MANOR HOUSE FARM
DORSINGTON
WARWICKSHIRE

BUILDING RECORDING

For

MR FELIX DENNIS

CA PROJECT: 2767
CA REPORT: 09039

MARCH 2009
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SUMMARY

Site Name: Manor House Farm
Location: Dorsington, Warwickshire
NGR: SP 1310 4937
Type: Building Recording
Date: 2-3 March 2009
Planning Reference: S07/02440/LBC
Location of Archive: To be deposited with the Warwickshire Museum service

A programme of building recording was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology at The Manor House Farm prior to works to convert the farm into a residence. This work was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for alterations to the building, including demolitions.

The complex consists of a 17th-century timber-framed barn, originally of eight bays, possibly of mid century date, with an extra two narrow bays added to the north not long afterwards. It fronts a farmyard on the west with two lower ranges flanking its north and south sides. The ranges are shelter sheds, on the south and another low range, currently pig sties, on the north. The ranges are stopped with slightly larger blocks at the west ends. That on the south has undergone many alterations and its original condition is hard to reconstruct. On the north the equivalent block is a stable and hayloft, in largely original condition, but with some significant alterations. These ranges are contemporary with the barn.

The building has undergone various changes, with floors in the barn being removed and altered, and milking parlour facilities installed, probably mostly in the 20th century. Repairs and other smaller scale changes are apparent. Modern steel and wooden sheds for a variety of modern farm uses have been built around the complex, but have had little impact on the fabric. The farm buildings around their courtyard are to be converted into a domestic residence.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In May 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out a photographic record and building analysis within Level 2 of the English Heritage specification (English Heritage 2006) for building recording for Mr Felix Dennis, at the request of Mr Dennis Bliss, Estate Manager, at Manor House Farm, Dorsington, Warwickshire, a 17th-century timber-framed barn and associated farm buildings, still in use as a farm. (centred on NGR: SP 1310 4937; Fig. 1).

1.2 Planning Permission (Planning refs: 07/02442/FUL; 08/01415/FUL) and Listed Building Consent (Planning ref: S07/02443/LBC) has been granted for the works on the farm by Warwickshire County Council. This work was undertaken to fulfil conditions attached to the Planning Permissions and Listed Building Consent for the works. The objective of the work was to ensure that features at risk of damage or concealment during the proposed works were recorded and understood.

1.3 The archaeological fieldwork was carried out and the report produced in accordance with a brief prepared by Ms Anna Stocks, Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire County Council (WCC 2008) and a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2008), and approved by Ms Stocks. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001) and *Understanding Historic Buildings* (English Heritage 2006).

**The site**

1.4 The site lies on the valley floor of the Noleham Brook, a small tributary of the Avon, which it reaches to the north-west. The area, part of the Vale of Evesham, is gently rolling with no significant hills. South, the ground rises to the low Pebworth Downs and north, to Welford Hill, rising only 16 and 35m respectively. The landscape is arable farmed.

**Background**

1.5 The proposed development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential, within the probable extent of the medieval settlement at Dorsington. The farm
complex includes two Listed Buildings, a 17th-century barn (LB 483125) and a mid 18th-century Farmhouse (LB 483124). The former is the subject of this report.

Methodology

1.7 The record of the historic buildings was carried out at the top end of Level 2 into Level 3, as described in *Understanding Historic Buildings* (English Heritage 2006). The survey comprised three elements; photographic survey, measured survey of the barn ground plan and Buildings 3 and 8 and two cross-sections, annotations on existing survey drawings and written notes. Fieldwork was carried out on 2 and 3 March 2009.

1.8 The buildings were photographed in 35mm black and white and colour slide film and in digital format. These films and copies of the digital images on CD are in the site archive, as are the associated lists and indexes. Site plans and an elevation of the barn provided by the architects provided the basis for some annotations and records of what was seen. Notes which formed the basis of the written record were completed during the fieldwork. No further documentary or historical research was carried out as part of the recording exercise. Consequently, the dating and phasing suggested in the following report are based on structural and stylistic analysis.

1.9 The buildings were given numbers by the architects and as far as possible these have been used in the descriptions. However, the south and north ranges each consist of two elements and they are referred to in part by their current and in part by their inferred historic functions.

1.10 The site archive will be deposited with Warwickshire Museum Service

2. DESCRIPTION

Main Barn, Building 7 and addition Building 6

2.1 The main building of the three ranges that enclose the courtyard is a long relatively narrow barn, Building 7 (Figs 3 and 4). It is a timber-framed barn in panelled construction divided into eight bays by six trusses. The timber frame is carried on a cill beam resting on a 0.45m thick, relatively tall stone wall (Figs 4 and 6). The posts
acting as jambs for the great doors (two each side) continue almost down to ground level and rest on post pads (Figs 4 and 6).

