

# **Barn at Ashfield Lodge, Ashfield cum Thorpe, Suffolk**

## **Heritage Asset Assessment**



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# **Barn at Ashfield Lodge, Clowe's Corner, Ashfield cum Thorpe, Suffolk**

(TM 216 637)

## **Heritage Asset Assessment**

*This report provides an archaeological record and analysis at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant farm building in the curtilage of a grade II-listed former farmhouse. It has been prepared to the standard specified by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service, and is intended to inform and accompany a planning application for conversion.*

### **Introduction**

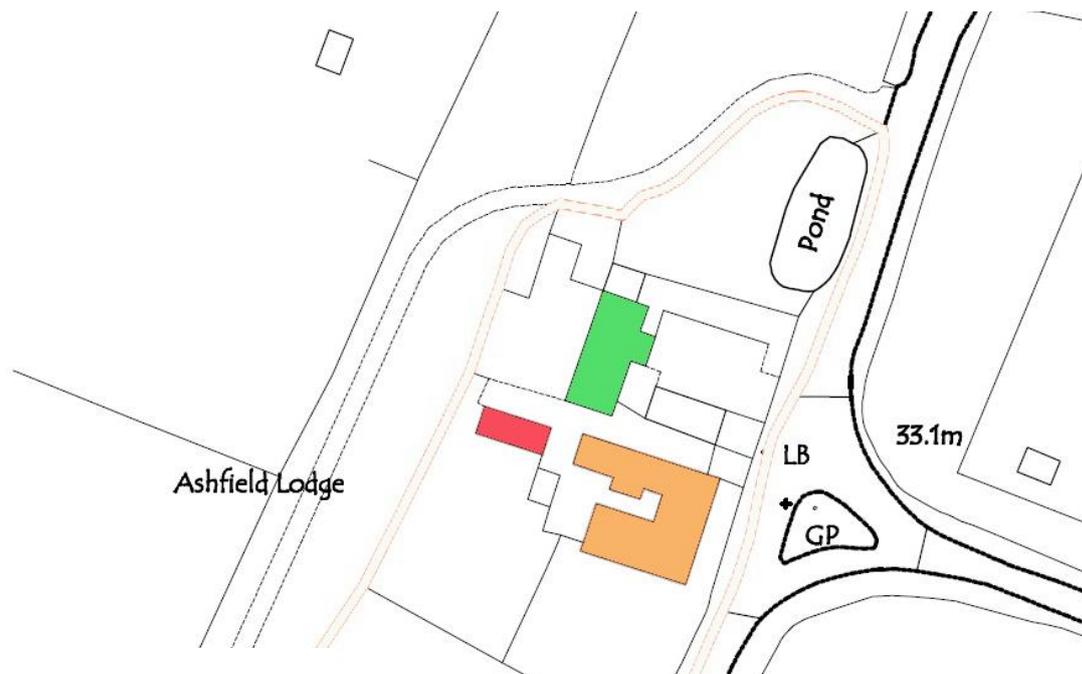
The report includes a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 43 Canon 5D digital images of 21 megapixels (Appendix 1), but also contains 14 printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text. Each image is described in a separate schedule and wherever possible includes a scale rod with half-metre divisions in red and white. The site was inspected on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

### **Summary**

Ashfield Lodge lies in open countryside 1 km north-east of the village of Ashfield at Clowe's Corner, close to the boundaries of Earl Soham and Monk Soham. The site consists of a substantial grade II-listed timber-framed and rendered former farmhouse on the south with a group of farm buildings arranged around a courtyard to the north. A detached rear outbuilding known for planning purposes as a barn lies in close proximity to the west and forms the subject of this report. Both the house and the main threshing barn on the north are timber-framed structures of the 16<sup>th</sup> century although the house was raised in height and heavily disguised early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the time of the parish tithe survey in 1837 the property was known as Clow's Corner Farm and was owned and occupied by George Cook with 88 acres of land in Ashfield. By 1855 George had been succeeded by James Chapman Cooke and the farm's name aggrandized to Ashfield Lodge or simply The Lodge, with an indenture of 1880 giving its total acreage as 147 including land in the two adjoining Soham parishes.

The detached rear barn is a timber-framed, weatherboarded and pantiled granary of 1.5 storeys built largely from pine in the 1850s or 60s but incorporating a high proportion of second-hand timber that was probably salvaged from a previous granary shown on the 1837 tithe map. This earlier structure lay closer to the farmhouse and was demolished to make way for a large new extension to the rear of its kitchen wing. The granary is typical of its period, extending to four bays with a first-floor loading door that would have been reached by a missing external stair and evidence of rendered brick between the timbers to support the weight of grain sacks. It illustrates the increasing specialisation of local farm buildings during 19<sup>th</sup> century and is accordingly of historic interest. Its external appearance remains largely original when viewed from the house, despite the renewal of its cladding in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century, and provides visual and historic context to the nearby threshing barn after the demolition of the rest of the farm buildings shown on maps of the 1980s. The western gable has been completely rebuilt and glazed in a very modern style but this is visible only from the adjoining field. Despite these points of historic significance the building is not of sufficient age, completeness or rarity to warrant listing in its own right but clearly lies within the curtilage of the adjacent house.

