

THE CHICHESTER GREY FRIARS' CHURCH, NOW THE GUILDHALL.

BY W. V. CRAKE.

DOCUMENTARY.

THE Grey Friars' Church, for over three hundred years the Guildhall of Chichester and Assize Court of Sussex, has been known to few persons outside the circle of students of architecture. This may be accounted for by the fact that the City of Chichester has ceased for fifty years to use the building municipally (No. 1). In addition to this, for fifty years it has been shut up behind the gates and walls of a self-supporting recreation ground.

The Priory Park (Plan A), which covers the site of the old Castle and Grey Friars' Convent or locus, is the property of the Duke of Richmond. The Guildhall (once the choir of the Grey Friars' Church) is the freehold of the City.

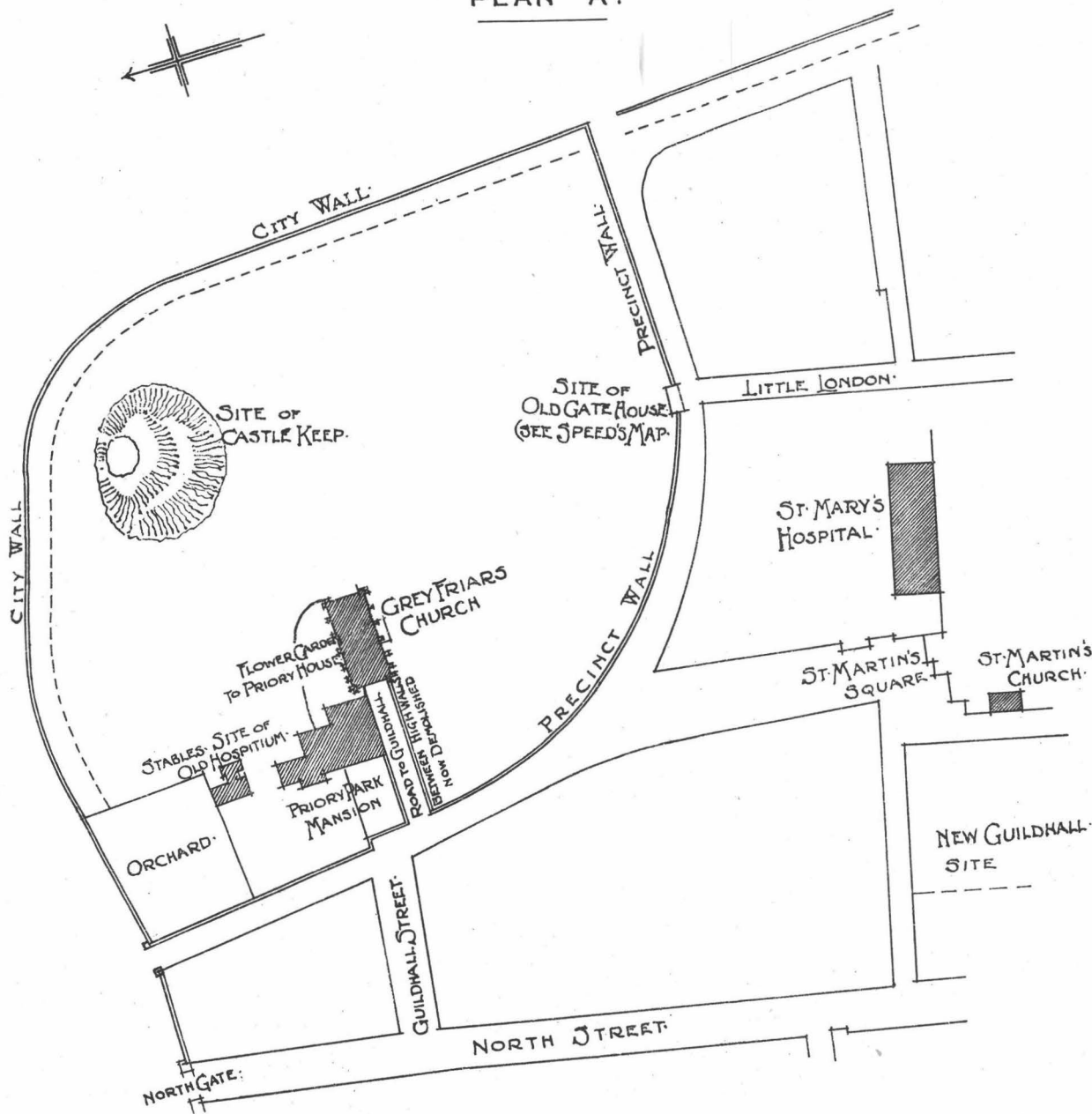
The church is one of the few still roofed Franciscan churches in England, and the reader of Knight's *Old England* looks upon it as a monument of the thirteenth century of striking beauty.

The castle site became the property of the Friars, as follows:—Roger Montgomery, as Earl of Sussex, after the Battle of Hastings, erected a stronghold here to over-awe the township and Rape of Chichester¹ on the

¹ Having passed by gift into the hands of the Bishop of Chichester, King John passed the town to his wife Isabella. The grant of the town of Chichester by King John to his wife Isabella in dower is enrolled on the Charter Roll of 17 John (No. 42), but it is dated as follows:—"Dat per mañ S. Cicestř etei (Simon Bp. of Chichester) apud Porcestř. 5 die Maii anno regni nostri quinto." It grants, *inter alia*, the City without reservation, as fully and freely as any predecessor of the King, &c., has held. From his mother Isabella Henry III. received the City and passed it on to Richard, King of the Romans.

Dallaway says, "This plan was superseded and another adopted by the Bishop, who placed there Franciscans or Mendicants about 1240."

PLAN A.



GENERAL PLAN OF NORTH-EAST CORNER OF CHICHESTER,
A.D. 1790 - 1815.

site of the north gate of the Roman military settlement. It then passed to the Albini, Earls of Arundel.² In 1217 we find in the Pat. Rolls 1 Henry III., Mem. 8, a letter dated at Winchester 16th April, "De Castro diruendo."

This letter is addressed to Philip d'Albini, ordering the Castle to be destroyed. "Rex Philippo de Albuniaco salutem mandamus vobis quod sine dilatione castrum Cicestrie dirui et funditus prosterni faciatis . . . sicut pater noster bone memorie J(ohannes) quondam rex Anglie, illud dirui precepit per litteras suas patentis." This Philip must have been a relation of William Albini, the third of the name living, probably in occupation of the Castle. The original order in the reign of King John seems to have been overlooked.

The site, however, was claimed by William d'Albini, as is shown by a document of which there is an Elizabethan copy in the Chichester Registers. Though undated it must have been granted between 1217 and 1221, for in 1217 the Castle was ordered to be pulled down and in 1221 William d'Albini died. In the Chichester Registers occurs the grant of which the following is a translation:—

CHARTER OF WILLIAM, EARL OF SUSSEX, "about the site of the Castle; given to the Church of the Holy Trinity."

To all sons of Holy Mother Church to whom the present writing shall come, William, Earl of Sussex, greeting. Know all of you that I by the instinct of divine piety for the health of my Soul, and for the health of the Souls of my ancestors, and heirs, have granted and given and by my present charter confirmed, to God and the Church of the Holy Trinity, Chichester,³ the whole place where the Castle of Chichester formerly was; with the whole Baillie, which is of my fee, to make and have, in the same place, a house of St. John for entertainment of the poor and weak in free, pure and perpetual alms,⁴ to have and to hold, as any gift of alms can be best or most freely given without any secular service and exaction. And that this my concession or grant may gain lasting support I have corroborated it with the impression of my seal, these being witnesses—Remigio de Auber, R. Ab. de Viler, R. filio Suo Bartholomeo et multis aliis.

² Albini, 1st Earl of Arundel, received Chichester as part of the portion of Adeliza, widow of Henry I.

³ Totum locum ubi castellum cicestreense quondam fuit, cum tota ballia quae est de feode meo ad faciendum et habendum, &c.

⁴ In puram et perpetuam Elemosinam, habendum et tenendum sicut aliqua elemosina melius vel liberius dari possit.

Henry III. would not allow this neglect of his mother Isabella's rights, and there is the following document, date 1222, in the Fine Rolls 20th August, 6 Henry III.:—

It is ordered that the site of the Castle of Chichester, which is occupied by the Dean and Chapter of Chichester, be taken and held in the hand of our lord the king.

This is further proved by the Pipe Roll of 15th Henry III., in which the citizens of Chichester render account of payments year by year, "de firma villæ suæ," from the eleventh year of his reign, A.D. 1226, to the sixteenth, "usque ad festum S. Michaelis."

