

**STUBBLES FARM, TYE GREEN, CRESSING  
ESSEX**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**



**Essex County Council**

**Field Archaeology Unit**

**April 2007**

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HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**

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**STUBBLES FARM, TYE GREEN, CRESSING  
ESSEX**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**

**Client:** Mrs M. Harling

**FAU Project No.:** 1723

**NGR:** TL 7826 2014

**OASIS No.:** essexcou1-25137

**Planning Application:** BTE0247/05

**Dates of Fieldwork:** 21st & 22nd December 2006

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A programme of building recording was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on a Grade II listed barn and outbuildings at Stubbles Farm, Cressing, prior to conversion. The work was funded by the owner/developer, Mrs M. Harling, and carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Management team of Essex County Council (ECC HEM), who also monitored the work.

Copies of the report will be supplied to ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) at County Hall, Chelmsford. The archive will be stored with Braintree Museum. An OASIS record has been completed.

Only those farm structures within the development area were recorded survey. They comprise:-

- Late 18th- or early 19th-century barn (Building 1)
- Contemporary ?cowhouse (Building 2)
- Contemporary in-filling around porches (Buildings 3a-3c)
- Early 20th-century cow shed (Building 4)
- Late 20th-century pole barn (Building 5)
- Late 20th-century garage/workshop (Building 5)
- Mid 20th-century shed (Building 6)

Of the existing six buildings, only the four traditional farm buildings (buildings 1-4) are to be converted to residential usage. The other three, all modern structures, are to be demolished.

The structures around the barn (buildings 2 and 3) are part of a late 18th to mid 19th-century farm complex, contemporary with the stables and farmhouse situated outside the development area. These, the barn itself, and shelter shed 4, form the main parts of the survey. The modern buildings (mainly post-1964) are recorded, to a lower level, to provide a record of the post-farm development.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Site location and description (fig.1)**

Tye Green is situated to the west of Cressing village, along the B1018 Braintree to Witham road, approximately 5km to the south-east of Braintree town centre (fig.1). Stubbles Farm is reached via a gravel driveway on the southern side of Mill Lane at TL 7826 2014.

The main element to the farm is the large, Grade II-listed barn (LBS 116386) built with contemporary livestock structures attached. It is described in its listing as late 18th or early 19th-century and in “exceptionally complete condition” (Listed Buildings Online); a good example of this type of barn with few alterations. The farm is laid out in the courtyard plan form that will be reinstated after the modern buildings have been removed. An aerial photograph of the earlier layout is shown at the back of the report as Appendix 1.

The contemporary farmhouse and stables on the west side of the yard are not part of the redevelopment scheme and will remain under the present ownership and are therefore outside the survey remit. However, plates of those Victorian buildings beyond the scope of the investigation are included for holistic purposes as Appendix 2.

The farm lies within a fairly flat agrarian landscape. Its courtyard plan form has been retained but somewhat impeded by later development. All the structures detailed within this report were occupied and in good order at the time of the survey. The main subject of the report is the barn, which is well-preserved and, at nine bays, extremely large, with twin porches. Interestingly, Jeffrey’s Farm, further up the road, has a barn of similar size and layout and is included on some of the cartographic figures found in the report.

## **2.2 Planning background**

Braintree District Council granted planning consent for the conversion of four farm buildings in March 2006 (BTE02471/05): barn 1, cowhouse 2 shelter shed/loose boxes 3 and shelter shed 4. The first three of these form the main part of the original planned farm. Three modern structures, a vehicle shed, pole barn and large garage/workshop are to be demolished.

Mindful of the possible effects on the historic integrity of the farm complex and responding to advice from the LPA Senior Historic Buildings Officer, 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**

The agrarian revolution began in the late 17th century with improvements in farming technique and application, which were to culminate in the Victorian ethos of 'High Farming'. Improvements in crop rotation heralded the end of the medieval three year crop cycle and developments in animal husbandry led to the rearing of larger animals, while increased production of winter feed meant more animals could be kept for fattening over the winter months.

Improvement led to a reappraisal of farming resources. In the 1740s, the medieval scattered farmsteads began to be replaced by a more uniform, inter-dependant layout with the introduction of 'planned' or 'model' farms by rich improving landlords, based around the courtyard plan form. Ideally the barn occupied the north side of the yard, providing it with shelter; with attached shelter sheds arranged either side of the yard. 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, preferably along the roadside. In the yards manure was trod into straw, which was collected and added to the fields to increase crop yields.

Improvement accelerated between 1840 and 1870 as the farming economy was stimulated by population growth and increased demand for milk, meat and grain from urban areas. The new markets were opened up by the growing railway network. The importance of cattle in the farming economy was realised, leading to the expansion of farms and farm buildings. This period is known as the 'Golden age of Agriculture. However, to most improving landowners, the expense of building a whole new planned farm like the 'model' farms was impractical. Instead, rather than demolish and build afresh, many added to and adapted their existing

farms to the courtyard form. Generally the larger buildings, inevitably barns, were retained and new housing for livestock attached to replicate the courtyard layout. This was the prevailing trend in Essex.

The philosophies of High Farming 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. In the planned farm, the buildings were arranged efficiently around the yard to follow the natural flow of materials: food and straw were provided for the animals in exchange for muck, meat and milk. By 1860 most farms included shelter sheds for cattle. Pigs were kept for fattening and to clear household waste, horses were used to pull ploughs and carts and sheep were kept outside or in temporary shelters outside the main yard.

The Golden Age finished in the 1870s when bad harvests, coupled with the introduction of cheap American grain and Argentinian refrigerated beef, started a long-term agricultural depression. 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 have post-medieval barns integrated into a 19th-century courtyard layout, often supplanted by 20th-century pre-fabricated structures. 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 phasing, based largely on the following information, included in the location/block plan of the site (fig.1).

There is no evidence of the farm or any other structures on Chapman and Andre's map of Essex, often the earliest cartographic source available for study. Drawn in 1777, its absence supports a late 18th-century or later establishment.



