

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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June 2011

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PLEASE ALSO REFER TO HA&HG REPORT 39 ON COWFIELDS BY RUTH GIBSON IN 1986

FINAL DRAFT

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE



Prepared for SAM and SUE SAMUELS
Cowfields Farm, Rotherfield Greys, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 4PX

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1. Background

This report has been commissioned by Sam and Sue Samuels, owners of Cowfields Farmhouse to inform forthcoming applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

Methodology included three site visits on 18th March, 27th April 2011 and 31st May, in April with Ruth Gibson and May with John Steane. Various documentation was reviewed including Report No 39/1986 on Cowfields Farmhouse by the Vernacular Building Research Section of Henley Archaeological and Historical Group (HAHG), the Tithe Award and Map transcribed by J. Bernard of HAHG, and pre-application reports and correspondence with SODC. Limited documentary research was carried out at Henley Library, including review of various sale catalogues of 1906, 1927, 1928 and maps. The assistance of Sam and Sue Samuels, the staff of Henley Library, Westgate Library, Oxford, Witney Library and the ORO is gratefully acknowledged in the preparation of this Report. Special thanks and acknowledgement are due to Ruth Gibson for sharing information on Cowfields Farm and for permission to reproduce information produced by HAHG. References are given in section 8.

2. Purpose of the Report

There are two main reasons for this report:

Firstly this report is being carried out to provide an understanding of the particular nature of the site and its significance in order to inform proposals for change. Secondly the report is provided to meet the requirements of PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE6 including:

- A description of the significance of the heritage assets affected, (including to understand the particular nature of the significance of the site, the extent to which significance relates and the level of importance of that significance)
- The contribution of setting to that significance

3. Heritage assets: Statutory and non- statutory designations

Cowfields Farmhouse is a grade II listed building, statutorily designated on 13th February 1985. *See Fig 1.* Statutory List Description

4. Location/context

Cowfields Farm is located on the south side of the road from Henley to Rotherfield Greys, approximately 1 mile south east of Rotherfield Greys and approximately 2 miles from Henley-on-Thames. The area is open and low lying with fields, occasional clumps of trees and larger areas of woodland, such as Silgrove Wood to the west of the farm. The openness was evidently a characteristic of the area in medieval times as Rotherfield Greys in Old English means 'feld or open land where cattle grazed' (Ekwall, Eilert, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names, Fourth Edition, 1984, p393)

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The farm comprises 230 acres of farm land, woodlands, and garden (Sam and Sue Samuels, Design and Access Statement, 2010) together with a complex of farm buildings including Cowfields Farmhouse and various barns, shelter sheds and storage buildings located mainly to the north and north west of the farmhouse.

5 Cowfields Farmhouse: Summary of architectural and historic interest

5.1 Map/photographic/documentary evidence.

Map evidence. *Figs 2-7, Appendix 1*

An early one inch OS map of c.1830s (Bond and Over, OS Historical Guide to Oxfordshire and Berkshire, 1988, map 35, p 122) records the farm as 'Covel's Farm. It is noticeable that the main access track seems to sweep round in an elongated semi-circle from the Henley to Rotherfield Greys Road on the east past the north east corner of the farm yard to join the road again on the north of the farm.

The Tithe Award and Tithe Award Map of 1840 lists Hodges as owner of Cowfields and Charles Bullock as tenant. The map shows numbered parcels listed in the returns, including 303 orchard, 304 yard and buildings and 305 garden. Various field parcels surrounding the farmhouse are named and listed in the returns under Cowfields. The total land being 228 acres, 1 rood 19 perches. Value £78.2s. Also a paddock under arable of 3 acres, 2 roods and 13 perches. See Appendix 1. The farmhouse and a large building on the east side of the courtyard seem joined in 1840. This is identified on the OS map of 1878 as a wellhouse.

The OS map of 1878, 1:10,560 names the property 'Coville's Farm and the north arm of the access track from the Henley Road is now given more emphasis than the track from the east. Other tracks as well as footpaths are shown passing the farmhouse in an east/west direction, as well as north west to Rotherfield Greys and to the south. It is noticeable that a track completely encircles the farmhouse and farm buildings and that there is a walled 'square' of cultivated garden or orchard to the south of the farmhouse. A 'wellhouse' is shown.

By the time of the OS Second Edition of 1900, 1:10,560 the property is named 'Cowfield's Farm and the layout of buildings and service tracks remains much the same. Silgrove Wood lies to the west of the farm, gravel pits are marked to the east, alongside the track leading to the Henley Road and a chalk pit is marked a field away to the south east.

In 2011, the extent of buildings comprising the farmstead has changed and various buildings including a large structure, annotated 'well house' on maps which was located to the north east of the house, no longer survive. A small square weather-boarded granary building once located to the south of the house was demolished post 1986.

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Brick/flint boundary walls: (Plates 7-8, Figs 3-4)

These are important boundary features in the immediate setting of the farmhouse, contributing to the pleasing character and appearance of the farm group and providing a means of enclosure for the farmhouse and farm buildings. Various changes to the walls have been made in recent times with some sections being taken down or re-aligned and new sections being built. The track and brick/flint walls with gate piers (shown in plate 2, 1939) which once enclosed the farm on the south have been removed and the track now follows the rectangular shape of the field boundary giving a more open rural aspect. Numerous trees have been planted along the main access track on the north with a further woodland belt on the east. By 2011 the enclosed cultivated 'square' shown on early OS maps to the south of the farmhouse has been removed and a tennis court, flower and vegetable gardens with trees located in this general area. The position and alignment of brick/flint walls forming the boundary to the courtyard to the north of the farmhouse has also changed over time, now curving in a reverse 'S' northwards across the area once occupied by the wellhouse.

Comparison of the Google earth map with the OS First Edition, 1:10560 map shows that various other features in the landscape have remained remarkably similar, including field boundaries, footpaths and tracks and the location of Silgrove Wood to the west and Packham Plantation to the north.

Photographic evidence: Plates 1-6

The earliest photographs of Cowfields Farmhouse date from 1939. At this time the property was rendered and there are different window and door configurations shown on both north and south elevations than at present. The north elevation photo is indistinct but does not appear to show either an oriel or 2 storey bay window. There are 8/8 sash windows to the ground floor of the east wing and to the hall, which does not have a bay window at this time. The east wing lacks a window to the first floor, but has an attic window. The rear elevation shows steeply pitched roofs (approximately 50 degrees) on both the east wing and wing to the rear of the hall. The space between the two wings is infilled with an extension to the inner, west slope, of the roof of the east parlour wing. Irregularly spaced 3/3 sash windows may have replaced wood mullioned and transomed windows in the east wing. The hall wing has a 2 storey canted bay window and a 2/2 sash attic window. Most noticeable is the large tapering brick stack on the south end gable of the west wing demolished post 1939. A brick/flint wall with gatepiers and cast-iron pedestrian gate gives access to the south elevation. A photo of 1956 shows the S rear elevation in a dilapidated condition- the lateral stack to the solar wing has fallen down/been pulled down. The canted 2 storey bay window to the hall wing has sash windows with a further 2/2 attic window.

A photo of the N front, elevation of 1958 shows the 2 storey bay window and oriel. The queen post roof construction, cambered tie beam and large panels infilled with brick are clearly visible in the west wing on the right of the picture. The HAHG survey photos of 1986 show the rear, S elevation. Aspects that stand out are the spaces between the

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wings infilled with a flat roofed 2 storey section, the 1848 extension and 3 storey extension to the rear of the hall rendered, with the 2 storey bay window now removed, absence of the chimney stack on the south gable of the west wing.

Documentary evidence

Hearth Tax returns for 1665 record 5 hearths for William Benwell of Rotherfield Peppard and 1 hearth for John Benwell Senior in Rotherfield Peppard. Other Benwells are recorded for Hearth Tax including William for 1 hearth in Henley, Henry in Bix for 4 and another William in Henley for 4. Presumably this is the same William Benwell of Rotherfield Peppard paying hearth tax for the 3 properties he owns. (Oxfordshire Record Society, Hearth Tax Returns, Oxon, 1965, Vol XX, p 263)

A probate inventory taken of the goods and chattels of William Benwell of Rotherfield Greys in 1669, lists his possessions at 'Coufould Farme in Peppard'. This records items in the hall, kitchen and kitchen chamber, as well as farm animals including sheep, one cow, and one horse. It also records goods in two other houses in Henley. **See Fig.7**

A sales inventory of 1906 lists Cowfields as 'a delightful old fashioned gabled residence being brick stud and plaster built and tiled, containing'

On the first floor: bedroom, attic and box room

On the second floor, approached by 2 staircases: 6 bedrooms 4 being fitted with stoves and 3 with cupboards, bathroom with lavatory basin, hot air linen cupboard and WC

On the ground floor: entrance porch, good hall, dining room 16' 9" square fitted with slow combustion stove, tiled hearth and sides and cupboard, drawing room 16' by 14' with bay window, fitted with slow combustion stove and tiled sides and grey marble mantle. Breakfast room with cupboards, kitchen with range, scullery with sink and force pump, back kitchen with sink and force pump, dairy, pantry, boothouse and EC and brick and tiled ash shed.

There is a nice flower garden and good productive kitchen garden and some fine walnut trees in the orchard'

The farm buildings were described as 'lately put through repair and enlarged' and included stables, piggeries, coach house and harness rooms, loose boxes, chaff house and barn, cart shed, cow shed, implement shed, timber and slated granary on 9 stone steddles, meal house, open shed, cowhouse and calf pen, coal house, fowl house and well house, cattle and rick yards, large rainwater tank and 2 ponds (Sales Catalogue of the Rose Hill and Gillotts Estates, Oxfordshire, 1906, Cowfields, Lot 23)

In a 1927 Sales Catalogue, Cowfields, Upper House and Rectory Farms were offered for sale and described as 'important freehold residential sporting and agricultural properties'. (Sales Catalogue of Cowfields, Upper House and Rectory Farms, 23rd June 1927)

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Similarly in 1938 Cowfields was described as a 'valuable freehold agricultural and sporting estate' (Mr George Shorland, Sales Catalogue of 11 Farms, 25th August 1938). The wellhouse and granary are listed amongst farm buildings.

5.2 Owners/Occupiers

Grateful thanks are due to the current owners and to HAHG for information concerning past ownership of the farm.

1575- Benwell family ownership of Cowfields (Peppard Parish Register)

1669-1784 (Benwell family wills and inventories)

1754 Farm sold by AG Blount to A Hodges (Cooper and Caldecott papers)

1771 A Hodges of Bolney took out mortgage on Cowfields

1815 Elizabeth Benwell occupier (Land tax)

1840 Hodges owner, Charles Green Trustee

1840 & 1851 Charles Bullock tenant (Census Returns and Tithe Award)

1871 Tenant Charles Longford (Census Returns)

1879 Cowfields mentioned in will of E Mackenzie of Fawley Court

1898 Mr Bennett of Cowfields (list drawn up for clearance of Widmore Pond)

1919 KR Mackenzie of Fawley Court sells Cowfields to George Shoreland Esq. of Sheephouse Farm, Harpsden. Tenant was John Burton A' Bear, also a tenant of Greys and Highlands

1938 Cowfields sold to Mr Borlase for £4000 and after 6 months to Mr Horn

1956 Mr RS Green bought the farm

2000- Sam and Sue Samuels purchased Cowfields and 230 acres of land.

5.3 The Farm complex/setting

Fig 8. Sketch of farmyard layout by Ruth Gibson, 1986

Survey of the farm buildings is outside the scope of the present study. However a brief survey of the buildings carried out by HAHG in 1986, notes the farm building complex comprising the farmhouse with a garage/former stable to the north east on or near the site of the former well house; cowsheds and bull pen on the north west with shelter shed and dairy to the west; a 6 bay barn with range of cowsheds and stables attached and a 3 bay barn with attached shelter sheds. A small square weather-boarded granary was located to the south of the farmhouse. (Granaries were normally sited in close proximity to the farmhouse, so as to be under the watchful eye of the farmer, containing precious grain for baking or brewing and seed grain for sowing the next year's crop). The granary at Manor Farm, Cogges has another example sited close to the farmhouse. (John Steane, pers.com. June 2011). The locations of a former pond, 2 wells and a former well house are also marked.

The farm buildings are of C17-C19 date and are grouped around a large courtyard to the north east of the house. The large timber-framed and weather-boarded 6 bay barn is of late C17/C18 date (queen strut and collar roof construction); the 3 bay timber-framed and weather-boarded barn with old tile roof of late C18 construction (principals with

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curved feet roof construction and brick and flint plinth walls). Other farm buildings are single storey brick or brick and flint buildings of C19/C20 date constructed as cow sheds, shelter sheds, dairy and stables.

The number of wells may point to difficulty in obtaining water. The water table is extremely low in the area (Ruth Gibson, pers. com. April 2011) as evidenced by the need for a donkey wheel house and horse wheel to raise water at nearby Greys Court. Another, famous well nearby is the Maharajah's Well at Stoke Row. The substantial footprint of the 'well house' shown at Cowfields Farm on the OS map of 1879 may indicate a building enclosing a wheel house and well, possibly a horse gin (horizontal wheel).

Land use:

The Benwell family were wealthy yeoman farmers and brewers with premises in Friday Street and property in Henley as well as Bix. (Ruth Gibson, pers. com. April 2011) The Benwell family association with brewing continued up until the C19 as in 1825 Mr WH Brakspear took possession of the Henley Brewery in partnership with Mr Richard Benwell (Climinson, Emily, *J, A Guide to Henley-on-Thames*, 1896, p 59). The Benwells owned or occupied Cowfields from 1575 to 1815.

The common land at Rotherfield Greys was enclosed in 1857 (Whitehead, p 142). It appears that over the years Cowfields was amalgamated with other farms for economies of scale for farming purposes and sale particulars of 1906, 1927 and 1938 show that by the early C20 the farm formed part of the larger local estates including the estate of the Mackenzies of Gillotts and Fawley Court, nearby.

In addition, Sales Catalogues of 1927 and 1938 list the farm as an important for sporting- presumably hunting/shooting – 'important freehold residential sporting and agricultural properties'. (Sales Catalogue of Cowfields, Upper House and Rectory Farms, 23rd June 1927). Cowfields seems to have been viewed as a gentleman's residence with opportunities for leisure pursuits, rather than as a purely agricultural farming operation. Rotherfield Greys possibly experienced the upcoming gentility of Henley and surrounding area which the association of royalty- Queen Victoria and Prince Albert- with the Henley regatta, brought from the 1850s. In addition the influence of the railways with the GWR improvements to the line to Henley post 1876 increased the popularity of the area for tourism, leisure pursuits on the river and in the countryside and the possibility of commuting to London for work. (Whitehead, p 65)

Cowfields Farm seems to have been typical of the small to medium sized farms which dominated the countryside around Henley from around 1800 to 1950s. There was little change in types of crop or method of production until the tractor replaced the horse. Records from Rotherfield Greys show that crops included wheat, barley, oats, turnips, mustard and hay. Most farms were mixed with both arable and livestock, meeting

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demands for meat, milk and wool production being sent to London and elsewhere. (David C. Whitehead, Henley-on-Thames, A History, 2007). Mixed farming seems to have been the norm until recent times according to information received from Mr Green, the farmer until 2000. In 1956 Cowfields was a mixed farm with a milking herd, horses, beef cattle, sheep, turkeys and deep litter chickens. Some of the land was under arable crops including oats, wheat and barley. Mr Green employed 4 farm hands. By 1986 Mr Green had 100 ewes, arable land and employed one full time and one part time worker. (Information from HAHG, Report 1986)

Setting:

The setting of Cowfields Farm has always been rural- the farm is surrounded by low lying fields. The form of enclosure surrounding the farmhouse and farm buildings has changed over time as have the access tracks. Brick/flint walls enclose the farmyard to the north of the farmhouse but have been removed from the east and south sides. Whereas at one time the main access track in the C19 seems to have been from Henley to the east, into the yard on the north by the time of the 1878 OS there was a loop with access to the south of the farmhouse. A photo of 1939 shows a pedestrian gate and gate piers leading on to the south front of the house. This was perhaps for visitors and the women folk to have the opportunity to avoid the workaday farmyard to the north. In 2011 the north track has now become the main access to the farm and the area south of the farm house has become integrated into the garden setting with lawns, flower beds and vegetable garden. The access track now follows the south field boundary. Evidence for changes to the setting can be seen by comparing maps and photographs.

See Figs 2-6, Plate 2

5.3 Cowfields Farmhouse- summary of evolution

Fig. 9 Suggested evolution with sketches by John Steane and **Fig. 10** Conjectural phasing by Sally Stradling

It's possible that Cowfield's Farmhouse originated as an 'L' or 'T' plan building of hall range and cross wing. At simplest level this could have provided a hall open to the roof with central fireplace, cross passage, access to service rooms comprising buttery and pantry in the wing and a chamber or solar above. This was a common plan form in smaller late medieval houses below manorial level between C14 to C16 in parts of south Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (Currie, Oxoniensia Vol VII, 1992, p 89). At Cowfields the plan then appears to have been modified by adding a further cross wing- either by demolishing one bay of the hall house or by constructing an entirely new wing to provide a parlour, with further accommodation at first floor and a cellar. The following analysis is conjectural and based on examination of the structure, materials and layout of the building and comparison with other dated examples nearby as well as further afield within Oxfordshire.

5.4 Structure, materials, layout

Figs 11-15, Plates 7-32

Cowfields Farmhouse is constructed in timber-frame with brick infill (probably replacing earlier wattle and daub panels in the main hall house range as a piece of timber with deep grooves was found reused in the 1848 extension), with red clay tile roofs and brick stacks. The property has undergone a number of phases of evolution, alteration and extension over the centuries.

The farmhouse comprises a three and a half bay frontage with a narrow C19 addition on the west: central hall with cross passage and 2 storey bay window, 2 storey wing with oriel window on the west and taller 3 storey wing on the east. The rear of the building shows the two wings with a large gabled extension and flat roof infilling the space between them and various single storey extensions. Outbuildings and brick and flint walls enclose the yard on the north and west sides, the south and east aspects now largely remaining open with rural views.

The central hall has large panels of timber framing with curved braces between the posts and wall plate, jowled posts of large section, queen post trusses with clasped purlins, massive cambered tie beams, wind braces from wall plate to purlin and smoke blackened rafters of 6" x 2 1/2" laid flat. (**Plates 24, 26**). The attic over the open hall and solar have smoke blackened timbers, those to the solar may be re-used. (**Plates 30-32**) There is a smoke blackened wattle and daub partition- blackening on the inner face over the hall but not blackened on the outer face. Scribed assembly marks are found on timbers, including joists and beams in the hall and bedroom over the hall. Two angled posts flank the bay window and angled corbels support the wall plate over the bay window. These timbers appear integral with the original structure. (**Plate 23**) Other examples of hall houses with evidence for 2 storey bay windows include Church Farm, South Leigh (C14) (Ayles, J and Steane, J, *Archaeological/Historical Report on Church Farmhouse, South Leigh, Oxfordshire*, 2005, p 13) and Yelford Manor, Oxfordshire (Pevsner, p 387)

The 2 bay west, solar wing shares the east timber-frame with the hall, has queen post trusses with clasped purlins (**Plate 27**), exposed slanted rafter feet in the space above the cross passage (**See Plate 25**), now a bathroom adjoining the room over the hall, smoke blackened rafters, reused purlins which are not smoke blackened, rafters pegged to the purlins. At the west end of the hall, there is a re-used timber brace joining the hall and solar roofs secured in place with large iron nails. (**Plate 32**)

The east parlour wing of late C17/early C18 date has a 3 bay clasped purlin roof with shortened collars. (**Plate 28**) This roof has been extended to the south by a further bay with a side purlin roof. The junction of the roofs can be clearly seen in the attic and first floor adjacent to the stairs and by a pronounced drop in the roof at that point externally (**Plate 29**)

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The narrow 2 storey C19 extension on the west (Initials and date CB 1848 for Charles Bullock seen scratched on 2 bricks in the extension, by HAHG during 1986 survey) is constructed in brick with tile hanging. It incorporates reused timbers at first floor level including an inverted beam which was originally part of a sill with a deep groove which originally held the hazel staves for a wattle and daub panel. (*Plates 10-11*)

5.5 External description

North elevation: *Fig 11, plates 7, 13-14*

Features that stand out on the front elevation include the irregular elevation with roofs of varying heights; an off centre substantial brick ridge stack and a further stack with axially mounted brick shafts adjacent to the east cross wing; evidence for the former hall house and solar wing including large square panels of timber framing, substantial posts, weathered arched brace at first floor level to the left, E of the 2 storey bay window and a similar renewed arched brace to the W, the end or break in the wall plate projecting at the east end of the first floor attic and a new section of wall plate extending towards the east parlour wing. The middle rail and sill timbers are renewed at this end of the building. The 2 storey bay has some ancient weathered timbers. The solar wing has a heavy weathered and cambered tie beam and an oriel with a weathered window sill. The east cross wing has renewed windows including two, 2-light wood mullioned and transomed windows on the ground floor, a 3-light casement on the first floor and a similar smaller window to the attic. The wood mullioned and transomed windows don't appear on the early to mid C20 photos and are therefore C20-C21 replacements.

South, garden elevation: *Fig 12, plates 9, 11*

Little of the original building is visible- the rear south elevation is masked by extensions and is mainly re faced in brick. There are 4 gabled brick wings running north/south and a flat roof section between the 2 bays to the right, E. All roofs are of red clay tile. From E to W: the wide gable span of the extension to the parlour wing has a C20 renewed wood mullioned and transomed window in the attic, two 4-light renewed C20 casements to first floor and a wide canted bay window with hipped roof at ground floor; at ground floor beneath the flat roof joining section there is a door with gabled door hood; the 3 storey gabled C20 extension to the rear of the hall has a wood mullioned and transomed window in the attic, 3-light casement at first floor and canted bay window with hipped roof at ground floor. On the W is the lower 2 storey solar wing, south gable end with queen post roof and brick infill, renewed 3-light casements at first floor and C20 timber frame/brick extension of the ground floor. To the far W, the narrow gabled extension constructed in 1848 with brick and upper section tile hung

East elevation: *Figs 11-12, plates 8-9*

There is a discernible drop in the roof about two thirds the way along, marking the extension to the parlour roof. The east elevation timber framing has been entirely clad in a brick outer skin in handmade 2" bricks from HG Mathews. A drawing made by Richard

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Oxley at the time of repairs and restoration works in 2006 shows the timber frame and distinct join of the extension roof. There are irregularly spaced renewed oak framed windows including a wood mullioned and transomed window, a casement window and 3, single light windows to the stair.

West elevation: Plates 10-11

This shows the 2 storey W elevation of the 1848 extension with brick/tile hung walls and clay tile roof and 2- and 3-light casement windows. Abutting on the north west is a single storey brick and flint out building with hipped clay tile roof- the bull pen/cow house. The tall shaft of a brick stack is shown between the bull pen and the 1848 extension.

