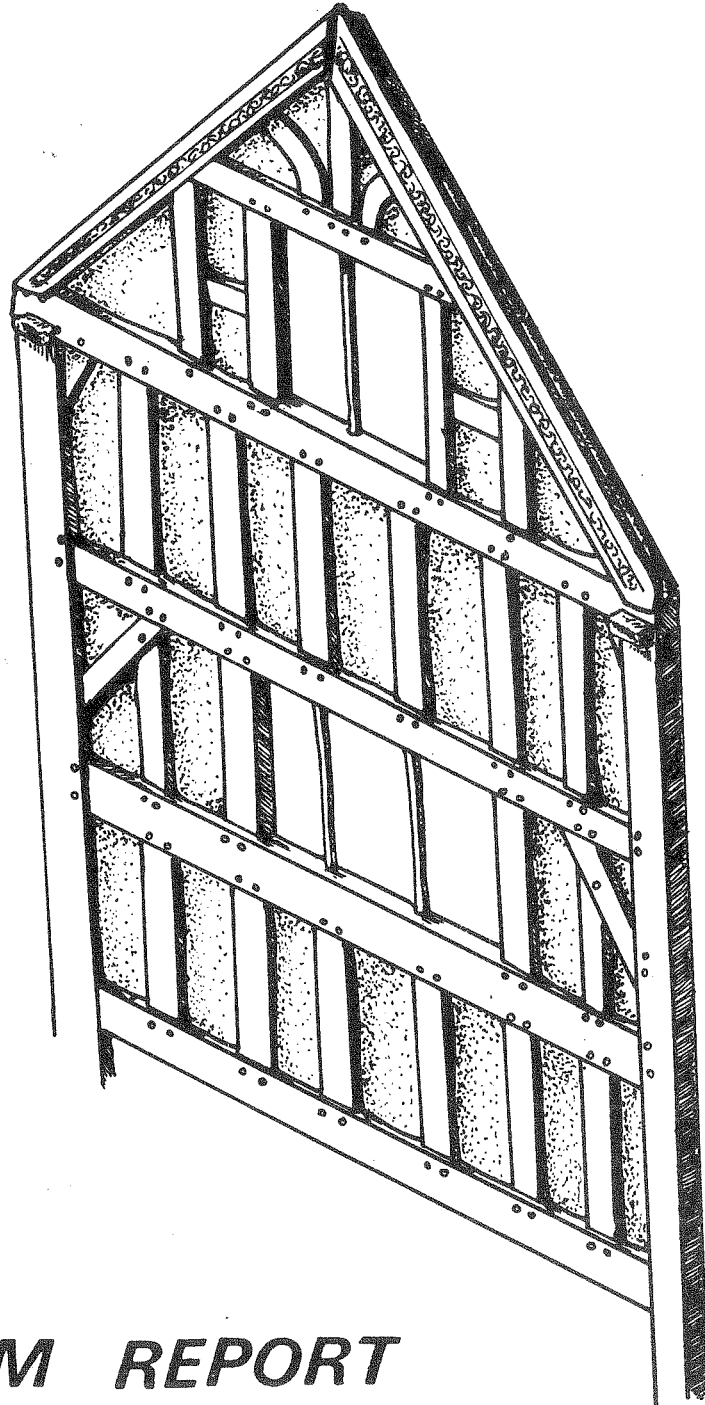


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1 BRIDGE STREET EVESHAM

WR
4372



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AN INTERIM REPORT

JANUARY 1989

This report is produced by:

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Town Hall,
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for:

English Heritage,
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and
English Heritage

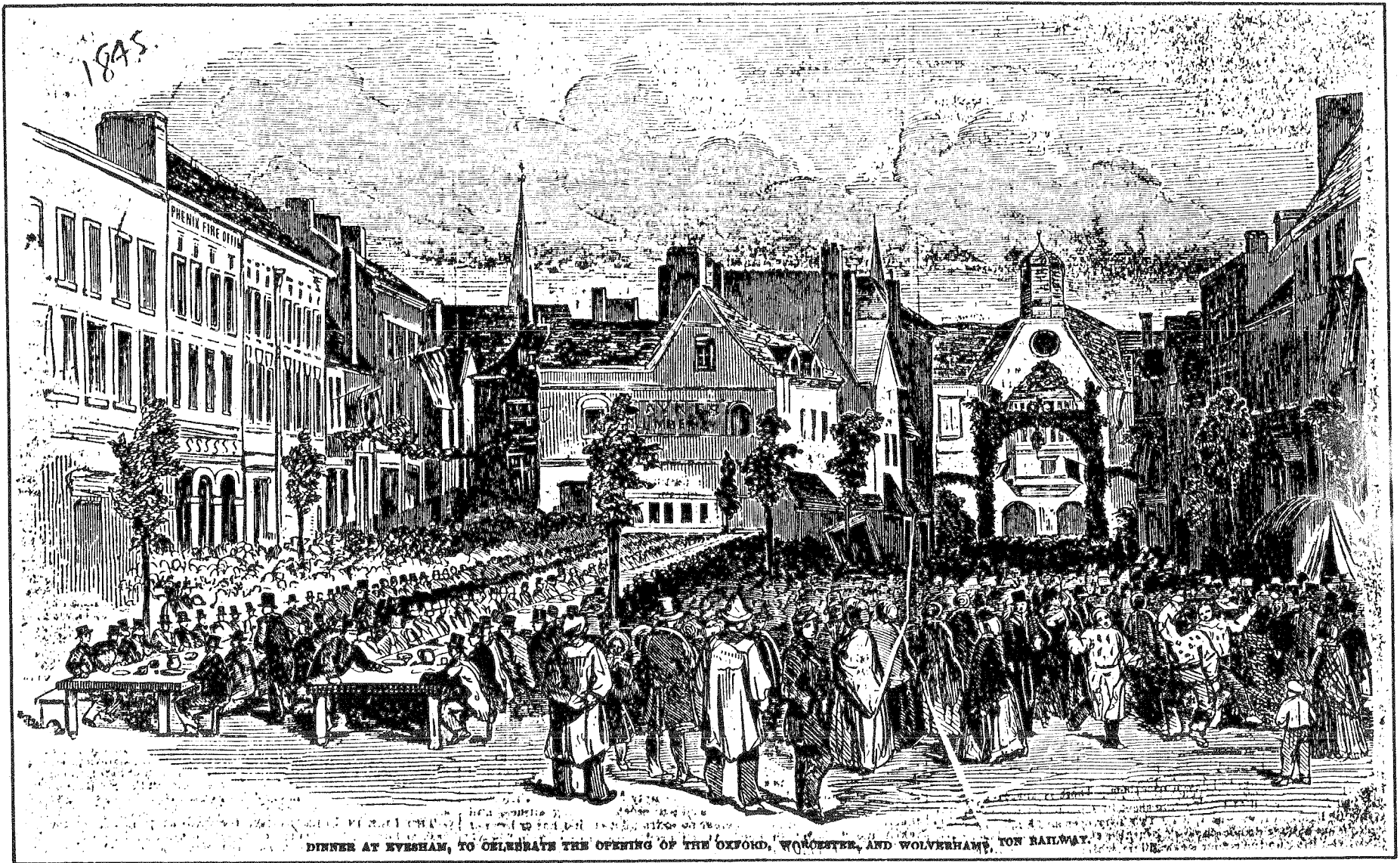
Cover:

Hypothetical reconstruction of the upper part of the surviving gable of building A which fronts on to High Street.

1 BRIDGE STREET EVESHAM

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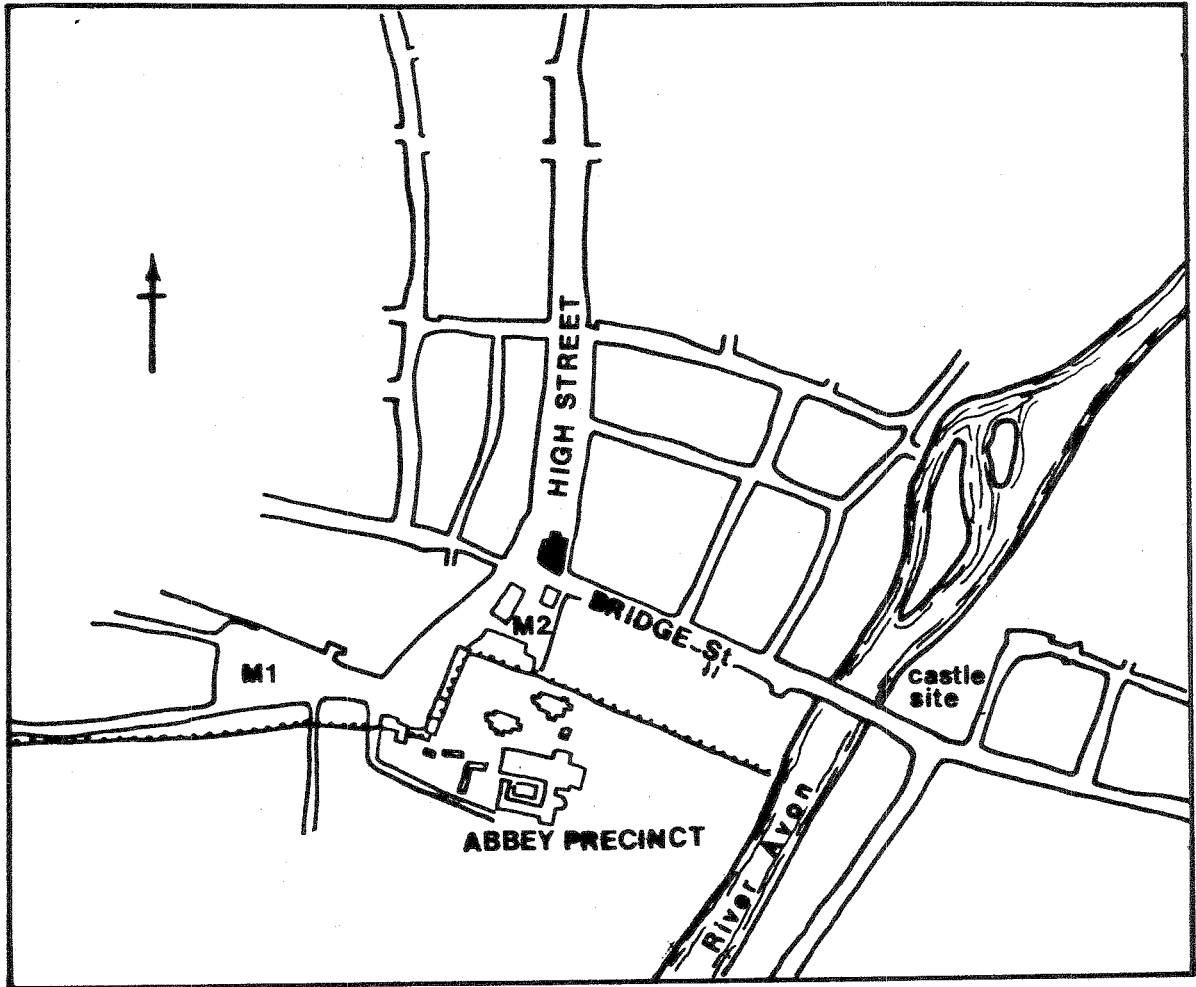
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DINNER AT EYESHAM, TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE OXFORD, WORCESTER, AND WOLVERHAMPTON RAILWAY.

The market place from the north in 1845

Part One: Introduction



The medieval part of Evesham showing the two suggested market places: M1 - Merstow Green, the pre-conquest market place; M2 - the new market

1, BRIDGE STREET

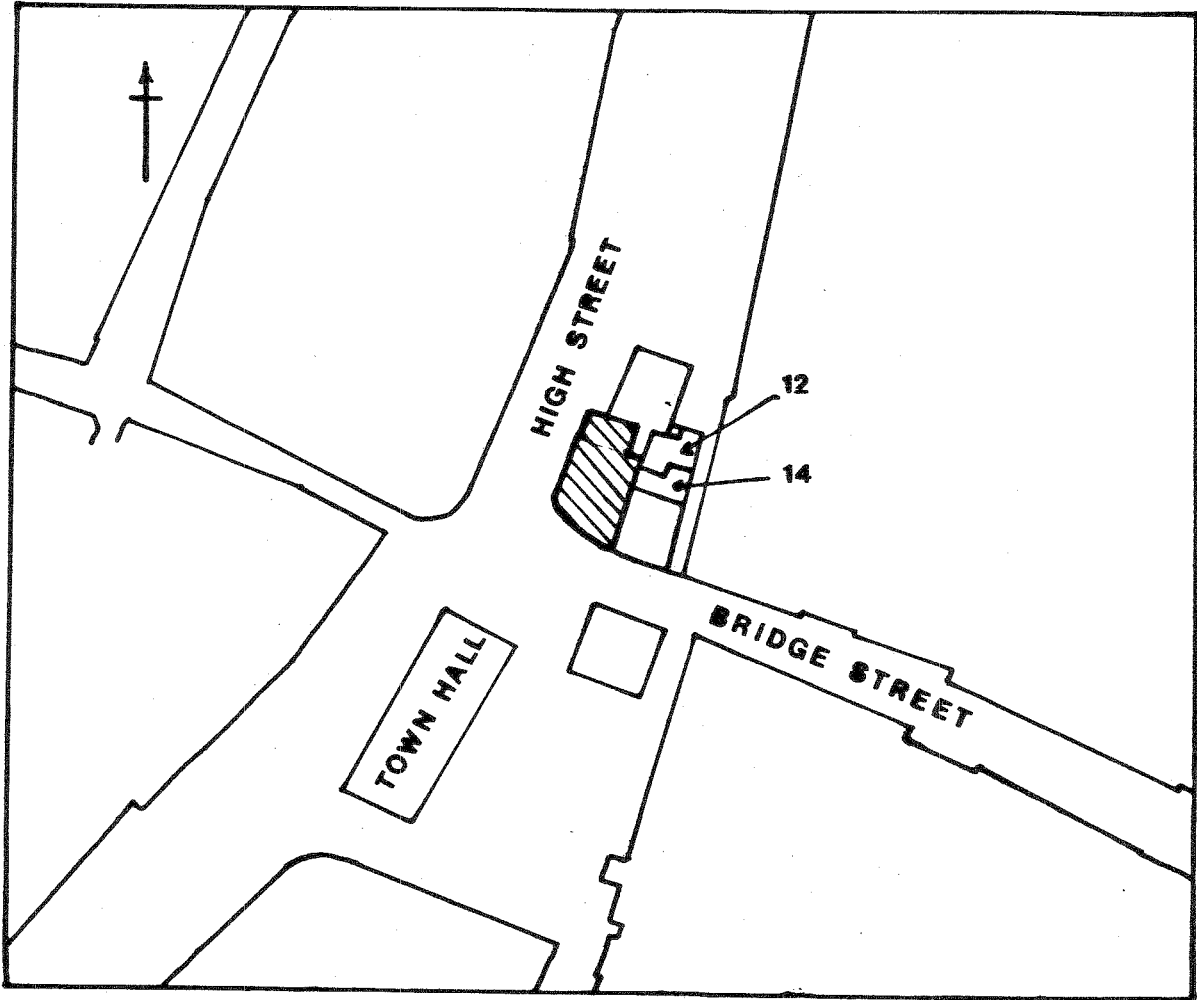
EVESHAM

Introduction

Evesham is in the south-eastern corner of Worcestershire on a promontory site in a loop of the River Avon. The abbey was founded in the early 8th century but the origin of the town is rather obscure. It probably grew as a small trading settlement outside the abbey precinct during the 8th and 9th centuries so that by 1055 Edward the Confessor could grant it a market and the privileges of a 'port'. The Domesday Book refers to it as a town, and by the late 12th century a cartulary lists almost 200 inhabitants some of whom were living in 'de novo burgo' - 'the new borough'.

