

A Historic Building Survey
of
REX'S SHED, MANOR FARM
HAMPSTEAD NORREYS

BERKSHIRE



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for
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A HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY OF REX'S SHED, MANOR FARM, HAMPSTEAD NORREYS, BERKSHIRE

Introduction

This report was commissioned by the Betts Family Partnership to assess the historic significance of Rex's Shed, one of a group of farm buildings at Manor Farm, Hampstead Norreys, Berkshire. Three barns and a granary are individually listed; Rex's shed and an L-shaped stable block 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. It is also proposed to demolish a derelict shed attached to the stable block. The drawings used as a basis for the survey were supplied by the architects, Spratley & Woodfield.

The farm buildings are informally grouped and the shed lies on the south-west side of a large open yard, backing onto fields. A roadway runs past its north-west end separating it from the listed granary and there is a large chestnut close to its south-west corner. The present layout of the farm buildings is unaltered from the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1912 (Fig 1) and their former functions are briefly described in an estate sale catalogue dated 19th September 1907 (NMR SC00043).

Description (Figs 2-6)

The building, currently used as a workshop and store, is single-storeyed and was originally open-fronted, facing north-east into the yard. This elevation and the north-west end are clad in 20th century weatherboarding with doors and windows at intervals and most of the roof is covered with corrugated asbestos, replacing thatch; the north-west end is hipped. The two bays at the south-east end are clad in more modern corrugated steel and the gable wall at this end is brick to eaves level with openwork ventilation slats framing a central loft door above. The rear south-west wall is cut into a bank and incorporates an outshot, giving it a low eaves height. The two bays at the south-east end are brick-built and the remainder is concrete blockwork on a brick base.

Internally it comprises an original unit of four bays and a two-bay extension at the south-east end, all roughly floored in concrete. There are three original trusses of pegged

construction built of mixed oak, elm and possibly chestnut. These have posts with jowled heads carrying substantial tie beams (one markedly waney), slighter principal rafters pegged at the apex, queen struts and straight collars clasping a single tier of purlins. The posts are morticed for wall plates which pass beneath the tie beams in normal assembly and have straight three-way braces. The upper, north-west faces have an inconsistent series of chisel-cut, carpenters' marks. The front posts sit on basal blocks which appear where visible to be replacements and are linked by original wall plates, now bowed. The rear posts sit on short brick piers and form an open arcade into an original south-west aisle. They are linked to the external wall by extant cill beams and have mortices for missing aisle ties. The wall plates, which are jointed adjacent to the trusses, have failed and are underbuilt with modern replacements. The rafters, c.11 per bay, are waney split quarter-trunks and largely original but the aisle rafters are replaced.

The north-west end wall is clad in plasterboard internally and it is not clear if the frame survives although a cill beam is partially visible. The original south-east end is now internal and consists of jowled corner posts linked by a wall plate which is morticed for five studs. The stubs of four remain; the fifth in the centre has been retained and is tenoned into a short length of cill beam set on a brick plinth. The framework of the hipped roof at this end survives in the loft space above.

The two bays at the south-west end are a more modern addition, also formerly open-fronted but with brick rear and end walls. There are two pairs of braced square posts carrying the wall plates, the end pair butted against the older structure and an inserted loft floor with a centre post supporting an axial ceiling beam. The loft has a machine-sawn common rafter roof with a single tier of purlins and a ridge board; this roof was formerly tiled.

Dating

In its original form Rex's shed was an open-fronted four-bay structure with a rear aisle. It was of timber-framed construction on a brick plinth and had a hipped thatched roof. The style of the framing provides little direct evidence for its date as in west Berkshire traditional building techniques continued in use with little discernible change over a long period of time into the mid 19th century (Barnwell & Giles 1997, 18). This is borne out by the three listed barns at Manor Farm which are assigned to the late 16th, 17th and early

18th centuries although they are all of the same basic construction. This is repeated in Rex's shed although the timbers are in general of poorer quality and slighter dimensions.