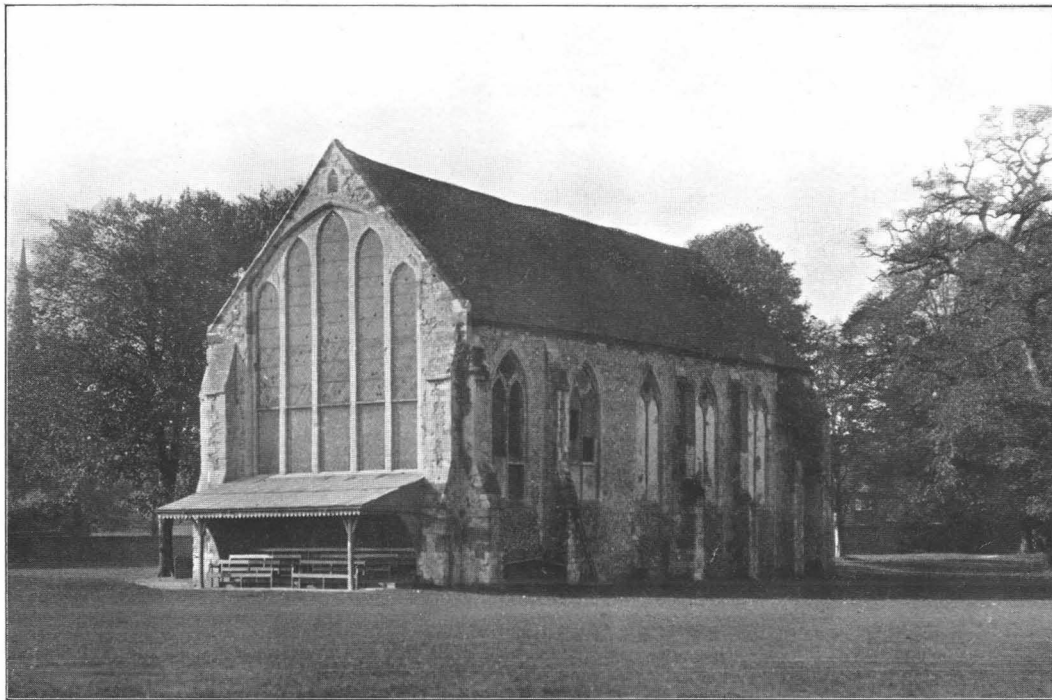
These extracts show that the King received £38. 10s. as annual rent until the time that he had given the city to his brother.

The King's Justices inquired, in 1279, into the liberties claimed by Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, son of Richard, King of the Romans. He produced the charter of Henry III., granting the city of Chichester to his father. The jury found that the Earl of Cornwall had all liberties in the city, with a few exceptions.

I have found A. Ballard's recent history of Chichester of great value; in this small, but important, book Mr. Ballard has done service to Chichester by grouping the documentary history of the borough.

Richard, King of the Romans, was the true patron of the Chichester Grey Friars. In the Patent Roll, 53 Henry III., 15th October, A.D. 1269, occurs:—"Whereas our very dear kinsman Richard by the grace of God the ever august king of the Romans has given and granted of his charity to the Friars Minor (dear to us in Christ) a certain place in Chichester which is called the old Castle Site to inhabit the same; we for the health of the souls of ourselves and ancestors . . . as much as is in our power, grant and confirm the gift."⁵

⁵ Pat. Roll, 53 Henry III. (15th October, 1269): "Cum carissimus germanus noster Ricardus dei gratia Rex Romanorum semper augustus caritatis intuitu dederit et concesserit dilectis nobis in Christo fratribus minoribus cicestrensibus quandam placeam in Villa Cicestren' quæ vetus castellarium appellatur; ad inhabitandum ibidem. Nos pro salute animæ nostræ et animarum antecessorum nostrorum . . . quantum in nobis est, donationem concedimus et confirmamus."



GREY FRIARS CHURCH,
NOW THE OLD CHICHESTER GUILDHALL.

Photo by Marsh, Chichester, 1907.

Richard, son of King John, Earl of Cornwall and Poitou, and King of the Romans, fills a large place in the life of his times. His great wealth as Earl of Cornwall and Poitou, and the wealth of his second wife, sister of Queen Eleanor, not only was the cause of his election to the heirship of the Empire, but placed him next to the King in importance in England. He commanded a crusade in 1240 and landed with Simon de Montford at Acre. He was regent of the Kingdom in the absence of Henry abroad, and is well known as commanding unsuccessfully the left wing at the Battle of Lewes. A. G. Little, in his history of the Oxford Grey Friars, describes him as the principal benefactor of the Oxford Grey Friars' Convent,⁶ where his heart was buried with the body of his third wife. His character as a man was chronicled by a Grey Friar (see A. G. Little) as "very lascivious, greedy of wealth and an oppressor of the poor."⁷ He was, however, in constant correspondence with Adam Marsh, the zealous apostle of St. Francis in England, and also with other Franciscans. It may be suspected that his loose living moved him to seek the intercession of the Franciscans.

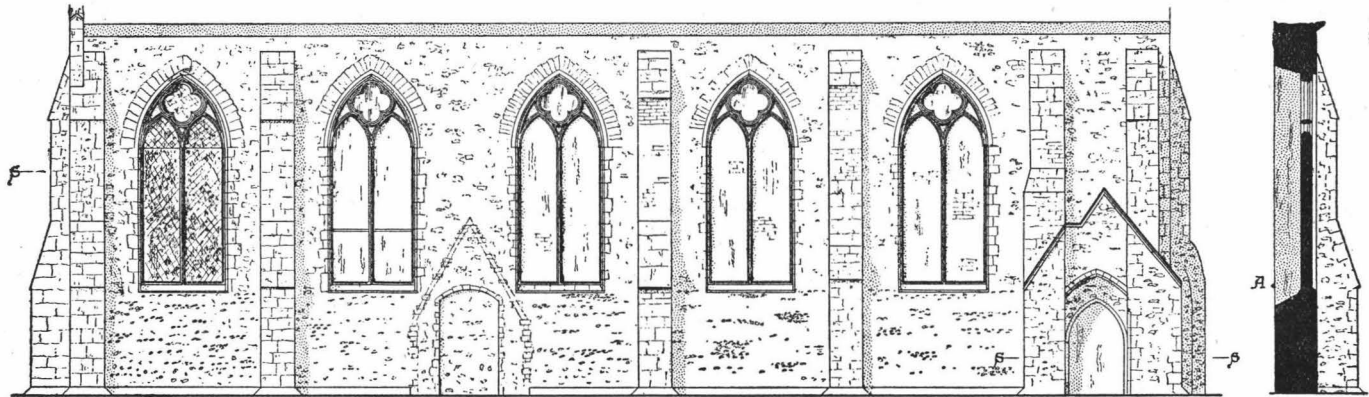
Prior to this in the Patent Roll, 37 Henry III., 26th December, 1253, Henry III.⁸ confirms the Grey Friars in possession of a piece of land for the purpose of enlarging their garden, being the gift of Richard, King of the Romans.⁹ The site afterwards passed to the Prior and Brethren of St. Mary's Hospital (Plan A). This is important as showing the date when the Grey Friars were in occupation of the St. Martin's Square site, and

⁶ Hic erga omnes mulieres cujuscunque professionis luxuriosissimus (A. G. Little, p. 25, note).

⁷ Died at Berkhamstead, Hertford, and his body was buried at Hayles Abbey, A.D. 1272.

⁸ See confirmation of this land for enlargement of garden, Patent Roll, 37 Henry III.:—Pro fratribus minoribus Cicester.—Rex omnibus etc. salutem Donacionem et concessionem quas delectus frater et fidelis noster Ricardus Comes Cornubie fecit fratribus minoribus commorantibus apud Cicestriam de quodam in clauso in eadem villa ad dilitandam aream in qua iidem fratres morantur ibidem ratas habentes et gratas eas pro nobis et heredibus nostris concedimus et confirmamus sicut littere patentes, quas predicti fratris inde habent racionabiliter testantur. In cujus etc. Teste Rege apud Winton 26 die Decembris.

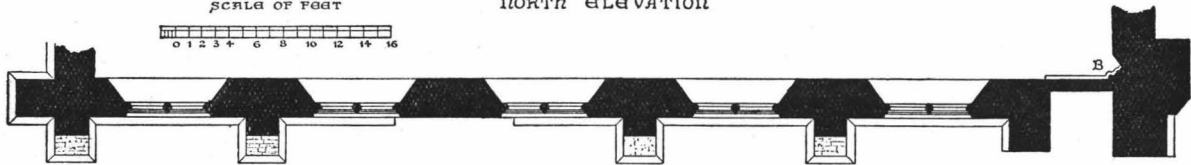
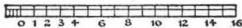
⁹ *Vict. Hist.*, Vol. II., p. 95 (Salzmann): Seal exists of Hugh Warden of Chichester Grey Friars, 1253.



SCALE OF FEET

NORTH ELEVATION

SECTION



PLAN

GREY FRIARS, CHICHESTER.

NORTH ELEVATION.

