

W. P. H. G. G. G. G. G.

From a drawing by S. H. Grimm (18th cent.)

S. FRONT OF WILMINGTON PRIORY, SHOWING 14TH CENTURY HALL ON THE LEFT.

# Sussex Archæological Society.

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## WILMINGTON PRIORY: AN ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION.

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BY WALTER H. GODFREY, F.S.A.

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THE generous gift of Wilmington Priory by the Duke of Devonshire to the Sussex Archæological Trust confers a privilege as well as a responsibility upon that body, which it is very ready to acknowledge. The extent of both will be the more clearly appreciated from the account of its remarkable history which follows, and from the description of its no less interesting buildings, which are now set down as fully as the present condition of our knowledge will admit. Owing to the ruinous state of the buildings, the Trust has been involved in a large outlay to make them secure, and much still remains to be done. During this preliminary work I have had the opportunity of surveying the remains and of making certain investigations, the results of which are here recorded.

The priory, as is more fully explained in the historical notes by the Rev. W. Budgen, F.S.A., came to be the headquarters in this country, of the Abbot of Grestain, in regard to the English property of the Abbey. As a small alien priory with but a meagre establishment it did not necessarily conform to the claustral plan with which we are familiar elsewhere. In all probability it approximated much more nearly to a grange or manor-house than to a monastery, and if this were so it would go far towards explaining the absence of a coherent plan in a dwelling-house, the design of which has been further confused by many vicissitudes

and changes. Some excavations already carried out give hope that further exploration below ground will help to elucidate some of the problems, but it has seemed to the present writer worth while to record the relics that exist to-day without theorising too far on the subject of the original plan.

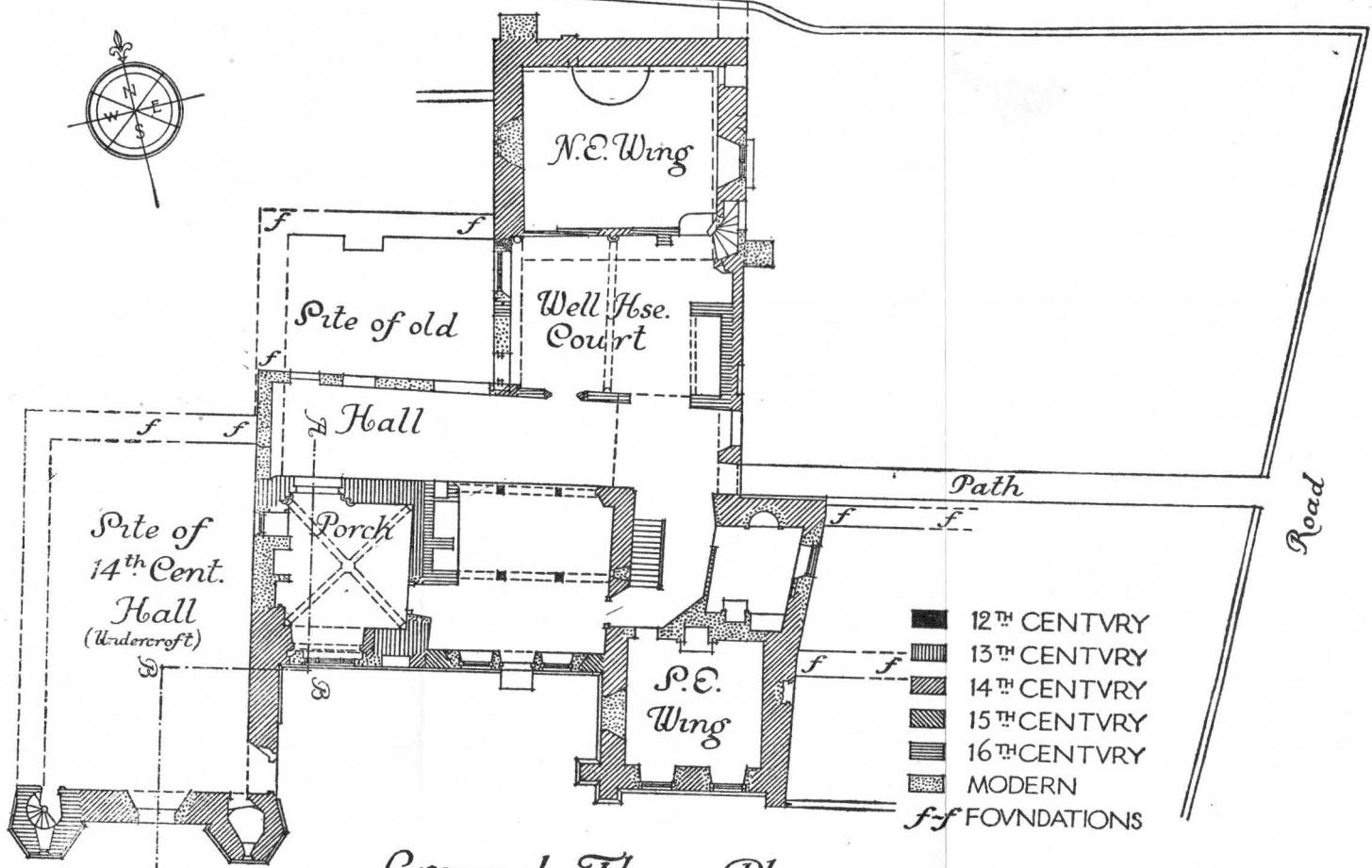
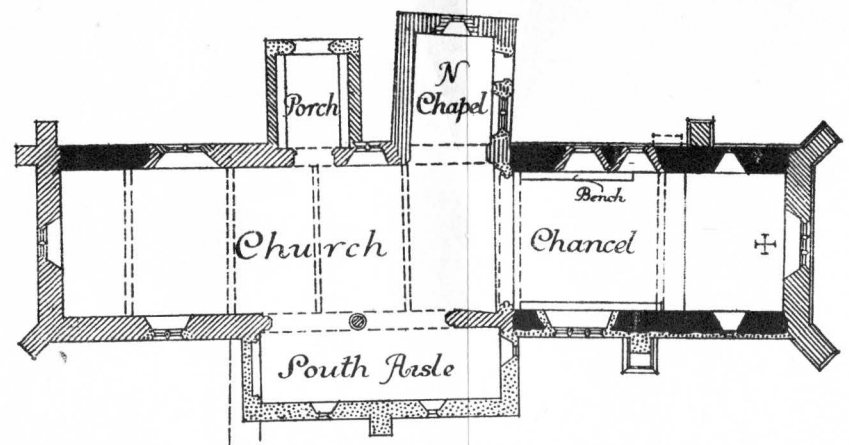
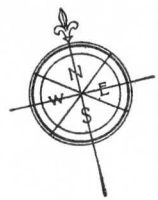
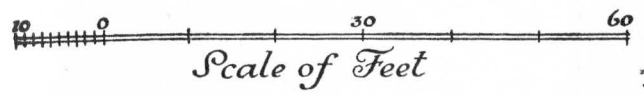
It will, I think, be found more convenient to note the buildings in order of position than in order of date, and we may begin with the parish church, the eastern part of which was no doubt rebuilt by the monks and used by them soon after the foundation of the Priory. It will not be necessary for me to refer to the description of the Priory and Church by the Rev. G. M. Cooper (*S.A.C.*, Vol. IV.), except in cases where his evidence on the condition of the latter building before its restoration in 1883 is of value.

