SIX ACRES, 17, THE RIDGEWAY, ROTHLEY

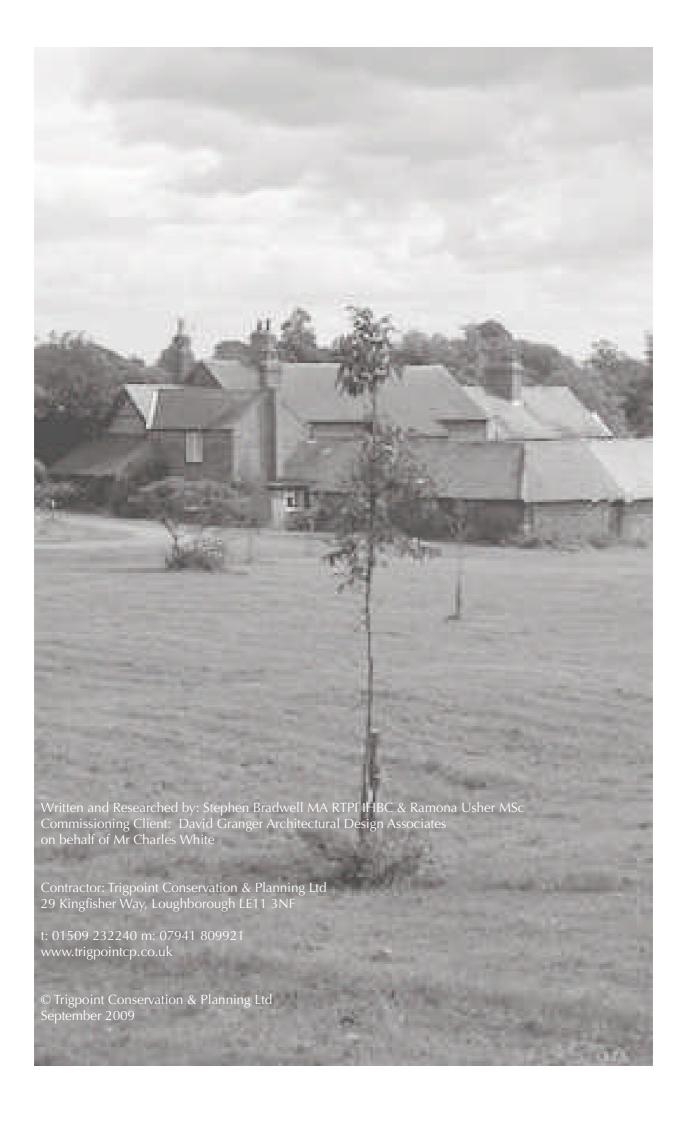
GRID REFERENCE: SK 4571 3123

HISTORIC BUILDINGS APPRAISAL (LEVEL 2 SURVEY)

TRIGPOINT CONSERVATION & PLANNING LTD.

REPORT DATE: SEPTEMBER 2009

ACCESSION NO. X.A 180.2009



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Summary

A Level 2 Survey was carried out by Trigpoint Conservation & Planning on behalf of Mr Charles White in August 2009 in advance of works to demolish the existing group of farm buildings at Six Acres, 17, The Ridgeway, Rothley (formerly known as West Fields Farm). The existing group comprise of a farmhouse with an attached barn, a pair of cottages and a range of redundant stock buildings, all set around three sides of a narrow rectangular farm-yard. The buildings are mainly constructed of brick with an irregular slate rubble plinth and a mix of Welsh slate and pantile roof coverings.

The archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service.

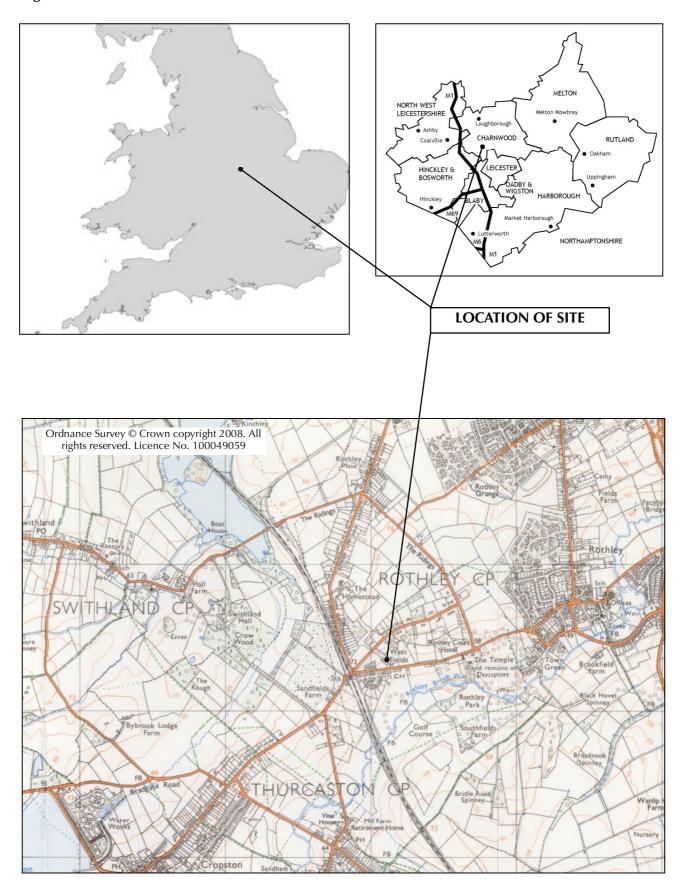
1. Introduction and Scope of the Survey

- 1.1 This record has been prepared by Trigpoint Conservation & Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr Charles White, the site's owner.
- 1.2 A site and photographic survey was carried out by Stephen Bradwell and Ramona Usher on Thursday 27th August 2009. The photographic survey was carried out using a 35mm SLR camera, with HP5 Ilford monochrome film, and a digital camera. The digital images were taken as RAW image files and subsequently converted to TIFFs and transferred to a CD-rom for deposition in the archive.
- 1.3 This survey has been undertaken to comply with a written request from Charnwood Borough Council in order to inform the determination of future planning applications for the redevelopment of the site including the demolition of the existing range of buildings.
- 1.4 The Project Design submitted to the County Council's Senior Planning Archaeologist (SPA), proposed to prepare a record of the building equivalent to a Level 2 Survey, which is defined by English Heritage as essentially a descriptive investigation, with only limited interpretation of the phasing and use of the building (Understanding Historic Buildings. A Guide to Good Recording Practice, 2006).
- 1.5 The objectives of the survey are:
 - to create a written account of the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence;
 - to create a photographic record of the internal and external features of the buildings and their general setting;
 - to produce an archive and report to allow future interpretation of the buildings within the context for which they were designed and subsequently evolved.
- 1.6 The survey comprises three parts:
 - a written record: a descriptive record of the building;
 - a photographic record: 35mm black and white prints and colour digital images of the main features of the buildings, and their immediate surroundings;
 - a drawn record: site and survey drawings have been prepared by David Granger
 Architectural Design Limited, and annotated where appropriate to show particular
 features.

