

1488 000/1007

NORTH YORKSHIRE:

Keeper's Cottage,
Brackenbottom,
Horton-in-Ribblesdale

SD 816722

This new survey was made possible by kind permission of the owner, Mr. Robert Bell, Langcliffe Hall, Settle, North Yorkshire, BD24 9LY

Recorded by Sallie Bassham and Arnold Pacey, 15-16 September, 1997

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Keeper's Cottage is an 18th-century house, 2 rooms wide and 2 rooms from front to back, with a central entrance, and can be described as follows:

Materials

In the geologically complex landscape of this part of Ribblesdale, many kinds of stone are available, and are used in the house as follows:

- Limestone (Carboniferous) is the chief walling material.
- Sandstone (probably Silurian) is used for lining the flues (where limestone would decompose), and shows on the wall surface around the flues. A fine-grained sandstone is used in the parlour fireplace.
- Gritstone is used for some lintels and dressings.
- Flagstone or "slate" (Silurian rock from the Austwick Flags or Horton Flags) is the roofing material, and courses of "slate" appear in the walls above and below windows, and indicate the position of a blocked window.

Exterior

See the description given in the previous report, but note also the old roofline in the south elevation and the blocked window in the south wall, shown in the drawings which follow.

Interior

The house has a double-pile plan, but the thick wall separating the front and back rooms appears to have been an external wall at one time, the back rooms being partly or wholly of later construction.

The front rooms comprise a housebody and parlour with ceiling beams cut from trees with markedly tapering trunks. Each beam has a "thick end" which has been carved to resemble a bracket diminishing into conventional chamfer stops. The thin ends are somewhat irregular because the tree had insufficient girth for the size of beam required. Chamfer stops at the thin ends are partly obscured by masonry of the chimney breasts in both rooms, as if chimneys projecting into the rooms were not originally envisaged.

The back of the house is subdivided into kitchen, stair-hall and dairy. The dairy has stone-slab ("slate") tables or shelves, some with drainage holes. The kitchen has a blocked fireplace whose flue appears to rise diagonally to a chimney in the very corner of the building. This chimney probably also served an oven (or set-pot?) in the extra thick wall below it. The wide staircase rises to a half-landing with a window, then doubles back to reach the first-floor landing onto which all four upstairs rooms (one now subdivided) open their doorways. Alongside the stairs and on the landing, the hand-rail is supported by flat balusters, replaced here and there by turned balusters of similar profile.

Inside the very wide roof are half-trusses made partly from sawn Baltic timber and partly from reused pieces from an earlier roof.

One very rough reused tie-beam spans the chamber above the parlour below ceiling level. The heavy wall between the front and back rooms of the house rises to the rafters and carries the ends of tie-beams of the half-trusses. Iron ties anchored in this wall stabilise the trusses.

The building has been re-roofed relatively recently, and nearly all the rafters are modern.

Relationships to other buildings

The house is unusual in facing west, but it is built on a west-facing hillside with a slight rise to the south, which makes its orientation logical. It was originally sheltered on the north side by two large barns, one of which is now demolished (see site plan). The 19th-century "slate" water trough in front of the house must have served both barns and was perhaps a source of domestic water also.

The one barn which survives stands very close to the house and is described in YVBSG report 1489. However, it should be noted that the plan of this barn does not taper to a narrower width at its eastern end, as shown there. The width at that end is 6.86m overall (22ft 6in).

The small outbuilding in the back-garden of the house was latterly used for the keeper's dogs, and further outbuilding accommodation was provided from the 1940s until demolished in 1997 by a nissen hut attached to the house. Nissen huts occur rather frequently in this part of Ribblesdale, and however unattractive, form a significant part of the building history of the area. They may be said, indeed, to bridge the gap between the vernacular farm buildings still being constructed in the early 20th century and today's "modern" farm buildings.

Interpretation

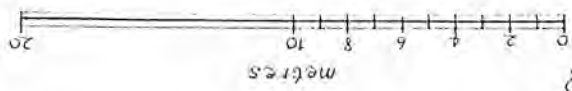
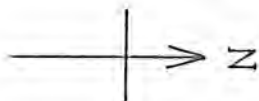
The houses was constructed in at least two phases, of which the earliest may be of c.1700 and may have incorporated the unusual ceiling beams. The wide-span roof appears to be a century or more later. Given the proximity of two substantial barns, the house must have been the centre of a prosperous farm.