5.6 Interior

Fig 10, GF plan conjectural phasing, **Fig 13**, sketch floor plans and room numbering; For ease of reference between description and sketch plans, rooms are referred to as G1 etc for ground floor, B basement, F1 etc for first floor and A1 etc for attic

G1. Reached via 2 steps up. 8' 7" height from floor to ceiling. Two chamfered transverse beams and 15 joists, 2 wood mullioned and transomed windows, blocked doorway in south east corner, wide brick fireplace with chamfered bressumer, 4 1/2" width studs.

B. Semi-basement or cellar below G1 has a brick floor, deeply chamfered beam, deep narrow joists 5 1/4 width x 5 1/2 depth, blocked doorway in the south wall, evidence of timber framing in E wall.

G2. Hall. 7' 6" height from floor to ceiling. Wide brick fireplace with chamfered bressumer. Chamfered beam, 8 stop chamfered joists (lamb's tongue stops) of 6 1/2" or 6 1/4" width laid flat, numbered i to viii from west to east and 2 further similarly sized joists nearest to the fireplace not numbered but morticed into the wall beam on the north and positioned in a wide slot cut into the north face of the beam. (Stop chamfers an indication of a high status room). Angled timber corbel either side of bay window and angled timber posts forming sides of bay window with long continuous timber forming head to bay window. NB Bay window completely rebuilt but these features indicate the former evidence of a predecessor. (**Plates 15-16**)

G3. Former cross passage now blocked on the S by insertion of newel stair (**Plate 18**)

G4. Solar wing basement. Chamfered and stopped beam, 9 no 5 1/2" joists, laid flat. Post measuring 6 3/4"x5 1/2", rail 5 1/2"x6 3/4", door in NW end leads to 1848 extension G8 and G9 (**Plate 17**)

G7. Stair extension to G1 has timber framing in S and E walls. Late C17 style open well stair with barley sugar twisted balusters on urn bases. (Said to be painted softwood,

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Sam Samuels, pers.com. May 2011). Blocked doorway in N timber frame of stair well
(Plate 22)

G5. Solar wing. Kitchen. Deep 10 1/2" chamfered beam similar to that in G4 and 4" to 5 1/2" chamfered joists laid flat, end timber framed wall to S removed for C20 kitchen extension. **(Plate 19)**

F1. Close studding in corner of room. Down 4 steps to F2

F2. Two substantial cambered tie beams supported on jowl posts, windbraces from wall plate to purlin, 2 angled posts either side of 2 storey bay window and head supported on two angled timber corbels. Jowled post 9 1/2" adjacent to F3 bathroom has huge slot for angled brace from N wall to W wall. S wall of corridor has mirror 8 1/2" width jowled post with discernible wide slot and head of post adzed back to create room in corridor. Roof space above has smoke blackened rafters and section of smoke blackened wattle and daub partition adjacent to the stack. **(Figs 14-15, plates 23, 24, 26)**

F3. Tapering brick stack, timber frame exposed in wall adjacent to newel stair, slanted rafter feet and principal rafter feet to roof over solar visible in bathroom **(Plate 25)**

F4. Queen post roof construction

F5. Wide span roof room, clasped purlin roof construction **(Plate 27)**

F6. C19 wing

F7. Stair extension to F1

A1. 3 bay queen post roof with clasped purlins and interrupted collars **(Plate 28)**

A2. Purlin 7"x6", smoke blackened rafters above hall 6"x2 1/2", wattle and daub partition not smoke blackened on W side **(Plate 30)**

A3. Attic over cross passage. Rafters to west wing pegged to purlin, which has no evidence of having had a roof covering nailed/secured to it. **(Plate 31)** Bricks to hall chimney stack measure 9x5x2 inches.

A4. & A5. Smoke blackened rafters morticed, tenoned and pegged at apex. Purlins do not appear to be smoke blackened

A6. C19/C20 roof structure

A7. Extension to south of A1. Side purlin roof open to apex

5.7 Discussion

The frame of the main hall/solar range is probably of c.1500 date, given the massive jowls, wind braces and generally heavy scantling of the timbers and queen post construction with clasped purlins. Evidence for the farmhouse originating as an open hall with cross wing is supported by:

the smoke blackening of the roof timbers above the hall, the insertion of a chamfered beam and stop chamfered joists numbered I to viii in the hall and the continuity and similarity in timber sizes and construction of the hall and west wings, including the queen post roofs with clasped purlins, large panels of timber framing with arched braces and scribed assembly marks. It is likely that there was a detached kitchen in the first phase of the farmhouse, due to the risk of fire. Examples of C14 and C15 detached kitchens are known at Fyfield Manor, Nr Abingdon (Pevsner, N, *Berkshire*, repr.1993, p 146), and of C15 at Stanton Harcourt Manor (Woods, M, *The English Mediaeval House*, repr.1983, p 251 and plate 20A), and there are presumed to have been detached kitchens at many sites including of C13 at Manor Farm Cogges Nr Witney (Rowley, T and Steiner, M, Eds, *Cogges Manor Farm, Witney, Oxfordshire, The Excavations from 1986-1994 and the Historic Building Analysis*,1996, p 15) and C14 at Church Farm, South Leigh, (Ayres, J and Steane, J, p 13)

A deep chamfered beam in G4 in the west solar wing has wide joists and chamfers without stops. This lack of decoration in terms of chamfer stops indicates a functional room, which would have been suitable for storage spaces such as buttery and pantry which were not meant to be seen. However the inserted joists in the hall, a public space for the reception of visitors and guests- are decorated with lambs tongue stop chamfers and therefore accord a degree of status.

What is perplexing is that the rafters in the west wing solar roof show evidence of smoke blackening too, although lacking visible smoke blackening on the purlins. The roof may have been repaired and timbers reused, or there may be some other explanation. In addition there is a wattle and daub partition adjacent to the chimney stack inserted between the hall G2 and cross passage G3 which is smoke blackened on the inward face in A2 but not but not on the outer face in A3. Was this part of an earlier smoke hood or smoke bay or simply a partition? Was it somehow linked to the two joists adjacent to the fireplace in G2 which are not numbered in sequence with the other joists numbered i to viii, and appear to have been located in position via a large slot cut in the north face of the longitudinal beam i.e. that these joists were removable because there had been a smoke hood or smoke bay previously? Or were these joists removable as a 'coffin' hole or space for lifting furniture upstairs?

It is not clear if the hall formerly extended east by another bay, where the parlour wing now stands, and was taken down and replaced by the wing or whether the east wing was added from scratch. There is a break in the wall plate evident below the eaves on

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the north elevation, exterior of the building, but below this at the base of the wall, the brick plinth and sills have been renewed and there are no remaining clues.

The east wing is of two phases, as there is a distinct break in the wall plate and difference in roof construction, with a 3 bay clasped purlin roof with shortened collar in the north section and a purlin roof in the south section. The basement or cellar is presumably contemporary with the parlour cross wing as it has similar ceiling details with deep chamfered beam and deep joists etc. The spacious proportions and height of the ground floor parlour are noticeable- 8' 7" as opposed to 7' 6" in the hall. This may well be an indication of the rise in status and wealth or at least the high aspirations of the owner of Cowfields in the C17/C18.

The significance of high ceilings is discussed by Linda Hall in relation to defining gentry houses in VA, Vol 22, 1991, pp 2-19. It is suggested that by comparing inventories of gentry- defined as gentlemen, clergy, schoolmasters and yeomen in C17/C18 Gloucestershire, key factors in defining social status can be seen in the value of goods, the number of hearths, the number and use of rooms, a parlour or two, the height and furnishings found in the parlour- one of these usually decorated green, a study full of books, decoration such as panelling and grand staircases together. The maximum value of a yeoman's goods was found to be up to £1000, and for gentry up to £3000. Yeoman houses in C17 Gloucestershire typically had 3-4 ground floor rooms, two and a half storey height with cheese lofts on the second floor, wood mullioned windows, chamfered or moulded beams and doorcases and fireplaces with chamfered or ovolo moulded wooden lintels. Plan forms for yeoman houses included L plan, 3 room and through passage plan and central service room plan. Gentry houses typically were of greater size, with an average of 12 ground floor rooms and tended to be imposing, set in their own grounds with grand stone gate piers at the entrance, and designed to stand out in the landscape, compared to the yeoman house which blends into the landscape. The gentry house had an emphasis on parlours- with one or more parlours being the norm combined with features such as tall ceiling height over 8' high, lateral chimney stacks, open well stair cases. Many gentry houses had single or double crosswing plan forms but could also have innovative and unusual plan forms or double pile plans.

Cowfields seems therefore to fit into the 'aspiring gentry' category with a double crosswing plan evolved from an L plan hall house, ground floor containing 4-5 rooms in the C17, including a well proportioned parlour with cellar under. The rural location, without ostentatious driveway and entrance gates would also support this view

At Cowfields the parlour and cellar have narrow but deep joists located within the depth of the transverse beams. In the parlour the underside of the joists shows evidence of laths for the application of a plaster ceiling. These two features- tall rooms and deep narrow joists have similarities to those found in parlour wings of gentry houses nearby at Harpsden Court of 1566/7 date and Greys Court, dated 1575/6. Given the narrower scantling of the east wing at Cowfields, this could perhaps indicate a late C17/early C18

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date for the parlour wing. As fashionable ideas for improvements in the size and impressiveness of rooms might take some years to filter down the social ladder, this date is not unreasonable, taken with the fact that the joists at Greys Court and Harpsden are of markedly heavier, thicker section and dated to the C16.

There is a blocked doorway in the south wall of the east wing, parlour in G1, which would lead directly onto the open well stair in G7. (Also a blocked wall below it in the cellar). This means that either the doorway was in use before the extension was added or the staircase was configured in a different way. The open well staircase is stylistically of late C17 form with barley sugar twisted balusters on urn bases, but appears very 'crisp' and is said by Sam Samuels to be of painted softwood. It would seem most likely to be of C20 date. An ancient timber, forming the westernmost post to the stairhousing, has been re-used from elsewhere.

Photos of the north elevation in 1939, do not appear to show the 2 storey bay window on the north elevation. However, the internal timbers of the bay window appear original and the likely explanation is that this feature was restored using archaeological evidence. Evidence for a 2 storey bay window or 'oriel' of C14 date has been found at Church Farm, South Leigh (Ayres and Steane, p 13); and there is another fine example of a hexagonal bay window at the dais end of the hall at Yelford Manor a timber framed manor house of C15-C16. (Pevsner, N and Sherwood, J, *Buildings of England, Oxfordshire*, 1974, p 387)

5.8 Possible phasing with evidence for suggested phasing

Possible Key phases include:

c.1500s late medieval hall house of one and a half or two and a half bays of open hall and cross passage with a 2 bay solar wing (large panels of framing, curved braces, smoke blackened rafters and partition in attic)

c.1570 floor inserted over open hall (10" beam, wide joists with lambs tongue chamfer stops indicating a high status room)newel stair in a turret, added on south to access first floor rooms

c. 1680s two storey cross wing and cellar added on east, (GFI room with high status high ceilings and late C17/early C18 style decoration- new wood mullioned and transomed windows, shell niche cupboard, chamfered beam with deep narrow joists and similar beam/joists to cellar. Late C17 style open well, modern staircase with barley sugar twist balusters on urn bases in stairwell extension to south)

C19 alterations and extensions. (addition of wing to S, rear of hall with 2 storey bay window with 6/6 sash windows of c.1850s evident in 1939 photo, 2 storey brick extension on west. CB 1848 inscribed on brick. Charles Bullock tenant at this time. Between 1939 and 1986 photographic evidence- brick stack removed from south gable

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end of solar wing, south front extended outwards, cement render applied to elevations and brick infill panels in hard cementitious mortar)

C20/C21 alterations and extensions (single storey timber framed extension to the kitchen added on the south, cement render removed, timber-frame repairs and infill with brick and lime mortar, east elevation encased in new 2" bricks laid in lime mortar, C20 wood mullioned and transomed windows, hipped roofs over bay windows)

6. Significance- the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That value may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. (PPS 5 Planning for the historic Environment, 2010)

An assessment of the significance of Cowfields Farmhouse using the family of heritage values set out in English Heritage's Conservation Principles, 2008 and PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment 2010.

The determination of the significance of assets is based on statutory designation and professional judgement against four broad values:

- *Evidential value*: Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. It includes physical remains, above and below ground (archaeology) as well as geology, landforms, species and habitats. Evidential value relates to the potential to contribute to people's understanding of the past and might take into account date, rarity, condition and relation to documentary evidence.
- *Historical value*: Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be *illustrative (visual) or associative*. *The illustrative value* of places tends to be greater if they incorporate the first, or only surviving, example of an innovation of consequence, whether related to design, technology or social organisation. For example if it illustrates a rare or early example, a unique style, complete survival, associated with significant people and events, association with other important assets or literature, art, music or film. It takes account of completeness and ability to illustrate connections, use and management.
- *Aesthetic value*: (design and artistic value) Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. It is related to periods of culture; quality of design, innovation, influence, role of architect and artist/craftsman, Design in accordance with landscape theories, such as the Picturesque), composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) materials or planting. Sources and expression of concepts. Strong indicators of importance are quality of design and execution, and innovation, particularly if influential.

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- *Communal value:* Commemorative and symbolic values and Social value. Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, along with educational, social or economic values.

Levels of significance

- **Very high** Grade I sites and buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments; sites/features of international significance
- **High:** Grade II* sites and buildings; sites/features of national importance
- **Medium:** **Grade II sites; sites/features of regional importance**
- **Low:** Sites /features of local importance, local listed buildings and landscapes
- **Negligible:** Sites/ features with no significant value
- **Negative:** Negative or intrusive features, which detract from the value of a site, such as impact on views

6.1 Significance of Cowfields Farmhouse

Overall significance: high (national)

Cowfields Farmhouse is included in English Heritage's Statutory List of buildings of architectural and historic interest, grade II and is therefore of national significance.

Evidential value:

Significance: Low and Medium (local and regional), as a good example of a late medieval hall house, typifying local and regional vernacular architecture styles and fashions in its evolution

The key evidential value of Cowfields Farmhouse lies in the historic core of the hall house of c.1500s date with former open hall with chamber over, the service cross wing with solar over and newel stair, and the C17 parlour wing with cellar and open well stair; to a moderate extent later extensions including the C19 wing to the rear, south of the hall and the narrow 1848 addition and to the least extent the alterations and additions carried out in the C20-C21, including further additions on the south.

Over time some parts of the structure have been changed or masked by alterations such as the replacement of the original infill panels of wattle and daub with brick, extensions and infill on the south and the construction of a brick 'skin' across the east elevation (due to the decay of the timber-frame). A substantial brick chimney stack was removed from the kitchen in the south end of the solar wing between 1939 and 1986. These changes have tended to dilute the extent, detailing and interest of the earliest phases of the building. Although the two storey bay window is not evident in the 1939 photos, there is archaeological evidence for a predecessor in the angled jambs and head- and there are other C14 and C15 examples of bay windows relating to open halls in Oxfordshire.

Historical value - illustrative and associative values

Historical illustrative value

Significance: Low and medium (local and regional)

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Cowfields has low and medium historical illustrative value as a good example of a hall house with crosswing, reflecting a common building type in C14-C16 South Oxfordshire and surrounding area and also in sharing certain design and construction techniques with nearby gentry houses in the C17 parlour wing.

The late medieval core of Cowfields is of medium historical illustrative significance. The farmhouse has a typical, well preserved late medieval plan form of hall house with solar wing and incorporates later improvements for comfort and privacy, such as the ceiling over of the open hall and the construction of a parlour wing and staircases. Later additions/extensions to the rear of the hall and on the west end illustrate the need for more separation and specialisation in room use and function- for processing and storage of food and accommodation for family, farm workers and guests.

The east parlour wing at Cowfields is of medium *historical illustrative* significance in showing innovative design and construction techniques. This has similarities in construction detail and room proportions found in the parlour wings to gentry houses such as Harpsden Manor and Greys Court nearby. The elements of those buildings being of 1566/7 and 1575/6 respectively, although believed to be of late C17 date at Cowfields. The construction of a parlour is illustrative of social aspirations in the desire for a room of taller, grander proportions for entertaining visitors. The deep joists, located within the depth of the beam to provide a level surface for lath and plaster are illustrative of new ideas and aesthetic appreciation for interior design and construction to achieve an even ceiling for the application of plastered ceiling decoration. The differentiation in social status and wealth between gentry and yeoman farmer could account for the slower assimilation of fashionable ideas for a grander parlour wing at Cowfields and could help justify a late C17 date.

Historical Associative

Significance: Low (local)

Cowfields has low *associative historical* significance due to its' association with prominent local families such as the Benwells who owned or occupied Cowfields from 1575 to 1874. The Benwells were prosperous yeoman farmers as well as brewers and maltsters with property in Henley and Bix. In the early C20 Cowfields formed part of the Rosehill and Gillotts Estates, owned by the Mackenzie family of Fawley Court and Gillotts, Henley.

Aesthetic value.

Significance: Low (local)

The farmhouse is of aesthetic value and visual interest in being a timber framed example of a late medieval hall house with crosswings, of organic form, including irregular plan and differing heights which has been sympathetically repaired and restored. It is located down a farm track about a mile from Rotherfield Greys. There are limited views of Cowfields from public foot paths and tracks; the farmhouse is inward rather than outward

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looking within its own farmyard and landscape and makes little contribution to views in the public domain.

Communal value.

Significance: Low (local)

Of value as one of a number of farmhouses in the parish of Rotherfield Greys which contribute to the quality and distinctiveness of the local vernacular architecture

6.2 Significance of the setting of Cowfields Farmhouse

An assessment to understand the particular nature of the significance of the site, the extent to which significance relates and the level of importance of that significance, using questions taken from Appendix I of the English Heritage draft publication , *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2010.

Overall significance: Low to high (local to national)

- What does the location of the asset within its setting, including its topography, contribute towards the significance of Cowfields?

Significance: Low to high (local to national)

Cowfields Farmhouse lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated in 1965, in the dip slope of the Chilterns in a flat open landscape just below the 100' contour. The proximity to springs and water supply would have been an important factor in the siting and location of the farmhouse as would proximity to markets in Henley to the owners and tenants farming Cowfields, including road networks for communication and the passage of goods. There is little or no intervisibility between Cowfields and the nearest farms and settlement at Rotherfield Greys. The farmhouse and farmyard form the focus of the farm which is located within a mile of Rotherfield Greys and about 2 miles from Henley, down a track off the Henley to Greys Road.

- What does the asset's functional relationship with its' setting contribute to its significance?

Significance: Low (local)

Cowfields Farmhouse is located within its own land/landscape setting, some distance away from other houses or settlements. It is an inward looking, functional farmstead, the most significant factor to note being that the farmhouse is located on the south side of the farm courtyard and is enclosed by farm buildings and brick/flint walls. The buildings making up the east side of the yard have now been demolished and the farming operation has ceased. The planning and layout of the farmhouse and farm buildings would have ensured intervisibility for safeguarding stock and crops as well as the supervision of farm operations. A track encircled the farmhouse until the mid C20, giving the owners the option of entering the house from the farmyard or south side of the house. Private gardens are mostly contained on the south side

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- What does the asset's aesthetic relationship to its setting, contribute to its significance?

Significance: Low (local)

The functional relationship of Cowfields Farmhouse to its agricultural setting has changed from that of a working farm within its fields to one of a private house which enjoys a rural aspect of cultivated fields and recently planted pleasure gardens with specimen trees and woodland belts. The farmhouse is still within a farmed landscape, but one which is managed and kept neat

- How does the landscape character of the asset's setting contribute to its significance?

Significance: High (national) within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Rotherfield means 'open grazing for cattle' and described the parish's mid Saxon landscape. Cowfields would once have been located in a much more open landscape. However the fields are now enclosed and bordered by hedges. The unspoilt, undeveloped nature of the setting, is a significant factor in preserving the timeless quality of the setting of the late medieval house.

- How does the extent, history and speed of change within the setting contribute to the asset's significance?

Significance: Low to medium (local- regional)

The character of the setting to Cowfields is one of an open agricultural landscape of scattered farms and villages within a post enclosure landscape of cultivated fields bordered by hedges, with copses and woodland planting belts. The setting, devoid of the encroachment of modern housing development or noise from road systems has probably changed little since the time of parliamentary enclosure in 1857, and makes a high contribution to the significance of Cowfields.

As seen in evidence from early C20 Sales Catalogues, the farm became viewed not just for its potential agricultural use but for sporting too, as a gentleman's residence with opportunities for leisure pursuits- hunting and shooting. This may have been a spinoff of the upcoming gentility of the Henley area due to the royal associations of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with the Henley regatta post 1850s, together with improvements in railway services. The GWR post 1876, increasing the possibility of tourism, with leisure pursuits on the river and in the countryside.

- What non visual sensory influences within the setting contribute to the asset's significance?

Significance: Low (local)

Whereas the farmhouse would once have been the focus of a busy farm operation with all the associated movements of people, vehicular traffic, farm animals, together with associated dirt, noise and smells, key non visual sensory influences are now the peaceful, tranquil nature of rural the setting

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- How do the asset's intellectual and associative relationships with its' setting add to its' significance

Significance: Low (local)

Properties nearby such as Grey's Court and Harpsden Court have probably had an influence on the intellectual and architectural expression of ideas found at Cowfields in the construction of the parlour for example. In other ways nearby properties within the setting, like Upper House Farm to the south of Cowfields, have once formed various parcels of property which together with Cowfields have been owned and farmed together as part of larger estates of, for example the Mackenzie family of Fawley Court

7 Conclusions

Cowfields Farmhouse is a grade II listed building and a fine timber-framed example illustrating the distinctive local and regional style of vernacular architecture found in south Oxfordshire and surrounding area. The farmhouse shows evidence of a number of different phases of construction and alteration, probably waxing and waning with the fortunes of various owners and tenants. It seems likely to have originated as the hall house of a prosperous yeoman farmer c.1500s, with enlargement and extension in the C16 and C17 including the addition of a parlour wing with a cellar. Further changes occurred in the C19-C21 including extensions and infilling, major repairs and part refacing of the timber frame.

Dating of construction phases can be assisted by techniques such as dendrochronology (tree ring dating) and by further documentary research including examination of material such as wills and probate inventories. Dr Dan Miles of Mapledurham could be contacted for assistance with dendrochronology.

The wider setting of the farmhouse has remained that of the rural countryside- the fields and copses surrounding the farm. The immediate setting has shown some change in the orientation of access to the farmhouse and farmyard, and the location of walls and cultivated orchard or garden areas. The farmyard buildings too have changed over the last 100 years with the demolition of buildings such as the granary and wellhouse.

