

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF BARN & OUTBUILDINGS
AT
CHURCH FARM, ALRESFORD
ESSEX**



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

March 2007

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**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF BARN & OUTBUILDINGS
AT CHURCH FARM, FORD LANE
ALRESFORD
ESSEX**

Client: Mr. E. Daniels

Agent: Mr. Gordon H. Parker

FAU Project No.: 1721

NGR: TM 0658 2110

OASIS No.: essexcou1-24900

Planning Application: TEN/0107/06 & TEN/0109/06/LB

Dates of Fieldwork: 30th November & 1st December 2006

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A programme of building recording was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) at Church Farm prior to demolition. The work was funded by the owner/developer, Mr. E. Daniels, through his agent, Mr. Gordon H. Parker, 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 (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/index.cfm>). In accordance with the brief, the archive will be stored with ECC HEM.

The buildings are part of a probable late 18th to mid 19th-century farm complex and comprise:-

- Late 18th- or early 19th-century barn with 19th-century extension (Building 1 & 1a)
- Loose box contemporary with barn, but later partly rebuilt (Building 2)
- Early 20th-century pole barn (Building 3)
- Mid 19th-century granary (Building 4)
- Mid 19th-century cowhouse (Building 5)
- Early 19th-century cowhouse (Building 6)
- Mid 19th-century wagon house and stables (Building 7)

Mapping suggests the present farmhouse replaced an earlier farmhouse in the mid 19th-century, built in the Regency style along with other farm structures. A pig sty that features on the latest OS mapping appears to have been demolished some time ago.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location and description (fig.1)

Alresford lies approximately 8km to the south-east of Colchester, the nearest large town. Church Farm is located on the west side of Alresford parish toward the top of Ford Lane at TM 0658 2110. The parish church to which it relates lies to the south, with the rectory located between farm and church on the opposite side of the road (fig. 1).

The farm layout remains largely intact and consists of a timber-framed barn and brick-built animal houses enclosing a central yard, with access onto Ford Lane. They appear to be largely contemporary as part of a planned farm. The Regency-style farmhouse that occupies the southern side of the yard is listed Grade II (LBS 120146) is difficult to date accurately, but is likely to be contemporary with the main phase of improvement in the mid 19th-century. The farm buildings are curtilage listed with the house, but have no statutory listing of their own, despite their group value as functional working elements of an almost intact Victorian farmstead.

Topographically, the farmyard occupies an area of fairly level low-lying ground (28m OD) with arable land to the west and former pasture to the south. The yard is unmade and has no walls or fences/gates remaining. Vegetation has been allowed to grow up around the rear of the complex, making some areas difficult to access, although this did not compromise the quality of the record.

2.2 Planning background

Tendring District Council received a planning application for the demolition and conversion of farm buildings in February 2006 (TEN/0107/06 & TEN/0109/06/LB). The structures intended for demolition form a large part of a Victorian planned farm (barn, granary, loose box, stables/wagon house and cowhouse 5). Stables 6 is to be converted as part of the scheme. A modern extension has already been added to the west of the farmhouse, which has been refurbished as the focus of the new development.

Mindful of the possible effects on the historic integrity of the farm complex and of the importance of farming in the East Anglian region in the 18th and 19th-centuries, the ECC HEM team 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 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 more uniform, inter-dependant, courtyard plan forms.

In the 1740s, the courtyard 'model' farm was established by 'improving' landlords and 'planned' farms began replacing earlier scattered farmsteads. Ideally this plan form had the barn occupying the north side of the yard for shelter, with sheds arranged either side of the yard as perpendicular 'wings'. One side contained cattle sheds and loose boxes, the other stables. Cattle were fed in one or more smaller yards within the main yard. An entrance on the warmer southern side was common, and it was here where feed and bedding stores and cart lodges were located, often along the roadside. In the yards manure was trod into straw, which was collected and added to the fields to increase crop yields.

Between 1840 and 1870 improvement accelerated and this period is known as the 'golden age' of farming. During this era, the farming economy was stimulated by population growth and increased demand for milk and grain from urban areas transported by the growing railway network. Thus the importance of cattle in the farming economy was realised, leading to the expansion of farms and farm buildings as meat became an increasingly important part of the urban diet with the rise in living standard of after 1850. By the 1860s open-sided cattle sheds were common on most farms.

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 farm 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. 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 long-term agricultural depression. With protectionism a thing of the past, farmers 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 lasted 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 redevelopment.

2.4 Historical background & development

Cartographic and documentary research at the Essex Records Office (ERO), Chelmsford, was undertaken to understand the development of the farm. The results are presented below and the results shown as a phase plan (fig.1).

Chapman and Andre's map of Essex, 1777, (fig.2) is the earliest surviving cartographic record studied and appears to show an earlier, pre-improvement, farmstead. It shows a plot with two buildings at the base of the fork in the road in the same place where Church Farm is now located. Although lacking the detail to accurately identify the structures, they are in roughly the correct positions to be the barn (though drawn with porch to the west) and a farmhouse, the forerunner of the existing house.

Alresford tithe map of 1839 (fig.3) clearly indicates Church Farm and shows the barn, with cowhouse 6 extending southwards and an L-shaped building to the east (fig.3). This later structure was lost when the farm was improved in the mid-19th-century and cowhouse 5 now stands on much of its footprint. At this stage, the barn extension and other structures

recorded in the survey have yet to be built. There are two yards; the main one around the barn and a second between the house and cowhouse 6.

The accompanying *tithe award* (ERO D/CT 4A) lists a small farm of c.25 acres owned by George Higginbotham and Sarah Schofield and rented to Joseph Barton. The land is predominantly to the south of the farmstead and it is likely that grazing pasture is included as plot 209 in the award; 'the homestead' (fig.3).

The *first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1879* (fig.4) shows that the farm was improved in the 'high farming' era between 1839 and 1879. By 1879, the granary, cowhouse 5, wagon house/stables 7 and the farmhouse have been built, representing much of the existing layout. An extension was made to the house around the end of cowhouse 6, possibly a utility range (dairy, etc.), that was recently lost to the modern extension (fig.1). A pigsty, no longer standing, has been built beside the wagon lodge, seen in better detail in the following OS map. The same is true for a shelter shed built against the road in the northern pasture (fig. 5). Two yards are present at this point. The pole barn, built much later, is the only structure not part of this group. A deed studied from the same year (ERO D/DB T1301) gives the holding as 120 acres, a five-fold increase in land in the from the date of tithe map 40 years before. Although the exact proportions of arable and grazing land are unclear, this increase may account for the improvements carried out at this stage, i.e. building of the granary and barn extension and remodelling of the cowhouses.

The *second edition OS map of 1897* (fig. 5) shows little in the way of change but is important in understanding how the farmyard worked. It shows three main yards. The southern yard defines the service/utility areas to the house. The central yard, divided into three was for cattle (left) and for horses and wagons to manoeuvre (right). The area in front of the store within Building 7 is enclosed. The third (north) yard serves cowhouse 5, with cart access to barn and granary, and a small yard encloses the pigsties. An open-sided shed is attached to the stables on the south side of loose box 2, linking to the north end of cowhouse 6. There is also a structure on the east side of the granary, covering part of the cowhouse (fig.5). Both of these structures are no longer standing, but evidence for the shed was recorded in the survey.

In the early part of the 20th-century a pole barn was constructed filling the gap between the barn extension and granary and replacing an unidentified structure here. The barn was likely used for loose cattle or bullocks. Some alterations were made to the house extension, which has been replaced by new build but is still depicted on the current OS map. Little is known

about the farm in the modern period and it is not known when the farm closed. However, judging from the state of the weatherboard and barn door, it had been disused for some time before the current plans were submitted to the LPA.

