

# “THE OLD PALACE” AT WEST TARRING.

BY ARTHUR B. PACKHAM.

IT has seemed advisable to divide the following notes into two portions—the first dealing with such traditional and documentary evidence as exists concerning general events which can be inferentially connected with the building; and the second with its architectural features. No attempt is here made to give a complete account of the devolution of the manor, such information only, as seemed applicable to the building, being used.

## I. TRADITIONAL AND DOCUMENTARY HISTORY.

West Tarring was given to Christchurch, Canterbury, by King Athelstan, who died A.D. 941, and it is probable that from an early period the Archbishops had an establishment here, of which they could avail themselves when journeying through the county. There can be little doubt that the building which forms the subject of these notes, represents what remains of that establishment. Popular tradition has specially associated with it the name of Thomas à Becket. So far as the writer is aware, no other manor-house belonging to the Archbishops has received this particular distinction, in the same degree, and it is difficult to account for, in this case. It is fairly certain that a manor-house of some kind existed here in Becket's time, but a consideration of the main events which occurred while he was Primate seems to show that he can have had but little leisure during that stormy period even for short visits to Tarring, much less for such prolonged residence as to establish special associations with the

place. From the date when he became Archbishop till his death—a matter of eight and a half years or so—he was apparently only in England for somewhat less than two years and a half, and most of that time must have been occupied with matters requiring his presence long distances away from Tarring.

Undoubtedly he had earlier associations with Sussex. As a youth he is said to have been much at Pevensey Castle. Later, he was Dean of Hastings. Dallaway's *Rape of Chichester* states that a dispute about the manor of South Mundham had given the first occasion for King Henry II. to openly oppose Becket—also that Becket was “frequently established at Pagham with a large retinue,” and that his interference with the jurisdiction of Hilary laid the foundation of the feud between them.<sup>1</sup> Dallaway does not quote any authority for the assertion of frequent residence at Pagham.

There is some possibility that Becket's association with Tarring may have preceded his elevation to the Primacy. He had been in the household of Theobald, his predecessor, from about 1142 to 1155, being Archdeacon of Canterbury—a most lucrative post—during the latter part of the time. He is said to have been fond of a country life. The writer thinks it not improbable that he held the manor of Tarring during some part of this time, and even during the seven years of his chancellorship which followed. There is a tradition of a “menagerie” as one of the buildings at Tarring, and that it was “filled with monkeys.” On Becket's embassy to France in 1159, each of his sumpter horses is said to have carried on its back, in addition to its packs, a long-tailed ape, in a procession which seems to have been a monumental instance of mediæval ostentation. But with all this there seems no *direct* evidence of residence at Tarring to account for the tradition, and even Becket's Sussex biographer, Herbert of Bosham, is silent upon the point.

The building here treated of has no definite architectural features of a date earlier than the thirteenth

<sup>1</sup> *Rape of Chichester* (Parochial Topography), pp. 36, 39.

century. It is appropriate, therefore, that from documents of that period we get the first evidence which can be considered as really bearing on its history. One of the well-known series of letters from Simon de Seinliz, the astute steward of Ralph Nevill, bishop of Chichester and chancellor of England, informs his master that the Archbishop—Richard Wethershed (1229–34)—will be coming to Sussex in the following Lent, and intends to journey from Slindon to Tarring, where he will stay one night, going on subsequently to Preston, west of Worthing.<sup>2</sup> (Follows then the suggestion that an offer to defray the cost of the Archbishop's entertainment at Preston would look well, and might safely be made, as it would not be accepted.)

These journeyings about the country—absolutely necessary in those days for the transaction of a large amount of business of the most varied character—must have been a tax on the resources of the places along the route. There seems to have been some sort of attempt to limit the number taking part in them—one writer says to fifty men and horses.<sup>3</sup> But it is evident that this number was often exceeded. Not only were there the officers and members of the household, from secretaries down to smiths and scullions, but a fairly large number of attendants were required for actual protection at times. Archbishop Mepham seems to have included in his train a cavalcade of eighty horsemen in armour during a visitation in 1329, which proceeded by way of Rochester, Chichester, Salisbury, Bath and Wells, etc. Dean Hook speaks of this number as being "less than the church allowed."<sup>4</sup>

Perambulations of this kind seem to have taken place in winter almost as frequently as in summer—a fact which makes one wonder whether the roads in those

<sup>2</sup> *S.A.C.*, Vol. III., p. 51, "Letters to Ralph de Neville" (Blaauw). In the letter referred to, the Archbishop is not mentioned by name, but from notes kindly supplied by Mr. J. E. Ray, I conclude that Wethershed is meant.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Vol. XX. (New Series), 1914, p. 107. "The Archbishop's Manors in Sussex" (Kershaw).

<sup>4</sup> Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, Vol. III., p. 503.

times were always so bad as popularly supposed. It has been a general practice with Sussex writers to insist on the specially bad character of the Sussex roads, and from the beginning of the sixteenth century there is doubtless justification for this. But although by then they had acquired an unenviable notoriety, it does not follow that they were exceptionally bad in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, until the Sussex ports became silted up it is unlikely that the Sussex roads were one whit worse than the generality of roads elsewhere (though this is not high praise), for the county was one of the chief thoroughfares to the continent.

To return to our subject, it must have been a busy scene when one of these ecclesiastical potentates arrived at a place, more especially when on a regular progress through the country, rather than on a visit which might allow of residence at, and work from, a centre. He would be accompanied by his train of officials, his bodyguard, and his household staff, with sumpter mules bearing the baggage—perhaps sometimes also with carts containing the more bulky sort. Hawks and hounds would form part of the train, and the spoils of the chase would be useful to provide the hungry party with food to eke out the local supplies.

An agreement between the Earl of Arundel and the Archbishop of Canterbury (1274) speaks of the latter hunting “with six greyhounds” while journeying to and from his manor of Slindon.<sup>5</sup> Another part of the letter of Simon de Seinliz above referred to, makes it clear also that contributions in the way of supplies would be forthcoming from bishops and others through whose dioceses or lands the Primate passed.<sup>6</sup> But with all this, local supplies would necessarily have to be requisitioned for many things. An officer had always to precede the Archbishop to make arrangements.

<sup>5</sup> Eustace, *Arundel Borough and Castle*, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> “As long as he (the Archbishop) stayed at Slindon, he was well supplied from your manors of Aldingbourne and Amberley” (“Letters to Ralph de Neville”), *S.A.C.*, Vol. III., p. 51.

More especially was this necessary in localities where supplies were likely to be difficult to obtain. In the case of the route lying where the church of Canterbury possessed property, arrangements could be more easily made. In Sussex, the Archbishops' "Peculiars," as their possessions were called, formed a nearly continuous chain, and all that was required was due notice in advance of an intended visit.

We get light on the arrangements at Tarring from a case which figured in the King's Court in the fifth year of Edward I.<sup>7</sup> The records of this include a recital of certain earlier happenings, and from these it is clear that the conditions under which the earlier tenant held, were the same as those which were being dealt with at the later enquiry. As the whole matter has a distinct bearing on the history of our building, it may be well to describe briefly what had taken place. For the sake of greater clearness the events will be placed in their proper chronological order.

It is evident, then, that during the first half of the thirteenth century, viz., some time between 1233 and 1240, the manor of Tarring was farmed out. The tenant, one Godfrey le Waleys, of whom we hear as early as 1227,<sup>8</sup> held of the Archbishop Edmund—afterwards canonised—under conditions stated to have been the same as those under which his grandson held afterwards. These were: £18 yearly in money or its value, at the option of the Archbishop, who was to be free to come there once a year if he wished, on condition of giving 40 days' notice, and stay until he had consumed food and other necessaries to that amount, or at the four terms, and consume a fourth part. The tenant was also to keep the men of the manor according to their tenures, and as freely without vexation or exaction as the Archbishop kept his men of his other manors, under pain of forfeiture. If he failed in any of the conditions the Archbishop was to be free to resume possession of the manor. This particular tenant Godfrey, made sundry defaults, and was duly deprived

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. Pat. R.* 1272-81, p. 204.

<sup>8</sup> *Cal. Pat. R.* 1225-32, p. 166.

of the manor by Edmund. This prelate had been, in his younger days as an Oxford tutor, remarkable for his generous nature, frequently accepting no fees for tuition from poor scholars, and sometimes getting imposed upon, in consequence, by others. Later, too, at Salisbury, he seems to have been notoriously unbusinesslike in his habits.<sup>9</sup> By the time he became Primate, however, he had become convinced of the necessity of giving stricter attention to worldly matters.

His treatment of the defaulting Godfrey cannot be said to have been unduly severe. He gave back the manor on condition, indeed, that a fine of £80 should be paid within four years, and £10 on failing to pay any quarter of it; but the £80 was given to Godfrey's four daughters as a marriage portion, to be kept at Lewes Priory till the said marriages took place. Godfrey also bound himself under penalty of again losing the manor, to treat the Archbishop's tenants properly. The above settlement was duly recorded in a writing dated 5 Ides June in the fourth year of Edmund's pontificate (9th June, 1237).

When the manor had been taken over by Edmund, the keys had been handed to “Master Richard de Wyke”—afterwards Bishop of Chichester, and eventually canonised. At this time he was Edmund's chancellor. When he subsequently became Bishop of Chichester, and the King refused to ratify his election, he was to find at Tarring a close friend in the person of the then rector, Simon de Terryng, who often extended hospitality to him.<sup>10</sup>

Edmund, in restoring the manor to Godfrey le Waleys, had not included the heirs of the latter in the grant, but on the death of Godfrey, at the special pleading of the son (also named Godfrey) he took the latter as tenant.