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9. Plates

Plate 1: 1939, N elevation

Plate 2: 1939, S elevation

Plate 3: 1956, S elevation

Plate 4: 1958, N elevation

Plate 5: 1986, SE corner (HAHG)

Plate 6: 1986 Southside (HAHG)

Plate 7: Front, NE elevation

Plate 8: E elevation, parlour wing.

Plate 9: SE elevation

Plate 10: W elevation

Plate 11: S elevation

Plate 13: Setting- looking SE from kitchen

Plate 14: N elevation, arched brace and large framing

Plate 15: Hall

Plate 16: Hall, joists with lambs tongue chamfer stops

Plate 17: Solar basement, chamfered beam, wide joists, framing in W wall

Plate 18: Newel stair

Plate 20: Parlour, beam and deep joists

Plate 21: Parlour, fireplace and cupboard with shell hood

Plate 22: Open well stair

Plate 23: Detail, bay window chamber over hall

Plate 24: Chamber over hall, windbraces, NE

Plate 25: Roof of solar, cross passage below

Plate 26: Corridor, cut back tie beam and jowl post to hall

Plate 27: Solar chamber, queen post and clasped purlin

Plate 28: Parlour attic, clasped purlins and cut back collar roof

Plate 29: FFI break in wall plates to parlour and stair extension

Plate 30: Hall, smoke blackened rafters

Plate 31: Junction of solar and hall roofs

Plate 32: Detail of brace joining hall and solar roofs

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10. Figures

- Fig 1: Statutory list description
- Fig 2: OS Map of c. 1830. 'Covel's Farm' From Bond, J and Over, L, OS Historical Guide, Oxfordshire and Berkshire, 1988, Map 35
- Fig 3: OS First Edition, 1878, 1:10,560. 'Coville's Farm'
- Fig 4: OS Second Edition, 1900, 1:10,560. 'Cowfields Farm'
- Fig 5: OS 1970, 1:10,000
- Fig 6: Google earth map, Cowfields
- Fig 7: Probate inventory of William Benwell of Coufould Farm, 1669
- Fig 8: Sketch Map of Cowfields Farm by Ruth Gibson, 1986
- Fig 9: Sketch, suggested evolution of Cowfields by John Steane
- Fig 10: Sketch plan with conjectural phasing by Sally Stradling after HAHG plan
- Fig 11: Sketch perspective of NE elevation by John Steane
- Fig 12: Sketch perspective of SE elevation by John Steane
- Fig 13: Sketch floor plans with room numbering by Sally Stradling
- Fig 14: Sketch section, chamber over hall, E, by John Steane
- Fig 15: Sketch section, chamber over hall, W by John Steane

11. Appendix

Appendix 1: Tithe Award Map 1840

Appendix 2: Tithe Award returns

COWFIELDS REPORT by Sally Straddling

Suggestions for corrections/changes and queries:

- P.7 5.3 should read sowing (not sewing)
- P.8 1st line ‘curved feet’, the more usual description is either ‘inner curved principals’ (suggested by Malcolm Airs when we first discovered these) or ‘cranked principals’ (David Clark’s preferred description). I imagine that you do refer to the type of cruck-like principals which are found in many 18th and early 19th C. barns. – I have no photograph of the smaller barn’s interior to check what these look like. Could you send me a picture so I can be sure.
- P.8 You refer to the horse wheel at Greys Court. As far as I know it is not original to it or its former home farm. It was certainly not there when I first knew Greys Ct. Also it is a typical ‘horse gin’ used to generate power for all kinds of activities such as chaff and turnip cutting, not for the raising of water.
- P.10 Para.3 refers to the ‘angled posts and angled corbels’, whilst on the plate 23 it is called ‘angled jambs & heads’. If this describes the same structure best to be consistent.
Under INTERIOR 5.6 , 2nd para’ typo, remove: one windows
- P.12 G 4 refers to ‘Solar wing basement’ . I thought there was just a ground floor there, did I miss the basement ? But the photograph on Plate 17 showing the g.f. ceiling beams also calls it solar basement. – Needs clarification
- I am not sure whether I understand the measurement references such as 61/2” and 51/2 , 51/4. Is the first figure mm? The second the same but in inches? Does not always work though. 61mm is 2 1/2“ . Can you make this clearer to the reader?
- P.18 6.0 refers to GD II as of regional importance. 6.1 Says Cowfields is Gd II listed and of national significance. It is only regionally important as a GD II.
- P. 19 3rd para. Harpsden Court not Manor

Concluding: Great piece of work.

My only doubt regarding interpretation is the conclusion that the two-storey bay window was original. It is a pity that I have no photograph or drawing of the underside of the wall plate from our first recordings, as this is now hidden under the upholstery cushion. Also my description of the holes in the beam is rather vague, due to this being in our early recording days and we were still in the early stages of learning the terminology. But there is no doubt that we saw empty mortises of former studs or mullions in the soffit of the wall plate (otherwise I would not have made a point of describing them); either of a former tall window, quite typical of halls of the better kind, or of a w&d. infill panel for a wall between the posts and no window at first floor level.

The angled jambs, looking at your photograph, are not totally convincing as being original, the way they are located to one side of the principal timbers. However, both you and John have no doubt looked at them in great detail and perhaps found evidence of pegs to come to this conclusion. I just wonder whether you might put my thoughts and what we described in as an alternative suggestion/possibility, so that the options are left open for the time being and encourage future researches to re-assess this part of the building, if the relevant wall plate becomes accessible (unless the Samuels will allow the upholstery to be removed?) . Just a thought.

With best regards

Ruth Gibson
8.7.2011

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Plate 1.
1939, N elevation



Plate 2.
1939, S elevation



Plate 3.
1956, S elevation



Plate 4.
1958, N elevation



Plate 5.
1986, SE corner (HAHG)



Plate 6.
1986 Southside (HAHG)

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HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 7.
Front NE elevation



Plate 8.
Parlour wing E elevation. Note drop in roof.

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 9.
SE elevation



Plate 10.
W elevation



Plate 11.
S elevation, 1848 ext & solar wing



Plate 12.
Setting, looking SE



Plate 13.
N. Elevation, arched brace & break in wall plate



Plate 14.
N elevation, arched brace & framing to solar wing

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 15.
Hall general view.



Plate 16.
Hall joists, lambs tongue chamfer stops and scribed assembly marks



Plate 17.
Solar: wide joists, chamfered beam and wall framing



Plate 18.
Newel stair



Plate 19.
Kitchen: chamfered beam, wide joists



Plate 20.
Parlour: beam and deep joists

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE



Plate 21.
Parlour: fireplace and cupboard with shell hood



Plate 22.
C20 Open well stair



Plate 23.
Detail of bay window, angled jambs and head,
chamber over hall



Plate 24.
Chamber over hall NE



Plate 25.
Roof of solar, cross passage below



Plate 26.
Hall chamber: cut back tie beam and jowl post in
corridor

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 27.
Solar chamber: queen post roof, clasped purlins



Plate 28.
Parlour attic: Clasped purlin, cut back collar roof.



Plate 29.
FFI. Junction between F1 and F7 parlour wing



Plate 30.
Hall: Smoke blackened rafters A2



Plate 31.
Junction of hall and solar roofs between A3 and A4



Plate 32.
Detail, brace joining hall and solar roofs

118/2/25

HENRY BENWELL. CUFFOLD FARM.

WILL. 1756.

In the Name of God Amen I Henry Benwell of Cuffold ffarm in the Parish of Rotherfield Peppard in the County of Oxon Yeoman do make and ordain this my Last Will and Testament in manner following (that is to say) In the First place I give and Bequeath unto my son John Benwell the sum of Fifty pounds to be paid him Twelve Months after my Decease by my Executor hereinafter named I Give to my Daughter Mrs. Wright one Guinea to Buy her a Ring I give and bequeath to my Daughter Elizabeth Benwell the Sum of Two hundred and fifty poundes to be paid her by my Executor twelve Months after my Decease with Interest for the same from the Day of my Decease after the Rate of Four pounds for One hundred Poundes by the year I also give to my said daughter Elizabeth Benwell the Bed and Bedstead late Mr. Watsons together with the Blanketts and all other the Bedding and furniture belonging to the same and one third part of all my Linen of what kindsoever and one half of my Pewter Plates & Dishes And Lastly all the rest and residue of my Estate wheresoever and whatsoever both Real & Personal not by me herein before Given & Disposed of (after my Debts Legacys & funeral Expences are Satisfyed out of my Personal Estate which Personal Estate only I hereby charge with the payments thereof) I hereby give Devise & Bequeath unto my son Samuel Benwell his Heirs Executors & Administrators and Assigns for Ever But if my said Son Samuel Benwell should happen to Dye without Issue of his body Lawfully begotten Then and in such case I give and Bequeath my Real Estate in the Parish of Harpsden otherwise Harding in the said County of Oxford unto my son John Benwell & his Heirs for Ever charged & chargeable with the sum of One hundred poundes to my said Daughter Elizabeth which I do in such case give to her to be paid to her by my said Son John Benwell within Six Months after he shall be possessed thereof I make my said Son Samuel Benwell Sole Executor of this my Last Will and Testament Revoking all Wills by me heretofore made I publish and declare this to be my last Will and Testament IN WITNESS whereof I the said Henry Benwell the Testator have hereunto sett my hand & Seal the twenty second day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and

Fifty Six.

Signed Sealed Published and Declared by the said Henry Benwell the Testator as & for his last Will & Testament in the presence of us & then Attested by us in his presence

HENRY BENWELL

EUSTACE COLES

The marke R of

RICHARD EAGLE

THOs: NEWELL

From the 'Cooper & Caldecott Collection' at Oxon Rec. Office
(Henry Solicitors)

There are many papers referring to the Bonwell family;
the following refer to Cowfields R. Peppard specifically:

- 1731 Lease of Cowfield Farm R.P. between
Som. Crice & Henry Bonwell jun.
- 1747 Lease between George Blount & H. Bonwell
- 1762 Assessment of mortgage. Samuel Bonwell
of Cuffolds R.P. Yeoman, son of Henry B., &
John Bonwell of Bix elder son of Henry B.
- 1768 Assessment of mortgage conc. 3 acres at Crags
Mead, Som. Bonwell of Cuffolds, yeom.
his elder brother John of Bix
- 1754 A.G. Blount of Henly-on-Thames grants to
A Hodge Cowfields, Paradise Farm, Highlands,
Gilletts and others
- 1771 Anthony Hodges of Bolnes, son of late Anthony,
mortgage on Cowfields, Paradise, Highlands
-
- 1840 Tithe Award: Owner Hodges Charles Green Trustee
Tenant Charles Bullock

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 1: Statutory list description

The screenshot shows the English Heritage National Monuments Record website. At the top, there is a header with the English Heritage logo and the text 'Images of England'. Below this is a navigation bar with a 'main menu' and a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here: Home > Details for IoE Number: 247141'. There are links for 'Update Details' and 'Log Out'.

The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a 'main menu' with links to Home, Basic Search, Advanced Search, About Searching, Learning Zone, Links, FAQ, Feedback, and Contact Us. Below the menu is a small image of a building and a section titled 'our other sites' with links to EH Archives, EH Prints, English Heritage, Heritage Explorer, Heritage Gateway, National Heritage List for England, NMR, PastScape, and ViewFinder.

The right column displays the details for the listed building. It starts with 'No Image Available'. Below this, the following information is provided:

- IoE Number: 247141
- Location: COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS, SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE
- Photographer: N/A
- Date Photographed: N/A
- Date listed: 13 February 1985
- Date of last amendment: 13 February 1985
- Grade: II

Below the details, there is a red text warning: 'The Images of England website consists of images of listed buildings based on the statutory list as it was in 2001 and does not incorporate subsequent amendments to the list. For the statutory list and information on the current listed status of individual buildings please go to [The National Heritage List for England](#).'

The description of the building is as follows:

ROTHFIELD GREYS
SU78SW
6/119
Cowfields Farmhouse
II

ROTHFIELD GREYS SU78SW 6/119 Cowfields Farmhouse - II Farmhouse. Late C17, with C18, and early C20 additions. Timber framed with brick infill and some render to centre, brick to left and right. Plain tile roof, brick stacks. 2 storeys with attic to left. 5-window range. Queen post cross-gable to left, 2 mullioned and transomed windows to ground floor. 3- light casement to 1st floor. Casement window to attic. 2-storey angled C20 bay under gabled king-post roof. Casement window to 1st floor, C20 panelled and studded door with flanking windows. Two queen post cross-gables to right. One of 2-window range with casements to all openings except 1st floor right, projecting wooden oriel under lean-to roof. Right cross gable with single window to ground floor. Interior not inspected.

At the bottom of the page, there are logos for the Royal Photographic Society, English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, and Department of Culture Media and Sport. A footer contains 'Term s and Condition s | Privacy Policy' and '© English Heritage 2007 - All rights reserved.'

Please note that the inclusion of a listed building on this website does not mean it is open to the public.

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

**Figure 2: OS Map of c. 1830. 'Covel's Farm' From Bond, J and Over,
L, OS Historical Guide, Oxfordshire and Berkshire, 1988,
Map 35**
(Covel's Farm highlighted by a red circle)

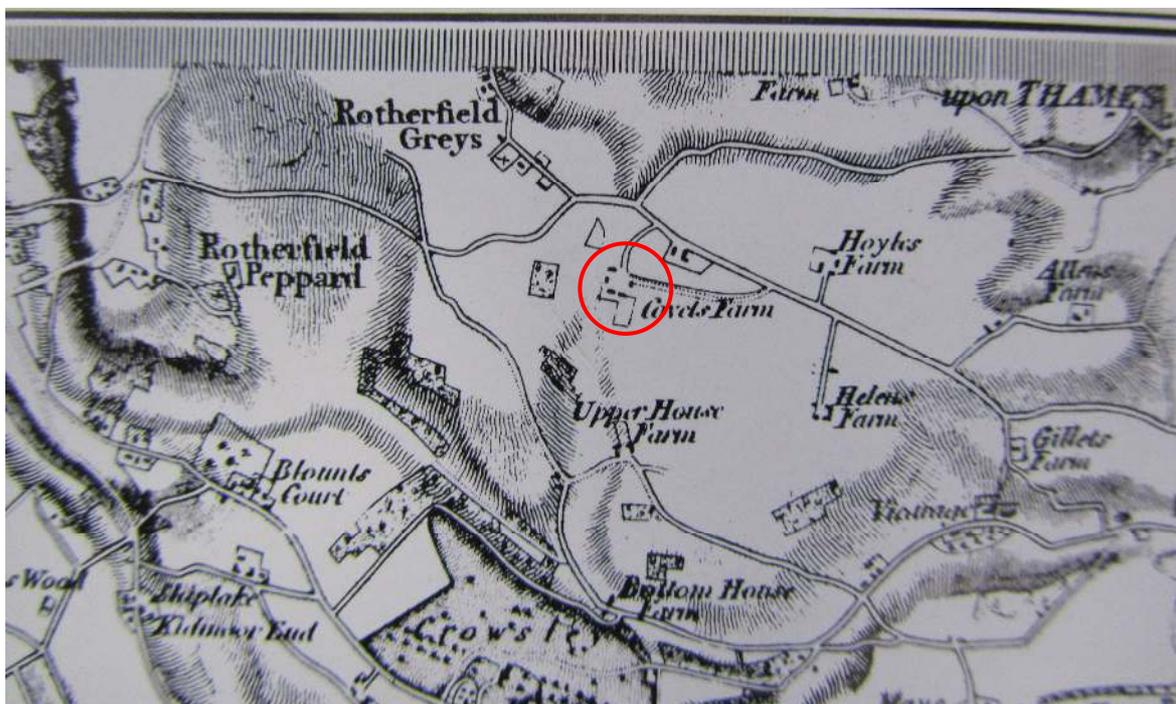


Figure 3. OS First Edition, 1878, 1:10,560. 'Coville's Farm'
(Coville's Farm highlighted by a red circle)



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 4: OS Second Edition, 1900, 1:10,560. 'Cowfields Farm'
(Cowfields Farm highlighted by a red circle)

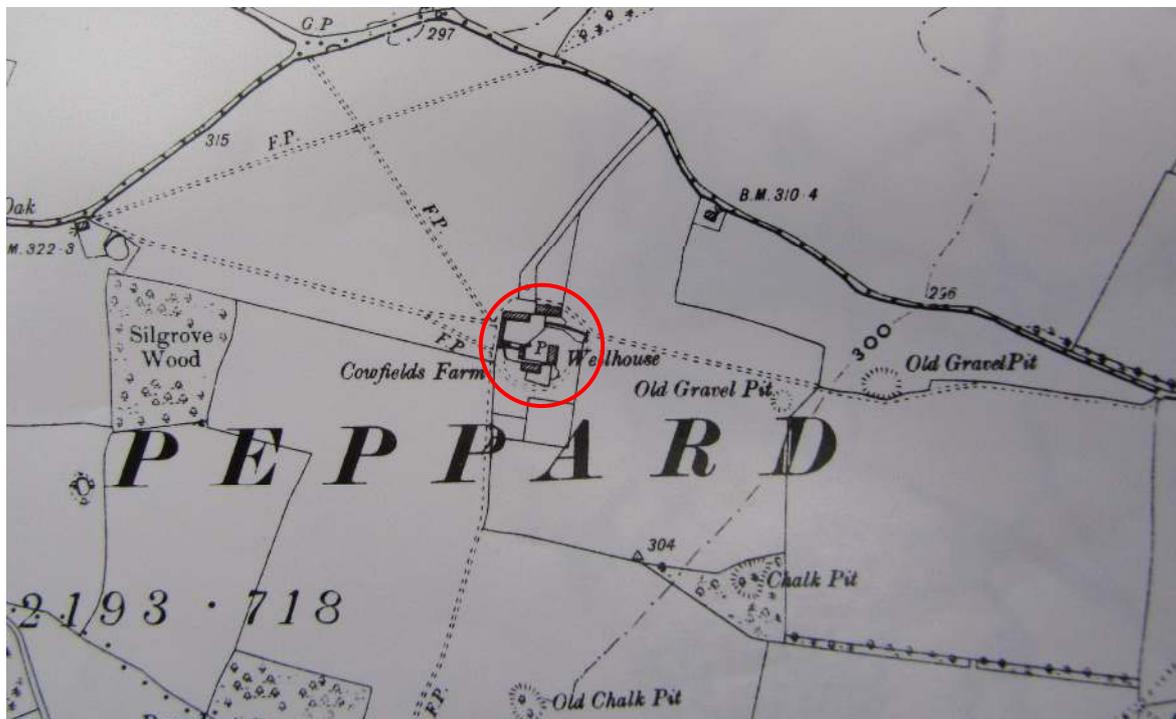
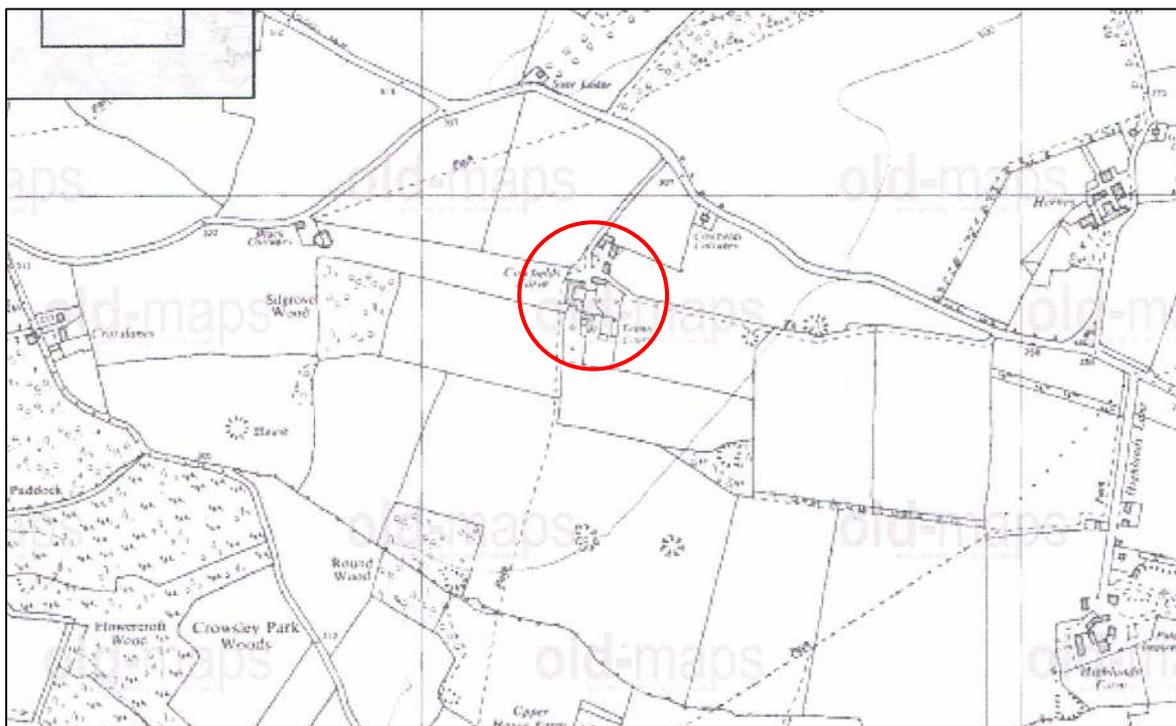


Figure 5: Land OS 1970, 1:10,000 (old-maps.co.uk)
(Covel's Farm highlighted by a red circle)