The Church consists now of a nave and chancel, with a modern chancel arch, a short aisle of two bays on the south side, a transeptal chapel and a porch on the north. There is no tower at the west end, but a belfry-loft of timber occupies the position of the westernmost bay of the roof, and projects outside with weatherboarded sides and a somewhat tall shingled broach spire.

The chancel contains a considerable amount of early twelfth century walling, the north wall, with one original window, having much of its original facing and some of its old external rendering, together with sections of a string course with axed chevron ornament, and a chamfered plinth. In this wall is built, on the outside, a small carved figure of the Virgin and Child, probably of the twelfth century. Attention should be called to the length of the chancel, which for its date is unusually long (some evidence of its monastic use), and there are quoin stones in the centre of the north wall, which suggest an original Norman buttress at this point. Inside the chancel, on both sides, is a considerable length of stone bench, which again points to a collegiate function.

From Extracts from the Account Book of Wilmington

# WILMINGTON PRIORY



Site of  
14<sup>th</sup> Cent.  
Hall  
(Undercroft)

- 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTVRY
- 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTVRY
- 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTVRY
- 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTVRY
- 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTVRY
- MODERN
- f-f FONDATIONS

Ground Floor Plan

Rents, etc., in the Compton Muniments, there is a reference to pulling down the chancel in 1686, and rebuilding it in 1687; also for repairs of the walls, "which were near tumbling down," in 1784. The evidence of the building itself is, however, against rebuilding in a literal sense. The walls inside are far from perpendicular, and considerable strengthening was no doubt required; the south wall was probably underpinned and certainly refaced—but it retains an early twelfth century window—and the east wall has been partly rebuilt, although the latter event probably took place as early as the fifteenth century, when the east window of three lights was inserted. The north wall possesses, beside the easternmost Norman window, a lofty fourteenth century window with trefoil head. Between the two is a fourteenth century "low-side" window, of one light with ogee head and trefoil cusping, and an almost semi-circular rear arch. This window is fully described and illustrated by Mr. P. M. Johnston in *S.A.C.*, Vol. XLII., pp. 137-9. There is a second window, on the south side between the Norman light and the chancel arch, which is of three lights and is modern.

The chancel arch is entirely modern, but replaces one of similar character, indicated by the mutilated stones described and illustrated by Mr. Cooper in *S.A.C.*, Vol. IV. The nave probably contains the core of its twelfth century walling, and part of the old faced work, plaster-coated, on the north side. It is lighted by four two-light windows, two on the north, and one each in the south and west walls. They are all of different designs, and range approximately from 1300 to 1400. It is possible that they have, in part, been taken from the Priory buildings, and especially is this noticeable in the west window. The western wall is of uncertain date, and may not represent the original termination. Both the chancel and the nave contain an excellent trussed rafter roof with heavy tie beams and king posts, which carry the collar purlins by means of curved struts.

The north chapel or transept is irregularly set out and is connected with the nave by a plain chamfered pointed arch resting on simple responds. The walls, which are plastered externally, have quoins of a stone similar to Binstead, and it is probable that this chapel belongs to the first half of the thirteenth century. The porch has a post-reformation front wall, while the north door of the nave is of two orders and of fourteenth century character.

The most interesting feature of the Church plan is the south aisle, which opens to the nave by an arcade of two arches. If the reader will refer to the small plan in *S.A.C.*, Vol. IV., he will see that in 1851 the aisle was in the form of a transept not dissimilar in size from that on the north. A building of this shape could hardly have been original, since it would not have had the length from east to west to cover the arcade, which shows no trace of alteration. The arches of the arcade, of two chamfered orders, are supported on semi-octagonal responds and a central circular pier, having good moulded capitals of early fourteenth century type, varying slightly in section. The aisle itself was rebuilt in 1883 (a tablet records this, set below the Colepeper tomb in the west wall), and since it must have formed the connection between the monastic buildings and the Church, it would be of great interest to know if it has been rebuilt upon the old foundations. The present west wall of the aisle very nearly lines with the east wall of the north wing of the Priory, but we shall see that the windows in the vaulted chamber beneath this wing seem to preclude a junction with the Church other than angle-wise, or by a single wall. It seems not unlikely that a pentise or covered cloister walk was arranged against the east wall of the Priory, and this covered way may have been two storeys in height (*vide infra*, p. 9). There is room between the angle of the Priory building and the Church for a chapel of considerably larger size than the modern aisle, and it is possible that this (and not the north chapel) is the one referred to in

the schedule of dilapidations at the time of the death of Edward Dalingridge (17 Richard II. See Appendix). The chancel and the chapel are therein referred to as part of the Priory buildings.<sup>1</sup>

In Mr. Budgen's account of the history of the Priory that follows this it will be seen that we have to deal with a certain number of isolated periods when the prior was possessed of sufficient security to set his house in order, and repair or rebuild. In the intervals



SOUTH FRONT FROM FARMYARD.

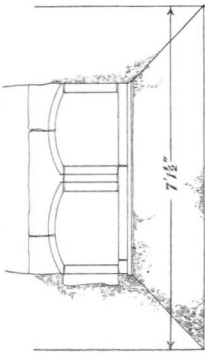
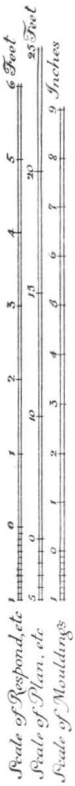
between the prior was only in the position of a custodian for the king, or the buildings were let to farm, as, for instance, to Dalingridge, concerning whose tenancy occurs the document just quoted. After the suppression of the Priory comes the period 1413-1565, during which the manor was held by the Dean and Chapter of Chichester, the main part of the building being retained (or let to farm) as their manor house, and a portion being allocated to their vicar, the incumbent of the Church.<sup>2</sup> In 1565 the property goes to Sir Richard Sackville, one of whose tenants,

<sup>1</sup> The fittings of the Church have not been included in this account, which deals with the Priory. A complete survey of the Church must be left for a future occasion.

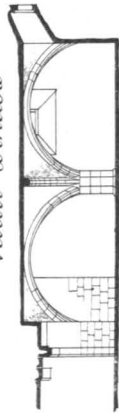
<sup>2</sup> See an interesting document (1541) given in Appendix II.

