

Report and Documentary History for
Hopkins, Wyre Lane, Long Marston, Warwickshire

Site Code: LNG-M

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View from the south.

© *N W Alcock and contributors 2012. Copyright in this document is retained under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, with all rights reserved including publication. Copyright in illustrations is reserved to the original copyright holder.*

Oxbow Books

LNG-M: HOPKINS, WYRE LANE, LONG MARSTON

Grid reference: SP 1554 4865 Survey dates: 1990-6

By: N. Cooper; N. W. Alcock

Illustrations:

	<i>Page</i>
1. View from the south	1
2. Ground floor plan	2
3. Section of truss T2	3
4. Details: Crown post and louvre	3
5. Split tiebeam of truss T2	4

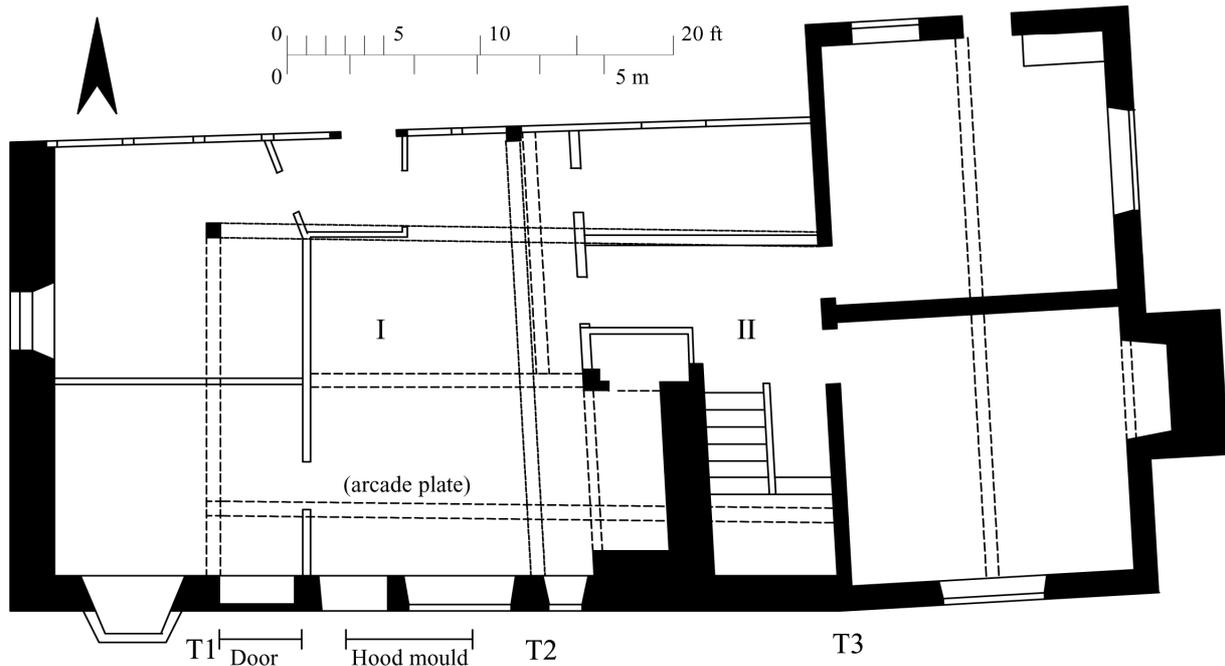


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

PHASE 1: The house stands away from the main village street, facing south. The original structure consists of a two-bay hall with a central base-cruck truss and aisled end trusses, which has been tree-ring-dated to 1339/40. It possibly had a cross-passage in the position of the later stair. The upper roof structure includes a four-way braced crown post. The original house did not extend to the west beyond truss 1, and it probably had a crosswing on the site of the later east wing. Sooting at the junction with the hall and the wing's re-used soot-blackened rafters suggest that this wing may have been a kitchen.

LATER PHASES: A post inserted half way along bay II at first floor level (supporting a tiebeam) appears to be part of a late medieval division, pre-dating the later internal partitioning. The wing has a queen-post roof and perhaps dates from around 1500. The main modernisation of the hall took place in the early seventeenth century, with the insertion of the fireplace and ceiling, and the partitioning of ground and first floor; a number of original door frames and doors survive. Probably at this date also, a tall chimney was constructed for the wing. The replacement of most of the exterior walls in stone with mullioned windows may be of the same date, but could be rather later. A new stair was added in about 1700. In the early to mid-eighteenth century, the walls of the wing were rebuilt in brick.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: The original hall was approximately 33ft long by 25ft wide (rather irregular in shape), and measures 13ft 8in between the arcade plates. Original framing survived until recently (concealed) in the

