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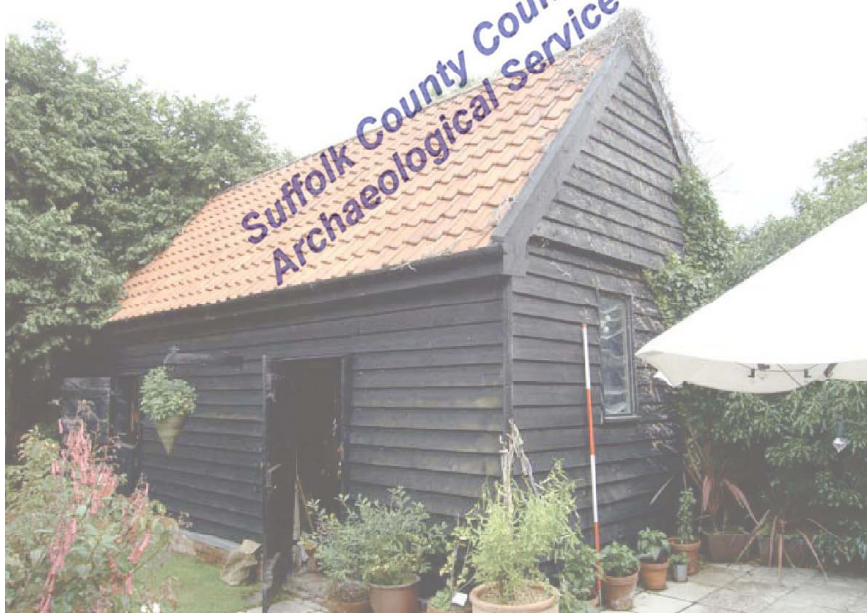
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**The Barn,  
Picknotts,  
Cockfield, Suffolk  
COK 057**

**Historic Building Record**

Suffolkc1-62608



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July 2009

# The Barn, Picknotts, Cross Green, Cockfield, Suffolk

(TL 907 555)

## Historic Building Record

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a small outbuilding that has been referred to for planning purposes as a barn. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (Edward Martin, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Ref. Picknotts\_Cockfield\_09) and is intended to inform and accompany an application for planning permission to Babergh District Council.*

### Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 32 digital images (Appendix 1) but also includes printed photographs of key features to illustrate the text (Appendix 2). Each image is described in a separate schedule and wherever possible includes a scale rod with half-metre divisions in red and white. The site was inspected on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

### Summary

Picknotts is an unlisted domestic house of the mid- to late-18<sup>th</sup> century which lies on the eastern side of the A1141 between Lavenham and Bury St Edmunds but is hidden from view behind the neighbouring Thatchers Restaurant. The site adjoined the southern edge of Cross Green until its partial enclosure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is probably of medieval origin. The property includes a small, single-storied detached barn or shed in the middle of its rear garden, but 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show that it formed only a small part of a long range of contiguous structures adjoining the park of Pepper's Hall on the south-east. The property boundary was extended into the park during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the rest of the range was demolished. Insurance documents in owner's possession identify the various buildings as a stable, barn, outhouse, closet, slaughterhouse and butcher's shop that in 1892 were occupied separately from the dwelling house.

The remaining barn is a timber-framed, weatherboarded and pantiled structure that was built in two phases during the late-18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> centuries as a pair of small sheds, and was never used as an agricultural barn. It can probably be equated with the stable mentioned in the insurance documents, but may possibly have formed the slaughterhouse and butcher's shop. The building is of some historic interest as an unusually small and cheaply-built utilitarian structure. While buildings of this type were once common, most have failed to stand the test of time. The well-preserved external gable of the older shed is of particular interest as its whitewashed render and boarding illustrate the usual appearance of outbuildings in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century local landscape depicted by Constable and Gainsborough prior to the introduction of tar during the second half of the century. Unfortunately, however, the building has been too heavily altered and rebuilt in recent years to be considered of special historic significance, and does not meet the criteria for listing.

