

THE BLACK FRIARS IN LONDON: A  
CHAPTER IN NATIONAL HISTORY.

BY

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AND

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

BY

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Read before the Society at Bishopsgate Institute, January 13th, 1926.<sup>1</sup>

FROM the year 1221 to the present year of Grace is a long period even in the life of a great nation, and yet that is the length of time during which the Dominican Brethren, with long and short intermission, have exercised their influence in this Country. A reminder of this, the great part which the Brethren played in the formation of English Character at a period when medievalism was on the wane and the glimmerings of the New Age were appearing on the horizon, has been presented in the form of relics in stone, recovered from the church of the Black Friars in London. For some time the position of the church on Ludgate Hill had been known to a close degree of accuracy, such that when in September, 1925, the site of the choir was once again in disturbance, the expectation was realised that remains of the Priory would be brought to light. An excavation of the site afforded an opportunity to the present writer to examine the material cast up during the progress of the work before its consignment, actual or threatened, to the River barges which a few hundred yards away lay in waiting.

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<sup>1</sup> A portion of the Paper was published in *Blackfriars*, Vol. vii, No. 72, March, 1926.

Concerning information as to the structure of the church, a certain amount of success was achieved through the recovery of worked stone amounting to several tons. By the kindness of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, the recovered stones were presented to the Dominican Community in London, and were taken to St. Dominic's Priory, at Havestock Hill, Hampstead, where they were set up at the expense of the Community as a visible and perpetual reminder of the early settlement of the Brethren in London.

The situation at Ludgate from which the remains were recovered did not however mark the original home in London, for it was the second place in which the Blackfriars had established themselves in our midst, the original settlement having been in the parish of St. Andrew, Holborn. The account of the coming of the Blackfriars to this Country is an oft-told tale, amounting perhaps to a common-place. Thus Nicholas Trevet, the Dominican, born within a generation of their coming says:—

“ At the second General Chapter of the Order of Friar Preacher which was held at Bologna under the blessed Dominic, there were sent into England, Friar Preachers to the number of thirteen, having as their Prior, Friar Gilbert Ash. In the company of the venerable Father, Lord Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, they reached Canterbury. After they had presented themselves to Lord Stephen, the Archbishop, and after he had understood that they were *preachers*, he straightway ordered Gilbert to preach before him in a certain church where he was himself that day to have preached. The prelate was so edified by the friar's sermon that henceforth during his episcopate he favoured and promoted the Order and its work. Leaving Canterbury, the friars came to London on the Feast of St. Lawrence, and finally reached Oxford on the Feast of the Assumption of the Glorious Virgin, to whose honour they built their Oratory. They held the schools that are now called St. Edward's, and settled in that parish for some time, but finding that they had no room for expanding, they removed to another site given them by the King, where, outside the city walls, they now dwell.”

From this account (Bede Jarrett, O.P.; *The English Dominicans*, 1221-1921; Part 1) we may suppose, as was

pointed out, that the arrival took place on August 6th of the year 1221 and coincided with the date of the death of St. Dominic. Although the friars halted at Canterbury and at London, "It is clear that they as yet made no foundations in either of these places"; this was to come later. They were given land in London by Hubert de Burgh, a gift which was confirmed in 1224 by John Bokointe. In 46 Hen. III (1262) licence was granted to the friars for the enclosing of a lane for the enlargement of their house (*v. Harben's Dict. of London*, 1918, for useful references and dates). Notwithstanding Stow's assertion in his *Survey of London* (1603) that "On the west side of Newstreet [Chancery Lane] towards the north end thereof was (of old time) the church and house of the Preaching Friars," we know that the house was at or near the north-east corner of Shoe Lane, in the parish of St. Andrew, a house which, on the friars' migration to Ludgate, was sold to Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln. The transfer, dated March 3rd, 1286, is embodied in the King's letters of *Inspeximus*.

by the sale of the house in Holborn, the friars obtained 550 marks. The descent of the property together with that of the manor of Holborn is traceable down to the year 1855 (W. Paley Baildon; *The Black Books of Lincoln's Inn*, 1902, vol. iv, p. 263 *et seq.*), when Newton in his *London in the Olden Time* said:—"a part of a mansion is yet standing and bears marks of some antiquity; it is presumed, however, that this is not the original Oldborne Hall, mentioned by Stowe, as it is evidently an erection of the time of James I." In all probability the site is that which is now occupied by the offices and works of *The Daily Sketch* in Shoe Lane, E.C.

By the year 1250, the priory buildings must have reached a considerable size, for at that date a General Chapter was held there when four hundred members of the Order were present.<sup>1</sup> At length, however—possibly because the quarters

<sup>1</sup> For the general history of the Black Friars down to the time of the Reformation and of their early habitation in Holborn and, later, in the neighbourhood of Ludgate

in Holborn proved too confined—the Order secured another site for their habitation and set up their home at the west of the City of London adjacent to Lud Gate on the hill as it sloped down to the River Fleet on the west and to the Thames on the south. Concerning this site we have no information beyond the knowledge that hereabouts the Roman Wall which encompassed the City ran south to the Thames but the exact run of the wall is not known, although fragments and remains of what appeared to be Roman walling have been discovered in the vicinity.

According to Stow:—

“ In the year 1276, Gregory Rokesley, Mayor, and the Barons of London, granted and gave to Robert Kilwerbie, Archbishop of Canterbury, two lanes or ways next the street of Baynard’s Castle and also the tower of Mountfichet, to be destroyed. On which place the said Robert builded the late new church with the rest of the stones that were left of the said Tower. And thus the black Fryers left their church and house by Oldborne and departed to their new.”

To this we may add that the date of the grant of the site is given in the Charter Rolls as 1278 (*Cal. Ch. R.* ii, 211 *per Harben*; *Dict. of London*), but, apparently in 1275, Robert Fitzwalter had licence to transfer Montfichet’s Tower, together with the Baynard’s Castle of the time to Archbishop Kilwardby for the enlargement of the new house of the Black Friars (Kingsford; *Lond. Top. Rec.*, Vol. xi, p. 47). Permission was given for the demolition of that part of the City wall that intersected the area, and a few years later, 1283-4, King Edward directed the wall to be built at the expense of the City so as to enclose the Friars’ demesne. In 1309, a licence was granted by the Mayor to enclose the lane which extended from the gate of the Prior of Okeburn on the east to the Fleet on the West, preserving however the citizens’ right of access to the Wall and the right of way

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Hill, together with the authorities for the statements made, reference may be had to *The Victoria History of the Counties*; London [1909] Vol. i, pp. 498-502; *The London Top. Record*, *passim*, and to Harben’s *Dict. of London*. Details of property acquired by the Friars in Shoe Lane and Holborn are given by Mr. E. Williams in his *Early Holborn and the Legal Quarters of London*, 1927, Vol. i. *passim*.

thereby from Ludgate to the Thames. (*Cal. Plea and Memo. Rolls; City of London; 1323-1364*, p. 46).