2. Statutory Designations

2.1 The buildings are not listed and do not stand within a conservation area. Furthermore there are

Figure 1: General Location Plan



no records relating to this property in the Leicestershire & Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER).

3. General Setting & Location

- 3.1 The complex of farm buildings at Six Acres (formerly known as West Fields Farm) are situated about 1.5km (¾ mile) west of Rothley on the gentle south facing slope of the valley to the Rothley Brook (NGR SK 4571 3123) [Figure 1].
- 3.2 The site is accessed from The Ridgeway, although prior to its construction the farm was accessed from Westfield Lane, and a secondary access to Westfield Lane still survives.
- 3.3 The existing site comprises of the existing two storey farmhouse and range of farm buildings, generally between one and two storeys in height, that stand in a narrow inverted U-shape on a roughly north-west south-east alignment on land that falls about 5 metres from north to south (from 65 metres to 60 metres) across the site.

4. Historical Background

- 4.1.An archaeological desk-top assessment for Six Acres has also been prepared in association with this building survey. This assessment provides further details on the topographical, archaeological and historical background of the site, to establish the known or potential archaeology and to assess its significance.
- 4.2 This historic research indicates that the farm complex is situated on land that originally formed part of the west field, one of the medieval open fields within Rothley parish and evidence of ridge and furrow farming from this medieval period can still be seen in the fields immediately to the west and east of the existing farm buildings.
- 4.3 McLoughlin (2006, p126) notes that whilst the open fields were enclosed in 1781, there was a partial enclosure in the early 16th century that appears to have encompassed much of what was termed the west field. Whilst it has not been possible to locate any documentary evidence for the first farm buildings on West Fields Farm, it may that the first buildings followed this 16th century enclosure. Evidence from the building survey suggests that the remains of a timber-framed building may be incorporated within the existing farmhouse.
- 4.4 Contemporary plans for 1881 show that the farmhouse and the barn to the south were in existence at that time and subsequently late 19th century and early 20th century Ordnance Survey (OS) maps show an expanding range of farm buildings at West Fields Farm.

5. Summary of the Building's Plan, Form, Function, Age and Development Sequence Functional Arrangements

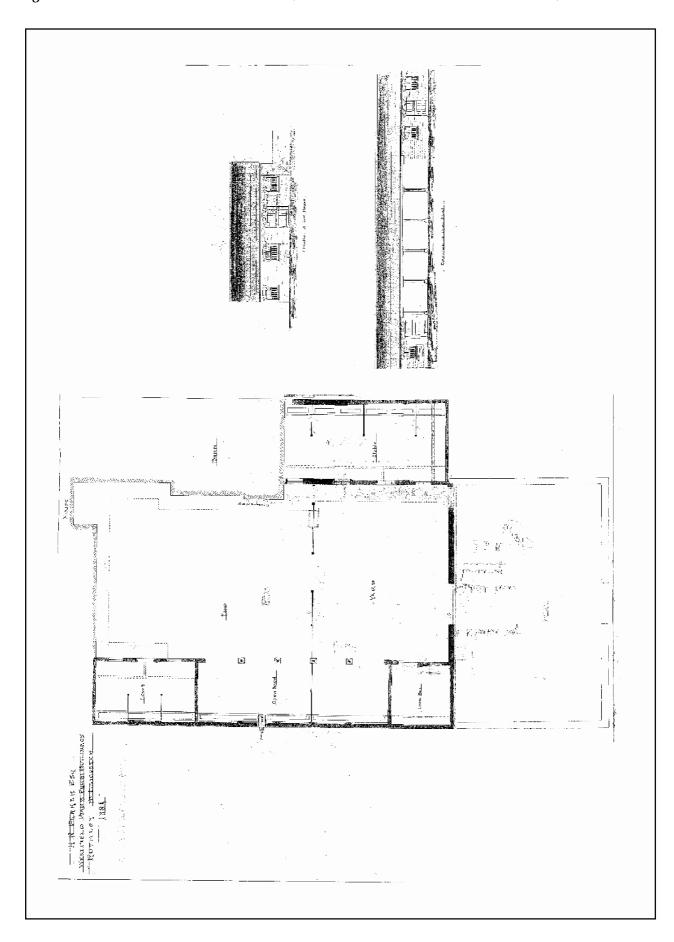
5.1 The existing farm buildings fall into three distinct groups providing a farmhouse along with two self-contained farm cottages; a threshing barn and a range of cattle sheds and stables. The buildings are built in the local agricultural tradition and style, having no known architects or builders.

Historical Sequence

5.2 The existing range of buildings appear to have undergone significant change over time and evidence of these changes can be found both in the surviving physical fabric and historic drawings and maps.

- 5.3 The Ordnance Survey Drawings of c. 1815 [Map 1] and the 1835 First Series Ordnance Survey [Map 2] show a small complex of farm buildings in this location that may correspond to the existing farmhouse and adjacent single storey range along the northern edge of the site. However the maps are too small scale to be confidently used, but they do imply an established group of farm buildings on the site at the start of the 19th century.
- 5.4 This limited map evidence appears to be supported by the structural evidence which would suggest that the lower two-storey section of the farmhouse, which is possibly a timber frame structure, was one of these original buildings.
- 5.5 A set of building plans produced in 1881 for the then Lord of the Manor H R Parker Esq. show the designs for a new range of farm buildings to be built alongside an existing barn and farmhouse as notated on the drawings and an existing, but unnamed, structure along the northern side of the farmyard [Figure 2]. The proposed buildings comprised of a cow shed at the upper part of the new range, an open, 5-bay shed in the centre and a loose box at the lower part of the range with a stable block on the opposite side of the farmyard adjacent to the barn. The drawings also show a wall enclosing the southern boundary of the farmyard with a possible further enclosed space immediately to the south of the farmyard.
- 5.6 This extended complex of farm buildings appears to be depicted on the 1884, 6" to 1 mile, OS map [Maps 3(a) & 3(b)], which shows the enclosed U-shaped farm-yard evident in Parker's 1881 drawings and the present range of buildings.
- 5.7 The more detailed 25" to 1 mile OS map of 1885 [Maps 4(a) & 4(b)] show an open range along the northern boundary of the farmyard range suggesting that the existing building post-dates 1885 and this may be supported by the structural evidence. The walls of this block are a combination of brick infill panels set between brick piers, with a noticeable difference in the bricks used for these structural elements, and this construction method may indicate that the building was originally an open shed that was subsequently enclosed.
- 5.8 The 1885 OS map also shows a further group of buildings along the southern edge of the farmyard, although these seem to have been demolished by the time of the 1904 OS map.
- 5.9 This general plan form is repeated on the 1904 OS map [Maps 5(a) & 5(b)] but it more closely reflects the present range of buildings. It shows in particular that Parker's 1881 stable had been replaced by the two-storey cottages and a new stable block built beyond the cottages at the south-eastern corner of the range and that the western range of cow sheds had been further extended beyond the 1881 loose box. This map also shows a more substantial building along the northern edge of the farmyard than the 1885 map indicating that the earlier open shed may have been infilled in the intervening period
- 5.10 This map also shows a noticeable change in the road layout with the construction of the Ridgeway across the northern edge of the site following an earlier field boundary and a new road junction to the west of the site to cater for the newly arrived Great Central Railway.
- 5.11 This plan form is then repeated on the later 1929 & 1950 OS maps [Maps 6 & 7]. The 1929 map also showing the outline of buildings outside of the enclosed farmyard that appear to correspond to a small range of timer post and clad cart shed that still stands on the site.

