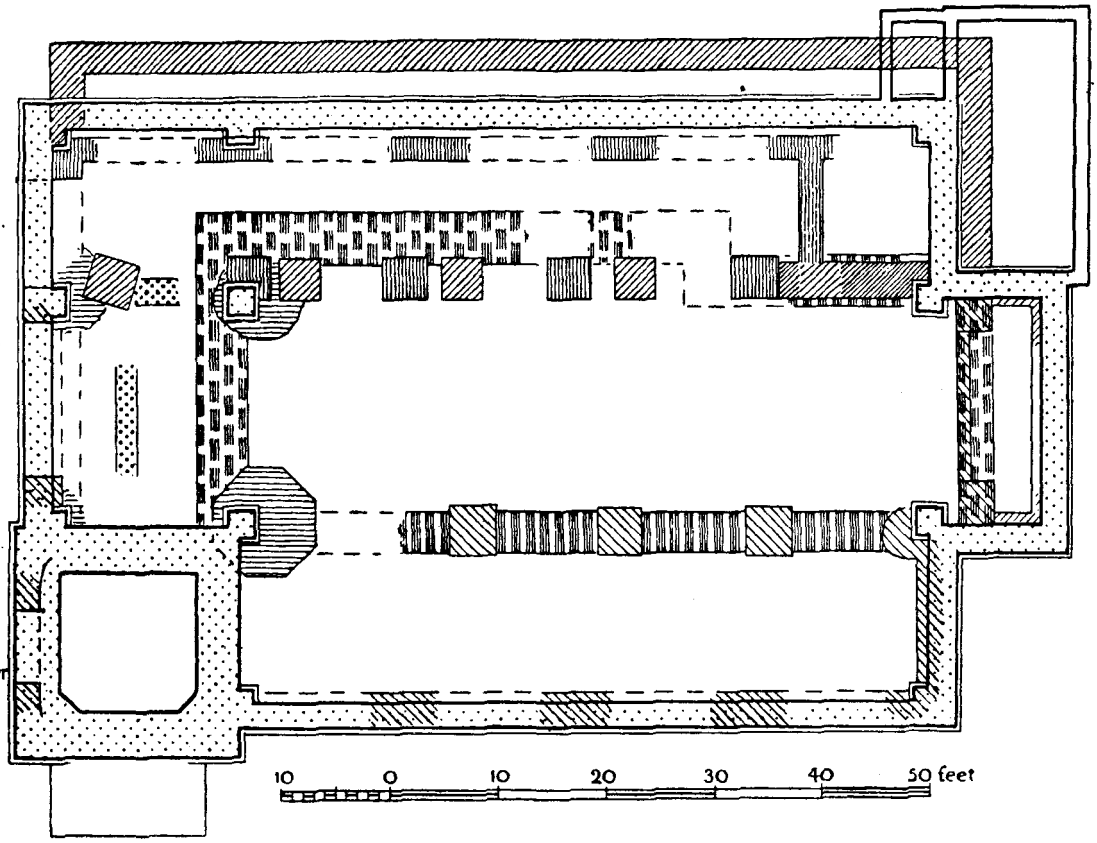
# CHURCH OF ALL HALLOWS LOMBARD STREET

demolished 1939-40

Plan of foundations.

- earliest church 11th or 12th c. ragstone & Roman rubble
- same excavated robbed footings
- same period or earlier ? pitched ragstone rubble
- N aisle, probably 13th c chalk walls ragstone piers
- probably 13th c. ragstone wall
- later N aisle 14th or 15th c. chalk walls ragstone & granite piers
- S. aisle, late 15th c chalk piers ragstone walls
- large piers of 16th c tower ragstone, brick, & grey mortar
- plan of 1694.




J W Bloe based on notes & measurements by Adrian Oswald

# REPORT OF THE VISITS MADE TO THE SITE OF ALL HALLOWS, LOMBARD STREET

FROM NOTES BY J. W. BLOE, O.B.E., F.S.A.

WHEN the first visit was made, by Messrs. Taylor and Bloe, to All Hallows, Lombard Street, on 23rd May, 1939, the side walls were still standing but roof-timbers were being carted away, and stones thrown down from the tower made close inspection dangerous. Mediaeval stones from the east wall which fell in 1934 had been put aside but buried under debris and were never recovered.

