The larger Medieval houses of Northamptonshire

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Northamptonshire is fortunate in having retained some material evidence of the great houses of the Middle Ages, the manors, granges and dwellings of secular clergy.

Being directly related to the limestone belt, the evidence from the county is collated and the houses discussed as a group in relation to the generally accepted standard form of the medieval house, concluding that there is a wide variation in the disposition of the usual units of accommodation. The paper discusses the evidence by elements, the detailed evidence being laid out in appendix form.

The purpose of this paper is to consider the surviving remains of domestic architecture of the Middle Ages in Northamptonshire, and to offer some observations on its form and interpretation. For this purpose the boundaries of Northamptonshire are taken as they now exist, thus excluding the Soke of Peterborough which in many respects is a different geographical entity. This excludes some major medieval houses such as Northborough and Ufford Old Rectory, which will be referred to only in passing, as will certain others geographically and physically in similar circumstances to the houses of Northamptonshire. An exception is made for a house in Haversham on the Northamptonshire side of the Great Ouse, but strictly two miles within Buckinghamshire.

A social distinction has also been drawn. The houses to be discussed all pertain to the higher echelons of medieval society, thus the smaller house of the subsistence farmer, the copyholder and houses built on crucks which, occurring in some numbers in some Northamptonshire villages and thus so defined as peasants' houses by J. T. Smith (1), have also been excluded. This may, in fact, not be as arbitrary as it seems as the larger stone-built houses are the dwellings of those who had sufficient resources to be able to influence or determine the form of the building. Thus far they will reflect more directly the requirements and aspirations of their patrons. However it must always be borne in mind that the houses of great and poor alike share elements of a common origin and this and the degree of fluidity which was always present in medieval society does not always permit a fine distinction to be drawn.

Due to the paucity of surviving evidence particularly for the earlier centuries it has not been considered necessary to define the start of the Middle Ages, but in architectural terms a distinct change was taking place by the accession of the Tudors, so the more numerous buildings dating from after 1485 to 1500 have been set aside for possible consideration in a later paper.

For the Saxon and Early Medieval periods no domestic structure has continued to stand to the present day, and for the evidence in this period it is necessary to rely on archaeology. Of great significance are the findings of Mr B K Davidson's excavations at Sulgrave (2) where a timber hall of 11th century date was found, and later partly demolished for the construction of the fortifications of the ringwork. Here, until corroborative or other evidence is forthcoming, one is invited to see three points of major importance, one the fact that the standard medieval plan of open hall, two opposed entry doors on the long side, and a service bay beyond the circulation passage connecting these doors, has already appeared in the later Saxon period, although perhaps so late as to admit the possibility of Norman influence. Second, is the use of a cross wing, and third is the transition in domestic construction between building in timber to building in stone. This change must have come about from cultural as much as from any other reason and may relate to the relative abundance of unskilled servile labour as compared to the rather more egalitarian Saxon society. The timber open hall at Sulgrave measures approximately 8m by 5½m span.

A second and later archaeological example is provided by the excavations carried out at Quinton in 1969-1973 (3). Here a 13th century building of 4m span, was interpreted as a two storey cross wing, possibly a rebuild of an earlier structure. On the north side of the cross wing a

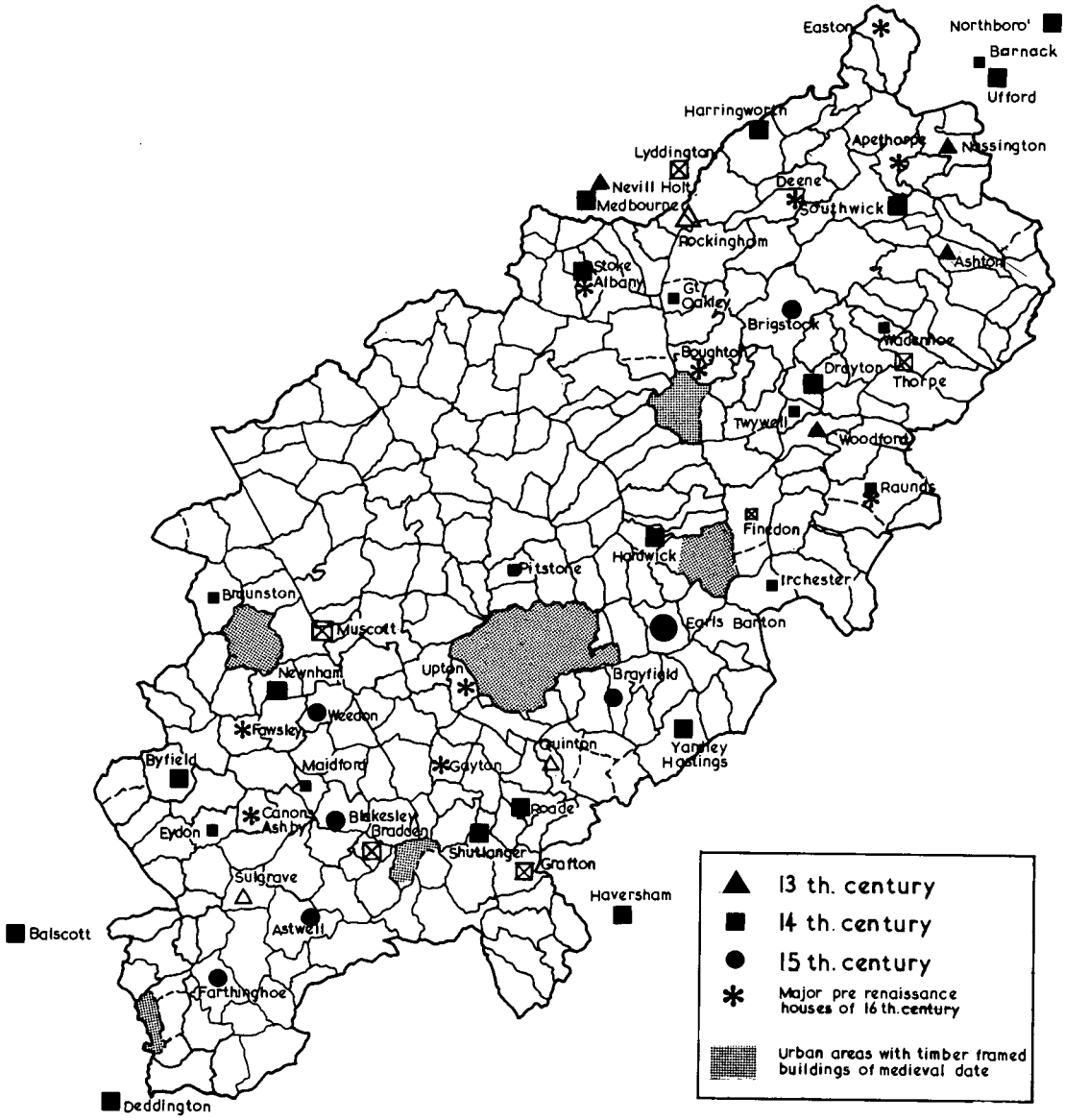


Fig 1 Distribution of surviving evidence of domestic architecture in Northants, 1050- 1485.

service building was attached, approximately 5m square internally, either a workshop or a kitchen. Further excavation is required to locate the main hall, and to determine what further structures were associated with the medieval house. The publication of Margaret Grey's excavations on a medieval house at Badby is also awaited with interest. An indication of the quality achieved by domestic buildings in the 12th century is given by the two-light window head found at Churchfield, Benefield (4).

The first buildings to survive in the county can be attributed to the 13th century. The earliest is the house of a prebendary of Lincoln Cathedral at Nassington, and later on in the century, houses probably of manorial status appear at Woodford and Stoke Albany, whilst just outside the county, important houses were built in the adjoining villages of Medbourne and Neville Holt, and in the Soke, at Ufford.

The prebendal house at Nassington now contains only the large hall of the original dwelling, which was considerably altered and extended in the 15th century. This building stands alone until the last quarter of the 13th century, when the great period of medieval domestic building activity apparently begins. This phase commences with another building under ecclesiastical patronage, the building of the manor for the Bishop of Coventry at Thorpe Waterville, of which the first floor *camera magna* survives as a barn, and a lancet window is now included in the later dwelling house on the site, perhaps reset in this position. This is followed chronologically by probable manor houses at Woodford and Stoke Albany, and not far beyond the northern boundaries of the county at Ufford, and the neighbouring Leicestershire villages of Medbourne and Nevill Holt. As represented by survivals, the first half of the 14th century has provided more domestic buildings than the remainder of the medieval period before 1500. The reasons for this are doubtlessly complex, and it is well to recall that this was a period of expansion and economic buoyancy not paralleled before or later (5). The population of the country continued to expand up to the abdication of Edward II and agriculture was enjoying a period of prosperity unequalled in medieval times due to rising prices and expanding markets. It had risen from subsistence levels to service expanding urban centres and the export of long hair wool was a major element in the Northamptonshire economy, although it is clear that wool is by no means the only foundation of the county's wealth, wheat production being another mainstay. In the poll tax returns of 1377 Northamptonshire shows up as one of the most thickly populated counties in the country, a reflection of the situation in the first half of the century and although the Black Death outbreaks between 1348 and 1370 took as heavy a toll as elsewhere, the effects of this particular catastrophe, as very roughly indicated by the number of surviving buildings, was not irredeemable and less disastrous in the countryside than in the towns. Politically the management of the state in the Edwardian period had brought wealth not only to those already socially well placed, but also to the prosperous freeholder or franklin, so that at least until 1340 lordly estates produced the sort of surplus wealth that may well be invested in property. The lull in the French wars also, after Crécy, brought money into the country and into the hands of the landed gentry, and as a result the general prosperity and the amount of movement to and from the confines of the kingdom ensured that the network of roads in the early 14th century were in such good condition as not to be paralleled for the next four hundred years.

Wealth concentrated into the hands of certain classes of society, combined with good communications, and an upturn in the call on labour service were conditions favourable to the erection of fine and permanent houses. In all 33% of the extant medieval buildings noted can be attributed to the fifty years from 1300 to 1350.

Change was already coming about before the Black Death. The population ceases to grow, and the country entered into a period of economic decline after 1340. There was a retreat from the earlier high levels of export of raw wool, parallel with efforts to increase cloth manufacture in certain areas, and the establishment of the staple to replenish the depleted royal exchequer. A dearth of labour precipitated changes in agriculture, the engrossment of holdings and a greater diffusion of a more modest prosperity. Nevertheless, in terms of surviving buildings a further 26% can, as near as can be determined, be attributed to the second half of the century, making a total of 59% of all surviving dateable medieval houses attributable to the 14th century. As on general grounds it may be anticipated that the older the building is the less its chance of survival, this figure, as compared with 30% for the 15th century, is submitted as significant. This picture is reinforced by the inclusion of the medieval houses lying on the limestone belt within six miles of the county boundaries.

SITING (FIG 1)

Any discussion on the distribution of surviving medieval houses must be prefixed by a severe warning that the numbers are insufficient to anticipate any really meaningful result, and that the factors affecting survival are so capricious as to commend the greatest caution. Notwithstanding these constraints, and if those houses immediately outside the county boundaries are added, it is clear that the distribution is fairly even, with no more than one significant house per parish. One anomaly however, appears; there is an unexplained, almost complete, absence of early major houses in the north-west sector of the county, the area bounded by a line drawn through Desborough, Burton Latimer and Daventry. This area, which includes much of the land sometimes termed the 'Northamptonshire Heights', does not differ significantly from, for instance, the area south of Daventry in geographical or geological structure, nor in terms of economic development in the medieval period as far as is known, nor was this area more intensively rebuilt than others in the Great Rebuilding or at other times. The significance of this pattern, which is confirmed by the similar distribution of medieval deer parks, must remain a mystery. The fact that this area has been omitted by all county historians since 1725 does not seem pertinent.

Where the principal axis of a house, ie the axis of the great hall can be determined, there is a very marked preference for an orientation providing the principal aspect to the south-east, that is, an axis inclined between 45 and 90 degrees from north. If this is extended to 100 degrees, that is giving a slight south-south-west aspect, then 80% of houses would be included. Those excluded, being the houses with their long axis between north-east to south-west, and north-west to south-east (an orientation which might well be chosen as providing greater penetration of sunlight and warmth), are so arranged to conform to existing roads, but a few now have no obvious physical constraints to explain their deviation from the norm. As there is such a marked preference for the one orientation, it must be assumed that influential factors no longer apparent must have existed, although in all such cases a whim of an eccentric patron must have occasionally influenced the layout.

Moats, significantly, do not seem to be a feature of even the earliest of the medieval houses, except in special circumstances. The royal hunting lodge at Brigstock is clearly moated, although in what period it was first built clearly cannot be told, and a water feature, possibly a moat, can be detected on the north side of the la Zouch capital manor at Harringworth. This is identified by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments as a fishpond (7), which is equally possible an explanation although it could have served both purposes. Thorpe Waterville castle has a moat, but this seems to defend the earlier castle, the episcopal manor house being built later outside. In many houses there is no possibility of their having had a moat but the physical possibility exists, without any evidence of one at Haversham Grange and Stoke Albany Old House. Generally it seems that the larger medieval house was not moated unless royal property or was in receipt of a licence to crenellate, and even then, as at Drayton, the owner may well choose to provide his defence in more imposing stone and mortar. The significance of moats in Northants at least must therefore be looked for elsewhere other than appertaining to the average medieval manor house or grange.

THE HOUSES

Any discussion on the form and accommodation of the medieval houses should be seen against the perhaps atypical range of types and fragments that have survived, and such reservations as are necessary borne in mind.

As referred to above, the standard medieval plan appears to be already extant at the beginning of the Norman period. However, amongst standing buildings, the development of cross wings to the simple rectangular block cannot be demonstrated earlier than *c* 1200 (8), those few Norman buildings to survive being contained within one block, but with occasional appendages.

In Northamptonshire, taking the period 1200 to 1475 as a whole, and where plans can be determined with a degree of probability, there are eight single block plans, and four possibles, compared with four and six possibles where a cross wing seems to have been present in the original arrangement. When those immediately outside the county are included the picture is not materially changed. In date the earlier buildings, Nassington and Woodford, may well have originally been single block houses, Nassington having developed its cross wing in the 15th century, though by the date of erection of the Old House, Stoke Albany, *c.* 1300, the single cross wing was clearly present. The single block plan appears to have continued to give satisfaction to the end of the 14th century at least, and probably

for houses of lesser folk, like Brafield and Earls Barton, to the end of the medieval period. The development of the cross wing may be concomitant with the combining of both services and the retiring rooms at the same end of the open hall, leaving the hall in an end-hall relationship (9). This could well be the case at Stoke Albany, and probably also at Newnham taking into account the persistance of property boundaries, but this negative evidence is unsusceptible of proof. Certainly it seems possible that at Nassington the development of the elaborate cross wing at the south end dispensed with the need for the upper end solar which was demolished, leaving a house with a more compact and efficient circulation and greater privacy in the hall.

Two cross wings, one at either end of the hall, appear but once in Northamptonshire, in the Manor House at Bradden, erected by the Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem and sadly demolished in the early 19th century. Some surviving houses may have have second cross wings, for which no evidence remains.

In general, whereas the usual units of medieval accommodation are present, the Northamptonshire evidence suggests that there is a great deal of variation acceptable, determined by need, siting and resources available for the building.

THE GREAT HALL

In all the medieval houses under consideration, the great hall open to the roof is either present as the fundamental feature, or is assumed to have been present.

The comparative sizes of halls is shown in FIG 2. Two houses, Drayton and Yardey Hastings, have great halls of dimensions approaching in scale those palaces being erected at approximately the same time by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Charing and Mayfield. Sir Simon de Drayton, a descendant of the de Veres, and the de Hastings family, are clearly major magnates in the county and their peers, the la Zouch of Harringworth, Earls of Huntingdon, the Greens of Greens Norton, would have had similarly important halls at their respective seats. The other medieval halls in the county are of more modest scale, ranging from 7.28 m (23 ft 10 in) to 11.12 m (36 ft 6 in) in length, and in width from 4.18 m (13 ft 8 in) to 7.4 m (24 ft 3 in). Of significance may be the fact that the largest of these smaller halls is Nassington, which is also the earliest. This may indicate the greater significance placed on the multi-purpose hall in earlier times, but a decline in size against a time scale cannot be shown.

The internal arrangements of the medieval hall have, in most cases, not survived. Roofs, where these survive (Shutlanger, Newnham, Drayton, Haversham), consistently show evidence of the open hearth with soot encrustation on the timbers, and the degree of blackening indicates the position of the hearth to be central to the upper bay, the traditional position. Louvres have not survived, although there is some evidence for the position at Drayton, and slight indications at Shutlanger, and of the four chimney terminals of stone to survive, two, Harringworth and Twywell, are relocated on later buildings, and the ones at Yardley Hastings and Thorpe Waterville, like Northborough in the Soke, serve flues from a private room and lesser hall respectively. An end wall fireplace occurs in Brigstock Manor, where the special circumstances of it being a low hall have necessitated alternative arrangements to the open central hearth. The lateral fireplace does not appear in the county until after the period under consideration, at Fawsley, Deene and one replacing the earlier central hearth at Drayton in the mid and later 16th century.

Windows to the great hall are most persistent, appearing in 9 cases. On the west elevation of the hall of Nassington, two windows, one to each bay survive. Although now provided with 15th century cusped tracery, their almost semi-circular heads strongly suggest that the openings are contemporary with the door, *c* 1200. Somewhat later at Shutlanger, a square headed window lights each of the two bays of the hall on the south side, and an equivalent arrangement is indicated by reveals of modern windows on the north side. Emphasis is given to the upper bay window, which has greater width and a lower sill, presumably to enhance the dais position. There were shutters to both upper and lower lights here as indicated by the hinge pins and squared off internal face but the tracery openings were probably left unshuttered. At Haversham a transomed two light window to the first bay of the hall beyond the cross passage survives on the south side, and its outline on the equivalent position on the north. As there were at least two bays to the hall it is assumed that the upper bay was equally well lit, and slight evidence for the second window remains. A later 14th century window also to the first bay of the hall survives at Blakesley, set curiously low. Here the hall lighting was supplemented by an oriel window, now removed, the only example beside Nassington in the county of this well-established medieval feature, although there are indications of a full height opening in this position at

Woodford. A medieval window close to the cross passage end also occurs, outside the county but in otherwise similar stone-belt country, at Leadenporch house, Deddington (10), where a similar window may originally have lit the second hall bay.

Single two light windows to halls are established for the region in the 14th century at the two houses in Balscott, near Banbury, Oxfordshire (11), under five miles from Northamptonshire's boundary. This simpler arrangement indicative of one bay halls, appears at Brafield-on-the-Green, and probably at Eydon, both being 15th century examples of lesser social status. The unusual three light window at Barnack in the Soke no doubt also represents a hall window.

A small two light window of later 14th century date appears at high level at Drayton, and probably represents a minor hall window illuminating the cross passage bay from above a porch.

The 15th century low hall at Brigstock represents a different approach. Here the hall has windows to each of its three bays on the south side (the fourth bay contains the cross passage), only the dais end, where the fireplace is located, is lit to the north. A similar fenestration is provided to the first floor chamber, except that the central window is omitted on each side.

An original opening in the gable wall at the upper end of the hall is taken as conclusive evidence for the existence of a private chamber or accommodation beyond the dais. Such doorways appear at Brigstock, Roade, Drayton and Shutlanger, the last two being the only houses where the original stone doorcase survives.

CROSS PASSAGES AND SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

The cross passage is, like the hall, a fundamental planning concept in medieval domestic architecture. It survived until well past the medieval period, and it is clear that even when all features distinctive of the medieval period are replaced, the cross passage will persist.

Fourteen of the larger stone houses in the county retain a cross passage in their plan. Original entrance doorcases remain in eight cases, and the traditional openings to service rooms remain in undisputed medieval work in six examples. The number and disposition of these openings require some consideration.

A single opening central to the cross passage is not necessarily a sign of relative humbleness, for such an arrangement survives at Nevill Holt Hall, Leicestershire, within the region. This arrangement is paralleled at Woodford, Braunston and Farthinghoe, spanning the whole of the period in discussion, although in no case does the actual original moulded opening survive. The possibility of alteration at a later date must therefore be admitted. Similarly, a single door placed towards one end of the passage is authenticated in the 15th century work at both Nassington and Brigstock, while at Drayton and at Blakesley there is one such opening at either end of the passage. At Blakesley one leads to the lower bay, the other to a cellar. It cannot be ascertained whether these openings are original as no identifiable medieval work remains.

The traditional two central doors survive, symmetrically disposed, at Shutlanger, Yardley Hastings, Haversham and, less symmetrically at Stoke Albany. Additionally, Shutlanger has a matching but smaller door at the south end and here one of the original pair of doors has been renewed in later alterations, and at Yardley Hastings there are two additional doors at the ends of the passage, one to the chamber over the end room, and one to the cellar beneath.

At Haversham the two symmetrical doors have been supplemented towards the southern end by a timber dern door (12) of almost insulting coarseness when set aside the finely moulded central doors. It is difficult to believe all three doors to be of the same build, although the ogee head to the timber lintel proclaims a similar date range. There is no example other than Northborough in the county of the three central doors to buttery, kitchen and pantry.