Figure 2: Extract from Plans for H R Parker (Leicester Records Office Ref: DE 5845/59)



5.12 Whilst it is difficult to accurately trace the overall development sequence from the maps and physical evidence, the map evidence indicates that there was an initial group of farm buildings on the site at the start of the 19th century and the structural evidence would suggest that part of the farmhouse was one of these original buildings. It is likely that this farmhouse was extended and the barn built during the early part of the 19th century, adding to the historic core. These additions were then followed by a substantial expansion during the last part of the 19th century with the addition of the cow sheds and farm workers cottages. This suggests that there was a major shift in the local agricultural practices from arable to dairy farming as a result of the growing demand for dairy and livestock products brought about by the growing populations of neighbouring towns, particularly Leicester and Loughborough, which were made more accessible by the construction by the Great Central Railway.

Description of the Buildings

The Farmhouse Arrangement

- 5.13 The farmhouse stands at the north-eastern corner of the existing complex and is L-shaped in plan and made up of three distinct components, a lower two-storey section that occupies the north-eastern corner of the site and which is probably the oldest building on the site; a two storey extension at right angles to this extending along the northern side of the site and a further two storey unit that is combined with the barn butting up to the southern gable of the smaller unit, forming additional farmhouse accommodation, similar in style to a laithe house [Plates 1 & 2] There is also a mono-pitched lean-to extension added to the north facing elevation that is divided into two rooms accessed internally from the hall.
- 5.14 The main entrance door is situated within the lower two-storey unit and this leads through an internal timber panelled lobby into a large hall with an inglenook against the southern wall (against the barn block) and a flight of stairs located towards the rear of the hall that lead to the first floor [Plate 3]. There is one bedroom with a side room on the upper floor of this two-storey unit and this also provides a high level access door into a loft area within the barn unit, although this was not accessible at the time of the inspection.
- 5.15 The hall then provides access to a rear living room that is contained within the two storey extension to the west of the earlier unit with a bedroom above. The living room leads to a narrow kitchen that is contained within a single storey block that sits at the end of the farm buildings along the northern side of the farmyard.
- 5.16 The living accommodation is further extended to the south with a dining room on the ground floor and two bedrooms on the upper floor that are contained within the attached barn building.

Materials

- 5.17 The farmhouse is constructed of red brick, laid in a Flemish Garden Wall bond (three stretchers between each pair of headers), with a granite rubble plinth on the front elevation of the barn unit [Plates 2 & 6]. The roofs of the main building are covered in Welsh slate while the lean-to and kitchen extension are covered in pantiles [Plates 2, 7 & 12].
- 5.18 Whilst now faced in brick, the lower, two storey section may originally have been of timber frame construction. There is an exposed timber frame in the end gable above the lean-to extension and also the possible faint outline of a timber frame within the wall of the back

bedroom that effectively forms the southern end wall of this unit [Plates 2 & 3]. However it is difficult to confirm the extent of any surviving timber frame within the building.

5.19 The ground floor appears to be timber while on the first floor there are gypsum plaster floors (also known as lime ash floors) as shown by the exposed floor in the rear bedroom [Plate 3].

Architectural Detail:

- 5.20 Whilst most of the windows have been replaced there are still some surviving examples of the original vertical sliding sash windows, such as in the front (east) elevation into the hall, alongside which is a surviving timber ledged and braced door. [Plate 5].
- 5.21 Internally the main hall has an enclosed panelled lobby behind the front door and the remains of an earlier inglenook fireplace against the south wall. The inserted staircase has simple chamfered newel posts and square section balusters. The rear living room has a simple fireplace with a timber mantel and built-in cupboards to either side.
- 5.22 There are also good surviving timber panel doors on the ground floor and a number of ledged plank doors with surviving cast iron door latches [Plates 3 & 4].

The Barn Arrangement

5.23 The barn stands along the eastern side of the farmyard and is rectangular in plan. It appears to have been originally built to serve two distinct functions, providing living accommodation for the farmhouse, as described above, and a typical three bay threshing barn with double height doors on both the front and rear elevations and a storage bay on either side of the threshing bay between the doors [Plates 1 & 6]. Within the upper part of the barn there is now a self-contained store room formed by the construction of an internal wall and lean-to roof, which is accessed directly from the farmyard, and this appears to be a later insertion.

Materials

5.24 The barn is constructed of brick, laid in a Flemish Garden Wall bond with a plinth course of random granite rubble on the front elevation [Plate 6]. The roof is covered by modern concrete roof tiles supported by a series of king post trusses. Internally there is a solid brick-paved ground floor and a raised timber mezzanine floor in the lower bay.

Architectural Detail

- 5.25 The eastern front elevation of the barn is supported by two brick buttresses built either side of the double height door. The height of this door appears to have been reduced by the insertion of ten courses of common bricks [Plate 6]. The full-height double door is then repeated on the rear (west) elevation although the doors project forward of the rear elevation to afford a degree of shelter to the threshing floor if the doors had to be open [Plate 7].
- 5.26 The barn is illuminated by three windows within the front elevation and a single window within the rear elevation, although this is now cut through by the inserted room. Whilst the two ground floor windows on the front elevation appear to be later insertions, the brickwork around the first floor window suggests that this is an original feature lighting the raised floor area. There is also some evidence of infilled ventilation slits on the front elevation.

