



The southern elevation of the Brick Barn.



Detail of the C20th barn doors.

Southern Elevation

The south elevation has two tall barn doors under a small section of weather-boarded studwork. The doors are of MC20th tongue and grooved boards with gate and ledgers fixed with French nails and screws and hung on reversible and T-strap hinges. A pedestrian door has been let in to the eastern one.

Description – 4. Brick Barn – Internal.



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Looking W inside the Brick Barn.



Looking E inside the Brick Barn.

The Brick Barn has five bays defined by the roof trusses. The walls are bare. There is a LC20th service platform at the eastern end built of steel girders. The building contained grain silos.



The midstrey porch.



The roof mimics the style of the queen post roof in the Timber-barn.

The roof is made of machine sawn softwood and forms a side purlin roof. The truss has queen struts secured with large wrought iron bolts and collets. The principal rafters are shored into the sides of the queen struts which are connected with a collar. The collar supports the side purlins upon which are laid the 2x4in rafters. In this way the truss is independent of the rafters. The extensive use of standardised machine cut softwood timber indicates that the Barn was erected in the second half of the C19th.



Tally marks in the midstretey.



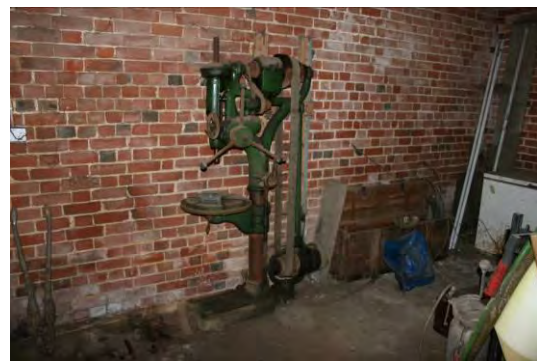
Yields written in chalk.

Marks

There are large numbers of tally marks scratched inside and outside on the brickwork. These can represent bags of produce or litters of pigs. There are also modern chalked numbers that represent yields from grain processing.



Pillar drill in the Brick Barn.



Pillar drill with belt drive.



Small milk cart stored in the Brick Barn.



Matching milk cart decaying in the Workshop.

Fixtures and Fittings

Any historic fixtures and the MC20th grain dressing machinery and silos have been removed. There are modern power connections and a MC20th pillar drill that appears still in use. There is another belt driven pillar drill that must have been rescued from the Workshop. There is a small hand pulled milk cart in working order that matches another decayed in the Workshop. An EC20th chest contains carpenters tools.

Description – 5. Brick Stables – External.



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The Brick Stables (centre) looking SE.



The Brick Stables northern elevation.

Northern Elevation

The Brick Stables was built at the same time as the Brick Barn using identical 70x110x225mm bricks all correctly keyed in with the same pilaster details. There is a single doorway under a gauged brick arch. The roof is clad with clay peg tiles.



The southern elevation of the Brick Stables.



The southern elevation looking NE.

Southern Elevation

The southern elevation was originally built with two doorways and four windows under gauged brick arches. The elevation was remodelled in the 1960's, blocking one doorway and opening another up under a steel lintel to accommodate the cattle. A substantial bull pen built of reinforced concrete and steel railings was built around the doorway to the east and is notable for the damage to its jambs.



Doorway to the bull pen.



Feeding trough in the bull pen.

Description – 5. Brick Stables – Internal.



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The stall used to house the bull. Note the blocked up door.



Concrete water trough.



LC19th hay rack.

The stall last used to house the bull was most likely originally the tack room as it is the only room with two doors allowing exit to the north. The door has been blocked and covered with Sterling board and another opening broken through on the western side has also been covered. There remains a low level concrete water trough with a tethering ring and an elegant C19th style hay rack riveted to the brickwork indicating that horses were also kept here at one point.

The room has been limewashed throughout and there are no signs of wooden pegs or dowels for fixings panels.



The eastern elevation now forms a corridor with the Timber Stables



Looking E in the main stable.



The stalls are made from LC20th materials.



The eastern stall.

The main stable has been divided into two stalls using LC20th machined posts and Sterling board. That to the east of the room has a homemade hay rack of roughly cut timber and metal tubes. The western wall is lined with decaying kick boards nailed to battens fixed to wooden wedges inserted into the brickwork and these are likely to be original.



Detail of the roof structure. Looking NE.



The roof is lath and plastered for insulation. Looking W.

The roof is of the same design as that of the Brick Barn. It has the added refinement of a lath and plaster ceiling to improve the insulation for the horses within.



Detail of graffiti on the Brick Stables.



Graffiti on the horse stalls.

The stables have chalk, felt tip and carved graffiti relating to the horses kept there in the LC20th made by the girls who rode them. Uno. Moey, Bumble and Tizzy, Frank, Woody, Lulu, Crackers all imply a busy livery for at least eight horses. AB 1981 implies when the livery was in operation and Ella and Lisa were established visitors.

