

Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of White Horse

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SUMMARY

This paper brings together the results of old and recent survey work on medieval manor houses and parsonages in that part of Berkshire transferred to Oxfordshire in 1974, and discusses other medieval houses which resemble the manor houses in aspects of plan and construction. An introduction, summarizing the economic background against which the houses were built and analysing their functional and architectural characteristics, is followed by a detailed gazetteer of individual houses. They include many with one or more phases of building between the 12th and the mid 14th century, and whose early origin has only recently become apparent. Well known buildings such as the Norman Hall and the Abbey at Sutton Courtenay, and Fyfield and Charney Bassett manor houses, are reinterpreted in the light of new discoveries; other hitherto unpublished sites are discussed for the first time.

INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

This study, originally planned as part of a volume treating manor houses and related sites in south Oxfordshire to 1350,¹ is concerned with the area transferred from Berkshire to Oxfordshire in 1974. It therefore covers the present Vale of White Horse district and the part of South Oxfordshire district lying west and south of the Thames. While it concentrates mainly on houses originating before 1350, those cannot be understood without taking into account not only their own late-medieval features but also those of houses wholly of the later Middle Ages, even though large late-medieval houses with no parts earlier than 1350 are comparatively rare in the Vale. The post-medieval development of individual houses will be considered where appropriate as a means of elucidating their medieval features.

The survey is not restricted to manor houses. Investigators of medieval rural houses commonly make a sharp but arbitrary distinction between 'manor' or 'gentry' and 'peasant' houses, a distinction based sometimes on size and plan-form, sometimes on modern nomenclature, without an inquiry into the medieval ownership of the house or the status of the estate to which it was attached. Such an approach reflects a High Tory or Marxist view of medieval society as rigidly divided between peasant producers and upper-class landlords: a view which few economic historians would now hold without

¹ The article was requested in 1984 and fieldwork and documentary research undertaken mainly in 1987-8.

considerable qualification. Inevitably it provides a circular justification of its own assumptions, and will be eschewed here as far as possible. For the purposes of this article a manor house is regarded as the chief house of a manor, which can be defined as an estate created before 30 November 1290,² held in fee or socage, called a manor by contemporary sources, and with enough tenants to justify the holding of the court to which it was entitled. Accumulations of freehold in the 14th and 15th centuries that were called manors by 1550, but for which there is no evidence of a court, are treated as reputed manors. Since manors, even strictly defined, varied greatly in size, might be held by laymen, clerks, or corporate bodies, might be the holder's main estate or part of a much larger one, might pass by subinfeudation, sale, or inheritance from one category to another, and might be leased out, the manor houses attached to them also varied greatly in size and function. To discover whether anything distinguishes manor houses from others we must examine the others also.

The gazetteer section therefore includes all medieval manor houses in the area known at the time of writing, except those for which more thorough individual treatment was planned in the intended volume.³ In addition the extensive documentation available for the largely lost Bishop's Manor, Harwell, and for Steventon manor house is analysed. Limitations of time have meant that many entries cannot be based on new fieldwork. Briefer entries are given for those known only from published or unpublished work of others and included for comparative purposes. Conversely, other large houses need to be compared with manor houses. Some reputed manors and rectorial estates were larger and more productive than some undoubted manors; reputed manor houses and parsonage houses are therefore included. Other houses, whether 'peasant' or not, which have similarities to manor houses, and in particular all known examples with cross-wings or chamber blocks, are included, though smaller ones are treated more summarily. On the other hand small single-range houses known not to have been manor houses are not considered, though examples found in parishes where larger houses exist are summarized for comparative purposes.

BACKGROUND

The Vale of White Horse forms part of the clay vale running below the northern chalk escarpment from Wiltshire to East Anglia. The north-facing escarpment is here stepped, with benches of lower chalk and fertile Upper Greensand, the latter marking the springline and being much wider in the east than in the west. To the north a low ridge of Corallian limestones separates the clay vale from the valley of the Thames, which breaks through to form the eastern boundary of the area between Oxford and Wallingford. The drift geology modifies the soil pattern further, adding a division between an area east of Wantage where boulder clay and (near the river) fertile alluvium and warm gravels overlie the substructure, and the area further west where soils formed from the underlying Gault and Kimmeridge clays. Four historic farming countries have been identified: the sandy Corallian zone in the north, the central clay and alluvium, the Icknield zone along the escarpment, and the Western zone.⁴ Local building materials

² When the provisions of the statute of *Quia Emptores* came into force.

³ Cumnor Place and Dean Court, Cumnor, were to be treated by Dr. Edward Impey and others.

⁴ J. Cottis, 'Agrarian Change in the Vale of White Horse, 1660-1760' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1985), pp.1-8.

were scarce.⁵ The Corallian provided coarse stones used for rubble walling both in the zone and beyond, for example at Sutton Courtenay.⁶ Oolitic limestones were available in the north-western Vale but were as often imported from north of the Thames. Chalk was used for dressings, as at Charney Bassett in the 13th century,⁷ but seldom for structural walling. Woodland, which by 1086 was limited to the Corallian zone, later survived mainly in the north-east corner round Cumnor. Oak timber was usually brought in from south of the Downs or occasionally from Oxfordshire; elm, however, was locally available in fields and closes, and recent work⁸ has shown that it was often used in smaller medieval houses.

The scarcity of woodland complemented the early arable development of the region. Charters hint at extensive open fields in the later 10th and early 11th centuries at least in the Icknield zone, and show that estate (later parish) boundaries were being drawn across existing field systems.⁹ Indeed, there may even have been some retreat from arable later, followed by a 13th-century revival. In 1086 numerous wicks, owing cheese renders, were scattered across the Vale, but were more prominent in the west,¹⁰ while even in the east, the stock stints for large tenements in Harwell in the mid 13th century suggest that sheep flocks had been much larger in the past; in that century Harwell was notable for the fewness of its stock.¹¹ By then, however, the eastern Vale was already distinguished by predominantly arable production and high corn yields, particularly of barley, and despite some decline after 1350 yields remained high in the 15th century.¹² medieval yields of barley were not widely surpassed before the 18th century.¹³ From the 16th century the western farming zone adapted to pastoral husbandry and after 1700 overtook the others in wealth,¹⁴ but in the Middle Ages it was more marked by relative poverty¹⁵ than by any particular specialization.

Those diverse experiences reflect, besides differences in soils, differences in transport and access to markets. In the early 13th century wheat from Harwell and Brightwell was shipped down the Thames from Wallingford to Southwark for sale on the London market;¹⁶ in the later 12th it had been assumed that shiploads of herrings would pay toll at Abingdon on their way upriver.¹⁷ Growing navigational difficulties on the upper

⁵ For building materials, C.R.J. Currie, 'Smaller Domestic Architecture in North Berkshire, c. 1300-c. 1650' (Oxford Univ. D. Phil. thesis, 1976), pp. 7-9.

⁶ Below, gazetteer, Sutton.

⁷ Below, gazetteer, Longworth: Charney.

⁸ By R. Howard and D.W.H. Miles for the Leverhulme Project on Medieval Peasant Houses in the Midlands, managed by Nottingham University Tree-ring Laboratory.

⁹ The evidence is discussed in a national context in O. Rackham, *History of the Countryside* (1986), 172-6: 'as far as our documents can tell us, west Berkshire was the seat of its [sc. open-field's] development'.

¹⁰ *V.C.H. Berks.* i, 305; Cottis, 'Agrarian Change in Vale', p. 313.

¹¹ British Library (hereafter B.L.), Egerton MS. 2418; Madgalen College, Oxford, MS. 83/18 (extract from mid 16th-cent. Land Revenue survey whose terms of tenure appear copied from much earlier survey); *ibid.* Harwell deeds, 64A, 128 (TS. cat. nos. 11, 24); J.Z. Titow, *Winchester Yields: A Study in Medieval Agricultural Productivity* (Cambridge, 1972), 138.

¹² Titow, *Winchester Yields*, appendices *passim*, figs. for Harwell and Brightwell; D.L. Farmer, 'Grain Yields on the Winchester Manors in the Later Middle Ages', *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd ser. xxx (1977), 555-66, describes those manors as 'less successful' (p. 556), but they remained at the top of the table for barley and at or near the top for wheat (p. 559).

¹³ Cf. Cottis, 'Agrarian Change in Vale', pp. 427-9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 307.

¹⁵ E.g. R.E. Glasscock, *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (1975), map 1 (p. xxvii).

¹⁶ H.R. Hall (ed.), *Pipe Roll of Bishopric of Winchester, 1208-1209* (London, 1903), 15; N.R. Holt (ed.), *ibid.* 1210-1211 (Manchester, 1964), 60-2.

¹⁷ *Chron. Mon de Abingdon* (Rolls Ser.), ii (1858), 308-9.

Thames were followed or accompanied by the decline of Wallingford as an entrepot and its replacement by Henley, Reading, and Newbury, a change echoed in alterations of customary carriage services in the 13th and 14th centuries for tenants at Harwell¹⁸ and South Moreton.¹⁹ The new pattern, like the old, favoured the west less than the east, which was nearer to London and to the entrepôts by road as well as by water. Moreover the main road from the Midlands via Oxford to Southampton passed through Abingdon and the eastern Vale. In 1281, for example, the obligation of the tenants of Steventon manor to carry corn to Winchester was confirmed, though their lord's claim that they should carry cheese to Southampton was rejected.²⁰

In contrast with its agrarian prosperity, there is little evidence of industrial activity in the medieval Vale. A large-scale cloth-finishing industry flourished briefly in a few villages on Ginge brook in the late 14th century and early 15th, but thereafter seems to have declined and to have become concentrated at East Hendred, leaving a legacy of Lollardy.²¹ It is unlikely to have been a major source of building capital for the gentry.

No systematic analysis of the manorial pattern of the whole Vale has been attempted, but c. 1300, of 35 parishes in the eastern zones, only 11 contained but one manor or formed part of a larger one.²² From before 1066 small manors had been commonest in the Icknield zone, East Hendred having six c. 1300; in the Corallian zone Cumnor, at the other extreme, included three parishes and many settlements. Most large manors coextensive with or greater than parishes were held by Benedictine or Cistercian houses or by peers. Abingdon abbey was the only great landowner with extensive estates in the Vale; Beaulieu had a large estate round Faringdon; other great lay and religious estates, including Cirencester, Glastonbury,²³ and Reading abbeys, the bishopric of Winchester, and the earldom of Cornwall, had one or two outlying manors each. Several alien priories held lands in the area, and Oxford colleges acquired property from the late 14th century. Local gentry families typically held one or two manors each; several combined a manor in the Vale with one in the wooded area south of the Downs, such unions sometimes being long-lasting.²⁴ The spoils of war and the opportunities of holding office in seigneurial, royal, or county administration could provide the gentry with additional income, and Vale gentry were perhaps more prominent in the county than the size of their estates appeared to warrant: in the late 14th century and early 15th a close-knit group of small gentry from the eastern Vale was particularly active. In the later Middle Ages, and particularly in the 15th century, low survival rates of male heirs resulted in more rapid changes in landownership, marked probably by an increase in the size of the average gentry estate, apparently by fewer land sales, and certainly by extinctions of families and the acquisition of many manors by outsiders marrying heiresses.²⁵ Such changes appear to have reduced the demand for new country seats.

Manorial sites might be let with the whole manor or with the demesne, might be occupied by their owners permanently or intermittently, or might be run by local officials. In the first or third cases the house might be allowed to decay or might be

¹⁸ B.L. Egerton MS. 2418; Hants. R.O., Eccl. 2/159355; *ibid.* Eccl. 2/159385.

¹⁹ P.R.O., SC 11/83; SC 2/154/44, rot. 7.

²⁰ Westminster Abbey Muniment (hereafter W.A.M.) 7301.

²¹ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit'. 64-6, 100-5.

²² This and following paras. based, unless otherwise stated, on Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit'. 39-42.

²³ Below, gazetteer, Ashbury.

²⁴ Cf. below, gazetteer, South Moreton.

²⁵ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 42-50; Hist. of Parliament, Commons, 1386-1471, draft biogs. of Berkshire MPs (TSS. in possession of Hist. of Parl. Trust.)

maintained or rebuilt at a size suited for someone of a lower status than the owner. Little is known of 12th-century manorial leasing in the area. The late-medieval form of demesne leasing began in the later 13th century, but most demesnes were not let until the earlier 15th century.²⁶ Sometimes, as at Steventon, small pieces of demesne were let first, but the bulk of the farm was usually kept in one piece, and parts leased earlier were sometimes reabsorbed in the main part.²⁷

Besides manors proper the Vale contained some large freehold estates in the later Middle Ages. The Icknield zone, with its small manors and numerous lay lords, already had many freeholders by the 13th century and retained the highest concentration in the 17th,²⁸ partly because corporate manorial lords elsewhere had been resuming large freeholds in the 13th century.²⁹ Few freemen had been recorded anywhere in the Vale in 1086. Most freehold therefore developed either from Domesday demesne or from the holdings of Domesday *villani*. Subinfeudation to reward followers may have been one source; royal serjeanties were another;³⁰ direct sales were a third;³¹ and a fourth appears to have been large, lightly-burdened customary holdings which were *ad censum* in the 12th century,³² and which thereafter escaped the strict supervision of which corporate lords like Abingdon abbey were capable.³³ As the market in freeholds developed in the 13th and early 14th centuries, some became very fragmented, with many tiny plots selling at up to £5 an acre.³⁴ In the 14th century much freehold was engrossed into large holdings, of which some came to be reputed manors, even where they began as peasant accumulations: some such successful peasants themselves became gentry, while the estates of others became targets for upper-class acquisition. One result was apparently a large rise, between c. 1300 and c. 1500, in the price of freehold measured by years' purchase, even where the absolute price fell markedly.³⁵

Outside the Icknield zone freeholders were greatly outnumbered by customary tenants.³⁶ The standard holdings were, as elsewhere before the Black Death, yardlands, half-yardlands, and cottage holdings; as in Oxfordshire, and in contrast to eastern England,³⁷ the yardland was apparently the modal holding on most manors. Yardlands in the Vale varied in size but appear to have been relatively small, 11 to 25 acres of arable at Harwell, for example,³⁸ and 24 acres at Steventon. Their terms of tenure varied greatly. Weekwork, at least for the whole year, seems to have been relatively unusual even in the 13th century but labour services were quite heavy on some manors. The

²⁶ Below, gazetteer; R.J. Faith, 'Berkshire', in P.D.A. Harvey (ed.), *The Peasant Land Market in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1984), 108-9; Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 114-15.

²⁷ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 106.

²⁸ Cottis, 'Agrarian Change in Vale', 79.

²⁹ E.g. below, gazetteer, Marcham, Hyde Farm House; Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 30, 66-7.

³⁰ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 299; *Cal. Inq. p. m.* ii, p. 79; iv, p. 43; P.R.O., C 143/331 no. 19.

³¹ E.g. Magdalen College, Oxford, Harwell deeds, 20, 18, 21, 9A (TS. cat. nos. 1-4).

³² E.g. presumably *ibid.* 124/42, 83/18; below, gazetteer, Harwell.

³³ Cf. *Chron. Mon. de Abingdon*, ii, 296 sqq., esp. pp. 303, 305-6 (though those holdings were south of the Downs).

³⁴ E.g. Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 73-80.

³⁵ E.g. *ibid.* 61-2, 68, 73-80; J.M. Fletcher, 'Three Medieval Farmhouses in Harwell,' *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii (1965-6), 55; below, gazetteer, Hagbourne: West Hagbourne and Harwell; *Cat. Anct. D.* vi, C 7350 (p. 463); cf. S. Raban, *Mortmain Legislation and the English Church 1279-1500* (Cambridge, 1982), 177-80.

³⁶ This and next paragraph based unless otherwise stated on Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' chapter 4; Faith, 'Berkshire', in Harvey (ed.), *Peasant Land Market*, 106-77.

³⁷ H.E. Hallam (ed.), *Agrarian Hist. of Eng. and Wales*, ii, chapter 6.

³⁸ *Harwell Houses to 1700: An Interim Gazetteer* (Oxford, published with Vernacular Architecture Group Oxfordshire Programme, 1987), 2.

combined weight of rental and labour dues c. 1300, even on the more heavily burdened tenants, was nevertheless generally only a half to two thirds of that endured by the bishop of Worcester's tenantry on poorer soils.³⁹ Instead landlords attempted to claw back the surplus by charging high entry fines, which reached £10 or more per yardland at Bishop's Harwell and South Moreton; such high fines were, however, not universal even for holdings of comparable quality, and even they were far below the market rate indicated by purchase prices and subtenants' rents on freeholds. The less heavily burdened of customary yardlanders could, therefore, make large profits with luck and good management.

Compound holdings of over a yardland are rarely recorded before the late 14th century; in the 15th standard holdings were often combined in larger but temporary accumulations. On some manors standard holdings were allowed to fragment to make the land market more flexible, but on others such fragmentation was rare before the 17th century. Though entry fines fell dramatically in the late Middle Ages, on good soils they remained high by national standards (£4 to £6 a yardland at Bishop's Harwell, for example). Economic change, as elsewhere, made life easier for labourers and allowed many peasants to enlarge their holdings, although the successful peasant with a multiple holding often became a demesne lessee, and thus had no need to build a large house on his own farm. Not until the 16th century did such multiple holdings become relatively stable, and gentry figure frequently as demesne lessees, sometimes, in practice, as middlemen between the lord and a rack-rented yeoman or husbandman.

SITING OF HOUSES

The Vale is overwhelmingly an area of nucleated settlement and of large villages, particularly in the east. In the west some parishes include several townships whose core settlements are smaller. Since a relationship between nucleation and the origin of township-wide open field systems seems probable, the siting of manor houses in relation to villages is a matter of considerable historical interest, though it cannot be discussed in detail here. Seacourt village is known to have been replanned in the high Middle Ages, and the same could have occurred at, for example, Steventon and Long Wittenham.

It is noticeable that while manor houses are often sited in villages, they are less often integrated into regular village plans. Many houses are close or next to the church, as at Appleton, Charney Bassett, Childrey, Fyfield, Steventon, and Prince's Harwell. At the last the church was originally a manorial chapel.⁴⁰ Sometimes manorial *curiae* or rectorial curtilages appear to be part of an irregular village core from which planned streets were later laid out. That seems likely at Prince's Harwell, where the putative rectory stands on an ovoid plot surrounded by lanes including a hollow way, and the manor house separates the church from the former open field. At East Hendred there are two such irregular plots: one in the centre of the village is shared by Abbey Manor and King's Manor, which are divided by a straight boundary that presumably dates from the separation of the two estates before 1066. Another surrounds Hendred House, which at least since the 12th or early 13th century has stood at its centre, well back from the street and on the alignment of the boundary between the house-plots of High Street and

³⁹ C. Dyer, *Landlords and Peasants in a Changing Society* (1980), 108.

