

Report for
The Hollies, Bathley, Nottinghamshire

Site Code: BAT-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View of the house from the east

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Oxbow Books

BAT-A: THE HOLLIES, BATHLEY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Grid reference: SK 7763 5913

Survey Dates: 1970-1996

By: D. Roberts; Nat Alcock

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References: Alcock, N. W. (1982) 'The hall of the Knights Templar at Temple Balsall, West Midlands', *Medieval Archaeol.* **26**, 155-158.

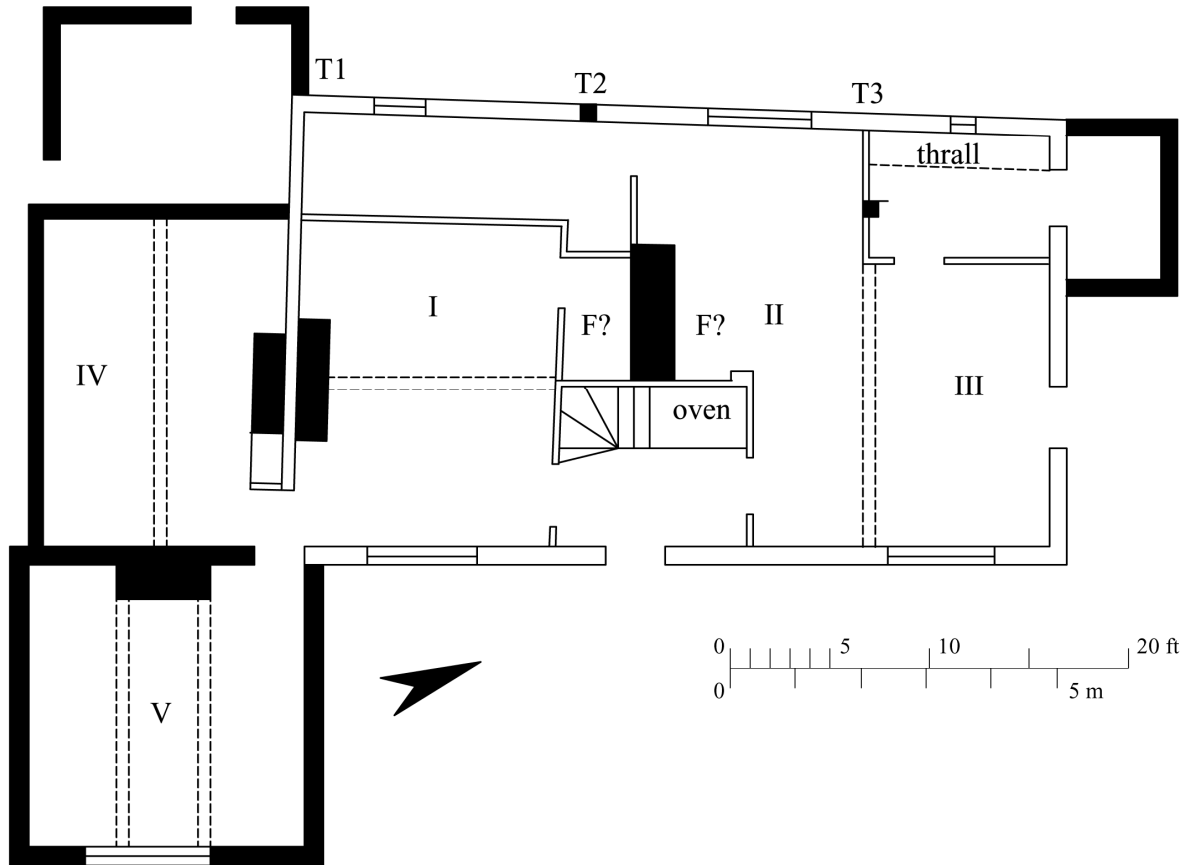


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: The surviving original structure comprises a two-bay open hall with a common rafter roof, a central base-cruck truss and one certain and one presumed aisled end truss. Some evidence also remains of a third bay, probably for service. The construction is relatively unsophisticated, using passing braces and a double tiebeam on the open truss. This phase has been dated to **1294-6**; the felling date of spring 1296 for several common rafters suggests that this was the year of construction.

LATER PHASES: Modernisation took place in stages from the late sixteenth century onwards. These included: flooring the hall; removing the east aisle and walling off the west aisle in the new main room; inserting a lobby-entrance, stair and back-to-back fireplaces; removing the lower part of truss T3 to create a large kitchen with adjoining dairy. An extra bay was added at the south end in the seventeenth century, and this was extended to the east in the early nineteenth century. Possibly c. 1700, the front (east) wall was rebuilt in brick.

