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PLAN OF THE OLD WATER SERVICE OF THE CHARTERHOUSE.

From the original parchment in the possession of the Governors of Sutton's Hospital.

THE ANCIENT BUILDINGS OF THE CHARTERHOUSE.¹

By G. WARDLE.

The study of the Ancient Buildings of the Charterhouse must begin with a study of the old plan, made sometime in the 15th century for showing the position of the water pipes. We know the date of foundation, and we have some fragments of the beautiful architecture of that date, but the Charterhouse as we see it is mainly a work of the 15th and 16th centuries, and this 15th century plan is therefore a document of supreme importance.

The original is in the possession of the Governors of Sutton's Hospital. By permission of the Governors, I am able now to give a photograph from the original instead of the copy of Archdeacon Hale's copy, which I used when reading the paper. The photograph represents the last of four skins laced together with linen thread, which together show the whole course of the water pipes from the white conduit in Islington to the Charterhouse. For a general description of the Plan and a reading of the verbal notes which cover it, I may refer to the paper read by Archdeacon Hale before the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, and printed in Vol. III of its Transactions. It contains many interesting details of the history of the monastery not belonging to our present subject. I must confine myself strictly to the examination of the buildings, my object being to show how much of the ancient monastery still exists after three hundred and fifty years of secular occupation.

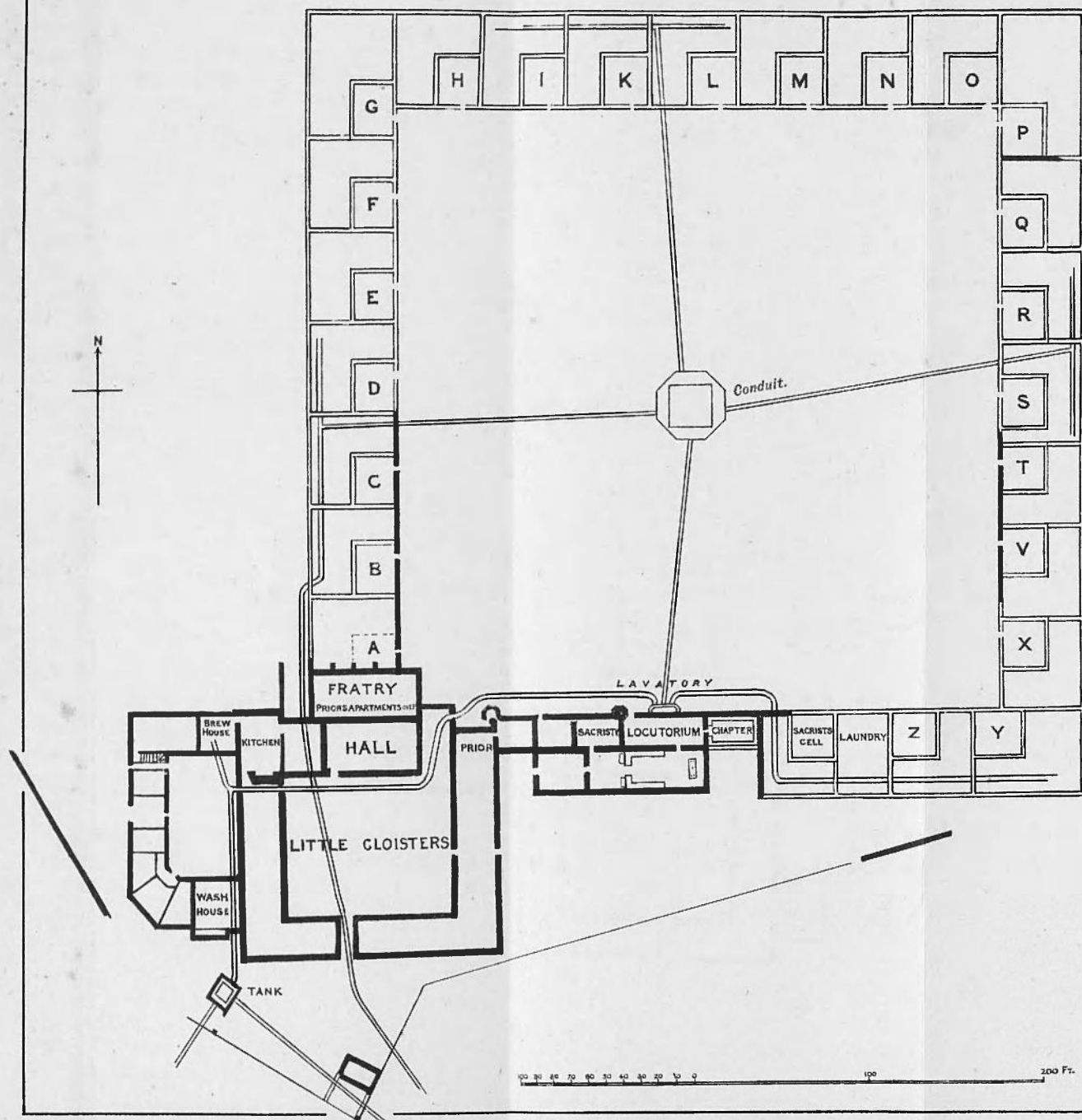
In referring to the plan for this purpose, two questions present themselves. How far may a drawing, not made for the purpose of showing the buildings, but using them to show the positions of the pipes, be accepted as evidence of the nature of the buildings themselves?

