

# WINGFIELD PRIORY, SUFFOLK

## HERITAGE STATEMENT



**February 2022**



**WINGFIELD PRIORY  
WINGFIELD  
SUFFOLK**

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**Prepared by**

**The Architectural History Practice Ltd**

**For**

**Robert and Jo Saville**

**February 2022**



# CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	4
2. WINGFIELD PRIORY .....	5
The farmhouse in the nineteenth century .....	6
Acquisition by the SPAB .....	10
1990s alterations.....	21
3. ANNOTATED PHOTOGRAPHS .....	25
4. SIGNIFICANCE.....	34
5. LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND POLICY.....	36
6. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT .....	38
Methodology .....	38
Background to current proposals .....	39
Current proposals .....	41
<i>Alterations to the former barn</i> .....	41
<i>Bathroom in attic store</i> .....	44
<i>Demolition of entrance lobby and link</i> .....	45
<i>Alterations to utility room, including new porch</i> .....	45
<i>Alterations to the eastern range</i> .....	46
<i>External repainting/limewashing</i> .....	46
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	47
Appendix 1: Existing floor plans (Retrouvius) .....	48
Appendix 2: List entry .....	50
Appendix 3: Extract from nineteenth century survey report .....	51

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by the Architectural History Practice (AHP) to accompany applications for planning and permission and listed building consent relating to Wingfield Priory, a Grade II-listed property. The proposals chiefly involve alterations to a timber framed former barn attached to the rear of the property, in association with its conversion to use as a kitchen and family room. Other alterations are proposed, detailed on the application drawings and described below.
- 1.2 The proposals were the subject of a pre-application submission to Babergh/Mid Suffolk Council by Durrants Building Consultancy (reference DC/21/00614). They have been significantly amended in the light of advice received from the council at that time, and following the appointment of Retrouvius Ltd as architects and AHP as heritage consultants.
- 1.3 This statement has been written by Andrew Derrick BA Hons AADipl Cons IHBC, a director of AHP. It provides an outline development history of the site, describes the buildings, assesses their significance and assesses the impact of current proposals in the light of relevant national and local policies and guidance. It reflects the advice of the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 194, 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'.
- 1.4 The writer is grateful to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the owners for making available archive information, which has usefully informed the development of the proposals.

## 2. WINGFIELD PRIORY



Fig. 1: Main range from southwest

- 2.1 Wingfield Priory (floor plans at appendix 1) was listed Grade II in 1955. The current list entry is at appendix 2.
- 2.2 There is no information on the building and site in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record, and the property is not included in James Bettley's revision of *The Buildings of England, Suffolk: East* (2015). The following account draws on information in the SPAB archive and research carried out by or on behalf of the previous owners.
- 2.3 Then name Wingfield Priory suggests a monastic, pre-Reformation origin. Although this is a modern (twentieth century) name, the site appears to have formed part of the land belonging to Wingfield College, a possession of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, which was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1541.<sup>1</sup> However, the main range of the present building (fig 1) has a later character and is given a date of c.1600 in the list entry. In 1603 ownership passed to John Godfrey, Steward of the Manor of Wingfield Old Hall; at this time the property was known as 'Vynces', probably after William Carre, *alias* Vince, who had been owner prior to Godfrey. In 1612 ownership passed to John

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives, SC 6/HENVIII/3434

Bancroft, in whose family it remained until 1687; they may have built the attached barn at the rear of the house. This is given a sixteenth century date in the list entry (i.e. earlier than the main range), but the overlaying of the roof structure on that of the front range confirms that the barn is a later, probably seventeenth century, addition.

### **The farmhouse in the nineteenth century**

2.4 From 1785 the property was owned by the Adair family, who had extensive estates in Suffolk, Norfolk, London and Ireland. Between 1831 and 1871 the farmhouse was occupied by William Brighton, hence the later name of Brighton's Farmhouse. A survey document dating from about 1870 (copy in the possession of the current owners, extract from text included at appendix 3) describes the farmhouse as of 'mud and plaster' and 'rapidly becoming dilapidated'. The farm buildings are described as 'joined up to the house in an inconvenient manner and are generally of an inferior description'. Accompanying plans identify the use of the main ground floor spaces in the farmhouse and the use of the attached or adjacent farm buildings. The farmhouse (fig. 3) was an inverted 'T' on plan, with the large spaces on either side of the great central stack used as a living room and a wash house. Giving off the living room to the north were cellars and a store, and beyond this (in a lean-to structure, no longer extant) was a hen house. In the projecting stub to the east was a dairy. Attached to the east of this were the farm buildings, forming an extended T. These are shown at fig. 2 and in enlarged detail at fig. 4. They included:

- A **Barn**, 'of stud clay and boarding on brick underpinning, thatched'. The southern end (under the current gallery) is denoted 'cows', adjoining which was a northern lean-to structure for calves, of 'stud and boarding on brick underpinning'.
- Attached to the east of the barn was a farm building identified as **cart house stable**, 'same materials as barn'. It had a lean-to 'horse shed and hack stable' on the north side, 'of stud and clay, on brick underpinning, pantiled, past repair'.
- Adjoining to the south was a **cart shed**, 'of clay, no underpinning, pantiled, past repair'. The survey advised that it should be rebuilt in brick.
- There was also a **cow shed**, of 'rough stuff, built by tenant'.
- Finally, alongside the rectangular garden area immediately in front of the farmhouse there was a **gig house** and **hen house**, 'of stud and clay, on low underpinning, pantiled'.

- 2.5 It is clear from this description that the barn and attached lower farm building to its east were of timber framed construction, with clay (wattle and daub) infilling. They were externally clad with weatherboard, and had thatched roofs. It is also to be noted that the plan of the barn indicates a pair of doors on both the north and the south side.
- 2.6 The general layout of farm buildings is shown on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1886 and 1904 (figs 5 and 6). In the 1886 map the occupied buildings are coloured carmine (or pink) and the farm buildings grey. By 1886 the two small buildings identified as 'pigs' and 'shed' at fig. 4 had been replaced with a single larger structure (the present utility room), attached to the south side of the barn.

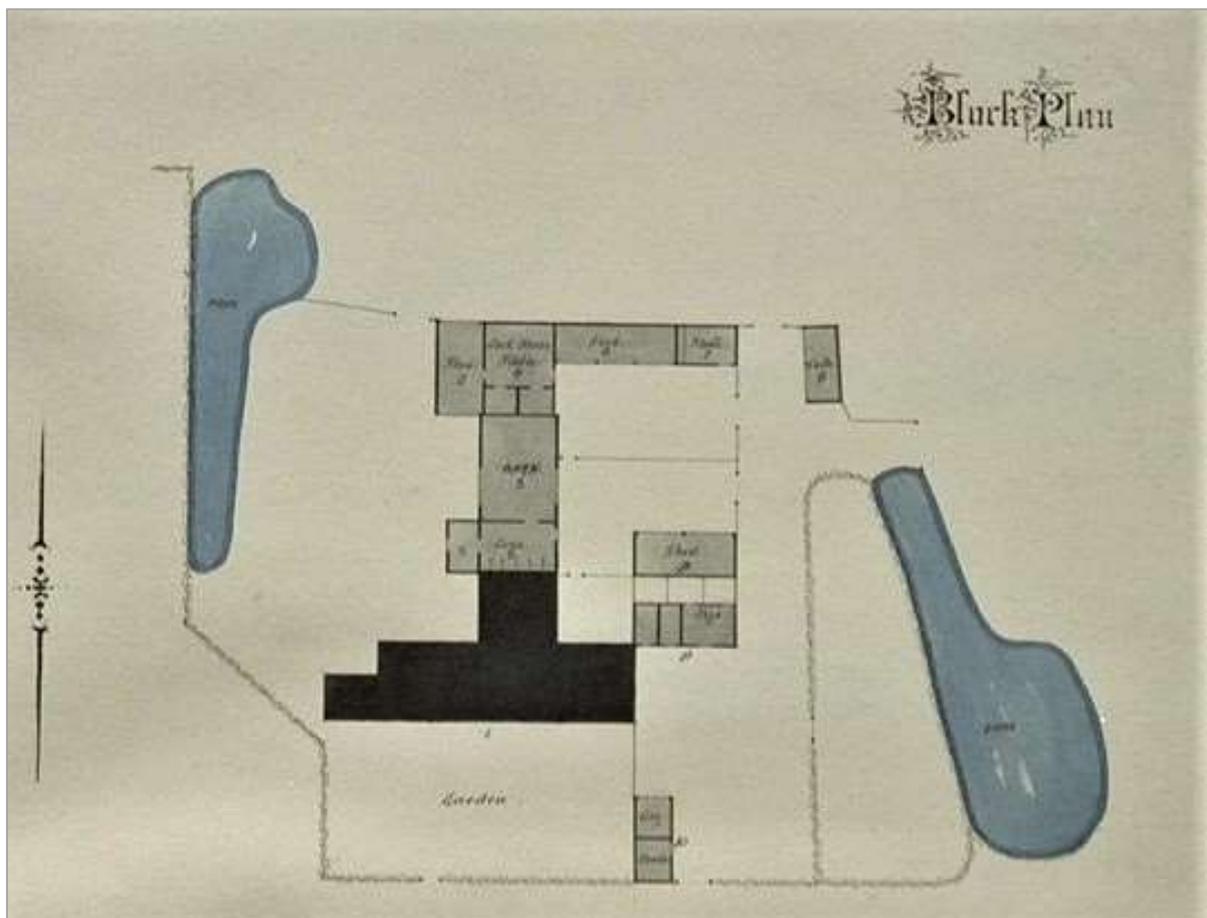


Fig 2: Plan showing farmhouse (shaded black) attached and adjacent farm buildings, c.1870 (owners' file)

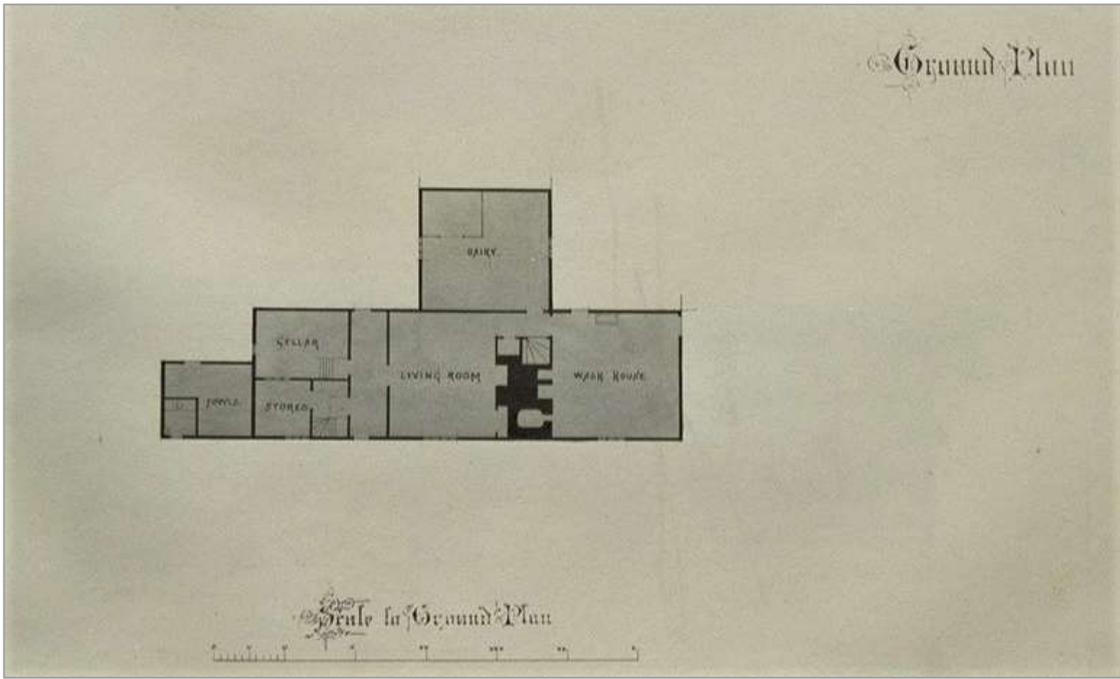


Fig. 3: Ground floor plan of farmhouse, c.1870 (owners' file)

