

STREET FARM, BRENT ELEIGH HERITAGE STATEMENT

July 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of the owners of Street Farm, Brent Eleigh, to accompany applications for planning and listed building consent to replace a lean-to addition at the side of the property with a larger side addition. The former farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, lying within the Brent Eleigh Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The statement is an independent assessment of the scheme, written by Andrew Derrick BA Hons AADipl Cons IHBC, a director of the Architectural History Practice (AHP). The document describes the development of the site, describes the building, assesses its significance and assesses the impact of current proposals in the light of relevant local and national policies and guidance. It meets the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 189, that 'local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.
- 1.3 Site inspection and online research took place in July 2021. Archive sources remained closed on account of Covid-19 at the time of writing and have not been consulted.

2. STREET FARMHOUSE



Fig. 1: Front elevation towards The Street

- 2.1 Street Farmhouse (fig. 1) lies at the end of the village street in Brent Eleigh, overlooking the River Brett. The house is described in the list entry (appendix 2) as ‘a timber framed and plastered building of fifteenth-sixteenth century origin’, but a historical survey carried out by Leigh Alston in 2002¹ established that it was originally built in the fourteenth century, with an open hall with crown-post roof (fig. 2) and a service cross wing to the south with a first-floor window overlooking the hall. Alston noted smoke-blackened timbers in the roof space over the original hallway. A ceiling with roll-moulded joists and a large brick stack were inserted in the hall in the sixteenth century (fig. 3). Alston suggests that the building may have originated as an inn, or was possibly built for an industrial purpose such as dyeing. The parlour wing to the north was probably built or rebuilt in the early fifteenth century, and retains its original straight flight staircase. A fireplace and external stack were added at a later date, probably in the late sixteenth century (fig. 4). A door on the north side of this range leads through to a twentieth century lean-to addition, the subject of this application (fig. 5).

¹ Leigh Alston, *Street Farm, Brent Eleigh, Suffolk, An Historical Survey*, October 2002 (report for previous owner)



Fig. 2: Crown post in hall range



Fig. 3: Inserted C16 stack and floor in hall range



Fig. 4: Brick stack added to the parlour range in the C16. The upper part of the stack was rebuilt c.2000. Alongside the stack is the C20 lean-to addition to be removed under current proposals.



Fig. 5: Early C15 parlour wing looking east, with original medieval stair to left and later fireplace to right. The door in the studwork wall beyond leads through to the lean-to structure which is the subject of this application.

- 2.2 Whatever its origins, the building was later a farmhouse, in the possession of the manor of Brent Eleigh. On the tithe map of 1838 (fig. 6) it is identified as plot no. 236, and shown surrounded by farm buildings and yards. The tithe apportionment gives the owner as E. C. Brown (of Brent Eleigh Hall) and the occupant as Ralph Gage. Alongside the house and abutting the parlour wing was a pair of cottages, each with a garden (plot numbers 235 and 237, occupied by 'Game and Leeks'). It is on the site of these cottages and gardens that the proposed addition will be built.
- 2.3 In 1880 the house was remodelled by Walter Thomas Brown of Brent Eleigh Hall, his initials and the date featuring in a timber framed gabled oriel bay added to the upper floor of the hall range at that time (fig. 7). The ground floor was refaced in brick at this time, and the original jetties of the cross wings underbuilt.
- 2.4 The Ordnance Survey maps of 1885, 1904 and 1926 (figs. 8-10) show more extensive ranges of farm buildings around the house. More relevant for current purposes, they show that the pair of cottages shown on the tithe map of 1839 were still in existence, abutting the flank wall of the parlour range (subsuming and partially concealing the external brick stack). A photograph taken in c.1900 shows that it had a thatched roof (fig.11), the outline of which is still discernible in the external plaster of the parlour range, to the left of the stack.

