TWO TIMBER-FRAMED HOUSES IN CHESTER

by J. C. Grenville and R. C. Turner

(i) 1 WHITEFRIARS, CHESTER by J. C. Grenville

INTRODUCTION

During restoration of 1 Whitefriars in 1987 it became clear that the building was more interesting than had previously been apparent. The City Council therefore agreed to commission a study of the historic structure, whilst it was being stripped out for repairs. This timber-framed building lies just outside the Row system of Chester, but nevertheless occupies a valuable urban site on the southern side of Whitefriars. Two bays parallel to the road survive with a continuous jetty supporting two gables projecting over the pavement. To the rear are two gabled wings at right angles to the main building, both of later construction. To the street, the left gable of the jetty bears the date 1658. It will be argued below that the jetty is additional, and that therefore the two surviving bays of the main building must be earlier than this date. Constructional details suggest a date no earlier than the mid 16th century. In essence, then, we are looking at a building of the late 16th century to early 17th century with subsequent additions and contractions.

Historical Notes

The identification of the building by the artist A. B. Bamford as 'Matthew Henry's House' is almost certainly erroneous as Henry's house seems to have been on the north side of Whitefriars (Appendix 1). The apparently high social status of the building (below) and its proximity to the medieval church of St. Bridget might suggest that it was St. Bridget's rectory. Further documentary research is necessary to test this hypothesis. Even if it was originally the rectory, however, it can have been so only for a century at most, since the initials on the fascia board of the jetty may tentatively be attributed to a member of the Moulson family, who were tanners (Appendix 2).

DESCRIPTION

As it now stands, 1 Whitefriars is a two-bay, two-storey building aligned east-west, of post-and-truss construction with a simple principal rafter roof. The west bay measures 5 m. (16′5″) x 3 m. (9′10″); the east bay is 5.15 m. (16′11″) x 3.5 m.

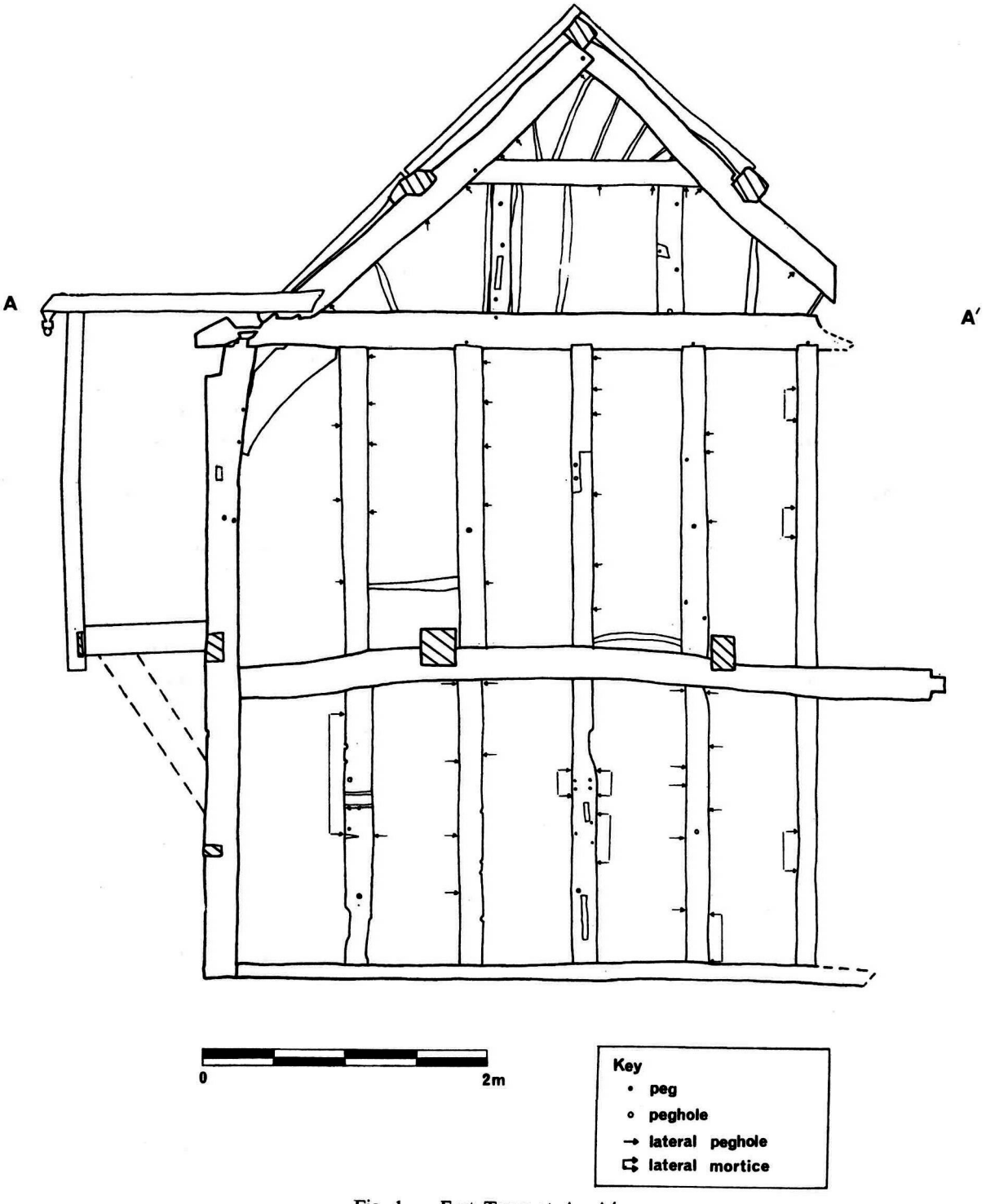


Fig. 1 — East Truss at A—A′

(11'6"). A fragment of timber-framing in 3 Whitefriars is also considered in this paper, as it provides an indication that the building may originally have been much larger.

The construction is of sawn and planed oak with walls of close studding. The posts measure approximately 0.25 m. x 0.19 m. and the studs approximately 0.15 x 0.08 m. at 0.75 — 0.8 m. placed at intervals centre-to-centre. The original infill panelling has recently been removed, but remained intact in some places at the time of the survey where it could be seen to have been of wattle and daub woven around horizontal stakes. With the infill panelling removed the auger holes and grooves drilled to take these stakes may clearly be seen in the sides of the studs. The joint most commonly used was the mortice-and-tenon although the principal rafters are bridle-jointed and the floor framed by means of dovetailed lap joints. A splayed and bridled scarf joint with one edge peg is visible in the sill beam of the east cross-frame.

There are three early cross-frames substantially surviving, and fragments of a fourth on a different alignment. These will be described individually, and their significance for the early appearance of the house then assessed.