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. Concerns were reported about the barn being in poor condition and unsafe to work inside before the survey started. Therefore the subsequent written scheme of investigation stated that if this were the case, the barn would be recorded only to level 1 standard. In reality the only unsafe area was inside the porch, where the walls were bulging inwards and the doors were half hanging off, and a satisfactory record was made.

In addition, 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

Each structure was assigned a number and referenced to the site block plan (fig.1). The standing buildings were recorded using a preliminary proposal plan supplied by the agent, showing the cowhouse conversion and those structures to be demolished outlined in dashed lines. Remaining detail was surveyed as part of the recording works to produce an existing ground plan of the farmstead (fig.6).

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. The structures are described under their perceived original functions. Any evidence of later adaption or change of use is included in the discussion/description.

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 1-30. The remainder can be found in the archive.

Research was undertaken at the Essex Records Office (section 2.4) to understand the origins and development of the farm.

All the buildings were disused and empty at the time of the survey, apart from buildings 6 and 7 that were being used by the building contractors to store tools and raw materials for conversion works. The loose box part of cowhouse 5 was padlocked and not entered.

5.0 HISTORIC BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 General description (fig.1)

The farmyard (plate 1) is set on a north to south alignment, with a low brick wall marking the boundary with Ford Lane to the east. The wall is contemporary with the farmhouse, and curves round to the north and the neighbouring plot, which has been recently redeveloped. This signifies an entrance to the rear of the farmstead, in particular the barn and granary, as well as the meadow beyond. Otherwise the central yard is completely enclosed by farm buildings and the house. Those farm structures concerned with livestock tend to be built in brick, laid in lime mortar, whilst those built for storage (i.e. barn, granary) have timber-framed construction beneath dry weatherboarding that has suffered from lack of maintenance. All the latter have replaced corrugated tin roofs that have kept the insides mostly watertight. All except the granary are single-storied. It is worth noting that the alignment of those structures on the west side is slightly canted, reflecting the earlier farm layout based on the position of the barn, whereas those to the east, and the farmhouse, have a more regular alignment with the road (fig.1). On the whole, there is very little adaption or alteration carried out to the buildings and the only modern structure is the pole barn (pre-WW2).

5.2 Barn 1

This is the most prominent and easily-recognisable part of the farm complex and appears to be the earliest; probably dating to the 18th-century, with an extension in the mid-19th-century. The two construction phases are described together externally, but separately internally below.

The barn stands on the west side of the yard, with its porch facing the east side (plate 2). Part of the east elevation is obscured by pole barn 3 and the south elevation by stables 6

(fig.1). In the working farm, large cart doors were generally located either side for bringing in the harvest and taking the empty carts out the other side to for refilling. The crop was stored either side, awaiting threshing in the winter. Loose box 2 is probably contemporary, for livestock, with access to the yard for exercise, but has signs of rebuild. Calving or sick cattle may have been kept here, away from the animals in the cowhouse.

The original barn was three bays with a porch, a typical small barn layout, onto which two shorter bays were added on the north end and the whole weatherboarded over. Not only are the bays shorter to the extension, but there are also clear changes in construction technique. However, the broad primary-braced style is the same in both, so there may not be a wide gap in terms of dating. There are no identified reused timbers in this building or any of the others. Usually when a farmstead is rebuilt, timbers are salvaged from the earlier buildings. Although the barn appears to be in poor condition from the roadside, it is only the porch that has suffered, and generally the condition of the structure is very good and dry inside.

The barn is timber-framed and weatherboarded, stood on a five-course red-brick plinth. Average brick size for the preliminary build is 22 x 11 x 7cm (approx. 8¾ x 4¼ x 2¾") arranged in a broad mixture of English and Flemish bond, in a sandy lime mortar. Some cement repointing adheres, but much has 'blown'. The plinth continues under loose box 2, which is built on the south side of the porch with the barn (fig.1). The barn roof is pitched at 50°, steep enough to originally have been thatched, but presently clad in corrugated iron; rusting and not attractive to look at, but which has saved the building from serious deterioration.

5.2.1 External description

Except for the porch and roof, the prominent east elevation that faces the yard is hidden from view by loose box 2 and pole barn 3. The porch, once central to the barn, has two owl holes in the gable apex and a seriously dilapidated cart door on the left side (plate 2). Both cart doors either side are ledged and battened with rebates in the jambs for tight closing. Threshold leaps are attached to the base of the jambs to prevent animals entering the barn from yard or meadow during threshing. Such features are typical of 19th-century barns and likely to be a secondary insertion in this part of the structure.

That part of the east elevation hidden by the loose box has an internal doorway and whitewashed weatherboarding (for animal hygiene), but no features. On the other hand, the same elevation on the opposite side of the porch is very different. Here is evidence for the original cowhouse or shed, replaced when cowhouse 5 was built, whose roof scar can be

seen in the untreated weatherboarding of the barn (plate 3). The shed was clearly brick-built, occupying the north bay on this side, and open to the north. The brickwork here rises to 1.8m, the height of the midrail on the inside, and is plastered in lime. The brick bond cannot be discerned beneath the plaster. There are no other walls remaining and no distinction between the builds to plinth and wall, suggesting that they were added at the same time to the existing barn.

A straight brick joint separates the two phases of barn construction. On the newer side, also hidden by the pole barn, the plinth is higher than the original, at 13 courses. The brickwork is noticeably neater and cleaner and the red bricks slightly shorter in length and height to the main build. The bond is more explicit, a crisp Flemish bond, and tumbling-in buttresses are built as part of the plinth on each bay (plate 3).

The north elevation is part of the secondary build (1a) but is actually the north end of barn 1, rebuilt. Two pitching hatches are located above and below the wall plate inside, suggesting there was once a hay loft (fig.6, plate 4). However, no evidence for this was found inside. The weatherboarding to the barn is covered in algae on the damp north side. Part has been replaced in corrugated tin, to the left of the bottom pitching door (plate 4).

Weatherboarding on the west elevation (plate 5) is dry and bramble bushes obscure the plinth and other parts. As there is no scar where the barn extension was added, it is clear the barn was re-clad after the extension was built. Only one cart door remains.

The south elevation abuts the north wall of stables 6, and contains an inter-connecting door that was boarded from the inside.

5.2.2 Internal description

The main part of the barn consists of three bays and a porch. Each bay is 4m wide. The extension to the north has two shorter 3m-wide bays (fig.6). A modern concrete floor is spread evenly throughout and a rendered internal plinth hides the base of the studs to a height of 1.1m (plates 6 & 7). Both builds are constructed in primary bracing.

Each bay in the primary build is divided by a midrail. There are six fairly regular hand-sawn six studs c.8 x 13cm-thick to each bay, with wide c.45cm gaps between. The lower register displays close-studding, without bracing, but the upper register has single pegged parallel bracing to each bay, onto which the studs are nailed (plate 8, left). Most of the studs are pegged to the wall plate. All the framing members are quite waney and slender and are

possibly elm or some other timber, built at a time when oak was scarce and expensive. Midrails are c.14 x 25cm-thick and roughly-chamfered and bay posts are c.17 x 20cm-thick. There are no wattle cuts on the stud edges to suggest the barn was ever daubed, so it was either originally weatherboarded or lath and plastered. However, if the latter were the case then traces of it may remain in sheltered parts (e.g. the loose box) or under the boarding.

Across the width of the primary build, the main trusses comprise double-pegged, slightly curved, braces passing from post to tie beam. Secondary queen post struts give extra support to the basic clasped collar purlin roof (plates 6 & 7); probably added when the roof was tiled. Nailed secondary wind braces in the earlier part are also later additions.

