

Report and Documentary History for
Loxley Farm, Loxley, Warwickshire

Site Code: LOX-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



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

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Oxbow Books

LOX-A: LOXLEY FARM, LOXLEY, WARWICKSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 2560 5305

Survey Date: 1979/1984

By: N W Alcock

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Abbreviation: WCRO Warwickshire County Record Office

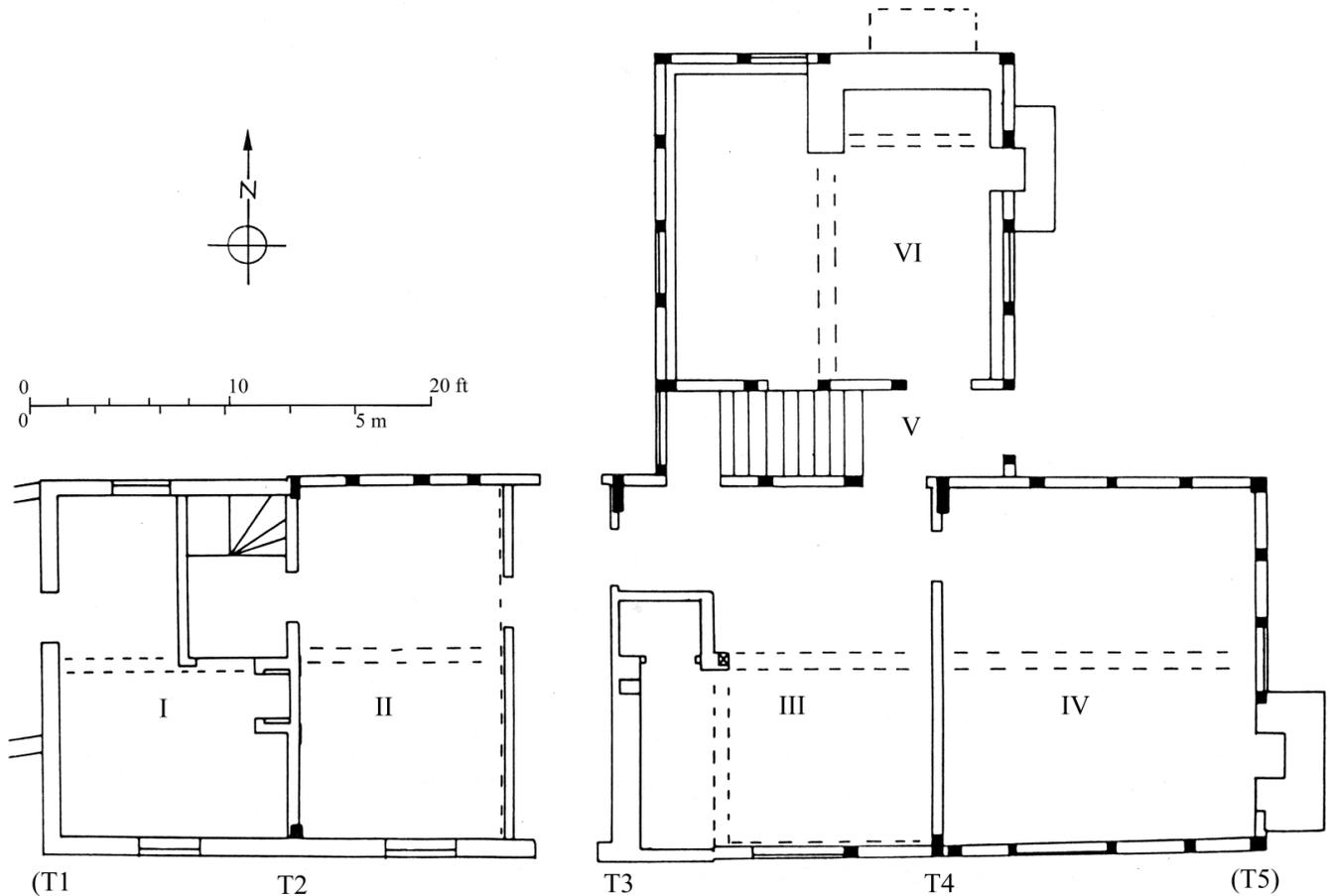


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: The cruck-built house originally had four bays, from which three cruck trusses survive. Tree-ring dating has been unsuccessful, but a fifteenth century date is likely on architectural grounds. Bay IV was the chamber end (replaced) and bay III the hall. Bays II and I were probably used as service and kitchen respectively, from the presence of smoke-blackening. The cross-passage was certainly present in the seventeenth century, and seems likely to be original. There is no evidence to suggest that T3 might have been the open central truss of a two-bay hall.

