

Report for

34, 36 Churchgate, Hallaton, Leicestershire

Site Code: HAL-B

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View of no. 34, Hallaton, from the south (Photo: Nick Hill)

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Oxbow Books

HAL-B: 34, 36 CHURCHGATE, HALLATON, LEICESTERSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 7863 9663

Survey Date: 17 July 1989

By: D. Miles

Illustrations:

1. View
2. Ground floor plan
3. Section of truss T1
4. Section of truss T2

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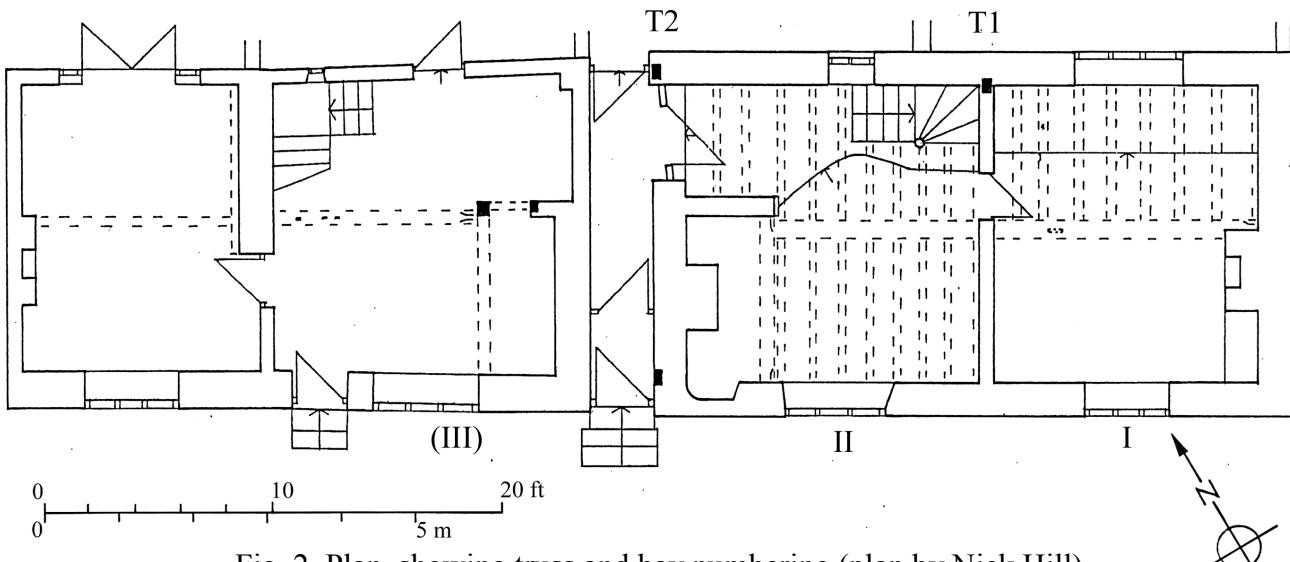


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering (plan by Nick Hill).

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Vine Cottage, 34 Churchgate was surveyed as part of the main project. Information on the adjoining 36 Churchgate has kindly been provided by Nick Hill.

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: No. 34 Churchgate comprises two bays retaining cruck trusses (bays I and II), with the third bay of the original house in no. 36, to the west. The eastermost bay (I) was probably the chamber. Bays II and III can be identified as the hall and service. Some soot blackening was noted on the ridge adjacent to T2, in bay III. The two surviving cruck trusses have type 'D' and 'C' apexes. The original walls may have been timber-framed, although mud construction is also possible. It has not been possible obtain a tree-ring date, but the later fifteenth to sixteenth century can be suggested on architectural grounds.

LATER PHASES: Sometime in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, bays I and II were refronted in stone, and the present triple casement windows inserted on the ground floor. The property may have been divided at this time. Probably in 1853 (date plaque I H D 1853 on the front) the eaves were raised in brickwork. The purlins were reset, and perhaps at this time the ridge and rafters were renewed.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Truss T1 (Fig. 3) has its cruck blades crossed at the apex to carry the diagonally-set ridge. A collar is half-dovetailed to the east side of the crucks with double skew pegs. Halvings are visible lower down for cruck spurs, now removed. The tiebeam is still in situ, extending beyond the blades to connect with the cruck studs. It appears that these studs would have been jointed into the underside of the spurs as well as being connected by the tiebeam. The front purlin (boxed in) sits on the end of the collar and measures 7½ by 6in. Most of the windbraces (7 by 2in) have been removed.

Truss T2 (Fig. 4) differs from T1 in having a saddle apex, which still carries a square-set ridge over bay I. Some later wattle and daub infill survives at the top of the truss. It has assembly marks on the east face of the collar, comprising two strokes, the front one having a tag. The present ridge in bays 2 and 3 is a later replacement in roundwood. Most of the rafters in bays II and III have also been replaced. The end

of the rear purlin (visible in bay III) is clearly weathered, indicating that this was the end of the house; it has a peg hole for fixing it to the missing cruck truss.