# WILMINGTON PRIORY

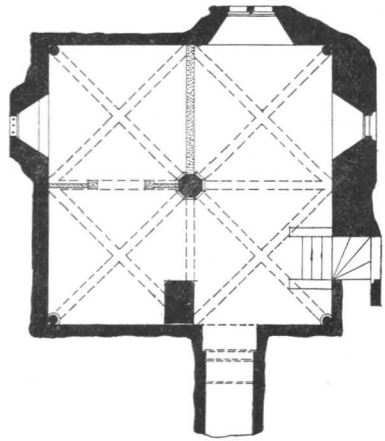
## Details



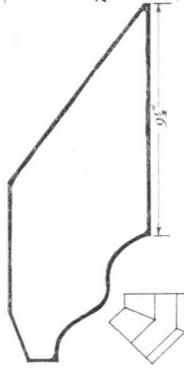
Vault Window



Section



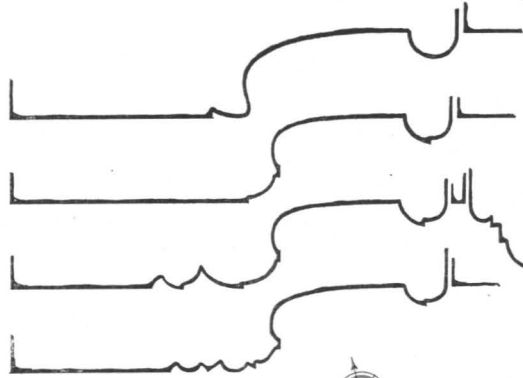
Plan



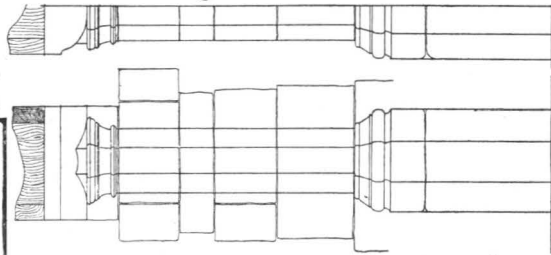
14<sup>th</sup> Century Oak Jamb



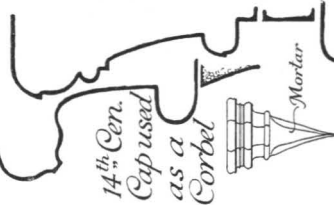
Corbel Moulding



Caps & Base of Vault



14<sup>th</sup> Cent. Respond



14<sup>th</sup> Cen. Cap used as a Corbel



Moulding of Respond





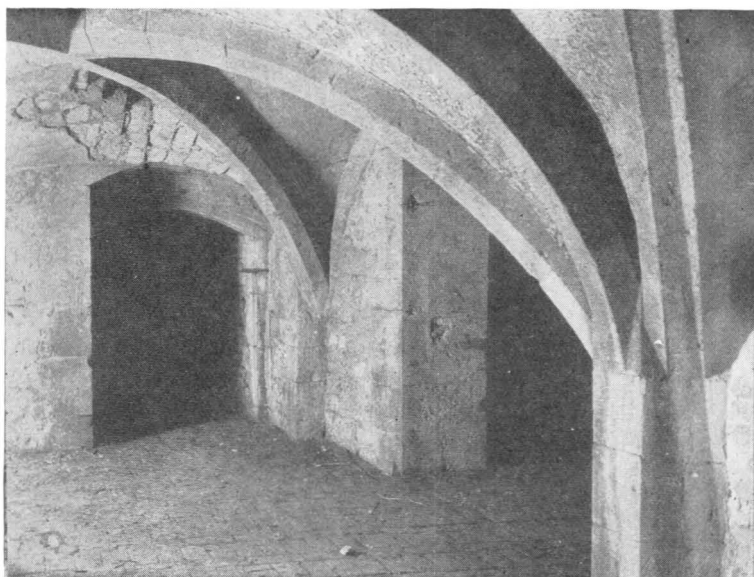
Elizabeth Colepeper, made a will (*S.A.C.*, Vol. XLVII., p. 64), which will be referred to later. About 1700 Spencer Compton inherits, and already early in the seventeenth century the vicarage had been re-absorbed in the manor house. So much may be said as a guide to the examination of the buildings, which have been uninhabited for many years and abandoned to the weather. During the last century much of the old work was removed and rebuilt, especially by Mr. Lamb, a tenant about 1827. His reconstructions have invested the eighteenth century drawings of S. H. Grimm (B.M. Burrell Collection) with all the greater value, and their reproduction here will be of real assistance in studying the remains.

No part of the twelfth century domestic buildings has come to light, but it has been possible to indicate on the plan the probable position of the great hall (a term, in this instance, to be preferred to that of "frater") built in the thirteenth century. This is no doubt the *magna vetus aula* of Bishop Day's Register (Appendix II.), although at that time, 1541, it was probably abandoned and possibly unroofed.

Beginning with the north wing of the Priory, we find here the walls of a roofless building of the fourteenth century, originally of two storeys in height, and, in addition, a fine vaulted apartment underground, which has the same dimensions as the superstructure from east to west, but extends beyond it to the south. The vault is of four compartments, each having heavy chamfered diagonal and transverse ribs (but no wall ribs) of greensand stone, perfectly cut, and supported upon a low central octagonal pier, and on angle shafts at the four corners, with moulded bell capitals. The filling is chalk, plastered with a coarse grit mortar, still in good condition. This vault dates from c. 1300, but is not so early as the hall, nor so late as the differently shaped building above it. It may have supported a solar wing of the early house.

From a point in the south wall of the vault, intermediate between the two southern compartments,

projects a short wing wall or pier, built apparently soon after the construction of the vault, and not otherwise attached, the purpose of which is quite clearly to support a pier above, which will be described later. In the south wall of the south-east compartment of the vault is a wide doorway with flat two-centred



Vault under N.E. wing, looking south, showing door (left), additional pier (centre) and central pier (right).

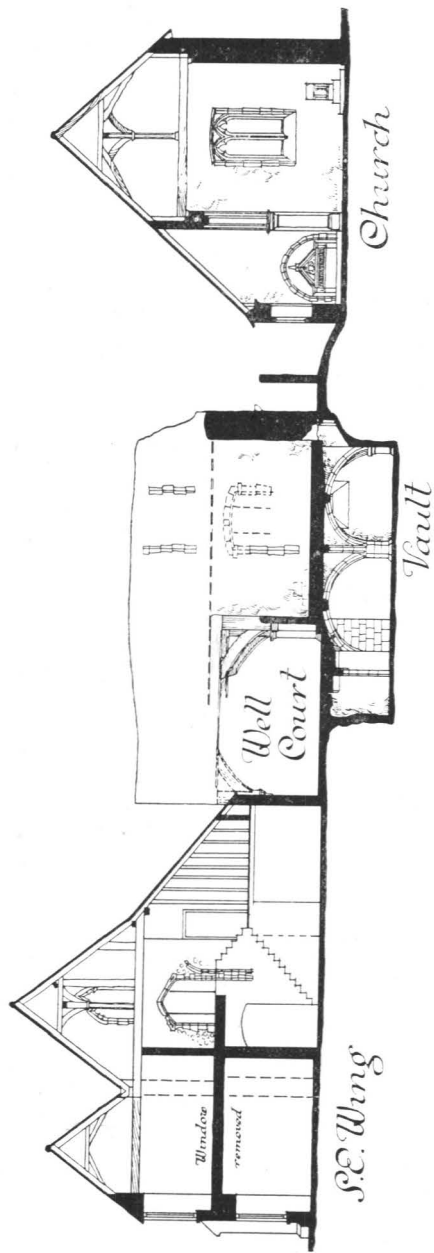
arch that gives now into a blind recess. In this recess is a second chamfered arch at a slightly higher level, and it is evident that at this point a broad staircase of stone led southwards to the ground floor. Its walls have been traced across the well-house court, but it is now filled up. This could not have been the only access to the vault, since the door here has been secured by an internal bar, the holes for which still exist. It was probably used for bringing stores into the vault, ordinary access being obtained by a vice or other-shaped stair in the east wall. The vaulted room

contains three contemporary rectangular windows, set high up and rebated for shutters. Two, of one light each, are in the west and east walls of the north-west and north-east compartments respectively, while the last-named compartment has an additional window of two lights looking north. These windows, it will be seen, would prevent a connection with the Church by an intermediate building, if their access to the open air were to be maintained, but the eastern light might quite reasonably have looked upon a cloister walk.

