PORTLAND COTTAGES, BURWASH

By DAVID MARTIN

Portland Cottages, originally Burwash Rectory, consisted in 1969 of a terrace of four dilapidated black weatherboarded cottages, situated in a cul-de-sac at the rear of a 19th century terrace of houses on the southern side of Burwash High Street (Fig. 1a). Their position, reached only by a tunnel through the terrace, literally invited decay, and in 1968 the Battle Rural District Council acquired the property, together with Portland Terrace and the adjacent Congregational Chapel, for redevelopment purposes. A public inquiry followed, and as the building was apparently of no outstanding architectural interest, and in a bad structural condition, permission for demolition was granted.

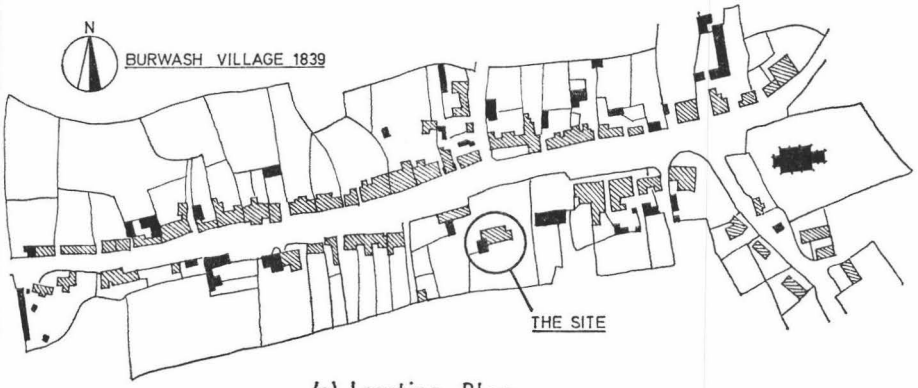
During the stripping, which preceded demolition, it became increasingly obvious that the archaeologists had failed to recognize the true context of the building. What had at first been regarded as a poor example of a typical medieval hall house slowly emerged as the major portion of a lofty, high class Rectory, originally over sixty feet long. In the light of these findings, fresh negotiations were opened with the Rural District Council. Although it proved impossible to save the building on its original site, the Council agreed to dismantle the frame carefully and donate it to the Landmark Trust with a view to its re-erection on a site near Crawley.

THE MEDIEVAL STRUCTURE

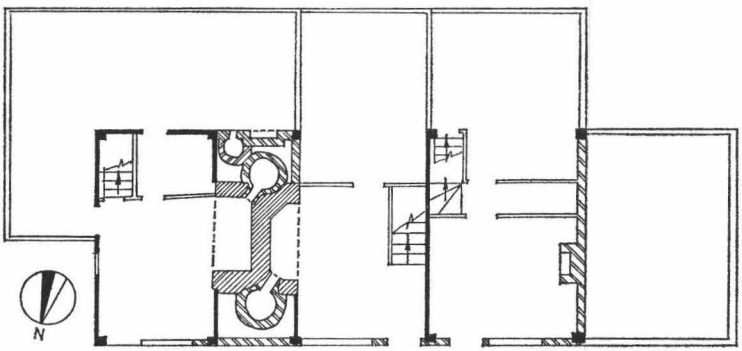
Layout and Design (*Fig.* 2)

The building originally consisted of a two bay hall, solar, parlour, services, great chamber and eastern bay. The western, or ' upper ' bay of the hall was open to the roof, whilst that at the ' lower ' or cross passage end was overshot by the western bay of the great chamber; the remaining bay of the chamber being set over the services, situated immediately east of the hall. The central open truss of the great chamber had a cambered tie-beam with free-standing crown-post above, and knuckle type spandrel braces below.

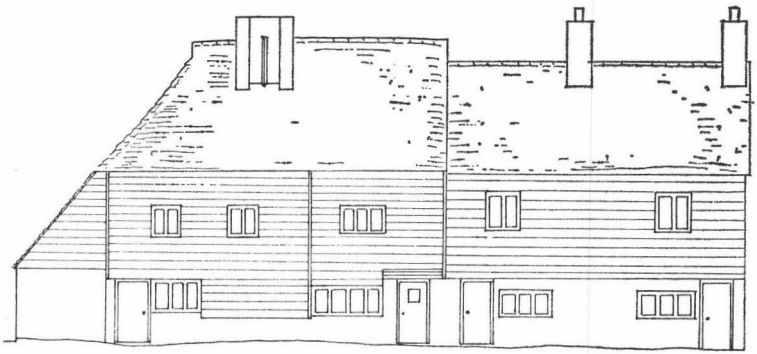
Access to the chamber was by way of a stairladder which was reached by a plain square-headed doorway at the southern end of the service/hall partition. This doorway remained and was rebated on the hall side clearly showing that the door was hung to open outwards into the hall, unlike the remaining doors in this partition



(a) Location Plan.



(b.i) Ground Floor Plan.



(b.2.) North Elevation.

(b) DETAILS OF BUILDING 1969.

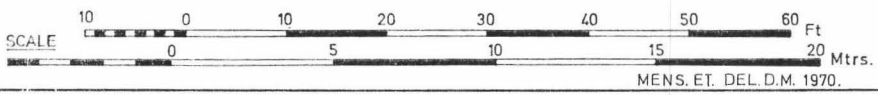


FIG. 1

which opened into the services. The trimming in the joists for the stairladder was still visible, as was the groove in the underside of the trimming joist for the wattle and daub partition dividing the staircase from the southern service room.

The remainder of the ground floor of the service bay was divided by a central access passage into two service rooms, these being reached by three centrally set doorways in the service/hall partition. The partitions between the services and the passage had been removed, but originally consisted of puncheons morticed into the soffits of two of the longitudinally-set ceiling joists.

The passage originally gave access to an eastern bay, demolished *c.*1600, and was the only link between this and the remainder of the house. Mortices for joists showed that this additional bay was originally of two stories, a gap in the mortices at the northern end of the cross-beam marking the position of a stairladder giving access to the chamber above.

