

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

BUILDING RECORDING
ON
THE SAW BARN, MANOR FARM,
CHURCH STREET, HAMPSTEAD NORREYS,
WEST BERKSHIRE
NGR SU 52944 76223

On behalf of

The Betts Family Partnership



JANUARY 2013

REPORT FOR The Betts Family Partnership
Manor Farm
Church Street
Hampstead Norreys
Thatcham
West Berkshire
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Saw Barn (Barn and Mill)

Manor Farm, Hampstead Norreys

Building Recording

SUMMARY

Building recording work was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services on the Saw Barn at Manor Barn Farm, Hampstead Norreys, Berkshire (NGR SU 52944 76223). The barn is a grade II listed building, starting off as an early 18th century aisled structure. In the 19th century the use of a fifth of the barn was altered, being converted for the purpose of mechanised milling. It is apparent from plans of 1877 that these alterations had been carried out by this date as new structures were added to the west and south of the building; what is not ascertained is if this was steam or horse driven. There is some interesting and important machinery remaining associated with the milling process, the date at which it was first erected is not confirmed, but it is possible that there are two phases of this as the material used for the construction of the sack hoist on the Bin Floor look rather ancient and are constructed almost entirely of wood and not iron or steel.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location (see figure 1)

The site is located in the medieval village and historic parish of Hampstead Norreys, which was located in the historic county of Berkshire, and is now located in the unitary authority of West Berkshire. The parish and manor were included in the historic Hundred of Faircross.

Topographically the village is located in the upper reaches of the River Pang, with the village extending on either bank, the main part of the village with the historic core (church and manor) lie on the southwest side of the river. The main road is Church Street. The Manor Farm (NGR SU 5298 7625) lies on the south side of Church Street; to the south and east of the Manor House and St Mary's church at an approximate height of 85-87m above Ordnance Datum is the building referred to here as the Saw Barn (NGR SU 52944 76223).

Geologically, the site is situated close to a boundary between Seaford Chalk Formation and Valley Bottom Head. A sand containing pieces of angular and sub angular flint and patches of clay were observed during the archaeological evaluation adjacent to the stables.

1.2 Commission

West Berkshire Council has granted planning permission (08/01099/FULEXT) for conversion of existing buildings to B1 Office Space, 6 No Self Catering Units and 1 No Dwelling; erection of new buildings of single and 2 storey to accommodate B1 Office Space and 2 No Self Catering Units; demolition and rebuild of Rex's Shed; and demolition of the extension to stables. Conditions 9 and 23 attached to the permission require the implementation of a programme of building recording in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. The condition has been discharged under planning number (10/00507/COND2), although reports on further buildings are still due (including the Saw Barn). John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) has been appointed by Manor Farm Partnership to carry out the historic building recording. A written scheme of investigation for building recording was also submitted and agreed in connection with planning application 12/01715/FULD – Conversion of existing agricultural building to 1 no. residential dwelling (amendments in design to the existing permitted conversion under planning permission 08/01099/FULDEXT).