## Documentary History and Map Regression



**Figure 1**

**Current site plan supplied by Rob Pearce Architects highlighting the grade II-listed house in orange, the timber-framed threshing barn in green and the detached former granary which forms the subject of this report in red.**

Ashfield Lodge lies in open countryside 1 km north-east of the village of Ashfield at Clowe's Corner (i.e. the junction between Low Road leading to Earl Soham and the lane to Monk Soham). The site consists of a substantial grade II-listed timber-framed and rendered former farmhouse on the south with a group of farm buildings arranged around a courtyard to the north and a detached outbuilding known for planning purposes as a barn to the west (figure 1). Historic England's schedule correctly describes the house as a late-16<sup>th</sup> century structure with a central hall flanked by parlour and service bays to the south and north respectively (images of England no. 281430). A major refurbishment of *circa* 1820 saw its walls raised and its roof rebuilt at a shallower pitch to create the illusion of a third storey, with a new red-brick facade added to the south. The main threshing barn on the north is a three-bay structure with a high-quality timber-frame that is contemporary with or slightly earlier than the house, but was extended and much altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and re-roofed in the 20<sup>th</sup>. This barn was formerly listed with the house (as 'Ashfield Lodge and barn'), but is now only curtilage-listed. A red-brick shelter-shed between the house and barn is the only other remnant of a much larger complex of farm buildings that survived until the late-20<sup>th</sup> century. The rear barn forms the subject of this report and was built as a granary as described in more detail below. At the time of the parish tithe survey in 1837 the property was known as Clow's Corner Farm and was owned and occupied by George Cook who was described in White's Suffolk Directory for 1844 as a farmer and one of 'a fewer smaller owners' in the parish. By 1855 the name had been aggrandized to Ashfield Lodge and George had been succeeded by James Chapman Cooke. By the 1874 edition James had been promoted to the list of significant landowners in the parish (alongside Lords Henniker, Waveney and Rendlesham), and was named as a farmer and landowner at 'The Lodge'. The tithe survey ascribes 88 acres to the farm, but an indenture of 1880 in the possession of the present owners reveals the true size of the holding as 147 acres including additional in Earl Soham and Monk Soham. The changing outlines of the buildings since 1837 are described in the captions to figures 2-7.

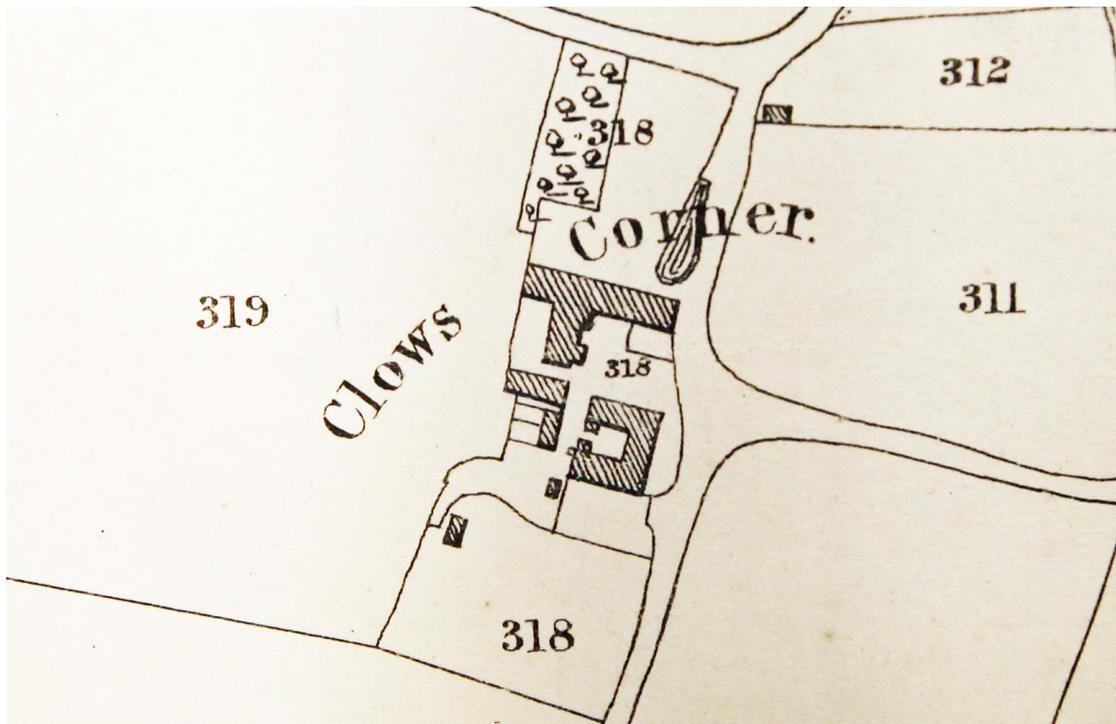


Figure 2. The site on the Ashfield cum Thorpe tithe map of 1837 when the property was known as Clow's Corner Farm (Suffolk Record Office). Plot 318 was described only as 'Homestead' with 'Home Meadow' on the west. The outbuilding on the approximate site of the present rear barn lies much closer to the house, overlapping the southern gable of the main threshing barn on the north and the two small pig sties on the south.