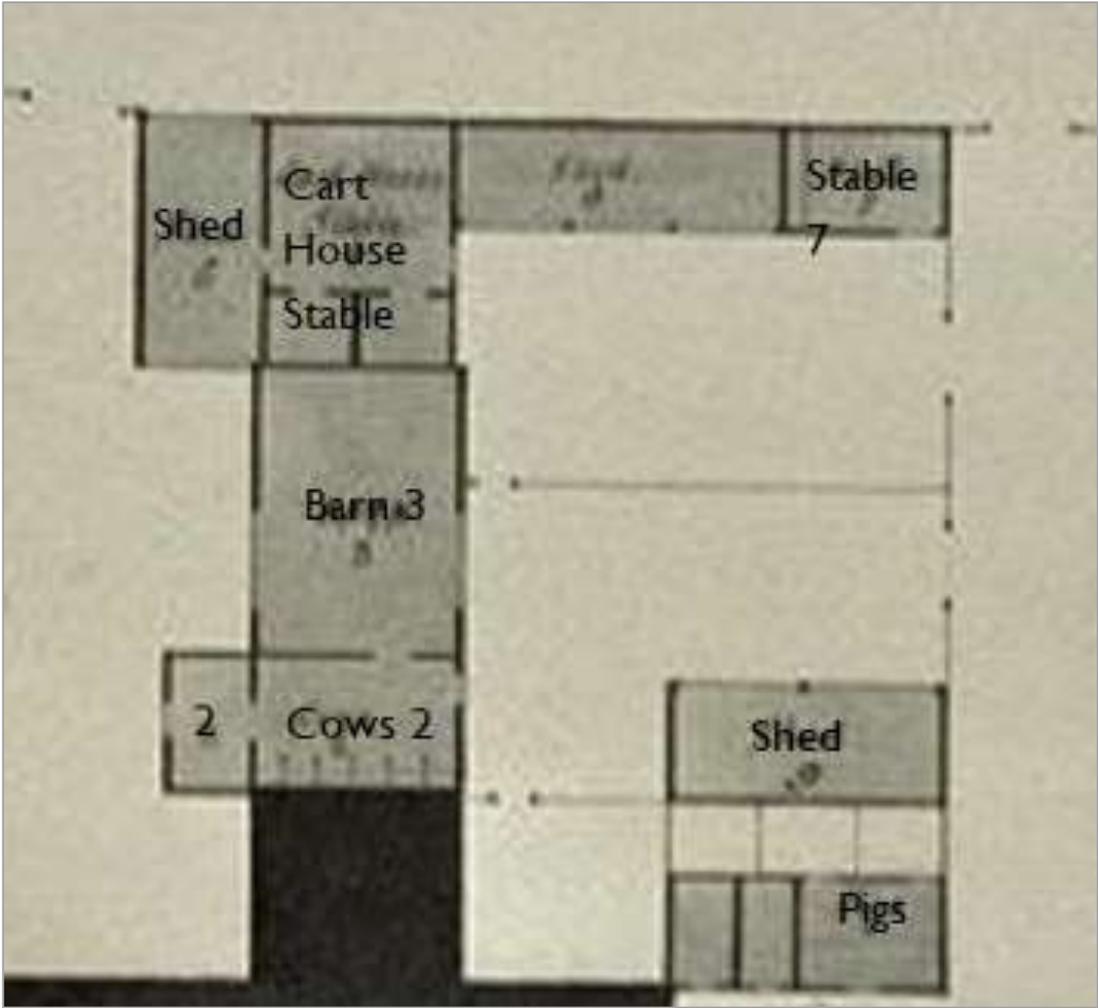


Fig. 4: Enlarged detail of fig. 2, with annotation clarified. Note barn doors.

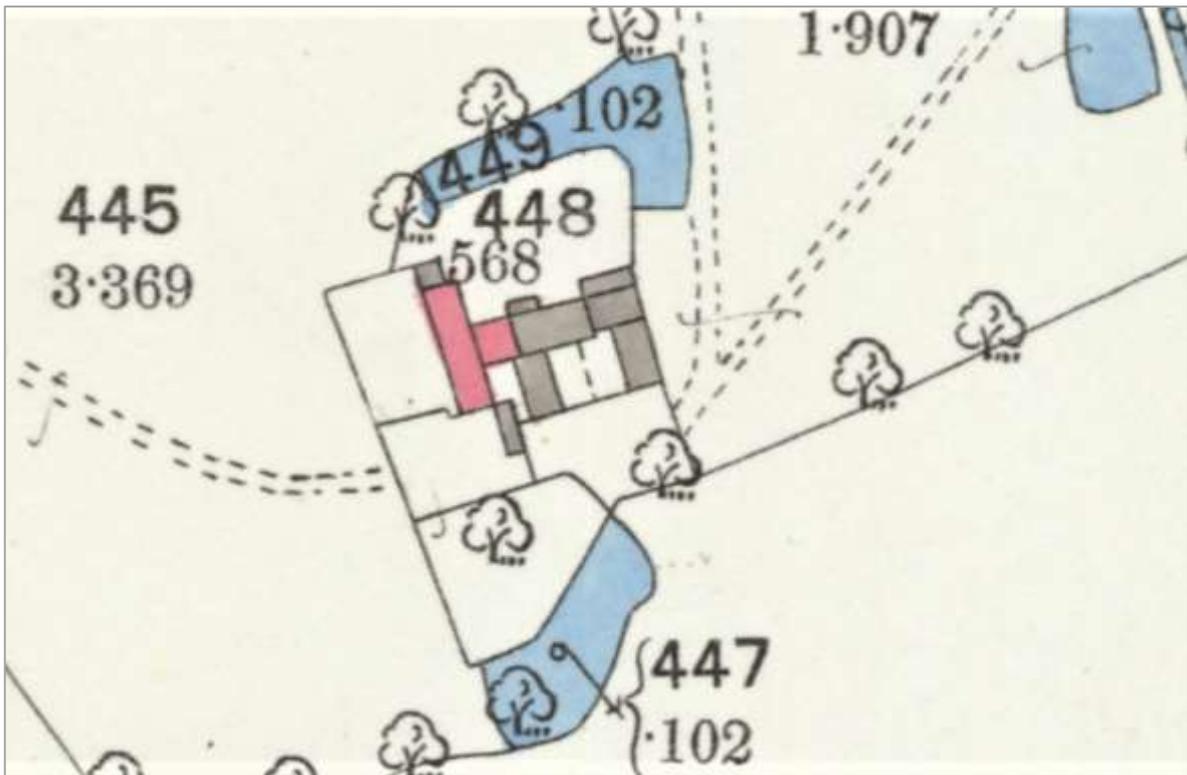


Fig. 5: Detail from 1886 Ordnance Survey map, Suffolk sheet XXVI.11 (National Library of Scotland)

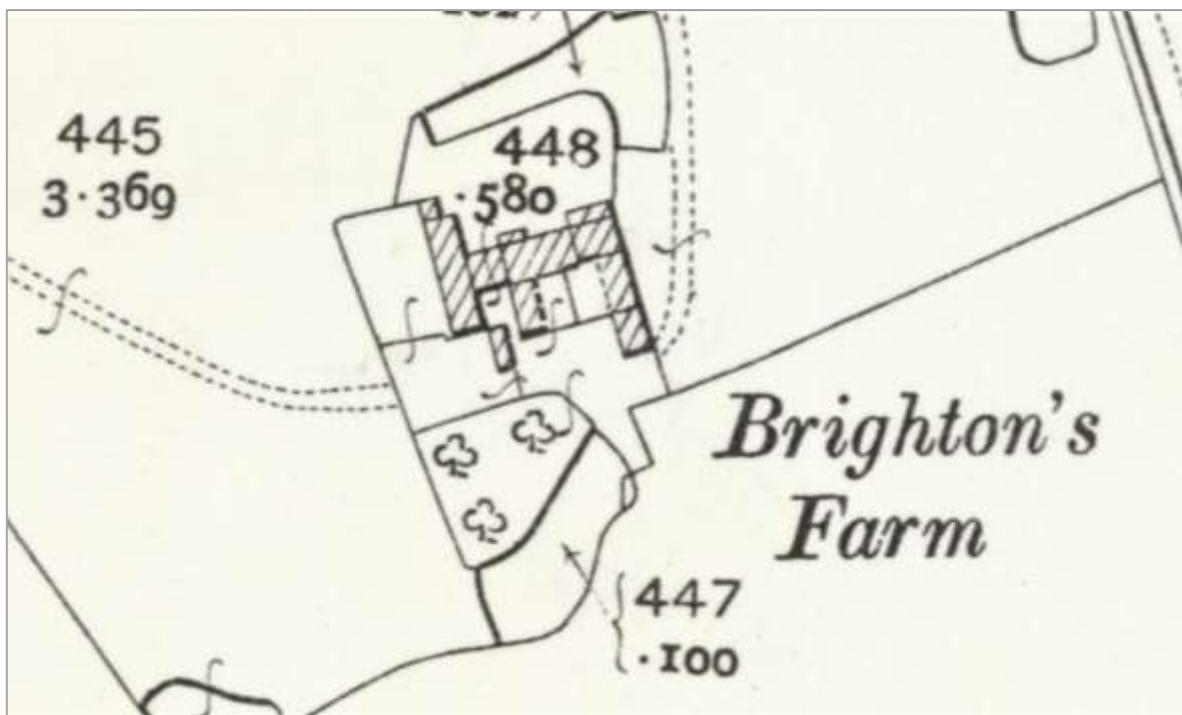


Fig. 6: Detail from 1904 Ordnance Survey map, Suffolk sheet XXVI.11 (National Library of Scotland)

## **Acquisition by the SPAB**

- 2.7 In March 1954, the then owner, Mrs D. Norris, wrote to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) offering them the property, along with the furnishings, 33 acres of land and a sum of £2,000 to provide an income for repairs. A note on the SPAB file from this time states that ‘the property fell into a poor state of repair and was about to be condemned in 1938 when it was bought (by Mrs Norris) and the work of repair and restoration begun’. Col. S. E. Glendinning, who visited the property on behalf of the Society, reported that ‘some of the repair work undertaken by Mrs Norris was not in accord with the principles of the SPAB’. Nevertheless, as this work ‘had not destroyed the basic interest of the house, it was a property which the Society might well accept, particularly as it was in excellent order and in the hands of an owner whose desire it was to maintain and preserve the building’.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.8 In the SPAB archives there are two photographs, undated but predating the acquisition of the building by the Society (which took place in 1965, after the death of Mrs Norris). These (figs 7 and 8) show the barn clad in horizontal black weatherboarding (as in the nineteenth century description quoted above), with the lower cart house/stable to the east now rendered. Both elements have pantile roofs rather than the thatch mentioned in the nineteenth century description. The barn had by this time lost its southern doors, and mullioned windows are shown on the ground and first floors. It is likely that these works of adaptation belong to the semi-residential conversion of the building by Mrs Norris, which involved extensive use of recycled timbers (and possibly gave rise to Col. Glendinning’s comments about the work not being in accordance with the principles of the SPAB).
- 2.9 In 1955, Wingfield Priory was listed Grade II, as Brighton’s Farmhouse (although Mrs Norris had used the name Wingfield Priory when offering the property to the SPAB in 1954). The original list description was brief:

C17 front wing, C16 rear. Two storeys and attic, gabled windows. Timber-framed, plastered, pantiles. Rebuilt chimney. Many original mullion and transom windows and some old plank doors. Old buttery door to cellar.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> SPAB committee minutes, 18 May 1954

<sup>3</sup> Copy on SPAB file

2.10 By the time the property came to the SPAB, the house had been refaced in cementitious render (fig. 9) and the weatherboard on the barn replaced with render over expanded metal lath, at least on its north elevation (fig. 10). An interior view of the barn probably taken at this time (looking south towards the stack of the former dairy) is at fig. 11. The southern return of the eastern outbuilding was still partly weatherboarded (fig. 12). Further outbuildings on the south side, since demolished, are shown at fig. 13.