Even though the original north wall has been removed, peg holes and rail mortices in the bay posts either side show this was the original end of the barn (fig.6). The tie beam here is secondary and supported on bolted knee braces like those in the secondary build (plates 7 & 8).

The porch is contemporary with the primary build. Part of the north wall is leaning inwards and detaching itself from the corner post (plate 9) possibly leading to some dampness in the rafters around the valley. The north-west corner post of the porch contains a single carpenter's mark (II, fig.6) indicating that the barn was built from the south end. A few face halved and bladed scarf joints were recorded in the wall plates of the main build, broadly indicative of post-medieval/pre-Victorian construction.

Phase 2 construction, in the last two north bays, is of machine-sawn timbers including 5 x 10cm studs and rafters, supporting the later date allocated to this part of the barn. No midrails are present and the primary bracing extends the full height of the wall (plate 8, right). In the roof, the end of the original purlin is crossed by another for the new build.

5.3 Loose box 2

The loose box (plate 2) appears contemporary with the first phase of barn build. During the late 19th-century (by 1879) an open-sided shed was attached to it, facing the southern yard (fig.5). Rebuilt modern brickwork in cowhouse 6 shows where the shed formerly linked to the building.

Like the barn, it is timber framed and clad in weatherboarding. Its plinth is contemporary. The roof is single-pitched at a shallow 20° and sloping away from the porch. It is clad in

corrugated tin. The two exposed elevations show a boarded-up high window to the east and ledge and batten door to the south (plate 2), with original fixtures.

The inside is covered in whitewashed weatherboarding that mostly obscures the primary-braced frame, which contains some machine-sawn timbers. Much of the roof contains later timbers too, so it appears to have been rebuilt, probably in the latter 19th-century. Large areas of walling and ceiling are obscured by hardboard and sacking. The boarded-up high window on the eastern wall is a three pane pull-down type contemporary with the rebuild. The roof is held by a single truss/strut.

Fixtures, removed or otherwise, confirm this was used for livestock, probably cattle, although the narrow doorways feeding to the barn and outside (fig.6) show it was used by small numbers only. Faint scars low down on the north wall and wooden brackets either side show the position of the trough. Behind this is a waste channel, in-filled with concrete and set within the diamond-patterned screed concrete floor (fig.6, plate 10).

5.4 Pole barn 3

The pole barn was built in the early 20th-century, filling the gap between the barn extension and granary (fig.1). It replaced a small 19th-century building that extended as far as the original north end of the barn. Such structures tend to be very basic large animal sheds that employ telegraph poles or similar as posts.

The structure is enclosed on three sides by existing buildings. The only built elevation is on the north side, very shed-like in aspect, composed of vertical planking nailed to a simple timber frame (plate 11). The window is simple, three-light and covered in plastic sheeting, while the door has older-style fixtures that were probably still being produced when the barn was built. The roof has an extremely shallow pitch.

The interior has a bare earth floor. The rafters rest on wooden brackets nailed to the structures either side, as well as to the two vertical 'poles' (fig.6), in reality cut-down trees whose bark has been stripped by livestock to (cow) head height. Access is from the yard and the rear, where there was traditionally grazing land in the plot to the north that has now been redeveloped as a modern house plot.

5.5 Granary 4

The granary is a multi-functional three-bay structure located between the pole barn and cowhouse. It was built around the middle of the 19th-century and can clearly be seen on the

OS maps jutting outwards to the north alongside the barn extension (figs.4 & 5). It is built as two storeys within a primary-braced machine-sawn frame clad in weatherboarding under a 40° pitch gabled roof. The ground floor is divided in two across the middle, with the front part, facing the yard, probably used by livestock. The rear part is a farm store. The granary itself was located on the first floor above the store and there is a taking-in door at this level on the north elevation, above the entrance (plate 12). Carts would be drawn up here, along the track between farm and meadow, to deliver grain for storage or take to the mill.

The original door on the south elevation (plate 2) has been widened by sawing through some of the studs. Above, there appears to be an in-filled former vent that can just be seen as a scar against the weatherboarding (plate 2). Inside, the front part is cluttered-up with rubbish, slightly obscuring the lower sections of the walls that are boarded, again, probably for livestock use (plate 13). The rear interior (plate 14) has a concrete floor and contains modern fencing and other such items.

The first floor granary is lined-out in beaded 6" pine boarding to contain the stored grain (plate 15). There is internal access from the tool store by a narrow trapdoor. The roof is simple nailed collar purlin.

5.6 Cowhouse 5

This is one of several structures (5, 7 and farmhouse) whose distinctive style and fabric are very similar and are likely to be contemporary with the main stage of farm development around the mid 19th-century (1839-79). The boundary wall, built at the same time, forms part of the structure.

The cowhouse is on the east side of the granary and served the northern yard. It is brick-built with a low, 30° pitch, slated roof, half-hipped on the eastern end (plate 16). The western wall is angled to square the structure in relation to its contemporaries that are aligned to the road. Bricks are orange and red in colour, soft and large, around 24 x 11.5-13 x 6.5cm (approx. 9½ x 4¾ x 2½"). They are laid in monk bond. Monk bond is a comparatively rare version of Flemish bond where two stretchers are laid instead of one (Brunskill 1997).

Much of the south elevation (plate 16) is brick-built, with a contemporary cow door and a boarded iron and wood-framed casement window (one side of which is clearly replaced) partly obscured by a bramble bush. The eastern third, beneath the roof hip, is a boarded (on this side) loose box contemporary with the main cowhouse. A low door with probable locking

loops (plate 17) suggests this may have housed a bull. Damaged/rebuilt brickwork in the corner shows rough treatment.

The rear (north) elevation has double half-heck cow doors largely covered in ivy (plate 18) and no other features. Conversely the bullnose bricks on the north-west corner wall, inside the granary, show no wear, proving the granary was laid out with the main farm structures.

The interior is open-plan of five bays, divided at the east end by a partition wall from the cowhouse into loose box 5a (fig.6). The main part has whitewashed walls. Part of the original brick floor has remained exposed within the concrete floor by the double doors (fig.6, plate 19). Further modern additions are the pipe drains inserted at the wall bases on the long sides (plate 19) and concrete render partly up the southern wall between door and partition wall to the bull house. Here also is a wooden rail and brackets to a possible hay feeder above the render (plate 20), since removed.

Roof framing is in machine-sawn queen post strut, with central bolted iron tie keeping each truss in compression. Purlins are notched over the principle rafters. Loose box 5a was padlocked and recorded from the outside only. The inside of the loose box is bare.

5.7 Cowhouse 6

A linear cow range extends on the west side of the yard from the barn into the modern house extension (fig.1) that replaced the Victorian service range. Its alignment and construction suggests it pre-dates the main phase of farm improvement, but is later in date to the barn; therefore probably early 19th-century. Originally it was built as an L-shaped range, with an open-fronted part against the south side of loose box 2, subsequently removed and the internal space bricked-up. It is divided internally into two or three functional areas. The main part was for livestock (6) and the second part, to the south, linked to the service range as a washhouse, partly partitioned in the modern period (fig.6). During the survey the cowhouse was used as a store by the builders and is the only part of the complex to be retained and converted. A modern house extension is attached to the south east corner of the range. Little has changed apart from some small infilling of doors and windows.

The range is brick-built with a c.40°-pitch roof clad in pantiles. The pantiles are modern, added recently when the extension was constructed (plate 21). Brickwork is in many ways similar to the later buildings contemporary with the house and in fact may not be all that different in date anyway, as the phasing is quite broad. This building is built in Flemish bond, but changes to monk every now and then, like in the improvement-era structures. Perhaps

monk bond is part of the local tradition or a particular builder. Certainly the bricks are large, around 24cm/9½" long, the same as in cowhouse 5, and would have been produced locally at the time.

