



# Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig

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North West Wales Dendrochronology Project  
**DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES**

**Llawr-dref, Llangian, Gwynedd**

**ARCHITECTURAL RECORD**

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*in partnership with*



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c 2012

# North West Wales Dendrochronology Project

## Llawr-dref, Llangian

### Introduction

This report contains the results of a survey undertaken to complement the proposed dating of timbers at Llawr-dref, Llangian, as part of the North West Wales Dendrochronology Project. The survey was undertaken on 11 December 2009 by Adam Voelcker. Documentary research will be undertaken by volunteers to accompany this survey, and separate reports will be issued describing the results of the documentary survey and of the dendrochronology sampling.

### Site particulars

#### Site address

Llawr-dref, Llangian, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 7LT

#### Present owner

Dr Owen 01758 612782

#### NGR

SH 28902874

### Sources of information (architectural)

RCAHMW *Caernarvonshire*, vol.3 (1964) p.61 and Plates 47, 52 & 59 (attached)

RCAHMW Coflein database, NPRN 26715

Cadw listing description, Record No. 19625 (1998) (attached)

Peter Smith, *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* (1981), distribution maps

p.413	windbraces
p.417	truss cusping
p.437	house Type A
p.474	fireplace stair
p.492	post-and-panel partition
p.503	enriched doorhead

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This information supplements the RCAHMW and Cadw descriptions. Cadw was unable to inspect the roof-space; RCAHMW could, but not in detail.

The inspection confirms that there are three oak trusses in the roof space, two with ornate cusping at and above collar level (Trusses 2 & 3) and one with a plain cambered collar without cusping (Truss 1). However, there are no wind-braces nor is there any evidence of any, for instance mortises in the purlins or trusses (this is contrary to Peter Smith's distribution map). Nor are there any holes for partition uprights in the collar and principals of the plain truss (Truss 1) - these might have been expected here, though not in the other two trusses.

The original oak purlins survive but have been cut off in line with the C19 truss south of Truss 3. Modern purlins have been inserted above the oak ones, to re-align the roof to a regular line and to carry the modern slated roof. It is not clear why the south gable of the house has been rebuilt (probably in the C19) and a new softwood truss inserted.

The remainder of the Cadw description appears to be accurate, but it omits (as does the RCAHMW description) the possible blocked window to the top of the former staircase, in the north gable. The high position of this window is unusual so it is possible that it is not original but was perhaps formed when the stonework above the former mural stair was removed. Stubs of stone projecting radially from the external north wall, in line with the window, give the superficial appearance that the stair might have once continued up to the roof-space, but this would be unusual and the stone stubs are more likely to be the ends of the stones forming the 'ceiling' above the mural stair. The most likely function of the window was to light the attic space when it was used for accommodation by servants or farm-hands (there are scraps of wall-paper evident on the south gable).

The RCAHMW states that there are no stops to the ground floor beams, but one does survive, on the south side of the main beam at its western end (in passage). The stop on the north side is less clear.

There is a minor error in the RCAHMW ground floor plan - the recess in the south room should be shown in the east, not the west, wall.



Llaw-dref, Llanengan

<sup>1</sup> The name presumably derives from an earthwork. The nearest known is No. 1578 in Llanbedrog parish, a little over a mile to the N.N.E., but a MS. of 1871 (*Arch. Camb.*, 1903, p. 253) mentions 'a circular British camp in the sandhills on the farm of Castellmarch'.

<sup>2</sup> *Wynn Papers*, No. 1364; cf. No. 644, dated 1614, and Dwnn, II, p. 117, visitation dated 1596, as evidence for the previous house. Sir William Jones (1566-1640) was Chief Justice to the King's Bench in Ireland, 1617-20, Judge of the King's Bench of England, 1624-40. His son Griffith Jones was kidnapped by a landing party from a Royalist frigate while he was at Castellmarch, and the house was plundered; see *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1649-50. For both see Griffith, *Pol.*, p. 191; A. H. Dodd, *Studies in Stuart Wales* (Cardiff, 1952), pp. 83, 130, 159, 173.

<sup>3</sup> Suggested by Harold Hughes, *Arch. Camb.*, 1926, p. 462.

<sup>4</sup> In *Arch. Camb.*, 1956, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> Hyde Hall, p. 291.

<sup>6</sup> For Rhys ap Tewdwr, the indented border omitted, cf. tablet to Margaret, wife of William Jones of Castellmarch, 1609, at Beaumaris Church, *Anglesey Inv.*, p. 66; this and the other shields denote his or his ancestors' marriages.

<sup>7</sup> By comparison with his first wife's tablet, see preceding n., the second quartering should stand for his second wife, *née* Powis, of Abington, see Griffith, *Pol.*, p. 191. Neither here nor elsewhere in the house do the arms of Meirion Goch with chevron agree with those which in 1596 were recorded here by Dwnn, II, p. 117, without chevron; J. Y. W. Lloyd, *History of Powys Fadog*, VI, pp. 22-3.

Condition: good.