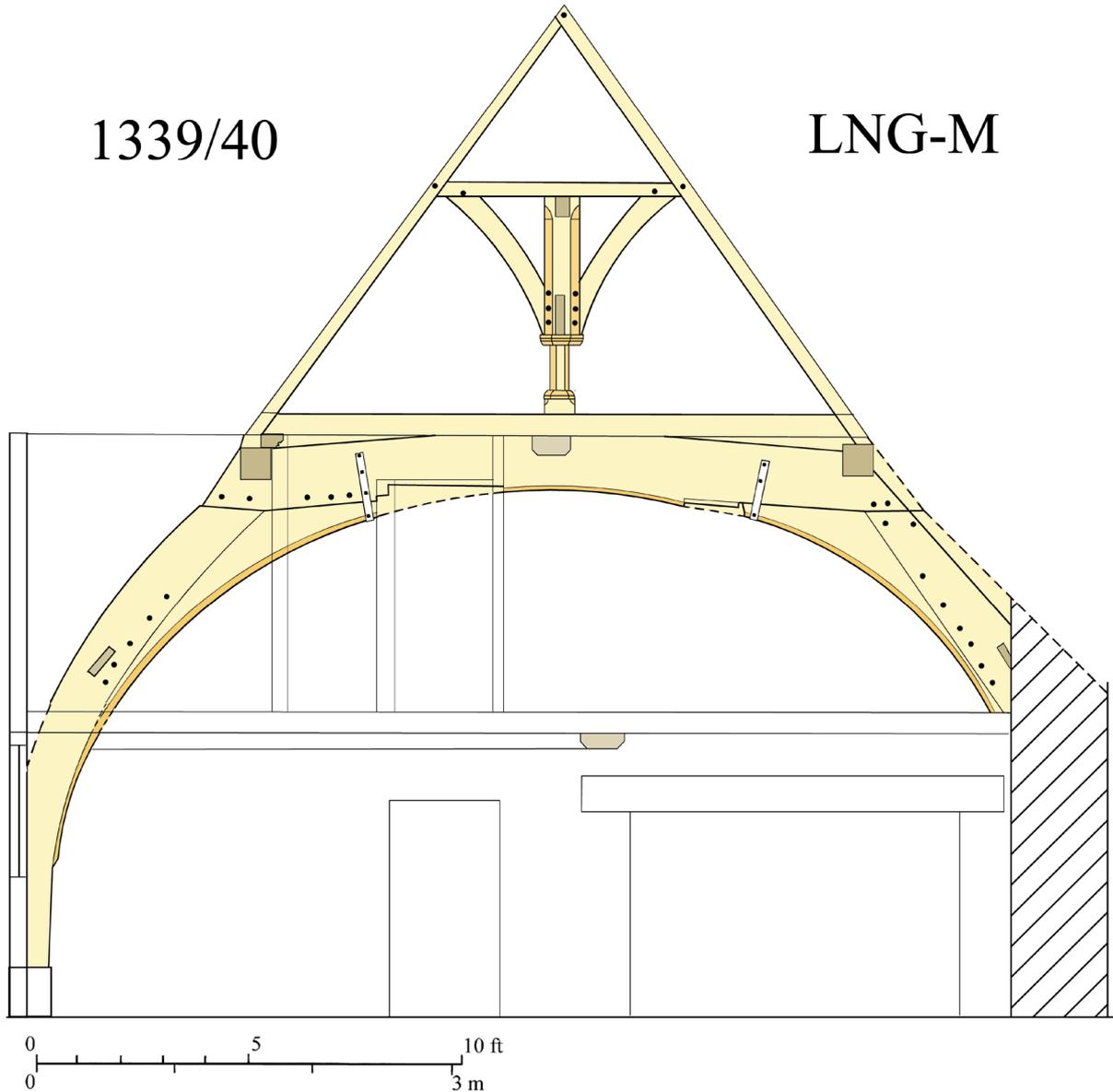
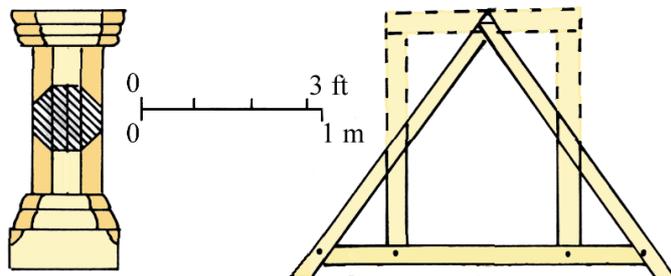


Fig. 3. Section of Truss T2. The cornice is shown, though it only survives on the far side of this truss.



