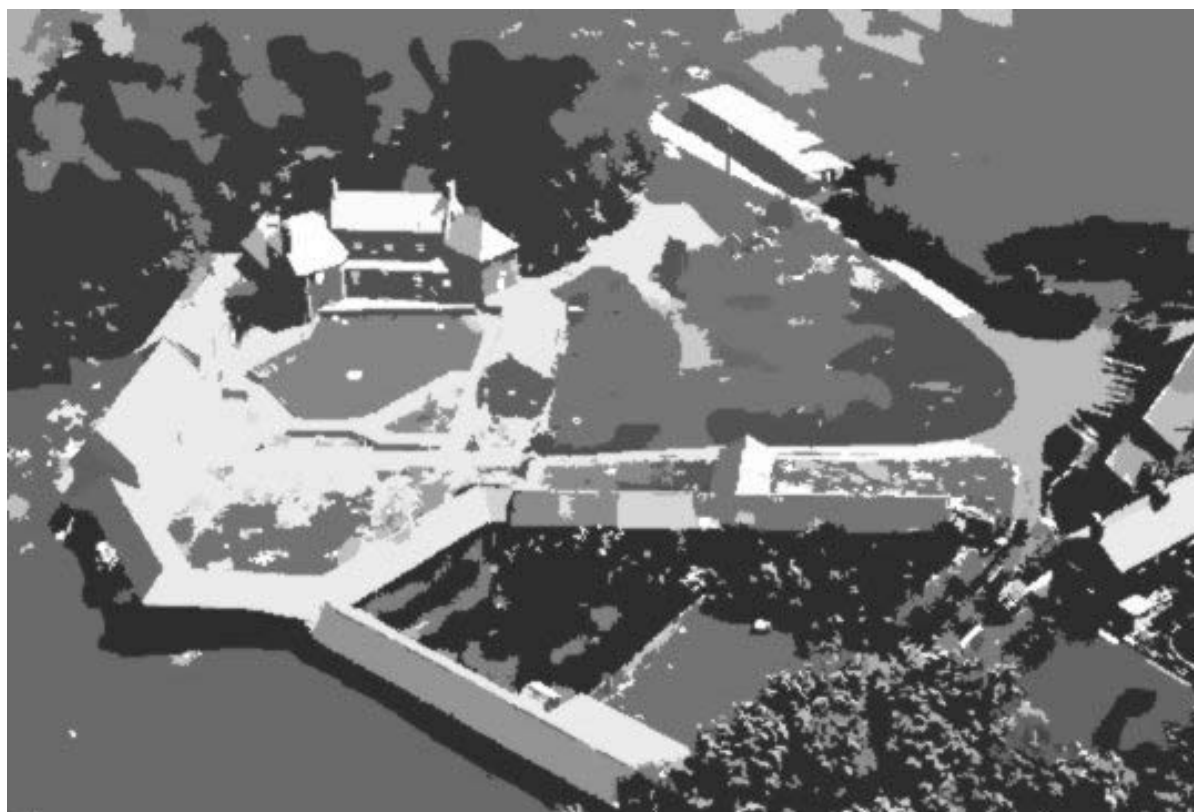


The Hunsbury Hill Centre Conservation Management Plan



June 2007



Produced on behalf of:
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by DEK Architects
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Fig 1 The farmhouse from the garden (from the Centre Archive - K Cropper May 2005)

(Cover design by Karen Cropper - image altered from aerial view of
the Hunsbury Hill Centre 1981 from the Centre archive)

FINAL DRAFT
June 2007

The Hunsbury Hill Centre
Conservation Management Plan

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i Introduction

The purpose of this Plan is to provide a framework against which proposals for repair or change and general management decisions which affect the Hunsbury Hill Centre (HHC) property can be assessed to ensure that there is no adverse effect on its significance. An appropriate definition of significance occurs in a document by Marquis-Kyle and Walker¹ in: “the cultural significance of a place is embodied in its fabric, its setting and its contents; in the associated documents; in its use; and in people’s memories and association with the place”. The Conservation Management Plan aims to look at all aspects of the site, its history, context, past and current usage, which contribute to its significance. It is a guide which should be accessible to all who have an interest in the site, should be regularly used to assess the impact of proposed repairs and alterations, and reviewed and revised to incorporate new information and the effects of change.

ii Definitions

This Plan refers to the Hunsbury Hill Centre which comprises the farm buildings and surrounding land including the adjacent woodland areas as defined on the site map. Throughout the Plan references to the “site” should be taken to include the buildings, their immediate setting and other parts of the property as defined by the site map in Appendix 8.1. The Plan relates to the whole area as well as the internal fittings, fixtures and collections within the buildings.

iii Limitations

The Conservation Management Plan is not intended to be a complete history of the site but provides only sufficient background information, or references to where such information can be found, to set the context for the site in physical, historic and social terms, and enable decisions to be made on the implications of change.

iv Acknowledgements

Northamptonshire ACRE wish to acknowledge with thanks all those who have made contributions to the content of the Conservation Management Plan, for their time and effort in helping to provide information for incorporation in the Plan.

The plan of Hunsbury Hill Farm in the Bouverie collection reference B(D) 620 (Figure 2) and the George Clark pencil drawing GCPS Vol. 34, No. 82 (Figure 8) are from the archive in the Northamptonshire Record Office who have given permission for the use these images in the Plan.

v Copyright

Copyright of this document remains with the Northamptonshire ACRE. The text in the document may be reproduced free of charge in any format without specific permission subject to acknowledgement being made of the copyright holders and the source of the material by reference to the title of the Plan. All photographs and illustrations are individually credited and reference to quoted text is made in footnotes. A bibliography is included in Section 9.

vi Contributors

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¹ P Marquis-Kyle & M Walker: The Illustrated Burra Charter, ICOMOS Australia, 1996.

Northampton Borough Council, Jane Jennings
Northamptonshire County Council
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Dick Rose
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1 Summary

1.1 Statement of heritage merit

The Hunsbury Hill Centre is a collection of farm buildings constructed as a 'model' farm around 1770, following the enclosure of land which included the common fields of the Parish of Hardingstone. The original buildings date from a period of major expansion of agriculture and the introduction of improved methods of farming. The farmhouse is listed Grade II and, although the listing description (see 2.3 below) refers to the farmhouse only, all the other buildings within the curtilage of the listed building are protected. The buildings should be considered to be of importance as a group, because they were constructed in one phase, specifically to make best use of the farming methods of the time. It is believed to be the earliest model farm of this period in Northamptonshire. Despite subsequent changes, the main buildings are still essentially as originally constructed.

1.2 How that merit is vulnerable

Inevitably, some changes have been made to the site, in both additions and losses of buildings, and to the surrounding landscape of the farm since it was formed around 1770. One of the barns has been removed, because it became unsafe, but the base of walls was retained as animal pens and can be clearly seen on site. In the late 19th century much of the farm land was quarried for ironstone and, although the land was reinstated, it was in poorer condition for agricultural use. In its more recent past (since 1986) most of the land attached to the farm has been sold for development, including the housing to the south and east of the site. Changes in use, farming of the land having ceased by 1977, have required further changes to the buildings to provide facilities compatible with the current community and office uses. The remaining land around the farm buildings is unused and provides a natural wooded habitat for wildlife. A pair of farm workers' cottages and outbuildings are now in private residential use and excluded from the site.

1.3 Summary of policies

The policies set out in this Plan aim to ensure that the significance of the buildings and their setting are not adversely affected by proposals for repair, alteration or use of the buildings and their environs.

Policies establish a framework for ensuring the retention of the significance, accommodating appropriate uses, prioritising repair and conservation, defining a conservation philosophy, meeting statutory controls, working within available resources, enhancing public appreciation, maintaining and managing the site, and influencing future external intervention.

1.4 Stage/date of adoption

This is the Final Draft of the Conservation Management Plan incorporating comments and information received on the second draft issued in March 2007. The Final Draft was approved by the Project Steering Group on 24th May 2007 and recommended for formal adoption by the NACRE Board at their next meeting on 18th July 2007.

1.5 Requirements for assessment of project proposals

Proposals for repair or alteration of the buildings and the heritage assets within the site should be reviewed against the policies set out in this Plan, enabling a heritage impact assessment to be drawn up. This will identify the possible impact of the project proposals and identify where proposals should be reviewed to mitigate the impact to protect the significance of the site. (See Appendix 8.16)

1.6 Executive Summary

An Executive Summary of the Conservation Management Plan has been prepared and is available as a separate document with an introduction, summaries of the Audience Development Plan and Access Plan and list of other relevant documents.

2 Background

2.1 Introduction to the Hunsbury Hill Centre

The Hunsbury Hill Centre houses administration and community facilities for Northamptonshire ACRE, the Rural Community Council for Northamptonshire. The property was leased by the organisation in 1977 from the Northampton Development Corporation and ownership acquired in 1986. The facilities at the Centre utilise the original farmhouse and adjacent barns but other buildings are currently underused and could provide additional facilities for NACRE or other organisations. Information on the Centre's facilities can be found at the website www.hunsburyhillcentre.co.uk.

2.2 Owner's organisation/ involvement/ responsibility

Northamptonshire ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) is an independent charitable organisation and part of the national ACRE network. The organisation works to improve the quality of life for rural communities in Northamptonshire, especially those from the most disadvantaged groups. The strategic aims are:

- To encourage and support rural community action.
- To support the identification of rural needs, particularly for the disadvantaged.
- To raise awareness of rural issues, lobby and influence policy.
- To support the provision of affordable, accessible rural services.
- To work in partnership with others, encouraging co-operation and influencing the allocation of resources.

The organisation was formed in 1946 and became a Company Limited by Guarantee in March 2000. Annual expenditure is in the region of £700,000 per annum. The Board of Directors/ Trustees (12 at present) have a wide range of experience and expertise including local government at a senior level in academic, business, ecclesiastical, judicial and voluntary sector backgrounds, with observers from a range of interested organisations who also make useful contributions. Further details can be found at www.ruralnet.org.uk/~northantsacre.

The organisation has 12 full-time and 7 part-time personnel, who cover a wide range of core activities and projects with the overall objective of supporting the regeneration and development of Rural Communities.

2.3 Statutory designations

Hunsbury Hill Farmhouse was listed Grade II in 1976 with the following description:

"Harksome Hill, Camp Hill (Grade) II 232091 LB0335 25A 22 Jan 1976
Hunsbury Hill Farmhouse
(Hunsbury Hill Centre)
NN4 9QX

C18, with additions. Ashlar, Welsh slated roof with stone coped side gables. 2 storeys and attic, gabled dormer. 1st floor has 3 sash windows with vertical glazing bars under cambered relieving arches. 2 ground floor canted bay windows with glazing bars, entablature. Lower 2 storey wings at oblique angles, on south C18, on north mid to late C19. Single storey late C19 pentice-roofed addition to main block on west."