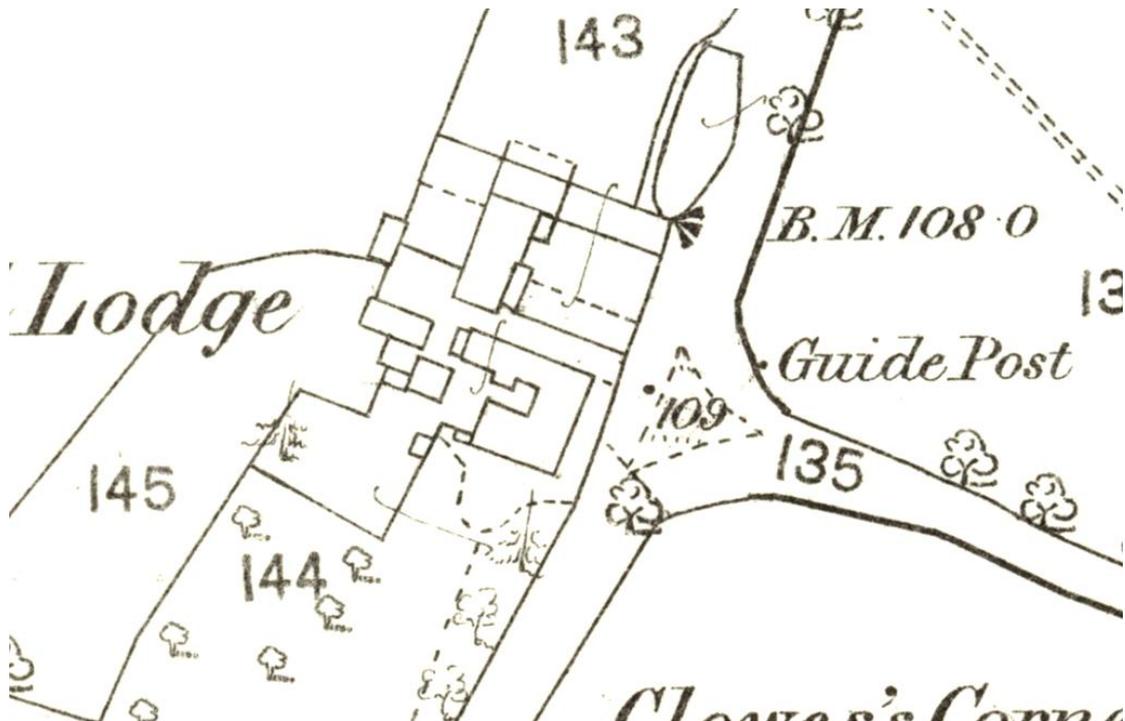


Figure 3. The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1883. The northern wing of the house had been extended to the west since 1837, well beyond the projection of its bread oven which coincided with the gable in 1837. In order to accommodate this extension the rear barn had been either truncated significantly or rebuilt further to the west. A new open-sided shelter-shed had also been built to the north of the house.

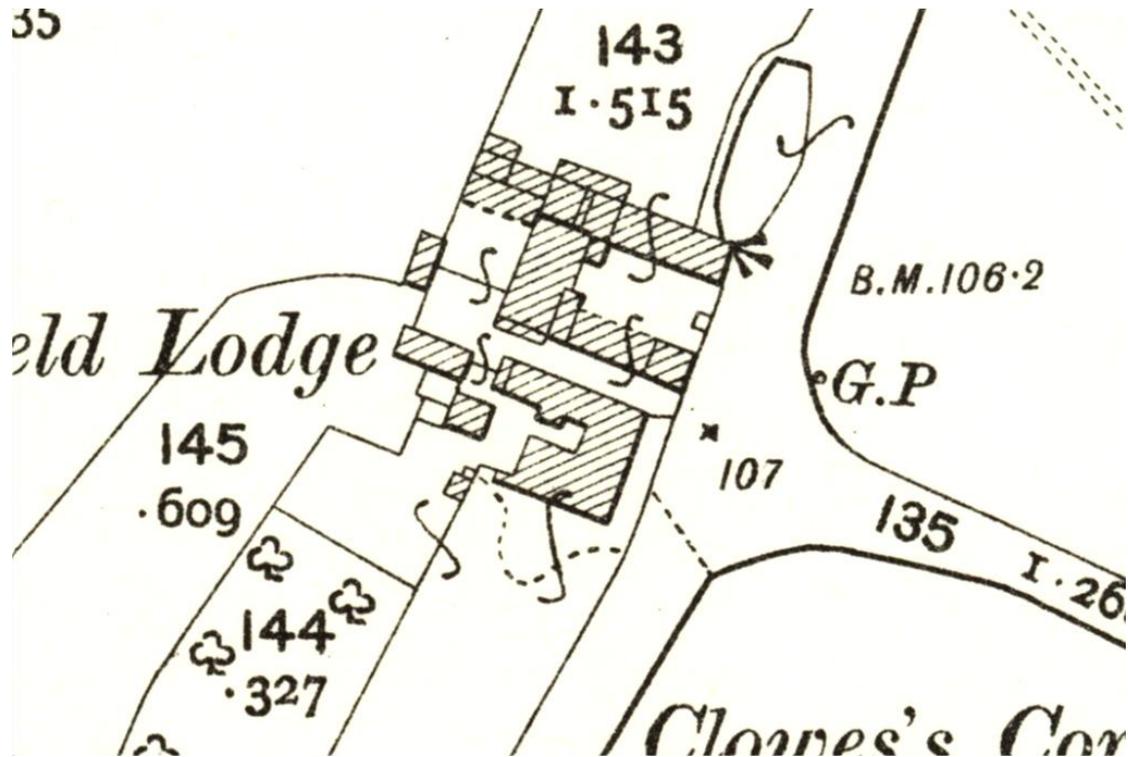


Figure 4

The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1903, showing little change since 1883. The narrow shed adjoining the western gable of the house's northern wing was probably a single-storied lean-to that no longer survives.