At the opposite end of the hall a single bay accommodated the parlour on the ground floor, and solar above; both apartments were reached by a single door set at the southern end of the hall/parlour partition. The original joists in this bay had been removed, but it seems probable that the stairladder giving access to the solar was set against the south wall, close to the doorway. The principal feature of the solar was its oriel window set in the north wall; this is described in greater detail later.

The main entrance to the house was by way of a door set in the northern wall of the lower bay of the hall. Another doorway in the south wall opposite probably led to a detached kitchen.

The Demolished Eastern Bay

As has been stated, the sole method of communication between this bay and the remainder of the house was via the central service passageway. This meant that both this and the adjacent service bay had to be equipped with stairladders giving access to the chambers above.

What was the purpose of this bay? It is unlikely to have been an attached kitchen as it was not only of two stories but all existing timbers were clean, showing no signs of sooting. The answer is probably found in the status of the structure; namely that it was a Rectory attached to a high class living[1]. Prior to the Reformation, indeed for several years afterwards, the celibacy laws prevented the English clergy from marrying, consequently the higher class clergy often employed full-time housekeepers. A section of the house

[1] The Rectory was a sinecure, being held by a priest other than a vicar until the middle of the 18th century. (V.C.H., *Sussex*, vol. 9, p. 199).

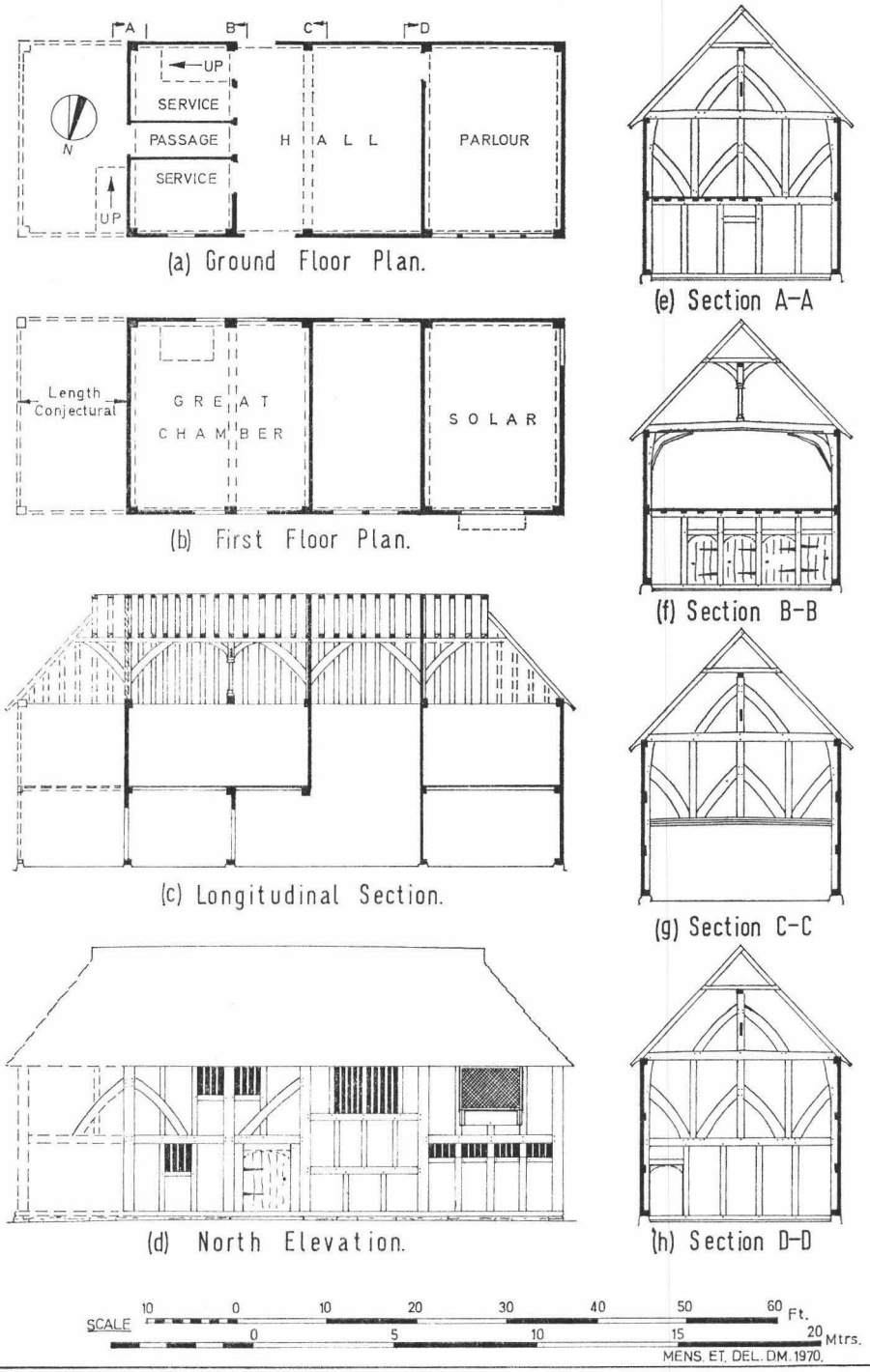


FIG. 2
Details of building, *c.* 1450

was usually divided off to form a virtually self-contained flat and it seems probable that this additional bay at the service end formed such a flat.

Wall Design (*Fig.* 2*d-h*)

All cross-partitions within the building were based on the same design, having three vertical studs with foot-bracing to the principal posts and central stud at first floor level, and four vertical studs at ground floor level.

The design of the external walling was more varied. On the street elevation the framing to the two-bay great chamber was taken as an entity. At the ends the principals were foot-braced whilst that in the centre was flanked on either side by a small four-light window. The bays had two and one stud respectively, the studs being notched on their external face to accommodate the braces where these crossed. The design on the rear elevation appears to have been a copy. The northern wall of the service below consisted of an intermediate stud set on either side of a centrally set four-light unglazed window. The design of the corresponding south wall is not known.

