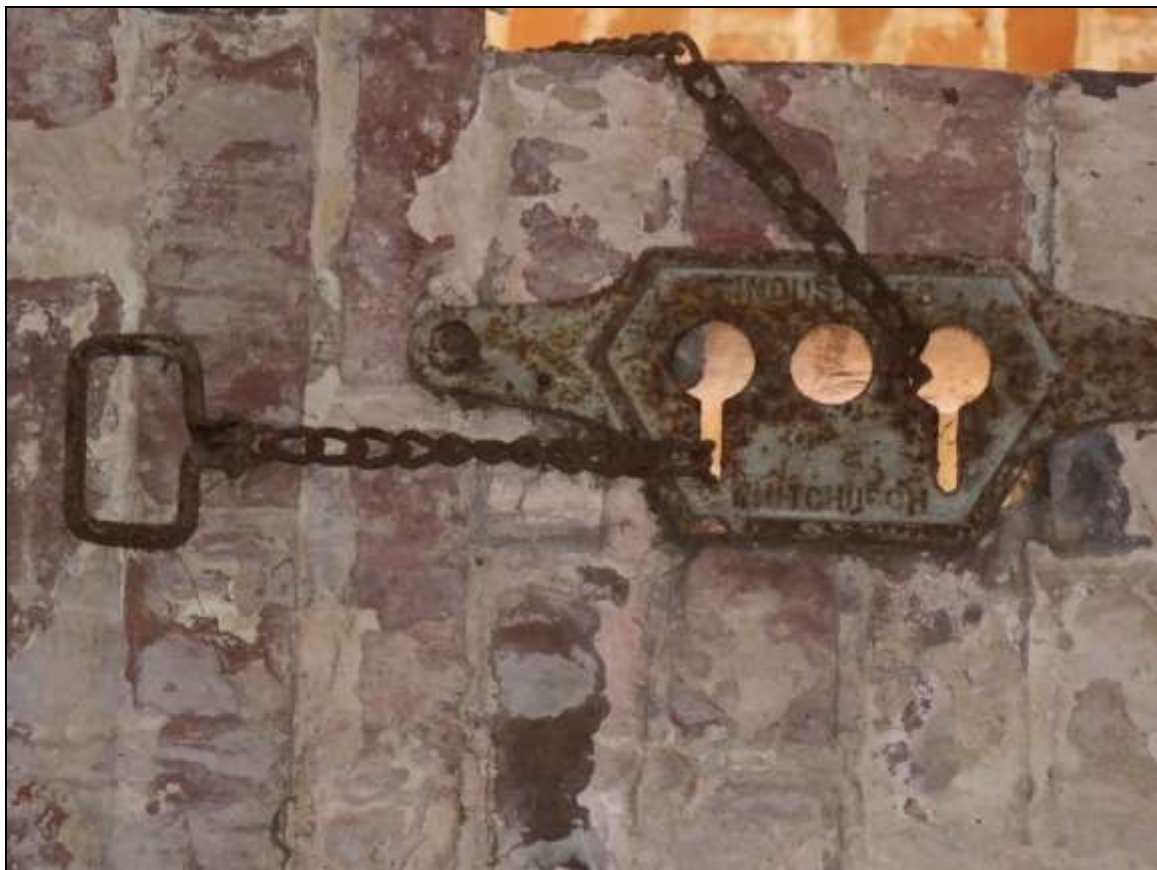


Plate 22: Detail of cast-iron fastening plate and chain through releasing holes.



Plate 23: Detail of troughs on the south-western wall.



Plate 24: Loft storey with remnants of former gable wall of the adjacent Building C (arrows).



Plate 25: Loft storey with inserted doorway to Building A, looking north-west (scale 2m).

### 6.3 Building C

6.3.1 Building C is part of the NW/SE wing along the lane adjoining Building B to the north-west and Building D to the south-east. The front elevation facing onto the access lane of the Farm seems an integral continuation of the adjoining buildings although construction breaks/joints demarcates their divisions (Plate 26). Indeed, the brickwork along the north-western edge next to the vertical joint contains alternating queen closer bricks establishing its accurate limit. The masonry is built with hand-made orangey bricks (9" x 4½" x 2¾") bonded with whiteish lime mortar and laid mostly in a slightly irregular Flemish Garden Wall bond. There is an inserted plain window opening for the loft storey and two inconspicuous concrete pads which support internally RSJ girders (Plate 27). The counterpart elevation facing onto the courtyards exhibits a more apparent separation between the adjoining Buildings B and D. It has a central doorway flanked by windows on each side although the distance between each window and the doorway is slightly asymmetrical (Plate 28). These openings appear to be secondary insertions which contain flat arched heads built with equivalent machine-made bricks and design to the openings within Building A. Moreover, the window openings also comprise corresponding sills (Plates 28 – 30). The tenuous concrete pads for the internal girders are also discerned within this elevation. There is a vertical construction break/joint separating this building with the adjoined Building D (Plate 31).



