

THE GILBERTINE PRIORY OF WATTON, IN THE
EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE.

By W. H. ST. JOHN HOPE, M.A.

Watton is a small village in the wapentake of Harthill in the East Riding of Yorkshire, about eight miles due north of Beverley, and some five miles south of Driffeld. It lies at the foot of the wolds, on the edge of the broad alluvial flat extending from Driffeld to Hull.

According to Tanner,¹ and other writers, there was a nunnery here about 686; but the only authority for this statement seems to be an account by Bæda² of a miracle wrought by St. John of Beverley after he became bishop of York in 705, on a visit "ad monasterium virginum in loco qui vocatur Uetadun, cui tunc Heriburg abbatissa præfuit."

Æthelred or Aelred, abbot of Rievaulx, 1146 to 1166, in his description of another "notable miracle" wrought at Watton in his time, thus describes the place, which was then evidently considered identical with the "Uetadun" of Bæda:

Inter monasteria virginum quæ vir venerabilis ac Deo dilectus pater et presbyter Gilelbertus per diversas Angliæ provincias miro fervore construxit, unum in provincia Eboracensi situm est in loco qui aquis et paludibus septus ex re nomen accepit. Dicitur enim WATTON, id est *humida villa*. Qui quondam, ut refert in historia Anglorum venerabilis presbyter Beda, magno sanctarum mulierum pollebat examine: ubi et beatus pontifex Johannes puellam ob incautam sanguinis diminutionem fere desperatam salubri tactu et oratione renavit. Quoniam igitur in eodem loco prædicti patris industria renovatur antiqua religio, antiqua nichilominus miracula renovantur.³

Of the Saxon monastery there is no further record. If such actually existed at Watton it had ceased to be at the time of the Norman Conquest, inasmuch as there

¹ Thomas Tanner, *Notitia Monastica*, ed. Nasmith (London, 1787), s.v. Yorkshire, cxx.

² *Hist. Ecclesiast. Gentis Anglorum*. lib. 5, cap. 3.

³ *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Decem* (London, 1752), i. col. 415.

is no mention of it in Domesday Book, though Watton then possessed a priest and a church.

The existing parish church, which dates from the thirteenth century and onwards, stands within the precinct of the priory. This is roughly an oblong area, bounded and intersected by a series of banks and ditches, and containing about forty-two acres. If an older monastery stood here, some of these earthworks may be of Saxon origin, but the construction of such enclosures was the first duty of every Gilbertine monastery.

Previous to the draining of the country the site of the priory no doubt corresponded with Aelred's description.

The Gilbertine Priory of St. Mary at Watton is said to have been founded about 1150 by Eustace FitzJohn, who, with Agnes his second wife, certainly gave "to the nuns who serve God at Watton" the vill of Watton itself, and other possessions. The various charters printed by Dugdale in the *Monasticon Anglicanum*¹ say nothing as to Eustace FitzJohn being the founder, and it may be that Aelred's statement concerning Gilbert the priest refers to the establishment by him of a monastery at Watton, which was afterwards endowed by Eustace FitzJohn.

Of the history of the monastery down to its suppression practically nothing is known, but it was then in a flourishing condition, its clear value being reckoned at £360 18s. 10d., an amount exceeded by only seven other Yorkshire houses.

The Priory was surrendered on 9th December, 31 Henry VIII. (1539), by Robert the commendator,² Thomas Webster the sub-prior, and seven other priests, with Joan Warcoppe, prioress, Agnes Warner, prioress, Anne Ellerker, sub-prioress, and eleven other nuns. The Pension List gives the names of nineteen more nuns, making thirty-three in all, and nine sisters. The signatures of the nuns in the deed of surrender are all written in one hand.

The Order of Sempringham, as it was called, to

¹ Ed. Caley, Ellis, and Bandenel (London, 1830), vi. part ii. 955-957.

² Robert Holgate, bishop of Llandaff, afterwards archbishop of York, who held the priory *in commendam*.

which the Priory of Watton belonged, was founded about 1139 by Gilbert, rector of Sempringham and Tirington,¹ owing to the desire of seven maidens, who lived in Sempringham, to lead a strict religious life. Gilbert accordingly built for them a cloister and offices on the north side of and adjoining the parish church of Sempringham, and to this monastery they retired. These first nuns of the Order were completely secluded from the outer world, and with it they held communication by means of a window only, through which necessary things could be introduced. Their needs were supplied from without by certain poor girls, serving in secular habit. But these subsequently became lay sisters, who lived in the monastery and there attended to the wants of the nuns. Gilbert also established a body of lay brothers to see after the external affairs of the nuns, their farms, etc.

Other houses beginning to be founded on the same model, Gilbert drew up the Rule. This, which is printed at length in the last edition of Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*,² opens with a chapter by Gilbert narrating his establishment of (1) the nuns and (2) the lay brothers and sisters, all of whom followed the strict and austere Rule of St. Benedict as observed by the Cistercian Order.

Owing to the multiplication of houses of the new Order, chaplains became necessary, and these were to be canons, following the Rule of St. Austin. They were not to have any access to the nuns, except to those who were dying and in need of unction and the last rites of the Church, and then only in places specially appointed for the purpose in the church and infirmary, and in the presence of many on each side. They were even to sing mass with a wall interposed, so that the canons and nuns could neither see nor be seen by one another. The church of the canons, where they kept the hours, etc. and their house and cloister were to be disjoined and shut off from the court and enclosure of the nuns, as was also the

¹ Probably "West Teryngton," which belonged to the sister house of Bullington at the Suppression; now called West Torrington.

² Vol. vi. part ii. *v-*xcr.

lodging of the *conversi* or lay brothers. The nuns were responsible for the clothing and sustenance of the canons, as well as the lay brothers; and four discreet canons, proctors (*procuratores*) as they were called, viz. the prior, the cellarer, and two *illiterati*, looked after the external business affairs of the house. The proctors had charge of all sheep and other animals, and were to know their number, etc.

The prior of Sempringham, if unable from pressure of other matters to visit the other houses, might appoint two canons and a lay brother as scrutators, and likewise two lettered nuns and one unlettered to visit the nuns.

As the nuns were strictly secluded, all business between them and their proctors was arranged *ad fenestram sororum*, and at it all moneys were paid in or out. One of the cellarer's officers was known as *frater fenestrae*, and acted as the medium of communication between the nuns and the canons. Two trustworthy nuns at least were assigned to attend to the great turning window (*magna fenestra versatilis*), one of whom did the necessary talking and gave out victuals, etc. thereat. This window was in a place called the window-house (*domus fenestrae*).

In each house of the Order there were to be at least seven canons, and never more than thirty, unless means allowed it. They were to hold the office of clerks at masses and the hour services. No boy was to be taught letters within the monastery unless a novice. None could be received as a novice under the age of fifteen, nor become a canon under twenty. In each house two laymen *magnae auctoritatis*, or even more, might be received. Every canon had three shirts (*tunicae*), a pilch or cassock (*pellicea*) of sheep's wool, and a white cloak; also a cap, two pairs of boots and socks, and day and night socks; also a linen (quire) cope. In cloister and in the frater they wore their cloaks. At labour they wore white scapularies. The canons kept chapter, etc. like other Augustinians. All their churches were to be dedicated in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all sculptures and superfluous pictures in them were forbidden. Only painted crosses

might be used. On feast days a sermon was to be preached in the nuns' church (*in ecclesia monialium*), a carpet or cloth being hung up between the two sexes.

The fraters of the canons and lay brethren were to be so constructed that the victuals could be served to them by the nuns or sisters *per fenestras versatiles*. These were to be so made that the men could not be seen by the sisters, nor the sisters by the men. There were to be one cellar and one kitchen for all, under the care of the prioress and nuns. A fire was allowed in the frater in winter. All flesh meat was forbidden, except in the infirmary. The warming-house (*calefactorium*) might not be entered without leave. The dorter could be entered at any time without leave, but with hoods drawn. When visiting the reredorter (*domus necessaria*), the canons were to cover their faces as much as possible. The chief officers among the canons were the prior, cellarer, sub-prior, and sub-cellarer; the last named had charge of the guests.

The lay brothers seem to have been farm labourers, serving men, workmen, etc. and for the most part to have lived at the granges under the supervision of a granger.

From the moneys of the nuns there were to be reserved three marks every year to inclose their houses with a ditch and a wall or hedge, until there be security of complete seclusion, and no expense was to be spared to prevent the nuns being seen or accessible. No one was allowed to enter their court (*curtus*).

The nuns were governed by three *præpositae* or prioresses, under whom were a *sub-præposita* or sub-prioress, a cellaress, etc. They could talk with their parents and others, always in the presence of one or more witnesses, at a window as long as a finger and as broad as a thumb, and bound round with iron. The window at which they made their confessions was similar.

