

**GREAT NUNTY'S FARM, NUNTY'S LANE
PATTISWICK
ESSEX**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

November 2008

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Prepared By: A. Letch Position: Project Officer	Signature: Date: 7th November 2008
Checked By: A. Scruby Position: Project Manager	Signature: Date: 7th November 2008

Document Ref.	1906
Report Issue Date	7th November 2008
Circulation	RED Investments c/o Graham Jones
	ECC Historic Environment Management
	Essex Historic Environment Record

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Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager at the

Field Archaeology Unit

Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ

Tel: 01376 331431

Fax: 01376 331428

Email: fieldarch@essexcc.gov.uk

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**GREAT NUNTY'S FARM, NUNTY'S LANE
PATTISWICK
ESSEX**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

Client: RED Investments

FAU Project No.: 1906

NGR: TL 8238 2641

OASIS No.: essexcou1- 48626

Planning Application: BTE/02573/07

Dates of Fieldwork: 19th–20th May 2008

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A programme of building recording was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on the extensive remains of a post-medieval farmstead at Great Nuntty's Farm, Pattiswick, prior to conversion to a single residential dwelling. The work was commissioned by the architect, Graham Jones, on behalf of RED Investments 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 online record has been created at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/index.cfm>.

The study of the development and impact of the agricultural revolution and Victorian High Farming is regarded as an important area for further research by the Regional Research Agenda (Brown & Glazebrook 2000, 42 & 45). The survey at Great Nuntty's suggests the current structures were part of a large farmstead built in the late 18th century, incorporating an earlier structure contemporary with the 16th/17th century farmstead and early farmhouse.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location and description (fig.1)

Great Nunty's Farm (TL 8238 2641) lies on the south side of the village of Pattiswick, a sparse parish located 7km to the north-east of Braintree, along an ancient thoroughfare known as Nunty's Lane, leading to Burton's Green (fig.1). The farm has a deeply rural location sited on fairly level ground, surrounded by fields with woods to the east. Just to the south, on the northern tip of Coggeshall parish stands Little Nunty's Farm (fig.1) which is probably related, but is a more recent establishment.

The farm has been redundant for some time and consists of five timber-framed structures and the remains of two brick buildings surrounding a square yard open to the north. The cross-winged farmhouse standing opposite dates to the 16th and 17th centuries and is Grade II Listed (LBS 116190). The farm buildings are therefore curtilage listed with the house.

The following buildings were recorded:

- Building 1: Possible 16th-century byre rebuilt in the 18th century
- Building 2: Main barn with cattle stalls 2a
- Building 3: Threshing barn incorporating elements of two earlier buildings
- Building 4: 18th century stables
- Building 5: Originally part of building 4, refurbished in the late 19th century as a feeding shed
- Buildings 6 & 7: Dilapidated Victorian brick structures

The yard is unmade and deeply rutted, presumably from building supplies being brought onto the site in wet conditions. Most of these materials are stored in a metal lock-up to the west of the complex, but there are also some in byre 1 and the yard itself. The standing buildings are in poor condition from lack of maintenance. The two remaining Victorian brick buildings have collapsed recently but other buildings and yard walls/fences were demolished previously and cleared from the site.

2.2 Planning background

A planning application for conversion to single residential use was submitted to Braintree District Council (BDC) in 2007 (BTE/02573/07) and approved in February 2008. Mindful of the impact of conversion on the historic integrity of the farm complex, and the importance of

farming in the East Anglian region during the post-medieval period, ECC HEM advised BDC that a full archaeological condition should be attached to the planning consent, based on advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DOE 1990).

2.3 Historical background & development

Cartographic and documentary research was undertaken at the Essex Record Office, Chelmsford (ERO), to understand the origins and development of the farm. Secondary sources were also studied. The results are presented below with their accompanying ERO references. Historic map extracts included in the report as figures 2-4 have been enlarged in the report to provide greater clarity.

Nunty's Farm and Wood are referred to as 'Noteheye' in Assize Rolls as far back as 1285 (Reaney 1969). According to Reaney, the name is likely to derive from 'the nut-hey or enclosure' or later the 'nun's nut-hay', probably the nun's of Castle Hedingham (1969 398). This meant a representative from each parish was responsible for collecting nuts from the manorial woods on Holy Cross Day (14th September)

Great Nunty's Farmhouse comprises a 16th-century main range and 17th-century crosswing. Byre 1 contains structural elements that suggest it formed part of the early farmstead.

The farm is referred to as 'Nunties' on Chapman and Andre's Map 1777 map of Essex, (fig.2), which shows the farmhouse and two other buildings, each with its own yard, and a small plot at the back. The building closest to the road is probably byre 1, which was rebuilt in the late 18th century when the current farm was constructed. The function of the other is unknown and it is clearly not one of the existing buildings. However it is possible that elements of this earlier building were used to construct barn 3 whose timberwork is different to the other structures. Monks Wood, to the east of the farm, was later known as Nunty's Wood.

From their structural components, buildings 1-5 were constructed in their present form in the late 18th-century, some time after 1777. The results of the survey and the nature of the buildings with their steeply-pitched roofs, suggest they were half-plastered thatched structures. All the current buildings are included as part of the early 19th-century layout on the Pattiswick Tithe Map of 1842 (D/CT 270B). The main barn (2) is shown with two porches, one close to byre (1), which no longer stands. Four other structures, subsequently demolished, are shown to the west of a large improved farmstead laid out around two roughly-formed yards (fig.3). The map shows a barn, whose porch faces towards the fields,

two open-sided sheds (a wagon lodge and cart/cow shed shown more clearly on later maps) close to the road and a square building, perhaps a cattle shed open to the yards either side. Like the surveyed buildings 1-5, it is likely they were constructed with timber-frames and thatched roofs, forming an attractive, if uncommon, group in the contemporary landscape. The map also shows a pond and wide trackway behind barn 3, leading between the fields to the south, which is still present in the landscape.

The Tithe Award (D/CT 270A) gives a mainly arable holding of approximately 70 acres, plus 2 acres of woodland, which seems quite sparse considering the size of the farmstead. It is significant that the occupier is given as Philip Gowlett Nunn, who is also the owner, which provides an alternative explanation to the origins of the farm's name.

A second phase of improvement occurs between 1842 and 1881, during the Victorian Golden Age of Agriculture when the farm expands to its maximum point. By this time, the Nunn's have vacated, perhaps to start the farm at Little Nunty's, about which little is known. The owner of the main farm in 1874 is Charles Wing Grey (Kelly's Directory), and it is possible the farm was improved again under his possession. Such expansion is likely to have coincided with an increase in the livestock holding, and perhaps more land. Certainly, the 1881 first edition OS map (fig.4) shows a new layout, with the present brick boundary wall onto the roadside verge and five clearly-defined yards with three new brick structures, two of which partially survive as buildings 6 and 7 (fig.1). A square structure has been built close to the west barn (fig.4). The two roadside structures to the north-west are shown with dashed lines indicative of open-sided structures, and the one on the verge is certain to be a wagon lodge. The planned layout of the yards suggests that livestock (cattle) were kept in the available barns rather than purpose-built shelter sheds that are the Essex norm. The western side of barn 3 is drawn oddly-angular on this map, which is unusual and hard to explain, though it does happen to be where the brick plinth has been consolidated, perhaps reflecting past structural problems around the pond. It also seems to echo where the frame is currently collapsing on the other side of the porch, which has distorted the buildings shape.

The second edition OS map of 1897 (fig.5) may illustrate a retraction in cereal production during the depression of the 1890s, with the loss of the western barn and some of the other buildings, and reorganisation of the now larger yards into two main areas. This layout survived into the middle part of the last century, but only partially survives today.

It is not clear when farming ceased at Nunty's, but the dilapidated condition of the remaining buildings suggests this was some time ago. Tiles removed from the two Victorian brick

buildings hastened their demise, and the yards and other structures were cleared. Since then, the remaining buildings have survived thanks to new roofs. There are more recent signs that horses were kept in the stables, which were perhaps rented-out and the farmhouse appears to be unoccupied.

2.4 Farming from the post-medieval to modern period

Medieval farm buildings tended to adopt an unplanned plan form, scattered around the farm house rather than around a central courtyard. Farms were 'mixed', producing cereals and livestock and frequently consisting of a barn (where crops were threshed and stored), a granary to store the grain (or the farmhouse) and a stable, often built with internal hay lofts. Except for horses, animals were kept outside or in temporary shelters, while implements (ploughs, etc) and wagons were stored in sheds or on the threshing floor of the barn. Arable and livestock farming were mutually dependent: cereals were produced as a cash crop and as animal feed while the animals provided power and manure for the crops, alongside wool, meat and dairy products.

Improved farming techniques, especially in grasses, and increased demand from urban markets, particularly London, improved the wealth of farmers considerably between 1500 and 1750 leading to expansion and the building of new larger farmsteads (Lake 1989). Major improvements in crop rotation and animal husbandry in the agrarian revolution of the late 17th century meant increased yields and the breeding of larger animals, which could be fattened over winter thanks to increased winter feed crops.

Agricultural improvement, a growing population and high corn prices between 1750 and 1813 led to the first wave of agricultural improvement (Lake 1989) when larger, more efficient farms based on the courtyard layout of the 'planned' farm were established. Improving landlords began enclosing marginal land and the remaining open fields, and replacing the earlier scattered farmsteads with the courtyard plan form, the peak exponent being the fully-formed 'model' farm, established on the more wealthy estates.

The new farms introduced a more intense approach to agriculture, based on the crop cycle. Cattle were fed in one or more enclosed yards, usually with an entrance to the south and a barn to north for shelter. In the yards manure was trod into threshed straw and the mixture added to the fields, increasing crop and straw yields.

Such improvements accelerated between 1840 and 1870, the so-called 'Golden Age of Agriculture', based on an increased demand for milk, meat and bread by growing urban

centres, aided by the growing railway network. Great debate was had in High Farming circles on the merits of different husbandry techniques and efficiency/labour saving devices such as mechanised threshing and ploughing machinery, based on the Victorian factory system.

The expense of the model farm in its purest form was a barrier to smaller landowners. So, rather than demolish and build afresh, many farmers remodelled their farms around the courtyard system. The prevailing trend in Essex was to retain the larger buildings, inevitably barns, with new housing for livestock around a central yard or yards.

Poor British harvests in the 1870s, cheap American grain imports and the effects of a world-wide recession led to a depression in agriculture which continued into the early part of the 20th century. As a result, land was turned over to market gardening and orchards and there was a greater emphasis on beef and dairy farming. Thanks to new feeds, farms could now specialise in cattle and between 1864 and 1876 the number of cattle increased by a third.

