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OF THE

Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

31 OCTOBER, 1892 TO 17 MAY, 1893,

WITH

Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY.

No. XXXV.

BEING No. 2 OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.

(SECOND VOLUME OF THE NEW SERIES.)

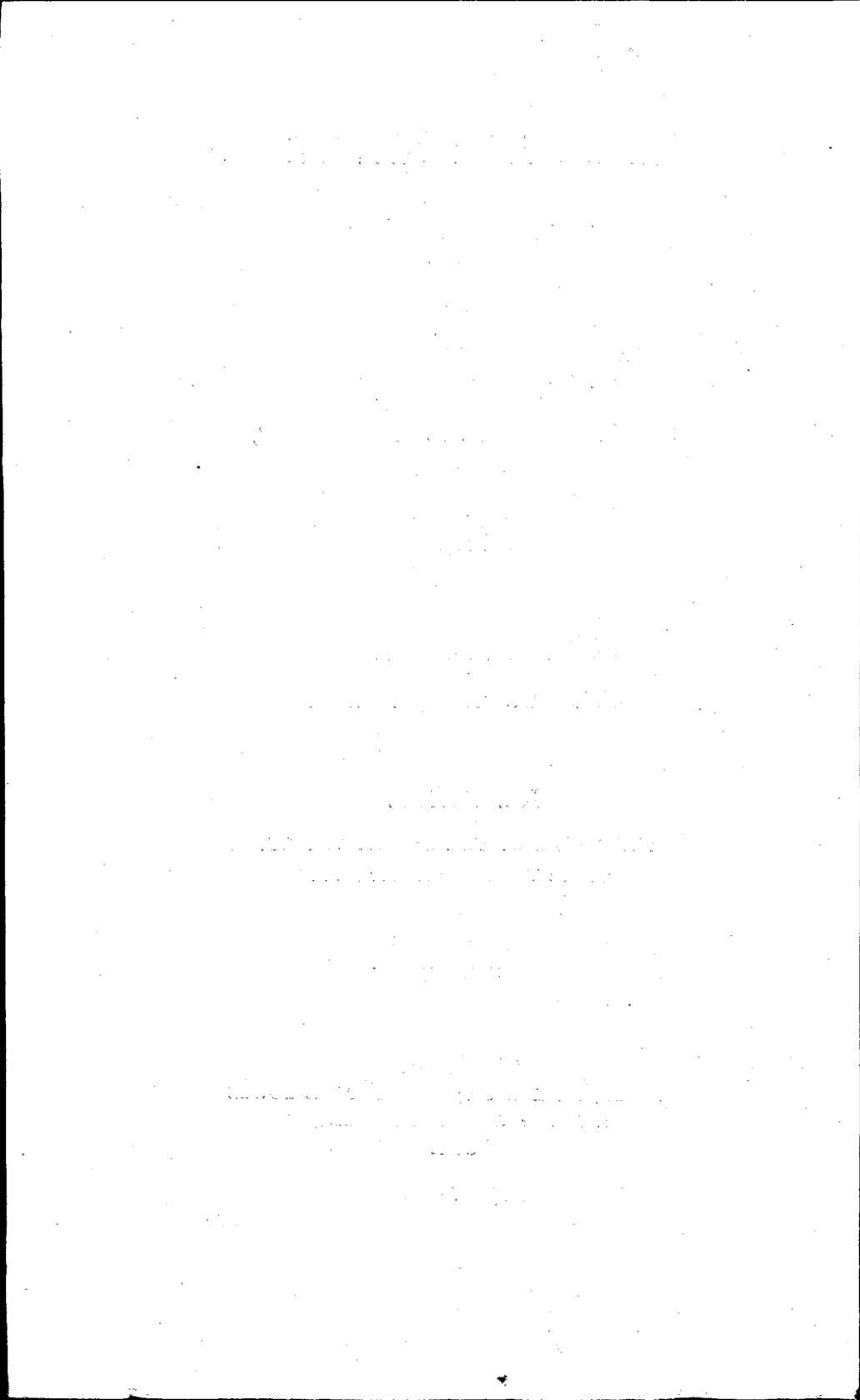
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and red ware and three small pieces of Samian. Oyster shells were found, and a considerable number of bones, including those of the horse, small ox allied to *Bos longifrons*, sheep, and pig.