Each nun had five smocks, three for labour, and two cowls for use in cloister, church, chapter, frater, and dorter; also a scapulary for labour. Each had further a pilch of sheep's wool, and a chemise of thicker stuff,

if she wished, with a linen kerchief (*mitra*) dyed black and furred with lamb's wool. All headgear was to be black and thick, as were also their veils.

The nuns received holy water and the pax (*lapis pacis*) "ad fenestram," and probably by means of the same window the nuns were communicated. The nuns were not allowed to sing in church or to talk Latin.

On fourteen occasions during the year a solemn procession was made round the nuns' cloister in this order : first, the bearer of the holy water ; then the cross-bearer and taperers, followed by the censer-bearer ; then the deacon carrying the Gospel book and relics, with the rest of the canons, the novices going first. After them came the seculars, if there were any. The lay brethren followed, the seniors going first, except two old men who came after the novices. Then came the *præpositæ* of the nuns, followed by the rest in order of seniority ; then the sisters after the novices, and then the novices of the sisters. Two elderly sisters, not veiled, brought up the rear. During the procession, doors constructed between the altar of the nuns and themselves were closed during the passage of the men, lest they should see or be seen by the nuns in passing. Similarly veils were placed across the four corners of the cloister, and curtains were extended by rings along the sides of the cloister, so that none could see across.

The nuns kept cloister and chapter as in other Orders.

There was a guest-house for women within the nuns' court, with an oratory or chapel in it for the use of the inmates.

The Statutes end with a direction "De Numero Sanctionum fratrum et sororum" allowed to each house. At Watton the brethren were not to exceed 70, nor the nuns and sisters 140. These are the highest numbers, those of Sempringham being 60 and 120, and Chick-sands 55 and 120. Watton was, therefore, the largest house of the Order. It is clear that nuns and canons lived in distinct houses, separated by a considerable interval, each containing its own cloister, church, chapter-house, dorter, frater, guest-house, infirmary, etc. The two houses were probably connected by a corridor or gallery in which was the *domus fenestræ*. The nuns'

church was the principal one, and had separate accommodation for both sexes.

The Gilbertine monasteries in England, according to Dugdale,¹ were twenty-six in number. Of these eleven were in Lincolnshire, five in Yorkshire, three in Cambridgeshire, and two in Wiltshire; while Bedfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, and Hertfordshire contained each one. Only half the number began with nuns and canons, the other half being apparently houses of canons only. At the Suppression only three surrenders were signed by nuns and canons, those of Chicksands (Beds.), Watton (Yorks.), and Shouldham (Norf.).²

Apart from such information as could be derived from the Statutes, nothing was known until lately of the actual arrangement of a Gilbertine monastery, or the disposition of its cloisters and buildings. Of Sempringham nothing is left but part of the parish church. At Malton some of the monastic buildings exist in and beneath a modern-looking house, and the greater part of the nave of a considerable church is standing and in use, but its plan presents nothing unusual. At Chicksands part of a late cloister remains, together with the western range, incorporated in a modern mansion, but there is not enough to show whether we have here part of the nuns' or the canons' buildings. With the exception of an interesting block at Watton, there does not seem to be anything of importance on the site of any other Gilbertine priory.

Shortly after the formation of the East Riding Antiquarian Society in 1892, a project was brought forward for excavating the site of Watton Priory. The chief reasons for this were threefold. In the first place, it seemed probable that as Watton had remained a double house from its foundation to its suppression, its ground plan would illustrate the peculiar arrangements of the Order. In the second place, the site was temptingly free and open, and the only buildings on it had evidently formed part of the monastery. And in the third place,

¹ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vi. part ii.
*iv.

² Miss Rose Graham has pointed out to me that nuns as well as canons appear

also in the pension lists of the priories of Alvingham, Bullington, Cattlev, Haverholme, Sempringham, and Six-hills.

the discovery, in the Public Record Office, of a survey taken at the Suppression, which enumerated various buildings and their dimensions, promised to afford useful information during the progress of the work.

By the kind permission of the owner, Mr. William Bethell, and of Mr. Richard Beckitt, the tenant of the "Abbey," as it is now called, excavations were begun in September, 1893, under the direction of the writer and the Rev. Dr. Cox, in the pasture west of the present house, where the irregularities of the ground promised good results. The excavations soon brought to light the foundations of the priory church and the site of a cloister, but the further elucidation of the plan had to be postponed until the next year. In September, 1894, the church was further explored, as well as the buildings surrounding the cloister adjoining it, but no traces could be found of a second cloister, or any other group of buildings. Some additional excavations made by the writer the following Easter led to the tracing of certain walled enclosures east of the cloister, and a few other details, but the other buildings still remained undiscovered. The interest attaching to the search was enhanced by the fact that it had been noticed, on comparing the survey with the plan, that the dimensions therein given did not in any way correspond to those of the buildings already laid bare, and that it must refer to the missing cloister. As the outcome of a more careful consideration of the plan, the site, and the existing buildings, a final search was made in Whitsun week, 1898, to the north of the present house, and here the long sought for cloister was successfully traced, together with the remains of the buildings that surrounded it.

Many of the buildings uncovered were unfortunately reduced to mere foundations, and in places even these had been destroyed. The chalk of which the walls were largely constructed had been burnt for lime, and most of the ashlar work had been torn out from the doorways and other places. Owing to the scarcity of building material in the district, as much as possible of the wrought and moulded stonework had been removed, and in consequence it is difficult to assign dates to many parts of the buildings. So much as could be made out



has been laid down on the plan, but many points for the present must remain unsolved, since funds did not permit of so complete an excavation as was desirable.

THE NUNS' COURT.

As will be seen from the plan (Plate I.) the southwestern quarter of the site described above is practically cut off from the rest by ditches on all four sides, as if to form a precinct in itself. In the centre of this stood what was no doubt the house and court of the nuns. It consisted of a cloister, with the church on the south, the chapter-house and warming-house, etc. on the east, the frater on the north, and a western range with buildings extending from it westwards. The kitchen stood semi-detached on the north-west.

The *claustrum* or cloister was oblong in form, and measured 98 feet from east to west and 113 feet from north to south. The centre was a grass plat surrounded by covered alleys, but of these no remains were found to give any clue to a date. The east, north, and west alleys were chiefly passages, with doorways opening from them into the various offices round the cloister. The south alley was practically the living room of the nuns, where they sat and read when not engaged in the church or elsewhere.

The church was 206 feet long, and consisted of a presbytery, central tower, and nave, a north transept with two eastern chapels, and a broad south aisle extending the length of the church, with a south transept, a south chapel, and another adjunct opening out of it. The arcade dividing the main part from the aisle seems to have stood upon a wall of some height, part of which remained towards the east, and thus formed a barrier between one half of the church and the other. Previous to the excavations nothing was visible above ground, and the eastern part was found to be ruined to its plinths. It was impossible on account of large trees to fully investigate the south transept. To the west of it the walls were standing to a height of over 6 feet as far as the west end, but the outer facing had been removed throughout, and the west wall had

been stripped within as well.¹ The chapels east of the north transept had been entirely destroyed, as had the corresponding work on the other side of the church. In the face of such destruction it is difficult to make out the precise arrangements of so curious a plan.

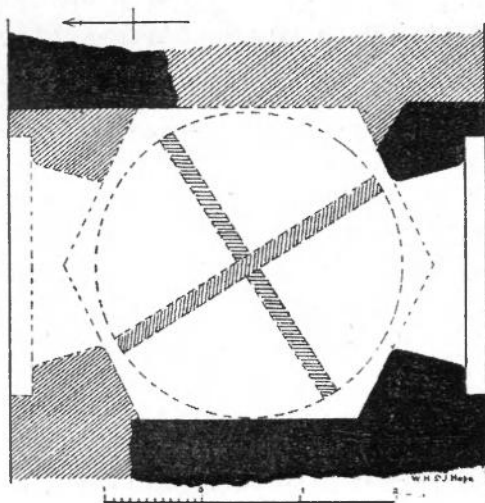
The presbytery was $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide and of two bays, divided midway by four steps extending right across. These led up to the altar platform, which was paved with chalk blocks, but we did not find any traces of the altar. On the south was a wide opening into the aisle,² where a similar chalk platform existed at the same level as the other, but of the steps up to it only the lowest was left. A few feet to the west of the opening there were the remains in the wall of a somewhat curious construction. On the north side it had been partly destroyed, but on the south a good deal was left. It consisted of two rebated apertures, one on each side of the wall, with gradually converging sides, opening into a central hexagonal recess. The bottom of this had been removed, and as only the lower portion of the construction was left it is not easy to see what it was for. Since its sill was nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the floor, the recess was evidently made to put something into, and it not improbably formed a *fenestra versatilis*, and contained a turntable or wheel for passing things from the canons to the nuns on the other side of the wall. Through such a window the holy water and the pax, for instance, could easily be passed, and, as will be seen from the accompanying diagram, a turntable of the simplest form would effectually prevent anyone seeing through the contrivance.

