Colchester Archaeological Trust



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Historic building recording at Spital Farm, Station Road, Tolleshunt D'arcy, Essex, CM9 8HR

November 2023



CAT project ref.: 2023/10c ECC code: TDSF23

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1 Summary

A programme of historic building recording was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust of a barn complex at Spital Farm, Station Road, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Essex. The structures recorded include a three-bay threshing barn, with a midstrey projecting to the north, three ancillary buildings and two lean-tos, arranged around a courtyard with a historic boundary wall. The cartographic evidence suggests that Spital Farm was built sometime between 1777 and 1840.

The barn has undergone some phases of rebuilding and consequently has differing techniques incorporated into its frame. The timbers used for the barn, both four-bay buildings, the six-bay building and lean-to 2 are mainly hand-sawn, some of which display signs of reuse. Despite the ever changing needs of agricultural buildings, the floor plan of the complex has changed very little since its inception.

2 Introduction (Fig 1)

This is the archive report of a historic building recording carried out at Spital Farm, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Essex. The recording work was commissioned by the landowner and was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on 6th November 2023. The site is located at NGR TL 94125 12765 (Fig 1).

A planning application (MAL/23/00010) was submitted to Maldon District Council in January 2023 comprising the *Proposed demolition of agricultural barns and construction of 2No dwellings.*

In response to this application, the Place Services Historic Environment Advisor (HEA) recommended to the council that a Historic England building recording be made of the buildings prior to any demolition works (ECC 2023). This recommendation was given due to the historical provenance of the barn. The recommendation was based on the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2023).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the building recording was prepared by Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT 2023) and agreed with the HEA. All work was carried out in accordance with this WSI.

All work was carried out according to standards and practices contained in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (2014a), Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (2014b), Management of research projects in the historic environment (Historic England 2015), Standards for field archaeology in the East of England (EAA 14) and Research and Archaeology Revised: A Revised Framework for the East of England (EAA 24). In addition, the guidelines contained in Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice (Historic England 2016) were followed.

3 Aims

The aim of the building recording was to provide a detailed record and assessment of the house prior to its conversion. The building recording was carried out to Level 3 (Historic England 2016) which is defined as:

"Level 3 is an analytical record and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis. The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. The documentary sources used are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record may contain some discussion the building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance. It may form part of a wider survey of a number of buildings which will aim at an overall synthesis, such as a thematic or regional publication, when the use of additional source material may be necessary as well as a broader historical and architectural discussion of the buildings as a group."

In particular the record considered:

- Plan and form of the site.
- · Materials and method of construction.
- Date(s) of the structure(s).
- · Original function and layout.
- · Original and later fixtures and fittings.
- The significance of the site in its immediate local context.

4 Methodology

The following are included in this report:

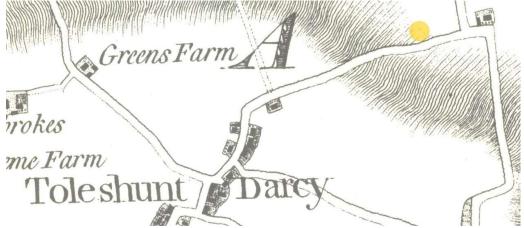
- A documentary, cartographic and pictorial survey of the evidence pertaining to the history and evolution of the site.
- A large-scale block plan of the site.
- Annotated and phased floor-plan of the building at a scale of 1:100.
- A description of the building. The description addresses features such as materials, dimensions, method of construction and phasing.
- A photographic record comprising digital photographs of both general shots and individual features. Selected examples of the photographic record are clearly tied into the drawn record and reproduced as fully annotated photographic plates supporting the text. The photographic record is accompanied by a photographic register detailing location and direction of shot (Appendix 1).

5 Historical background (Fig 1)

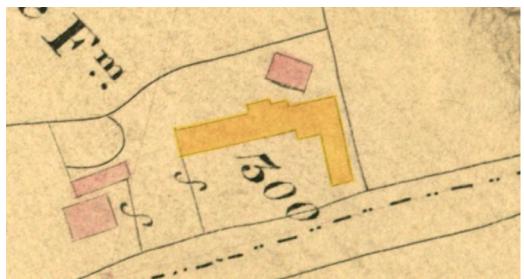
The following background includes extracts of the Essex Historic Environment Records (EHER) held at Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex (accessed via http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk and the Essex Records Office (ERO)).

This report details a complex of buildings, arranged in an L-shape around a courtyard, which includes a three-bay threshing barn with a central midstrey. The earliest cartographic evidence of the area of Spital Farm is the 1777 Chapman and André map, on which the farm is not depicted.

The first time Spital Farm appears on historic mapping is the tithe map from 1840, on which it is labelled 'Spittle Farm' (Map 2). The apportionment indicates the land was owned and occupied by a Thomas Seabrook, a prolific landowner recorded as owning over 50 plots in the area. The buildings detailed in this report are depicted with a similar footprint to the modern day, the main differences being four-bay building B is larger in size, the six-bay building is shorter and lean-to 1 is not present. Three other buildings are present at the farm: the farmhouse and an outbuilding to the west of the courtyard and a square building to the north.



Map 1 Extract of the 1777 Chapman and André map. The approximate location of Spital Farm highlighted in yellow.

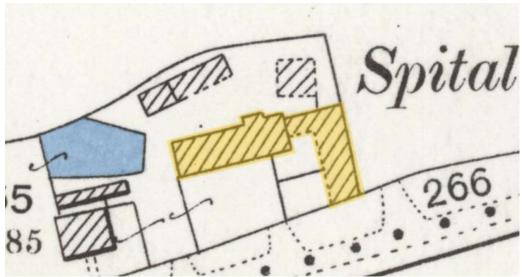


Map 2 Extract of the 1840 tithe apportionment map. The buildings recorded at Spital Farm highlighted in yellow.

By the time the 1st edition 6-inch OS map was surveyed in 1874, four-bay building B had reduced in size and the six-bay building had been extended to the south. The footprint remains unchanged on the 25-inch 1895 OS map (Map 3) but the building is shown in more detail. Four-bay building B and the six-bay building are shown to be open-fronted at this time and the adjacent courtyard recorded as being subdivided. The rest of the buildings on the farm remain unchanged with the addition of a long rectangular building to the north.



Map 3 Extract of the 1st edition 6-inch OS map (1874). The buildings recorded at Spital Farm highlighted in yellow.



Map 4 Extract of the 1895 25-inch OS map. The buildings recorded at Spital Farm highlighted in yellow.

In 1920 Spital Farm was sold at auction as part of the Virley Estate. The sales catalogue (ERO SALE/A44) details the buildings sold at auction at Spital Farm and reads:

THE BUILDINGS comprise timber and iron Six-Bay Open Shed, Loose Box, Barn with paved floor and corn chambers, timber and tiled Cart Horse Stable for 6, Chaff House, Harness Room, Five-Bay timber and Iron Cart Shed and Drill House, timber and thatched Cart Shed with Granary over, Pony Stable and Trap House.

Plate 1 Extract of the 1920 sales catalogue (ERO SALE/A44) detailing the agricultural buildings present on the farm.



Plate 2 Photograph of Spital Farm included in the 1920 sales catalogue (ERO SALE/A44). The buildings recorded visible in the right of the frame.