The presence of Stubbles Farm on the *Cressing tithe map of 1842* (D/CT 109, fig.2), between the two bends in Mill Lane, confirms the establishment date given in the listed buildings description of late 18th- or early 19th-century. The map has been drawn to the west, but has been re-oriented northward in fig.3 for easy comparison. The map shows the barn, house and stables. The accompanying *tithe award* (ERO D/CT 109A) provides important information on land ownership and tenancy. It shows a large farm of 144 acres owned by Jeffrey Grimwood and farmed by John Sadler. The land is predominantly to the south and west of the farmstead and Mill Lane, and contains arable and grazing land.

The *first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875* (fig.3) shows some evidence of 'improvement' in the 'high farming' era, based very much upon the structures already standing. With the major buildings in place, the yard has been divided into two, one for cattle (east) and the other for horses and farm implements (west, in front of the stables). There is a third smaller yard to the south containing pigsties. A small central building, later replaced by shelter shed 4, divides the eastern yard into two, producing an inverted E-shaped plan form on this side. There is a second shelter shed at the bottom of the southern yard (fig.3). The old wagon lodge, shown in Appendix 1, lies to the south-west.

The *second edition OS map of 1897* (fig.4) shows much the same layout, but in a clearer format. The important changes are to the east, where two structures, one attached to the barn and a second free-standing, have been built. The attached structure was discussed during the site visit with the then owner, Doug Nixon, and was reputed to be a shed for a steam engine used for driving milling equipment inside the north end of the barn. Although the milling gear had been removed, some fixtures remained and were recorded during the survey. According to Mr. Nixon, the engine drew its water from the pond close to the roadside (fig.1). The granary to the east (fig.1) was also built by this time. The map also shows that near-by Jeffrey's Farm has a twin-porched barn of similar proportions. Its presence was confirmed by a roadside inspection.

Both structures have disappeared by 1922, which is the publication date of the *New Series 6" OS map* (fig.5). Central shelter shed 3 has been built to replace the earlier shed, thus preserving the inverted E-shaped plan form. The map shows a much narrower shelter shed than that recorded in the survey, open-sided to the north. This suggests the open-sided southern side, viewed as contemporary during the survey, was added later, though its build is identical.

By c.1964, when the aerial photograph of the farm was taken (Appendix 1), shed 7 had been built. The farm was bought by the last but one owner, Mr. Nixon, and the existing buildings, including the barn, were cleared and used to house his collection of old cars and transport memorabilia (see front cover). The pole barn and garage/workshop were built for the same purpose.

### **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the historic building survey was, as outlined in the brief (ECC HEM 2006), to investigate and record the traditional farm buildings to RCHME level 3 standard prior to conversion. Due to their more recent age, the modern additions were recorded to a lower level.

In addition, the record was required to consider the following: plan form of the site, materials and method of construction, building chronology, development and phasing, function and internal layout and any surviving fixtures and fittings relating to original function or change of use. The record also aimed to discuss changes in design in relation to agricultural development/legislation and assess the local/regional significance/rarity of the buildings.

### **4.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS**

Each structure was assigned a number and referenced to the phased block/location plan (fig.1). Copies of the architect's drawings were supplied by the client and used as part of the survey to produce an annotated floor plan of the structures to be converted (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, based on the survey and map information. Any evidence of later adaption or change of use is included in the description and discussion.

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 any areas of important architectural detail, fixtures or fittings. However, external photography was hampered by poor weather conditions (rain, overcast, gloomy). A representative selection of

all photographs is reproduced at the back of the report as plates 1-20. 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.

## **5.0 HISTORIC BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS**

### **5.1 General description (fig.1)**

The farmyard has a north-west to south-east orientation and is split in two halves, with the house and stables to the west, outside the redevelopment area, and the barn, its outbuildings and modern shed structures to the east. The modern buildings are grouped around the southern end and comprise practical but unattractive structures that obscure the south and south-western parts of the barn. All the traditional structures are timber-framed and weatherboarded, with red hamerite-painted corrugated tin roofs to protect the interiors from damp. All are single-storied and concrete-floored. The western yard is gravelled. On the eastern side, the top yard has been paved to provide an outdoor seating area. The bottom yard now lies inside the pole barn. From Mill Lane, the driveway has a circular route that goes up to the eastern barn doors and around the rear to the western yard and back onto Mill Lane through meadow to the north of the yard (Appendix 1).

### **5.2 Barn 1**

The barn dates to the establishment of the farm in the late 18th- or early 19th-century. Its considerable length (5.7m wide x 34m long) marks it as the most prominent part of the farming group. An unusually large amount of reused timbers were used in its construction; salvaged, it would appear, from a high-status 16th-century house.

As part of a planned farm, the barn was built together with buildings 2 and 3 on an L-shaped plan form opposite the stables on the eastern side of a large, south-facing single yard (fig.2). In the late 19th-century, steam-powered milling machinery was installed in the northern end. More recently the barn has provided a useful space for storing cars. Charity events have been held in and around the barn and an inglenook fireplace was latterly built as an internal feature by Mr. Nixon. This was demolished during the survey, but is included on some of the photographic plates at the end of the report.

The barn is laid out over nine bays with hipped wagon porches on the third and seventh bays, facing westwards. Its primary-braced construction belongs to one building phase and many of the timbers are reused. The stepped brick plinth on which the building rests is unusually high, at 1.7m. Its orange/red bricks have dimensions of 225 x 110 x 65mm (approx. 9 x 4½ x 2½") and are laid in English bond within a lime mortar. The bricks are creased with a few diagonal kiss marks and conform to a late 18th- or early 19th-century date (Ryan 1996). Some are vitrified, but generally size and colour are fairly uniform. The roof has a 50° pitch (steep enough for thatch, which it may originally have had) and is gabled either end with high windows, probably converted pitching hatches. The south wall has been partially rebuilt after storms (D. Nixon pers. comm.).