Description – 6. Timber-framed Stables – External.



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Northern elevation of the Timber-framed Stables.



Detail of the exterior of the Tack Room and Garage Workshop.

Southern Elevation

The piecemeal building is clad in a variety of C20th finishes including vertical weatherboards, corrugated iron sheets, tongue and grooved timber and plywood. The frame is made of machine sawn soft wood with primary bracing and nailed interrupted studwork characteristic of the end of the C19th. The roof is clad with MC20th double roman tiles. The building is divided into an entrance corridor that leads through to the horse stalls and a small Tack Room. There is a large garage workshop with two pairs of mismatched garage doors. At the western end is a car garage that faces the garden and is now blocked off by a fence. The northern elevation is consumed by foliage and inaccessible.

Description – 6. Timber-framed Stables – Internal.



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Entrance corridor with tongue and grooved boarded walls. Note the harness pegs.



The Tack Room with work bench. Looking SW.

The Tack Room is lined with EC20th tongue and grooved boards and there is an EC20th workbench with woodwork and leatherwork vices and a wall mounted tool board.



Looking W in the Garage Workshop. The partition is common with the Tack Room.



The roof of the Garage Workshop.

The Garage Workshop displays the machine cut softwood studwork of the frame and the rafters which are supported on raking struts to the side purlins. The tie-beams are very old but reused. An EC20th timber platform supports a large cylindrical tank.



The southern wall has an interesting collage of cladding materials.



Looking E in the roof of the Garage Workshop.

The building appears to have been built as horse stalls and there are a few timbers that may have supported a manger against the south wall. However the building has been turned into a Garage Workshop and Car Garage that went out of use late in the last century.

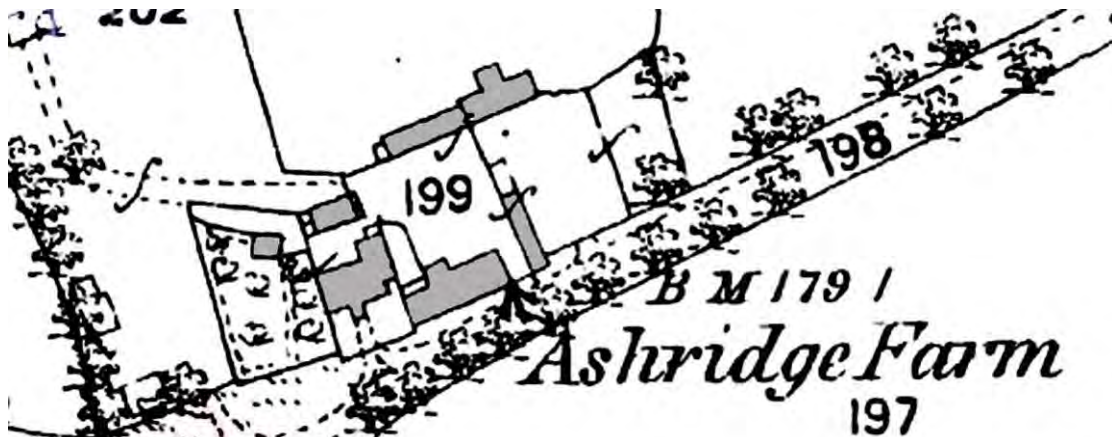
Topographical Survey from Maps



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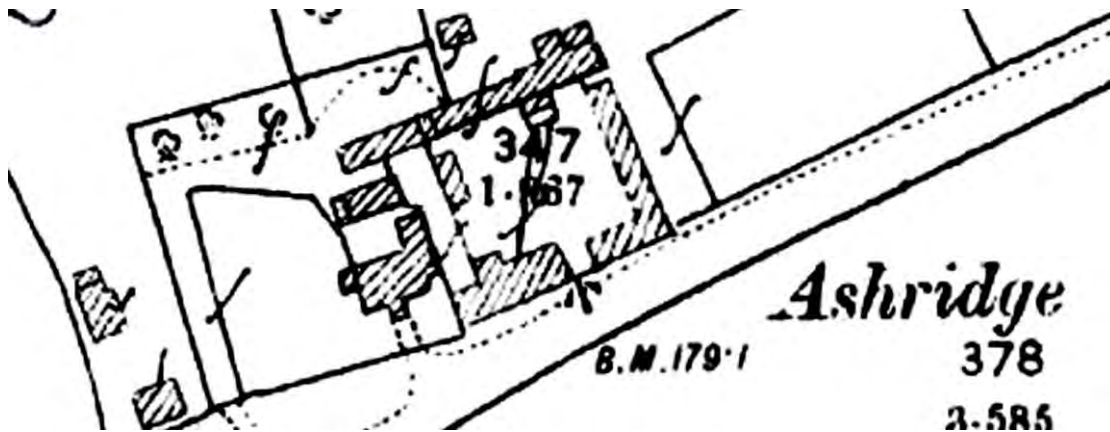
1838 Tithe Award Map for Wokingham. BRO D/P 154/27B.

