

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF BARN & OUTBUILDINGS
AT
LITTLE WINCEYS FARM, BARDFIELD ROAD
FINCHINGFIELD
ESSEX**



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

January 2007

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Document Ref.	1684rep
Report Issue Date	19th January 2007
Circulation	Dr. T. Walker
	ECC Historic Environment Management
	Essex Historic Environment Record

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Site location and description	2
2.2 Planning background	2
2.3 Historical background & development	3
2.4 Farming in the 18th and 19th-centuries	5
3.0 OBJECTIVES	6
4.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	7
5.0 HISTORIC BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS	7
5.1 General description	7
5.2 Barn 1 & Granary 2	8
5.3 Loose Box 3	12
5.4 Shelter Shed 4	13
5.5 Stable 5	14
6.0 DISCUSSION AND PHASING	15
7.0 CONCLUSION	16
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY	19

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Process flow diagram
- Appendix 2: The working of the Victorian farm
- Appendix 3: Contents of archive
- Appendix 4: EHER Summary

FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location and block plan
- Fig. 2 Tithe map of Finchingfield, 1834 (D/CT 139B)
- Fig. 3 First Edition 25" OS map, 1881 (sheet 15.7)
- Fig. 4 Second Edition 25" OS map, 1897 (sheet 15.7)
- Fig. 5 Ground plan of traditional farm complex
- Fig. 6 First floor plan of granary (with fig. 5)
- Fig. 7 Sections through buildings

PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES

- Plate 1 Farm group viewed from north-east
- Plate 2 Farm group viewed from south-east
- Plate 3 Farm group viewed from west
- Plate 4 Barn/granary viewed from north
- Plate 5 Rear of barn/granary viewed from east
- Plate 6 Interior of barn viewed from south-east
- Plate 7 Interior of barn viewed from north-west
- Plate 8 Reused main framing on south-west side of barn
- Plate 9 Porch with steps to switch box
- Plate 10 Ground floor of granary viewed from north
- Plate 11 Detail of brickwork skin supporting first floor in granary
- Plate 12 First floor of granary viewed from south
- Plate 13 First floor of granary viewed from north
- Plate 14 Brick infill to gable end of loose box viewed from north-east
- Plate 15 Interior of loose box viewed from south-east
- Plate 16 Interior of loose box converted to pig stalls
- Plate 17 Shelter shed viewed from south-east
- Plate 18 Shelter shed and pig run viewed from north-east
- Plate 19 Exposed timber framing to shelter shed viewed from west
- Plate 20 Converted interior of shelter shed
- Plate 21 Stable viewed from north
- Plate 22 Interior of stable viewed from north-east
- Plate 23 Modern pre-fabricated sheds viewed from south-east, with barn to right
- Plate 24 Battery sheds viewed from north-west, with barn centre right

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF BARN & OUTBUILDINGS
AT
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FINCHINGFIELD
ESSEX

Client: Dr. T. Walker

FAU Project No.: 1684

NGR: TL 6779 3219

Site Code: FFLW 06

OASIS No.: essexcou1-22760

Planning Application: BTE/1824/04

Dates of Fieldwork: 18th-19th October 2006

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A programme of building recording was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) during conversion work to live/work units on a late 18th and 19th-century farm complex at Little Winceys Farm. The work was funded by the owner/developer, Dr. T. Walker, 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. An OASIS entry has been created. The archive will be stored at Braintree Museum.

The buildings covered in the survey were as follows. Their broad build dates are provided from map evidence and local knowledge:

- Late 18th-century (1780) barn and granary (Buildings 1 & 2)
- Mid 19th-century loose box (Building 3)
- Mid 19th-century shelter shed (Building 4)
- Late 19th-century stable (Building 5)

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location and description (fig.1)

Little Winceys Farm is located to the south-west of the village of Finchingfield at TL 6779 3219. Access is from a long winding gravel trackway that leads from the Great Bardfield stretch of the B1057 road to Great Dunmow (fig. 1).

The traditional farming core forms a regular C-shaped plan form around a yard that is open to the north-east, with the barn on the south-west side. Up until the post-war period, the yard was enclosed on the north-east side as well, but later structures now stand in their place, roughly consistent with the former layout, but clearly modern in character. The older, more dominant structures are the timber-framed barn and granary, built as one unit in 1780. The others are timber-framed buildings for horses and cattle dating from at least two 19th-century building phases with 20th-century adaptations. None have statutory listing. Several large pig and broiler sheds remain from the post-war period that surround the traditional farm buildings on the existing alignment. These are not affected by the development.

The farmhouse is positioned to the east of the complex and dates to the 19th century. It is in separate ownership and not part of the development scheme.

Topographically, the farmyard occupies an area of fairly level ground surrounded on all sides by flat arable farmland. The yard is unmade and has no walls or fences/gates remaining. The main yard appears to have been cleared when grain silos were installed beside the barn in the post-war period. Vegetation has been allowed to grow up around the rear of the complex, making some areas impenetrable. Where this occurred, recording was carried out from a distance and the quality of the record was not compromised.

2.2 Planning background

Braintree District Council received a planning application (BTE/1824/04) for change of use and conversion of farm buildings to mixed residential/business use in September 2004. Mindful of the possible effects on the historic integrity of the farm complex and the importance of farming in the East Anglian region in the 18th and 19th-centuries, ECC HEM attached a full archaeological condition to the planning permission, based on advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DOE 1990).

2.3 Historical background & development

Cartographic and documentary research at the Essex Records Office (ERO), Chelmsford, provided information beneficial to understanding the development of the farm. One of the main discoveries was a likely association with an earlier farmhouse called Great Winsey, standing within a moated enclosure to the west of the site. Unfortunately the house no longer stands, but the moat is still evident on modern maps. Discussions with the previous owners of Little Winceys, Mr and Mrs Bell, revealed the barn and granary were built in 1780.

Reaney, in his *Place Names of Essex* (1969) provides various spellings of Winceys from dated documentary sources: 'Wineshly' (1367), Wynsey (1596) and Windsey (1634), though the derivation of the name is unknown (Reaney 1969). It is likely to refer to the more ancient site of Great Winsey where the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (RCHM), in their 1913 inventory, recorded an early 17th-century timber-framed house with an L-shaped plan form. Remains of a moat were recorded to the south. The presence of a moat signifies likely medieval origins to the site, to the 13th-century, with the 17th-century house probably replacing an earlier one. Morant, in his *History of Essex* (1763) describes it as a 'nominal manor' in Wethersfield. This may mean it was owned by a Wethersfield family, which would explain its tie to Wethersfield church, described in the next paragraph.

In fact, a deed dated 3rd December 1633 (ERO D/DQ 41/133) records 'the sale of a farm called Winsey in Finchingfield and Little Sampford, etc. from Stephen Marshall (Morant 1763) to Walter Wilsher for use during his lifetime'. Thereafter the farm was to be held in Trust by a board of 11 local gentlemen, clerks and one 'Doctor of Physick,' its profits used to fund 'perpetual lectures to be read weekly in Wethersfield Church'. Undoubtedly the subject matter would have been a religious/moral one. Whether these talks were outside normal service times is unknown, but it forms an interesting element to the story.

Chapman and Andre's map of 1777 (not shown) is the earliest surviving cartographic record of the area studied. It pre-dates the establishment of Little Winceys by three years and indicates only open fields in its place, thus supportive of a late 18th-century foundation date for the farm. However, its accuracy is brought into question by the fact that it fails to show the house and moat at Great Winsey, which pre-date the map. It is therefore clear that, like other early maps, Chapman and Andre offers a more abstract interpretation of the landscape.

The 'pre-improvement' farm of Little Winceys is included on the Finchingfield tithe map of 1834, as is Great Winsey immediately to the north-west (fig. 2). Map detail is poor, yet the existing L-shaped barn/granary range (Buildings 1 & 2) can be seen, open to north and east.

A building stands to the north, which is probably the brewhouse mentioned in an 1883 auction catalogue. There is a second farm structure to the east, but no evidence for a farmhouse. The irregular dark areas are likely to be ponds. Unfortunately, details on ownership, occupancy, land use, acreage and tenancy have been lost from the tithe award (ERO D/CT 139A). The house at Great Wincey stands on the in-filled north arm of the moat. The main farm is also in its pre-improvement phase, with a large outbuilding, probably the barn, facing the house to the north. The trackway leading to it from the village is now a public footpath.

The first edition OS map of 1881 (fig. 3), surveyed in 1876, records the effects of improvement in the high farming era. The farm is referred to as 'Winsey' and the enclosed courtyard plan form has been adopted, incorporating the barn and granary around the yard, which is divided into four areas, for different livestock. The new buildings comprise Loose Box 3 and Shelter shed 4. Shed 4 is shown on the map as being open-sided, so building 3 may have served it as a loose box, for sick or calving cattle, or feed store. At the same time, a range of structures on the east side were built enclosing the yard (fig. 3). What is now the location of Stable 5 is taken up by an oddly-angled building attached to the east end of the granary (fig. 3). A better guide to the functional identity of the various buildings is revealed through an auction catalogue produced by Franklins & Son, two years later, in 1883 (ERO D/F 35/7/574), after the death of Hezekiah Smith, owner of the Beslyns estate. The estate consisted of Beslyns (a neo Classical mansion house), Little Winceys, Letches Farm (in Great Bardfield) and Moor Hall, together comprising 320 acres of land. The description for Little Winceys is given thus:-

'House, timber-framed and tiled, slated lean-to...detached brewhouse and pump. Farm board and plaster-built slated granary, thatched horse shed, stables for four horses and five horses respectively, large loose box and well timbered barn, thatched cattle shed, root house, and two sheds with mangers, yards divided by timber fences, long pantiled implement shed and a detached wagon lodge...'

