

BATTISFORD HALL

FARM BARNS

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT



whitworth

Whitworth
18 Hatter Street
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 1NE

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FARM BARNS

1.0 **Background:**

The current owners of Battisford Hall are considering the redevelopment of the redundant farm buildings to the rear of Battisford Hall and within the curtilage of the hall.

This report assesses the quality of the buildings which form the complex, but only notes their condition in general terms. It assesses their value in terms of intrinsic value and landscape value and considers the impact on their value of any likely development.

The assessment has been made visually, mainly from ground level and takes into account what can be gleaned from the construction of their history of use and development. Reference has been made to maps and documents and a list of references is appended to the end of the report.

Date of inspection: 28th February 2017

2.0 **General description:**

The farm forms a complex comprising the following 14 separate structures. All of these have been inspected briefly, but detailed inspection has only been made of those subject to potential redevelopment. The others are included for group value purposes and to enable this assessment to be definitive to the time at the date of the inspection. The numbers are for identification purposes only within the limitations of this report, and relate to the order in which the buildings were inspected.

Those mentioned below *in italics* are buildings which were not inspected in any detail due to them being either of minimal value or being beyond the development boundary, but are mentioned here for completeness:

2.1 **Cart lodge:** (“Cart lodge” on Whitworth drawings)





Comprising a brick built room with a hearth and chimney, eight open bays, an enclosed bay with garage door, and four further bays. The open front faces approximately west, with the main axis approximately north- south

2.2 **Piggery:** (no ref on Whitworth drawing):



Subdivided into two, possibly adapted from another use, opening west on to an open courtyard

2.3 **Piggery:** (no separate ref on Whitworth drawings):



Low pitched roofed building forming western side to previous enclosure, probably a former stable for heavy horses, opening west onto a larger open courtyard.

2.4 **Piggery:** (no separate ref on Whitworth drawings):



Low brick built piggery, possibly former stabling for heavy horses, forming south side to open courtyard.

2.5 **Stables:**



Forming northern side to courtyard, part masonry, part timber framed, only part of south and north walls now standing.

2.6 **Mill:** (“old mill” on Whitworth drawings):



Substantial brick structure with first floor intact (but inaccessible), main axis running north – south. Range of lean-to outbuildings to east in derelict condition, double height cart shelter to west intact.

2.7 **Aisled barn:** (“open barn” on drawings):



Of seven bays, formerly a threshing and storage facility, currently used for storage of machinery, main axis north south, with further lean-to structure beyond east aisle, in timber frame construction and derelict.

2.8 **Low timber framed shed:** (“The Pig Shed” on Whitworth drawings):



Formerly a piggery, now converted to a nursery unit or possible chicken or turkey production, with a later lean-to addition which quadruples the floor area.

2.9 **Low shed:** (No ref on Whitworth drawings):



Timber framed construction, main axis east/west, with C20th extension to south, used for storage purposes.

2.10 **Aisle-less barn:** (“Grain Barn” on Whitworth drawings):



Presenting as a ten bay building, but actually two barns constructed end to end, main axis north/south, now containing corn storage and drying equipment, with a lean-to structure at southern end, west side. *Major extensions in timber framed construction to east side now derelict.*

2.11 *Two external circular corrugated iron corn bins.*



With no heritage significance.

2.12 **Open ended shed:**



Crude timber framed construction, currently used for the storage of logs, no heritage impact.

2.13 **Single cell storage building (“Apple Store” on Whitworth drawings):**



of clay lump construction with bricked gable, formerly thatched, but now covered in corrugated iron and semi derelict.

2.14 **Single story office range:** in brick, axis east west, separating Hall residence from farm complex.

2.15 **Boundary wall:**



Extending beyond west gable of farm office range, short section in clay lump capped with terracotta (very unusual in Suffolk).

2.16 **Two storey cart shed building:** shown on earlier photographs but no longer standing.

2.17 **Collection of buildings west of it:** shown on photos, now demolished.