¹ Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, March 4, 1886.

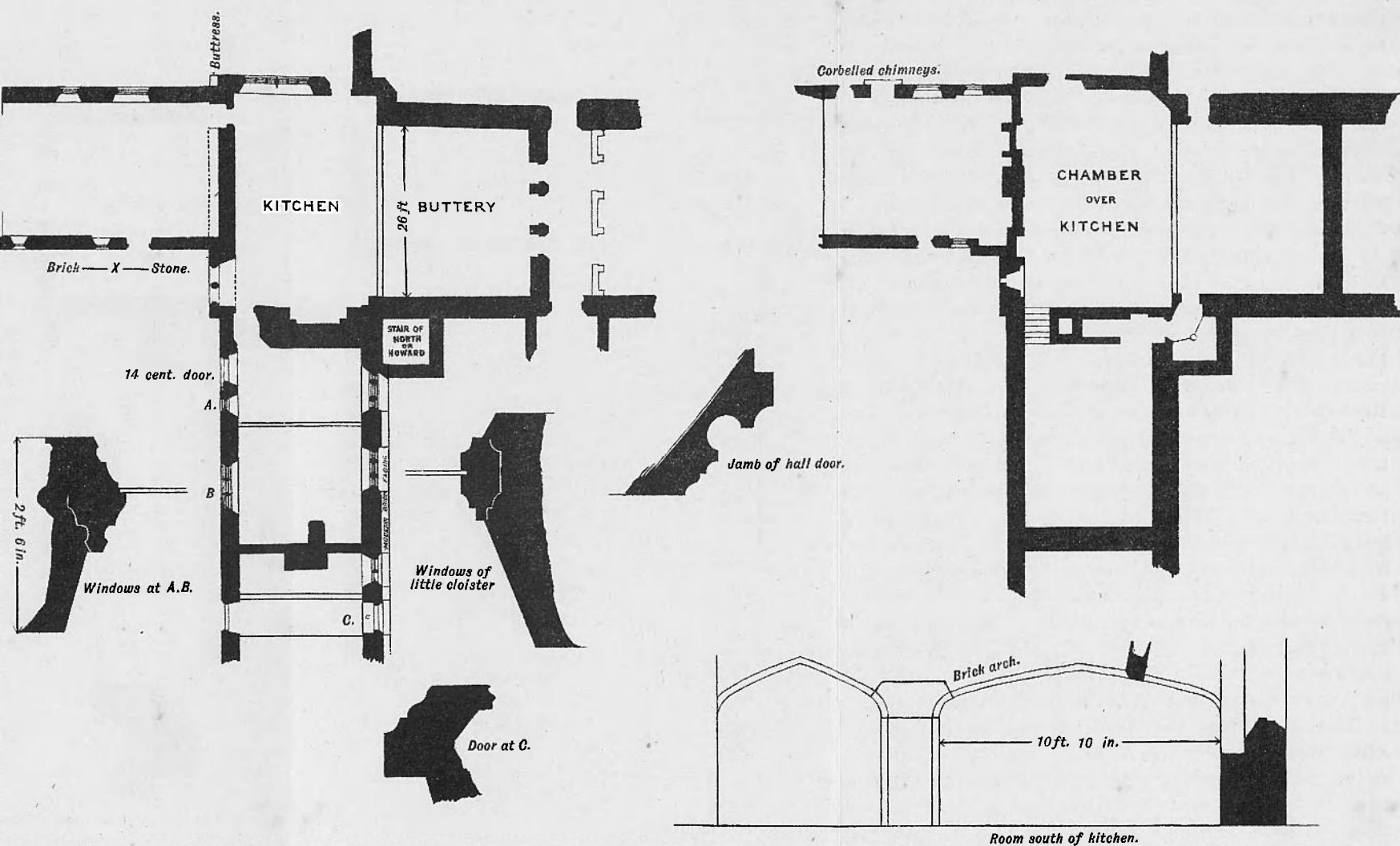
and how must a drawing be translated which is plan, elevation, and perspective all in one? It is certain we must take it very literally in some respects. We may say, for instance, quite positively, that the Church, the Chapter House, and Lavatory, lie together in the middle of the south side of the great Cloister, that the Sacristy is about the middle of the church on the north side, and that the Sacristan's cell was to the east of the Chapter House. The draughtsman could not have gone wrong in these particulars. We may say with the same confidence that the little Cloister was at the south-west angle of the Great Cloister, and that the Priors' Cell and the Fraternity were together, or near each other in the place indicated. We may also go so far as to say that the drawing of the Church would have been recognised by any of the monks. The plan was intended for use, and the Prior, or whoever referred to it, would expect to find the Church depicted with some degree of likeness.