The eastern elevation (plate 1) fronts onto the gravel driveway and is relatively austere. Both pairs of cart doors have been replaced in the modern period by metal sliding doors hung from steel runners attached to telegraph poles. North of the doors is the blocked former transmission portal between steam engine and milling machinery inside this end of the barn (fig.6). Some rebuilding has been done around the north door that was damaged by a tractor (D. Nixon pers. comm.). The central part is taken up with the mid-20th-century shed 7 and tumbling-in buttresses support the plinth south of the doors (fig.6 and plate 1).

Facing onto the two yards, the western elevation is completely hidden from the outside by contemporary cowhouse 2 and loose boxes/shelter shed 3, but can be viewed from the inside. The photographs taken on this side show bare, untreated 8-10½"-wide weatherboarding and some late 17th-early 18th-century style bricks (Ryan 1996) running in narrow occasional courses inside shelter shed 3b (plate 15). They are of narrow depth, only 220 x 110 x 50mm (approx. 8¾ x 4¾ x 2"). Their infrequency in the build does not affect the dating of the barn. It is likely they were spare or reused from an earlier structure. The north porch stands free of later buildings. The door has been replaced and the upper part filled-in in weatherboarding (plate 3). However, the upper door pintels remain either side to show the door was originally full-height. The second, southern, porch is entirely subsumed within pole barn 5 apart from the top part (plate 4). The original cart doors have been retained here, but nailed shut and the bottom parts replaced in concrete blockwork against the pole barn (plate 16).

Again, the two short elevations are largely obscured by buildings, apart from their upper sections, and were recorded from inside other structures. Little has changed at the north end. However, the south end, inside the garage/workshop, was rebuilt in oak boarding after a storm (plate 5). Adjoining loose box 3c was unaffected.

Inside the barn, the framing is primary-braced (plates 6 & 7). The nine bays vary between 3.2 and 3.7m-wide. Each bay has a central stud and either three or four normal studs either side, depending on the position of the bay. The central bays, between the wagon doors, are wider. The studs are long and slightly waney, tenoned to the plates and nailed to the bracing. Average width is 11cm, but the reused ones are thicker at around 13cm. The studs are set fairly close together, between 26 and 30cm.

The main framing members are pegged together. Stout bay posts are on average around 22cm<sup>2</sup> or larger and are all reused. The wall plates (c.15 x 18cm dimensions) are contemporary with the barn (i.e. not reused) and come in long sections up to two bays in length. They are joined by face-halved and bladed scarf joints, typical of post-medieval construction but becoming obsolete during the 19th-century. The sill plates have identical scantling and are linked by over-lipped bridle scarf joints (plate 9).

The south end has been rebuilt recently up to eaves level. Both wagon porches are contemporary with the barn and display the same level of reused timbers.

The reused items of studwork and main framing appear to have been salvaged from a disassembled high-status house. There are wattle marks, nail holes (for internal plaster) and rebates for trenched bracing, giving a possible date of 16th- or early 17th-century for the timbers. Some timbers also feature substantial 4" diamond mullion rebates and (horizontal) shutter grooves. Very few houses had glass before the late 16th-century (Harris 1995), confirming the likely date of the salvaged timbers to the 16th-century. Mortice holes in the salvaged wall plate soffits indicate heavy close studding at intervals of c.20cm. Significant reused timbers are shown in fig.6. A good example of reuse is illustrated by plate 8 which shows a wall plate containing rebates for a two by three light diamond mullion shuttered window, reused as a barn sill beam.

Although the milling machinery is no longer extant, some evidence of its superstructure remains, attached to the timber frame and in the roofspace. The original tie beam between the two northern bays has been 'doubled-up' to support the running gear and a bearing box bracket remains bolted to the framing on the western side (fig.6, plate 10).

Roof trusses are simple clasped collar purlin supported on bolted knee braces (plates 6-8). Many rafters are reused and there are a few machine-sawn replacements, added when the recent corrugated iron roof was fitted to replace the tiled roof recorded around 1964 in Appendix 1.

### **5.3 Cowhouse 2**

The cowhouse is contemporary with the barn and attached to its north end. It is constructed from the same materials and in the same style. It also features reused timbers, though fewer. An early 20th-century shed, outside the development area, is built against its western end (plate 11).

Like the barn, it is timber framed and clad in weatherboarding. Its plinth is contemporary, though lower, at 0.3m, and there are some later repairs around the east side, which is exposed to the weather. The roof is gabled at the west end, extending into the yard, but built against the barn as single-pitch (plate 2). It is clad in corrugated tin. There is a high pitching hatch on the western gable linking to the later shed (fig.6). Entry points are on the eastern and southern sides in the form of modern replacement double doors (fig.6), domestic in style to suit the paved 'patio' yard. The southern wall (plate 11) has been rebuilt in blockwork up to and beyond loose box 3a, but does not represent infilling of open-fronted shelter sheds, according to cartographic evidence. Otherwise there are no external features of interest.

Inside (plates 12 & 13), the structure is five bays wide, each bay around 2.5m in width. The plinth is cement-rendered and the floor sloping towards the west. There are five studs per bay including the central one to hold the primary bracing either side (plate 13). Bay posts are thinner than the barn at around 16 x 12cm as the walls carry a lesser load. Studs are thinner too; at around 7 x 8cm. Reused timbers have been used as posts, sills and some studwork, again with wattle marks, probably from the same building. The most dramatic example is perhaps the sill plate on the west wall that contains mullion rebates, shutter groove and mortice holes for heavy studding, like in the barn (fig.6).

The roof framing is simple clasped collar purlin with no embellishment (plate 12). The tie beams that anchor the structure to the barn are nailed internally to the bay posts in the same way as the structures either side of the barn porches, included together as Building 3. No internal features associated with livestock (e.g. trough, hay feeders) remain, nor their positions recorded.