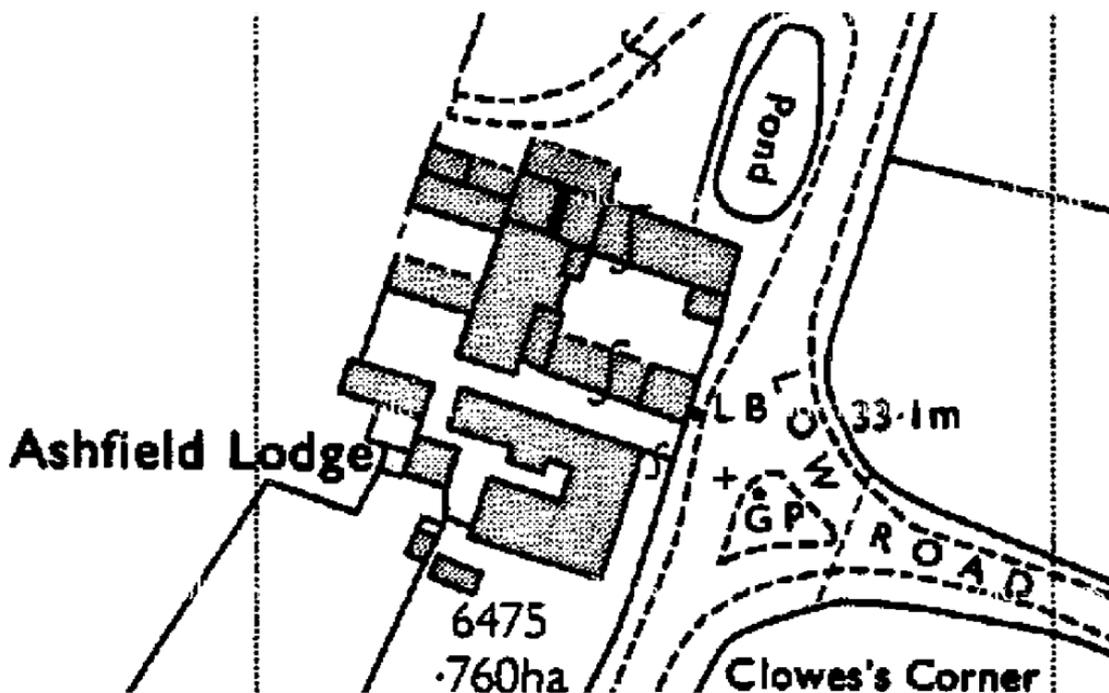


Figure 5

The 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1980. The site layout had altered very little since 1903 but many of the farm buildings have since disappeared including everything to the west of the threshing barn. The pig sty is shown with a square outline overlapping the house but its eastern half has since been demolished.



**Figure 6**

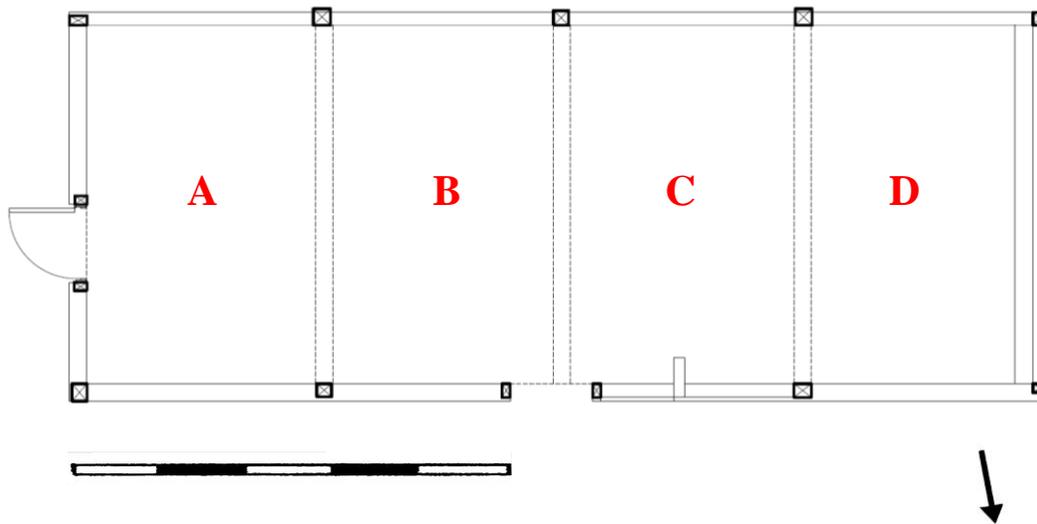
**An aerial view taken from the east in 1964 when the large 19<sup>th</sup> century farm complex on the right remained intact (from a copy in the possession of the owner). The rear barn appears to lack its existing southern window. Note the double pitch of the pig sties, of which the eastern range has since been demolished.**



**Figure 7**

**An aerial view of 2003 showing the losses to the farm buildings since the Ordnance Survey of 1980 and the present vehicle entrance on the south.**

## Building Analysis



**Figure 8**  
**Ground floor plan by Rob Pearce Architects identifying each bay with a letter for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Scale in metres.**

### Proportions, structure and date

The timber-framed, weatherboarded and pantiled 'barn' to the rear of Ashfield Lodge extends to a total of 11.25 ft in length by 4.5 m in width on an approximately east-west axis (37 ft by 14.75 ft). The walls of the four-bay structure rise to 3.6 m at their roof-plates (11.75 ft) including a tall red-brick plinth of 1.1 m laid in Monk Bond (3.6 ft), and the interior was initially floored throughout at a height of 2.1 m (7 ft). The walls consist of vertical studs which are tenoned but not pegged to the plates and interrupted by straight diagonal primary braces that are nailed to the storey posts (illus. A2.10). The posts are not jowled, and the shallow-pitched clasped-purlin roof structure contains a ridge-board with nailed collars and two cambered tie-beams which do not respect the posts and are secured directly to the roof-plates by iron straps (A2.14). The frame was originally infilled with rendered brick, of which only fragments remain (A2.12), but much of the timber shows evidence of lath-and-plaster and has been re-used from at least one older building. This re-used timber is of mixed oak, elm and pine, and is roughly square in section indicating a date no earlier than the late-18<sup>th</sup> century for the demolished frame from which it was salvaged. The timber that is primary to the present building is narrow-sectioned and largely of pine, including the roof-plates, collars, ridge-board and common ceiling joists. Framing of this nature is typical of the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the building is likely to represent the replacement of an earlier structure on much the same site but which extended further to the east as shown on the 1837 tithe map. There is nothing to suggest the present building has been truncated, with the brick plinth completely intact. The re-used timber probably derives from this earlier structure which is unlikely to have pre-dated the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but was in the way of the westward extension of the farmhouse's northern wing.