The central pair of doors traditionally serve pantry and buttery, being divided axially within the confines of the outer walls. The central partition exists at Stoke Albany and Haversham, but cannot be proven to be original. The possibility of a timber division wall as at Swalcliffe Manor, Oxon (13), could be entertained. One central door must lead to both facilities, again perhaps subdivided internally by ephemeral partitions, although where the lower room beyond the cross passage is a parlour, or at a different level, the possibility of a longhouse type arrangement cannot be entirely dismissed. Wood Jones argues for this as a later medieval development (14). Where there are doors in end positions within the cross passage, it is tempting to anticipate a cross wing, doors nearer the centre of a room being arguably more useful than those in a corner. At Shutlanger the purpose of the third doorway, towards the front entrance is clear, as it

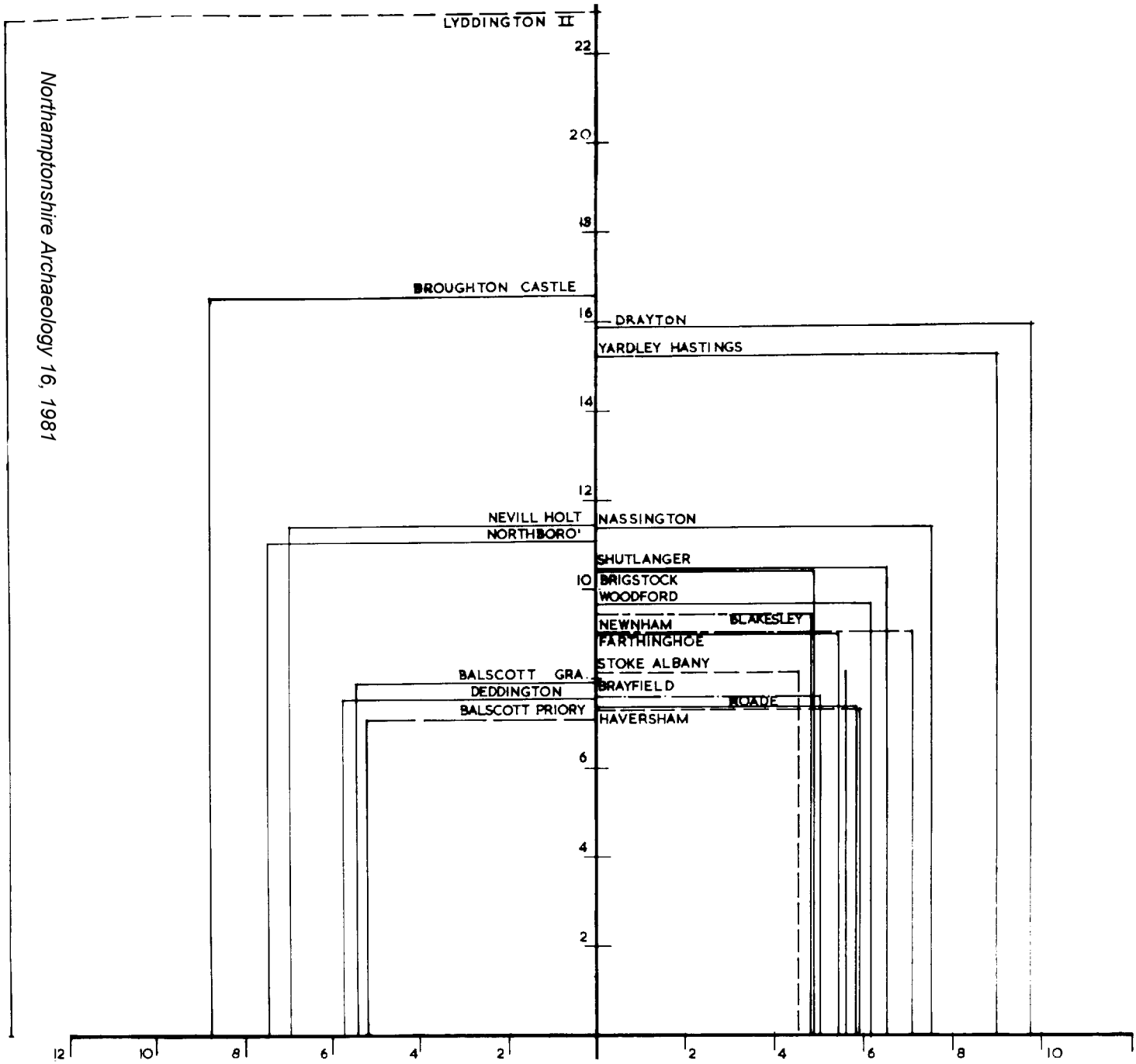


Fig 2 Comparative sizes of great halls.

leads directly to a newel stair to the chamber over the porch. The explanation for the four doors at Yardley is also clear. Here the two central doors both lead to the same chamber, and cupboard recesses survive on the chamber side by each door. There seems little doubt that in a house of this status, the chamber is the pantry with one way circulation (although both doors open inwards in deference to the cross passage circulation). The low end door leads directly to a flight of steps to the cellar, which, with its contrived cross ventilation, seems to be the buttery, while the fourth door at the main entrance end of the passage leads up to the first floor chamber which, it is argued here, is the bailiff's quarters. In the light of these examples the timber door at Haversham is likely to have given access to a stair either to the upper chamber over the service rooms, or to a porch chamber.

PORCHES

Two-storey medieval porches exist at the houses at Brigstock, Shutlanger, and Roade, and post medieval porches were added at Nevill Holt, Northborough, and in the county at Deene. Brigstock apparently had one to each door of the cross passage, the principal one having been taken down and reset at right angles to the hall. The most spectacular porch is that at Shutlanger, which appears to be an addition to the house some half century after the original build, and contains an upper chamber above the sexpartite vault. An undated single storey porch exists at Nassington. At Roade and Brigstock the upper chamber is connected directly to the first floor accommodation, and probably represents a flooring over the cross passage as a gallery, but at Shutlanger the upper chamber was, at a later date, connected to the chamber over the service rooms.

THE PARLOUR AND SOLAR

The standard arrangement whereby the parlour-solar area occupies an extension of the hall at the high end, the opposite end from the entry passage, occurs less frequently than might be anticipated, being present at Roade, probably at Shutlanger, and Nassington, in the more modest houses of Earls Barton, Brafield and Blakesley, and is suggested by fragmentary evidence at Maidford and Irchester. At Roade the upper bay is in physical terms lower on the ground, the arrangements are unusually large and may incorporate elements from the inadequate service bay in that house. It is of two bays, with an open truss between them, thus providing two rooms almost equivalent in area to the hall itself. The alternative arrangement to the single block, the cross wing at the high end, occurs more frequently; at Drayton where the retiring room is raised on a vaulted undercroft with access probably from a stair projecting from the hall; at Braddon, Farthinghoe and probably at Ashton by Oundle. A local variant may be demonstrated at Haversham and Stoke Albany where a more compact relationship may be achieved by placing the parlour-solar over the service end of the house. The alterations at Nassington in the 14th century seem to point to a development in this direction, and at Hardwick a similar arrangement may also have happened although the extent to which this house has been rebuilt in the 16th century has eliminated the reference point, the cross passage. The internal arrangements of parlour and solar nowhere survive, but the appearance of fine gable windows at first floor level at Irchester, Wadenhoe, Maidford and elsewhere are taken as being indicative of a room of status in this position.

The room above the service bay is represented by one example, Yardley Hastings, although another survives at Northborough. As already discussed, access to this room at Yardley is from immediately inside the principal door. At Northborough the access position is not clear. The first floor room at Yardley appears to have been originally open to the roof, although a floor was later inserted above. The room has a number of features, a fireplace in the outer gable wall, compared with an inserted fireplace on the inner wall at Northborough, a garderobe within the thickness of the rear wall, and four windows, the two rear with higher sills than the other two on the end gable and front wall. It seems clear that this room served two functions, a living room and a bedroom, in other words, a flat either for relatives in dower, or more probably, having regard to the position of the entrance, for a bailiff acting as head of the house in the owner's absence. Such an interpretation could also be applied to Northborough.

KITCHEN

For the period under discussion the kitchen arrangements are usually the most ephemeral, being housed in a detached stone or timber structure at a safe distance from the main house until well on in the medieval period when they become attached to the house. In Northamptonshire, only one example of a detached kitchen exists, located some 11 m from the rear cross

passage door at Yardley Hastings, and hitherto unrecognised having been built around by the present Victorian manor house. The building is almost square, 7.4 m x 6.2 m internally and thus is comparable with the slightly larger kitchen at Stanton Harcourt, Oxon. It was apparently two storeys high, and contains blocked windows at high level to two proven, and probably all four elevations. Internally, the building still contains a large stack occupying most of the south-west side, but this may not be contemporary. The point of access may have been the blocked opening on the north-east side, although this is rather remote for access to the cross passage of the hall. The south-west face of the building lines up with the projected line of the cross passage suggesting a more likely point of entry where the present door is, at the side of the great fireplace, although this doorway appears to be of fairly recent construction. Detached domestic kitchens of the medieval period are comparatively rare survivals and the appearance of what appears to be another at Yardley Hastings is a matter of great interest.

ROOFS

Medieval roofs have survived at a number of houses, and offer an important series for the study of the evolution of carpentry in the Midlands.

Of those dateable to the later 13th and first half of the 14th centuries, there are apparently three alternative forms of construction suitable for the larger span. Two of these, the base cruck truss and the short principal truss (16) are, as far as the Northants evidence goes, based on there being an arcade plate set square to the floor, and therefore are seen as derivatives of timber arcaded buildings such as the Bishop's Palace at Hereford. The third alternative is the truss utilizing raised crucks, having their principal plate, the purlin, set to the plane of the roof. That these types are current simultaneously is shown by the documentary evidence applied to Drayton in the first instance, where the licence to crenellate was issued in 1328, and in the second, the purchase of land and the probable establishment of a grange at Haversham by Lavendon Abbey in 1325. Within these groups, short principal roofs occur at Drayton, Shutlanger, Yardley, and outside the county at Medbourne and Nevill Holt. Only one base cruck roof has been found, that at Church Farm, Newnham.

Three raised cruck trusses occur in this early period, Haversham, Roade, and a more modest example at Byfield which may well represent the overlap into the buildings of the lower classes of society but which may be very approximately dated by the soffit carving of the collar to the 14th century.

Taking the short principal roofs, with five examples some points on an evolutionary scale can be postulated, though whether this has any significance in an absolute chronology is a different matter. The earlier ones, Nevill Holt, and Medbourne, have double ties, the former house being dated by J T Smith to *c* 1250-1300. Yardley, Shutlanger and Drayton, without double ties, a structural superfluity, are then typologically later, and within this small group, Shutlanger has straight braces of relatively square scantling between the short principals and the arcade plates, as if they are still seen in the eyes of the carpenter as braces from arcade plate to post. At Drayton these same braces have developed a rather more rectangular section, and at the same time a slight curve, whilst at Yardley Hastings these braces are now well curved and have developed the flat form of the true windbrace the function which they have been performing since the arcade posts were removed from the open hall. At Shutlanger and Drayton, where the opportunity to revert to well tried practice presented itself at gable walls, stub posts carry the load of the arcade plate vertically well down the wall to corbels, and at Shutlanger the arcade posts themselves are retained in the spere truss position. Scarf joints used at Shutlanger, Drayton and Newnham are identical, the through-splayed and tabled scarf with face pegs, the *trait de Jupiter*. Applying dates attributed to the mouldings, and anchored by the licence date at Drayton (for there is no evidence to support the theory that the present structure pre-dates the licence date as has been held) the chronology would read Nevill Holt 1250-1300 (17), Medbourne *c* 1300, Shutlanger *c* 1320, Drayton 1325-30 and Yardley 1340-60. It must be repeated that the assumption of a step by step evolution over even this relatively small area is a dangerous exercise.

At Newnham the problem was clearly the same — to clear the hall of intrusive arcade posts. Here an alternative solution to using short principals has been used whereby the arcade plate is carried on base crucks. These are a derivative of the vernacular cruck construction used in exactly the same way, but as base crucks were probably more difficult to obtain, the choice may have been influenced by local ability perhaps seated more within a timber framing tradition, Newnham being nearer to the timber framing areas of Warwickshire. The line may not, however, be too strongly drawn, as is shown at Shutlanger and Drayton, where the principals have curved feet.

The short principal construction may be a derivative of the base cruck adapted to construction in stone.

Newnham has a form of double tie, the upper tie being framed into the upper roof by cornice runners. The survival of this feature suggests a date towards the first quarter of the 14th century. Cornices also appear in the upper roof at Drayton.

True crucks are widespread throughout the county, and amongst the larger houses are represented at Haversham, Roade and Byfield, and notwithstanding their proven ability to clear great spans, they represent here the more modest medieval halls averaging 5.8 m span (19 ft). Haversham and Byfield have the saddle apex normal in the East Midlands, but the ridge is supported on a vertical post standing on the collar and halved over the saddle, a device combined with longer saddles than is usual in the vernacular, which presumably enabled greater spans to be achieved. The incompletely known roof at Roade has a crossed and halved apex.

Seven roofs of the later 14th and 15th centuries survive in major houses, Brigstock, Braunston, Blakesley, Brafield, Farthinghoe, Nassington and Earls Barton. Brigstock is interesting as representing the survival of raised cruck construction to the mid 15th century where modest spans are required, and the trusses are provided with knee braces abutting a dropped centre abutment on the collar. The influence of cruck construction appears also in the roof of the cross wing at Braunston and in the central trusses of the manor house at Stowe Nine Churches, a house of probably the last quarter of the 15th century where normal principals with a single trenched purlin terminate in a saddle carrying a square set ridge. Knee braces occur regularly, at Brigstock, Blakesley, Nassington, Earls Barton, and Farthinghoe, the first three having dropped collar abutments absent on the latter two. The curve of the braces is continued down visually by planted members at Brigstock and Blakesley to terminate in corbels, whilst corbels also occur at Farthinghoe and Earls Barton. Curved struts from collar to principal rafters, or between tie and collar also seem characteristic of 14th century roofs, and equally most sport curved windbraces to both or just the upper or single purlin. Ridge trees may be either absent, or when present either set square or angled to the roof. As the dating of these roofs relies on mouldings and other internal detail rather than external evidence, no line of development can be recognised in these roofs, there being insufficient examples for the 150 years. Earliest is probably Blakesley, dated 1370-1400 which already has the corbels, moulded braces and no dropped abutments and these features are still present in the mid 15th century roof at Brigstock plus the dropped abutments, a widely used and almost characteristic 14th century feature. In the later roofs of Farthinghoe, Brafield and Earls Barton, the lowest horizontal members lack the camber of earlier roofs, suggesting that the carpenter had learned to calculate the amount to which the timber will deflect.

Tudor roofs once more reach majestic proportions in the county, at Upton, Fawsley, Broughton and elsewhere, but lie beyond the parameters of this paper.

FRAGMENTS

Across the county there are inevitably fragments of medieval construction which cannot be interpreted on the basis of standardised arrangements. Gable windows have been mentioned above in the discussion on solar rooms, but this of course need not be the only interpretation possible, particularly in such examples as the curious low set window at Wadenhoe and the late 14th century window in the gable of a barn in Finedon, which disappeared around 1970 (18). The single lancet window that appears both at Thorpe Waterville and at Little Billing manor cannot be interpreted, and in the latter case the building of which it is the only surviving feature is monastic rather than a dwelling. One doorway survives, at Upper Weedon Fernhollow Farm, clearly *in situ*, but so extensively rebuilt as to preclude further explanation other than it terminates a cross passage. Two windows, Pitsford and in the Old Post Office at Raunds are so diminutive in scale as to suggest they may be squints, the former probably in its original position. The more substantial remains at Harringworth could be a fragment of the Zouch manor house, but could equally be part of the gatehouse of what must have been one of Northamptonshire's major establishments. Gatehouses have generally been excluded from this discussion, but it should be recorded that there are medieval gatehouses surviving for the Lovatt manor at Astwell, the Woodville manor at Grafton Regis, and a 14th century example at Muscott by Brockhall (FIG 18) where the adjacent 19th century house embodies both a 16th century three light window and an undated but probably earlier low set cross slit vent.

Finally there are three groups of fragments which should be mentioned; the Old Watch House

at Pilton, which incorporates numerous early medieval fragments, none in position and which may well have an ecclesiastical origin; a house south of the church at Mears Ashby, which has two medieval heads built in at high level, and a house in Gretton which has a collection of fragments, apparently Elizabethan in date.

ASHTON, OUNDLE, The Manor House TL054882

Description (FIG 17)

The house lies outside the present village, which is an estate village built *c* 1900 by Huckvale for the Hon Charles Rothschild. The position of the house must relate to the medieval village since destroyed. There is no evidence for a moat around the property.

The house comprises a long range parallel to, and set well back from, the road, and a cross wing at the western end. The main range consists of five bays with an axial stack in the second bay from the west, the main entrance forming a baffle entry on the north side. A blocked opening on the south opposite the stack indicates that the insertion of the stack took place later than the building of the walls. There are no features in this range that are clearly dateable, although a straight joint indicates its secondary position to the cross wing, and the roof construction is not inconsistent with a later 16th to 17th century origin.

The cross wing, also of two storeys, has been clearly heightened on both gables, and in the north gable there is a blocked medieval window set 3 m to sill above the floor level. No evidence is visible internally as a gable stack has been inserted.

The window consists of two lights with a plate tracery head pierced with a square set quatrefoil. The relationship of this head with the jambs below is odd in that it is flush with the outer chamfer (19). This might be explained by the head being reset when the window was blocked. Above the window there is a well constructed relieving arch. Corner buttresses are of recent build.

It seems that the medieval construction consists of a cross wing approximately 5 m span and 12 m long containing the parlour and upper camera of a substantial medieval house, the gable window lighting the solar. This block would have related to a hall in the main range which was apparently replaced by a more up-to-date two storey building in the 16th to 17th centuries. The size of the cross wing approximately equals in span the similar manor house at Maidford, probably also a parlour wing, and the house at Wadenhoe, although all are smaller than the Old Rectory House at Irchester.

Date

The date is assessed, on the slender basis of the window, to be 13th century.

History

The manor of Ashton was held by the Abbey of Peterborough until the dissolution, after which it was settled on Queen Katherine Parr in dower. In the parish Peterborough Abbey also had a grange at a place called Biggin, granted in 1304 to which a deer leap was granted in 1327. Bridges also records a structure then a barn with long arches and old windows at a hamlet of Elminton, also in the parish of Ashton. The house was known as the Manor house in the 17th century.

BLAKESLEY, Glebe Farm SP 626505

General description (FIG 3)

Glebe Farm lies in the centre of Blakesley, across the road from the west end of the church, with its long axis at right angles to the road. The major elevations thus face approximately north and south. Of medieval work the north elevation is the most significant with an original door and window, and the roof survives with little later alteration. Major extensions have taken place at the western end.

Detailed description

The house comprises 3½ bays of medieval work, defined by four identical arch braced collar beam trusses carrying two levels of purlins, each bay being fully windbraced at both levels. The walls are of dark brown liassic sandstone, squared and coursed both as rubble and ashlar. The medieval work appears to terminate in a stone wall now internal, but of like thickness. Beyond this wall the external face of the south wall changes character. Assuming this to be an end gable, the western bay of the medieval house contains a cross passage, the stone moulded casement of the north door surviving. Opposite a modern entrance occupies the position of the south passage door.

The next adjoining bay has a late decorated to early perpendicular period window on the north elevation, with two cinquefoliated lights and quatrefoil head, all enclosed like the door case under a hollow moulded hood. The position of this window is low in the wall, and pays little heed to the structural spacing of the bays. On the south, the corresponding position is occupied by a modern window.

The third bay contains, on the north side, a blocked chamfered arched opening to ground level, now blocked and containing a two light window with hollow moulded jambs. This window appears to be medieval work below the head, and must therefore be reset in this position after the arched opening was redundant. As its overall width is similar to the surviving window, it is possible that it is the lower part of the original south window of bay 2.

Beyond the east jamb of the archway, the external stonework terminates in a well quoined corner immediately east of the fourth truss. This point appears to be the end of the building, and a corresponding change in masonry in this position on the south side can be detected, although here the quoins have been removed.

The roof trusses are, to practical effect, identical, the only variant being a lack of chamfer on the outer edge of the knee braces to the fourth truss, further confirmation that the early building stops at this point. The principal rafters are of similar scantling to the collars, and carry an ogee moulding on the lower arrises which is returned along the collar, and above, a simple chamfer to the ridge. At the feet of the principal rafters a carefully worked gusset piece is morticed in, and carries the mouldings, and the eye, down in a curve to meet a brattished cornice plate, the carvings of which have been chiselled away flush with the plastered internal wall face. The relationship between this decorative plate, and the mid- or outer-wall plate carrying the rafters cannot be seen. The knee braces, which pick up the curve of the gusset pieces, are chamfered and meet at centre span. Above the cambered collar, curved struts in unpegged mortices carry the load superimposed by the upper chamfered purlins.

Problems and interpretation

The two end walls of the medieval structure may be identified with some degree of certainty as described above, giving a structure of 10.1 m x 4.86 m span with a cross passage

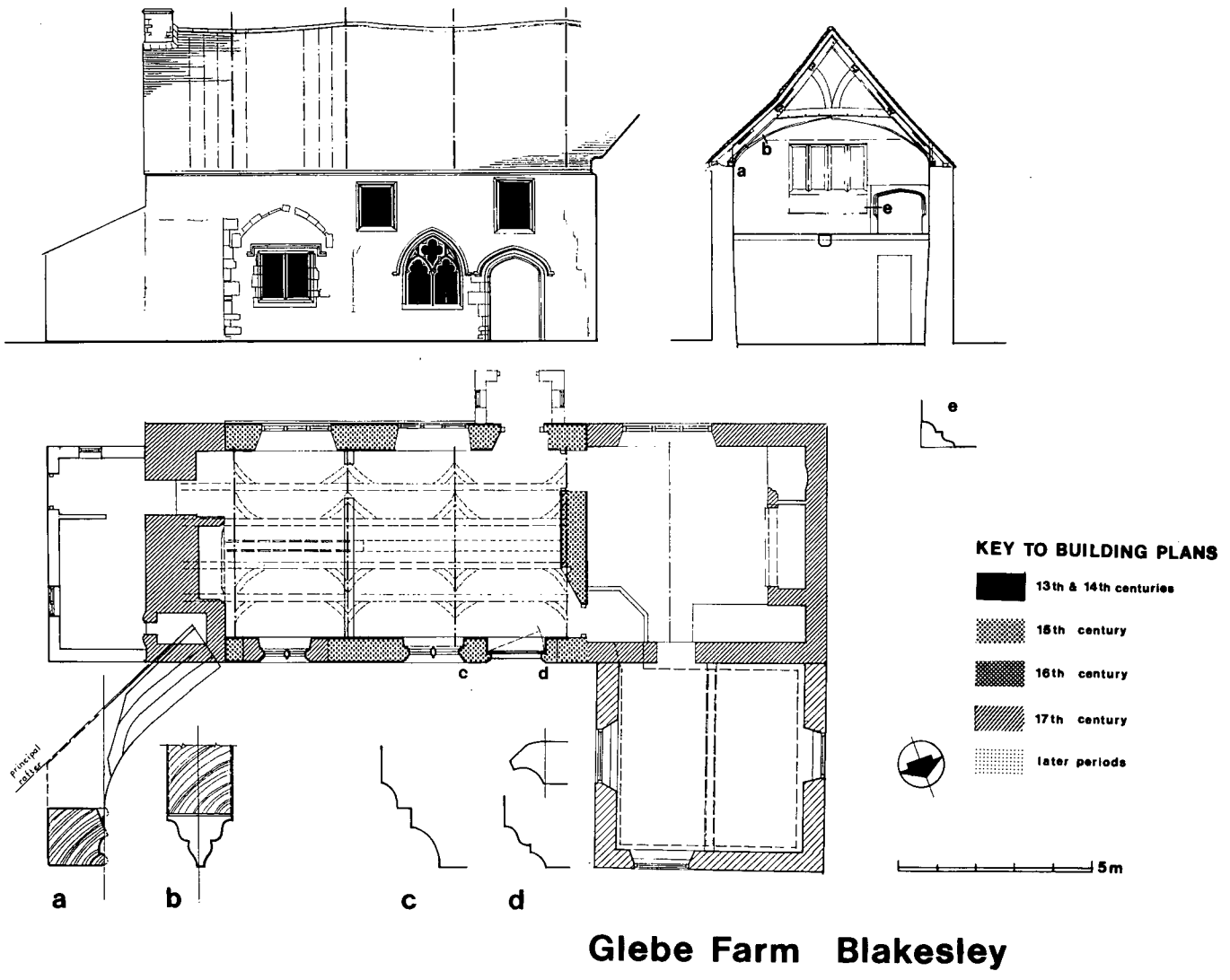


Fig 3 Blakesley; Glebe Farm.

at its west end and a hall adjacent. The absence of any evidence of intermediate partitioning at truss level suggests that there was no subdivision within this space.