2.2 The timber is mostly recycled oak, the stone is a mixture of two main types: a very fine textured but soft and friable, greyish green stone, possibly a Mercian Mudstone, and an ochre-coloured, weathering to silvery grey, more bedded material, and slightly more resistant to weathering, which is a limestone, possibly Liassic. The roof is ceramic tile. Lath and plaster panel fill still survives in a large part of the building, but has been piece-meal replaced with brick on its side (Fig. 5). The bricks are 8½" x 4½" x 3", varied in colour around a pinkish yellow-brown and set in pale greyish ochre lime mortar. Some panels have been replaced with modern machine-made brick, mostly banded-colour commons, but some face brick is used, in cement mortar. These modern bricks are 8¼" x 4" x 2¾". A large number of panels, especially on the west side, have been replaced with glazing in wooden frames (Fig. 12). The south gable end of Building 7 is stone-built up to the eaves line and then the gable itself in modern brick. The gable was, presumably, originally timber-framed over this stone base, as the north end is still, with the quoins rising up either side of the framing and clamping the end wall posts of the east wall.

2.3 The design of the barn is very balanced, almost symmetrical, north to south (Figs 3 and 4). The main trusses (all bar two of the seven) are braced queen-post roofs with raking subsidiary struts and truncated principals. Two rows of very heavy purlins are both trenched and lapped on to the principals (Fig. 6). The individual timbers are all in line and simply through-splayed scarfed, but not at the truss positions. The timber is generally roughly finished, and externally badly weathered. A very high proportion is re-used, and the purlins in particular are waney and barely reduced. All joints are pegged, no nails or bolts were used in the early phases.

2.4 At each end the final truss is a sling-braced, collared truss with interrupted tie beams set at half the spacing of the other trusses (Truss 1 at the north and Truss 7 at the south). The sling braces have their feet set on a dropped tie beam. At the south end this dropped tie beam has been removed, except for a short stub on the west, but still exists at the north, though well hidden by later additions. These dropped tie beams clearly carried a floor at each end. The blocked pockets for the floor joists can be seen in the south wall, with a long timber in the wall forming the base of the pockets, and mortises for the beams in the north end can be seen in the south side of the dropped tie beam in Truss 1, showing that the floor continued to the next truss.
south at this end. Truss 2 still has a dropped tie beam under its real tie beam, down-braced from the wall posts (Fig. 11). This floor has been replaced at the present, higher, level, clearly when the new floor was installed in Building 6. Truss 6 at the south also has a down-brace (just visible in Fig. 9) but the dropped tie beam has been removed. These two, floored bays at each end of the barn occupy the same space as each of the normal bays in the rest of the building, which is another way of saying that the sling-braced trusses are inserted in the middle of these bays to support the floor, but at the same time provide plenty of head room (Fig. 5). The eastern foot of the sling brace in Truss 7 has been cut away and a doubled helper beam picks up the sawn-off end at a higher level (Fig. 6).

2.5 The two narrower bays at each end are the only ones fitted with a wind brace, a long passing brace running through the common rafters from wall plate to the base of the half hip on each side.

2.6 The dropped tie beam in Truss 2 was clearly re-used and from a longer timber, as it has one and a half curved door heads cut in its east end, the half, the result of truncation for its present position (Fig. 11).

2.7 The dropped tie beam in Truss 2 has been underbuilt in soft red brick in almost white, very pale ochre, soft lime mortar. The bricks are 9" x 4¼" x 2⅞", a very even colour, with about 2% cinder temper. The brick infill is probably secondary but looks late 17th or 18th-century in style. The bond is nondescript and seem to be a sort of informal English Garden Wall. The wall is clearly very distinct from the later changes using RSJs and orange, machine-made brick.

2.8 Above the dropped tie beam, machine bricks were used to fill the space between dropped tie and the new, higher floor (see section 2.13 below, Building 6 for this). The raised first floor space was closed off from the rest of Building 7 by a modern timber partition nailed to the Truss 2 timbers (Figs 7 and 11).

2.9 The interpretation of a long barn with an upper floor in each end bay is reasonably clear and accounts for the present features in the barn. However, the picture is muddied by Truss 4. This has down-braces still in place and mortises for a dropped tie beam (Fig. 7). The only other truss with which it could share a floor, however, Truss 3, has no such fittings or signs of any. Neither is there any sign of a removed
partition on Truss 4, which is another option. The fact that this truss has a full tie beam at wall head indicates that there would be little head room for any space here.

