

73 and 75, High Street (The Old Forge)

Grade II listed

List entry number 1285710

The Old Forge is located at the ancient NSEW crossroads, locally to Stibb Green, Burbage, Eastcourt and Westcourt, and Marlborough, Salisbury, Hungerford and Pewsey in the wider geography. This location suggests that there may have been a smithy for many years prior to the current buildings.

These were developed in the latter half of the 17th century. Wooden framed on green sand, the buildings are red brick and combed wheat reed thatch. Initially, the smithy workshop (73) and an attached two up two down cottage (75) were built but an additional up and downstairs room were added to the house on the south side along with a triangular storage and stable block in the yard across to and along Smithys Lane. There is aerial photographic evidence that this is how it remained until after the Second World War.

By this time, blacksmiths had ceased to use the Old Forge. The Spreadbury family used 75 as a house and 73 as a retail space, including a bicycle and electrical store. In the late 20th century, Percy Spreadbury, a curator at Littlecote House, lived (and died in 1996) in the house, by which time the outbuildings had fallen to ruin and the south facing section had been entirely demolished, partly replaced by a poorly made ground floor wet room when Percy could only live downstairs.

The house fell into further decline with two other owners in the next decade before I bought it in 2006. With guidance from Wiltshire Council Planning, the smithy was restored back to its original format including working bellows, fire and benches. It is a beautiful room with features that tell many tales about the last 350 years. I have also restored one of the original outbuildings. Known as “The Boffy”, this is a one bedroom cottage which runs parallel with Smithys Lane. If time and money dictate, I intend to

resurrect the other half of the outbuilding but that is financially reliant on this application proceeding.

Please note that this is an application to Change the Use of 73 High Street, the Smithy, back to its original commercial use. There are no physical developments taking place so the building and its surroundings, including trees, will not be impacted at all.