

An historic buildings assessment of Wolvesacre Hall, Iscoyd, near Whitchurch



Nigel Baker
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By Nigel Baker BA PhD FSA MCIfA
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Summary

A survey of the farm buildings at Wolvesacre Hall, and subsequent research, show that the farmyard had developed north of the medieval moated hall by c.1800, and was enhanced by construction of a new farmhouse c.1850 and the abandonment of the old moat. There was further significant investment in the site c.1879, probably by the neighbouring estate.

The buildings vary in their condition, legibility and significance. The least-altered are barns C and B, a stable block and an open-sided cart-shed, both of c.1879, both extremely common types. Barn A is a much-altered/mutilated probable cowhouse range of the same period. The 'L-shaped barn' comprises two buildings. One, the north range, is an example of a steam-powered 'designer cowhouse' of the Victorian high farming period, in a mutilated and part-ruined state. The other, the eastern range, is the earliest of the standing buildings, a multi-functional building range of c.1800.

Introduction

This report was commissioned in May 2017 by Mr John Clarke, owner of Wolvesacre Hall, via his agent, Moss Co, in response to a requirement advised by CPAT to undertake a historic buildings assessment to mitigate the demolition, part-demolition and alteration of traditional buildings as part of the redevelopment of the farmyard complex (planning ref. Wrexham BC P/2017/0258). The survey of the farmyard buildings and the farmhouse (located at NGR SJ 506424) was undertaken by the writer in May 2017.

This report is designed to be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement by Moss Co (2017), which contains full details of the redevelopment and measured drawings of the buildings reported here.

Historical and archaeological background

Detailed historical research has not been undertaken for this site and only the barest history can be reported here. Wolvesacre Hall is first apparent in the archaeological record as a moated site, possibly manorial in status, possibly of late 13th-century origin, and probably one of three in Iscoyd parish, including one site suspected to lie under Iscoyd Hall, the country house just south of Wolvesacre. The moat is still partly extant and is Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (Flintshire no.178). The CPAT Historic Landscape Characterisation notes Iscoyd as HLC character area 1127, distinguished by a pattern of large and small irregular fields with some ridge & furrow surviving the north and west of Wolvesacre Hall.

Iscoyd Hall was to play a role in the development of Wolvesacre, but only in the later 19th century. A series of estate plans from 1780 onwards, following the purchase of Iscoyd Hall by the Reverend Richard Congreve, omits Wolvesacre, which lay beyond the northern boundary of the Iscoyd estate, which ran just north of fishponds and the 'Mount', a barrow-like mound. The history of Iscoyd Hall has not been traced. Burke's *Landed Gentry* (1886, vol. I) notes that Mariamne Congreve died unmarried there in 1871 though it had been bought in 1843 by Philip Lake Godsal, a leading coach-maker, in 1843. By the end of the 1870s at the latest the estate had acquired Wolvesacre Hall, as the late 19th-century buildings there have uniform neo-classical detailing which the owner reports as being the signature of Iscoyd estate buildings, and a datestone of 1879 bears the initials P.W.G., which can be identified as those of Philip William Godsal (son of P. L. Godsal) 'an improving agriculturalist and rural philanthropist' ('Invitation to View' website on Iscoyd Park).

The site was first mapped in the early 1840s by the surveyor for the local Tithe Commission (C.R.O. ref EDT 219/2, Malpas parish, Iscoyd Township; see Design & Access Statement, and below). This shows a principal building still standing in the south-east corner of the moat approached via a drive from the NE side. The site of the present farmyard is shown as an irregular polygon, linked to the moat by a drive and linked to an irregular drove-way on the site of the present enclosed road. Three buildings were disposed along the northern edge of the farmyard. One of these can be identified with the earlier, eastern, wing, of the present 'L-shaped barn'. The tithe survey is, it seems, not very accurate in showing the layout of the farmyard buildings. This is not surprising – it is in fact consistent with the writer's experience of historic farmyards on tithe maps, where, at least in Shropshire, about ten per cent of the tithe surveys omit major farm buildings or suffer from other serious errors, presumably because it was the fields and their acreages that were important, not the 'house and buildings' of the actual farmyards.