Many Essex farmsteads today are composites of post-medieval buildings integrated into a 19th-century courtyard layout and augmented by 20th-century pre-fabricated structures, usually to one side of the traditional farm core. Inevitably, 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 larger economies of scale through bigger machinery and crop yields, traditional farm buildings and farmsteads have become redundant and fit for conversion.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the historic building survey was, as outlined in the brief (ECC HEM 2008), to provide a RCHME level 3 standard record of the buildings prior to conversion and assess the significance and architectural merit of the farm buildings individually and as a whole.

In addition, the record was required to address the following: plan form of the site, materials and method of construction, building chronology and phasing, function and internal layout, fixtures and fittings, additions and modifications and the context of the farm within its contemporary landscape. An interpretation of the functional relationships of the 18th-century farm is given in the discussion (section 6.0) based on the existing structures, but in view of our limited knowledge, a process flow diagram has not been included.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

The standing buildings were recorded using drawings (floor plans frame survey and elevations) supplied by the client. A block plan was produced to show the location of the structures within the survey (fig.1), which are referred to by the same number given in the architect's drawings.

External and internal architectural descriptions were made and building function assessed along with, where possible, relationships to others as part of the traditional working farm. The buildings were open and free to access, except for the byre whose examination was slightly hampered by the presence of building materials and equipment. To complete the record, two small derelict Victorian structures (buildings 6 and 7) are given outline descriptions (section 5.1).

A series of photographs (digital and 35mm black & white print) were taken to record the main buildings internally and externally. Specific shots were taken of any areas of important architectural detail, fixtures or fittings. A representative selection of photographs is reproduced at the back of the report as plates 1-26. The remainder can be found in the archive.

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

5.0 HISTORIC BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

The structures were recorded in their current condition. All are single-storied and except for the byre were relatively clear and free of obstacles. In the following text each building is described separately, except for buildings 1 and 2 and 4 and 5, whose exteriors form part of one range and are therefore described together.

5.1 General description

The farmyard is entered from the north across a wide grass verge and through modern farm gates located centrally within the 19th-century brick boundary wall. Built contemporary to the wall are the remains of small brick building 6, a probable feed store. The wall to the west of it has collapsed (cover plate). The yard is large, overgrown and deeply-rutted, and there is no sign of the wall or fences shown on 19th-century maps. The timber-framed structures stand

on three sides of the yard, in varying states of degradation, with large gaps in some places where fences and other buildings once stood. The remains of a second small brick building probably a store or workshop, stands off-set to the stables (building 7, fig.1). Enough survives amidst the rubble to show this was a single-pitched structure with an entrance to the north-west facing the western yard. The area to the west which, based on map sources, was formerly occupied by 18th and 19th-century structures, retains no evidence of their presence despite being left undeveloped.

The surviving structures seem to be built from oak and elm and have primary-braced timber-frames, faded weather-boarded exteriors and brick plinths. The roofs are clad in 'Everlite' corrugated asbestos sheeting that is likely to have replaced the thatched roofs in the post-war period.

5.2 Byre 1

The byre represents an earlier building pre-dating the existing farmstead but substantially rebuilt in the late 18th century phase. The main framing appears to be of 16th-century construction with later infilling and a cut-back southern bay dating from when barn 2 was constructed.

The structure stands on the north-east corner of the yard, with its entrance to the yard and the end gable facing onto the road. It is a small building consisting of two and a bit bays with a double door entrance to the yard, for cattle. It has a primary-braced weatherboard-clad timber frame, set on a brick plinth constructed from short 8¼" English-bonded reds, typical of the 18th or early 19th-century (Ryan 1996) and also recorded in barn 2. The roof is steep, at 45°, for thatch. The current floor area is roughly square at 5.5 x 5.1m, but the original layout would appear originally to be c.5.4 x 7.3, which would better suit the slightly longer building seen in late 18th-century mapping (fig.2). The original internal layout had a comparatively wide (3m) entrance bay (for cattle) flanked by smaller, 2.1m bays.

5.2.1 External description

The main elevation is to the west, facing onto the yard. Crude ledged and battened cow doors provide the only entry into the byre: one is a full door and the other a half-heck. Each is held on wrought iron pintels and there are fixings for a draw bar across the front. To the left of the door the wall is overgrown in ivy. To the right, early planked, rather than overlapping, weatherboarding extends across to the adjacent barn (plate 1).

The north end gable, facing the road, is less protected from the elements and the middle part has been replaced with un-tarred elm board. Above is the outline of a former pitching hatch (plate 1). The eastern or rear elevation (plate 2) which is now covered in ivy, once had a window or vent that has since been boarded over, but can still be seen on the inside (fig.6). The south wall also forms the end wall of barn 2, and is made of un-tarred weatherboarding, supporting the theory that the barn was built onto the existing byre. A pitching hatch between the two, perhaps to supply bedding into the byre, has been covered up.

5.2.2 Internal description

A wooden trough stands on the eastern side, with a small modern wooden bale store in the north-east corner (fig.6). The floor is made up from earth and straw and historic boarding covers the wall framing to a height of 0.85m above the sill plate, protecting the animals from sharp edges and splinters. The doorway onto the yard has some sawn-through studs in the lintel (therefore secondary, but probably contemporary with the rebuild) although most of the underside is hidden. Close inspection of the blocked window/vent on the eastern wall was hampered by ivy, but it is shown in plate 3. There is a second pitching hatch in the northern gable, facing the roadside.

The wall framing is an interesting combination of 16th-century main framing and 18th-century primary bracing. Jowled bay posts survive to two of the three surviving trusses and these are a mixture of rather elegant long swelling heads and the cruder 'gunstock' form. Jowled posts tend to belong to the pre-1650 period, but are occasionally (in their cruder form) found in 18th century farm buildings. Empty sockets below the long jowls formerly housed internal bracing that connected to mortice holes in the wall plate soffit, especially clear in the northern gable, which again suggests a 16th century date.

Lengths of wall plates on the west and east sides are connected by edge-halved and bridled scarf-joints (fig. 6, plate 4, left) which are another early indicator, commonly used between the late 14th- to 16th century (Walker 1994). There are double pegholes in the lower sections of the joints for former bay posts, which is commonly found, the post providing support below the joint. The eastern wall plate continues into barn 2.

Dimensions for the main timbers are fairly large at c.20cm x 18cm, and double-pegged. The tie beam of the central truss, which is slightly irregular and probably secondary, has a flat brace nailed on the east side (fig.7a).

The studwork has steep primary bracing falling to the centre, the same as in barn 2 and the stables. Stout, quite large timbers (c.14cm x 9cm) are included, probably reused from the original structure. More-waney studs, only 10cm-wide and more typical of 18th-century buildings, have also been tenoned into the larger mortices. The main studs are pegged; as are the braces and typically the gaps between studs are 30-40cm. There are no cut marks in the studwork to indicate daub-infilling, nor evidence for external lime plaster.

Clasped purlin roof trusses are set either end with straight pegged collars, while the central truss is slightly different, with a curved birdsmouth collar (fig.7a). The rafters are consistent with the main build and roughly in-line with the studs. Rafters on the north gable have cut-outs for jointed wind bracing, pre-dating the nailed replacement on the eastern side of the roof and the modern version opposite (plates 3 & 4). Modern battens are contemporary with the replacement roof.

5.3 Barn 2

The east barn is a large five-bay barn to the south of the byre, enclosing the east side of the yard. It measures almost 21m long and 5m-wide, which is roughly equivalent to 4 by 1 rods. It is slightly higher than the byre at 7m, but has the same roof pitch. Its porch faces the yard, with a short porch opposite that although built from lower-quality timber, is probably contemporary. According to the maps (figs 3, 4 & 6), a second 'porch' stood to the north, at the intersection of the barn and byre, but no evidence survives for it. Inside, any threshing floor has been removed. A small outshot (2a) for cattle stands to the south of the porch, which is likely to be contemporary with the barn, but has been partly rebuilt.

This is the main barn, whose build is consistent throughout, containing few reused timbers. Its steep primary-braced construction sets the pattern for most of the 18th century structures. Like the other structures in the group, it has suffered from neglect; weatherboarding is hanging off the frame, the cartdoors have fallen into the porch and part of the front plinth has rolled (fig.6), causing the frame to drop.

5.3.1 External description

The porch on the western elevation (fig.6) is slightly off-centre to the main structure, but is contemporary with it. Its large cartdoors have collapsed over the threshold leaving the front part open (plates 5 & 6). The doors are typical ledged battened and braced cartdoors held on pintel hinges. There is no threshold leap, though there are grooves for one, but there is a threshold gate. This would have kept the muck and straw in the yard from getting inside the barn. A smaller porch door stands on the north side, which is 0.5m off the ground. The upper

part of the south side of the porch has a lime plaster finish that extends down into the outshot 2a (plate 7) and raises the likelihood the top part of the whole yard elevation was originally plastered. This is certainly the case with barn 3 to the south-west. The outshot is weatherboarded like the rest, but has a shallow single-pitched roof of only 30°. Three doorways lead into separate cattle stalls.

On the southern side, rusting early 20th-century corrugated iron doors have been inserted into the outshot, which led to the yard via a set of iron gates (plate 5). This area is now badly overgrown. A considerable amount of roughly-cut boarding has been used in the rebuilt gable end of the barn that also contains a contemporary narrow-paned window to light the southern end.

The rear elevation, facing the field, is badly overgrown and closely skirted by a ditch, thus impeding closer inspection. The small porch here is clad in weatherboarding like the barn and has a partly-boarded half-heck door out to the fields, clearly not designed as a cart exit. Its roof follows the main pitch down (plate 2), suggesting that while it is an unusual feature, given its small size and limited use, it is likely to have been built with the barn. There is no external evidence for the northern 'porch', which may simply have been an attached lean-to or shed.

As noted earlier (section 5.2) the north gable wall forms the south wall of the byre. It is un-tarred and has a blocked pitching hatch only seen from the barn interior.

5.3.2 Internal description

The interior (plates 8 & 9) comprises five bays, two either side of a midstrey. They vary slightly in width from 4m north of the central bay to 3.6m to the south. The midstrey and porch are slightly wider at 4.2m, to allow fully-laden harvest carts. A short, 2m-deep, second porch stands opposite. The floor is a combination of bare earth and chalk and there is no evidence for earlier floors, or a threshing floor in particular.

Wall framing is largely made from new timber, though some reused timbers are evident. The main elements are tall, straight bay posts, mid-posts and tie beams, all measuring c.16cm². The main timbers are more slender and consistent in size to those in the byre. Tie beams are braced to the posts with fairly straight sections (fig.7b), except for those either side of the midstrey that were never fitted with braces. Iron brackets have been added to all. All main members are single-pegged, except for a pair on the south end that are double-pegged, where, somewhat ironically, the west brace is drifting from its housing (plate 8).

