

**CHALK END FARM, FARMBRIDGE END ROAD
ROXWELL, CHELMSFORD
ESSEX**

LEVEL II HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD



Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit

July 2009

**CHALK END FARM, FARMBRIDGE END ROAD
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ESSEX**

LEVEL II HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

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	The John Bishop Partnership
	ECC Historic Environment Management
	Essex Historic Environment Record

***As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments
you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.***

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**CHALK END FARM, FARMBRIDGE END ROAD
ROXWELL, CHELMSFORD
ESSEX**

LEVEL II HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

Client: Mr. & Mrs I Anderson

FAU Project No.: 2057

NGR: TL 6306 1055

OASIS No.: essexcou1- 61066

Planning Application: 09/00015/FUL

Date of Fieldwork: 12th May 2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A programme of building recording was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on the remains of a Victorian farmstead at Chalk End Farm, Roxwell, prior to residential conversion. The work was commissioned by the architects, The John Bishop Partnership, on behalf of the owners, Mr & Mrs Anderson, 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 Chelmsford 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 buildings at Chalk End Farm form the main part of a well-dated late 19th century farmstead rebuilt on the site of an earlier farm complex following a major fire around 1880.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location and description

Chalk End Farm lies in the historic centre of Chalk End, a hamlet situated on the north side of Roxwell parish. The farm is situated at the junction of Farmbridge End Road (TL 6306 1055) and comprise of several single storey agricultural buildings and modern sheds on a courtyard layout, with a dovecote in the centre (cover plate). Both surviving ranges date to the 19th century and were rebuilt after a fire destroyed much of the farm. To the north and east are 20th-century agricultural structures forming the core of the more recent farm, but outside the survey area. Chalk End Farmhouse is located to the south of the pond and driveway (fig. 1) and is inhabited by the owners of the farm.

The farm appears to have been redundant for some time and like many others is now empty or used for storage. Apart from the modern sheds, the structures are timber-framed and boarded, and laid out in ranges. All appear to be in good structural condition but the exteriors have suffered over the years from neglect, particularly the old stable doors. The dovecote in particular has a poor appearance but is unaffected by the development and therefore beyond the remit of the brief.

2.2 Planning background

A planning application for conversion of domestic outbuildings to residential annexe was submitted to Chelmsford Borough Council (CBC) in January 2009 (09/00015/FUL). The dovecote was not included within the present scheme but may be converted at a later date (Mrs Anderson pers. comm.). Mindful of the impact of conversion on the historic integrity of the farm buildings, and the importance of farming in the East Anglian region during the post-medieval and Victorian periods, ECC HEM advised CBC 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. References are supplied within the text. Historic map extracts are included as figures 2-5 and have been enlarged in the report to provide greater clarity. In broad terms the maps show a probable 18th-century farmstead improved in the mid-19th century and then largely rebuilt towards the end of the century. It is however possible that the farm was established before the 18th century and that the fire removed all standing evidence for it.

The earliest known references to the farm at Chalk End are from the 18th century, when it was known as 'Roxwell Farm'. Although the detail is poor, its presence is shown on Chapman and Andre's 1777 map of Essex (plate 12). A much clearer representation appears on a map of Roxwell Farm dated to 1788 (D/DP/P153), and reproduced as figure 2 in this report. The map shows a north range similar to the current layout but includes a barn with a porch on the north. The dovecote is clearly shown to the south. Beyond the line of the trackway, leading to fields to the east, are two fairly substantial structures that are likely to be the early farmhouse (west) and associated outbuildings. The original farmhouse was timber-framed (Mrs Anderson pers comm.). Several ponds are located around the farmyard (fig. 2). The owners of the farm are given as 'Mr Abel Clifton and E, his wife and Mr John Curtis and J. C. T., his wife'. The inclusion of wives names in the document is unusual for the time, unless the husbands had married-in to the property. The holding is given as primarily arable (82 acres), with 4 acres of pasture, occupied by Thomas Booty, tenant farmer.

By the mid-19th century (1842) the ownership of the farm had changed to John Ward and the occupier to Robert Clift (D/CT 301A). The holding had increased considerably to around 130 acres, still with an emphasis on arable land (c.110 acres) over grazing (18 acres), though with a marked increase in the latter. The Roxwell Tithe Map (D/CT 301) shows a similar layout to the 18th-century map but with a new east range (fig. 3) in the location of building 7, possibly sheds to house a growing cattle herd.

Later on additional ranges were incorporated into the existing layout, as shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1873 (fig. 4). These ranges are slightly askew to the 18th-century range to fit the existing layout. The yard is divided into two for stock rearing and the farmhouse is enlarged.