The superstructure over the vault has walls 3 feet 3 inches thick on the east, west and north, and these are set back at first floor level for the joists of the floor. The segmental rear arch of perhaps a two-light window in the east wall is still in position (it had fallen recently, but was immediately replaced), and there are remains of a similar opening in the west wall. There is a narrow fourteenth century doorway in the east wall, hard against the north end, and parts of a similar doorway exist just above it on the first floor—further evidence of a two-storey cloister walk on the outside, unless these doors indicate a staircase, which would suggest the intention of a dormitory above, from which access could be obtained to the Church for the night offices. At the upper level there are also evidences of windows above those below. The north wall has been a good deal altered, but the north-west quoin is intact near the ground. Against this wall the oven of the late farmhouse had been built, but there is a row of corbels on the outside suggesting an external chimney-stack to the upper floor.

The south wall is something of a puzzle. It is very thin, scarcely 12 inches thick, and is of worked stone with a shallow recess, about the size of a door, at the west end. At its eastern end is a doorway leading into the area which now contains the modern well-house. The doorway, or rather its eastern post, stood midway between the remains of two doors in the east wall, one in the building over the vault and the other in the well-house court. The south jamb of

# WILMINGTON PRIORY



*Section looking West*



the latter, of good fourteenth century moulded green-sand stone (two hollows separated by a fillet), and a portion of the springer of the arch are in position and stand by the entrance to the present modern stairs to the undercroft. The north jamb of the other doorway, with half its arch (one archstone) of chamfered chalk, is of different character, but probably of the same date. It seems likely that there was a projecting vice or other type of stair in the position of the modern steps, and that they led both down to the vault and up to the first floor. If that were so these two adjacent doorways would be explained.

We are still, however, met with the problem of the thin stone wall, which is the north boundary of the well-house court, and which is part of the still greater difficulty that this area presents. This court (the old outer kitchen of the farmhouse, of which the fine chamfered chimney beam to the fireplace on the east side still stands disconsolate) occupies in all probability a part at least of the "old hall," though it is not now as wide as the hall, a slip being separated from it on the south side by a wall built mainly of Tudor or earlier brickwork. Its eastern wall, very much mutilated and repaired, contains a certain amount of ashlar, and seems to be on the original building line. Its western wall is a post-monastic work of mingled stone and brick, the story of which is not very clear. There will be occasion to return to this wall later, but here it should be noticed that it seems clearly to be on the line of one of the old hall roof trusses, and, indeed, it buries two of the triple shafts of a respond on the north (*see* plan and detail drawing). The western shaft of this respond is cut out for toothing into the masonry of the north wall of the hall, the foundations of which have been traced, together with the projecting footings for what was probably the support of yet another truss. The eastern shaft of the existing respond (or rather the capital, for the shaft is missing) evidently stood free, and may have formed part of the jamb of a doorway in the north wall of the hall.

In any case it would seem that the area (now the well-house court) was cut off from the thirteenth century hall, and it may first have been done when the new fourteenth century hall was built further to the west and the old hall had fallen into disuse. It was roofed by means of enormous oak trusses, the central one, of which a section of the wall post remains, being carried on a moulded stone corbel now set in the brickwork on the south, and on a semi-octagonal hollow-sided pier with moulded cap and base (c. 1400) inserted in the thin wall on the north and resting, as already noted, on the pier which was added to the undercroft below. The other truss adjoins and is embedded in the west wall. It is of composite construction with separate wall posts, tie beams and curved struts, resting on the two western capitals of the triple respond. At the west end of the south wall of this area is the chamfered stone jamb of an abandoned opening, and a little to the east is a good fourteenth century oak doorway, the frame square-headed and moulded with two quarter rounds divided by a fillet.

What was the function of this area which I have called the well-house court? In Mrs. Colepeper's will of 1606 there is mention of the "kitchen" and the "old kitchen"; the former easily recognisable as that which remained the kitchen of the farmhouse, and the latter almost certainly the room under discussion. After a careful consideration of all the possibilities of the plan, I have come to the conclusion that the probable explanation is to be found in the extract from Bishop Day's Register concerning the Vicarage in 1541, printed in Appendix II. The description of the Vicarage itself is a building at the east angle of the "great old hall," on the north side, measuring 30 feet east to west, and 18 feet north to south, and having rooms above and below. The north-east wing is exactly 30 feet in width, and if we measure 18 feet from its northern wall we shall leave room for a passage (*parvum curtilagium*) between it and the then north wall of the well-house court (*coquina*). The

last-named then becomes the kitchen, referred to as "newly erected" in 1541, a description that aptly fits its appearance, although it was evidently built of old materials, some of which were no doubt already *in situ*. The big trusses, which may even contain timbers from the roof of the old hall, were not designed to carry an upper room, and therefore fit the description of the kitchen, which was part of the Vicarage, and yet was to be used by the Dean and Chapter on occasion, since no doubt the medieval kitchen was already out of use. The passage or "small curtilage" enclosed between the Vicarage and the kitchen is rendered likely, not only by the dimensions before given, but by the character of the north wall of the kitchen, which has the appearance of a passage wall, and by the recess at its western end, which seems to mark the position of a former doorway communicating (perhaps by means of a lobby in the kitchen) with the ground to the west. Such an entrance would agree with the further grant of "ingress and egress to and from the said Vicarage by the gate on the north side of the newly built kitchen." No such grant would be required on the east side, as here lay the Vicarage garden, and the staircase already presumed at this point would have rendered an entrance impossible. It seems then that the well-house court represents the kitchen of the Vicarage, built by the Dean and Chapter a little before 1541, and used by them when they visited the manor.<sup>3</sup>

The east wall of the well-house court continues southwards as far as the line of the south wall of the "old hall," which here projects eastwards and forms the northern boundary of a building we will call the south-east wing. A pointed arched doorway of two flat chamfered arch stones, early fourteenth century in character, occurs at the south end of the east wall, and the arch is partly buried in the return wall of the wing. The archway, which would have opened into the hall if the latter extended so far east, is clearly earlier than

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. G. M. Cooper suggests a different position for the Vicarage.

the wing, which is faced on the north side with a chequerwork of flint and stone, forming for some 8 feet high a projection from the face of the wall. This projection suggests the set-off for a roof such as has already been suggested for a covered way to the Church, but there are no clear indications of its purpose. It seems rather to have been a re-facing to an older chalk wall, partly under-pinning and supporting it, and trespassing on the older doorway the southern jamb of which it replaced.<sup>4</sup>

The wing itself is of curious shape. Its greater length is now from north to south, and the whole of its western wall was an external one before the suppression. It abuts for half its width on the "old hall" (or its extension) on the north, and on the south it was also free of buildings, having two buttresses at the south-west angle and one buttress at the south-east. It is more difficult to see what has happened on its eastern side, much of the wall having fallen away. It appears, however, that its northern portion (about two-thirds) extended further east; an arrangement indicated by the mortices in the purlin of the roof, of which one truss, with king post and moulded cap, still spans this part from north to south. The extension is confirmed by the foundations of the walls which Mr. Budgen has uncovered (*see* Plan). The irregular line of the eastern wall, which was flint faced, also suggests a later build to close the gap when the remaining part was demolished, but there are curious remains of a rebated series of openings in this wall, perhaps some form of screen. The south part of the east wall is square with the south front, and this southern section of the building is roofed separately with trussed rafters without principals.

