

Report for

**The Old House, 89 Town Green Street, Rothley,
Leicestershire**

Site Code: ROT-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

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Fig. 1. View from the south-west (Photo: Neil Finn)

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Oxbow Books

ROT-A: THE OLD HOUSE, 89 TOWN GREEN STREET, ROTHLEY,
LEICESTERSHIRE

Grid reference: SK 5813 1233 Survey Date: 25 April 1989 By: D. Miles

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Reference: Webster, V. R. (1954), 'Cruck-framed buildings of Leicestershire', *Leicestershire Archaeol Hist Soc Trans*, **30**, 26-58.

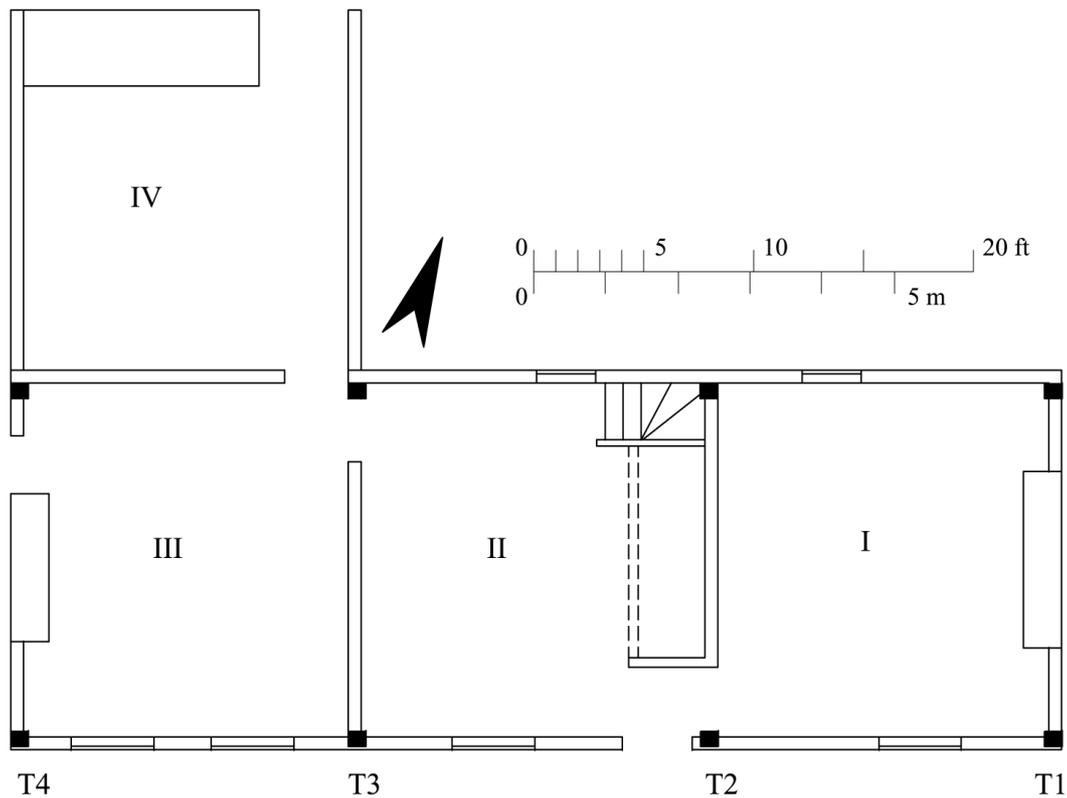


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: The Old House is a relatively intact large three-bay cruck house with four cruck trusses remaining. It is oriented east-west with the road front to the south. The crucks have varying apex types which include a type 'F2' with crossed blades, two type 'A's with high yokes, and a type 'F1'. The eastern bay is most likely to have been the upper or chamber end, while the middle and western bays would have comprised a hall and service. Although sampled for dendrochronology, no dates were obtained. There is little smoke blackening within the roof space, thus suggesting that the original construction date might be in the sixteenth rather than the fifteenth century.