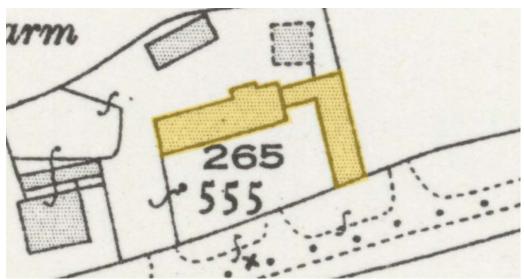
A photograph included in the sales catalogue (Plate 2) shows the buildings in *c* 1920. The southern elevation of threshing barn is reminiscent of the elevation as it is in the modern day. The door on the southern elevation of four-bay building A is not blocked and an extra door and window are present on the western elevation. The front of the six-bay building is shown as being open. A smaller lean-to can be seen on the northern elevation, which has subsequently been demolished and replaced with lean-to 1.

The Virley estate is described in the sales catalogue as covering a vast area of 2,518 acres and being situated in the parishes of Virley, Tolleshunt Knights, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Great Wigborough, Salcott, Layer Breton, Layer Marney and Tollesbury (Map 5). The estate comprised 27 lots, many of which were farmsteads. It was under the supervision of a Mr Henry Abbot, on behalf of the late owner, Sir Anthony Abdy, Bt. The Abdy family began to acquire property in Essex in the 17th century when Anthony Abdy Esquire, alderman and sheriff of London, purchased Felix Hall in Kelvedon and the manor of Virley.



Map 5 Extract of the 1920 sales catalogue (ERO SALE/A44), the highlighted area showing the extent of the Virley Estate.

The 1920 25-inch OS map (Map 4) shows the footprint of the buildings remained unchanged but four-bay building B and the six-bay building are now shown as having closed fronts and the courtyard is no longer divided. The rest of the farmstead remains unchanged.



Map 6 Extract of the 1920 25-inch OS map. The buildings recorded at Spital Farm highlighted in yellow.

6 Building recording descriptive record (Figs 2-7)

The buildings recorded at Spital farm comprised a three-bay threshing barn, with a midstrey projecting to the north, that had been extended to the east and west to create an L-shaped complex. The buildings are primarily timber-framed with some brickwork. The threshing barn measures roughly 12m by 9m and the whole complex covers an area of 372m². See Fig 2 for building locations.



Photograph 1 Northern elevation. Photograph taken facing south south-west.

Exterior

The threshing barn is supported on a red brick plinth (brick dimensions: $210 \times 110 \times 60 \text{mm}$) comprising four courses of English-bond brickwork. To the east of the doors on

the southern elevation and on the eastern elevation, the plinth is topped with four courses of Flemish-bond brickwork. The addition of these courses of bricks indicates these elevations may have been rebuilt or raised at some point. Four-bay building A also has a red brick plinth (brick dimensions: 220 x 110 x 60mm) laid in Flemish bond.

The roof of the threshing barn is gabled at both ends, as is the roof of the midstrey, both of which are clad in corrugated metal sheeting. Adjacent to the midstrey, the roof of the barn has a catslide covering lean-to 2. Four-bay building A has a roof that is hipped at the western end and gabled at the eastern end, where it meets the threshing barn. The roof is clad in modern box-profile sheeting on the southern pitch and corrugated bitumen sheets on the hip and northern pitch. Three sheets of translucent corrugated plastic have been inserted into the northern roof pitch to form crude windows.

An L-shaped roof covers four-bay building B and the six-bay building, which is gabled at both ends and covered in corrugated bitumen sheets. Lean-to 1 has a low-angle mono-pitch roof clad in corrugated metal sheeting. Similarly to four-bay building B, crude roof lights have been formed with translucent corrugated plastic.

All elevations of the buildings are clad in weatherboarding, unless otherwise stated. All doors are vertically-planked.

The midstrey projects from the northern elevation of the threshing barn, between lean-to 1 and 2. The northern elevation of the midstrey is dominated by a large opening which would have originally housed a set of double barn doors, the upper eastern strap hinge of which is still present. In both top corners of the opening is a timber-knee brace. To the west of the midstrey, lean-to 1 is open fronted and supported on five posts which comprise reused telegraph poles. To the east, lean-to 2 is plain weatherboarding. The northern elevation of four-bay building B is consists of a low red brick wall (brick dimensions: $215 \times 105 \times 60 \text{mm}$) laid in Flemish bond. At the western end of the wall is an opening.



Photograph 2 Northern elevation. Photograph taken facing south south-east.

At the time of recording, the eastern elevation of four-bay building B and the six-bay building was completely obscured by vegetation. From the interior of the six-bay building, the southern length of the wall comprises red brick (220 x 110 x 60mm) laid in

a rough English Garden Wall bond. Presumably, this is the same for the rest of the elevation. The eastern elevation of the threshing barn is plain weatherboarding.



Photograph 3 Eastern elevation. Photograph taken facing south-west.



Photograph 4 Southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.



Photograph 5 Detail of double barn doors in southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

In the centre of it's southern elevation, the threshing barn has a set of full-height double doors. They are secured with iron strap hinges and likely had a threshold leap at their base but, due to their dilapidated state, its difficult to be certain. To the west of the double doors is a smaller single door and to the east missing weatherboarding has revealed red brick nogging beneath. The southern elevation of four-bay building A has a blocked door way adjacent to a small inserted poultry opening.

On the southern elevation, four-bay building B has an opening blocked with breeze-blocks to the west and a door to the east. Adjacent to the door, a breeze-block plinth has been added. At the time of recording, the six-bay building was largely obscured by vegetation, but is presumably plain weatherboarding. The cladding of the gable-end has come away, leaving a large opening.



Photograph 6 Southern elevation of four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

On the western elevation, four-bay building A has a set of double doors, secured with iron strap hinges. A small concrete plinth is present at the base of the elevation. The six-bay building has three door openings and two smaller openings on this elevation. The northern-most doorway no longer has a door present, while the remains two have dilapidated stable doors, with the central one blocked from the inside. A concrete plinth has been added between the doors. Lean-to 1 is plain weatherboard with a small concrete plinth.



Photograph 7 Western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.



Photograph 8 Detail of double doors on western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

The courtyard of the complex is defined by the buildings to the north and east, a modern boundary to the south and a historic brick wall to the west. The wall is red brick (brick dimensions: $220 \times 110 \times 60$ mm), laid principally in Flemish bond. Towards the top of the wall is a single course of chamfered bricks, topped with a course of alternating headers and stretchers which in turn are capped with triangular copping bricks. Three small buttresses project from the wall, one where the wall meets four-bay building A and two flanking the gateway. There is an area of modern repair at the northern end.



Photograph 9 Southern elevation, boundary wall visible in the foreground. Photograph taken facing north-east.

Interior

All building floors are concrete, unless otherwise noted.



Photograph 10 Interior of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing north-east.

Threshing Barn

The threshing barn consists of three bays, labelled bay 1-3 from east to west (see Fig 2) and a midstrey. It is located in the middle of the east-west range of the building complex.



Photograph 11 Detail of reused tie-beam between bays 1 and 2 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing south-east.