Drawn by W. E. Ginner.

marks the first documentary reference of the Franciscans as holders of land in Chichester.

The record of the early occupation, as before stated, of the St. Martin's Square site by the Friars Minor occurs in the history of the St. Mary's Hospital, written by Rev. J. Cavis Brown, *Old English Hospital*, from which the following reference is taken.

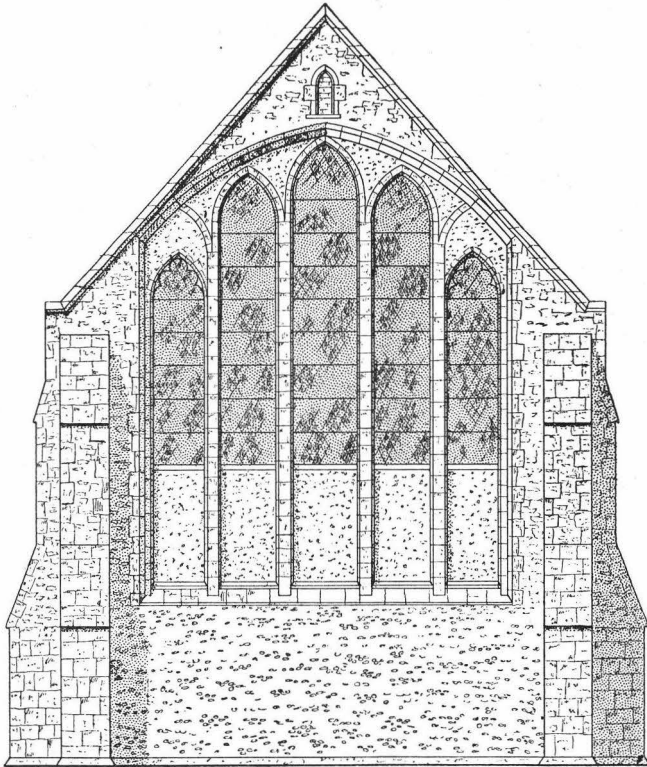
In the Patent Roll, 13 Edward I., the King confirms a grant of a piece of land to the Prior and Brethren of St. Mary's Hospital, "that place in the city of Chichester where the Friars Minor were accustomed to dwell" (morari). This was the site of their old house, which had been claimed by the Dominicans, and had been given to the Grey Friars by Henricus de Chikehull before his death (nuper ante mortem) in pure and perpetual alms. No date is given of this gift.

The settlement of the Franciscans in Chichester seems to have followed the same course as at Oxford, as shown by A. G. Little in his book, *Grey Friars in Oxford*.¹⁰ The first Franciscans arrived at Dover in 1224, on the 10th September, under the leadership of Angellus of Pisa, the English apostle of St. Francis and first Provincial Director for England. From London they made settlements before the year was over at Reading and Oxford. At Oxford they were received by the other preaching Friars, the Dominicans, who already had their own refectory and dormitory at Oxford; before twelve months were over it is recorded that in 1225 they left their hired house at Oxford to occupy a house with land attached.¹¹ The rule of St. Francis commanded poverty and forbade the brotherhoods to own land,¹² so

¹⁰ A. G. Little states that the Friars at Oxford for the first 20 years probably occupied such houses in the town as were granted to them. In 1232 building began at Oxford and was general in England in 1240. In 1240 it was quoted by the contemporary Franciscan historian, Eccleston. He stated that "if the Friars were not damned for excessive building they would at any rate be severely punished." After Wycliffe's time every Friar had his desk and bookcase.

¹¹ A. G. Little states "in 1232 Henry III. gave the Oxford Friars 30 beams in the Royal forest for the fabric" of their chapel. This chapel was pulled down in 1246 to make way for another.

¹² *Evangelical Poverty*: Archbishop Peckham (himself once a Friar Minor) enunciated the formula—de paupertate Christi, "having no title to the possession of any property real or personal, private or common."



elevation
of
east end.
SCALE OF FEET 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Drawn by W. E. Ginner.

GREY FRIARS, CHICHESTER.

the Franciscan convents sprang out of trusts which were held by their friends, lay and cleric.

In Oxford their first houses were mean and small, and the infirmary was so low that the height of the walls did not much exceed the height of a man. When their first church was built, Bishop and Abbot, who assumed the coarse habits of the Friars, are said to have carried water, sand and stones for the buildings. (A. G. Little.)

The settlement at Chichester without doubt grew out of the usual conditions. The Franciscans would arrive as missionaries, possibly about 1240,¹³ and occupy the lanes within the walls, between Little London and North Street (see Plan A).

The first that we hear of the Chichester Settlement is that Richard de la Wyche, Bishop of Chichester, known as St. Richard, in his will, signed *circa* 1245,¹⁴ states: "Item fratribus minoribus Cicestrensibus Psalterium meum glosatum et Viginti solidos," leaving his annotated Book of Psalms and 20s. to the Chichester Friars Minor.

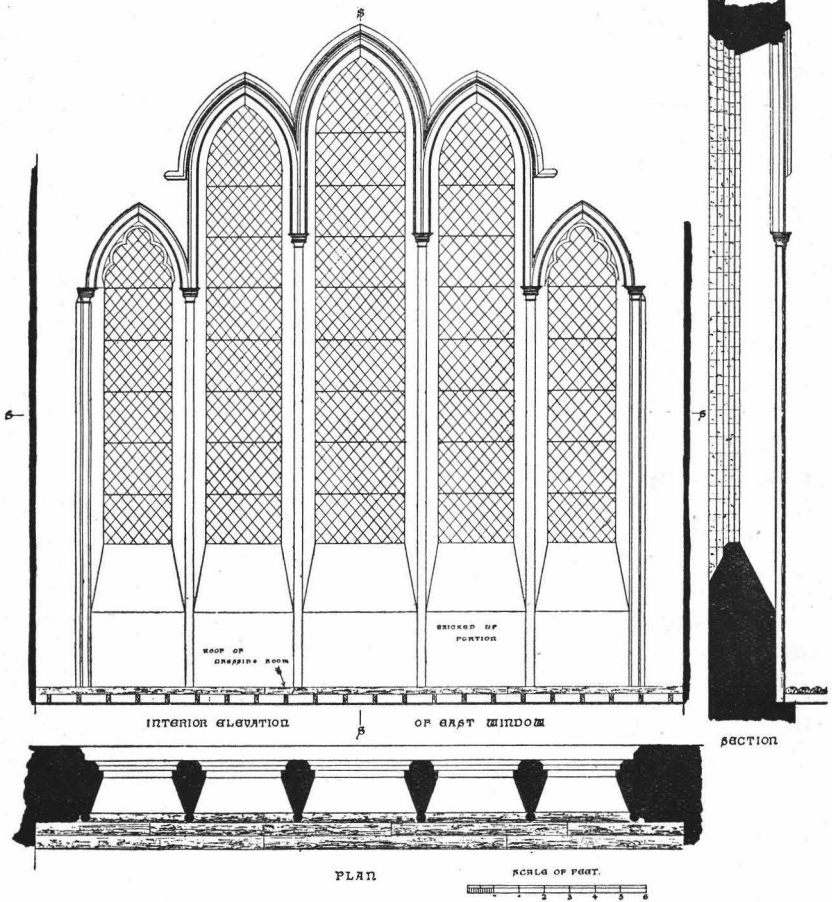
The connection of St. Richard with the Friars Minor was close; it may be noted that a Friar Minor examined his life and miracles in order, as the King and Bishops of England prayed, that he might be placed in the catalogue of saints.

Finally the ceremony of the declaration of his enrolment as saint took place under Pope Urban IV. at the Franciscan Church at Viterbo (see Bocking's *Life of St. Richard*). St. Richard also bequeathed 20s. and the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John to the Franciscans of Lewes.

In the same will St. Richard gave the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark to Winchelsea Grey Friars and

¹³ The reference to Chichester in Dugdale's *Monasticon* states that the Church of the Friars Minor was dedicated to St. Peter. Winchelsea and Lewes are both mentioned as having Grey Friar Settlements. Chichester is mentioned as in the "custody" of London. Note: The province of England was divided into seven wardenships or custodia, the government being extra episcopal; the Provincial Master was often a member of the King's Privy Council. England as a Franciscan Province ranked after France in its relations with Rome.

¹⁴ C. Stephen's *Diocesan History*, p. 103.



GREY FRIARS, CHICHESTER.

Drawn by W. E. Ginner.

20s.; this was old Winchelsea; New Winchelsea Grey Friars dates from 1280.¹⁵

We may gather that, comparing the Oxford Friars with the Chichester Friars, money came in to the community, and the old simple tenements were not enough for the increasing wants of the brotherhood. A fresh home would be sought, a barrack and dining hall, a church would be required; also a place to keep the books,¹⁶ always an important feature in a missionary fraternity, and especially so with the Friars Minor. For these there would be ample space on the old Castle site.

