

Heritage statement for the proposed conversion of integral carport into a habitable residential space and enclosure of the existing open front with addition of 2no windows at Oak Tree Stables, Gore Green Road, Higham, Kent, ME3 7HL.

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1.00 Introduction

Mr and Mrs Caldecourt of Oak Tree Stables have been asked to prepare a Heritage Statement to accompany an application to convert the integral carport into a habitable residential space of Oak Tree Stables

The key issue that will be considered is the historical and aesthetic significance of The Kent Barn and Oak Tree Stables at the site at Gore Green Farm. We will not include any archaeological or specific cultural analysis.

2.00 Historic & Aesthetic Significance of Site

2.01 Context

The Hoo Peninsula is the northern most point of the county of Kent. The land form reaches out into the Thames estuary and restricts access to and from the river Medway and the Thames.

Gore Green Farm is on the southern edge of the Hoo Peninsula, 1.4 miles north of Higham Village, 0.5 miles from Upper Higham (the hamlet formally known as Chequers Street) and 0.8 miles south of Church Street.

The site has 4 main built structures. In order of significance they are; Kent Barn – listed grade II, Black Cottages – former farmhouse, Stables and the Cartshed (all unlisted).



Fig 1. Gore Green Farm context within Kent

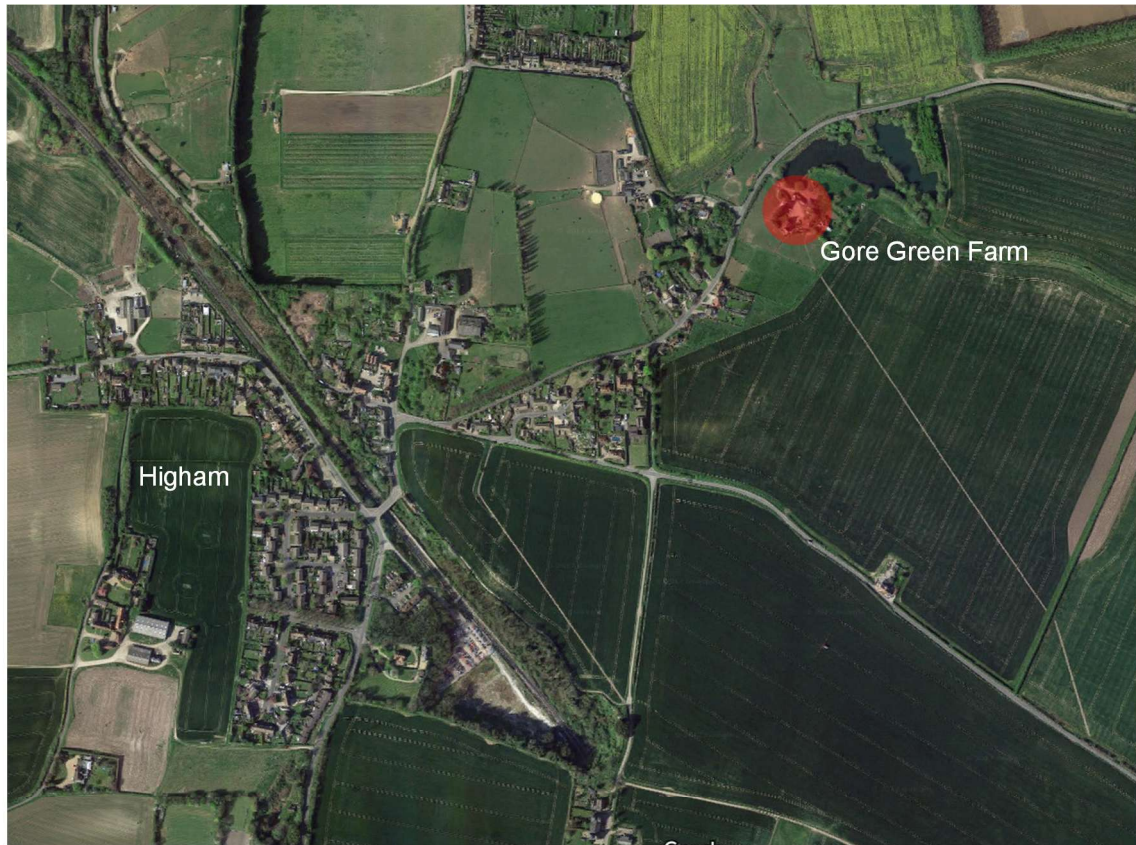


Fig 2. Gore Green Farm context in relation to Upper Higham - Google Maps

2.02 The Existing Site

The farmstead is formed as a loose courtyard with the former farmhouse raised on higher ground to the south west, the Kent Barn forms the south east corner, the Stables run perpendicularly of the Kent Barn forming the north eastern edge with the Cartshed situated on the north western boundary between the Stables and the former farmhouse.

Fig 3. Gore Green Farm Aerial Photo - Google



2.03 Site Ownership

