

THE STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUTBUILDINGS

at

RUSH MANOR

WALLINGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE



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for

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

June 2006

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Introduction

This report records the appearance and structural development of historic outbuildings in the curtilage of Rush Manor, Wallingford, a Grade II listed building. It was commissioned as an adjunct to a planning application for alterations to and partial demolition of the buildings. The drawings used as a basis for the survey (Figs 2-8) are those supplied by the architects, Peter Fisk Associates. The measured survey of the bin partition was carried out by the author.

Rush Manor lies east of the road from Wallingford to Shillingford on a low-lying site close to the Thames. The extended house occupies the western side of a large courtyard garden with detached outbuildings forming the other three sides of the enclosure (Fig 2). The mill house, one of the survey buildings, lies on the north side with a modern carport and bungalow to the east, and the other buildings, two stable ranges separated by a length of walling, occupy the south-eastern corner of the courtyard. The buildings are not on a true north-south alignment but for ease of description are treated as if they were.

History

Rush Manor occupies a medieval moated site whose outline can be seen on 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey maps of 1877 and 1898 (Fig 1). The earliest features in the existing, much altered house are thought to date to the late 17th century and there is a cross-wing with a date-stone of 1796. The descent of the manor, which changed hands frequently, is described by the VCH (1923, 547-9). In 1675 the manor was sold to Henry Barker and remained in his family for nearly 150 years. It was purchased after 1813 by Charles Greenwood, sold in 1886 by his nephew to Charles Fuller and again in 1900 to George Denison Faber. Charles Fuller built a new house, Moat House on higher ground and the old manor house was converted into cottages. In 1949 the building became an old peoples' home and subsequent planning applications are documented in McCoy 2006. The outbuildings which are the subject of this report are shown on both the 19th century Ordnance Survey maps (Fig 1).

Description

Mill house (Figs 3-6)

Exterior - This is a two-cell building on the northern side of the courtyard which backs onto an arm of the moat; a modern carport and bungalow range is butted against its east end. The western half of the principal south elevation is built of thin bricks (60mm) in Flemish bond with random vitrified headers; it has an offset plinth and a two-light ground floor window with a segmentally-arched head. The eastern half is taken up by double garage doors with tongue and groove boarding above and an eaves level gabled dormer; this has a (modern) clock and a former window infilled by a modern board with four pigeon-hole cut-outs. The roof is tiled. The lower part of the east end wall is brick and the upper weatherboarded. The gabled west wall is brick throughout without a plinth; there is a door at the south end, a high level window and overhanging eaves. The bricks are larger than those on the south elevation. The rear north elevation backs onto the moat and has a brick raking buttress on the north-west corner. A straight joint at the mid point indicates that the building has two distinct construction phases with the western half being the earlier. A large modern ground floor window has been inserted into this end; there is a blocked door in the eastern half.

Interior – The ground floor of the western unit is used as a workshop and has a modern door knocked through to the east end. It has a concrete floor, a large elm ceiling beam close to the west wall and exposed ceiling joists; in the southern half of the room these are modern replacements. There is a closed string wooden stair to the first floor which is open to the roof with limewashed brick walls and one free-standing roof truss close to the west end. The principals have curved feet, which rise from the tie beam at floor level to a high collar; there are two tiers of purlins, the upper clasped by the collar. Its position close to the west end and the differences in the construction of the west wall indicate that the building has been reduced in length and externally there are indications of its former footprint in the grass. Set against the brick east wall which was originally the end of the building there is an open framework, comprising an eaves-level tie beam and collar linked by queen posts with side rails. In the centre, set in the brickwork there is a high level window with a pegged frame divided into five-lights by diagonal wooden mullions. In the gable there is a row of four rectangular openings which are probably pigeon holes.

The ground floor of the eastern unit is used as a garage and has a lower floor level; the west partition wall which was formerly external to the earlier unit continues the offset plinth. There is the outline of a knocked-through door replaced by a modern opening and a second blocked door in the north wall; the ceiling beams and joists are exposed. The double doors are probably early 20th century and the opening in the front wall has been widened as there is the scar of a return jamb at the south-east corner.