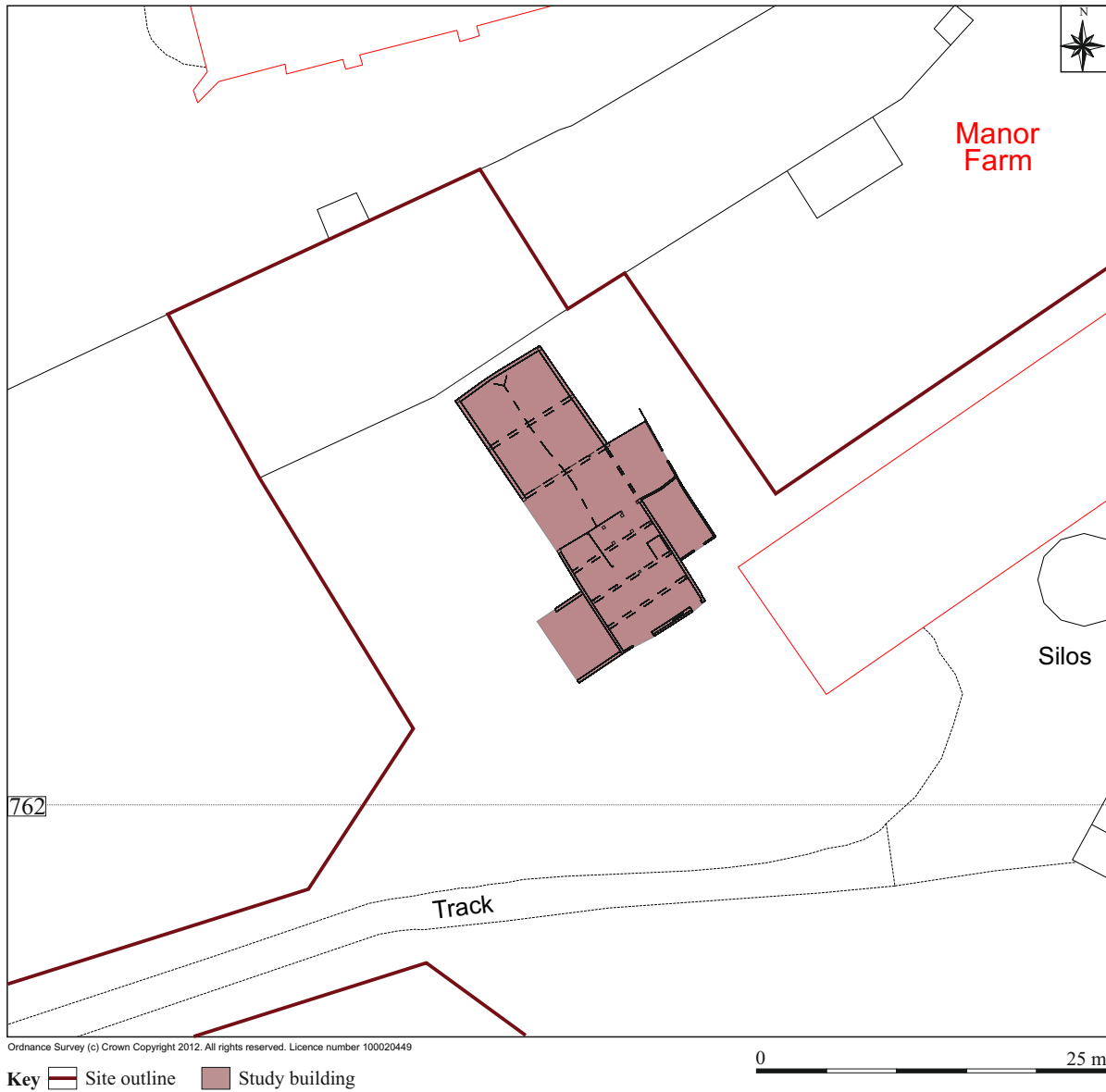
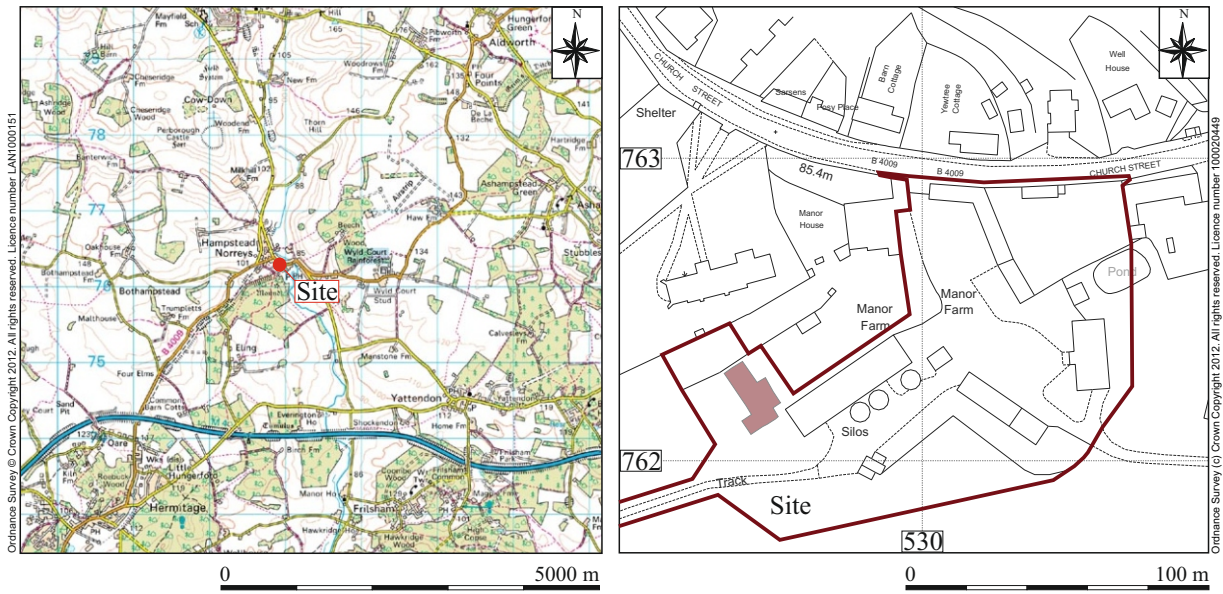


Figure 1. Site location

The Archaeological Officer (Duncan Coe) for West Berkshire Council outlined the reasons for, and the extent of, the work required in a memorandum dated 18 June 2008 to the Planning Officer (Debra Hammond). The work was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording issued in September 2008.