**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Figure 6: Google earth map, Cowfields



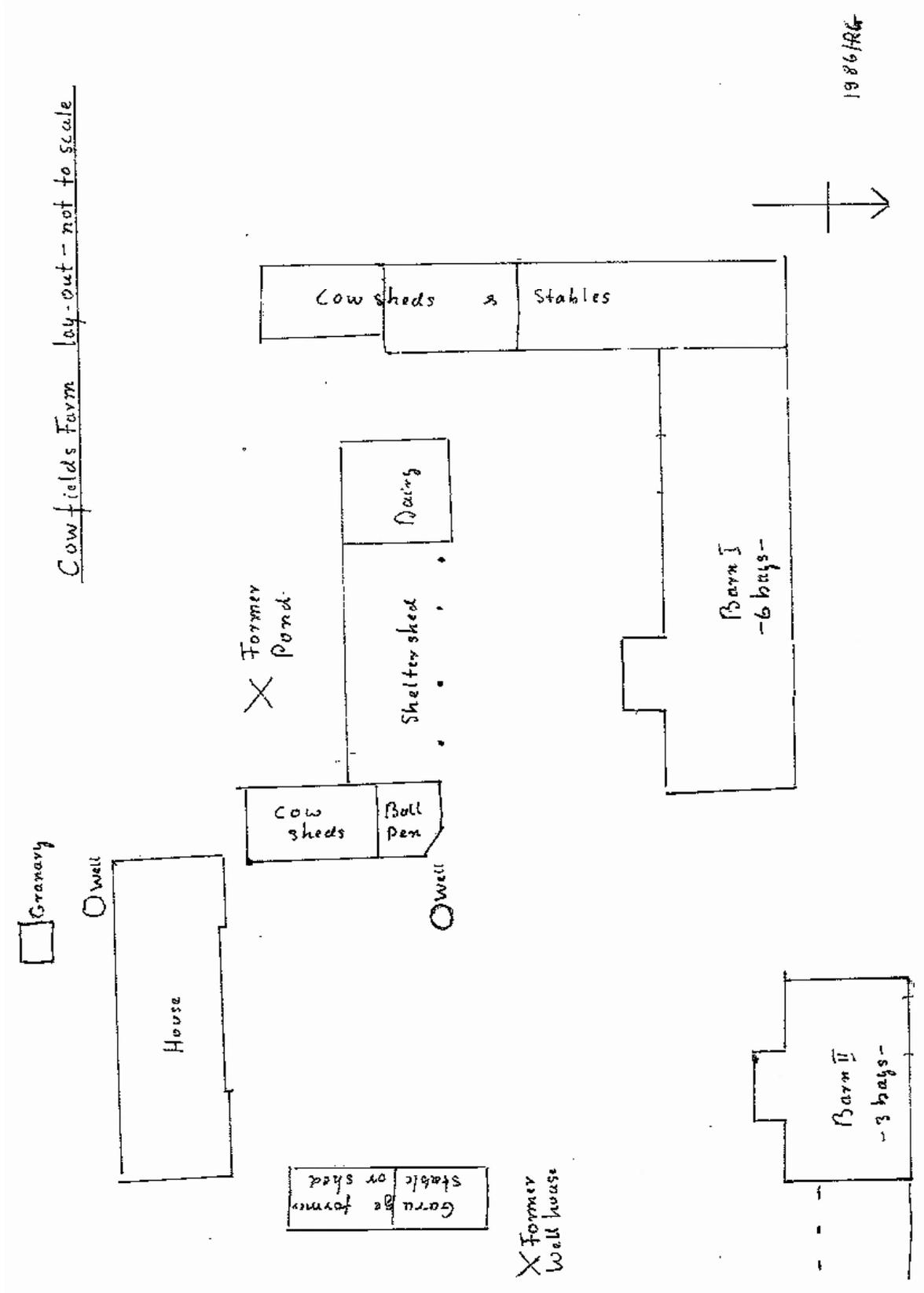
**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Figure 7: Probate inventory of William Benwell of Coufould Farm, 1669

6/3/42	Inventory	William Benwell 1669	Rotherf. Greys
<p>An Inventory taken of all the goods and chattles of William Benwell deceased of the Parish of Grays taken an apraised by Georg Jematt of the Parish of Shiplake and Walter Clarke of Peppard taken this 7th of May in the year of our Lord God 1669</p>			
			£ sh d
Imprimis:	His wearing apparell		
Item:	Two bedsteades, a truckelbed & all ffurniture belonging to them in the <u>Chamber over the Hall</u>	7	
"	The chests & coffers & boxes & the linnon in them in the Chamber afore said and one smale trunke	6	
"	One side cuboard & to small Chares	15	
"	<u>At Coufould Farme in the Parish of Peppard:</u>		
"	One bed stead & all that belongs to it	0	10 c
"	One Coufere & Chest	1	6
"	One Courte Cubort		16
"	the Pewter		10
"	one Kittill	12	
"	the Sheepe	2	
"	one cowe	1	
"	one horse	20	
"	In Malt		
"	one longe Tabel, & one Cubbord, and six stooles <u>in the Hall</u> and Three Cheres	3	10
"	The Pewter	2	10
"	The Brass	2	0
"	<u>In the Kitchen</u>		
"	one Smale Table & one Seate & to Stooles & one Jake with to Cheres	1	10
"	<u>the Kitchin Chamber</u>		
"	one bedsteed, one ffetherbed, one Chest	4	
"	one Bible & other Books	0	10
"	<u>ansers</u> , tonges & fire shovle	0	10
"	Halfe a dousen of Cushens		6
"	the Goods within the <u>House that Thomas Burgies live in Henley</u>	1	0 c
"	The Goods within the House that <u>Thomas Houlding liveth in in Henley</u>	1	0
"	In Bonds and Redy Monney	181	6 6
"	In desperet depts	17	10
	Summa all is	284	1 2
	Walter Clarke Georg Jemott prayers of the goods		

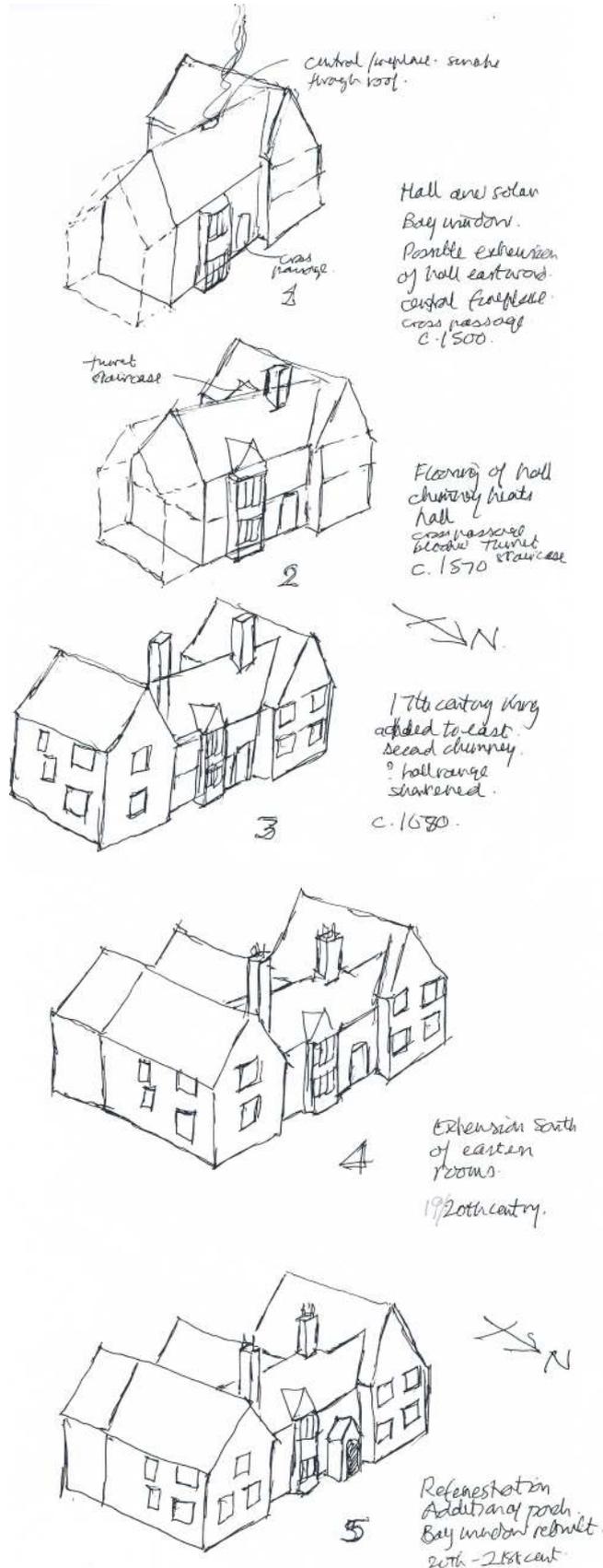
COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 8. Sketch Map of Cowfields Farm by Ruth Gibson, 1986



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

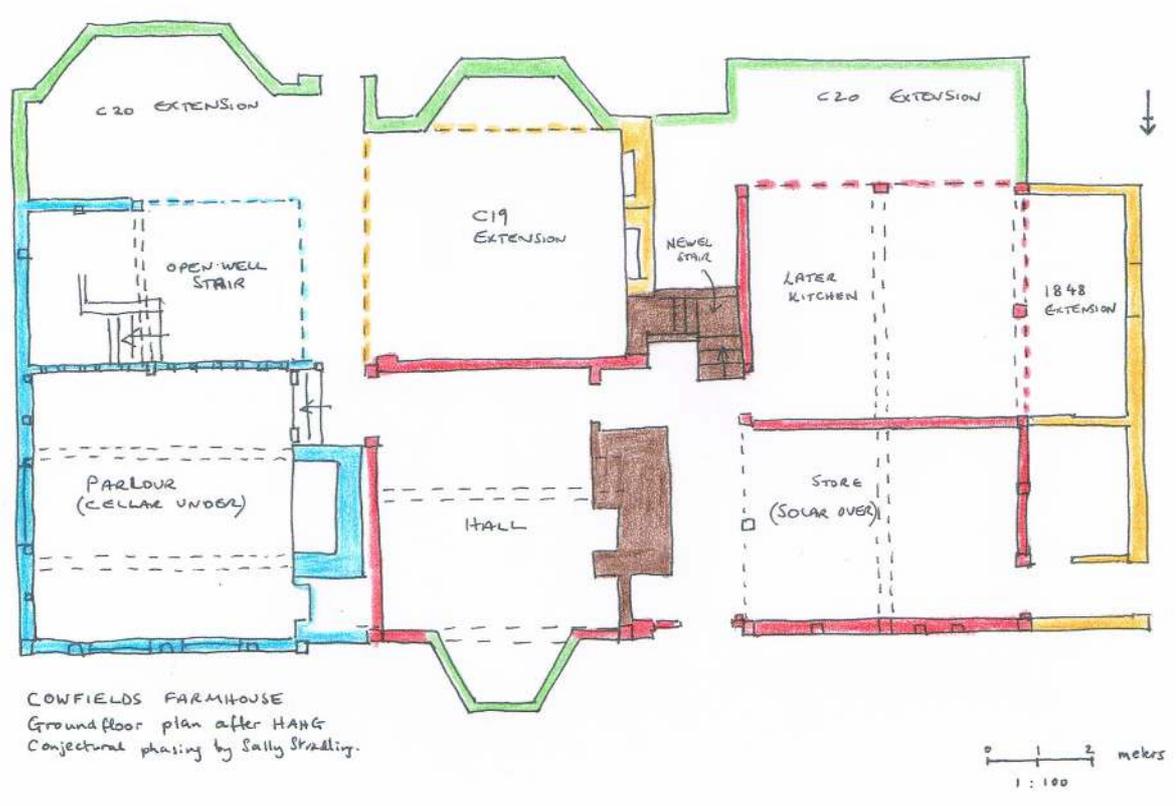
Figure 9. Suggested evolution of Cowfields with sketches by John Steane



Suggested evolution of Cowfields

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 10. Sketch plan with conjectural phasing by Sally Stradling after HAHG plan



KEY	
■	1500s
■	1570s
■	1680s
■	1848
■	C20-C21
----	PREV. WALL
====	BEAM

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Figure 11. Sketch perspective of NE elevation by John Steane

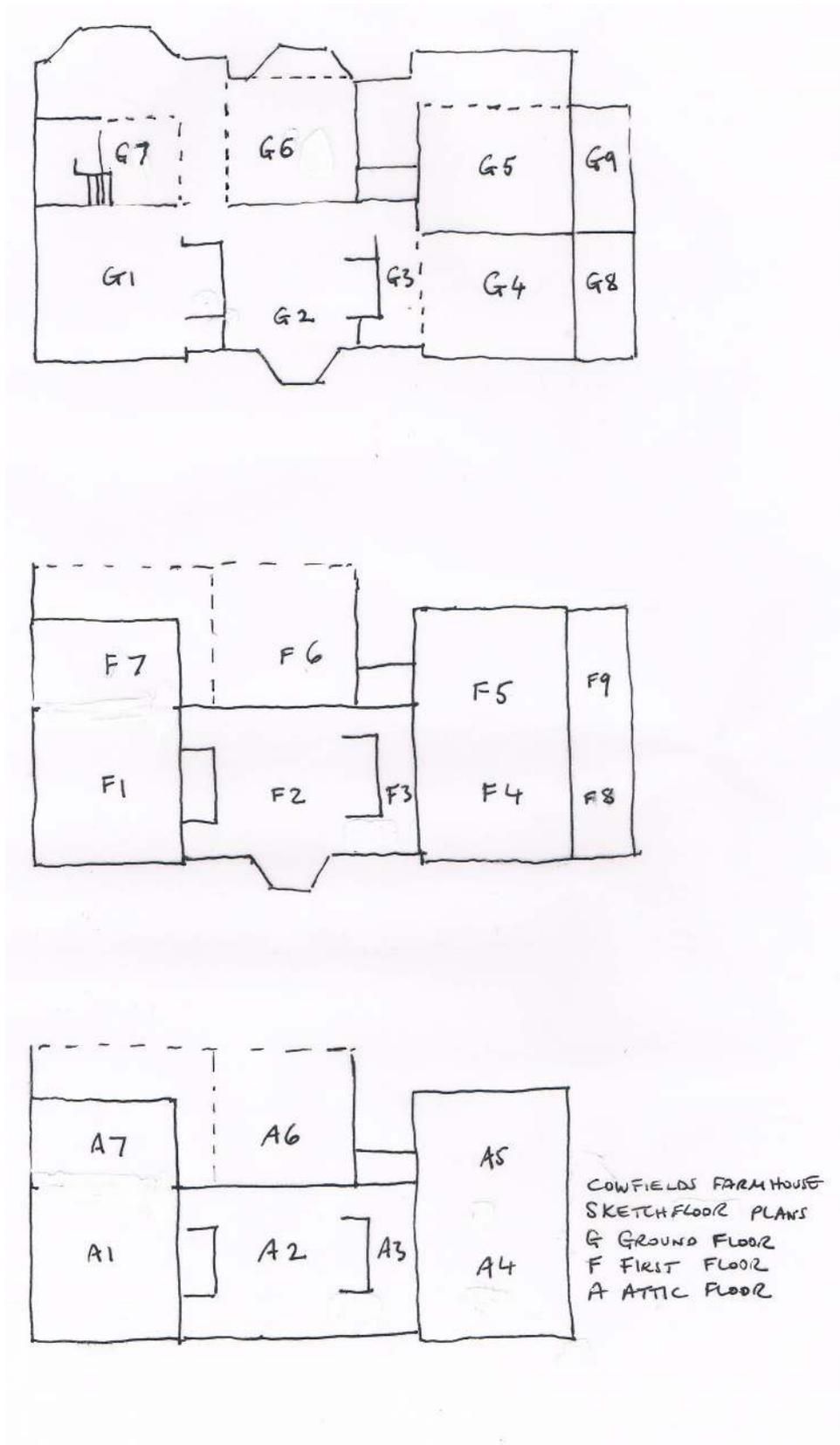


Figure 12. Sketch perspective of SE elevation by John Steane



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 13. Sketch floor plans with room numbering by Sally Stradling



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 14. Sketch section, chamber over hall, E, by John Steane

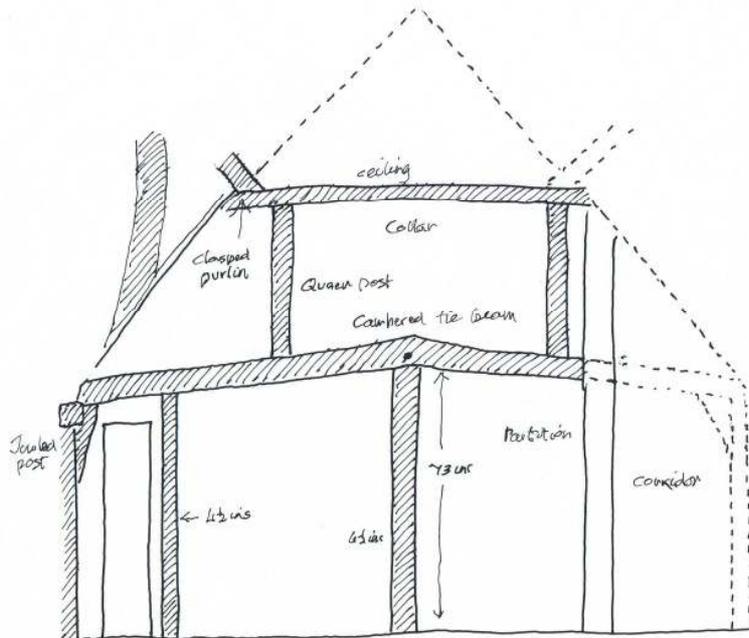
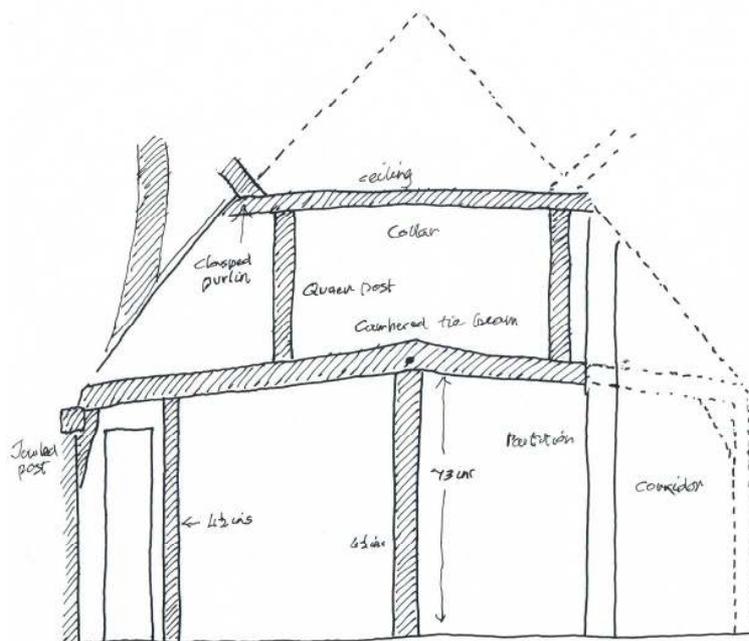
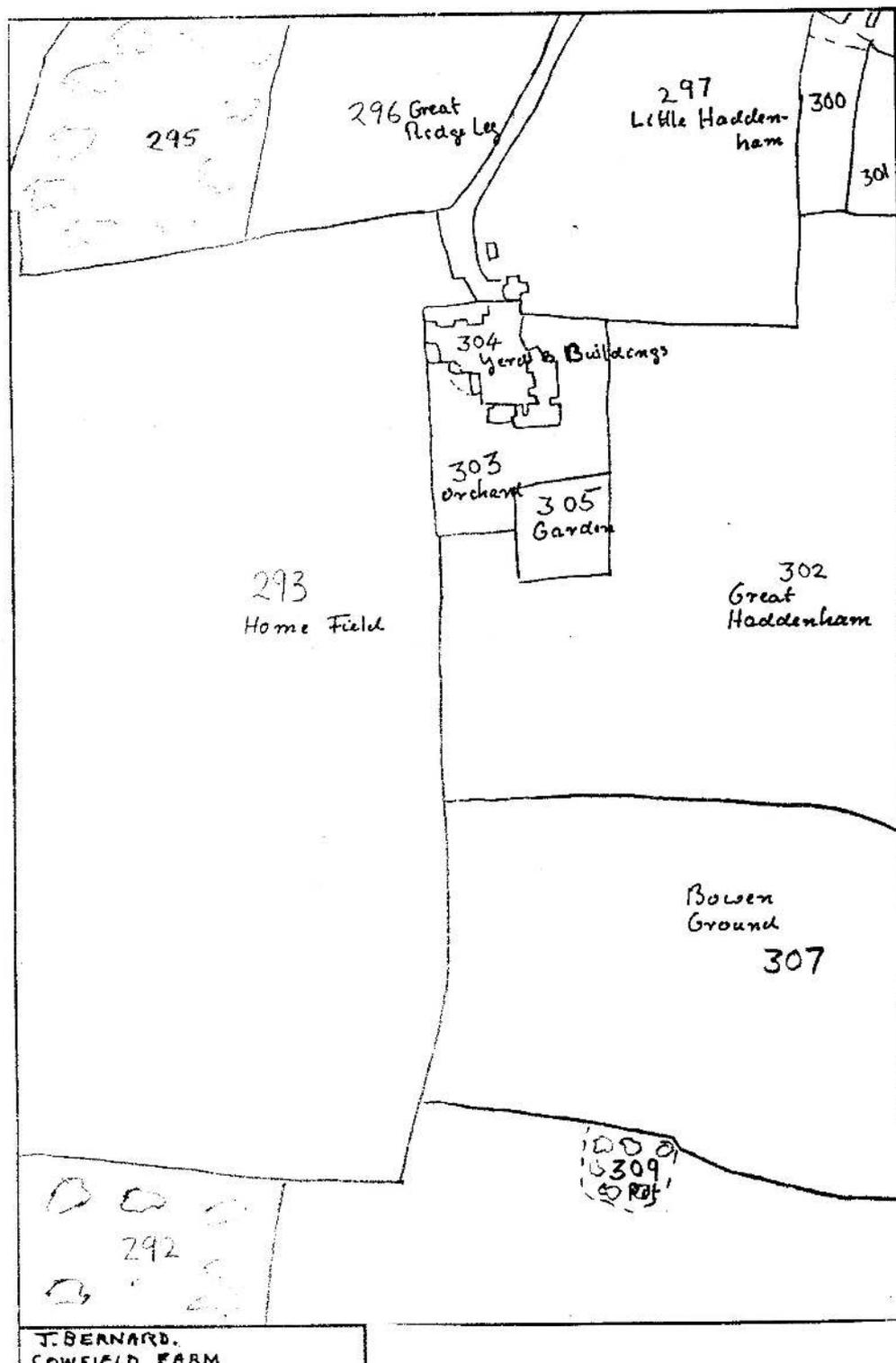


Figure 15. Sketch section, chamber over hall, W by John Steane



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Appendix 1. Tithe Award Map 1840



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Appendix 2. Tithe Award returns

J. BERNARD

R. P. Tithe Award 1840.

Owner: Hodges Charles Green Trustee.

Tenant:

Charles Bullock.