The open-fronted form indicates that it was built as a cart shed, a building type that became common in the region in the early - mid 19th century to house the increasing number of carts, wagons and other implements used in this largely arable area (Barnwell & Giles 1997, 38-41). It conforms to the norm in being detached, timber-framed with a rear aisle and facing north-east away from the sun and prevailing winds. The sum of evidence therefore suggests that the building dates to the early 19th century. The brick-built extension at the south-east end was added in the mid-late 19th century and was modified in the 20th century.

Assessment

- The cartshed is of minor historic interest and was not considered significant enough to be individually listed. There are a number of other buildings in the complex which were individually listed because they are architecturally of far greater significance.
- It is later than the other buildings in the complex and of poorer quality.
- It has been altered and extended so that little of the original fabric remains; represented only by three trusses, fragmentary end walls and some roof timbers. The outer cladding, rear wall and roof coverings are all replacements and there is a later extension at one end.
- The building is an average example of a well-understood type which is widespread in the region and there are a number of better preserved examples which are individually listed (Barnwell & Giles 1997, 38-41; IOE).
- The structural engineer's report concludes that the frame has been compromised by later alterations and has reached the end of its useful life. Improvement would not be possible without substantial reconstruction. Constraints are placed on repairs by the protected tree close to the south-west corner.
- A proposed new building of similar scale and size would continue to preserve the sense of enclosure on this side of the yard and if appropriately designed could enhance the yard and its wider setting.

Outbuilding south-east of stable (Fig 7)

This building is butted against the brick gable wall of the stable block and is in derelict condition. The western wall has a base of random brick and flint rubble with a studwork superstructure clad in boarding; there is a wide central doorway. The other walls are brick also with a studwork superstructure and there are feeding troughs along the eastern side. The shallow-pitched roof is formed of pairs of machine-sawn common rafters with alternate collar ties and a ridge board. A number of secondary ties have been inserted but the structure has collapsed. It is roofed with corrugated iron over boarding.

Dating

The building dates to the mid or late 19th century although the west wall probably utilises a pre-existing boundary wall. It was built to house livestock and is probably one of the cow houses mentioned in the 1907 sale catalogue.

Assessment

- This building is an unlisted mid 19th or later structure of no intrinsic architectural interest.
- It is in a derelict structural condition and does not merit retention.

References

Barnwell, P S & Giles, C, 1997 *English Farmsteads, 1750-1914*, RCHME

IOE - Images of England www.imagesofengland.org.uk

NMR – National Monuments Record, Swindon

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Manor Farm, Hampstead Norreys

