

Report on

**Paradise Cottage, Paradise Lane, Newton Longville,
Buckinghamshire**

Site Code: NWL-C

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

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Fig. 1. View of Paradise Cottage from the south (Photo: Paul Woodfield)

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Oxbow Books

NWL-C: PARADISE COTTAGE, PARADISE LANE, NEWTON LONGVILLE,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 8481 3149

Survey Date: 15 Oct. 1990

By: D. Miles

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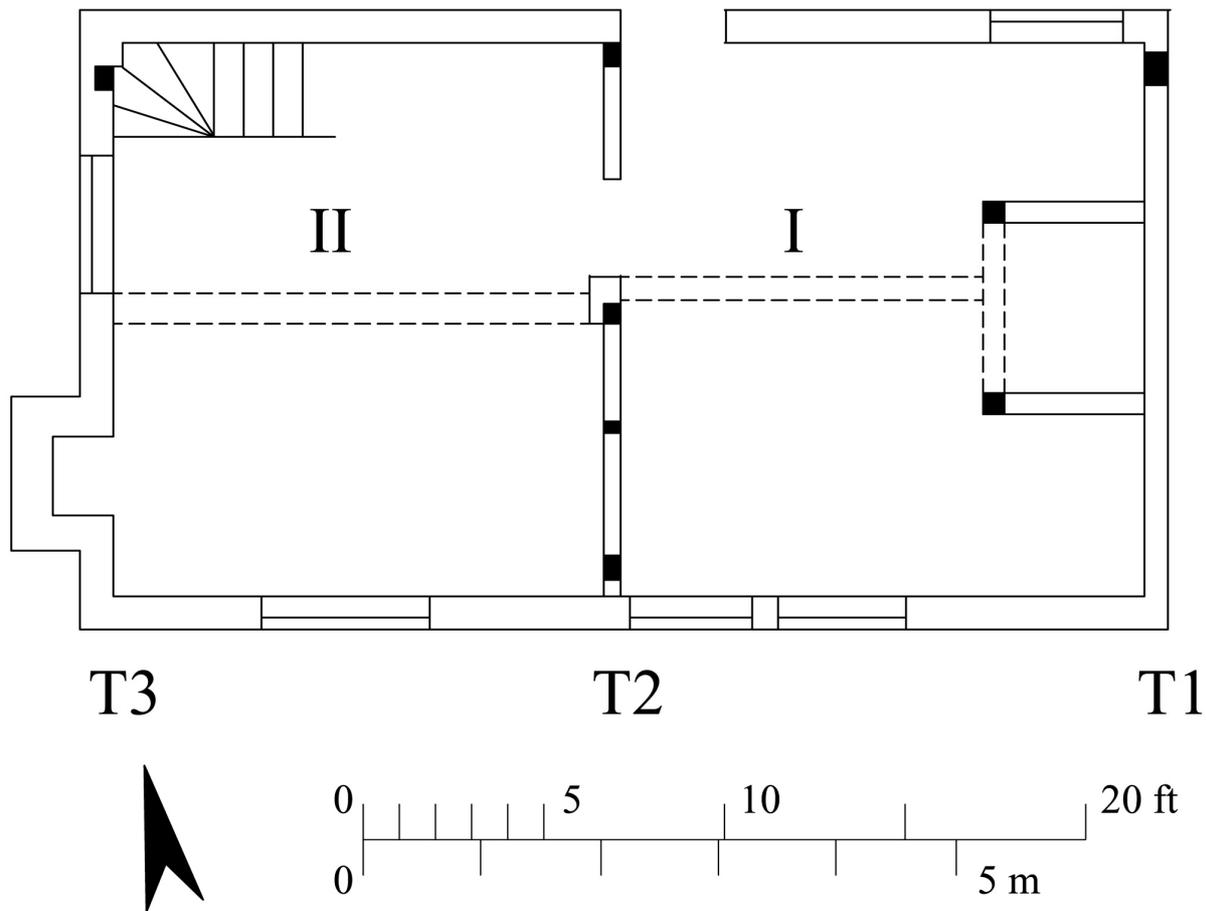