LATER PHASES: Probably in about 1600, a box-framed rear kitchen was constructed behind the western bay and the hall ceiled over, with a stack built between the hall and chamber. Much of the front wall framing was probably replaced at this time, or shortly thereafter. The roof was reconstructed in the mid-20th century, raising the roof line by about a foot above the original ridge line.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: The house is described in Webster (1954). The four cruck trusses are broadly similar, but differ in their apex types, and in the number and positioning of their transverse members. Truss T1 has a stave groove above the 9in square collar. Webster suggests that the superstructure above, comprising two principals extending the cruck blades (apex F2) was a later replacement, but on closer inspection it appears coeval. The crucks are both boxed heart, 9in square. The purlins are carried on the back of packing pieces and the wall plates are supported on the extended ends of the tiebeam, which themselves rest on 10in x 6in wall posts. There is no soot blackening or staining on this truss.

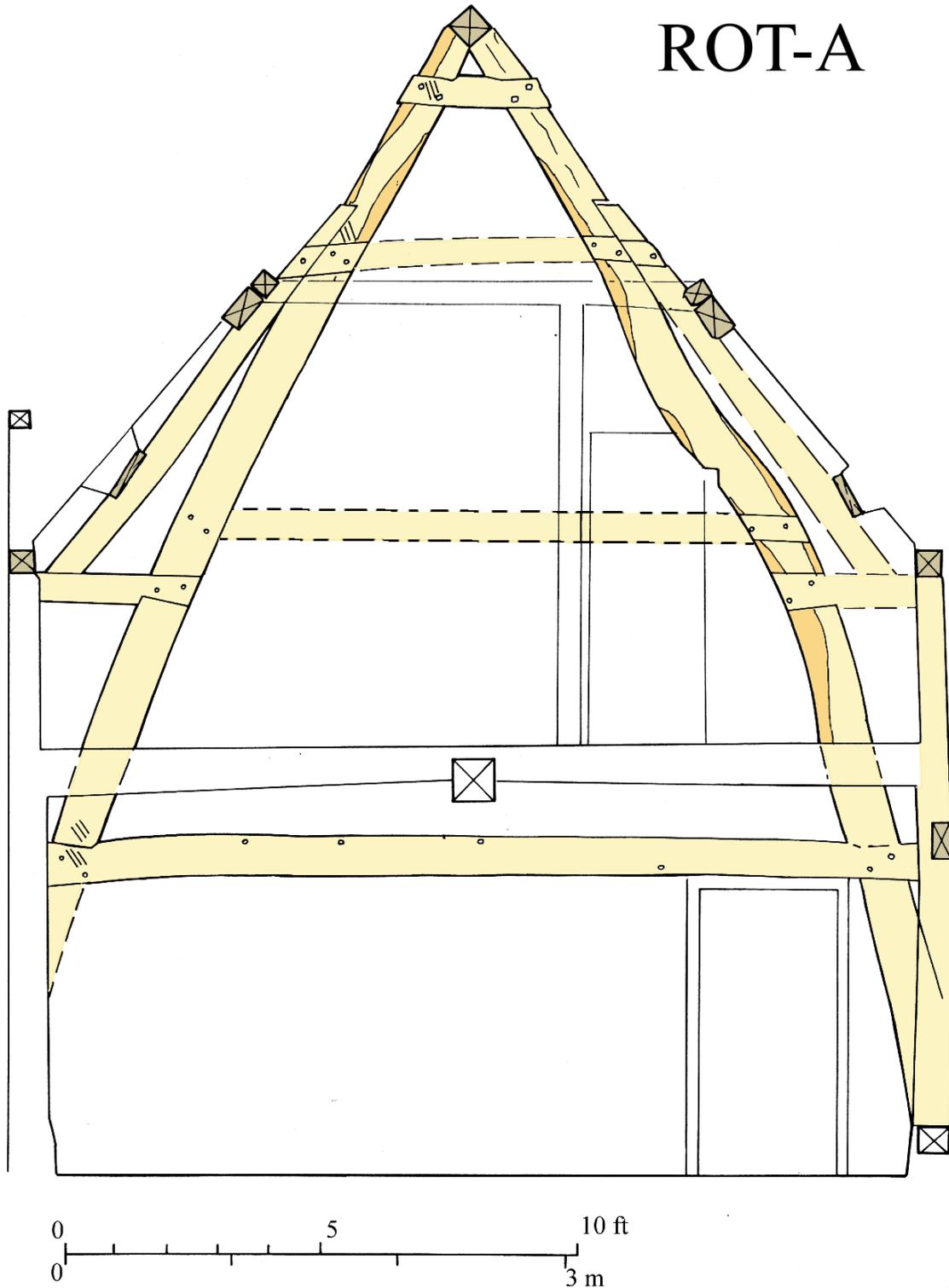


Fig. 3. Section of truss T3 from the east.

Truss T2 has a lower tiebeam, an upper tiebeam that extends to support the wall plates, and a collar, with a yoke just below the diagonally set ridge (apex A). The ridge is scarfed with a thin tenon extending through the scarf into the next bay. Much original wattle and daub infill remains in the truss. The lower tiebeam supports the floor joists which run axially, and are probably original. The wall-plate measures 7 by 5in, and the cruck blades are about 12in square, diminishing to 7in at the top. The crucks are again boxed heart. Truss T3 is similar, but the wall plates are supported by cruck spurs set immediately below a (removed) lower collar. Again the purlins are lapped over the packing pieces which are pegged to the ends of the upper collar. The wind braces are fixed to the backs of the packing pieces. Both collars have been removed, but three peg holes in the top of the tiebeam suggest the likelihood of a partition, as does a peg hole on the bottom of the tiebeam towards the north side. Three stave holes in the underside of the yoke show that the top section of the truss was certainly closed. There is some smoke blackening on the timbers and the remaining daub, but none of it could be considered encrusted. Truss T4 is illustrated in Webster. Its ridge is carried on a short king strut above a saddle (apex F1). No smoke blackening is evident on the inside of the truss.