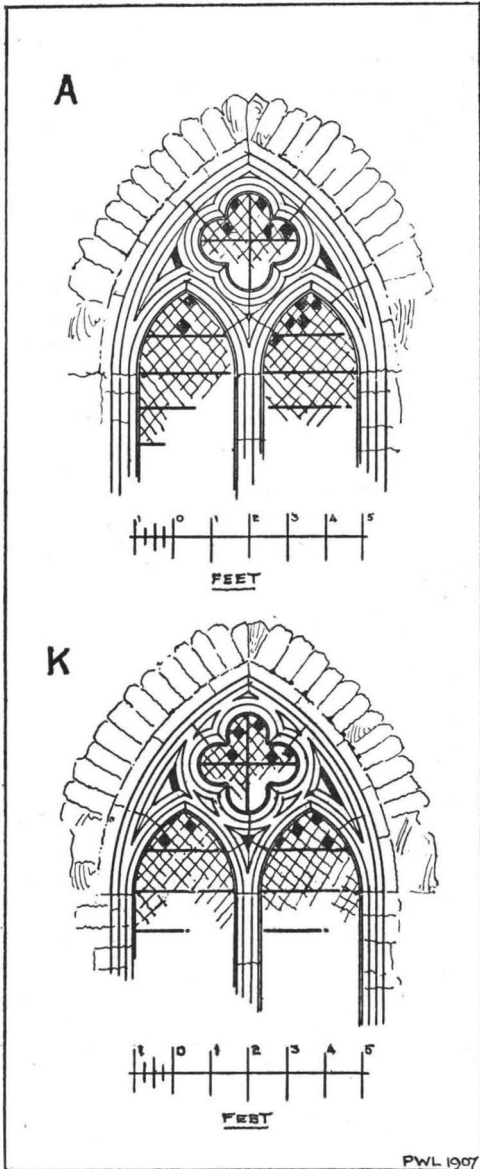
The earliest reference to the church is the date mentioned by Mr. Salzmann (*Victoria County History, Sussex, Vol. II.*),¹⁷ namely, that Archbishop Peckham held an ordination in the Grey Friars' Church, Chichester, in 1283. This date corresponds with the lateness of the mouldings of the architecture, which show, though early in general effect, yet of marked decorated tendency in details. So that we may take it that 1282 saw the choir at least roofed in. This date is also important as showing that Chichester was first in the field before Winchelsea (new town) Franciscan Church. This church at Winchelsea, though corresponding in many points, has marked decorated tracery and was not begun much before 1287. 1253 has been mentioned elsewhere as the date when the Friars Minor moved into the Castle site. I have failed, so far, to verify this date. There is an unsubstantiated statement current that the St. Mary's Hospital Brethren

¹⁵ Winchelsea Grey Friars' Church is often mentioned in this paper. It was not begun before 1290 and has many details of resemblance to the Chichester Franciscan Church.

¹⁶ Richard of Bury, Bp. of Durham 1333-45, in his *Philobiblon*, bears testimony to the magnificence of the libraries of the Mendicant Friars, which he visited. He says, "There were heaped up amid the utmost poverty the utmost riches of wisdom."

As early as 1257 it was stated that every convent of the order had its noble library. Such collectors were they that scarcely a useful book could be found in the market (A. G. Little).

¹⁷ In referring to the Roll Series I find: "Registrum Epistolarum J. Peckham, Arch. Cant., folio 103, 6. Ordination held on Trinity Eve, 10 Cal. Jun., 1282. Consecr. 4 in the Church of the Friars Minor in Chichester. Robert di Lacy, Peter de Guldeford Examinors." A list is given of priests, deacons, sub-deacons and acolytes, 57 in all, including eleven of the Friars Minor.



GREY FRIARS, CHICHESTER.

Details shewing Variations of Tracery in Windows.

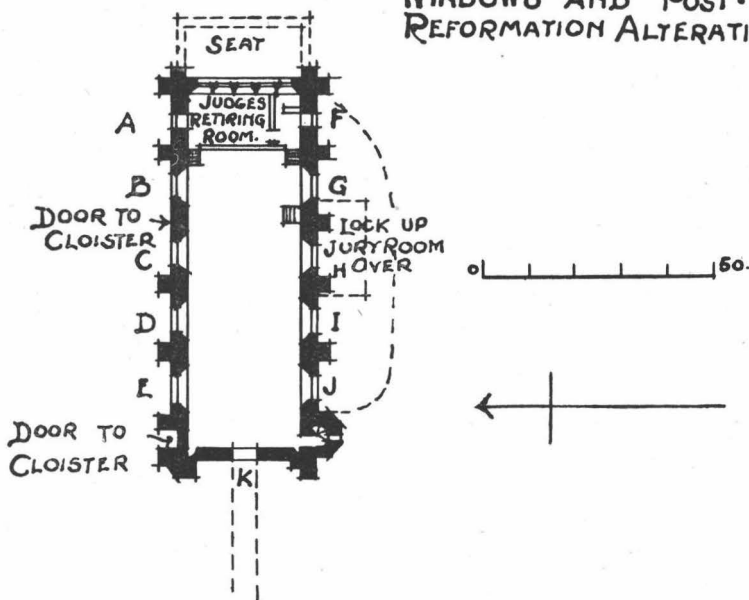
moved into the ground occupied by the Friars in 1253. So far I have not traced the date of reference. The only two fixed points are 1269, confirmation of the King of the Romans gift, by Henry III.; and 1282, the ordination service by Bishop Peckham.

MEDIEVAL REMAINS.

With regard to existing remains the chancel is oblong and aisleless, 82 feet long by 31 feet wide and 42 feet in height. Some portion of the nave must also have been begun, for the present west wall is a later erection of the same period as the west buttresses set up against it.

PLAN B.

PLAN AT GROUND FLOOR
LEVEL SHOWING BUTTRESSES.
WINDOWS AND POST-
REFORMATION ALTERATIONS.



Adapted from a Corporation Map.

The chancel arch, which has been carefully allowed to show its mouldings when the west wall was built, spans the whole width and there are evidences that a portion of the nave immediately adjoining it was built for at least

a bay to the west. The inner order of the chancel arch has a chamfered edge; it springs from a triple cluster of attached shafts in half relief. The central shaft has a broad fillet on its rectangular face. The side shafts are round; the necking is a half roll keeled where it breaks round the central shaft. The bell of the capital is also keeled below the mouldings. The three shafts, like Winchelsea, have a common abacus. The abacus is the continuation of a hood moulding which runs without a break from east to west.

The west wall shows signs of being a subsequent filling, as the joints are rough, but the west window and doorway have been re-inserted.

The row of apparently symmetrical windows north and south are divided by stepped buttresses (No. 1 and No. 2).* The jambs and mullions of the windows have simple chamfers without other mouldings on the outside. Inside are the deeply splayed rear-arches, the two lancet lights being divided by a mullion chamfered and rebated for glass as usual for thirteenth century windows. In the head of the arch is a quatrefoil set unconformably on the lancets with plain cusps, springing from and continuing a hollow chamfer. The triangular hollows left by the quatrefoil in windows are not in all cases pierced.¹⁸ These windows on the north and south have, with one or two partial exceptions, been bricked up and plastered, the quatrefoils being left for ventilation and light. Our immediate ancestors (No. 6) in the eighteenth century had a great talent in breaking up windows to avoid draughts, and in this case did less harm than some of our restorers, who restore to an imaginary date.

The great east window (No. 3 and No. 4), known by Knight's picture in *Old England*, is walled up one-third of its height and glazed. This glazing has been done since the days of George III. When Francis Grose visited the building about 1758 it was bricked up entirely; see picture (No. 6).

* A door takes the place of a buttress between windows B and C.

¹⁸ In the plate (2) the effect of the drawing gives the idea of piercing, which is true only in the two large triangles.

It is composed of five lights, lancet shape,¹⁹ with cinquefoil cusps in the heads of the two outside lancets, but these are a fifteenth century addition. The rear arches of these lights are supported by nearly detached shafts of circular section and bonded courses, in place of the usual Purbeck monoliths (No. 10). The three arches in the middle are stilted in the usual way, their mouldings carried below the spring into the jamb for some distance, until they are received by the central shafts. The bases of the shafts are now blocked by the hideous erection made for the Judge's retiring room and lavatory (No. 9), so that on the inside it cannot be seen whether the bases of the shafts exist or not. On the outside the feet of the mullions are covered by the shelter erected for the Cricket Club.

The drawing (No. 3) of the outside of this window shows how the gable of the roof has been lowered and the height of the two outside lancets curtailed in order to allow of new slope of the roof. The cusps show this alteration to have been a work of the fifteenth or early sixteenth century. When the roof was lowered about 1400 the parapet, which crowned the north and south walls, was removed. This parapet was approached by the turret stair and had a plain corbel table, of which one of the corbels have been built into the north wall.

