

**Outbuildings at,  
Forge Cottage,  
Cockfield, Suffolk  
COK 058**

**Historic Building Record**

Suffolkc1-70030



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*on behalf of*  
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# Outbuildings at Forge Cottage, Great Green, Cockfield, Suffolk

(TL 915 558)

## Historic Building Record

*This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a pair of single-storied sheds. It has been prepared to a brief written by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (Ref. SpecHBR(EM)\_ForgeCott\_Cockfield\_01061\_09, dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009) and is intended to inform and accompany an application to Babergh District Council for permission to demolish (ref B/09/01061).*

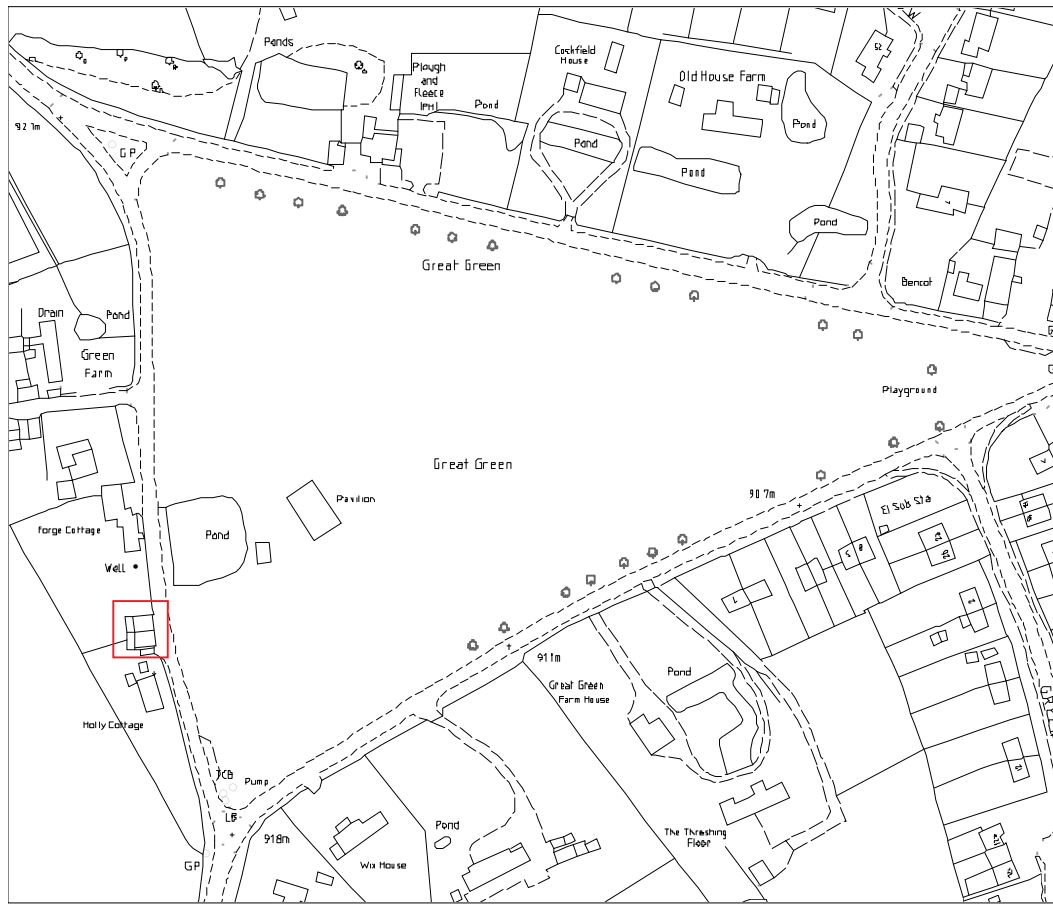
### Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a photographic record in the form of 56 digital images (Appendix 1), but also includes 12 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 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

### Summary

Forge Cottage is a grade II-listed thatched and rendered structure which is dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Schedule of Listed Buildings but may be earlier. It adjoins the western edge of a large and exceptionally well-preserved medieval green known as Great Green and therefore forms part of an important historic landscape. The property was identified as a house and blacksmith's shop by the Cockfield tithe survey of 1845, and the single-storied 19<sup>th</sup> century outbuildings of flint and brick attached to the cottage's northern gable probably represent the remains of the 'smithy' marked on later Ordnance Surveys.