The roof of the barn comprises pairs of rafters, which rise from the wall-plates to meet at the apex of the roof. The rafters are supported by single clasped purlin on each roof pitch, which in turn are clasped by two collars per bay. In all three bays, diagonal wind-

bracing is fixed to the rafters, beneath the purlins, on both pitches of the roof. Each bay of the barn is separated by a tie-beam, which are supported at both ends at by a knee-brace. Both tie-beams show signs of reuse in the form of empty mortices on their underside. The frame of the barn comprises a combination of hand-sawn and machine-cut timbers.

The northern wall of bay 1 is clad in weatherboard, concealing the wall-framing beneath, but from the interior of lean-to 1 it can be seen that the frame comprises diagonal through-bracing with a secondary perpendicular brace (henceforth referred to as Y-bracing). The frame appears to comprise a combination of machine-cut and hand-sawn timbers and has likely been, at least partially, rebuilt. Both the wall-plate and sill-beam have signs of reuse.



Photograph 12 Detail of exposed timber-frame of threshing barn in lean-to 1. Photograph taken facing south.

The southern wall of the bay is different. It comprises a series of timber studs, interrupted by a sizeable girding-beam, with no bracing. There is an inserted door in the lower half of the wall. A face-halved and bladed scarf-joint is present in the southern wall-plate.



Photograph 13 Southern wall of bay 1 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing south south-east.



Photograph 14 Detail of wall-plate scarf joint in southern wall of bay 1 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing south.

The southern half of the western wall has diagonal through-bracing and thin studs which appear to be blocking an opening. Adjacent to the opening is a single stud interrupted by a short beam. The northern half of this wall has Y-bracing. The wall-plate does not continue through the gable-end, instead the frame has a higher horizontal timber. The central post on this wall has a large empty mortice on its face, evidence it has been reused. The lower portion of the frame has been encase in concrete, which in turn is sheathed in metal sheets.



Photograph 15 Western wall of bay 1 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing west south-west.

Bay 2 is the central bay of the threshing barn and is the narrowest of the three bays. The southern wall of the bay is dominated by a set of large barn doors while the northern wall is open for access to the midstrey. The southern wall-plate is a continuation of that seen in bay 1 and therefore has a series of empty mortices on its underside. In the door frame on the northern wall is a timber with a series of carpenter's marks (I, II, III, IIII and V) carved into it. The function of the timber is unclear but is possibly related to the threshold leap. As the carpenter's marks do not have corresponding marks on the adjacent frame, the timber is likely reused.



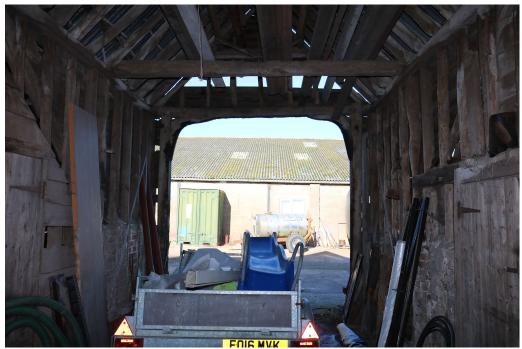
Photograph 16 Detail of carpenter's marks on timber adjacent to door in bay 2 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing south south-west.



Photograph 17 Eastern wall of bay 3 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing east.

The northern wall of bay 3 of the threshing barn has diagonal through-bracing, as does the eastern wall. The southern wall, however, has diagonal through-bracing on its eastern side and Y-bracing on the western side. A face-halved and bladed scarf-joint is present in the northern wall-plate and iron straps are present on the eastern wall-plate. An inserted door is located in the eastern wall. The lower portion of all three walls has been encased in concrete and sheathed with metal sheets. The studs in the gable-end have been largely replaced with modern timber.

The midstrey projects from the northern wall of bay 2, and appears to be a later addition to the barn. This is evidenced by weatherboard, from the northern elevation of the barn, being present beneath the frame of the midstrey and the lack of knee-braces supporting the tie-beam. The eastern wall comprises diagonal through-bracing in its northern half and studs with a girding-beam (which has been reused) in the southern half. The western wall comprises diagonal through-bracing, though the southern brace is obscured by weatherboard. A door is present in both walls. Brick nogging has been added between many of the studs on the lower half of both walls. The northern wall of the midstrey is dominated by a large opening, which would have originally housed a set of double barn doors. In both top corners of the opening is a knee-brace, the addition of which is further evidence for the midstrey being a later addition as this differs from the doors in the southern elevation.



Photograph 18 Northern wall of midstrey of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing north north-west.



Photograph 19 Detail of iron strap in eastern wall-plate of midstrey of threshing barn. External weatherboarding visible adjacent to the right-most stud. Photograph taken facing east.

Four-bay building A

Four-bay building A projects from the western elevation of the threshing barn. It has four bays, labelled bay 1-4 from west to east and defined by tie-beams.

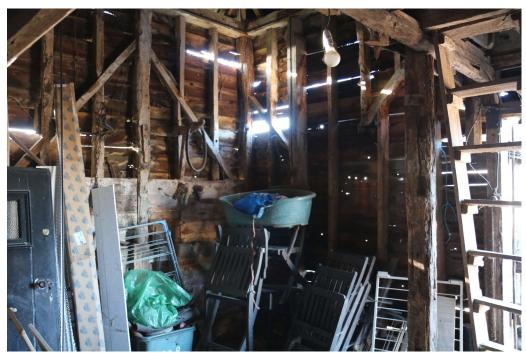


Photograph 20 Detail of roof construction of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing south-west.

The roof of four-bay building A is constructed from pairs of rafters that meet at a ridge-board at the roof's apex. Each roof pitch has a single clasped purlin, which are clasped by two collars per bay (except in bay 1, due to the presence of the loft). The tie-beams between bays 2 and 3 and bays 3 and 4 are very sinuous in nature and are both supported at each end with a timber knee-brace. The wall-framing comprises diagonal through-bracing with studs and intermediate posts. The timbers used are primarily hand-sawn, a number of which have signs of reuse, although areas of repair are machine-cut.



Photograph 21 Detail of exposed timber-frame of four-bay building A in lean-to 1. Photograph taken facing south.



Photograph 22 Interior of four-bay building A (bay 1). Photograph taken facing southwest.

Bay 1 of four-bay building A is the largest of the four bays and has been divided from the rest of the building by a timber wall. The wall is supported on a red brick plinth laid in Flemish bond. The frame of the western wall is somewhat irregular, likely as it has been partially rebuilt after the removal of the window and door seen in the photograph from the 1920 sales catalogue (Plate 2). Adjacent to this is a set of small double doors.



Photograph 23 Detail of saddle hook in four-bay building A (bay 1). Photograph taken facing south-east.

The northern wall is clad in weatherboard and a carpenter's mark (IIII) is present on the northern sill-beam, its location suggestive that the timber is reused. A side-halved scarf-joint is present in the northern sill-beam (seen from lean-to 1). The tie-beam and

sill-beam of the eastern wall both have iron straps. Two timber saddle hooks are located on the southern wall.



Photograph 24 Detail of carpenter's mark in northern sill-beam of bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing north north-west.