In 1311, the king confirmed the gift of Kilwerbie of "two lanes adjoining to his place of Castle Baynard and the Town of Mountfichet . . . . that so they shall not in future be disturbed or molested on the ground of purpresture made as to the lanes aforesaid" (*Liber Albus*, p. 113, quoted by Wheatley in *London, Past and Present*). By 1315, it would seem that the wall was still unfinished as customs were then granted by Edward II in furtherance of the work and for the erection of a turret adjoining the Wall. At length it came about that the later City Wall when completed ran parallel to the south side of the present thoroughfare, Ludgate Hill, down to the Fleet river, when it turned at right angles to the south to reach the Thames.

The church was begun in 1279 (*V.C.H., Lond.*, p. 499) while, in 1287, a royal grant of 100 marks was secured towards its erection. In the next year, the church was still in process of building, and in 1292 the cloister was being made. In 1294, a quay on the Thames-side was under construction.

Bearing in mind the two centuries and a half during which the friars were flourishing in their Thames-side settlement, it is remarkable that so few of the many and important events that must have occurred there have been recorded. It may be that the personality of the friars themselves was such as to have diverted attention from the habitation to the inhabitants and thus to have left us so little information concerning the Priory, its buildings, and general topography. Late in its history, in 1523, we are told that Sir Thomas More was elected Speaker of the House of Commons, while, as Hall reports, Katherine of Aragon, "a most poor woman and a stranger born out of your dominions"—wording from another context—was arraigned in 1529 before the Papal Legate when her imperious and royal master was seeking pretext for a severance of marital bonds.

Soon the hand of the spoiler was to be outstretched for on 17th April, 1534, "Frater Robertus Strowddyll, D.D., humillimus prior fratrum predicatorum" with the consent of his brethren signed submission to the Royal Supremacy. As has been so graphically expressed, "Three weeks after the friars had signified their submission the implacable nature of the royal will was made further manifest by an order to bury in the cloister the headless corpses of two Benedictine monks, Edward Bocking and John Dearing, who had been hanged and beheaded at Tyburn with Elizabeth Barton, Holy Maid of Kent, for their share in the denunciation of the King's divorce."

The end was now in sight. Surrender of the House with its revenue of £100 15s. 5d. was made by the prior and fifteen friars on the 12th November, 1538, Hilsey, the last of the priors, receiving a pension of £60 and a lodging in the precinct.

There followed the granting of leases, of sales, and of gifts by the Crown to favoured persons, for in 1547, on the accession of Edward VI, Sir Francis Bryan obtained a hall and the site of the prior's lodging while three years later, Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master of the Revels, received the lion's share in the form of "the church, cloister, chapter-house, and part of the guest-house beside the church-yard and other yards and closes."

The grants and surveys, the terms of many of which have been preserved, are useful—so far as the present account is concerned—only or mainly as regards the assistance they render in recovering the ground-plan of the Priory, and, in particular, that of the church in respect of which they have proved so successful. The fate of the buildings, the establishment of a shop-keeping centre in the former home of the friars, the visits of Queen Elizabeth, the efflorescence of the Shakespearean Drama within the walls of the settlement, the purchase of a house in the precincts by Shakespeare in 1613, furnish material of intense interest for the historian; but as

regards the friars themselves they have little or no significance. The curtain, however, is lifted a little in the time of Queen Mary when a glimpse is obtained of the Dominicans, not at Ludgate Hill, but at Smithfield where for a short period they were put into possession of the Priory of St. Bartholomew, and according to the Rev. Walter Gumbley, O.P.—“The Province, suppressed by Henry VIII, was erected into a congregation in 1555 through the efforts of Queen Mary. From that date to the present the Dominicans have never been absent from this Country, where during the days of persecution, not a few of them suffered imprisonment.”

Relevant to the excavations of 1925-6, it may be noted that hardly the church there was the parish of St. Ann, also with its church and graveyards, and that, although their existence had been officially recognised and indeed had been served by a curate maintained by the prior for the time being, Sir Thomas Carwarden seized the church and employed it for the storage of the king's “Pavilions, tents, masks, and revels.” In the reign of Queen Mary, however, “he, being forced to find a church to the inhabitants, allowed them a lodging chamber above a stair, which since that time, to wit, the year 1597, fell down, and was again by collection therefore made, new builded, and enlarged in the same year.” (Stow's *Survey* 1603; Norman in the *Annual Record of the Lond. Topog. Soc.*, 1900; Greenstreet in *The Athenæum*, July 17, 1886). The site of the original church of St. Ann is unknown, but it is possible that the chapel at the North-east end of the friars' church was called St. Ann's Chapel and that this was the building used by the early inhabitants of the district as a parish church (J. Q. Adams's *Studies in Philology* Vol. xiv, p. 67). A formless fragment of rubble walling in Ireland Yard at the end of one of the two graveyards of St. Ann's still remains as a visible reminder of what had formerly existed here. The wall of which this was a portion, is marked on the Guildhall plan of the seventeenth century, Fig. 7, (*Arch.* lxiii, p. 72), adjacent to Ireland Yard and forming the

southern side of "the old or open vault." The map of London by Ogilby and Morgan, 1677, places the chapel of St. Ann in the same situation. The rubble-walling might have formed therefore a portion of the later chapel. We find that before the year 1555, the "site and soil of the same parish church, or the more part thereof, and the site and soil of divers parts of the belfry, chapels, chancel, vestry, and church belonging to the said late Black friars . . . . [have] been abused and perverted into two separate tennis courts or tennis plays to the open maintenance of vice and to the great hurt and corruption of the youth of the City of London.' (Bill of complaint; Chancery Proceedings; Misc. 3rd. Ser., 27.) By the year 1615, one tennis court only seems to have been in existence at Blackfriars, its dimensions being 75 feet long, 20 feet broad, and 19 feet high (Book of Clerk of the Works, Petworth, 1615, quoted in *The Annals of Tennis* by Marshall, 1878, pp. 59, 64, 80). In the plan of London by Ogilby and Morgan, 1677, a lane marked 'k 68' is shown at right-angles to the upper end of Church Entry on its eastern side; but 'k 68' is not mentioned in the key to the map. On the late 17th cent. Guildhall plan, Tennis Court appears under that name and down to a recent period the lane shown by Ogilby and Morgan was still known as Tennis Court. From the early part of the present century however, the Court was closed to the public, and is now completely lost in the new building upon the site. The Court ran over the site of the choir of the church of the friars or perhaps immediately against the north wall of the choir.

As a natural consequence of the fame of the priory and of the sanctity of its church, the place was much in request for interments.