On both the south and north elevations the lower hall bay was taken up by an external doorway. The northern main entrance door occupied the whole of the bay, having jambs set against the principals. The southern door was smaller and had a wide stud acting as a jamb on its western side, the eastern jamb was formed by the principal.

The upper bay of the hall had twin bressumers to both its northern and southern walls, one bressumer being set near the base and the other near the head of the wall. The lower panel was divided into three by a pair of sturdy vertical studs whilst the remainder of the wall was fitted with three vertical studs. The two central panels at the head of both the north and south walls were occupied by five-light unglazed windows, the central stud forming a massive mullion between the two openings.

The design of the southern solar/parlour wall is not known but that on the north elevation was divided into four panels by vertical studs. It would appear from the mortices that this ground floor section had a range of four shallow four-light windows set just below the bresummer.

The first floor section of this wall is of considerable interest as it originally contained an oriel window, possibly glazed. The evidence is rather mutilated and an accurate reconstruction is not possible, but from what remained it would appear to have been of the ' square-cheeked ' type, a good example of which can be seen in the High Street of Westham village. It would appear that the ' splayed-cheeked ' oriel was by far the more common type used; although, to the author's knowledge, there has never been a survey

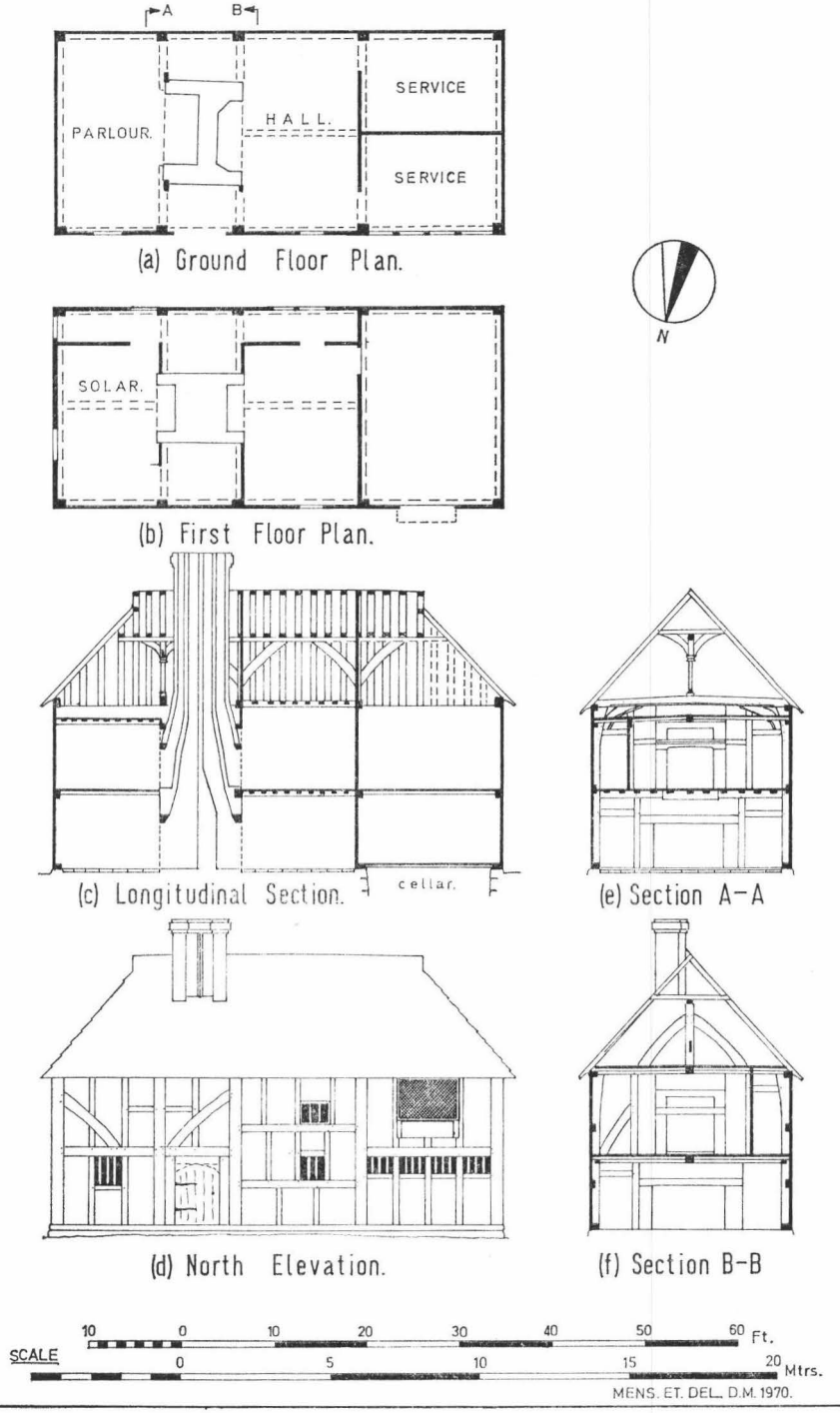


FIG .3
Details of building after the 16th century modifications

undertaken to establish the distribution or chronological significance of the varying forms. The only other square-cheeked oriel known to him is at 'The 15th Century Bookshop', 99 High Street, Lewes, a sketch of which is shown in Fig. 4A. As at Lewes all that remained at Burwash was the blank opening consisting of a pair of strong vertical studs with deep horizontal rail set between them, just above the line of the bressumer. This timber, which had been removed at Burwash, would have supported the brackets to the underside of the bay window. Two horizontally set mortices in the plate above marked the positions of the cheeks of the oriel.

