

## GREAT BOWDEN HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY

# WHEN IS A CRUCK COTTAGE NOT A CRUCK COTTAGE?

*A few years ago the Heritage Group sought help from Leicestershire County Council about identifying the remains of what we thought was a cruck cottage in a garage in Sutton Road (see photograph below)*



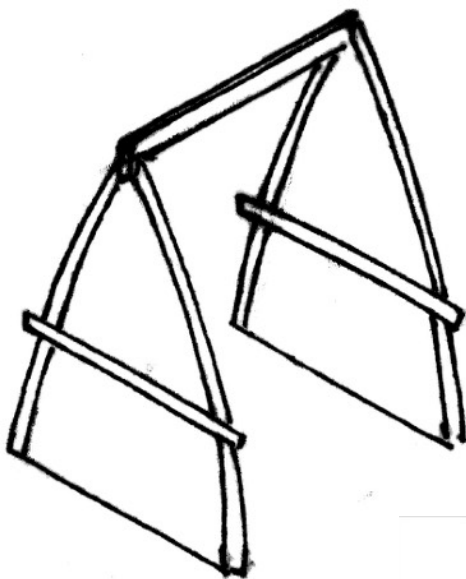
In a detailed reply to our enquiry we were told that this was not a cruck cottage but in fact a late style box frame cottage, found in Leicestershire in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The expert consulted thought it would have been the roof of a hovel or possibly a small outbuilding and the wood in the tie beam would have originated in the hedgerow rather than from woodland. Apparently there are other similar examples in Great Bowden in association with mud constructed dwellings. This particular example may have been moved to its present position from elsewhere.

**What then is the difference between this box frame construction and a true cruck cottage?**

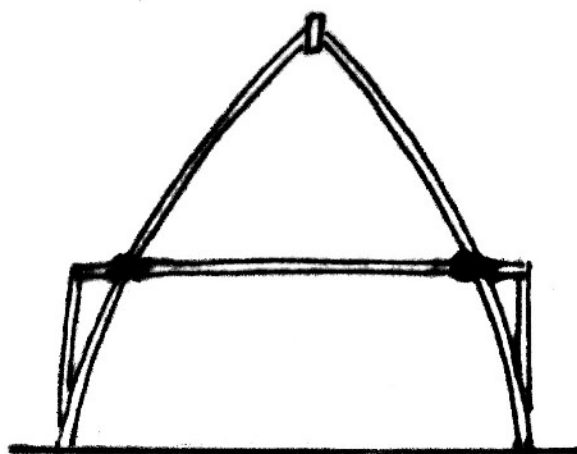
A true cruck cottage was basically a roof with the main beams carrying the weight of the roof directly to the ground. The walls were then filled in with material that was not load-bearing.

Here are diagrams of a cruck cottage:



*Load bearing frame*

*Walls built on a separate frame*

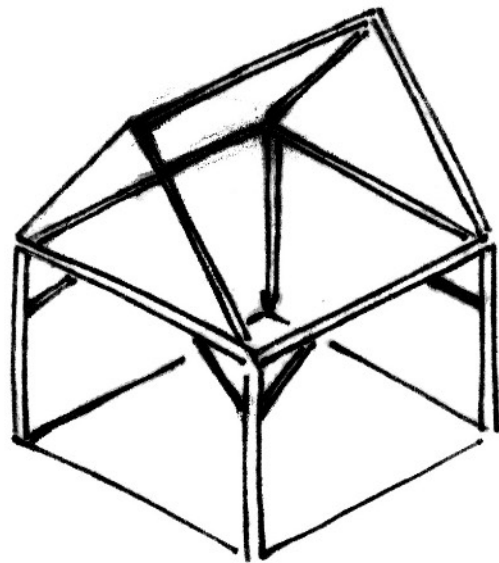


In the case of the box frame there was a distinct roof with the trusses transferring the weight of the roof onto the wooden box frame beneath.

Many old cruck cottages have been modified over the years and are no longer true to their original style.

Here is an example of a box frame construction similar to the photo which we submitted.

*Roof sits on walls of  
box frame*



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