Attached drawings

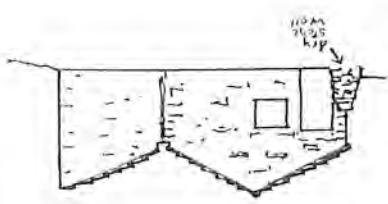
Site plan
 Ground plan
 West elevation
 South elevation and sections
 Detail: parlour fireplace
 Detail: ceiling beams

KEEPER'S COTTAGE

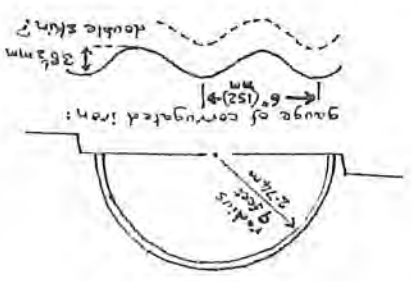
SITE PLAN



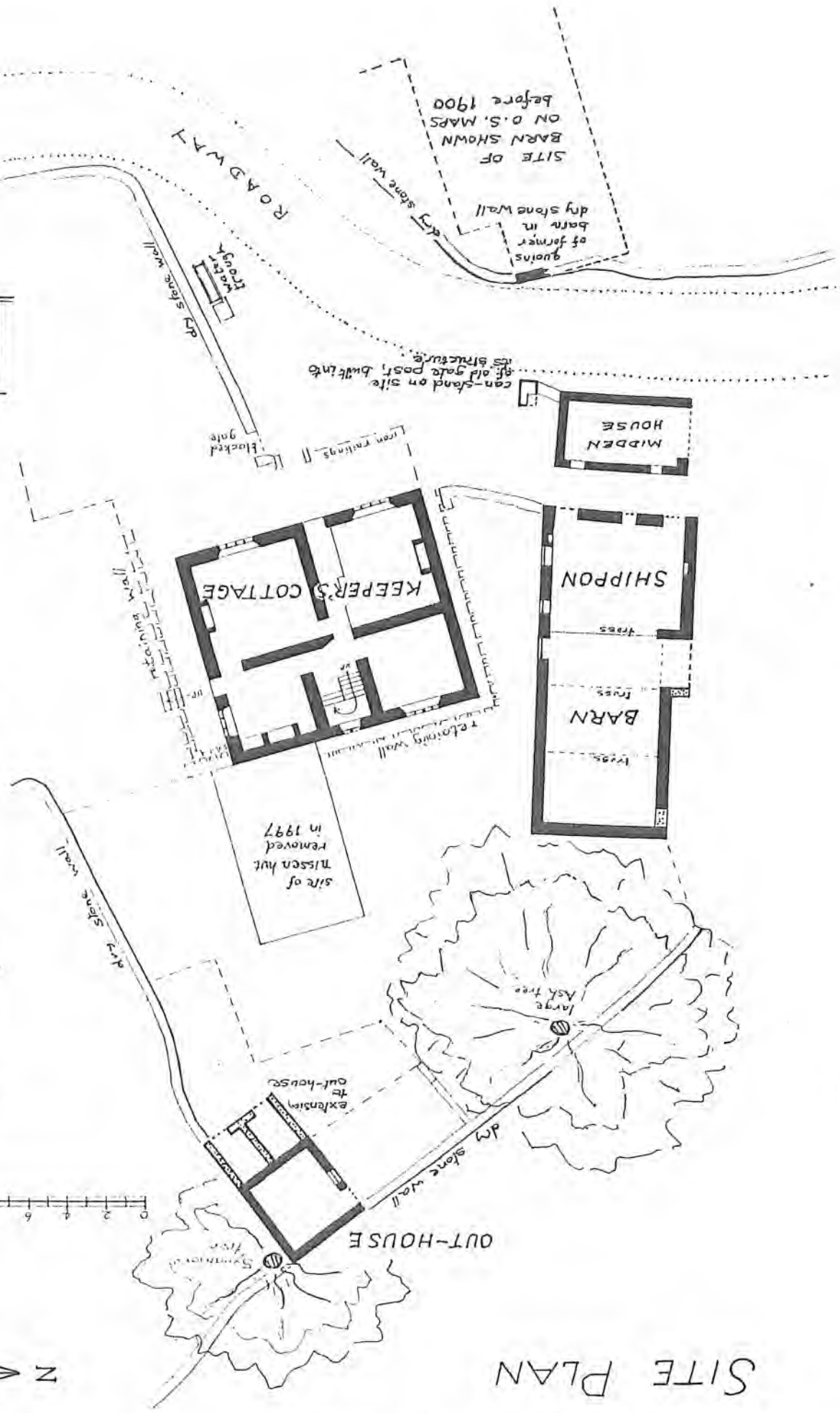
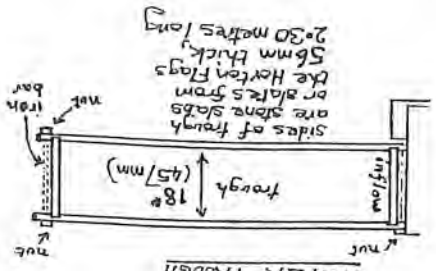
NORTH-WEST
ELEVATION
OF OUTBUILDING



