

Report for  
**Green Farm, Bradgate Road, Anstey,  
Leicestershire**

*Site Code: ANS-A*

*from*

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

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Fig. 1. View from the north

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***Oxbow Books***

ANS-A: GREEN FARM, BRADGATE ROAD, ANSTEY, LEICESTERSHIRE

Grid reference: SK 5448 0862

Survey Date: 24 July 1991

By: D. Miles

Illustrations:

- 1. View from the north
- 2. View from the south
- 3. Ground floor plan
- 4. Section of truss T2

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Fig. 2. View from the south. (The brickwork date is not visible.)

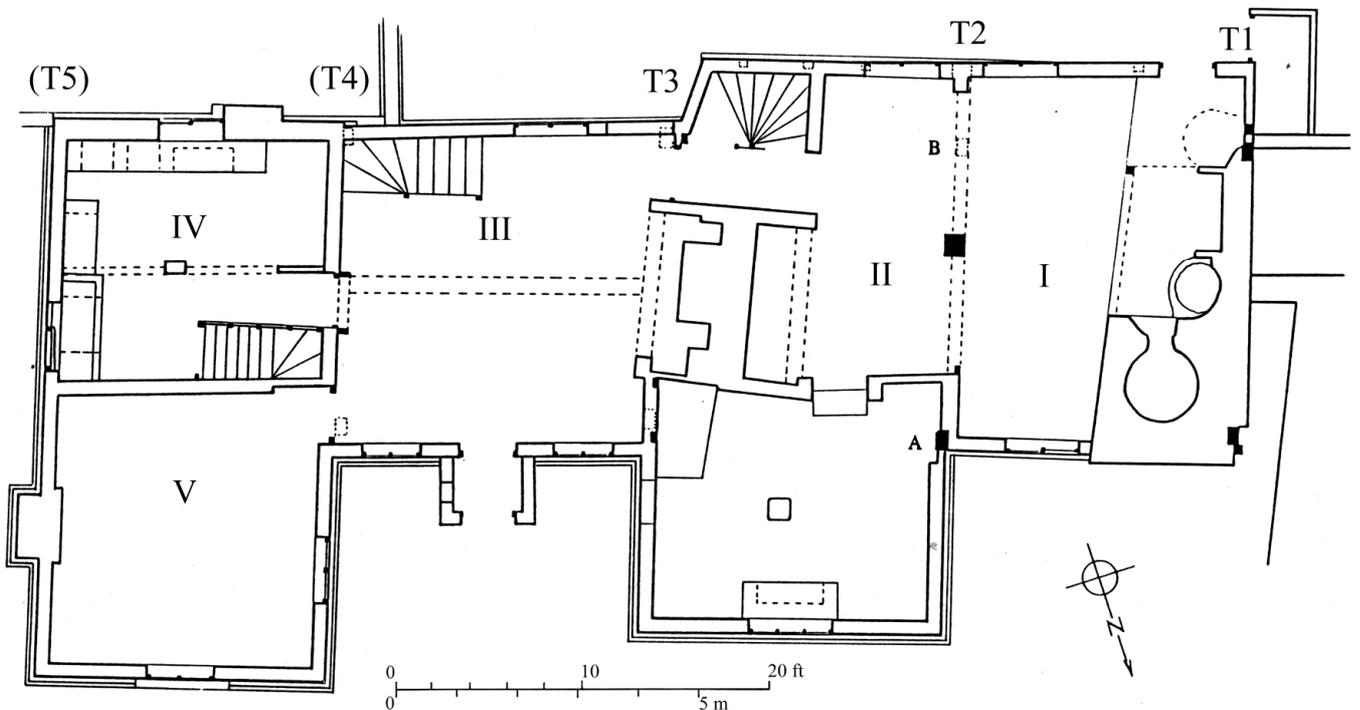


Fig. 3. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

### SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: Green Farm is a substantial cruck house running roughly east to west, of three bays and with strong evidence for the existence of a fourth bay. It has been dated by dendrochronology to 1449/50. The cruck trusses have type 'C' apexes and the purlins, crucks, and collars are exceptionally heavy in section. Three bays of the original cruck range are intact, Bays II and III were the hall, with bay I at the western end probably for service. Bay IV was probably the chamber end but has been replaced by the 1715 cross-wing. The heaviest smoke blackening in bays I to III is near the western end of bay III. The open hearth may have been here, or possibly under the existing chimney stack on the other side of truss T3.