Crown post (x4)

Fig. 4. Crown post detail and suggested louvre structure.

rear hall wall (now partly replaced/restored). Truss T1 is set 8ft within the present west wall. It includes two 9in square aisle posts; these lean towards the east (the tops displaced by about 8in) and the lower end of the southern post has been removed. The northern post (but not apparently the southern one) has an open notched-lap halving for a down-brace across the aisle. The slightly curved square-section arcade braces have small chamfers with small step stops at the top and pyramid stops at the base. The west sides of the posts are heavily weathered and the arcade plates terminate 8in to the west of the posts, indicating that this was the original end of the house. The mid-rail joining the posts survives, with a series of mortices for studs in its soffit. The tiebeam and upper roof were replaced in the seventeenth century.

Truss T2 is of base-cruck form (Fig. 3). Its main tiebeam carries either a complete upper tiebeam, or clasp pieces locating the arcade plates (mostly concealed in the ceiling). The north side blade survives almost complete, but the other has been removed below first floor level, presumably when the front wall was replaced in stone. The truss is chamfered in a smooth curve up the lower part of the blade, the arch-braces, and across the collar. The blades and braces are halved timbers, with the waney side facing east; the upper face of the brace on this side is extraordinarily irregular and it was masked by a plank set in a rebate. The tiebeam carries an octagonal crown post with moulded octagonal cap and base. The upper part is chamfered with four-way up-braces (Fig. 4).

The original carpenters clearly encountered problems when making the tiebeam. On the south side, the brace mortice was cut and the pegholes in the top of the arch brace were drilled, but those in the tiebeam go only half-way through, because at this point a chunk of the base of the tiebeam split away, revealing a massive shake and cavity in the beam. The holes were abandoned and the end of the brace was then secured to the tiebeam with an iron strap held with square-headed nails, which is a most remarkable fourteenth century survival; the split is smoke-blackened inside, demonstrating that the damage is medieval. The strap and the un-drilled west side of the tiebeam are illustrated in Fig. 5a. On the other side of the truss (Fig. 5b), the split tiebeam and the rebate for the plank that was intended to conceal the waney edges of the brace and the blade can be seen. The pegholes in the brace are just visible in the photograph; the upper sides of the pegholes in the tiebeam cannot be seen but can be felt on the broken soffit.



Fig. 5 (a) (above left). Tiebeam and strap, south end, west side. Note the absence of pegholes for the tenon of the brace.

(b) (right). Tiebeam and strap, south end, east side. Note the pegholes in the brace tenon (just visible), and the waney edge of the top of the brace, with the rebate for the masking plank. The upper sides of the pegholes in the tiebeam (where the soffit has split away) can be seen by looking more obliquely upwards into the cavity.

(c) (below). Tiebeam and strap, north end.

The north side of the truss gave almost as much trouble (Fig. 5c). Here, the pegholes were drilled through but, probably when the brace was being pegged (since only one peg of the three is in place), the tiebeam split along the line of the pegholes. Again, the brace was repaired with a strap, identical to that on the

other end. The other side of this brace is concealed, so we do not know if it also had a plank to cover the waney edges.

Truss T3 is of aisled form, similar to T1, and carries a down-braced crown post. The collar purlin terminates just to the east of T3. The east side of the truss is heavily sooted over daub and batten infill (also sooted); one of the battens is nailed onto the rafter with a heavy round-headed nail, clearly medieval. The soot-blackening indicates that the medieval crosswing included an open hearth, thus may well have been a kitchen.

The arcade plates have trait-de-Jupiter scarfs just west of truss T2 and a small length of hollow-moulded cornice survives in bay II. Curved dragon ties link the plates and the tiebeam of T3; any evidence for their use at T1 is concealed. Ten common rafter couples survive in Bay I (concealed in Bay II); they are set flat and measure 3 by 5in, with tenoned collars and halved apexes. The louvre was positioned between the first and third couples west of T2; these couples carry a pair of uprights, and their apexes are rebated for a horizontal timber (suggested form in Fig. 4).

LATER PHASES: The wing roof has queen-post trusses, possibly of around 1500, with clasped purlins having splayed and bridled scarfs. It includes six reused sooted rafters similar to those over the hall, but with the collars halved rather than tenoned. Two other reused rafters are un-sooted and retain their chamfered and scalloped lower ends (which had projected beyond the wallplate); they have rafter holes.

The inserted fireplace has a fluted lintel, similar to one of 1604 from Surrey.¹ The side of the fireplace contains a latticework door (cf. Hall Farm, Loxley, Warwickshire, LOX-A), giving access to a small space that may have been a smoking chamber. The ceiling is supported on chamfered but unstopped beams. The stonework of the walls and the octagonal mullioned windows are probably early seventeenth century, as is the tall brick chimney to the wing, which has stone quoins. The ground-floor fireplace in the wing has a Tudor arch with ovolo moulding and pumpkin stops (probably of the same period).

In the years around 1700, a dog-leg stair with turned balusters was inserted behind the chimney; this space may well have previously been the position of a cross-passage, though direct evidence for this is lacking. In the early/mid-eighteenth century, the crosswing was rebuilt in brick with segmental-arched windows, though the earlier chimney was retained.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations and master sequence references, see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: 9 samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 22nd April 1991. Dating was funded by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England).

