

**LINHAY AT 2 HAYES DAIRY COTTAGES  
RATSLOE, POLTIMORE  
DEVON**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING**

**March 2013**

**Martin Watts**

1 Trinity Cottages  
Cullompton  
Devon  
EX15 1PE

Project HDL223

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*Historic Building Recording  
Traditional Milling Specialist*

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## **HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING**

### **Summary**

*A linhay – a traditional Devon farm building which provided shelter for stock at ground level and fodder storage above – to the south of 2 Hayes Dairy Cottages, Ratsloe, Poltimore, Devon, was recorded prior to repair and conversion of the building. The west end, nearest the road, appears to date from the late 18th century and was extended to form an 8-bay building, which survives largely intact, in the early 19th century.*

### **Introduction**

This report has been compiled at the request of the building owner, to record the historic fabric affected by the proposed development of a former agricultural building at 2 Hayes Dairy Cottages, Ratsloe, Poltimore, Exeter EX4 0AB. It follows a Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording submitted to the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Devon County Council, for an archaeological/historic building survey to accompany a planning application to East Devon District Council for conversion of the buildings to provide ancillary storage, workshop, office and car port facilities (planning reference 12/2392/FUL).

The building which is the subject of this report is not listed nor understood to be within the curtilage of a listed building.

A non-intrusive site survey and recording were carried out on 12 February 2013. The building recording broadly conforms to Level 1-2 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).

Copies of this report will be deposited with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Service and a digital copy will be uploaded onto the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database under the identification number martinwa1-141428.

This report is intended to be read with the drawings and photographs attached. The drawings are based on plans, elevations and a section through the existing building prepared by Mr Ingram.

### **Location**

The linhay is located to the south of Hayes Dairy Cottages, Ratsloe, at NGR SX958 975. The building stands on a level site at approximately 37m above Ordnance Datum.

### **Historical background**

Ratsloe is a small hamlet on the parish boundary between Huxham to the west and Poltimore to the east. The parish boundary as shown on the Ordnance Survey maps is very complex at this point and the site is recorded on both the Huxham and Poltimore tithe maps. Historically, however, the site was in Huxham parish, which is confirmed by an 1832 map showing the estates of Lord Poltimore (DHS. DRO 50/3/1/5) (Figure 2) and also the Huxham tithe map of c.1839 (Figure 3). At the time of the tithe award the

property was a smallholding of some 3½ acres (1.4 hectares), which was occupied by John Gould.<sup>1</sup> According to White (1850, 196; 200) Huxham was ‘mostly the property of Lord Poltimore, the lord of the manor, and Poltimore ‘includes the small hamlet of Ratsloe’ and was ‘all the property and manor of Lord Poltimore.’ As shown on the early 19th century maps, the linhay was part of a small farm complex, which comprised two ranges of agricultural buildings enclosing a square yard, with a dwelling house to the east. To the east of the group was a horseshoe-shaped pond with a small island (see Figure 3). The small farm complex appears to have been demolished, with the exception of the linhay, sometime before 1890, perhaps in the 1870s as the pair of semi-detached cottages which front the road to the north of the linhay are understood to date from that time (T. Ingram pers comm.). The name Hayes Dairy Cottages implies that towards the end of the 19th century this site was an outlier of Hayes Farm which is situated at Poltimore, about 0.6km to the south-east, and had a specific function, presumably connected with dairy cattle.