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Figure 1

**Existing Ordnance Survey Site Plan**

**Showing the barn shaded in red with its internal partition into two sheds. A modern lean-to garage adjoins its south-western elevation, and the house (Picknotts) is outlined in red. The park of Pepper's Hall is shown to the right.**

## Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Picknotts lies on the eastern side of the A1141 between Lavenham and Bury St Edmunds at the southern edge of the hamlet of Cross Green, approximately 1.5 km north-west of the parish church. The unlisted house is a mid- to late-18<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed and rendered structure with a Mansard roof which is hidden from the road behind the Thatchers Restaurant (formerly the King's Head Public House). The property includes a small, single-storied detached barn or shed in the rear garden, as shown in figure 1, but the layout of the site as shown on the Cockfield tithe map of 1845 was strikingly different. A third house lay immediately to the north-west, and Picknotts extended further to the rear in a series of increasingly narrow projections to abut a long series of buildings of which the surviving 'barn' or shed represents only a fragment. The property boundary also differs significantly, with the house and outbuildings abutting the park of the medieval manor of Pepper's Hall on the south-east. A strip of land was taken from the park in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to enlarge the garden and create the present drive and access to the south-east of the house; the modern lean-to garage against the shed's rear elevation lies on land formerly within the park.

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Figure 2

Cross Green as shown on the Cockfield tithe map of 1845 (SRO Bury branch) showing the moated site of Peppers Hall to the right with Picknotts bottom-centre (see detail below). The green consists of two triangles bounded on the south by Thatchers Restaurant and Picknotts, but the field boundaries suggest it originally formed a much larger triangle including the field to the north of Picknotts (693).

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Figure 2a

Detail of 1845 tithe map

Picknotts is shown in pink to the right, with a large attached outbuilding to the north-east (695). A second house, now demolished, lies immediately to the west (695a), and the King's Head Public House (now the Thatchers) to the south-west (696). The small building on the green to the north-west is a cottage and blacksmith's shop (694).

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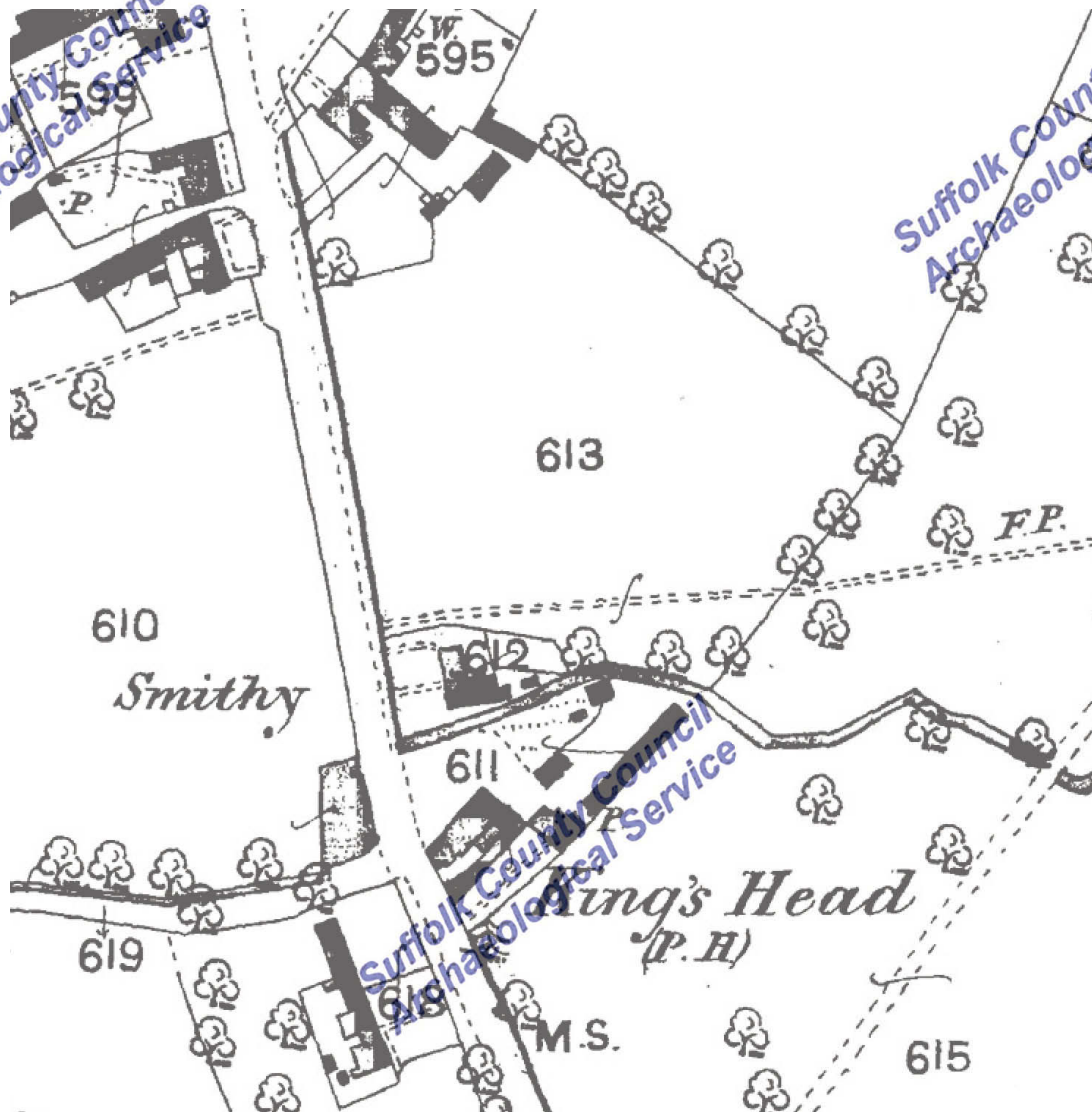