The east cross-frame (Fig. 1)

The dimensions of the cross-frame are *c.* 5.4 m. (17'5") in width and *c.* 6.9 m. (22'8") in height. The height of the first floor is *c.* 2.12 m. (6'11") from floor level. It is intact except for the loss of its southern post, which was still *in situ* in early 1987 but was performing no structural role having been severely disturbed by the insertion of the brick chimney in the south-east corner of the house, probably in the mid 17th century (see below for a discussion of the development of heating arrangements). It was therefore removed before restoration work began although its position may easily be projected.

The cross-frame stands on a sleeper wall of rubble with two upper courses of hammer-dressed local red sandstone which carry a scarfed groundsill, into which the northern post is morticed. Presumably the same arrangement obtained at its southern end. The bressumer at first floor level has a steep camber which is, perhaps surprisingly, not reflected in the tie beam above. At its north end the tie beam is secured to the post by means of an arch brace: we may postulate a similar arrangement at the southern end.

The beam, post and wall-plate were secured by the very commonly-used tie-beam lap-dovetail assembly, which in this case can be closely observed because of the removal of the wall plate at the time of the addition of the jetty and the subsequent rotting away of the timbers to reveal the internal mortices and tenons. The studs, of which there are five to each storey, are affixed by means of mortice-and-tenon joints, although not all of these are pegged. Some, notably the first from the north on the ground floor, and the second from the north on the first floor, appear to be re-used, that to the ground floor having mortices and pegholes

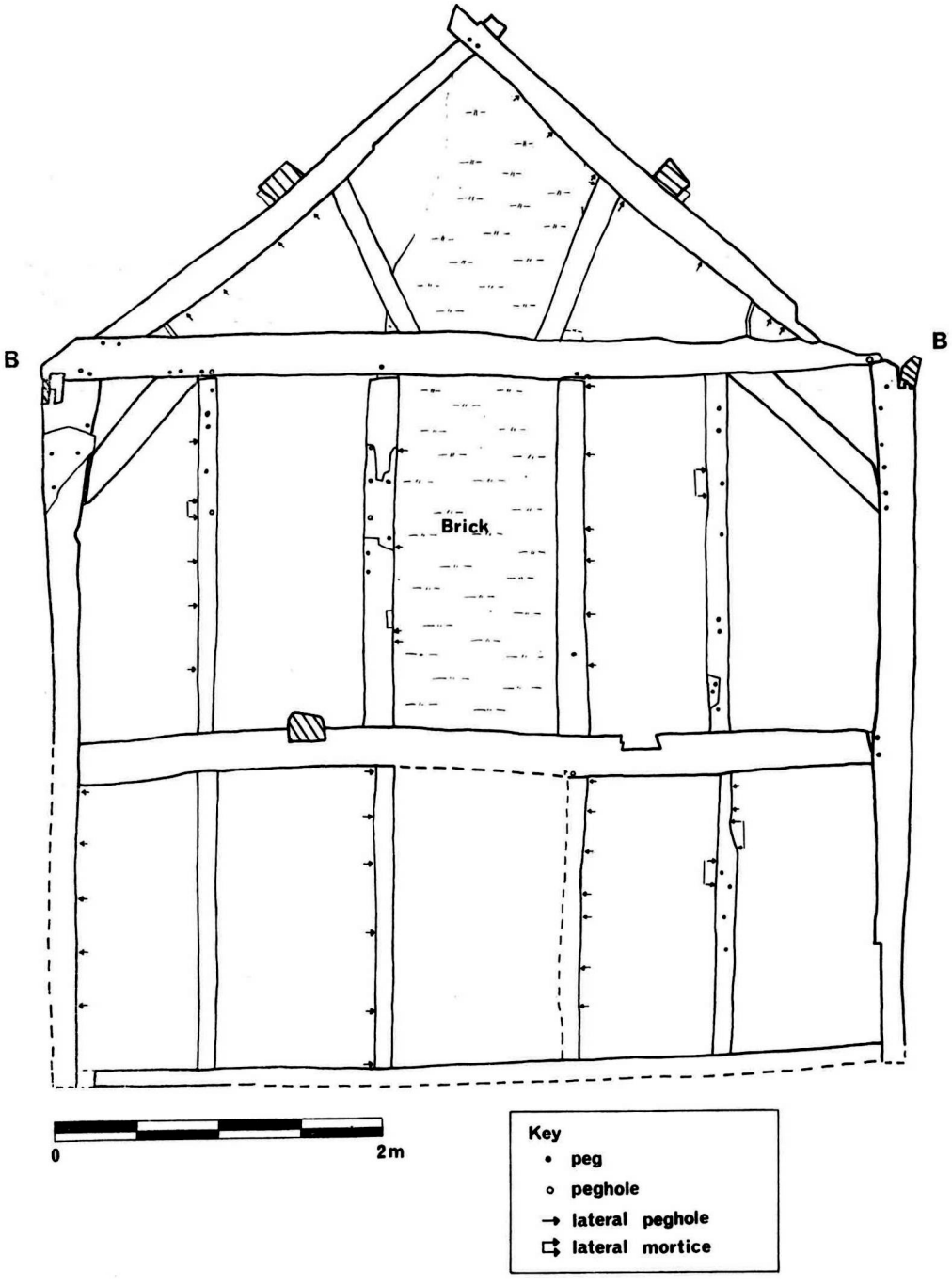


Fig. 2 — West Truss at B—B′

which appear to bear no relation to the present structure, and that to the first floor having a vertical roll-moulding suggesting re-use from a section of panelling, presumably in another building. Both pieces are affixed by mortice-and-tenon joints suggesting that they were re-used at the time of building and are not insertions. Two massive beams carrying the first floor are lapped into the bressumer by means of a dovetail joint (see west cross-frame below). Details of the floor construction will be discussed separately.

The roof structure of this cross-frame differs from that of the other cross-frame and this may hold some significance for the early heating arrangements. One principal rafter is bridled into the other at the apex to form a cradle into which the ridge is laid diagonally. Roughly-cut purlins are trenched into the backs of the principals, that to the north additionally secured by means of a free tenon. Smaller common rafters overlie the purlins. The method of their fixing at the apex is not visible. There is a collar, surprisingly set slightly above the level of the purlins and therefore offering them no support, itself supported by queen struts both of which carry mortices which will be further discussed in the section on heating arrangements. Sawn stakes, some vertical, some inclined, to carry the infill panelling, complete the framing of the cross-frame. The positions of missing stakes can be inferred from the auger holes marked on fig. 1.

