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THREE HAMPSHIRE WEALDEN HOUSES

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ABSTRACT

Three medieval hall houses of Wealden type at Andover, Headley and Chalton are described. Documentary sources for Suters, Headley, suggest it was purpose built as a church house after 1520. The distribution, form and structural characteristics of Wealdens so far recognised in Hampshire are considered and compared with those in other counties.

INTRODUCTION

Wealden houses, as the name suggests, form a group of medieval hall houses with a distribution centred upon the Weald of Sussex, Surrey and especially Kent where they are a dominant local type, dating from the early fifteenth to the sixteenth century (Rigold 1963, 351–4). It is estimated that there may be over 350 surviving in Kent alone (Barley 1986, 153).

In these areas their structural characteristics are fairly constant. All by definition have a recessed central hall of either one or two bays and projecting, floored end bays which are jettied to the front, and sometimes also to the side and even internally to form a dais canopy. The roof is usually of crown post construction with common rafters and a collar-purlin. The variations in plan proportions and bay arrangement are much the same as those in hall houses without the recessed hall characteristic of Wealdens: in other words Wealdens are best "read" from the outside, where their two jettied bays give a prominent rhythm to the facade. These are buildings originally of high status, often walled in profligate style with expensive close studding, the true expression of the life-style of the well-off Kentish yeoman.

Like many striking and impressive buildings Wealden houses were soon copied and reproduced outside their place of origin, and a penumbra of Wealden types developed around the Wealden core, moving outwards to Surrey, West Sussex and Hampshire and northwards to Buckinghamshire, East Anglia and as far as Warwickshire (Jones and Smith 1960, 22–35). Here three phenomena were noticed: first that regional preferences were expressed in the carpentry, especially the roof construction; secondly they were found increasingly in an urban or village setting as opposed to the isolated farmsteads sometimes to be found in the Weald; and thirdly the type was used in buildings of lower status than in the area of origin.

This paper examines three Wealden houses recently identified and made available for survey within the county boundaries of Hampshire (Fig 1). They are compared with other published examples (Lewis, Roberts and Roberts 1988, and Sutton 1988) in an attempt to establish any regional characteristics and to compare their construction, distribution and status with those in other areas.

11–13 Chantry Street, Andover, SU 365453
(Figs 2 and 3)

This house stands on the south side of Chantry Street (Fig 1), probably within that area of the town that suffered a destructive fire in 1435 (Spaul 1977, 10). Close by, in 1444, the Angel Inn was built by Winchester College on a devastated site, to specifications that survive (Salzman 1952, 517). It is a great pity that there is no such documentary evidence to indicate the owner of the Chantry Street house, the building of which must, however, post-date the fire.

The house is framed in three bays. At the east there is a floored and jettied bay, probably

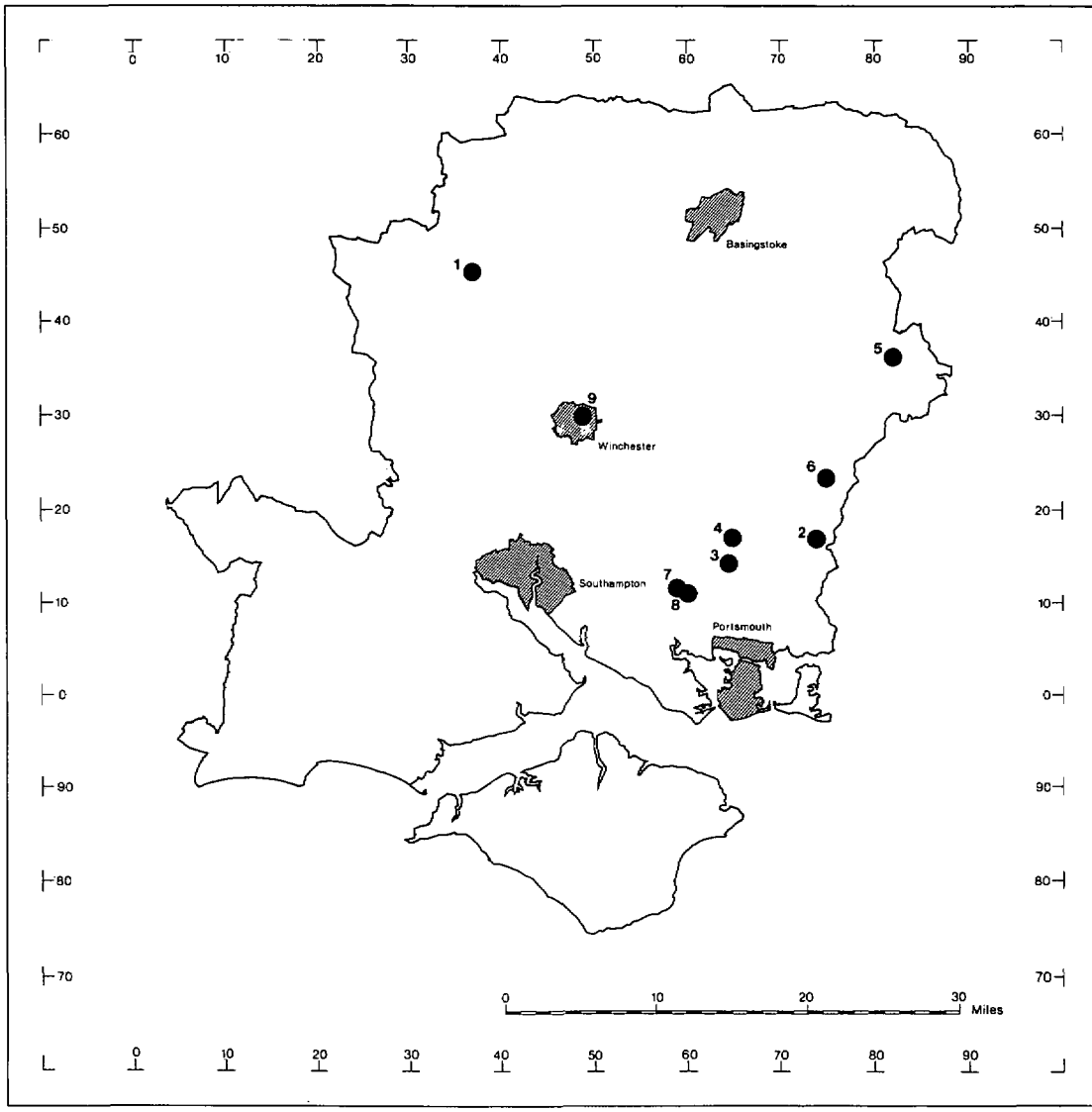

Fig 1. The distribution of Wealden houses in Hampshire.
1. 11–13 Chantry Street, Andover. 2. Red Lion, Chalton. 3. Bittles, Denmead. 4. 3/4 High Street, Hambledon. 5. Suters, Headley. 6. Tully's, Petersfield. 7. Alexandra House, Wickham. 8. The Barracks, Wickham. 9. Boots, Winchester.

the parlour, the plain and unchamfered joists of which are interrupted in the south east corner of the room indicating the possible position of a stair. There are signs of an external doorway leading directly to the street. The soffit of the cross beam B, B1 is concealed, but there is evidence for a stud at the south end for a doorway leading into the hall. The west side of the cross beam is moulded with a hollow chamfer and roll with traces of red paint – all befitting its status as dais beam at the upper end of the hall. But the cross beam at the lower end of the hall is also quite elaborately moulded in the same pattern (Fig 8), which returns down the jowl of the post at C1 (at C it is concealed behind the inserted chimney). There were two studs (only one remains) with jowls shaped to create a wide-shouldered arch leading from the cross passage into the hall. These studs formed the ends of two short speres or screens which were made of planks of timber slotted into a groove on the underside of the cross beam. In the post at C there is a long mortise for a brace which is indicated on the drawing.

