Order. 'An old hall, at the west end a ... parlour with chimney ... with lodging over [presumably the surviving c. 1500 wing, with its chimney added by this date], and adjoining ... a buttery with cellar under the same. At the east end of the hall ... lodgings above, and beneath a low parlour with chimney. ... On the north side of the hall, the kitchen and other houses of office.' The E. wing probably survived until the 19th-century reconstruction, as it appears on an estate map of 1759.

N. W. ALCOCK

NOTES

1 Mrs Eileen Godder drew the attention of Dr J. M. Fletcher to this striking building, and I am grateful to him for suggesting that we should visit it together. Dr Fletcher is investigating the dendrochronological evidence: the present paper provides an architectural description. Mrs Gooder has kindly provided the documentary references, collected in the course of her extensive study of the Templar estates. The Governors of Lady Katherine Leveson's Hospital are thanked for permission to examine the hall.

2 Some of the posts have been cut into for later doors etc., but the only regular features are small outward-facing unppegged mortices 1.7 m over the floor on each post. These were perhaps used in one or other phase of reconstruction.

3 The joints are too tight for the presence or absence of tenons on the tops of the posts to be established.

4 The replacement of these strainer beams must have been a remarkable feat. It seems likely that the posts had splayed outwards, probably following decay of the outer walls, and that this was why both strainer beams and tie-beams needed replacement. After the new strainer beams were raised, the posts must have been levered inwards, before the beam ends were pegged.

5 These survive on the SW. of post A, and the NE. of posts C and D.

6 Drawn in a sketch section by Rev. Thomas Ward (British Lib. Add. MS. 29265, f.126v). In the 17th-century reconstruction, these braces must have been replaced, or picked up on the new strainer beams. An accurate and detailed drawing of the interior made shortly before the conversion to cottages confirms the evidence of Ward's section (Birmingham City Museum, Local History section, P 865-78; kindly communicated by S. J. Price).

7 Only those on the NE. side can be observed, as two of the halvings on the SW. were replaced in 17th-century patching, while the third is concealed. Failure of these feeble and decayed halvings may have been the cause of the 17th-century repairs.

8 See J. T. Smith, 'The early development of timber buildings: the passing-brace and reversed assembly', Archaeol. J., 131 (1974), 255. Rafter-braces are very rare in England, and have so far only been found in 13th-century contexts. A similar brace on the N. side of the roof has been removed.

9 B. A. Lees, Records of the Templars in the 13th Century (British Academy, 1935).

10 P.R.O. E35/81 r8-20.

11 Smith, op. cit. in note 8, 241-42; C. A. Hewett, English Historic Carpentry (Chichester, 1980), esp. 59-63. The Templar association of the Cressing barn is intriguing, but probably coincidental.


13 P.R.O. E315/361 f. 15.

14 Warwick C.R.O. CR621/6.

'WEEPERS': A SMALL LATE MEDIEVAL AISLED HALL IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE (Figs. 6, 7)

Weepers (TL 236 794) is a small medieval timber-framed house with a single aisle and attached byre. A detailed survey revealed a large amount of waney timber and some carpentry details that were used to compensate for this.

The house is situated in the village of Wennington on a plateau above the fens, 4½ miles N. of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. On an estate map of 1623 the house is shown in a close with a small copse of trees. Nearby are two woods, Holland Wood and Wennington Wood, remnants of the Forest of Somersham which covered an extensive area in the 14th century.

The original plan has an open hall of two bays, 4.06 m. square, a narrow bay for the cross-passage, and a two bay parlour to the W. with a loft above it (Fig. 6). A mortice in the W. post of the cross-passage in the S. wall may indicate the position of a screen that divided, or partly divided, the passage and hall from the parlour. The aisle runs the full length of the main building to the N. and is quite clearly part of the original plan (post 1). It is partitioned from the hall (C-D) to the height of the middle rail, and from the loft above the middle rail,
FIG. 6 WEEPERS, WENNINGTON, CAMBS: Plans and elevations
and has two wide openings into the parlour. One opening, which has a rough chamfer, may have been a box bed. Partition walls closed the aisles on either side of the cross-passage, as indicated by rod holes present on both arcade posts, one now covered by a modern partition. The cross-passage opening survives between these two posts up to arcade-plate height, where there are two braces which meet, roughly forming a two-centred arch.

Smoke blackening is concentrated around the central tie-beam and on both faces of the arcade-plate in the area of the hall and cross-passage. Two hearths were uncovered recently (H on plan), one beside the partition wall to the E. and the other in the present position of the chimney stack.

Abutting against the hall to the E. is a two-bay extension of lower proportions that possibly served as a byre, similar to one at 'Church Cottage' at Stukely (TL 217 746). It was originally divided by a stud partition with a central opening. A chamfer in the middle rail of the S. wall indicates a wide opening of c. 1.60 m.