On the main elevation facing the yard (plate 21) there is a replaced double (?cow) door. A second doorway has been blocked in Fletton bricks (fig.6), as has the area on the north side of the cow door that formerly opened out into the (removed) shelter shed against loose box 2. An original central-tilting window has been inserted in the later brickwork (plate 22), identical to another towards the south. The window probably came out from the blocked partition wall between the cowhouse and washhouse (buildings 6 and 6a, fig.6). The opposite elevation, on the west side (plate 23), has a fairly uniform appearance with a central half-heck doorway to the main area out to the fields. There is no scar for the former 'porch' that stood here in the 1897 map (fig.5).

The interior in both sections is whitewashed. The main part comprises four bays of varying widths. In the main part (6), granite setts are laid as flooring either side of a drainage gully (plate 24). It is likely this part had troughs and stalls for fattening the animals, but these have since been removed. Although hidden in part by tools and buildings materials, the gully appears to finish at the north bay (fig.6) in line with the former open-sided part, which was partitioned off as an open-area for exercise around the yard. Like the others, the gully has been cemented-in after the cattle were removed.

Roof trusses are built in king post style, with collar trenched purlins throughout. A service area 6a, possibly the washhouse, was linked to the main part by a doorway that is now blocked (fig.6). A chimney breast and truncated chimney stack on the west wall of the room suggests this may have been used as a washhouse (plate 25). Certainly, its proximity to the main house suggests a more domestic function. The chimney breast probably housed a stove and copper. Any décor or fire surround is missing. Modern partitioning and a sliding door have been added and may relate to structures already demolished, perhaps a dairy.

Wagon house & stables 7

It appears the farmhouse, cowhouse 5 and the wagon house/stables were built as a group, as they show contemporary style and fabric. The size and use of brick (monk bond) also show some parallels with cowhouse 6.

The roof has a low pitch is hipped either end and slate-clad, like the others. Its proximity to the house suggests this kept the owner's own transport and horses. Builder's tools and materials are now stored inside ready for the start of conversion works.

The cart doors on the west elevation, facing the yard (plate 26), appear to be modern replacements cut into the existing wall fabric. Those on the opposite side are original and, in their prominent position facing the road, designed to be on show. Here the cart doors and stable door are ledged with diagonal battens (plate 27). A third, behind the stores on the south end (fig.6), is more basic with vertical battens, but the attractive ventilation grille above continues the diagonal theme in slatted timber strips (plate 27a or 28). Fenestration in the building is limited, and found only on the west and north elevations. The windows are thin iron 15-light twin fixed paned, set within wooden frames inside segmental brick heads (plate 26) and would have provided little in the way of ventilation inside.

The interior consists of irregular-sized bays divided into two areas, stables to the north and wagon house to south (fig.6). Walls are whitewashed and flooring laid in brick setts, with a drainage gully inside the stable area (fig.6, plate 29). Originally there was a narrow tack room attached to the wagon house whose wall has since been removed, leaving a scar each side (fig.6). A wooden bracket is attached to the existing partition wall for hanging-up harnesses (plate 30).

Roof trusses are queen post strut type constructed from machine-sawn timbers tenoned and nailed together (plate 30), like those in cowhouse 6. The south wall, against the end store, has been built up from eaves level in stretcher bond, probably representing later in-filling.

The end store is open-sided, but containing no evidence of a gate or door fixtures. Being so close to the house it is unlikely to be for farm animals and may have been a store for coal or wood or even just a covered passageway through to the road. Its rear (south) wall is attached to the farm house by a straight joint, although the wall seems to pre-exist the structure as there is a change of brickwork in the wall after the fourteenth course (1.4m high).

6.0 DISCUSSION & PHASING

The phasing is relatively complicated but, from the available evidence, it seems that Church Farm was established in the 18th-century. Only the barn survives from this era, reused in two successive 'improvement' phases. The good standard of carpentry, scantling of timber and

jointing techniques certainly suggest an 18th rather than 19th-century construction date. Brick cowhouse ranges were built onto the barn in the early part of the 19th-century forming an L-shaped plan form, slightly canted away from the main road, with the house to the south-east. The farm had a small holding of only 25 acres, mainly to the south-west, with grazing land around the farmstead.

Improvement was undertaken around the mid to late 19th-century, during the era of High Farming, after the holdings had grown to 120 acres. A new farmhouse was built, along with a second cowhouse and wagon house/stables in a rather elegant 'Regency' style along the roadside, the buildings matching one another, with red brick and low hipped slated roofs. The bricks were unusually large in size and laid in monk bond, which is rare in other parts of the county but may be common locally. These new structures were built on the same alignment as the road rather than the original layout. Timber-framed and clapboard-covered elements were added, grouped around the earlier structures, producing an enclosed courtyard plan form around three yards. Increased acreage meant that the barn was extended and a granary was built to accommodate the larger yields. Appendix 1 and 2 provide information on how the 19th-century farm worked. In the early 20th-century a pole barn was added to the layout, perhaps after the cattle herd was increased. Otherwise the Victorian farmstead remained the same.

Although no specific date has been established, it would appear the farm became redundant in the late 20th-century. Possibly at this time the interiors were cleared of fixtures and fittings that would otherwise have given a better idea of building function: troughs, stall partitions and other livestock-related fixtures. Some buildings carried on being used but not for their original purpose. The gullies were filled-in and the interiors probably used for storage or workshops for the farmhouse.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Church Farm was established in the 18th-century and grew in size during the 19th-century. It largely retains its traditional Victorian layout, which on other farms is often altered or marred by the imposition of factory-scale pre-fabricated farm buildings. It also provides an interesting and attractive collection of 18th- and mid 19th-century farming structures from the era of agricultural improvement. The group comprises structures of vernacular and architectural significance, especially the Regency-style buildings along the roadside that make an

attractive contribution to the street scenery and are very unusual in their agricultural setting. All buildings are in very good condition, bearing in mind their age and lack of maintenance.