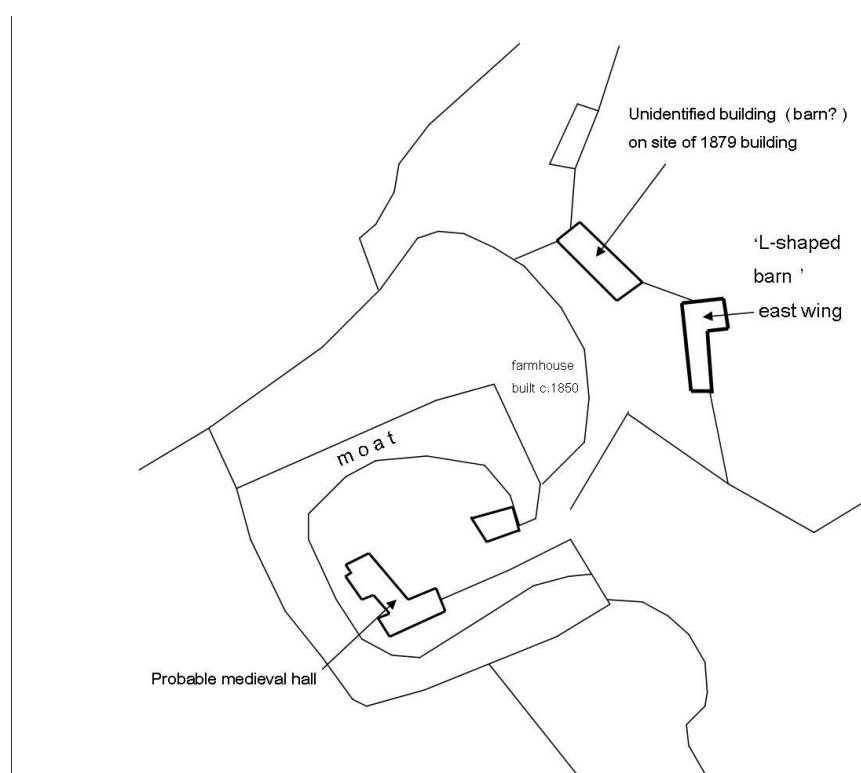
The first reliable survey of Wolvesacre Hall is that of the Ordnance Survey first edition 1:2,500 and 1:10,560 (6-inch) plans, surveyed in 1873-8, published in 1891 (general figures, below). These show most of the moat still surviving, though its internal buildings had gone, presumably replaced by the present farmhouse which was, sensibly, built just outside the infilled north corner of the moat. The farmyard to the north had matured into a regular quadrilateral form, with two buildings end-to-end (but not quite in line) on the north side, replaced by the 'L-shaped barn' range of 1879, and a building on the site of 'Barn A' on the west side. The next O.S. edition (1901) shows the farmyard ranges as they now exist, with a cattle (or manure) shed in the middle of the yard, since removed.

Methodology

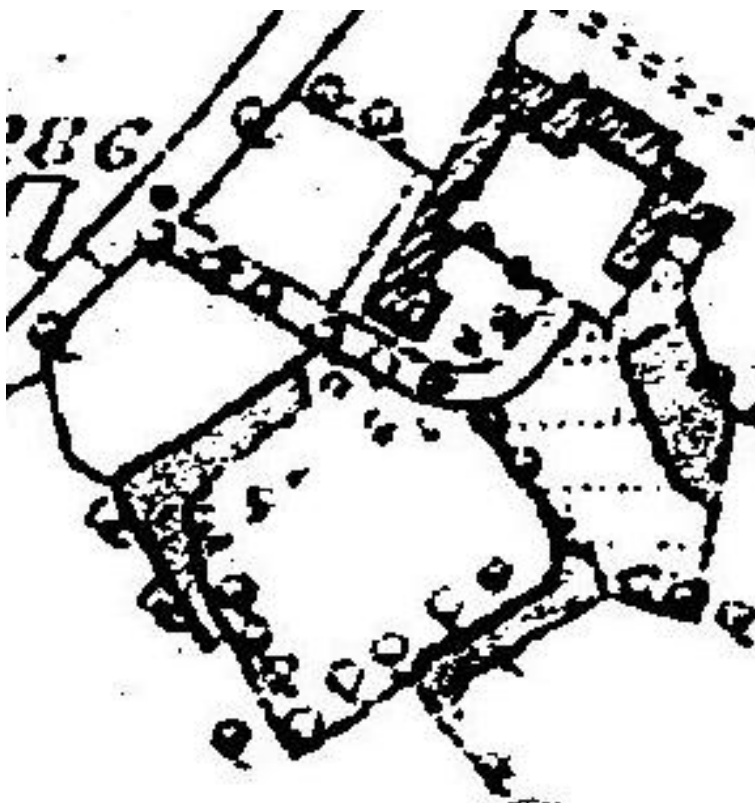
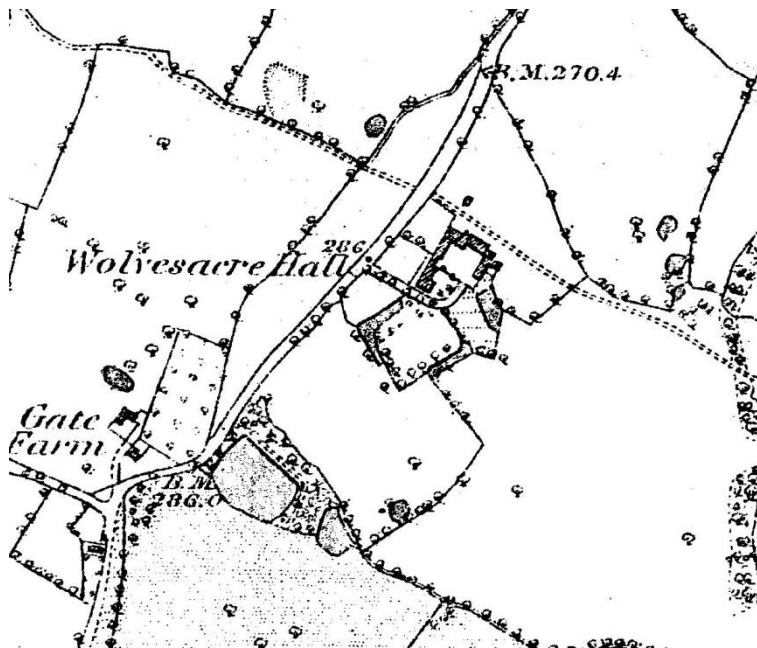
The buildings were visited by the writer in May 2017 at a time when a number of steel-framed sheds of 20th-century date had already been demolished, opening up views of the farmyard as it had been in the late 19th century. The buildings were unoccupied and unused. Most were found to be basically intact but neglected, though the north end of 'Barn A' and, most notably, the north-west end of the 'L-shaped Barn', were ruinous, the latter having occurred as a result of gales earlier in 2017. Not all spaces were fully accessed where there were safety issues (west end of the 'L-shaped barn' and much of the first floor of its east range).