The dissolution of the Abbey in 1539 must have caused some problems but by 1605 the mayor, alderman and burgesses of Evesham were granted borough status with the right to hold markets on both Monday and Friday and to hold three annual fairs (later increased to six).

The medieval part of Evesham comprises two distinct morphological units - the area around Merstow Green on the western side of the main Abbey gateway, and the area immediately to the north of the Abbey with High Street forming its main north-south road along the peninsula. It has been suggested that Merstow Green was the pre-conquest market place referred to by Edward the Confessor, and that the grid pattern of streets centring on the market place at the southern end of High Street was the 'novo burgo' of the 12th century.



The encroachments north of the line of Bridge Street

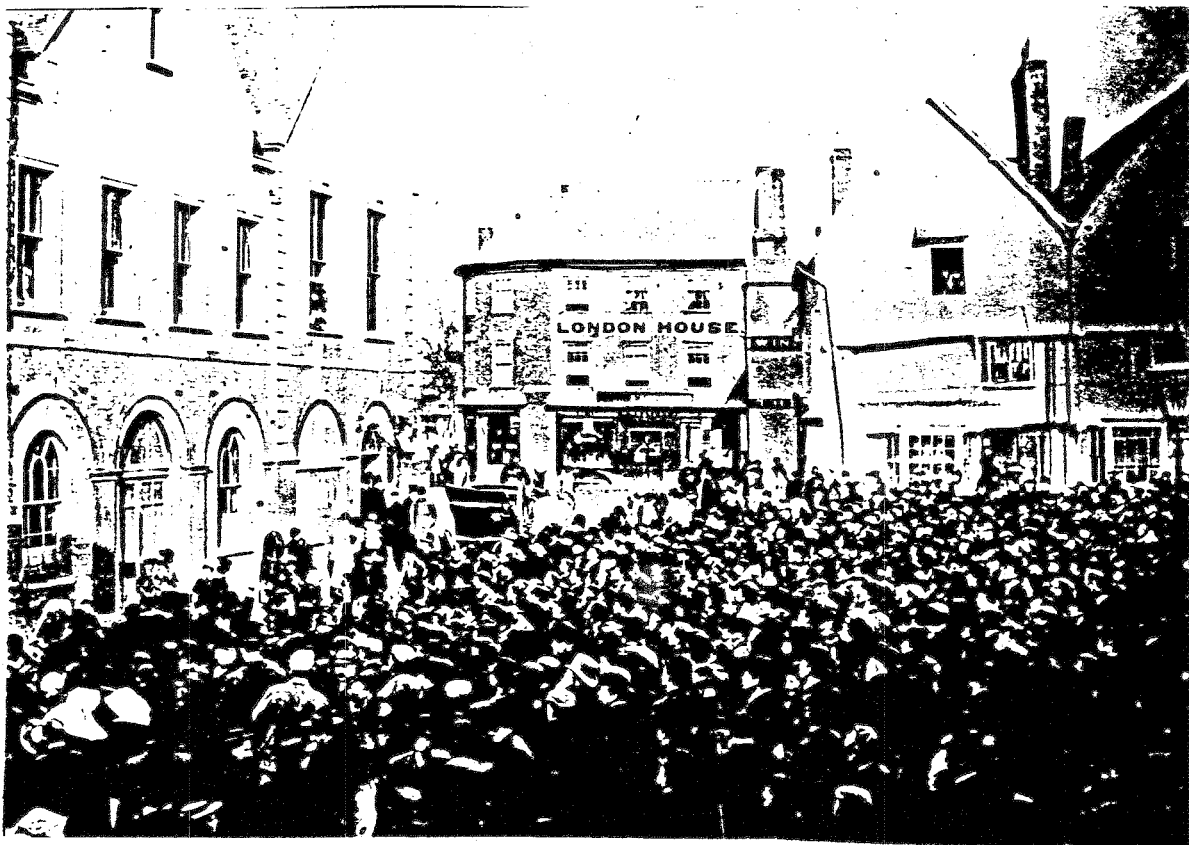
The new market place to the north of the abbey precinct has been reduced in size by encroachment as market stalls gradually became more permanent structures. Within the old market place are several historic buildings including the Town Hall (1586 and later) and the Booth Hall or Round House (now the National Westminster Bank) (late 15th century), both to the south of the line of Bridge Street.

The northernmost encroachment is on the north side of Bridge Street between High Street on the west and Allee de Dreux on the east. It consists of an irregular arrangement of buildings of which 1 Bridge Street (including 2 High Street) forms the south-western corner. The remaining buildings in the block include 12 High Street, a 17th century listed building on the north-eastern corner occupied by Smitty's; a late Victorian building with a flat-roofed extension occupied by Freeman, Hardy, Willis at the north-western corner; and 3 Bridge Street, a 19th century building occupied by Oliver's on the south-eastern corner. There is a small single storey building between Oliver's and Smitty's facing onto the alley and occupied by a jewellers shop.

No. 12 (Smitty's) is described in the listing detail as follows:

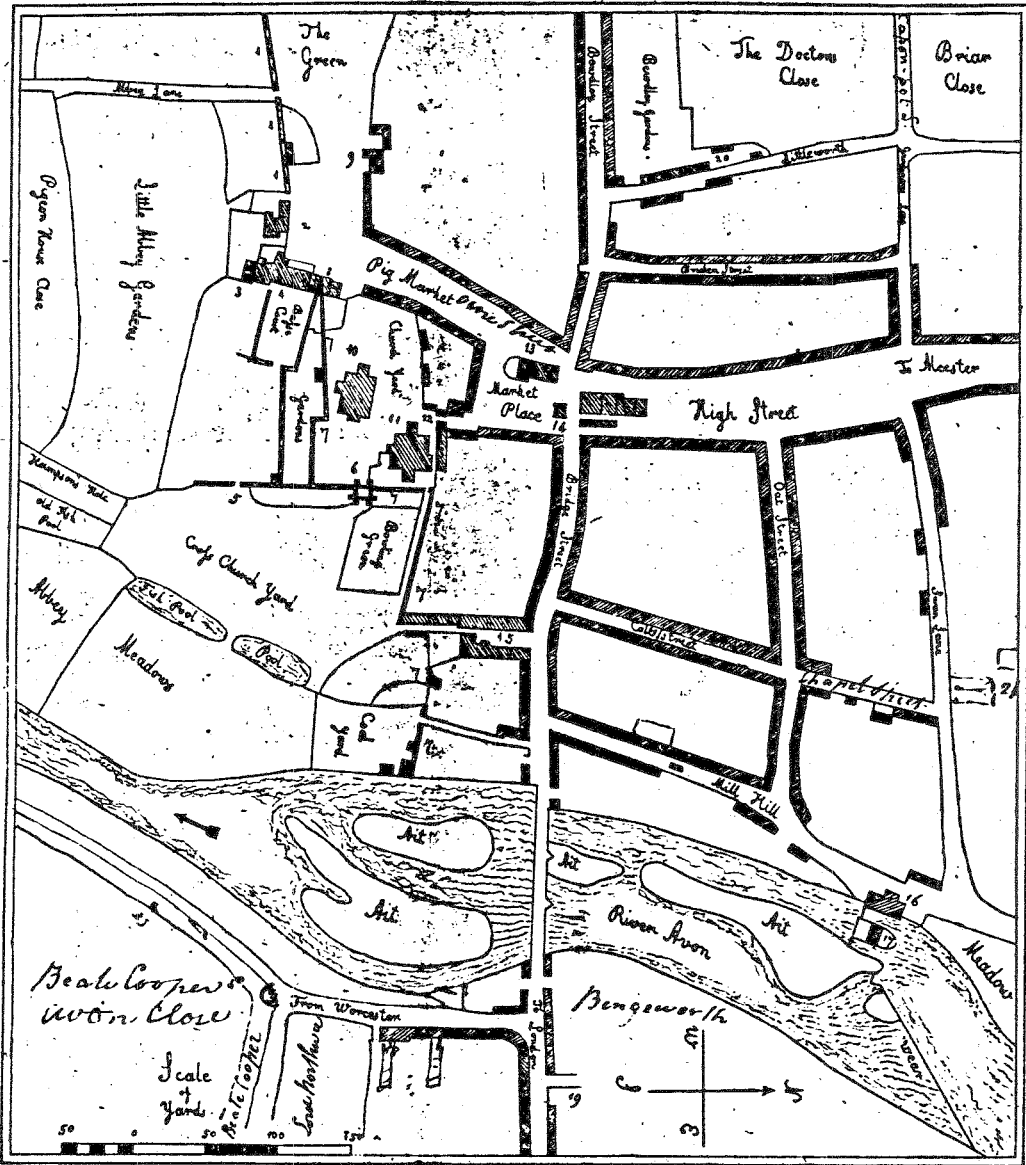
"17th century with later alterations. Timber frame exposed at 1st storey on north and east sides; 2 storeys; gabled end to north with 19th century centred bay window tiered over both storeys; 1st floor overhung on east side supported on later wood brackets; projecting eaves; hipped tile roof. Ground storey altered and with modern shop on east side."

A visual examination suggests that the listing description should have included the adjoining building to the west which is in the same ownership. Although this is encased in brick and has had its roof cut flat at the upper purlin level, it may well include 17th century elements.



The Market Square, Evesham, c.1900 with Buildings D and E in the middle distance, the Town Hall on the left and the Round House on the right.

Part Two: The Survey



Plan of Evesham.

Plan of Evesham in 1820

The Survey

The Hereford Archaeology Unit was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake an analytical survey of 1 Bridge Street (including 2 High Street).

We inspected the building on 9th January 1989 to prepare estimates and carried out the survey work between 13th January and 23rd January 1989.

Much of the late plasterwork had been stripped out of the building before our first visit and the main timber-framed elements were exposed. A limited amount of further stripping was organised during the survey to expose specific features of the earlier timber-framing.

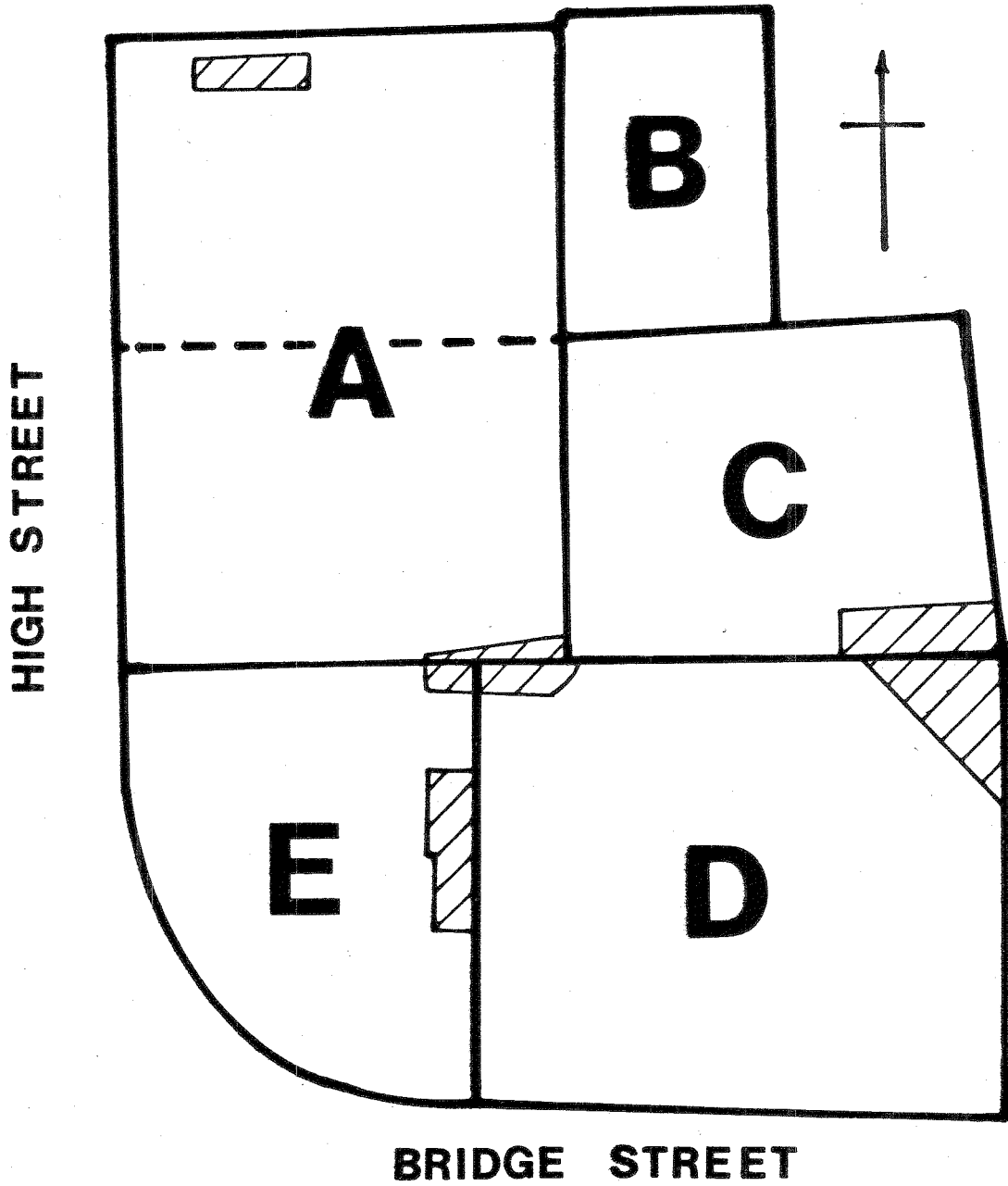
The detailed survey work was concentrated on building A, the earliest of the buildings on the site. Each frame was drawn at a scale of 1:20 showing original and secondary timber-framing. A plan at the original second floor level and a plan showing the roof structure of the building was also prepared.