The Tithe Award Map of 1838 shows only the House and the Timber-framed Barn in their current positions. By proportion the Barn is shown shorter than now.



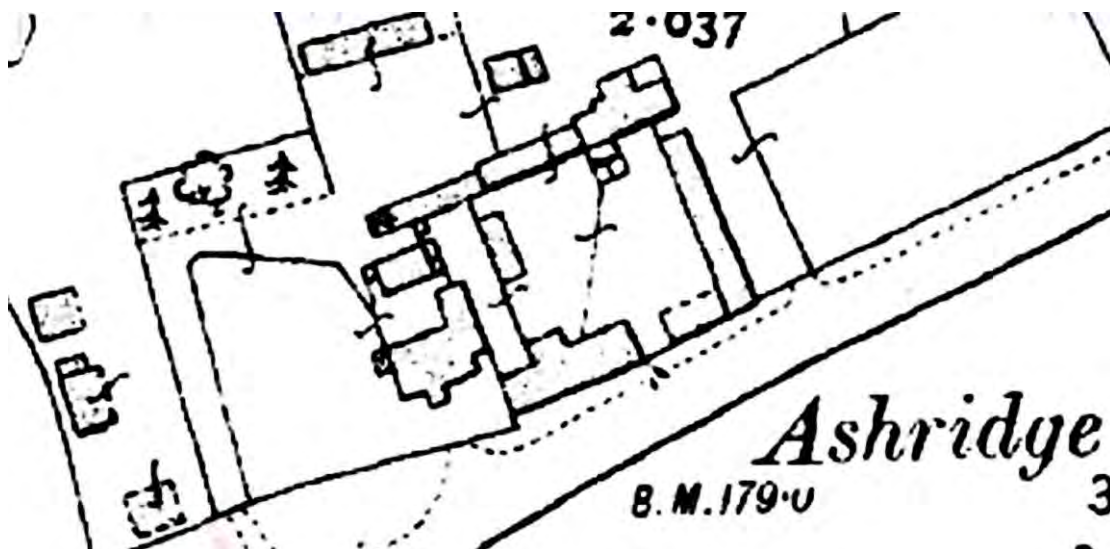
1872 First Edition Ordnance Survey.

By 1872 the Brick Barn and Brick Stables appear in their current position. The Timber-framed Barn has been enlarged to the west. A narrow range similar in plan to the present Workshop Range was running through the middle of the farmyard. The House has been altered in plan. The fenced paddocks indicate an increase in animal husbandry.



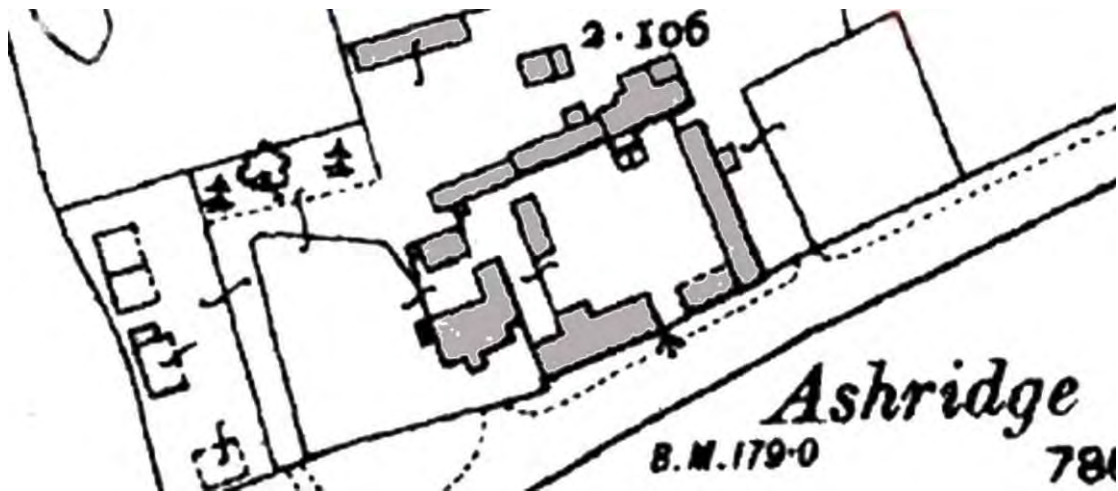
1899 Ordnance Survey.

By 1899 the plan of the farmyard is very close to that of today. The Timber-framed Stables have been added to the north range. The Timber-framed Workshop and Brick Processing Shed are both shown as open-sided. A small unit has been added to the Brick Barn on the NE side and another, corresponding to the modern bull pen is in place. A stand alone building north of the Timber-framed Barn corresponds to the modern Cow Byre.

