

Report for
**Inglenook/Penny Green, East Hendred,
Oxfordshire**

Site Code: EAH-B

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

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Fig. 1. View of the house from the east (Photo: D. Clark)

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Oxbow Books

EAH-B: INGLENOOK/PENNY GREEN, EAST HENDRED, OXFORDSHIRE

Grid reference: SU 4591 8885 Survey Date: 1st August 1988 By: D. Miles

<i>Illustrations:</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. View of the house	1
2. Ground floor plan	2
3. Section of truss T3	3

Reference: Currie, C. R. J. (1976) 'Smaller domestic architecture in North Berkshire, c 1300 - c 1650', Oxford, D. Phil thesis.

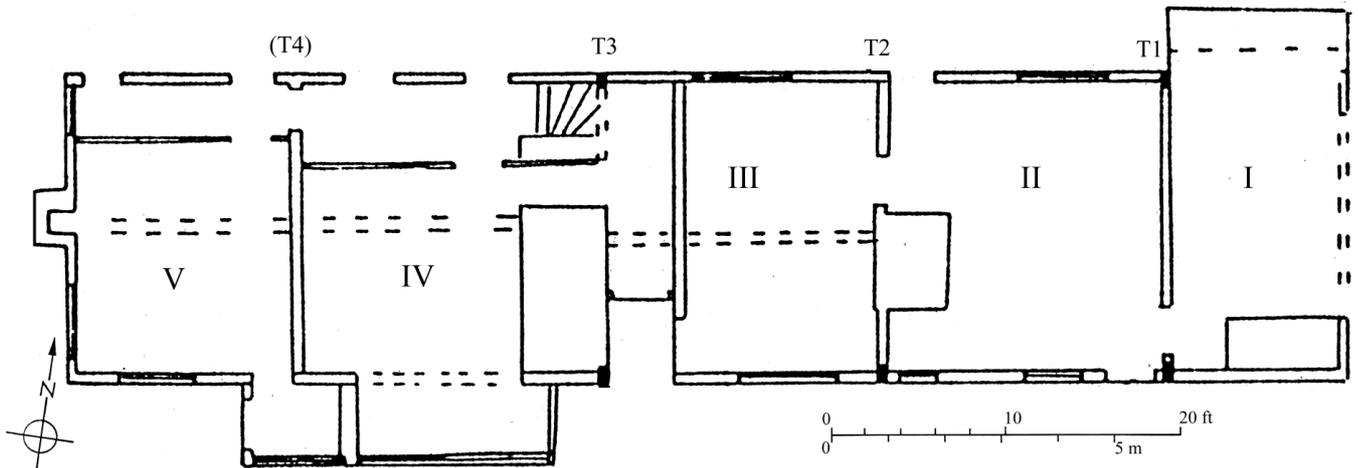


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering (after Currie (1976)).

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: Inglenook and Penny Green are two halves of a long cruck range which was divided, probably in the nineteenth century. The original house consisted of three cruck bays (II-IV), of which three of the four cruck trusses still remain, with type 'E' apexes. Bay II is suggested as the chamber, although it was not partitioned off above the collar of T2. Bays III and IV would have been a two-bayed hall, with truss T3 being an open truss with a low 'mantel' beam. In this instance, the open hearth must have been to the west of T3, partly divided from the first hall bay (III) by infill in truss T3 (certainly above the collar and possibly between tiebeam and collar). Thus the central bay would have served for living, containing the smoke louvre, with the last bay as the service and cooking end. This layout has been suggested by the smoke distribution in the roof space in which the timbers in bays II and III are smoke blackened but not encrusted. On the west side of T3 however, soot was found to be heavily encrusted on both the timbers as well as the wattle and daub panel. Dendrochronology has failed to date the building but it could well be of the mid-fifteenth century on stylistic grounds by comparison with two cruck houses at Mapledurham dated 1458 (MDM-C) and 1471/2 (X-MD4).