Plate 26: North-eastern wall of Building C along the central lane of the farm (scale 2m).



Plate 27: Detail of north-eastern wall with inserted concrete pads (arrows) for internal RSJ (scale 2m).





Plate 28: South-western elevation facing onto the courtyard (scale 2m).



Plate 29: Detail of the central doorway (scale 2m).



Plate 30: Detail of window opening (scale 2m).



Plate 31: Detail of vertical construction joint between Buildings C and D, looking north-east.

*Internal*

6.3.2 The ground floor is accessed from the doorway facing onto the courtyard (Plate 33). The general fabrics consist of lime washed brick walls which are partially rendered, a concrete floor and timber exposed joists supported by two inserted RSJ girders. The south-eastern wall contains two blocked-up doorways. This wall appears to be an integral construction with the side walls, thus the adjacent Building D would have been built against it (Plate 34).

6.3.3 The loft contains a bolted king-post truss which appears to have been a later repair/rebuilt (Plate 35). Equivalent trusses are also present in the adjacent Building D. The south-eastern end comprises a gable wall with diamond-shaped vents and an inserted doorway which enables access to the loft of Building D through a step 350mm down. Although the gable wall has suffered minor alterations to accommodate the present roof structure, it can be discerned that the face of the brickwork (somewhat crudely finished and with sections of horizontal timber) corresponds to an internal side. (Plate 36). Indeed, the opposite side of this wall which faces onto the loft of Building D is more even and properly finished corresponding to a former external face of the wall (Plate 37). The entire masonry appears to be an integral construction thus the adjoining Building D would have been built against it.



Plate 32: Ground floor of Building C, looking north-west (scale 2m).



Plate 33: Ground floor of Building C with doorway and windows facing onto the courtyard (scale 2m).



Plate 34: South-eastern wall with blocked-up doorways (scale 2m).



Plate 35: Loft storey of Building C with bolted king-post truss, looking north-west.



Plate 36: Loft storey looking towards the gable wall of the adjacent Building D (scale 2m).



Plate 37: Outer face of gable wall viewed from the adjacent Building C, looking north-west (scale 2m).

## 6.4 Building D

6.4.1 Building D consists of the south-eastern area of the NW/SE wing along the lane and with a gable wall facing onto Black Park Road (Plate 38). The original masonry consists of hand-made orangey bricks (9" x 4¼" x 2¾") bonded with whiteish lime mortar and laid mostly in a slightly irregular Flemish Garden Wall bond. The gable wall appears to have been substantially repaired with darker coloured bricks and contains an inserted window on the ground floor within a section of even later brickwork which may have blocked a former doorway containing a concrete threshold (Plate 39). Above it, there are two X-shaped vents produced with alternating omitted bricks. There is also a slightly off-centre oculus with bullnosed bricks which appears to be a later insertion based on the type of machine-made brickwork comparable to the masonry of Building A (Plate 40). There is also a small diamond-shaped vent toward the apex of the gable. The verge is currently built with later brickwork supporting the present roof structure.

6.4.2 The south-east section of the north-eastern elevation along the access lane of the farm contains an integral oculus and several primary diamond-shaped vents arranged in two horizontal rows of which the upper one comprises smaller vents than the ones within the lower row (Plates 41 and 42). There is also a series of later inserted openings including doorways and windows. The cornice is composed of later brick courses which occasionally truncates the uppermost section of the vents. These would have been laid when the roof was re-built. The north-west section consists of a later refaced brick wall containing an

oculus and a large opening which leads to a passageway against Building C. The refaced wall projects up to 100mm and is built with machine-made orangey bricks (8½" x 4½" x 3") bonded with beige sandy mortar and laid in Flemish Garden Wall bond. Below the oculus there is a possible window opening bricked up with a flat arched head equivalent to the construction identified within Building A (Plate 43). The passageway appears to have been recently used to provide access to cattle into the courtyard. The north-western edge of the lintel, which is concealed with a timber plank, is inserted into the masonry of the adjacent Building C (Plate 44).

