

Report for
Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Shottery, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

Site Code: STR-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View of the house at the present day.

© *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

STR-A: ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, SHOTTERY, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON, WARWICKSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 1845 5475 Survey Date: 12 March 1990 By: D. Miles

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. View of the house at the present day | 1 |
| 2. View of the house in the 1850s | 2 |
| 3. Ground floor plan | 2 |
| 4. Section of truss T6 | 4 |

References: Halliwell-Phillips, J. O. (1886) *Outlines of the life of Shakespeare*, (6th ed.), vol. 2, 195.

Abbreviation: SCLA Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives, Stratford-upon-Avon)



Fig. 2. View of the house in the 1850s (SCLA, reproduced with permission)

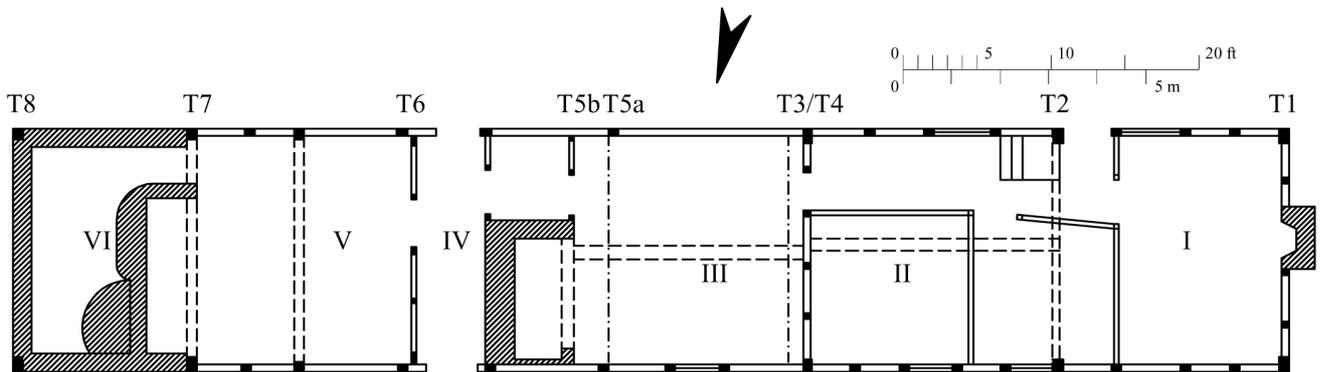


Fig. 3. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering (based on plan of 1927 by G Pemberton from SCLA files)

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Anne Hathaway's Cottage house is situated in the hamlet of Shottery on an isolated site, oriented east-west, with its gable end to the road. Today it shows a complex development with three main phases.

PHASE 1: At the centre is a three-bay cruck range (bays III-V) tree-ring dated to 1462/3. The only complete cruck truss (T6) has an apex with the ends of the blades linked by a yoke and clasping the ridge (type 'A'). The functions of the bays in this range are not certain, but it seems likely that bay V was for

service and bays III and IV were an open hall, with a further bay for a chamber beyond (now replaced by bays I-II). Half of bay IV was later converted to a smoke hood and then, after the insertion of a stone chimney, became the cross-passage. Inscribed dates of 1697 on a lattice door and the top of this chimney may relate to its insertion but are more likely to be associated with a partial rebuilding.

PHASE 2: Phase 2 comprises a two-bay box-framed extension (bays I and II) at the east end of the present cruck range. It provided service rooms below, although that was a rather inconvenient arrangement domestically, while upstairs it contained two additional bed chambers. This can be architecturally dated to the seventeenth century, probably pre-1650.

PHASE 3 and LATER: The short extension to the east of the Phase I cruck range was used as a wood store and in the nineteenth century contained the copper. It has a stone ground floor with box-framing above, whose brick-nogging is probably original. It is probably of the late 17th century and could well be of a similar period to the 1697 date on the central chimney. In the nineteenth century, the house was divided into three cottages, but this has left few obvious structural traces.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: The best preserved cruck truss is T6, which has slightly curved blades (about 8in thick) joined by a yoke and nestling a diagonally-set ridge measuring 5½ by 6in (a type 'A' apex). The 7 by 8in purlins are trenched across the back of the cruck packing pieces whose upper ends are set into the backs of the blades with undersquinted joints. The packing pieces are also halved to the extended ends of the collar, and their lower ends are tenoned into the cruck spurs. A tiebeam supports the partially lodged joists of a later floor. The blades continue to the ground sill which is carried on low stone walling. The soffit of the collar has drillings for staves to infill the panel below it, and a stove hole is also visible in the underside of the yoke. Under the tiebeam are three studs, the northern of which is a later reused timber. The cruck blades are boxed heart, left almost in the round above the collar. A long scribing on the western face of the southern blade above the spur is possibly an assembly mark (I).

