

**Lyddington Manor History Society  
Historic Building Survey**

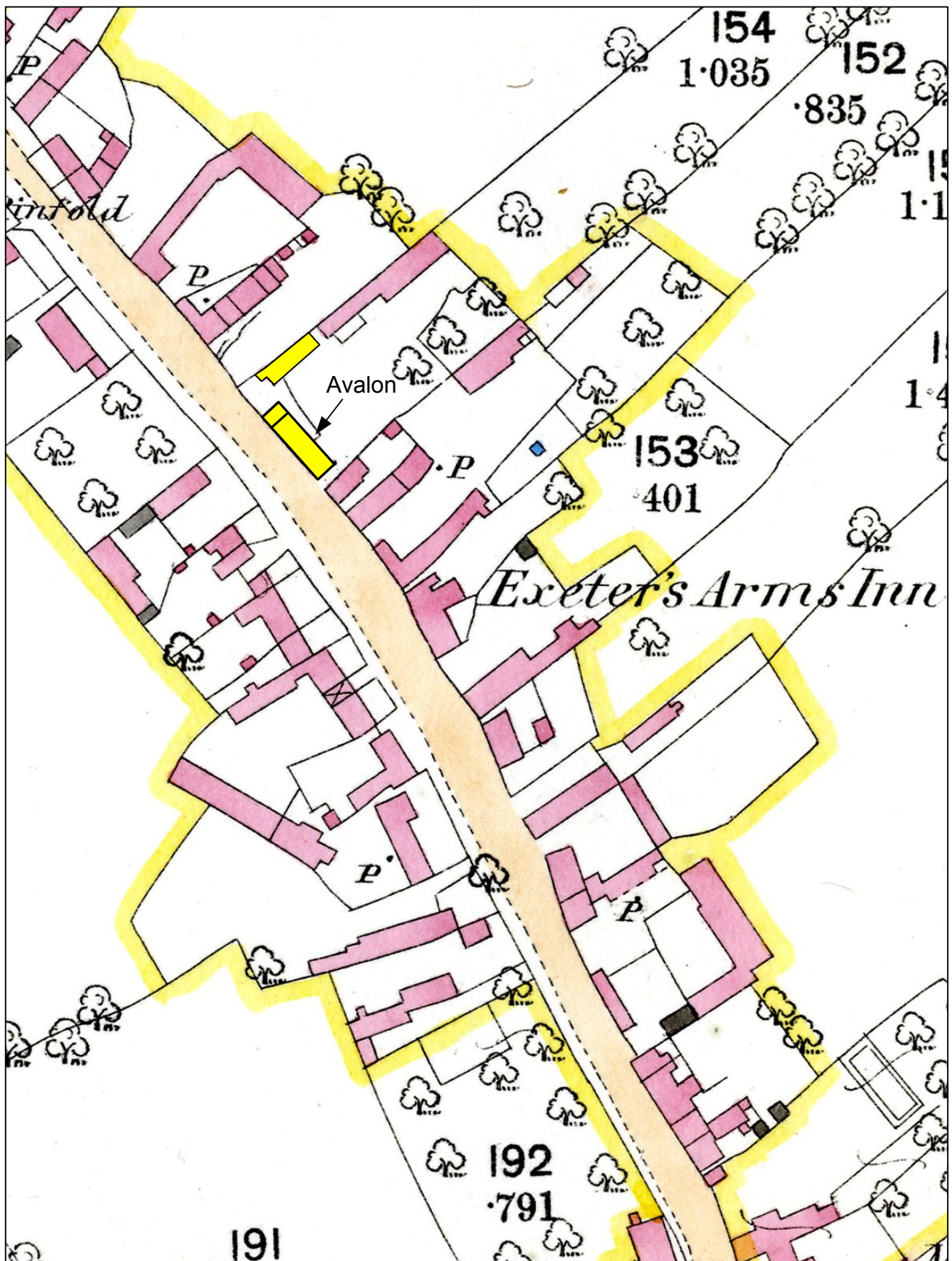
**Avalon, 58 Main St  
Lyddington, Rutland**



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Location Map – Avalon, 58 Main Street, Lyddington  
(OS First Edition 1886)

## HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

### AVALON, 58 MAIN ST, LYDDINGTON

#### Survey

Date of survey: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2013

Surveyed by: Nick Hill & Robert Ovens

#### Summary

Hidden in the roof space of the north end of this house, a smoke-blackened medieval roof structure was discovered, probably a cruck truss. The truss has the typical apex and collar features of a local cruck frame, but the blades are still encased at first floor level. Tree-ring dating indicated a date of 1388-1413 for a collar timber, which seems likely to be the date of the original structure, though the collar is not in its original location. The original house seems to have extended further north, but its original form is unclear.