The report is a record on a heritage asset that will be altered as a result of conversion and has been undertaken to ensure that an adequate record is made of this farm building for architectural, historic and general interest.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Designations

The village of Hampstead Norreys has had a conservation area status from 1982, which aims to preserve the character of the village. A number of the nearby buildings and structures in the village have been listed including the following: Saint Mary's church a Grade I listed building (NHLE 1135735: SU 52932 76260), a cross base in the churchyard (EHID 39931: SU 52927 76278), and Lowsley Tomb a grade II* structure (NHLE 1117158: SU 52936 76246), the Manor House along with gate piers and railings (NHLE 1135746: SU 52985 76279), the Great Barn (NHLE 1319578), a further barn at Manor Farm (NHLE 1135751: SU 53056 76235), the granary at Manor Farm (NHLE 1117160: SU 53005 76234).

In the complex of farm buildings at Manor Farm, Rex's Shed (Rodwell 2008) and an L-shaped stable block (Yeates 2011) are not individually listed but fall within the curtilage of the Listed Manor House. It is proposed to redevelop the whole complex for a mixture of residential and office use, retaining and restoring the other buildings but replacing Rex's Shed with a new structure (not yet demolished).

The building that is the subject of this particular report is a grade II listed structure named as 'Barn and mill at Manor Farm located approximately 44 metres south west of Manor House' (NHLE 1117161: SU 52944 76223). The listing description is as follows.

"Barn and corn mill. Early C18, mill C19. Timber framed, weatherboarded, old tile half-hipped roof. 5 framed bays, the 2 on the south east floored to form the mill, which contains original machinery. Double queen post roof, jowled posts, double clasped purlin; carpenters marks in correct sequence."

In this report the barn and mill is referred to as the Saw Barn.

2.2 History of Development

The development site lies within the historic core of the village of Hampstead Norreys. Evidence from around the village, including pottery from a site opposite the Manor Farm complex, suggests Romano-British activity in the area. This indicates but does not categorically prove the possibility of settlement continuity within the village for up to 2000 years.

The settlement has a long recorded history, being first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 (VCH 1924, 73-81; Morgan 1979, 63.2). Here it is accounted that in 1066 Lank held the manor from King Edward the Confessor. The manor after the conquest passed to Theodoric the Goldsmith and was accounted for 6 hides but had previously had 17. The account records 13 villagers, 9 smallholders, 8 slaves, along with 4 acres of meadow, and woodland for 40 pigs.

The name *Hanstede*, recorded in 1086, is derived from the Old English *hāmstede* which has an etymology of homestead (Gelling 1973, i. 249-50). It is thus symbolic of Hampstead Norreys origins as a small settlement of a secondary status.

The over lordship of Hampstead Norreys manor remained for much of the medieval period with the crown (VCH 1924, 73-81). In 1166-7 William de Sirfrewarst held the manor, but in 1194 the land had been seized in a default in a suit against Pientia widow of William de Cauz. The manor was granted to the de Clares in 1269-70 and they exchanged the manor in 1276 with Robert de

Muscegos. In 1304-5 the manor descended to John Ferrers and in 1315-6 John de Bures held the manor. The manor was subsequently under the descent of the barony of Ferrers of Chartley. John Norreys bought the manor in 1448-50, which passed to the Gallinis after 1766. There were a series of exchanges of ownership from 1834 to 1860 when the manor eventually came into the hands of Lord Overstone.

The neighbouring church is recorded in 1086 with ½ hide of land (VCH 1924, 73-81; Morgan 1979, 63.2). The rectory and advowson in the medieval period was granted to the priory of Goring.

The Manor Farm complex itself lying adjacent to the medieval parish church would have been an important component of the medieval settlement, forming the social, religious and administrative heart of the village. The survival of the 16th century components in the Manor House and the Great Barn represent a good indication of the historic and archaeological potential of the site.

Rocque's map of 1761 (figure 5) shows the village of Hampstead Norreys with the church and a square building to the northeast of the church (Manor). The great threshing barn of the 16th century is shown to the south of the church, while adjacent to this to the east there is a large building shown with two wings. It was suggested in an earlier report (Yeates 2011) that part of this structure may survive in the stable block. The Saw Barn as it is indicated in this report (Barn and Mill by English Heritages listing) is not shown on this map, but this is no indication that it did not exist.