⁴⁰ *V.C.H. Berks.* i, 361.

the former open field.⁴¹ At Sutton Courtenay the original manorial *curia* and barton, divided into two in the Middle Ages, formed the irregular north-west side of a clearly planned green, among whose regularly aligned house-plots the rectory was fitted probably before 1066.⁴²

Elsewhere, too, the manor house stands at one end or corner of an apparently planned village, as at Steventon, Bishop's Manor, Harwell,⁴³ and Manor Farm, West Hagbourne. South Moreton Manor lies at the end of a winding lane running from the eastern end of a regular village street. Manor houses on isolated sites are less common, though they include Lollingdon in Cholsey, Lyford Grange, and Fulscot in South Moreton. Lollingdon and Fulscot may have had surrounding hamlets in the 14th century.

Houses which occupy plots apparently laid out as part of village planning are more typically reputed or late-developing manors, such as Watlingtons and York Farm at West Hagbourne and Middle Farm at Harwell, though Maltravers Manor at Childrey, on a site that was manorial before 1300, is at one end of a possibly planned street.

Most of the medieval manor houses discussed are not moated. Those which are include isolated houses (Lollingdon and, formerly, Fulscot), and the peninsular South Moreton Manor, but also manor houses in villages such as Appleton Manor and Manor Farm, West Hagbourne. At Steventon the putative manor house stands outside the irregular moat.

Houses discussed below which were never manor houses or priests' houses are all within villages, and are normally aligned parallel with a village street. There is no compelling evidence that houses were built to face a preferred point of the compass.

DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS

It is a commonplace that English medieval houses consisted of one or more rectangular ranges, each one room deep and normally entered from its long side: double-pile or double depth plans are most unusual before the 17th century except in castle keeps. Gable entries are unusual except to undercrofts, as at Southampton,⁴⁴ or in this region the Norman vaulted basement at Sutton Courtenay Manor House. Variation in plans is therefore restricted to the arrangement of the rectangular ranges in the curtilage and the disposition of rooms within them. The assumption that 12th-century houses often had first-floor halls and that those were succeeded by ground-floor aisled halls to which extra rooms were later added has long ceased to be part of current thinking. Supposed first-floor halls in rural settings are now thought to have been chambers or service-blocks which have lost an associated ground-floor hall. Even an assumption that an irregular arrangement of detached buildings in the *curia* gave way to more standardized and integrated plans may be invalid; excavation at Sulgrave (Northants.) showed that the common late-medieval plan of service, cross passage, hall, and upper-end cross wing was already known in the 11th century.⁴⁵ Moreover detached buildings – the hall, chambers, kitchen, and so on – could be set facing into a rectangular enclosed court rather than scattered round the site, so that a late-medieval courtyard plan may have

⁴¹ Berks. County Council, *East Hendred Village Plan* (1969), map A; below, gazetteer, East Hendred.

⁴² Below, gazetteer, Sutton Courtenay, topography.

⁴³ Cf. *Harwell Hos.*: *Interim Gaz.* 1–2 and map.

⁴⁴ C. Platt and R. Coleman-Smith, *Excavations in Medieval Southampton 1953–1969* (Leicester 1975), i, 88–116.

⁴⁵ B.K. Davison, in *Current Archaeol.* 12 Jan 1969, 19–22.

been prefigured much earlier.⁴⁶ A likely example is Sutton Courtenay Abbey (the rectory house). Nevertheless detached chamber blocks are well documented, from Bishop's Manor at Harwell in the 14th century to peasant houses at Fyfield in the 16th.⁴⁷ It is probably reasonable to suppose that detached components were commoner in the 12th and 13th centuries than later, but that there was a constant tension between integration, dispersion, and agglomeration.

Two characteristic features of larger houses may be noted. First, alternate rebuilding, once thought of as diagnostic of peasant longhouses, appears almost universal in this area and period; only in a few peasant houses can the earliest phase be satisfactorily explained as a complete house. Where the earliest phase seems structurally self-contained but functionally incomplete (as at the Hyde Farm, Marcham, where it lacked a chamber) a missing detached part should probably be predicated. Secondly, the hall range is rarely the earliest building on the site. Exceptions to this rule include the Hyde Farm, Marcham, Lime Tree House, Harwell, a few houses where hall and single wing are contemporary, and late-medieval peasant houses with only one range. In all the more complex houses a two-storeyed structure, usually a chamber block or solar wing but sometimes a service block or wing, predates the hall. Even at Appleton Manor the service block appears a little earlier than the hall.

Those considerations make it usually impossible to determine what was the full plan of a house when its earliest surviving part was built, and therefore to indicate a valid succession of common plan-types. For example, an H-plan house where one wing is earlier than the rest may result from the reconstruction either of an earlier H-plan or of a quite different layout.

Conceptually the simplest plan – a free-standing hall probably accompanied by detached chamber and kitchen – is absent in surviving manor-houses and can be inferred only at H.S. Baker's (Tiverton Cottage), Harwell (c. 1300). A long hall of three bays, with a one-bayed two-storeyed service block, occurs at Appleton (c. 1210), Lime Tree House Harwell (c. 1250), Hyde Farm, Marcham, (? c. 1300), and putatively before 1284 at Sutton Courtenay Abbey, where it forms part of a longer range; the hall and wardrobe at Bishop's Manor, Harwell, in the 13th century were probably similar. In the first three there was probably a detached chamber, as at Bishop's Manor, Harwell, and the Bishop's Palace, Hereford.⁴⁸ The originally detached chamber of 1284 at the Cottage, Aston Tirrold, probably formed part of a similar layout, which persisted later in smallish houses than in very large ones. At Abbey Timbers, Harwell, probably c. 1400, the two-bayed hall has a one-bayed kitchen in line and a two-bayed, two-storeyed, formerly detached chamber in front. In some small houses the chamber survives backing onto the front of the hall range, as at Old Manor Cottage, North Moreton, and Cruckfield Cottage, Long Wittenham. It seems likely that in peasant houses where only the hall and service bay survive from the first phase (e.g. Elm Close Cottage, Drayton) there was formerly a similar detached or frontal chamber.

More common is the L or T-plan comprising hall range and single cross wing. In manor houses it survives only at Ashbury (c. 1488), York Farm, West Hagbourne (c. 1285), Prince's Manor, Harwell (c. 1500) and Maltravers Manor, Childrey (? late 14th century). York Farm was not yet a manor house, and the last two were not the lords'

⁴⁶ Cf. G. Beresford, 'The Medieval Manor of Penhallam, Jacobstow, Cornwall', *Medieval Archaeology*, xviii (1974), 90–145.

⁴⁷ For the latter, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 146–7.

⁴⁸ J. Blair, 'The 12th-Century Bishop's Palace at Hereford', *Medieval Archaeology*, xxxi (1987), 59–73.

residences when the present houses were built. The plan occurs at the White Hart, Fyfield (a chantry house built after 1446) and in fragmentary form at North Moreton House (the former rectory), but is more typical of 'peasant' houses, such as Manor Cottage, Sutton Courtenay (1317-18), Tudor House Steventon (early and mid 14th century), 42-42A High Street, Milton (early 14th century), 39 the Causeway, Steventon (probably earlier 14th century), Church Farm Harwell (second phase, after c. 1430), 77-81 the Causeway, Steventon (a pair of 16th-century instances), and many more fragmentary examples of the 14th to 16th centuries. No. 39 the Causeway is of end-hall type; at Milton the wing is a service-wing and there was a ground-floor chamber beyond the hall. In most of the rest, however, the wing contained a chamber or chambers and there was a service bay at the other end of the hall.

The H-plan is more typical of the developed gentleman's residence. It had appeared by the mid or later 13th century at Charney Bassett and at Sutton Courtenay Abbey (probably 1284 x 1290). Examples completed later include Middle Farm, Harwell (by c. 1372), South Moreton and Fyfield Manors (by c. 1350), Sutton Courtenay Manor House (probably by 1350), Hendred House and Childrey Manor (by the 16th century), and perhaps Rectory Farm, Letcombe Bassett (by the mid 14th century?) and Lyford Grange (by the 15th century before the 16th-century reconstruction). At Sutton Courtenay Manor House late-medieval extensions produced a U-plan, and the H-plan forms an element in courtyard houses which had reached that form by the late Middle Ages, including Sutton Courtenay Abbey and the Priory, Steventon. The H-plan is very rare in medieval peasant houses, Lower Cross Cottages, East Hagbourne, being the only clear example. Though the Stores, East Hendred, has two cross wings, the ground plan is a truncated L.

In contrast the integrated single-range plan with service rooms and chambers at opposite ends of the hall appears to have been developed for the peasantry and to have started late. The earliest examples are Church Farm, Harwell, first phase (1420s), and Godfrey's Farm, East Hendred (of about the same date). Later examples are numerous. The Hyde Farm, Marcham, was converted to the form in the late Middle Ages. Only at Lyford Grange in the 16th century was a serious attempt made to bring those functions under one manorial roof; and the attempt failed, since the house had soon to be extended to make a U plan. Even some smaller houses of the type required extension before the mid 16th century, for example Church Farm, Harwell, as seen above, and Folly House, Steventon.

DATING OF BUILDING PHASES: PERIODS OF UPPER-CLASS BUILDING

In his survey of the larger medieval houses of Northamptonshire, Woodfield noted that 11 per cent of survivals dated from the 13th century, 33 per cent from the earlier 14th, 26 per cent from the later 14th and only 30 per cent from c. 1400-85, although early Tudor survivals were 'more numerous'. The pattern was attributed to economic buoyancy in agriculture and the wool trade in the earlier periods.⁴⁹ If the date of the first phase of building only is considered the pattern in the Vale of White Horse is similar but even more biased to the pre-Black Death period. The first phases of 11 manor houses and parsonages, two reputed manor houses, and one estate farmhouse considered here,

⁴⁹ P. Woodfield, 'The Larger Medieval Houses of Northamptonshire', *Northants. Archaeol.* xvi (1986), 153-96, esp. p. 155.

besides two houses in Cumnor not treated, belong to that period; the entire period from the Black Death to the Reformation claims 6 houses, with one other of the mid 14th century and two of uncertain medieval date. Of the later group only the White Hart, Fyfield, can be confidently dated to 1400-85, the rest being mostly early Tudor. On the other hand only Sutton Courtenay Manor House has a significant structure clearly earlier than 1200. Moreover the dates of the most extensive or prominent medieval phase of each house have a later bias, reducing the pre-1350 group to 10 or 11 (of which three are more prominently post-medieval) and increasing the early Tudor group to seven or eight. Early and mid-15th century work seems generally restricted to refurbishings and minor additions.

Houses of lesser men in the Vale present a contrasting picture of a gradual increase in survivals from *c.* 1250. That probably disguises a pattern in the wealthier peasants' houses more like that of the upper classes, with notable survivals from before 1350 and after *c.* 1485 contrasting with the survival of many smaller houses of the later 14th century and the 15th.

ROOMS AND COMPONENTS OF HOUSES

Halls

The early group of long halls, three of the 13th century and one of the 13th or early 14th, appear to have had three equal bays with a cross-entry in the end bay adjoining the service block. That plan is clear at the Hyde Farm, Marcham, and can be inferred at Appleton (where the front doorway survives), and less certainly at the putative early hall at Sutton Courtenay Abbey. At Lime Tree House, Harwell, the original entry position is uncertain. At Sutton Courtenay Manor House the hall appears to have had three bays, though the uppermost bay may have been shorter than the others. Normally, however, from the late 13th century onwards halls had two main bays, though those might be subdivided by intermediate trusses. An additional, narrow passage bay, separated from the rest of the hall by a spere truss or its equivalent, is found at Sutton Courtenay Abbey and Manor House, South Moreton Manor, the Priory, Steventon, the Stores, East Hendred, Lyford Grange, Princes Manor, Harwell, and perhaps formerly at Childrey Manor. That arrangement may have been normal in manor houses, but in some manor houses and most smaller houses there was a cross-entry in the lower bay of the hall. Sometimes there may have been a spere-like truss in the bay: that at Adnams Farmhouse, Harwell, is a rare survival. Hall bays were sometimes almost equal, as at York Farm, West Hagbourne, and Hendred House, but the more typical plan of a narrower lower bay already appears at 42-42A High Street, Milton, in the early 14th century. Similarly Manor Cottage, Sutton (1317-18) appears to have had a square hall above the screens, a common late-medieval plan.

The screens themselves survive at the White Hart, Fyfield, and in part at the Priory, Steventon, and were complete at Childrey Manor before 1824. The screen at Sutton Courtenay Manor House is not medieval. On the lower side of the passage, paired doorways to the service rooms survive at Appleton (with traces of a third to a stair), at Fyfield Manor and the White Hart, at the Priory, Steventon, and at the Stores, East Hendred; traces remain at Southfield Farm, Sutton Courtenay. In small single-range houses there was more often only one service room, as at 12, Milton Lane, Steventon, and probably the Hyde Farm, Marcham. Indications of the hall dais are rare, but at Sutton Courtenay Abbey the return for the moulded dais canopy beam is perhaps the

earliest evidence for that feature in England. Early hall windows rarely survive, though there is a jamb of a tall window at Appleton, two-light Decorated windows remained at Sutton Courtenay Abbey until this century, the sill of a 14th-century upper-end window remains at 42-42A High Street, Milton, and the timber head of a Perpendicular dais window survives at Godfrey's Farm, East Hendred. Early Tudor fenestration is determinable more often, typically with two tiers of three- or four-light windows in the upper bay of timber halls. An oriel is recorded at Childrey Manor and there are traces of a bay window at Lyford Grange.

Chambers

In medieval sources the words 'chamber, *chambre*, *camera*' could mean either a single room or a building – a chamber block or wing. That ambiguity persisted as late as the mid 16th century,⁵⁰ and presumably derives from the period when the chamber block contained a single great chamber on the first floor, over a low basement used for storage. A structure of this type could stand on its own away from the hall, or abutting it at one corner – as at Bishop's Manor, Harwell, until the 14th century, and until later at Abbey Timbers, Harwell, and the Cottage, Aston Tirrold – or it could form either an upper-end cross wing or a service cross-wing for the hall. Only the relationship to a contemporary hall or the arrangement of doorways, where determinable, can show which: thus some service wings could have originated as free-standing or upper-end chamber blocks (as perhaps the south wing of 1323-4 at Middle Farm, Harwell, where the present service doorways were not cut until c.1371-2), while some upper-end wings may have begun as 'solar-service' wings adjoining a cross passage (as perhaps the south-west block of the Priory, Steventon).

The earliest building of this kind in the Vale is the late 11th- or 12th-century chamber block at Sutton Courtenay Manor House, but the first floor is featureless. At Appleton only one wall of the service block of c. 1210 remains. From c. 1250 to c. 1350, however, many examples in stone, timber, or both survive, though most have been truncated. In upper-class houses the great chamber on the first floor had two, three, or even four⁵¹ bays, not always equal in length. At Sutton Courtenay Abbey and Charney Bassett, and perhaps originally in the solar wing at Fyfield, the stone-walled chamber was entered through a door in the side wall of the rear bay from an external stair which at Sutton was covered by a pentice. Timber-framed houses⁵² had an extra stairhead bay, partitioned from the main chamber, into or through which the staircase rose. The service chamber at Fyfield may have been similar or may have had an internal stair, as probably did the great chamber at Hendred House, which backed onto the chapel. In peasant houses the chamber had one,⁵³ two,⁵⁴ or three⁵⁵ bays. In that group a clearly defined stairhead bay seems absent, and the entry was presumably by an internal stair-ladder, though except perhaps at Old Manor Cottage, North Moreton, there is little evidence of it.

⁵⁰ Below, gazetteer, Steventon.

⁵¹ E.g. Hendred House.

⁵² E.g. Middle Farm Harwell (both wings), York Farm, West Hagbourne; South Moreton Manor (both wings); probably Wellshead Farm, Harwell. The rear ends of the chambers at Old Vicarage and the Priory, Steventon, have been altered, and the arrangements at Lollington are uncertain. The Cottage, Aston Tirrold, may have had a stairhead bay at the *front* of the chamber.

⁵³ E.g. Old Manor Cottage, North Moreton.

⁵⁴ The Cottage, Aston Tirrold; Home Farm, and Tudor House, Steventon; 42-42A High Street, Milton (service chamber).

⁵⁵ Lime Tree House, Harwell; Manor Cottage, Sutton Courtenay; 39 the Causeway, Steventon.

Although the stone-built chambers at Charney and Sutton Courtenay Abbey had windows in both end and outer side walls, the chamber was more usually lit from the end wall only, and several wings retain original side-wall framing uninterrupted by contemporary windowsills. They may have had small quatrefoils attached to the infilling of the wall panels, as at Aston Tirrold.⁵⁶ A few chambers have internal cornices or traces thereof.⁵⁷ No early chamber can be proved to have been heated from the start, though at Sutton Courtenay Abbey a fireplace was inserted in the earlier or mid 14th century and the post-medieval fireplaces at Charney and Fyfield might replace original ones. Sooting in some roofs is attributable either to incomplete partitioning from the hall or to the later insertion of kitchens or smoke-lofts.

The north wing of Middle Farm, Harwell (c. 1371–2) is perhaps the latest traditional gentleman's great chamber to survive in the area, though two-bay chambers were built for lesser men at Abbey Timbers, Harwell (probably c. 1400), Maltravers Manor, Childrey (? c. 1400), and Prince's Manor, Harwell, (c. 1500). In the later Middle Ages further first-floor chambers were sometimes added to the existing chamber, as at Sutton Courtenay Abbey (probably c. 1444) and at the Priory, Steventon (in 1463). At Sutton and possibly Steventon there was a contemporary fireplace; that at North Moreton House may be a 16th-century addition. New houses, or new wings in old houses, often had subdivided first floors,⁵⁸ and old chambers were sometimes subdivided.⁵⁹ In smaller peasant houses the ground-floor chamber at the upper end of the hall, already apparent at 42–42A High Street Milton in the earlier 14th century, became common.⁶⁰

Undercrofts and Parlours

The ground floors of early chamber blocks have for the most part been drastically altered and refitted but the absence of large early windows, except at Charney Bassett where an early 13th-century window has been reset, is consistent with their use as stores only; so is the survival of small loop windows at Charney and at Sutton Courtenay Abbey. The barrel vault at Sutton Courtenay Manor House is the only vault to survive; elsewhere the first floor was supported by timber joists, which have often been replaced by higher ceilings. Several of the original ceilings had heavy transverse joists consistent with central samson posts, which survive in two smaller houses:⁶¹ such samson posts replicate the piers of a stone storage basement. More commonly the ceilings were

⁵⁶ Blank side walls: the Priory, Steventon, S.W. block; York Farm, West Hagbourne; 42–42A High Street, Milton; Middle Farm, Harwell, N. wing; Manor Cottage, Sutton; the Cottage, Aston Tirrold. At Tudor House, Steventon, the side wall abutted another tenement so the absence of windows is not surprising. It is not clear that the diamond-mullioned side window found at 39 the Causeway, Steventon, during restoration was original.