Now, granting the general accuracy of the plan, we must not forget how the drawing was made, or attempt to get from it more than it was intended to give. We may assume that the distribution of the cells is generally correct, though we could not expect the draughtsman to know, or to think it necessary to give, the exact position of each cell wall. Neither can we suppose he could lay down all the parts regularly by a scale. The drawing is made quite freely, with one intention, that of laying down the directions, ending and crossings of the pipes. The pipes are quite out of proportion to the scale of the buildings, and other details of sufficient importance to be given at all, are also much larger than their proper size. That is quite natural to such a drawing. Again the draughtsman has had recourse, where the details were getting crowded, to verbal description, or he has carried the object, if he was bound to draw it, clear away from the place to which it belonged. He gives us a tub or a copper to represent the brewhouse, and gives us only one other feature of wash-house court, the cistern by the kitchen door, which, however, he is obliged to draw quite clear of the kitchen itself, and he makes it much larger than the kitchen. As part of this consideration it will be admitted that the gate house is

AN ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT THE PLAN OF THE MONASTERY
FROM THE EXISTING REMAINS
AND THE INDICATIONS OF THE OLD DRAWING.



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drawn without any adjacent walls merely because a pipe passes under *it*, and that fact was all the drawing had to show in that place.

The next point of importance is the date of the plan. Archdeacon Hale fixes it at 1430, I do not think it is quite so old, but we may safely say that it is not much later than the middle of the 15th century, to which time the earliest of the writings on it may be attributed.¹

Adopting that view, we will consider the chief buildings in detail, having regard always to this plan and to those remains of the ancient buildings which can still be distinguished under modern alterations and restorations. We shall be much helped in distinguishing new work from old by the plans made about 1614 for the Governors, though I am sorry to say I cannot exhibit copies of these. They were printed by Archdeacon Hale in *The Carthusian*, a little school magazine of 1839.

The first of the buildings to which I shall ask attention is the Kitchen; perhaps the least important feature in a Carthusian house, but for our purpose the most useful since we can place it with very great certainty. It is at the north end of the east block of the little cloister, and close to the fraternity—having only the buttery between. The old plan fixes the position of the buttery by this note. “This pipe gothe oute of the bake syde of the cell next the prior’s cell wy’n ij foote of ye ende of y^e fraytor w’owt y^e wall and so throw the litill cloyst’ by the buttery,” and it also calls the pipe which stands in this corner “the buttery cok.” That being so, the Kitchen is near. In Plate I we have the old fire place with a doorway at the side and an outer door close by. The fire place has been altered so much in quite recent times that we can scarcely say it exists. The drawing is copied from one made before the last alteration. We have, however, the outer doorway almost perfect, it was preserved by having been blocked up. Its existence is proof that this block is part of the

¹ The Archdeacon, in his description of the skins, does not take any notice of the differences of handwriting upon them, nor of the different dates which they represent, though it is plain the entries were made at various times during at

least one hundred years. It may also be as well to state that there is but one original plan, that of four skins; the three skin scroll from which he quotes in the paper referred to is a modern copy of the other.

