

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE NOTES 1991

HISTORIC BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

These are a selection of the most interesting houses recorded by members of the Society during the year. Full records are deposited in the Somerset Record Office and with the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments. The whole of historic Somerset is covered, including the southern part of Avon; records for the latter are also deposited with the Avon County Planning Department. The Committee would be glad to hear from members who have an interest in recording traditional buildings of all kinds, or from anyone who knows of such buildings not yet recorded.

NOTES SUBMITTED BY E.H.D. WILLIAMS

Bridgwater, Wembdon, Cockerhurst Farm (with C. Sidaway)

The house, with cob walls of 30 in. or more on the ground floor (except where partly rebuilt in the 17th century) has an unusual plan (see Fig. 1). There is no inner

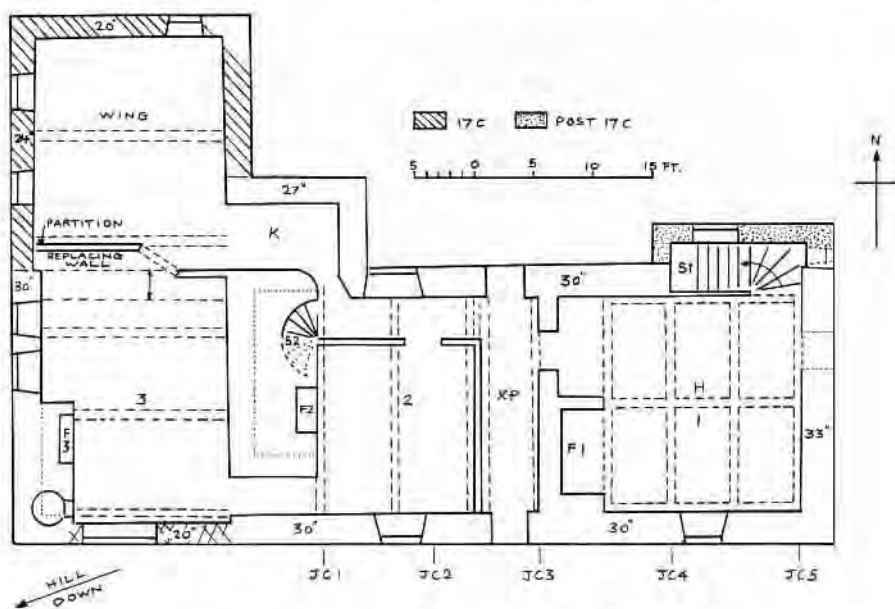


Fig. 1 Bridgwater, Wembdon, Cockerhurst Farmhouse

room beyond the hall (1), and below a cross passage, on to which the hall fireplace (F1) backs, are two rooms (2 and 3) with a total length of 46 ft on a downhill site. They were the byre of a longhouse, now divided by a fireplace (F2) in a stack 7.5 ft thick. Abreast F2, a large rectangular projection (now giving access to an added 17th century wing) has 27 in. walls and is coeval with F2; it was probably a corn kiln (K). The fireplaces are 16th century insertions into a single-storey medieval longhouse, whose upper walls, which are only 2 ft thick, were raised and reroofed at that time; some surviving jointed crucks have the joint 7 ft above the first floor. The 17th century roof of the wing has some reused blackened timbers, presumably from the original house roof.

Other houses without an inner room and with very long low ends are Allshire, Brushford, Westowe, Lydeard St Lawrence, No. 8 Church Lane, Gatchell's and Lower Newton, Bicknoller, Church Hill Cottage and Halse Water, Halse, and Underhill Farm, Stocklinch. The byre is also divided at Nethercott and Pain's Farm House, Lydeard St Lawrence, and at Carew Cottage, Crowcombe, but these three do have an inner room.

Dunster, Keeper's House (with Mrs Gould)

This is one of three surviving houses of four which were built in 1617 beside the entrance to Dunster Castle. Although typical in being of two-room plan with one originally heated room, the building is unusual for a cottage of this date in that the original fireplace is sited on a side wall, with stairs beside it, instead of occupying the usual position at the gable; in addition, it is of two full storeys and attic, to which further stairs rise from the first floor. A small fireplace has been added to the smaller room and there is an added kitchen wing. The entrance was direct into the heated room, but a passage has been partitioned out of it. A ceiling beam has scroll stops to plain chamfers; a four-light window has octagonal wooden mullions; roof trusses have side-lapped dovetailed collars; all these features are typically 17th century. Otherwise, details are much rebuilt or hidden.

Ilton, Court House (formerly Scot's Farm)

A two-storey thatched house of three-room and cross-passage plan has an added parlour wing abreast the inner room (see Fig. 2); the inner room is now modified to form an entrance lobby and has a dog-legged stair inserted into it; it is entered through a reused 16th century stone-framed doorway (D1) moulded hollow/step/ogee with depressed four-centred head and incised spandrels. The partition from the wing is of tall, narrow, timberframed panels of the 17th century (replacing the original wall of the inner room), in contrast to that from the hall which has large rectangular timberframed panels with mid rail of the 16th century. Wing ceiling beams have scroll stops to plain chamfers, and windows are ovolo moulded in stone frames of the 17th century. The hall has 16th century ceiling beams with keeled stops to plain chamfers; stairs in the traditional position beside the axial hall fireplace, backing on the cross passage, have been removed and replaced by stairs in an outshut abreast the outer room. Outer room ceiling beams have 16th century shallow step and runout stops to plain chamfers. To the rear is a coeval outshut, the partition from which is of 16th century large rectangular timberframed panels. The partition from the cross passage was similar, but has been much altered, as have so many other features in recent times. The roofs are mostly post and truss structures, except for two half-jointed crucks supporting the junction of the house and wing ridges over the inner room.

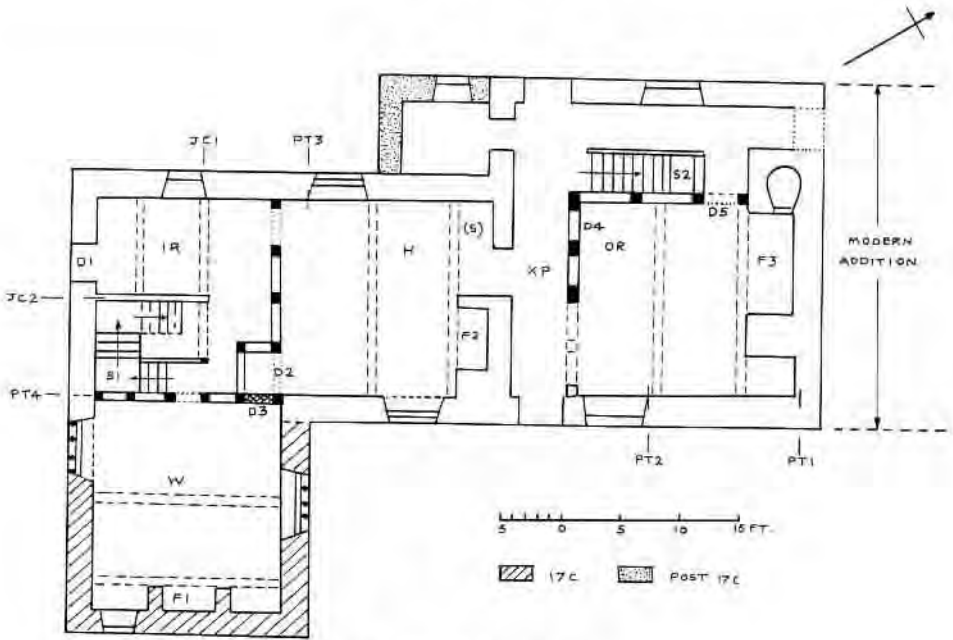


Fig. 2 Ilton. Court House

Ilton, Drake's Farmhouse

Stone walls of 29 in. thickness suggest a late medieval origin, but the house as it now stands is a late example of the three-room and cross-passage plan of the early 17th century, but much modified in the 19th century (see Fig. 3). The joint of a jointed cruck and the tie-beam of a post and truss are c. 6 ft above the upper floor, indicating that the present house was always of two storeys. Abreast the outer and inner rooms are coeval outshuts with 24 in. walls, so that the rear eaves are only

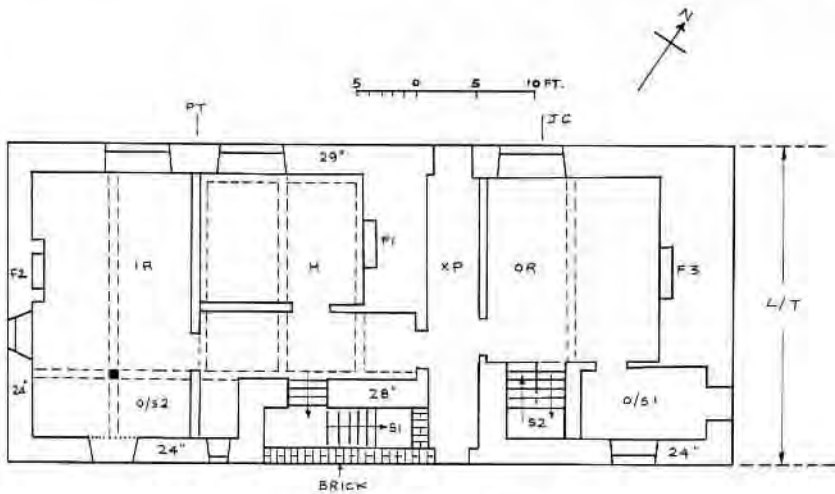


Fig. 3 Ilton. Drakes Farm

single storeys at each gable. The space behind the hall between the outshuts has late stairs within a brick infilling, and within the outer-room outshut are secondary stairs; the partition of the inner-room outshut has been removed and the two rooms are combined.

