

MANOR FARM, HALLOUGHTON

By N. SUMMERS

HALLOUGHTON was a prebend of the Collegiate Church of Southwell, and by the dating and extent of its buildings we can identify Manor Farm as the prebendal house; documentary evidence cannot be found to establish its foundations and early history, but an architectural survey does reveal its development in considerable detail.

THE TOWERHOUSE

The farm is a complex of buildings of four main periods (Fig. 1), of which the earliest is a tower house, a three-storey building at the north-east end of the range. The origins and development of this very early type of house have been traced by Mr. M. W. Barley.¹ The tower house was common in Scotland and the northern borders of England, and it provided a moderate defence in troubled times. It consisted usually of a ground floor entered directly from the outside and used for storage; the first floor contained the hall, or principal living room, and the access to it was normally by a stone stair which could easily be defended; chambers above the hall reached by an internal stair. The tower house provided only minimum accommodation for living, and was of necessity a substantial building in stone, so that when improved living standards demanded more accommodation in the house, as happened in the housing revolution of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this could be achieved more easily by extensions on plan than by demolition and rebuilding. The scarcity of examples in the Midlands was therefore probably because few had been built so far south, and it is unlikely that subsequent demolition has much depleted their numbers here. In Nottinghamshire the only other example known is in the ruins of Beauvale Priory, a fourteenth-century Carthusian house.² Strelley Hall, a Georgian building of

¹M. W. Barley, *The House and Home* (1963), pp. 27-28.

²*Transactions*, II (1898): Account of a Society visit to Halloughton. The Rev. A. M. Y. Baylay made the assumption that the tower at Halloughton is part of a 14th-century addition to an earlier manor house. There is no evidence whatever of an earlier building to which the tower was attached, either in the existing masonry or on the ground beside it; on the other hand the form of the tower is just as we would expect to see it as a complete entity in itself in the period of its building.