original 14th century building. The wall is consequently original, though it is not without signs of subsequent alterations. A few years ago the north angle of the wall, with its buttress, and the return wall, the north wall of the Kitchen, were to be seen. The drawing I exhibit shows the buttress,¹ and an earlier one in the Archer Collection shows the end wall and the window which I have inserted in my plan. Another drawing by Archer gives the interior of the Kitchen in 1844. There was a fire-place on the west side exactly like that which may still be seen in the room to the south. Unfortunately for us Archer turned his back on the *original* fire-place. He, however, shows us the partition between kitchen and buttery. It was framed, with plaster fillings. It had a door at the north-east end with two little glazed lights over. They look like late fifteenth century work. Over the Kitchen was a chamber, approached by stone steps in the narrow space between the wall and chimney stack. The chamber was, therefore, at a higher level than that of the chambers in the rest of the block. The only light in the Kitchen which we can suppose was mediæval was that to the right of the fire-place. The big window in the end wall was not made until after 1614, if we may judge by its absence in the plan of that date.

The kitchen chimney makes a cross wall, which may have been the end of a small hall, perhaps the refectory of the lay monks. There is a hall in precisely the same relation to the kitchen at Mountgrace. In the 1614 plan this hall is divided by partitions into dry larder and pastry kitchen. I think that was done, and those names given when the house was in the occupation of North. The 1614 plan retains the old names of the rooms. The room above, for instance, is called privy chamber. A pastry kitchen was not part of the monastic arrangements. I attribute therefore the building of the pastry oven to the beginning of the secular occupation. It was considered a necessary part of a gentleman's house in North's time.²

¹ A drawing made by the present Surveyor of the Charterhouse before the alteration of the Kitchen.

² "Make the hall under such a fashion

that the parlour be annexed to the head of the hall. And the buttery and pantry be at the lower end of the hall, the seller under the pantry set somewhat abase.

The hood of the flue is exactly like the drawing Archer made of the supplementary fire-place in the kitchen. North may have built them both, or he may have adapted the fire-place in this hall as an oven. If it is thought that North was the builder, he must be credited with making the windows in the great chamber. They are exactly like in jamb section to that on the west side of this hall which seems to have been inserted to light the fire-place. It is quite unlike the opposite window which answers to all the other windows in little cloister.

South of this hall is a passage from Washhouse Court to Little cloister. It has quartered partitions on either side. The wall openings are arched with rather flat four centered arches of easy curve, that opening into cloister is moulded. The other has a broad chamfer which reminds one of the arches (restored) at S. James's Palace. One of the quartered partitions has a doorway, the mouldings of which are worked on the timber framing; they are certainly of post reformation date. It may be a question if this was the original entrance to Little cloister from this side. The old plan suggests a passage at the back of the kitchen flue. It will be noticed that the east wall of this block is thicker than the west, the recent facing of bricks not being taken into account. I have not tinted that in the drawing.

We will now examine the buildings on the north side of Little cloister. These are of great interest, and I may as well say at the outset are very puzzling. The Hall has undergone a good many changes. I think the roof exhibits the oldest features. It is apparently of the type of the great roof at Westminster. Sutton ceiled it, I think, and stuck pendants to the ends of the hammer beams. The ceiling has been divided into panels since his time, unless the ribs or bands are of plaster and have only been made conspicuous lately by paint and varnish to imitate old oak. Old views of the Hall do not show any panels on

