

**Location:**  
Offices at Princes Manor Barns, Harwell  
**Client:**  
Messrs DJ & A Lay /  
Princes Manor Farm



## TO THE MANOR BARNS

Repair of two listed 16th & 17th century barns and conversion to lettable offices

CYMA RECTA. A double-curved moulding, concave above and convex below, also called an ogee moulding.

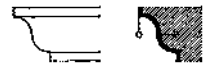
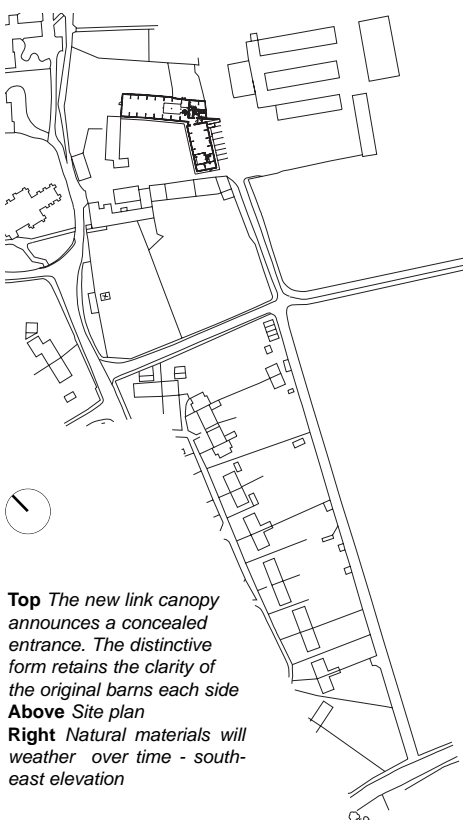


Fig. 36. Cyma recta



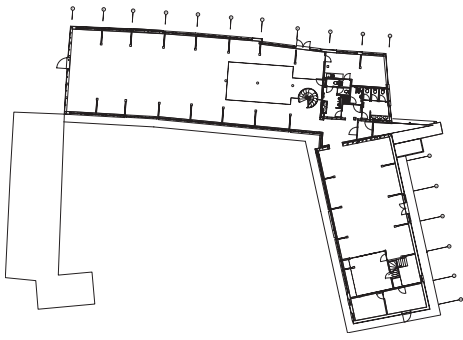
**Top** The new link canopy announces a concealed entrance. The distinctive form retains the clarity of the original barns each side  
**Above** Site plan  
**Right** Natural materials will weather over time - south-east elevation

The recent repair and conversion of two listed Barns at Princes Manor Farm, Harwell provides valuable office space in the heart of the Oxfordshire countryside, alongside ongoing farming activities.

Archaeological studies conclude that the earliest elements of Barn 1 date back to

the 16th Century. *Cyma recta* mouldings to the principal frame members indicate its origins as a building of a higher purpose, such as an early manorial court. It's reconstruction on the present site, with subsequent extensions and the addition of a second Barn to the south, dates to the early 17th century (D Miles, 2006).





Over recent years, both barns had suffered significant weather damage and a number of trusses had either collapsed or were propped with telegraph poles. Consequently, extensive specialist repair works to the original frame were required, including the sensitive reconstruction of a number of bays in new green oak, before their realignment and new roofing works could commence.

In addition, new first floor office space has been provided in each barn. In Barn 1, this takes the form of a new mezzanine level on slender columns four metres high accessed via a sleek white spiral stair. Frameless sheets of toughened glass at it's edges allow uninterrupted views across the queen-post trusses within the roof-space.

Similarly, in Barn 2 a new meeting room and private office are enclosed by a new frameless glass screen, masked by the truss frame it sits behind.

Underfloor heating and simple lighting provide a comfortable working environment, whilst a simple pallet of white finishes and frameless glass highlights the inherent beauty of the original oak frame.

**Top** Ground floor plan.

**Main picture** Original medieval barn, with new mezzanine above trusses beyond.

**Below** Prior to the most recent works, the barns had been in limited use, providing shelter to farm machinery and a stock of pigs within concrete pigsties.





Externally, the barns are roofed in hand-made clay plain tiles and external walls are clad in untreated western red cedar, selected for its natural weather resistance. It is expected that over time the cladding will develop a silver-grey patina, closely matching the finish of the timber windows and glazed screens.

In their conversion to office use, the originally planned layout was reconfigured, placing a new entrance link between the barns. Entered under a dramatic tapering canopy, users can then enter either of the barns allowing a for flexible, multi-tenancy occupation if required in the future.

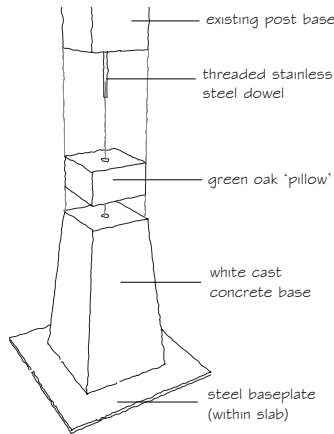
Study of the barns reveals a strong history of adaption and conversion, ongoing since the earliest of the timber frames was reconstructed in its current location over 400 years ago. With the latest work, it is hoped that the future of the barns at Princes Manor Farm has been secured for even longer still.KJB

*Project Particulars*

*Contract Period: April 2006 - Feb 2007*  
*Contract Value: £1.2M*  
*Principal Contractor: Donovan Construction (South West) Ltd.*



**Above** Externally, natural materials dominate which will develop more character over time.  
**Right** The projecting canopy becomes even more dramatic after dark  
**Below** Post base treatment, following removal of concrete pigsty enclosures.  
**Left** Frameless glass balustrades allow uninterrupted views at first floor



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