Decor

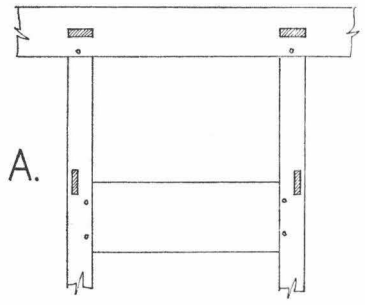
The parlour doorway, together with the range of three service doors, originally had shaped spandrel heads morticed into a moulded headbeam and jambs. The shape of these spandrel heads is not known as all had been removed. The head beams and jambs however did remain and these were of two orders, the outer order consisting of a plain chamfer and the inner one a hollow chamfer (Fig. 4D). The rear of the openings were rebated to accommodate a square-headed door. Only the mortices for the two external doorways remained, but that on the north elevation would almost certainly have had a shaped spandrel head.

The cross-beam between the upper and lower bays of the hall was moulded with large hollows and rolls, a simple but effective treatment (Fig. 4B). The crown-post over the open truss in the great chamber was of equally simple design (Fig. 4C) consisting of a square shaft with neatly stopped chamfers, a plain rounded hollow and roll base and a cup comprising merely of a roll set between two rounded hollows. It had high-set fourway head-braces.

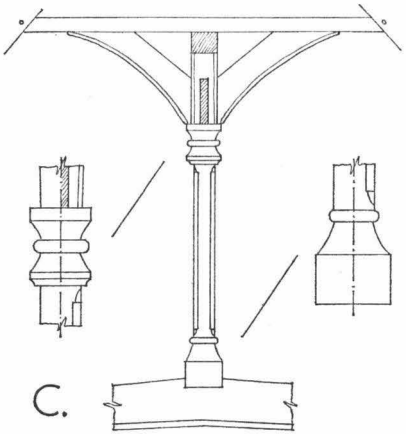
The remainder of the beams within the house were plain save for a neat stopped chamfer to all leading edges, including those of all joists, which were straight and very unlike the usual rough, unstraightened medieval joists.

It is interesting to note that although the windows in the southern elevation were of the usual type with diagonally set diamond-shaped mullions, those on the west, south and probably east elevations, which were visible from the street, had octagonal mullions. The two outer chamfers of these mullions were hollow, as too were those to the external leading edges of the head, cill and jambs (Fig. 4E). There were no grooves for sliding shutters and it must therefore be assumed that these would have been side hung.

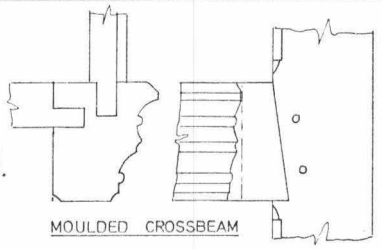
Where the medieval plasterwork remained, its surface had been decorated with simple line patterns formed with a five toothed comb (Fig. 4F). The best preserved panels were in the end partitions of the hall, at both first and ground floor levels, and on a small section of the north wall of the solar. The latter was also decorated on the external surface suggesting that, at least on the



REMAINS OF ORIEL AT 'THE 15TH C. BOOKSHOP' LEWES.

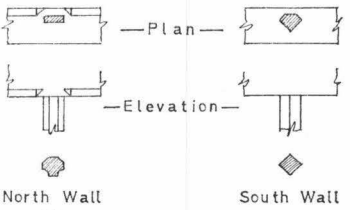


DETAILS OF CROWNPOST

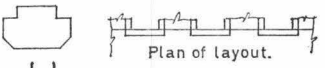


MOULDED CROSSBEAM

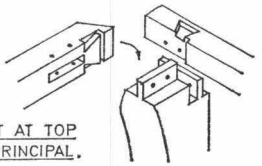
SECTION THRO' DOOR JAMB



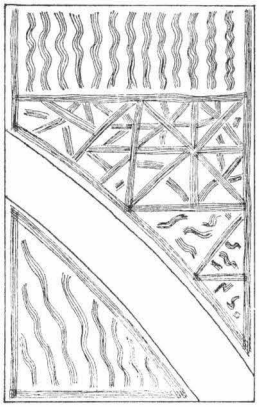
E. DETAILS OF WINDOWS.



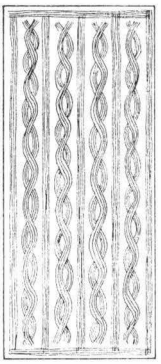
H. JOIST DETAILS

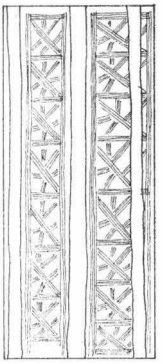


JOINT AT TOP OF PRINCIPAL.

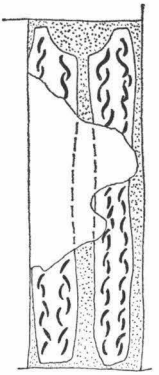


F[1] PLASTER PANEL IN HALL [HALL/SOLAR PTN.]





F[2] Hall side Parlour side PANEL IN HALL/PARLOUR PTN.



G. WALL PAINTING ON REVEAL OF FIREPLACE

SCALE NO'S. A.C.F. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 FEET

SCALE NO'S. B.D.E.G.H. 0 1 2 3 FEET

MENS. ET. DEL. D.M. 1970

FIG. 4

north elevation, the external plastering was also treated in this way. All surfaces were left showing their natural yellow colouring, with the exception of those in the hall which were smoke-stained to a light grey colour. This staining was very thin and at no point was there any soot encrustation. It is worth noting that the laths to the panels were nailed to the side of the puncheons and not woven around them as is usual practice.

Construction Details

It is only when a house is demolished that a comprehensive study can be made of the types of joints used in the construction of the frame.

