



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Heritage asset assessment of Coombs Farm Barns
Thornborough, Buckinghamshire
May 2012



Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk



Northamptonshire
County Council

Tim Upson-Smith

Report 12/124

June 2012



STAFF

Project Manager: Tim Upson-Smith BA, PG Dip
Text: Tim Upson-Smith
Fieldwork: Tim Upson-Smith
Illustrations: Amir Bassir BSc, PIfA

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signature	Date
Verified by	C Walker		
Checked by	P Chapman		
Approved by	A Chapman		

OASIS REPORT: 129343

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project title	Heritage asset assessment of Coombs Farm Barns, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire, May 2012
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out a heritage asset assessment of Coombs Farm Barns, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire. The assessment demonstrated that the 19th-century buildings are in poor to very bad condition and are of overall low significance.
Project type	Building assessment
Previous work	Unknown
Future work	Unknown
Monument type and period	19th-century farm buildings
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Buckinghamshire
Site address	Coombs Farm, Thornborough
NGR	SP 7328 3237
Area	0.32ha
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project brief originator	N/A
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Director/Supervisor	Tim Upson-Smith
Project Manager	Tim Upson-Smith
Sponsor or funding body	Lambert Smith Hampton
PROJECT DATE	
Start date	May 2012
End date	May 2012
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Title	Heritage asset assessment of Coombs Farm Barns, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire, May 2012
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Report 12/124
Author(s)	Tim Upson-Smith
Page numbers	17
Date	July 2012

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	4
	2.1 Heritage assests	4
	2.2 Historic and architectural interest	4
3	BUILDING ASSESSMENT	6
	3.1 Building 1, cattle shed	6
	3.2 Building 2, cattle shelter shed	7
	3.3 Building 3, barn	8
	3.4 Building 4, milking parlour	8
	3.5 Building 5	9
	3.6 Building 6	9
	3.7 Buildings 7 and 8	11
	3.8 Building 9	12
	3.9 Buildings 10 and 11	13
4	CONDITION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS	14
	4.1 Condition	14
	4.2 Significance Criteria	15
5	CONCLUSIONS	16
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	16

Figures

Front cover: Building 5

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Coombs Farm Barns, figure location plan

Fig 3: Building 1, looking west

Fig 4: Interior of Building 1 showing the kingpost truss

Fig 5: Building 2, open cattle shelter shed, looking north

Fig 6: Building 3, looking north

Fig 7: Building 4, looking east

Fig 8: Building 5, looking east

Fig 9: Building 6, looking north-east

Fig 10: Building 6, inglenook fireplace, looking east

Fig 11: Building 7, looking south-east

Fig 12: Fireplace and chimney breast, Building 7, looking west

Fig 13: Building 9, looking north-east

Fig 14: Building 9, feeding trough and rack

Fig 15: Building 10, looking north-west

Fig 16: Building 10, horizontal sliding hit-and-miss ventilator window

Fig 17: Building 11, looking south-west

Back cover: Donkeys

HERITAGE ASSET ASSESSMENT OF COOMBS FARM BARNs
THORNBOROUGH, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
MAY 2012

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out a heritage asset assessment of Coombs Farm Barns, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire. The assessment demonstrated that the 19th-century buildings are in poor to very bad condition and are of overall low significance.