Only the upper part of cruck truss T4 survives, as a pair of blades apparently resting on the mid-rail of T3. They have been reset to carry the purlins directly, taking the place of the packing pieces. The north blade is now well above its original height, as its spur halving is level with the collar halving on the south blade. The original trusses T5 and T7 have been completely removed. The former has been replaced by a part truss beside the chimney with a tiebeam at floor level and one thin inset principal (T5b). Truss T7 is now a box-framed truss, forming part of the construction of bay VI.

The surviving south purlin between trusses T4 and T6 has a rough 1½ in chamfer. It reveals the original positions of T4 and T5 by halvings respectively 12in east of T4 and 18in west of T5. It also has peggings for windbraces adjacent to both trusses, and has a simple splayed scarf just east of T5. The north side purlin seems to have been replaced with a different but original length of purlin (perhaps from the end bay), as it lacks the truss halving corresponding to that on the south side, but it retains the peg for a windbrace. A further section of original purlin is reused as a sill in bay II. In bay V, the purlins have been removed but have probably been reused as the purlins in bay VI, reversed so that the paired windbrace halvings are on the visible inner sides.

The wall-framing includes studs and mid-rails with two heavy curved down braces on each side, from the studs nearest T5 and T6 to the sills on each side. The framing adjacent to T4 which might have contained another brace, has been renewed. These braces and some of the studs are probably original; one stud matches the phase 1 tree-ring sequence.

The upper part of the west side of the present passage in bay IV is infilled with heavily sooted wattle and daub, indicating clearly that it was converted into a smoke-bay. The transverse rail carrying the wattle infill has a second rail beside it also with stove holes, apparently for an earlier phase of infill. Later, this section of the house became a cross-passage, following the insertion of the adjoining lias stone chimney. The latter includes a small alcove on its north side, closed by a small door with wavy splats forming an open-work grille, and carrying the date 1697 with initials IH EH IB. A stone with the same date and initials IH (for John Hathaway) was formerly built into the top of this chimney.

