

# THE BLUE BOAR INN, SALISBURY

## AN EXISTING 15th-CENTURY BUILDING AND THE CONTRACT FOR ITS ERECTION

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The indenture transcribed at the end of this paper, and now in the County Record Office at Trowbridge on loan from the South Wiltshire and Blackmore Museum, is dated 16 December, 1444. It is a contract for the erection of a small timber building for a private person; it has twice been published<sup>2</sup> and might seem to warrant little further comment. It is, however, a significant document for it can be shown to relate, in all probability, to a structure still standing. To show this, it is necessary first to establish the site of the 'hows' (house) specified in the indenture and then to establish the original character of the building now upon that site.

In the terms of the contract the building was to be erected 'with ynne the Boor agenst the market place of Salesbury' by John Fayrebowe, carpenter of Bishopstrow near Warminster, for William Ludlow. 'The Boar' or 'White Boar' as it was known in the mid 15th century (the name was changed later to 'Blue Boar') was an important Salisbury inn. That the reference is indeed to this inn is made reasonably certain by an entry in Bishop Beauchamp's *Liber Niger* of 1455, eleven years later, that records the receipt of rent of assize from William Ludlow for 'his Inn called Boore'.<sup>3</sup>

The Boar Inn has now disappeared but it was still in existence in 1721,<sup>4</sup> and its site was recorded in 1843 as the premises of Messrs. Style and Large, predecessors of the present firm of Style and Gerrish.<sup>5</sup> Their property extends today, and extended in 1854 when Botham drew up a town-plan of Salisbury, from Blue Boar Row to Chipper Lane and has a carriage entrance from the latter. Not very much is known about medieval inns,<sup>6</sup> but often they fronted or abutted on a street and had an entry from it into a courtyard. Sometimes, for easier access they also had an entry from a street at the rear. It is not possible to be certain about the extent of the premises of the 'Boore' in 1455, but the property had been in the possession of Thomas Burford,<sup>7</sup> who in 1404 made a grant to his daughter Johanna and her husband William Toyl of 'all my tenement where I live, with shops, cottages and gardens, in a street called Chepyn Place opposite the market where corn is sold and extending as far as Chipperstreet'.<sup>8</sup> It is very likely that these were the premises that Ludlow had acquired and converted to an inn by 1444. Translated into modern names the

<sup>1</sup> The building was discovered in the course of the survey of Salisbury City by The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). We are grateful to the Commissioners for permission to publish this paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*, xv (1875), 330; L. F. Salzman, *Building in England* (1952), 516.

<sup>3</sup> Muniments of the Dean and Chapter: *Liber Niger*, f. 155.

<sup>4</sup> C. Haskins, *Ancient Trade Guilds and Companies of Salisbury* (1912), 334.

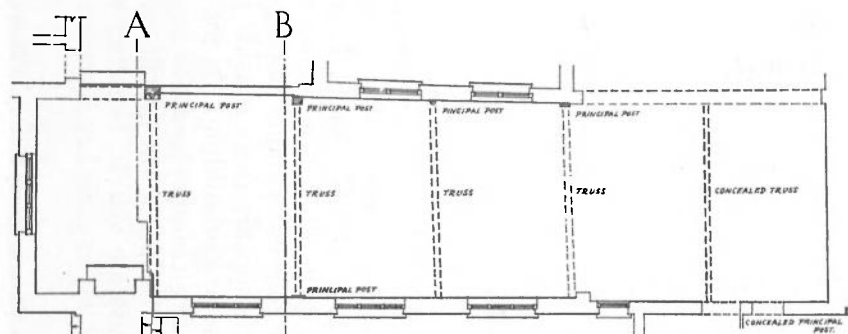
<sup>5</sup> Sir R. Colt Hoare, *History of Modern Wiltshire* (1843), 207.

<sup>6</sup> For an important comparative study see W. A. Pantin, 'Medieval Inns', in *Studies in Building History* (ed. E. M. Jope, 1961), 166.

<sup>7</sup> *Liber Niger*, loc. cit.

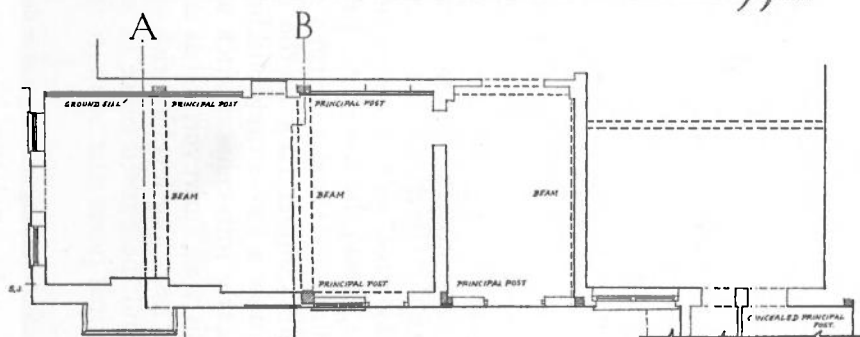
<sup>8</sup> Salisbury Corporation Muniments, *Domesday Book* (1398-1413), f. 99.