⁵⁷ Charney Bassett (below, gazetteer, Longworth: Charney); Sutton Courtenay Abbey (below, gazetteer, Sutton Courtenay, rectory house); Fyfield Manor (service chamber); South Moreton Manor (upper-end chamber); and very crudely, York Farm, West Hagbourne.

⁵⁸ E.g. Southfield Farm, Sutton Courtenay (? c. 1400), the White Hart, Fyfield (after 1446), the Stores, East Hendred (c. 1500), Green Farm I, Steventon (early 16th century), and the Priory, Steventon, E. courtyard wing (1551).

⁵⁹ E.g. The Cottage, Aston Tirrold.

⁶⁰ N.W. Alcock and C.R.J. Currie, 'Upstairs or Downstairs?' *Vernacular Archit.* xx (1989), 21–3.

⁶¹ At 39 the Causeway, Steventon, and Old Manor Cottage, North Moreton; cf. also Camoys Court, Chiselhampton, Oxon. (1318: *V.C.H. Oxon.* vii, 7). A post hole possibly for a samson post was excavated at the Cottage, Aston Tirrold, in 1991.

supported by lengthwise joists lodged on, or tenoned into, braced binders; spare mortices for these, and less certainly the height of external rails, can reveal the levels of removed original floors.⁶² In some cases the ceilings were between 5 and 6 feet above ground level.⁶³ In some larger houses the undercrofts were slightly higher, though seldom impressive.⁶⁴ Some of the partitioning in the north wing at Sutton Courtenay Abbey may predate the use of the structure as a chamber block; elsewhere partitions are altered or inserted.

Where the undercroft did not flank the hall, it was probably entered from the end. The basement at Sutton Courtenay Manor has end entrances, though one is a reconstruction; that at Aston Tirrold was entered from the rear end. The chapel undercroft at Charney Bassett and the east end of the north range at Sutton Courtenay Abbey each had an off-centre doorway in the end wall. Where the undercroft flanked the hall the entry position is not easily determined. The door to the solar undercroft adjoined the back wall of the hall at Fyfield, and the front wall at Charney. At Sutton Courtenay Abbey the door abutting the front wall of the hall is inserted and the original entrance to the undercroft, formerly to a cross passage, survives below the staircase pentice. The arrangement at the Priory, Steventon, may once have been similar.

Inventories show that parlours were still rare in the mid 16th century.⁶⁵ They appear to be a 15th-century development in manor houses and rectories, paralleling the ground-floor chambers of small houses, though that at North Moreton House may date from before 1400. At Fyfield Manor traces of Perpendicular windows hint at improvements to the undercroft perhaps paralleling those at Sutton Courtenay Abbey, where in the 15th century and the early 16th the floor was dug out to heighten the room, new large windows were inserted, and a fireplace added. The new chamber of 1463 at the Priory, Steventon, has a heated parlour below, as does that of the mid 16th century at Sutton Courtenay Manor House. Elsewhere parlour chimneys are post-medieval additions.⁶⁶

Chapels and oratories

Surviving and documented chapels suggest a shift of emphasis from a few rare buildings that in scale and perhaps intent were semi-public rather than domestic, to numerous private oratories which have left few physical remains. The size of the five-bayed Norman Hall, Sutton Courtenay (c. 1210), and its distance from the manor house, suggest an attempt to establish a parochial chapel at a time when canon law already obstructed foundations that threatened existing benefices. The four-bayed chapel at Hendred House (licensed 1255) had a formally endowed chaplain, is oriented, is of two-storeyed height even if the gallery is not original, has opposed entries like a church, and is considerably grander than the more publicly sited 15th-century chantry chapel in Chapel Square. It was nevertheless designed as part of the house, abutting an existing chamber block. At Charney the topography mirrors the development from manorial to

⁶² E.g. at Wellshead Farm, Harwell, the Cottage, Aston Tirrold, and the Home Farm, Steventon.

⁶³ E.g. the Old Vicarage and the Home Farm, Steventon; Lower Cross Cottages, East Hagbourne; Old Manor Cottage, North Moreton; the Cottage, Aston Tirrold.

⁶⁴ E.g. Middle Farm, Harwell, N. wing; York Farm, West Hagbourne; Sutton Courtenay Abbey, fourth bay of N. wing.

⁶⁵ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 294.

⁶⁶ Most obviously at Middle Farm, Harwell (1589) and Maltravers Manor, Childrey.

private chapel: the church, originally a chapel of Longworth, closely adjoins the manor house whose lord was patron of its *mater ecclesia*, but who nevertheless created a small first-floor chapel off his chamber in the late 13th century. The increase in oratory licences from the mid 14th century, which made an oratory almost the hallmark of a gentleman, may reflect reality rather than simply the nature of surviving documentation. At Steventon the alien prior had no chapel in 1324 and presumably said mass in the nearby parish church, but his absentee successors or their peasant tenant had a chapel in 1405. Like those in Middle Farm, Harwell, South Moreton Manor, and Sutton Courtenay Manor House, its site cannot firmly be identified and it presumably occupied the end bay of a chamber. It is the survival of screens which permits identification of the abbot of Glastonbury's chapel over the porch at Ashbury (late 15th century) and the rector's chapel at Sutton Courtenay Abbey (licensed 1444).

Kitchens

While medieval manorial accounts⁶⁷ and 16th-century evidence for smaller houses⁶⁸ indicate that kitchens were universal except in the smallest houses, none survives in a manor house from before the 16th century or in a smaller house from before the 15th. The loss is easily accounted for. Even in the 17th century many kitchens were still detached or at least semi-detached buildings with separate roofs and entrances.⁶⁹ On most manorial sites original detached kitchens with open hearths were replaced from the 16th century onwards, but on some, and on more cramped freehold and copyhold tenements, a semi-detached form developed at the back of houses (especially at the rear of cross wings) in the late Middle Ages. The clearest examples are post-medieval,⁷⁰ but their position permits us to identify analogously sited medieval bays with sooted roofs as kitchens. Confirmation comes from later inserted chimneys often with large kitchen fireplaces; some such rooms preserve their original function with modern equipment. The group includes those where the kitchen seems an original feature of the wing or range,⁷¹ those where a smoke bay was contrived in the rear bay of an earlier wing,⁷² those where a kitchen bay was added at the rear,⁷³ those where the smoke-blackened bays form part of a larger added rear range,⁷⁴ and one case where the apparent burning down of the kitchen has left traces on the wing.⁷⁵ At Sutton Courtenay Abbey, smoke-blackening may indicate a 16th-century kitchen in the south range.⁷⁶ In 1551 what seems to have been an internal kitchen, despite moulded ceiling beams, was built at the Priory, Steventon.⁷⁷ The 17th-century kitchen at Middle Farm, Harwell, occupies an analogous position in the front of the service wing.

⁶⁷ Below, gazetteer, Harwell, Bishop's Manor; Steventon, manor.

⁶⁸ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 147, 267-8, 277.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 289-90.

⁷⁰ At Southfield Farm, Sutton Courtenay, and Adnams Farmhouse, Harwell.

⁷¹ E.g. Church Farm and Abbey Timbers, Harwell.

⁷² E.g. Lime Tree House, Harwell; York Farm, West Hagbourne.

⁷³ E.g. the Cottage, Aston Tirrold; 39 the Causeway, Steventon.

⁷⁴ E.g. Maltravers Manor, Childrey, and 77-9 the Causeway, Steventon.

⁷⁵ Tudor House, Steventon.

⁷⁶ Below, gazetteer, Sutton Courtenay.

⁷⁷ Below, gazetteer, Steventon, manor.

Farm buildings

The size and number of farm buildings probably distinguished manorial from peasant sites more clearly than did the scale of the houses; certainly those at Bishop's Harwell and Steventon manor sites were elaborate.⁷⁸ Few remain except barns. The size of great monastic barns like those at Cholsey (destroyed) and Great Coxwell may be somewhat misleading, though the tithes at Coxwell in 1269–70 required far less storage space than demesne produce,⁷⁹ and Letcombe Bassett rectory barn, which presumably stored great tithes, was of only five bays. The Coxwell barn may have served the same purposes as pairs of barns on other sites. Six bays seems to have been a common length, as at Bishop's and Prince's manors and Middle Farm, Harwell, and, more surprisingly on a non-manorial site, at Uptown Farm, Sutton Courtenay. Possibly, as at Letcombe Bassett, the sixth bay in those barns was a stable. More remarkable is the survival of the late-medieval stable block at Sutton Courtenay Manor House, now incorporated into the house.

CONSTRUCTION

Stonework and stone detail

Of the houses examined, only Ashbury and Charney Bassett manor houses are wholly stone-built, and only a minority have any medieval stone structures. Stone halls survive at Appleton Manor, Fyfield Manor and the Hyde Farm, Marcham, and a stone-cased hall at Sutton Courtenay Abbey. Stone wings, or fragments of them, remain at Appleton, at Sutton Courtenay Abbey and Manor House, at Charney, at Childrey Manor, at Lyford Grange, and Longworth Rectory; the service basement at Fyfield Manor, and the lower walls of the hall at the White Hart, Fyfield, are also stone built, as are the chapels at Charney, at Norman Hall, Sutton Courtenay, and at Hendred House. Almost all those stone structures⁸⁰ appear to date either from before c. 1350 or from after 1485. Rubble walling predominates, sometimes even with clay mortar;⁸¹ good ashlar is found at Ashbury, but otherwise only in late or post-medieval groundsills, as at the north-west block at the Priory, Steventon. There is little high-quality detail except the fine 13th-century doorway at Norman Hall and the outstanding one at Appleton. Of late 13th-century tracery and mouldings the best is at Charney (with crude remains at Sutton Courtenay Abbey); Sutton Courtenay Abbey and Fyfield Manor retain 14th-century doors, hoodmoulds, and (at Sutton) traceried windows. Perpendicular detail is hardly more common, being restricted to Fyfield (reset window fragments), Childrey Manor, Longworth, and above all Ashbury Manor.

Timber framing

In large halls and hall ranges fully aisled buildings, such as Lime Tree House, Harwell, of c. 1250, had by 1300 been superseded by quasi-aisled constructions with base-cruck

⁷⁸ For documentation of farm buildings at Harwell and Steventon, below, gazetteer.

⁷⁹ *Account-Book of Beaulieu Abbey*, ed. S.F. Hockey (Camden 4th ser. xvi, 1975), 92–4.

⁸⁰ Longworth Rectory (not examined) is a possible exception.

⁸¹ In parts of the north and east ranges at Sutton Courtenay Abbey.

open trusses (as indeed at Lime Tree House). Since no large halls of the earlier 15th century survive, it is not clear when those forms were succeeded by the box-framed structures that predominate in the early Tudor period. In small halls tree-ring dating has shown that crucks were in use by the later 13th century and persisted to c. 1560, though box-framed trusses are found from the earlier 15th century and several late-medieval halls are wholly box-framed. In two-storeyed blocks and wings box-framing was used probably before 1250⁸² and certainly by 1284⁸³ and persisted throughout, although two or three 16th-century wings have cruck trusses.

(a) *Wall framing.* The Vale, and particularly its eastern part, has more surviving or deducible pre-1350 wall framing known at present than any comparable rural area of Europe. It is best seen in storeyed wings, though some evidence comes from halls. Before c. 1350 some wings, and a few halls, were built with posts (or, in the halls, cruck or base-cruck blades) set over padstones, without continuous groundsills.⁸⁴ The base of the panel infilling was probably held in loose sills resting on the ground or in sill trenches, of which there is evidence at the Cottage, Aston Tirrold (1284).⁸⁵ The replacement of such sills by continuous groundsills is documented in the later Middle Ages,⁸⁶ and there is structural evidence for intruded sills at, for example, York Farm, West Hagbourne.⁸⁷ In a few buildings of the earlier 14th century the continuous timber sills over stone walls appear original.⁸⁸

The earliest form of framing had giant panels one bay wide and one storey high; the infilling was of vertical staves to which horizontal laths were nailed. At Aston Tirrold (1284) the straight, square-sectioned, steeply-pitched braces were notch-lapped to the inner face of the wallplates and were concealed by the infill except at the front end wall. Those characteristics were progressively modified later. At York Farm, West Hagbourne (c. 1285), the brace-heads were mortised; at 42-42A High Street, Milton, and Manor Cottage, Sutton Courtenay (1317-18), the straight braces were exposed,⁸⁹ at Middle Farm, Harwell, south wing (1324), they have Gothic curvature, and at Tudor House, Steventon (c. 1314 or later) they become more plank-like. Many other wings had giant-panelled framing usually with slightly curved, square-sectioned braces.⁹⁰ In the north wing of Middle Farm (1371-2) the braces are deeper and more plank-like. Hall walls are more often plastered or reframed, though giant-panelled, long-braced framing survives at 42-42A High Street, Milton, and Middle Farm, Harwell (1371-2), in both cases like that in their contemporary wings. At Manor Cottage, Sutton, and Old Manor

⁸² E.g. Hendred House, lost chamber block adjoining chapel.

⁸³ E.g. The Cottage, Aston Tirrold.

⁸⁴ Wings: South Moreton Manor (west wing), Wellshead Farm (Willowbrook), Harwell, almost certainly York Farm, West Hagbourne, probably the Home Farm, Steventon, and Manor Cottage, Sutton Courtenay, and perhaps others. Halls: York Farm, West Hagbourne, South Moreton Manor, and perhaps Sutton Courtenay Abbey. Below, gazetteer.

⁸⁵ Below, gazetteer, Aston Tirrold.

⁸⁶ Below, gazetteer, Steventon, manor or priory house, site documentation.

⁸⁷ Below, gazetteer, West Hagbourne.

⁸⁸ At 42-42A High Street, Milton (Fig. 25) and the Priory, Steventon, S.W. block: below, gazetteer.

⁸⁹ It is assumed that the subdivision of the panels at Manor Cottage, with the curved two-pegged braces, result from later alteration.

⁹⁰ The Priory (S.W. block), Old Vicarage, Home Farm (braces inferred from mortices), and 39 the Causeway (convex braces), Steventon; Lollingdon, Cholsey; Wellshead Farm, Harwell (braces inferred from mortices); South Moreton Manor, west wing; Lower Cross Cottages, East Hagbourne; Lime Tree House, Harwell, S. wing (before 1370); Old Manor Cottage, North Moreton; Sutton Courtenay Abbey, E. end of N. range, with very long curved brace.

Cottage, North Moreton, the hall-range walls had tall panels without a middle rail. Tudor House hall, Steventon (1355-6) also had very large panels, and old photographs of South Moreton Manor hall⁹¹ suggest that it had long braces like the north range of Sutton Courtenay Abbey.

It may be noted here that wings with early wall framing had dragon-ties at the corners or at partitions.⁹² The first to omit them is the north wing of Middle Farm (1371-2). The only hall with dragon ties was 42-42A High Street, Milton, though they occur at Church Farm barn (formerly a hall), Lewknor, Oxon. (1350-1).⁹³

Tension or scissor-braces appeared in gable walls before c. 1350⁹⁴ and from the 1380s to c. 1500 tension braces were used in side walls also; at the same period, panels were subdivided by an intermediate stud or a pair framing a window, forming conventional large framing.⁹⁵ Perhaps at the same time cruck buildings began to be given middle rails.⁹⁶ The only box-framed hall with tension-braced framing is Adnams Farm, Harwell, and towards the end of the Middle Ages arch bracing reappeared and is found in box-framed halls and late cruck houses. Such late arch braces are generally low-pitched and four-centred.

(b) *Roofs.* The eastern Vale has probably the greatest diversity of medieval roof-types of any region of its size in England. The predominant types can nevertheless be indicated. Crucks are common in smaller houses. The truss forms, including blade shape, apex type, and the method of supporting the wallplate and purlins, are very diverse, and no chronological sequence can be determined. Nevertheless cruck houses of the 15th and 16th centuries usually have taller proportions than those built before about 1400. True crucks are found in only one manor house, Maltravers Manor, Childrey, and that was not the lord's residence. It combines crucks and jointed crucks in one range, while Tiverton Cottage, Harwell, had a base-cruck open truss and cruck end truss. The area round Didcot has the densest known distribution in England of domestic base-crucks, which are not restricted to manor houses or gentlemen's residences.⁹⁷ Their forms vary not only in the type of roof adopted above the tie but in the relation of blade, tie, and roofplate, and the variation is not determined by date. Two, in Harwell,⁹⁸ of c. 1300 and 1371-2, like a building in Thames Street, Abingdon,⁹⁹ have double ties clasping the plate; three have a single tie over the plate, two without and one with a jowled blade;¹⁰⁰ two have plates over a single tie;¹⁰¹ two have purlins rather than plates.¹⁰²

⁹¹ In the house (1987).

⁹² Besides those listed in the last paragraph there were dragon ties at Hendred House, S. wing, and South Moreton Manor, E. wing.

⁹³ For date, *Vernacular Archit.* xxi (1990), 47.

⁹⁴ Tudor House, the Priory, 39 the Causeway, Steventon.

⁹⁵ The earliest dated example is the New Inn (26-28 Cornmarket), Oxford, late 1380s: *Vernacular Archit.* xix (1988), 43. Those in the Vale include Maltravers Manor, Childrey, Abbey Timbers, Harwell, Southfield Farm, Sutton Courtenay, the White Hart, Fyfield (after 1446), the Priory, Steventon, N.W. block (1463), Folly House, Steventon, wing, and Sutton Courtenay Abbey, E. range. Church Farm, Long Wittenham, combines tension braces with long arch-braces.

⁹⁶ E.g. Hickman's Cottages, East Hendred.

⁹⁷ 'Peasant' examples include, besides Tiverton Cottage, Lime Tree House, Harwell, 42-42A High Street, Milton, and Tudor House, Steventon, the last certainly held by customary tenure.

⁹⁸ Lime Tree House and Middle Farm.

⁹⁹ *Med. Archaeol.* xiii (1969), 243.

¹⁰⁰ Sutton Courtenay Abbey, York Farm, West Hagbourne, and 42-42A High Street Milton.

¹⁰¹ South Moreton Manor and Sutton Courtenay Manor House.

¹⁰² Tiverton Cottage and Tudor House.