The windows and other dressings are generally of Caen stone, but there were other stones used.²⁰

The buttresses²¹ are of good workmanship, corresponding to contemporary work in the Cathedral.

The flint rubble, with a small use of Pulborough or Midhurst stone, occurs in what seems the latest work of the thirteenth century.

There remain inside, on the south wall (No. 7, No. 9 and No. 10), the sedilia and piscina of marked Decorated character, though badly defaced by ill-usage and partly blocked by the lavatory.

¹⁹ F. Bond, *Gothic Architecture*. Lancets—earliest 1170; latest 1270.

²⁰ Caen and Binstead stone, with fine claw chisel work in regular oblong stones high in the bed. (E. S. Prior. See his booklet, *Chichester Masoncraft*.)

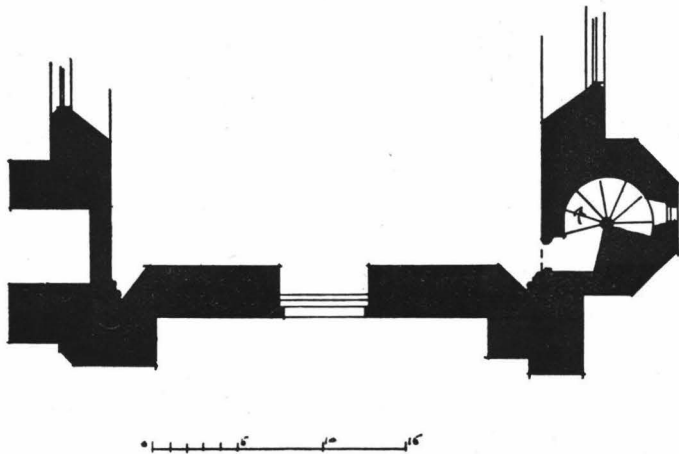
²¹ Mr. Prior thinks that the buttresses have been rebuilt at various times.

A fine canopy still exists of a tomb of Decorated character.

The floor level of the main building is six inches below the present floor, and the altar area was approached by two or more steps, as may be seen by the sedilia levels. The high altar was probably some steps higher still, as may be seen by the remains of an aumbry niche in the north wall of the sacrarium.

The cloisters were in existence in the eighteenth century and were approached by two doors (No. 1 and No. 2) on the north side, each with moulded span roof on the outside. There is still a heavy piece of masonry on the west side of the cloister, which may be ascribed to the kitchen and offices of the hospitium, which is called the "ostre" in the inventory (see below).

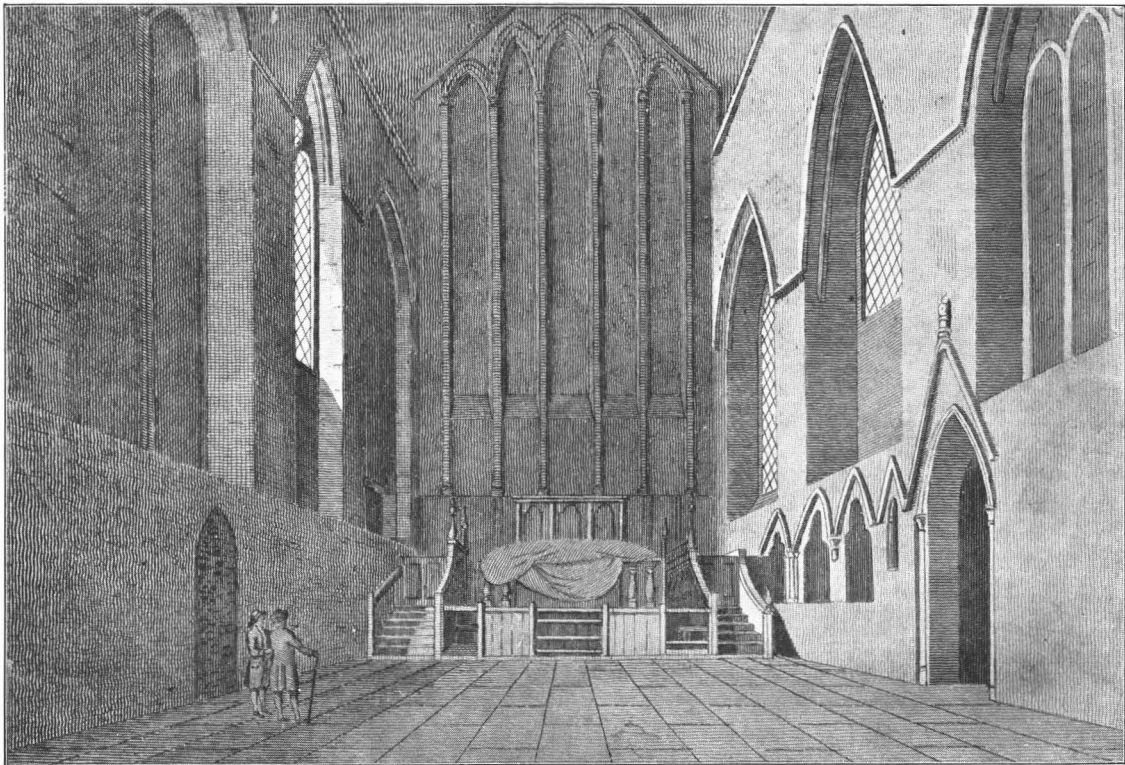
PLAN C.



PLAN OF WEST END.

The other buildings referred to are:—The brewe house, the parlour, the vestry, the frater, the cloister and the library.

The rood loft turret is octagon in plan and has a close resemblance to that of Winchelsea Grey Friars' Church. The roof, which was probably pyramidal, is now covered by the old Horsham stone slabs, which certainly covered



From an old Engraving dated 1784.

GREY FRIARS, CHICHESTER, FITTED AS GUILDHALL.

Founded on an Illustration from F. Grose's Antiquities.

the old building, and may be seen in the picture referred to above in Knight's *Old England*. The stairway opening is by a low door from within (No. 8). This leads to an arch about 11-ft. 6-in. from the ground level, opening westward. This archway is semi-circular in elevation, about 4-ft. 9-in. high, with a double recessed fillet in section. It is blocked with broken chalk and is invisible from without, being closed by the end of the nave wall and the recent buttress. With regard to the evidence of the existence of a nave, it may be well to note that there is no mention of a nave in the careful inventory made (see below) at the time of the Dissolution. A choir only is mentioned. The springing of the arch of a window splaying outwards exists in the north-west angle, suggesting an unfinished arch, or a possible lobby like a university college. The turret is built of flint rubble, with Binstead coigns. The interior is of Pulborough stones and lighted by two narrow chamfered shot-hole windows.

So it happens that in studying the evidences of the date of the building we have serious difficulties to contend with. In the east end we have the lancet style of the last period, with bonded shafts. Then, as we travel westward, we have the earliest form of geometrical tracery, namely, double lancets with a quatrefoil set unconformably with the lancets under a deeply splayed recessed arch. Again, westward, we have the same window, but with pierced triangular hollows with the quatrefoil circle carrying on the centre of the lancets. Finally, we have the chancel arch with late thirteenth century mouldings (No. 5).

Mr. P. M. Johnston, in his report* to the Corporation of Chichester in 1905, states: "The church was not built at one time, as is evident from the character of the various mouldings and details. . . . The choir was not completed till about 1270. . . . The great east window, or group of windows, is one of the most remarkable of its kind in England. . . . The interior is plain to the verge of severity, but the beauty of the windows redeems it from the reproach of bareness."

* Carried out with Mr. Michell Whitley.

Mr. E. S. Prior thinks that, roughly speaking, twenty years may have covered its erection; also that the difference of style between the east window and those of the body of the chancel may be accounted for by the possible removal of stones from another site, but that the doorway and tomb show a completion scarcely before 1300.²²

In spite of many difficulties, documentary and structural, I hold to the opinion that it is the work of one designer with a changing masoncraft, say during the years 1260 to 1282; the east window belonging to the last period of the lancet style, with shafts in bonded courses, the designer developed the style in conformity with new ideas from the simple lancet to the early form of geometrical tracery of the north and south windows.²³

Finally, the remarkable general symmetry of buttressing and windows are the result of one architectural impulse, one would desire to believe inspired by the great Franciscan movement. It would be difficult to find a building of this size where walls, windows and buttresses show so fine a sense of balance, or, with such simple means, give so marked a sense of true greatness.

SECULARIZATION.