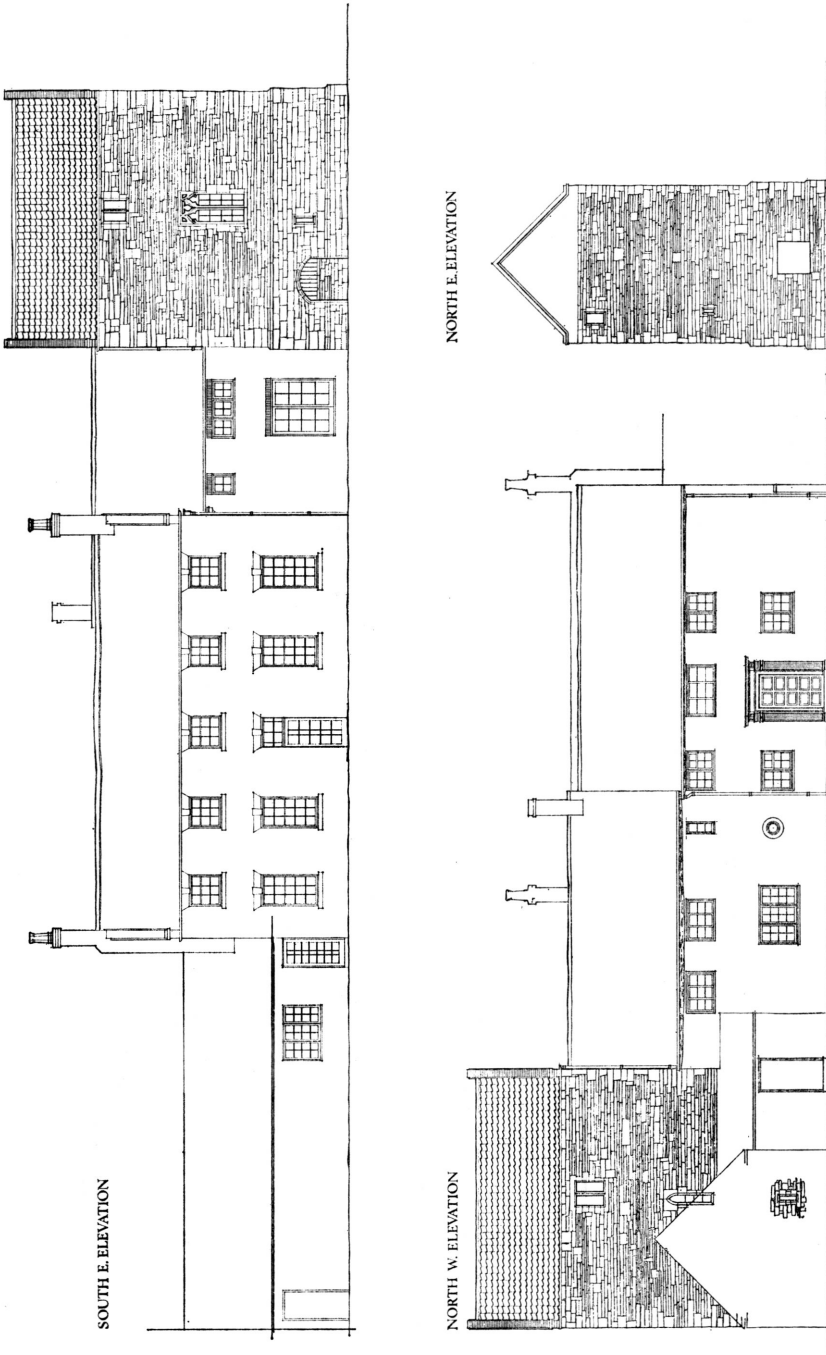


FIG. 1 Main elevations to tower and farmhouse

c. 1791, incorporates a medieval tower, but whether it was originally a tower house cannot now be ascertained. Tower houses are not unknown in lowland England in the later middle ages.¹

The Halloughton house is built in skerry, a fine-grained sandstone found in narrow beds in the Keuper Marls. If it is not too exposed it is fairly durable, but it weathers in marked stratifications by the leaching away of softer material in the bed. It is unpredictable in working and breaks away from the chisel without warning, so that it cannot be used for dressings or carved wood, and so is restricted to coursed or random rubble walling. Nottinghamshire is deficient in building stones, and even the use of skerry in a house of this period argues that it was a property of considerable wealth. Quoins and dressed stones in the windows are from Mansfield; the best of the quarries there are worked out now but beds exploited earlier gave an even-grained magnesian lime stone which carved and weathered well. Both walls and dressings in the house are in a good state of preservation although some parts have had to be renewed.

The entrance to the ground floor is by a raised doorway in the south-east wall (Fig. 2), lighting being in narrow slit windows in the south-east and north-west walls (the latter was uncovered only in restoration work in 1965). The large rectangular opening in the north-east wall is probably modern and is roughly cut, but the low arch to the doorway appears to be original and is in skerry in a good state of preservation.

The importance of the first floor is marked by an excellent example of a two-light square-headed window with ogee arches to the lights (Plate 2b). Holes in protrusions left on the mullion internally were for shutter bars, preceding the use of glazing in the windows. This window shows no positive signs of being a later insertion and would date the house as fourteenth century. The discovery in 1961 of a single lancet window in the north-west wall, when a later fireplace was removed from the inside wall there suggests an earlier dating—possibly thirteenth century—in which case the two-light window would have to be regarded as an insertion. In the parish church across the road the only early work is the east wall, built in skerry, and containing two lancet windows, so that from the similarities in detail, church and house appear to be more or less contemporary. The original access to the first floor was in the south-west wall and

¹Margaret Wood, *The English Medieval House* (1965), Ch. 12.

was covered by the later additions to the house; part of the stair remains in the thickness of the wall, with arched openings on both faces, but the external lower flight which would have turned to lie alongside the outside wall of the house has been removed.

