

Report for
24 & 26 Warwick Road, Southam, Warwickshire

Site Code: SOU-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

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

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SOU-A: 24 & 26 WARWICK ROAD, SOUTHAM, WARWICKSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 4147 6155

Survey Date: 22 Nov. 1988

By: D. Miles

Illustrations:

1. View of the house

Page

1

2. Ground floor plan

2

3. Sections of trusses T1-3

3-4

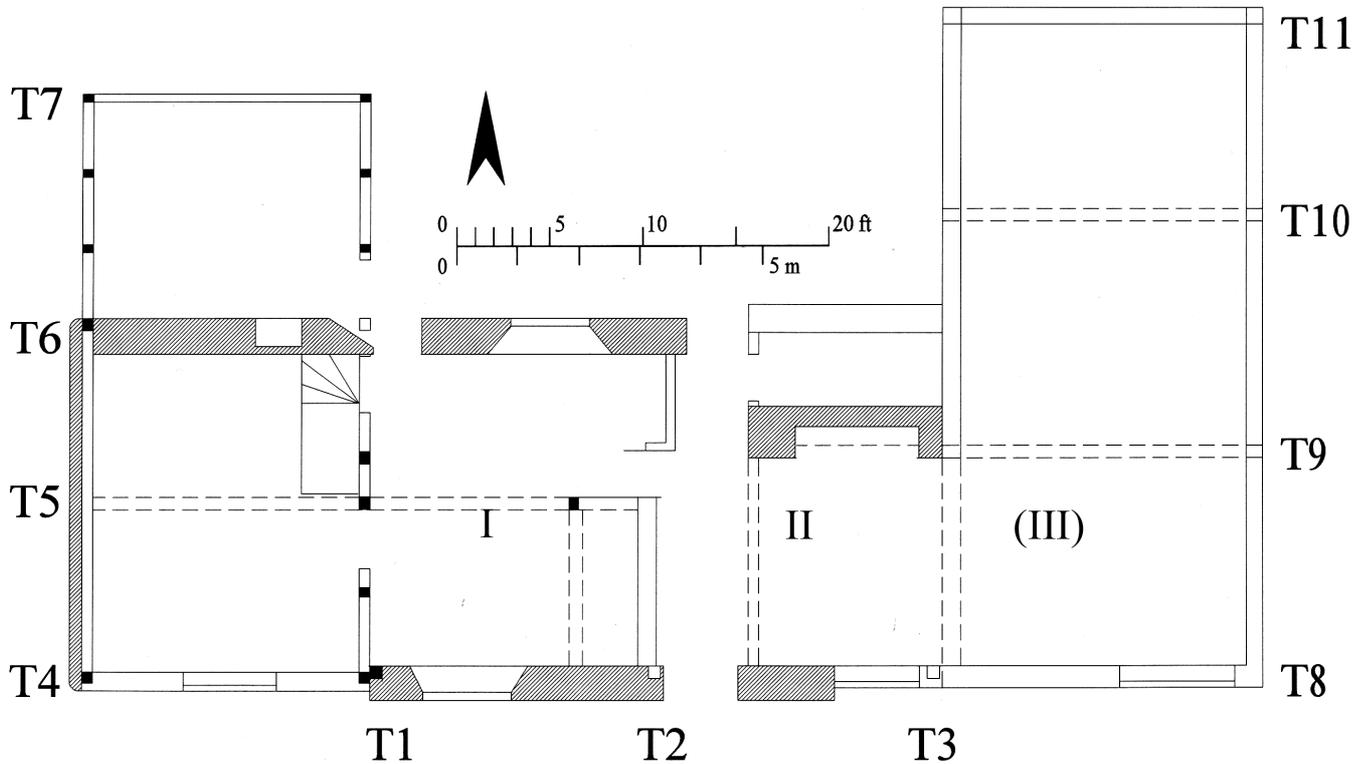


Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

PHASE 1: 24 and 26 Warwick Road comprises a two-bay open hall set parallel to the street between two crosswings. The central arch-braced open truss of the hall and one of the closed trusses have type 'C' apexes, while the other hall end truss has a type 'F1' apex. This range has been dated to 1418/19. The upper end crosswing (western) has a short two-bay front section which may be contemporary with the hall; this has tiebeam trusses with queen struts and back purlins. The hall range probably extended into an eastern service bay.