SECTION OF
NISSEN HUT



PLAN VIEW OF
WATER TROUGH



SITE OF
BARN SHOWN
ON O.S. MAPS
before 1900

quoins
barn in
former
dry stone wall

sides of trough
are stone slabs
or slates from
the Heron Flags
56mm thick
2.30 metres long

can stand on site
of old gate post, built into
its structure

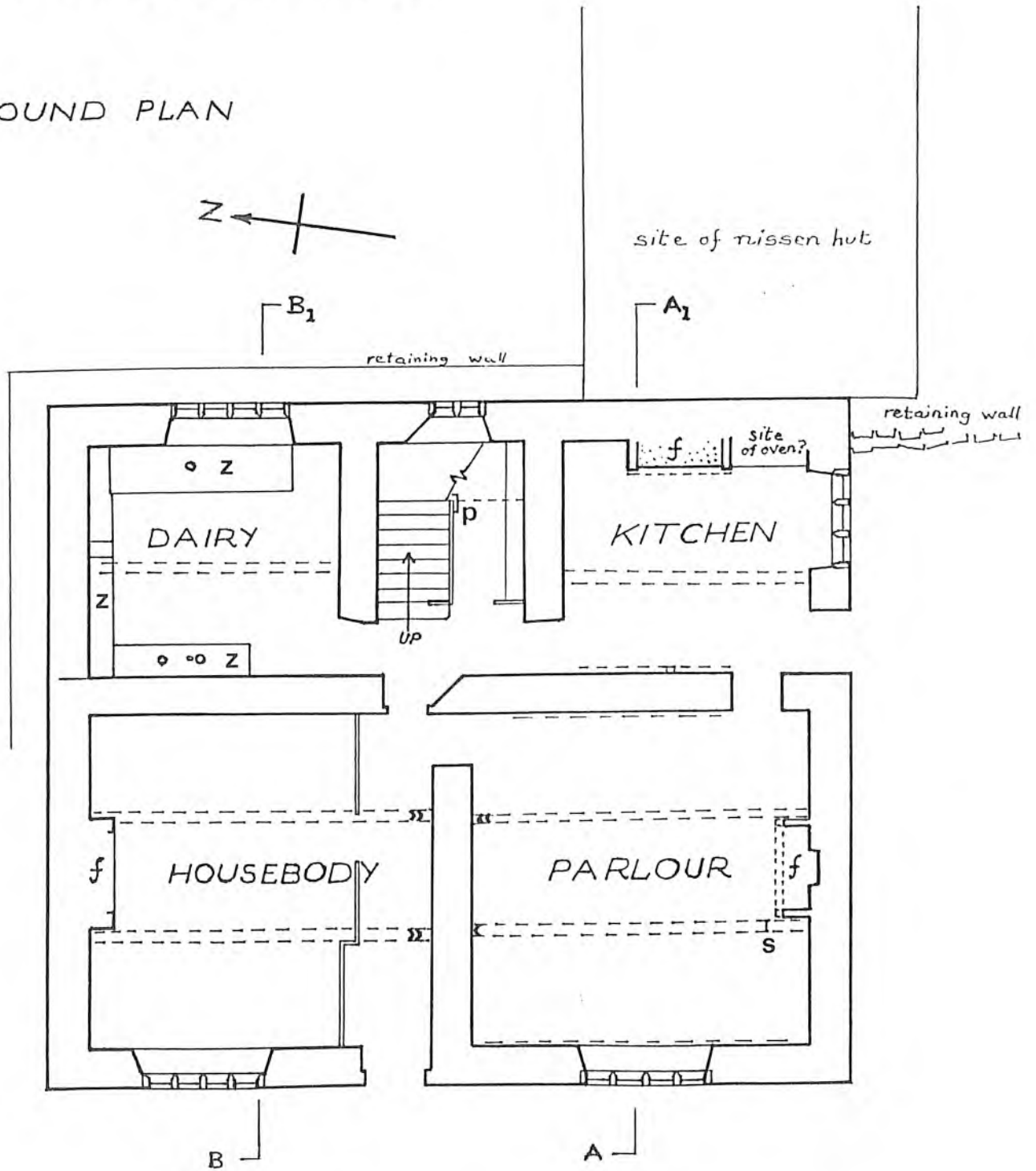
site of
nisssen hut
removed
in 1997

expansion
of
out-house

expansion
of
out-house

KEEPER'S COTTAGE

GROUND PLAN



0 1 2 3 4 5 METRES

Z
slate slab tables and shelves for dairy storage, some with drainage holes.

f
carved stop in ceiling beam.

s
scarf joint to repair of rotted end of ceiling beam.

p
podstone under stairs supporting curved stub post.

KEEPER'S COTTAGE



west elevation

↑
centre window
more carefully
made than
the rest;
door jambs
have broad
tooling

↑
area of
early walling
with blocked
window;
note courses
of "slate"
above and below
window.



