Barry Hillman-Crouch
Design & Recording Services

Forge Cottage and The Forge, Church Road, Peldon, Essex CO5 7PS

Description and analysis of the House and former Forge. Recorded 16 02 2013.
Revisited 28 07 2015.

2006 Google earth. Location of the Forge and Forge Cottage in the centre of the image.

2006 Google earth. The site annotating the buildings.

Location

Forge Cottage is located to the west of the village of Peldon, Colchester on Church Road to the NW of a triangle of greensward. The Forge is a separate building on the edge of the road contained within the long narrow plot. Forge Cottage, Church Road, Peldon, Essex CO5 7PS Listing NGR: TL9864416369.

Barry J Hillman-Crouch MStPA DipFA BSc HND. Tel. 0794 2010703.
e-mail barry@hillman-crouch.fsnet.co.uk. Website www.dowsingarchaeology.org.uk

Listing

© Mr Richard J. Turner. The Forge in 2001. Looking W.

IoE Number:420835Location:FORGE, CHURCH ROAD, PELDON, COLCHESTER, ESSEX
Photographer:Mr Richard J. Turner. Date Photographed:05 October 2001
Date listed:27 January 1982. Date of last amendment:27 January 1982
GradeII

1. 5214 Forge
TL 91 NE 17/29 II
2. Small early C19 forge. Timber framed and weather-boarded with red double Roman tiled roof. Large fixed casements to south front.
Listing NGR: TL9864416369

© Mr Richard J. Turner. Forge Cottage in 2001. Looking W.

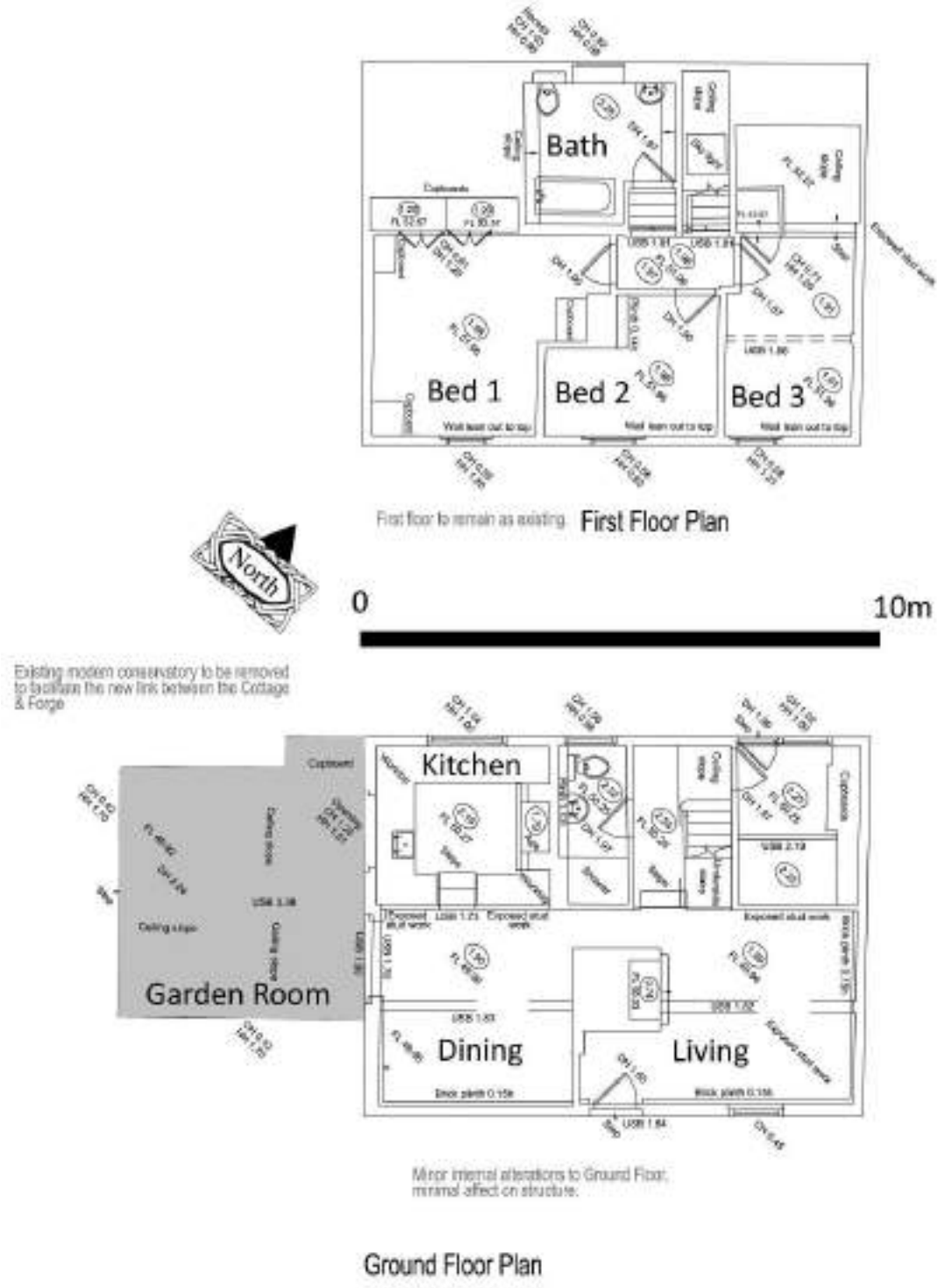
IoE Number:420834.
Location:FORGE COTTAGE, CHURCH ROAD, PELDON, COLCHESTER, ESSEX
Photographer:Mr Richard J. Turner. Date Photographed:05 October 2001
Date listed:27 January 1982. Date of last amendment:27 January 1982
GradeII

1. 5214 Forge Cottage
TL 91 NE 17/28 II
2. Late Cl7, timber framed and weather-boarded house, with red plain tile half hipped roof. Two storeys. Three window range double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars. Original central chimney stack.
Listing NGR: TL9864416369.