SH 31442972

15 v 55

45 N.W.

(1614) LLAWR-DREF (Fig. 79, Plates 47, 52, 59), two-storeyed house probably of the 16th century. It is built of rubble and roofed with small slates; the S. gable and both chimneys have been rebuilt, but the roof and plain-chamfered eaves course appear to be original. Some of the internal arrangements have been altered and the original stone stair has been removed. Nothing is known of the early history of this house; the name has been transferred to a 19th-century house nearby.

### LLAWR - DREF

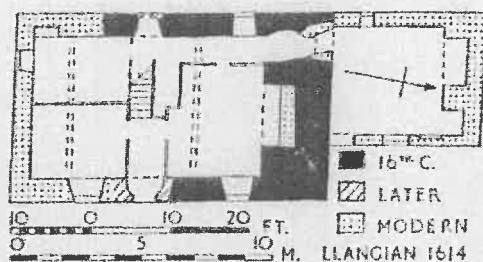


FIG. 79

The present doorway, 3 ft. 3 ins. wide and set off-centre, has a depressed pointed arch. It is certainly an early opening, probably original, but the stones used are generally smaller than those in the blocked W. doorway. The windows on this E. front have all been altered, but that on the ground floor to N. of the door occupies an original opening. The two most southerly date from the rebuilding of the S. gable in the 19th century. During the course of this work much of the original fenestration in the W. wall was also destroyed, but two small

plain windows remain, only 1 ft. 6 ins. square. The W. doorway (Plate 52), 2 ft. 7 ins. wide, is opposite the present entrance; it has been blocked, leaving only a small window.

The lower part of the N. gable has been masked by the addition of a small 19th-century kitchen, but the upper part of the wall contains traces of a small window which once lit the stair. The quoins are large and well built; the copings and the rough kneeders appear to be original.

The inner jambs of the E. doorway are widely splayed and retain one of the old door crooks in the S. jamb; the head is lintelled.

The interior has been altered, and all the present rooms are modern, but part of the original moulded post-and-panel screen remains *in situ* S. of the entrance passage. It contains two doorways with shaped heads, one to the W. (Plate 59) and the other, blocked, near the centre. The principal room on the ground floor has its original ceiling-beams, with a well formed cavetto and double ovolo mould of Elizabethan type; the joists have a simplified version of the same mould. All lack stops. The fireplace-beam is similar, with plain stops. Traces remain W. of the fireplace of a stone stair, which was removed to give access to the added kitchen.

The roof is ceiled and the woodwork could not be examined closely. The S. truss is modern, but the design of the other three suggests that they may be earlier than the building, perhaps from a medieval house on or near this site. All the roof woodwork is of excellent workmanship. The first or N. truss has only a plain cambered or even cranked collar. The second has a very slightly cambered collar with two cusped struts forming a central octofoil flanked by sexfoils. The third has the same arrangement of struts but has well-formed arched braces beneath the collar. It was impossible to reach the trusses to determine whether wind-braces had been used, but none now exist.

Condition: fair, now abandoned.

SH 28902874

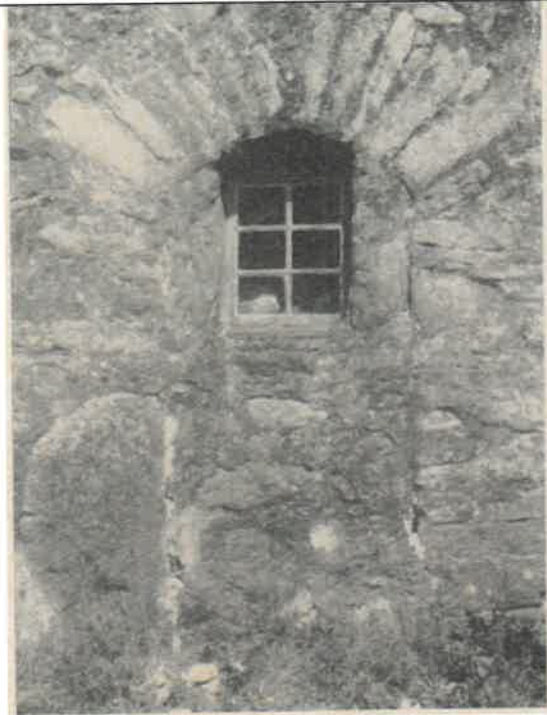
24 vi 58

44 N.E.

(1615) NANHORON (Plate 56), a house of two and three storeys built between *ca.* 1800 and *ca.* 1840. The walls are ashlar-built; the roofs are slate-covered.