Figure 3

First edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885. Picknotts and the King's Head had changed little since 1845, but the third cottage had been demolished and the green enclosed to leave the smithy on private ground north of the present road.

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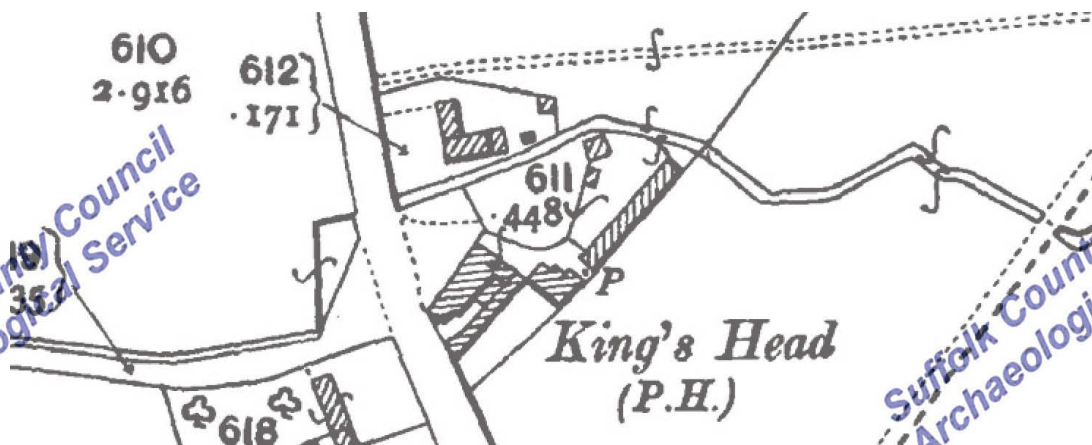


Figure 4

Second edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, still showing the present 'barn' as part of a long, narrow range of buildings on the boundary of Pepper's Hall park.

The title apportionment notes that Picknotts (no. 695 on the map) was both owned and occupied in 1845 by the Widow Gosling, and that the adjacent house (695a) was divided into a pair of cottages owned by Martha Gosling (presumably a relative, but possibly the Widow Gosling herself) and occupied by 'Henry Makins and another'. It was normal for title apportionments to name only one of several tenants in this way. The nearby 'King's Head Public House and Yard' was owned by John Fenton and occupied by John Good.

A deed of 1708 in the possession of the present owner records the purchase of a small piece of land adjoining the Lavenham road to the south of the King's Head in Cockfield, which piece was staked out to distinguish it from another plot of ground belonging to 'the adjoining messuage (i.e. house) called Picknotts. This ground clearly formed the modern front garden of Picknotts, which then extended to the Kings Head, and the shed or stable on the land acquired by the public house was replaced by the linear brick and flint shed which now forms its north-western boundary. The deed demonstrates the age of the name Picknotts, which is sufficiently eccentric to suggest a medieval origin, but the present house is undoubtedly later – although a number of 16<sup>th</sup> century ceiling joists were imported in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The identity of the large range of outbuildings to the rear is revealed by a series of insurance documents also in the present owner's possession. A document of 1915 insures the house, which was then occupied by William Wilding, bootmaker, for £175, and 'a range of buildings comprising a slaughterhouse, stable and barn, built of brick, stud and plaster and tiled and thatched' for £110. This range was in the separate occupation of one James Jolly. Four other buildings on the site, including an outhouse of timber and slate and a closet (privy) of tiled brick and timber, both of which adjoined the 'range', were insured separately for sums of £15 or less – suggesting the scale of the main range was comparable to the house. A similar document of 1892 is more specific, insuring the house for £100, a barn for £40, a stable for £10 and a 'slaughterhouse and butcher shop communicating' for £40. The closet and a henhouse were both insured for £5. The tranquil modern garden was evidently something of an industrial estate behind the public house. The present owner understands that the surviving shed was formerly a slaughterhouse, but its small scale and cheap timber construction suggests it is more likely to have formed the stable insured in 1892 for £10 rather than the slaughterhouse and connecting butcher's shop which was presumably a more substantial structure if was insured for almost half as much as the house.