For full details of the recording methodology and approach, the reader is referred to the Appendix, the *Written Scheme of Investigation* governing the recording process, submitted to Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust in May 2017.

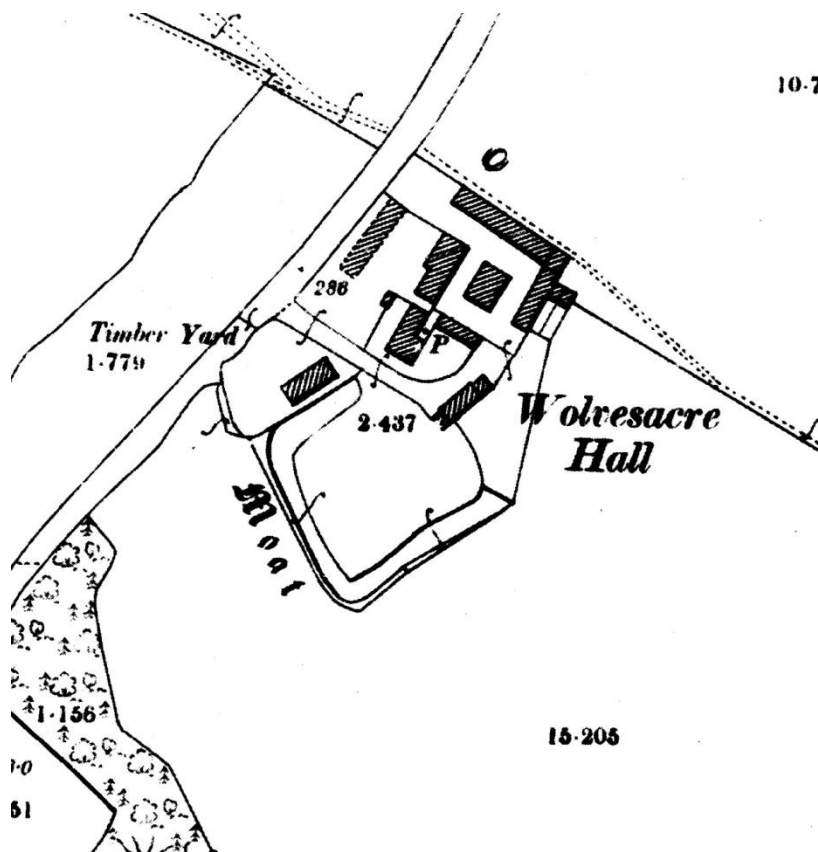
GENERAL ILLUSTRATIONS



The moated site and nascent farmyard to the north in c.1840, based on the Tithe Map



Wolvesacre Hall in 1873-8. The O.S. 6-inch 1st edition. Top: the site in its setting north of the Iscoyd Hall parkland; bottom: enlarged to show the farmyard with the new farmhouse and its drive, the existing east wing of the 'L-shaped barn' and buildings since demolished on the north and west sides



Wolvesacre Hall in 1901 (O.S. 2nd edition). All the ranges reported on here are extant after the redevelopment of the farm c.1879. Barn B (bottom) has been extended at each end. The shed in the centre of the yard has now gone, as has the rear wing of the eastern farmyard range

Description of the standing buildings

The Farmhouse

A very brief inspection of the farmhouse confirmed the cartographic evidence for its origin in the mid-19th century. The brick building has a simple L-plan, with a two-storey front (south) wing symmetrically planned with reception rooms either side of a central hallway and staircase, and a contemporary rear wing, also two-storeyed, with a lower section on the west side under a catslide roof. There are end stacks on each gable of the front range; all the eaves have a simple dentilled brick course. Later extensions include a bay added to extend the rear range northwards (late 19th-century), a small outshut in the angle of the two wings and a conservatory on the east gable.