Although the description refers only to the farmhouse, under the terms of The planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990, “any object or structure fixed to the building and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948 are also treated as part of the listed building”² Any alterations to any part of the site will therefore require Listed Building Consent from Northampton Borough Council. Planning permission may also be required for a change of use or for alterations involving new building works.

Under The Planning (Applications for Planning Permission, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006, a Design and Access Statement is required to accompany an application for Listed Building Consent and this Plan should be referred to in compiling such a Statement.

The Government has issued policy guidance on historic buildings in Planning Policy Guidance Notes PPG15, Planning and the Historic Environment 1994, and in PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning 1990. The documents advise on best practice in the care and management of historic sites and emphasise the need to understand the significance of the site before changes are made. The guidance is for both those responsible for the historic site and for local planning authorities dealing with applications for consent to alter historic buildings.

2.4 Reason for Conservation Management Plan and use of it

The purpose of this Plan is to provide a basis for assessment of proposals for change to the site by setting out details of the historical development and current usage of the buildings. It will provide a means of familiarisation with the historical background for all those who are involved in managing or working on the buildings, setting, contents and features, and particularly for those involved in the decision process for proposals which may affect the significance of the site, allowing an informed assessment of the impact of change to be made.

The Plan is a working document which should be referred to by all those whose activities affect the site, which should be reviewed on a regular basis following its adoption by the Northamptonshire ACRE Trust to ensure that policies are updated as required following changes in legislation or the acquisition of new information on the significance of the site.

2.5 Scope of the plan/ limitations

It is not practical to include in this Plan all the information available on the site. The Plan is intended to cover as much information as is necessary to the decision making process in a summarised form and provide policies against which proposals for change should be considered, to ensure that the significance of the historical and cultural character of the site is not adversely affected. It is a summary only of known information. Where known, references to sources of further information are provided which may help those who need to examine specific aspects of the site to gain a more thorough understanding of the implications of specific proposals for change. A separate document, the Building Database, is being prepared which contains detailed descriptions of the buildings and their historical features.

All aspects of the site and uses are considered and references to further information are given. The Plan highlights the aspects of the site which are thought to be vulnerable

² The planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990, HMSO.

to change; the physical condition of buildings, past changes, current and possible future uses, resources, management and external factors are considered.

2.6 Those involved in preparation

A list of contributors is given at the beginning of the document (page 5). The Centre has sought to invite contributions from a wide variety of people who have associations with the general use and specific aspects of the site and welcomes any additional information which can add to the safeguarding of this important site.

2.7 Associated documents

A Condition Survey report has been prepared (December 2006), which is available for reference at the Centre, advises of the current condition of the fabric of the buildings, recommending and prioritising repairs which will need to be carried out. A previous report was prepared in May 1998 by Northampton Borough Council Construction and Property Services on behalf of Northamptonshire ACRE. Condition reports had also been prepared in 1976 by Northampton Development Corporation for incorporation in the lease. These reports are not included in this Plan but are retained in the site archive for reference.

A document labelled "Hunsbury Hill Farm: A Record, Fabric Survey" has been obtained from Richard Moss, which provides a description of the construction and building materials of the farmhouse and farm buildings, with plans of the farmhouse marked up to show the dates of different parts of the building (see Figure 6) and labels rooms with their use before alterations approved in 1977. The document is undated but refers to "the 1977 pre-conversion plans" and to mangers in the foddering hovels being dismantled in November 1977.

The Centre archive also contains a large number of photographs of the site. A number of these are included in the Plan and the full archive index is listed in Appendix 8.5. Other relevant documents located are either included in appendices where it has been possible to reproduce them or a reference provided to where they can be found.

2.8 Consultation process

All contributions from consultations have been reviewed by the Editor and incorporated in the Plan. The Plan has been made available in draft to all contributors, users and visitors to the site for comments, which have been reviewed, corrections and additional information incorporated, and the document revised and refined before adoption.

The purpose of the consultation process has been to:

- inform as many stakeholders and interested people as possible on progress with the project
- check that consultees think the contents of the report cover all the aspects that it should
- check for any inaccuracies or additional available information on the historical and social context of the site

2.9 Statement on adoption process

The Final Draft was approved by the Project Steering Group on 24th May 2007 and recommended for formal adoption by the NACRE Board at their next meeting on 18th July 2007.

Further reviews will be made on a regular basis to incorporate new information which

comes to light or changes in uses, management or legislation which need to be considered.

3 Understanding the site

This section of the Plan provides details of the architectural and historical development of the site and its associations with the locality.

3.1 Description of the Hunsbury Hill Centre

The site lies on the south side of Danes Camp Way (the A45) approximately 3 miles south of the centre of Northampton. The land is elevated above the road level and falls from east to west. Much of the land belonging to the farm when it had ceased as a working farm by 1977 was acquired by the Northampton Development Corporation and has been developed for housing. An area of light woodland south-east of the Spinney remains as open space but is no longer part of the Centre property. The Hunsbury Hillfort lies to the south-east and Camp Hill, the Industrial Museum and Railway of the iron extraction industry lies adjacent to the hillfort.

The site extends to 5.43 hectares (13.4 acres) as shown on the Site Map in Appendix 8.1, with the Hunsbury Hill Farm buildings towards the east end. The land to the west is occupied by the Hunsbury Hill Spinney, an area of mixed woodland and ponds, with open meadow between the Spinney and Danes Camp Way. To the north east of the farm buildings is a smaller areas of woodland. East of the farmhouse is an oval shaped garden area enclosed by an iron railing fence with mature tree and shrub planting around a lawn. On the south side of the farm buildings is a terraced grassed area now providing car parking. The access to the site is from the east off Harksome Hill, one of the access roads to the adjacent housing.

The farm buildings are arranged around an elongated octagonal yard, the farmhouse on higher ground at the east end with splayed wings forming angles of the octagon. The farmhouse is separated from agricultural buildings on the north and south sides of the yard which provided the main barns, stable and cow house. Beyond the barns are open fronted 'hovels' (sheds) used for feeding livestock. At the west end of the yard, opposite the farmhouse, is an open fronted cart hovel facing away from the yard its doors now blocked in. There are two long cattle sheds attached to the back of the south-west hovel added in the early 19th century.

The site also includes an open fronted pole barn, post 1965, providing garaging for the Centre. An adjacent brick outbuilding, now in private ownership with the farm workers cottages, is believed to have included a smithy. The wooded areas are natural features, the Spinney identified on early maps and probably planted in the early days of the farm to provide cover for birds and animals for hunting. Ponds were created after Northamptonshire ACRE first leased the property.

3.2 History, context and development of the site

The length of human occupation in the area is known from the Hunsbury Hillfort, an Iron Age settlement dating from the period 700-400BC³, about half a mile from Hunsbury Hill Farm where traces of much earlier settlement have been identified. The Domesday Book mentions Hardingstone in the Collingtree Hundred as belonging to the King and the land obviously farmed at that time: "Hardingstone: 5 hides. Land for 4 ploughs besides the inland. 2 ploughs there. 4 villagers and 10 smallholders with 4 ploughs. 2

³ J Waller: Hunsbury Hillfort, www.jwaller.co.uk/nas/Hunsbury_Hillfort.

mills at 50s; from the meadows and pastures 66d.”⁴The precise location of the cultivated areas is difficult to define due to the extent of recent development and the enclosure map contains later additions.

The land was therefore cultivated over a long period and Conlon⁵describes it as standing on one of the common fields of the Hardingstone Parish. The extent of farming and population will have varied with changes in the major historic periods of expansion and contraction of activity in the area. By the mid 18th century, the period when the Hunsbury Hill Farm was established, improvements in agricultural practice were changing the desired size and capabilities of farms, expansion of population and concentration in urban areas due to industrial expansion leading to an increased demand for food. In addition, the enclosure acts allowed common land to be taken into private ownership providing the ability to create farming units of a size on which new methods of farming could be carried out. Hunsbury Hill Farm was just such a “model farm”, created specifically to utilise the latest methods of the period.

The estate of Delapre Abbey and manor of Hardingstone, to which the land belonged, was purchased by Edward Bouverie in 1764. Bouverie was responsible for enclosing much of the land and by 1770 had built the Hunsbury Hill Farm. There is a drawing of a farm in the Bouverie collection at the Northamptonshire Record Office which is endorsed externally ‘Plan for a New Farm from Mr Robt Taylor 1769’. There is an accompanying estimate of the same date from builder/architect John Wagstaff of Daventry which is for a farm ‘...for the Honle Mr Bowverie in Hardingstone Field’. This was not the farm built at Hunsbury Hill, but almost certainly influenced the final design⁵. There is, however, another plan of about the same date which does show exactly the same layout as the Hunsbury Hill Farm (see Fig 2).

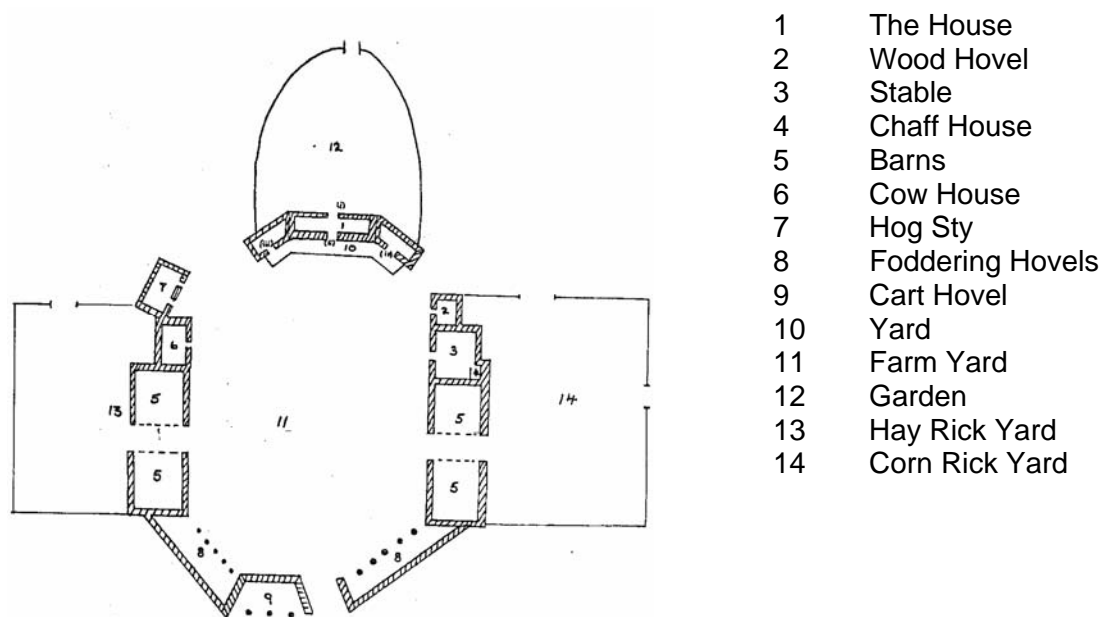


Fig 2 Probable Plan of Hunsbury Hill Farm c1770 from the Northants Records Office
 (From the Bouverie collection, reference B(D) 620)

⁴ History from the Sources series; Domesday Book, Northamptonshire, Phillimore, 1979.
⁵ R Conlon: Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Historical Report, November 2005.