Farm Cottages Arrangement

5.27 A pair of two storey, two-up/two-down cottages stand to the south of the barn and it is likely that these were built to house farm workers [Plate 1].

Materials

5.28 The cottages have a roughcast render frontage with brick commons on the rear elevation and a Welsh slate roof. All the original windows and doors have been replaced.

Architectural Detail

5.29 These cottages are privately occupied and therefore an internal inspection was not possible.

The Stock Buildings Arrangement

- 5.30 The range of buildings along the north and west side of the farmyard were designed to house the stock with a further stable block on the eastern side of the farmyard adjacent to the cottages [Plates 8 &.9]
- 5.31 The original single storey block located along the north side of the farmyard complex is rectangular in plan, combining a single bay at the eastern end that provides a kitchen to the farmhouse and which is separated from the main building by an open passageway [Plates 2 & 7].
- 5.32 The original purpose of this building is somewhat complicated. The 1885 OS plan indicates an open structure rather than a building and the structural evidence of rounded brick piers spaced along the main elevations indicates that the building may have been used as an open cart shed or a shelter shed, particularly as there are surviving timber mangers on each of the inner gable walls. This building was then subsequently enclosed, leaving three doors in the (south) farmyard elevation, two doors opening direct onto the farmyard and a further door opens into a passageway between this stock building and the 1881 milking sheds. The building is now divided into smaller stock pens by a series of internal walls [Plate 13].
- 5.33 Running along the western side of the farmyard is a range of cattle sheds that step down the hillside that is reflected in a series of stepped rooflines and changes of floor levels [Plate 8]. The upper two units were built in 1881 and comprised as a cow shed, open shed and a loose box [Figure 2]. The lower unit appears to have added between 1881 and 1904. The open shed has subsequently been enclosed and all three buildings have been combined to form a single, linear milking shed, albeit with changes in the floor levels and dividing cross walls.
- 5.34 On the opposite side of the farmyard is a further single storey rectangular stable block.

Materials

- 5.35 The stock pens are built in a pier and panel style combining distinctive rounded bull nose brick piers with (different) red brick panels and a pantile roof supported by a heavy timber queen post trusses [Plates 2 & 13].
- 5.36 The milking sheds are also constructed of red brick, laid in a Flemish garden wall bond over a granite rubble plinth on the rear elevation [Plate 8]. Whilst the external brickwork runs through the length of the rear (east) elevation, a distinct vertical joint marks the break between

the 1881 building and the later extension.

- 5.37 The 1881 building drops down the hillside with one break in its roof line mid-way along the original building. The exposed gable at this break is finished with timber boarding while the original gable end is built up in brick with the date of '1881' marked in the brickwork in the apex of the gable [Plate 10]. The original open farmyard elevation of this building has now been infilled with timber panelling although the original structure of timber posts on stone plinths is still discernible [Plate 11], while the farmyard elevation of the later extension has been infilled by breeze blocks [Plate 9].
- 5.38 The roofs of the 1881 building are covered in Welsh slate while the later extension has a corrugated metal sheet roof and the roof throughout is supported by a series of timber King post trusses [Plate 14].
- 5.39 On the opposite side of the farmyard is the stable block which is constructed of brick with a Welsh slate roof [Plate 12]. To the side of the stable block is a rudimentary cart shed constructed of timber posts and clad in timber weatherboarding.
- 5.40 Internally the cow sheds and stable block have concrete floors, with drainage channels set in the concrete that drain directly through the front walls of the respective buildings into the farmyard [Plate 14]. The farmyard itself is surfaced with random blocks of Mountsorrel granite [Plates 7 & 12].

Architectural Details

- 5.41 The external north and west facing elevations have no surviving openings save for the clay pipe ventilators tucked into external walls just below the eaves while the farmyard elevations have a range of doors and bottom-hung ventilator windows [Plates 11 & 15]. Internally the milking sheds have been largely 'modernised' with concrete stalls located against the back wall and a concrete floor [Plate 15].
- 5.42 The stable block has a pair of timber 'hit-and-miss' ventilator windows either side of the original stable door and internally there are the remains of two wooden mangers attached to each gable [Plates 14 & 15].

6. Archive Deposition

- 6.1 The photographic and digital archive along with a copy of this report and architect's drawings will be deposited with the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service (Accession Number: X.A 180.2009).
- 6.2. A copy of the final report will be deposited with the National Monuments Record in Swindon and with the OASIS scheme.
- 6.3 In addition, a summary of the project will also be submitted to the 'Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society'.

7. Archive Catalogue

- 7.1 The deposited archive will consist of:
 - 1. One copy of the written report;

- 2. Project brief submitted to the County Council's Senior Planning Archaeologist;
- 3. One set of black & white prints with negatives and contact sheet;
- 4. One CD-rom with colour digital photographs in TIFF format and contact sheet;
- 5. Photographic Index and Register;
- 6. One set of the architect's survey drawings of the buildings.

8. References

English Heritage (2006) The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice

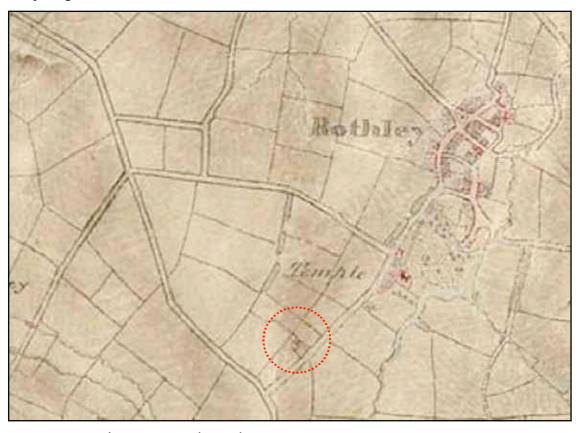
Brunskill, R. W. (2007) Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain and their Conservation, Yale University Press;

McLoughlin V (2006) Medieval Rothley, Leicestershire: Manor, Soke and Parish, Unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D. at the Centre for English Local History University of Leicester (at: https://lra.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/3523/1/Thesis%20V%20McLoughlin.pdf) (Accessed 1st September 2009)

Peters, J. E. C. (1981) Discovering Traditional Farm Buildings, Shire Publications Ltd.