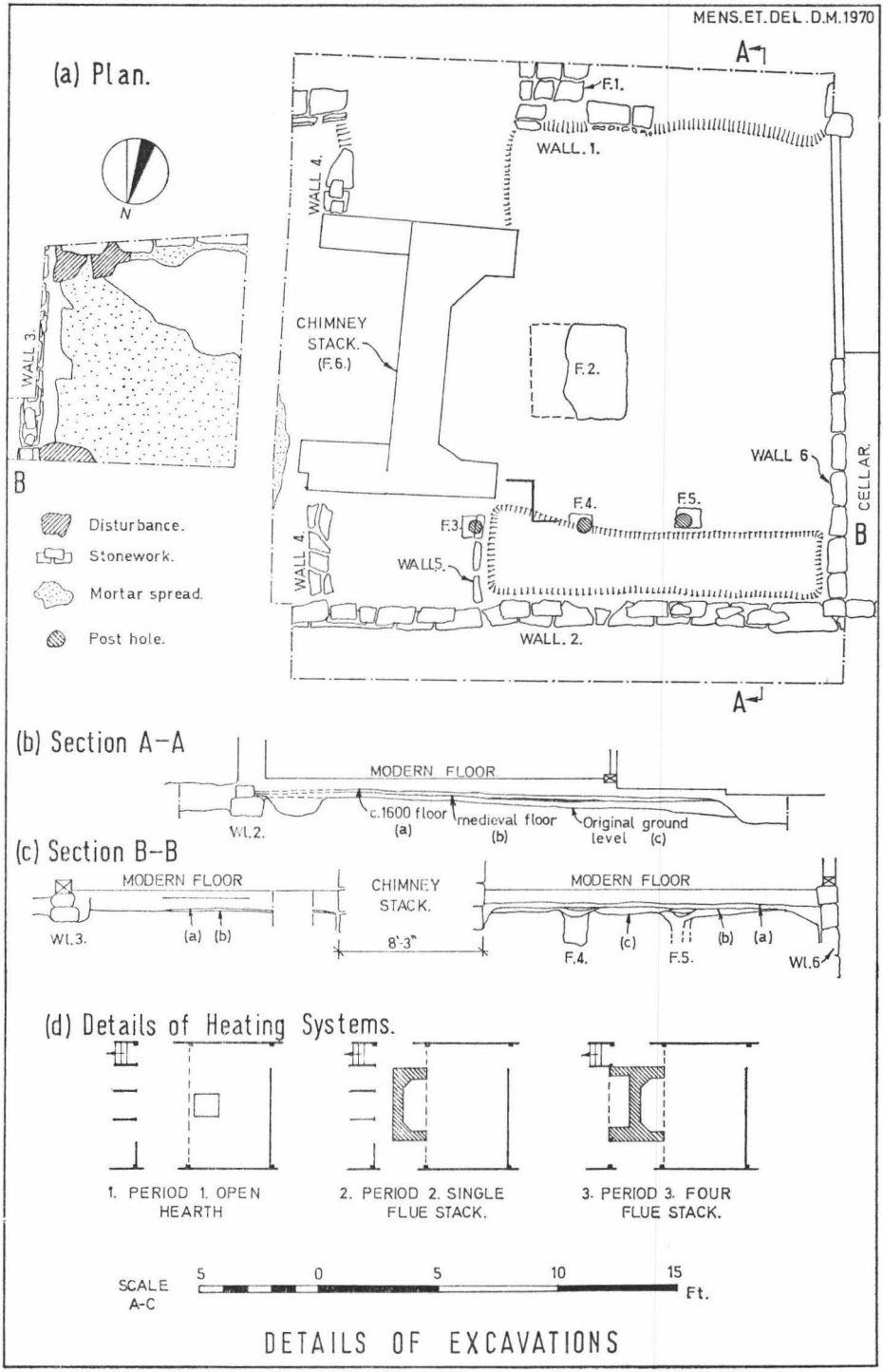
The most common form of joint was, as usual, the mortice and tenon. This was used at the junction of bressumer to principals and at every point where an intermediate stud met the main frame, it was also utilized at the ends of window cills and door jambs.

There are three standard methods of jointing collars to the rafters, the straight halving, the dovetailed halving and the mortice and tenon. The latter was the most expensive and seems to have been used in most early buildings of any consequence in the south of England[1]. During the 15th century however the dovetailed halving was adopted more and more for use in upper vernacular buildings, a trend which was probably caused by the realization that this form of joint was quite adequate. At Portland Cottages this change in thought appears to have reached a transitional phase, as although all the common rafters are jointed to the collars by dovetailed halvings, those over the trusses were still morticed and tenoned. All full-length rafters contained a blind peg hole in the side just above plate level, these being without exception sited at the same point and on the same side of each pair of rafters. These are found quite commonly in medieval buildings and it has recently been suggested that they were used for fixing side sprockets to the feet of the rafters.[2] This is certainly not the case here, however, as the rafters extended a full twelve inches beyond the plate and were equipped with splay cut and slightly concave feet. Furthermore the holes were absent from the unpaired jack rafters, which they would not have been if used for sprockets.

The joists were of considerable interest as they were rebated on their upper leading edges to accommodate either floor or ceiling boards, which ran with the joists instead of spanning across them (Fig. 4H). The rebate was also found on the cross-beams, pre-

[1] Most early crown-post type roofs utilized the mortice and tenon, two examples being the 13th century king-post roof at Robertsbridge Abbey and the crown-post roof at Old Soar Manor, also of the 13th century. Halvings appear to be used however in the more primitive 13th century roofs over timber-framed constructions as at Old Court Cottage, Limpsfield, Surrey, and Purton Green Farm, Stansfield, Suffolk.