The elevations were then re-drawn to show the original arrangement of the timbers and to provide reconstructions.

Acknowledgments

Arthur Fryer, Custodian of the Almonry Museum, Evesham, was particularly helpful in providing historical information. The staff at Worcester and Evesham libraries and the Worcester County Record Offices at County Hall and at St Helen's, Worcester, helped with the provision of historic photographs, maps and plans.

The survey was supervised by R K Morris and drawings were prepared by R Williams, D A Thomas, and D Beeley; the finished drawings were by R Williams.



The building elements of 1 Bridge Street

THE COMPLEX OF BUILDINGS

There are five separate structures within the study area. They are as follows:

Building A: 17th century timber-framed

Building B: late 17th century addition to the north bay of building A

Building C: early 18th century addition to the south bay of building A

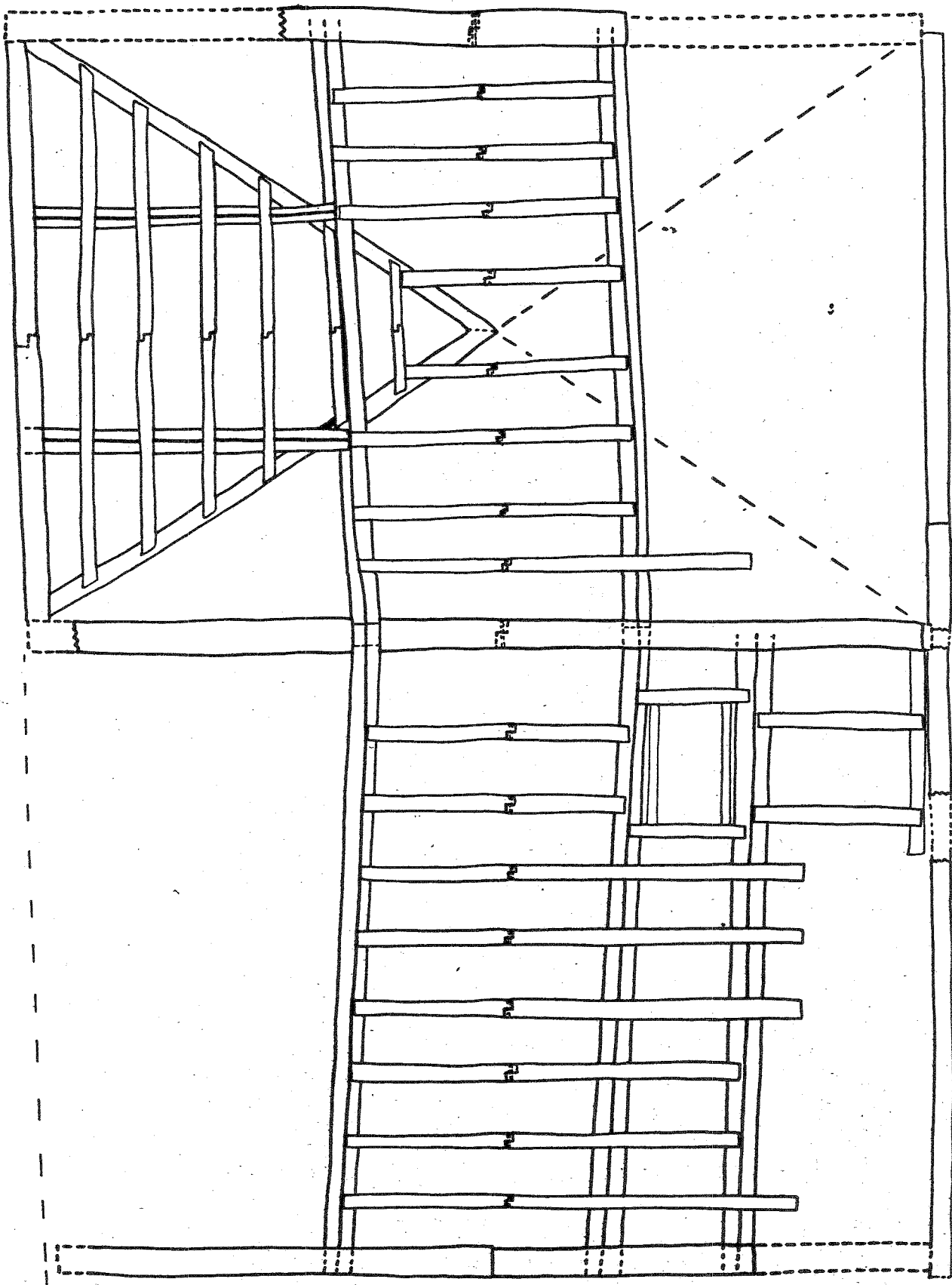
Building D: early 18th century brick-built town house facing Bridge Street

Building E: early 19th century rebuild of the western part of building D to provide a curved corner.

BUILDING A

Building A is a two-bay, two-storey, timber-framed building with attic and cellar under a gabled roof aligned parallel to High Street. The northern bay has a dormer gable facing High Street and evidence in the roof structure indicates that there was originally a similar feature attached to the southern bay. The building was constructed as a single unit and probably dates to the first half of the 17th century.

The insertion of large shop windows and the opening up of the ground floor area has resulted in virtually all of the ground floor timber-framing being lost. The facade facing High Street has been replaced in brick apart from the northern dormer gable and there have been changes of floor levels, room divisions, openings and stairways as is common with a building of this age. However, the remaining timber framework is sufficient to enable reconstructions to be deduced from the level of the original first floor girding beam to the apex of the roof.



Building A:

Roof plan showing survival of original rafters

The Roof

The double-collared gabled roof of building A was designed to be large enough to accommodate an attic floor above tie-beam level, and the lower collar of the intermediate truss is interrupted by the original framework of an opening between the two bays at this level. There are two purlins on the rear slope and a single purlin on the front. The two slopes of the roof are built differently. The east, or back, slope consists of continuous rafters resting on clasped purlins. The west, or front, slope has rafters from the roof apex tenoned into the butted purlin. This arrangement was designed to allow some headroom within the dormer gables. Many of the original rafters survive; they are coupled, being tenoned and pegged at the apex.

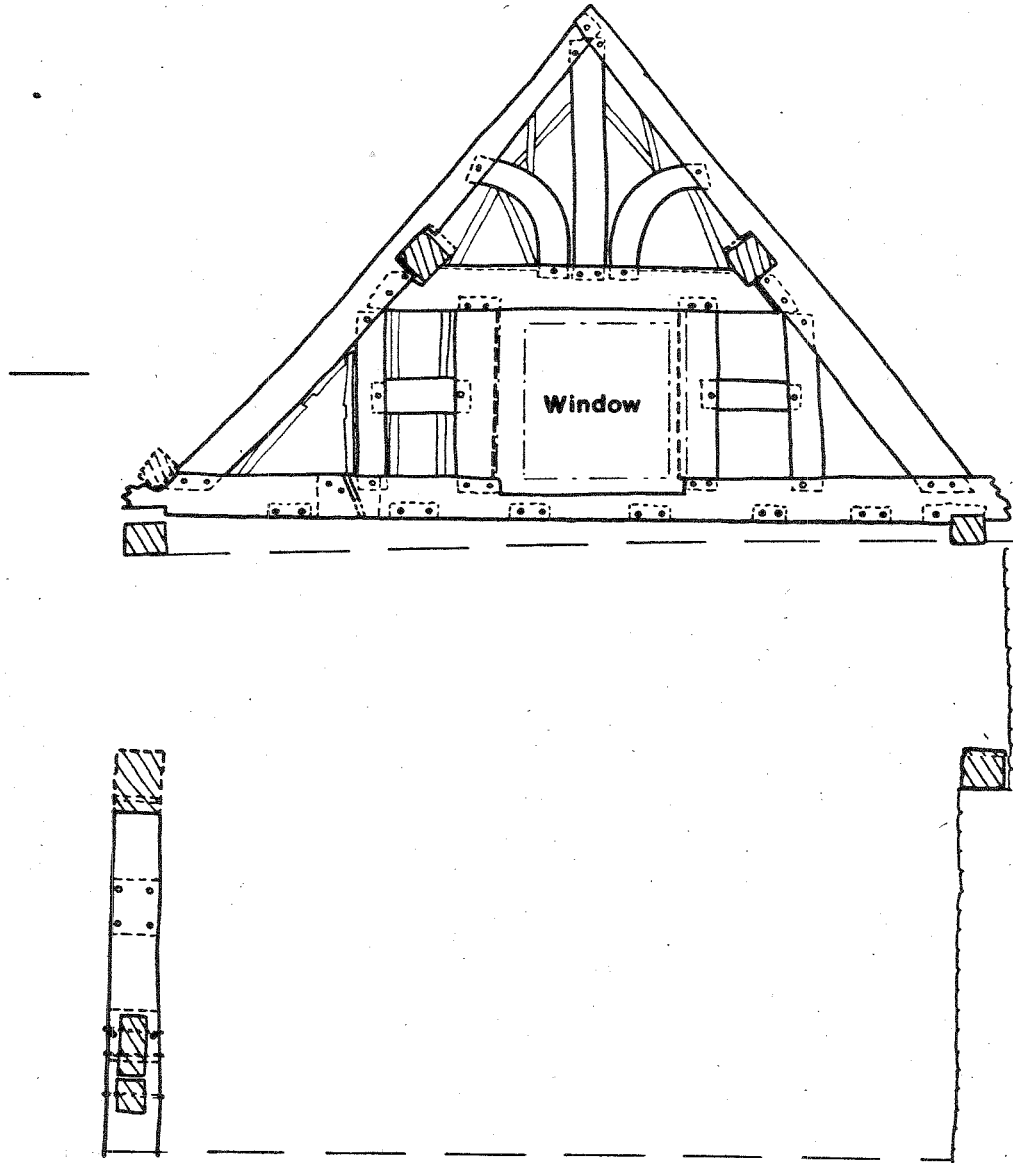
The dormer gable and the front slope of the roof are covered with slates; the back slope with modern plain tiles. The upper sections of the chimneys above the roof line have been demolished.

The West Face

The surviving dormer gable is of full bay width with its wall plates and frames tenoned into the principal rafters of the north and intermediate trusses. The gable truss was clearly designed to incorporate a window between the tie beam and the collar. A king strut rises from the collar to the apex flanked by a pair of decorative curved braces. The ends of a single pair of purlins are clasped between the collar and the principal rafters. The other ends of the purlins originally rested on the main roof purlin but were not tenoned or pegged. They have slipped from their original positions and are now held by iron straps.

The northern bay was re-modelled in the 18th century when the facade was plastered over and the original windows were replaced. A new window was inserted in the original opening in the dormer gable, and two large balanced sashes were inserted at first floor level. The facade of the southern bay might have been re-modelled in the same style and at the same time but there is no surviving evidence of this as the frontage of this bay was completely rebuilt in the early 19th century. The dormer gable was then removed, along with all the west frame members, and a new, slightly taller, brick facade was built allowing the west slope of the roof of the bay to be raised. This new front had balanced sash windows on first and attic floors and a bay window on the ground floor. A similar bay window on the ground floor of the northern bay might have been added at about the same time.

This different treatment of the two bays suggests that they had come into separate ownership by the early 19th century. In the 1920's, however, they appear to have been re-united. The facade of the northern bay was faced in brick and a mock-Tudor gable fixed to the original framework. A new window was inserted into the original opening in this gable, and a three-part window lit the first floor, matching a re-built window in the southern bay; the brickwork was subsequently rendered.



Building A:

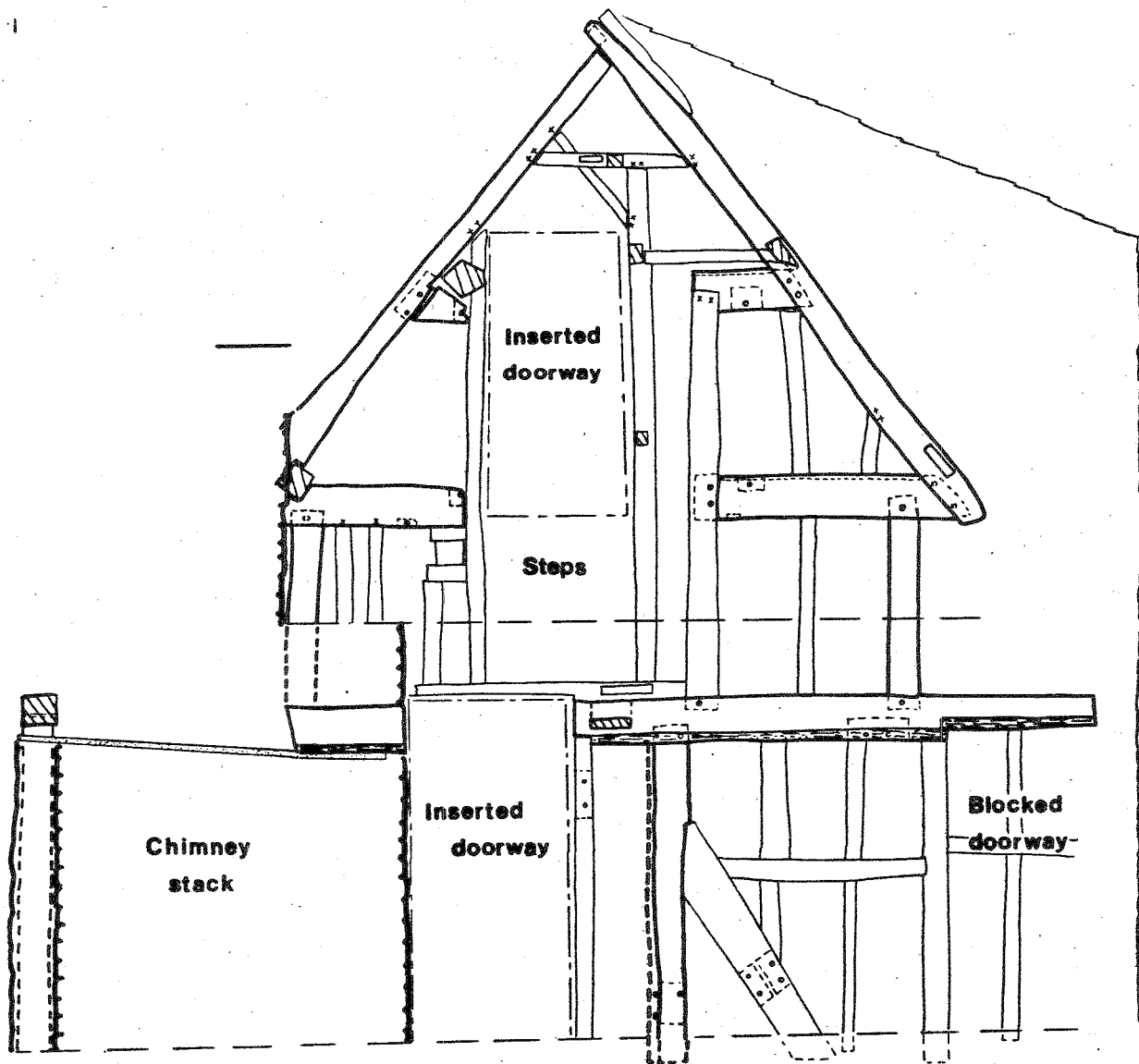
West gable of north bay, east face
As surveyed

The South Frame

This frame has suffered some alteration due to the insertion of openings to building E and the addition of a chimney stack. It has been totally removed at ground floor level. In its original phase the truss consisted of a tie-beam, chamfered on its northern arris, and two collar beams. There were four struts between tie-beam and lower collar, and two struts between lower and upper collars. Below the truss, the eastern principal post survives but is mainly obscured by the inserted fireplace and a concrete render. A pair of side-braces rose from the principal posts to the tie-beam, but both have been removed. Only one of the original intermediate posts survives. This has a through mortice for a low rail at the same height as the rail in the intermediate truss.