The farm house at the beginning of the sale description can be seen to the north-east of the yard on the second edition OS map of 1897 (fig. 4), in the same position as the farmhouse of today. This gives an unusually precise date for the existing farmhouse of between 1876 (when the first edition map was surveyed) and the date of the catalogue, 1883. The second edition also shows Stable 5, which has replaced the oddly-shaped building on the previous map. Otherwise the layout remains unchanged until after 1946 (Provisional edition OS map, not shown). After this point the farm was taken on by the previous owners who began

extensive pig-rearing and battery housing alongside large-scale arable farming. They added large pre-fabricated timber pig sheds and battery houses, shown in fig.1, around the traditional farming core, and converted the north-west side to styers. Between 7,000 and 8,000 pigs were kept at one time (Mr. Bell pers. comm.). With ongoing mechanisation and higher crop yields, the barn was used to store and process grain, using modern machinery. Large grain silos were inserted inside and also in the yard. Farming finished fifteen years ago. The barn was stripped of machinery and silos removed. Most of the other 19th-century buildings were left empty, except for Loose box 3 and Stable 5 that are still in use. Some of the modern sheds are now used to store a variety of items.

2.4 Farming in the 18th and 19th-centuries

In the late 17th century, improvements in crop rotation heralded the end of the traditional three year crop cycle. Increased production of winter feed meant that more cattle could be kept for fattening and improvements in animal husbandry meant larger animals could be reared. Improvements lead to a reappraisal of farming resources and a shift away from the medieval scattered farmstead to a more uniform and permanent, inter-dependant, courtyard plan form.

The courtyard 'planned' or 'model' farm dates from the 1740s, when such farms, established by 'improving' landlords, began replacing the earlier scattered farmsteads. The barn stood on one side of the yard form, ideally the north for shelter. Sheds were arranged either side as perpendicular 'wings', one containing cattle sheds and loose boxes, the other stables. The cattle were fed in one or more enclosed yards, with an entrance on the warmer southern side, where feed and bedding stores, as well as cart lodges, were located along the roadside. In the yards manure was trod into straw, which was collected and added to the fields, increasing crop yields.

This blueprint was adopted by improving landlords. Between 1840 and 1870 improvement accelerated. This period is known as the 'golden age of farming', where the farming economy was stimulated by increased demand for milk and grain from urban areas, utilising the growing railway network. As the standard of living rose, meat became an important part of the urban diet. Thus the importance of cattle in the farming economy was realised, leading to the expansion of farms and farm buildings. By the 1860s open-sided cattle sheds were common on most farms (Barnwell 1998).

In the planned form, the buildings were arranged efficiently around the yard to follow the natural flow of materials: food and straw in exchange for muck, meat and milk. Pigs were

often kept to clear the waste, horses were used to pull ploughs and carts and sheep were kept outside or in temporary shelters away from the main yard. The ideals of 'high farming' philosophies developed the courtyard system to its full potential, aided by mechanisation, artificial fertilisers and new feeds, in conjunction with prevailing Victorian views on efficiency and organisation. In the printed form, great debate was had on the benefits of different designs and husbandry techniques.

The expense of the planned model farm in its purest form was a barrier to smaller landowners. Rather than demolish and build afresh, many farmers adapted and remodelled their farms. Thus some of the larger buildings, inevitably barns, were retained with new housing for livestock attached around a courtyard layout. This was the prevailing trend in Essex and Little Winceys Farm was no exception. Appendices 1 and 2 at the rear of the report explain and illustrate how the farm would have operated in the era of Victorian High Farming.

The golden age finished in the 1870s when bad harvests coupled with importation of cheap American grain and refrigerated beef from Argentina signalled the start of the Great Depression in agriculture. With protectionism a thing of the past, framers had to survive by cutting costs and improving efficiency still further. Although the worst was over by the end of Victoria's reign, the depression was not over until after the First World War.

Many Essex farmsteads today are composites of post-medieval barns integrated into a 19th-century courtyard layout and supplanted by 20th-century pre-fabricated structures, usually to one side of the traditional farm core. Inevitably in Essex, Britain's entry into the EEC in the 1970s accelerated the move to more intensive agriculture, amalgamation of estates and a shift away from mixed to arable farming. With increased economies of scale through larger machinery and crop yields, the smaller traditional farm buildings no longer have a role and with house prices continuing to boom, offer an attractive prospect for conversion.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the historic building survey was, as outlined in the brief (ECC HEM 2006), to investigate and record the farm buildings to RCHME level 3 standard prior to conversion. The record was required to consider the plan form of the site, materials and method of construction, building chronology, development and phasing, function and internal layout and survival of early fixtures and fittings relating to original or change of usage. The record also

aimed to understand the context of the farm within broad historical trends in agricultural development and the local/regional significance/rarity of the buildings.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

The standing buildings were recorded using base drawings (existing floor plans and sections) supplied by the architect and checked during the survey. Each structure was assigned a number and referenced to a block plan of the site (fig. 1). Floor plans (figs. 5 & 6) and sections (fig. 7) were reproduced and annotated through the standing structures. External and internal architectural descriptions were made and the function of each building was assessed, along with its relationships to others as part of the agricultural environment. In the main, the structures are described under their primary functions and evidence for any later adaptations or change of use included in the discussion/description. The granary is described under its secondary function.

None of the 20th-century prefabricated buildings are included within the development plans but they have been described briefly in the report as part of the later farm chronology and shown as plates 23 and 24. Some to the east of the yard have been built on the same footprints to earlier structures dating to the high farming phase.

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

Cartographic and documentary research was undertaken at the Essex Records Office (ERO), Chelmsford (section 2.3) to understand the origins and development of the farm. Additional information was provided by the former owner, Mr. Bell.

5.0 HISTORIC BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 General description (fig. 1)

The farmyard is set on a north-west to south-east alignment, with the traditional core of barn, granary, shelter sheds and stables (plates 1 & 2) forming an open C– shape to the north-east. During the era of high farming, this side was enclosed and entrances located centrally

to north and south, between structures that have all but one (stables 5) been removed. The modern sheds extend in a planned fashion to north and south of the main core beyond the 19th century boundaries.

5.2 Barn 1 & Granary 2 (figs. 5 & 7a)

This is the most prominent and easily-recognisable part of the farming group. It is also the earliest. The two operated in the later period as a functional group for grain processing and storage. Both are described together externally, but separately internally. They are said to have been built in 1780, the year Captain Cook discovered Australia. Although this could be the stuff of myths, its character and fabric comply with a late 18th- or early 19th-century date and the map evidence does not refute this. In the 1883 catalogue the granary is described as boarded and plastered and slated, i.e. some of the plaster had been replaced by this date in the more exposed parts with clapboard. The clapboard exterior was a secondary replacement for plaster render, probably added some time in the 19th-century. Presumably, this was also the case with the barn. With their steeper roof pitches, it is likely that both elements were originally thatched. They are now covered in corrugated fibre cement sheeting.

The condition of the structure is generally very good and dry; the timber frame is free from damp. Its aspect is slightly marred by twenty years of unchecked vegetation on the rear north-west side and the fading and algae-ridden clapboard on the main elevations. Latterly the barn was used to store and process grain, a common usage for such large buildings on modern farms. The granary was used for storing tools and spare parts for machinery, perhaps for servicing and repairing the mechanics in the main building, the barn, of which little is left. Several later grain processing/transfer apertures have been punched into the walls of the barn. Otherwise they have not been used in recent years. The granary was not built for this purpose and its original function remains unknown.

5.2.1 External description

The barn/granary (plates 3-5) is built on an L-shaped plan in the southernmost part of the complex. It has a faded clapboard exterior with steeply-pitched 50° roof clad in modern corrugated fibre cement sheeting up to the gable ends. The building's timber frame is raised on a 1.25m-high stepped brick plinth comprising soft red handmade bricks c.22-23 x 11 x 6cm (approx. 9 x 4¼ x 2⅜") arranged in a broad mixture of English and Flemish bond, in a chalky lime mortar. All except those on the rebuilt part of the porch (damaged from farm machinery) are unfrogged. The lower portion of the plinth is mainly in flint panels, with brickwork dressings and blocked areas.

The barn is a small four-bay linear structure, with south-west-facing porch on the penultimate north-west bay (fig. 5). Short cart doors face onto the yard. Both these and the canopy frame above are modern replacements and would not be practical on a large working Victorian farm. Such alterations have removed the threshold 'leap', a characteristic of 19th-century threshing barns onto the yard. Close to the corner, vegetation impedes close analysis of the opposite side, but the general view was clear (plate 3). The door here is 19th-century and in a poor state of repair. Part of the porch wall has been rebuilt in brick, having been damaged in the modern period, probably by tractor. Both ends are gabled, but the gable on the south-east end is half-hipped, following the back of the granary roof.