### Layout and purpose

There is no evidence of internal partitions but the lower storey is entered by two doors in the centre of the northern elevation, facing the farm yard, and in the eastern gable facing the house. Both are respected by closers (quarter bricks) in the original plinth and appear to be original to the building. The eastern door lies to the north of the gable's centre, reflecting the first-floor loading door immediately above and indicating that an original external stair of which no trace now survives rose from south to north (A2. 5). This arrangement is typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century granaries in Suffolk which often contained milling machinery and other

equipment for the preparation of animal feed. The infill of rendered brick on the upper storey was intended to protect the weatherboarding from the weight of the grain, which was normally stored in sacks until grain bins became the norm during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is evidence of a blocked ceiling trap in the easternmost bay which may have accommodated an additional internal stair or a bagging drop beneath a mill. There is no evidence of windows on the ground floor and those in the northern and southern walls of the upper storey appear to be modern insertions. The first-floor is lit by windows on both sides of the eastern loading door which each contained two lights with iron glazing bars divided by wooden mullions. The mullions have been removed leaving mortises in the sills and lintels. The tie-beam contains mortises for missing studs above these windows suggesting both they and the external door are later insertions, but it is unclear whether the timber is re-used. The offset position of the original ground-floor door indicates an external stair existed from the outset, but this cannot be established with certainty and it may have replaced a predecessor in the aforementioned ceiling trap. Further windows may have existed in the rebuilt western gable.

### **Alterations**

The building survives substantially intact but underwent a significant restoration in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century which included the complete rebuilding and glazing of its western gable to match that of the farmhouse, leaving only its brick plinth intact. The entire western bay of the ceiling was probably removed at the same time (although this may have occurred earlier), the north-eastern corner post and its adjacent studs were renewed (leaving only the south-eastern corner of the building intact), the roof was felted and the weatherboarding completely replaced. The present northern and southern windows are likely to have been inserted at the same point.

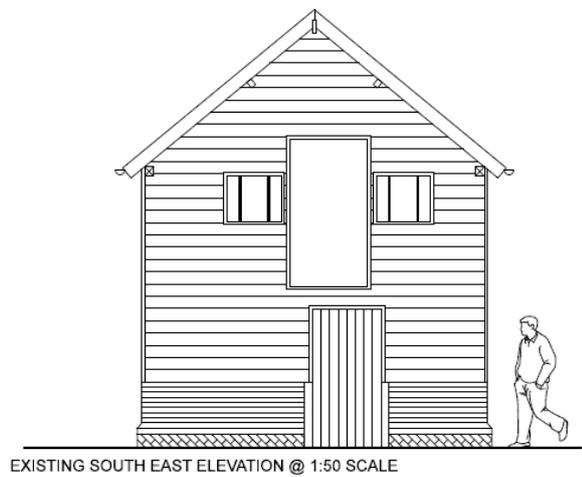
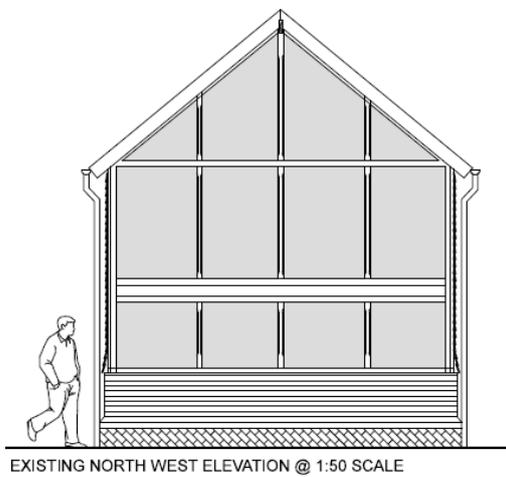
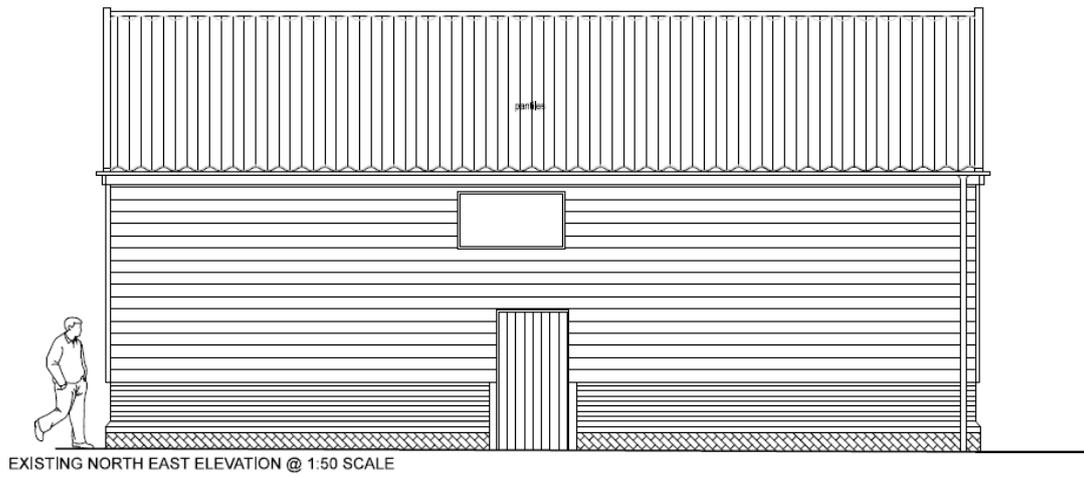
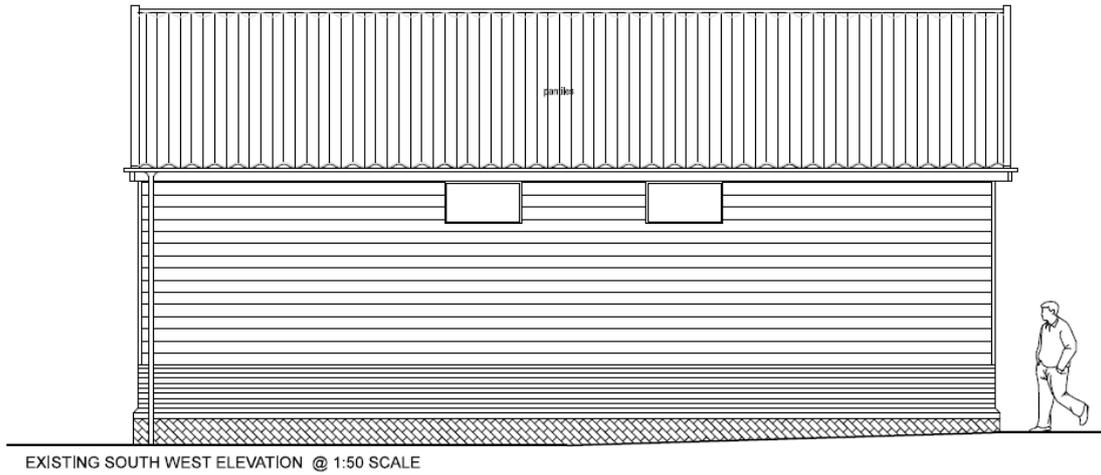
### **Historic Significance**