6.4.3 The south-western elevation which faces onto the courtyard is partially obscured by a modern lean-to extension (Building E). An inserted window opening with flat arched head, comparable to the one recorded in Building A, was identified towards the south-eastern edge although this had been blocked up possibly when the extension was erected against it (Plate 45). Further details of this elevation were observed from inside Building E including an almost undisturbed upper row of diamond-shaped vents (Plate 46). The corresponding vents facing onto the courtyard have been crudely blocked up with later bricks although these are clearly identifiable. This section of wall also comprises an inserted large doorway which would have contained a sliding door as indicated by the surviving rack above the lintel. This doorway leads to a milking parlour inside the ground floor. The wall also contains the passageway opening to the north-west and a blocked-up doorway with a soldier brick head towards the south-east (Plate 47). The bricked-up doorway might have been contemporary with the later rebuilt of Building A as indicated by the type of machine-made bricks employed to create the opening's head. Moreover, the wall also contains a large repaired/rebuilt section adjacent to the blocked-up doorway built with the same type of machine-made bricks.



Plate 38: General view of Building D along the access lane of the farm (scale 2m).



Plate 39: Gable wall facing onto Black Park Road (scale 2m).





Plate 40: Detail of oculus and X-shaped vents.



Plate 41: South-east end of the north-eastern elevation (scale 2m).



Plate 42: Detail of oculus and diamond-shaped vents within the north-eastern elevation.



Plate 43: Refaced brickwork within the north-west side of the north-eastern elevation (scale 2m).



Plate 44: Gate for livestock leading to a large inserted passageway, looking south-west (scale 2m).



Plate 45: Gable wall and blocked-up opening (arrow) within the south-western elevation (scale 2m).



Plate 46: South-western elevation with diamond-shaped vents viewed from inside Building E (scale 2m).



Plate 47: South-western elevation with blocked-up vents and a doorway (scale 2m).

*Internal*

6.4.4 The passageway is built with a modern concrete block wall and the existing external gable elevation of the adjacent Building C which contains two doorways that have been blocked with concrete blocks (Plate 48). The milking parlour occupies most of the ground floor's space and contains part of the milking equipment. The general fabrics consist of render brick walls, a concrete floor and exposed bridging beams supporting later plasterboard. There is also a long brick-built pit with an overall depth of 950mm (Plates 49 and 50). The ceiling beams are sawn timber with narrow flat chamfered edges and contain inscribed shipping marks (Plate 51).

6.4.5 The loft contains a series of bolted king-post trusses which are equivalent to the truss within the adjacent Building C as these form part of a later and contiguous roof rebuilt (Plate 52 and 53). The tie-beams of the trusses contain chiselled shipping marks (Plate 54). The loft contains plywood floor boards containing hoppers from where a series of PVC pipes would have dispensed grains into them. The primary brickwork can be seen with vents along the side walls as well as the uppermost courses up to the eaves which are later replacement supporting the roof trusses (Plate 55). The gable wall contains clear sign of an earlier oculus which had been removed and substituted with the present one at a lower level (Plate 56). This rearrangement may have been undertaken in order to obtain a draft closer to the floor which may have facilitated grain processing such as threshing and/or drying.



Plate 48: Internal view of the passageway of Building D, looking north-east.



Plate 49: Milking parlour within the ground floor of Building D, looking south-east.



Plate 50: Detail of central pit of the milking parlour, looking south-east (scale 1m).



Plate 51: Ceiling beam with inscribed shipping mark.



Plate 52: King-post trusses equivalent to the one within the adjacent Building C, looking south-west.



Plate 53: South-eastern end of the loft storey, looking north-west.