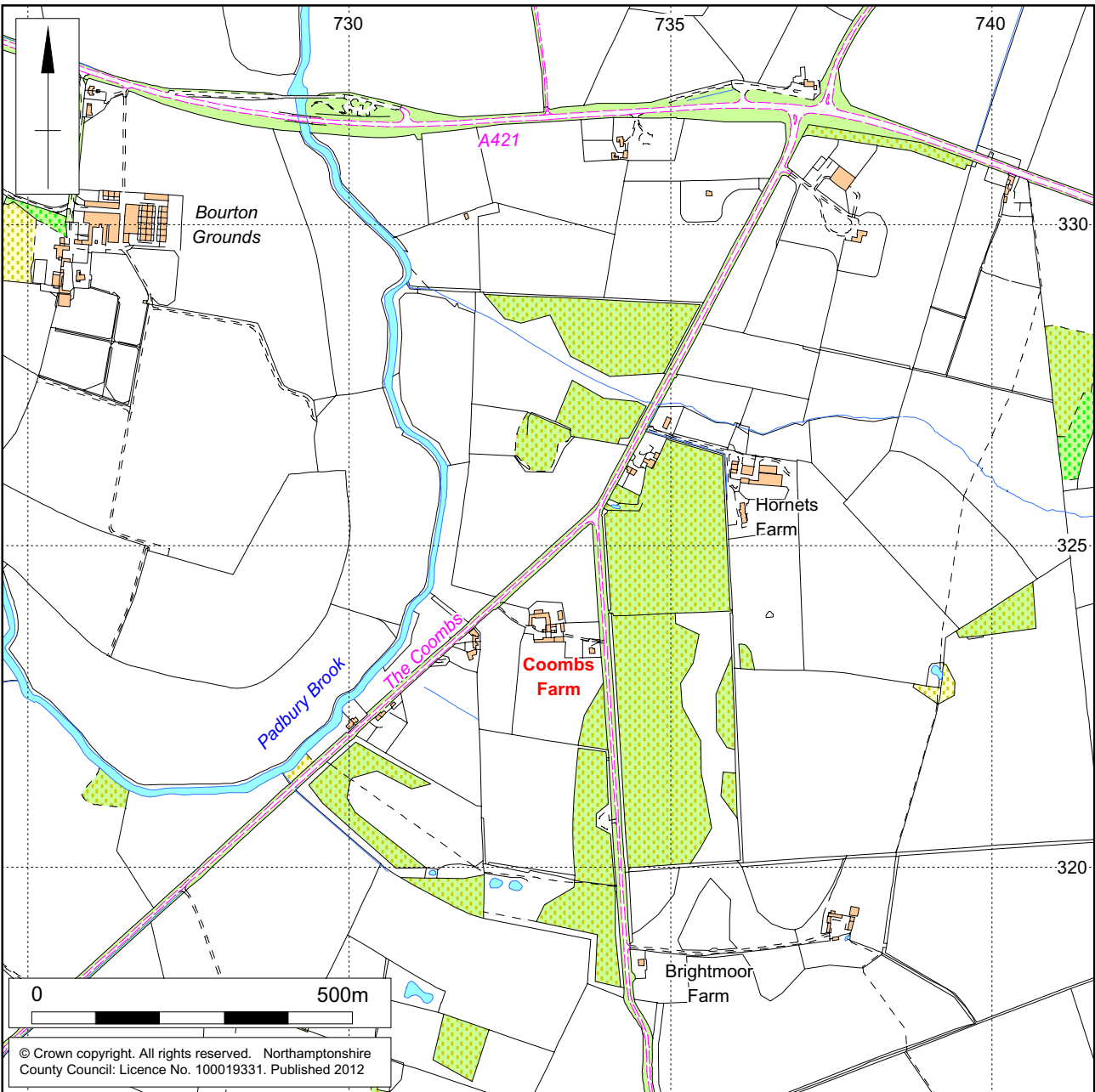
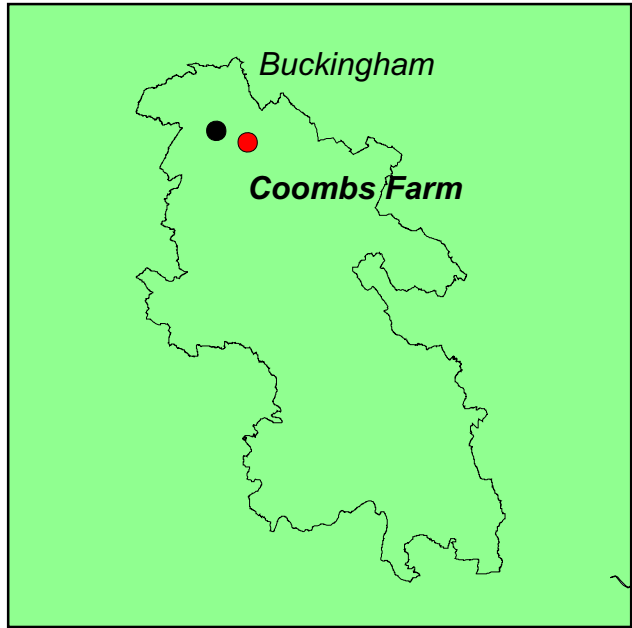
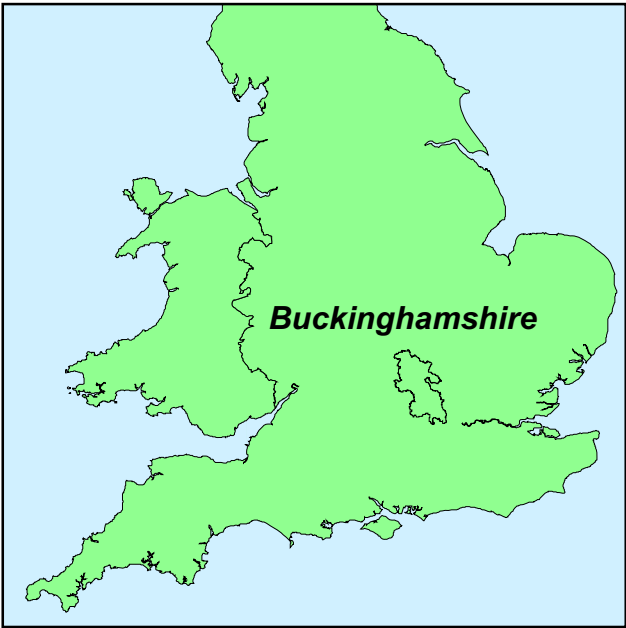
1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) were commissioned by Lambert Smith Hampton to undertake a heritage asset assessment of Coombs Farm Barns, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire, (NGR SP 7328 3237 Figs 1 and 2). The work was carried out in response to the proposed conversion of the buildings to domestic use.