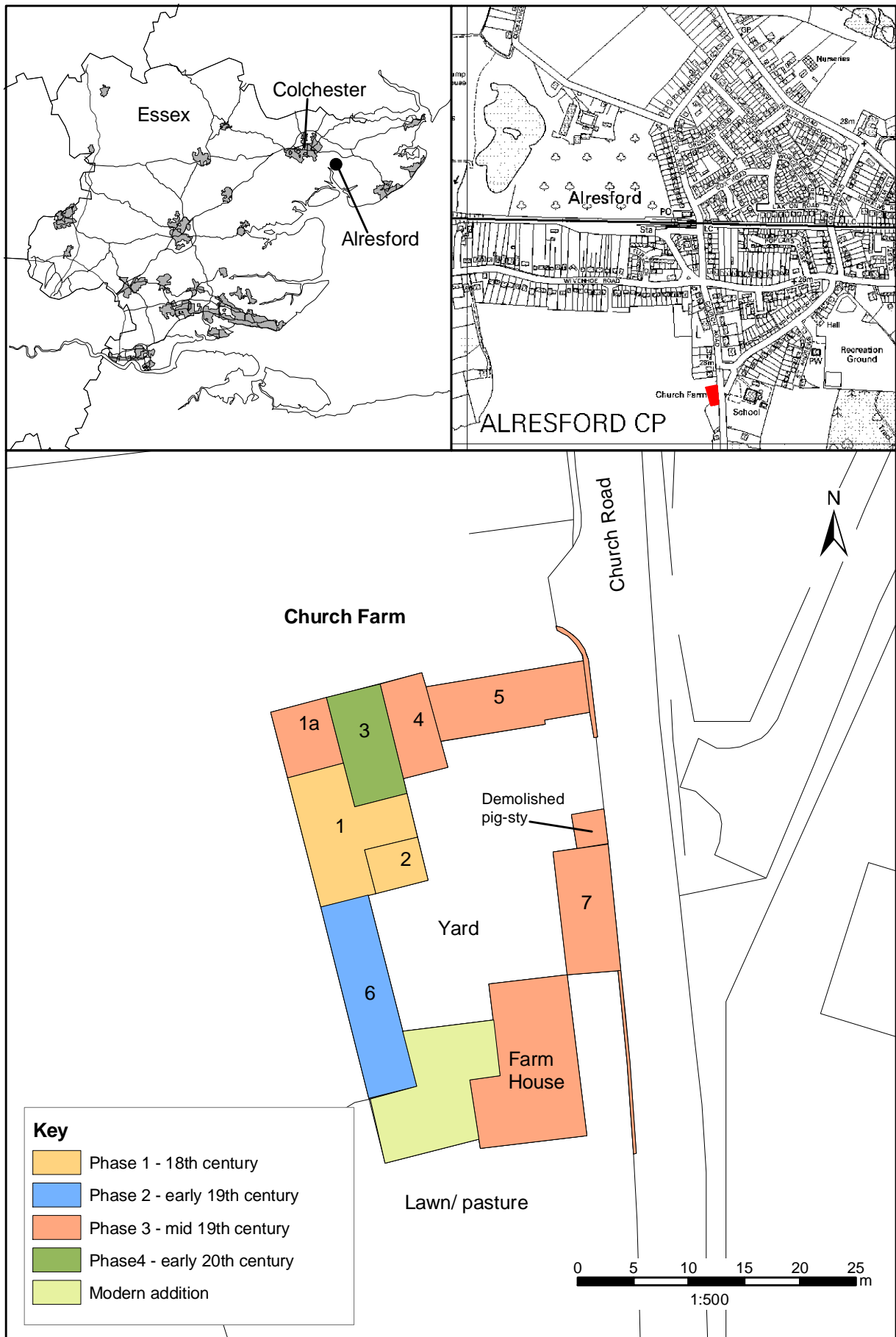
The structures recorded are important in their contribution towards the study of Essex and East Anglian farming groups, an area of study highlighted by the Regional Research Framework (Brown & Glazebrook 2000). The farm is typical of many improved Essex farmsteads where existing agricultural structures were incorporated into new yard layouts in the mid 19th-century, during the golden age of agriculture. However, the real significance of the complex lies in the fact that it retains an almost intact group of Victorian (and earlier) farm buildings, some of which display significant Regency-style architectural treatment alongside the Grade II listed farmhouse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the client, Mr. E. Daniels, for commissioning the works and to his agent, Gordon H. Parker, for supplying a proposal plan of the site. Also to staff at the Essex Records Office. 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 Pat Connell on behalf of ECC HEM and the LPA.

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Fig.1. Location and block plan with phasing

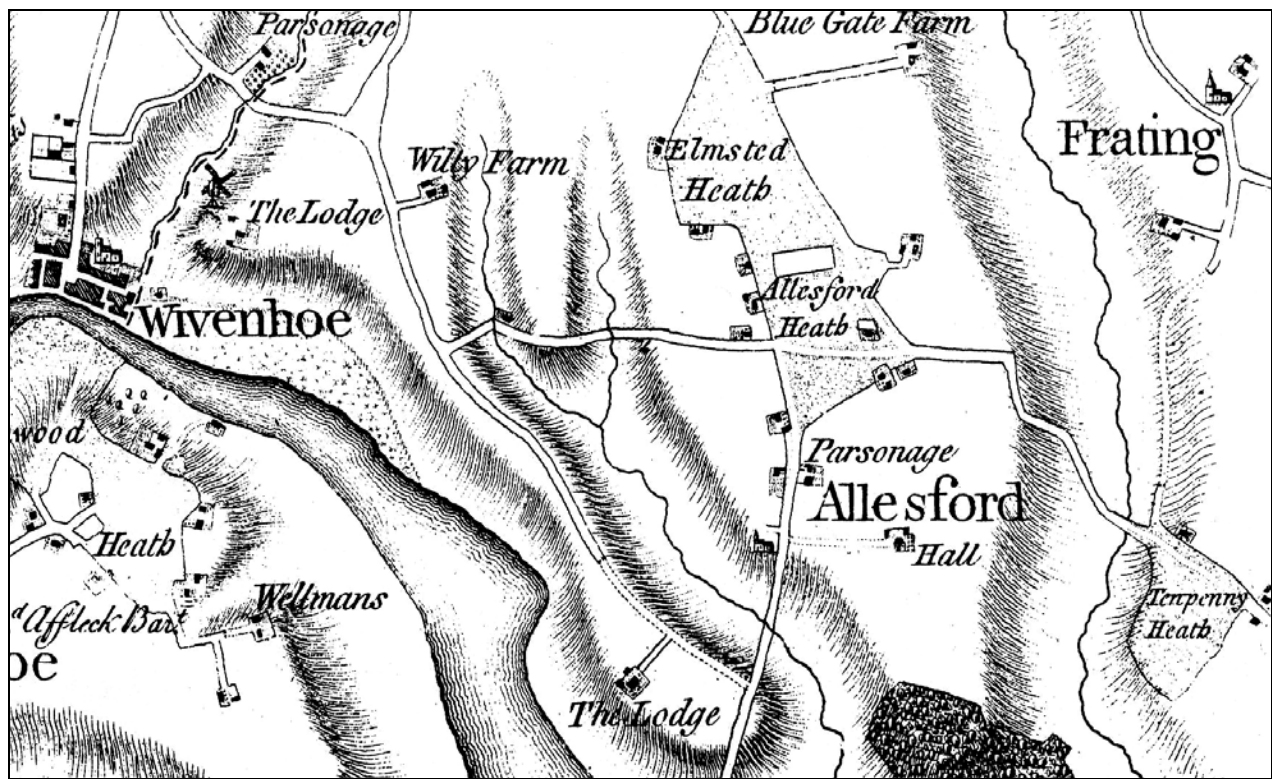


Fig. 2 Chapman & Andre map of Essex, 1777 (plate 9)