The site at Gore Green Farm is owned by Mr and Mrs Caldecourt and was purchased in 2020. The site was formerly owned St Johns College, Cambridge. Who were the custodians of this land and collection of buildings for a number of centuries.

Previously it was under the ownership of Lady Margaret Beaufort (fig 4), mother of Henry the VII (fig 5), countess of Richmond and Derby, the land was governed by the Prioress of the Abbey at Lillechurch under the watchful eye Lady Margret and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. In 1509, Lady Margaret Beaufort, died. Prior to her death she had focused her attention on the transformation of the Hospital of St John, Cambridge into a centre of learning under the revised name St John's College, Cambridge. Bishop John Fisher of Rochester, Chancellor of the University, gave the manors of Lillechurch to St John's College to further its development. Clague Architect's have been unable to determine the exact year the lands on the Hoo Peninsula were given to St John's College, however, there is secondary evidence of this transfer of land in Hasted's account of the Parish of Higham written in 1797.

"Soon after which, in 1548, Margaret, countess of Richmond and Derby, having begun the foundation of St. John's college, in Cambridge, died, and left her executors to carry on the design; one of these was John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, who being himself a learned man, and greatly anxious for the increase of learning, obtained licence of king Henry VIII."
Hasted, 1797, British History online.

Note; The date that Lady Margaret died is incorrect in Hasted's account above.

Gore Green Farm was therefore owned by the college since the early 16th Century and farmed on a tenanted basis. The 1840's tithe map (fig 6,7 and 8) and accompanying schedule evidences that The Master and Fellows of St John's Collage Cambridge own Gore Green Farm and many other portions of land on the Hoo Peninsula and a Mr William Stunt is the tenant farmer working the land.

Fig 7. 1840 Tithe Map Schedule - Showing



Fig 4. Lady Margaret Beaufort, Mother of Henry VII, Countess of Richmond and Derby
National Portrait Gallery