LATER PHASES: Joists for an early inserted floor in bay IV are lodged on the tiebeam of T3. The house was extended at both ends, probably in the seventeenth century, bay I being built to the east, while bay IV was reconstructed and extended into bay V.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Although Currie (1976) describes the crucks as being of poor quality, the trusses were found on close examination to be of good quality, of consistent curvature and with uniform apexes. T3 in particular is well formed, with a 2in chamfer on the crucks and the underside of the tiebeam, and with a 1in chamfer above. This however is only on the upper (eastern) face. The crucks have a type 'E' apex (joined on a diagonal line); unusually, the square-set ridge rests directly on top of the blades. There is no evidence for arch braces in any of the trusses. The purlins are trenched into the back of short packing pieces which are morticed into the cruck spurs. The latter are lap-dovetailed into the side of the cruck blades and were supported by cruck studs. The wall plates sit in halvings on the cruck spurs.

Most of the timbers are of elm, including the cruck spurs, purlins, packing pieces, ties and rafters. The cruck blades however are all oak. The rafters measure 4 by 2½in, the cruck blades are 7in thick, and the purlins are 9 by 6in. One wind-brace remains in situ behind the stack adjacent to T3. It measures 8 by 2in thick and is slightly curved.

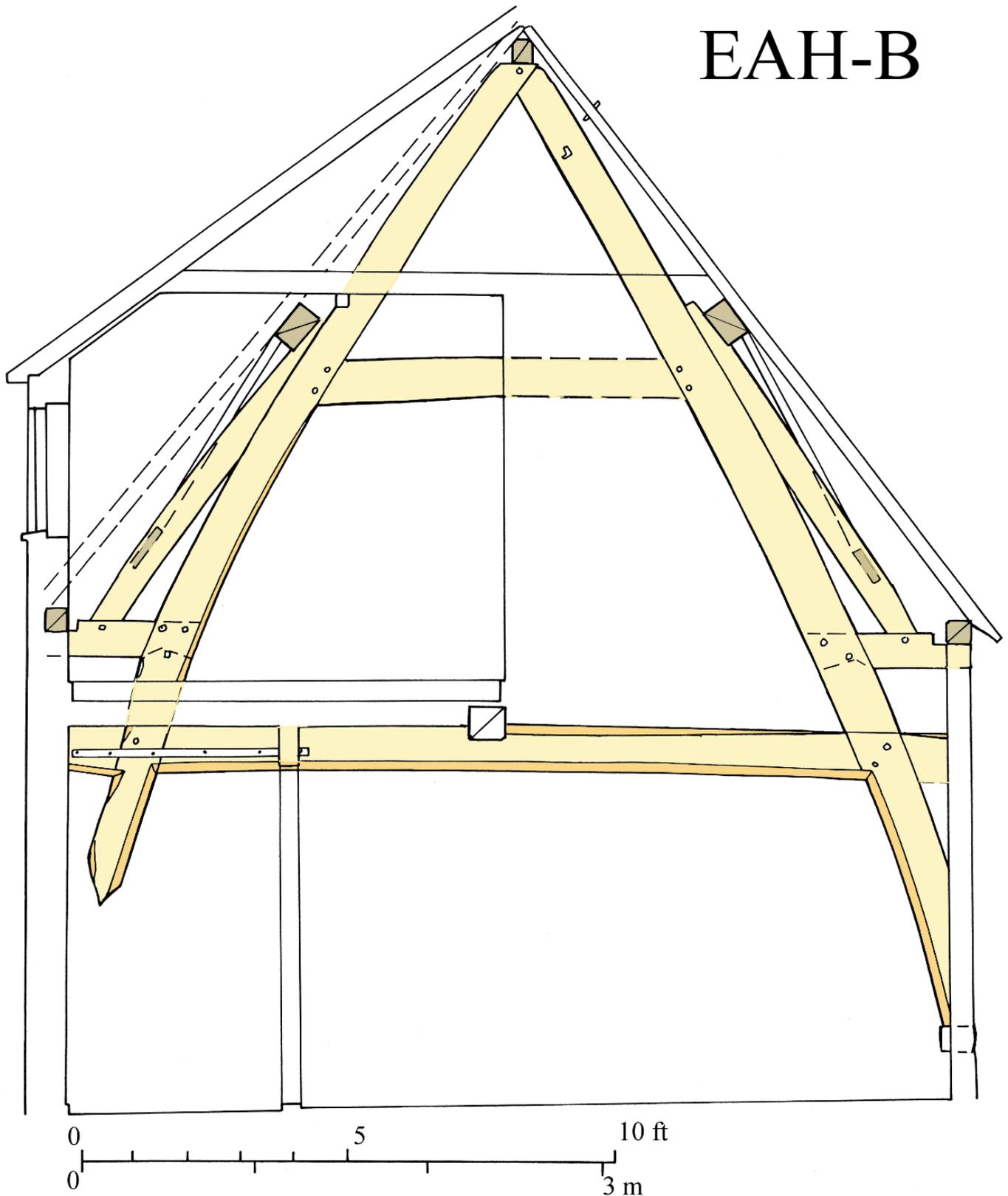


Fig. 3. Section of truss T3 from the east.

The heavy soot encrustation on the western side of truss T3, would lead to the expectation of a louvre located in bay IV. However, in reality it was situated in bay III, adjacent to T3. The eastern face of the north blade has a hinge pin about 2ft below the ridge, which may have held a bar or stay for operating the louvre. Also, the east face of the south blade of T3 is weathered, as is the south face of the ridge above this. Peg holes in rafters on the north slope near to the ridge mark the position of the baseplate of the louvre. This off-centre louvre is almost identical in position to that at MDM-B (dated 1458), a house which also had an open truss, with a tiebeam, which was evidently closed between the tiebeam and the apex. A small louvre was present on the service side of the truss, while a larger, off-centre louvre was positioned on the hall side of the truss, as at EAH-B. Furthermore, the service bay at Mapledurham was floored over very early, as also at EAH-B. The similarity of the two examples is striking.

