

**GYPSY CORNER FARM  
PARK LANE  
LITTLE CHISHILL**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**



Essex County Council

**Field Archaeology Unit**

May 2012

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PARK LANE  
LITTLE CHISHILL**

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**GYPSY CORNER FARM  
PARK LANE  
LITTLE CHISHILL**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**

**Client:** Hibbs & Walsh Associates

**FAU Project No.:** 2577

**NGR:** TL 4269 3615

**Planning Application:** UTT/2048/11

**OASIS No.:** 124992

**Date of Fieldwork:** March 2012

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A programme of historic building recording was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on an early 20th century planned farm prior to residential conversion. The work was commissioned by the architects, Hibbs & Walsh Associates and carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Management team of Essex County Council (ECC HEM), who also monitored the work.

Copies of the report will be supplied to ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) at County Hall, Chelmsford. The archive will be stored with Saffron Walden Museum. An OASIS online record has been created at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/index.cfm>.

Gypsy Corner Farm is an example of a later planned farm, constructed in 1914 by the Crossman estate on previously undeveloped land and farmed by the same family for two generations. The original layout survives intact although, since farming has shifted to a new site across the road, much of the historic structure has been adapted for other uses. None of the buildings are listed.

The importance of recording historic farm structures prior to conversion is outlined in *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape: Finding a Future for Historic Farm Buildings* (University of Gloucester et al 2006), while the development of agriculture in East Anglia from the

agricultural revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries onwards and changes in technologies and plan form, is regarded as an important area for further research in the Regional Research Agenda (Brown & Glazebrook 2000).

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Site location and description**

Gypsy Corner Farm is located in open countryside in the north-west of Uttlesford District, close to the border with Hertfordshire on the south-east side of Little Chishill (TL 4269 3615). The modern farm straddles Park Lane, with the now redundant historic core and farmhouse lying to the north and modern pre-fabricated structures to the south (fig.1).

The planned farm is centred on a large courtyard complex comprising four yellow brick ranges orientated from south-east to north-west. Other structures are located to the north-west and south and there is a contemporary farmhouse in a separate plot to the west (fig.1). The courtyard complex has a covered entrance on the south-west side and includes former open-sided cart sheds, shelter sheds and houses for cattle, bullocks and pigs, all of which have been adapted to serve other uses over time. For convenience, reference to the ranges has been simplified to north, south, east and west, and each component is numbered and described using its original or earliest known use, based on conversations with the farmer, Mr Bates, as depicted on the block plan (fig. 1) and as follows:

- South range (covered entrance, cow houses 1 & 2 and milling room 3)
- East range (bull ring 4 and pig shed 5)
- North range (shelter sheds and loose boxes 6)
- Part of west range (workshop 7, cart shed 8 and generator room 9)

Other outlying structures are also included briefly for the record, though not all are included in the conversion plans

- Meal shed (10)
- Stable/cart shed (11)
- Modern pole barn (sheep) (12)
- Farmhouse and field barn (not included in the survey)

The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER 40760) states (2008):

*Planned Farm buildings built c.1897-1920 on Chrishall Common for stock rearing. The planned farm adopts a rectangular courtyard plan with single and two storey yellow brick and slated ranges arranged around a central courtyard. Accessed by a covered carriageway from roadside. The courtyard was formerly divided into two stock yards, with open shelter sheds and cattle houses to each yard. Stock rearing has since ceased and the present planned farm buildings remain in use but in a secondary non-farming capacity. The farm now concentrates on arable and is a rambling collection of modern buildings built on the other side of the Chrishall Road.*

The modern entrance to the farm is a gravelled entrance between the courtyard complex and perimeter wall of the house (fig. 1 & plate 1) but traditionally it was facing the covered entrance of from the road. The surrounding area is laid to tarmac and concrete. To the north are paddocks and open grassland and to the east a duck pond and an isolated modern farm building. The farmhouse is located to the west, bounded by a brick wall.

Later conversions and adaptations have affected most of the buildings, particularly those of the west range and building 11, the former stables, which latterly formed part of a catering business run from the farm. Otherwise the external historic character of the buildings has been largely preserved and is in good condition. Interiors have either been refurbished or put to other uses and there are few historic features remaining or visible.

## **2.2 Planning background**

A planning application for conversion to residential use was submitted to Uttlesford District Council (UDC) in October 2011 (UTT/2048/11). Mindful of the impact of conversion on the historic integrity of the buildings, the importance of farming in the East Anglian region and the comparative rarity value of planned farm complexes such as these, ECC HEM advised UDC that a full archaeological condition should be attached to the planning consent, based on advice given in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (CLG 2010). The condition required a historic building record to be made of the buildings to be impacted upon by the development.

## **2.3 Historical background & development**

Cartographic and documentary research was undertaken at the Essex Record Office (ERO), Chelmsford, to understand the origins and development of the farm. No documentary material was available but historic maps proved useful and extracts of these are included in the report as figures 2 and 3. Information about the history of the farm and the functions of

the different parts of the farm, in his lifetime if not originally, was provided the present farmer and owner, Mr Bates.

According to Mr Bates, the farm was established in 1914, by the Crossmans, former owners of the Cockenach estate near Royston, who had bought Little Chishill manor. The farm and farmhouse were built on a previously undeveloped site and Mr Bates' father was the first tenant. Fourteen labourers worked the farm in the early days and there was around 900 acres of land (Mr Bates pers. comm.), mainly pasture.

The farm and farmhouse are first depicted on the 1921 Ordnance Survey map in a form very similar to today showing shelter sheds and stock houses for cattle-rearing around two yards and cart sheds and stables closer to the farmhouse (fig. 2).

Within the lifetime of the present owner, i.e. the post-war period, the farm was heavily involved in pig-rearing and sheep, and also reared turkeys (in the old generator room 9) and chickens in building 13 (not included in the survey). Sheep shed 12, also used for pigs, was added to the complex and a small extension added to meal shed 10.

After Mr Crossman's death in 1970, the estate farms were sold off and Gypsy Corner Farm was bought up by the Bates family. By 1981 (fig. 3), the focus of the farm had shifted to the south where a new complex had been built, based on arable farming and marking a significant change in direction leading to the 1914 planned farm becoming redundant. After this time, the old buildings were largely stripped out and refurbished for various uses, most markedly a catering business and garages adopting the west range. Many of the other buildings were used for storage purposes and workshops and remain as such to the present day.

### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the historic building survey was, as outlined in the brief, to provide a detailed record of the planned farm in its present state prior to conversion. Part of the west range and building 13 were not subject to record since they are to be retained by the farmhouse in the development.

As part of the work, the record was required to address the following: plan form of the site, materials and method of construction, dating and phasing, function and internal layout,



fixtures and fittings, additions and modifications, process flow (if represented) and also the context of the farm within its contemporary landscape.

#### **4.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS**

The farm was recorded using drawings (floor plans, sections and elevations) supplied by the architects. A numbered block plan has been produced to show the separate functional elements within the planned form (fig.1). Their previous or most pertinent farm functions, as far as is known, are provided and discussed in the text and shown on the floor plans (figs. 4, 6 & 7). Current function is also provided in the text.

A series of photographs (digital and 35mm black & white print) were taken internally and externally. Specific shots were taken of areas of important architectural detail, fixtures or fittings. A representative selection of photographs is reproduced at the back of the report as plates 1-24. The remainder can be found in the archive.

Documentary and cartographic research, outlined in section 2.3, was undertaken to investigate the origins and development of the farm.