The barn to the rear of Ashfield Lodge was built in the 1850s or 60s as a granary and feed mill using much timber that was probably salvaged from a similar building of the late-18<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup> century. This earlier structure lay nearer the farmhouse to the east, as shown on the tithe map of 1837, but was demolished when the latter's kitchen wing was extended westwards. The building is typical of its period, illustrating the increasing specialisation of local farm buildings during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural revolution known today as Victorian High Farming, and is accordingly of historic interest. Its external appearance remains largely original when viewed from the house, despite the renewal of its cladding and the insertion of first-floor windows, and it complements the nearby 16<sup>th</sup> century weatherboarded threshing barn. The western gable has been completely rebuilt and glazed in a modern style but this is visible only from the adjoining field. Despite these points of historic significance the building is not of sufficient age, completeness or rarity to warrant listing in its own right, but clearly lies within the curtilage of the adjacent grade II-listed house.

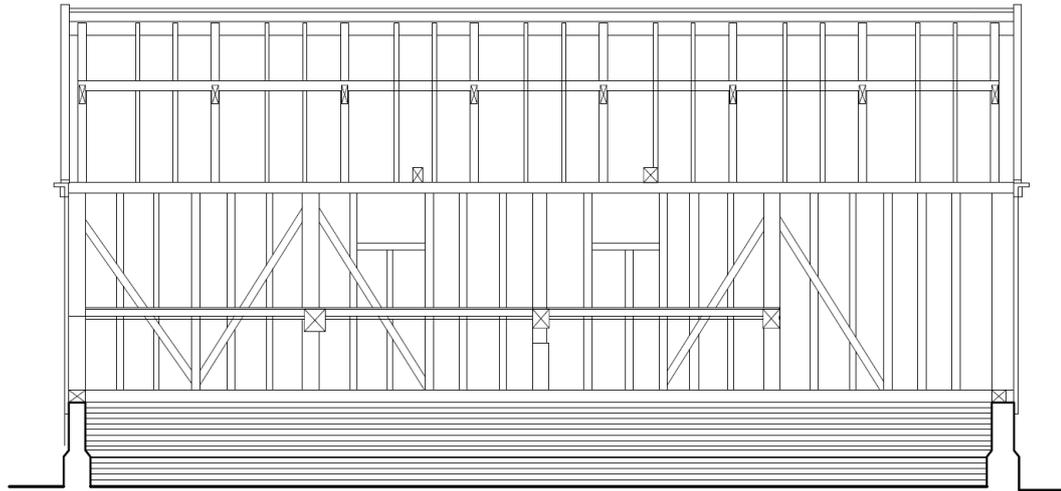
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*Leigh Alston is a building archaeologist and architectural historian who lectures on the analysis and recording of timber-framed structures in the Department of Archaeology at Cambridge University, but also undertakes commissions on a freelance basis for the National Trust and various county archaeological units. He co-founded the Suffolk Historic Buildings Group in 1993 and served as Chairman for 13 years. Publications include 'Late Medieval Workshops in East Anglia' in 'The Vernacular Workshop' edited by Paul Barnwell & Malcolm Airs (Council for British Archaeology and English Heritage, 2004) and the National Trust guidebook to Lavenham Guildhall.*

