

Plans of Glastonbury Abbey.

I have never seen the original plans of Hope, Bond or Fyfe. But as they are all published this is of no great consequence.

The Committee, which ran the excavations from 1926-39 had the structural remains plotted on the general plan made by Bond (see below). W. J. Wedlake, who acted as Foreman, also made detailed plans illustrating details of the finds. I could only find one of these in the Abbey Gatehouse - the east end of the Chapter House. I have a copy of this traced by myself. To complete a plan for the Summer Meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute a draughtsman was sent down from the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. He did not make a resurvey of the whole abbey, but added the Saxon Church of which he made a full survey and half of the east range. He only showed walls and restorations of missing walls. The plan was drawn out by Vera Dallas of RCHM under the supervision of Clapham, Secretary of RCHM. (Ant. Journ., x, 24; Arch Journ., lxxxviii, pl. x; Sanhs. Proc. lxxvi, pl VI). A similar procedure was followed with the south end of the east range (Sanhs. Proc., lxxx, 32). From 1935 on the area of the Abbot's House to the south west of the site was explored ending in August 1939; no survey was made from RCHM. But a plan was filed in Abbey Gatehouse, which on stylistic grounds I attribute to Wedlake. The site was left open and fenced off and so remained till I began work in 1951. The Trustees were anxious as a first stage to have the site covered up and levelled. I assumed the plan was accurate and only needed redrawing, tested the sequence in a several places and levelled the whole area. There was no masonry remains worth preserving ~~and~~ for exhibition and the buildings were to be marked out on the site. I took a copy of the filed plan.

Reference has been made to Bond's general plan, which forms the basis of all subsequent plans. This was published in 1913, 'corrected to 1912!' (Sanhs. Proc. lxx, 56, pl. I), overlaid with a grid of 74 ft. squares. The cloister is a perfect rectangle with the church, east range and refectory framing it on three sides also shown as rectangular. Bond was a trained and competent architect and his layout was not questioned. But a year earlier in 1911 (Sanhs. Proc., lvii, 76, pl II) he had published a careful survey of the Refectory subvault and the adjacent parts of the cloister; this shews that the axis of the subvault and the adjacent cloister walk diverges from a right angle to the east and west sides of the cloister (and the east range) by about 4 degrees. The surveyor of the southwest area of the abbey ignored the divergence and assumed that the west side of the cloister and the west end of the refectory were in a straight line, which he used as the base for his triangulated survey. As a result the whole survey is vitiated.

There should be in the Gatehouse: 1. Wedlake's plan of east end of Chapter House; 2. plan of southwest area; 3. copy of my plan of cloister area, confirming divergence of south range from grid.

3 x 1988

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