LATER PHASES: Probably in the sixteenth century, the hall was modernised by the insertion, first, of a firehood and then of a ceiling with moulded beam; a stair extension was also added (bay V). In the seventeenth century, bay IV of the cruck was replaced by a parlour bay, and a rear bakehouse/storage loft was added (bay VI).

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Cruck trusses T2, T3 and T4 remain from the original structure. Truss T4 has a saddle carrying the ridge directly (C apex) while in T2 and T3 short king-posts rise from the saddles (F1 apexes); they appear all to have had packing pieces (mostly now hidden), with cruck spurs and tiebeams. Carpenters marks are visible on the west sides of T3 and T4 (three and four scribed lines respectively, the north sides differentiated by additional tag lines).

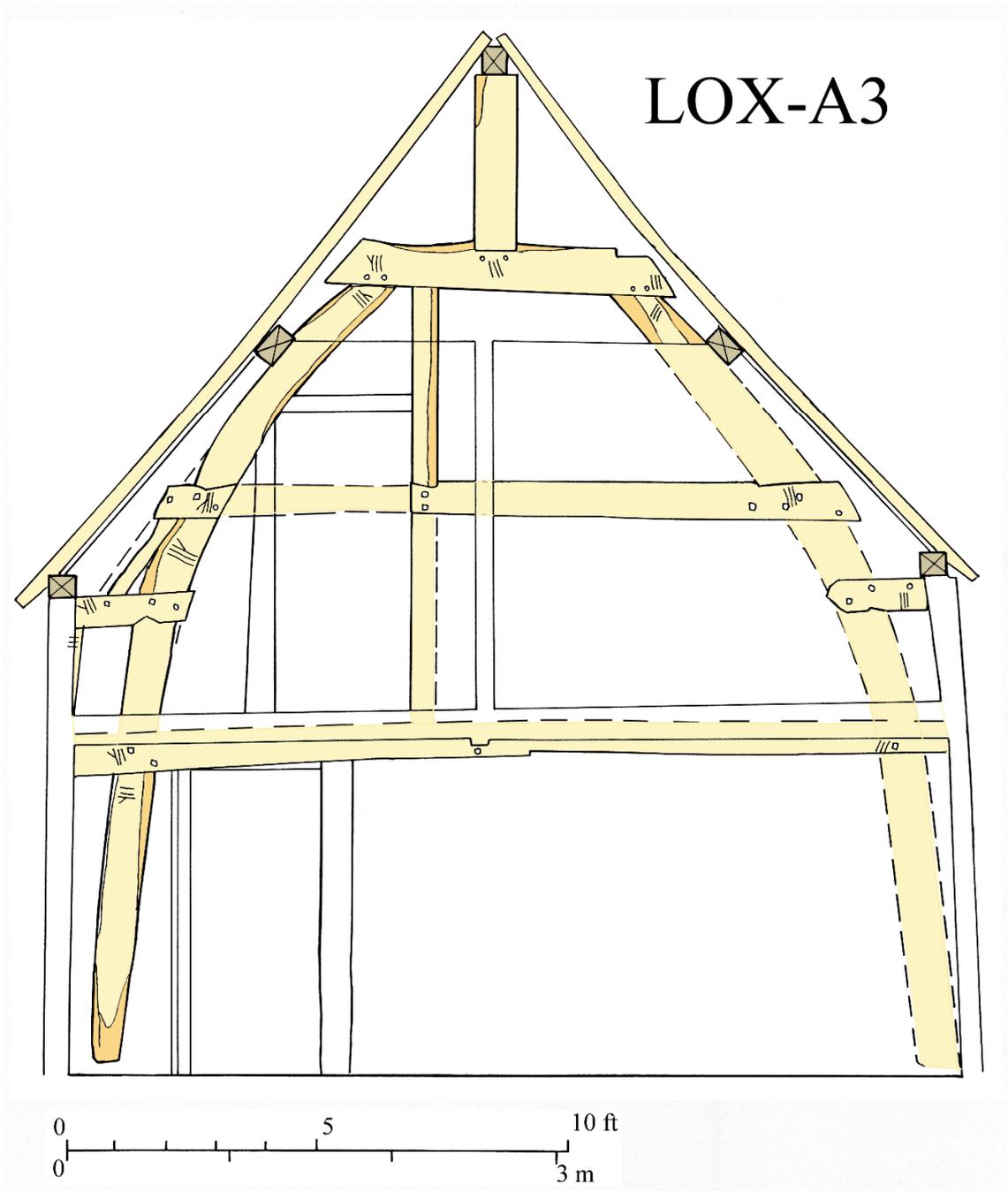


Fig. 3(a). Section of truss T3 from west.

