

Report for  
**Kingsholm, East Hagbourne, Oxfordshire**

*Site Code: DID-B*

*from*

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

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Fig. 1. View of the house from the north.

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***Oxbow Books***

DID-B: KINGSHOLM, EAST HAGBOURNE, OXFORDSHIRE

Grid reference: SU 5286 8831

Survey Date: 1 July 1988

By: D. Miles

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Reference: Survey by Ascough & Associates of Solihull (date unknown), in owners possession.



Fig. 2. View from the east, showing cruck T1 incorporated into the later wing.

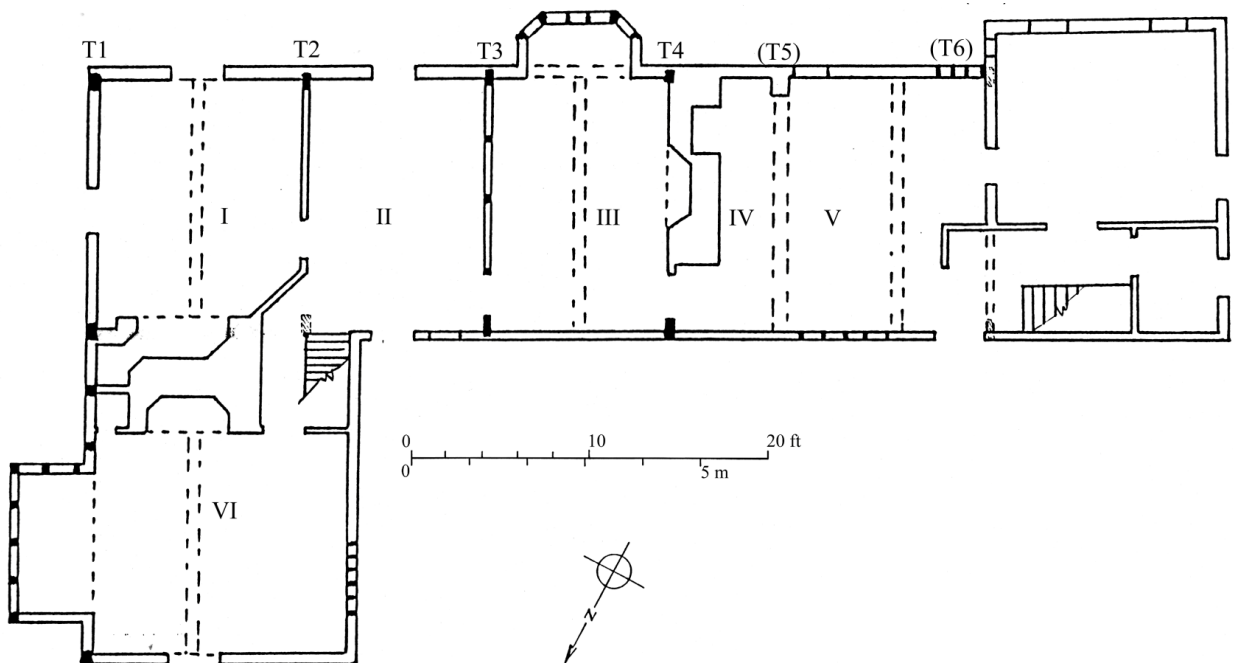


Fig. 3. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

#### SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: Kingsholm, East Hagbourne, is a substantial cruck-framed house set back from and parallel to the road. It has been dated by dendrochronology with a felling date range of **1549-60**. The original house

was probably of five bays, although evidence for the fifth is somewhat inconclusive and it would make the house unusually long. Bay II appears to have been an open hall, an interesting feature considering the late date of the house. This use is clearly evidenced by the heavily soot-blackening on the rafters and the wattle-and-daub panel in the apex of truss T3; this bay also has evidence for the presence of a louvre.