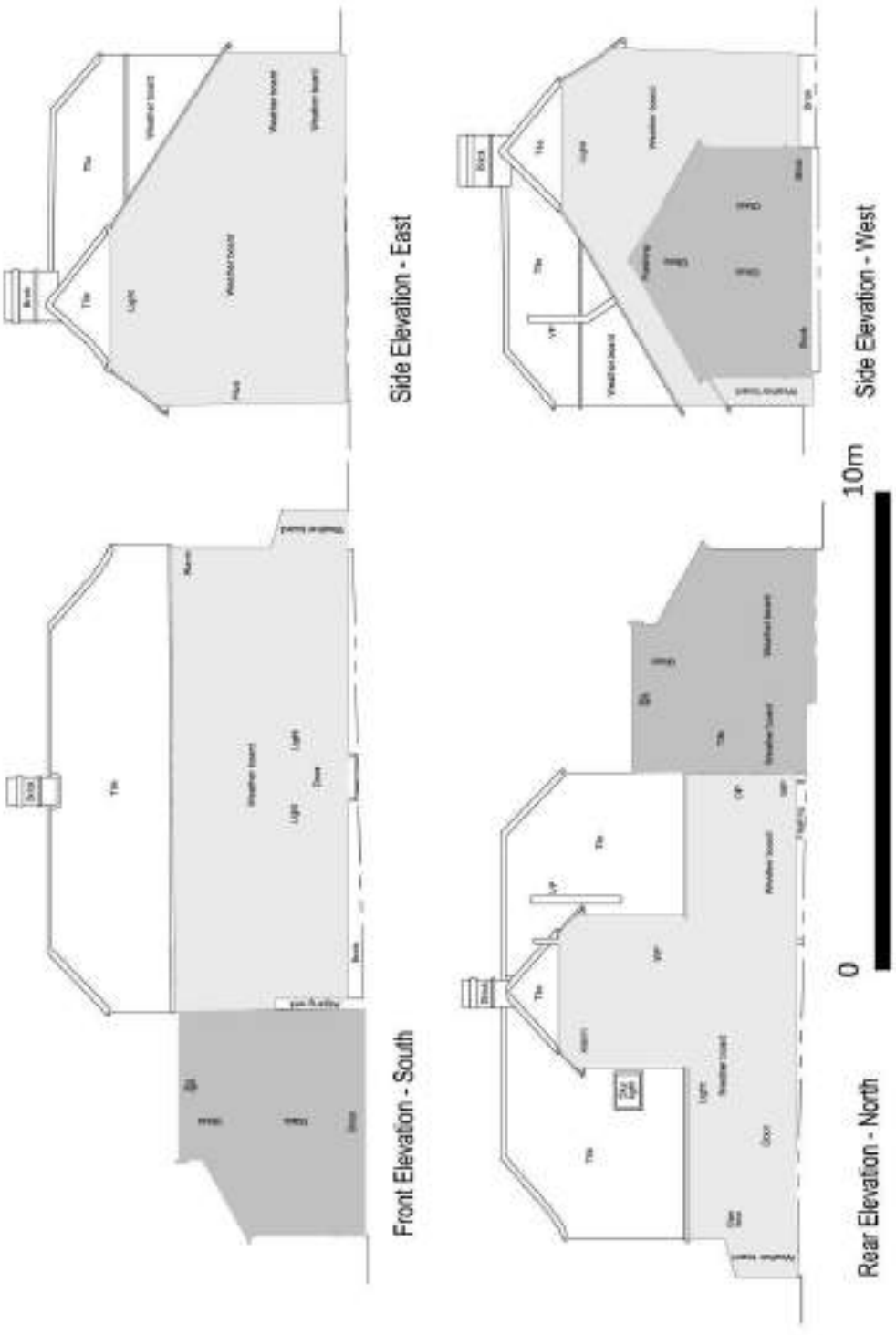
The house and cottage pictured in February 2013. Note the degraded paintwork.

Scope of this Report.

This report serves to record and analyse the historic fabric of the Forge and Forge Cottage in order to inform a planning application for repairs and alterations to both buildings. It should be noted that both buildings were renovated and materially altered in works during 1982/3 and that nearly all the external fabric is from that period. In particular the weather-boards are all replacements in poor quality thin timber that now requires replacing again. Internally the buildings were stripped of their lath and plaster finishes and the scantling frames exposed. The building was Listed in 1982, no doubt as a reaction to the proposed works.



2011 Ground and First Floor Plans. Provided by Holmes and Kelly, Architecture and Design.



Elevations of the house showing the proposed alterations to the weather-boarding. 2011. Provided by Holmes and Kelly, Architecture and Design.

Description – The House – External

The blank NE elevation and the front SE facade.

NE and SE Elevations.

Forge Cottage is a timber-framed building clad with LC20th, 7in wide, very thin, weather-boards fastened with galvanised French nails. It is known that the frame was stripped completely, sheathed in plywood and the boards applied. The NE elevation has been left blank of windows and doors.

Detail of the upper range of windows. Note the rot in the cills.

The SE elevation, which is the main facade facing the road, has a complete set of replacement timber 8/8 sash windows and a modern oak front door set in a new frame. Above the front door is a pair of four light casements. The frames, especially the cills are in poor condition with visible signs of rot and must be softwood.

Note the slight asymmetry of the roof lines.

The roof is a gambrel roof with half hips at either end. The hips are slightly different and the roof line kicks up near the centrally placed brick chimney stack to different heights. This usually indicates a rebuild in more than one phase (perhaps due to split ownership). The chimney is LC19th or C20th in character and repointed with grey cement. The rainwater goods are black plastic.

The SW elevation is dominated by LC20th Garden Room.

The SW elevation of the House. Looking into the Kitchen and Dining Room.

The SW Elevation.

The SW elevation of the house is hidden largely by a LC20th timber Garden Room. Set on a brick plinth it is a recent addition to the house with a polished granite floor. External to the Garden Room the House is clad in weather-boards but internally is has been rendered and painted. There is a wide window giving light into the Kitchen with a reused timber frame made by the current owner (pers comm).

Looking upwards at the frame into the Dining Room. Note the rounded mortices.

There is also a wide opening leading into the Dining Room. While the plate forming the ill is original to the frame and has round-ended and square cut mortices to indicate a door or window frame, the supporting posts are reused from elsewhere. They are notably a different colour to the rest of the frame and have a series of redundant mortices and peg holes.