## Building Analysis

The 'barn' is better described as a pair of sheds, and has never operated as an agricultural barn in the usual sense of the term. At the time of inspection it was used for general-purpose storage in the manner of a garden shed, and contained few clues to its role in the linear range of outbuildings described in the insurance documents cited above.

### Proportions and Structure

The shed is a timber-framed, weatherboarded and pantiled structure on a north-east/south-west axis, immediately to the rear of a domestic house. It extends to 9.3 m in length by 3.8 m in overall width (30.5 ft by 12.5 ft) and rises to 2.6 m at its eaves (9.5 ft). The interior is divided into a pair of equal compartments by a lateral partition, each entered by central doors on the north-western elevation and connected internally by a door against the same front wall.

The timber frame of both compartments consists of vertical studs interrupted by primary diagonal braces which are nailed rather than tenoned to the principal posts. The common studs vary in scantling, with evidence of re-use from an older frame, and are tenoned but not pegged and in some cases nailed to the roof-plates, sills and tie-beams. The original roof consists of clasped-purlins with nailed collars, but most of the existing rafters and collars are

recent softwood insertions. Despite the similarity of its wall-framing, the northern compartment appears to pre-date the southern compartment, as the internal partition is constructed in the manner of an external gable and corresponds with scarf joints in both roof-plates. The northern shed also contains a central open truss with arch-braces that are pegged and tenoned to the storey posts but (unusually) nailed to the southern face of the tie-beam; this feature is lacking from the southern shed, which is otherwise of identical size. The internal gable retains its original infill of wattle-and-daub with multiple layers of whitewash, with horizontal boarding and the outline of a blocked central window to the lower storey of its southern (formerly external) elevation. The white brick floor of the northern shed is lower by 15 cm (6 ins) than its counterpart to the south and contains a central lateral gully or drain which corresponds to the external entrance.

The structure has been extensively renovated in recent years (ostensibly within the last decade), with substantial areas of studwork renewed in softwood, new external weatherboarding and new pantiles. The lean-to garage against the south-eastern elevation is an addition of the late-20<sup>th</sup> century. The external door frames are modern, but probably occupy their original positions as tenons for earlier lintels survive alongside both (pegged in the case of the northern shed but not the southern). The present windows in the two gables and the south-eastern elevation (opening onto the garage) are also modern, and there is evidence of a removed collar-height ceiling in the southern shed (its whitewash does not extend to the apex of the roof). Although the present tiles are recent, the relatively low pitch of the rafters (at approximately 45 degrees) suggests they were designed for tile rather than thatch or slate – but possibly for peg-tiles rather than pantiles. It is not clear whether the exterior was weatherboarded from the outset or rendered, but given the original infill of the internal gable the latter is more likely – at least for the older northern shed.

### Date

The wall framing is typical of the late-18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with re-used studs interrupted by nailed primary braces. The northern half of the present structure is slightly earlier than the southern, with the latter added as an extension to the former's gable, but there is unlikely to be more than a quarter of a century between each phase. A date of *circa* 1800 can be suggested for the former, and *circa* 1820 for the latter.

### Original Layout and Function

The two sheds were entered by separate doors from the north-west, as at present, and there is evidence of a large blocked window between the original gable of the northern shed and the door of the southern addition. There is no obvious evidence of an original window in the northern shed, however, but small windows or vents may have existed between its studs. There is no conclusive evidence of the original purpose of the two areas, but the two bentwood hooks which project from the southern gables of each shed are normally associated with stables (where they secured harness). The central lateral drain in the northern shed is also typical of stables, but other functions cannot be ruled out. The documentary evidence discussed above indicates that the remaining sheds formed only a small part of a much larger range of buildings and that semi-industrial activities occurred on the site; the small scale of the sheds is consistent with their interpretation as the stable mentioned in the insurance document of 1892 rather than the more expensive and therefore more substantial barn or the slaughterhouse with interconnecting butcher's shop – but the latter cannot be entirely ruled out.