Apparently Godfrey, junior, profited by his father's experience, and escaped forfeiture of his holding. Not so, however, his own son Richard. Richard was a

<sup>9</sup> Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops*, Vol. III.

<sup>10</sup> *S.A.C.*, Vol. XLIV., p. 192, “Some Notes on the Life of Saint Richard of Chichester” (Cooper).

minor when his father died, in the time of Archbishop Boniface. The latter therefore took the manor into his own hands "in the name of a custody," and assigned to Joan, Godfrey's widow (the mother of Richard), a third part in dower at a third of the rent, viz., £6. When Richard became of age he was put in seisin of the other two parts of the manor, but eventually he followed the ways of his grandfather rather than of his wiser father, the second Godfrey. Richard oppressed the manorial tenants, and it is specially noted that whereas they were only bound to thresh corn against the coming of the Archbishop, he compelled them to do so at other times as well. Events reached a climax when, on a visit from the Archbishop (Kilwardby) Richard and his mother failed to expend the proper amount of £18, and only laid out a sum which, we are told, with a commendable regard for exactitude, amounted to £6 17s. 5½d. This niggardly interpretation of his liabilities naturally caused dissatisfaction. The Archbishop re-entered into possession of the manor, and Richard brought an action for wrongful disseisin. In the course of the legal proceedings it was claimed by the Primate that in allowance of the £18 the tenants should have found for him a quarter of wheat for 18d., a quarter of oats for 8d., 4 gallons of best ale for 1d., "and if it be not the best let the cask be smashed, the ale spilt, and 1d. or ½d. put upon the cask," a fat ox carcase for 16d., a male pig over a year old and of reasonable size for 8d., a fat mutton carcase for 4d., two fat geese for 1d., four fat hens for 1d., 100 eggs for 1d., and 100 for nothing, dishes, plates, salt cellars, cups, skewars, firewood, coal, salt, "pychers," daily at noon, hay for nothing, and litter likewise for nothing. Warter<sup>11</sup> says the award of the court differed from these claims, but this does not seem to have been the case.

The Archbishop won the day, after a suit which evidently aroused unusual interest. There were numerous adjournments, and we are told that "all the knights and free tenants of Sussex were challenged on one side

<sup>11</sup> *Parochial Fragments*, p. 185.

or the other, and Richard claimed that jury ought not to be taken by any jurors of Kent or Surrey.” There was a final adjournment, and the King was consulted. The verdict went against Richard, he forfeiting the manor, and also the right of chase in the Archbishop’s other manors of South Malling and Mayfield. Eventually he was ousted from the manor of Tarring altogether, but his mother Joan was allowed to remain in possession of her third portion. The incident seems to have led to an arrangement by which the King intervened and took over the property. The Sheriff of Sussex was ordered to go in person and take the manor into the King’s hand, and to cause the demesne lands thereof to be tilled and sown, and to bring back any goods alienated.<sup>12</sup>

In January, 1289, Archbishop Peckham evidently stayed for one night at Tarring, two of his letters being dated thence on consecutive days.<sup>13</sup> But for some little time previous to this, the more prolonged visits of the Archbishops to Sussex had been passed either at Malling or Slindon, and we hear nothing subsequently of any direct connection between the Primates and our building, or of any special arrangements for accommodating the former. The manor passed through the usual vicissitudes of church property, being from time to time in the hands of the reigning monarch owing to vacancies in the Primacy. It was held by tenants whose rents were duly accounted for, either to the Archbishop or the King, as the case might be. The most noteworthy occasion on which the manor passed into royal hands, occurred towards the end of the fourteenth century, when Archbishop Thomas Arundel was impeached and subsequently banished. Following this, an inquisition was taken at Tarring 23 Oct., 21, Ric. II., at which the jurors stated<sup>14</sup> that the Archbishop, on the day of forfeiture, held “the manor of Terryngge, in which manor is a site with garden enclosed, containing three

<sup>12</sup> *Cal. Fine Rolls*, 1272–1307, p. 74.

<sup>13</sup> *Registrum Epistolarum J. Peckham*, Arch. Cant.

<sup>14</sup> *Miscellaneous Inquisitions Chancery File 269*.



acres, and worth nothing beyond reprisals. There are there 280 acres of arable land worth 4d. an acre, sum £4 13s. 4d., and pasture for 150 sheep worth yearly 18d., 30 acres of separate pasture in the parish of Horsham<sup>15</sup> belonging to said manor, worth yearly 2d. an acre, sum 5s.; 10 acres of meadow worth 12d. an acre, sum 10s.; one wood containing 7 acres, worth nothing. Rents of assize of free tenants £14. There is a windmill worth yearly 20s.; and divers farm rents 75s. 7d."

The Court Rolls at Lambeth<sup>16</sup> show that in 6-7 Henry V. the Steward of the Liberty accounted for "10s. of the issues of a garden in Terryng, co. Sussex, in the hands of the lord by reason of the minority of the son and heir of the lord of Hungerford, who held of the lord by Knight service the day he died." From the fact that in the survey *tempo* Richard II., a "site with garden enclosed" figured as a principal item, it seems reasonable to conclude that the garden of which the issues were accounted for by the Steward, was the same, and that it was probably attached to the manor-house.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, it would seem that only the "Palace" property, and not the whole of the manor is referred to, there being no mention of any income other than that from the garden. (In passing, one may wonder whether the famous figs contributed to the 10s.) Assuming the old Palace to be referred to, it would be interesting to be able to trace the particular "lord of Hungerford," who had held by knight service. Attempts to do this, however, have been unsuccessful. A "Lord Hungirford" held lands in Sussex at Fyndon and Horsham in 1411.<sup>18</sup> No record other than that at Lambeth seems to exist, of a Hungerford holding at West Tarring. This lack of confirmatory record is, of course, no proof of unreliability as regards the one extant; similarly scanty reference to a Hungerford

<sup>15</sup> This was at Marlpost.

<sup>16</sup> Roll 95 (6-7 Henry V.).

<sup>17</sup> The area—3 acres—agrees approximately with that of the land immediately surrounding the Palace, and forming the main part of the later "Tarring Rectoria" manor.

<sup>18</sup> S.A.C., Vol. X., p. 140

holding occurs in the case of a manor in Hampshire; but in this case of Tarring there is the further difficulty of finding any particular Hungerford who had just died at the date in question (1418). This is unfortunate, as, for reasons given further on, one is disposed to assign much of the later architectural work, to the early years of the fifteenth century.

The next date which has interest, is that of 1464, when (as shown by an original copy of a Court Roll in the possession of our member, Mr. Edward Sayers) John Sutton, Rector of Tarring, held (at Heene) his court as lord of the manor of “Teryng Parsonatus” (Tarring Parsonage). Now the manor bearing this name would presumably be the same as “Tarring Rectoria,” which was the title borne in 1539 by the manor for which courts were held in the old Palace down to so recent a date as 1844. “Tarring Rectoria” would seem to have been carved out of the very much larger manor which had previously existed and which had included lands at Marlpost, Horsham. There is clear proof, however, that the Archbishops continued to hold the larger area right down to 4 and 5 Philip and Mary.<sup>19</sup> After this it passed into royal hands, Queen Elizabeth being apparently the first monarch to own it. “Tarring Rectoria” comprised only the old Palace, the grounds surrounding it (containing about two acres and a half) and some land on the eastern side of Heene. It is not clear why John Sutton’s court was not held in the old Palace, but apparently for some reason that building was not at that time available. It eventually, however, became the Rectory (probably at the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century), and, as already stated, the manorial courts were held there.

It is unnecessary to follow in detail the subsequent

<sup>19</sup> *Court Rolls of Aldwick* (including Tarring and Marlpost). Roll 186, Lambeth (4-6 Ph. and Mary), “Elizabeth Pylfolde . . . held . . . a message and land . . . in Marelposte, whereby a heriot falls due to the lord” This seems to dispose of the assertion in Elwes (*Castles, Manors, and Mansions of West Sussex*) that Cranmer exchanged the manor for other property with Henry VIII (p. 231).