### **Description**

A linhay is an open-fronted building with a dual function, providing shelter for cattle at yard level and the storage of fodder on the loft or tallet floor above. It is a distinctive local type of farm building, prevalent in Devon but virtually unknown elsewhere in England (Alcock 1963; Child 1995, 71). The linhay at Hayes Dairy Cottages is a typical medium-sized example, being about 21m in length by about 5m deep. It is orientated south-east – north-west, its north-west end abutting the road. For convenience, the cardinal points are used in this description. The linhay contains 8 structural bays, each about 2.2m wide, the bay at the west end being slightly wider and extending forward of the main (north) front of the building. The bays are defined by the front posts and cross beams, which span from the posts to the rear wall, and the roof trusses. The rear wall is of cob on a base of rubble stone masonry which stands about 0.6m high. Internally, the lower part of the cob wall has been eroded quite deeply in places, due to animal activity. There is a modern agricultural building abutting the south side of the exterior wall. The cob is rendered and the stone base of the wall is obscured by a concrete blockwork outer skin built in front of it. The west wall, to the road, was formerly of cob on a stone base, but has been rebuilt in concrete blockwork. There is a concrete block churn stand projecting from the wall, over the ditch that runs alongside it. The east end has also been infilled with concrete block up to cross beam level, with the remains of horizontal timber boarding above. This elevation is now obscured by a modern shed.

The ground floor of the linhay was partly obscured but, where visible, there is an uneven mix of levels and materials, including concrete, earth and cobbles. In bay 3 (from the east) there is a mixture of small stones set on edge and larger blocks and in bay 4 small cobbles and earth. Some of the bays were formerly divided, but no internal partitions now remain.

The front posts which define bays 1 to 5, are of oak, about 19 x 19cm cross section, with plain chamfers running the full length on all four corners. The feet of the front posts were carried on padstones, some of which survive. One post is distorted and its foot is displaced and another has been cut off and sits on a cast concrete base. All the posts are decayed at their lower ends. The main cross beams are of elm, about 30 by 30cm square at the north end and slightly lighter at the south. Their outer ends are notched into the backs of the posts, each with a shouldered through tenon held with two pegs through the

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<sup>1</sup> In 1850 John Gould is listed as a land agent living at Hayes, Poltimore (White 1850, 201). It seems likely that he was Lord Poltimore’s agent.

post. The front posts that define bays 6 and 7 are much wider, being 34 x 19cm in section, and of very knotty oak or elm. The outer ends of the main cross beams are notched as at the south end, but the tenons pass through the posts, being held with two pegs through the tenon itself. Some pintle hinges survive in the front posts towards the east end, where half doors were hung.

The joists that carry the tallet floor are of random widths and centres, generally 8 per bay, with some missing and some additions. They are predominantly of sparingly converted hardwood. The joist ends generally sit on the tops of the cross beams, only a random few being notched in. The floor is of circular-sawn elm boards laid with gaps between them, some boards being held in place only by a nail at each end.

The roof, which is fully hipped at both ends, is set at a pitch of about 48 degrees. There are 7 trusses of similar construction, although again there are slight differences between the south and north ends. The timbers are pit-sawn, plainly finished and predominantly of elm. The principals, which are 20.5 by 9cm section, have their front feet tenoned into the heads of the front posts and their rear feet sit on short timber plates on the head of the cob wall. The heads of the principals are notched and lapped at the apex, front over rear looking south. The ends of the collars are notched over the west faces of the principals, those to T1, 2, 3 and 4 being fixed with two large nails or spikes and those to T5, 6 and 7 fixed with a large spike and a wooden peg. The collars at the west end are of slightly superior form to those at the east, some having a natural camber. T5 and 6 have two purlin trenches on the back of each principal, whereas the trusses to the east have none. T7 has an empty mortise with 3 pegs on its under-face, close to the head of the post, and there is a small empty mortise lower down on the back of the post. There is a timber wall plate on the tops of the front posts, 24 by 10cm section, in lengths joined by plain scarfs. The present roof is of corrugated metal sheet on a light softwood structure which overlays the original construction. There are 10 by 8cm timbers over each of the trusses, carrying 4 purlins on each slope and a ridge.