#### **5.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS**

Due to the large size of the buildings, the plans in the report are reproduced at 1:150 scale and sections at the more common 1:50.

##### **5.1 Planned farm (buildings 1-9)**

In the following descriptions, the planned farm refers to the complex around the yard rather than the farm as a whole. External descriptions are arranged by the outer elevations first, followed by the yard elevations, and the different internal areas described by range following a clockwise pattern starting with the main south elevation. Internal descriptions and plans highlight original fixtures and fittings rather than record modern interiors.

##### **5.1.1 General description**

The planned farm is constructed in 9-inch gault bricks (220 x 105 x 60mm) laid predominantly in Flemish bond with a lime cement mix. It has a symmetrical four-range oblong layout occupying an area of 25 x 40m, i.e.1000m<sup>2</sup>. It is built in a homogenous and

plain style apart from the covered entrance on the south elevation which is relatively decorous and provides a focal point. The roofs have a shallow 30° pitch and gabled ends. All have been re-clad in modern brown pantiles on a felt backing, replacing the slate roofs recorded on the EHER. Roof-framing is built in machine-sawn pine and is identical in each range and all other contemporary buildings. Its form utilises an iron king rod, bolted above the apex and below the tie beam, with a nailed raking strut either side and the rafter sitting on purlins resting on the frame and fixed by cleats (fig. 5).

All ranges were built one storey high, although first floors have been inserted during modern refurbishments of the west range. Bays are indicated by brick buttresses capped with moulded red ashlar bricks that usually, though not always, match the positions of the roof trusses. Original features such as windows and doors have generally been replaced with modern forms. Each of the gable ends are fitted with windows (or vents) as part of the original design but replaced with modern single panes. Other windows have been refitted with timber casements with aluminium fittings, made to fit existing segmental arched heads. PVC rainwater goods have replaced original iron ones.

The yard is clean and tidy apart from a few articles gathered around the edges. It is laid to concrete with none of its former divisions surviving. Three cast iron drain heads, manufactured by 'N Varty' of Royston are the only *in situ* historic features (fig. 4).

### 5.1.2 External descriptions (outer elevations)

The main **south range** (plate 2) faces onto the road and comprises the gable end of the west range and a long 13-bay range (fig. 4). The covered entrance is located centrally and features a slightly steeper (45°) roof built onto a relatively elaborate exposed timber roof frame that comprises a pegged king post and collar purlins, plus curved collar brackets and struts (plates 2 & 8). Originally there were wooden gates but these were damaged on occasions by the wind and removed (Mr Bates pers comm.). On the second and fourth bays either side are modern casement windows inserted into earlier apertures, probably once accommodating wooden air vents. The window bays are decidedly narrower and do not reflect the location of trusses inside. A replaced cattle doorway is positioned to the left of the entrance in the central bay between the two window bays (plate 2).

At the west end is the gable end of the two-bay west range, the gable window of which is sealed with metal sheeting. At the opposite end, where the south range finishes in a hipped roof, is a first floor hatch, connected to the first floor of the milling room (plate 3). It is possible

that this was built for an overhead conveyor to transfer milled feed to the meal shed for mixing, though there is no evidence for this.

The **east range** (plate 3) is obscured largely by modern open sheep shed 12, that was constructed sometime before 1981. This elevation forms the rear of the former mill room, bull ring and pig sheds and retains its original form and appearance including a half-heck stable-type door at the south-west end (fig. 4 & plate 4), and no other features. The elevation is divided neatly into nine bays.

The **north range** (plate 5) faces onto a paddock and former grazing land. The gable at the eastern end (pig shed) contains an early door set on later T-hinges and above it is a modern gable window inserted into a previous opening. The main eight-bay shelter shed range contains an adapted doorway on the second bay (fig. 4). The rear wall of bays 5-7 has been rebuilt recently to counteract the lean of the existing wall (fig. 4). At the western end, the gable end of the west range contains a small lean-to brick structure, likely to be part of the original complex. Modern windows have been inserted into the lean-to and within the gable, the latter to light an inserted first floor office.

The **west range** (plate 6) faces the farm house and some later structures that are not included in the conversion plans (fig. 1). This range was converted some time ago into offices/kitchens for a catering business for Mrs Bates and as a garage, which is still in use by the owner. The garage is to be retained by the farmhouse and was therefore not recorded in the survey other than externally since it is part of the planned farm. Although converted and containing modern windows and doors, a section of modern weatherboarding in the middle bays bears comparison with the open-sided cart shed in the 1921 OS map (fig. 2). Some modern brickwork was observed further to the south around the single garage door, but this does not relate to any known original opening here (plate 6).

### **5.1.3 External descriptions (yard elevations)**

The main **south range** (plate 7) remains unaffected by later developments and contains the covered entrance on the fifth bay which is an interesting feature best viewed from this side (plate 8). Within the entrance are two original half-heck doors leading into the cattle houses either side (plate 8 and section 5.2).

The **east range** (plate 9) has been significantly altered in recent years. The former bull ring, occupying the brick-built bays, lost part of its wall when it was opened up for tractors but thereafter the wall was rebuilt and refurbished as an office/meeting room. The wall facing the

yard is thicker here, constructed in 14-inch English-bonded brickwork, to contain the bulls. The open-sided pig shed that forms the north half of the elevation has been enclosed with weatherboarding and a central garage door to become a carpentry workshop (plate 9).

The **north range** (plates 9 & 10) has been refurbished as stables, replacing the bay posts and enclosing two bays of the open-sided shelter shed in black-painted weatherboarding to create three stalls (fig. 4). The doorways into the loose boxes either end have been refurbished and no longer retain doors (fig. 4).

The **west range** (plates 7 & 10) contains a blank wall divided up into four bays externally. Square iron plates indicate the location of roof trusses reconfigured to suit the modern room layouts within. Photovoltaic panels are a recent addition to the roof.

#### **5.1.4 Internal descriptions**

Many of the interiors have been refurbished for other uses and to varying degrees, and it is only the south range that has not been modernised internally, though it has been affected by changes in use. Such changes have inevitably had an effect on the layout of the buildings and the survival of original fixtures and fittings. These changes have not affected the roof structure, which is well-preserved.

##### **5.1.4.1 South range** (cow houses 1 & 2 & mill room 3)

Cow house 1 traditionally kept the dairy herd, but has more recently been used as a chemical store and for general storage purposes. It has a four-bay layout, comprising the cow house and a fourth bay at the end for cattle feed (fig. 4). Entry points are located within the covered entrance and along the south elevation (fig. 4), both of which are wider at 1.2m to cater for the animals. The entrance within the covered entranceway retains its original half-heck door with its cast iron strap hinges and top vent, though the latter is now boarded up (plate 6). Upon entry on this side is the chemical store, refurbished but likely to represent the former feed store. A well-worn doorway leads from the feed store into the main area, which is used for storage purposes and at the time of the survey was full of junk (oil drums, engine parts, etc) spread over the floor and on metal racks at the north-western end. The floor is laid to concrete and has a waste gully along its centre (fig. 4), behind where the cattle stood. There are no internal partitions and the bare brick walls are whitewashed and open to the roof (plate 11). Along the north-east wall is a row of four 'Doulton' ceramic feeding/water troughs set within a low brick wall, five courses high (plate 12) and above are the remains of wall rails to former hay-feeders (plate 11, left).