When the south bay of building A became connected with the early 18th century range (Buildings D/E), several openings had to be cut into the frame to provide access. Two doorways were inserted at first floor level; the eastern doorway (not seen in the frame drawing) had a chamfered head on the south side of the tie-beam and the existing strut was cut back slightly on its eastern side to accommodate the opening. The western door head was also cut into the tie-beam. The western door post of the attic doorway still survives, morticed into the cut-through lower collar and nailed on to the upper collar.

Following the rebuilding of building E and the re-modelling of the south bay of building A, which are assumed to have happened during the early 19th century, the new floor levels meant that the doorways had to be re-cut at a higher level. On the attic floor the upper collar had to be cut through to cope with the higher doorway, and more of the lower collar was cut away because the new door was built off-centre to accommodate the new attic stairs in building E. On the first floor the western doorway was blocked and the eastern one re-cut at a higher level. The insertion of the chimney stack, which resulted in the removal of part of the eastern end of the frame, was probably part of the early 19th century work.



Building A: South frame, north face
As surveyed

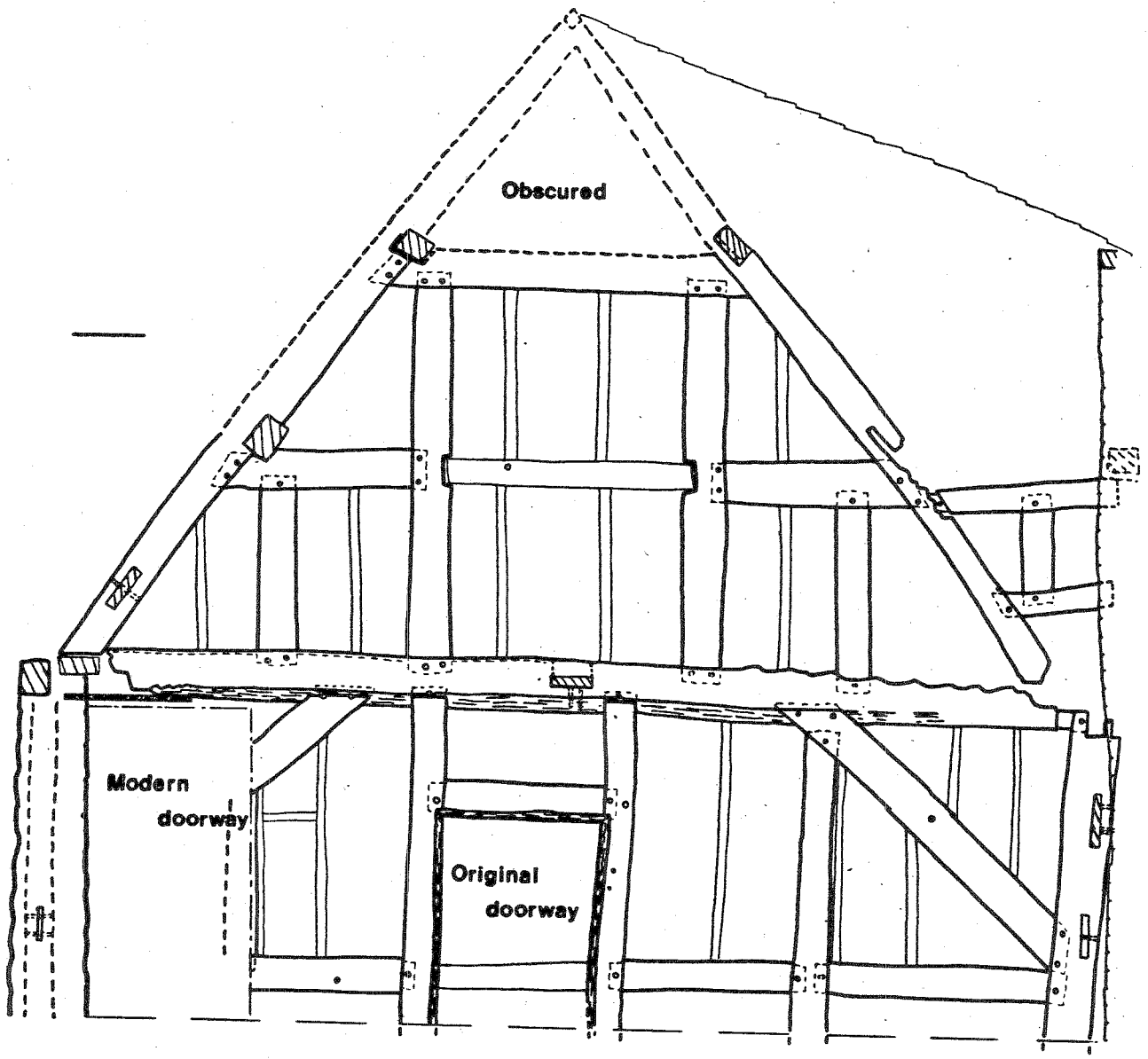
The Intermediate Frame

Despite several alterations this frame is substantially complete from just above the level of the first floor girding beam. The apex of the truss was inaccessible but is assumed to be intact. This was clearly designed as an intermediate frame and originally had openings at both first and attic floor levels; these were subsequently blocked following the division of the building and the changes in floor levels.

The ends of the tie-beam have perished and the remainder is plain-chamfered on both sides. The posts and braces below the tie-beam were tenoned into it after it had been chamfered, suggesting that it may have been re-used. Centrally placed pegged mortices in both sides of the tie-beam carried the tenons for the spine-beams. They are answered by similar mortices in the tie-beams of the northern and southern trusses.

Enough of the framing of the original first floor survives to suggest how it was built. Diagonal braces rose from the principal posts to the tie-beam, but apart from this none of the framing was symmetrical. The off-centre doorway is flanked by two posts which ran between the first floor girding beam and the tie-beam. An attempt was made to provide a measure of symmetry to each side of the doorway by inserting centrally-positioned posts from the girding beam to the diagonal braces. There is a low, interrupted rail, approximately one-third of the storey high. The side-frame of the dormer gable is tenoned into the slope of the west principal rafter.

After the first floor doorway was blocked the wall was replastered and an elaborate pattern of circular mock-timberwork was painted on its northern side, much of which remains. At a later date, a new doorway was inserted linking the first floor rooms at the new, higher level and cutting through the eastern brace. The ground-floor frame and the first floor girding beam were probably removed in the early 20th century.



Building A:

Intermediate frame, north face
As surveyed

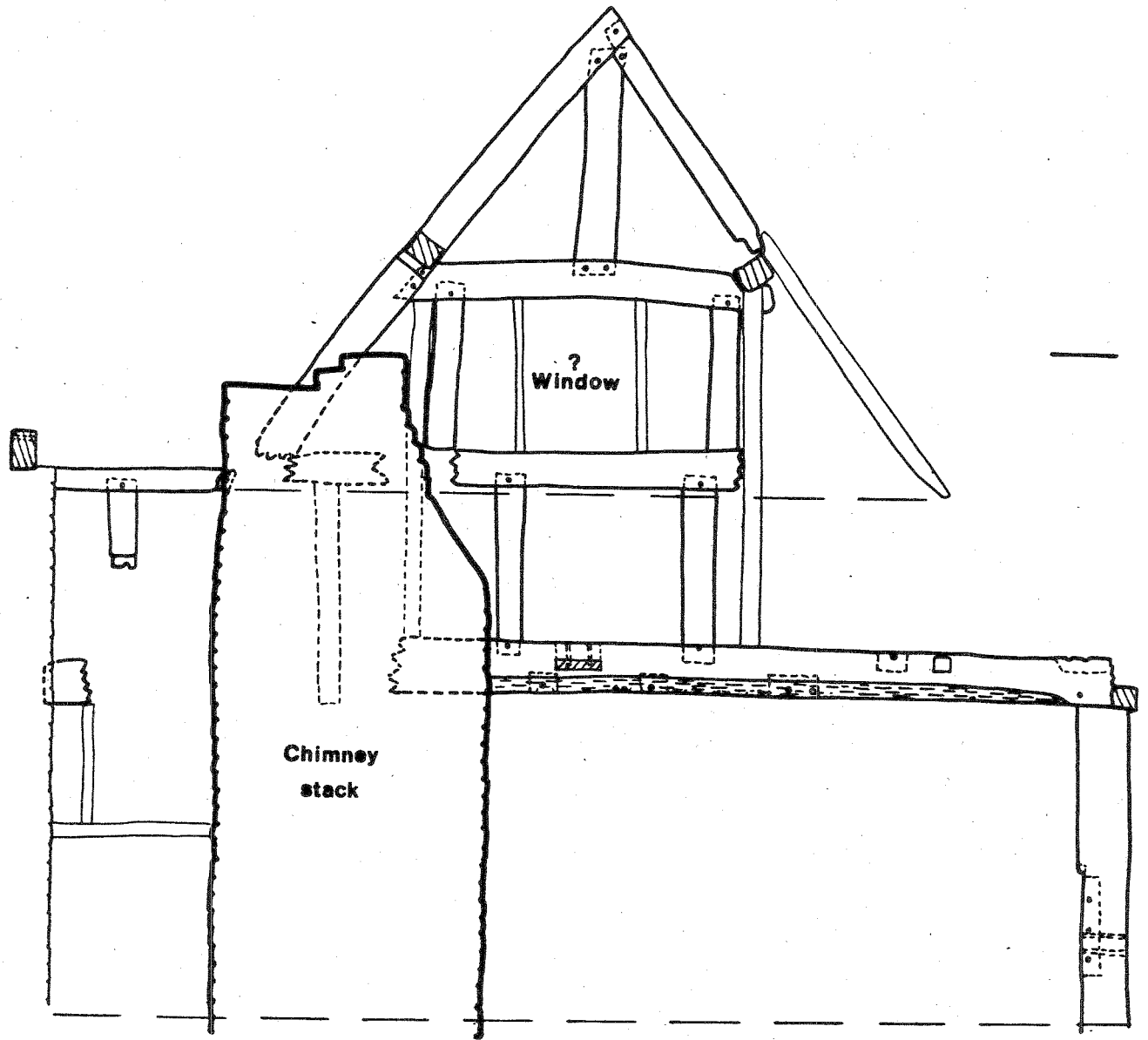
The North Frame

The surviving sections of this frame comprise the truss and the east principal post. This post is the only timber in the building which continues down to the ground floor.

The truss has a tie-beam, chamfered on its inner arris, and two collar beams. Two of the original four struts between the tie-beam and the lower collar are still in place and there are two struts between the lower and upper collars which may have provided the framing for a window. From the upper collar, a king strut rises to the underside of the apex of the principal rafters. The lower collar has been forced slightly to the north following the loss of the original attic floor and the insertion of a raised one.

The northern wall frame of the dormer gable is tenoned into the west principal rafter of the truss but this junction is in very poor condition. The western section of the tie-beam is also in a parlous state. The inserted chimney stack was built around the tie-beam at this point and has clearly caused many of the problems of damp and rot in this area.

The evidence from the surviving principal post and in the soffit of the tie-beam shows that this frame was originally similar to the south frame, with braces from post to tie-beam, a low mid-storey rail, and probably four vertical struts. There is no evidence of windows below the attic level suggesting that the building abutted an earlier but lower one. Just below the present ground floor ceiling the principal post has blocked mortices at the same height in its west and south faces, which show the position of the original first floor girding beams. There are lower mortice relating to the mid-rails of the ground floor. The post rests on flat stones.