A loft has been inserted into the northern half of bay 1. It is constructed from handsawn timbers and supported on a single post and straight brace. It is enclosed and clad in weatherboard on its exterior.

The southern half of the floor in bay 1 is laid with floor bricks (brick dimensions: $210 \times 105 \times 50 \text{mm}$).



Photograph 25 Interior of loft in bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing north-east.



Photograph 26 Detail of brick floor in bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing north-west.

The western wall of bay 2 is covered with weatherboard while the northern wall is covered with modern plastic. A side-halved scarf-joint is present in the southern sill-beam while the northern wall-plate contains a face-halved and bladed scarf-joint. A 'VIII' carpenter's mark has been carved into the sill-beam of the western wall, its solitary nature an indication the timber is reused. Bay 2 is currently segregated by Heras panels and is being used to house chickens.



Photograph 27 Detail of scarf joint in northern wall-plate in four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing south-east.



Photograph 28 Detail of carpenter's mark on western sill-beam of bay 2 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing south-west.

Bay 3 has a door in the northern and southern walls, although the southern door has been blocked. Both door openings appear to be original to the building. Bay 4 is smallest of the four bays. The northern wall of both bays is clad in weatherboard, as is the eastern wall of bay 4 (the original external wall of the threshing barn). In bays 2-4, much of the brick plinth has been skimmed in concrete.



Photograph 29 Interior of four-bay building A (bays 2-4). Photograph taken facing east south-east.

Four-bay building B

Four-bay building B projects from the eastern elevation of threshing barn. It has a semi-aisled construction, with an aisle on the northern and eastern sides of the

building. It has four bays, labelled from west to east, divided by a series of tie-beams. The western two tie-beams are supported at each end by a knee-brace.



Photograph 30 Interior of four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing north-east.

The roof of the building comprises pairs of rafters which rise, from the wall-plate on the southern wall and the arcade-plate on the northern wall, to meet at ridge-board at the apex of the roof. Smaller rafters rise from the northern wall-plate to meet the base of the main rafters on the arcade plate. Equally spaced high collars clasp a purlin on each roof pitch. Each high collar has a corresponding lower collar which is much slimmer. A lower purlin has been added to the rafters below the arcade-plate. The frame comprises mainly hand-sawn timbers, with additional machine-cut timbers where the frame has been repaired.

The truss between bays 2 and 3 has been boarded-up above the tie-beam, using a door and weatherboards. In the corner of the northern and eastern arcade-plates, in bay 4, a knee-brace has been fixed on its side. All of the posts along the northern edge of the arcade are supported on inserted concrete blocks. Iron straps are present on a number of the tie-beams and posts. The northern posts between bays 2 and 3 and the corner of bay 4 have signs of reuse, in the form of empty mortices. Three side-halved and bridled scarf-joints are present in four-bay building B, one in the southern wall-plate (bay 2) and two in the northern wall-plate (bay 3).

The brickwork of the northern and eastern walls has been rendered with concrete, as is the lower half of the southern and western walls. The top half of the southern wall is a combination of exposed timber-frame and render. A door is present in the southern wall, in bay 2. The western wall is the external wall of the barn, and therefore is clad in weatherboard, and contains a door, which no longer opens due to the concrete render.

Six-bay building

Six bay-building dominates the north-south range of the complex. Similarly to four-bay building B, it has semi-aisled construction, with an aisle along the eastern wall. It has six fairly equally-sized bays.

The bays of the building are defined by tie-beams, two of which have knee-bracing at both ends. Each bay has two collars, which clasp a purlin on both roof pitches. The purlins support the rafters, which, in pairs, rise from the wall-plate and the arcade-plate

to meet at a ridge-board. The timber-frame of the six-bay building comprises a combination of hand-sawn and machine-cut timbers.



Photograph 31 Interior of six-bay building (bays 1-4). Photograph taken facing northeast.

A number of scarf-joints are present in the six-bay building. The western wall-plate has two, between bays 3 and 4 and bays 5 and 6, both face-halved and bladed. Three more face-halved and bladed joints are present in the arcade-plate, in bays 1,3 and 5. Finally, each purlin has a single splayed scarf-joint in bay 4.



Photograph 32 Detail of scarf-joint in eastern arcade-plate of six-bay building (bay 3). Photograph taken facing east north-east.

A dividing wall has been inserted between bays 4 and 5, incorporating the tie-beam and posts into its structure. A timber king-post has been added to the tie-beam. It is

supported on a plinth sheathed in concrete and is clad in weatherboard on the northern side. A small livestock door is present in the wall.



Photograph 33 Interior of six-bay building (bays 5-6). Photograph taken facing northwest

Lean-to 1

Lean-to 1 is a rectangular in shape and open-fronted. It is built on to the northern elevations of the threshing barn and four-bay building A.

Lean-to 1 is modern in construction. The roof comprises single rafters, which rise from the posts in the northern wall to meet the wall-plate of the buildings. The posts in the northern wall and the rafters are reused telegraph poles. The southern wall of lean-to 1 has the exposed timber-framing of the threshing barn and four-bay building A.

Lean-to 2

 $\overline{\text{Lean-to 2}}$ is a small rectangular building located on the northern elevation of the threshing barn.

The roof of lean-to 2 comprises single rafters rising from the wall-plate to meet the northern elevation of the barn. A single purlin supports the rafters, which is in turn supported by two inclined struts projecting from the southern wall. The timber-frame of lean-to 2 consists of hand-sawn timbers.

The northern wall of the lean-to is constructed using evenly spaced studs with throughbracing while the eastern wall is only constructed from studs, the lower half of which have been encased in concrete. Iron straps are present on the wall-plate in the eastern wall.



Photograph 34 Interior of lean-to 1. Photograph taken facing south-east.



Photograph 35 Interior of lean-to 2. Photograph taken facing north-east.

The southern and western walls of lean-to 2 are external walls of the threshing barn, so consequently are clad in weatherboard. Some of the weatherboard of the southern wall has come away revealing the barns timber-frame beneath, along with red brick nogging. On the timber-frame are two carpenter's marks, 'III' and 'IIII', incised through each diagonal brace its adjacent stud.



Photograph 36 Detail of 'III' and 'IIII' carpenter's marks in northern wall of bay 3 of threshing barn (seen in lean-to 2). Photograph taken facing south south-east.

7 Discussion

The cartographic evidence of Spital Farm proves the barn complex was constructed between 1777 and 1840, during which time the farmstead was both conceived and expanded. While the construction dates of the buildings are likely to be fairly contemporary with one another, the threshing barn was probably the first structure to have been constructed. The use of English bond in the plinth of the barn is different to the use of Flemish bond in the rest of the brickwork, a good indication it was constructed prior to the other buildings. Its central location in the complex further compounds this.

The presence of reused timbers in the frame of the barn is interesting. We normally assume that such timbers have been reclaimed from nearby structures, usually on the same farmstead. On the Chapman and André map, the area around Spital Farm is very sparsely populated, which begs the question where the timbers came from. The tithe apportionment records the owner and occupier as Thomas Seabrook, a prolific landowner in the area. It is plausible the farm was constructed by Seabrook using timbers reclaimed from other land under his ownership. It could also be argued that the timbers were procured from elsewhere, possibly purchased from other farmsteads, as during this period it appears Seabrook was actively constructing farm buildings on his land. This is evidenced as Seabrook is also recorded as owning and occupying Profits Farm (built during the same period as Spital Farm), located to the south of Station Road.