A fire occurred in the farmhouse c.1880 (Mrs Anderson pers. comm.) that spread to the ranges, destroying much of the early farm. However a new farm and farmhouse was built soon after and completed by 1886, according to an inscription recorded inside the stables. The new buildings are shown on the second edition OS map of 1897, which depicts the layout as being the same as the earlier one, and it is this phase that survives today.

In the post-war modern period activity became centred to the north and east of the traditional farm around new grain barns and sheds. The west range was demolished and large new sheds added either side of the yard. The yard was cleared and concreted over. Today the old farm buildings have no agricultural function and along with the farmhouse are privately-owned.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the historic building survey was, as outlined in the brief (ECC HEM 2009), to record the existing farm buildings to English Heritage level 2 standard prior to conversion. The dovecote was not included in the requirements as there are currently no plans to develop it. However, as a prominent part of the group, the structure was included in the survey to complete the record.

As part of the project, the survey was required to address/record plan form and landscape setting, materials and method of construction, building chronology and phasing, function and internal layout and historic fixtures and fittings.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

The standing buildings were recorded using drawings (floor plans and elevations) supplied by the architects. A numbered block plan was produced to show the location of the structures within the survey (fig.1).

External and internal architectural descriptions were made and building function assessed. The buildings were free to access. 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 1-12. The remainder can be found in the archive.

Documentary and cartographic research (section 2.3) was undertaken to investigate the origins and development of the farm.

5.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

The structures were recorded in their current condition. Some are in use for storage purposes while others are empty. They are single-storied, built from primary-braced timber frames with weatherboarded exteriors, some of which have been rendered over in cement and painted. Both ranges have pantile roofs (probably original) and are arranged around a central yard with the dovecote, the oldest of the buildings, in the centre (cover plate). Apart

from the dovecote, the farm was re-built as a single unit and there is no evidence of fire damage to any of the buildings. Inside there are very few original fixtures and fittings but the interiors themselves are clean and dry. Modern concrete flooring has been universally applied in the buildings and across the old yard.

The following descriptions are given by range to begin with, followed by the component interiors.

North Range

The north range consists of a barn and stables built on the footprint of the previous range from new primary-braced softwood timbers and trusses, all machine sawn and compatible with a late 19th century date.

5.1 Barn 1

The early barn was destroyed in the fire and rebuilt on the existing footprint minus the porch. It is a small, 5.7m x 12.5m five-bay rectangular structure, gabled either end. Access is by two opposing doorways in the central bay with additional internal access into the main range on the east side.

5.1.1 External description

On the south (yard) elevation (plate 1) the exterior is weatherboarded up to the main entrance, a wide ledged braced and battened half-heck door that leads onto the yard. The outline of the former brick wall and roof of the old western range can be seen to the west of the yard door, inside the modern shed 6 (plate 2). Beyond the south door, heading east, the walls are rendered in cement over the existing weatherboarding, and this is also true of the gables and rear (north) wall where the whole of the north range has been re-covered (plates 3 & 4). Access out of the north side is by a second half-heck door, identical to that on the south side that leads out onto the fields (plate 3).

5.1.2 Internal description

Internally the barn is divided into five roughly-equal short bays between 2 and 2.5m wide. A regular, nailed, primary-braced timber frame rests on a wooden sill and the spaces in-between the timbers have been infilled with (frogged) brick noggin up to 1.5m high in an alternating four-brick pattern (plate 5), which is rather unusual. Above, the panels are lath and plastered. A floor scar between bays 3 and 4 shows where a partition stood, which is likely to be freestanding and modern as there are no historic fixing points on the walls or truss above.

The wall framing has long wall plates held together by nailed and pegged through-splayed and tabled scarf joints (*trait de Jupiter*- plate 7), initially a medieval form but revived during the late 19th century in use across the whole of the north range. The studs are narrow and straight, with 2 by 4 inch scantling.

The narrow 8 x 3 inch tie beams are fixed by iron straps at either end, while the roof trusses consist of widely-spaced raking queen struts and intermediate collars to purlins (plate 6).

5.2 Stable 2

The stable forms the eastern end of the north range and is contemporary with the barn. It is eight bays in length, with dimensions of 18.7 by 5.5m, and divided into three units: a feed store, stalls and loose box, which are discussed separately where appropriate.