The granary forms the two-bay tail of the L, adjoined to the north-east (fig. 1, plate 3). The wall incorporates flintwork panels between the brickwork. Three openings face onto the yard. One is a contemporary opening and is situated in the corner formed between the two buildings. The other two are set centrally, one above the other, on each floor. The ground floor opening has the remains of a hinged shutter that controlled ventilation inside the granary. Straight joints show evidence for a partially blocked doorway. The first floor has a taking-in door, used to bring the grain in for storage after threshing. Both of these are cut through the studwork and are therefore secondary alterations contemporary with the conversion of the building to a granary.

The rear south-east barn/granary elevation has large areas of lath and plaster adhering to its timber frame (plate 5). Both barn gables retain earlier plaster as well. There are two coats visible, the latter of which, the finishing coat, contains a large amount of hair, probably goat. It's a fairly rough mix, with plenty of chalk in it. Parts of the finishing coat have peeled off, exposing keying beneath (plate 5). This is likely to be the original wall covering preserved thanks to farm buildings being built against it over the past 150 or so years (figs. 3-4). The current structure is far more modern, an attached post-war machine shed. An open doorway has been made through the ancient wall fabric to link the two. A pitching hatch exists in the barn gable, but is better seen from the inside.

5.2.2 Barn 1: internal description

Inside, the barn is laid out over four bays with a fifth bay porch (plates 6-9) and modern concrete floor. An in-filled modern elevator pit stands just within the doorway (fig. 5), used to bring grain up into the roofspace, for horizontal transfer to the grain silos.

The bays vary from between 3.7 and 4.7m, the widest being the south-west corner bay that needs to be the same width as the granary. The next widest is the midstre where the

threshing floor was located, which are usually the widest, to accommodate fully-laden carts at harvest time. Overall the building dimensions are 18 x 5.2m with a 3.8m porch projection. In the modern era, the porch contained the switch box necessary to power the grain machinery, which was accessed by a short stair (plate 9).

The frame is primary braced and fully timbered in quite slender oak or elm, some of which have not been entirely stripped of bark. Bay posts and sill beams are c.16cm wide and pegged together. The studs are tenoned to plates and nailed to bracing only. Generally the studs measure 8 x 10cm and are tall and quite waney, especially in the north-west bay. Woodworm is prevalent. Gaps between the studwork are a uniform 30cm and there are few machine-sawn replacements. Some are reused from a daubed building, their edges show axe cuts to hold wattles.

One notable exception is the inclusion of reused main wall framing, extending halfway into bays 1 and 2 (B1 & B2 in fig. 5) either side, that on the limited evidence may broadly date to the 15th- or 16th-century. Three heavy bay posts have been re-assembled each side with mid rails and new studs (plate 8). The studs are inserted into earlier tenons that in some cases contain peg holes, suggestive of a 16th-century date, when only some of the timbers were pegged to the frame. There is no evidence for bracing. The main members are pegged twice at the intersections. Top and base plates are contemporary with the main build.

Roof trusses are simple pegged collar purlin type (fig. 7a) with birdsmouth collars at half bay intervals that appear contemporary. These are both post-medieval characteristics. Little support was needed for such a light roof, constructed to take thatch. Bolted knee braces have been added beneath the tie beams and one has been 'doubled up', to take an electric motor (plate 7), that ran a conveyor system in the roofspace, formerly feeding the modern grain silos. Side struts are also later insertions, as the trusses were not initially braced. The purlins are nailed, and some have been replaced with machine-sawn versions in the 19th-century. Few of the rafters are replaced. Sections of timber approximately one bay's width have been used for the wall plates. They are generally joined by edge-halved and bladed scarf joints, a jointing technique that became common after 1600 and remained in use up to the beginning of the 19th-century. On the other hand, a single side-halved and bridled scarf joint, its predecessor, was recorded in association with the reused main frame just to the south-east of the porch (fig. 5). This type of scarf joint was used between c.1370 and the 16th century (though the latter is preferred in this case) and provides a clue to the age of the building that was partly reused in the building of the barn/granary in the late 18th-century.

5.2.3 Granary 2: internal description

The granary is contemporary with the barn as the earliest standing building on the site, but its original function is unknown. It became a granary in the late 19th-century, when the first floor was added, perhaps during one of the 'improvement' phases. In such cases, the upper floor was used for storage, to keep the grain dry and free from vermin. The ground floor may have been used for livestock or as a feed or tool store. Its construction is identical to the barn, incorporating a high brick plinth and primary braced timber-framing.

On the ground floor, the timber frame is only exposed on the north-east wall. The opposite end is clad in clapboard and both long walls are hidden by a skin of brickwork that supports the first floor (plate 10). These bricks are laid in a more orderly Flemish bond, rather than the mixed bond characteristic of the external walls. Their dimensions are slightly longer and deeper to those in the main build, and those in the inner coursing are a darker, more consistent, red, have sharper arises and are more uniform in size. They are associated with the later remodelling phase. The bricks are frogged, unlike those in the main build and are set within a clean white mortar. The telegraph posts that support the first floor are, on first viewing, later additions, but it is difficult to see evidence for replacement, so they could be contemporary. A tentative mid 19th-century date is suggested for the granary conversion, as part of the main remodelling phase.

In terms of joinery, the only visible jointing is an edge-halved and bladed scarf joint that forms the lintel to a crude doorway, cut into the brick plinth to the rear when the modern shed was constructed (plate 11, fig. 7). Although weakening the joint, it does provide a section through the plinth and skin wall that allows greater understanding of the construction (plate 11).

Machine-sawn joists are laid longitudinally to provide support for the first floor that is entered from a plain wooden stair along the south-west side (fig. 5). The stair well and walls are lined out to a height of 0.8m in 6½" horizontal planking to restrict grain loss in the main storage area (plates 12 & 13). It is unknown whether grain was stored in loose or sacked form, but the latter is more likely. No evidence for partitions was seen on either floor. One hatch was recorded close to the stairs (fig. 5), but no others were identified. The north-east gable, which stable 5 was built onto, has evidence for external plaster (plate 12), again showing the whole barn/granary was originally plastered. Internal plaster is located in the south-west gable/partition wall, which is also boarded up to the tie beam (plate 13). Two oblong apertures cut into the planking may have been linked with driving modern forms of grain transference between barn and granary.

The best timbers were saved for the barn, leading to a high level of reuse in the granary on both levels. New main framing members are poor quality; irregular and knotted, with 8cm-wide mortices. Reused timbers have similar dimensions (c.15cm) but have wider mortices of between 12-20cm and it is possible they came from the same source as the reused framing section in the barn. Such variations also account for gaps of between 30 and 48cm between the studs, where primary mortices have been reused in the later construction, especially on the rear, south-east, wall (plate 13). However, the edge-halved and bladed scarf jointing in the granary is all consistent with an 18th-century date. Like in the barn, the studs are tenoned to the sill beam and wall plates and nailed to the bracing. From what was seen, the exposed gable studs lap over the collar (plate 12), a characteristic of the unhipped gable end of the barn.

A central truss divides the granary into two equal 3.1m-wide bays, slightly narrower than those in the barn. The reused tie beam has mortice and peg holes on its soffit from the earlier building, which for the purposes of the secondary build, have been exchanged for bolted knee braces. Central V-struts carry to the purlins (fig. 7a), but otherwise the truss is identical to those in the barn.

5.3 Loose Box 3 (figs. 5 & 7b)

From the built evidence, this mid 19th-century structure is interpreted as a loose box, built during the period of High Farming for calving or sick cattle and a common feature of farms from this period. The loose box was provided to service the cattle kept in shelter shed 4, which is likely to be contemporary. In the 1883 catalogue there is an entry for 'two sheds and mangers' and the 1881 map (fig. 3) shows it as two units. The structure was converted to stables during the 20th-century, along with shed 4, which was then converted to pig styes. It is still used as a feed store and tack room for the horses kept in stable 5, but the north-west end was partitioned off when it was converted with building 4 (fig. 5). It is therefore described separately as building 3a. Building 3 is very similar to shed 4 in date, materials and plan form, and may have been built at the same time, but it varies slightly in construction detail and its ultimate adaption/function to pig styes, and is therefore described separately. Both have been much altered in the post-war period.

This is a timber-framed structure, built abutting the existing barn to complete the south-west range of buildings (plate 2). The roof is set lower than the barn but has the same pitch and modern roofing material (corrugated fibre cement) and is half-hipped at the north-west end. This method is a common way of attaching two perpendicular structures on planned farms in a courtyard setting.

Timber-framing on the north-east side of the loose box, facing the yard, was replaced by 20th-century fletton brickwork probably in the post-war period to create stables. Two stable doors with corresponding fixed windows are included in the build (plate 2), one of which leads to the tack room/stores, divided by a timber partition (fig. 5). The second (3a) leads to a raised area, perhaps for milking and stabling, converted along with the shelter shed into pig stalls (fig. 5). Timbers have been replaced on the north-west gable end too with flettons, and apertures made from the stalls inside to the run at the back (4a in fig. 5). Two fixed three-light windows light the corner internally. One of these has since been blocked (plate 14). On the south-west side of building 3, the rear elevation retains its clapboard exterior, but the brick plinth has been replaced with modern concrete blockwork. There is a small void between the south-east end wall and the barn that has been bridged on the external walls in cement render.