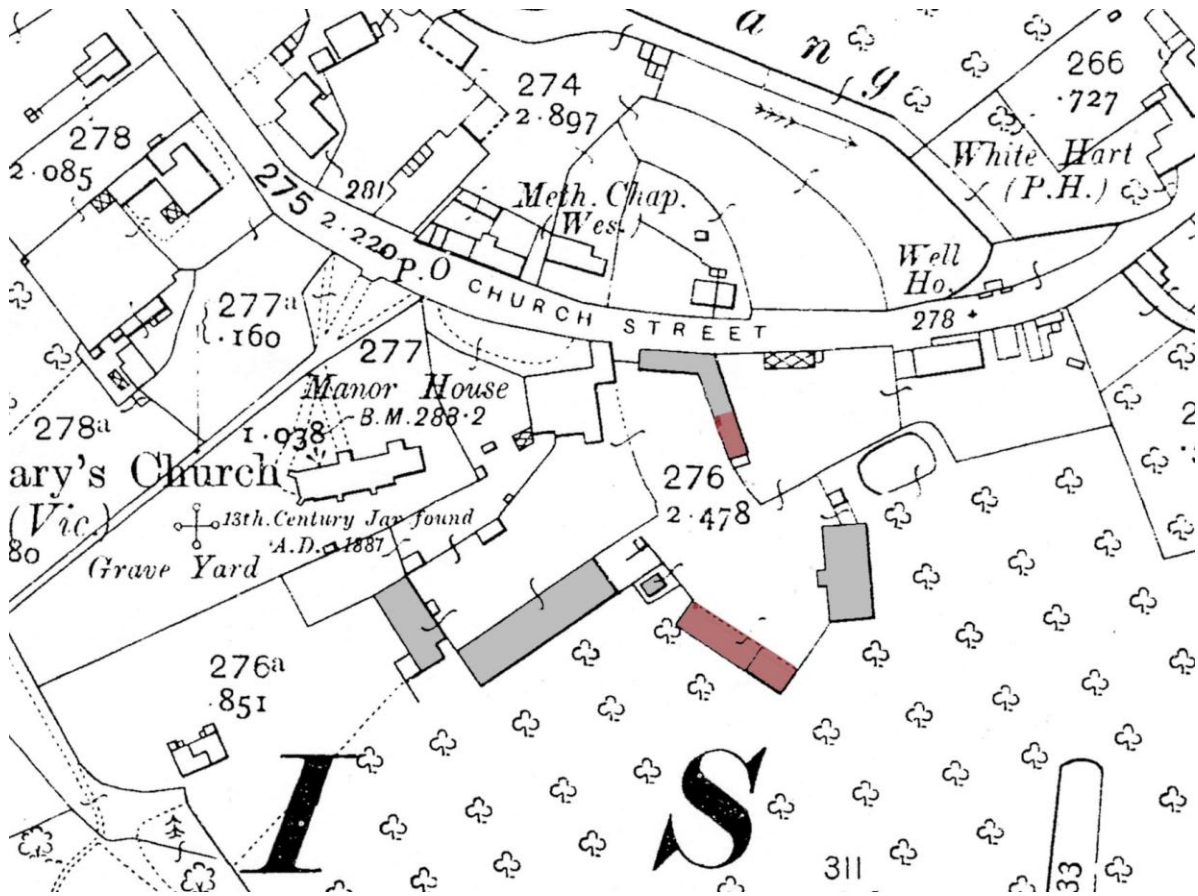
