

## 30 Church Street (Spooners) 1353-86



Spooners is the oldest house to have been dated in Coggeshall. The only house which has been identified in the study of the buildings which may be older than it is 47 Church Street. Cores taken from three timbers, a tiebeam, a post, and a rafter, gave an estimated date between 1353 and 1386.

This is an unusually large in-line house. In its proportions, with its tall hall, it looks forward to the Wealden houses that would be popular a few years hence. For this kind of standard accommodation, a house with its two cross-wings would have been the standard accommodation.

The front elevation is much rebuilt, but the position and features of the four bays remain legible, although the cross-passage door and hall window are now blocked. The framing was characterised by large braces, including one of serpentine or ogee shape. The door was formed of two large curved timbers or durns, with foliate carving between traceried motifs in the spandrels. The left hand durn has reproduction carving, but because the durn is such a good match for the other it may have come from a dismantled doorway at the rear of the house. There is a suggestion, from the presence of marks and pegs, that the high end mid rail may have carried a moulded superimposed fascia, hinting at an implied jetty and making it look like a cross-wing house.

The hall is of two unequal bays separated by a truss with long but modest braces. The hall windows are surprisingly narrow, suggesting that this space would have been relatively dark. The owner's bench was set within a high end recess (a fairly popular feature in Coggeshall) but this has been lost as a result of the moving of the high end

partition. All the storey posts have substantial jowled heads. In this respect, the house differs from the Colchester style of carpentry prevalent in Coggeshall, possibly suggesting the work of a non-local carpenter.

Both ends of the house are relatively narrow, determined by the limited space on the street frontage. Access to the stair to the solar over the parlour was gained by a door with an ogee head in the high end partition. A first floor window is so positioned as to light the stairwell below.

At the east end, there is a single undivided service room accessed by a central ground floor door. This plan arrangement is unusual, as normally there is a pair of doors leading to the service end. A parallel for a single door can be found at Appletrees Farmhouse, Cressing. The evidence of the timber frame suggests that the chamber over the service room had a similar central door, reached via a ladder up from the hall. The east wall of the service end has been lost. The side of the house here is formed by the framing of the adjoining Conservative Club, a 16th century wall three-storeys high, jettied on both upper floors.

The roof has tall simple crown posts and includes a number of reused timbers.

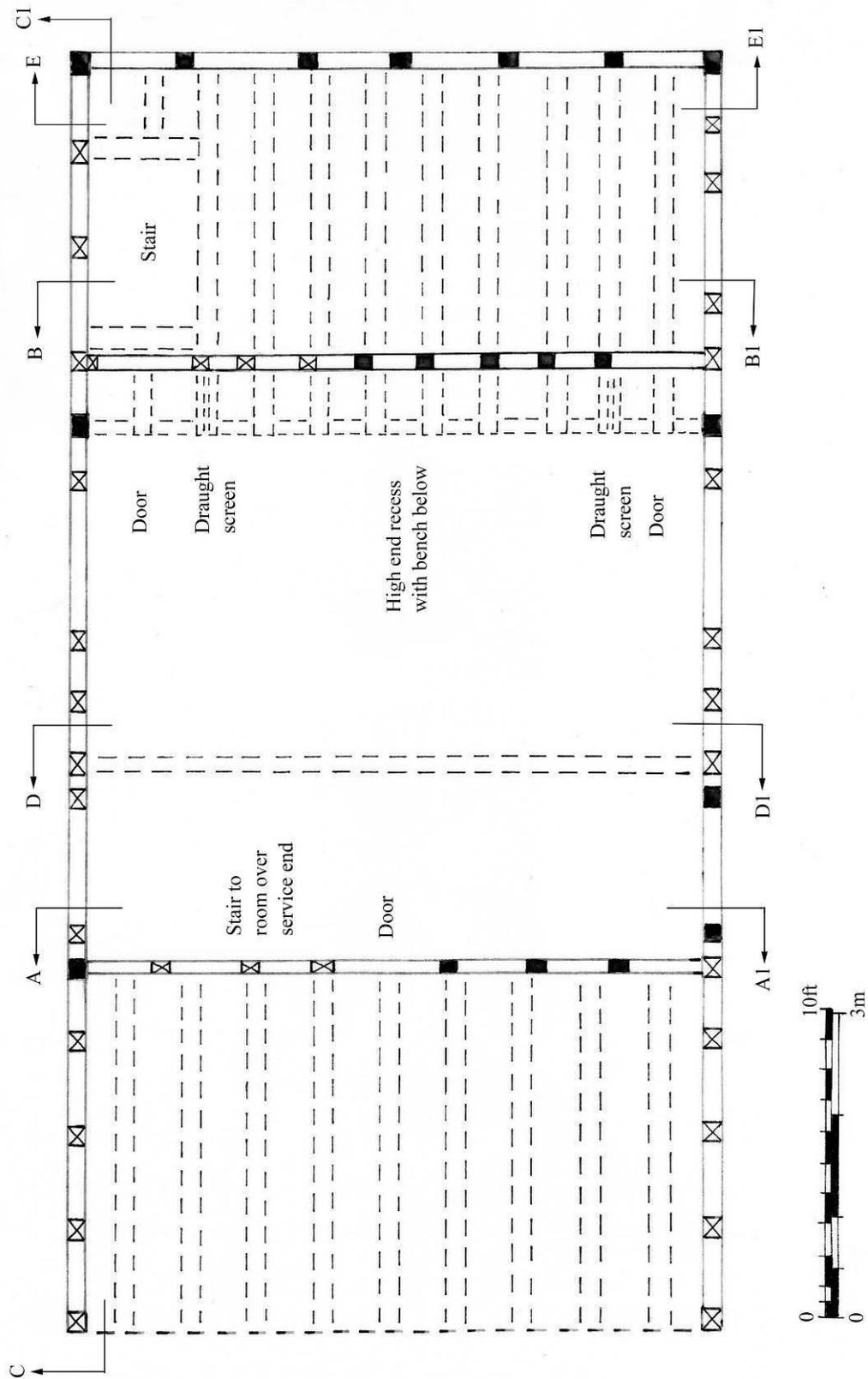
The carving on the door, the curved bracing, and the door with an ogee head, of which there may have been more examples, now lost, identify the house as belonging to the Decorated style of architecture.