There may have been earlier phases of progressive rebuilding, but tree-ring dating shows that major upgrading was carried out in 1685-1710, the date of the A-frame roof truss over the southern part. The late 17<sup>th</sup> century house, now with well-built stone walls throughout, was of three-room plan form, probably with a lobby entry doorway to the rear, opening against a central chimneystack which divided the hall from the kitchen. The hall had an unusual corbel-moulded ceiling beam and at least one stone-mullioned window. At the south end was a parlour, unheated until the insertion of a corner fireplace in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Site

OS Ref: SP874974

Orientation: For report purposes, the main front is taken as facing W.

The house is set parallel to and adjoining the main village street. There was a good-sized farmyard to the rear, with a line of outbuildings against the N boundary.

#### Materials

Coursed ironstone rubble with roofs of Collyweston and Welsh slate

#### External features

The house now consists of a 3-cell block of 1½ storeys, with a rebuilt single storey extension to the N end.

The N end of the W front has coursed ironstone in regular, fairly thin courses, which looks like a later re-facing. This stonework abuts against the southern two-thirds of the W front with a straight joint and is set back slightly. Doorway to N with ironstone plain flat lintel and tall, thin jamb stones – probably of C19 date. Timber casement window to S with timber lintel and stone cill. The masonry runs on into the block to



the N with no straight joint or quoins. This is now a single-storey extension, but was clearly an integral part of the earlier building. The stonework now has some larger blocks, and a small single-light window with plain-chamfered ironstone surround. Beyond the single-storey extension, the wall continues further N up to the plot boundary, with various irregularities but no clear straight joints. There is a blocked doorway with good quoins – no lintel externally, but an old oak lintel survives to the E face. Good quoins to the N end, against a stone gate pier of the adjoining plot.

The S section of the W front has coursed ironstone, with some courses of rather larger blocks. There are no quoins to the straight joint with the N section. A little S of this junction, there is another straight joint and small offset to the lower part of the wall, probably from rebuilding an outward leaning section. Two ground floor windows with plain flat ironstone lintels, ironstone jambs and 2-light timber casements. Two half-dormers to 1<sup>st</sup> floor, with plain sloping roofs of Collyweston slates and rendered cheeks.

The S gable has good quoins and a coped gable parapet with plain kneelers. The lower parts have irregular coursed ironstone. The SW corner and the upper part of the wall have been rebuilt/re-faced, with better-shaped blocks. Ironstone doorway with plain, projecting surround, plinth blocks and flat lintel – probably of late C18 or C19 date. At the top the gable coping has a seating for a 2-flue stack with good ironstone blocks and a chamfered plinth, though the upper part has been lost.

The rear E wall has rather irregular coursed ironstone to the S third, with a single-light window opening, a modern insertion. The central section has better coursed ironstone, and a 2-light ovolo-moulded brownstone window with cyma cornice. The mullions are quite tall, and the moulding returns to the head are left short of the jambs and central mullion. Another single-light window of modern appearance to the N, then a projecting modern conservatory. Inside the conservatory there is another stone doorway with ironstone surround, with a small chamfer and flat lintel. Slightly wider window with timber lintel to N of the conservatory, then good quoins to the N end.

The N gable, above the lean-to N extension, has good coursed ironstone with a coped gable parapet, plain kneelers and a roll-moulded apex. 2-light timber window to 1<sup>st</sup> floor with stone jambs and timber lintel. The E and N walls of the N extension are of 9 inch brick, of the mid to later C19, laid with 3 stretchers and 1 header, a cambered arch of two half-brick rings to the E window, with a cill of chamfered bricks, used also on the N window.