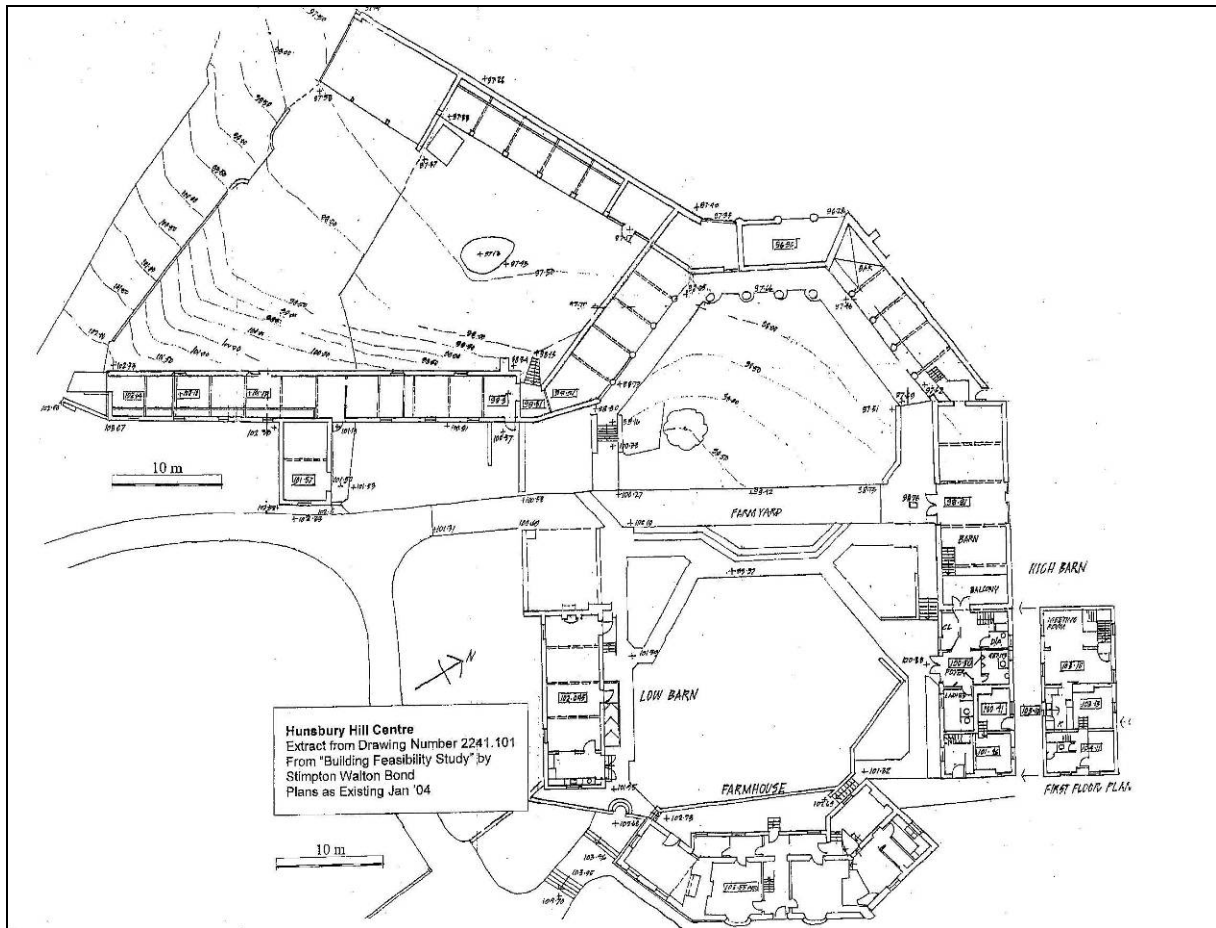


Fig 3 Layout of the Farm buildings today

The farm appears to have been built in one phase closely following the plan and remains intact with the exception of the south barn which has been removed, the additional early 19th century cattle sheds and changes to the farmhouse itself dating from the mid 19th century. In its latter days as a working farm the separate pole barn was added and part of the south-west C19 cattle shed was extended. In 1980-81 The Northamptonshire ACRE refurbished the High and Low Barns to provide meeting rooms. At times the central yard has been subdivided with timber fencing and stone or brick walls as can be seen on photographs in the Centre archive dating from 1976.

3.3 Social history

The land around the Centre has been occupied since the Iron Age although the farm buildings of c1770 are believed to be the first built on the site. The Domesday Book entry for Hardingstone mentions two mills and these may be Upton Mill and Duston Mill (both water mills) shown on the 1810 Ordnance Survey map on the north side of the road (now Danes Camp Way). Conlon notes that there are no signs of any of the buildings on the farm being used as a mill and it was probably unnecessary with two mills so close. The land lies on the southern edge of the river Nene and was good quality farmland.

Although it was cultivated as arable land prior to enclosure, a large part of the farm acreage was meadow land when the farm was built and used for cattle rearing. This is compatible with the production of food to serve an expanding urban area. The arable areas may have been used for livestock feed rather than to produce cereal crops to feed the population. It is possible that in addition to meat and dairy products the leather

from hides was used in shoe making, one of the major industries of Northampton. The addition of the cattle sheds in the early 19th century demonstrates an increase in livestock activity on the farm which is the result of both an increase in population demand and of reduced exports due to the war in Europe. Food production was also required to serve the army and navy during the Napoleonic war period.

The construction of the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal in 1815 will have improved transport and further increased the market for farm produce. In 1872 A S Bouverie leased the mineral rights of the Hunsbury Hill and Brier Hill farms⁵ and much of the land was quarried for iron extracted from the ironstone at the Hunsbury Hill Iron Works, located adjacent to the railway which ran parallel to the canal north and west of Hunsbury Hill Farm. In the 1870's a tramway was constructed to serve the iron works crossing the farm land on the west side of the farm and passing through the Spinney, leading up to Camp Hill. A brick works is also identified on the 1880 Ordnance Survey map, adjacent to the ironworks north of the farm. This suggests that the land gave access to some of the Upper Estuarine clays used in brick making which underlie Oolitic rock but are overlaid above the ironstone. Ironstone extraction in the immediate vicinity of the farm continued from around 1870 to around 1900 when the land was returned to agricultural use. All ironstone working on Hunsbury Hill had ceased by 1921 when the furnaces at the iron works closed and the tramway was abandoned⁶. The cottage adjacent to the farmhouse is called 'Mrs Burman's Cottage'. Mrs Burman's father was a horseman (in charge of horse-powered engines) at the iron works and she later rented the cottage after farming was re-established.

In the period 1881-1891 the farm was occupied by the military, the farmhouse used as accommodation by soldiers possibly from the Weedon or Barracks Road barracks.

The site of the Camp Hill works was developed as a country type park from 1970 with the formation of the ironstone museum, incorporating a railway museum and railway track with working engines and rolling stock, a children's play area and barbeque site and a rural skills centre. The railway museum is operated by the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust in conjunction with Northamptonshire County Council. The Iron Age hillfort is within the park area⁷.

3.4 Management of the Centre

Northamptonshire ACRE uses only part of the building stock of the Hunsbury Hill Centre, the farmhouse providing office accommodation for administration and meeting spaces as well as document storage. The High Barn and Low Barns (see farm map in Appendix 8.2) have been refurbished to provide spaces which are let for a variety of community uses (such as weddings, family gatherings, meetings and training events). The open hovel at the north-west corner of the yard is used, with the adjacent lawned area at the west end of the yard, as an outdoor seating area and the hovel in the south-west corner is used to store BBQ equipment supplementing this facility. The other buildings are at present unused at this time except for storage. The hire of the High and Low Barns is managed by ACRE's full-time and part-time Centre staff, supported by an administration team, who are also responsible for the general administration of ACRE's Rural Team's activities.

Northamptonshire ACRE offers support to individuals, community groups, local authorities, town and parish councils and any agency working in rural areas, providing advice and guidance on managing rural issues, obtaining funding, advising on

⁶ 'The Ironstone Quarries of the Midlands: Part III Northampton Area', Eric Tonks, 1989.

⁷ See 'Hunsbury Hill park' on the Northampton Borough Council's website at www.northampton.gov.uk

legislation and as a voice in issues of strategic planning. In particular support is given for the provision of village halls, post offices and village shops, rural housing and transport, social enterprise and social exclusion issues.

3.5 Detailed description of site's interest

The site's interest lies in its connections with the long term settlement of the area as well as in the historical evidence contained in the farm buildings, in their construction at one time in accordance with a specific 'model farm' plan for and their continued use as a working farm up to 1977 (date to be confirmed). The farm buildings are well laid out in an arrangement which both simplified working patterns and accommodated new methods of farming. The enclosed yard allowed collection of manure to improve fertilisation of the fields, improving land production and healthy livestock. Although on a very different scale, Culzean Castle in Ayrshire has a farm buildings group of a similar period (1777-90, Robert Adam) built in a square around a yard to enable the manure to be stored in a central holding area for spreading on arable fields (see *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914*; Susanna Wade Martins).



Fig 4 The lower part of the yard c1976 showing the foddering and cart hovels

It is not clear when the Hunsbury Hill Spinney was planted. It is shown on the enclosure map but this has had several later features such as the Canal added. It also appears on the 1810 Ordnance survey map and may have been planted or extended from natural woodland to provide coverts for birds and habitat for game hunted by the estate owner.

3.6 Areas requiring further assessment

The Condition Survey of the buildings identifies areas requiring further assessment for repair. The survey should be reviewed on a regular basis to maintain the buildings in satisfactory condition. Proposals for alterations are excluded from the scope of this Plan but the Plan should be referred to when considering alterations which may affect the character of the site. The Building Database records the features of the buildings considered to be of historical interest some of which merit further investigation and recording.

A survey of bats and nesting birds (see Appendix 8.8) has been carried out but proposals affecting protected species should be assessed against the survey and further detailed surveys may be required of specific areas affected. If areas of bat

habitat are going to be affected a DEFRA licence may need to be obtained. The Wildlife Trust has undertaken surveys of the ecology of the Hunsbury Hill Spinney and ponds and future reviews of the surveys should be referred to this Plan.