The chamber over the hall was originally reached by a stone stair carried on a reduced thickness of the external wall at first-floor level (see longitudinal section, Fig. 2). It was extremely narrow and has had to be widened slightly by the insertion of a modern partition in the hall, but sufficient can still be seen, together with the remains of a small fireplace underneath it. The flue from this fireplace turns back to run in the wall thickness behind the stair and would originally have emerged at the ridge line inside the gable-end wall, but is now sealed off in the roof space, at ceiling level in the upper chamber. The small square-headed windows in the north-east of both hall and chamber probably lit closets partitioned off the main rooms. The triangular gable ends externally have been rebuilt in brickwork, and the roof has had to be replaced, together with most of the timbers in the ceiling to the chamber, but some fragments of the latter have been preserved. They have ovolo mouldings along the edges which are probably seventeenth century in date and are therefore a replacement of the original. The form of the roof with its gables closely follows what one would expect in a building of this date.

THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY HOUSE

The single-storey building with a hipped roof against the north-west wall of the tower is modern, and the earliest addition was the range of buildings against the south-west wall. In this extension is the remains of a two-storied timber-framed structure consisting of a ground-floor hall with a chamber over; the framework appears to be little altered from its original form, although the upper floor has been partitioned off into bedrooms. The hall is two and a half bays long, with the remains of the posts still in the walls, supporting main cross beams with a subsidiary beam down the centre of the hall. It is difficult to date this frame and the nearest assessment possible is between 1580 and 1630. The subsidiary beam has plain chamfers with broach stops against the fireplace cross beam, but at the other end the chamfers stop squarely against the wall cross beam. Broach stops must be carved (they cannot be cut from templates) and this, together with fragmentary remains of a carved head to one of the posts would indicate that the original framed structure was of a high

