



## 25-27 East Street

Nos 25-27 were originally a jettied three-bay building which is now divided so that 25 occupies most of the western bay and 27 the eastern two bays. A narrow strip of the westernmost bay is split up to provide an entrance hall to 25 to the front, and to the rear a stairwell to 27.

The building was open-framed against no. 23 to the west. There are short straight braces between the corner posts and the top plate on this side. On its eastern side, 27 is built up against the wall of the 15th-century cross-wing of no. 29. The framing of this is visible at the first floor, where the top plate and studwork, including two curving down braces, of 29 are visible. Short thin studs or cripple pieces have been set on top of the top plate to support the tie-beam of 27 which is at a level about 2ft higher than the older next-door building. At ground floor, there is an enclosed passage between 27 and 29, reducing the floor area of 27 at this level. This looks like a cross-passage arrangement, but in fact seems to be an old access to the side of no. 29 which was apparently preserved when 25-27 was built.

Little of the timber frame of no. 27 is visible, except for the tie-beams, top plates and floor joists. More of the timber frame is visible in no. 25. The building is made of good quality well converted oak, the mortices being fully pegged. However, there is a certain amount of reused timber and the mid rail against no. 23 may be elm. The top plate in the rear wall in the easternmost bay in no. 27 has rows of blocked wide section mortices, suggestive of a reused floor joist. An old tie-beam was reused as a binding joist in no. 27. This has a long central mortice for down braces and at its southern end mortices and dovetails. This is identified as being the tie-beam removed when the hall of no. 29 next door was rebuilt on two storeys.

Studs occur in the rear wall of no. 25 at 400mm centres at first floor, at 500mm centres at ground floor. In the rear wall at first floor, there is a primary brace, set at a

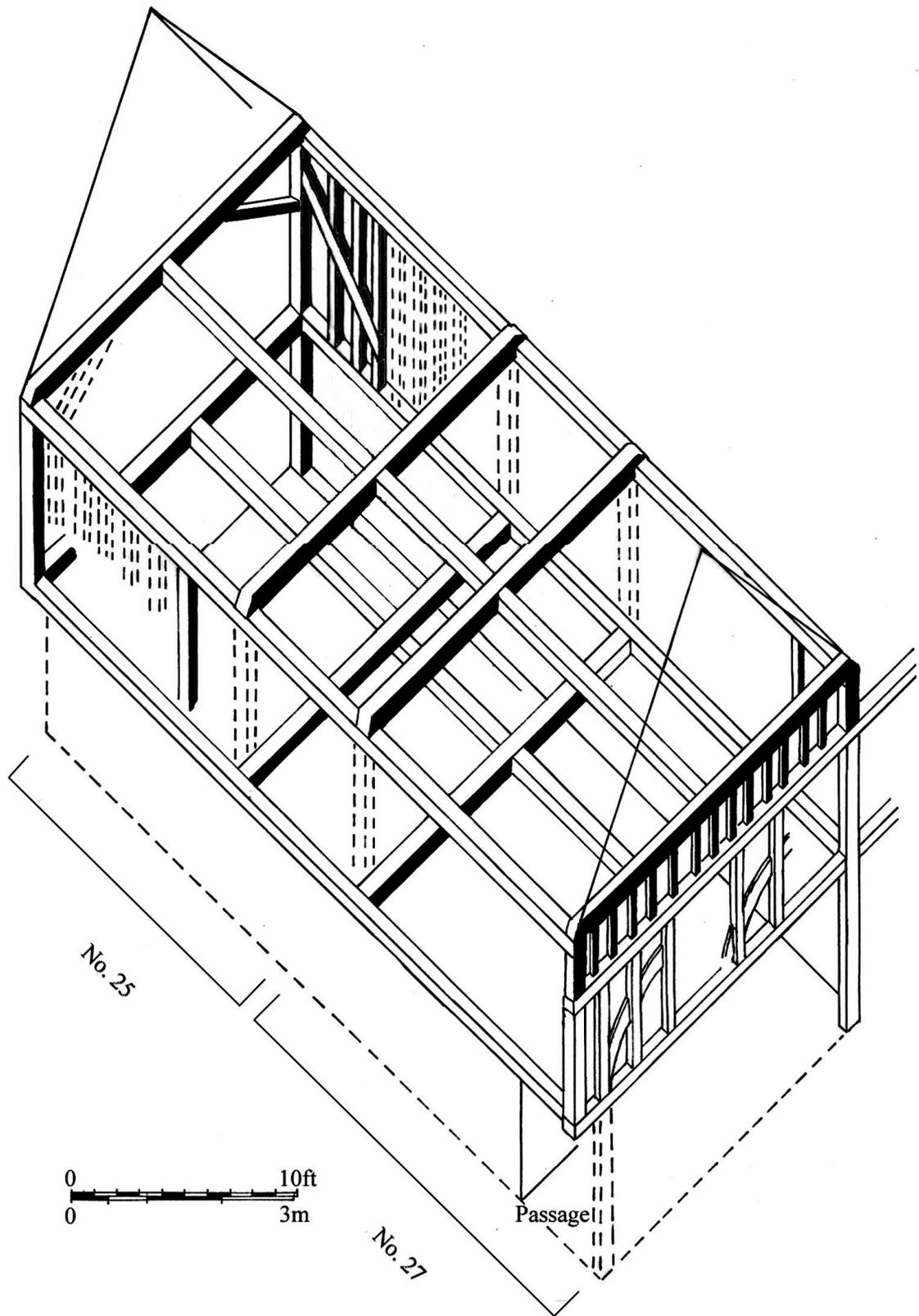
rather slack angle, with the studs aligned accurately above and below it. The jetty is now underbuilt, and no features of the front elevation can be made out at ground floor.