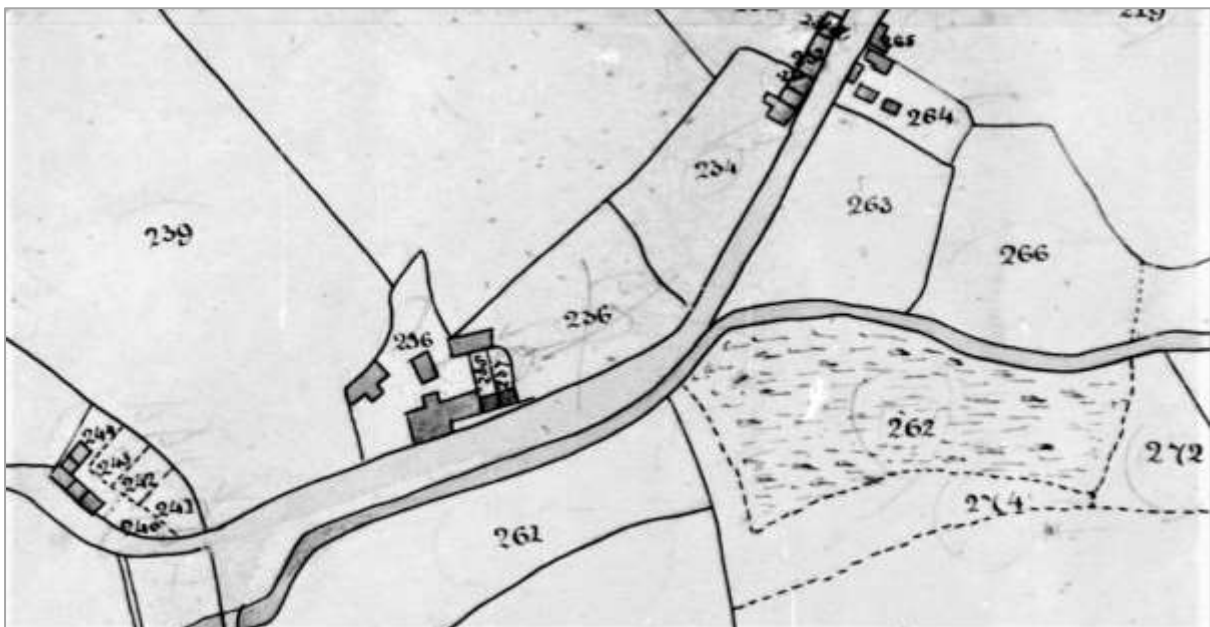


Fig. 6: Detail from tithe map, 1838



Fig. 7: Gabled oriel bay added to the hall range in 1880, the initials WTB standing for Walter Thomas Brown of Brent Eleigh Hall



Fig. 8: Detail from first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, 1885, Suffolk sheet LXIII.NW (National Library of Scotland)