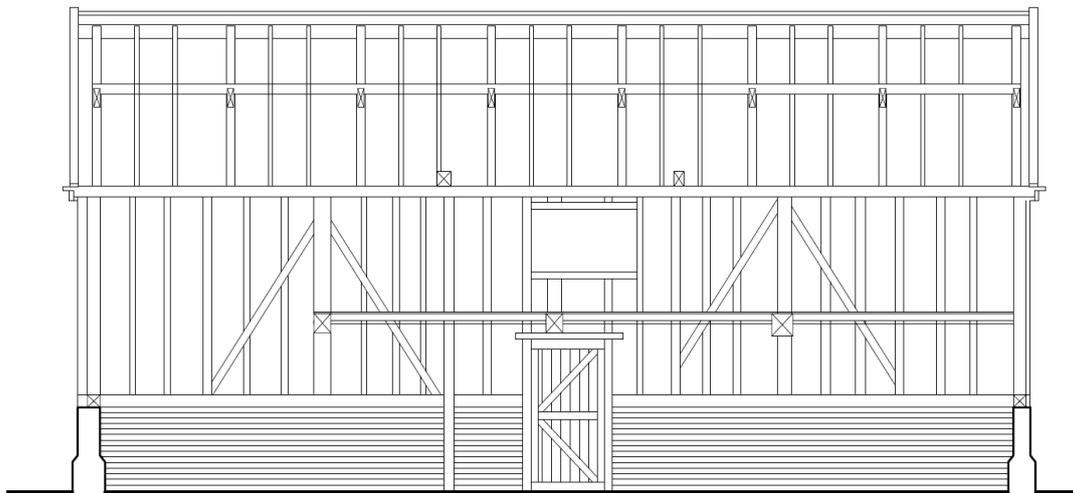
***Elevations follow on pp.8-9***



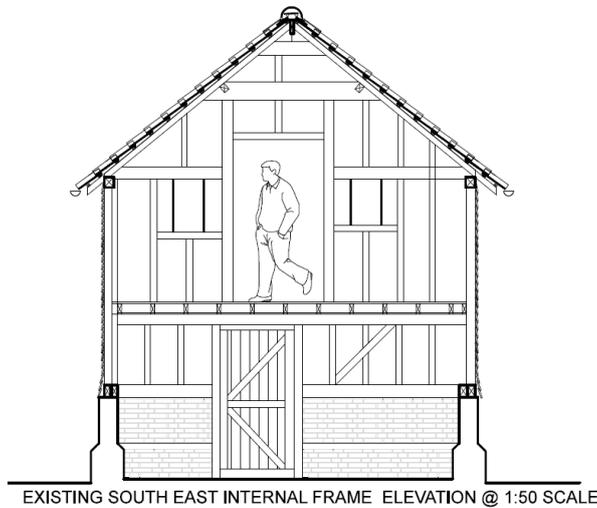
**Figure 9a.**  
**External elevations by Rob Pearce Architects. Not to scale as reproduced here.**



EXISTING SOUTH WEST INTERNAL FRAME ELEVATION @ 1:50 SCALE



EXISTING NORTH EAST INTERNAL FRAME ELEVATION @ 1:50 SCALE



EXISTING SOUTH EAST INTERNAL FRAME ELEVATION @ 1:50 SCALE

**Figure 9b**  
**Internal elevations by Rob Pearce Architects. Not to scale as reproduced here**  
*Schedule of full photographic record follows (pp. 10-12)*

## **Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record**

### **Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1**

#### **Photograph no.**

1. A general view of the site from Low Road to the east showing the conspicuous location of the grade II-listed house on a road junction.
2. The grade II-listed house from Low Road to the north-east showing the weatherboarded barn in the rear.
3. The barn from the north-east showing its proximity to the house on the left and the threshing barn on the right.
4. The site from the north-west showing the barn on the right with the house in the rear and the 16th century threshing barn on the left.
5. The 16th century threshing barn from the west showing the gable of a demolished western wing on the left & the barn to right.
6. The 16th century threshing barn from the north-west showing the mid-19th century shelter-shed to left & the barn in the rear.
7. The site from the north-west showing the rear barn in the centre with the house on the right & the contemporary threshing barn on the left.
8. The site from the south showing the small 19th century range of pig sties and the house on the right with the rear barn to the left.
9. The site from the west showing the rear barn's bowed northern wall with its gable in the foreground & the threshing barn on the left.
10. The rear barn's southern exterior showing its proximity to the 19th century range of pig sties on the right.
11. The much altered western exterior of the pig sties showing entrances to left & right with evidence of blocked arches in the centre.
12. The flint-rubble eastern exterior of the pig sties alongside the rear barn on the right showing a central entrance respected by brickwork.
13. The eastern external gable showing the loft loading door with an ostensibly original entrance beneath respected by the brick plinth.
14. The southern exterior showing its 20th century pine weatherboarding and brick plinth laid in Monk Bond.
15. The northern exterior showing its 20th century cladding with an original central door respected by the brick plinth laid in Monk Bond.
16. The western external gable showing its late-20th century glazing on the original plinth matching the rear gable of the house.