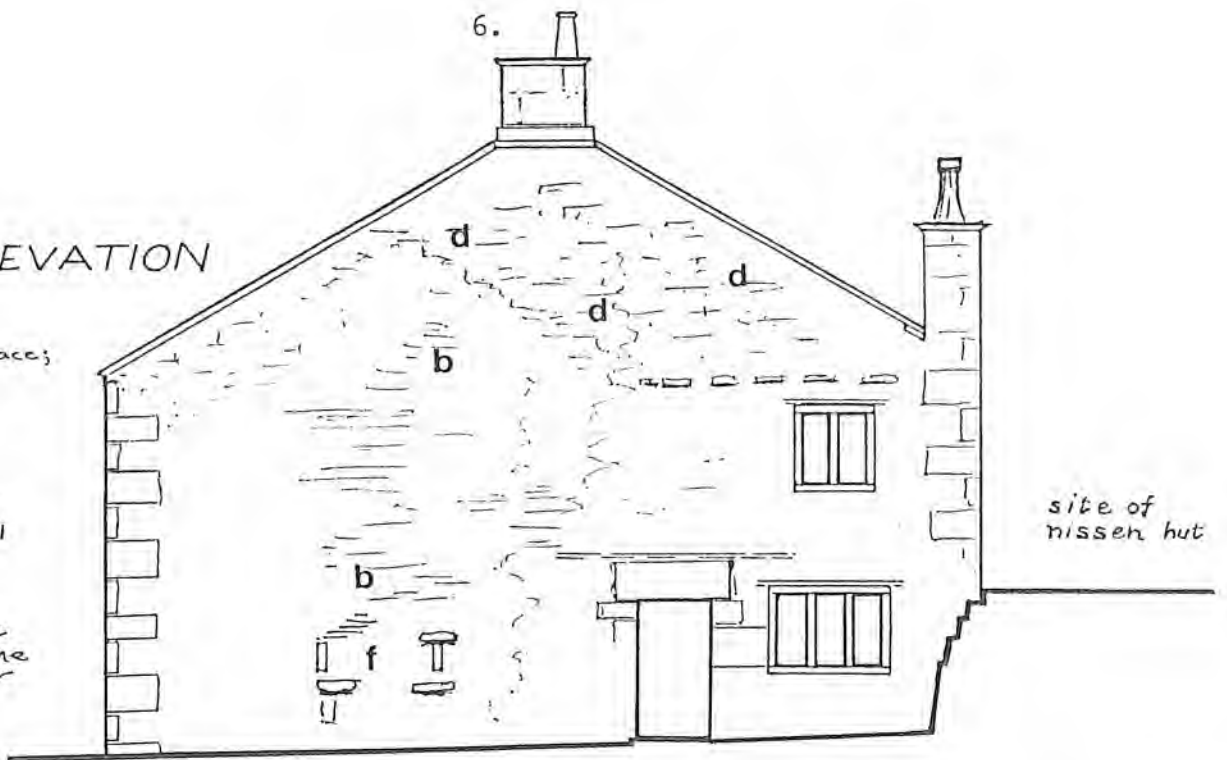
metres

SOUTH ELEVATION

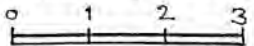
f
back of fireplace;
ends of
cantilevered
brackets

b
slight brown-
coloured
sandstone used
in flues

d
darker stone
(limestone, some
slate) in later
extension to
gable



Not fully to scale.
Roof structure and upper parts
of walls not measured.
Approximate scale of METRES
for rest: 0 1 2 3