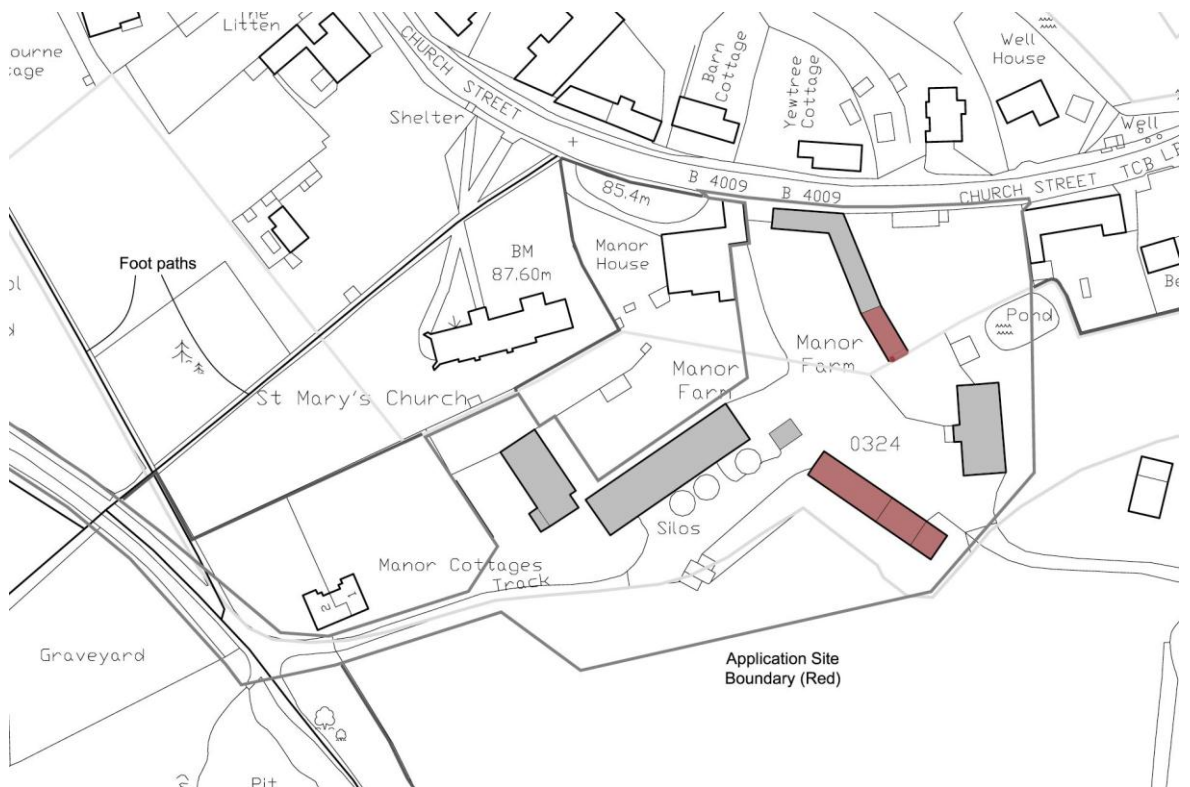


