

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING
RECORDING OF A BARN AND STABLE BLOCK AT DOVECOTE, PILTON
ROAD, WADENHOE,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**A Report by Paul Stamper Heritage
March 2019 (with Addendum July 2019)**



PAUL STAMPER HERITAGE

25 Big Green, Warmington, Peterborough PE8 6TU

paul.stamper52@gmail.com 01832 280344 07507 720397

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Wadenhoe Trust has been granted LBC (18/02319/LBC) to convert a stone barn into office accommodation and a stable into a dwelling. Both adjoin Wadenhoe's Grade II-listed dovecote and lie within Wadenhoe's conservation area. Paul Stamper Heritage was commissioned by the scheme's architect Colin Moore on behalf of the Trust to undertake Level 2 recording work as set out in a WSI approved by NCC following a brief issued by NCC dated 31 January 2019.

On-site recording was undertaken on 28 February by Dr Paul Stamper, FSA assisted by Prof Stephen Upex, MCifA. FSA.

The HER Event Number is ENN109392.

2 THE SITE: HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The barn and stables, together with the listed dovecote, form parts of an irregular farmyard, now disused, in the centre of Wadenhoe.



Figure 1: Map of Wadenhoe 1793 (Wadenhoe Trust) showing location of farmyard.

The farmyard has no known specific identity (that is, it is not a manor farm or rectory farm) or any known documented history. The barn – which is probably 18th-century – is probably

the structure running left-right in the bottom-centre of the red box in Figure 1, an extract from an estate map of 1793. It should be noted that in 1793 the dovecote had apparently yet to be constructed, although it was mapped in 1822;¹ a date of c.1800 is currently favoured for it. The stables range here recorded is of the mid-19th century. When first mapped at a large scale by the Ordnance Survey in 1886 the farmyard was essentially as it is today, by then with the gardens of Wadenhoe House (a new complex of 1858) abutting it to the east.²

3 DESIGNATIONS

As noted, the whole site lies within the Wadenhoe conservation area. The barn and stables are not listed. The prominent dovecote which adjoins them is listed at Grade II, as is Dovecote House to its north. The kitchen garden wall of c.1858 to the south of the stables is listed as part of a group of estate structures.

4 THE BARN

The barn is of roughly coursed limestone with some sandstone quoins and a red pantile roof, running downhill from Pilton Road. It is orientated roughly north-west to south-east; in this report it is described as if north-south, with north towards Pilton Road. Overall the barn (excluding the addition at the north end) is 19.5 x 7m externally and of five bays, here numbered with bay 1 (and truss 1) at the south end. The principal entrances are opposed full-height doors in the central bay. Other door openings are later. Additions comprise a stone bay, slightly lower than the barn and not interconnecting with it, abutting the barn's north end; a mid-19th-century pigsty range running eastwards off its south end; and a mid-20th-century privy on the west side.