The positioning of the soot-blackening described here is inconsistent with this in Currie (1976), 198, who reports that the soffit of the tiebeam of T3 was soot blackened, but that the west face was not.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

At enclosure in 1802, this house was a King's Manor copyholding in the tenure of Ambrose Darling, associated with a quarter-acre croft.¹ The holding can be traced back to 1693 in the court books:²

Date	Admission	From	Description	Rent
1693	Mary White for life then Richard White her husband	John Short	Messuage and ¼ acre in Catt Street, East Hendred in possession [occupation] of Edward Mills, previously two tenements,	1s and heriot
1720	Margaret King, wife of Thomas King of Holecomb in Oxon	Mary White widow of Richard White	Messuage and ¼ acre in Catt Street, East Hendred	1s and heriot
1724	Elizabeth Darling, wife of William Darling and later of Richard Holmes	Thomas and Margaret King	Messuage and ¼ acre in Cat Street, East Hendred	1s and heriot
1766	Ambrose Darling	Death Elizabeth (Darling) Holmes	One messuage or tenement and ¼ acre in Catstreet, East Hendred	1s and heriot

¹ Berkshire Record Office, D/P66/26B

² Berkshire Record Office, D/EX 28/M1. We thank Catherine Lorigan for examining these records.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Six samples from all existing cruck blades were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 1 August 1988. The sapwood on sample 3 is estimated to be almost complete. Although samples EAH-B-2, 3 and 5 matched each other, the sequence could not be dated conclusively. A match (Nottingham University Tree-Ring Dating Laboratory Initial Report) giving a tentative felling date of c.1448 is on re-evaluation not supported by satisfactory t-values, and has been discarded.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
EAH-B01	Cruck blade truss T3 north side	59	03	—	—	—	—
EAH-B02	Cruck blade truss T3 south side	40 + 15NM	04+15NM	—	—	—	—
EAH-B03	Cruck blade truss T2 north side	96	26	—	—	—	—
EAH-B04	Cruck blade truss T1 south side	NM	—	—	—	—	—
EAH-B05	Cruck blade truss T1 north side	70	11	—	—	—	—
EAH-B06	Cruck blade truss T2 south side	23 NM	—	—	—	—	—
Not dated							