Interior inspection was similarly rapid, and excluded the attic space and those first-floor rooms in poor condition. However, the form of the staircase, with simple inch-square banisters, and the presence of panelled doors in the front wing and planked doors in the rear wing, were consistent with a farmhouse of the mid-19th century. More surprising was the presence of exposed ceiling beams with elaborately-stopped chamfers. While these would have been quite at home in a 17th-century context, they seem to be archaic features in a genuinely Victorian building, with no signs of their having been re-used (all are in pristine condition with no redundant mortices or peg-holes). The pair exposed in the south front room match exactly that in the kitchen in the rear wing, demonstrating the contemporaneity of the two wings; there is probably another pair above the lower ceiling of the north front room. The question of an encased timber frame does not arise as the building was not there when the Tithe Map was surveyed in the 1840s.

Close to the catslide-roofed section to the west of the farmhouse is a small disused pig-sty range, its position convenient for the farmhouse kitchen and for the dairy.

FARMHOUSE: ILLUSTRATIONS



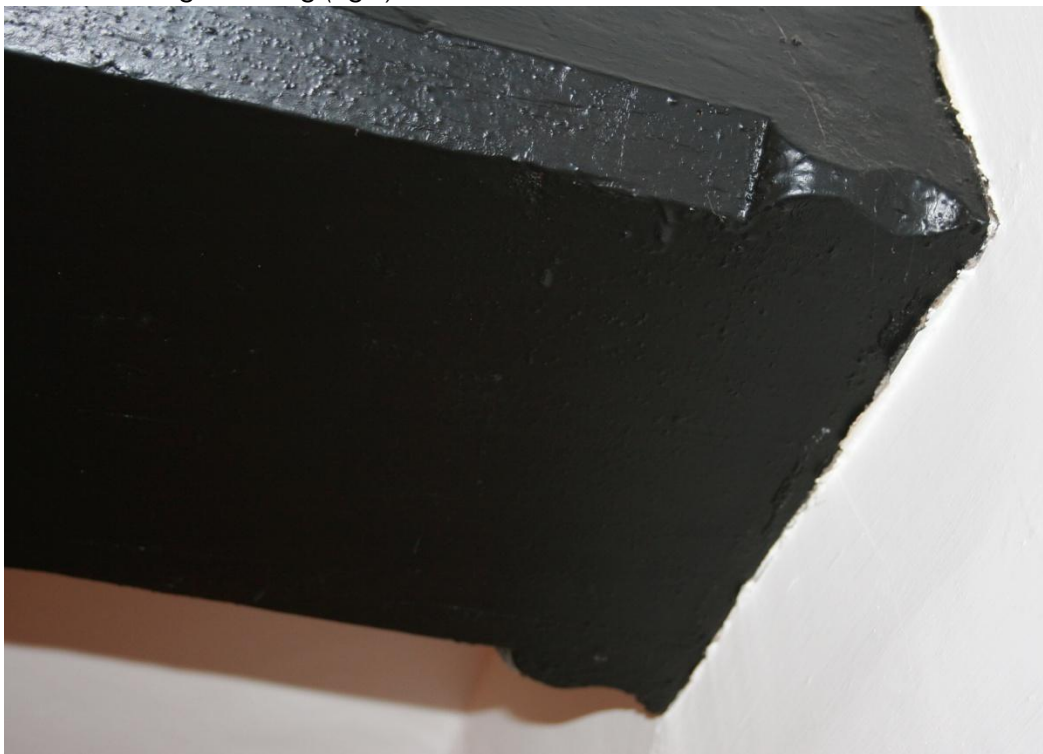
The farmhouse from the front, looking north west. The change in level represented by the modern plinth/patio roughly reflects the edge of the medieval moat, infilled shortly before the house was built



The farmhouse from the rear, looking south east. The bay nearest the camera (left) is a later 19th-century extension to the original rear wing with its catslide-roofed section, of c.1850. The pigsty block (foreground) was convenient to receive waste from the kitchen and the dairy



The farmhouse, garden view, looking south west: the L-plan consisting of the 'polite' front wing (left) and the working rear wing (right)



The farmhouse, south front room, detail of ceiling beam with stopped chamfer

'Barn A'

This building lies north-south closing the west side of the farmyard. Of late 19th-century date, it is brick-built with a corrugated asbestos roof-covering on both pitches, and

dentilled/corniced gables with the classical detailing in contrasting dark blue engineering brick. This, along with base courses of engineering brick, distinguishes it as part of the 'estate investment' phase of the farmyard, probably of c.1879 and the ensuing years, along with the north farmyard range (part of the 'L-shaped barn') and barns B and C. It is of one storey with an attic; the latter was not accessed. There are extensions at both ends: at the south containing the dairy with a contemporary outshut projecting on the west side, added probably in the early 20th century, the north (now unroofed) containing part of the milking parlour, added in the mid-20th.