The N third of the building has a roof of Welsh slate, with Collyweston to the remainder. At the junction is a 2-flue stack with a base of good ironstone blocks, set N-S; the upper part has been replaced in C20 brick.

## **Internal features**

### Ground floor

The N room has a wide inglenook fireplace with slightly cambered beam, chamfered with ogee stops. There is a bake oven in the left corner, now covered up. Transverse

beam, chamfered with run-out stops to N end, and bearing into a masonry pier at the S end, with no stops. No features of note in the N lean-to extension.

The central room has another wide inglenook fireplace, with high-set beam, cased in and with a cyma-moulded cornice. A spine beam with a fine ogee-moulded, corbelled N end, carved out of the solid, bears onto the ingle beam. The spine beam is chamfered with good ogee stops to the N end but no stops to the S. Against the W wall is an oak plate to carry the first floor joists, chamfered with ogee stops. The ironstone mullioned window to the E wall has plain chamfers internally (cf ovolo moulding externally). As on the outside, the moulding to the jambs and mullion is left short of that to the head. The S room has a spine beam with chamfers and straight-cut stops to both ends, which are set c.300mm away from the wall. There is a splayed chimneybreast to the SW corner, with modern fireplace. The window to the E wall is a modern insertion. This rear E wall is much thicker than other walls, and may well be of early date.

Wall thicknesses: the front wall is around 700mm thick. The rear wall of the N and central rooms is c.650mm thick, but 840mm to the S room.

### First floor and roof structure

The N bedroom has a smoke-blackened roof truss (T1), visible only in the roof void, as it is boxed in at first floor level. Although no curving timber is visible, the truss is very probably of cruck form, as it has all the characteristics of the local, standard cruck construction. The truss has two principal blades, tenoned and pegged into a saddle at the apex. The blades are of fairly thick, squarish section (170/185mm wide by 150mm thick at later collar height), with saw marks only visible to the N face of the E blade. There are empty matrices for a dovetail-lapped collar, fixed with two skew pegs. There is now a collar set at a higher level, fixed with nails – perhaps the original collar re-used, as the S face seems to have some sooting. A ridge beam, with plain, splayed scarf joint, is trenched into the top of the saddle. There are two downwards pegs to fix the scarf joint, and a third downwards peg fixes the ridge to the saddle, passing right through it. The ridge beams to N and S of the truss are both smoke-blackened. Side purlins are carried on the back of the principals, but these have various peg holes from a previous use. No trenching is visible to the back of the principals, so the original purlins were probably carried on the projecting ends of the collar, in the normal local fashion. At the N end, the ridge has a splayed scarf with a peg hole visible. This indicates that the cruck structure originally extended for at least one further bay to the N, but was truncated when the current stone gable wall was built.

Rafters to this bay are of squared oak, with some surviving ash poles and split ash battens for a thatched roof (and added modern softwood rafters). The construction of the N gable internal face, with old masonry and an embedded oak timber to the E, shows this wall is of 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century date, not 19<sup>th</sup>.

The central part of the roof void has the large double chimneybreast, built of good quality, large ironstone blocks, with steps. Purlins are supported off the chimneystack structure.

The roof over the two S bays is of different type. A single truss (T2) has large principal rafters, half-lapped at the apex, with no ridge. The truss is of A-frame form, but the collar is not visible, as it is set below ceiling line, in the partition dividing the central and S bedrooms. The truss was closed, with nailed studs and mud infill on nailed laths. Purlins are trenched into the back of the principal rafters, and have straight-splayed, pegged scarfs. The original rafter couples survive extensively, of squared oak (eg 75mm wide by 70mm deep), with small, knife-cut carpenter's marks at the apex. The marks are set out of sequence, with Roman numerals eg XVII. An unusual feature of the roof structure is the wind-bracing. One brace survives in situ on the E side, rising from the SE purlin up towards the top of the E principal rafter, tenoned at both ends, and passing inside of the rafters. The raking mortices to the principals show that there was a second brace on the W side of the roof, rising from the N purlin to the principal. But there were no corresponding braces on the other sides of the principal rafters.

