

Manor Farm Barn and outbuildings, Manor Farm, Frindsbury, Kent.

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Summary

The proposed development at Manor Farm Barn, Frindsbury, Kent (TQ 74744 7003) includes the conversion of a former farmyard and its buildings into a venue for weddings and similar functions, with accommodation for guests. Alterations to the existing structures are proposed, along with the construction of four new buildings, to provide accommodation and amenities. Parking, for approximately 54 cars, would be formed to the west of the yard. Landscaping, with trees and other planting and features is proposed, and access would be from the north, from the A289, along a new drive.

The proposed scheme makes good use of materials and historically and archaeologically informed architectural consideration in order to have as little impact as possible, presenting no harm to original fabric.

Changes to the setting of the historic barn, apart from making every effort at chiming with the history of the place, or concealing extensions, are also considered off-set by bringing the building back into twenty-first century use, valuing and thereby maintaining it.

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1.1 LOCATION

The proposed development area (PDA) is located along the north-west side of Upnor Road, approximately 1km to the north-east of Frindsbury, 1.5km north-east of the City of Rochester and 0.4km south-east of the A228 (TQ 74744 70031). The PDA occupies part of the site of Frindsbury Manor or Manor Farm, formerly also called Court Lodge Farm. For purpose of this report a north-south alignment for the barn is assumed, its bays numbered from the north. The PDA occupies the western half of the site, where the farmyard is located, the house, now under separate ownership and outside the PDA, the eastern half.

1.2 SETTING

The manor developed on the northern edge of Frindsbury peninsula, on Frindsbury Hill, slightly below its summit and All Saints' Church. The peninsula, a large chalk promontory that projects out from the north bank of the River Medway, almost directly opposite the City of Rochester, creates a long and strategic bend in the river (Chatham Ness). To the east the peninsula is largely undeveloped, falling away to broken salt marshes and Whitewall creek (now bisected by the A289), a once significant but now largely infilled inlet that fed into the river. To the south the peninsula has been wholly quarried away, and levelled off close to river level, as a result of more recent industrial activity, and is now occupied by a modern industrial estate.

A large quarry was opened immediately to the west of the site around the middle of the twentieth century (presently being infilled), beyond which lies later housing development on the outskirts of Frindsbury, this originally a village, but now swallowed up by development along the River Medway. Undeveloped land, comprising open fields, still remains to the north of the site, the last vestiges of the historic landscape that once surrounded the manor, whose holdings once extended over much of Frindsbury Hill.

The farmstead comprises a small but significant group of historic buildings. These include the manor house, a grade II listed late sixteenth-century farmhouse, with later additions including a handsome mid eighteenth-century front range; a grade II listed brick oasthouse; a large Grade I listed medieval barn; an unlisted late nineteenth-century cattle shed; and eighteenth or nineteenth-century boundary walls. Other buildings once populated the site but have been lost.

Only two of the aforementioned buildings occupy the PDA; the barn and cattle shed. Despite their close proximity to the farmhouse, these acquired a degree of separation from the residence, as the farmhouse became more gentrified in later centuries (most likely during the eighteenth-century). Its occupants sought to isolate it, as far as was possible, from the messy business of the farm, screening their landscaped garden and looped front drive to the south, and kitchen garden to the west, from the yard, with tall brick boundary walls. Combined with now mature trees and other planting in the gardens, the visual impact of proposed development within the farmyard, upon the setting of the house, despite its proximity, is less than it might have been.

1.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPEMENT

The development seeks to convert the former farmyard and its buildings into a venue for weddings and similar functions, with accommodation for guests. Alterations to the existing structures are proposed, along with the construction of four new buildings, to provide

accommodation and amenities. Parking, for approximately 54 cars, would be formed to the west of the yard, on the site of the large quarry. The site, including the yard, would be landscaped, with trees and other planting and features. Access to the new development would be from the north, from the A289, along a new drive, not from Upnor road, as today. This would sweep down along the west side of the site, to the car park, from where service roads and a footpath would lead to the barn and new additions. One road would continue to the south side of the site and the original entrance into the farmyard.

1.4 HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The manor of Frindsbury belonged, historically, to the bishop of Rochester and the monks of the cathedral priory, coming into the possession of the bishop in 764, when it was granted to him by King Offa.¹ Frindsbury was a valuable manor, the monks receiving produce from their demesne land here, which comprised arable for growing wheat and probably other crops, and meadow for raising livestock. They also received rents in cash and kind, from their tenants. The manor's holdings grew considerably during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, through donations of land from local families and other means, and consequently two granges or sub manors were formed (those of de la Rede and Chatyngdon). Probably by this time there was at least one large barn on the site, a precursor to the present barn. Much of the produce of the manor was surely transported to the priory, for consumption there, but some must have been consumed by farm workers, and any surplus sold at local markets.

By the late Middle Ages the demesne appears to have been leased, the rent paid in cash and kind by the tenant farmer (or perhaps his sub-tenant), who perhaps lived in the manor house. He would have been expected to maintain the dwelling and farm buildings in good repair. Unfortunately, nothing survives in the documentary record to indicate where or how the farmstead was arranged at this time. Probably, though, it came to occupy its present site by the turn of the fourteenth century, then comprising, perhaps, a modest suite of buildings, confined to the broadly square site known from later maps. The barn would undoubtedly have been the most significant, then as now.

The buildings would not, though, have necessarily occupied the same positions or arrangement of the present site – possibly they were scattered haphazardly across the site, rather than defining neat courts. Many may not have been as robust or well-constructed as the present barn. Evidence for demolished medieval, and later, farm buildings and other structures may survive within the PDA, although some will fall within the curtilage of the house.