The cross passage is of generous width and is overshot by a large upper-floor chamber, jettied onto the street. The chamfered spine beam was supported by a central post in the wall between the passage and the service room – a necessity in view of the wide unsupported opening between the screens in truss C, C1 where the spine beam is lodged. There is a mortise for the doorpost of a single doorway (later blocked), into the undivided service which may have combined buttery and pantry if it was a private house, but may equally have had a commercial function – certainly by the seventeenth century it had acquired a workshop in a wing at the back.

Most of the wall framing on the ground floor was concealed at the time of survey (February 1988), but there is some evidence that the south wall of the hall was close studded. The facade at first floor level had curved arched braces. There was a window in the hall with a moulded lintel, and this was apparently an oriel since there are voided mortises on the outside face of the plate for brackets to support it. For a hall light, this window is exceptionally small since it cannot have had an opening above the plate; it is however possible that the oriel, if not the lintel, was an added feature along with the hall joists that transformed the appearance of the house in the seventeenth century into a continuous jetty which was then coming into fashion. There is a fragmentary relic of another moulded lintel next to a stud, suggesting a window, in the south wall of the service bay, now obscured by the later brick fireplace. The position of the inner wall plate of the original recessed hall is shown by the single voided mortice in the tie beam (section B, B1). There is also evidence for flying braces to the outer plate.

The original roof structure survives at the east end and in the hall bay – it has been replaced in the west bay C–D by two pairs of parallel side purlins with raking struts. The medieval roof had a single pair of purlins, clasped by undiminished principals, and a collar and cambered tie beam linked by a single central or king strut. There were curved windbraces in bays A–B, B–C. There was a louvre to regulate the escape of smoke from the open hall above the lower end of the hall, and three pairs of peg holes remain at the ends of the rafters to show its position. Intermediate arched tie beams of little structural value spanned the chambers in bays A–B and C–D. Both were simply pinned to the wall plates.

The house expresses very clearly the medieval desire for a display of expensive decoration in those areas of the house that were generally on public view – the passage and screens where the visitor entered, and the open hall where he was received – contrasting with the very simple finishes in the more private upper rooms and the floored bays: even the parlour bay has extremely plain treatment. This tendency continued into the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century when the hall was floored and a stone chimney stack inserted, reusing medieval stones from the ruins of Andover Priory or possibly Selborne Priory which furnished the materials for Le Belle Inn (Warmington 1976).

About the same time a surprisingly elabor-

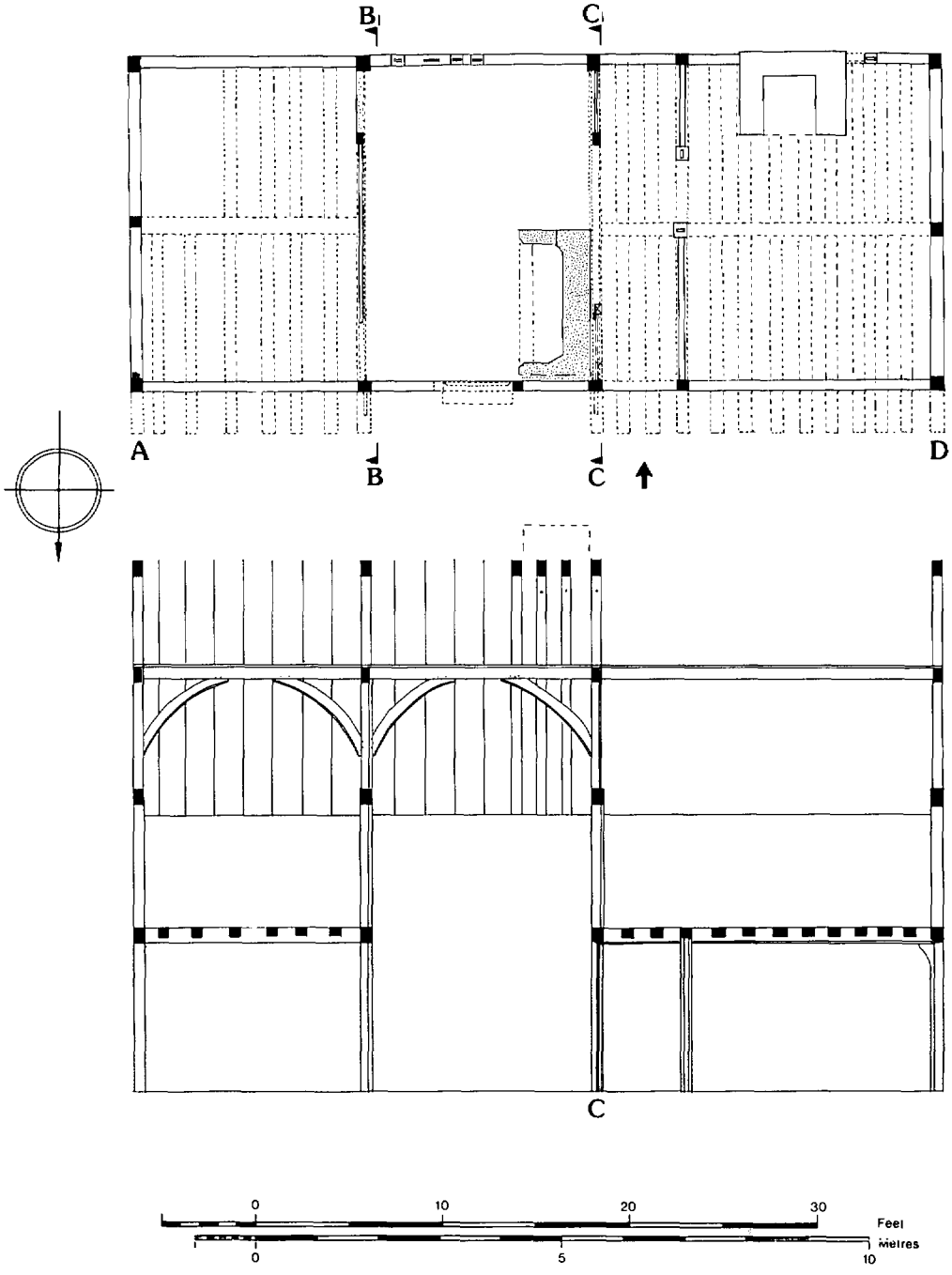

Fig 2. Plan and long section of 11–13 Chantry Street, Andover.