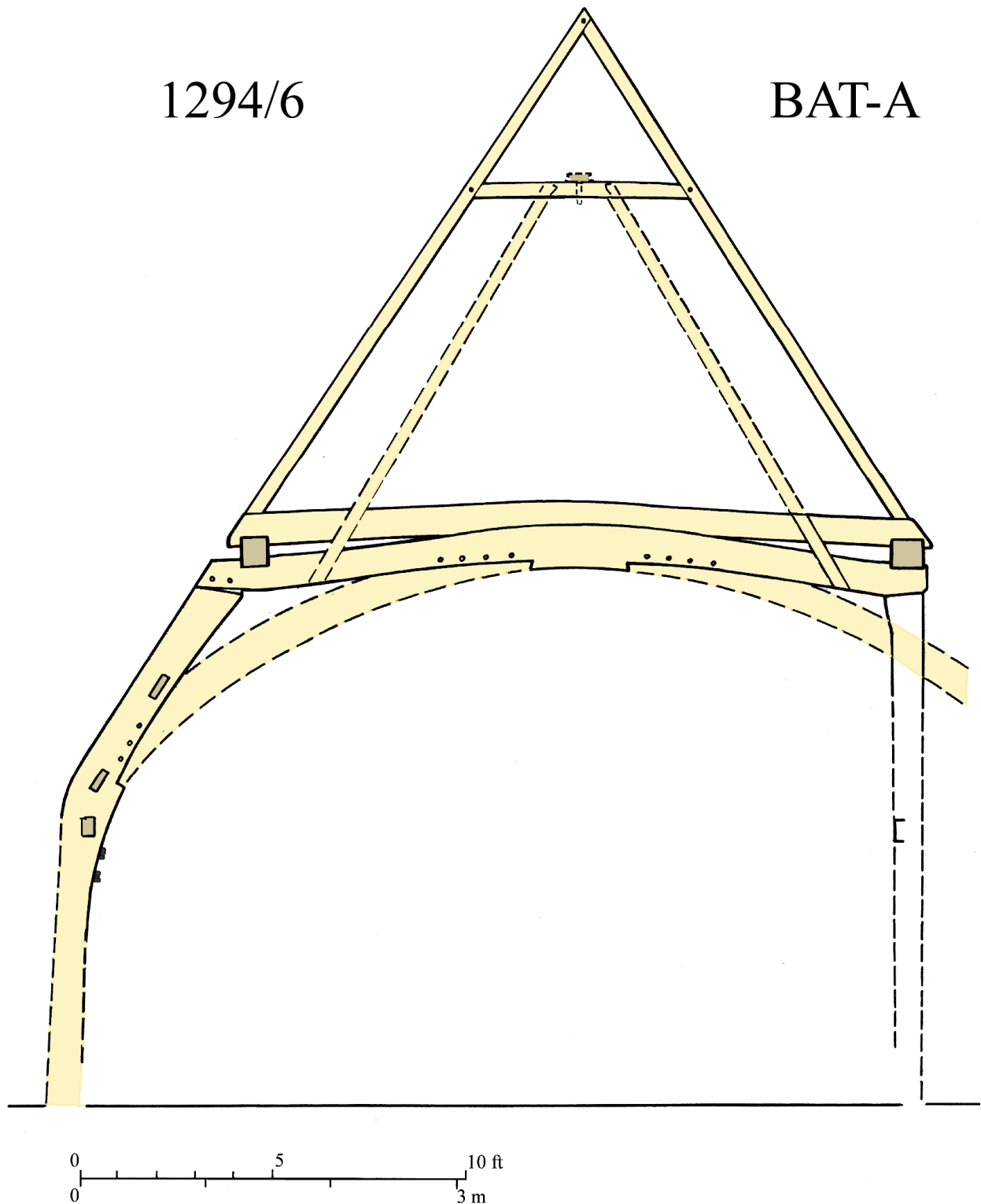


Fig. 3. Section of truss T2.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Two complete bays of the original structure, oriented approximately north-south, are defined by fragments of a closed end truss (T1), a base-cruick truss (T2) (from which one blade was later removed), and a complete aisled closed truss (T3); the arcade plates extend into bay III, but nothing remains of the truss at the end of this bay. The roof above the tiebeams is almost complete over bays I-II and is uniformly soot-blackened. It is of common rafter form, each truss having a single collar apart from that over T1; this has a double collar and mortices for four studs/staves as infilling below the lower collar. The collars have central pegs to secure a collar purlin (removed), and at the surviving end truss (T1), this was trapped between the two collars. D. Roberts suggested that the collar purlin ran *below* the

collars, but it has left no shadow there in the soot blackening, nor do the projecting pegs show any trace of it; measurement of the collar heights suggests that the collar purlin trapped between the double collars of T1 would line up better above rather than below the other collars. The couple above T2 has mortices for the passing braces visible on the underside of its collar. Neither the couple over T3 nor any of those in bay III have survived.