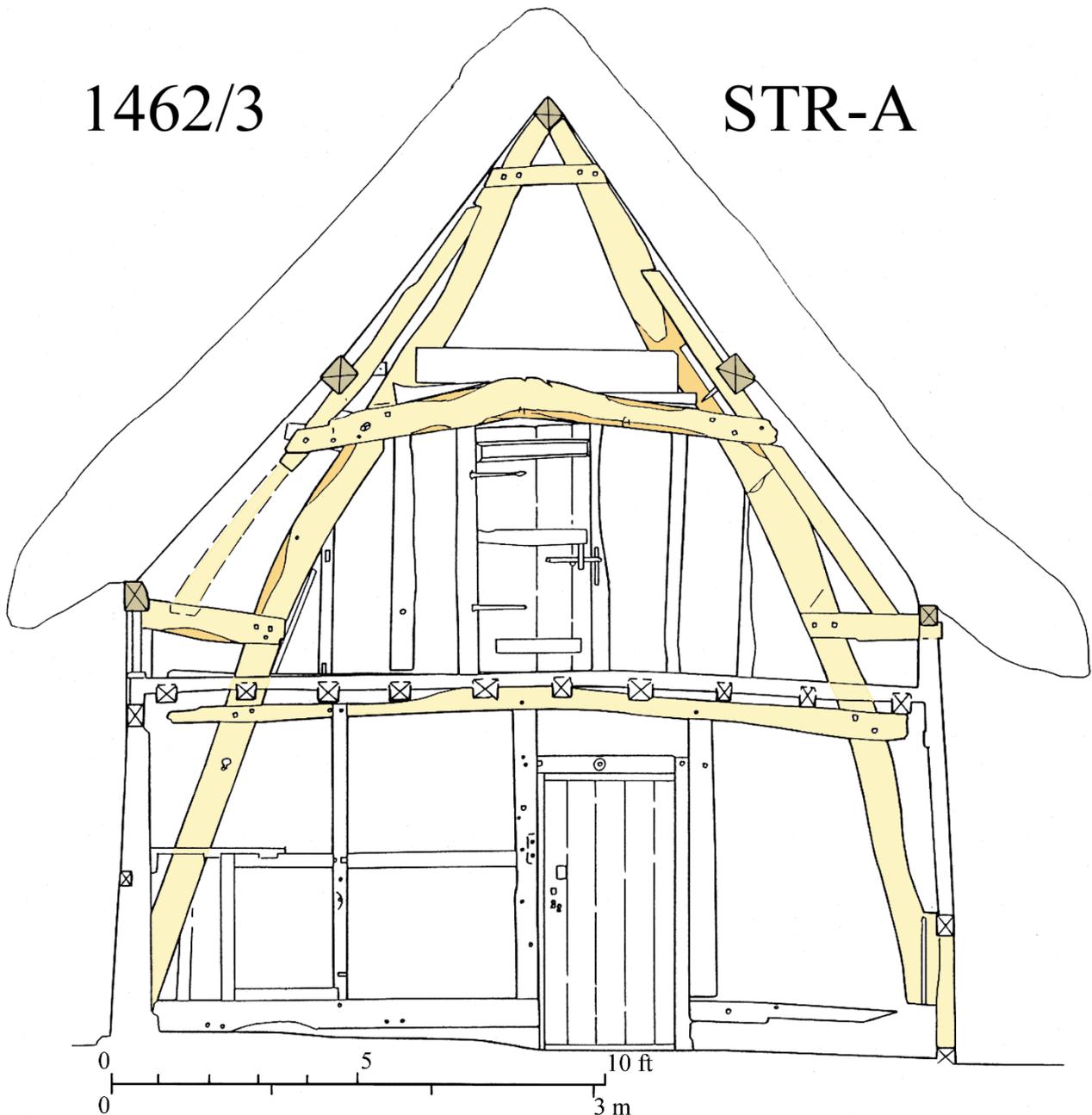


Fig. 4. Section of truss T6 (drawing by R A Meeson prepared as part of a conservation report and reproduced with permission of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust).

PHASE 2: This two-bay range (bays I-II) of one-and-a-half storeys with full height studs and posts, and with short straight diagonal braces between the posts and wallplates. Each wall is divided into three panels horizontally, the upper one belonging to the upstairs room. The tiebeam and collar trusses have three vertical struts below the collar and raking struts above it. The axial beam in bay II is chamfered and stopped at the position of T2 and is now supported on a later post. Thus, originally, this section was divided into two rooms, as it is upstairs. However, the ground floor internal partitions have heavy studs and mid-rails, suggesting that the re-planning of this section took place soon after it was built. Since the nineteenth century, the stairs have been moved from the eastern to the western end of bay II. The end chimney apparently post-dates a 1795 view of the house. The inserted floor in bay V must be of a similar date. It is carried by an inserted transverse beam and a half beam against T6.

PHASE 3: The short western bay (VI) is of mixed construction, with well-built coursed lias stone walling for the ground floor and framing above. The framing is infilled with brick nogging, which appears to be original. The posts of the end truss (T8) have gunstock heads with straight down-braces to the high sill

beam in the transverse frame, though up-braces are used on the side walls and for the tiebeam bracing in T7. This bay contains a large lias stone chimney, with an in-built oven.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Deeds trace the history of the house from 1704,¹ and Hathaway family wills and an inventory of 1624 are printed in Halliwell-Phillips (1886), 195. The house was associated with 2½ yardlands in 1624 and 1704.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Seventeen samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 12-13 March 1990. Nine samples were taken from the box-framed range and although some had over 70 rings, and two groups could be formed, no matches against the reference chronologies were found.

Note. The bays and trusses have been renumbered since the original report, in which the cruck range was labelled as bays I-III and its trusses as T1-4.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
STR-A01	Cruck blade, truss T6 N side	97	14c	1364	1446	1460	1
STR-A02	Cruck spur, truss T6 N side	105	12	1346	1438	1450	1
STR-A03	Collar, truss T6	73	—	1351	—	1423	1
STR-A04	Cruck blade, truss T6 S side	NM	—	—	—	—	—
STR-A05	Purlin, bay IV S side	144	18C	1319	1444	1462	1
STR-A06	Purlin, bay IV N side	52	12	1405	1444	1456	1
STR-A07	Cruck blade, truss T4 S side	51	07	1397	1440	1447	1
STR-A08	Stud, bay IV S side	118	32C	1345	1430	1462	1
STR-A09	Wall plate, bay II S side	48	—	—	—	—	—
STR-A10	Stud, bay II S side	42	10	—	—	—	—
STR-A11	Principal post, truss T3 S side	70	17	—	—	—	—
STR-A12	Tiebeam, truss T3	56	14	—	—	—	—
STR-A13	Stud, bay II N side	67	22	—	—	—	—
STR-A14	Principal post, truss T3 N side	77	—	—	—	—	—
STR-A15	Stud, bay II S side	56	19	—	—	—	—
STR-A16	Stud, bay I N side	61	—	—	—	—	—
STR-A17	Lower rail, bay II N side	70	—	—	—	—	—

Site sequence: (composed of samples 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8), 144 rings long dated 1319–1462 with *t*-values of 6.4(E.MID), 6.0(S.ENG)

Estimated felling date: (samples 5 and 8 with the last dated rings have complete sapwood), Winter **1462/3** (VA22.91).

¹ SCLA, TT deeds/3.