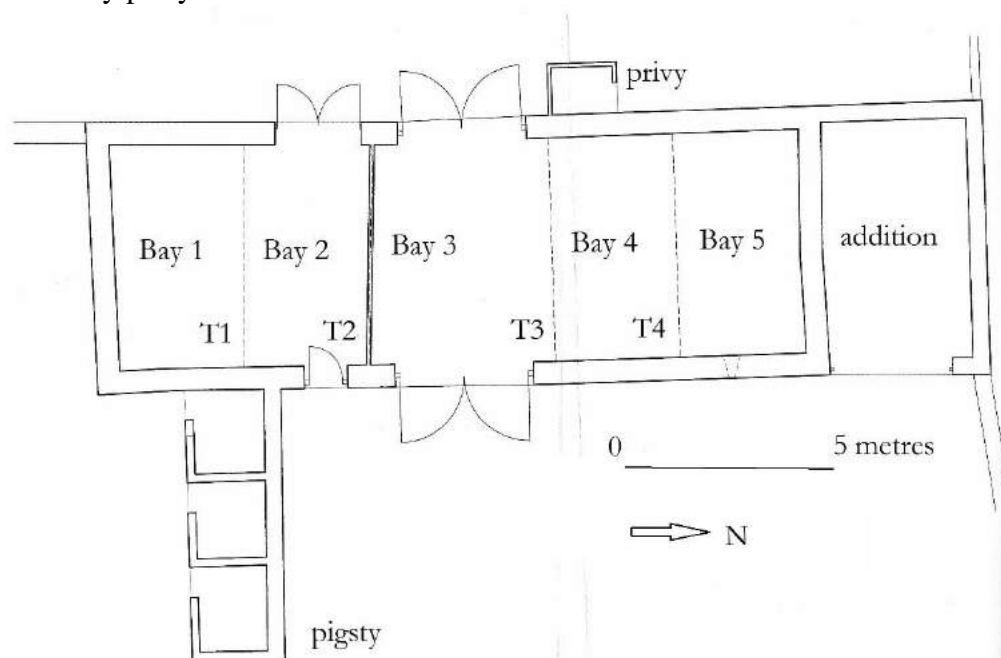


Figure 2: The barn (annotated architect's plan). Pilton Road to right.

¹ <https://www.wadenhoetrust.org/the-history-of-wadenhoe/>

² Northants 25 inch XXVI.4 (1886)

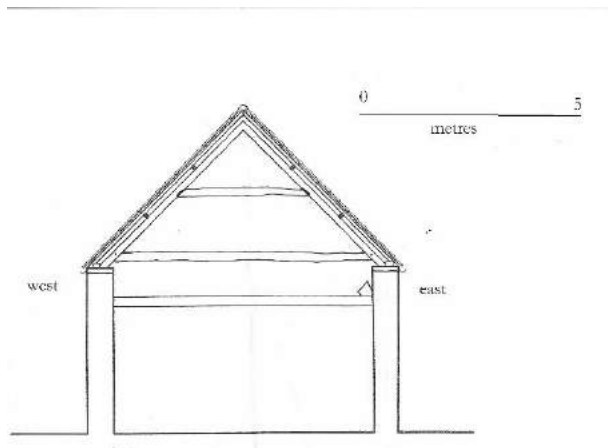


Figure 3: Barn, section at truss 3, south face (annotated architect's drawing).

4.1 The barn: illustrated commentary

Presented here is a series of photographs recording the barn and adjoining structures, with captions providing a brief commentary on the main points of interest.



Figure 4: Barn, east side; Pilton Road is to the right. The later extension can be seen on the right, with the pigsty range running out from the barn to the left. The listed dovecote is behind the photographer.



Figure 5: Barn, west side. Deflections in the roof due to the use of lightweight timbers can be seen.



Figure 6: Barn, east side, bay 5. Note ventilation slit.



Figure 7: Barn, east side, bay 4.



Figure 8: Barn, east side, bay 3, double doors closed.



Figure 9: Barn, east side, bay 3, doors open. The doors are probably from the first half of the 20th century.



Figure 10: Iron hinge to base of southern door. Note the concrete posts which both east side doors are set on.



Figure 11: Barn, east side, bay 2. The door is a 19th-century insertion. Its introduction led to the blocking of a window above, itself an insertion. Large-scale OS mapping shows bays 1 and 2 (which the door gives access to) were already divided off by the 1880s.



Figure 12: Barn, south-east corner. The gable wall, and the first metre of the side walls (see crack just to left of ranging rod), were rebuilt after a structural failure in the 19th century. It is hard to assess if the two tie rods were inserted before or after this, or as part of the same repairs. Note ventilation slit under right-hand tie-plate.



Figure 13: Barn, west side, bays 1 and 2. The garage doors were inserted c.30 years ago.



Figure 14: Re-used chamfered stone above garage door. Perhaps introduced when the upper courses were rebuilt at reroofing in the mid-19th century.



Figure 15: To show construction of barn door, west side.



Figure 16: Barn, west side, bay 4. Mid-20th century brick privy.



Figure 17: Barn, west side, bay 5.



Figure 18: To show upper section of Bay 5, the barn's north-west corner. The addition to the barn is to the left.



Figure 19: View from Pilton Road to the one-bay addition to the barn. This has virtually no diagnostic features but is likely to be from the decades either side of 1800.



Figure 20: Pigsty range from south-east. Probably mid-19th-century, and mapped in 1886.



Figure 21: Pigsty range, south face. Note the one surviving round-headed arch to the left.



Figure 22: Window with hatch for chickens in east gable wall of pigsty.



Figure 23: Barn, bay 5, north gable wall. Possible floor joist holes are either side of the ranging rod.



Figure 24. Barn, bays 4 and 5, east side, showing (a) splayed inner side of ventilation slit (b) plastered lower section of wall and (c) possible floor joists to right of ranging rod.



