



29 East Street

This house comprises a 15th-century cross-wing, its jetty now underbuilt, and a rebuilt hall to the east of it. There was a further wing to the east of the hall, but, apart from its side wall which forms the end or east wall of no. 29, this was pulled down when the Swan public house was demolished and Swan Lane was created early in the 20th century.

The cross-wing is of two bays. The rear one is truncated, and it is possible that there were more. It has massive floor joists, and widely spaced studding in its side walls. The ground-floor front bay was probably a shop, apparently without any access from the hall. The shop front had three relatively equally spaced posts interrupting a single shutter groove overhead. A stair at the back of the front bay, screened off from the shop, gave access to the chamber over the shop. This was accessed from a door in the west wall where there must have been a passageway, just as there is today separating this house from no. 27. The ground floor rear bay of the wing was entered by a door from the hall.

The timber framed partition wall between the two bays has a distinctive and very unusual X-shaped pattern of bracing. The eastern flank wall of the front bay has a strong decorative pattern of bracing which probably continued in the side of the rear bay. Cores taken from two posts in this wall could not be tree-ring dated.

This bracing would have been a striking feature when seen from the open hall on this side. It is suggested that this hall was originally double-aisled, with a similar wing to the east. The evidence for this is to be found in no. 27 where a binding joist is

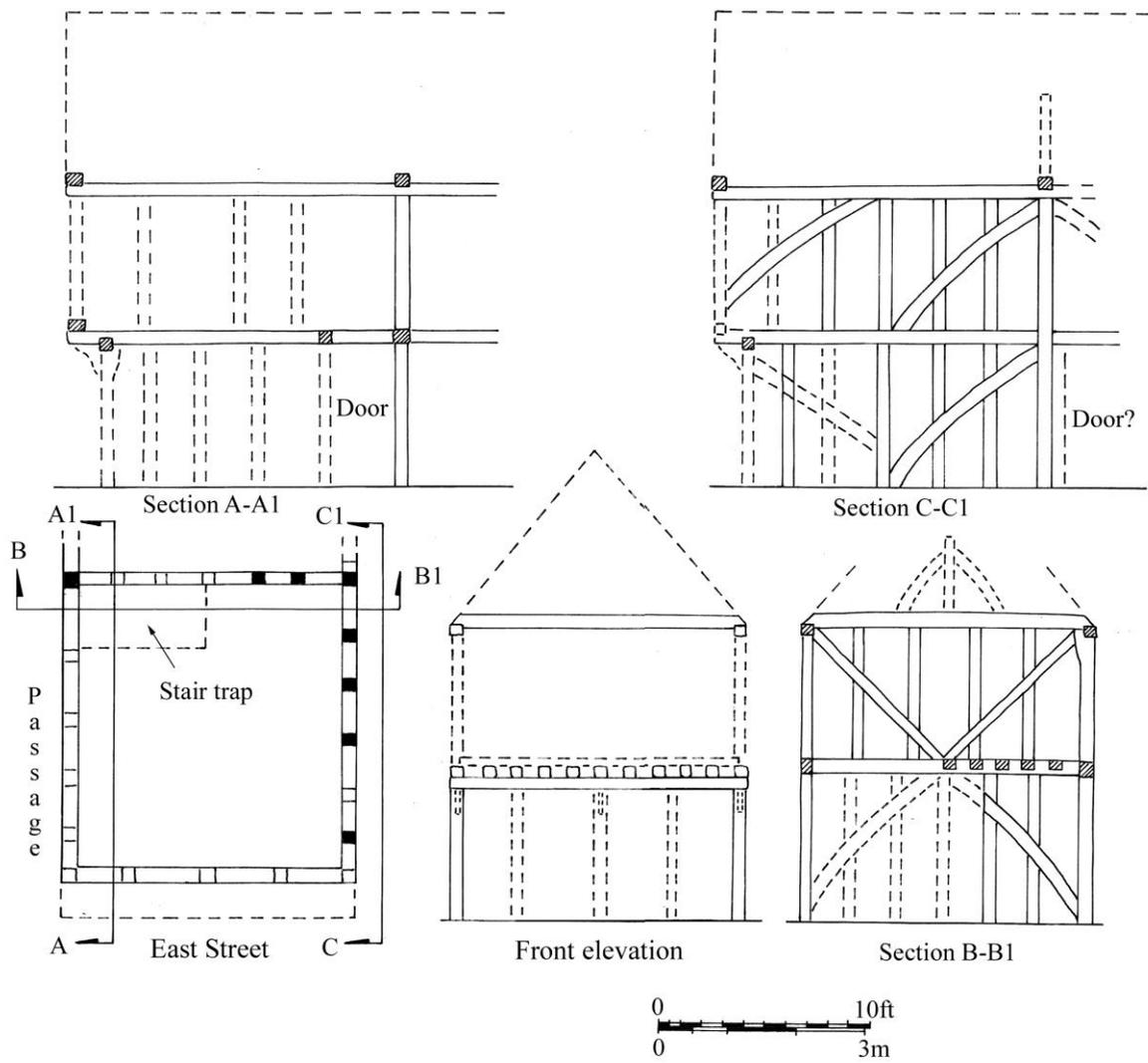
interpreted as part of a top plate from the former hall, the pair of curving braces that were once in its soffit indicating that it was from the open arcade of an aisled hall. The existing hall tie-beam was once located centrally spanning this presumed aisled hall. The western end was then demolished and replaced by the existing cross-wing. It was thought sufficient to only tenon-in some of the timbers. The bracing pattern was designed symmetrically to embellish the interior of the hall. The hall was later demolished, leaving only the tie-beam as a clue to this sequence of development.