3.0 **Limitations:**

The development boundary does not contain the buildings above numbered 11 to 15. Neither is the Hall included in this assessment.

4.0 **Listing:**

None of the farm buildings are listed in their own right. Battsford Hall (IoE ref: 279782) is listed grade 2. The farm complex is assumed to be within the curtilage of the Hall, although not mentioned in the listing documentation.

5.0 **Known History:**

Battsford Hall was probably built for Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange in London, or his father Sir Richard¹, who was granted the manor of St Johns with its hospital and Battsford Hall from The Bishop of Norwich in 1545². The common adjacent to the hall was enclosed 1812³, and this might form the basis for the development of present farmstead. Tithe records record arable culture in the 1840's and H.B. Gunning refers to the growing of wheat and barley with break crops of "artificial grasses" and turnips⁴. This area of Suffolk has always had a strong arable culture, rather than pastoral, and the obvious association of some of the buildings with animals there relates either to the use of horses for ploughing, or to later redevelopment for diversification purposes

Samuel Thomas Harwood JP was the owner in 1916 and described as the principle landowner in the parish⁵.

The farm has been in the same family since the turn of the C20th, and all of the C20th century adaptation relates to changing styles of agriculture encountered by a single family over 110 years of continuous farming occupation. No agricultural use has been made of the buildings since the retirement of the last member of the family engaged in the enterprise.

¹From Listing description

² Whites Suffolk 1844, reprint p227

³ Ibid p227

⁴ SIAH Vol XXXXpt 2 1982.

⁵ Kellys directory 1916

In recent times the buildings have been allowed to fall into disrepair.

6.0 Key elements:

- **The collection of buildings as a complex:** (see Appendix 1) Buildings 2 to 5 reflect model farm practice from the mid 1830's onwards, with stabling and tack rooms for heavy horses grouped round a yard, and with close access to the pond for watering purposes. Some of the brick detailing and care in the coursing of the bricks also suggests a knowledge of Loudens recommendations that utilitarian farm buildings need not be crude in their detailing⁶. Lost structures 15 and 16 might have enabled better interpretation of this (see 2.17 above and Appendix 2).
- **Barn 7:** which despite having had its original roof lowered and replaced with one of corrugated asbestos, is almost intact as a threshing and storage barn of C16th style. Bark extant on upper braces might enable this to be tree ring dated.



- **Building 6:** an almost complete mill building, probably dating from the second quarter of the C19th.
- **Building 10:** Effectively two barns erected end to end
- **Building 13:** Apple Store: a semi derelict clay lump building. Not currently included within development boundary.
- **Building 16:** clay lump wall, beyond site development boundary. Not currently included within development boundary.

7.0 Statement of Heritage significance:

Historical development of individual structures:

- 7.1 The two oldest buildings on the site are undoubtedly the so called "open Barn" building 7, and the northern end of building 10, currently used as a grain store. Photographs of the complex dated between 1975 and 1990 suggest that these were in recent times much better integrated with other buildings which have since disappeared or been demolished east of the barn.
- 7.2 Building 7 has a brick and flint plinth containing Tudor bricks typically 62mm x 225mm (2 1/4" x 9"),

⁶ Quoted in Weller J 1982 p 155



giving a fairly safe suggestion that this is in-situ and pre 1600 or thereabouts in date. Datable bark adherence already alluded to in East Bay 3 may be able to date the construction with some accuracy. Two series of carpenter's marks, one earlier one to the main frame members and one eighteenth or nineteenth century one to side timbers in the west aisle suggest that the main timbers are intact, and that the aisle walls have been adapted at a later date. Given the historic record of a change of ownership in 1545, it is quite likely that this might have been constructed soon afterwards. The roof structure to the main barn has been replaced with a C20th lightweight softwood structure and asbestos cement sheet finish. The aisle roofs appear to be original with a 45degree pitch and covered on red pantiles with lath for torching on underside.





The wall frames have been heavily amended to the east wall, while the west side has retained its horizontal weather boarding. The upper part to this has however been amended to include slats for ventilation under the eaves (Appendices 3 & 4). Suggesting stabling for farm animals (see below)



See Appendices 3 and 4 for layout.

