



LORDS FARM, EYNSHAM

HERITAGE REPORT STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
MARCH 2018

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WORLLEDGE ASSOCIATES

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He has experience of working on a wide variety of casework, in historic towns, large urban areas, rural settlements and country estates. He has project managed the repair of historic buildings, including a 13th century lepers' hospital in Blandford, an 18th century thatched stone cottage in Shaftesbury, an 18th century clay pipeworks in Broseley, the Franciscan Friary in Bridgnorth and the Martyrs Memorial, Oxford. He has been involved in significant commercial, residential and University building projects in Oxford – Westgate, Oxford Castle, the Ashmolean Museum, University Science Area, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Weston Library, colleges and the award winning Oxford Brookes campus building as well as providing specialist advice on a number of Country Houses and estates – Crichel House, Dorset, Tottenham House, Wiltshire, Nevill Holt Hall, Leicestershire, Aynhoe Park, Oxfordshire, Hunsdon House, Hertfordshire, Ombersley Court, Worcestershire, Great Tew Estate, Oxfordshire and Bathurst Estate, Gloucestershire. He is currently a panel member on the BOBMK Design Panel, which provides design, heritage and planning advice on emerging planning proposals.

His role in local government has involved him in detailed discussion on specific schemes with leading local, national and international architects and advising on strategic projects including Masterplans, Area Action Plans, Public Realm Strategies and Townscape Character Studies. His work, developing methodologies for assessing the character of and managing historic areas has attracted funding from Historic England and has been recognised with two RTPI Awards (in 2011 and 2013) for improvements in the planning process.



Fig 1: Front elevation of house and barn

METHODOLOGY

The intelligent management of change is a key principle necessary to sustain the historic environment for present and future generations to enjoy. English Heritage and successive governments have published policy and advice that extend our understanding of the historic environment and develop our competency in making decisions about how to manage it.

Paragraphs 4-10 of Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment) explains that applications (for planning permission and listed building consent) have a greater likelihood of success and better decisions will be made when applicants and local planning authorities assess and understand the particular nature of the significance of an asset, the extent of the asset's fabric to which the significance relates and the level of importance of that significance.

The National Planning Policy Framework provides a very similar message in paragraphs 128 and 129 expecting both applicant and local planning authority to take responsibility for understanding the significance of a heritage asset and the impact of a development proposal, seeking to avoid unacceptable conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

It has never been the intention of government to prevent change or freeze frame local communities and current policy and good practice suggests that change, if managed intelligently would not be harmful.



Fig 2: The stables, gable end from the garden

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Farmsteads and their buildings are an important part of the character of the countryside and rural communities, which along with field patterns and boundaries, help to create a local identity and sense of place. Their layouts are of significance for what they tell us of local development and farming practices, while their material construction reflects the singular relationship between local building traditions and the landscape itself.

Writers on the subject such as O'Reilly & Colm (2007) evoke linguistic metaphors to emphasise this group coherence and connection to the landscape, arguing that much in the same way that local accents betray the specifics of place, so too does the architecture of traditional farm buildings illustrate their roots in the locality.

This connection to place inscribes farm buildings with an underlying communal value. These, often modest structures, sensitise us to significance of everyday objects, reminding us of the value inherent in even the simplest and utilitarian of places.

They are buildings constructed using locally sourced materials and in accordance with a commonly 'spoken' language of construction. The traditions followed are often founded on experience and tempered by the climate and availability of resources and as such they are buildings very much in harmony with their local settings.

The barn at Lords Farm is part of this broader narrative of the contribution made by farm buildings to the character of the English landscape. This small farm articulates the agricultural developments of Eynsham with the farm's sitting and layout reflecting the settlement pattern of the town and prevalent agricultural practices. The building's construction using local materials – some of which are thought to have been recycled from the former Benedictine abbey – underline its strong connection to the landscape, linking it both to the commonly understood building practiced of the locality and wider Oxfordshire region.



Fig 3: 20th century casement in rear elevation of the barn

LANDSCAPE & SETTLEMENT PATTERN IN EYNSHAM

Patterns of land use across the south east of England reflect the cultural, climatic and physical landscape character of the region. At Eynsham, the former site of a Benedictine Abbey and a borough and market town, the landscape and settlement pattern is one largely influenced by attempts to establish the town as a key commercial centre.

Early records indicate that this was initially a small settlement comprised, in 1086, of only 70 abbey tenants, each of whom is thought to have represented a single household. Population and built development would fluctuate according to the economic fortunes of the town over the ensuing centuries.

The confirmation of the market by Henry II in the 12th century, along with the addition of two fairs, brought significant crowds to the area. By the 13th century the abbey was actively attempting to further stimulate the market and increase its rental income through the creation of a new borough. At this time, all its demesne between the town and the Cassington Road was divided into burgage plot laid out on both sides of Newland and Queen Street.