II. ON THE HALL OF MICHAEL HOUSE.

Last summer, during some alterations in the buildings to the south of the hall of Trinity College, some foundations were exposed which were clearly those of the hall of Michael House, and two or three fragments of stone, easily recognizable as parts of the oriel, were found. These discoveries add something to our knowledge of the buildings of the second college founded in Cambridge.

Michael House was founded in 1324¹ in what is now the south-west corner of the great court of Trinity College. We do not know much about any of the buildings except those which survived the foundation of Trinity College, and which are shewn in some old views and plans. New buildings were erected in the middle of the 15th century, and again about fifty years later. It is probably to one of these occasions that the building of the hall may be attributed.

In 1546 Trinity College was founded by Henry VIII., and to make way for it King's Hall, Physwick Hostel, and Michael House were surrendered to the king. King's Hall provided the college with a chapel, and each of the three with a hall and chambers. In 1550-1 and 1551-2 some of the buildings of each of these older foundations were destroyed, including part of Michael House. The hall of the latter, however, was retained as the hall of the new college.

In 1554-5 a new buttery and kitchen were built, and it is possible that the hall was lengthened at the same time. Michael House contained only 21 persons, but its hall had now to receive in addition the scholars from King's Hall and Physwick Hostel—an increase, it would appear, of between 80

¹ The following facts relating to the history of Michael House and Trinity College are taken from Willis and Clark's *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*.

and 90 persons. If the hall was not enlarged, it must have been much too large for Michael House, or much too small for Trinity College.

The evidence for the reconstruction of the plan of the building is derived from the following sources. (1) Hamond's map of Cambridge, made in 1592; (2) a plan preserved in Trinity College Library, shewing a proposed re-arrangement of the buildings round the great court, probably made about 1595, and which I shall refer to as the Library plan; (3) a view by Loggan taken about 1688¹; (4) the foundations discovered in 1892. It is almost needless to say that none of the first three agree among themselves, or with the actual work discovered.

(1) Hamond's map shews a hall roofed with slate, and with the wall finished by a battlemented parapet instead of with overhanging eaves like most of the other buildings. There is an oriel and a range of four windows. The roof is surmounted by a louvre. The building to the south of the hall is in two storeys with attics in the roof, and two chimneys rise from the west wall. No buttresses are shewn. The building to the north of the screens, with a large chimney rising from its east wall, is evidently the kitchen.

(2) The Library plan is not dated, but it is believed by Mr Clark to have been made about 1595². I reproduce so much of it (fig. 1) as is required for the illustration of this paper. It was evidently intended to shew a scheme for completing the college buildings, but unfortunately it does not distinguish between the old buildings to be retained and those to be rebuilt or added. Nor is it known to what extent it was carried out. It differs from Hamond's map in shewing two windows to the south of the oriel where Hamond shews three, and two windows between the oriel and the door to the screens where Hamond shews four. The plan shews no windows in the west wall of the hall. This is probably an intentional omission,

¹ These are all reproduced by Willis and Clark, vol. ii. fig. 3, pp. 402, 403; fig. 10, pp. 464, 465; fig. 7, pp. 460, 461.