5.2.1 External description

The external main elevation facing onto the yard is weatherboarded except for part of the most westerly bay, which is rendered over (plate 2). Half-heck stable doors are arranged at roughly regular intervals along the elevation, with windows between, providing entry to each section (fig. 6). The doors have wooden ventilation grills above the lintel and the windows are unusual in having a vented lower part and glazed upper part (plate 8) that could be slid open horizontally from the interior (plate 11) to bring in fresh air.

Render has been applied to the rear elevation and continues onto the east range. The roof between the two ranges is hipped (plate 4).

5.2.2 Internal description

Feed store

A two bay feed store is located between the barn and stalls, identified by the remains of a wooden grain bin by the barn wall (fig. 6, plate 9). A tap has been fitted on the other side which, although later in date, again points to a utility function. Part of the rear wall has brick infill but this is absent elsewhere. A half-heck door leads out through the north wall to the back (plate 9).

Stalls

The stalls occupy the three bays east of the feed store. The two end walls are partially boarded to protect the horses and the back wall has concrete infill around the lower parts of the studs (plate 10) where the old feeding trough and hay feeder would have been located.

Loose boxes

The final three bays on the east end contain two large loose boxes for foaling mares or sick animals. This part has a few stouter, machine sawn timbers in its walls but otherwise is the same as the rest of the north range.

The two loose boxes differ in their construction, the western one being slatted and the eastern one boarded (plates 12 & 13), though the holding fixtures are the same to each and identical to the doors out onto the yard. The outer walls are half-boarded, with three harness racks attached to the south wall (fig. 6). A plank of wood nailed to the same wall contains an inscription reading 'March 1886 TR' and alludes to the rebuilding of the range after the fire (plate 14). The initials probably belong to either the landowner, farmer or the builder who carried out the work. There are other less conspicuous inscriptions, most notably 'WH 1900' to the right-hand side (plate 14), possibly referring to some long-forgotten phase of improvement or maintenance work. Other inscriptions are indistinct and impossible to decipher.

5.3 Eastern Range (sheds 3 & 4)

Two cattle sheds face onto the eastern side of the yard (plate 15), which were rebuilt in the 1880s using mainly reused timbers from the earlier farm and farmhouse. Much of the main framing (bay posts, sills and braces) is heavier than the rest, with a high percentage hand-cut and re-used. Also, some of the studs are heavier (up to 4 by 4 inches) and have a waney appearance often seen in structures dating to the 18th and early 19th-century (plates 16 & 17), though there are many machine-sawn studs included in the build, particularly in shed 4.

The two sheds are raised on low brick plinths that also support a stout dividing wall incorporating a reused plate and sill (plate 17).

The roof of the east range is built completely from machine-sawn timber in the same way as the north range.

5.4 Modern sheds 5 and 6

Two tall modern sheds, built from timber and corrugated sheeting, were built at the end stages of farm. The largest is shed 6, which is built onto the former rear wall of the western shelter shed range (plate 18). This wall is constructed in monk bond from 9 inch soft red bricks typical of those manufactured in the 19th and 20th centuries (Ryan 1996) and thus fits in well with the rebuilding of the farm in the 1880s.

5.5 Dovecote 7

The dovecote is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure encased in a modern cement render skin. The sole entrance is on the south side and there is a later inserted window above (plate 19). The roof is plain-tiled and pyramidal in form with a canopy at the top for bird egress. The interior is primary-braced in quite heavy timbers (plate 20), some of which are pegged. Most of the main timbers are reused, some containing sockets for down bracing. All fresh studs are irregular, hand-cut in an 18th century form.

The first floor is inserted. Around the walls are empty pegholes for 'columbaria' or nesting boxes (plates 20 & 21), one of which lays amidst the rubbish on the first floor (plate 22), reached by a trapdoor at the south end. The roof has been re-felted and some new rafters inserted. Further photographs and a measured sketch plan of the building are included in the archive.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The survey has found physical, diagnostic and documentary evidence to show the farm at Chalk End was rebuilt in the 1880s following a substantial fire that also burnt down the earlier farmhouse (Mrs Anderson pers. comm.). The new layout was on the same courtyard plan form as the previous farm, built between 1842 and 1873, which in turn replaced the less compact 18th century (or earlier) layout of barn, ranges, and dovecote shown on the 1788 pre-improvement map as Roxwell Farm. The dovecote, which is clearly datable to the 18th-century, was the only building to survive the fire, presumably because of its detached position in the centre to the farmyard.

Following the fire, the north range was completely rebuilt in new machine-sawn timbers. Inside, the barn was lined-out in a decorative pattern of brick noggin and plaster that would have provided a form of insulation more typical of a building meant for stock. Indeed, were it not for its lack of light and ventilation, this would be the likely function. After all, there is no familiar porch and large cart doors more typical of barns. Given the size of the barn it would only be suitable to store small harvests or animal feedstuffs, though cartographic sources show it to be comparable in size to the former barn.