The west elevation is plain, with one wide doorway and no windows. The east (yard) elevation now has four windows, originally two windows and two doors onto the yard. The inserted windows have concrete lintels, the originals had segmental-arched brick heads. A blocked door at the south end retains the quarter-round moulded sandstone blocks to support the hinge pintels of a two-leaf stable-type door – again a feature characteristic of the 'estate investment' phase buildings. The interior of the main block contains a disused mid-20th-century milking parlour with a sunken central well in the concrete floor; the milking parlour extends into the north extension, built probably expressly for the purpose. The south extension containing the dairy has one (blocked) door to the yard and one window; its south gable contains a doorway and two windows giving access to and lighting the dairy.

'BARN A' ILLUSTRATIONS



Barn 'A' farmyard (east) elevation showing the main block with extensions added at both ends, that at the south end (nearest the camera) partly covering the engineering-brick gable pediment detail



'Barn A' view from south-west corner, dairy in foreground



'Barn A' flat-roofed N extension, including milking parlour, looking south

'Barn B'

'Barn B' is a two-phase building, a cart-shed, built in the late 19th century (c.1879 or the years following). It nevertheless exhibits two oddities. The first is its orientation, which lies

roughly NE-SW. This, it seems, is because it was built on the curve of the driveway added around the south side of the farmhouse into the yard, perhaps angled so that its open side was easily visible from the farmhouse for added security. The building was not there in 1873-8 when the site was first surveyed by the O.S. and its orientation has therefore nothing to do with that of the former buildings within the moat. Secondly, it uses distinctive hand-made bricks (22-23cm x 6-6.5cm x 10.5-11cm), perhaps locally-made, for its walls, but contrasting machine-made imported brick and blue engineering brick for its neo-classical detailing, consistent with the other 'estate phase' buildings.

The earlier phase of the building is the central section: a single-storey cart shed with an open timber arcade of four bays, facing north-west. The arcade has timber posts with 'gunstock' jowls (enlarged heads), but is now infilled with modern brickwork and timber slats. Within is a three-bay room with a single-bay room partitioned off (with a manger along the partition) at its south end. The roof structure is a modern, nailed and bolted, softwood kingpost. The end gables have the dentilled pediment design, in engineering brick contrasting with the hand-made brickwork of the walls.

At each end of the building is an extension, of slightly smaller dimensions than the original building, butted against each gable wall. At the north end is a plain room, open to the purlin roof, with a concrete floor; a stable-type door has been replaced by a sliding door. At the south end the extension contains a main room with a fireplace, lit by a glazed window in the west wall with a wooden frame and iron bars. A doorway leads into a small privy to the rear (east), which is also directly accessible from the outside via a doorway with no provision for a door. Both extensions have the same classical pediment detailing suggesting that, although they were built later than the central open-sided block, they belong to the same phase of investment in the farm. The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition shows extensions at both ends by 1901 (see general figs, above).

The building was most probably built as a cart shed, angled towards the farmhouse for security. While it could have been a shelter shed for farm livestock, this seems less likely, given its location relatively far from the other livestock and outside the gate into the yard. The heated and glazed room at the south end may have been used as a farm-workers' mess-room. Whether it was ever intended for overnight accommodation is unknown, though use by a shepherd at lambing time, the animals penned in the main building, seems perfectly feasible.

'BARN B' ILLUSTRATIONS



Barn B from the north-west showing repetition of gable detail on the main block and on the extension



Barn B: left: interior with modern roof, looking south; right: one of the jowled arcade posts



Barn B, south-east corner, showing south extension and its privy entrance, and repetition of the gable detail



Barn B, interior and fireplace of the heated and glazed room in the south extension

‘Barn C’

This is a brick, single-storey stable block containing five individual stables, divided by brick partition walls; each has a manger or trough along the back wall. Two-leaf stable doors have their furniture mounted on sandstone blocks with quarter-round mouldings, and their additional sandstone blocks mid-wall to take the impact of the doors folded-back. The gable ends have the neoclassical pediments in blue engineering brick seen in other buildings here; the wall base courses are also in engineering brick. In each gable is a central round-headed window with six lights over a ventilator panel in an iron frame. The thoughtfulness of the design extends to the north-east corner, facing into the yard, which is rounded to prevent injury to passing livestock. The roof covering is modern.

‘BARN C’ ILLUSTRATIONS



‘Barn C’, stable block. Top: general view from the east; bottom: the yard elevation



'Barn C', stable block. Detail of yard elevation showing doors, their furniture and supporting masonry blocks

The 'L-shaped Barn'

This range closes the north and east sides of the farmyard and was found to comprise two separate buildings of different dates. The later of the two occupies the north side of the yard and returns around the east side for a short distance to effect a junction with the earlier build; a datestone over a doorway dates it to 1879 (see below). The earlier, eastern, range probably dates to c.1800 or slightly earlier, and is described and illustrated first.