## **Discussion**

The linhay at Hayes Dairy Cottages conforms broadly to Alcock's T1 type (Alcock 1963), although it is acknowledged that his pioneer study, which was carried out over 50 years ago, was based on a relatively small sample. As with many minor agricultural buildings, it is difficult to date precisely and the map evidence can only push the date back to the early 19th century. It is possible that only the west end of the building appears on the Ordnance Survey surveyor's map of 1801 (Sheet 40.1, by Thomas Budgen),<sup>2</sup> although the definition is not clear enough to be certain. It seems likely that the west end of the linhay, at least, was standing in the late 18th century. From the differences in construction between the three western and five eastern bays it appears that the linhay was built in two phases. The broad front posts at the west end are less typical of linhay construction than the square section posts to the east and the roof trusses at the west end are also of slightly superior construction, which may support an earlier construction date. The pitch of the roof suggests that it was originally thatched.

The estate map of 1832 (Figure 2) shows a northern extension which appears to be wider than that which is shown on the tithe map and what survives, so it is feasible that the 5 eastern bays were added to extend an earlier, squarer building sometime before the tithe

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<sup>2</sup> [www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/other/](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/other/), accessed February 2013

map was drawn in 1839 (Figure 3). The three western bays may have originally been constructed as a cart or wagon linhay, being adjacent to the road. While the basic structure appears to have survived generally as built, the tallet floor has been re-boarded, using circular-sawn boards placed with gaps between them. It is also of note that there is no surviving evidence of a manger along the inside of the rear wall.

### Conclusion

The linhay at Hayes Dairy Cottages is a good example of a late 18th – early 19th century specialised Devon farm building, built of locally-sourced materials – cob, stone and timber. It is at present in use for storage and it is considered that the proposed scheme will allow its repair and retention as an important local traditional building.

It is considered that no further recording is required.

Martin Watts  
March 2013

### References

Alcock, N.W. 1963: Devonshire linhays: a vernacular tradition. *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* 95, 117-30

Child, P. 1995: Farm Buildings, in P. Beacham (ed) *Devon Building*, 60-94

White, W. 1850: *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire* (reprinted 1968)

### Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the building owner for showing me around the site and for supplying copies of his survey drawings; to Sue Watts, for her help with map work and background research; and the staff of the Devon Heritage Centre, Exeter.

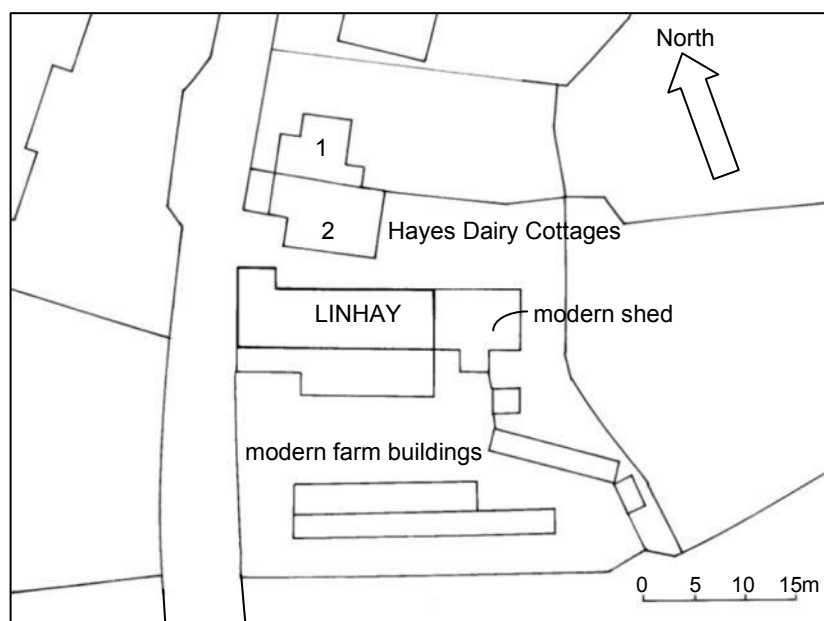


Figure 1: Hayes Dairy Cottages, Ratsloe, Poltimore, Devon. Site plan



Figure 2: Ratsloe, from a 'Map of the Estates in the Parish of Poltimore in the County of Devon, The Property of the R<sup>t</sup> Honb<sup>le</sup> Lord Poltimore', 1832 (DHC. DRO 50/3/1/5)