Fig. 7: Undated, probably mid-C20th photograph, showing the barn weatherboarded (SPAB file)



Fig. 8: Undated, probably mid-twentieth century photograph, showing the barn clad in weatherboard and the lower range to the east rendered, possibly over weatherboard (SPAB file)



Fig. 9: Wingfield Priory in 1965, at the time of the SPAB's acquisition. The old lime render had been replaced with a more cementitious render. The lean-to structure to the east may have been that shown on the nineteenth century plans and maps (SPAB file)



Fig. 10: The rear elevation of the front range and the north elevation of the barn, at the time of the SPAB's acquisition in 1965. By this time the weatherboard on the barn had been replaced with cementitious render. Note the door at the top end of the barn (SPAB file)



Fig. 11: Barn interior, looking south towards stack of former dairy, c.1965? (SPAB file)



Fig 12: Photo with verso inscription 'Back of barns and outbuildings, July, 1965'. The weatherboard survived in part on the southern return of the eastern outbuilding and beneath plaster on the eastern gable end elevation. Note windows on this elevation and high level window in barn gable (SPAB file).



Fig. 13: Photo with verso inscription 'Kitchen end at back of house, site of barn, garage and fuel stores, July 1965'. The left hand forebuilding has been demolished, the right hand one remodelled as the present utility room (SPAB file).

- 2.11 In 1966 a condition report was prepared by David Evelyn Nye & Partners of Guildford; this commented that ‘Mrs Norris purchased the house before the last war and carried out extensive repairs and alterations. The interior remains attractive with the framing exposed in most rooms, though ‘features’ have been introduced from other buildings. (A fairly complete record of these exists). Unfortunately the external appearance has been completely ruined by being covered with a hard rendering and by the windows which are of poor design and out of scale’.<sup>4</sup> The report described the condition of the barn as ‘good’, but noted that the rendering on the gable end of the eastern extension was ‘in part at least, on expanded metal lathing fixed over old weatherboarding’ (see figs. 8 and 12).
- 2.12 During 1966, repairs and minor improvements to the house were undertaken by David Mawson ARIBA of Feilden & Mawson. Alterations included the creation of a lobby under the gallery, with an existing WC separating this area from the space of the barn beyond (fig. 14). Above this, a bathroom was formed beside the chimney stack, giving off the rear bedroom (fig. 15). Only basic repairs were carried out to the barn and the attached outbuilding to its east; this included Sandtex painting of the external render, as also applied to the rest of the property.

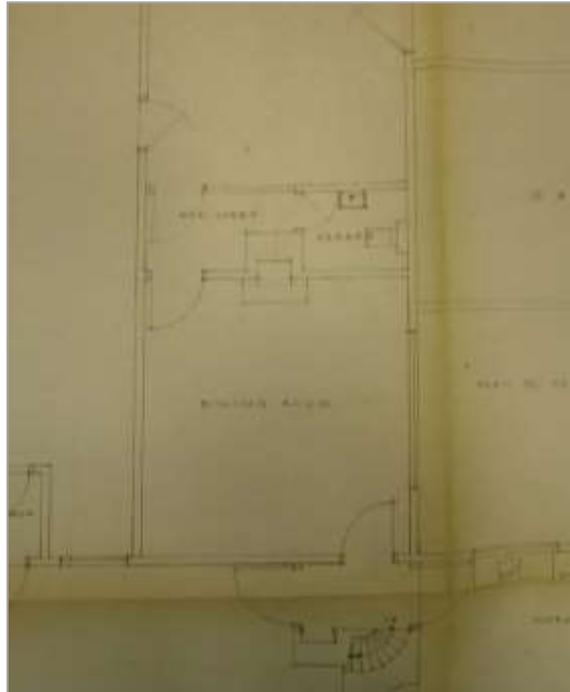


Fig. 14: Detail of drawing by Feilden & Mawson, dated March 1966, showing cloak room and proposed lobby between dining room and barn (SPAB file)

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<sup>4</sup> Report dated August 1966, on SPAB file. The present whereabouts of the ‘fairly complete record’ is unknown.

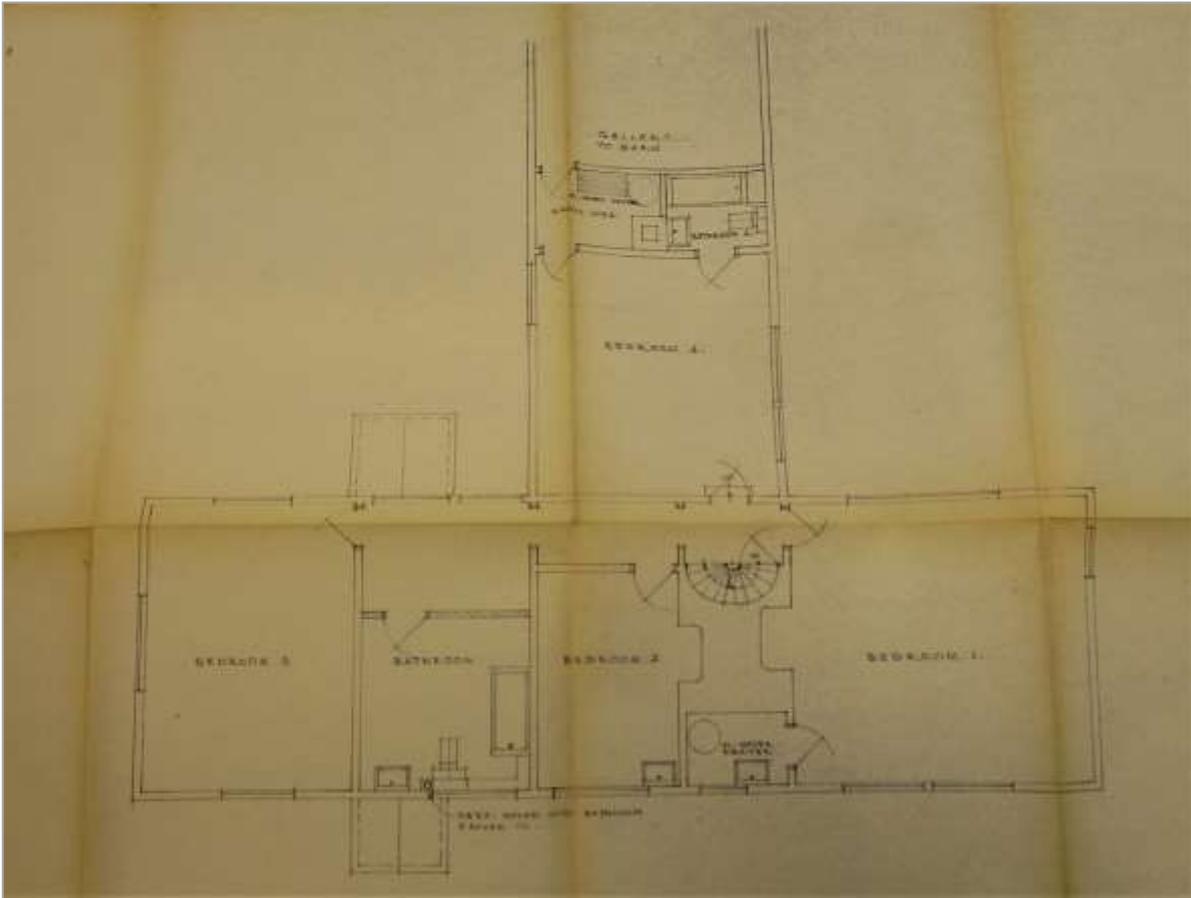


Fig. 15: Detail of drawing by Feilden & Mawson, dated March 1966, showing proposed WC and airing cupboard on either side of stack separating bedroom 4 from barn gallery (SPAB file)

- 2.13 In 1979 an invoice was received from C. Hugman & Sons, builders of Stradbroke, for various works including ‘constructing new opening light to barn, glazing and hanging same’.<sup>5</sup> This must refer to the lower right hand window on the south elevation (see fig. 27).
- 2.14 In 1986 a schedule of works was prepared by Hollins, surveyors of Woodbridge. Their schematic plan indicates that at this time the former barn was in use as a garage, with the building to the east a store (fig. 16). Proposed repairs to these buildings included re-roofing (with underfelt) and the repair of a window on the south side of the barn/garage (‘take out decayed studwork below window and renew in timber of size and species to match’). Also to ‘fix galvanised expanded metal lath as necessary and re-render to match’. It is not certain that all these works were carried out, for at this time the SPAB was engaged in lengthy negotiations with the tenant over an extension to the lease. The former barn was re-roofed (with underfelt) and emergency repairs carried out by the Society in 1989, but they did not have the funds to carry out all that was

<sup>5</sup> Invoice dated 16 January 1979, on SPAB file

required. In 1990 authorisation was obtained from the Charity Commission to sell the building, with a covenant requiring the Society's approval for future alterations.

2.15 A photograph from a *Country Life* advertisement of sale is at fig. 17. The Strutt & Parker sale particulars described the property as 'an historic Grade II listed Suffolk longhouse requiring renovation in a secluded country setting' and described the former barn as providing 'potential for the extension of the living accommodation. Presently ideal as a playroom/annexe. Fine exposed timbers, two fine queen posts, concrete floor and former mullion windows. Large external doors'.<sup>6</sup>

2.16 Photographs showing the appearance of the property at the time of sale are at figs. 18-22.

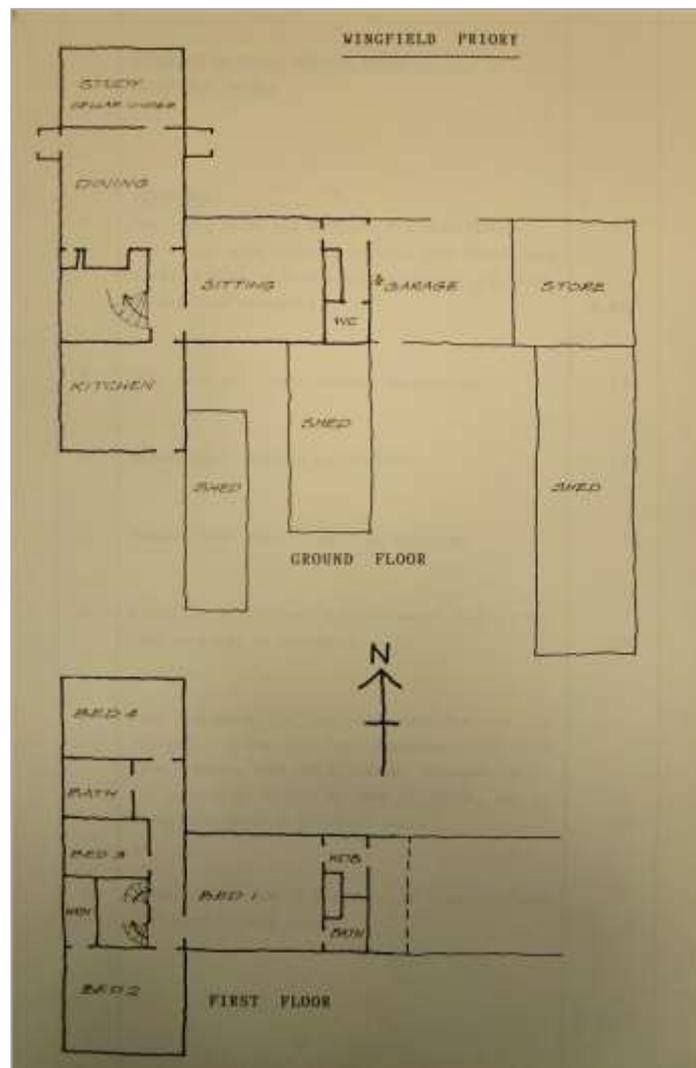


Fig. 16: Floor plans by Hollins, 1986 (SPAB file)

<sup>6</sup> Sale particulars on SPAB file

**STRUTT & PARKER** 



**Suffolk Nr. Eye**

Diss 8 miles, A140 8 miles, Liverpool Street Station approx. 100 minutes.