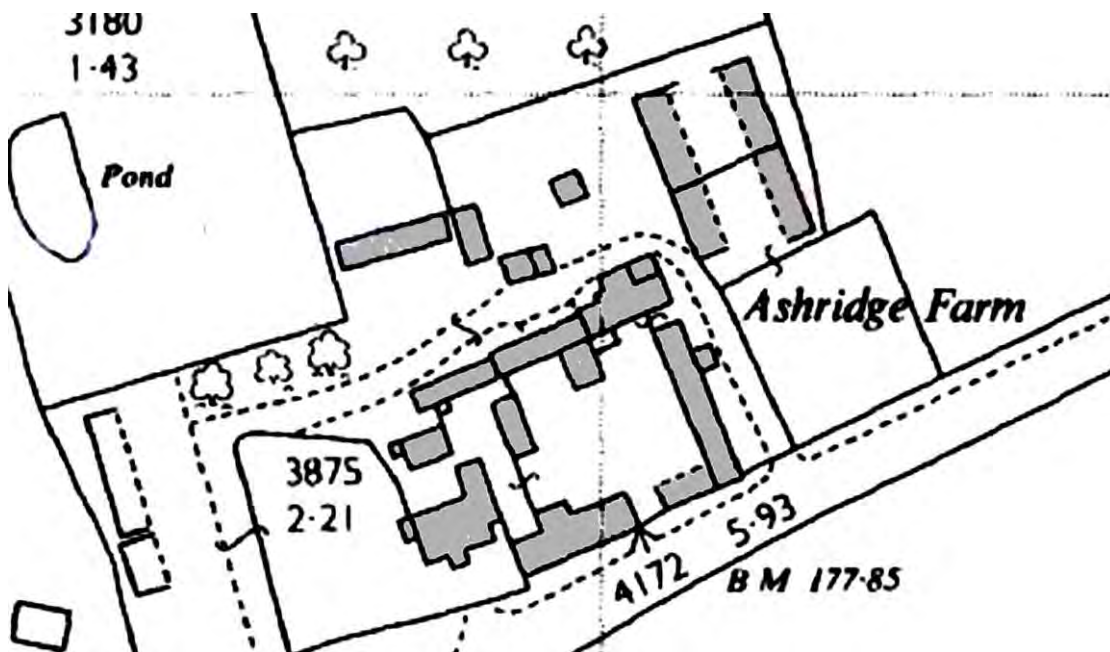


1912 Ordnance Survey.

By 1912 the only discernible difference in the farmyard is that the Timber-framed Workshop is no longer shown as open sided. Other outbuildings away from the farmyard have appeared.