2.10 Below the level of the removed floor at the south end is evidence of a double doorway on the eastern side. It is clear that the stone plinth wall was never built here and the wall posts continue to the ground (Fig. 4). There is no evidence for any timbers below the present first rail, and this acts as a lintel, picking up the studs above it. Lack of peg holes in the lintel indicates that there were never any posts going down, except the central one. The lack of peg holes or joints on this indicates that no lower horizontal beams ever existed. One door jamb still exists on south side of south opening with a pintle. These two openings are now blocked with two mismatched loads of modern brick (commons and face) both seen in other parts of the complex.

2.11 It is probable that Bay 1 at the north end had an entrance analogous to this, but the rail which would have been the lintel has been renewed. However, the lack of a continuous plinth here and the existence of low pads for the wall posts strongly suggests this was the case. It, too, is blocked with modern machine made bricks (Fig. 4).

2.12 Building 6 is an addition to the north end of Building 7, superficially very similar and not obviously of any very different age. The evidence for this is clear in the building:

- Survival of north gable end wall of Building 7 and the addition of the stone walls and timber frame of Building 6 to it (Fig. 4).
- The timber frame end wall of Building 7, first floor, can be seen to have the frame of the half hip roof still in situ (Fig. 10).
- The purlins project over the end principals and are neatly finished off.
- The new purlins of Building 6 overlap them and are not scarfed in line as they are in original (Fig. 10).
- Door through gable end into upper floor of Building 6 clearly cut through earlier frame (although this may be a later alteration, Fig.10).

2.13 The large lintel to the eastern side door of Building 6 is original to this phase. This also seems to be the same for the west doorway. Both seem to support ends of thick floor timbers, now sawn off inside (Fig. 4). The ground floor of Building 6 has been gutted. The first floor joists and floorboards are all recent, carried on two north/south
RSJs (1950s?). The slightly raking queen posts of the roof truss in Building 6 were presumably carried on an east/west dropped tie beam but are now carried on the RSJs, the tie beam having been removed. The RSJs rest on brick piers built against the end walls (Fig. 3). The first floor has been fitted out with stalls either side of a central aisle and these stalls also occupy the north two bays of Building 7, connected by the door cut through the gable end of Building 7. This upper floor is separated from the main space of Building 7 by the large modern board partition mentioned above. The doorway into Building 6 may be quite recent, as the lower part, cut through the stone end wall, is made good with later 20th-century machine-made bricks (Fig. 10). The timberwork includes various processed-wood boards, suggesting a later 20th-century date, as does its new-looking condition (Fig. 10).

2.14 The missing centre piece of the tie in Building 6’s truss seems original as the joint to the struts would be impossible if the beam went all the way across. In effect the strut is halfway to a sling brace. The pegs in the joints here and in the upper part of Building 7 have been replaced with metal bolts. The end door in the north gable of Building 6 is an insertion, the same as the door through the end wall of Building 7. Downstairs is divided into storage bays, again in recent timber, and a ladder stair to the first floor is packed in among them.

External details

2.15 Various observations are detailed here in summary form

2.16 East face of Building 7 working from the south.

- Bay 6, south end: No numbers or assembly marks visible. Clear signs of re-used timbers above lintel, redundant peg holes, mortises.
- First door: Large south upright to door has four pintles, indicating that double-leaved doors were fitted. The doorway is now blocked in machine-made brick with a smaller door and a window above.
- Bay 4. Assembly marks. Right hand jamb has XLI vertically at lowest joint. Top rails have I - V.
- Second door, now blocked in machine-made brick with a smaller door and a window above. Door jamb also has four pintles indicating that double-leaved doors were fitted.
- Bay 1/2: Left wall post (i.e. right jamb to the door just described) has I, VII, VII (sic) vertically on jamb against each rail joint. VII visible on next stud at top joint.
il on fifth stud from south (inc wall post) at top joint. Marks on top horizontals: I - VII on north end of beam (from north to south).

2.17 North gable end (Building 6)
- This has IIII at east of door on upper jamb and I and II on base of queen posts above door. The upper parts of the jamb are original fabric. The lower jambs were inserted when the door was cut in.

2.18 West side (Building 6)
- Heavy, sawn-off floor timbers visible externally, resting on lintel. Doorway is original to Building 6. Bricks to right in Flemish garden wall bond 9" x 4 3/8" x 2 3/4", but four courses to top are a sort of English bond, 8 3/4" x 4" x 2 3/4". Both set in same very pale ochre, soft lime-mortar. This wall butts the north wall of Building 7.