**An historic Grade II Listed Suffolk Long house requiring renovation in a delightfully secluded country setting.**

3 reception rooms, farmhouse kitchen., 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 attic bedrooms. Large adjoining annexe barn. Range of outbuildings.

About 4 acres.

Region £160,000.

**Ipswich Office:**  
11 Museum Street,  
Tel: (0473) 214841.

Ref. 5DD9434.

Fig. 17: Advertisement in *Country Life*, 1990 (SPAB file)



Fig. 18: West elevation of main range, 1990 (SPAB file)



Fig. 19: North elevation of main range, 1990 (SPAB file)



Fig. 20: North elevation of former barn, 1990 (SPAB file)



Fig. 21: View from east, 1990 (SPAB file)



Fig. 22: View from south, 1990 (SPAB file)

## 1990s alterations

- 2.17 A series of alterations were carried out in the 1990s by Culver Evans of Hoxne, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Patterson, owners from 1992. These included:
- Erection of a detached garage to the south of the house (approved in June 1992);
  - Demolition of the twentieth century outbuilding shown at figs. 13 and 22 and replacement with a new glazed and pantiled entrance lobby, linking the utility room and kitchen and creating a small courtyard behind (approved in December 1992 and carried out in 1993, figs. 23 and 24);
  - Conversion of the eastern range (attached to the former barn) from a store into living accommodation, including windows between the studs on the gable end and a chimney stack against the raised gable of the barn (figs. 25 and 26). These works received planning permission and listed building consent in March 1995 and were carried out in 1998, but without the approval of the SPAB, as required by the sale covenant. The Society (reluctantly and retrospectively ) gave consent in September 2009.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.18 The conversion of the eastern range involved the removal of one timber stud in the eastern wall of the former barn, to create an opening to connect these two areas. The former barn was repaired, with new oak doors on the north side and a smaller doorway on the north side blocked. Inside, a new gallery front and stair to the gallery were installed at the west end, and below the gallery the WC was removed and an opening formed in the modern wall below. An oak boarded floor was laid over the concrete finish mentioned in the 1990 sale particulars.
- 2.19 When Wingfield Priory was put back on to the market in 2009 (fig. 27), the former barn was described as a ‘function barn’ which ‘provides flexibility and scope for a variety of uses, including function room, games room, workshop or studio, as well as having the potential to be formalised to provide further accommodation if required’.<sup>8</sup> However, none of these uses has come about, mainly because the space is inadequately heated and poorly insulated and therefore not easily habitable in the winter months.

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<sup>7</sup> Letter from SPAB to Jackaman, Smith & Mulley, 1 September 2009 (on SPAB file)

<sup>8</sup> Jackson-Stops and Staff sale particulars, 2009

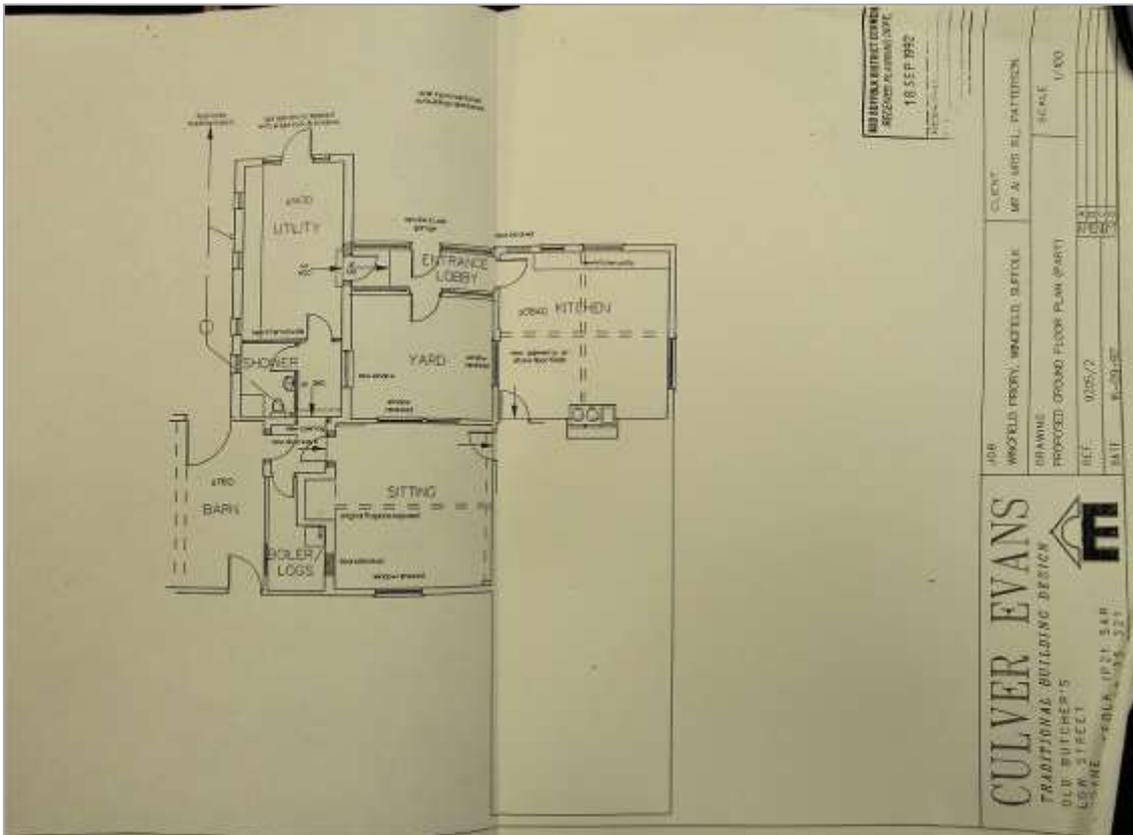


Fig. 23: Plan by Culver Evans, 1992, showing proposed entrance lobby and alterations to former garage and space below barn gallery (SPAB file)

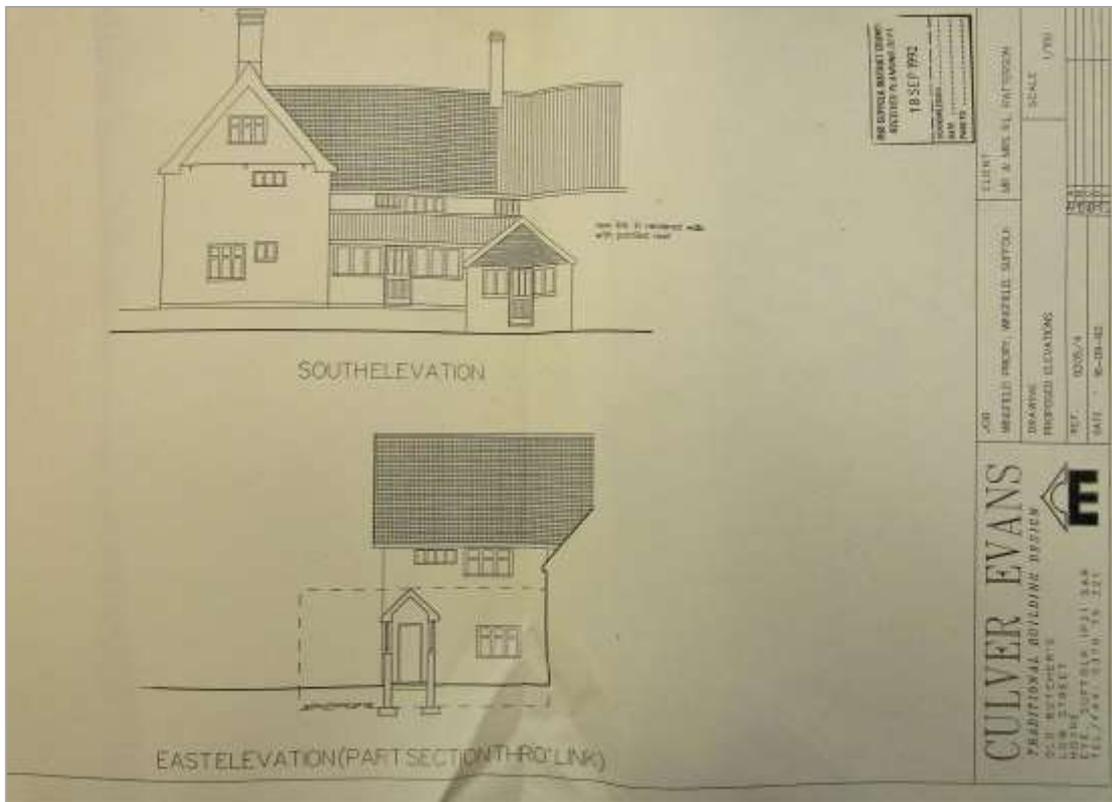


Fig. 24: South elevation and section of proposed entrance lobby, Culver Evans, 1992 (SPAB file)

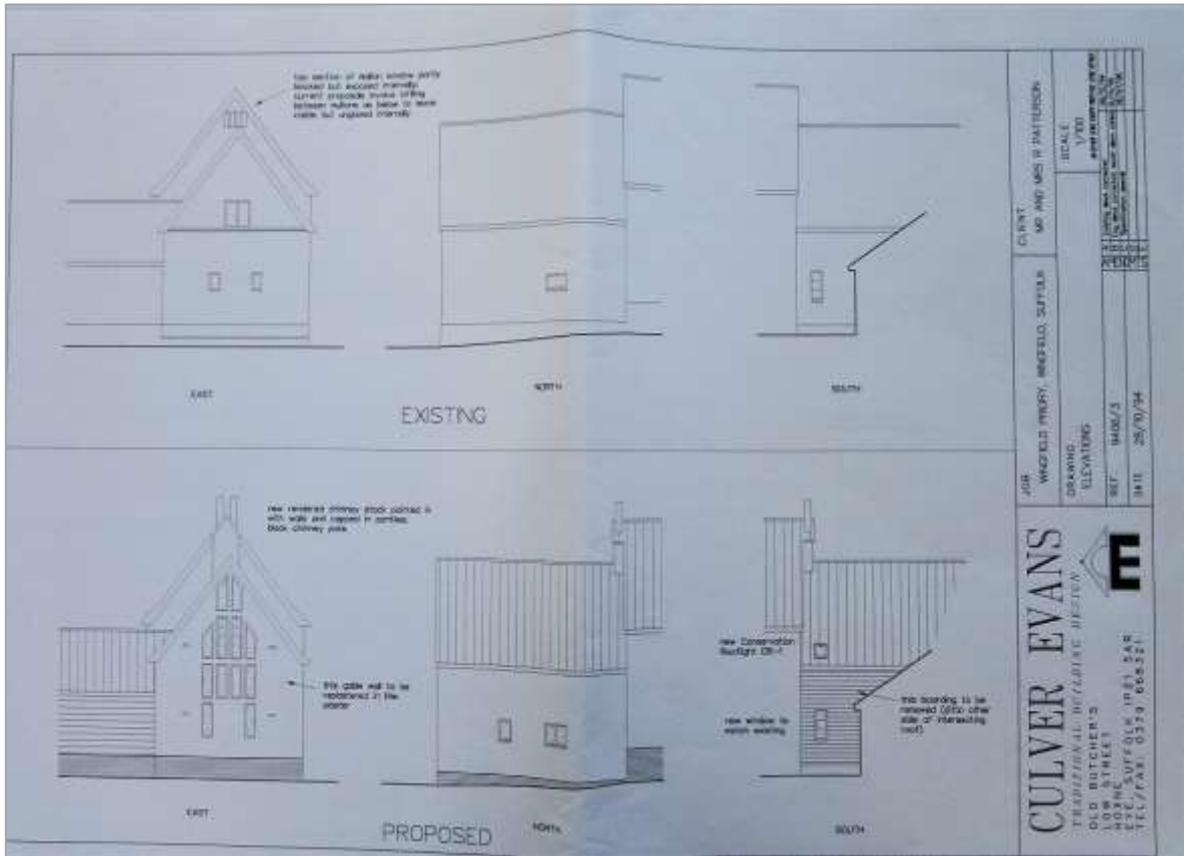


Fig. 25: Elevations for conversion of eastern store, Culver Evans, 1994 (SPAB file)

