

Cold East Cottages, Liverton, Devon.



**Heritage Appraisal.
Impact Assessment of proposed works.**

Summary

Cold East Cottages is an attached pair of traditional dwellings with a thatched roof located on the southern edge of Liverton. They are listed Grade II. The building is in need of urgent repair following partial collapse of Number 2, sale of both properties and emergency evacuation of the tenant of Number 1.

The cottages appear much as they are today on the 1839 Ilington Tithe Map, and on the First Edition 25" Ordnance Survey Map. Inspection of the fabric and junctures of walls suggests they were built in two phases, Number 2 being slightly earlier than Number 1; its walls are primarily cob, whereas those of Number 2 are largely stone rubble.

All the roof and floor timbers of both buildings appear to be locally grown softwood, which suggests a relatively late construction date. There are no features that would date the buildings before the early 19th century.

The cottages are significant as late examples of their vernacular tradition and as a reminder of the historic character of the area, now largely transformed by modern housing.

The proposed works principally involve repair and reinstatement. These are essential given the buildings 'at risk' status. Care has been taken to specify all methods and materials correctly to ensure that as much as possible of the historic character is preserved.

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1. Purpose and Scope of Report

Introduction

Nils White Conservation was instructed to prepare this Heritage Statement by the owners [REDACTED]. The brief was to carry out a heritage appraisal of the building and its setting in accordance with national guidance and to assess the potential impact of the proposed repairs and alterations

The report has been prepared to accompany planning and Listed Building Consent applications in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 189, which states: *In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.*

Methodology

The site was visited and evaluated over a period between March and May 2020 during which the collapsed and precarious elements of the building were gradually dismantled with the agreement of the local planning authority, eventually permitting access to the entire site. The Devon Historic Environment Record was referred to and neighbouring heritage assets identified. A statement of significance was prepared in accordance with the Historic England guidance set out in their publication Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance. Following inspection of the house, its wider setting was assessed using the sequential approach set out in the Historic England guidance The Setting of Heritage Assets.

2. Description and historic development of cottages

Description

Cold East Cottages are a pair of attached dwellings, traditionally constructed with walls of stone rubble and cob, and thatched roofs. They are listed Grade II (list entry reproduced in Appendix 1). The south wall and roof of Number 2 have largely collapsed, partly during the winter of 2019/20 and subsequently during authorised works to clear the building and make it safe; temporary roof scaffolding has been erected over both cottages to enable assessment and repair of the building.

The cottages stand on the edge of Liverton, with late 20th century housing to the north, east and west.

