THE OLD MANOR HOUSE OF CROYDON,

COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE.

BY

BANISTER FLETCHER

AND

J. M. HOBSON.

THE fact of the See of Canterbury having held the Manor of Croydon for 700 years gives to the pile of buildings, situated on the head-waters of the little river Wandle round which the town grew up, not only a local, but a general or national interest.

Ducarel, in the 12th number of the *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica* (1783), gives a long list of manors at one time or another held by the See in Surrey, Kent and Sussex. Of these many *maneria*, as distinct from the ancient *palatium* of Canterbury, Lambeth alone remains, the seat, near the City of London, of the archbishops. Yet Croydon Manor-house has stood, still practically intact as to its main structure, since the archbishops ceased to reside there in 1757, although its glory has departed and its splendour has decayed.

Ducarel's *Survey*, though incomplete as a description, is very valuable, especially through his plates, as giving a good general idea of the grounds and buildings in his day. A print engraved for the *European Magazine*, and dated 1808, represents the outer gate-house or "porter's lodge"—a large three-storied building—"My lord's pond" beside it, and the servants' quarters on the east side of the forecourt. One of the arches of the gate-

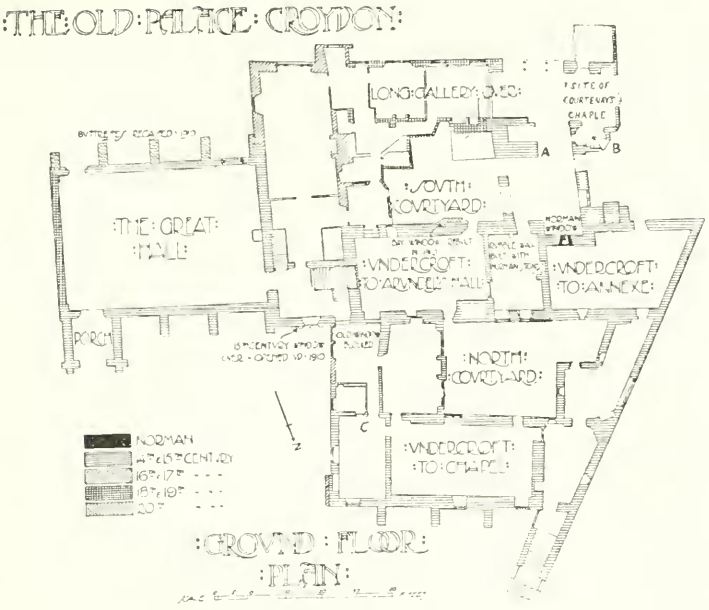
house was standing across a street, which had been carried through the eastern part of the grounds, as late as 1886. All the accessory buildings, including the buttery, &c., the vinery, and the servants' quarters, are now destroyed: but all the principal buildings, as indicated by Ducarel remain. The ponds are filled in and the water-courses are confined underground, to emerge again in Wandle Park, a little further to the west.

A reference to the plan will show the pile of buildings to consist now of the Great Hall, the Chapel, Arundel's Hall, and the Long Gallery with some more ancient work at its western end, all running east and west, and of certain structures lying north or south, the whole completing two small internal courts. The material used, since the 13th or 14th centuries, has been mostly brick. There is no evidence whatever of pre-Conquest work, either in the manor-house or the adjoining church, although the late Corbet Anderson records the presence of a priest of Croydon in 960, and the words *ubi est ecclesia* occur in *Domesday*.

The evidence of any Norman work having stood here is the discovery by Mr. P. M. Johnston, F.S.A., of a round-headed window in the south wall of that which we have called the "Annex" and of certain stones *in situ* in Arundel's Hall. This small opening reaches 4 ft. 7 in. from the ground, is 9 in. wide, and about 3 ft. high where uncovered. Its lower part is concealed by some work enclosing a curious sort of pit, and it has been blocked. Some of the blocking has fallen out and the tool marks are very distinct in the upper part of the splay. The opening itself is cased in stone and the wall in immediate proximity is composed of flint. Nothing can at present be seen of the window from the inside. Later buildings abut against the older walls and their superstructure here, and doubtless led to the blocking of the window which no longer served its purpose of lighting a basement, and, possibly, sunken room.