Thus, among the notables, the body of Hubert de Burgh was laid here, the body having been removed from the original home in Holborn. The Earl of Worcester together with his wife Margaret, daughter of the King of Scotland, were also buried here as well as the heart of Queen Eleanor,



wife of Edward I., John of Eltham, Duke of Cornwall, brother of Edward III were also among the goodly list. (Wheatley's *London, Past and Present*). Among the burials given by Stow, we find those of earls, countesses, lawyers, and others of importance, including various commoners. To this list, the Rev. C. F. R. Palmer, O.P., added a notable number of worthy citizens (*The Antiquary*, Vols. xxiii and xxiv) and who knows but that many of the human remains which the vaults of St. Ann at the present day conceal, and the vestiges which, during the excavations of 1925, were so often encountered may not have belonged to those who lived here before the dictates of the masterful Harry had been put into execution; those whose acquaintance with the precinct was of the closest character. It is curious, however, that so little information is extant as to the disposal of the monuments, the tombs, the coffins, and bodies of those who were buried within the church or in the grounds immediately adjacent.

From time to time, remains of the Priory during the frequent demolition and rebuilding on the site have been recorded. Thus *The Illustrated London News*, Feb. 2nd, 1856, p. 133, says:—"The church of the Black Friars immediately adjoined the site of the [Blackfriars] theatre; for a plinth and foundation of one of the buttresses of the church have, according to the *Builder* 'been brought to light after being buried 300 years; to turn up in such a position too—in the midst of the printing house of *The Times* newspaper. The plinth stands on a mass of ragstone and chalk, six feet high. The plinth itself projects from what was the face of the wall 4 ft. 5 ins. from east to west; is 2 ft. 6½ ins. wide, and 2 ft. 6 ins. high, including a chamfer 2 ins. high which runs round it. Close to the buttress on the south side of it, is what would have been the jamb of a doorway. . . . . ' These interesting relics had long been preserved at the *Times* Office, but their removal being inevitable, our Artist has placed the fact upon illustrative record." . . . . . The

paragraph is accompanied by a wood-cut showing fragments that had been discovered.

As regards later discoveries, those in 1900, consisting of several pointed arches, capitals, shafts, and bases all *in situ*, may be mentioned. One of the pillars with its base and capital is preserved in the church at St. Dominic's, Hampstead, where also can be seen the piece of a supposed reredos and of a sedilia found in post-Reformation walling in 1925.

An arch enclosing a transverse wall, which itself was pierced by a lancet window having a shaft and capital on either side was set up at Selsdon Park, Croydon (*The Croydon Advertiser*, March 9, 1901) where it is still to be seen. The springing of the largest arch is at the ground level. A metal plaque says 'This arch originally formed one of the entrances to the monastery of the black friars erected in the City London in the thirteenth century. Removed and re-erected here in June 1900.' It is clear however, that the remains came from Ireland Yard where, in 1900, they were to be seen in their original position during the demolition of No. 7. They were south of the church and were identified as part of a sub-vault of the south dorter (*Arch.* lxiii, p. 71). A view as presented during demolition appears in the Annual Record of the London Topographical Society, 1900, Vol. 1, and elsewhere.

In January, 1923, a fragment of carved stone was taken out of the rubble wall between the Wetting Cellar of *The Times* Printing Works and the Summary Room when the doorway was shifted. It evidently had formed a portion of the structure of one of the Priory buildings. It had been faced upon on the eastern side with nine inches of new brickwork when *The Times* Office was rebuilt; but, on the west side, the face of the wall seemed to have been cut back and covered with plaster. The wall in which the fragment was embedded ran north and south from Ireland Yard, opposite the disused churchyard of St. Ann, and to the right of the doorway opening to *The Times* Works.

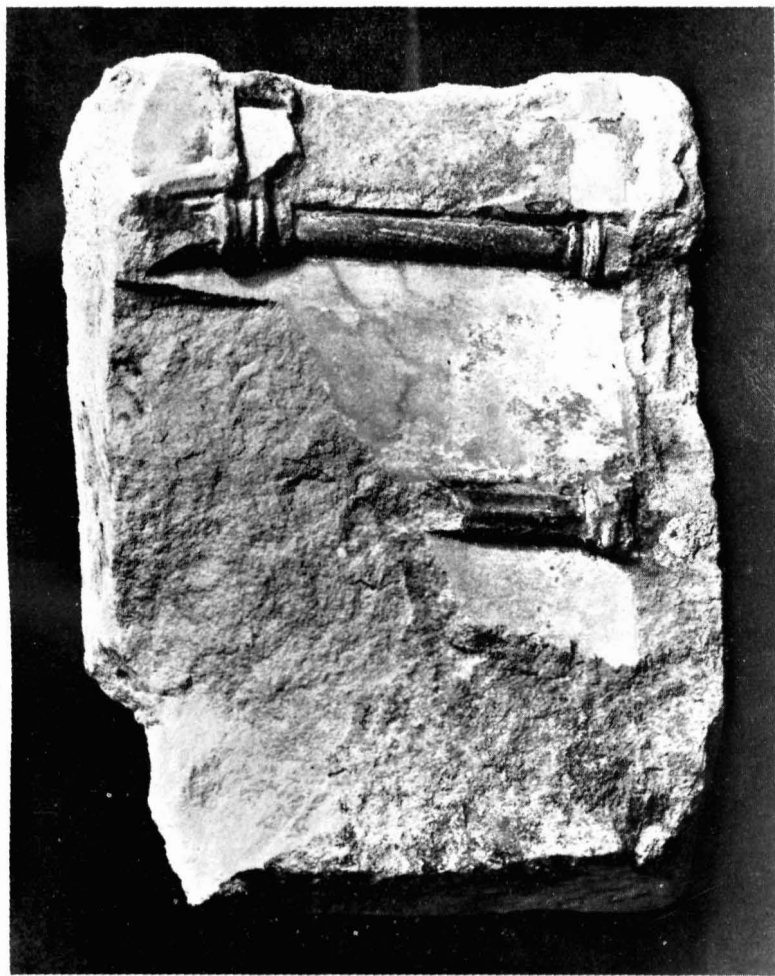


Fig. 11.—FRAGMENT OF OLD BLACKFRIARS.

Contributed by *The Times*.

Many other stones of large size were found, but none was carved, Fig. 11. (Contributed by *The Times*).

In 1915, there was laid bare a portion of the west wall of the church and of the south aisle, Fig. 8. It was then observed that this wall abutted upon the north wall of the Apothecaries' Hall, a Hall which stands upon a guest-house of the Priory (*Arch.*, 1916, Vol. lxvii, 13).