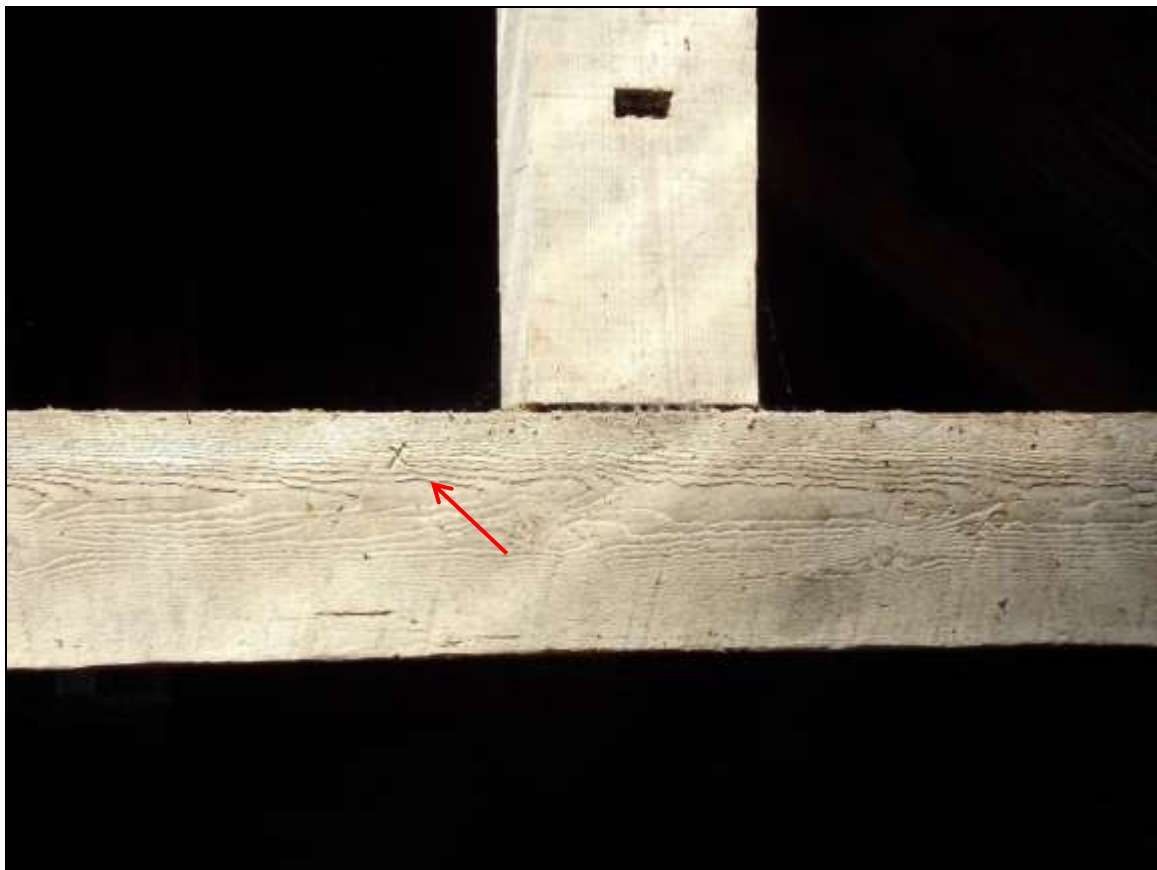


Plate 54: Shipping mark within the tie-beam of the bolted truss.





Plate 55: Detail of primary brickwork with vent and later bricks supporting the roof structure.



Plate 56: Gable wall with an inserted oculus which substituted a comparable opening above it (arrow).

## **6.5 Building E**

6.5.1 Building E is a modern concrete lean-to structure with steel frame and a shallow asbestos corrugated sheeting roof. The lean-to abuts the south-eastern end of Building D projecting into the courtyard (Plates 57 – 59). This structure has no historical significance or architectural merit.



Plate 57: Building E facing onto Black Park Road, looking north-east.



Plate 58: Building E projecting into the courtyard, looking north-east.



Plate 59: Internal view of Building E, looking east.

## 6.6 Building F

### *External*

6.6.1 Building F consists of the south-western range of the SW/NE wing of the L-shaped merged complex. The south-eastern elevation facing onto the courtyard bears high resemblance with the construction of its counterpart wing with bricks and a pitched roof clad with asbestos corrugated sheeting. The original masonry consists of hand-made orangey bricks (9" x 4¼" x 2¾") bonded with whiteish lime mortar and laid mostly in a slightly irregular Flemish Garden Wall bond. The brick wall contains diamond-shaped vents towards the eaves. There is an inserted central doorway with flat arched head comparable to the construction of the openings within Building A. The doorway has been blocked with bricks. Above it there is also a square window opening with a chamfered projecting sill also equivalent to the type recorded in Building A (Plate 60 and 61). Towards the adjoining Building G there is a large section of later brick repair.