Building A: North frame, south face
As surveyed

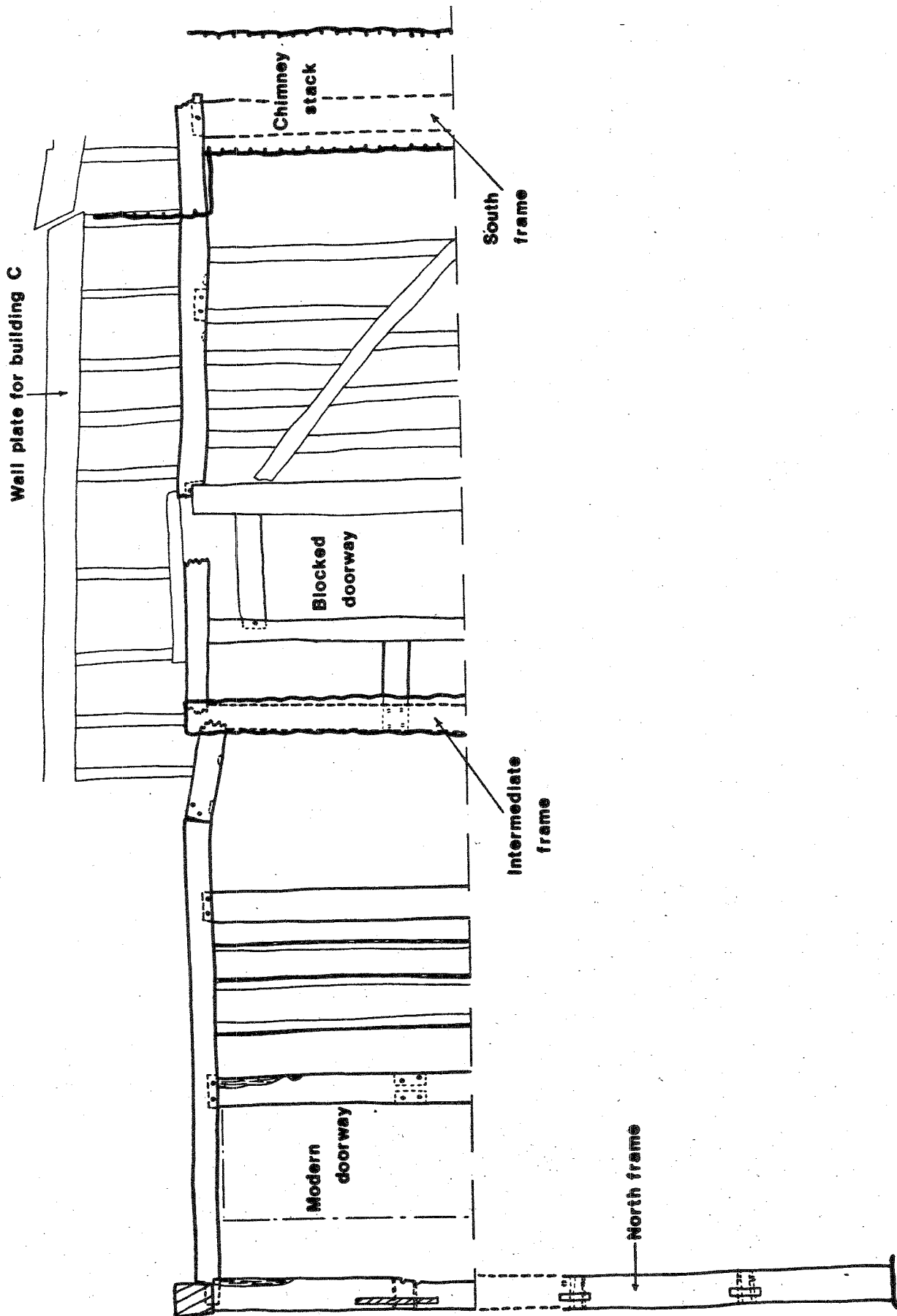
The East Frame

Apart from the north-east corner post, the east frame of building A was not immediately visible. Additional clearance revealed the main structure at first-floor level; it is assumed that it is totally lost below the level of the first-floor girding beam.

The post belonging to the intermediate frame and the south-eastern post are both encased in concrete and could not be examined in any detail. The wall plate, which has a poorly-constructed scarf joint close to the intermediate frame, is now in several parts. The frame could not be examined below the present first-floor level - parts of the girding beam could exist but if so are completely hidden.

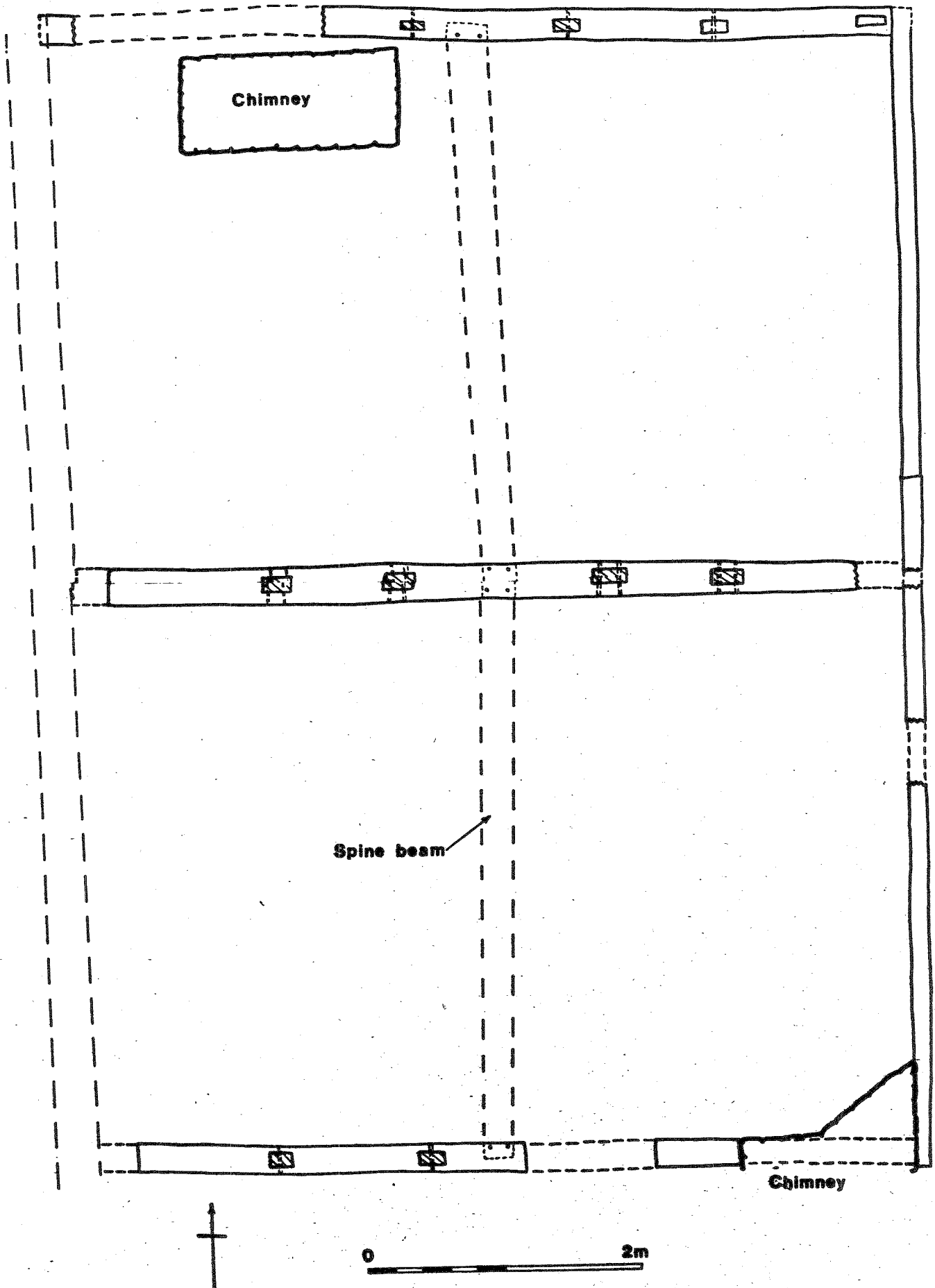
The frame originally consisted of six panels, three in each bay, with rails some two-thirds of the way down between the wall plate and the first-floor girding beam. The wall plate was used to support the higher roof plate of building C in the early 19th century by inserting a series of struts. It was presumably at this time that the rails were removed and replaced by a series of struts in an attempt to provide the additional support. An inserted, blocked doorway may have led to a cupboard underneath the stairs in building C.

There is no evidence for any windows in this frame and it may well have been built against an existing building which would have had to be demolished before buildings B and C were erected.



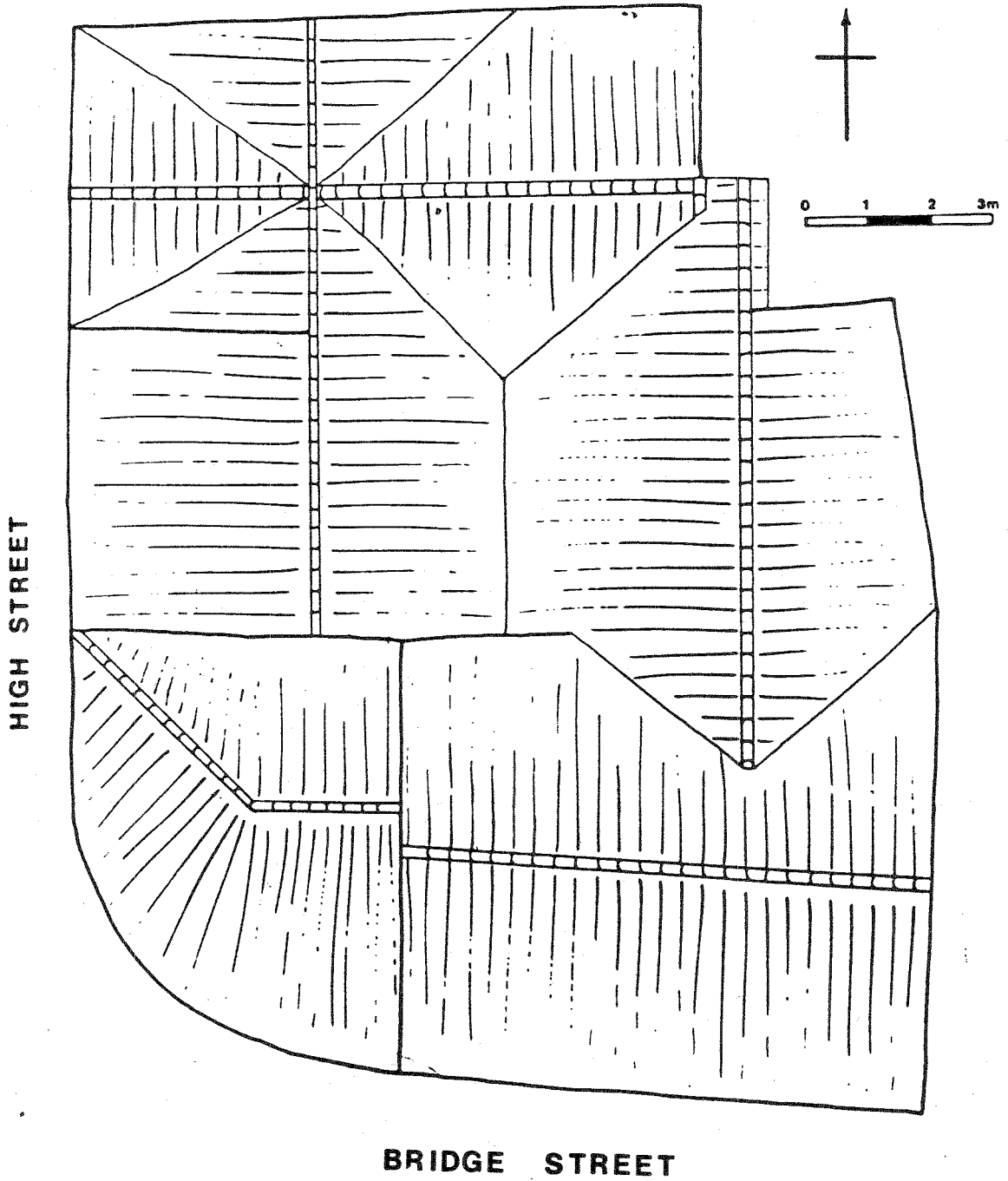
Building A:

East frame, west face
As surveyed

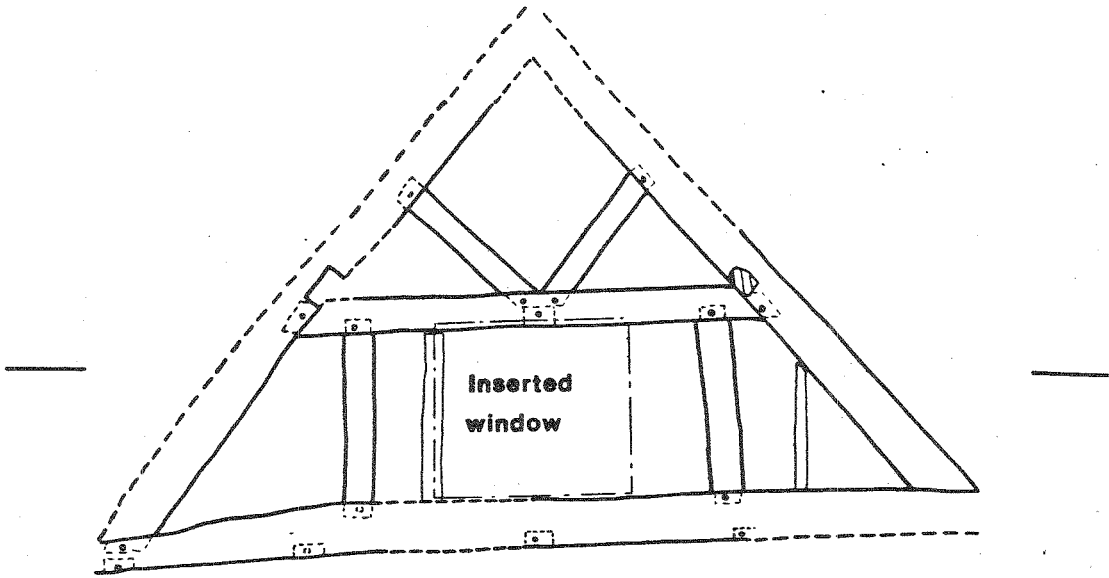


Building A:

Plan at original second floor level



Sketch plan of the robfscape of 1 Bridge Street



0 2m

Building B:

East frame, west face

As surveyed

BUILDING B

This is a single bay, timber-framed extension to building A, with 2½ storeys under a coupled-rafter roof running at right angles to that of the main block. It was probably a service wing. Virtually all the timber frame beneath wall-plate level has either been replaced or encased in rendered brick.

This range must have been built after building A, probably in the second half of the 17th century. The rafters of building A were cut off at the upper purlin level and the lower purlin was removed to accommodate the roof of building B. The single pair of purlins are butted into the principals of the east gable truss and run through to the upper purlins of building A, where they are held in place by iron straps.

The gable truss is quite plain, and probably had three struts between tie-beam and collar. Above the collar, a pair of 'V' struts help support the principal rafters. This truss, and the roof itself, is virtually intact.

A spiral staircase was inserted into the ground floor of building B to replace those removed in buildings C and D in the latter part of the 20th century.

BUILDING C

Building C is a wide, single bay, 2½ storey partly timber-framed range built to the rear of the southern bay of building A and next to building B. The building is poorly constructed, using many second-hand timbers. The gabled roof is aligned parallel to that of building A and there is a valley between the two roofs. The north gable truss is timber-framed, rendered externally, but the wall below the tie-beam is rendered on both sides and it was impossible to see what it is constructed of; the same is true of the east side wall. The upper part of the west wall is timber-framed and sits on the wall plate of building A.

The low standard of workmanship in the timber-framing probably points to a fairly late date for this range, and it may be contemporary with the early 18th century structure, building D/E, functioning as a service wing. The southern ends of the single pair of purlins are supported by the brick side wall of building D. However, the present rather awkward access between the attic floor of building C and the second floor of building D could suggest that it was inserted later and there is some evidence in the rafters in the south-western corner of the former building to support this.