# THE OLD PALACE, WEST TARRING.

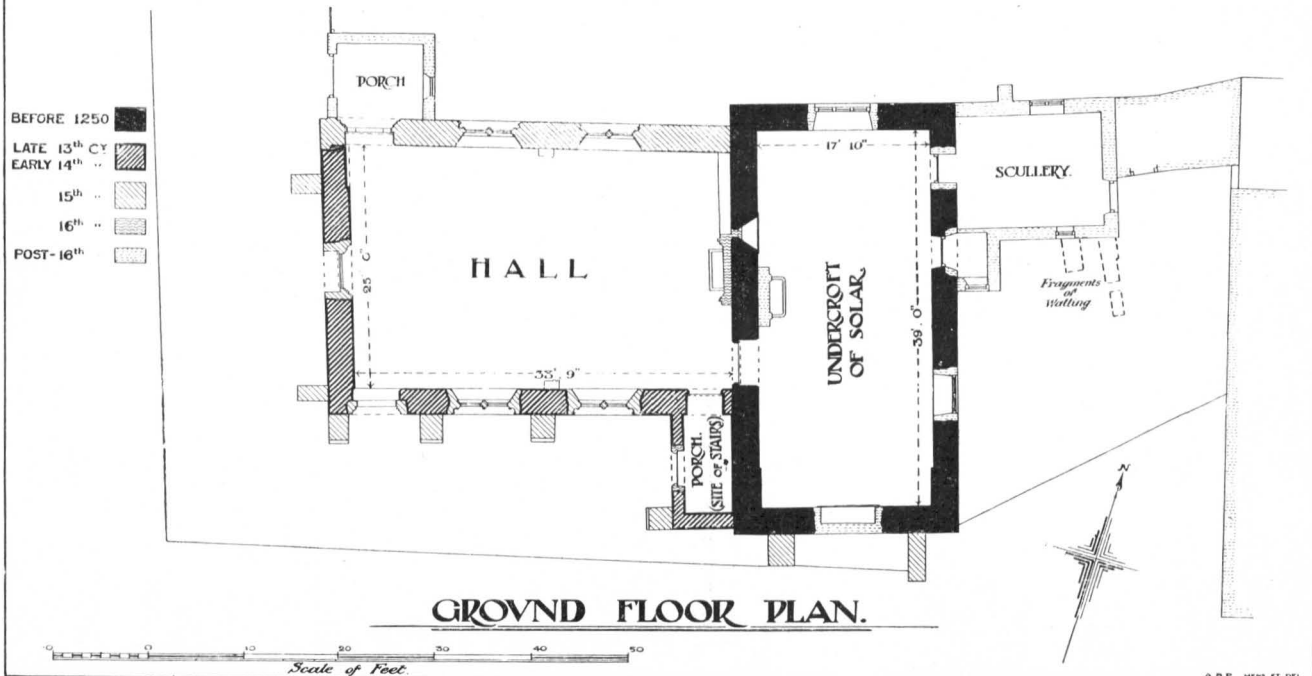


FIG. 1.

fortunes of the building. In the early years of the nineteenth century it was partly occupied by cottagers. A local guide-book of 1805 says characteristically: “The Archbishop of Canterbury, it is said, had formerly a Palace at Tarring, where he occasionally resided. The remains of the Kitchen are now inhabited by labouring people, who would be thankful for the crumbs that fell from his Grace’s table. Such are the vicissitudes of this transitory life.”

The building was afterwards used as a day school till superseded by the more modern erection close by. It now serves sundry useful purposes in connection with church activities.

## II. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY.

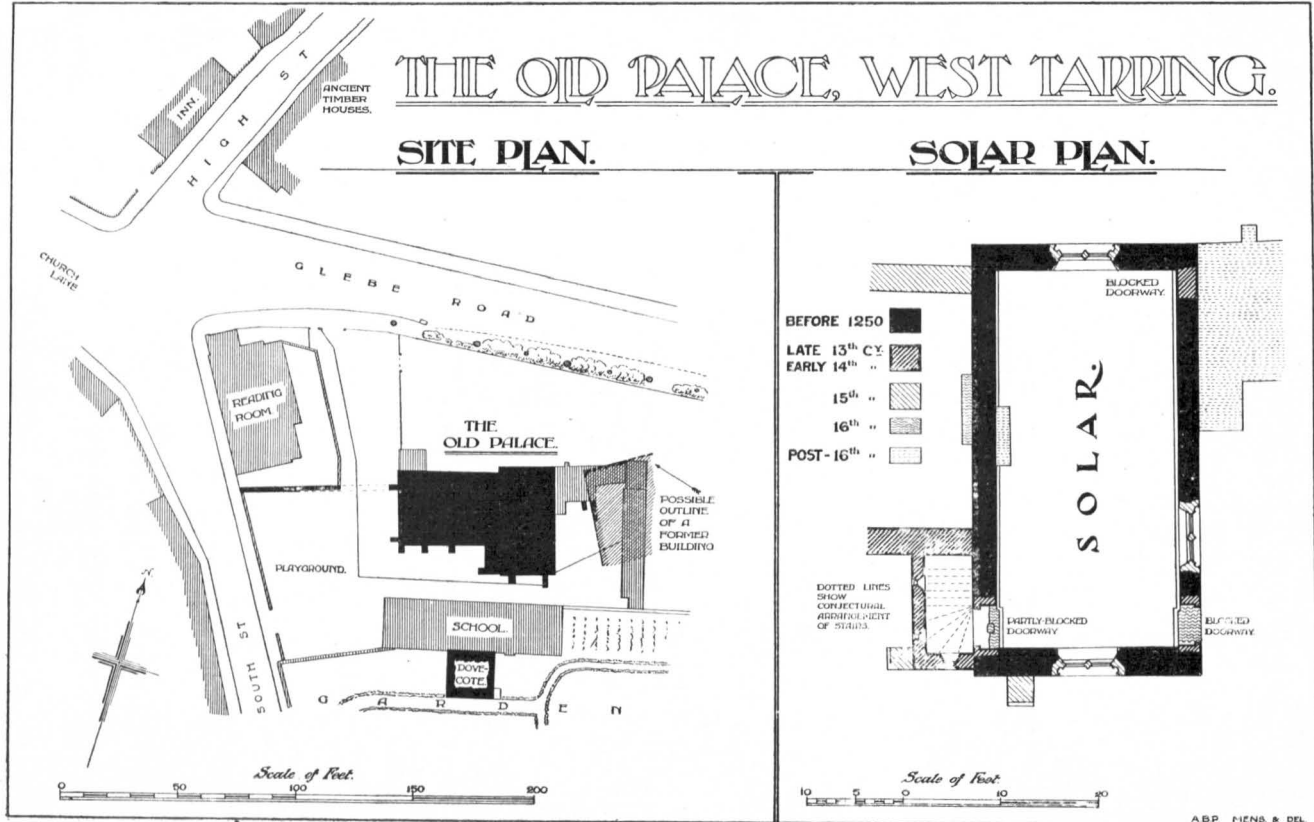
Warter, in his *Parochial Fragments*, seems to imply a doubt as to the existing building representing the principal manor-house; but in this respect the persistent nature of the Becket legend seems conclusive, especially when taken in conjunction with indications which exist, tending to show that what remains is part only, of a much larger establishment. Before describing the main building, I will deal briefly with these indications.

Commencing on the east side of the main block there are, in the back yard between the “solar” and the modern outbuildings some fragments of walling running south from the present scullery (see Figs. 1 and 2). These are not parallel with the main building, but range themselves so as to lie approximately at right angles to the north boundary of a building just east of the Scullery—a north boundary whose line, cutting away at this angle, seems difficult to account for, unless it follows an older boundary of a definite kind, and probably a building—hence the right angle. The two pieces of walling side by side, suggest the sub-structure of an external stair, of stone. It is possible, therefore, that here there may have existed an outbuilding which has now vanished, though it would have lain awkwardly for any connection with the main building. Many mediæval buildings exist, however,

# THE OLD PALACE, WEST TARRING.

## SITE PLAN.

## SOLAR PLAN.



A.B.P. FIENS & DEL.

FIG. 2.

the component parts of which follow a no less wayward arrangement (or want of it). There is no definite proof of these walls having been other than garden walls, though, as will be seen later, there is reason to believe that on this side at one time lay further portions of the manor-house.

Passing round now to the south side of the solar there is another fragment of walling projecting from near the south-east angle. Rouse's view (*circa* 1820) shows at this part, a garden wall running up to the building, with a gate in it a little further south. Grimm's view, which is earlier, being dated 1781, shows the fragment of wall much as now (Fig. 3*b*). There are no indications on the main structure of any roofs of ancient buildings on this side, and it is probable that this fragment was never anything more important than a garden wall.

At a short distance south from the main block is the modern school. This lies along the north side of a garden, in which, adjoining the school building, is situated a dovecote—a square erection with tiled roof, hipped all round from the eaves-line, but rising at the apex into a short ridge with the usual two gablets. The “issues of dovecotes and gardens” sold in the manors of South Malling and Tarring are referred to in 1313–14, when the See of Canterbury was vacant by the death of Robert de Winchelsea. (In passing, it may be remarked that some evidence of the duality of the manor may be noted in the fact that there was formerly another dovecote at Tarring, close to the churchyard; old views show this, and Mr. Edward Sayers has a sketch of it taken by himself. It seems to have resembled the one still remaining to the south of the school).

Coming now to the west side of the main buildings, there are, projecting from the west end of the hall, two buttress-like pieces of walling (Fig. 15). Here we have definite evidence of the former existence of an additional building, for the opening in the west wall of the hall (now a window) was formerly a doorway which opened

back westwards—that is to say, the vanished building formed the inner side of the doorway, and on the hall side was fashioned the narrower opening which provided the rebate against which the door shut. This was the usual treatment for doors in this position. The door-hooks remain, outside.

The north projection of the two above referred to comes practically in a line with a piece of old wall now forming the north side of the school playground (see Site plan, Fig. 2). These walls include early worked stones built in at random, and must, therefore, be grouped with the later work.

This playground area formed, many years ago, a garden used by the Rector. Mr. Sayers says that sixty or seventy years back an abnormally dry summer would produce here, distinct signs of foundations. One of the Rectors had wished to have these removed to improve the garden. He desisted after interviewing the local smith, a functionary from whom he found himself constantly receiving bills. The smith explained that these were for sharpening tools spoilt by the workmen in attempting to cope with the stubborn rubble of the foundations.

