

Monuments or Muniments?

The Interrelation of Material Remains and Documentary Sources

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IN this paper¹ I propose to talk about 'archaeology above ground', that is to say, about buildings rather than excavations, about the later medieval and sub-medieval periods, and about domestic rather than other kinds of buildings.

In studying any building, there are two main lines of investigation: *form* and *function*. There are the problems connected with *form* or *construction*, namely, how and when was the building originally constructed, what was its original form, and by what subsequent changes did it reach its present form? There are the problems connected with *function* or *use*, namely, by whom and for whom (whether individuals or bodies) was the building built, how was the building and its component parts used, how has the use varied throughout its history, and is the building typical of the institution or person that used it?

Roughly corresponding to these two lines of investigation are the two types of evidence to be used: (i) *material remains*, which are likely to tell us most about the construction; and (ii) *documentary sources*, which are likely to tell us most about the use; though this distinction is not water-tight, for material remains may tell us something about the use, and documents may tell us something about the construction.

When I say 'Monuments or muniments?', I do not for a moment mean to suggest that they are alternatives, that one can use one instead of the other. On the contrary there is the utmost need to use both, where available, to the full. It is fallacy to suppose that 'archaeology' stops, or becomes less useful, when historical and documentary records begin; in other words, that 'archaeology' is essentially 'prehistoric'. On the contrary, the more we have documentary sources to help us, the more we can hope to get out of the material remains, and *vice versa*. The two kinds of evidence cross-fertilize each other and multiply. All this may seem rather obvious, but it is often ignored in practice. The vulgar idea undoubtedly prevails that scientific archaeology ceases at an early date and what comes afterwards is antiquarianism. I believe that in a dispute about valuation for rating it was recently argued that one of our more distinguished local archaeological societies could not claim to be concerned with 'scientific archaeology', because it had charge of objects dating from after 1500!

Apart from this vulgar error, however, it is only too easy for people to turn a

¹ This paper was read at the First Spring Conference of the Society for Medieval Archaeology at Sheffield on 29 March, 1958.

blind eye to one side of the picture: to consider, for instance, a building such as a cathedral simply as a bare structure, without considering the use made of it, the internal arrangements, the constitutional adjuncts, such as dean and chapter, colleges of minor canons and of cantarists, and the subsidiary buildings which these bodies entailed—cloister, houses in the close, and so forth. This limitation is less likely to occur when English cathedrals are being considered, because the architecture of a cathedral close like Wells or Salisbury invites attention; but some of the standard descriptions of French cathedrals have tended to treat them as bare structures.²

Conversely there is the familiar danger of treating an institution without regard to its architectural framework. It is true that no one would try to write the history of a Cistercian monastery or an Oxford college without giving at least a ground plan and some architectural description; the thing would not make sense without it. But the late Professor Rait wrote two volumes on the episcopal palaces of England without giving a single plan. Professor Tait's classic work on the *Medieval English Borough* contains, alas, no town-plans, though Carl Stephenson did provide some of these in his book *Borough and Town*. Much work has been done in the last eighty years on the history of medieval English feudalism and of medieval English government and administration; this might profitably be given a supplement on the architectural background, giving plans of buildings like Clarendon or Westminster Palace³ or of selected castles.⁴ I dearly wish, too, that the excellent histories of Woburn, Welbeck and Knole could have included plans showing the uses of the various rooms at different times. It is clearly a step in the right direction that we find Dom David Knowles's volumes on the monastic order and the religious orders in England being supplemented by *Monastic Sites from the Air*,⁵ as well as by the numerous existing books on monastic architecture. People are, in fact, making an increasing effort to integrate the historical with the archaeological or architectural approach. Dr. W. G. Hoskins is an example of a social and economic historian who is also interested in domestic architecture.⁶ Conversely Sir John Summerson is an architectural historian who has some interesting things to say on social and political history, as in this passage on Adam's London houses:

'It is all devised for the conduct of an elaborate social parade, a parade which was felt to be the necessary accompaniment of active and responsible living. These houses of Adam's were not pleasure pavilions or settings for Vanity Fair; they were built by people with a certainty of their own importance and of the paramount justice of whichever political cause they espoused. They were not built for domestic but for public life—a life of continual entertaining in drawing-rooms and ante-rooms and "eating-rooms" where conversation would not be wholly ephemeral, where a sen-

² There are some honourable exceptions, such as A. Ledru, *La cathédrale du Mans au moyen-âge: disposition intérieure* (Le Mans, n.d.); L. de Farcy, *Monographie de la cathédrale d'Angers* (Angers, 190 f.).