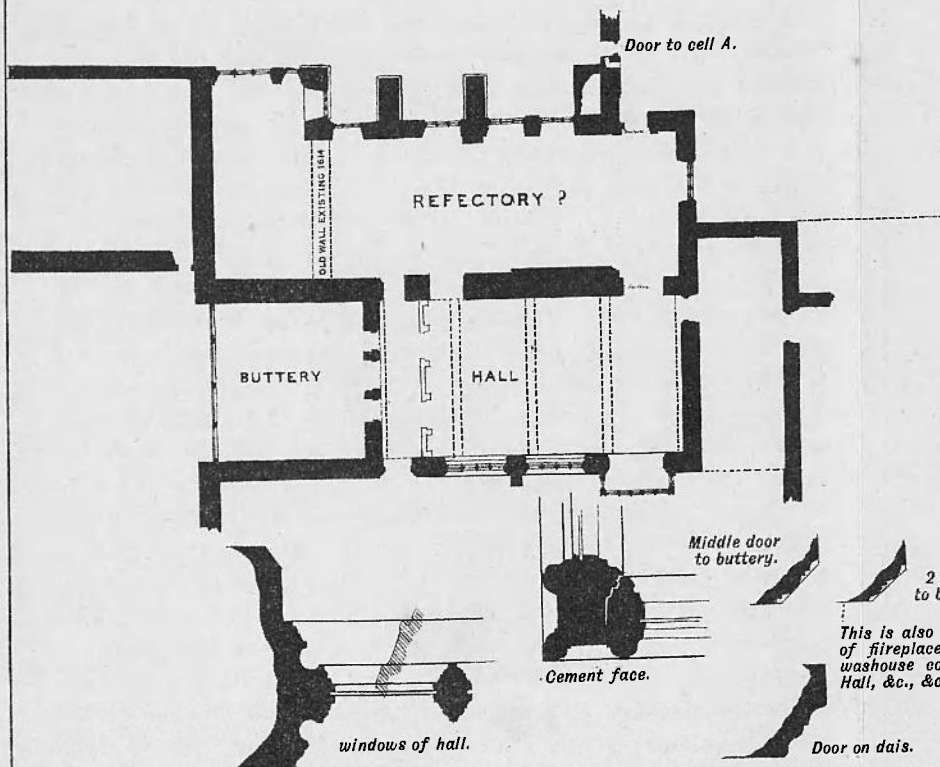
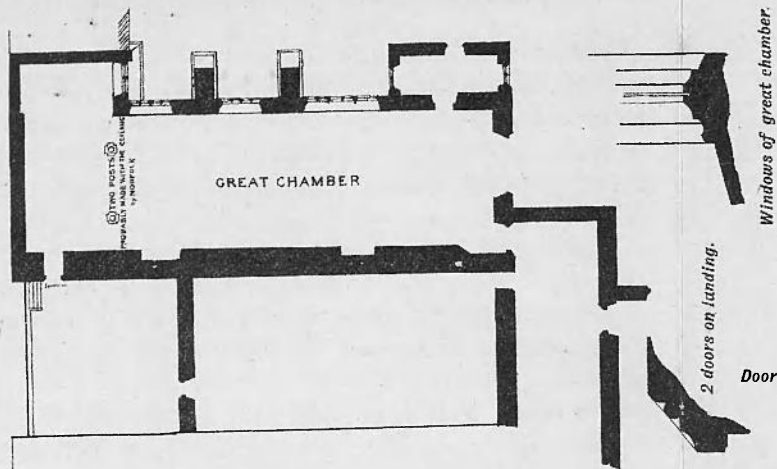
"The kitchen set somewhat abase from the buttery and pantry coming with an entry by the wall of the buttry, the pastry house, and larderhouse annexed to the kitchen. Then divide the lodgings by the circuit of the quadrivial court, and let the gate house be opposite or against the hall door, not directly, but the hall

door standing abase and the gatehouse in the middle of the front entering in to the place. Let the privy chamber be annexed to the chamber of estate with other chambers necessary for the building, so that many of the chambers may have a prospect into the chapel." Andrew Boord, 1542.