Non-cruck roofs, including the superstructures of base-cruck halls, fall into two main groups. The first includes common-rafter and crown-post roofs. Only two lacked crown-plates.¹⁰³ Most crown-post roofs occur over 13th or early 14th-century stonework,¹⁰⁴ on box-framed wings with giant-panelled walls, or over associated base-cruck halls, and are certainly or probably before 1350. Two at Middle Farm, Harwell, date from 1371–2. That at Abbey Timbers, Harwell, is probably of c. 1400 and belongs to a late group including Goosey church nave,¹⁰⁵ 60 East St. Helen's Street, Abingdon,¹⁰⁶ and several roofs of c. 1386–1406 in Oxford.¹⁰⁷ The crown posts are seldom ornate, moulded caps and bases occurring in only three domestic roofs,¹⁰⁸ though the east wing at South Moreton Manor incorporates crown posts in a wagon roof. There are crown posts with double upstands or single jowls as well as the unjowled type. Three roofs have king struts or truncated king struts at partitions.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes the crown plate is tenoned into the posts instead of passing over them.¹¹⁰ Crown posts at partitions and gables have either no transverse braces or braces down to the tiebeam, which is usually flat. In open trusses, which have cambered tiebeams, the choice of four- or two-way bracing appears to have depended on the status of the house and of the room where the truss is found.

It was formerly thought that purlin roofs succeeded crown-post roofs after an overlap in the late 14th and early 15th centuries.¹¹¹ Tree-ring dating now suggests that purlin roofs were already an alternative to crown posts between 1280 and 1350, at first in relatively unprepossessing buildings.¹¹² The Cottage, Aston Tirrold (1284) almost certainly had a purlin roof. Tudor House wing, Steventon (c. 1314) forms one of a group of three with clasped-purlin roofs over early wall framing; all have false crown-post trusses on the gables.¹¹³ The Hyde Farm, Marcham, has a clasped-purlin truss as well as two with trapped purlins like those at Great Coxwell barn (shortly after 1305).¹¹⁴ The cruck range at Manor Cottage, Sutton Courtenay (1317–18), has tenoned purlins; two roofs in South Oxfordshire built in 1341 and 1350–1 have clasped purlins.¹¹⁵ The clasped- and tenoned-purlin roofs of the hall and south-east wing at Sutton Courtenay Manor House are probably of about that period, the purlin roof of the service wing at Fyfield (technically remarkable as apparently the earliest *liegender stuhl* in Europe) perhaps a little earlier. The last roofs reflect the adaptation of purlin roofs to the high Decorated style, as noted by Mercer.¹¹⁶ The relative scarcity of crown posts after 1350,

¹⁰³ Lime Tree House, Harwell, phase I (c. 1250) and South Moreton Manor hall (? 1340s.)

¹⁰⁴ Charney Bassett; Sutton Courtenay Abbey; and various church roofs.

¹⁰⁵ This has Perpendicular mouldings and rests on corbels, two of which appear to depict Henry IV and Henry V as prince of Wales.

¹⁰⁶ *Med. Archaeol.* xvi (1972), 197.

¹⁰⁷ These include the Warden's Barn and Necessarium at New College and two roofs at the New Inn (Zacharias's shop), Ship Street.

¹⁰⁸ Charney Bassett, Lime Tree House, Harwell, and Sutton Courtenay Abbey solar.

¹⁰⁹ Sutton Courtenay Abbey (hall and solar) and York Farm, West Hagbourne.

¹¹⁰ York Farm; Home Farm, Steventon; Manor Cottage, Sutton Courtenay; and Middle Farm, Harwell, N. wing (W. gable only).

¹¹¹ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* 52–3.

¹¹² Cf. E. Mercer, *English Vernacular Houses* (1975), 86–7, showing that in western England before 1400 crown posts are found in halls but not in barns.

¹¹³ The others are Hendred House, S. wing, and 39 the Causeway, Steventon.

¹¹⁴ For date, *Vernacular Archit.* xi (1980), 34.

¹¹⁵ The Queen's Head, Crowmarsh Gifford (*Vernacular Archit.* xx (1989), 46) and Church Farm 'barn', Lewknor.

¹¹⁶ Mercer, *op. cit.* 89.

and their apparent disappearance after c. 1410, is not, however, elucidated by Mercer's theory about vernacular houses in south-east England, which explains the retention of the crown-post roof by the supposition that it was more economical of timber and labour than double-framed roofs. The most cursory structural analysis shows on the contrary that crown-post roofs needed far more joints, more small trees, and scarcely fewer large trees than clasped-purlin roofs.

It is not therefore surprising that with the late-medieval slump and its high building wages began the predominance of the clasped-purlin roof in two-storeyed buildings in the Vale. By the 16th century it was also used in vernacular box-framed open halls. The principals tend to be more massive than in 14th-century examples.¹¹⁷ For high-quality open halls, where arch-braced or hammer-beam trusses were used, tenoned-purlin construction was preferred;¹¹⁸ sometimes clasped purlins were set flush with the soffit of the principal rafter to mimic the superior tenoned form.¹¹⁹ A few buildings have purlins carried on the backs of heavy principals.¹²⁰

(c) *Detail.* Structural timberwork is seldom elaborately ornamented; except for the buildings with moulded crown-posts noted above, mouldings other than straight or hollow chamfers are found only in some six houses.¹²¹ The traceried spandrels of the hammer-beam open truss at the Priory, Steventon, are remarkable. Structural cusping is found in five houses.¹²² Several houses have notable bargeboards, both Decorated with cusping and plain or simply moulded arrises,¹²³ and Perpendicular with incised patterns or tracery.¹²⁴

Roof covering

Both thatched and tiled roofs are documented. Medieval crested ridge tiles survive at Middle Farm, Harwell, Sutton Courtenay Abbey (east range), and 39 the Causeway, Steventon. Smoke-blackened thatch was noted at Cruckfield Cottage, Long Wittenham, and 69 High Street, Drayton. Stone tiles survive at the Hyde Farm, Marcham, at Fyfield Manor, and at the Priory, Steventon (east courtyard range).

¹¹⁷ E.g. Adnam's Farmhouse, Harwell, and 75, 77-79, and 87 the Causeway, Steventon.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Prince's Manor, Harwell, the Priory, Steventon, Hendred House, Ashbury Manor, and Lyford Grange.

¹¹⁹ E.g. at the hammerbeam open truss at Windyridge-Dunelm, East Hendred, and at 87 the Causeway, Steventon.

¹²⁰ Godfrey's Farm and Meadow Cottages, East Hendred; Maltravers Manor, Childrey, N.W. extension.

¹²¹ Sutton Courtenay Abbey (cornices and hall arch; parlour ceiling), South Moreton Manor (great chamber cornice), Ashbury (cornice), Fyfield Manor service chamber (cornice), Charney Bassett (cornice), and North Moreton House (parlour ceiling).

¹²² Sutton Courtenay Manor House (base-cruck arch), Tudor House, Steventon (above the base-cruck arch), Rectory Farm at Letcombe Bassett (N. wing truss), Fyfield (open trusses and windbraces), and Ashbury Manor (windbraces).

¹²³ Middle Farm, Harwell, N. and S. wings and porch; Lime Tree House, Harwell, S. wing; Old Vicarage, Steventon, W. wing; 42-42A High Street, Milton; 39 the Causeway, Steventon.

¹²⁴ The Priory, Steventon, E. courtyard wing; the Stores, East Hendred.

GAZETTEER

APPLETON

APPLETON MANOR

Descent

By the late 12th century the manor of Appleton was held of the honor of Wallingford, apparently in two moieties, one of which was later known as the manor.¹²⁵ By the early 13th century the terre tenants were the local Appleton family. Geoffrey of Appleton's land was granted to Roger de Haya in 1215, though Thomas of Appleton seems to have recovered it by 1240. In 1269 he granted it to Denise de Stoke (d. 1307), who left a son Robert. The Crown granted the reversion to Giles de la Mote and his wife Alice. Their daughter and eventual heir Margaret married John fitz Warin, who obtained possession in 1375 and died in 1401. His son William died in 1435; after his daughter Alice died in 1446 the manor was granted to her third husband John Crofton, who by 1460 was claiming to have been disseised by a group of three men including Thomas Denton. John Denton died seised of Appleton manor in 1497 and it passed successively to his son Thomas and grandson John Denton, who sold it in 1564 to John Fettiplace of Bessels Leigh. It then descended with Bessels Leigh until 1772, when it was bought by Robert Southby. The Southbys had been resident in Appleton, possibly as lessees of the manor, since the 17th century.

Site and buildings

The manor house stands within a three-sided dry moat south of the church. It consists of a long irregular front range with an east rear wing dating wholly or mainly from the 20th century. The eastern part of the front range, however (plan, Fig. 1), includes the two-storeyed service block and hall of an early 13th-century house, with a very elaborate front doorway in a Transitional style, which has been described by Wood.¹²⁶ It is only necessary to add some additional observations and corrections here. The service block was remodelled and extended to the north in the 17th century, since the adjoining porch, with a late 16th-century timber-framed and jettied superstructure, has evidence of a blocked window in its east wall. Only the west wall can therefore be regarded as retaining original features. Irregularities in the stonework at the north end of that wall, and its greater thickness than those of the other three walls of the hall, might indicate that the service block was built a few years before the hall.¹²⁷ South of the two service doorways are the quoins of a doorway to a staircase north of the later newel stair noted by Wood and leading to a former chamber over the services. The hall (38–39 by 24 feet) appears not to have been altered in area, except by the insertion of a chimney backing on to the entry bay, since roll-moulded quoining survives at the south-west corner.¹²⁸ The walls have been heightened to provide two full storeys, but traces of a tall window with a pointed head, in the north wall west of the porch, show that the building was considerably taller than later aisled structures. It is not clear how it was roofed; the placing of the window next the porch may rule out the three-bayed layout which otherwise seems indicated. There was doubtless a detached great chamber somewhere else on the

¹²⁵ For descent, *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 336–8.

¹²⁶ M.E. Wood, 'Norman Domestic Architecture', *Archaeol. Jnl.* xcii (1935), 175–6. The plan reproduced here was kindly drawn by Dr. J. Blair from a new survey by Dr. Blair, Dr. E. Impey, and the writer.

¹²⁷ Dr. Blair points out, however, that e.g. Hereford Bishop's Palace had an extra-thick wall dividing the hall from the contemporary service block.

¹²⁸ It is not clear why Wood suggests (*loc. cit.*) that the moulding is re-used.

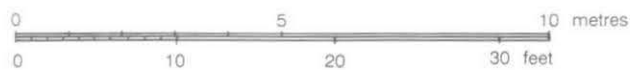
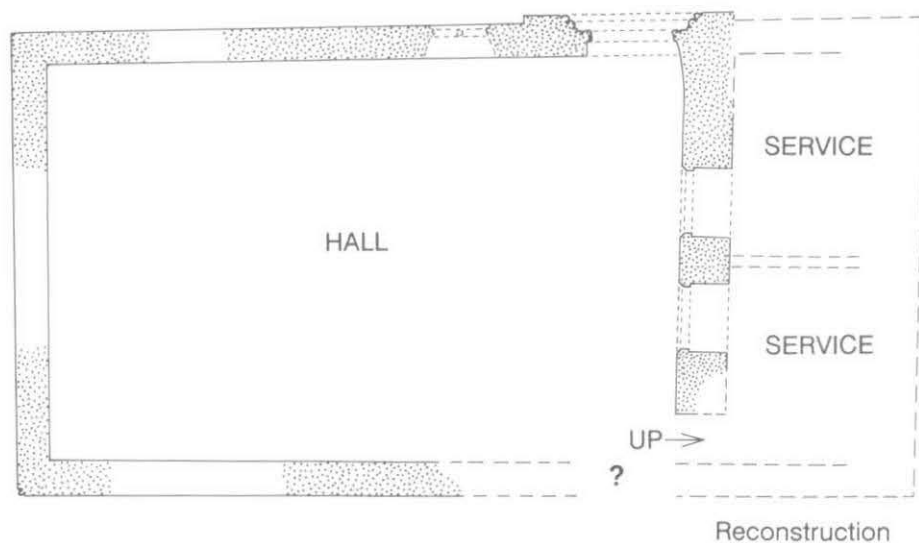
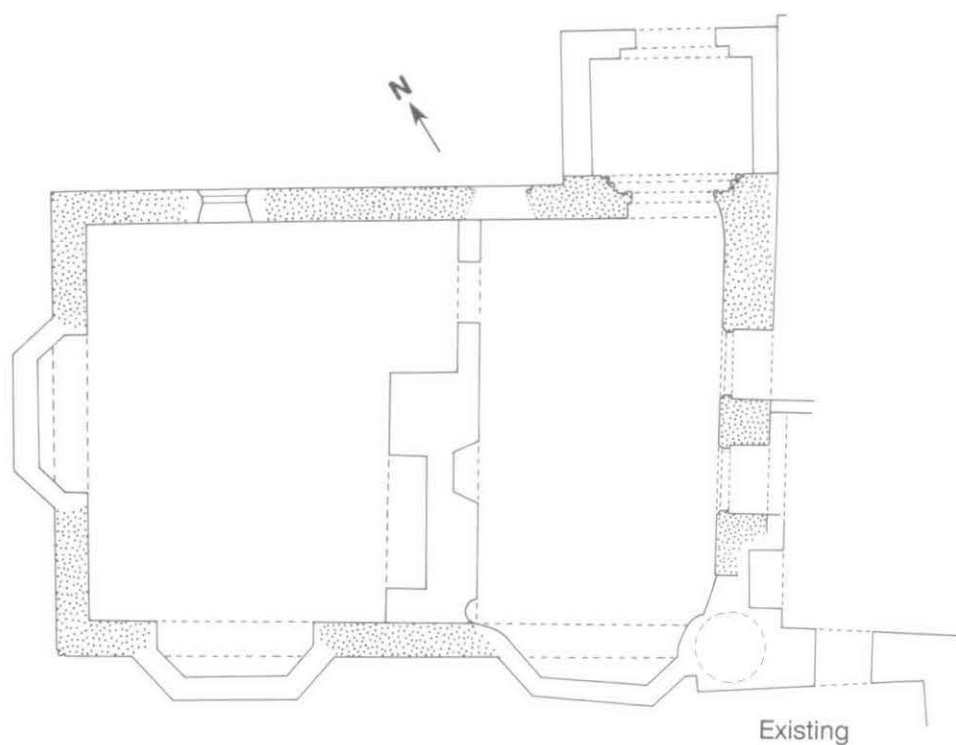


Fig. 1. Appleton Manor: plans (J. Blair).

site. The house was presumably the work of Geoffrey of Appleton, despite the high quality of the doorway. The siting of the chimney, whose face divides the hall range into two equal bays and whose rear creates a square to the west of it, may indicate that the hall was reroofed in the later Middle Ages, with a central truss and a later smoke-bay partition east of it. But no trace of such a reconstruction survives upstairs.

ASHBURY

CHAPEL MANOR HOUSE

Ashbury manor was held by Glastonbury Abbey from 1086 to 1539, and from the 17th century by the Craven family. Although in 1519 the demesne was on lease, the court, barton, and manor house were reserved to the abbey and to the monastic scholars at Oxford. The medieval manor house, later known as Chapel Manor House, survives, but was replaced as the lord's seat c. 1665 by Ashdown Park.¹²⁹ Chapel Manor House could not be re-examined for this study, but has been surveyed by Pantin and described by Wood.¹³⁰ It dates mainly from the late 15th century, perhaps from 1488, during the time of Abbot Selwood. The house, which includes a wealth of Perpendicular detail both in stone and timber, faces south and consists of hall, screens passage, and service block and kitchen all in one range; there is no parlour, but a small two-storeyed rear chamber wing behind the hall, and a two-storeyed front porch surmounted by an oratory. The service block has a lower roof and is separated from the hall and screens passage by a thick stone wall, which may indicate alternate rebuilding. The hall range was two-storeyed from the first. The hall was allegedly heated by a fireplace at the upper (west) end, but was apparently partitioned in the earlier 16th century; the east room was then heated by a lateral fireplace in the north wall, within a putatively original chimney breast. The staircase, rising from beside the dais in the north wall, was ingeniously contained in the rear wing, which had a latrine at the north-east corner. That retained its original wooden seat until the 1950s. The principal chambers were above the hall and were both heated, by end and lateral fireplaces respectively. The eastern, inner, chamber appears to have been more important. The oratory was reached from it through a timber screen. Topologically the chambers and oratory bear the same relationship to the hall as the upper rooms in the north range at Sutton Courtenay Abbey as remodelled in the 15th century. The inner chamber had a timber frieze with Flamboyant decoration and both chambers were open to the roof, which had moulded arch-braced collar-beam trusses with tenoned purlins, and vee-struts above the collars. The partition truss between the two chambers had three studs between tie and collar. The central crown stud had curved downward braces to the tie. There were curved raking struts from tiebeam to principals. Two tiers of cusped windbraces were arranged in a syncopated cinquefoil pattern, and above them was a quatrefoil at the apex of the western chamber, where a louvre would have been in a room with an open hearth.

The house may well have been built by masons and carpenters from Glastonbury's Somerset estates; that would explain both the compact plan with chambers over the hall, and the roof design. Yet even if the house does not reflect local traditions it probably influenced such later buildings as Lyford Grange.

¹²⁹ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 504-7.

¹³⁰ W.A. Pantin, 'Medieval Priests' Houses in South-west England', *Med. Archaeol.* i (1957), 142-3; M.E. Wood, *The English Medieval House* (1965), refs. listed on p. 430; idem, 'Ashbury Manor, Berks.' *Trans. Newbury Dist. Field Club*, xi (3, 1965), 5-18.

ASTON TIRROLD

No medieval manor houses are known; only one other house is relevant to this study.

THE COTTAGE, Aston Street (SU 556858), stands on the east side of Aston Street. Nothing is known of its medieval descent and ownership, but even allowing for the former inclusion of land on the south and east sides, the size of the curtilage does not suggest anything more than an ordinary peasant freehold or copyhold. By the 1660s it belonged to the Sadler family, apparently as part of a larger estate including other houses, and was then, or had recently been, occupied by a tenant, Richard Tirrold. In 1666 William Sadler, his wife Alice, and Jacob Sadler sold a 2,000-year lease to Josiah Tirrold, apparently without any field land. By 1745 the lease belonged to William Pope, who about that time also owned the adjoining house on the north. He sold the lease to Matthew Cooper in trust for the marriage of Matthew's daughter Elizabeth to Richard Field; the common rights and part of the orchard to the east were excepted from the sale. In 1753 the Fields sold the lease to Matthew Parsons in trust for Parsons' daughter Elizabeth Martin, her husband John and their son John.¹³¹ In 1771 the two John Martins, described as labourers, sold to Samuel Martin a new 1,000-year lease of the reversion after the elder John and Elizabeth's death. That lease passed by sale through the Lane family (1784–1827), William Irons or Parsons and his trustees (1827–62),¹³² Daniel Parsons and his widow Ann (1862–74),¹³³ T.J. Lane, Lane's widow, and their daughter Emily (owners 1874–1931), to Trevor Price, a coffee merchant who used the house as his registered office and who enlarged the leasehold to a freehold in 1931. Price conveyed the title to his company which built a second house, used as a factory, on the south of the curtilage; that was sold probably in 1946.¹³⁴ The Cottage, known as the Thatched House, was sold separately to the company secretary in 1950 and has since remained a private residence.¹³⁵

The house is L-shaped, the south-west wing forming one arm of the L; its gable end abuts the street. The remaining parts consist of a south-east block at the corner of the L and a north-east range forming the other arm.