The "Brewhouse" and the "Menagerie" were, according to tradition, located on the site of some old cottages now superseded by the Reading Room, north of the playground.

The *Picture of Worthing* (1805) already quoted from, says, "A considerable wall, nearly ten feet high, built of split flints, and in a high state of preservation, is shown as part of the Episcopal kitchen garden. Indeed, from its construction it bears evident marks of antiquity somewhat resembling Merton Abbey, in Surrey." Mr. Sayers, who remembers the wall in question, adds that it had a tiled weathering on top, and that it ran from the garden (now the playground) down the street front towards the present Rectory, and had a wooden gate and frame in it, leading into the garden. While on the subject of walls, we may note, in passing, those shown in Shaw's view of 1791 (Fig. 3a). These apparently

extended out to where is now the modern Glebe Road, and they have completely disappeared.

A gatehouse is alluded to in documents of the early part of the sixteenth century. One assumes that its position must, of course, have been on, or near, the old main road. Immediately north of the Palace is now what is known as Glebe Road—but this was formed only a few years back. It has sometimes been suggested that the picturesque old timber houses further up the street, may have had some connection with the Palace. They formerly bore the name of Parsonage Row, and there is one old reference to them as “Parsonage Rents.” This seems to imply former possession by the church (the Palace itself is called “Tarring Parsonage” in Shaw’s view, and also in Grimm’s). The suggestion is that the Palace gateway was where these houses stand. In Yorkshire “Rents” sometimes equates with “Went,” which “is equivalent to the Latin *augiportus*, and was a vent or exit leading to the public street, to the gates, or the walls.”<sup>20</sup>

This may conclude our inspection of the surroundings of the Palace, and we may note that there seems no definitely traceable evidence now of any grouping of the buildings round a courtyard—that familiar mediæval arrangement. The remains of the building comprise what must always have been its most important part.

<sup>20</sup> Addy, *Evolution of the English House*, pp. 98–99.

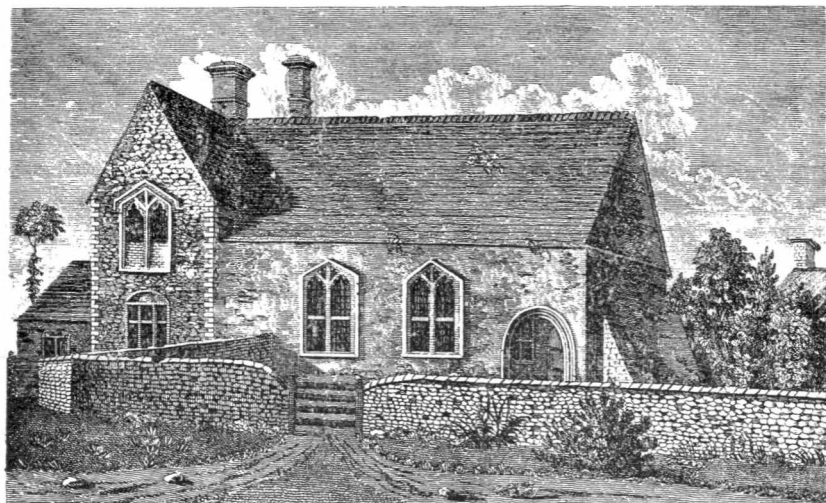
Since the above was written, Mr. Sayers has furnished me with the following extracts from the Court Rolls of the Manor of Tarring Rectory, and informs me that the tenements referred to can be quite clearly identified as forming part of the old timber row:—

A.D. 1751. “All that tenement or building called the Parsonage Gates.”

A.D. 1821. “Tenement part of the Parsonage Row abutting to a close called the Parsonage Gate and the gate-room of the Rectory towards the west.”

There is nothing, at present, to indicate a gateway at the buildings in question. The nearest approach to any feature suggestive of such, consists of the large curved brackets carrying the eaves of the main roof across a recessed portion of the front—but this is, of course, a feature present in countless examples of the period, where no suggestion of a gateway is, or can be, made.





*Thaw del.*

*Ravenhill fecit.*

PARSONAGE HALL at TERRING SUSSEX.

*Published Sep. 1799. by J. Robson, New Bond Street*

FIG. 3a.



*W. View of West Wall Terring Parsonage, supposed to have been erected by Archbishop Becket's father 1181 by Grim.*

GRIMM'S VIEW, 1781.

FIG. 3b.

The alleged “Brewhouse” and “Menagerie” do not appear to have possessed any specially mediæval characteristics. A further word should be said as to the old views of the still-existing main block. The earliest is that by Grimm showing the structure from the south side—dated 1781. Another view by Shaw, dated 1791, shows the north side (see Fig. 3, *a* and *b*). A third, by Rouse (about 1820), shows the south and west sides. Nibbs *Antiquities of Sussex* (1874) includes a similar view, with the additional feature of a loophole over the south hall door. There is not the slightest reason to believe that this loophole ever existed, but probably the artist thought it improved the picture. These views show that the manor-house has remained substantially unchanged for the last 140 years. The north porch was added after 1791, and since then the north yard walls have vanished. Two chimneys are shown instead of one, in these early views, and the bell-cote on the west gable did not then exist. The eighteenth century views show the lower portions of the upper “solar” windows built up, as they must have been for reasons explained further on. Other differences may probably be ascribed rather to short-comings on the part of the artists rather than to alterations in the building.

Having thus far cleared the ground, we may proceed to examine the building more in detail. It is quite evidently an example of the usual “hall and solar” type. The hall lies east and west—the solar north and south at the east end of the hall. The solar or chamber was on the upper floor, and built over a low ground-floor or cellar; it was approached from the hall by a stair situated in what is now a porch only, at the south-east angle of the hall.

So far the general arrangement of the building is clear; but there remain some few points sufficiently obscure to lend a zest to more detailed investigation. Superficially it may be said that the “solar” part of the structure is Early English, with fifteenth century windows inserted, and that the hall is fifteenth century.

# SOUTH ELEVATION.

Scale 1" = 10'