Kingston St Mary, Lower Yarford

The 28 in. cob walls, the low two storeys and stepped runout stops to ceiling beams of this three-room and cross-passage house date it to c. 1600. The dovetailed side-lapped collars of roof trusses are usually 17th century, but here are associated with trenched purlins and thus are early examples of the type. To one side of the outer room gable fireplace is a 5.5 ft by 8 ft recess, in a projection beyond the side wall of the house, which rises to eaves level. It is now ceiled at first floor level; during alterations it was seen to be blackened; at upper floor level is a blocked opening in the gable. It was a corn kiln, subsequently used as a curing chamber. On the other side of the hearth is a spiral stair blocking a small slit opening in the gable; thus the stairs have been built into a former curing chamber; when this occurred the kiln was used as a curing chamber, a sequence of events seen in many other houses.

Shepton Beauchamp, Salisbury House

References to a Church House in *VCH* 4, 219, are to a building, some distance along the street from Salisbury House, which was converted to almshouses and demolished in 1935. It is shown on the tithe map as lying some 200 yards away from Salisbury House, on the opposite side of the street. Salisbury House is sited next to the churchyard wall and with little doubt was in fact the Church House; subsequent rebuilding and additions as a dwelling, and later subdivision into cottages, have, however, completely altered the plan and elevation.

The eastern-most room of the four-room plan is an 18th century addition beyond straight joints at the gable of the original building; the latter was raised to two full storeys and reroofed in the 16th/17th century. At a lower level are the remains of a medieval roof truss. Other early details have been lost in the conversion to cottages. Thus, although structural evidence is sparse, the siting is highly typical of a church house, which Salisbury House undoubtedly was.

West Buckland, France Farmhouse

A two-storey house has three rooms in line and a side lobby entrance abreast a very large fireplace (F1) heating the central room (*see* Fig. 4). Such a lobby entrance is very rare in Somerset, and here is due to the fact that the third room behind the fireplace is an addition. The original two-roomed house with one heated room has walls 28 in. thick, except where rebuilt thinner, but walls of the added room are only 21 in. thick. The stack of F1, 6.5 ft deep, suggests a 16th century date, although it lacks datable details; this date is appropriate to the step and runout stops of the plain chamfered ceiling beam and to a jointed cruck truss which had a tenoned collar and has trenched purlins and a notched tenoned apex. A true cruck is also partially visible, but this must have been reused at this date. Another rare example of a house with an apparently similar side-lobby entrance is Withyditich, Dunkerton, near Bath. The only known original two-roomed side-lobby entry house is Elm Tree, Marksbury, also near Bath; both are now in the county of Avon.

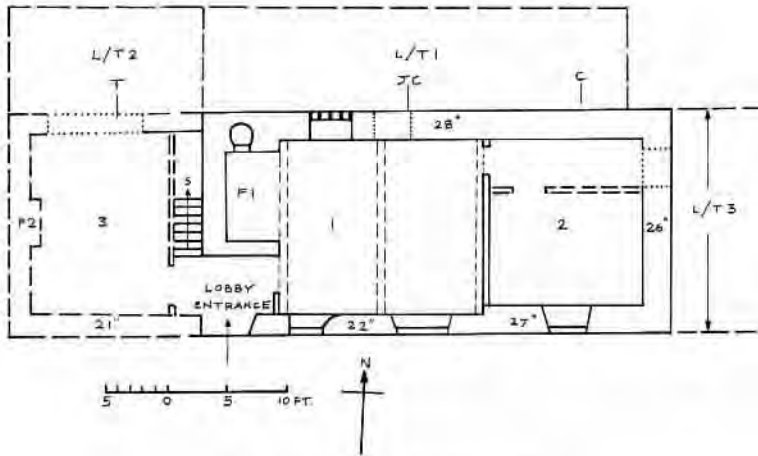


Fig. 4 West Buckland, France Farm

The following is a selection of houses in Woodspring District, Avon, examined jointly with Miss P. Brimacombe.

Banwell, Doubleton Farmhouse

Substantial rebuilding of part of the house, and various additions to it, have resulted in an unusual plan (see Fig. 5). One room, the kitchen (K), in a rear wing, is a survival of the original 16th century house. It is of low, one and a half storey height, aligned

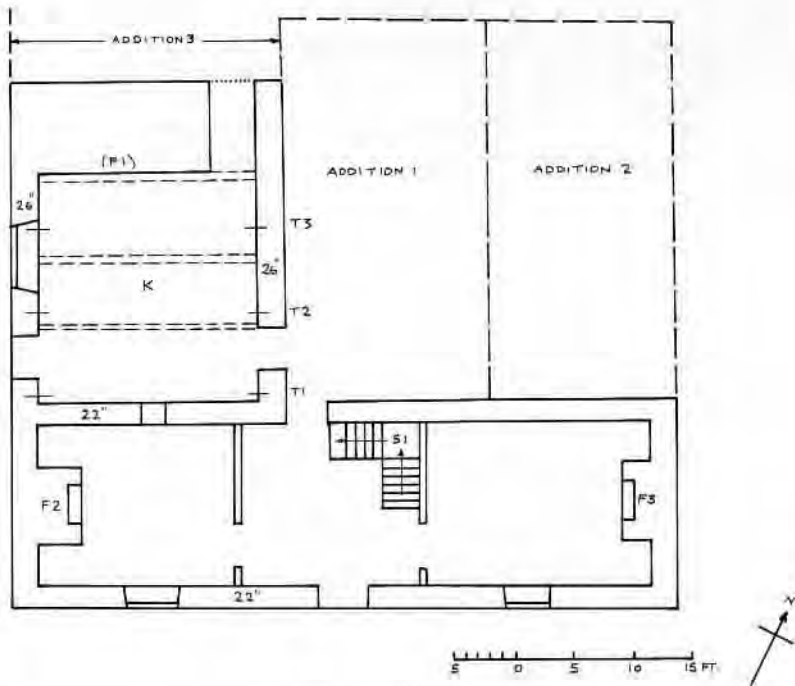


Fig. 5 Banwell, Doubleton Farm

N-S; the remainder of the house to the S was rebuilt in the late 17th/18th century: it is two tall storeys and attics high, aligned E-W and giving an L plan. Subsequently, the angle of the L was infilled by two later additions. The E-W range has a central entrance/stair lobby to two rooms, each with a gable fireplace. The stairs have a moulded rail ramped at the top with a spiral at the bottom; thin turned balusters stand on open-ended treads, and the string is carved; dado panelling has fielded panels. The whole is a good example of c. 1700. The roof is a 19th century rebuild using earlier trusses. 19th century parapets have been added. The date of the kitchen wing is uncertain owing to the sparsity of datable details, but the blocked fireplace in a stack 7.5 ft deep suggests a 16th century origin. Chamfer stops on ceiling beams and such details of the roof trusses as can be seen suggest some 17th century rebuilding. A 19th century parapet has been added on the W side.

Blagdon, Charterhouse Manor Farm

The house stands on the site of Hinton Charterhouse Priory, but retains no details of the original building unless the rubble walls, 3 ft thick, are an indication of it. The majority of the windows are ovolo-moulded in stone frames, and the present house can be dated to the early 17th century. The plan is of three rooms and cross passage with a 2 ft walled cross-wing added beyond the inner room. The hall had a lateral fireplace – now a cupboard – which has been replaced by a small axial fireplace: beside the former are turret stairs structurally combined with the entrance porch. The wing roof has been much rebuilt, but retains some reused heavy timbers; apex and collar joints are side lapped, in the typical 17th century manner, but the purlins are trencled. The main roof was not examined.

Butcombe, Yew Tree Farmhouse

This is a two-storey house of T plan, and has a short cross-wing beyond the upper end of the hall (H) (*see* Fig. 6). The hall range has a two roomed plan with hall fireplace (F1) backing on to a former cross passage which is now combined with the outer room. The latter is now a parlour: its gable fireplace (F2) never had cooking facilities. The kitchen is in the wing.

Much of the medieval roof survives below the present higher roof, walls having been raised. Partly buried in the hall stack is a true cruck (C2); another cruck (C1) is at the upper end of the hall. Both have a vertical apex joint trapping the ridge (*cf.* Fig. 7), and purlins are in-line tenoned; these, and some common rafters, are blackened. The wing has a partly-visible central truss (T1) which appears to be another cruck; it, and some common rafters, are blackened. These crucks date the house to the early 15th century.

The hall fireplace (F1) has 45° flat stops to plain chamfers, and a slightly four-centred plain chamfered wooden lintel; it is an early 16th century insertion. Hall walls are 33 in. thick. By contrast, outer-room walls are c. 2 ft thick. Roof truss T2, which is not black, has a notched, tenoned apex, and in-line tenoned purlins. Outer-room ceiling beams have scroll stops, as has a first floor fireplace wooden lintel. The low end of the house was rebuilt in the 17th century. The ground falls away steeply and the rebuilding of the outer room implies that the medieval house was a longhouse, combining house and byre. To one side of the hall fireplace is an oven in a projection rising to the original eaves level. Under the oven is a hearth opening for a former curing chamber into which the oven has been inserted.