The outbuildings which form the subject of this report lie approximately 20 m from Forge Cottage at the southern end of its garden. They form a contiguous pair of single-storied boarded sheds with pantiled roofs which adjoin the road at right-angles. The southernmost shed is shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1885 (but not the tithe map of 1845) and dates from *circa* 1870. It remains largely intact, with much of its original external cladding of tarred vertical boards and two original windows with small, overlapping panes of glass. The northernmost shed is of identical scale but is shown for the first time on the Ordnance Survey of 1904 and was built as an extension to its neighbour in *circa* 1890. This second shed was originally an open-sided shelter in the manner of a cart lodge with vertical boarding only to its roof gables. Both sheds are understood to have formed the workshop and store of a local builder since the 1930s, and no fixtures or fittings survive to illustrate their original purpose. The southern shed is believed by its present owner to have contained a saw pit but this has been filled and concealed beneath a concrete floor. The buildings represent a late-19<sup>th</sup> century workshop complex that may well have belonged to a wheelwright (as by local repute). Utilitarian structures of this kind are now rare survivals, and the original windows and external cladding of the southern shed are particularly good examples of a fragile type. The sheds are accordingly of some historic interest at a local level, particularly given their conspicuous location, but have been too extensively altered to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing in their own right.



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**Figure 1**  
**Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan**  
 Showing the outbuildings within a red square to the west of Great Green. Forge Cottage lies to the north of the site and Holly Cottage to the south. Figure 5 shows this area in more detail.

## Historic Context: Documentary & Cartographic Record

Forge Cottage adjoins the western side of a large and unusually well-preserved medieval green known as Great Green which contains approximately 10 acres and lies 1.5 km north-east of Cockfield parish church. The cottage is a grade II-listed thatched and rendered structure immediately opposite a substantial pond that was not inspected internally for the purpose of this report but is dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Schedule of Listed Buildings. It may be of earlier origin. The two sheds recorded here adjoin the road at the southern end of the cottage garden, 20 m from the building, and are currently in separate ownership; they lie within a metre of a garage belonging to the neighbouring property on the south (known as Holly Cottage: an unlisted white brick and slate structure of *circa* 1840 that was designed as a pair of tenements).

The Cockfield tithe survey of 1845 shows Forge Cottage with a narrow, linear garden to the south, but the two sheds had not yet been built (figure 2). The property was described as a ‘house, blacksmith’s shop, etc.’ owned by one Sarah Rush and occupied by ‘herself and two others’. The cottage was presumably divided into a pair of tenements and the adjoining outbuildings to the north and west let separately as a smithy. Holly Cottage was a ‘cottage and garden’ belonging with several others to a local farmer, William Wolton, and occupied by

'William Crick and another'. Wolton's farm adjoined the south-eastern corner of the green (no. 109 in figure 2) and he also owned 'Upper Folks Field' to the west of Forge Cottage.