³ The forthcoming *History of the King's Works*, sponsored by the Ministry of Works and edited by H. M. Colvin, will fill this gap.

⁴ R. A. Brown's *English Medieval Castles* (London, 1954), has the merit of dealing with both the architectural and the administrative sides of the subject.

⁵ By D. Knowles and J. K. S. St. Joseph (Cambridge, 1952).

⁶ As shown in his *Essays in Leicestershire History* (Liverpool, 1950); *The Midland Peasant* (London, 1957); and (with H. P. R. Finberg), *Devonshire Studies* (London, 1952).

tence might be delivered, which would echo round political England, where an introduction might mean the beginning of a career or a deft criticism the dethronement of a policy.⁷

Or take this comment by Sir Cyril Fox on a small Elizabethan house at Six Wells, Llantwit Major:

'In all, three modest-sized living and working rooms and five bedrooms: an eight-roomed house. Not much of a house, one might think, for landed gentry, lesser or otherwise. But it was not too small for permanence, for comfort and for dignity. The careful masoncraft, the massive and well-wrought woodwork, and a life of about three hundred and sixty years without signs of serious structural weakness account for, or testify to, permanence; the thick walls (2'), huge fireplaces, recessed window seats and comparatively low ceilings, together with glazing (then a novelty), suggest comfort; while housing for dignity seems to have been an effortless achievement on the part of Tudor masons, so frequently was it attained independently of size. . . . One feels there is something to be said for a social order whose setting flowers into a serene and dignified simplicity such as is represented at Six Wells.'⁸

What we are concerned with, in fact, is a series of interrelated questions: who lived and worked in what kind of buildings, and how, and why? The quotation from Sir John Summerson admirably illustrates how history and archaeology (that is to say, the study of material remains) can help each other in the eighteenth century just as much as in the eighth.

THE STUDY OF MATERIAL REMAINS

Material remains constitute the first of the two types of evidence to which I referred at the beginning of this paper. How should we set about the study of these, and what is to be learnt from them? Obviously, the fundamental need is to survey a structure, to measure it, draw up plans, sections and elevations and take numerous photographs—the more the better. In some cases—where, for instance, extensive alteration or demolition is taking place—it is possible to dissect a building by a process which may be called excavation above ground. By stripping off the later accretions and modifications of the building, we can try to trace the successive changes and developments, going back to the original structure. All this can with luck give us a sequence of developments. To pin this sequence down to dates, we need either documentary evidence, or analogy with known dated examples. For this purpose we need a chronological index of dated architectural specimens, which might well be based on the great store of photographs and drawings in the National Buildings Record.

The continual surveying of particular buildings is important in that it builds up a body of generalized knowledge, and this in turn helps us to understand and diagnose individual specimens. The more we can familiarize ourselves with different types of structure, materials and planning, the more we shall know what to expect, what to look for, what questions to ask. A doctor cannot dissect a

⁷ Sir J. Summerson, *Georgian London* (London, 1945), p. 126.

⁸ Sir Cyril Fox, *A Country House of the Elizabethan period in Wales: Six Wells, Llantwit Major, Glamorgan-shire* (Cardiff, 1941), pp. 23-4; cf. also Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan, *Monmouthshire Houses*, 3 vols. (Cardiff, 1951-4), especially vol. II, where the spate of building c. 1550-1610 is related to economic developments such as the rise of wheat prices.

living body, but by dissecting a number of dead subjects, he knows how to diagnose and treat a living body. We need to apply a similar technique to the study and care of buildings. A sad example of the need for diagnosis was the Clarendon Hotel, Oxford.⁹ Superficially it looked a not very exciting specimen of late Georgian architecture; in fact, when it was demolished, it turned out to be a sixteenth-century timber-framed building, incorporating a medieval house with a twelfth-century cellar. We ought to have suspected this, before demolition began, from closer examination and analogies—from such things as the shape and position of chimney stacks, different floor levels, and so forth. If we had known at the beginning what we knew at the end, we could have made out a stronger case for preserving it.

While it is valuable all the time to keep putting forward hypotheses, analysing and dividing our material into types, we must always be tentative and ready to think again, if the facts do not fit a preconceived hypothesis. Above all, we must avoid obstinacy, avoid being wedded to a favourite theory, which may be all the more attractive—and unreliable—because it is of our own invention.