² Willis and Clark, vol. ii. pp. 464, 465.

as in all the other buildings—and notably in the chapel—the only windows shewn are those looking into the court, except when a room can only be lighted by a window in the external wall. There is a round hearth in the centre of the hall agreeing with the louvre shewn by Hamond. In the two rooms to the south of the hall no fireplaces are shewn, while Hamond makes it clear that they or the rooms above them had fireplaces, for he shews chimneys rising from the west wall. The northernmost of these two rooms opened out of the hall,

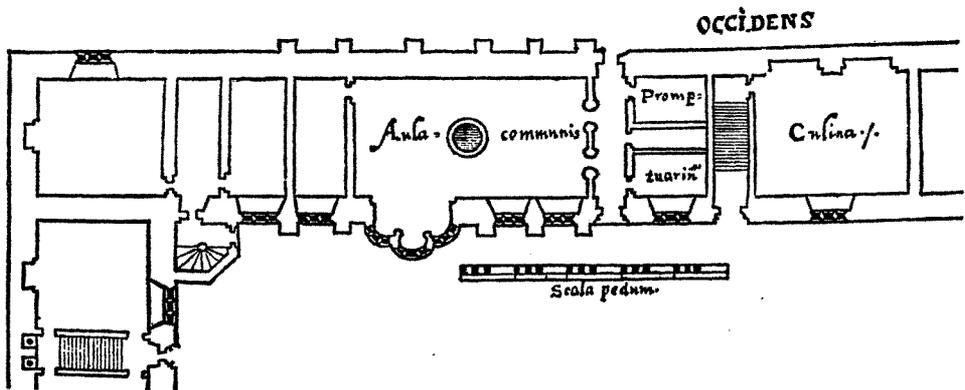


FIG. 1. South-west corner of the Great Court of Trinity College, reduced from a plan preserved in the College Library, probably made about 1595.

and was therefore probably the parlour, and no doubt had a fireplace. The kitchen, to the north of the hall, differs entirely from that shewn by Hamond. It has two large fireplaces in the west wall, and is lighted from the east, whereas Hamond shews a large chimney rising from the east wall. The means of communication between the hall and kitchen is not very clearly shewn on the plan, but must have been down the passage between the pantry and buttery, and then under the stairs which intervene between those offices and the kitchen. There is an error of 20 feet in the total length of the west side of the court, which is given as "225 pedes," whereas it really measured 245 feet before Nevile altered it. This is no doubt due to the surveyor having measured the east side of the court and made the west side equal to it. He shews the court as a parallelogram, whereas, actually, it is an irregular trapezium.

(3) Loggan's view was taken about 1688. Before that time the court had assumed its present shape and proportions. In 1604 the old butteries and kitchen had been removed, and the present hall built on their site. The old hall, on the other hand, had been converted into butteries. The passage between the new hall and butteries occupied—as I hope to shew—exactly the same position as that between the old hall and butteries. A new kitchen had been built on the west side of the old hall, a part of the west wall of which had been pulled down, and the kitchen intruded into the area of the hall. The buttresses of the hall had been pulled down and the interior divided into three storeys like the building to the south. New windows were of course necessary. But, strange to say, the old oriel was preserved. It would seem that this was due to admiration of its architecture, for it must have become useless, or at least inconvenient, after the building had been divided into several storeys. Whatever the cause, its preservation till Loggan's time was most fortunate, as that draughtsman's marvellous accuracy in points which can be tested leaves no doubt that in this case also he is perfectly exact¹.

The whole building between the present hall and the south-west corner of the court, including the oriel, was finally destroyed in 1772, and "an elegant building erected in its place by the ingenious Mr Essex." As cellars were formed under the new building, it was necessary to remove the foundations of the old walls. The rubble foundations, however, of the oriel and of four buttresses were left undisturbed (fig. 2, A, B, C, D, E), while two buttresses (*ibid.*, A, B) also retain the lowest course of dressed masonry. We must then take these foundations as our starting point in the reconstruction of the plan.

¹ Although it does not bear on the present subject, I may perhaps be allowed to suggest that the existence of this oriel influenced Dr Nevile (Master 1592—1615) in building the semicircular oriel to the Master's Lodge. These two windows and the doors of the hall and Lodge, balance about the oriel of the present hall, which is in the centre of this side of the court, with an exactness which can scarcely have been purely accidental at a period when symmetry was so much considered.