# SALISBURY, BLUE BOAR ROW, 15<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY BUILDING IN THE PREMISES OF MESSRS STYLE & GERRISH

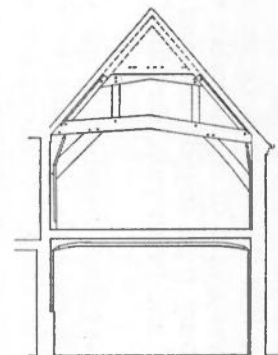


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

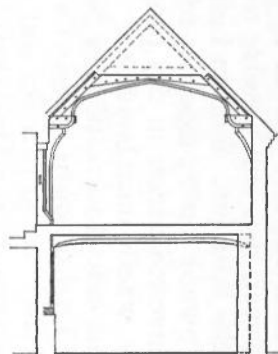
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GROUND FLOOR PLAN



SECTION B-B



SECTION A-A

H. BAINBRIDGE, A.R.C.S.

Fig. 1. Plans and sections of building in Blue Boar Row  
(Crown Copyright, R. C. H. M., England)

grant shows that the property extended from Blue Boar Row to Chipper Lane and that the Boar Inn of 1455 very probably occupied the site, admirably suited to a medieval inn, now owned by Messrs. Style and Gerrish.

However, it is still possible to argue that the contract of 1444 does not refer to the Boar Inn. William Ludlow was a man of considerable wealth. In 1455 he owned more properties in Salisbury than anyone else and it is clear that he invested widely in city property,<sup>1</sup> and 'with ynne the Boor' is not, in Salisbury, wholly unambiguous.

As its official name of New Sarum suggests, Salisbury is not one of the oldest of English towns. It was founded in the early 13th century as the result of the decision to transfer the seat of the see from the hill-top fortress of Old Sarum, which the priests had shared, with growing reluctance, with the garrison of the Royal castle there, to a less crowded and more peaceable site. Like some earlier medieval 'New Towns', such as Ludlow in the early 12th century and Bury St. Edmunds in the late 11th, New Sarum was laid out on a gridiron plan that divided its area into a number of roughly rectangular blocks. This pattern and the application of the name of 'chequer' to the blocks, together with the runnels in the middle of the streets that once gave Salisbury a very distinctive appearance, can be seen in the map of 1716 here reproduced (Pl. IV). Most of these 'chequers', and especially those near the centre, were named after the most prominent building in them. 'Trinity Chequer', for example, was named after the Trinity Almshouses, but generally the most prominent building was an Inn: thus '3 Swans Chequer', 'White Horse Chequer' and, to the present purpose, 'Blew Bore Chequer'.

It could therefore be argued that 'with ynne the Boor' of the indenture means no more than 'within the Boar chequer', and that since William Ludlow is recorded as holding many properties in Salisbury the contract of 1444 need have no connection with the Boar Inn. However, researches into the Corporation muniments and into a large number of private deeds<sup>2</sup> have produced no instance of the use of the term 'chequer' or of its equivalent, nor evidence of a practice of identifying a property by locating it within such an area, before 1603. There can be little doubt that 'within the Boar' in 1444 meant 'upon the premises of the Boar Inn' and, in consequence, that the contract of that year refers to a building upon the site of the present premises of Messrs. Style and Gerrish.

Behind Style and Gerrish's main shop in Blue Boar Row, opposite an entry into Chipper Lane at the rear and running parallel with both streets, there is now a two-storey building, which appears from outside to be a late 18th or early 19th-century brick warehouse or outbuilding. At the east end of the north wall, however, it has a protruding chimneybreast of stone (Pl. VA) rebuilt at first-floor level in brick of c. 1700. Inside, on the first floor, four whole trusses and the curved brace of a fifth truss are visible, together with five of the principal posts that support them (Fig. 1); in each bay between the wholly

<sup>1</sup> For Ludlow's standing in the city and in the county see Victoria County History, *Wiltshire*, vi (1962), 104, 127, 150.

<sup>2</sup> By Miss Marion Dale, for the Victoria County History of Wiltshire and kindly communicated to the Commission, and by our colleague, Mrs. Helen Bonney.



Plan of Salisbury, by William Nash, 1716



A. 15th-century chimney breast in N. wall, Messrs. Style and Gerrish

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B. Bedroom in a medieval inn, from a 15th-century MS. in the Hunterian Collection (MS. 252, 'Les cent nouvelles nouvelles').