This great church of the friars measured 220 ft. from east to west. The site of the western front is now covered by houses in Water Lane while its eastern end is occupied by the houses on the western side of Friar Street. By a reading and visualization of the grants, surveys, and leases of the time of Edward VI, which appear among the Loseley Manuscripts<sup>1</sup> and from other information and deductions, *e.g.*, the situation of the present day Church Entry, a portion of which marks out the east cloister of the former conventual building, skilful attempts have been made to plot exactly the whole of the church. Among these attempts was notably that of Mr. A. W. Clapham, F.S.A., before the major portion of the Loseley MSS. had been made available. With the material then to hand, Mr. Clapham ingeniously recovered the plan of the church and the priory (*Arch.*, 1912, Vol. lxiii, pp. 57-84). Mr. Clapham's plan however has been modified in the light of the Loseley MSS., but as regards the church, its position, and plan, with which in the main this paper is concerned, the modifications are not great. Incidentally Mr. Clapham points out that a long passage in *Piers Plowman* of the 14th cent. referred without doubt to the London house of the Blackfriars, a passage that prepares us for the statement of Stow that "This was a large church and richly furnished with ornaments."

As regards the exterior of the church, no adequate view is known to exist. True it is that indications occur here and there but from these no reliable conception of the structure

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<sup>1</sup> The Malone Society's *Collections*; Blackfriars Records; 1913, Vol. ii, Part 1.

is obtainable. Thus, in the panoramic view of London, c. 1543, attributed to Van den Wyngaerde, a church is shown in the friars' quarter. The spire is drawn with a tower-like base which stands upon an enlargement having small gables, the whole rising from a pair of gabled buildings which run east and west. One of the gabled buildings is shown with several windows. It is possible however that the gabled buildings are not intended to illustrate a portion of the church, although indeed these, with the uprising tower and spire, are reminiscent of the friars' church at Norwich. In the map of London in the Atlas of Braun and Hogenberg, 1573, and in a derivation of that map, or of some original common to both—the so-called Agas' map—the wall which enclosed the precinct is clearly shown as it runs parallel with Ludgate Hill until it meets the River Fleet where a bastion-like enlargement occurs. The wall then turns southerly to the Thames, at the junction with which a tower is indicated. The wall is continued along the bank of the River and is pierced with a water-gate situated at the end of a lane parallel with the Fleet. In the "Agas' map," the upper and northern end of this land is terminated by a gate-house. In both of these maps a structure which suggests a church is shown. It cannot however even be called a conventional sketch for it is classic and not gothic in outline. It is negligible.

In the absence of a view of the church, we are relegated to a comparison with other similar structures of the friars. We may suppose it not to have differed materially from the church of the Blackfriars at Norwich with its long nave and equally long choir, both pierced with windows between buttresses and surmounted at the crossing by a tower or belfry. The crossing, which may have served as a passage through the church, is to-day represented at Ludgate by the narrow "Church Entry." It opened out at the south end upon the east walk of the cloister, a walk flanked on the east by the chapter-house and the dormitory. The thoroughfare known

at the present time as Carter Lane extends east and west outside and to the north of the church. It cut through the friars' cemetery. At the west end of Carter Lane near or at the site of the north-west corner of the friars' nave there is Fleur de Lis Court which is indicative of the site here a chapel dedicated to Our Lady. Mr. Sidney Toy is of opinion, however, that if such a chapel existed, it was incorporated within the north aisle of the Priory church, and did not form a separate building. Trenching into Fleur de Lis Court for draining purposes revealed a few years ago, as was told the present writer, a thick wall of a substantial character. This may have been a portion of the north wall of the church.

As regards the discoveries of 1925, the area was excavated in September of that year, the area having been covered by Nos. 73 and 74 Carter Lane, E.C. It lay between Carter Lane on the north (Fig. 1), the backs of the houses in Friar Street on the east, Church Entry on the west, and a burial ground with the adjacent Vestry Hall of the united parishes of St. Ann and St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe on the south. The greater part of the excavated area was occupied by a portion of the choir. The east end of the choir, however, being situated below houses in Friar Street was not included in the area under excavation. In 1925, some operations in connection with sewerage in Friar Street revealed a massive wall of medieval masonry just below the surface along the line of the Street. The wall appeared to be at least 5 ft. in thickness (*Per* Mr. Quintus Waddington). The total length of the choir, excluding the passage through the church, measured ninety-five feet.

By September, 1925, when the present writer arrived on the scene, much material had already been taken away but a sufficient number of fragments remained in walls apparently constructed soon after the Dissolution to enable a clear idea of the style of architecture employed in the church to be obtained and for dimensions of the pillars of the nave-arcade to be recovered. Fig. 2 shows the south-western portion of

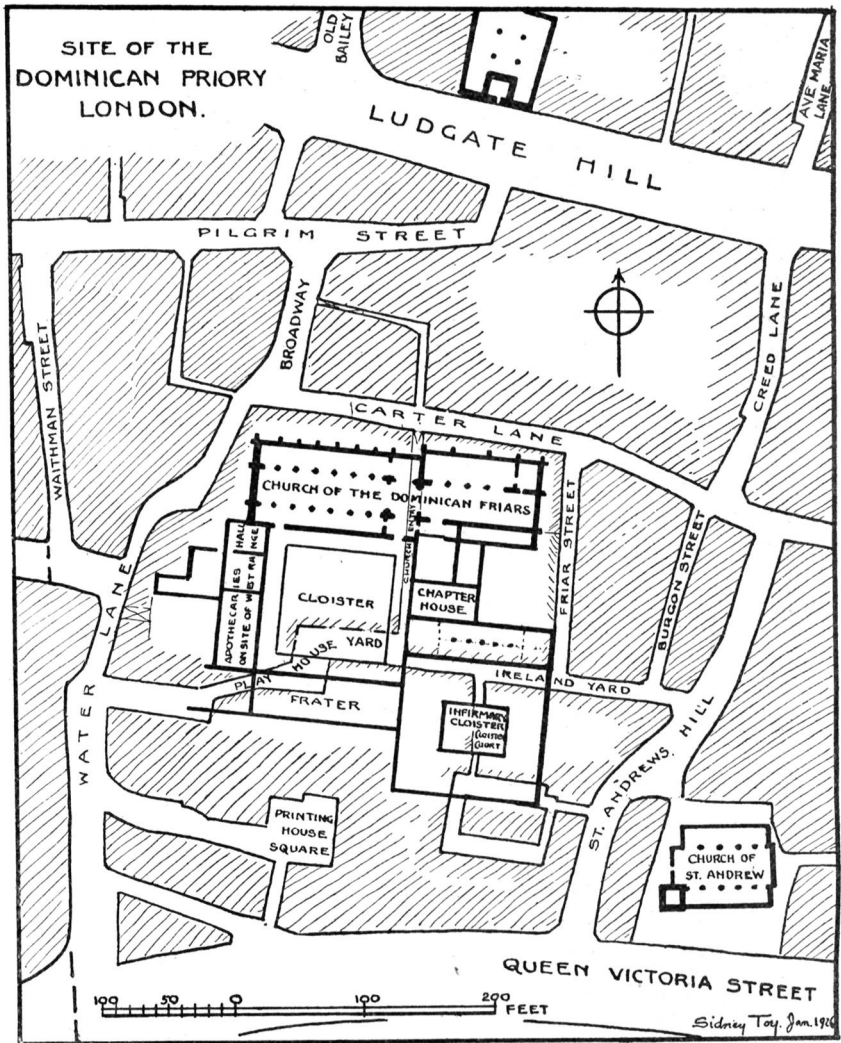


Fig. 1.—PLAN SHOWING GENERAL SITUATION OF THE PRIORY, LUDGATE.



