Report for

Church Cottage, Cadeby, Leicestershire

Site Code: CAD-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles

Fig. 1. View from the north

Oxbow Books

CAD-A: CHURCH COTTAGE, CADEBY, LEICESTERSHIRE

Grid reference: SK 4251 0237 *Survey Date*: 29 August 1991 *By*: D Miles

Illustrations:

References: Webster, V. R. (1954), 'Cruck-framed buildings of Leicestershire', *Leicestershire Archaeol Hist Soc Trans*, **30,** 26-58. Lloyd, Nathaniel (1925), *History of English brickwork*, London, H G Montgomery.

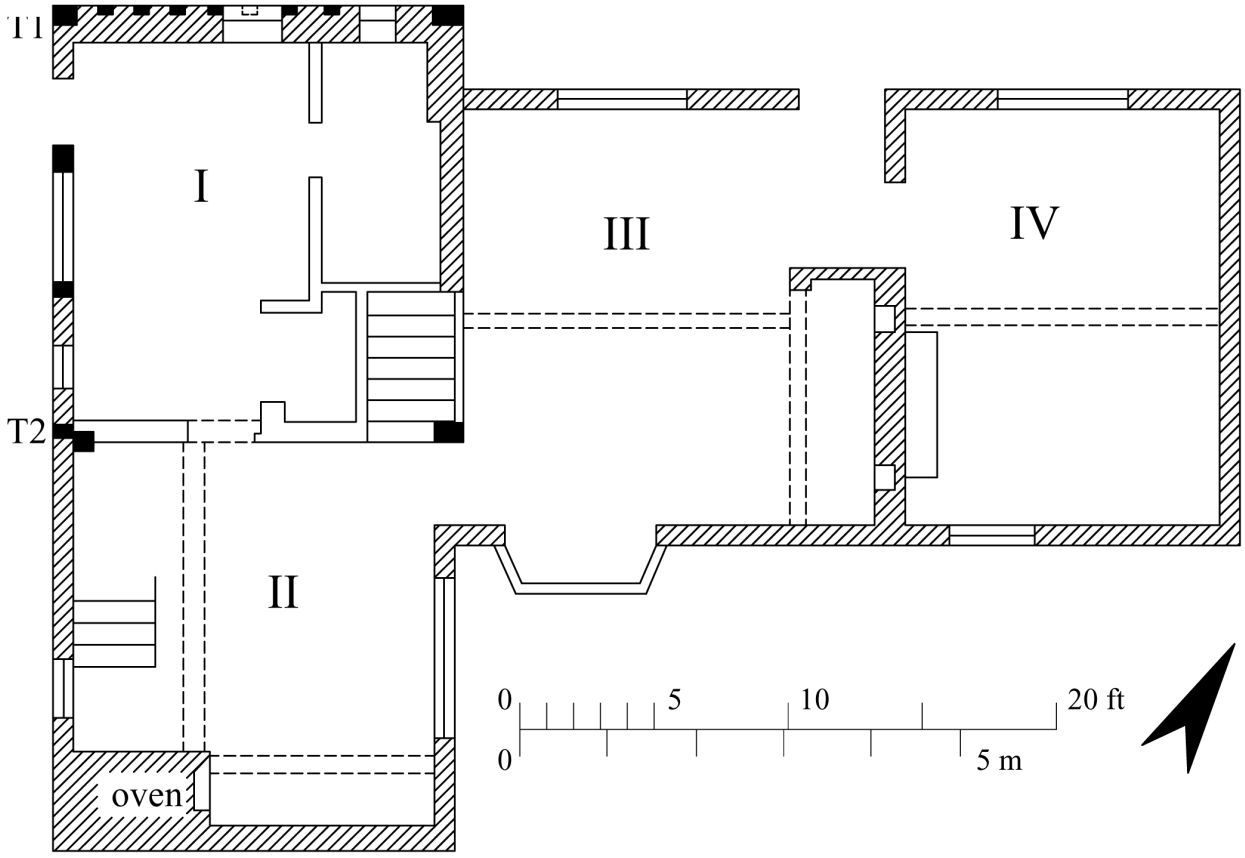

Fig. 2. Plan, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: Church Cottage is a cruck house now of two bays (I-II) with the north end fronting to the road, and with an eighteenth century brick wing to the east. Two cruck trusses remain. That facing the road (truss T1) is close studded and has a type 'F1' apex. The other cruck truss (T2, 'A' apex) appears to have been an open truss. The south cruck (truss T3) of bay II was replaced in the nineteenth century in brick. The existence of a third bay to the south would produce a standard plan, but no evidence exists to confirm this. The centre truss shows is no evidence of any smoke blackening, and the purlins are also relatively clean (although other roof timbers including the ridge have been removed. The cruck phase of the house has been dated by dendrochronology to 1472/3. The dating results show that the timbers were all cut specifically for the construction of the house.