Eynsham however – perhaps owing to its proximity to Oxford – appears to have failed in establishing itself as a successful town. Some of the new burgages were re-granted as ordinary freeholds and a survey of the time (c1249) highlights that the number of tenants had reduced to 49. The town's decline continued into the 14th century with tax assessments of the period (c1334) highlighting that Eynsham's wealth was the lowest of all Oxfordshire towns – lower even than the considerably smaller hamlet of Tigarsley.

The town's fortunes and development would change with the Black Death (1349-50). The former's devastating effects on neighbouring Tigarsley meant that the latter hamlet had to be abandoned. Its fields were enclosed and its remaining inhabitants relocated to Eynsham. We thus find that in 1377 there were now 211 adults assessed for poll tax. Eynsham consequently became the only considerable centre of settlement – with only a scattering of development found near Freeland and Twelve Acre Farm.

The relatively more prosperous village community of the 16th century was dominated by farmers and monastic servants. The dissolution of the abbey in this period would stimulate building activity in the town, “and even before the abbey was finally demolished in the later 17th century its masonry was used widely in local buildings.”

By the mid 17th century there were about 115 village tenements – some perhaps in multiple occupation – and half a dozen outlying houses and cottages. The early 18th century (c 1738) witnessed further growth, with the vicar estimating that there were about 160 households and 153 families. The population continued to rise steadily throughout the 19th century, peaking at 2177 in 1871.

Following a brief decline to 1,644 people in 1921, the 20th century period would witness further built development prompted by the rising number of inhabitants. The early 20th century period was characterised by an expansion boom that would transform Eynsham into a dormitory town. By 1931 the number of houses had risen from 406 in the 20s to 483, corresponding to a rise in

population to 1,963. This expansion would continue despite the separation of Freeland from the parish in 1948 when we find that there were now 588 houses and a population of 2,373.

After a modest increase in the 1950s, the continued population growth would prompt a further intensive period of house building between the 1960s and 70s. By 1981 the population had grown to 4449.

The early development pattern was dominated by Eynsham's significance as a crossing place between the Thames and Swinford with the “street plan centred on the intersection of the road from Swinford ferry with a north-south road - now Mill Street and Abbey Street.”

Although the parish was eventually enclosed in 1802, early attempts had been made and had proved futile. Attempts to enclose the common lands had led to riots breaking out at Twelve Acre in 1615. There were further riots in 1696 when Thomas Jordan, the then lord of the manor, attempted to enclose lands around his new house. Riots broke out again in 1780 when a later Lord, Thomas Langford, began to enclose the park.

Much of the northern part of the parish remained uncultivated woodland until the park was finally enclosed in 1781. The extent of the woodland and heath, in which many of the town's poor retained a stake, is attributed to the area's ‘independent’ character, a feature arguably “encouraged by the absence, after the early 17th century, of a truly resident squire.”

EYNHAM'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Early buildings in area are constructed of local limestone with stonessfield slate. The use of these locally sourced materials adds to the distinct character of the town, giving it both a local identity, as well as helping to articulate its relationship to the wider Oxfordshire region whose vernacular traditions it shares.

Serious fires in 1629, 1696 and 1854 would destroy many of the earlier structures with only a few remaining in the village today. The earliest surviving domestic building is the White Hart inn in Newland Street which retains parts of a medieval roof. Most buildings however date from the 16th and 17th centuries.

The latter was a period dominated by a few wealthier men “whose houses, mostly rebuilt in that period, are among the most substantial buildings in the village. The leading taxpayers were farmers, occupying Abbey Farm, Twelve Acre Farm, the Elms ... the Gables, the Shrubbery, and one or two other central farmhouses.”

There was increased building activity throughout the 18th and 19th centuries prompted, as explained, by the demands of a rising population. Some of this new development however was as a result of the re-organisation of farms following the acts of enclosure in the early 19th century. These for instance included Blankstones Farm in Acre Street, a farmstead constructed c1802 by James Preston – who was a major farmer in the parish.

The 19th century also witnessed the construction of many new cottages – most of these in red brick. “A typical early row using black and red bricks for the façade and stone rubble for the rear, was Trap Alley at the south end of Queen Street, built by Richard Bowerman in 1817.” Another brick group was constructed by Jonathan Arnatt in 1833. Other brick additions included a small row of cottages in the east side of Queen Street; Lord’s Row on Oxford Road; cottages on Pug lane west of Queen’s Head; and a brick pair in Mill Street (ibid).

Several old farmhouses were also rebuilt or enlarged during this 19th century period. Other farmhouses such as Newland Lodge in Newland Street, would emerge as gentry houses. The latter farmhouse had found itself separated from its agricultural holding following the enclosure acts of the early 19th century.