Figure 3: Ratsloe, from the Huxham tithe map, c.1839 (DHC)

171: Garden	172: Orchard	173: Part Rattisloe. Mead, House, Pond
174: Courtlage &c	175: Mow Plot	
held by John Gould from Lord Poltimore (Huxham tithe apportionment, 1837)		



Figure 4: Hayes Dairy Cottages. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st edition, c.1890

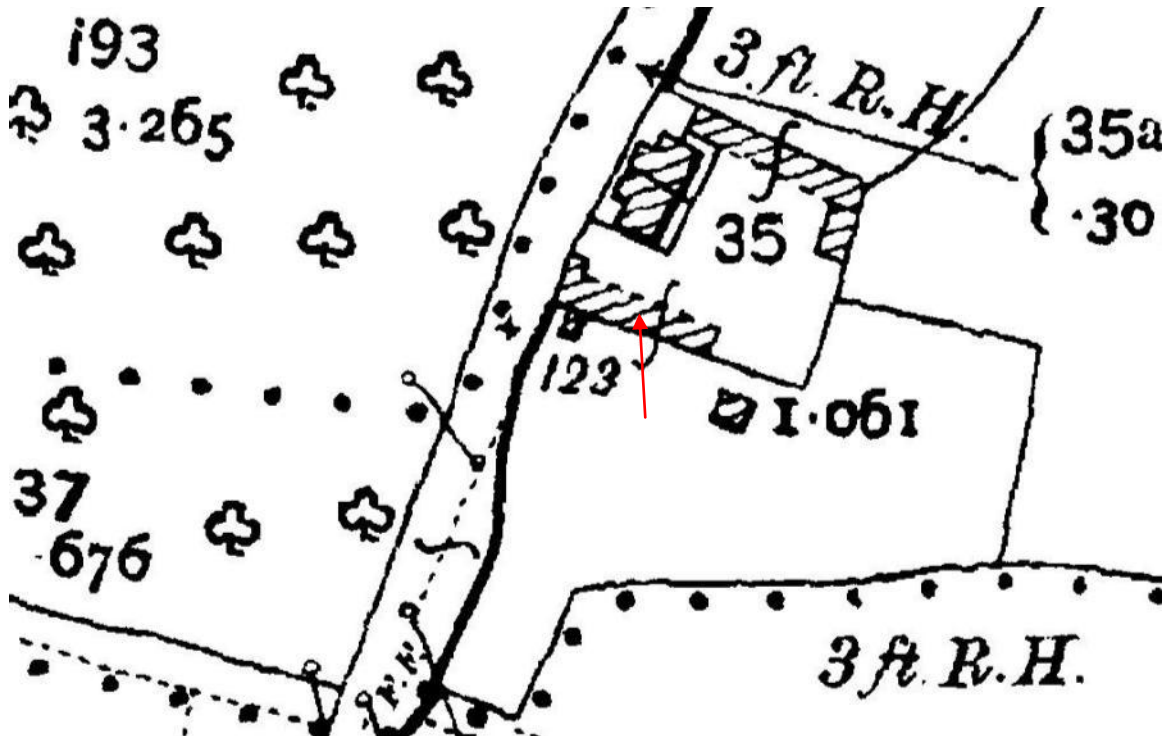
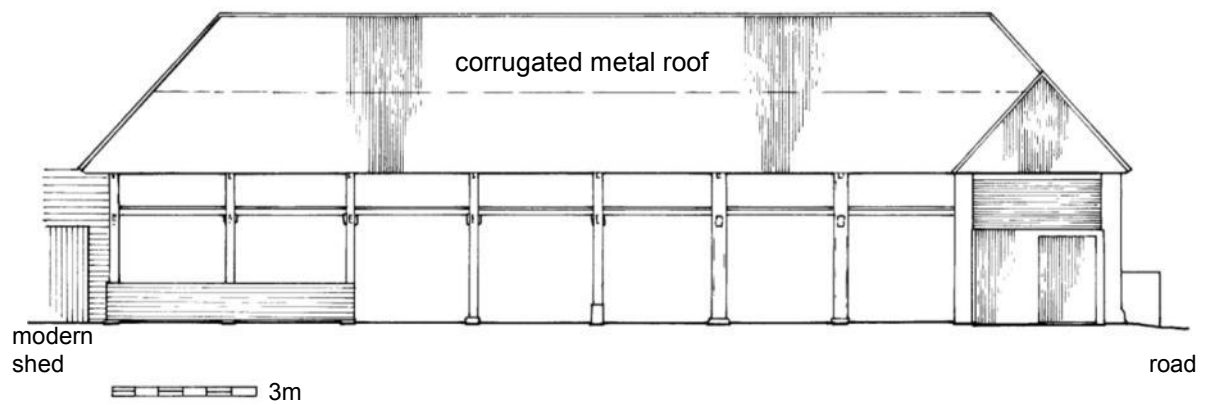