Westwards of the lowest step in the presbytery, and level with it, were the remains of a floor of chalk blocks. The north wall contained a doorway into the transept chapels. Just to the east of this there had been inserted, about the middle of the fourteenth century, a most sumptuous canopied tomb. It had contained the effigy of a knight in armour, whose body had been laid to rest

¹ The west wall was laid open on both sides, but of the western half of the south wall only sections were examined.

² The chalk floor of the altar platform was continued through the opening, which bore no signs of a door or barrier of any kind.

in a walled grave beneath,¹ surmounted by an ogee canopy of the same character and workmanship as the beautiful monument of Lady Eleanor Percy in Beverley Minster. Many pieces of the canopy were found as they had been thrown down by the destroyers, but of the effigy such fragments only remained as had been roughly hacked off to make the stone more shapely



RESTORED PLAN OF THE TURN BETWEEN THE
NUNS' AND CANONS' QUIRES.

as spoil. Among these were shields charged with a bend and others with a cross.²

Of the crossing only the base of the north-east pier was left. This showed that the arches were of three orders, the innermost of which was carried by a broad semi-circular member and the others by semi-detached nook shafts.

¹ The grave was 7 feet 3½ inches long, 2 feet 2½ inches wide at the head and 1 foot 10 inches at the foot, and 3 feet 3 inches deep to the top of a brick curb forming the south edge.

² The fragments of the tomb and effigy are at present deposited in the parish church of Watton. From the arms, the tomb may be to one of the De Mauleys.

By his will dated April 10th, 1350, Gilbert de Aton, knight, desires that

if he die in Yorkshire he is to be buried "entre les bones gentz de religion a Watton," and he leaves the sum of £100 to the priory. Richard, prior of Watton, was to be one of his executors. *Testamenta Eboracensia* (Surtees Society 4), i. 62, 63. So great a benefactor ought to have had a sumptuous tomb, but the one above described cannot be identified as his, unless the shields with the cross are his arms.

From the base a stone wall about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick extended westwards across the transept arch, no doubt to place the quire stalls against. But owing to the complete destruction of the western bases and the nave walls immediately beyond them, it is not possible to fix the limits of the quire itself.

Of the north transept there remained the base of the west wall, and of part of the north with the jamb of a doorway from without; also one respond of the arches that opened into the chapels, and beside it the base of a vaulting shaft.

The nave has been so ruined that little else now exists than the lower part of the north wall towards the west, and the massive chalk core of the west wall. There was no western entrance, but in the north wall a doorway on the extreme west led into the buildings there abutting on the church, and there was certainly one and perhaps two entrances from the cloister into the nave. The wall on which the arcade stood was 4 feet 11 inches thick, but it had been destroyed almost from end to end, and only some remains of it existed here and there, together with sections of the piers and pieces of capitals. The piers were apparently clustered, with capitals carved with broad-leaved volutes. There were no signs of a western respond, nor of the wall having continued up to the west wall. Possibly, therefore, it stopped against some pier or other such abutment a little in advance of the wall, and belonging to a galilee or narthex in line with the internal projections shown on the plan.

The south aisle was $19\frac{1}{4}$ feet wide, and had a stair turret in its south-east angle projecting into the church. There are no traces of any doorways from without.

The chapel opening out of the aisle was 28 feet long and 14 feet wide, and entered by a wide archway of two orders carried by clustered columns. The arch was at some time closed by a wooden screen. The altar platform remained, with part of its step and a pavement of yellow and black tiles arranged checkerwise. The block of the altar was 6 feet long and 2 feet 11 inches wide. It stood against a chalk wall, 2 feet thick, which divided the chapel from another east of it. This was

entered from the aisle by an archway like the other, of which the western respond remained. A party wall crossing this second chapel 5 feet from its west end shows that the arrangements were different from that of the other, but all the stonework here was so shivered by the action of a strong fire and dislocated and shattered by some heavy fall that it was not possible to pursue the investigations.

The greater part of the church seems, from the architectural remains, to have been all of one date *circa* 1170, but there are also traces of an earlier building of the time of the foundation of the priory beneath the later east end. The western part of the nave was also perhaps of the earlier date.

For the explanation of this we are indebted to a casual entry in the chronicle of the neighbouring Cistercian abbey of Meaux, which tells how Adam, the first abbot there (1150–1160), resigned his office after ten years and retired to Watton, “then a new monastery of virgins,” intending henceforth to have leisure for God alone and choosing to lead an anker’s life. “And there he remained for a long time shut up, until after a lapse of seven years, the church beneath which he dwelt was burnt, and he himself having been rescued from the fire returned to his monastery of Meaux,” where he died thirteen years later and was buried in the chapter-house there.¹

It is interesting to note that, as its remains show, the church burnt in 1167 was of the same plan and extent as its successor, but it is not clear why so complete a reconstruction was necessary. Possibly the large amount of chalk used in the walling, which would partly be converted into lime by fire, may account for the fact; but the scantiness of the remains, and our lack of information as to the cause and extent of the fire, effectually hinder fuller investigation. Adam’s ankerhold, if it escaped the flames, was no doubt destroyed in

¹ “Habita ergo deliberatione, decimo anno administrationis sue cedens, apud Wattonam, novum tunc virginum monasterium, intendens deinceps soli Deo vacare ac anachoreticam vitam preeligiens ducere, se concludit. Ibiq̃ue

tandiu mansit inclusus donec, post septem annorum curricula, ecclesia sub qua manebat combureretur, et ipse ab igne extractus ad monasterium suum de Melsa est reversus.” *Chronica de Melsa* (Rolls Series 43), i. 107.

the rebuilding. There is nothing to show where it was.

Before leaving the church, it should be noticed that a large mass of masonry, apparently of the thirteenth century, has been added at the north-east angle of the presbytery. It may have served merely as a buttress, but its size rather indicates the base of a stair turret. The north-west corner of the transept has been also strengthened by an added buttress.

There can be little doubt that the building just described formed the *ecclesia sanctimonialium* of the Statutes. The main or northern division served as the nuns' church and had their quire under the crossing, with probably the quire of the sisters in the nave. The aisle or southern division served as the quire of the canons, probably with the quire of the *conversi* in its western half. Between the two presbyteries was (1) an archway for the passage of processions, etc. and (2) a turn through which the nuns could take holy water and receive the pax and be communicated. The north transept may have been the place provided in the church where the sick nuns could be anointed, and it no doubt contained a staircase from the nuns' dormer to enable them to come directly into church for the night offices.

Next to the transept, into which there was a doorway from it, was a chamber 12 feet wide and twice as long, with an entrance from the cloister, but the west wall has been destroyed. This was probably the *auditorium* or parlour, where such necessary conversation might be carried on as was forbidden in the cloister. It had no eastern door.

The *capitulum* or chapter-house, which adjoined the parlour, was 66 feet long and 23 feet wide. Its entrance from the cloister has been utterly destroyed, and just within it a lime-kiln measuring 12 feet by 10 feet has been made, no doubt soon after the Suppression, for converting into lime the chalk of which so much of the walls was built. The rest of the area is filled many feet deep with fallen rubbish, but we ascertained that it had a tiled floor and had been roofed in one span. At a distance of $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet from the east wall

was a raised dais, 7 inches high, paved with tile. Along the south wall was a bench table, 18 inches high and the same in width, built of chalk; it had no step in front. Along the north wall a different arrangement prevailed. Here a step 13 inches high and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide led up to a bench table 16 inches high and 18 inches wide, all built of chalk. How these differing levels were returned across the east end is doubtful, owing to the destruction of the wall there. The unusual variation in the treatment of the side benches is not easy to account for, unless the nuns during chapter sat on the north and the novices facing them on the south. The exterior of the south wall was built of brick with stone courses.

The remains of the north wall suggest that the chapter-house has been lengthened by about one-third, probably in the fourteenth century.

From the chapter-house there extended northward a vaulted undercroft of five bays, about 90 feet long and $23\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, divided into two alleys by a central row of octagonal pillars. It had been so ruined that only the lower parts of its south end and east side and a fragment of the west side remained, and from these, and the bases of three of the pillars, the probable extent of the undercroft has been laid down on plan. The east wall had in the second bay from the chapter-house a recess like a fireplace, and there were doorways from without in the third and fifth bays. This last bay seems to have been cut off from the rest by a cross wall. There were also indications of a wall having extended westwards from the base of the second pillar, and round the base were some remains of brick paving. Both the doorways noted above had stepped sills. If there was an entrance from the cloister it must have been in the second bay.

The building just described probably served, at any rate as regards its southern end, as the *calefactorium* or warming-house, where the nuns might come and warm themselves in winter; and this is to some extent borne out by the discovery of pieces of coal and charcoal on the floor level. Owing to the complete destruction of the rest of the building there is nothing to show to

what use it was put, or whether and how it was further subdivided. There was probably a passage through the third bay.