Sill beams are generally in fair condition, although few have been replaced. The one in the penultimate north bay, west side, has rolled with the plinth (fig.6, plate 9), while on the same side in the southern bays the beam has spread outwards (plate 9), where the plinth has been undermined by burrowing in building 2a.

Wall plates are in one bay lengths and mainly connected by face-halved and bladed scarf joints, the norm for 17th and 18th-century structures. Their positions are indicated on fig.6. Others are fairly crude simply lapped joints, which is strange given the overall quality of the build. In particular, there is one very crude and ineffective 'bridle-scarf' joint without the 'halving', held together with bolted iron plates (plate 10). The joint on the north-west corner is scarfed onto the rear wall plate of the byre.

Wall-framing is divided into two sections per bay by a mid-post. Each part comprises 3 long studs tenoned, but not pegged, to plate and sill, except for the central eastern bay (with the short porch attached) which has no evidence for bracing, suggesting this is a reused plate (plate 11). The primary bracing falls steeply towards the central bay on each side except for the bays either side of the main porch. All studs and braces are straight and measure c.10 x 7cm. Framing in the porch is consistent with the rest of the barn. Few studs have been replaced in the barn, except for those in the southern gable, which has been rebuilt below the wall plate in machine-sawn timbers (plate 9).

Evidence of daub infill panels was found on the western side of the penultimate south bay, tied onto wattles (plate 10). Most of it has fallen away over time and hardly any now survives, and it is difficult to say whether it was originally present just on this side or throughout the barn. The daub has been replaced on the bottom section of walling against stalls 2a with brick infill. The main porch has lime plastered panels on laths rather than daub on wattles, surviving on the internal south wall (plate 6), and the frame below is boarded to ease the passage of carts (plates 6 & 9).

The roof is of double-pegged collar clasped purlin form (fig.7b), with original rafters the same scantling as the studwork below and occasionally in-line with the studs. All wind braces and battens are modern additions, contemporary with the roof.

The small porch to the east is interpreted as contemporary with the barn, although the studs here are often thinner (c.7cm wide in places) and more waney (plate 11). However, all other parts, plinth and plates, are the same as the main build. The upper part of a half-heck door survives in the centre, amidst the ivy (plate 11).A flying wall plate over the porch has several

pegged mortice slots. but the size of these suggests this is reused rather than a former back wall, particularly as there are no slots for braces on the bay posts either side. Clearly the roof frame was replaced in the modern period when the barn was sheeted over.

Building 2a was probably built as part of the main build, but the roof was partially rebuilt in the modern period by replacing the purlin, wall plate and some of the rafters. Otherwise, the majority of studs are the same as those in the barn, albeit close-studded, although the timbers are only tenoned-in, like the barn. Iron cowdoors have been inserted into the southern wall, with the studs sawn back to accommodate them.

The floor has been divided into three stalls, each with their own entry point, most of which have now lost their doors (fig.6). Two stalls occupy the north bay, with gault/red brick floors separated by a low brick plinth to a now-removed concrete wall (plate 7). The second bay comprises a single cobbled area, close to the main door, though much of the cobbling has been removed allowing rabbits to burrow into the ground.

The south side of the main porch and remainder of the west side of the barn, as seen inside stalls 2a, show no signs of ever being tarred or exposed to the weather and it would therefore be safe to assume the building is contemporary with the barn. Boarding up to eaves level on both walls is partly in so-called 'Essex boarding', where the planks are nailed flush rather than overlapping and limewashed on all sides (plate 7). Some of the boards on the west side are little more than crude planks and seem to have been added at a later date. The finish coat to the lime-plastered north wall (main porch) is failing and falling away.

5.4 Barn 3

This is a relatively small five-bay barn, measuring 14 x 6m with a 4.3m-long porch facing away from the yard. Its height is about 7m with a roof pitch of 45°. Its yard-facing elevation was originally half-boarded and plastered like barn 2. Internally, the threshing floor still survives and there is evidence for partitions either side of the midstrey for crop storage and livestock.

As with the byre, this is a complex building containing earlier elements, the framing of which is different to the main group. Instead of the typical tall framing with steep braces seen in the other buildings, the studs in barn 3 are shorter and separated by midrails. There are also differences between the two ends (referred to as west and east ends in the text) suggesting the carpenters were bringing-in and re-assembling whole parts of already-existing barns, rather than just re-using odd timbers.

The current condition of the barn is by far the worst of all the structures surveyed. Corrugated tin sheets were fitted to the walls at some point in the past to steady the weak frame and the east wall is collapsing, causing the porch to 'kick up', pulling the roofline down on the east side (plate 12).

The interior of the barn is open and the frame fully-exposed except at the west end, which is partly lined-out in corrugated sheeting, whilst old fertiliser bags have been attached to the deteriorating east side and porch.

5.4.1 External description

The main elevation fronts onto the former yard. Rusty corrugated iron sheeting hides much of the walls either side of the cartdoors, including areas of lath and plaster (plate 12), while the unprotected parts below have suffered and the weatherboarding has fallen away. The left-side cartdoor has collapsed into the building, but the right side still stands. The former leap gate is clad in corrugated tin (plate 12).

Brambles and elder hide the eastern gable and porch (plate 13) and boards are missing from the lower part of the frame. No remains of the formerly attached building seen in the 1842 map (fig. 3) are evident through the vegetation. The east side of the porch has no sign of a plinth and this has caused the sill to rot and the south-east bays and porch walls to collapse at the base, causing the distinctive bow in the roofline (plates 12 & 14). The western gable is in a much better state and has a Flemish bonded plinth of 7x 10 x 22cm frogged red bricks, likely to be of 19th-century origin (Ryan 1999) and therefore later than the barn/byre plinth. The plinth on the west side of the porch is more substantial and has been rebuilt around the pond here (plate 15).

On the south elevation, vegetation disguises much of the porch gable and east side, which is also lacking a plinth (fig.8), resulting in the barn sinking into the ground. The porch has only a small doorway at the end that is now blocked, but would have led out onto uneven, perhaps boggy, ground by the side of the pond.

5.4.2 Internal description

In earlier times, the north wall at least was plastered and the midstrey separated from the eastern bays by a partition wall and from the west by a wooden gate (fig.8). It would therefore seem likely that the east side was used for storing crops and the west side, livestock.

The internal layout comprises two combined elements, a west and east end (labelled on fig. 8), and a porch. It is believed the two ends were assembled together and the porch built to complete the barn in the main 18th century phase. The plan form has a slightly off-centre midstrey, a comparatively large western bay (4.5m) and two narrow eastern bays (c.3m each, fig.8), with a bare earth and straw-covered floor. The western bay has a concrete floor, while the midstrey/porch, measuring only 4m-wide, retains a worn herringbone-pattern threshing floor, built in 21cm-long gault floor bricks.

The main framing is in oak and elm and the beam size between the two builds is regular, although the bay posts on the west side are about an inch larger (c.7.5"). The most immediate difference between the two ends is in the truss bracing. The tie beam between the western bay and the midstrey has thin curved bracing, which is a feature more common in earlier buildings, though still used in the 18th century. The braces are double-pegged to the posts, with carpenter's marks I and II for each side (fig.9). In contrast, the truss between the two eastern bays has bolted knee braces (plate 16), which are common in later 18th and 19th century barns, though it is possible these were added later to an un-braced truss. The tie beam here slopes noticeably to the south with the lean of the building (plate 17).

Sill plates in the barn were difficult to examine due to their poor condition, vegetation or absence. The wall plates above though are connected by fairly good edge-halved and bladed scarf joints (better than those seen in barn 2) at roughly one or one and a half bay intervals (fig.8).

Unusually for this site, the stud walls are divided into two registers, which is the more construction of post-medieval barns, rather than the tall steeply-bracing registers more common at Great Nunty's. The registers in barn 3 are divided by midrails double-pegged to the bay posts, while the posts are single-pegged to the wall plates. The upper registers both ends have plaster infill panels (plates 16 & 18), on the backs of the external laths. The west end and eastern gable are constructed the same, with a central midrail, neat close-studded lower register and a primary-braced upper register (plates 17 & 18). On the other hand, the east end has a higher midrail and bracing on both levels (plate 16).

The studs on the west side are straight-cut, with little bark remaining, located in-line between registers and often with the rafters. Scantling to studs and braces is c.10 x 8cm with c.35cm gaps between. All whole studs are pegged top and bottom and there are no obvious reused timbers. The east end has more joggled studwork and is of a less consistent build than the west side. Also, the studs in the lower register (at least) are nailed to rebates on the outer

side of the rail rather than tenoned, common in other 18th century farm buildings. While both ends contain the same amount of studs per bay, those on the east side have variable scantling of 10 x 8 or 8 x 8cm, with correspondingly wider gaps of between 40 and 45cm. The midrails are more rounded this end, but not abnormally so.

A former wall partition on the east side of the midstrey is shown by redundant sockets in the tie beam soffit that tally well for a mid post, primary-bracing and four studs the same as the fully-framed west end wall. The collar has been removed, leaving only empty sockets and pegs. The opposite side of the midstrey was partitioned by a wooden gate to hold livestock, evidenced by closing fixtures on the north side wall post (plate 18).

In terms of survival, the walls of the east side gable and south wall have suffered badly through damp and vegetation over the years of redundancy. The midstrey post has collapsed and is supported by a second post, while weatherboarding has fallen in and the sill beam and studwork is rotting. This is especially bad on the south wall (and porch) which, without the support of a brick plinth, is sinking (plate 19).

The wall plate between the midstrey and porch is reused from a different building altogether, a close-studded structure predating the barn components. The empty stud sockets have regular pegging (plate 20), a less common practice by the 17th century. The plate is sloping down to the east side, with the movement in the building, loosening its purchase in the scarf joint on the west side of the porch (plate 20).

Roof framing is consistent the length of the barn, comprising neat double-pegged collar clasped purlins and contemporary rafters. The purlins are joined by either face-halved or splayed scarf joints. The only variation between the two parts is the collars on the eastern side are pegged from the east and vice-versa, and only the east side is wind-braced.