In the northern part of the west wall of the wing, on the upper floor, the rear arch of a very interesting fourteenth century window has been discovered, and

<sup>4</sup> It is probably modern, as it differs in character from the flint and stone work above, and it bears the initials of Mr. Lamb and an early nineteenth century date.

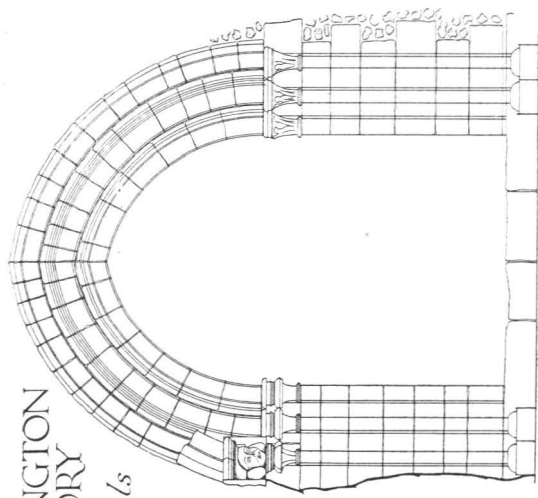


alongside it the southern jamb and part of the arch of a doorway. The window arch and the plastered splays are complete, and the springers of the former are made of large stones, in each of which is carved a little sunk and shaped spandrel. The former tenant of Wilmington Farm remembers another window in the west wall, further south, which fell down some years ago when the walls were built up with brickwork. This is probably referred to in the paragraph in *S.A.C.*, IV., p. 63, concerning the sitting room "called the chapel," which had windows "of arched stone," and an "arched roof of wood," the latter being the trussed rafters in this part of the roof. The door next to the window described above seems to have led to a passage or gallery, which perhaps ran over a like feature along the south side of the "old hall." The plaster reveal of the door continues right through the wall, and appears to suggest a continuation beyond. This gallery would have led to the east wall of the prior's chapel, where the lower part of the north jamb of a door is still *in situ*. An alternative explanation would be that both doors are evidence of original and separate staircases. The only other feature which can be recognised is a small arched doorway with chamfered jambs and arch stones in the south part of the east wall. Some of the stones are displaced. Just north of this are two irregular openings through the wall (now bricked up), where the plastering is still visible. One of these openings is at first floor and the other at ground floor level, and the upper is not directly over the lower. They suggest a rudely shaped winding stair.

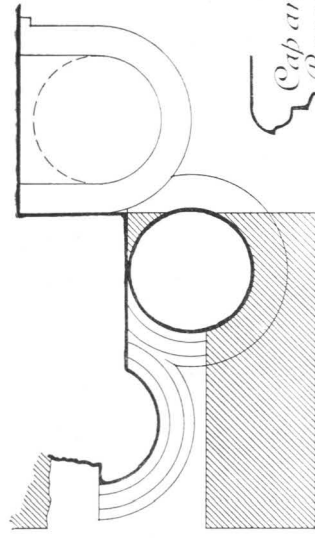
Returning now to the "Old Hall," the site of which is chiefly open ground, we can examine its most important remaining feature—the south door. Until recently this doorway was entirely bricked up and unknown. It consists of three fully moulded orders to the arch of early thirteenth century date, supported on three shafts at each side. There is a curious difference in the capitals of these shafts, the three

WILMINGTON  
PRIORY

*Details*

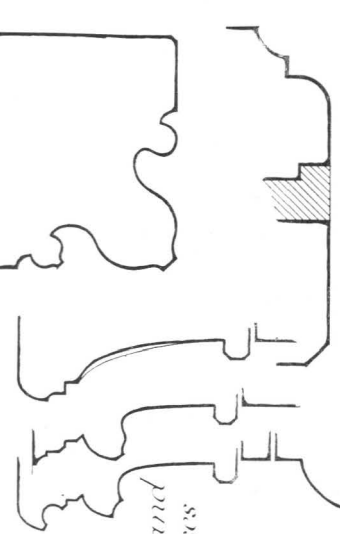
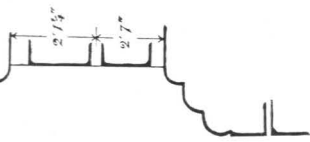


*Section  
thru'  
Arch*



*Cap and  
Base of  
Columns*

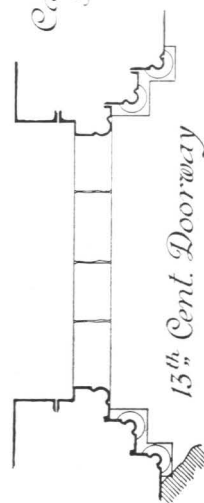
*14<sup>th</sup> Cent. Triple Columns*



*14<sup>th</sup> Cent. Door Jamb*



*Caps and  
Bases*



*15<sup>th</sup> Cent. Doorway*



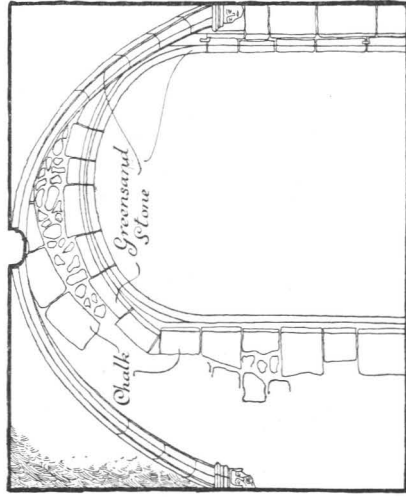
eastern ones having been carved with foliage, two of the western ones being plain moulded bell capitals, and



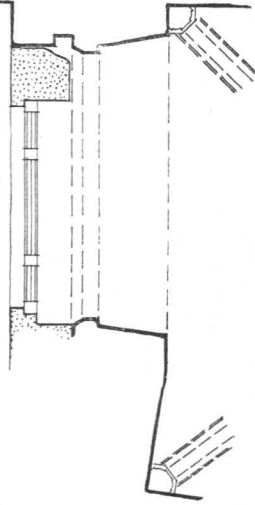
13TH CENTURY DOOR TO OLD HALL (FROM INSIDE).

the third (the westernmost) moulded, but octagonal. It is not unusual to work the circle from the octagon