Remains of an early floor survive in bay I. It comprises an axial beam, located below the tiebeam of T2, with chamfers and run-out stops. Each end has a mortice for a supporting vertical post. Original joists survive on the north side of the beam. They are broad and flat (8½ by 5in), set at 20in centres, and having soffit tenons with diminished shoulders. They have heavy chamfers about 1½in wide with run out stops. When originally recorded, this bay had a lime-ash floor.

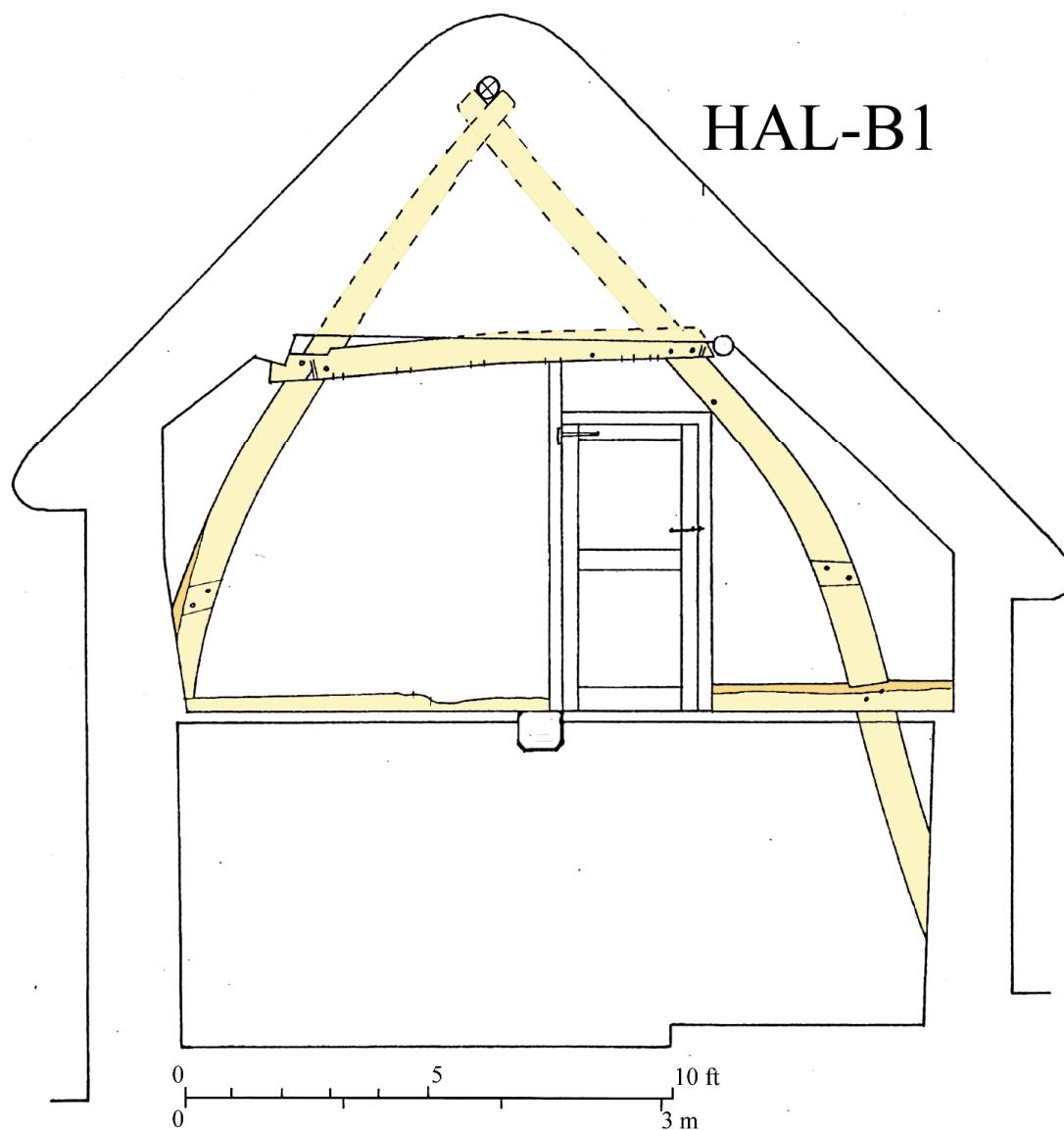


Fig. 3. Section of truss T1 from the east.

LATER PHASES: Bay II has a stone inglenook fireplace, the timber mantel beam with a long tapering pyramid stop. The ceiling and joists are much later in date than those in bay I with small joists, probably of the later seventeenth or eighteenth century. Bay I contains the remains of a smokehood set towards the front of the bay, which has been superseded by a recently rebuilt chimney. The house retains a number of eighteenth-century fittings.