Surveys required under health and safety or other legislation such as a Fire Risk Assessment, Accessibility Audit, Asbestos Survey are outside the scope of this Plan but any recommendations in such reports to improve facilities or meet current or new legislation will need to be assessed against the Plan policies.

No known archaeological excavations have been carried out on the site. Due to the historic settlement of the area any proposals which involve new building works requiring excavations for foundations or services would give the opportunity for archaeological monitoring of excavations. Trial holes may provide further evidence of the past uses of the site and its context.

The architectural details of the farmhouse, which has fine timber panelled reception rooms and marble fireplaces, suggests the house was built for a person of some social standing. Research to establish the background of the original tenant would be of interest to see if he was more than a tenant farmer and possibly had other involvement with the Bouverie estate.



Fig 5 Bay windows to the garden front of the farmhouse

4 Assessment of significance

4.1 Summary of assessment

This assessment of significance of the Hunsbury Hill Centre site is based on available documentation and comments from contributors.

4.2 Archaeology

No known archaeological investigations have been carried out on the site which is the subject of this Plan. However, considerable interest has arisen from the Iron Age hillfort, just half a mile from the farm buildings, on land belonging to the farm when formed in 1770, and the adjacent Ironworks railway. The index of the Historic Buildings and Sites Monuments Record is included in Appendix 8.15 and includes one reference to Hunsbury Hill Farmhouse and one to the Farm as well as several relating to the hillfort and field evidence of 'cropmarks' relating to earlier agricultural activity.

Pevsner⁸ records that during the ironstone workings of 1882-84 some 300 storage pits were found relating to the hillfort. Neolithic artefacts including arrow heads were also found. There is no reference to Hunsbury Hill Farm in the Northamptonshire volume, the first and second editions pre-dating the listing of the building in 1976.

4.3 Architectural significance

The principal architectural significance of the farm buildings lies in their construction at one time as a model farm rather than the more common development over a long period. The farmhouse is a yeoman's residence rather than a gentleman farmer's house but contains a number of features showing the investment in the original construction and later additions of maintained income from the land. The farm buildings are well laid out in an arrangement which both simplified working patterns and accommodated methods of farming new to the late 18th C.

The buildings are constructed in a mixture of ironstone and brick. Although the origin of these materials is unknown it would be of interest to investigate whether they were obtained locally, the ironstone being readily available. The roofs are also a mixture of slate (on the farmhouse and High and Low Barns) and clay pantiles (on the cattle sheds and hovels). Pantiles, only made in England from around 1700 and imported from the Netherlands, are more commonly found further north in Lincolnshire, where they are still made, and Yorkshire⁹. The transport of materials from any distance, at a time prior to the construction of the canal, supports the importance attached to the building of the model farm. Internally the farmhouse has some fine features in fireplaces and timber panelling, a degree of enhancement not found in simpler farmhouses. This suggests that the farm, although always tenanted, was intended to be an exemplary part of the Bouverie Estate.

Even in the simple farm hovels there are architectural details such as the round brick piers complete with entasis which are unusual in this context. The 19C livestock sheds, either side of the outer yard still have the stone and timber mangers and subsequent changes to the divisions between the barns can be identified by internal walls not being tied into the external walls.

⁸ Nikolaus Pevsner: *The Buildings of England, Northamptonshire*, Penguin Books, 1995.

⁹ *The Development of English Building Construction*; C F Innocent; Cambridge University Press, 1916 (reproduced by Donhead 1999).

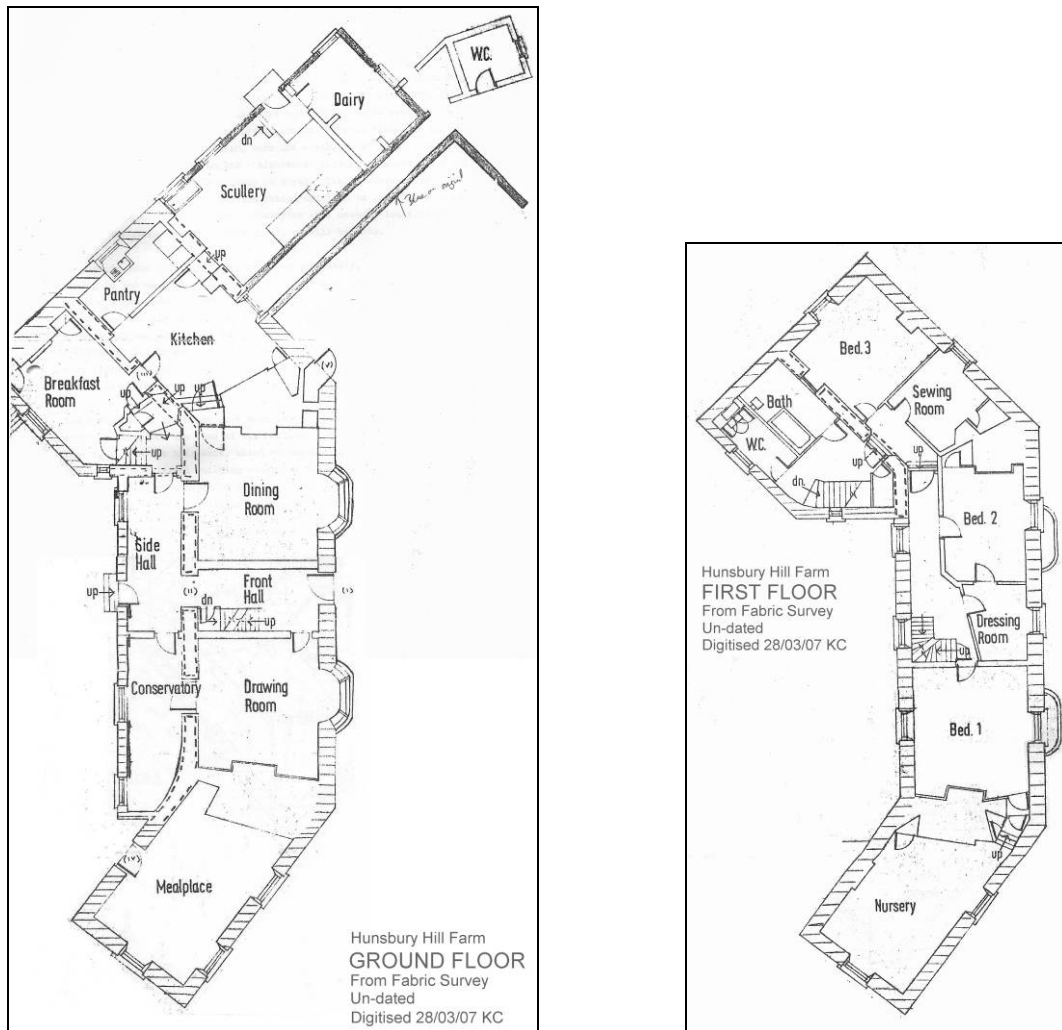


Fig 6 Fabric Survey - Plans of the farmhouse with pre-conversion room labels

4.4 Development of the Centre

The original farm buildings were constructed around 1770 on land farmed from as early as 1220¹⁰ and believed to be one of the medieval common fields of the Hardingstone Parish. The land does not appear to have been previously built upon⁵. Conlon has identified in the Northamptonshire records office a drawing showing the design for a model farm by Robert Taylor which is believed to have been used for the Hunsbury Hill Farm, both from the layout of the buildings and the size and shape of the central yard. No similar group of farm buildings is known of in the region.

The layout of the original buildings is shown in Figure 2 and appears to have comprised the farmhouse at the east end of the farmyard with splayed wings on north (dairy) and south (kitchen) sides. Adjacent to each wing was an access to the farmyard. On the north side of the yard, from the east end was a small building used as a hog sty, a cow house and a larger barn identified by Conlon as the hay barn, because of its location next to a hay rick yard on the plan. On the south side was a wood store, a stable and another larger barn identified as the corn barn. To the west side of both barns, built on the splay, were foddering hovels for livestock facing into the yard. Between these was a cart hovel facing west, out from the yard, with an access to the fields on its south side.

¹⁰ 'Hardingstone Parish Survey 1972'; D Hall, Northamptonshire Archaeology, Vol 15, 1980.

Of these buildings, the hog sty appears on the drawing to be set at an angle to the north range of buildings closest to the farmhouse and there is now no evidence of this. It is likely that it was replaced during the 19C to provide a larger and better ventilated building before 1872 when a deed plan shows the current layout¹¹. The construction of the east end as a farm workers cottage (known as Mrs Burman's Cottage, after the last occupier) may be of the same period. The Low Barn may have been rebuilt at the same time, both buildings being in brick instead of stone as the original barns and hovels.

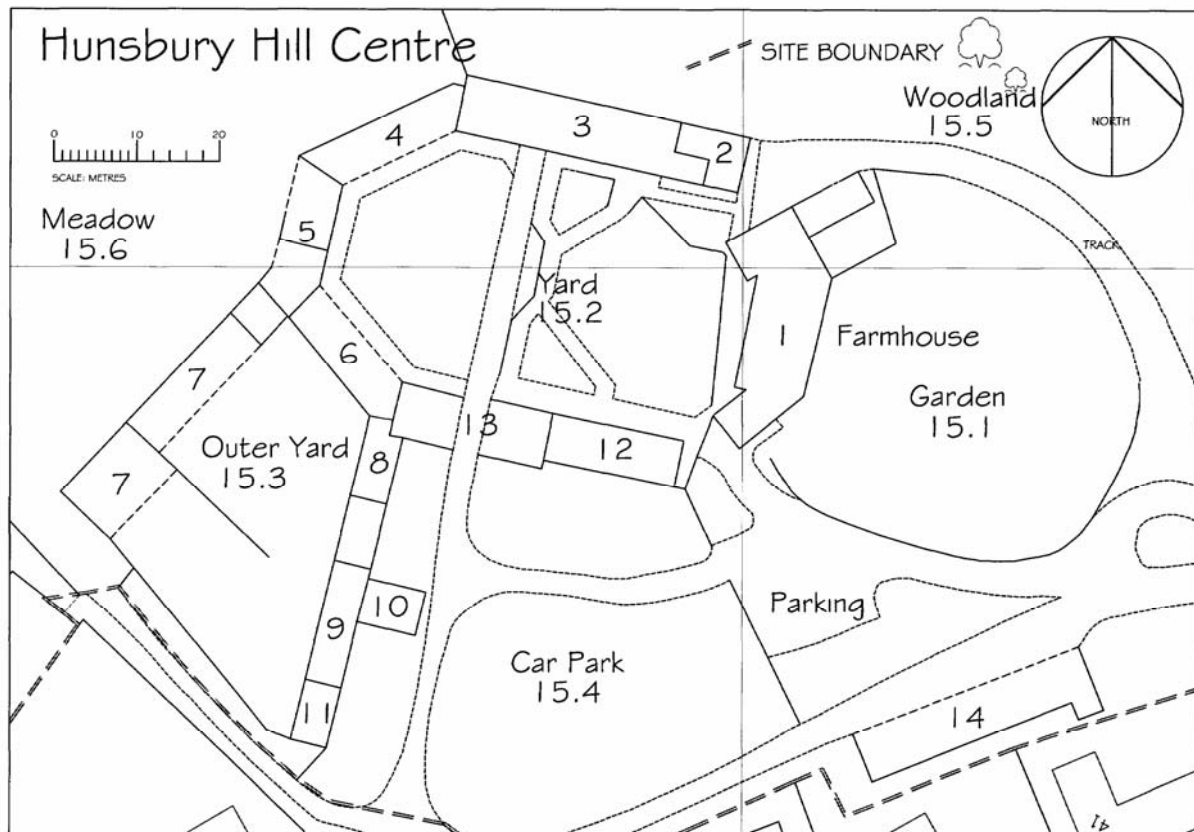


Fig 7 Reference plan of the buildings and immediate grounds
 (numbers refer to the Building Database building references)