LATER PHASES: Subsequent alterations included flooring over the hall and inserting the main chimney (framed in timber), probably in the later sixteenth century. The open truss was closed off and a doorway cut through, carving away a large section of the arch-brace for the door head. At this stage, the lower bay was converted into a cross passage and service bay. In the seventeenth century, one extra bay was added to the western crosswing and the eastern wing built. A stone fireplace was inserted in the original lower bay of the hall.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: The best preserved bay is the western half of the open hall (situated in no. 26). Truss T1 is the hall end truss and comprises a tiebeam and collar truss with a saddle, surmounted by a king post supporting a square set ridge measuring 6 by 7½in (apex type F1). The purlins are carried on the backs of the cruck blades and supported by packing pieces; the latter are concealed by plaster, but inferred from the windbraces running into them. The purlins measure 8-9½ by 6-7in and each has a splayed scarf joint.

The thin (2in) windbraces are let into the backs of the purlins with simple half-lapped dovetails, twice pegged. Inscribed assembly marks were noted on the tops of the eastern face of the blades, III on the north side and III-tag on the south. The eastern face of the collar shows see-saw marks.

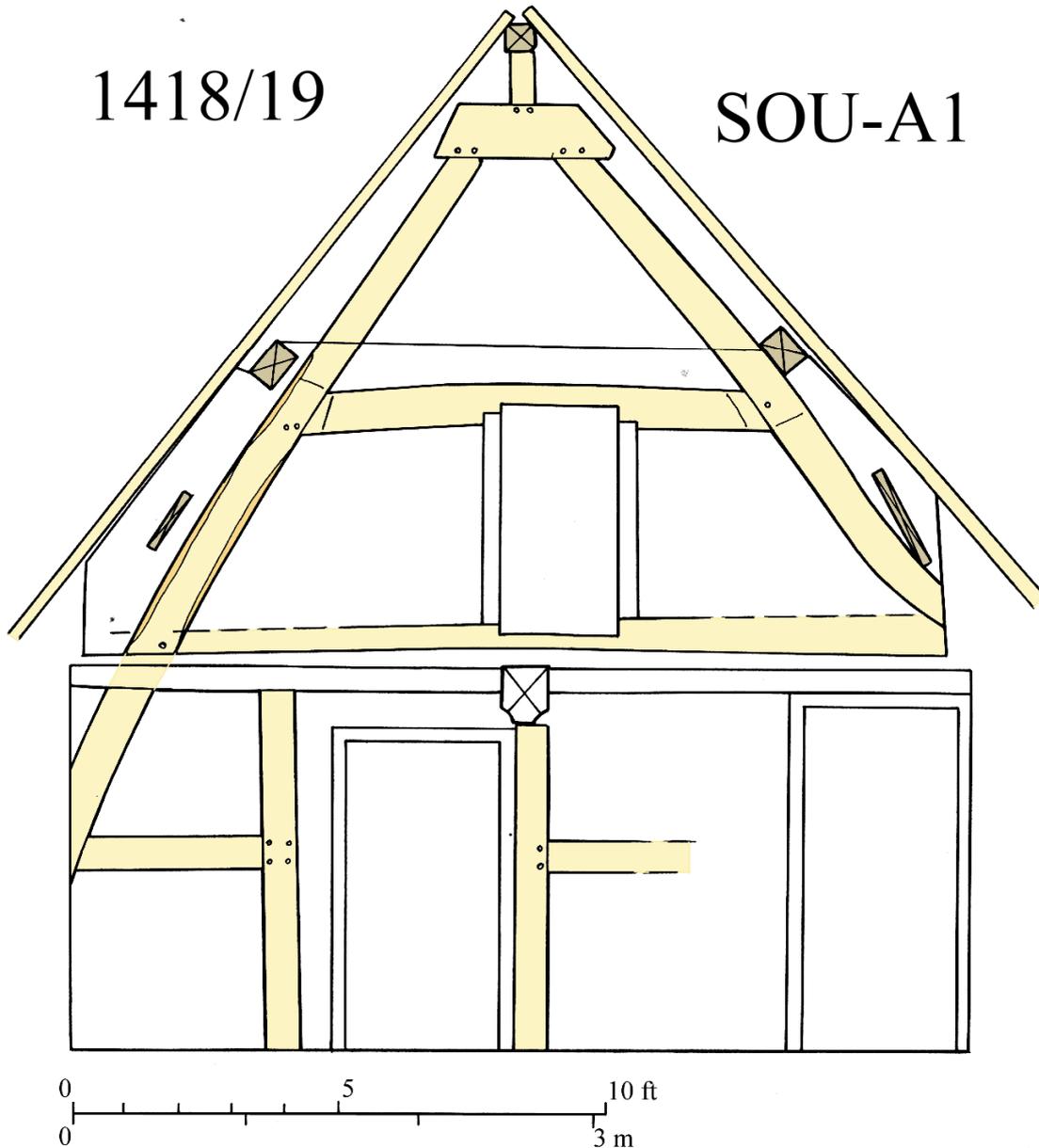


Fig. 3(a). Section of truss T1 from the east.

Truss T2 is partially obscured by the present chimney stack, presumably on the site of the open hearth. It has an arch-braced collar terminating in a saddle directly supporting the ridge. The ridge beam has a splayed scarf immediately to the east of the open truss, as do the purlins. The wind braces are joined directly into the sides of the blades without packing pieces. No chamfers are visible on the arch-braces, and the fair face of the open truss faces west. Assembly marks on this face comprise a II on the north blade and a II-tag on the south across the tops of the crucks and saddle, and a II at the north end of the collar and another II on the collar/arch-brace joint. However, the cruck at the collar joint carries a III (perhaps in error for II-tag).

T3 has a type 'C' apex, the same as T2. Again, scribed assembly marks are visible on the east face which were the same as T1, except that the south mark had an extra tag on the saddle; the saddle also carries a centre line mark. The ridge continues for 6 feet beyond T3.