Thirty visits by our two representatives were made before 2nd March, 1940, and they were made to coincide with the workmen's dinner hour. On 27th June, pieces of 15th century window jambs and tracery, used in Wren's north and south walls were put aside, together with stones of the 13th and 14th centuries. These were sketched and photographed, and the best were a vaulting boss of an angel holding a shield, and the jamb of an elaborate 15th century monument or recess. Mr. Quintin Waddington, of the Guildhall Museum, agreed to take the vaulting boss, but had no room for other relics.

Six other pieces were set aside for preservation, to which was added a 13th century moulded base of Purbeck marble, and some other items of the same date. Eighteenth century gravestones, leaden coffins and human remains were being exposed, and carefully collected for interment elsewhere. A portion of the base of a large octagonal pier came to light under the north-east corner of Wren's tower, and at the south-west angle of his chancel were found what seemed to be the foundation of the east respond of a former south arcade. In August two mediaeval arches were exposed in the foundations of the west wall and 24 lead coffins were removed from black earth with much humus, probably the filling-in after the Great Fire. Under the former south aisle was black earth, mixed with chalk, stone and brick. Another mass of mediaeval masonry was being exposed in the northern half of the nave-site, corresponding with the octagonal southern pier.

When work on the site was stopped on the outbreak of

war another small arch had been uncovered below the foundation of Wren's south-west tower; and ten important stones were removed to safe custody. Nearly three months later, 30th November, our representatives had a conference with Mr. Waddington and Mr. Oswald at the Guildhall Museum, and learned that the work had been resumed and that Mr. Oswald had made important discoveries during the five weeks of his efforts.

He had made careful measurements, but the mediaeval north and south walls with basement arches had been demolished. Many mediaeval pottery shards had been found as well as a penny of Edward the Confessor. Another visit on 14th December showed the east end and part of the south wall still standing to wait for adjacent demolition of office property.

In the south wall there remained the easternmost of the segmental-pointed foundation arches, and part of the next, earlier than the great west arch and with rougher voussoirs of stone.

The square pier between them contained flints and pieces of Roman brick, while on the north side was a scrap of the basement of the west end of the narrower aisle, in which were the remains of a chalk arch, and a little of the original west wall of the aisle, also with the voussoirs of a similar arch. Another chalk arch was seen in the foundations of the east wall of the chancel. The wall of the wider north aisle, with its chalk arches, had entirely disappeared, but many pieces of 15th century window tracery were seen in the broken edges of the south walls. A photograph was taken on 21st December of the south-east corner, showing the foundation arches. The large octagonal pier, 10 feet across, of good dressed ashlar, and a corresponding pier in the northern half, seen four months previously, were now levelled; the evidence of these two piers showed that the mediaeval tower must have been at the west end of the nave instead of at the south-west angle of the Church.

The west wall, pierced by the great arch, was 4 ft. 4 in. thick, enough to support such a tower. Eastward excavations were showing square sub-bases of the pillars of the north and south arcades.

Mr. Oswald's digging in January, 1940, for which the Society of Antiquaries had voted money, did not reveal much evidence of the Saxon church.

Most early masonry had been grubbed out by mediaeval

builders, but he found a narrow cross wall below the former west tower, and a similar one in line with the former north arcade. A mass of masonry against the west wall was probably the north-west angle of the mediaeval tower. The square footings of the south arcade indicated four bays between the east end and the tower, but on the north side were found footings of two different arcades, of four bays but differently spaced. The rough great pier, probably the north-east leg of the mediaeval west tower, was broken down, having been built above two arcade bases, one of each period. A pier of Roman bricks was found incorporated in the east wall, and north of the nave was a Roman rubbish pit.

On 2nd March, 1940, our representatives were advised by the foreman to get further details from the Guildhall Museum, and arrangements were made accordingly. Our Society was first in the field, and we were able to watch early excavations; but it was lucky that Mr. Oswald, with far more time at his disposal, was able to pay almost daily visits to the site. We pay a warm tribute to Mr. Oswald's admirable investigations and to the courtesy which he has shown to our representatives. The differences of interpretation are very slight. Mr. Oswald's plan shows the earliest church with a nave 24 feet wide, with its south well coinciding with the later arcade, but with its north wall outside the line of the north arcade. Very few stones were found of the east and west walls, so the lines are partly surmise.