[2] *Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Guide*, p. 11.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(a) Plan.
N
WALL 3.
B
Disturbance.
Stonework.
Mortar spread.
Post hole.
A
F.1.
WALL. 1.
WALL 4.
CHIMNEY STACK. (F.6.)
F.2.
WALL 6
CELLAR.
F.4.
F.5.
F.3.
WALL 4
WALL5.
WALL. 2.
(b) Section A–A
MODERN FLOOR
Wl.2.
c.1600 floor (a)
medieval floor (b)
Original ground level (c)
(c) Section B–B
MODERN FLOOR
CHIMNEY STACK.
MODERN FLOOR
Wl.3.
(a) (b)
8'-3"
F.4.
(c)
F.5.
(b) (a)
Wl.6
(d) Details of Heating Systems.
1. PERIOD 1. OPEN HEARTH
2. PERIOD 2. SINGLE FLUE STACK.
3. PERIOD 3. FOUR FLUE STACK.
SCALE A-C
5 0 5 10 15 Ft.
DETAILS OF EXCAVATIONS

FIG. 5

sumably to accommodate the end of the boards. It is usually thought that these rebates accommodate floor-boards, but this is a comparatively weak form of construction as not only does the grain of the boarding run in the same direction as the span of the joists, but as soon as the boards begin to rot the edges would break away and the boards lose their bearing. An alternative explanation is that ceiling boards were laid between the joists, floor-boards being laid over them spanning across the joists in the usual way. Both methods would give a high-class ceiling finish which would be in keeping with the quality of the joists. A variety of joints for fixing joists to cross-beam were used; in at least one bay they were housed at one end, instead of morticed, so that they could be fitted after the frame was erected.

The cross-beams were morticed to the principals, but as in some other local houses the shoulder of the tenon was splayed and set on a notch cut out of the face of the principal post. This feature was apparently aimed at giving the joint greater strength vertically (Fig. 4B). The moulded cross-beam, being of additional width, was equipped with double tenons.

All splices in wall plates and collar purlin were achieved by the use of a typical horizontally halved scarf as illustrated in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vol. 81, p. 4, Fig. 1D. The joint of wall-plate and tie-beam to principal post however was not typical (Fig. 4J). In general format it was quite normal but it contained two peculiarities; the wall-plate was reduced in width at the principal post and the dove-tailed joint between tie-beam and wall-plate was ' stopped ' on the external surface.

Summary and Dating

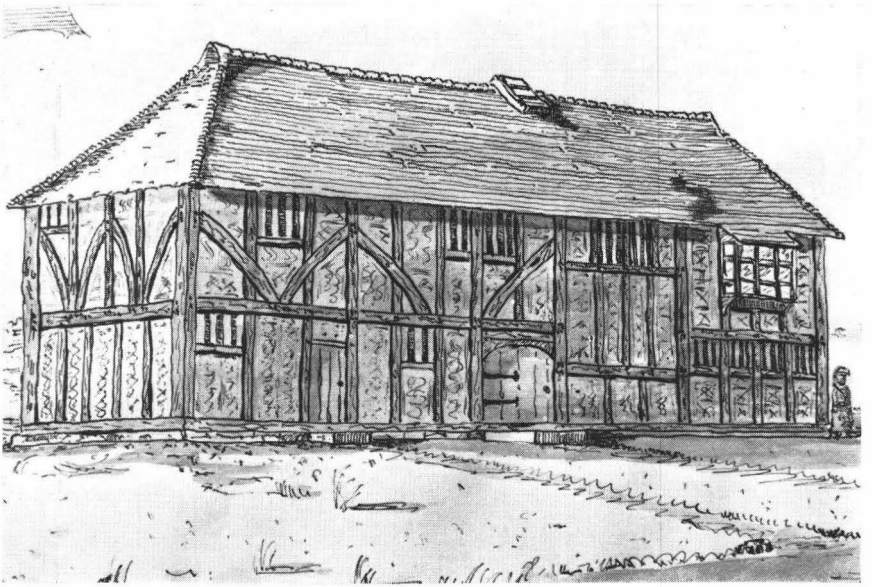
The most striking feature of the building was its plainness for a structure of such high class. It is usual for upper vernacular and manorial buildings to be liberally decorated with mouldings, but here there was less elaboration than in the normal yeoman's hall. This had not effected the character of the building; where used, the mouldings were clear, simple and effective. The construction generally was exceptionally good, the timber was of massive scantling and had without exception been well finished with smooth surfaces and neat chamfers; the joints, too, were well cut and of quite adequate proportions.

The roofs were of tile[1] and were thus pitched at a slight angle. As the building was relatively narrow compared with its height, the roofs appear slight against the vast area of exposed side wall and this does to some extent detract from the building's otherwise perfect proportions.

Dating a structure is always difficult and it is here increased by the absence of parallels for comparison. The overshot lower bay

[1] See below under ' The Excavations ', p. 27.