The upper chamber is reached by a branch of the main stair. The north and east walls and formerly the roof slopes were plastered; there is a blocked window in the east wall and the south wall is boarded. It has a common rafter roof with two tiers of purlins and a similar frame against the east wall; all the timbers are more roughly-formed than the roof to the west and there are a number of pole rafters.

Partition - The room has a boarded floor, formerly divided into a central walk-way with paired bins to either side. The outlines remain as scars in the floor and the partition on the north side survives (Fig 5). It is formed of six tiers of lapped elm boarding, reinforced at the base and with a sloped top-rail; this is nailed to a rafter at the north end. The boards are nailed to six uprights on the reverse (east) side. The end post is tenoned into the floor and retains two truncated horizontal boards at right angles to the partition which once formed the front of the bin; the top rail to this section is also truncated.

Stables (Figs 7-9)

The stables occupy the south-east corner of the courtyard and form two distinct units separated by a brick boundary wall; one is on the eastern side of the yard and the other longer range on the southern side.

East stable – this is a single-storeyed building of five bays with a brick rear wall and a low-pitched slated roof, hipped at the north end. It forms one end of a longer building which utilises the boundary wall to the south and is now divided between two properties; the roof is continuous. The north and west elevations are weatherboarded on a studwork frame above a brick plinth. This is all infilling around a structure which was originally open on two sides, with the roof carried by wooden posts set on tapered

padstones; there are five, including the corner post, on the west elevation and one on the north. The cladding incorporates four doors on the west side to stables and store-rooms; the stable doors are of heavy boarded type dating to the late 19th or early 20th century, and a mixed collection of windows.

Internally the structure is clearest in the two-bay room at the north end where the curved three-way braces to the original posts are visible. These carry the wall plates and are integrated with the roof trusses which are of strutted king post type with a single tier of purlins lodged on applied brackets; the wood is evenly sawn pine. The remaining three bays are subdivided in part by modern partitions and in part by stable boarding; at the end of the range is a tack room with a brick south wall.

South stable – this is nine bays long, narrower and somewhat lower than the east stable but similar in construction with a low-pitched slate roof and weatherboarded elevations above a brick basal plinth. It also originated as an open-fronted shed with posts on tapered padstones and the two bays at the south-east end remain open. The posts have straight braces of machine-sawn pine and the roof trusses are of queen-post type with purlins clasped above the collar and a plated apex with a ridge board. The rear wall is brick; it has been pushed inwards by a high external ground level and has been buttressed. The south-east end bay is trapezoidal, open to both north and east and detached from the adjoining brick wall. The three bays to the west form part of the same space, one remains open-fronted, the other two are now closed, each with a small window. Beyond this are four stables, each with a split door and a small window, divided internally by boarded partitions to tie beam level; boards also line the outer walls.

Structural development

All the surviving historic outbuildings predate the 1877 Ordnance Survey map which shows the three sides of the courtyard almost completely built up and the house to the west still separated by one arm of the moat.

Mill house (Fig 3)

A The western unit is the oldest part of this building; the internal partition wall was originally external and formed the east end of a building which originally

extended westwards for at least one more bay. The former extent of the range is shown on both 19th century Ordnance Survey maps and is indicated by the position of the surviving open truss, too close to the present west wall; it has a cranked form to create unimpeded headroom on the upper floor. Milling activities must have been carried out in the demolished part of the building and the surviving section has no special features to indicate how it was used. Construction details such as the thin handmade bricks, the roof structure and the mullioned east window suggest a date in the late 17th or early 18th century.

B The east end of the building is an addition, also two storied, of late 18th or early 19th century date. The upper room was divided up for grain storage into bins with boarded divisions, one of which survives. This is not necessarily original to the build but appears to be no later than the mid 19th century. By 1877 a further range of buildings had been added to the east, on the site of their modern replacements, blocking the east window to the upper room.

C After 1898 the west end of the mill house was demolished and the present gable wall built. The existing double doors were added to the eastern extension, enlarging an earlier opening and the dormer added to the roof. These alterations are contemporary with the conversion of the other outbuildings into stables and are early 20th century in appearance, probably carried out after the sale of the manor to George Denison Faber in 1900. There is a modern ground floor window in the north wall of the western unit and other minor alterations.