Historic Maps

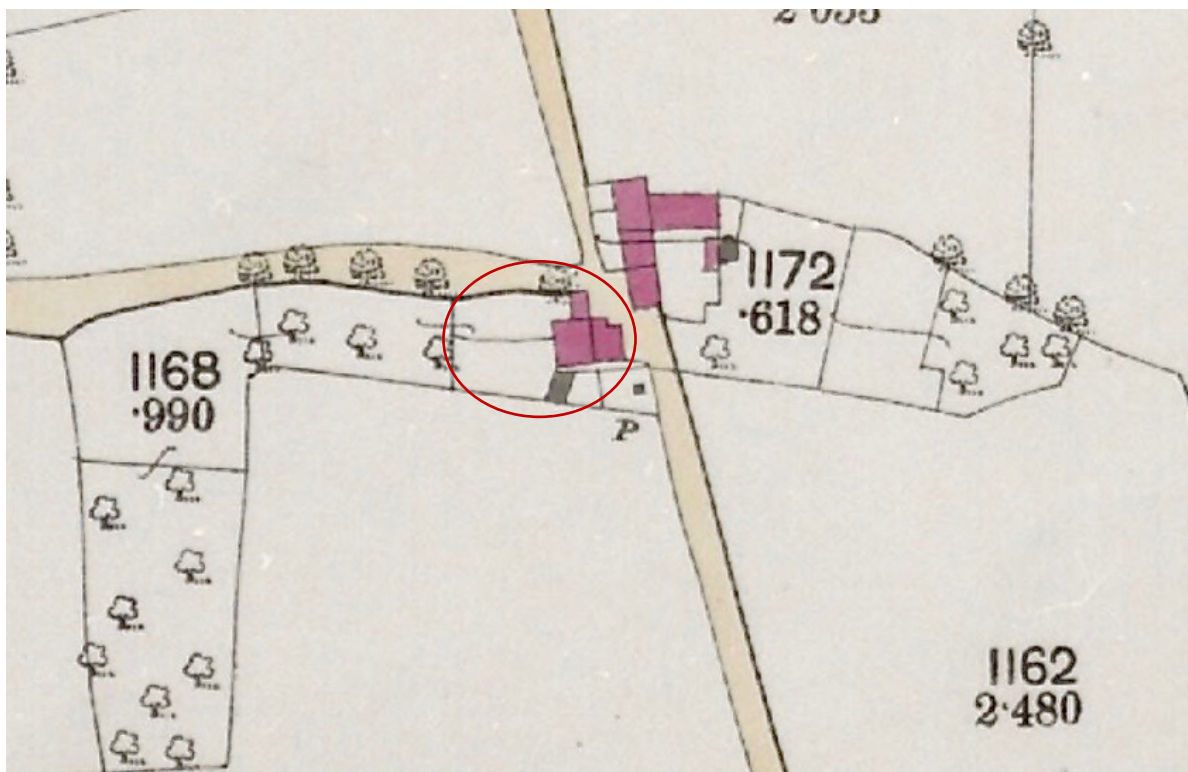
The Ilsington Parish Tithe Map of 1839 shows a building with a narrow rear wing, which is described as *Cottages etc* in the accompanying Tithe Apportionment. Although it appears much narrower than the current arrangement, as if only one of the cottages existed at this time, maps from this period are not always reliable.

The 1874 25" Ordnance Survey map appears to show the cottages as they are today.



Site shown on c1839 Ilington Parish Tithe Map with cottages circled in red (approximate North point inserted by author). The Tithe Apportionment entry for the plot is reproduced below.

Plot no.	Landowner	Occupier	Plot name	Cultivation
410a	Joseph Mann	Samuel Pingelly and Thomas French	New Take or Cold East 2 Cottages & gardens	Cottages etc.



Detail from OS 25" map surveyed 1874 (maps.nls.uk) with cottages circled in red.



View of cottages from SW with Number 2 in the foreground (before collapse of remainder of south wall and roof).

Surviving building fabric

The collapse and subsequent dismantlement of part of the building has made possible a closer than usual inspection of its construction and constituent features, which are described below.

Walls

Wall construction is a combination of cob and stone rubble, all of which was clad in cement render. The structure of Number 2 is cob with a low rubble base, built to a rectangular plan. Where they are visible, the walls of Number 1 are different, being of stone rubble nearly to eaves level with only a final lift of cob. Based on observation of the juxtaposition of these two walls, it is clear that Number 1 was added after Number 2 was already standing.



SE corner of cob wall of Number 2 in area of collapse showing how the predominantly stone rubble wall (right) of Number 1 abuts it.

The cob outshot of Number 2 has been raised in height in concrete block. The narrow, perpendicular north wing is constructed entirely of stone rubble. The granite porch on the south wall of Number 2 is modern.



Internal view of pine roof structure and thatch of Number 1.



*View of the western part of the roof structure of Number 2 prior to its collapse and removal.
Thatch*

The extant thatch on Number 1 comprises an overcoat of water reed over a base of wheat reed. The thatch of Number 2 now removed was wheat reed in its entirety. There is no smoke blackening on the underside of the thatch.

Roof and floor carpentry

The roof structure comprised A frame trusses with thatching battens laid directly over them; there are no purlins or common rafters. Principal rafters are pegged and nailed at their apex and collar; secondary timbers are nailed throughout.

The roof and floor timbers of both dwellings were softwood, much of it roughly sawn with its bark left on. Some of the battens are little more than thin, roundwood branches. This is not imported Baltic pine, which is generally tight-grained, but much poorer quality, locally-grown timber.