THE USE OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Turning to the second type of evidence, we may ask what are the various kinds of documentary sources, and what is each kind likely to tell us about a building? The documents may be divided into two main classes, according to whether they are connected with the *making* of a building, or with the *use* of a building.

i. On the one hand there are the documents which were generated, as a matter of course, in the actual process of making a building, and which tell us about that process. First there are *building contracts*, of which a valuable collection has been brought together, for the medieval period, in Appendix B of Mr. L. F. Salzman's *Building in England down to 1540*. The importance of such contracts has long been recognized; good use of them was made, for instance, in Willis and Clark's *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*. Contracts are very valuable for the light they throw on the plan, dimensions, construction and materials, often giving the exact dimensions, in inches, of the timbers to be used, and so forth. It may perhaps be asked, do these contracts tell us anything that we could not see for ourselves from the existing building? As to that, they tell us how a building was seen by contemporaries, before any changes were made—and there are few, if any, buildings where some changes have not been made. They throw light on the meaning of technical terms; it seems clear, for instance, from a contract for the building of an inn at Andover in 1444-5¹⁰ that the openings of an inn-gallery were called 'oriels'. Above all, they are valuable for buildings which no longer exist, or of which only rare specimens survive, as with the remarkable series of contracts for the building of what we should now call 'terrace houses', rows of uniform houses in London, York and elsewhere in the

⁹ An account of this will be published in a forthcoming volume of *Oxoniensia*.

¹⁰ L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 517-19.

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹¹ Contracts are a type of document of which we may hope to find more examples, as formularies, letter-books and registers are explored.

Building accounts are likely to throw more light on materials and construction than on planning or dimensions. They are indeed rather difficult to interpret unless we know something about the structure from other sources, and they sometimes simply give us the quantities of materials, stone, lime, timber, lathes, nails, etc., used. Nevertheless, they do supply some illuminating details, for instance, as to the glazing or the 'lattices' of windows, or the prevalence of white-wash, or the almost painful realism of this entry in the Canterbury College accounts for 1476-8: 'Et pro tribus herdillis pro bottoms dictorum lectisterniorum vj d'.¹² Accounts may also give topographical hints as to the relative position of buildings; or information about repairs to the roof of a kitchen or hall may tell us that it was a single-story building. And of course building accounts are particularly useful for giving the chronology of a building.¹³

ii. On the other hand, there are the documents which illustrate the use of a building.

First, there are *inventories* of various sorts, made in connexion with the proving of a will, or the taking over of a new office, or the making of a new lease; these may record movables (e.g. of a deceased person), or fixtures, such as glass, wainscoting, etc. (in a lease). Inventories, of all documents, are perhaps the most valuable for the light they throw on buildings, their use and their inhabitants. Pioneer work in showing the value of inventories was done by Edmund Bishop, F. de Mely,¹⁴ St. John Hope,¹⁵ and C. L. Kingsford,¹⁶ and in recent years, Dr. W. G. Hoskins¹⁷ and Mr. M. W. Barley¹⁸ have put them to good use. Inventories are useful in several ways. Perhaps they have least to tell us about construction and materials, though they sometimes tell us, for instance, the number of lights or the size of windows. They are most likely to tell us how the different rooms were used and furnished, and they can help us to reconstruct the lay-out and plan of a building, even one no longer existing, because the order of rooms visited is likely to follow the plan,¹⁹ and chance references in an inventory may tell us that the

¹¹ L. F. Salzman, *op. cit.* in note 10, pp. 418 (London, 1310), 430 (York, 1335), 441 (London, 1369), 443 (London, 1370), 483 (London, 1410), 554 (Canterbury, 1497); Angelo Raine, *Medieval York* (London, 1955), pp. 47 (York, 1316), 151 (York, 1335), 157 (York, 1337), 181 (York, 1336). At York the building of these rows of houses was a favourite method of endowing chantries.

¹² W. A. Pantin, *Canterbury College, Oxford* (Oxford Historical Society, n.s. vii, 1947) II, 202.

¹³ Cf. the use of building accounts in Willis and Clark, *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge* 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1886); W. H. St. John Hope, *Windsor Castle, an Architectural History*, 2 vols. (London, 1913).