Flints and stones are used in the lower part of the north wall of Arundel's Hall, and in the window here, as

(1)



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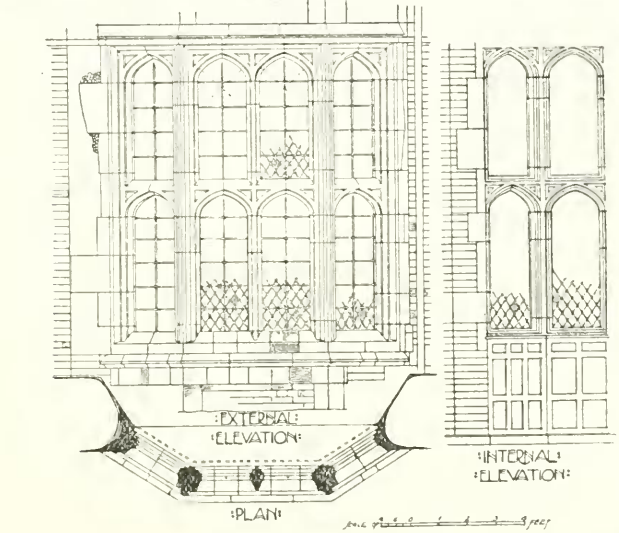


BANISTER FLETCHER, *del.*

NORMAN WINDOW.
3 ft. by 9 in. externally.

face p. 83.

DOORWAY:
Perhaps to Courtenay's Chapel.

shown in the plan, are stones showing a narrower splay than the present.

In the south wall of the same undercroft, to the east of the bay, are stones showing hatchet-work, but as these are associated with a stone cut with chevron ornament they are probably re-used.

Outside, in the north-west angle of Arundel's Hall are quoin stones and a pilaster buttress.

By taking all these facts together we are led to the conclusion, in the first place, that a line of very early buildings occupied the site of Arundel's Hall and the Annex; and secondly, that the presence of re-used stones, cut with chevron ornament, suggests, though it does not prove, the former existence of a Norman building of some pretension on this site. It is, of course, possible that the re-used and ornamented stones were brought here at some rebuilding in the adjoining church.

At A in the plan are squared stones, while at B are the same combined with flints. The latter contains the remains of a newel stair. The angles of the quoin-stones, both externally and internally, point to a short turret of octagonal shape enclosing this stair. Probably, at this place, there was a detached building of two stories and of not later than 13th-century date.

We note in the plan, a little south of the newel stair, an opening through the thick wall into a small wing. The wall is composed of stone and brick, and the inner arch, which is quite plain, is well figured in the late Corbet Anderson's account of the manor house. The outer arch, however, appears to have escaped the notice of all previous writers. When we enter the wing we see on the inner face of this little apartment a door-case with a two-centred head, a square hood-mould, a good section in the jambs, and quatre-foils in the spandrils. The wing is evidently a later addition.

In Courtenay's *Register*, quoted by Ducarel in his *Appendix*, occur these words: "1390, 23 Maii, ordines specialiter celebrati per dominum in capella manerii sui de Croydon, viz.: in capella secretiori ejusdem manerii

infra secretam cameram, juxta gardinam, jam de novo constructa." It is evident that either a space beneath the archbishop's private chamber, already existing, had just recently been fitted up as a chapel and a new doorcase inserted, or an entirely new extension of the more ancient buildings had taken place. These buildings were, perhaps, still detached, and the creation of a small private oratory here, reached by the newel stairs which would also give access to the garden, would be a distinct convenience to the primate. In the *Register* of Arundel, Courtenay's successor, there is mention of ordination in the same chapel.