Figure 25: Barn, bays 4 and 5, west side, with blocked window left of ranging rod.



Figure 26: Looking north from bay 3, showing truss 3 (nearest camera) and truss 4. The generally lightweight nature of the roof timbers is clear. The larger beam set into the wall has no structural function. Such a beam is set beneath each of the four trusses.



Figure 27: Large re-used beam beneath truss 3, east end, south face, to show sawn-off principal rafter.



Figure 28: Truss 3, detail, showing deflection to collar (common to all four trusses) due to compression caused by the weight of the pantiles. An iron pin can be seen joining it to an inserted secondary collar.



Figure 29: Bay 3, south wall. This wall is of mid-19th-century date, and was inserted when bays 1 and 2 were separated off. Again, the beam above it which the brick wall abuts has no structural function.



Figure 30: Bay 3, truss 3. The vertical timbers helped separate off the two end bays. The deflected collar, common to all trusses, is clearly visible.



Figure 31: Bay 3, looking west over threshing floor.



Figure 32: Bays 2 (to left) and 2, east wall, showing door with blocked window (perhaps a ventilation slit) above. Another blocked window (here certainly a ventilation slit) is to the right, now with a tie rod through it.



Figure 33: Bay 1, south gable wall. Note the large vertical crack to centre.

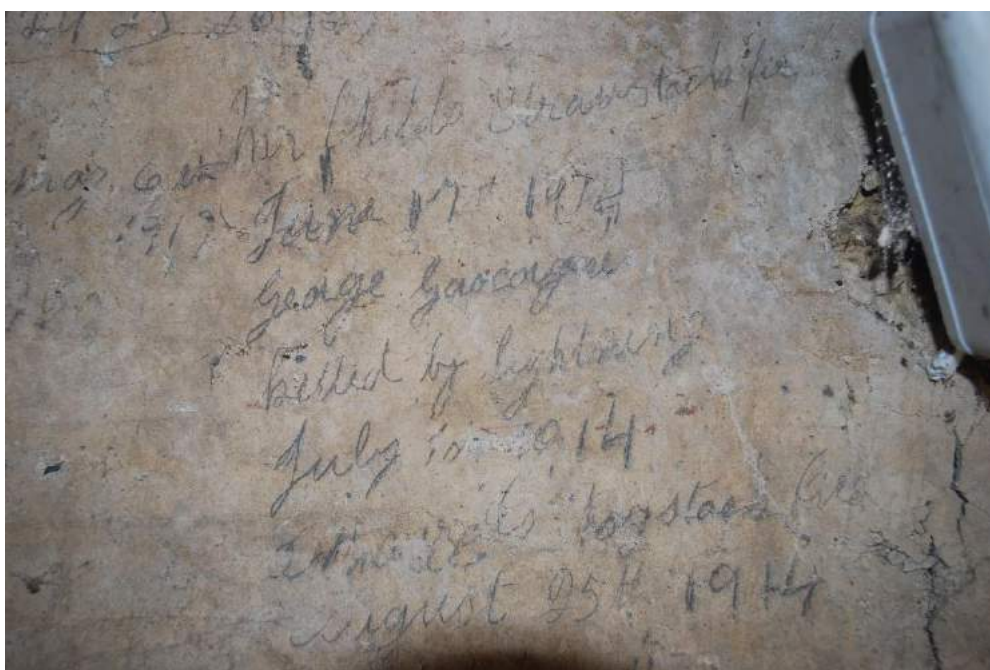


Figure 34: Example of graffiti in addition to barn (1). ‘George Gascoyne killed by lightning July 1st 1914’.