### **The rear parlour/solar extension**

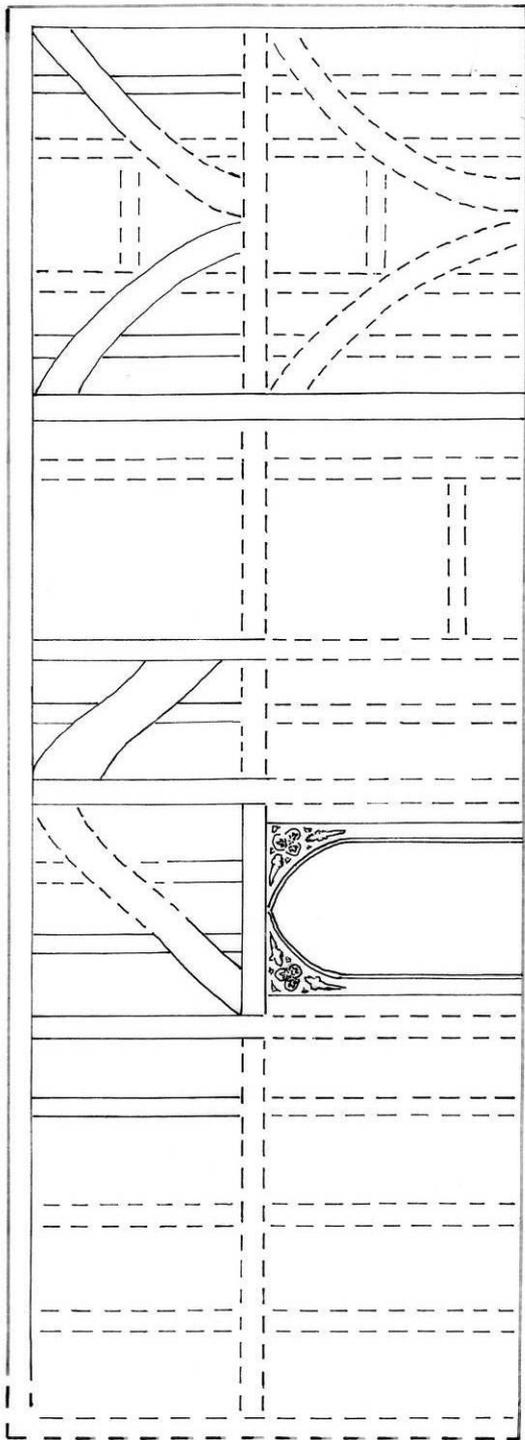
In 1608/9, the date obtained from a core from a storey post, Spooners was given a rear two storey parlour/solar extension, as occurred elsewhere in Coggeshall. The parlour was heated, there were a number of windows, and the roof has wind-braced side purlins.