The NW elevation is the rear of the house.

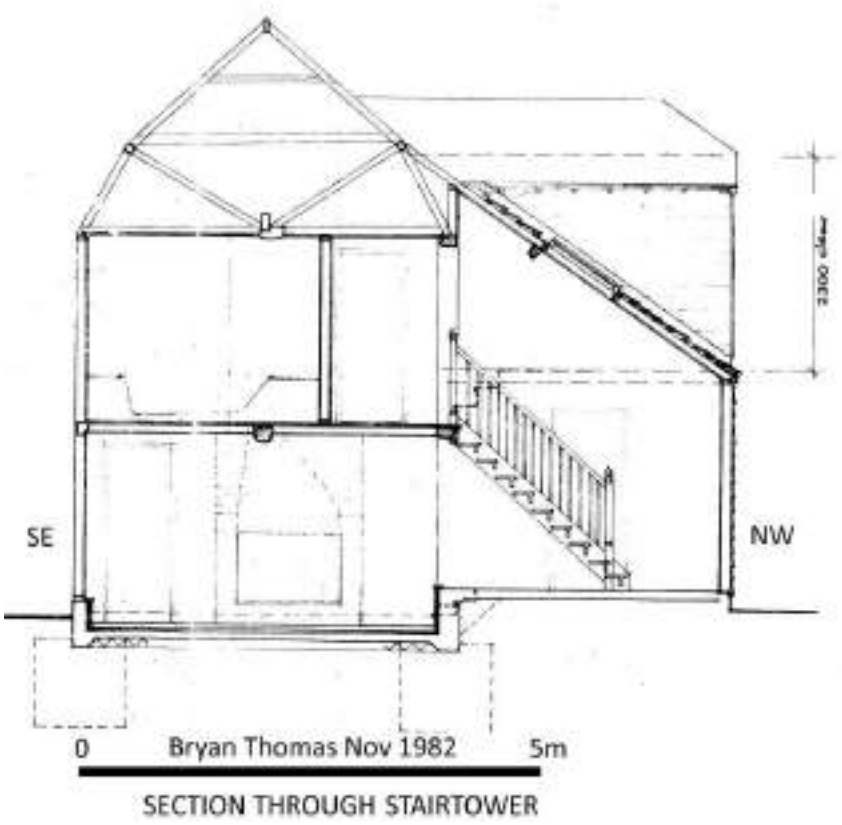
The NW Elevation.

The NW elevation is the rear of house close to the boundary line with the fields. Here can be seen the large rear extensions made to the house in 1982. There is a centrally placed two storey bay with a half-hipped roof and this is flanked with two outshots under catslide roofs. The two storey bay houses the new staircase and bathrooms while the outshots contain the Kitchen and Office.

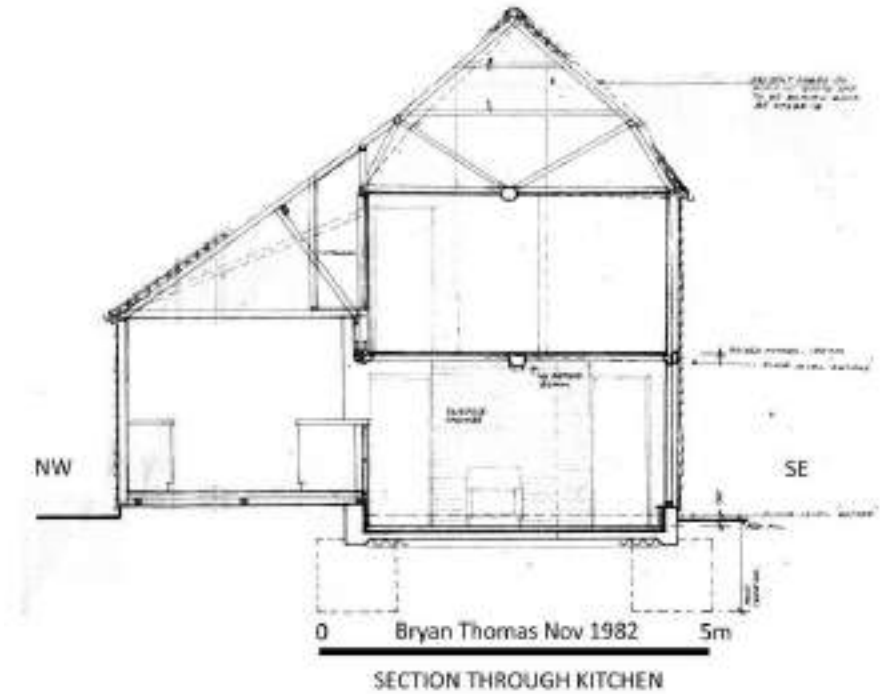
Detail of the rear windows and doors. Detail of the failing cladding.

The rear windows are timber 6 light casements ad the doors is a LC20th timber door with a 9 light glazed upper section hinged independently. The walls are clad in thin section weather-boards applied in 1982 which are rotting quite significantly especially close to the grey and black plastic rainwater goods.

Description - The House - Internal



SECTION THROUGH STAIRTOWER



SECTION THROUGH KITCHEN

Proposed sections through the House by architect Bryan Thomas. Drawn in Nov 1982.

The Dining Room looking SW to the Garden Room. Note primary brace.

The Dining Room looking NE. The fireplace was rebuilt and blocked in at the end of 1982.

The Dining Room looking NW towards the Kitchen.

The Dining Room.

The Dining Room has the frame exposed in all the walls which is ironic as it is a primary braced, interrupted stud scantling frame that was designed to be clad with lath and plaster and never meant to be seen. Each stud is peppered with nail holes but is can be seen that some have been rotated or moved out of place and it may be assumed this was done in 1982. The frame has been shot-blasted and stained losing the patina of the original timbers but is seems that the studs may be elm while the principal timbers are knotty softwoods.

Clumsy scarf in the SW wall above the primary brace.

The work is poor quality and the studs are not pegged but clout nailed. Most of those in the Kitchen party wall are nailed into rebates. There are plain scarves in the mid-rail which must be nailed.

The timber-frame as seen from the Kitchen. Looking SE.

The Kitchen.