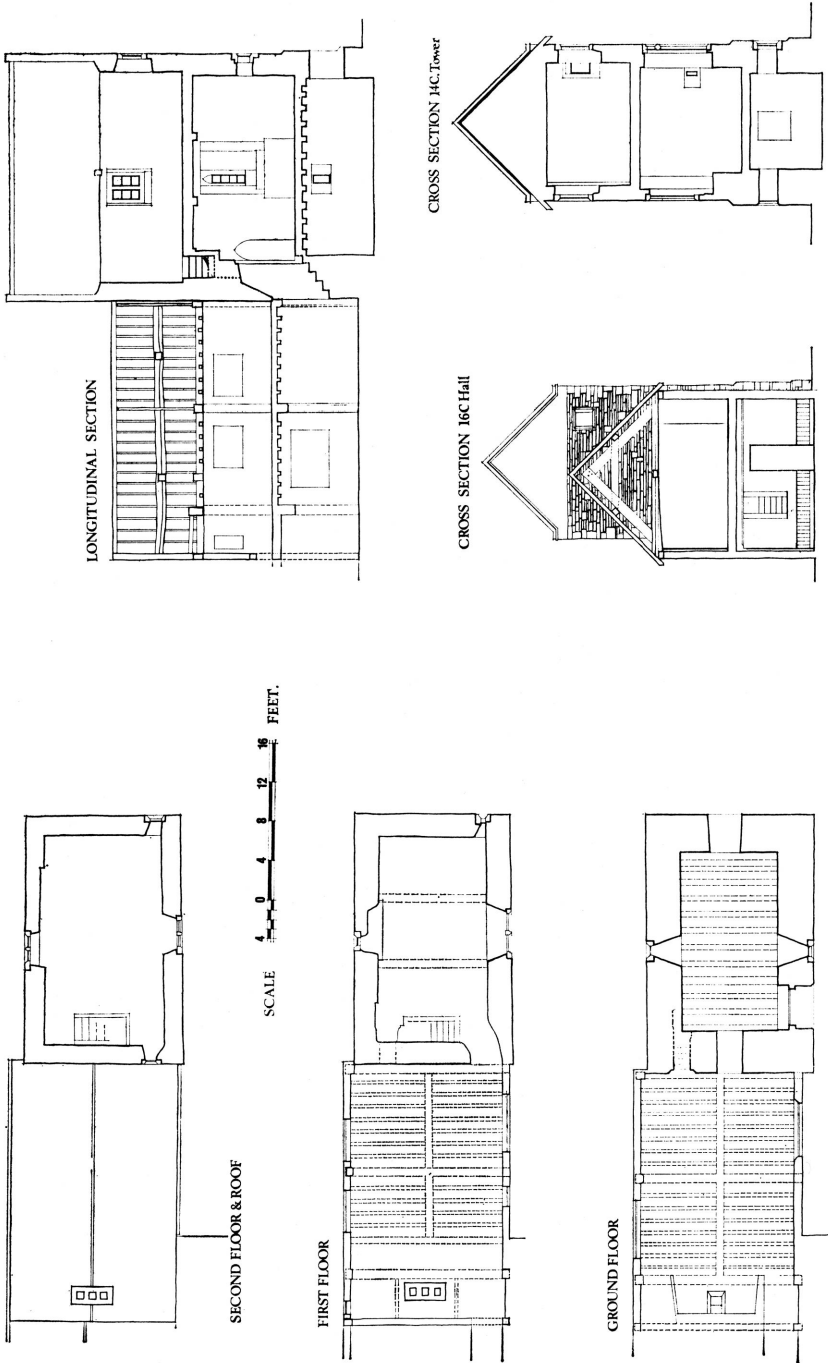


FIG. 2 Plans and sections of tower house and timber-framed hall

standard of workmanship not common in the County. The fireplace is in the half-bay, which is farthest from the tower, and although it is a modern one it is most likely to be in the original position.

This timber-framed addition covered the original staircase access to the Hall of the tower house, and access to the first floor of the timber frame was probably by a stair beside the fireplace. The next section of the building, to the south-west of the newly-framed hall, and in line with it, does still contain fragmentary remains of timber framing although it is too much altered to detect a methodical layout of bays. There has also been a large chimney base here, at right angles to the line of the building, which has now been cut through for a passage-way to the modern kitchen. The best explanation of this complete timber-framed section seems to be that it had an axial chimney stack, serving two main rooms with fireplaces back-to-back, and a lobby type entrance from the road, i.e. north-west side. The south-west half (or more) of this frame containing a parlour and perhaps service rooms, such as a buttery or butteries, was completely altered in the next rebuilding of c. 1790. This implies that the new house had no kitchen, cooking being done in the hall, and this would not be altogether surprising. On the other hand, the surviving room may have been a large parlour, in which case one must assume that the hall and service rooms such as a kitchen disappeared in the later alterations. Throsby writes of alterations to the 'mansion house',¹ obviously within a few years only of the time of his writing, and it is a reasonable assumption that it was this section of the house which was altered for the erection of the eighteenth-century wing. The upper rooms of the old tower house were probably chambers during this period, although the means of access to them at that time cannot with certainty be deduced. The timber frame cut across the former external stair to the first floor, and possibly the chamber over the new hall gave access to the tower, as it does now.

¹Throsby edition of Thoroton's *History of Nottinghamshire* (1797), III, p. 70: 'The mansion house, in its original state, which stood upon the prebendal estate, was large and gloomy, and stood near the chapel. In making some alterations in this Building (for now it is very unlike what it has been)' Throsby then recounts how, in taking down a 'stack of chimnies' in the house many human skeletons were found in a large recess; they were entire and uncovered with earth, mostly of children. He also describes the finding of a passage way under a large stone in the kitchen floor during alterations to the house. Throsby's account is taken from W. Dickinson Rastall, *History of the Antiquities of Southwell* (1787), p. 397. The kitchen and the work he refers to could only have been in the further extension of the timber-framed Hall, where the kitchen and entrance hall are today.