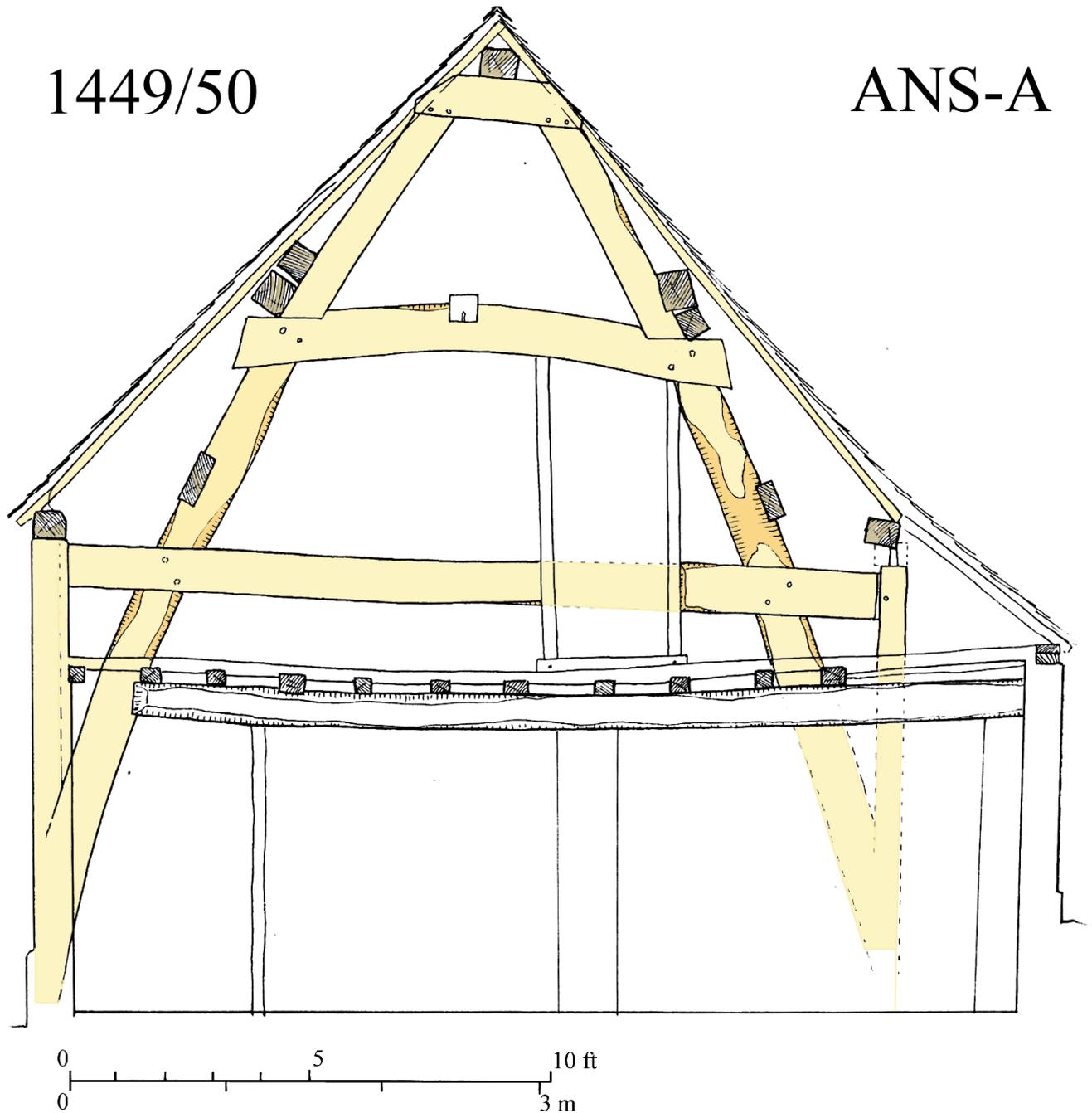


Fig. 4. Section of Truss T2.

PHASE 2: In the 17th century, the stack was inserted along with the flooring over of bay II and III. A lean-to behind bays I and II was also added for a staircase.

PHASE 3: In 1715, a brick cross-wing was built at the eastern end of the cruck range, projecting to the front (north). A similar projection in was added in the centre and the front wall between them replaced in brickwork. All these extensions have fine ovolo and hollow moulded brick plinths along the front and eastern end, and the brickwork is consistent with the date of 1715 picked out with burnt headers in the rear gable of the cross-wing. This new construction provided a parlour with cellar below in bay V, a dairy with thralls and a low brick-built sink in bay IV, two bedrooms above and two attic rooms on the second floor. The upper rooms are reached by a staircase built in bay III with a contemporary brick gable carried on the original wall-plate (Fig. 2). At the same time, a gabled extension was built to the front of bay II, which also appears to be a dairy, with a sunken floor and another cold slab under the window. The front wall of bay III was also rebuilt, with a gable over the front door.

LATER PHASES. Shortly after the phase 3 alterations, a kitchen range with two coppers and a bread oven was built at the western end of bay I. The bread oven itself is of brick and stone, wrapped around the cruck and cruck stud in the front corner. The remaining part of the front wall of bay I was replaced in brick in about 1850. A first floor was probably inserted into this bay at the same time as the oven and fireplace were built. A front porch was added in the later 19th century.

### STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: *Cruck range*: Of the first phase construction, three cruck trusses remain, along with some of the rear wall framing. All three trusses have type 'C' apexes which consist of cruck blades joined by a saddle (10 x 9in) on which rests the ridge (9½ by 9in). The purlins (9 by 8in) are supported on the back of the cruck blades (11in wide x 10in thick), resting on the extended ends of the collar (12 by 7in); they carry substantial wind-braces (4½ by 9in) which are trenched into the backs of the cruck blades and the purlins. The tiebeams (12 by 5in) continue past the crucks to tenon into the cruck studs (6 by 5in) which rise another inch above the top of the tiebeams to tenon into the underside of the wall-plate (6 by 8in). It was not possible to inspect the junction between the bottom of the cruck stud and the cruck blade. All the component members are among the most massive that have been recorded during the project.