The east range

This building is the only surviving building that was standing when the site was surveyed for the Tithe Map of the early/mid-1840s. The Tithe Map shows a very irregular diamond-shaped yard with two separate buildings on its north and east sides. The latter was L-shaped with an extension projecting from its east (external) side. This can be positively identified with the present building from its identical representation on the Ordnance Survey map editions, and from the physical evidence for the removed rear wing visible as a scar on the eastern elevation. The site of the present building also coincides accurately with that shown on the Tithe Map: it is only their orientation that is different, and this is believed to be a surveying error that is not untypical of farmyards depicted on the tithe maps (see historical and archaeological background, above).

The building is of red brick (brick size 22-23cm x 8cm x 11cm) with a modern roof covering. It presents a two-part ground-floor (west) elevation to the farmyard. At the north end (left) is a three-bay open arcade, with timber posts supported on stone blocks. These survive, though the arcade has been infilled with brick. This arcaded space (one room) was probably designed as a cart shed. At the south end of the range (right-hand end) are two rooms or loose boxes, divided by a brick partition and accessed via sliding doors, replacing earlier doorways with segmental arched heads, each room lit by a small window, the room at the south end being additionally lit by an iron-barred window in the rear elevation.

The floors over these rooms have square-section common joists supported by pairs of cross beams with surprisingly elaborate mouldings. However, the mortices taking the common joists are much wider than required, having clearly been made for flat-laid joists and partly infilled with plaster to disguise the bad fit. The beams are clearly re-used from some other, earlier, building (as this range was extant when the buildings in the moat still stood, they did not come from there). The floor over the arcaded cart-shed section has one cross-beam with a plain quarter-round moulding, and one with plain chamfers, suggesting that at least one of these timbers too was re-used. The rooms at first-floor level are completely plain, with windows in the rear elevation with plain wooden frames. These rooms were probably used as a granary or bedding store, despite the absence of first-floor loading hatches or 'pitching eyes', as the north-end gable wall, now covered by the end of the 1879 building, contains ventilator panels with the usual diamond-pattern formed by omitted headers.

'L-SHAPED BARN', EAST RANGE, ILLUSTRATIONS



The east range, farmyard (west) elevation. This is the earliest standing building on site. It consists of an open-arcade cart-shed (left) and loose-boxes (right) under rooms for grain or bedding storage



The 'L-shaped barn' east range, rear/east elevation. Note the gable scar of a removed wing that projected from the far (north) end



'L-shaped barn', east range, loose-box ceiling showing one of the second-hand moulded cross-beams with the mortices for a previous set of (wider) joists infilled with plaster



'L-shaped Barn' east range. Left: south gable end with (later) external stair-block and hoist beam. Right: the rooms over the south end seen from 1st-floor doorway, looking north



'L-shaped barn', east range, the junction with the 1879 building. Above: the gable end of the east range with ventilator panels and crudely-inserted purlins. Below: vertical joint and contrasting brickwork and arcade lintel of the east range of c.1800 (right) with the 1879 building (left)



The 'L-shaped Barn', 1879 north range

The north farmyard range is demonstrably later than/added against the east range (see photos of junction), is of a single phase and can be dated from the dated keystone over one of its openings reading 'PWG 1879'. The initials belong to Philip William Godsall of Iscoyd Park, remembered as an agricultural improver, and just the kind of owner to have invested substantially in the latest agricultural technology. The building is of large machine-made red bricks (22 x 8.2 x 10.5cm) with dressings and base courses of blue engineering brick, and supports for the door furniture of substantial sandstone blocks, with quarter-round mouldings to those supporting hinge-pintels and latches. The intact east-facing gable of the two-storey west end has a classical pediment contrived in the contrasting blue engineering brick; presumably the destroyed west gable end had been similarly treated.

The building, whose two-storey north-west end was recently ruined by winter gales, is, or rather was, a good if not uncommon example of a mechanised cowshed range of the Victorian 'high farming' period. The two-storey section has two halves. The (unroofed) western bay has an extra-high double-width doorway giving access to a space that was open to the roof internally. Its function is disclosed by the (primary) drive-shaft and belt wheels on the back wall. This was an engine bay, designed to accommodate a mobile power source – a steam engine – that would have been reversed in and linked by belt to the drive shaft to power machinery (feed mills, oil-seed crushers, chaff-cutters and so on) in the loft of the two bays to the east. Above the high doorway, inside, an iron plate with a large circular hole may represent the remains of a flue to exhaust the smoke from the engine. The adjoining east bays, now only partly floored, were accessible via the dated cart-width opening on the ground floor, a normal doorway further east and a round pitching eye (loading hatch) into the loft on the first floor. The range continues to the east as a single-storey cowshed with five blocked openings into the yard discernible, with some remains of the sandstone blocks of their door furniture. Two further doorways into the yard occupy the southern return of this range where it joins the earlier east range building. The north (external) elevation is plain, except for six windows spread between the two-storey and single-storey sections.