1.1 Legislation

The assessment conforms to the relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government March 2012
- *The Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, English Heritage, 2010
- *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, English Heritage April, 2008
- *Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to Good Practice and Procedures*, DCLG June 2006
- *Code of conduct* Institute for Archaeologists, 2010



Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

1.2 National Guidance

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG) replaced *Planning Policy Statement 5* in March 2012. Of particular relevance are the following chapters which state:

Chapter 128

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Chapter 129

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Chapter 132

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

Chapter 135

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Chapter 141

Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost ((wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Heritage assests

The proposed development site includes a recorded heritage asset and lies within the context of a number of other heritage assets. The relevant heritage assets are:

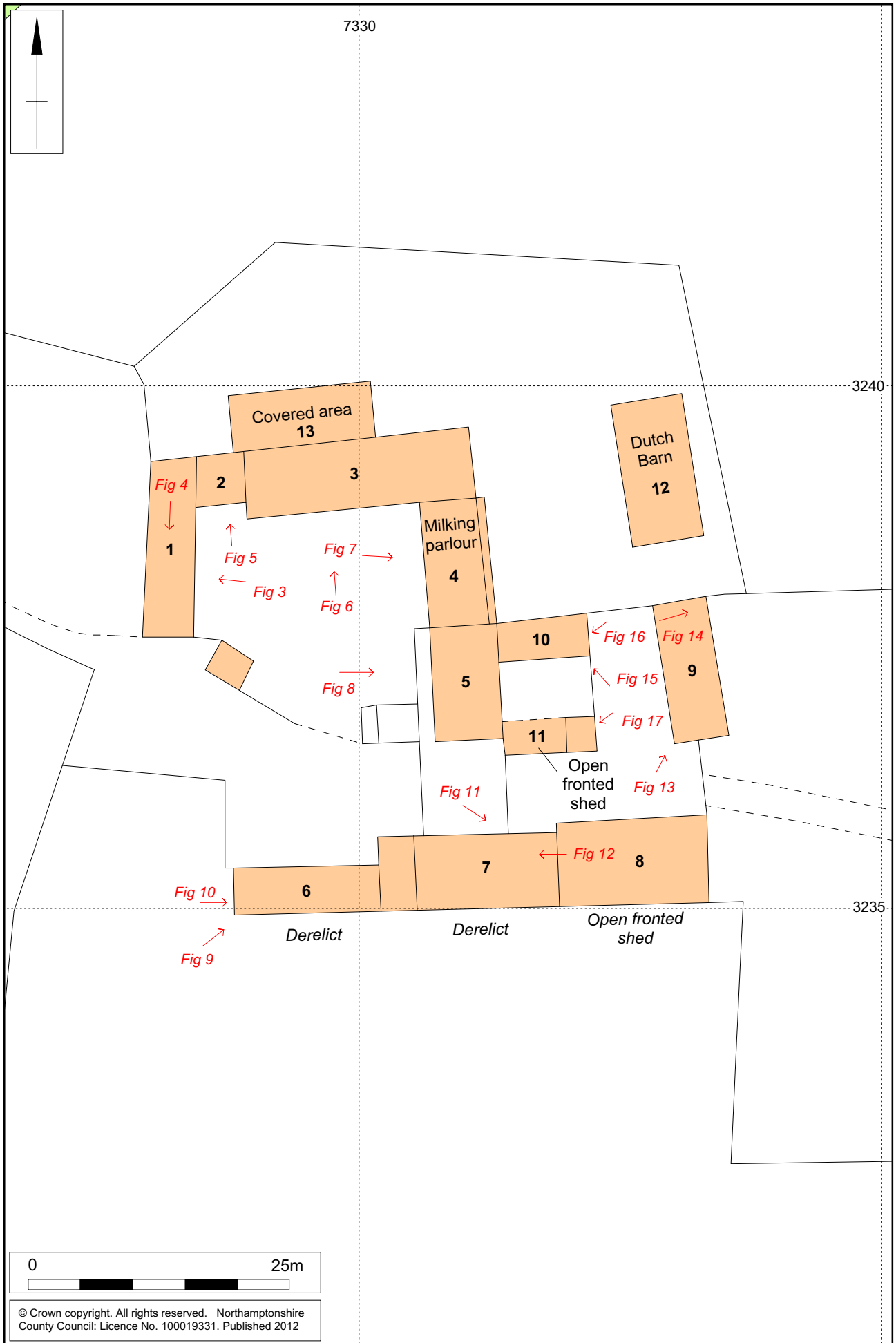
Table 1: Historic Environment Record (HER) data