Internally, the structure is divided into three bays over a concrete floor. The first two bays consist of tack room and food/bedding store. However, it is clear from the position of a concrete drinking trough in the corner of the stores (plate 15), that it formerly functioned as a stall. Therefore the feed was kept elsewhere, perhaps in the larger corner bay, 3a, which is divided from the others by an inserted brick wall along the line of the roof truss (fig. 5). The internal walls are whitewashed to eaves level.

The shorter bays of loose box 3 (3.1m each) are separated into functional elements by a low wooden partition. There is no sign of former stall partitioning here, but if stabling was a secondary use, this was probably free-standing. The single large corner bay (numbered 3a in fig. 5) is twice the length, giving full dimensions of 12.4m. The loadbearing capacity of the hipped roof means there is no need for a truss here. Part 3a is separated into a concrete raised area, perhaps initially for milking, and a pair of concrete blockwork stalls for the pigs. They share a trough at the front and low apertures, formerly gated, leading to pig run 4a. The layout and construction of the stalls (plate 16) are identical to those in Shed 4.

Where they are present, roof trusses are simple and crude; plain knee-braced tie beams with V-struts to the collar purlins fashioned from stripped tree branches (fig. 7b). Waney rafters, inevitably still covered in bark, show a general lesser build quality compared to the rest of the structures.

5.4 Shelter Shed 4 (figs. 5 & 7b)

The shelter shed, also built in the mid 19th-century, is the most adapted of the historic buildings recorded in the survey. It is 19m long and linear in plan form. A modern lean-to

structure is attached to the rear (pig run 4a, fig. 1), acting as a means of bringing pigs in and out of the styes efficiently for transport to market. A concrete ramp at the north-west end probably led to the waiting lorry (plate 3). The roof is covered in red pantiles on a shallower 40° pitched and gabled to the north-east. These are not original, as the 1883 catalogue describes the building as thatched. The south-west end overlaps the hipped gable of shed 3. Parts of the original framing remain on the outer walls, but much has been rebuilt in concrete blockwork upon conversion to pig units. Prior to this, however, there is evidence to show that the building was used as stabling for horses. Both of these later functions occurred within the 20th-century.

The main façade (plate 17), fronting onto the yard to the south-east, has secondary fletton brick walling, with plain fixed windows arranged equally. These provided light to the stables, but are secondary. There is no purpose-built ventilation evident. Removed stable doors are indicated by pairs of straight joints in the brickwork between the windows where the apertures have been blocked with a single skin of flettons (fig. 5). The use of the same brick in both cases shows these 20th-century adaptations happened over a relatively short period of time.

On the rear (north-west) of the shed, the elevation is hidden by covered pig run 4a, a partially collapsing modern concrete block and Perspex-built structure with a corrugated fibre cement roof supported on a light timber frame (plate 18). Closer inspection from inside shows the rear of the shed has a primary-braced timber frame whose clapboard covering is in a poor state and falling away in places (plate 19). The timbers have been cut back to insert a blockwork plinth containing low apertures connecting the run and each of the styes. The gable end elevation retains clapboard and the original brickwork plinth that has been removed at the rear. Its bricks are the same size as those in the granary lining, which allows them to be broadly phased together to the period of remodelling, i.e. mid-late 19th-century.

Inside (plate 20), the walls are whitewashed and floor concreted. There are seven bays divided by strapped king post strut trusses made from machine sawn planks (fig. 7b). On ground level there are six identical stalls in all, approximately 2.5m wide and divided by partly-demolished brick and blockwork walls. Troughs are located beside the walkway that links the two ends from which the animals were fed and watered.

5.5 Stable 5 (figs. 5 & 7b)

The most recent structure of the five recorded can be firmly dated to the late 19th-century-1881-97- through map evidence. Such close dating is rare. It is butted against the north-east

lime-plastered end of the granary (plates 1 & 21). Like all the structures, it is built in clapboard/primary braced timber-framing on a brickwork plinth. Both ends are gabled and the roof pitched at 40° for pantiles. Again the bricks are relatively large, the same as those in shelter shed 4 and the granary lining, showing that brick size is a broad dating tool in the 19th-century.

The main north-west elevation is rendered in stucco-effect cement with a central doorway and partially-exposed plinth. The opposite (rear) elevation is contained within the prefabricated modern machine shed behind. This side has not been affected by later developments. The lower ground level here has resulted in a higher plinth on this side (1.1m vs. 0.5m at the front). Two fixed windows are situated within the cladding, one per stall inside. They are the same as those found in the later shelter shed adaptations. Carpenter's marks have been exposed where clapboarding has fallen away at the base of the north-east gable end. Here the number 1-10 have been chiselled into the studs. Were the frame to be exposed, other marks would doubtless be discovered.

The interior is plastered and whitewashed with a concrete floor sloping slightly towards the doorway, to drain off the water after cleaning. Signs are (bedding, etc) that the stables are still in use, though no horses were encountered during the two days of the survey. It is divided into two 3.2m bays by a bolted king post truss (plate 22), which is similar, though not exactly the same, as the truss in shed 4 opposite. All timbers are machine-sawn and modern boarded partitioning defines the two stalls. There is a communal trough on the far wall, with round drinking troughs in each corner. All these are built from either concrete blockwork or moulded concrete and are likely 20th-century replacements for wooden troughs.

6.0 DISCUSSION & PHASING

Little Winceys Farm was established in the late 18th-century, perhaps at the same time as the farm at nearby Great Wincey, though clearly under different ownership. Great Wincey had origins in the medieval period as a moated site, but is no longer in existence. The two kept abreast of 19th-century farming developments, like many farms in the region where climate and soil conditions were conducive to mixed farming.

A farmstead is believed to have begun at Little Winceys in 1780 when the barn and granary were built as one L-shaped block to service a mainly arable farm. The two are clearly contemporary and originally had plastered exteriors and thatched roofs. The framing inside

was adequate but, with a shortage of timber at the time, of low quality. Timbers from a more substantially-built, possibly 16th-century building were used with the new; a common practice of the time when good timber was scarce and expensive. It seems certain that the granary was built originally for another purpose, as the first floor, where the grain would be stored, is a later addition, as is the taking-in door at the front and ground floor entry below it. Its primary function is difficult to establish as the contemporary farmscape is difficult to read, but if the emphasis was on arable farming, with only a few animals kept, perhaps they were housed in this building originally.

In the middle part of the 19th-century, the era of High Farming, the farm began to expand, with the emphasis on mixed farming. The farm was 'improved' by introducing buildings for rearing cattle and storing root crops. In line with contemporary practice, a south-facing shelter shed and loose box unit was built in the western corner of the yard, again on an L-shaped plan.

Typically, these structures were timber-framed and clapboard-covered, stood on brick plinths, in the vernacular tradition. Generally by this date on most farms, brick structures are more evident, but this is not the case at Little Winceys. The barn was retained within the layout, continuing its function as part of the arable side. The granary was created by inserting a first floor stood on internal brick walls. Remodelling was essentially complete by the 1870s, when the Great Depression began.

Farming in the modern post-war period concentrated on extensive pig rearing and egg production. Up to half the 19th-century buildings were removed to the restructuring of the farm and stalls added inside the loose box and shelter shed for the pigs. Grain processing machinery and storage silos were installed within and around the barn. The farm complex continued in operation until 1991.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The farm buildings at Little Winceys Farm provide an interesting group of late 18th- and mid 19th-century farming structures from the era of agricultural improvement. The style and form of barn, sheds, loose boxes, stores and stables is typical of many such small farms spread across the county and region. Its layout and plan form reflects the contemporary view of the planned farm on a minor scale, utilising already existing valuable buildings within the new enclosed courtyard layout.

The Victorian farm was remodelled in the mid-19th century to accommodate cattle. It is likely there were dairy and beef herds and bullocks occupying the different yards. Pigs were probably kept to deal with the scraps and chickens for eggs. The 1883 auction catalogue mentions a brewhouse and sheds/stables for horses as well as cattle. However, since this time, half the contemporary buildings have been lost in the later development of the farm for pig farming and broiler houses on a grand scale.

Although not of any great architectural significance, the structures recorded are important in their contribution towards the study of Essex and East Anglian farming groups. It is unusual to discover the exact build date for any purpose-built farm building, but the barn/granary is an exception that is supported by its built fabric. Its association with an important historical event, Cook's discovery of Australia in 1780, provides a chronological benchmark for the study of agricultural structures from this time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the owner, Dr. Trevor Walker, for commissioning the works and to his architects, Acorus, for supplying such well-executed plans and sections. Thanks also to the former owner and farmer, Mr. Bell and his wife for supplying important background information on the farm. Also to staff at the Essex Records Office for their assistance. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and undertaken by Andrew Lewsey. The site was monitored by Vanessa Clarke on behalf of ECC HEM