Over all the buildings described above, from the church northwards, was the usual place of the *dormitorium* or dormer. It would thus have been nearly 120 feet long and have also extended over the chapter-house.

Nothing whatever of it remains, nor is there anything to show how it was approached.

Some indications of a transverse building at the north end suggest that the reredorter, of which there are no other remains, occupied that position.

The whole of the north side of the cloister was covered by the *refectorium* or frater. Like the dormer it was on the first floor, but there is none of it left. Some idea of its plan and extent can be gained from the scanty remains of the undercroft or cellars upon which it stood. These remains consist of portions of four buttresses and as many doorways of the south wall, and some rough foundations of the north wall. When laid down on plan they show that the subvault was ten bays long, and divided into two alleys by a central row of pillars, some of the bases of which remained. The two end bays were narrower than the others and probably served as passages through the range, which was 90 feet long and 20 feet broad internally. Of the four remaining doorways, one opened out of the western passage into the cloister; the other three led from the cloister into the frater subvault. The doorway next to this western passage, from its position in the range, most likely opened upon a flight of steps leading up to the frater. The pillars of the subvault were octagonal with the angles indented, and rising directly from flat bases $20\frac{1}{2}$ inches square.

Immediately to the west of the frater, in the angle formed by it and the western range, was the kitchen. It was an oblong building about 30 feet long and 19 feet wide, standing detached from and not quite square with the main building. As in other cases, the extent and arrangements of the kitchen can only be recovered by laying down on plan its few remaining fragments.

These consisted of the foundation of part of the north wall, with the hearth of a fireplace, a length of west wall, and the south-east angle. The fireplace was about 7 feet wide, and immediately to the west of it were the remains of a stone bench, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, against the wall. There were some doubtful indications of another fireplace opposite. The west wall had a plinth along it, and as a short length of similar wall was found in place about 7 feet east of it, it seems as if a passage that width had been cut off from the kitchen proper. In the eastern end of the kitchen a space 4 feet wide seems also to have been partitioned off, probably to form a service department. The east wall is too far destroyed to retain any remains of a doorway, but as there was one opposite in the west wall¹ of the frater range, which was only a few feet distant, it is probable that meals were served into the entry there and conveyed thence up to the frater. The kitchen was most likely entered from the passage west of it, and this in turn no doubt extended southwards to the western block of buildings.

To the north of the passage were some offices with which it communicated, but of these only some scanty brick foundations remained.

From the kitchen to the church, and covering the west side of the cloister, was a range of buildings 112 feet long and about 24 feet wide, with a return westwards near its south end. Circumstances did not permit a complete excavation of this, and only the outer walls could be traced.

From variations in the thickness of these, it is clear that the range consisted of an L-shaped block which did not extend as far as the church, but was connected therewith by a building with thinner walls.

The entrance was in the north end of the west wall, through a porch about 13 feet wide, but of uncertain projection, in which would also be the door to the kitchen entry. The north side of this porch was represented by a foundation 8 feet wide in continuation of the north end of the range, which was only $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet

¹ This could not be fully opened out because of a tree.

thick, and probably contained the staircase to the upper story.

There was no other doorway in the west wall of the range.

On the cloister side there were certainly two doorways into the basement, and breaches in the wall may indicate two others. One of these openings is at the north end; the other is between the two doorways. The northern of the doorways has a much worn sill. These entrances show that the basement was divided into a series of chambers, but no traces of the partition walls were met with, nor anything to show that the bays were vaulted. The remains of the western extension of the range were too fragmentary to enable anything definite to be made out about it.

In default of other evidence as to the arrangements of a Gilbertine house it is uncertain to what use this western range was put. The basement was probably in part a storeplace, but it may also have included an outer parlour where the nuns could talk with their relations under the conditions already noticed. The rest of it was most likely occupied by the lay sisters, who, it must be remembered, were secluded like the nuns; and as it was one of their duties to attend to guests, the upper story of the range probably served, at any rate in part, as the *hospitium* or guest-house,¹ as well as the dormitory of the lay sisters.

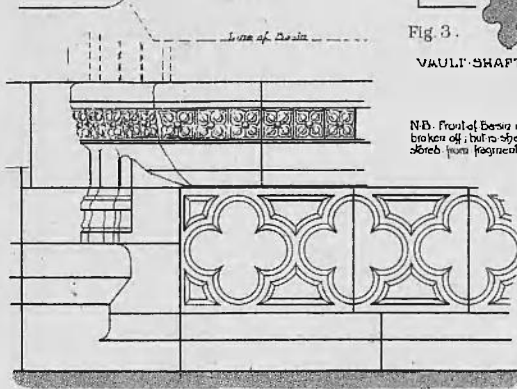
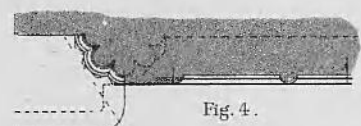
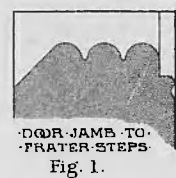
The ground story or basement of the building between the western range and the church had a doorway from without in the west wall and another on the east into the cloister. Both doorways are placed as far north as possible, as if opening into a narrow passage cut off from the rest of the room. This area south of the passage probably contained a staircase from the upper floor to give the lay sisters direct access to the church, but owing to the ruined condition of the south wall nothing definite can be said on this point. There are the remains, however, in the south-east corner, of a chalk foundation which may have served to support the

¹ "Sorores tamen hospitibus serviant, et in hospitio ministrent; et res hospitii custodiant; et in hospicio jaceant cum

opus fuerit, non moniales." *Institutiones ad moniales Ordinis pertinentes*, Cap. xxxiv.

WATTON PRIORY, YORKS.

DETAILS OF CANONS' CLOISTER.



PLAN & ELEVATION OF PART OF LAVATORY.

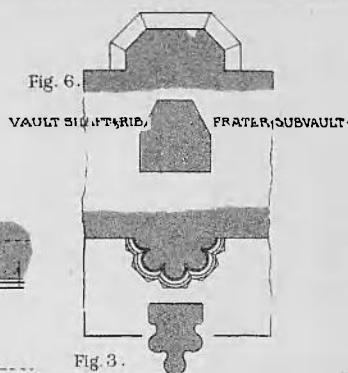
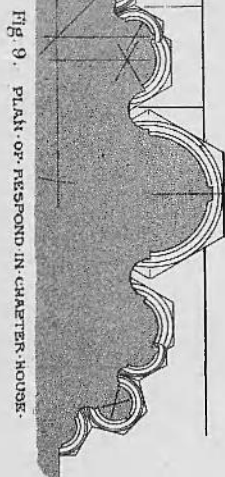
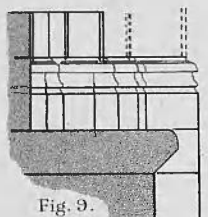


Fig. 3. Vault-shaft & rib in walk.

N.B. Front of Base is not broken off; but is shown as restored from fragments found.



Fig. 5. Section of Lavatory.

Fig. 2. Vault-shaft & rib at 0 on plan.

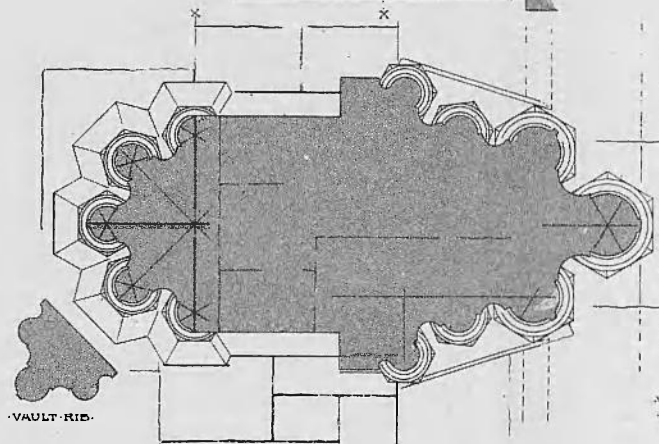
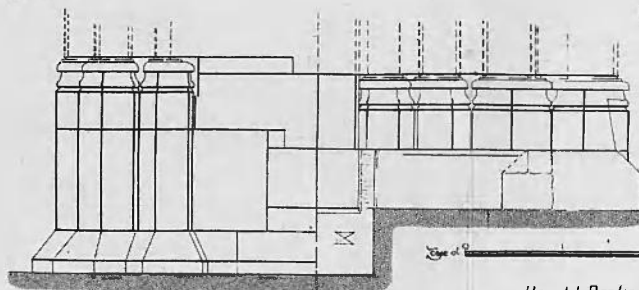


Fig. 8. Vault-rib & skap at 0 on plan.



Harold Brakspear, mens. et del. 1899.

stair. It has already been pointed out that there was a wide doorway into the room from the church.