### **History**

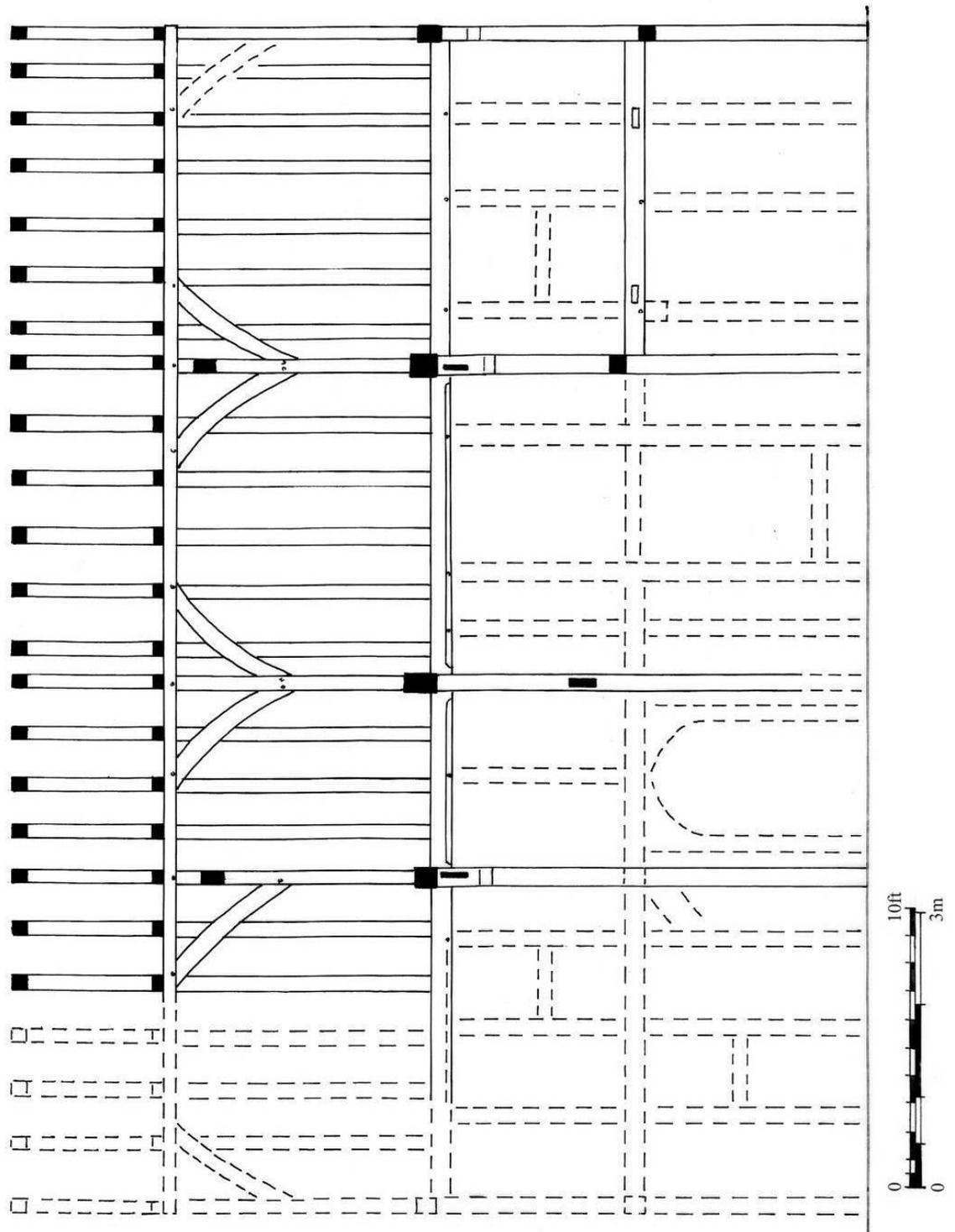
At the time of the 1575 rental, Spooners was a copyhold property belonging to William Sponer and had an orchard attached to it. No Spooners are recorded at Coggeshall in the 1670 hearth tax returns, but being formerly a copyhold, the house has retained the family name until the present day.