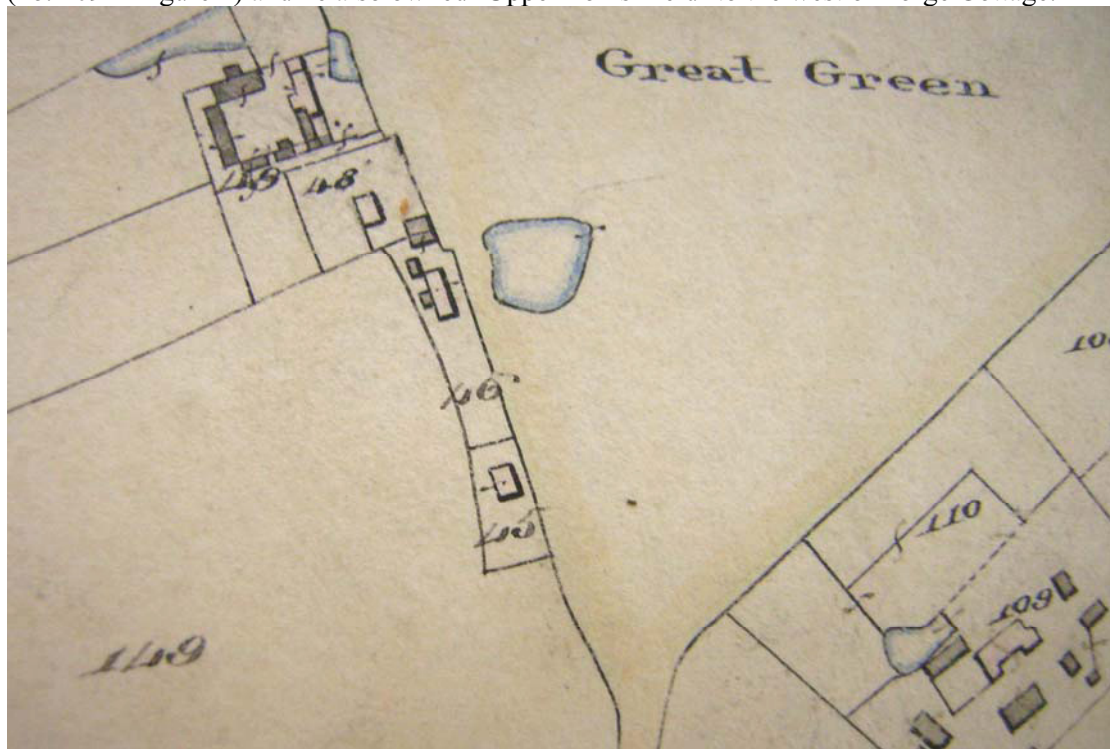


Figure 2

Cockfield Tithe Map of 1845 (Suffolk Record Office) showing Forge Cottage (no. 46) west of the pond on Great Green, with Holly Cottage (no. 45) to the south. Forge Cottage is identified in the accompanying apportionment as a blacksmith's shop, but the two sheds which form the subject of this report had not yet been built.