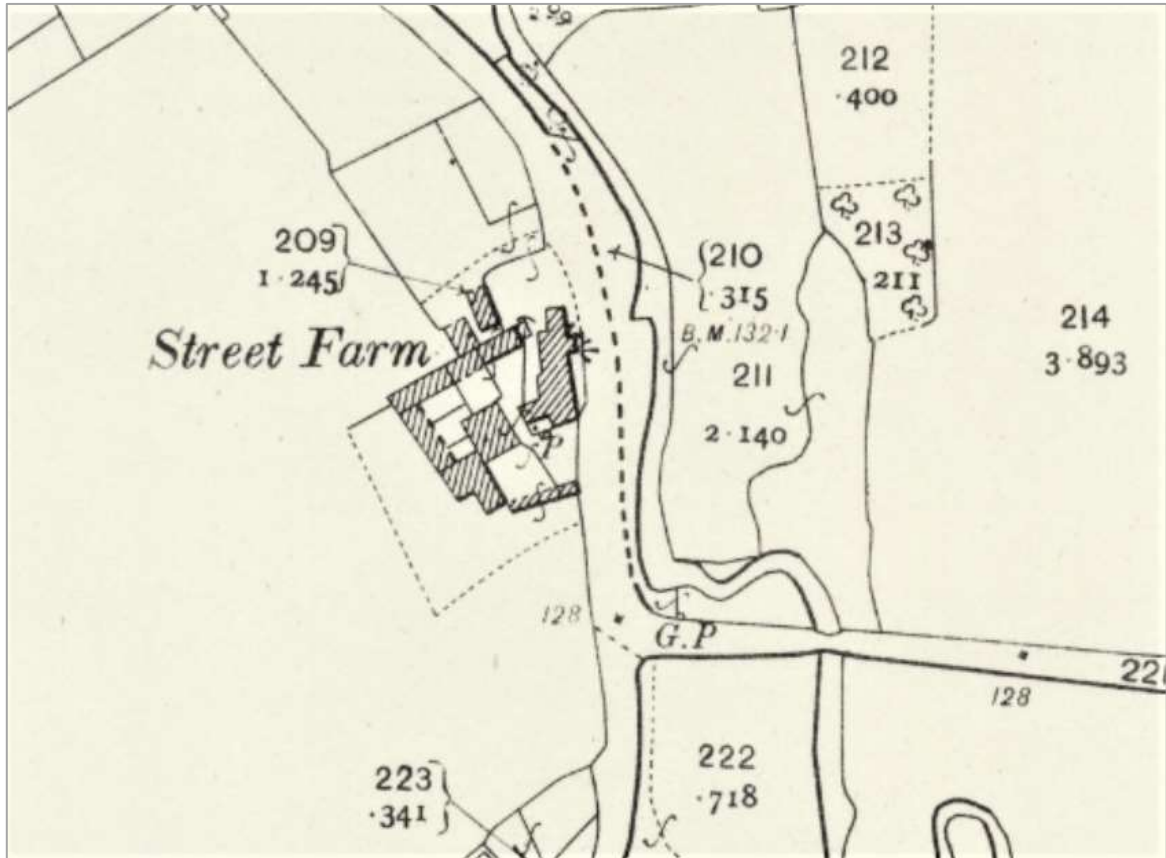


Fig. 9: Detail from 25-inch Ordnance Survey map, revised 1902 and published 1904, Suffolk sheet LXIII.2 (National Library of Scotland)

