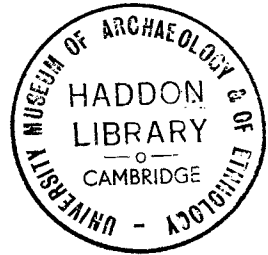


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Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

OCTOBER 1934—OCTOBER 1935



VOLUME XXXVI

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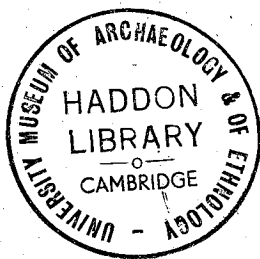
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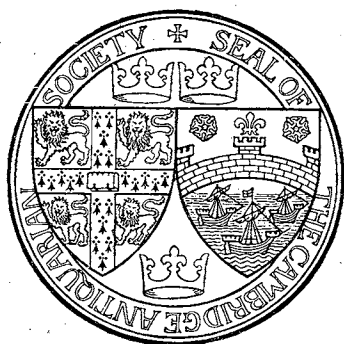


CAMBRIDGE  
ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
PROCEEDINGS



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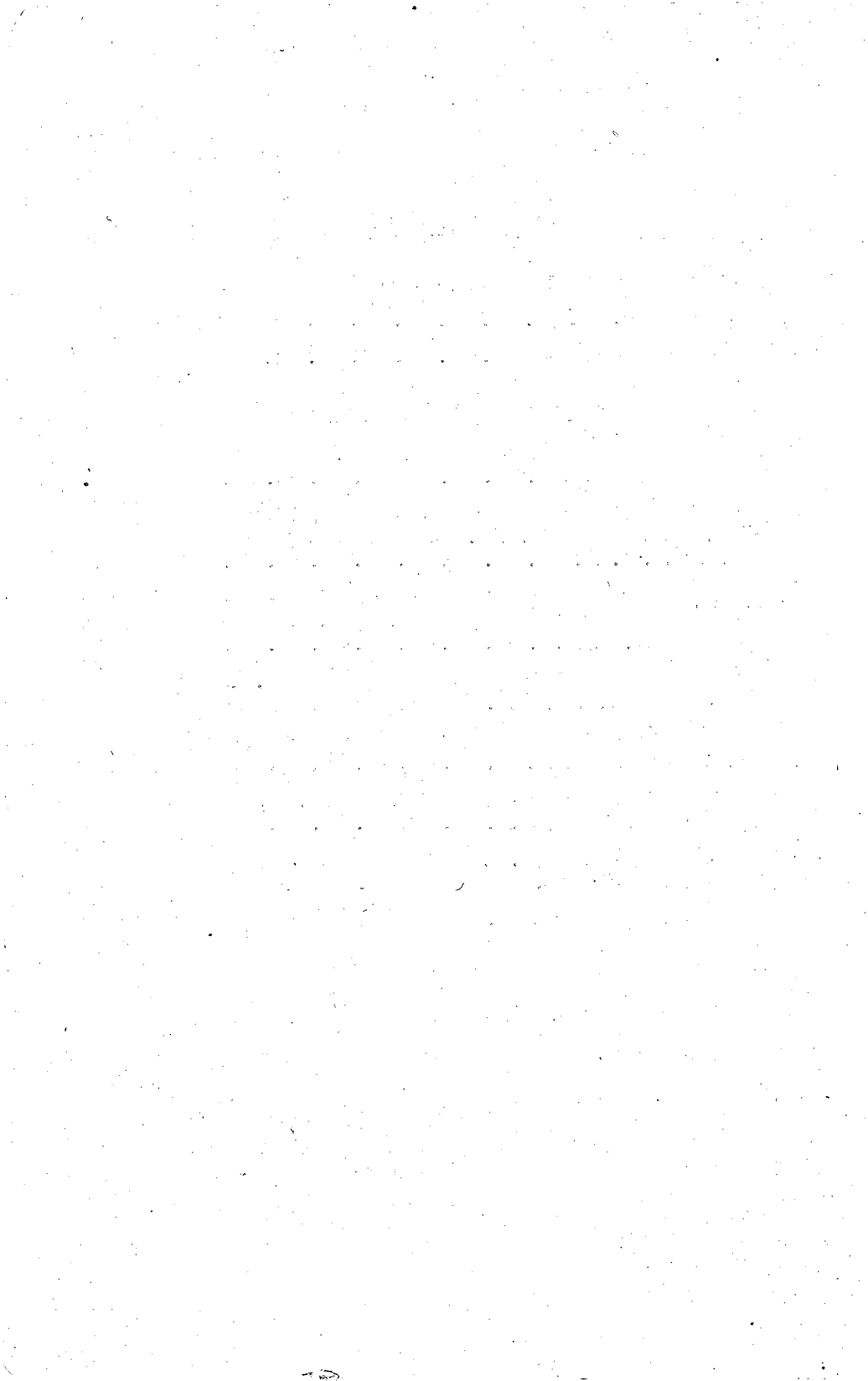
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## ALTERATIONS AT QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