Fig 1

Ordnance Survey map 1912; Rex's shed (red) shown open fronted. Other farm buildings in grey

Modern site plan



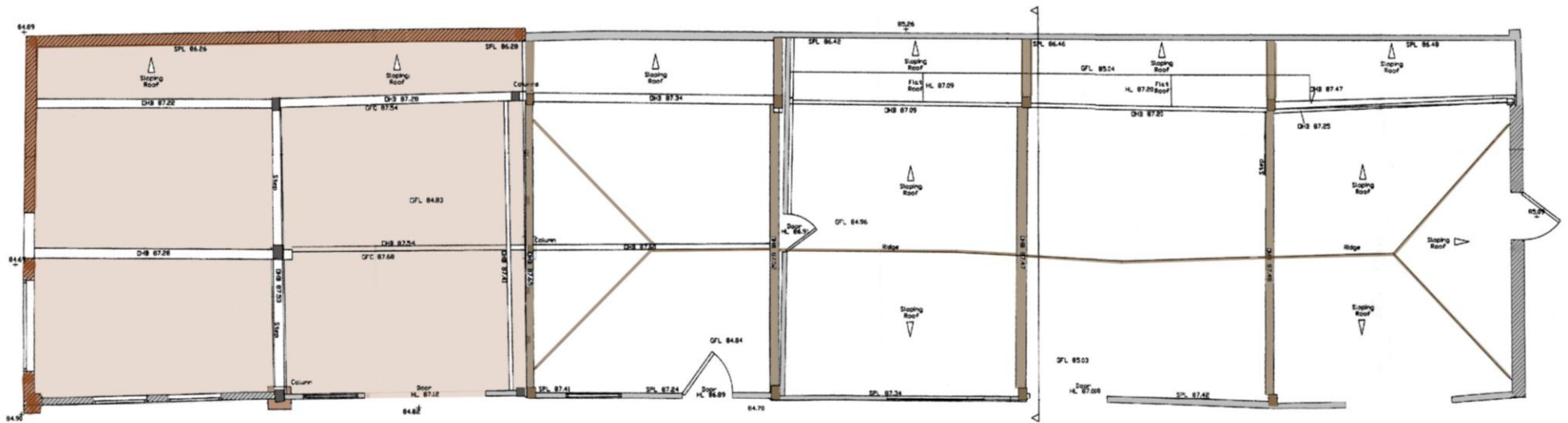
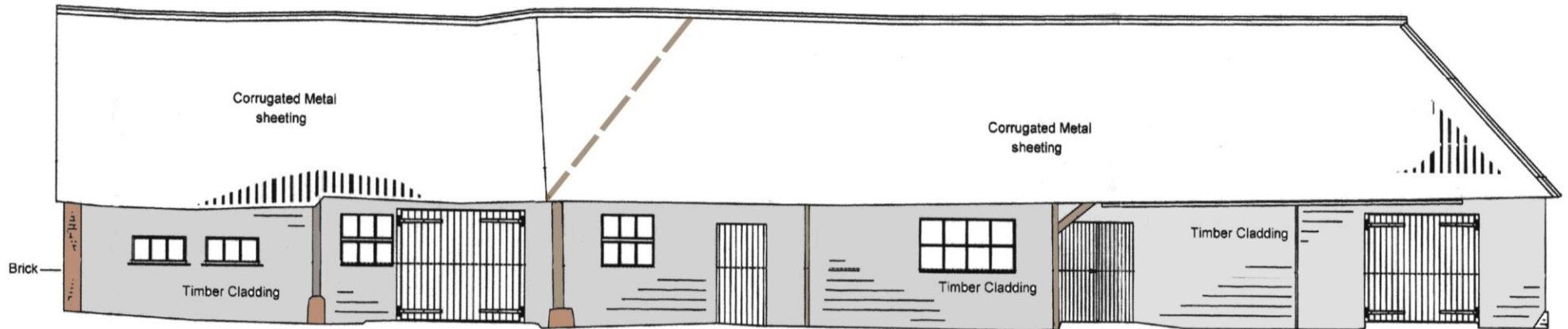