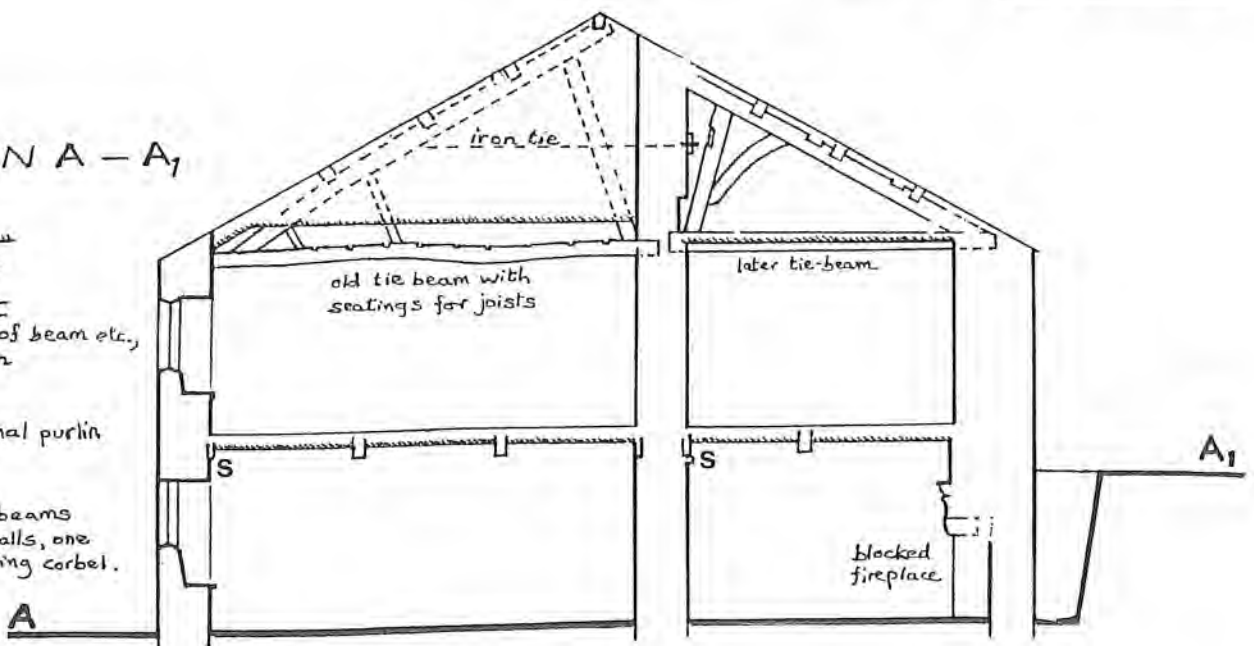
SECTION A - A₁

ceiling

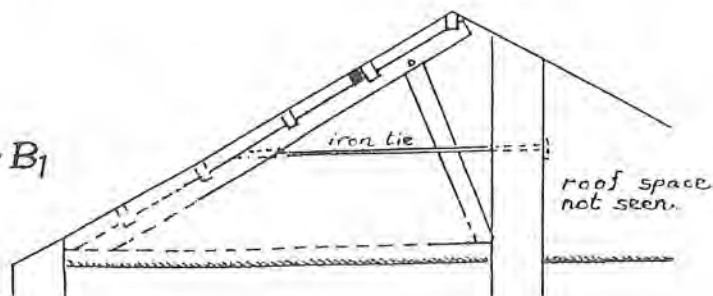
lengths of beam etc.,
not seen

■ one original purlin