6.6.2 The south-western elevation is partially obscured by a later lean-to (Building I) and the gable above it appears to have been substantially repaired with darker coloured bricks (Plate 62). The corresponding side wall of the entire wing has been removed and is now opened up to a large modern steel warehouse whose stanchions support the wall plate with additional brackets (Plate 63).



Plate 60: South-east elevation of Building F facing onto the courtyard (scale 2m).



Plate 61: Blocked-up central doorway, looking north-west (scale 2m).



Plate 62: Gable wall of Building F and later lean-to extension Building I, looking north-east (scale 2m).



Plate 63: South-western end of Building F, looking south (scale 2m).

### *Internal*

6.6.3 Internally it is an opened space where animal is stored. The general fabrics consist of partially rendered brick walls, a concrete floor and exposed roof trusses (Plate 64). The division between this range and the contiguous Building G would have consisted of a brick gable wall which has been removed. Testimony of the removed gable wall can be discerned within the internal wall which contains a clear vertical scar with partially hacked off bricks. Moreover, the removal of this wall involved the construction of improvised timber trusses supporting the corresponding purlin extremities which would have formerly been sustained by the gable wall. Apart from the *ad hoc* end truss, the range comprises two slender king-post trusses with raking struts and pegged joints carrying four tiers of butt purlins staggered at joint with principal rafters and supporting the common rafters which are attached to the wall plates with bird mouth joints (Plate 65 and 66). The tie-beam of the south-western truss has split across it (Plate 67). The upper faces (looking south-west) of the trusses contain the pegs' heads and associated carpenter's assembly marks (Plate 68). Shipping marks were also identified within one of the side purlins despite some root damage (Plate 69).



Plate 64: Internal view of Building F, looking south-west.



Plate 65: North-eastern king-post truss with pegged joints, looking north-east.



Plate 66: Common rafters with bird mouth joints attaching the south-eastern wall plate.



Plate 67: South-western truss with cracked tie-beam, looking north-east.





Plate 68: Upper face of truss with peg's heads and associated carpenter's assembly marks.



Plate 69: Shipping mark within a side purlin of Building F.

## 6.7 Building G

### *External*

6.7.1 Building G consists of the north-eastern range of the SW/NE wing of the L-shaped merged complex. The south-eastern elevation facing onto the courtyard seems, at first glance, the same construction as the adjacent Building F (Plate 70). However, internal evidence discussed in the preceding building indicates that these are two merged structures built with the same type of bricks and laid in the same style and including comparable diamond-shaped vents. The wall has been modified with the insertion of later openings and is now partially destroyed around the central area where a large hole exists between the jamb of a former window opening and a blocked up doorway (Plate 71 and 72).

6.7.2 There are two inserted window openings with segmental arched heads created with a single course of headers. These window openings are now blocked with bricks (Plates 73 and 74). Of note is a slightly unclear jagged joint above the head of the south-westernmost window opening whose position matches the irrefutable internal division between these two buildings (Plate 74). The north-eastern end of the façade is mostly obscured by a later lean-to structure (Building H).



Plate 70 South-eastern elevation of Building G facing onto the courtyard.



Plate 71: Partially destroyed wall with remnants of a former window and a blocked-up doorway (scale 2m).



Plate 72: Detail of the remains of a blocked-up doorway, looking north-west (scale 1m).



Plate 73: Blocked-up window opening abutted by Building H, looking north-west.