Fig 2 Rex's Shed: plan and north-east elevation

brown original trusses
pink brick extension
grey 20th century



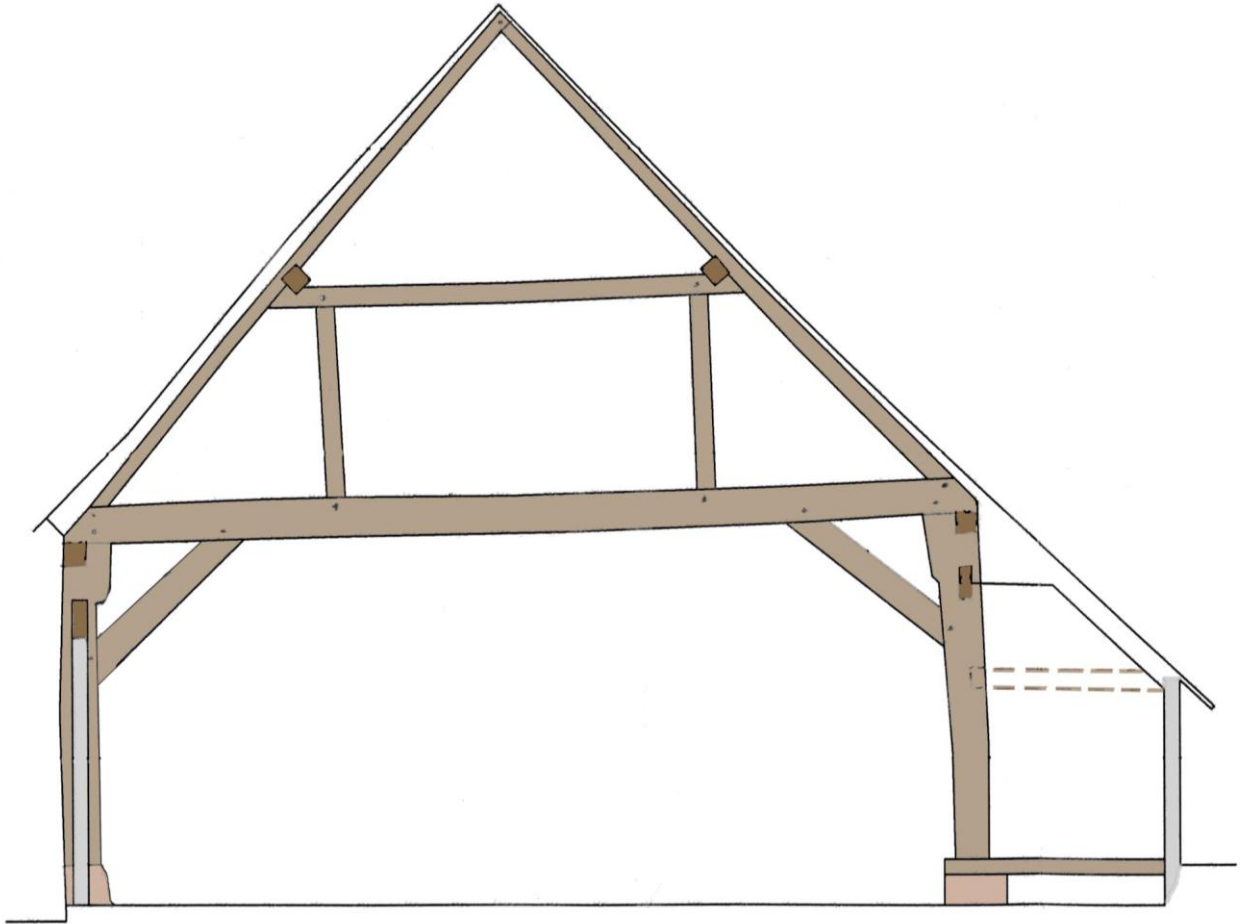


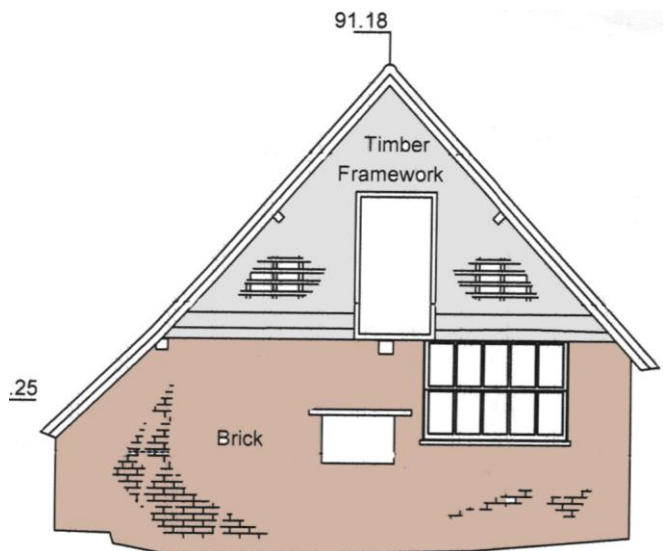
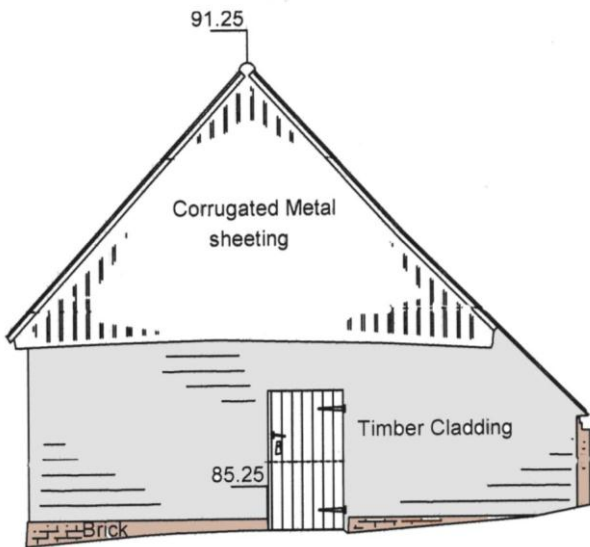
Fig 3 Rex's Shed

Typical truss section; NE to left

North-west elevation

South-east elevation

(key as fig 2)