The four 1:2,500 maps of the Ordnance Survey series were consulted and appear to be ambiguous in some respects. The first series map of 1877 shows a long building orientated from northwest to southeast with a step on the southeast corner (figure 6). This is ambiguous in that it appears to show the east aisle (which is now partial); extending along the full length of the building. There is an enclosure (or possible building extension) on the east side at the northeast corner. There is also a building extension on the south side of the building.

The second series Ordnance Survey map dated to 1899 shows the similar main outline, with what can only be described as a near full aisle on the east side of the building. There is an enclosure or structure on the north side on the building and a further addition on the north side of that. The extension on the south side of the structure is still there, though the south-west-ward extension to this structure has now gone. In addition to this there are the remains of a further south-westward extension coming of the southwest end of the main barn.

The third series map of 1912 shows map shows the main outline of the barn (with almost full aisle), with a short lived central addition on the east side. The southwest addition at the south end of the west end is shown in outline, but has by this time lost its roof.

The 1974 map shows the basic outline of the barn and the remains of walls on the southwest corner of the building.

2.3 Saw Barn, Manor Farm, Hampstead Norreys

The Saw Barn lies within the farmyard of Manor Farm to the southwest of the farmhouse. The building has been dated on stylistic grounds to the 18th century. Map evidence would suggest that it is post 1761 (although antiquarian maps are notoriously problematic). The barn underwent considerable alterations internally in the 19th century.

3 DESCRIPTION OF SAW BARN AT MANOR FARM

3.1 Introduction and general description (see figures 2-4, plates 1-17)

The present structure is essentially a barn with an aisle or lean-to structure on the east side (although the barn is orientated close to a northwest-southeast alignment, for the purposes of this report its façades are described as north rather than northwest, east rather than northeast, etc.). The structure is a mixture of timber frame and weather board with brick additions. In some places the timber frame has been replaced with brick infill. The roof is steeply pitched and hipped and