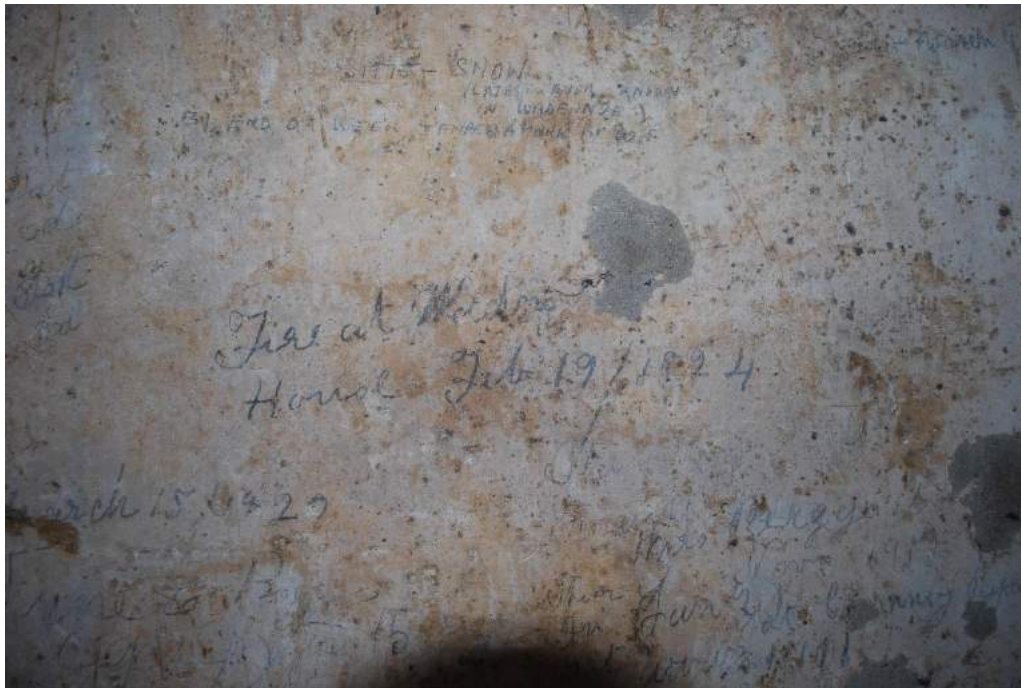


Figure 35: Example of graffiti in addition to barn (2). ‘Fire at Wadenhoe House Feb 19 1924’.

5 THE STABLES

The stables range is of coursed limestone with a slate roof set on a roof frame of fairly lightweight machine-sawn timbers with angle braces rising to meet the purlins off the tiebeams. (Figure 41). It has maximum external dimensions of 23 x 5.3m, runs east-west, and stands just downhill from the Grade II-listed dovecote. It is marked on the 1886 25-inch Ordnance Survey map, and is probably of mid-19th-century date.

The first three sets of openings from the west alternate window-door, whereas the easternmost is door-window. This gable end is at a marked skew. This is one of several indications, along with the lack of a complete mechanical regularity to the plan, that the stables may have been adapted from an earlier building on the site, perhaps a low shelter open to the south. Those other indications are a straight joint in the west gable suggesting it was built against a pre-existing rear (north) wall (Figure 36), and the fact that the north wall itself has been raised to the present wall-plate level (Figure 38).

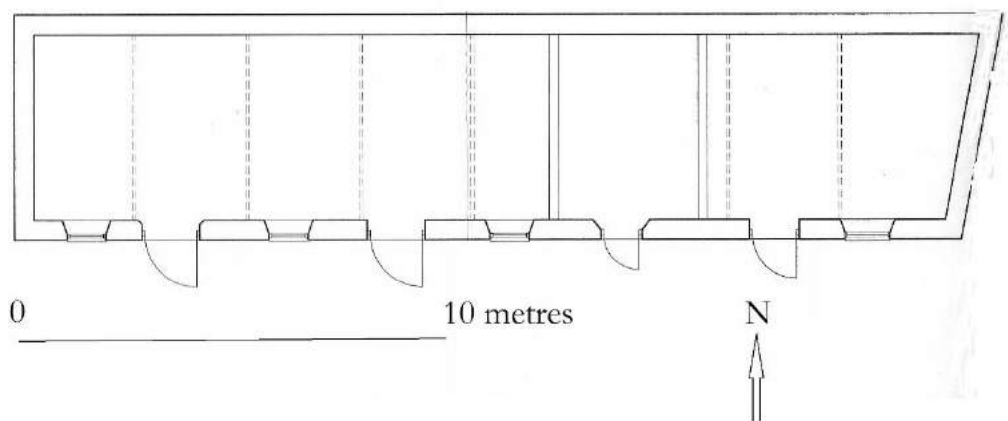


Figure 36: Stable block (annotated architect's plan).

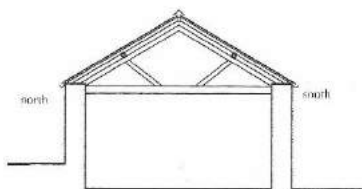


Figure 37: Stable block; section showing roof structure (annotated architect's drawing).