The foot of cruck T3 (rear) is visible (Fig. 4), set in front of the sill beam and apparently resting on a pad stone at the level of the present (early) floor. It could well have originally have been earth-fast. The purlins in bays II and III have pegs for removed windbraces, which rose from the packing pieces. The wallplates and purlins have splayed scarfs on the west sides of T2 and T3, the latter positions confirming the former presence of bay IV.

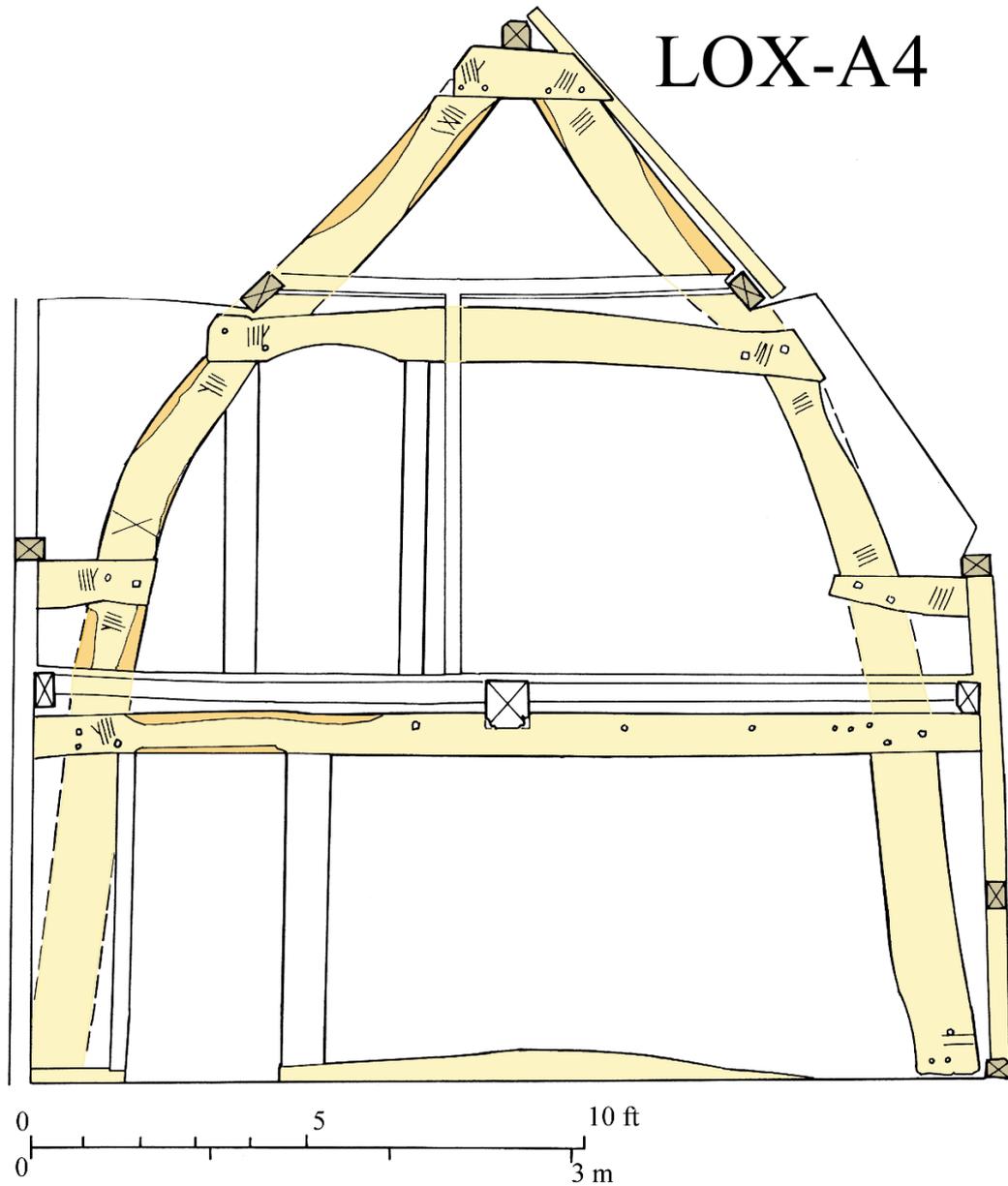


Fig. 3(b). Section of truss T4 from west.