The base of two hip rafters are embedded in the east wall of Number 2 confirming that this was originally a freestanding house that pre-dates Number 1.

Floor joists are embedded directly into the walls; most had been replaced on Number 2, but the originals that survived were softwood similar to the roof timbers.



View of rotten joist ends, and sockets in north wall of Number 2

The roof structure and floor structure of Number 2 were removed following the collapse due to their precarious state.

Chimneys

The first of the two stacks is located on the eastern edge of the party wall and serves fireplaces in the two dwellings. Where its construction is visible - in the loft, and behind the first-floor fireplace of No. 1) – it is built of brick laid to stretcher bond bedded in lime mortar. In the attic space the brick on the eastern (No. 1) side is noticeably different in character (smoother and more orange in colour) to that of the west, suggesting that the original chimney has been widened.



Chimney of Number 1 from within loft space.

The second chimney is located on the outside of the west wall of No.2 and is constructed of local, early 20th century red- and buff-coloured brick. The upper parts of both chimneys are cement rendered.

Fireplaces

Number 1 has a traditional open fireplace to the main ground-floor room. Its jambs are granite orthostats and there is a simple wooden lintel devoid of mouldings or markings typically associated with earlier timbers. Upstairs, there is a fireplace in the south room, which had been blocked with plasterboard and its chimneypiece removed in the later 20th century.

Number 2 has a simple fireplace containing a Rayburn in its east room. Again, there is a simple timber lintel and stone rubble jambs with no early features. A second fireplace in the west room is modern, formed of stone rubble.



Fireplace of Number 2 in party wall.



Fireplace of Number 1. Note fake beams and fibreboard on ceiling

Internal walls and ceilings

Upstairs partitions in Number 1 appear to be lath and plaster over stud. The surviving partition in Number 2 comprises thick laths nailed to studs with a cob daub infill. The internal face of the cob walls appears to be lime plastered throughout. One interesting feature, made visible following removal of the roof of Number 2, is the way the internal plaster is returned over the wall heads all around the building. There was evidence that the wall and upstairs ceiling of Number 2 had been raised in height (there was a final lift in stone rubble over the plaster return mentioned above).



Lath and daub partition wall in Number 2.



Wall top of Number 2 showing how internal plaster has been returned on to the head.

The upstairs ceilings of Number 1 appear to be lath and plaster. The same was the case for Number 2, though these have now been removed following partial collapse. Close inspection of the plaster reveals its full thickness was lime-rich (with no earth plaster backing), and was applied to pine laths. Downstairs, the original ceilings of both cottages have been removed and 20th century fibreboard placed between joists.

Doors, windows and other joinery

There are various timber windows, all except one dating from the late 20th century. The exception is an asymmetrical 2-over-2 pane sash window with moulded horns in the south ground-floor wall of Number 1, which is likely to date from around 1900.

There were two 19th century ledged and braced doors in Number 2. Elsewhere, all surviving doors are inappropriate for the house and late 20th century in date.

The softwood staircases in the two cottages are of machined timber and again appear to date from the 19th century or later.

Historic development of the building

There is no evidence to support the statement in the list description that the cottages were '*probably converted from a single farmhouse*'. The Tithe Apportionment describes '*two cottages and gardens*' and no evidence has been seen of physical links between them.

There is compelling evidence that Number 2 was built as a single cottage; its complete rectangular plan was built as one, and there is a blocked window and vestigial hip rafters in the east wall where it abuts Number 1. The wall of Number 1 is principally stone rubble and was clearly built against the pre-existing cob wall of Number 2. The similarity of roof timbers used in the two cottages suggests Number 1 was added shortly after Number 2 was completed.