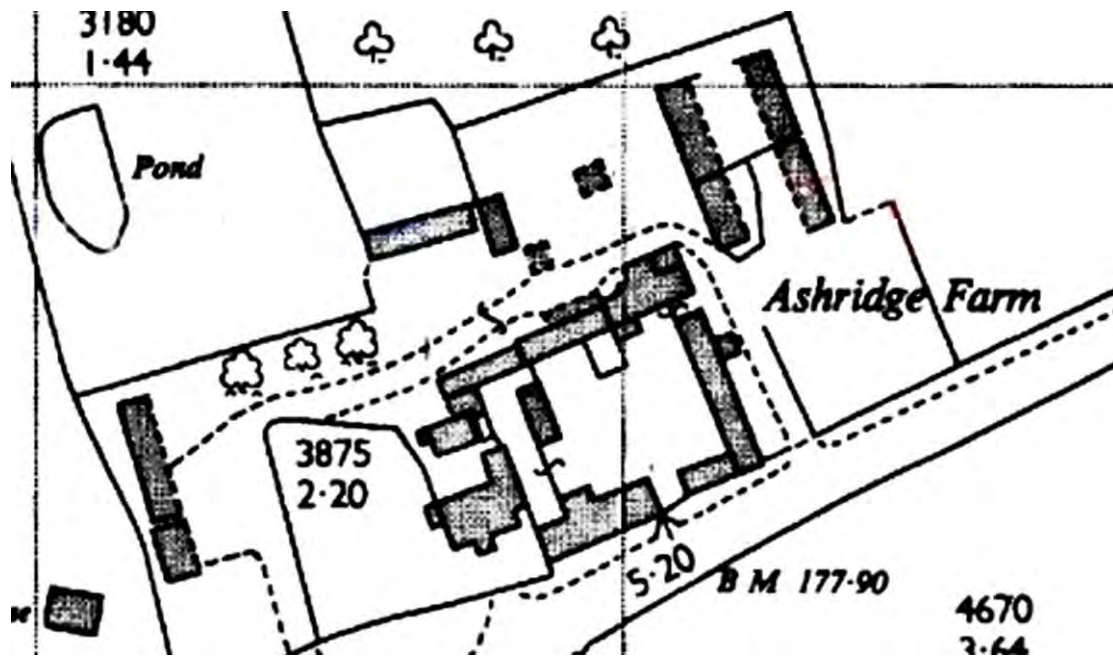


1933 Ordnance Survey.



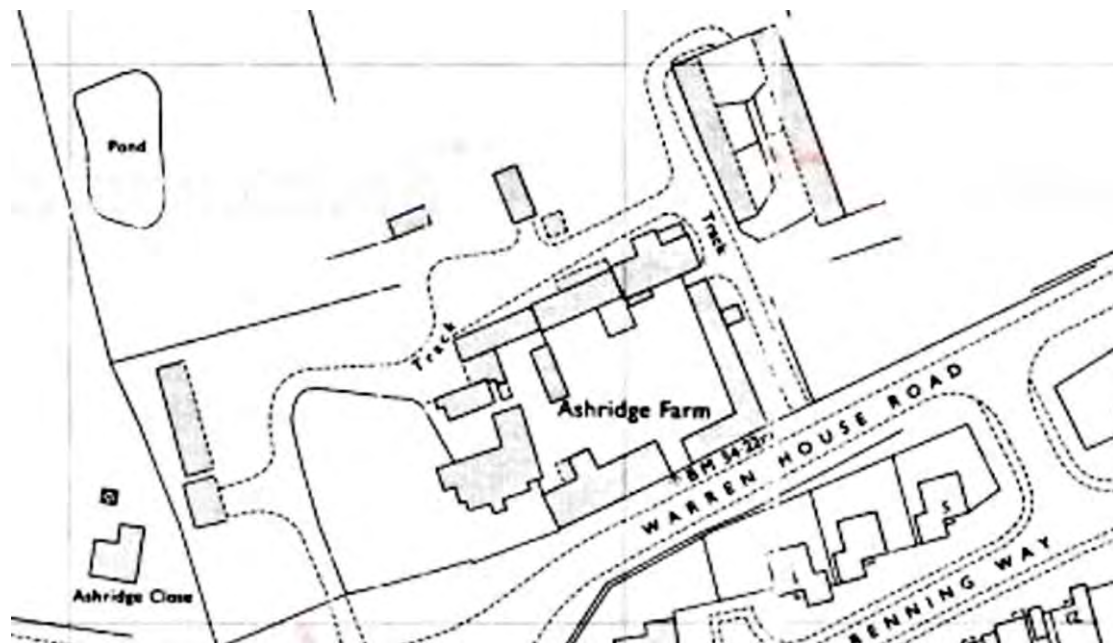
1966 Ordnance Survey.

Between 1933 and 1966 the farm expands to the north and two rows of open sided cattle sheds have been built.



1969 Ordnance Survey.

Between 1966 and 1969 the Processing Shed has been closed up on the north side.
 A pen corresponding with the Bull Pen is in place.



1977 Ordnance Survey.

Phasing and Discussion



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1838 Tithe Award Map for Wokingham. BRO D/P 154/27B.

Phase 1 – C.1800 establishment of the farm buildings.

The Tithe Award of 1838 shows the House, the Timber-framed Barn and a third building (no longer in place) forming the farmstead. To the north is a very large building which disappears by the time of the 1876 Ordnance Survey. The House (which is not part of this study) is Listed as late C16th and extended in the C19th which would account for its asymmetric plan.

The Timber-framed Barn is an highly altered and rebuilt structure with many characteristics which would date it to a rebuild of circa AD1800. The walls have primary bracing with interrupted studwork which is placed in plates and rails that have been recut with a second set of mortices. The mortices all have rounded ends – that is they have been drilled but not finished with a chisel. This is normally associated with carpentry of the LC18th or C19th.

The westernmost truss is fully morticed for an end wall in this fashion but the queen post trusses are EC17th in form and design. The easternmost truss still houses the studwork for the end wall but it is evident that it has been added to a former open truss from an older structure.

The frame is largely made of elm and has other peculiarities. The storey posts are tapered upwards and have upstands in the style of early mediaeval carpentry. By 1800 newly implemented storey posts tend to have no jowl or upstands and are secured with iron ties. It may have been that the heavy queen post trusses demanded extra security.

Originally there were curved spandrels from each storey post to the tie-beams pegged and morticed in place. These have been replaced with straighter braces side nailed to the tie-beams and only two original ones remain. By the southern door the storey post has been displaced to widen the doorway leaving the tie-beam floating over the door lintel and secured with a distorted side nailed brace.