5.1 Stables: illustrated commentary



Figure 38: Stables, south side. The Grade II-listed dovecote rises behind.



Figure 39: Stables east end window, south side.



Figure 40: Stables, west gable wall. Note break in fabric to left of ranging rod.



Figure 41: Stables, rear, north, wall.



Figure 42: To centre of rear, north, wall showing raised or rebuilt upper courses.



Figure 43: Four-ways roof vent (top of dovecote beyond).



Figure 44: Stables from west, showing position in relation to Grade II-listed dovecote. Just visible to the right is the listed walled garden.



Figure 45: Stables, view west to gable, to show roof construction. Feeding trough and partitions are of relatively recent date.

6 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

6.1 The barn

The barn is difficult to date given the absence of diagnostic features, but a date in the mid-18th century seems likely. It was a threshing barn, designed for the storage and processing of cereal crops – the latter facilitated by the opposed double doors – although such barns were well-suited to all manner of uses at different times of the year. A neatly-edged floor survives in the threshing bay (Figure 31); it is hard to ascertain what it is made of – probably part cobbles and part concrete. There were at least three splayed ventilation slits in the east wall (e.g. Figure 6), and a small window or owlet (to allow owls access) high in the north gable wall (Figure 23). One feature probably associated with the storage of cereal crops and straw is the lime plaster applied to the lower metre of the barn wall and the whitewashing of the walls – both for cleanliness – above this. Also possibly associated with crop storage are what appear to be sawn-off floor joists at the base of the east wall in the north-end bays (bays 4 and 5; Figure 24), protruding possible ledge-stones to their left, and possible joist holes in the bottom of the gable wall (Figure 23). If these did support a wooden floor it might suggest that grain was stored here in sacks. Normally this was kept away from vermin in an elevated granary, but it is perhaps telling that no granary is among the buildings around the dovecote.³

Probably relatively early in the barn's history there was a catastrophic failure of the south gable wall, which probably collapsed. It, and the first metre or so of the side walls, were rebuilt in a somewhat crude manner (Figure 12). At some stage the adjoining length of the east side wall developed a serious bulge, and two tie rods were inserted, one passing through a ventilation slit, which was blocked around it (Figure 32).

The date of the addition to the north end of the barn (Figures 4 and 19) is unknown, although as it is wholly of stone (no brick is used) this suggests a relatively early date, probably before the mid-19th century. The roof is modern. Its original function is uncertain; latterly it was used as a garage, with an inserted up-and-over door. It is possible that it was always used for vehicle storage. There is a small fireplace in the south-west corner, and there is a considerable amount of pencilled graffiti on the plastered north and south walls. Much is so faint or worn that it is illegible, but subjects include notable local events (e.g. Figures 34-5); exceptional weather; lists of names; and tally marks, sometimes referencing 'quarters' associated with getting in the harvest. Where dates are given, they are mostly in the second decade of the 20th century.

The barn was wholly reroofed in the mid-19th century with machine-sawn timbers, other than for the tie beams (fixed to the bases of the principal rafters by iron spikes) where recycled timbers were used (see e.g. Figure 26). The new timbers were overly lightweight, and over time the roof has deflected as shown in a number of the photographs. At the same time the southern two bays (1 and 2) were separated with a brick wall from the rest of the barn (Figure 29). A new door was provided in the east wall of bay 2 for access (Figure 11).

It was also in the mid-19th century that the stone-and-brick three-unit pigsty was built against the south end of the east side of the barn (Figures 20-2). Chickens had access to the interior

³ The 1886 OS does mark a small square structure – possibly a granary – in the farmyard on the west side of the barn, but that yard was probably associated with a different farm.

via the window in the east wall. The large-scale OS map of 1886 shows the sty's walled yards on its south side. These no longer survive.

Various minor episodes of change which can be seen in the fabric probably date from the 19th century, including the opening and blocking of a window in the west wall of bay 4. Most notable are the heavy beams inserted across the width of the barn c. 0.5m below the tie beams (see e.g. Figures 23, 26 and 30). A local informant remembers that these were sometimes used to support pulleys or hoists for heavy lifting, which seems plausible given the flimsy character of the tie beams themselves. Currently, at both ends of the barn, they also provide support for planks which create raised storage areas, and again this may have been part of their original intended function.