¹⁴ F. de Mely and Edmund Bishop, *Bibliographie générale des inventaires imprimés*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1892-4); cf. Edmund Bishop, 'Character sketches from medieval inventories', *Liturgica Historica* (Oxford, 1918), pp. 422 ff.

¹⁵ W. H. St. John Hope and J. Wickham Legg, *Inventories of Christ Church, Canterbury* (London, 1902).

¹⁶ In a series of articles on London houses, using surveys and leases as well as inventories, in *Archaeologia*, LXXI (1920-1), 17 ff.; LXXII (1921-2), 243 ff.; LXXIII (1922-3), 1 ff.; LXXIV (1923-4), 137 ff.

¹⁷ E.g. in *The Midland Peasant*, pp. 285 ff.

¹⁸ M. W. Barley, 'Farmhouses and cottages, 1550-1725', *Economic History Review*, 2 ser. viii (1954-5), 291 ff.; 'The Lincolnshire village and its buildings', *The Lincolnshire Historian* (1951), 252 ff.

¹⁹ E.g. The inventories of the Golden Cross Inn and the Crown Tavern, *Oxoniensia*, xx (1955), 54 ff., 65 ff.

window of a room was in the south wall, or the fireplace in the west wall. Above all, an inventory taken in conjunction with an existing building, can show us exactly what use was made of the various rooms.

An astonishing number of testamentary records (wills and inventories), especially for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, survive; these are now being opened up and made more easily accessible to students. The wills and inventories for Oxfordshire and Berkshire, for instance, have recently been brought from Somerset House to the Bodleian Library. These records are generally indexed under the names of the persons. For architectural purposes, inventories can be used in several ways. One way is by 'sampling' a large collection, by taking a cross section of inventories, at intervals of so many years, and analysing these to show the various types of house, the number of rooms, the value of the goods, the different types of occupant, and so forth. But an inventory is even more valuable if one can identify the house described. This may sound like trying to find a needle in a haystack, but it is not impossible, though it requires some detective work. If one is trying to find an inventory for a particular house, the best procedure is to begin by trying to establish a list of successive tenants and occupiers, from such sources as leases, surveys, hearth and window tax returns, tithe maps and even early directories; a family that is found occupying a house in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century may well have been occupying it in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Then, with the names of the tenants, one can go through the name-index of the wills and inventories.²⁰

An early library shelf-catalogue may enable us to reconstruct the plan, arrangement, even the dimensions, of a library building. Thus the library catalogue of the Cistercian monastery of Heiligenkreuz, near Vienna (c. 1363-74),²¹ shows us a typical Cistercian book-room, with three sides occupied by books, each side having ten shelves with an average of ten books to a shelf. Again, the shelf-catalogue of a fifteenth, sixteenth or seventeenth century library will probably reveal a long room divided into compartments by projecting desks or presses, and from the number of books to a desk or shelf, we can sometimes roughly guess the dimensions. Nor should we neglect the possibilities of even nineteenth-century epigraphy. One of those old-fashioned bell-boards that used to hang in servants' quarters can be a useful document. When we were surveying the houses in Broad Street, Oxford, which were demolished in 1937 to make way for the new Bodleian building, we found one such bell-board in Acland House, the old home of Sir Henry Acland. The names on it included: 'Letting out bell; Tank room; Captain Acland's room; Mr. Theodore's room; Sir Henry's dressing room; Miss Acland's room; Front Door Visitors; Front Door Servants.'²² I suppose if we had been true archaeologists, we would have tracked down each bell-wire to its appropriate room, but I am sorry to say that we did not, and we shall probably never know the exact whereabouts of the Tank room or Mr. Theodore's room.

²⁰ Cf. the inventory of 47 Broad Street, Oxford, *Antiquaries Journal*, xxvii (1947), 149, and the inventories of the Golden Cross referred to above.

²¹ T. Gottlieb, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Österreichs*, I (Vienna, 1915), 22 ff.

²² *Oxoniensia*, II (1937), 195-6.