The jetty: the eastern cross-frame is the only one in which the relationship of the jetty to the main building can be traced. It is quite clear that it is an addition. In an integral jetty the bressumer would surely have extended to carry the side wall of the jetty. Here the side wall is carried on a short member morticed into the corner post, at a higher level than the main bressumer. This poor piece of construction is further weakened by the failure in the west bay to run joists through from the main beam carrying the floor of the earlier structure. The wall-plate of the jetty is crudely nailed with iron nails to the inner edge of the principal structural weakness of the jetty was visually manifest at the time of the survey. An unsuccessful attempt to prop it has been made with the insertion of braces, probably in the 19th century but certainly before 1848 (Fig. 11). Although jerry-built, the jetty is a structure of some pretention with a carved fascia board bearing the initials R and JM and pargetting to its panels and gable ends, surviving to the east end. There is no reason to doubt the date of 1658 on the east gable.

The west cross-frame (Fig. 2)

In essence this cross-frame is similar to that already discussed, being of post-and-truss construction with a principal rafter roof. It differs, however, in certain details. Although similar in width, it is slightly lower, at *c.* 6.6 m. (21′8″). This is almost certainly to take account of the slightly upward rise of the ground to the west. There are four studs, as opposed to five in the east cross-frame. The southernmost studs on both floors contain mortices which are not readily explicable

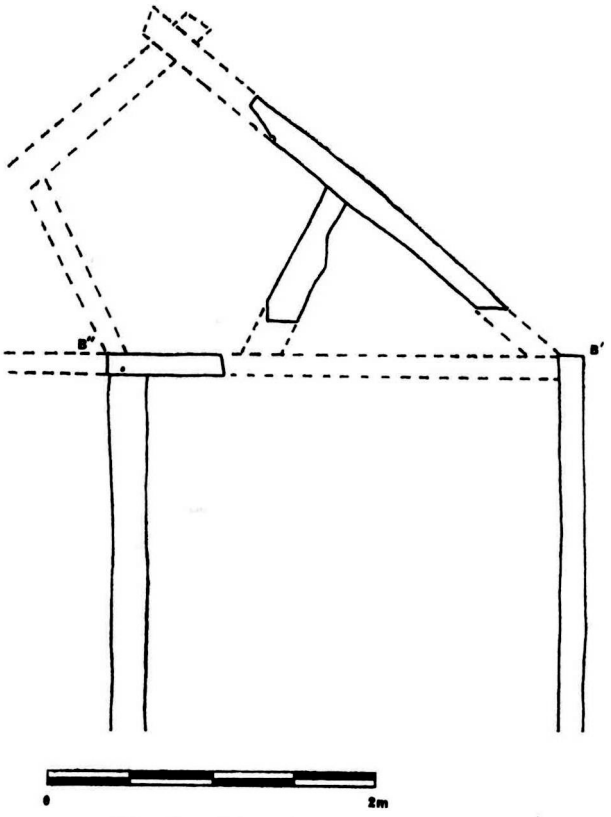


Fig. 3 — Elevation at first floor level at B′—B″

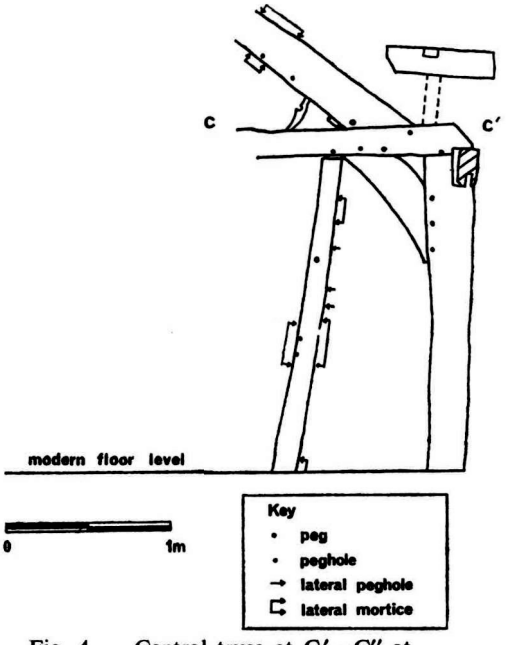


Fig. 4 — Central truss at C′—C″ at first floor level

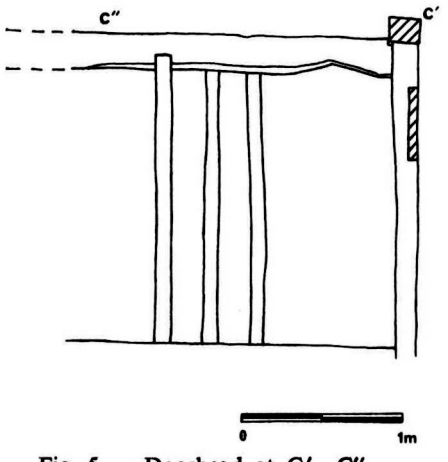


Fig. 5 — Doorhead at C′—C″ at first floor level

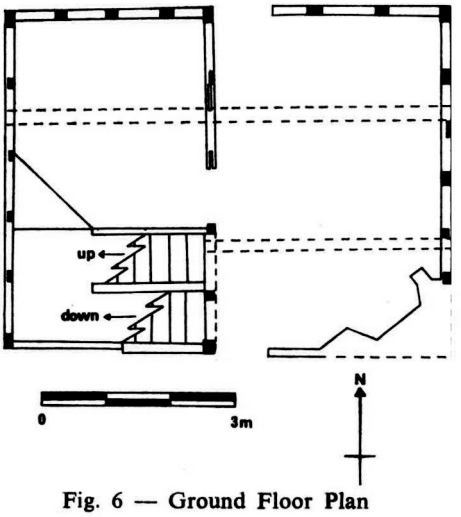


Fig. 6 — Ground Floor Plan

but may represent the position of doorways. The bressumer is not cambered. A particularly interesting joint may be observed in this bressumer, where the southern floor beam has been removed to allow the insertion of a later stairway. The empty slot revealed shows that the lap joint was double-dovetailed, on two levels and was also slightly wider at the bottom than the top. This is a complex joint and not one which would have been easy to frame once the bressumer was in place. It is the first piece of evidence to suggest that the first floor is integral with the building. This contention will be discussed in further detail below. The tie beam is supported by straight rather than arch braces. The tie-beam lap-dovetail assembly may once more be clearly observed to the north, but has rotted to the south.

The roof structure of this cross-frame is rather cruder than that of the east cross-frame. The principal rafters cross over and are halved and pegged, rather than bridled and pegged, forming a cradle into which the ridge, now removed to make way for an 18th-century chimney, was laid diagonally. The purlins, laid diagonally across the backs of the principals, are not trenched, but simply secured by means of free tenons. There is no collar. Two angle struts support the principals, again above the level of the purlins. Two small stakes survive; pegholes for others are visible.

There are several points to notice about this cross-frame. Firstly, it is less well finished than the gable end cross-frame to the east. Secondly, its northern purlin projects *c.* 0.5 m. to the west. Thirdly, to its west and at right angles to it, fragments of a further cross-frame remain, one whose principal rafter was originally jointed at the junction of the southern post and tie-beam (Figs. 3 & 7). This cross-frame is very fragmentary, but is of similar proportions and construction to the west cross-frame. All these factors taken together suggest that the building extended further west and that this was an integral cross-frame. I would suggest, on the basis of the fragment of cross-frame aligned east-west and the general proportions of the surviving bays, that the building continued westward for at least a further two narrow bays, with a contemporary gabled wing to the south.