A threshing barn would have originally been constructed for the processing and storage of a grain crop. A grain crop, whether wheat, oats, barley or rye, is called corn and requires processing to be used. The grains need to be separated from the stalks and chaff needs to be removed from the grains. This process, called threshing, was traditionally carried out by hand-flail. The barn would have had two large sets of doors opposite each other, in the midstrey and bay 2 which, when open, would have allowed a cross draught to winnow the chaff from the grain on the threshing floor. A threshold leap would have been present at the base of these doors, to prevent farm animals walking into the barn during this process. The grain would be taken out of the barn to be stored in a granary while the by-product of the threshing, the straw, would be piled

high on either side of the threshing floor in bays 1 and 3. It would be stored in the barn until such time it was needed for fodder or bedding.

Despite the small site of the barn, the addition of a midstrey, especially so soon after the barns inception, is indicative of a thriving arable farmstead. It would have allowed the threshing floor to have been lengthened allowing for a greater volume of grain to be processed. It would have also offered greater protection (from poor weather) to the threshing floor and allowed the last cart of the day to be left under cover, ready to be unloaded the following morning.

The mid-19th century was a period known as the 'High Farming' years in British agriculture, a time of increased output and prosperity brought about by affordable imported artificial fertilisers, manure and feeds. These, combined with an Act of Parliament in 1849 that provided loans for the construction of farm buildings, led to a boom in agriculture in Britain. Theses years of prosperity came to an end in the 1870's after several years of poor weather and failed harvests and the collapse of grain prices in the face of cheap foreign imports. This brought about a depression in British farming. Luckily for Britain's farmers, however, this was offset against a rising urban demand for milk and many of the eastern regions ailing arable farms diversified into small-scale dairy farming, turning their valueless wheat fields over to pasture and exploiting the cheap foreign grain as feed (Harvey 1984). It seems likely that this was the driving force behind the alterations at the farm in the mid 19th century, as can be seen from the 1st edition OS map. Four-bay building B and the six-bay buildings appear to have been converted into animal sheds to allow the farmer to cash in on the increased demand for milk.

Despite this slight diversification into dairy farming, arable farming appears to have still been a prominent revenue stream for Spital Farm. The sales catalogue from 1920 (Plate 1) records the farm as still having a barn with corn chambers, a chaff house, a cart-shed with drill house and a cart-lodge with a granary, along with space for six cart horses and a pony and trap, all buildings associated with arable farming.

On the face of it, this may seem surprising but farming in Essex has always relied heavily on cereal production, the drier climate, flatter landscape and clayey soils of East Anglia being ideally suited for growing crops. When this is taken into account, it would seem ill-considered for a farm to completely abandon arable farming. Many farms during this period may have seen a purposeful reduction in acreage for cereal crops, but it tended to be focussed on areas with poorer soils where crops may have not proved fruitful. Many farmers continued to grow cereals profitably (even if the profit was lower than during the 'High Farming' years) just in smaller quantities (Pam 2004).

Further evidence for the continuation of arable farming is provided by the continued maintenance and rebuilding of the threshing barn. The timber-frame of the barn is somewhat irregular, three different styles of framing have been used, indicating at least two phase of rebuilding. This maintenance and rebuilding of the barn's frame is indicative of the barn's importance and the need to keep it structurally sound for the continued success of the farm.

In later years, it is evident the buildings were likely used to house livestock. The render and weather boarding on the interior of some of the buildings was likely added to stop animals gnawing on the timber-frames of the buildings and the brick floor added to stop livestock from sinking into a mud floor. Most recently, much of the complex was utilized for storage.

Timber-framed farm buildings are under particular threat of loss from the historical record thanks to their redundant nature (due to the stark differences in modern day agriculture) and the societal desire to convert them into residential buildings (Andrew 2022). The structures recorded at Spital Farm form part of England's dwindling stock of historic agriculture buildings, despite their state of disrepair and basic architectural interest. They tell the story of a small farm which diversified into pastoral farming

sufficiently enough to keep afloat but seemingly able to keep to the arable roots that Essex is famed for.

8 Acknowledgements

Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank the landowner for commissioning and funding the historic building recording. The recording was carried out by Sarah Veasey. Figures are by Sarah Veasey, based on original architects drawings by Tricker Blackie Associates. The project was monitored by Maria Medlycott for Essex County Council.

9 References

Note: all CAT reports, except for DBAs, are available online in .pdf format at http://cat.essex.ac.uk

nttp.//out.occox	.ao.an	
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Brunskill, R W	1985	Timber Building in Britain
Brunskill, R W	1987	Traditional Farm Buildings iof Britain
CAT	2023	Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for historic building recording at Spital Farm, Station Road, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Essex, CM9 8HR by S Veasey
CIfA	2020a	Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials
CIfA	2020b	Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures
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Pam, S J	2004	Essex Agriculture: Landowners' and Farmers' Responses to Economic Change, 1850-1914
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Harvey, N	1984	A History of Farm Buildings in England and Wales
Historic England	2015	MoRPHE: Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment
Historic England	2016	Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice

10 Abbreviations and glossary

beam horizontal members in timber-frames CAT Colchester Archaeological Trust

catslide roof a roof continuing down beyond the main wall-plate to cover and

outshot or extension

ClfA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

collar a horizontal timber in a roof structure spanning between a pair of

inclined timbers (such as rafters)

EHER Essex Historic Environment Record, held by the ECC

ERO Essex Records Office

English-bond a brickwork bond created from alternate courses of headers and

stretchers

Flemish-bond a brickwork bond created from alternating headers and stretchers

within a single course

HE Historic Environment NGR National Grid Reference

OASIS Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS,

http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main

post vertical members in timber-frames

purlin a longitudinal timber giving support to the common rafters of a roof

and normally set at right-angles to the slope of the rafters

rafter an inclined timber following the slope of the roof

ridge-board a plank-like timber running below the apex of the roof and receiving

the ends of the rafters

stretcher a brick laid parallel to the face of the wall, i.e. lengthways stretcher-bond a brickwork bond where each curse consists of only stretchers –

indicating a cavity wall

wall-plate a timber running horizontally along the top of a wall to receive the

ends of common rafters

wind-brace diagonal roof braces designed to connect the rafters together and

prevent racking

11 Archive deposition

The archive is currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at Roman Circus House, Roman Circus Walk, Colchester, Essex CO2 7GZ, but will be permanently deposited with the Archaeological Data Service.

12 Contents of digital archive

The CAT WSI The report (CAT Report 2010) Digital plans Site digital photos and log

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Distribution list

Landowner Maria Medlycott, ECCHEA EHER

Appendix 1:

Full digital photographic record

TDSF23_photograph_001.JPG	Southern elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_002.JPG Southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_003.JPG Southern elevation. Photograph taken facing north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_004.JPG Detail of inserted chicken door in southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_005.JPG Detail of door in southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_006.JPG Detail of door in southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_007.JPG Detail of double barn doors in southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_008.JPG Detail of brick infill in timber-frame of southern elevation. Photograph taken facing north.