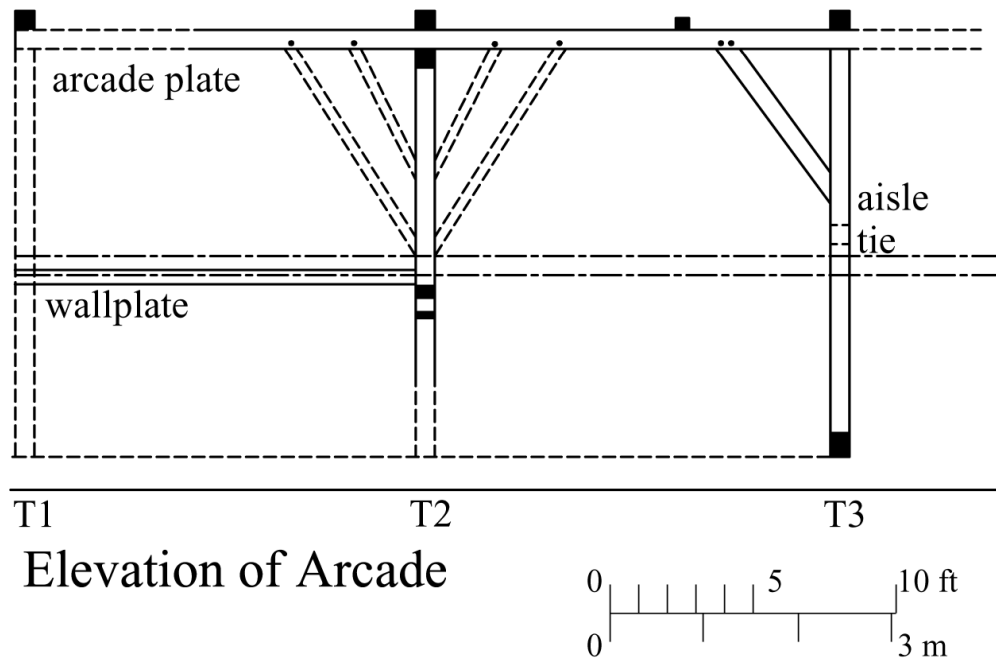


Fig. 4. Long section on the line of the arcade.

Truss T2 is of base-cruck form, with one blade surviving. At eaves level, this carries a simple decoration probably intended to resemble a column capital, comprising a set of two shallow partly fluted bands flanking two rolls, separated by about 4in from a set of three rolls. The blade has mortices for double windbraces, of a primitive V-form (Alcock, 1982), and the joint between the blade and the lower tiebeam has no dovetail or other sophistication, simply consisting of a double-pegged tenon. The doubled tiebeam traps the arcade plates. Mortices remain for long arch-braces spanning between the lower tiebeam and the blades, and the tiebeams carry slots for passing braces which started from the collar and presumably ended below the lower tiebeam or on the arch-braces (one brace fragment remaining on the west side).

Of truss T1, only part of the tiebeam is visible, and it appears that its presumed aisle posts have both been removed. T3 is a closed truss of aisled form with a single tiebeam. The west post is complete, standing on a sandstone block, and carrying straight braces to the arcade plate and the tiebeam; the aisle tie also survives. The brace to the arcade plate is chamfered with a small step stop. A passing brace (removed) started at an open notched lap joint on the tiebeam, crossed the post and the aisle tie, and presumably terminated on the wallpost. Most of the east post is concealed in the front wall (or has been removed), but it appears to be identical in form.

Both arcade plates survive, visible over most of their length. The north plate (Fig. 4) shows mortices for the double windbraces from the base cruck, as well as the surviving brace from T3 (the plate is not visible at T1); no scarf joint can be seen. The pegging in the south plate appears to follow the same pattern. A flying tiebeam in bay II has the same chamfer stop as the adjacent brace and is possibly original, perhaps associated with a smoke louvre. The west wallplate in bay I survives, though not enough is visible to establish the pattern of wall framing.