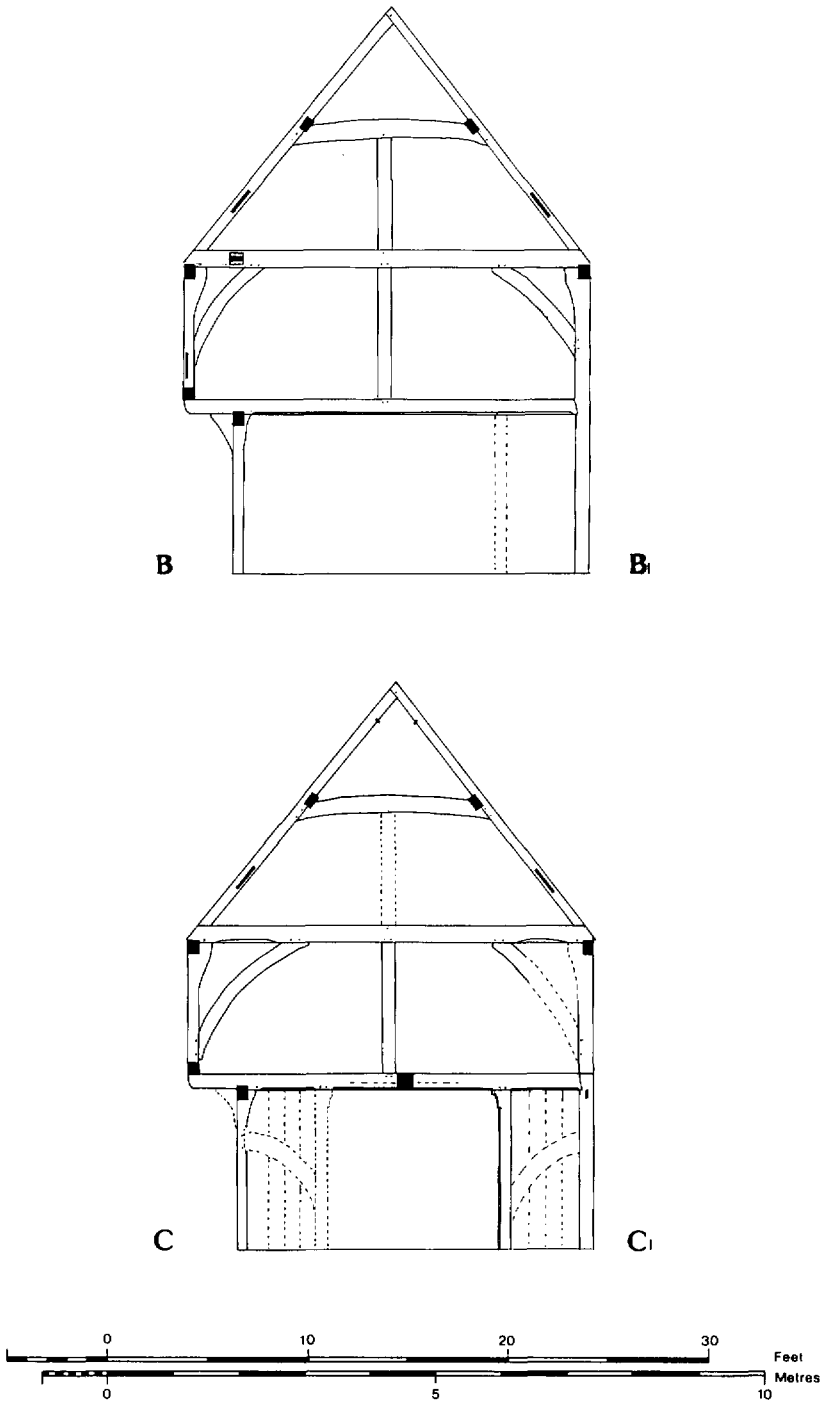

Fig 3. Cross sections of 11–13 Chantry Street, Andover.

ate ribbed and moulded plaster ceiling was put into what was now reduced to a very small hall indeed, but no attempt was made at this stage even to heat the parlour. The plaster decoration did however continue on the upper part of the stack in the chamber over the hall, where it was applied in a heavy floral frieze, a single eagle and several *fleurs de lys*.

The only dating evidence at present available for this house is indicated by the hall mouldings, which have hollow chamfers and rolls popular in the late fifteenth century and into the early sixteenth century, for example at Monks Rest and Littleton Manor, Littleton (Lewis, Roberts and Roberts 1988). The roof is typical of many fifteenth century local buildings, but differs in not having curved queen struts which may be an earlier feature (appearing for example at the Angel Inn, Andover). The small proportions of the hall in relation to the other bays also point to a date perhaps in the early sixteenth century.

The Red Lion, Chalton SU 731160
(Figs 4 and 5)

The Red Lion stands in the middle of the small village of Chalton, opposite the medieval church and manor house, which during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the property and probably the home of the Strange family (Cunliffe 1973). It is one of the few Hampshire Wealdens whose character is immediately apparent from the exterior, since both jettied bays and the recessed hall are intact. The facade can therefore be reconstructed quite confidently (Fig 5). The remains of an arched doorhead indicates the position of the passage which is set within the service bay at the north end of the house. In the hall bay, the upper part of the framing (if not the detail) for a large window remains. Even the position of the internal jetty can be made out from the facade, its position marked (x) by a stud set six inches from the post supporting truss B, B1. The jettied bays are framed with large tension braces and there is a decorative moulded string course applied to each. The hall bay has curved flying braces.

The main plan elements are apparent inside the building, except that the wall separating the passage from the service has been removed, and almost all the joists are obscured by later ceilings. The insertion of the chimney stack may have necessitated the renewal of the spine beam in the service bay, since this does not appear to be original, having ogee chamfer stops compatible with a seventeenth century date. Before the insertion of the chimney the hall was divided to create a smoke bay and the inserted frame still remains up to collar height in the roof space (Fig 13).

The roof has curved raking struts between collar and tie beam and side purlins clasped between diminished principals at the south end (B, B1), and threaded through undiminished principals at truss C, C1. It was fully hipped at the north end, and a gablet let the smoke out at the service end. The roof has always been thatched; some of the laths and even the twine for the thatch are still in position, still sooty from when the hall was open to the roof.

The most remarkable feature about the Red Lion is its aisled construction. The aisle runs the entire length of the house on the west side. On the first floor it is quite evident in the posts which form the arcade, some of which, in the hall and service bays, have bracing to the arcade plate. These posts do not however go down to floor level, but are supported on the cross beams which are extended over the aisle area and rest on posts and lower plates in the outer wall of the aisle. On the ground floor there are studs and partitions parallel to the arcade though not beneath it, and these appear to have been inserted, perhaps in response to the inevitable sagging of the cross beam that occurred. Originally, the aisle area was not segregated but part of each of the three bays. The hall would have been given greater depth and quite dramatic emphasis with its open braced arcade. The parlour bay may well have had a stair tucked into the space provided by the aisle: this conjecture is supported by the absence of arcade braces (which would interrupt access to the first floor) and the presence of a trimmer in the joists of the