In the mid-20th century a brick privy was built against the south side of the barn for the cottage on Pilton Lane to the west of the barn (Figure 16). Its construction led to the blocking of the inserted window into the barn.

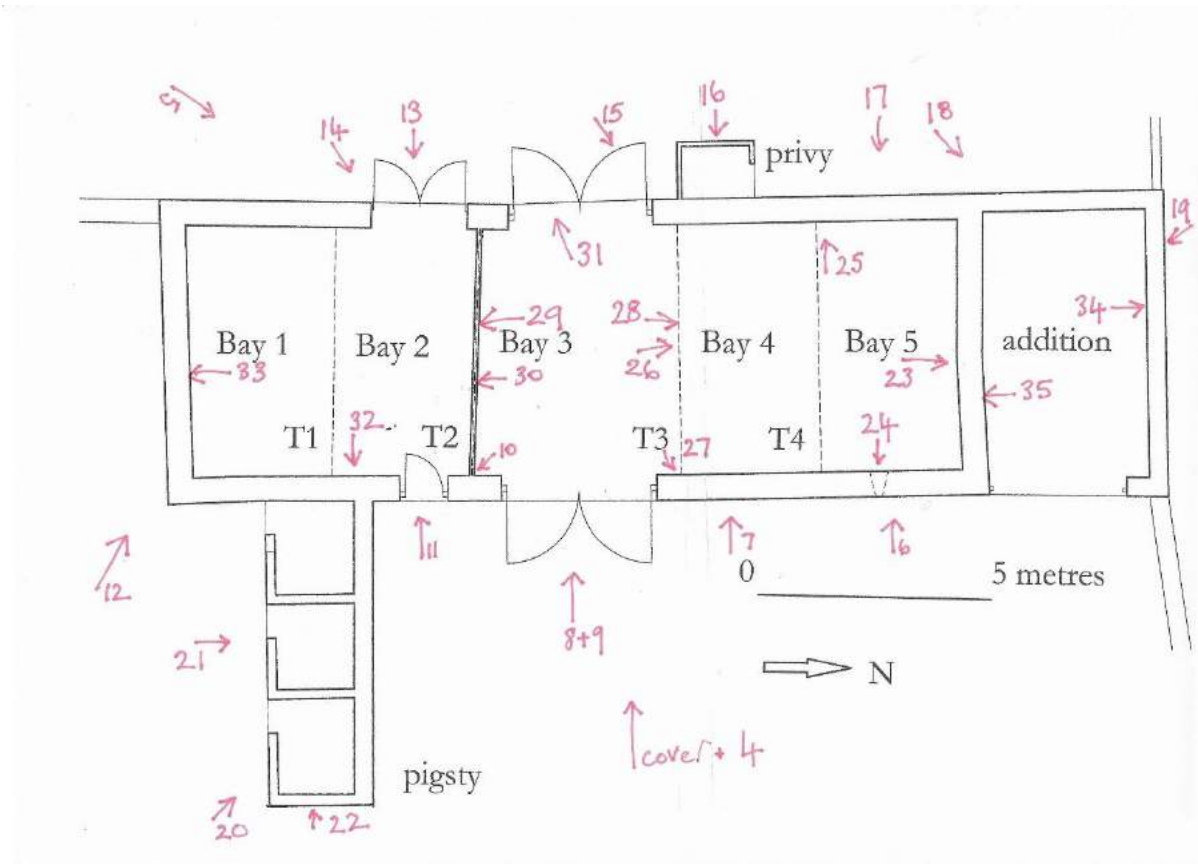
The final change to the structures came c.30 years ago (that is in the later 1980s) when a double garage door was created leading in to bay 2 on the west side of the barn (Figure 13).

