

EAST ANGLIAN WATTLE & DAUB

Wattle and daub panels may contain more archaeological information than the timber—frame. Where possible the panels should be refixed or the daub should be reconstituted and reused.

WATTLE

Any hardwood sticks that are straight can be used. Hazel, which is coppiced for thatchers is the most readily available. Willow and ash are easy to find in hedges and woodland.

Sticks should be 15—50 millimetres diameter and are better used fresh.

The horizontal sticks are called ledgers and are cleft or round and are either nailed to the outside face of the frame or sprung into pockets cut into the sides of the studs. If the walls are to be rendered on expanded metal lath then standard treated roofing batten can be fixed at 450 to 750 apart.

Split sweet chestnut may be better for between the studs.

The vertical sticks, the wattles, are cut to suit the height of the panels and are tied to the ledgers with any sort of string. Plastic baler twine indicates that the work is modern. The string is tied at one end of the ledger and wound round it so as to secure one wattle with each turn. It is tied at the other end of the ledger and can wind round one or more studs before being tied off if the wall is to be rendered.

Wattles should be spaced so an open hand will pass between them or so the spaces are the same width as the thickness of the wattles.

DAUB

Chalky—boulder clay subsoil is suitable and is easier to handle if it has been exposed to frost after it was dug.

Salvaged: clay—lump: shuttered clay walls, and clay renders as well as old daub can be broken up and reconstituted and used as the daub. Shuttered clay walls and old renders are especially good as their shrinkage is less.

Basic daub is made of (by volume):

- 4—5 parts clay or salvaged material
- 1 part chopped straw
- 1 part cow muck (optional, it reduces the amount of water required)

TIPS

Mixing with a pan mill is sometimes possible and may be an advantage on larger sites but they do make a mess.

Make mixing easier by adding extra water which can be taken up when the straw is added or the mixture is left over night. Do a trial wattle and daub panel first or make a box or series of boxes 50 x 50 x 500 and fill with daub and dry in the airing cupboard to test the shrinkage. Nail loose panels of daub to the frame,