Stephen Bradwell MA MRTPI IHBC 18 September 2009

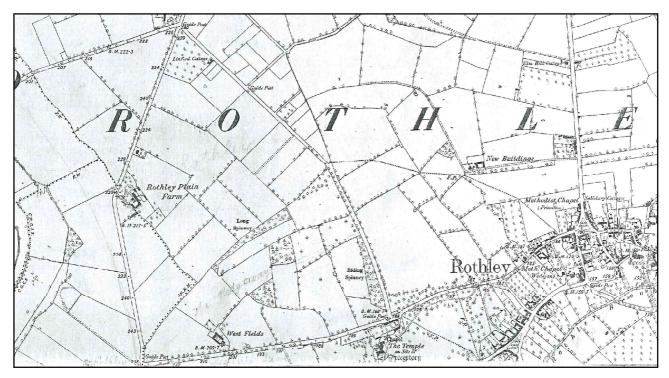
Map Regression Series



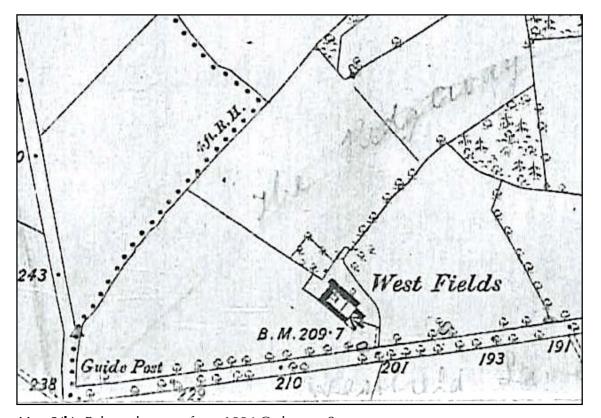
Map 1: Extract from 2'': 1 Mile, Ordnance Survey Drawings 1815
[Source: http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/l/002osd000000012u00223000.html]
[Accessed 8 September 2009]



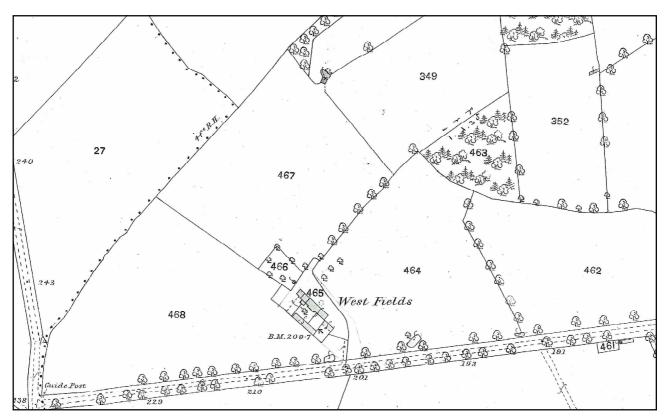
Map 2: Extract from First Series Ordnance Survey 1835
[Source: http://visionofbritain.org.uk/iipmooviewer/iipmooviewer.html?fileName=first_edition %2Fsheet63%3DThe+British+Library%3DOrdnance+Survey%3DFirst+Series%3D63+-+Leicester] [Accessed 8 September 2009]



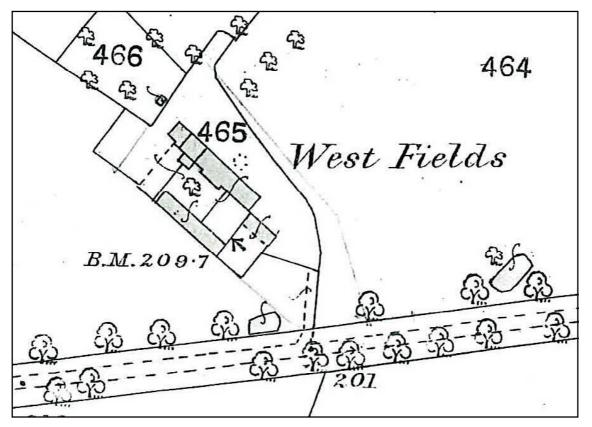
Map 3(a): Extract from 1884 Ordnance Survey map



Map 3(b): Enlarged extract from 1884 Ordnance Survey map

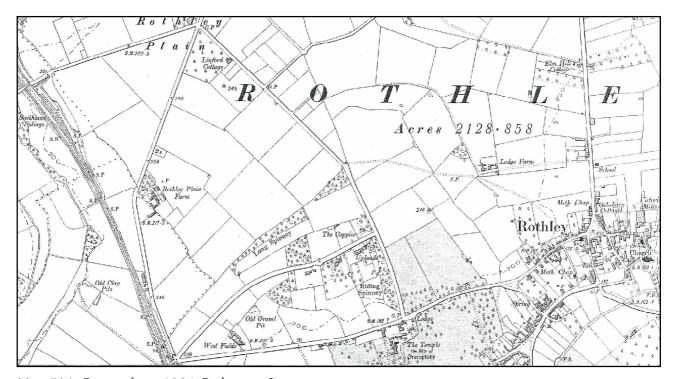


Map 4(a): Extract from 1885 Ordnance Survey map

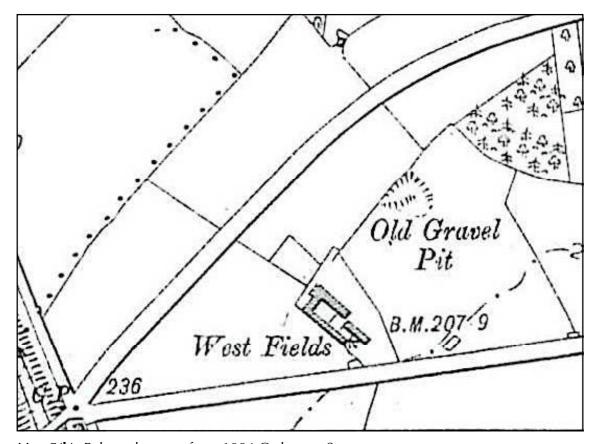


Map 4(b): Enlarged extract from 1885 Ordnance Survey map

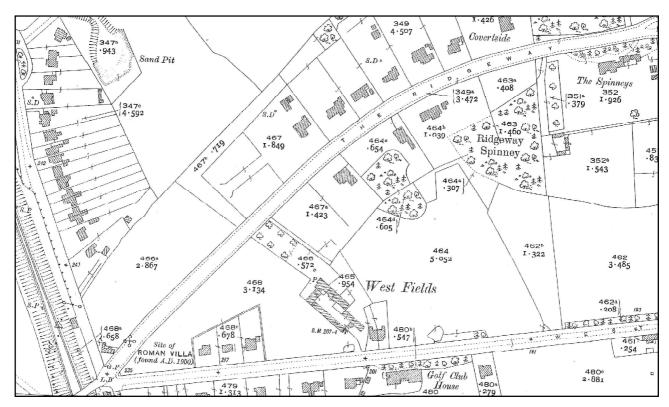
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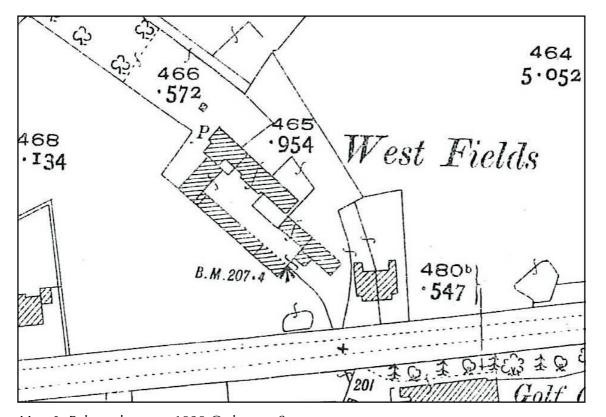
Map 5(a): Extract from 1904 Ordnance Survey map