The existing small hall only 4-5m long has narrow section floor joists and a clasped purlin roof, and is presumably a remodelling of the 17th century. Its east wall incorporates the surviving flank of the missing cross-wing. This has timber of excellent quality with carpenters' marks, close studwork and Colchester carpentry. At ground floor there are peg holes for a high end bench. A core from the centre post in this wall was tree-ring dated to 1418-54. Photographs of this missing wing before its demolition indicate that it was relatively narrow in width.

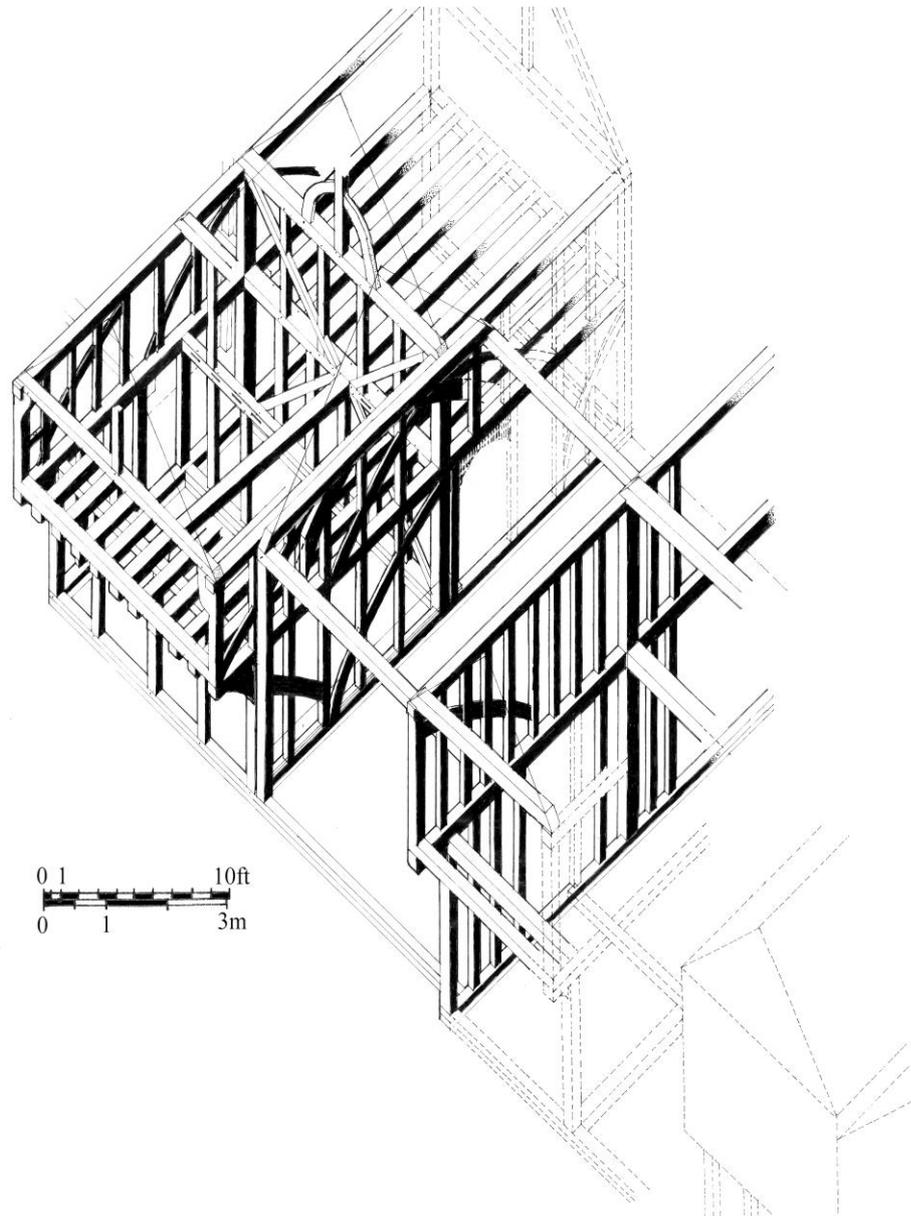
History and discussion

At the time of the 1575 rental, the house is identified as part belonging to Robert Webb whose property extended as far east as no. 39. In the 17th century, no. 27 was probably part of the same property as 29. in view of the apparent reuse of a timber from 27 in 29. The passageway between the two houses also implies probable joint ownership, especially as the east wall of 27 is built over the top of the west wall of 29.