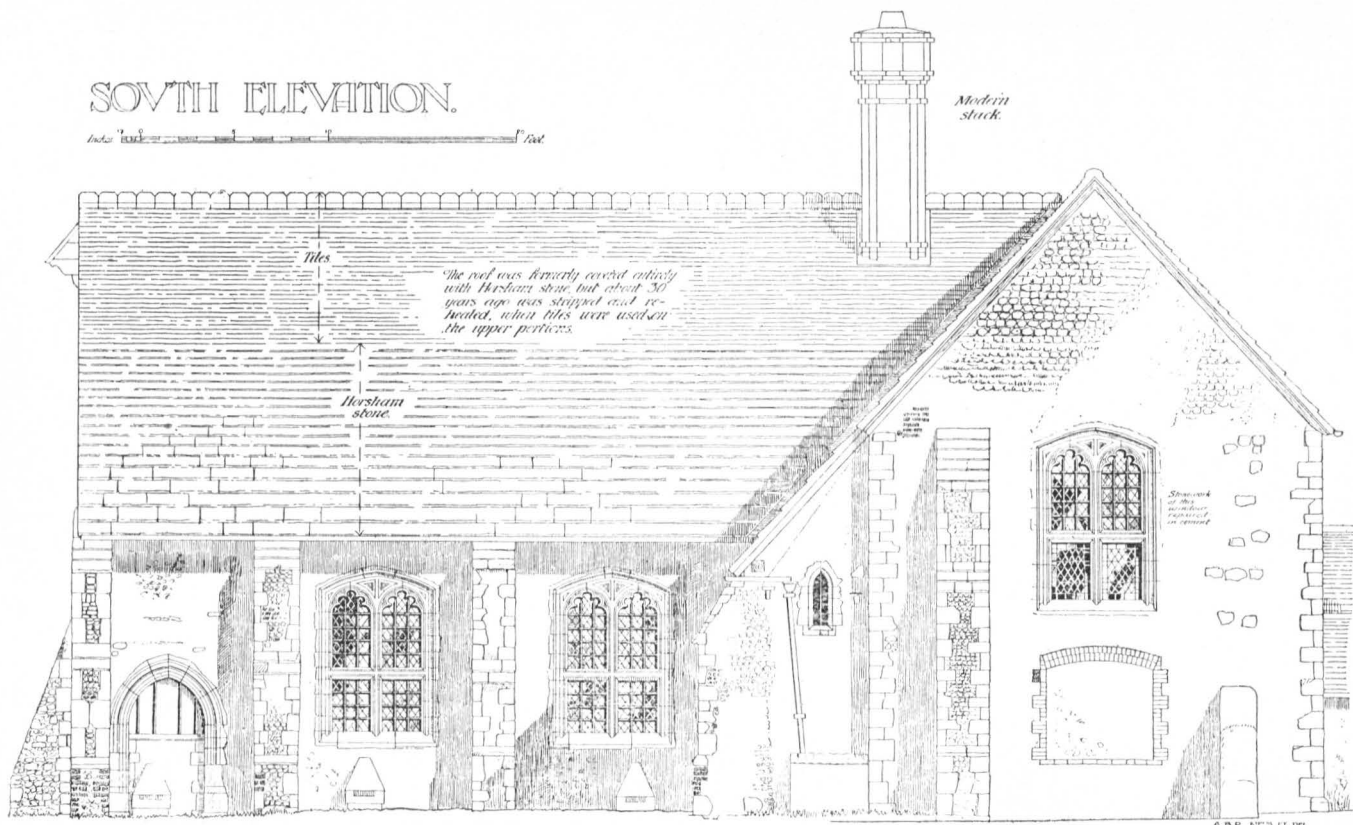


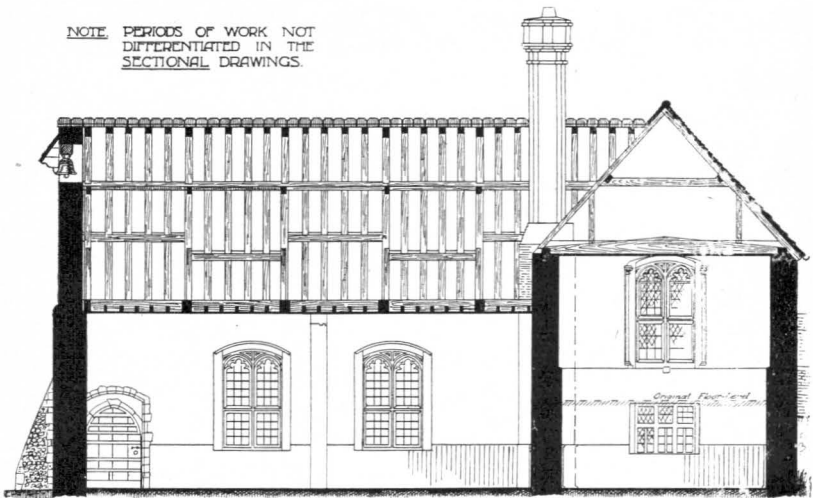
FIG. 4.

There are reasons, however, for modifying this generalisation. The Caen stone used at the west angle quoins of the hall and elsewhere, and the numerous worked fragments of it re-used in what is evidently later work, suggests that there was much more than the solar in existence before 1325. It may here be said generally though, that so much of the early stonework has been re-used, that its presence at any part is no safe indication alone as to date.

But though the solar portion was probably not the only fairly early piece of building here, it seems likely that it represents the *earliest*. The thirteenth century manor-house close to the churchyard at Crowhurst (near Hastings) seems to have consisted mainly of two floors—a vaulted cellar below, and a main chamber above. I think it likely that the solar portion of the building at Tarring was a similarly simple erection, and that for a while it stood alone. Let us examine it more minutely. At present it forms a fine room about 39 feet by 18 feet, and 20 feet in height, having a flat ceiling divided by wooden ribs. At the level of the upper window sills there is a set-off in the wall-plaster, and some stone corbels, indicating a former floor. There is a modern fireplace and chimney-breast on the west side of the room. The indications of a floor just mentioned are misleading. The floor at that level was not the original one. I cannot say when it superseded the earlier one. All this part seems to have been at one time divided up for cottagers to live in, and later, the rooms were used by the teachers of the school held in the building. A stair in the north-east corner of the hall led to the upper rooms of the solar portion through an opening in the west wall (the hall side) now built up.

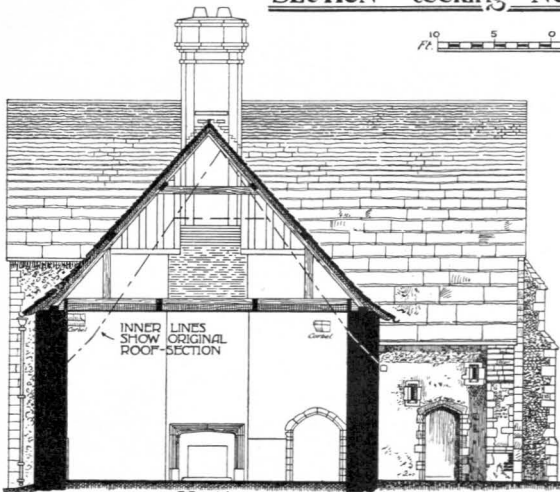
It is evident that the *original* ground storey was of low pitch compared with the solar above it. This is proved by the fact that all the *old* openings from it—viz., the door to the hall, that to the present pantry, and the cupboard north of fireplace—are arched at no great height above the floor-level, and that the line suggested by these arches coincides with the sill levels of the two

NOTE PERIODS OF WORK NOT  
DIFFERENTIATED IN THE  
SECTIONAL DRAWINGS.

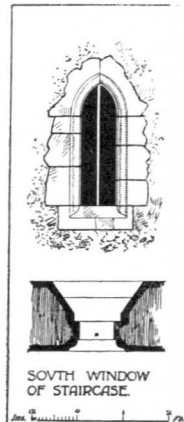


Hall.  
SECTION looking NORTH.

Solar.



Hall.  
SECTION looking EAST.



SOUTH WINDOW  
OF STAIRCASE.

A D P MERS ET DEI

FIG. 5.

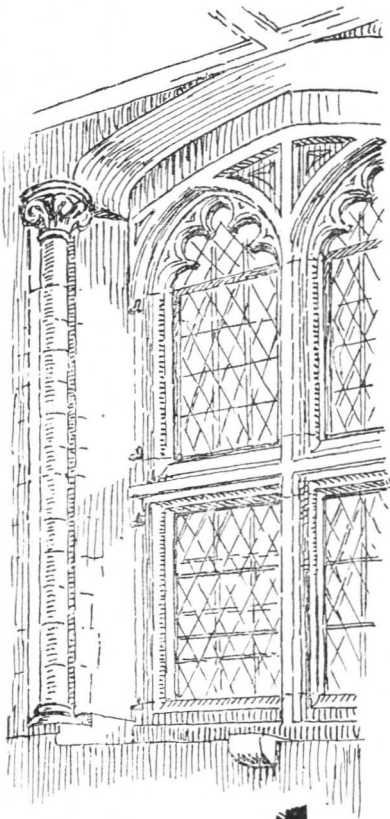
doorways at the south end of the upper chamber, to be dealt with presently. This lower floor-level, too, would leave the upper windows at a normal height above it. (The later floor at the higher level necessitated building up the lower portions of the upper windows because otherwise the glass-line reached the floor-level—this walling-up is shown in the old views as already mentioned.) When the later floor was inserted, it is evident that a set-off which existed in the walls at the original lower floor-level, was carried on up to the new floor-level, and the whole plastered over.

The fireplace and chimney-breast, as already stated, are modern. There was another in the centre of the building, and all old views show two distinct chimneys above the roof instead of the present single stack which now includes the flue of the modern fireplace here, and that of the sixteenth century fireplace at the east end of the hall.

The north and east ground floor windows are comparatively modern, and there was formerly another at the south end; this last is now built up, and the inside recess made into a cupboard. The north and south lower windows are shown in the eighteenth century views. The Scullery also figures on the eighteenth century north view, and the pantry may have been built by then also. The door to scullery formed no part of the original mediæval erection, but the present pantry doorway may have been an external door to the ground storey, though its eastern case has been altered.

The cupboard north of fireplace, on the hall side, is interesting. It is pointed out as having been a serving hatch where the Archbishop (Becket, of course—it is impossible to escape him) had his meals handed through to him from what was then the kitchen. The reasons for rejecting this theory may be given thus: Although the position of the kitchen in a mediæval building cannot always be reckoned on with absolute certainty, it would be most unusual to find it placed behind and close to, the “dais” end of the hall and under the

solar. Mediæval kitchens were generally of great height—this low cellar would have been quite



NORTH  
WINDOW  
OF SOLAR  
INSIDE.

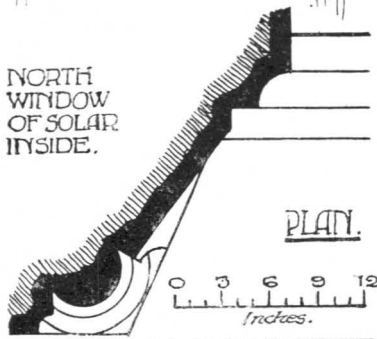


FIG. 6.

would have been quite unsuitable for such a purpose. The shelf of the opening is too low—including the modern wooden floor of the cupboard, the height is but 1 foot 11½ inches above the floor. (The present floor, here of wood blocks, may possibly be a little higher than the original, but indications in the way of chamfer-stops, moulded plinths, etc., at the doorways, rather point to the present level as being not very different from the original one.) The opening splays inwards rapidly from 3 feet 6 inches wide, till at 19½ inches back, it is but 16½ inches wide—too narrow, one may confidently assume, for the passage of some of the weird productions of mediæval cookery. It is, I think, evident that the kitchen hatchway theory has originated merely from the more modern kitchen, which I believe *was* here. On the other hand, the alleged hatchway bears a strong resemblance to just the kind of narrow loop or lancet that

would have been employed to light such a lower storey or cellar as existed here. Allowing for the usual thickness of stone dressing on the west side of the wall thickness, the continuation of the internal splays would give a narrow light of 6 or 7 inches only. If this is what existed here, it implies the non-existence of the hall when this part of the building was first erected. The opening on the hall side is built up and the sixteenth century chimney breast partly overlaps its position. It is probable that the only light in the original ground storey below the solar consisted in a few other precisely similar narrow loops with wide internal splays to diffuse the small amount of light admitted.