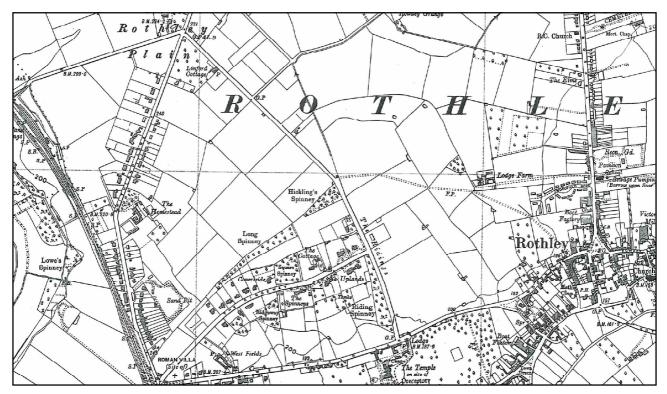
Map 5(b): Enlarged extract from 1904 Ordnance Survey map



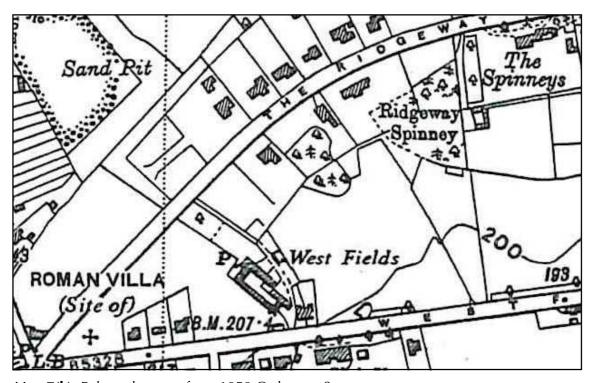
Map 6(a): Extract from 1929 Ordnance Survey map



Map 6: Enlarged extract 1929 Ordnance Survey map



Map 7(a): Extract from from 1950 Ordnance Survey map



Map 7(b): Enlarged extract from 1950 Ordnance Survey map

Plate 1: East facing elevation with farmhouse to the right of the threshing barn and cottages to the left



Plate 2: North facing elevation of farmhouse, showing two storey extension at right angles to timber frame cell and pantile roofed leanto extension



Plate 3: Internal view of the entrance hall



Plate 4: Exposed gypsum plaster floors in the rear bedroom and faint outline of a timber frame within the rear wall



Plate 5: Surviving vertical sliding sash windows and timber ledged and braced front door



