

Report for
**The Old Forge, Stretton-under-Fosse,
Warwickshire**

Site Code: SUF-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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Oxbow Books

SUF-A: THE OLD FORGE, STRETTON-UNDER-FOSSE, WARWICKSHIRE

The house is also known as 27, 29 Main Street, Stretton-under-Fosse.

Grid reference: SP 4502 8131 Survey Date: 14 October, 1988 By: D. Miles

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Reference: Moran, Madge (2003) *Vernacular buildings of Shropshire*, Almley, Herefs: Logaston Press.

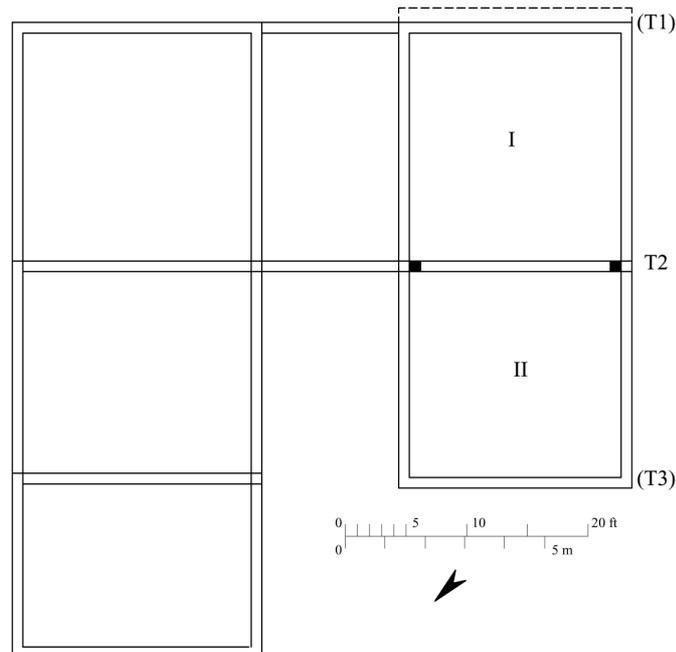


Fig. 2. Block plan, showing truss and bay numbering (scale approximate).

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: The Old Forge comprises three blocks, the south-western wing of which is a cruck building now of two-bays, set at right angles to the road. The bay nearest the street has evidence for having been floored, while the rear bay is still open to the roof, and it would appear that the range contained a chamber and one bay of a hall. Light smoke-blackening on the central cruck truss suggests the position of an open hearth towards the back of the rear bay, and that the house extended for at least one further bay; however, since the end wall has been rebuilt, this cannot be confirmed. The single visible cruck truss has a saddle apex (type 'C'). A felling date range of 1480-92 has been obtained for this phase.

LATER PHASES: Later work seems principally to be of about 1600. It includes the provision of a jetty to the street-side gable of the cruck range, a north-west extension beside the front cruck bay, and a three-bay range running back to the north-west of this extension. Most internal detailing is concealed, and the relative dating of these additions is uncertain. The three-bay range contains two timber-framed chimney stacks.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: Nothing is visible in the front bay; the front truss has been replaced or totally encased, and the centre cruck truss (T2) is plastered over internally. On the other side (north-west), in what is thought to be the hall, the crucks are visible for their full height up to the saddle. This supports a secondary saddle which is notched for a 6½ by 7in diagonally-set ridge. The crucks are joined by a 7½in high tiebeam at 5 to 6ft above floor level. Cruck spurs support the wall plates. The 8½in collar is about 6ft above the tie beam, and a pair of studs rise between them, framing a doorway.

The doorposts are notched around the ends of two large lodged floor joists, measuring 5 by 8in and 4 by 11in respectively. It seems likely that the door formed the entry to the front chamber via a staircase from the hall, in much the same way as at St Owen's Well house, Much Wenlock (Moran (2003), 282-4).