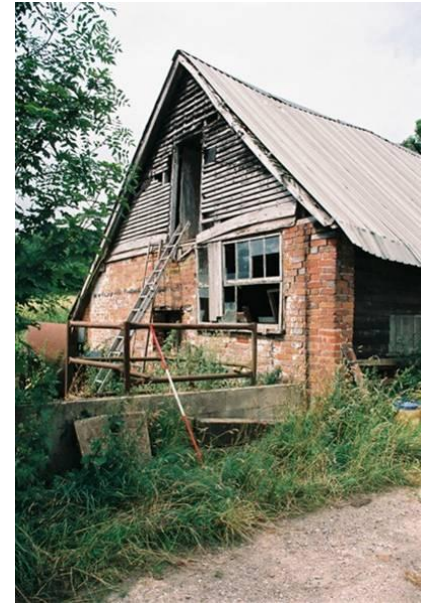


Fig 4 Rex's Shed

(clockwise from above)

North-east elevation, general view

South-east elevation; extension

North-east elevation, originally open

North-west elevation showing aisle

North-east corner





Fig 5 Rex's Shed

(clockwise from above)

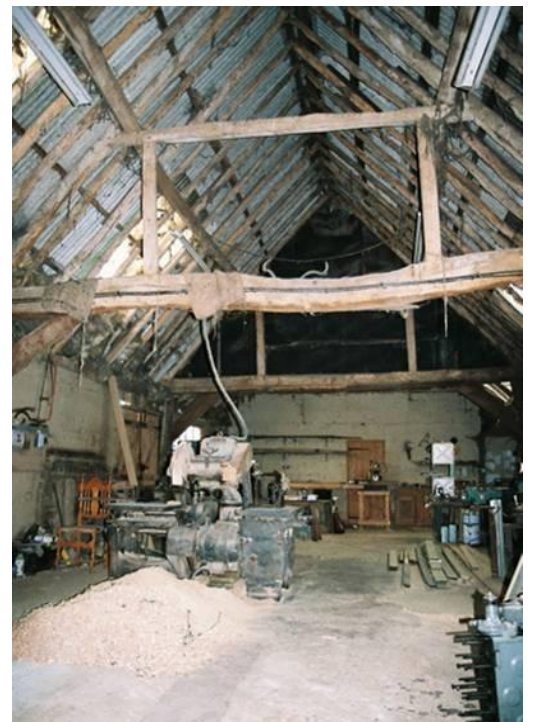
Jowled post detail, aisle side with reinforced wall plate

South-east end of original building, now internal with sawn-off studs and retained central post