The major problem rests on the interpretation of the arched opening at the east bay, a feature not repeated on the south side. Despite the lack of evidence of scars on the masonry around the arch, the feature should probably be explained as an opening into an oriel bay of modest proportions.

The second problem is the lack of evidence for any provision for heating. The easternmost truss, above identified as the termination of the building, is significant in this context, for it bears some smoke incrustation on its inner, west, face, and immediately east, there are three early rafter couples, also stained. The truss here is infilled with split oak lath and daub, not of external weathering quality, so despite evidence of the north quoined end, there is a suggestion that the medieval structure continued at least sufficiently far to include a stone chimney stack, thus the present half bay at this end may replace or incorporate a pre-existing structure. If this presumed stone stack was of lesser width than the medieval building, the quoining may thus be explained, with perhaps an external stair in the re-entrant angle, later replaced with the mixed lias and Jurassic limestone rubble masonry now visible. This explanation may be considered too contrived, and it must be borne in mind that rafter couples cannot be proved to be coeval with the truss.

A third point without adequate explanation is the presence of a 15 mm approx deep by 3 mm wide sawcut on the inner face of all timbers of the western truss above collar level (but not returned on the upper face of the collar). This must surely relate to some infilling process pre-dating the lath and daub mentioned above.

Interpretation

It is noted that the Blakesley house departs from the standard medieval form in the absence of any identifiable service building.

It is quite possible that the 16th-17th century double bay now at the west end replaced in its entirety a service bay which was considered inadequate or in poor condition. The services might also, though less likely, be accommodated in a detached building.

An explanation for the remainder may be that Glebe Farm is a priest's house with the annex to the north containing the oriel demolished in the Reformation. Such buildings may well contain fireplaces served by a masonry chimney. This explanation is rather unsatisfactory as the building is clearly of high quality, better perhaps than may be expected of a rural vicarage.

Date

The window tracery, mouldings and truss construction are all consistent with a construction date in the period 1370-1400.

Later development

As mentioned, the building west of the cross passage is of later date, and contains a large fireplace and later oven, now removed. This would appear to be a service room, a kitchen or dairy built anew in post medieval times, but earlier than the attached wing on the north side. This latter room, with longitudinal central spine beam and ogee stops appears to be later 17th to early 18th century, and probably contained further service accommodation, perhaps a new dairy.

At the east end, the structure beyond the last medieval truss was remodelled or built anew and incorporates a large fireplace at ground floor level and a fine moulded fireplace to the chamber above. This chamber is lit by a four-light ovolo moulded window in the gable, both window and fireplace suggesting a date post Civil War.

The medieval window on the north side retains in the quatrefoil a coat of arms in 16th century glass, being part of an arms divided per pale bearing azure, a chevron argent with three roses in outline, and three yellow stained haycocks.

History

Blakesley manor was held by the Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem from at least as early as 1203, then rented to Peter de Stokes, for which the Knights rendered a knight's fee to the Lord of Peverell. They were fined in 1208 for keeping a pack of dogs there without the king's leave, and for killing deer in Blakesley park. By the time of Edward I a manor at Blakesley was held by the Zouch family of Harringworth of the Prior, an annual payment of one penny being due to the prior in 1396. A branch of the Zouch family held the property until the turn of the 17th century, although on the Dissolution the first holding of the manor had passed to princess Elizabeth. The provision of the house with an oriel suggests that it could well be built as a cadet manor of the Zouches', rather than a vicarage, but it must be recorded that Blakesley has one of the earliest recorded vicarages to be entered on the diocesan rolls for Northamptonshire (20), 1156 or before, so by the 15th century it may have become sufficiently wealthy to erect a substantial house for the incumbent. The advowson of the rectory was with John, Duke of Northumberland who had exchanged Blakesley *inter alia* for the manor and castle of Tonbridge in Kent. The *valor* of 1535 records the vicarage to be worth £40, that is more than the rectory, so that the possibility of Glebe Farm being the vicarage remains. The manor was for a short time restored to the Knights during the reign of Mary, but reverted to Elizabeth, by then Queen of England.

BRAFIELD ON THE GREEN, The Monk's House, formerly The Old School House, 25 Church Lane SP822590

Description (FIG 4)

The Monk's House is a simple rectangular block lying parallel to the road on the west side of the green and south of the church. The long axis lies north-east to south-west. It was extensively restored in 1966-7 and it is from notes taken by others at the time that the plan is based.

The earliest features still surviving are the front east door, the roof trusses and the head of a two light window with cinquefoil cusps on the west wall. The roof has arched braced collar beams with curved hollow chamfered windbraces to single purlins. Unusually the principal rafters meet to a king post standing vertically on the tie and halved over the collar and continuing to the square set ridge piece. There were originally three such trusses carrying a thatched roof, and dividing the house to 3½ bays. If the entrance door is in its original position, and there is no sign of it having been reset, then the two light window, which was higher than where it is now set, and back to front, must represent the main window of an open hall in the centre full bay. Notes made at the time of restoration indicate evidence for a window on the corresponding opposite wall, but this evidence can only be seen with difficulty. If the roof trusses can be taken to indicate the internal subdivisions of the house, we can thus identify an open hall, approximately 6m x 5.05m span, with an inner room or parlour, 3.25m wide, and below the entrance passage a service bay. The building is thus of conforming plan, although of modest scale. The details indicate a high quality of work and individuality, in particular the cusped spandrels of the door, and the curious inclined horizontal member of the external

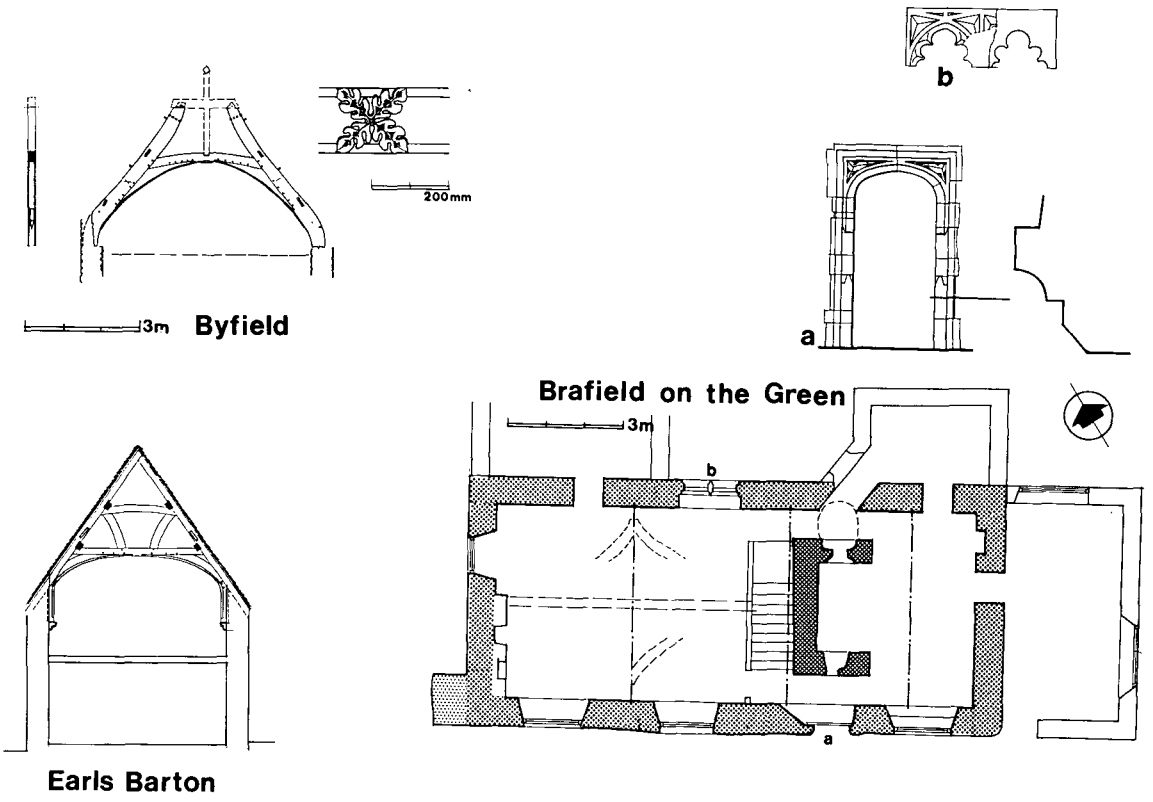


Fig 4 Brafield on the Green; the Monk's House. Byfield; Cross Tree Farm. Earls Barton; West Street.

aspect of the window head. These indicate a date of mid to late 15th century and the suggested date of 1471 would be acceptable.

At the southern end there is a masonry projection on the south east angle. It has a stepped back head and the character of the masonry suggests it may be an addition to the original structure. This has been suggested to be a garderobe, but its dimensions would hardly permit of any space internally. There is now no evidence for this projection internally but there was apparently originally a small opening to it at first floor level. During repair work in 1966 wall paintings of the 16th century were found on the west wall of the supposed hall. Unfortunately these were not preserved.

History

Brafield was established as a perpetual vicarage in 1325 (21), the advowson lying with St Andrew's Priory, Northampton (22). In 1535 the vicarage was worth £6.13s.4d. The early establishment of a resident priest in Brafield suggests that the Monk's House may be a priest's house. The Manor of Brafield was held by a branch of the la Zouche family from 1299 to the time of James I.

BRIGSTOCK, Brigstock Manor House SP945853

Description (FIG 5)

Brigstock Manor is a large complex house occupying a site of some antiquity in Rockingham Forest. The moat, fed by Harper's Brook, is now landscaped.

The core of the present building comprises a low hall, 10.4m x 4.93m, with cross passage and porches, and extensions of the 16th and 19th centuries.

There are three raised cruck trusses over the hall. These were clearly originally mounted on corbels, now missing, and have knee braces to the cranked collar which has a dropped central section to provide abutments. There is a face-planted timber piece on the foot of the blades to continue the arch down in a visually smooth curve to the corbels. Both the cruck blades and the braces are chamfered both sides.

The low and upper hall levels have deep set windows on the south side, the windows being of two lights, with four centred heads and transoms, the lights having cinquefoiled heads at both levels. On the north side windows occur only at the high end at both levels.

The south porch has diagonal buttresses and a four centred

arched entrance, and has been extended upwards in the 16th century. The north porch, which seems to be the major entrance, has been totally remodelled, the outer arch having been reset at right angles to the hall.

Problems

The problem at Brigstock is to define the first building phase. The north porch arch, now reset, has mouldings applicable to the Decorated period 1330-50, the remainder are 15th century and the extensions to the hall, 16th century. The question is whether the roof trusses relate to the first or second building periods, as although the total internal height of 10m is not very appreciably higher than other medieval houses in the county, the narrowness of the Brigstock hall would provide an uncomfortable feeling of great height unless they related to a two storey structure. The second building period as established by the mouldings, is mid 15th century, a date quite acceptable for the refined roof trusses, and by which period the low hall has become an established building form, particularly in the south-west of Britain. The third building period relates to the rebuildings to both ends of the hall block, that at the east being a parlour with a large double window on the north side, a fireplace and a door in the gable wall.

History

Brigstock was a royal hunting lodge from the reign of Henry II located in the royal forest of Rockingham. The construction of the moat must relate to the early royal use of the site which continued to 1319 when it was rented out by the king to Duncan de Farendraght, and demised to the tenant in 1332. The 14th century construction may relate to the period after this date but in the reign of Henry VI, 1449, it was leased on a longer term to the Montagu family who presumably initiated the construction of the existing hall. Subsequently the property was sub-let to Sir William Parr in 1516, which would correspond to the architectural evidence for the parlour and the reconstruction of the service end.

BRAUNSTON, 43, High Street (FIG 18) SP541662

The house, now divided into two, comprises an east-west range and a cross wing at the eastern end, presenting a timber framed gable to the High Street.

Description

The main range is of two bays with a half bay at the east end containing a wide cross passage, and doors at front and rear. The first bay of the range from the cross passage contains a large fireplace backing on the cross passage, and is ceiled with 16th or early 17th century deep chamfered cross ceiling beams with stepped ogee chamfer stops. The ceiling joists have simple run-out stops. The dividing wall to the upper bay is also timber framed, and there is a gable fireplace of later date. Beyond there is an outbuilding or dairy at a lower level.

The cross wing is of three bays, and has a timber framed gable carrying single trenched purlins, with struts from tie and collar to the principals. These curiously meet a saddle piece at the apex which carries a square set ridge piece. This demonstrates the cruck tradition origin of much timber framing in Northamptonshire.

On the west elevation there is a two light window with trefoil cusped heads and a short vertical from each arch head to the window head. The thus enlarged spandrils originally contained leaf forms and a dragon in one. The cross wing is continued to the south by a six-bay barn.

The window and the plan of the building are the only features which suggest a date for the construction before the 16th century. The fireplace and ceiling are clearly inserted into an earlier building, although the width it occupies has always been a separate compartment. The single, now blocked, door to the cross wing as at Farthinghoe, probably gave access to the service rooms, and being of three bays, the upper floor probably contained the private rooms to which the surviving window belongs. The fall in the ground at the west end reinforces this suggestion.

This house, which is probably late 15th century in origin, is probably the house of a wealthy farmer, and thus approaches the vernacular level in size represented by the four bay large cruck framed building, Broadlands, nearly opposite on the High Street.

In the north-west parts of Northamptonshire timber framing appears to have been a prominent type of construction in the later medieval period, which was ousted by stone construction in the 17th century. At Yelvertoft for instance, where at least seven timber-framed houses survive, the framed structure of the Old House, School Lane, acquired a stone cross wing in 1687.

History

The manor site lies at the western end of the town in Berry Fields. Bridges describes the site as moated, and where many walls are found. 43 High Street is clearly not the manor and must be the dwelling of a prosperous farmer in this large and wealthy medieval village.

BYFIELD, Cross Tree Farm (FIG 4) SP518533

The sole evidence for a medieval house with open hall is the central cruck frame, spanning 5.6 m (18 ft 4½ in). The blades were raised on stone walls, and have a collar with dropped abutment for the knee braces. On the soffit of this collar a four leaf boss was carved. The heads of the blades were joined with an extended saddle, and a king post mounted on the tie presumably halved over the saddle and carried the ridge, a form of construction noted at Brafield in the 15th century. Butt purlins were windbraced but neither survived.

The significance of this fragment is that although when discovered it was in a cottage of modest social standing, it matched the social level of other houses included in this discussion. Clearly it was a two-bay hall, with a span adequate for a manorial establishment, and with a high quality of finish.

Similar large span cruck framed buildings, but without the obvious sophistication of Byfield, occur elsewhere in the county, e.g. The Hilltop, Wollaston.

EARLS BARTON, Dr Ingram's Surgery, West Street (FIG 4) SP850638

The house lies on the north side of West Street, approximately 150 m west of the church. It is thus arguably a town building and cannot be compared with the other buildings under discussion. However, there is no sign of contraction in the plan to reduce the frontage, thus it is included although the original builder may not have been of gentry status.

Description

The house consists of four bays set parallel and slightly back from the road on an east-west axis. It is of stone construction but no features survive to confirm that the present walling is of medieval date although the east gable and north return with a

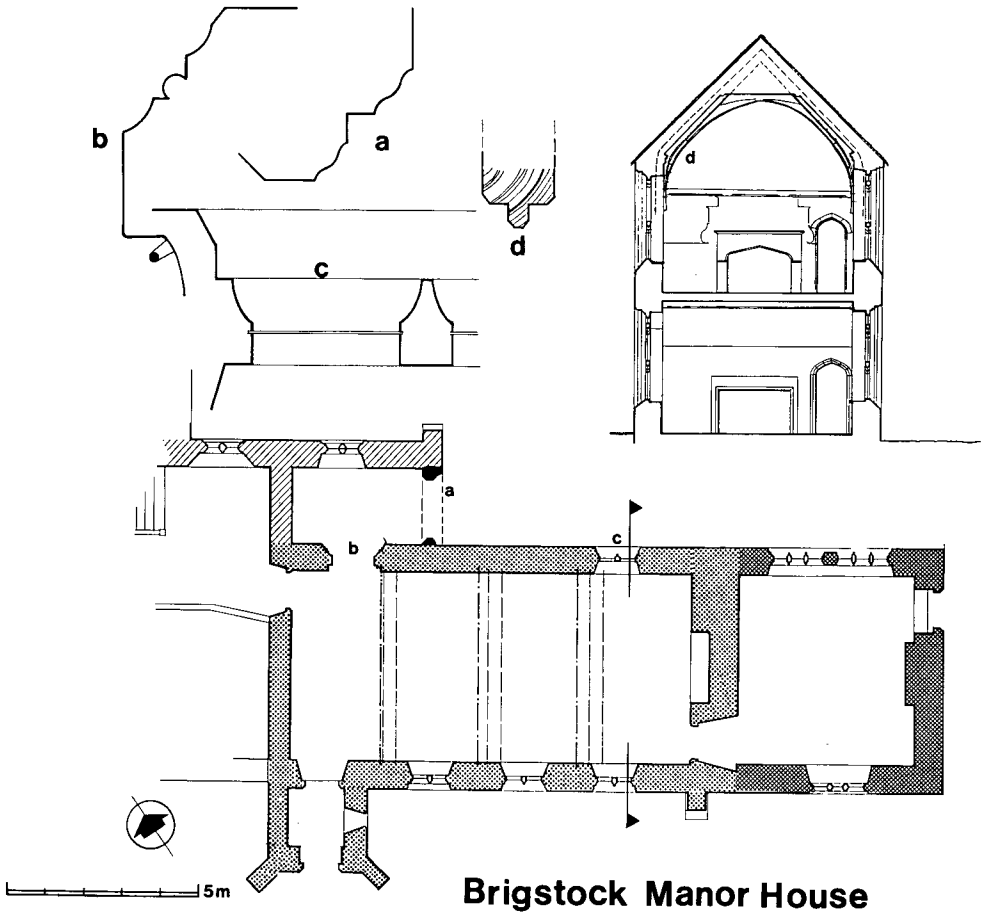


Fig 5 Brigstock; the Manor House.

plinth appear to be the earliest build. It is probable that the walls are in fact contemporary with the roof structure and have been refaced externally and all openings adjusted. The now missing datestone of 1628 probably relates to this refurbishing.

The two central bays have an open central truss thus forming a hall chamber 5.4 m (17 ft 9 in) in span. There is a door at the west end on the south side which may occupy the original entry position. The west bay is 4.1 m long (13 ft 5 in) and the eastern bay 4.06 m (13 ft 4 in). At first floor level in this east bay there is an additional narrow bay at first floor level divided off by a stud and daub partition with smoke encrustation on the inner face. This is interpreted as a smoke bay.

The central truss of the hall carries two purlins in the clasped position, the lower collar straight and the upper cambered and strutted from below. There are curved windbraces to the upper purlins. Chamfered knee braces extend the full width of the lower collar, forming a remarkably flat arch. A gusset piece continues the line down to wall corbels one of which is present being of stepped form simply chamfered.

There is no smoke staining on the roof timbers of the hall.

Problems

The suggested interpretation of this house is that the service end was at the west of the hall, and the parlour with solar over at the east. This is based on the position of the present door, door positions being rarely changed, and the existence of a smoke bay at the upper end which presumably served a private room rather than a service room. An alternative explanation is that the hall continued to the east end of the building and the fireplace served the dais end of the hall, as there is no evidence for another early fire. This solution would, however, produce an abnormally large hall for a 15th century building.

In the 17th century or later, fireplaces and stacks were inserted in the eastern end of the hall, and in the upper room at the western end.

Date

Clasped purlins are frequent in much 15th century timber construction in the midlands. The treatment of the knee braces and the insertion of the gusset pieces appears at other 15th century houses at Brigstock and Farthinghoe, and although this house by comparison seems more devolved, it is probably safe to conclude that the basic structure and roof construction belong to the 15th century.

EYDON, Rectory Farm, School Lane. SP542501

Description (FIG 18)

A two light trefoil headed window, now blocked, survives in a building lying parallel and adjacent to the lane. The window appears to be in its original position in an area of walling built off offset footings at ground level and can be defined by walling of different character without offset courses on both sides and above; thus no other early features can be expected.

A consideration of the plan suggests that the area of medieval walling probably formed part of the original house which was relegated to form outbuildings when the T-shaped present house was built adjoining on the south side in the later 17th century. Subsequently the early building was extended west to enclose the farmyard.

The window is somewhat elongated for a normal domestic light, but is not sufficiently high to be conclusive that it belonged to an open hall.

History

Early in the medieval period the living of Eydon was appropriated to St Mary de Pratis in Leicester. In 1291 the incumbent was granted 12 marks, a not insubstantial sum suggesting a degree of local prosperity. There were also two manors. In 1410 one was held of the king by John, Earl of Somerset. The name of the property, Rectory Farm, is the only and insufficient evidence to tie the house to being a priests house.

FARTHINGHOE, Abbey Lodge SP535398

Abbey Lodge lies immediately west of the parish church, on the north side of the village. It is set back from the road and faces due south. There is a cross wing at the eastern end and various agricultural buildings are attached on the north side.

The village stands on the edge of the Banbury region as defined by Wood Jones, and the house is briefly described in that work (25).

Description (FIG 6)

The main east-west range consists of four bays, the cross passage entry being in the second bay from the west, the third and fourth bays comprising the hall. The cross wing is a separate structure also of stone and has three bays. Below the cross passage a single door gives access to the former kitchen in the first and second bays.

The earliest work is identifiable in the roof structure. The central open truss of the hall has an arched braced collar, strutted to a second collar above. It has dropped abutments and carries the mouldings which extend down the knee braces to the corbels of stone. The lower section is, as at Blakesley and Brigstock, continued by additional sections or gusset pieces morticed and pegged to the principal rafters.

A closed truss divides the hall from the lower bay which contains the cross passage. The roof timbers of the hall are heavily soot encrusted, indicating that an open hearth preceded the present fireplace.

Apparently contemporary with the hall roof is that of the cross wing, also formed with double purlins and windbraced at both levels. The two trusses separating the three bays are open suggesting that the upper chamber was originally open for its full length.

Although it must be assumed that the external walls of Abbey Lodge are original, no openings of medieval character survive. On the basis of other examples this first phase is dated to the 15th century.

The second identifiable phase may be attributable to the date 1581 which appears on a Victorian stone, credibly a replacement, over the main south door. At this period the hall was apparently floored over, the supporting beams being carried on corbels, one having been pillaged from the roof truss, and concomitantly a fine carved and moulded stone fireplace inserted to back on to the cross passage, of distinct mid-Elizabethan character, and on its north side, a newel stair to the new first floor chamber. It is also probable that the cross wing was subdivided on the ground floor at this period, to provide a south facing parlour, a dairy and a pantry. It is assumed that the lower western room then took on its kitchen function, although its fireplace and stack seem to be a later introduction.

From ovolo moulded windows on the first floor, a third phase may be anticipated, and Bridges describes the house as being greatly out of repair in the early 18th century (26). It was still very dilapidated when described by Baker a hundred years later (27).

It may clearly be identified as the manor house of Farthinghoe.