		Acres	Roads	Patches	£	s	d
274	Holly Croft	Arable	8	2	7		
282	Paddock	"	3	0	33		
287	Great Bear Garden	"	9	1	0		
288	Little Bear Garden	"	8	0	15		
289	Silgrove Field	"	19	0	9		
290	Barrow Field	"	15	0	24		
291	Raw Croft	"	11	3	14		
293	Home Field	"	39	3	3		
296	Great Ridge Ley	"	13	1	3		
297	Little Haddenham	"	6	3	6		
302	Great Haddenham	"	18	0	26		
303	Orchard	Grass	1	2	9		
304	Yard & Buildings			1	17		
305	Garden			2	10		
306	Pit	Wood		1	15		
307	Bowen Ground	Arable	13	2	30		
308	Pit	Wood		1	15		
309	"	"		1	16		
310	Stoney Croft	Arable	19	0	13		
312	Little Hillbury	"	11	3	4		
313	Great Hillbury	"	24	3	20		
355	Peppard Mead	Grass	2	1	10		
			<u>228</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>£78.</u>	<u>2 ..</u>

Owner: Charles Elsee

Tenant: Charles Bullock

275 Paddock Arable 3 2 13 17 ..

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SALLY STRADLING, BSc (Hons) MA, FSA, IHBC

June 2011

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PLEASE ALSO REFER TO HA&HG REPORT 39 ON COWFIELDS BY RUTH GIBSON IN 1986

FINAL DRAFT

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE



Prepared for SAM and SUE SAMUELS
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June 2011

June 2011

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3. Heritage Assets: Statutory and non statutory designations
4. Location/context
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6. Significance of Cowfields Farmhouse
7. Conclusions
8. References
9. Plates
10. Figures
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1. Background

This report has been commissioned by Sam and Sue Samuels, owners of Cowfields Farmhouse to inform forthcoming applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

Methodology included three site visits on 18th March, 27th April 2011 and 31st May, in April with Ruth Gibson and May with John Steane. Various documentation was reviewed including Report No 39/1986 on Cowfields Farmhouse by the Vernacular Building Research Section of Henley Archaeological and Historical Group (HAHG), the Tithe Award and Map transcribed by J. Bernard of HAHG, and pre-application reports and correspondence with SODC. Limited documentary research was carried out at Henley Library, including review of various sale catalogues of 1906, 1927, 1928 and maps. The assistance of Sam and Sue Samuels, the staff of Henley Library, Westgate Library, Oxford, Witney Library and the ORO is gratefully acknowledged in the preparation of this Report. Special thanks and acknowledgement are due to Ruth Gibson for sharing information on Cowfields Farm and for permission to reproduce information produced by HAHG. References are given in section 8.

2. Purpose of the Report

There are two main reasons for this report:

Firstly this report is being carried out to provide an understanding of the particular nature of the site and its significance in order to inform proposals for change. Secondly the report is provided to meet the requirements of PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy HE6 including:

- A description of the significance of the heritage assets affected, (including to understand the particular nature of the significance of the site, the extent to which significance relates and the level of importance of that significance)
- The contribution of setting to that significance

3. Heritage assets: Statutory and non- statutory designations

Cowfields Farmhouse is a grade II listed building, statutorily designated on 13th February 1985. *See Fig 1.* Statutory List Description

4. Location/context

Cowfields Farm is located on the south side of the road from Henley to Rotherfield Greys, approximately 1 mile south east of Rotherfield Greys and approximately 2 miles from Henley-on-Thames. The area is open and low lying with fields, occasional clumps of trees and larger areas of woodland, such as Silgrove Wood to the west of the farm. The openness was evidently a characteristic of the area in medieval times as Rotherfield Greys in Old English means 'feld or open land where cattle grazed' (Ekwall, Eilert, The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names, Fourth Edition, 1984, p393)

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

The farm comprises 230 acres of farm land, woodlands, and garden (Sam and Sue Samuels, Design and Access Statement, 2010) together with a complex of farm buildings including Cowfields Farmhouse and various barns, shelter sheds and storage buildings located mainly to the north and north west of the farmhouse.

5 Cowfields Farmhouse: Summary of architectural and historic interest

5.1 Map/photographic/documentary evidence.

Map evidence. *Figs 2-7, Appendix 1*

An early one inch OS map of c.1830s (Bond and Over, OS Historical Guide to Oxfordshire and Berkshire, 1988, map 35, p 122) records the farm as 'Covel's Farm. It is noticeable that the main access track seems to sweep round in an elongated semi-circle from the Henley to Rotherfield Greys Road on the east past the north east corner of the farm yard to join the road again on the north of the farm.

The Tithe Award and Tithe Award Map of 1840 lists Hodges as owner of Cowfields and Charles Bullock as tenant. The map shows numbered parcels listed in the returns, including 303 orchard, 304 yard and buildings and 305 garden. Various field parcels surrounding the farmhouse are named and listed in the returns under Cowfields. The total land being 228 acres, 1 rood 19 perches. Value £78.2s. Also a paddock under arable of 3 acres, 2 roods and 13 perches. See Appendix 1. The farmhouse and a large building on the east side of the courtyard seem joined in 1840. This is identified on the OS map of 1878 as a wellhouse.

The OS map of 1878, 1:10,560 names the property 'Coville's Farm and the north arm of the access track from the Henley Road is now given more emphasis than the track from the east. Other tracks as well as footpaths are shown passing the farmhouse in an east/west direction, as well as north west to Rotherfield Greys and to the south. It is noticeable that a track completely encircles the farmhouse and farm buildings and that there is a walled 'square' of cultivated garden or orchard to the south of the farmhouse. A 'wellhouse' is shown.

By the time of the OS Second Edition of 1900, 1:10,560 the property is named 'Cowfield's Farm and the layout of buildings and service tracks remains much the same. Silgrove Wood lies to the west of the farm, gravel pits are marked to the east, alongside the track leading to the Henley Road and a chalk pit is marked a field away to the south east.

In 2011, the extent of buildings comprising the farmstead has changed and various buildings including a large structure, annotated 'well house' on maps which was located to the north east of the house, no longer survive. A small square weather-boarded granary building once located to the south of the house was demolished post 1986.

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Brick/flint boundary walls: (Plates 7-8, Figs 3-4)

These are important boundary features in the immediate setting of the farmhouse, contributing to the pleasing character and appearance of the farm group and providing a means of enclosure for the farmhouse and farm buildings. Various changes to the walls have been made in recent times with some sections being taken down or re-aligned and new sections being built. The track and brick/flint walls with gate piers (shown in plate 2, 1939) which once enclosed the farm on the south have been removed and the track now follows the rectangular shape of the field boundary giving a more open rural aspect. Numerous trees have been planted along the main access track on the north with a further woodland belt on the east. By 2011 the enclosed cultivated 'square' shown on early OS maps to the south of the farmhouse has been removed and a tennis court, flower and vegetable gardens with trees located in this general area. The position and alignment of brick/flint walls forming the boundary to the courtyard to the north of the farmhouse has also changed over time, now curving in a reverse 'S' northwards across the area once occupied by the wellhouse.

Comparison of the Google earth map with the OS First Edition, 1:10560 map shows that various other features in the landscape have remained remarkably similar, including field boundaries, footpaths and tracks and the location of Silgrove Wood to the west and Packham Plantation to the north.

Photographic evidence: Plates 1-6

The earliest photographs of Cowfields Farmhouse date from 1939. At this time the property was rendered and there are different window and door configurations shown on both north and south elevations than at present. The north elevation photo is indistinct but does not appear to show either an oriel or 2 storey bay window. There are 8/8 sash windows to the ground floor of the east wing and to the hall, which does not have a bay window at this time. The east wing lacks a window to the first floor, but has an attic window. The rear elevation shows steeply pitched roofs (approximately 50 degrees) on both the east wing and wing to the rear of the hall. The space between the two wings is infilled with an extension to the inner, west slope, of the roof of the east parlour wing. Irregularly spaced 3/3 sash windows may have replaced wood mullioned and transomed windows in the east wing. The hall wing has a 2 storey canted bay window and a 2/2 sash attic window. Most noticeable is the large tapering brick stack on the south end gable of the west wing demolished post 1939. A brick/flint wall with gatepiers and cast-iron pedestrian gate gives access to the south elevation. A photo of 1956 shows the S rear elevation in a dilapidated condition- the lateral stack to the solar wing has fallen down/been pulled down. The canted 2 storey bay window to the hall wing has sash windows with a further 2/2 attic window.

A photo of the N front, elevation of 1958 shows the 2 storey bay window and oriel. The queen post roof construction, cambered tie beam and large panels infilled with brick are clearly visible in the west wing on the right of the picture. The HAHG survey photos of 1986 show the rear, S elevation. Aspects that stand out are the spaces between the

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

wings infilled with a flat roofed 2 storey section, the 1848 extension and 3 storey extension to the rear of the hall rendered, with the 2 storey bay window now removed, absence of the chimney stack on the south gable of the west wing.

Documentary evidence

Hearth Tax returns for 1665 record 5 hearths for William Benwell of Rotherfield Peppard and 1 hearth for John Benwell Senior in Rotherfield Peppard. Other Benwells are recorded for Hearth Tax including William for 1 hearth in Henley, Henry in Bix for 4 and another William in Henley for 4. Presumably this is the same William Benwell of Rotherfield Peppard paying hearth tax for the 3 properties he owns. (Oxfordshire Record Society, Hearth Tax Returns, Oxon, 1965, Vol XX, p 263)

A probate inventory taken of the goods and chattels of William Benwell of Rotherfield Greys in 1669, lists his possessions at 'Coufould Farme in Peppard'. This records items in the hall, kitchen and kitchen chamber, as well as farm animals including sheep, one cow, and one horse. It also records goods in two other houses in Henley. **See Fig.7**

A sales inventory of 1906 lists Cowfields as 'a delightful old fashioned gabled residence being brick stud and plaster built and tiled, containing'

On the first floor: bedroom, attic and box room

On the second floor, approached by 2 staircases: 6 bedrooms 4 being fitted with stoves and 3 with cupboards, bathroom with lavatory basin, hot air linen cupboard and WC

On the ground floor: entrance porch, good hall, dining room 16' 9" square fitted with slow combustion stove, tiled hearth and sides and cupboard, drawing room 16' by 14' with bay window, fitted with slow combustion stove and tiled sides and grey marble mantle. Breakfast room with cupboards, kitchen with range, scullery with sink and force pump, back kitchen with sink and force pump, dairy, pantry, boothouse and EC and brick and tiled ash shed.

There is a nice flower garden and good productive kitchen garden and some fine walnut trees in the orchard'

The farm buildings were described as 'lately put through repair and enlarged' and included stables, piggeries, coach house and harness rooms, loose boxes, chaff house and barn, cart shed, cow shed, implement shed, timber and slated granary on 9 stone steddles, meal house, open shed, cowhouse and calf pen, coal house, fowl house and well house, cattle and rick yards, large rainwater tank and 2 ponds (Sales Catalogue of the Rose Hill and Gillotts Estates, Oxfordshire, 1906, Cowfields, Lot 23)

In a 1927 Sales Catalogue, Cowfields, Upper House and Rectory Farms were offered for sale and described as 'important freehold residential sporting and agricultural properties'. (Sales Catalogue of Cowfields, Upper House and Rectory Farms, 23rd June 1927)

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Similarly in 1938 Cowfields was described as a 'valuable freehold agricultural and sporting estate' (Mr George Shorland, Sales Catalogue of 11 Farms, 25th August 1938). The wellhouse and granary are listed amongst farm buildings.

5.2 Owners/Occupiers

Grateful thanks are due to the current owners and to HAHG for information concerning past ownership of the farm.

1575- Benwell family ownership of Cowfields (Peppard Parish Register)

1669-1784 (Benwell family wills and inventories)

1754 Farm sold by AG Blount to A Hodges (Cooper and Caldecott papers)

1771 A Hodges of Bolney took out mortgage on Cowfields

1815 Elizabeth Benwell occupier (Land tax)

1840 Hodges owner, Charles Green Trustee

1840 & 1851 Charles Bullock tenant (Census Returns and Tithe Award)

1871 Tenant Charles Longford (Census Returns)

1879 Cowfields mentioned in will of E Mackenzie of Fawley Court

1898 Mr Bennett of Cowfields (list drawn up for clearance of Widmore Pond)

1919 KR Mackenzie of Fawley Court sells Cowfields to George Shoreland Esq. of Sheephouse Farm, Harpsden. Tenant was John Burton A' Bear, also a tenant of Greys and Highlands

1938 Cowfields sold to Mr Borlase for £4000 and after 6 months to Mr Horn

1956 Mr RS Green bought the farm

2000- Sam and Sue Samuels purchased Cowfields and 230 acres of land.

5.3 The Farm complex/setting

Fig 8. Sketch of farmyard layout by Ruth Gibson, 1986

Survey of the farm buildings is outside the scope of the present study. However a brief survey of the buildings carried out by HAHG in 1986, notes the farm building complex comprising the farmhouse with a garage/former stable to the north east on or near the site of the former well house; cowsheds and bull pen on the north west with shelter shed and dairy to the west; a 6 bay barn with range of cowsheds and stables attached and a 3 bay barn with attached shelter sheds. A small square weather-boarded granary was located to the south of the farmhouse. (Granaries were normally sited in close proximity to the farmhouse, so as to be under the watchful eye of the farmer, containing precious grain for baking or brewing and seed grain for sowing the next year's crop). The granary at Manor Farm, Cogges has another example sited close to the farmhouse. (John Steane, pers.com. June 2011). The locations of a former pond, 2 wells and a former well house are also marked.

The farm buildings are of C17-C19 date and are grouped around a large courtyard to the north east of the house. The large timber-framed and weather-boarded 6 bay barn is of late C17/C18 date (queen strut and collar roof construction); the 3 bay timber-framed and weather-boarded barn with old tile roof of late C18 construction (principals with

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curved feet roof construction and brick and flint plinth walls). Other farm buildings are single storey brick or brick and flint buildings of C19/C20 date constructed as cow sheds, shelter sheds, dairy and stables.

The number of wells may point to difficulty in obtaining water. The water table is extremely low in the area (Ruth Gibson, pers. com. April 2011) as evidenced by the need for a donkey wheel house and horse wheel to raise water at nearby Greys Court. Another, famous well nearby is the Maharajah's Well at Stoke Row. The substantial footprint of the 'well house' shown at Cowfields Farm on the OS map of 1879 may indicate a building enclosing a wheel house and well, possibly a horse gin (horizontal wheel).

Land use:

The Benwell family were wealthy yeoman farmers and brewers with premises in Friday Street and property in Henley as well as Bix. (Ruth Gibson, pers. com. April 2011) The Benwell family association with brewing continued up until the C19 as in 1825 Mr WH Brakspear took possession of the Henley Brewery in partnership with Mr Richard Benwell (Climinson, Emily, *J, A Guide to Henley-on-Thames*, 1896, p 59). The Benwells owned or occupied Cowfields from 1575 to 1815.

The common land at Rotherfield Greys was enclosed in 1857 (Whitehead, p 142). It appears that over the years Cowfields was amalgamated with other farms for economies of scale for farming purposes and sale particulars of 1906, 1927 and 1938 show that by the early C20 the farm formed part of the larger local estates including the estate of the Mackenzies of Gillotts and Fawley Court, nearby.

In addition, Sales Catalogues of 1927 and 1938 list the farm as an important for sporting- presumably hunting/shooting – 'important freehold residential sporting and agricultural properties'. (Sales Catalogue of Cowfields, Upper House and Rectory Farms, 23rd June 1927). Cowfields seems to have been viewed as a gentleman's residence with opportunities for leisure pursuits, rather than as a purely agricultural farming operation. Rotherfield Greys possibly experienced the upcoming gentility of Henley and surrounding area which the association of royalty- Queen Victoria and Prince Albert- with the Henley regatta, brought from the 1850s. In addition the influence of the railways with the GWR improvements to the line to Henley post 1876 increased the popularity of the area for tourism, leisure pursuits on the river and in the countryside and the possibility of commuting to London for work. (Whitehead, p 65)

Cowfields Farm seems to have been typical of the small to medium sized farms which dominated the countryside around Henley from around 1800 to 1950s. There was little change in types of crop or method of production until the tractor replaced the horse. Records from Rotherfield Greys show that crops included wheat, barley, oats, turnips, mustard and hay. Most farms were mixed with both arable and livestock, meeting

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demands for meat, milk and wool production being sent to London and elsewhere. (David C. Whitehead, Henley-on-Thames, A History, 2007). Mixed farming seems to have been the norm until recent times according to information received from Mr Green, the farmer until 2000. In 1956 Cowfields was a mixed farm with a milking herd, horses, beef cattle, sheep, turkeys and deep litter chickens. Some of the land was under arable crops including oats, wheat and barley. Mr Green employed 4 farm hands. By 1986 Mr Green had 100 ewes, arable land and employed one full time and one part time worker. (Information from HAHG, Report 1986)

Setting:

The setting of Cowfields Farm has always been rural- the farm is surrounded by low lying fields. The form of enclosure surrounding the farmhouse and farm buildings has changed over time as have the access tracks. Brick/flint walls enclose the farmyard to the north of the farmhouse but have been removed from the east and south sides. Whereas at one time the main access track in the C19 seems to have been from Henley to the east, into the yard on the north by the time of the 1878 OS there was a loop with access to the south of the farmhouse. A photo of 1939 shows a pedestrian gate and gate piers leading on to the south front of the house. This was perhaps for visitors and the women folk to have the opportunity to avoid the workaday farmyard to the north. In 2011 the north track has now become the main access to the farm and the area south of the farm house has become integrated into the garden setting with lawns, flower beds and vegetable garden. The access track now follows the south field boundary. Evidence for changes to the setting can be seen by comparing maps and photographs.

See Figs 2-6, Plate 2

5.3 Cowfields Farmhouse- summary of evolution

Fig. 9 Suggested evolution with sketches by John Steane and **Fig. 10** Conjectural phasing by Sally Stradling

It's possible that Cowfield's Farmhouse originated as an 'L' or 'T' plan building of hall range and cross wing. At simplest level this could have provided a hall open to the roof with central fireplace, cross passage, access to service rooms comprising buttery and pantry in the wing and a chamber or solar above. This was a common plan form in smaller late medieval houses below manorial level between C14 to C16 in parts of south Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (Currie, Oxoniensia Vol VII, 1992, p 89). At Cowfields the plan then appears to have been modified by adding a further cross wing- either by demolishing one bay of the hall house or by constructing an entirely new wing to provide a parlour, with further accommodation at first floor and a cellar. The following analysis is conjectural and based on examination of the structure, materials and layout of the building and comparison with other dated examples nearby as well as further afield within Oxfordshire.

5.4 Structure, materials, layout

Figs 11-15, Plates 7-32

Cowfields Farmhouse is constructed in timber-frame with brick infill (probably replacing earlier wattle and daub panels in the main hall house range as a piece of timber with deep grooves was found reused in the 1848 extension), with red clay tile roofs and brick stacks. The property has undergone a number of phases of evolution, alteration and extension over the centuries.

The farmhouse comprises a three and a half bay frontage with a narrow C19 addition on the west: central hall with cross passage and 2 storey bay window, 2 storey wing with oriel window on the west and taller 3 storey wing on the east. The rear of the building shows the two wings with a large gabled extension and flat roof infilling the space between them and various single storey extensions. Outbuildings and brick and flint walls enclose the yard on the north and west sides, the south and east aspects now largely remaining open with rural views.

The central hall has large panels of timber framing with curved braces between the posts and wall plate, jowled posts of large section, queen post trusses with clasped purlins, massive cambered tie beams, wind braces from wall plate to purlin and smoke blackened rafters of 6" x 2 1/2" laid flat. (*Plates 24, 26*). The attic over the open hall and solar have smoke blackened timbers, those to the solar may be re-used. (*Plates 30-32*) There is a smoke blackened wattle and daub partition- blackening on the inner face over the hall but not blackened on the outer face. Scribed assembly marks are found on timbers, including joists and beams in the hall and bedroom over the hall. Two angled posts flank the bay window and angled corbels support the wall plate over the bay window. These timbers appear integral with the original structure. (*Plate 23*) Other examples of hall houses with evidence for 2 storey bay windows include Church Farm, South Leigh (C14) (Ayles, J and Steane, J, *Archaeological/Historical Report on Church Farmhouse, South Leigh, Oxfordshire*, 2005, p 13) and Yelford Manor, Oxfordshire (Pevsner, p 387)

The 2 bay west, solar wing shares the east timber-frame with the hall, has queen post trusses with clasped purlins (*Plate 27*), exposed slanted rafter feet in the space above the cross passage (*See Plate 25*), now a bathroom adjoining the room over the hall, smoke blackened rafters, reused purlins which are not smoke blackened, rafters pegged to the purlins. At the west end of the hall, there is a re-used timber brace joining the hall and solar roofs secured in place with large iron nails. (*Plate 32*)

The east parlour wing of late C17/early C18 date has a 3 bay clasped purlin roof with shortened collars. (*Plate 28*) This roof has been extended to the south by a further bay with a side purlin roof. The junction of the roofs can be clearly seen in the attic and first floor adjacent to the stairs and by a pronounced drop in the roof at that point externally (*Plate 29*)

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The narrow 2 storey C19 extension on the west (Initials and date CB 1848 for Charles Bullock seen scratched on 2 bricks in the extension, by HAHG during 1986 survey) is constructed in brick with tile hanging. It incorporates reused timbers at first floor level including an inverted beam which was originally part of a sill with a deep groove which originally held the hazel staves for a wattle and daub panel. (*Plates 10-11*)

5.5 External description

North elevation: *Fig 11, plates 7, 13-14*

Features that stand out on the front elevation include the irregular elevation with roofs of varying heights; an off centre substantial brick ridge stack and a further stack with axially mounted brick shafts adjacent to the east cross wing; evidence for the former hall house and solar wing including large square panels of timber framing, substantial posts, weathered arched brace at first floor level to the left, E of the 2 storey bay window and a similar renewed arched brace to the W, the end or break in the wall plate projecting at the east end of the first floor attic and a new section of wall plate extending towards the east parlour wing. The middle rail and sill timbers are renewed at this end of the building. The 2 storey bay has some ancient weathered timbers. The solar wing has a heavy weathered and cambered tie beam and an oriel with a weathered window sill. The east cross wing has renewed windows including two, 2-light wood mullioned and transomed windows on the ground floor, a 3-light casement on the first floor and a similar smaller window to the attic. The wood mullioned and transomed windows don't appear on the early to mid C20 photos and are therefore C20-C21 replacements.

South, garden elevation: *Fig 12, plates 9, 11*

Little of the original building is visible- the rear south elevation is masked by extensions and is mainly re faced in brick. There are 4 gabled brick wings running north/south and a flat roof section between the 2 bays to the right, E. All roofs are of red clay tile. From E to W: the wide gable span of the extension to the parlour wing has a C20 renewed wood mullioned and transomed window in the attic, two 4-light renewed C20 casements to first floor and a wide canted bay window with hipped roof at ground floor; at ground floor beneath the flat roof joining section there is a door with gabled door hood; the 3 storey gabled C20 extension to the rear of the hall has a wood mullioned and transomed window in the attic, 3-light casement at first floor and canted bay window with hipped roof at ground floor. On the W is the lower 2 storey solar wing, south gable end with queen post roof and brick infill, renewed 3-light casements at first floor and C20 timber frame/brick extension of the ground floor. To the far W, the narrow gabled extension constructed in 1848 with brick and upper section tile hung

East elevation: *Figs 11-12, plates 8-9*

There is a discernible drop in the roof about two thirds the way along, marking the extension to the parlour roof. The east elevation timber framing has been entirely clad in a brick outer skin in handmade 2" bricks from HG Mathews. A drawing made by Richard

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Oxley at the time of repairs and restoration works in 2006 shows the timber frame and distinct join of the extension roof. There are irregularly spaced renewed oak framed windows including a wood mullioned and transomed window, a casement window and 3, single light windows to the stair.