The Hunsbury Hill Centre	Date
1 Offices (Farmhouse)	C18
2 Mrs Burman's Cottage (hog sty & cow house)	C19
3 High Barn (Hay Barn)	C18/C19
4 Bar (Cattle Hovel)	C18
5 Cart Hovel	C18
6 BBQ area (Cattle Hovel)	C18
7 Cattle shed	C19
8-9 Cattle shed	C19
10 Store	C19
11 Cattle shed	C19
12 Low Barn (wood hovel & stable)	C19
13 Open space (barn)	C18
14 Parking area (Implement shed)	C20
15 Grounds	

¹¹ 'Hunsbury Hill Farm: A Record, Fabric Survey', undated, unsigned.

A single storey extension was added to the yard side of the farmhouse forming a connecting passage between the Kitchen and dairy wings and a two storey extension added to the south-west side of the north wing, providing additional rooms and a back stair to the upper floor both dating from the 19th century. An extension providing a back kitchen and dairy was added at right angles to the north wing of the farmhouse which has since been demolished, the line of the roof clearly visible in the north wing wall and the base of walls still in place. Before 1810 two additional livestock sheds were added to the ends of the foddering hovel at the south-west corner of the yard, one running south from the south end and one at the west end running south-west. The opening to the fields between the foddering hovel and the cart hovel was infilled leaving only a small doorway and this may have been done at the same time. The south barn was demolished around 1930 as it was unsafe but the lower part of the walls either side of the door openings were retained as open livestock pens and are still in place.

A horse engine was used to provide power for threshing machinery in the High Barn (the corn barn) driving an axle fixed below one of the trusses with three belt drive wheels of different sizes. The horse drive was located outside on the north side of the barn and at least in the 1930's was in the open, there being no engine house. There is no evidence remaining of any enclosure or the engine capstan gear which ceased to be used after it broke in the 1930's and was removed with other iron for the war effort.

Separate from the farm complex are an open fronted pole barn, now used for car parking, on the south side of the access road built after 1965 (not shown on an aerial photograph of that date). Two cottages used by farm workers, now in private residential use, are no longer part of the Centre and further adjacent outbuildings to the south of the Centre car park are in the same ownership. The aerial photograph of 1965 also shows a walled garden to the south side of the access drive (Harksome Hill) which has since been developed for housing although part of the wall remains on the south side of the site entrance.

4.5 Community/social value

The farm buildings at Hunsbury Hill Centre provide valuable evidence of the agricultural methods at the period of its formation and continuing use. The relatively minor later changes and additions to the buildings illustrate adaptation to meet changes in farming practices, industry and society of the locality. Change in the use of the land, from farming to quarrying for ironstone, in the late 19th century clearly shows the effect of changes in industrial activity in the area. Although there is no specific evidence of quarrying for stone at Hunsbury from an earlier period, ironstone was extensively used for building masonry from the 13th century and some stone may have been locally quarried for building.

Census records and lease information provide an interesting record of the people involved in farming the site which could be further developed to examine the change of occupation of family members at the times of change of use of the land, in particular whether members of the tenant families were employed at the iron or brick works when much of the farm land was given over to these industrial uses. The use of the farm for billeting of soldiers between 1881 and 1891 suggests it may not have been occupied by the tenant at this time.

From 1984 the Natural History Society Astronomy Section had an observatory (located to the south of the Low Barn where the concrete base and telescope mount

can still be seen) with a fibreglass dome. This was moved from Hunsbury Hill to Cottesbrooke in 2000 when the area became subject to light pollution from nearby building development and sports ground floodlighting (see section 8.12 for source).

4.6 Cultural importance

The Hunsbury Hill Farm is considered to be an important example of agrarian activity from the middle of the 18th century when the land was first enclosed. The associated activity in the area going back to the Neolithic period however emphasises the importance of the area which is recognised in the Hunsbury hillfort site and the Iron railway museum.

4.7 Historical context

From early times cattle on the pasture of the Nene Valley provided hides and oak bark required for tanning was also supplied from local woodland. This supported the leather industries in Northampton which is believed to have produced more than required for local consumption even in medieval times. From the middle of the 17th century Northamptonshire began to specialise in the production of boots and shoes and became the most important boot producing district in England. The fine displays in Northampton Museum show this. The industrialisation provided a ready market for local farm produce and the introduction of the canal, and later railway, extended supply to other markets. The construction of the farm also fits historically into a period of extensive home production required by the Napoleonic War between 1793 and 1815 to feed the Army and Navy¹².

4.8 Geographical context

The site of the buildings is elevated between 97 and 103m above sea level and lies on the south side of the alluvial valley of the river Nene on an area of Inferior Oolite rock. The ground is good agricultural land as is demonstrated by the long period of agricultural use. The Inferior Oolite includes Northamptonshire Sand and Ironstone at the base of the beds which have been quarried in a number of areas.

The Nene valley is a major highway of communication between the two most important towns of the county, Northampton and Peterborough. The river itself formed an important route for water traffic in the past, and road and rail links also follow the valley route. The river was easily navigable by barges due to the relatively level central section, the main fall in height from its source being in the first 14 miles of the river. The Nene is subject to flooding which leaves an improved soil due to the silt which is washed onto low lying land beside the river but this will not have occurred on the lands of the Hunsbury Hill Farm which are elevated well above the flood plain level.

The availability of good communications supports agriculture, easing transport of goods encouraging levels of production in excess of the needs of local demand. The farm was perhaps intentionally sited alongside the ancient drover's road leading from South Wales to the Midlands to have a ready supply of young stock for fattening and supply to local markets. The climate of the region also supports agriculture with a moderate level of rainfall. Wheat thrives on the clay soil above the alluvial valley which provides good pasture land. Stock rearing is profitable as long as there is demand and requires associated crops for animal feed.

Of the Nene valley pastures, the regular floods result in a fine silt being deposited on

¹² See 'Nelson's purse', Martyn Downer, Bantam Press, 2005

adjacent fields making it possible to keep the land in permanent pasture without impoverishing the soil. On more elevated land the soil requires more assistance or improvement by the usual routines of crop rotation or applying manure to the pasture. The layout of the farm around a courtyard allowed manure to be collected more easily and spread on the pasture to improve the soil condition.

4.9 Ecology/ wildlife

The ecology of the woodland area and ponds in Hunsbury Hill Spinney has been surveyed by the Wildlife Trust and their survey details are included in Appendix 8.8. While similar ecology may be expected in the other wooded areas, these are closer to the A45 Danes Camp way trunk road which will intrude both noise and fumes to the periphery and thus may make the environment less favourable for some species. At present human activity outside the Centre buildings is limited and the ground is overgrown in places. Changes in the range of uses or access to the wooded areas could result in effects on the established ecology and this should be carefully considered.

A bat survey has been carried out¹³ (also referred to in Appendix 8.8) and identifies areas of the buildings used by bats, a protected species. Any changes to the buildings must be carried out without affecting bats or their roosts. The bats may also use adjacent woodland for foraging. The use of the buildings by nesting birds has also been confirmed by survey evidence¹⁴.

4.10 Educational/ public potential

The Centre already provides amongst its current uses a meeting venue suitable for educational purposes but could provide more direct interpretation of the model farm and its associations with the ironworks and hillfort. The woodland areas could offer access to the local ecology although this would need to be carefully managed to avoid an unnecessary degree of disturbance of habitats.

The Centre has been used by local schools as the subject for local history along with the ironworks museum and hillfort. A document entitled "Hunsbury Hill Farm: Study of buildings and past use" was produced by Nene College (now Northampton University) giving tasks for students visiting the farm to help interpret and identify what they could see. Copies of some school students' project papers have been acquired by the Centre and are retained in their archive. The level of detail of information contained in these reflects the age range of the originators but they are of interest in including details of conversations with a past tenant of the farm.

4.11 Public/ recreational value

The Industrial Museum already provides a recreational area around the working railway and information on the iron works. The provision of access to the model farm could provide associated areas of interest and additional facilities for local skills workshops and displays providing information on the agricultural developments which lead to the establishment of the farm and its subsequent development as a working farm.

¹³ Bat Report, Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Phil Richardson, Bat Consultant, 27/09/06.

¹⁴ Bird Report, Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Phil Richardson, Bat Consultant, 27/09/06.

4.12 Significance as a historical record

The site's significance lies in the integrity of the farm buildings, its construction as a model farm and in the retention of elements of the original construction which makes interpretation of the original farm concept easily made. The connections with the iron works and brick works on land originally part of the farm is of historical importance as it demonstrates the changes which occur due to pressures of industrialisation. The Spinney is described in the most recent survey by the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre as containing traces of ancient woodland (see Appendix 8.8).

4.13 Significance of component parts

The significance of the various elements of the site such as buildings and Spinney vary in nature and will require consideration of a different nature when looking at the effect of proposals. At present the Spinney offers little opportunity for alternative uses other than increased access as suggested above. The buildings however could be considered for a wide variety of different uses which will have varying degree of impact. Within the livestock sheds there are mangers built in brick along the back wall which reduce available floor space but represent an important element of their original use. Some uses such as exhibition and display of the buildings to represent their original use would not require the removal of these components but alternative uses requiring removal in whole or part would require a detailed justification against the policies of this Plan. Within the farmhouse itself details such as the panelling and fireplaces should be retained undisturbed wherever possible as alterations could be justified only with the greatest difficulty.