In its original form, the infilling for the framed farmhouse would have been in 'mud and stud'. This has since been replaced by brickwork taken across the face of the frame, but in a small section of exposed wall where the line of the roof breaks in level, the external rendering has weathered away, exposing original filling at this point. Sections of timber wall plate are exposed under the eaves at both front and back, but otherwise the brickwork masks the frame entirely from the outside. Many later changes in occupation resulted in several lean-to additions being built against the north-west wall of the house, which was also divided into two or three dwellings. Mr. Crane, the present owner, has cleared away these, and restored the road elevation as nearly as possible to its original condition.

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FARMHOUSE

The main building work of this period was the addition of the wing on the south-east side of the earlier house, i.e. the garden front. This comprises a room either side of a small entrance hall and staircase, on both ground floor and first floors, and it must have been necessary to carry out the alterations described above in order to gain access to the new staircase from the front of the building. The plan on completion of the new work must have been very similar to the present arrangement, i.e. an entrance hall on the road front, with kitchen beside it, leading through to the new staircase flanked by its new rooms.

We can date this addition and the alterations from the comment of John Byng on his tour of the Midlands in 1789, on the 'new and neatly-built Farm House'.¹ It is most probable that at the same time the timber frame was faced and filled in with brick, and the dovecote and stable block built in the farm yard, together with some of the minor farm buildings. Byng's description of the farm being 'new and neatly-built' is unlikely to have been prompted only by one wing, but if all this work had been carried out together it would have been an impressive achievement worthy of mention in a traveller's diary.

On the south-east side the setting of the house is completed by the ha-ha or sunk fence, with walls again of skerry, stretching from the tower to link up with the dovecote and enclosing the lawn against

¹*The Torrington Diaries* (1938), IV, p. 140. 'Leaving Thurgaton I came upon a higher Country and in 2 miles to Hallaton where I walk'd around their Chapel, and survey'd a very old Building opposite, adjoined to the new and neatly-built Farm House'. See also p. 75, below.

the cattle in the pasture beyond—a popular feature of the country house of late Georgian England.

The dovecote, with stables under, is a two-storey building in brick, rectangular on plan with a gable-ended roof and corbelled brick eaves. An external stair with stone treads on the north-west wall gives access to the upper storey, which is open to the roof and divided into two by a mud-and-stud partition. The south-east end is the dovecote. The external gable wall at this end has courses of headers left protruding in the brickwork as landing perches, and the present window, which is a modern insertion, was probably originally a section of wall honeycombed with flight holes. Two other openings in the north-east wall have been bricked up and their original purpose is not clear; inside the long walls are ranges of brick nesting boxes running across these openings, and it seems that earlier flight holes may have been bricked up here to enable extra nesting boxes to be accommodated.

The dovecote has a mud-and-stud partition dividing it from the granary or hay loft at the north-west end. The studs of this partition carry a light framework built on its face, consisting of battens with pegs as perches, and lath trays floored with mud for use as nesting boxes. The whole construction is a local application of the ancient mud-and-stud technique, perfectly adapted for its purpose. The open roof has plain tie beams and principals in the granary, but collars are built above the purlins in the dovecote. Some of the minor buildings in the farm yard have traces of early brickwork in their walls, so that the dovecote was probably part of an extensive rebuilding of earlier farm structures.

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FARM

A farm of this size undoubtedly required buildings for storage of produce and equipment early in its development, although no evidence remains of farm structures earlier than the eighteenth century. The present buildings are grouped around a large yard, now divided into two by an open, hipped-roofed shed in the centre. The more common type of working farm plan incorporates the house in one side of the building range around a yard, but here at Halloughton the house was probably always detached—an indication of the superior status of a manor house. The great barn enclosing the north-west side of the yard is a lofty brick structure, buttressed internally twice against each of the long walls, and carrying an open