The south porch is contemporary with the barn but built independently of the main structure, as the frame is tied onto its own posts rather than the barn midstrey posts (plate 19). It has different features to the rest of the barn, noticeably the same steeply-sloping primary bracing typical of other buildings on the site. The studs are generally thinner and waney, stretching the full height of the wall-framing and their size is fairly consistent at c.8 x 7cm, with gaps of 36-40cm in between. All are tenoned-in but only those either side of the former porch door are pegged as well. Horizontal boarding occupies the lower part of the walls, which would be appropriate for livestock or crop storage. Much boarding has fallen away, especially on the

unsupported eastern wall. The low, former porch door, which has been blocked, was clearly not meant for carts.

5.5 Stables 4 & Shed 5

The former stable block stands on the west side of the yard and is formed by two distinct units, the stables and an open-sided feeding shed (5). Originally, it appears the latter was part of the stables, partitioned from the main structure, with a hay loft above. Fittings remain each side to suggest stabling for horses one side and perhaps foals/ponies on the other, although the fixtures in building 5 may be associated with secondary use. The conversion probably happened in the late 19th century when a cattle yard was established in this corner, adjoining the western end of derelict structure 6 (fig.4).

The two structures form a short, linear, range one side of the late 19th-century yard, built in the predominant construction style of the site. Straw and horse dung lie on the floor suggesting more recent use, while the shed has a partitioned-off log store at the north end (fig.10), which is a later modification.

As the two are connected, the stable and shed are described together externally and internal descriptions separately.

5.5.1 External description

In common with the rest of the farm buildings, the stables are in poor condition, with weatherboarding fallen away, particularly at the back, and dry, fading boards. The roof is pitched steeply for thatch, but is now clad in ubiquitous corrugated tin sheeting along with the shed beside it. Both are built as timber-frames on brick plinths, now surrounded by vegetation.

The main eastern elevation contains a central half-heck door that provides entry into the stables (plate 21), above a worn brick threshold. The shed is open-sided and divided by a central post into two bays. A flat-roofed 'pole-porch' has been added at the front, with corrugated tin sides (plate 22).

Up in the weatherboarded north gable of the stable is the door into the former hay loft, now partly blocked by the re-built shed roof (plate 22). The north wall of the shed has been re-built to the lower roof pitch, while the elevations to the south (plate 22) and west (not shown) are in poor condition and show no features of interest.

5.5.2 Internal description

The stables remain as they were last used, with straw and horse dung littering the floor. A now-derelict trough is fitted to the west wall, which at only 0.65m high, is more appropriate for ponies or cattle (Peters 2003). Above this is a hay feeder that has lost many of its bars (plate 23). The interior is half-boarded except for the north wall, while both the north and east walls contain carved wooden harness racks, five in all. A small compartment is placed in the north-west corner (plate 24) which appears to be a later insertion or rebuilt, judging by the combination of old reused timbers and more recent machine-sawn types. This was probably the feed store that also provided covered ladder access to the hayloft (fig.10).

The interior is divided into two 3.5m-wide bays separated by a single roughly-hewn un-braced tie beam. The internal framing has the same steep primary-bracing common on the farm, on all but the west wall, which is close-studded. This links the construction of the stables to the main phase of farm building in the late 18th century. Posts and other main elements measure around 16cm² and are single-pegged to the wall plates. Perhaps because of the relatively small size of the structure, the sill and wall plates are built from whole lengths of timber.

Wall framing is quite neat at five studs per bay and eight at either end, few of which are waney or reused. Studs are fairly large at c.10 x 8cm, with wide gaps of around 40-45cm in-between. All appear to be tenoned, with pegging confined to braces and full studs only. The roof contains many of its original timbers and is sound; there are wind braces at each end and the purlins are clasped by a central collar double-pegged to the rafter (fig.10), like barn 2.

Shed 5 was built as part of the stables but was adapted in the late 19th or early 20th century from an enclosed structure (according to the OS maps) into an open-sided structure. Unfortunately, in the process, the hay loft was stripped-out and the roof and north wall rebuilt. One of the few fixtures to remain, the feeding trough along the western wall, is of a height (1.05m) conducive for keeping fully-grown working horses, and there is a hay feeder above it (plate 25), the same as in stable. The log store (fig.10) is clearly a later addition.

The studwork is the same size and with similar spacing to the stables, but the bracing is less steep and thus more similar to barn 3. The only original tie beam, close to the stable partition, is in a good position to carry the hayloft floor (fig.10, plate 25). Facing the yard, no evidence remains for a former stable wall line, as the wall plate here was replaced when the

roof was rebuilt. The north gable wall is built from machine-sawn timbers to the secondary roof pitch and is therefore likely to be contemporary with the roof (plate 26).

6.0 PHASING AND DISCUSSION

From the 16th to late 19th centuries Great Nunty's Farm developed into a large farmstead. However, in the process of evolution, many of the old farm structures have disappeared. Fortunately some of the oldest and most interesting buildings are still standing.

Some attempt has been made to establish the chronology of the site based on the architectural character of the site, common themes between the structures, cartographic evidence, and broad trends in regional vernacular architecture. From the available information the following phasing is suggested.

Phase 1: 16th & 17th century

The present Nunty's Farm was established in the 16th century beginning with the farmhouse, which was extended in the 17th-century with a cross-wing. The derivation of the name Nuntys is likely to come from the Nunn family who owned and farmed it in the 1840s, and possibly established the farm 300 years earlier, although there are also medieval references to woods owned by the Nuns of Castle Hedingham, which may also account for the name.

The byre is the only extant building dating to this period and is shown in its original form on the Chapman and Andre map of 1777. The byre comprised three short bays, the southern one of which was cut back when the east barn and other structures were built. Although no early fixtures remain, a 16th-century date can be extrapolated from specific built elements such as internal bracing, jowled wall posts and the exclusive use of the bridle scarf joint.

Phase 2: Late 17th to early 18th century

Map evidence from 1777 shows the early farmstead as the byre and a since-demolished barn on the west side of the yard (fig.2). Whether this provides a clear representation of the 18th-century farm is unknown, as early maps are not always reliable. Although largely speculative, it is suggested that the west barn was built sometime in the later 17th or early part of the 18th century, and partly incorporated into barn 3 during the laying out of the improved late 18th century farmstead. Such dating is based on barn 3's distinctive construction pattern that appears to be slightly earlier than the main structures in its better quality of wall framing and use of curved bracing seen in its west end.

Phase 3: Late 18th century

The main phase of development probably began in the late 18th century (post-1777) as a planned farm around a central yard, with scattered outlying yards and buildings; essentially a mixture of the courtyard and 'unplanned' form. It is easy to identify these structures from their steep primary-braced construction. In forming the contemporary farmyard, the byre was rebuilt and the east barn (2) constructed on its southern side. The south barn (3) was assembled, perhaps using whole sections of framing from the demolished old west barn and another structure, and the stables unit (4 and 5) built on the west side of the yard. The origins of the south barn may not be as complicated as it seems, as both curved and bolted knee braces could be contemporary with a late 18th century construction. However, the porch, which is stylistically consistent with the other phase 3 buildings, was clearly built as part of the structure in the phase 3 style.

The late 18th-century farmstead had two barns for threshing and storing straw, grain and fodder crops. Fully laden harvest carts would be brought into the yard and into the barns through the high cart doors, and then reversed back out through the yard, as the small doors facing the fields were not built for through-passage. It is not clear how this arrangement of doors would have worked in creating the draught required for winnowing the grain after threshing. Barn 3 certainly accommodated livestock and possibly stored fodder crops and hay, while the main barn (2) was perhaps the straw barn, with room also for carts and implements, if required. A small amount of cattle were kept in byre 1 and in barn outshot 2a. The stables (4 and 5) were divided in two, one side for working horses and the other for ponies, assuming the feeding troughs found inside relate to the early period. The stables were built close to the road and the later wagon lodges, and there are enough harness holders in the main part of the stables for five working horses. A hay loft linked the two compartments.

Phase 4: 19th & 20th centuries

The early 19th-century farm consisted of three barns, stables and other buildings set around yards. Barely anything now survives from the later period, apart from two small unidentifiable brick buildings (6 and 7), probably stores or workshops. The farm probably went into decline in the late 19th century during the agricultural depression.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Great Nunty's Farm represents the remains of an important group of probable late 18th-century weatherboarded, plastered and thatched farm buildings. Once a common sight, it is relatively rare for such a large part of a pre-Victorian farmstead to survive.

The use of weather-boarding, lime render and thatch is typical of the vernacular Essex farming tradition, though the common construction form of steep primary-bracing is perhaps peculiar to this locality. Architecturally and historically, the byre is the most important building for its earlier associations, but at Great Nunty's all of the buildings possess fixtures and fittings of significance, in particular the threshing floor and hay loft as well as various feeding troughs and racks. For farm structures of this age, they display a relatively high standard of timber and a low level of reuse, except in the south barn (3) which appears to be built from two slightly earlier structures, identified by their contrasting construction style. This practice, which is quite rare, was carried out on other Essex farms such as Sheering Hall (Letch 2007) in the same period, during a time when good timber was expensive and in short supply.