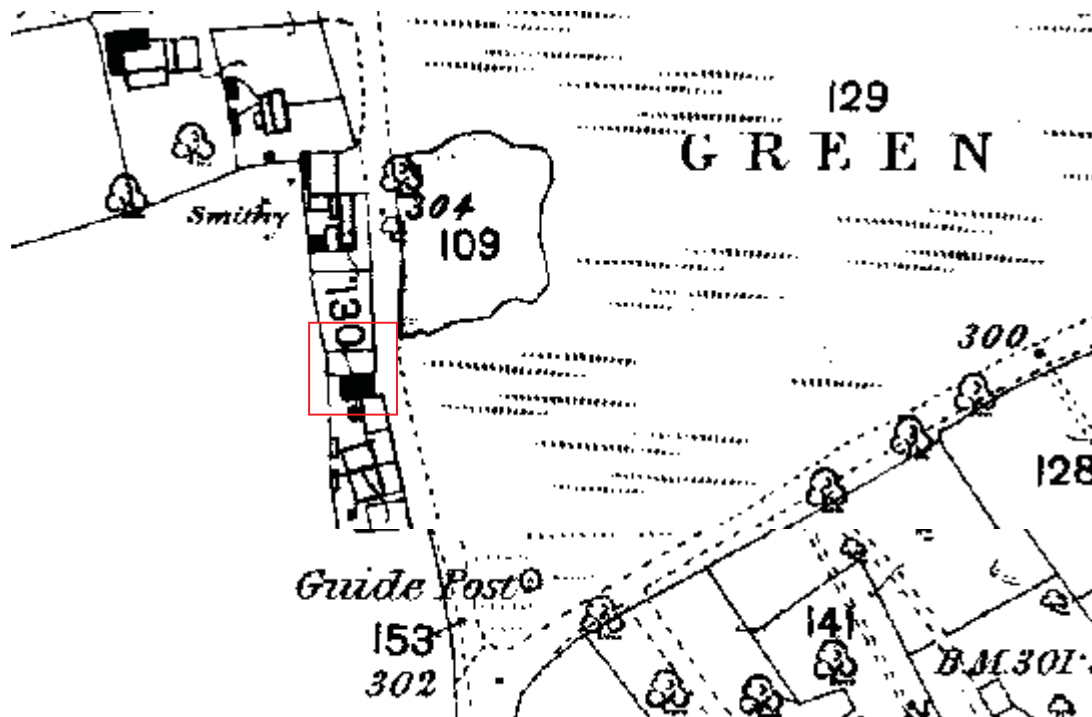


Figure 3.

First edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885. Forge Cottage is labelled 'smithy' and the southern shed (no 1 in figure 5) is shown to the south of its former yard. It adjoins a small enclosure to the north but the second shed (no. 2) is not shown.

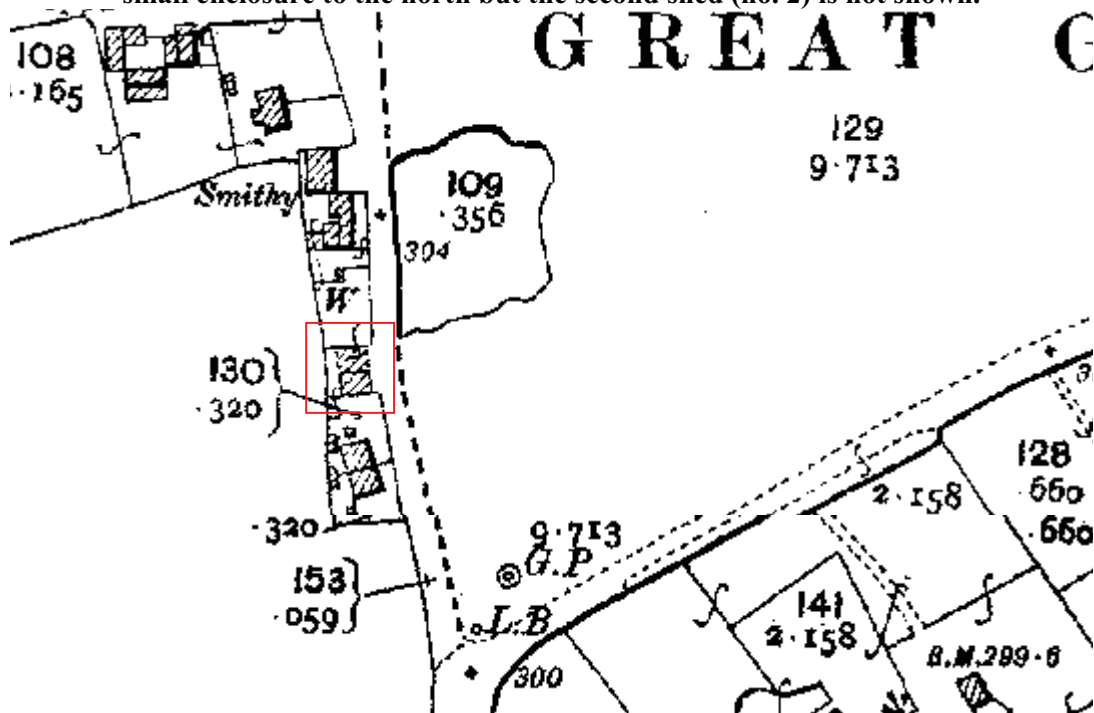


Figure 4

Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904. Both sheds are shown for the first time, but the broken outline of the new northern shed (2) indicates that its walls were open rather than solid.