### **5.4 Loose boxes & shelter shed 3**

Three small structures occupy the areas either side of the porches, and all are contemporary with the barn. They consist of two loose boxes (buildings 3a and 3c) and an open sided shelter shed (3b) that all face onto the cattle yard(s) (fig.1). Shelter shed 3b worked jointly

with later shelter shed 4 and its forebear from the mid-19th century. All except loose box 3a are now obscured by later buildings. Their common features are described together below.

All the structures are timber-built against the west side of the barn, except for loose box 3a whose front has been replaced in concrete blockwork like cowhouse 2 (fig.6). Some of the timbers are reused. The roofs are shallow single pitch to the barn at 35° and clad in corrugated iron sheeting. Rafters have primary-braced wind bracing and the purlins are supported on single struts attached to beams (plate 15). These extend into the barn where they are nailed to the side of bay posts, resting on sills. The interiors were still in use for storage (3a and 3b) and offices (3c) but this did not impede the survey.

The main elevation of **loose box 3a** is built of blockwork with a modern house door set within (plate 11). Inside, are several reused timbers, including the wall plates to north and west (plate 14). Although there are no contemporary studwork mortices to show for sure there was a stud wall here, none of the maps show this structure as open-sided. Therefore it would appear that the existing mortices were reused when the shed was built.

**Shelter shed 3b** was built open to the yard for loose cattle. Later on these facilities were increased by joining the large shelter shed onto it. In more recent times, the area has been used as a bar area for functions, nicknamed 'The Titanic Bar' (plate 15). The inside is divided into three bays and from here the coursing of late 17th-early 18th-century bricks may be seen (plate 15).

**Loose box 3c** is sited at the south end of the barn, but its main elevation (plate 16) was partly obscured by the items stored inside the pole barn. The interior has been nicely refurbished as an office for a wedding car business. The two bays were originally partitioned into loose boxes for a small amount of cattle, but the studwork below the tie beam has been removed (plate 17). Two doorways, one into the porch and the other out into the yard, provided entry into the boxes.

## **5.5 Shelter shed 4**

This structure (plates 3, 4, & 18) is the latest in date of the farm buildings, built sometime in the early 20th-century to house loose cattle. Since then, parts have been used for general and vehicle storage and as part of the 'Titanic Bar'.

The maps show that the present structure replaced a smaller shelter shed in the early 20th-century (pre-1922). It has an oblong plan form with two open-sides providing accommodation



for cattle in the two facing yards. However, the 1922 map (fig.5) only shows one side of the shed, open to the north yard. This seems questionable as both sides of the shed appear to be of contemporary construction.

Inside, the two sides are divided by an axial spinal wall built from primary-braced machine-sawn timbers and weatherboarding (plate 19). There is a narrow vent running along the top for through-draft to either side. The long elevations are divided into four bays by square-cut 6" posts whose tie beams are connected to the roof purlins by simple splayed struts. Gate fixtures remain on the posts. The western bay is partitioned-off as a woodshed by a folding door a later adaptation (plate 18). The southern side opens out inside the pole barn whose roof is laid directly onto the cowhouse rafters (plate 19).

### **5.6 Pole barn 5**

The pole barn is contemporary with the garage/workshop, both of which are scheduled for demolition. As modern elements post-dating the farm they are described briefly for group value. The barn is built in concrete block with the main external entrance at the west side accessed by two wide doors, large enough to get vehicles inside. Iron 'Crittalls' casement windows provide the only daylight into the building (plate 4). The other wall, the south wall, is also concrete block-built but contains, on the western end, part of the earlier flint-built yard wall (fig.6), dating to the mid 19th-century or perhaps earlier. It is shown on the Appendix 1 by the rick yard and features in fig.5, but may be earlier.

The barn has a low-pitch roof, sloping to the south. Inside, rafters span the width of the structure, held up by telegraph poles (plate 16). It is likely the corrugated iron roof was put on the same time as those on the more traditional buildings.

### **5.7 Garage/workshop 6**

The garage (plate 4) is built from corrugated iron sheeting and concrete blockwork; adjacent to the south walls of the barn and pole shed. Iron Crittalls windows bring in light from the east from high up and in the projecting lower part. On the opposite side are large sliding doors to bring the cars in and out (plate 1). Construction-wise, buildings 5 and 6 are similar as they both have telegraph poles supporting the low-pitch roof and partial light timber-framing (plate 20).

### **5.8 Shed 7**

The shed (plates 1 & 2) is situated on the east side of the barn against the central bays (fig.1) and is open to the south. It is used to store numerous large vintage car spares (wings,



axles, etc) and there is a forklift inside too. Its planked frame is nailed to the barn and the exterior has 3" oak boarding, the same as on the rebuilt south wall of the barn. This is the same shed as seen on the 1960s photo (Appendix 1). The roof is low-pitched, sloping to the east and clad in corrugated iron sheeting.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION & PHASING**

Stubbles Farm was built in the late 18th- or early 19th-century as a planned mixed farm comprising a barn and buildings for cattle (Buildings 1-3) on an L-shaped plan form, together with stables and farmhouse set around a courtyard. The yard was divided into two in the mid 19th-century. A central shelter shed was built on the eastern yard, dividing it in two by presenting an inverted E-shape plan form on this side of two independent yards. This layout was perpetuated when a larger early 20th-century shed was built (Building 4) in the same position. Thus the two main yards performed separate functions: the western yard was used for the horses, carts and implements; much like the photo in Appendix 1, and the eastern yard for rearing cattle. Milling machinery was installed in the barn during the late 19th-century, powered by a steam engine located in a shed outside. Threshing may have been carried out mechanically too. Although the engine has gone, some of the wooden superstructure remains, evidence for 19th-century mechanisation and adaptation rarely recorded. Much of the original farm layout remains, but since the 1960s has been built onto with large post-farming vehicle sheds.