2.19 West side (Building 7)
- Bay 1/2 in the passage east of pig sties has assembly marks (Fig. 23). The timber here has been protected by the pig sty roof as in Building 8 and is in unweathered condition and the assembly marks are fresh. A blocked doorway from Bays 1/2 of Building 7 (Fig. 3) gave access to the passage, and the door into the pigsties opposite, from the ground floor in these bays. The blocking is not that recent, the bricks being a softish orangey red in soft, ochre lime mortar. Bricks 8 ¼" x 4 ¼" x 3". Door lintel, new timber (i.e. not recycled) assembly mark, V matches V on jamb, which is Truss 2 wall post.
- Bay 4: Assembly marks just visible on middle row horizontals. North to south, I-V (VI eroded away).
- Bay 7/8 at the south end has been protected by the shelter shed (Building 8) and assembly marks survive well. Along the cill beam from north to south, is XII (presumed, hidden), XIII, XIV, XV and XVI, with matching marks on studs and brace.

Further structural history
2.20 The barn has remained in use as an agricultural building up to the present day and has undergone several changes. A significant one of these was the removal of the raised floor at the south end. If this was at the same time as the removal of the lower part of the east sling brace and the insertion of the helper beam, then an early to mid...
20th century date looks likely, given the relatively small scanting, doubled, mill-sawn timber and the use of bolts for fixing. This is especially likely if the blocking of the doors to the lower floor (in modern machine brick) is contemporary with this change. The rebuilding on the upper south gable is also in this brick. Indeed this brick seems to be a chronological marker for major repairs around the building. Most of the panel fill in the north gable of Building 6 is of this brick (though it is used rarely for this elsewhere in Building 7), as are the walls replacing the two sets of opposing doors, the making good of jambs in the door in the upper north gable end of Building 7, and the lower walling on the east side of Bays 1 and 2. The windows inserted into some panels, especially along the west side, are probably part of these works.

2.21 This all represents a major programme of repair and updating. It is probably to be associated with the present concrete floor in the barn and the installation of milking stalls in Bays 3, 4 and part of 5 (Figs 3 and 13). Associated equipment makes use (in two phases) of new rooms (in the ubiquitous brick) created under the raised first floor of Bays 1 and 2 (Fig. 3). The alterations to Building 6, involving the new floor on RSJs, and a door linking to Building 7 in the south-west corner should also belong to this phase of works (Fig. 3). On the upper floor, the north door and the doorway into Building 7 also seem to be generally of this date (Figs 10 and 14). A 1950s to recent date seems likely, although the style of the external wooden doors associated with these changes suggest a date early in this range is more probable. The tubular galvanized metal partitions dividing the milking stalls also suggest a mid 20th-century date, and the replacement of the galvanized pipe work with plastic probably post-dates the 1970s. The wall along the east side of the stalls, forming a feeding passage on the east, is too obscured to characterise, but is capped with softer red bricks only 2” (50mm) thick, each stamped before firing with an incuse copperplate, curlicued, uppercase N. These are unusual and may be re-used.

2.22 This banded, machine brick is used in the repair and alterations in the other buildings as well. It suggests a wide ranging repair programme in all the farm buildings. This is to be associated with the partial rendering of the interior of the shelter sheds and pig sties and the provision of glazed, built-in terracotta feeding troughs in these buildings.

2.23 Earlier changes can also be identified. The first phase of replacement of the lath and plaster fill was the use of a sandy, orangey red brick used on edge (Fig. 20 inter alia). This appears widely in all the timber-framed buildings, and is most likely earlier
19th century. Other isolated patched of red brick infill are probably later 19th or early 20th-century localized repair.

2.24 The main change prior to this, and after the addition of Building 6, is the underbuilding in soft red brick of Truss 2. This was probably the first subdivision of the barn, or it may replace an earlier stud wall to the ground floor space in Bay 1/2. The bricks and mortar suggest an 18th-century date.

North and South ranges, Building 3 and Building 8

2.25 Running westwards from the barn are two ranges, Building 3 and Building 8. With Building 7 they enclose the farmyard on three sides. On the south they form shelter sheds and a room on the west end (Building 8). The north wall plate is carried by 4 posts and a modern brick wall at the east end. This replaced another post whose mortise can be seen in the wall plate, so originally there were five posts and six bays. The first truss west of the barn, in line with the first surviving post has an underbuilt brick wall, separating off the eastern two bays. This is in similar brick to that under Truss 2 in the barn, but the mortar is similar to that in the blocked door in the west wall of Building 7, Bay 2. The south wall is a continuation of the south gable wall of Building 7 at a lower level, and is one build with it. There is a blocked doorway in it near the junction with the barn.