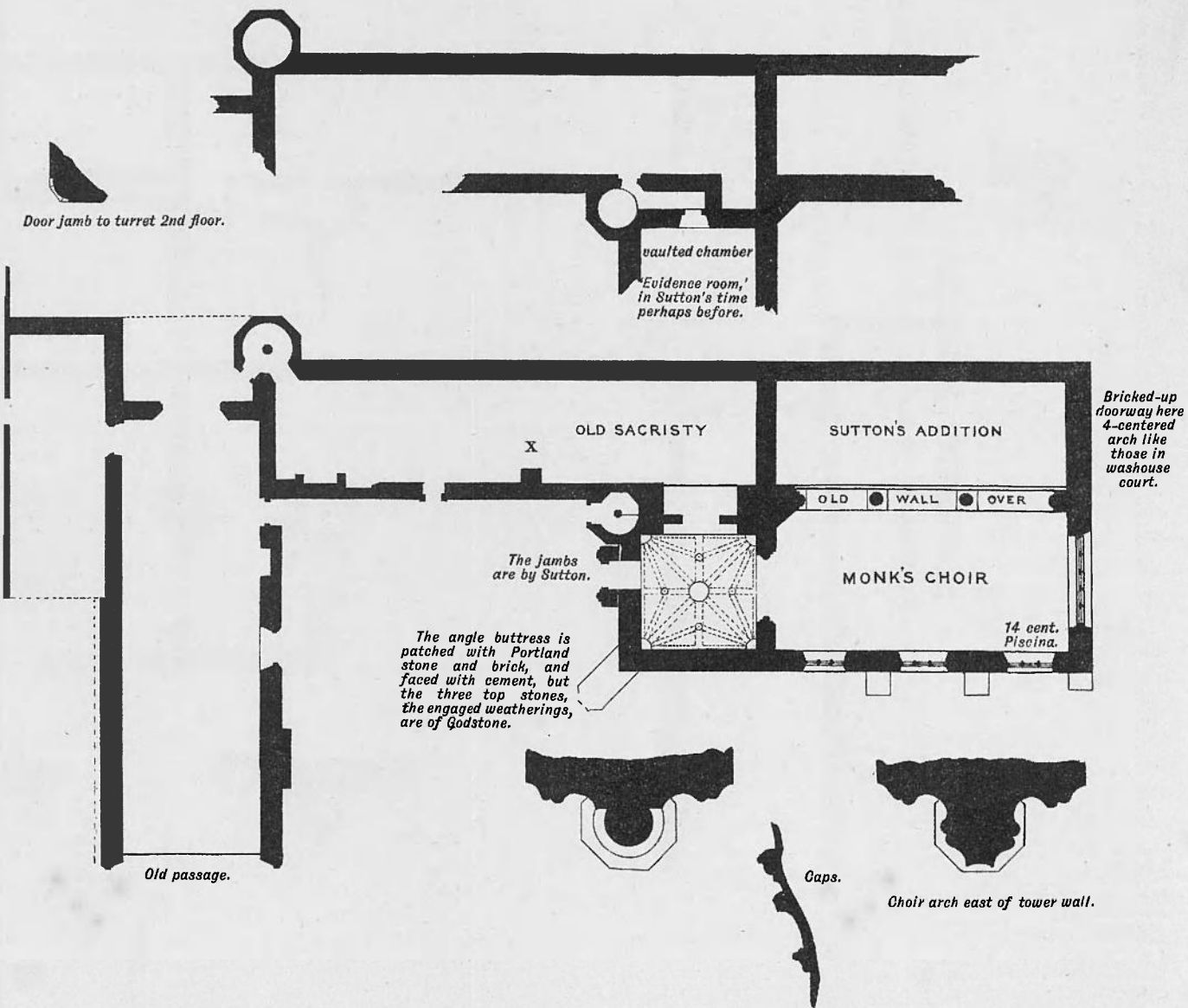
the ceiling. The real roof of the Hall is not I think much later than the beginning of the 15th century. It has five trusses, 12 ft. 6 in. apart. They are quite independent of the windows, which are certainly of later date, say early in the 16th century. There are three doorways in the buttery wall, two, in the ordinary positions, have four centered arches under square recesses, and have carved spandrels of Holbeinesque character, quite unlike the carving in the spandrels of the Hall door or that which I was able to exhibit by two casts.¹ The centre opening in this wall is also square headed, but its mouldings are Elizabethan. The door opposite the entrance is also Elizabethan. These two doorways are probably the work of Norfolk. The doorway on the dais is of the same time as the two buttery doors. The Hall door and the arch on the dais are both earlier than any of these, but the oriel itself is not. We have therefore in the Hall, without reckoning alterations by Sutton, at least three changes since the roof was put on. First, the enlargement of the windows, consequent, I think, to the building of the Fraternity to the north; next, the communication with the Parlour from the dais, made either by North or just before the dissolution; and the embellishments by Norfolk, of which the screen is the most conspicuous.

The chief change in the aspect of the Hall was occasioned by the building of the Frater on the north side. The date of this must, I think, be fixed by that of the two doorways on the great stair. They are clearly intended for communication between the Prior's Lodging and the Great Chamber over the new Fraternity. The chamber has no present marks of style corresponding with the refined but vigorous character of these doorways, but it has endured many changes since it may have been the great chamber of the Prior. North and Howard successively used it for their state room, and no doubt each modified it somewhat to his tastes. Sutton undoubtedly modernized it to his date, and since then it has suffered both from neglect and restoration. The ground floor or fraternity proper, has been changed quite as seriously, but it seems impossible to resist the evidence of those two doors as to the existence of a 15th century upper chamber, and the

¹ The casts were made from two spandrels over the great window.



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old drawing is unmistakable as to the position of the Fraternity in its time. That the original position of the Fraternity was not here I think is not less clear. We have cell A, of which the door and turnstile still remain. Their position I have taken pains to give quite accurately. A cell with a door so placed would have been impossible after the Fraternity was built. The 15th century Fraternity must therefore have been built on the site of cell A, and apartments were given to the Prior on the upper floor. Cell A therefore became the Prior's cell as the old plan calls it; the garden space would be needed for light to the new Fraternity, and it is possible that the Prior had another garden to the west which became later the privy garden of the secular owners; in that case the cell door would still be used by the Prior as garden door.