The central cross-frame

This cross-frame adds nothing to our knowledge of constructional detail for this building and has been much mutilated, with its northern end entirely destroyed. For this reason only the southern end is illustrated (Fig. 4). Of particular interest here is the 'floating' short horizontal member above the tie beam. That this member was originally jointed to the cross-frame is shown by the presence of a mortice to take it in the back of the principal. It is suggested that this horizontal member is either a purlin or a high wall-plate of another gabled wing running out to the south. Further evidence for such a wing is provided by the presence of a low-arched doorhead in the southern wall plate immediately to the east of the central cross-frame (Fig. 5).

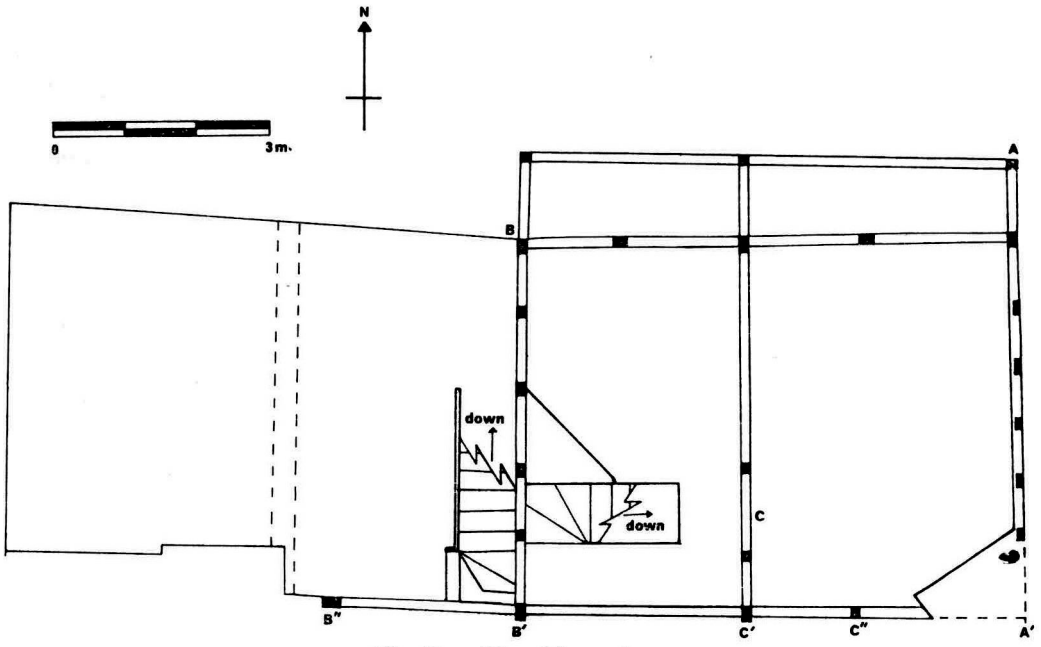


Fig. 7 — First Floor plan

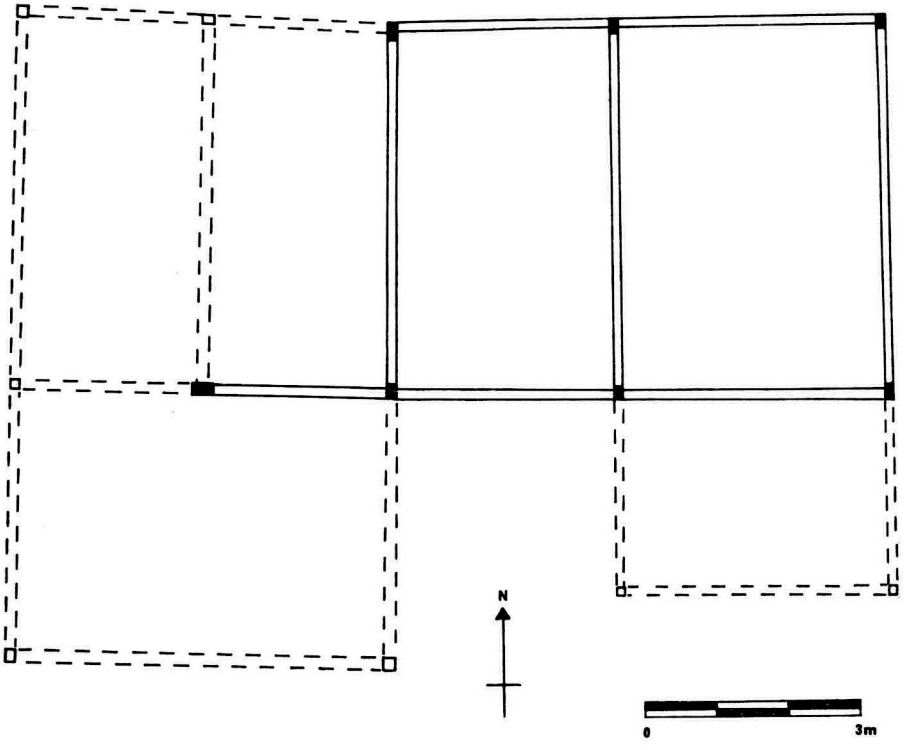


Fig. 8 — Suggested reconstruction of original plan

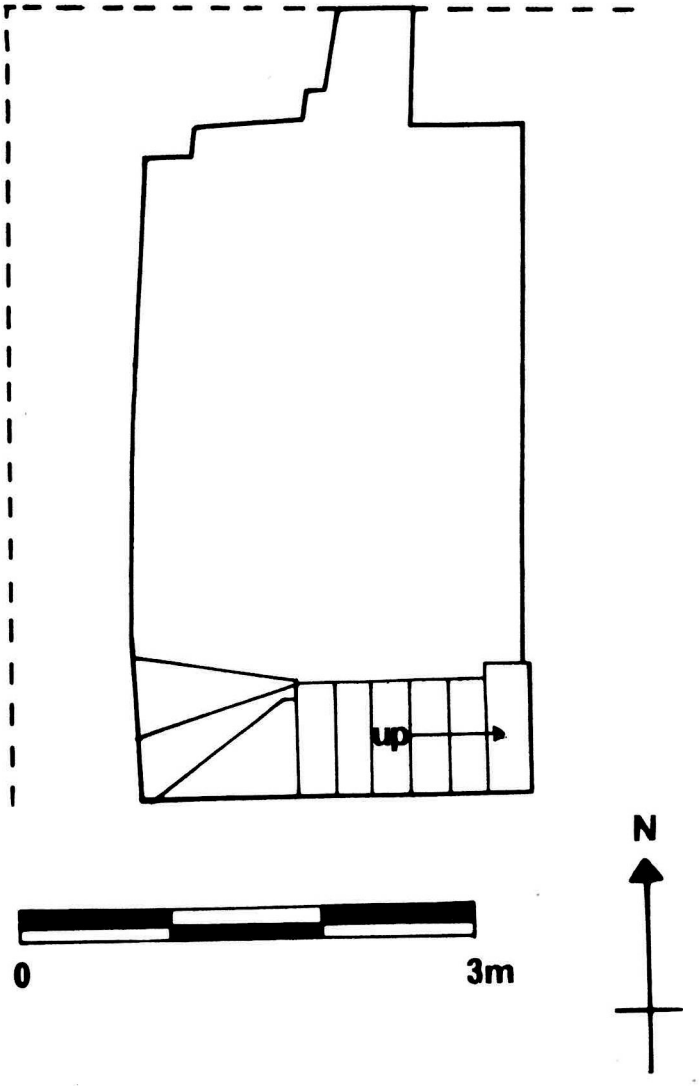


Fig. 9 — Cellar Plan

A study of the basic constructional details of the building suggests, therefore, a structure of at least four bays, parallel to the street with two rear cross wings. A suggested reconstruction of the orignal plan is shown in fig. 8.

The Cellar

Some months after the original study of the building it was possible to examine the cellar in closer detail (Fig. 9). The posts and floor joists of the timber frame could clearly be seen to be structurally integral with the cellar walls. This can also be demonstrated in the front facade of the building. The partition at the head of the steps down to the cellar is of the same construction as that to the adjacent stairwell (i.e. 18th-century), suggesting that this access may be a later insertion. The present floor of the cellar, which seems to be bedrock for at least some if its extent, is 1.52 m. below street level. The walls are of roughly-dressed sandstone blocks of varying sizes, built up from floor level, implying that the cellar is not dug into bedrock. In the west wall five courses stand to a height of 1.17 m. while a 3 m. stretch of walling contains six blocks. Sizes of individual blocks vary from 0.22 x 0.22 m. to 0.75 x 0.20 m. and 0.64 x 0.14 m. There is a break in construction in the west wall approximately one metre from its southern end. Here the dressed blocks are replaced by random rubble and the wall shows a distinct bulge. This may represent a blocked doorway, implying original access from a cellar next door beneath No. 3, now itself inaccessible. In the north wall is an opening to the street with a deeply-splayed sill, flanked by well-cut (and possibly re-used) blocks, standing on their ends and measuring an average of 0.55 x 0.45 x 0.25 m. The east wall was unfortunately not available for inspection but is said to be of rougher construction than the west wall, and to contain some very large blocks.