- 7.3 Building 10 is a short five bay barn with haunched posts and cross ties, with principle trusses in slightly tapering oak rafters clasped at the ridge, with three intermediate rafters per bay at approx. 18" centres, in approx. 5" round in scantlings, with upper ties between the lower main cross tie and ridge housed into the sides of the trusses. Lathes for torching mortar are in place on the topside, under the pantiled roof, with double purlins housed into the sides of the main truss timbers and curved lower braces between post and cross ties, all of which appear to be intact.



Corn storage bins prevented close inspection, but the storey height walls which support the posts and remaining timber framed construction are of flint rubble with red brick quoins with brick dimensions $2\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ ", typical of early nineteenth century post standardisation. Diaper work in a diamond pattern created ventilation suggestion that this was erected as a storage barn.



- 7.4 The northern end of barn 10 is earlier. This is a separate barn of five constructional bays (see appendix 5), all in oak, with trusses clasped at the ridge, supporting single purlins housed into the back of the truss timbers supporting common rafters, four per bay, also in oak, approx. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4$ ", themselves supporting close softwood boarding with an asbestos roof finish over.



(Straight joint in plinth, west side)

Both this and the southernmost part of the barn have original roof finishes pitched at approx. 47degrees. The Haunched posts forming the bay divisions go down to a sole plate at ground level, and the walling itself is formed of 6 1/2" x 4 1/2" laid flat within the wall, and subsequently infilled with brick noggins, the bricks being laid on edge and secured with lime mortar. The middle bay had opposing double doors, the entrances are still visible, suggesting that this was constructed as a threshing barn. The bricks used in the plinth construction, where visible, are of Tudor proportions, but much altered with C19th dimensioned brickwork. Corn storage bins make photography difficult and a further detailed photographic record should be made when these have been removed.

- 7.5 The posts where visible, each have two mortices for diagonal braces, although all of them are missing where access could be obtained to inspect, but none of the visible cross ties have mortices for braces. The wall framing is integral to the posts suggesting that these are of a single constructional date and in-situ. The roof structure is less certainly integral, but single purlins under each slope cover two bays each working inwards from each end, with the central bay common rafters supported by a short purlin each side, together with an additional introduced truss supported off the lintel beams over the cart entrances on each side. Although the roof structure appears to have been reworked, and additional trusses introduced in bays three and four numbering from the southern end, the main frame appears to be substantially intact and readable as an early structure, possibly early to mid C14th⁷⁸. Again, corn storage silos prevented close and detailed inspection. Further investigation of these is necessary once the silos have been removed.

⁷ Cf Aitkens P in Cressing conference papers 1994, p42, ref: College Street Bury St Edmunds

⁸ Hewitt C Historic Carpentry, 1997



7.6 **Building 9:** which is tangential to Building 10 is much later in construction, possibly early C19th and has been altered and extended since to the south.



Timber framed construction formerly with vertical weather boarded sides in tarred softwood boards, with a stub of flint walling to the barn end on the north wall which may be a remnant from an earlier building. However, its roof finish of red clay pantiles has been "semi-torched" on the underside with softwood lathe and lime mortar to deter rain entry.



This formed part of a range of outshot buildings to the east side of building 10, the remainder of which have been subsequently demolished.



7.7 **Building 6:** the old mill, is probably next in order of date and interest. This is in substantially better order than the others and was clearly constructed for the purpose which it appears to have retained throughout its working life.



Brick walls to east and west and the lower part of the north and south gables support a substantial timber structure, with 12" x 13" oak beams supporting 5" X 4" oak joists at 18" centres, with softwood floor boarding above forming a second floor and a softwood roof structure of lower tie design early C19 with red pantiles roof finish at a pitch of 26 degrees. Although there has been some adaption of the openings in the west wall, and the loss of annexed storage buildings to the east, the main building retains its interest.