Stables (Figs 7, 8)

A These both originated as open-sided sheds built against brick rear walls, with the roofs supported on braced posts. The east stable appears to be the earlier; it has more finely detailed curved braces and a king post roof and probably dates to the first half of the 19th century. The roof of the south stable is formed more functionally of machine-sawn timber and probably dates to the second half of the 19th century; it appears to have been built before 1877 unless it was a replacement for an earlier structure in the same position. The rear wall was probably a pre-existing boundary wall.

B Both buildings were converted into stables by infilling the open structures with weatherboarding on a brick plinth and subdividing the interiors below the trusses with boarded partitions. This probably took place in the early 20th century as part of a general renovation of the outbuildings.

References

VCH 1923, *Victoria History of the counties of England: Berkshire*, **3**

McCoy, D F, March 2006 *Rush Manor Wallingford: comments on proposals for alterations*

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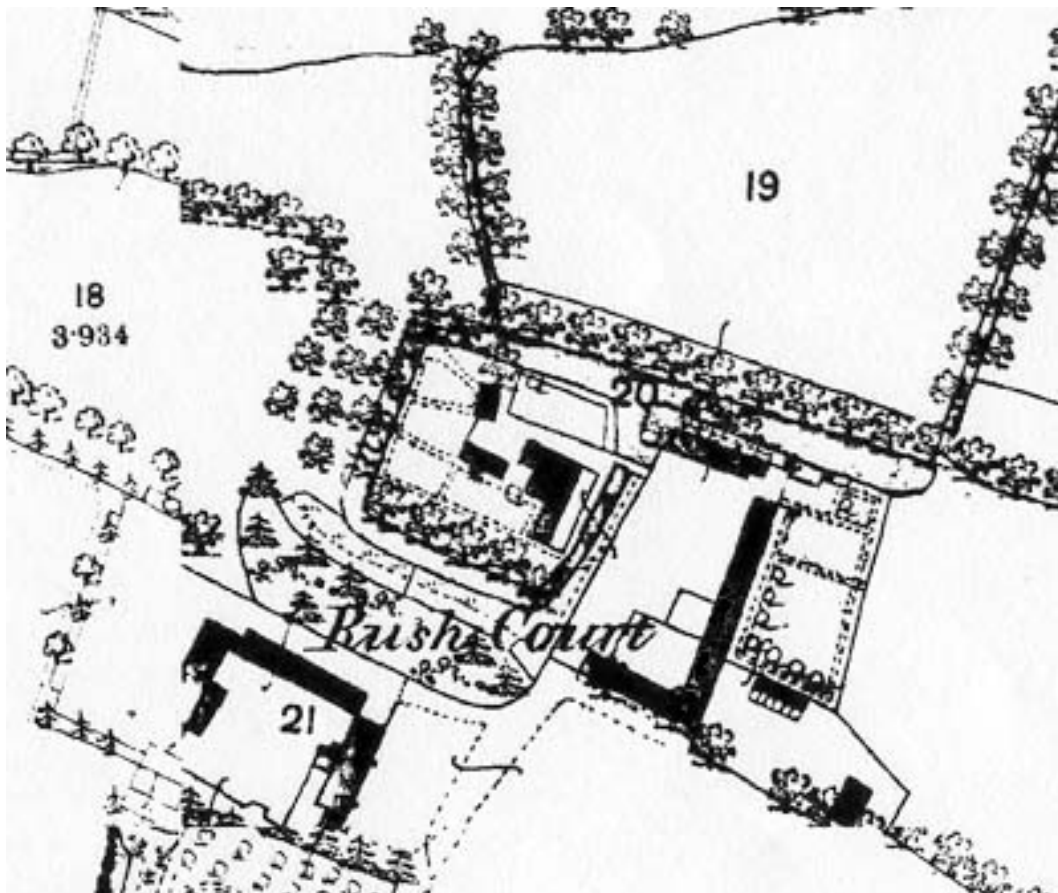
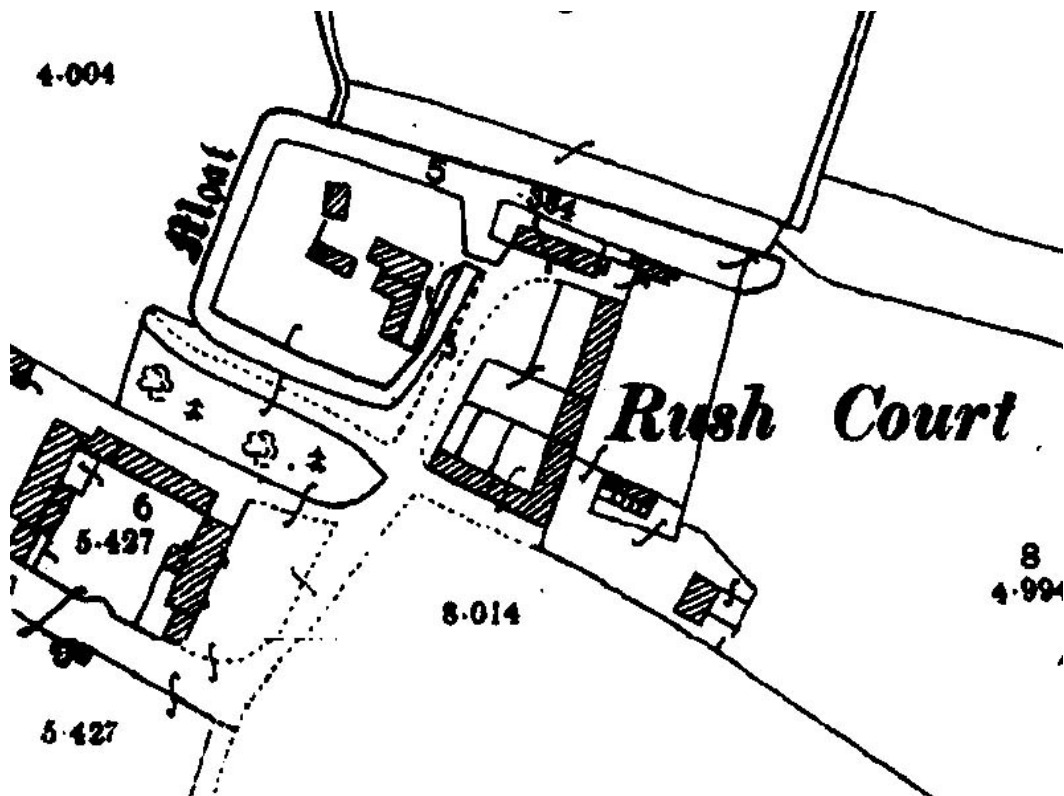