A jetton or counting token was discovered in the loose fill of the north wall, bearing the stamp 'Hans Shultes in Nurnberg'. Dr. Lloyd Morgan of the Grosvenor Museum has dated it to the late 16th century. Bearing in mind the two caveats that although not satisfactorily stratified, its position within the wall rather than on the floor is suggestive, and although jettons, like coins, remained in circulation for a number of years, the piece provides us with a reasonably reliable terminus post quem for the cellar and hence for the building itself.

Internal Arrangements

The floor

An argument for the inclusion of the first floor in the original design has already been discussed in the section on the west cross-frame in the consideration of the double-dovetail lap joint between the south ceiling beam and the bressumer. Further points may be added here. The south beam has been sawn off at the central cross-frame to accommodate the inserted staircase, but the north one is intact

and unscarfed giving it a continuous overall length of *c* 6.9 m. (*c.* 22 ft.). It would not be practicable to insert such a large piece into a building already standing.

Turning to the detail of the floor joists, it is clear that those to the northern section were replaced at the time of the addition of the jetty. By contrast the joists to the central section seem to be original, fitting neatly into unaltered housings. A comparison between the two types of joists is telling: the earlier ones are of smaller scantling (c 0.10 x 0.80 m. as opposed to c 0.10 x 0.13 m.). They are laid edgewise; those to the jetty are laid on their backs. Given that the laying of joists edgewise to provide increased strength is a late development (early 16th-century) it might seem anomalous to argue for their earlier position in the chronology of this particular building, but this might be explained by the generally low standard of craftsmanship in the jetty. The most important detail of the earlier joists is the method of jointing at their northern ends where they show barefaced soffit tenons. All other joists, and the southern end of these early ones, are fixed with very simple housed joints. The argument that the bare-faced soffit tenons identify the original joists is of importance to the discussion of the changes in the heating arrangements of the house. A sketch diagram to show the arrangement of original and inserted floor joists is given in fig. 10.

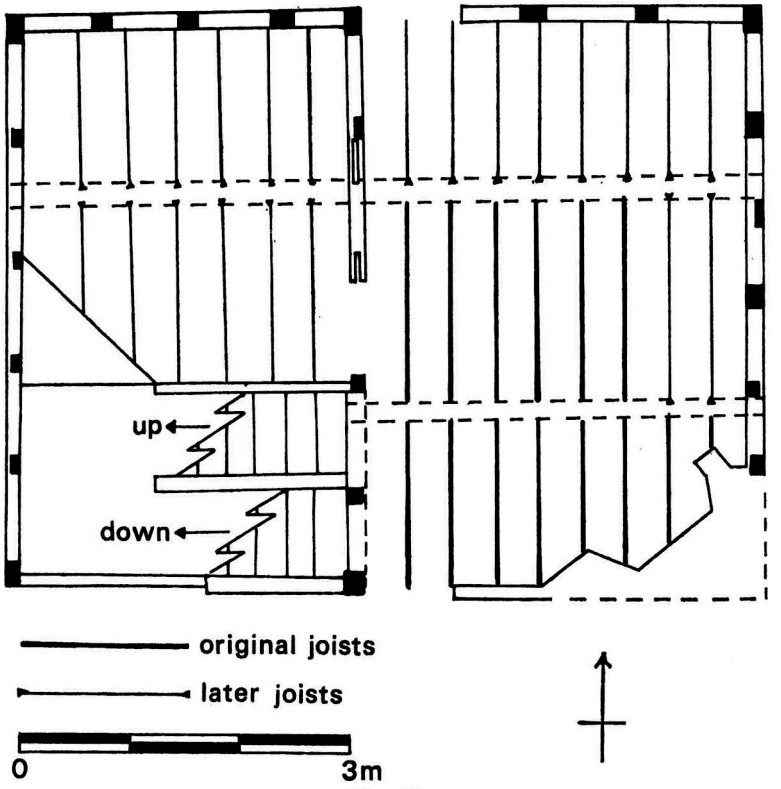


Fig. 10

Heating arrangements

Given that the first floor is original and there is no smoke blackening of timbers, an open fire may be ruled out.