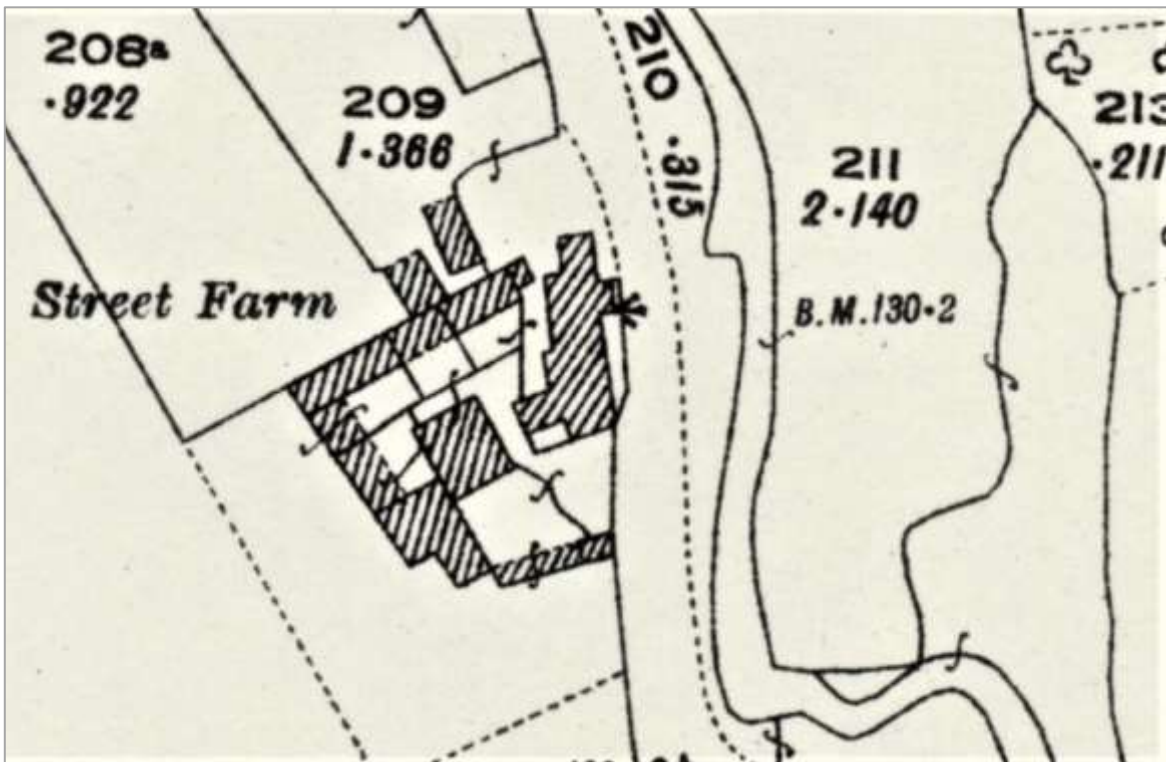


Fig. 10: Detail from 25-inch Ordnance Survey map, revised 1924 and published 1926, Suffolk sheet LXIII.2 (National Library of Scotland)



Fig.11: Photograph of c.1900, with thatched roof of former cottage addition visible to right.

- 2.5 At some point later in the twentieth century the thatched structure was demolished and a new kitchen addition built to a slightly different configuration, set back from the Street and aligning with the east elevation of the parlour range (and in the process revealing more of the brick stack). According to one local source, this addition was built in 1968,² although the building appears to consist of at least two phases of construction. Today it is a utility room and store, accessed from the parlour range (fig.4). The building is constructed of red brick, in a mixture of Flemish bond and stretcher bond, which is painted on the north elevation and rendered on the east (the render finish returning as far as the window on the north side). The rafters are of modern sawn timbers and the roof clad in clay plain tiles. See annotated photos at figs. 12-15.
- 2.6 The entry for Street Farmhouse in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record is attached at appendix 1. This adds little about the house to what is contained above and in the list entry, but provides further information about two outbuildings which were adapted/rebuilt in recent years to provide a cafeteria, Café Como.

² Info. ex current owners



Fig. 12: The C20 lean-to addition from the NE. Its E elevation is aligned with the E elevation of the parlour range and is rendered. The N return elevation is also rendered, as far as the window (concealed by a shrub in this photo), and thereafter is of painted brick.



Fig. 13: The upper part of the S elevation of the lean-to, abutting the C16 stack and of unpainted red brick laid in stretcher bond.



Fig. 14: Interior of the lean-to, now a utility room and store. The finishes are basic, late C20.



Fig. 15: View upwards through a small trapdoor in the ceiling into the roof space of the lean-to. The timber in the foreground is of uncertain purpose but may represent a wall plate belonging to a previous roof. Below this (still within the roof space) the studwork of the originally outer wall of the parlour range is exposed and limewashed. Above it, old plaster is still present over the C15 timber framing. To the left is the side of the C16 brick stack, and above is the modern roof with sawn timber rafters and roofing felt.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) recommends that for planning purposes, the significance of heritage assets should be assessed under the following headings: archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. It states that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.
- 3.2 The listed building known as Street Farm is of high archaeological, architectural and historical significance, primarily for its surviving medieval and sixteenth-seventeenth century fabric – including the plan form (consisting of hall, service and parlour ranges), timber framing (including a crown post roof of the fourteenth century), rare medieval stair and sixteenth century inserted floor and brick stacks. It is also a prominent feature in the Brent Eleigh Conservation Area, its front elevation making a positive contribution to the townscape of The Street and overlooking the River Brett. In recent decades the garden elevations have been opened up to public view with the demolition of former farm buildings, construction of the bypass and the opening of Café Como.
- 3.3 Later alterations to the building are of lesser significance. The alterations of 1880 were not especially sympathetic in architectural terms, with the ground floor refaced and the jetties underbuilt in a fairly hard red brick, but the timber framed and gabled 'oriel' addition is a picturesque (although not typically Suffolk) feature and the initials of Walter Thomas Brown of Brent Eleigh Hall add evidential and historical value.
- 3.4 There are three lean-to additions, one on the west side of the service range, one on the west side of the hall range and one on the north side of the parlour range. All are of nineteenth or twentieth century date, and of low significance. That attached to the parlour range (the subject of this application) is of late twentieth century date and is poor in aesthetic terms, its bland, flush east façade undermining the architectural articulation of the corner of the parlour range.

4. LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND POLICY

4.1 The overarching legislative context for managing change in the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, Section 66 (1) of which states that:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting [...]