The southernmost shed (numbered 1 in figure 5) is shown for the first time on the first edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885, which labels Forge Cottage (or its rear outbuildings) as a 'smithy' (figure 3). The shed appears to be divided from the cottage by a small yard and was probably in separate occupation. A group of 19<sup>th</sup> century single-storied flint and brick outbuildings adjoining the northern gable of the cottage probably contained the smithy, but no relevant fixtures or fittings are visible from the exterior.

The second edition Ordnance Survey of 1904 shows the northernmost shed for the first time, but the broken lines with which its walls are outlined suggest the building was initially open-sided in the manner of a cart-lodge or shelter-shed rather than enclosed.

Both sheds are understood to have been used as general workshops by a local builder since the 1930s, when they were acquired by the present owner's family. One shed is reputed to have operated previously as a wheelwrights shop (as might be expected in close proximity to a forge) and the other is understood to have contained a saw pit. This saw pit was filled by the present owner's grandfather who then laid the present concrete floors. Both sheds have been owned separately from Forge Cottage since at least the 1930s. In recent years they have operated primarily as a store for scaffolding poles, with the building company's main premises lying elsewhere in the parish.

## Building Analysis

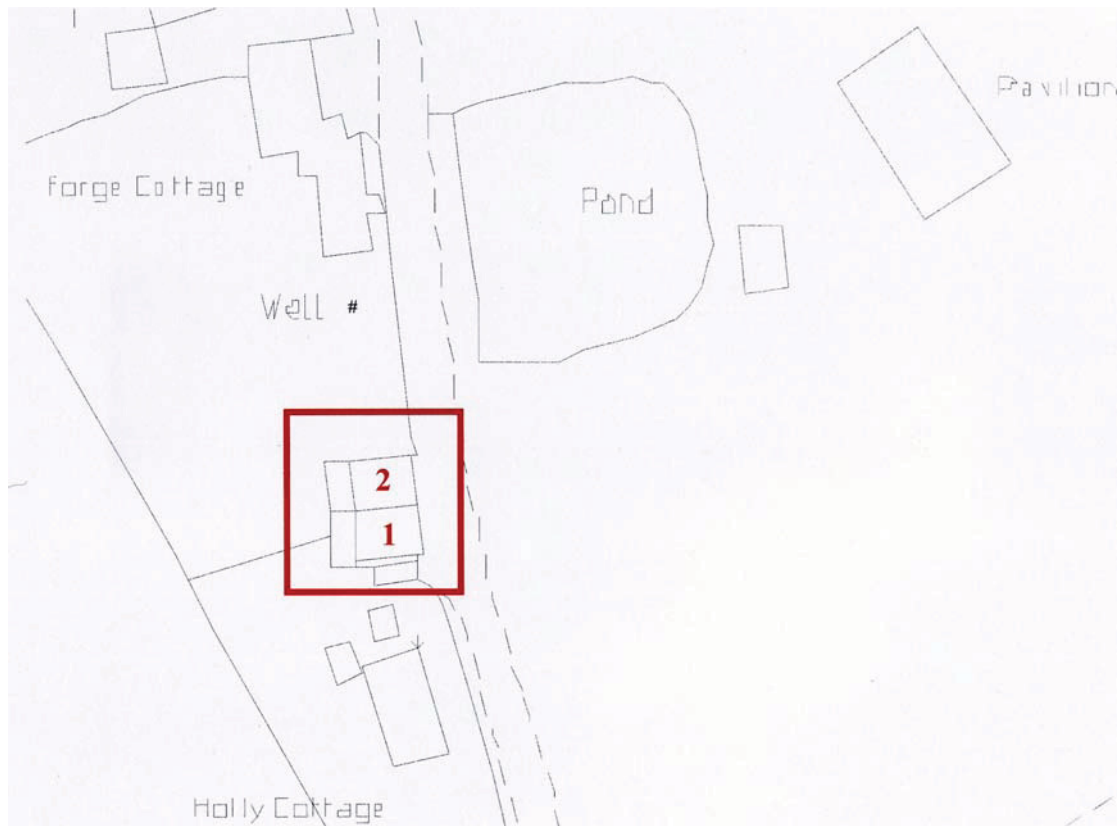


Figure 5

Block plan of site, based on modern Ordnance Survey, showing the two sheds as described below. The narrow yards to the west of each shed indicate the width of the original plot of land belonging to Forge Cottage, as shown in figures 2-4 above. The garden was widened during the 20<sup>th</sup> century by encroaching upon the neighbouring field to the west.

1. Single-storied enclosed shed of *circa* 1870 with two windows to north, two to south and a third in the western gable. Later double doors in eastern gable adjoining road. Black glazed pantiles with external cladding of tarred vertical boards. Reported to have contained a saw pit but now with a concrete floor.
2. Single-storied enclosed shed of *circa* 1900, formerly open-sided to north. Later double doors in eastern gable adjoining road. Red pantiles with original external cladding of vertical boarding to roof gables and secondary weatherboarding elsewhere.

### Shed 1

#### Proportions and Structure

The southernmost shed at Forge Cottage is the earlier of two ostensibly similar structures which lie side-by-side at right-angles to the road. It extends to 5 m in overall width by 7.4 m