Fig. 2.—SOUTH-WESTERN PORTION OF THE EXCAVATED SITE, BLACKFRIARS, SEPTEMBER, 1925.





Fig. 3.—CHANCEL WALLING *IN SITU*.



FIG. 4.—WESTERN END OF CHANCEL WALLING.

the excavated area as it appeared in September, 1925. The hoarding on the right marks the eastern line of the narrow Church Entry which stretches north and south. Somewhat at right angles to Church Entry, a short run east and west of apparently a part of the choir was seen to be the only portion of the church *in situ*. It measured some 7 ft. in length, over 3 ft. in height and 3 ft. 3 ins. in thickness. It was terminated at its east end by modern brickwork. In Figs. 2 and 3 the gap in the wall from which the brickwork was torn is visible on the left of the walling. The worked stones at the western end of the walling (middle of Fig. 3; also Fig. 4) were splayed vertically. They suggested the side of an arched opening leading into an area, possibly, as suggested by Mr. Clapham, the sacristy.

According to Mr. J. Q. Adams's reading of the Loseley MSS. this site to the south of the choir was occupied by the "Prior's Lodging, with larders, buttery, kitchen, store-room, cellar, gallery, and other parcels" lying "just east of the East Dorter and to the south of the Chancel" with both of which it was directly connected. A small Priors' Chapel was 'adjacent usque ad ecclesiam' and connected with the Prior's Lodging by a gallery. All this group of buildings is described in the grant to Sir Thomas Bryan, but without enough details to allow of a reconstruction. (*Studies in Philology*, Vol. xiv, p. 68). In regard to the chapel referred to in Bryan's grant, Mr. Toy considers it probable that it was situated immediately south of the choir. In the plan of the church, Fig. 8, the situation of the original walling which was discovered *in situ* is shown.

Immediately to the west of the extremity of this walling (Figs. 2, 3 and 4), were found in an upright position, the base and capital of a clustered column, the pieces being very accurately bedded with a trace of mortar and flakes of oyster shell. Since the base and capital as thus rebuilt protruded from the face of the unremoved original walling, they had been hacked away so as to make them flush with

the walling and thus to render them more serviceable. At this place there was a set-back of about a foot to a massive wall passing to the west over twenty-four feet in length. This wall had evidently been built since the destruction of the church; it marked the division between the area immediately under excavation and an open passage against the adjacent modern Vestry Hall which lay to the south of the site, Fig. 2. This wall extended to Church Entry on the west where it turned north and provided the foundation for the eastern side of Church Entry. From these walls, which lay nearly at a right angle to each other, much of the worked stone, saved for erection at Hampstead, was recovered. The style which the worked stone exhibited accorded with that prevailing during the latter part of the thirteenth century and with the date of the building of the church. The columns, presumably of the nave-arcading, are seen (Fig. 5), to consist of a cluster of four shafts quatrefoil in plan and of two feet ten inches in diameter. The capitals are simply moulded with plain abaci and a splay beneath, the splay not returning horizontally above the upper moulding by passing into the moulding all round.

A fragment of a richly moulded arcade consisting of the junction of two of the arches was also found built into the walling. This may have been a portion of a sedilia. Among pieces of window-tracery brought to light was one which seems to have occupied a position at the head of a geometric window. Mr. Toy has completed from this fragment the whole of the design (Fig. 6), the recovered fragment being indicated in hatched lines. Smaller fragments include a portion of a tomb or possibly the angle of a reredos. Many of the stones bore tool-marks of the masons.

On the western face of the excavated area and in the length of the walling that supported the east side of Church Entry there was to be seen (Fig. 2), a projecting brick-built chamber of 9 ft. in width and, internally 3 ft. 6 ins. from back to front. Its rear face lay back from the general surface of the walling

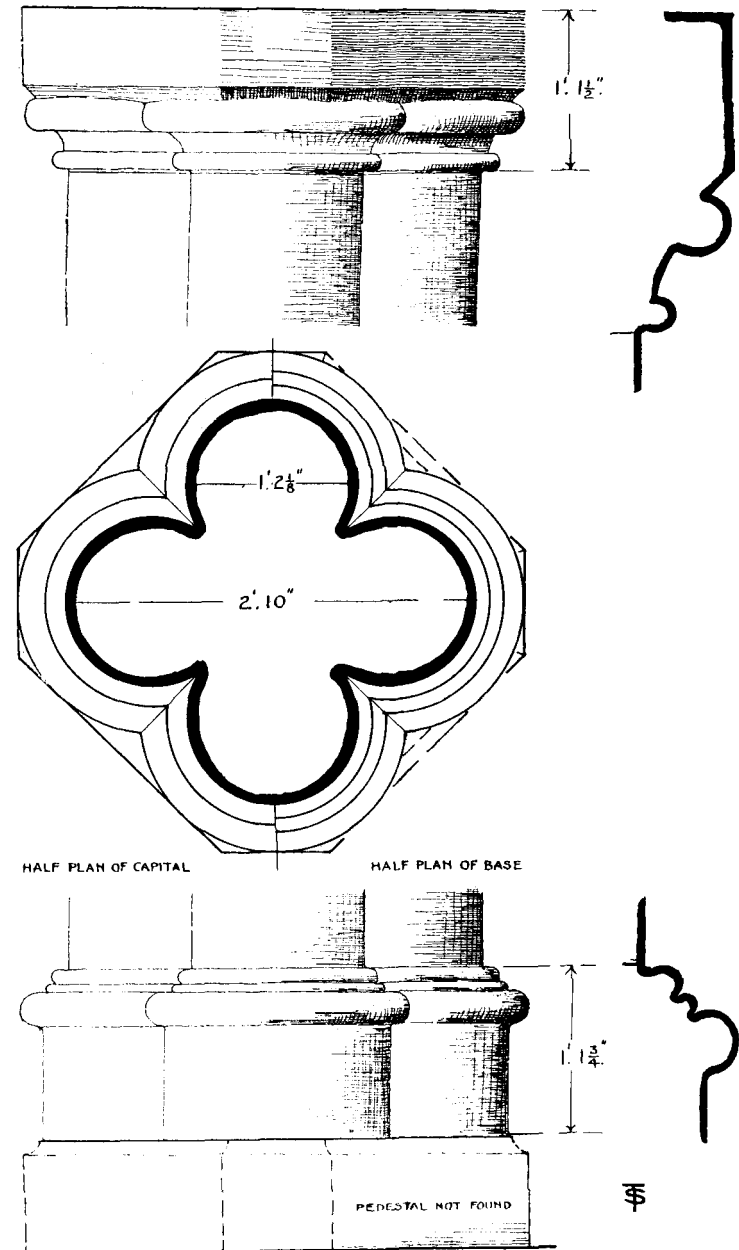


Fig. 5.—DETAILS OF PILLARS.