At the Dissolution the manor (and its sub-manors, Rede Court and Chattenden) passed to the Dean and Chapter of Rochester, who remained, by far the largest landowner in the parish of Frindsbury. Documentary sources for the manor are more plentiful for the post-medieval period. From the seventeenth century, although details of its buildings are scarce, a reasonably clear picture of the farm and its place in the landscape can be formed – an extensive contiguous estate stretching from Frindsbury Peninsula, upon which stood a windmill, across Hog's Marsh to Beacon and Tower Hill. Probably the estate had changed little since the medieval period. A survey of the farmyard buildings made for the Dean and Chapter in 1623 described them as follows:

¹ Birch, 1885, Vol 1, no.195.

Court Lodge or the Mann^r House containing a Hall, a Parlour, Kitchen & Buttery a Cellar, 6 Chambers, 2 Studies, 3 Garrets a Dairy & Brewhouse: partly brick & part timber. A large barn of 8 Bayes, a stable & granary, wth orchards Gardens & back sides, in all 4 Acres val 10 . 7 . 0

The name Court Lodge reflects a condition of the farm's lease, to house the travelling courts baron and leet. The barn of '8 Bayes' surely refers to the present barn, despite it comprising thirteen by our terminology, suggesting it was divided into eight compartments. By c1637 the farm was leased to Sir David Cunningham, knight and baron and others. During the late seventeenth century the manor was leased to Thomas Lamplugh, Archbishop of York from 1688 until his death in 1691.

The manor saw a succession of lessees through the eighteenth century, firstly to the Lamplugh family, then in 1730 to John Boghurst, yeoman, the manor remaining with his descendants for around the next hundred years.² In the middle of the eighteenth century the farmhouse was provided with a new wing with a fashionable Georgian façade.³

Frederic Baker's survey of c1768 provides us with one of the earliest surviving detailed plans of the farmstead (Map A). Although schematic, it suggests the farm buildings by now occupied the present squarish site, which would be recorded in greater detail on subsequent surveys. The Rack Rent Valuation of 1775 provides us with further information:

The buildings now on the manor lands. One very good Mansion House with Brewhouse and Bakehouse under one tiled roof in good repair. One large Barn, in good repair built with stone and timber with three midstreys or threshing places and tiled. Two tiled granarys with a suckling house under the same. Two wagon lodges, one stable thatched, one other stable tiled, a house for wood and utensils of husbandry, a hogsty and henhouse a new built dovehouse, not stocked.

Around 1789, Philip Boghurst proposed reflooring the barn to the Dean and Chapter. His proposal, which also illustrates the paucity of timber on the estate, was recorded in Chapter Minute Book IX as follows:

Mr. Philip Boghurst Jun[r] having stated to the church that one of the barns on the premises at Frindsbury in lease to him wants new flooring of timber in lieu of an earthen one it now has and that there is not any timber on the estate large enough to make such new floor; and Mr. Boghurst offering that if the church will give him ten Oak trees off the premises he will in consideration thereof at his own expense either provide proper Oak timber for the purpose and make a new floor thereof or make a floor of stone to the said barn. It is resolved and ordered that Mr. Baker do mark ten oak trees for Mr. Boghurst's use in consideration of his performing his above mentioned proposal (MA: DRc/Ac/10/29).

It seems most unlikely that ten oaks (doubtless of reduced stature) would have been sufficient to floor the entire barn.

² In 1728 Mr Llewellyn, farmer, and presumably a tenant of the Lamplughs, was allowed 'timber for a barn floor, to be marked out by Mr. Hammond the Church carpenter, out of the timber now felled on his estate at Frindsbury' (MA: DRc Ac 6/16). This was perhaps for one of the barn's threshing floors

³ A date of 1753 is suggested for this alteration in the listed building description, see Pl 2.

The manor's holdings began to decline in the nineteenth century, some to chalk and brickearth extraction, often initiated by the lessee and occupant of the farm. To the south, the levelling of the peninsula, through such activities, only just stopped short of the farm and church. Plans by the Thames and Medway Canal Company to form a canal across estate land (ultimately aborted in favour of the Strood-Higham tunnel) also disrupted its holdings, and in 1804 a substantial tract of land, near Upnor Castle, which had been severed by the canal corridor, was sold to the Board of Ordnance.

In 1811 a new map of the manor, along with those parts of the demesne lands of Saint Margaret Parsonage contained within the parishes of Frindsbury and Strood, was ordered by the Chapter (Map B).⁴ This and a slightly later copy dated 1814 (Map C), with additional details, provides our first good depiction of the farm.⁵ Messrs Joseph and Thomas Brindley of Frindsbury, shipbuilders, leased the farm at this time, and seem to have quickly set about making improvements, however, they dissolved their partnership in 1825, putting Manor Farm up for sale the following year. A good description of the house and its amenities is provided by the sales particulars, along with a description of its setting at this time:

Lot 1... The House is erected on a handsome elevation, seated on a spacious lawn, ornamented by stately timber trees, surrounded by a fine flowering shrubbery, with gravelled walks, and numerous fruit trees, commanding beautiful views of the Medway, Chatham, and the richly varied country; conveniently planned, and adapted for the accommodation of a gentleman's family.

Evidently the house had been thoroughly gentrified by this point, the south-east corner of the nearby farmyard swept away in favour of landscaped pleasure gardens and a long looped drive, an arrangement that has remained largely unaltered down to the present day. A good description of the farmyard and ancillary buildings is also provided by the sales particulars:

...Stable yard, with two coach houses and capital four-stall stable; Granary, &c. over. Open yard; two new-built store houses; poultry houses; ranges of piggeries; drying ground, &c. Large farm yard, with cart and wagon lodges; nag stable for two horses; stables for twelve cart horses; chaff house, &c. a capital three-bay barn; granary; tool house; large stack yard, &c. roomy fold yard; long ranges of bullock sheds; cow houses; calf pens; rabbit house &c. Capital walled garden, well stocked, cropped and planted; a smaller garden adjoining; & excellent orchard; together with the following enclosures of meadow, pasture, arable, wood land, & saltings; containing 423a. 0r. 23p., in hand.