PLATE I

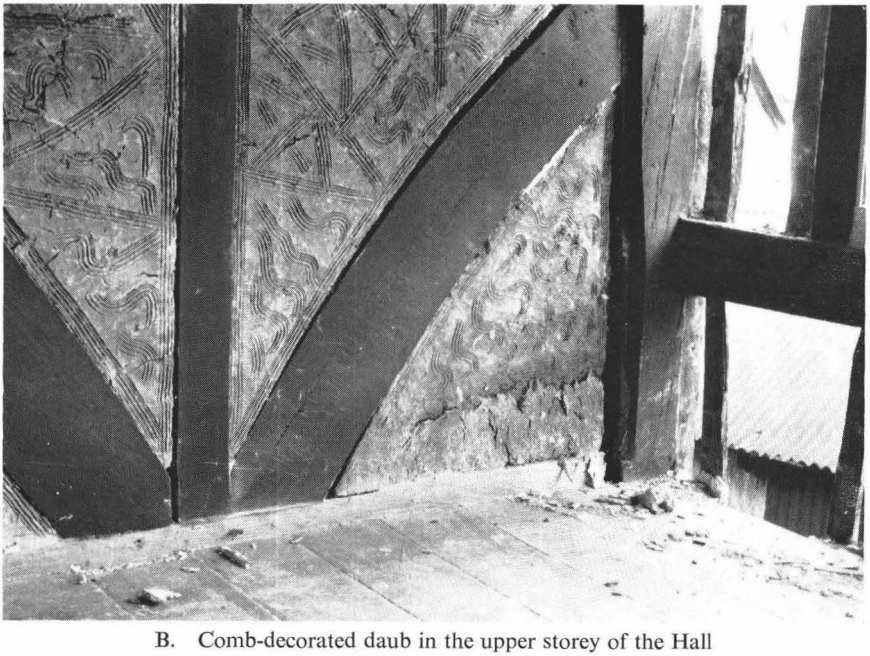


A. North Elevation *c.* 1450

B. Interior of Hall, *c.* 1450 showing overshot lower bay

PLATE II

A. Roof to the open bay of the hall



B. Comb-decorated daub in the upper storey of the Hall

PLATE III

A. Original west wall showing scale of structure and false walling to north elevation

B. South elevation of building during stripping, 1968-9

of the hall is thought to have been in use from the beginning of the 15th century or earlier[1] and became more and more common towards the end of the medieval era. The dovetailed halving joints between the majority of collars and rafters in a building of this status suggests a relatively late date, although not as late as if no mortices and tenons had been used. Bearing these points in mind the building is most likely to have belonged to the second half of the 15th century, although the absence of some of the expected refinements, such as sliding window shutters, may suggest a slightly earlier date.

Alterations and Modernizations

Modifications of circa 1500

It seems likely that at the close of the medieval period a lath and plaster chimney stack was inserted into the open hall, just east of the central truss. The lower six feet of what was probably a stone screen was discovered incorporated into the lower section of the central chimney stack when it was demolished, but all traces of the chimney above had been destroyed when the brick stack was inserted. The eastern face of the cross-beam was badly charred at this point, a feature which is unlikely to have occurred after the insertion of the brick stack. The roof to the open hall was remarkably clear of soot blackening although there was some smoke staining. This either suggests a very short life to the open hearth or the use of relatively smoke-free fuels such as charcoal.

Late 16th Century ' Modernizations '

During the second half of the 16th century the entire structure underwent a massive ' modernization ' which completely changed both the character and layout of the building (Fig. 3).

The adjustment which most altered its external appearance was the demolition of the eastern bay. It would appear that this had been made redundant either by the change in law which allowed clergy to marry, or through a severe drop in the status of the building. The former seems the more likely as the modernizations do not give the appearance of economic restriction. The partition crown-post between the flat and the great chamber was dismantled and the roof at this end reframed to form a hip.

As was usual at this period, a floor was inserted into the open bay of the hall at first floor level. This consisted of neat small scantling lateral joists trimmed into a central girder and supported at the perimeter by an inserted longitudinal trimmer.

The insertion of this floor rendered the existing hall fenestration obsolete and the windows were consequently blocked. They were replaced by smaller ones set at ground and first floor level. That

[1] It has been suggested that the hall at Bodiam Castle (1385) incorporated an overshot lower bay; cf. P. A. Faulkner, ' Castle Planning in the 14th Century ', in *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 120 (1964), p. 230.

on the ground floor was unglazed and had diagonally set mullions, whilst the first floor windows consisted of a three-light glazed casement with ovolo moulded jambs, head, cill and mullions. A vertical circular section dowel divided each light into two.

The most impressive feature of this period was the massive four-flue chimney stack which replaced its single-flue predecessor. The two inglenooks on the ground floor were quite plain having stone jambs and slightly cambered timber lintels. That heating the chamber over the hall was of similar character but here a crude overmantel was formed above the lintel and the jambs were plastered and painted. The wall painting on the northern wall had almost disappeared, but that on the southern jambs was tolerably complete (see Fig. 4G). It consisted of two wide yellow vertical bands on a dark blue background. Each yellow band contained a pair of blue and red intertwined spirals. The first floor fireplace in the eastern face of the stack was similar to its counterpart with the exception of its lintel, which was fully moulded and shaped to form a shallow four-centred head with sunken spandrels.

The modernization works also included the provision of a stone cellar under the northern section of the old parlour, and at this time the services were moved from the eastern end of the building into the old parlour bay. The partitions were stripped out from the old services and the room converted into a new heated parlour. The great chamber above became the new solar, hence the more elaborate fireplace in this room.

Ceilings were inserted into two first floor rooms. Owing to the lofty proportions of the structure these were set considerably below plate level in one of the bays in order to reduce the storey height.

Modern Alterations

In the 18th century the structure lost its Rectorial status and was converted into three cottages. During the following two centuries it slowly fell in importance, this being aided by the construction of Portland Terrace and the Congregational Chapel in front of it early in the 19th century. During this period a small tenement was attached to the rear of the building towards the eastern end, a lean-to added at the eastern end and an additional terraced house built to the west. At the same time as this house was added the western bay of the medieval building was re-roofed at a lower pitch and false walled, the latter being necessary to plumb the walls after severe settlement and movement of the frame. At this time the joists in the western bay were removed, ripped into two and reused as new floor and ceiling joists.

Several sections of the northern ground floor wall were underbuilt in brickwork during this period and all the external wall-framing was clad in creosoted weatherboarding.

This then was the state of the building in the late 1960s when it received its final blow. During December 1968 it was stripped to its frame and left standing as a skeleton for nine months awaiting the decision of its fate. During September and October 1969 the building was carefully dismantled and transported to a site near Crawley where it awaits re-erection.

The Excavations (Fig. 5)

During the winter of 1968-69 a small excavation was undertaken at the eastern end of the building, prior to its demolition. The aim was to determine the size of the demolished eastern bay and to ascertain the construction of the service floor. The following winter a somewhat larger area was investigated. During this season the complete hall area was stripped in the hope of finding traces of an earlier structure, as well as examining the drystone walling and chimney stack foundation. It was also hoped to ascertain the position and construction of the medieval open hearth.

The Demolished Eastern Bay. Two trenches were cut on an east-west alignment in order to determine the original eastern edge of the house platform. Unfortunately during the 18th and 20th centuries no less than four drain runs had been laid through the area and these, together with extensive cultivation, had long obliterated any signs of the vanished bay.