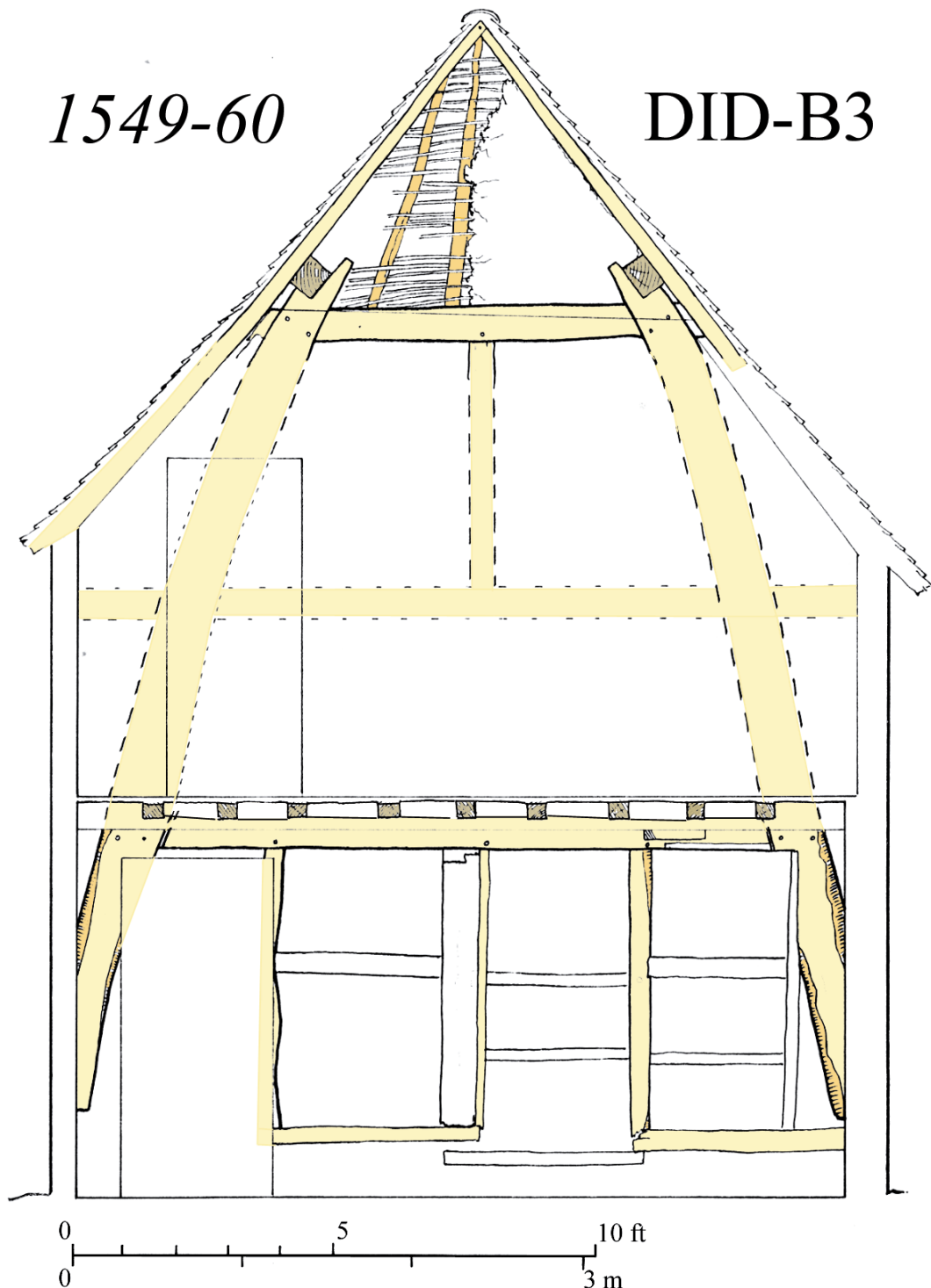


Fig. 4(a). Section of truss T3.

The rafters in bay III are clean, and although the rafters are missing altogether in bay I, the eastern side of truss 2 is equally clean, indicating the hall did not extend beyond bay II. Bays I and III were probably floored over initially; the bay III joists are probably original, running from truss to truss where they lodge on the lower tiebeams. No cruck timbers are now visible in truss T5, though they have been recorded there; a final cruck would have been lost in the nineteenth century rebuilding of that end. Whether original or added in the later 16th century, bay V can be interpreted as a kitchen, served by a



chimney/smoke bay in bay IV. Only cruck truss T1 is visible from ground to apex. However it is clear that all the trusses have type 'W' apexes, the blades terminating just above the collar, with only common rafters above.

PHASE 2: Sometime in the mid-seventeenth century, judging from its stylistic features, a timber-framed crosswing was built with two rooms on each floor. This incorporated bay I, extending it northwards towards the road. It is of good quality, obviously serving as a second parlour with chamber over. The wing is divided by a large chimney stack which has its own short chimney bay. The open hall was probably floored over at this time, giving continuous access throughout the first floor. A staircase was provided in the crosswing chimney bay, presumably with another in the main range.