I have determined the size of the Fraternity by two data. There is a very thick piece of wall existing on the east side of the bay of this block which is not carried up of the same thickness to the height of the great chamber, but sloped off below the windows. This may have been a piece of the old garden wall which North worked into his addition to the Fraternity; it was more convenient to use it than to pull it down. There is also a thick wall shown in the 1614 plan where I have marked the end of the Fraternity. These two are almost in line. The windows of the Fraternity (Sutton's boys' dining hall), are of the kind one would expect to see in any Edward VI. grammar school. Those above have that peculiar section I have already spoken of, which may indicate pre-Reformation work or may be attributed to North. I cannot decide.

I must make a stay for one moment in the passage at the east end of the Hall, it is now the great staircase. This passage was once open. In digging next the Hall a skeleton was found lying in due east and west position. The Surveyor tells me also that both walls of this passage have marks of old windows in them. I think it was originally the passage to great cloister and that it was ceiled and the upper stage enclosed when the two doors were made from Prior's House to Great Chamber.

We now come to a very interesting consideration, that of the disposition of the buildings on the south side of Great Cloister. See Plate II. My drawing shows all the thick

walls that I can be sure existed at any time. The one forming the north side of the Monks' choir can be traced from the end of the existing church, above the arcade, to the door to Brook Hall and perhaps farther, but the western portion has been so cut into and added to for fire-places, doors, and cupboards, that one cannot safely say anything as to its antiquity now the plaster is on. Assuming this wall to be genuine from the east end to the door to Brook Hall or thereabouts, that would suffice for the whole length of the church as depicted on the old plan, and also, so far as I am able to calculate, for the actual requirements of the Monks, lay and learned. The cloister Monks would have about half the whole length for their choir, and the space now occupied by the Tower for the two private altars; the western limb separated by a stone wall, in which would be a door but not I think any wider opening, would suffice for the lay monks. This was perhaps the arrangement before 1512 when a general re-building and repair seems to have been made. The building of the Tower would not very much alter that, but it left a peculiarity which successive alterations have not been able very seriously to modify. I refer to the extraordinary thickness of the north wall, where the Tower intervenes. This thickness grew out of the plan adopted for the vault. It is an exact square, and the former interval between the two choirs was longer from north to south than the other way. In order to raise the Tower two walls had to be built; the east wall was placed just behind the screen, the north wall made the square true. We have consequently two walls on the north side, close together. The upper plan shows how they were utilized by the builders. The chamber in the Tower, as I judge from an expression in Archdeacon Hale's account of the room, may have been an extra chapel. I am unable to speak from personal knowledge. We have got, then, from existing walls and by help of the old plan, a reasonable idea of the ancient church of the Monastery. The Sacristy there is no difficulty in placing, but I am not sure whether I should make it square or oblong. There is at X what appears, in a modern drawing I have seen and also in the 1614 plan, a fragment of thick wall, and this may have been the west wall of the Sacristy. Of course the Sacristy would be entered from the cloister

and would have an entrance to the church. The choir of the cloister monks would have its entrance on the north side, and the lay brothers would enter their church at some point near the little cloister. The old plan shows a story over the Sacristy, with a mullioned window and battlemented gable. This was probably the Library, the Sacrist being Librarian.

We have now only to place the Chapter House and the Lavatory. There is no doubt about either. The description of the old plan is too clear. The Chapter House stood at the north-east angle of the church and the Lavatory against the Hall between the Chapter House and the Sacristy. The little court enclosed was the customary place where Carthusians enjoyed their occasional allowance of conversation. It is the site of Sutton's enlargement of the chapel. I ought to have said that a great part of the wall I have supposed to be the cloister wall remains in more or less patched condition.

There remains but one point to discuss in this survey of the buildings—the position of the prior's lodge and the lodging of his guests. I think the gap between church and hall, between the great cloister and the little, is of all places the most suitable. I would therefore give the space included between the two thick walls which prolong the east block of little cloister for the priors' first house, adding that piece which faces the great cloister, this would give him but and ben below, chamber and oratory above. The octagonal turret which still stands has an arched stone doorway on the first floor. On the floor above, the door casing is of oak of Elizabethan type. The great hall and guest chambers might be in the remaining length of the block, and round the south side also. When guests increased and greater state became common, the extension over the fratriy may have been made, and may have led to the rebuilding of the fratriy.