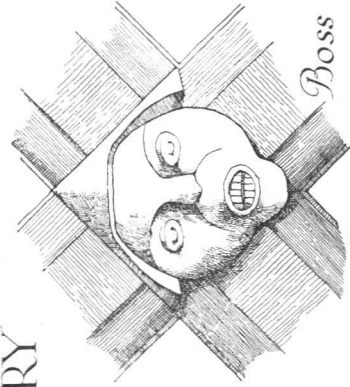
# WILMINGTON PRIORY



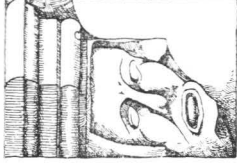
14<sup>th</sup> Cent. S. Door of Porch



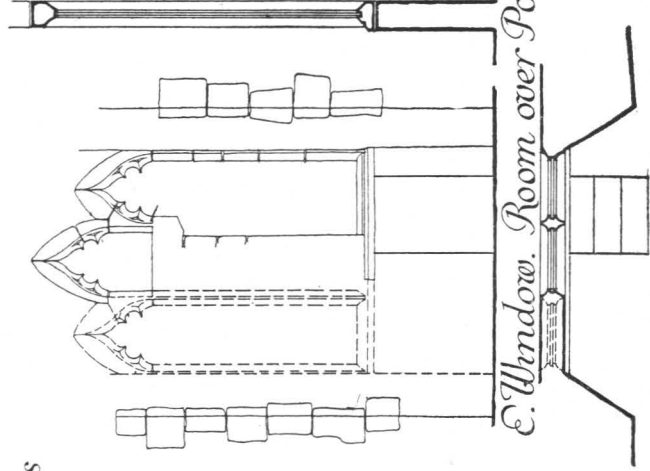
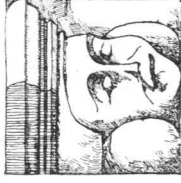
Blocked Window &  
Door Jamb (S.E. Wing)



Boss



Corbels



E. Window. Room over Porch

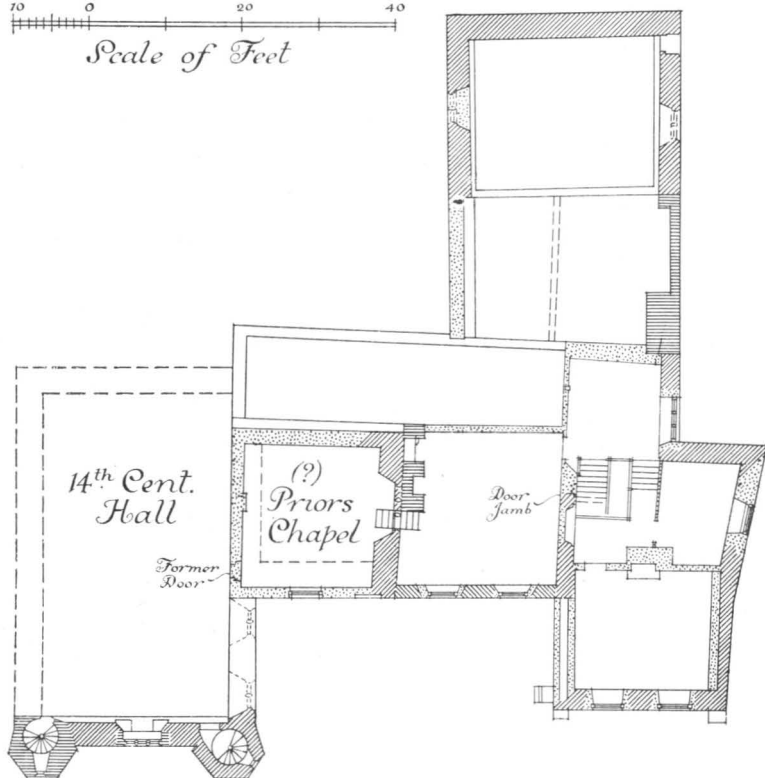
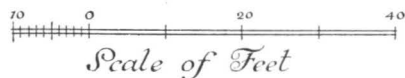
and again to enrich the plain moulded capital, so that the explanation might be that we have here interrupted workmanship.

That the door, however, was a principal entrance is made clear by the elaborate vaulted gatehouse that stood before it. This is a two-storied building, much altered since S. H. Grimm made his drawing for the Burrell Collection (see illustration), but still retaining the main features that show it to have served as a roomy porch below and a chapel adjoining the new prior's hall above. As it stands the building is in the main of the fourteenth century, and no regard has been shown for the beautiful early doorway in setting out its present walls and its vault. The vault and the new entrance in the south wall of the porch were evidently built when the new upper hall was erected in the fourteenth century, and exigencies of space threw the porch too far east to allow of a proper combination with the old door. The vault ribs are carried on four corbels, carved with masks, at the angles of the porch, and one corbel has been ruthlessly thrust through the moulded archstones, and rests on the westernmost capital and shaft of the door. From this the vault springs, and hides from view a considerable segment of the old archway.

When we turn to the outer doorway (in the south wall of the porch) we see a similar clash between vault and archway, though here the fourteenth century segmental inner arch just clears the vault itself. But the chalk relieving arch above is cut completely by the vault, and since this chalk arch and much of the chalk walling of the porch itself are very similar to the wall of the thirteenth century hall, it may be that there was a porch here which was contemporary with the early hall door, and that it was enlarged at the same time as the later hall. This suggestion, which I owe chiefly to Mr. A. W. Clapham, is perhaps confirmed by the *applied* outer orders of the archway shown in Grimm's drawing. The external arch has disappeared, but the rear arch, which had lost several

stones, and was on the point of falling, has been made secure by the Society during this last year. The diagonal vaulting ribs (there are no wall ribs) meet at a centre point in a boss carved with a mask, which is

## WILMINGTON PRIORY



*First Floor Plan*

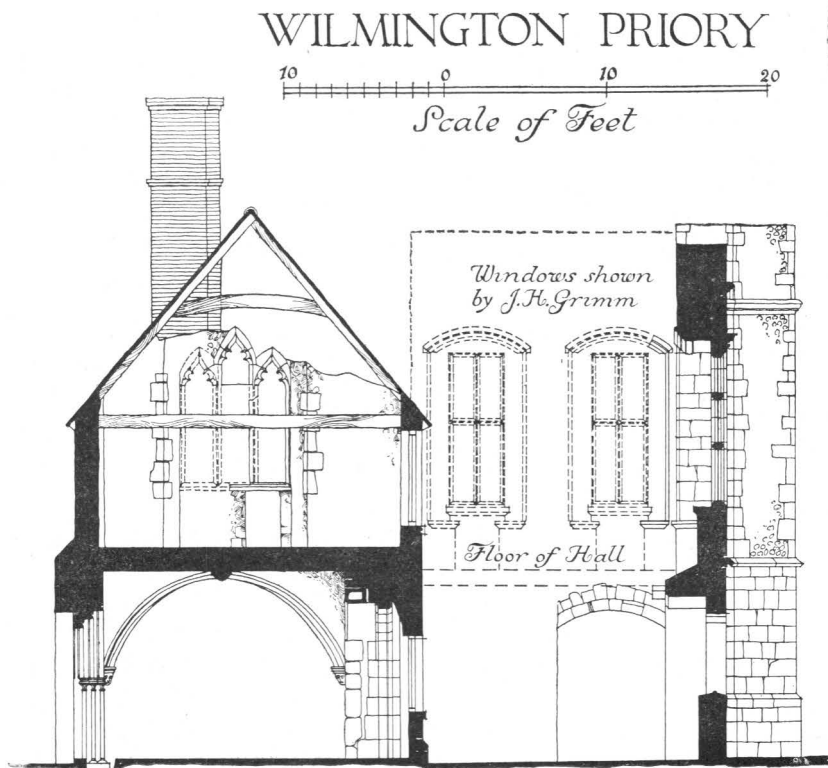
very similar to those at Michelham. The ribs themselves are broad with moulded angles. The west wall of the porch has been largely rebuilt and a chimney inserted, but the left-hand reveal of a window has survived, with the holes for iron bars, and probably

represents a communicating hatch with the building to the west.