Flax Bourton, Old Angel

This is a two-storey house, externally c. 41 ft long by 21 ft wide, sited immediately opposite the church. It was undoubtedly the medieval church house, which became

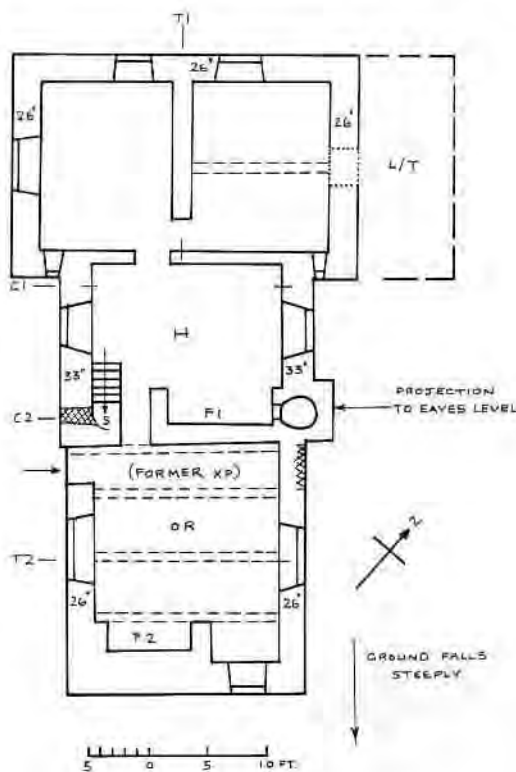


Fig. 6 Butcombe, Yew Tree Farm

an inn in the 17th century – as was so often the case – and is now finally a private house. The house has a Jacobean front door, ovolo-moulded window frames, and scroll stops to ceiling beams. In the 17th century, a stair turret and a rear kitchen wing were added; they were built with 2 ft walls, in contrast to the 30 in. walls in the front. At the E gable of the latter, a 17th century fireplace is built into a very large stack. The original larger fireplace so sited is typical of most church houses. The wing roof has 17th century in-line tenoned purlins and lapped, dovetailed collars. The front was reroofed in the 19th century, reusing 17th century timbers.

Long Ashton, Nos 2 and 3 Church Lane

Evidence that one of these houses was the priest's house and the other the chantry priest's house is to be found in the Ashton Court records at the Bristol Record Office; a charter of 1495 (Bristol Record Office, AC/DI/99) refers to the tenement of the chaplain 'extending to the garden of the Chantry House'; a list of lands belonging to the chantry (Bristol Record Office, AC/C23) states that 'there is my house, an orchard and garden . . .'

The houses stand adjacent to each other and to the church (*see* Fig. 7). They are of two storeys, c. 32 ft long by c. 18 ft wide externally; the 27–28 in. thick walls are of roughly-dressed coursed rubble. Both houses have recent additions to the rear, and No. 2 also has an addition beyond the E gable. Both have gable fireplaces (but in No. 3 one of them is blocked), so presumably both were of two-room plan, though No. 3 is now a single room. To varying degrees, details have been modified in both.

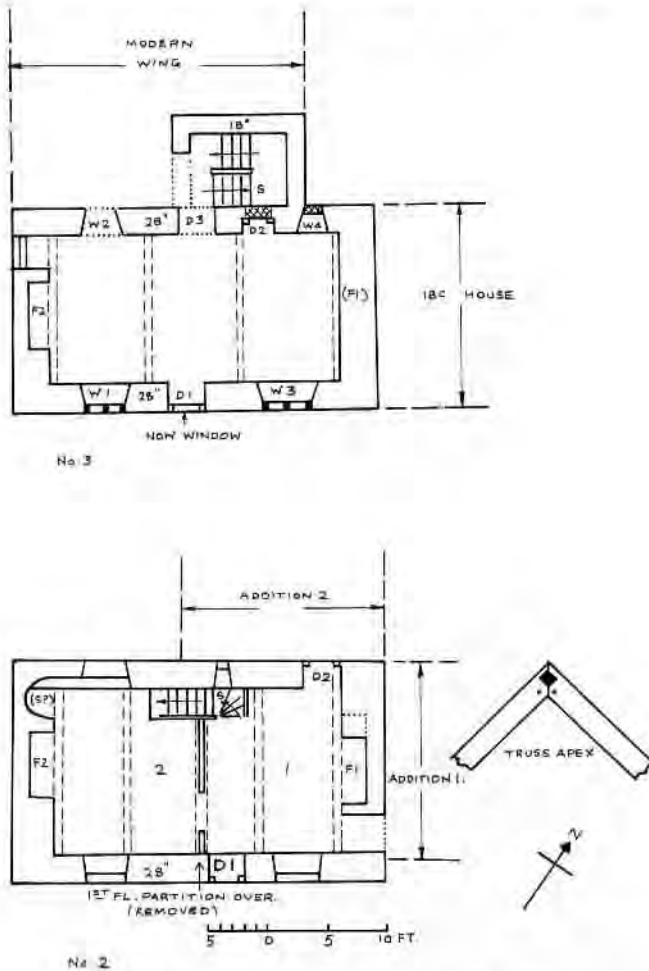


Fig. 7 Long Ashton, Nos 2 and 3 Church Lane

In No. 3, the plain chamfered four-centred stone doorway, D1, is now a window and the entrance is into the rear addition. At the back are modern stairs within a turret now entered from the addition, but the blocked four-centred doorway, D2, shows that originally there were stairs in a turret. A rear window, W2, is now a door. The roof is completely rebuilt so that the surviving datable details are the fireplace, F2, which has a four-centred stone lintel of the Tudor period, moulded hollow/step/ogee, the four-centred doorways, and, at the front, trefoil-headed windows with incised spandrels under deep sided drip-moulds with incised square terminals. A late 15th century building date is probable.

In No. 2, the chamfered four-centred entrance doorway, D1, remains, as does a rear doorway, D2, but the latter is inexplicably sited close to the gable and there are no signs of a stair turret; modern stairs are against the back wall. An oddly-shaped recess beside the fireplace, F2, may possibly have been stairs. Two roof trusses have in-line tenoned purlins, cambered and tenoned collars and a

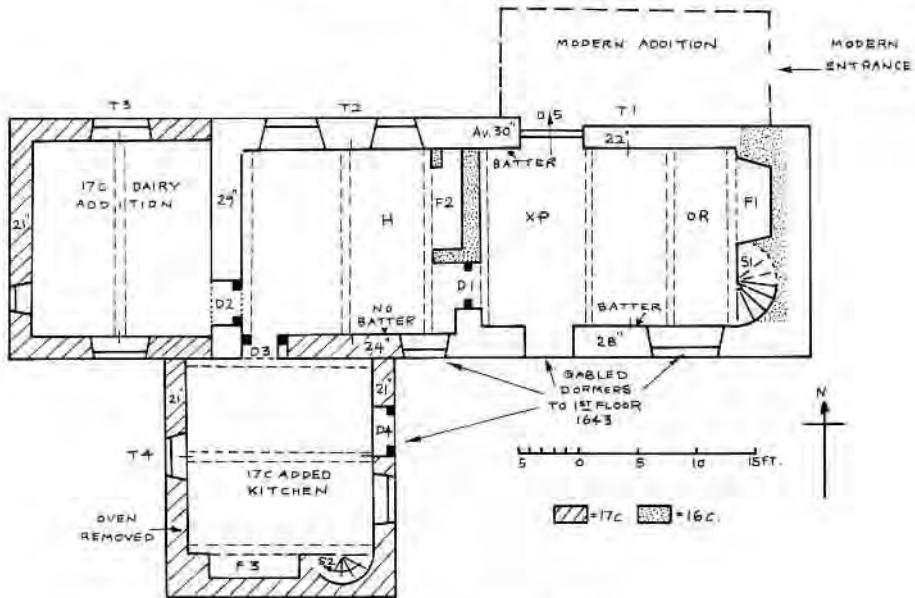


Fig. 8 Nailsea, Old Kingshill Farm

vertical apex joint held by a slip tenon. These, the doorways and fireplace, F2, date the house to the late 15th century. Both houses are similar to the small priests' houses described by W. A. Pantin in *Medieval Archaeology* (1957), 118–146, where he states that few survive.

Nailsea, Old Kingshill Farmhouse

The house has walls up to 30 in. thick, except where rebuilt, and is of single-storey height with upper windows in large gabled dormers dated 1643 (see Fig. 8). That was the date at which a medieval hall house had a first floor inserted: ceiling beams in the hall and outer room have scroll stops to plain chamfers, as has the outer room fireplace (F1) and the first floor doors. Hall and outer room roof trusses are true crucks, so far as can be seen; purlins are in-line tenoned; collars are tenoned and apex is vertically jointed; timbers are blackened and the hall fireplace (F2) is thus an insertion. The door (D1) into the hall from the cross passage is in a deeply two-centred wooden frame with 45° flat stops to plain chamfers. The house thus dates from at least the early 15th century. Beyond the 29 in. upper end gable of the hall, a dairy with 21 in. walls was added in the 17th century; its doorway (D2) and ceiling beams have scroll stops to plain chamfers. Abreast the hall, a 21 in. walled kitchen wing was added in the 17th century; its entrance door is in an ovolo-moulded frame and like the door from the hall (D3) has scroll stops, as have the ceiling beams and lintel of the fireplace, F3. Both roofs have 17th century trusses with in-line tenoned purlins and notched tenoned apex.