In addition to these ‘gentry conversions,’ the early 19th century also witnessed the construction of many substantial houses,

mostly built by wealthy newcomers. These included buildings such as Acre End House’ built by the Pinfords of Oxford, and Willow Bank, a large brick house on the eastern edge of the town built in the 1830s by Matthew Hastings a wealthy land agent and surveyor. The construction of large houses however, began to wane in the late 19th century perhaps as improved communication links to larger towns reduced Eynsham’s ability to attract wealthy inhabitants.



Fig 4: New roof structure in the stables building

LORD'S FARM EYNSHAM: A BRIEF HISTORY

The name comes from its occupation in the 18th and 19th century by two or three generations of a prominent local family called Lord. The name is recorded in the Oxfordshire archives and in the Bartholomew Room charity boards in 1837 and 1841 with a freehold to Peter Lord of seven cottages and gardens at the farm for 40 years. The history of the farmstead however is a much older one.

A framed inscription with coat of arms points to a late 11th or 12th century date. The inscription stated that the earliest house on the site was built by William Avenel, Seneschal to the Count of Mortain at the Battle of Hastings, and an early benefactor of the Abbey. According to E.K. Chambers (1936: 31), “the Avenels were people of consideration in Oxfordshire.’ William’s son, also William, married Helewisa daughter of Walkelin Waard, a holder of Doomesday manors. His older daughter, Dionysia, married Hugh de Chesney, who also endowed the abbey.”

This early house, or possibly a later one on the site, “was owned in 1414 by William del Fermereye.” The house was replaced, sometime in the late 16th or early 17th century, by the building shown on the Corpus Christi College estate map of 1615. The map section shows the corner of the village bounded by Puke Lane (now Queen Street) and Thames Street (now Oxford Road).

The 17th century house is marked as the property of Richard Townsend. A reconstruction of the 1650 survey of Eynsham by Brian Atkins shows that the property was later “in the occupation of William Broadwater, as copyhold of the Manor of Eynsham, and comprised 35 square perches (1059 square yards).”

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the house was occupied by generations of members of the Lord family. Of particular note was James Lord – a prominent local mason “who prepared the estimate in connection with the building of the Swinford Bridge (opened 1769), and... (was) probably one of the principal subcontractors on the project.” A notebook by James held at the Oxfordshire History Centre, dating between 1745 -1830 (OHC Ref: P381/F/1), and including bills, farm accounts, and records of employees engaged in farm work or quarrying (1745-1763) may provide an insight into how the Lords lived and how the farm functioned during this period.

A Peter Lord, James's son, is described in the 1841 census as a coal dealer. His involvement in the coal trade is a significant one in the wider history of the town and would have placed him in a profitable position in an area noted for its fuel shortages. Scarcity in fuel had prompted various attempts at coal mining in the area. As Anthony Wood's would comment in his Parochial Collection of 1781, ‘several fruitless attempts have been made at great expense to find coal’ at Eynsham. An early 18th century Lord – Thomas Jordan – had attempted, with 4 other partners, to exploit a coal seam but was forced to desist after sinking a shaft about 80 yards deep. A later Lord – James Lacy – made further attempts in the late 18th century (c1764) – but with equally little success and a much-reduced income. By the 19th century however, a waterborne coal trade was established, cashing in on the fuel problems of area.

The Lords were an arguably well to do family. During Peter Lord's occupation, a fuller account of their property (c1837) was

made highlighting the extent of the holding including the seven cottages already mentioned. Deeds of the period mention a meadow of 6 acres 1 rood situated to the south of Cassington Road and known as ‘Peter Lord's Meadow.’ It is also possible that the family owned land elsewhere in Oxfordshire. James Lord's notebook makes mention of works being carried out at Cassington although he is not known to have lived there.

The seven cottages mentioned possibly included the row of buildings facing Oxford Road and known as Lord's Row. These consisted of 4 cottages (until 1950 when they were converted into two) and were constructed in two phases. No. 1 and 2 adjoining the main building can be seen on the enclosure map of 1800 but No. 3 and 4 were added at a later date.

In 1919 the property was in the hands of George Harold Febery (a Gloucestershire farmer) and Blanford Bushell Febery (a butcher in Stow-on-the-World), who sold it John Treadwell (a farmer). It remained in the Treadwell family until 1947 when it was sold to a Mrs Joyce Catherine Price. Price sold it sometime later in 1950, to Ernest Heritage – an estate agent who changed the name of the property to Wadhurst.

Two years later the entire property and its four cottages were sold to Miss Margaret Foote who restored its traditional name of Lord's Farm. Foote owned the farmstead for the next 30 years over which period she restored both the farmhouse and the Lord's Row cottages. Work on the cottages began in July of 1959 and was carried out by G.Kimber & Son under the direction of the architect Thomas Rayson.