The room above the porch communicated with the fourteenth century upper hall, which will be described directly, but the communicating door, which can be plainly seen on Grimm's drawing, has disappeared. The whole of the west and south walls have been rebuilt in the upper portions, and nothing can be gleaned from the north wall, which is partly a reconstruction and is chiefly in chalk. The east wall, however, in spite of the insertion of a chimney-stack (to which is still attached the iron wheel for turning the spit), retains a considerable part of the three-light window that opened to the east. The splays of this window continue to the brick floor over the vault below and show the majority of their greensand stone quoins. The rear arch has gone, but two of the three lights, with ogee heads and cusped cinquefoils are in position, together with the south jamb. The centre light rises above those at the side, and they must have made a graceful composition in the old east gable, which is just visible in Grimm's drawing. The re-roofing of this part of the building in modern times has obscured the old arrangement. There was a pleasant little corbel table of brick over the windows in this gable, which, unfortunately, fell before it could be secured.

We have noticed that the principal remains of the Priory belong to the fourteenth century, and the chief of these has yet to be described. This is the large hall on the first floor, with apartments below, of which the south end and part of the east wall alone remain. It appears much more completely in the two drawings by S. H. Grimm from the Burrell Collection, for at the end of the eighteenth century when these drawings were made the two eastern side windows had not fallen. The present appearance of the building, showing a lofty wall with polygonal staircase towers at each side and a modern opening below, has led most visitors (and former writers) to take it for a gatehouse, but it is quite clear that it was an upper hall, probably

some 42 feet by 24 feet in size.<sup>5</sup> The ground floor, or undercroft, had a doorway, of which the relieving arches and traces of the jambs remain on the east side, and there seems also to have been a door leading into



### *Section thro' Porch, etc.*

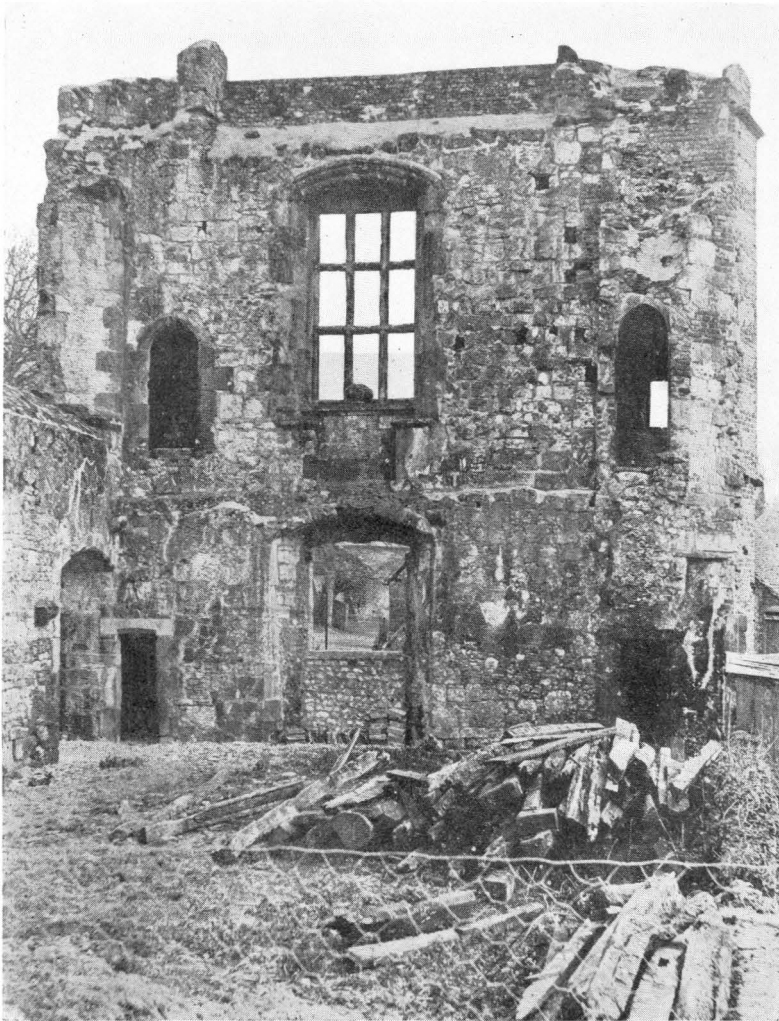
THIS SECTION IS TAKEN ON THE LINES A-B, B-C ON GROUND PLAN.

the "old hall." To the south (and on the west, doubtless) were windows. Two spiral staircases were contained in the south turrets, but there would have been a principal stair, probably to the north, in the proximity of the kitchens. Of the south window of the

<sup>5</sup> The foundations of the north wall have been traced, but the upper hall may have extended further.



hall only the fourteenth century rear arch remains with the sill and characteristic stone seats of the



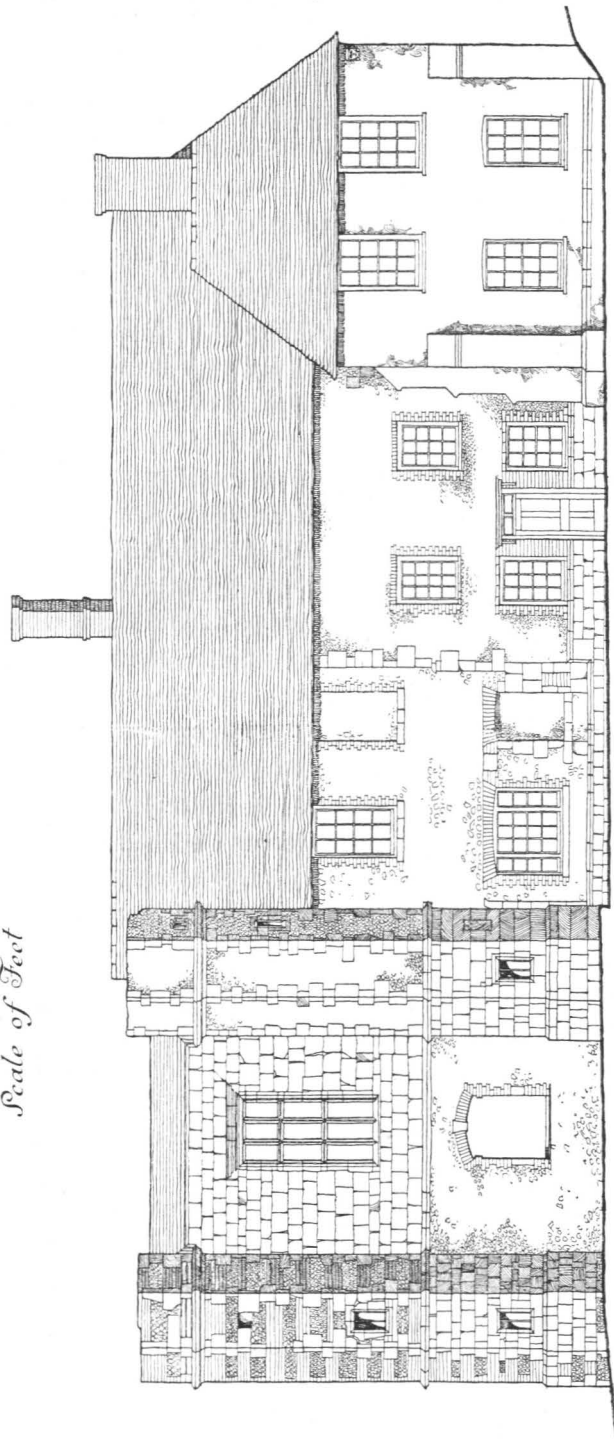
INTERIOR OF S. WALL OF 14TH CENTURY HALL.