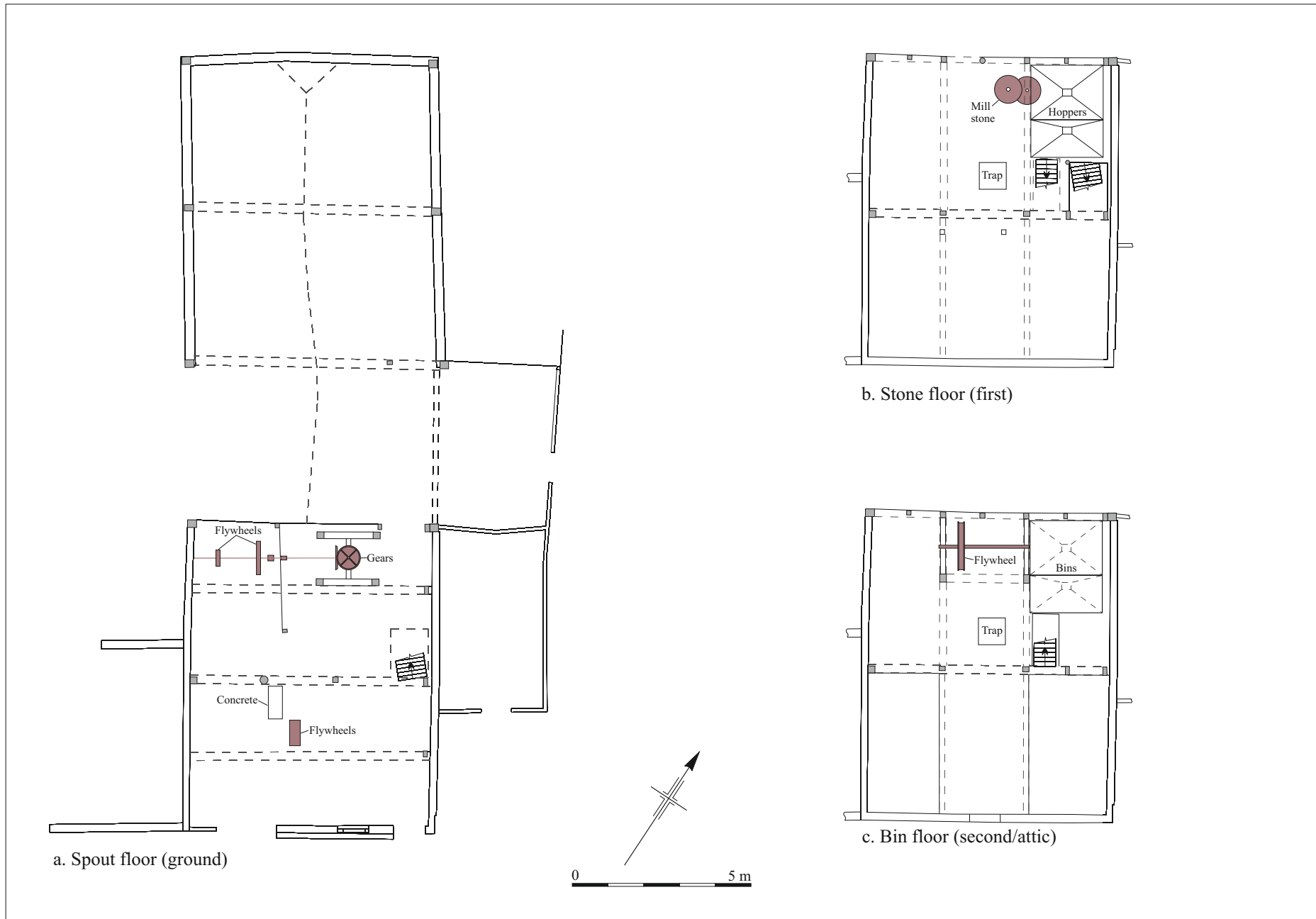


Figure 2. Floor plans of Saw Barn



Figure 3. North and south elevations and section of Saw Barn

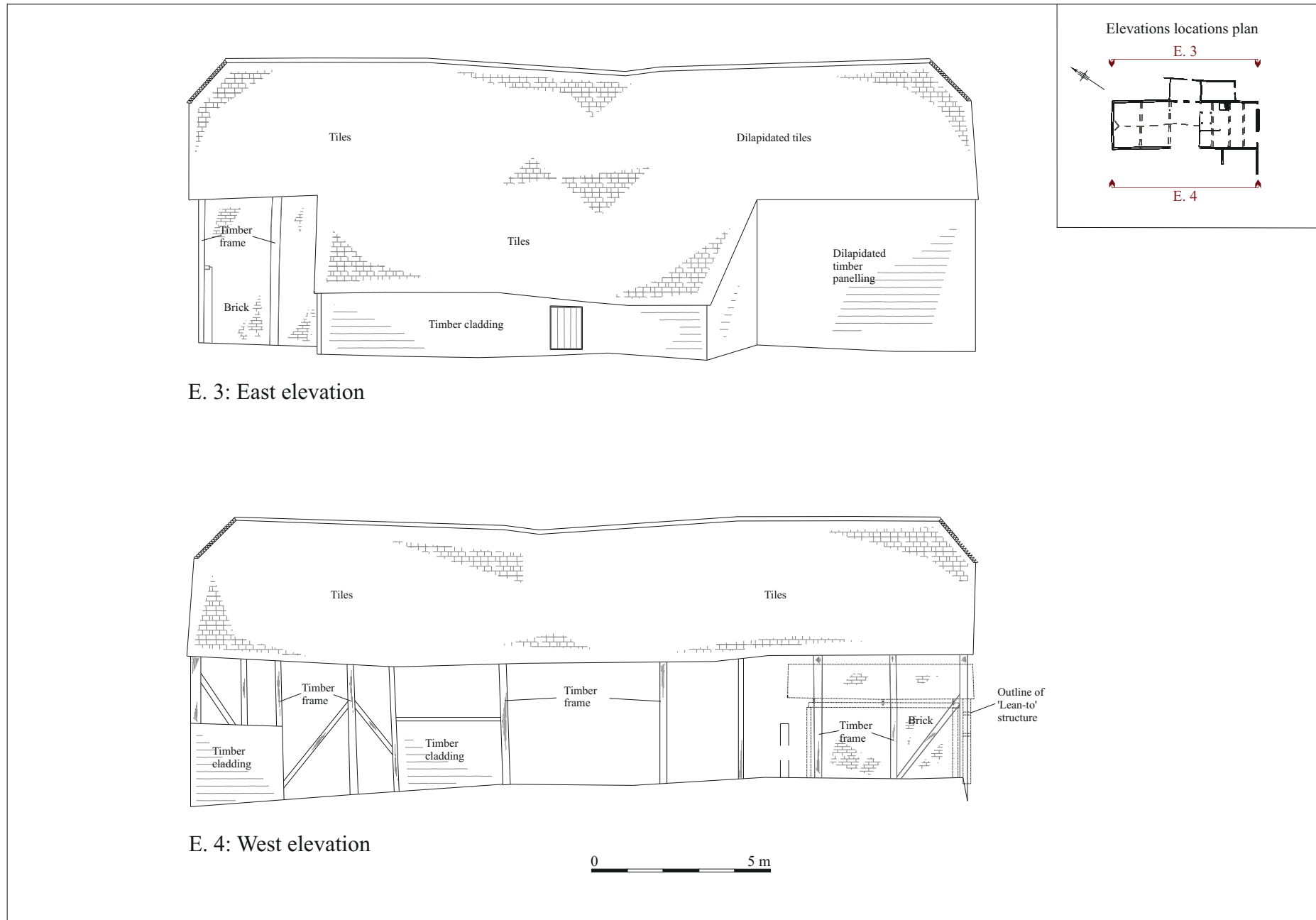


Figure 4. East and west elevations of Saw Barn

covered in clay peg tiles. In the 19th century two fifths of the building was converted to hold a mechanised mill. Here two floors were inserted into the barn thus creating a spout floor, a stone floor and a bin floor. Some of the mechanisms still survive. There are the remains of walling on the southwest side of the building.



Plate 1: The west and south façades

3.2 Saw Barn west façade

The west façade of the building is the main elevation; it contains a large central opening; the central one of five bays (Fig. 4, plate 1). This is the original barn opening. The wall to the north of that consists of a brick dwarf wall with a timber sill beam. There are the remains of two bays on this side. The main posts forming the box frame truss are braced in the side walls, with each panel having three upright stud posts, some of which cross the bracing timbers from the sill beams. This produces an Eastern English panelling tradition called vertical panelling. This wall would previously have been covered with weatherboarding, but most of this has now gone. On the south side there are a further two bays, which appear wider. A brick dwarf wall is evident here also, but the surviving timber frame has less surviving members. There are three beams supporting the truss and two middle stud beams. The wall (if it can still be called that) is in a bad state of repair, the wall plate is visible that supports the base of the frame for the roof over which is a red clay peg tile hipped roof.

On the south side of the building are the remains of two walls extending at right angles, which were originally part of a roofed side structure.

3.3 Saw Barn north façade

The north façade of the barn is a hipped gable end with a brick dwarf wall surmounted by a timber frame with external weatherboarding (Fig. 3, plate 2). The wall plates protrude under the eaves. On the left side of that façade it is apparent that timber framing and a section of weatherboarding continue thus indicating that the Ordnance Survey maps for 1877, 1899, 1912 and 1974 were correct in that the aisle or lean-to structure on the side did previously extend along practically the

whole length of the east side. It should be noted that the brick dwarf wall does not include this aisle extension.