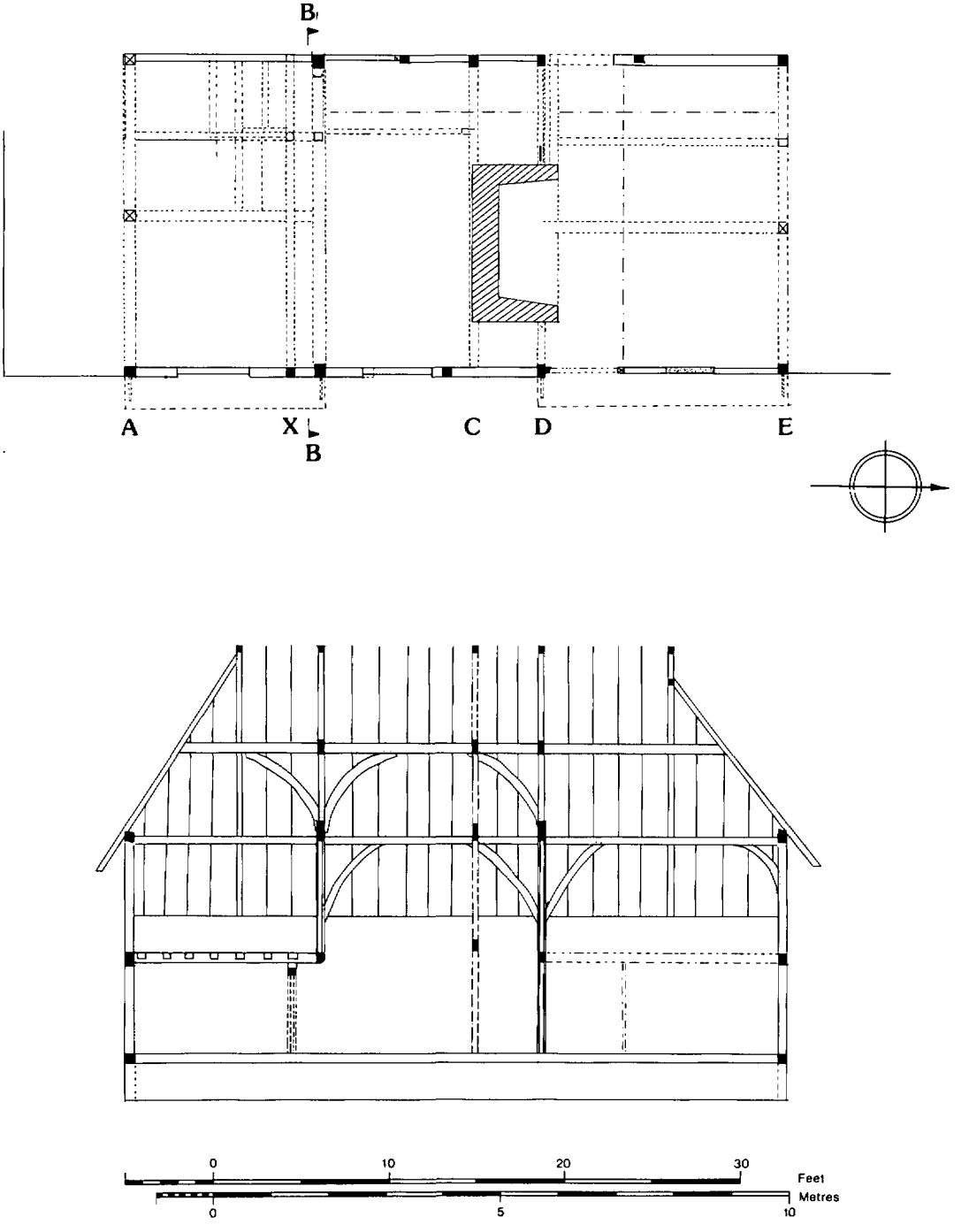

Fig 4. Plan and long section of the Red Lion, Chalton.

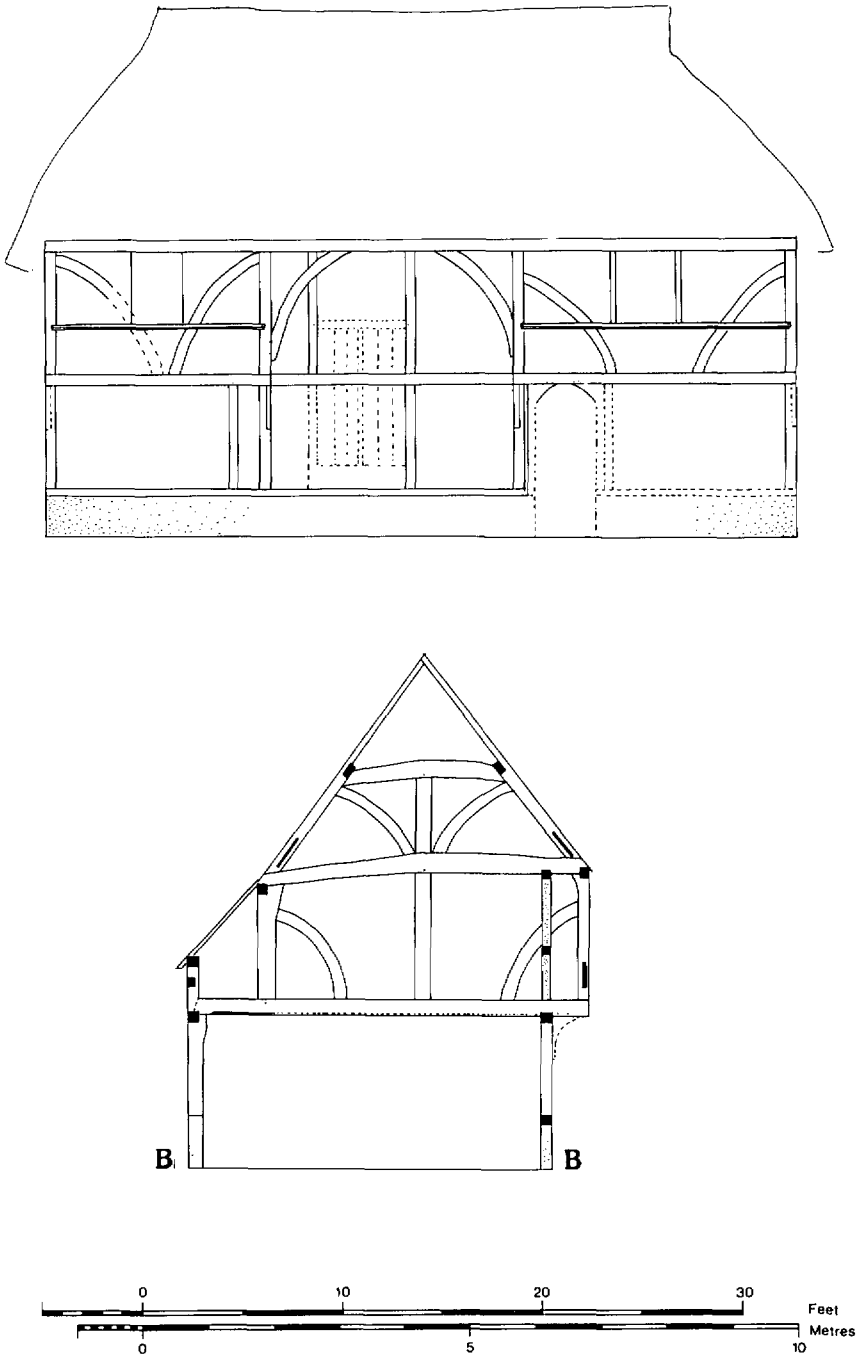

Fig 5. Elevation and cross section of the Red Lion, Chalton.

ground floor – admittedly possibly a secondary feature. It is not clear how the aisle worked in the service bay. The blackened arcade braces here suggest the passage of smoke from the hall, and yet the whole of the service could not have been open to the roof because of the floor implicit in this jettied bay. Further, there is a short tie linking the outer wall plate to the arcade post, above the cross beam, and this has a groove for a wattle and daub partition. The rest of the truss C, C1 is still essentially closed up to collar height – above may have been open to let the smoke out of the gablet. On the ground floor there is a screen right across the aisle at the low end of the hall, and a mortise for a stud remains in evidence. The cross beam here is chamfered on the passage side. Presumably there was a doorway at this end of the passage, but the age of the iron pin hinges that remain can only be guessed.