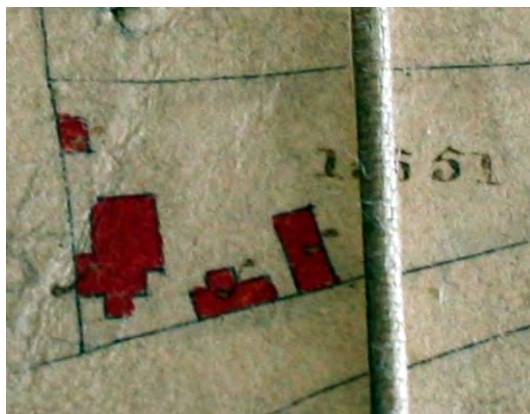
The western wall has been lath and plastered on the western side implying it was once the end of the building and this would concur with the map evidence. The porch does match up with the main frame and has obviously been added. The frame of the porch is C16th in style and fabric with flat paired rafters but the queen post collars have oversize pegs and many of the rafters are set on edge again showing it has been reassembled.

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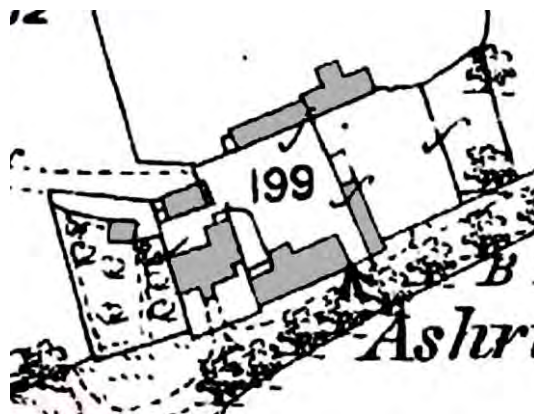
After the French Revolution of 1789 there was a long period of instability culminating in the Napoleonic Wars of 1799 to 1815. Britain and France declared outright war in 1803. England also went to war with the USA who in 1807 declared the Embargo Act preventing European vessels from trading with America. War was declared in 1812 and ceased in 1815.

The Barn is a typical building of the Napoleonic War Era which ignited the rush for farms to convert to grain production to capitalise on the grain embargo imposed during the hostilities from AD1799 to AD1815.

Buildings that have been so highly altered are difficult to place in space and time as there is no good evidence that the Timber-framed Barn was on the site before it was reassembled.



1838 Tithe Award Map.



1875 Ordnance Survey Map.

Phase 2. 1838-1872. Extending the Timber-framed Barn. Building the Brick Barn and Stables.

The Timber-framed Barn was extended to the west by removing the studwork and reinforcing the truss with straight braces. The round ended mortices in the truss imply that the studwork was not put there until the LC18th or EC19th so the truss was reverted to near its original form. The additional bay to the west timber-framed had side walls made out of all sorts of scraps of timber, half and quarter poles, with primary braces and interrupted and nailed studwork. The top plates have simple halved scarf joints with ironwork straps and the storey posts are plain without upstands or jowls.

The western wall is made of red and purple overfired brickwork but it seems as though it was built up against a previous wall as it is unpointed and ragged on the inside. It is most likely the Barn was extended with a timber-framed wall which was then superseded by the present brick wall to compliment the House.

The eastern end was extended with a two storey building reassembled from a C17th style box frame which has interstitial studs added to support the lath and plaster and later weather-boarding. The top plate has many empty mortices indicating it has been reused.

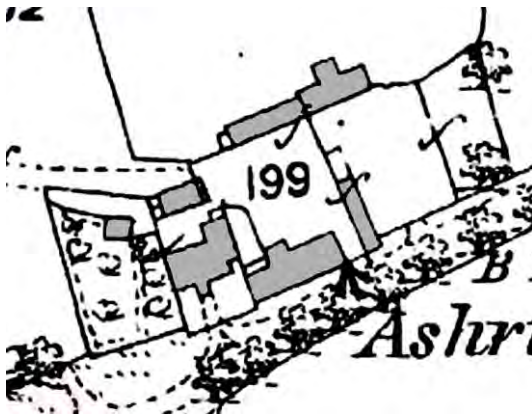
The fully hipped roof contains elements of older timbers in the form of flat rafters that have been turned over but most of the rafters are set on edge. There are also poles used as shores to arrest the racking of the main Timber-framed Barn which may explain the use of a hipped roof as the building has clearly racked over a long period of time. The frame is stood on plinth made of reused Tudor style 2in bricks. By the road side the frame has lath and plaster panels over brick nogged panels and this is a pattern common in the C19th.

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Between 1838 and 1872 the rest of the farmyard was established. The Brick Barn and Brick Stables were built in their current positions and their fabric and design concur with the latter part of this period. The farmyard adopts a layout that would have been recognised by the Victorian High Farmers.

By the 1840's the concept of Victorian High Farming emerged. According to G.E Mingay in *Victorian Countryside* (2000) High Farming 'was the achievement of high production by the widespread application of new knowledge and equipment. Land was drained to grow more grain and other food for more and fatter stock, yielding in turn more manure and heavier crops.'