Plate 2: North façade

3.4 Saw Barn east façade

The east façade of the saw barn consists of a number of different components (Fig. 4, plate 3), although from the evidence this is only a recent result. The northern two bays of the main building are now visible with the remains of a dwarf brick wall on which a sill beam is located. There are a number of timber uprights including the main posts in the trusses and a number of stud posts. The weatherboarding is particularly fragmentary here, but does continue under the wall plate and eaves.



Plate 3: East façade

The central section of the east elevation shows the side aisle with as a low timber framed wall with weatherboarding. The timber framing extended into the ground and it is for this reason that it is beginning to rot and then slump.

At the south end of the building it is apparent that the timber weatherboarding has been replaced. Here there is a brick dwarf wall supporting a sill beam. Above there is part of a timber box framing in the form of vertical panelling, with the trust posts and one stud post surviving.

The tiled roof is hipped and extends lower in the central area to cover the aisle or lean-to component. The roof continues at the same steep pitch. Slumping of the roof is evident on the northern three bays.



Plate 4: South façade

3.5 Saw Barn south façade

The south façade is a hipped gable end (Fig. 3, plate 4). It is predominantly constructed of brick in predominantly a Flemish bond fashion. The external truss posts survive but parts of their associated framework have gone. Inside each of the two truss posts at ground level are the remains of two doorways. The one on the east side is narrow with a plank door with wooden frame. On the west side there is a wider doorway with part of a plank door and wooden frame. Above this door is a poor attempt at a segmental arch decidedly lacking in its execution. Between the doors are the remains of a sill beam. Other surviving timber frame features include a brace between the sill beam and east post and three stud posts. There is a small part of the tie beam showing also. Below the hipped roof there are the remains of a mullioned timber window.

A brick wall constructed from 1877 to 1899 can be seen extending from the west side of the barn. There is a white plaster mark down the wall which is indicative of there being a wall previously butted up to this wall and a sign that structures did previously exist on the south side of the barn.