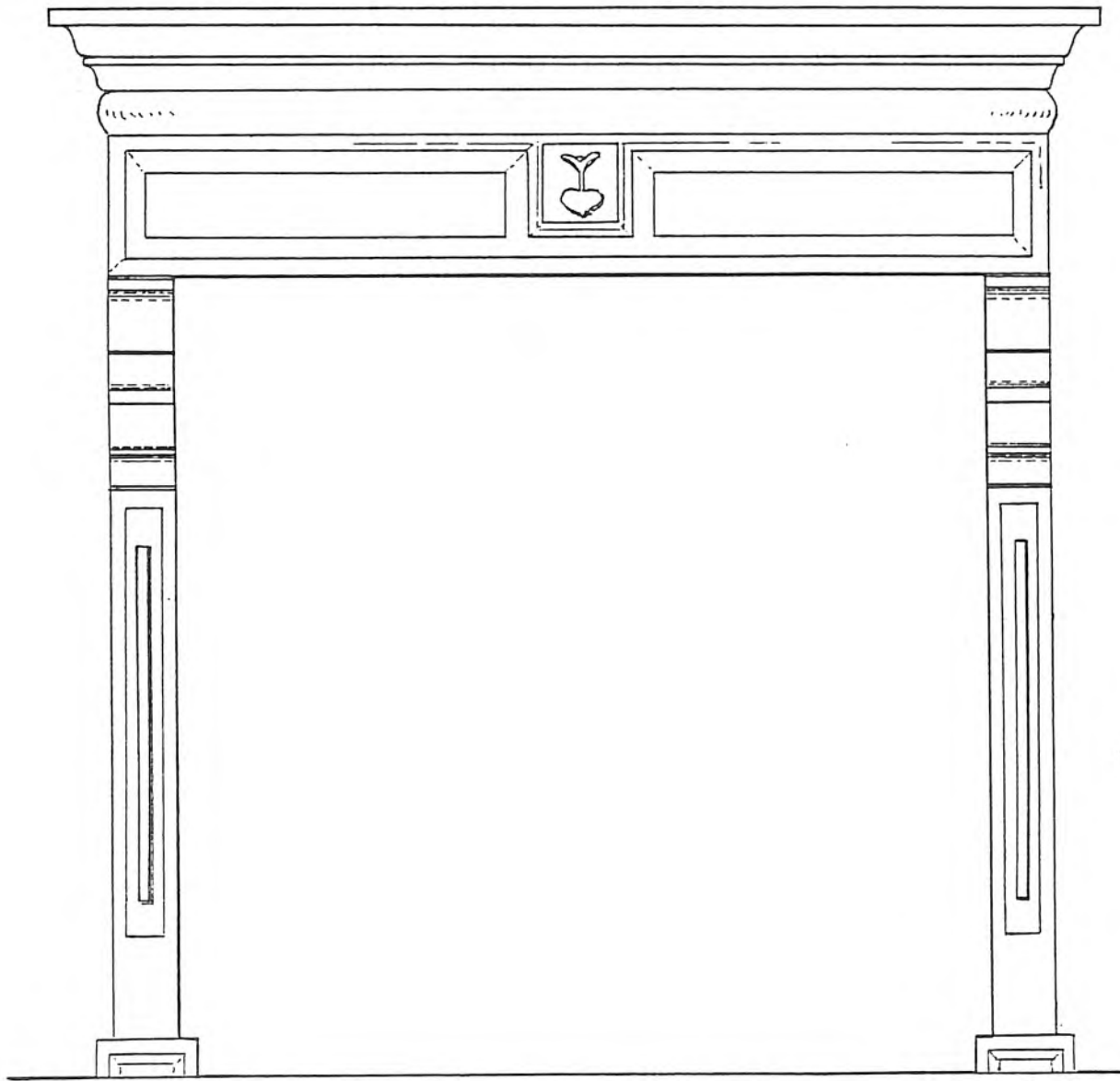
S
sleeper beams
within walls, one
on supporting corbel.



SECTION B - B₁ (DETAIL)



STONE FIREPLACE IN PARLOUR



PROFILE