In having no inner room, this medieval house resembles those described earlier in these notes, although unlike them the outer room has remained undivided; nevertheless, with the cross passage it has an overall length of 27 ft, and the fact that the kitchen is in an added wing does imply that the outer room was the byre of a longhouse, although there is no down slope for drainage.

NOTES SUBMITTED BY B.C.M. HALE

Compton Dando, Court Hill House (with Mrs B. Bowes)

This is a tall three-storey rubble-built house set back from the road. It was originally called Crabbe's Farm. It has modern sash windows on either side of a pedimented central door, but the sash windows which are over the door, and which light the hall and stairs, have large paned beardless sashes with the sash boxes set flush with the wall, presumably being of the late 17th or early 18th century but with replacement sash frames. All the windows are under small brick relieving arches with horizontal brick infilling between frame head and arch. N of the centre line is a small second storey sash, but S of the centre the first floor room has had the ceiling raised, pushing the second floor room into the attic where it is lit by gable windows. The rear of the house is covered by three gable-ended wings of two stories, the N one overlapping the house slightly. The left hand (S) ground floor room has two transverse boxed beams with elegant double ogee mouldings set as chamfers. Above this is the 'Court Room' which has its ceiling raised into the roof area, again with two transverse beams with plaster soffits of running floral scrolls interspersed with anonymous animals; a similar frieze, but including blank shields, runs round the room. There is a large decorated overmantel area of plaster mouldings, including a swagged cartouche between decorated pilasters ending in female masks. There is copious late 17th/18th century detail and many ledged doors in pegged ovolo frames on original 'H', 'L' or spatulate strap hinges.

The Manor of Compton Dando was part of the large estates of the Popham family. As the house has the design and style of the late 17th/early 18th century, with later improvements, it is probable that the steward of the Popham estates lived here and was responsible for the upgrading. However, the N end fireplace is in a 5 ft block and perhaps the whole ground floor has been raised; this may indicate an earlier start for the building.

Croscombe, Ivy House

This is one of three three-room cross-passage houses within 100 yards of each other, all of them having at the back a later 17th century building running N from the E end. Although these 'wings' are now incorporated in their respective houses, they all appear to have started as separate dwellings. The other houses are Laurel House, reported last year, and Long Street House (*see below*); all three are of early date, Ivy House probably of the early 16th century. Here the 'wing' does not align with the house, being offset by a foot or so. Ivy House has the hall fireplace backing on to the cross passage, but the space for the winder stair is now a passage-way to the inner room, and the stairs are dog-leg in an added stair turret at the end of the cross passage. The hall has a framed ceiling with plain deep chamfers, but the inner room has a transverse rough chamfered beam with trenches for the studs of a partition which would have made two small rooms. Walls are 27 in. thick, although the front wall is thinner, having been rebuilt with close-set coursed squared rubble, with ovolo moulded stone windows incorporated on both floors.

Croscombe, Long Street House

Long Street House is the third of the early three-room cross-passage houses on Long Street with a now incorporated 'wing' built separately, and has several features similar to Laurel House (*see above*). In both houses, the wing has a well four-centred doorway with a plain 4 in. chamfer (at Laurel House it is blocked by a window); both doors are at the internal junction of the wing and the house at the back. In both houses the windows in the 'wing' are wooden ovolos in pegged frames

and the stairs come out of the hall into a semi-winder stone turret. In Long Street House, the stair has been straightened to exit from the short passage-way from the hall to the 'wing'. The original stairs may have been in the traditional place, while a semi-circular alcove in the back wall of the hall probably shows the interim exit to the stair turret before straightening, an arrangement similar to Laurel House. Two other early houses, the Bull Terrier and Rock Bottom, also have stairs of this nature, but the position of the hall fireplaces is reversed, being on the left.

The street (S) side of Long Street House has been rebuilt, and the roof raised, and four stone ovolo moulded windows under label moulds have been inserted on the first floor: these are of two lights, but the ground floor window in the outer room is similar but of four lights; the hall and inner room have three-light reserve chamfered windows, presumably inserted in the first quarter of the 17th century, while the others are probably slightly later. The front door frame is a handsome depressed four-centred one, moulded with a narrow ovolo step ogee.

Internally, the house was remodelled in the 19th century, the hall fireplace (and stack) having been removed and formed into a decorative alcove; an eight-panel framed ceiling with complex early mouldings remains in the hall. There is no sign of a division between hall and inner room, but the transverse beam of the framed ceiling – where a moulded half beam would be expected against the division wall, or perhaps a fully moulded beam if there was no division – is fully moulded on the hall side, but has a plain bevel from soffit to ceiling on the inner room side, and has a run of smallish holes well up the bevel about 18 in. apart (*see* Fig. 9). This arrangement has not been seen before, and the only explanation that can be suggested is that there was a low wall on which a light screen was subsequently placed. Any alternative suggestion would be welcome. Considerable expense was incurred to maintain the status of the house, stone ovolo windows having been fitted to the single lofted room of the late 18th/early 19th century building which forms the W side of the courtyard opposite the 'wing'; a similar ovolo-moulded window is fitted on the first floor of the 19th century extension of the 'wing' (a cider room), which is entered through a wide stone-framed square-headed doorway with a dropped decorated keystone.

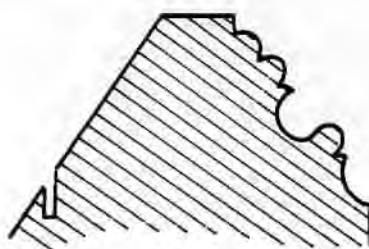


Fig. 9 Croscombe, Long Street House

Croscombe, Parsonage Farm

Cdr E.H.D. Williams recorded Parsonage Farm in 1979, leaving some doubts as to its interpretation. It has been re-examined, again with inconclusive results. It was suggested in 1979 that the original three-room cross-passage house lay N-S up the slope of the hill; now it is suggested that the axis was E-W, which is in conformity with virtually all early houses in the area and consistent with the line of the roof-ridge over the main room (*see* Fig. 10). The approach is from the N, with the

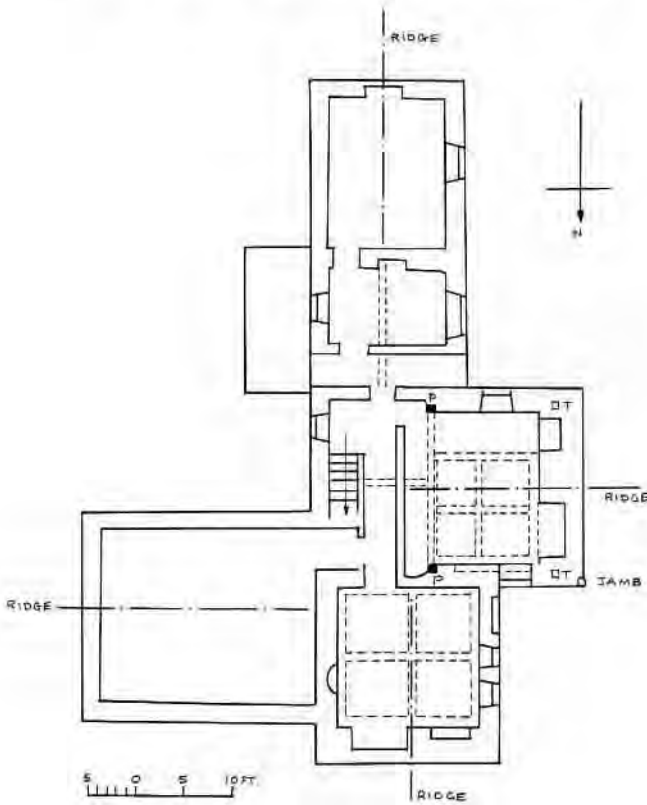


Fig. 10 Croscombe, Parsonage Farm

blank gable end of a N addition to the main room flanked by, and forward of, a late addition to E. while a short portion of the main room protrudes to W. with the jamb of a moulded doorway on the corner. The adjacent Parsonage House is 17 ft away, but as this part of Parsonage House is a late addition, there would have been ample room for a lost cross passage and outer room. The roof ridge over the main room runs E-W, but the roof over the remodelled stair area has been incorporated in a later roof running S over a thick-walled room (possibly a wing to the original house, rather than a cross passage as suggested in 1979). To the S of this thick-walled room has been added a small 18th century house, again aligned S up the hill.

The N room, the one first approached, is straight-jointed to the main room, and blocks half its N window. It has a four-panelled famed ceiling with an unusual moulding; a fireplace in the NE corner has a four-centred stone surround with plain chamfers descending to sloped steps and pyramid stops, probably a late 16th century addition. The main room (hall?) also has a four-panelled ceiling with various mouldings on its different component parts; it is supported on its E side, where a wall has been moved to the E. by a beam under the four-panelled framed ceiling between the posts of a post and truss framing in the chamber above, and by another on the S side with mouldings inside but square outside with empty joist mortices; thus there are two blank areas in the ceiling, the first where the wall has been moved over into the inner room, and the second where there may have been a

passage-way from the cross-passage to the inner room. An axial beam runs from the framed ceiling across the inner room (stair area). In the chamber above the hall is the framed post and truss, unusually with the tie tenoned into the rafter. At the other end is a collar-beam truss, and between the two are curved windbraces. The roof is clean. This account provides a simplification of the plan and of a number of inconsistencies introduced by later remodelling or rebuilding of the house, which is no later than the early 16th century.