Second, there are *surveys, terriers, leases, wills, hearth tax and window tax returns*. These often give valuable details about buildings and building sites, and sometimes have plans, inventories and schedules of fixtures attached to them. And, of course, they tell us much about the social history of the building, so to speak, the owners and occupants of the houses, the motives for building, and the changes of use (for instance, to or from use as an inn or academic hall); they can also tell us about the subdivision or amalgamation of tenements. In investigating the history of a town house, the first thing is to get the shape of the tenement clear. It is remarkable how the sites and dimensions of tenements in towns can be traced almost unchanged from the twelfth century down to recent times, even though the buildings may have been replaced many times over; it is only in our own generation that the ancient tenement boundaries have come to be obliterated by the growth of multiple stores and super-cinemas. This continuity in the history of town tenements is brought out very strongly in the remarkable work of the late Dr. H. E. Salter for the Oxford Historical Society. In editing the deeds of Balliol College and of the Hospital of St. John (which later came to Magdalen College), for instance:

'he was dealing with a limited field, namely Oxford house property, but also with a vast mass of documentary material of various types, ranging from thirteenth century charters to modern leases, rentals and fine books. This constituted at once a problem and an opportunity, which Salter met . . . by arranging his work topographically, under parishes and tenements, so that it is possible to trace the history of an individual house and its owners for seven centuries or more. And by applying this method to the deeds of one college or monastery after another, he came to cover most of the tenements of medieval Oxford. Moreover, thirty years of this work gave him an astonishing detailed knowledge of the personnel of Oxford, the house-owners and occupiers and tradesmen, the scholars and principals of halls, from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century; this made him a living historical directory of the town, and this personal knowledge in turn gave him additional skill in dating deeds and identifying tenements. It was like fitting together the pieces of a great jig-saw puzzle. Fortunately Salter did not let this knowledge die with him. He put much of his topographical knowledge into his *Map of Medieval Oxford* (published in 1934), which deserves to be imitated for other towns. And he put even more of his accumulated knowledge into his great survey of Oxford, contained in a row of notebooks, which he left to the Bodleian; this gives the history of every tenement, street by street. There are probably few towns in this country, or perhaps in Europe, where such a study in social history and human geography has been made with such accuracy and detail.'²³

Something of the same work could profitably be done for other towns. Dr. William Urry has been making a survey and map of medieval Canterbury, where the history of the tenements can be traced from the twelfth century onwards from the records of Christ Church Cathedral priory. And it should be possible to reconstruct some at least of the medieval tenements of King's Lynn from the wills and other deeds in the *Red Register of King's Lynn*.²⁴

Third, there are *maps and plans*, ancient and modern, which are, of course, important sources. Especially valuable are the very large-scale town plans (1/500 or 10 ft. to 1 mile), published by the Ordnance Survey; these are all the

²³ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XL (1954), 228-9.

²⁴ Ed. R. F. Isaacson and Holcombe Ingleby, 2 vols. (King's Lynn, 1919-22).

more valuable because they were made in the nick of time, *c.* 1870-80, before big business and slum clearance combined to 'ruin the great work of Time, And cast the Kingdoms old Into another mould'. Collections of topographical drawings and paintings are also important, especially those of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, like the drawings of J. B. Malchair and the Bucklers for Oxford and elsewhere.²⁵

SOME EXAMPLES OF COMBINED OPERATIONS

Here are some examples of the kind of problems that can be tackled with the combined operations of archaeological and documentary method:

i. *Canterbury College, Oxford*.²⁶ This was the monastic college which stood on the site of the eighteenth-century Canterbury Quadrangle of Christ Church, Oxford. It is an interesting example of a building which has now entirely disappeared, yet can be reconstructed to a considerable extent from various sources: from 'visual aids' such as early plans and views made before the destruction of buildings, as in Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675) and Williams's *Oxonia Depicta* (1732), and Malchair's drawings made during demolition²⁷; and from numerous documents, mostly surviving at Canterbury, especially inventories and accounts, which tell us, for instance, the position and occupants of the various chambers and, combined with the plans and views, the position and character of the chapel, hall, gatehouse, etc. We can even get considerable details about parts of the building from the accounts, which tell us, for instance, that the kitchen was a single-story building with chimneys and a slated roof of its own, with several ovens and cupboards and a coop in which live poultry was kept, and a subterranean drain covered by flagstones and a plank, while the inventories give us the whole *batterie de cuisine* of pots, gridirons, chafing-dishes, and so forth. Finally, we are helped out by analogy with existing college buildings: we know what a college hall, chapel, library, 'staircases' and chambers and studies are likely to have been like, and so we can fit these 'types' together with the evidence of the visual aids and the documents.