It has been suggested that the house was originally single-aisled, but the evidence is strongly against this: (i) the pegging of the east arcade plate appears to correspond to that of the west plate; (ii) the arch-brace mortices (Fig. 3) are identical on each side, although a differently shaped brace would be

expected on the east side if it terminated on the post. With two aisles, the original internal width was about 26ft (present width 21ft 6in); bays I and II are both 14ft 6in long (truss centre-to-centre).

LATER PHASES: Modernisation took place in stages, although not all the phases can be individually dated. Probably in the first major modernisation stage, the front (east) base-cruck blade and aisle was removed, and the wall reframed on the line of the arcade plate; this would have improved the lighting of the first floor rooms. Part of the new wall post of the open truss was retained when the front wall was replaced in brick (probably datable to around 1700 from the character of the bricks). In bay I, the inserted ceiling beam has shallow step stops; this, with the overall re-planning, suggests a date of c. 1600. The stops correspond to the present position of the inserted stair, which presumably had back-to-back fireplaces behind it, although most of the evidence for these has been removed (apart from what appears to be the redundant masonry of its chimney breast); they probably had a light fire hood rather than a brick stack. The position of the beam suggests that the rear aisle was walled off, to provide a rear service room.

In bays II-III, the modernisation took a different form. The lower part of truss 3 has been replaced by a transverse ceiling beam with scroll stops. This provided a relatively large room, probably used as the kitchen; there was a brick oven under the staircase (removed relatively recently), served from its fireplace. In contrast to bay I, bay II is not divided from the rear aisle. In bay III, a service room is partitioned off; this was used as a dairy in the nineteenth century with brick thralls, and it may well have had the same function earlier.

South of the hall, a timber-framed bay (IV) was added in the sixteenth-seventeenth century, possibly at the same time as the improvements to the hall; this perhaps served as an unheated parlour; it apparently had a chimney inserted against its south wall, later superseded by a fireplace, back-to-back with one inserted into the hall. In the early nineteenth century, a brick bay (V) was added to the east of bay IV; this has re-used timbers (wallposts?) as ceiling beams. Small extensions to the north and south west are probably late nineteenth century.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY (information from Dr F. A. Barnes)

The house was a freehold farm of about 50 acres in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. No direct medieval identification can be made but an association is suggested with the de Bathley family, the principal family in the village in the thirteenth century; if correct, the builder would have been either Thomas de Bathley (son of William who held a knight's fee in 1263) or his son William (fl. 1295-1311). The absence of any later medieval modernisation, such as the addition of a parlour cross-wing, suggests that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the house may have been held by tenant farmers.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: 7 samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 30 Nov 1989, and a further 9 samples on 11 April 1995.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
BAT-A01	Rear (W) base cruck blade	95	HS	1186	1280	1280	1
BAT-A02	Lower tie base cruck truss (T2)	88	—	1153	—	1240	1
BAT-A03	Brace rear post (T3) to arcade plate	101	—	1157	—	1257	1
BAT-A04	Rear main post aisled truss (T3)	90	27C	1206	1268	1295	1
BAT-A05	Rear arcade plate aisled to base cruck	84	HS	1186	1268	1269	1
BAT-A06	Brace rear post to tie, aisled truss (T3)	145	38C	1150	1256	1294	1
BAT-A07	Tie beam aisled truss (T3)	120	HS	1152	1271	1271	1
BAT-A08	Common rafter 2 (front)	108	24C	1189	1272	1296	1

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
BAT-A09	Common rafter 3 (front)	66	20C	1231	1276	1296	1
BAT-A10	Common rafter 1 (rear)	92	22C	1205	1274	1296	1
BAT-A11	Common rafter 2 (rear)	132	24C	1165	1272	1296	1
BAT-A12	Wallplate (front)	99	20	1191	1269	1289	1
BAT-A13	Tie (moved; in bathrom)	134	19	1156	1270	1289	1
BAT-A14	Upper tie, base cruck truss (T2)	110	—	1148	—	1257	1
BAT-A15	Hallway bridging beam	57	10	—	—	—	
BAT-A16	Bedroom bridging beam	67	08	—	—	—	

Site sequence: (composed of samples 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14), 149 rings long dated 1148–1296 with *t*-values of 12.2 (EM80887), 5.2 (HULL)

Felling dates: (samples 4, 6, 8-11 with last dated rings complete to bark), **1294-1296**; Spring growth was present on samples 8-11.

The dating of this house was partially funded by the Planning and Transportation Department of the Nottinghamshire County Council.