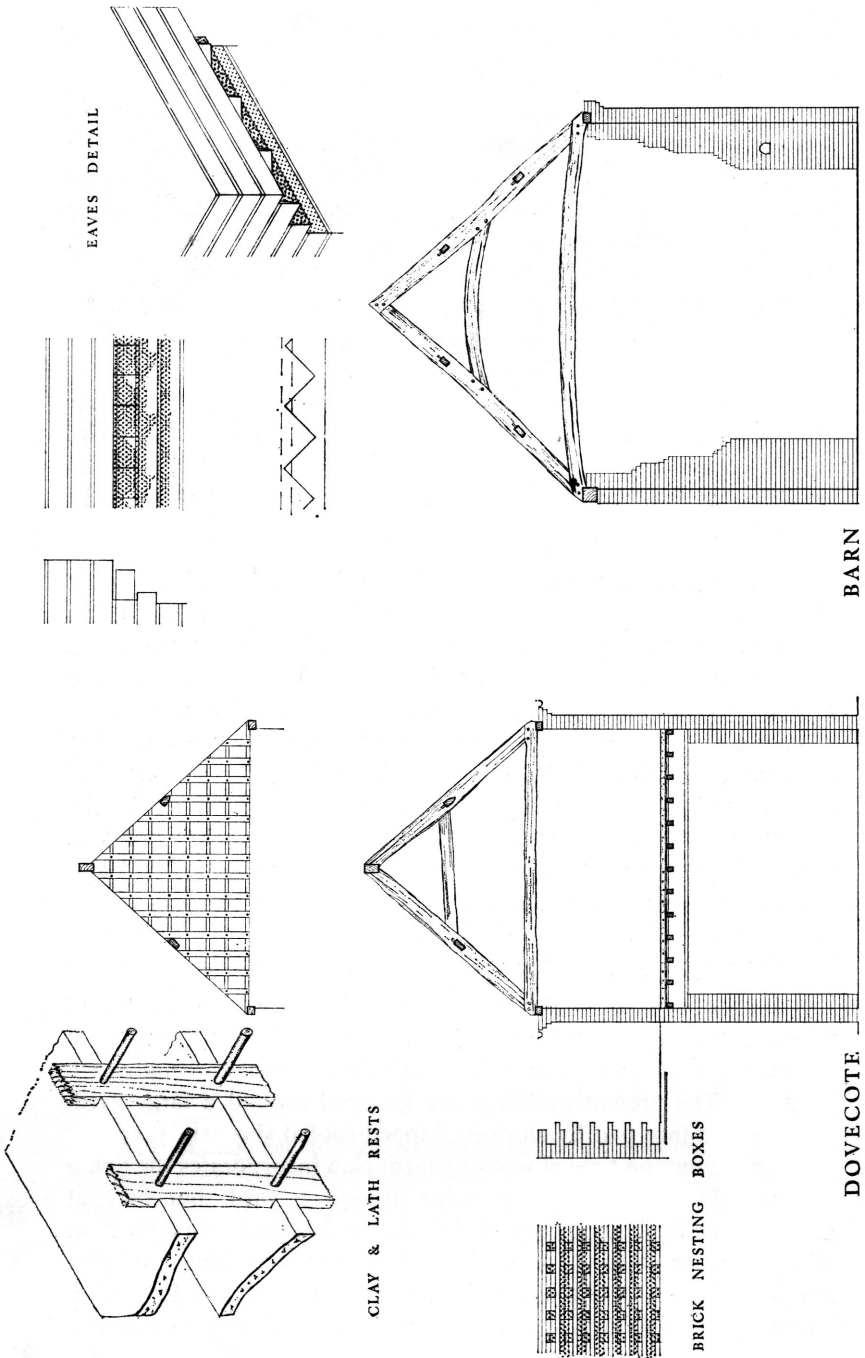


Fig. 3 Details of dovecote and barn

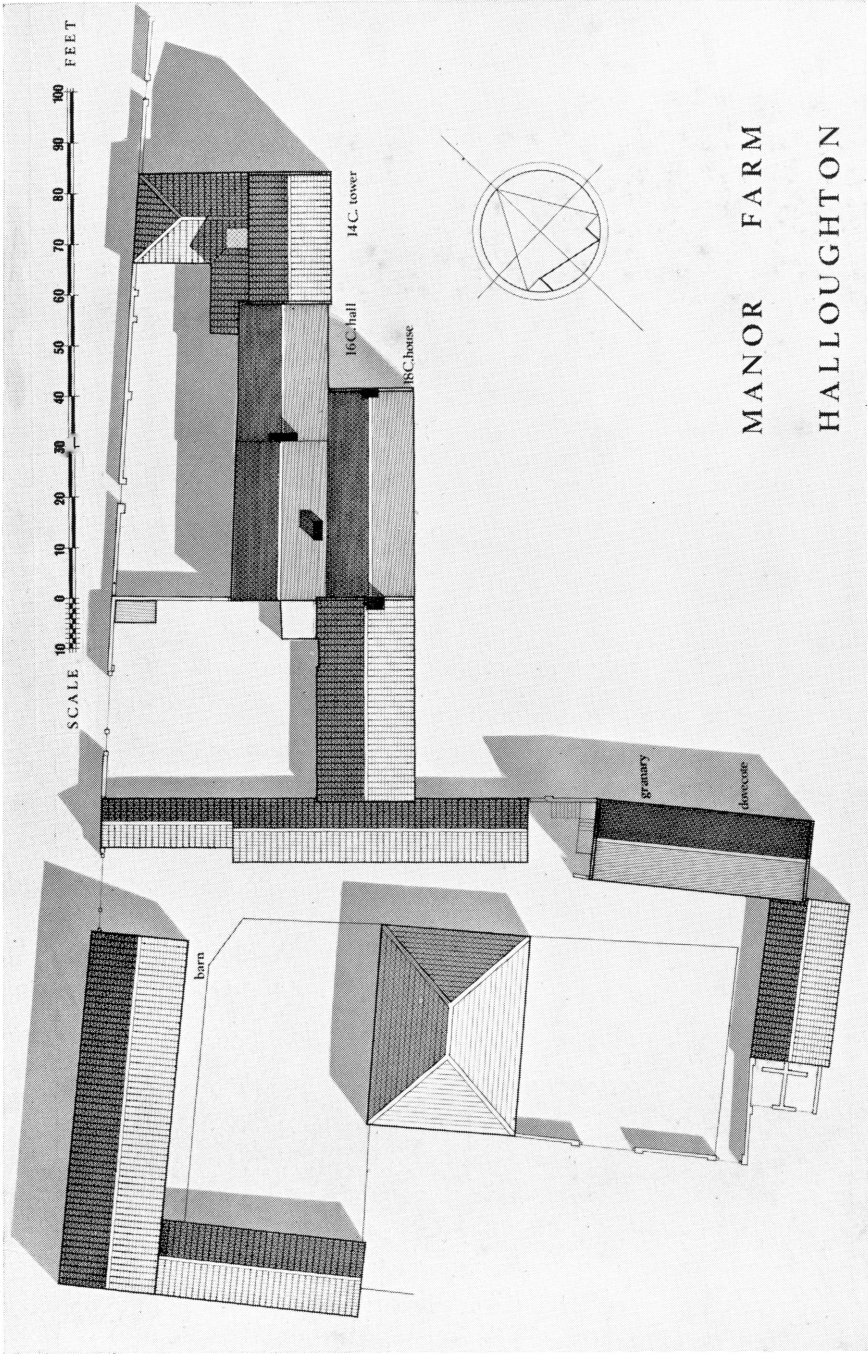


PLATE I General layout of Hall and Farm Buildings



PLATE 2a Tower and farmhouse from east



PLATE 2b Window in south-east wall of tower house



PLATE 3a Tower and farmhouse from west

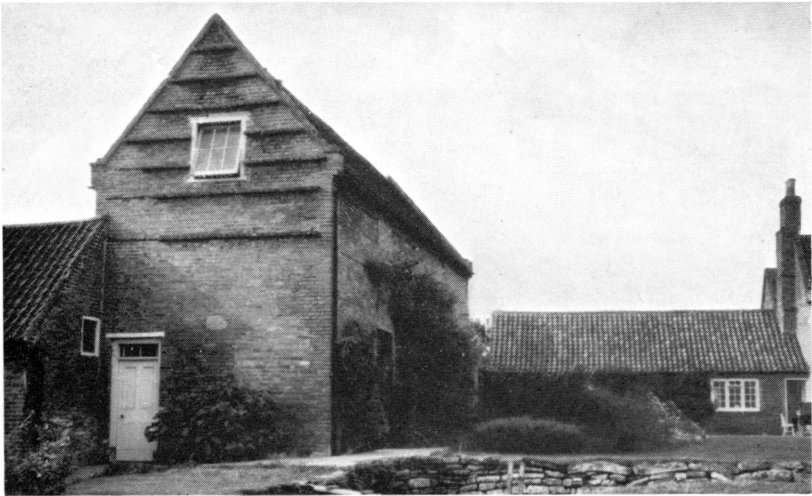


PLATE 3b Dovecote from south-east

roof with principals, purlins, and collars. It is a nineteenth-century building, reminiscent of the great tithed barns of the medieval period, with doors of eaves height in both sides so that the hay wains could be driven inside for loading and unloading. This was the last major achievement in a farm whose complex of buildings reflects nearly seven hundred years of architectural and social history.

The search for documents relating to the house and to phases of rebuilding has been somewhat unrewarding. There are no probate inventories relating to the house. The prebendal estates of Southwell Minster were in the post-Reformation period usually let by the prebendaries on leases of three lives. From the lease books and various other sources we learn that Halloughton was leased in 1589 to Nicholas Blundeston of Hexgreave Park, in 1611 to Edward Bolde of Halloughton, and in 1677 and 1713 to the Wolseley family.