The Edwards family, who adopted their surname by the middle of the 17th century, had been associated with this site, Nanhoron-uchaf, for some generations already.<sup>1</sup> At the back of the present house are two re-set dating tablets inscribed (i) 1677 E.R.A., (ii) E.R.D. 1756,<sup>2</sup> which come from an earlier house, no doubt that shown about 50 yds. to the E. on an estate-map of 1777-8.<sup>3</sup> The period during which the present house was under construction is known approximately from a volume of drawings dated 1796, and signed J. B. Salop,<sup>4</sup> which include a plan differing only slightly from that of the present house, and from two other drawings (on paper water-marked 1832) made by H. Walsh, both more accurate in proportion, which include the large N. wing of three storeys. This wing bears a tablet inscribed: LL E.R.M.<sup>5</sup>

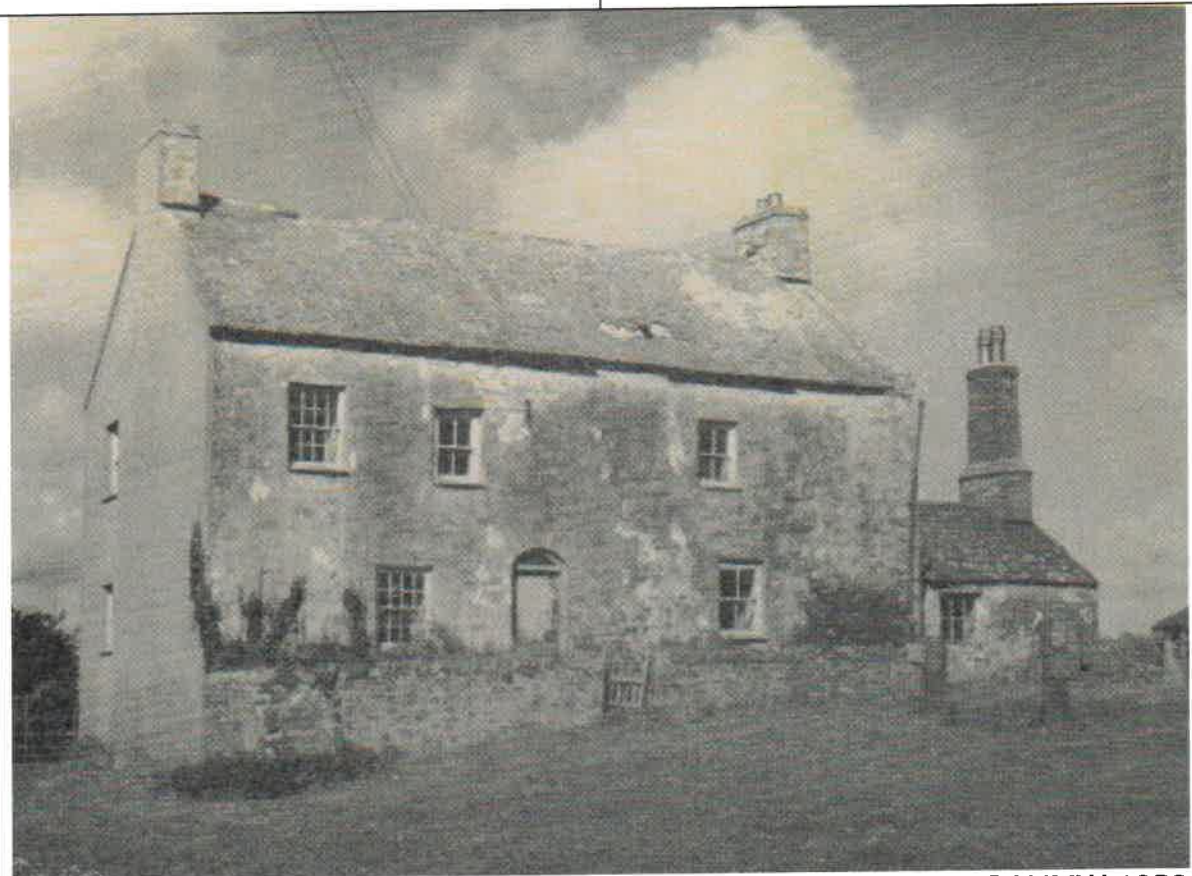
Externally the house is plain, except for a delicate cast-iron verandah along the front, but internally it contains work that for this region is of relatively high quality. Especially



west (rear) doorway RCAHMW 1958



Llangian (1614, p. 61b), Llawr-dref, screen doorway. 16th-century.



east (front) elevation

RCAHMW 1958

Authority	Gwynedd	Record No	19625
		Date Listed	01/04/1998
Community	Llanengan		
Locality	Llangian	Grid Ref	228900 328740
Postcode	LL53 7LU	Grade	II
Name	Llawr-dref		

#### Location

Situated W of Llangian, reached by track joining Llanengan road opposite Bont Newydd, some 600m S of Llangian.

#### History

Late C16 to early C17 house, altered in C19. It is to be distinguished from another farmhouse of the same name in the same parish 1 km further W, sometimes called Llawr-y-dref, which may have been built to replace this house in the earlier C19. Marked on 1839 Tithe Map as owned by the Vaynol estate, occupied by Henry Griffiths.

#### Exterior

Farmhouse, pebbledashed rubble stone with slate close-eaved roof and rebuilt stone end stacks. Tall two-storey front irregularly fenestrated. First floor has smallish C19 4-pane plate glass sashes left and right of centre and a large 4-pane sash to left. Ground floor has C20 slightly left of centre and C20 plastic window each side, not evenly spaced nor aligned with upper windows. Left end has 4-pane sash each floor, set to left. Right end has single storey addition with tall rendered stack on stone base at N end. One door and C20 window.