The Kitchen itself is a modern outshot but the exterior of the frame can be seen. The studs are 3x4in set at 18in centres and the joints marked on the outside of the frame with a narrow blade. Two studs have been removed to form the entrance to the Kitchen. The studs above the mid-rail are peppered with nail holes in some but not others. In this case it suggests the studs were reused. In general the nail patterns suggest the building was always weather-boarded externally rather than lath and plastered.

Carpenter's mark on the mid-rail visible in the Kitchen. Reads XIIII(tag)

The tag on the carpenter's mark differentiates one part of the frame from another and it is likely the frame is marked on the exterior right round the building.

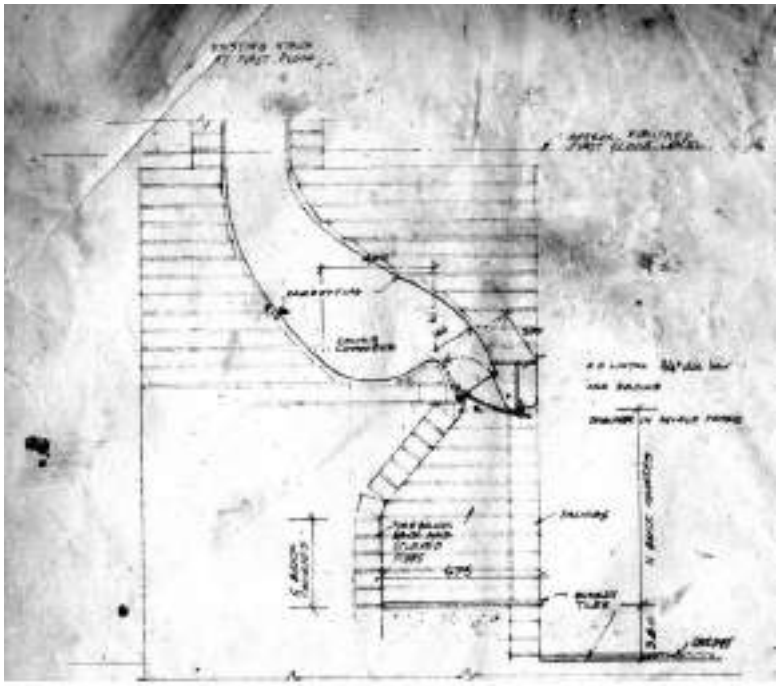
The Living Room fireplace is a rebuild of 1982/3. Looking SW.

The Living Room

The timber-frame is exposed in the front and rear walls of the Living Room but not the end (NE) wall. The wall frame has the same characteristics and sizes as that in the Dining Room but the ceiling/first floor framing is markedly different. That in the Dining Room has a very knotty pine axial joist with 2in wide common rafters set at 19in centres each with a slight edge-moulding. In the Living Room there is a heavy oak axial joist with a deep chamfer with 2.25-2.75in wide pitsawn rafters set at 18in centres. It is evident that both axial joists are modern replacements.

The ceiling height is unnaturally low at only 7ft3in to the common joists and about 6ft8in to the underside of the axial joists. The wall frames are stood on rebuilt brick plinths and the floor has been brought up with Florentine granite slabs. The common joists do not sit on the mid-rails as might be expected but are lodged higher up, presumably on applied plates as part of the 1982 works.

In the Living Room is an open fireplace with a deep timber bressummer. All this was created as part of the 1982 works and there are plans to show this specific detail. The bricks are reused and repointed with grey cement. A plan follows identifying a reinforced concrete lintel behind the reused timber bressummer.



Section drawing of the Living Room fireplace by Bryan Thomas architect. Drawn 09 12 1982.

Looking N in the Dining Room. The principal post has iron reinforcing straps on both sides.

Of interest is the principal post in the NE wall. This is also visible in the bedroom above. It has very long (approx 6ft) wrought iron straps that are clout nailed using EC20th branded clouts and represents a major repair to the frame.

The rear rooms are all from 1982 and are specified in architect's drawings.

Looking SE at the modern staircase and the Dining Room fireplace.

The stair tower was added in 1982. As there are no breaks in the exposed ceilings or trimmer beams for earlier staircases in the main rooms it can be deduced they were either side the firestack. However this can only be done with hindsight knowing that originally the house was described as two tenements in the 1838 Tithe Award. There is no visual evidence.

Looking up the stairs to the landing. The hatch gives access to the roofspace.

Looking SE in Bedroom 3. Note the bracing on the frame.

Bedroom 3

Bedroom 3 is to the NE of the House and is the only one to display the frame in the walls and ceiling. The frame is of the same primary braced, interrupted scantling studwork as downstairs and is also visible in the other bedrooms. The ceiling has a fragile 3.5in wide axial joist with 2.25-3in common joists connected with scarfed terminals in rectangular mortices. The axial joist is lodged in the chimney stack at the SW end and supported on a wide storey post in the end wall.

Unusually, the storey post is scarfed and then retained with large wrought iron nails and the two long EC20th straps seen in the Living Room. There is also a LC20th wrought steel angle bracket with decorative terminals and a suspension ring for a lamp. The joints are welded.

It is evident from the slenderness of the ceiling joists that there was not originally any rooms in the roof.

Roof Structure.

The roof can be viewed through a hatch on the landing. It is a gambrel roof with half pole side purlins where the rafters are birds-mouthed or simply nailed across. There are three clear phases of rebuild. The original roof, of which there is very little, has roughly squared pitsawn elm short members or half poles in the lower pitch of the gambrel. Above this the roof has been completely rebuilt with LC19th or EC20th circular sawn softwood where the rafters are made of 1.5x4in nailed pairs fixed to a ridge piece. Finally, there are the fresh timbers associated with the 1982 works. Photos follow.

Some early timbers remain below the half pole purlin. Looking NE.

An early elm strut reused with later paired rafters above. Fresh timber dates to 1982.

The roof also has an asphalt membrane indicating that the entire roof was dismantled and relaid in 1982.

Description – The Forge – External

The SE elevation close to the road.

SE Elevation.

The Forge is split into two distinct builds. To the NE is small two bay single story timber-framed building clad with LC20th weather-boarding in poor condition, fastened with galvanised nails. Where it has failed it can be seen that the scantling frame has been first clad with plywood sheeting.