TDSF23_photograph_009.JPG Southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west. Detail of door in southern elevation. Photograph taken facing west north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_011.JPG Detail of brick plinth on southern elevation of the three-bay building. Photograph taken facing north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_012.JPG Detail of brick plinth on southern elevation of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing north-west.

TDSF23 photograph 013.JPG Western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_014.JPG Detail of doorway on western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_015.JPG Detail of doorway on western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_016.JPG Detail of doorway on western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_017.JPG Detail of opening on western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_018.JPG Detail of opening on western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_019.JPG Detail of double doors on western elevation. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23 photograph 020.JPG Northern elevation. Photograph taken facing south-west.

TDSF23_photograph_021.JPG Northern elevation. Photograph taken facing south south-west. TDSF23_photograph_022.JPG Northern elevation. Photograph taken facing south south-east.

TDSF23_photograph_023.JPG Detail of knee-brace and strap hinge on northern elevation of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing south-east.

TDSF23 photograph 024.JPG Eastern elevation. Photograph taken facing south-west.

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TDSF23_photograph_028.JPG Detail of brick floor in bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing north-west.

TDSF23_photograph_029.JPG Detail of floor joists in bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing east north-east.

TDSF23_photograph_030.JPG Detail of reused wall-plate in northern wall of bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing north north-east.

TDSF23 photograph 031.JPG Detail of sill-beam strap in eastern wall of bay 1 of four-bay building A.

TDSF23_photograph_031.JPG Detail of sill-beam strap in eastern wall of bay 1 of four-bay building A Photograph taken facing south-east.

TDSF23_photograph_032.JPG Detail of carpenter's mark in northern sill-beam of bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing north north-west.

TDSF23 photograph 033.JPG Detail of loft bracing in bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken

facing north-east.

TDSF23 photograph 034.JPG Interior of loft in bay 1 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing

north-east.

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TDSF23_photograph_035.JPG Interior of lean-to 1. Photograph taken facing south-east. TDSF23_photograph_036.JPG Interior of lean-to 1. Photograph taken facing south-west.

TDSF23_photograph_037.JPG Detail of exposed timber-frame of four-bay building A in lean-to 1. Photograph taken facing south.

TDSF23_photograph_038.JPG Detail of scarf joint in northern wall-plate in four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing south-east.

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TDSF23_photograph_039.JPG	Detail of reused timber lintel in northern wall of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing south south-east.
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TDSF23_photograph_041.JPG	Detail of exposed timber-frame of threshing barn and four-bay building A in lean-to 1. Photograph taken facing south-east.
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TDSF23_photograph_051.JPG	
TDSF23_photograph_052.JPG	Detail of carpenter's mark on western sill-beam of bay 2 of four-bay building A. Photograph taken facing south-west.
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TDSF23_photograph_062.JPG	Northern wall of bay 1 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing north north-west.
TDSF23_photograph_063.JPG	Northern roof pitch of bay 1 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing north north-west.
TDSF23_photograph_064.JPG	Southern wall of bay 1 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing south south-east.
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TDSF23_photograph_077.JPG	*******
TDSF23_photograph_078.JPG	Southern wall of bay 3 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing
TDSF23_photograph_079.JPG	
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TDSF23_photograph_088.JPG	Western wall of midstrey of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing north-west.
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TDSF23_photograph_091.JPG	Detail of door in western wall of midstrey of threshing barn.
TDSF23_photograph_092.JPG	Photograph taken facing south-west. Detail of iron strap in eastern wall-plate of midstrey of threshing barn.
TDSF23_photograph_093.JPG	Photograph taken facing east. Detail of brick infill in western wall of midstrey of threshing barn.
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TDSF23 photograph 101.JPG	Interior of four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing north-east.
TDSF23_photograph_102.JPG	Interior of four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing north-east.
TDSF23_photograph_103.JPG	Detail of knee-braces in four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing north-east.
TDSF23_photograph_104.JPG	Detail of iron tie-beam strap in four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing south-east.
TDSF23_photograph_105.JPG	Detail of iron straps in four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing south-east.
TDSF23_photograph_106.JPG	Detail of side-on knee-brace in four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing east north-east.
TDSF23_photograph_107.JPG	
TDSF23_photograph_108.JPG	Detail of scarf joint in southern wall-plate in four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing north north-west.
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TDSF23_photograph_109.JPG	Detail of scarf joint in northern wall-plate of four-bay building B. Photograph taken facing north.
TDSF23_photograph_110.JPG	Interior of six-bay building (bays 1-4). Photograph taken facing southeast.
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TDSF23_photograph_113.JPG	Detail of roof structure of six-bay building (bays 1-4). Photograph taken facing north.
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TDSF23_photograph_116.JPG	Detail of scarf-joint in eastern arcade-plate of six-bay building (bay 1). Photograph taken facing north-east.
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TDSF23_photograph_118.jpg	Interior of six-bay building (bays 5-6). Photograph taken facing southeast.
TDSF23_photograph_119.jpg	Interior of six-bay building (bays 5-6). Photograph taken facing southwest.
	Interior of six-bay building (bays 5-6). Photograph taken facing northwest.
_	Interior of six-bay building (bays 5-6). Photograph taken facing northeast.
_	Detail of iron straps in six-bay building (bays 5-6). Photograph taken facing north.
_	Detail of reused rafter in eastern roof pitch of six-bay building (bay 6). Photograph taken facing north-east.
_	Detail of scarf joint in the western wall-plate of six-bay building (bays 5-6). Photograph taken facing south-west.
	Detail of scarf-joint in eastern arcade-plate of six-bay building (bay 5). Photograph taken facing north-east.
	Detail of knee-brace in dividing wall of six-bay building (bay 5). Photograph taken facing north.
_	Detail of live-stock door in dividing wall of six-bay building (bay 5. Photograph taken facing north.
TDSF23_photograph_128.jpg	Southern roof pitch of bay 2 of threshing barn. Photograph taken facing south-east.