History

Of the relevant period is a fine levied between William Gresham and other in fee simple, to John Moreton, clerk, in 1446, and later another fine in 1493 between Richard Empson and other and Mary Middleton, in fee to the said Richard. By 1503 John Mauntell died in possession of the manor which he held of the Earl of Derby by fealty and the annual payment of sixpence. His apparent successor, another John Mauntel, was convicted of felony in 1547 and his lands seized for the Crown. Abbey Lodge was probably occupied by a tenant of Richard Empson.

GREAT OAKLEY SP868857

Description (FIG 18)

A small two light trefoil headed window appears in the gable wall of No 18 Brook Road. It is set deep into the wall under a timber lintel and does not appear to be in its original position. It is claimed that the window was brought to Great Oakley from the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey at Pipewell, three miles distant. Whereas this is by no means improbable, there is no reason why this window could not be domestic in origin and belong in the village of Great Oakley. Bridges (28) records a very old structure 'now gone to decay' near the church, and between the church and manor another ruinous building called 'the chapel' and notes that there were here none of the usual signs of religious use. It seems more probable that the window originally came from one of these properties.

HARDWICK, The Manor House SP852698

General description (FIG 7)

The Manor House lies close to the south-east side of the

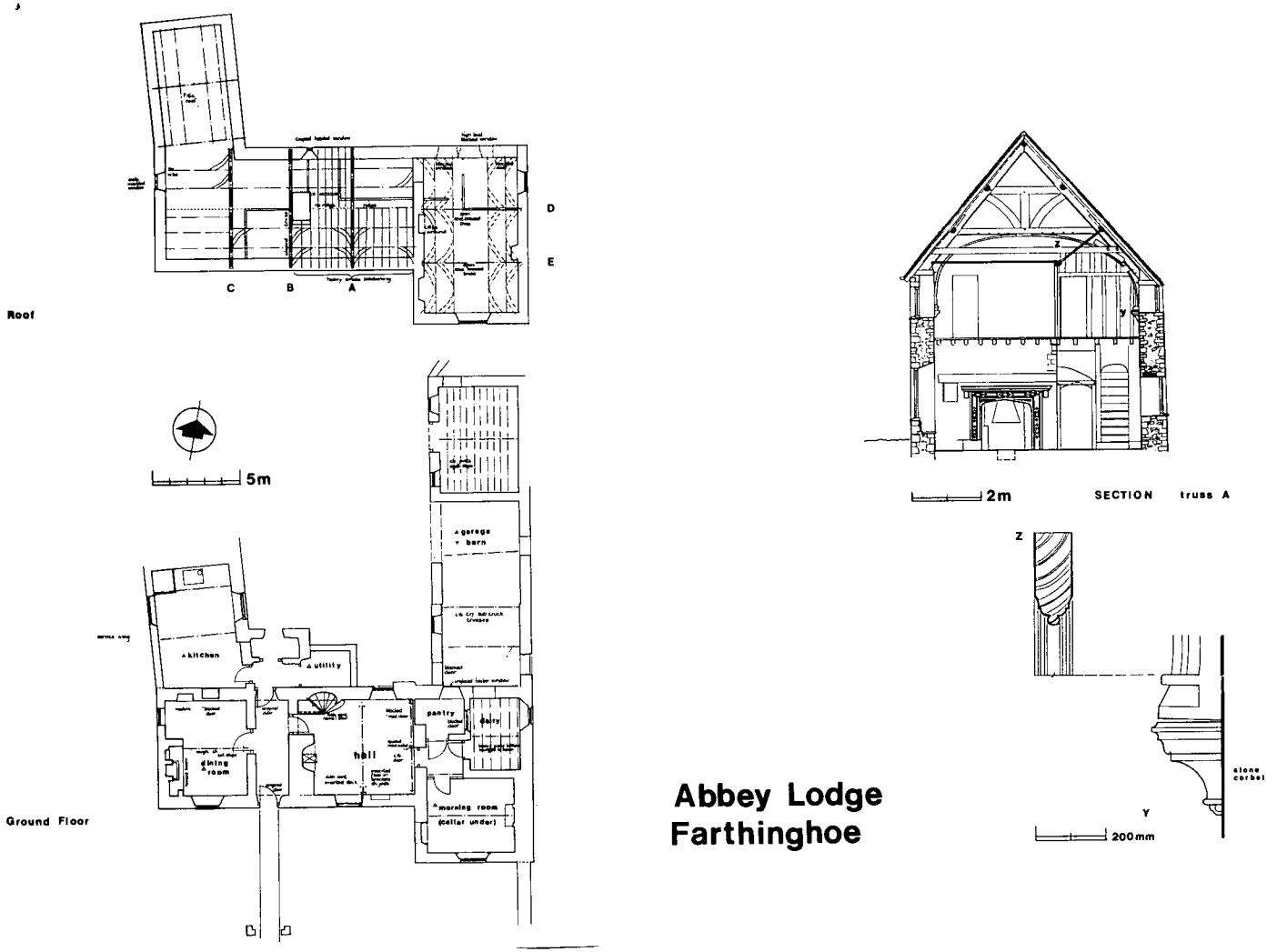


Fig 6 **Farthinghoe; Abbey Lodge.**

parish church. It comprises a main range and cross wing, the latter being of three storeys. A number of single-storey extensions have been added to the south and east sides in Victorian and modern times.

Detailed description

The medieval work can be most clearly identified externally. It is apparently confined to the north end of the cross wing extending through all three storeys, and the north wall of the main range, although here the medieval work can only be tentatively identified by the ashlar quoins to the gable and central window. The cross wing gable has, by contrast, medieval buttresses to the ground floor level, and a blocked window with moulded jambs and square head, partly removed by the 16th century alterations at first floor level. On medieval precedent, the main range would normally contain the hall, and the cross wing the service rooms with the solar in the first floor position as represented by the blocked window. Internally the main range has an inserted fireplace at the east gable end. The roof over the main range is inaccessible. In the last quarter of the 16th century the building was considerably remodelled and three-storey bow windows inserted on both west and south elevations of the cross wing.

Problems

The problems of interpretation at Hardwick concern the main range for it is uncommonly smaller than medieval parallels. It appears from the narrower south wall (ignoring the recent extensions) that the medieval hall, if such it is, was completely destroyed, leaving only the north wall, and the replacement built much narrower. The disposition of the buttresses on the north gable of the cross wing also requires some explanation. The corner buttress has been considerably reinforced, probably in the 16th century, but the curious central buttress, small and out of square, still remains unexplained. On the first floor, the spacing of the window suggests that the medieval arrangement necessitated two square headed lights, and that this room was a main daily living room.

The attic window, the only second storey medieval window in the county, appears to be in its original position and provides a date approximately mid-14th century. This room must have provided living accommodation. The later alterations can be dated to post 1574-6. An inscription on the south gable wall to the side of the entrance claims that the house was repaired in 1775 and restored 1887. To this last date may be attributed the building of the parlour at the east end.

History (30)

The church of Hardwick, originally bestowed on St Andrew's Priory, Northampton, was conveyed to the Knights Templars in 1199. By 1250 it, together with the manor, was conveyed to Henry de Seymour as a tenant of William Grimbaud, who himself held the fee of John de Hastings. The property returned to Grimbaud in 1325 but this may have been no more than a formality for it was again held by the Seymours as sub-tenants, notably John de Seymour between 1329 and his death in 1340. The Seymours apparently occupied the manor until the second half of the 14th century when the Manor, with 5½ virgates in demesne of 26 acres was forfeit to the crown. At this time Bridges mentions the property consisting of the manor, township and a large grange and garden, the latter being conveyed separately by John de Seymour at the door of his manor in 1349 (29). In 1410 the property passed to the Greens' of Greens Norton by their marriage into the Seymour family.

Thomas Nicholls bought the property from the Greens of Drayton in 1567 who apparently soon initiated the major rebuilding, for his arms appear over the great fireplace in the solar and on the external bow window, although he died shortly after and the work was probably carried through by his father, William Nicholls who died in 1596 aged 96.

John, Lord Maudaunt, succeeded to the property in 1608 and in 1628 was created Earl of Peterborough. An estate map of ?1587 illustrates a complex house with a fine adjoining knot garden.

HARRINGWORTH, Nos 50 and 51, Manor Cottages SP918975

The remains of medieval date at Harringworth comprise a fragment of medieval walling incorporated into a later cottage lying east-north-east of the church. A water feature on the north side of the cottages is interpreted as fishponds. Although it doubtless served this purpose it may well also be part of the original moat, fed by a channel from the River Welland, a few metres further north.

Description (FIG 18)

The main south elevation of cottage No 50 is constructed of well coursed limestone divided horizontally at first floor level by a simple string course. The ground floor has a central window with chamfered jambs and a deep splayed head. This appears to be a medieval window much altered and reset in the wall, as evidenced by the change in masonry around the opening. Immediately over the string there is a two light ogee headed window under a hollow moulded label, the lower section of the window being blank (31). This work relates to the coursing of the wall suggesting it is in its original position. The ashlar walling stops at a vertical joint 950 mm from the west corner of the cottage, and to the east of the window, ends at a ragged joint to rubble stonework. The west gable of the cottage displays evidence of much alteration and rebuilding. There is also a vented chimney cap reset on the old forge in the centre of the village.

It is clear from early illustrations that the surviving wall is a fragment of a cross wing of a much more extensive medieval building on the site. Leland provides a description of the building in the first half of the 16th century (32): 'Right goodly manor place by the paroche chyrch of this village, buildid castelle like, the first court whereof is clene doune, saving that a greate peace of the gate house and the front of the waulle by it yet standith. The inner parte of this place is meately welle maintainid, and hath a diche aboute it. The waulles of this ynner courte be in sum places imbattelid. And withyn this courte is a fiare chapelle, in the bodie whereof lyith one of the Souches byried, and a greate flat stone over hym. There is a parke by this manor place and a fair lodge in it. I hard say, that this place hath bene long time in the Souche's handes and that they have countid it for one of their chefest howses'. Leland clearly saw the surviving fragment, but which piece it is cannot be recognised with any accuracy. The chapel was recorded by Bridges in the early 18th century as being 58 ft by 24 ft 6 in in size.

The window may be dated to the early-to-mid 14th century. The chimney head is of similar date and no doubt came from the Zouche manor.

History

The property was acquired by the Zouches by marriage in 1279 when Endo la Zouche married Millicent de Montalt, relict of the seneschal of Chester. William la Zouche was confirmed

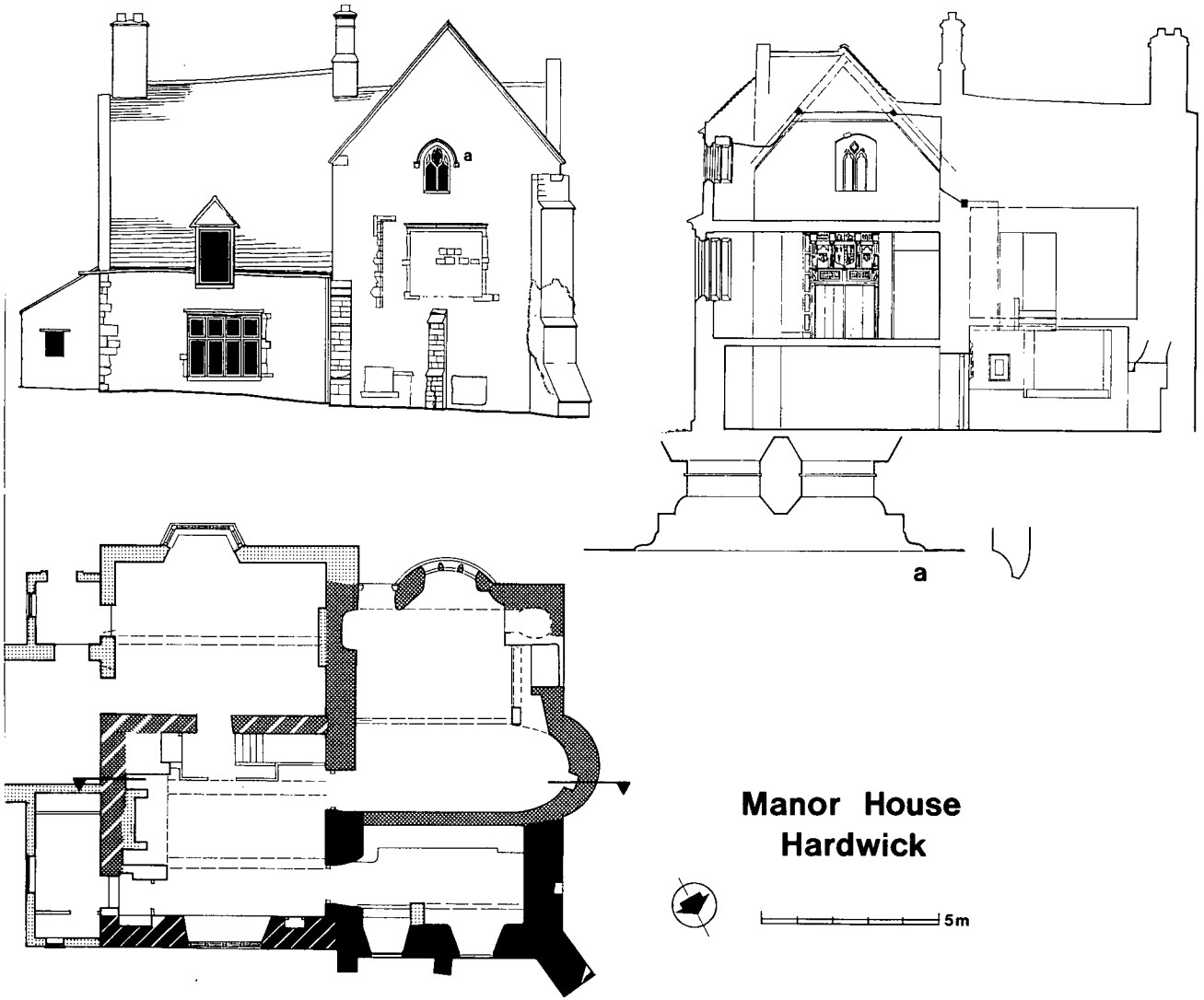


Fig 7 Hardwick; the Manor House.

Lord of Harringworth in 1316, he holding the property of the honour of Huntingdon, at which time he was building up his estate and park. In 1353 the estate passes to his son, who ten years later obtains a licence to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The surviving building was probably erected by this time. A licence to crenellate was granted in 1387 and no doubt further extensive work followed. The property continued with the la Zouches until John la Zouche was attainted after Bosworth in 1485 and the property sold out of the family in the late 16th century.

One of the Zouches still occasionally appears in cottage No 51.

HAVERSHAM, The Grange SP832432

The house lies at the north-east end of the village of Haversham, on the left bank of the river Great Ouse, just in Buckinghamshire. The church lies in the centre of the old village, ½ km distant. The house comprises a main range north-east to south-west, and a cross wing at the western end. A square dovecote 3 m x 3.3 m internally with 450 nesting holes and a roof lantern formerly existed on the west side of the cross wing, its ruins being visible in 1956. The house is included here as it is a stone building of Northamptonshire type.

Description (FIG 8)

The main range contains the original medieval hall, now measuring 7.3 m (24 ft 0 in) x 5.9 m span (19 ft 4½ in) with the cross passage at the western end. The north door has a moulded two centred head and hood mould, its opposite doorway is now replaced with a window. The hall has an original two light window with transome, the upper lights trefoiled with a quatrefoil in the head, and is now blocked at the upper level. Opposite on the north wall the window has been built up externally leaving at least the masonry of the head visible internally. The mouldings of the door may be attributed to the 13th to early 14th century, the simple chamfered window jambs are similar to those at Shutlanger. These two windows light the first bay of the hall. The second bay now has no surviving medieval windows, so if it is an end hall, lighting of the upper end may have been achieved through the gable. There are however some quoins on the north side in such a position as to relate to a second window later adapted by inserting a timber lintel to serve the ground floor room only.

The centre truss of the hall survives as a spectacular example of medieval carpentry. It is centred 4.5 m from the end cross passage wall and, assuming it to be central to the space it served, the gable wall is thus shown as rebuilt shortening the hall from an original length of 9 m internally. If, on the other hand, the hall was of two and a half bays (the half being the cross passage) then the truss is central to the surviving walls. The bays would, however, be rather narrow and the construction favours the former explanation. The truss is of raised cruck construction, although the extent to which the feet pass lower than first floor level cannot be ascertained.

The blades terminate in an extended saddle, and below a cambered collar at purlin level. From this a king post rises which halves over the saddle and meets the square set ridge. This form of king post construction has been met elsewhere in the county, both in true cruck construction at a house in Church Lane, Blakesley, and in later medieval construction where crucks are no longer employed as in the Monks House, Brafield (FIG 4) (33). It clearly enables greater spans to be achieved with the timbers to hand, while constructing a rigid framework. The collar has dropped centre abutments for the knee braces, and a small chamfer is carried through stopping at the stepping in of the braces on the blades. On the upper side this termination of the chamfer has a small elaboration on the upper hall bay side only. There are long curved windbraces to the single purlins.

The cross passage contains two two-centred doors, without hood moulds but with radial relieving arches. The mouldings are similar to the external door. The two doors are not axial but are set slightly to the north of centre, allowing space for a third door in the south-west corner of the passage. This door, by aggressive contrast, is constructed in heavy timber derns, tenoned into a timber lintel. The simple unchamfered two-centred arch terminates in an ogee in the lintel. The frame is set in a constructed rebate in the wall, and bears rushlight burns on the passage face. The fact that the stone doors are asymmetrical to allow for a third door suggests that, despite the extreme contrast, they are indeed contemporary.

The cross wing is of four bays and present sub-divisions are of recent origin. The roof structure is of 17th century character, a date supported by a small stone window on the east face of the south projection, although the head of the window has been altered. The remainder of the openings are of indeterminate date although there is a blocked door almost opposite the timber passage door. A later Victorian chimney stack is a major feature externally. The wall thicknesses suggest that north and south gable walls were originally medieval but it seems likely that the wing was almost totally rebuilt in the 17th century.

The alterations to the hall consist of the insertion of the major stack backing on to the cross passage and no doubt the contemporary insertion of the floor and the building up of the north gable to light the upper chamber. The position of this gable probably betokens the position of the original hall window. Also contemporary is the end gable wall of the hall with similar kneelers and raised raked parapet. This is the likely period when the hall was curtailed in length.

On the south side of the hall an agricultural building was added in 1628, the date set in the south gable. The connection of this building to the house and its conversion to living accommodation is of recent date.

History

It has been noted that this house stands apart from the church and village centre, where a moat still survives. This moat probably represents the early manor house of Haversham. In 1325 John de Haveresham, chaplain, obtained a licence for the alienation in mortmain of twelve acres of land in Haversham to the Abbot and convent of St Mary and St John in Lavendon (34). This was a small house of Premonstratensian canons which had acquired land in Haversham in the early 13th century as part of Salcey forest, and after 1257 had been permitted to clear and cultivate it (35). The additional twelve acres granted in 1325 was in aid of the maintenance of a chaplain to perform the divine services at the Abbey. The increment from twenty four to thirty six acres under cultivation would probably have demanded a farm or grange on site if one had not already been built. In 1423 there is a record of a grant of maintenance for seven priests to have easement at Hornes Place, which has been identified with Corn Close adjacent to the present house (36). A grange was certainly in existence in 1476 when the Abbot of Lavendon paid annually one pound of pepper to the lord of the manor of Haversham (37).

IRCHESTER, No 77, High Street, Lower End: Rectory Farm, formerly Old Rectory House SP926660

Description (FIG 17)

The house lies on the south side of the church and parallel to

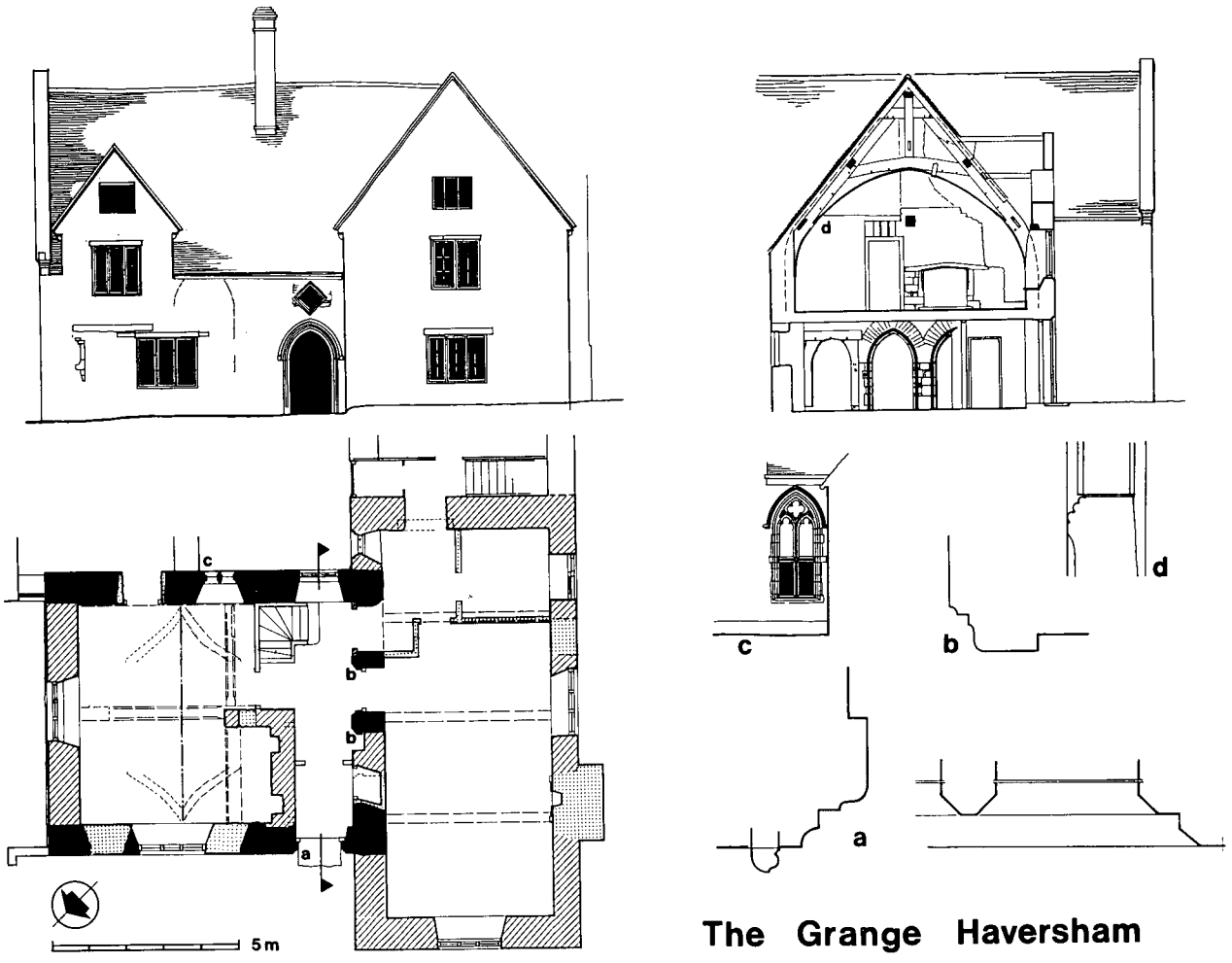


Fig 8 Haversham; the Grange.

the main north-south street. It is now a large three-bay mid-18th century house with end stacks and ironstone quoins, re-fronting a 17th century building.