Although so far unique of its kind in Hampshire, the single aisled hall is known in the area, for example at Forge Sound, East Meon, thought to date from the fourteenth century (Lewis, Roberts and Roberts 1988). However the single aisle with extended cross beam is also found in Kent, at Yew Tree Farm, Petham, and The Cottage, Anvil Green, Waltham (RCHME, S Pearson *pers comm*) Neither of these houses is a Wealden and Yew Tree Farm was probably floored throughout, but The Cottage is remarkably similar in construction to the Red Lion. In Bexhill, East Sussex, there is a pair of semi-detached aisled Wealdens, each with a single-bay hall which is aisled, but with a floored bay and passage without an aisle (Martin 1977–80, 53). Church Farmhouse (formerly Marthams), Salehurst, was apparently completely aisled with extended crossbeam on the service/passage wall truss but with a full height arcade post at the lower end of the hall. (Martin 1980, 24) Both these Wealdens date to the fifteenth century while the two Kentish examples are thought to be of sixteenth century date. Except for Marthams none of these examples are large or of high status. The Red Lion has no decorative elements and even the dais beam on the internal jetty is simply chamfered, not moulded. It is interesting that subsequent alterations have hardly improved the status of the house at all, being confined to adding a smoke bay (followed by a brick chimney), a cellar, side and end service outshots and a two-storey extension at the service end, all strictly functional. It was probably an ale house for a considerable part of its history and its appearance has hardly altered since photographs were taken at the turn of the century (Fig 12).

Suters, Headley, SU 822363 (Figs 6 and 7)

Suters lies just to the south of the parish church, in the centre of Headley. Externally it offers few clues to its identity as a Wealden for the facade has been concealed behind a wall of local Bargate stone and the timber frame is visible only at the north end.

It is however one of the grandest of the Hampshire Wealdens, both in terms of size (43 ft. long) and finish. The hall is of two unequal bays with an open truss with a cambered collar and arch braces. At the south end of the hall is a doorway with a two-centred arched doorhead, leading to the parlour. At the north end there is evidence for a screen, which had two speres, formed by studs with planking infill (as shown by the vertical groove in post XI). The opening in the screens must have been elaborately moulded (as at 11–13 Chantry Street), but the detail has been subsequently cut away.

On the other side of the screen was the cross passage. There were three doorways leading off it to the north: one to the stair to the upper floor (the sill which was also the bottom stair still survives, forming part of the structure of the modern staircase). The other two doorways led to the buttery and pantry. Grooves in the cross beam here indicate that the two doorways had arched heads like the existing example to the parlour. There is no evidence in the spine beam for a divided service bay that the two doorways certainly indicate; but it seems to be sometimes the case in timber framed houses that the partitions did not always engage with the beam above.

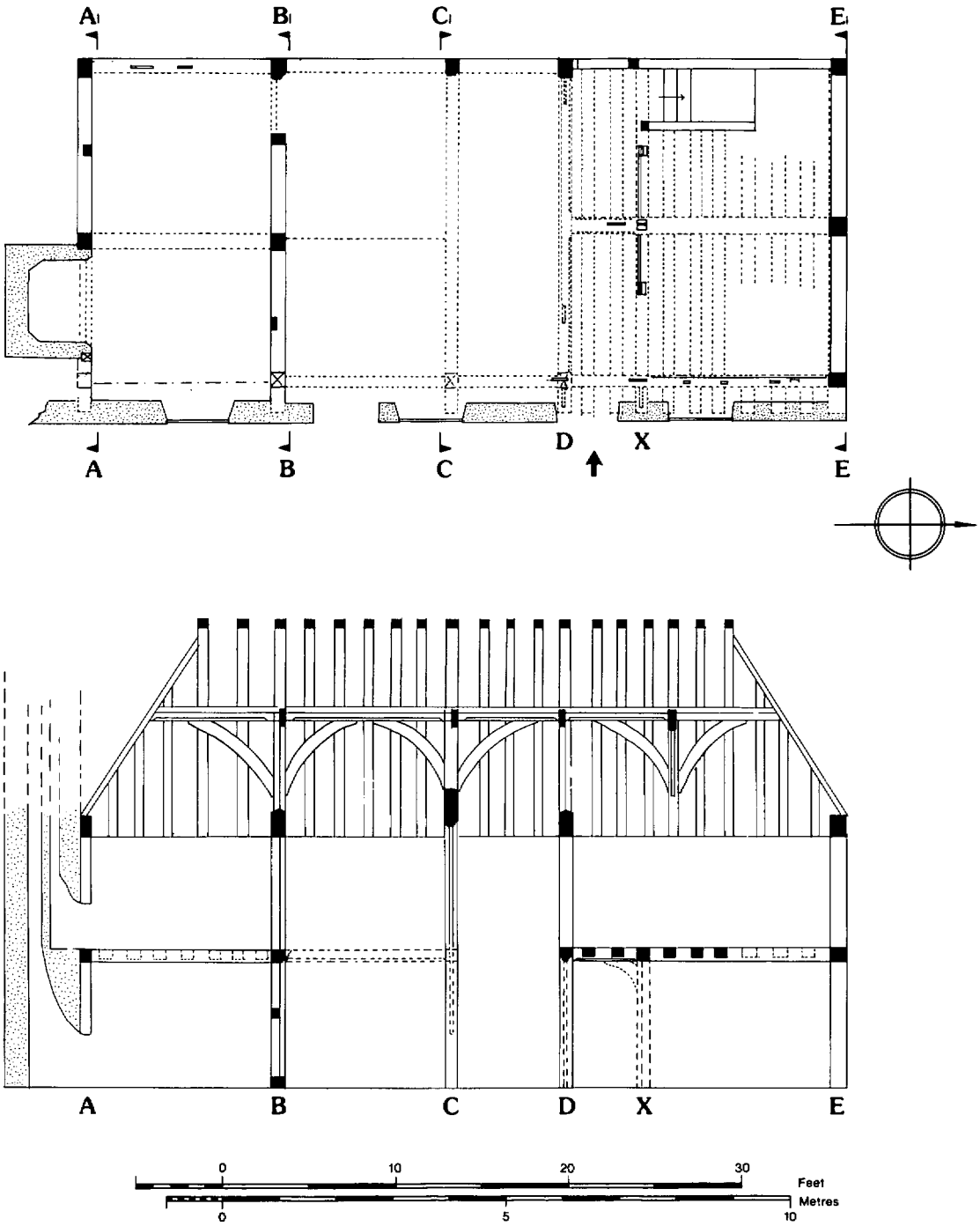

Fig 6. Plan and long section of Suters, Headley.