some 9 ins. The sides and the front, each of brickwork, were  $15\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in thickness. In height it reached the paving of Church Entry. A window-like opening into the chamber occurred mid-way in the rear-wall, it being  $18\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in length from side to side. Its situation seems to have been immediately below Tennis Court (p. 360 ante) and to have



Fig. 6.—COMPLETED DESIGN OF A WINDOW OF THE CHURCH.

served as a foundation for that part of the Court. It also marked the northern end of the post-reformation walling of Church Entry. The interior of the chamber was found to be filled with loose earth, broken tiling, oyster-shells, pieces of glass, and glazed pottery, nodules of charcoal, and occasional human bones. The chamber, comparatively modern in its construction, may have marked the site of a tomb, although



there is a possibility of its having been one of a pair of hollow piers to carry an archway to a cellar lying parallel to Church Entry. Mr. Toy thinks that it indicates the site of the pulpitum of the church and in his plan (Fig. 8) he shows it in full lines as such.

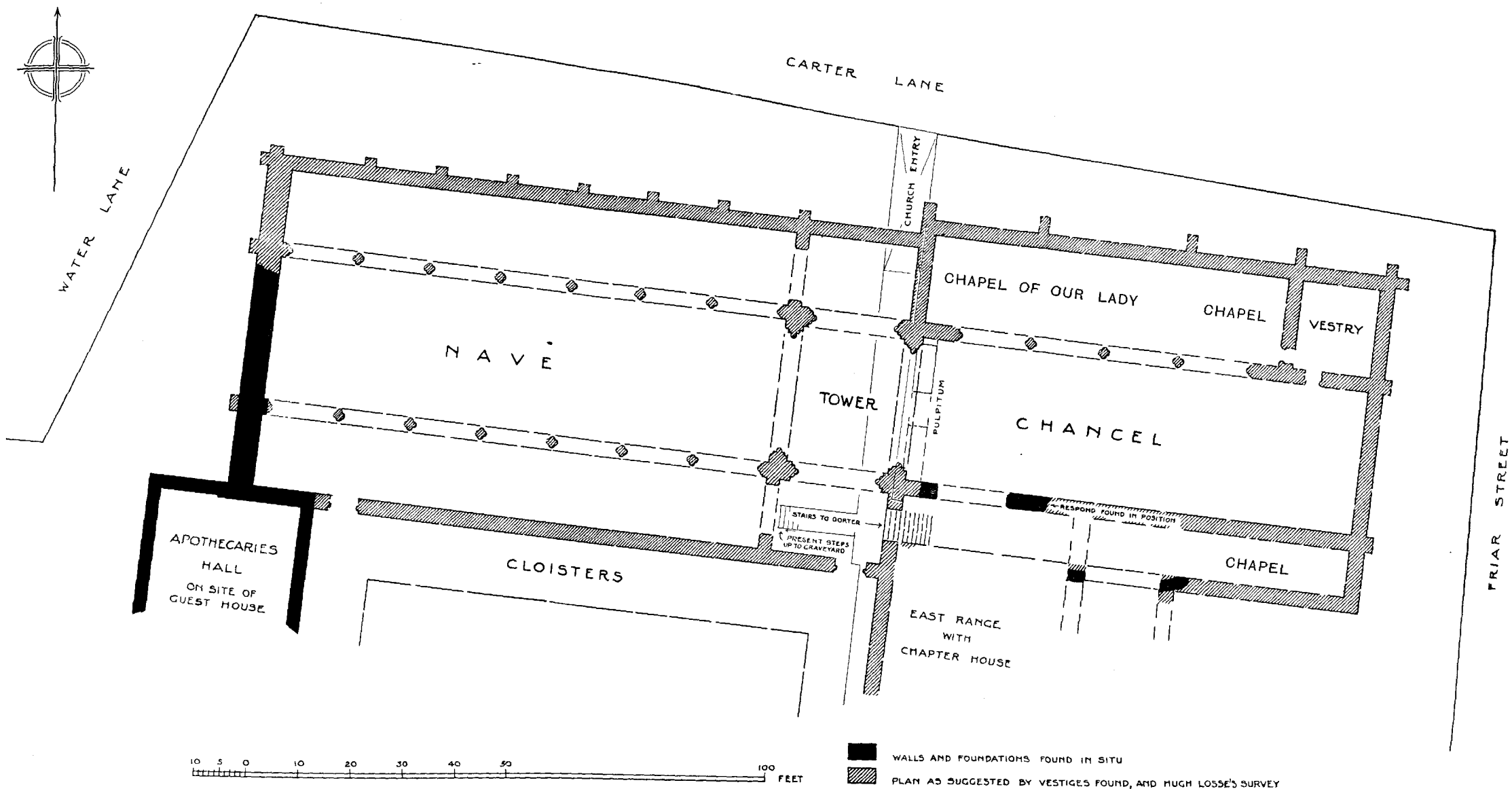
In the erection of the remains recovered from the site at Ludgate Hill at the Dominican Priory, Haverstock Hill, at the expense of the Brethren of the Order, the writer was fortunate in receiving the advice of Mr. Sidney Toy, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., who kindly arranged so many of the fragments as they now are to be seen. The short length of walling which at Ludgate was found *in situ* was set up at the Priory so as to appear substantially as when discovered. The sections of the columns of the nave-arcades were also assembled along with fragments and bases of capitals to form two dwarf pillars. Isolated fragments of window tracery, stones of arches, etc., were aggregated to form a mass which balanced the walling on the other side of the pillars. Many of the stones showed traces of fire—perhaps of the Great Fire of 1666.

Mr. Clapham, in his Paper published in *Archæologia*, 1912, Vol. lxiii, reproduced (p. 72) a late seventeenth century plan from the Guildhall, London, of a portion of the area now under discussion. In this plan (Fig. 7), there is shown the set-back which was formed, as mentioned above, by a capital and base at the west end of the wall which was found *in situ*. Without the knowledge obtained by the present excavation the significance of this marking on the plan could not have been appreciated. It shows once again, how, in the interpretation of old plans and views, markings, however casual or degraded in appearance, cannot be ignored. Further, in the Guildhall plan, there was shown at right angles to the set back wall a short dotted line of apparently no importance. The recent excavation, however, showed it to have represented a thin brick wall which was then found, a wall built so as to abut upon the set-back wall.