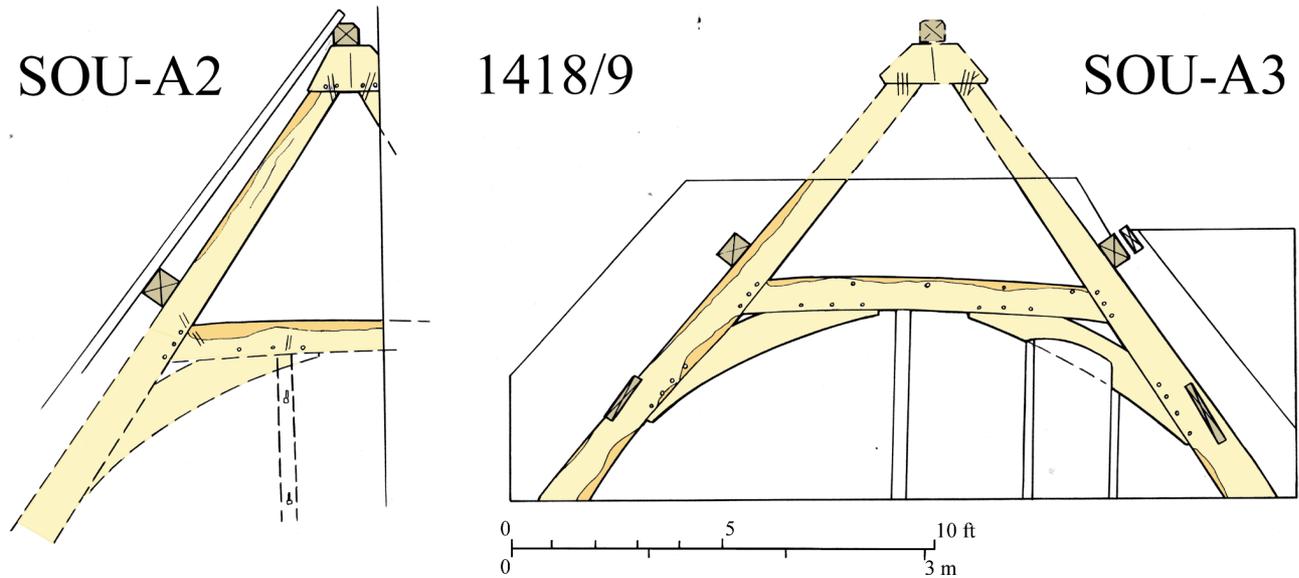


Fig. 3(b). Upper parts of trusses T2 (from west) and T3 (from east).

Long scribed assembly marks were noted: a I on the east side of T1 and a II and III on the west and east sides of T2, all on the upper faces of the windbraces; a III on the yoke and principals of T3; all with tags on the south side mark. None of the rafters were visible in the western bay of the hall, and they have been removed entirely in the eastern bay. The underside of the collar of T1 was inspected but no evidence for any stave partitions was noted. No windbraces extend beyond this truss.

Western wing: It is clear from the structural evidence that truss I abutted a separate structure, presumably a crosswing. The present wing has not been dated but, if not original, must be of the later fifteenth/early sixteenth century. Its earliest component contains three close-set trusses (T4-6, only about 8ft apart), each with a cambered tiebeam and slanted queen struts to the collars. The purlins are not visible internally but on the gable truss are carried on the backs of the principal rafters; if the wing is as early as the hall, clasped purlins might have been expected. The original framing survives at first floor level on the west wall, underbuilt in stone, and includes down braces from the posts to the mid-rail.

Eastern end: The extension of the ridge piece indicates that there was further structure beyond T3, and an in-line service bay seems most likely.

LATER PHASES: The axial hall ceiling beam is chamfered with a heavy cut stop. It is supported by the 6 by 10in corner post of the timbered chimney into which the fireplace lintel is tenoned. When this was inserted, the cross-passage was probably created. The partition between it and the lower end contains re-used timbers including a stud with an open notched lap joint. Later, the stone axial chimney was added in this bay, probably for a kitchen (then or later enlarged to run into the eastern wing); unusually, it is inset from the rear wall.