THE 'L-SHAPED BARN, 1879 NORTH RANGE ILLUSTRATIONS



The two-storey western end of the 1879 range: south (yard) elevation showing the extra high doorway for a portable steam engine, an inserted doorway to its left



The datestone and pitching eye to the feed loft of the two-storey section of the 'L-shaped barn'



The 'L-shaped barn' looking east. Before its collapse, the ruined gable had probably had the neoclassical detailing in engineering brick exhibited by all the 'estate phase' buildings



The 'L-shaped barn' 1879 north range. Top: the yard elevation showing signs of five blocked doorways(note interruptions of the base courses); middle: the integral drive shaft in the engine bay passing through the wall into the feed loft; bottom: the partly-unfloored feed loft in the two-storey block, looking east into the cowhouse through an inserted or enlarged doorway



The 'L-shaped barn' 1879 north range. Top: view looking west along the rear (north) wall; bottom: the cow house interior, looking west, some of the original door positions can be seen from their projecting reveals (left)

Analysis and conclusions

The farmyard at Wolvesacre Hall offers, in some respects, a very familiar pattern of farmyard development – the remodelling of an old farm by a big estate at a time of agricultural expansion, investment and improvement. At Wolvesacre, however, the medieval moat offers an additional dimension. Nothing is known of the moat interior other than what the Tithe Map shows: a house with a cross-wing, very probably the medieval hall, and a second smaller building just within the entrance across the moat. There is currently no evidence to suggest whether farming activity ever took place within the medieval moat and later moved out, or the moat site was always purely residential and the farmyard was always separate, outside.

It is the case that, by c.1840, a separate farmyard was developing outside the moat to the north. This yard was bounded on the east side by the surviving range ('L-shaped barn') – a multi-functional building with a cartshed (or possibly shelter-shed), loose boxes and first-floor bulk storage (haylofts and/or straw). On the north side of the yard were two buildings, neither of which survive; in a traditional farmyard plan, one of these would have been a barn. Around 1850 the north corner of the moat was infilled, the old hall and the other building within the moat demolished, and a new farmhouse built just clear of the line of the recently-infilled moat. A new drive was added curving across the corner of the old moat around the front of the new house; it may be around this time that the public lane, to Wolvesacre Mill, was enclosed in its present form.

In 1879 a new north farmyard range was built. Its designed, neoclassical form and detailing, its scientific functionality and the implication of mechanisation, would, on their own, indicate a major investment in the site, but the style is indicative of the work of the Iscoyd Hall estate, and the initials those of its owner, Philip William Godsal. During the preceding twenty years, grain prices had been keeping up with inflation but were ultimately limited by competition with imported U.S. grain, while meat prices had risen by around thirty per cent (Wade-Martins 2003, 115-7). The result was a rush to invest in plant and buildings for the efficient raising of livestock, of which the 1879 range would have been, before alteration and ruination took its toll, a very good example. Further building took place around the farmyard, either c.1879 as a single episode, or as a more extended campaign. A new west range ('Barn A') may have been built as a further cowhouse and dairy; across the south side of the yard was a new stable block ('Barn C'); just outside the yard on the drive facing the farmhouse a new cartshed was built ('Barn B'). The small pigsty by the back door to the farmhouse may have been an addition at this time. Early on in the life of this new-look farmyard, Building 'B' was extended with annexes at each end, and a new shed erected that covered most of the yard, protecting livestock and their stored manure. It may be that, if as suggested, the farmyard in these years was part of a larger estate economy, resources were shared so that, for example, bedding (straw) was generated and bulk-stored elsewhere, and the mobile power-plant, a traction engine, necessary for mechanised feed-processing in the 1879 building was common to a number of farms. If the previous building on the site of the 1879 building had, as suggested, been a barn, it might be that this period saw the conversion of the farm to dairying, having previously been mixed.

The buildings vary greatly in terms of their condition, legibility, and significance. The least-altered are buildings ('barns') C and B. 'C', a stable block, is the least altered of all the buildings, but is an extremely common type with no exceptional features; its condition is

reported elsewhere. 'B' appears to be an open-sided cart-shed with additions. Its handmade brickwork contrasting with the machine-made detailing is distinctive, but the building has lost its original roof structure and, again, is a common type. The significance of the primitive domestic accommodation offered at one end is uncertain.

As built in 1879, the north range (phase 2 of the 'L-shaped barn') would have been an excellent, though not uncommon, example of the mid-Victorian 'high farming' period, characterised by factors such as higher standards of livestock accommodation, the introduction of imported feed and the application of steam-power. However, most of the original cowhouse doorway openings have been removed and blocked, the two-storey west end irrevocably altered and, most recently, unroofed and part ruined in winter storms.