4.2 Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2018, p.71) as:
The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

4.3 NPPF paragraph 184 enjoins local authorities to recognise that designated heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraphs 193-4 state:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification [...]

4.4 NPPF para 11 states that development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

4.5 National legislation and guidance is reflected in local plan policies. Of particular relevance in this instance is Babergh/Mid Suffolk Local Plan Policy CNO6, which states:

Proposals for the alteration (including part demolition), extension or change of use of buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (including curtilage structures), or for the subdivision of, or new work within the curtilage or setting of a listed building should:

- preserve the historic fabric of the building, and ensure that all proposals to remove by demolition, or alter any part of the building are justified in terms of preserving the special character of the building and will cause the minimum possible impact;

- retain all elements, components, and features which form part of the building's special interest and respect the original scale, form, design and purpose of the architectural unit;
- not conceal features of importance or special interest;
- be of an appropriate scale, form, siting and detailed design to harmonise with the existing building and its setting;
- retain a curtilage area and/or setting which is appropriate to the listed building and the relationship with its surroundings;
- include fenestration which respects the character of the building;
- retain traditional thatch roof coverings;
- use materials and components which are natural or handmade, and which complement or harmonise with those on the building and the area. This will include: lime plasters and lime mortars; natural clay or slate roofs; bricks; handmade timber windows and doors;
- use appropriate detailing, finishes, and colours, both internally and externally;
- respect those features which contribute positively to the setting of a listed building including space, views from and to the building and historic layout; and
- comply with Annex C of PPG 15.

5. CURRENT PROPOSALS AND THEIR HERITAGE IMPACT



Fig. 16: Rear perspective (Project Orange)

- 5.1 Please refer to the application drawings prepared by Project Orange. These were the subject of a pre-application submission (pre-application inquiry DC/21/03131), and the proposals were broadly welcomed by the Council. Various positive suggestions were made by the Conservation Officer, and these have been incorporated in the proposals.
- 5.2 The details of the proposals and the design rationale are set out in the Design and Access Statement, prepared by Project Orange. Briefly, the proposals involve the removal of the twentieth century lean-to addition on the north side of the parlour range and its replacement with a new single-storey extension with link structure.
- 5.3 In heritage terms the proposal is uncontentious, and in some respects beneficial. The existing lean-to structure is of low aesthetic and historical value, and has a poor visual and physical relationship with fabric of high architectural, historical and aesthetic value. By removing it and providing a narrower link structure, more of the north elevation of the parlour range will be removed and the setting back of the link will allow the northwest corner of that range to be better articulated. The newly-exposed wall of the parlour range will be made good in lime render, following the treatment on the left (east) side of the stack. The new addition will be clad mainly in vertical timber boarding which, with the pantile roof, will reflect the building's subsidiary status and reflect the agricultural character and history of the site; the more 'polite' elevation towards the street will be faced in red brick, with tumbled detail in the gable. The addition being

only single storey, the chimney stack will remain prominent in long views from the north, and (as now) will become more fully visible as the building is approached (although the view will be constrained, as now, by the non-deciduous hedge along the property boundary. As the visuals make clear, the house's and specifically the stack's contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area (a potential concern raised by the Conservation Officer) will be preserved.

5.4 In summary, the proposals comply with Babergh/Mid Suffolk Local Plan Policy CNO6 in all relevant respects:

- They preserve the historic fabric of the building, the element to be removed not contributing to the special character of the building.
- They involve no impact on historic fabric; access to the new extension will be via the existing door in the north wall of the parlour range.
- All elements, components, and features which form part of the special interest of the building will be retained, and the addition is respectful and harmonious in terms of scale, form, design and purpose.
- The extension does not conceal features of importance or special interest; on the contrary, it better reveals them.
- The site covers a large area, and its immediate garden setting was historically dominated by other buildings, some of them of substantial footprint. Cottages formerly occupied the site of the proposed addition. There are therefore historical precedents for building here. Nevertheless, an appropriate lower scale has been adopted. A curtilage area appropriate to the listed building will be retained and harm to its setting and surroundings avoided.
- The proposed fenestration respects the character of the building, with the vertical glazing subdivisions of the link echoing the timber framing of the rear elevation and the other windows in the extension being in a low-key contemporary style, complement the host building in their form and scale.
- The proposed materials – brick, timber, pantile, lime plaster and mortar – are all natural and hand-made, and will harmonise with the building and the prevailing character of the conservation area. The addition will use appropriate detailing, finishes and colours, both internally and externally.
- Finally, the addition respects all those features which contribute positively to the setting of the heritage asset, including views from and to the building, as well as the historic plan form and layout.