2.26 The roof is a miniature version of the barn roof, simple tie beam, collar and either raking strut or queen post, with heavy trenched purlins. The principals are not truncated where there are queen posts, but are not necessarily complete where there are not, probably the result of using recycled timbers. It is not tied in to the structure of the barn, and the purlins rest on rough boards crudely fixed across the studding (cf. Fig. 24), but the structure is clearly contemporary with the barn, nonetheless.

The block at the west of the shelter sheds

2.27 This is built at right angles to the shelter sheds and is two-storeyed. It was clearly built to balance the west end of Building 3, faces it across the farmyard and is the same width east to west (Fig. 2). It is much shorter north to south, however, and despite having been rebuilt twice, shows no sign of ever having been any longer. The earliest stone phase was built in large, roughly squared blocks in courses (Figs 15 and 16). A doorway occurred in the south wall. The lower metre of this survived the truncation, blocked, and was incorporated in the rebuild (Fig. 17). It was first
rebuilt in very roughly coursed rubble, using thinner and more mixed stones. This was evidently because the west wall was leaning out. The lower portion remaining here from this first phase still does. A large loading door was put in the west wall of the rebuild, showing that the structure now (if not before) possessed an upper floor (Fig. 16). Both storeys were in stone rubble. An arched doorway, now blocked, was inserted in the north face, near the west end.

2.28 The gables might have been east to west or north to south in the two earliest phases, as they do not survive. It is tempting to assume the roof was aligned north/south as this would make architectural sense. Nonetheless, what appear to be new gables in red brick were added to the east and west walls. Indeed, the east wall seems to have been completely rebuilt in brick and three arched recesses were built into its external face at the lower level. They may have been bee boles. Despite being phase two stone externally, the eastern halves of the north and south walls of the upper floor were rebuilt in brick internally. The walls here were battered internally, being not quite as wide at the base as the stone ones and narrowing to 9 inches at the top (0.23m). The bricks of this phase are soft, hand made, 8½" x 4" x 2" in very pale ochrey mortar. The size suggests a 17th or early 18th-century date (Brunskill 1990, 140), but as they seem to belong to the second phase of alterations to this building, this suggests an earlier rather than later date in the 17th century for its earlier phases. The present floor structure belongs to this phase, although the boards have been renewed.

2.29 The final phase was the removal of the roof, the rebuilding of the gables and the lean-to on the northern side and fitting a new asbestos roof. The loading door was blocked in at this phase, having survived the earlier brick alterations. Probably of this phase was the fitting of new feed troughs in the shelter shed, with a rendered wall to "dado" height. This also involved a new rectangular recess in the wall between the shelter sheds and the end block, cutting away parts of two of the possible bee boles.

**The Northern Range, Building 3**

2.30 This was very similar to Building 8, but the end range was rather larger and is in a much more unchanged condition (Fig. 18). The low range is very similar to the shelter sheds and is currently in use as pig sties. The walls are rendered and have ground level ceramic glazed troughs. The roof is nearly identical to Building 8 (Fig. 21) and it too has a stone rear wall and a timber-framed front one. The passage between it and Building 7 means there is no direct connection with the latter’s
masonry. Nonetheless, the quoin of Building 7 shows no sign of there ever having been a wall attached here. In other words, the passage is primary. The roof is ‘bodged’ on to the side of Building 7 in the same way as Building 8 (Fig. 24).

2.31 The wall along the west side of the passage is in modern brick, but enough remains of the framework (wall plate and one stud) to show that it was timber-framed, with a central door. Peg holes in the surviving stud show that the wall was two panels high. The south side was open fronted, if the present studs are original. This does not seem likely, as, except for one, they are arranged to provide doors into the bays, rather than regular posts to support the wall plate. They show no sign of the timber-framed wall which would be expected between the doorposts if they had pre-dated the brick work. The present infill walls are modern moulded face brick. The internal walls are also modern brick. The roof trusses suggest a division into 5 bays and one surviving wall post in the south wall lines up with the second truss from the west, supporting this view, as well as the roof. It was not possible to enter the sties to study the underside of the wall plate more closely for evidence of uprights, but no mortises were visible over the doors nor any peg holes. The range is too low to be a stable. It might have housed oxen. If, as seems more likely, it was open, and another shelter shed, it is in a much better position than Building 8, as it is sheltered from the north and the west.

2.32 The end range is like a miniature Building 7. Based on its style and design it is contemporary with it and its north wall is clearly of one phase with the pigsties (Fig. 26). The roof structures are also of one build. The building has stone-built gable ends (Figs 20 and 26). The gables are timber-framed with the same mix of bricks on edge and modern bricks replacing lath and plaster in the panels. On the south end, there is a door, a small window on the ground floor and a pitching window. Unlike the former, the last is an insertion. The small window is blocked with brick similar to those on the west wall. On the north, there is only a pitching window, this time original.

