

Report for  
**72 High Street, Syston, Leicestershire**

*Site Code: SYS-A*

*from*

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View of the house from the south (Photo: Neil Finn)

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***Oxbow Books***

## SYS-A: 72 HIGH STREET, SYSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE

Grid reference: SK 624 1182

Survey Date: 17 July 1996

By: Nat Alcock

## Illustrations:

1. View of the house
2. Ground floor plan
3. Section of truss T2

## Page

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Reference: Hall, L. and Alcock, N. W. (1994) *Fixtures and fittings in dated houses: 1567-1763*, Council for British Archaeology, York.

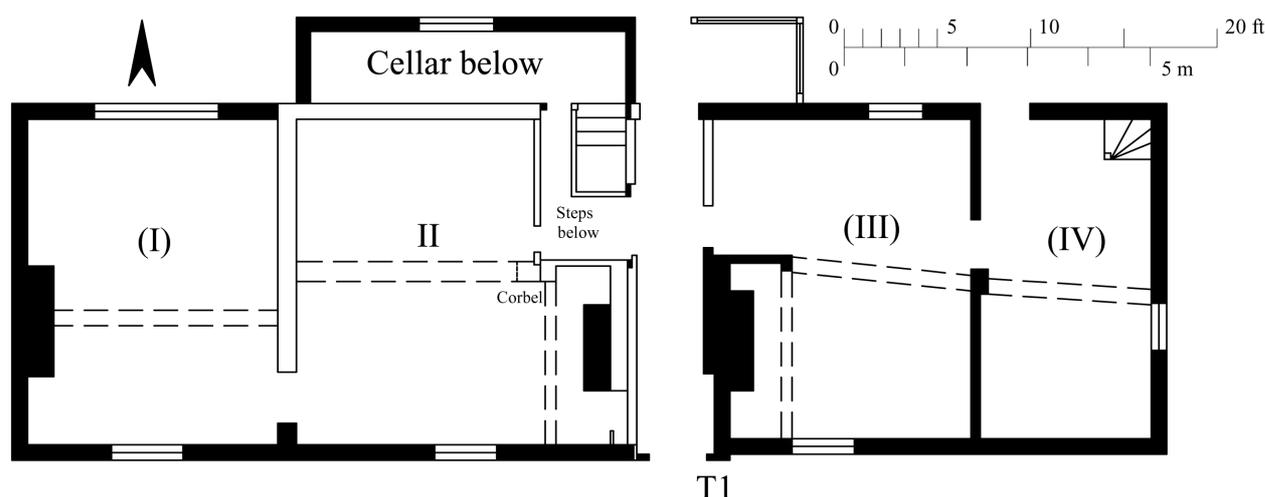


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

### SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The house has a standard three-room and passage plan, but only the cruck truss beside the passage (formerly with saddle apex) is definitely medieval (probably later fifteenth/early sixteenth century by analogy with dated examples). Bay II was presumably the original open hall; it retains an inserted ceiling beam and chimney, probably of the seventeenth century. At this period a rear lean-to was added, over a stone cellar. Bays I and III are later (or totally rebuilt), as is the extra service bay (IV). The house is thatched and the pebble-dashed exterior walls appear to be of brick, apart from the stone rear lean-to.

### STRUCTURAL FEATURES

**PHASE 1:** The cruck truss has large halved blades (11in by 6in) with a slight even curve; their outer surfaces are very irregular. The tiebeam is at eaves level, with two studs remaining below it, as well as the northern cruck stud. The soffit of the N blade also has stave holes for infill. The purlins have been removed, as has most of both packing pieces and the windbraces, which were set in trenches on the backs of the cruck blades; a double trench on the N blade confirms that the roof formerly continued into bay III. The apex was recently burnt off, but one tenon remains for a saddle. This probably carried the ridge piece directly (C-apex), but it might have had a small supporting post (i.e. an F1 apex). Wall studs survive on either side of the front (S) door, with a pegged lintel; these are probably part of the original building.

**LATER PHASES:** In bay II, the axial beam has geometric stops, probably of the early seventeenth century (cf. Hall & Alcock (1994), 37r). The fireplace end is supported on a large chamfered corbel that may remain from a smoke-hood. A stone-walled cellar and lean-to was probably added on the north side at the same period. Stone steps (now disused) descend from within the hall. In bay III, the fireplace appears late, but the lintel is part of a reused cruck blade, with tiebeam halving. The axial beam has a cut

stop. Bay IV was added at some period, with a chamfered but unstopped axial beam. A similar beam in Bay I is the only remaining early feature there; it is not possible to establish whether either Bay I or Bay IV were part of the original house.