On the opposite side of the covered entrance is **cow house 2**, whose décor and layout is the same as building 1, but with slightly wider bays. This also retains its original half-heck door, though some of the strap hinges have been replaced with later T-hinges. The main area that housed the cattle is also full of old junk, spread over the floor and on metal racks along the centre and the north-east side. Careful examination found no evidence for gullies or feeding troughs like in the other house, though perhaps the floor has been re-concreted. Above, there are three metal water tanks in the roof, resting on longitudinal beams fitted to the tie beams (fig. 4 & plate 13), presumably to supply former troughs, though any associated pipes or pumping equipment have been removed. At the far end of this range (south-east) is the feed store, or perhaps a pump room, though this would perhaps be impractical considering the proximity to the cattle. The entrance contains a replaced hardboard door mounted on T-hinges. There is a high hatch in the wall between the feed store and former mill room that may have taken a conveyor or simply been used to transfer feed.

There is a significant drop in floor height of 0.34m at the boundary between cow house 2 and **mill room 3** that would have prevented livestock entering this area. The mill room (plate 14) has clearly been used for storage purposes for a long time, like the other parts of the south range. In this case, the area is predominated with old tyres and steel elevator sections, perhaps providing an insight into the later technologies employed on the farm for milling the feed. Any machinery is now absent but would have been powered from an old switch box on the south-east wall (plate 14). On the south-east end is an original ledged, braced and battened half-heck door and there is a boarded-over aperture into the bull ring on the north-east wall (fig. 4), perhaps for filling feed troughs. Above, a heavy 5-inch girder supports an inserted floor above that initially appears to have been a platform over the southern half of the room that was later extended to encompass the whole, since the joists on the north side are modern. On the upper floor (plate 15), which is accessed through a crude opening in the eastern corner, are two early wall hatches, already mentioned (fig. 4). The hatch between this level and the feed store is well-preserved and is probably similar to the hatches/windows/vents that were once on the gable ends. It has a timber frame, sill and door, and a segmental arched head (plate 15). The mauve colour scheme may also be original. The hatch on the south-west wall is less elaborate, having a simpler frame and square head and if mechanisation was included as part of the early farm, would have conveyed milled feed over to the mill shed for mixing.

#### **5.1.4.2 East range (bull ring 4 and pig shed 5)**

The interiors of this range have been modernised for their current functions, although the basic internal layout of range survives. After the farm moved away from livestock-rearing,

**bull ring 4**, where the bullocks were kept, was adapted as a tractor shed, but latterly refurbished as the farm office. The farm office is now housed within the farmhouse and this area is used for gatherings such as shooting parties. Modern carpets, wall finishings and ceilings mask the historic fabric. **Pig shed 5** is now a carpentry workshop and has not been altered to the same extent (plate 16). The interior is laid out over five bays, with a concrete floor and bare brick walls, and is filled with various lathes, drills and other equipment. Within the gable between this and the bull ring is a brick air vent (plate 16) and at the opposite end is a doorway leading out to the back of the range through a wide half-heck door. The window in the gable above the door has been replaced like the others.

#### **5.1.4.3 North range** (*shelter shed and loose boxes 6*)

The north range has been refurbished for horse stabling by creating stalls and renewing the old timber bay posts to the remaining open area. Therefore, its original layout, with its open-sided eight-bay range and single-bay brick loose boxes at either end, is easy to identify (fig. 4). A modern concrete floor has been added and concrete block walls form stall divisions (fig. 4). Outer walling is built in new timber-framing and weatherboarding and new doorways added. The loose boxes either side currently store wood and a sit-on mower, as well as other items. The former shelter shed contains materials and equipment used in the refurbishment, but provides a good view of the roof framing (plate 17). The north-east end contains a doorway between the loose box and former workshop that has now been blocked (fig. 4). A second (currently empty) doorway leads out the back of the shelter shed and may be an original feature, but has been rebuilt, so it is hard to tell.

#### **5.1.4.4 West range** (*workshop 7, cart shed 8 and generator room 9*)

In recent years, Mrs Bates ran a catering company from the farm, and half of the west range (workshop & lean-to 7 and part of cart shed 8) was converted to preparation rooms and first floor offices. The other half of the range (the remainder of cart shed 8 and generator room 9), perhaps at the same time, were converted to garages belonging to the farmhouse and are not included in the survey or development proposals.

Internal inspection of the catering area showed complete refurbishment of all areas and no exposed historic fabric or features. Workshop 7 (plate 18) was last used as a preparation area and the lean-to next door was used as a freezer room. The former open side of the cart shed has been enclosed and now contains stairs to an office area above the former workshop, divided from the garages to the south-west by a likely modern wall (fig. 4). All doors and windows are modern, including the external ones into the lean-to (fig. 4). The garages were not entered during the survey.

## **5.2 Meal shed 10**

Lying 7m to the south of the planned farm unit and on a west to east alignment, this is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure contemporary with the main group. Originally it was used as a meal shed for mixing animal food, milled in building 3 opposite.

The building adopts an oblong four-bay plan form, with dimensions of 7.5 x 15m and a modern addition on its eastern side (fig. 4). The walls stand on a tall (0.5m) Flemish-bonded gault brick plinth, with the only entrance located on the north side, widened to accept a modern sliding steel door (plate 19). The gable ends each have modern single-glazed replacement windows with safety glass and steel flashing and the roof is also modern: corrugated iron with translucent roof lights.

As a workshop, the interior is filled with metal lathes, welding equipment and shelving for various metal articles (plate 20). Beside the doorway is a 'Hercules' chain hoist (made in the USA) attached to a 4-inch iron girder, used to unload heavy items inside the workshop. No internal fixtures or fittings remain. The floor is laid to concrete and much of the timber wall-framing is hidden behind white modern wall panels. A small gap all the way round between the plinth and panels reveals a primary-braced frame made from 2-inch wide studs and 4-inch bay posts, using machine-sawn timbers.

Roof construction is the same as seen in the main part of the farm, though slightly larger, i.e. the bolted iron king rod form with raking struts and, here at least, triangular braces against the walls to cope with the greater span (plate 20).

A modern structure is attached by a high wooden rail bolted to the eastern wall of the meal shed (plate 19). Its construction is similar to modern sheep shed 11. Internally, square-cut wooden posts are bolted to the rafters by wooden 'pillows' or caps and there are long rails and rafters to hold pre-formed light steel panels that constitute the walls and also the shallow-pitched roof.

## **5.3 Stables & cart shed 11**

The former stables and cart lodge stand close to the house and probably held the domestic horses and transport, rather than carts and horses used on the farm that were housed in building 8. This is typical of the building type here, constructed in the same gault bricks and with a pantile roof, formerly slated. The building lies on a broadly north to south alignment, respecting the layout of the farmhouse rather than the planned farm unit. Originally it was divided into stables and a cart shed, but was refurbished as an office and preparation and

kitchen area for the catering business. Externally it is clear that the office glazing on the western elevation (plate 21) has been inserted into the former cart shed opening and that the locations of the two doorways into the stables further to the north are probably original, even though the doors themselves are not. Modern windows have been inserted into the eastern elevation that was probably featureless apart from the brick buttresses that continue in the wall surrounding the farmhouse (plate 5, right).

Inside, the roof trusses have been used in a prominent way in the refurbished areas but there are no other exposed historic features (plate 22).