2.33 The west wall has been completely rebuilt in brick, presumably replacing a timber frame like that on the east, but this has been done without disturbing the internal timber structure or the end walls, being carefully fitted in. The bricks used are 8¾" x 4¼" x 2½" laid in English Garden Wall bond, smaller, but the same in fabric as in underbuilt Truss 2 in Building 7 (which is in a similar bond but with more stretcher courses). They are probably earlier than the brick tax of 1784, given the standard
18th century depth of 2½" (Brunskill 1990, 156). Several on the south-west quoin have been scored “WW”, one occurrence marked in black paint.

2.34 Internally the building has two sling-braced, interrupted tie beam trusses, giving the same head room in an upper floor as in the ends of Building 7 (Fig. 22). They are raised on a dropped tie beam which supports the floor joists and boards (all original or at least ancient). They are linked by in-line trenched purlins. There is evidence of re-use of timbers as in the main block. The new brick wall on the west is underbuilt to the wall plate and supports the floor beams (Fig. 25). There is no other sign of any changes to this upper floor (other than the inserted north pitching window).

2.35 The lower floor has east/west walls built under each tie beam. That on the south is modern, in banded machine-moulded bricks. The northern one is of brick similar to the west wall (but not bonded in to it or matching in coursing, so is an early addition). It has two openings in the upper part, now blocked with old bricks.

2.36 Built on to the west side of the stable is a cranked, single storey structure, built in the greeny-grey stone used in the other buildings. It post-dates the west wall of the stable. When it was added is unclear (the western part has been recently rebuilt above about 1m and the eastern was not accessible). It is probably a 20th-century addition, altered mid-century (Fig. 34).

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The farmyard complex is clearly a unified design laid out following one plan. Pace the listing description, there is no evidence that the barn is of more than one phase (except for the addition of Building 6), and indeed the analysis shows that its integrated design reflects the intended uses of the building. A 17th-century date is almost certain, based on the style and technology of the building. A closer dating of its first construction has not been achieved, but the thin bricks used in the second phase of alterations to the end range of Building 8 suggest a date of 17th to early 18th century for those changes. This suggests that the original phase is hardly likely to be much later than the mid 17th century. The farmhouse itself (not part of this study) is conspicuously not part of the functional scheme, being the house of the gentleman farmer, set as far aside from the working farm buildings as practical given
its actual role as the farmhouse. Indeed, the formal entrance faces away from the farmyard, and is in polite Georgian ashlar, while the rear, the practical side, is in local brick vernacular. The present farmhouse is, indeed, later 18th-century, but it is likely to occupy the site of its 17th-century (or earlier) predecessor.

3.2 The barn has two sets of opposed entrances, for wagon unloading and for a through-draught for threshing. Easy access from the east meant that this could be done without having to pass through the working farmyard. The double-leaf doors would enhance control over the draught. The central space and the floored bays at each end provided a very large storage space. Up to the wall plate and minus the two lower floors at each end, the barn had a capacity of 276 m$^3$ (over 9,739 cubic feet or 632 bushels).

3.3 The two lower spaces at each end had separate access doors to the east side and were quite probably cattle byres, although all direct sign of this use has vanished. The brick wall at the north end which separates off this space is probably of 18th century date, and the slightly larger size than the usual suggests a post-1784 Brick Tax date. Nonetheless, it probably replaced a wooden partition, and a similar would be expected at the south end, although the beam which might carry the evidence has been removed. The north “byre” had access to the yard via the now blocked door into the passage on its west, without having to pass through the barn. This may have been blocked at about the time the brick wall under Truss 2 was built. It would be of obvious use if the barn was full of hay or corn. However, no such access existed at the south end.

3.4 The addition of Building 6 must not have been long after the construction of Building 7, and it is unlikely to be much later than the early 18th century. An obvious function would be as a cheese store. The massive board ends passing through the wall and resting on the lintels seem to have represented a very solid floor, suitable for such a purpose, as is its north-facing position; the ventilation vents in the walls, not now evident, would have been removed when the panel fill was altered, as recently as the mid 20th century or later.

3.5 The low range of Building 8 looks like a shelter shed and this is its current use, but it does face north which is rather unusual. It may be that both it and Building 3 were shelter sheds. The three recesses in the west end in the first brick phase, are in a rather odd place if they really are bee boles. The position inside another building and
not facing south rather suggests that they had another purpose. It seems that the
uses of this building were probably rather complex, at least over time. The bay
closed off on the east side may have been a calving shed. The function of the west
block of Building 8 is impossible to reconstruct from the evidence, but use as a cart
shed would not be impossible, with a gable end facing that of Building 3. This would
have ceased to be the case after the first phase rebuild as no wall from the later
phases had a suitable door opening. The huge loading window on the west suggests
a hay or feed loft.