Very few surviving rural cottages in Devon pre-date the late 17th century and most are 18th century or later. In the case of Cold East, none of the surviving fabric appears any earlier than 19th century. The use of locally-grown pine is particularly telling as this would not have been available as a construction material before this period. Staple Hill Woods, a fir plantation owned by the Duke of Somerset just 300m to the north, are clearly shown on the 1839 Tithe Map and seem a good contender for its source and the attached report from Rupert Baker (Appendix 3) further backs this up, suggesting that the timber used came from thinnings from the plantation. There are no indications this is a replacement of an earlier roof structure.

The extravagant use of lime for plasters and mortars in preference to earth also points to a later date. The cottages were thoroughly restored in the second half of the 20th century, but the few elements of old joinery that do survive are no earlier than 19th century.

3. Statement of Significance.

Cold East Cottages are significant as a fairly late example of local vernacular architecture – two modest dwellings with cob walls and a thatched roof. Together with the neighbouring Lantern Cottage they represent a surviving vestige of the scattered settlement of Cold East, which once embraced the Star Inn and an independent chapel, prior to being subsumed by the new residential area of Liverton in the second half of the 20th century.

The essential form of the cottages is much as it would have been when they were built some 200 years ago. Accordingly, they have architectural and historic significance in reflecting local traditions in construction and lifestyle for ordinary folk.

The open setting of the cottages is important – they stand on the edge of the modern settlement, overlooking fields and the Liverton Brook to the south.

Designation

The cottages were listed Grade II in 1986. The list entry is reproduced in Appendix 1.

Condition

Although the cottages remained inhabited until 2019, they had been neglected and a number of factors contributed to the partial collapse of Number 2 in that year, including water ingress at the juncture between old and new thatch, presence of hard cement render preventing the cob wall of Number 2 from drying out, and the worm-eaten and rotten timbers that did little to hold the structure together.



Fractured principal rafter in roof of Number 2.

The collapse left much of Number 2 in a perilous state and had knock-on impacts on the surviving wall and roof structure, part of which subsequently collapsed and were removed.

Following purchase of the cottages, the client immediately had full canopy scaffolding erected to prevent further damage and facilitate careful repair of the building. Before any work commenced, a meeting was held with the Local Authority Conservation Officer, the client, the builder and the author in order to agree a framework for making the building safe, clearing debris, assessing its significance and structural integrity and carrying out preparatory works prior to submitting an application for Listed Building Consent. A subsequent meeting was held with the Conservation Officer immediately prior to submission of the Listed Building Consent application.

4. Proposed alterations and their impact on building's setting and significance.

The following repair works are proposed (more detail is included in the separate statement of *Proposed Conservation Works* that will be submitted with the LBC application):

1. Reconstruction of south wall of Number 2 in cob block – as far as vertical crack in corner of west gable.
2. Reconstruction of timber roof structure of Number 2.
3. Re-thatching of Number 2.
4. Overcoating thatch of Number 1.
5. Removal of cement render and replacement with lime plaster.
6. Replacement of doors and windows.
7. Reinstatement of timber floor structure of Number 2.
8. Reinstatement of internal partitions and ceilings of Number 2 in lath and lime plaster.
9. Introduction of new, standing seam zinc roof on outshot and rear wing.
10. Removal of east wall of rear wing to create usable entrance porch.

Given the present condition of the cottages, they are clearly at risk and their careful repair is therefore urgent. As always, the quality of the end result will depend on workmanship, materials used, detailing and finishes and these are set out in a separate schedule of Works.

The overall approach is one of preserving historic fabric where possible (for example, walls and ceilings in Number 1), removing harmful additions - such as the hard cement external render, and restoration of lost elements using traditional techniques and materials – replacement carpentry for Number 2 would be traditionally detailed, while partitions and ceilings are generally to be reinstated using lath and lime plaster. Where new interventions are proposed, high quality modern materials and detailing are specified that would complement the historic character of the group.

The proposed replacement windows would be simple, double-glazed two-light casements manufactured locally of Accoya and painted. This solution is considered to be an honest, sympathetic, long-lasting, and energy-efficient solution for this building given that no historic windows survive. Likewise, replacement doors would be traditionally detailed ledged and braced, or batten and plank units.