#### **5.4 Sheep shed 12**

Both sheep and pigs were formerly kept in this large open-sided shed that is now used to store straw bales and other items (plates 3 & 4). The building is modern, with a shallow-pitched roof bolted onto the east range by a long wooden rail. Like building 10, the internal bays are defined by square-cut wooden posts bolted to the rafters by wooden caps and it is likely the two are contemporary. Such a utilitarian form is a fairly universal one, displaying no architectural merit.

#### **5.5 Farmhouse & Field barn 13**

The farmhouse and former field barn are contemporary with the planned farm and although not part of the re-development proposals, these are worth summary external descriptions to complete the group.

The farmhouse (fig. 1 & plate 1, left) is a two-storeyed structure forming an L-shaped plan form. The main range faces the road and has a small entrance porch. The rear part has a modern extension built onto the eastern end. The exterior is rendered and painted a cream colour, with casement windows and tiled roofs, clearly based on the traditional farmhouse form.

The field barn was relocated to its current location and used to keep chickens, though it is now used for storage purposes. It is similar in form to the meal shed: timber-framed and boarded and stood upon a brick plinth, though in this case gault bricks mixed with red bricks (plate 23). The main entrance is on the north-east elevation and features a steel sliding door. Fenestration is provided on most elevations by narrow fixed windows and there is a corrugated iron roof.



To complete the record, plate 24 shows the modern farm buildings on the opposite side of the road.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION**

Planned farms were established by 'improving' landlords from the mid 18th century onwards, adopting the courtyard plan form of separate ranges around a square stock yard and were either built on new sites or to replace earlier more scattered farmsteads. Their intention was to make the farm work as a single co-related and self-sufficient functioning unit, set up to maximise production from arable and livestock (i.e. mixed farming). During the 19th century farming boom the courtyard form became the norm, though many smaller landowners simply remodelled their farms by building ranges around their existing barns. In the late 19th century a series of bad harvests led to an agricultural depression and the amount of cattle on farms increased as a consequence. The depression was to last until after the First World War.

Gypsy Corner Farm is an example of a fully-planned estate farm established in the early 20th century on the courtyard plan model. Being built during a time of agricultural depression, the main focus of the farm was cattle-rearing. Crop-growing was probably directed more to producing cattle feed and providing hay and bedding straw and it interesting to note the lack of a barn or granary that would have provided the capacity to store large amounts.

The layout of the farm is largely typical of the courtyard form. Original process flow can be inferred from individual historic building functions, but is not represented in the existing farm. There is little evidence of mechanisation, though from quite early on the farm was generating its own power. The entrance was located to the south, with south-facing open-fronted shelter sheds placed at the back of the stock yard, maximising warmth and sunlight. Loose boxes were located at either end to segregate sick or calving animals. The stock yard was divided into two main parts, perhaps exclusively for cattle initially, though pigs were an important element of the east range, as well as bullocks who had more sturdy accommodation and presumably a small yard of their own in the south-east corner. Fertiliser for the fields was produced in the yards through the action of the livestock treading their manure into the straw bedding. Other cattle were kept in two houses in the south range, at least in the winter months. The dairy herd was probably quite small since there appears to have been no purpose-built milking parlour, and it is therefore logical to assume that most of the cattle were being reared for beef. Each side had its own feed store. Barley was milled for feed in a room at the eastern end, presumably by mechanical means, and perhaps conveyed through a first

floor hatch to the separate meal house, where it was mixed and transferred to the feed stores. The west range, facing the farmhouse was more of an outbuilding range, containing a workshop, cart shed (probably with stables for working horses) and a generator room, though this is likely to be a later function, since it would be unusual for a farm to be generating electricity so early on. The fact that workshop 7 is linked to the shelter shed suggests that hay and straw may have been stored in here, close to the stock yards.

As the focus has changed to arable farming, encouraged by EU subsidies, the functions of the old farm buildings have changed to specific non-agricultural uses. Although the exteriors remain either intact or sympathetically converted, the historic interiors have fared less well. The best features recorded in the survey are the Doulton feeding troughs in cow house 1. Otherwise, apart from the fabric of the buildings themselves, original features are limited to occasional doors, hatches and wall vents. Such changes mean it is difficult to assess process flow on the farm other than in fairly general terms. One aspect of modern planned farms is often the employment of technological or labour-saving devices, but there is little evidence for this here. The only area where there is evidence is in the mill room, but any mechanisation here probably post-dates the beginnings of the farm.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

Being a primarily a Victorian phenomena, early 20th century planned farms are rare and their study can illuminate farming practices of the time. Gypsy Corner Farm was built as a planned farm on a virgin site on the eve of the First World War during a long agricultural depression. It is remarkable that all of the main elements of the farm survive with the original layout intact and largely unspoilt by modern additions. This isolated low-level building group blends in with the surrounding open countryside and provides a contrast with other more traditional vernacular farmsteads in the area. In particular, the use of gault bricks throughout has an affinity with Cambridgeshire agricultural buildings of this time.

Although of limited architectural significance and lacking internal historic detail, the farm buildings have been kept from neglect by careful and adaptive reuses. Potentially this is one of the latest examples of its type and therefore provides an important contribution to the study of Essex and East Anglian farm buildings of this period.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Sebastian Walsh of Hibbs Walsh Associates for commissioning the works and for supplying drawings used in the survey and to Mr Bates for accommodating the survey. The assistance of staff at the Essex Records Office is also acknowledged. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Mark Atkinson and monitored by Richard Havis of ECC HEM, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

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## **Appendix 1: Contents of Archive**

**Site name: Gypsy Corner Farm, Park Lane, Little Chishill**

**Project no. 2557**

### **Index to the Archive**

Document wallet containing:

#### **1. Research Archive**

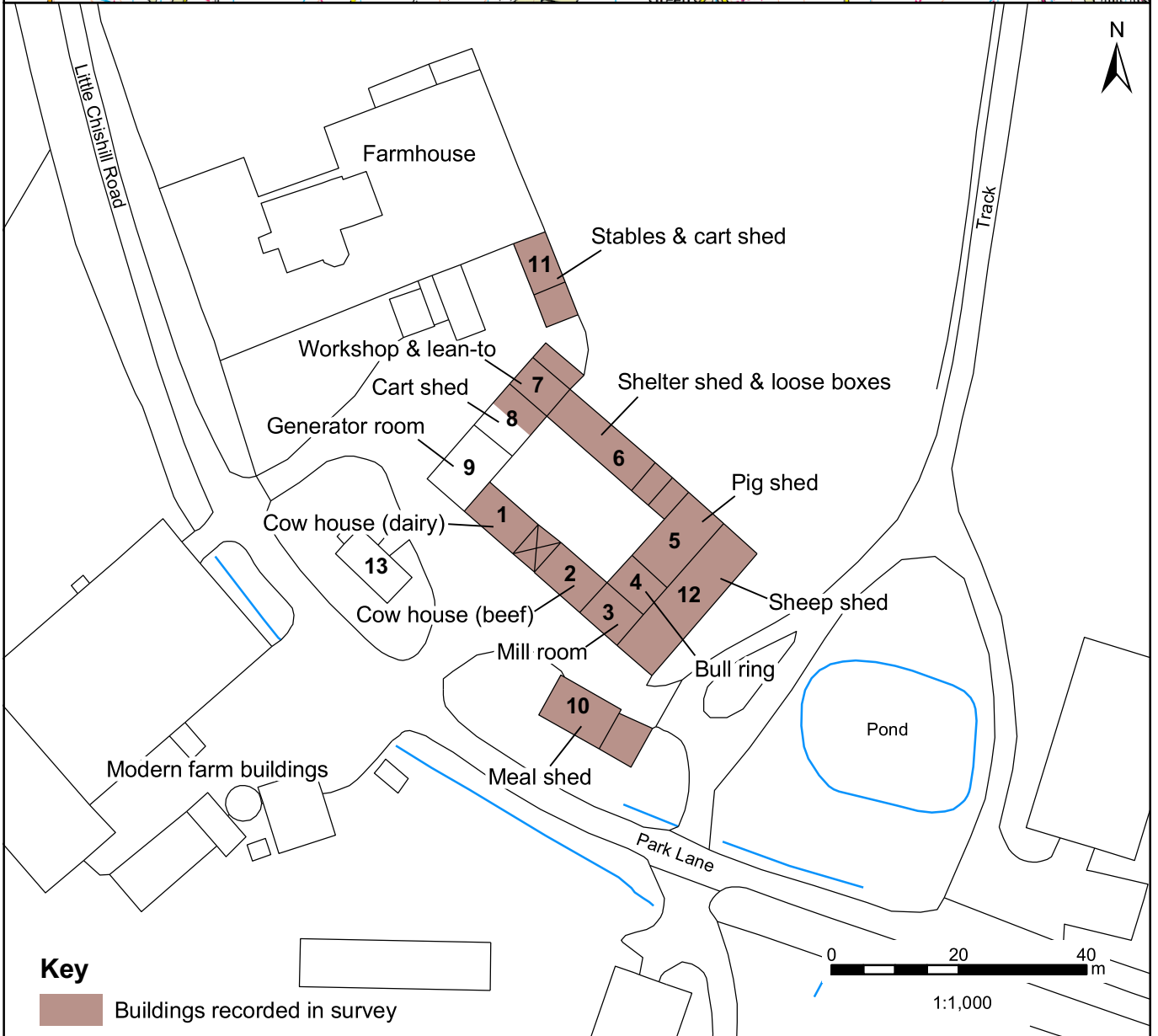
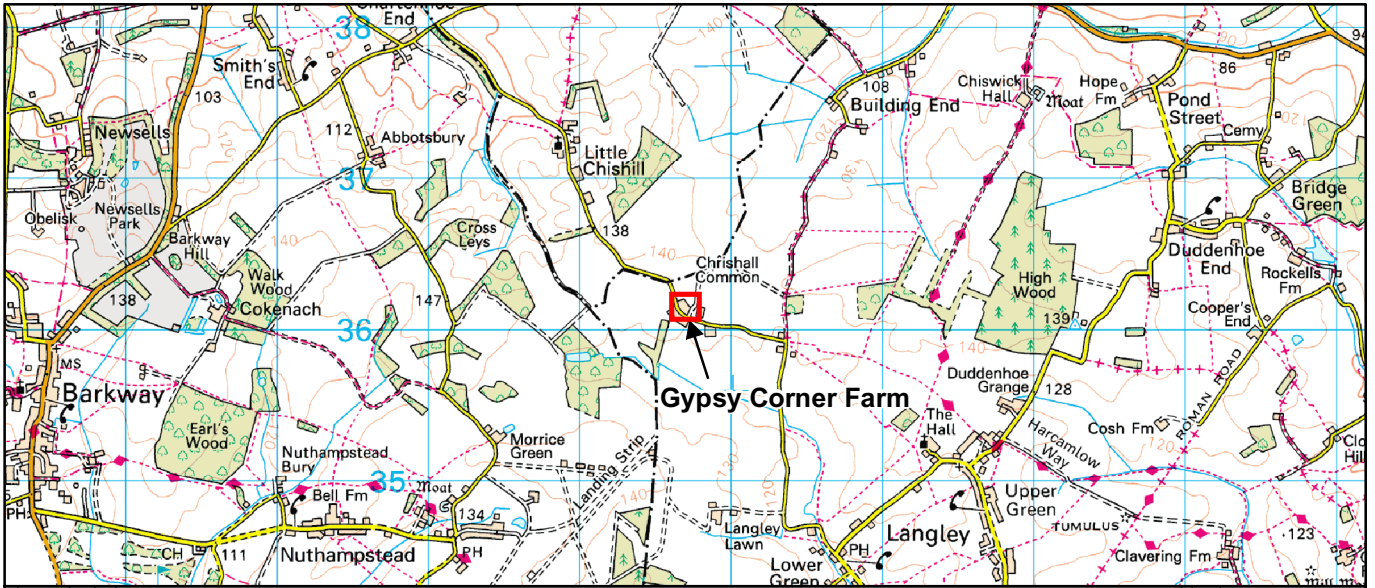
- 1.1 ECC HEM design brief
- 1.2 ECC FAU written scheme of investigation (WSI)
- 1.3 Two copies of the client report (one unbound)
- 1.4 CD containing digital images, pdf-formatted report & architects drawings

#### **2. Site Archive**

- 2.1 Photographic registers
- 2.2 Photographic record (colour digital & 35mm monochrome prints)
- 2.3 Site notes & annotated survey plans

## Appendix 2: EHER Summary Sheet

<b>Site Name/Address:</b> Gypsy Corner Farm, Park Lane, Little Chishill	
<b>Parish:</b> Little Chishill	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 4269 3615	<b>Oasis ref.:</b> 124992
<b>Type of Work:</b> Building recording	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Andy Letch, ECC FAU
<b>Dates of Work:</b> March 2012	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> N/A
<b>Curating Museum:</b> Saffron Walden	<b>Funding Source:</b> Client
<b>Further Work Anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related EHER Nos.:</b> HER 40760
<b>Final Report:</b> Summary in EAH	
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Modern (20th century)	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p>A programme of building recording was undertaken on an unlisted planned farm prior to residential conversion. The farm was established in 1914 by the owners of Little Chishill manor for cattle-rearing at a time of depression in arable farming caused by a long spell of bad harvests.</p> <p>The planned farm is centred on a large courtyard complex comprising four yellow brick ranges orientated from south-east to north-west. Other structures are located to the north-west and south and there is a contemporary farmhouse in a separate plot to the west. The courtyard complex has a covered entrance on the south-west side and includes former open-sided cart sheds, shelter sheds and houses for cattle, bullocks and pigs, all of which have been adapted to serve other uses, which has affected the historic interiors and reduced the amount of surviving original fixtures and fittings. Of these, the most interesting are some Doulton feeding troughs. Otherwise, apart from the fabric of the buildings themselves, original features are limited to occasional doors, hatches and wall vents.</p> <p>Early 20th century planned farms are a rare and under-studied resource. Gypsy Corner Farm is the more remarkable in that the original layout and all of the main elements survive unspoilt by modern buildings.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Andrew Letch	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 3rd May 2012



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Fig.1. Location and block plan showing historic building function