In the seventeenth century, the western crosswing was extended by one bay (T7). The framing is slender, two panels high on the side walls above a high stone plinth, with straight diagonal corner braces. The tiebeam of T6 was cut through for access at first floor level and, then or later, the corner post was removed. At a similar date, the eastern wing was built in three bays with similar framing to the west wing (T8-T11). The ground floor of the present east wall is partly of stone, partly of brick, supporting what appears to be an original sill running *under* the feet of the studs and posts, implying that this wing was always of mixed construction. Internally, the original layout of this wing has been obscured by alterations, including the creation of a small shop in the front corner (these later details omitted from the plan).

Most of the hall walling has been replaced in stone, possibly in the 17th century, and much of the remaining exterior wall is now of brick.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Eight samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 22 November 1988. Two groups of three samples matched together, of which one group dated to span the years 1304-1418. Surprisingly, two samples of over 100 rings in length failed to date.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
SOU-A01	Front cruck blade truss T2 (arch braced)	114	29	1304	—	1417	2
SOU-A02	Rear cruck blade truss T2	110	17	—	—	—	—
SOU-A03	Collar truss T2	71	15C	1348	—	1418	2
SOU-A04	Front cruck blade truss T3	60	13	—	—	—	—
SOU-A05	Front cruck blade truss T1	46	12C	1373	—	1418	2
SOU-A06	Front purlin bay II	69	21C	—	—	—	—
SOU-A07	Rear purlin bay II	54	04	—	—	—	—
SOU-A08	Rear cruck blade truss T1	108	12	—	—	—	—

Site sequence: (composed of samples 1, 3, 5), 115 rings long dated 1304–1418 with *t*-values of 5.3 (OXFORD), 5.3 (STR-A, site sequence of Ann Hathaways Cottage, Stratford-on-Avon).

Felling date: (samples 3 and 5 with last dated rings have complete sapwood), **1418/19**