At the rear of Number 2, it is proposed to remove part of the east wall of the rear wing in order to provide a useable covered space and to open up a blocked door providing access to Number 2. It is not clear what the original use of this wing would have been, though old maps show it directly facing the lane. The wall is not tied to the rear wall of the cottage and has a blocked door and recent window. It is not considered to be of great significance in the context of the site, and the benefits of the proposed opening-up - in improving circulation and habitability of Number 2 - are considered to outweigh any harm.

The proposed use of standing seam zinc for the roofs of the outshot and rear wing is considered to be complementary to the contrasting thatch of the main roof.

5. References

Cherry B. & Pevsner N.	1989	The Buildings of England - Devon
Clark K.	2001	Informed Conservation
Historic England	2011	The Setting of Heritage Assets
Historic England	2008	Conservation Principles
Hoskins W.G.	1954	A New Survey of England: Devon
Beacham P. (ed.)	1990	Devon Building; an introduction to Local Traditions

25" Ordnance Survey Maps are from the Historic Scotland website.

6. Relevant Conservation Policies and Guidance

The development would comply with the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) Paragraphs 189 and 192, which deal with the need to preserve the significance of 'heritage assets' and to avoid harm.

189. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The relevant heritage policy in the *Teignbridge Local Plan* (adopted May 2014) is Policy EN5, set out below.

EN5 Heritage Assets

To protect and enhance the area's heritage, consideration of development proposals will take account of the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of any affected heritage asset, including Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens, other archaeological sites and other assets on the Register of Local Assets, particularly those of national importance.

Development should respect and draw inspiration from the local historic environment responding positively to the character and distinctiveness of the area, important historic features, their settings and street patterns. Where appropriate development should include proposals for enhancement of the historic environment including key views and actions identified in Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans.

Appendix 1- List Entry.

ILSINGTON COLDEAST
SX 87 SW
8/93 Nos. 1 and 2 Coldeast Cottages

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- II

Pair of cottages, probably converted from a single farmhouse. Probably C17 or earlier with additions at rear. Solid roughcast walls of cob or stone. Wheatreed thatched roof, hipped at each end. Large rendered brick chimneystack on ridge, off-centre to right. Smaller yellow brick stack in left-hand gable wall. No.1, to right, seems to have a 1-room ground plan and No.2, to left, 2 rooms. 2 storeys. 3-window front with C19 wood casements. In ground storey No.1 has single window with doorway to right, while No.2 has 2 windows with a doorway between them. Both doorways have C20 wood porches. Interiors not inspected.

Listing NGR: SX8164874739

Appendix 2 – Historic Environment Record entries

HER Number: MDV37259
Name: COTTAGE NON SPECIFIC in the Parish of Ilsington

Summary

Nos 1 and 2 Cold East cottages. Pair of cottages, probably converted from a single farmhouse. Probably c17 or earlier with additions at rear. Solid roughcast walls of cob or stone. Wheat reed thatched roof, hipped at each end. Large rendered brick chimneystack on ridge, off-centre to right. Smaller yellow brick stack in left-hand gable wall. No 1, to right, seems to have a 1-room ground plan and no 2, to left, 2 rooms.2 storeys.3-window front with c19 wood casements. In ground storey no 1 has single window with doorway to right, while no 2 has 2 windows with a doorway between them. Both doorways have c20 wood porches. Interiors not inspected (doe).

Location

Grid Reference: SX 816 747
Map Sheet: SX87SW
Admin Area: Devon
Civil Parish: Ilsington
District: Teignbridge
Ecclesiastical Parish: ILSINGTON

Protected Status: none recorded

Other References/Statuses

Old DCC SMR Ref: SX87SW/173

Old Listed Building Ref (II)

Monument Type(s) and Dates

COTTAGE NON SPECIFIC (Early Medieval to Post Medieval - 1066 AD to 1750 AD (Between))

Historic Landscape Character - Modern

TITLE: Medieval enclosures based on strip fields

DESCRIPN: This area was probably first enclosed with hedge-banks during the later middle ages. The curving form of the hedge-banks suggests that earlier it may have been farmed as open strip-fields

Appendix 3 – Report on provenance of roof timbers by Rupert Baker

Observations on species, age, and probable planting date of Rafter from Cottages at Coldeast.