West elevation: Plates 10-11

This shows the 2 storey W elevation of the 1848 extension with brick/tile hung walls and clay tile roof and 2- and 3-light casement windows. Abutting on the north west is a single storey brick and flint out building with hipped clay tile roof- the bull pen/cow house. The tall shaft of a brick stack is shown between the bull pen and the 1848 extension.

5.6 Interior

Fig 10, GF plan conjectural phasing, **Fig 13**, sketch floor plans and room numbering; For ease of reference between description and sketch plans, rooms are referred to as G1 etc for ground floor, B basement, F1 etc for first floor and A1 etc for attic

G1. Reached via 2 steps up. 8' 7" height from floor to ceiling. Two chamfered transverse beams and 15 joists, 2 wood mullioned and transomed windows, blocked doorway in south east corner, wide brick fireplace with chamfered bressumer, 4 1/2" width studs.

B. Semi-basement or cellar below G1 has a brick floor, deeply chamfered beam, deep narrow joists 5 1/4 width x 5 1/2 depth, blocked doorway in the south wall, evidence of timber framing in E wall.

G2. Hall. 7' 6" height from floor to ceiling. Wide brick fireplace with chamfered bressumer. Chamfered beam, 8 stop chamfered joists (lamb's tongue stops) of 6 1/2" or 6 1/4" width laid flat, numbered i to viii from west to east and 2 further similarly sized joists nearest to the fireplace not numbered but morticed into the wall beam on the north and positioned in a wide slot cut into the north face of the beam. (Stop chamfers an indication of a high status room). Angled timber corbel either side of bay window and angled timber posts forming sides of bay window with long continuous timber forming head to bay window. NB Bay window completely rebuilt but these features indicate the former evidence of a predecessor. (**Plates 15-16**)

G3. Former cross passage now blocked on the S by insertion of newel stair (**Plate 18**)

G4. Solar wing basement. Chamfered and stopped beam, 9 no 5 1/2" joists, laid flat. Post measuring 6 3/4"x5 1/2", rail 5 1/2"x6 3/4", door in NW end leads to 1848 extension G8 and G9 (**Plate 17**)

G7. Stair extension to G1 has timber framing in S and E walls. Late C17 style open well stair with barley sugar twisted balusters on urn bases. (Said to be painted softwood,

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Sam Samuels, pers.com. May 2011). Blocked doorway in N timber frame of stair well
(Plate 22)

G5. Solar wing. Kitchen. Deep 10 1/2" chamfered beam similar to that in G4 and 4" to 5 1/2" chamfered joists laid flat, end timber framed wall to S removed for C20 kitchen extension. **(Plate 19)**

F1. Close studding in corner of room. Down 4 steps to F2

F2. Two substantial cambered tie beams supported on jowl posts, windbraces from wall plate to purlin, 2 angled posts either side of 2 storey bay window and head supported on two angled timber corbels. Jowled post 9 1/2" adjacent to F3 bathroom has huge slot for angled brace from N wall to W wall. S wall of corridor has mirror 8 1/2" width jowled post with discernible wide slot and head of post adzed back to create room in corridor. Roof space above has smoke blackened rafters and section of smoke blackened wattle and daub partition adjacent to the stack. **(Figs 14-15, plates 23, 24, 26)**

F3. Tapering brick stack, timber frame exposed in wall adjacent to newel stair, slanted rafter feet and principal rafter feet to roof over solar visible in bathroom **(Plate 25)**

F4. Queen post roof construction

F5. Wide span roof room, clasped purlin roof construction **(Plate 27)**

F6. C19 wing

F7. Stair extension to F1

A1. 3 bay queen post roof with clasped purlins and interrupted collars **(Plate 28)**

A2. Purlin 7"x6", smoke blackened rafters above hall 6"x2 1/2", wattle and daub partition not smoke blackened on W side **(Plate 30)**

A3. Attic over cross passage. Rafters to west wing pegged to purlin, which has no evidence of having had a roof covering nailed/secured to it. **(Plate 31)** Bricks to hall chimney stack measure 9x5x2 inches.

A4. & A5. Smoke blackened rafters morticed, tenoned and pegged at apex. Purlins do not appear to be smoke blackened

A6. C19/C20 roof structure

A7. Extension to south of A1. Side purlin roof open to apex

5.7 Discussion

The frame of the main hall/solar range is probably of c.1500 date, given the massive jowls, wind braces and generally heavy scantling of the timbers and queen post construction with clasped purlins. Evidence for the farmhouse originating as an open hall with cross wing is supported by:

the smoke blackening of the roof timbers above the hall, the insertion of a chamfered beam and stop chamfered joists numbered I to viii in the hall and the continuity and similarity in timber sizes and construction of the hall and west wings, including the queen post roofs with clasped purlins, large panels of timber framing with arched braces and scribed assembly marks. It is likely that there was a detached kitchen in the first phase of the farmhouse, due to the risk of fire. Examples of C14 and C15 detached kitchens are known at Fyfield Manor, Nr Abingdon (Pevsner, N, *Berkshire*, repr.1993, p 146), and of C15 at Stanton Harcourt Manor (Woods, M, *The English Mediaeval House*, repr.1983, p 251 and plate 20A), and there are presumed to have been detached kitchens at many sites including of C13 at Manor Farm Cogges Nr Witney (Rowley, T and Steiner, M, Eds, *Cogges Manor Farm, Witney, Oxfordshire, The Excavations from 1986-1994 and the Historic Building Analysis*,1996, p 15) and C14 at Church Farm, South Leigh, (Ayres, J and Steane, J, p 13)

A deep chamfered beam in G4 in the west solar wing has wide joists and chamfers without stops. This lack of decoration in terms of chamfer stops indicates a functional room, which would have been suitable for storage spaces such as buttery and pantry which were not meant to be seen. However the inserted joists in the hall, a public space for the reception of visitors and guests- are decorated with lambs tongue stop chamfers and therefore accord a degree of status.

What is perplexing is that the rafters in the west wing solar roof show evidence of smoke blackening too, although lacking visible smoke blackening on the purlins. The roof may have been repaired and timbers reused, or there may be some other explanation. In addition there is a wattle and daub partition adjacent to the chimney stack inserted between the hall G2 and cross passage G3 which is smoke blackened on the inward face in A2 but not but not on the outer face in A3. Was this part of an earlier smoke hood or smoke bay or simply a partition? Was it somehow linked to the two joists adjacent to the fireplace in G2 which are not numbered in sequence with the other joists numbered i to viii, and appear to have been located in position via a large slot cut in the north face of the longitudinal beam i.e. that these joists were removable because there had been a smoke hood or smoke bay previously? Or were these joists removable as a 'coffin' hole or space for lifting furniture upstairs?

It is not clear if the hall formerly extended east by another bay, where the parlour wing now stands, and was taken down and replaced by the wing or whether the east wing was added from scratch. There is a break in the wall plate evident below the eaves on

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the north elevation, exterior of the building, but below this at the base of the wall, the brick plinth and sills have been renewed and there are no remaining clues.

The east wing is of two phases, as there is a distinct break in the wall plate and difference in roof construction, with a 3 bay clasped purlin roof with shortened collar in the north section and a purlin roof in the south section. The basement or cellar is presumably contemporary with the parlour cross wing as it has similar ceiling details with deep chamfered beam and deep joists etc. The spacious proportions and height of the ground floor parlour are noticeable- 8' 7" as opposed to 7' 6" in the hall. This may well be an indication of the rise in status and wealth or at least the high aspirations of the owner of Cowfields in the C17/C18.

The significance of high ceilings is discussed by Linda Hall in relation to defining gentry houses in VA, Vol 22, 1991, pp 2-19. It is suggested that by comparing inventories of gentry- defined as gentlemen, clergy, schoolmasters and yeomen in C17/C18 Gloucestershire, key factors in defining social status can be seen in the value of goods, the number of hearths, the number and use of rooms, a parlour or two, the height and furnishings found in the parlour- one of these usually decorated green, a study full of books, decoration such as panelling and grand staircases together. The maximum value of a yeoman's goods was found to be up to £1000, and for gentry up to £3000. Yeoman houses in C17 Gloucestershire typically had 3-4 ground floor rooms, two and a half storey height with cheese lofts on the second floor, wood mullioned windows, chamfered or moulded beams and doorcases and fireplaces with chamfered or ovolo moulded wooden lintels. Plan forms for yeoman houses included L plan, 3 room and through passage plan and central service room plan. Gentry houses typically were of greater size, with an average of 12 ground floor rooms and tended to be imposing, set in their own grounds with grand stone gate piers at the entrance, and designed to stand out in the landscape, compared to the yeoman house which blends into the landscape. The gentry house had an emphasis on parlours- with one or more parlours being the norm combined with features such as tall ceiling height over 8' high, lateral chimney stacks, open well stair cases. Many gentry houses had single or double crosswing plan forms but could also have innovative and unusual plan forms or double pile plans.

Cowfields seems therefore to fit into the 'aspiring gentry' category with a double crosswing plan evolved from an L plan hall house, ground floor containing 4-5 rooms in the C17, including a well proportioned parlour with cellar under. The rural location, without ostentatious driveway and entrance gates would also support this view

At Cowfields the parlour and cellar have narrow but deep joists located within the depth of the transverse beams. In the parlour the underside of the joists shows evidence of laths for the application of a plaster ceiling. These two features- tall rooms and deep narrow joists have similarities to those found in parlour wings of gentry houses nearby at Harpsden Court of 1566/7 date and Greys Court, dated 1575/6. Given the narrower scantling of the east wing at Cowfields, this could perhaps indicate a late C17/early C18

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date for the parlour wing. As fashionable ideas for improvements in the size and impressiveness of rooms might take some years to filter down the social ladder, this date is not unreasonable, taken with the fact that the joists at Greys Court and Harpsden are of markedly heavier, thicker section and dated to the C16.

There is a blocked doorway in the south wall of the east wing, parlour in G1, which would lead directly onto the open well stair in G7. (Also a blocked wall below it in the cellar). This means that either the doorway was in use before the extension was added or the staircase was configured in a different way. The open well staircase is stylistically of late C17 form with barley sugar twisted balusters on urn bases, but appears very 'crisp' and is said by Sam Samuels to be of painted softwood. It would seem most likely to be of C20 date. An ancient timber, forming the westernmost post to the stairhousing, has been re-used from elsewhere.

Photos of the north elevation in 1939, do not appear to show the 2 storey bay window on the north elevation. However, the internal timbers of the bay window appear original and the likely explanation is that this feature was restored using archaeological evidence. Evidence for a 2 storey bay window or 'oriel' of C14 date has been found at Church Farm, South Leigh (Ayres and Steane, p 13); and there is another fine example of a hexagonal bay window at the dais end of the hall at Yelford Manor a timber framed manor house of C15-C16. (Pevsner, N and Sherwood, J, *Buildings of England, Oxfordshire*, 1974, p 387)

5.8 Possible phasing with evidence for suggested phasing

Possible Key phases include:

c.1500s late medieval hall house of one and a half or two and a half bays of open hall and cross passage with a 2 bay solar wing (large panels of framing, curved braces, smoke blackened rafters and partition in attic)

c.1570 floor inserted over open hall (10" beam, wide joists with lambs tongue chamfer stops indicating a high status room)newel stair in a turret, added on south to access first floor rooms

c. 1680s two storey cross wing and cellar added on east, (GFI room with high status high ceilings and late C17/early C18 style decoration- new wood mullioned and transomed windows, shell niche cupboard, chamfered beam with deep narrow joists and similar beam/joists to cellar. Late C17 style open well, modern staircase with barley sugar twist balusters on urn bases in stairwell extension to south)

C19 alterations and extensions. (addition of wing to S, rear of hall with 2 storey bay window with 6/6 sash windows of c.1850s evident in 1939 photo, 2 storey brick extension on west. CB 1848 inscribed on brick. Charles Bullock tenant at this time. Between 1939 and 1986 photographic evidence- brick stack removed from south gable

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end of solar wing, south front extended outwards, cement render applied to elevations and brick infill panels in hard cementitious mortar)

C20/C21 alterations and extensions (single storey timber framed extension to the kitchen added on the south, cement render removed, timber-frame repairs and infill with brick and lime mortar, east elevation encased in new 2" bricks laid in lime mortar, C20 wood mullioned and transomed windows, hipped roofs over bay windows)

6. Significance- the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That value may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. (PPS 5 Planning for the historic Environment, 2010)

An assessment of the significance of Cowfields Farmhouse using the family of heritage values set out in English Heritage's Conservation Principles, 2008 and PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment 2010.

The determination of the significance of assets is based on statutory designation and professional judgement against four broad values:

- *Evidential value*: Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. It includes physical remains, above and below ground (archaeology) as well as geology, landforms, species and habitats. Evidential value relates to the potential to contribute to people's understanding of the past and might take into account date, rarity, condition and relation to documentary evidence.
- *Historical value*: Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be *illustrative (visual) or associative*. *The illustrative value* of places tends to be greater if they incorporate the first, or only surviving, example of an innovation of consequence, whether related to design, technology or social organisation. For example if it illustrates a rare or early example, a unique style, complete survival, associated with significant people and events, association with other important assets or literature, art, music or film. It takes account of completeness and ability to illustrate connections, use and management.
- *Aesthetic value*: (design and artistic value) Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. It is related to periods of culture; quality of design, innovation, influence, role of architect and artist/craftsman, Design in accordance with landscape theories, such as the Picturesque), composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) materials or planting. Sources and expression of concepts. Strong indicators of importance are quality of design and execution, and innovation, particularly if influential.

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- *Communal value:* Commemorative and symbolic values and Social value. Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, along with educational, social or economic values.

Levels of significance

- **Very high** Grade I sites and buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments; sites/features of international significance
- **High:** Grade II* sites and buildings; sites/features of national importance
- **Medium:** **Grade II sites; sites/features of regional importance**
- **Low:** Sites /features of local importance, local listed buildings and landscapes
- **Negligible:** Sites/ features with no significant value
- **Negative:** Negative or intrusive features, which detract from the value of a site, such as impact on views

6.1 Significance of Cowfields Farmhouse

Overall significance: high (national)

Cowfields Farmhouse is included in English Heritage's Statutory List of buildings of architectural and historic interest, grade II and is therefore of national significance.

Evidential value:

Significance: Low and Medium (local and regional), as a good example of a late medieval hall house, typifying local and regional vernacular architecture styles and fashions in its evolution

The key evidential value of Cowfields Farmhouse lies in the historic core of the hall house of c.1500s date with former open hall with chamber over, the service cross wing with solar over and newel stair, and the C17 parlour wing with cellar and open well stair; to a moderate extent later extensions including the C19 wing to the rear, south of the hall and the narrow 1848 addition and to the least extent the alterations and additions carried out in the C20-C21, including further additions on the south.

Over time some parts of the structure have been changed or masked by alterations such as the replacement of the original infill panels of wattle and daub with brick, extensions and infill on the south and the construction of a brick 'skin' across the east elevation (due to the decay of the timber-frame). A substantial brick chimney stack was removed from the kitchen in the south end of the solar wing between 1939 and 1986. These changes have tended to dilute the extent, detailing and interest of the earliest phases of the building. Although the two storey bay window is not evident in the 1939 photos, there is archaeological evidence for a predecessor in the angled jambs and head- and there are other C14 and C15 examples of bay windows relating to open halls in Oxfordshire.

Historical value - illustrative and associative values

Historical illustrative value

Significance: Low and medium (local and regional)

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Cowfields has low and medium historical illustrative value as a good example of a hall house with crosswing, reflecting a common building type in C14-C16 South Oxfordshire and surrounding area and also in sharing certain design and construction techniques with nearby gentry houses in the C17 parlour wing.

The late medieval core of Cowfields is of medium historical illustrative significance. The farmhouse has a typical, well preserved late medieval plan form of hall house with solar wing and incorporates later improvements for comfort and privacy, such as the ceiling over of the open hall and the construction of a parlour wing and staircases. Later additions/extensions to the rear of the hall and on the west end illustrate the need for more separation and specialisation in room use and function- for processing and storage of food and accommodation for family, farm workers and guests.

The east parlour wing at Cowfields is of medium *historical illustrative* significance in showing innovative design and construction techniques. This has similarities in construction detail and room proportions found in the parlour wings to gentry houses such as Harpsden Manor and Greys Court nearby. The elements of those buildings being of 1566/7 and 1575/6 respectively, although believed to be of late C17 date at Cowfields. The construction of a parlour is illustrative of social aspirations in the desire for a room of taller, grander proportions for entertaining visitors. The deep joists, located within the depth of the beam to provide a level surface for lath and plaster are illustrative of new ideas and aesthetic appreciation for interior design and construction to achieve an even ceiling for the application of plastered ceiling decoration. The differentiation in social status and wealth between gentry and yeoman farmer could account for the slower assimilation of fashionable ideas for a grander parlour wing at Cowfields and could help justify a late C17 date.

Historical Associative

Significance: Low (local)

Cowfields has low *associative historical* significance due to its' association with prominent local families such as the Benwells who owned or occupied Cowfields from 1575 to 1874. The Benwells were prosperous yeoman farmers as well as brewers and maltsters with property in Henley and Bix. In the early C20 Cowfields formed part of the Rosehill and Gillotts Estates, owned by the Mackenzie family of Fawley Court and Gillotts, Henley.

Aesthetic value.

Significance: Low (local)

The farmhouse is of aesthetic value and visual interest in being a timber framed example of a late medieval hall house with crosswings, of organic form, including irregular plan and differing heights which has been sympathetically repaired and restored. It is located down a farm track about a mile from Rotherfield Greys. There are limited views of Cowfields from public foot paths and tracks; the farmhouse is inward rather than outward

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
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looking within its own farmyard and landscape and makes little contribution to views in the public domain.

Communal value.

Significance: Low (local)

Of value as one of a number of farmhouses in the parish of Rotherfield Greys which contribute to the quality and distinctiveness of the local vernacular architecture

6.2 Significance of the setting of Cowfields Farmhouse

An assessment to understand the particular nature of the significance of the site, the extent to which significance relates and the level of importance of that significance, using questions taken from Appendix I of the English Heritage draft publication , *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2010.

Overall significance: Low to high (local to national)

- What does the location of the asset within its setting, including its topography, contribute towards the significance of Cowfields?

Significance: Low to high (local to national)

Cowfields Farmhouse lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated in 1965, in the dip slope of the Chilterns in a flat open landscape just below the 100' contour. The proximity to springs and water supply would have been an important factor in the siting and location of the farmhouse as would proximity to markets in Henley to the owners and tenants farming Cowfields, including road networks for communication and the passage of goods. There is little or no intervisibility between Cowfields and the nearest farms and settlement at Rotherfield Greys. The farmhouse and farmyard form the focus of the farm which is located within a mile of Rotherfield Greys and about 2 miles from Henley, down a track off the Henley to Greys Road.

- What does the asset's functional relationship with its' setting contribute to its significance?

Significance: Low (local)

Cowfields Farmhouse is located within its own land/landscape setting, some distance away from other houses or settlements. It is an inward looking, functional farmstead, the most significant factor to note being that the farmhouse is located on the south side of the farm courtyard and is enclosed by farm buildings and brick/flint walls. The buildings making up the east side of the yard have now been demolished and the farming operation has ceased. The planning and layout of the farmhouse and farm buildings would have ensured intervisibility for safeguarding stock and crops as well as the supervision of farm operations. A track encircled the farmhouse until the mid C20, giving the owners the option of entering the house from the farmyard or south side of the house. Private gardens are mostly contained on the south side

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
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- What does the asset's aesthetic relationship to its setting, contribute to its significance?

Significance: Low (local)

The functional relationship of Cowfields Farmhouse to its agricultural setting has changed from that of a working farm within its fields to one of a private house which enjoys a rural aspect of cultivated fields and recently planted pleasure gardens with specimen trees and woodland belts. The farmhouse is still within a farmed landscape, but one which is managed and kept neat

- How does the landscape character of the asset's setting contribute to its significance?

Significance: High (national) within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Rotherfield means 'open grazing for cattle' and described the parish's mid Saxon landscape. Cowfields would once have been located in a much more open landscape. However the fields are now enclosed and bordered by hedges. The unspoilt, undeveloped nature of the setting, is a significant factor in preserving the timeless quality of the setting of the late medieval house.

- How does the extent, history and speed of change within the setting contribute to the asset's significance?

Significance: Low to medium (local- regional)

The character of the setting to Cowfields is one of an open agricultural landscape of scattered farms and villages within a post enclosure landscape of cultivated fields bordered by hedges, with copses and woodland planting belts. The setting, devoid of the encroachment of modern housing development or noise from road systems has probably changed little since the time of parliamentary enclosure in 1857, and makes a high contribution to the significance of Cowfields.

As seen in evidence from early C20 Sales Catalogues, the farm became viewed not just for its potential agricultural use but for sporting too, as a gentleman's residence with opportunities for leisure pursuits- hunting and shooting. This may have been a spinoff of the upcoming gentility of the Henley area due to the royal associations of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with the Henley regatta post 1850s, together with improvements in railway services. The GWR post 1876, increasing the possibility of tourism, with leisure pursuits on the river and in the countryside.

- What non visual sensory influences within the setting contribute to the asset's significance?

Significance: Low (local)

Whereas the farmhouse would once have been the focus of a busy farm operation with all the associated movements of people, vehicular traffic, farm animals, together with associated dirt, noise and smells, key non visual sensory influences are now the peaceful, tranquil nature of rural the setting

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

- How do the asset's intellectual and associative relationships with its' setting add to its' significance

Significance: Low (local)

Properties nearby such as Grey's Court and Harpsden Court have probably had an influence on the intellectual and architectural expression of ideas found at Cowfields in the construction of the parlour for example. In other ways nearby properties within the setting, like Upper House Farm to the south of Cowfields, have once formed various parcels of property which together with Cowfields have been owned and farmed together as part of larger estates of, for example the Mackenzie family of Fawley Court

7 Conclusions

Cowfields Farmhouse is a grade II listed building and a fine timber-framed example illustrating the distinctive local and regional style of vernacular architecture found in south Oxfordshire and surrounding area. The farmhouse shows evidence of a number of different phases of construction and alteration, probably waxing and waning with the fortunes of various owners and tenants. It seems likely to have originated as the hall house of a prosperous yeoman farmer c.1500s, with enlargement and extension in the C16 and C17 including the addition of a parlour wing with a cellar. Further changes occurred in the C19-C21 including extensions and infilling, major repairs and part refacing of the timber frame.

Dating of construction phases can be assisted by techniques such as dendrochronology (tree ring dating) and by further documentary research including examination of material such as wills and probate inventories. Dr Dan Miles of Mapledurham could be contacted for assistance with dendrochronology.

The wider setting of the farmhouse has remained that of the rural countryside- the fields and copses surrounding the farm. The immediate setting has shown some change in the orientation of access to the farmhouse and farmyard, and the location of walls and cultivated orchard or garden areas. The farmyard buildings too have changed over the last 100 years with the demolition of buildings such as the granary and wellhouse.