The south-west wing is the earliest part. It is in fact the most archaic, and probably the earliest, two-storeyed timber-framed building in England to retain all four walls. The archaic features of the building indicate a 13th-century date; tree-ring samples from two original timbers gave felling dates of 1282 and 1284, a third matched them, and three others were consistent with felling at that time.¹³⁶ No two-storeyed timber building of comparable completeness and earlier date has yet been published.

The frame, whose repair under the supervision of D.W.H. Miles in 1991 and 1992 has revealed previously hidden features, is slightly irregular, the north wall being some 7½ ins. longer than the south. Since the south wallplate curves slightly inwards at its west end, the irregularity may have been determined by the length of the timber available. The range has two bays each c. 11 ft. 6 ins. by 12 ft. 9 ins. internally, and was designed as a free-standing structure, though there was probably a hall at the north-east corner, on the site of a later range. The wing is now a one-storeyed sitting room and was formerly used as an outhouse. Nevertheless it was clearly a two-storeyed chamber block or wing like several others in the Vale, box-framed, with straight

¹³¹ Deeds in possession of Mr. and Mrs. B.C. Bateman, Aston Tirrold, deed of 3 May 1753.

¹³² Ibid. abstract of title 1862.

¹³³ Ibid. deeds of 2 May 1862, 6 Jun 1872; probates of wills of Daniel and Ann Parsons, 19 July 1864, 30 Oct. 1874.

¹³⁴ Ibid. deeds of 21 Nov. 1931, deed of 17 May 1932, and statutory declaration of Fras. Hedges, 13 May 1946.

¹³⁵ Ibid. deeds of 31 July 1950, 31 July 1951, 8 July 1952, 19 June 1969; local information.

¹³⁶ Samples by D.W.H. Miles (unpublished) with full sapwood, gave dates of 1282 and 1284. Provisional Nottingham Univ. dates: sample AST-A07 (Tie-beam, E. truss), 82 rings incl. 2 sapwood, last ring 1249 (t=5.4 Oxford, t=4.5 E. Midlands, t=6.9 S.E. England); sample AST-08 (principal N. post, central truss), 55 rings, no sapwood, last ring 1189 (t=6.5 Oxford, t=6.3 E. Midlands); sample AST-09 (principal N. post, W. truss), 58 rings, no sapwood, last ring 1241 (t=5 Oxford, t=4.9 S.E. England).

uncambered gable tiebeams, dragon-ties at the corners, and large wall panels having steeply pitched straight braces of square section. It differs from similar local buildings of the first half of the 14th century in being unjettied; in having had an exceptionally low undercroft, with a floor some 5 ft. from the ground; in having wholly unjowled posts without upstands, aligned with their long sides parallel to the long walls; in the use of stop-splayed and tabled scarf joints with edge-keys¹³⁷ instead of the usual *Trait-de-Jupiter* form; in its very low ground sill, not supported by a continuous stone wall, resting on clay under the east wall and apparently also under the others,¹³⁸ and perhaps replacing a system of padstones of which one was discovered during repair in 1991 below the south post of the central truss; in the absence of braces to the side and end rails; in the floor framing (see below); and in the use of open notched-lap joints of 'refined' profile to connect the wall-braces to the wall plates, except on the front gable where they are mortised. The joints at the lower ends of all the braces are mortised.

The side-wall braces were halved to the inside edges of the plates (Fig. 2) so that each wall could be reared as a unit, laterally, towards the other. That form of construction occurs in the main trusses of a few aisled buildings of the late 12th to mid 13th century¹³⁹ and in one or two 13th-century outer wall frames.¹⁴⁰ The outer edges of the braces are thereby set well inside the outer edge of the wallplate, so that stave and lath panels could be applied externally to the whole rectangle formed by the bay-posts, the wallplate, and the side rails, concealing the braces except at the front. The complete panels remain on the north wall; there were formerly signs of two or three vertical staves covered in whitewash on the outside. In 1992 Mr. Miles established that at least the eastern first-floor panel on that wall retained their original staves, nailed laths, and applied daub. He also found a porthole-like quatrefoil window cut into a plank nailed to the staves in the centre of the panel about 1 ft. below the wallplate; it apparently retained evidence of a shutter operated by a flap inside. On the south side he found that the groove for the panels remains in the rail, but the panels have been partly replaced by modern brick-nogging and a 19th- or 20th-century chimney stack; they have been further altered by the intrusion of a small window with diamond mullions east of the west wall-brace, a few additional studs and horizontals, and modern windows in the east bay.

The west wall (fig. 2) has two modern windows one above the other in the centre; the upper window replaces an original two-light one, the mortices for whose central mullion have been found in the tiebeam and rail,¹⁴¹ but the lower window has been intruded since 1932.¹⁴² They are flanked by vertical studs pegged to the rail and tiebeam. In addition, a chamfered rail is applied to the outside of the studs and braces and pegged to them to form the sill and lintel of the two windows. That arrangement seems original. No evidence has been found of framed original windows in the side or rear (east) walls, though they may have had windows nailed to the staves like the quatrefoil in the south wall. The rest of the west wall was filled by panelling composed of staves set in the underside of the tiebeam at approximately 10-in. intervals; the stave-holes were prepared before the mortices for the braces were cut.¹⁴³ Laths were nailed to the staves.

The central truss (Fig. 2) has a slightly cambered tiebeam chamfered on both soffit edges. Tree-ring dating has shown that it is a replacement put in at a later reroofing.¹⁴⁴ Short straight braces of square scantling, in pitch and position reminiscent of the lower ends of passing-braces

¹³⁷ Cf. the Wheat Barn, Cressing Temple, Essex: C.A. Hewett, *English Historic Carpentry* (1980), p. 264, Fig. 248.

¹³⁸ Inf. (1992) from Mr. D.W.H. Miles. The east part of the south wall sill was replaced in 1508: *ibid.*, from tree-ring analysis.

¹³⁹ Handsacre Hall, Staffs, phase 1 (for date, *Vernacular Archit.* xxi (1990), 38; Whiston barn, Yorks. (*ibid.* xix, 44); Grange Farm barn, Coggeshall, Essex (*Essex Archaeol. and Hist.* xvi (1984-5), 150-3); cf. also Songers, Boxted, Essex (Hewett, *Eng. Hist. Carpentry*, 85-8).

¹⁴⁰ No. 2 West St., Ware, Herts. (*Herts. Archaeol.* viii (1980-2), 128) and the Wheat Barn, Cressing Temple (pers. obs.)

¹⁴¹ Inf. from D.W.H. Miles.

¹⁴² *The Times*, 9 Sept. 1932.

¹⁴³ Drawing by D.W.H. Miles.

¹⁴⁴ Below (this section).

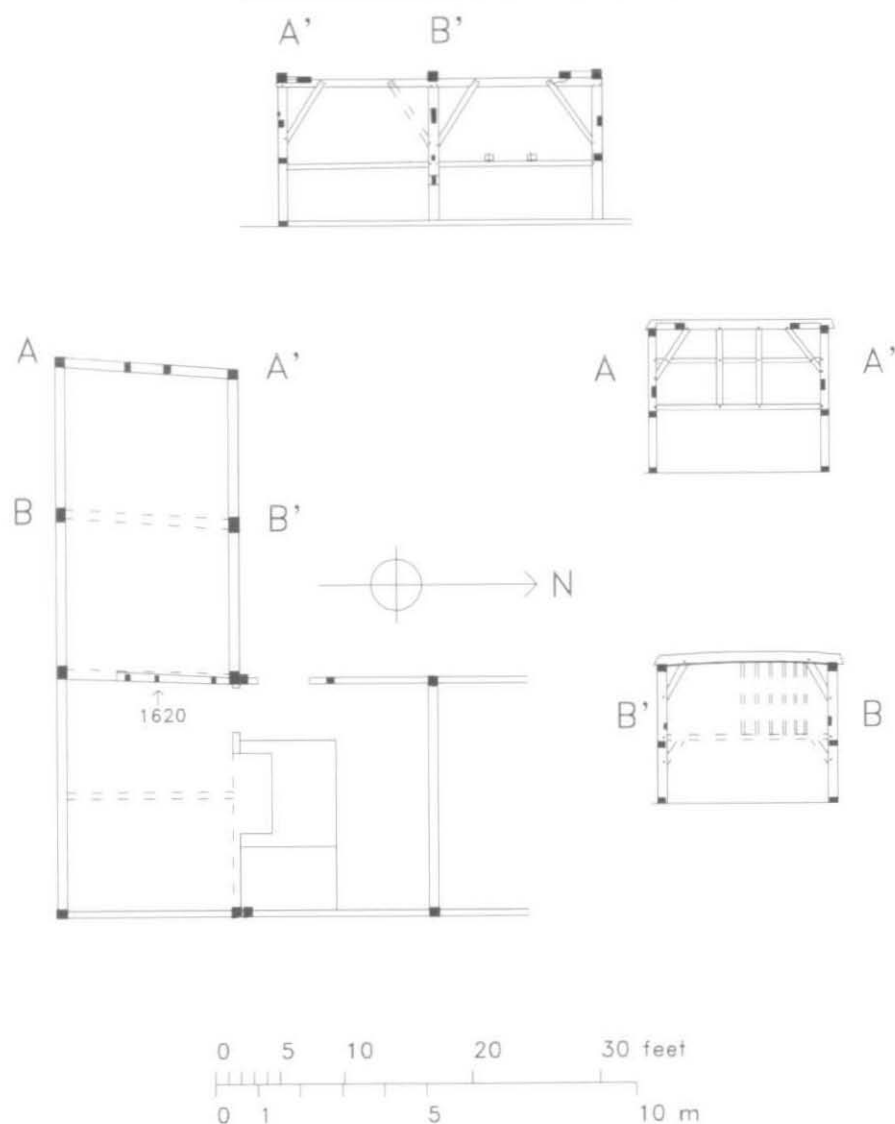


Fig. 2. The Cottage, Aston Tirrold.

but terminating in mortised joints at both ends, join posts to the tiebeam; their patina is much more eroded than that of the tiebeam. Although they are at the correct angle for passing-braces rising beyond the original tiebeam, their tenons are centrally placed and they are presumably replacements contemporary with the tiebeam.

The posts at that truss also have mortises for a binder to support floorboards at 5 ft. 3 ins. above the present floor, and for short braces to it. Other joists were lodged on the side rails and pegged to them from above; peg-holes survive in the faces of the rails, though during repair in 1992 gaps in the series of peg-holes were found including one at the west end, perhaps marking the site of a stair or ladder (analogous to the stairhead bay of larger houses). The clasp plate usually found

above such lodged joists appears to have been omitted. There may have been samson posts and a plate to support the centres of the joists; a trial excavation by Mr. Miles in 1991 exposed what may have been a padstone for a samson post below the central truss.

At the east (gable) truss the wall braces were halved to the east (i.e. outside) of the tiebeam, in which have been found a stave-groove on the upper side and stave holes in the soffit. Tree-ring dating suggests that the south post, into which the south wall rail is not mortised, is a replacement.¹⁴⁵ There are some peg holes in the middle rail perhaps for studding below, and a chamfer, extending 5 ins. of the modern door at the south end, above a possible door into the undercroft; but these features may not have been original. A reconstructed staircase at the north-east corner now leads into the south-east block. Some wattling, formerly exposed in the wall below it, is a replacement for stave and lath panels.

The wing has been reroofed three times. Recent detailed examination by Mr. Miles during the third reroofing has revealed evidence about the original roofing arrangements and the first replacement roof. The original tiebeams at east and west ends were joined to the wallplates by barefaced lap-dovetails. Both wallplates are chamfered on their outside upper arris; the chamfers are interrupted by the tiebeams, the dragon ties, and on each side by mortices on the upper face of the plates, 4 ft. 4½ ins. from the end tiebeams and roughly above the last peghole for a joist. The south mortice contains the remains of a tenon for a vertically-grained member. The chamfers do not continue beyond the end tiebeams. There are no original rafter housings on the wallplates; one of a set of later housings associated with the replacement roof¹⁴⁶ cuts into the upper mortice on the north side. On the upper face of the east tiebeam is a row of stave-holes, set towards the outer side, but no mortices for studs. At the west tiebeam, however, is a similar chamfer on the outer top arris, and a set of housings and pegholes, numbered 3 to 10, for the rafters of a hipped or lean-to roof; at the corners they are intersected by sockets for the hip-rafters of the replacement roof.

It is clear that the building cannot have had a common-rafter or crown-post roof, and that there must have been purlins. It is suggested that the mortices towards the east end of the wallplates were for principal rafters, probably with curved feet to fit the roof-pitch of the other trusses above the tiebeams (hence the vertical grain of the surviving tenon), and that there were further principals at the west and central trusses. The roof may have been boarded – hence the lack of rafter housings – but that seems unlikely on an otherwise economically constructed peasant building. An alternative would be that the common rafters were pegged to the purlins and to a clasped ridgepiece, and therefore did not need fixing at the bottom, simply protruding below the wallplates. It is suggested that the roof resembled that of the hall range at the Hyde Farm House, Marcham, with a studless clasped-purlin truss at the east end, possibly parallel rafters trapping the purlins at the central truss, and a hipped roof, perhaps here rising to an upper collar or gablet on the curved-principal truss, at the west end (above the stair or ladder). Pegs on the wallplates between the vertical mortices and the west tiebeam may have been for attaching the short side-rafters rising to the hip. Hyde Farm also had no joints at the feet of the common rafters, since it had no wallplate.¹⁴⁷

The south-east block could not be surveyed in detail. It consists of one bay 17 ft. 6 ins. long and 13 ft. wide which was roofed in line with the south-west wing. It was originally open to the roof, the inserted first floor being dated 1620. No wall braces could be seen. A jowled wall-post remains at the north-east corner, and one roof-truss over the partition with the south-west wing. It has a collar, queen-struts, and clasped purlins 4 ins. square set wholly within the thickness of the principals, which were not diminished but have been cut off a little above the purlins. They have windbraces low down on the west side, showing that the roof continued over the south-west wing. The central tiebeam of that wing also has mortices for queen struts, and on its soffit mortices for a staked partition with a door at the south end, which presumably indicates subdivision of the

¹⁴⁵ Below (this section).

¹⁴⁶ Below (this section).

¹⁴⁷ Below, gazetteer, Marcham.

original great chamber when the south-east block was added. Tree-ring dates suggest that that tiebeam, the south principal rafter of the surviving queen-strut truss described above, and the south-east post of the original wing, were felled at the same time, though the precise date is still uncertain.¹⁴⁸ The unpegged rafter housings on the north and south wallplates of the south-west wing, which cut into the original chamfer and mortices,¹⁴⁹ are presumably of that second phase, as are the secondary hip-rafter housings cutting into the original ones at the west end, where the roof was still hipped in 1932.¹⁵⁰

The east side of the roof truss between the south-west and south-east wings is smoke-blackened, and there are clear signs of soot granulation under the paintwork on the north wallplate of the south-east wing, particularly towards the western end. The wallplate has no studs below and clearly abutted an earlier building to the east. It is likely that the south-east block was a kitchen and that the eastern building was a hall associated with the south-west wing.

The ends of the joists of the first floor of 1620 are carried on applied and decorated bressumers or fascias on the west and east walls, both bearing the inscribed date. An ovolo-moulded ceiling beam is now jointed into a chimney outside the former north wall of the block. The moulding is stopped 4 ft. from the chimney on the east side, not at all on the west; there is evidence of studding north of the stop. Those features, together with the position of the inscribed dates, indicate that there was a smoke bay in the north-east corner and that the chimney was inserted later. The common joists are chamfered, with cyma stops except in the smoke bay.

The two-storeyed north-east range was not surveyed in detail. It is 17 ft. 6 ins. wide, was built presumably in 1620 and now has one long bay. Peg-holes for a rail and brace at the north end of the west wall show that a second, northern bay either stood on the site of a one-storeyed extension of c. 1620 or was planned to be built there. The walls are in small framing with straight braces. There is now a lobby entrance next to the south-west wing, opposite the chimney, of brick and clunch with brick fireplaces on the ground floor serving the north bay and the south-east block. The fireplace in the north bay is narrower than that on the south side; it has wide bricks but a bressummer elaborately moulded with multiple rolls and narrow chamfers. The bressummer is exactly long enough to have fitted in the smoke bay in the south-east block, or in a backing smoke bay north of it. The north side of the tiebeam above is sooted, although grooved for a partition, facts which suggest a second hearth on the north side.

In the 1960s the thatched roof was destroyed by a Guy Fawkes Day rocket¹⁵¹ and the entire roof structure was rebuilt with new timber and shingled. The north gable is hung with similar shingles. A roof based on the surviving evidence of the second-phase roof was built in 1990-1.¹⁵²

The house thus appears to have developed as follows. In the 13th century there was probably a hall on the site of the north-east range, probably 17 ft. 6 ins. wide, abutting the two-storeyed chamber block (south-west wing) built probably in 1284 at the corner. In the late Middle Ages a kitchen, with an open hearth, was added to join the two buildings, and the chamber was repaired, reroofed, and partitioned. In 1620 the hall range was rebuilt with a lobby entrance and a smoke bay, later replaced by the present chimney; also in 1620 the kitchen was ceiled, and perhaps became the hall, with a parlour on the site of the former hall, and a third room beyond. The old chamber in the south-west wing may have become a farm building then or later.

¹⁴⁸ Nottingham Univ. samples AST-A06, AST-A01, and AST-A10 from those timbers cross-matched with a t-value of 5; two had complete sapwood, and the three gave a total sequence of 81 rings. A tentative date of 1476 from matches with various references curves, all with $t < 4$, was not supported by the Oxon. curve ($t = 1.9$), which indicated several alternative dates including 1551.

¹⁴⁹ Inf. from D.W.H. Miles.

¹⁵⁰ *The Times*, 9 Sept. 1932.

¹⁵¹ Local information.

¹⁵² Under the direction of D.W.H. Miles.