6.2 The stables

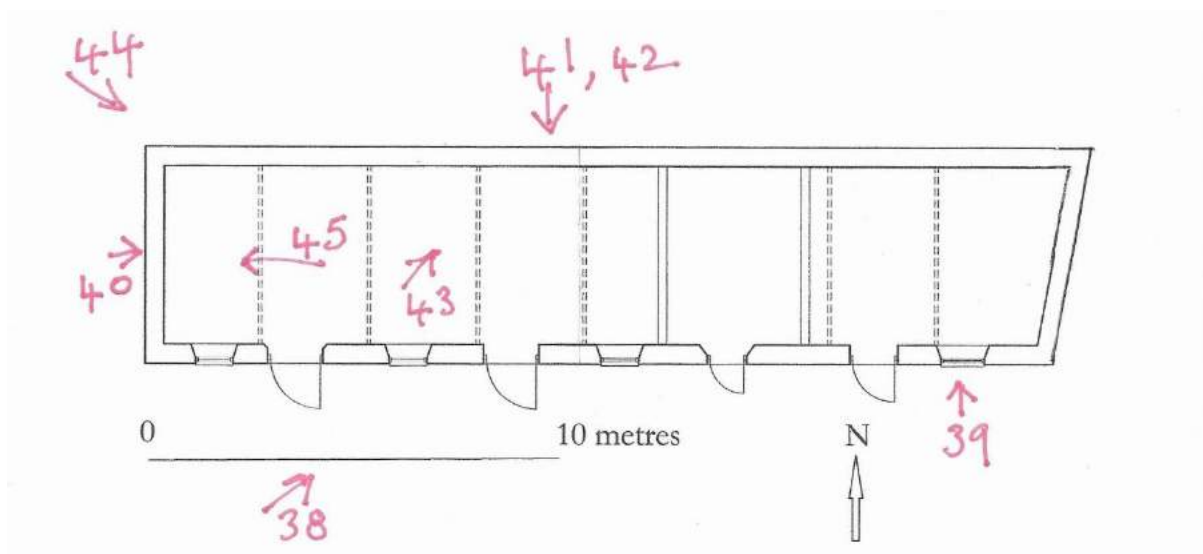
As noted above, the stables range is probably mid-19th-century, possibly constructed off the lower walls of a pre-existing agricultural building. Confirmation that the range was built as stabling, rather than as loose boxes for cattle, is provided by the relatively large window openings (e.g. Figure 39). In 1886 the eastern three doors gave access to a small enclosed yard running down to the walled garden.

APPENDIX: RECORD OF POSITION FROM WHICH PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN

Red numbers are those of figure numbers in the text.



Appendix A: the barn



Appendix B: the stables

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OASIS ID: paulstam1-344857

Project details

Project name	Wadenhoe Barns
Short description of the project	Recording of barn and stable before conversion
Project dates	Start: 28-02-2019 End: 30-03-2019
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	18/02318/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	ENN109392 - Related HER No.
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Conservation Area
Site status (other)	Listed building
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	BARN Post Medieval
Monument type	STABLE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	"Photographic Survey"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WADENHOE Wadenhoe Dovecote
Postcode	PE8 5SU
Study area	0.5 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 012 836 52.440606620719 -0.511020044741 52 26 26 N 000 30 39 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 1m Max: 1m

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	HER
Physical Archive ID	ENN109392.
Physical Contents	"other"
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive Exists?	No

Entered by	paul stamper (paulstamper52@gmail.com)
Entered on	6 March 2019

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ADDENDUM: FURTHER OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING BUILDING WORKS, JUNE 2019

In June 2019 the first phase of conversion works took place, the principal elements of which were (1) the removal of the roof tiles, preparatory to removal of the roof itself (2) the demolition of the north end of the barn (3) the excavation of the floor in the south end of the barn. A basic photographic record was made during two site visits.

1. Removal of the roof tiles



Addendum Figure 1. View east, centre of barn, showing flexed purlins.

Removal of the pantiles showed more clearly the extent to which purlins and braces had flexed under compression from the weight of the pantiles. No other details were noted.

2. Demolition of the north end of the barn

After removal of the roof timbers at the north end of the barn, and demolition of the unstable gable wall, it became clear that the first sections of the side walls were in a worse condition than had been appreciated. The walls of bays 1 and 2 were demolished to ground level, as was the inserted brick partition wall.



Addendum Figure 2. View from north-east across demolished bays 1 and 2. The partition wall has been largely removed, and the double doors can be seen beyond.

3. Excavation of the floor in Bays 1 and 2

The floor level in bays 1 and 2 proved to have been raised by c.600mm in the 20th century with rubble and an asphalt skim, probably when this end of the barn was converted to a garage c.30 years ago (cf. Figure 13).



Addendum Figure 3. To show nature of raised floor in bays 1 and 2.



Addendum Figure 4. Rebuilding work in progress, July 2019, showing detail of upper part of south gable wall with splayed window and ventilation holes.