General view looking north-west

General view looking south-east

Aisle cill beam detail



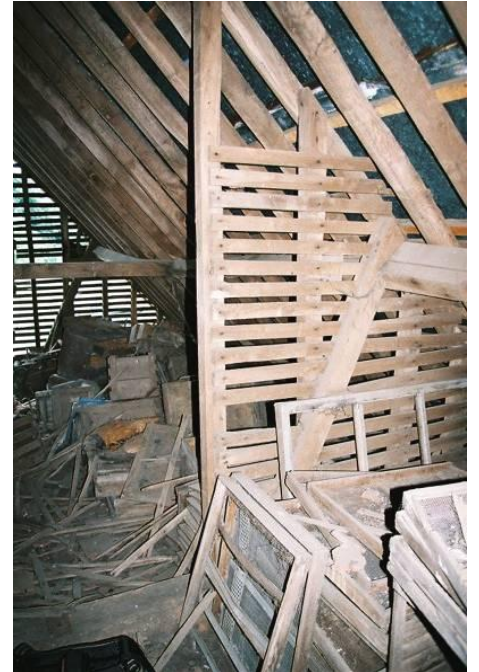
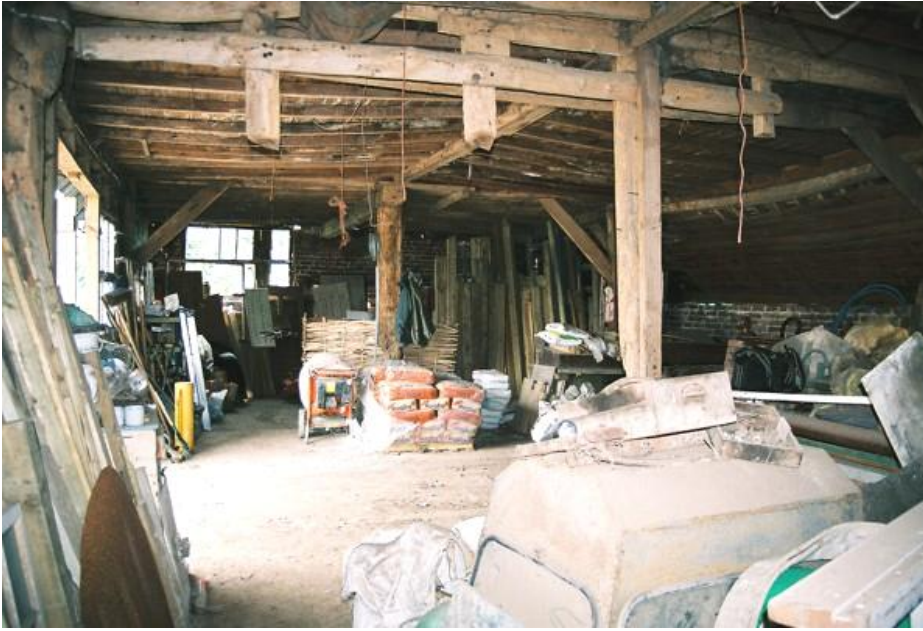


Fig 6 Rex's Shed

(clockwise from top)

General view of extension looking south-east

Roof to extension

Junction of original building and extension

Framework for original hipped roof in loft space

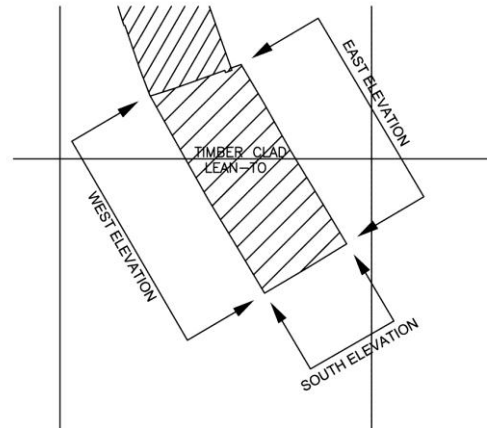
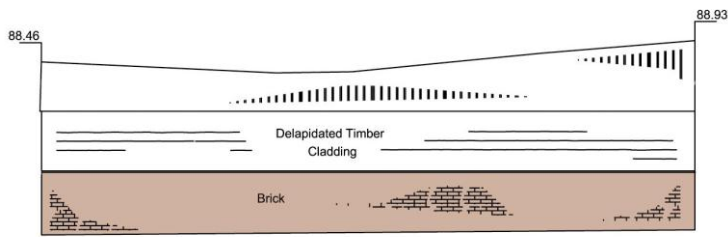
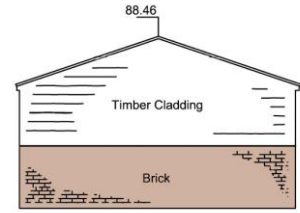
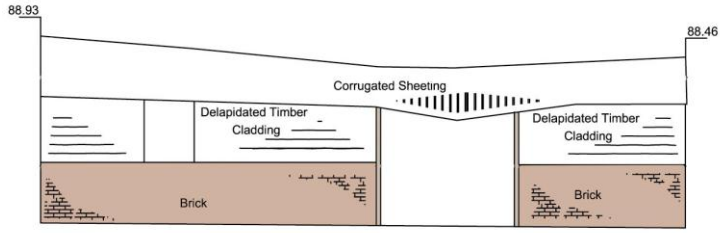


Fig 7 Outbuilding

External elevations and block plan

View from the west

Interior looking north

West wall detail

