

BUILDING SURVEY AT THE SCOTCH PIPER INN, 1985

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Introduction

The Scotch Piper Inn stands parallel to and set back from the west side of the road which runs between the townships of Maghull and Downholland (Frontispiece). The remains of Lydiat Hall lie to the north-west. Those of St. Catherine's Chapel are in the field next to the inn. Both the Hall and Chapel probably date from the first half of the 16th century (Lewis & Samuels this volume; Lewis & O'Hanlon, this volume).

The inn is reputedly the oldest in Lancashire; the sign over the door makes a claim for an origin in 1320. However, the reason for such a claim is not known. In the 17th century, reference was made to an inn in Lydiat called the Highland Piper (Gibson 1884). This may be the same building as the present Scotch Piper. An L-shaped building is shown on a plan of 1809 (Lancs. RO DDIn 63/95a; Fig. 1a). The tithe map of the 1844 shows a rectangular building described as "Scotch Piper Inn" (Lancs. RO DRL 1/52; Fig. 1b).

Since c. 1920 there have been three roof fires, the most recent of which, in May 1985, necessitated the

total removal of the thatch. The present survey of the building was limited to the first floor only and was undertaken in advance of repair work. The survey and dendrochronological analysis were carried out on behalf of the North West Archaeological Trust and made possible by a donation from the owners, Messrs. Burtonwood Brewery Co. (Forshaws) Ltd. A copy of the archive report has been placed in the Archaeological Survey of Merseyside, Merseyside County Museums, Liverpool.

Present building

The Scotch Piper Inn is a two-storeyed, cruck-framed building consisting of three bays (Fig. 2). There is a central chimney stack and additional chimney at the north gable. The present entrance is by means of a doorway set almost immediately next to one of the cruck blades and on a line with the rear of the chimney stack. Evidence for an opposing doorway is not visible but may be obscured by a more recent extension to the rear of the building.