HER reference	Designation Status	Description
0203400000	HER	Margary Road 162. Possible line of Roman road of trackway between Akeman Street and Alchester – Towcester Road
0197100000	HER	Brightmoor Farm. Roman road recorded in excavation
0623700000	HER	300m of Thornborough Bridge. Roman road found whilst digging a pond
0078200000	SAM	Thornborough Mounds. Two Roman burial mounds, partly excavated in 1839-1840
0634200000	HER	Open fields, Thornborough parish. Ridge and furrow from medieval to post-medieval open field system in Thornborough parish
0490500000	HER	Thornborough Coombs. 19th-century brick and tile works and lime kilns recorded in field survey

2.2 Historic and architectural interest

Coombs Farm is shown on the Ordnance Survey Surveyor's Drawings (1822-35) and the OS First Edition maps (1876-1885). Both maps depict a courtyard farm, the south-west corner of which is now gone. The farm sits within a landscape that was enclosed in 1798.

The survey of the surviving buildings has demonstrated that they date to the mid 19th century with later additions. The buildings which make up the southern side of the courtyard survive as roofless ruins and those which were in the south-west corner are partially visible as earthworks.



Scale 1:500 (A4)

Cooms Farm Barns, figure location plan Fig 2

3 BUILDING ASSESSMENT

The buildings were visited on the 16th May 2012 to carry out an assessment of the buildings to be affected by the proposed works.

The buildings which fall within the scope of the assessment consist of a 19th-century and later farmyard complex (Fig 2). The yard is split into two main elements, a courtyard and secondary yard. In addition there is a range of derelict domestic buildings to the south of the complex (Buildings 6 and 7), an open fronted shed (Building 8), and a modern Dutch barn, to the north-east of the complex (Building 12).

The buildings which make up the elements of the farmyard appear to be broadly contemporary, with the construction in red brick. The roofs are all kingpost truss with Welsh slate over, the exceptions to this are Buildings 6 and 7 which are now roofless, although elements of the kingpost truss survive in the ruin of Building 6. Buildings 8, 10 and 11 have corrugated iron roofs and Building 9 has a corrugated asbestos roof.

The original windows, where they survive, are wood-framed casements with a varying number of top lights and the bottom part having wooden horizontal sliding hit-and-miss ventilators.

3.1 Building 1, Cattle shed

Building 1 is a cattle shed on the western side of the main courtyard (Figs 2 and 3). The building has two rooms, the southern of which was likely to have been a stable. The northern room had been modernised with a concrete floor and metal cattle feeding trough. There are doors into the two rooms consisting of split stable style ledged and braced doors.