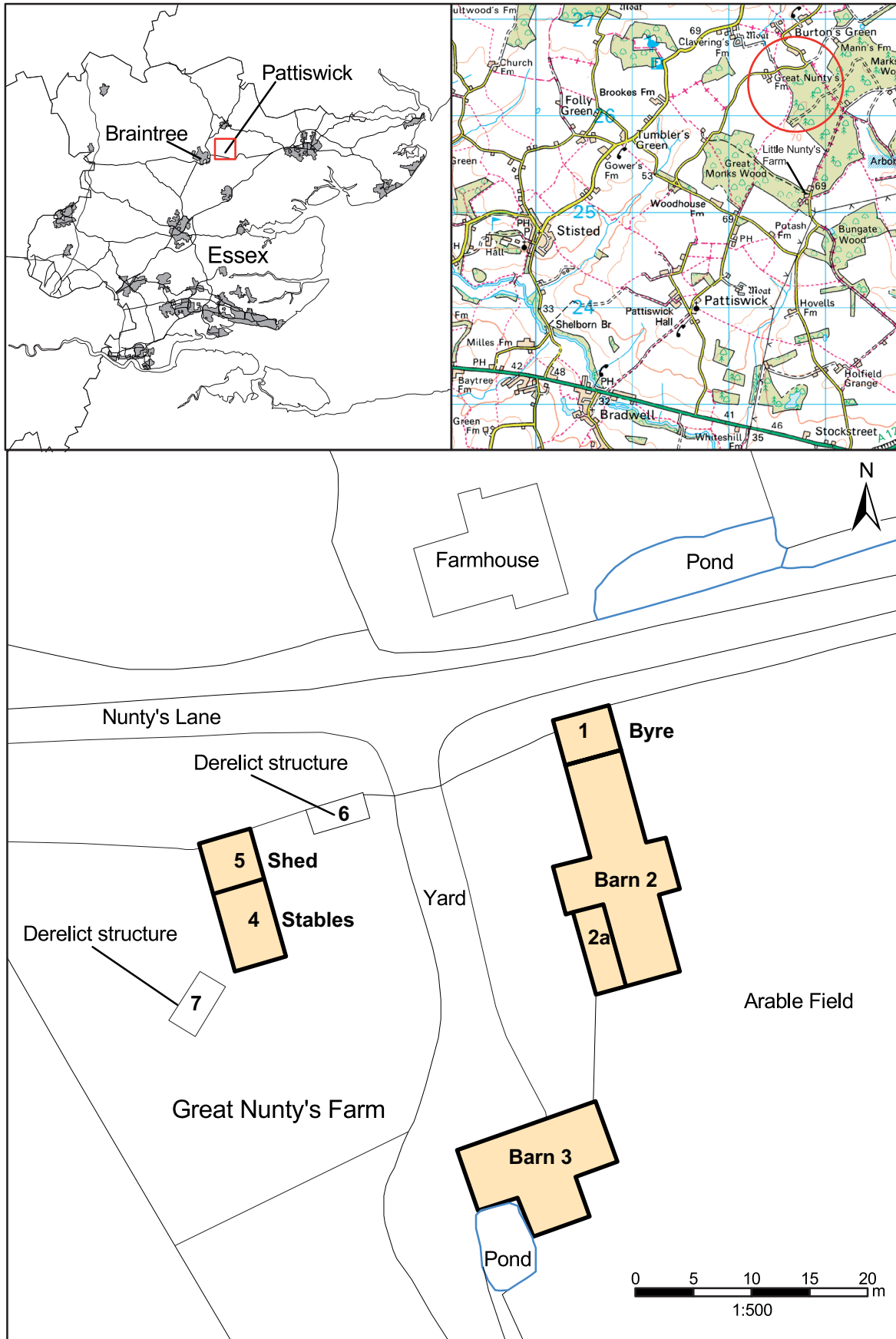
Many traditional Essex farmsteads have been made redundant by the large-scale requirements of intensive Modern agriculture and the complete cessation of farming at Great Nunty's has led to a level of neglect and decay not often seen. However, sympathetic repair and conversion should help ensure the future of the farmstead as an important part of the rural landscape.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the architect, Graham C. Jones who commissioned the works on behalf of RED Investments and also supplied plans of the site. The assistance of staff at the Essex Records Office is also acknowledged. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby of ECC FAU and monitored by Teresa O'Connor of ECC HEM, on behalf of the LPA.

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Fig.1. Site location and block plan



Fig.2 Chapman & Andre's map of Essex, 1777 (plate 8)

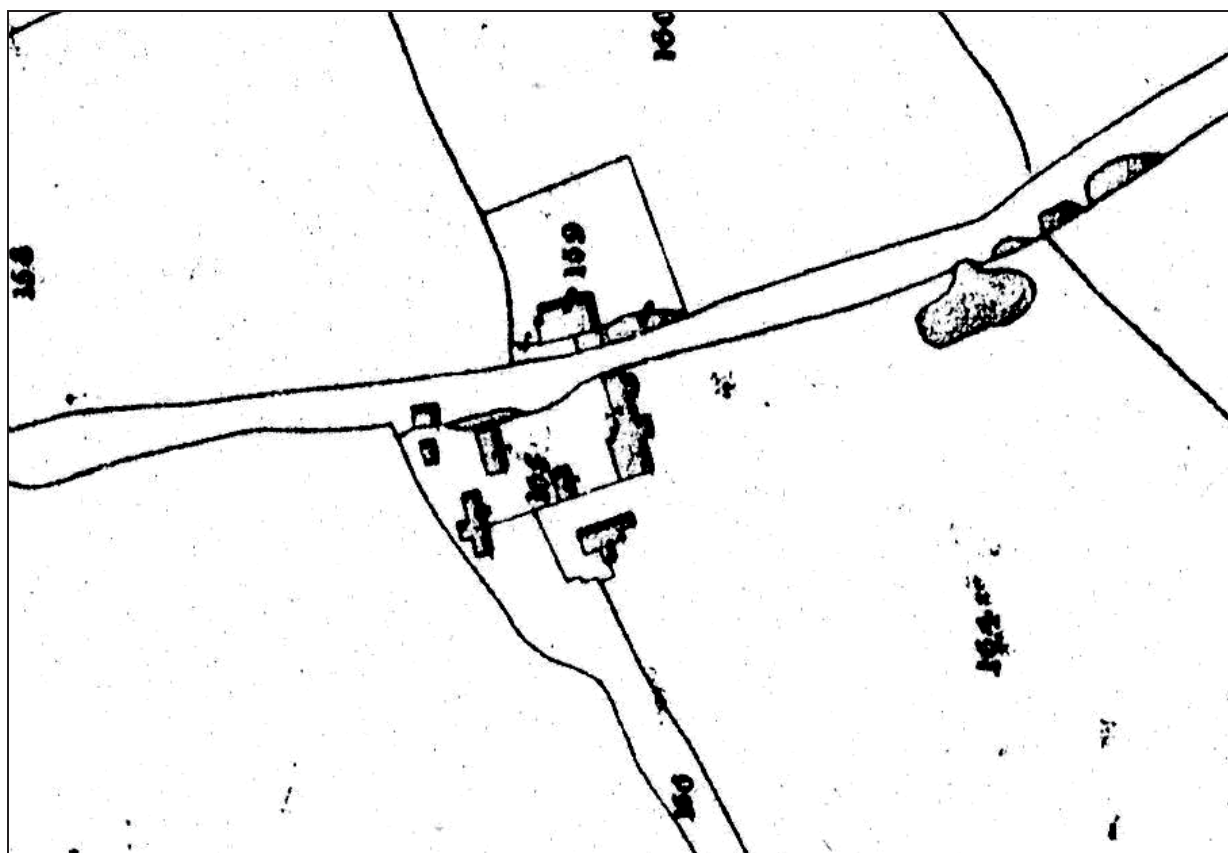


Fig. 3 Pattiswick Tithe Map, 1842

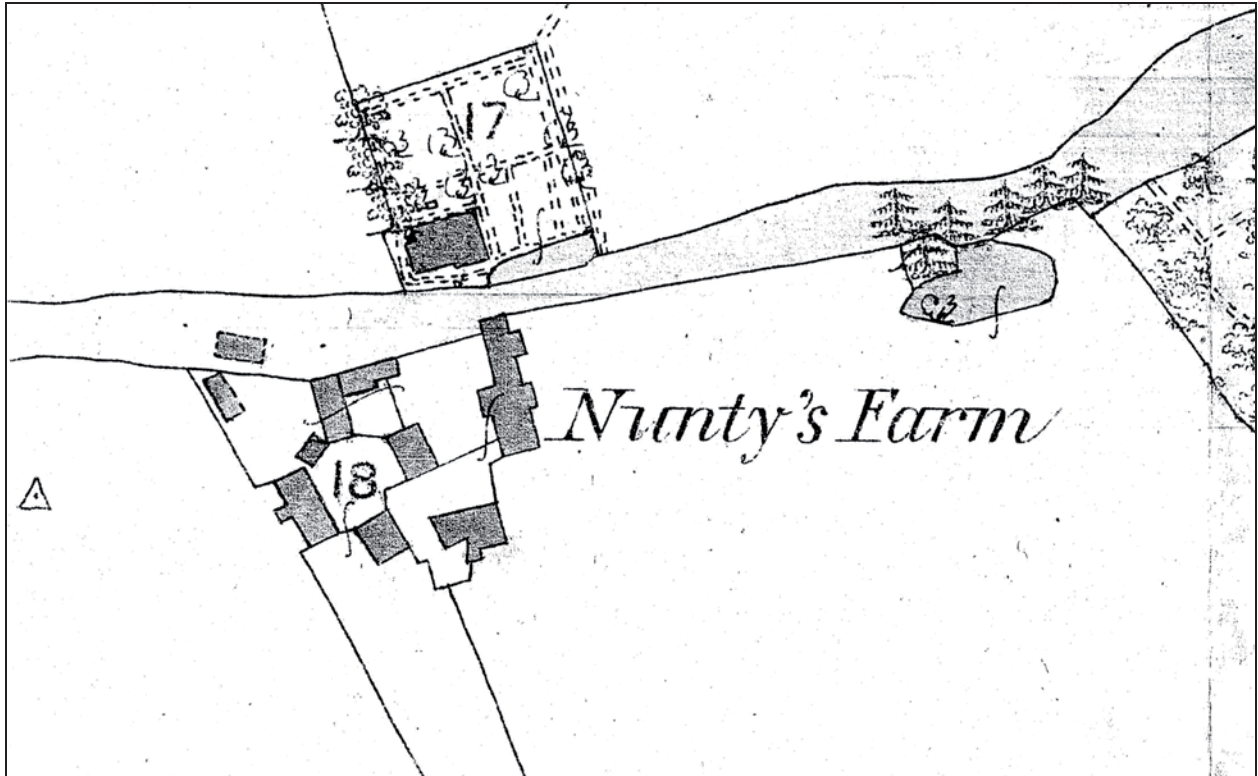


Fig. 4 First Edition 22" OS map, 1881 (sheet 26/5)