Fig. 4. Foot of truss T3

The wall-framing of the front (south) wall was replaced in the seventeenth century, but a heavy mid-rail survives at the rear in bay II; unpegged intermediate studs are present above this with later replacements below.

Heavy smoke-blackening is present over all three bays. Bay III can be presumed to be the hall, from the early insertion of a firehood there, and the sooting suggests that one of the other bays was originally a heated kitchen (most plausibly bay I), with the other used for service, incompletely divided at roof level from the kitchen.

LATER PHASES: The first improvement was probably the insertion (presumably in the sixteenth century) of a framed firehood in bay III with a plain lintel supported by a post (cut-off below the lintel) (visible on the lower part of Fig. 5); the post rose to the ridge and carried two horizontal framing members. The firehood cannot be dated, but preceded the later sixteenth-century insertion of a finely moulded hall ceiling beam (tentatively dated from the moulding and stop; Fig. 5); the beam on the south wall is ovolo-moulded with a step stop. After the replacement of the firehood by a chimney, a brick smoking chamber was constructed beside the fireplace, with an open lattice-work door (Fig. 6). Perhaps contemporary with the flooring of the hall, a framed stair projection was added behind the hall (bay V), though this lacks any direct dating evidence. The ceiling beam in bay I has a plain unstopped chamfer, and that in bay II a scroll stop, indicating flooring in the seventeenth century. This beam is stopped against the passage partition, indicating that the passage existed by this period.



Fig. 5. End of inserted hall beam with firehood post and lintel



Fig. 6. Lattice-work door of smoking chamber.

In the seventeenth century, the original inner room was replaced by a new parlour (bay IV) in square framing, with its own stone chimney, and with a scroll-stopped ceiling beam. This has a separate tiebeam truss adjoining cruck truss T4. At the same time (or later in the century), the rear room was added, as a bakehouse with (apple?) loft above. This loft could only be entered (with some inconvenience) by a step-up from the stair extension. This bay is also built in square framing, and its chamfered ceiling beam has a scroll stop. The fireplace lintel appears to be part of a re-used cruck blade,

possibly indicating that this section was constructed at the same time as the original end bay was replaced.

In the nineteenth century, bay 1 was mostly reconstructed in brick.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

The house was formerly part of the Loxley Hall Estate. A long series of deeds for a messuage and two yardlands (WCRO, CR675/8/2; CR829) can be shown from an early map (CR3257/1) to relate to this farm. They start in 1659 with its acquisition by Rev. Christopher Smith from Mark Parker and Elizabeth his wife (daughter of Sir Symon Clarke, bart); it had previously been held by Clarke as a perpetual leasehold (1,000 year lease) granted to him in 1637 by Thomas Underhill, then lord of the manor of Loxley, and had perhaps previously been a copyholding. The farm passed in 1701 to John Dadley on his marriage with Ann Smith, Christopher's daughter. It remained with this family until the death of Benjamin Dadley in 1825, after which it was sold to John Millward the then owner of the manor of Loxley. It passed with the manor to James Cove Jones in 1853.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: 10 samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 13 Oct 1988. Despite having relatively long sequences, they could not be matched with any master chronologies

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
LOX-A01	Cruck blade, truss T4, south	63 +27NM	HS+27	—	—	—	—
LOX-A02	Saddle, truss T4	74	HS	—	—	—	—
LOX-A03	Cruck blade, truss T4, north	84	24	—	—	—	—
LOX-A04	Cruck blade, truss T3, north	47	14	—	—	—	—
LOX-A05	Collar, truss T3	45	HS	—	—	—	—
LOX-A06	King post, truss T3	46	HS	—	—	—	—
LOX-A07	Collar, truss T2	NM	—	—	—	—	—
LOX-A08	King post, truss T2	55	HS	—	—	—	—
LOX-A09	Cruck blade, truss T2, north	NM	—	—	—	—	—
LOX-A10	Cruck blade, truss T2, south	53	12	—	—	—	—

Not dated