At Ashridge Farm in 1872 we see a fully developed farmyard system fully corralled for animal husbandry. As Mingay says 'To house valuable stock, preserve its manure and promote greater efficiency in the working of the greater complexities of the system, new buildings in new configurations were required. Implements of unprecedented complexity and dedication to single tasks became increasingly common and steam power invaded, first the barn and eventually the field.'



1875 Ordnance Survey Map.



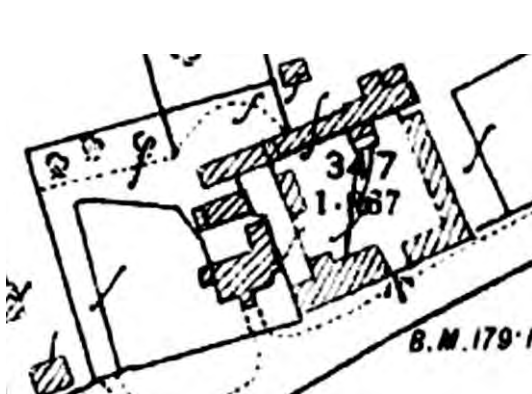
1899 Ordnance Survey Map.

Phase 3. 1872 – 1899.

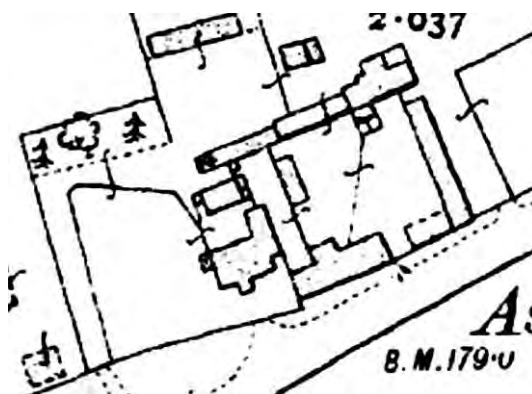
Between 1872 and 1899 we see the addition of the Workshop and Processing Shed to the east of the site. These are both shown as open-sided and so were designed to shelter animals or equipment. The Workshop has a roof made of pitsawn timbers but machine cut 2x4in softwood walls while the Processing Shed has a completely machine sawn roof and LC19th brick walls. It is more than likely that the shed shown on the 1872 OS map was moved eastwards and connected to the new building to form the eastern range.

In the farmyard there is a small unit with a pen which is in the position of the present bull pen. The Timber Stables are shown added to the western end of the Brick Stables and again are made of machine sawn softwood concurrent with the period.

The small shelter added to the NE side of the Brick Barn is shown in place but the present one is a C20th replacement.



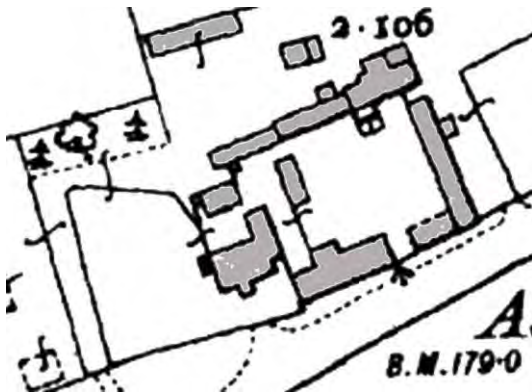
1899 Ordnance Survey Map.



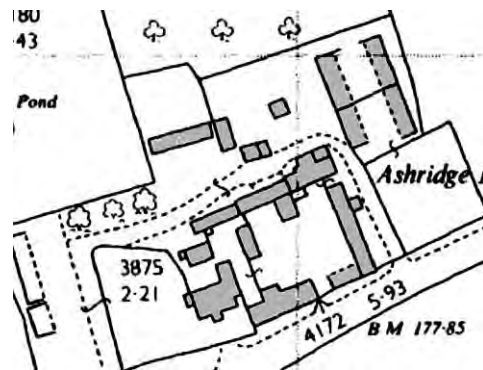
1912 Ordnance Survey Map.

Phase 4. 1899-1912. Building the Workshop facility.

It is a small detail but by 1912 the western side of the Workshop had been closed up. The pulley drive still in the northern end of the building could date to this era or a few years later. It would have been out of date by the 1930's.



1933 Ordnance Survey.



1966 Ordnance Survey.

Phase 5. 1933 -1966. Expansion of the farm.

Between 1933 and 1966 the farm expanded its operations to increase its capacity as a dairy farm. To the NE two large ranks of cow byres were built of blockwork. Another was put in the farmyard to the north of the Timber-framed Barn replacing whatever building previously stood there. The Processing Shed was used to house the milking machinery. The Workshop had a metal silo with an electrically powered auger to feed a Bental's crusher grinder for cattle cake production. There was also a hand driven root chopper to add to the feed.

The House and Timber-framed Barn were Listed in 1951 where it is mentioned that the Timber-framed Barn had a farm shop. The Timber Stables were converted into garages and workshops.