Stones discovered make it difficult to say whether the first church was Saxon or Norman. The chancel, possibly of 13th century, was narrower on the north side. A narrow cross wall at the west end suggests a possible narthex or porch preceding the tower. John Stow, in 1598, speaks of the church "lately new built," and this may include the aisle. John Warner, Sheriff, in 1494, began the south aisle, which his son Robert finished in 1516. The pewterers were benefactors to the north aisle, and the steeple was finished in 1544, while the fair stone porch came from the dissolved Priory of St. John of Jerusalem, by Smithfield.

West of the church was the George Hostelry, and next to it the Church of St. Edmund, so probably the "fair stone porch" was on the south side. Writing of the Grassmarket, Stow says that "the street was far broader than now, being straitened by encroachments." This probably refers to

Lombard Street and the south side and porch were definitely on the market front.

To sum up, the later mediaeval church had a chancel and nave, each 21 feet wide, and as long as Wren's Church, 90 feet in all, with a possible chancel arch between the two; a south aisle, probably finished in 1516, two north aisles of different widths and dates, and a middle west tower built within the church. Five out of eight city towers identified by the Hist. Monuments Comm. as mediaeval were middle western.

The south arcade was of four 14–15 feet bays, spaced with regard to the great octagonal south-east pier of the tower, which may have been begun at much the same time, although finished later. There may also have existed an earlier south aisle as there was a narrow mediaeval arch below the west wall of Wren's south-west tower, set in a thinner wall than Wren's superstructure.

On the north side two sets of footings for arcade columns were found. The earlier seems to have been of four 15-feet bays from opposite the first south pillar up to the west end. The north-east pier of the 16th century tower was found to have been built above the base of the western pillar. The footings were of ragstone and the aisle, with walls of chalk, was fairly narrow (about 10 feet). This was probably of the 13th century. Mr. Oswald thinks it stopped at the conjectural west end of the shorter 11th or 12th century nave and that the nave was not lengthened westwards before the 14th century, to which date he ascribes the second range of pillars and the wider north aisle, the north wall of the narrow aisle representing the remains of the earliest nave. The footings of ragstone and granite seem to indicate an arcade of four 15-feet bays up to the west tower, tallying approximately with the south arcade but a little longer towards the east, and with its columns placed to the east of the earlier footings. The aisle was some 17 or 18 feet wide, probably that of the 15th century mentioned by Stow. The north wall is said to have been built of chalk. It seems that further length was restricted by the hostelry, so that when the tower was planned it was inserted within the nave, destroying the westernmost bay of the early arcade or, if Mr. Oswald is correct, the westernmost bay of the 14th century arcade. There was another unexplained footing set askew on the site of this bay.

The most peculiar feature, however, is the presence of

arches in the basements of all the walls. They appear to have been merely wall-arches and had no connection with sub-vaults. The remains of the westernmost arch of the north wall of the narrow aisle, which certainly seemed to extend right up to the west wall, and also its west arch, were photographed and sketched. They were of chalk, as was also one under the east wall of the chancel. The easternmost arch of the south wall of the south aisle and part of the next were also still standing, and were photographed: these were of hard stone. The east wall of the aisle had much shallower foundations and the workmen were digging out brown earth from below it while others were demolishing the top of it.

The great arch in the west wall of the nave, which was segmental-pointed, pierced a 4 ft.-4 in. wall of rubble. It was about 14 ft. span as exposed, but was about 16 ft. span originally. Its apex was north of the axis of the mediaeval tower and was possibly earlier. It had good long dressed stone voussoirs such as one can see in many a 14th or 15th century bridge in the country. They were perfect in the lower part of the south half of the arch, but had been hacked back on the face about 8 or 9 inches in the upper part, probably by the 17th century builders. The rough toothing or edge of the longitudinal wall that met the north side of the arch (reducing its span about 2 ft.) was probably a relic of the 16th century tower, retained by Wren to support the pilaster of his vestibule. The smaller arch north of and in line with it was a very rough piece of work without any proper voussoirs, and the early west arch of chalk had been partly destroyed for it. This, too, seems to have been Wren's work. His west wall, being on one plane throughout, came outside the west wall of the mediaeval aisle. He retained the good octagonal foundation of the south-east leg of the old tower to support the north-east angle of his tower and the south respond of his vestibule arcade and probably the core of the mediaeval north-east leg was kept to carry the other pier of this arcade. Presumably the reason for all these basement-arches was the accumulation of debris and loose material right from Roman times, which it was considered easier to pierce at intervals for piers than for continuous footings. Opportunities to examine the foundations of city churches have been rare (at least up till 1940). It will be interesting to see if other city