In the 17th century, at a time of prosperity and rebuilding in the county, a brick chimney was built on the W. side of the open truss in the cross-passage. It provided a hearth in the hall; another was added behind it in the 18th century to heat the parlour. A floor was inserted in the hall in the 17th century, and some time later a staircase was built within the aisle. The newel post, with vacant mortices and rod holes, most probably came from the E. gable wall when a hearth was built into the byre converting it to a kitchen. Chambers were created in the byre at this time.

The unusual feature of Weepers lies in the economic use of timber in its construction. The timber is nearly all wane and it is obvious that trees were used to their extremities to achieve the required lengths. The trunks appear to vary from c. 3.10 to 3.75 m to the stock and a suitable branch sometimes had to be included. A similar observation was made by Dr O. Rackham at 'Grundle House', Suffolk. The arcade post (post 1) is an example of this as it 'knees' out where the branch left the trunk (Fig. 7). The S. wall-plate bends downwards in such a way that there is a reversed assembly with the tie-beam — a timber is spliced in above this to maintain a horizontal line for the rafters. Braces from the posts to the wall-plates are convex, concave, or straight, and usually in matching pairs, their shape being determined by the available timber. Where possible, conventional framing methods are used with wedges to maintain levels. The three oblique scarf-joints with single bridles and two edge pegs found in the wall-plates, and the reconstruction of the aisle post braces are the only features that can be used to give a tentative 15th-century date for the building. The scarf joint is commonly used in the county and in Bedfordshire in buildings dating from the late 15th century. Only one very early example is recorded by Mr C. A. Hewett in Essex. The aisle plan is used locally, particularly in barns up to the 18th century and in a modified outshut in many farm houses of the 16th and 17th centuries; the attached byre, however, is a rare feature and so far only one other example has been found.

By examining the growth patterns of twelve timbers used in Weepers with Dr G. Peterken it was apparent that most were standard trees in coppice woodland, i.e. woodland where the underwood is felled on a regular cycle (Table I). The manor of Wennington and Abbots Ripton was held by Ramsey Abbey, and at the time of the dissolution the trees in Holland Wood, together with other woods, were assessed to have from one to sixty years of growth; no record is made of their height however. It is interesting to note that 38 copyholders in 1539 had rights to fell trees for the repair of their houses. This was disputed by the new landlord and in 1543 a lawsuit was brought against Sir John St John by the copyholders for withdrawing their rights to fell trees 'abowe theyre yardes and theyr woods in the komen hethe which have always been komen and never denied'.

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to Mr J. T. Smith, and Mrs K. Sandal who initially visited the house with me; to Dr G. Peterken for describing the timbers; and to Sqn Ldr and Mrs Norwood, owners of the property, for their kindness and co-operation.

E. M. DAVIS
NOTES AND NEWS

FIG. 7

'WEEPERS', WENNINGTON, CAMBS.: Reconstruction of arcade post 1

NOTES

1 Estate map dated 1623 of Abbots Ripton and Wennington, the property of Lord de Ramsey.
4 J. Bailey, Timber Framed Buildings (Dunstable, 1979), 5.
5 C. A. Hewett, English Historic Carpentry (Chichester, 1980), 269.
7 V.C.H., op. cit. in note 2, 204.
NOTES AND NEWS

TABLE 1

Growth patterns of twelve trees used in the construction of Weepers. Numbers as shown on the plans and elevations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arcade post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oak standard in coppice wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arcade-plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Elderly tree on edge of woodland with small branches growing after coppicing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mature standard oak, slow growing from mature woodland, 59 rings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parlour axial beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mature standard oak with small branches due to coppicing, 120–50 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hall axial beam (17th century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hall hearth mantel-beam (17th century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Standard tree in coppice with a 20-year rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Standard tree in coppice with a 20-year rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>At least 85 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LICENCES TO CRENELLATE

A provisional ‘Handlist of English royal licences to crenellate, 1200 to 1578’ has been prepared by the author. It comprises one sheet of explanations, sixteen sheets covering the 39 historical English counties and one sheet of sites outside England, listing a total of 566 licensed sites. Duplicated MS copies are available from the author, in return for information about unidentified sites, grantees etc., at ‘Beauchamps’, Nonington, Nr Dover, Kent, CT15 4LN. Please send a first-class stamp, and state whether a particular county or counties, or the full set, are required.

CHARLES COULSON

THE KILKENNY CONFERENCE, 1982

The 25th Annual Conference of the Society was held in Kilkenny from 2 to 7 April 1982. The theme was ‘Medieval Kilkenny and its Region’. Members were welcomed by the President of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society to their premises at Rothe House, the history and restoration of which was described by Mrs M. Phelan. Professor F.-J. Byrne and Dr K. Simms then introduced the medieval history of the region and Mr J. Bradley lectured on ‘Medieval Kilkenny’; after dinner, Mr M. Ryan lectured on ‘The Derrynaflan hoard’ which was followed by a reception from the Kilkenny Archaeological Society. On 3 April the following lectures were given: Dr T. Barry on ‘Medieval earthworks’, Mr D. Johnson on ‘Medieval stone castles’, and Mr R. Stalley on ‘Gothic architecture’; there followed a visit to Kilkenny Castle to view the Board of Works’ exhibition of finds from medieval sites in SE.