Fig 5. King Henry VII
National Maritime Museum

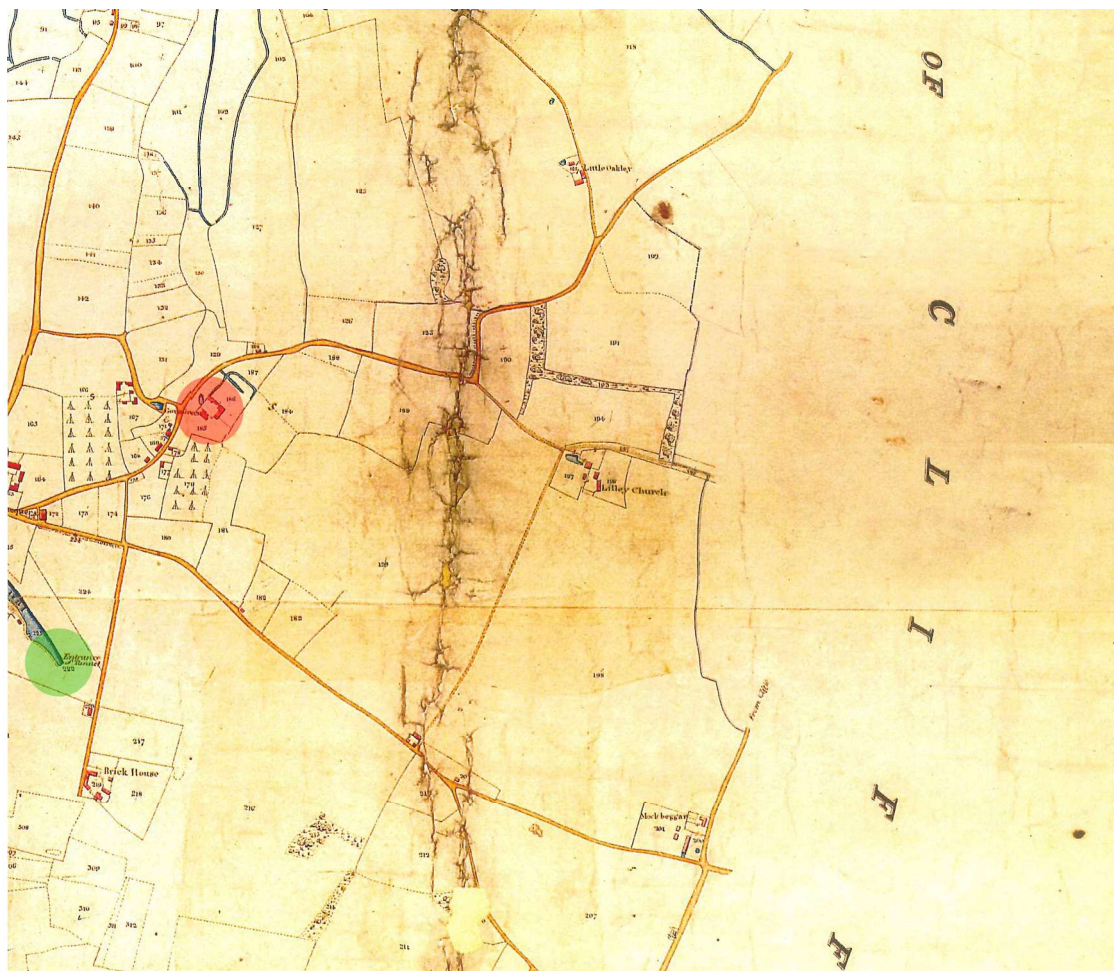


Fig 6.1840 Tithe Map of Gore Green Farm (red) and the Canal Tunnel (green)

Owner	Occupier	No.	Description	Cultivation	Quantities	Vicarial Appropriator
Master & Fellows of St John's College Cambridge	James Redsale & others	385	Cottages in Four Tenements & Gdns at Gadshill	---	<u>0.2.11</u>	<u>0.5.9</u>
	Edward Nash	287	House and Garden	Plantation	<u>0.1.20</u>	
	William Stunt	14	Colts Marsh	Pasture	10.3.25	
		15	Wick Marsh	Pasture	7.2.19	
		16	Shutting Marsh	Pasture	14.2.20	
		17	Wick Piece	Pasture	1.0.10	
		18	Lwr Comports Marsh	Pasture	17.3.8	
		19	2nd Comports Marsh	Pasture	10.2.15	
		22	Pauls Shutting Marsh	Pasture	16.3.24	
		23	Sluice Marsh	Pasture	13.0.10	
		115	The Wet Marsh	Pasture	9.1.8	
		128	Cottage and Garden	---	0.1.4	
		129	Gore Green	Pasture	3.2.5	
		130	Gore Green Meadow	Pasture	4.0.10	
		170	Garden at Gore Green	---	0.0.18	
		175	Cottage & Garden at Gore Green	---	0.0.26	
		178	Cottage & Garden at Gore Green	---	0.0.24	
		209	Kemps Wood	Wood	2.3.22	
		211	Great Kemps & Shaw	Arable	22.2.16	
		211a	Kemps Wood	Wood	1.0.36	
		214	Long Shaw	Wood	1.0.35	
		215	Old Chalkhole Shaw			
			1st Upper Press Field			
			2nd Upper Press Field	Wood	1.3.0	
		216	Pear tree Field			
			1st Lower Press Field			
			2nd Lower Press Field	Arable	100.0.13	