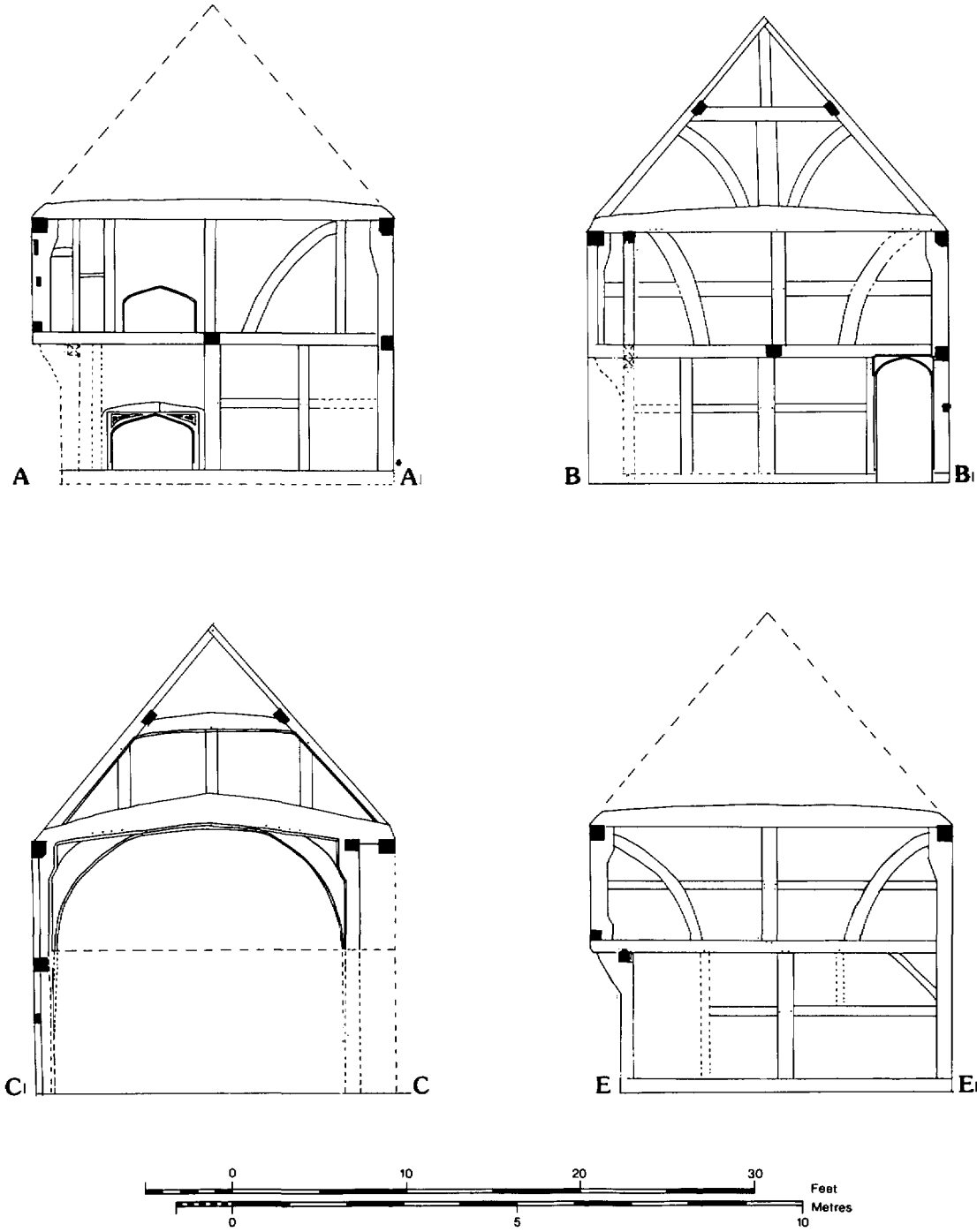

Fig 7. Cross sections, Suters, Headley.

In the parlour bay at the south end of the house the joists for the upper floor are concealed, and the position of the stair cannot be determined. There is an end chimney stack built on the outside in sandstone with narrow brick quoins. It has flues from a fireplace on the first floor as well as the ground floor. The fireplace in the parlour has stone jambs and lintel, with ogee mouldings defining the two-centred arch and returning to the level of the hearth stone, terminating in vase stops. The spandrels are decorated with deeply cut quatrefoils within circles. Although this stack could be a secondary feature, there is some evidence to support the possibility that it is contemporary with the Wealden house. The stone jamb on the west side of the fireplace is built up against the mid stud of the frame supporting the spine beam and is wedged up against it with oyster shells. There is no peg hole in this stud for a midrail which one would expect if the house had been planned without the stack. The framing of the south wall on the first floor (section A, A1) is also eccentric, with only one tension brace and two vertical studs framing the fireplace. The gap between post and stud at the south west corner, though narrow, could have been for a garderobe. The framing of this south wall is in marked contrast to that on the north with its symmetrically placed tension braces.

The framing of the front wall can be partially reconstructed from evidence surviving on the inside. Both jettied bays retain midrails with grooves that received sliding shutters to small windows set between paired tension braces that are so common on the facades of Wealden houses. The hall may have been lit by a long mullion window beneath the plate on the west side, besides the conventional tall window on the east front, of which a single stud below the inner plate is the sole survivor. The roof is hipped at both ends. The closed trusses at B, B1 and D, D1 have tie beams, collars and curved raking struts with a central king strut. There are diminished principals above the collar and clasped purlins with windbraces in each bay. In the hall bays the purlins have flat chamfers. The hall truss has a tie beam supported on jowled principal posts with arched braces of fairly massive form, all with hollow chamfers, double where they meet the tie beam. Above this are a king strut and straight queen struts with flat chamfers on the principals and underside of the collar. Over the service end is an intermediate truss with arch-braced collar plainly treated.

The later development of Suters is of some interest for the status of the house was retained and even enhanced. At a quite early stage the larger bay of the hall was floored by inserting a bressumer across the open truss C, C1, a spine beam and additional wall plates, all with a new and distinctive moulding featuring a double ogee (Fig 8B). At the same time the lower part of the post C and the rest of the timber-framed front wall were removed and rebuilt in stone in its present position, with extra support being given to the new floor joists by inserting a beam parallel to the front wall in the position of the old timber wall. The new facade was of uncoursed freestone of local sandstone and completely obscured the Weal-

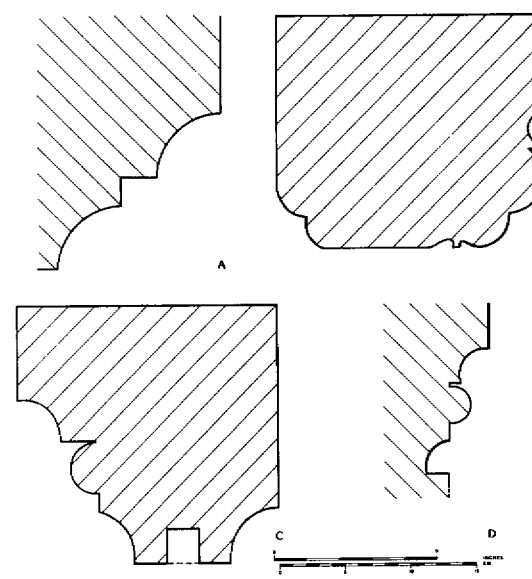

Fig 8. Mouldings: A – Suters, tie beam C, C1
B – Suters, inserted cross beam C, C1
C – 11–13 Chantry Street, cross beam C, C1
D – 11–13 Chantry Street, cross beam B, B1

den character of the house, being carried over the jettied bays. The smaller bay of the hall was used as a restricted smoke bay, a floored passage being retained on the west side. It is not clear how long the original cross passage continued in use, but at some point the main entrance was moved to the floored bay of the hall – perhaps when the whole house was divided into three cottages. A number of large pieces of stone lying in the smoke bay suggest that the first chimney to be inserted was of stone; the present one is of 2″ bricks and probably dates to the mid seventeenth century.