in length on an east-west axis (16.25 ft by 24.25 ft), and its walls rise to 2.4 m in height at their roof-plates (7.75 ft). The roof of black-glazed pantiles is a clasped-purlin structure with nailed collars and a ridge-board, and is sealed by horizontal boards laid across the rafters and between the battens (photo A2.5). The studwork walls consist of three horizontal rails between the roof-plates and ground-sills, strengthened by diagonal corner braces, to which the external cladding of vertical boards is nailed (A2.6). Each board abuts its neighbour, but the external joints are hidden by narrow fillets (A2.9). The sills rest on shallow plinths of red brick, each 22 cm in height (9 ins) above the internal concrete floor, and there is evidence of grey pigment beneath the internal whitewash. The external surfaces are tarred.

### **Layout and Function**

The shed is undivided and open to its roof. Entrance is by means of double doors in the roadside gable, but these were installed by the present owner (salvaged from a local barn) and there is no evidence of the original door. The interior was lit by five windows, each 1 m in width by 1.2 m in height (42 by 48 ins), between vertical jambs that are tenoned and pegged to the plates and sills; two in both the northern and southern elevations and another in the western gable. The southern and gable windows have been renewed, but those to the north were protected by the construction of the second shed and are entirely original (A2.10). These windows contain overlapping panes of varying lengths in six narrow lights and are typical of the inexpensive glazing found in late-19<sup>th</sup> century workshops and outbuildings. The shed is shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1885 but not the tithe map of 1845 and can be dated on stylistic grounds to *circa* 1870.

There is no physical evidence of the building's original purpose. Its internal walls are now lined with secondary shelving which extends across the northern windows and contains a variety of tools that are consistent with the building's documented use as the workshop of a local builder since the 1930s. A two-man pit or trestle saw lay on a work bench against the southern elevation, together with a mowing scythe, and a second was propped against the western gable at the time of inspection. The concrete floor has partly collapsed along the axis of the shed, and this may indicate the position of a reputed saw pit which the present owner understands to have been filled in by his grandfather in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (A2.8).