Evidently the stable yard and coach houses were located to the east of the house, the farmyard to the south-west.

Shortly afterwards it was found that 'the Barn floors and outside Boarding [were] in want of repairs... The Dean and Chapter's carpenter accordingly 'marked ten oaks for the purpose'. An 1828 survey of the manor states the barn 'contains three floors, one is in a very bad state of repair and required to be reinstated. The other two want repair. The weatherboard also requires reparation.

⁴ MA: DRc EP10.

⁵ MA: CCRc P18.

A parliamentary act of 1860 decreed that all property belonging to bishops and archbishops, by virtue of their office, was to pass to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners upon the next vacancy of their see. This occurred in 1867 for Rochester, with the death of Bishop Joseph Wigram Cotton. From this point onwards the farm remained in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

F. Baker was perhaps the last gentleman(?) farmer to occupy Manor Farm, his tenure extending from the end of the nineteenth into the twentieth century. The house was occasionally still used for Parish Council meetings in the early twentieth century, recalling its old function as a Court Lodge.

1.5 RECENT EVENTS

Around 1968 the contents of a Dutch barn, located hard up against the south end of the medieval barn, caught fire, causing damage to the latter, but fortunately not spreading further along its length. With the Dutch barn gone, and perhaps damage to this end of the medieval structure, the opportunity was taken to form a large, but unfortunately disfiguring opening through its south (end) wall, a feature which presently still exists. The opening did, however, improve access into the interior of the building for large farm machinery, something that was lost when its large (nineteenth-century) midstreys were removed. Another fire occurred a few years later, within the south end of the barn, blackening and scorching some of its timbers, but fortunately not causing significant damage. An extensive programme of repairs, including repairs to the frame and masonry footings, and the strengthening of the main posts with iron straps, was undertaken in the mid 1970s. Notably the building retained its agricultural use right down to the beginning of the twenty first century, last being used by a tenant farmer, who leased the building from the Church Commissioners, for general stowage and for housing farm machinery.

1.5.1 The fire of 2003

Regrettably, a more serious fire occurred on 22 January 2003, on the night of a national fire strike, totally destroying the barn's four northern bays.⁶ Fortunately, the fire was extinguished by the army, using a 1950s Green Goddess engine, before it could cause further damage. Subsequently, the structure remained empty and unused for fifteen years, before it was purchased by the Heritage Design and Development Team Ltd (HDDT). Planning permission (ref. MC/18/1234) and Listed Building consent (ref. MC/18/1235) for the reconstruction and restoration of the fire-damaged building, back to its pre-fire condition, was eventually granted by Medway Council in April 2018.

1.5.2 The restoration of 2019

Restoration of the barn was undertaken by Dolmen Conservation.⁷ This entailed reinstating the four destroyed bays and north end-aisle, in new oak, up to truss five, which was heavily scorched, but structurally sound. Notably the framing sought to precisely replicate the form and detail of the original medieval work. Repairs to the stone plinth at this end of the barn also proved necessary, before the new frame could be raised upon it. Unfortunately, this

⁶ Pl 5

⁷ Pl 9-11

required the complete rebuilding of the plinth (until then the best preserved length of medieval masonry) along the east side, from the foundations up.

From truss five onwards the medieval building remains intact, however, minor repairs were made to its frame, in new oak. The entire barn was re-roofed using a combination of salvaged and new clay tiles. Work was completed by the summer of 2019. With the structure restored and sound, attention then turned to future uses and the development of the site, the intention then as now to form a venue for weddings and similar events.

1.6 PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

The significance of Frindsbury barn has long been recognised and the structure has been studied previously by a number of scholars, notably Stewart Rigold⁸ and Cecil Hewett, both pioneers in the study of medieval timber-framing.⁹ Dendrochronological analysis of its timbers was undertaken in 2002, and provided a construction date of c1403.¹⁰ Further investigation occurred in June 2003, after the aforementioned fire, when the Canterbury Archaeological Trust was asked to identify and record the fire-damaged timbers that lay fallen and scattered around the north end of the barn.¹¹

In June 2005 a Conservation Plan for the barn was developed by Thomas Ford and Partners, architects and surveyors, that sought to restore and provide a future use for the structure – the Trust contributed to this plan, providing an archaeological desk-based assessment of the site, with a contribution on the medieval sources by Sheila Sweetinburgh,¹² an architectural description of the barn¹³ and an archaeological evaluation, comprising the excavation of a small number of test pits within its interior.¹⁴

A watching brief was maintained during the recent restoration, on works to the standing building and below ground interventions, in response to conditions attached to the planning and listed building consent. This exercise was recently reported on by the Trust.¹⁵ Additional dendrochronological analysis was commissioned at this time and confirmed the previous dating.¹⁶

⁸ Rigold S E, 1966, *Some major Kentish timber barns*, Archaeologia Cantiana, p1, Vol. LXXXI.; see Pl 1

⁹ Hewett C A, 1980, *English Historic Carpentry*, p185.

¹⁰ Arnold A J, Laxton R R and Litton C D, 2002, *Tree-Ring Analysis of Timbers from Manor Farm Barn, Frindsbury, Kent*, Centre for Archaeology Report 42, 2002.

¹¹ Austin R, 2003, *Manor Barn, Frindsbury, Kent, Archaeological clearance and recovery of fire-damaged timbers*, grey client report.

¹² Seary P, 2005, *Frindsbury Barn, Manor Farm, Frindsbury, Kent, Desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential and assessment of the available documentary sources*, grey client report.

¹³ Austin R, 2005, *Manor Farm Barn, Frindsbury, Kent, An architectural description*, grey client report.

¹⁴ Diack M, 2005, *Manor Farm Barn, Frindsbury, Kent, Archaeological evaluation*, grey client report.