Possibly contemporary with the drastic and expensive remodelling of the house are the wall paintings in the parlour. Over the fireplace was an inscription in black letter, now completely illegible. The opposite wall was decorated with a lively composition with a frieze of curled acanthus leaves and a repeat interlace design of red briar roses and buds. Each open flower bears superimposed upon it a bird, perhaps a parrot or a pigeon to judge by its beak, in heraldic stance with half open wings and one raised claw. Unfortunately it has proved difficult to identify any Hampshire family with this device, if indeed it is intended for a heraldic badge or a rebus rather than a purely decorative pattern.

All the mouldings of the inserted timber and the style of the wall paintings would be compatible with a late sixteenth century date.

Philip Brooks (1983, 289 and *pers comm*) suggests that it may be possible to identify Suters with a new building erected after 1520, the date when the Bishopric fine book records that two Churchwardens of Headley Church paid a fine of 12 pence to acquire three acres of the Rector's land on which to build a new house ("mansio") for the use of the church for "recreation", for which they were to pay 5/3d per year. The precisely defined location certainly supports the case for Suters being the church house (note 1). We have here, then, a very interesting example of a Wealden erected for a specific purpose. It is true that this purpose apparently required a plan and structure no different from the domestic dwelling of a fairly well off family. Buildings erected for community use such as guildhalls and courthouses often had large open rooms on the first floor where meetings and dinners could be held (Rigold 1968, 1–2), but church houses may have served a more modest function for the drinking of church ales (Coulton 1943, 111). One other Wealden church house has been identified at Slough, and the end bay of the community building at Long Crendon had a recessed hall (R Thorne, *pers comm*). The middle property of the long row of Wealdens at Battle, built between 1460 and 1477 for the Abbot of Battle, is also thought to have been an ale house as well as a shop (Martin 1987, 16).

The fine books also shed a little light on one of the churchwardens responsible for the building. He was Richard Drake (note 2) who appears frequently under other entries, taking on and developing land and as the builder of at least three mills, one of them an iron mill at Drake's Bridge (Brooks 1983, 291). It was energetic farmer-entrepreneurs of this type who were in a position to amass the means needed to build the large hall houses of the Weald area (Barley 1986, 154 suggests some

Note 1
The fine reads
1520 From John Rede and – Drake, Churchwardens, for 3 acres of land next to the close called Chalcroft. Which close abuts the Rector's (of Headley) land on the west and the highway from Headley to Bramshot on the east, and the Alton road on the north and the churchway from Headley to Stanford on the south, by surrender of John Fyshe, Rector, on this condition that the church wardens make a new house of (blank) trusses for the use of the church for recreation as long as the church wardens pay 5/3d per annum.

Note 2
A will and inventory for the possessions of one Richard Drake, smith, of Headley, dated 1550 survives (HRO B wills). However this does not appear to be the same man, though possibly a poorer relation.

were iron masters) and these houses might well have provided the obvious model for the new church house.

Discussion

Some of the features of the Wealden houses described here are shared with other hall houses in Hampshire. The plan form with its overshot passage is common throughout the south-east, and there are local examples at Preshaw Farm Cottages, near Bishops Waltham, and Garden Cottage, West Meon. The spere studs with their shouldered jowls which survive in part in Chantry Street and are inferred at Suters, also appear at Tully's, a Wealden in Petersfield (Sutton 1988) and in the non-Wealden houses called the Blue Boar, Winchester and the Crease, Micheldever, where they are indicative of houses of above-average status (Lewis, Roberts and Roberts, 1988). The internal jetty at the Red Lion finds a parallel at Garden Cottage and the Blue Boar. All the Wealdens in Hampshire, except for Boots in Winchester, have side purlin roofs in common with the majority of Hampshire hall houses. The curved queen struts between the tie beam and the collar, with or without a single straight king stud are particularly characteristic of Hampshire roofs of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

A structural problem peculiar to Wealdens was how to carry the inner wall plate of the recessed hall (Figs 9 and 10). The normal method in Kent and Sussex was to introduce a second inner post or stud in line with the recessed wall of the hall, seated on the cross beam, carrying the inner wall plate (Martin 1981, 54). This can be seen at Suters (section B, B1) and at Tully's, Peterfield, both two-bay halls. This system was apparently thought unnecessary in the case of some single bay halls, where the plate was tenoned directly into the tie beam, without the support of the post. In most examples the inner wall has been removed and at Chantry Street, Andover the only surviving evidence for this device is the voided mortise in the tie beam (section B, B1). At Chalton, the inner wall and plate are still present, and the plate is similarly tenoned directly into the tie beam (section C, C1). A comparable assembly existed at 6/7 High Street Hambledon, which had a single-bay hall 15 ft. long, only a foot shorter than the two-bay hall at Suters. This particular structural detail seems to be local. The house opposite the church at Wilton, Wilts., (no 25 North Street – RCHME Salisbury) appears to be built in a similar way, but the row of single-bay Wealdens at Spon Street, Coventry are all built with the second post (Jones and Smith 1960, 24).

Two Wealdens at Wickham (Lewis, Roberts and Roberts 1988, 50–55) are strangely lacking in support for the inner wall plate – at the time of examination it was proposed that the inner plate was lodged above the tie beam, but so far no examples of this technique unaffected by later alteration have been found. The cross section of the Barracks, Wickham, with its inner post (Fig 10, no 8) is illustrated here as a substitute for the incorrect version published erroneously in the volume mentioned above.

Where the recessed hall had two bays, the tie beam of the central open hall truss extended to the outer plate and carried (in south eastern counties) a handsome, often decorated crown post. At Suters the same arrangement can be seen, adapted to the side purlin roof. At Tully's, where the hall is very short, the tie beam was dispensed with altogether and an arch-braced collar was pegged to principal rafters resting directly on the outer wall plate (Fig 9, no 6b). This hall truss is clearly intended entirely for show and has no structural purpose at all; similarly Tully's is the only Wealden in Hampshire to sport a mock crosswing of the kind identified in East Sussex, for example at 52 High Street, Salehurst (Martin n.d.). Old photographs show a moulded filet pinned onto the outside of the inner wall plate at Tully's, perhaps in deference to the Kentish convention of a coved ceiling in this position (Sutton 1988).

The size of Hampshire Wealdens varies from between 27 ft up to 43 ft in overall length, the smallest hall being 11′6″ long and the largest 16′6″, and the overall width about 20 ft. Compared with the Wealdens of Rob-

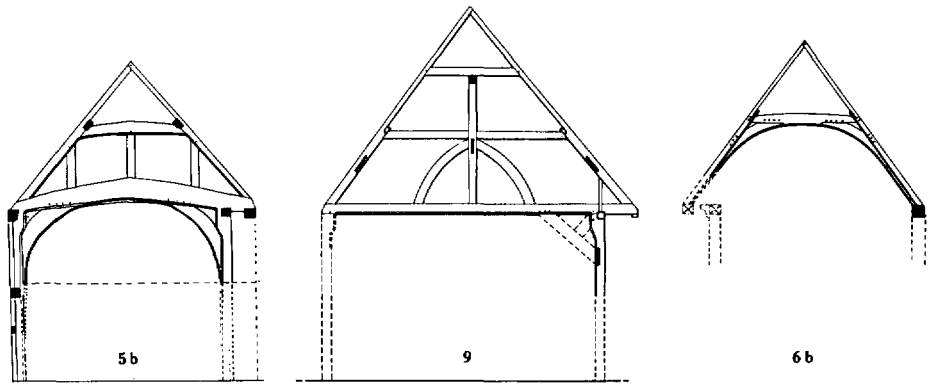

Fig 9. Comparative sections of hall trusses in Hampshire Wealdens: 5b Suters, Headley, 9, Boots Winchester, 6b Tully's Petersfield.