No other features are visible on the first floor, except for the splayed chimneybreast to the SW corner, for a bedroom fireplace, now blocked. The stonework for this chimneystack can be seen in the roof void, though it is unclear from this whether the stack is original or inserted.

## **Outbuildings**

Against the N boundary of the plot is an ironstone outbuilding, single-storeyed with two pedestrian-sized doors to the front, along with a large and small window. There is no doorway to the rear wall. As the gable ends show, the building has been heightened in brick, and has a Welsh slate roof. Inside, a brick chimneystack and cross-wall have been inserted, for use as a laundry or brewhouse, with two copper-type boilers set either side of a fireplace. The brickwork dates from the mid or late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as does the softwood kingpost roof. Hanging on the S wall is a large iron pan, which is said to have been used to collect the blood when the building was used as a slaughterhouse.

On the 1804 map, it can be seen that this range of outbuildings formerly extended further W and E. There is now a small brick privy to the W, and a free-standing brick coach house or cart shed to the E. Further E (also on the 1804 map) is a large ironstone outbuilding, currently being converted to domestic use. Survey drawings of 1991 show that the barn originally had a pedestrian-sized door to the front and rear walls, though a large barn-type glazed opening has recently been inserted. The outbuilding must have been re-roofed in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, as it had the same type of kingpost roof structure as that in the laundry/brewhouse. A new range has recently been added to the building, running S from the original building.

## **Tree-ring dating**

Tree-ring dating samples were taken in 2013 by Robert Howard of Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory from the cruck truss T1, truss T2 and from the corbel-moulded ceiling beam in the central ground floor room. For truss T1, the re-set collar dated to 1388-1413, but other timbers could not be dated. The principal rafters of truss T2 dated to 1685-1710. The ceiling beam was found to be of elm, so was not dateable.