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: Paradise Cottage stands at the corner of Church End and Paradise Lane, facing slightly west of south. It is a two-bayed cruck house with three trusses with truncated blades (types V and W apices). Built of small scantling timbers, and probably originally of only two bays (Fig. 2), this house represents the lowest level of surviving peasant housing, and as such is of considerable interest. The eastern bay (I) was certainly open to the rafters originally, but it is possible that the western bay (II) was floored over with a loft above. Some slight smoke blackening is evident on both sides of the central truss, suggesting that the loft and the hall were not completely separated. A largely intact timber-framed fireplace and smoke hood in bay I is either original or an early insertion

before the hall was floored. Dendrochronology failed to date the building, but a 16th century date is likely by comparison with other buildings with W-apex crucks.

LATER PHASES: Bay I was floored over during the seventeenth or eighteenth century, leaving the smoke-hood in place. Part of the floor over bay II was probably also replaced then, and a winder staircase was constructed in the NW corner of this bay. During the late Victorian or Edwardian period the roof over both bays was raised some 3-4 feet and an extension added to the north of bay II (not shown on the plan). A nineteenth century farm building stands to the east of the house.

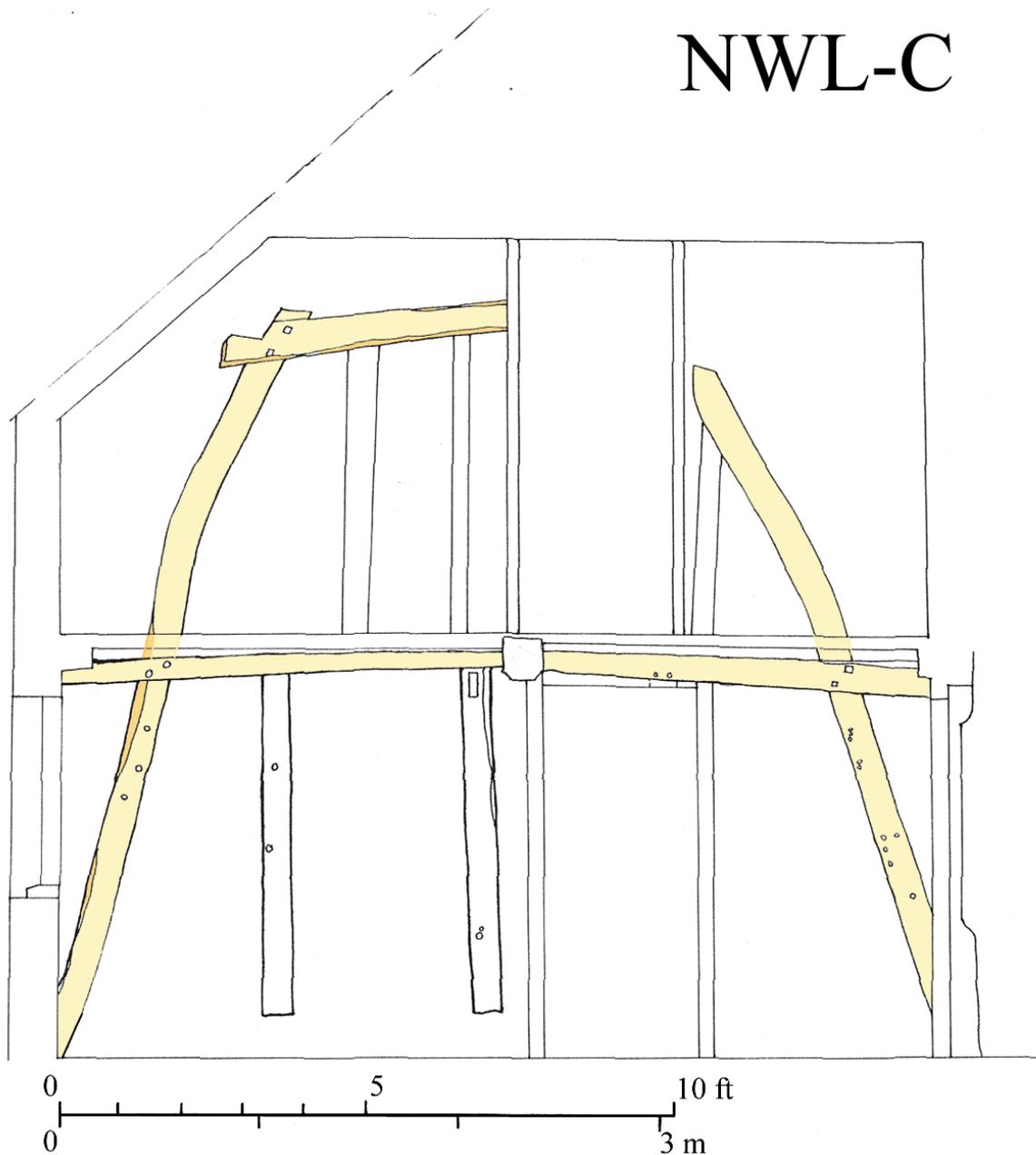


Fig. 3. Section of truss T2

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: The central cruck truss (T2, Fig. 3) has a type W apex, in which the cruck blades terminate just above the collar, and the half-hipped end trusses are of the same form (type V apices). The boxed heart cruck blades are of small section, averaging just 6-7in square. In truss T2 the elm collar is 6in high. The tiebeam of T3 appears to be a reused cruck blade as a halving joint is visible. The 6in high tiebeam to T2 extends to support the wall-plates which are just about 6ft 6in above

ground level. The north wall plate has a bridled scarf just to the east of T2. The floor in bay II is carried on a 10½in axial beam with 1½in unstopped chamfers. The joists to the southern side of the beam range from 3½ to 7in wide with ¾in chamfers with runout stops. This floor is not obviously early, but does not match that in bay I, and so may be original.