period. The mullions and transoms, as also the classical moulded cornice to the window on the outside, show alterations in the post-monastic period, which

WILMINGTON PRIORY



*Scale of Feet*

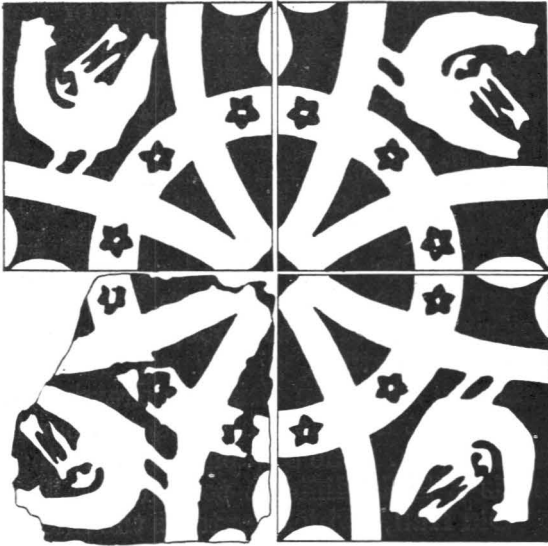


*South Elevation*

were similarly carried out in the case of the other windows, as seen in Grimm's drawing. When the building was taken in hand by the Dean and Chapter of Chichester it no doubt needed a good deal of repair, and the western stair turret had to be rebuilt. Bricks were then used for the infilling instead of flint, and a Tudor flavour was imparted to the whole. It appears likely, too, that the west wall fell and was replaced by timber framing. This hall has been a ruin now for certainly a century and a half.

In the foregoing description details have been given of the south-east wing, and the porch with the Prior's Hall to the south-west, each of which projected southwards from the "Old Hall" of the thirteenth century. Part of the space between these wings was enclosed perhaps as early as 1500, but certainly by the Sackville occupation, giving an odd effect of varying roofs well shown in Grimm's drawing, until in the nineteenth century the whole centre portion was re-roofed in one span. The sequence of building events in this area is a little difficult to follow. The south wall of the "Old Hall," which contains the fine doorway towards its western end, seems to have been reconstructed in the fourteenth century, for at its eastern end is a door jamb with the splays outwards (i.e. toward the south), indicating that there was an entrance to either a ground floor chamber, a staircase, or perhaps a covered way beneath the passage we postulated above. The fellow of this door jamb appears to have been refixed (for it can scarcely be another *in situ*) to form part of the large open fireplace to the modern kitchen which came to occupy this centre position between the wings. The chimney beam, a fine piece of oak, extends right across the jamb, and is carefully cut to follow the mouldings of the stone work. This kitchen and the room over it (both mentioned in Mrs. Colepeper's will, 1606), which occupy the space on to which windows from the two wings originally looked, have a south wall faced with flint, which was built in line with the gatehouse buttress shown on Grimm's drawing. The

splays of two pairs of windows, one pair on each floor, are still to be seen, but the windows themselves have been replaced by sashes. The alteration to the south wall of the gatehouse or porch will be best



FLOOR TILES FROM WILMINGTON PRIORY.

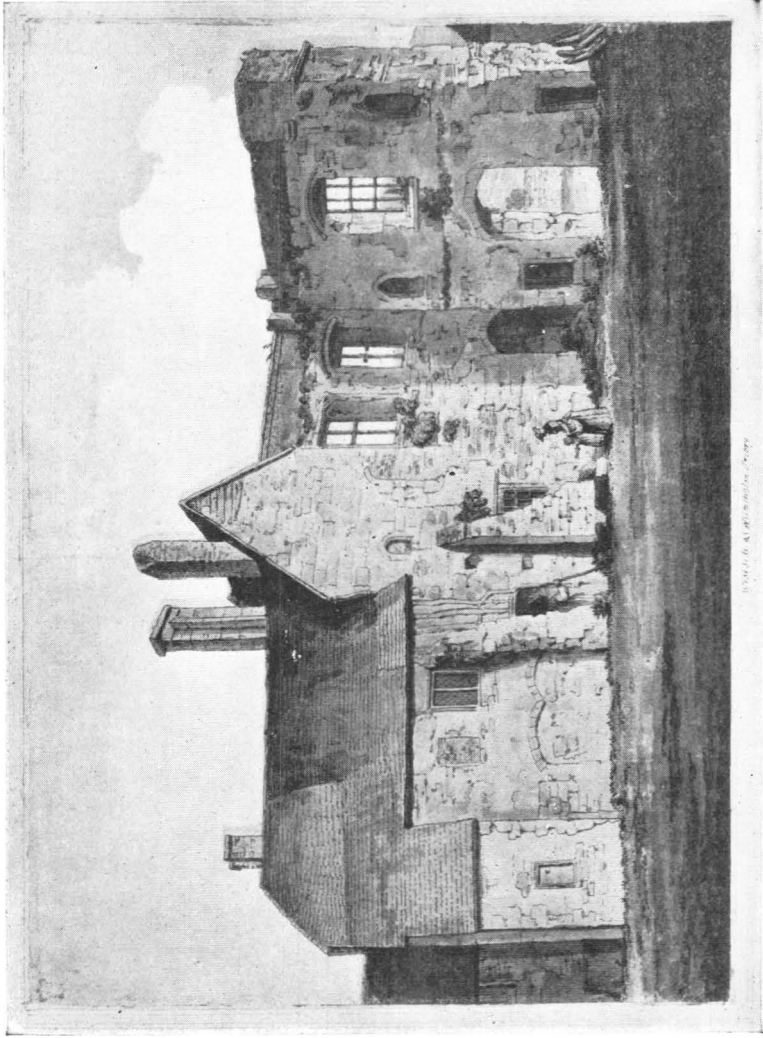
appreciated by comparing Grimm's drawing with the measured drawing of the south elevation.

There are one or two other small matters to be noticed. Just by the lower steps of the eighteenth

century stair in the south-east wing is a small square-headed light looking westwards to the former court. There is another fragment of a late stone window (probably Tudor) in the west wall of the well-house court, also looking westwards, which was no doubt inserted after the thirteenth century hall had disappeared.

A very large number of architectural fragments are on the site awaiting identification—portions of windows and doors predominating. There is a corbel carved with a head fixed under the eaves of the south wall of the south-east wing at its eastern end, and another is preserved among the fragments—both, no doubt, twelfth century. Only half a dozen floor tiles with any indication of design have been found, the more interesting being illustrated here. These are preserved at the museum at Barbican House, Lewes. The house received certain improvements in the eighteenth century, and among the features of this date should be mentioned the staircase in the south-east wing, with its balustrade of a Chinese interlacing pattern, and an interesting circular backed cupboard formed of wood blocks, furnished with shaped shelves and a well-designed front.

The plans and drawings accompanying this article have been made by Mr. E. F. Harvey under my direction. The photographs have been kindly taken by Mr. Budgen.



*From a drawing by S. H. Grimm (18th cent.)*

**W. END OF WILMINGTON PRIORY, SHOWING INTERIOR OF 14TH CENTURY HALL.**