The Principal Chapel occupies the whole upper story of the conspicuous building on the north, and is well shown in Ducarel's plate. There is a straight joint where this joins the cross structure on the east side, and there is every probability that it was originally detached. In the south wall of the present undercroft flints and hewn stones appear, and on the north side is a blocked door (shown on the plan) with old arch-stones; but except for the windows all the rest of the entire building is of brick. To consider the undercroft first. A brick wall cuts off its eastern end. Two stone doorways with four-centred heads stand in its south wall [see C on plan], each still fitted with a two-ply door: the larger was, probably, an external entrance when the whole building was detached, while the smaller opened into a small chamber. In the south wall of this chamber is a piscina-like recess, but too high from the floor for that purpose: in its south-west angle is a wooden post, and an incomplete plinth is against its south wall. A door opening from the kitchen into the present internal passage, is two-leaved, has a fifteenth-century head and strap hinges, and was obviously at one time an external feature. In the east wall of the passage there is a blocked two-light Tudor window, showing that, by that period, the chapel had become connected with the other buildings.

Now, it is well-known that mediæval domestic chapels

(1)

VIEW FROM SOUTH WEST.

The Long Gallery joining Courtenay's Private Chamber (?).

(2)

ENTRANCE ARCH TO PORCH OF CHAPEL.

(c. 1300.)

face p. 84.

(1)

Head of a Man.

(2)

Head of a Boy.

BENCH ENDS.

face p. 85.

were not infrequently of two stories, the upper forming a loft for the family, the lower being occupied by the household, while the east end was open to both and contained the altar; a screen separating this, the sacrarium, from both stories. Could such an arrangement have obtained in early times at Croydon?

The great east window, or rather a predecessor, would have given ample light to an altar on the basement floor, the larger south door would serve for admission of the chaplain and the small chamber for a sacristy, while the brick wall may well have been erected at the later conversion of the chapel. We may mention here, not as a corroboration of the above theory, but rather as militating against it, the presence in the northern half of the east wall in the undercroft of a piscina-like recess. It is of rather large proportions and reminds us of a late piscina in a chapel at Limpsfield Church. Its position precludes it serving any common altar.

If the two-storied arrangement ever existed, it evidently ceased at the end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century, for the upper story is divided into a small western and a large eastern part by an oaken screen. This is about 9 ft. high and is surmounted by a somewhat debased battlemented crest, below which is a cornice showing the remains of good foliage carving: there is no tracery or foliation: the whole design is of *temp.* Henry VII. There are three desk-stalls on each side of the larger eastern part. The ends of the two central stalls are thicker than those to east and west and are surmounted by boldly carved poppy-heads of 15th-century date. The other side-stalls have poppy-heads of quite different design, those to the east bearing Archbishop Juxon's arms (1660–63) on both faces, while the western display the arms of Laud or else floral ornament.

There are two return desk-stalls in front of the screen with Laud's arms on the poppy-heads. The seats to these, on either side of the screen doors, are terminated by bench-ends of similar design to the more ancient stall-ends but on a larger scale: these have been

somewhat mutilated and set up against the screen at some later date, probably in the Laud-Juxon period: each presents the notable feature of a small human head at the elbow, one a man's, the other a boy's, having the buttoned cap and long, turned-in hair, characteristic of the time of Edward IV. It has been suggested that these heads were intended as effigies of Henry VII and one of his young sons, Arthur or Henry, but against this theory we must remember that Morton (1486—1500) appears only to have resided at Croydon occasionally, Dean (1501–3) not at all, and Warham, his successor, not much. On the other hand, Cardinal Bourchier resided much at this place during his long episcopate, and died in 1486, before Henry's sons were born: we are therefore inclined to attribute the effigies to him and to regard them as representing Edward IV and his young son Edward: the screen might also have been his work. In *Parker's Domestic Architecture* there is a drawing of the chapel at the Mote, Ightham. It resembles Croydon Chapel in many particulars, though richer in details. A screen divides it into two parts and is stated to be *temp.* Henry VII, while against it is figured a split bench-end with a human head at the elbow.