The evidence for a medieval house lies in the north gable, where there is a large blocked window with ogee head and hood mould, with hollow chamfer jambs and a sill height approximately 4 m above internal floor level. The tracery has apparently been removed in the 17th century and a smaller window formed, which itself was taken out and blocked at a subsequent period of alteration. There is sufficient evidence remaining to show that the tracery had two lights and a quatrefoil in the head, indicative of a 1300-1350 date. The internal span of the building is 6.5 m, that is wider than other parallel examples in the county.

The fire window and other openings in the gable are of the 17th century and later dates.

Problems and history

The problem with Irchester is whether the building is, as tradition holds, the rectory. Although the rectory and advowson were originally a gift to the Priory of Lenton (38), they were successfully claimed back by the Countess of Derby in 1268 and remained the gift of the lords of the manor to 1330. At this date Henry, Earl of Leicester, made them part of the endowment of his hospital in Leicester and it remained in the possession of this establishment, refounded as the College of Newark, until it is recorded as being in the spiritualities of the College in 1535. The manor, on the other hand, was with Sir William Lovel until successfully sued by Elizabeth de Pabenham in 1343, and in 1345 it was taken into the king's hands during the minority of the heir of Thomas de Pabenham. The manor stayed with this family to the end of the 14th century.

Although the window position suggests that it lights the solar room of the house, the width of the building is probably governed by the original hall in the same range. The indications are that the scale of the building is more appropriate to a manor house than to a rectory, thus the surviving window may be the work of Sir William Lovel before he lost the property.

LOWICK, Drayton House (FIG 9) SP963800

The medieval work at Drayton is confined to the great hall and cross wing at the upper end. It is a major house, and the hall is the largest to survive in the county, measuring 15.9 m long (52 ft 2 in) by 9.6 m (31 ft 6 in) span. It is of three bays, the lower bay divided to form a remarkably narrow end compartment, 2.1 m (6 ft 10 in) wide. The hall was remodelled twice, once in the mid 17th century, the date being deduced from the construction, and again after 1700 when Thomas Talman added his fine baroque façade. Despite the great windows on the south side, the two side walls and the upper end wall of the early house survive, together with the fine 14th century roof. The parlour at the upper end is raised on a vaulted undercroft, but has been cloaked in later refacings and the extent of surviving medieval work cannot be ascertained.

The undercroft is entered from the hall by a simple two-centred chamfered doorway in the corner of the end wall of the hall. Directly opposite there is a similar opening leading to further accommodation to the east, now replaced. Other openings in the undercroft are of more recent date. The architectural details confirm an early 14th century date, the chamfered ribs being comparable to 'la Cave' cellar at the royal palace at Kings Langley (24), dated 1291-2, and rather broader than those of the porch at Shutlanger. Access to the room above is assumed to be through an oriel bay on the north side of the hall, where a later stair is now situated.

A trefoil headed cusped window, with its hood moulding removed, survives on the external face of the north wall, apparently positioned to light a gallery over the cross passage.

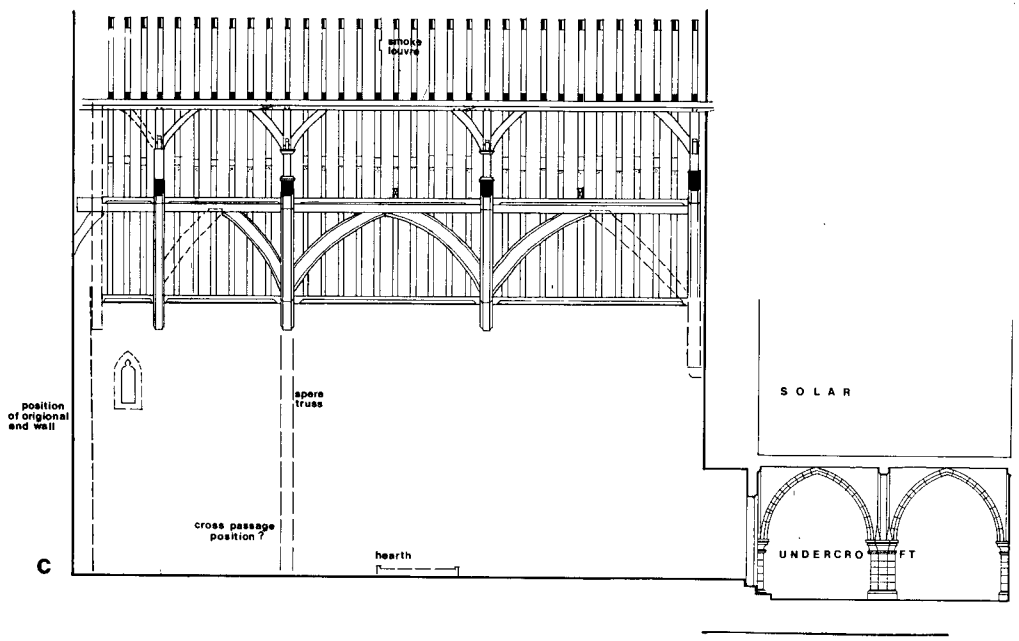
The hall roof consists of two major bays 5.2 m (17 ft) wide with a central open truss supported on short principals as at Yardley Hastings, Shutlanger, Medbourne and Nevill Holt. The spere posts have been cut off in the seventeenth century to insert the plaster vaulted ceiling. The spere truss carries an unmoulded short crown post, and has a parallel strut open notched to the arcade tie, and stop lapped to the posts. The central truss (FIG 9) comprises spur ties at the head of the principals which carry the arcade plates. These spurs meet hollow moulded arch braces to the upper arcade ties, but the precise nature of the spur-to-brace relationship cannot be resolved. The upper roof consists of cornice plates with ovolo mouldings swept out at the ends where the plates are tenoned into the upper arcade ties. These cornice plates carry curved ashlars which are nailed at their upper end to the rafters, and arch braces continue the arch to the collars, which are in turn supported on collar purlins. Two collar purlins are present, the lower much more smoke blackened than the upper suggesting medieval repair as the original lower one shows some distress at the gable wall. There is no other sign of refabrication and the 17th century roof repairs do not bear smoke soot. The collar purlins are supported on short square crown posts with simply chamfered square capitals and bases with their corners removed. The posts carry mortices for four slightly curved braces, only the longitudinal ones having been inserted.

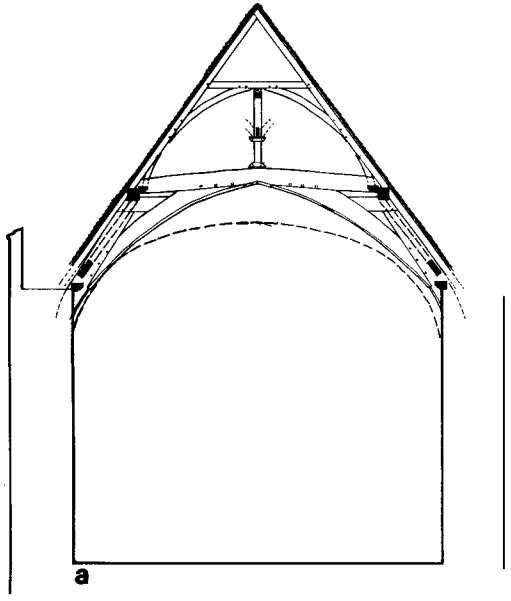
The gable truss is similar to the spere truss and the support for the posts cannot be seen but is presumed to be on wall corbels hidden behind the later hall refacings. Behind the arch braces parallel straight struts are open notch lapped to the arcade tie, and are face trenched through the posts, ending on what appear to be spur ties at wall plate level. These timbers, and the nature of the joints seem to be survivals of 12th or 13th century carpentry techniques. The wall plates, like the cornice plates bear an ovolo moulding, swept out. The third bay at the lower end of the hall is divided unequally with a further truss. The reason for this unequal division is not clear, and because of the narrowness of the end sub-bay it is suggested that the original cross passage was adjacent to the spere truss. The narrowness of the end division clearly caused problems in the 17th century conversion, and the hall was lengthened by approximately 70 cm and the original gable truss removed. The enormous labour involved, particularly if contemporary with the removal of the spere posts, hardly seems merited by the gain in space, and was probably instrumental to the distortion appearing in the early work. This probably also brought about the complete overhaul and strengthening which took place probably in the mid century, when most timbers were plated with heavy ovolo moulded timbers and two intermediate trusses inserted. This work prevents a clear view of many details of the original roof.

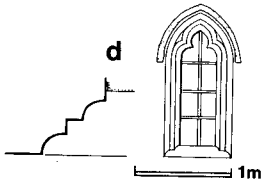
Two vertical trenches, approximately 1.0 m apart at the apex of the rafters of the central bay is taken to be evidence of the position of the original louvre.

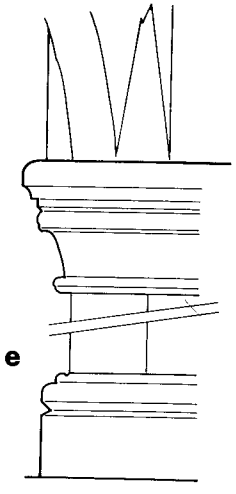
History and comment

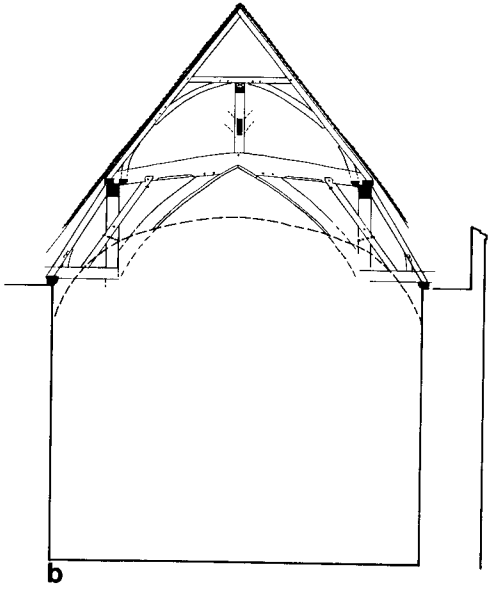
It has been claimed that at least part of the structure existing at Drayton is earlier than the licence to crenellate granted to Simon de Drayton in 1328. Whereas the details of the undercroft, and certain constructional details described in the roof could belong to the last quarter of the 13th century, these could well be merely conservative detailing, and the general approach to the design of the roof is technically more advanced than the other short principal roofs in Northamptonshire with the exception of Yardley. In particular the long arched braces

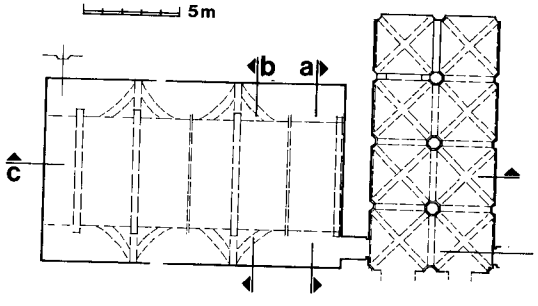












Drayton House Lowick

Fig 9 Lowick; Drayton House.

to the arcade plates are curved but have not developed the full width and thin section of the medieval windbrace, the function that these braces are now performing. Their derivation from angle braces of the arcade can thus still be seen, as at Shutlanger. Thus a date of 1325-1330 is acceptable for the whole structure, the licence being granted when the work was well advanced. The strengthening of the roof is probably the work of John, fifth Lord Maudant and first Earl of Peterborough, at Drayton 1598-1643. His successor, Henry, second Earl, inserted the ceiling in the hall, and by 1653 was sufficiently alert to fashion to employ John Webb to design and build a fireplace. The modifications to the medieval roof which still left it open to the ground are not the work of such a man.

MAIDFORD, The Manor House SP609525

Description (FIG 17)

The Manor House lies adjacent to the church and presents a gable end to the main road containing, at first floor level, a blocked large window with hollow chamfers and a hood mould. There is no evidence for the form of the tracery although the window was undoubtedly of two lights. The building has been much remodelled in the 17th century. The internal width of the building is estimated at approximately 5 m.

This is another example of the raised gable window which probably represents the solar end or cross wing of the 15th century manor house.

History

The lord of the manor of Maidford in 1316 was Robert Kyme. A century later Robert de Holland held the Knights fee of the Duke of Bridgewater and by 1455 this had come to William, Lord Lovell, the immediate possession being in the hands of a William Trist. The Duke of Bridgewater held court Leet and Baron from time to time at his manor in Maidford. The presentation of the rectory also lay with the manor.

NASSINGTON, The Prebendal Manor House TL 063962

The prebendal Manor House at Nassington lies about 100 m south-west of the church, and has a long axis due north-south. The house is the earliest standing dwelling in Northamptonshire and has already been discussed by various scholars (39), the most recent survey having been carried out by investigators of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments together with the writer. The commentary which follows is based on this last survey, which will be published in greater detail by the RCHM in due course.

Description (FIG 10)

The early house consists of a hall, approximately 11.35 m (37 ft 3 in) by 7.5 m (24 ft 7 in) span. It is divided into two and a half bays, the half bay containing the cross passage at the southern end. Original features are the west door, round headed with hood mould and animal mask head stops, and the two windows on the same side, also with round heads but now with later tracery, one recently restored.

Attached as a separate block on the north end is the parlour block, reduced to 6 m span and of indeterminate length, which was demolished *c* 1800. Access from the hall to this chamber was through a door in the north-east corner of the hall. At the opposite corner another door of early date with chamfered jambs now opens externally. It may have originally have done so but could also have led to another cell. The parlour room has a door on the west side which opens to the same position. The evidence for this door remains on the gable end of the present building.

The service room for the 13th century house lay at the south end. This appears to be a separate block narrower than the hall, measuring 7.5 m by 4.9 m span. Access was from a central door in the cross passage. There is no dating evidence for this structure and as the junctions with the main hall have been obscured and altered in the 17th century, it is assumed to be contemporary with the early house.

The date for the early work is provided by the transitional nature of the architectural features, and is placed early in the 13th century.

The house was considerably modernised in the 15th century, 1434 being a date recorded for a major reconstruction. Dating evidence is provided by the slender cusped tracery of the windows, and by the new roof comprising double purlins, and knee braces to the collar. The presumed early open fireplace was apparently replaced by a stone fireplace with timber lintel in the north gable, where it may also have served the parlour, and a bay or oriel window was constructed on the west side opposite the high table, with a squint looking towards the front east door. Also at this time the presumed screening of the cross passage was replaced with a masonry dividing wall with two openings, and the enclosed cross passage ceiled over to provide a plaster floor to a gallery open to the hall. The cross passage door to the east was also replaced.

A third period of alteration may be identified at the end of the medieval period, 1574 being a further date recorded for major works. This is an extension of the service bay to the west to form a cross wing. Access is from a segmental headed door at the western end of the cross passage, and the build is divided to provide one room and two narrow spaces of unknown function, one probably a stair to store rooms above. The entrance porch on the east side was probably constructed at this time as like the cross wing, it incorporates sculpture of an earlier period. The house was further altered in the 17th century by the insertion of a new stack and floor in the hall, subdividing it, and by further divisions in the early service wing.

Unexplained details of the early phase are the relationship of the service wing to the main hall, obscured by the insertion of a 17th century fireplace and window, and the buttressing of the hall, which does not relate to any roof structure. It is possible that the east buttress was rebuilt in the 15th century when the bay window was inserted.

Comment

This house differs from most in that the essential functions are housed in separate builds. This approach possibly reflects at a great distance the Anglo-Saxon preference for separate structures, which might be identified again in the county at Rectory Farm, Woodford.

History

Nassington is a place of early significance. It was a royal vill under Canute (40), who passed through *c* 995, and there is Anglo-Saxon sculpture in the church. The prebend of Lincoln was endowed with estates here in the early 12th century (41), and the house was constructed about a century later, perhaps immediately prior to William of Avalon holding the prebend. The house continued to be held as a prebendary manor until the 19th century, thus the modifications noted must reflect the needs of a lay clergy house throughout the Middle Ages.

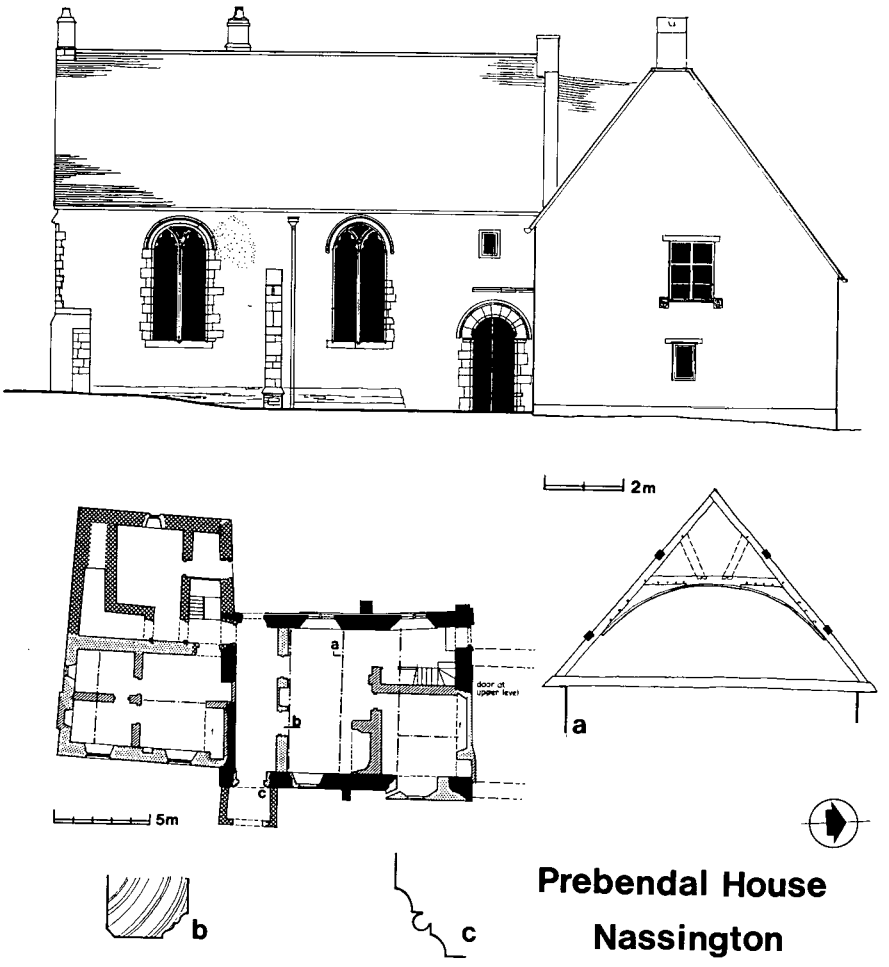


Fig 10 Nassington; the Prebendal Manor House.

NEWNHAM, Church Farm SP 580596

This house contains the remains of a substantial early medieval hall house, radically remodelled in the 17th century.

Description (FIG 11)

The surviving medieval work comprises the roof structure of a two bay open hall, measuring, as near as can now be ascertained, 7.130 m span (23 ft 6 in) and 12.680 m (41 ft 6 in) long, the open central truss being approximately 6.340 m (20 ft 9 in) to the apex of the arch. The second, eastern bay, has been considerably cut back with the insertion of a later stack.

The timber framing of the surviving bay is of considerable interest, for Church Farm still remains the only known clear example of base cruck construction in the county. The truss survives complete to approximately 750 mm below first floor ceiling level, where the blades have been crudely cut off, and the superimposed roof, of uniform scantling type with a crown post, survives practically intact including the rafters themselves on the northern side.

The base crucks themselves, slightly tapered from 460 mm to 400 mm, are slightly curved as they approach the attic floor level, thus clearly defining the structure as a base cruck form as opposed to the angled short principal roofs known elsewhere in the county. The arched form of the blades is carried upwards by knee braces, finishing at a pointed apex cut deeply into the soffit of the heavy collar (360 mm x 160 mm). The whole of the arch is chamfered on both lower arrises. Curved windbraces rise from the cruck blades to the arcade plates (200 x 200) seated on the collar. There is no haunching of the members at the joints. The relationship of the cruck blades to the walls cannot now be determined, as the external walls have either been rebuilt or refaced, but their position is such that they must have been seated in a raised relationship to the walls. It is just possible, but unlikely, that the external walls were originally of timber, and later rebuilt in stone at a slightly reduced span. A blind mortice in the face of the blades at wall plate level is probably for a butting wallplate, thus the balance is in favour of original stone walls, 850 mm thick, later reduced in thickness when rebuilt.

The superimposed truss is of a type frequently associated with base crucks, the crown post with collar purlin roof. Here, however, the upper truss is entirely self contained with its own tie beams, a feature noted for instance at Rectory Farm, Grafton Flyford (42), Worcestershire and which should be typologically early in the development of the base-cruck structural system. The tie beam of this upper truss is secured by shoulder entry lap dovetails, and carries at centre span a short wide crown post, 260 mm x 160 mm, devoid of enrichment, and reduced and tenoned into a collar purlin at its head. The crown post is braced with curved braces to the collar purlin, and strutted to the collar with straight rectangular struts, 100 mm x 85 mm. The collar purlin supports collars to each rafter couple which are halved at their apex, there being nine couples to the bay. Horizontally, the upper trusses are connected by longitudinal cornice plates tenoned into the tie beams at each end. Both ties and plates are deeply chamfered with run-out stops, and can be paralleled in the early 14th century roof at Drayton, and outside the county, for example, at Middle Farm, Harwell, Berks (43).

At the western end of the medieval hall the arcade plates are carried on vertical wall posts, probably supported on corbels now invisible within the attic floor structure. These posts have curved braces to the arcade plates and originally had braces to the collar. The small scantling of these posts (180 mm x 200 mm) precludes their being spere posts to ground level, thus confirming that the cross wall was at least, *ab initio,* of stone.

The longitudinal joints of the arcade plates and collar purlin are both stop splayed scarfs with square butts and four face pegs. From the evidence of the square pegs visible on the west face of the centre truss, the erection of the cruck frames proceeded from west to east, the frames being assembled on the ground to the east and pulled upright towards the west. The reverse splay of the collar purlin scarf however suggests that the upper truss was assembled in position, piece by piece, working in the reverse direction. Throughout, the roof timbers are heavily smoke blackened, the soot being noticeably thicker in the eastern part-demolished bay. It also hangs heaviest on the soffits of the timbers.

The only other evidence for the early roof is found in two binders inverted and reused at first floor ceiling level. These, form a lap dovetail and housings for the feet of rafters at 460 mm centres and are clearly arcade plates presumably from the demolished bay.