3.6 The west block of Building 3 is clearly a stable and could have held four working
horses comfortably, assuming they were not in loose boxes, or perhaps three if the
tack was kept in the building. Three horses might imply about 60 acres of arable on
the farm (Lake 1989, 30). The upper floor is the hayloft and the pitching window at
the north side and the hay gap on the west, over the hay racks, are original to the
first build. Again this shows a concern to keep maintenance access to the peripheral
buildings away from the working yard, while the horse entrance is to the yard.

3.7 The provision of access to the north and south ranges, and the barn, from outside
the yard, may indicate that the main purpose of the yard itself was to accommodate
the dung heap, rather than to facilitate access.

3.8 While evidence of piecemeal changes to the fabric, mostly repairs, can be seen
through the building, the majority of them can be ascribed to a major modernization
which is certainly of 20th-century date and may be ascribed to around its middle
years. The large doors, not needed for threshing since the early 19th-century
introduction of machine threshing, were reduced, the south gable rebuilt, and a new
milking unit installed at the north end of Building 7. The south “byre” was removed at
this time, if not before, and the doors to both north and south “byres” blocked in. The
installation of milking stalls also involved the creation of new rooms in Bays 1 and 2.
The “calving unit” in Building 8 and the shelter sheds of Building 3 were given new
external walls facing the yard, and the shelter sheds of Building 3 were also
partitioned in brick. The opportunity was taken to make repairs around the farmyard
and to finally rebuild the west block of Building 8. The cranked building west of
Building 3 was rebuilt or may have been built at this time.

3.9 The farm complex at Manor House Farm is clearly the result of a decision, probably
in the mid-to-late 17th century, to invest in a complete rebuild of the farm (assuming
an earlier one on the site) and to do it to answer very carefully analysed functional requirements and a clear view of the intended working practices. While the buildings were made from re-used timber, the investment was nonetheless very heavy and must have been based on a confident view of future income.

3.10 The original farm buildings reflect a mixed economy that was biased towards corn production, with a significant cattle component, of importance at least as much for manuring as for beef or dairy. The manure could be collected in the sheds when folding on the fields was not possible or desirable. The predicted productivity of the farm is also indicated by the stabling for three or four horses. The mid 20th-century alterations presumably coincide with the construction of the Dutch barn for hay storage (Fig. 31) and the portal-framed building for a covered cattle yard (Figs 33 and 34). The brick-walled and metal roofed work shop or shed, Building 10, must also date from this period of major re-organization (Figs 27 and 28). The large sheds to the south-east of Building 10 seem to be a little later (Fig. 30). A move into poultry is indicated by the timber coop south of building 10 (Fig. 29), and this may have been the purpose of the stalls more recently inserted in the first floor of Building 6 and the adjacent part of Building 7.

5. CA PROJECT TEAM

5.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Davenport who also wrote this report. The illustrations were prepared by Rachel Kershaw. The archive has been compiled by Peter Davenport, and prepared for deposition by Victoria Taylor. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

6. REFERENCES

Brunskill, R. W. 1990 Brick Building in Britain (Gollancz, London)

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 Manor House Farm, Dorsington, Warwickshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Standing Building Recording

English Heritage 2006 Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice (English Heritage, Swindon)

WCC (Warwickshire County Council) 2008 *Brief for Building Recording and Archaeological Fieldwork*
Appendix 1
The DCMS Listing description

IoE Number: 483125
Location: BARN AND OUTBUILDINGS IMMEDIATELY NORTH EAST OF MANOR HOUSE FARMHOUSE, VILLAGE STREET (west side) DORSINGTON, STRATFORD ON AVON, WARWICKSHIRE
Photographer: N/A
Date Photographed: N/A
Date listed: 05 April 1967
Date of last amendment: 19 June 2000
Grade II