Fig 8 Pencil sketch of the Farmhouse garden by George Clark dated October 28th 1854
Permission to reproduce from Northamptonshire Records Office (Ref: GCPS Vol. 34, No. 82)

The farmhouse garden is lawned with planted borders, now to some degree overgrown, and investigation of the original landscaping of the garden area would be of value. It is known that the wife of John Shaw, tenant farmer between c1852-1871 was a keen gardener and there is a sketch of the garden by George Clark dated 24th October 1854 in the Northamptonshire Records Office which is assumed to record the garden as it was then (Figure 8). The sketch, whilst faint, is helpful in that it shows the chimney to the 19C extension to the north wing dating this to before 1854. The

remaining land around the buildings includes open space to the north-west of the buildings with views over the Nene valley which could offer the opportunity to provide interpretations of how the land may have looked at the time of enclosure of the farm.

5 Vulnerability and related issues

5.1 Existing/ proposed uses

The Northamptonshire ACRE's existing use of the site is limited to the buildings, the open land and woodland adjacent being unused. The current use is to provide office and meeting accommodation with the High and Low Barns being available for hire by community groups and businesses for a range of activities from wedding receptions to seminars. The unused buildings provide an opportunity to increase the use of the site but changes and additional uses may have an affect on areas of significance in the need to alter the buildings, provide additional parking and alternative access. A Feasibility Study was carried out in 2004 by Architects Stimpson Walton Bond for Northamptonshire ACRE looking at possible improvements to existing facilities and the potential for use of underused spaces. Such new proposals must be designed and built to meet current legislative requirements for Structural integrity, fire precautions, ventilation, waste disposal, heating and energy conservation and access, although in some cases flexibility is allowed in order to maintain the historic significance of the listed building. All alterations of this nature must be considered against the policies set out in Section 6 of the Plan.

The Feasibility Study mentioned above looks at the potential for alternative use of attic floor space in the farmhouse which is currently used for storage; use of the Cottage at the east end of the High Barn, currently disused; possible provision of a wheelchair access lift in the High Barn; enclosure of the open fronted hovels to provide additional useable space and the construction of a Reception space on the site of the demolished barn. An impact assessment should be carried out to consider the effect of these proposals.

The unused landscape around the buildings could also offer opportunities for access extending use of the wider site but such changes will also have a potential impact of the significance of these landscape elements. The ecology of the Spinney may be particularly vulnerable to increased access unless strictly controlled.

5.2 New/ alternative uses

Changes in the use of the site and buildings are inevitable as needs of users alter, as has happened in the past, and the nature of new uses should be considered against the impact on the significance of the site. In general terms, uses which require a minimum intervention in the building environment should be acceptable but the greater the alteration to the listed buildings and site setting required to accommodate a new use, the greater the impact will be on the site's significance.

The potential for providing exhibition space for subjects such as the farming history of the Centre is obvious and such a use should have a minimal impact. Facilities provided at the time of refurbishment of the High and Low Barns as conference spaces have already introduced changes to accommodate the flexible use of these spaces. Further alterations may be required to meet changes in legislation relating to alternative uses as well as to meet the general health and safety requirements of public access and working environments. The recommendations in the Audience Development Plan commissioned to look at the potential for new uses should be considered against the Policies in the Conservation management Plan.

Planning permission was granted in 1980 for the construction of four Training Workshops in a separate building sited on the existing car park area. This was not constructed and the permission will have lapsed.

5.3 Sensitive features

Extending the range of uses can introduce conflicts in the desire to make facilities more flexible and there is a danger that features specific to the original use of the buildings and landscape may be lost to achieve this greater flexibility. Careful consideration needs to be given to all proposals for change to reduce the potential impact on the significance of the site.

5.4 Areas of conflict

The requirement to meet current legislation in the operation of the site relating to public access and workplace safety may introduce conflicts with the conservation of the historic character of the site. For example, some alterations to access by the provision of ramps to the Low Barn have already been made and further consideration may be desirable to improve access to the farmhouse which has stepped access from most approaches. The need to consider alterations to adapt for alternative uses of the site may introduce conflicts in considering the effect on the historic significance against the provision of facilities which will ensure the long term future of the site.

Considerable expansion of the Northampton built-up area occurred from 1968 after Northampton was officially designated a “new town” and the Northampton Development Corporation was set up to work in partnership with the local authority. Expansion was mainly to the east and south of the town and designed to accommodate new residents, mainly from the London area. From 1970 the expansion started with slum clearance, road widening and new road schemes, which resulted in an influx of new and varied commercial and industrial activity. Danes Camp Way was constructed off the new southern ring road, Nene Valley Way, around 1980 when the Hunsbury Hill Farm land was being developed for housing. Proposals to extend Danes Camp Way are incorporated in the Northamptonshire County Strategic Development Plan to link with the A45 and divert through traffic from the town centre. This is likely to lead to increased traffic on the roads adjacent to the site.

5.5 Management issues

The need to meet changing legislative requirements for workplace safety, fire precautions and access for persons with disabilities may require alterations to be considered against the policies set out in the Plan. In some cases there may be a need for investigative work in connection with meeting regulations such as the preparation of an asbestos survey. As long as such investigations do not require destructive examination of historic features of the site there should be no problem in meeting such regulations. Where examination is intrusive however, the work should be considered against the Plan policies to minimise the impact.

The maintenance requirements of the site, especially the buildings, should be considered in order to reduce the need for increased amounts of work due to delays in carrying out routine or essential maintenance. A management policy for the regular inspection of the building stock should be considered and wherever possible repairs highlighted by inspections carried out as soon as possible.

In general terms it is to be expected that greater use of the site will allow buildings and landscape to be better maintained and introduce a need to ensure that

maintenance is carried out without undue delay. Increased use is therefore to be encouraged as long as use does not adversely impact on the significance of elements of the site.

5.6 External factors

Considerable development has been undertaken over the years, most recently with the residential development of the farm land since farming activity ceased in the 1970's. This level of development has considerably changed the landscape around the site. A watch should be kept on proposals for further development around the site to ensure that appropriate representations can be made if it is considered that the proposals may affect the significance of the site. This should include review of future editions of the Regional Spatial Strategy (due to be published in its final form in 2008), the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan (to be superseded by a number of Strategic Plans by September 2007) and Northampton Borough Council's Local Plan (to be superseded by Local Development Framework Plans by 2009) which set out regional and local planning policies for development. Separate Plans are prepared for waste and mineral extraction policies. Planning applications for local development involving development or changes of use of adjacent land should also be monitored. Changes to the listed status of the site would also impact on its significance.

5.7 Accessibility

The physical restrictions of the sloping site have an impact on accessibility. From December 2006 the last section of the Disabled Discrimination Act to be brought into force requires an Access Equality Scheme to be drawn up looking at access issues to the whole property. An Access audit has been carried out and is available as a separate document. The provision of improved access to the buildings may impact on both the landscape and buildings and care will need to be taken to ensure that the significance of the site is not adversely affected. Access to the outer site areas including the woodland, garden and Spinney may also impact on their significance and should be undertaken only with due consideration for the significance of the landscape and ecology.

5.8 Health & safety issues

Health and safety regulations must be met to ensure the well-being of staff, visitors and users of the site facilities. The historic status of the site cannot be used as an excuse for evading such legislation but does introduce the need to consider proposals arising from risk assessments and health and safety policies against the Plan policies to ensure that the impact can be minimised.

The site lies within an area subject to radon gas emissions and an application was made in 2004 for the installation of an extract fan housing. Radon gas is emitted from the ground naturally but may collect in voids below buildings and current legislation requires the provision of protective membranes and/or extract plant to ensure that gas does not enter into buildings. Provision of suitable protection in the course of alterations may require more extensive work to be undertaken affecting the significance of ground floors.

5.9 Public/community expectations

It is only to be expected that the expectations of users and visitors to the Centre will include not only a wish to see the site presented to best advantage but the provision of facilities to meet desired levels of comfort. It is reasonable to want to provide facilities which will encourage increased use and help to protect the long term future

of the site. However, the need to meet these issues may raise consideration of changes which impact on the significance of the site and will need to be considered against the policies in this Plan.

An Audience Development Plan has been prepared based on interpretation of the results of questionnaires inviting comments from sectors of the public who may be interested in using facilities at the centre.

5.10 Limitations to understanding the significance

The accommodation of alternative of uses supported by Northamptonshire ACRE, where this requires alterations to the existing buildings, will limit the capacity to provide a full interpretation of specific past uses and this will place greater importance on buildings retained to demonstrate the farming activities. It is not expected that the display of material showing the farming history of the site will be the dominant activity on the site, because of the priorities for the Hunsbury Hill Centre to provide accommodation for Northamptonshire ACRE and facilities to support the organisation's activities of working with rural communities.

Interpretation of the original agricultural use of the site will be limited by the reduced area of land remaining attached to the Centre. Of the 13.4 acres the largest proportion is occupied by the Hunsbury Hill Spinney and only a small area remains as open space. This would limit the introduction of livestock to present an active farming display, at least of larger animals, should this be considered. Interpretation material can be provided to describe the use of the site and links could be established with the Iron Age hillfort to show the differences in farming methods of the different periods, as well as Iron Works Museum at Camp Hill to show the connections with industrial activity in the locality.

5.11 Physical condition

The physical condition of the buildings has been assessed in the Condition Survey of December 2006. Such condition surveys should be prepared every 5 years to identify and prioritise repairs which will be required in the following period with estimated costs for repairs to assist in planning for the necessary resources. A copy of the report is available for reference if required. Whilst the buildings currently in use are generally in satisfactory condition, any maintenance repairs recommended should be carried out without undue delay.

The condition of the remaining land has not been assessed as it has not been used for agricultural purposes since farming activity. The condition of the Hunsbury Hill Spinney is outlined briefly in the NBRC survey (see Appendix 8.8) which includes recommendations for opening the canopy to improve light levels. This should be undertaken only after a detailed assessment by an Environmental advisor to ensure that habitats are not affected by the clearance.

5.12 Previous alterations

Previous changes to the building stock as described in section 3.2 have lead to the loss of one of the main barns and other elements of both the original farm buildings and later additions. However these can be represented graphically to show the development of the farm at different periods and the reasons for alterations to the buildings and land uses can be explained in exhibition material on site. Past changes represent the changing life of the farm and land and are an important part of the development of the site. There is a temptation to reverse more recent changes because they were inappropriate to the original concept of the site, but such

alterations should be carefully considered to ensure that the record of past changes is not lost.

5.13 Statutory controls

More recent alterations are subject to the need for approvals under statutory controls and future alterations which affect the significance of the site will require to be fully considered under Planning and Listed Building legislation. These will require applications for consent which should be accompanied by a full justification in an impact assessment which should help to reduce the vulnerability of the site. Legislation which provides protection of ecology will also assist in reducing vulnerability to change.

5.14 Area & boundaries

The adjacent residential development of the original farmland has introduced new neighbouring users who may come into conflict with the Centre and impact on the periphery of the site. Shared boundaries may be affected by the desire for privacy or the wish to open views from adjacent houses, the effects of which may be outside the control of the Northamptonshire ACRE. Although the roads along the west and north boundaries appear visually to be adequate for the current level of traffic, there may be proposals in the future for road widening which may affect the boundaries of the site. Such proposals should be monitored, considered against the Plan policies and objections made where the significance of the site may be affected.