- 7.8 **Buildings 2 to 5:** form a group of narrow part timber framed buildings with outer walls in brick or clay lump construction. Clay lump is rarely seen in Suffolk buildings other than dovecotes and columbariums before 1830 and its peak of use in agricultural and domestic structures was probably 1840 to 1860, when arable farming was at its peak and fired bricks expensive due to taxation. This might be a reasonable date to give to this group of buildings, although the derelict building 5 retains elements of a circa C17th timber frame in its eastern gable, with an unusual corner truss detail where the tenon passes through the mortised corner post with a wedged end to retain it (see below and Appendix 6).



- 7.9 **Building 1:** is a cart lodge with a warming room or heated office at its southern end, eight open bays, an enclosed bay and then a further four bays at its northern end. The latter appear to be of cruder and later construction. The rear framing is in softwood, with vertical timber boarding, much patched and adapted.



The northern range also contains a tack room and stables reached from the northern end of the range, with roofs pitched at 47 degrees to the front and 25 degrees and a central valley gutter.

- 7.10 **Building 8:** is a stand-alone former pig shed, with softwood timber framing over a brick plinth, and formerly with gates and enclosures on the south side, now removed and replaced with a C20th extension to form a turkey shed or some such, itself in disrepair.



8.0 **Layout and setting:**

- 8.1 The complex informs a development of the changing face of agriculture from the C16 to C21st, with arable giving way to livestock and then to mixed farming, eventually giving way to mixed and under development. There has been a significant loss of supplementary structures on the site which limits this reading of development, and some of the remaining buildings are in effect stranded. Its heyday was the mid to late C19th, with the use of heavy horses and the milling of grain, subsequently developing this by using the grain to feed livestock on the farm. The remoteness of the farm has enabled some isolated elements to survive which might otherwise have been lost to modern farming methods.

9.0 **Character:**

- 9.1 This is distinctly industrial farming in character and any development should seek to retain the “industrial nature” of these buildings. The general poor quality of repair, inappropriateness for modern farming practices render them vulnerable to loss, and appropriate new uses should be considered to salvage heritage the significant structures.

10.0 **Surfaces and materials:**

- 10.1 Strong use of black tar for the walls generally and red pantiles for the roofing throughout, but the use of white limewash in the case of building 10, and red ochre on external boarding to building 6 should be reflected in the choices for external finishes in any new development. Tudor brickwork, later brick detailing etc should be retained whenever possible. Red ochre was commonly applied to farm buildings in the late C18th of recent discoveries at Hall Farm, Finborough.



Traces of red ochre pigment.

11.0 Risk analysis and mitigation:

Building	Item	Value	Risk	Mitigation
2-5	General arrangement	Low	Medium	Retain sense of enclosure and courtyard.
4	Original layout: development from open fronted horse bye. Possible evidence of earlier development	Medium	Low	Record as found during alterations
5	Unusual timber details in derelict structure	Medium	Low	Derelict structure. Record, photographically
5	Open layerage: possible earlier floor beneath concrete	Low	Low	Record as found, salvage if possible
6	Mill: good structure in original condition	Medium	Medium	Retain as much structure as possible in conversion, remove later excrescences to enable better reading of original structure
7	Open barn: structure	Medium	Medium	Repair derelict parts to retain integrity
	Carpenters' marks	High	Medium	Ensure cleaning does not erase marks
	Datable timbers	High	Low	Retain dating evidence if at all possible
8	Piggery: building proportions	Low	Low	Retain sense of proportion in any new work
10	Grain barn: older section: frame details	High	High	Re-inspect and record frame details once grain mechanism removed. Possibly high value building. may require further expert involvement to interpret once exposed.
	External envelope details	Medium	Medium	Urgent repairs needed to frame to retain integrity
	Southern most five bays: external envelope	Medium	Medium	Retain evidence of original usage in brick vents
13	<i>Clay lump apple store</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Rebuild clay lump walls would be an idea, but building not in development area</i>

15	<i>Clay lump boundary wall</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Condition puts this at risk, retention would be worthwhile, but outside development boundary</i>

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