College buildings afford a particularly good field for investigation, because of the large amount of structures surviving (though often much altered), which supply the necessary types and analogies, and because they are so well documented and we know so much about the societies and individuals that inhabited the buildings.²⁸

ii. There are some other types of building that I have found suitable subjects for combined operations, such as *medieval priests' houses* or parsonages, which have the advantage of presenting a body of identifiable architectural specimens that can be surveyed, recorded, classified and compared, while there

²⁵ There are collections of J. B. Malchair's drawings in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and in Corpus Christi College, Oxford (cf. H. Minn in *Oxoniensia*, viii-ix (1943-4), 159); and of the drawings of John Buckler (d. 1851), his son John Chessell Buckler (d. 1894), and his grandson Charles Alban Buckler (d. 1904), in British Museum Addit. MSS. 36356-36443 and in Bodleian MSS. Don. a. 2-3.

²⁶ W. A. Pantin, *Canterbury College, Oxford*, Oxford Historical Society, n.s. vi-viii (1947-50).

²⁷ Reproduced in A. Vallance, *The old colleges of Oxford* (London, 1912), p. 172.

²⁸ For Cambridge, see Willis and Clark, *op. cit.* in note 13; for Oxford, see A. Vallance, *op. cit.* in note 27; *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, England: City of Oxford* (London, 1939); and the articles by Dr. Eric Gee on 'Oxford Masons, 1370-1550', *Archaeological Journal*, cix (1953), 54 ff., and on 'Oxford Carpenters, 1370-1550', *Oxoniensia*, xvii-xviii (1952-3), 112 ff.

is also a large body of records about the medieval clergy and their houses, such as ordinations of vicarages, visitation records, terriers and inventories. The buildings and the records combined help to answer such questions as: who built these houses, and when; what are the types of plan, and how do they resemble or differ from the houses of laymen; what accommodation did they provide, and so forth. Similar questions and similar methods can be applied to the study of *chantry-priests' houses*, and these have the special interest that while in some ways they resemble private houses, in other ways they have analogy with college buildings or the vicars' closes of cathedrals; some chantry-priests houses are like a college staircase set down in the country.²⁹

Again, the study of *medieval and sub-medieval inns* presents a surprising number of problems still to be answered, which demand combined operations: for instance, the quality and quantity of the accommodation provided (how many people to a room or to a bed); sanitation; what kind of stabling was provided, whether for vehicles as well as for horses, and the nature of entrance passages; the various methods of serving drink, in the cellars, the chambers, the buttery; the origin and development of the bar.

iii. *Towns and town-houses* provide a very suitable field for combined operations, especially if studied in groups or blocks. I think it was the houses in Broad Street, Oxford,³⁰ demolished for the new Bodleian building in 1936-7, that first opened my eyes to the possibilities and the need for this kind of study; here one could dissect and survey a group of buildings during demolition, and at the same time there was good documentation, thanks to the work of H. E. Salter and others, in the form of leases and even inventories. A model example of a survey of a group of town-houses is the late Mr. B. H. St. J. O'Neil's paper on the houses in the rows of Great Yarmouth.³¹ This was emergency work, carried out under most difficult circumstances, in which only a limited number of specimens could be described. If only domestic vandalism had not wantonly completed the ravages of war, and if O'Neil had lived to continue the work, we might have had a survey of the whole of the rows, which would have been a unique contribution to the archaeology of this country. Similarly, the rows of Chester would make a wonderful subject for systematic survey, with plans, sections, measured drawings and so forth. It seems almost incredible that such a survey of the Chester rows has not been made, except perhaps for drawings of one or two houses, and some external photographs. Again, King's Lynn, especially the area between King Street, Queen Street, Nelson Street, and the river, containing the great ranges of merchants' houses, with yards and warehouses behind them—all this would provide a wonderful survey of mercantile and domestic architecture from the middle ages to the nineteenth century³²; one could trace the development of

²⁹ For medieval priest's houses, see *Medieval Archaeol.*, I (1957), 118 ff.; chantry priests' houses will be studied in a subsequent article.

³⁰ *Oxoniensia*, II (1937), 171 ff.

³¹ 'Some seventeenth-century houses in Great Yarmouth', *Archaeologia*, xciv (1953), 141 ff.