CHILDREY

MANOR-HOUSES

CHILDREY MANOR

The house has been identified as that of Rampayns manor, held by the Rampayn family from the early 13th century until 1329 or later, by William and Isabel of Lynt in 1355, and by their heirs the Walronds between 1428 and 1480. It then passed to Thomas Walrond's granddaughter Elizabeth and her husband William Fettiplace. The Fettiplaces remained owners until the early 19th century, although they moved to Swinbrook in the 17th century. The house was allegedly dismantled in 1824 and enlarged and restored in the late 19th century by W.S. Burton, then owner.¹⁵³

J.C. Buckler drew the medieval hall before its demolition. The house appears to have consisted of a stone hall and east and west wings. On the south wall of the hall there were, from the west, a straight stair with triangular risers leading to a room over the screens, with above it a two- or three-light window with uncusped four-centred lights; further east, a similar two-light window; an oriel with two or more similar lights; and a door at the east end presumably opening on to a stair to the first floor of the east wing, which was separated from the hall by a close-studded partition. The hall was heated by a fireplace on the north wall, with four-centred head and jambs and voussoirs continuously moulded with ogee and hollow chamfer. The hall was still open to the roof, which had ashlar pieces, collar-beam trusses with deep arched braces from the principals and curved raking struts above the collar, two tiers of tenoned purlins, and three tiers of windbraces rising to the ridge.¹⁵⁴ All that now remains of the medieval house is the porch and cross passage with its doorways at the west end of the hall range, and part of the limestone walls of the adjoining service wing. The Late Perpendicular detail probably indicates a rebuilding after the Fettiplaces obtained the manor.¹⁵⁵

FRETHORNES MANOR

The site is allegedly north of the church. No standing buildings remain.¹⁵⁶

MALTRAVERS MANOR, WEST STREET

Descent

The manor was held by the Maltravers family from 1194 or earlier until the forfeiture of John, later Lord Maltravers, in 1321. Thereafter Maltravers or his wife Agnes held it from 1327 to 1330 and after 1348; in between it was held by the Crown or its grantees, including Walter de Beauchamp (1326), John Nevill of Hornby (1331), and Ralph Ufford (1336). In 1371 Lady Maltravers used it to endow a chantry at Lytchett Maltravers (Dorset), the rectors of Lytchett being *ex officio* trustees and lords of the manor until the suppression of the chantry in the mid 16th century. She added to the endowment in 1374 a large freehold estate in Childrey, which her husband had acquired in 1329 and which had subsequently passed to Nicholas de la Beche (1330) and Robert and Edmund Danvers, all absentee owners. The estate was united with the manor.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 272, 276.

¹⁵⁴ B.L. Add. MS. 36436, nos. 682, 684, 687.

¹⁵⁵ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 272-3; P.J.M. Eyres, 'Traditional Domestic Architecture in the Vale of White Horse' (Manchester Univ. M.A. dissertation, 1971), 35; external observation. Access could not be obtained to the interior.

¹⁵⁶ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 273.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 274-5.

After the Crown sold it in 1552 the manor passed through a succession of short-term owners to the Ashcombes of Lyford, who held it from 1577 to 1757. From 1772 to the 1840s, and probably until 1869, it belonged to the Shippery family.¹⁵⁸

Site Documentation

There was no manor-house in the *curia* recorded in 1297,¹⁵⁹ but in 1347 a house worth 6s. 8d. a year was mentioned.¹⁶⁰ A house was also attached to the freehold granted to the chantry in 1374.¹⁶¹ Either could have been on the site of the present house, which, though not identifiable with Maltravers manor in the early 20th century,¹⁶² was part of William Shippery's property about 1840. His initials discovered on a pane of glass in the house during recent restoration work suggest that he lived there.¹⁶³

Buildings

Maltravers Manor stands on the north side of West Street. In the early 20th century it was said to have been 'almost entirely' modernized, and it was first recognized as a medieval house by Eyres in 1971.¹⁶⁴ It consists of a three-bayed cruck-built hall range parallel with the street, a two-bayed and two-storeyed west cross wing, and a six-bayed rear extension to the wing.

The hall range now has a hearth-passage plan. The eastern service bay was rebuilt in brick and reroofed, probably in the 18th or earlier 19th century, and may have been lengthened then. Assembly marks show that it formerly had one cruck truss at the east end. That bay is separated from the cross passage, which is part of the lower hall bay, by the partition cruck truss II. Most of the truss is concealed but the apex is visible in the loft. The blades terminate in a low saddle and the ridge-piece is carried by a yoke jointed into the common rafters.

The western two bays appear to retain most of their medieval framing, although the internal timberwork was cased in the early 20th century. The casing was being gradually removed when the house was investigated in 1988. The north wall is still partly timber-framed with large panels. Smoke-blackening shows that these bays formed the hall. Trusses III and IIII (Fig. 3) are arch-braced and moulded with double hollow chamfers. The central truss (III), originally open, was filled in to enclose a smoke bay to the east, probably in the 16th century. The lower part of the visible south blade is massive and supports the wallplate without spur-ties. The upper part of the crucks are narrow and are joined by bladed scarfs¹⁶⁵ to extensions which support the apex. On the north side a packing-piece was required. The central arch retains traces of an ogee head, a motif repeated at the apex. The windbraces in the west bay are curved, of thick plank section, and the ridge plate has a stop-splayed scarf joint. One purlin also has a splayed scarf.

The western jointed cruck (IIII), which abuts the wing, is an open plank end truss,¹⁶⁶ only two thirds the thickness of truss III and moulded on the east only; the western side is crudely cut, although blackened by smoke which escaped through the gap into the tetrahedron between the truss and the wing roof. The ridge plate is continued as far as the wing. This truss seems to have a double collar clasping the purlins.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 275; for the Shipperry, also inf. from the owners, Mr. and Mrs. H. Marsh (1988).

¹⁵⁹ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* iii, p. 266.

¹⁶⁰ P.R.O., C 135/80, no. 12.

¹⁶¹ *Cal. Pat.* 1370-4, 448.

¹⁶² *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 273 (illus.).

¹⁶³ Inf. from Mrs. Marsh (partly based on Childrey Tithe Map).

¹⁶⁴ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 273; Eyres, 'Trad. Dom. Archit.' 35-6.

¹⁶⁵ This scarf is used here much earlier than in Essex: cf. C.A. Hewett, *The Development of Carpentry 1200-1700: An Essex Study* (Newton Abbot, 1969), 184.

¹⁶⁶ C.R.J. Currie, 'Open Plank End Trusses in the Oxford Region', *Vernacular Archit.* xix (1988), 32-3.

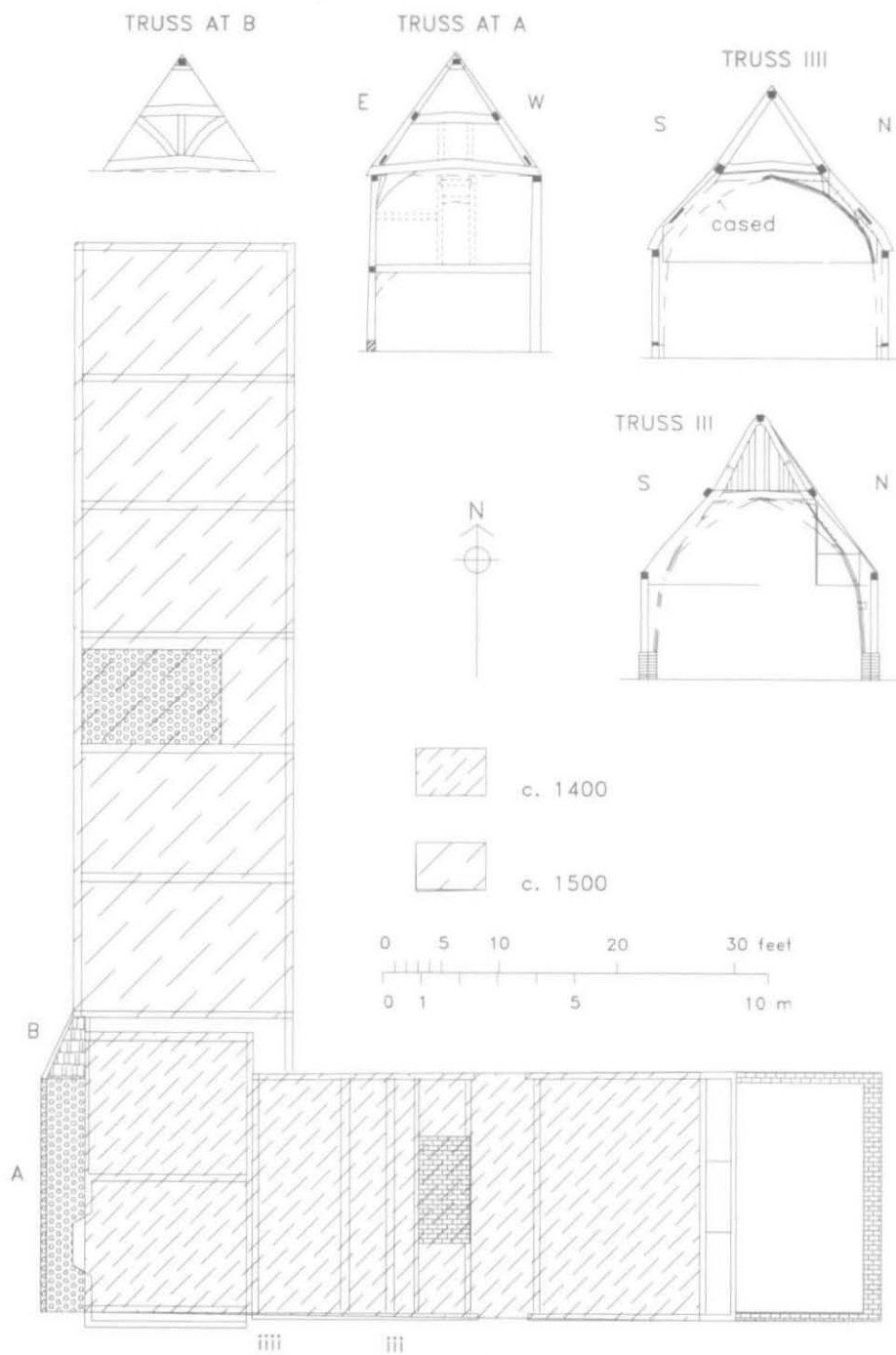


Fig. 3. Maltravers Manor, Childrey.

The west wing was originally jettied at both ends, with Wessex gables having between tie and collar a king strut and curved raking struts (Fig. 3). Those timbers have been removed from the south gable. The side wall framing was tension-braced; such braces survive on the east wall at first-floor level where it abutted the hall. On the first floor both bays formed a single great chamber spanned by an arch-braced open truss (Fig. 3), converted to a partition probably in the 16th century. It was perhaps then that queen struts were inserted above the collar. The ground floor may also have been one room, to judge by what seems to be the remains of a ceiling bracket on the east side. It may have been unheated; the parlour chimney was probably added in the 17th century, when the roof was extended westwards. The clasped ridge plate, clasped purlins, and steeply pitched windbraces of the roof are original.

The Perpendicular mouldings of the hall trusses rule out a date before c. 1370, but the ogee-headed arches at truss III recall mid 14th-century work; the splayed scarf joints and the treatment of the wallplate at the open truss would also be more consistent with a 14th- than a 15th-century date. It seems likely therefore that the hall was built by or for a lessee (at that time, probably a peasant) under the trustees of the chantry. It was designed to abut a west wing, and the surviving wing appears to be contemporary. Its wall framing and roof structure could be of any date between c. 1380 and 1450. Nevertheless the Wessex gable treatment is not known elsewhere in the district before the mid 15th century.

The house presumably had a detached kitchen. If so, that was replaced when a tall six-bayed single-storeyed building, which probably included kitchen and brewhouse, was added to the north of the wing, perhaps c. 1500. The roof is extensively sooted, perhaps throughout, and there is a large 18th-century chimney stack in the third bay. The two northern bays are now outside the house proper.

The carpentry of the extension has features suggesting the work of a craftsman trained on the other side of the Cotswolds, including principals trenched to support purlins and windbraces, straight braces rising to uncambered tiebeams, and large panel framing with long curved tension braces passing the middle rails. The windbraces are four-centred and cranked, and their lower ends are halved across each other in the rafter trench. The northern truss is half-hipped and has a central stud between tie and collar.

CHOLSEY

MANOR HOUSES

Nothing remains above ground of Reading Abbey's manor house or of the great barn, larger than any surviving English medieval barn but demolished in 1815.¹⁶⁷ The barn timbers were, however, extensively re-used in its successor.

LOLLINGDON FARM

Descent

Members of the Peche family held the manor of Lollingdon from 1240 or earlier until at least 1350, when on the marriage of John son of Sir John Peche it was remortgaged and settled. The Peches sold other Berkshire property covered by the same settlement in 1352 and 1353,¹⁶⁸ and it was perhaps then that Lollingdon passed to John Loveday, recorded after his death as a former tenant.¹⁶⁹ Loveday witnessed Wallingford deeds in 1342 and 1356.¹⁷⁰ His daughter and coheir

¹⁶⁷ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 297. For measured drawings, B.L. Add. MS. 36436, no. 680.

¹⁶⁸ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 299; *ibid.* iv, 75, 177; *Cal. Close*, 1349-54, 607.

¹⁶⁹ Magdalen College, Oxford, Harwell Deeds, H13a.

¹⁷⁰ *Berks. R.O.*, W/TLa 2, W/TLa 4.

Elizabeth married Walter Catewy the younger (of Lime Tree House Harwell),¹⁷¹ although Walter had another wife Joan by 1366.¹⁷² Catewy was witnessing Wallingford deeds in 1367,¹⁷³ so had probably succeeded Loveday at Lollingdon. When in 1370 William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, forced Walter's brother Thomas to admit himself Wykeham's villein,¹⁷⁴ and to surrender his Harwell estate,¹⁷⁵ it followed that Walter too was his villein and Lollingdon was also seized.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless Walter was allowed to remain as lessee, receiving in the late 1380s a life annuity paid out of his own rent, and was still living there in 1396 and perhaps in 1399. Wykeham may have intended the estate to support his scholars in Oxford, since in the 1380s the income was assigned to New College. If so, he changed his mind, and in 1392 attached Lollingdon to the episcopal manor of Brightwell.¹⁷⁷ Despite an attempt to recover it by Walter Catewy's grandson Thomas Attwater, son of his daughter Margaret by Richard Attwater,¹⁷⁸ it remained with the bishopric, and later with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who sold it in 1882; it passed to F.J.K. Cross in 1908.¹⁷⁹

Site documentation

No evidence has been found in the New College accounts or Winchester Pipe Rolls to suggest that Wykeham rebuilt the house after seizing it.

Description

Lollingdon Farm stands within a moat,¹⁸⁰ and consists of a long hall range running east-west, with a cross wing at the east end. There appears to be no evidence to support claims that it contains 16th-century features.¹⁸¹ The hall range was rebuilt in stages from the 17th century onwards and the only medieval remains are two re-used smoke-blackened rafters, of square cross-section, which may have come from a 14th-century hall. The cross wing, however, includes the remains of a medieval service block of two storeys and two or more bays, with a single chamber on the first floor. The south bay has been largely rebuilt in brick, and a third bay, with small panel framing, was added at the north end in the 17th century. In between, the east wall retains some timber-framing, in large panels with long, steep-pitched, square-sectioned, slightly curved braces, and later brick nogging. Internally there are remains of two trusses, the northern a gable truss with a flat tiebeam angle-braced to the wallplate, and the southern an open truss with a cambered tiebeam. That has a mortice for a crown post and is supported by thick, steeply-pitched arched braces from jowled principal posts. The crown-post roof was rebuilt with purlins in the 17th century, but retains many earlier rafters, which are smoke-blackened and have mortices for common collars. Heavy joists of squarish section in the 17th-century north bay may have been moved there from the medieval bays further south. The closest parallels to the framing are those of the north wing of Wellshead Farm, Harwell, and the south-west block at the Priory, Stevenston.¹⁸² The range thus dates probably from the early 14th century and was perhaps built by

¹⁷¹ Magd. Harwell deeds, H13a.

¹⁷² *Cal. Pat.* 1364-7, 327.

¹⁷³ Berks. R.O., W/TLA 9.

¹⁷⁴ T.F. Kirby (ed.), *Wykeham's Register*, ii (Hants Record Soc. 1899), pp. 100-4.

¹⁷⁵ Below, gazetteer, Harwell, Lime Tree House.

¹⁷⁶ Magd. Harwell deeds, H13a.

¹⁷⁷ New College, Oxford, MSS. 5966-5968, 7333, 7334; *Cat. Anct. D.* i, C 467 (p. 431); *ibid.* C 964; *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 299.

¹⁷⁸ Magd. Harwell deeds, H13a.

¹⁷⁹ MSS. in possession of M. Clarke, Esq., formerly of Lollingdon, Church Commissioners to Clarke, 12 April 1976.

¹⁸⁰ *V.C.H. Berks.* i, 269.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* iii, 297.

¹⁸² Below, gazetteer, Harwell and Stevenston.

Sir Bartholomew Peche (b.1279 or 1280, d. by 1327).¹⁸³ The smoke-blackening may be due to incomplete partitioning from the hall, or to later use as a kitchen.

CUMNOR

MANOR HOUSE

The abbot of Abingdon's former manor house at Cumnor Place, and Dean Court farmhouse, will be treated in an independent report or reports.

DRAYTON

MANOR HOUSES

No medieval manor houses are known to survive in the parish. Nevertheless at 1 GRAVEL LANE is a late-medieval outhouse which may have been part of the barton of the adjoining New College manor. Used as a carthouse in the early 19th century, it has two bays separated by a cruck truss with recurved blades formerly joined by a tiebeam and ending at a collar, the ridgepiece above being supported by a yoke between common rafters. There are purlins and elegant, four-centred windbraces. As the roof is smoke-blackened, the building may have been a kitchen or brewhouse for the manor house.¹⁸⁴

OTHER HOUSES

ELM CLOSE COTTAGE, 69 High Street, is a cruck building originally of three bays, with a fourth bay added at the east end and a fifth at right angles behind the west end. The three-bayed range comprised a two-bayed hall, with arch-braced open truss, and a two-storeyed west bay whose upper room was a loft incompletely partitioned from the hall. It was formerly suggested that the west bay was a chamber bay and the east an added service bay, but by analogy with similar three-bayed cruck ranges it now seems more probable that the west bay was an original service room and that the added east bay was an upper-end chamber added to replace a detached one. The low eaves and splayed scarf joints are consistent with a late 14th-century date.¹⁸⁵

EAST HENDRED

MANOR HOUSES

Of the six manors recorded in East Hendred¹⁸⁶ only one retains part of its medieval chief house.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 299.

¹⁸⁴ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 221.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 194-5; *Vernacular Archit.* xx (1989), 22 and 23, n. 10.

¹⁸⁶ The descents of five are treated in *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 296-300; in addition about 1300 Tristan of Padehale described his former estate there as a manor: New College, Oxford, MSS. 10361-10370, East Hendred no. 28; for date cf. *ibid.* nos. 29-30.

¹⁸⁷ For the post-medieval buildings of King's Manor, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' p. 320, and plates 58-9 and Fig. 28.