DORSINGTON SP14NW VILLAGE STREET 1931-1/5/45 (West side) 05/04/67 Barn and outbuildings immediately north-east of Manor House Farmhouse (Formerly Listed as: Barn at Manor House Farm) GV II Barn and 2 ranges of outbuildings forming 3 sides of yard. C17 with later alterations and additions including roof trusses. Timber-frame with C20 brick and wattle-and-daub infill, brick and coursed rubble; steeply pitched half-hipped renewed tile roof. 5-bay barn has addition to each end*; north-west shelter shed range has 2-storey cross-wing to end; later* south-west shelter shed range. EXTERIOR: east elevation of barn has 2 former threshing floor entrances with C20 brick infill and entrances with windows above; each has bay to left with square framing with tension braces over high stone plinth; timber-framed bay to right has some alterations to former entrance: probably 3-bay barn extended to 5 bays with extra threshing floor*; left end has timber-framed addition with large brick panels and high frieze window; right end has visible end of stone cross wall and addition with timber-framed attic over stone, entrance to left. Left return brick gable; right return has loading door and flanking windows. INTERIOR: has 4 roof trusses with tie beams, 2 braced, queen struts to collars and principals truncated at upper purlins; truss to south has lower tie beam and straight crucks* to second collar and spurs; end attic has one cruck truss, and queen strut truss to addition. West elevation similar, but with shelter sheds, that to north is stone with brick infill to front; tie-beam and collar trusses with struts; cross wing has timber-framed side wall and stone end walls with timber-framed half-hipped gables over shuttered pitching holes; outer wall is brick with modillioned cornice and small stone wing. Shelter shed to south is open fronted, with C20 end block*. The outbuildings were not formerly listed.

*The interpretations in this listing are now superseded. Cardinal directions are wrong too. There is no evidence of extension other than the north end, and it is all otherwise one build, with later alterations and repairs. There are no crucks, they are sling braces.
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Manor House Farm, Dorsington
Warwickshire

The site, showing location of buildings
First Phase stone walls mid 17th-century
Second Phase stone walls late 17th-century
Old (18th - 19th-century) brick
20th-century brick
20th-century concrete blocks
20th-century wood partitions and stairs
Manor House Farm, Dorsington, Warwickshire

East elevation of Buildings 6 and 7 (photomontage). Scales 2m
Section of Building 7 at Truss 7
MANOR HOUSE FARM, DORSTINGTON
WARWICKSHIRE

SECTION OF BUILDING 7 AT TRUSS 5

DRAWN BY: RK
SCALE: 1:50
PROJECT NO: 2767
FIGURE NO: 6
7 View of interior of Building 7 looking north. Trusses 3 and 4; Truss 4 (nearest) with down-braces

8 Upper part of sling-braced Truss 1 in Building 7, looking south
West side of sling-braced Truss 7 in Building 7 with helper beam and sawn off dropped tie beam at bottom right, looking south
10 First floor north elevation of Building 7 showing new doorway and relict half hip

COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE
Manor House Farm, Dorsington
Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE
Photographs

DRAWN BY
RK

SCALE
n/a

PROJECT NO.
2767

FIGURE NO.
10
11 The red brick underbuilt wall at Truss 2, Building 7. Down brace to dropped tie beam just visible and relict door heads in beam. Scales 1m

12 General view of west side of Building 7 and junction with Building 8, looking south-east
13 General view across interior of Building 7 to south south-west, milking stalls in foreground. Scale 2m

14 North elevation of Building 6. Scale 2m
Manor House Farm, Dorsington
Warwickshire

Ground floor phased plan
Building 8

First Phase stone walls mid 17th-century
Old (18th - 19th-century) brick
20th-century brick
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| 16        | West face of Building 8, showing different phases of build, looking south-east. Scale 2m | West face of Building 8, showing different phases of build, looking south-east. Scale 2m.  

17 South face of Building 8. Note quoin variations on left and blocked door just visible behind hutch. Scale 2m
18 General view of Building 3 and Building 6/7 in the background, looking north-east. Scale 2m

20 Building 3, east face of stable and pig sties to right. Scale 2m
Manor House Farm, Dorsington
Warwickshire

Phased ground floor plan of Building 3 (stable)

- First Phase stone walls; mid 17th-century
- Old (18th - 19th-century) brick
- 20th-century brick

- Sling-back trusses
- Blocked window
- Hay drop in ceiling
- Inserted doorway
21 Building 3, the roof space of the lower range, looking west

22 The upper floor hayloft of the stable (Building 3 west block), looking south. Scale 2m
23  Typical assembly marks in Building 7 in the passage between it and Building 3

24  The joint of the roof of Building 8 with Building 7
25 The rebuilt brick wall of the stable, looking south-west in the hayloft. Note hay gap, feed racks below

26 The north side of Building 3 showing low range and the stable to be one build. Scale 2m
27 Modern workshop shed, Building 10, south of Building 8, west side

28 Modern workshop shed, Building 10, south of Building 8, interior
29  Poultry shed south of main complex, looking south

30  Modern storage sheds south-east of main complex, looking east
31 Dutch-barn on east of complex, looking north-east

32 Portal-framed cattle shed on north of complex, looking north-west
33  Interior of Portal-framed shed, looking north-west

34  Small offices added to west side of Building 3, looking north