The history of the secularization of the buildings and property of the Franciscans is as follows:—

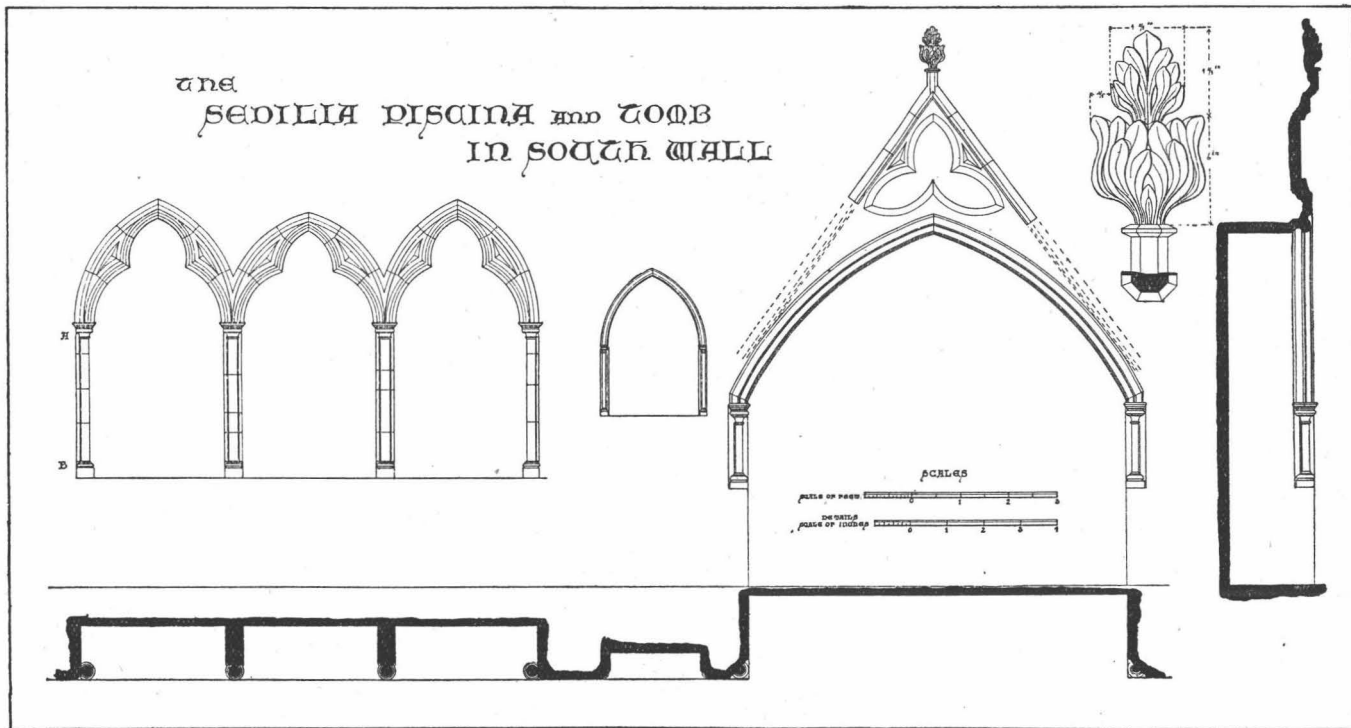
In 1538 the smaller monasteries with incomes of less than £200 a year having been ordered to be dissolved, the Chichester Grey Friars fell under this Act, and were surrendered on October 8th, 1538, with the Dominicans. The surrender may be seen at the Record Office.²⁴ In each house were seven brethren; it is worthy of note that the Chichester Grey Friars showed a capacity at

²² *Victoria County History*, Vol. II. Mr. P. M. Johnston puts the date of the east window at 1260.

²³ Mr. Basil Champneys, writing on the subject of the Grey Friars, Winchelsea, considers that the special features of that building showed the influences of "a distinct guild of masons," adding, "probably the Franciscans had their own school of design and their own workmen." *Quiet Corner of England*, 1875.

²⁴ Record Office, Letters and Papers, Vol. 8, No. 941, Henry VIII.

THE
 SEDILIA DISCINA AND TOMB
 IN SOUTH WALL



GREY FRIARS, CHICHESTER.

Drawn by W. E. Ginner.

least for writing by signing their names with one exception, whereas only the Prior signed his name to the Dominican deed of surrender.

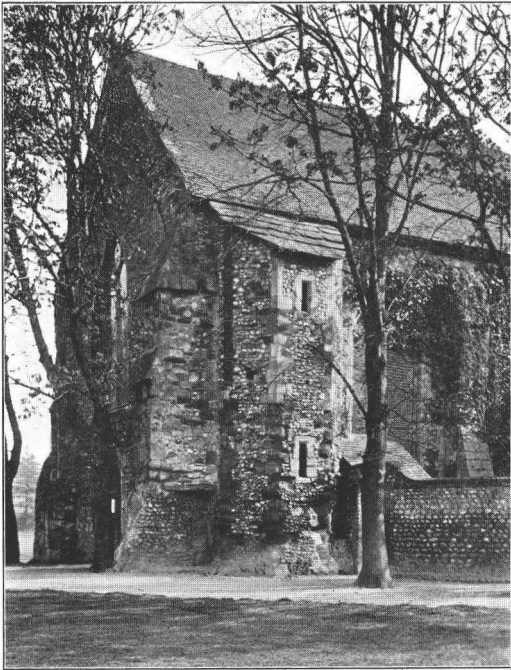
The property of the Grey Friars was handed over to Mr. William Bradbridge, the Mayor, and a careful inventory will be found in full in Vol. XLIV., *S.A.C.*²⁵ Much of the stuff was sold to pay the debts and pledges of the Friars. The library is described as "four stalls and a half, substantially new made, with diverse old books, a goodly press, with almers for books." In the choir, on the high altar, was a fair painted picture (Table), a pair of small candlesticks, also a holy water stoop and two bells in the steeple. In the cloister there was a lavatory with a conduit. The vestry was well supplied with vestments, red velvet, blue silk, &c., in two great chests, and 141 ounces of broken gold and silver. In the Record Office is a document showing that a Friar, in 1532, was accused of selling some of the broken silver of the Friary, before the arrival of the King's visitors, to a goldsmith in Chichester.²⁶

The Surrender of 1538 states that "The Prior and congregation with one assent and consent without any manner of coercion or counsel do give our house into the hands of the lord visitor to the King's use, desiring his Grace to be good and gracious to us." It is worthy of note that in the Refectory were six tables, which may show that the Refectory was not small. The money given to the Friars is mentioned as ten pounds, seventeen shillings to the "poor freres." Finally the visitor departed, paying his own cost; it is signed William Bradbrydge, Mayor of Chichester. The deed of sale to the Mayor and citizens of the site, which was valued at the fortieth part of a Knight's fee, is dated 1541, and at a yearly rent of 2s. 7d.

"We, Henry, King, etc. . . . have given and granted to the Mayor and Citizens of Chichester the site including the circuit of the precincts of the house

²⁵ Treasury receipts, Vol. 115, No. 2.

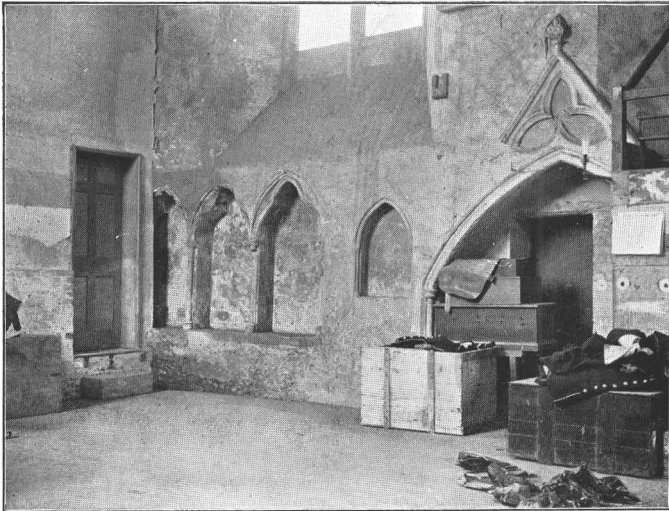
²⁶ See Record Office Letters, Henry VIII., Vol. 6, 1697.



TURRET AND SOUTH-WEST ANGLE.

Photo by J. C. Stenning.

No. 9.



GREY FRIARS CHURCH,

With 18th Century Alterations.

ROBING ROOM DOOR. STAIRWAY TO JURY ROOM.
DOOR TO LOCK-UP.

(Domus) of the Friars Minor lately dissolved and suppressed as well as every house and building to the above mentioned citizens, reserving the furniture (utensilibus) of the house for our use, which will be sold by our visitors."

The choir was at once used as the Guildhall of the city, and till 1851 served as a regular municipal building (No. 6), fitted as a Court of Justice, with the usual seats for judge and jury.