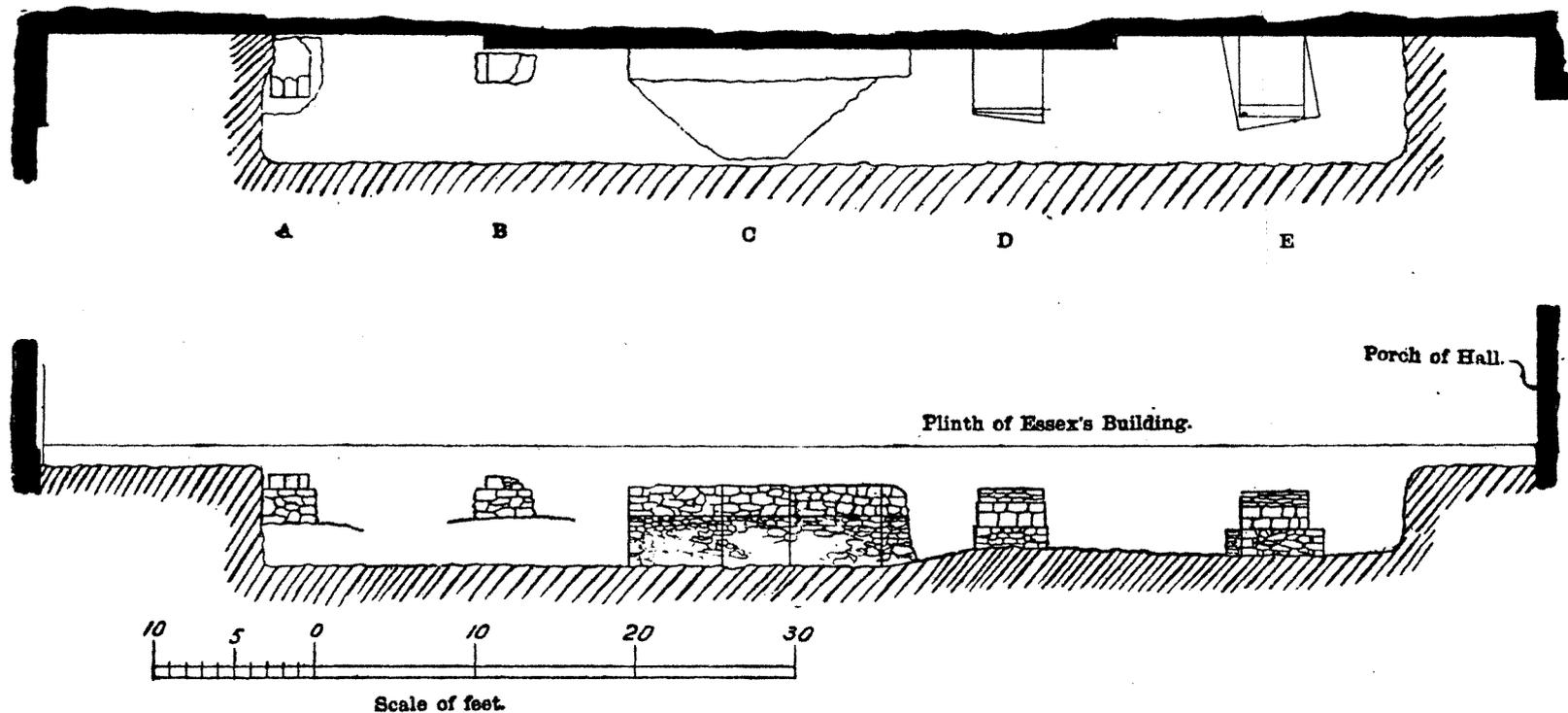


FIG. 2. Ground plan and elevation of the foundations of the oriel and buttresses of the hall of Michael House.