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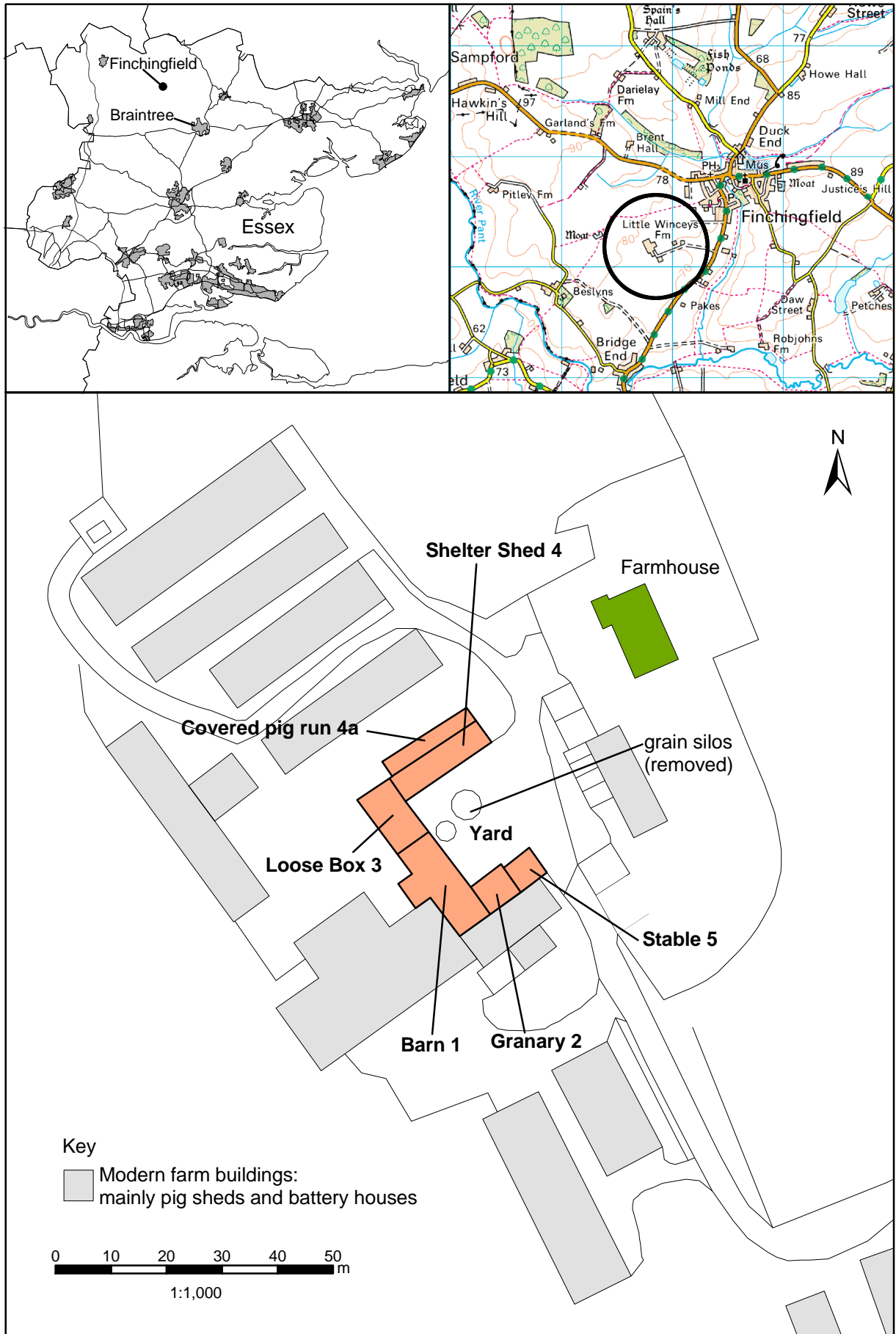


Fig.1. Location and block plan

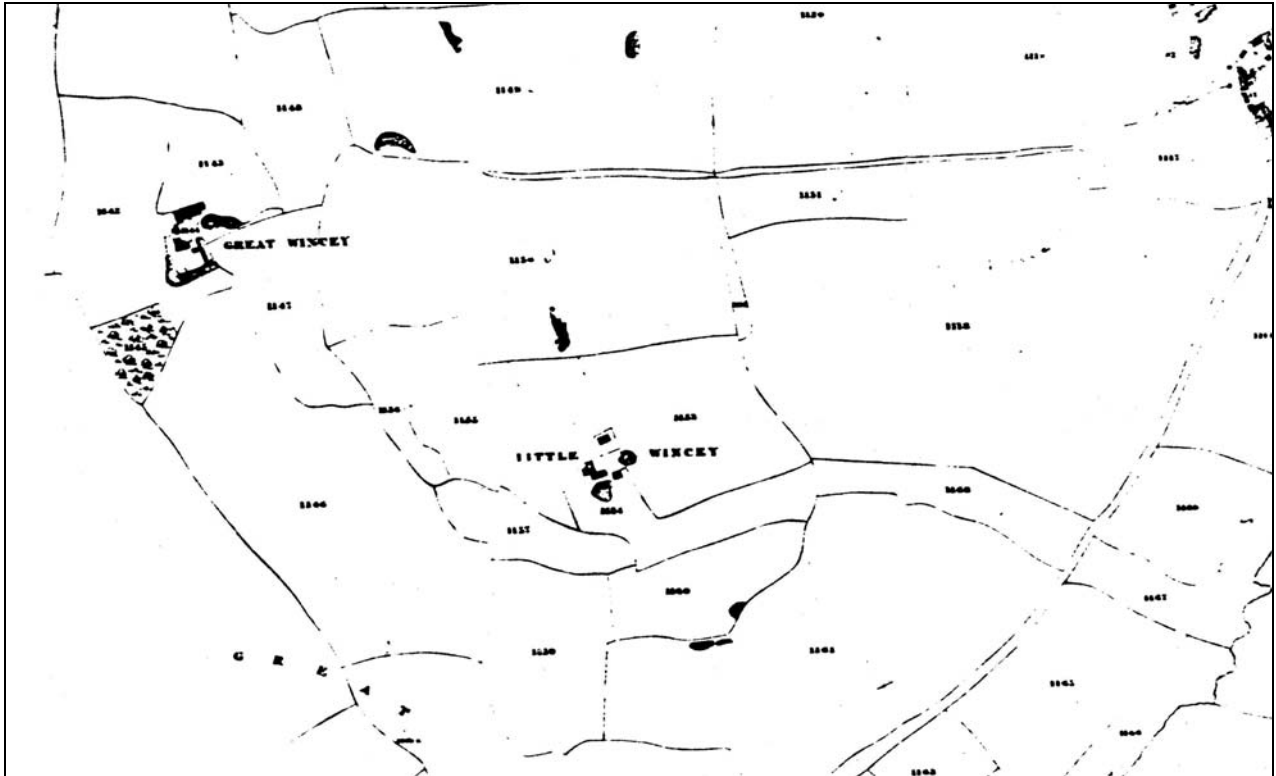


Fig. 2 Tithe map of Finchingfield, 1834 (D/CT 139B)

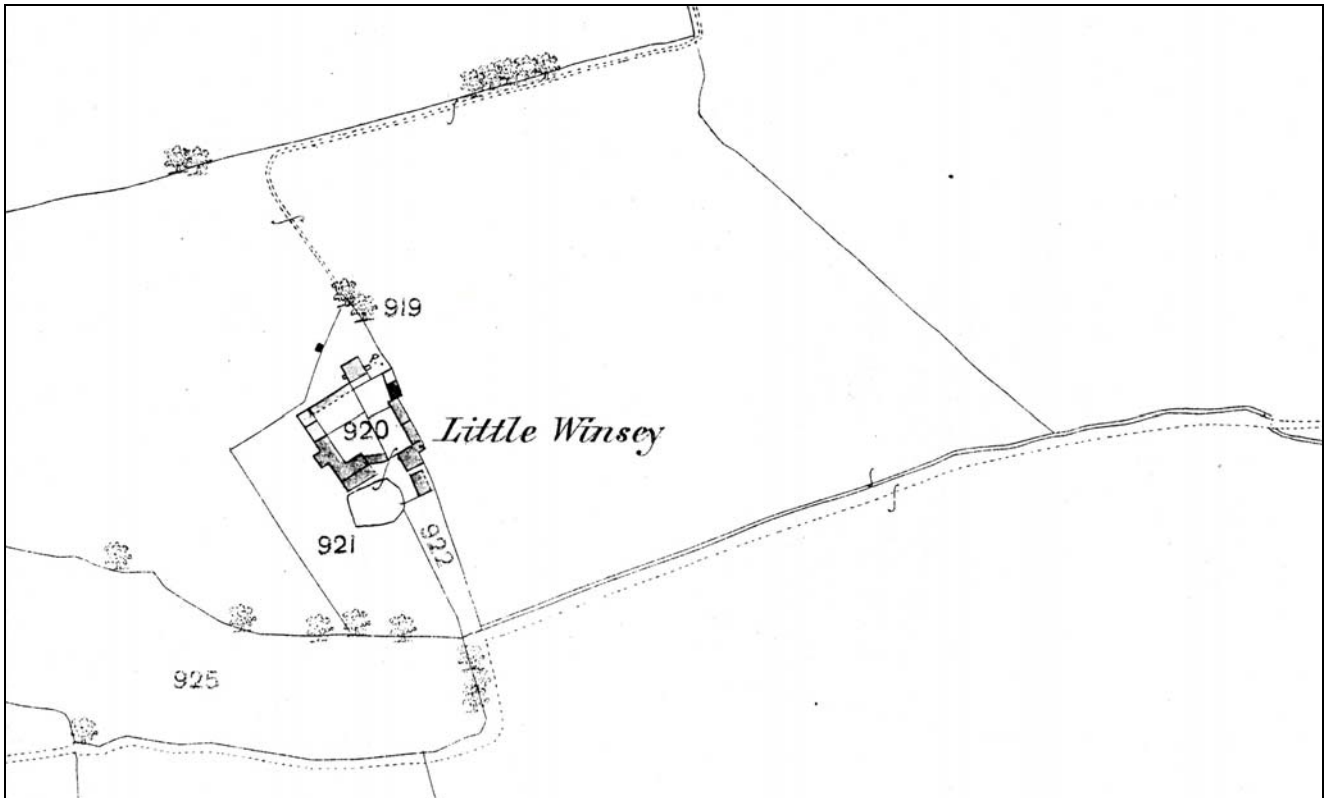


Fig. 3(a) First Edition 25" OS map, 1881 (sheet 15.7)