Figure 5: Hayes Dairy Cottages and linhay. Ordnance Survey 1:2500, 2nd edition, c.1904

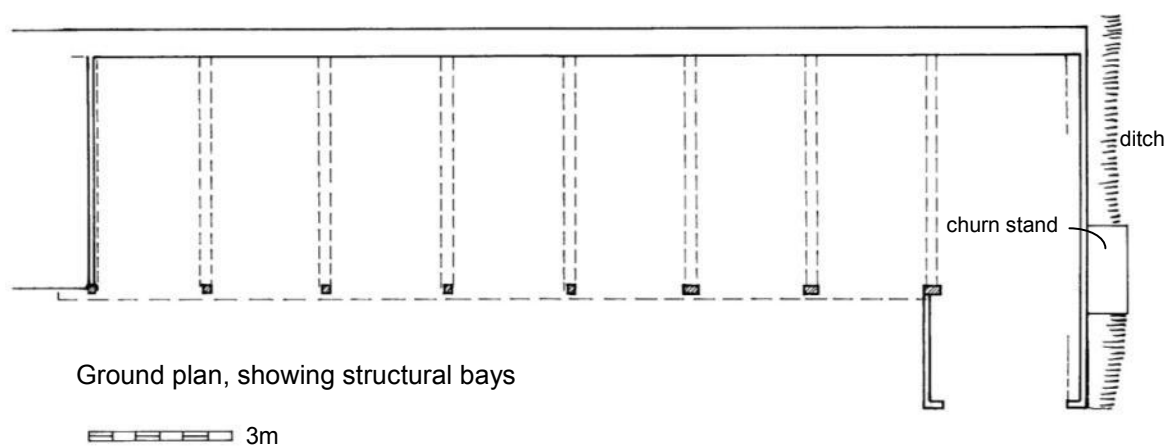
North to top. Maps not reproduced to scale