Croscombe, Rock Bottom, Long Street

Rock Bottom is a small rubble-built cross-passage house which stands at the corner of Long Street and Rock Street, and which was probably re-faced in the 18th century. Currently it has only one ground-floor room, including a lean-to extension on the W, but there are three transverse beams with step and runout stops to their chamfers; two of these are half beams, one across the fireplace, the other marking the division to the inner room and having mortices for a doorway at the N end. The loss of the inner room is suggested by the roof structure where the (late) truss at this point is filled in with a single brick wall, pebble dashed and colour rendered outside, showing that the house originally extended farther W. The fireplace in the hall has two piers cut from conglomerate stone, showing worn double-ovolo mouldings which change 22 in. from the floor to plain chamfers for a further 12 in., and end in battered cushion stops. The head is sandstone with the moulding continuing probably depressed four-centred: the central part is missing. Immediately N of the fireplace is the back of a well four-centred door frame, giving into the outer room/cross-passage. In the back wall adjacent to the door frame is a small window like a stair window, but the space available (33 in.) seems inadequate for a winder stair. In the back wall, further to the W, is a door-frame in conglomerate stone with a 3 in. chamfer stopped by probably 45° flat stops and headed by a rather depressed four-centred wooden head. The siting, head, and appearance of this doorway are the same as that to the stairs in the 15th century house Bull Terrier near by. The stairs now rise in the wing room against the dividing wall. The outer room is now truncated by the adjacent building and made into a garage so that it is not possible to tell whether there was a cross passage or an opposed entry.

Croscombe, Saddlers, Long Street

This small, rubble-built, irregular house lies below current street level between the street and the River Sheppey and may be below the level of the river which is only 10–15 ft to the S. The fenestration is irregular, and includes a ground floor stone-framed bulbous ovolo-moulded window, a beardless sash with the boxes flush with the wall, and a 'bordered' 19th century sash. Wall thicknesses are 28 in. (S wall), 26 in. (N wall) and 23 in. in the E extension, which has its own winder stair half in the back wall. The hall has parts of a framed ceiling with step and runout stops (probably a reconstruction), and a large fireplace which backs on to a larger one in the room next door which has a chamfered wooden lintel with diagonal stops. This fireplace is far too large for the current size of the room, suggesting that this room extended father W into the adjacent house: no joins can be seen at ground level outside, although there are quoins at first floor level. Located between the two rooms is a winder stair in the thickness of the back wall, but not rising over the entry between the rooms. Both N and S walls show bulges associated with the fireplace stack area, suggesting that originally the hall was open. The evidence is rather inadequate but suggests that Saddlers is one of Croscombe's earlier houses, possibly 14th century. The current entry is a lobby one beside the fireplace in the outer room. (All the above houses were recorded with Mrs M. Mnatzaganian.)

Doultling, Newman Street Farm (with Mrs M. Mnatzaganian and Mrs S. Halley)
 Newman Street Farm is an isolated $1\frac{1}{2}$ storey farmhouse with a large curtilage of early agricultural buildings (see Fig. 11). It is apparently of three-room cross-passage plan, but the outer room (E) is an 18th century addition where the creation of an opposed entry has caused the removal of a stone-lined bread oven which protruded from the gable end and whose entrance is still in the fireplace backing on the gable. There are two rooms, the first – entered through a plain stone-framed doorway with a chamfered, slightly segmental head – has a large rebuilt fireplace with a chamfered four-centred head as well as three axial beams (two boundary beams) with step and runout stops (one has a double transverse ridge before the step). The winder stair, in the customary place, is now covered by a straight one. The walls of both rooms show a sharp degree of batter and are some 29–30 in. thick, while the wall dividing the two rooms is 28 in. thick and rises to the roof ridge. The fireplace in the W room has a mutilated chamfered segmental head, and between it and the N wall is a very large brick-lined bread oven where the stair and perhaps an entry would have been. The entry is in the N wall. The ceiling is divided into three panels by four transverse beams (some replaced) with chamfers and step and runouts. These beams terminate on an axial beam level with the N edge of the fireplace some 5 ft from the N wall. This beam has mortices for a stud and plank screen, but it is doubtful if it was an early one. This screen would have protected the room from the door draughts.

The windows in these two rooms all have bulbous ovolo mouldings, the first floor windows being tucked under the eaves, the ground floor under label moulds. The window to the W room is of four lights and has a king mullion with the two ribs outside and the broad rib inside. The roof over the W room has a clean truss with a tenoned apex (ridge obscured), a slender cambered collar and chamfered purlins. Over the E room are chamfered purlins running from the 28 in. dividing wall to the stack.

The house is unusually arranged, having two units of a single room each, one with a gable entry, the other with a lateral entry, although it too may earlier have had a gable entry. A possible date for the house is the early 15th century, although it may well be even older.

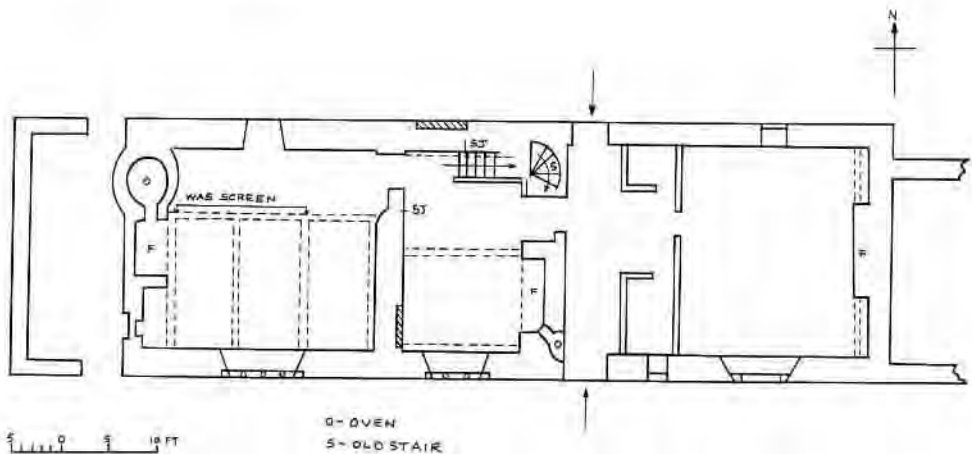


Fig. 11 Doultling, Newman Street Farm

East Pennard, Home Farm, Colbury (with Mrs Mnatzaganian, Mrs Rands and A. Pearse)

The quality of the squared rubble masonry at the S end, the four-centred moulded doorway, and the two rows of windbraces to a cruck with a decorated intermediate truss (all smoke blackened), indicate a house of very high quality, although more confirmatory detail is obscured. At the N end, a 19th century dairy has absorbed the inner room, but the wide cross passage and the possibilities for drainage suggest a long house, with a late fire inserted in the byre end. The hall fire backing on to the cross passage is blocked by a small modern grate and the original stairs have been suppressed. However, parts of a smoke-blackened arch-braced cruck roof with windbraces remain (*see* Fig. 12). The cruck blade is 12 in. \times 5½ in.; the apex is tenoned with a 5 in. \times 5 in. ridge set diagonally in an open slot. There are two rows of chamfered purlins (9 in. \times 6 in. and 7 in. \times 5 in.) tenoned in line, and an intermediate truss. The remaining intermediate truss is arch-braced up to a high-level collar, cambered and tenoned, each brace descending to a small boss at the foot, which is trencled into the lower purlin. The upper purlin is clasped between the collar and the intermediate truss blade, and only serves to carry the tops of the windbraces and not the common rafters. The upper windbraces are in pairs on either side of the intermediate truss; the lower ones are wide, and spread from main truss to main truss. The apexes of the intermediate trusses meet vertically around the ridge, but are not fastened to it or to each other. The house can reasonably be dated to the early 1400s.