Fig 7. 1840 Tithe Map Schedule - Showing

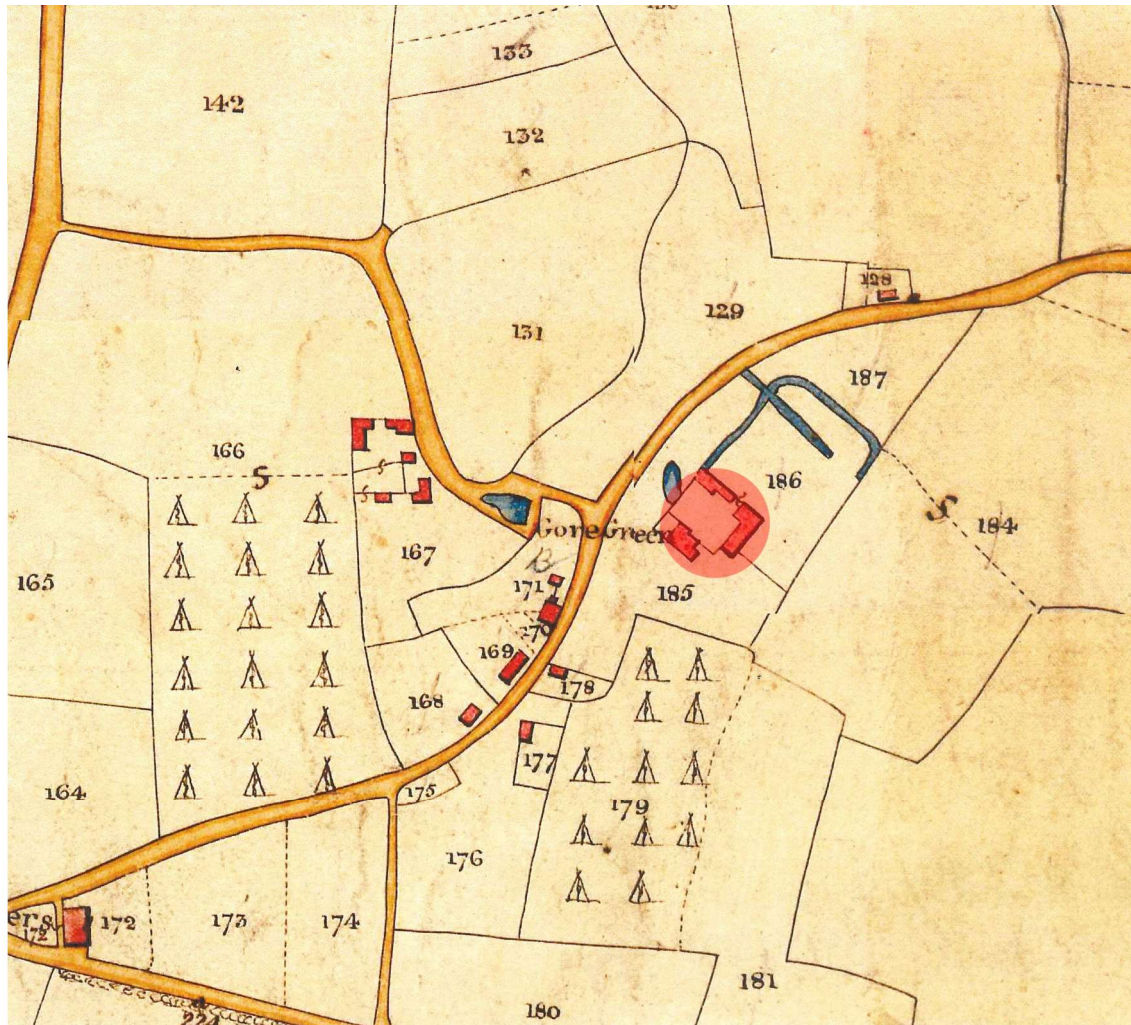


Fig 8. 1840 Tithe Map

2.04 19th Century Change

Half a mile to the south of the site is the former Thames and Medway Canal route. Figure 6 shows a tunnel entrance in 1840. The formation of the canal was promoted by Ralph Dodd an engineer from the north east of England. The concept for the canal was to reduce the time taken to move goods and military equipment from the important military focused Medway towns to London. The route was designed to decrease the journey time by two thirds.