The early structures all include reused timbers from a high quality timber-framed domestic building. Many bay posts, sill/wall plates and studs originate from this building and contain interesting features. Some of these, the trenched bracing, heavy studwork and mullioned/shuttered windows, offer a 16th-century date. It is likely the building was a local one, but no such building existed on the site before the farm was established, according to the Chapman and Andre map of Essex of 1777. The quality of the craftsmanship is of a very high standard and it is likely the timbers came from a building of some note.

It is difficult to date the barn any more precisely than can be deduced from the survey, map analysis and the list description. In any case, it is an early example of a complete planned farm on a virgin site. Although it is common in the post-medieval period for farms to employ reused timbers in barn construction, it is unusual to source timbers from a high status building, whose history and identity remains intriguing.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

Stubbles Farm represents the survival of an important group of farm buildings, all of which, including those outside the conversion area, date to the establishment of the farm in the late 18th- or early 19th-century. In recent years, since the farm's closure, the traditional pre-Victorian layout has been partly subsumed by 20th-century concrete and corrugated iron sheds. The removal of these useful but unattractive buildings can only improve the setting of the barn and re-expose properly the traditional farm buildings and planned layout.

The main building in the group, the grade II listed barn is well-preserved and unusually large, having within it nine bays and two porches. Such a size is surely comparable to the acreage held by the farm in the period when it was established, which must have been considerable, probably more than the 144 acres recorded in the tithe award of 1842. An unusual amount of reused timber is present in the barn that seems to come from a single source. At a time when good wood was scarce and expensive, reusing old timber was quite common on farms, where function was more important than architectural trends. It would be interesting to find out the earlier building's history and identity. Cartographic sources confirm there were no buildings, such as an earlier farmstead, on the site before the farm was established, although it is likely to have derived from a local source. Often in Essex, farms were remodelled on the site of established ones.

Nothing is known about the early days of the farm or who established it, but it is interesting to note that Jeffrey's Farm, set on an older site further along Mill Road, appears to have been 'improved' at the same time - with the construction of a barn of similar scale and plan form - implying the two were, perhaps, owned by the same estate.

The structures recorded are important in their contribution towards the study of Essex and East Anglian farming groups. The farm is an early example of the planned form, established before the great period of farm building and improvement from the mid- to late- 19th-century, otherwise known as the Golden Age of Farming. Contrary to many other Essex farms, because of its pioneering plan form and range of buildings, there was evidently little need for improvement in the Victorian era. So it remained, little changed until farming ceased here in the 1960s.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the client, Mrs Marga Harling, for commissioning the works and supplying the drawings and to Doug Nixon for the benefit of his knowledge and for providing the photograph in Appendix 1. The assistance of staff at the Essex Records Office is also acknowledged. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey. The site was monitored by Vanessa Clarke on behalf of ECC HEM and the LPA.

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Fig.1. Location and block plan