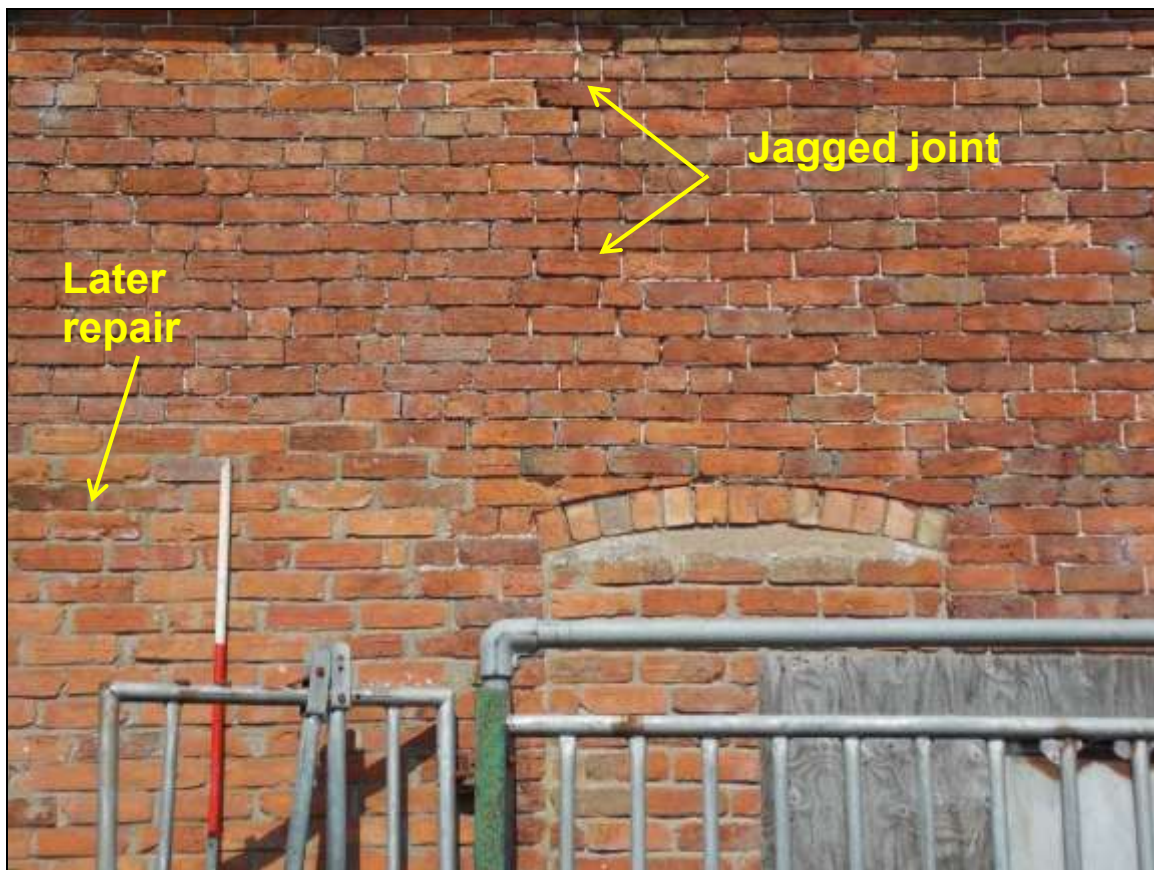


Plate 74: Blocked-up window opening and unclear jagged joint above the segmental head (scale 1m).

*Internal*

6.7.3 Internally it is an opened space with partially rendered brick walls, a concrete floor and exposed roof trusses (Plate 75). The division between this range and the contiguous Building F would have consisted of a brick gable wall which has been removed. Testimony of the removed gable wall can be discerned within the internal wall which contains a clear vertical scar with partially hacked off bricks above the segmental head of the inserted window (Plate 76). Moreover, the removal of this wall involved the construction of improvised timber trusses supporting the corresponding purlin extremities which would have formerly been sustained by the gable wall (Plate 77). Apart from the *ad hoc* end truss, the range comprises two sturdy king-post trusses with raking struts and pegged joints carrying two tiers of trenched purlins supporting the common rafters. The upper faces (looking north-east) of the trusses contain the pegs' heads and associated carpenter's assembly marks (Plates 78 – 81).

6.7.4 The truss composition and design are contiguous with the roof structure of the adjacent Building A suggesting an integral configuration of a former building composed of four bays demarcated by the three trusses within the casing that included the removed gable wall between Building F and G.



Plate 75: Internal view of Building G with partially demolished wall, looking south-east (scale 2m).



Plate 76: Vertical construction scar (arrow) and improvised trusses above it, looking south-east.



Plate 77: Detail of improvised trusses supporting the edges of side purlins of Buildings F and G.



Plate 78: North-eastern king-post truss with pegged joints, looking south-west.



Plate 79: Upper face of truss with peg's heads and associated carpenter's assembly marks.



Plate 80: South-western king-post truss of Building G, looking south-west



Plate 81: Upper face of truss with peg's heads and associated carpenter's assembly marks.



## 6.8 Building H

6.8.1 Building H is a small lean-to structure projecting into the courtyard from the wall of Building G and abutting south-western wall of Building B. It is built with modern bricks and has a shallow asbestos corrugated roof. Internally it contains a raised brick trough which would have comprised a sliding gate as indicated by the surviving railing with a pulling chain attached to a plate on the internal wall of Building B (Plates 82 – 84). This structure was erected in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and has no historic significance or architectural merit.