The two buttresses of the hall (D, E) are 16 ft. 9 in. apart, measuring from centre to centre, while the Library plan shews them 9 feet apart. The buttresses to the south of the oriel (A, B) are 13 ft. 6 in. apart, while the Library plan shews them to be 10 ft. apart. Again, the plan shews the oriel with an external width of 19 ft. while the foundation is only 18 ft. wide. It is clear, therefore, that if the plan represents the general arrangement of the hall, it certainly is not to be trusted in the matter of dimensions. If we take the plan to be right in making the south end of the hall opposite to the first buttress south of the oriel, and in shewing three buttresses to the hall, and if we make these buttresses 16 ft. 9 in. apart, as shewn by the foundations, we get a hall at least 70 feet long, including the screens, instead of 50 feet, as shewn in the Library plan. But it will be remembered that the Library plan shews the north side of the court 20 feet too short. This will account for the hall being shewn 50 feet long instead of 70 feet. These dimensions place the old screens passage in the position of the present one. The internal width of the hall, according to the Library plan, was 24 feet. But if it had been no more than this the kitchen of 1605 would not have projected into it, as we are expressly told it did¹. It is possible that an external width of 35 feet as shewn on the plan is approximately correct, and that the walls instead of being 5 feet thick as shewn, were about 3 ft. 6 in., leaving for the hall an internal width of 28 feet. The plan shews the hall of the same width as the Master's rooms, which form part of the present Lodge. These are 28 feet wide. The plan itself, therefore, proves its own inaccuracy. Seventy feet by twenty-eight would certainly have been a large hall for Michael House, the average dimensions of the Cambridge halls being about 57 feet long by 27 feet wide. The foundations of the most northerly of the buttresses shewn in the Library plan have not been exposed. If they should turn out to be of workmanship different to those of the two further south, there will be good

¹ *Arch. Hist.* ii. 467.

reason for assuming that the hall was lengthened after the foundation of Trinity College.

The fragments of the oriel referred to above consist of some pieces of a horizontal moulding, either a string-course or a hood-mould, some fragments of mullion, and one piece of a transom (fig. 3). It will be seen that the latter is par-

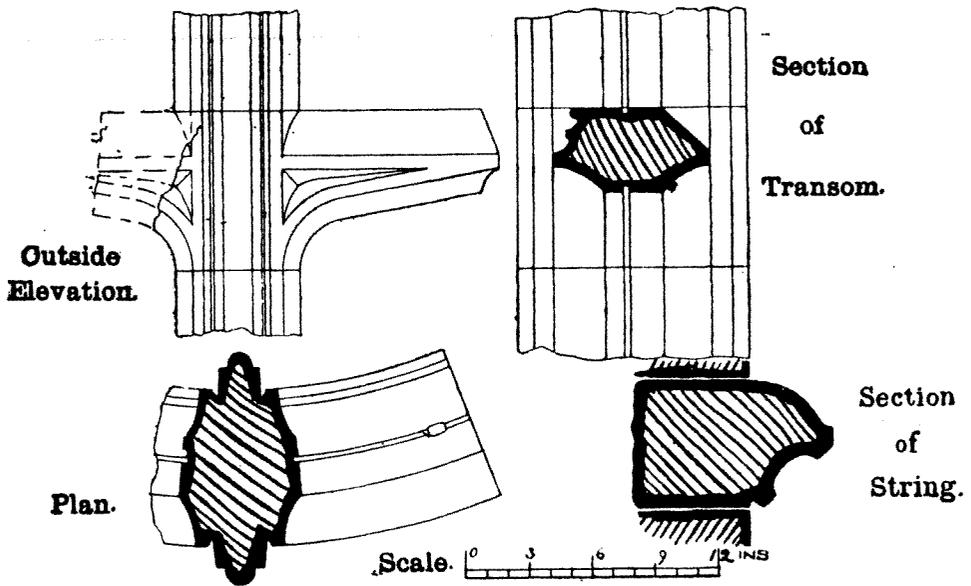


FIG. 3. Remains of the oriel in the hall of Michael House.

ticularly valuable as giving not only the radius of the circles forming the plan of the oriel, but also the mouldings of both the transom and the mullions, and the character of the window generally. It shews that the transoms were arched, but that the sub-arches were not cusped, and that the transom was of less depth, from inside to outside, than the mullion. It is also clear that the fragment forms half the arch, and we have therefore, the width of the light. This information enables us, with the assistance of the authorities already quoted, to reconstruct the general elevation and plan of the hall with some degree of certainty. The latter I have attempted (fig. 4). The use of the southernmost room (1) is not clear, possibly it is an ordinary chamber. The room next to it on the north (2) is evidently the parlour, entered from the high-table end of the hall (3), called *Aula communis* on the Library plan. At the