THE FARMSTEAD: IT'S LAYOUT, MATERIALS & EVOLUTION

LOCAL SITING & FARMSTEAD LAYOUT

Lord's Farm sits on a corner position at the junction of Oxford Road and Queen Street. Its siting within the town owes much to the fact that Eynsham, unlike neighbouring Abingdon, did not develop a fully urban character and with enclosure happening in the 19th century the location of the farm within the settlement followed traditional practices.

The layout of the structures helps us understand how these buildings originally functioned. The presence of the threshing barn indicates that it was a predominantly arable farm for much of its 'working life' although the later addition of the stable block – which inhibited access to the barn– suggests that this function had ceased to be of great importance from the 19th century onwards. The grouping of the outbuildings and their contiguous relationship with the main farmhouse is an unusual feature for the area – where most outbuildings are laid out in a courtyard plan, as distinct elements from the farmhouse – and most likely arises from the farm's early history and central position within the townscape. The layout may also reflect wider 17th and 18th century efforts to unite farm activities into a single range, particularly in areas or farms involved in little corn production.

The farmhouse frontage has changed to reflect the evolving significance of burgage plots – discussed elsewhere in the report. The house currently presents a narrow frontage to the High Street which Steane & Ayres (2013: 144) argue may correspond to the medieval burgage plots. During this latter period, the building's frontage was on High Street and possibly occupied two burgage plots. The significance of these plots however had faded by the 18th century at which point "greater emphasis was accorded to the longer and larger Queen Street elevation which now included a contiguous barn."

MATERIALITY

The site's materiality betrays the specifics of place, bounding

it– both literally and metaphorically- to the wider cultural, historic and physical landscape. The 'alleged' use of recycled stone from the abbey (c.f Hibbert's 1992 argument further evidenced by Steane & Ayers 2013: 146) , link the Lord's farmstead through time to the historic events surrounding the dissolution of the monasteries and to how these events unfolded at Eynsham.

The use of 'traditional' material such as limestone rubble and Stonesfield stone slate links the farmstead to the building practices employed across the region and help locate the site within the wider vernacular practices of the Oxfordshire region. The use of red brick - found in later additions to the farmstead – evidences the changing architectural fashions and availability of materials and their impact on 18th and 19th century Eynsham. As noted elsewhere in the report, brick was a new and fashionable material in the town from the 18th century onwards, with certain buildings such as the Gables setting a stylistic precedent. Steane & Ayers (2013) have highlighted good examples at Lord's Farm on the ground floor level of the east-west wing of the farmhouse. Here they note that the "Flemish bond with well distributed vitrified headers...form an attractive chequer pattern."

EVOLUTION

The adaptation of the farmstead generally correlates to the social-economic progress of the town, with the advent of new fashions and technologies often corresponding to changes to the farm buildings. With the exception of the cellars – which belonged to the earlier building on the site – available evidence suggests that the present farmstead and its buildings has witnessed 4 key phases of development.

PHASE 1: 17TH CENTURY:

Much of the farmhouse's masonry dates to this period. Steane and Ayes (2013) hypothesis that this first phase comprised of the parlour; the lobby; the old kitchen and No.1 the Cottages – a two up two down structure – which formed part of the house.



Fig 5: Stone flags to threshing floor of barn

PHASE 2: 18TH CENTURY

The second half of the 18th century saw some development on the site. It was during this period that the barn was added. As were the front door hood and external shutter to the north on the ground floor.

PHASE 3: 19TH CENTURY.

The early 19th century saw the construction of the stables. The introduction of the stables rendered access to the barn difficult and it can thus be surmised that the farmstead ceased to function primarily as an arable farm. "At this time, a decision appears to have been made to convert the east wing of the farmhouse into a main house and subsequently to build further cottages to the east." This resulted in a loss of accommodation, later accounted for through the addition of an extension constructed in "newly fashionable brick" in what is an "otherwise stone district."

Some building works continued into the late 19th century period. The upper parts of the farmhouse chimney were rebuilt. It was also at this time that the ground floor window to the parlour was added in keeping with the broader gentrification of this side of the street.

PHASE 4: 20TH CENTURY

The 20th century was perhaps the busiest with regards to built development on the site – a factor arguably in keeping with the broader changes occurring in the town and the pressures of a growing population. It was during this period – under Margaret Foote's ownership – that major works were undertaken (c1957) to convert and modernise the cottages following the direction of her architect Rayson FRIBA of 29 Beaumont St. Oxford,

The last major phase of building works at the site occurred in the late 20th century. In December of 1985 the Oxford Preservation Trust obtained planning consent for the demolition of an old building in the north-west corner of the farmyard of Lord's Farm and to erect a new structure. This old building is believed to have "at one time been occupied by Jimmy Davey, a harness maker,

and later by Frederick Ayers" and is described in the deeds as "a stone store house (formerly a cottage)." The replacement was of Cotswold stone and built along the line of the north wall of the stable. This resulted in the division of a portion of the previous Lord's Farm garden to form a new plot.