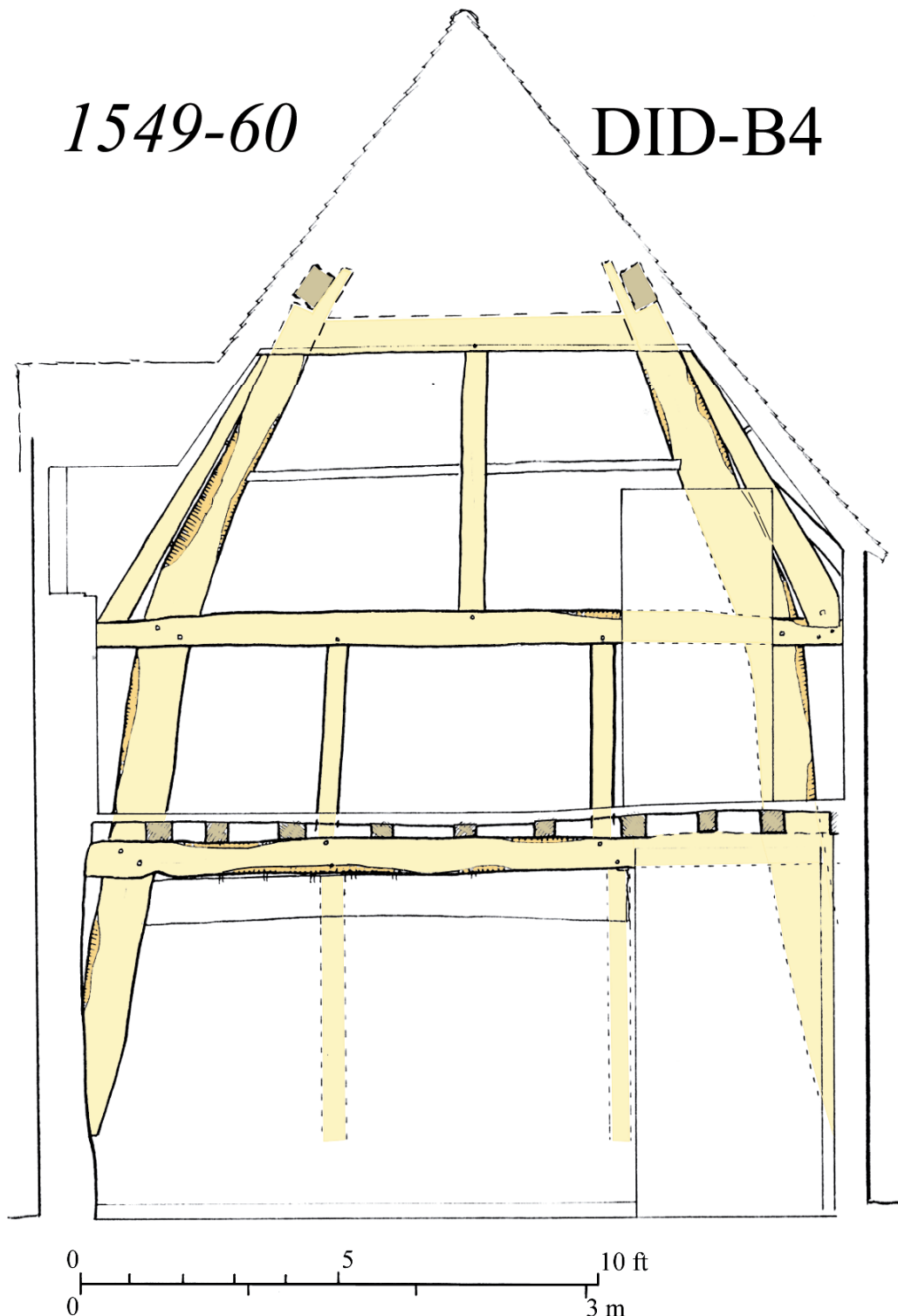


Fig. 4(b). Section of truss T4.

PHASE 3: The last main phase of construction is of the mid to late nineteenth century and consists of a brick-built crosswing at the western end of the house. The house has also received embellishments and extensions in the form of porches and bay windows. The front and rear porches are reused from a high quality sixteenth century building; they are very elaborately carved with inscriptions over the door heads: HK 1591.

### STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: CRUCK RANGE: Externally, the walls of this part of the house consist of large-panel timber-framing infilled with brickwork, most of it in herringbone pattern and all of it probably replacing wattle and daub. Internally, the cruck trusses all have type 'W' apexes. They all measure about 13 by 6-7in, reducing to about 9 by 5in at collar level. The internal framing of the trusses vary somewhat. Trusses T1, T4 and possibly T3 and T5, all have upper and lower tiebeams, but truss T2 has an upper and lower collar with cruck spurs to engage the cruck studs. The centre portions of trusses T3 and T5 are not clearly visible, however the Ascough survey shows their features. Immediately below the collars, all the trusses have single struts. Trusses T1 and T4 have two struts between the two tiebeams, but truss T2 has evidence for three (also possibly T5). Truss T3 has three studs below the lower tiebeam, but T4 had only two.

Most of the timber used in the cruck trusses is heart-sawn with the pith used on the face or eastern side of the trusses. All ties and collars are jointed with half-lapped dovetailed joints, all with the face side eastwards. No assembly marks are visible. The arrangement of the cruck studs is clear on the northern sides of trusses T1 and T2. Here the upper and lower tiebeams, and the cruck spur (T2), are tenoned into cruck studs which continued at least an inch above the higher horizontal member to support the (removed) wall-plates.

The roof consists of 4 by 3in elm rafters reducing to 2in at the top where they are paired and bridled; generally seven pairs are used in each 12ft bay. There is no ridge, but purlins measuring an average of 6 by 8in sit in notches on the outer edges of the cruck blades some inches above the collars. The purlins retain evidence for wind bracing. These are scarfed immediately beyond truss T2 in bay II with simple bridled scarfs no more than 6in long.

The lower sections of the internal wall frames have largely been replaced by brick nogging with bonding timbers, although several wattle and daub panels remain. The only one above collar level is in truss T3. This is heavily soot encrusted on the side facing bay II. In bay II, three pegs protrude through the rafters a foot down from the ridge; these probably indicate the position of a smoke louvre. The floor joists in bay III measure 5in high by 4 to 6in broad, the wider ones tending to be of elm.

The survey by Ascough & Associates of Solihull indicates the probable presence of a cruck at T5. It is possible that bay V was also of the cruck phase and that truss T6 was initially the end cruck of the house, lost in the nineteenth century rebuilding of that end, though this would make the house of exceptional length. It is significant, however, that bay IV is a short bay, and that bay V is in line with bays I to III, and the same length as bay I. Moreover, the Ascough survey shows on their ground floor plan '*beam soffit twisted...? old framing member*' at truss T6 which might be the remains of the lower tiebeam of a sixth cruck. All this evidence is now concealed.

PHASE 2: CROSSWING: This wing comprises one room built over and incorporating the walls of bay I, with a chimney bay and another bay (VI) built to the front or north. The frames have principal posts at truss positions with horizontal girding timbers at first floor level, and secondary studs and middle rails dividing the whole up into square panels about 3 foot across. Up-braces run from some of the principal posts to the wall plates and are generally straight although some are slightly convex. The whole structure is infilled with brickwork in herringbone fashion, probably of the eighteenth century. Above are two now disused attic rooms. The crosswing as well as much of the original part of the house, retains much oak panelling and many early doors (although some may be reset).

## DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

*Sampling Comments:* Seven samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard, one being an additional sample from B03 to identify its sapwood length. Crucks from trusses 1 to 4 were sampled and at least one sample from each of trusses 2, 3 and 4 was dated.

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

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
DID-B01	Cruck blade truss 4 south side	75 + 1NM	03 + 1NM	1451	1522	1525	1
DID-B02	Cruck blade truss 4 north side	173 + 4NM	04 + 4NM	1355	1523	1527	1
DID-B03	Cruck blade truss 3 south side	97	—	1395	—	1491	1
DID-B04	Cruck blade truss 2 south side	153 + 2NM	07 + 2NM	—	—	—	—
DID-B05	Cruck blade truss 2 north side	150	23	1399	1525	1548	1
DID-B06	Cruck blade truss 1 south side	75	HS	—	—	—	—
DID-B07	Sapwood piece of sample DID-B03	40	20	1497	1516	1536	1
Average date of last heartwood ring					1522		

Site sequence: (samples 1, 2, 3, 5), 194 rings long dated 1355–1548 with  $t$ -values, 6.9(MC10), 5.7(E.MID). Sample 7 matches with this sequence ( $t = 5.2$ ); it proved not to overlap with sample 3, but provides a minimum sapwood estimate for this sample.

Felling date range: 1549-1563 (previously 1548–1562). OxCal estimated felling date range: **1549-60**.