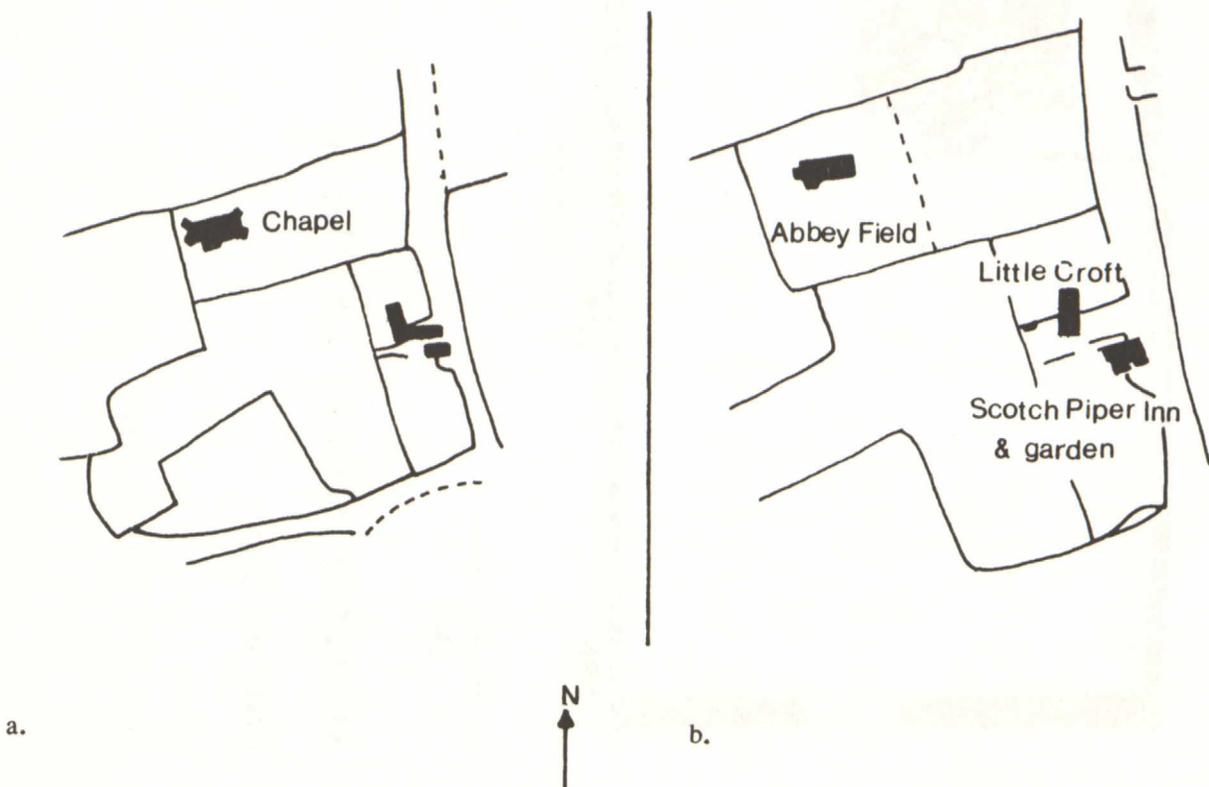
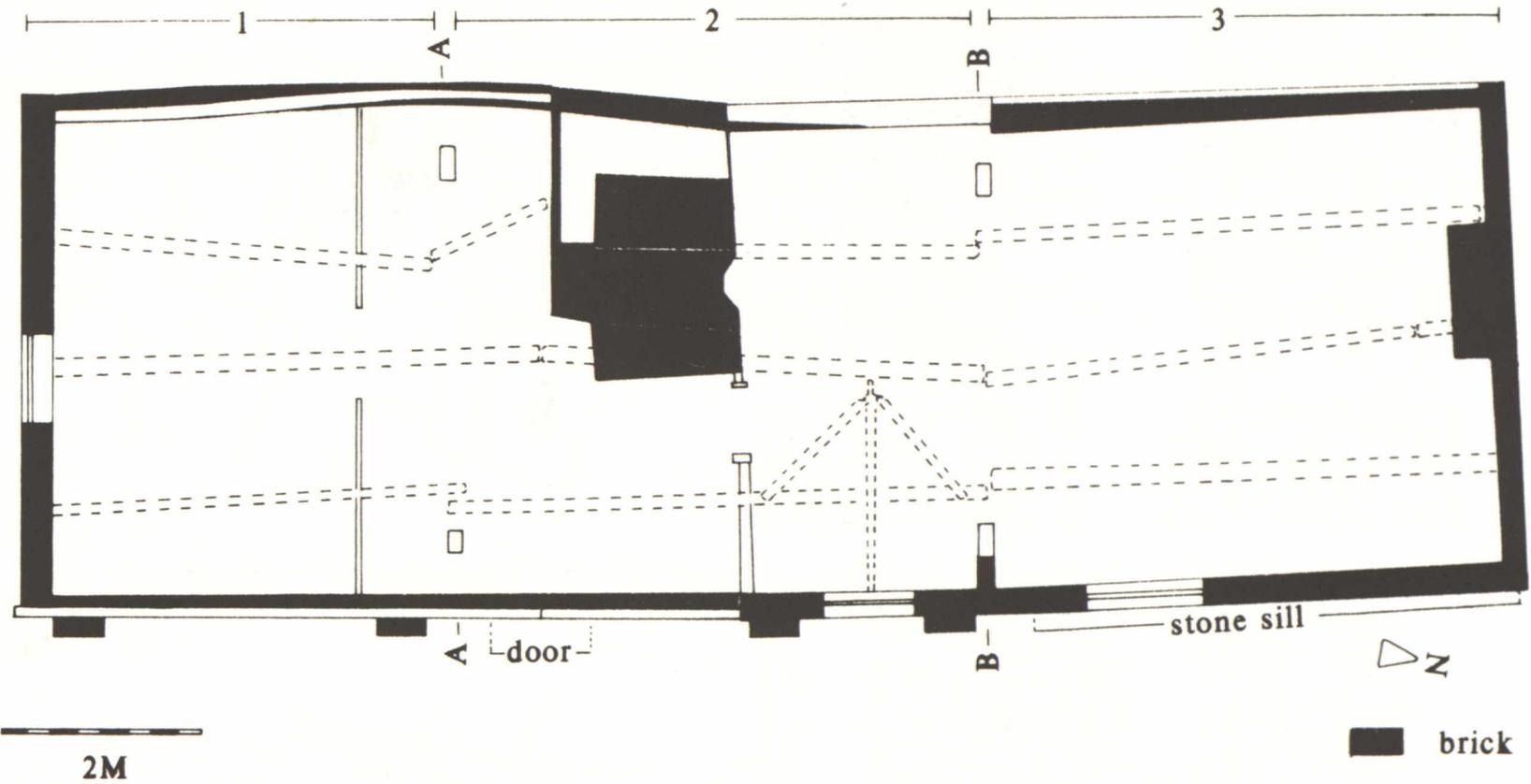