5.15 Setting

Proposals for the wider area setting may also impact on the setting of the site and the Regional, County and Local Authority development proposals should be monitored so that representations can be made against policies which may be considered to impact on the site.

5.16 Limitations on resources

As Northamptonshire ACRE is a charity, the resources available for the maintenance and development of the site are likely to be limited. Where proposals have to be altered to meet the provisions of legislation and the Plan policies elements of the site may become vulnerable if necessary work is deferred. The listed status of the building may enable applications for grant aid to be sought from funding organisations and the potential for this should be examined.

**6 Conservation policies
(Formally adopted by the Board of Trustees on 21/02/07)**

6.1 Identifying appropriate uses

Uses of the Centre will be considered against the effect of the use on the historic fabric and character of the site. Where a use is not considered appropriate to the available building stock an alternative facility may be considered in other buildings which may require refurbishment to accommodate the use, or if none can be identified, outside the site.

6.2 Management of the Centre

Operational decisions in relation to the management of the Centre should continue to consider the conservation of the site and these decisions will now be reviewed against the policies set out in this Plan.

6.3 Maintaining the site

The ACRE trustees should continue to ensure the future conservation of the site through a regular programme of inspection, maintenance and repair in accordance with priorities identified in the Condition Survey of the buildings and recommendations relating to other aspects of the site and the effect of proposals for repair shall be considered against this Plan.

6.4 Conservation philosophy

Repair and maintenance works on the site buildings will be carried out using materials and methods of workmanship in accordance with acknowledged methods of conservative repair. Alterations should be carried out in a way which will allow a reversion to the previous form without loss of historic fabric or materials. The effect of work on specific features of the site may require advice to be sought from specialist consultants.

6.5 Protection of the site

The ACRE will endeavour to maintain the historic integrity of the site and consider all project proposals against the policies set out in this Plan.

6.6 Potential for development of the site

All project proposals shall be considered against this Plan to assess the effect on the site and ensure that no adverse effect on the significance or removal of historic material results.

6.7 Protection of the setting

All external influences which may affect the significance of the site shall be monitored and representations made as appropriate to resist proposals which could have an adverse effect on the site or its environment.

6.8 Coordination of elements of the site

The different features of the site will be considered in the context of the whole site and consideration will be given to the effect of proposals for one element on other elements of the site.

6.9 Improvement of access

Proposals for improved access and facilities for persons with disabilities shall be encouraged but will need to be assessed against the policies of this Plan. The effect of these measures must be balanced against the safeguarding of the significance of historic buildings and site while ensuring that the requirements of statutory regulations are met.

6.10 Interpretation of the site

Wherever public access is offered to the buildings and environs, consideration should be given to providing information which will allow a full appreciation and understanding of the site.

6.11 Impact of alterations

The impact of repairs and alterations to the site will be considered by undertaking an impact assessment for all projects affecting the site.

6.12 Provision of visitor facilities

Proposals which provide improvement of facilities for visitors shall be encouraged but will need to be assessed against the policies of this Plan.

6.13 Statutory requirements

All proposals shall be processed through the statutory control procedures relating to listed buildings and protection of ecology. The requirements of new legislation and regulations should be assessed so that the Centre can be advised of the likely effect of legislative changes. This Plan cannot override legislative requirements but the effects should be considered against the policies of this Plan.

6.14 Maintaining the site records

Before any alterations are undertaken the affected area will be recorded and the information added to the site archive records. Archive material will be made available to interested parties. Any new material obtained should be reviewed for inclusion in the site archive.

7 Implementation and review

7.1 Use of the Conservation Management Plan

NACRE's Board of Trustees through its Properties Committee has the responsibility for the care and maintenance of the site and in this capacity will take on the responsibility for ensuring that the Conservation Management Plan, once adopted, is referred to and proposals correctly and effectively assessed against the policies in the Plan. The Plan should be referred to at the earliest stage of proposals and used as a general management tool to ensure that full consideration is given to the effects of changes involved in proposals. A record of the impact of any proposals affecting the site should be kept and retained on file for review to ensure that the assessment processes are being effectively carried out.

The Plan should be referred to, not only in relation to proposals for alterations but also in relation to routine maintenance and annual programmes of work on the Centre site. The maintenance plan outlined in appendix 8.7 should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the site is not vulnerable due to lack of or late maintenance and after any

new condition survey is carried out.

The Plan should be made available to all members of staff, to all those involved in decision processes within the Northamptonshire ACRE organisation and to external consultants commissioned for work on the site.

The Plan should be available to any outside organisations who may be involved in proposals for the site or funding organisations. Local and Regional Planning Authorities may wish to refer to the plan when drawing up planning guidance on the site or its surrounding area.

7.2 Review of the Conservation Plan

The Plan should be reviewed and updated every five years or earlier to take account of changes in legislation, designation, the effect of specific alterations carried out or new information arising from site investigations or outside research. Revisions should be circulated for comment to those who have made contributions to the original document and to any other persons or organisations the Centre considers can contribute to the full understanding of the site and review of the Plan.

Scheduled date for adoption of the Final Draft: 18th July 2007.

8 Appendices

8.1 Site map

The site map is based on the Ordnance Survey data and reproduced under licence. Crown copyright preserved 2006. The Hunsbury Hill Centre is located at grid reference SP 73204 58893. The site boundary is shown as a dashed line.

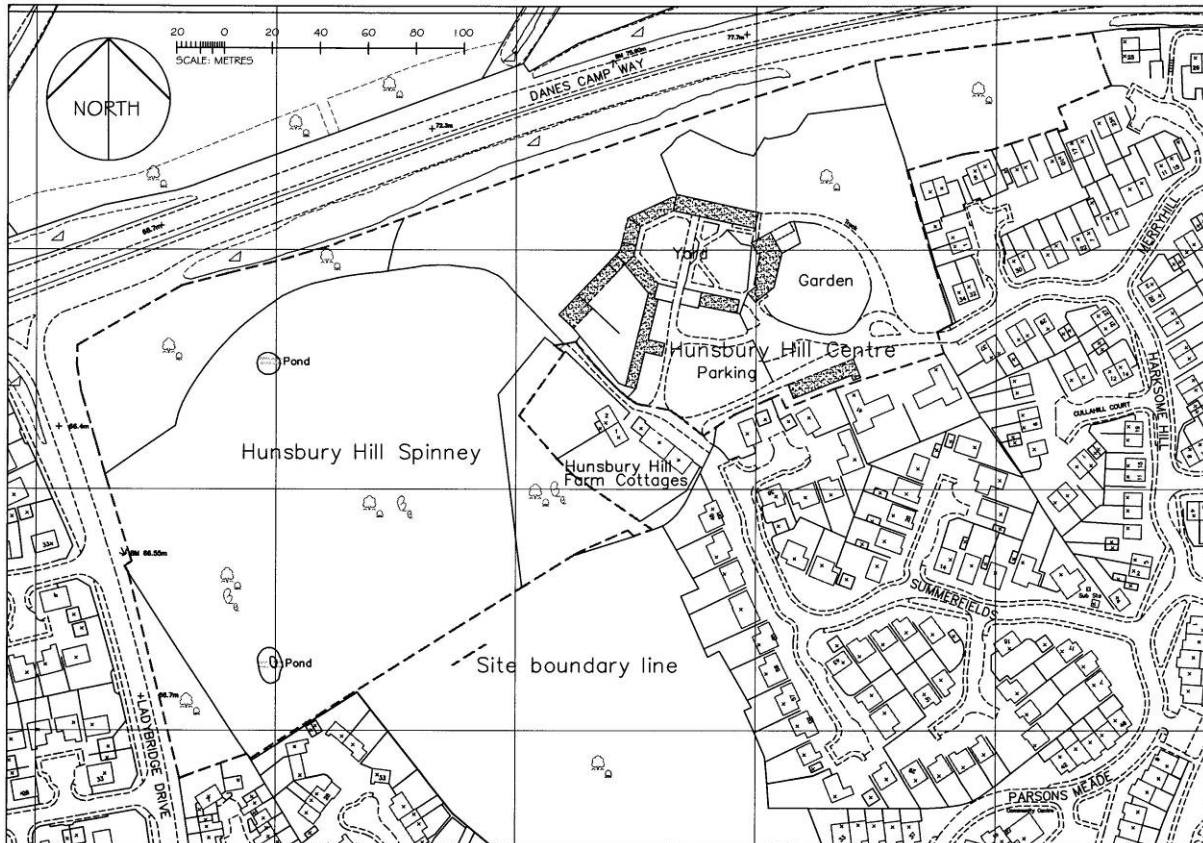


Fig 9 Site map
(Based on the Ordnance Survey and reproduced under licence. Crown Copyright 2005)

8.2 Site records

The site archive contains the following information:

- 1 Photographs (see Appendix 8.5)
- 2 Copy of a lease dated 24th April 1978 to the Northamptonshire ACRE from Northampton Development Corporation (incorporating Schedule of Condition dated September 1976).
- 3 'Hunsbury Hill Farm', a study of buildings and past use; Nene College, undated (Richard Moss et al, 1983).
- 4 'Hunsbury Hill, a place of kings'; A local history of Hunsbury; Jessica Wooley; July 2004.
- 5 Copies of census records for the years 1851-1901

- 6 'Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Historical Report'; prepared by Rod Conlon for Northamptonshire ACRE, November 2005.
- 7 Sketch of the garden at Hunsbury Hill Farm, 24th October 1854, by George Clark, from a sketch book in Northamptonshire Record Office.
- 8 'Hunsbury Hill Farm: A Record, Fabric Survey', undated, unsigned. (This is a description of the form and materials of construction rather than a condition survey and includes plans of the farmhouse with rooms labelled as their use before conversion to offices.)

8.3 Building record drawings

All drawings are the copyright of the originator or the Northamptonshire ACRE. Permission to reproduce part or all of any drawings listed must be obtained from the originator or Northamptonshire ACRE.

The following drawings are available in the site archive:

1. Northampton Development Corporation plan 1976
2. Details of refurbishment/alterations to the High and Low Barns 1980-81
3. Hunsbury Hill Centre, Stimpson Walton Bond Drawing number 2241.101, Plans as existing Jan 2004

8.4 Historic maps

The following maps showing the Hunsbury Hill Farm are accessible in the Northamptonshire Record Office (reference numbers shown in brackets) and are reproduced in 'Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Historical Report' by Rod Conlon (see Appendix 8.2, item 6).