There are but two adjuncts to be noted. The gate and the buildings attached to the kitchen.

There can be no doubt, I think, that the gate we now see is that depicted in the old plan, a stone lower story with one arch, and a wooden story over. The inner arch of the gate is still of wood. If I had time I would have shown the transitions by which the upper story has

passed into its present condition. One of them is shown in the old print given by Strype; the last change was made in 1713-25, when the picturesque Jacobean gabled story gave way before Georgian dulness.

The side arch to the gateway was made not many years ago.

Wash-house Court is more difficult to describe, and I must not enter into the details of its various uses. It was part of the monastery, but it is impossible to say for how long. The absence of any plan of it in the old parchment is no proof that it did not then exist, at least in part. This has already been noticed. I think we may safely say that the buildings as we have them are chiefly the work of Houghton, adapted by North and Sutton. Houghton may have rebuilt with brick the west block and part of the north. The stone walls must, I think, belong to the earlier work. I take the wide arch in the outer wall to have been the entrance for the poor who waited the daily distributions of bread and ale. It must have been bricked up at a very early period, because, in the angle close to it is a fire place of the same pattern as those I attribute to North. There are many of them at Charterhouse.

Wash-house Court, after serving for the lodging of the domestics of the monastery, for the servants of North and Howard, was fitted by Sutton as a residence for some of his pensioners. He built other houses for them to the north and east of the privy garden, but into the changes made by Sutton I must not enter; neither can I say anything consecutive of the occupation by North and the Howards. I have referred to their work only when it was necessary for my principal object, the setting before you the earlier condition of the buildings.

By way of gathering up what I have to offer to you on that point, I have made a little plan which I will compare with that from which we started. See Plate I. The plan is made in the first place from measurement of the existing walls; secondly, from the indications and plain description of the old parchment.

I have taken as base line the old wall I have already called the south wall of the cloister. From the face of this the position of the first cell door has been carefully measured, and the interval between it and the door of cell

B, which also exists. This interval is 50ft. 3in., which is about the average space allowed for cell and garden in other houses. The other cells on this side are repetitions of the measurement. On the east side of the cloister a good deal of the old wall remains, but it is mainly underground, a terrace having been made against it. The doorway of cell V is, however, visible, and there is an indication that the next doorway northwards might be found. The door of V is 88ft. 6in. from the south wall. On this east side, also, there is a bit of cross-wall remaining, which I have taken to be the party wall of cells P and Q. It is shown by a full black line, as are all the existing walls in this plan, conjectural walls being in outline. Having laid down these points carefully, I find that the arrangement of cells which is most convenient falls in with them and with the data of the old map. We have, therefore, got the position of the corner cells G and P, and the dimensions of the cloister.

On the south-side the position and length of the Chapter House are limited by the position of "the sexten is cock in hys wassying place" viz: *iiij* foote from the Chapt. hous ende in ye garden" and "*xvj* zerdys & di fro y^e lavoirs? it turnyth in," and these measurements fit the plan exactly. The position of the buttery, in its present place at the north-west angle of the little cloister, is also plainly marked if we do not forget that the pipes only are horizontal, and that the *positions* of the cocks are at the points where they branch upward from the pipes. I have said nothing of a little building outside the walls which is called on the old plan "Egypte the fleyshe Kychyn." I doubt if it was part of the monastery, as the rule did not permit flesh to be eaten even by guests. It may have been served with water, as the windmill was, "by sufferance of the Charterhouse." The building and the pipes serving it are of much ruder drawing than the other parts of the map, and the pipes are coloured differently. The original pipes are shaded neatly with blue to represent lead. These two are of a dirty yellowish brown. Excluding this building; which no longer exists, the whole of the ancient monastery may be traced through the existing buildings of the Charterhouse.

A few years ago the evidences were still plainer. Archer gives a view of the west wall of the great cloister from the north end, where Merchant Taylor's School now stands, which shows the doorways very clearly, as if in good preservation; and in the old school days a terrace ran across the north side of the green and marked the foundations of the cells on that side.

With all its changes and misfortunes the London Charterhouse is still, next to Mount Grace, the most perfect of the nine Carthusian houses founded in England. Indeed, such is the ruin which has befallen the rest that these two only may be said to remain. The duty of preserving these is therefore the greater for Archæologists and Churchmen.