As far as it is possible to tell, the truss that effectively divides 25 and 27 was a closed truss. Thus that part of the building occupied by 27 comprised a two-bay ground-floor room and upstairs chamber. There is no clear evidence as to how the building functioned in terms of doors and access to the first floor.

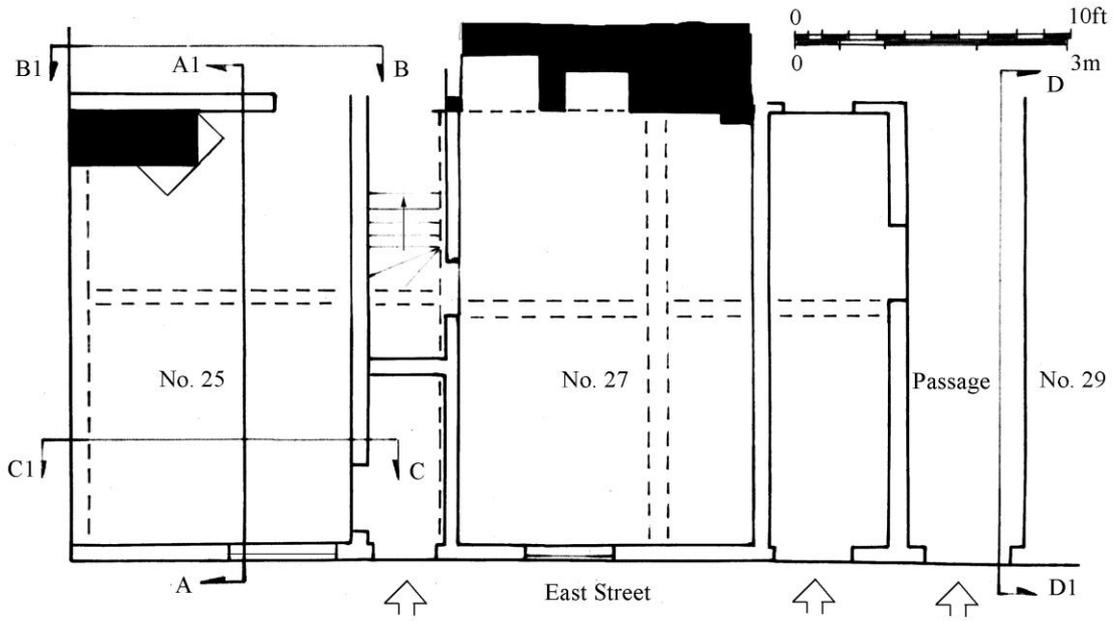
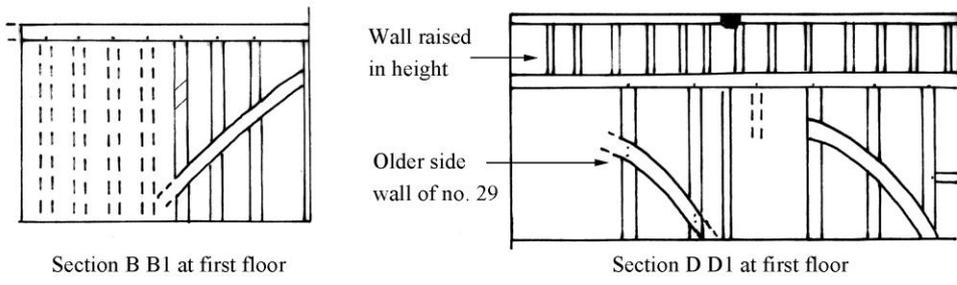
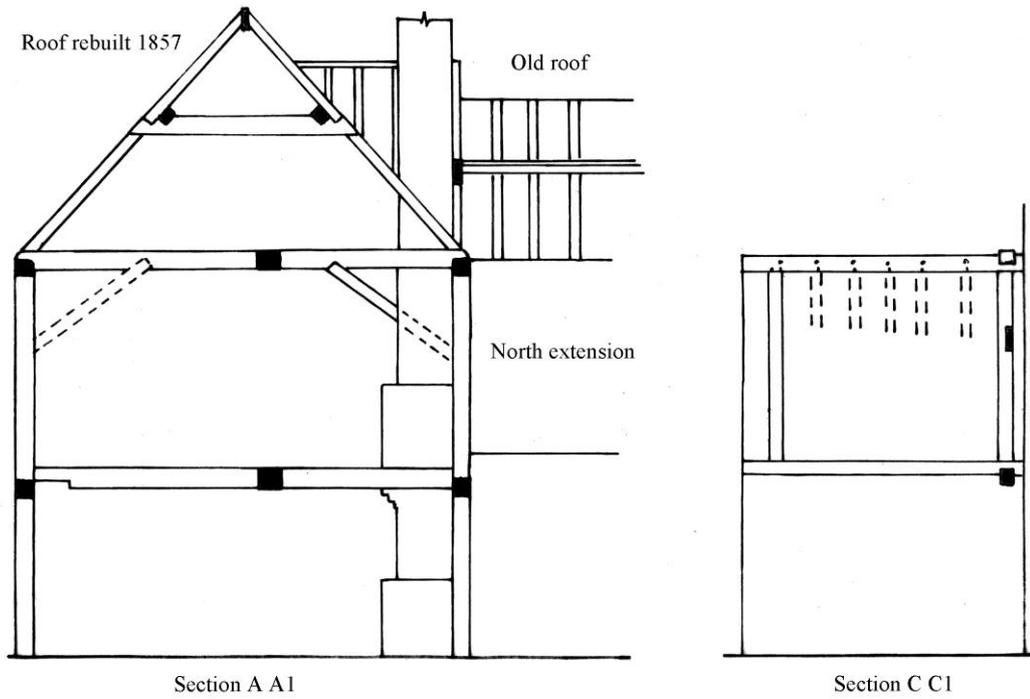
### **Dating and discussion**