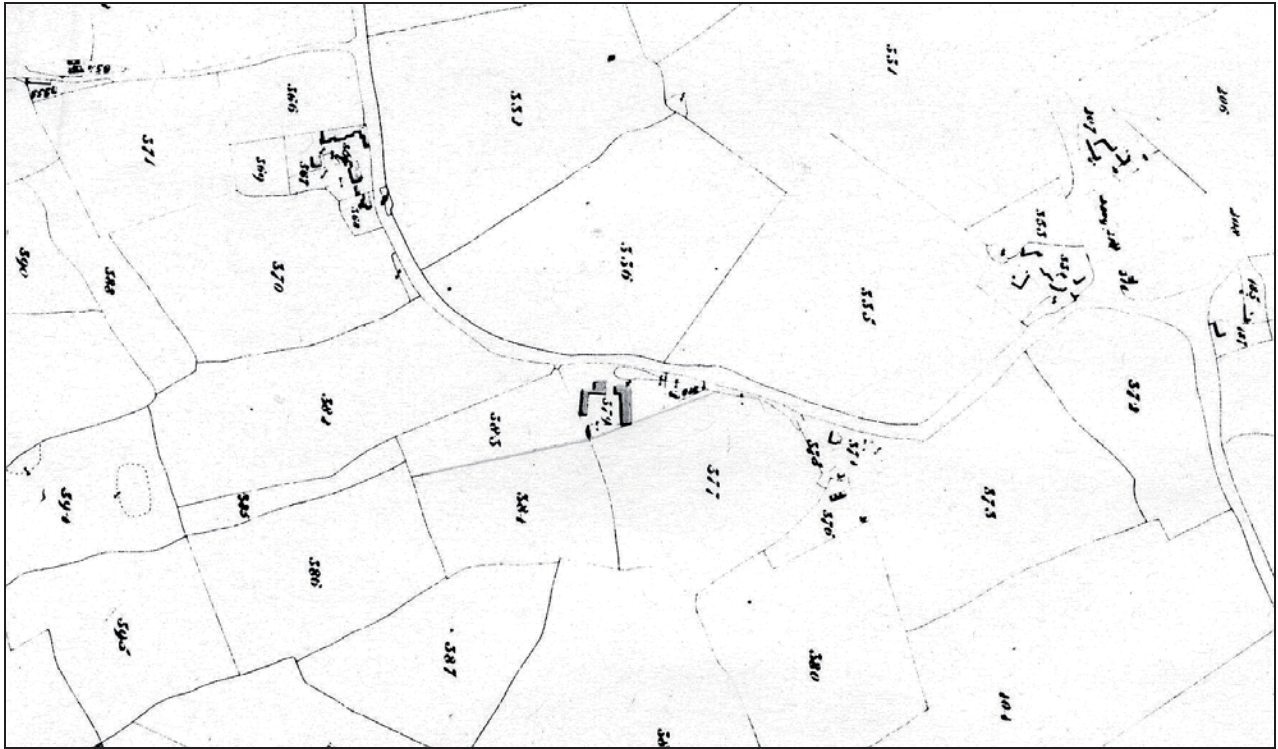


Fig. 2 Crossing tithe map, 1842 (D/CT 109), re-oriented to north

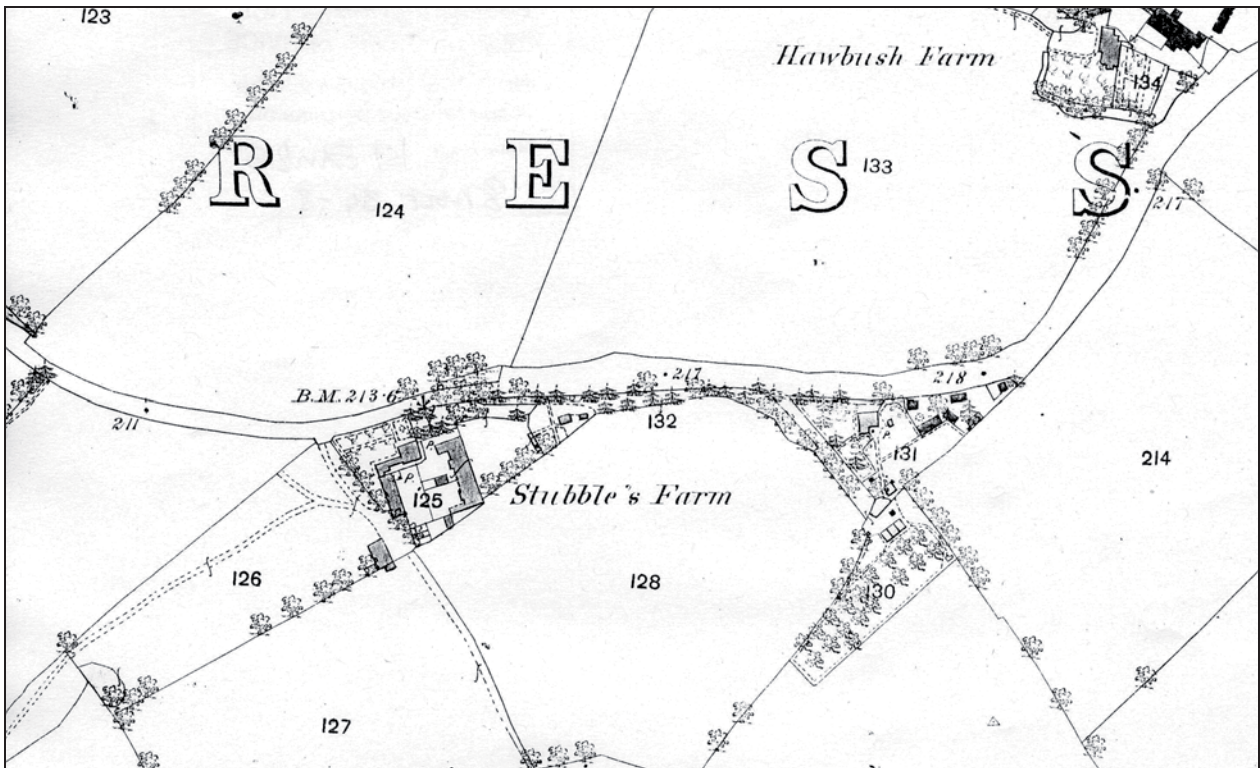


Fig. 3 First Edition 25" OS map, 1875 (sheet 34/3)

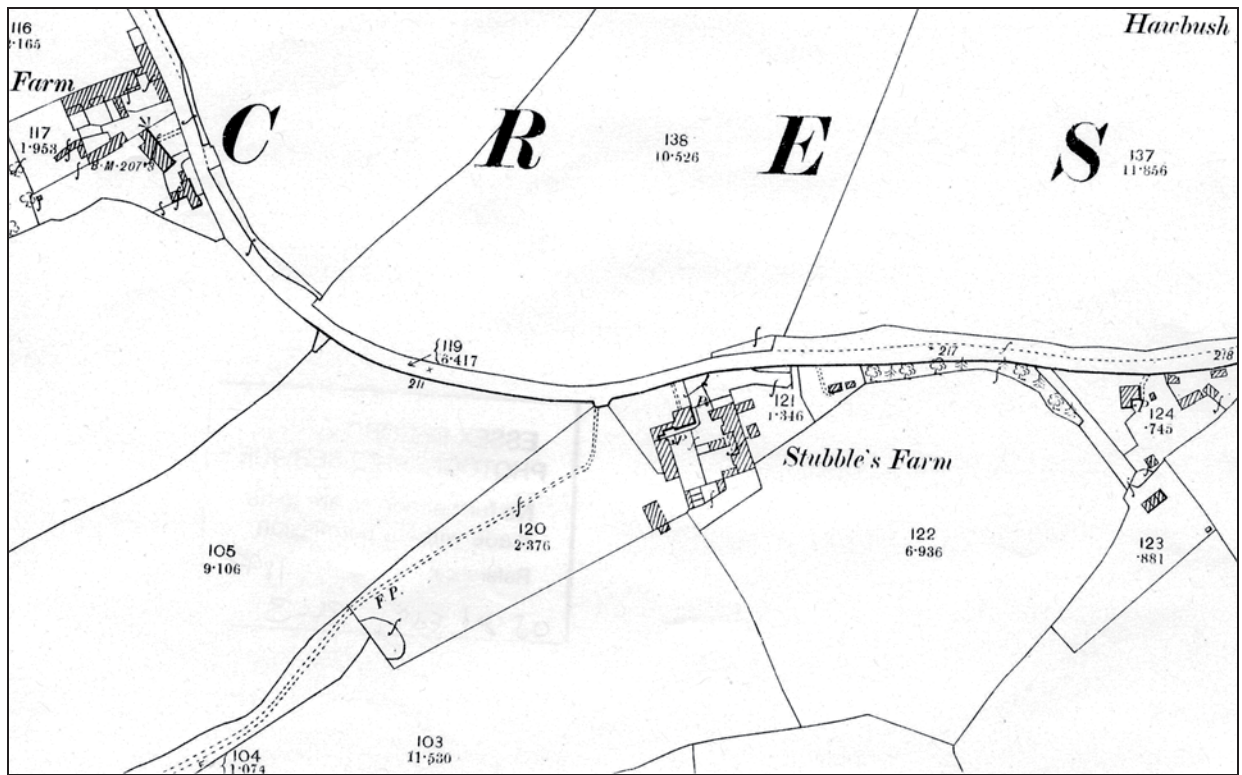


Fig. 4 Second Edition 25" OS map, 1897 (sheet 34/3)