The low-pitched wooden ceiling bears the arms of Juxon, but in the west gable, above the great west window, and in the east gable, behind later casing, are the remains of high windows. These windows indicate the previous existence of an open roof, which would be more in keeping with an important domestic chapel.

The east window is very wide and has seven lancet-headed lights under a flattened arch. There are three five-light windows on the north side and two on the south, the heads of the separate lights being four-centred.

In the south-west angle is a hanging oaken pew of classical design and bearing the arms of Archbishop Laud, the only proper access to which is from a chamber on the second floor of the connecting building. The erection of the pew no doubt led to the blocking of the four-light west window.

INTERIOR OF CHAPEL LOOKING WEST

Infra p. 86.

There are two wooden doors with square heads at the floor-level behind the screen, the one opening on to stone stairs which descend to the forecourt and churchyard, the other leading into the first floor of the house. There is a 15th-century wooden doorway close to the sacrarium which was probably used by the officiating clergy.

The sanctuary is raised one step and the altar rails were recently replaced, upon the representation of Mr. Colerick Smith and one of the authors, from their abnormal position in the "Guard room." They are probably of Laud's time and, though the top casing is mostly gone, a fragment of dentals remains.

The woodwork round the east window is of classical design.

There is a dado in oak panels to the west of the screen, characteristic of the late 16th or early 17th centuries, and similar panels exist behind the side stalls.

The cornices in the westernmost bay differ from those in the "choir."

Till the late renovation of the chapel, all the woodwork was thickly covered with yellowish-brown paint. This is now happily removed and the beautiful grain of the oak revealed. The removal has at the same time emphasised the barbarous latter-day insertions of soft wood above and about the screen. The so-called "bishop's pew," set up here, is of the same wretched work: Laud's pew has suffered an even worse barbarism, for one of its panels has been cut out to admit of a rude staircase.

Arundel's Hall is so called by us from its undoubted building by the Archbishop Thomas (1397–1414), younger brother of that Earl of Arundel who was executed by Richard II. The scanty rolls of account state that a hall was built in 1399–1400 "behind the cellar." This gives a site to the west of the Great Hall. Moreover, Arundel's arms appear on corbels supporting the roof.

The entire building consists, at present, of an upper and a basement story. The former was known, in

Ducarel's time, as the "Guard room." It has a barrel-roof formed of four-centred wooden arches. Two at each end and two between are moulded and rest upon corbels boldly carved as angels. The four corner ones are in various positions and hold, or apparently have held, musical instruments. The other four may be described as "squatting on their heels," and hold each a shield, carved respectively with the emblems of our Lord's Passion, the arms of the See of Canterbury, those of Arundel as archbishop, and his personal arms alone: these latter are, quarterly, 1 and 4 gules, a lion rampant or; 2 and 3 checkey or and azure, the last being the ancient arms of the de Warrens, Earls of Surrey.

There is a moulded wall-plate or cornice, and subordinate arches show through the ceiling.