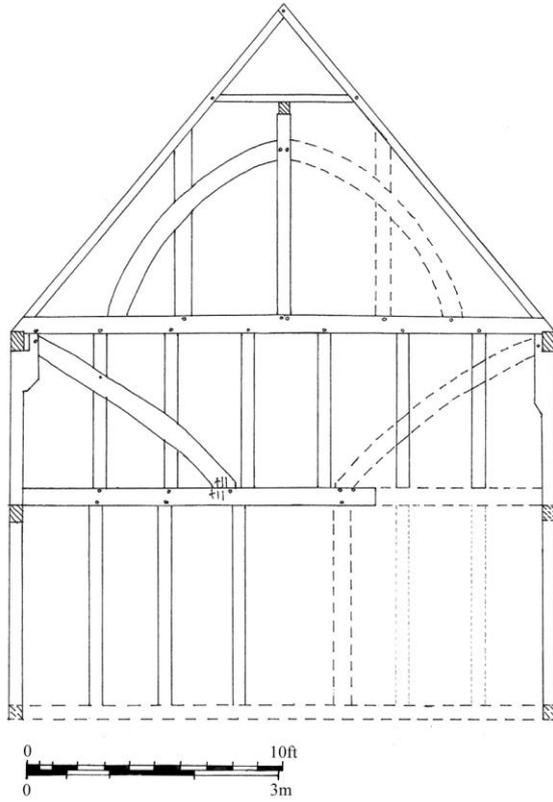
*Spoons, ground plan*



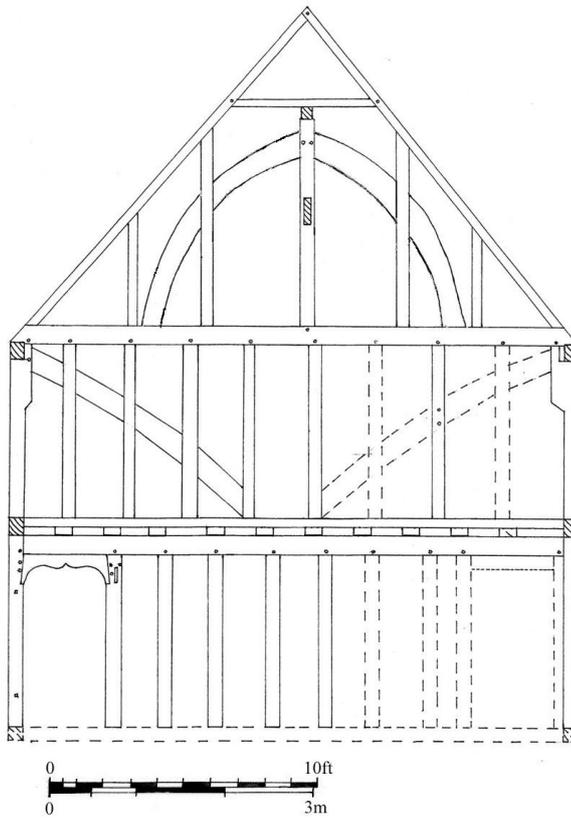
*Spooners, front elevation, partially reconstructed*



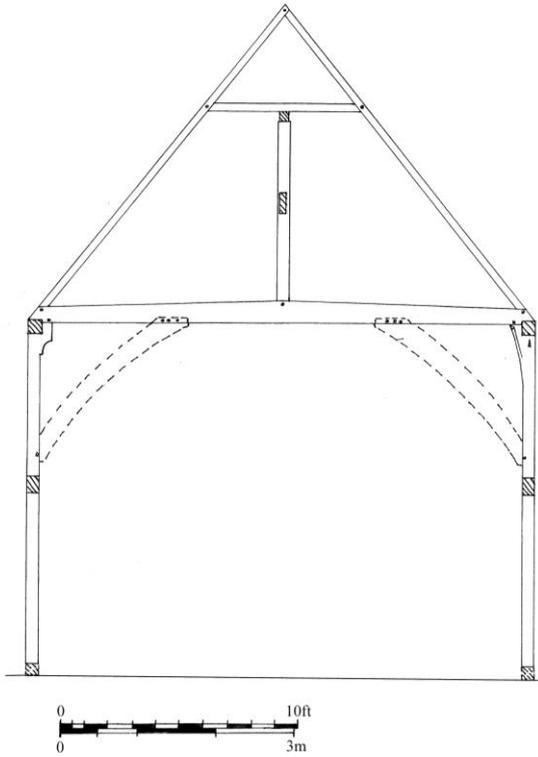
*Spooners, longitudinal section*



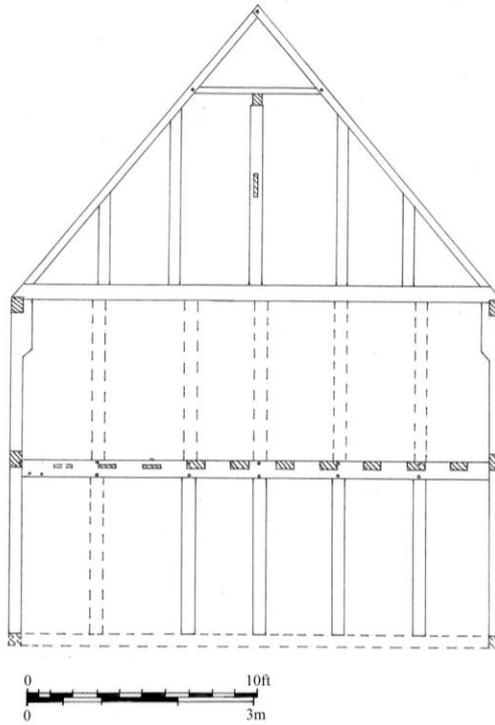
*Section A A1*



*Section B B1*



*Section D D1*



*Section E E1*