Fig. 3(b) First Edition 25" OS map, 1881 (sheet 15.7)



Fig. 4 Second Edition 25" OS map, 1897 (sheet 15.7)

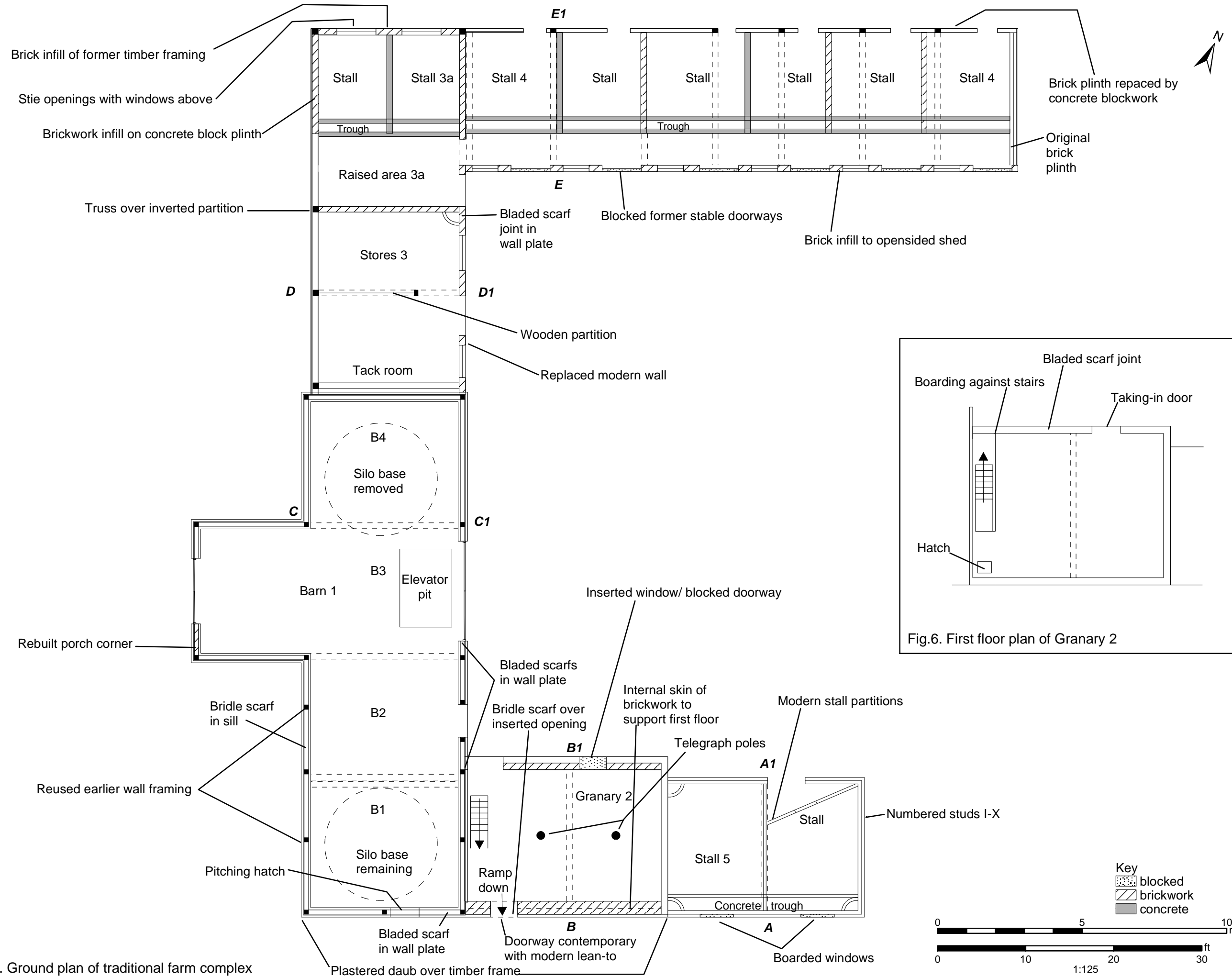


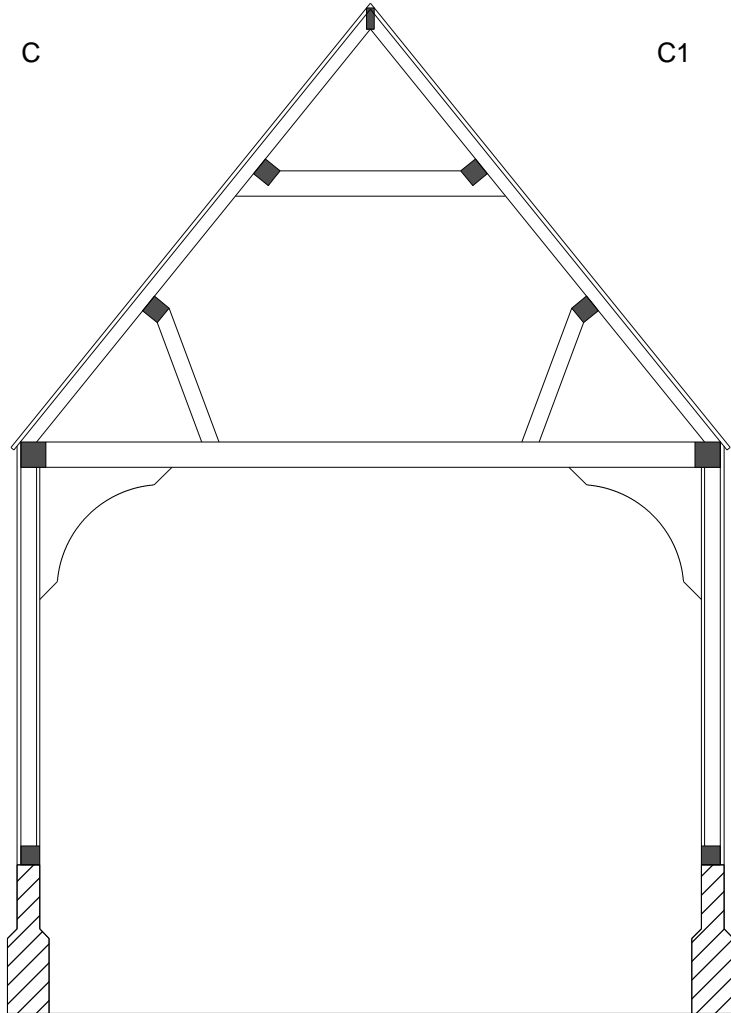
Fig.5. Ground plan of traditional farm complex