Fig 1
Ordnance Survey map, 1877

Ordnance Survey map, 1898



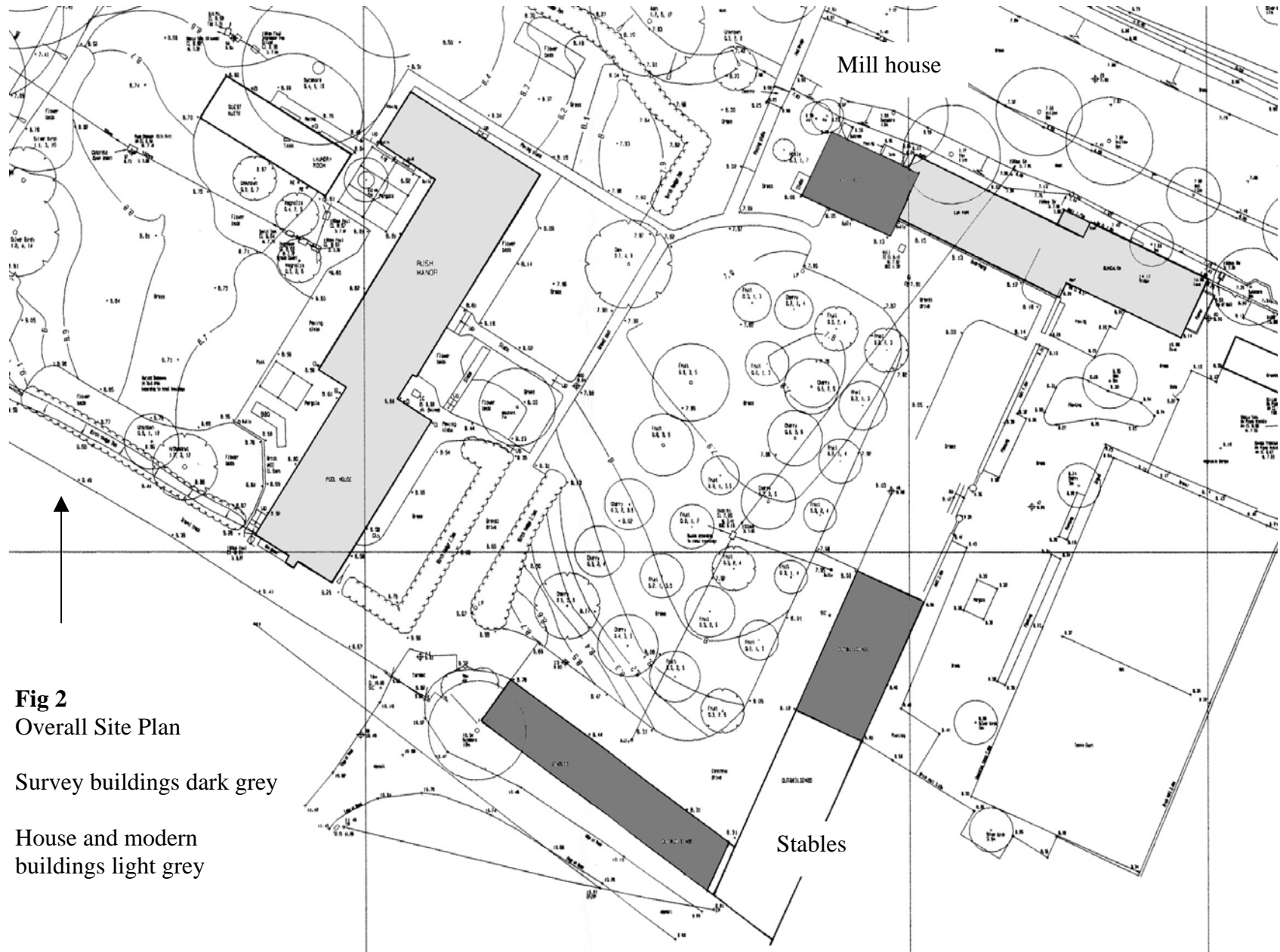


Fig 2
Overall Site Plan

Survey buildings dark grey

House and modern
buildings light grey

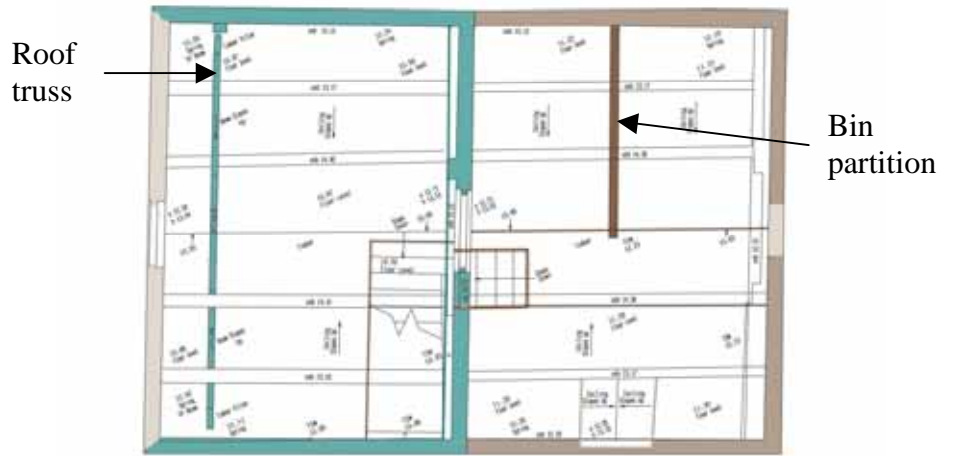
Fig 3

Mill house

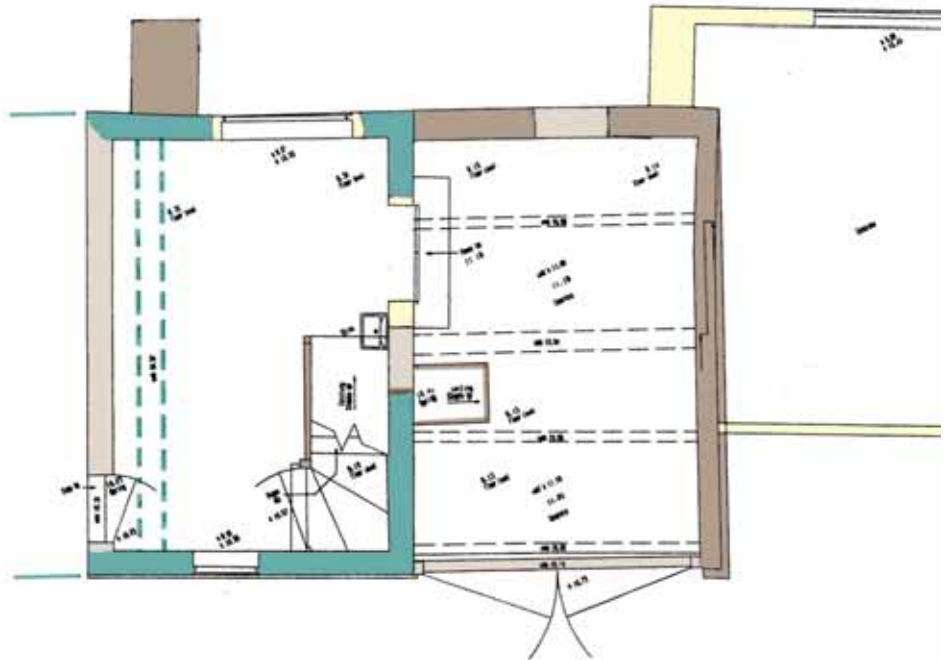
First floor plan

Ground floor plan

W-E section



Original building truncated



Green
Brown