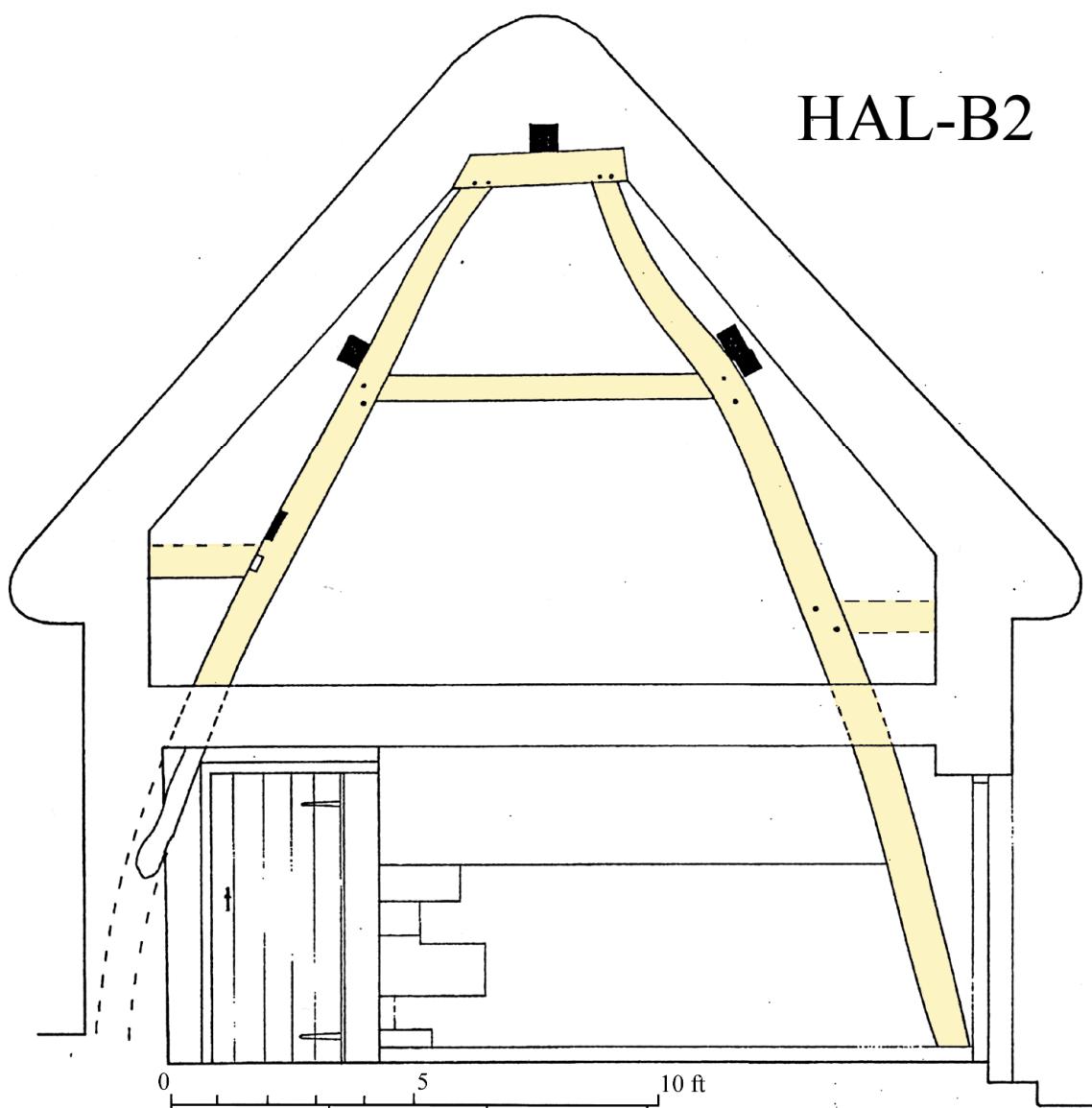


Fig. 3. Section of truss T2 from the west (drawing by Nick Hill).

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Eight samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 17 July 1989. However, no site sequence could be constructed and no date was obtained.

Note: Truss numbers T1 and T2 have been exchanged from those originally used.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
HAL-B01	Front (south) cruck blade truss T2	35 NM	—	—	—	—	—
HAL-B02	Rear cruck blade truss T2	37 NM	—	—	—	—	—
HAL-B03	Rear cruck blade truss T2	68	HS	—	—	—	—
HAL-B04	Front cruck blade truss T2	54	HS	—	—	—	—
HAL-B05	Collar truss T2	26 NM	6	—	—	—	—
HAL-B06	Front purlin bay II	32 NM	4	—	—	—	—
HAL-B07	Rear purlin bay II	69	20	—	—	—	—
HAL-B08	Beam in smoke hood at truss T2	60	—	—	—	—	—

Not dated.