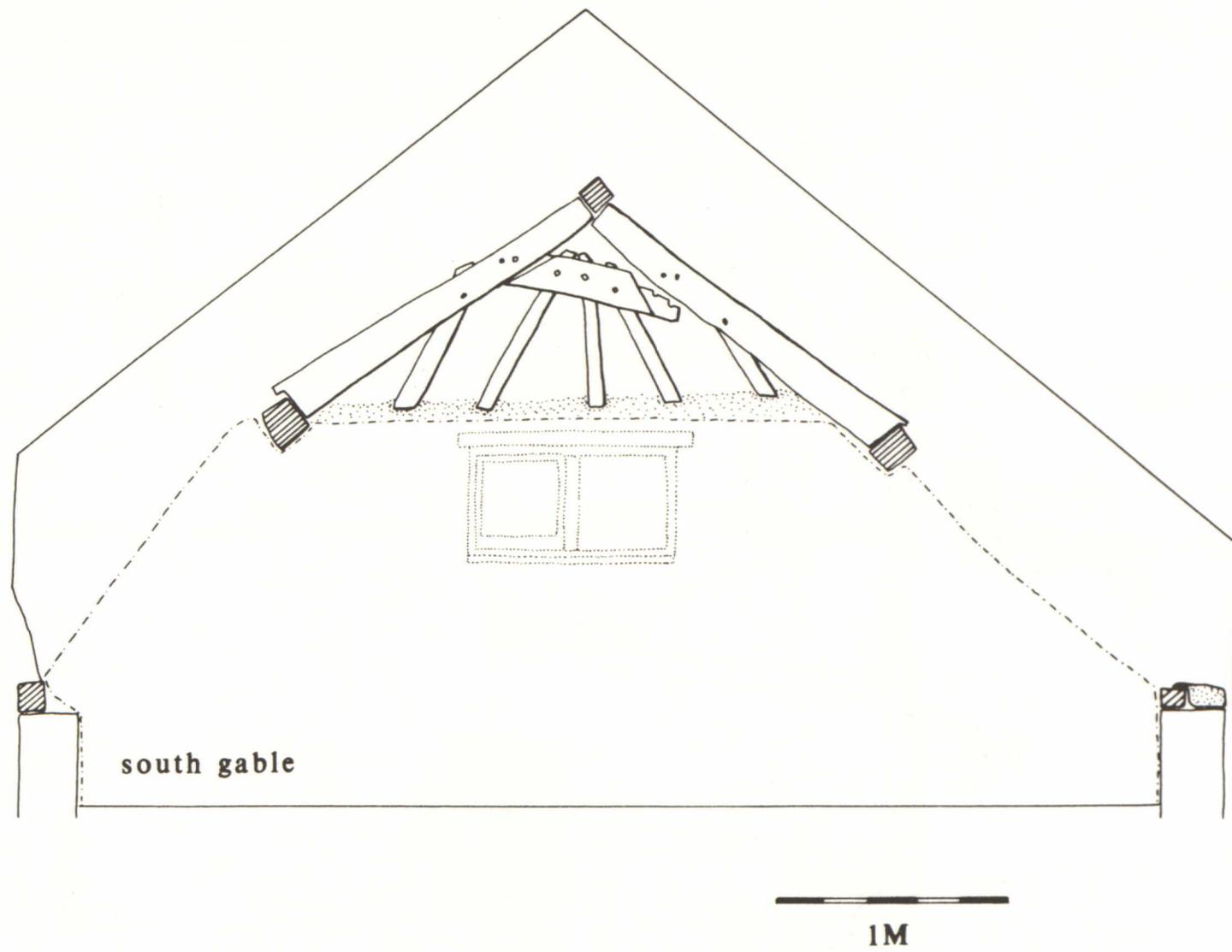
Figure 1. Scotch Piper Inn, plans: a. 1809 (Lancs. RO DDIn 63/95A). b. 1844 (Lancs. RO DRL 1/52).