Fig.6. First floor plan of Granary 2

Barn 1

C

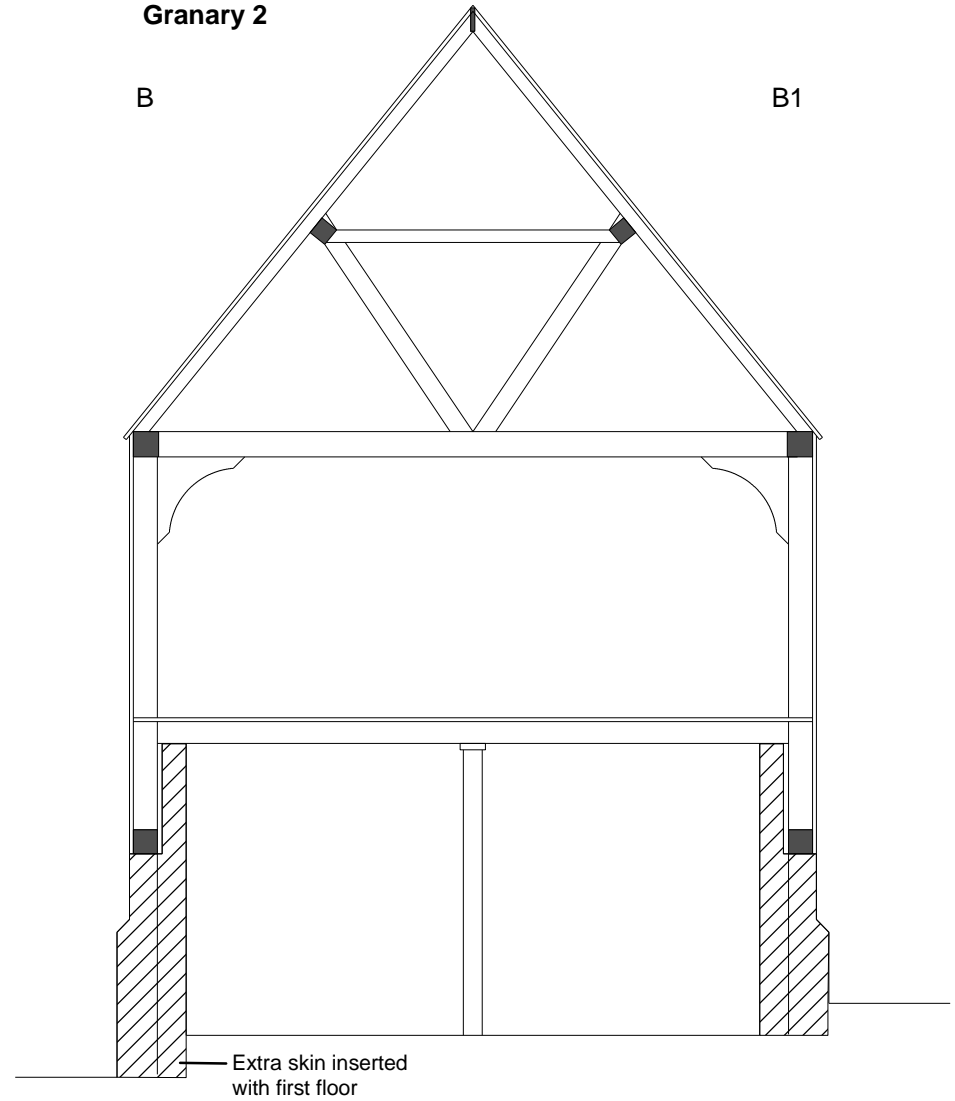
C1




Granary 2

B

B1



Key

 brickwork

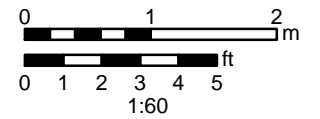
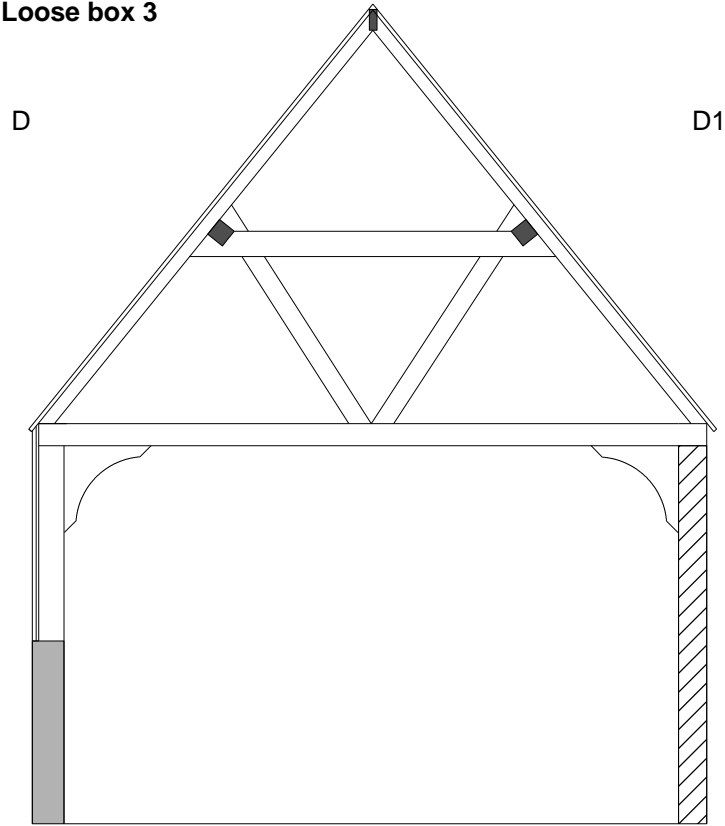
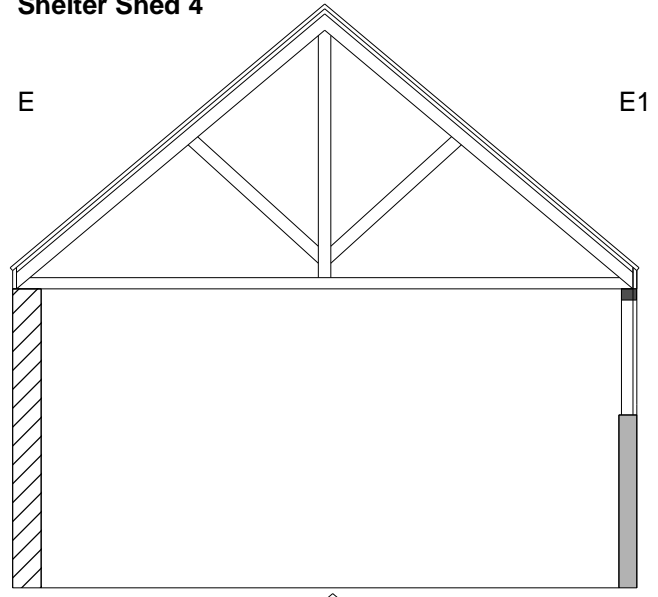


Fig.7a. Sections

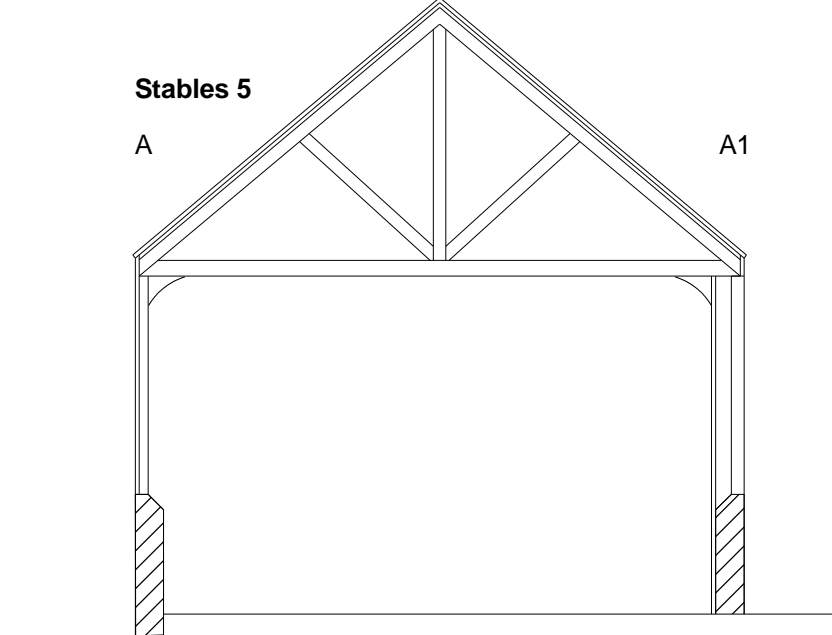
Loose box 3




Shelter Shed 4




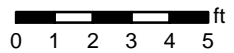
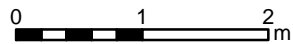
Stables 5