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
LNG-M01	Tiebeam truss 2	30	—	—	—	—	—
LNG-M02	Front (S) blade truss 2	101	31C	—	—	—	—
LNG-M03	Front brace truss 2	51	11	—	—	—	—
LNG-M04	Front arcade plate	63	18C	1277	1321	1339	2
LNG-M05	Rear arcade plate	50	15c	1289	1323	1338	2
LNG-M06	Rear brace truss 2	49	01	—	—	—	—
LNG-M07	Rear blade truss 2	39	HS	—	—	—	—
LNG-M08	Rear plate bay 2	28	—	—	—	—	—
LNG-M09	Aisle post truss 3	21	—	—	—	—	—

Site sequence: (composed of samples 4 and 5), 63 rings long dated 1277–1339 with *t*-values of 6.5(MGB-E01), 6.6(READING).

¹ Hall, L. and Alcock, N. W. (1994) *Fixtures and Fittings in Dated Houses: 1567-1763*, Council for British Archaeology, York); an iron fireback dated 1626 is probably a modern replica.

Felling date (sample 4 has complete sapwood, with the 1339 ring complete and sample 5 is virtually complete): **1339/40**.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

A map of 1776 by W. Sollis (in the house) identifies the property as an estate called The Lower Farm, the property of John Haynes, gentleman.² The map includes an elevation of the house, corresponding closely to its present appearance. In the 1774 Enclosure Award, John Haynes received 110 acres for Lower Farm and 67 acres for Upper Farm. The latter is identified as a 2½ yardland farm in the will of John Haynes (1772; proved 1774), suggesting that Lower Farm comprised about 4 yardlands.³ It passed to his son, another John (the 1776 owner), presumably by settlement since it is un-named in his will. Components of Upper Farm comprising 1 and 1½ yardlands were purchased by the Haynes family in 1713 and 1729;⁴ no earlier documentation has been located for Lower Farm and it may have belonged to the Haynes family for many years before 1774; members of the family were living in the parish as early as 1637.⁵ Sale particulars of 1812 indicate that Lower Farm paid a chief rent of 8d to the Lord of the Manor; however, lists of chief rents show that these rents were paid solely for encroachments.⁶ The house is named for Thomas Hopkins who bought the farm in 1813 and whose family held it until 1879.⁷

The manor of Long Marston belonged to Winchcombe Abbey before the Dissolution. It was held by Robert Dudley in 1566 and was acquired by Ralph Sheldon from Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, in 1589. The Sheldon family retained it until about 1780, although the manor site and its buildings had been sold off by 1578.⁸ A Winchcombe Abbey survey of 1355 lists four freeholders (with one, two, two and three yardlands), seventeen customary tenants holding 20 yardlands for fairly substantial rents (typically 16s 2d per yardland), and four cottagers. Two post-dissolution surveys list three freeholders (holding only three yardlands) and eleven copyholders holding 27 yardlands and paying 13s 4d per yardland (mostly with several messuages and corresponding numbers of yardlands).⁹

From the later history, it appears that the copyholdings were sold off piecemeal between 1550 and 1600; one sale deed of 1567 for five messuages and five yardlands survives. There is no indication that Lower Farm formed part of the Winchcombe Abbey manorial demesne. An undated memorandum (probably late sixteenth century) lists properties being rented, with 'one messuage ... called the Lower House with a barne and a stable and thre yardes lande and the close thereundo belonging' being rented to one Thomas Yeate for £12 per year, listed with other rent of meadows and closes. This may have been drawn up by whoever had acquired the properties on the break-up of the manor.¹⁰

It seems likely that, as a substantial pre-Black Death house, Hopkins can be identified with one of the three freeholdings listed in 1355, perhaps indeed the three-yardland holding. However, we have insufficient evidence to confirm this and we cannot exclude it being an enfranchised copyholding.

² Photostat at Warwickshire County Record Office (WCRO).

³ WCRO, CR631/6; Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive (SCLA), ER5/145.

⁴ WCRO, CR2028/Box 3.

⁵ WCRO, DR326/15.

⁶ WCRO, CR2028/Box 8; Boxes 1 and 6.

⁷ Deeds in possession of Mr P. Hodges, The Goodwins, Long Marston.

⁸ Rental at Longleat House (1566); (Birmingham Archives, Ms 328771 (1589); WCRO, CR2028/box 4 (1578).

⁹ Gloucestershire Archives, D678/1 M4/3 (1355; information from Professor C Dyer); TNA, SC2/175/1, f.467ff (1545); E164/39, f.150 (1550 x 1565).

¹⁰ SCLA, ER3/2838 (1567); WCRO, CR2028, box6/1.