(Reproduced by permission of the University of Glasgow)



C. Principal post, first floor, Messrs. Style and Gerrish

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visible trusses wind-braces can also be seen. The trusses, so far as can be seen, are alternately collar-beam trusses with curved braces below and tie-beam trusses with queen struts. Their character and that of the posts and wind-braces makes it plain that this is a timber-framed building of the 15th century; it was altered and cased in brick at a later date. The question arises whether this is the building referred to in the contract: the coincidences of site and of century although suggestive are not enough in themselves.

The surviving visible trusses and posts are indicative of at least four bays, each just over 11 ft. long. At the east end of the building no trusses or posts are visible but a surviving wind-brace proves the existence of another original bay here, while the ashlar quoins at the north-east corner which appear to be part of the original walling in support of the chimneybreast, and which do not bond in with the later east wall, show that the building did not extend any further to the east. At the west end also there is nothing of the old timbering visible but the present west wall is just over 10 ft. from the westernmost, partly visible, truss; a distance which, allowing for the refacing of the old wall, perfectly fits the assumption of a further original bay at the west. This assumption is strengthened by a vertical crack in the plaster at the north-west angle which suggests a hidden corner principal post. All the evidence tends to show that the original timber building had six bays; thus it must have had fourteen principal posts; and this is the number that the contract specifies. According to the contract the posts were to be 16 ft. long; and the existing ones, allowing for tenons at either end, conform to this length. They were to be 13 in. broad by 12 in. thick; the only post of which the breadth and thickness can be taken is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  in. by  $11\frac{1}{2}$  in., and these measurements, allowing for surface treatment, again conform very closely.

A reference in the contract to stairs shows that a two-storey building was proposed. There are two storeys in the existing building now, and it can be asserted that there always were. The one principal post wholly visible on the first floor has been given an elaborate splayed and chamfered base at first-floor level (Pl. Vc) and the principals visible on the ground floor have run-out stops that finish just beneath the ceiling beam. It is clear therefore that the floor is not, as so often, a later insertion. Further, the contract calls, rather surprisingly in such a modest building, for two stairs.

It is, of course, possible to argue that this means no more than two flights of stairs. However, it is clear that the contract does not envisage more than two storeys, and as the first floor is only  $10\frac{1}{2}$  ft. from ground level two flights fitted into the ground storey would have been a hindrance rather than a help. We ourselves have never come across a building of this kind and date that had more than a straight flight of stairs to the upper floor. Further, the reference to 'ij stayers' rather than to 'a stair' or 'stairs' is a rare one. We have found only one other instance, in London in 1512, where the contract demands that 'the same house shall have two lofts and one oversett w<sup>t</sup> ij stayres to the said ij loftes'.<sup>1</sup> It hardly needs arguing that this means two separate stairways, and

<sup>1</sup> Salzman, *op. cit.*, 560.



there can be little doubt that the 'Blue Boar' contract means the same. The building is now without stairs; but there is reason to surmise that it had two originally, for the underside of the second tie-beam from the east has been slotted and cut in such a way as to show that a cross partition existed on the first floor. If there were no doorway in the partition, separate stairs would have been necessary for access to the two sides. But on this point there is no proof either way: the regular spacing of the slots in the tie-beam provides no evidence of a doorway; on the other hand, the slots are neither so widely nor so closely spaced as to preclude a doorway with its jambs worked in the uprights and with a lintel tenoned into the latter above head height.

However, there is one major difference between contract and building; the contract called for a length of 63 ft. and a width 'with ynne the wallys' of 20 ft., whereas, so far as the later brick casing allows estimation, the building was originally  $67\frac{1}{2}$  ft. long and 17 ft. wide. The width of a timber building is limited by the lengths of the timbers available, and it may be that the carpenter was unable to get a greater span than 17 ft. and so extended the building lengthwise to compensate for the reduction in width. Though this may appear a facile explanation, something of the kind is demanded in face of the weight of evidence of the close agreement between contract and building in the number of bays, the dimensions, especially the height of the principal posts, and, probably, the two stairs.

Although later alterations might seem to have robbed the building of much of its interest, it is nevertheless of value as a probable example of the type of accommodation provided in a medieval inn. An inventory of 1473 of the George Inn in the High Street shows that each room contained the necessary furniture and equipment to enable several people to eat and sleep in it, rather as in a ship's Mess or a 'communal bed-sitter'.<sup>1</sup> This communal aspect is well illustrated by the accompanying 15th-century MS. illumination, now in the Hunterian Collection at Glasgow, of an inn room at bedtime (Pl. Vb). The rooms varied too in the quality of their furnishing and equipment. The Blue Boar building was not the whole inn and there is no inventory to explain it, but the surmise may be made that it was intended as an addition that would itself provide two levels of accommodation. The first floor, as described above, was formerly divided; on the east was a room with a fireplace so sited that it could never have been meant to heat the whole floor, and on the west was a larger and unheated room. A similar arrangement was made in an addition to the Angel Inn at Alresford, Hants., in 1418 where the main floor was divided into two parts, one of which, called the parlour, was finished in a better manner than the other.<sup>2</sup> Fire and light were, sometimes at least, charged as extras on medieval innkeepers' bills. Thus this combination of a small heated room and a large unheated room suggests that superior and more private accommodation was being made available for those few who could afford standards of comfort above the ordinary. That some men did expect the higher standards is shown by a guide to French conversation of c. 1396, wherein a