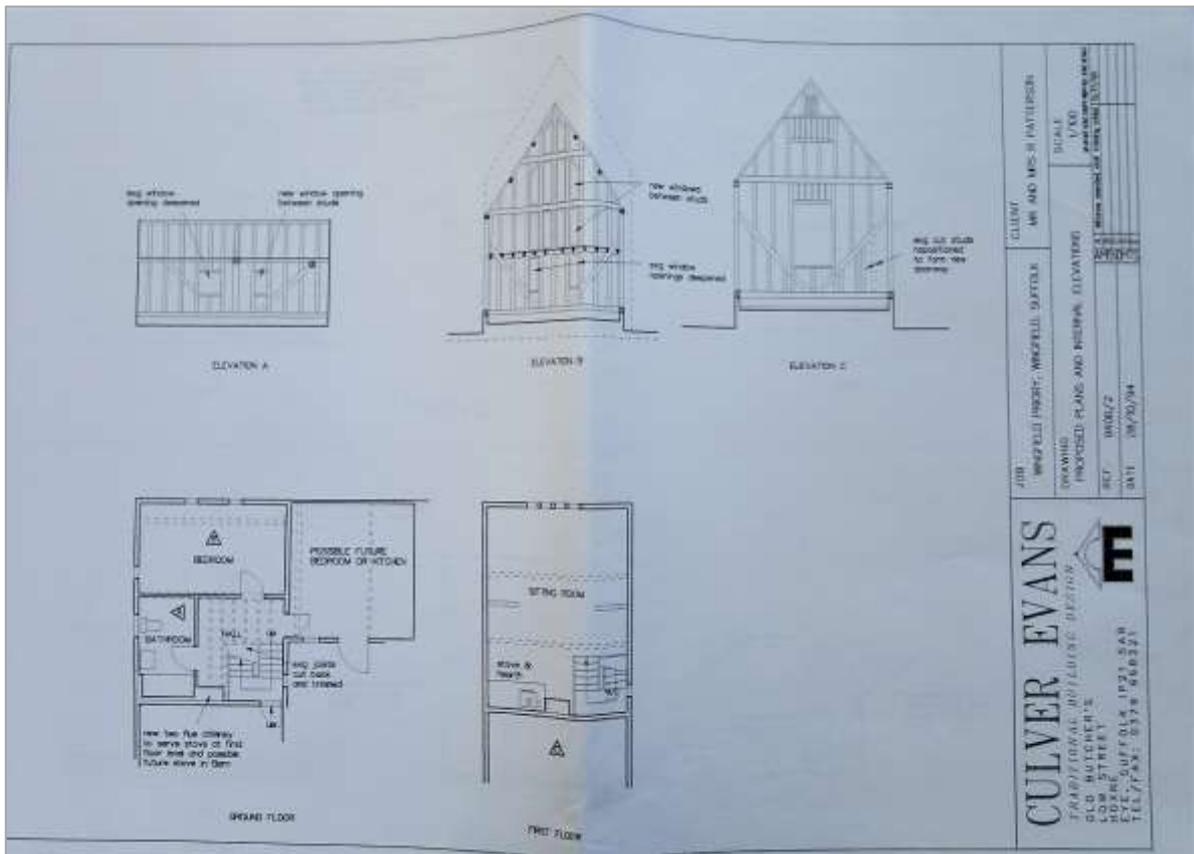


Fig. 26: Plans and internal elevations for conversion of eastern store, Culver Evans, 1994 (SPAB file)



Fig. 27: Photograph from Jackson-Stops & Staff sales brochure, 2009, showing the new (1993) link between the utility room and kitchen and new brick terrace to south of former barn. The lower right hand window in the barn is probably that installed in 1979 (see para. 2.12) (SPAB file)

### 3. ANNOTATED PHOTOGRAPHS



Fig. 28: The front range from southwest. Visible to the rear is the low single storey link building of 1993, which will be removed under current proposals.



Fig. 29: The front range and former dairy form a T-plan; the attached former barn (with pantiles) is to the left.



Fig. 30: North elevation of the former barn. Since 1990 (fig. 20) a door opening to the right has been blocked, and the barn doors replaced. Under current proposals the blocked opening will be partially re-opened as a mullion window and new barn doors provided.



Fig. 31: East elevation of the lower former farm building, converted to residential use in 1998, when the present 'ecclesiastical' glazing was installed between the timber studs. These openings will be simplified and the detailing refined under current proposals.



Fig. 32: South elevation of the former barn. The door shown to the left of the mullion window will be blocked and the brick plinth and sole plate reinstated. Central barn doors will be reinstated (as shown on old plans and as evidenced by the fabric). The plate glass casement window lower right dates from 1979; it will be replaced by a diamond mullion window.



Fig. 33: The external stack on the east gable end of the former barn was built in 1998; it will be retained to house the heating flues.



Fig. 34: The entrance lobby and link, built in 1993. This will be removed, and a new open-sided, gabled porch built in front of the present utility room (right).



Fig. 35: Former barn interior, looking east from the gallery. The timber framing of the walls and the mullion windows are largely a twentieth century confection, although the tie beams and queen post roof are likely to be historic. Note the exposed roofing felt; there is currently no roof insulation.



Fig. 36: Former barn interior looking west. There may historically have been an intermediate floor at this end, but the present gallery appears to be of mid-twentieth century date, re-using a chamfered beam (with mortices now on the vertical side). The gallery front and steep stair access date from the 1990s; they are hazardous and non-compliant with building regulations; the stair will be removed and more suitable balustrading provided in the gallery front. The gallery space will be an office area accessed from the bedroom beyond.



Fig. 37: The underside of the gallery has joists placed on the diagonal. Also shown here is the modern south door which will be removed under current proposals, with the opening blocked.



Fig. 38: A closer view of the wall shown in fig. 37, with the furniture removed. A single slender stud (not pegged into the sole plate or mid-rail and not original) will be removed in order to form an opening to the proposed larder. The sole plate will remain in situ.



Fig. 39: The south wall of the former barn, viewed from the gallery. All the timbers of the central bay (between the two wall posts) are re-used and installed in the mid-twentieth century, when the brick plinth was also extended. It is proposed to form an opening below the mid-rail of this bay and reinstate barn doors, as shown on the c.1870 plan. Note also the 1979 ground floor window to left and the 1990s opening in the studwork of the east wall, connecting the barn to the accommodation in the eastern range.



Fig. 40: Re-used sole plate and studs in the centre bay of the former barn, south side



Fig. 41: The north wall of the former barn, showing the 1990s barn doors. These will be replaced like-for-like (on account of the floor lowering), and augmented by inner doors. To the left, a mullion window is proposed in the blocked door opening below the gallery.



Fig. 42: The second floor guest bedroom. The far end will be partitioned off to create a small lobby and storage space.



Fig. 43: Steps down from the second floor landing to the proposed bathroom.



Fig. 44: A second view of the second floor space at the back of the main range, where it is proposed to form a bathroom. The roof timbers will be exposed, with insulation provided between. The boarded floor will be retained with a raised floor for the bathroom, to conceal the plumbing and spread the additional load of the bath.

## 4. SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1 The NPPF suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of historic buildings should be assessed under the headings of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, and points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting.
- 4.2 The levels of significance adopted here are as follows:
- *High*: where there is scope for only minor, non-destructive change
  - *Moderate*: of some significance, but where non-destructive and carefully-considered change should be acceptable
  - *Neutral*: neither contributing to nor detracting from the significance of the whole, therefore more adaptable to carefully-considered change
  - *Low*: adds little or nothing to the site or detracts from it, and where carefully considered change may be welcomed.
- 4.3 The **main range**, including the projecting 'T' to the east previously housing (on the ground floor) the dairy is of *high* architectural, historical and archaeological significance (its archaeological significance, or evidential value, primarily being embedded in the standing structure). This is the oldest part of the property, and is a building of high status, with close studding, richly moulded beams and large fireplaces. Its interior is little altered.
- 4.4 The **former barn and attached ranged to the east** are of *moderate* architectural and historical significance. They are later in date, and much more altered than the main range. Nevertheless, they are of interest in their own right, representing the evolution of the property from a high status dwelling to a tenanted farmhouse (which may be the reason why the buildings escaped Georgian modernisation). The former barn appears to have undergone a semi-residential conversion in the mid-twentieth century, when mullioned windows were added and (possibly) the mezzanine floor inserted at one end. These adaptations may now be regarded as of *moderate* interest in their own right. Further alterations were made to both buildings in the late twentieth century, but these are of *low* significance.
- 4.5 Attached to the south of the east range are a group of timber framed, weatherboarded and pantiled **outbuildings**. These are picturesque vernacular structures, probably of

eighteenth or early nineteenth century date, and are of *moderate* architectural and historical significance.

- 4.6 The **utility room** attached to the south of the former barn is a late nineteenth century outbuilding, altered and adapted in the early twentieth century and again in the 1990s. It is a modest vernacular design which sits well in its setting, but in view of the extensive alterations is of no more than *neutral* architectural and historical significance.
- 4.7 The **entrance lobby/link building** added in 1993 is not unsympathetic in design, but in itself is of *low* architectural and historical significance.
- 4.8 The freestanding **garage** of 1993 to the south is of *low* architectural and historical significance.
- 4.9 The attractive open rural **setting** of the house contributes positively to its significance. This setting includes two ponds, possibly the remains of former moats. The immediate setting of the former barn consists of late twentieth century brick paved areas and hard standing; these finishes are of *low* significance.

## **5. LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND POLICY**

- 5.1 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 [...]

- 5.2 NPPF paragraph 189 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 199-200 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 [...]

- 5.3 NPPF paragraphs 201-202 state:

Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

5.4 National legislation and guidance is reflected in local plan policies. Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Councils are currently in the process of drafting the new Joint Local Plan, and policies are not yet sufficiently advanced as to be given weight. The adopted Development Plan is the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) and Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2012).

5.5 The most relevant local plan policies relating to heritage are HB1 (Protection of historic buildings), HB3 (Conversions and alterations to historic buildings) and HB4 (Extensions to listed buildings).

5.6 HB1 states:

The district planning authority places a high priority on protecting the character and appearance of all buildings of architectural or historic interest. Particular attention will be given to protecting the settings of listed buildings.