The Forge Room.

The smaller unit is called the Forge and features a LC20th, 6 light pair of casements and a LC20th replica split stable door. The single pitch roof is clad with replica and C19th pantiles. The rainwater goods are plastic. It shares a common plinth with the larger unit which was originally open-sided for some of its life.

The larger unit is the later of the two builds.

The larger unit, known as the Wheelwright's Shop is of similar appearance to the Forge and has been reclad with 9mm plywood and poor quality LC20th weather-boards fixed with galvanised French nails. The plinth, although rebuilt retains some earlier 65x110x225mm red brick in lime mortar.

The SW elevation facing the garden.

The SW Elevation

The SW elevation presents the gabled end of the Wheelwright's Shop clad in LC20th weather-boards. There is a LC20th split stable door with mild steel reversible hinges in an original opening.

The NW elevation illustrates the difference in the size of the builds.

NW Elevation

The NW elevation is the rear of the two builds and more readily illustrates the difference in the two phases. The Forge is a near square building and has no openings to the rear. The Wheelwrights Shop is of three bays and has modern timber casements to match the rest and a modern timber boarded door. There is a large chimney stack which is also LC20th.

The NE elevation includes a recent shed.

NE Elevation

The NE elevation shows the gables of the Forge and the Wheelwright's Shop along with a very recent shed. It is evident that the two older buildings were completely refinished at the same time as the House using the same specifications and materials. This would date the work to 1982/3.

Description – The Forge and Wheelwrights Shop – Internal

Inside the Wheelwright's Shop looking W.

Inside the Wheelwright's Shop looking E at the Forge.

The interior of the Wheelwright's Shop displays the scantling frame in much the same way as the House. Made of poor quality timber, cleaned and stained dark brown the SW and NW walls retain part of a primary braced, interrupted and nailed studwork frame. Large parts of the NW wall and all of the SE wall are made from 2x4in softwood. The SE wall however is almost all LC20th and part of the 1982/3 works.

The roof has been completely remodelled.

The roof of the Wheelwright's Shop has been completely remodelled whilst retaining the original 2x4in machine softwood rafters. The original collars have been cut and new, longer collar pairs introduced with new principal rafters to clasp new side purlins whilst retaining the older members. Both the walls and the ceiling have been panelled with plaster boards and Rockwool insulation between the rafters which leads to a very cold room.

To the SW end of the room is a modern mezzanine reached through a loft hatch and so only used for storage.

Detail of a single remaining hanging knee cut from a tree branch.

A single old bracket in the form of a hanging knee cut from a branch or tree root has been incorporated into the structure perhaps as a reminded of the original form. Secured with a modern bolt it could have come from anywhere.

Looking N towards the Forge. The fireplace is a LC20th fake.

Installed in the Wheelwrights Shop is a tall brick firestack built in a style reminiscent of a hooded forge. Constructed of reused C19th bricks it is bonded with grey cement and lined with a steel flue for a modern multi-fuel burner. The chimney flue has a very long crack running up it probably due to excess heat from the burner. LC20th.

The timber-frame of the Forge. The studs a have been truncated and raised on a plinth.

The NW wall of the Forge. Note the raised roof plate and modern roof.

The Forge retains a rather rustic interrupted stud wall where the studs are closely spaced and very irregular widths representing a continual battle with repairs. The roof has been raised as part of the 1982/3 works and incorporates machine softwood paired collars and older 2x4in softwood rafters.

The NE wall. The section by the cabinet is a C20th rebuild.

The NE wall appears largely rebuilt with several machined 2x4in studs in place of the more 'rustic' studs whose form is exaggerated by the LC20th plastering. There is also a bandsawn diagonal brace and there may have been a doorway here.

The door jambs in the partition between the Forge and the Wheelwright's Shop.

There is clear evidence for a connecting door between the two builds in the partition. Two studs, acting as door jambs have pintle hinges and a catch plate for a split stable door.

End of descriptions.

Carpenter's Marks.

Carpenter's mark on the exposed partition wall. Note pitsaw marks.

The partition between the Forge and the Wheelwright's Shop is marked up with a race knife on the pitsawn timber that equates to the top-plate of the Forge. Unusually it is on the inside but as this wall has been completely rebuilt it may have been accidently reversed.