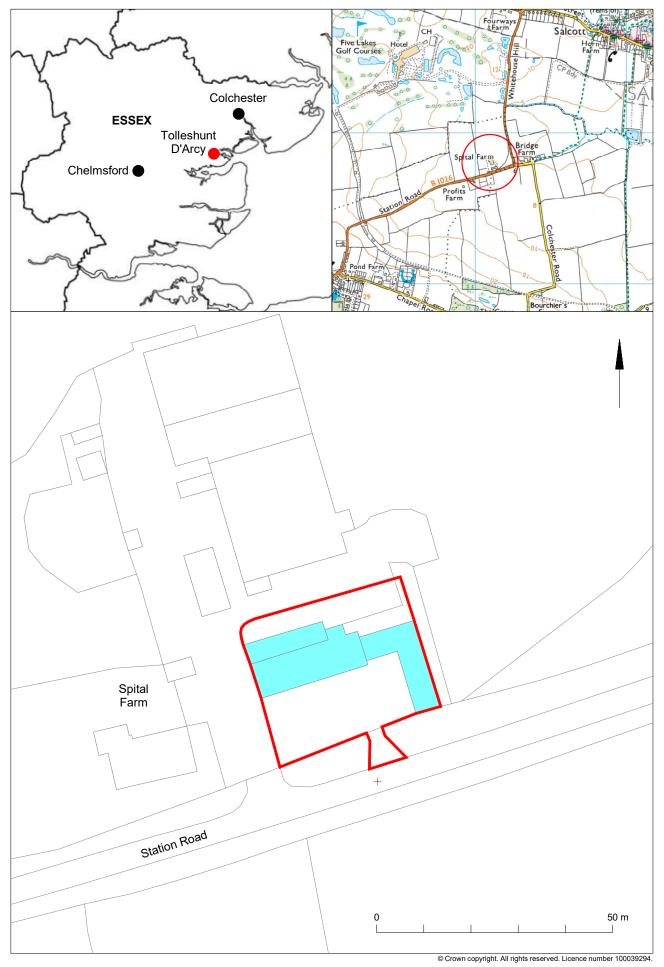
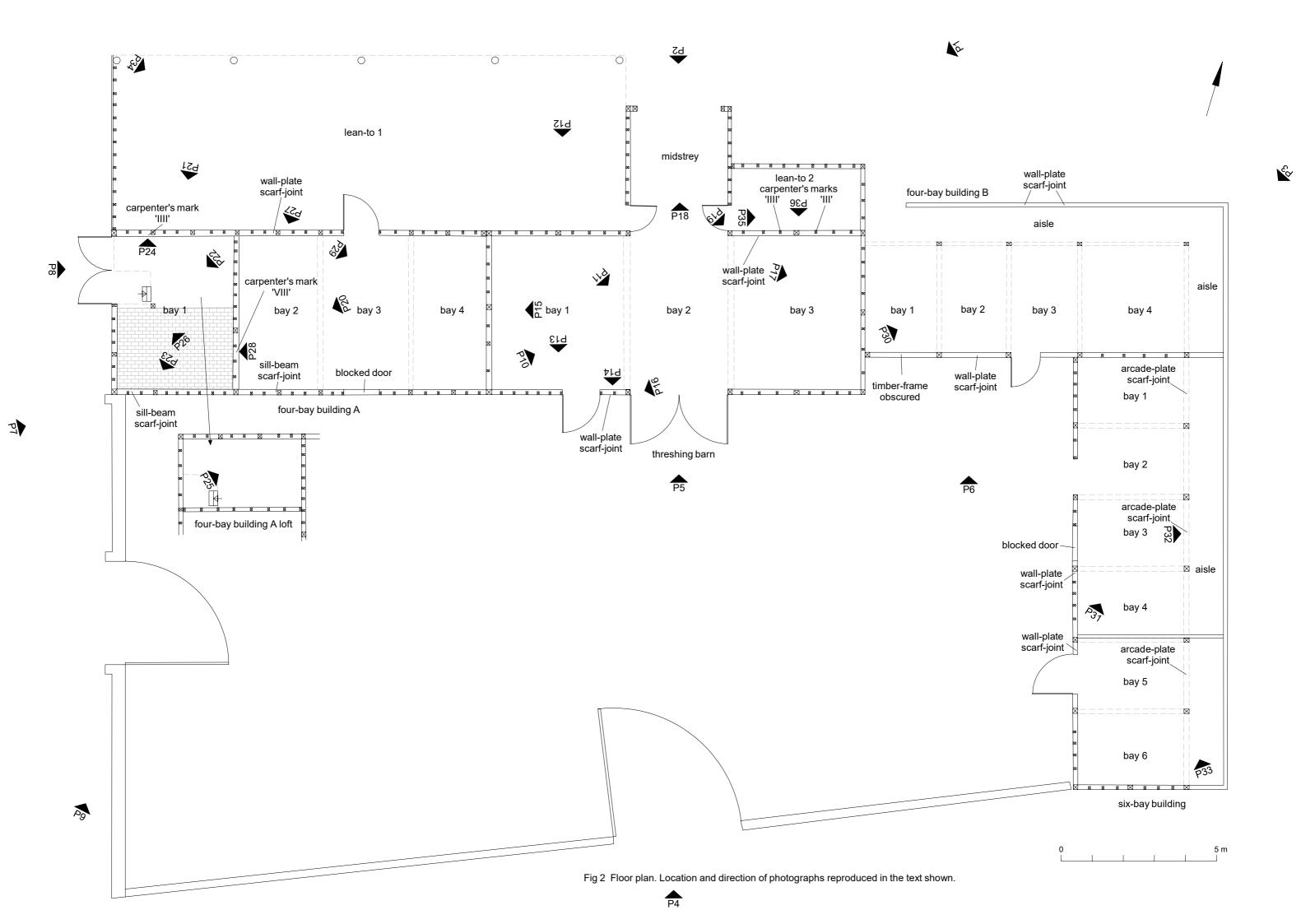
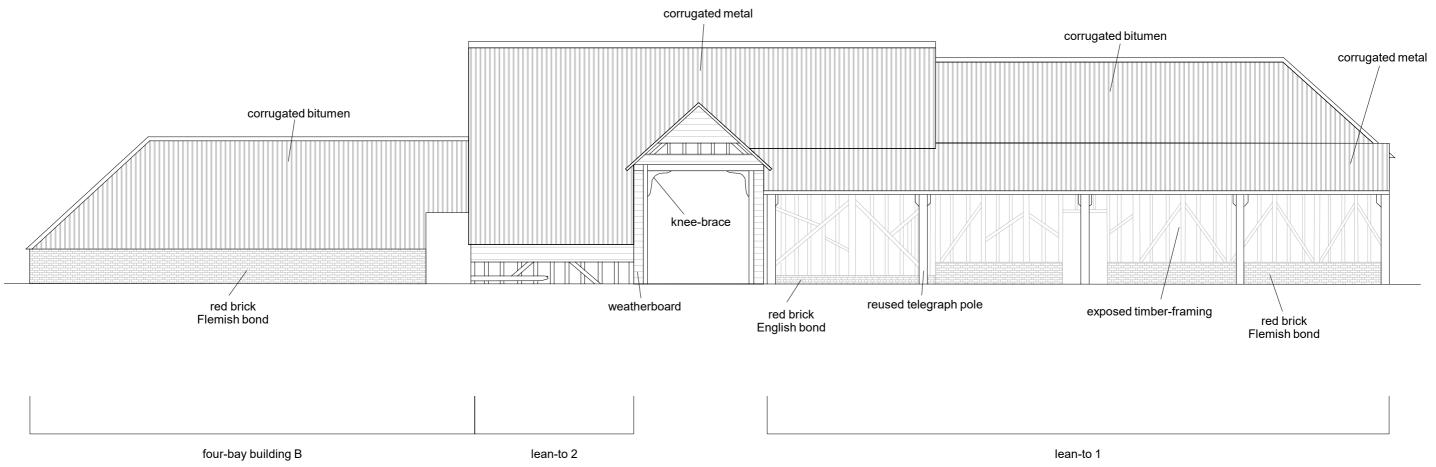
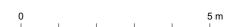


Fig 1 Site Location. Buildings surveyed highlighted in blue.