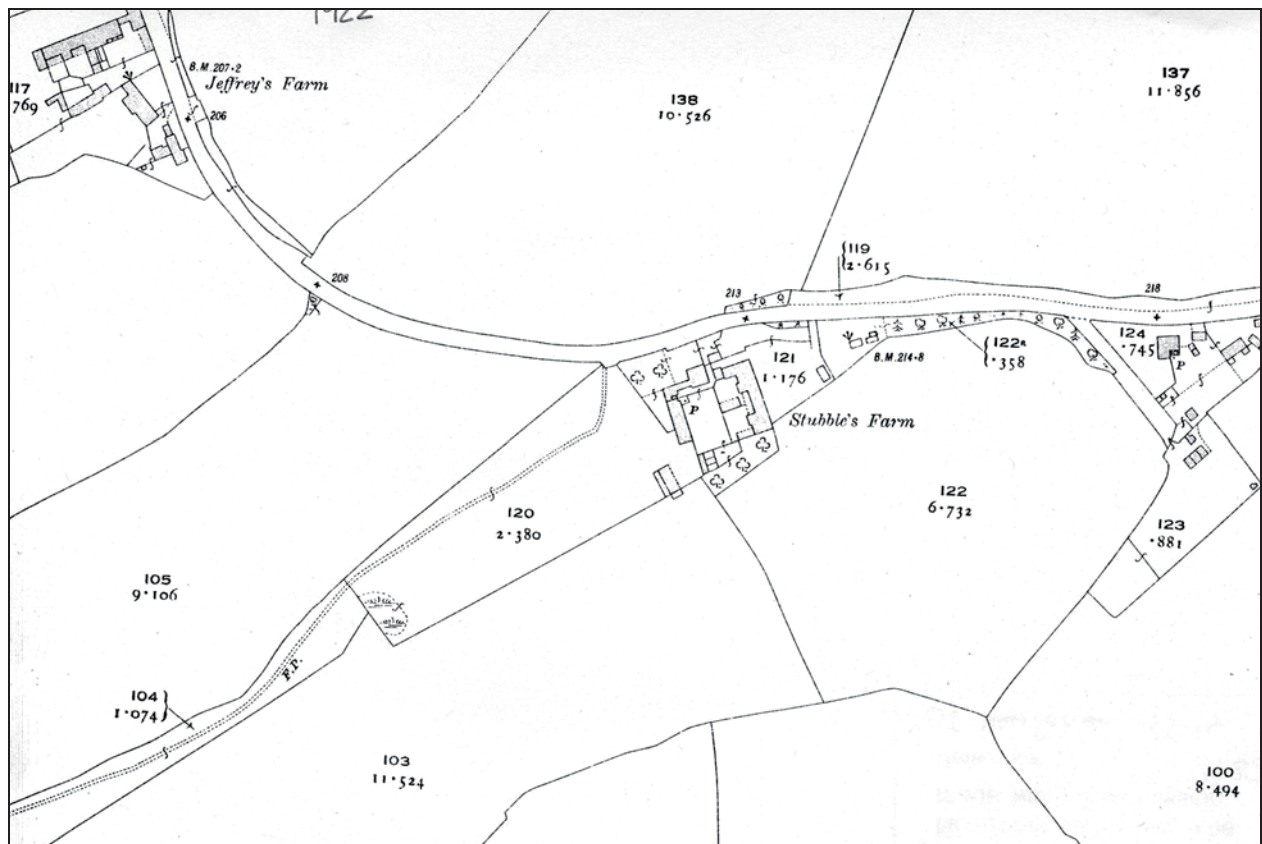


Fig. 5 New series 6" OS map, 1922 (sheet 34/14)