Fig. 4. Timber-framed hall fireplace: ground floor.



Fig. 5. Timber-framed hall fireplace/smoke hood: first floor.

The mantel beam of the smoke hood (Figs. 4-5) is supported by two front corner posts, 6½ by 8in, the left hand one being in its original position, but at the right-hand end, the mantel-beam has been cut back to the edge of the raking principal post. These posts rake back from the front of the mantel beam. Originally two ‘hip’ posts slanting from the front corners of the mantel-beam were pegged to the sides of the front raking principals. Three morticed and tenoned cross pieces (5-6 by 3½in) survive on the left hand side, with two more between the front principals. The hood is infilled with hazel staves with cleft laths for wattles to receive the lime-rich daub. A large timber sill beam

runs across the back of the fireplace, with a side sill carrying the front corner post. The mantel-beam measures 13in high by 11in deep and is heavily bevelled internally. A chamfer runs up the inside of the left hand jamb and is carried around the lintel. A later brick fireplace has been built within the narrowed opening.

LATER PHASES: The hall (bay I) floor is carried on an 8 in axial beam, supported on a block set on the smoke-hood mantel-beam; this has 2in chamfers with run out stops. The joists are 3-4½in wide, at 16½ to 17½in centres. The north part of bay II floor seems to have been replaced with similar 3-4in joists with ¼in runout chamfers. The south wall of the house is now rendered but the shadows of some frame elements can be seen.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Eight samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 15 October 1990. None of the samples had over 45 rings, and six had under 40. Due to the shortness of the ring width series, none of the samples could be dated.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
NWL-C01	Tie beam truss 2	26 NM	—	—	—	—	—
NWL-C02	Front cruck blade truss 2	21 NM	1	—	—	—	—
NWL-C03	Tie beam truss 3	41	11	—	—	—	—
NWL-C04	Rear wall plate truss 2–3	40	07	—	—	—	—
NWL-C05	Rear cruck blade truss 1	22 NM	—	—	—	—	—
NWL-C06	Rear wall plate truss 1–2	25 NM	6	—	—	—	—
NWL-C07	Rear cruck blade truss 2	33 NM	10	—	—	—	—
NWL-C08	Front LH raking stud to fire hood	19 NM	—	—	—	—	—

Not dated.