The probability that the hall was not in existence so early as the solar is borne out by some other indications. These concern the upper chamber or solar itself. It was originally lighted by what were probably two-light lancet windows in the north and south gables with single segment rere-arches. The internal angle-shafts of the latter remain, in both cases, but the lancets have given way to later transomed lights with cinque-foil cusping in the heads. The slender angle-shafts all have the “water-bearing” base-moulding, and the typical Early English foliage carved on the caps. Those to the north window have circular abaci

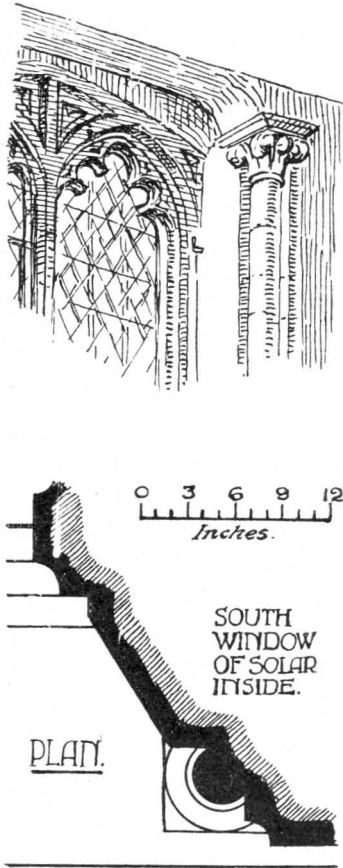


FIG. 7.



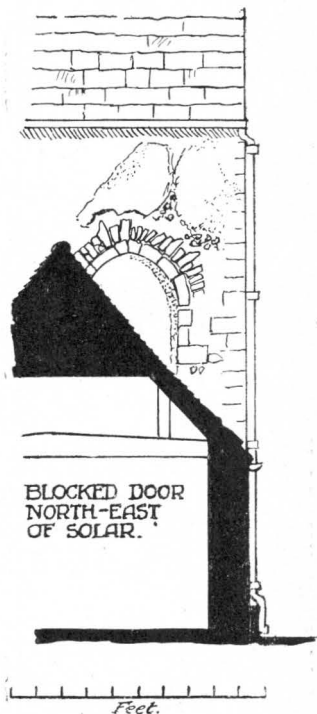
while the square abacus is used for the south window shafts. The plinths to bases are also square in the latter case; those at north window are cut to the window splay, and show very clearly the way in which the main part of the splay was altered and flattened when the later windows were inserted. Probably none of this E.E. work is later than A.D. 1250, whereas the part forming the site of the staircase which connected the solar with the hall is probably at least 50 years later.

The fifteenth century windows inserted within the thirteenth century openings of these north and south gables are of the same design as the hall windows, and were evidently put in at the same time. There is another on the east side of the solar, but in that instance there are no indications of a thirteenth century predecessor.

There can be little doubt that the solar was open up to the roof timbers originally. At some time or other, probably between the fifteenth century and the end of the seventeenth, the roof has been re-modelled. The old rafters (laid the flat way as originally) have been re-used, and there is no ridge-piece. The tie-beams are level on their undersides, and they support ceiling-joists running north and south. There are two vertical side-struts or queen-posts on each tie-beam, but no principal rafters over and the queen-posts do not directly support the purlins, the latter being carried by the collars a little higher up. The original roof-timbers have evidently been worked in, wherever possible, and there is a plenitude of mortice-holes everywhere, so evidently in unnecessary places, as to defy any attempt to reconstruct the original design—with one exception. This is in the top of the centre of one of the tie-beams—the second from the south end—which is evidently one of the earlier timbers; it differs from the rest in being considerably cambered. The mortice obviously indicates a vanished king-post. It may be inferred, therefore, that the framing took the familiar form of which there are other instances

in this part of the county<sup>21</sup>—viz., a cambered tie-beam supporting a king-post, which in its turn would (stopping short of the apex of the roof) support a collar-purlin running the length of the building; across on the collar-purlin would rest the collars connecting each pair of rafters. Curved braces in the direction of the collar-purlin (and perhaps also in the direction of each side rafter) would spring from the king-posts. There *may* also have been curved brackets from the walls to support the undersides of the tie-beams, but over the comparatively narrow span of the solar these may not have been necessary. The tie-beam with the king-post mortice in its top can, perhaps, be more safely taken as a relic of the fifteenth century than of any earlier period, for it is evident that the whole building underwent considerable alteration then. The roof covering was, and is, of Horsham stone, with some tiling near the ridge.

We may now return to the earlier periods. With the exception of the roof framing, and the fifteenth century windows, the solar building so far described may be pictured as standing alone up to nearly the end of the thirteenth century. Perhaps even the thirteenth century roof was not very different from the fifteenth century one described above, except for being sharper in pitch. We have no means of knowing, positively, where the original door and necessary approach steps to the upper room, were situated. There are



Feet.

FIG. 8.

<sup>21</sup> At Old Erringham; at the “Marlipins,” Shoreham; a fine barn roof existing till a year or two ago at Southwick, etc., etc.

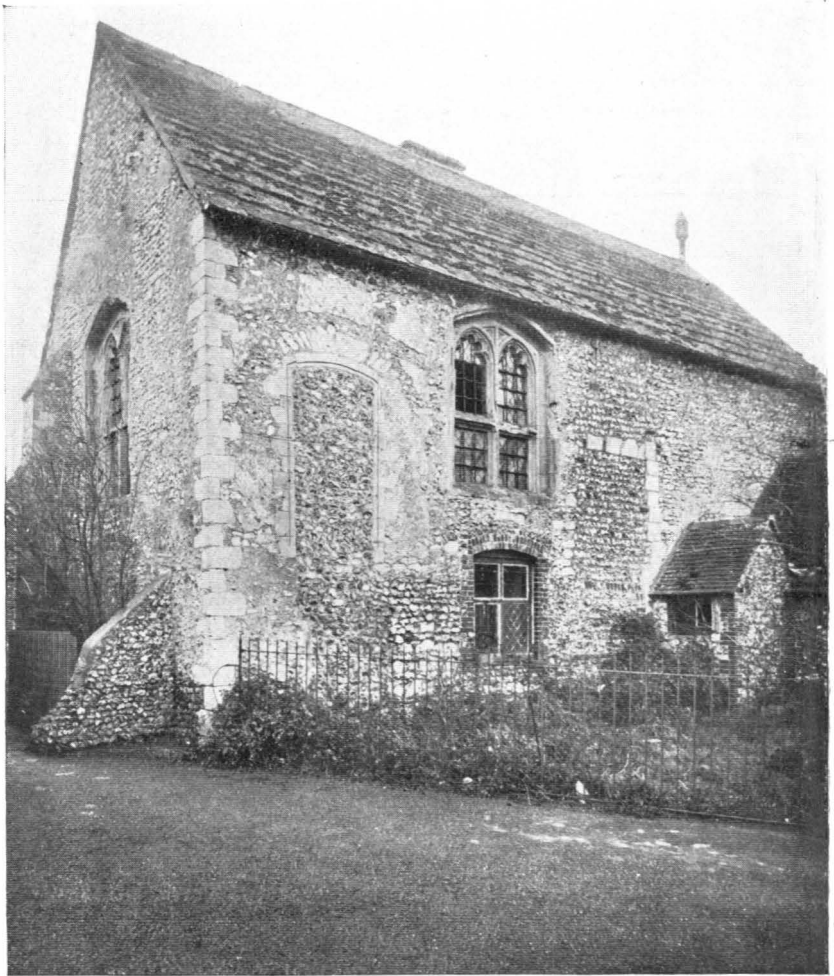


FIG. 9. EAST END.

[Photo by W. Pannell, Hove.]

remains of a doorway showing on the exterior of the east wall at its north end. These remains are partly hidden by the scullery roof (Fig. 8). It is not improbable that the original entrance was here, but it is the merest guess. (It may here be remarked that the plaster and the match-boarded dados to the whole of the interior of the building render it impossible to gain a good bit of information that would be very valuable.)

At the end of the thirteenth century, or beginning of the 14th, further developments were embarked upon. Two doorways were opened at the south end of the solar—one in the east wall and one in the west. There may have been a passage from one to the other. A break in the line of the plaster face is the only internal indication of these doorways now, but both are clearly to be seen on the outer sides of the walls. One is visible close to the angle of the building in Fig. 9. Over

and beside it the walling shows traces of a narrow wooden roof truss (Figs. 9 and 10). Apparently whatever erection existed here was of timber only, there being no indication of (or indeed room for) a stone wall between the truss and the angle. The erection may have been an external porch conducting to steps leading down into a garden. It may have been a timber gallery leading out level to another building further east (see page 151, *ante.*)—or it may even have been a small chapel or oratory. Below this door the main wall seems to have been disturbed, the appearance