## **Shed 2**

### **Proportions and Structure**

The northernmost shed at Forge Cottage is the later of the two sheds and is shown for the first time on the second edition Ordnance Survey of 1904. It is of precisely the same proportions as its neighbour, extending to 5 m in width by 7.4 m in length, but is roofed with unglazed red pantiles without sealing boards. The northern elevation was originally open-sided, and retains two arcade posts with straight braces nailed to its roof-plate (A2.10), but was later enclosed with weatherboarded studwork. The southern roof-plate was probably supported in a similar manner but now rests on a series of secondary posts, and the eastern gable has been extended by 0.5 m (18 ins) to accommodate the double doors by which the shed is entered from the road. It seems likely that both gables were also open-framed as the studwork beneath the tie-beam of the western gable appears to be secondary and the original cladding of vertical boards (like that of the northern shed) survives only on the roof gables; the rebuilt section of the western gable is weatherboarded to match the northern elevation but is hidden by corrugated iron from the exterior.

### **Layout and Function**

The northern shed has been much altered but appears to have been designed as an open-sided shelter with no solid walls. Such an interpretation is supported by the Ordnance Survey of 1904 which depicts the structure with broken lines in the manner of a cart lodge. It presumably protected a working or storage area associated with the adjoining workshop and would have been entirely appropriate for the needs of a wheelwright – although there is no firm evidence of its exact function. A date of *circa* 1890 is suggested by the building's absence from the Ordnance Survey of 1885, but its present external walls are consistent with its reputed conversion into an enclosed builder's shed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Historic Significance**

The two outbuildings at Forge Cottage represent a late-19<sup>th</sup> century workshop complex consisting of an enclosed shed to the south and a slightly later open-sided shelter to the north. Utilitarian structures of this type are now rare survivals, and the original northern windows and external cladding of the southern shed are exceptionally well preserved. In other respects, however, the buildings have been extensively altered and contain no fixtures or fittings relevant to their original function. Although of considerable local interest as the reputed premises of a wheelwright's shop, and for the extent to which they illustrate the scale and fabric of late-Victorian rural workshops, the buildings are not of national importance and therefore fail to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.



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

### **Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1**

#### **Photograph no.**

1. General view of Great Green from south showing Holly Cottage to left.
2. General view of site from south-east showing Holly Cottage to left and sheds to right.
3. General view from east showing from left to right Holly Cottage, sheds 1 & 2 and Forge Cottage.
4. General view from north showing Forge Cottage to right and sheds in rear.
5. Facade of Forge Cottage from road to south-east (included for site context).
6. Flint shed adjoining northern gable of Forge Cottage (probable location of forge: included for site context).
7. Exterior from east showing sheds to right and garage of Holly Cottage to left.
8. Eastern external gables from north-east showing Holly Cottage to left.
9. Exterior from south-east showing black glazed pantiles of shed 1 (left) and red pantiles of shed 2.
10. External eastern gables showing vehicle doors to road with shed 1 left and shed 2 right.
11. General view of site from west showing Forge Cottage to left and sheds to right.
12. Rear elevation of Forge Cottage from south showing flint shed to left (included for site context).
13. General view of site from west showing garage of Holly Cottage to right.
14. External rear western gables showing shed 1 to right and shed 2 left.
15. Western external gable from north-west showing corrugated iron cladding of shed 2 left.
16. Western external gable of shed 1 showing original cladding of vertical boards.
17. Northern external elevation of shed 2 showing original boundary ditch to right.
18. Southern external elevation of shed 1 from east showing two modern windows.