That both the existing fireplaces are insertions will be argued below, but this leaves a problem over the original heating arrangements. It is suggested that a smoke-hood was erected against the east wall. The fixings for this may be represented by otherwise unexplained mortices in the central studs of both storeys, and by the mortices in the queen struts (Fig. 1). The absence of barefaced soffit tenons on two of the joists at the east end of the central section of floor (Fig. 10) suggests that they are later insertions added after the removal of the smoke hood.

This smoke hood was replaced by a brick built chimney in the south-east corner. On the first floor the fireplace has a large low-arched stone front with a mantelpiece and a plastered chimney piece above bearing a coat of arms yet to be identified. The bricks of the chimney are very narrow (0.045 x 0.115 x 0.23 m. or 1⅞″ x 4½″ x 9″) suggesting an early date. Nevertheless it is clear that the chimney is an insertion: on the ground floor early joists with barefaced soffit tenons have been sawn off to accommodate it (Fig. 10), while upstairs the rear wall-plate has been sawn through, severely weakening the structure. Whilst one is tempted to identify such crass stupidity with the builders of the jetty, stylistically the basket-arched fireplace seems to be earlier than 1658. A date in the first quarter of the 17th century might be reasonable. A positive identification of the crest would solve this dating problem.

The second fireplace removed during renovation, was almost certainly an 18th century or 19th century insertion with bricks measuring 2″ x 4″ x 9″ (0.05 x 0.1 x 0.23 m.).

Internal decoration

Little evidence of internal decoration remains, but two interesting fragments survive. On the ground floor of No. 3 in a position on the west side of the west cross-frame and now partially obscured by the staircase, is a section of plasterwork painted to represent 17th-century wooden panelling. At first floor level in the west bay of No. 1, in a position formerly obscured by the cornerwise fireplace, was a section of decorative plaster frieze of early 17th-century date which adorned the inner face of the south purlin. Unfortunately it was not possible to preserve this *in situ.*

Staircases

The staircase in No. 1 is clearly an insertion as evidenced by the removal of the southern beam and its positioning suggests it was inserted at the same time as the fireplace on to which it backs (Figs. 6 & 7).

That the staircase in No. 3 is also an insertion is shown by the fact that it obscures the section of painted plaster discussed above.

CONCLUSIONS

On present evidence we may divide the building into four phases.

Phase 1

A four-bay building parallel to the street with rear cross wings. This is a large building and its position parallel to the street indicates a high status, although it may always have been subdivided, as it is now, into two buildings. However, if the mortices in the southernmost studs of the west cross-frame do represent doorways as suggested, this is unlikely. The function and internal divisions of the building are not clear. Was it partly commercial or entirely residential? At any rate it was of two storeys, with the ground floor probably heated at its eastern end and the first floor apparently open to the roof, but room divisions are uncertain. Access to the upper floors is not apparent — presumably a ladder sufficed. Even the positions of original doors and windows are not clear. The present doorways, to front and back, lack posts to their eastern jambs, but this does not necessarily militate against their being in the original positions, and the fact that they are opposed is highly suggestive of an early date. However, this would suggest that entrance was gained into the only room for which we can suggest an early fire, making this a somewhat illogical arrangement, maximising the draughts in the only heated room. The arrangement of studs in the second bay (Fig. 6) leaves no space for an entrance, so we might postulate one in the third or fourth bay. This would strengthen the argument for the building being in single occupation. A suggested date for the original construction of the building is late 16th-century based on the roof structure, the integrity of the floor and the edgewise laying of the floor, joists and this is supported by the discovery of the jetton in the cellar.

Phase 2

The second phase is represented by the insertion of the fireplace and the decorative plaster frieze. At this stage the first two bays of the first floor were one room and this would have been a room of considerable status. The section of painted plaster on the west cross-frame may date from this phase or the next.

Phase 3

During this phase which is dated to 1658 by the inscription on the building, the jetty was added, presumably as an exercise in conspicuous display of wealth. The house was still of high status. It might be argued that phase 2 and 3 were simultaneous. This would seem more logical than postulating two major alterations within a comparatively short space of time, but the stylistic factors already discussed tend to militate against such a simplification.

Phase 4

The house was sub-divided into tenements. Separate staircases are inserted in nos. 1 & 3 and the rooms of no. 1 are sub-divided, thus necessitating the insertion of a further cornerwise fireplace.

APPENDIX 1

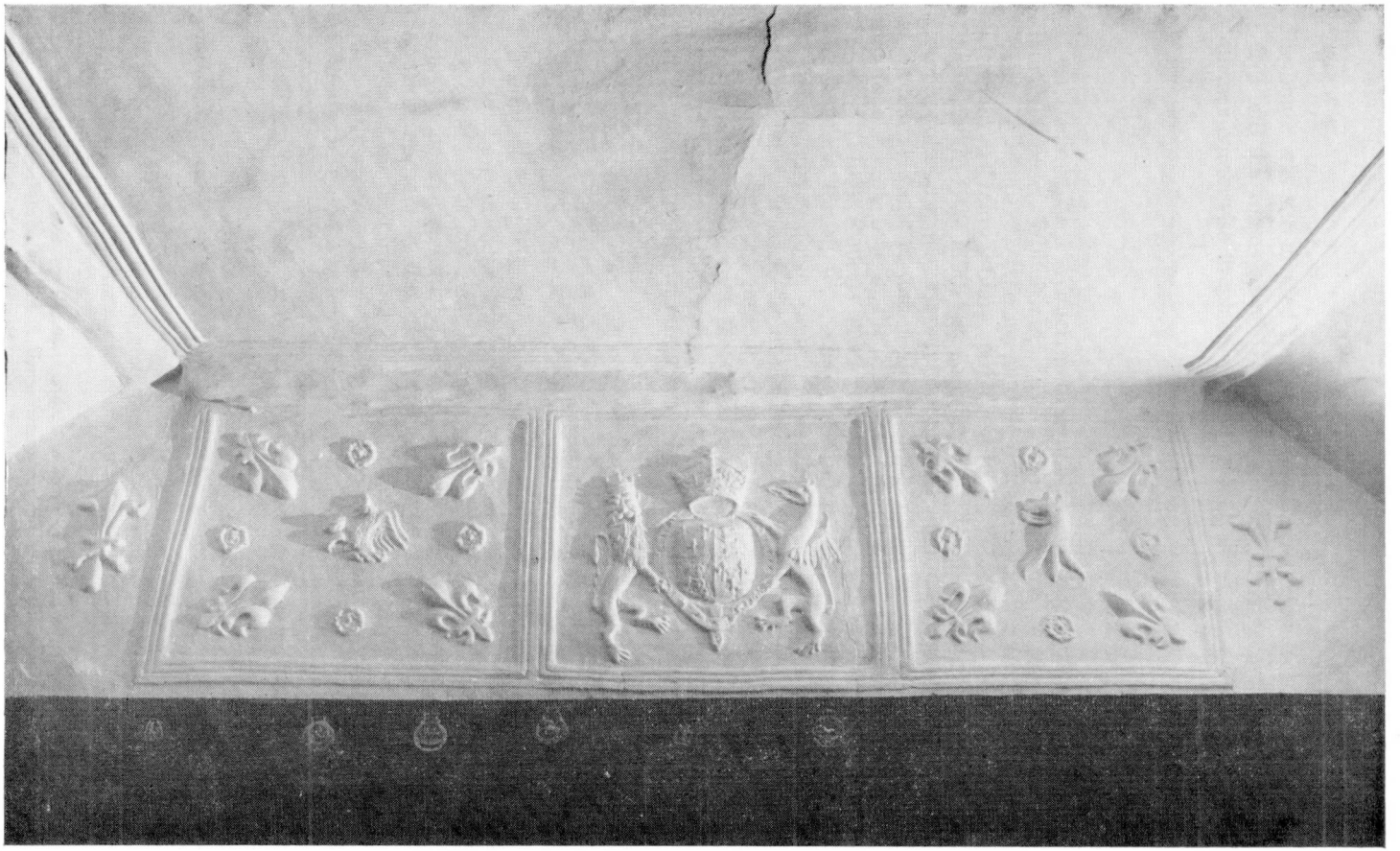
A watercolour of 1 Whitefriars, signed A. B. Bamford and entitled 'Matthew Henry's House, Whitefriars, 1930', was exhibited at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, in June 1987. It seems unlikely that the association with Henry is justified. An extract from Henry's diary, published in H. D. Roberts' *Matthew Henry and his Chapel, 1662-1900* (1901) is specific about the original name of the house: 'In October following, Mr. Harvey, upon some small disagreement with Mr. Henthorn in the Friery, came to one in Bridge Street much more convenient for his meeting, and then I took that in the Friery in which I have lived ever since, now about 22 years' (1709). Roberts states the 'The Fiery' was on the corner of Whitefriars and Bollands Court, west, i.e. on the north side of the street. The first edition Ordnance Survey town plan of 1875 shows 'The Friars' as a large detached building set well back from the street and backing on to Commonhall Street. The building occuping the corner position suggested to Roberts is marked on the early plan as 'Brethren's Meeting House'. Although the references do not tally precisely, certainly the weight of the evidence suggests the 'Matthew Henry's House' was on the north rather than the south side of the street.