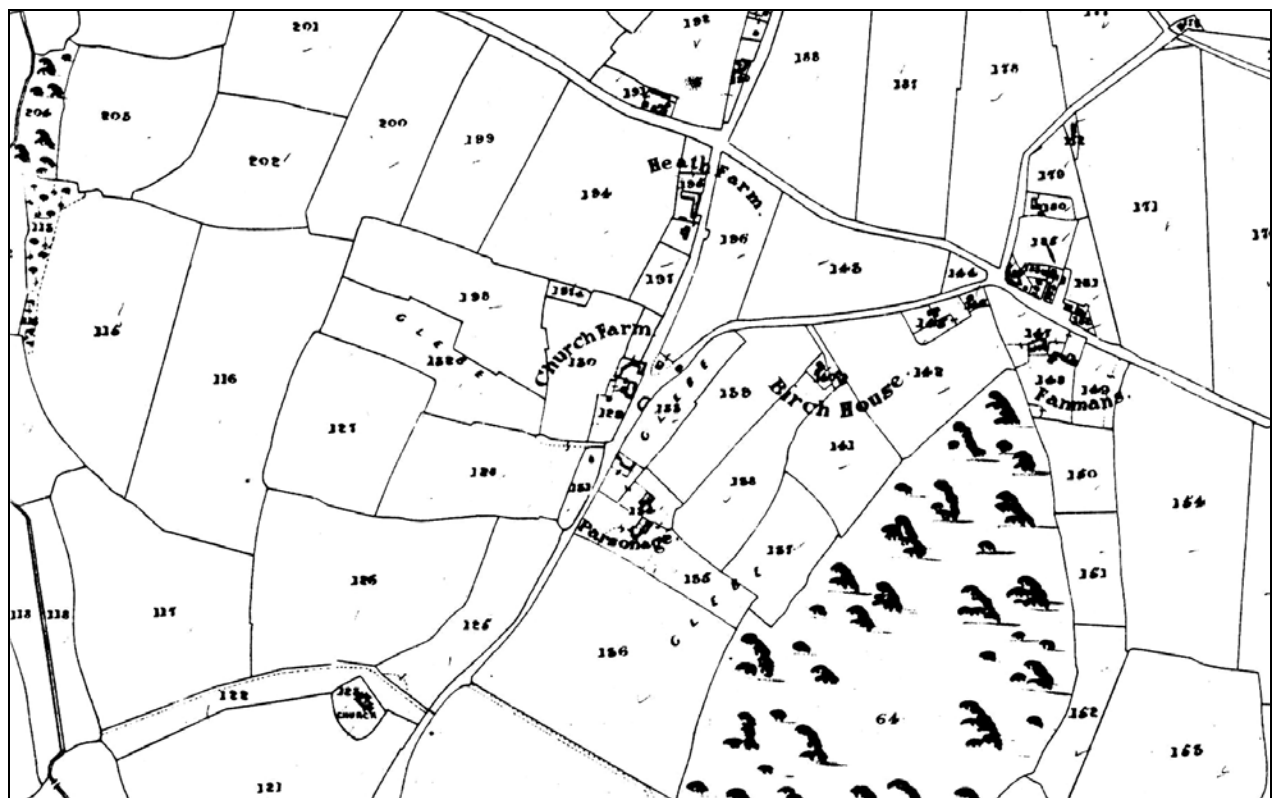


Fig. 3 Allesford tithe map, 1839 (D/CT 4B)

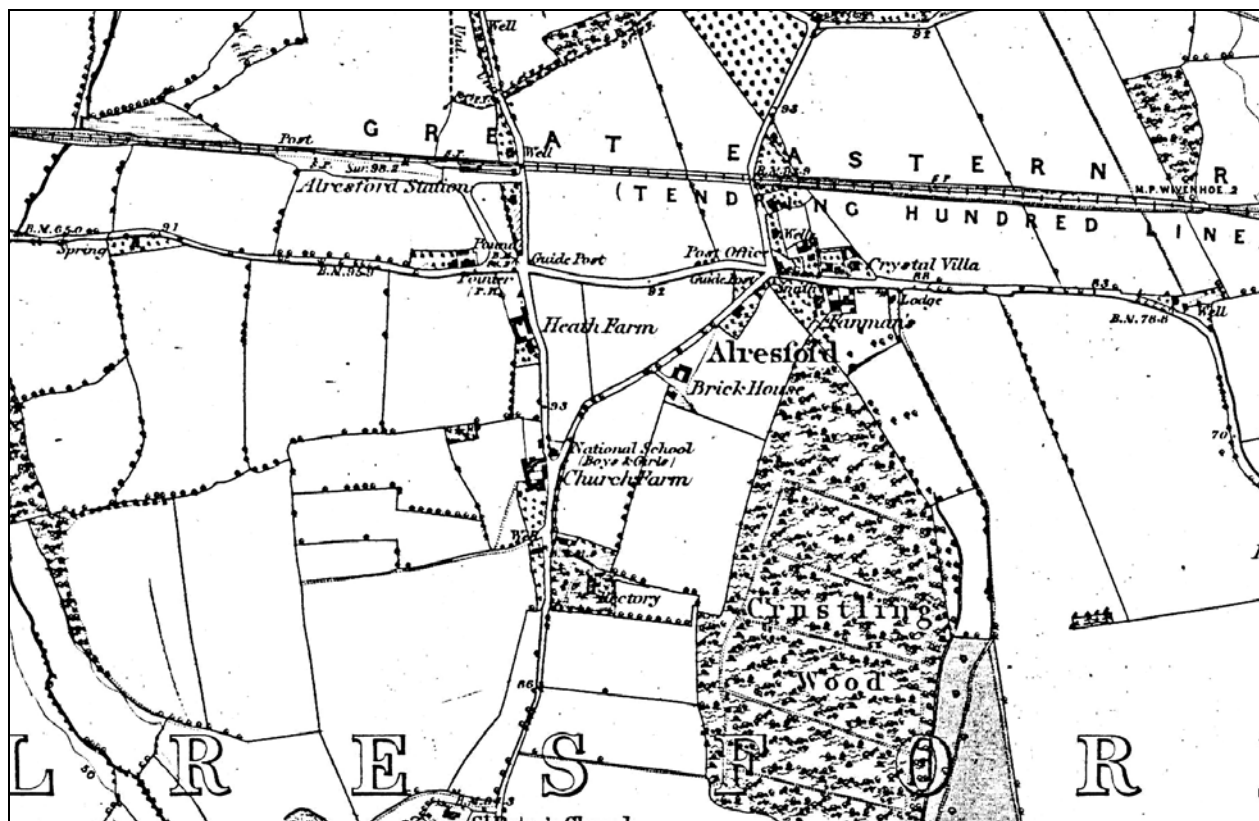


Fig. 4 First Edition 6" OS map, 1879 (sheet 37)