Building 1, looking west

Fig 3

The roof is a kingpost truss and is covered with Welsh slate. The timber work of the kingpost truss is machine-sawn pine with an iron bolt joining the kingpost to the tie beam (Fig 4).



Interior of Building 1 showing the kingpost truss

Fig 4

3.2 Building 2, cattle shelter shed

Building 2 is an infill between Buildings 1 and 3 and consists of a small open fronted shelter shed (Figs 2 and 5). The shed has a later concrete floor and metal and concrete feeding trough on the back wall. There is the remains of a ledged and braced split stable door, which may suggest the building was not always an open shelter shed.



Building 2, open cattle shelter shed, looking north

Fig 5

3.3 Building 3, Barn

This building is the main barn within the principal courtyard complex (Figs 2 and 6). It is of two storeys at its western end, the eastern end is open to the roof structure. Access was not gained to the first floor.

Under the eaves there is a course of dentil enrichment consisting of alternate projecting bricks. There are also four diamond shaped panels of ventilation holes in the brickwork on the courtyard facade of the building. These, however, have been cut by the insertion of a later doorway. The windows in this building are metal framed with concrete lintels and are later insertions, as is the large opening on the eastern side of the yard facade. There is an original round window in the apex of the west gable.



Building 3, looking north

Fig 6

On the northern side of the building is a later covered area (Building 13, Fig 2), consisting of a corrugated iron roofed wood framed shelter shed.

3.4 Building 4, milking parlour

Building 4 is a single storey infill building on the eastern side of the yard which joins together Building 3 and 5 (Figs 2 and 7).



Building 4, looking east

Fig 7

This building has three metal framed windows replacing the originals and two doors, the northern of which is a ledged and braced door, the other is a split stable style door.

Internally, the building has the remains of a milking parlour, consisting of a concrete floor and metal fittings. The east wall of the building has been moved out and the roof line altered on this side to accommodate the milking parlour machinery which is no longer extant.

3.5 Building 5

Building 5 forms the south-eastern corner of the main yard complex and the western side of the secondary yard (Figs 2 and 8). It comprises a threshing barn, two storeys in height with a hay loft in its southern end. Access to the hayloft is via an external brick stair on the southern gable of the building. It has a pair of full height doors on either side of the threshing floor.



Building 5, looking east

Fig 8

There is an inserted door at the northern end of the main yard facade which cuts the bottom of the diamond shaped panel of ventilation holes in the brickwork. As Building 3, there is under the eaves a course of dentil enrichment consisting of alternate projecting bricks. This would suggest that this building and Building 3 are contemporary with the other buildings being slightly later.

3.6 Building 6

This building is to the south of the main courtyard and consists of a roofless ruin with several of its walls also partially collapsed (Figs 2, 9 and 10). Young trees and shrubs are growing within the building making access difficult.



Building 6, looking north-east

Fig 9

The building in the east wall of the western room has an inglenook fireplace, with a small cast iron oven set into it (Fig 10).



Building 6, inglenook fireplace, looking east

Fig 10

The presence of this style of fireplace may suggest a domestic function for this building. Elements survived in the undergrowth of the kingpost truss for the roof.

3.7 Buildings 7 and 8

Building 7 is on the same alignment as 6 and like 6 it is without its roof and is overgrown with young trees and shrubs (Figs 2 and 11). Much of the north wall of the building is no longer standing. The eastern end of the building is two storey although the floor is no longer extant and there is a chimney in the western gable of the east end (Fig 12).



Building 7, looking south-east

Fig 11



Fireplace and chimney breast, Building 7, looking west

Fig 12

Again the presence of the fireplaces would suggest a domestic function for this building.

Building 8 adjoins 7 and consists of an open fronted shed, its walls reuse elements of brick structures and some modern breeze block infill. The roof is corrugated iron supported on re-used telegraph poles.

3.8 Building 9

This building is free standing and forms the eastern side of the smaller secondary yard (Figs 2 and 13). It is in red brick with a hipped corrugated asbestos roof, the windows are metal framed with concrete lintels and are later insertions. The doors also have concrete lintels.



Building 9, looking north-east

Fig 13

The room at the northern end of the buildings retains its brick feeding trough with wooden feeding rack over. There are tether rings for three animals (Fig 14).