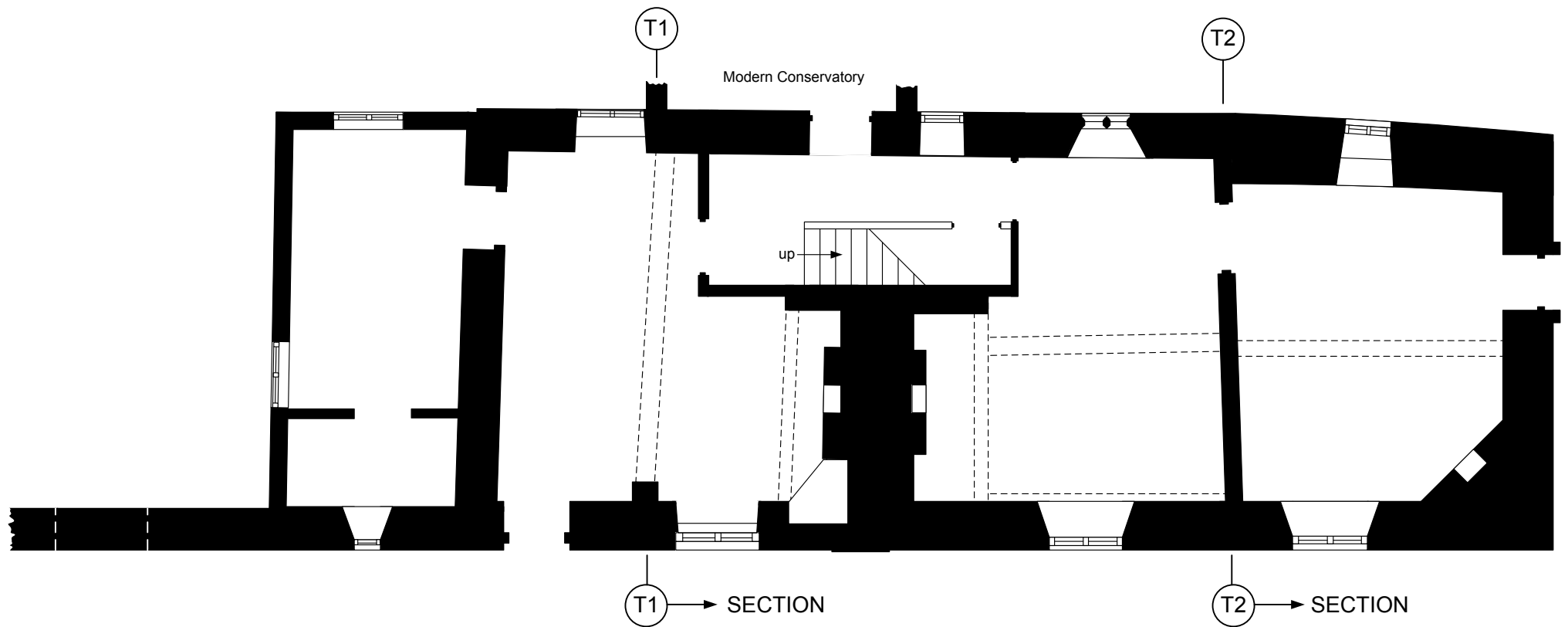
## Date and development

The early house was of cruck form, and had a hall with an open hearth. It may well date from 1388-1413, though this remains somewhat uncertain, as only the re-set collar was dated, and it may not belong to the original building. This cruck building extended further N for at least one bay. The original plan form is unclear. It may have had a 2-bay hall with a first floor chamber at one or both ends, or could have been smaller.

This early house was rebuilt in c.1685-1710, though some of the cruck structure was retained. The main part of the house, as surviving today, was of 3-cell form and seems to have been of lobby entry plan. Unusually, the doorway seems to have been at the back, opening into a lobby at the rear of the double chimneystack. The stairs were probably against the stack, though of more compact form than the current stair. The N room, with a good ingle fireplace and bake oven, would have been the kitchen. The central room, also with an inglenook, was the hall, the principal living room, with a high quality beam/corbel. The first floor bearer joist to the front wall here suggests that, in the original house, this room may have had no first floor above, though the room is well to the south of the cruck truss, giving an unusually long open hall. The S room would have been the parlour, with no chimneybreast at first. The intact N gable end suggests that the cruck structure to N was demolished in the 17<sup>th</sup> century phase. The block to the N, as shown on the 1804 map but now missing, may have been single-storeyed, providing further service rooms beyond the kitchen. This block may have been added later than the main 17<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding, and its rear wall may have stepped inwards, which would explain the quoins at the NE corner of the main block. The tall stone mullioned window with a cyma cornice, together with the roof structure, accord with the tree-ring date, suggesting a date in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The considerable amount of re-working of the masonry walls, and varying thicknesses, suggest that the early walling of the cruck house – perhaps of mud – was replaced progressively, rather than in a single phase of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

It is interesting that one cell of the cruck structure was retained in the 17<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding, and the new build received a roof of different form. This roof structure, with its good quality sawn oak rafters, would have been of sufficient quality to have been roofed from the start in Collyweston slates, contrasting with a thatch roof over the N end.