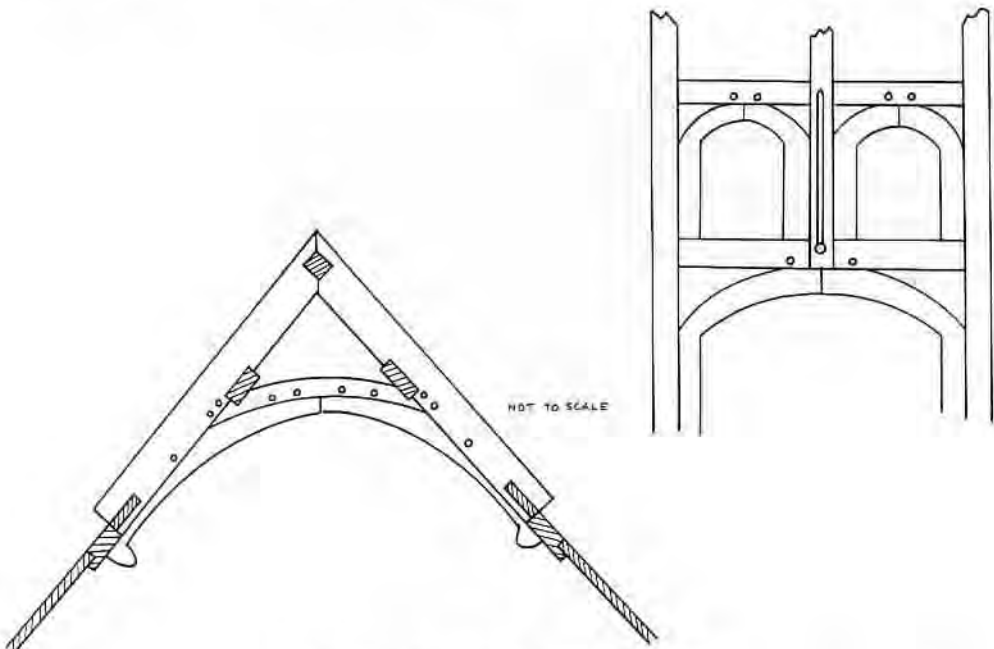


Fig. 12 East Pennard, Home Farm, Colbury

Queen Charlton, Manor Farm (with Mrs B. Bowes)

A three-room cross-passage house built of coursed dressed rubble probably in the late 16th century to a somewhat old-fashioned plan, with an outer room of a single storey and a square stair turret added at the rear. The large inner room was divided from the hall by a late stud and plank screen. The house is chiefly remarkable for a complete set of wooden ovolo-moulded windows on both floors, front and rear, eight on one front alone: they probably represent a mid-17th century improvement.

Wells, The Rib, St Andrew's Street

The building, standing close to the NE corner of the cathedral, has a long and well documented history as a canonical house of the cathedral. The names of forty occupiers, starting with Walter de Pederton who died in 1316, are known. It consists of a medieval hall built of coursed red rubble with 28 in. walls (surprisingly thin considering the height and size of the hall), an early 17th century structure on the NE corner of the hall entered through an oriel arch, an early porch on the NW corner with a 19th century stair lobby between the two, and several late extensions at the E end (see Fig. 13). An early photograph shows a lower building to the W of the hall gable which can be accepted as part of, or on the site of, the medieval service block.

The hall, divided into three rooms early in the 19th century, is a double cube 20 ft wide, 20 ft high, and 40 ft long. There is an entry from the porch at the W end which is opposite a blocked door at the S end representing the screens passage, and small fireplaces are in each gable. The oriel arch at the NE end is moulded in the form: ogee, step, hollow, step, ogee. It has a well four-centred head, and a return between the two edges of the oriel arch has two opposed trefoils at its internal head. The styling is very similar to the oriel at the Old Rectory, Yatton, although there the arch is much higher and more decorated. A similar arch at Lytes Cary is dated by Margery Wood in *The English Medieval House* as 1530.

The early 17th century, perhaps late 16th century, room was probably built in two halves, firstly replacing the oriel room and then extending it to the E: the extension is not square, presumably having been restricted by buildings then existing to the E. It has a four-panelled moulded framed ceiling which has been made into an eight-panelled one by insertion of two smaller beams of a different moulding. The W part of the N wall measures 37 in. and is the thickest in the house.

The porch with chamber over has a four-panelled framed ceiling (another different moulding). One corner (SW) has a diagonal across the soffits representing treads of a winder stair, now lost, to the chamber. In the N face of the porch is a handsome well four-centred moulded door set in a square frame with indented spandrels, one having a carved 'W'. Resting on the head of this frame is a moulded panel containing three 'tournament' shields, two carved but not identified. Above this is a three-light window, the heads being four-centred and having trefoil tracery. Above the window is a blank stone tablet with a four-centred head not central to the porch gable peak: the door and window are offset as far as possible to the W wall.

The roof over the hall has seven clean trusses to six bays, with straight principal rafters. These trusses have cambered arch-braced tenoned collars and four rows of curved chamfered windbraces set in scissor fashion. The braces are trenched into both principal and purlin, but not pegged. The apices are tenoned with the ridge in a central mortice; the purlins are also trenched. Principals, purlins, arch braces and windbraces are all chamfered and have plain runouts, although in some cases the purlin chamfer runs into the trench. The trusses are scratch-marked in order. Alternate trusses have dropped centres to the arch braces: in these cases the brace

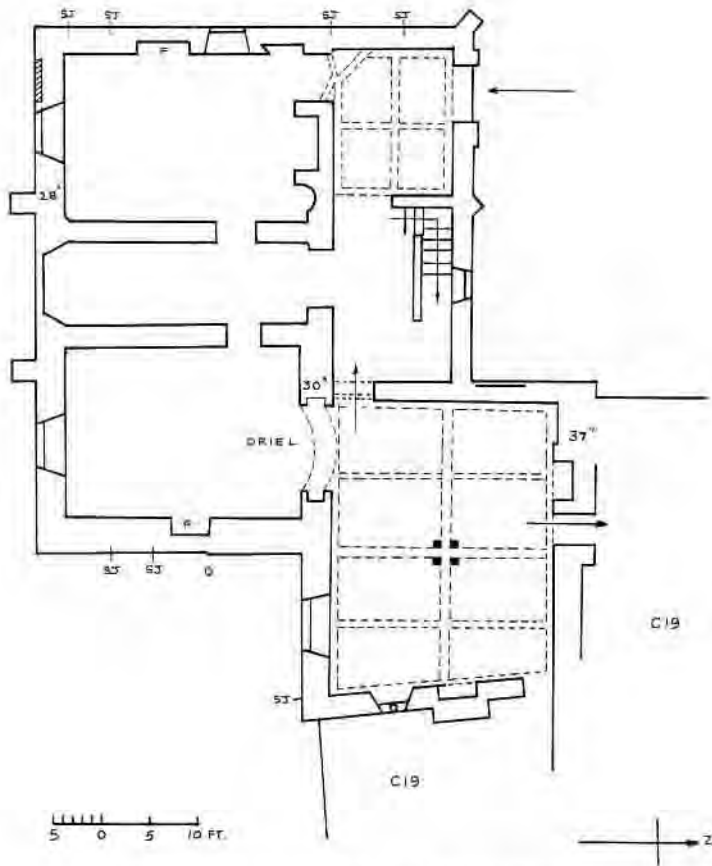


Fig. 13 Wells, The Rib, St Andrew's Street

finishes at the top of the wall over the window; in the other cases, the brace descends a few feet down the wall to end on a pad supported by a wooden angel. The two roofs over the 17th century room have straight clean trusses – with curved windbraces tenoned into the principals – trencched unpegged into the purlins, which are chamfered and tenoned in line. The E roof has the ridge in a central mortice, but the W one has it in a side slot. The trusses here are marked 'III', 'V' and 'I'.

Identification of the carved 'W', which also appears in other places, is with William Witham, Dean of Wells, 1467–72, and it is interesting to note that the roof over the hall is very similar to the roofs in Bishop Beckington's 'New Works' of 1450–70, on the N side of the Market Place, Wells. These houses are heated by small fireplaces in the party walls, which are not dissimilar to the hall gable fire here. There are strong indications that Dean Witham's tenure saw a reroofing of the building, several structural and decorative features being paralleled in other cathedral-inspired buildings of that date.

West Cranmore, Gannets, Nos 8 and 9 (with Mrs Mnatzaganian)

Gannets (no. 8) is a single-room late medieval cottage with masonry of remarkable quality, just short of ashlar. Internal measurements are 15 ft × 13 ft; the walls are 28 in. thick, with a degree of batter. The window in the S wall is a two-light

ogee-moulded stone-framed one. The fireplace with a brick bread oven has a mutilated segmental wooden head and a fireback largely consisting of 9 in. × 2 in. bricks set on edge in a herringbone pattern. The chamfered transverse beam has lost its stops owing to its having been corbelled out of the walls. The stairs, lit by a small intermediate-height window, were in the NE corner opposite the original door, a gable entry in the W gable. This entry was subsequently changed to a lobby entry round the corner in the N wall. The cottage is 1½ stories high with the roof raised later. In the N wall, the first floor window of c. 1700 is a beardless sash with the boxes set flush with the wall, thick glazing bars and small panes. Up two steps, the cottage is joined to a late 18th century lobby and stairs. No. 9, a few yards to the E. consists of part of two 28 in. thick walls, with batter, incorporated in a large building housing a commercial garage. One wall has a two-light ovolo-moulded window under a drip mould large enough for three lights. A likely date is the early 16th century.

NOTES SUBMITTED BY THE SOMERSET AND SOUTH AVON VERNACULAR BUILDING RESEARCH GROUP

Beckington, Nos 47 and 49 Goose Street

This is a 15th century cross-passage house, presently of 3 rooms in line and now subdivided as two dwellings (see Fig. 14). The formerly open two-bay hall has a central arch-braced cruck with closed cruck trusses at high and low ends. The roof has curved windbraces throughout, with two tiers over the hall and one tier elsewhere. Both hall and service room are smoke-blackened. The closed truss at the high end is blackened on the hall side only, indicating a former high-end solar; the closed truss at the low end of the hall is smoke-blackened on both sides, suggesting a separate low-end hearth. A hall stack backing on to the cross passage was inserted and the hall floored over in the early 17th century. Below the cross passage, the service room has two jointed cruck trusses. Overall the roof trusses are consistently numbered from 3 to 7, starting inside the E gable with carpenter's mark 'III'. This implies that at least two further bays, now gone, extended eastward (three further bays if the E gable was of stone). The masonry of the present E gable indicates that it was built before the insertion of the low-end stack. The existence of such a long low end – four or five bays – suggests various possibilities: a former longhouse can be discounted, the house being sited on the outskirts of a medieval town; an extended service end with buttery, pantry and kitchen beyond (like a manor house plan) is not very likely, as the rest of the house is not large enough to merit such an arrangement; the third possibility, that it was a large service area used for trade purposes connected with Beckington's extensive late medieval wool trade, seems the most likely.