Fig 6: Street elevation to barn

MAP REGRESSION



Fig 1: 1615 Estate Map



Fig 1: 1782 Map



Fig 1: 1800 Enclosure Map

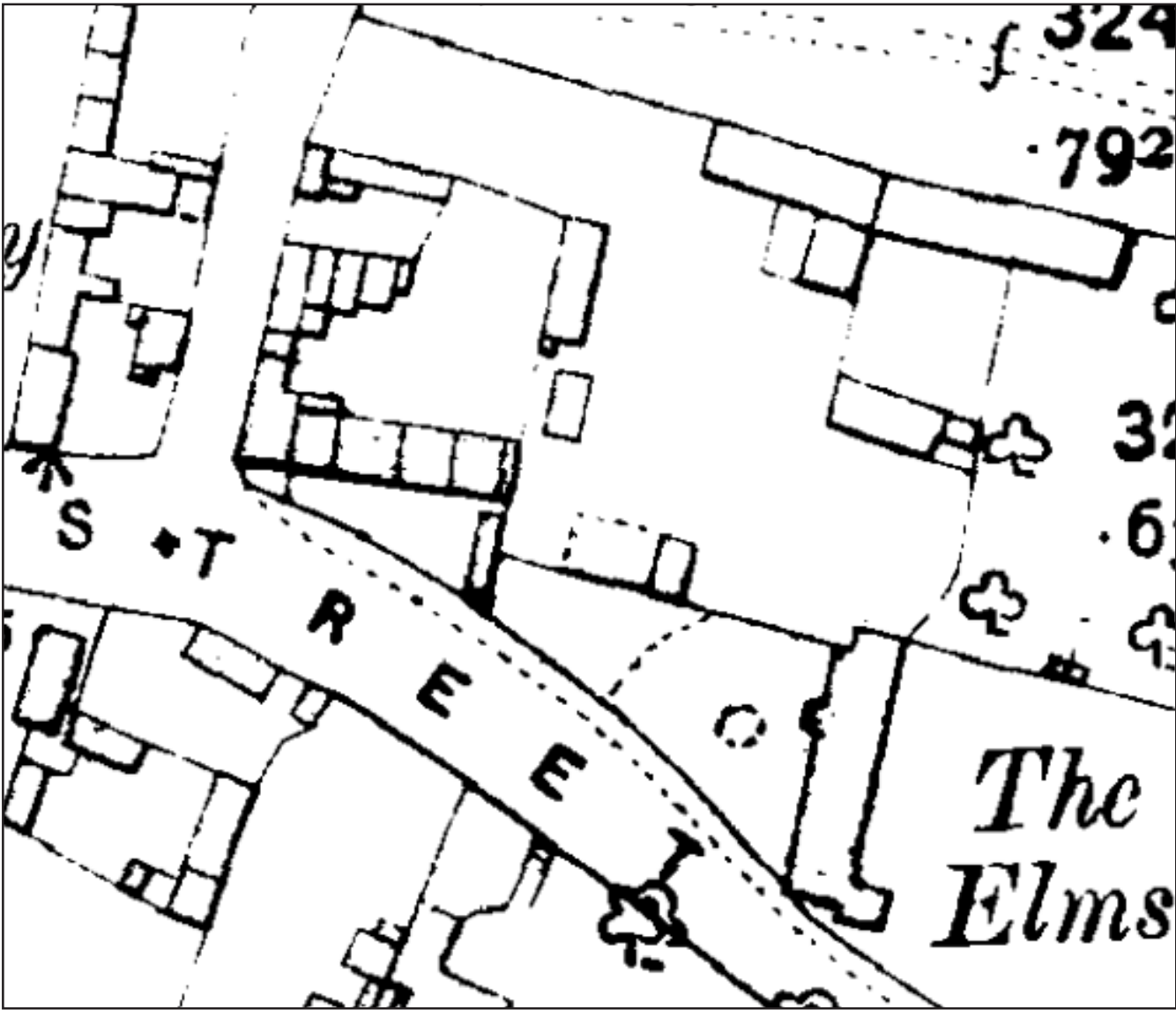


Fig 1: OS Map 1921-1923

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

As an arable farmstead built before the scientific improvements of the 19th century, Lord's Farm does not display many of the conventional farm building types but does comprise of a few principal examples namely the farmhouse; threshing barn; and stables.

THE FARMHOUSE

The farmhouse is a two-storey building constructed of limestone rubble with a hipped Stonesfield stone slate roof. It predominantly dates to the 17th century with older basements associated with the earlier house on the site. The house has been remodelled several times over the centuries, with much of this work reflecting broader changes within the town. The building was extended in the 18th and 19th centuries – first with the addition of the barn (C18) using similar stone materials and latter with addition of a two-storey rear extension (C 19) in newly introduced red brick.