5.7 HB3 states:

Proposals for the conversion of, or alteration to, listed buildings or other buildings of architectural or historic interest will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and will be required to meet high standards of design, detailing, materials and construction. Listed building consent will be granted if the district planning authority is satisfied that:

- The proposal will not detract from the architectural or historic character of the existing building or its setting;
- And, in the case of a timber framed building, the structure of the frame including its infill material remains largely unaltered.

5.8 HB4 states:

Listed building consent will be granted for the extension of listed buildings if the district planning authority is satisfied that:

- The proposed extension will not dominate the original building by virtue of its siting, size, scale or materials;
- The proposal does not detract from the architectural or historic character both externally and internally for which the building is listed.

## 6. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### Methodology

6.1 The methodology used here for assessing the scale of change and for judging the impact of that change follows internationally-established methodology:

**Scale or severity of impacts or changes** can be judged taking into account their direct and indirect effects and whether they are temporary or permanent, reversible or irreversible. The cumulative effect of separate impacts should also be considered. The scale or severity of impact can be ranked *without regard to the value of the asset* (emphasis added) as:

- No change
- Negligible change
- Minor change
- Moderate change
- Major change

The significance of the effect of change – i.e. **the overall impact** - on an attribute is a function of the importance of the attribute and the scale of change. This can be summarized for each attribute described using the following descriptors. As change or impacts may be adverse or beneficial, there is a nine-point scale with “neutral” as its centre point:

- Major beneficial
- Moderate beneficial
- Minor beneficial
- Negligible beneficial
- Neutral
- Negligible adverse
- Minor adverse
- Moderate adverse
- Major adverse.<sup>9</sup>

6.2 The descriptors ‘negligible adverse’, ‘minor adverse’ or ‘moderate adverse’ heritage impact might be regarded, in the language of the NPPF, as equating to less than substantial harm, and that of ‘major adverse’ impact to substantial harm. Where these levels of harmful impact are present, paragraphs 201-202 of the NPPF apply. All other

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<sup>9</sup> From Unesco, *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*, 2011, 5-7 and 5-8, available online [here](#).

impacts are either neutral or beneficial, and as such should be regarded as acceptable in terms of heritage policy.

### **Background to current proposals**

- 6.3 Initial proposals prepared by Durrants Building Consultancy in January 2021 were the subject of a pre-application submission to Babergh/Mid Suffolk Council (reference DC/21/00614).
- 6.4 Proposals put forward at that time were:
- The reopening of a blocked window opening in the kitchen and the formation of French doors from the kitchen to the courtyard
  - Conversion of the former barn from use as reception area to a kitchen and family room, involving insulation of the structure and the addition of secondary doors in the large opening on the north side
  - The formation of a corridor to an attic bedroom in the main range
  - Conversion of an attic store into a bathroom (with rooflights)
  - Conversion of outbuildings attached to the south side of the east range, with sliding folded glazed doors
  - Replacement of clay pantiles with plain tiles on former barn and eastern annexe.
- 6.5 No objection was raised to the principle of development, subject to satisfying relevant policies (GP1, H15, H16, HBO1, Core Strategy Policy CS5 and the NPPF).
- 6.6 No objection was raised in principle to the proposed alterations to the existing kitchen in the main range, subject to further investigation of the fabric.
- 6.7 No objection was raised in principle to the conversion of the former barn (which is already in low-key use as a living space) to a kitchen and family room. However concerns were raised that the proposed insulation of the roof and walls with wood wool boards would erode the three-dimensional character of the timber framing as seen from the interior, and insulation of the walls was therefore not supported. Insulation of the roof would be acceptable, provided this was applied above the rafters, in order to retain the full expression of the timber framing. It was suggested that the floor (if concrete) could be insulated as an alternative to the walls. As to the outer doors, it was suggested that the door which opens out onto a window should be pinned shut, to avoid

interrupting the window and the opposing side door pinned open with a simple glass panel and/or door inserted in this position.

- 6.8 No objection was raised to the proposed partition wall in the attic space, subject to detail.
- 6.9 No objection was raised to the conversion of the attic store room to a bathroom, since the proposal would retain the form and proportion of the space. Further details of insulation, pipework and ventilation would be required, as would details of any strengthening of the floor for the bath. The proposed rooflights however were not supported.
- 6.10 The principle of converting the outbuildings attached to the south side of the east range was 'not necessarily unacceptable', subject to further information and detail.
- 6.11 Objection was raised to the change of roof covering from pantiles to plain tiles in the former barn and eastern annexe.
- 6.12 The conclusion of the pre-application advice was that:

In its current form the proposal is considered that the proposal will likely result in a tilted balance decision. As established by the Heritage Team, the proposal is likely to result in a level of harm to the Listed Building in its current form and as such must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It is unlikely that the proposal will offer public benefits to outweigh the harm and as such would likely be refused in its current form.

As such it is considered that any application that comes forward should take careful consideration into the impact the proposal has on the listed building. Should it be that the concerns raised by the Heritage Team are addressed, it is likely that the proposal would be supported by officers.

## Current proposals

- 6.13 Please see the drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by Retrouvius Ltd. The proposals have been significantly amended since the pre-application submission, in the light of council officers' advice and following the appointment of Retrouvius and AHP. The alterations to the kitchen in the main range, conversion of outbuildings and replacement of roof pantiles with clay tiles are no longer proposed. Adaptation and insulation of the former barn to form a kitchen and family room is still proposed, but the proposals for this area have been amended. The provision of a partition and lobby in an attic bedroom and bathroom in the existing attic store are also still proposed, the latter again to a different design, and without rooflights. Additional proposals involve the demolition of the 1993 entrance lobby and link, a small gabled porch addition to the utility room and alterations to the eastern range and southern annexe. Major improvements to the garden setting of the house are also proposed, but do not form part of the listed building consent submission.

### *Alterations to the former barn*



Figs 45 and 46: Typical variations in depth of studs in former barn

- 6.14 The conversion of the former barn (currently in low-key use as a reception room) to form a kitchen and family room was agreed in principle by officers at pre-application stage. However, a concern was raised that the proposed method of insulation in the walls would result in loss of the three dimensional quality of the timber framing.

- 6.15 Insulation of the walls is highly desirable, if the former barn is to have a beneficial and sustainable use, and if that use is to have a low environmental impact. The owners are very conscious of their duties in this regard, and wish the building's environmental impact to be as low as possible. To this end, they propose to provide to provide underfloor heating for the barn, fed by an air or ground source heat pump. In order to be effective, this form of heating requires high levels of insulation. The floor (which has a modern floor finish of oak boarding over concrete) will be lowered by 300mm and finished with clay pampments.
- 6.16 Although the nineteenth century description of the barn (quoted at para. 2.4) above describes the construction as 'stud clay and boarding', there is no surviving evidence of historic infill panels (such as wattle and daub), and the weatherboarding has been removed. When present, the infill panels would have reduced the internal articulation of the timbers, and the present 'three dimensional quality' is likely to be of relatively recent date. Nevertheless, the council officers' comments in this regard have been taken into account, and the proposals revised accordingly. Instead of thick plastered wood wool boarding placed between the timbers, it is proposed to use only slender (50mm) wood fibre insulating material here, cut neatly to fit between the existing timber framing, and then lime plastered and limewashed. This will acceptably reduce the impact in terms of ability to appreciate the three-dimensional character of the framing; most of the timbers are of substantial size, typically projecting from the existing external plaster by between 130mm and 180mm (see figs. 45 and 46).
- 6.17 However, a reduced thickness in insulation between the timbers would render that level of insulation ineffective on its own. It is therefore proposed to also add slightly thicker (100mm) wood fibre insulating material externally, and for this to be clad with oak weatherboarding, which will weather to a silvery hue. This will provide a sufficient level of insulation, in a manner which preserves the internal three-dimensional quality of the timbers. The proposal will also return the former barn to something closer to its earlier appearance (see figs. 7 and 8). The proposals for insulating the walls and weatherboarding the exterior are therefore justifiable in terms of historical precedent as well as being desirable in terms of improved energy efficiency.
- 6.18 In addition to the floor and walls, insulation of the roof is required. As advised by council officers, this will be placed over the rafters, with the underside lime plastered and limewashed (in place of the existing exposed roofing felt). The pantile roof will then be reinstated.

6.19 Other alterations to the former barn are proposed, as indicated on the application drawings. These include:

- The formation of 'barn doors' on the south side. There is historical evidence for these (fig. 4), and analysis of the structure shows that the timber framing in this area is a relatively modern adaptation, using recycled timbers fixed by nails rather than traditional mortices, tenons and pegs. The barn doors will be of the same design as those on the north side, with inner Crittall-style doors. The formation of doors here will not involve loss of significant or historic fabric, and along with the proposed weatherboarding will serve to reinstate and reinforce the historically agricultural character of the building.
- A concern was raised at pre-application stage (relating to the north side, but the same consideration applies on the south) that the outer doors when fully opened would block flanking windows. It is not clear why this should be a matter of concern, given that overall light levels when the outer doors are open will be greater than when closed. It is suggested that the operation of the doors is not a planning or historic buildings issue.
- The modern door on the south side will be removed and the opening blocked, with the brick plinth reinstated.
- The 1979 window on the south side will be provided with diamond section oak mullions.
- On the north side, new inner doors of the same design as proposed on the south will be installed. The 1990 outer doors need to be replaced (on account of the floor lowering), but will be replaced like-for-like.
- Also on the north side, a window will be formed in the kitchen area under the mezzanine gallery. This is in the position of a former door (fig. 20); the former opening has been infilled with recycled nailed together timbers and externally plastered. As on the south side, the new window will be provided with diamond section oak mullions.
- Inside the former barn, the wall beneath the gallery will be removed to create a larger kitchen in this area. The wall is modern and probably of blockwork construction; it was built in the post-war period to provide a lobby and WC (see figs. 15, 16 and 23). To the south of this, a single stud will be removed to provide access to the proposed larder in the present utility room. This is not an original stud (see fig. 38), but the sole plate may be historic, and will be retained.
- The gallery front and ladder/stair will be removed. These are modern, unsympathetic and non-building regulations compliant (see fig. 36). A new gallery

front of more suitable design will be provided, and the upper gallery space used as an office, accessed from the bedroom in the main range.

- 6.20 **Heritage impact:** The former barn is of *moderate significance*. The proposed works are desirable and necessary to make the space useable as a kitchen and family space. This is conducive to its long term maintenance and repair, and as such represents a public (heritage) benefit. No loss of significant historic fabric is involved, and the works will serve to reinforce, in a non-conjectural manner, the building's historic agricultural character. The severity of change is judged to be *moderate* and the overall impact on the heritage asset and its setting *moderate beneficial*. The requirements of relevant NPPF and local plan policies are therefore satisfied.

*Bathroom in attic store*

- 6.21 A bathroom is proposed within the present attic store in the projecting 'T' of the original main range (figs. 43 and 44), to serve the two second floor bedrooms. This proposal was included in the pre-application submission, when no objection in principle was raised. In line with advice received at that time, rooflights are no longer proposed. It is proposed to remove the existing fibre boarding and expose the roof structure, with insulation between the timbers. Drainage runs and mechanical ventilation will avoid historic fabric; a raised floor in the area of the bath and shower will accommodate the plumbing and allow the additional load of the filled bath to be spread. In addition, the bath itself will be lightweight (copper) rather than cast iron. This addresses a concern raised at pre-application stage regarding the floor loading of the bath.
- 6.22 Associated with the proposed bathroom, it is proposed to partition off the southern end of a second floor bedroom to create a lobby and storage area/linen cupboard. This proposal was put forward at pre-application stage, when the Council's conservation adviser commented that 'I would not oppose the insertion of a partition wall as indicated to the attic space. The proportions of the room would largely be retained, and it does not appear that there is a historic fireplace that would be affected. There appears to be a historic stack and the space is already used as accommodation'. The space is shown at fig. 42. A stud partition is proposed, with the existing door at the top of the stair reused as the door to the bedroom.
- 6.23 **Heritage impact:** The bedroom and proposed bathroom area are spaces of *high significance*. The proposed bathroom space is currently unused, and the proposals will

bring it into use in a manner which involves no loss of historic fabric or character. The removal of the fibreboarding which covers the historic roof structure represents a heritage gain. Drainage runs and ventilation have been devised so as to avoid impact on historic fabric and concerns about floor loading have been addressed. The partition in the bedroom is a minor, non-destructive and reversible incursion into what is a long space. The severity of change is judged to be *minor* and the overall impact on the heritage asset *neutral*. The requirements of relevant NPPF and local plan policies are therefore satisfied.