HENDRED HOUSE

Descent

Hendred House is the manor house of Arches manor, so called from the 14th-century tenants.¹⁸⁸ In 1066 it was held by Godric the sheriff; the overlordship later descended with the Ferrers honor of Tutbury to the Duchy of Lancaster. The Turbervilles held the manor from before 1154¹⁸⁹ until some time between 1304¹⁹⁰ and 1308, when it was settled on Geoffrey de Turberville's cousin Amice and her second husband Rou (*Rogo*) de Gacelyn. Although the manor was taken into the king's hands in 1322 after Rou had joined the rebels, it had by 1323 been restored to his stepson William de Arches (b. c. 1292), Amice's son by her first husband William; the younger William had been Rou's domestic chaplain.¹⁹¹

Arches, M.P. for Gloucestershire in 1326 and Berkshire in 1335,¹⁹² died some time between 1346 and 1357 and was succeeded by his son John, possibly the John del Arches serving in France about 1347.¹⁹³ John died probably by 1374, leaving a son John, who was probably a minor and who has often been confused with his father. In 1375 his mother's second husband divided the estate with him, receiving the family's manor of Catmere by the curtesy, while Arches held East Hendred.¹⁹⁴ The younger John, a prominent figure in county administration,¹⁹⁵ died before January 1408 and was succeeded by his son Ralph or Rawlin, who died between 1418 and 1421.¹⁹⁶ The estate descended to Ralph's daughter, his granddaughter, and in 1453 to her husband John Eyston,¹⁹⁷ who died in 1492¹⁹⁸ and whose descendant Mr. T.M. Eyston still owned it in 1990. Later medieval holders of the estate included John's son William Eyston (d. 1494), William's son Thomas (a minor in 1494, d. 1531), and Thomas's son John (d. 1545), who left another John Eyston, a minor, as his heir.

Site documentation

No accounts or inventories have been found that shed light on the development of the house in the Middle Ages, but much is known of the history of its chapel. John de Turberville received papal licence to build a domestic chapel in 1255.¹⁹⁹ The bishop confirmed Geoffrey de Turberville's right to have a chapel, with a chaplain, in 1293, and assigned the tithes arising from Turberville's manor to it, reserving the obedience due to the rector of the parish. The chapel was dedicated to St. John the Baptist,²⁰⁰ but was later known as St. Amand's.²⁰¹ In 1412 a settlement of a dispute

¹⁸⁸ This descent is based unless otherwise stated on *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 297-8.

¹⁸⁹ Hendred House, Eyston MSS., MTD/1/1a and b (from N.R.A. calendar); cf. B.R. Kemp. (ed.), *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, ii (Royal Historical Soc., Camden 4th series xxxiii, 1987), 86.

¹⁹⁰ *Reg. Simonis de Gandavo*, ii (Cant. and York Soc. xli, 1934), p. 634.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 807; Susan Reynolds (ed.), *Reg. of Roger Martival, Bishop of Salisbury 1315-30*, iii (Cant. and York Soc. lix, 1965), pp. 2-3; National Register of Archives MS. catalogue of Eyston MSS., ii, cal. of deeds, 9 June 1323.

¹⁹² *Return of Members of Parliament*, pt. 1, H.C. 69, pp. 76, 106 (1878), lxii(1). Arches was living in Gloucestershire in 1322, possibly at Acton Turville, which was part of the Turberville inheritance: *Cal. Fine Rolls, 1319-27*, 160; Rudder, *New Hist. of Glos.* (1779), 216; cf. *Ministers' Accounts, part 1* (P.R.O. Lists and Indexes v), pp. 43, 451, 452.

¹⁹³ Eyston MSS., ii, cal. of deeds, 26 Mar. 1346 and 30 Sept. 1357; G. Wrottesley, 'Greyc and Calais', *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, xviii (2) (William Salt Archaeol. Soc. 1897), p. 217.

¹⁹⁴ Eyston MSS., ii, cal. of deeds, 25 Mar. 1375.

¹⁹⁵ For details, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 47.

¹⁹⁶ Eyston MSS., ii, cal. of deeds, 24 June 1418.

¹⁹⁷ Eyston MSS., i, court rolls, recogn. of John Eyston, 12 Oct. 1453.

¹⁹⁸ Eyston MSS., i, will dated Nov. 1491, proved Jan. 1492.

¹⁹⁹ J.M. Horn (ed.), *Reg. Rob. Hallum* (Cant. & York Soc. lxxii, 1982), pp. 22-5, no. 1149.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 117-18, no. 880.

²⁰¹ E.R. Manley, *A Descriptive Account of East Hendred* (1969), 27.

between the chaplain and the rector of East Hendred resulted in a detailed terrier's being made of the manor.²⁰² The endowments were confiscated by Edward VI.²⁰³ At least after 1293 the chaplaincy was an endowed benefice, so the chaplains, at first styled rectors, were regularly presented to the bishop and instituted.²⁰⁴ Since the Eyston family has remained Roman Catholic, mass has continued to be said in the chapel during and after the period of persecution.

Description

The house, unlike those on the other manorial sites in the village, whose buildings are close to or even adjoin the street, is set back 100 m. east of High Street in the middle of a large curtilage. Its curved boundaries extend to the west beyond the line which further north divides the village crofts from the former open field; indeed the house stands on the projection of that line. Thus the curtilage, together with the egg-shaped plot on the other side of High Street on which Abbey and King's Manors stand, may have been part of the original core hamlet before the present nucleated village and its open fields developed (not later than the 10th and 11th centuries), and the site of the house itself may be very ancient.

The medieval part of the house (plan, Fig. 4) consists of a hall range and north and south cross wings. There are two later outer wings: one parallel with the north cross wing, in its present form of the early 19th century but replacing one which stood there *c.* 1700, and another, of 17th-century origin, at the south-west corner.²⁰⁵ A 19th-century east range parallel with the hall was demolished in the 1970s. The site slopes slightly from north to south, so that the formal high end is the physical lower end. The chapel is at the east end of the south wing. West of it a two-storeyed timber-framed chamber block already stood by 1255, since the chapel has no west wall; but that block was largely or wholly rebuilt later.

The earliest visible features are those of the chapel itself, which are consistent with a date soon after 1255. The chapel, whose north, south, and east walls are of rendered rubble with dressings of chalk and limestone ashlar, has a west gallery and has renewed opposing doorways in the north and south walls, and east of them two opposing lancet windows. The south window has medieval graffiti on its east reveal. The remains of a high blocked window are visible further east on the north wall. The east window was renewed in the earlier 14th century, probably by William Arches, and has two lights with reticulated tracery. A view of *c.* 1800 shows the south door flanked by narrow buttresses, and in that wall three windows which may have been medieval, with timber jambs and mullions; west of the door tall ostensibly round-headed two-light windows, and further east a low three-light one with a square head; and between the door and the surviving lancet a high two-light window with timber mullions, which is shown as a lancet on a view of 1859. In addition, an 18th-century round window had been inserted high up towards the east end.²⁰⁶ The west gallery, which has a renewed Tudor fireplace above the south door, appears to have been built or reconstructed as the chaplain's lodging in the later Middle Ages. At the west end of the north wall a further straight-headed four-light window, with stone reveals having traces of wall-painting, and rectangular-sectioned timber mullions with wooden slides between, was discovered during recent restoration. It appears to have been blocked soon after the Reformation as part of the process of contriving a priest's hole.

In the later 19th century the chapel was drastically restored and reroofed. The round window was Gothicised, elaborate porch-buttresses were built outside the doors, and new square-headed

²⁰² *Reg. Hallum*, pp. 125–30, no. 918.

²⁰³ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 302.

²⁰⁴ E.g. *Reg. Gandavo*, ii, pp. 634, 714, 807, 898; K. Edwards (ed.), *Reg. Martival*, i (Cant. and York Soc. iv, 1960), p. 30; Wilts. R.O., *Reg. Erghum*, ff. 59v., 85; *Reg. Mitford*, f. 31v.; *Reg. Beauchamp*, vol. i, unnumbered folio after index; *Reg. Beauchamp*, vol. ii, f. 26v. and 2nd nos. f. 21v.

²⁰⁵ Manley, *East Hendred*, plate facing p. 26.

²⁰⁶ Painting of *c.* 1800 in house, to which the owner, Mr. T.M. Eyston, kindly drew the writer's attention; B.L. Add. MS. 36356, f. 183.

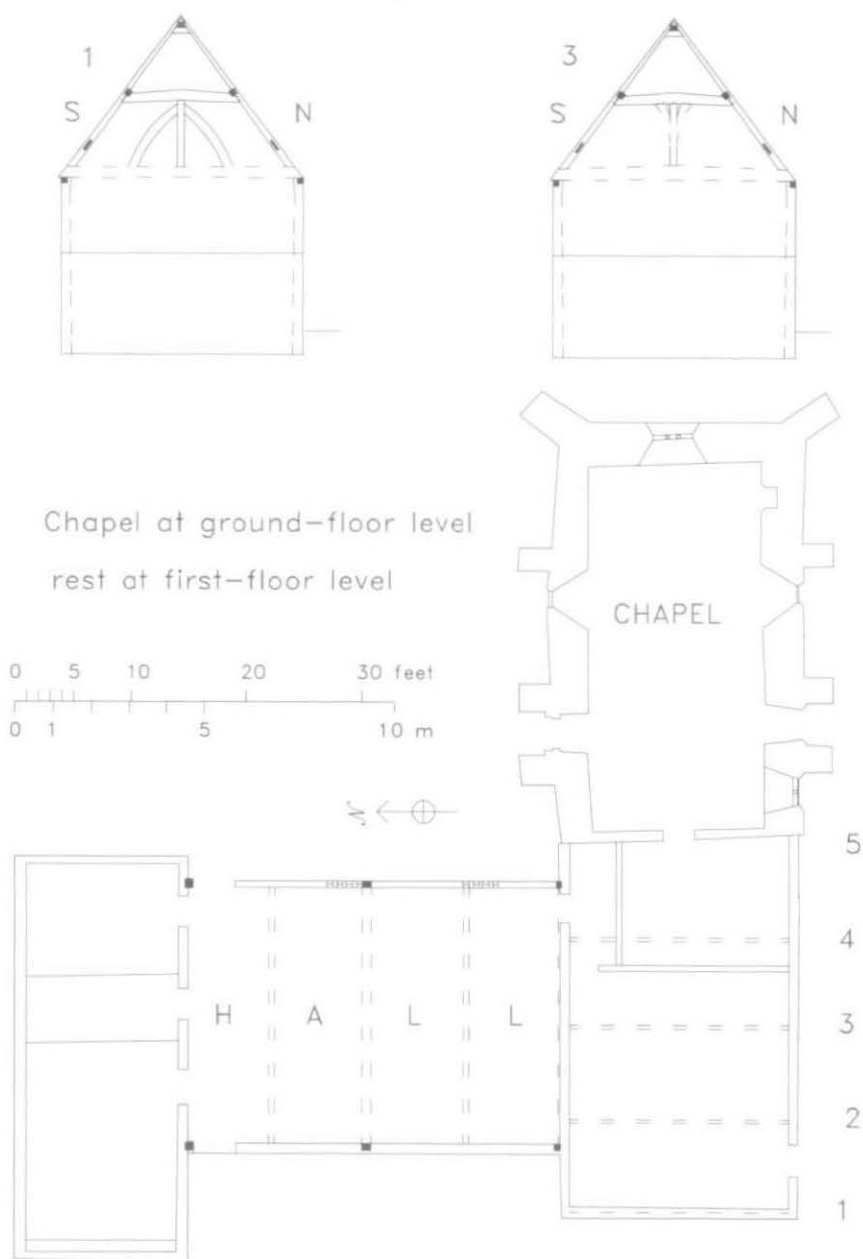


Fig. 4. Hendred House, East Hendred.

windows in a Decorated style, probably in imitation of those at Sutton Courtenay Abbey, were inserted into the south wall. In the 20th century a square-headed Tudor-style window was built at the west end of the south wall, replacing a wooden-mullioned one.

The south wing, west of the chapel, is timber-framed and was not jettied. Its east wall forms the west wall of the chapel, although much of the walling has been filled or replaced by brickwork. No early features are visible on the ground and first floors, although family tradition records that a 13th-century window was formerly visible at the west end of the north wall, facing a similar one in the north wing across the courtyard. The ground floor, now a library, is at a lower level than that of the hall and may have begun as a storage basement. If so, the ceiling height suggests that it was raised in the 17th century, and the cased ceiling-beams may date from that period.

The roof structure shows that the first floor was a single great chamber of four bays. The central two bays are slightly sooted, perhaps by seepage from the hall. The roof has five principal-rafter trusses, with light clasped purlins, steeply pitched windbraces (6 by 3 ins.), and a clasped ridgepiece. The central truss has a crown strut braced to the collar, and the west gable truss a crown strut braced downwards to a flat tiebeam (Fig. 4), but the intermediate trusses have no framing, and the eastern truss only light infilling, between tie and collar. The common rafters measure c. 4½ by 2½ ins., and are laid on their long sides. The purlin and ridge scarf joints are splayed, and the assembly marks were scribed with a compass. At the north-east corner, a flat tiebeam, a steeply pitched wall brace, and evidence of dragon ties were noted in the early 1970s. A view of c. 1700 shows multifoliate Geometric bargeboards on the west gable.²⁰⁷

The structure has close resemblances to the chamber wings at Tudor House and 39 The Causeway, Steventon. The group was formerly attributed to the late 14th century²⁰⁸ but since the timber for that at Tudor House was felled c. 1314²⁰⁹ it seems probable that all three wings date from the earlier 14th century, that at Hendred House being probably the work of William Arches (d. by 1357).

No evidence survives of the 13th- and 14th-century hall. It may well have been on the site of the present one, whose length, unusual for its date, may reflect that of its predecessor. It nevertheless has no traces of the aisled proportions which would be expected, and appears to be a complete rebuilding of the late 15th or earlier 16th century, although some of the posts are cased. The structure is timber-framed, in two long, or four short bays, with a false hammer-beam open truss and arch-braced intermediate trusses, moulded with hollow chamfers and stepped stops. There are two tiers of tenoned purlins, and windbraces forming four-centred arches. The overall design closely resembles that of the hall at Lyford Grange.²¹⁰ On the east wall are two four-light timber windows with four-centred boarded heads set into slots in the mullions. One window is immediately north of the central truss, but the other is set oddly below the southern arch-braced truss. The hall was heated by an open hearth, soot from which still coated the roof timbers in 1971 but has since been removed when the roof was restored and opened to view.²¹¹ The present central side fireplace in the east wall, with a four-centred head and a frieze with quatrefoil roundels, is said to have been brought from elsewhere. Wood regarded it as 15th-century (though accepting a date-range for the type up to c. 1530).²¹² If it is *in situ* it indicates that the open-hearthed hall is likely to date from before rather than after 1500, and to be the work of the first Eyston owner.

The north, service, wing was jettied in 1661,²¹³ and had what may have been Perpendicular bargeboards.²¹⁴ No trace survives of the alleged 13th-century window.²¹⁵ The wing has been much altered internally, but retains on the ground floor, in the west bay, a ceiling beam with a hollow

²⁰⁷ Manley, *East Hendred*, plate facing p. 26.

²⁰⁸ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 160.

²⁰⁹ *Vernacular Archit.* xx (1989), 42; below, Steventon.

²¹⁰ Below, gazetteer, Hanneys: Lyford.

²¹¹ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' plate 15.

²¹² Wood, *Eng. Med. Ho.* 269, 275.

²¹³ Print examined in house, 1971.

²¹⁴ Manley, *East Hendred*, plate facing p. 26.

²¹⁵ Above (this section).

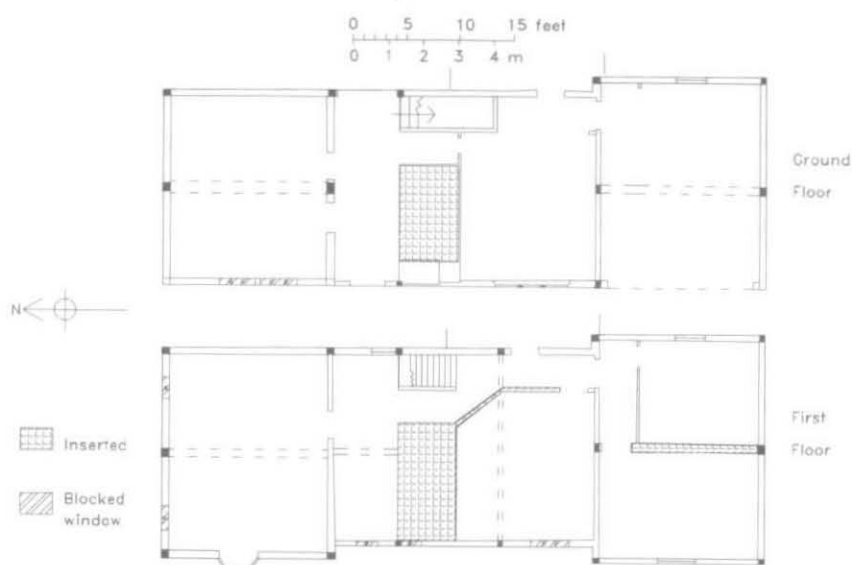


Fig. 5. The Stores, East Hendred: plans.

chamfer between two rolls. The roof has ties, collars, clasped purlins, and queen struts, and four-centred or ogival windbraces; at one truss the principals are diminished by shaving above the purlin. It is probably contemporary with the hall. On its north side is a massive kitchen chimney which in its present state belongs to the added outer wing.

PRIEST'S HOUSE

Adjoining the Chapel of Jesus of Bethlehem in Chapel Square, built in the 15th century by Sheen priory, then lords of the adjacent King's Manor, is the house of the priest who served the chapel. It is a small timber-framed building of two storeys, with a fireplace on the first floor.²¹⁶

OTHER HOUSES

The descent of THE STORES, High Street, which adjoins Hendred House on the north, is not known: it was probably built about 1500 by a merchant or clothier.²¹⁷ The house (plans, Fig. 5) is of a type unusual in the rural part of the Vale, but familiar in Essex and Hertfordshire. It has a hall and integrated and jettied north and south cross wings, whose ground floors are flush with the hall at the front, although the south wing projects slightly at the rear. As at Hendred House, the formal upper end is at the south, lower end of the site. The house is or was close-studded at the front and sides, and has some early brick nogging which is nevertheless inserted,²¹⁸ but the rear walls had open framing now replaced by brickwork. The wing fronts have Wessex gables each with a crown strut and raking struts, and Perpendicular bargeboards with quatrefoil panelling. Their jetties have fascias with a double hollow chamfer and bowtell moulding.

The hall had an open hearth and two bays of building, with two tiers of tenoned purlins and

²¹⁶ Described, *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 295.