The building of the canal was originally budgeted in 1799 as costing £24,500, a vast sum. A year later, in 1800, when works began the cost had increased to £57,400 and at its completion in 1824 the final costs of the works was in the region of £260,000, following five acts of parliament. Whilst the canal was being constructed a new form of transport was being developed, the steam locomotive. Within years of the canal being completed this new faster and cheaper form of transport was being marketed and would soon signal the downfall of the many canals that had been constructed and were being planned for the future.

From 1845 the canal route was used by both the Thames and Medway Canal Company and the South Eastern Railway Company. The channel as a route for maritime trade had largely ceased by the 1930's. The route is currently used by South Eastern trains as the main line from London to

Rochester.

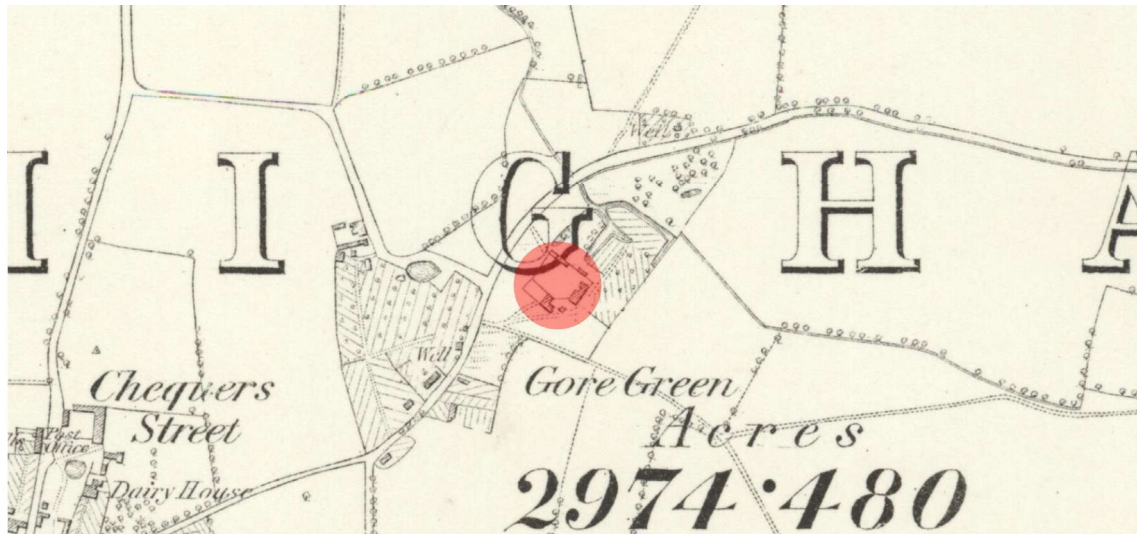


Fig 9. 1862 Strood Union Map - Showing Upper Higham named as Chequers Street

Over the last 200 years the OS Maps show the development of the surrounding villages, unsurprisingly large growth has been recorded. This is partly due to the arrival of the railway (locally) and continued mechanisation in farming, these two changes, meant less of the workforce was needed for the production of food giving the ability for a boom in industrial activity. As explained previously the Hoo Peninsula is at the mouth of the Thames estuary, making it well placed to take advantage of the rise of industry and commercial activity. The building of the canal as trade route and later its conversion into the main railway line cemented its role locally in these activities.



Fig 10. 1960 OS Map - Gore Green Farm (red) and the Canal Tunnel (green) Now the Railway

Over the last 50 years small scale agriculture has been on the decline. Constant advances in

mechanisation has left small tenant farms unable to survive, with the competition of larger industrial farms. To some extent the decline is partly due to the inflexible historic buildings which restrict the use of modern equipment . Gore Green Farm is a prime example of this historic process.