<sup>1</sup> Colt Hoare, *op. cit.*, 770-1.

<sup>2</sup> Salzman, *op. cit.*, 494.

traveller, obviously of some social standing, upon arriving at an Inn is given a chamber of his own with a fire.<sup>1</sup> The ground floor of the 'Blue Boar' building has less well-preserved details and presents many difficulties of interpretation. It is however possible that, as on the first floor, the east part was intended to be superior to the west.

Although the Salisbury building is undistinguished and the contract only one of many, the two together provide a sufficiently rare instance of a small building and its probable contract surviving from the Middle Ages, while this double survival serves to illustrate some of the features of a medieval inn.

## APPENDIX

*Contract for the erection of a building in the Blue Boar, Salisbury, dated 16 December, 1444.*

This Indenture ymade at Newe Salesbury the xvj day of Decembre yn the xiiij<sup>th</sup> yere of the regnyng of Kyng Harry the vj<sup>th</sup> bytwene William Ludlowe of the on party and John Fayrebowe carpenter of Busshopppestrowe yn the countie of Wiltes of the other party Witnessith that the seyde John shal make to the seyde William an hows with ynne the Boor agenst the market place of Salesbury forseyd conteynnyng yn lengthe lxiiij fot and with ynne the wallys xx<sup>th</sup> fote And the groundsilles yn brede of xv ynche And yn thiknesse x ynche And xiiij principal postis every post xvj fote of lengthe And yn brede xiiij ynche and yn thiknesse xij ynche And every somer yn brede xvj ynche and yn thiknesse xv ynche And every juyste viij ynche yn thiknesse And ix ynche yn brede And x ynche by twene every juyste And every byndyngbeme yn thiknesse ix ynche and yn brede xv ynche And every walplate of viij ynche in thiknesse And ix ynche in brede And every cours restour<sup>2</sup> iiij ynche thikke at the top and at the fote v ynche And of brede vij ynche at the fote and v ynche at the top And with vj wyndowes clenly accordaunt And ij stayers And by twene every restour ix ynche And the Sideresons<sup>3</sup> yn brede of xj ynche and vj ynches of thiknesse with braces wel accordyng: Whiche hows above seyde shal be wel and trewly made of sufficiant tymber and clene with oute Sape or wyndshake reprevable and redy to be set up And arered by the feste of the Nativite of oure Lady next comyng after this present date: To the whiche hows the seyde John shal fynde alle manner tymber bordis for doris and for wyndowes and stodes to alle the walles: And the seyde William shal fynde alle manner naylle yregare<sup>4</sup> breydyng<sup>5</sup> helyng<sup>6</sup> wallyng And masons work thereto langyng Also ij men laboryng with the seyde John vij dayes at the reryng of the forseide hows with mete and wages and mannys mete and drynke for alle the cariage of the seyde tymber at Salesbury at the seyde William his owen costs And also paye to the seyde John for the seyde hows makying And tymber ther to fyndyng yn alle manner wyse after the forme above seyde y made and performed as workmanship axeth xx<sup>li</sup> of money at iij dayes to be payd that ys for to seye at the by gynnyng of the seyde hows makying yn tymber hewyng x marks: At the bryngyng hom of the seyde tymber to Salesbury x marks and whanne the seyde hows ys ful made and doris and wyndowes y set up and hangeth x marks To alle these convenauntes wel and trewly to be performed the seyde Wylliam yn his party and Robert Warmwell bynden hem to the seyde John yn xx<sup>li</sup> to paye yn the feste of oure Lady above seyde And also yn the same wyse the seyde John yn his party And Symond Poy bynden hem to the seyde William yn xx<sup>li</sup> to pay yn the feste above seyde In Witnesse wherof the seydes of the seyd parteys of these yndentures interchaungeably to these present indentures er set the day and yere aboveseyde.

<sup>1</sup> *Revue Critique*, x (1870), 373.

<sup>2</sup> *restour*: rafter.

<sup>3</sup> *Sideresons*: wall-plates

<sup>4</sup> *yregare*: iron gear.

<sup>5</sup> *breydyng*: wattling.

<sup>6</sup> *belyng*: roofing.