¹⁵ Austin R, 2019, *Manor Farm Barn, Upnor road, Frindsbury, Kent, Watching brief during repairs to the fabric*, grey client report

¹⁶ Arnold A, Howard R, Tyers C, 2019, *Manor Barn, Parsonage Lane (Upnor Road), Frindsbury, Rochester, Kent, Further Tree-ring Analysis of Oak Timbers*.

A further archaeological desk-based assessment was prepared by the Trust in 2019, to inform decisions concerning the development of the wider area, to the north and west of the farmstead, that include the construction of a new school.¹⁷

1.7 THE MEDIEVAL BARN

The medieval barn is a remarkable and rare survival, and a building of high historic and architectural interest. Rigold described the structure, in the 1960s, as ‘the queen of the Kentish’ barns.¹⁸ It is one of only a small number of medieval barns that survive in Kent. The structure is timber-framed and of one period and has not been enlarged or reduced in size since it was formed. Numerous repairs and other minor alterations can, though, be observed within its fabric, mostly to its outer walls.

One of its most striking features is, of course, its great length. At 65.6 metres it is the longest barn in Kent. Even today, in a world of engineering marvels, its size is impressive and even more so when one considers every last timber was felled and hewn by hand. Its size is expressed externally by the great expanse of its tiled roof, which is barely raised above ground level by the low walls, and internally by a ‘forest’ of framing that stretches off into the distance, down its undivided cathedral-like interior.

Dendrochronological analysis has revealed it was constructed in the early fifteenth century, its timbers felled c1403. Recent investigation showed it was constructed over two or more seasons, hardly surprising given its great size. The barn is aligned north-south and can be resolved into thirteen full bays. It is aisled, like many medieval Kent barns, down both sides.

The frame is well preserved, retaining a high proportion of its original fabric, and in places rests upon its original Kentish Ragstone plinth. A notable survival is some of the original vertical oak planking of its outer walls. The structure was framed using new (not reused) oak of good quality and generous cross section. The barn’s carpentry is of the highest standard and incorporates several early and unusual details, such as the reverse assembly of its aisle walls. In other respects, its construction is typical of the period and locality, the roof, for example, of crown-post construction, the most common medieval roof form. Although well built, it is a plain building, with no decorative elements, that embodies its functional, agricultural use.

The Trust’s investigations confirmed the barn has always faced east, towards the farmyard, this wall pierced, from the outset, by three openings or midstreys – no points of entry were provided along its west side, originally. Evidently the medieval openings were small, passing beneath the structure’s low eaves, but in later years, these were replaced by tall openings with large barn doors protected, probably, by projecting canopies. New openings were punched through its walls in later years, including on the west side another large barn door.

No evidence for medieval partitions has been observed within the barn, but partitions were introduced in later years, albeit of a rather rudimentary nature. None have survived, however, a sketch, titled *The Old Barn, Frindsbury*, by Mary White, shows the barn interior interrupted

¹⁷ Grigsby J, 2019, *Manor Farm, Frindsbury, Kent, Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Report incorporating Historic Environment Record, Map Regression and Aerial Photograph Analysis*, grey client report.

¹⁸ Rigold, S E, Some major Kentish timber barns, *Archaeologia Cantiana*, p1, Vol. LXXXI, 1966. See Pls 1; 6-7

by several east-west aligned timber partitions, some waist-high, one extending almost to the apex of the roof.¹⁹ These will have segregated its bays into different uses.

The barn's primary use was surely for the storage of crops, probably mostly corn, given its location, but such buildings were frequently used for threshing and maybe other farm work and also for housing animals. The remnants of timber threshing floors and evidence for stabling (albeit later) reveal such uses here.

1.8 THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY COWSHED

Map regression analysis indicates the cowshed was formed in the late nineteenth century, between the 1st and 2nd Edition *Ordnance Survey* (Maps F and G). Evidently it replaces an earlier smaller building in this position (Map C). The structure comprises a long, narrow, single-storey range, covered with a low pitched slate roof. The shed walls are formed from yellow stock bricks and are pierced, on the yard (west) side, by various doors and windows. The interior is now largely open throughout its length and has clearly been refurbished since the nineteenth century, now accommodating stalls and a long concrete feeding trough against its east wall, with mangers above, and a paved floor with an open drain below. The structure is considered of low historic interest and was not studied or recorded by the Trust.

1.9 BOUNDARY WALLS

The site is contained, on its north and east sides, where there are no buildings, by tall brick boundary walls of probable eighteenth or nineteenth-century date.

1.10 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

The medieval barn

The development proposes to convert the recently rebuilt northern bays of the barn into a venue, for wedding ceremonies and other such functions, making this end of the structure 'habitable' with plastered walls, insulation, heating, lighting and other services. The surviving medieval bays, the majority of the structure, would be left unconverted, but some alterations are proposed, such as the relaying of the floor, the introduction of a new entrance and the removal of an existing one.

1.10.1 South entrance

The tall wide opening inserted through the south end of the barn in perhaps the late 1960s, to allow large farm machinery to enter the building, would be infilled and the floor levelled locally here. This opening rudely cuts through the elevation, detracting from the appearance of the building.

Drawings propose to 'infill existing opening with new stone and flint dwarf wall to match adjacent walls.' No details for the supervening framing have been provided at the time of writing.

¹⁹ MA: 'Villages' folders; Pl. 3 in the present report

1.10.2 Reinstatement of central midstreys

The removal of the extant south door would limit access into the barn interior. It is proposed, therefore, to form a new entrance or midstreys, on the east side of the barn, against its central bay, that would provide access into the medieval bays and from there the reinstated bays.

Archaeological investigation has shown the barn was originally entered from the east (not the west) through three midstreys, one located against this central bay. Evidence suggests the original openings were low, passing beneath the barn's eaves, however, by the nineteenth century, if not before, these had been superseded by tall wide barn doors – most older barns were provided with such entrances in later years and newer ones built with them from the outset, to accommodate the increasing size of farm vehicles. All these later openings have since been removed.