The Convent Buildings, which had a cloister, were leased with the meadow to G. Gorringe, in 1544, at a ground rent of £6. 13s. 6d. It was some time afterward devised on a 999 years' lease to P. Williams about the year 1700, remaining in his family till Admiral Frankland bought the lease in 1790. Admiral Frankland removed what remained of the ancient conventual buildings, excepting the before-mentioned kitchen wall, and built a modern house on the site; the plan is L-shaped, facing east, with the back to North Street, and lying north-west of the Guildhall.²⁷

From Admiral Frankland it passed to the Baker family, who sold the lease to the Duke of Richmond (*circa* 1820). The Duke of Richmond found the house so out of repair that it would not pay to have money spent on it. It was then bodily removed, and the Priory Meadow in its complete state, with the exception of the orchard near the north gate, has been since 1850 rented by the Priory Park Committee, who have converted it into perhaps one of the most popular places of recreation in the South of England.

²⁷ The first Guildhall (see Dall., 114) was in South Street, then granted to the Bishop, and is now the site of the Priest Vicars' Hall (Rot. Pat., 18 Richard II., p. 2). The heavy groined crypt is part of the old merchant store under the Guildhall.

Hay, historian of Chichester and Chaplain of St. Mary's Hospital, gives the following list of proprietors from 1543 to 1582: John Knott, 1543; Wm. Appleby, 1567; John Yonge, 1580; Ralph Chandler, 1581; George Goring, 1582, who made additions; Sir John Caryll, 1602; Christopher Lewkenor, 1634, who was ousted by Parliament; Wm. Cawley, 1640-1-2-3, &c.; Sir Richard May, 1674; Sir Hutchins Williams, 1747 (purchased for £800, a lease for 1,000 years); Sir Pere Williams; Sir Boothe Williams, and passed by marriage to Mr. Founereau by leasehold tenure, 999 years remainder.

The old so-called Priory House, which appears in Bowen's map of the year 1747 and was probably the house occupied by Waller after the siege, is shown as an oblong block with a double spanned roof, the back to North Street; the garden abutted on the north side²⁸ of the Guildhall with flower beds in the old cloisters and with the general entrance and drive at the north end of Little London; the approach to the Guildhall was walled in from Guildhall Street with a paved roadway. The remains of the wall are visible at the west end of the Guildhall to-day. The Little London entrance to the Priory House was shown in Speed's map with a gate house and two towers. This entrance is still used. The Dukes of Richmond formerly used this meadow for grazing and pasturing their cattle intended for Chichester market.

Now as to the history of the Guildhall. At an early date an enclosing wall separated the Priory Park owners from the Guildhall, and contained a paved way (Plan A), as already said, connecting the street known as Guildhall Street with the west end of the present building and a lock up jail, with a jury room attached, as built on the south side, with an entrance through the south wall. The door was pierced through the monument (No. 6 and No. 9) on the south side of the altar, of which the canopy remains, and from which a doubtful tradition says the Fitzalan monument, now in the north aisle of the Cathedral, was removed.

Rouse's *Journeys in Sussex* represents the jail, now the present armoury, with a double span roof and with four Tudor two-light windows. Rouse's description is worth quoting in full:—

“The Guildhall is a spacious structure; herein the Courts of Assize are holden, and all affairs relating to the civil administration of the city are transacted. When the galleries for the jury were erected workmen discovered the remains of the former inmates of the Convent deposited near the altar. Fragments of the

²⁸ See map in the Cathedral Chapter House, circa 1815.

substructure of some conventual building remain on the north-west side."²⁹

Rouse presents a picture of the Town Hall, showing transoms on the south windows, presumably temporary wooden window frames. Continuing Rouse: "The light seen in a straight line on the grass (on the south side) describes the top of a vaulted passage, which it is said communicated with this chapel."

Rouse represents, in a view of the interior, a large picture, described as follows:—"Immediately over the justice seat is a large allegorical painting presented by the Duke of Richmond. It describes the Restoration of Charles II., crowned by an angel, and the hydra of Rebellion transfixed at his feet."

Grose has a brief record of the Guildhall, and the engraving I show represents the old Guildhall and Sessions Court arranged as a Law Court with practical doors north and south, and the east window blocked.³⁰

ASSIZE COURT.

That the County of Sussex should be interested in the Guildhall and ancient Assize Court of the County a few facts may be mentioned from the history of Chichester.

Ballard says, p. 43, "In 1337 Edward III. ordered a commission to inquire which was the best place in Sussex for the holding of the County Court, and ordered the County Court should in future be held at Chichester." The Court was previously held at different places at the whim of the Sheriff. This order was confirmed in 1451 by Henry VI. In 1503 an Act was passed for holding Assizes alternately at Lewes and Chichester. In 1832 the county was divided for election purposes into East and West Sussex.

With the changes of the eighteenth century and early part of the nineteenth century, Chichester lost its old position as county town of Sussex and the last Assizes held in Chichester were in 1748, for a smuggling case and

²⁹ Dallaway, 1815, states that "the east windows (five lights) are now bricked up." Something then has been done in modern times to alter the lighting arrangements.

³⁰ The present Council Chamber was built in 1731 in North Street.

murder. Since then Lewes has been the Assize town of Sussex.

The Guildhall, County and Sessions House ceased to occupy a dignified position in the town and county after 1850. It was last used for the nomination of the knights of the shire about that year.* The Rev. A. P. Cornwall informs me that at election times the party chiefs proceeded thither, with their tenantry behind them, on horseback, in carriages and on foot, with music and colours displayed, orange for Richmond, blue for Wyndham.

In the Hall the Sheriff sat on the scarlet lined daïs with the candidates, one on each side. In this way the nomination took place.

Such was its last appearance in the arena of municipal and national life. Its present condition is lamentable. It now serves as a shed to store the cricket tent and supply the wants of the football players.

In the municipal life of England this Guildhall has played no unimportant part. It has passed through the stormy days of Edward VI. and Queen Mary, the days of Elizabeth, the siege and sack of Waller and the days of Wellington and Nelson.

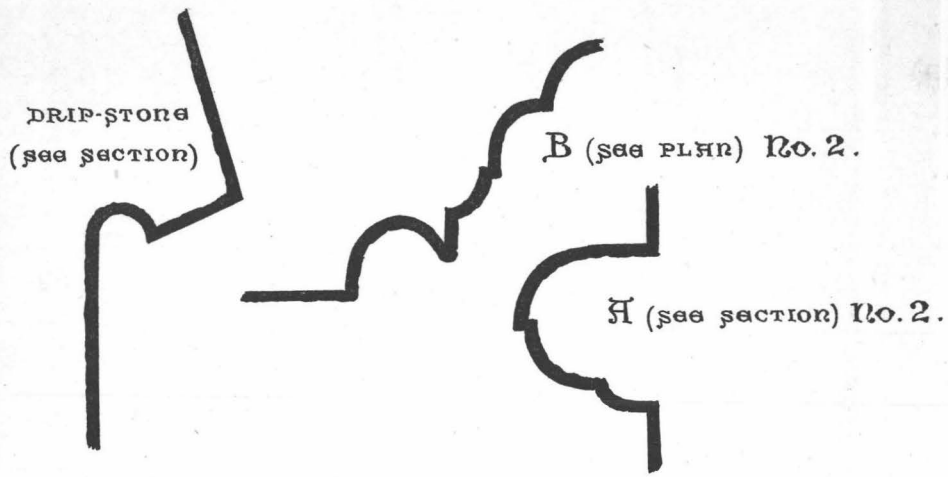
London has its Guildhall of Gothic date, York and Lynn have their fine Gothic Halls. St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich, has a similar history to this Guildhall, being once a Dominican Friars' Church. But no city Guildhall in England has so venerable a history as that of Chichester.

A hopeful future seems on the horizon and an active committee are to-day at work to collect funds and place the Guildhall once more in the position of one of the glories of Sussex mediæval architecture and a monument of the civic life of Chichester.

