

Report for
64 High Street, Polesworth, Warwickshire

Site Code: POL-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View from the west.

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Oxbow Books

POL-A: 64 HIGH STREET, POLESWORTH, WARWICKSHIRE

Grid reference: SK 2646 0256

Survey Date: 14 June 1990

By: D Miles

Illustrations:

- 1. View of the house
- 2. Ground floor plan
- 3. The removed cruck timbers
- 4. Section of truss T1

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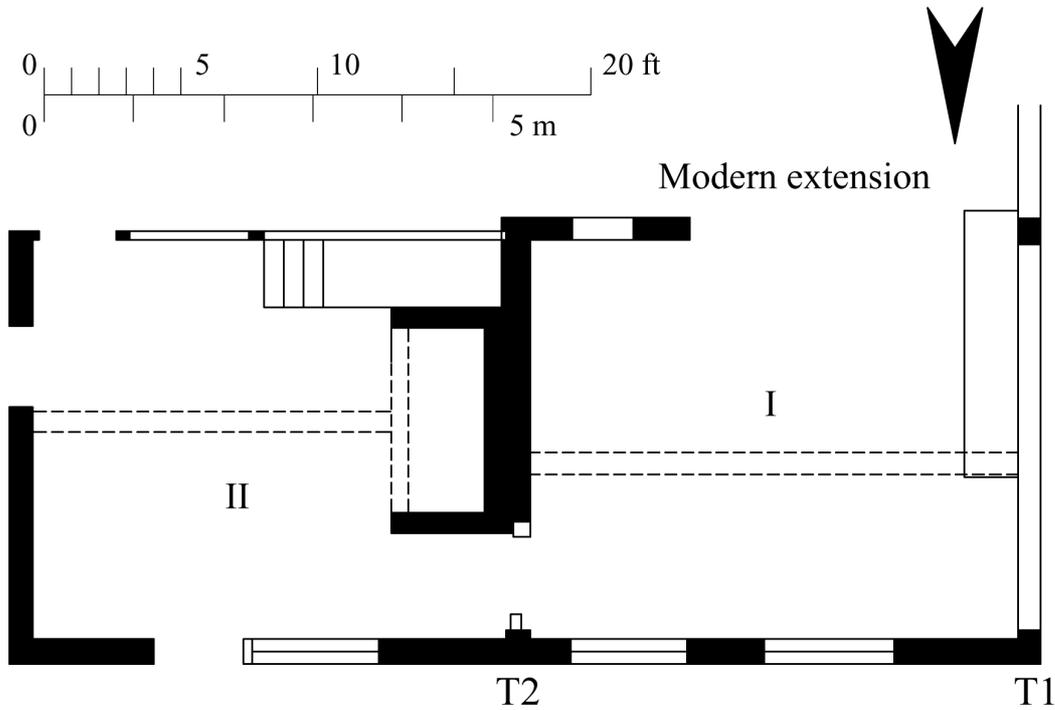


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.



Fig. 3. The removed cruck timbers.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: 64 High Street is a two-bay cruck house, set parallel to the street. Its crucks have saddle apes and were supported directly on pad-stones. It is much rebuilt but had until recently the western gable end cruck frame exposed. This was replaced in facsimile in about 1984 but the original decayed timbers were retained and kept under cover (Fig. 3). These were recorded and sections removed for dendrochronological analysis, giving felling dates of 1508-9.