It is clear that the structure described represents a two bay open hall with an open central fire just within the eastern bay, the position now occupied by the present massive stack. From this position of the fire it might be deduced that the parlour end lay to the east, and the service end beyond the stone wall to the west in the position now occupied by the cross wing. More than this cannot be usefully said. The date of the surviving work cannot be determined from documentary sources. Base cruck construction is usually considered to be found within the period 1300 to 1400, and probably lingering longer in the midlands of England. By parallels with other houses in the country, the cutting of the arch apex into the collar seems characteristic of the first half of the 14th century, although it continues into the 15th century, as at Brigstock Manor. This might be subjectively supported by the lack of decoration coupled with the use of very ample scantlings for all members, also seen elsewhere at this period, and typologically, the relative independence of the two, upper and lower, constructions. On this basis a date 1300 to 1325 is proposed for Church Farm.

In the post medieval period the house was considerably modified in plan, in fact rebuilding would probably be a more accurate term. The reason for this may be due to the deformation of the structure and the failure of the joints on the south side, defects best explained by a failure in the support to the arcade plate in one or other end bay, in all probability that to the east where the land drops away. If such a failure took place, this would explain why the medieval hall was so drastically curtailed at this end. The date of this work cannot be determined, but it seems unlikely that on one hand the open medieval hall would remain unaltered until the later 17th century, and on the other. that a stack of such massive proportions would be built at this later date. As indicated, the major remodelling took place in the 17th century, and probably after the Civil War, the date being deduced from the ovolo window mouldings and the roof construction of the cross wing. The planning behind the 17th century house is of further interest. The cross wing contains two rooms of very nearly the same size with central back-to-back fireplaces, the southern room having, as near central to the dividing wall as possible, a door, now blocked. This door, with a corresponding door opposite into the old hall, forms a cross passage immediately across the face of the major fireplace (not now visible). If this door now became the primary entrance, and there is no other candidate, then this curious arrangement seems to embody the traditional cross passage, and the room therefore may be identified as a reception-hall. The medieval structure, which was also apparently remodelled at the same time whether or not there was an earlier post-medieval rebuild, now became the kitchen-general living room of the house. The northern room in the cross wing is therefore interpreted as a parlour or withdrawing room, as there is no evidence of inferior status as might be expected in, for instance, a dairy.

There was apparently no cellar built at this time, and the position of the stair cannot be determined. A feature not explained is the pair of recesses in the inner wall of the cross wing, one in each of the two rooms. Their height, 1.5 m, precludes their being associated with a stair, so it remains to suggest that they had some function connected with the furnishing of these rooms.

History

The early 16th century was a period of prosperity in Newnham, reflected in the rebuilding of the church, a short distance to the north of Church Farm. For at least two centuries before the abbey of Evesham had owned Newnham and the adjacent manor of Badby, controlling both through the steward at their grange at Badby. It is possible that the house was built as a centre for the manorial business at Newnham, the farming of the demesne, and the residence of the steward's deputy. Its home close stretched south to the Nene, beyond which was the mill and over two hundred acres of the lord's land. So it remained until after the Reformation; the new owners were the Knightleys of Fawsley who leased Newnham to the Thorntons until the latter bought the lordship in 1635. They built a 'hansome seat' just south of the churchyard and must have modernised and developed the farmhouse opposite as a home farm to supply farm produce and malt from the large kiln they built immediately south-east of the house. Church Farm seems always to have been the personal freehold property of the Lord of the Manor, paying only chief rent, and after enlargement by the Thorntons soon after they obtained possession they probably used the property for some of their many relatives recorded as living in the village in the 17th century.

PITSFORD, Corbett Cottage (FIG 18) SP 757679

A very small two light trefoil headed squint window appears in a semi-detached cottage in West Street, Pitsford. The cottage has a double purlin roof parallel with the road and

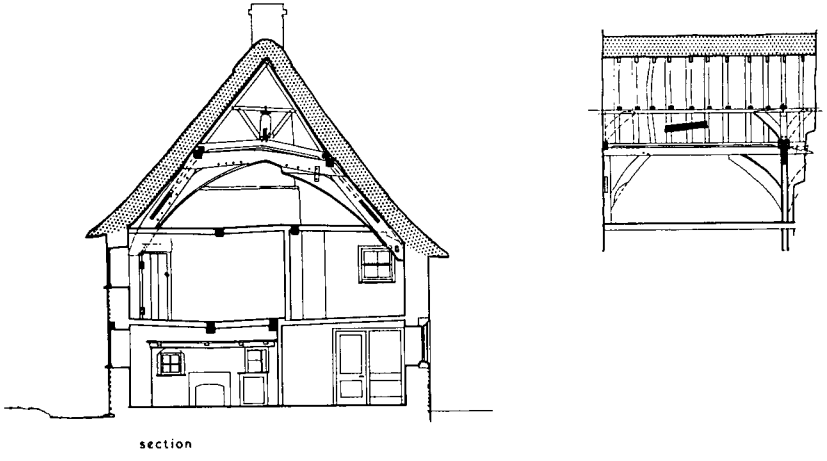


Fig 11 Newnham; Church Farm.

some of the Lias stone masonry of the front wall looks early, and beside the window there are indications of a blocked doorway. The window lights a large fireplace in the same room. The relationship of the window to the cottage layout suggests that it is a post medieval reconstruction.

The rectory of Pitsford was appropriated to St James' convent, Northampton. A vicarage was ordained in 1274. The possibility of this being a priest's house like Easton on the Hill cannot be entirely dismissed.

RAUNDS, The Old Post Office (FIG 18) SP 997726

Another small window of probable 14th century date appears on the north gable of the Old Post Office, High Street, Raunds. This is clearly incorporated in a two bay house of 17th century date, the narrower northern bay having a timber framed division at roof level, and longitudinal binders, one inscribed roughly with the name Thos Brown 1666 on the deep chamfer.

This house apparently had a rear wing at the north end by 1678 where a reset datestone appears on the gable, initialled RR.

The medieval window has a single trefoiled ogee head with mouchettes in the spandrils, all contained within a chamfered opening 600 x 300 mm. It is now blocked and no glazing line can be observed. It is possible that it is a canopied niche and not a window at all.

ROADE, Hyde Farm SP 749514

This house is a good example of the medieval manor, being almost entirely 14th century in origin, the later addition being clearly defined, and with a medieval circular dovecote to the east of the service end, and fishponds in the valley immediately south of the house.

The house has not been as fully surveyed as it deserves due to access being denied on change of ownership.

Description (FIG 12)

The house consists of a two bay hall with an eastern cross passage with a porch on the north side. At the western end there are a further two bays divided by a central arch braced collar beam truss. Below the cross passage, there is a lean-to service compartment 2 m wide for the full width of the house, the original access to which is now not clear.

The hall, 7.3 m x 5.8 m span has a stack inserted backing on to the cross passage which has subsequently gone out of use and been closed on the south side, although evidence for its former existence remains externally. A modern bay window on the north side of the hall, with a dormer window above, replaces the original full height hall window, and a modern window occupies a similar position on the opposite side.

The building was considerably modified in the 17th century with the remodelling of the porch, the insertion of a cellar under the west end of the building, and the building of an almost detached two storey dairy to amplify the clearly inadequate services provision. This now houses the kitchen.

Problems

Hyde Farm raises a number of problems. Firstly it will be noted that, in relation to the hall, the parlour-solar area is unusually large, whilst the service area is significantly small. Lean-to service bays are not unknown elsewhere, but this is the only example to survive in Northamptonshire. Its lack of space for the size of the house, and one may fairly assume some proportional relationship makes it probable that that it contained only one function, the pantry or buttery, the other function and the kitchen being located elsewhere. It is possible that due to the fall in the ground towards the west, the buttery was placed underground here, where greater security could be maintained, and later converted to a cellar.

But the simpler and preferred explanation is that the significance of the greater area of the parlour should be explained by the siting of some service accommodation, probably the pantry here.

At the first floor level in the solar end the arched braced truss chamfered on both faces, seems to have been intended as an open truss. The principals cannot be seen below ceiling level so their relationship with the outer walls cannot be determined. Although they exhibit a distinct knee well within the outer walls of the house, this evidence alone is not sufficient to assume they are crucks, as the use of angled principals or crucks mounted on tie beams is well attested in the county well into the 17th century. However, the carpentry details, with the dropped centre to the collar to form abutments for the knee braces is associated with cruck construction elsewhere in the 14th century and early 15th century. The central truss of the hall has not been seen above ceiling level.

The character of the construction of the porch suggests that it is medieval in origin although the outer arch was probably reset when the new windows were inserted in the western return some time in the 17th century. A single light cusped medieval window survived in the porch gable into the 19th century.

The dairy, with heavy chamfered ceiling beams and lack of ashlar quoining seems to be wholly of 17th century date, although it may occupy the site of a detached medieval kitchen.

History

The manor of Hyde, in the fee of the Bishop of Bayeux at the time of the Domesday survey, was assarted prior to 1150 by the convent of St James, Northampton. They continued to hold the manor, exempt from suit and service at the Cleley Hundred court, until the Dissolution.

Based on the form of the building, and the roof truss detail, the building was probably erected in the second half of the 14th century as a grange of St James, Northampton for the management of some 150 acres of land acquired in the area. The large upper end may derive from special needs related to providing easement for the Augustinian canons of St James.

SHUTLANGER, The Monastery SP 731500

Description (FIG 13a and 13b)

A major house of the medieval period, two storey, 3½ bays, with a fine two storey porch on the south side and modern extensions along the north side. The romantic name has misled the Ordnance Survey into describing it as a chapel on some maps.

The house consists of a two bay hall, with a half bay below the spere truss containing the cross passage, and beyond, a service bay. The two hall bays are slightly unequal at 4.25 m and 4.6 m, with a central open truss spanning 6.6 m (21 ft 7 in). The passage bay is 1.6 m (5 ft 3 in) wide, the spere truss posts being set at 3.48 m (11 ft 5 in) centres to centre. The service bay, separated from the passage by a metre thick stone wall, is of similar width 4.65 m but of slightly narrower span, 6.315 m (20 ft 9 in) occasioned by a thicker south wall. The greatest height to the ridge within the hall is 10.3 m (33 ft 10 in). The vaulted two storey porch covers the south entrance to the cross passage and measures 2.75 m by 3.00 m.

Detailed description

Of early features, the hall retains apart from the spere truss,

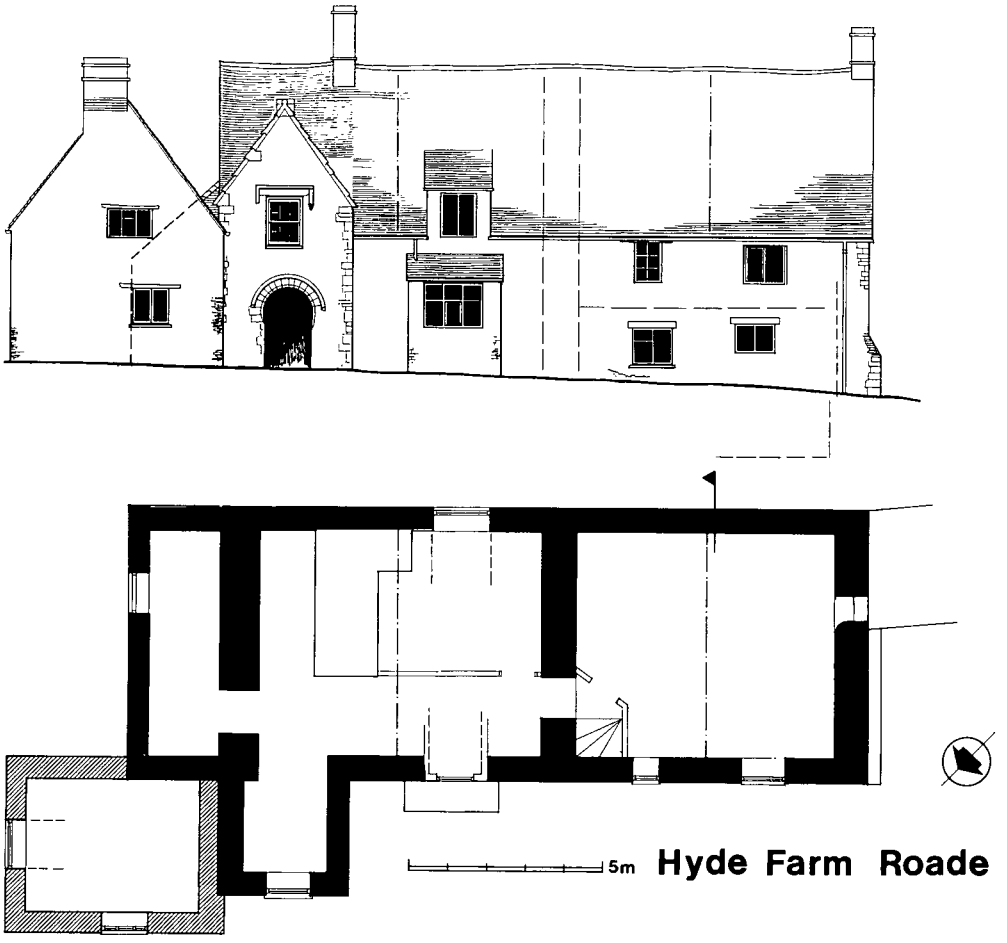


Fig 12 Roade; Hyde Farm.

two transomed and trefoil headed windows on the south side, one to each bay passing through the inserted floor. Both windows have chamfered and angle stopped oak lintels at high level internally (45). The eastern window has a lower sill level and greater width indicating the greater importance afforded to this end of the hall. The window mullions have flush rear faces and retain pins for internal shutters meeting at the central mullion. On the east, now end, wall a corner doorway with wave mouldings connects to a presumed parlour bay which has now disappeared. No features are visible internally on the north wall, and none is recorded by Dryden, but two windows with splayed reveals at present first floor level seem to utilize similarly placed but narrower window openings, quoined internally.

The cross passage is entered by a fine moulded two-centred arch (46), but the anticipated corresponding opening on the north wall has been altered and there remains only a blocked opening with a chamfered timber lintel. On the lower side of the passage there are two dissimilar wave moulded two-centred arched openings. The larger of the two leads down two steps to the service bay, while the smaller opens to a spiral stair leading to the chamber over the service bay, and the small chamber over the entrance porch.

The service bay, now a drawing room, has no original features. Two longitudinal beams, chamfered with deep notched stops, occur centrally as if the room were divided in half. These are clearly later insertions. Sir Henry Dryden (47) in his manuscript notes and published plans, notes a two light medieval window in the western gable, north of the central axis. This window has now disappeared.

The porch has a simple sexpartite vault with deep chamfered vault and wall ribs terminating in a large central boss with elaborate naturalistic vine foliage. The ribs abut the boss uncomfortably, and lack any proper termination at their bases, thus have all the signs of having been designed for elsewhere.

A narrow blocked door opening appears on the east side, and a window, originally with curvilinear reticulated tracery on the west. A small trefoil headed light in the gable lights the upper chamber. Evidence for another opening on the east side is probably a later alteration.

The first floor arrangement adds little to the understanding of the medieval house, and the chief glory of the house resides in the almost complete surviving medieval roof structure.

The roof is constructed on the arcade principle, with tie beams spanning across from the square set arcade plates which

run continuously through the building. Against the stone cross and end walls the arcade plates are carried on vertical wall posts mounted on uncarved wooden corbels, and are braced with straight braces to the posts. The corbel timbers are set through the cross walls to project as corbels on both sides. The arcade plates are jointed by stop splayed scarfs. The spere truss tie is supported by long arch braces stopped to corbels carved in solid on the posts (FIG 13b).

The centre, open truss is of major interest in that it required the greatest ingenuity of the carpenter to clear the hall below of inconvenient posts.

In an evolutionary sense the vertical arcade posts have been set at an angle so as to transfer the load from the plate to the side walls. The normal post to plate relationship at the head has been retained as indeed has the straight angle braces even though they have now taken up the position of windbraces. It is considered significant in the evolution of open trusses that its origin in the early medieval arcade is here so clearly demonstrated. The post in its inclined position is tapered and with curved feet to provide better anchorage in the stone walls. The timber here is 600 mm (2 ft 0 in) wide including the arch brace which has been cut out from the solid. Unfortunately it is not possible to ascertain whether these timbers continue for any distance down the walls, although the continuation of the chamfered braces on the short principle suggests this may be so, and thus the wall plates would be stub tenoned into the side faces of the blades. The wall plate has fallen from place on the south side west of the centre truss, which also supports this suggestion.

Above tie beam level, the trusses are formed with principals and a collar with dropped centre, providing abutment for slender chamfered arch braces. Over the hall there are intermediate trusses in each bay, consisting of a duplication of the collar and arch braces, tenoned into the common rafters. All original rafters have been replaced in a major repair of the roof structure in the 1950's and at an earlier date various steel ties and plates have been inserted to halt the spreading and racking of the roof.

Green glazed medieval roofing tile has been found in the garden to the north of the house, suggesting that the roof was tiled in the medieval period, probably from the date of erection.

Problems

The medieval structure poses a number of problems which will now be considered.

Firstly, following the standard medieval plan, a third element, a parlour/solar bay would be expected, but at Shutlanger the ground to the east rises considerably and there is no sign of further building on the ground, or in the stonework of the eastern gable. Notwithstanding this, the evidence points to an upper bay having once been present in that there is a doorway in the corner, moulded to the hall and wider behind, suggesting a door splaying open into a further chamber. Secondly, both arcade plates and timber corbels appear cut off in the external face of the gable which would not be the case if the wall had been external as the west gable. Thirdly, there are no angle buttresses at this end as might be expected at least for appearances in a house of this standing. Thus one may reasonably assume the third bay was present, was raised up in level, and that on demolition the lower part of the gable wall was refaced, as indeed is indicated by the offset at wallplate level.

The second problem is less tractable. It is the relationship between the porch and the main house. The mouldings around the porch entrance, together with the carvings and window tracery suggest workmanship somewhat different from the entrance door to the house itself, although there is no demonstratable difference in date.

Also, a straight joint appears internally at first floor level in the circular stair between the stonework of the stair and the original cross wall of the house. It is clear there is a difference in build and the imposing nature of the porch is not consistent with the more modest detail of the house. If the porch is indeed an afterthought it is necessary to assume the small door in the cross passage originally gave access to a wooden stair to the chamber over the service room, and that the porch was brought to Shutlanger and added on to the house after it became redundant elsewhere. Such an occasion might have been the dissolution of the small Benedictine nunnery at Sewardsley, some two miles distant, at the Reformation, and this is supported in evidence by a Nuremburg jetton of the 16th century found in the straight and plastered joint, and the addition of a small four-centred head doorway from the stair to the first floor chamber over the service room.

The contrary evidence is the presence of the wave moulding both in the main house in three places, and in the porch chamber at the head of the stair, itself equivalent in date to the outer arch mouldings of the porch. On balance, in view of the obvious misfit of the various elements of the porch it seems that the porch has been brought in from elsewhere, and the similarity of dates as suggested by the mouldings is but a happy coincidence.

A third problem is a matter of terminology, and has already been alluded to. The principals of the centre truss do apparently have curved feet, but the extent to which they pass down the wall beyond the elbow could only be ascertained by judicious removal of some plaster. On present evidence they do not extend far enough to be called base crucks, and thus are referred to as short principals.

It is claimed that during the repairs of the roof by the Historic Buildings Council in 1965, evidence for a smoke louvre was found and removed. Written record was apparently not made, and there survives at high level two heavily smoke blackened cross struts birds-mouthed between the purlins. No explanation for these original timbers is manifest and it may be that the one immediately east of the central hall truss is in fact the base support for a smoke louvre. It is however difficult to explain the other, nearer the cross passage end, in the same way.

At ground level there is no evidence for subdivision within the service room. The entrance door is however sufficiently asymetrical to allow a duplicate door to be set providing symmetry within the central aisle of the building. Two doors in this position may provide access to two service rooms, or, as at Yardley Hastings, to one. In the absence of a cellar or evidence for alternative storage two rooms may be presumed.

No explanation can be found for two features, an offset with quoins on the rear wall externally, which confirms some rebuilding of this face to the western end, so obliterating the external evidence for a cross passage door, and the greater thickness of the south wall of the service room. This latter may relate to the addition of the porch stair.

In repair of the tracery of the windows, a section of hood moulding was removed. It was found to be reused and has originally formed the spandrel of an opening, with a blind triangle. There is no clear difference of date and it is probable that this piece is no more than a mason's reject.

There is also no evidence for outbuildings, including a kitchen, although a wall survives some eight metres south of the service room.

Subsequent development

There is no dating evidence for the later adaptations of the medieval house that have clearly taken place. The stone stair in the cross passage is probably of the 17th century, the circular

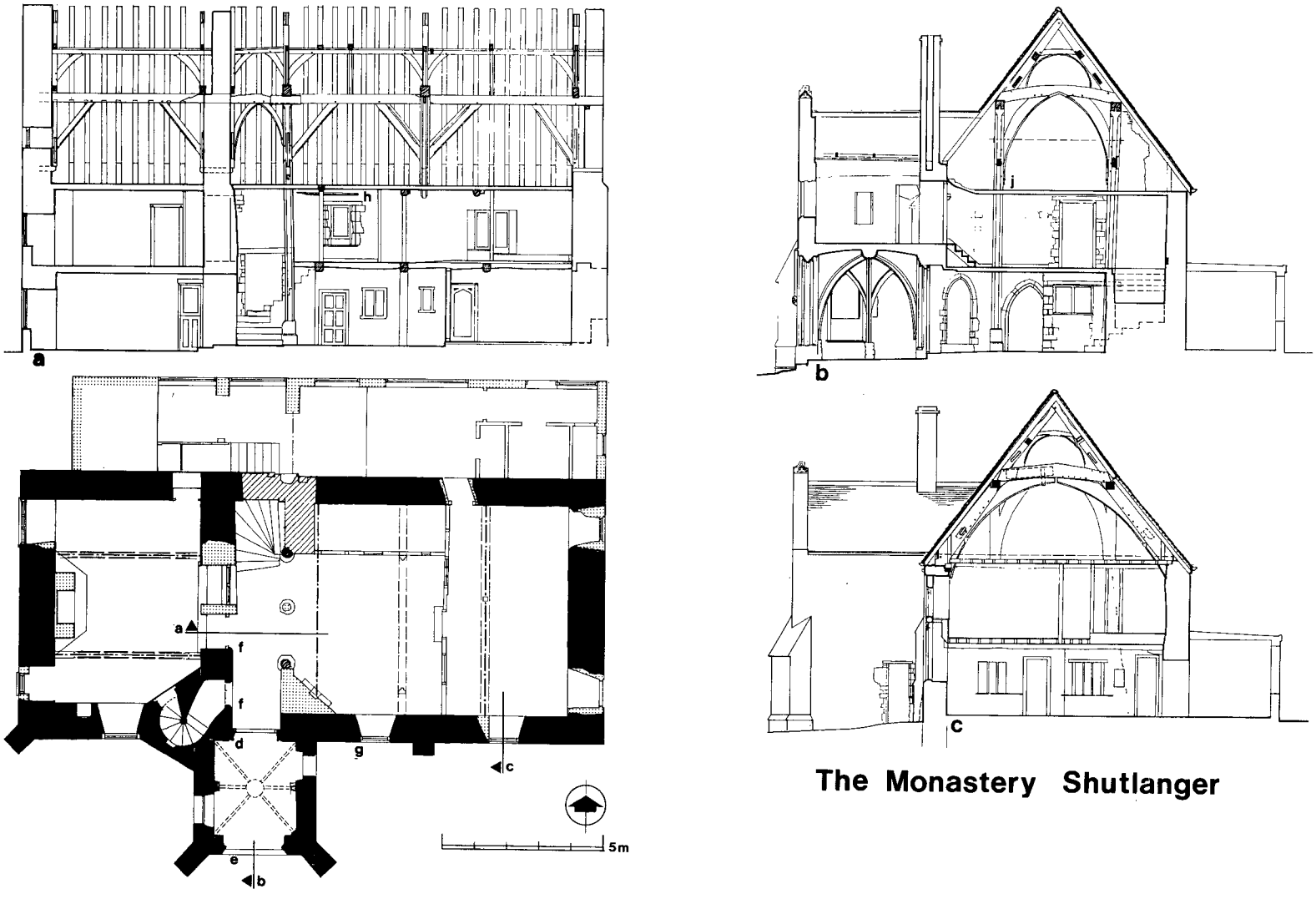


Fig 13a Shutlanger; the Monastery. Plan, sections.

stair originally serving the floored over hall. A mortice on the outer face of the north spere post most likely relates to this earlier flooring over of the hall than to a medieval gallery over the cross passage.