APPENDIX 2

The original identification of the building as Robert Moulson's House was made by P. H. Lawson in an appendix to Charles Greenwood's *A Plan for Redevelopment* (1945). It is not clear how Lawson arrived at this attribution: the only clue seems to lie in the initials R. & J. M. on the fascia board of 1658. A Robert Moulson appears in the parish register of St. Bridget's in connection with the baptism of his daughters in 1655 and 1657.

An early reference to Robert Moulson's house appears in the will of Thomas Whittell *c.*1605-1666, held by Cheshire County Record Office and published in the *Cheshire Sheaf*, 3rd series, **26**, 44-5: 'I doe give and bequeth unto m(y) lovenge wife all the rent of the tenement which I have in lease wheare in she now dwelleth, tann hous, Robert Moulson's hous, John Lamskin's hous and all the goods in the houses that belonge to me payenge to my landlord Minshaw eight pounds. The probate inventory includes the following:

		£	s	d
	In Robert Moulson's house in his streete chamber			
Impr :	one Bensh & one grate one bedsted two curtains Rodds one table & one wanescott doore att	00	08	00
	In the house below stairs			
Impr :	one presse by the streetside one grate & one table one dresser and three shilfes & three wainscott doors & all the wainscott in thatt Roome att	00	15	00



Plaster Overmantel at 23 Castle Street

(Photo: Simon Warburton, Grosvenor Museum)

This document certainly could refer to 1, Whitefriars in 1666, with upstairs and downstairs fireplaces, yet it is clear that the house is sublet and at the disposal of Widow Whittell, which belies the high status suggested by the date plaque and the initials on the front facade. Three possibilities present themselves:

1. Moulson was no longer resident in the house he had extended only eight years previously, but it was still known by his name, although it had by now descended down the social scale to the status of rented property.
2. The initial M on the fascia board refers to the landlord, Minshaw.
3. The attribution of the building to Moulson is erroneous. It would be interesting to know Lawson's evidence for his assertion.

(ii) 23, CASTLE STREET by R. C. Turner

In 1986, an opportunity arose to study 23, Castle Street, during alterations and repairs to the house. The facade of the house does not betray any early origins. It is of the early 18th century in Flemish bond, red-brown brick with red sandstone dressings. The front is of two storeys and four bays with a chamfered stone plinth, banded rusticated quoins, plain bands at first and second floor, and a panelled brick parapet with stone coping. The windows are a little later in date, being cased, flush, twelve-pane sashes with gauged and rubbed brick heads with stone key blocks. The reveals of the heads of the upper windows are neatly cut into a flattened ogee profile, an unusual feature. The door with its earred architrave and flat moulded hood is in the second bay, offending the symmetry of the rest of the facade. Access to the side and rear of the property is through a door and covered passage to the left of the facade, which appears to be part of the adjacent property.

Behind this Georgian front can be traced an earlier timber-framed building of two distinct ranges, one parallel to the street, and the other running down the plot. The range parallel to the street retains less early fabric, but would seem to date from the late 16th century. It is of two equally sized rooms on each storey, with only those to the right of the door heated. The room entered directly from the street contains a good well staircase, with three, iron twist balusters on each tread, ending with a curtail step and a spiralling handrail. This stair was inserted in the second half of the 18th century and necessitated raising the ceiling. Two good, chamfered ceiling beams with jewelled and tongue stops were reused, but must be original to the room.

In the room above can be seen the remains of a truss from the original building on the site. It formed part of the eastern gable and is of large, well-jointed timbers, with a canted tiebeam and collar, and two arched diagonal struts (Fig. 11). Despite its incompleteness, it shows that the early 18th-century facade was added to the front of the building, and the remainder of the timber framing must have been dismantled behind. The roof line has been carried up with brickwork to the