Buff
Yellow

late 17th/early 18th cent
late 18th/early 19th cent
early 20th cent
modern

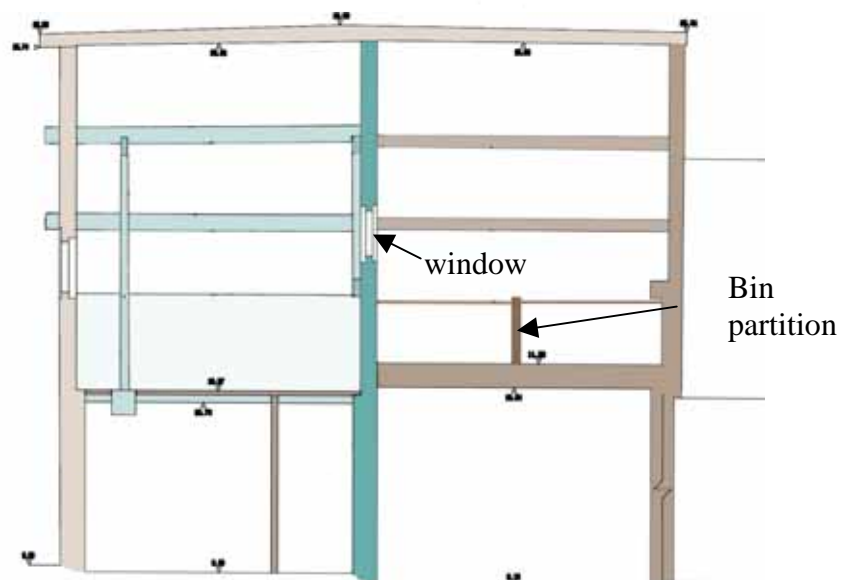




Fig 4 Mill house
(clockwise)
External view from south-west

East end, ground floor,
showing first floor structure
and underside of stairs

North side of roof truss at west
end of buildings

Brick partition wall showing
window



Fig 5 Mill house