North elevation, showing bays and extension at west end

Linhay at 2 Hayes Dairy Cottages, Ratsloe



Ground plan, showing structural bays

Figure 6: Linhay, 2 Hayes Dairy Cottages, Ratsloe. Plan and elevation

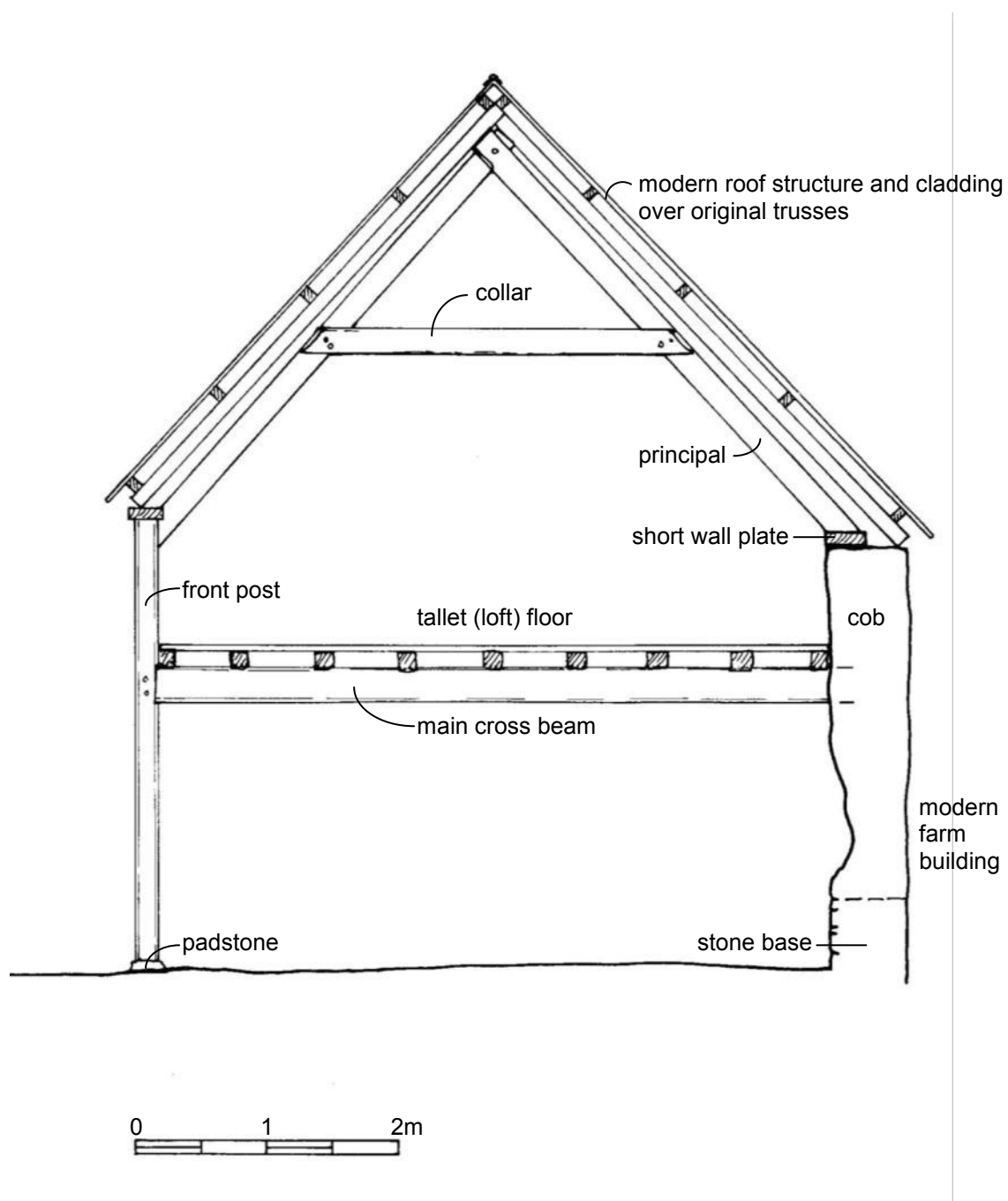


Figure 7: Linhay, 2 Hayes Dairy Cottages, Ratsloe. Section



Hayes Dairy linhay, from the south-west



Yard entrance and extended west bay of linhay



Linhay from the north-east



East end of linhay, facing the former yard





Front post and cross beam with pegged tenon at east end



Wider front post and beam with through tenon and pegs at west end



Front posts, bay 6



Bay 5, with concrete foot to front post



Stone pad to front post, bay 3-4





Remains of stone cobble flooring, bay 3



Rear wall, showing stone footing and eroded cob



Bay 8, looking to rear wall, blockwork wall to road on right



First floor interior looking east, showing roof construction and boarded east gable end



Ground floor interior looking east, showing cross beams and joists





Roof structure, looking west



Detail of T6, showing collar/principal junction and former purlin trench



Apex junction of truss principals



Foot of principal and timber plate on rear cob wall head



Front foot of principal tenoned into front post