17. The internal eastern gable showing the original framing to the right & new oak timber to the left of the original entrance.
18. The blocked original stair trap or hatch in the ceiling joists of bay A seen from the west.
19. The blocked original stair trap or hatch respected by chamfers in the ceiling joists of bay A seen from the east.
20. The southern interior of bays A & B showing the original narrow studs and diagonal primary braces with evidence of re-use.
21. The southern interior of bays C & D showing modern timber repairs and new studs flanking the storey post.
22. A detail from the north-east of the chambered principal joist between bays B & C with tall-sectioned pine common joists.
23. The northern interior of bay A showing the modern oak sill and studs to the right with the ceiling trap at top left.
24. The northern interior of bays C & B showing the dividing binding joist resting on the lintel of the original central entrance door.
25. The northern interior of bays D & C showing an original narrow pine diagonal primary brace and pine ceiling joists.
26. The northern interior of bay D from which the original ceiling joists have been removed showing a renewed section of sill to the left.
27. The southern interior of bay D from which the original ceiling joists have been removed showing three renewed studs to the right.
28. The interior of the western gable which has been completely rebuilt and glazed in recent decades.
29. The interior looking east from bay D on the west showing empty mortises for missing joists in the binding joist.
30. The interior looking east from bay D on the west showing empty mortises with diminished shoulders & the lack of jowls to the storey posts.
31. A detail of the northern interior of bay D showing a roof-plate repair on the left & lath nails to the larger studs indicating re-use.
32. A detail of the south interior of bay D showing a roof-plate repair & new studs on the right a nailed primary diagonal braces to left.
33. The eastern interior of the loft showing the central door flanked by windows with original rendered brick infill to right.
34. A detail of the southern loft window sill in the eastern gable showing a central circular mortise for a missing wooden mullion.

35. A detail of the southern tie-beam soffit in the eastern gable showing stud mortises indicating the window and door are secondary.
36. A detail of the northern tie-beam soffit in the eastern gable showing stud mortises indicating the window and door are secondary.
37. The loft from the east showing its ostensibly original clasped-purlin roof with some re-used rafters containing lath nails.
38. A detail from the east of the nailed collars and ridge board of the roof with paint scars indicating re-use.
39. The loft from the west showing a cambered tie-beam to increase headroom with original infill to the left.
40. The southern interior of the loft showing its pine roof-plate with iron straps securing the two cambered tie-beams.
41. The southern interior of bay A from the loft showing the original narrow studs & nailed braces with original rendered brick infill left.
42. The northern interior of bay A from the loft showing its renewed studs with original rendered brick infill in bay B to the left.
43. A detail of the original lime-rendered brick infill to the northern interior of the loft in bay B.

*Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 13-19.*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 13-19): Selected Photographs to Illustrate the Text**



**Illus. 1. Ashfield Lodge from Low Road to the north-east showing the extent to which the property dominates the junction. The walls of the original 16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse rose only to the lintels of the first-floor windows but were raised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The rear barn is visible between the house and the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century shelter-shed on the right.**



**Illus. 2. The site from the north-west showing the rear barn in the centre with the U-shaped 16<sup>th</sup> century house on the right and the much altered weatherboarded threshing barn of approximately the same date on the left.**



**Illus. 3. The site from the west showing the rear barn's bowed northern wall with the threshing barn on the left. The former's western gable was completely rebuilt and glazed in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century retaining only its brick plinth. The northern wing of the house was glazed in the same manner on its upper storey.**



**Illus. 4. The rear barn's southern elevation showing its close proximity to the much altered 19<sup>th</sup> century range of pig sties on the right, which preserves the outlines of two earlier arched apertures between its existing entrances. The two buildings almost adjoin corner-to-corner as on the Ordnance Survey of 1883 but in marked contrast to the situation shown in 1837 when a building on the site of the rear barn extended much further to the right.**



**Illus. 5. The eastern external gable showing the loading door to the loft which is offset on the right suggesting an external stair once rose from the left. The ground-floor entrance is respected by closers (quarter-bricks) in the brick plinth and is therefore an original feature.**



**Illus. 6. The northern elevation showing its renewed 20th century cladding of stained pine boards and the original central door respected by the brick plinth which is laid in Monk Bond. The first-floor windows in both this and the southern elevations appear to be later insertions.**



**Illus. 7. The internal eastern gable showing the original studwork to the right of the door with a narrow diagonal primary brace and evidence of re-used timber (as some studs bear the scars of lath-and-plaster while others do not). The studs and sill to the left of the door were renewed in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century.**



**Illus. 8. The ground-floor ceiling of bay A from the eastern gable showing the blocked trap that may have accommodated an internal stair or milling equipment. The trimmer and the joists in the foreground differ from the plain pine joists elsewhere in the ceiling and bear evidence of lath-and-plaster having been re-used from elsewhere.**



**Illus. 9.** A detail from the north-east of the neatly chamfered principal joist between bays B & C showing the tall-sectioned common joists which are of plain pine and typical of those elsewhere in the ceiling.



**Illus. 10.** The northern internal wall of bay D from which the original ceiling joists have been removed showing the rebuilt western gable on the left. The left-hand stud and sections of the roof-plate and sill have also been renewed but the brick plinth is original to the building. The diagonal braces are nailed to the principal posts, which lack jowls in the typical manner of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and many studs show evidence of re-use from an 18<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup> century structure.



**Illus. 11. The interior looking east from the western gable showing the missing ceiling in bay D with empty joist mortises in the binding joist. The two posts above may have secured a piece of milling machinery.**



**Illus. 12. The eastern internal gable of the loft showing the loading door slightly to the left of centre with an intact section of original rendered brick infill on the right. The post and stud of the northern elevation on the left are modern replacements.**



**Illus. 13. A detail of the underside of the pine tie-beam in the eastern gable showing empty stud mortises that suggest both the window and door are later insertions – or that the timber has been re-used. A small circular mortise in the centre housed a wooden mullion between the surviving iron bars.**



**Illus. 14. The loft from the eastern gable showing its ostensibly original clasped-purlin roof with a ridge board, purlins and nailed collars of pine. The two tie-beams, which are cambered to increase headroom, are also of pine and are secured to the roof-plates with original iron straps. A section of original infill of rendered brick is visible on the right and many rafters show signs of re-use with the remains of lath-and-plaster that are not relevant to the existing building.**