LATER PHASES: The wing is of two stories with two rooms on each floor separated by a central chimney stack (bays III-IV).. It was probably added in the first half of the eighteenth century, judging from the size of the bricks (Lloyd, 1925). After the phase 2 wing was built, a further single storey

extension was added to the east, used as a forge. This was demolished shortly before 1960. An inglenook fireplace and bread oven was added at the southern end of bay II during the 18th or early 19th century. At some stage during its later life, the house was used as 'The Wheatsheaf' licensed house which probably brought about the construction of the cellar under the eastern half of bay I. In the 19th century, bay II was reconstructed in brick. A front porch was added during a 1960s renovation.

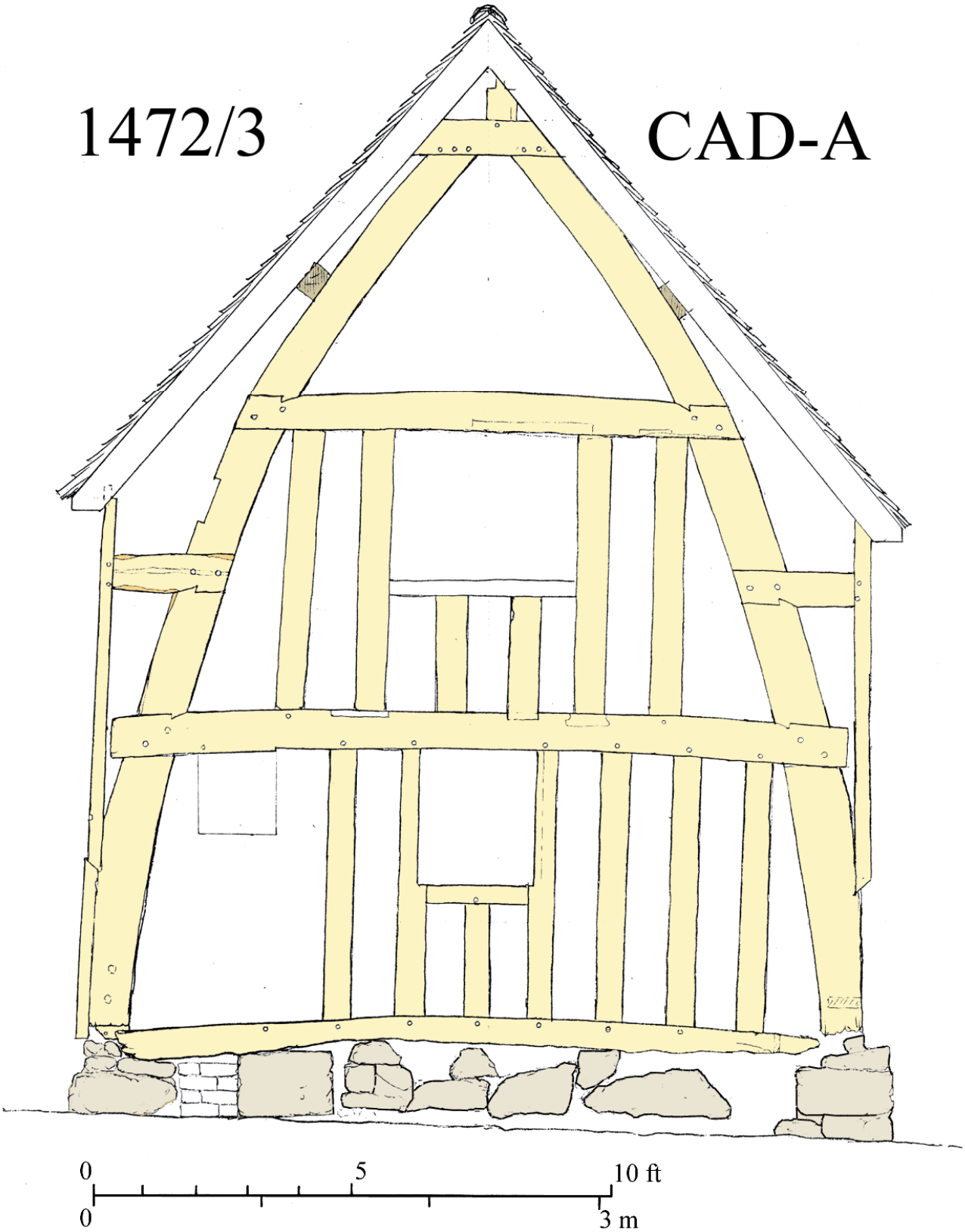

Fig. 3. Section of Truss T1.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

PHASE 1: *Cruck range*: The crucks of the end truss (T1) are halved from single trees and measure 13in x 6in. The truss has a type 'F1' apex (crucks joined by a saddle on which a short king-post supports the ridge piece). The cruck blades are further connected by a collar and a tiebeam. The wall-plates (5½in square) are supported by cruck studs which are V-notched and face pegged into the backs of the cruck blades. The tiebeam (10in high) is not jointed to the cruck studs despite their almost touching. The cruck studs (4in by 6-8in) are tied to the blades a foot below the top by cruck spurs through barefaced notch-lapped joints, rather than the more normal lap-dovetail. However, the joints between the crucks and the tiebeam and collar (10in x 4in) on T2 use half-lapped barefaced dovetails throughout.