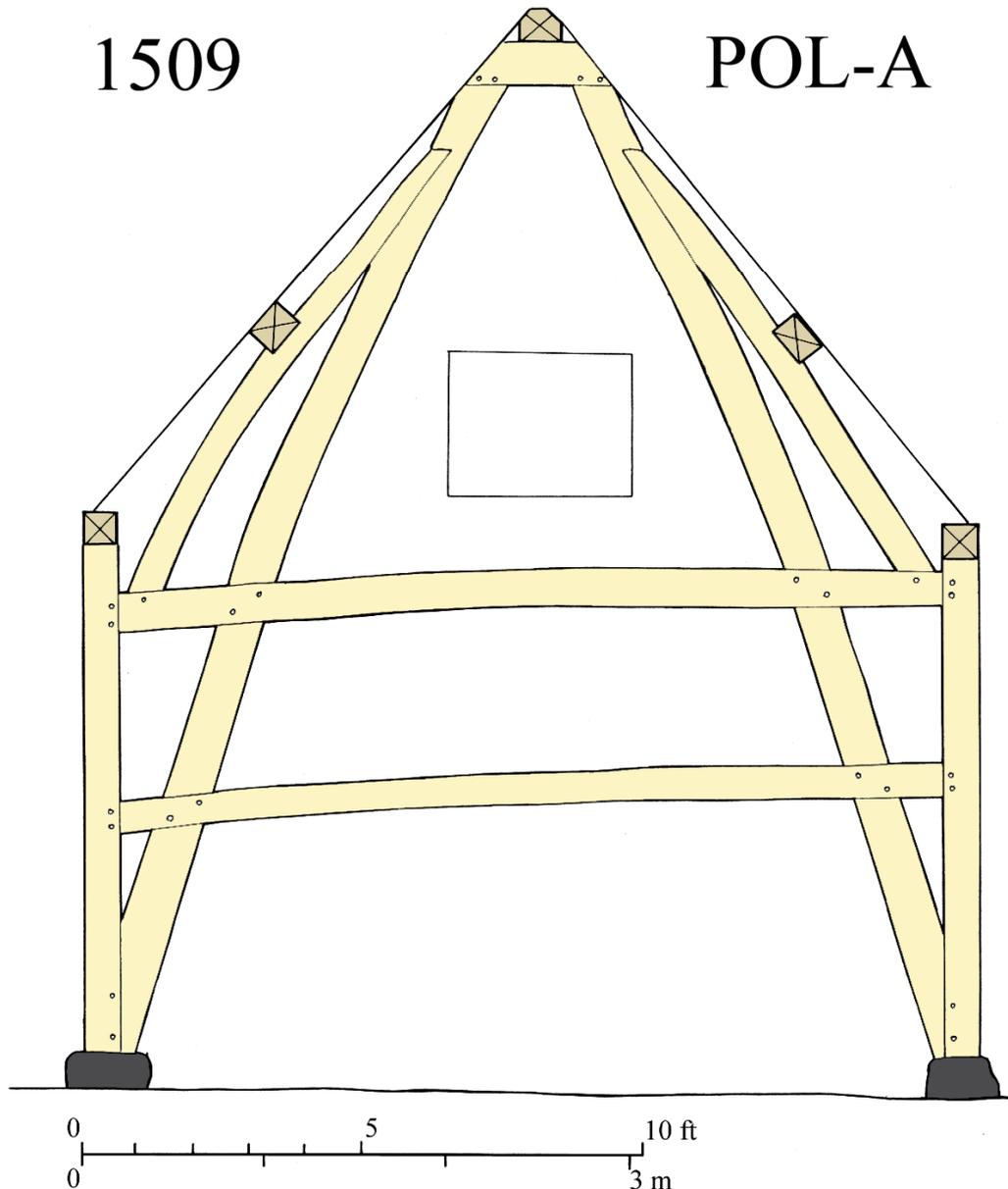


Fig. 4. Section of truss T1.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Truss T1 had full-height cruck blades standing on stone stylobates which still survive. No evidence for a timber sill was found during the repairs of 1984, and the crucks seem to have been supported directly on the pad stones. The blades measured 8 by 10in and were gently curving. The crucks were partially tenoned into the cruck studs, and partially supported by the stone bases. Two tiebeams were lapped across the crucks and tenoned into the cruck studs, the upper tiebeam just below the wall plates. The crucks were joined at the apex by a saddle which supported a square-set ridge (type C apex.). Packing pieces carried the purlins, which measured 9 by 7in. The wall plates were 6in square (the present

replicas measure 8 by 8in, with the present front wall plate to the western bay being the reused ridge (7 by 9in). The discarded ridge from the eastern bay was *diagonally* set, and measured 6½in square. The original saddle clearly had a seating for a square set ridge. This truss was replaced with a replica in 1984. The drawing is based on this replica and on the surviving timbers.

The centre cruck truss (T2) remains *in situ*, and is of similar form to the western end truss. It has a halved collar and spurs just below the wall plate, with a tiebeam at floor level. A central stud runs between tiebeam and collar, with rails on each side, at the level of the spurs. The blades are complete trees, only trimmed square in a few places. They show some signs of light smoke blackening. The eastern truss at T3 has long been replaced in brickwork. The rafters were reported to be of birch, and very rotten before their recent replacement.

The central fireplace is of brick, but the dividing wall between bays I and II is of stone, perhaps providing a fire-back inserted before the later fireplace.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Seven samples were obtained by D Miles as slices cut with a chain saw from the discarded timbers of the replaced cruck. The original position of samples 5-7 is not entirely certain.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
POL-A01	Purlin	58	17C	—	—	—	—
POL-A02	Cruck blade T1 road side	53	13C	1457	1496	1509	5
POL-A03	Ridge	46	05	—	—	—	—
POL-A04	Ridge	46	13C	—	—	—	—
POL-A05	Wallplate rear ?	72 +15NM	07+15NM	—	—	—	—
POL-A06	Stud (rear?)	55	13C	1454	1495	1508	5
POL-A07	Stud (rear?)	34	11C	—	—	—	—

Site sequence: (composed of samples 2 and 6), 56 rings long matched at 1454–1509 with *t*-values of 4.4(KENT 88), 3.2(MGB-E01), 3.5 (BREASQ01, the site sequence of BRE-A, VA22.91), 3.6 (TAM-C1, the site sequence of North range, Tamworth Castle, VA15.84), 4.2 (HARASQ01, the site sequence of HAR-A, VA22.91), 4.3 (STEASQ01, the site sequence of STE-A, VA20.89).

Felling dates: (samples 2 and 6 have complete sapwood) **1508-9**.