- 1 The Hardingstone enclosure map of 1765/6 (NRO Map Inc 46)
- 2 Ordnance Survey 2inch map 1810.
- 3 Plan of the farm from a deed of 1872 (NRO B(D) 1408)

8.5 Photographic record

There is a large collection of black and white and colour photographs in the Centre Archive that form part of the original lease agreement between the Northampton Development Corporation and the Rural Community Council dated 1976. A selection of these photographs is reproduced on the HHC website (see www.hhcrestoration.org.uk) with comparison current photographs. An index is available of the collection of nearly 600 images.

8.6 Condition survey of the buildings

The following reports of condition surveys are available in the Centre Archives.

- 1 Schedule of Condition attached to the lease to Northamptonshire ACRE dated September 1976.
- 2 Structural Inspection of the Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton; Construction and Property Services, Northampton Borough Council, 1998.
- 3 A Fabric Survey containing a detailed description of the house and farm buildings, including measured plans of both floors of the house and naming all the rooms, undated and without authorship but with an internal reference which indicates it is post 1978.

A new survey was carried out as part of the preparation of this Plan and is available at the Centre.

- 4 Condition Survey Report, Sarum Architects, December 2006.

8.7 Maintenance plan

A full Maintenance Plan has been adopted by NACRE's Properties Committee which includes general recommendations as listed below and a schedule of repairs based on the recommendations in the latest Condition Survey.

- 1 Every five years a thorough inspection of the building should be made by a qualified Architect or Surveyor to report on the condition of the fabric and advise on the need and priority for repairs. Any reports recommended on specific installations in items below should be available before the Architect or Surveyor carries out his inspection so that comments and recommendations made in such reports can be incorporated in the Condition Survey report.
- 2 Northamptonshire ACRE staff, including the Site Supervisor, are responsible for making regular inspections of the buildings to look for damage which requires attention. This is important because small defects, if left unattended, can lead to major work being required. It is recommended that these 'walk round' inspections should be done each month and after severe storms, which may cause damage to roof coverings, chimneys, parapets, etc.
- 3 Every three months checks on all rainwater pipes, gutters and outlets should be made to ensure that water is drained freely from the buildings.
- 4 Every three months any manhole covers and gullies on all accessible sections of underground drains should be lifted to check that drains are clear and free flowing.
- 5 Any blockages noted in rainwater goods, gullies or underground drains should be cleared immediately.
- 6 External timber joinery, particularly on south facing facades, will require protection on a regular basis to ensure that exposed timber does not rot. Gloss painted or stained woodwork should be treated in accordance with the paint or stain manufacturer's recommendations and at least every five years. Flaked paint should be removed and any bare timber should be primed or base sealed before painting.

- 7 Cast iron rainwater goods and other external metalwork should be re-painted on a regular basis and at least every 5-10 years (depending on the paint system used and exposure). During re-decoration any corrosion should be removed and bare metal should be thoroughly cleaned and primed before painting.
- 8 Every five years the condition of the electrical installation should be inspected by an NICEIC registered Electrician and any faults reported should be rectified as soon as possible. The inspection should include all electrical heating equipment whether fixed or moveable.
- 9 Each year, in the late summer before the systems are switched on, gas boilers and water heaters should be serviced and gas service valves and pipes checked for safe operation, by a CORGI registered engineer. The condition of heating systems, radiators and pipework, should be regularly checked for leaks during the heating season.
- 10 Fire precautions systems such as fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and fire alarms if installed, should be regularly maintained and serviced annually by the installer or other approved engineer, qualified to provide certificates of satisfactory operation.
- 11 The Centre is required to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) which requires that a 'Responsible Person' is appointed to oversee the conduct of fire safety measures. This can be done by carrying out a Fire Risk Assessment which should be a written document assessing the risks to building users and physical and management measures to be taken for safety in the event of a fire. The Assessment should be regularly reviewed and updated to cover any changes to the built environment or use of the buildings.
- 12 The Health and Safety Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 require that a survey be carried out to record the location of any materials known or believed to contain asbestos. A survey has been made and materials identified have been labelled accordingly. No work should be instructed which requires materials to be cut, drilled or disturbed in any way and materials should be removed only by a licensed asbestos removal contractor. Certain asbestos materials may now be handled by an unlicensed contractor but the nature of the material should first be confirmed by analysis of samples.

8.8 Ecological surveys

- 1 Bat Report, Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Phil Richardson, Bat Consultant, 27 September 2006⁸ (available on the website www.hhcrestoration.org.uk as a separate report)
- 2 Bird Report, Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Phil Richardson, Bat Consultant, 27 September 2006⁹ (available on the website at www.hhcrestoration.org.uk as a separate report)
- 3 County Wildlife Site Survey, Hunsbury Hill Spinney and Hunsbury Hill Spinney Pond, Site number 179, Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre, August 2005 – reproduced below.

- 4 County Wildlife Site Survey, Hunsbury Hill Spinney and Pond, File Code: N/18.8.92 The Wildlife Trusts, August 1992.

8.9 Accessibility audit

An Access Plan, including an accessibility audit, has been prepared as part of the Project Planning Grant work. The Access Plan will be a separate document to this Conservation Management Plan.

8.10 Fire risk assessment

A fire risk assessment report has been completed by Northamptonshire ACRE and was approved by the Property Committee on 22/11/2006 (date to be confirmed). The Fire Risk Assessment document forms part of the Centre's Health and Safety documentation.

8.11 Historical development records

The plan of the farmhouse reproduced in section 4.3 identifies the dates of different elements of the building. A plan of the farm buildings similarly identifying the dates of construction of the various elements and the location of demolished buildings taken from historical records could be prepared when a detailed survey of the site has been carried out.

8.12 Associated uses records

Within the area of the Hunsbury Hill Centre the only known alternative uses of the site are the use of the buildings as a billet for troops, mentioned in section 3.3, and the observatory referred to in section 4.5. The use as a billet was advised following a conversation between Rod Conlon and Richard Moss. This occurred during the period when the land was being quarried for ironstone. The dates of the observatory were advised in a telephone conversation between the Editor and Nick Hewitt, a member of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society Astronomy Section.

8.13 Social historical records

Copies of census records for the years 1851-1901 are available in the Centre archive.

Rod Conlon's Historical Report on the Hunsbury Hill Centre includes a list of identified owners and tenants of the farm from 1770 to 1979 when the Northamptonshire ACRE acquired the property, with source references.

8.14 Statutory approvals

Northampton Borough Council's Planning Department archive holds details of the following applications submitted for work at the Hunsbury Hill Centre.

(Part of the NBC archive is being scanned for digital storage and is not currently accessible – details to be added)

- 597/77 Planning Permission: Conversion of farmhouse to offices
- LB18/77 Listed Building Consent: Conversion of farmhouse to offices
- 767/80 COSIRA (Council for Small Businesses in Rural Areas), 4no Training workshops.
- 93/LB06 Listed Building Consent: Internal alterations at HHC.
- N/2002/49 Northamptonshire ACRE, Radon remedial works
- N/2002/1278 Planning Permission: Northamptonshire ACRE, Disabled access ramp with railings (to Low Barn).
- N/2002/1279 Listed Building Consent: Northamptonshire ACRE, Disabled access ramp with railings (to Low Barn).
- N/2004/0302 Listed Building Consent: Hunsbury Hill Centre, Harksome Hill, NN4 9QX; Installation of external fan housing for Radon gas extraction; approved 8 April 2004.

8.15 Archaeological survey

No known archaeological investigations have been carried out on the site of the farm buildings. The farm, constructed around 1770 is reported to have been built on open land rather than on the site of previous buildings. The proximity of the Iron Age hillfort and the industrial site of the ironworks, from which a tramway passed close to the west side of the farm buildings leading down to the canal, makes it possible that artefacts may be uncovered in the course of excavations for new works and trial excavations under an archaeological watching brief may be desirable before new construction is carried out to identify traces of previous occupation from the period of agricultural use or earlier.

8.16 Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposals which involve alterations to a historic building should be carefully assessed to establish the effect on the significance of the site. A Heritage Impact Assessment looks at the consequences of a specific proposal and at what can be done to reduce the adverse effects of the scheme. Mitigation may be achieved by a range of actions from finding an alternative site to recording the existing site in detail before work is carried out.

The table below gives headings for assessing the impact of proposals

Proposed work	Examine specific works envisaged
Relevant Conservation Policy	Refer to policies in the Conservation Management Plan and statutory guidance
Significance of element affected	Examine in detail the significance of areas affected

Possible impact of work	Assess the impact in light of significance
Mitigation	Suggest design alternatives or archaeological mitigation

The impact assessment is an essential on-going part of the Conservation Management Plan process, to ensure that a scheme for alterations or management proposal is measured against the Plan policies. It can also help to identify further information or recording which may be required to assess a scheme.

9 Bibliography

(notes in the text refer to the references numbered below)

- 1 P Marquis-Kyle & M Walker: The Illustrated Burra Charter, ICOMOS Australia, 1996.
- 2 The planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990, HMSO.
- 3 J Waller: Hunsbury Hillfort, www.jwaller.co.uk/nas/Hunsbury_Hillfort.
- 4 History from the Sources series; Domesday Book, Northamptonshire, Phillimore, 1979.
- 5 R Conlon: Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Historical Report, November 2005.
- 6 Nikolaus Pevsner: The Buildings of England, Northamptonshire, Penguin Books, 1995.
- 7 The Development of English Building Construction; C F Innocent; Cambridge University Press, 1916 (reproduced by Donhead 1999).
- 8 Bat Report, Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Phil Richardson, Bat Consultant, 27 September 2006.
- 9 Bird Report, Hunsbury Hill Centre, Northampton, Phil Richardson, Bat Consultant, 27 September 2006.

10 Further Reading

The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914; Susanna Wade; Martins Windgather Press, 13 May 2002.

Historic Farmsteads, Preliminary Character Statement: East Midlands; English Heritage & The Countryside Agency; University of Gloucestershire, 2006.

English Heritage: The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: a guide to good practice.

11 Glossary

Term	Definition
ACRE	Action with Communities in Rural England
cambered	An arched shape such as at the head of a window
canted	Set at an oblique (more than 90 degrees) angle
conservative repair	Repairs carried out in accordance with established conservation practice minimising alteration to historic building fabric
curtilage	The land attached to a building as part of its enclosure
entablature	The decorative head to a door or window which comprises an architrave, frieze and cornice. The frieze may be plain or decorated and the cornice projects forward of the frieze.
entasis	A slight convex swelling of the shaft of a column
HHC	Hunsbury Hill Centre
Hovel	A shed for livestock or storage
model farm	A farm constructed in a single phase specifically designed to make best use of the farming methods of the time
NACRE	Northamptonshire ACRE (see ACRE)
Pantile	A clay roofing tile of curved S shaped section
pentice-roofed	A roof at a lower level to the main roof of a building
yeoman	A man holding and cultivating a small landed estate