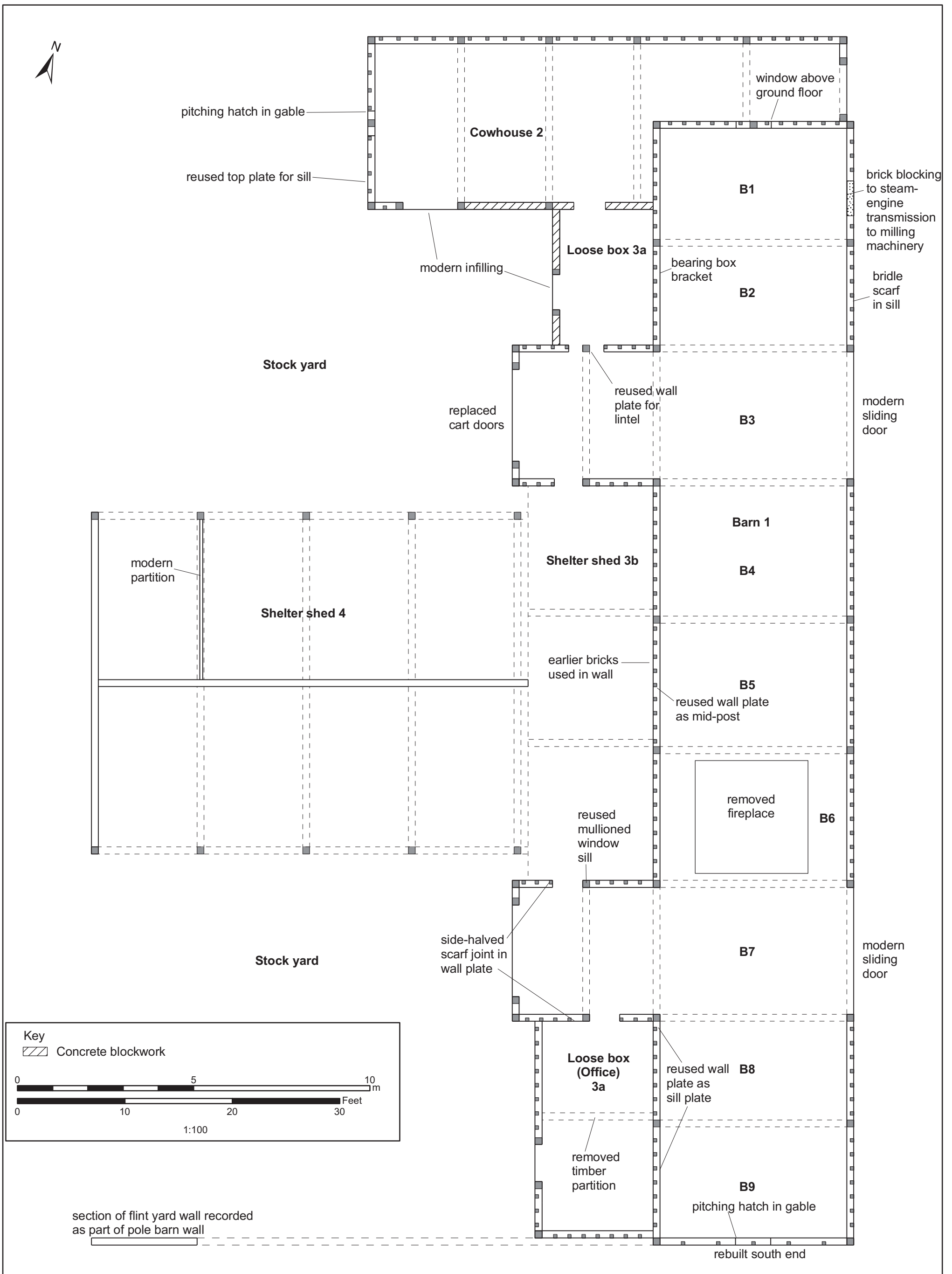


Fig.6. Ground floor plan of buildings to be converted





Plate 1 Barn and garage viewed towards west



Plate 2 Barn, cowhouse and shed 7 viewed towards south





Plate 3 Former yard surrounded by barn, shelter shed 4 and cowhouse



Plate 4 Modern additions to barn





Plate 5 Rebuilt south wall of barn inside garage



Plate 6 Interior of barn viewed to north





Plate 7 Interior of barn viewed to south



Plate 8 Reused wall plate used as sill



Plate 9 Bridle joint with over-lipped face in sill



Plate 10 Bearing box bracket for former milling machinery





Plate 11 Cowhouse and loose box 3a beside southern porch



Plate 12 Interior of cowhouse viewed to west





Plate 13 Interior of cowhouse viewed to north-east



Plate 14 Interior of loose box 3a





Plate 15 Interior of shelter shed 3b



Plate 16 Southern porch and loose box 3c viewed from inside pole barn





Plate 17 Interior of loose box 3c (office)



Plate 18 Shelter shed 4 viewed to south





Plate 19 Southern side of shelter shed 4 from inside pole barn



Plate 20 Garage interior



Appendix 1: Photograph of working farm taken c.1964





**Appendix 2: Victorian farm buildings beyond the conversion zone**



Granary



Stables and western yard, with farmhouse and flint yard wall

## **Appendix 3: Contents of Archive**

**Site name: Stubbles Farm, Tye Green, Cressing, Essex**

**Project no. 1723**

### **Index to the Archive**

Document wallet containing:

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 HEM design brief
- 1.2 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 record (digital images & prints, colour 120mm & monochrome 35mm prints)
- 2.2 Site notes & annotated survey drawings
- 2.3 Set of architect's drawings

#### Appendix 4: EHER Summary Sheet

<b>Site Name/Address:</b> Stubbles Farm, Tye Green, Cressing, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Cressing	<b>District:</b> Braintree
<b>NGR:</b> TL 7826 2014	<b>Site Code:</b> N/A
<b>Type of Work:</b> Building recording	<b>Site Director/Team:</b> Andrew Letch ECC FAU
<b>Dates of Work:</b> 21st-22nd December 2006	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> N/A
<b>Curating Museum:</b> Braintree	<b>Funding Source:</b> Mrs M. Harling
<b>Further Work Anticipated?</b> None	<b>Related EHER Nos.:</b> None.
<b>Final Report:</b> Summary in EAH	
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Post-medieval (18th & 19th-century), modern	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p>Stubbles Farm was built as a planned farmstead in the late 18th- or early 19th-century with barn, farmhouse, stables and housing for livestock (cattle). From the beginning the courtyard plan form was adopted. Around the middle of the 19th-century the yards were divided with the east yard for cattle (on an inverted E-plan layout) and the western yard for horses, carts and implements. During the late 20th-century large utility buildings were constructed around the barn to store and maintain a collection of vintage cars and transport memorabilia.</p> <p>The following structures were recorded: a late 18th-/early 19th-century barn with cowhouse and attached loose boxes and shelter shed, early 20th-century shelter shed and later 20th-century (mainly post-1964) shed, pole barn and garage/workshop.</p> <p>The barn, which is Grade II-listed, and its contemporaries are in exceptionally good condition, and internally at least, largely unaffected by later alterations. A large quantity of quality reused timbers from a probable 16th-century house of unknown source, are included within the primary buildings.</p> <p>Stubbles is important as an early example of an intact early planned farmstead, which are unusual in Essex. Because it was designed on the principles of high farming, there was virtually no 'improvements' required during the Golden Age of Agriculture when many Essex farms were either rebuilt or established.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> A. Letch	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 2nd April 2007