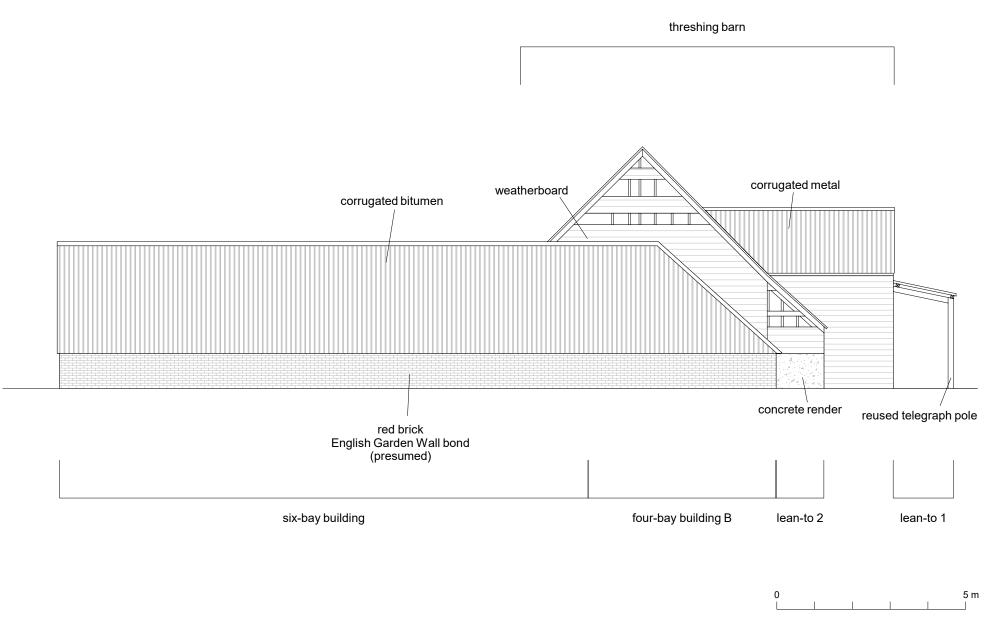
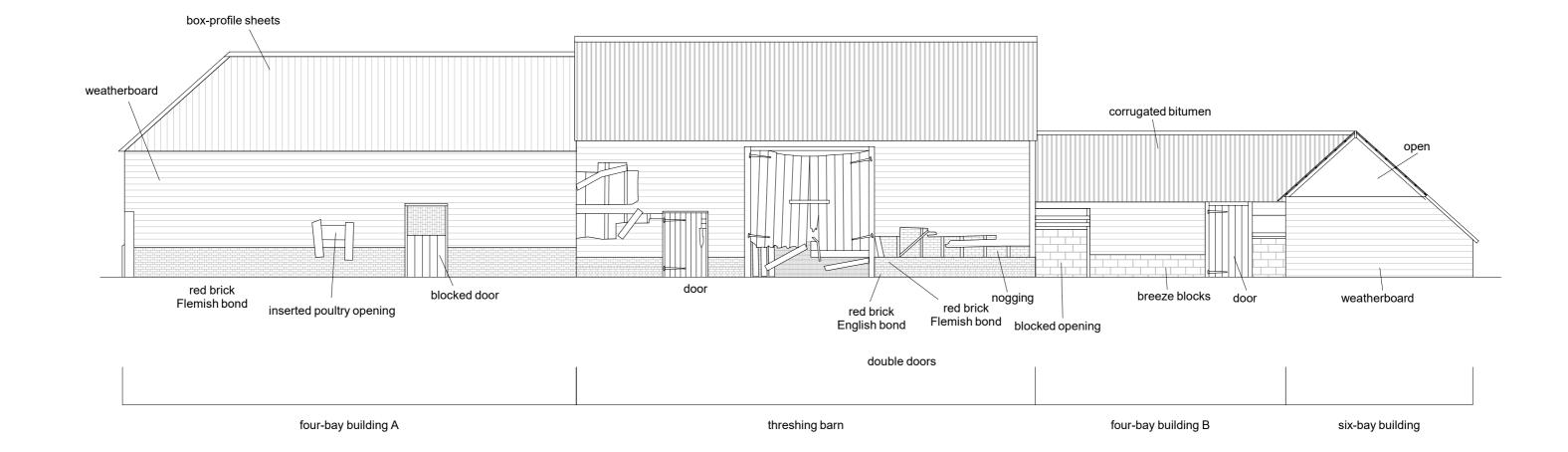


Fig 4 Eastern elevation.





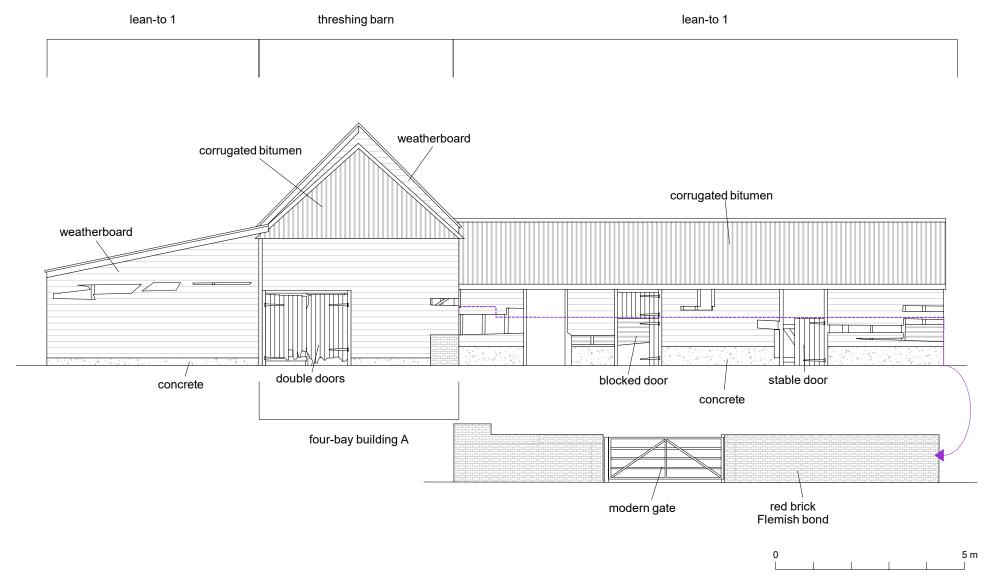
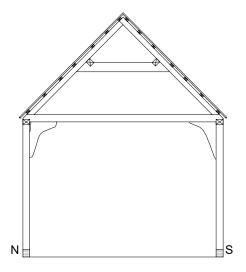
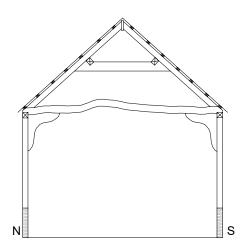


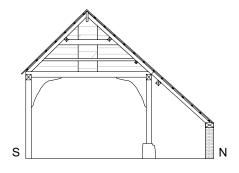
Fig 6 Western elevation.



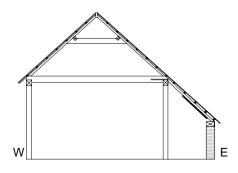
Threshing barn



Four-bay building A



Four-bay building B



Six-bay building



Fig 7 Truss cross-sections.