Key

 brickwork

 concrete blockwork



1:60

Fig.7b. Sections



Plate 1 Farm group viewed from north-east



Plate 2 Farm group viewed from south-east



Plate 3 Farm group viewed from west



Plate 4 Barn/granary viewed from north



Plate 5 Rear of barn/granary viewed from east



Plate 6 Interior of barn viewed from south-east



Plate 7 Interior of barn viewed from north-west



Plate 8 Reused main framing on south-west side of barn

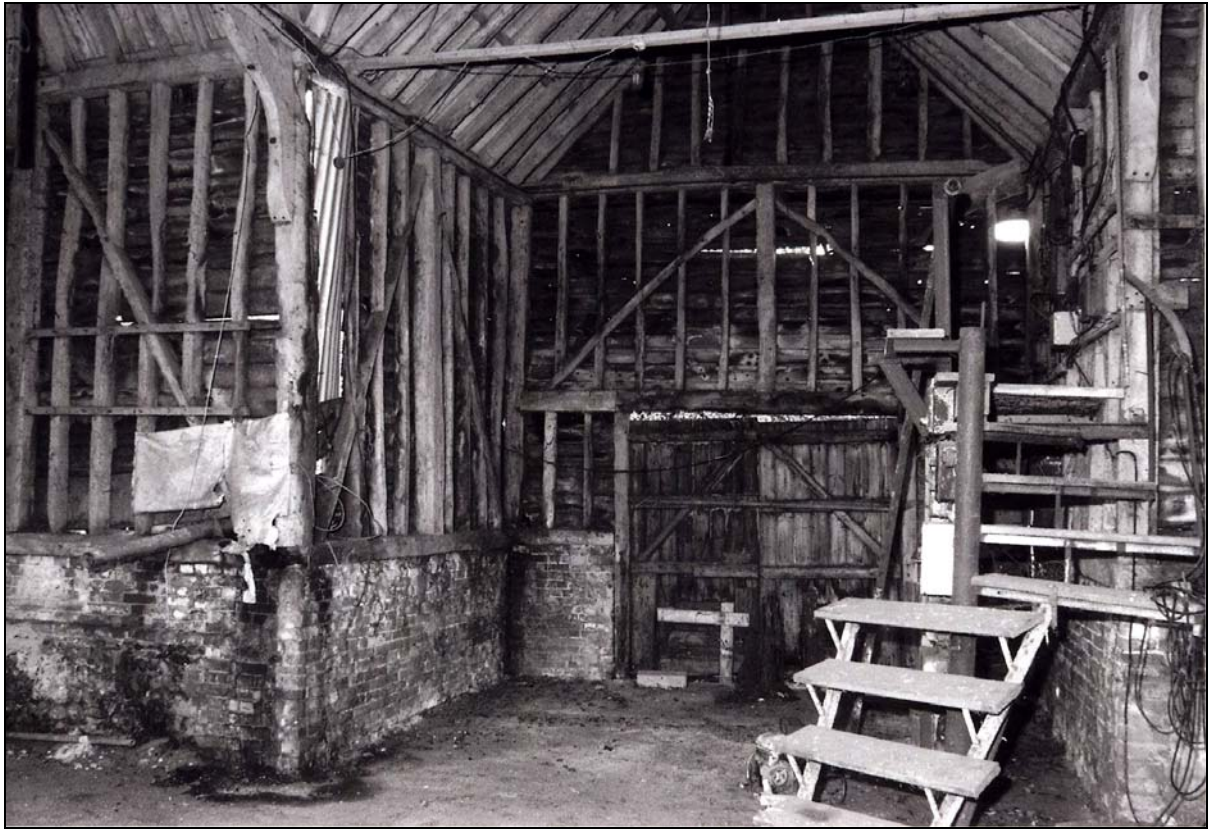


Plate 9 Porch with steps to switch box



Plate 10 Ground floor of granary viewed from north



Plate 11 Detail of brickwork skin supporting first floor in granary



Plate 12 First floor of granary viewed from south



Plate 13 First floor of granary viewed from north



Plate 14 Brick infill to gable end of loose box viewed from north-east



Plate 15 Interior of loose box viewed from south-east



Plate 16 Interior of loose box converted to pig stalls



Plate 17 Shelter shed viewed from south-east



Plate 18 Shelter shed and covered pig run viewed from north-east



Plate 19 Exposed timber framing to shelter shed viewed from west



Plate 20 Converted interior of shelter shed



Plate 21 Stable viewed from north



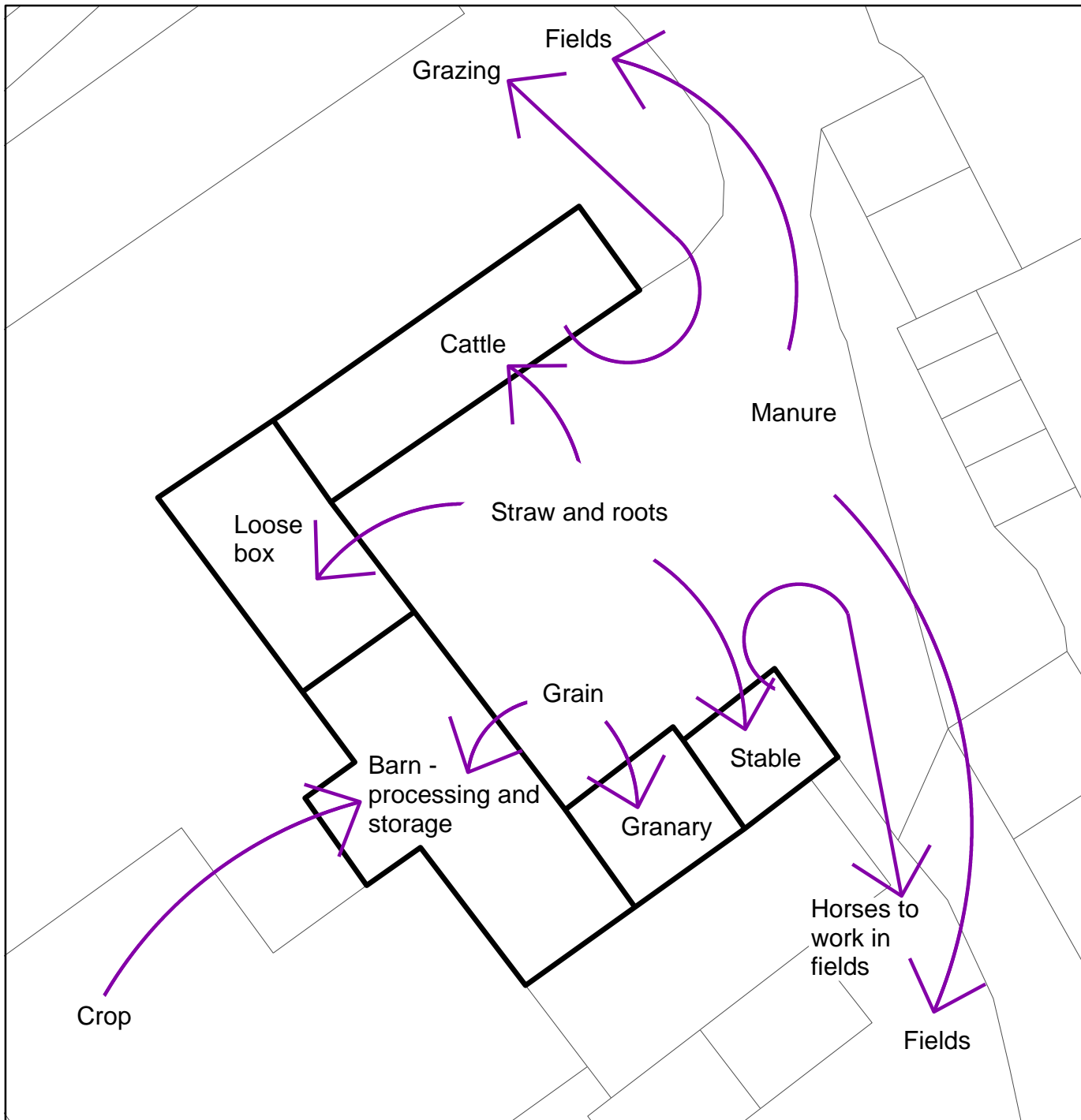
Plate 22 Interior of stable viewed from north-east



Plate 23 Modern pre-fabricated sheds viewed from south-east with barn to right



Plate 24 Battery sheds viewed from north-west, with barn centre right



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Appendix 1. Process flow diagram

Appendix 2: The working of the Victorian farm

See Also Appendix 1.

NB based on surviving structures, with some reference to known inferred former structures.

The barn was used to process cereals and perhaps root crops grown in the surrounding fields. After harvest, the sheaves were brought into the barn by cart, through the cart doors on the north-west west side, which faced onto the fields. Root crops were processed on the floor of the barn and perhaps stored at one end as animal feed. The sheaves would be separated and threshed on the floors behind the cart doors where the grain was separated from the chaff, either manually or mechanically, using a steam-powered threshing machine. During the 19th century in Essex, where labour was inexpensive, the former method was commonly employed. After threshing, the straw was stored in the barn or stacked in a heap outside, ready for spreading on the floors of the stables, sheds and yards. The grain was taken for storage to the first floor of the granary, while the separated chaff, used for animal feed, but a less valuable crop all the same, might have been stored on the floor below. During the summer months the long grass was periodically cut and this would be stored as hay.

The open shelter sheds to the north-west were occupied by cows and bullocks that could also use the uncovered stockyard when dry. The animals ate the root crops and chaff. Manure was produced from the dung and straw, and piled up in the yard to decompose for use on the fields in spring. There was probably a loose box, where sick animals and pregnant cows could be isolated away from the group attached to one of the ranges. Meadowland or unused fields were used for summer grazing/pasture. Horses were kept in the stables, at the southern end of the range with access to the trackway. Further stabling, cart and implement sheds and piggeries (pigs ate the by-products from the dairy) were situated on the east side of the yard and have since been demolished. Sheep may have been kept, but were not housed.

Appendix 3: Contents of Archive

1. Introduction

1.1 Brief for works

1.2 WSI

2. Research Archive

2.1 Copy of report

2.2 Copy of report pdf-formatted

3. Site Archive

3.1 Site photographic record (digital images, 120mm & 35mm monochrome prints)

3.2 Miscellaneous plans & drawings

3.3 Site notes

3.4 Architects drawings

Appendix 4: EHER Summary Sheet

Site Name/Address: Little Winceys Farm, Bardfield Road, Finchingfield, Essex	
Parish: Finchingfield	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 6779 3219	Site Code: FFLW 06
Type of Work: Building recording	Site Director/Team: Andrew Letch ECC FAU
Dates of Work: 18th-19th October 2006	Size of Area Investigated: N/A
Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding Source: Dr. T. Walker
Further Work Anticipated? None	Related EHER Nos.: None.
Final Report: Summary in EAH	
Periods Represented: Post-medieval (18th & 19th-century), modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Little Winceys Farm was reputedly established in 1780 with the building of a timber-framed barn/granary and farmhouse. It may have been associated with the site known as Great Wincey to the west of the farm, a former house with medieval origins set within a moat. In the middle part of the 19th-century the farm was improved and timber-framed animal sheds and houses built around an enclosed yard already established by the main, 18th-century, structures. A first floor was added to the granary and numerous other structures built that were demolished some time ago.</p> <p>In the 20th-century, the shelter shed was converted to stables and then to piggeries, when large scale pig-rearing and battery hen housing was introduced in the post-war period. Extra sheds were added for up to 8,000 pigs. The farm closed in 1991.</p> <p>The farm is typical of many improved Essex farmsteads where existing agricultural structures were incorporated into a new courtyard layout with the introduction of cattle-rearing in the mid 19th-century. Unlike many, the barn/granary has an exact build date of 1780 which will be a important benchmark in future surveys of late 18th-century structures.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: A. R. Letch	Date of Summary: 19th January 2007