The upper story probably contained an oratory for the use of guests, who were not allowed to enter the nuns' church. They apparently might hear the service from a gallery or closet, but were to withdraw before the nuns left their places so as to avoid being seen.¹

There is nothing to show where the nuns' infirmary stood.

From a doorway in the middle of the east wall of the dorter subvault a covered passage about 5 feet wide with thin walls led eastwards for about 80 feet to a small building of doubtful dimensions of which only some scanty fragments remained. These consisted of a wall crossing the passage, with another projecting from it eastwards, the sill of a wide doorway with two steps on its east side, and a further length of wall going southwards, from which other walls extended westwards. As the building stood midway between the two cloisters it probably also communicated with the eastern or canons' cloister by another passage leading directly to it, but this had been entirely destroyed.

From the building occupying such a position it is likely that it formed the *domus fenestrae* or window-house. This seems to have contained a very small window (*fenestra parvula*) at which conversation was carried on between the nuns and canons, and a great turning window (*magna fenestra versatilis*) through which food and other things could be passed. The opening of this window was to be less than 2 feet in height and width by three fingers' breadth all round, or about 18 inches square.² The window-house must have consisted of at least two chambers, one for the two nuns who waited at the window, the other for the canon (*frater fenestrae*) who attended on the other side, with the turn and window in the partition wall.

¹ "Hospitales vero sorores, in oratorium introducere hospites possunt, hospitibus paratum; dum moniales debitum horarum persolverint, set reducant eas antequam de choro exeant." *Institutiones ad moniales Ordinis pertinentes*, Cap. xxxiv.

² "Fenestrae autem versatiles, per quas cibaria communiter emittuntur, vix duorum pedum fiant in altitudine vel in latitudine, videlicet trium digitorum latitudine ablata hinc et inde." *Institutiones ad moniales Ordinis pertinentes*, Cap. vi.

The wall mentioned above as crossing the nuns' passage extended southwards for nearly 50 feet. It then deflected a little to the west for $31\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and finally continued with a further deflection westwards for 52 feet to the north-east angle of the nuns' church. The wall was throughout of a uniform thickness of about $2\frac{1}{5}$ feet, with a plinth on both sides. In the section next the church was another doorway. The space enclosed by the wall into which this led was probably the nuns' cemetery. It seems to have been subdivided in later times by a thin ashlar wall extending obliquely across it from north to south, just in front of the chapter-house. The object of this wall is not apparent, unless it was to shut out a possible view of the nuns from the late fifteenth century addition to the prior's lodging on the south-east.

THE CANONS' COURT.

The buildings of the canons' court, so far as they have been traced, consisted of a cloister 100 feet square, surrounded by vaulted alleys 14 feet wide, having on the east the dormer, above an undercroft containing the chapter-house, parlour, warming-house, etc. on the south the chapel, on the west the hall, and on the north the frater, which stood partly over the north alley of the cloister and partly over a vaulted undercroft parallel with it. Attached to the south-west angle of the cloister was the prior's lodging. The sites of the kitchen, the infirmary, and some minor offices have not been recovered.

The entrance into the cloister was by a doorway (Plate II. fig. 1) with two much-worn steps, in the north-west corner, in front of which a further series of five steps, segmental in plan and projecting into the alley, led down to the cloister level (Plate III.). The west wall in which the doorway was set has been destroyed almost to its footings, but a short length remained just to the south of the entrance, with the attached bases of the shafts that carried an arch which here spanned the alley on the line of the garth north wall (Plate II. fig. 2).

The north wall of the cloister remained to a height of



WATTON PRIORY—STEPS IN N.W. ANGLE OF CANONS' CLOISTER
AND BASE OF LAVATORY.



To face page 21.

WATTON PRIORY—FRAGMENTS OF THE LAVATORY IN THE CANONS' CLOISTER.

several feet for most of its length. It was built of ashlar throughout, and divided into seven bays by the vaulting shafts, which stood upon a stone bench, but that in the north-west corner was placed on top of the steps there. The plan of the shafts and the section of the vaulting ribs are shown in Plate II. fig. 3. The vault was a simple one with diagonal, transverse, and wall ribs. The surface of the bench table in the seventh or westernmost bay is greatly worn. In the next, or sixth bay, the place of the bench was taken by a richly decorated lavatory. This was recessed into the wall, and had an ashlar base with eleven moulded quatrefoil panels, above which projected the bason. This had a lovely row of four-leaved flowers along the front and bevelled ends, and was no doubt lined with lead. From the bason a down pipe carried off the waste water. Behind the bason was a ledge to carry the cistern; only the ends of this remained.¹ The lavatory was surmounted by a canopy of unusual richness, with a diaper of four-leaved flowers like those on the bason, painted alternately red and white with gold centres, and a crocketed pediment with the ball-flower in the hollow of the mouldings, also decorated with colour. Some of the larger fragments,² many of which were found buried in the rubbish, are shown in the accompanying illustration (Plate IV.).

The three bays beyond the lavatory were blank. In the second bay was a doorway, of which the west jamb only remained, and beyond this the wall had been destroyed. The doorway opened into a narrow undercroft of eight bays, parallel with the cloister alley, and vaulted throughout with simple groining springing from half-octagon vaulting shafts. The plan and section of these and the vaulting ribs are shown on Plate II. fig. 6. The wall dividing the undercroft from the cloister was only 21 inches thick.

The east alley was also seven bays long, but it differed from the north in having neither bench table nor vaulting shafts. For a little more than half its length the

¹ For plan and section, see Plate II. figs. 4 and 5.

² In the absence of any local museum where these beautiful fragments could

be properly kept and appreciated, they were all carefully packed in the lavatory recess and buried again for their better preservation.

wall had been greatly ruined, but the sides of a doorway opening eastwards were left in the first bay. In the fourth and fifth bays were two other doorways placed side by side; they were both alike, and apparently of some architectural pretensions. Each was of four orders, carried by a group of shafts, the bases of which remained in good condition, and had stepped sills (Plate V. and plan and sections, Plate II. fig. 7). Beyond the doorways the wall was found standing to a height of about 4 feet as far as the angle, but there were no other openings in it.

Of the south alley we were not able, on account of modern buildings, to trace more than a short length of wall towards the east. This had a doorway in the first bay into the chapel. Between the first and second bays was a group of shafts like those adjoining the entry in the western wall, to carry an arch over the cloister alley. To the west of the shafts part of a bench table remained against the wall.

The wall towards the garth has been completely destroyed, but we uncovered the plinth of one of the buttresses on the north side, from which the cloister has been laid down on plan. The alleys seem to have been 14 feet wide throughout.

Before noticing the remains of the buildings which surrounded the canons' cloister, it will be useful to refer to the survey¹ that was made of them, for the sake of the lead, before they were dismantled.

This survey formed one of a series, of which the others are at present lost, since the covering sheet is endorsed, "A view of superfluous howses covered wth leade in the Estridinge."

The document is undated, but for reasons presently to be given it was probably drawn up shortly after the suppression of the priory in December, 1539. It enumerates the various buildings, with their rough dimensions in yards, to which I have appended for convenience, in brackets, their equivalents in feet.

The text of the survey is as follows :



WATTON PRIORY—DOORWAYS OF THE CANONS' WARMING HOUSE
AND PARLOUR.

WATTON.

Este Rydinge in Com Ebor	The vewe and Certificate of all suche superfluous howses coveryd wythe leade as doo at this Instant remayn at the late p'orie of Watton in the Countie afforesaide.		
	viz.		
The Dortoure	Fyrste the Dorter in lengthe	xxxvij th yeardes	[111] ^{Feet}
	Item in Bredthe or depthe	xij yeardes di.	[37 $\frac{1}{2}$]
The Chapell	Item the Chapell in lengthe	xxxvj th yeardes	[108]
	Item in depth	x yeardes	[30]
The olde dinyng chamber	Item in lengthe	xij yeardes di.	[40 $\frac{1}{2}$]
	Item in Depthe	ix yeardes	[27]
The olde haull	Item in lengthe	xxxj th yeardes	[93]
	Item in depthe	xij yeardes di.	[37 $\frac{1}{2}$]
ij Chambers caullid the haull side	Item in lengthe	xx th yeardes	[60]
	Item in depthe	vij yeardes di.	[22 $\frac{1}{2}$]
The haull staires	Item in Bredthe	v yeardes di.	[16 $\frac{1}{2}$]
	Item in lengthe	v yeardes di.	[16 $\frac{1}{2}$]
The old Kytchen	Item about the Same in gutters and Spowtes wythe an olde Rouffe over the entrye leading ffrom the oute parte of the haulle to the said Kytchen conteine by estimacon		
	ij ffuthers leade		
A littill Chapell ioynge to the olde Dinyng chambre	Item in lengthe	vj yeardes	[18]
	Item in Bredthe	iiij yeardes	[12]
The entrie leading out of the dortoure to the Jakis house	Item in lengthe	v yeardes di.	[16 $\frac{1}{2}$]
	Item in Bredthe	iiij yeardes di.	[13 $\frac{1}{2}$]
The [Jakis house struck out] haull syde leades	Item in lengthe	xxvij th yeardes	[81]
	Item in bredthe	v yeardes di.	[16 $\frac{1}{2}$]
The lytill garner in the yarde	Item in lengthe	xvij th yeardes	[54]
	Item in Bredthe	vij yeardes	[21]
The ffrater	Item in lengthe	xxxv th yeardes	[105]
	Item Bredthe	xj yeardes di.	[34 $\frac{1}{2}$]
The Jakis house	Item in lengthe	vij yeardes di.	[22 $\frac{1}{2}$]
	Item in Bredthe	iiij yeardes	[12]

The dimensions given do not represent the actual length and breadth of each chamber, but the roughly paced measurements for the valuation of the lead. In the longer dimensions these are always a few feet short

of the actual lengths, as in the frater, dorter, and chapel, but the shorter widths agree more closely with the probable measurements between the parapets, or, if in excess of this, with the sum of the slopes of a ridged roof. Buildings covered with other than lead roofs are not included in the Survey.