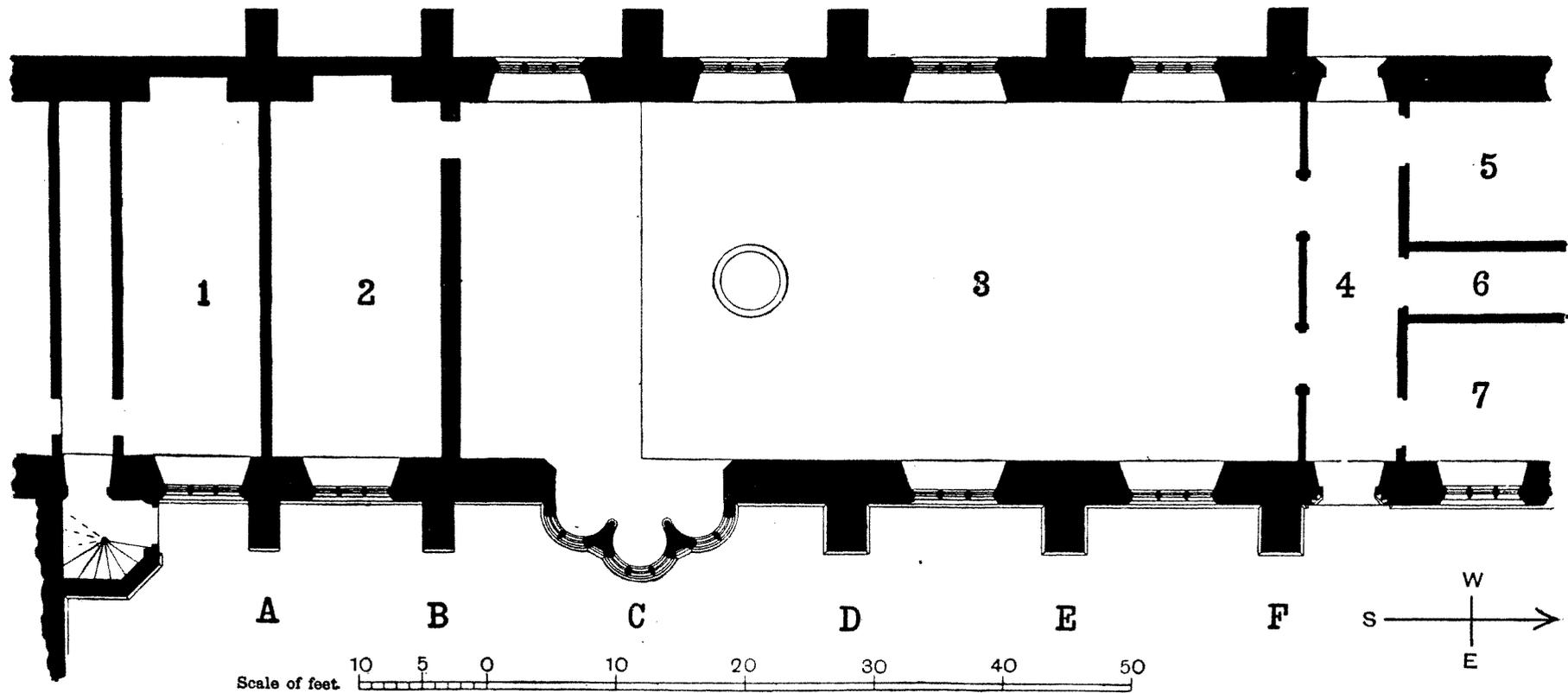


FIG. 4. Suggested restoration of the ground-plan of the hall of Michael House.

north end of the hall are the screens, and the thoroughfare from the court to the yard or garden on the west (4). It is known from an Inventory taken in 1560 that in this College there was a gallery over the screen¹. Beyond the thoroughfare again are two rooms (5), (7) lettered *Promptuarium* on the plan. They were probably used as buttery and pantry. Between them is the passage (6) to the kitchen (*Culina*).