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HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

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9. Plates

Plate 1: 1939, N elevation

Plate 2: 1939, S elevation

Plate 3: 1956, S elevation

Plate 4: 1958, N elevation

Plate 5: 1986, SE corner (HAHG)

Plate 6: 1986 Southside (HAHG)

Plate 7: Front, NE elevation

Plate 8: E elevation, parlour wing.

Plate 9: SE elevation

Plate 10: W elevation

Plate 11: S elevation

Plate 13: Setting- looking SE from kitchen

Plate 14: N elevation, arched brace and large framing

Plate 15: Hall

Plate 16: Hall, joists with lambs tongue chamfer stops

Plate 17: Solar basement, chamfered beam, wide joists, framing in W wall

Plate 18: Newel stair

Plate 20: Parlour, beam and deep joists

Plate 21: Parlour, fireplace and cupboard with shell hood

Plate 22: Open well stair

Plate 23: Detail, bay window chamber over hall

Plate 24: Chamber over hall, windbraces, NE

Plate 25: Roof of solar, cross passage below

Plate 26: Corridor, cut back tie beam and jowl post to hall

Plate 27: Solar chamber, queen post and clasped purlin

Plate 28: Parlour attic, clasped purlins and cut back collar roof

Plate 29: FFI break in wall plates to parlour and stair extension

Plate 30: Hall, smoke blackened rafters

Plate 31: Junction of solar and hall roofs

Plate 32: Detail of brace joining hall and solar roofs

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

10. Figures

- Fig 1: Statutory list description
- Fig 2: OS Map of c. 1830. 'Covel's Farm' From Bond, J and Over, L, OS Historical Guide, Oxfordshire and Berkshire, 1988, Map 35
- Fig 3: OS First Edition, 1878, 1:10,560. 'Coville's Farm'
- Fig 4: OS Second Edition, 1900, 1:10,560. 'Cowfields Farm'
- Fig 5: OS 1970, 1:10,000
- Fig 6: Google earth map, Cowfields
- Fig 7: Probate inventory of William Benwell of Coufould Farm, 1669
- Fig 8: Sketch Map of Cowfields Farm by Ruth Gibson, 1986
- Fig 9: Sketch, suggested evolution of Cowfields by John Steane
- Fig 10: Sketch plan with conjectural phasing by Sally Stradling after HAHG plan
- Fig 11: Sketch perspective of NE elevation by John Steane
- Fig 12: Sketch perspective of SE elevation by John Steane
- Fig 13: Sketch floor plans with room numbering by Sally Stradling
- Fig 14: Sketch section, chamber over hall, E, by John Steane
- Fig 15: Sketch section, chamber over hall, W by John Steane

11. Appendix

Appendix 1: Tithe Award Map 1840

Appendix 2: Tithe Award returns

COWFIELDS REPORT by Sally Straddling

Suggestions for corrections/changes and queries:

- P.7 5.3 should read sowing (not sewing)
- P.8 1st line ‘curved feet’, the more usual description is either ‘inner curved principals’ (suggested by Malcolm Airs when we first discovered these) or ‘cranked principals’ (David Clark’s preferred description). I imagine that you do refer to the type of cruck-like principals which are found in many 18th and early 19th C. barns. – I have no photograph of the smaller barn’s interior to check what these look like. Could you send me a picture so I can be sure.
- P.8 You refer to the horse wheel at Greys Court. As far as I know it is not original to it or its former home farm. It was certainly not there when I first knew Greys Ct. Also it is a typical ‘horse gin’ used to generate power for all kinds of activities such as chaff and turnip cutting, not for the raising of water.
- P.10 Para.3 refers to the ‘angled posts and angled corbels’, whilst on the plate 23 it is called ‘angled jambs & heads’. If this describes the same structure best to be consistent.
Under INTERIOR 5.6 , 2nd para’ typo, remove: one windows
- P.12 G 4 refers to ‘Solar wing basement’ . I thought there was just a ground floor there, did I miss the basement ? But the photograph on Plate 17 showing the g.f. ceiling beams also calls it solar basement. – Needs clarification
- I am not sure whether I understand the measurement references such as 61/2” and 51/2 , 51/4. Is the first figure mm? The second the same but in inches? Does not always work though. 61mm is 2 1/2“ . Can you make this clearer to the reader?
- P.18 6.0 refers to GD II as of regional importance. 6.1 Says Cowfields is Gd II listed and of national significance. It is only regionally important as a GD II.
- P. 19 3rd para. Harpsden Court not Manor

Concluding: Great piece of work.

My only doubt regarding interpretation is the conclusion that the two-storey bay window was original. It is a pity that I have no photograph or drawing of the underside of the wall plate from our first recordings, as this is now hidden under the upholstery cushion. Also my description of the holes in the beam is rather vague, due to this being in our early recording days and we were still in the early stages of learning the terminology. But there is no doubt that we saw empty mortises of former studs or mullions in the soffit of the wall plate (otherwise I would not have made a point of describing them); either of a former tall window, quite typical of halls of the better kind, or of a w&d. infill panel for a wall between the posts and no window at first floor level.

The angled jambs, looking at your photograph, are not totally convincing as being original, the way they are located to one side of the principal timbers. However, both you and John have no doubt looked at them in great detail and perhaps found evidence of pegs to come to this conclusion. I just wonder whether you might put my thoughts and what we described in as an alternative suggestion/possibility, so that the options are left open for the time being and encourage future researches to re-assess this part of the building, if the relevant wall plate becomes accessible (unless the Samuels will allow the upholstery to be removed?) . Just a thought.

With best regards

Ruth Gibson
8.7.2011

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 1.
1939, N elevation



Plate 2.
1939, S elevation



Plate 3.
1956, S elevation



Plate 4.
1958, N elevation



Plate 5.
1986, SE corner (HAHG)



Plate 6.
1986 Southside (HAHG)

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 7.
Front NE elevation



Plate 8.
ParLOUR wing E elevation. Note drop in roof.

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 9.
SE elevation



Plate 10.
W elevation



Plate 11.
S elevation, 1848 ext & solar wing



Plate 12.
Setting, looking SE



Plate 13.
N. Elevation, arched brace & break in wall plate



Plate 14.
N elevation, arched brace & framing to solar wing

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 15.
Hall general view.



Plate 16.
Hall joists, lambs tongue chamfer stops and scribed assembly marks



Plate 17.
Solar: wide joists, chamfered beam and wall framing



Plate 18.
Newel stair



Plate 19.
Kitchen: chamfered beam, wide joists



Plate 20.
Parlour: beam and deep joists

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 21.
Parlour: fireplace and cupboard with shell hood



Plate 22.
C20 Open well stair



Plate 23.
Detail of bay window, angled jambs and head,
chamber over hall



Plate 24.
Chamber over hall NE



Plate 25.
Roof of solar, cross passage below



Plate 26.
Hall chamber: cut back tie beam and jowl post in
corridor

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**



Plate 27.
Solar chamber: queen post roof, clasped purlins



Plate 28.
Parlour attic: Clasped purlin, cut back collar roof.



Plate 29.
FFI. Junction between F1 and F7 parlour wing



Plate 30.
Hall: Smoke blackened rafters A2



Plate 31.
Junction of hall and solar roofs between A3 and A4



Plate 32.
Detail, brace joining hall and solar roofs

118/2/25

HENRY BENWELL. CUFFOLD FARM.

WILL. 1756.

In the Name of God Amen I Henry Benwell of Cuffold ffarm in the Parish of Rotherfield Peppard in the County of Oxon Yeoman do make and ordain this my Last Will and Testament in manner following (that is to say) In the First place I give and Bequeath unto my son John Benwell the sum of Fifty pounds to be paid him Twelve Months after my Decease by my Executor hereinafter named I Give to my Daughter Mrs. Wright one Guinea to Buy her a Ring I give and bequeath to my Daughter Elizabeth Benwell the Sum of Two hundred and fifty poundes to be paid her by my Executor twelve Months after my Decease with Interest for the same from the Day of my Decease after the Rate of Four pounds for One hundred Poundes by the year I also give to my said daughter Elizabeth Benwell the Bed and Bedstead late Mr. Watsons together with the Blanketts and all other the Bedding and furniture belonging to the same and one third part of all my Linen of what kindsoever and one half of my Pewter Plates & Dishes And Lastly all the rest and residue of my Estate wheresoever and whatsoever both Real & Personal not by me herein before Given & Disposed of (after my Debts Legacys & funeral Expences are Satisfyed out of my Personal Estate which Personal Estate only I hereby charge with the payments thereof) I hereby give Devise & Bequeath unto my son Samuel Benwell his Heirs Executors & Administrators and Assigns for Ever But if my said Son Samuel Benwell should happen to Dye without Issue of his body Lawfully begotten Then and in such case I give and Bequeath my Real Estate in the Parish of Harpsden otherwise Harding in the said County of Oxford unto my son John Benwell & his Heirs for Ever charged & chargeable with the sum of One hundred poundes to my said Daughter Elizabeth which I do in such case give to her to be paid to her by my said Son John Benwell within Six Months after he shall be possessed thereof I make my said Son Samuel Benwell Sole Executor of this my Last Will and Testament Revoking all Wills by me heretofore made I publish and declare this to be my last Will and Testament IN WITNESS whereof I the said Henry Benwell the Testator have hereunto sett my hand & Seal the twenty second day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and

Fifty Six.

Signed Sealed Published and Declared by the said Henry Benwell the Testator as & for his last Will & Testament in the presence of us & then Attested by us in his presence EUSTACE COLES

HENRY BENWELL

The marke *R* of
RICHARD EAGLE

THOs: NEWELL

From the 'Cooper & Caldecott Collection' at Oxon Rec. Office
(Henry Solicitors)

There are many papers referring to the Bonwell family;
the following refer to Cowfields R. Peppard specifically:

- 1731 Lease of Cowfield Farm R.P. between
Som. Crice & Henry Bonwell jun.
- 1747 Lease between George Blount & H. Bonwell
- 1762 Assessment of mortgage. Samuel Bonwell
of Cuffolds R.P. Yeoman, son of Henry B., &
John Bonwell of Bix elder son of Henry B.
- 1768 Assessment of mortgage conc. 3 acres at Crags
Mead, Som. Bonwell of Cuffolds, yeom.
his elder brother John of Bix
- 1754 A.G. Blount of Henly-on-Thames grants to
A Hodge Cowfields, Paradise Farm, Highlands,
Gilletts and others
- 1771 Anthony Hodges of Bolnes, son of late Anthony,
mortgage on Cowfields, Paradise, Highlands
-
- 1840 Tithe Award: Owner Hodges Charles Green Trustee
Tenant Charles Bullock

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 1: Statutory list description

The screenshot displays the English Heritage National Monuments Record website. At the top, there is a header with the English Heritage logo and the text 'Images of England'. Below this is a navigation menu with links such as 'Home', 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', 'About Searching', 'Learning Zone', 'Links', 'FAQ', 'Feedback', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area shows the details for the listed building 'Cowfields Farmhouse' in Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire. The details include the IoE Number (247141), Location, Photographer (N/A), Date Photographed (N/A), Date listed (13 February 1985), Date of last amendment (13 February 1985), and Grade (II). A note states that the website's images are based on the 2001 statutory list and do not incorporate subsequent amendments. A description of the building is provided, detailing its architectural features. The footer contains logos for the Royal Photographic Society, English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, and Department of Culture, Media and Sport, along with copyright information for English Heritage 2007.

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IoE Number: 247141

Location: COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS, SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE

Photographer: N/A

Date Photographed: N/A

Date listed: 13 February 1985

Date of last amendment: 13 February 1985

Grade II

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ROTHERFIELD GREYS

SU78SW

6/119

Cowfields Farmhouse

II

ROTHERFIELD GREYS SU78SW 6/119 Cowfields Farmhouse - II Farmhouse. Late C17, with C18, and early C20 additions. Timber framed with brick infill and some render to centre, brick to left and right. Plain tile roof, brick stacks. 2 storeys with attic to left. 5-window range. Queen post cross-gable to left, 2 mullioned and transomed windows to ground floor. 3- light casement to 1st floor. Casement window to attic. 2-storey angled C20 bay under gabled king-post roof. Casement window to 1st floor, C20 panelled and studded door with flanking windows. Two queen post cross-gables to right. One of 2-window range with casements to all openings except 1st floor right, projecting wooden oriel under lean-to roof. Right cross gable with single window to ground floor. Interior not inspected.

Royal Photographic Society

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COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
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**Figure 2: OS Map of c. 1830. 'Covel's Farm' From Bond, J and Over,
L, OS Historical Guide, Oxfordshire and Berkshire, 1988,
Map 35**
(Covel's Farm highlighted by a red circle)

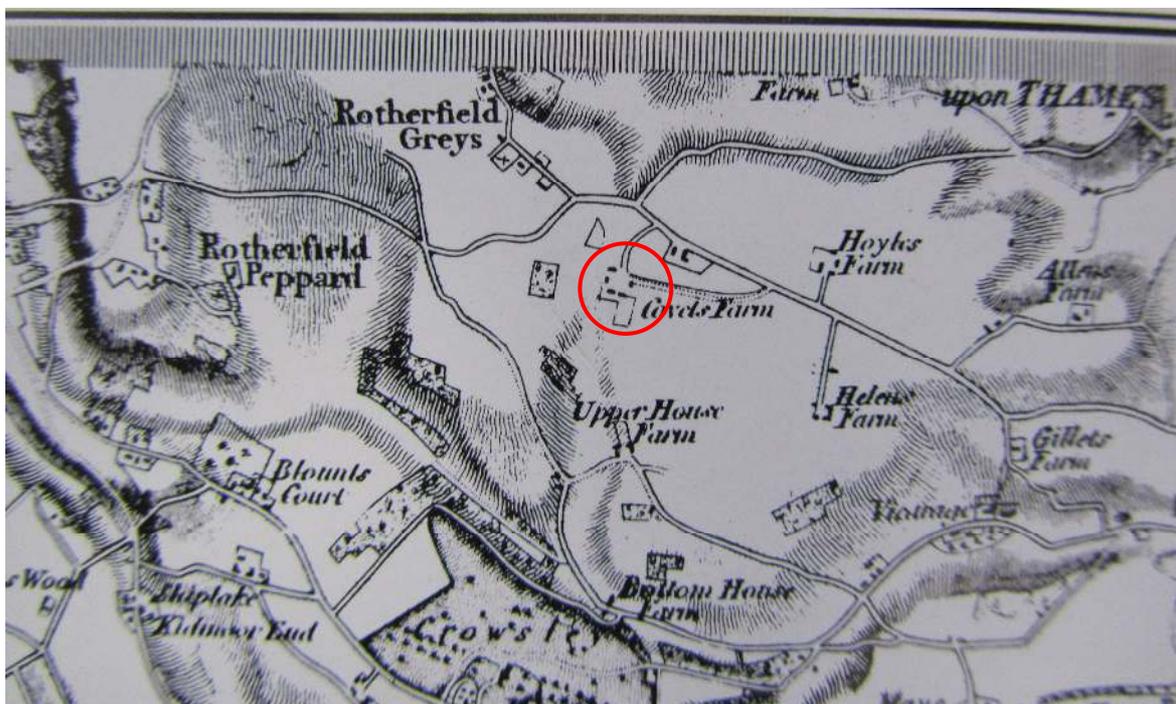


Figure 3. OS First Edition, 1878, 1:10,560. 'Coville's Farm'
(Coville's Farm highlighted by a red circle)



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 4: OS Second Edition, 1900, 1:10,560. 'Cowfields Farm'
(Cowfields Farm highlighted by a red circle)

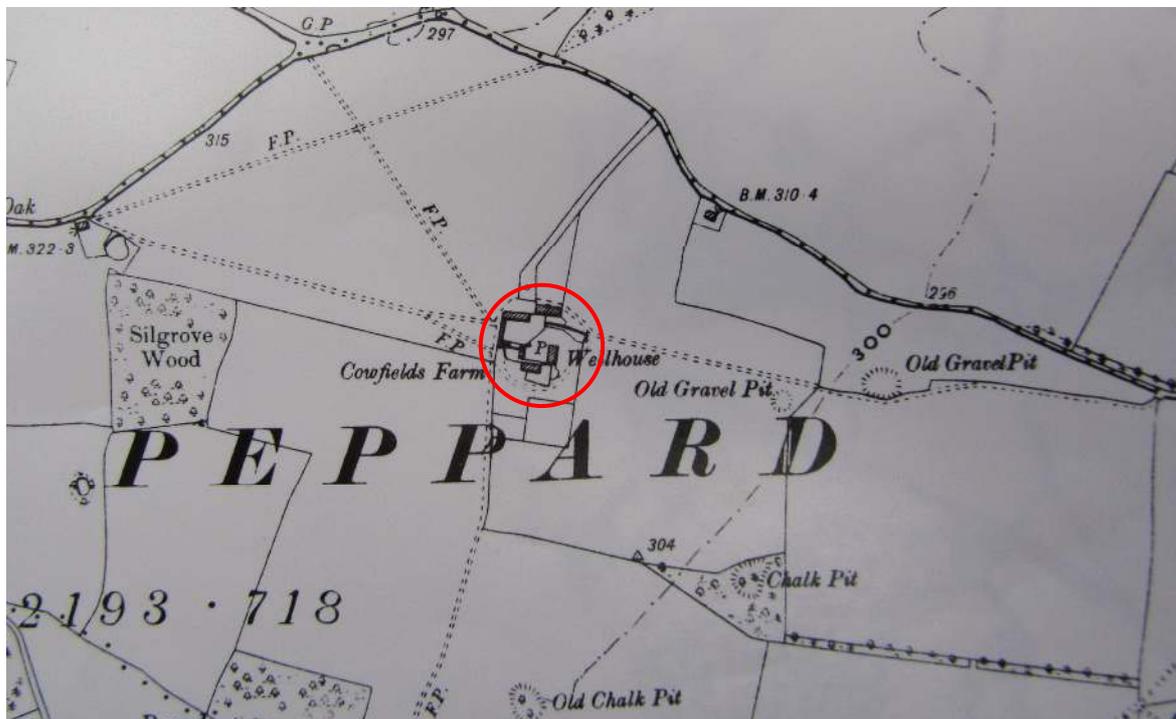
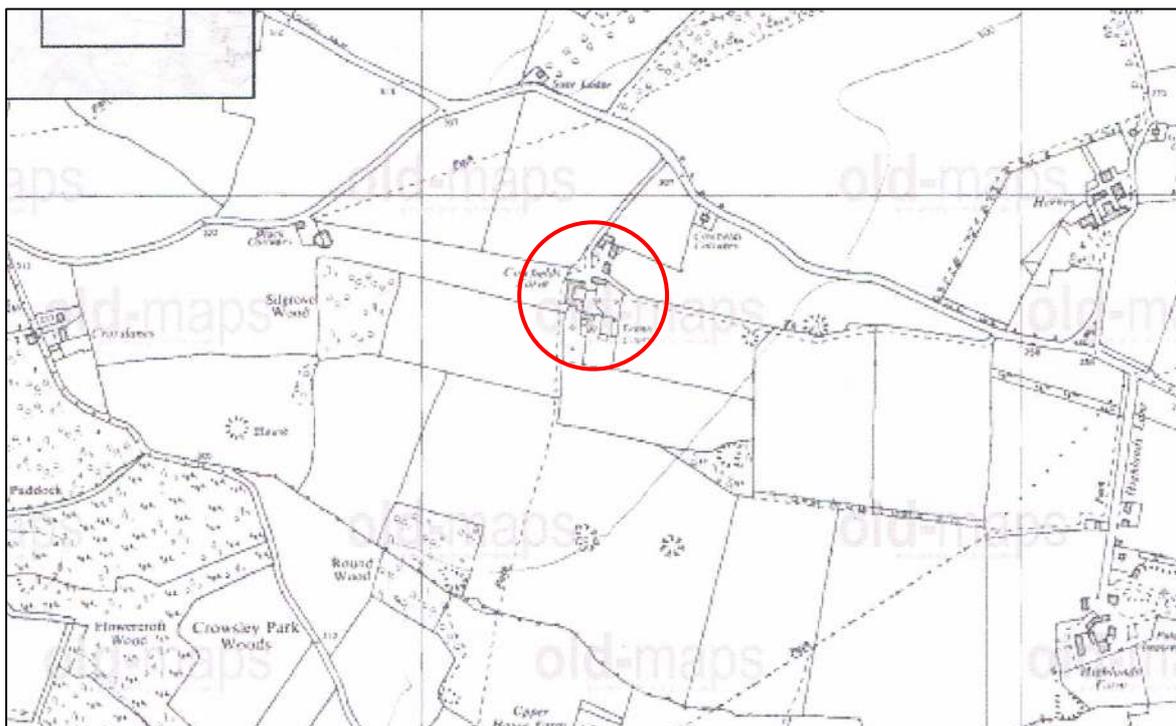


Figure 5: Land OS 1970, 1:10,000 (old-maps.co.uk)
(Covel's Farm highlighted by a red circle)



**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Figure 6: Google earth map, Cowfields



**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Figure 7: Probate inventory of William Benwell of Coufould Farm, 1669