#### Interior

Said in 1964 to have had ornate open roof with 2 cusped roof trusses not visible now. The right half is the C16 part, up to just right of the door. 2 heavy moulded beams with hollow and round mouldings and scratch-moulded joists. Fireplace beam is similarly moulded, cambered, with run-out stops. There was a stone stair to left of the fireplace, now gone. Left of the present stairs, the remains of a moulded post and panel partition. C19 stairs and pine beam in left ground floor room. One of the 2 enriched door-heads mentioned in 1981 remains. The front door is arched within but the S door jamb noted in 1964 is not visible.

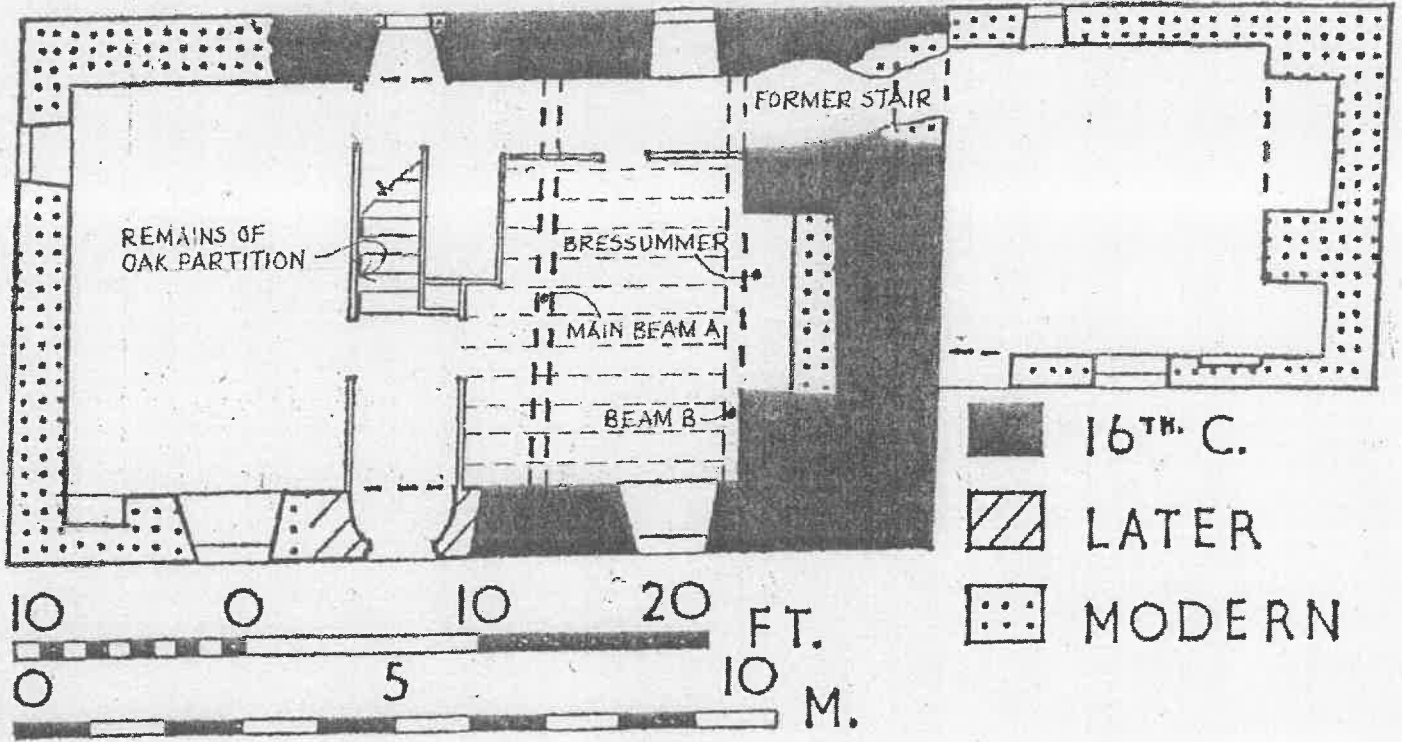
#### Listed

A farmhouse with surviving early timberwork possibly of the C16.

#### Reference

RCAHM, Caernarvonshire, 3, 1964, p61;  
P Smith, Houses of the Welsh Countryside, 1981, pp413, 417, 437, 474, 492, 503.