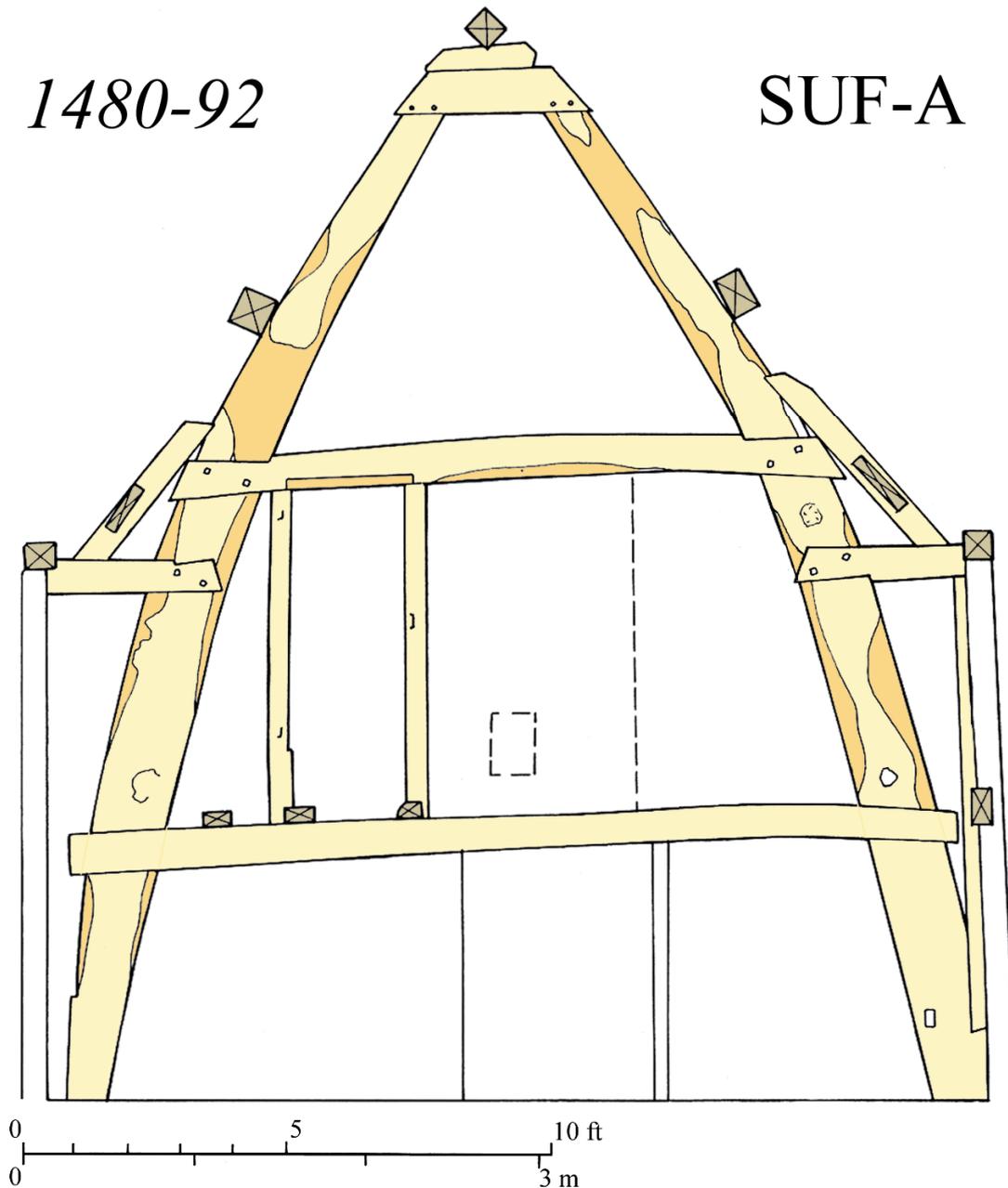


Fig. 3. Section of truss T2.

Packing pieces support the underside of the 8 by 8½-10in purlins; slightly curved wind braces (8 by 3in) still survive. The cruck blades appear to be halved from one tree, with the good face towards the chamber. Assembly marks would be expected on this face, and none are visible on the north-west side of the truss. Some daub infill survives above the collar and to the left of the door frame. This, along with the truss framework, has some smoke blackening but not amounting to encrustation. This would suggest an open hearth at the far end by T3, making a further bay likely.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Seven samples were obtained through coring by Robert Howard on 14 October 1988. Two groups of two samples were found to match each other, and these were successfully matched.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
SUF-A01	Cruck blade west side	58 +10NM	02+10NM	1410	1465	1467	3d
SUF-A02	Cruck blade east side	51	HS	1416	1466	1466	3d
SUF-A03	Tiebeam	80 +(5-8)NM	HS+NM	1392	1471	1471	3b
SUF-A04	Collar	50	12	1414	1451	1463	3b
SUF-A05	Cruck spur west side	NM	—	—	—	—	—
SUF-A06	Cruck stud east side	88 +(6-8)NM	HS+NM	—	—	—	—
SUF-A07	Cruck spur west side	68	02	—	—	—	—
Average date of last heartwood ring					1463		

Site sequences: (composed of samples 1, 2), 58 rings long dated 1410–1467 with *t*-values of 4.8(E.MID), 4.8(S.ENG); (composed of samples 3, 4), 80 rings long dated 1392–1471 with *t*-values of 4.1(E.MID), 5.9(STO-D, Site sequence of 21–3 Birmingham Road, Stoneleigh, VA20.89)

95% felling date range: (samples 1, 2, 3, 4) 1475–1508 (revised from 1480–1515, VA20.89). OxCal refined felling date range **1480-92**.