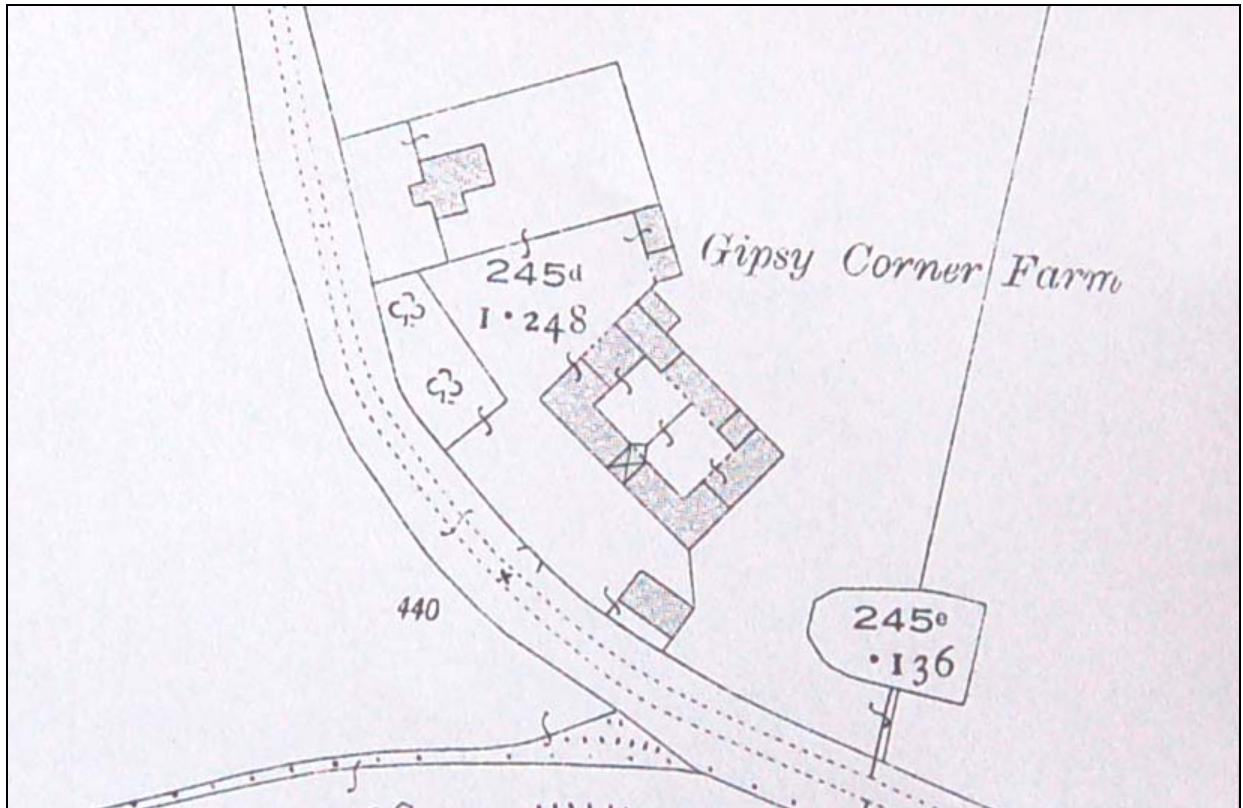


Fig. 2 Original planned farm (1921 OS map, sheet 9/3)

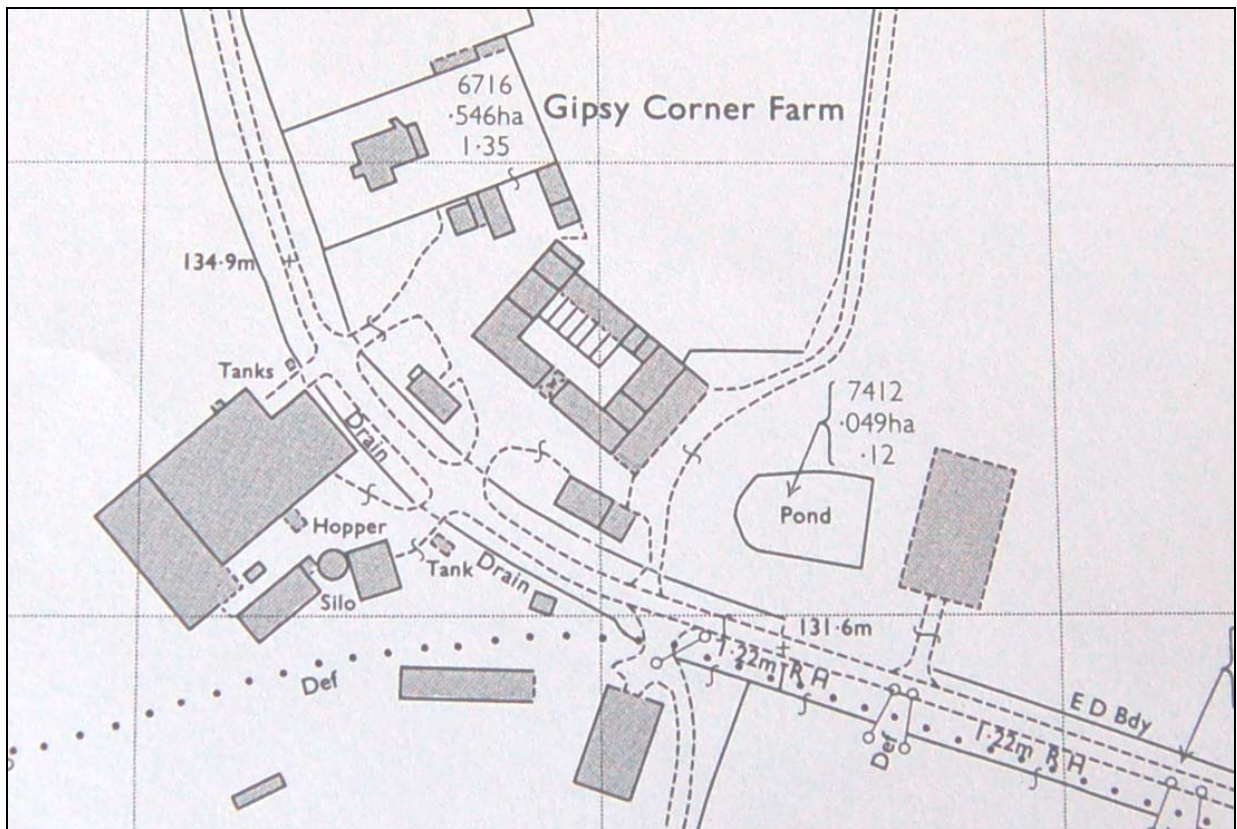


Fig. 3 Modern farm (1981 OS map, sheet TL 4236 4336)