The earliest building now standing is the east range of the 'L-shaped barn'. Multi-functional, and a fairly common form (bulk storage over varied accommodation for equipment and/or livestock), it can only be dated approximately to c.1800, though the Tithe Map gives it a *terminus ante quem* of c.1840; the function of its former projecting rear wing is unknown. The re-use of old timber-frame components (the first-floor main beams) is a character-enhancing though very common feature of traditional Marches farmyards.

Reference

Wade-Martins, S, 2002, *The English model farm, building the agricultural ideal, 1700-1914*. Windgather Press

Appendix: The Written Scheme of Investigation (W.S.I.)

Summary

This document is a formal proposal, a *written scheme of investigation*, for the procedures to be followed and the methods to be employed on an *historic buildings assessment* at Wolvesacre Hall, Iscoyd parish, near Whitchurch, SY13 3AS.

The development project

The proposed development (**planning ref: Wrexham BC P/2017/0258**) comprises the demolition and replacement of the existing farmhouse, the demolition or part-demolition of some of the existing traditional farmyard ranges (Barns A, B and C) and the alteration and conversion of another ('the L-shaped barn'). Full details are contained in the Design & Access Statement by the client's agent, Moss Co, dated 17-1-2017.

The background to the archaeological project

This document responds to an *archaeological survey request* from Clywd Powys Archaeological Trust requiring archaeological surveys of the traditional farm buildings proposed for demolition or alteration. Immediately to the south of the present farmyard lies a moated site, of probable medieval date, Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (SAM Flintshire no.178). This is unaffected by the works referred to here.

Stages of work

The work will be undertaken in three phases:

1. Site survey visit
2. Record Office visit to secure basic historic mapping
3. Analysis and reporting

Methodology

The CPAT *archaeological survey request* requires archaeological building surveys equivalent to the English Heritage 'level 2' standard on all the traditional farm ranges, 'barns A and C' and the 'L-shaped barn', and a 'level 3' equivalent standard on 'barn B'. No survey was required on the farmhouse.

The English Heritage (2006) survey levels may be differentiated in terms of their relative *intensity of analysis* and the concomitant need for supporting survey data and written text. Level 2 is a 'descriptive record' of the interior and exterior of a building; level 3 is an 'analytical record' with a greater degree of attention to the building's 'origins, development and use' supported by a greater weight of written commentary and illustration.

Following experience gathered on previous farmyard surveys, it is proposed that the *historic buildings assessment* here is best conducted to a uniform, higher, standard, across the complex, adopting the equivalent of a level 3 survey for all of the traditional (pre-20th-century) farmyard ranges. This is proposed on the basis that, in order to fully understand the developmental sequence and evolution of a farm complex, it is argued that:

- attention has to be paid to all the stratigraphic relationships between contiguous building ranges and their major components (extensions, added lofts etc)
- uniformities and differences in style and materials have to be noted and compared as part of the process of identifying phases of work, e.g. investment by a major estate

It is also proposed that the Wolvesacre farmhouse, which is of mid-19th-century date with later additions, should be included in the survey at a basic level (level 2 equivalent), as this too forms part of the story of cycles of investment and changes of use as the new farmyard was established after the abandonment of the moated site.

On this basis:

Photographic recording will be by means of high resolution (10k dpi) colour digital photography. All major external elevations will be covered, together with all (or representative) internal spaces. All important stratigraphic relationships (e.g. butt-joints between major builds), decorative schemes and detailing (brickwork) and evidence of past uses, will be recorded.

Written notes will be made throughout the process and will form the basis of the report. Measured drawings of the buildings as they are at present are contained in the Moss Co Design & Access Statement (2017). Brick sizes will also be recorded as this may offer a further guide to the chronology of the buildings and the economics of their construction.

Copies of the basic historic maps required to understand the buildings on site will be consulted: the tithe survey of the 1840s, followed by successive O.S. map editions surveyed from the early 1870s onwards. These are all also contained in the 2017 Moss Co Design & Access Statement.

ClfA Standards & Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (2014) will be followed.

Reporting

A fully-illustrated report in digital form will be submitted to the client and his agent within one month of the completion of fieldwork. The report will be fully referenced.

Health & Safety

The works are confined to a private property and there will be no general public access.

The archaeologist has public liability insurance cover (£5m) for archaeological fieldwork; policy details can be provided on request.

Personal safety kit will be worn. It is recognised that redundant farm buildings may be in unsafe condition. Internal spaces, particularly upper floors, will be assessed on first inspection for hazards and may not be entered, or entered fully, if it is unsafe to do so.

Staff qualifications

The archaeologist (Dr N Baker) is a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCI(A) with *areas of competence* in excavation and the recording of standing buildings. He has 38 years

experience in the conduct of archaeological building surveys under a variety of conditions, including around twenty previous farmyard surveys, many in North Shropshire. A full CV and/or list of publications can be provided on request.

Reference

English Heritage, 2006, *Understanding historic buildings; a guide to good recording practice*