19. Southern external elevation of shed 1 from west showing Holly Cottage garage to right.
20. Shed 1. General view of interior from east showing western gable.
21. Shed 1. Clasped-purlin roof structure from east showing original boards beneath pantiles.
22. Shed 1. Interior of north-western corner showing diagonal braces and horizontal rails.
23. Shed 1. Internal northern elevation showing two original glazed windows.
24. Shed 1. Internal northern elevation from south-east, showing original windows.
25. Shed 1. Internal detail of western window of northern elevation with pegged jambs.
26. Shed 1. Detail of first-aid tin attached in northern internal elevation.
27. Shed 1. Internal detail of eastern window in northern elevation.
28. Shed 1. Detail of external boarding to northern interior, showing grey pigment beneath whitewash.
29. Shed 1. Interior of eastern roadside gable showing doors imported from elsewhere.
30. Shed 1. Internal southern elevation showing two replaced windows in original positions.
31. Shed 1. Interior of south-western corner showing pit saw leaning against western gable.
32. Shed 1. Detail of pit saw leaning against interior of western gable.
33. Shed 1. Detail of work bench adjoining southern elevation.
34. Shed 1. Detail of pit saw and scythe on work bench adjoining southern wall.
35. Shed 1. Concrete floor from west showing area of collapse possibly caused by infilled saw pit.
36. Shed 1. Northern exterior from shed 2 showing original windows and cladding.
37. Shed 1. Detail of original tarred external northern cladding showing vertical boards & fillets.
38. Shed 1. Detail of original glazing to eastern window of northern wall (seen from shed 2).
39. Shed 1. Original glazing to western window of northern elevation (seen from north-east).
40. Shed 1. Original glazing to eastern window of northern external elevation.

41. Shed 1. Detail of fillets covering abutments of vertical boarding to northern external elevation.
42. Shed 2. Interior from east showing exterior of shed 1 to left.
43. Shed 2. Interior of western gable showing louvered central window.
44. Shed 2. Detail of louvered window in western internal gable.
45. Shed 2. Interior from west showing secondary doors to road.
46. Shed 2. Interior of originally open northern elevation showing two arcade posts.
47. Shed 2. Western end of northern internal elevation showing gable to left.
48. Shed 2. Internal northern elevation showing original open arcade posts & braces.
49. Shed 2. Detail of original arcade posts and braces to northern interior.
50. Shed 2. Detail of arcade post and braces to northern interior.
51. Shed 2. Northern internal elevation from south-east showing secondary windows.
52. Shed 2. Detail of internal clasped-purlin roof structure.
53. Shed 2. Intact 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete floor seen from east.
54. Shed 2. Eastern internal gable from north showing secondary projection of roadside doors.
55. Shed 2. Interior of open southern elevation from north-east showing northern exterior of shed 1.
56. Shed 2. Interior of open southern elevation from west showing exterior of shed 1 to right.

*Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 12-17*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 11-17): Selected Printed Photographs**



A2.1 General view of site from Great Green to east showing the two sheds (1 & 2) in centre with Holly Cottage and its garage to the left and Forge Cottage behind the pond to the right.



A2.2 Exterior from south-east showing the black glazed pantiles of shed 1 to left and the red pantiles of the later shed 2 to the right. The smaller shed to the extreme left is the garage of the neighbouring property (Holly Cottage)



A2.3 External rear (western) gables showing the original cladding of vertical boards to shed 1 (right) and the roof gable of shed 2 (left). The secondary weatherboarding of shed 2 (which was originally open-sided) is hidden by corrugated iron.



A2.4 Shed 1. General view of interior from east showing original wall fabric of horizontal rails with diagonal bracing to corners and external cladding of vertical boards. The framing of the two windows in both the northern and southern elevations is original, as is that of the central window shown here in the western gable, but the original glazing survives only to the north (right). Note the secondary shelving.



A2.5 Shed 1. The well-built clasped-purlin roof structure from the east, showing original rafters with boards between the tile battens.



A2.6 Shed 1. Internal northern elevation seen from the south-east, showing two windows with original glazing now blocked by secondary shelving.



A2.7 Shed 1. Detail of pit saw and scythe on work bench adjoining southern wall (seen from north-east).



A2.8 Shed 1. Concrete floor from west showing area of collapse possibly caused by infilled saw pit.



A2.9 Shed 1. Detail of original tarred external northern cladding showing vertical boards with fillets concealing abutments (seen from shed 2).





A2.10 Shed 1. Detail of original lapped glazing to eastern window of northern wall (seen from shed 2).



A2.11 Shed 2. Interior of open southern elevation from north-east showing original northern exterior of shed 1.



A2.12 Shed 2. Internal northern elevation from south-west, showing posts and braces or original open arcade with secondary outer weatherboarding.