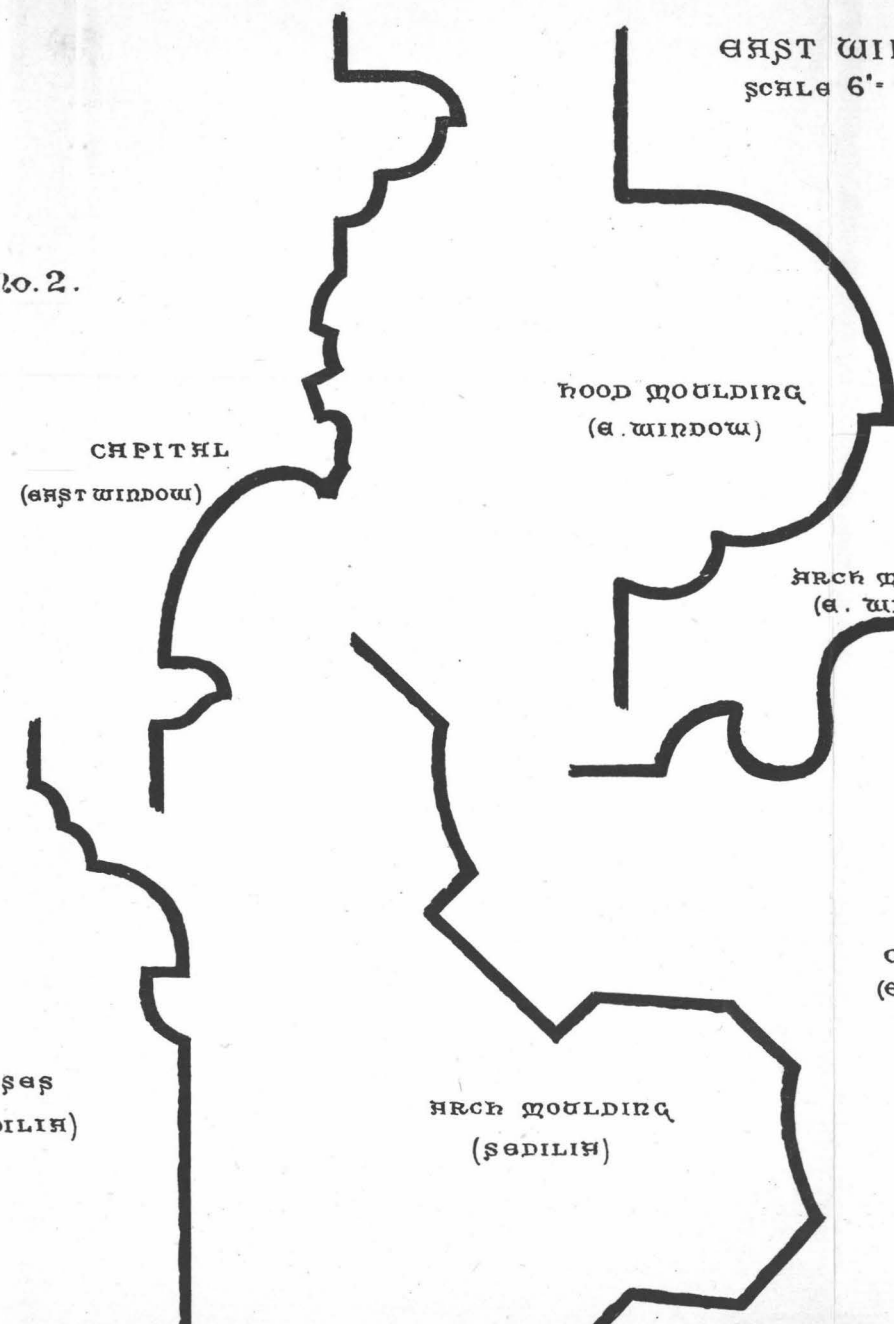
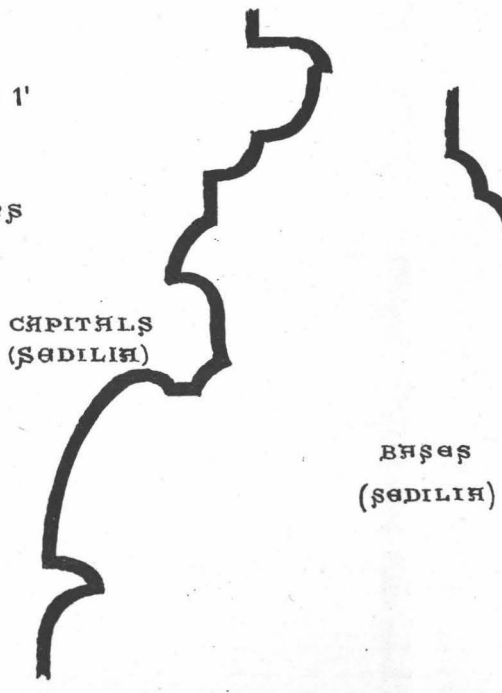
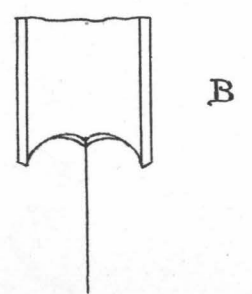
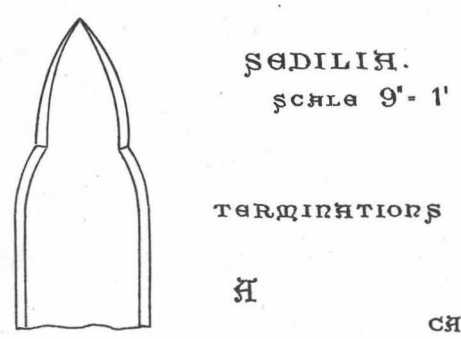
NOTE.—My sincere thanks are owed to Rev. Prebendary Deedes for assistance with the Cathedral registers and loan of books, also to Mr. R. H. Thompson for architectural notes, and also to Mr. E. Prior for his valuable help.

* Mr. Loader-Cooper tells me that it was last used in 1888 for a nomination.

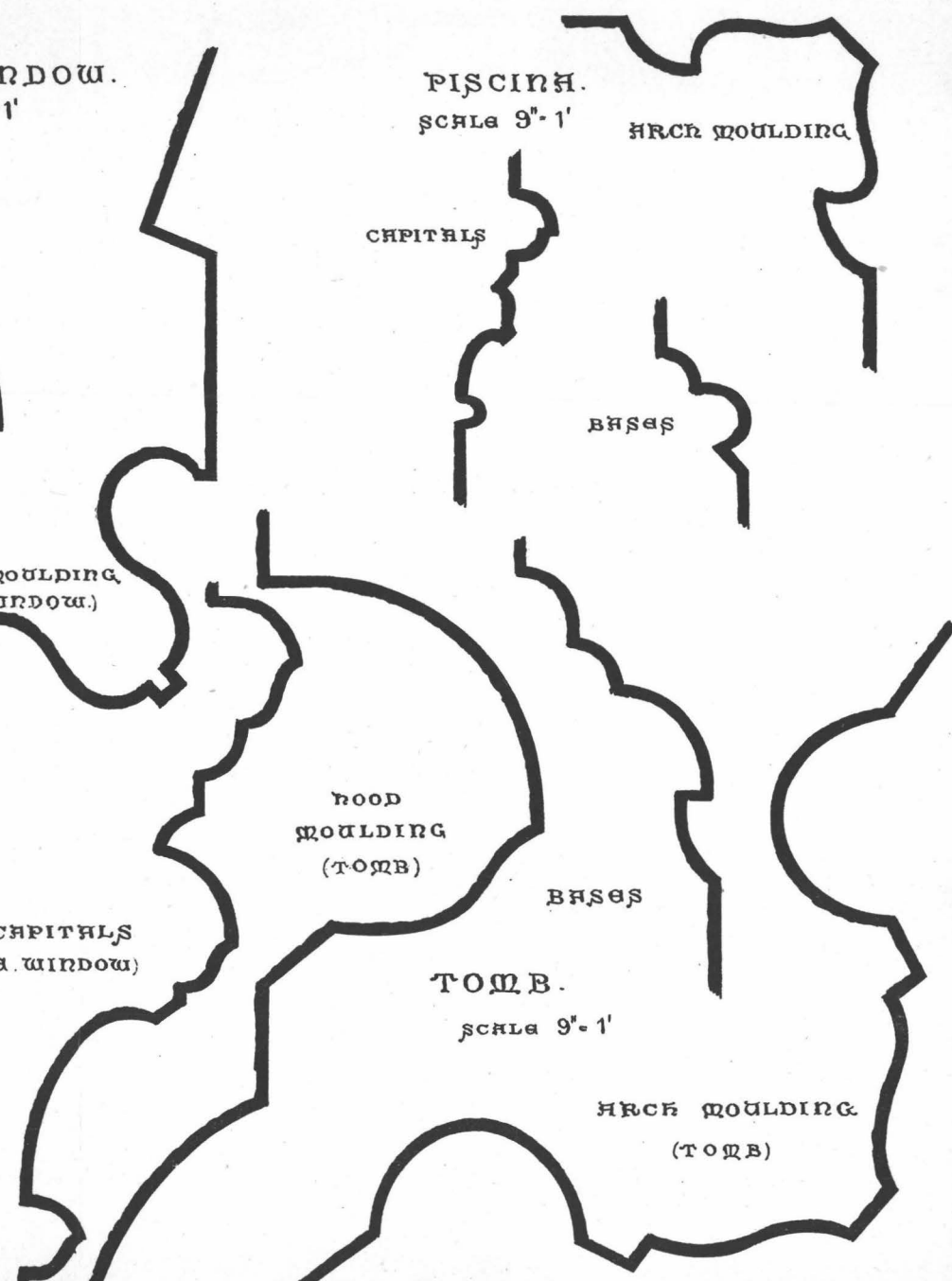
No. 10.



NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE 6" - 1'



EAST WINDOW.
SCALE 6" - 1'



PISCINA.
SCALE 9" - 1'

TOMB.
SCALE 9" - 1'