Also in the 17th century a stone stack was inserted into the service bay gable, and this roof space adapted for use, requiring the insertion of two gable lights and a ceiling. The means of access to this room is not clear.

Conclusions

The evidence of the architectural detail and the evolving roof structure, point to a date for building in the first half of the 14th century. These features are consistent with its being a dwelling of the gentry class, perhaps a minor feudal magnate or secular clergy, or a grange.

History

The history of the manor of Shutlanger is obscure, for it was held with the manor of the neighbouring Stoke Bruerne from as early as the 13th century. In 1316 William de Coumbemartym died seized of the manor and certified as lord of Shutlanger. By the end of the century the manor was in the hands of the Wydeville family and passed through various hands until it was annexed to the Honour of Grafton in 1542. A manor at Shutlanger is mentioned in the visitations of Bishop Repingdon of Lincoln in March 1410-11 (48). The Cistercian nunnery at Sewardsley founded during the reign of Henry II had a farm at Shutlanger (Shittylhanger) and it is possible that the house, not the manor, was a grange of that foundation.

SOUTHWICK, Southwick Hall TL 022922

The Hall stands immediately east of the church. It is a complex building owing much to alterations and extension of the late 16th and 18th centuries. The medieval great hall, aligned east-west, has been almost entirely replaced and all that remains are appendages on the north and south side.

Description

The 14th century hall is now only represented by the north door of the cross passage at its eastern end. West of this point, and originally attached to the upper end of the hall is a vaulted chamber of 14th century date, with access through the north wall of the hall. On its western side the chamber has a newel stair which presumably gave access to the upper floor of the cross wing with which it is in line. This indirect approach through a vaulted lateral chamber is similar to that at Drayton, and suggests that the undercroft was originally vaulted. The two existing openings in the west end wall of the later hall may indicate that this wall, and part of the north wall of the hall of similar thickness survive from the 14th century.

Well to the south of the cross wing there is a two storey tower with a pitched roof set at an angle to both the medieval and later house. This curious relationship suggests that it is an addition to the vanished cross wing, thus this and the hall may be of earlier date than the 14th century. This structure contains on the ground floor a sexpartite vault, and has a door in the north east corner. That there was a physical connection between this tower and the original cross wing is suggested by a connecting door at first floor level, and the corresponding absence of a contemporary stair. The first floor room is called the chapel, and has a fine canopied fireplace carried on carved corbels, and an oriel bay on the east side equipped with a piscina.

Later in the 14th century, a three storey extension was built on the west side of the tower, providing a vaulted chamber at ground level and a stair to a first floor chamber, called the priest's room. The need for this extension so soon after the tower was built probably arose out of the inconvenience of access through the solar cross wing, and the need for more sacerdotal space. The adaptation of the chamber with the fireplace to a chapel may relate to this later phase of alterations, thus what was originally a room for a resident priest was adapted to provide an oratory as well.

The windows of the south tower are of two light, cinquefoil cusped, with quatrefoiled head, that in the extension having a transome. Some medieval heraldic glass survives in the 'chapel'.

History

The Knyvet family, resident in Southwick from the twelfth century, held the manor of the Earl of Warwick in the 13th century. Richard Knyvet was appointed Keeper of the Forest of Cliffe in 1324. His position and wealth probably relates to his position in the wool trade.

His son, Sir John Knyvet inherited the property in 1352, and had a distinguished career as a lawyer, rising to Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor by 1372. He died in 1381.

Richard and Sir John Knyvet were the probable builders of the surviving medieval work, but may have inherited a structure of earlier date.

STOKE ALBANY, The Old House SP 805883

Description (FIG 14)

The house, called the Old House as distinct from the Manor House, a 16th century building on high land at the south end of the village, lies immediately west of the church at the foot of the escarpment of the river Welland. It consists of a hall range on an east-west axis, with a cross passage at the east end, and a two bay cross wing.

The hall range is small as compared with others in the county, measuring 8.25 x 4.56 m inclusive of the passage. There is a central two stage buttress on the south side and a newel stair tower in the corresponding position on the north. A major stack with a cambered moulded timber beam backs on to the cross passage. All the windows are ovolo moulded section. From the cross passage two stone doorcases with segmental heads and hood moulds with animal mask terminals open into the cross wing. Their disposition is not symmetrical indicating that the north wing originally projected further. Both end external doors to the cross passage are of square headed form with flat pointed inner arches, plain spandrels and mouldings stopped high on the jambs. Externally there is a clear evidence of two building phases, one of rubble ironstone and apparently associated with the 1619 datestone on the south wall, and the other of better ironstone ashlar associated with the ovolo mullioned windows.

The cross wing is also of three builds, the medieval work comprising the north gable, part of the west wall and the internal wall to the cross passage, a build associated with rubble stone which may relate to the 1619 date, and the ashlar phase. The west buttress and the wall from this point southwards, together with all windows, seem to belong to this latter period. Apart from one blocked door on the south gable there is evidence for two other smaller openings probably vents, the south one perhaps relating to a no longer extant cellar.

At first floor level on the north gable there is a two light Y tracery window with a hood mould and terminals similar to those of the cross passage doors. This gable wall is considerably out of line and apart from the central mullion of the window, and the repaired and heightened sill, there is no

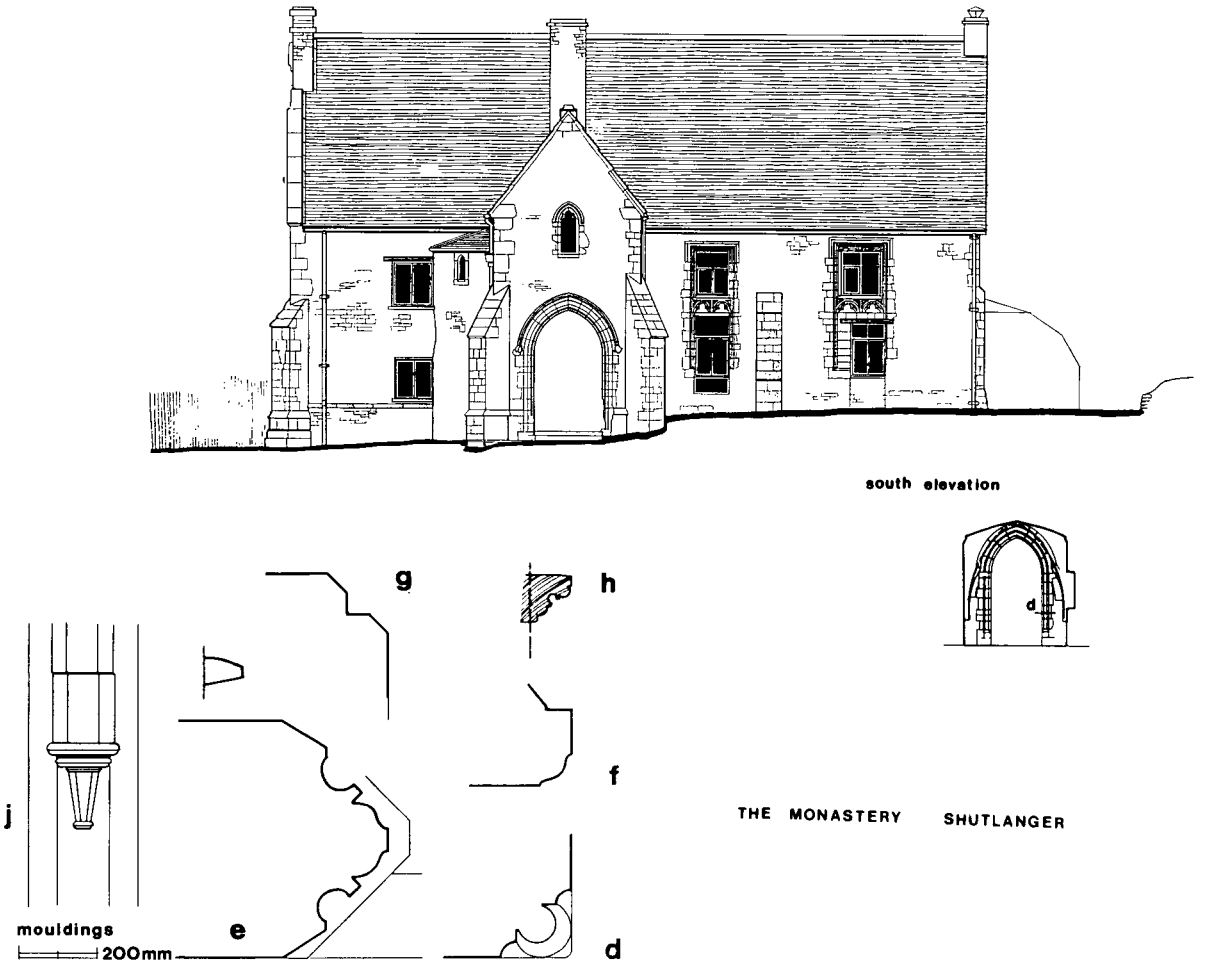


Fig 13b Shutlanger; the Monastery. Elevation, details.

sign of rebuild since early medieval times. At the attic level there is one rectangular internally splayed blocked opening, and a central two light segmental headed window with simple chamfered jambs and much decayed hood mould.

Problems

The problem at Stoke Albany is to ascertain how much medieval work still remains, as it is clear that the building has been substantially repaired and modified twice in the 17th century.

For the hall wing the plan is the only evidence of medieval origin, the rebuilt buttress demonstrating the position of the original open timber truss, replaced in the 17th century. It is argued that the buttress would not have been built *ab initio* in the 17th century had one not already existed and the work carried out as a restoration. It may however be that the asymmetry of the service doors indicate that the hall was reduced in width when rebuilt as it is distinctly smaller than average, but this cannot be put forward without evidence. The segmental headed doors are without parallel in the county, and the stops are similar to those at Woodford, suggesting an early date.

The cross wing gable window is dated by the form of the tracery to *c* 1300. In this first floor position it would appear to be the window of the original solar of the house, although its asymmetrical position is not explained. The upper window is apparently in the same build of wall, and thus is of the same date.

The medieval house thus consists of a hall with central open truss, a cross passage, and a two bay service wing with solar above. Access to the solar is probably from a gallery over the cross passage, using the central existing door opening. Access to the attic level may be indicated by the blocked window opening, and be in the north west corner of the solar.

The next stage of development of the Old House is the insertion of a floor over the hall, combined with a main axial stack and staircase, both probably contemporary, and probably at the date indicated by the datestone, 1619. The rear, north service room may also have been rebuilt at that time. Despite these modernisations, the house seems either to have been allowed to decay considerably in the 17th century, or been damaged in civil commotion, or just come into wealthy hands, for there is evidence throughout of extensive rebuilding in the second half of the 17th century.

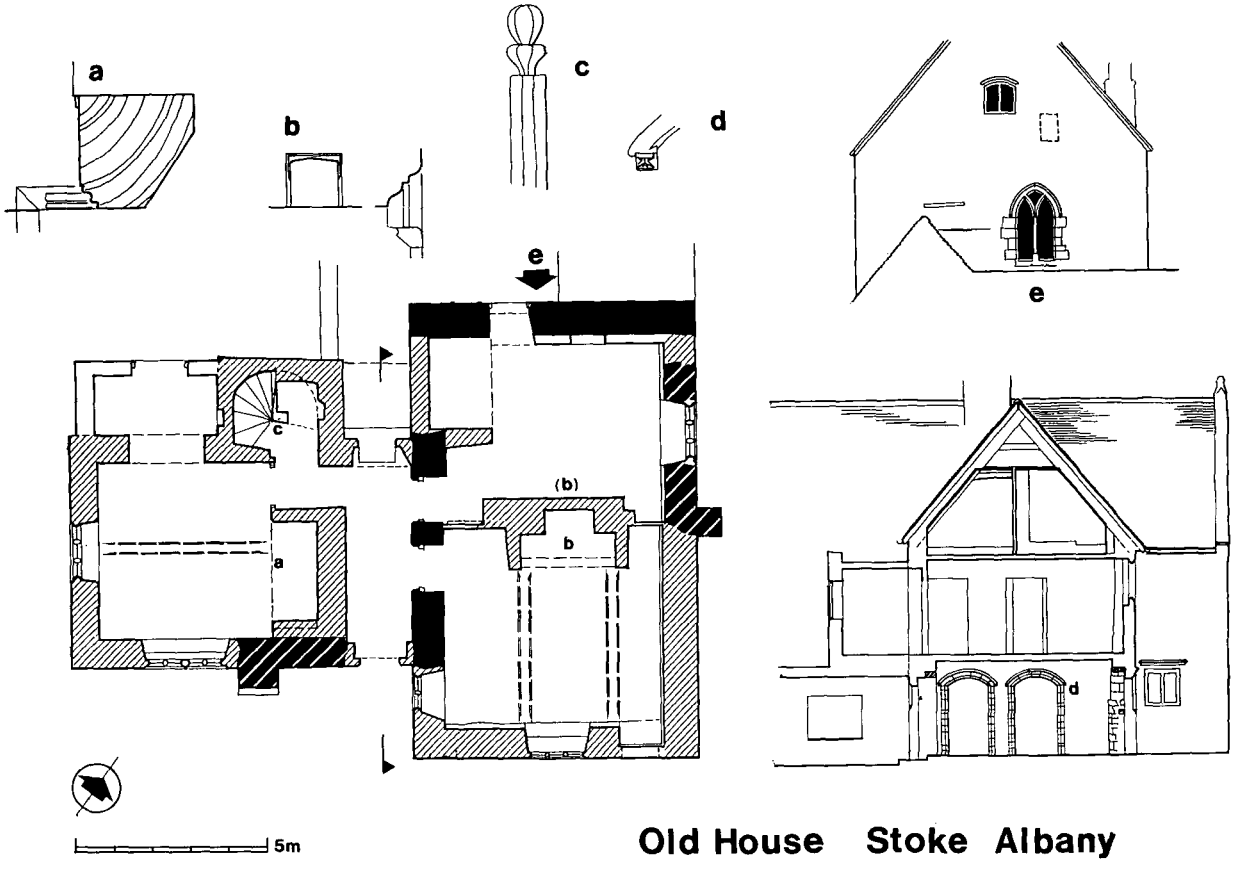


Fig 14 Stoke Albany; the Old House.

History (49)

In the second half of the 12th century the manor was held by William de Albani, from whom it passed to the Roos family, originally of Holderness in Yorkshire, and later the Lords Roos of Hamlake.

In 1465 the manor was confiscated from Roos and passed to Sir William Hastings, who in turn was put to death by Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Henry VII restored the manor to the Roos family, who continued to hold it until the mid 16th century.

It is tentatively suggested that the Old House was the original Manor House built by the Lords Roos. After the confiscation is was allowed to decay as the Hastings were well provided by houses elsewhere, as at Harringworth. On its restoration to the Roos, a decision was taken to build a new seat, the present Manor House which still bears their arms (51). The datestones on the Old House therefore must refer to a drastic restoration of the building which must by then have been little more than a ruin.

WADENHOE TL 011836

Description (FIG 17)

A medieval window with a two centred arch and a four centred subsidiary head bearing the upper part of a sexafoil opening exists in a modest house in the High Street. The sill of this window is approximately 3.8 m above the present floor level, although now obscured by an inserted stack internally. The present house is of two bays, originally a kitchen and parlour, with longitudinal ceiling beams with ogee stops over the kitchen area. The external walls show much evidence of rebuilding.

Problems

A number of problems are raised. The window is set rather low for a two storey medieval structure, thus the window could represent a gable window of an open hall; the estimated original span of 5 m is consistent with a small hall. The form of the window head as quasi plate tracery is unusual and the four-centred arch appears to be a modification of an earlier, possibly fourteenth century window. The remainder of the cottage as now existing seems to be a rebuild of a medieval structure carried out in the later 17th century and probably represents only the hall section, the continuation or cross wing having disappeared.

WEEDON, Fernhollow Farm SP 618588

General description (FIG 18)

A medieval doorway surviving on the north elevation of the farmhouse. The building spanning 5.150 m (160 ft 11 in) was altered in the 17th century and much rebuilt in the 19th century.

Detailed description

The doorway is set in the north wall of the building, built of honey-coloured liassic sandstone, 550 mm (1 ft 9 in) thick. It leads directly to a through stair hall, with opposed door on the south side. Doors from the back of the hall lead to dining and drawing rooms and the kitchen is now housed in a 19th century brick rear wing.

The medieval doorway has a four-centred moulded arch and simple hood mould with outward turned stops. To the west the north wall has a four light 17th century window and beyond a blocked fire window to a major fireplace, also blocked, probably the original kitchen. The room east of the hallway was entirely rebuilt in the 1840-50 period following a fire, at which period the building was heightened and the rear extension probably built. This major rebuilding adjusted the alignment of the front wall so that it steps back over the medieval doorway and oversails at the west end.

Date and comment

From the form of the arch and the mouldings, the doorway may be dated to the 15th century. The span is consistent with a medieval structure and the present through hall may well embody the original cross passage, with services to the west. No further assessment can be made on the basis of surviving evidence.

WOODFORD, Glebe Farm SP 969768

Description (FIG 15)

The medieval structure at Glebe Farm comprises solely the open hall with a cross passage, 9.7 x 6.2 m (31 ft 10 in x 20 ft 4 in). The south elevation retains the original cross passage door, a two centred arch with a hood mould, a central buttress with two offsets and two later buttresses to the gable ends. The large living room window occupies the original position of the hall window as defined by the ashlar quoining but extends below the original sill level at approximately 1.2 m above floor level. A small window between the centre buttress and the door is also probably medieval. On the north side one jamb of the hall window remains both internally and externally, although the main door still occupies the original position. Internally the most spectacular feature is the end wall of the hall, articulated by two large arches with subsidiary trefoil arches and carried on a fine and elaborate central corbel from which hangs a *fleur de lis*.

The house received a major chimney stack backing on to the cross passage in the 16th century, at which date a closet was constructed against the south wall with moulded timber studs and panels. The winding stair mounting on the stack, and the closet window probably date from this time. The surviving area of the hall, being some five-ninths of the original, was ceiled over with heavily moulded beams and a chamber constructed above. Thus far the interpretation is clear. The west side of the cross passage contains one original door which leads to an altogether narrower building containing the present dining room and kitchen. Although this must represent the service rooms of the medieval house there is no evidence for date, but this appears to be a post medieval structure. To the east of the hall the range is continued with a stone built structure, probably of 17th century date. The door presently giving access is probably a modern opening.

This house raises a number of problems. It appears to be an end hall, thus the ancillary accommodation should be sought at the western end. The lack of any evidence for a second hall window on either elevation, between the central truss and the cross passage, may indicate that the 16th century closet replaced a medieval arrangement for storage in the same position but in general terms it is more probable that all the service accommodation lay beyond the single door. Similarly, it might be anticipated that the retiring room was located above the services at first floor level, with access from a gallery over the cross passage, but positive evidence for this is lacking in the present range or on the gable wall. A possibility that might be entertained is that all accommodation beyond the hall was housed in a timber building which could be moved in its entirety to leave the hall free standing.

Date

The details and mouldings have been dated by Dr Richard

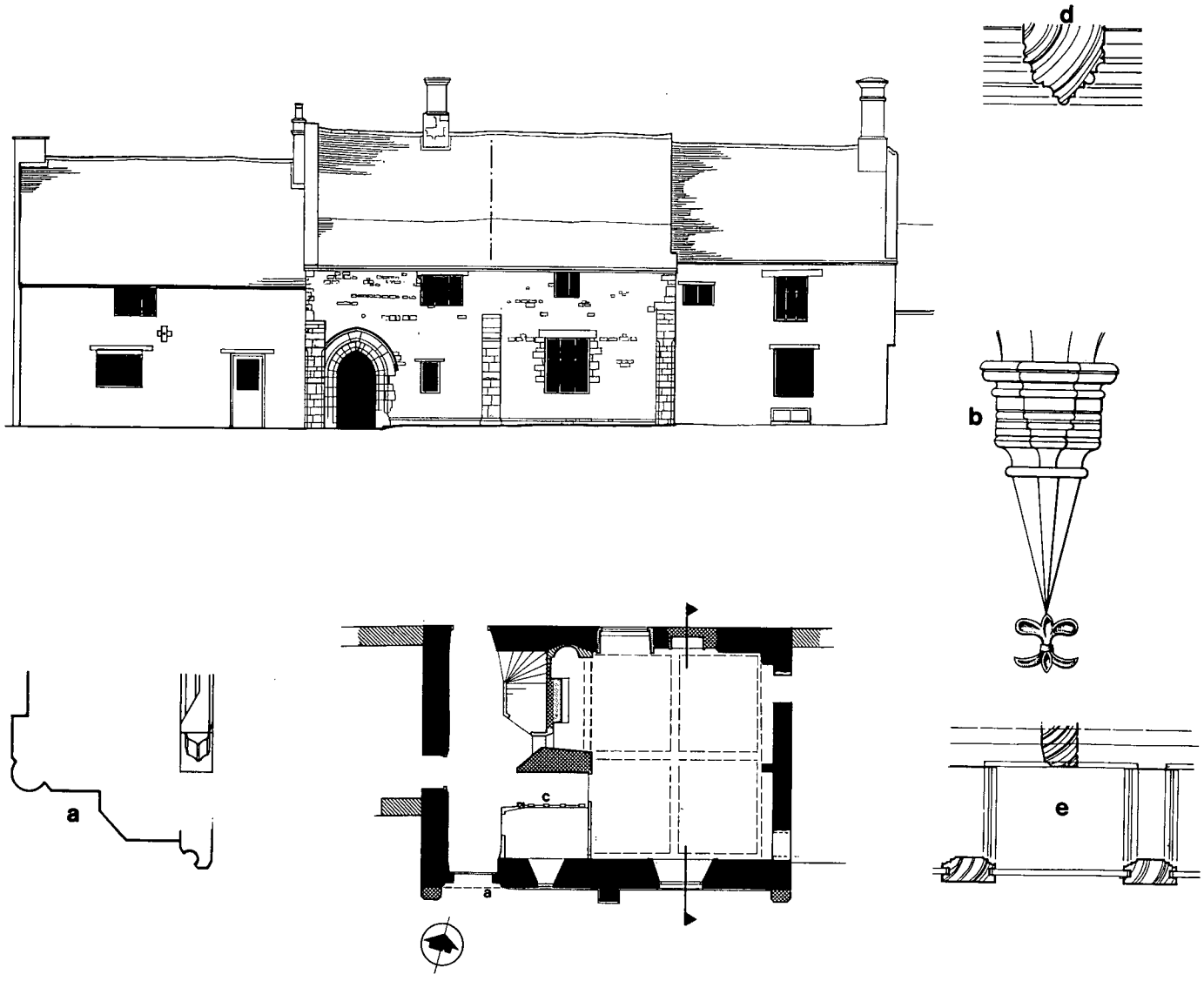


Fig 15 Woodford; Glebe Farm.