On truss T1, most of the tiebeam was removed to insert the 18th century kitchen chimney stack, and the front cruck stud has been recently replaced. All of the original wattle and daub panels have been replaced in brick, probably also in the 18th century. Truss T2 (Fig. 4) is reasonably intact with the exception of the rear cruck blade which is cut off below first floor level with a beam inserted to transfer the load to the outside of the rear lean-to. The tiebeam has also been severed for a doorway, probably in phase II, and the front cruck stud was removed during the 19th century refronting of bay I. Between the tiebeam and collar, much wattle and daub still remains. For truss T3 the blades are only visible on the first floor. At the position of the removed truss T4, the rear purlin is trenched with a peg hole, and the end of the ridge beam has one half of a splayed and pegged scarf at the same point, confirming the presence of a further bay. The rear wall-plate has a similar splayed scarf, half way along bay III.

Most of the original rafters remain in situ in bay III, but bays I and II each contain only a couple. These rafters measure 4-5½ by 2 in and are generally heart sawn poles. In the ridge beam in bay II, near to the chimney stack, staples may indicate the position of a smoke louvre. Interestingly, there is a small pent roof over this area, however no smoke blackening is to be seen on the timbers; indeed, there is very little on the roof structure itself in this bay. Behind the chimney, on the western face of truss T3, a wattle and daub screen may be the remains of a smoke hood. The ridge and purlins are chamfered with rough, inch-deep bevels.

PHASE 2: A lean-to outshot was constructed along the rear of bays I and II, probably in the 17th century; its outside wall was initially timber-framed (later replaced in brick). The door to the staircase and cupboard has an elaborate scratch moulding on its jamb. During the construction of this lean-to, the rear wall-plate was lifted up and perched on the tenons of the cruck studs at trusses T1 and T2. A small mullioned triple light window in the rear of bay II (on the reset wall-plate) was probably inserted at this time. The rest of the original fenestration and doors to the first three bays have been much altered.

Bay I contains an inserted floor consisting of joists measuring approx 4-6 by 4in deep and running east to west, with a trimmer at the rear which may indicate an earlier stair/ladder opening to the room above. The lime-plaster floors run throughout the first floor. Bay II has joists carried on an axial beam which bears on a recent post under Truss T2 (replacing a brick pier). The joists in this bay are similar to those in bay I but are more even in width averaging around 4-5in. Bay III has a smart inserted floor with joists 3½ by 5in at 16in centres with a ½in chamfers with lambs tongue stops. The axial beam is 11in square with simple 1½in chamfer. This is probably 17th century, as is the fireplace with its simply finished mantel beam and two salt cupboards in the inglenook fireplace. A door to the right of the fireplace gave access to the projecting dairy.

PHASE 3: *Crosswing and refronting*: The wing is wholly brick built, in Flemish bond on the front elevations and garden wall bond along the left hand return. Two external chimney stacks serve the wing. The brickwork is of very good quality, particularly the plinths which have a course of hollow moulded bricks, over an ovolo-moulded course, over an ordinary course of bricks, set on rubble. Both this and the front alterations still retain their early 18th century mullioned and transomed windows, with very deep brick arches, although without the original casements. A particularly complicated arrangement of the plinth bricks has been used over the window-head of the cellar in bay V. The front and left hand return of the cross-wing and as the refronted section of bay III have a brick string course, but this is absent from the projecting wing in front of bay II. The gable over the front door in bay III appears to have been very steep originally; the plastered over end of a purlin is visible on the eastern side. Later, this gable seems to have been raised along the eaves, and the roof diminished in pitch, to meet the existing ridge.

The roofs are all covered with stone tiles laid in diminishing courses with the exception of the rear roof slope over bays I to III which are covered in regular Welsh slate.

## DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

*Sampling Comments*: 8 samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 31 July 1989.

### TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
ANS-A01	Front windbrace bay I	165	39C	1285	1410	1449	2
ANS-A02	Front purlin bay I	112	25	—	—	—	—
ANS-A03	Front cruck blade truss T1	94	21	1344	1416	1437	2
ANS-A04	Rear cruck blade truss T1	116	25	—	—	—	—
ANS-A05	Rear cruck blade truss T2	157	20	1283	1419	1439	2
ANS-A06	Front cruck blade truss T2	164	29	1278	1412	1441	2
ANS-A07	Ridge piece bay II	183	20	1254	1416	1436	2
ANS-A08	Rear purlin bay I	159	35	1286	1408	1443	2

ANS-A Site sequence: (composed of samples 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8), 196 rings long dated 1254–1449 with *t*-values of 5.9 (E.MID), 5.6 (ROTBSQ01, Site sequence for ROT-B, VA21.90). (Samples 2 and 4 were very difficult to measure.)

Estimated felling date: (sample with last dated ring is complete to bark), **1449/50** (VA21.90).