Plate 82: Lean-to extension Building H abutting the corner of the L-shaped wings, looking north.



Plate 83: South-eastern wall of Building H (scale 2m).



Plate 84: Internal view of Building H, looking north (scale 2m).

## **6.9 Building I**

6.9.1 Building I is another small lean-to which abuts the gable wall of Building F and is built with modern bricks and an asbestos roof. Internally it consists of a passageway which leads to two separate small rooms with concrete floors and partially rendered walls (Plates 85 – 88). This structure was also erected in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and has no historic significance or architectural merit.



Plate 85: Building I abutting the gable wall of Building F, looking north-east (scale 2m).



Plate 86: Doorway facing onto the courtyard, looking north-west (scale 2m).



Plate 87: Passageway of Building I, looking north-west (scale 2m).



Plate 88: North-western room of Building I.

## **7 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSET**

7.1 The results of the historical research, together with the building recording, successfully identified clear evidence of different phases of construction. This is represented mainly by changes in the buildings' plans, with additional extensions and the insertion of building materials. A general phased plan of the buildings has been compiled based on the results (Fig. 5).

7.2 The architectural design, as well as some of the internal fixtures and fittings (e.g. roof truss), is typical of the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Later alterations and extensions occurred through time as well as substantial repairs and rebuilding brickwork. The primary use of the barn complex has changed through time.

7.3 In term of its setting, the L-shaped range of Yockings Gate Farm is viewed from Black Park Road, although only from its close vicinity as the road is fairly narrow and the fields to the southern side of the road. Rural buildings are a significant part of the landscape of the district and play an important role in creating the character of the local environment. Historic buildings, including traditional agricultural and industrial buildings, are part of the nation's historic environment; as such, they provide continuity with those who have gone before us and help future generations to learn about life in the past. While a few historic rural buildings will be of such importance that they should be maintained as they are without change, most will be able to accommodate new uses.

7.4 To assess the L-shaped range's wider significance several criteria must be considered.

*Condition*

7.5 The L-shaped range, although mainly disused, has been historically well maintained, and the original elements are in generally good to moderate condition. However, there has been considerable repair/rebuild, including large sections of masonry being refaced. There are also areas where the masonry has been destroyed and even fully removed as is the case with the north-western elevation of the SW/NE wing except for the surviving arcade, as well as the dismantlement of some of the internal gable walls. There have been considerable alterations with the removal of primary openings and the insertion of later windows, doorways, passageways, etc. The original functionality of the merged buildings was not ascertained due to the lack of associated primary fixtures and fittings and substantial alteration. It is noteworthy that no sign of threshing floor with associated wide doorway was identified.

*Rarity*

7.6 The construction of the L-shaped range is relatively widespread in the district area and similar examples exist in some numbers in the neighbouring areas of Shropshire. With changing agricultural practices and the pressure for rural development in the last three decades unconverted traditional farm buildings are now becoming increasingly scarce, and this scarcity adds some significance to the heritage value of the present buildings.

*Group value*

7.7 The L-shaped cross wing barn forms part of a farmstead complex dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This complex also includes a number of fairly contemporary buildings in various states of completeness, which in some cases include substantial later repairs and alterations. The principal element that contributes to the value of the current farmstead is the L-shaped cross wing barn facing the courtyard, although the barn has been considerably mutilated by later repairs and alterations. As such the farmstead cannot be considered a 'planned' or 'model' farmstead, but represents an interesting group of traditional farm buildings with subsequent additions.

*Associations*

7.8 The building range has no known historic associations with significant persons or events.

*Significance*

7.9 The L-shaped range is a non-designated heritage asset which has a particular charm, being built in the traditional vernacular style and local materials, and every effort should be made to ensure that the basic fabric, form and exterior appearance of the core structures is retained during conversion to a secondary use.

*Impact Assessment*

7.10 Whilst the L-shaped range is of substantial importance both as a contribution to the landscape and setting of the farmstead as a whole, the range is currently moderately altered and suffering from neglect. The building survey identified the significance of the standing structures although there are limited significant features, fixtures and fittings to be impacted on the proposed development. Structural elements will be retained although additional openings will impact upon the masonry of the merged range. A table has been arranged which summarises their chronology and highlights their architectural elements of significance (Table 2).