Plate 6: East elevation of the threshing barn



Plate 7: Rear elevation of the farmhouse and barn into the internal farmyard



Plate 8: West facing elevation of the stock shed range



Plate 9: Internal farmyard elevation of the cow sheds



Plate 10: 1881 date marked in the brickwork in the apex of the gable



Plate 11: Original timber posts on stone plinths to cow sheds



Plate 12: Front elevation of stable block with 'hit and miss' ventilator windows



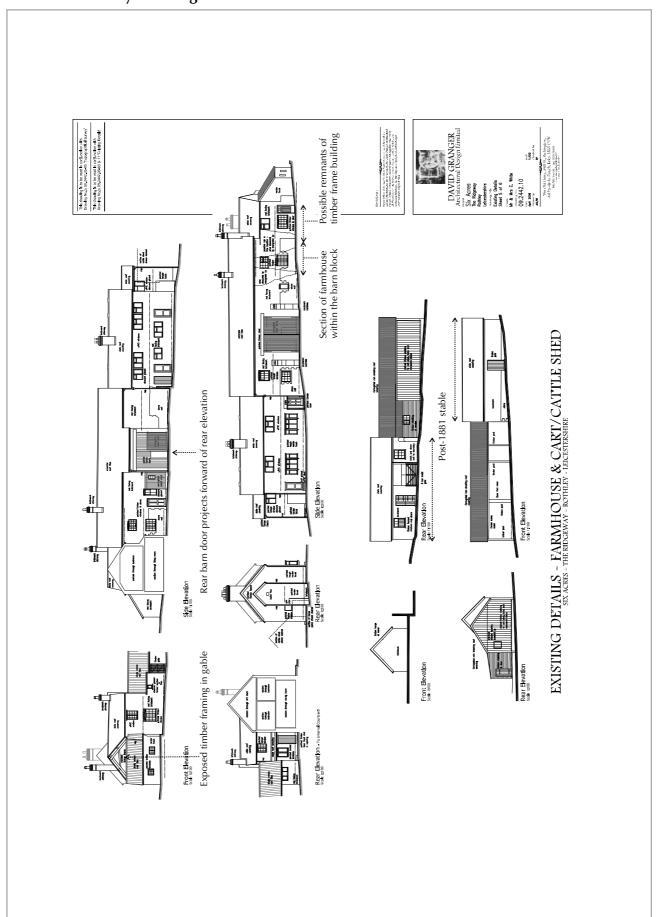
Plate 13: Internal view of stock pens

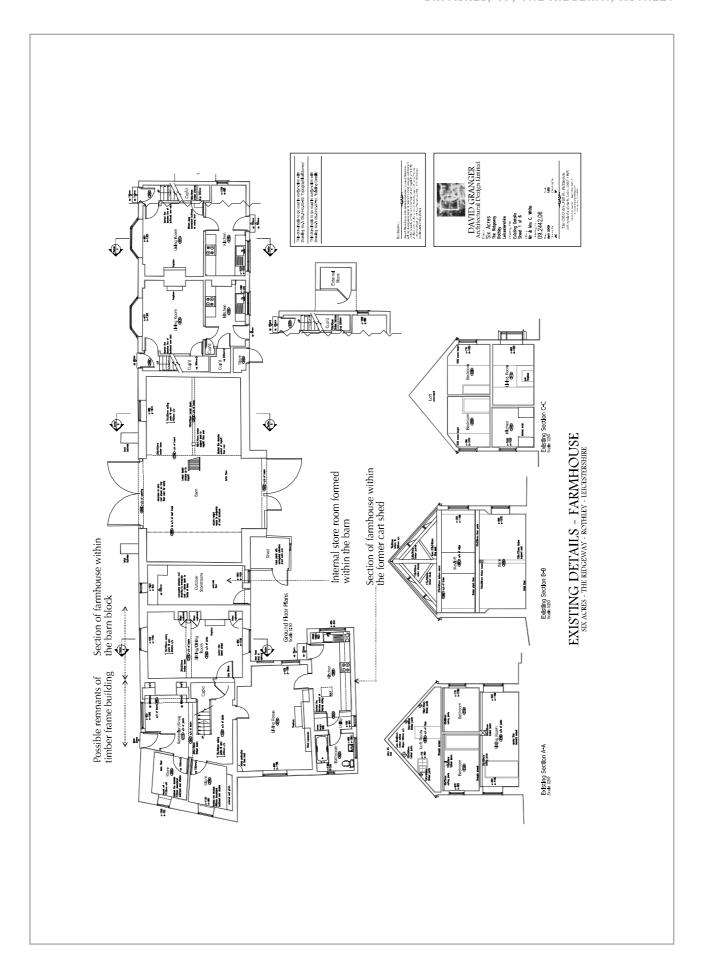


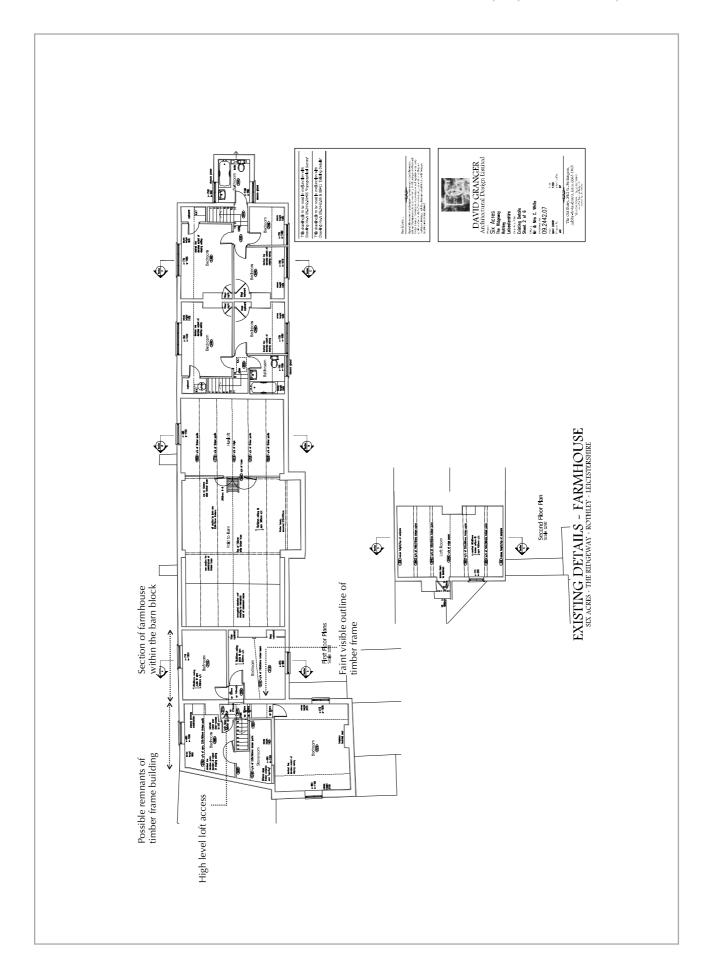
Plate 14: Internal view of cow sheds with modern concrete fittings