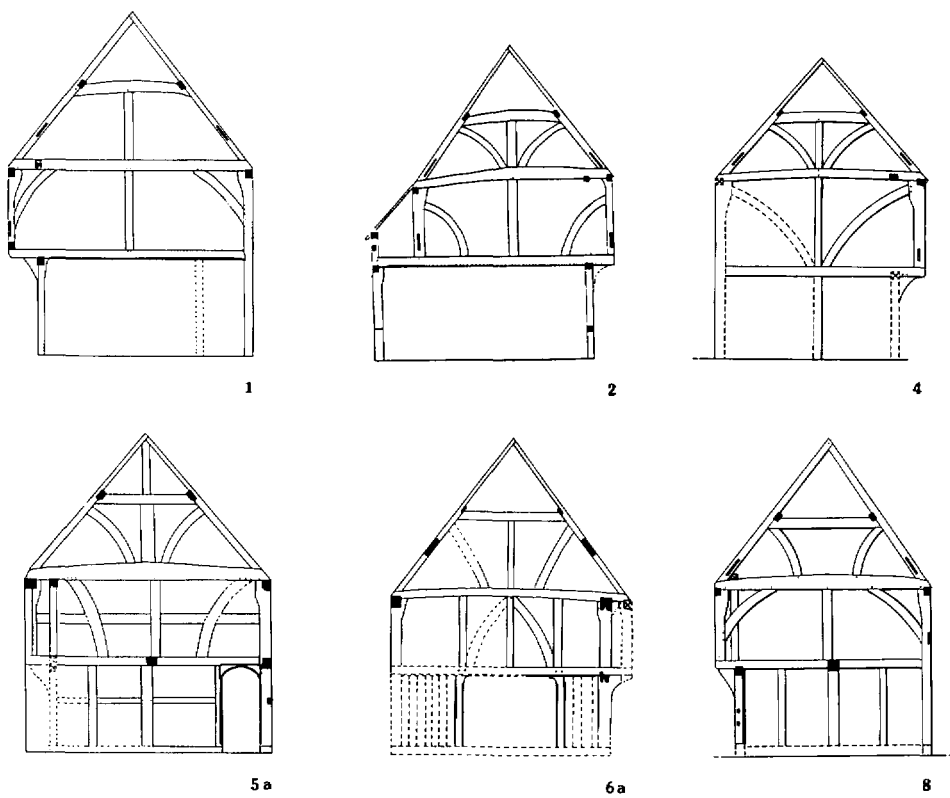

Fig 10. Comparative sections to show wall plate assembly of Hampshire Wealdens.
1. 11–13 Chantry Street, Andover. 2. Red Lion, Chalton. 4. 3–4 High Street, Hambledon. 5a. Suters, Headley – section B/B1. 6a. Tully's, Petersfield – section D/D1. 8. The Barracks, Wickham

Fig 11. Exterior of 11–13 Chantry Street, Andover (RCHME).

Fig 12. The Red Lion about 1880–1900.

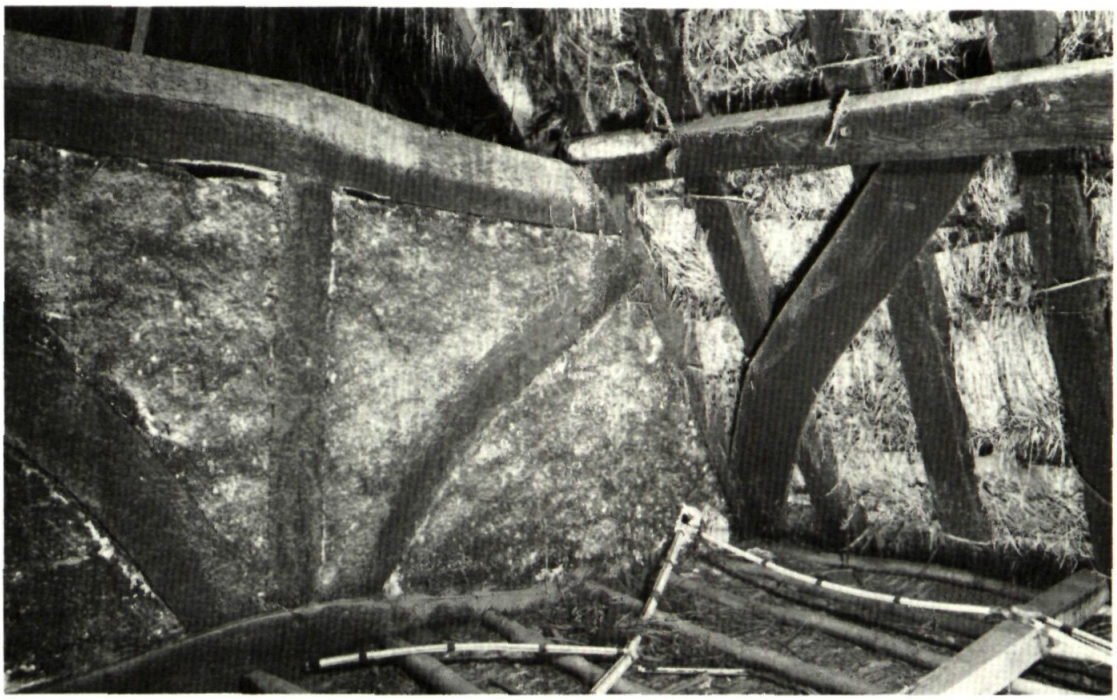

Fig 13. Interior of roof of Red Lion.

ertsbridge, in East Sussex, where the Wealden house 43 ft long and 23 ft wide is the standard form for a medieval house and Kent where Wealdens are up to 50 ft long are normal, Hampshire Wealdens are on average smaller. There is considerable variation in form, even among the few examples in Hampshire; in their counties of origin Mason (1964, 38) lists eight variations of design and four of plan form. Jetties for example are found on all four sides of the house in different combinations, whereas in Hampshire they are confined to the front elevation. Though not particularly grand in size, their status is at least equal to that of the better houses of late medieval Hampshire, which show in general considerable restraint in decoration. The choice of a wealden design for the church house at Headley as late as 1520 also suggests the design was thought appropriate for a public building.

The distribution of Wealdens in Hampshire shows an inclination to the south-east (Fig 1) and gives some support to the thesis of Jones and Smith that Wealdens became a prominent urban and village type, although so far only one (of early date) is known in a large town like Winchester and none are recorded in Southampton, in marked contrast to Coventry with 28 of them. The building of speculative developments concentrating Wealdens in rows or terraces as in Coventry or Battle is not a feature of Hampshire towns – the rows that survive have facades with continuous jetties without the recessed hall. However, as individual houses they seem to have found favour in small market towns such as Wickham and Andover where they enjoy central positions.

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The photograph of the interior of the Red Lion was taken by John Crook; the photograph of the exterior of the Red Lion is reproduced by kind permission of John Budden and that of Chantry Street, Andover by kind permission of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England).

The drawings in Figs 9 and 10 are based on those of the Mid Hants Building Survey and are reproduced with grateful acknowledgement. The drawings of Tully's were first published in the Newsletter of the Hampshire Field Club.

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