1.10.3 Flooring within the original bays

A new limecrete floor would be installed throughout the central 'nave' of the barn, in the original medieval bays. The floor is presently uneven here and would be levelled out. Surviving areas of historic flooring, in the aisles, would be retained.

The barn interior has previously been investigated by the Trust, for archaeological deposits – after the 2003 fire and during recent works. Remnants of later oak(?) threshing floors, and Ragstone cobbles for stabling, were identified in the aisles. Further evidence for the threshing floors (brick sleeper walls) was revealed within the main body of the barn, beneath the extant floor. These survivals have only moderate historic interest. No evidence for activity on the site that pre-dated the barn was revealed.

1.10.4 Inserted glass screen

A glass screen, supported by a steel frame, would be inserted east-west across the middle of bay 5, to divide the would be heated and 'habitable' new northern bays from the unheated original southern bays. The interior of the barn is visually impressive on account of its great length and undivided nature. Clearly the introduction any form of screen will impact this. It should be noted, however, that the present wholly open nature of the barn is partly a consequence of the removal, in modern times, of a variety of partitions and divisions that came to compartmentalise its interior, during its later working life – documentary evidence suggests partitions had been thrown across it from an early date.

1.10.5 Alterations to the reinstated bays

The reinstated bays would be adapted to create a heated and draught free environment for wedding ceremonies and other events. Insulation would be applied to the interior faces of the barn's external weatherboards, to leave the main framing exposed, and between the rafters of its roof, so as to leave the roof profile unchanged and the rafters visible, internally.²⁰ In both cases, the insulation would be concealed by a 15mm skim of traditional lime plaster, over expanded steel mesh – it is not clear if the walls in those bays internalised by the new west extension would be treated similarly.

²⁰ The roof would also be felted, beneath the battens.

1.10.6 Openings in the east and west walls

A link would be formed between the barn's reinstated northern bays and a new west extension. This would be in bay 4. No entrances existed, originally, on this side of the barn, but a large opening, almost the full width of the bay, was formed in this bay in the nineteenth century. This was retained, albeit reduced in size, during the reconstruction.

A link would also be formed on the west side of the barn, to connect it with the new east range. This would be in bay 1. The framing has recently been reinstated in this bay, in new oak, and includes a small foot door. This would be removed along with the whole of the aisle wall, thereby undoing some of what has been gained during the restoration.

A small lobby is proposed in bay 3, in the east aisle, separated from the main body of the barn by a glazed screen, with an opening into the yard secured by double doors. This would be located in the rebuilt end of the barn, where a pair of new oak doors have already been formed. The proposal will not, therefore, affect historic fabric and should not unduly affect the interior appearance of the barn.

The nineteenth-century cowshed

The cowshed was formed during the second half of nineteenth century. The structure has little architectural or historic interest. The development would see the building subdivided and converted into guest accommodation, with five private suites.

The west elevation, facing the yard, would be modified by adapting existing openings; extant windows would be fitted with new frames, or converted into doors; existing doors would be widened; a new opening would be formed at the south end of the building. The plain unseen rear (west) elevation (facing the farmhouse) would remain unaltered, except for the blocking of a window at its north end. The original roof structure, now in poor condition and in places collapsed, would be rebuilt or repaired.

New development of the site

The proposed development, in addition to alterations to the barn and cowshed, also seeks to erect four new buildings on the site. These include a large new extension to the west of the barn, a second wing to the east (linking it with the cowshed) and to the south a detached reception building and detached hotel, with guest accommodation.

Little is known about the arrangement of the medieval farmstead, but from the early modern period onwards documentary sources indicate the farmyard developed in a rather informal manner, around a squarish yard, the buildings generally aligned east-west or north-south. Evidently the farmyard was once busier and more populated – buildings have come and gone, in response to the changing needs of the farmstead – and the yard is now rather depleted. The barn will, however, have always dominated the site, its great size dwarfing any surrounding structures. The present scheme seeks to reintroduce buildings to the site, some where others previously stood.

1.10.7 West extension

The most significant new addition proposed is arguably the west extension, which would contain a venue for indoor wedding ceremonies. This would comprise a single-storey structure, with a multi-level flat roofs, and would abut the second to fourth bays of the barn

through a low level link, with lead valley roof. The new wing would connect with the main body of the barn through an opening in bay 4. Existing levels would be maintained against the west side of the barn.

1.10.8 East link building

A new wing is also proposed against the east side of the barn, at its north end, to link it with the cowshed – this would include a bar, kitchen, toilets and other facilities and would be connected with the main barn through an opening in bay 1.

1.10.9 Detached reception building

A detached reception building is proposed, approximately 14 metres east of the south end of the barn.

1.10.10 Detached hotel and guest accommodation

A detached single-storey hotel, containing guest accommodation, including a bridal suite and six independent bedrooms, would be built approximately 18 metres to the east of the barn and aligned east-west.

The yard

The yard would be landscaped, to provide space for outdoor wedding ceremonies or receptions and other events, and provided with permeable paving, around all its sides, for vehicular access.

1.11 ASSESSMENT AND SUGGESTED MITIGATION

The Medieval Barn

1.11.1 South entrance

Its removal combined with the reinstatement of the original medieval arrangement would have a positive impact on the appearance of the barn and is to be encouraged. A new stone and flint dwarf should be reinstated to match the arrangement and details of the original medieval work. Ample evidence for the original medieval arrangement exists here and should be investigated archaeologically before works commence, in order to inform proposals. A photographic record of the present arrangement should be made. Only minor, localised splicing together of new and old timber should be necessary, to infill the opening, and would be acceptable.