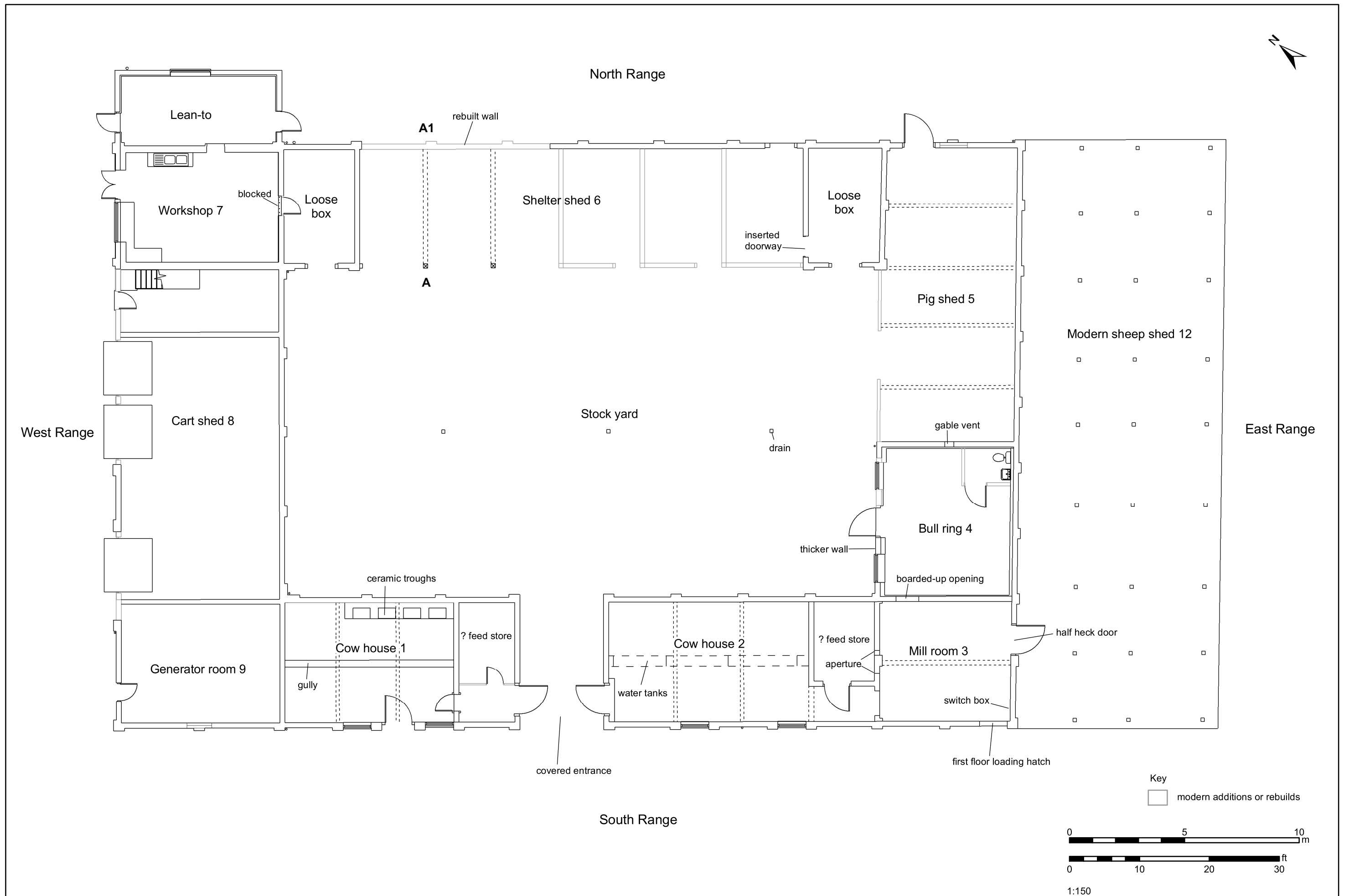


Fig.4. Existing planned farm layout



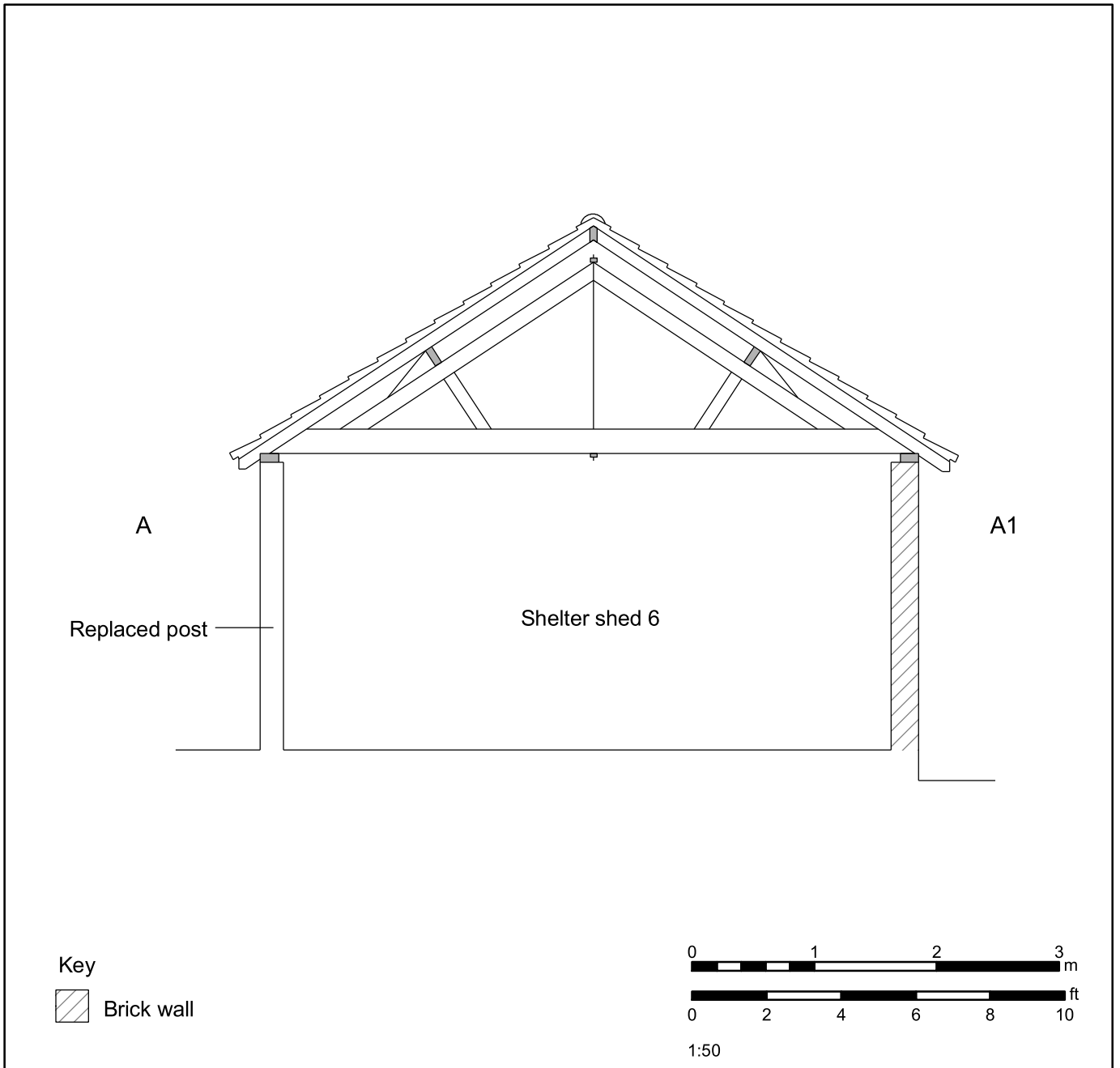


Fig.5. Representative section A-A1

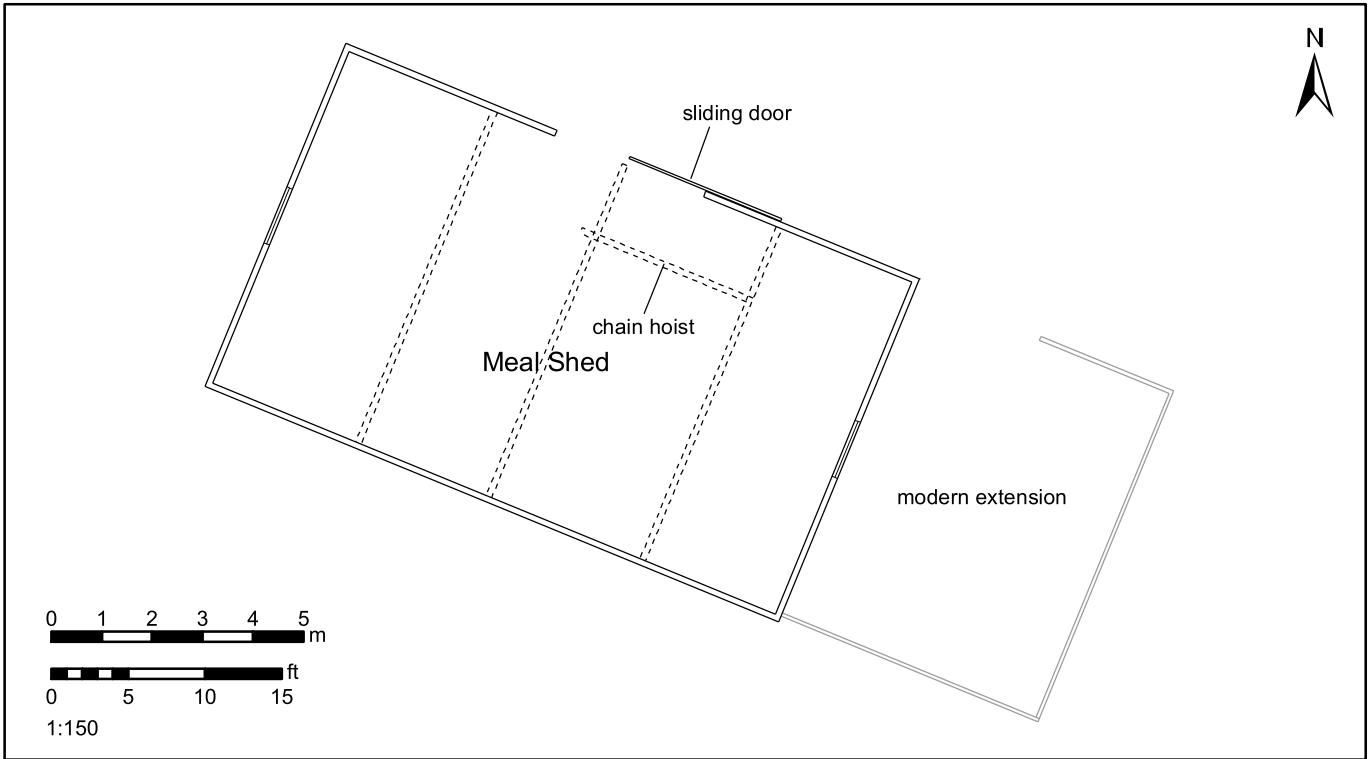


Fig.6. Plan of former meal shed

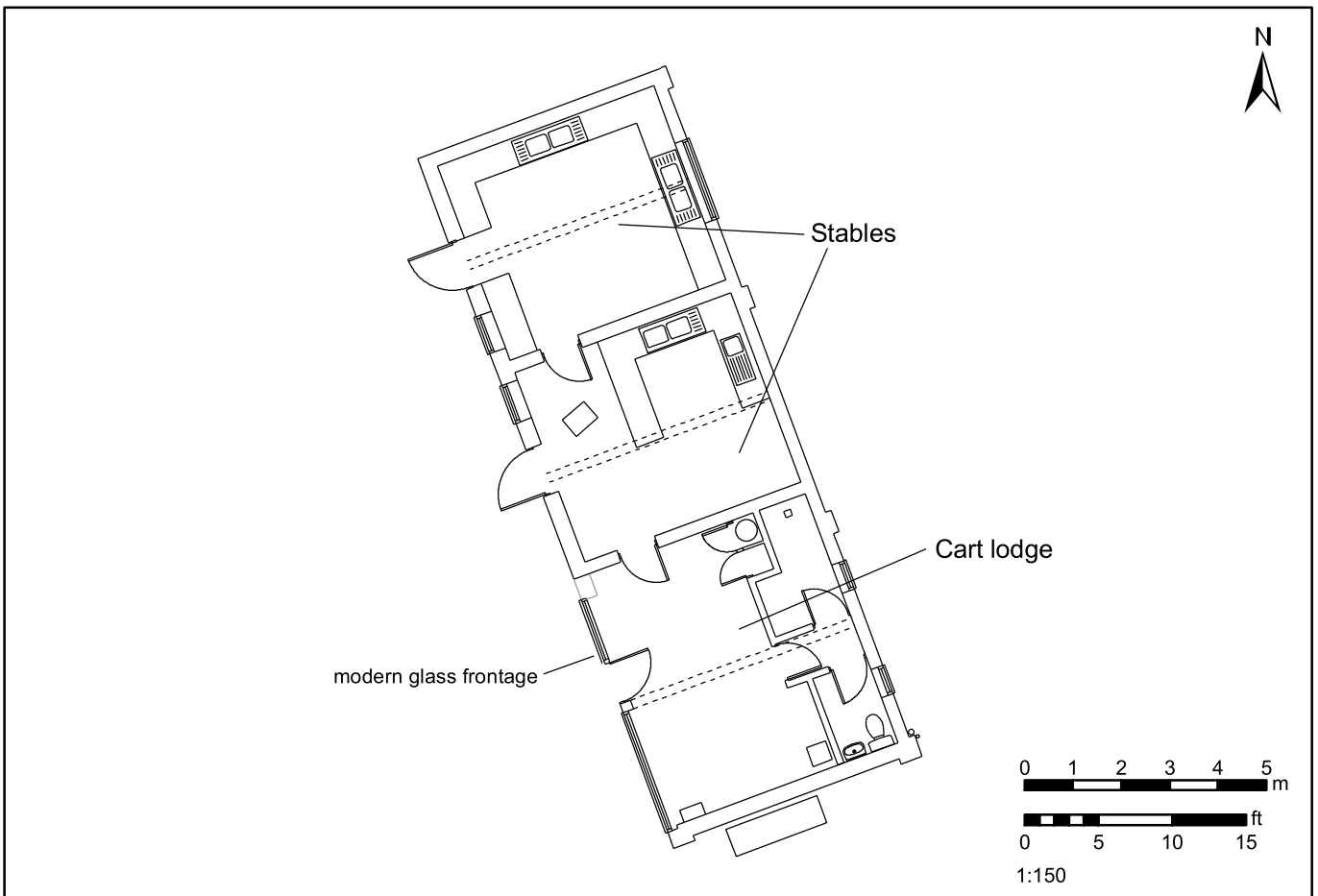


Fig.7. Plan of former cart lodge and stables



Plate 1 Modern farm entrance viewed from road



Plate 2 South range viewed to north-east



Plate 3 South and east ranges viewed to north



Plate 4 Original door on east range



Plate 5 East and north ranges viewed to west



Plate 6 West and south ranges viewed to east



Plate 7 South and west ranges viewed from yard



Plate 8 Covered entrance viewed from yard



Plate 9 East and north ranges viewed from yard



Plate 10 North and west ranges viewed from yard



Plate 11 Interior of cow house 1 viewed to south-east



Plate 12 Doulton feeding trough





Plate 13 Interior of cow house 2 viewed to south-east



Plate 14 Mill room 3 interior viewed to south-east



Plate 15 First floor of mill room viewed to north-west



Plate 16 Pig shed 5 viewed to south-west



Plate 17 Shelter shed 6 viewed to north-west



Plate 18 Interior of workshop 7



Plate 19 Meal shed 10 viewed to south-west



Plate 20 Interior of meal shed viewed to north-west



Plate 21 Stable and cart shed 11 viewed to north-east



Plate 22 Interior of cart shed



Plate 23 Field barn 13 viewed to south



Plate 24 Modern farm buildings and former farm entrance