¹ Thoroton's rather vague statement: 'Sir Charles Owseley or Wolseley had it in lease lately, and I think still hath' suggests that Wolseley had sub-let the prebendal manor, and that the actual tenant was not a gentleman. It is not possible, therefore, to name the man responsible for the first rebuilding.

In 1751 the lease came to William Tufnell Jolliff of Nun Monckton, Yorkshire, from his father. William Dickinson Rastall identifies the tenant responsible for the second rebuilding: 'The Prebendal land here was let upon lease for three lives to a Mr. Prescott (or Prescottt), who, a few years since, built a good house, and much improved the estate.' From him the lease passed before 1787 and by a complicated series of mortgages, to Sir Richard Sutton of Norwood in the parish of Southwell.²

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have contributed to the survey and recording of the farm. In September 1962 students of the Week-end School held at Brackenhurst Farm Institute, and organised by the University of Nottingham Department of Adult Education in association with the Nottinghamshire Local History Council measured many parts of the Farm complex under the direction of Mr. M. W. Barley and myself. They all freely gave their results to me to help in the preparation of the survey.

¹Southwell Minster Records, MS 6, pp. 242, 657, 691; MS 32(1); Thoroton's *Nottinghamshire* (1677), p. 310.

²Rastall, *History of the Antiquities of Southwell* (1787), p. 127; Notts. Co. Records, DDM 103, especially 167 and 176.

Mr. D. B. Jones, and Mr. J. M. Collins, then students of the Nottingham School of Architecture, checked the first results, completed the measured survey and prepared a set of scale drawings covering all the important aspects of the house and farm buildings. I am particularly grateful to Mr. D. B. Jones who has extensively revised and redrawn the survey for the reproductions published here, in spite of heavy commitments in practice.

Mr. M. W. Barley has investigated the documentary history available on the farm and has written the above section under this heading. Mr. R. M. Beaumont and Mr. W. R. Serjeant kindly searched the Minster Records and the deposits in the County Record Office.

Mr. and Mrs. Crane, the owners of Manor Farm, have generously given all of us access at all times to inspect, sketch, measure, and photograph their house without reservation. They are very interested in the historic and architectural character of the buildings and are pursuing a planned policy of preservation and improvement which is safeguarding its future for many years to come.