I have been asked to assess timber from the roofs of the cottages at Coldeast to ascertain what species of wood was used and, therefore, (if possible) the probable age of the construction of the said roof.

I am an experienced and trained arboriculturalist and forester, familiar with the species of hard- and softwoods grown in the UK both currently and historically; and the timber they produce. It is my professional opinion that the wood that I have examined (see photographs below) is from a Scots Pine tree (*Pinus sylvestris*).

The characteristic features on which I based this opinion comprise the bark, with its characteristic colour, thickness and flaking appearance; the appearance of the wood in transverse radial and tangential sections; and the medullary rays and needle bundle traces visible in these sections.

The wood of the sampled rafter cut from a single young plantation tree which was 13 years old at the point where it was cross-sectioned. The cross section shows the characteristic growth of young trees with the central core and following annual rings progressively decreasing in size as the trees closed canopy in the plantation. Scots Pine, even those grown at tight spacing in plantations, tend in this part of the UK to fork at 10-15m high, because of a bud moth which attacks the leading bud once the trees reach that height. The rafter has the knots from whorls of branches, at 12” and 16” apart, with vigorous side-branches lopped off, and 2 faces squared with an adze or similar tool; this is a good rate of height growth - also shown by the wide annual rings of the inner part of the trunk. The most recent growth, under the bark, has started to slow down; but it and the annual extension growth is still wider/longer than one would expect from the top of a mature tree. I conclude that the tree was a young specimen, still in the stage where it was producing large diameter side-branches; so from a relatively newly established plantation.

In terms of dating this provides some problems since Scots pine is a native to the north of England and northern Europe; and was one of the first trees first conifer species used in plantation forestry in the UK.

Looking at the Tithe Map of 1840’s the only plantations in the area are Great Plantation, and the associated section to its SE, on the SE side of the old A38, bounded on one side by fields - now modern Liverton - and on the other by Newton-Bovey road. They are shown on the Tithe map as ‘fir (a generic term for conifers on such maps) plantations’; owned by the Duke of Somerset - a family with a long and continuing history of interest and involvement with estate forestry.

These are established on nutrient-poor clays, sands and gravels (Wickham 2 series of poorly draining drift soils, formed from the Bovey Formation - alluvial detritus from decomposing granite of the Dartmoor Batholith).

Such soils are quickly depleted of nutrients, and the good growth of the sample wood contrasts markedly with the very low annual increment/growth rate shown by the current rotation on Great

Plantation - which would provide trees with much slower growth and tighter ring-widths. Scot Pine would likely have been chosen for such a site as being more suitable than European Larch, or Norway Spruce - the only other coniferous species available for such forestry plantations (the N American conifers now the mainstay of UK forestry were not introduced into the UK in commercial quantities until after the 1840's); given the poor soil, low, level land forming a frost-pocket, and poor drainage. It is noticeable that it is still the main species used by the current owners of Great Plantation, the Forestry Commission; who know a thing or two about species selection for sites, are driven by commercial imperatives, and would have planted a more productive species were the site suitable.

This kind of coniferous plantation forestry only started in UK with the German influence of Prince Albert; and is characteristic of the Victorian era and thirst for Scientific improvement.

In a backward, out-of the way corner of UK like Devon was, the characteristic method of growing trees was in woodlands of mixed broadleaved species, favouring Oak. Such woods were coppiced, with some trees left as standards where bigger timber was needed. This system was still in place in the 1920s and 1930s - North Wood at Dartington was converted by the Elmhirsts in the 1930's from a previous coppice-wood.

Great Plantation would have been waste or heathland before its planting. It is a few 100 metres from the cottages.

I conclude that the rafter came from an early rotation of Great Plantation; which would date it to no later than the early 19th Century.

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See annotated photographs below