Shepton Mallet, No. 8 Market Place

This handsome mid-17th century town house is an important survival, now sadly decayed, lying next to the churchyard and the market place (see Fig. 15). The large central urban site and the proximity of the Strode Almshouses, built in 1699, make it possible that the house was in Strode ownership. The Strodes were rich and deeply involved with the woollen cloth industry of the town; so perhaps the house was purpose-built for a clothier, his family and his work, conveniently placed for directing the cottage industry of the area.

The T-shaped plan comprises a former three-room main range of two and a half storeys, facing S on to a courtyard with a large wing to the N. There are extensive

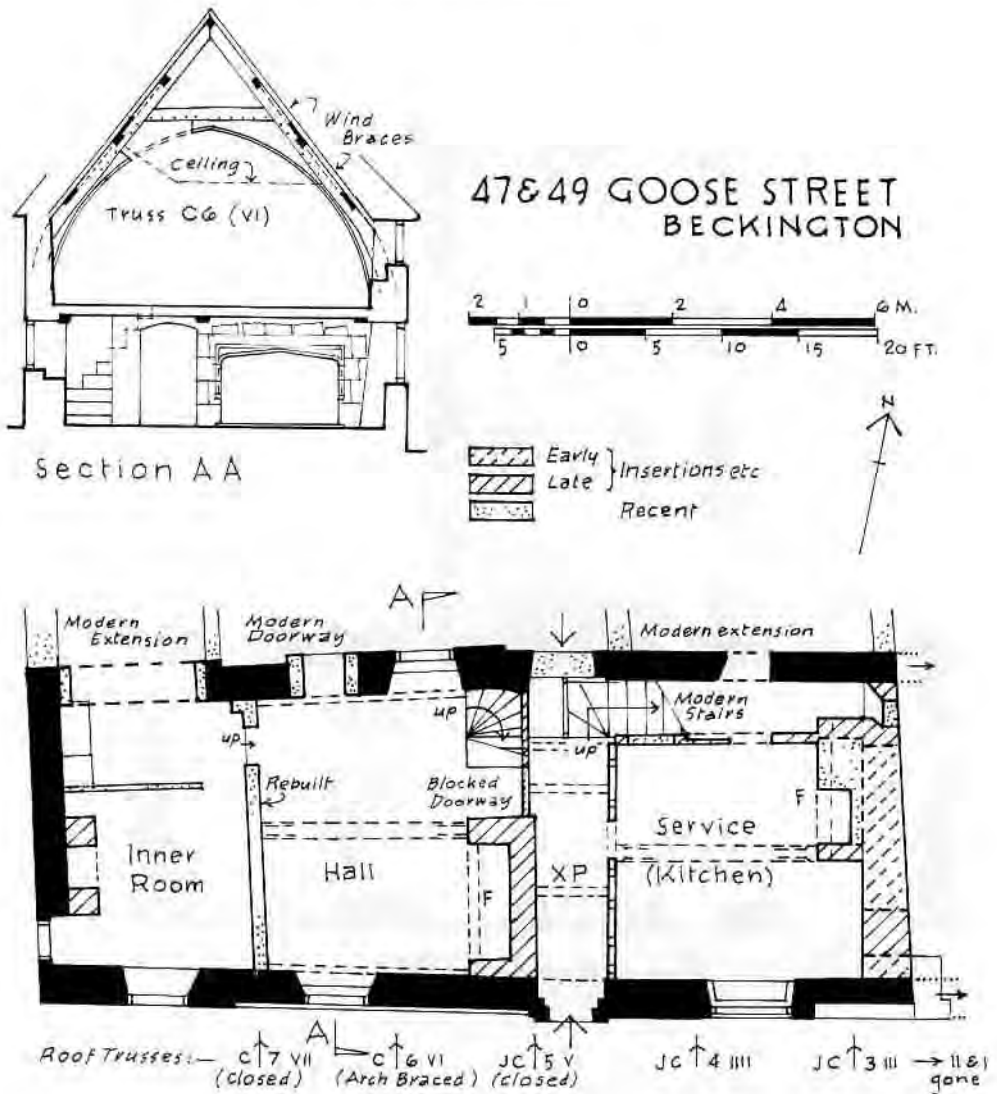


Fig. 14 Beckington, 47 and 49 Goose Street

cellars under both ranges. The wing was virtually unheated and had a separate entrance from the market place and wide newel stairs leading to the basement and upper storeys, the latter not well lit. The wing is not planned for domestic use and was probably intended for storage and other trade purposes. Across the courtyard and facing the main range are the remains of a building that may have been the kitchen. Later alterations include refenestration of the N gable and a carriageway entrance taken through the W end of the main range where surviving ovolo-moulded door jambs at back and front suggest the location of the original entrance doors. The best room was at first floor level with two four-light windows; so perhaps the ground floor rooms were used for domestic services or for the reception of trade visitors. The house has consistently good 17th century stone detailing, with

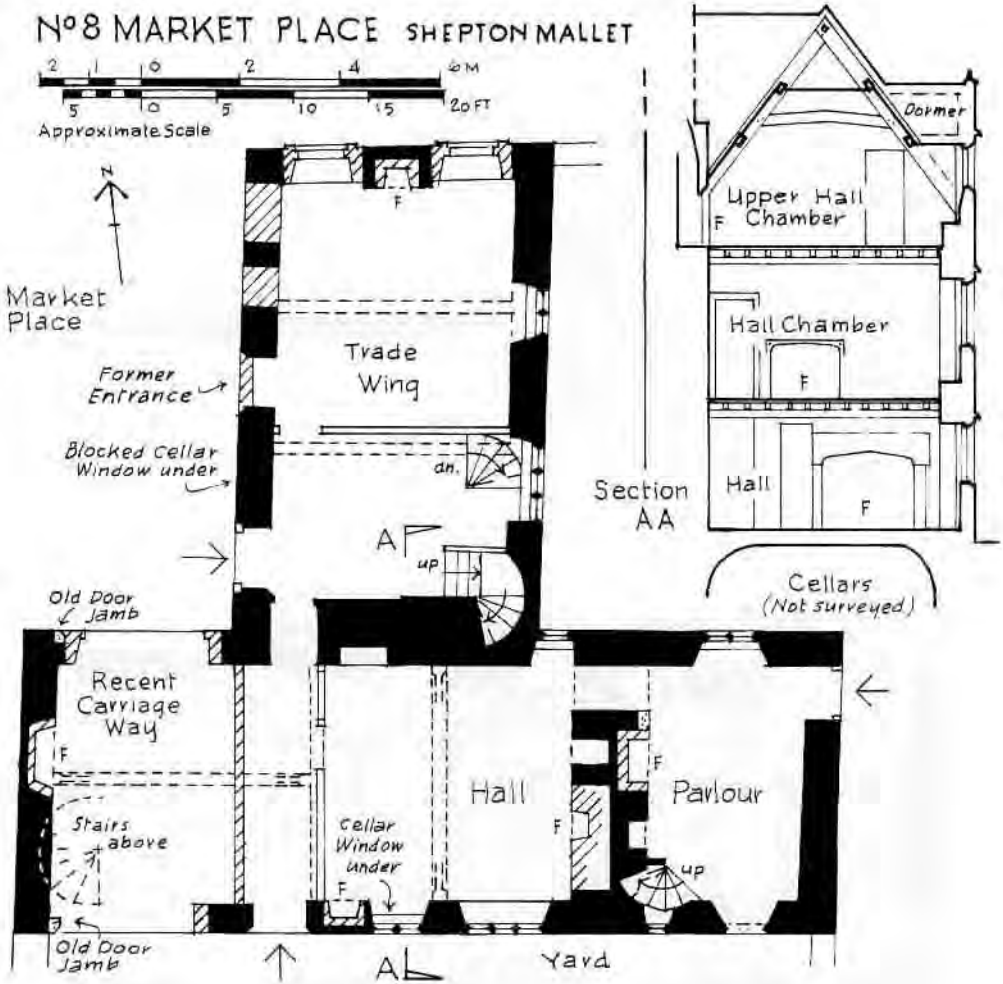
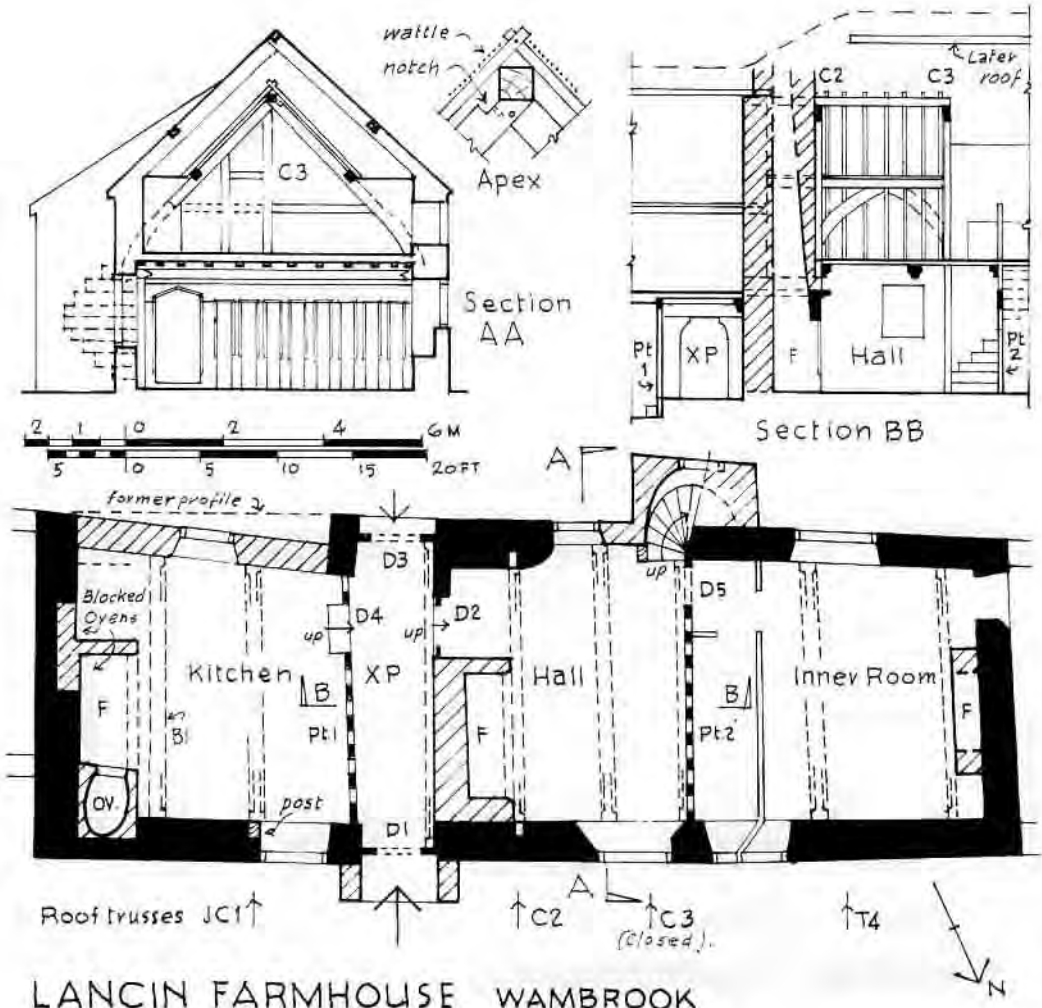