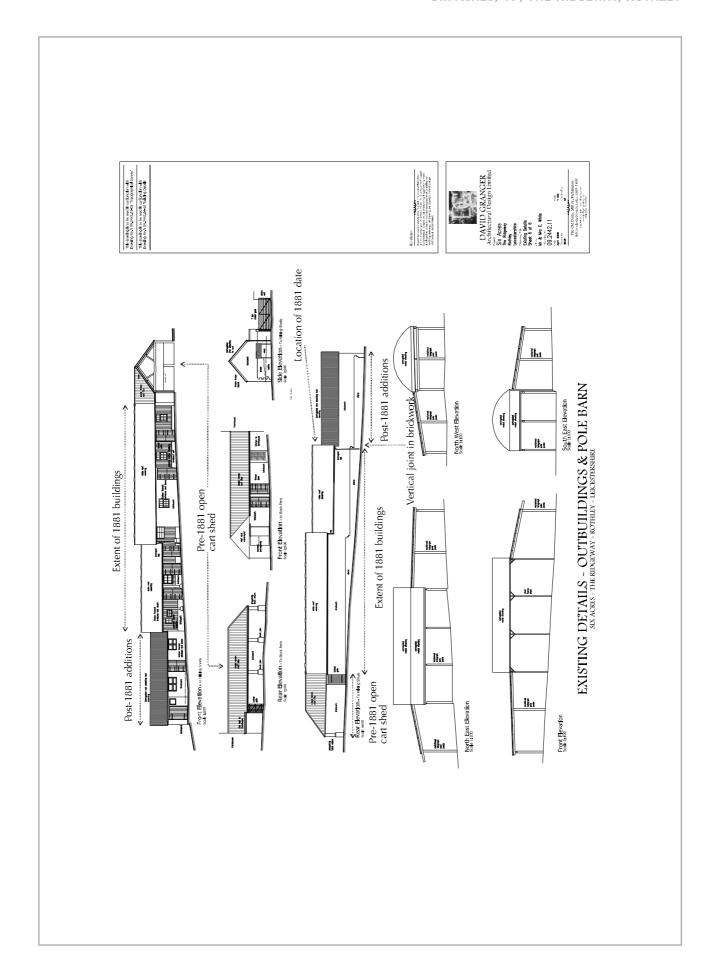
Plate 15: Internal view of stable block

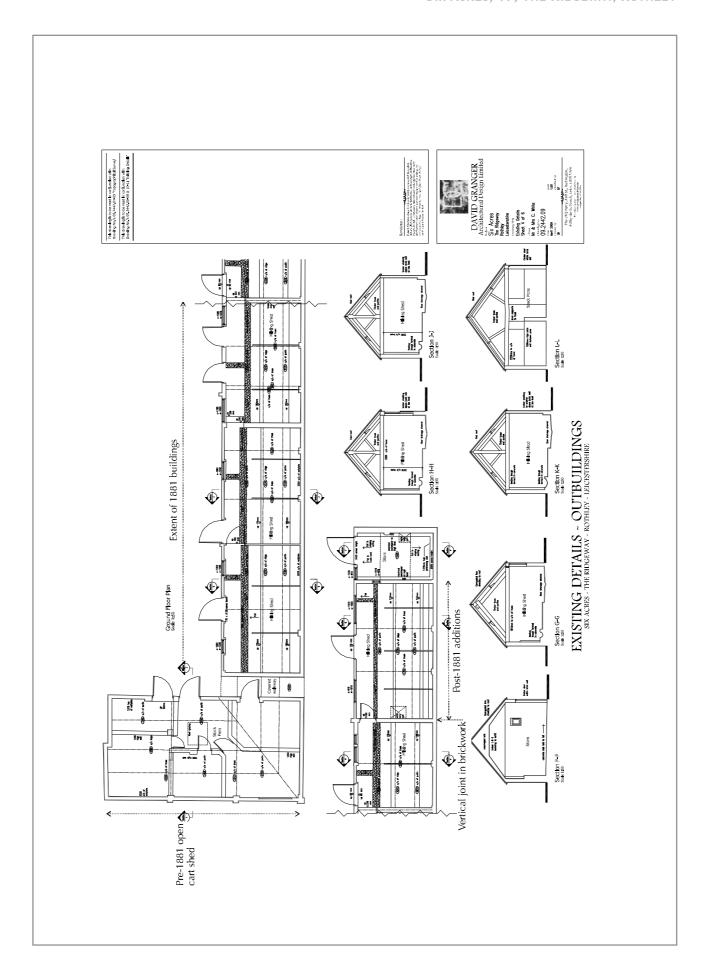
Architect's Survey Drawings

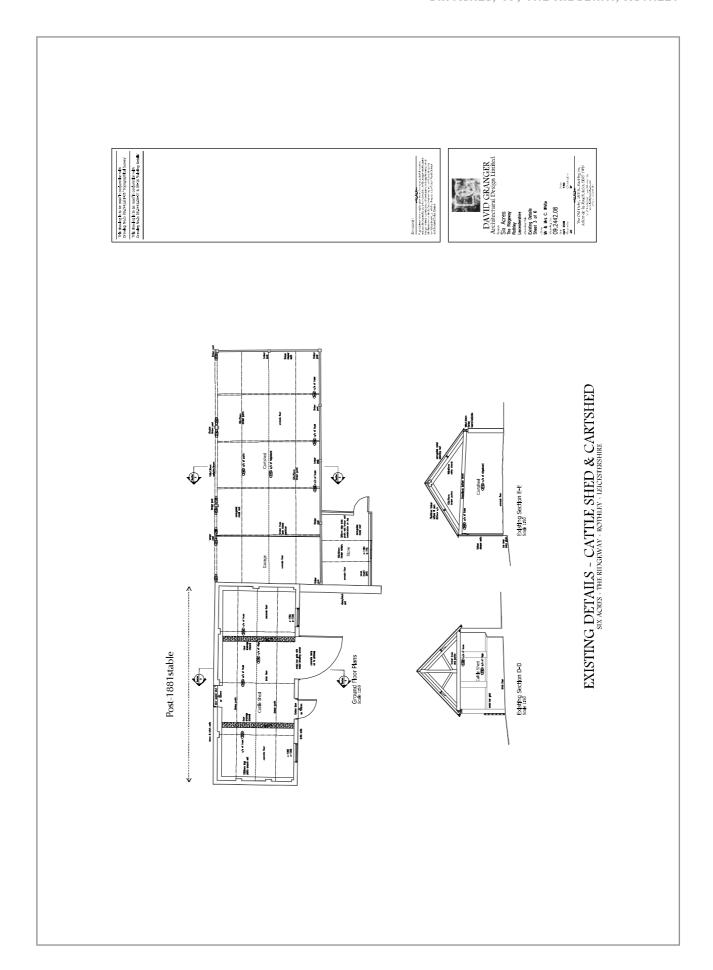












Contact Sheet of all Digital Images

Index of Digital Images Submitted to Archive

Description of Project: Historic Buildings Record - Level 2 Survey **Accession No.:**

Site Address: Six Acres, 17, The Ridgeway, Rothley

Date: 27 August 2009

Digital File Name (Pict MRW.)	Plate Nos. in Report	Description	Direction Of Shot
01	2	North facing elevation of farmhouse, showing two storey extension at right angles to timber frame cell and pantile roofed lean-to extension	SE
02	8	West facing elevation of the stock shed range	SE
03		West facing elevation of the stock shed range	NW
04		View into the central farmyard	N
05		Rear elevation of the stable block	SW
06		East facing elevation with the cottages adjacent to the barn	NW
07		East facing elevation of the barn and farmhouse	NW
08	6	East elevation of the threshing barn	SW
09	1	East facing elevation with farmhouse to the right of the threshing barn and cottages to the left	SW
10	5	Surviving vertical sliding sash windows and timber ledged and braced front door	SW
11	7	Rear elevation of the farmhouse and barn into the internal farmyard	NNE
12	11	Original timber posts on stone plinths to cow sheds	SW
13	9	Internal farmyard elevation of the cow sheds	NE
14	12	Front elevation of stable block with 'hit and miss' ventilator windows	NE
15		Internal farmyard elevation of the cow sheds	NNE
16	10	'1881' date marked in the brickwork in the apex of the gable	WSW
17		Internal view of cow sheds with modern concrete fittings	S

Index of Digital Images Submitted to Archive

Description of Project: Historic Buildings Record - Level 2 Survey **Accession No.:**

Site Address: Six Acres, 17, The Ridgeway, Rothley

Date: 27 August 2009

Digital File Name (Pict MRW.)	Plate Nos. in Report	Description	Direction Of Shot
18	14	Internal view of cow sheds with modern concrete fittings	E
19		Internal view along the length of the cowsheds	SE
20	15	Internal view of the stable block	SE
21		Internal view of stock pens	NE
22	13	Internal view of stock pens	SW
23		View of the Inglenook fireplace	E
24	3	Internal view of the entrance hall	NE
25		Dining room with surviving four panel door	SW
26		View of the staircase in the hall	WNW
27		View of the fireplace in the living room	SW
28	4	Exposed gypsum plaster floors in the rear bedroom and faint outline of a timber frame within the rear wall	WNW
29		Internal view of barn showing king post truss and internal mono-pitch roof	NW