The original 18th century staircase still leads from the 1st floor to the attic level but the ground floor staircase, which curved underneath the higher one, was removed when the building was used as an office in the later part of the 20th century.

Below the attic level the building has been comprehensively modernised leaving virtually no traces of the original structure visible.

BUILDINGS D & E

Building D is a large brick-built range of 3½ storeys above a cellar and under a gabled roof aligned parallel to Bridge Street. There is sufficient structural and stylistic evidence to show that this range was originally longer and included the squared-off site of building E. Two secondary doorways, cut into the southern frame of building A at first floor level, which are now blocked, imply that at least the southern bay of that building was incorporated into the new property.

Building D/E, therefore, was built as a fashionable, early 18th century town house with a symmetrical facade to Bridge Street. Flanking the central passageway, which contained the main staircase, were large chambers on each of the main floors. These were each lit by two tall sash window, the central bay being lit by an identical window on each floor, except at the ground floor where the main door was positioned. This room division seems to have been maintained even in the attic and there is evidence, in the rafter pattern, of dormer windows maintaining the symmetry of the fenestration above the parapet.

Despite the elegance of its Bridge Street facade, which was probably matched by the gable wall facing High Street, the building was not very well constructed. Most of the timbers appear to have been re-used, especially in the roof structure. The two trusses carrying the single pair of purlins have a tie-beam and a collar and are positioned at each side of the former central bay. They are made up of timbers of comparatively thin scantling. At the east gable the purlins are supported by the brickwork; presumably this would have been the case at the west gable as well. The purlins are given added support by a single pair of wind-braces rising from the west face of the eastern truss. The rafters are of a variety of sizes; the upper set of rafters are tenoned into

the purlin and many of the lower rafters appear to be later additions. The sprocketing is probably later as well and the roof was probably hidden originally by a low parapet.

All the internal partitions are timber-framed and made up of re-used timbers. The section of the rear, or north, wall adjacent to building A was not built in brick like the rest of the outside walls. Instead, beams, running between the west gable wall and the rest of the north wall brickwork, were inserted to support the floors.

In the early 19th century the west bay of the building was virtually demolished and replaced by building E with a curved front to the corner of Bridge Street and High Street.

Building D

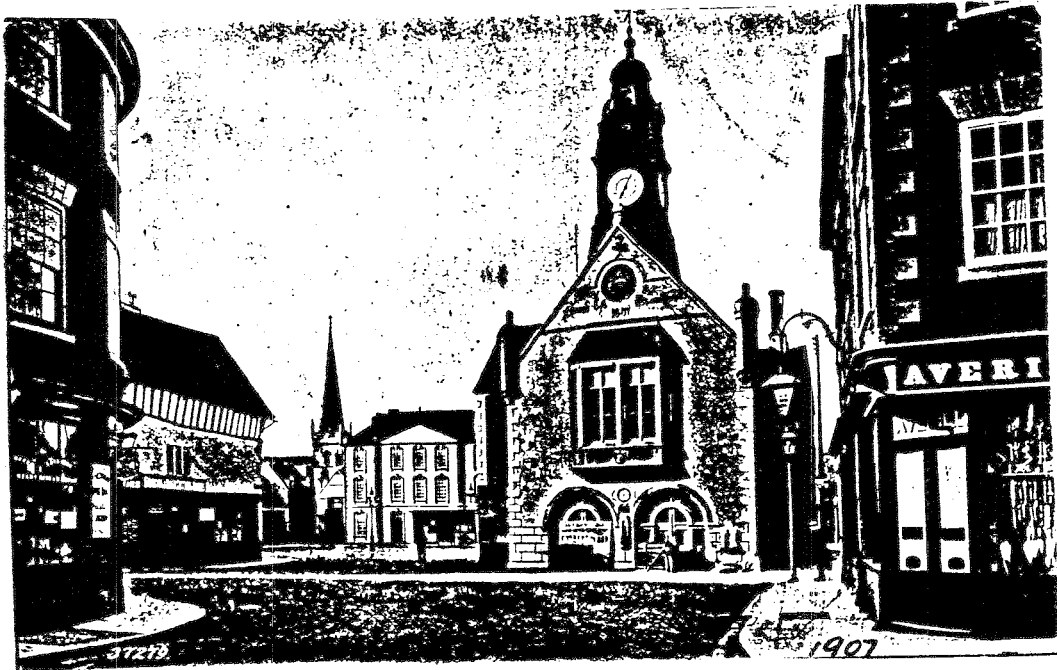
The remaining part of the original building maintained its facade to Bridge Street, but was now left with three windows on each of the main floors. There was an attempt to recreate a symmetrical facade; on the ground floor a large shop front was inserted with a recessed central doorway. The front was stuccoed and given stucco quoins; the first floor windows were given channelled flat-arched stucco heads. The symmetry did not quite work; the western windows were uncomfortably close to the western quoins and the head of the first floor window cut into the line of the quoins. The attic dormers were probably removed.

In the early 20th century the first floor sash windows were replaced by the present top-lit casements, and more recently the second floor windows were also replaced. On the ground floor the present shop front only dates from the 1970's when it replaced the early 19th century example; it was then that the main staircase was removed and the stucco detailing was covered in plain render.

Building E

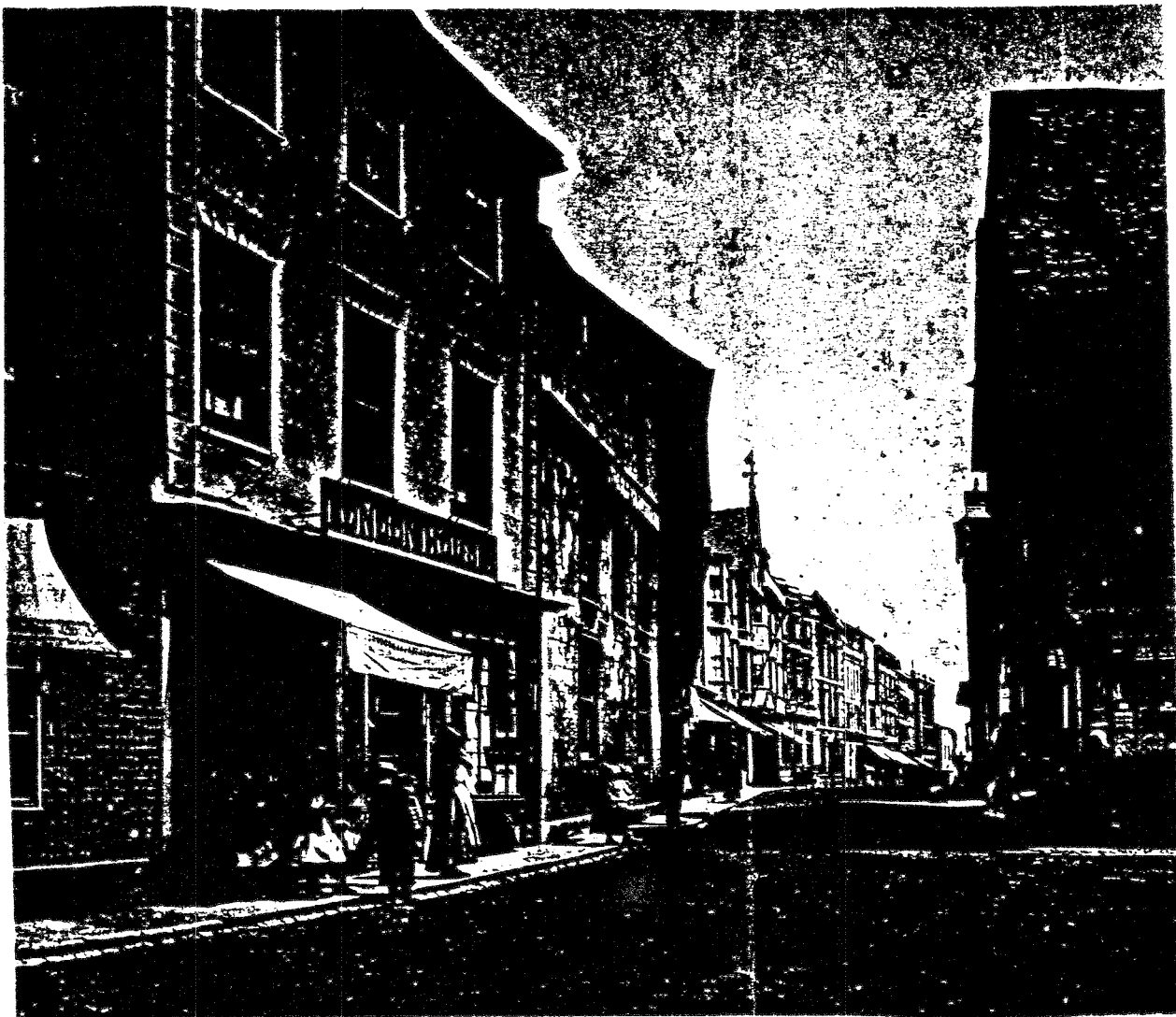
This building re-used elements of the early 18th century building but is effectively a different structure. The roof was lowered, with a lower pitch, off-centre ridge, and a convex, hipped end to match the corner facade. The north slope of this roof has recently been replaced. The floors had all to be reconstructed and a new, narrow staircase was inserted to provide access to the attic. The new first floor level was higher than that in Building D. Doorways were maintained between buildings A and E at first and second floor levels.

The curved facade had three windows on first and second floors with channelled, flat-arched stucco heads; the central ones were blank, the others being balanced sashes. The ground floor was probably given an ornate shop-front at this time, which survived until the 1960's, with a recessed central doorway. The brick face of the building was rendered in the 20th century and is now painted grey.



Looking towards the Market Square, Evesham, c.1900, with the corner of Building E on the left.

Part Three: Phasing



The upper end of Bridge Street c.1880; the stuccoed facade of Building D on the left.

PHASING

Pre-17th Century

The only evidence for the presence of buildings in this area before the 17th century is the lack of windows in the south, east and lower part of the north elevations of building A. It is presumed that buildings D and E replaced an earlier range and that there was a building to the north of A. The area now occupied by buildings B and C could have included a further building but there would have been difficulties in obtaining light.

Early 17th Century

Building A, a two-bay, 2½ storey, timber-framed building with cellars was built, with two gable dormers facing High Street.

Late 17th Century

Building B was constructed as a timber-framed extension to the west of building A. Any existing building on this site must, therefore, have been demolished beforehand.

Early 18th Century

A large 3½ storey brick town house with a symmetrical facade of five sash windows was built fronting Bridge Street (Building D/E). Building C was probably a timber-framed service wing to this new range, and the south bay of building A was probably included within the property. At this time it appears that the north bay of building A and all of building B were separated from the rest of the block resulting in the blocking of doorways in the former's intermediate frame. The facade of building A was gentrified with the newly fashionable sash windows around this time.

Early 19th Century

The west bay of building D/E was partially demolished and rebuilt as building E. The facade of the south bay of building A was rebuilt; the dormer gable was removed and the front wall rebuilt in brick, raised, and re-windowed to match the new corner building. The ground floor facades of buildings A, D and E were all rebuilt. Each bay of building A had a bay window and both buildings D and E were fitted with large shop fronts. It appears that the block was then divided into three separate properties: the north bay of building A and building B; building C and the remaining part of the early 18th century range, building D; and building E and the south bay of building A.

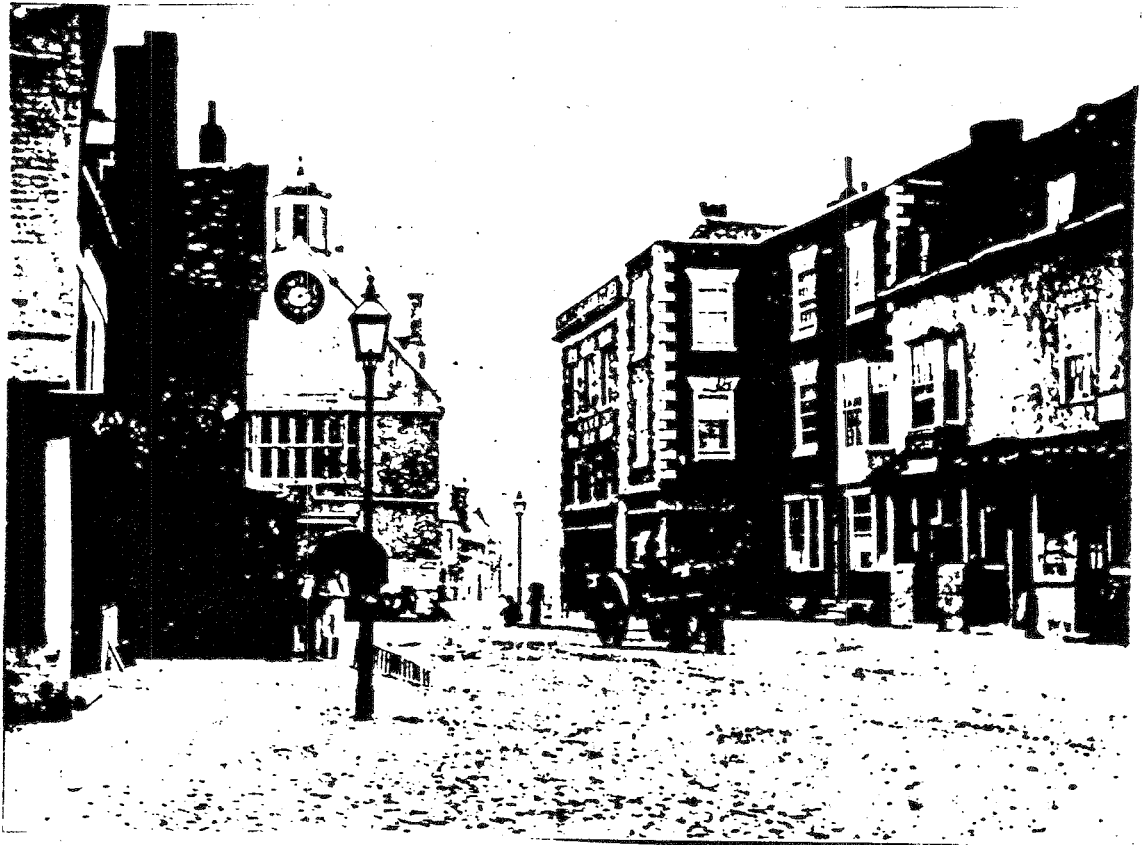
Early 20th Century

The facade of the north bay of building A was replaced beneath the dormer gable in brick and a fake dormer gable truss added. At the same time the facade of the south bay was remodelled in the same way and the whole frontage of building A was rendered. Building E was also rendered. Building D might have been rendered shortly before-hand. It does seem that the whole block was back in one ownership at this time. The sash windows of building D were later replaced by modern casements.