THE BARN

A straight joint - aligning with the rear of the old kitchen flue connects the farmhouse to an 18th century barn. This contiguity is an a-typical feature of farmstead layouts in the region - where farm buildings are predominantly found as distinct and separate elements within the steading – and may reflect the limitations of the site's location at the centre of town.

It is a simple three bay building with large central door and no other apertures on its west elevation. The bays are defined by their principal rafters and each “are of differing lengths which, from north to south contain 11, 12 and 8 common rafters.” The two large doors are connected by a threshing floor comprised of large stone slabs. Photographs of the building in the early 80s (c1984) “show that the north gable of the barn contained a hay loft door giving access to a mezzanine floor over the north bay.” With the exception of a cart porch – added c19th century to the rear door and since removed – the building has remained largely unaltered since construction.

The layout of the barn building related to the process of hand threshing -characterised by “the three-part division of a tall, elongated building into threshing floor with tall barn doors, and flanking storage bays with limited ventilation holes.”

The threshing space was usually a specially prepared floor. It needed to account for several factors; the floor had to be “hard enough to withstand the beating of the frail but springy enough to help with its rhythm; it had to be smooth enough to make sure the grains could be swept up without loss; (yet) strong enough to carry loaded carts moving sheaves for storage.” Several materials were used to achieve this, with flagstones being the preferred option where available. Other alternatives included wood boarding – sometimes a removable section - and flagged, cobbled or brick paving.

The threshing space also needed to be large enough to accommodate several threshers working in tandem. “A tall unobstructed area was required for swinging the flail and even the smallest barns have a height twice that of a man above the threshing floor. The floor was lit by one of the pairs of tall barn doors.”

The doors usually opened outwards to ensure that they did not get in the way of the flail. The tallest of the barn doors often included a small pass door in their design. Many threshing barns also had tall doors at both ends of the threshing floor –to allow carts to be hauled in and unloaded. Sometimes in smaller barns there was a small door opposite the main barn doors. This, Brunskill argues (1987:40), was intended mainly for winnowing.

The main barn doors were often protected by a canopy or by a deep porch. The latter were of various designs and both protected the floor as well as allowing the last cart of the day to remain under shelter until it was unloaded the following day.

To each side of the threshing floor were storage areas; for threshed corn and unthreshed sheaves. Ventilation to storage, a feature not found at the Lord's barn, was only necessary to a limited extent as corn needed less ventilation than hay. In timber-framed buildings air simply flowed through the unplastered wattle panels or between the weatherboarding. Stone and brick barns often had slits or triangular holes.

THE STABLES

The stable block of exposed stonework is linked to the barn by a stone wall. The “north gable of the barn lines up with the gable of the stable (to the rear) each having a similar pitch and each clad in Stonefield slate.” Historic maps suggest that there were other structures occupying this space between barn and stables.

Stables were often well-built structures constructed in close proximity to the main house - owing to the value of horse. They need to be well ventilated with plenty of light for grooming and harnessing. Those built from the 16th century onwards were normally two-storey buildings with a hayloft above and were characterised by a central door, often between two windows, and cobbled (later brick) floors sometimes with drainage channels.

These are characteristics largely typified at Lord's Farm whose original features include a mezzanine level constructed of elm; a hay loft door; hay rack; and a pitched stone paving floor. The hay loft “was reached by a loading door, high in the north gable (now blocked), but a window in the south gable remains serviceable.” The north wall of the building also retains a niche for a lamp and horse medicines.

“The size of the stables suggests accommodation for two horse which would have entered through a door in the north wall (now blocked) while a groom could have used the door in the west wall opposite the barn. Adjoining the stable was a two- seater privy.”

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Significance is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Annex as comprising:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

Placing a building in its historical context and describing its characteristics and appearance is an important component of the evidence gathering exercise to inform understanding of a place’s significance and contribution of its setting. As Historic England explains in ‘Conservation Principles’ (2008) understanding how a place has evolved and how different phases add to or detract from its significance is a part of that exercise.

The Lord’s Farm farmhouse, attached barn, wall and stables are all Grade II listed buildings whose material construction evidence the vernacular traditions of the region and inform the local character of Eynsham. The unusual siting of the farm at the heart of the village and the physical survival of its buildings helps articulate the town’s settlement pattern and evidences of the changes in land tenure, ownership and farming practices. The heritage significance the site holds can be defined as follows:

FARMHOUSE

- The house holds architectural interest with datable internal and external features that plot changes in vernacular architectural styles from the 17th to the 19th centuries. While its internal layout underwent significant alterations in the mid 20th century (c1957), the earlier plan form is still evident and helps articulate the house’s former function and the lifestyle of its previous occupants;
- It has original features of evidential value. These include a number of windows such as the first-floor window casement -

possibly the oldest window on the Queen Street elevation; the basement opening onto Queen street; and the stone staircase to the basements;

- The phases of change reflect how contemporary society adapts and extends existing buildings, to meet changing needs and aspirations, adding layers of history and contributing to the buildings’ historical interest.