Although Webster could only find one assembly mark, his assumption that the trusses were numbered from the east has been borne out by further investigation. Clear assembly marks for trusses T2 and T3 are visible on the southern sides of the trusses (eastern faces). An interesting set of marks was also noted on the tiebeam of T1. These ran from the southern stud, northwards for about 2ft 8in where another stud was positioned (now missing). The existing stud has a single stroke and the other stud carries a double stroke with tag; between them come a double stroke mark and a triple stroke with tag, which may relate to a now lost mullioned window. Some wall framing survives along the back wall comprising the centre stud between each cruck, with a single horizontal rail between. A peg hole 2ft 4in below the wall plate on the centre stud of bay I suggests that a window was placed to the west of this member.

LATER PHASES: Webster identified the rear bay as of cruck construction. Although the exposed rear truss superficially appears to be a cruck, it is in reality a box-frame structure, whose principal has an incurved foot. The tiebeam carries a carpenter's mark in the form of two gouged circles. The internal frame is similar, but the principals are straight. An early 17th century date seems likely from the character of the frame. The large rear fireplace was no doubt used for a kitchen or back kitchen.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Formerly part of the Rothley Temple Estate (information from owner); specific documentary sources have not been identified.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Eight core samples were obtained by Robert Howard on 25 April 1989. Only one sample had over 50 rings, and most had less than 40. Because of their shortness, none gave satisfactory matches with the master sequences.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
ROT-A01	Rear cruck blade truss T1	42	16	—	—	—	—
ROT-A02	Front cruck blade truss T1	30 NM	—	—	—	—	—
ROT-A03	Yoke truss T1	18 NM	—	—	—	—	—
ROT-A04	King post truss T1	7 NM	—	—	—	—	—
ROT-A05	Ridge beam	46	11	—	—	—	—
ROT-A06	Yoke truss T2	62	HS	—	—	—	—
ROT-A07	Front cruck blade truss T2	30 NM	—	—	—	—	—
ROT-A08	Rear cruck blade truss T2	35 NM	—	—	—	—	—

Not dated