The north range stable retains few features apart from a possible feed bin and loose boxes. Troughs and stalls for working horses are no longer present. Enough harness racks remain

for three horses, but there were probably more. The stable windows with their sliding air vents are notable features.

While the north range was built afresh, the east range reused some of the old 18th-century timbers in its new build, with new roofs over the tops of the cattle sheds. These old timbers are likely to have derived from the earlier farmstead and farmhouse, though there are no signs of fire damage on any of them. No historic fixtures or fittings survive. The western range, which was built in the same form as the range opposite, was replaced by a much larger modern shed, built onto the earlier brick wall that faced onto the road.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The existing structures at Chalk End Farm include buildings dated to the 18th and late 19th-century, though it is only the later buildings that are to be converted at this stage. It is possible that there was an even earlier farm pre-dating the 1788 map, though no standing evidence remains.

In the 18th-century, existing farms were enlarged and new farms set up to cash-in on improvements in agriculture and livestock rearing during the Agrarian Revolution. Pigeons were kept in dovecotes for their meat and dung, though as livestock rearing increased during the century they became less common (Peters 2003). This is therefore a late example.

The main ranges were built at the beginning of the downturn in agriculture that followed the boom years of the so-called Golden Age of Agriculture. The 1880s was the start of a long depression that lasted until around 1940 (English Heritage 2006). Hence the farm was rebuilt at a time of great agricultural uncertainty with an emphasis on livestock production. The plan form is typical of a Victorian mixed farmstead, with a barn and stables at one end and animal ranges each side of a central yard. The barn and stables display materials and construction methods typical of late 19th century Essex farm buildings while the sheds incorporate reused timbers from buildings demolished after the fire. It is unusual to study a farm whose precise construction date (1886) is known and is therefore important in the study of Essex farms.

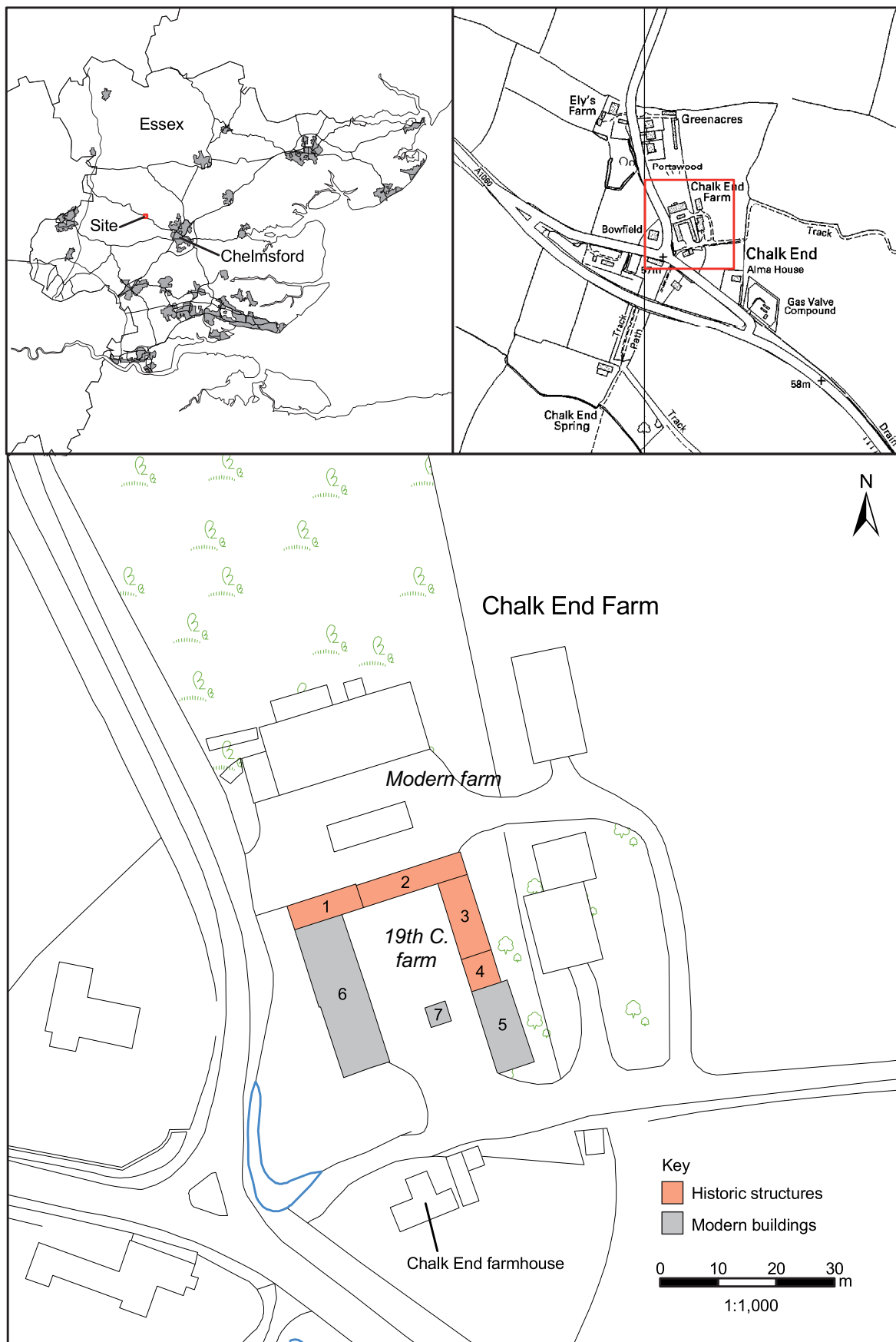
The dovecote is the most important structure in the group. Although the later structures have limited architectural value, their vernacular character is worthy of record and preservation within the local rural landscape.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Sue Bell of The John Bishop Partnership for commissioning the works and supplying drawings used in the survey. Thanks also to Mrs Anderson for her assistance during the survey and the staff at the Essex Records Office. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey of ECC FAU. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby and monitored by Teresa O'Connor of ECC HEM, on behalf of the LPA.

