

5-7 Mwrog Street, Ruthin. NPRN27541.

A medieval timber-framed building projects gable-end on to Mwrog Street which has been reduced after vehicle damage, now with a modern gable-end wall. It was probably originally a four bay range with a two-bay principal-chamber over services at the rear, and a two-bay open hall bay to the Street. There are three existing truss partitions, the one to Mwrog Street (truss 3) is the former hall's existing inner partition. It has purlins and wind-braces which continue over its former hall. The partition has an elaborately decorative 15th century truss with trefoil cusping, and a massively cranked tie-beam. It has a superb carved first-floor viewing window of three lights, which have 'ogee' heads and mouchette motifs in the spandrels. The partition's lower part has been cut back, but mortices in the flanking studs, indicate its extent to a mid-rail frame in line with the modern first-floor (see drawing). All the principal trusses are haunched where they meet the tie-beam. They have threaded purlins with curved wind-braces and the common rafters are mortised at the apex without a ridge-piece. This range is linked to a c1600, storied 2-bay, former timber-frame range, on an alignment, parallel to the street. Its roof has been altered in the late-17th century, reusing earlier timbers including smoke-blackened rafters, and its walls are of later brick work.

The medieval timber-framed range has had most of its walls replaced by brick and stone walling, including a late 17th century double chimney shaft to its west side with internal diagonally set fireplaces. Its hall has been cut back at the street and was probably of two bays. The rear gable-end truss partition is very plain with a flatish tie-beam and central stud between collar and tie-beam. It has evidence for two-tiers of square-framed wattle and daub panels separated by a floor level mid-rail spine beam. Here the existing central spine ceiling beam (plastered over) is mortised to the mid-rail and its joists were once probably supported by the lateral wall-frame mid-rails (removed). The central truss has a central stud between a straight collar and massive cranked tie-beam, with peg-hole evidence to one side for an arched brace, and a partly visible haunched principal-post, indicating it was open below the tie-beam and would have formed the centre of a two-bay solar or principal chamber.

The hall end window must have been a first-floor viewing point, from the solar, looking down into the hall. At Cefn ceido, near Rhayader there is a similar viewing window, which looks into the open hall from a lateral first-floor window in the cross-wing.

Similar high status carpentry details with ogee and mouchette carving occur in window heads at Bryndraenog, Rads, dendro dated 1436, and in The King's Head, Mardol, Shropshire. This feature is visible in a door head at The Nag's Head in Wyle Cop Shropshire dendro dated 1421.

Other examples of dais-end of halls with trefoil cusping to first-floor solars, include Tretower, Llanfihangel Cwm Du, Brecks. (dendro 1447) and Upper-Skynlais, Rads. (dendro 1436), although they do not have obvious viewing openings, but would probably have had a spy hole.

Nearby nos. 1-3 Mwrog Street are parallel to the street and was originally an early-16th century, 4-bay timber-framed range, with an arch-braced truss for a two-bay open hall, arranged between two queen-strut cranked tie-beam trusses. The c1600 part of 5-7 Mwrog Street, adjoins this range.

Ref.Moran,M Vernacular Buildings of Shropshire.p 229 & 232. Sugett, R, Radnor Houses, RCAHMW.
(pp 55 window)

Geoff Ward, 25/09/2014.