SCOTCH PIPER, LYDIATE

first floor plan

Figure 2. Plan of present building at first floor level



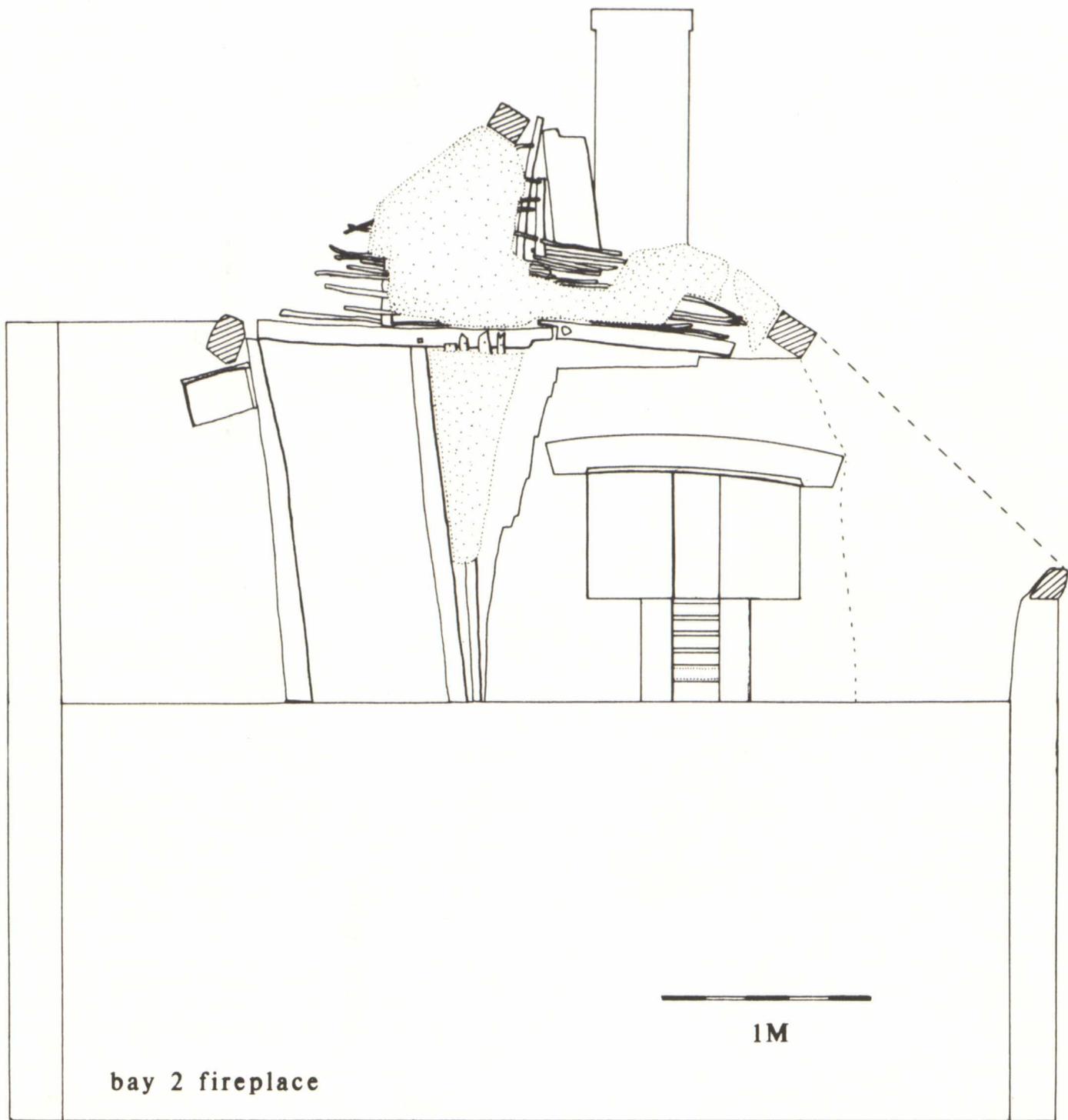


Figure 4. Fireplace elevation

Original windows are of the two- or three-light side-sliding sash type. A dormer window has been inserted into the south elevation of the centre bay (2). Valleys between the main roof and that of the dormer were formed by thin sandstone slabs.

All external walls are of brick. Those of the west walls in the south (1) and centre (2) bays and the lower part of the south gable, together with part of the centre chimney stack, are probably the earliest brickwork in the building. The south gable has been extended upwards in modern brick (Fig. 3). Brickwork in the bay (3) and along the east elevation is relatively modern. It rests on a line of sandstone masonry, the blocks of which are large and rectangular in shape. They may well have been 'robbed' from Lydiat Hall or St. Catherine's Chapel. The west purlin has been introduced. From its straightness and the inclusion of three large mortices, it would appear to have been taken from a box-framed timber building, perhaps Lydiat Hall. A moulded joist in the ceiling of the ground floor may also have come from the Hall. Part of the centre bay and two buttresses on the east wall were rebuilt within the last eleven years. The upper part of the centre chimney stack is also modern.

All exterior walls are covered in limewash. The earlier brickwork of the interior walls is poorly mortared and covered with a layer of daub, over which there is sometimes a thin layer of plaster and numerous coatings of limewash.

Internal partitioning at the centre stack is of wattle and daub, overlaid with limewash (Fig. 4). There is a modern, plasterboard partition which separates the present (modern) staircase well from the cruck frame which stands between bays 1 and 2.

Timber-framing

Two cruck frames survive. These are situated on either side of bay 2. Existence of timber-framing at the south gable is suggested by the arrangement of timbers to form a half-hip gable (Fig. 3), together with cuts in the purlins to indicate the former position of wind-braces. All timber in bay 3 appears to be modern or introduced from elsewhere.

Frame A

Frame A (Fig. 5) consists of a pair of oak blades with tie-beam (equivalent to present floor level and into which modern floor joists have been set). The tops of each blade are morticed into a collar above which there is a short king-post supported by straight-edged braces. The king-post is V-notched to take the ridge piece. King-post and braces are morticed into the collar and all joints are secured by wooden pegs.

The west blade runs down to ground level. It is cut to receive purlins, but the timbering is too badly worm-infested for details of the jointing to be clearly established. There is a pair of cuts to indicate the former existence of windbraces, the position of one also being shown on a cut into the purlin which runs into bay 1. The purlin which runs into bay 2 appears to be re-used from elsewhere.

The west blade has collapsed, probably due, at least in part, to poor selection of timber with a large knot immediately below the purlin position. As a result of the collapse the purlins have been forced out of their original housing. In order to re-establish an acceptable roof pitch the back of the cruck blade has been packed with thick layers of daub. The frame has been braced and battened to make it secure.

The east blade does not appear to continue to ground level though it may be contained within the partition wall of the ground floor. Purlins are carried on the back of the blade and pegged through with wooden pegs. There are no cuts for wind-braces, though their former existence is suggested by peg holes in the blade and cuts in each purlin. The purlins overlap at the cruck frame. At present first-floor level is a cut into either side of the blade. The purpose for the cuts was not established though they may relate to a former floor. The tie-beam has been cut through and the further evidence for an earlier floor is not available.

Above the collar there was daub infill between the king-post and braces. Elsewhere there was no evidence to suggest any infilling.