1.11.2 Reinstatement of central midstrey

The reinstatement of one such door is considered a positive change (one could argue for all three to be reinstated). The design for the new midstrey should be informed by surviving parallels, and any remaining evidence for the lost barn door here.²¹ It should be convincing in form and detail, if it is to be a positive addition. How it is connected to the framing of the

²¹ Evidence for the later nineteenth-century opening into the north midstrey was recorded by the Trust.

existing barn needs to be considered in detail. Its eaves should perhaps be located at arcade-plate level.

Proposals correctly show the new entrance located in-line with the aisle wall. The projecting hipped roof, or canopy, over the doors should perhaps be deeper than is presently proposed – deep enough to protect the threshing floor from the weather whilst the barn doors are open – and supported by longer up-braces. Tall vehicles could potentially foul the canopy, or more likely its braces, something that could be prevented with landscape features such as bollards. The opening should perhaps be closed by tall barn doors, not split ‘stable’ doors. Grooves for drop boards, at the foot of the door posts, would reinforce the impression of the barn as a working building.

The formation of a new entrance here would require the removal of the existing aisle wall, which includes a small door. This will comprise later work (nineteenth-century and 2019 restoration) of low historic significance, but earlier fabric could exist, against the bay divisions and some of the infill might also comprise significant earlier, reused material. The fabric here should be investigated, for evidence of the original medieval arrangement and subsequent development, and an archaeological record made of the extant fabric, prior to works.

1.11.3 Flooring within the original bays

Works to level and relay the floor would likely result in the removal of some material, including perhaps archaeological features. Further evaluation would seem unnecessary, given the fair understanding we already have, but a watching brief should be maintained during works, to record any features of historic interest that might be revealed.

1.11.4 Inserted glass screen

The use of glass will clearly reduce the impact of a new partition. Aligning the structural elements of its supporting steel frame with the geometry of medieval frame could reduce its impact (indeed these could echo the arrangement of the medieval cross-frames).

The screen will detract from the internal appearance of the barn, but not unduly so, given its proposed glazed construction. Considering the scheme relies heavily on this feature, its introduction, providing there is minimal interference (fixing points) with the surrounding historic fabric, is considered acceptable.

1.11.5 Alterations to the reinstated bays

Clearly these alterations will alter the internal appearance of the barn, which was never plastered in this manner. Whilst these are not the original bays, the intention of the reconstruction was to reinstate the original arrangement and appearance of the barn. The alterations are, though, necessary, if this part of the barn is to fulfil its intended new use. The approach proposed here (plastering between the main timbers, thereby leaving them exposed) is one that has been adopted in other historic buildings and should be acceptable if undertaken in a sympathetic manner.²²

²² Occasionally the interiors of historic barns were plastered, in some bays, when these were put to other uses, such as makeshift granaries, to prevent the ingress of rats or damp.

Presently the new bays retain a modern, but unsightly and unsuitable concrete floor. This would be replaced by a new limecrete floor, like that proposed for the original bays, but with the addition of underfloor heating. In our view this would be an improvement. The floor would be dug out to a greater depth here, to accommodate the heating system, but with a 600mm buffer zone around the masonry plinth – and presumably also the spur walls, that support the main posts? – so as to not disturb the barn's shallow footings.

The Trust has investigated the underfloor deposits here, finding evidence (sleeper walls) for the northernmost threshing floor. Little else of significance was encountered, where the floor was opened up, but evidence for other internal features might still survive elsewhere. These and the remnants of the threshing floor will likely be partly or wholly removed, when the extant floor is dug out. A watching brief during works is recommended.

1.11.6 Openings in the east and west walls

The continued use of the door retained during the reconstruction is to be encouraged and we recommend the new oak doors here are retained, even if no longer needed, to maintain the perception of separation between barn and extension, and potentially allowing it to be closed off

This proposed opening on the other side of the barn is also not acceptable, in our opinion, given none of the fabric here is historic (note the plinth has also been wholly rebuilt in this bay). Its impact could be mitigated by reducing, slightly, the width of the proposed opening, by retaining perhaps short spur walls from the bay divisions, and by fitting a pair of suitably designed new oak doors to the opening. Even if held open, for most of the time, they would again maintain the perception of separation between barn and extension and allow it to be closed off.

The small lobby proposed in bay 3 would likewise be located in the rebuilt end of the barn, where a pair of new oak doors have already been formed. The proposal will not, therefore, affect historic fabric and should not unduly affect the interior appearance of the barn.

The nineteenth-century cow shed

The low historic interest of the structure presents few concerns, and its conversion would appear wholly acceptable, however, it will impact the setting of the barn, given it faces the yard. The design of the conversion should be sympathetic with the barn and in keeping with the agricultural nature of the site (the proposed design, resembling a row of stables and would seem suitable). Although of low historic interest, a brief photographic survey and written description of the structure, prior to its conversion, is recommended.

New development on the site

This development must be subservient to the barn and should not diminish or obstruct its visual impact.

1.11.7 West extension

This extension is arguably the most challenging addition to the site, comprising a modern design and occupying a position outside the farmyard. It will also be visually prominent from the intended new approach to the site, from the north, the proposed structure rising quite high

relative to the barn. We should, however, remember that the barn is presently bordered, on its west side, by a large quarry, not an attractive and unspoiled rural landscape.

It is proposed to mitigate the impact of the new extension on the setting of the barn by banking up ground levels on its west side, to slightly below its eaves and providing it with a planted green roof, thereby blending the structure into the landscape.

Its impact could perhaps be reduced further, if practical, by reducing its height slightly (the proposed design rises quite high relative to barn, almost arcade-plate level), or perhaps by pulling it slightly further away from the barn and reducing the amount of contact between the two buildings, down to perhaps a single bay. Good design and appropriate use of materials will also determine whether the new addition complements the barn and its setting, or detracts from it. The new extension would be formed against the barn's reinstated bays and would not therefore interfere with the historic fabric. Archaeological remains could, though, survive below ground here and should be investigated. Investigation has shown the medieval footings are shallow and due care should be taken not to destabilise them.