Fig. 15 Shepton Mallet, No. 8 Market Place

ovolo-moulded mullioned windows (including those in the gabled dormers), depressed four-centred arched fireplaces and ovolo-moulded doorways. The newel stairs seem a little modest for a wealthy man's house; and, indeed, the building as a whole, although large and well proportioned, is notable for its lack of ostentation or decoration. If it was built by a Strode, it is unlikely that he meant to live there himself.

Wambrook, Lancin Farmhouse

This three-unit cross-passage house, originally with an open hall, is part of an isolated farmstead close to the Devon border (see Fig. 16). The style of the shouldered headed doorways (D2 and D3), together with the details of the cruck and jointed cruck construction of the oldest part of the roof, indicates that it dates from the 15th century; at that time the partitions which divide the cross passage from the hall and the service room were probably only at head height. The extent of the smoke-blackening of the roof indicates that the high end of the house always



LANCIN FARMHOUSE WAMBROOK

Fig. 16 Wambrook. Lancin Farmhouse

had two floors. The closed truss (C3) and the ground floor partition (Pt2) are not in line and may, earlier, have allowed the upper chamber floor to be jettied about 2.5 ft over the hall, forming a sort of canopy over the bench which, on the evidence of the truncated chamfers on Pt2, may have existed. The hall had a two-bay cruck frame, and in that area the underside of the thatch is clad with wattling; the early rafters are pegged over the top of the square-set ridge, and there is a single tier of windbraces. In the lower end, the rafters are set flat.

The hall chamber floor, with the associated stack, was inserted in the mid-16th century with massive pyramid chamfer stops on the beams. At about the same time a smoke bay was created in the service end and, later in the century, an upper floor inserted. In the early 17th century, further upgrading occurred. The floor of the kitchen was lowered and the stack built within the smoke bay; in addition, the high end was rebuilt with a raised roof to the chamber, and fireplaces were added to the gable end.

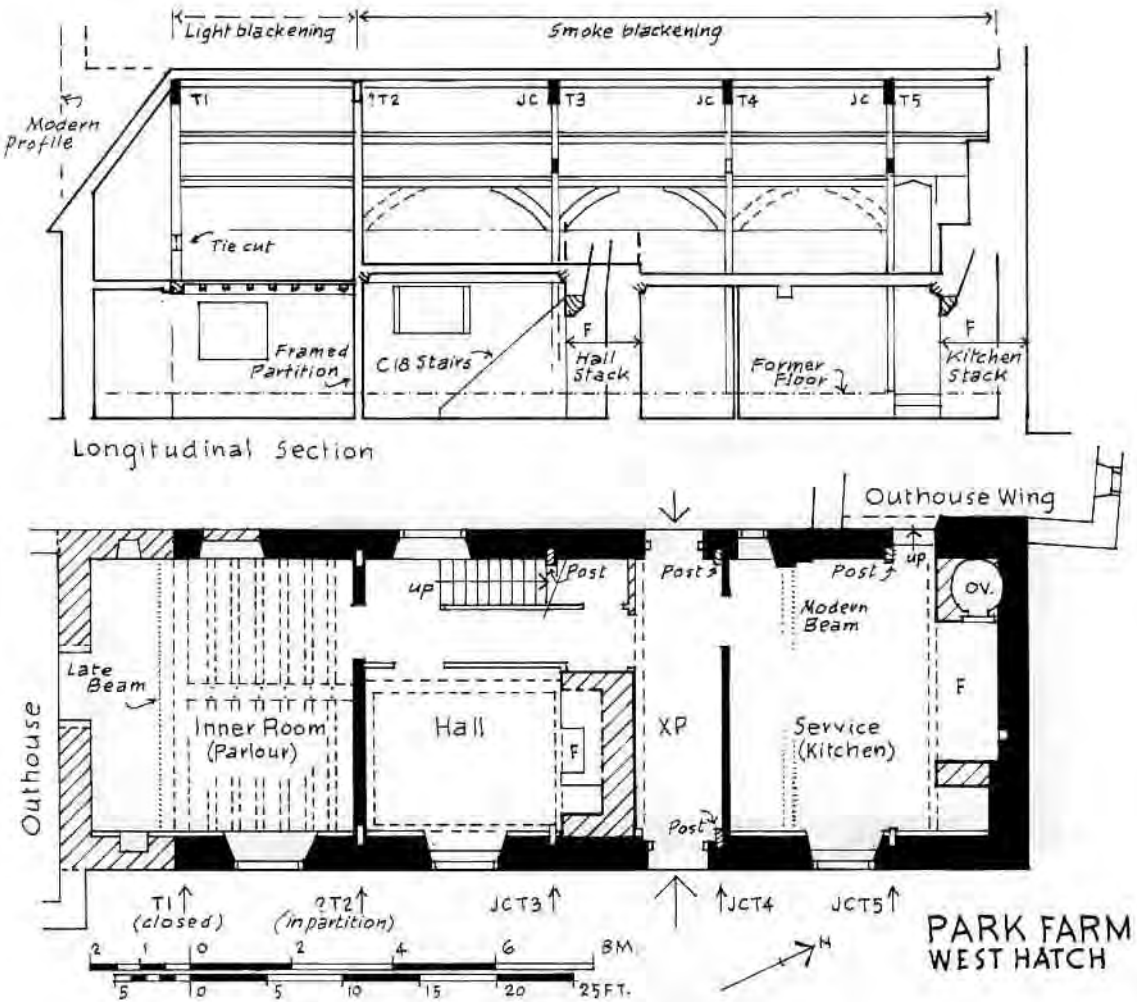


Fig. 17 West Hatch, Park Farm

West Hatch, Park Farm

This is a late medieval farmhouse having a very complete surviving roof structure of the late 15th century with widely-spaced jointed crucks, heavily smoke-blackened (see Fig. 17). The formerly closed truss (T1) probably represents the original gable wall of the house at the high end. Light smoke blackening between T1 and T2 indicates a high-end solar, inserted soon after the house was built, with a well-made floor over the inner room; the large joists are closely spaced and laid flat, chamfered, stopped and pegged to the axial beam. Hall and service room were floored over, and fireplaces installed, in the late 16th or early 17th century. Some of the cruck posts extend down into the ground floor rooms, but stop short of the present floor level. Opening up below the stairs and inside the large fireplace openings reveals that the ground floor has been lowered by some 27 in., presumably at the time the late 18th century oak staircase was installed. This, although disastrous for the stability of the house, was no doubt done to accord with the 18th century fashion for higher rooms. In spite of this drastic alteration, the appearance of the house, with its long low proportions, reveals its medieval date.