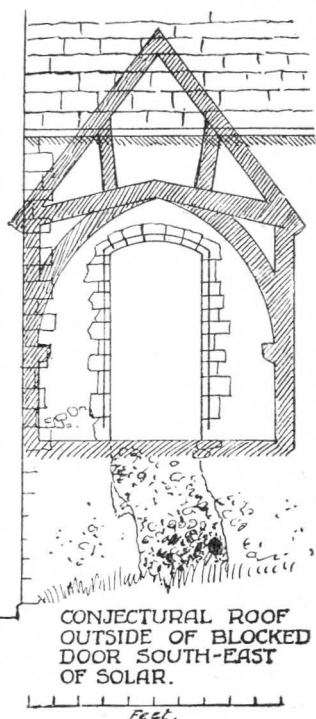
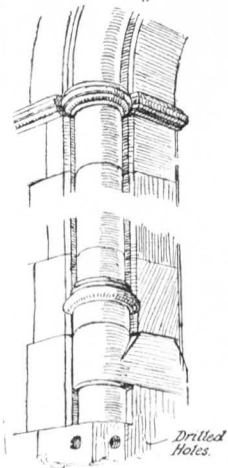
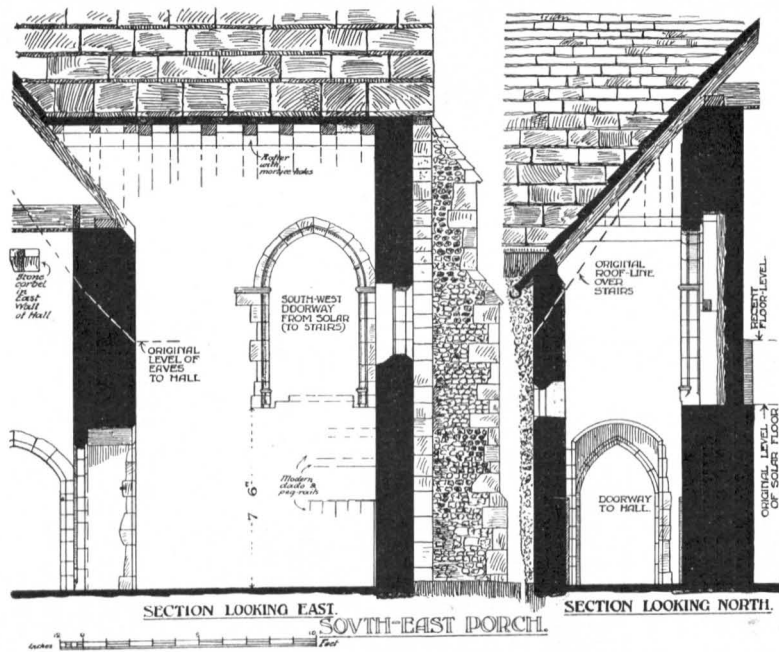


FIG. 10.



CAPITAL & BASE,  
DOORWAY FROM  
STAIRS TO  
SOLAR.

FIG. 11.

rather suggesting that another opening from the cellar ran under the porch or gallery referred to, and was afterwards built up.

While on this side of the building attention may be called to some stonework in the walls further north; it can be seen in Fig. 9, between the blocked south-east door and the projecting pantry further along. Frankly, I can make nothing of it. The vertical portions look rather like the quoins frequently found in mediæval walls where another wall or other projection starts off at right-angles. It is just possible that there was a fireplace in the solar on this side, and I fancy a narrower disturbance of the wall above, up to the eaves, can be detected, and may be where the flue rose through the said eaves.

The doorway in the west wall of the solar can be seen, in what is now a porch at the south-east angle of the hall (see Fig. 11). This porch has contained a staircase leading up from the hall to the solar. (What is now the external door of the porch was apparently only made in the sixteenth century, though much older stones were used for its jambs.) Two loop-holes at different levels, and a narrow, arched, south window with external “wave” moulding, served to light the stairs. The steps were probably formed of oak blocks, as there seems no indication of any ends of stone ones being built into the walling, so far as can be ascertained from an examination through a hole in the defective modern matchboarding. There must have been “winders” to enable the requisite height to be reached in the amount of “going” which was at command, after allowing the stair-foot door (to hall) sufficient room to open. There is a moulded stop to the chamfer of stair-foot door on the hall side. All this stairway, with the doorways at top and bottom, and the enclosing walls, etc., but not the external doorway, may be ascribed to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Apparently the hall, in its original form, must have been added at this period. The thicker wall through which the doorway from the hall passes to the stairs

# HALL WINDOW, N.-W.

7 1/2 10 5 10 FT.

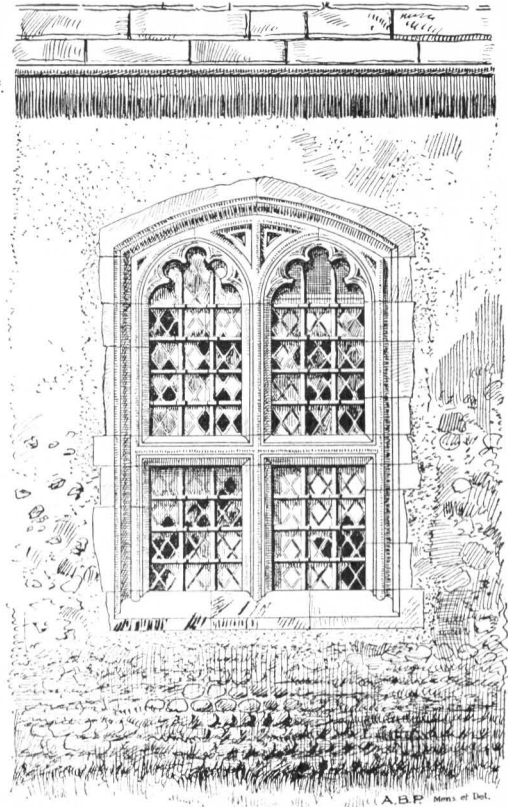
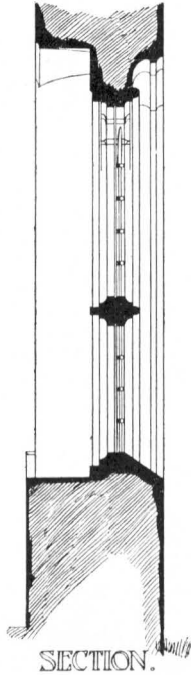
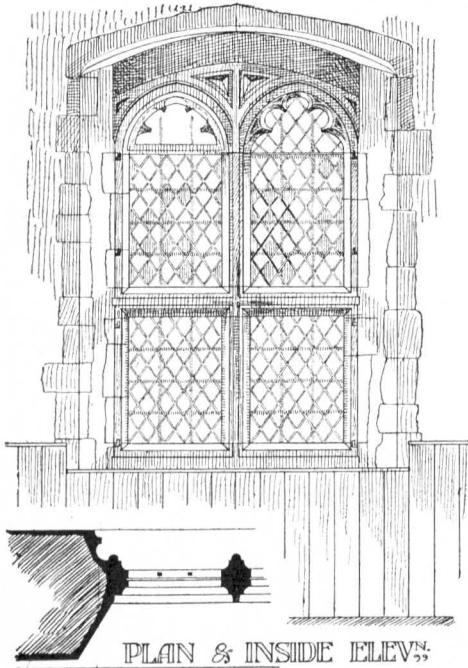


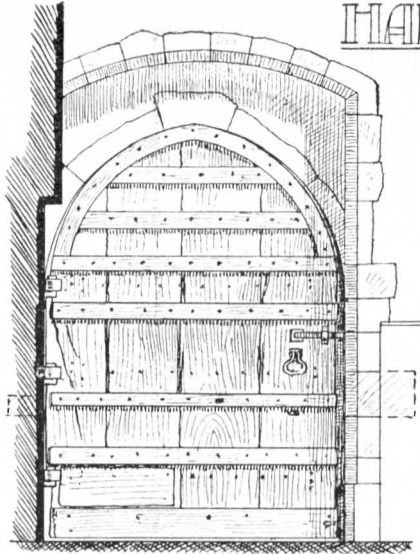
FIG. 12.

was part of the necessarily more substantial construction of the hall. Just north of the door which was at the stair-head, one of the rafters of the roof has a series of mortice holes in its soffit, alternated along near the two edges respectively. These suggest that a vertical timber (or timber and plaster) bulkhead enclosed the upper space further north towards the hall. There is no indication as to how far down from the roof this bulkhead came, but it must, of course, have left sufficient height below it to afford headway to persons using the stairs. Further, there is no means of knowing whether the ceiling at its base was horizontal, or followed the slope of the bottom stairs. In any case there remains the question whether the mortised rafter is in its original (fifteenth century) position, but there is nothing inherently improbable in the bulkhead theory. In fact, there almost seems a call for some means of shutting off the awkward space above the wall-plate which carries the hall rafters at the north end of the stair lobby. These rafters originally rested on a plate still lower than the existing one, thus increasing the size of the gap above them. The *original* roof of staircase also descended to a lower wall-plate—probably level with that of the original hall (see later).

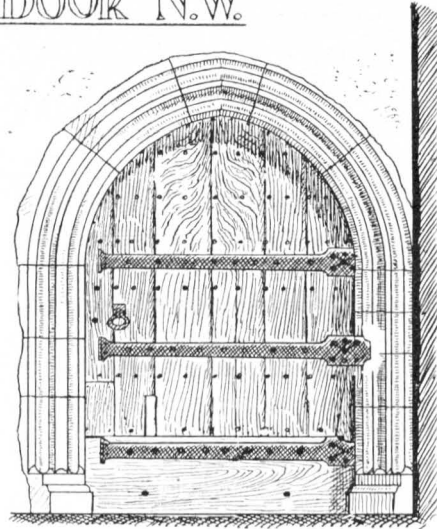
Let us now pass into the hall. It is about 15 feet 3 inches in height to the flat ceiling, and has a length of about 39 feet and a width of 25. There are reasons (given further on) for believing that it was slightly narrower when originally built, and was not quite so high to the wall-plate level. Apparently the south wall is the original one in the main—this would seem to be proved by the early character of the door to stairs at its east end. In the centre of the east wall is a fireplace, erected in the sixteenth century. There are no indications of a “dais” (there is a modern wood floor). No indications remain either of the original hall windows. The present windows and the three doors at west end are seemingly of early fifteenth century date (say 1400–20). Work of this kind is difficult to place with certitude, but the mouldings are of the bolder kind found early



# HALL-DOOR N.W.



INSIDE.