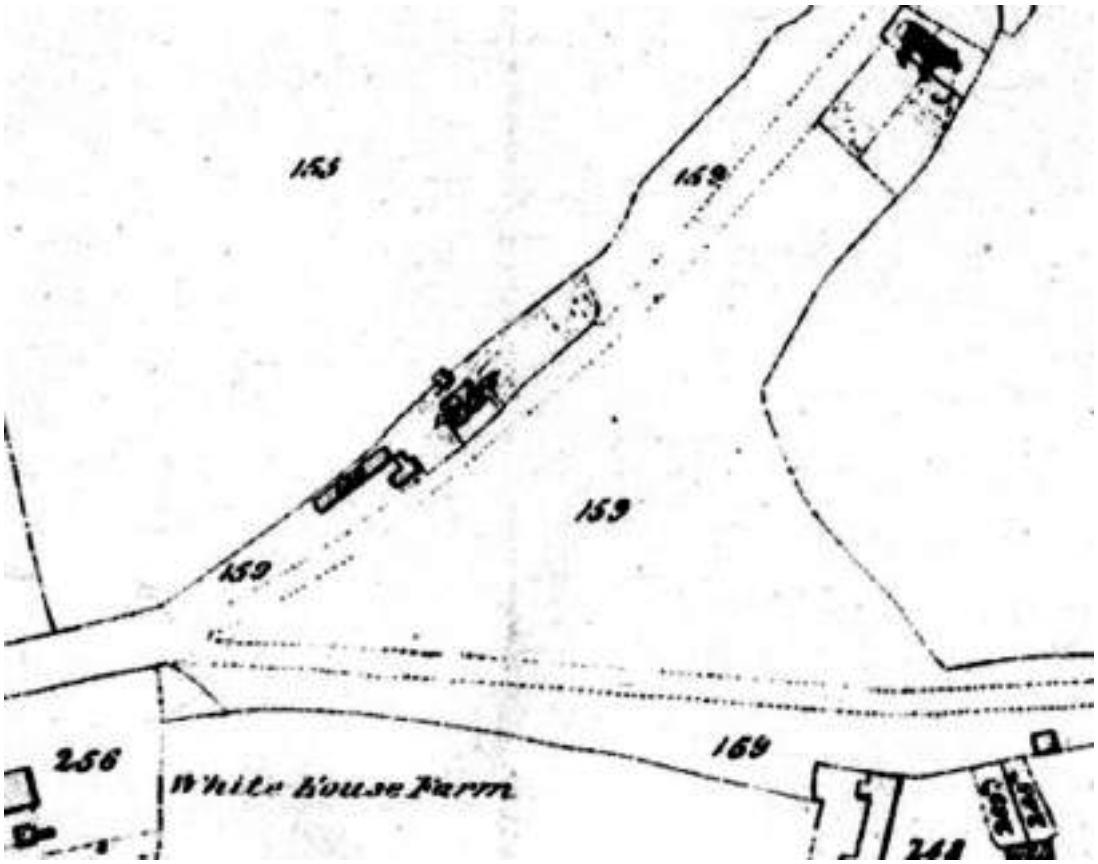
Ironwork Fittings

Wrought iron L-ties used to reinforce the corners of the frame,

Unsurprisingly for a forge there are plenty of small iron fitments used to reinforce the frame from its first fix through a long series of alterations and repairs. The wrought iron L-ties securing the corners of the frame are EC19th in design and fabrication.

End of Descriptions.

Topographical Survey from Maps

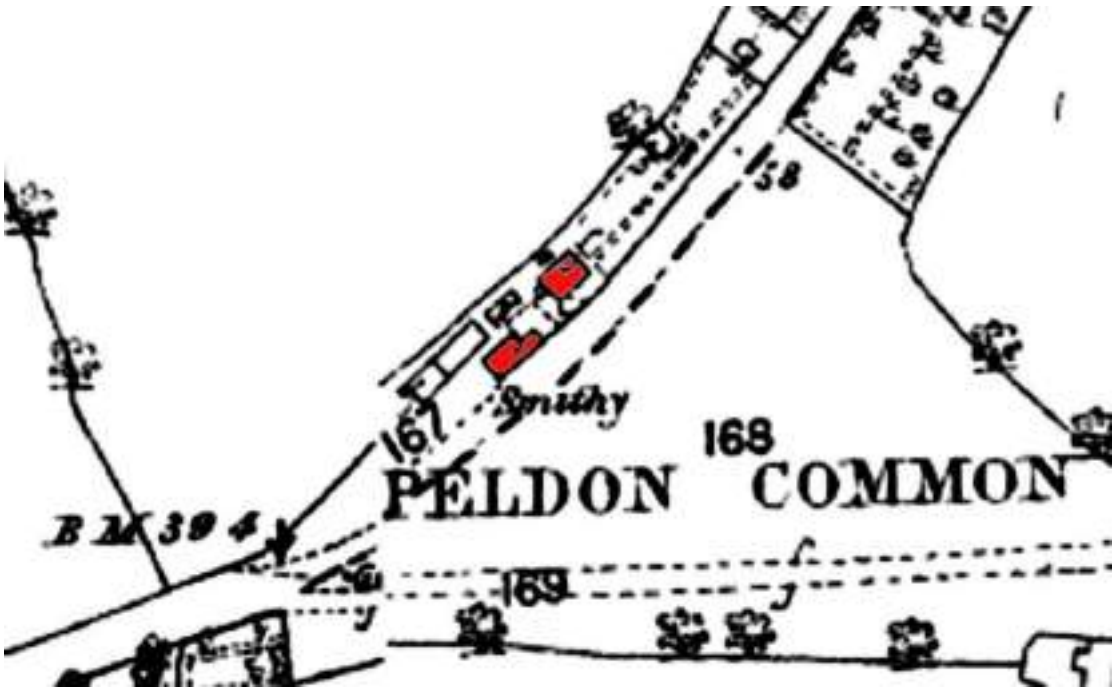


1838 Tithe Award for Peldon.

In 1838 the Tithe Award records the House as two plots 157 House and Garden belonging to Mrs Sarah Everitt and occupied by John Wright and 158 House and Garden owned and occupied by Mrs Sarah Everitt. Plot 156, immediately adjacent to the Forge is also a House and Garden belonging to her and occupied by John Cooke. Original deeds with the house show that William Everitt was granted the land by Charles Jolland in 1807 and that Everitt's will, made in 1823, left 'all that double tenement, wheelwright and blacksmiths shop' to Sarah.

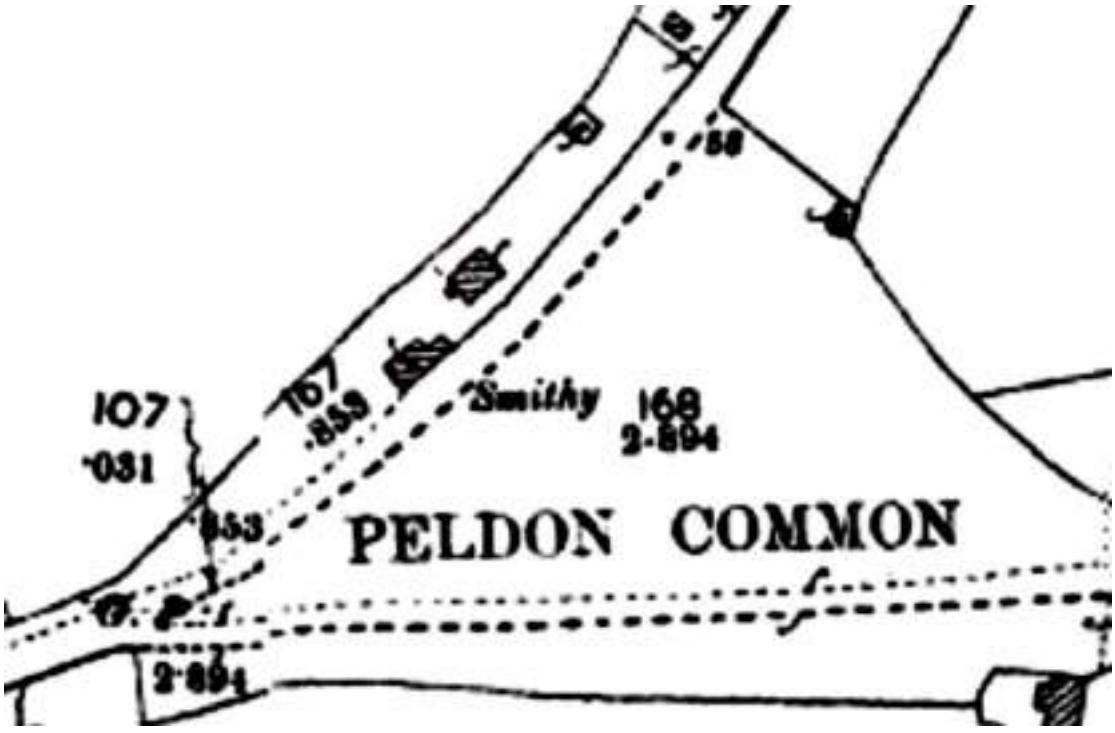
Notably the map shows that the paths lead to the sides of the house indicating that this is where the entrance doors were. There is a small outhouse to the rear of the house over the ditch which is likely to have been the privy.