Bin partition in east first floor room

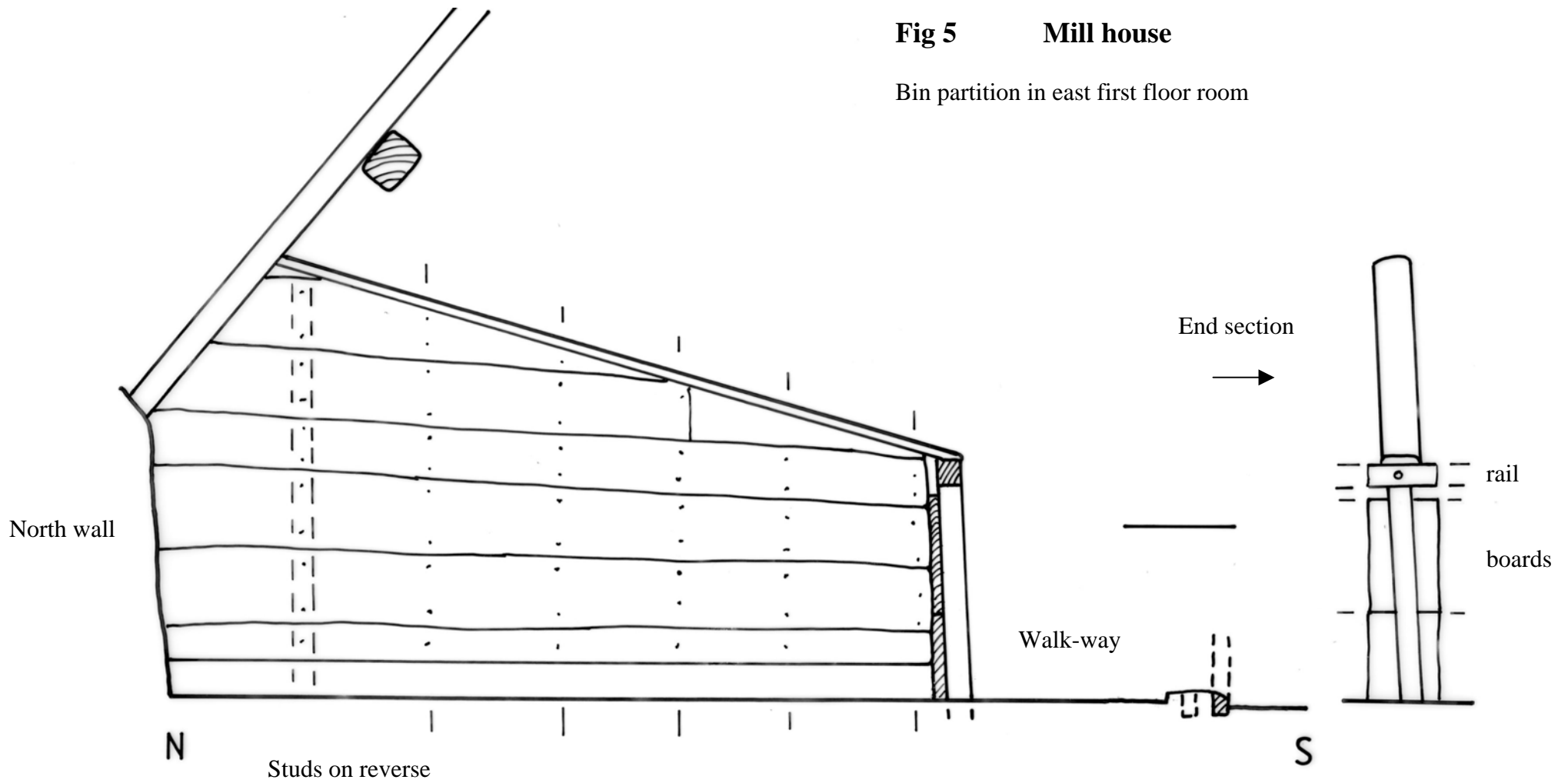


Fig 6
Mill house

Bin partition, east room
first floor -

From the south-west
showing boarding

From the south

From the south-east
showing studs

From the south showing
end post and truncated
boarding



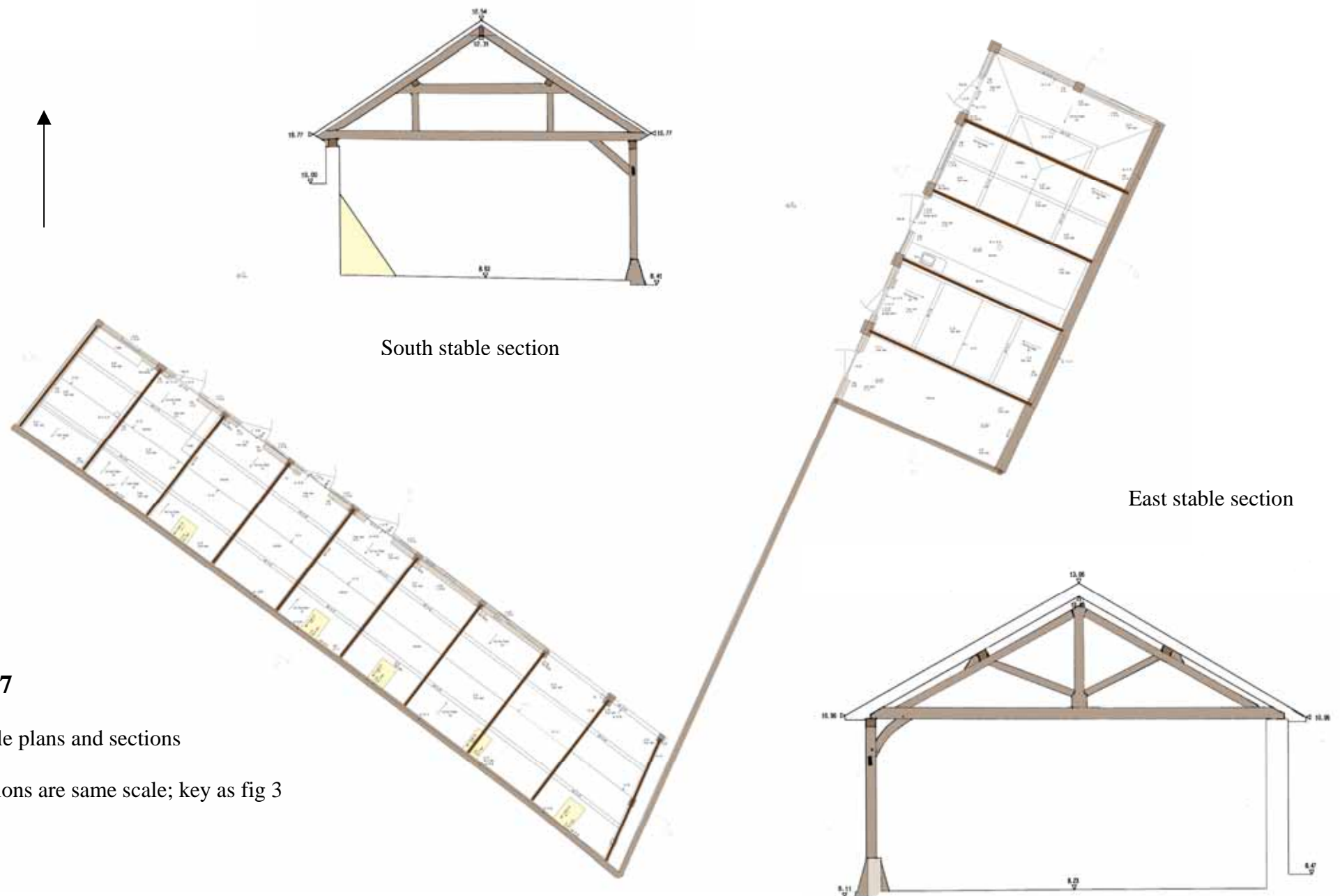


Fig 7

Stable plans and sections

Sections are same scale; key as fig 3



Fig 8 Stables
(clockwise)

East stable from the west

East stable elevation

East stable, north wall interior showing braced post

South stable elevation (for key see fig 3)

Roof to east stable





Fig 9 South stable
(clockwise from above)

- From the north-east
- From the north-west
- Central stable compartment
- East end looking west
- Stable compartment at west end
- East end looking east