6/3/42	Inventory	William Benwell 1669	Rotherf. Greys
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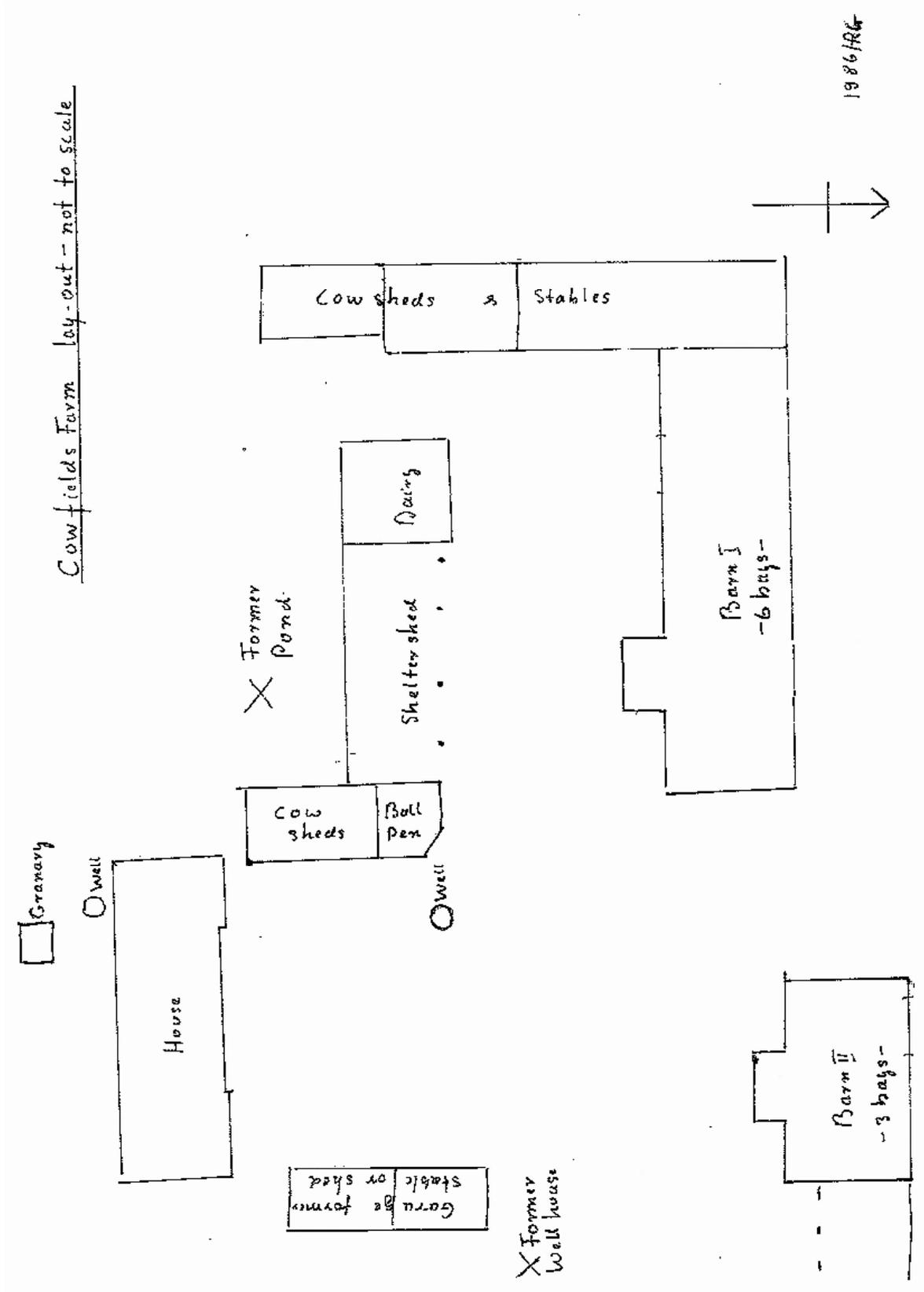
An Inventory taken of all the goods and chattles of William Benwell deceased of the Parish of Grays taken an apraised by Georg Jematt of the Parish of Shiplake and Walter Clarke of Peppard taken this 7th of May in the year of our Lord God 1669

	£	sh	d
Imprimis: His wearing apparell			
Item: Two bedsteades, a truckelbed & all ffurniture belonging to them in the <u>Chamber over the Hall</u>	7		
" The chests & coffers & boxes & the linnon in them in the Chamber afore said and one smale trunke	6		
" One side cuboard & to small Chares	15	0	6 8
" <u>At Coufould Farme in the Parish of Peppard:</u>			
" One bed stead & all that belongs to it	2		
" One Coufere & Chest	0	10	0
" One Courte Cubort	1		
" One Coufere & box		6	
" the Pewter		16	
" one Kittill		10	
" the Sheepe	12		
" one cowe	2		
" one horse	1		
" In Malt	20		
" one longe Tabel, & one Cubbord, and six stooles <u>in the Hall</u> and Three Cheres	3	10	
" The Pewter	2	10	
" The Brass	2	0	
" <u>In the Kitchen</u>			
" one Smale Table & one Seate & to Stooles & one Jake with to Cheres	1	10	
" <u>the Kitchin Chamber</u>			
" one bedsteed, one ffetherbed, one Chest	4		
" one Bible & other Books	0	10	
" ansers , tonges & fire shovle			
" and the Hangeres and one Spite	0	10	
" Halfe a dousen of Cushens		6	
" the Goods within the <u>House that Thomas Burgies live in Henley</u>	1	0	0
" The Goods within the House that <u>Thomas Houlding liveth in in Henley</u>	1	0	
" In Bonds and Redy Monney	181	6	6
" In desperet depts	17	10	
Summa all is	284	1	2

Walter Clarke
Georg Jemott
prayers of the goods

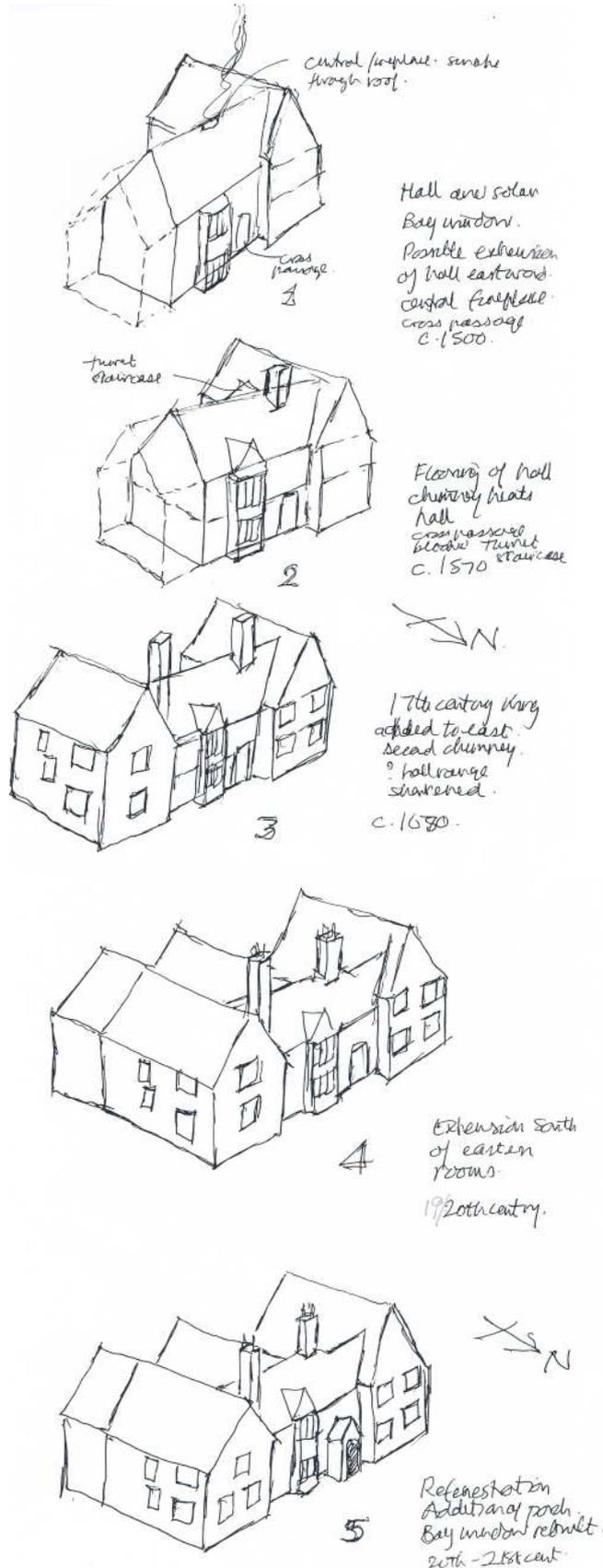
COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 8. Sketch Map of Cowfields Farm by Ruth Gibson, 1986



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

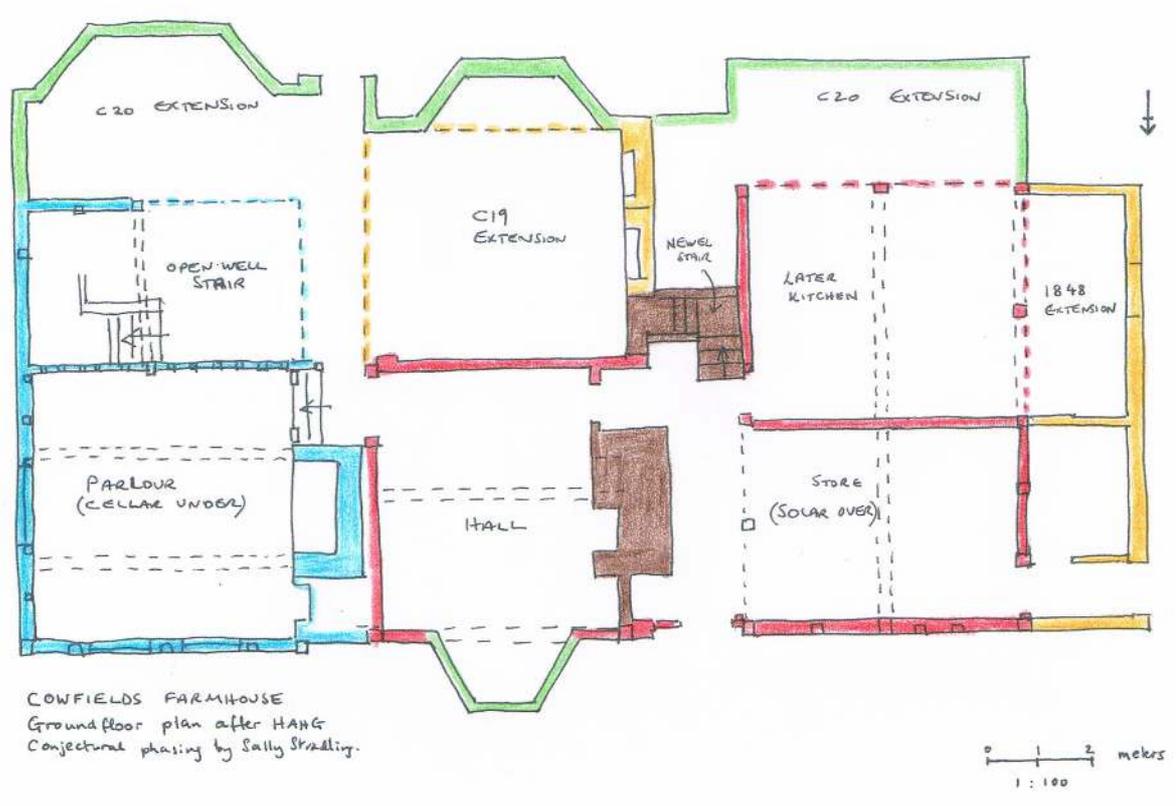
Figure 9. Suggested evolution of Cowfields with sketches by John Steane



Suggested evolution of Cowfields

COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 10. Sketch plan with conjectural phasing by Sally Stradling after HAHG plan



KEY	
■	1500s
■	1570s
■	1680s
■	1848
■	C20-C21
----	PREV. WALL
====	BEAM

**COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE**

Figure 11. Sketch perspective of NE elevation by John Steane

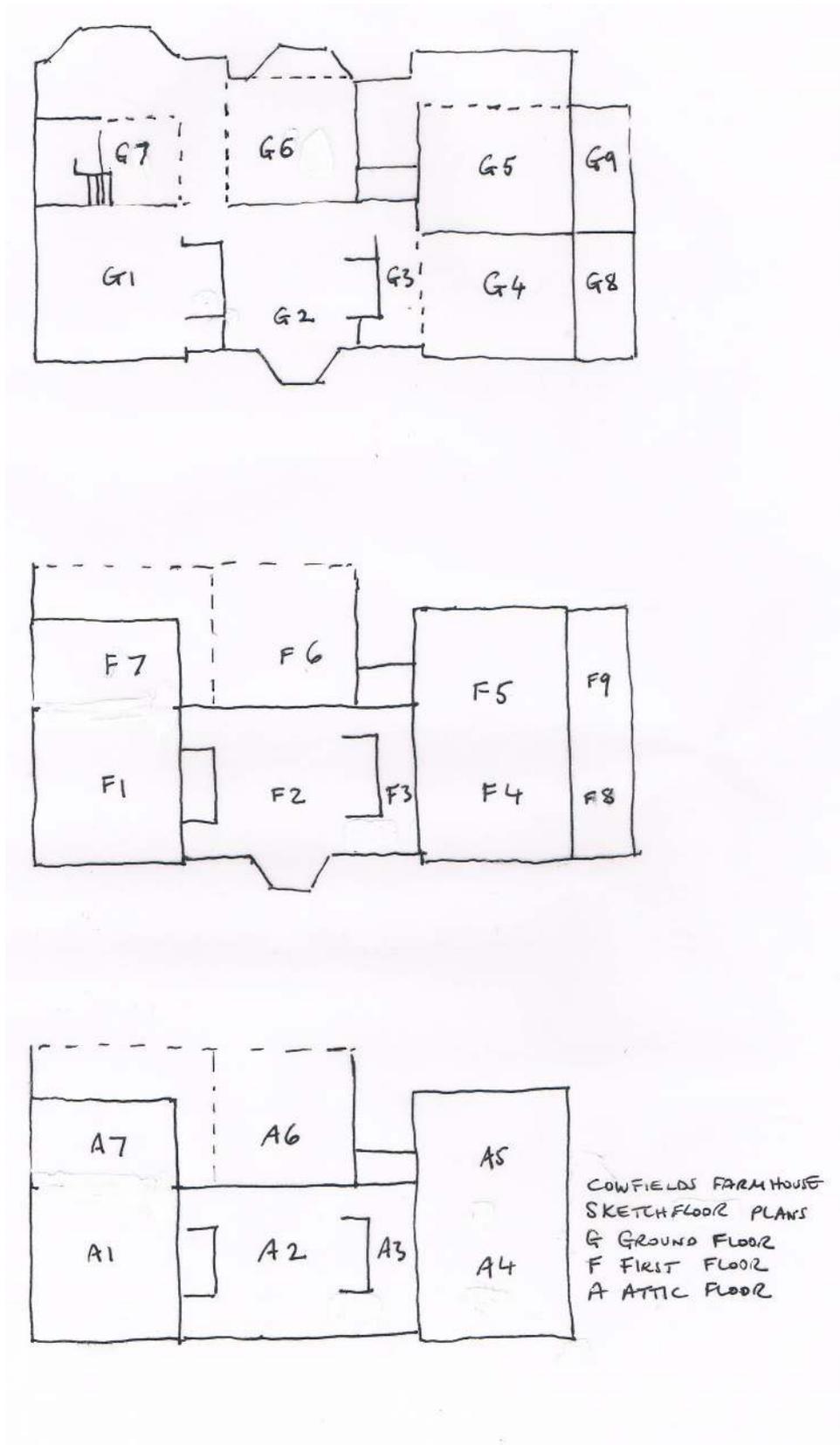


Figure 12. Sketch perspective of SE elevation by John Steane



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 13. Sketch floor plans with room numbering by Sally Stradling



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Figure 14. Sketch section, chamber over hall, E, by John Steane

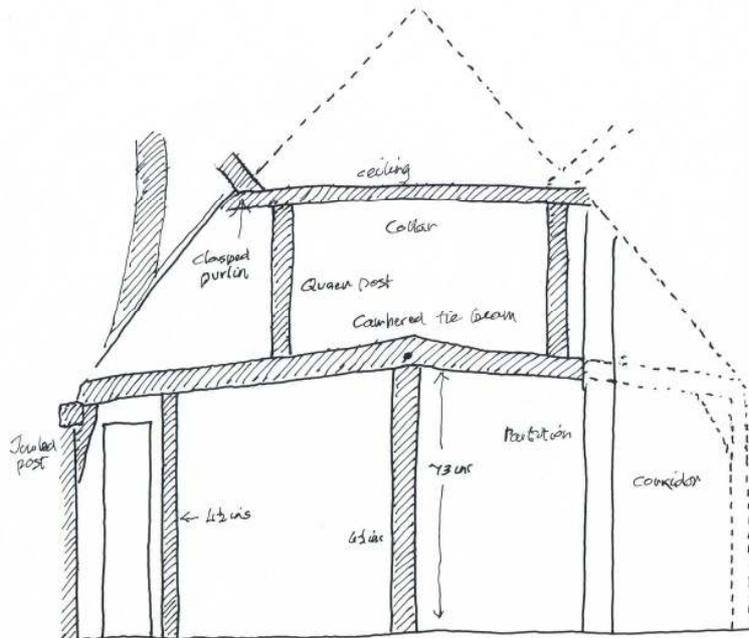
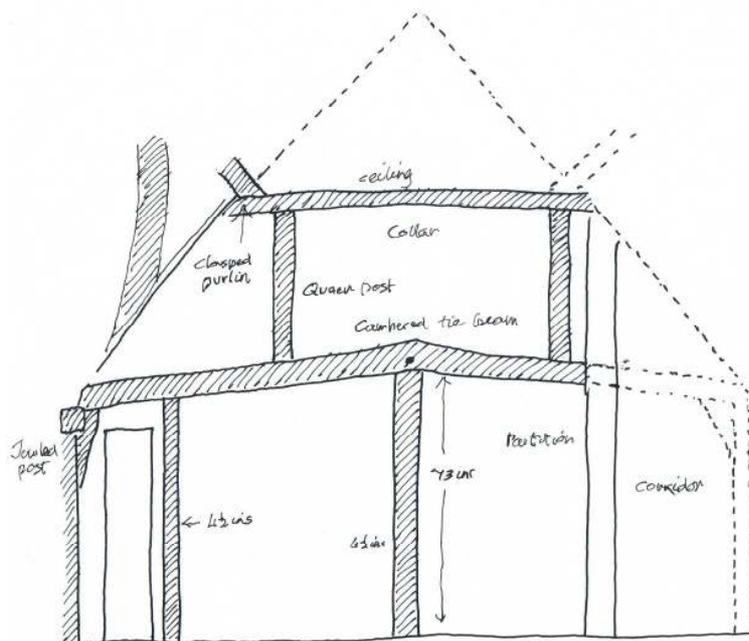
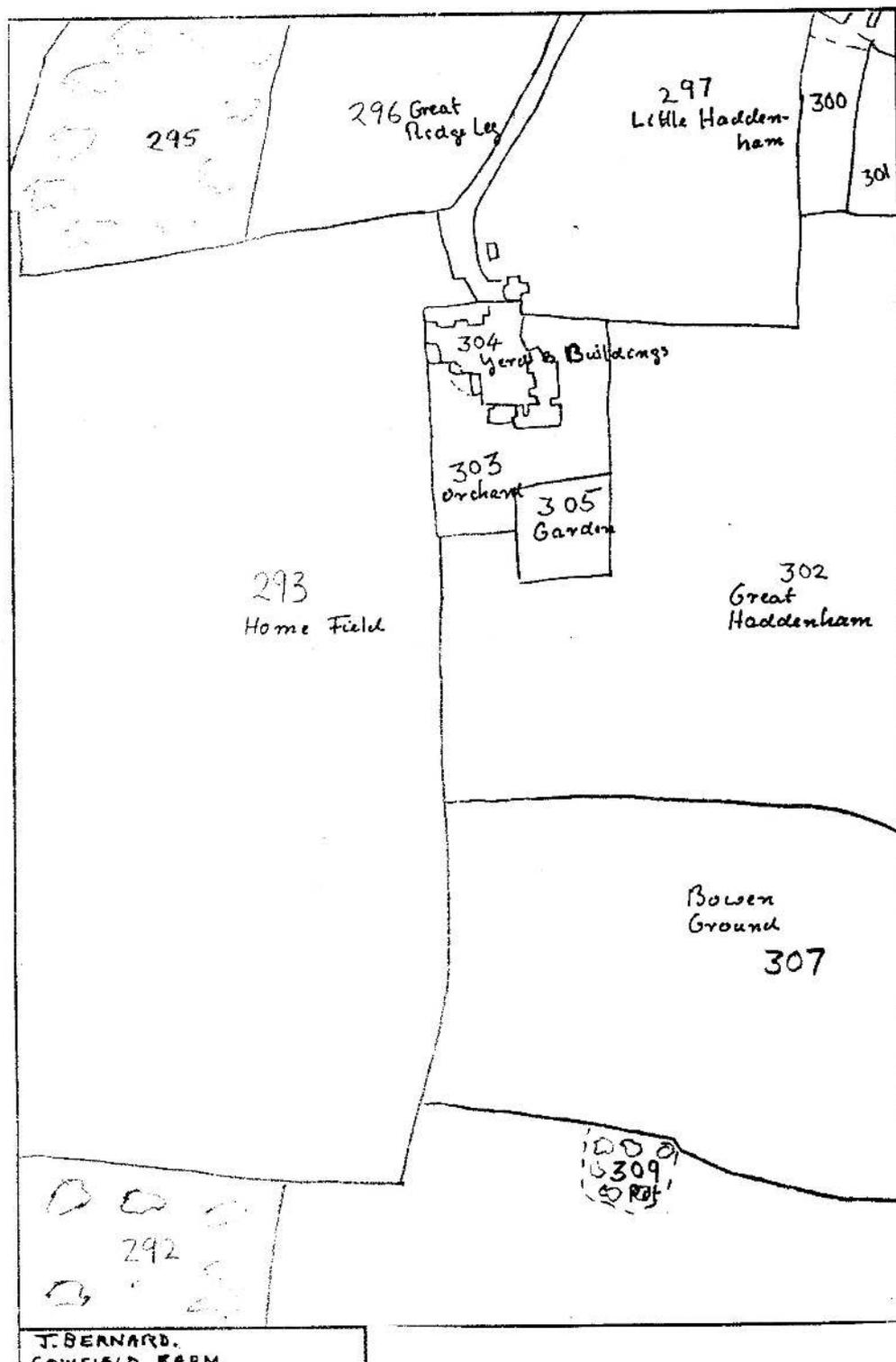


Figure 15. Sketch section, chamber over hall, W by John Steane



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Appendix 1. Tithe Award Map 1840



COWFIELDS FARMHOUSE, ROTHERFIELD GREYS,
HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

Appendix 2. Tithe Award returns

J. BERNARD

R. P. Tithe Award 1840.

Owner: Hodges Charles Green Trustee.

Tenant:

Charles Bullock.

		Acres	Roads	Patches	£	s	d
274	Holly Croft	Arable	8	2	7		
282	Paddock	"	3	0	33		
287	Great Bear Garden	"	9	1	0		
288	Little Bear Garden	"	8	0	15		
289	Silgrove Field	"	19	0	9		
290	Barrow Field	"	15	0	24		
291	Raw Croft	"	11	3	14		
293	Home Field	"	39	3	3		
296	Great Ridge Ley	"	13	1	3		
297	Little Haddenham	"	6	3	6		
302	Great Haddenham	"	18	0	26		
303	Orchard	Grass	1	2	9		
304	Yard & Buildings			1	17		
305	Garden			2	10		
306	Pit	Wood		1	15		
307	Bowen Ground	Arable	13	2	30		
308	Pit	Wood		1	15		
309	"	"		1	16		
310	Stoney Croft	Arable	19	0	13		
312	Little Hillbury	"	11	3	4		
313	Great Hillbury	"	24	3	20		
355	Peppard Mead	Grass	2	1	10		
			<u>228</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>£78.</u>	<u>2 ..</u>

Owner: Charles Elsee

Tenant: Charles Bullock

275 Paddock Arable 3 2 13 17 ..