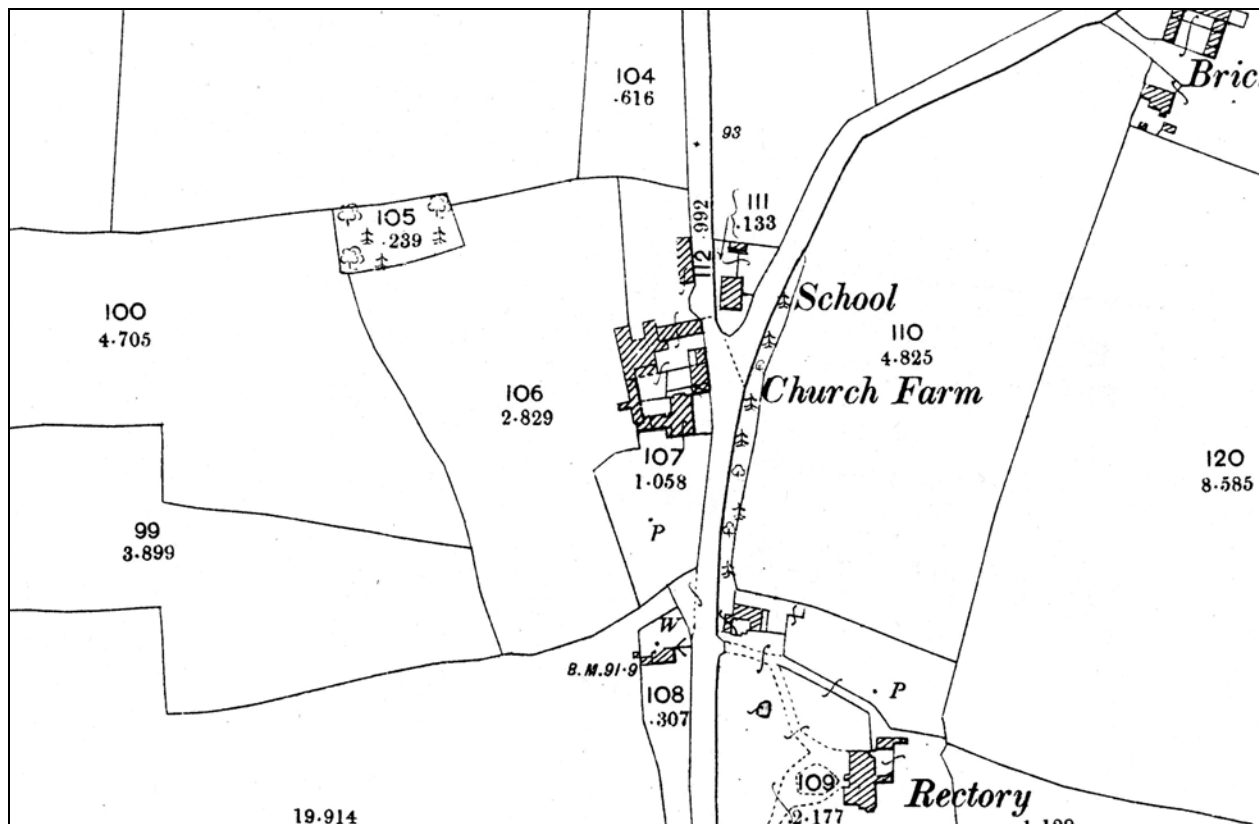


Fig. 5 Second Edition 25" OS map, 1897 (sheet 37.3)