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Fig.1. Location and block plan

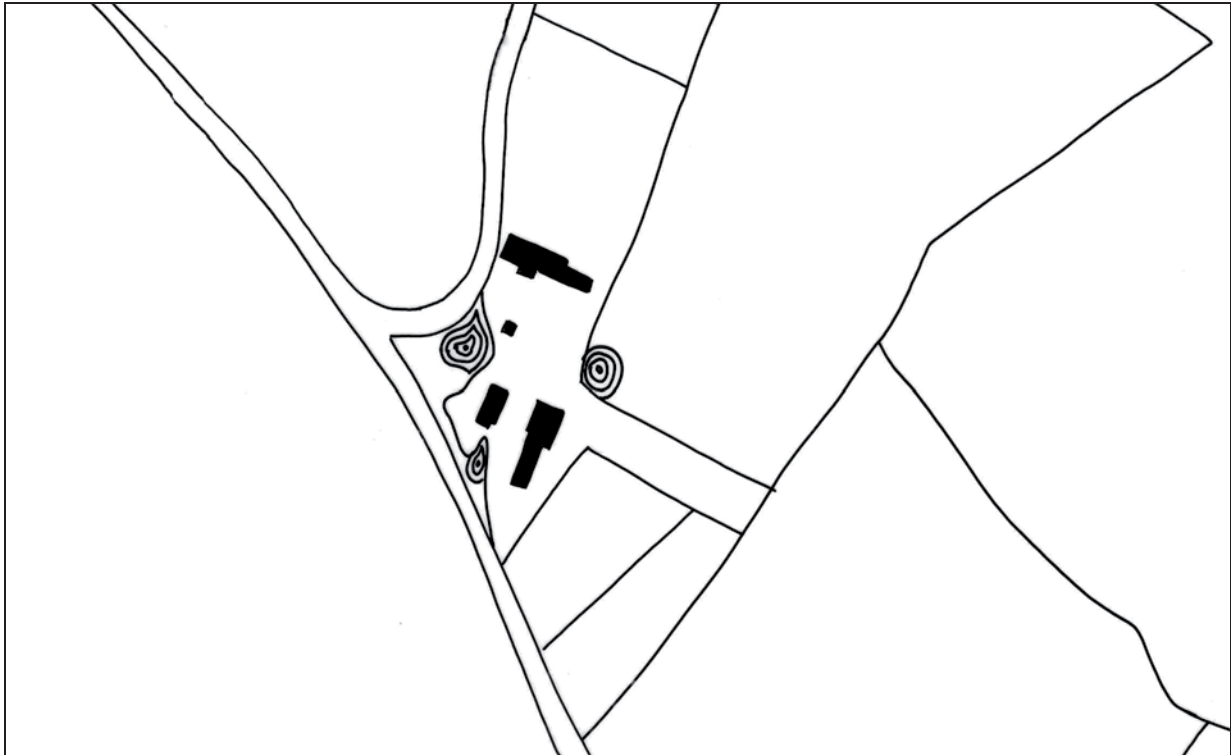


Fig. 2 Map of Roxwell Farm, Chalk End, 1788 (D/DP/P153)