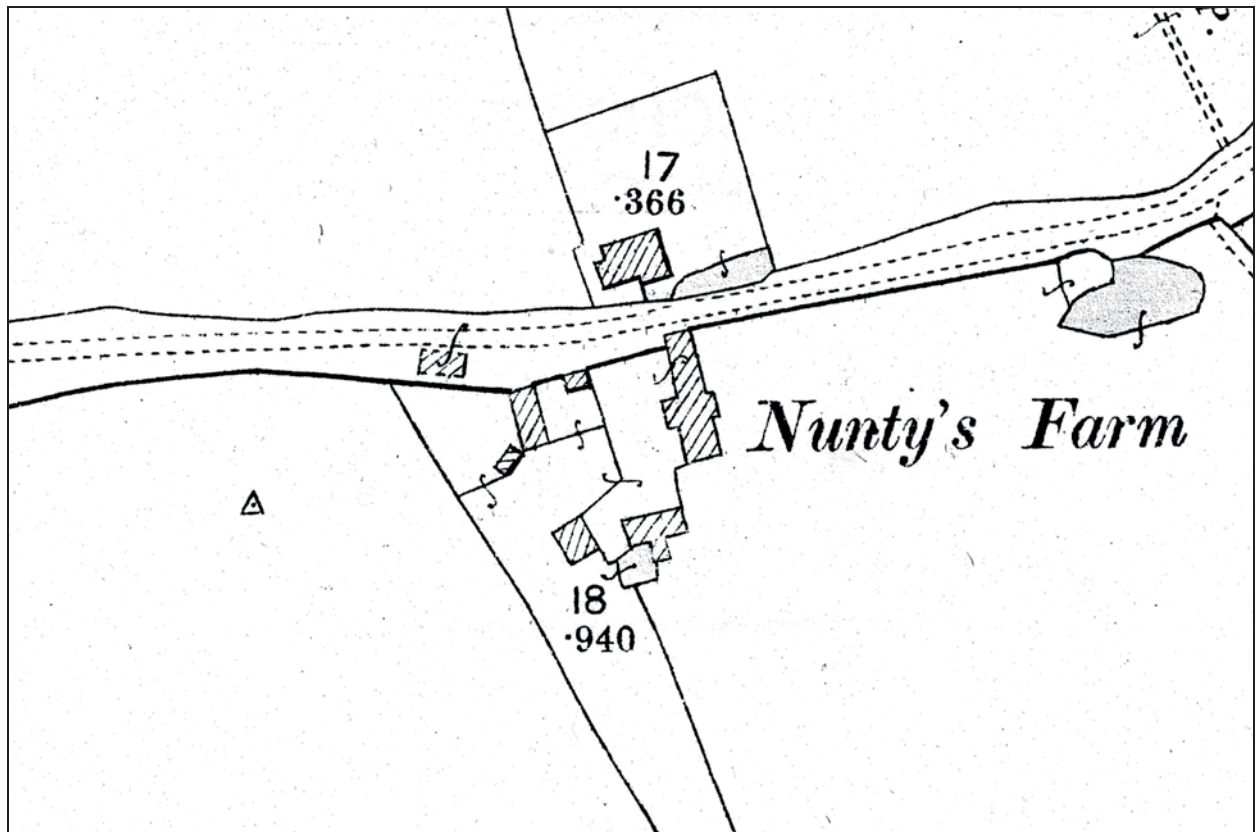


Fig. 5 Second Edition 22" OS map, 1896 (sheet 26/5)