Late 20th Century

The 19th century shop fronts were replaced by the present one, which encompasses virtually all the street frontage on both High Street and Bridge Street. The fireplaces became redundant and the chimney stacks above roof level were removed. Alterations to the ground floor led to the removal of most of the partitions, frames and all the staircases at this level. A new staircase was installed in the northern part of building A and a spiral staircase was inserted into building B.

Part Four : Reconstructions



The south end of High Street, Evesham, c.1880; Building A is in the middle distance on the left.

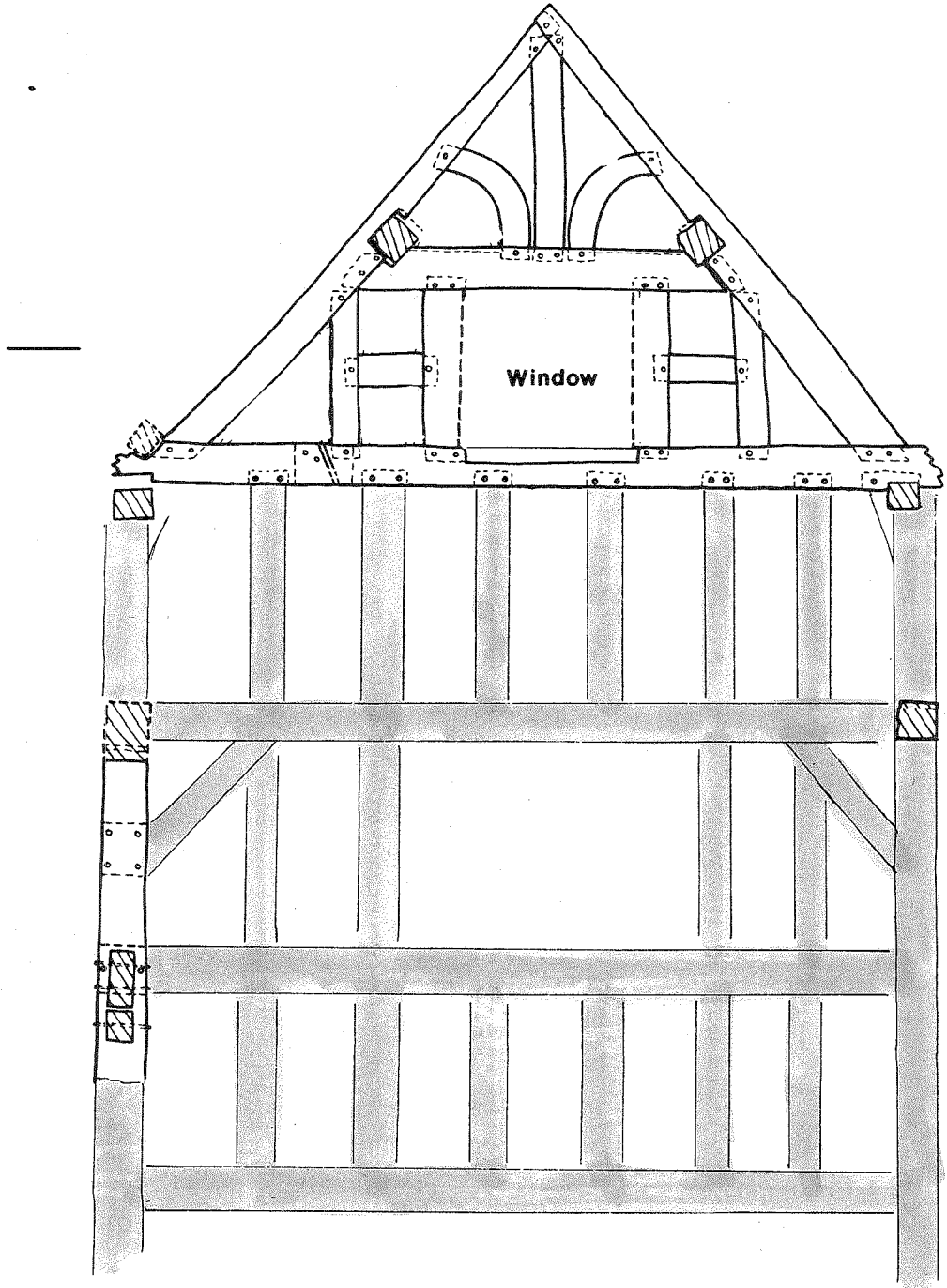
KEY TO RECONSTRUCTIONS



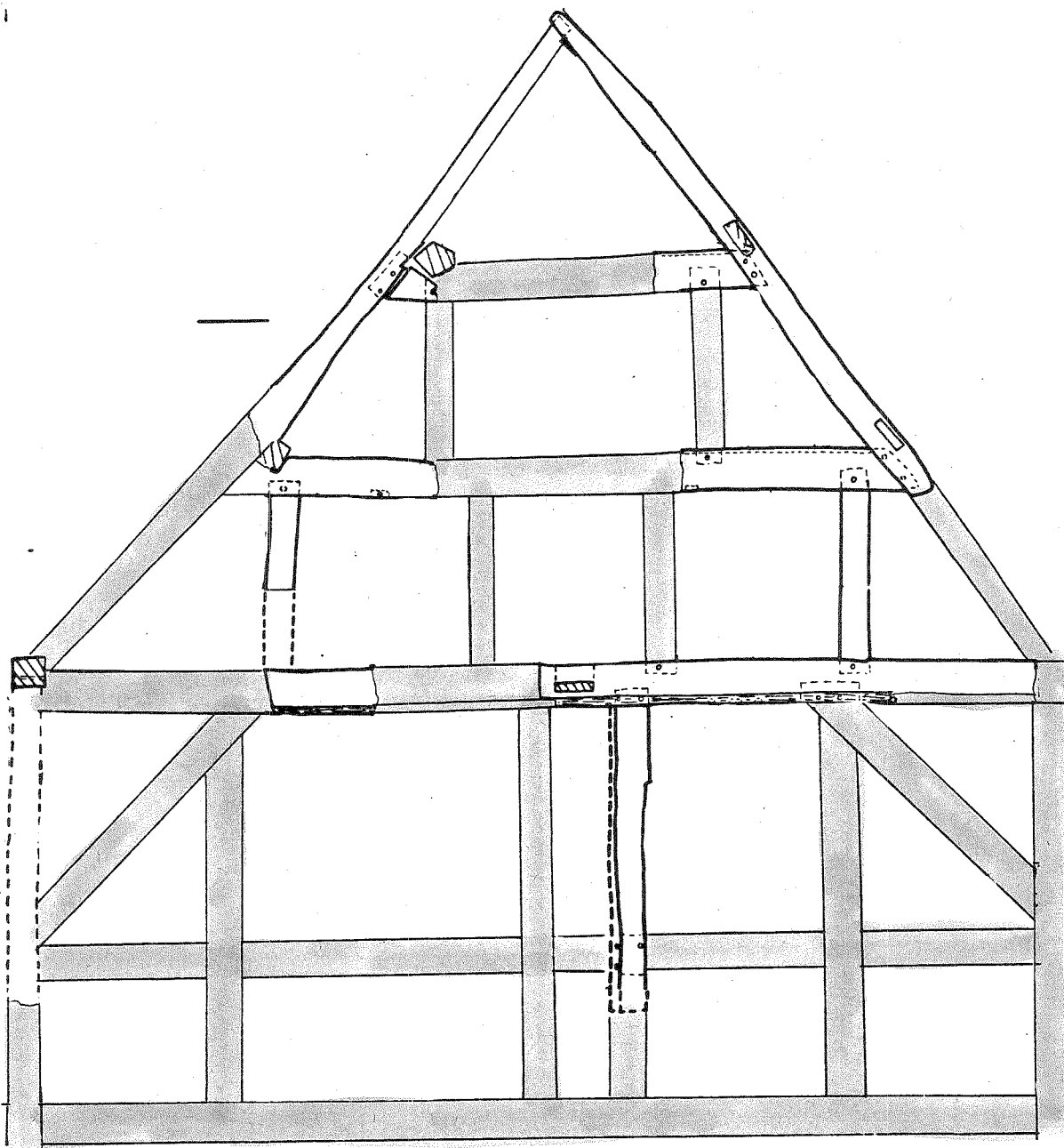
Surviving original timbers



Position of removed timbers

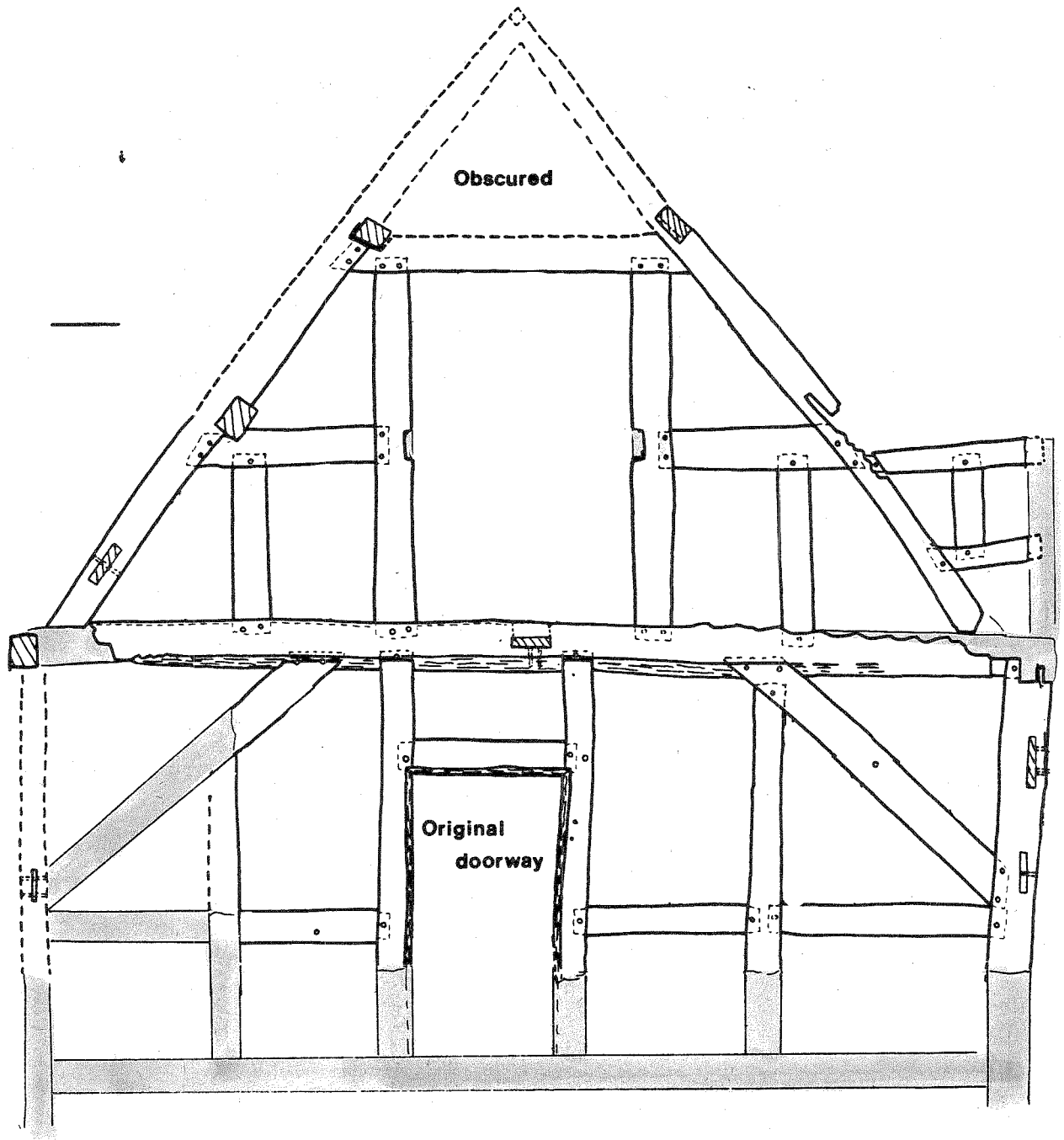


Building A: West gable of north bay, east face reconstruction



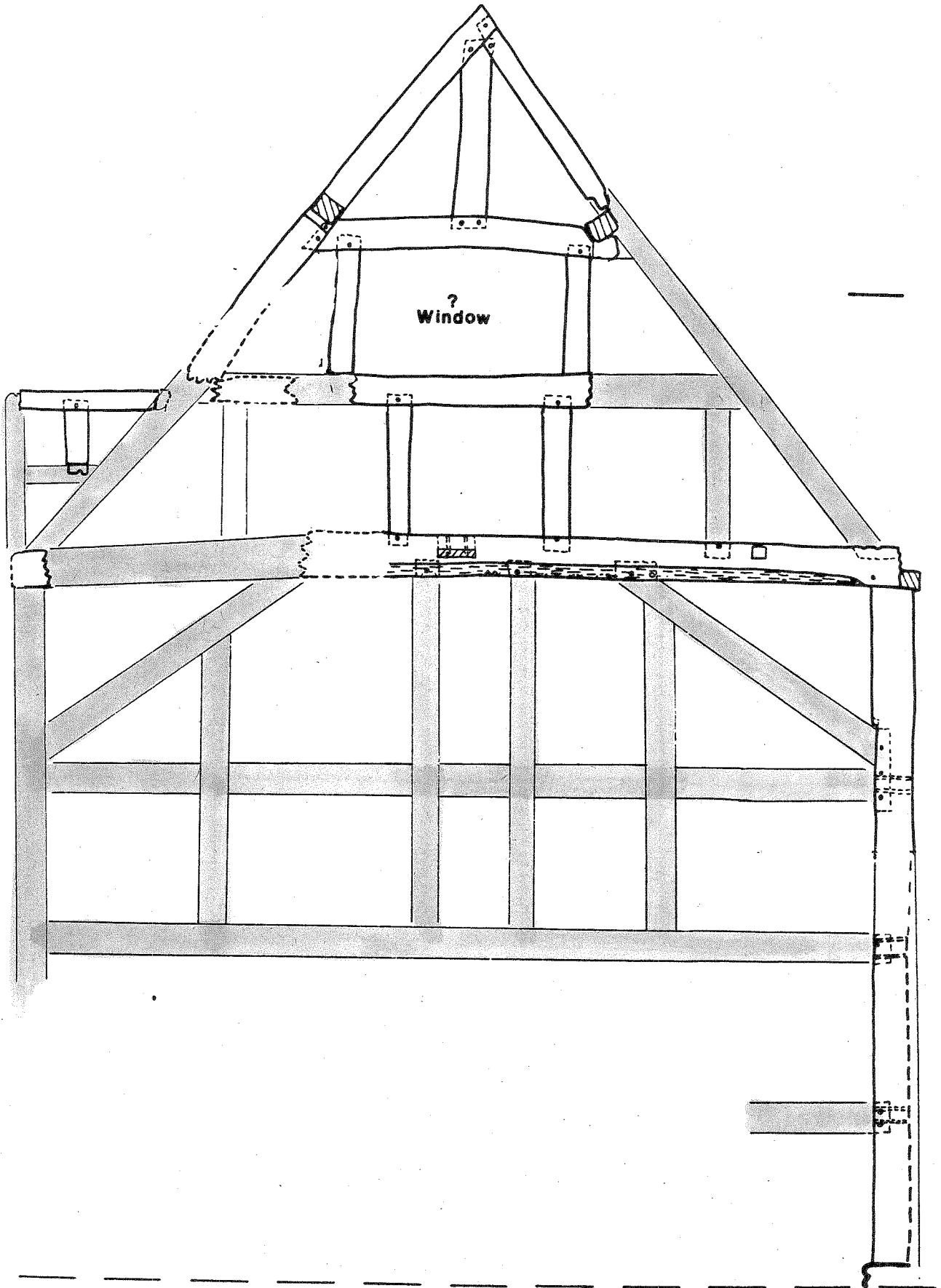
Building A:

South frame, north face
reconstruction

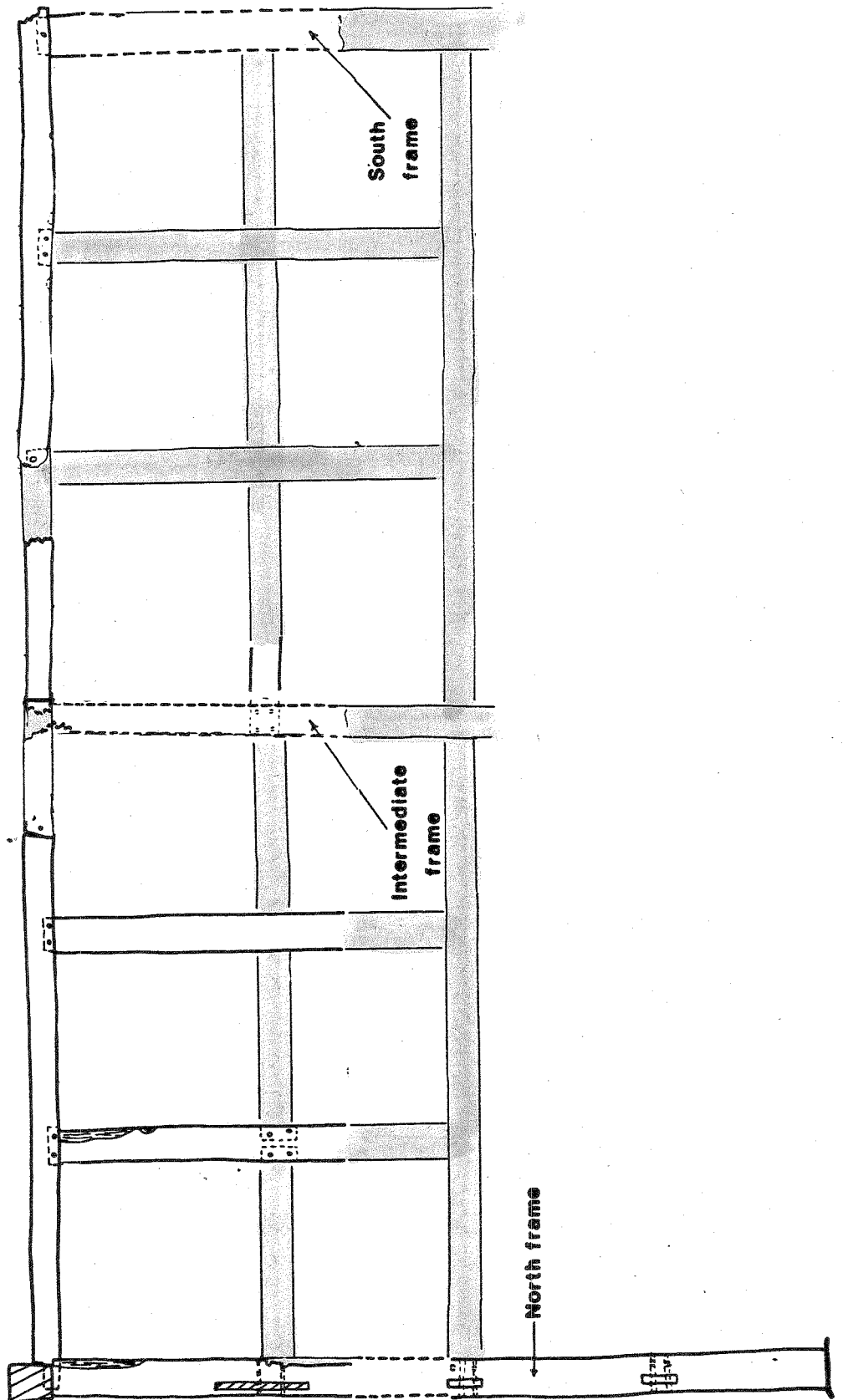


Building A:

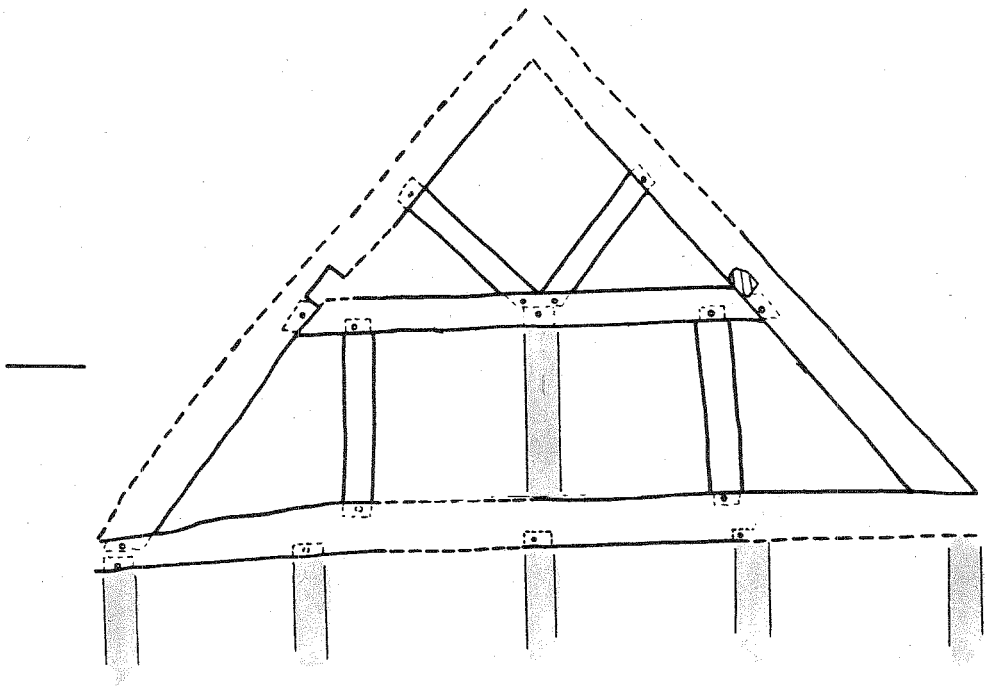
Intermediate frame, north face reconstruction



Building A: North frame, south face reconstruction



Building A: East frame, west face reconstruction



Building B: East frame, west face reconstruction

Part Five: Photographs



1 Bridge Street from the west



1 Bridge Street from the south-west



12 High Street from the north



The roof of building A from the south



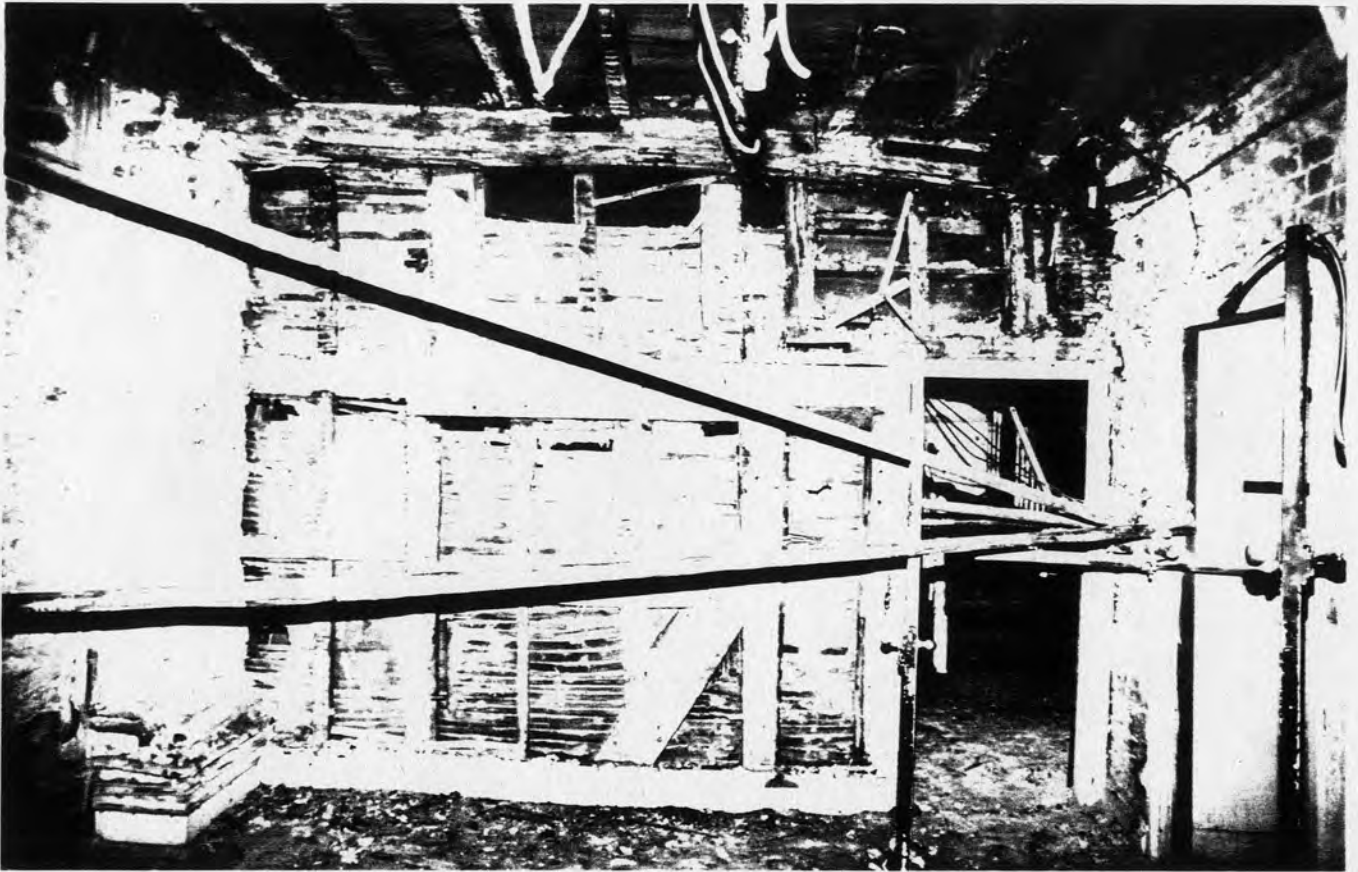
The roof of 12 High Street from the south-west



Building A: West gable, attic floor, east face,
showing the upper part of the truss



Building A: West gable, attic floor, east face
showing the lower part of the gable



Building A: South frame, 1st floor, south face, showing inserted doorway



Building A: South frame, attic floor, north face, showing the inserted doorway and part of the original roof



Building A: Intermediate frame, attic floor, south face, showing original purlins and rafters



Building A: Intermediate frame, 1st floor, south face, showing tie beam and traces of wall paintings



Building A: Intermediate frame, attic floor, south face,
showing central opening cut through lower collar



Building A: Intermediate frame, 1st floor, south face, showing
wall paintings across blocked doorway



Building A: North frame, attic, south face, showing the upper part of the truss and original purlins and rafters



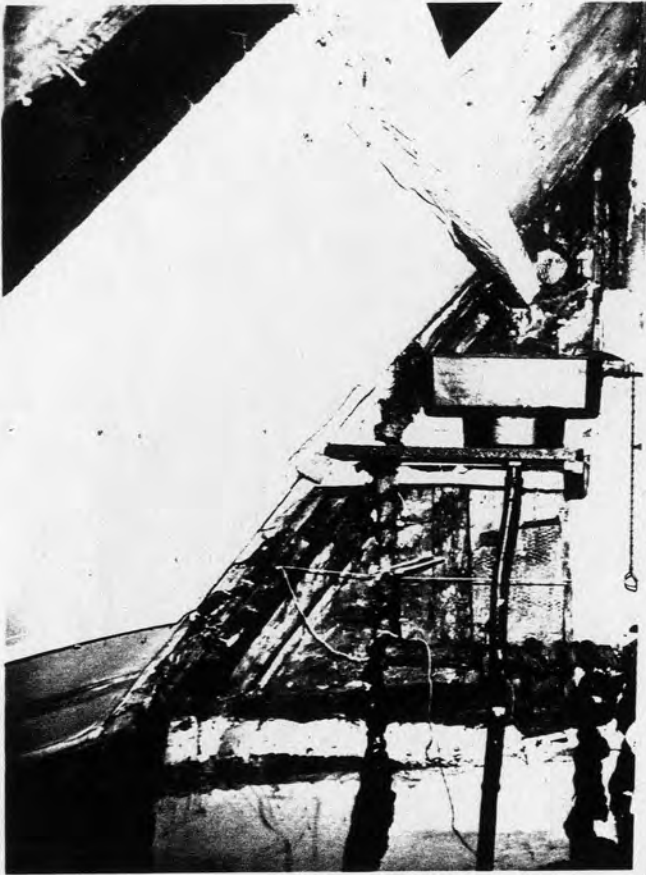
Building A: North frame, 1st floor, south face showing the tie-beam of the truss



Building A: East frame, 1st floor, west face, showing the north-eastern corner post and the wall plate



Building A: East frame, 1st floor, west face, showing part of surviving frame, and the staircase in building C



Building B: East frame, attic floor, west face,
showing surviving truss



Buildings A & C: The party wall from the south-east, showing
the wall plate of A and the raised wall of C



Building D: 2nd floor from the south, showing the poor quality timber dividing frames



Building E: 1st floor from the north, showing the chimney stack and re-used timbers