Nick Hill  
December 2013



GROUND FLOOR

AVALON, 58 MAIN STREET, LYDDINGTON

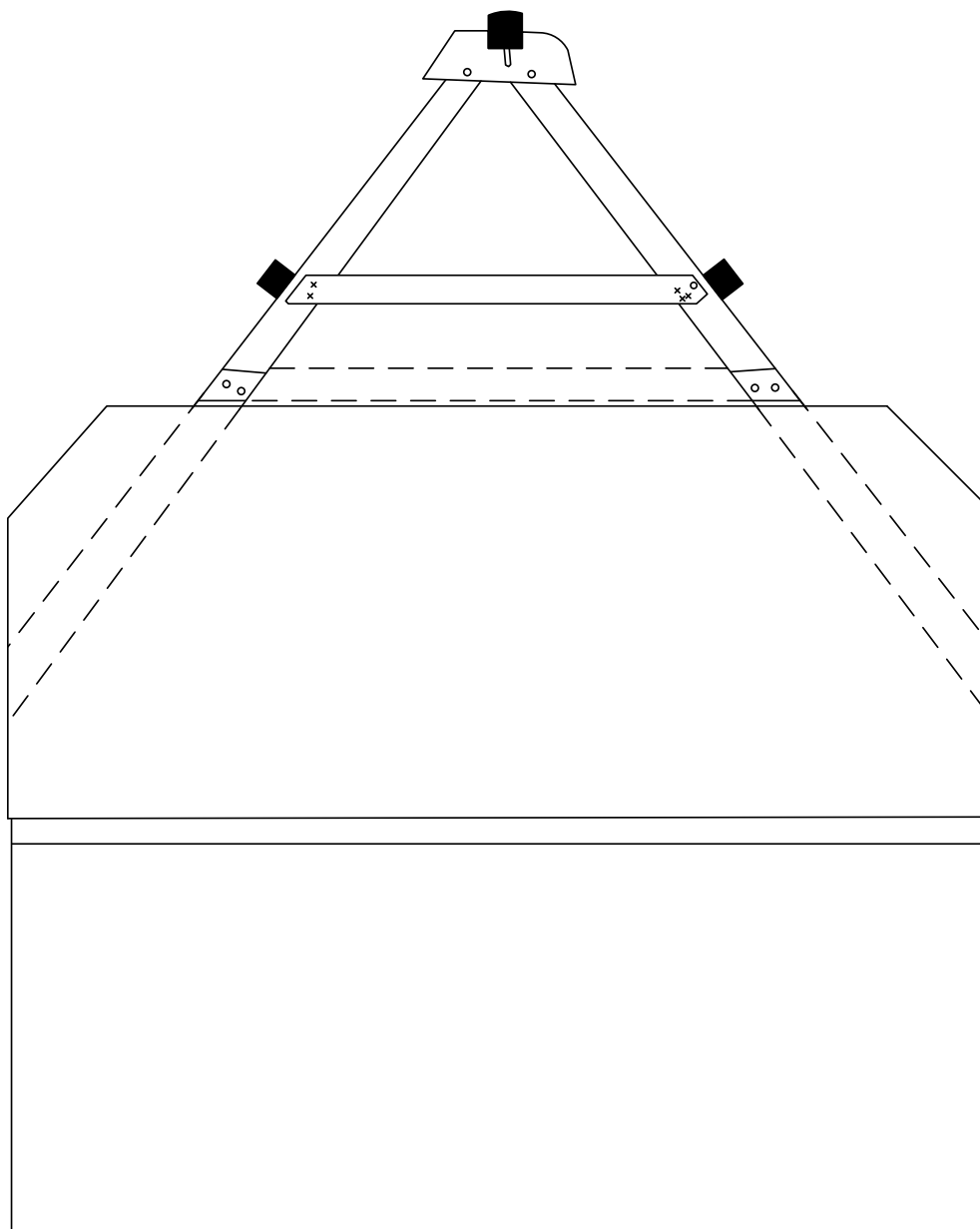


North

Report North

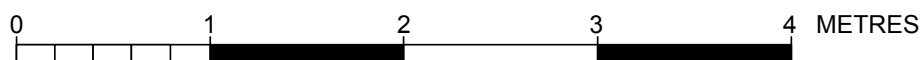
NH / RO February 2013





SECTION - TRUSS T1 NORTH FACE

AVALON, 58 MAIN STREET, LYDDINGTON







View from the north-west



View from south-west





View from the south-east