Fig 16a Yardley Hastings, the Court Parlour. Plans, details.

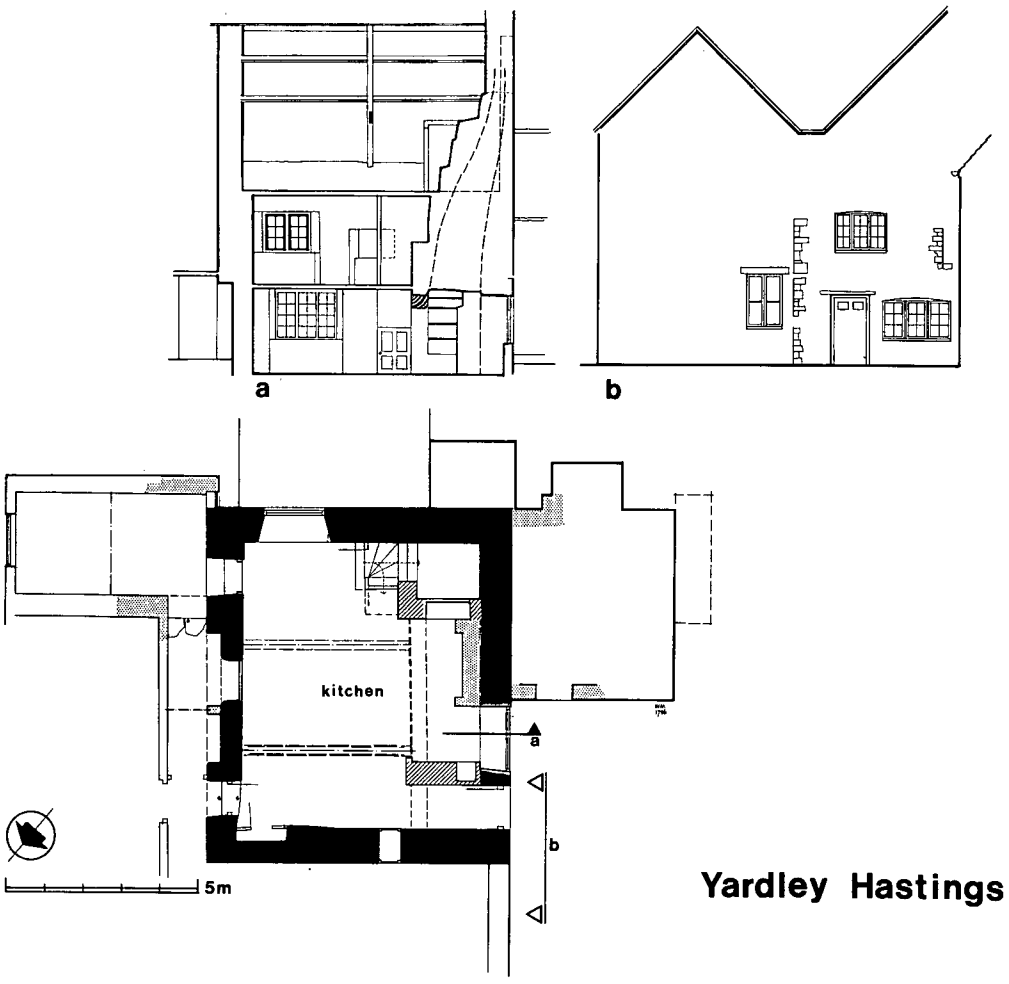


Fig 16b Yardley Hastings, the Court Parlour. Kitchen.

Morris to within the period 1260-1320 and probably to *c* 1275. The trefoiled arches, unique in Northamptonshire, appear at Stamford where they are dated to the 12th century (52). The two end buttresses with their chamfered arrises are, as evidenced by the relationship to the door, later alterations and could be as late as the 16th century when the major alterations were carried out. The stops to the hood mould over the south door are repeated on the elaborate south porch of the church, there dated 1250-80.

History

For the period 1275-1300 the size of hall suggests that the building was a manor house rather than a lay clergy dwelling, although local tradition maintains that there was a college of secular priests at Woodford. The hall retained its oak panelling, probably of the 16th century, bearing a text from Psalm XXII of the 1860's, this being associated with an appearance of the Jesuit, Fr Andreas Powlett as a ghost (53).

In the reign of Henry III the manor of Woodford, in the Honour of Gloucester, was held by William Trayle for half a knight's fee and a Geoffrey de Traylley dies seized of it in 1333, passing the inheritance to his son Henry. By 1419 Sir John Holt, Kt dies seized of 'Trayles Place', thus the name of the early holders had become established, but whether the house can be identified with this manor is not clear. In 1254 the Rectory was valued at 17½ marks and 12½ marks to Peterborough Abbey (54). The valuation at 1535 was £11 13s 4d.

YARDLEY HASTINGS, The Court Parlour SP 865570

The remains of the great Hastings manor house at Yardley Hastings are well known (55). Here a re-survey is offered, together with a new interpretation of the uses to which the surviving parts of the building were put.

The surviving building is the service end of one of the greatest medieval houses of the county. It is sited immediately north of the parish church, unusually on a north to south axis. The hall of the house was demolished prior to the 18th century

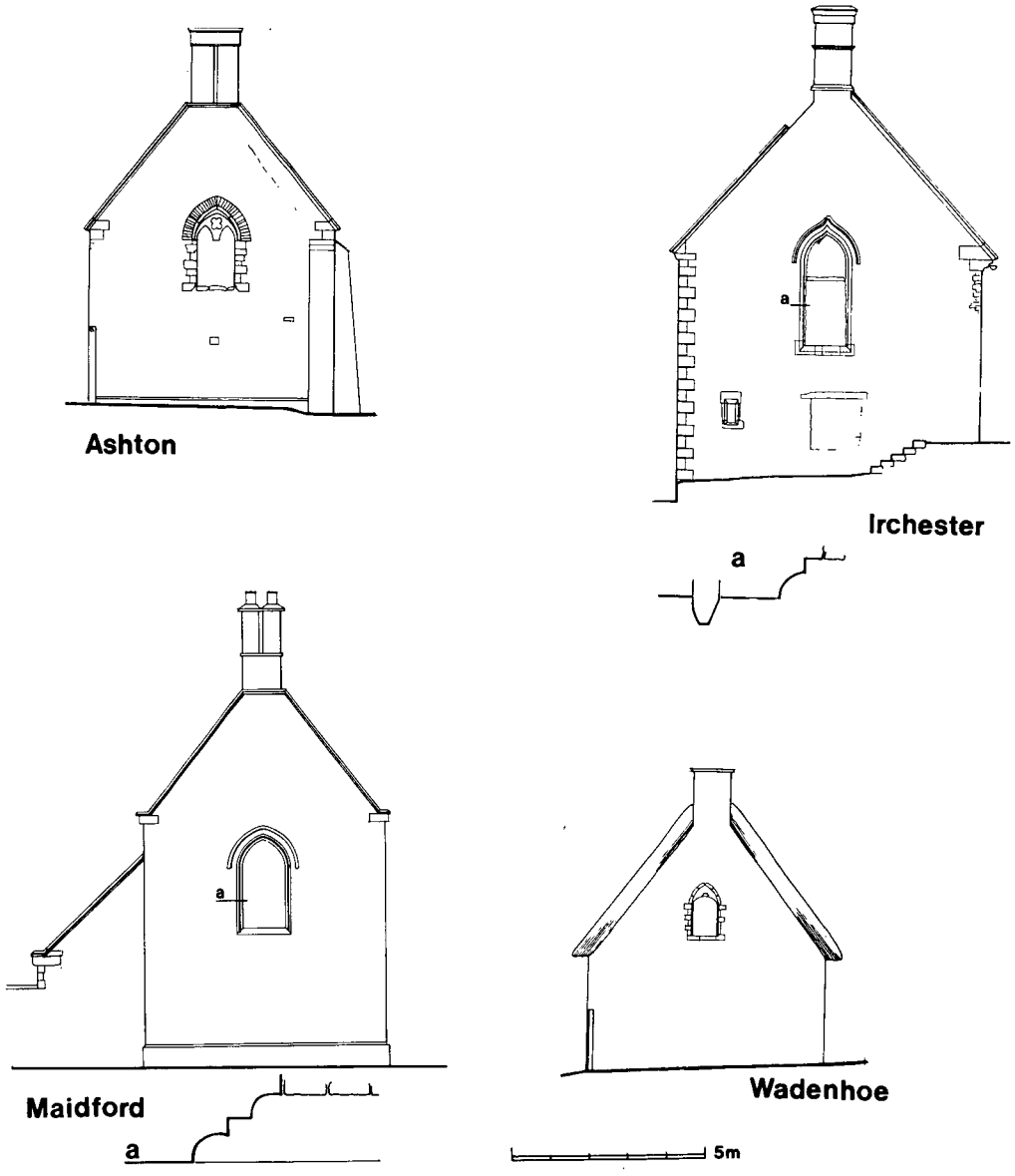


Fig 17 Fragments: Gables. Ashton; The Manor House. Irchester; Rectory Farm. Maidford; the Manor House. Wadenhoe.

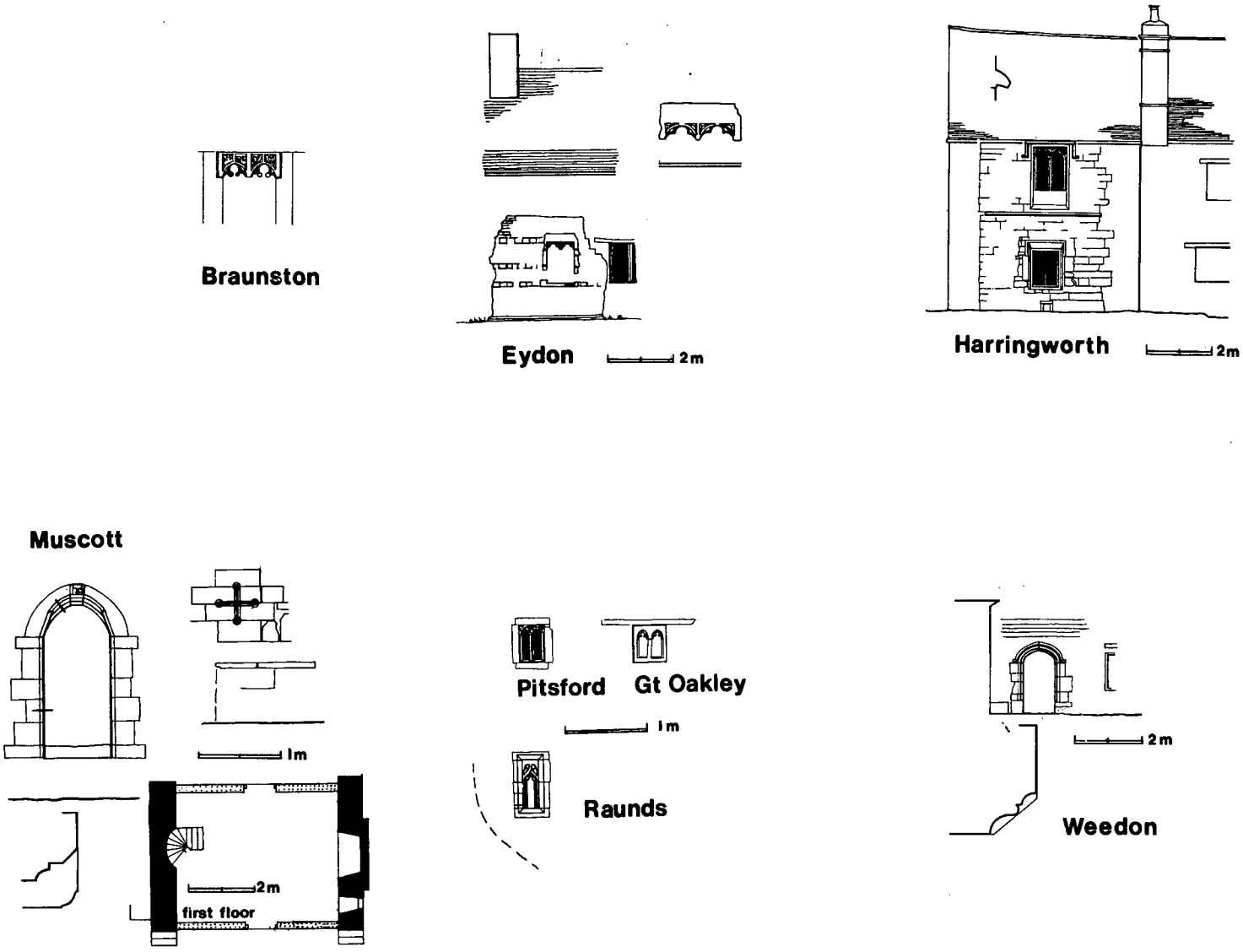


Fig 18 Fragments; Windows. Eydon; Rectory Farm. Gt. Oakley. Braunston; 43, High Street. Pitsford; Corbett Cottage. Raunds; Old Post Office. Weedon; Fernhollow Farm. Muscott; The Manor House. Harringworth; Manor Cottages.

and its size is known from early excavations. The Victorian house on the adjacent site incorporates some early structure.

Description (FIGS 16a and b)

The services end survives complete including the roof. It is three storeys high and presents four doors to the cross passage, the responds of both end doors remaining. The span of the roof is 8.97 m (29 ft 5 in), and the bay width internally 4.36 m (14 ft 3 in).

The ground floor chamber is served by the two moulded doorways disposed about the central axis. Both are arranged to open into the chamber, and on the outer side of each internally there is a cupboard rebated for a timber door. This chamber is provided with two windows in the gable wall (one replaced in the 17th century) and one on the front, the west wall. To the rear (east) of the building there would have been an enclosure for the stair to the chamber below. The east wall internally has a small blocked recess in the south corner, this may have been a fireplace but there is no evidence of a flue. The doors to the screens are identical, with two centred arches and wave moulding, and with hood moulds. Internally the openings are high with two centred segmental chamfered stones. One door was blocked between 1908 and 1965.

A doorway with a two centred head and double chamfered jambs at the east end of the cross passage gives access to a steep broad flight of steps to the basement chamber. This room is not as wide, the west wall being thicker, and has four vents around the walls to narrow slit openings to above ground level. The floor to the chamber over has been reconstructed using collar beams probably taken from the great hall at the time of demolition. Seatings for the original floor joists show that these were approximately 200 mm square and set at between 400 and 500 mm centres.

The corresponding doorway at the west end of the cross passage leads to a timber stair giving access to the first floor. The stair is formed of diagonally halved timbers pegged to two carriages of heavy scantling. The doorway is two centred, without hood mould, of double chamfer section, thus graded inferior to the central openings. The first floor chamber has a central fireplace in the south gable wall with a square head of one large lintel stone. The west side of the room is lit by two windows with low sills, the west window itself being of two lights. The east or rear half of the room also has two windows, a two light one in the gable, and one on the east wall. Both have high sills. In the south east corner there is a garderobe in the wall which has been slightly increased in thickness to accommodate it. The garderobe has two small quatrefoil windows, originally glazed. The privy was formed in stone, and the passage is roofed in single slabs.

A further staircase of similar construction gives access to an upper level, now mostly destroyed.

The interpretation offered is that the cellar room, being well vented, is the buttery for the house, the ground floor chamber is the pantry, the fireplace perhaps offering dry conditions and some comfort for the staff, and the upper floor a self-contained flat with living space on the entrance front, and bedroom space with the garderobe at the rear. The fact that the access is from the front door position of the house suggests it is for a bailiff or housekeeper rather than dower accommodation, but the latter is possible. The stair to the upper section probably allowed some storage space at high level, although there is no evidence that this constituted a complete upper floor.

Externally the doors to the cross passage vary in that the western door is fully moulded, and the eastern or rear door simple double chamfered. The south gable has angle buttresses, and an original chimney to the gable flue.

Although the section of the house to survive is the service end, the roof is probably the most significant in the county. It is based on raked short principals carrying arcade plates over which is set a lightly cambered collar. The short principals appear to be set on transverse wall corbels, which also give rise to arch braces which carry chamfers to a dropped abutment on the collar.

The upper roof has a crown post with shaped head and foot carrying a chamfered collar purlin and arch braces to it. Similarly long arch braces rise from the principal rafters to the collar.

Not only is the roof construction both elegant and prodigious in its use of timber, but it displays some refinements. Not only are the principals heavily jowled to make adequate joints with the arcade plate tie, but this tie has been pared down on either side for appearances as is shown by the thicker ends. Again the principals are stooled out to provide a better joint with the windbraces. In this work Northamptonshire structural carpentry reaches its apogee. It should be noted that this construction, using the clear span short principals, has been used for even the service end of the house.

The great hall is only known from excavations carried out in the early years of this century (56). It apparently measured 13.71 m (45 ft) long by 8.97 m (29 ft 7 in) wide. Until recently a hearth was marked out at the cross passage end. Recent excavations at the north end of the house on underlying Anglo-Saxon features produced a quantity of glazed roof tiles, some with pinched up crestings (57). The beams now supporting the ground floor are cambered plate collars with dropped central abutments carrying chamfers. These presumably came from the hall when it was removed.

On the east side, the rear of the house, lies the present Manor House constructed *c*1840 but incorporating an approximately square structure with thick walls and high set windows in the two visible elevations. There is a series of openings on the north side, some of which may be original. The roof structure is replaced. This building lies approximately 11 m east of the service door to the cross passage and is interpreted as the original medieval kitchen. There is now a large stack and fireplace internally on the south side which, from the fact that it covers the original window, and supports a ceiling beam with ogee stops, is probably a 17th century modification of the building as a kitchen or bakehouse. Apart from the example at Southwick, this is the only example of a medieval kitchen to survive in the county, and a comparative rarity elsewhere.

Date

The ogee tracery, the mouldings with the double ogee and elongated hollow, and the roof structure, point to a date of construction of approximately 1375.

History

In 1284 Sir John de Hastings held the Manor of Yardley of the king in chief. He died in 1314 as Lord Hastings. In 1325 a fair was granted to his son, another Sir John, who died the same year possessed of the manor, two dovecotes, a windmill and a horsemill, a wood called Roundehai, a park and free chase, which he held in chief by service of a sparrowhawk, or two shillings. In 1339 Lawrence de Hastings, although still a minor, was created Earl of Pembroke, and the king confirmed the grant of bailiwick of the manor and chase from Lawrence to a yeoman Robt Wyard in 1345. Lawrence died in 1348.

His heir, John, was then under two years of age, and the manor was placed in the custody of William de Groncey. He died in 1375 after being captured at the seige of Rochel and four years imprisonment, leaving another son John aged two as heir, who was later killed at a tournament at Woodstock in

1389, after which the earldom became extinct. The manor was then being farmed for Margery, Countess of Norfolk. The manor was held by Reginald, Lord Gray of Ruthin to 1441.

Through the succession of minors who held Yardley it is difficult to see a construction date later than Laurence de Hastings, and although he may have put such work in hand on being granted the earldom, he still was very young. The early Perpendicular nature of the mouldings make it difficult to accept a date earlier than 1360 and it is possible that de Groncey put the work in hand, or continued it on behalf of the Earl.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly and most importantly thanks are due to the owners of the properties discussed, for their patience and forbearance in allowing unrestricted access even to the most private and intimate corners of their homes on, in some cases, many occasions. Without this a study of this nature would be impossible. They are, alphabetically and not identified with specific properties for privacy: Mr and Mrs Atwell; Mrs Baile; British Steel Corporation; Mr David Horne; Mr and Mrs A Horrell; Dr Illingworth; Dr Ingram; Mr and Mrs Russell Key; Mr G W Kell; Mr and Mrs Lewis; Mr and Mrs McKinnell; Mr H and Lady Melville; The Earl of Northampton; Mr Richardson; Mrs A Siddons; Mr and Mrs Julian Smithers; Mr L G Stopford Sackville; Mr and Mrs George Wigley; Mr and Mrs Webster; and also those people who equally allowed access but where the houses proved not to fall within the compass of this paper.

Grateful thanks are also due to those scholars who have discussed specific aspects of the houses, in particular Dr N W Alcock for his comments on roofs, Dr Richard Morris for advice on mouldings, Mr Robert Taylor for his expert help with Nassington and Southwick Hall, and to Professor M W Barley for his comments on the draft of the paper. Mr Anthony Fleming was a great encouragement at the start of this project, and helped with the measuring up of Shutlanger and Yardley Hastings, and he and Mr Dennis Mynard put their notes of Brafield at my disposal. Mr Mynard further provided useful information regarding the Grange at Haversham. Mr Brian Giggins provided much information on the Surgery at Earls Barton, and Mr Russell Key wrote the historical aspect for Newnham.

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14. *Ibid,* p 43.
15. Jones, S R, and Smith, J T, The great hall of the Bishop's Palace at Hereford, *Medieval Archaeol,* 4, 1960, 69f.
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17. Opinion given on a personal visit.
18. A distant photograph appears in Bailey, J H L, *Finedon, otherwise Thingdon,* 1975, 166.
19. The RCHM on a recent survey concluded that the window head was *ex-situ.* It is suggested here that the head is merely reset under an *in-situ* relieving arch.
20. Round, J H, *Calendar of documents preserved in France,* 444, No 1231. Bishop Hugh of Wells proceeded with the establishment of vicarages and the enrollment of those already ordained after 1219.
21. Cott M S S, Vesp E xvii fol 64.
22. *Calendar Patent Rolls,* 1345-8, 420.
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31. Parallel examples of the window are illustrated by Wood, M E, *op cit* PL 55 B and C, dated 1320 and mid 14th century respectively.
32. Leland, *Itinerary,* Vol 1, fol 14, quoted by Bridges, II, 320.
33. Also outside the county at Oxhill, Warwickshire (information Dr Alcock). A similar vertical member, but not supporting the ridge, occurs at Leadenporch House, Deddington. Wood Jones, FIG 6.
34. *Calendar Patent Rolls,* 1324-7, 122.
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45. These windows have now been carefully restored on the strict basis of surviving evidence.
46. The mouldings of this two centered door contain a large bowtell carried down without capitals to small ring bases of early appearance (FIG 13).
47. Plan published in Northants and Oakham Architectural Society *Proceedings* of 1894. Manuscript notes are in the Northants Public Library Local Collection.
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56. Markham, C A, 1903, *op cit*.
57. Unpublished information from Mr Dennis Jackson.

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