Service Bay. This consisted of the area between walls 3 and 4, and had generally, in the 20th century, been floored in timber, laid on a bed of ashes. Prior to this, the area had been paved in brick as was evidenced by a small area of paving found buried in the north-eastern corner. Below these modern coverings was a flat trampled dirt floor having slight remains of a lime mortar bed spread over it. The spread of mortar was explained along the southern edge of the excavations where the remains of a stone paved floor was discovered. This was bedded on mortar and had originally covered the whole of the service bay. It was probably contemporary with the late 16th century remodelling and had been laid directly over the original medieval compacted earth floor. Both the medieval floor and the 16th century mortar spread had been cut along the eastern edge by a later construction trench which had evidently been formed in the 18th or 19th century, when the whole of sleeper wall 3 had been rebuilt in brick and reused sandstone.

At the same time the sole-plate above was replaced, the ground floor timberwork to the wall re-framed and the south-eastern principal post, having presumably become rotten, was replaced by one having square cut gunstock.

Wall 4 between hall and services, though partially destroyed by the insertion of the central chimney stack, appeared to be original.

It was formed by a single course of stones the top surfaces of which were set approximately 6ins. below the top of the external side walls. The wall retained its timber cill-beam showing that the cills of the cross-walls were set lower than those of the external walls. It seems likely that the ends of the lateral cill beams were laid directly under the longitudinal ones, and possibly incorporated a dovetail or lap joint.

The Hall. The area generally had been covered with 19th century brick paving laid on a levelling layer of earth, which in turn had been screeded in cement and sand after becoming worn. After these modern coverings had been removed the outline of the original house platform was clearly visible. The platform was raised approximately one foot above the surrounding ground, the edge being retained by a rough drystone wall 2-3 courses high. The upper course, of roughly shaped stones, was situated above floor level and served to raise the cill beam off the floor, unlike the cross-walls the tops of which were set only 2-3ins. above the floor. The majority of the northern sleeper wall remained, that along the southern edge was evidenced by four stones only. Where this wall had been robbed the line was marked by the rough escarpment at the point where the floor met the external ground floor level.

As in the service bay there were basically two ancient floors. The upper, consisting of a layer of dirty sand topped with a coating of earth tramp, was continuous to the edge of both the chimney stack and cellar wall and sealed the construction trenches for these. It therefore post-dates these features and, as there is no other topping over the trench backfill, probably formed part of these alterations.

Below this the majority of the original medieval floor remained intact though its surface had obviously been trimmed in places. It consisted of a layer of loam tramp formed over the construction build-up. In this floor just west of the central stack was discovered the impression of part of the open hearth. This is described in greater detail later.

The construction build-up on the whole consisted of a layer of sand and loam varying from 2ins. thick in the north to up to 9ins. thick on the south. Its purpose was to level an area to form the house platform without making the floors below the level of the surrounding ground. In places the build-up was mixed with ash, and near the centre of the hall it incorporated a large scatter of broken clay roofing-tiles. These were as clean and fresh as when made and had obviously not been subjected to weathering or smoke for any length of time. The tiles have both peg-holes and nibs, the latter being formed by pinching the clay up when still green.

To a builder the meaning of this spread of fresh tiles under the floor is obvious. When tiles are unloaded and stacked a certain percentage become broken, even under the most careful handling.

These broken tiles have to be disposed of, and the obvious place is where the ground is being made up. One must bear in mind that the frames were often initially erected on wooden or stone blocks, the sleeper walls being infilled after the frame was up and pegged. The floors were probably not added until the structure was virtually complete, and certainly not before daubing had been undertaken.

The Features

F1. This feature consists of a patch of flat sandstones situated south of the southern wall and laid on the original ground level. Their use is not known. In appearance they resemble paving and may therefore be connected with the rear doorway which was situated slightly to the east.

F2. The impression of the central hearth. It was probably square though this could not be checked as the eastern half had been destroyed by levelling works. The feature measured four feet north to south and had been filled with make-up for the later earth floor. The slight impression of what appeared to be square hearth tiles was found in the base of the depression. By the very slight smoke staining on the roof timbers it would appear that the hearth was only used for a very limited period.

F3-5. A row of post-holes showing clear signs of having accommodated posts of 6-9in. diameter. They had been cut prior to the placing of the earth make-up under the floor and may have been associated with the initial erection of the frame. The posts were all set vertically.

F6. The stone base to the chimney stack. This stonework originally reached up to the cross-beam level, the remainder of the stack being constructed in brick. During the demolition it was noticed that it was clearly of two periods. The two eastern side walls had plainly been added, there being a straight joint between them and the spine wall of the stack. The brickwork above was all of one period and appeared to be late 16th century in style.

It would appear then, that the massive central chimney was preceded by a single flue stack having a stone base, and either a lath and plaster, or brick head, set against the hall/great chamber partition. The charred rear face of the cross-beam suggests that the reredos under the original stack was open at the front for the full height of the ground floor (Fig. 5).

A 2ft. 6in.-3ft. void was left between the rear of the reredos and the hall/service partition. This space is adequate for the passage of people but it cannot be certain whether the three centrally set service doors remained in use after the stack's construction.

Finds. Apart from the scatter of tiles previously described and the bulk of modern artifacts, finds were exceptionally rare. Only three body sherds were discovered, one of coarse unglazed grey ware and the others of green glazed fine grey ware; neither groups had any datable features.

Conclusion

Although the building was important for several reasons, it was not until it was demolished that these became apparent. The demolished celibacy bay is of particular interest as very few Rectories have survived which incorporate accommodation for a housekeeper. The scale of the building was also outstanding, especially when compared with the meagre proportions of other medieval Rectories which survive in the area. Although large and obviously extremely well built, the building lacked the over elaboration which often accompanies buildings of this status; instead it was simple, even austere in its internal appearance.

It is rare that one can establish such detailed reconstructions for three periods within the life of a dwelling, especially when each period is so different in character; it is therefore important from this angle. The ironical fact is that the archaeologists, the author included, decided against fighting the demolition order on the grounds that the building was of no great outstanding architectural interest. In making this decision the ancient village of Burwash was allowed to lose one of its three most important historic buildings.

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