Plate 5: Interior north wall

3.6 Saw Barn interior

The interior of the Saw Barn falls into two distinct units. The northern three quarters of the barn or the three northern bays remain open as part of a barn (plates 5-7). The three bays contain the remains of four main trusses, supported by braces along the line of the sill beams. The upper part of the trusses contain a tie beam with a collar beam and queen struts, then there are interrupted collar beams and -princess struts. These timbers show signs of using timbers with chamfering and uncut timber faces. There are braces between the tie beams, which are sawn and have no chamfers, these undoubtedly later additions. Some of the trusses contain windbraces, to stabilise the purlins and principal rafters. The two northern bays were enclosed, with the dwarf brick wall, with sill beams, post beams, stud posts and braces. The surviving walls at the north end are of weatherboarding, those on the east and west have all but been lost. The central bay on the north side is open; on the south side the aperture has been blocked by what forms the remains of the south aisle or lean-to. On the south side of the middle bay the inside wall is formed mainly by wood planking, while the lower part has been replaced by corrugated sheeting. There is a door on the east side floor level and a planked door centrally corresponding to a floor layer in the other part of the barn.

There is no clear floor structure evident at present, but the floor level in the north two bays are lower. In the middle or central bay the ground level is raised, now with earth and cement blocks. The levels as they exist at present are indicative of the barn previously operating as a threshing barn when the two entrances would have been open and a threshing floor would have been set between the two.

The lean-to structure, blocking the east opening of the central bay (plate 8), has a series of main posts with stud posts, principal rafters and passing braces. The sill beam would have lain on the ground, in this component it has partially rotted. There is a small panel door. The southern part of the lean-to is a contained unit separated by wooden panelling not lapped weatherboarding. This adjoining part of the aisle has a similar method of construction and roofing. The wall that it is

butted up to is similar to the external wall adjacent and to the south, with a brick dwarf wall, a sill beam, some surviving post beams and stud posts, joined by a wall plate and in-filled with brick.



Plate 6: Queen and princess struts, interior barn



Plate 7: Interior of barn, north wall of mill



Plate 8: Interior of barn aisle



Plate 9: Mill gearing Spout Floor



Plate 10: Gearing mechanism Spout Floor



Plate 11: Machinery Spout Floor



Plate 12: Ladder stairs, Spout Floor



Plate 13: Stone Floor of the mill



Plate 14: Mill stones, Stone Floor



Plate 15: Queen and princess struts on Bin Floor



Plate 16: Fly-wheel on Bin Floor

The remaining two bays of the barn contain three floor levels associated with the introduction of a mechanised mill. The east wall is of brick with some timber framing (mentioned above in respect to the aisle or lean-to). The south wall is also of brick with some timber framing surviving. The west wall has a lower brick dwarf wall, there are the remains of post beams and stud posts, but the rest of the wall has gone. The north internal wall has a series of transverse beams associated with floor lines and stud posts onto which the wood planking is attached.

The ground floor ceiling or first floor is supported by five transverse beams, supported on a number of upright posts. There are joists between these. There is a wooden set of ladder stairs on the east side located centrally on the ground floor (Spout Floor), which enters the first floor through a trapdoor (plate 12). There is a further trapdoor located centrally. At the north side there are two compartments that contain part of the gear mechanism for turning the mill stone (see below, plates 9-10). In the central area there is a large block of concrete with bolts, and a piece of iron machinery (plate 11) that turned the belts that would have driven the gears to rotate the mill stone.

On the first floor (Stone Floor) the walls are on the same construction as below, though it should be noted that the tie beam on the south wall is fully visible internally. The floor-boarding of the first floor extends across the whole area. There is a pair of mill stones located in the central northern part of the floor (plate 13-14). The trapdoor from the steps up lies on the east side, there is a further trapdoor located centrally. This appears to be in line with another trapdoor in the ceiling above. Four further holes of an unknown purpose are evident in the floor (square cut not rotted). Also by the east wall are some wheat feeder funnels (hoppers) to provide the wheat for the mill. Adjacent to the steps up from the ground floor there is a further set of narrower ladder steps extending up to the third floor. The second floor (Bin Floor) is also supported by transverse beams (tie beams), with posts, but this time there are only three with the bay to the south of the central bay of the barn containing the floor. On the south side of this bay there are wooden troughs constructed above the grain feeders, and in the central part a large fly wheel (plate 16). In the southern bay there are two axial beams that support a walkway to the mullioned window inserted in the south wall (plate 17). The bin floor is located in the attic space (plate 15).