CODE	DATE	ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER
A	L18/E19 C rebuilt L19/E20 C	Timber ceiling/floor structure, roof structure with king-post truss, south-east primary brick wall
B	L18/E19 C	Brick walls, timber ceiling/floor structure
C	L18/E19 C altered L19/E20 C	Brick walls including internal gable with vents
D	L18/E19 C altered L19/E20 C	Brick wall, ceiling beams
E	Mid-20 C	None
F	L18/E19 C	Brick wall, roof structure with king-post trusses
G	L18/E19 C	Brick wall, roof structure with king-post trusses originally part of loft Building A
H	Mid-20 C	None
I	Mid-20 C	None

Table 2: Summary of buildings' chronology and architectural character.

7.11 The proposed conversion of the L-shaped range will offer an opportunity to remove some of the later, and more unsightly, accretions from the exterior whilst ensuring the future maintenance of the farmstead. Where possible the design of the conversion should seek to retain historic fabric by utilising existing openings (and re-opening currently blocked former openings as necessary). The preliminary design of the development proposes minor alterations to the main structures. This proposal avoids major alterations particularly on the main front elevation facing to the courtyard which will retain the primary openings. Moreover, combination barns such as the one concerned here are less sensitive to change than those with minimal external openings.

7.12 The proposed development includes additional openings within the masonry in order to accommodate viable dwelling spaces. As the L-shaped range has few interior structures, there is ample scope for low-impact and reversible conversion without significant structural alterations. The majority of the proposed alterations will be in the interior of the building, and are minor in the context of the overall development and it is intended to retain most of the existing openings. Sympathetic alterations will have little impact on the significance of the heritage asset and the conversion of the buildings will enhance its setting, by preventing the site falling into disuse.

7.13 The Historic England (2006) publication *'The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice'* should be consulted for further detailed advice which

is available online (<http://www.therooflightcompany.co.uk/assets/files/English-Heritage-Farm-Buildings1.pdf>).

7.14 In rural areas, landscape design is particularly important and may be central to the acceptability of a scheme. Screening should be used to minimise any negative impact of development but should not aim for complete concealment. Important views of traditional rural buildings should be retained. The proposal would have a negligible negative impact on the views from and to the site as the main structures will be retained with little alterations.

7.15 On consideration of the above it is apparent that the application proposals would have a negligible negative impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the buildings. Considering the present situation of the buildings, a sympathetic programme of work represents an opportunity to secure the future of the building, and will enhance the character and appearance of Yockings Gate Farm and surrounding area.

7.16 The level 2 Historic Building Recording has provided an account of the developmental history and purpose of the buildings that is deemed to be appropriate to the buildings' significance as well as an appropriate preservation by record prior to the proposed conversion. The interpretation of the buildings' development was not hampered by obscured evidence that may be revealed during the course of conversion works. For these reasons no further historic building recording work, e.g. intra-demolition monitoring and recording, is recommended.

## **8 PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT**

8.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

8.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

## **9 STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY**

9.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

## **10 ARCHIVE**



10.1 A paper and a digital archive, consisting of the final project report in PDF/A format, will be deposited at the Shropshire Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (within the OASIS records).

## 11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

11.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank all those involved with the archaeological project, especially Mr and Mrs Evans, for commissioning the work and Rob Lee of Porthand Surveyors for arranging access to undertake the historic building recording work.

## 12 REFERENCES

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**APPENDIX I: OASIS FORM**

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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## Printable version

**OASIS ID: archaeol5-252148**

### Project details

Project name	Yockings Gate Farm, Whitchurch, Shropshire. Historic Building Assessment
Short description of the project	building recording and assessment of farm buildings of late 18th century through to 19th and 20th century, prior to their conversion.
Project dates	Start: 12-05-2016 End: 13-05-2016
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Building Recording
Monument type	BARN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Photographic Survey", "Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	SHROPSHIRE NORTH SHROPSHIRE WHITCHURCH RURAL Yockings Gate Farm
Study area	100 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 5512 4221 52.975048680916 -2.668432388159 52 58 30 N 002 40 06 W Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Project director/manager	Robin Holgate
Project supervisor	Alvaro Mora-Ottomano

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive Exists? No

Paper Archive Exists? No

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Yockings Gate Farm, Whitchurch, Shropshire. Historic Building Assessment

Author(s)/Editor(s) Mora-Ottomano, A.

Date 2016

Issuer or publisher Archaeological Research Services Ltd.

Place of issue or publication Bakewell

Entered by Alvaro Mora-Ottomano (alvaro@archaeologicalresearchservices.com)

Entered on 19 May 2016

## OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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