*Demolition of entrance lobby and link*

- 6.24 The entrance lobby and link building (fig. 34) was erected in 1993 to connect the utility room and kitchen. With the relocation of the kitchen and the adaptation of the utility room to serve as the day-to-day entrance it is no longer required.
- 6.25 **Heritage impact:** This structure is of *low significance*, and the appearance of the south side of the building will benefit by its removal. The severity of change is judged to be *moderate* and the overall impact on the heritage asset and its setting *moderate beneficial*. The requirements of relevant NPPF and local plan policies are therefore satisfied.

*Alterations to utility room, including new porch*

- 6.26 The utility room is a late nineteenth century weatherboarded and pantiled addition, much altered in the twentieth century but retaining its modest vernacular character. It previously served as a garage (fig. 13). Inside, the modern suspended ceiling will be removed to reveal the roof structure. Outside, a window will be formed in place of the door to the present link building and a small, open-sided gabled and pantiled porch will be added. This will become the day-to-day entrance to the house, incorporating a shower room and a larder, the latter linked to the barn (see 6.19 above).
- 6.27 **Heritage impact:** The utility room is of *neutral significance*. The interior is much altered, and the impact of change here is low. The proposed external changes are minor and sympathetic. The severity of change is judged to be *minor* and the overall impact on the heritage asset and its setting *neutral*. The requirements of relevant NPPF and local plan policies are therefore satisfied.

### *Alterations to the eastern range*

- 6.28 The eastern range, formerly a store, was incorporated in the residential accommodation in 1998. This involved the addition of a chimney stack against the eastern gable end of the former barn (blocking the mullion window there) and the formation of tall, narrow windows openings between the studs on the eastern gable end, conferring a slightly ecclesiastical character (compare figs. 21 and 31). The modern stack will be retained, to house the heating flues, and the appearance of the windows on the gable end will be modified and improved. To help break up the verticality of the modern window arrangement, a mid-level pentice board will be reinstated (as in fig. 21) as part of the render repairs. The render will be given an ochre limewash or similar finish. Minor internal alterations are also proposed, as shown on the drawings, but these have no heritage implications.
- 6.29 **Heritage impact:** The eastern range is of moderate significance. The proposed alterations will mitigate some of the harmful impacts of the 1998 work. The severity of change is judged to be *moderate* and the overall impact on the heritage asset and its setting *moderate beneficial*. The requirements of relevant NPPF and local plan policies are therefore satisfied.

### *External repainting/limewashing*

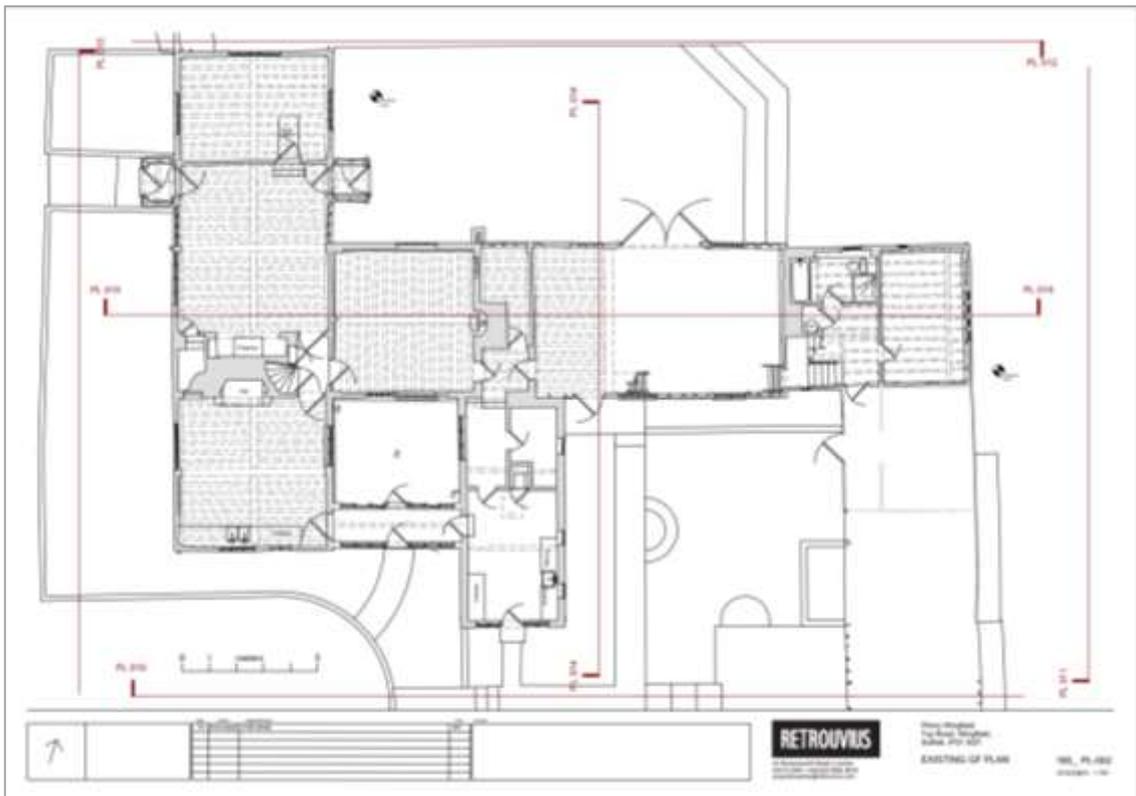
- 6.30 The existing external walls are of modern lime render with a bright white masonry paint finish (see figs. 28-32). With the exception of the walls of the barn (which will be clad with oak weatherboard, left to weather naturally), these will be redecorated with a softer colour finish (in the ochre range), more befitting a Suffolk farmhouse. Ideally this will be in limewash, but if there are problems with adhesion, a suitable environmentally-friendly paint product (such as Keim mineral coatings) will be used. Trial patches will be necessary, and it is requested that the specification and colour for the final decorative finish should be left as a reserved matter.
- 6.31 **Heritage impact:** The existing white masonry paint finish is harsh and unsuitable for a historic property of this character and quality. Limewashing or alternative suitable recoating in a traditional ochre colour is a **major change** (albeit a superficial one), which will have a **major beneficial** impact.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

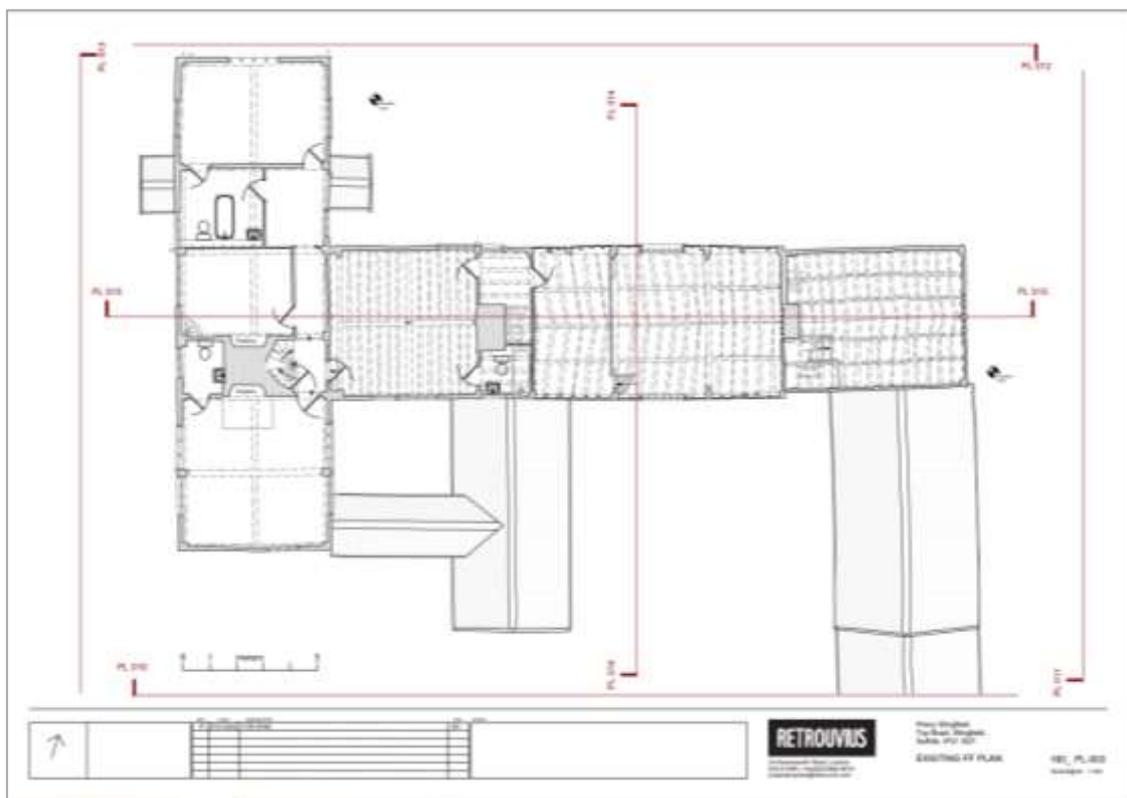
- 7.1 The main range of Wingfield Priory, including the projecting 'T' to the east, is of high architectural, historical and archaeological significance. This is the oldest part of the property, and is a building of high status, with close studding, richly moulded beams and large fireplaces. Its interior is little altered.
- 7.2 To the east of the main range, the former barn and attached ranged to the east are of moderate architectural and historical significance. They are later in date, and much more altered than the main range. Nevertheless, they are of interest in their own right, representing the evolution of the property from a high status dwelling to a tenanted farmhouse. The former barn appears to have undergone a semi-residential conversion in the mid-twentieth century. Further alterations were made to both buildings in the late twentieth century, but these are of *low* significance.
- 7.3 The utility room attached to the south of the former barn is a late nineteenth century outbuilding, altered and adapted in the early twentieth century and again in the 1990s. It is of neutral significance.
- 7.4 An entrance lobby/link building added in 1993 is of low significance.
- 7.5 Current proposals relate primarily to the adaptation of the former barn, giving it an appropriate and sustainable new use and linking it to the existing linked living accommodation to the east and west. This will be conducive to the long-term maintenance and repair of the building, and as such represents a public (heritage) benefit. No loss of significance historic fabric is involved, and the works will reinforce rather than dilute the building's historic agricultural character.
- 7.6 Alterations to other parts of the property are also proposed, as described above. These range from neutral to major beneficial in their heritage impact.
- 7.7 The scale of proposed change is in all cases either minor or moderate, and the overall impact of that change on the significance of the heritage asset and its setting ranges from neutral to major beneficial. The requirements of relevant NPPF and local plan heritage policies are therefore satisfied.