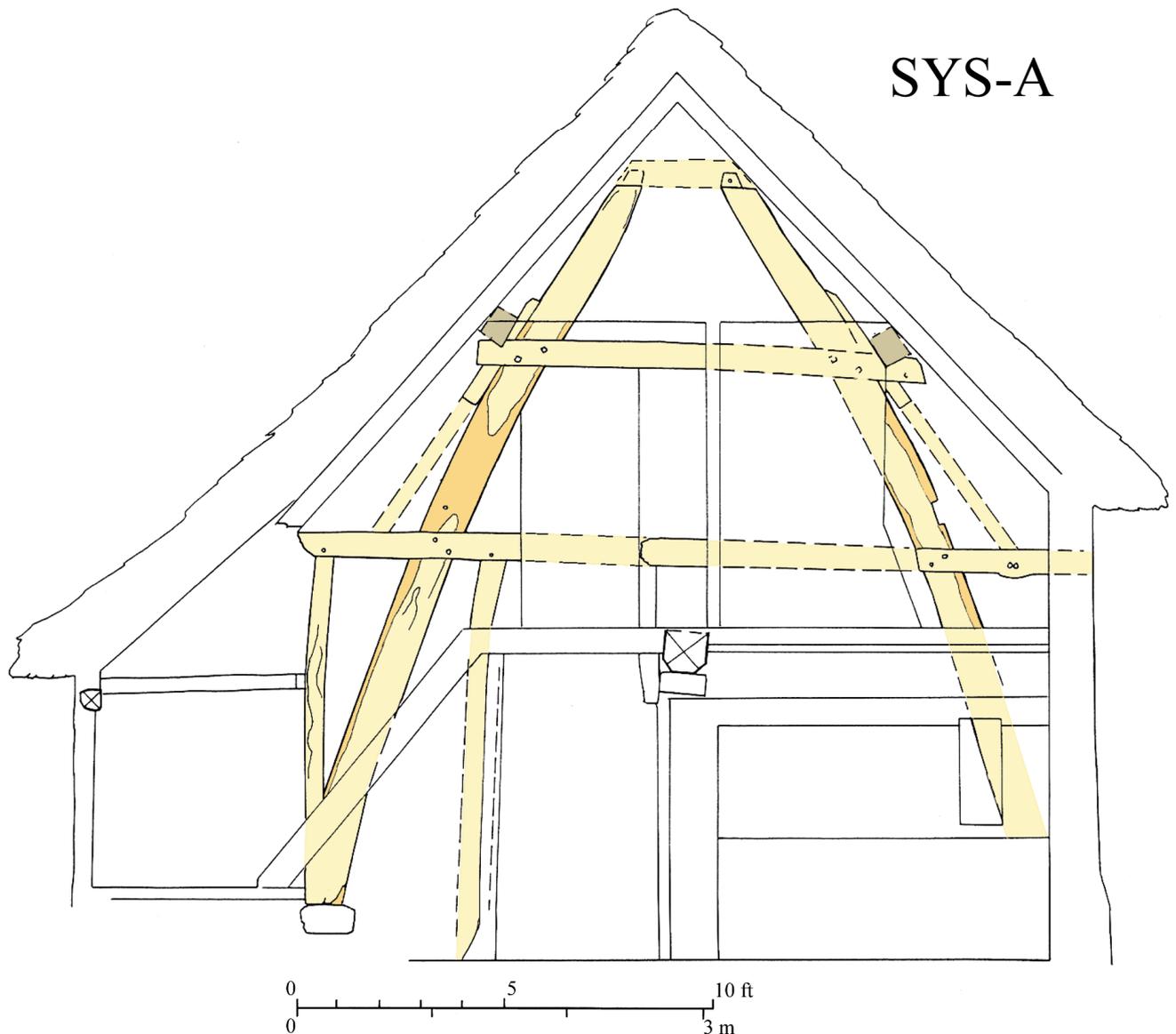


Fig. 3. Section of truss T2 from west.

## DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

*Sampling Comments:* Four samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 3rd June 1990. All proved to be of elm and no date could be obtained.

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

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
SYS-A01	Rear (north) cruck blade truss 1	62	Not oak 7	—	—	—	—
SYS-A02	Tie beam truss 1	30	Not oak —	—	—	—	—
SYS-A03	Collar truss 1	14	Not oak —	—	—	—	—
SYS-A04	Front cruck blade truss 1	73	Not oak 3	—	—	—	—

Not dated