By G. C. DRINKWATER, M.C., M.A., R.B.A.

### STAIRCASE E

In the course of the excavations and internal demolition necessary to the alterations of Staircase E, in 1934, many interesting facts which throw light on the somewhat haphazard methods of the medieval builders were revealed.

In order to provide space for new lavatories, it was necessary to excavate and underpin the north-east corner of the stair. It was found that the old foundations had been taken down to an average depth of 6 ft. 6 in. below the level of the court, and there is no evidence that that level has been altered since. Trenches for the foundations were dug in made ground, in which were found some bones and a few pieces of pottery.

The made ground was quite dry. For the greater part of the foundations of the street wall the trench was taken down to a good clean sand, but the party wall between the stair and the Old Chapel was not so well treated, for the trench was dug in an inverted and truncated conical section and was not so wide at the top as the wall which was to be built above, whilst only a small part reached a pocket of sand.

The street wall had footings of brick, taken about 18 in. below the present street level, and then clunch, all set in such hard lime mortar that it was impossible to get a brick or a piece of stone out whole. The party wall had only clunch in a matrix of clay, and not too much of that.

The level of the ground floor left set of rooms had at some time been raised some 11 in., probably recently, and was originally at the same level as the ground floor right set, now the Porters' Lodge.

Above ground there were many puzzling features.

Although faced with brick, it would be hardly fair to call Queens' a brick college, for the walls, where they were cut through to form windows, were found to be built almost entirely of clunch, and were only faced with  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. brick,

apparently in Old English Bond, but with all headers cut and nowhere bonded into the clunch, the only connection between the two materials being the very fine lime mortar.

The turret (hatched on the accompanying plan from right to left, downwards) was definitely an afterthought, for its 9 in. side walls do not bond in to the main wall face. How long after the main structure it was added is a matter only for conjecture, but it was probably not long. At one time it contained, on the ground floor, a baker's oven with vaulted ceiling and two flues against the outer wall, but whether the turret was built to house the oven or was put to that use at a later date it is impossible to say.


At some later period a 2 ft. 3 in. clunch rubble wall (hatched on the plan from left to right, downwards) was built to the left of the entrance, the foundations going down to the level of the main walls. It was taken up to the underside of the beam carrying the first-floor joists. This beam was supported previously by the old main wall above the relieving arch to the baker's oven. The clunch wall was not, however, bonded in in any way to either of the main walls. At the doorway opening in to the ground floor left set the oak lintel supporting the clunch above was only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick, and there was no form of relieving arch. There was but little life left in it.

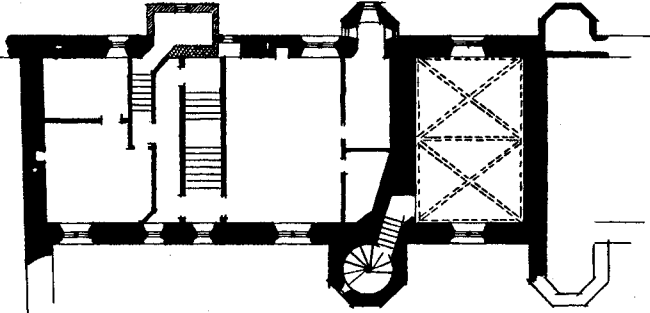
It seems obvious that only the ground and first floors were intended for habitation, and that there was no access to the attics. These, judging by the dormer windows, seem to have been brought into use early in the seventeenth century.