The private passage, mentioned previously, p. 368, which down to the time of the excavation lay against the north wall of the modern Vestry Hall upon the south of the excavated area, was entered by a few ascending steps of a total height of about 5 feet. This entrance is shown at the left of the hoarding in fig. 2, the fig. which also shows the passage against the vestry-wall. From the well-known conservative habits of builders, it may be taken with some degree of confidence that this passage, together with steps, were in existence when the church was standing. This *a priori* reasoning is confirmed by the Loseley MSS. which show that there was here a stairway coming out of the church to the east dorter. On the Guildhall plan, these steps or stairway, together with a door-way at the top, are clearly indicated. Unfortunately the erection in 1926 of the modern building on the site necessitated a clearing of this passage, but a passage still remains to indicate the site. On the Guildhall plan, a portion of this space or passage against the north wall of the present vestry was occupied by a "coal house." To the east of the coal house and in the length of the wall which is there shown a rounded corner appears on the plan. This corner was not present when the site was visited by the writer, but it is possible to suppose that it consisted of another set of capitals and bases of the same character as that found during the excavations at the west end of this wall.

As regards the general plan of the church, Mr. Sidney Toy, studying the Loseley MSS. as printed in the *Malone Society's Collections*, Blackfriars Records, 1913, Vol. ii, Part 1, and with the help of preceding writers and of the results of the excavation of 1925, has kindly drawn a plan of the Friars' church for our *Transactions* and has explained the basis of his plottings. Although there are still debateable points in the lay-out, one may be sure that the plan of Mr. Toy is as near the original as can be obtained with the data at present available. Mr. Toy's plan and explanatory notes now follow:—



SIDNEY TOY, JAN. 1926.

Fig. 8.—GROUND PLAN OF THE CHURCH OF THE BLACKFRIARS, LUDGATE.

The Church of the Dominican Priory of London (Fig. 8), consisted of a nave with two aisles, a choir, a chapel and vestry on the north of the choir, and a central tower. The night stairs to the Dorter, at the south west of the choir, was under a separate roof. There appears also to have been a chapel on the south of the choir while other chapels were established within but not distinct from the building. The whole area of this church is described in a grant to Sir Thomas Cawarden in 1549-50 as being 220 ft. in length and 66 ft. in breadth.<sup>1</sup> Two parcels of ground adjoining the west end of the church, one let to Mr. Scryven and another Jane Fremownte, are described in leases of 1552.<sup>2</sup> Another parcel of ground including the choir, chapel, vestry, and the central tower, is described in a lease to Ninyan Sawnders in 1553.<sup>3</sup> The dimensions of the cloister, 110 ft. by 110 ft., and its relation to the church are also given in the grant and leases mentioned. From these particulars and from the foundations actually found in situ it is possible to prepare a fairly accurate plan of the church.

The foundations of a portion of the west wall of the nave and of the respond of the south arcade were discovered and plotted by Dr. Philip Norman in 1915. This discovery not only determines the position and thickness of the west wall and the width of the aisle, but also, since the distance between this wall and the east wall of the Apothecaries' Hall corresponds with that given in the lease to Jane Fremownte as between the west wall of the church and the west wall of the cloister, the site of the cloister is determined also. Indeed there can be little question but that the four walls of the Apothecaries' Hall stand upon old foundations. The width of the nave and its aisles being taken as 66 ft., as in the grant to Sir Thomas Cawarden, the west end of the church can be completed. In the description of the lease to Mr. Scryven

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<sup>1</sup> Loseley MSS., 1396, f. 49v.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 40r.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 1396, f. 42.

of a plot of ground immediately west of the nave, the dimension of 77 ft. given as the length of its eastern boundary, 62 ft. following the line of "the body of

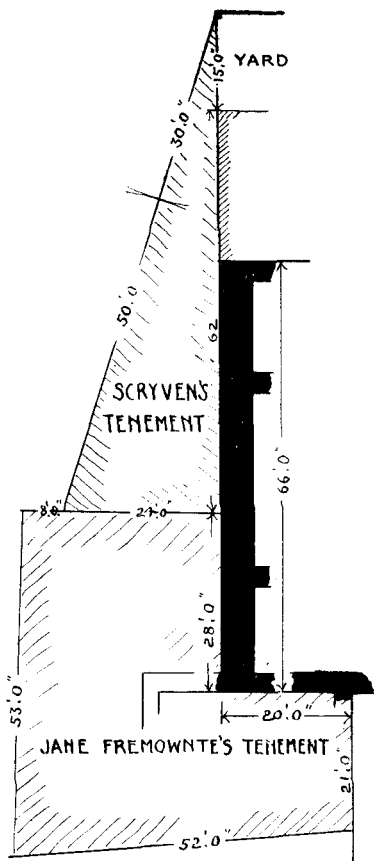


Fig. 9.

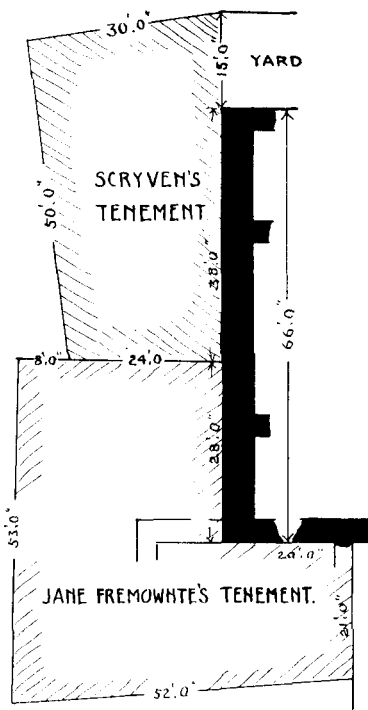


Fig. 10.

the church" and the remaining 15 ft. that of a yard to the north of the church, appears to be an error. The 62 ft. here given added to 28 ft. south of it, a portion of

the west end within the lease of Jane Fremownte, brings the total width of the nave to 90 ft. Apart from the difficulty of reconciling this with the 66 ft. given in the original grant, the north and west boundaries of Mr. Scryven's plot, given as 30 ft. and 50 ft. respectively, could only be made to join by supposing them to form one straight line and the plot to be triangular. (Fig. 9). If, however, the yard is taken as immediately north of the church and the total width of the church 66 ft., as described in the original grant, Scryven's plot assumes a reasonable shape. (Fig. 10).