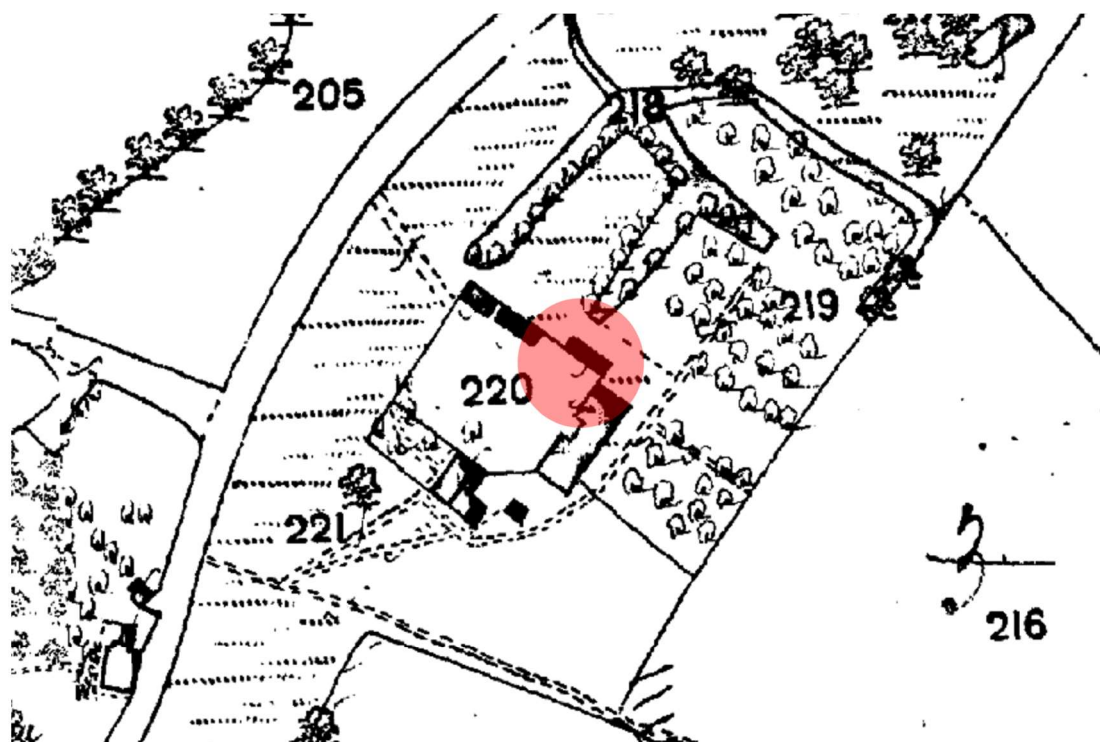


Fig 11. 1871 - 1890 OS Map - Gore Green Farm

The Historic Map of Gore Green Farm dated 1871 – 1890 indicates a clear courtyard boundary with separate access to the existing farm house. The map shows an additional structure on the outskirts of the site boundary to the north east of the existing barn.

Further development of the site is shown in figure 12 dated from 1907 – 1923 with the addition of a lean-to roof on the north end of the barn. The structure appears to be narrow and enclosed along the north west elevation. Evidence of pre-existing structures on the north side of the stable allow for justification to rebuild on the former footprint as shown in the maps above.