Plots numbered 159 were occupied by John Mann but were owned by the Public. The large field 155 was known as Little Hill and owned by Sir James Brookes Pechell and occupied (used) by Joseph Harvey. Most of the surrounding land was managed by these two.



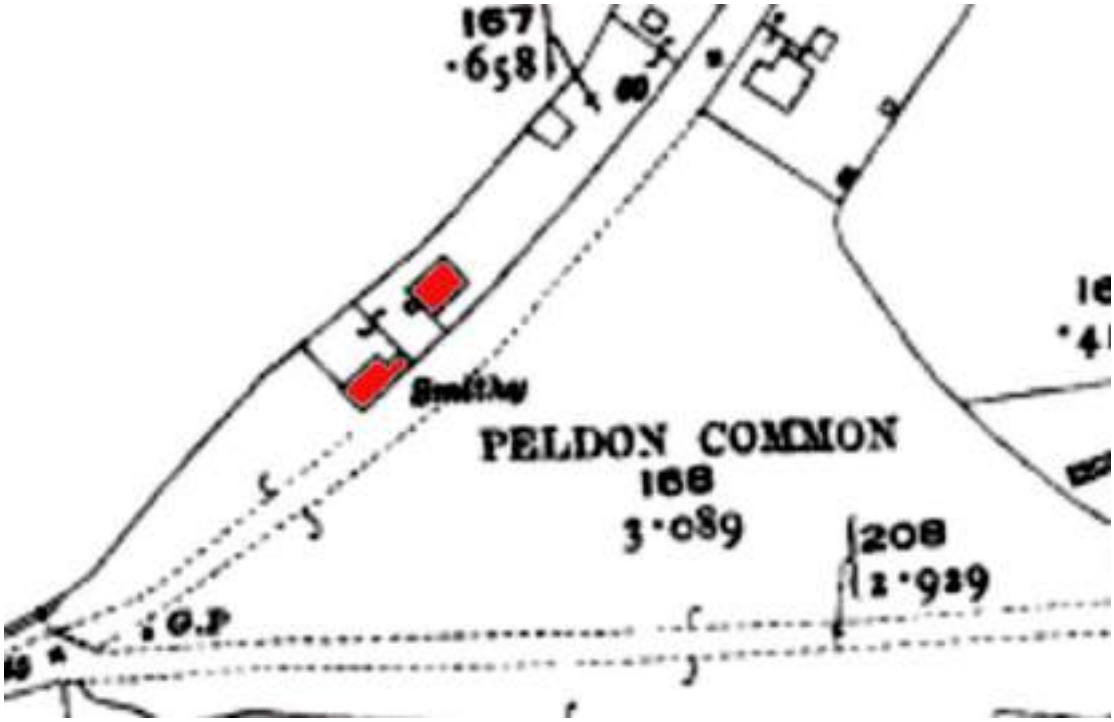
1874 First Edition Ordnance Survey

By 1874 there appears to be little change in the layout of the site. There is a small outshot on the SW side of the House. The Smithy is marked as such. There is another small outbuilding to the rear of the Forge.



1897 Second Edition Ordnance Survey

By 1897 the other house by the Forge has been removed.



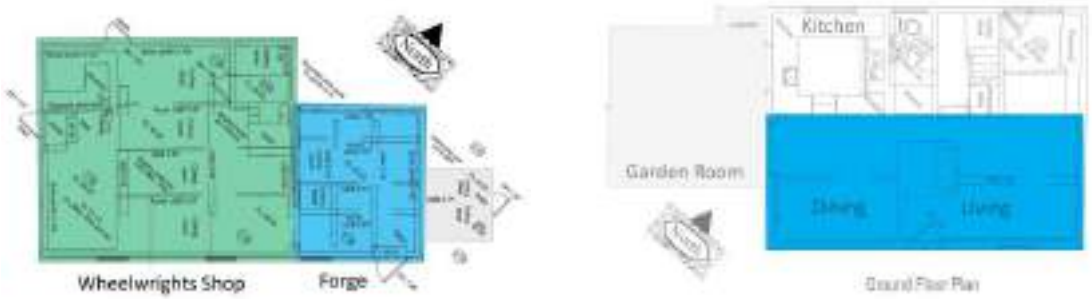
1924 Ordnance Survey.

Apart from the introduction of new fences there is little change in the layout of the site.

1974 Ordnance Survey.

The next available map shows the rear of the house has been extended and given its name.

Phasing and Discussion



Phase 1. 1807 to 1823.

Notwithstanding any documentary evidence, the fabric of both buildings is not much earlier than the turn of the C19th. The poor quality nailed frames made mostly of softwood and pinned with nails and fixed with iron ties became commonplace during the Napoleonic Wars of 1799 to 1815. This was due to in part to trade embargoes and import problems during the conflict. Also about 310,000 Englishmen died during the wars (of a 1801 Census population of 8.9 million) leading to a shortage of skilled labour. At the same time, engineers like Henry Maudslay were refining materials technology and the better understanding of loads, stresses and strains meant that buildings could be fabricated of slender materials and skinned with lath and plaster and weather-boarding without fear of collapse.