The provision of access was a problem and necessitated the rather complex system of passages which existed on the first floor until the present alterations.

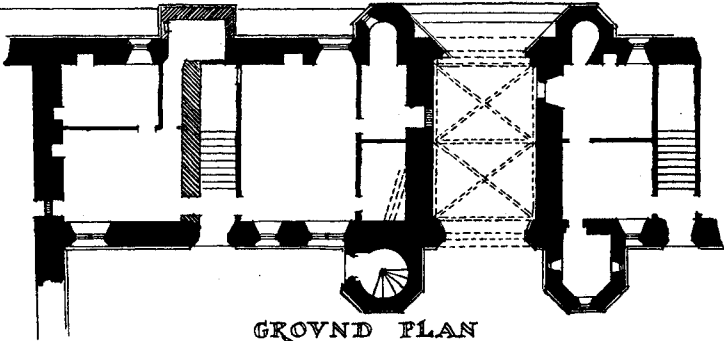
In building the tower, in which, on the first floor, the Muniment Room is situated, the builders met with an unforeseen difficulty. Apparently when they had nearly reached the first floor level they found it impossible to gain access from the spiral stair in the north-west turret to the Muniment Room and the room above it. The solution was to throw a squinch arch across the angle made by the wall of the ground

QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.  
PLAN OF STAIRCASE E. BEFORE  
ALTERATIONS AD. MCMXXXIV.

scale  of feet.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND PLAN

G. W. Wilkinson.  
15. VII. 34.

floor right set facing the court and the north wall of the Tower (shown in dotted lines on the ground-floor plan). The splay thus formed in the north wall of the tower was carried right up to the top of the battlements.

A doorway was found from the porch leading into the ground floor right set, which suggests that this is not the first time that the set has been used as a Porters' Lodge.

Apart from the provision of new windows, the only alteration to the exterior has been the removal of a single flue stack, shown in Loggan's drawing, though probably not original, which had been badly restored in large rather soft red brick some time during the last century. Connecting this stack to the gable of the Chapel was a piece of brick wall which completely spoiled the horizontal section of the coping and the corbel below it and formed an awkward gutter at the foot of the valley: this, too, has been removed.

#### THE PORCH VAULTING

The vaulting of the porch is a very fine example of late Perpendicular work, carried out in clunch and divided into two bays. At every joint of the ribs are carved bosses, the central ones of each bay representing St Bernard and St Margaret respectively. St Margaret, wearing a crown, stands on a dragon into whose mouth she thrusts a sword, part of which is now destroyed. The background to the figure is a design of oak leaves and acorns. St Bernard holds a crozier in his right hand, a book in his left.

The remainder of the bosses consist of Tudor roses—all but one of which are in St Margaret's bay—lilies, oak, ivy and vine leaves, with other conventional leaf designs which I am not able to identify with certainty. There are forty-nine bosses altogether, and on the whole they are in an excellent state of preservation. On two of them are snails, one complete even to the horns. Traces alone remain of a third snail.

The whole of the vaulting was very dirty and when it had been cleaned no traces of any original colour were apparent, though there is little doubt that it had once been painted, the preservation of the carvings, which are in many cases

deeply undercut, being due to some such protection. Such damage as has been sustained seems to be due rather to accident than to age.

The clunch walls of the porch and the shafts supporting the vaulting had, on the other hand, deteriorated in the past to such an extent that they were rendered in cement and painted many years ago.

It was decided to wash the whole of the walls and vaulting with distemper to the colour of the new Ketton stone used in the windows and doorway of the new Porters' Lodge, and to pick out the bosses with gold leaf and oil colour. The colours used are malachite green, the oldest and most beautiful green on the palette, for the leaves, ceruleum for the blue of St Margaret's robes, and chinese vermilion for the Tudor roses.



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