The building seems to have been added to the side of no. 23 which has been dated to 1599 and thus provides a *terminus post quem*. Datable carpentry features include the primary brace, and possible evidence for an internal brace, seen in no. 25; and a face-halved scarf in the top plate of no. 27 where the floor is made of narrow section (4inch) joists. These would all be consistent with a 17th century date.

This is one of several buildings in Coggeshall which are not of obviously domestic character and which seem not to have been built primarily as a dwelling. In its initial phase of construction, it seems to have lacked chimneys. If the dowel holes in the tie-beams in no. 25 have been correctly interpreted, then it seems to have been built with an attic for storage.



*Axonometric illustration of the frame of 25-27 East Street*



*Ground plan and details of nos 25-27 East Street*

### **Later phases**

The western part of the building, corresponding to no. 25 and partially overlapping no. 27, was extended by about 5m to the rear. The frame includes reused timber and looks late 17th-century or 18th century in date. It is probably 18th century as it seems to be contemporary with the chimney which is built of 18th-century bricks (230 x 110 x 60-65mm) with diagonal pressure marks. This is apparent because the clasped purlin roof of the extension was later raised round the chimney, leaving the ghost of a chase mark from the original roof pitch on the side of the brickwork. This roof raise round the chimney dated from the rebuild of the roof in 1857, the date chalked on one of the collars in the void over no. 27. The roof fabric includes mechanically sawn elm collars nailed to the rafters, reused timbers, and softwood rafters with merchants' or trading marks.

In the rear wall of no. 27, there is a chimney built of Tudor bricks (9 x 4 ¼ x 2ins) datable to the 17th century. The fireplace, however, is rather small, more typical of the 18th century.

### **History**

This property has been identified with a free tenement and garden belonging in 1575 to Edmund Hills.