Fig. 3 Roxwell Tithe Map, 1842 (D/CT 301)

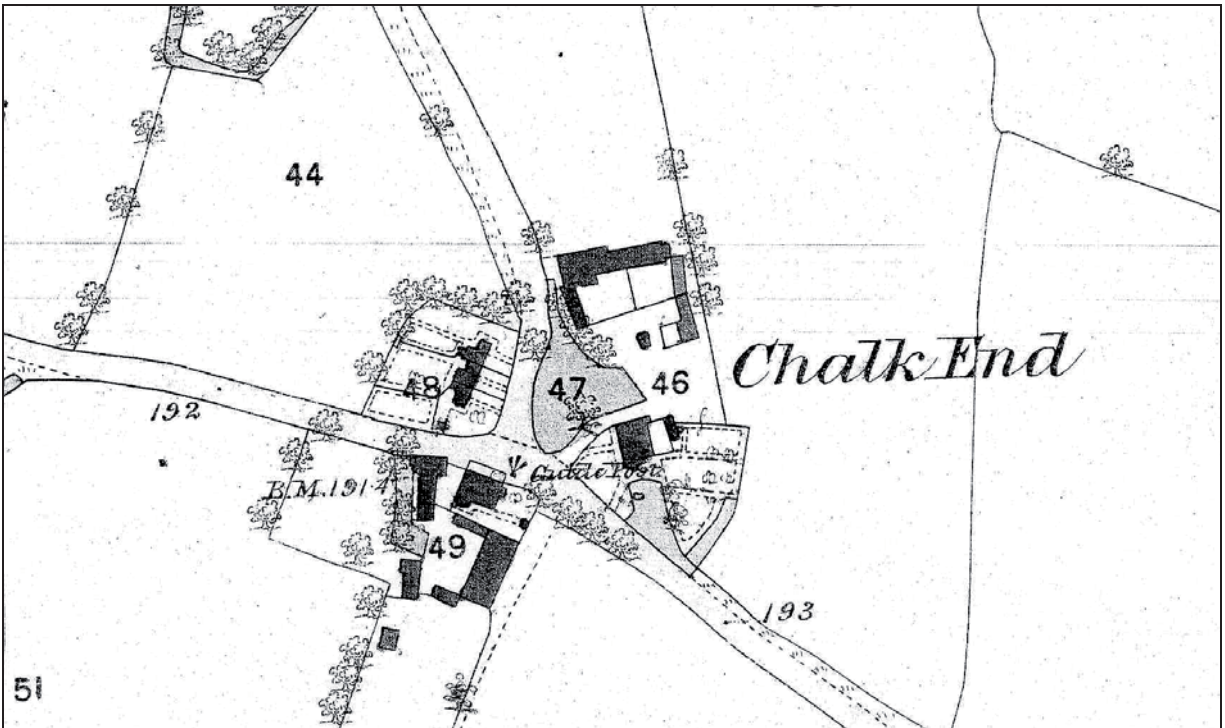


Fig. 4 First Edition 1873 OS map (sheet 43/9)