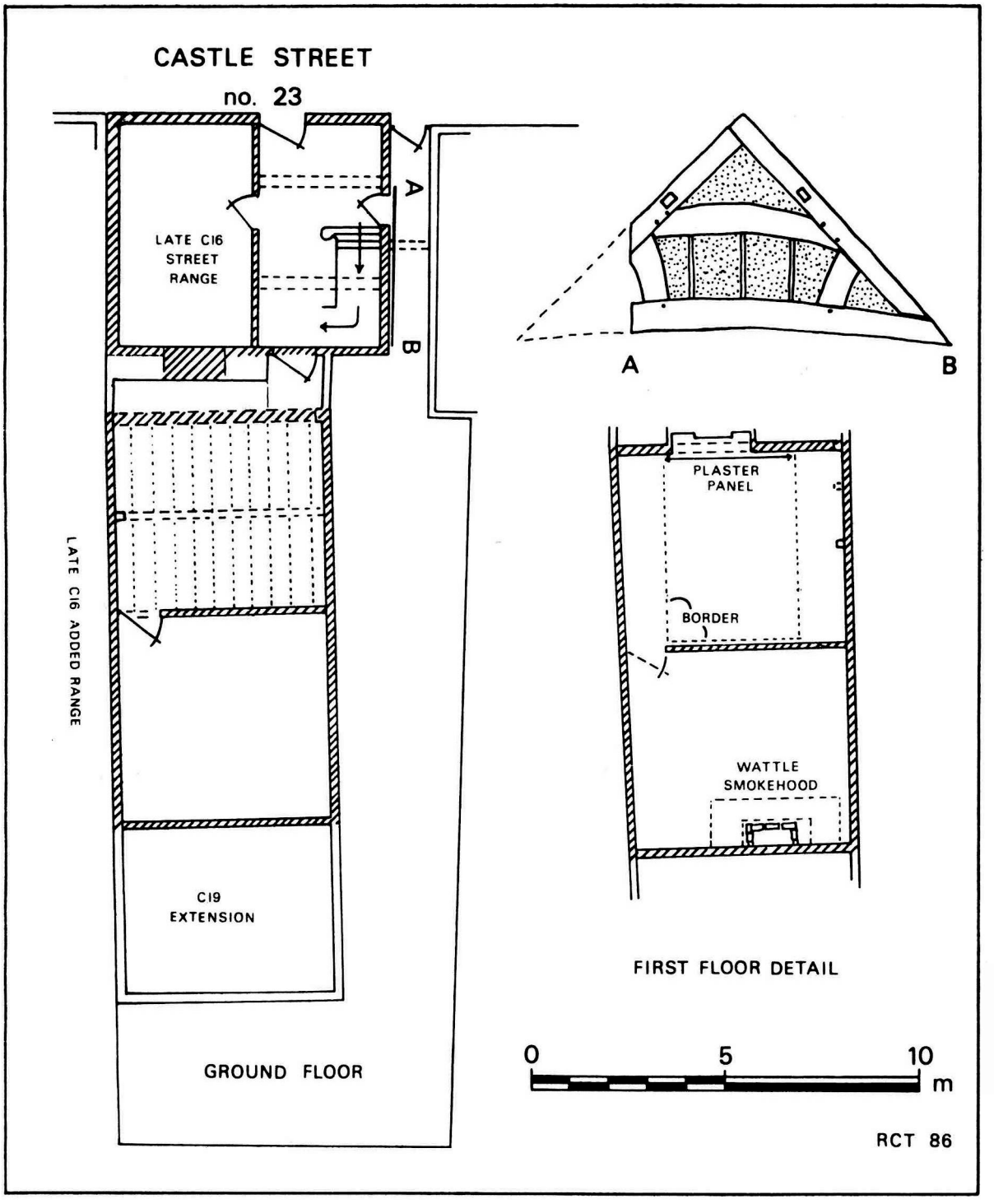

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Fig. 11

height of the parapet, the original height being about that of the top of the present windows.

Attached to the rear and at a slight angle are the remains of another timber-framed range, running down the western edge of the tenement plot. It was originally 10.5 m. long and 6.3 m. wide, and was divided into two rooms on each storey. The two ranges do not directly join and there is a gap of about 1.5 m. in width (now filled), through which the chimneys would have passed.

The main room on each floor is 5 m. long (Fig. 11). At ground level, it retains its ceiling consisting of a chamfered beam and chamfered joists, with fillet and tongue stops. One or two posts survive in the room above, as does the wall plate and roof trusses. The latter are simple, with a tiebeam, two diagonal struts and wind-braced purlins, and are filled with wattle and daub. The room retains an early plastered ceiling, with a moulded border at the level of the purlins, which is contemporary with a plaster overmantel at the north end. This overmantel is of three panels with the arms of Elizabeth I at the centre, a griffon carrying a helmet with Tudor roses and fleur-de-lys to the left, and a dog's head with similar additional details to the right (plate). Underneath is a restored or pastiche ingle-nook which contains a good but small sandstone fireplace, with a cyma-moulded square opening (jambs restored) and a cyma-moulded mantel shelf. The lintel has three raised and painted hatchments; all are halved with the wife's arms of the same family, separated by a line of roses. The fireplace is not in its original position and must have been introduced into the house with the mock timber framing of the 1950s.[1] All this detailing was the work of Harry Brown, rebuilder of such historic properties as the Quaintways site (12-16 Northgate Street).

Little survives in the rooms further to the south, except one feature of great interest: a timber-framed and wattle and daub smoke hood, surviving in the roof space and now containing a brick chimney. It is against the original end wall of the house. Such flimsy structures are very susceptible to fire and rarely survive in rural houses. They are hardly known in towns, probably because they were so dangerous.[2]

Conclusion

23 Castle Street is one of the very few timber-framed town houses known to survive in Chester, off the four main streets. The most famous example is 1, Whitefriars (see Grenville, above) and there are suggestions that 7, Nuns Road

[1] A copy of an old photograph in the possession of Mrs. J. Hore seems to show this fireplace in the Old King's Head, Lower Bridge Street.

[2] P. Smith lists 31 examples in Wales, including three in Denbighshire, but none in towns: *Houses in the Welsh Countryside* (H.M.S.O., 1975), p. 469. The nearest surviving examples to Chester are in Church House, Tarvin, and Rock Farm, Elton.

may have had a timber-framed core.[3] The plan of 23, Castle Street is unusual in being of two separate ranges, both probably of the late 16th century. It is possible that they represented two separate dwellings, as there are no obvious principal rooms in either, as one would expect for a larger house of this date. If this is the case, the impression is of a landowner developing a plot to maximise its rental, not for his own use. Speed's map of Chester of 1611 shows Castle Street fully developed by that date, perhaps with buildings of a similar character to this one.

Castle Street was more fashionable in the 17th and 18th centuries. The refronting of the house with an elegant early 18th century facade led to some alteration in the floor levels. It also involved an encroachment onto the street and it may be possible to trace the necessary permission in the City records. That would provide valuable insights into who owned the property and how it may have appeared before.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Mrs. J. Hore for researching the appendices relating 1 Whitefriars, and Mr. and Mrs. Marl for permission to carry out the survey of 23 Castle Street. Thanks are also rendered to the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, for permission to publish the photograph of the overmantel at 23 Castle Street.

[3] Information from Mr. Max Wheeler, a resident in the property. Recent alteration of the Golden Eagle, Castle Street, showed that it was originally also a timber-framed house, of hall and cross-wing plan.