III. ON EXCAVATIONS AT ELY CATHEDRAL.

By permission of the Dean and Chapter, some excavations were made during July 1892 in the open space to the south of the south transept of Ely Cathedral, with a view to finding the foundations of the Chapter House. Trial holes were dug in the positions shewn in the plan (fig. 1). Foundations were

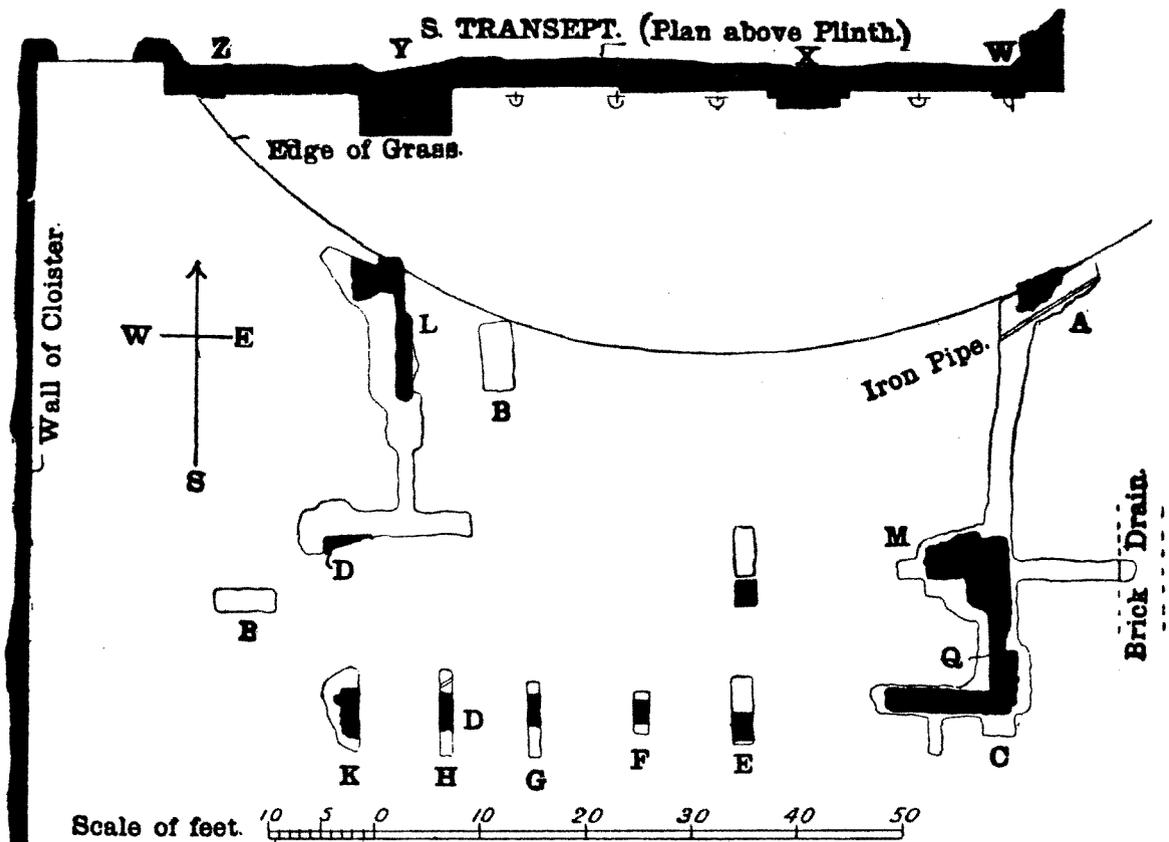


FIG. 1. Excavations on the site of the Chapter House at Ely Cathedral.

¹ *Arch. Hist.* iii. 361.