Frame B

Frame B consists of a pair of matching oak blades (Fig. 6). The top of each blade is truncated to form an empty housing on which the ridge piece sits, jacked up by an additional, small timber block. The frame is cross-boarded but details of the jointing between boards and blades was obscured. Vertical staves are attached by iron nails to the upper boarding. Below, there is horizontal wattling and at the lowest level there is vertical planking. All is overlaid with daub to form a solid wall. A modern doorway has been punched through into the north bay (3).

The purlins butt, and are half-jointed to, the backs of each blade. Cuts for wind-braces are visible on the west blade, but modern repairs have obscured detail on the east blade.

Wall-plates

Wall-plates survive only in bay 1, and on the west side and part of the east side of bay 2. In all cases

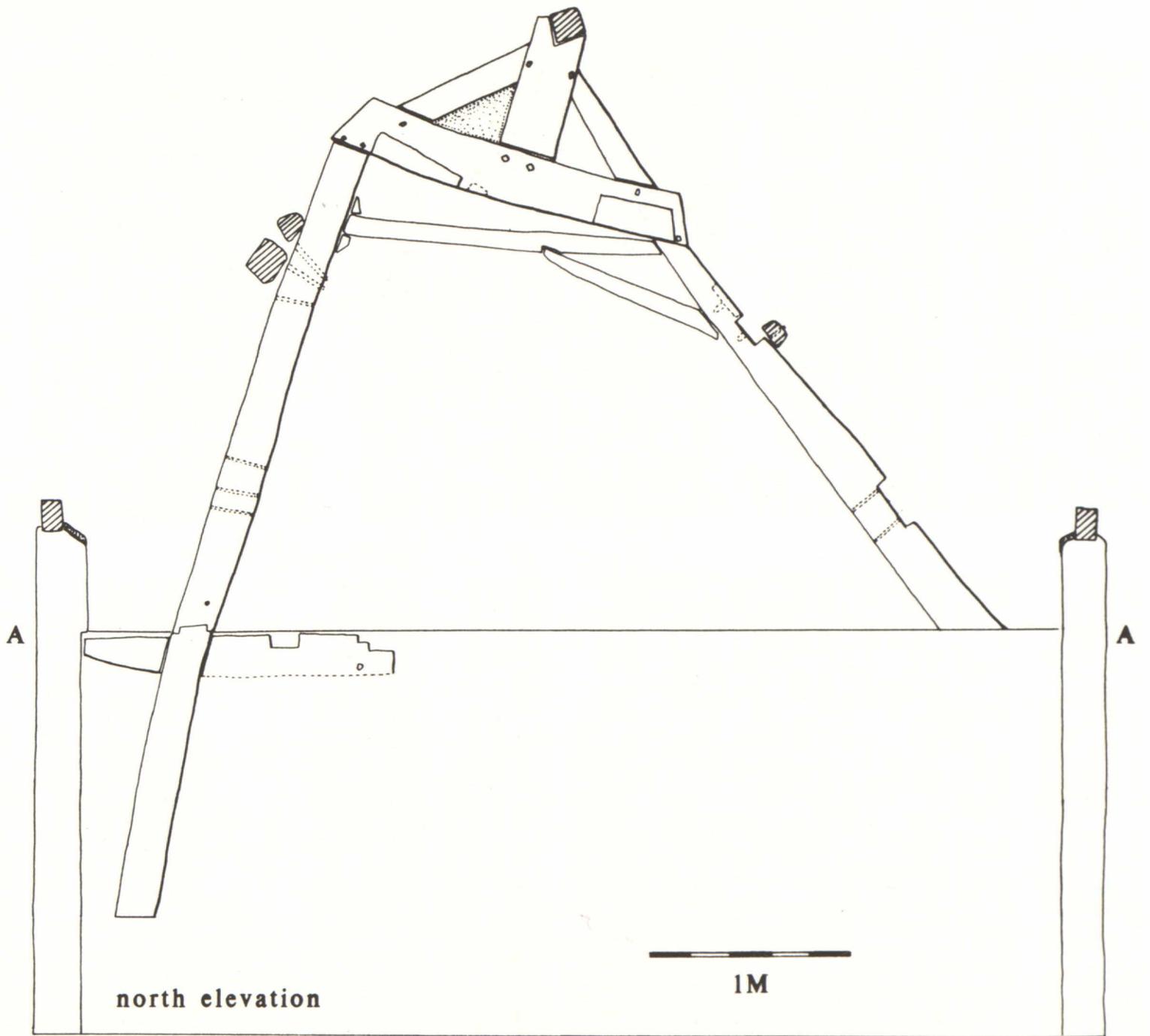
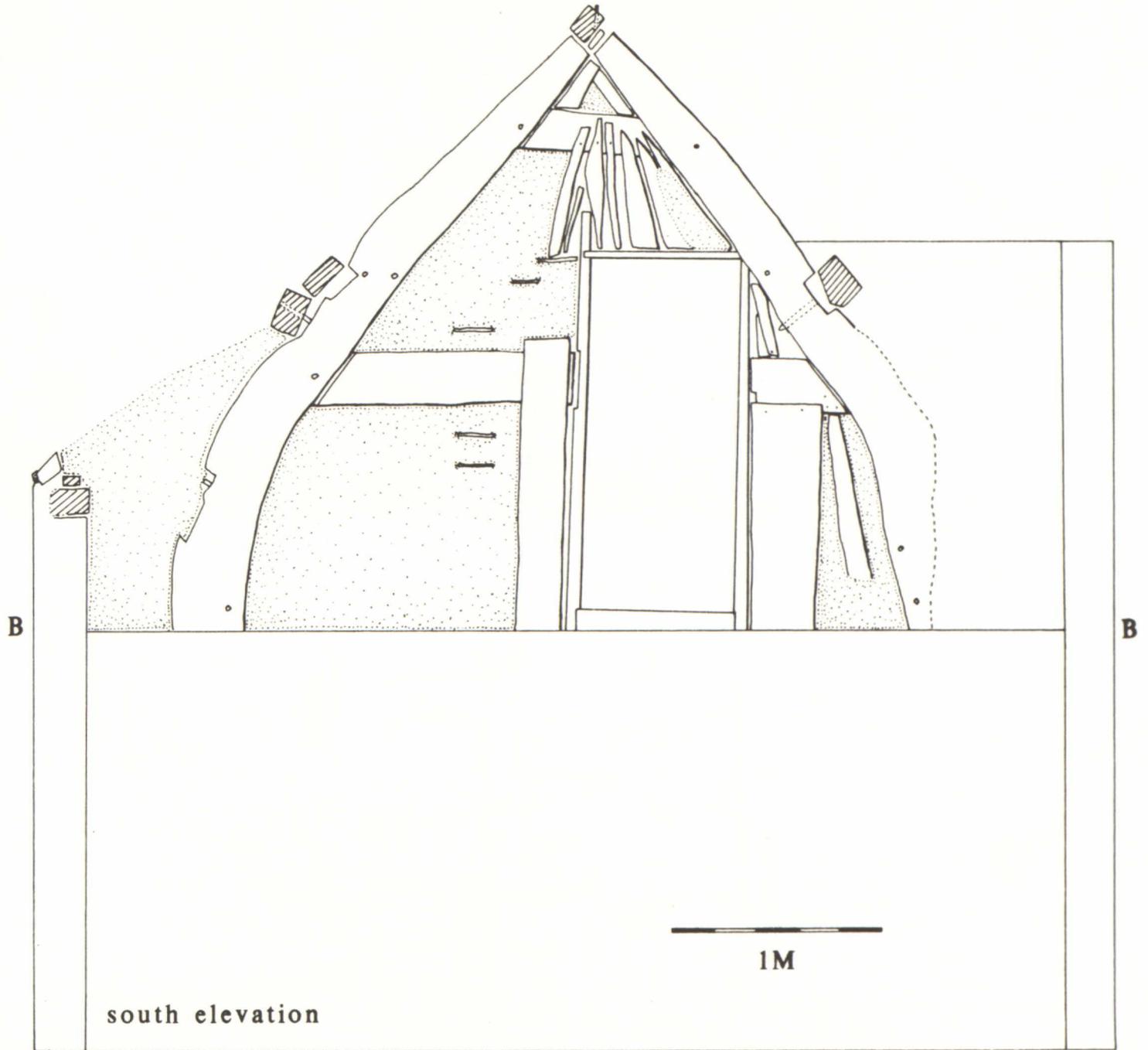
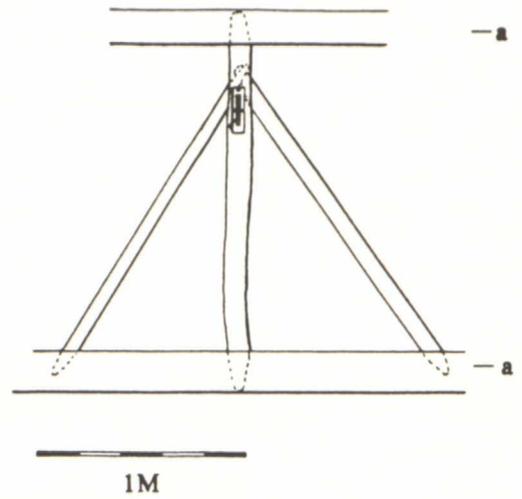
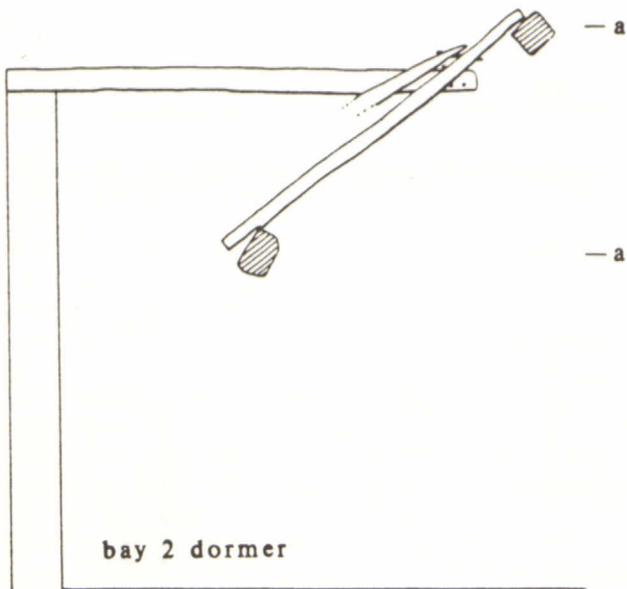