churches were treated in a similar manner when the time comes for the repair or demolition of some of those that have suffered severe war damage. Incidentally, it is possible that the arches were a source of weakness in themselves or at least insufficient to prevent weakness in the superstructure (being mostly of chalk) and this may have necessitated the rebuilding mentioned by Stow. Wren's north wall avoided the older north walls of chalk, possibly only for purposes of symmetry, but he did rebuild above the south and west walls, which had good stone foundation-arches. The chalk arch below the east wall of Wren's chancel may well have contributed to its downfall in 1934. He seems to have reinforced the foundations of the south wall of the chancel where many window-fragments were re-used in the wall.

As to the mediaeval stones found in the walls, several photographs were taken of these. How far they are evidence of the dates of the various parts of the mediaeval church is uncertain for the reason that, excepting the numerous pieces of window tracery, there was seldom more than a single stone of each king brought to our representatives' notice. Some may have been indigenous to the church or the fair south porch from St. John's, but, on the other hand, there must have been huge heaps of derelict stones after the Great Fire which could be drawn upon for whatever church was being rebuilt at the moment. The pieces of window tracery, jambstones, etc., seem to have belonged to the church. Many of these were extraordinarily well preserved (apart from breakages), with sharp arrises and cusps, and could not have been of great age when the Fire occurred, but some of them seem to have been of the 14th century. Some groups were collected together and photographed. The carving of the angel with the shield seems to have been a vaulting-boss: the charges, two millrind crosses alternating with two plain crosses, have not been identified. The other angel with a plain shield was the stop of a late mediaeval window-label. There were several pieces of Purbeck marble, including the 13th-century hold-water base of a $4\frac{1}{2}$-in. shaft, which were saved. Another 13th-century fragment is the intermediate moulded band of a small engaged shaft in stone and there were several fragments of carved capitals. One of these had been recarved more than once, starting as a foliage-capital of a three-quarter round shaft, but its head, and

again the back of it, had later workings. Efforts were made to save this stone, but it had disappeared when the others were collected for removal.

The large white stone, 18 in. wide and 27 in. high, was elaborately moulded and enriched with a frieze of quatrefoils with carved central bosses. It may have been part of a large tomb like the Rahere monument at St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield; as illustrated, it may be upside down or on its side. It was too large to be removed. Another stone may have been also part of a tomb recess, it differs from the rest in being of a rather friable red-brown material. This was saved, but had suffered from exposure and misuse. They were practically all isolated examples and no replicas were seen. But many of the other fragments of carvings or mouldings were very badly smashed or mutilated. It is rather surprising that no Norman or earlier carvings were found, and there were very few pieces earlier than the 14th century.

---

## ALL HALLOWS, LOMBARD STREET

By FRANCIS R. TAYLOR

This church was demolished in 1939–40, and was watched by J. W. Bloe, F.S.A., and myself from June to March. Many stones from mediaeval churches were evidently used by Wren in his rebuilding after the Great Fire of 1666, some from other churches on the site, some from elsewhere.

This is the sixth City church with a similar dedication which no longer exists. All Hallows, London Wall, built in the late 18th century, is still intact, but All Hallows, Barking, has only its four extreme walls and its brick tower of 1658 still standing.

All Hallows, Lombard Street, was given by Britmer, of Grasschurch, to the Priory of Christchurch, Canterbury, in 1053, which gives it a Saxon origin. A second church was built in 1258, enlarged in 1494, and finished in 1544.

The church had to be demolished after the Great Fire, though parts were still standing in 1679. Wren rebuilt it in 1686–94, for £8,058 15s. 6d. Part was built on the old arched