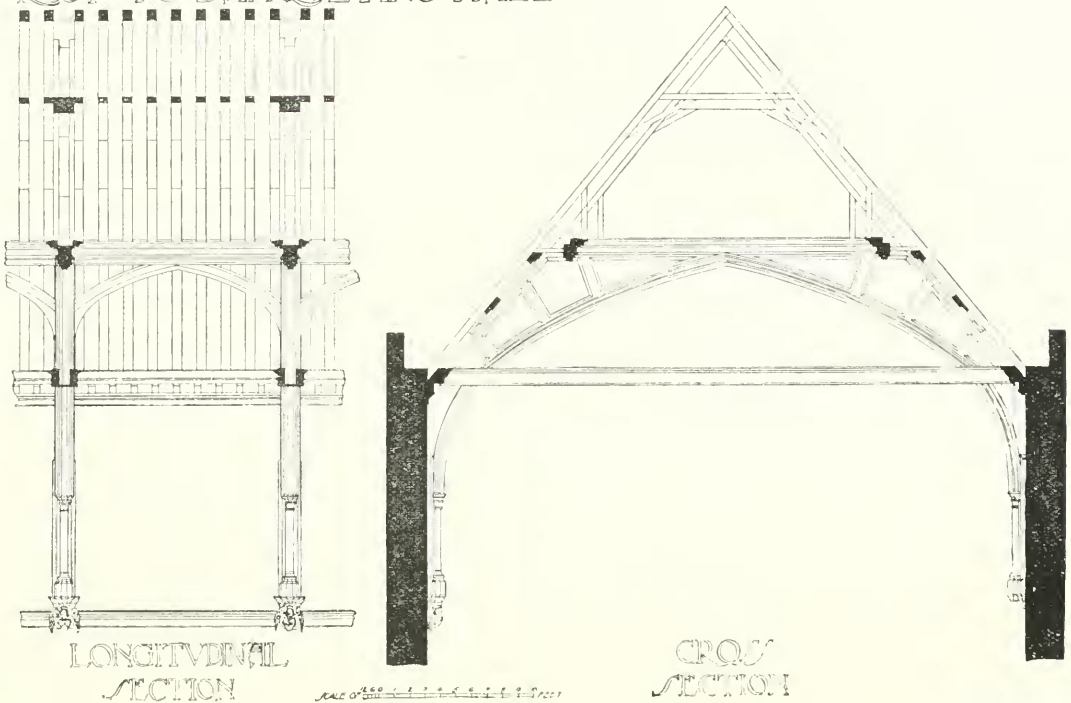
The only ancient window is a bay, on the south, of late perpendicular design, without foliation in the lights. It is not corbelled out but rises from a foundation at the basement filled-in solid.

The "Annex" is a building which now appears to be entirely of brick, save for the walling on its south side which contains the Norman window and a core of stone which we found in the north wall. There is also part of a stone cornice in the undercroft. Its north wall abuts against the quoin stones of Arundel's Hall, and the partial removal of its east wall reveals no bonding with the west wall of that building.

There are three stories in the Annex which do not, however, rise higher than Arundel's Hall, and have a common external roof-covering with it. By the removal of the walls, the upper story now forms a sort of loft overlooking the Guard room: the altar rails having been placed here, probably during the factory period, gave rise to the error of calling this loft a "music gallery."

The Great Hall next claims our attention. In its north wall are remains of stone-work, part showing an arch, which may date back to the 13th century, and the north door within the porch suggests its being of the same date but altered later.

THE OLD PALACE CROYDON
ROOF TO BANQUETING HALL



LONGITUDINAL SECTION

CROSS SECTION

face p. 89.

BANISTER FLETCHER, *del.*

The porch is Early Perpendicular, corresponding in date with Courtenay's primacy: it has good vaulting ribs and a flowered boss. Above, is a room which, doubtless, served the musicians for access to the music gallery. In Ducarel's plate, a turret is shown in the angle with the Hall, and this would contain the stairs to the chamber.

The Hall itself is 56 ft. high from the floor, which is a little below the present ground-level, to the ridge of the fine open roof. At the level of 16 ft. to its underside is a string-course, moulded like a cornice, below the side windows. In the angles, and at intervals in the string-course, are five corbels on each side, constituting four bays to the hall. These corbels are carved, in the upper parts, as angels' busts holding shields of arms; some of which are of the Stafford family, to which John Stafford, archbishop from 1443–52, belonged. From the corbels arise the upright principals of the roof, and from these again the great spanning arches: upon the arches, in turn, rests the superstructure. All these principal timbers are moulded and the roof is wonderfully light coloured. Archbishop Herring's tie-beams, dated 1748, are a great disfigurement.

There is no trace of a chimney in the Hall, and it is stated in Ducarel that there was, formerly, an open hearth and louvre above.