Documentary evidence in the form of deeds and wills held by the owner show that the land was granted to William Everitt in 1807 (without mention of buildings) and left in his will to his wife Sarah in 1823 which left 'all that double tenement, wheelwright and blacksmiths shop'. Sarah lived in the NE side at least in 1843 when the Tithe Award map was made.

The original House comprised a two-up-two-down pair of tenements with a shared central stack and doors in each end. The staircases must have risen beside the firestack. The interior would have been lath and plastered throughout with up to two inches of plaster on the walls to provide insulation. Walls were commonly six inches thick rather than the two or three they are today (between the studs).

The Forge was built first because the Wheelwright's Shop is sprung of its SW gable but it is likely there was only a short time between them. Perhaps as the business flourished they expanded the premises. The 1838 Tithe Award map shows the forge as a twice its current size, extended to the north.

There was also another house behind the Forge owned by Sarah Everitt and occupied by John Cooke who may well have been the blacksmith. However White's Directories of 1843 and 1864 make no mention of him. This other house was removed by the time of the 1896 Ordnance Survey.

Phase 2. LC19th or EC20th

The roof of the House was completely remodelled with machine sawn 1.5x4in softwood rafters each inserted as nailed pairs. This is an unusual feature that the author has not seen before and must have been done to achieve the section of the original rafters. It seems likely due the prominent circular saw marks on the timbers that the timbers were steam sawn and this would place the work in the LC19th or EC20th. The wrought iron nails were still in use well into the C20th and are not diagnostic. The roof of the Wheelwright's was also replaced with machined 2x4in rafters of the same character.

Phase 3. 1982/3 Complete renovation and extension.

In 1982, under the direction of architect Bryan Thomas of 10 Church Road, Alresford, Colchester, Essex CO7 8AB the House Wheelwright's and Forge were stripped to their frames and rebuilt in their current form. Whilst retaining most of the frame, significant members were replaced.

In the House both axial joists were replaced on the ground floor, the ceilings were levelled by raising the joists and the central firestack completely rebuilt. It seems likely the central, inconveniently low front door was added at this time.

The walls were reclad with new, thin section, poor quality weather-boards fastened with galvanised French nails over sheets of 9mm ply. All the internal finishes were removed and the frame exposed. The gaps between the exposed scantling studs were infilled with a thin layer of Rockwool insulation and plasterboard leaving them only 4in thick.

The rear of the house was extended with a central two storey stair tower and two outshots containing the new Kitchen and Office. Upstairs, the frames were stripped of their lath and plaster and the fragile ceiling frame exposed in the NE Bedroom 3. The other ceilings may have been too poor to reveal.

The roof was completely stripped and rebuilt inserting new softwood rafters and struts. An asphalt membrane was inserted and the roof retiled.

The Forge and Wheelwright's underwent the same process to the same specification.

2000 Google earth showing the foundations of the Garden Room and the garage being built.

Phase 4. C21st.

In the year 2000 a large timber and glass Garden Room was added to the SW end of the building. Essentially a kit building it is raised on a modern brick plinth. At the same time the double garage was built

Significance

It is hard to judge the significance of buildings that have been so materially altered in the LC20th as to their historic value. From the point of view of their contribution to the landscape the buildings have been in-situ for about 200 years and their general form is vernacular.

Never meant as a grand building, the house has been elevated in status by creating a lobby entry house from two tenements and giving it a pleasing, if faked Georgian facade. The lower part of the building is completely hidden from the road by sound deadening hedges.

The Forge is an invention of 1982 drawing from an older tradition.

The Case for Delisting the House and Forge.

The buildings were Listed in the January 1982 rounds.

The house was identified as: *Late Cl7, timber framed and weather-boarded house, with red plain tile half hipped roof. Two storeys. Three window range double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars. Original central chimney stack.*

The Forge was identified as; *Small early C19 forge. Timber framed and weather-boarded with red double Roman tiled roof. Large fixed casements to south front.*

Subsequent to this date the House and Forge were highly redeveloped in the works of 1982. The EH Level 3 report here presented notes that firstly there is no fabric in the house earlier than circa 1800 and that the documentary evidence strongly supports a build date of 1807-1823. There is no reason to assign a date in the C17th.

The amount of removal of the historic fabric in the House is substantial. The firestack has been removed, the staircase has been removed, the original cladding has been removed and all original internal finishes have been removed. The windows are all replacements from 1982. The roof has been completely rebuilt in two phases, firstly in the EC20th and again in 1982. The exposed timbers in the Dining Room are facsimiles. The exposed timbers in the walls are not in their original positions.

Turning to the Forge, almost no original fabric remains. The Forge itself has been halved in size and some older timbers reassembled for an ‘olde worlde’ atmosphere but only one partition is correctly pegged. All the external walls are made of machined timbers skew nailed with modern French nails. The roof has been completely rebuilt in the same manner as the house in the EC20th and again in 1982.

When considering whether or not the building should be Listed the selection criteria can be studied in *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings General principles applied by the Secretary of State when deciding whether a building is of special architectural or historic interest and should be added to the list of buildings compiled under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. March 2010.*

It is contended that both buildings, being substantially replaced in 1982, do not meet the criteria to be Listed and should therefore be delisted according to the evidence submitted in this report.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the owners, Mr and Mrs French for engaging me to record the building and to Jaimie Kelly of Holmes and Kelly for recommending me for the work.

Bibliography

Alcock et al. Recording Timber-framed buildings: an illustrated glossary. CBA Reprint 2008.

Brunskill, R.W. Brick and Clay Building in Britain. 2009

Lord Ernle (Prothero). English Farming Past and Present, 1st-5th edition. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1962. First published London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1912.

Hall, Linda. Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900. Countryside Books. 2005.

Harris, Richard. Discovering Timber -framed Buildings. Shire Publications. 1978.

Hewett, Cecil. English Historic Carpentry. Phillimore. 1980.

Hillman-Crouch, B J. Historic Ironwork Repairs in Timber-framed Buildings. 2003. Published on the internet in 2006. http://www.dowsingarchaeology.org.uk/Ironwork/iron-index.htm.