The rear east side



Inglenook fireplace to north room



Ceiling beam to central room, with moulded corbel





Smoke-blackened cruck truss T1, south face



Apex of truss T1, north face





Truss T2, north face



Outbuilding to north-east of the house





Outbuilding to north-east, with brick fireplace and coppers



Iron pan in the north-east outbuilding



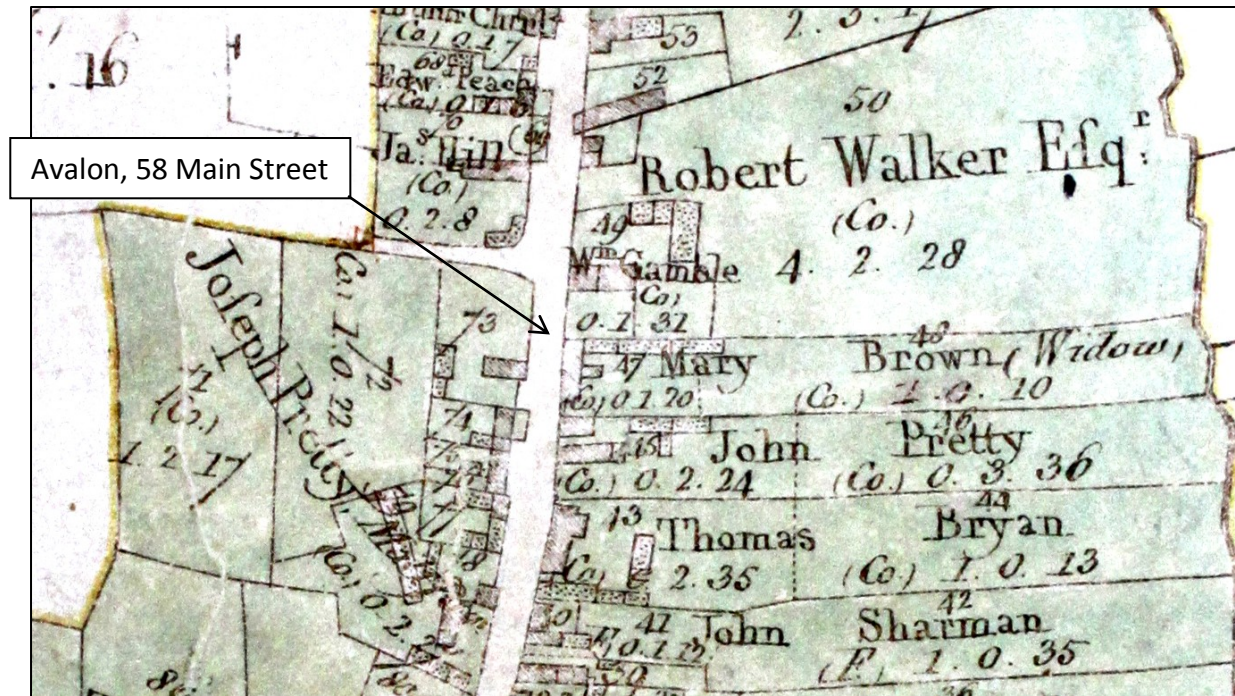


19<sup>th</sup> century brick coach house or cart shed

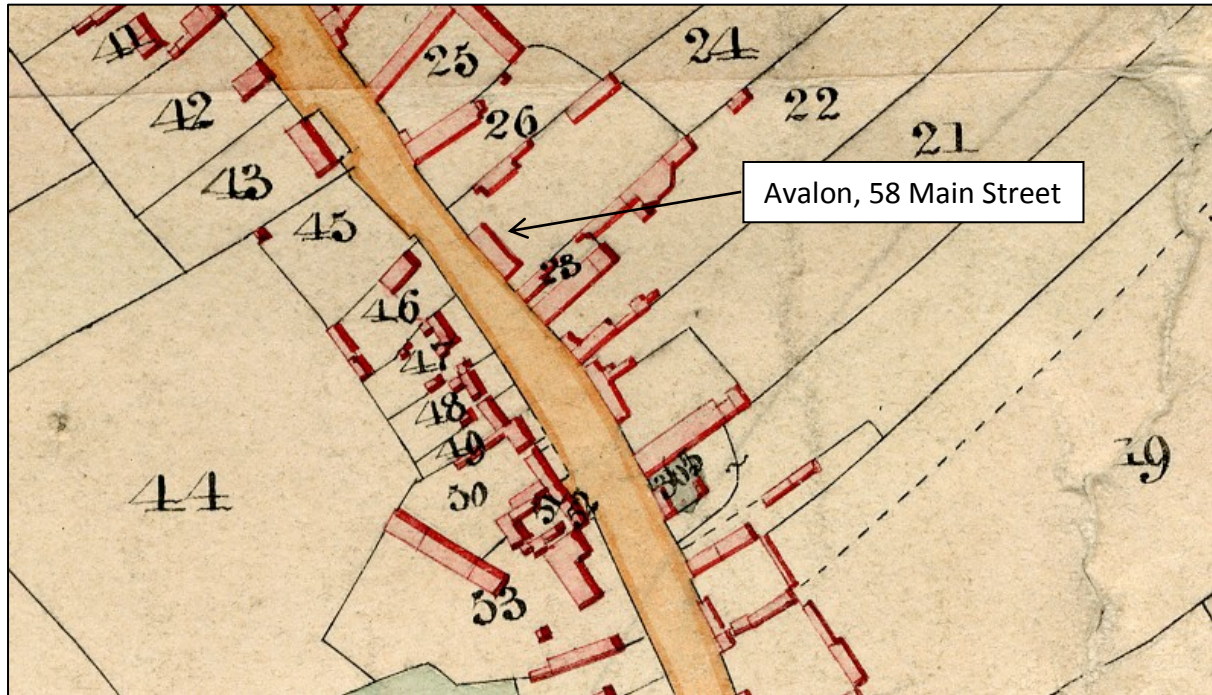


The eastern outbuilding, with recently inserted large opening



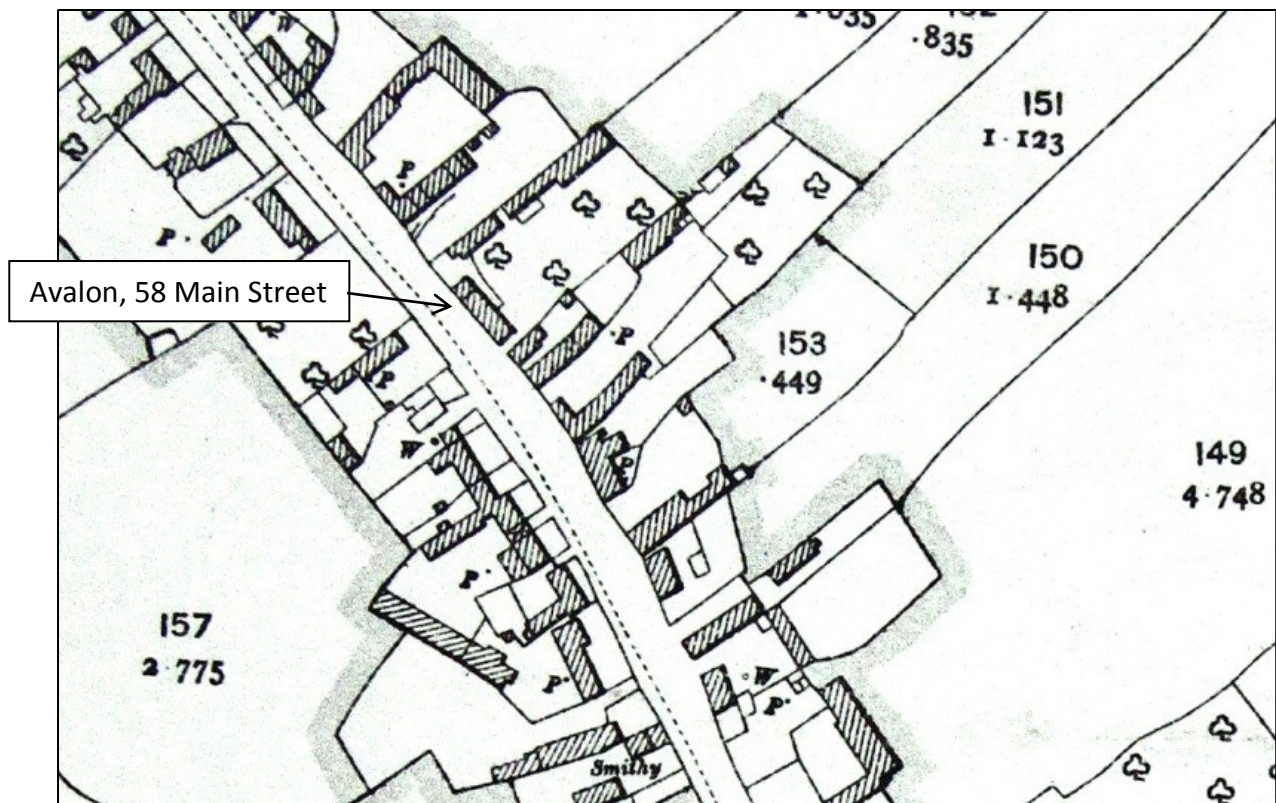


Lyddington Enclosure Map - 1804



Lyddington Estate Map, 1848 (Burghley Archives)





Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, 1904