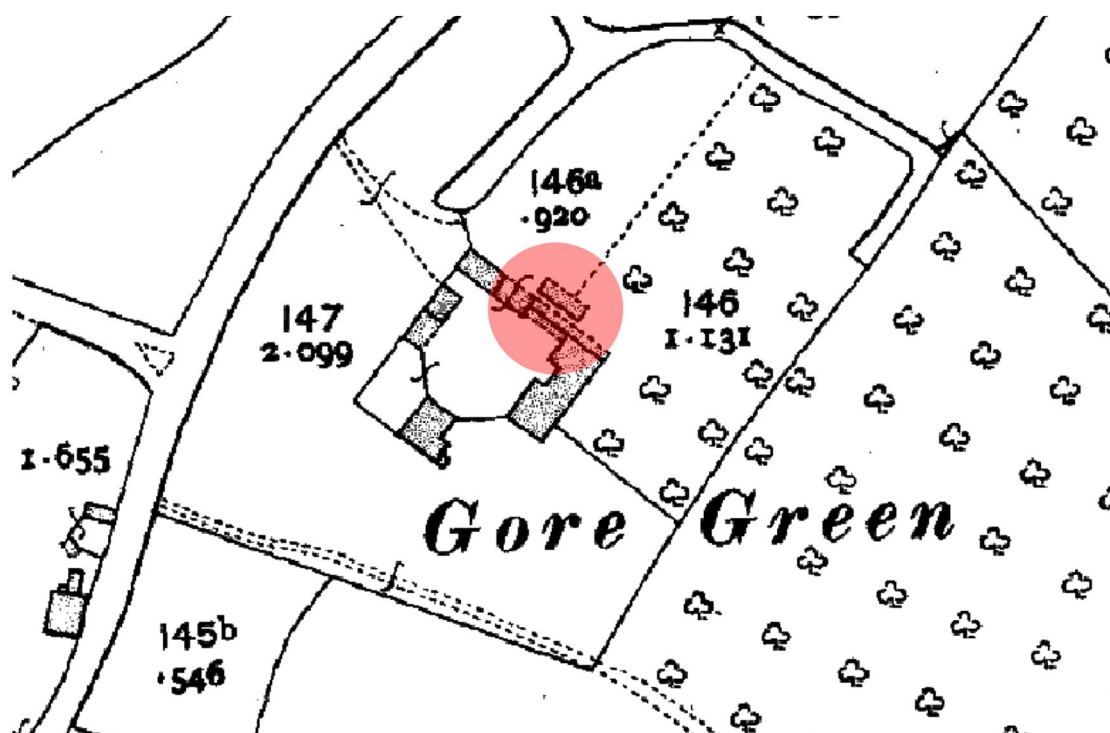


Fig 12. 1901 - 1923 OS Map - Gore Green Farm

3.00 Historic & Aesthetic Significance of the Buildings

3.01 The Kent Barn

The Barn was listed in 1983. The description is as follows;

"Perhaps C16. Aisled oak structure in 5 bays. Weatherboarded with asbestos cement roofing. Queen posts. Passing braces in aisles. Central midstreys somewhat altered."

The description above is a little brief, however, it alludes to the date of the barn coinciding with the transfer of the land to St John's College, Cambridge. The farm would have seen considerable investment to ensure that the farm was able to provide sufficient funds for the future development of The College.

It goes on to describe the internal structure as being formed of oak and consisting of 5 bays (fig 13) with altered midstreys with specific mention to a queen post roof frame. This description can be closely match to the barns current appearance.

However, there is evidence that an earlier truss design was in place and the queen post goal frame (fig 16) that can be seen on 2 of the bays are in fact later insertions of sawn timber, arranged in an adhoc manner. The earlier arrangement appears, from ground level, to have been raking struts (fig 16).

3.02 Stables

The Stables run perpendicularly off the Kent Barn forming the north eastern edge of the loose courtyard arrangement. The former construction suggests that the building dates from the 19th century. The building used to vary in height, width and style. However, the historic fabric had largely been lost. The Stables have now been remodeled and rebuilt to form a 3 bedroom family home and are our current residence.

DATUM 5.00m

SECTION 15-15

DATUM 5.00m

SECTION 16-16

Southern section of Stables





Northern section of Stables former state



Northern section of stables currently

4.00 Conclusion

In conclusion the set of buildings at Gore Green Farm range from high historic and cultural value to buildings of low value. However as a group of buildings they are important as a good example of a loose courtyard farm arrangement which is part of a wider rural landscape

The proposed carport will have no visual impact on the Grade II listed barn