OUTSIDE.



In. 12 0 7 Ft.

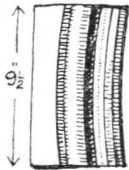
FIG. 13.

in the Perpendicular style. The arches of the doors, too, are not contained within the square label so characteristic of the later samples of the style, and have, superficially, more of a fourteenth than a fifteenth century look about them, being drop arches—not four-centred ones. The heads of the windows are almost identical with one which Mr. P. M. Johnston restored on paper from a fragment found built in at Poling Preceptory, and ascribed to the early 15th century.<sup>22</sup> The windows retain their external iron grids, and all their internal shutter hooks, but the depth of the stone jambs and mullions seems to indicate that they were also glazed from the first. The present diamond-shaped panes are, in the upper lights, in alternate rows of blue and colourless glass. I imagine this may be eighteenth century glazing. The general description of these windows applies also, with but one or two small modifications, to those in the solar, previously referred to. They are evidently all of one date.

The hall has what were originally three doorways at the west end—one in the north wall, one in the south, and one in the west. The two latter have been converted into windows. The north door leads in from the modern porch, and has a modern door and frame built in it. It also, however, happily still retains its original door laid open back against the west wall, and no longer used, but remaining a fine and sturdy specimen of mediæval carpentry and smith's work (Fig. 13). The holes for the locking-bar remain. There can be practically no doubt that the usual “screens” existed, at this west end of the hall, forming a passage between the north and south doors. An irregular mark in the plaster above dado on north wall, and about 2 feet east of the door, may possibly be an indication of the point at which the screen met this wall. There is no indication, either inside or outside, of the usual three doors conducting to buttery, pantry, and kitchen. Sometimes, in lieu of this arrangement, one door only was formed in the hall wall, but it led

<sup>22</sup> *S.A.C.*, Vol. LXII., p. 103.

into a passage from which the buttery and pantry could be entered. This may have been the case here. The single west door which exists is a somewhat doubtful looking specimen. Its moulding on the hall side resembles that of the sixteenth century chimney-piece



← 5 1/4" →



*Stone built  
into Door-jamb  
of Hall west  
door*

FIG. 14.

at the other end of the room, but it has a drop-arch. Its outer jambs are built up with thirteenth or fourteenth century stonework, including one piece of delicate arch moulding, while the flattened lintel (of remarkably green sandstone) looks more like that of the sixteenth century door to what was originally the stair enclosure, already dealt with.

Most of the fifteenth century stonework throughout the building is sandstone of a more or less greenish hue, and has crumbled badly where the weather has got at it. The early stonework is mostly Caen. Hard chalk is also employed in some places. The main walls are of chalk and flint rubble, and retain externally some of the old plaster on surface. There are tiles in the walls here and there—like those of mediæval fireplace backs.

The hall would originally, of course, have been open to the roof—at present there is a flat ceiling. An inspection of the roof timbers shows that what has been said about the roof of the solar applies here also with but little variation. This was remodelled at the same date as the other, and in a very similar way, the original king-post roof giving place to a queen-post arrangement.

The hall roof, being of greater span, has two purlins. Many of the re-used rafters are blackened, evidently from the effects of the former central hall fire. None of the original tie-beams can be found, but the existence of the usual mediæval king-post form of roof is to be inferred from the missing plaster on the inside of the west gable, where the end post and truss evidently lay close to the wall. Along over the existing ceiling

line, too, is a stain on the plaster south of the king-post mark, which may possibly be connected with the cambered tie-beam.

A further interest attaches to the plaster inside this gable wall in that it shows distinct traces of another roof inside of, and not central with, the existing one. (The vanished king-post roof just mentioned was of the same span as the present, and the king-post central with the present.) The *inner* roof-mark referred to, coincides with indications on the outside of the west gable (see Fig. 15). Those indications have usually been taken as signs of the roof-shape of the former building west of the hall. This seems to be an error. The marks are not built-in “weatherings” such as would usually be found over a roof butting against a higher wall. They are, in fact, mere stoppings of the crack where the hall gable was altered and raised. Obviously another roof merely butting against the west side of the hall gable would not have given any indications *inside* the gable, such as plainly exist. The earlier roof thus shown to have existed must have been that over the hall when the latter was first erected. Continuing the line of its slope (which was steeper than the present) downwards to intersect with the present south wall of the hall we get a lower eaves-line than that of the present hall. For the reasons already given, the present south wall must be on the original line, and in fact must be partly the original wall. On this side, then, we have a fixed limit. Taking the position of the apex of the early roof (south of the present centre) as the centre of the early hall, we find that the fifteenth century north wall has been built further north than the original line (Fig. 5). The difference shows that only about 32 inches greater width (the thickness of the wall) was thus gained; possibly it was considered undesirable to interfere with the north-west angle of the solar where the walls and roof had to join. (This consideration may also have operated when the original north wall was built. The fact that the latter was not made to line with the north wall of the solar—though



FIG. 15. WEST END.

*[Photo by W. Pannell, Hove.]*

so near it—seems, I think, to strengthen the theory that the hall was, even at its first building, a later erection than the solar.) The original north wall may have developed defects which resulted in the decision to remove it. At all events the south wall received additional support at this time by the erection of buttresses. These are in “snapped” or “knapped” flintwork, and in the main are not bonded into the original walls, but only erected against them. The angle of the staircase was also strengthened by a buttress, and there is another against the south wall of the solar.

One of the buttresses—that to the east of the hall door—has on it what looks something like a dial, scratched into the stone—which in this situation, may have indicated a meal-time.

Thus remodelled, strengthened structurally, and brought into the prevalent architectural convention, we may conclude that the building remained, without material change, till the commencement of the sixteenth century. Under date 20–21 Henry VII. (1505–6) the Tarring accounts at Lambeth Palace Library contain the following:—

For taking down stone of gatehouse	.. ..	6d.
Ditto timber of same	.. ..	17s.
Item. To the carpenter for making of new work, and laying in new timber in the old work, and the making of the buttery, and eight window-pieces with a stair	.. ..	14s. 5d.
To the “Stonehelyar”	.. ..	11s. 6d.
For the mending of the “gervar”	.. ..	6d.
For 3 quarters of lime	.. ..	4s. 8d.
For carrying same	.. ..	1d.
For fetching 4 loads of square timber and 7 loads of other timber from the Maryllpost carried every load 20d.	.. ..	13s. 4d.
To John Meehell for carrying, etc., for timber, etc., etc., nails and so forth	.. ..	
Total	.. ..	116s. 9d.

The “stone of gatehouse” was, no doubt, the Horsham roofing stone, which other accounts at Lambeth show to have been used at Tarring. The timber in these accounts was always brought from Marlpost, near

Horsham, which place seems, indeed, to have been held mainly for this purpose. I am disposed to think the whole building underwent modification at this time to fit it more for use as a rectory. Unless, indeed, *all* the above items are to be taken as applying only to the *gate-house*, the "eight window-pieces," the new "buttery" and the "stair" seem to imply this, and the last may point to the staircase in the porch being superseded by a fresh one elsewhere—possibly leading up in the north-east corner of the hall, where one certainly existed within living memory. The door to the south-east porch looks, judging by the stone lintels, as though it might have been formed at this period, though the other stones are much older. A doorway could not have been here, of course, while the stairs were still in existence. The hall fireplace may date from about this time, though it looks later, and it is not possible to say definitely what other changes may have been made. The general period for remodelling such buildings of the mediæval period as were still standing was nearer to the middle of the sixteenth century, when many old halls previously open to the roofs were divided by floors into two storeys, fire-places introduced into them, etc., etc.

The only information which I have been able to obtain as to what happened to the building after the sixteenth century, is furnished in the few passing references made for the sake of comparison in what is written above. In quite modern times the chimney-stack has been re-built in its upper part. Some of the Horsham stone roofing, having become hopelessly bad, has been replaced by tiles. The west gable bell-cote is modern. Various changes have been made from time to time in the boundaries to the school-ground.

To sum up the principal earlier changes, they may be thus expressed.

1. Before 1250. Solar building only. Low cellar below, and higher chamber above.  
Access by external stairs (exact situation of these doubtful).

2. 1290–1315. Hall added, with staircase connecting from same up to solar.
3. 1400–1420. New door, windows, and buttresses put to south hall wall. North wall to hall with windows and doors rebuilt further north. Hall, staircase, and perhaps solar, re-roofed. New windows to solar.
4. 1505 & later. Stairs to solar at south-east corner of hall abolished and space converted into porch. Fireplace in hall built. Roofs to hall and solar remodelled. Flat ceilings possibly introduced similar to present.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. W. D. Peckham and to Mr. O. H. Leeney for very helpful suggestions—to Mr. Edward Sayers for much kind help and information concerning the manor and local matters generally—and, finally, to the Rector, the Rev. Chas. Lee, for the freedom of access to the building, allowed to me for a lengthy period.