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



ROOF PLAN

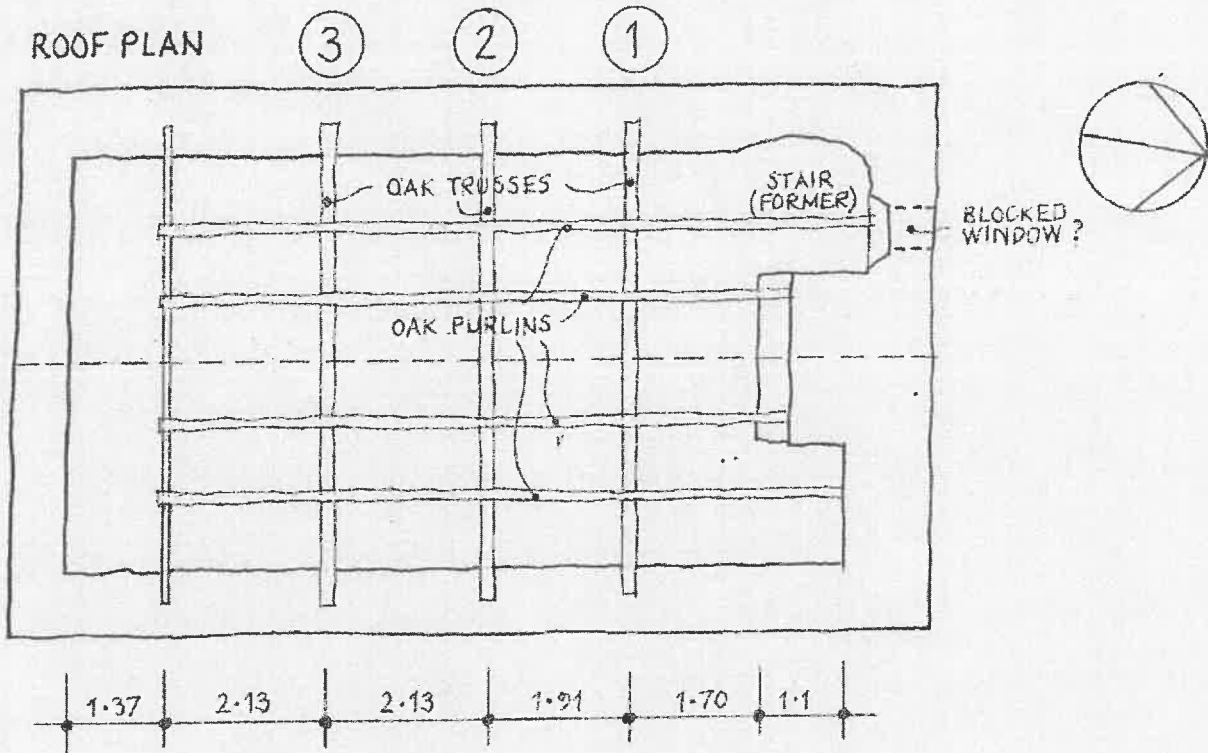


Fig 1 Ground floor and roof plans

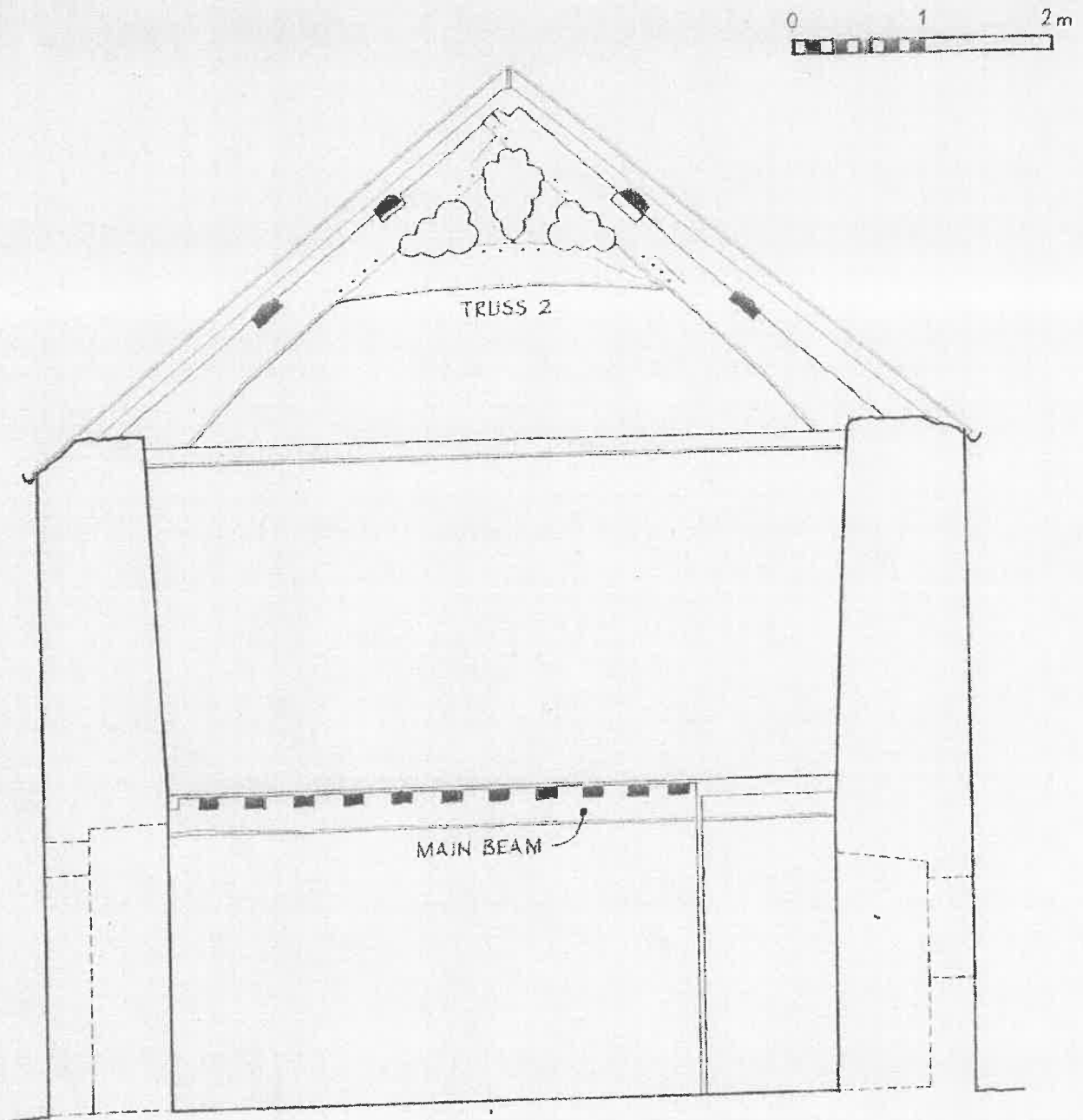


Fig 2 Elevations of trusses



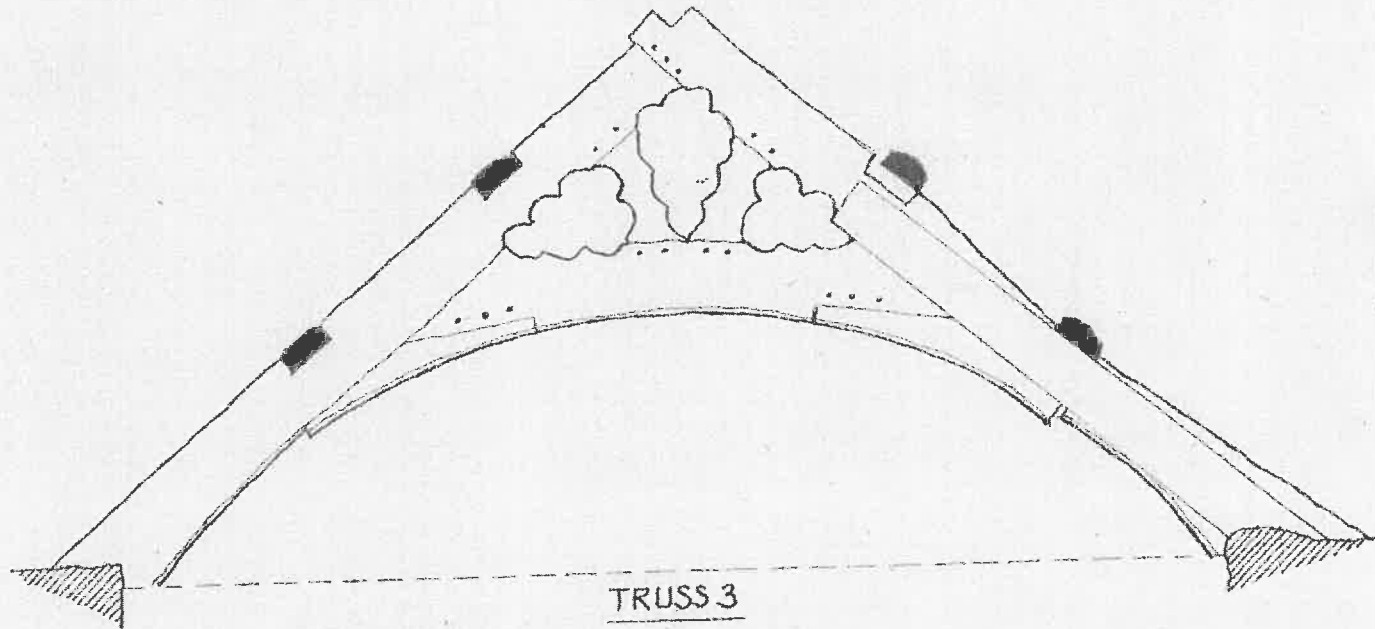
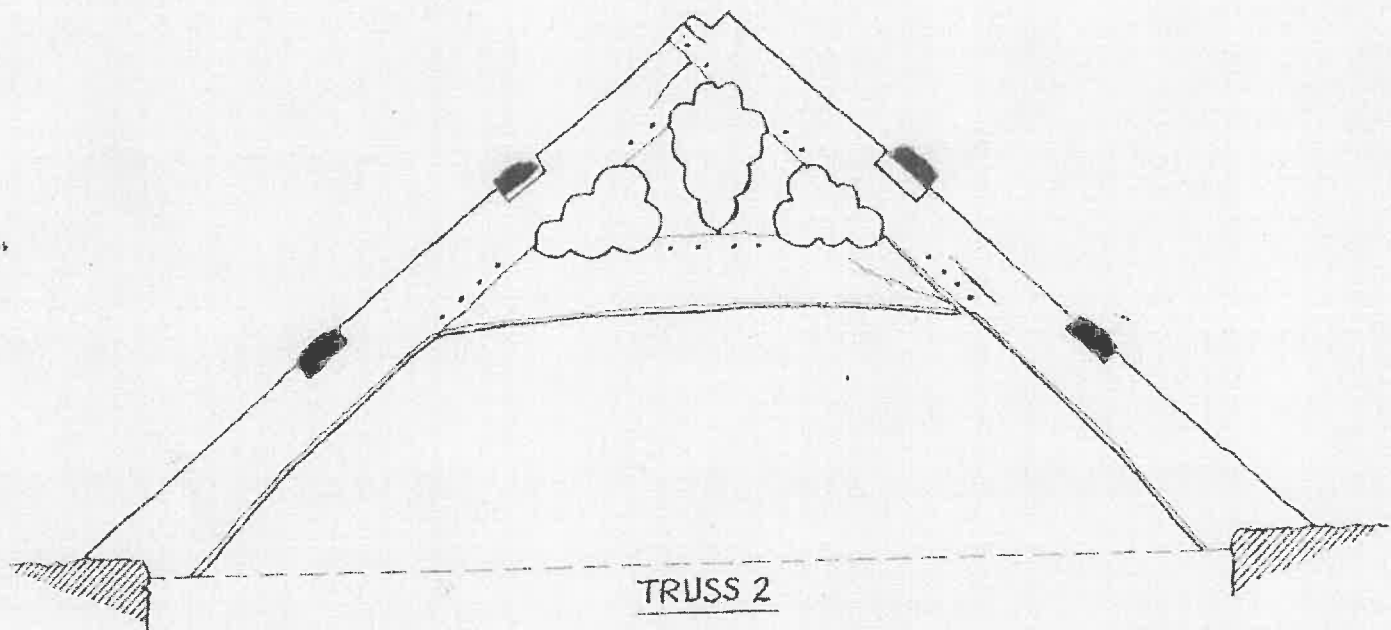