1.11.8 East link building

Evidently there has been a structure here, enclosing the north side of the yard, since at least the eighteenth century (Map A). The last, a narrow single-storey range, was perhaps demolished in the late 1960s – remnants of its paved floor can still be seen on site. There is therefore precedence. The proposed range will close off the north side of the yard, which in our opinion is a positive alteration that will further reinforce its enclosed rectangular nature. The new wing would be formed up against the reinstated bays and would not therefore interfere with historic fabric. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the structure does not unduly interfere with the eighteenth-century boundary wall to north. The new wing would be directly attached to the Grade I listed barn, and its design, scale and appearance should complement the barn.

1.11.9 Detached reception building

No evidence for previous structures in this position has been found, however, none has been sought and an archaeological evaluation and watching brief is recommended. The proposed building falls within the setting of the barn and its design should therefore complement the barn.

1.11.10 Detached hotel and guest accommodation

Evidently buildings have been located here in the past (Map E) and on roughly the same alignment (east-west) but were lost by the end of the nineteenth century (Map G). The reintroduction of a structure in this position would seem acceptable and indeed would serve to partly close off the south end of the yard, as was once the case. An archaeological evaluation should be undertaken ahead of works, to investigate whether evidence for earlier structures survives here. A watching brief should be maintained during works. The proposed building also falls within the setting of the barn, and its design should therefore complement the barn.

The yard

The open form of the yard should be maintained. Any landscaping should, perhaps, endeavour to retain its functional, agricultural nature, perhaps incorporating some suitable agricultural

equipment or paraphernalia, rather than, for example, giving the appearance of a well-tended garden.

1.12 CONCLUSION

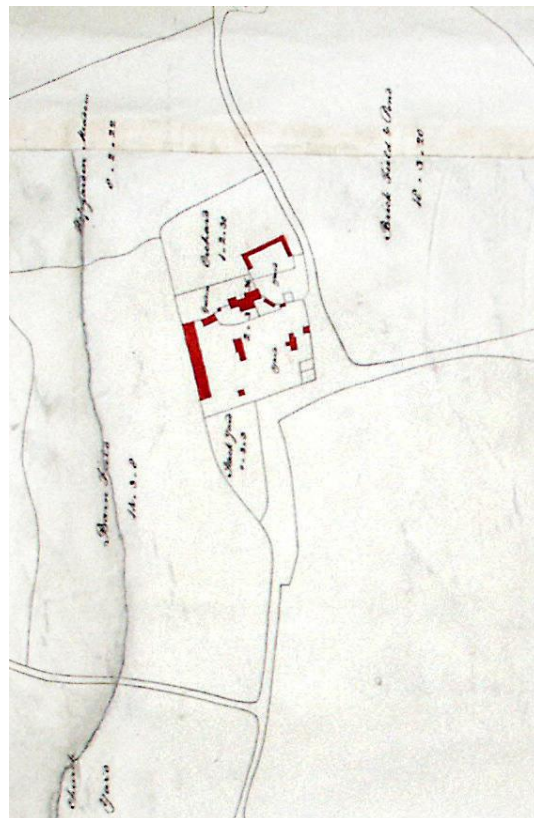
The development seeks to convert the former farmyard and its buildings into a venue for weddings and similar functions, with accommodation for guests. Alterations to the existing structures are proposed, along with the construction of four new buildings, to provide accommodation and amenities. Parking, for approximately 54 cars, would be formed to the west of the yard. Landscaping, with trees and other planting and features is proposed, and access would be from the north, from the A289, along a new drive.

The proposed scheme makes good use of materials and historically and archaeologically informed architectural consideration in order to have as little impact as possible, presenting no harm to original fabric.

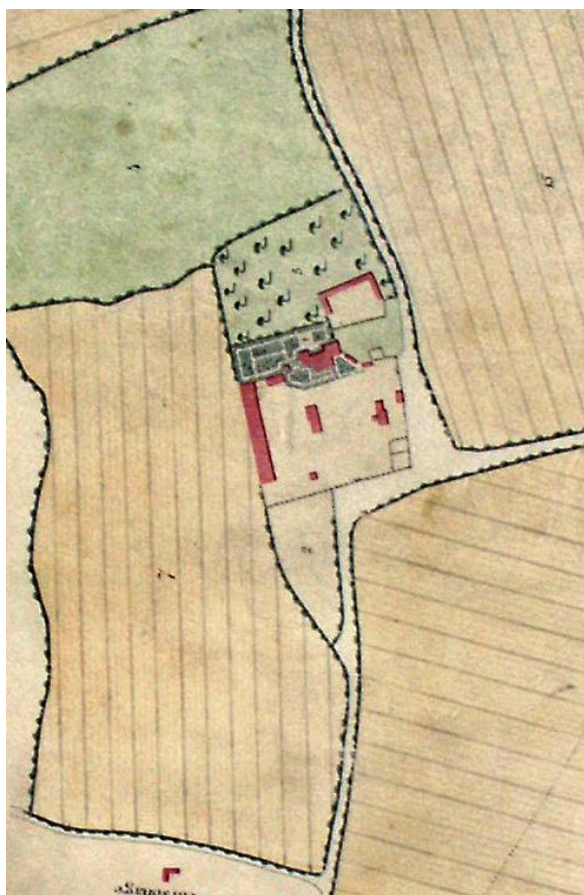
Changes to the setting of the historic barn, apart from making every effort at chiming with the history of the place, or concealing, extensions are also considered off-set by bringing the building back into twenty-first century use, valuing and thereby maintaining it.