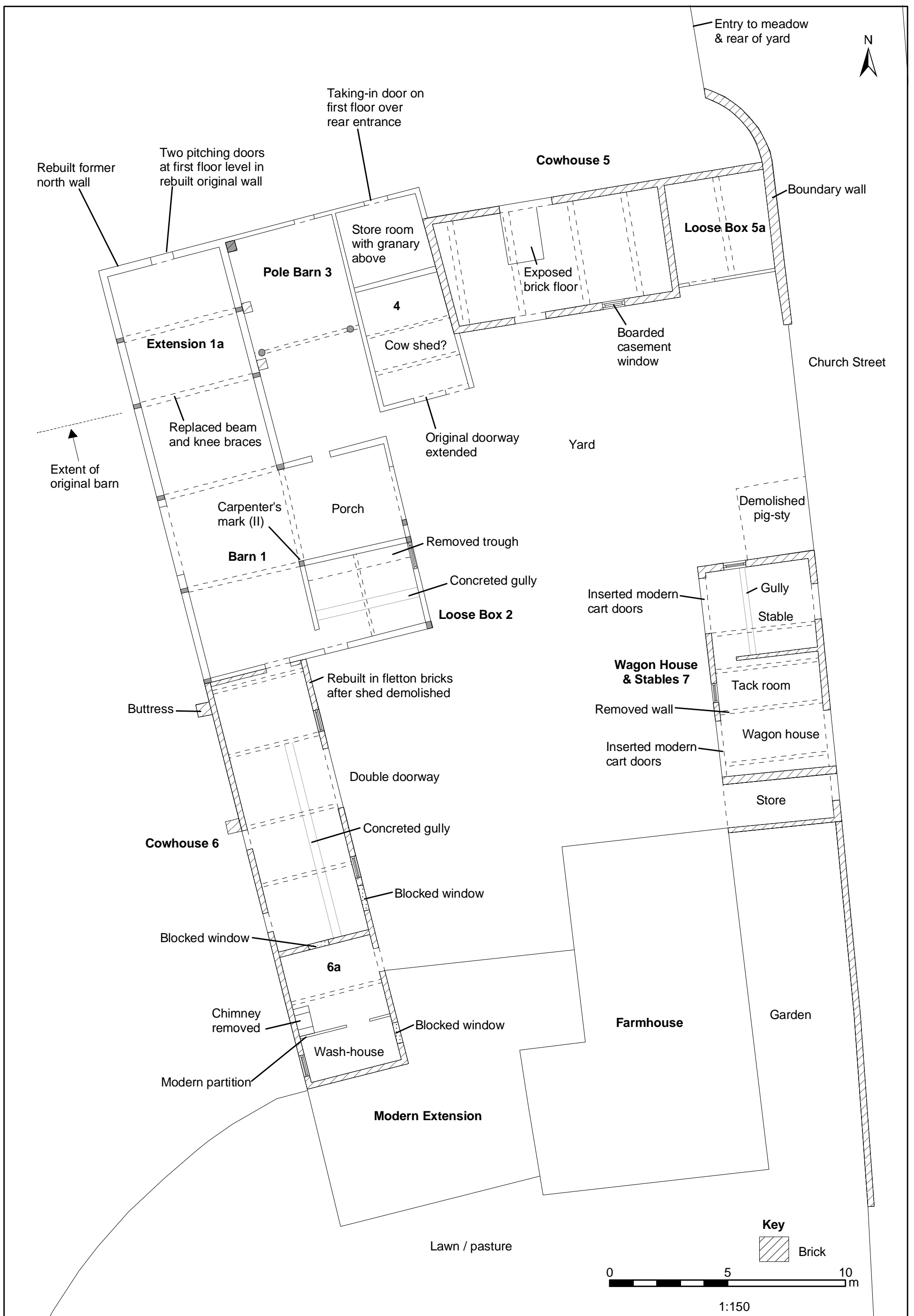


Fig.6. Ground floor plan of farm complex



Plate 1 Farm viewed from east



Plate 2 Barn viewed from yard



Plate 3 Barn extension and evidence for former cowhouse viewed inside pole barn

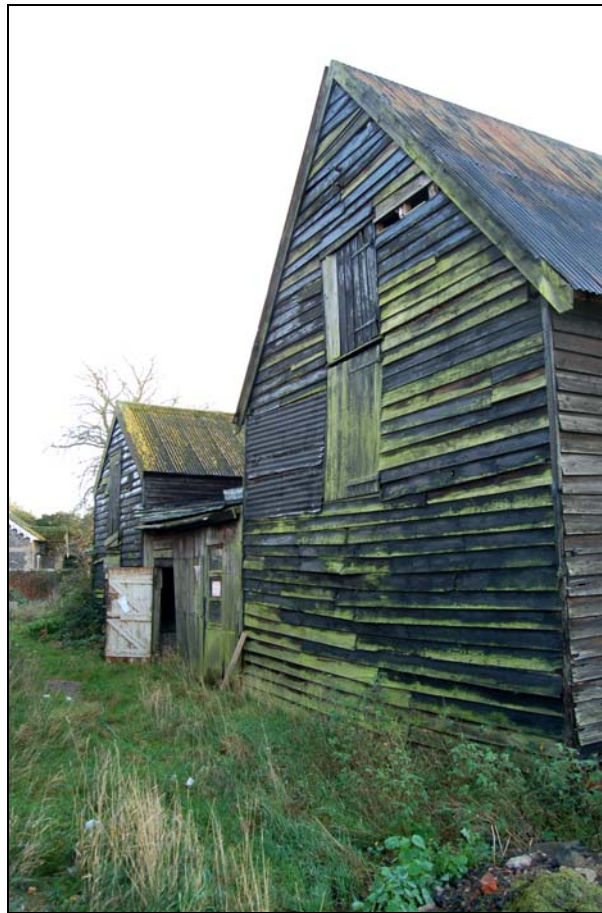


Plate 4 North elevation of barn with pole barn and granary to left



Plate 5 West elevation of barn



Plate 6 Barn interior viewed to south end



Plate 7 Barn interior viewed to rebuilt north end



Plate 8 Comparison of primary and secondary builds in barn



Plate 9 Barn porch and north end



Plate 10 Interior of loose box 2



Plate 11 North front of pole barn with granary to left



Plate 12 North front of granary with first floor taking-in door



Plate 13 Interior of cowshed element to granary



Plate 14 Store underneath granary



Plate 15 Interior of granary



Plate 16 South elevation of cowhouse 5



Plate 17 Entrance to loose box 5a



Plate 18 Rear of cowhouse 5 and overgrown cow doors



Plate 19 Interior of cowhouse 5 showing exposed brick floor by cow doors



Plate 20 Interior of cowhouse 5 showing removed hay rack



Plate 21 Cowhouse 6, house and modern extension viewed from north-east



Plate 22 Typical cowhouse 6 window set within later brickwork



Plate 23 Rear (west) elevation of cowhouse 6



Plate 24 Interior of cowhouse 6 viewed to south



Plate 25 Interior of probable washhouse at southern end of cowhouse 6



Plate 26 West elevation of wagon house/stables



Plate 27 Wagon house/stables viewed from road



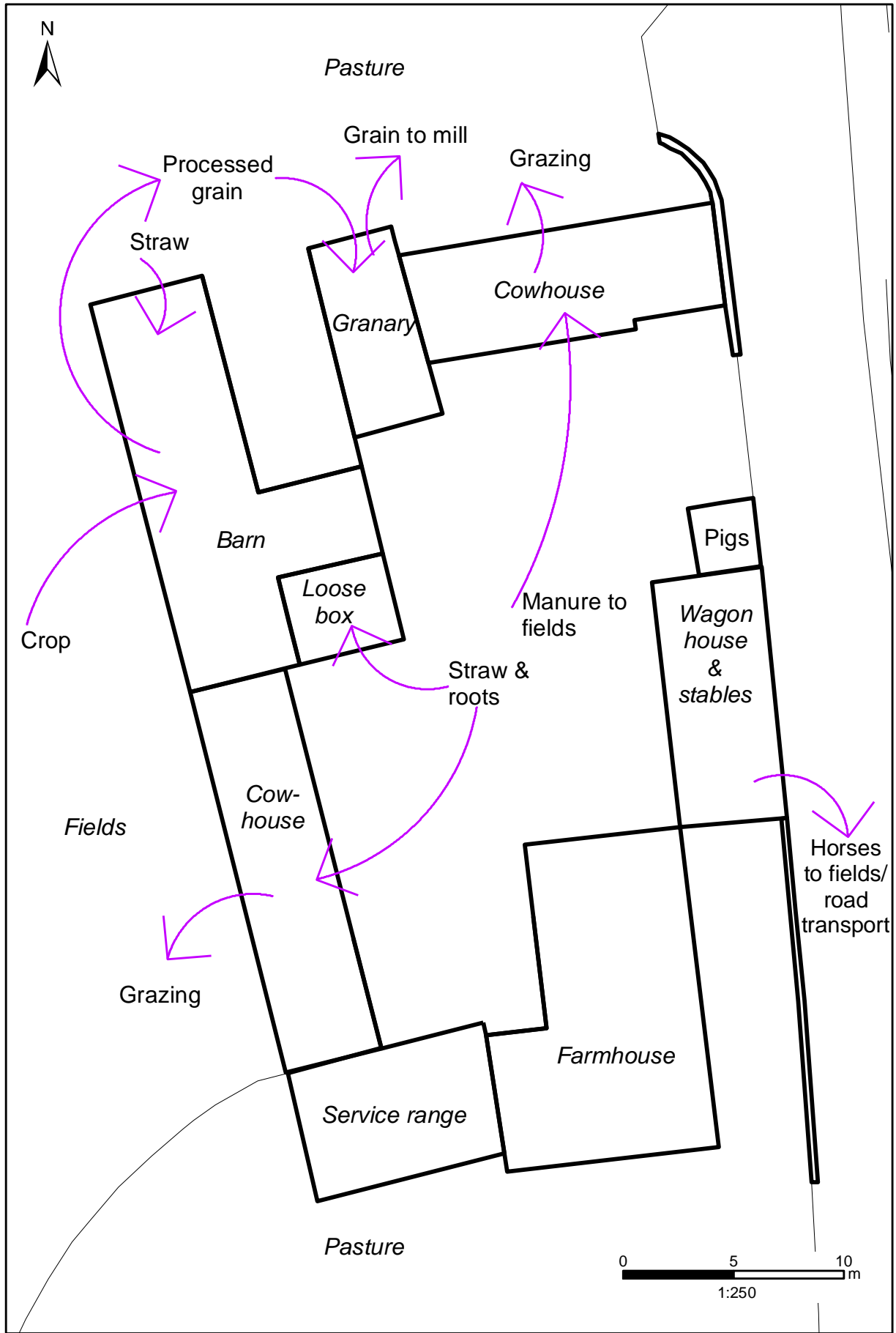
Plate 28 Roadside doorway into stores attached to wagon house/stables



Plate 29 Interior of stables 7



Plate 30 Interior of wagon house and former tack room



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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 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 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.

Cattle were placed in the two cowhouses and open-sided shed (demolished) for fattening. The animals were exercised in the uncovered stockyards and ate the root crops, hay 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 a loose box, where sick animals and pregnant cows could be isolated away from the group, attached to the barn and another for a bull, perhaps attached to one of the ranges. Meadowland or fallow fields were used for summer grazing/pasture. Horses were kept in the wagon house/stables and probably elsewhere. Pigs ate the by-products from the dairy and household food waste. Their sties were located on the east side of the yard and have since been demolished. Sheep may have been kept on the farm, but may have not been housed.

Appendix 3: Contents of Archive

Site name: Church Farm, Alresford, Essex

Project no. 1721

Index to the Archive

Document wallet containing:

1. Research Archive

- 1.1 ECC HEM design brief
- 1.2 ECC FAU written scheme of investigation
- 1.3 Client/archive report
- 1.4 CD rom containing copy of report pdf-formatted

2. Site Archive

- 2.1 Photographic register
- 2.2 Photographic record (36 x digital images& prints, 3 x colour 120mm & 6 x 35mm monochrome prints)
- 2.3 Site notes & annotated survey plans
- 2.4 Proposal drawing

Appendix 4: EHER Summary Sheet

Site Name/Address: Church Farm, Ford Street, Alresford, Essex	
Parish: Alresford	District: Tendering
NGR: TM 0658 2110	Site Code: N/A
Type of Work: Building recording	Site Director/Team: Andrew Letch ECC FAU
Dates of Work: 30th November & 1st December 2006	Size of Area Investigated: N/A
Curating Museum: Colchester	Funding Source: Mr. E. Daniels
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>Church Farm was established in the 18th-century based around a barn (recorded in the survey) and farmhouse. Initially the holding was small (25 acres) but grew in the 19th-century to 120 acres. Two phases of farm improvement were recorded in the survey, dated approximately to the early and mid 19th-century. The first of these produced an L-shaped plan form and the second the courtyard plan form, incorporating barn and cowhouse retained from earlier phases along with new structures replacing older ones.</p> <p>The survey recorded the following: an 18th-century barn & loose box, an early 19th-century cowhouse, mid 19th-century barn extension, granary, cowhouse and stable/wagon house and an early 20th-century pole barn.</p> <p>The farm is typical of many improved mixed Essex farmsteads that expanded in the mid 19th-century during the golden age of agriculture. Existing agricultural structures were incorporated into new yard layouts. However, the real significance of the farm lies in the fact that it retains an almost intact group of Victorian (and earlier) farm buildings, some of which, contemporary with the farmhouse, are of a good neo-Georgian architectural standard.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: A. R. Letch	Date of Summary: 16th March 2007