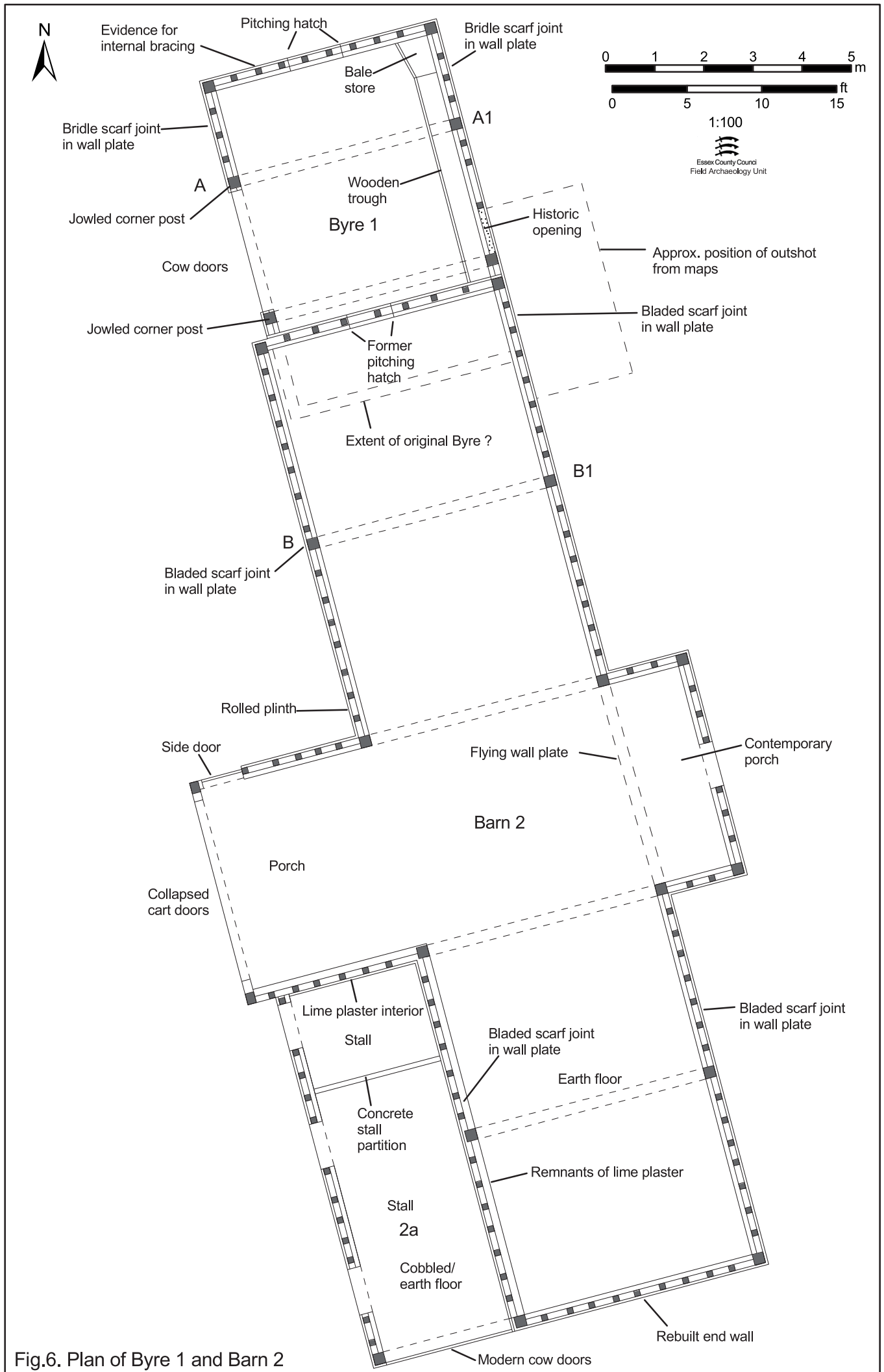


Fig.6. Plan of Byre 1 and Barn 2

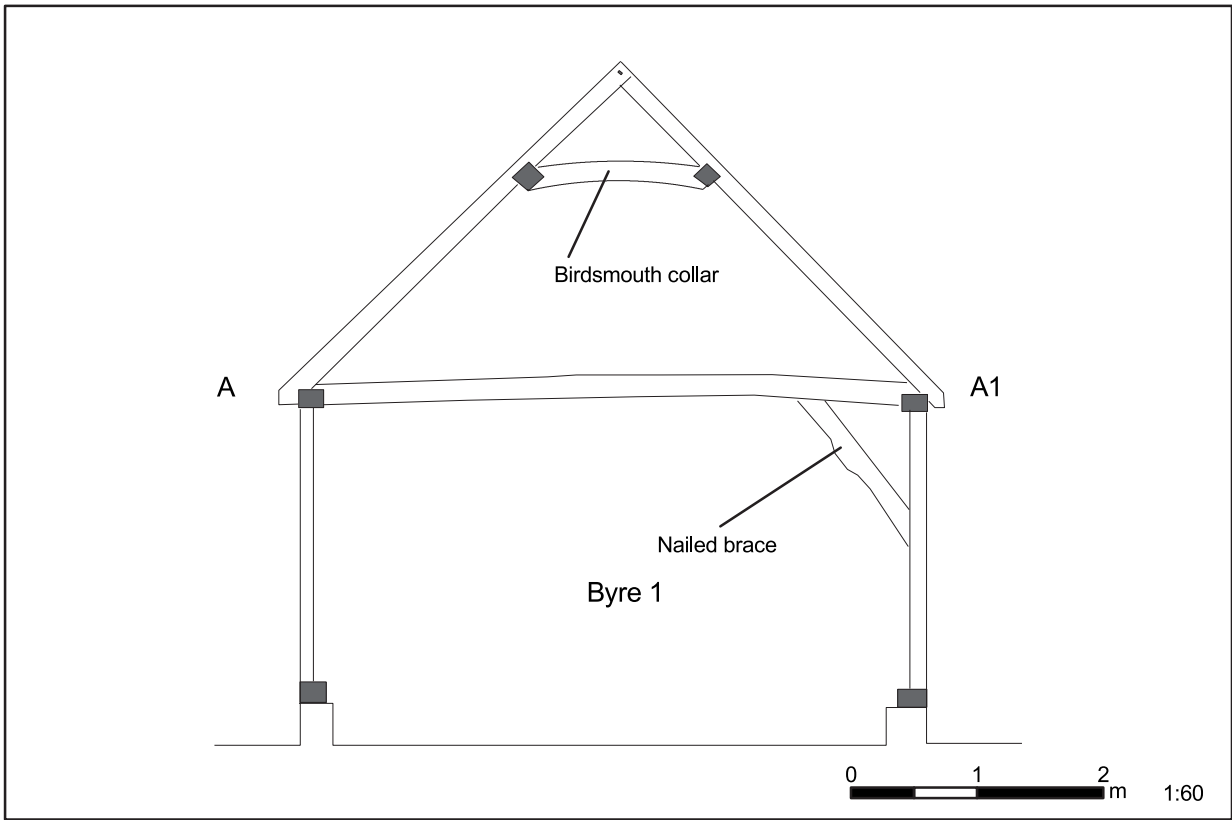


Fig.7a. Section A - A1

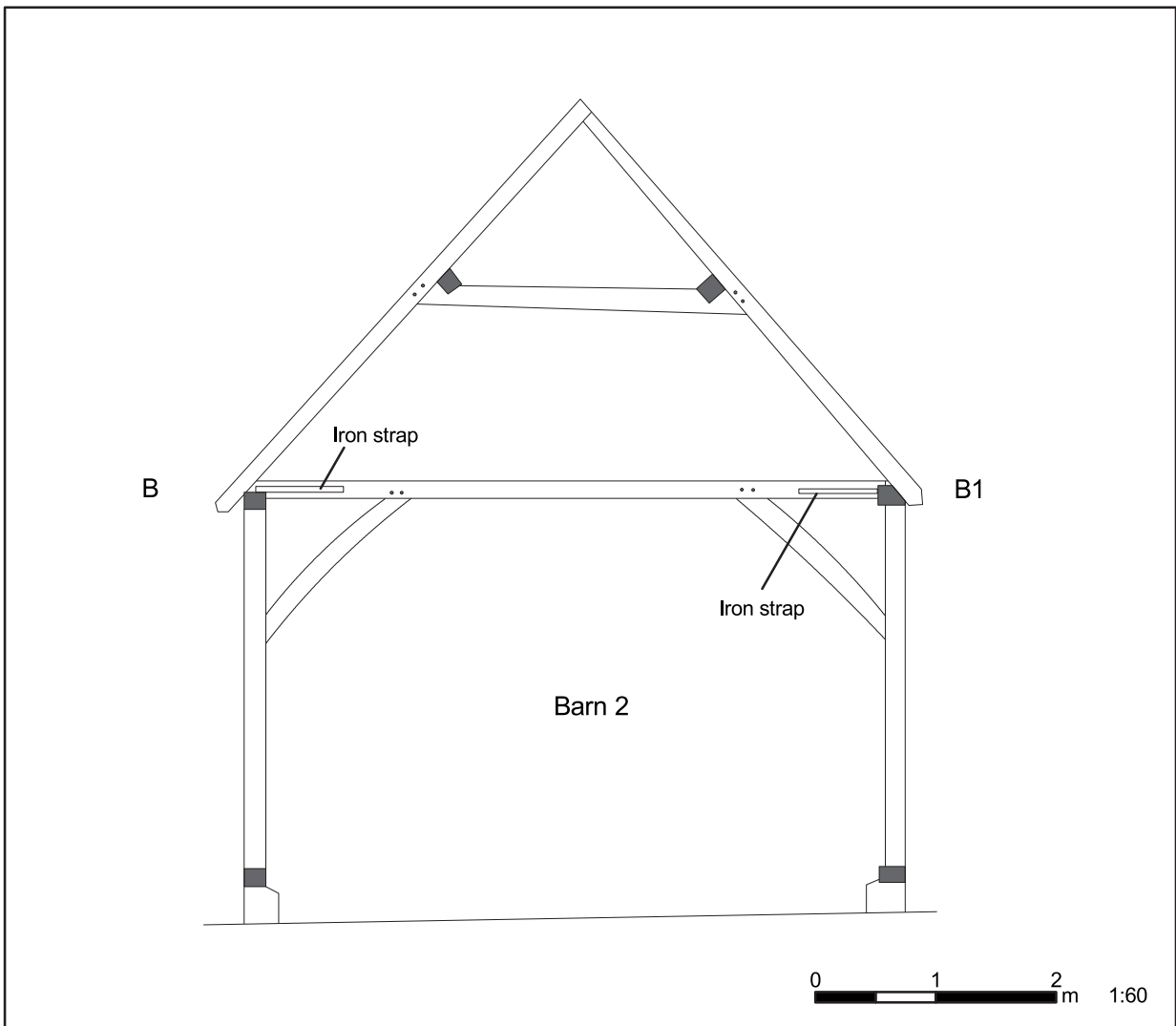


Fig.7b. Section B - B1

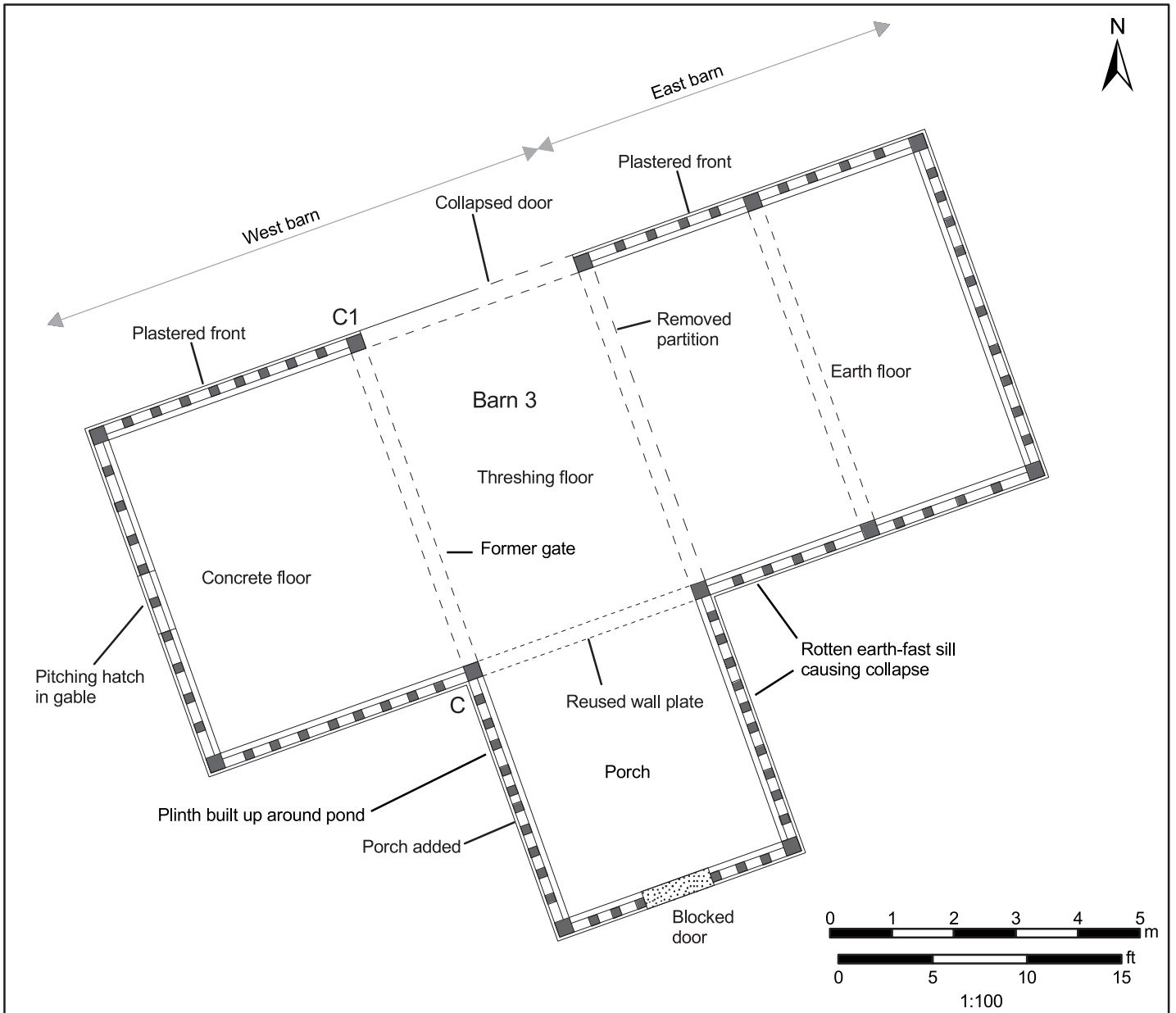


Fig.8. Plan of Barn 3

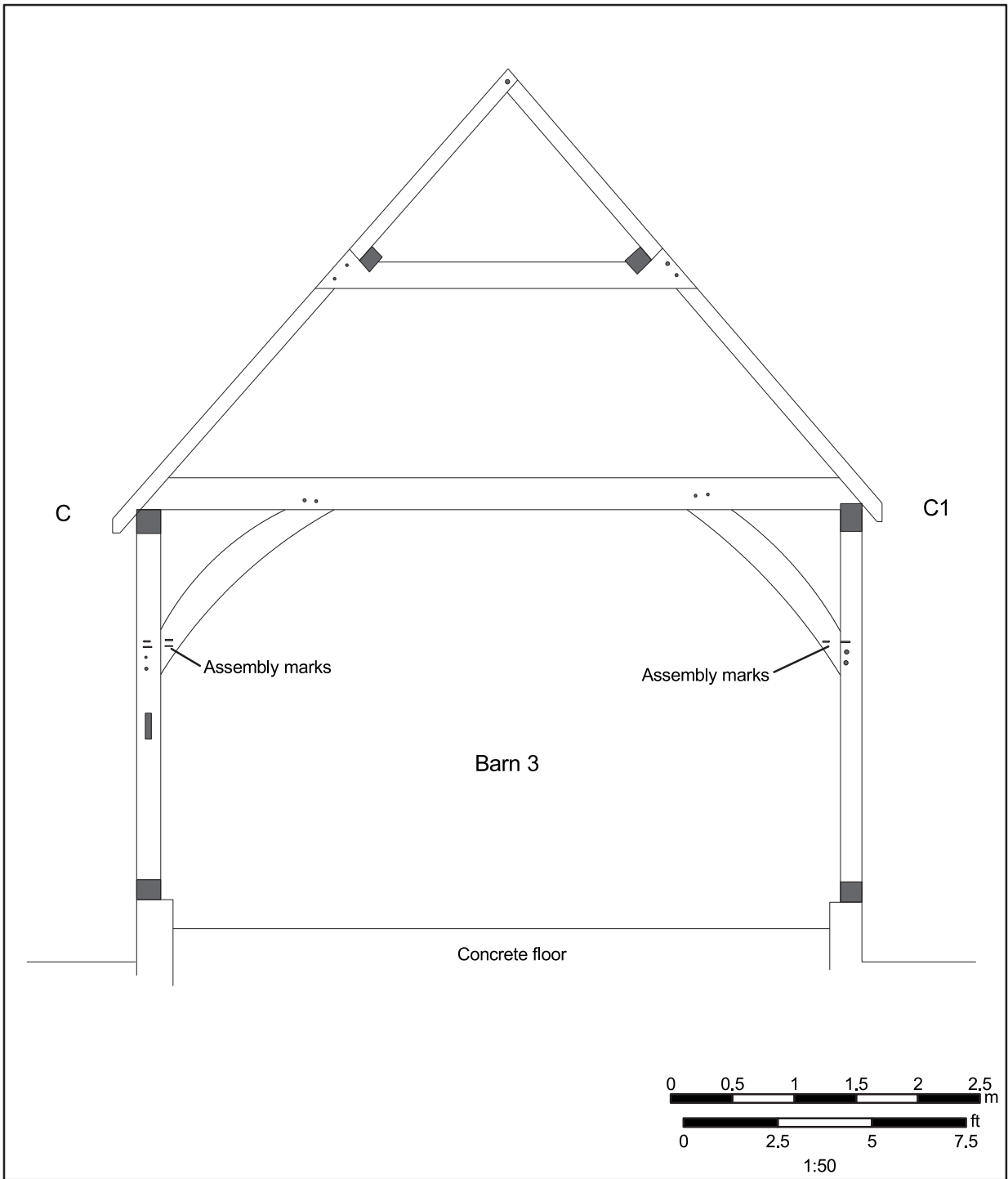


Fig.9. Section C - C1

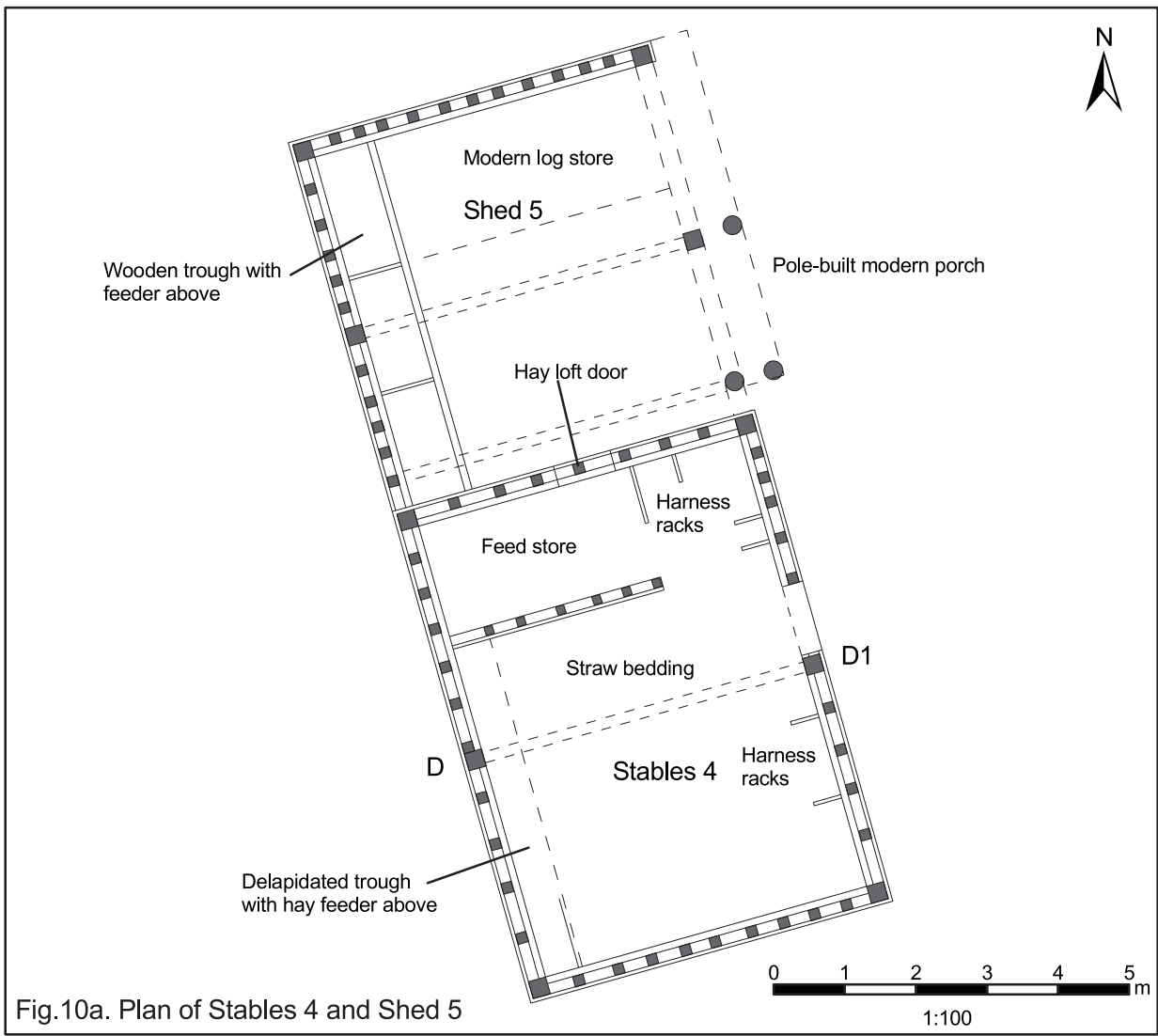


Fig.10a. Plan of Stables 4 and Shed 5

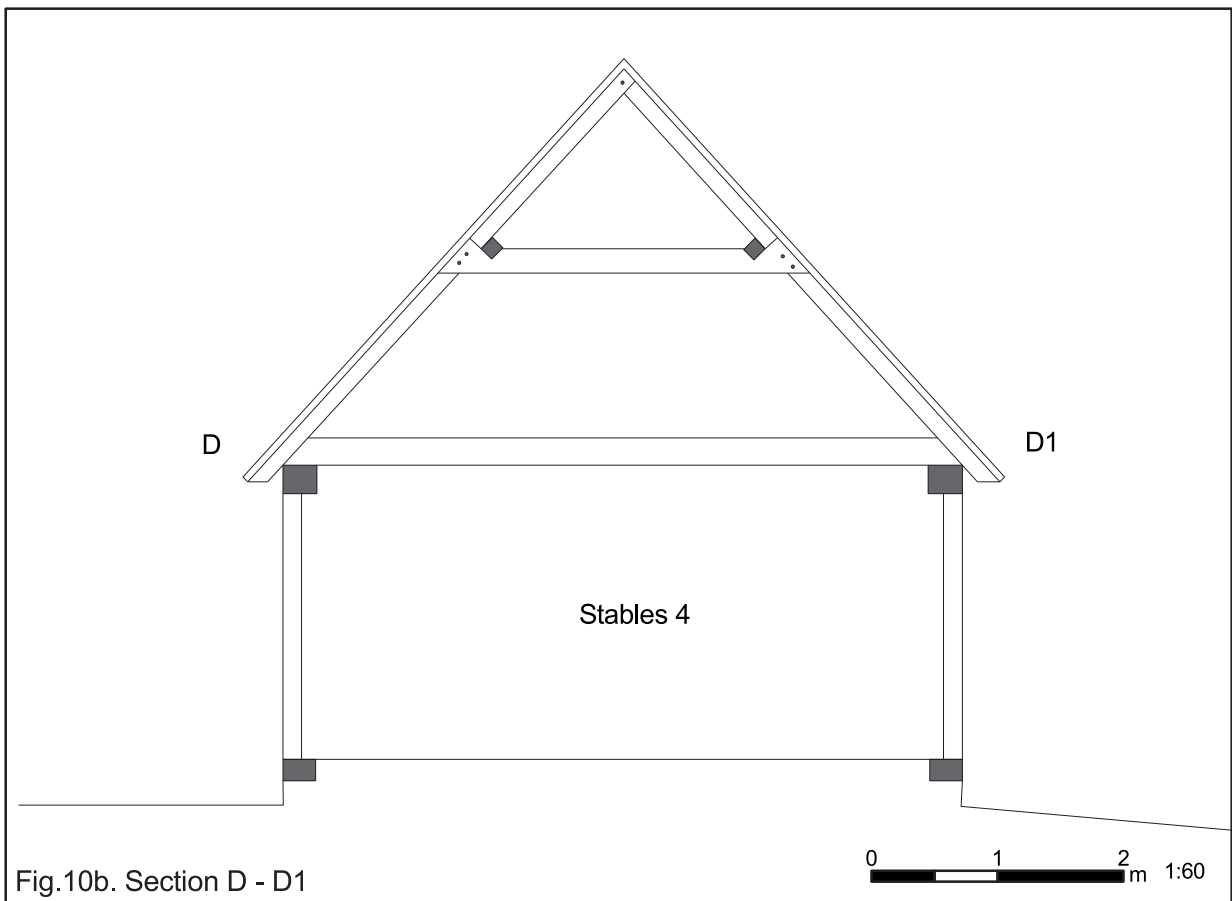


Fig.10b. Section D - D1



Plate 1 Byre and barn 2 viewed to south-east



Plate 2 Byre and barn 2 viewed to south-west



Plate 3 Interior of byre from doorway (west)



Plate 4 Main view of byre interior



Plate 5 Barn 2 viewed to north-east



Plate 6 Collapsed cartdoors and plastered panels in barn 2 porch



Plate 7 Enclosed walls of barn 2 from inside stalls 2a



Plate 8 Interior of barn 2 viewed to north



Plate 9 Interior of barn 2 viewed to rebuilt gable to south



Plate 10 Crude un-halved bridle scarf joint inside barn 2 & remains of daub panel



Plate 11 Short porch to rear of barn 2



Plate 12 North elevation of barn 3



Plate 13 Barn 3 viewed from north-east



Plate 14 Collapsing barn 3 porch viewed from south-east



Plate 15 Barn 3 viewed from south-west with farmhouse in background



Plate 16 Interior of barn 3 viewed to west end



Plate 17 Interior of barn 3 viewed to east end



Plate 18 Lime-plastered wall-framing to west end of barn 3



Plate 19 Dilapidated east end and porch in barn 3



Plate 20 Porch and threshing floor in barn 3



Plate 21 Stables and feeding shed viewed from yard (south-east)



Plate 22 Stables and feeding shed viewed from north-east



Plate 23 Interior of stables viewed to south-west



Plate 24 Feeding fixtures, store and hayloft door inside stables



Plate 25 Interior of feeding shed viewed to hayloft door



Plate 26 Interior of feeding shed viewed to north-west

Appendix 1: Contents of Archive

Site name: Great Nunty's Farm, Nunty's Lane, Pattiswick, Essex

Project no.: 1906

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 Unbound version of report