The first of the buildings given in the list is the canons' *dormitorium* or dorter. This no doubt formed the upper story of the eastern range, which was 118 feet long and $29\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, but there is nothing to indicate the place of the stair by which it was reached. Nor can we at present locate the "entrie leading out of the dortoure to the Jakis house" or reredorter, but it was most likely at the north end. The "Jakis house" was $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and 12 feet wide, and the entry to it $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide.

The dorter stood upon a vaulted undercroft with a central row of columns, extending northward for eight bays from the south-east angle of the cloister. This sub-vault was divided by partition walls into at least four apartments.

The northernmost was most likely a cellar or store place. It was entered from the cloister by the doorway in the first bay of the east alley, and was three bays long. The vault, which was quadripartite with moulded ribs, was carried by the central row of columns and by clustered shafts against the walls (Plate II. fig. 8). It had not any wall ribs.

The next two bays probably served as the *calefactorium* or warming-house, where a fire was provided in winter for the canons to warm themselves at. It was entered by a doorway in its south-west angle.

The fifth bay had a doorway from the cloister and also another on the east. It probably formed the *auditorium* or parlour, where such conversation might be carried on as was forbidden in the cloister. It also served as a passage to the infirmary and as a lobby to the remaining bays to the south, which were entered from it.

These bays were originally prolonged eastward to form one large apartment 47 feet long and $29\frac{1}{4}$ feet wide, which no doubt was the canons' chapter-house, but the eastern division was pulled down after the Suppression

and the arches opening into it walled up. These arches were of two orders carried by moulded piers, the section of which is shown in Plate II. fig. 9. The chapter-house had a stone bench against the walls, which was also extended along the west end of the lobby as far as the doorway there. Upon the bench stood the vaulting shafts, as in the north alley of the cloister. The absence of a western entrance into the chapter-house is most unusual, and the arrangement can only be compared with the somewhat similar one of the chapter-house of the canons of St. George's chapel in Windsor Castle, built in 1360, which stood north and south with the entrance at the north-west corner.

The eastern range abuts on the south against the canons' chapel, the next building mentioned in the Survey, which covered six of the bays of the south alley of the cloister. It was an aisleless parallelogram measuring $114\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length by $24\frac{1}{4}$ feet in width, with certainly one (Plate II. fig. 10) and probably two doorways from the cloister alley. The lower part of its south wall and part of the west wall remain above ground, and together with the base of the east front, are of the same fourteenth century work as the northern and eastern ranges of buildings,¹ but the north wall is much thicker than the others and evidently formed part of an older structure.

Of the arrangements of the chapel we have no evidence, but a curious projection and thickening at the north end of the east wall, and a setting back of the adjoining section of the north wall, may point to the position here of a staircase from the dorter, which would thus have a doorway at its foot into the cloister. From an existing springer in the south wall it is clear that there was a vaulted ante-chapel in the western end, probably to support a gallery where guests might attend the services. A doorway, which is still in use, opened into the ante-chapel from without on the south, and to the west of this was another doorway, or more likely window, now blocked. Above these is a pointed doorway which opened southwards from the gallery on to a building

¹ Theplinths of the buildings are shown in section on Plate II. figs. 11 and 12.

outside, to be mentioned below. There seems also to have been a doorway into the ante-chapel in its north-west corner, but this was afterwards walled up.

After the chapel the Survey mentions the "olde dinyng chamber." This must refer to the fourteenth century building, which is still complete, attached to the chapel on the south-west. It is three stories high, and consists of (i) a basement $39\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and $19\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide,¹ vaulted in two bays with simple groining springing from carved corbels; (ii) a large chamber of the same dimensions on the first floor, lighted by a wide square-headed west window of five lights; and (iii) an upper story lighted by a two-light square-headed window, also in the west wall. A circular stair or vice, now blocked, in the south-west angle gave access from the basement to the upper floors, and in the north-west angle were the garderobes. All three stories are now subdivided by modern partitions into various apartments, but there can be little doubt that the large room on the first floor was the "olde dinyng chamber," with a cellar or servants' apartment below and sleeping accommodation above. The old roof was probably a nearly flat one covered with lead, as the dimensions given, $40\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 27 feet, are those between gable to gable and from side to side. The present roof is of high pitch, covered with slate. The two gables may have been built just after the suppression. The absence of original windows on the east is owing to the chapel being there.

On the east side of the block just described, and extending along the south wall of the chapel, are some traces of a late fifteenth or early sixteenth century gallery or ambulatory 12 feet wide, like an open cloister alley, vaulted in square bays with a lierne vault, the shafts and springers of which remain in the first bay. It must have had a flat roof, or one of very low pitch, since a doorway opened on to it from the chapel gallery. Its purpose and extent are alike doubtful.

Of the next four buildings mentioned in the Survey, viz. the "oulde haull," "ij Chambers caullid the haull side," the "haull staires," and the "old Kytchen," there

¹ This has in the east wall a late Tudor doorway with carved spandrels, but all its other openings are modern.

are no remains. The old hall, since it had stairs to it, probably stood upon a vaulted basement or cellar. It most likely formed the western range of buildings, and if the lines of the north wall of the chapel and of the north side of the cloister garth be produced westwards, a hall of the length given, 31 yards from gable to gable, would just fill the space. Its width was apparently the same as the eastern range.

The chambers called the "haull side," and the stairs, probably abutted against the west side of the hall, the former at the south end, the stairs at the north. The latter would thus open into the screens, whence there was an "entrye leading ffrom the oute parte of the haulte" to the "old kytchen," which probably stood semi-detached on the north. The dimensions of neither entry nor kitchen are given.

The western range of buildings stood on a higher level than the cloister, hence the steps in the north-west angle of the latter.

The north-west corner of the "olde dinyng chamber" block does not seem to have had any building against it, and the old hall must therefore have stood away from it as suggested on the plan. But against the eastern half of the block there was clearly a two-storied building. The lower story was vaulted,¹ and probably served as an entry into the cloister. The upper story formed the "littill Chapell ioyninge to the olde Dinyng chambre," next mentioned in the Survey, the roof dimensions of which exactly agree with those of a building fitted in here. The little chapel had probably west and north windows, and must have been entered from the old dining chamber which it adjoined, although there are now no signs of a doorway.

The next item in the Survey which concerns us is "the haull syde leades." There can be little doubt that this entry refers to the west side of the cloister, which adjoined the hall, and the length given, 27 yards, or 81 feet, is almost exactly that from the little chapel northwards to the north end of the hall, while the width, $5\frac{1}{2}$ yards, or $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet, is the extreme breadth of the cloister alley.

¹ One of the wall ribs of the vault may still be seen.

Both the hall and hall side ended northwards against the frater, which is the last of the claustral buildings mentioned in the list.

The usual place for the frater was against that side of the cloister which was remote from the church, and the dimensions given, a length of 35 yards and a breadth of $11\frac{1}{2}$ yards, enable us to assign it this position here. In most houses of canons the frater stood upon an undercroft, which served as cellarage, but in this instance the subvault was only half the width of the frater, which must, therefore, have extended southwards over the north alley of the cloister. The thinness of the cloister wall on this side is thus accounted for, since it had merely to help to support the frater floor.

The frater was no doubt reached by a continuation of the steps in the north-west angle of the cloister. Its total length was $111\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and its breadth $28\frac{3}{4}$ feet, but the westernmost bay would be cut off to form the screens, leaving seven bays clear to form the frater proper; its position over the cloister enabled it to be well lighted from both sides.

According to the Statutes, the food served in the canons' frater was cooked in the nuns' kitchen and passed through the turn in the window-house. As this kitchen at Watton was 350 feet away from the frater, it is difficult to see how the dishes were kept hot during such a journey, especially with the additional delay midway while they were being passed through the turning window. It is, therefore, not surprising to find, as we do from the Survey, that the canons had a kitchen of their own, which no doubt served the frater as well as the old hall. Its possible position is indicated on the plan.