Truss T1 has are six close-set studs (8in x 4in) between the tiebeam and the collar. Although the middle two have been partially cut to form a window, a photograph from 1951 shows one of these intact and an off centre blocked window; this suggests that there was originally no window here. Below the tiebeam, there were originally nine studs, though the left hand two have been removed (probably for a doorway, since blocked) The absence of a peghole in the tiebeam indicates that the central window position is probably original, although the studs are too decayed at the junction with the windowsill rail to identify peg holes there. There seem to have been no studs above the collar or at the ends of the tiebeam intersecting the cruck blades. Much of the original sill-beam remains, into which the bottoms of the crucks are tenoned; large sarsen stones are incorporated in the rubble stone foundation below them. A small window below the blocked up door position lights the brick-vaulted cellar. The ridge has been removed (as have the original rafters), but what appears to be one side of the tenon on the top of the king-post is visible above the saddle.

Truss T2 differs from T1 in a number of ways. The crucks are boxed heart, without studs or evidence of infilling; it uses lap-dovetail halvings, and the blades are joined at the top by a yoke a couple of inches below the ridge position at which the cruck blades just touch (apex type 'A'). The blades are 11 by 10in thick and sit on a transverse sill beam (10 by 8in deep). The axial sill beams between each cruck truss are tenoned into the sides of the transverse sills. The truss carries a collar (7 by 8in) but any tiebeam is completely hidden within the first floor construction. In both bays I and II the purlins (8-9 by 7-10in) are trenched over the back of the blades (apart from the eastern blade of truss T2 which carries a packing piece). They are braced by convex wind-braces (8-9 by 2in) (removed on the north side of T2). The purlins in bay II indicate the previous existence of truss III by their being trenched at the south end and by halvings for windbraces.

Assembly marks are visible on truss T2 and the western outside wall face. T2 is marked by two gouged strokes for the eastern side, and two strokes plus a half circle of 1½in diameter on the western face. 'Square' marks are visible on the northern face of T2 between the spur and tiebeam on the western side, and between the spur and collar on the eastern side. No marks could be identified on T1 due to the weathering of the timbers.

The original side wall framing exists on the west side of bay I. This consists only of a middle rail (12in x 5in) which is tenoned into the cruck studs. No evidence was visible for any studs above or below this rail. On the eastern side of bay I, the secondary framing is arranged in three by three panels. Any old floor joists are concealed. An un-chamfered axial beam (9in square) is visible in bay II, but the report that bay II was open to the roof in 1960 indicates that this must be a recent insertion (Webster, 1954, 47).

PHASE 2: *Wing*: This two storied brick range (bays III-IV) has segmental single-brick window arches over the two ground floor front windows. The first floor windows are eyebrow dormers above the wall-plate and were originally formed in thatch. The bricks measure 9¼ by 4½ by 2½in and are laid in garden-wall bond. The floor joists, axial beams and purlins all appear to be reused timbers; the axial beams are unchamfered, but the fireplace lintel has a small chamfer and scroll stop

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Supposedly the house has been known as Church Cottage since 1582 (Leicester Advertiser, 5 Nov. 1960, p. 16).

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: eight samples were obtained through coring by R. Howard on 10th March 1990.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date	Date Cat
CAD-A01	East cruck blade truss T2	60	01c	1399	1457	1458	3d
CAD-A02	Collar truss T2	101	20C	1372	1452	1472	1
CAD-A03	East purlin bay I	105	22c	1367	1449	1471	1
CAD-A04	East purlin bay II	57	24c	—	—	—	—
CAD-A05	West cruck blade truss T2	76	09c	1394	1460	1469	5
CAD-A06	West purlin bay I	97	20C	1376	1452	1472	1
CAD-A07	East cruck blade truss T1	93	21C	1380	1451	1472	1
CAD-A08	West cruck blade truss T1	110	29C	1363	1443	1472	1

CAD-A Site sequence: (composed of samples 2, 3, 6, 7, 8), 110 rings long dated 1363–1472 with *t*-values 7.1 (E.MID). 5.9 (MC10); Samples CAD-A07 and 08 were from the crucks in the gable end truss which visually appeared to halved from the same tree; the *t*-value between the two is t=9.2.

Sample 1 dated 1399–1458 with *t*-values 5.6 (E.MID), 4.8 (S.ENG). 95% felling date range: (sample 1), 1470–1495 (see VA19.88, 20.89, 22.91 for site sequences).

Sample 5 dated 1394–1469 with *t*-values: 4.3 (E.MID), 4.5 (MC10), 3.9 (DLHMSQ01), 3.8 (TGCFSQ01), 3.7 (GOTSQ06), 4.2 (KNEHSQ01). Estimated felling date c. 1475 (a few rings lost in sampling). Sample 2 dates weakly with the same last date, but is regarded as undated.

Estimated felling date: (samples 2, 6, 7, 8 all have complete sapwood), **1472/3** (VA22.91). This felling date falls within the date range for sample 1 and is consistent with the approximate felling date for sample 5.