### Historic Significance

The 'barn' or shed at Picknotts is all that survives of a long range of contiguous semi-industrial buildings shown on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps, including a stable, slaughterhouse, butcher's



shop, barn, outhouse and closet. Whether the present structure formed the stable and tack room of the slaughterhouse and shop is not entirely clear, but whatever its original purpose the building is of some historic interest as an unusually small and cheaply-built utilitarian structure of the late-18<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup> century. While structures of this type were once common, most failed to stand the test of time and either collapsed or were demolished. The well-preserved external gable of the older compartment is of particular interest as its whitewashed render and boarding illustrates the usual appearance of outbuildings in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century local landscape depicted by Constable and Gainsborough, prior to the introduction of tar during the second half of the century. Unfortunately, however, the building has been too heavily altered and rebuilt in recent years to be considered of special historic significance, and is certainly not worthy of listing.

## Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

### Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

#### Photograph no.

1. Approach to site from southwest, showing facade of Picknotts house with barn in rear to right.
2. General view from south-east showing proximity of house to right & Thatchers in rear.
3. General view from garden to north-east showing site of demolished range in foreground.
4. Exterior of barn from east showing modern lean-to garage to left.
5. Exterior of barn from north showing shed door with rear elevation of house to right.
6. External north-western facade from north showing modern cladding.
7. Exterior of barn from west showing modern tiles and cladding.
8. Exterior from south showing modern lean-to garage in foreground.
9. External rear south-eastern elevation from within lean-to garage, seen from east.
10. Internal rear elevation of northern shed showing original open truss in centre.
11. Internal northern gable showing modern window with locked door to right.
12. Internal southern partition of northern shed, showing door to southern shed to right.
13. Open truss of northern shed seen from east, showing new timber in roof structure.
14. Roof structure of northern shed seen from south, showing remains of original clasped-purlins.
15. Detail from south of pegged and nailed tie-beam brace in northern shed.
16. Internal front elevation of northern shed showing entrance with door to southern shed to left.
17. Northern elevation of internal partition showing bentwood harness hook to right.
18. Detail of from south of open truss in northern shed, showing external door to left.
19. Detail from south of front storey post showing apparent pegged portion of original door lintel.

20. Detail of internal partition in northern shed showing projecting hook with wattle-and-daub.
21. Detail of Gault brick floor of northern shed from west, showing lateral central drain.
22. Internal partition from southern shed showing blocked central window and connecting door to left.
23. Detail of internal partition from southern shed showing original external render and whitewash.
24. Detail from south of blocked central window and boarded lower storey to internal partition.
25. Detail from west of external render and projecting tie-beam to internal partition.
26. Roof structure of southern shed showing evidence of removed collar-height ceiling.
27. Internal rear partition of southern shed showing renewed fabric.
28. Internal southern gable of southern shed.
29. Detail of bentwood hook to left of modern window in southern gable.
30. Position of blocked window in western facade of southern shed, showing internal door to right.
31. Internal western elevation of southern shed showing external door & modern studwork.
32. Detail of brick floor in southern shed.



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Appendix 2 (pp. 11-14): Selected Printed Photographs

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A2.1 Approach to site from south-west, showing the facade of Picknotts house with the barn in rear to right and the single storied shed belonging to the Thatchers to left

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A2.2 Exterior of barn from north showing shed doors in western façade with rear elevation of house to right



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A2.3 Exterior of barn from west showing modern tiles and cladding with entrance to southern shed to right and northern shed to left

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A2.4 Internal rear elevation of northern shed showing original studs and primary bracing with open truss in centre



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A2.5 Detail of from south of open truss in northern shed, showing tenoned and pegged junction with wall post and nailed attachment to tie-beam, with external door to left.

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A2.6 Detail of internal partition from northern shed showing projecting hook with wattle-and-daub infill.



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A2.7 Internal partition seen from southern shed showing blocked central window and connecting door to left

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A2.8 Internal southern gable showing original studwork with primary bracing and bentwood hook to left of modern window