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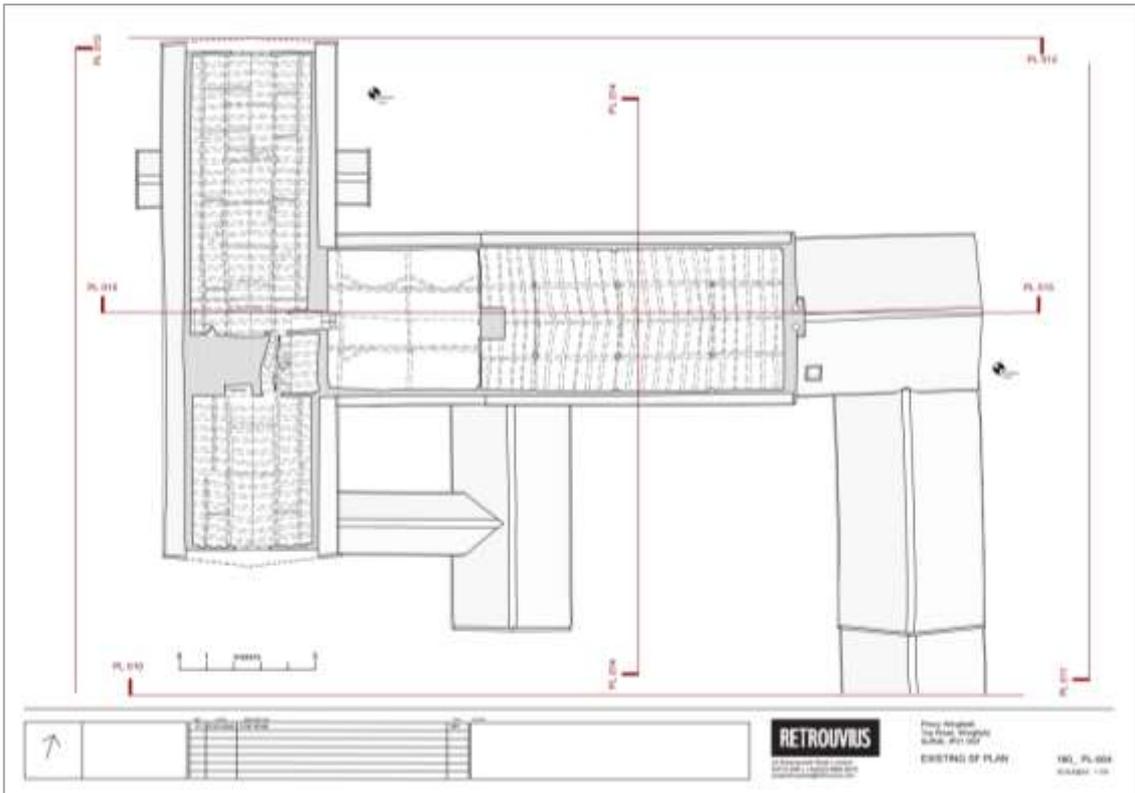
# APPENDIX 1: EXISTING FLOOR PLANS



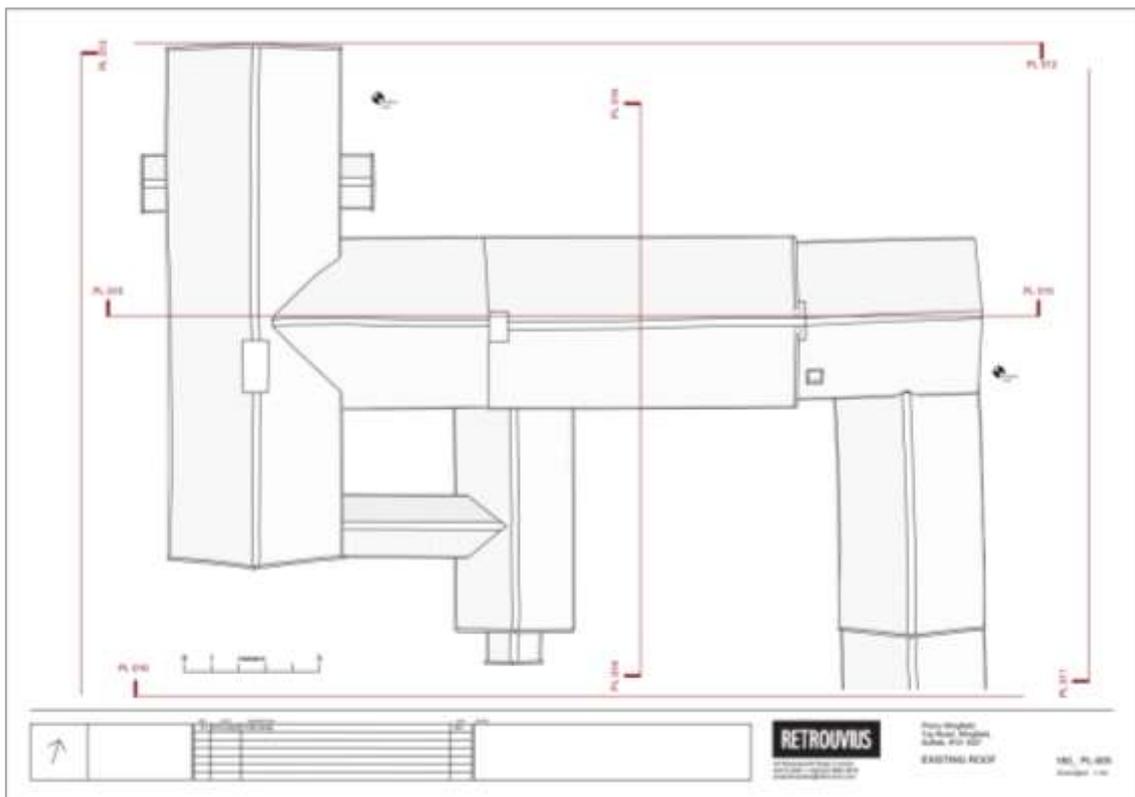
Ground



First



**Second**



**Roof**

## **APPENDIX 2: LIST ENTRY**

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1182847

Date first listed: 29-Jul-1955

Statutory Address: WINGFIELD PRIORY, TOP ROAD

County: Suffolk

District: Mid Suffolk (District Authority)

Parish: Wingfield

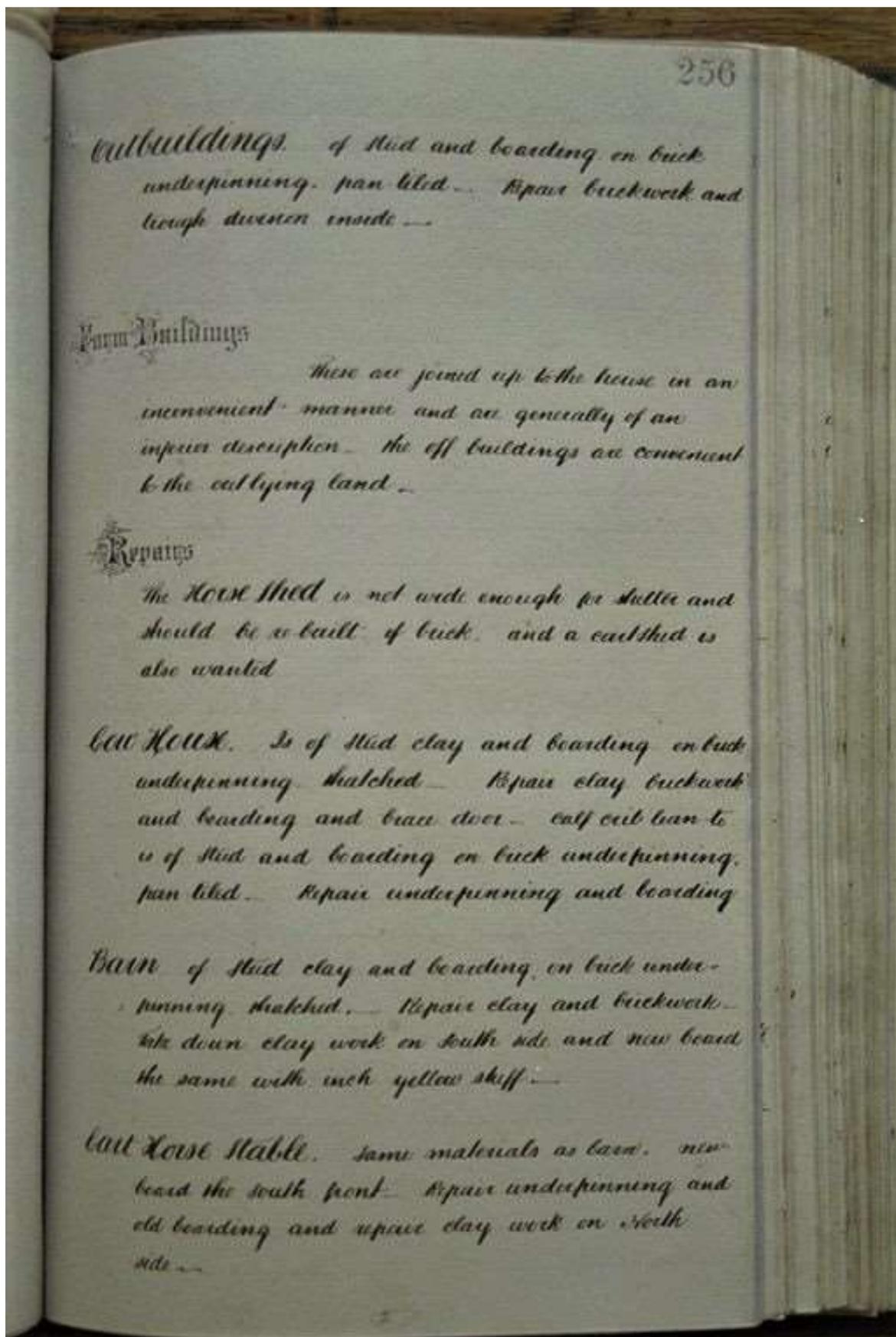
National Grid Reference: TM 24150 76566

WINGFIELD TOP ROAD TM 27 NW 5/162 Wingfield Priory - 29.7.55 -- II

Farmhouse. Circa 1600 with C16 and later work to rear. Timber framed and plastered, lined in imitation of ashlar. Plaintiled roofs except later sections of rear range which are pantiled. 2 storeys with attic to main range. 3-cell main range with a long rear wing in 3 sections. A mixture of C20 reproduction mullion and transom windows and mullioned windows (many original), all with C20 plain glass. 2 original windows to left gable end. Cross-passage entry: a small C20 gabled porch with plank and muntin door; inside the porch the original entrance door to the same pattern. Matching porch to rear. Internal stack (the upper part rebuilt) placed between the hall and service end, leaving the parlour unheated.

Fine interior with a fully exposed frame; close studding throughout on the ground floor. The hall and parlour have cross-beamed ceilings and storey posts with moulded heads. The parlour is at a higher level, with an original cellar below. Newel stairs; some original doors. The rear range comprises: a C16 range attached to the main part of the house; a 3-bay barn with queen-post roof, the framing considerably altered and with a number of large diamond-mullioned windows inserted; a lower range of stabling, probably of early C18 date.

Listing NGR: TM2415076566



Horse Shed and Hack Stable. of Stud and clay, on  
back underpinning, pan tiled, past repair.  
rebuild of brick.

Cart Shed. of clay, no underpinning, pan-tiled, past  
repair. rebuild of brickwork and posts.

Cow Shed. of rough stuff, built by tenant.

Big House and Hen House. of Stud and clay, on  
low underpinning, pan tiled, in fair condition.

The off **Haym** is indispensable to the working of  
the off land.

BARN. is of Stud, boarding and clay, thatched, let  
down clay on both sides of porch and replat with  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  weather boarding. Repair brickwork all round.

Wool House and Shed. of clay and thatch. repair  
clay work.

Cart Horse Stable. of clay and pan-tiled. repair  
clay work.

Horse Shed. of posts and lathes, thatched, in fair  
condition.

Eaves Gutters and DRAINS. Floods and six inch  
cast iron half round eaves guttering to house and  
next straw yards with three inch cast iron down pipes

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