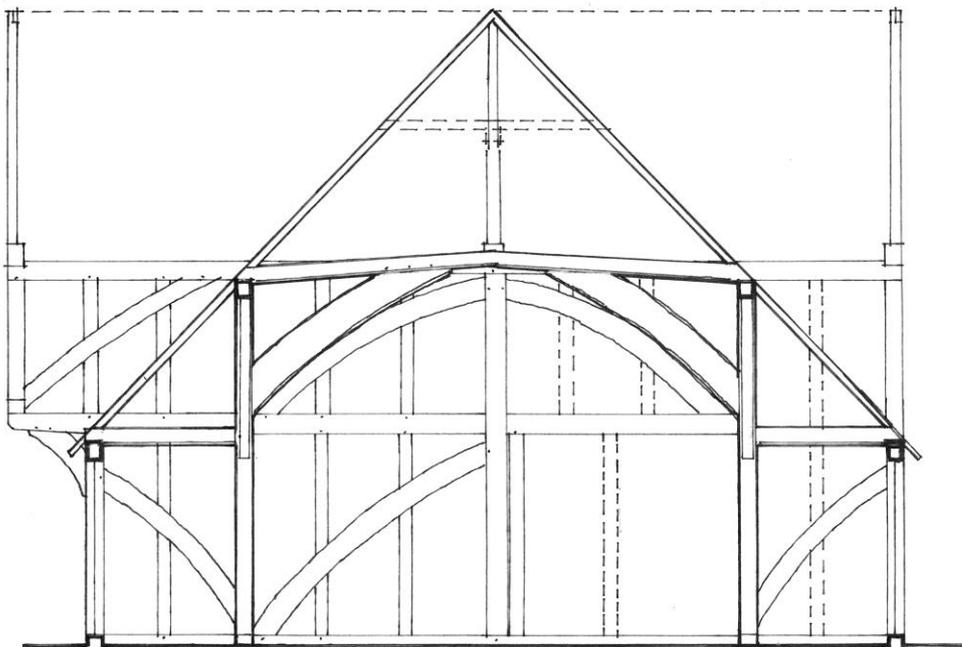
The sequence here of an aisled hall being rebuilt with cross-wings to provide more accommodation, the hall becoming smaller and the appearance of the street frontage radically changing, is an interesting example of a process which seems to have been commonplace in Coggeshall.



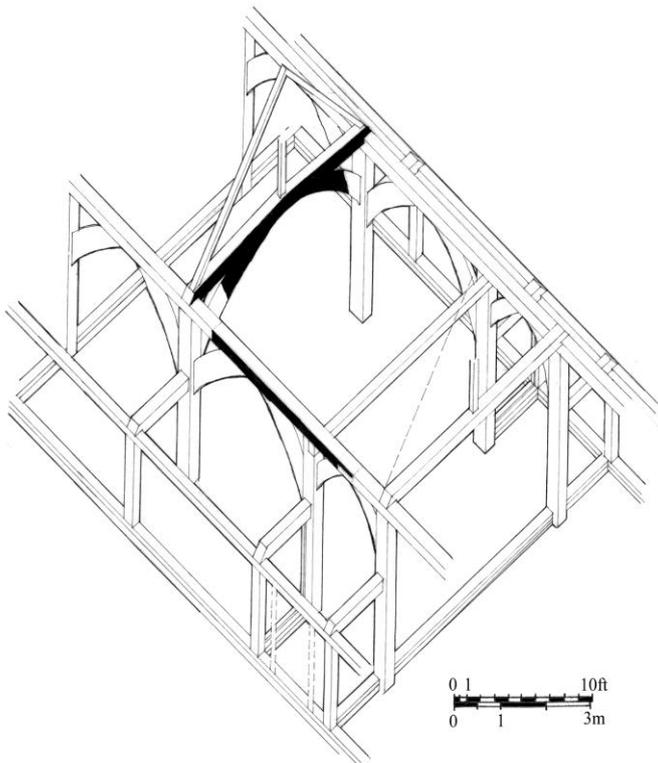
Drawings to illustrate the timber frame at 29 East Street



Reconstruction of the timber frame at 29 East Street, with the outline of the missing eastern cross-wing shown, together with part of the now demolished Swan public house



Reconstructed cross section through the probable aisled hall



Reconstruction of the probable aisled hall, with the reused tie-beam, and the top plate now in no.27, shown in black



29 East Street, the building to the right with a split roof line reflecting the two elements, cross-wing and hall. The right hand of the pair of doors leads into the passage between nos 27 and 29. The pair of early 20th century houses in the background beyond the entrance to Swan Yard occupy the site of the former Swan public house.