There are four windows, one to each bay, above the string-course, on the south side, and three on the north. Each contains three lancet-headed lights, without foliation, under a rather flattened four-centred arch. There is now no trace of the great east window stated by Steinman to have existed in the 18th century, nor of the music gallery; but the south door of the "screens" remains, in a patched condition.

Dr. Milles, precentor of Exeter Cathedral, writing a letter dated 1754 and transcribed by Ducarel, refers to various arms at the palace, and says:—"Those of Edward the Confessor, impaling France and England, which are placed on high at the lower [east] end of the room, and are carved in stone, were removed by the

present archbishop [Herring] from an orielle or passage which stood at the upper [west] end of the room, and which led from that room to the bottom of the great staircase." Further on, after referring to Juxon's arms in the north-west corner, on the string-course, he describes the arms of the next bay eastwards as probably those of Richard duke of York, great-grandson of Edward III, "because they stood next to the king's [Henry VI's] arms, which were placed in the orielle above it." Milles' reference is to a massive piece of masonry now set up against the west wall of the Hall, which can be best understood by means of the Plate. The top, which is missing, might well have supported a stone canopy. Beneath the so-called arms of the Confessor and their supporters, we note a winged figure holding a scroll, and beneath that the personal arms of John Stafford, the archbishop. At the sides and towards the back are angels holding the shield of arms of the Stafford family and of the See of Bath and Wells. The pedestal has evidently nothing to do with the original structure.

The worthy precentor's description is somewhat lacking in precision, but his use of the term "an orielle or passage which *stood*," *in* which the arms had been placed, and from which they had been removed by Herring, who also is stated to have removed the oriel, as well as the imposing character of this piece of masonry, evidently imply that he was writing of a stone screen at the western end of the Hall. Such a screen, placed transversely across the Hall, would constitute of the west bay a passage leading to the west door and thence to the "great staircase."[1] The mass of masonry with the various coats of arms upon it, supporting a stone canopy and placed in the centre of a stone screen, with an opening beneath leading on to the dais, in front of which was placed the Chair of State, would constitute a splendid and commanding architectural arrangement.

[1] The word "oriel" is of obscure origin, but in mediæval architecture is applied to some space in a primary apartment detached for a special purpose. An oriel window is only a particular case of an oriel.

STONE CANOPY TO SEAT ON DAIS.

WEST END OF CHAPEL FROM CHURCHYARD.

face p. 31.

Arundel's rolls mention a new door-case in Caen stone to the cellar. The present west door may be the same, but unfortunately the arms in its spandrils have become obliterated.

Of the remaining buildings which complete the sides of the two internal courts, the Long Gallery should be the most important. Save, however, for some panelling and framing, very little of its original features remain. On the south face of the cross building, to the west of the Great Hall, is a large cross in blue brick. The west side of the south court is bounded by a building which shows no bonding in the angle which it makes with Arundel's Hall. Its upper storey forms a means of communication between the first floor of the Annex and those chambers at the end of the Long Gallery where we believe Courtenay's private rooms to have been.

The Annex, cross building, and chapel, present a continuous wall to the churchyard, ornamented with designs in blue brick, amongst which "Peter's Keys" are conspicuous on the chapel gable.

In various places moulded joists appear, and probably they exist in other places where the ceiling covers them.

Croydon Manor House presents now few features of architectural beauty. The absence of tracery in the windows, of "breakouts," of stone facings and quoins and of ornamental chimneys, gives a degree of flatness to the pile. Still, it must not be overlooked that the place has been largely spoiled of its former decorations during, and even before, the 130 years of neglect and ill-usage which followed its occupation by the Archbishops of Canterbury.

Note.—For permission to reproduce from *The Reliquary* of 1909 the Plates (excepting the Plans) which appear with this article, the Editor is indebted to the courtesy of Messrs. George Allen & Co. The Plans are the work of Mr. Banister Fletcher.