BARN

- The survival of the barn provides evidence of the early origins of the farmstead and the traditional location within the settlement;
- The barn is characterised by a simple geometry that helps to explain its function and the threshing ‘system’;
- This results in internal spatial qualities – tall double height space of the threshing bay for example, that holds aesthetic value as well;
- The arrangement and sense of enclosure it provides to the rear yard contributes to its aesthetic appeal;
- This aesthetic value is further enhanced by the barn’s material construction and layout with its rubble stonework and stone slates tiles and stone flooring.

STABLES

- The stables evidence of the 19th century changes to the site;
- The survival of its features helps in our understanding of the building’s history of use. The external access door on the boundary evidences the previous use and land ownership while other features such as the ventilation holes and pitch paving floor inform our understanding of the building’s function.

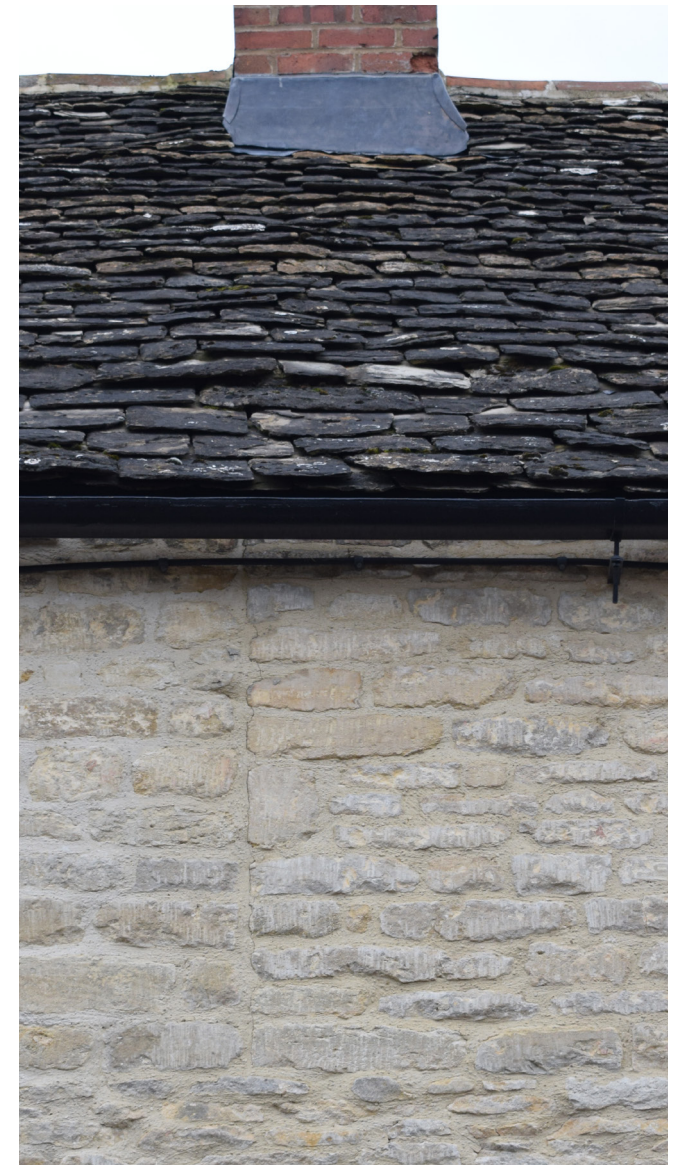


Fig 7: Detail showing the joint in the stone work between house and barn

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT POLICY

In relation to development affecting a designated heritage asset and that includes development within its setting the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states in paragraph 132 that:

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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

The NPPF goes on to explain in paragraphs 133 and 134 the differences between 'substantial' harm and 'less than substantial' harm, advising that any harm should be justified by the public benefit of a proposal.

Specifically, paragraph 134 provides a framework for planning permission to be granted notwithstanding that a particular proposal might cause harm to an asset, provided that there are compensatory public benefits. For development affecting a 'non designated heritage asset' the NPPF explains that the desirability of preserving that 's asset's interest is a material planning consideration.

The historic environment policies of the NPPF are supported by Historic England's Good Practice Advice Notes, which give more detailed advice about gathering the information on significance, assessing the impact and assessing harm with an emphasis on a proportionate approach and proactive and effective management of heritage assets.

The Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014) seeks to provide further advice on assessing the impact of proposals explaining that what matters in assessing the level of harm (if any) is the degree of impact on the significance of the asset, rather than the scale of development. It states (paragraph 017):

In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.....works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all.