1966 Ordnance Survey.



1977 Ordnance Survey.

Phase 6. 1966 – present.

The historic mapping indicates that the north wall of the Processing Shed was closed up between 1966 and 1969 and the layout of the farmyard has changed little since then. The only major change is to the southern facade of the Brick Stables where the windows were blocked and a wide opening was made to accommodate the cattle.

Later, from the 1980's the farm appears to have been used as a livery and the cow byres in the Brick Stables outfitted with plywood stalls to keep horses and their hay. The graffiti

indicates a number of horses, at least eight were kept on the site. The Tack Room was in use until recently but the stables are now in an independent building north of the farmyard. At the end of the century The Processing Shed was used to process potatoes which were stored in the Timber-framed Barn and a shop operated out of the ground floor room in the extension.

Significance

The buildings at Ashridge Farm illustrate the development of C19th agriculture around the nucleus of a much older House believed to be C17th. The Timber-framed Barn was assembled c.AD1800 using the components of a much older C17th style barn and much reused timber from other buildings. It is principally made of elm rather than oak which may reflect a local industry. Originally erected with five unequal bays and an offset porch on the north side it would have been used at a threshing barn at a time when it was realised that the stored produce needed more room than the gleaned grain.

The Brick Barn and Brick Stables were built as a unit between 1838 and 1877 and the quality of the brickwork and the machine sawn softwood timbers indicates a date later in that range. In the same time bracket the Timber-framed Barn was extended, adding a bay to the western end and a two storey extension using a second-hand C17th frame at the other end.

Between 1875 and 1899 the Workshop and Processing Shed were built as a combination of a new brick building and a reused timber-framed one, most likely moved from the middle of the site. In the same period the Timber Stables were added to the western end of the Brick Stable. This concluded the expansion of the farmyard until the late C20th when cow byres and a bull pen were added. The buildings changed in use but not in layout.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the present owner for engaging me to record the buildings and to Smart Planning for recommending me. Thanks are also due to the very helpful staff of the Berkshire record Office. The architect's drawings were created and supplied by Martin Pattie architects.

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Appendix 1. Listing of the House.



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Ashridge Farmhouse from the south.



Ashridge Farmhouse looking S. The farmyard is to the LHS.

GRADE: II*

DATE LISTED: 12 November 1951

ENGLISH HERITAGE BUILDING ID: 41783

OS GRID REFERENCE: SU8137669727

OS GRID COORDINATES: 481376, 169727

LATITUDE/LONGITUDE: 51.4207, -0.8311

LOCATION: Warren House Road, Wokingham RG40 5QB

WOKINGHAM WARREN HOUSE ROAD
SU 86 NW
(North side)
10/20 Ashridge Farmhouse
12.11.51
G.V. II*

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Farmhouse. Late C16, extended late C19. Timber framed, part tile-hung, part brick, part weatherboarded. Old tile cross gabled roof. Lobby entry, 4 cell plan, extensions on north east. 2 storeys, cellar and attics. Fine, large, central chimney with 4 octagonal brick shafts, moulded star shaped brick caps and weathered coping on square stack. Each gable has a 3-light leaded casement, diminishing in size on each floor, with a small opening light in centre top part. Road front:- double gabled with moulded bargeboards. Rendered ground floor, weatherboarded above. Projecting, closed, gabled porch in centre; rendered, and with the original, repaired planked door in a moulded frame which is a replica of the original which still exists behind in the former position. Small 3-light overlight. Interior:- virtually unaltered. Newel stair the whole height. Doors mostly original in heavy moulded and chamfered frames. Dining room:- chalk fireplace with Tudor arch in square head; former bread oven on right, small spice cupboard with original door and hinges on left. Drawing room:- chalk fireplace with flat head, moulded and carved with ball flower ornament. A date on the 2 jambs of 1575, and a date and inscription on the top reads '16RS.PS58RP.' spice cupboard with door on right. Chimney piece of fluted pilasters with panelled overmantel. Remainder of room has C17 panelling and moulded cornice. Stained glass in window facing south of 4 diamond leads with fleur-de-lys on each side pane; '1.P' in the top pane and '1576' in the bottom pane. Upper floors contain several original doors in moulded frames and fireplaces. B.O.E. (Berkshire) p.309.

Listing NGR: SU81376697

Appendix 2 – C20th Outbuildings. Photographic Record.



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Cow Byre to the NE of the site. One remaining of two built. Looking NE.



Working stable block north of the farmyard. Looking NE.



Storage Shed north of the farmyard.



C20th granary. North of the farmyard. Looking NE.



Shelter rebuilt in the 1960's. West of the farmyard. Looking W.



Hay Barn west of the farmyard. Looking SW.



LC20th cow byre to the west of the farmyard. Looking NW.



LC20th cow byre to the west of the farmyard. Detail. Looking NW.