Plate 17: Window in south wall of Bin Floor

4 ASSESSMENT (FIGURE 3)

4.1 Date and Phasing

The building is not shown on the map of 1761, but it is only a small scale map with schematic representations of many buildings, and on stylistic grounds it is better to suggest that the barn originated in the early 18th century (as stated by English Heritage). Such styles found in this period are often continuations of what went on in the 17th century and thus it is possible that with the pitch of the roof and the chamfering and use of the beams that it could possibly be earlier, but there is no way of categorically demonstrating this without testing the timber. This Phase 1 structure would have consisted of a five bay unit with dropped floors either side of a threshing floor, which would have been a raised structure. The structure was originally aisleless. There are the remains of dwarf walls below the sill beams which may be original or perhaps later replacements. The brick sizes here are similar to those used in the other end of the barn to replace the timber weatherboarding.

Mechanical threshing engines were first introduced in the 18th century, but probably did not become widespread in England until the 19th century (Barnwell and Giles 1997: 156-157). Berkshire is considered to be a county in which there was a slow adaptation of mechanisation, which is generally considered to have occurred from c. 1840. It is apparent from the first edition Ordnance Survey map that the east lean-to had been built by 1877; this would in effect block the opening on the east side of the barn that was essential for air circulation for threshing. This map indicates therefore that the aisle was in existence by 1877 and therefore the use of the barn must have altered from threshing prior to this date (due to the blocked east door and its air flow implications). Phase 2 is thus being placed as mid 19th century (1840-77) and would include the construction of the aisle, the insertion of the three floors, and any milling machinery required at that time. An addition was noted on the 1877 map at the northeast side of the building. These walls can also be classed as part of the Phase 2 development. There is a further structure built at the south end of the building outside the double doors, this was probably a brick structure housing a steam engine that would have provided the energy to turn the gear mechanism.

Phase 3 should be dated 1877 to 1899 and saw the partial removal of the building at the south end of the building and the construction of a new brick structure to the west of the barn at the south end. This probably related to a change in the mechanism and gear settings and a new structure to hold a new engine. The threshing floor was removed at some time so that heavier vehicles could be used to bring the grain into the barn and get the grain up into the feeder locations.

4.2 Historic and Architectural Assessment

The barn is considered important in a national context because it is a listed building. The story of the barn, however, is of interest because it reflects a change in agricultural practices over a number of centuries. The process of threshing and having a threshing floor goes back to the time man first cultivated grain. The introduction of this process into a barn is at least medieval in date, although this barn is later. The barn, however, contains this ancient notion and tradition along with signs of mechanisation. The mill that was inserted in the south end of the barn is in some respects well preserved or rather has well preserved components. The fly wheel and axle on the bin floor looks decidedly old, being made of wood. The wheel on the bin floor is thought to be part of a Phase 2 of the building (when the first machinery is envisaged as being inserted). Because it did not or would not wear to the same extent as the other machinery on the lower floors as it was only associated with hoisting the wheat or corn sacks (marks of ropes can be seen around the axle), it was retained when other more intensively used grinding mechanisms evident below were probably replaced. The mill stones may also be a component of Phase 2 as may be the gearing although the driving machinery to which they were attached would presumably be younger (due to alterations on the plans of the building). In both of these phases it is envisaged that the purpose of the machinery was for milling corn, wheat, barley or oats. No records survive at Manor Farm (pers com William Betts) but it is believed that the site produced flour. The name Saw Barn arose because there was a piece of mechanised sawing equipment placed in the barn to which a tractor could be attached.

5 THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

The proposal, which has been passed, is to renovate the buildings and to turn them into buildings for commercial or residential use. The wheel cogs in the centre of the building will be retained and other milling equipment where practical also will be retained.

6 CONCLUSION

The building is a listed building of a grade II status, and probably has three definable phases, of which two are major. The building is at least of the early 18th century, although could be older (Phase 1). This saw the construction of an aisleless barn. The alterations in the 19th century (Phase 2) saw the introduction of the mechanisation of milling process. This included the insertion of the stone floor and bin floor, with the spout floor being adapted. The final mechanisation process may have had an initial phase and a later replacement phase. The fly-wheel in the roof looks decidedly older and possibly part of an earlier process (it is of wood and on a wooden axle), this is possibly part of the means of raising the corn sacks. There was a building, now gone, attached to the south side of the building in the mid 19th century which is part of the earliest phase of mechanisation (Phase 2). The gears and mechanisms in the lower part of the building are of iron and may well have been introduced in the period from 1877 to 1899 (Phase 3). One of the reasons for thinking that they are a replacement is that a new building was inserted on the west side presumably with this change, and the older building on the south partially removed.

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BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE / HISTORIC MAPS

D/D1 62/1 1842 Hampstead Norreys Tithe Award Apportionment and Map

Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 maps 1877 (first series), 1899 (second series), 1912 (third series), 1974

Stephen Yeates

John Moore Heritage Services,

11th January 2013



Figure 5: Rocque's map of 1761



Figure 6: OS map first series 1877