APPENDIX 1: SITE ENTRY IN SUFFOLK HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

Suffolk HER Number (Pref. Ref.): BTE 027
Unique number (MonUID): MSF25240
Type of Record: Farmstead
Parish: BRENT ELEIGH, BABERGH, SUFFOLK
NGR: TL 9440 4763

Summary

Street Farm is a farmstead visible on the 1st Ed OS map. The farmstead is laid out in a regular E-plan. The farmhouse is detached and set side on to the yard. The farmstead sits alongside a public road in a village location. There has been a significant loss of working buildings with a large modern shed on site.

Monument Types

- [FARMHOUSE](#) (15th century to 16th century - 1400 AD to 1599 AD)
- [FARMSTEAD](#) (15th century to 16th century - 1400 AD to 1599 AD)
- [BARN](#) (19th century - 1800 AD to 1899 AD)
- [REGULAR COURTYARD E PLAN](#) (19th century - 1800 AD to 1899 AD)
- [SHED](#) (19th century - 1800 AD to 1899 AD)
- [BARN](#) (20th century - 1900 AD to 1999 AD)

Associated Finds: None recorded

Protected Status: Listed Building (II) 276333: STREET FARMHOUSE

Description

Street Farm is a farmstead visible on the 1st Ed OS map. The farmstead is laid out in a regular E-plan. The farmhouse is detached and set side on to the yard. The farmstead sits alongside a public road in a village location. There has been a significant loss of working buildings with a large modern shed on site. (S2-5)

Two 19th century farm buildings that formed part of a continuous complex of outbuildings. The 1886 OS map shows a range of outbuildings adjacent to the house. Building one has two walls constructed from brick and two which are timber framed, with an earth floor and a purlin style roof. Building two was damaged by fire and has been re-constructed from a mix of older brickwork and re-used timbers alongside modern materials. This structure has a new timber roof covered with pantiles as well as a concrete floor (S1).

Sources

- [S1] Unpublished document: Modece Architects. 2011. Historic Appraisal of Outbuildings, Street Farm, Brent Eleigh. (SSF54009)
- [S2] Vertical Aerial Photograph: various. Google Earth. (SSZ54999)
- [S3] Map: Ordnance Survey. c 1904. Ordnance Survey 25 inch to 1 mile map, 2nd edition. 25". (SXS50094)
- [S4] Map: Ordnance Survey. 1880s. Ordnance Survey 25 inch to 1 mile map, 1st edition. (SXS50088)
- [S5] Unpublished document: Campbell, G., and McSorley, G. 2019. SCCAS: Farmsteads in the Suffolk Countryside Project. (SSF59079)

APPENDIX 2: LIST ENTRY

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1037346

Date first listed: 10-Jul-1980

Statutory Address: STREET FARMHOUSE, THE STREET

County: Suffolk

District: Babergh (District Authority)

Parish: Brent Eleigh

National Grid Reference: TL 94432 47626

Details

BRENT ELEIGH THE STREET 1. 5377 Street Farmhouse TL 9447 53/186

II

A timber-framed and plastered building of C15-C16 origin with cross wings at the north-west and south-east ends. Much altered. Two storeys. The south-east cross wing has a jettied upper storey on the front and the timber-framing is exposed on the south-east end. The north-west cross wing was added or rebuilt at a later date. The centre block has a large jettied gabled dormer with the initials W. B. above the date 1880. The ground storey on the front is faced in red brick. Casement windows. Roof tiled, with a tall ridge chimney. stack with a diagonally set shaft, and an external chimney stack at the north-west end with tabled offsets and a cruciform shaft. The interior has exposed timber-framing and there is a crown post roof.

Listing NGR: TL9443247626

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