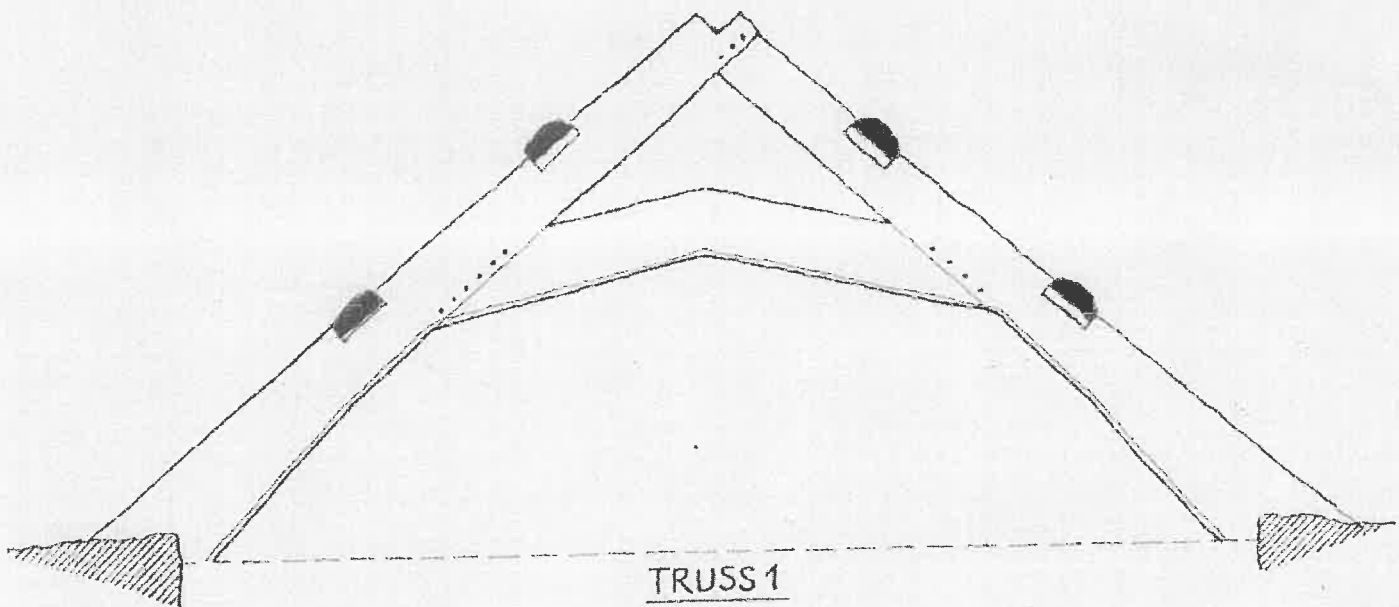
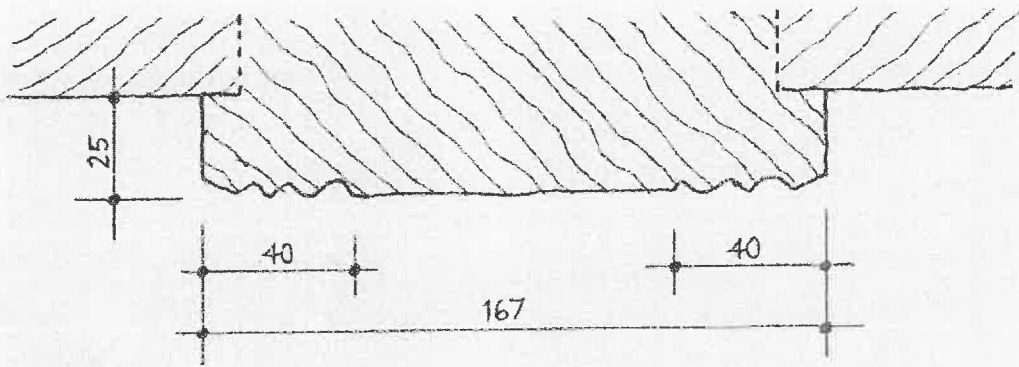
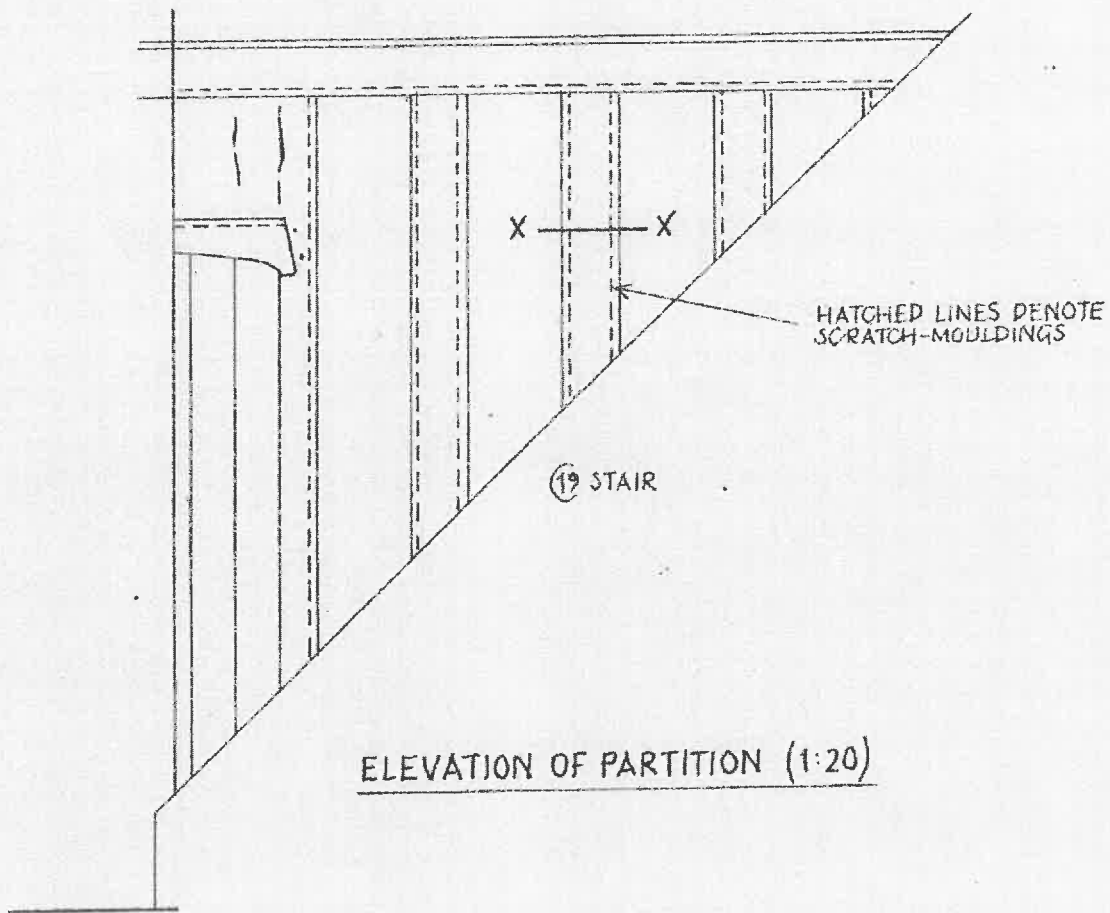


Fig 3 Elevations of trusses



DETAIL OF POST AT X-X (1:2)



ELEVATION OF PARTITION (1:20)

Fig 5 Details of oak partition



Plate 1 East elevation



Plate 2 West elevation



Plate 3 Truss 1 (viewed from south)



Plate 4 Truss 1 (viewed from south)



Plate 5 Trusses 2 & 3 (viewed from north - Truss 2 in foreground)



Plate 6 Trusses 2 & 3 (viewed from north - Truss 2 in foreground)



Plate 7 Truss 3 (viewed from north)



Plate 8 Truss 3 (viewed from north)



Plate 9 Partition



Plate 10 Partition (part of blocked doorhead)



Plate 11 Partition (detail of post and head mouldings)



Plate 12 Possible blocked window in north gable



Plate 13 Stop to main beam (west end, south side)



Plate 14 Fireplace (bressummer)



Plate 15 Stop at east end of bressummer