Of the last of the buildings mentioned in the Survey which have not been noticed, the "lytill garner in the yarde," we know nothing beyond the dimensions of its roof, 54 feet by 21 feet. It was perhaps placed to close in the west side of a yard next the old hall, and so helped to shut out the view of the nuns' cloister.

It has now been shown that the Survey includes all the buildings round the cloister, but it makes no mention of the east and south alleys, probably because they were

roofed with tile or slate instead of lead, nor of the remainder of the existing house upon the site.

This may now be described.

The house in question consists of three blocks: (i) that on the north already noticed under the name of the "olde dinyng chamber;" (ii) a smaller and later block to the south; and (iii) a larger and still later block on the west.

The smaller block is a three-storied *camera* of the fifteenth century, standing east and west against the south wall of the fourteenth century block. The windows have been modernised and the interior subdivided, but there is little difficulty in making out its arrangements. On the ground floor was a room 27 feet long and $15\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, with a fireplace in the south wall, which also contained one or more windows.¹ The east wall had a small loop in its north end, but was for the most overlapped externally by a half-octagon projection which contained a stair to the first floor; this projection was also continued southwards to contain a garderobe shaft from the upper chamber. On the first floor was a room of the same size as that below, but in later times the west end was probably partitioned off, as now, to allow of communication between the three divisions of the house; it had a garderobe in the south-east corner and was lighted by square-headed windows in the south wall. The third story seems to be of later date, and was perhaps added when the western block was built. The present high-pitched roof is covered with slate.

The western wing, unlike the others, which are for the most part of ashlar, is built throughout of brick with stone dressings. It now consists of a three-storied block, standing north and south, with large octagonal turrets at the western angles and a lesser turret at the south-east corner containing the staircase. Projecting from the west front towards its northern end is a handsome two-storied oriel.

The house had formerly a wing at the south end, also of three stories, projecting from it westwards just north

¹ The present windows are modern.

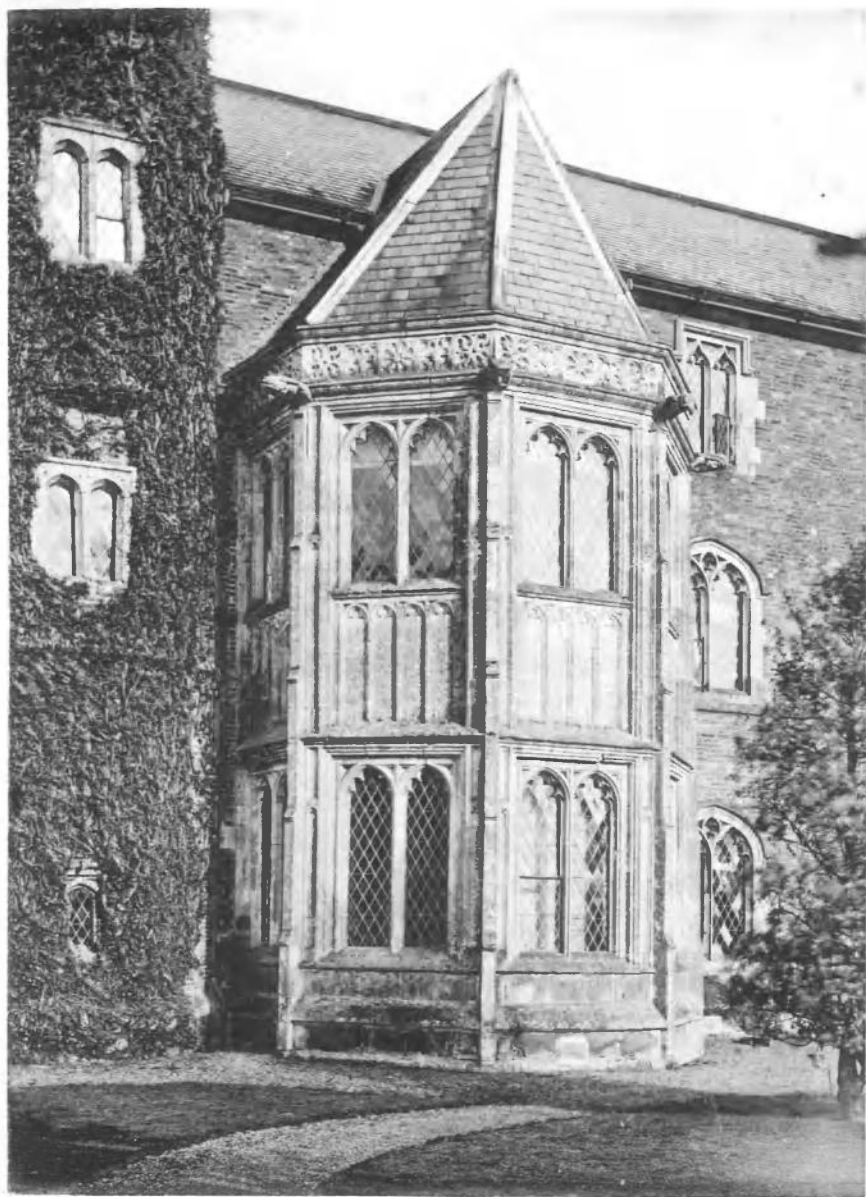
of the turret,¹ but it was taken down about 1840, and all traces of the junction carefully effaced.

The ground floor and the first story of the existing block were identical in plan. Each consisted of a hall $52\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and $19\frac{3}{4}$ feet wide, with a panelled arch opening into the oriel. In the middle of the east wall was a fireplace, and in the south-east angle was a doorway into the vice, which extends from the ground floor to the roof. The other turrets had small chambers on each floor. The south-west turret probably contained the garderobes. The turret windows are original, but the others are modern, and it is doubtful how far they represent the older ones. The oriel was ceiled and not vaulted. The third story is a huge attic, amply lighted by large and original five-light windows at each end, and probably served as a dormitory. Externally this western block is greatly overgrown with ivy, which of course obscures many interesting architectural features, but it is fortunately kept clear of the oriel. This is one of the finest examples of its kind in the country (Plate VI.). It is semi-octagonal in plan, with a moulded plinth, and has in each side two two-light square-headed windows, one above the other, separated by a band of panelled ashlar. On the angles are slender buttresses of five stages. These end under a parapet, enriched by a continuous series of traceried panels. The effect of the whole, which is in perfect preservation, is enhanced by the carved figures projecting as gargoyles below the parapet on the four free angles. The present roof is a pyramidal one covered with green slate.

There can be little doubt that the existing house formed the prior's *camera* or lodging. In the fourteenth century it consisted of the northern block only, but in the next century this was enlarged by the southern block. About the end of the fifteenth century the western block was added.

It will be noticed that the Survey mentions the "oulde haull," the "olde dinyng chamber," and the "old kytchen," but says nothing about a new hall, etc. If such existed, as we may certainly assume they did,

¹ See the engraving in G. Oliver, *Town and Minister of Beverley in the History and Antiquities of the County of York* (Beverley, 1829), 529.



WATTON PRIORY—ORIEL OF THE PRIOR'S LODGING.

these must have formed part of some building of more recent date which was not one of those deemed to be superfluous. The western block of the existing house is exactly such a building as meets these requirements. The ground floor formed the "new hall," the hall above it "the new dining chamber," while the "new kitchen" and its appendages formed the ground story of the destroyed west wing. This opened directly into the screens at the south end of the hall, whence the stair in the south-east corner enabled the service to be readily extended when necessary to the dining chamber above.

As the accommodation afforded by the three blocks forming the prior's lodging must have been somewhat in excess of what was needed by himself and his household, it may be concluded that he also lodged here, as was usual, persons of quality who were the guests of the monastery. The ordinary guests of the middle class would of course be housed by the cellarer in the old hall and the chambers forming the "hall side."

The canons' infirmary has yet to be sought for, either eastwards of their cloister, which is the more likely place, and where there is plenty of room for it, or south of their chapel.

One other point on which light is wanted is the way by which the canons went from their cloister to the great church, where their quire was in the south aisle. If the "hall side" stood where suggested in the plan the canons might have left the cloister by the entry under the little chapel, and traversed a pentise extending along the hall end and "hall side" and thence to the south-east angle of the church and round to a doorway in the south wall. We have of course no evidence of this course, but it is not easy to suggest a simple alternative, and in view of the fondness for pentises in religious houses it may have been that actually adopted. The space between such a pentise and the nuns' cemetery wall would serve for the canons' cemetery.

The Survey makes no mention of any building that could have been used by the *conversi*, and there is no accommodation for them in the canons' cloister. Possibly

by the time the latter was rebuilt the *conversi*, as among the Cistercians, had given place to hired servants who for the most part lived at the granges. If any such were lodged in the priory their quarters have yet to be found.