³² *King's Lynn: Report and Survey of the Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest prepared for the Corporation of King's Lynn by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings* (London, 1948), contains a good collection of photographs; but I do not think that the area as a whole has been surveyed and recorded in plans and drawings.

types of warehouse, for instance; and here, as I have already mentioned, there is good documentation, from the wills contained in the *Red Register of King's Lynn* onwards. It would be interesting, too, to compare these merchants' houses of King's Lynn with the lay-out of north German towns like Lübeck or Hamburg, where office, dwelling-house and warehouse are piled on top of each other, instead of being spread out around a yard as in the English examples.³³

Town planning also provides a suitable field for combined operations. We badly need a series of dated plans for our chief towns. One could work backwards starting from the great Ordnance Survey plans of the 1870's and 1880's; next, one might have a seventeenth-century plan, using old maps and views; finally, one might get back to the medieval plan, in one or more stages. The work of Dr. Salter and Dr. Urry, already mentioned, shows how one can hope to trace the history not only of streets, but of tenements, and to trace the successive owners and occupiers, and the location of the various trades. And this leads one back to the questions: who lived and worked in what buildings, and how, and why? A specially interesting problem is raised by the successive changes in the occupation and use of certain areas and groups of houses. There are, for instance, the patrician houses of nobles or great merchants to be found in Italian, French or German towns—the kind of house described by Thomas Mann in *Buddenbrooks*. These patrician houses have now generally become flats or offices or slum tenements; one asks oneself when did the original habitants leave, and where did they go to, and by what stages was the use of these houses changed? Again, it would be of great practical interest to have a series of distribution maps of undergraduates' lodgings in Oxford and Cambridge, taken at intervals during the last hundred years, showing the gradual *diaspora* as the centre of the town comes to be filled up with offices and the like. And in English towns generally it would be an interesting study to trace the original location of merchants' and professional men's houses and their gradual spread into the suburbs and surrounding country; the effect, in fact, of communications, railways, buses, cars, on town-planning and architecture; thus at Manchester, this would mean the movement from the centre out to Ardwick, Victoria Park, Didsbury, and Alderley Edge.³⁴

CONCLUSION

I must end on a note of urgency: 'it is later than you think', and the time is short. All over the country, old buildings of all periods, but especially of the sub-medieval period, are being destroyed on various pretexts, sometimes quite

³³ W. Melhop, *Alt-Hamburgische Bauweise* (Hamburg, 1908), especially chapter vii, 'Das alte Hamburger Kaufmannshaus'; E. Fink, *Die Treppenanlagen in den alten Bürgerhäusern der Hansestädte Bremen, Hamburg, Lübeck* (Hamburg, 1912), with numerous plans and illustrations; Hans Arnold Gräbke, *Lübeck* (Lübeck, 1953). For German towns in general see K. Gruber, *Die Gestalt der deutschen Stadt* (Munich, 1952), with excellent illustrations. For some Dutch examples see D. F. Slothouwer, *Amsterdamsche Huizen 1600-1800* (Amsterdam, 1928); and for Swiss town houses see the survey in thirty volumes published by the Schweiz. Ingenieur- und Architektenverein, *Das Bürgerhaus in der Schweiz* (Orell Fussli Verlag, Zürich).

³⁴ For some studies of Brighton, see E. W. Gilbert, 'The growth of Brighton', *Geographical Journal*, cxiv (1949), 30 ff.; Antony Dale, *Fashionable Brighton 1820-1860* (London, 1947). For the 'moving out' from Manchester to Alderley Edge, see K. Chorley, *Manchester Made Them* (London, 1950), especially chapters vii and viii.

wantonly. There are hundreds of people whose paid job it is to destroy; there are comparatively few who are paid to preserve or record, and although bodies like the National Buildings Record and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments are doing valiant work, there is still great need for volunteer work. One cannot always prevent an old building being destroyed: indeed, it would be unreasonable to expect to do so in every case. What is absolutely unnecessary and intolerable is for old buildings to be destroyed without being fully recorded; and in fact, demolition may actually be turned into an occasion for finding out and recording the history of a building. It ought to be made a condition in every permission granted for demolition that complete plans, drawings and photographs should be made; and there ought to be a full-time, trained official in every city or area, whose job it would be to record disappearing buildings and so forth; but all that is too much to expect, too sensible a plan to be realized. In the meanwhile, however, we can do something to organize volunteer work. When you hear of an old building in danger, do not reach for your fountain pen or your typewriter, to write a letter to the newspapers; reach for your tape-measure and your camera, to survey the building before it goes. Anybody can, in an hour or two, take enough notes and measurements and photographs to be of some use in making a permanent record.³⁵

³⁵ In default of a tape-measure, one can (like the fifteenth-century antiquary, William Worcester) measure a building with one's feet—so it is worth knowing the exact length of one's boot.