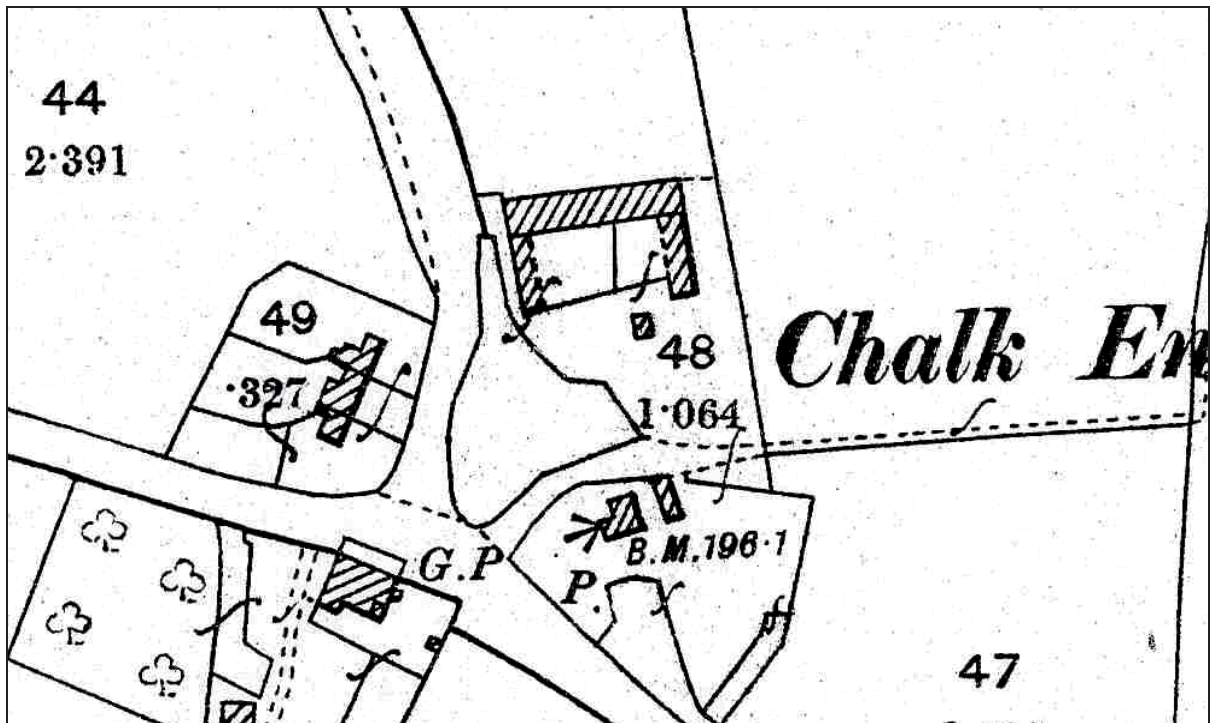


Fig.5 1897 OS map (sheet 43/9)