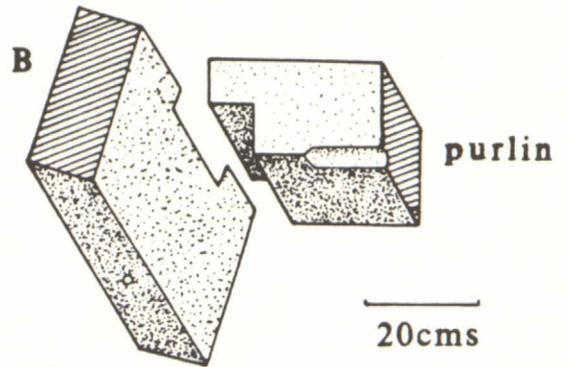
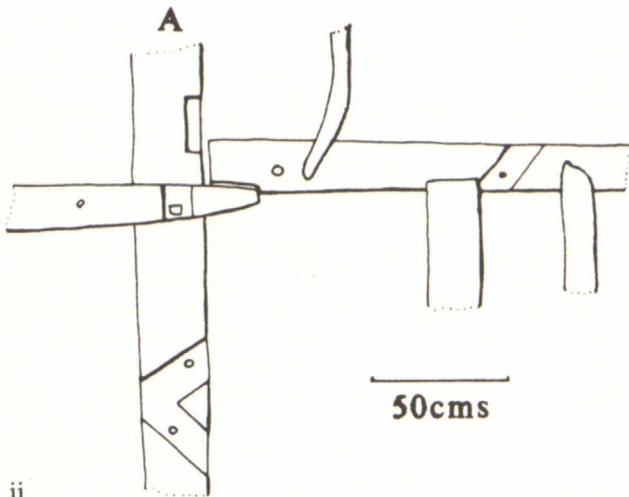
Figure 5. Frame A: North elevation

Figure 6. Frame B: South elevation

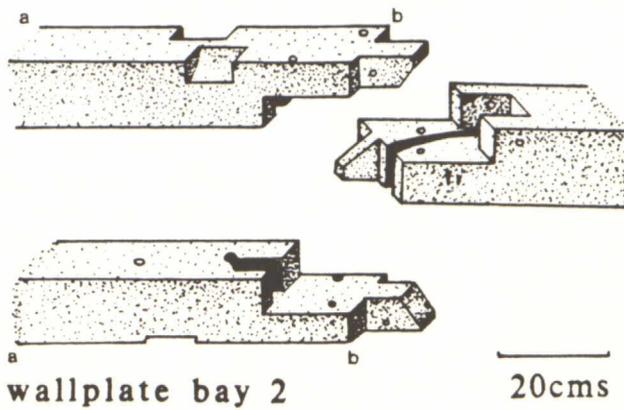




i



ii



iii

Figure 7. Jointing details: i timber framing at dormer; ii purlins at frames A and B; iii wallplate join at Bay 2.

they are carried on brick walls, which appear to have been built up under the wall-plates and finally levelled by means of thin sandstone slabs.

A join in the wall-plate on the east side of bay 2 (a continuous length of timber which runs from bay 1) consists of an edge-halved scarf with open-ended mortices, pegged through with edge and face pegs (Fig. 7iii). Walling of vertical staves is suggested by circular slots cut into the under side of the wall-plate.

The relationship of the walling with the cruck frames was not established. There is no visible evidence on the crucks to suggest the position of cruck spurs.

Roof

The ridge piece runs across bay 1, over frame A and into bay 2 where it apparently butts the next ridge timber. At frame B the ridge piece is pegged to the frame from above.

Some original rafters appear to survive in bay 1 being pegged to wall-plates and purlins with wooden nails. Otherwise all rafters seem to represent repair with modern timbers.

At the south gable the original half-hip arrangement has been replaced. The ridge piece was extended and the brickwork build upwards. The struts of the half-hip were embedded in daub and encased in brick (Fig. 3).

In bay 3 there seems also to have been a half-hip, this being replaced by a gable, perhaps when the chimney was introduced.

Purlins

Original purlins survive only in bay 1 and the east purlin of bay 2. The evidence of frame B and the west blade of frame A suggests butted, halved jointing to be the usual method of attachment of purlins to frames (Fig. 7i and ii). Overlapping of the purlins on the east blade of frame A perhaps suggests that bay 2 was formed before bay 1.

Chimney

The centre stack is built of hand-made brick (Fig. 4). Fireplace openings occur at both sides of the stack at ground level. On the first floor there is a fireplace, with late 19th century grate, on the north side only. A smoke hood is formed of horizontal wattles and daub supported on an oak beam. Repairs to the stack are demonstrated by the use of daub, presumably to patch up holes in the original

brickwork. A modern brick stack has replaced the earlier flue.