- 1.5 CD containing digital photographs & copy of report, pdf-formatted

2. Site Archive

- 2.1 Photographic record (digital prints & monochrome 35mm prints & negatives)
- 2.2 Photographic registers
- 2.3 Site notes & annotated survey drawings
- 2.4 Hand-drawn architect's survey

Appendix 2: EHER Summary Sheet

Site Name/Address: Great Nunty's Farm, Nunty's Lane, Pattiswick	
Parish: Pattiswick	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 8238 2641	OASIS record No.:
Type of Work: Building recording	Site Director/Team: Andrew Letch ECC FAU
Dates of Work: 19th–20th May 2008	Size of Area Investigated: N/A
Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding Source: RED Investments
Further Work Anticipated? None	Related LB Nos. LBS 116190 (farmhouse)
Final Report: Summary in EAH	
Periods Represented: Probable 16th to late 18th-century	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Recording works were undertaken on a late 18th century farmstead in advance of residential conversion. The group is formed by two barns, a byre and stables, plus two small dilapidated Victorian structures.</p> <p>The buildings are timber-framed and boarded with corrugated asbestos roofs. All were formerly thatched, and the two barns had their upper walls plastered, which is fairly common on Essex barns of this date. The byre, barn 2 and the stables are constructed the same in unusually steep primary-bracing, but there is evidence to show that the byre is a rebuilt 16th century structure, perhaps contemporary with the farmhouse. Barn 3, whose character is noticeably different to the others, appears to be built from elements of broadly-contemporary pre-existing barns.</p> <p>All buildings have suffered badly from neglect, but very little from modern farm development. Therefore, historic wall treatments such as daub and wall plaster and features such as a brick threshing floor, feeding troughs, etc remain.</p> <p>.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: Andrew Letch	Date of Summary: 7th November 2008