Building 9, feeding trough and rack

Fig 14

3.9 Buildings 10 and 11

Building 10 is built onto the eastern side of Building 5 and forms the northern side of the smaller courtyard (Figs 2 and 15). This building retains its wood topped brick feeding trough and original wooden horizontal sliding hit-and-miss ventilator windows. The doors however, have been removed and the brickwork around the openings has partially been taken down.



Building 10, looking north-west

Fig 15



Building 10, horizontal sliding hit-and-miss ventilator window

Fig 16

Building 11 comprises a post and corrugated iron roofed lean to structure built against the south wall of the smaller yard (Figs 2 and 17).



Building 11, looking south-west

Fig 17

4 CONDITION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS

4.1 Condition

The condition of the buildings was recorded using the criteria set by the Lincolnshire Heritage at Risk, survey notes, where condition is recorded on a four point scale from very bad to good (<http://www.lincshar.org/>). See below:

Table 2: Condition table

very bad	Ruinous and derelict buildings. It also includes buildings where there has been structural failure or where it is likely to occur, eg the roof covering is largely missing or sagging and those where part of the structure is suspect, eg an unstable, severely cracked gable wall. If it is known that the internal structures have or are liable to collapse it should be classed as very bad.
poor	A building is in poor condition if there are obvious faults likely to lead to structural failure, eg the roof appears uneven, there is an area of missing slates; the gutters and downpipes are missing or broken. A building that has several faults may be considered poor, eg decayed window frames and blocked gutters and signs of damp.
fair	A building that is structurally sound but in need of minor repairs or suggests a lack of maintenance of individual elements, eg decayed window frames or blocked gutters or signs of damp or patches of eroded pointing. Overall it would still be assessed as in fair condition.
good	A building in good condition is structurally sound, weathertight and with no significant problems. Look to see if the building is wind and watertight.

Condition survey results

When using the above criteria for assessing the condition of the farm buildings, it is clear that the condition of the buildings is poor to very bad, as they are not being used they can be considered vacant, which means that the risk category is medium to high. However the buildings are capable of beneficial re-use.

4.2 Significance Criteria

For the purposes of the assessment the following categories have been utilised:-

Table 3: Criteria for assessing the sensitivity (value) of cultural heritage resources

Level of Sensitivity	Definition
Very High	Sites of international importance: World Heritage Sites Sites of national importance include those that are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments or those that are considered to be suitable for scheduling, Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, Registered Historic Gardens, other historic landscapes of international importance whether designated or not
High	Sites of high importance include Grade II Listed Buildings, sites that have the potential to significantly contribute to national research objectives
Medium	Sites of regional importance include Conservation Areas and those sites which are considered to be significant regional examples with well-preserved evidence of occupation, industry etc
Low	Sites which are of less-defined extent, nature and date or which are in a poor or fragmentary state, but which are considered to be significant examples in a local context; important hedgerows; locally listed buildings
Negligible	Sites with little or no surviving archaeological remains, buildings of no architectural or historical note
Unknown	The importance of the site is unknown

5 CONCLUSIONS

The elements which make up Coombs Farm have been assessed as being in poor to very bad condition, and therefore at medium to high risk, however they are capable of beneficial re-use.

The buildings using the table for assessing the value/sensitivity would indicate that the buildings are of negligible value. The proposed conversion of the buildings will have an impact on the buildings and their setting, which could be considered minor to moderate, however without development the buildings which are already deemed at risk will decay further. The conversion of the buildings could also be deemed as having a positive impact, as they will be restored as part of the proposed works and brought back into use. Using the criteria for establishing the significance of the impact of the proposed development on the heritage asset it can be seen to be neutral or slight and ultimately beneficial.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

EH 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practise*, English Heritage

EH 2006 *Living buildings in a living landscape: finding a future for traditional farm buildings*, English Heritage

EH 2006 *Historic Farmsteads preliminary character statement: South East region*, English Heritage

EH 2008 *Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, English Heritage

EH, DCMS 2010 *PPS5 Planning for the historic environment: historic environment planning practise guide*, English Heritage, Department for Culture Media and Sport

IfA 2001, revised 2008 *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings and structures*, Institute for Archaeologists

Peters, J, 1991 *Discovering traditional farm buildings*, Shire Publications Ltd

Woodforde, J, 1983 *Farm Buildings*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London

Websites

<http://www.lincshar.org/>



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology



Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE

t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822

e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk

w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk



Northamptonshire
County Council