The fireplace wall extends across the centre of the bay to form a partition of wattle and daub in which there is an original timber-framed doorway, jointed to the purlin.

Dendrochronology

A total of twelve timbers was sampled for dendrochronological analysis and a date of construction after 1500 is proposed, probably in the mid-16th century. The visual differences between cruck frames A and B are also supported by the dendrochronological evidence (Leggett this volume, see below). It is likely that the building went through several phases of repair and rebuilding, with at least some timber re-used from elsewhere.

Discussion

Bays 1 and 2, perhaps together with the two pairs of cruck frames, are contemporary and provided living accommodation. The south half-hip gable is an original feature. These two bays probably had timber walls. The brick chimney is in its original position. The earliest known use of brick in Lydiat dates from 1609 when quantities of unburnt brick were recorded in the inventory of the possessions of Laurence Ireland of Lydiat Hall (Lancs. RO WCW). It is not inconceivable that brickwork in the stack could be of this date. Whilst the ground floor fireplace, though altered, is in its original position, that on the first floor is probably no earlier than the late 19th century when the iron grate was inserted. On present knowledge, there is no reason to believe that the wattle and daub smoke hood is any earlier than the grate though, alternatively it may originally have extended downwards to the floor. For an example of a wattle chimney canopy see Cubbon (1980, 28-30).

The north bay is a modification or rebuild of an earlier bay; all timbers are either re-used from elsewhere or represent new building work.

Frame B does not bear evidence for half-hip gabling and so does not present the appearance of an original exterior wall. However, the frame was originally 'closed', at least at first floor level, as suggested by the horizontal boarding between the blades and apparently solid wattle and daub infill. It may be suggested that the north bay was integral with the original structure, but functioned as a separate unit, either open to the ceiling or, perhaps, as a two-storey unit. Access from outside could have been through a doorway set in one of the upper walls or by means of an interior stair or ladder. Function as an animal house or stable and

granary is suggested. Alterations from its original form may be suggested by the introduction of the stone sill, brick walls and west purlin, though perhaps the half-hip gable was retained. The east range of Lydiate Hall was demolished in 1780. Part of the south range may also have disappeared at the same time, though there has been gradual decay at the site until the present day (Lewis & Samuels, this volume). However, it is possible that the introduction of a stone sill, moulded beam (at ground level) and upright from a box-framed building for re-use as a purlin, can be dated to the late 18th century. There were further alterations by the insertion of a chimney with grates at both ground and upper floor levels, presumably for an extension to the inn's accommodation.

Collapse of the timbering in bays 1 and 2 is demonstrated in the present angle of frame A, the slipping of purlins from their housing at frame A (west side) and frame 3 (east side), the springing of the joint in the east wall-plate, the angle of the doorway in the chimney partition and possible cracking in the wattle smoke hood. Reasons for the collapse may be suggested by the absence of wind-braces, all of which may have been removed at the same date, and the slumping of the timber frame at the south gable. This is demonstrated in the distinct downslope of the east purlin between frame A and the gable. The gable was rebuilt in hand-made brick but retained the half-hip. More recently, and perhaps at the same time as the modifications in bay 3, the south wall was extended upwards, the ridge was extended and a straight gable was constructed. The date for the collapse can only be established as prior to the introduction of brick into the south gable.

The cruck frames are different in form. Frame A, has a braced king-post and appears to have originally extended to ground level. The upper blades of frame B are truncated; their relative straightness as they extend downwards perhaps suggests that the frame is of the raised cruck type.

The relationship between the original timber walling and the cruck frames has not been established. Nor has it been possible to draw any clear conclusions about the sequence of replacement of the walls with brick. However, the west wall of bay 1, the south gable up to the level of the half-hip and perhaps some of the chimney may represent the earliest brickwork in the building.

The wall-plate joint is not dissimilar to a type of joint (no. 263) recorded by Hewett (1980, 267). He notes that the latest dated example is from a barn in Essex of c. 1650. Dendrochronological analysis of the wall-plate in bay 1 (see below) has given a date of c. 1561 which falls well within Hewett's range.

The wing shown at the south gable on the plan of

1809 has left no visible signs on the present building. It may have been no more than a single-storey structure butted on to the gable and running under the present car park towards the road. Any relationship with the present building may be masked by the single-storey, modern lean-to attached to the gable, or the earlier building line may be echoed in the present boundary wall of the plot.

Conclusions

The Scotch Piper Inn was a domestic building consisting of two bays and constructed of timber with a brick, centre chimney stack. A third bay, probably also of timber, was perhaps an animal house or stable with storage space in the upper level. This phase of building may date from the first half of the 17th century.

Collapse of the domestic bays was followed by at least a partial rebuild in brick.

Alterations to the north bay may have taken place after 1780 when Lydiate Hall was partially demolished.

Further alterations took place in the 19th century with the introduction of a new chimney in the north bay, a grate at first floor level in the centre chimney stack, and raising of the south gable.

Repairs in the 20th century include rebuilding of the centre chimney stack and the complete replacement of the centre portion of the east wall at the dormer.

Acknowledgements

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References

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