The Planning Practice Guidance also seeks to provide a clearer understanding of what constitutes 'public benefit'; as it is the public benefit that flows from a development that can justify harm, always ensuring also that considerable weight and importance is given to the desirability to preserve the character or appearance of a conservation area in weighing the public benefits against the harm. It states (paragraph 020):

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

It explains that public benefits can include heritage benefits including:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset;
- securing the optimum viable use for a heritage asset.

Recent Case law - Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East

Northants District Council, English Heritage and National Trust, 18th February 2014, and Sevenoaks District Council v The Forge Field Society, March 2014, have brought into sharp relief the weight and importance that decision makers should give to the duty under Section 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and in this case section 72 which requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. In Jones v Mordue & Anor [2015] EWHC 539 the Court of Appeal explains how decision makers can ensure this duty can be fulfilled: that by working through paragraphs 131-134 of the NPPF, in accordance with their terms a decision maker will have complied with the duty under section 72. The applicant has followed this advice to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage assets is properly considered in assessing the impact of the proposed development on that significance and in concluding on the level of harm, if any, that would result.

Historic England has been aware for some time that many historic farm buildings are now redundant as a part of modern farming enterprises and recognizes that new uses are the most realistic way forward to secure their preservation.

It published advice on the conversion of farm buildings in 2006. It states:

Reuse is inherently sustainable. These (farm) buildings represent a historical investment in materials and energy, and contribute to environmentally benign and sustainable rural development. If uses and buildings are paired sensitively and if changes are planned so as to preserve the buildings, their features of interest and their setting, then these buildings can go on to tell the story of our past and present.

The advice explains that with any conversion or adaptation there is a balance to be struck between incorporating the practical requirements of a new use and protecting the special character

and significance of the farm building and its setting. It adds that these potential conflicts require careful and thoughtful design and often, innovative solutions need to be found.

This advice shows that contemporary design offers the opportunity for additional accommodation and unconventional solutions are possible without compromising the heritage values the site or its setting holds.

Following intensive studies of farm buildings and farmsteads, by region, it has published further guidance on the conservation of historic farm buildings and developed a methodology to follow in assessing impacts. In its advice 'Farmstead Assessment Framework' (2015) Historic England explains that assessment of the character and significance of the whole site should look at:

- *The landscape setting;*
- *The whole site;*
- *Extent of historic change;*
- *The architectural patterning present in the building styles.*

As an evidence base to inform design solutions for new uses and to identify the challenges and opportunities the site's present condition may present.

The 2006 Historic England publication has been revised and a new publication issued in 2017 - *Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings: Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse*.

The publication explores some of the challenges and opportunities of re-use and seeks to establish some key principles – pointing out that while there is a wide variety in building types and regional variations there often a common approach that is applicable.

There are some points that are particularly relevant to Lords Farm:

- A difficult aspect of conversion is in finding a suitable way to incorporate functions that require subdivision of spaces. This is particularly relevant for threshing barns where long sight lines and a sense of openness are part of their interest;
- One of the greatest challenges with many adaptations is to increase daylight without compromising the building's external appearance;

- Extensions and new buildings can be appropriate where a farm building is particularly sensitive to certain changes - for example sub-division and where an extension can relieve that pressure and facilitate a new use;
- Minor outbuildings provide evidence for how a farmstead has evolved and should be retained and re-used (such as the small stable building at Lords Farm).



Fig 8: Double height space of barn with existing mezzanine level

HERITAGE BENEFITS

Historic England in the Heritage Protection Guide defines Heritage Conservation as

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance. The vast majority of our heritage assets are capable of being adapted or worked around to some extent without a loss of their significance. Indeed, change is often vital to facilitate the optimum viable use of an asset so that it continues to receive investment. It is the Government's overarching aim that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

In its publication Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment, Historic England further comments that:

The historic environment is central to England's cultural heritage and sense of identity, and hence a resource that should be sustained for the benefit of present and future generations (para. 18)

The document sets out a number of Conservation Principles:

- *Significant places should be managed to sustain their values*
- *Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change.*
- *Conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.*
- *Intervention may be justified if it increases understanding of the past, reveals or reinforces particular heritage values of a place, or is necessary to sustain those values for present and future generations, so long as any resulting harm is decisively outweighed by the benefits.*

In applying the Principles the document concludes,

The historic environment is constantly changing, but each significant part of it represents a finite resource. If it is not sustained, not only are its heritage values eroded or lost, but so is its potential to give distinctiveness, meaning and quality to the places in which people live, and provide people with a sense of continuity and a source of identity. The historic environment is a social and economic asset and a cultural resource for learning and enjoyment (para 163).

Government recognises in Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014), that private patronage has contributed to the historic environment, and that

Owners and managers of significant places should not be discouraged from adding further layers of potential future interest and value, provided that recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process. (Paragraph 86)

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