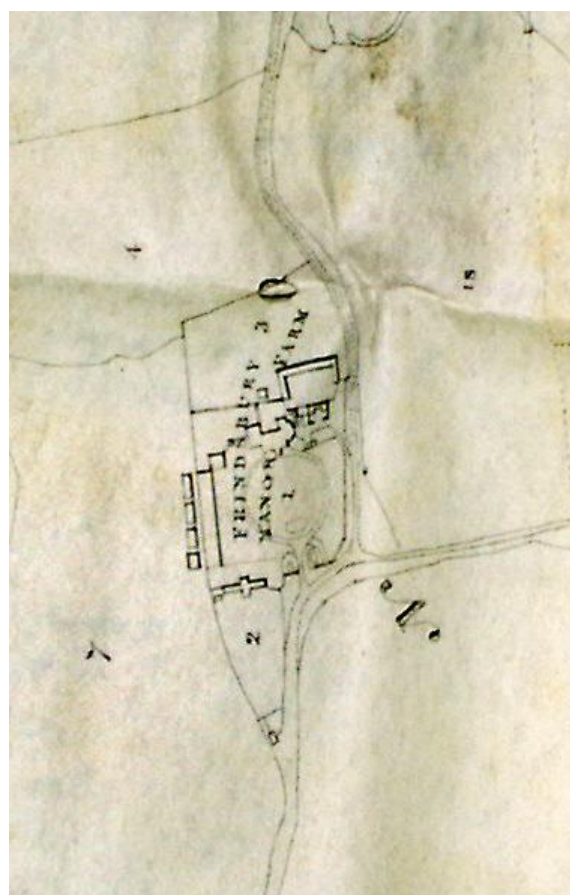
Map A: Detail of Frederic Baker's c1768 survey of the *Manor of Frindsbury*, Dean and Chapter of Rochester (MA: CCRC P16).



Map B: Detail of James Gouge's estate plan of *Frindsbury Manor Farm*, 1814 (MA: CCRC P18).



Map C: Detail of James Gouge's estate plan of *Frindsbury Manor Farm*, 1811 (MA: DRc EP10).



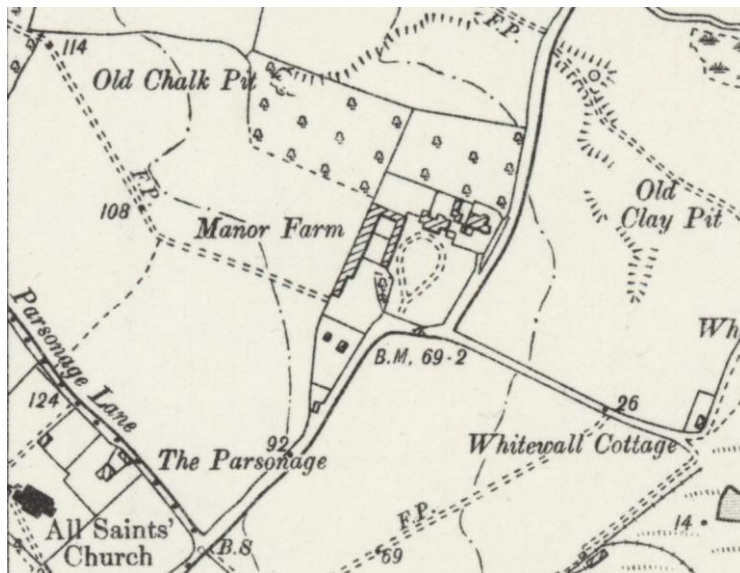
Map D: Detail of 1830 estate plan (CCRC T40).



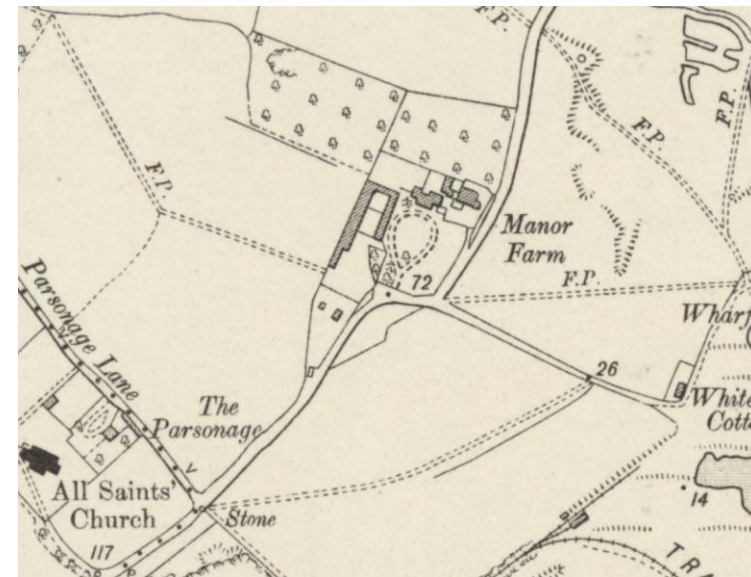
Map E: Detail of c1840 Tithe Map.



Map F: Detail of 1st Edition Ordnance Survey c1869 (6 inch).



Map G: Detail of 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey c1898 (6 inch).



Map H: Detail of c1909 Ordnance Survey (6 inch).



Pl 1: 1970s view of barn and farmyard, looking north-west.



Pl 2: Nineteenth-century(?) view of c1750 Georgian façade of farmhouse, looking north.



Pl 3: Engraving of barn interior, by Mary White, showing inserted partitions.



Pl 4: 1970-80s view of barn interior, showing it in use for storing crops.



Pl 5: North end of barn after the fire of 2003.



Pl 6: 2003 view of barn interior, looking south, towards surviving medieval bays.



Pl 7: Remnants of Kentish Ragstone paving and open drain in south aisle of barn.



Pl 8: North end of barn, showing bays 1-4 during reconstruction in 2019.



Pl 9: New oak framing being hoisted into position at north end of barn during restoration in 2019.



Pl 10: View of restored barn, looking north-west in 2019.



Pl 11: View of restored barn, looking west in 2019.



Pl 12: Interior of restored northern bays of barn, looking north in 2019.



Pl 13: General view of cattle shed, looking east.



Pl 14: Interior of cattle shed, looking south.