The outer court of the priory must have been on the north, and the entrance to it on the west where the lane now called the Avenue abuts on the precinct. There are no remains of the gatehouse nor of any of the buildings, such as the stables, bakehouse, brewhouse, etc. that usually stood in the outer court. The only building now on the site is a long range of stabling, etc. standing east and west, to the north of the present house, and known locally as the Nunnery. It is a picturesque two-storied structure with four-centred doorways and square-headed windows, built entirely of brick and roofed with tile, but is apparently of a date subsequent to the suppression of the priory.

The north side of the outer court is bounded by a running stream, which rises somewhere to the north-west, and also furnished a branch that once formed the western boundary of the precinct. After traversing the north side it bends southwards at a right angle and passes under the building described above through a wide archway. It reappears a few yards south of this, but after skirting the base of an old wall for about 130 feet it is covered over and runs through a stone tunnel beneath the canons' buildings, finally emerging from under the south end of the present house. It thence continues southwards and discharges into another stream which bounds the precinct on the south along Church Lane.

Previous to the building of the western block of the prior's lodging the stream was open there, and spanned by a bridge. This was not destroyed when the block was added, but the parapets were removed and the bridge utilised as part of the tunnel. It measures 10 feet across, with a span of 11 feet, and is ribbed beneath in a manner characteristic of the fourteenth century, to which period it belongs.

The fate of the priory buildings at the Suppression is not easy to make out. It is clear from a letter addressed to Cromwell on 18th March, 1539-40, by

Robert Holgate, bishop of Llandaff, who held the priory *in commendam*, and surrendered it in December, 1539, that he had applied for a grant of it to him for life.¹ The result was the issue of letters patent, dated 16th July, 32 Henry VIII. (1540), granting to Robert, bishop of Llandaff and lord president of the Council of the North, “totum illud nuper Monasterium sive Prioratum nostrum de Watton in Comitatu nostro Ebor. Ac etiam totum dictum scitum fundum circuitum et precinctum ac ecclesiam ejusdem nuper Monasterii sive Prioratus,” together with divers manors and other properties. But “omnia et singula debita Catalla bona mobilia et immobilia dicto nuper Monasterio sive Prioratui de Watton predicto tempore dissolutionis ejusdem spectantia sive pertinentia tam ea que predictus Episcopus nuper Commendatorius et ejusdem loci Conventus adtunc possidebant quam ea que obligacione vel alia quacumque de causa ipsis vel dicto Monasterio sive Prioratui quoquomodo debebantur ornamentis jocalibus et vasis argenteis ad dicta officia psallendis cultumque divinum in ecclesia principali sive majori de Watton predicta vocata *the Nunnes Churche* infra idem nuper Monasterium destinatis occupatis seu positis necnon omnibus edificijs tectis plumbo et Campanis ejusdem ecclesie principalis et aliorum edificiorum infra circuitum et precinctum Monasterii ibidem nobis semper et omnino salvis et reservatis.”²

It will be seen that this grant makes over the precinct and the church, probably the canons' chapel, to Holgate, but reserves to the king all the jewels and ornaments used in the principal or greater church, called the nuns' church, as well as all buildings covered with lead and the bells of the principal church and whatever others there were.

Surveys were no doubt thereupon made of what buildings were covered with lead, and considered superfluous. That which dealt with the nuns' church and the buildings attached to it is lost, but the Survey of the

¹ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII.* xv. No. 362, p. 143.

² Public Record Office. Augmentation Office Book 235, ff. 13, 14.

canons' court has survived, and the above cited grant enables it to be approximately dated.

The buildings forming the prior's lodging, although in part covered with lead, were evidently spared as being a convenient mansion to live in, while the remainder were dismantled and eventually demolished.

Holgate was advanced to the archiepiscopal see of York in 1545, but deprived early in 1554, and in the following year he died. The priory of Watton seems, however, to have reverted to the Crown some time before, for in 3 Edward VI. (1549), an exchange was effected between the king and John (Dudley) earl of Warwick, by which the latter received *inter alia* "Firma Scitus sive capitalis mancionis dicti nuper Prioratus [de Watton] cum omnibus terris pratis pascuis et pasturis dominicalibus eidem prioratui pertinentibus sive expectantibus nuper in Manibus et occupatione nuper Prioris et Conventus ibidem die dissolutionis ejusdem nuper Prioratus per annum xliij. li."¹

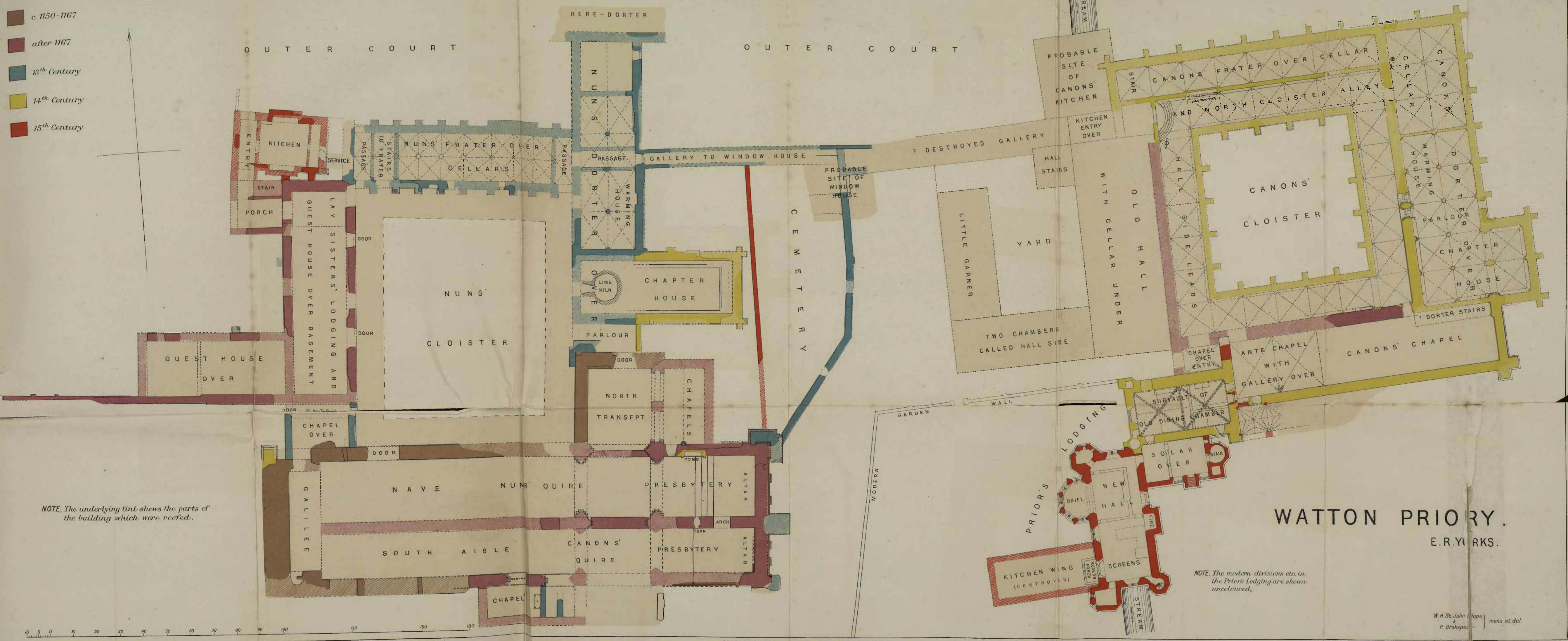
This grant was confirmed to John Dudley, as earl of Northumberland, in 7 Edward VI. (1553), in identical terms.² After his beheading the same year Watton again reverted to the Crown on the forfeiture of all his honours and estates. Its further history does not fall within the scope of this paper.

In conclusion, I must express my thanks to Mr. William Bethell, the owner, and the late Mr. Richard Beckitt and Mrs. Beckitt for many kindnesses during the progress of excavations, and to Mr. William Stephenson, of Beverley, and Mr. John Bilson, F.S.A., for much kind help. I have to thank Mr. Harold Brakspear, F.S.A., who was my companion in 1898, for the plate of architectural details, for the use of the photographs reproduced as illustrations, and for drawing the plan of the remains of the canons' cloister. For the rest of the ground plan I am myself responsible.

¹ P. R. O. Particulars for Grants 3 Edward VI. Augmentation Office, File 2.046.

² *Ibid.* 7 Edward VI. File 1821.

- c. 1150-1167
- after 1167
- 13th Century
- 14th Century
- 15th Century



NOTE. The underlying tint shows the parts of the building which were roofed.

NOTE. The modern divisions etc. in the Priors Lodging are shown uncoloured.

WATTON PRIORY. E.R. YOKES.

W. H. St. John & H. Brooks
mens. et del.