The eastern part of the church is described in a lease to Ninnyan Sawnders in 1553 of a parcel of ground including the chancel, the central tower, "the chappell and a Vestry at the End there belonginge to ye same chappell . . . ye late chappell some tyme annexed to the same," and a piece of the churchyard on the north.<sup>1</sup> The particular statement here as to the chapel and vestry, referred to in the grant to Sir Thomas Cawarden as "one chapell on the north side of the same church" and "a vestrie on the northe side on thest ende of the said church,"<sup>2</sup> definitely fixes their sites. It would appear from the account in Ninnyan Sawnder's lease that there were actually two chapels, continuous east and west, with the vestry adjoining on the north east corner of the church. That there was an arcade on the north of the chancel is also clear from reference to burials in its second and fourth arches.<sup>3</sup> In whose honour these chapels were dedicated it is not possible to state, but it is probable that one of them was the chapel of Our Lady. In the will of Robert Castell<sup>4</sup> the testator directs that his body be buried *desuper* the chapel of Our Lady and the west wall of the church. This passage becomes clear if the chapel was at the east end of the building since the spot indicated, between the chapel

<sup>1</sup> Loseley MSS., 1396 f. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* f. 49v.

<sup>3</sup> MSS. *Harleian Plutarch*, 6033.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Mr. A. W. Clapham's paper on the Priory (*Arch.* Vol. lxii).

and the west wall of the church, would be somewhere in the north aisle.

The length of the east side of Ninyan Sawnders' plot was 65 ft., 22 ft. being the width of the vestry and 43 ft. that of the chancel. The latter dimension being abnormally great for the width of the choir alone suggests a south chapel, probably that referred to in a grant to Sir Francis Bryan in 1548, "*ac totam illam Capellam nostram ibidem adjacentem usque ad ecclesiam dictam nuper domus fratrum predicatorum ibidem ex parte australi.*" The western boundary of the plot ran north and south in line with the west arch of the tower and the portion of its length from the south wall of the tower to the north wall of the church was 56 ft. The bay of the south aisle south of the tower was not let to Sawnders but it is described in the lease as being 20 ft. from east to west and 13 ft. from north to south. The central tower is thus particularly described as being 20 ft in width from east to west. Its depth north to south would approximate to the distance between the north and south arcades of the nave as shown on the plan. The dorter stairs, also not included in Sawnders' lease, were immediately east of the south aisle of the nave and 20 ft. in length from east to west. The total lengths given, west to east, of 122 ft. on the north and 134 ft. on the south, when taken in relation to the dimensions given in the other grants, suggest that this parcel of ground extended eastward some 18 ft. beyond the east wall of the church to a line corresponding with the present west boundary of Friar Street.

The plan of the church being laid out from these particulars, and from the discoveries made at the west end, it is found that the length of walling recently unearthed at the eastern part of the church is in direct line with the nave arcade and is doubtless a portion of the south wall of the chancel. The foundations discovered 10 ft. south of this walling indicate the line of the south wall of the church here. For if the plan is completed, allowing the same width for the

chancel as the nave, the width of the east end, with the vestry, agrees with that given in Sawnders' lease.

The fragment of the chancel wall was 3 ft. 3 in. thick, about 6 ft. high, and was built of rubble. It terminated at the west in the respond of an arch, built of Caen stone ashlar. This respond had a plain face with chamfered edges, the chamfer on the north side being hollow and that on the south plain, and both terminating in moulded stops. Incorporated in the material of a post-Reformation wall which ran westward from the respond was a large number of fragments of dressed stonework from the arcades and other parts of the church. Among these fragments were many complete pieces of shafts, capitals, and bases of an arcade dating from the latter half of the 13th century. Two pieces (seen in the photographs as found) placed against the respond, were a piece of a capital, inverted, and a piece of a base placed upon it; both had been roughly hacked away to line with the wall against which they stood. On arranging the pieces in their proper positions the design of the whole pillar, excepting the pedestal of the base, was revealed, Fig. 5. The shaft was quatrefoil in plan and 2ft. 10 ins. in thickness across the lobes. The capital had a plain abacus and both capital and base were decorated with simple mouldings. No part of a pedestal was found. Another fragment of this period was one stone of a traceried window which, when drawn to scale and completed, strongly suggested the design shown in the diagram, Fig. 6. Other fragments were of various dates, from this period to the 16th century, and included pieces of arches, of dripstones, and of tombs; many of these being carved stones of an earlier period reversed and recut.

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As the Roman wall around London must have passed through or close to the site, the possibility of Roman remains being met with during the excavating was not lost sight of. With a very few exceptions nothing was detected which was

distinctly referable to the Roman occupation. It is indeed likely that much of the large quantity of rubble which was found on the site once formed a part of the Roman Wall, but beyond this there was little else save fragments of Roman bonding bricks which had been cemented in the walls which were found on the site. Human remains were abundant in the "made earth," and here and there the greater part of a skeleton was visible. This was not surprising for the ground hereabouts had long been used as a burial place. In particular, a skeleton was found when trenching for the underpinning of the eastern wall of the house which covered the north end of Church Entry. The skeleton lay east and west, near the south-eastern corner of the house. The skull was broken; the remainder was not exhumed. The body had been buried in the virgin soil without a coffin, although a board had been placed over the corpse before the grave was filled in.

A few of the human bones that were met with were removed by special permission of the Home Secretary and conveyed to the Priory at Haverstock Hill. After the unveiling of the re-erected remains of the old church of the Blackfriars at a special service held at the Priory upon January 16th, 1926, the human bones, with due solemnity, were reverently interred at the foot of the remains. In a sealed earthenware jar placed within the chest which inclosed the bones, a parchment, signed by eleven Dominican Fathers, was deposited upon which were recorded the circumstances of the reburial:—

*"Haec ossa inventa mense Septembri anno MCMXXV infra muros veteris ecclesiae Fratrum Predicatorum apud Ludgate Londini denuo sepulta sunt ad pedes parietum disjectorum ejusdem ecclesiae ibidem inventorum atque infra moenia novi domus Fratrum Predicatorum Londini erectorum assistentibus consodalibus plurium Societatum Eruditorum et communitate conventus S.P.N. dominici precesque fundentibus nominatim pro benefactoribus quorum nomina*



sunt hic in chartula inscripta. xvii Kal. Febr. Anno MCMXXVI. . . . .”

The rescue of the stones and their re-erection under proper custody was rendered possible only through the cordial co-operation and generous assistance of many friends, including those who were engaged in the actual digging out of the site. To all of these individually and collectively, grateful thanks are tendered. To-day, those who so desire may see remains of Old Blackfriars, at the Dominican Priory, Haverstock Hill, set up amid sympathetic surroundings. From them they may gather an impression how the church at Ludgate must have appeared when in its glory and what a loss to Londoners its destruction must have been.

Aesthetically, nothing more need be said than to invite Londoners to visit Church Entry, Carter Lane, and to inspect the eminently utilitarian and no doubt very necessary building that now rears its unabashed head upon the site of the choir of the old church of the Blackfriars.

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