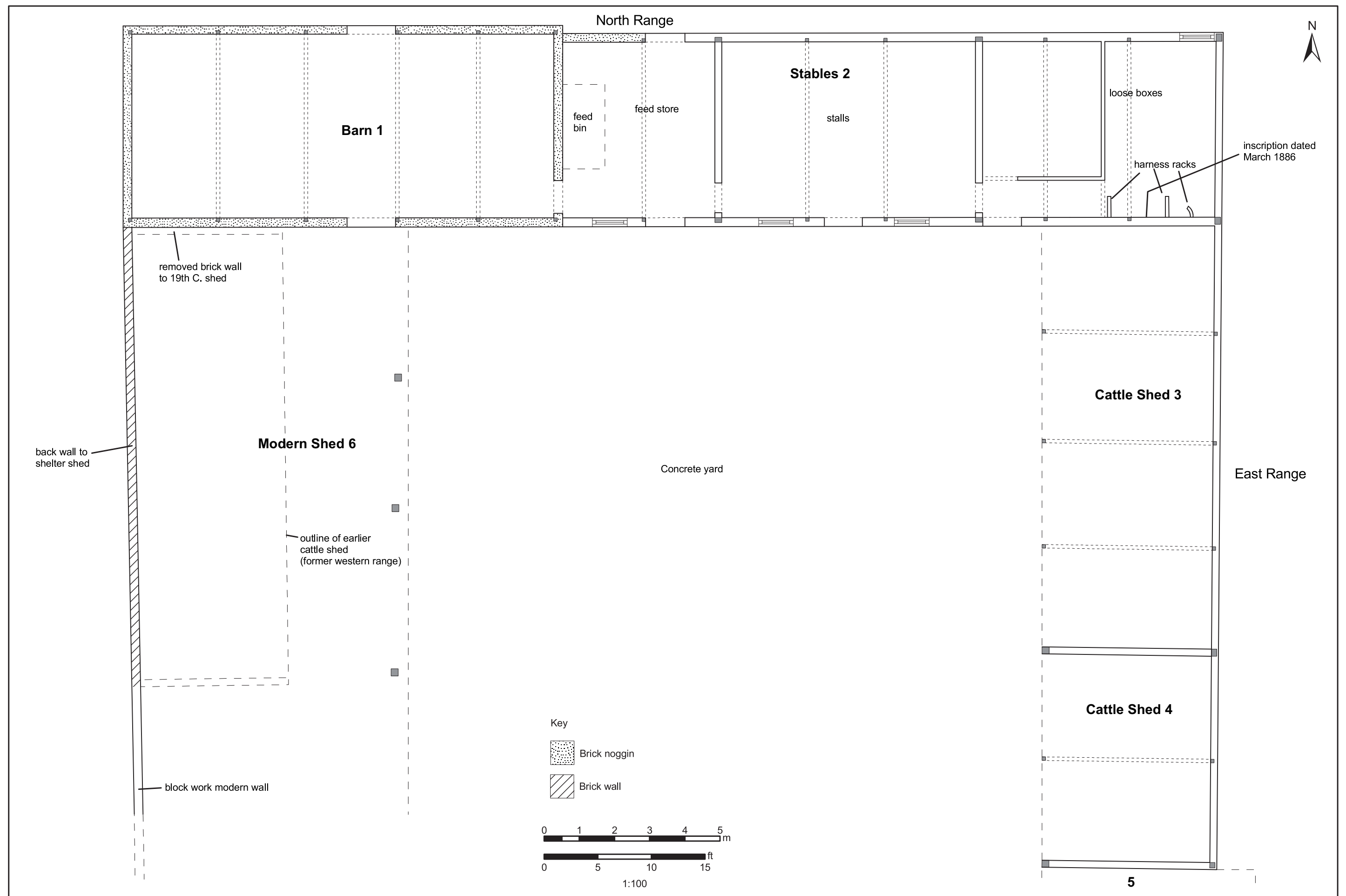


Fig.6. Plan of historic structures



Plate 1 Farmyard viewed to north



Plate 2 Wall scar of former West Range on Barn 1



Plate 3 Barn 1 and North Range viewed towards south-east



Plate 4 North and East Ranges viewed towards south-west



Plate 5 Brick noggin inside Barn 1 (west wall)



Plate 6 Interior of Barn 1 viewed towards Stables 2 (east)



Plate 7 *Trait de Jupiter* scarf joint



Plate 8 Vented window on stable block



Plate 9 Interior of feed store in Stables 2 (view to north-west)



Plate 10 Interior of stalls in Stables 2 (viewed to north-west)



Plate 11 Stalls in Stables 2 viewed towards yard (south)



Plate 12 Interior of Loose Box viewed to east



Plate 13 Interior of Loose Box viewed to west



Plate 14 Dated inscription inside Loose Box



Plate 15 East Range viewed towards north-east



Plate 16 Cattle Shed 3



Plate 17 Cattle Shed 4



Plate 18 Remains of West Range within Modern Shed 6



Plate 19 The Dovecote



Plate 20 Dovecote interior (ground floor)



Plate 21 First floor of Dovecote



Plate 22 Nesting box (upside-down)

Appendix 1: Contents of Archive

Site name: Chalk End Farm, Farmbridge Road, Roxwell, Essex

Project no.: 2057

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 (including notes & measured sketch plans of dovecote)
- 2.4 Architects survey

Appendix 2: EHER Summary Sheet

Site Name/Address: Chalk End Farm, Farmbridge Road, Roxwell, Chelmsford, Essex	
Parish: Roxwell	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 6306 1055	OASIS record No.: essexcou-61066
Type of Work: Building recording	Site Director/Team: Andrew Letch ECC FAU
Date of Work: 12th May 2009	Size of Area Investigated: N/A
Curating Museum: Chelmsford	Funding Source: Mr. & Mrs I. Anderson
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related LB Nos. None
Final Report: Summary in EAH	
Periods Represented: 18th & late 19th-century	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Recording works were undertaken on the remains of an 1880s farmstead in advance of residential conversion. The group comprises a barn and stable range, a range of shelter sheds and an 18th-century dovecote, the only survivor from an earlier farmstead though outside the range of this survey (though described and photographed for the report).</p> <p>The farmstead and farmhouse were re-built in 1886 following a fire that destroyed an 18th-century (perhaps earlier) barn range and mid 19th-century cow sheds. According to the client, the farmhouse was timber-framed, and therefore likely to be a similar date to the barn.</p> <p>The surveyed structures are typically timber-framed in machine-sawn soft wood and weatherboarded and pantile roofs. From its size, form and fixtures, it is not clear if the barn was used to hold grain or house livestock. The shelter sheds have older, reused timbers amidst new timbers in the walls and roofs while the dovecote appears largely as-built although some timbers show signs of reuse.</p> <p>Like many other farms, internal fixtures have been removed. There are vestiges of a feed bin and loose boxes. The barn contains some patterned brick noggin and the stable windows have sliding vents in the lower sections, which are unusual characteristics.</p> <p>Chalk End Farm has the plan form of a typical Victorian mixed farmstead, with a barn and stables at one end and animal ranges each side of a central yard. Although the structures have limited architectural value, their vernacular character is worthy of record and their preservation as part of the rural landscape is important.</p> <p>.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: Andrew Letch	Date of Summary: 15th July 2009