²¹⁷ For the East Hendred cloth trade, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 64-6.

²¹⁸ J. McCann, 'Brick Nogging in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, with examples drawn mainly from Essex', *Trans. Ancient Monuments Soc.* xxxi (1987), 130.

four-centred windbraces, and a short northern screens bay with only one set of purlins. The central truss was a jointed cruck with an arch-braced collar which has since been replaced, and has a hollow-chamfer moulding on the surviving western post. There is a closed truss at the south end, with tie and collar, and a similar truss over the former screens, with a crown strut. The west wall²¹⁹ has evidence of blocked two-light windows over the screens passage and in the lower hall bay, and of a three-light one in the dais bay.

The south wing had a two-bayed chamber or parlour, now a shop, on the ground floor. It has a transverse ceiling beam with wide chamfers and stepped stops. The first floor, now partitioned, may have been one or two rooms. The north wing apparently had two rooms on the first floor, lit by two-light windows, now blocked, in the north wall, and perhaps by windows in the gables. Downstairs, peg-holes indicate two doors from the cross passage. There may have been a buttery and a pantry; or the eastern door may have led to a stair or ladder and the western to a single main room, a shop or second parlour, lit by a pair of three-light windows, now replaced, at the front. A later timber-framed kitchen formerly stood east of this wing, but was burnt down in 1969.²²⁰

The wings, in contrast to the hall, have ridgeless clasped-purlin roofs in two bays, and four-centred windbraces at the centre trusses only. The centre and rear trusses have queen struts between tie and collar. The purlins, like the hall wallplates, have secret-bridled scarf joints.

East Hendred is unusual among the villages of the district in lacking any early cross-winged peasant houses, while retaining an exceptional number of compact single-range houses dating from between c. 1400 and c. 1550. All, unless otherwise stated below, are of cruck construction; dates given are tree-ring dates.

Only HICKMAN'S COTTAGES, in the western extension of Cat Street, is large enough to merit separate treatment here. The house and its large curtilage were known as Hickman's Close in 1802.²²¹ In 1607 Henry Hickman held it, without attached farmland, by copy of King's manor dated 1599. A description probably transcribed *verbatim* from the copy called it a parcel of ground in Cat Street with a house newly built (*de novo edificato*), but listed five previous tenants of whom the first two were John Saunders and Margaret Saunders. The 'new building' thus dates from not later than John's tenure.²²² In 1551 he held two farms by copies dated 1544 and 1536, one of one yardland and the other of three.²²³ While it is possible that John built Hickman's Cottages after 1551 as a cottage for Margaret, the size and quality of the house make it more probable that the 'new building' was a fiction to justify the separation of one of John's farmhouses from its land, a device later made illegal by the Cottages Act of 1589. The 1607 survey described the house as of two spaces (bays) and two cuttings (outshuts). The structure shows that the outshuts were at the ends rather than the rear of the house.

Until damaged by fire in 1986 or 1987 Hickman's Cottages was the largest cruck house so far identified in the Vale, with an internal width of 21 ft. and eaves over 11 ft. high.²²⁴ The crucks appear to have been of elm,²²⁵ and the wall framing was in large panels, later extensively subdivided or replaced in brick. If the service outshut at the south end, which was rebuilt in the mid or later 17th century, was the same length as the surviving upper-end one, there were at least 1,390 sq. ft. of floor space, and if the outshuts were lofted possibly 1,930 sq. ft., as much as a substantial Wealden house provided.

Apart from the outshuts the house has two long, or (from the carpenter's point of view) one long and two short bays, including the cross passage (which retains evidence of a west door with four-centred head) and the hall, whose lowest bay had a loft above, which was probably used for

²¹⁹ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 191 wrongly calls this the north wall.

²²⁰ Inf. (1971) from the occupier, Mr. Wickens.

²²¹ Berks. R.O., T/M 33/1.

²²² P.R.O., LR 2/209, f. 67.

²²³ Ibid. LR 2/187, f. 296v.

²²⁴ For details and illustrations, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 195-6, Fig. 17, and plate 39, where, however, it was not recognized that the 17th-century south end replaced an original outshut.

²²⁵ Inf. from D.W.H. Miles (1988).

storage. The two short upper bays were open to the roof and were separated by an arch-braced principal-rafter truss, thus obviating the problem of finding suitably massive elbowed crucks for this position. The owner's chamber was presumably in the north outshut and may have been open to the roof; no obvious signs could be detected of an original ceiling, though most of the timbers in that bay were concealed when the house was examined.

The structure is remarkable for the treatment of the windbraces, whose assembly marks showed them to be contemporary. Those in the loft were 6-in. wide boards of relatively thin cross-section, but those in the open part of the hall were exceptionally massive, and formed two pairs of two-centred arches on each side. They thus show a careful balance between display and economy. Yet in the mid and later 16th century, a period of rapidly rising timber prices, the design would have been not only very old-fashioned in style but extravagantly so by comparison with upper-class buildings. The house probably dates from the mid or late 15th century and has, for example, scarf joints typical of that century.

Of the remaining houses, MEADOW COTTAGES, Horn Lane (box-framed)²²⁶ and FEATHERBED COTTAGE, Newbury Road,²²⁷ are too fragmentary for their original form to be determined, while the OLD FORGE, Church Street (c. 1541)²²⁸ may not have been domestic. THE COTTAGE, Horn Lane, has two bays of uncertain plan.²²⁹ The rest had a central hall, upper-end chamber, and lower-end service room; the end bays were often not fully partitioned from the hall bay, and not all had lofted ends. Those with four bays include: GODFREY'S FARM (2, St. Mary's Road: all but the central truss box-framed; apparently c. 1432);²³⁰ 2, NEWBURY ROAD;²³¹ BRIAR COTTAGES, Cat St.;²³² and WINDYRIDGE-DUNELM, Horn Lane (box-framed, probably with a hammer-beam central truss).²³³ Those with three bays include INGLENOOK-PENNY GREEN, Cat St. (apparently c. 1448);²³⁴ CHURCH STREET COTTAGES (box-framed);²³⁵ and perhaps WYTHE COTTAGE, Church St. (probably with an outshut kitchen).²³⁶

FYFIELD

MANOR HOUSE

Descent

The overlordship of Fyfield manor was part of the earldom, later the Duchy, of Lancaster from the 13th century.²³⁷ The Fyfield family were undertenants from 1170 or earlier until the early 14th century. It is not clear whether John de Fyfield (fl. 1309, d. by 1316) was the same John whose heiress Elizabeth had married Sir John Golafre by 1335. The manor was settled in 1336 on Sir John (d. 1363) and Elizabeth. The Golafres held it until the last Sir John died childless in 1442. His trustees conveyed it in 1448 to William and Alice de la Pole, marquess and marchioness of Suffolk. The Pole family held it until John earl of Lincoln's attainder in 1487. From 1510 it was held by

²²⁶ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' p. 194, plate 38.

²²⁷ Manley, *East Hendred*, 47.

²²⁸ *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 42.

²²⁹ John Fletcher, 'Crucks in the West Berks. and Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, xxxiii (1968), 86.

²³⁰ Nottingham Univ. provisional tree-ring date; Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 193-4, Fig. 15, plates 34-7.

²³¹ *Oxoniensia*, xxxiii, 86.

²³² Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 197-8, Fig. 15, plates 40-1.

²³³ *ibid.* p. 199, Fig. 16, plate 46.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 198, Fig. 19, plate 41; provisional Nottingham Univ. tree-ring date.

²³⁵ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' p. 202, Fig. 21, plate 48.

²³⁶ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 196-7, Fig. 21, plates 39-40.

²³⁷ This descent is based, unless otherwise stated, on *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 36-7.

Lady Katherine Gordon and her successive husbands, the fourth being Christopher Ashton, an usher of the chamber who died after 1558. Meanwhile the remainder had been acquired in 1554 by Sir Thomas White, who gave it in 1555 to St. John's College, Oxford, which he founded, and which still held the manor in the 20th century. The White family held it on lease from the college until 1738.²³⁸ The manor house is now occupied by Blackwells Rare Books.

Site documentation

No evidence has been found about the house under the Fyfields and Golafres. In 1584 George White claimed to have incurred great charges in repairs and building work on the manor house.²³⁹

Description

Access could not be obtained to all parts of the site and time did not permit a full measured survey. This is therefore merely an interim account.

Fyfield Manor (plan, Fig. 6) includes a hall range with front porch, fragmentary east and complete west cross wings, north-west and south-west extensions to the west wing, and a south-west range flanking a courtyard on the south front. That was the main front, facing the church.

The earliest part of the house appears to be the east (upper-end) wing, of which only the west wall 40 ins. thick, forming the east wall of the hall range and now the east end of the house, survives. The south hall wall abuts it in a straight joint, showing that the hall wall was built later and that the wing probably extended further southwards. There is no straight joint on the north-east corner, where the curved wall was clearly the core of a spiral staircase, leading to a landing and a further stair to a door opening into the room over the hall; the doorway, now blocked, has a four-centred head and was probably inserted in George White's 16th-century reconstruction. There was presumably also a door to the chamber in the first floor of the wing.

The staircase was entered at ground floor level by a passageway with an inner door, now on the outside of the hall range, with a four-centred head and hollow-chamfer moulding, and an outer door at the east end of the north wall of the hall. That has a wave-moulded surround but a four-centred head and presumably dates from the 16th century in its present form. Adjoining it in the east wall, and formerly leading to the ground floor of the wing, is a superficially similar door, also with a four-centred head but having instead of a wave a wide recessed quarter-round moulding. Close examination suggests that the large blocks forming the head had been made up from a two-centred arch, and that the doorway is thus a 16th-century remodelling of an original of c. 1300.²⁴⁰ That may have been the period when the wing was built, but if so it was probably altered in the 15th century, since a Perpendicular traceried window was re-set on the outside of the surviving wall when the rest was demolished, perhaps in the 17th century, the apparent date of the chimney built into the upper gable. Garden features (Fig. 6) may give a clue to the wing's original width.

The hall range, now of two storeys and attics, retains a cross entry at the west end. The 14th-century front doorway has a moulding of two waves flanking a hollow enriched with ballflower. Nevertheless the hall has been regarded as wholly rebuilt in the 16th century, presumably by George White.²⁴¹ Details consistent with that date include the string courses above each tier of windows with wide casement or hollow chamfer below, the dormer gables and their

²³⁸ W.H. Stevenson and H.E. Salter, *The Early History of St. John's College, Oxford* (Oxford Hist Soc. n.s. i, 1939), 250, 378-9, 501.

²³⁹ *Ibid.* 250-1.

²⁴⁰ The moulding resembles that on the doors of the Old Warden's Hall (1299-1300) and Mob Quad (c. 1307) at Merton College, Oxford: J.R.L. Highfield, 'The Aula Custodis', *Postmaster*, iv (4 Dec. 1970), 14-22.

²⁴¹ *Vernacular Architecture Group Oxfordshire Programme*, (1987), 55.

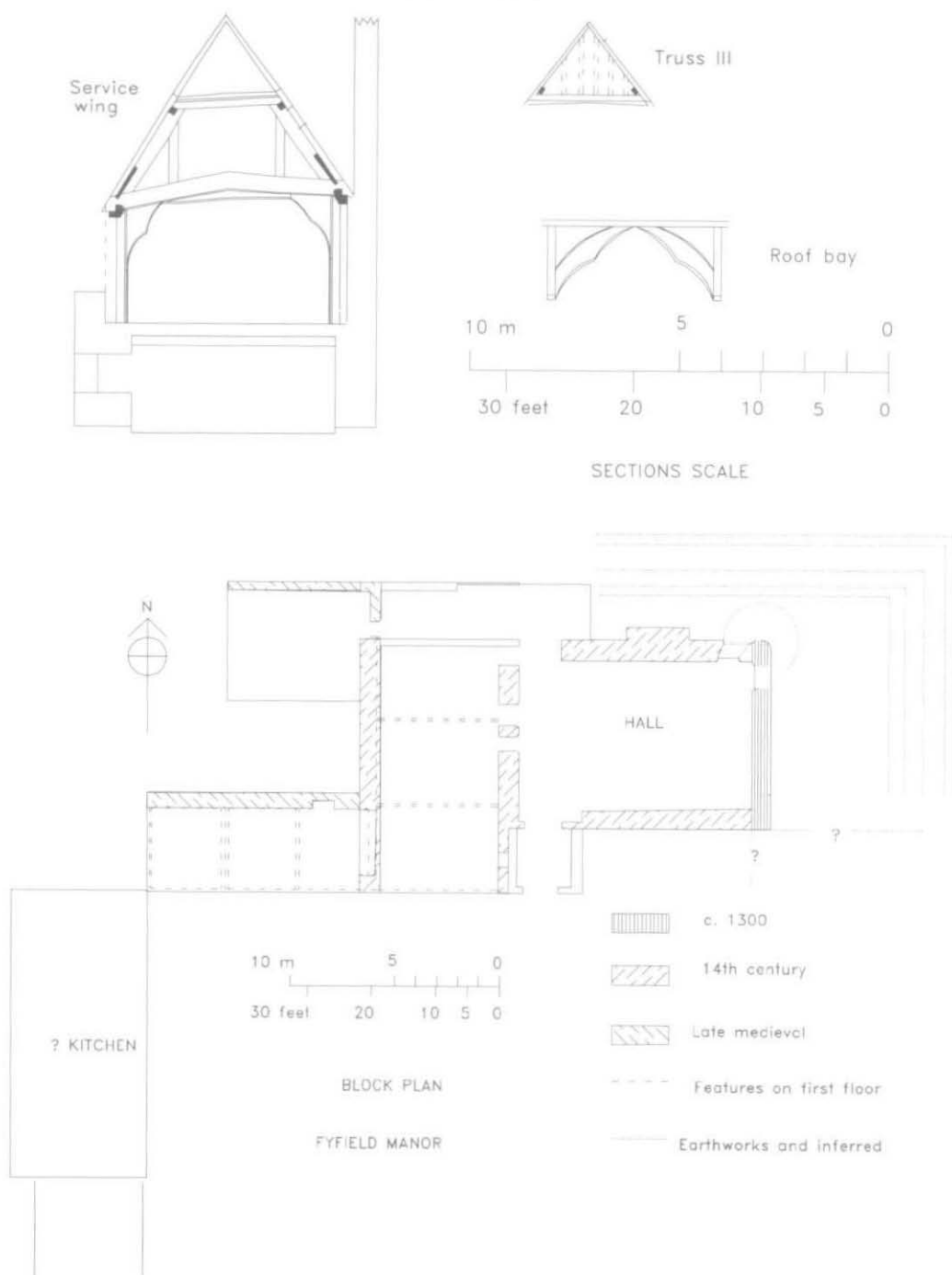


Fig. 6. Fyfield Manor: block plan and sections.

mullioned windows with straight heads and hollow-chamfer mouldings, the large lateral chimneystack in the north wall, the ceiling of the ground-floor hall, and the roof, with principal rafters and purlins.

It seems, however, that the 16th-century work was a drastic remodelling rather than a complete rebuilding. The plan of the ground floor, with its corner doorways to the chamber basement and staircase, is typical of the 14th century. There is no sign of a break in the stonework above or to the east of the 14th-century doorway, or of a horizontal break in the front wall. That wall is 34 ins. thick at ground floor level, diminishing only to 32½ ins. on the first floor; the north wall is 36 ins. thick throughout. Only at the dormer level, above the upper string course, is the thickness significantly reduced. These thicknesses are considerably greater than was normal in Oxfordshire or north Berkshire c. 1580,²⁴² and there is no sign of a 6-in. rebate at first-floor level as would be expected if the building had been designed to have two storeys.²⁴³ The hall was thus unusually tall for the mid 14th century, but the two-storeyed porch appears intended to preface a building of great height.

The porch is nevertheless considerably altered and restored. The lower storey is of stone; its outer door is two-centred, with Decorated mouldings, but the label above appears Perpendicular, and the side walls have been rebuilt, since they incorporate re-used fragments of Perpendicular worked stone. The upper storey is timber-framed and has in its south (front) wall a two-light window with reticulated tracery and blank shields of arms, which may once have borne the arms of Fyfield and Golafre.

At the west end of the hall are three doors into the service wing. Two in the centre, presumably leading to buttery and pantry, have jambs and voussoirs with double wave moulding. The third door is at the north (rear) end of the cross entry, which as late as the 19th century led to a staircase, then a dog-leg at the rear of the wing. The door has a single wave moulding. The first floor of the wing is now approached by a modern staircase at the back.

The two-storeyed service wing has a basement with thick stone walls and, apart from the entrance doors, no early detail. In the 19th century the eastern stone wall extended to the present modern rear wall of the wing and bore signs of having extended farther.²⁴⁴ The upper storey, however, is timber-framed, and consists of a great chamber in three bays. The quality of its timberwork (Fig. 6) suggests a guest chamber, since the owner's chamber was presumably in the east wing. Although the framing was heavily restored in softwood in the 19th century, enough original timber remains to confirm the fidelity of the restoration.

The chamber roof is constructed of heavy plank-like timbers and is of an unusual design. From the principal posts moulded and cusped arch braces rise to massive tiebeams, whose soffits are partly cut away in the centre so that the whole forms a cusped, shouldered arch. The moulding is in two orders, the outer hollow-chamfered and the inner straight-chamfered. The cornice has a scroll and bead moulding. Above the ties each roof truss has short principals some of which are made of two pieces mortised together; queen struts; purlins let into the backs of the short principals and trapped by a collar above; windbraces forming trefoiled arches; and upper principals set on the backs of the short principals. A window near the south end of the west wall, probably reticulated like that in the porch, has been converted to a door. A window in the south gable, with two trefoiled lights, appears restored. A door from the chamber to the first floor of the porch appears to have been cut in the 16th century.

The service block has two extensions of late medieval origin. A small building at the north-west corner is much altered but retains an entrance doorway with bracket-moulded jambs. At the south-west corner is a narrow three-bay range, perhaps lodgings originally, with stone north and partly timber-framed south walls. The roof has tiebeams, to which brackets rise from the posts, collars, clasped purlins, and windbraces.²⁴⁵ The west bay is separated from the others by a door

²⁴² Cf. P.S. Spokes and E.M. Jope, 'The Priory, Marcham, Berks.', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lvii (1959), 86-98; R.B. Wood-Jones, *Traditional Domestic Archit. in the Banbury Region* (Manchester, 1963), 240.

²⁴³ Cf. Holywell Manor, Oxford (1516): L.F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540*, 510.

²⁴⁴ Plan in N.B.R.

²⁴⁵ Upper roof not seen; description from J.M. Fletcher's notes, in possession of the writer.

with a four-centred head and on the jambs double hollow-chamfer mouldings ending in mitred stops. The fireplace in the east bay is dated 1664.

The west courtyard range includes, running south from the wing just described, a tall stone-walled four-bayed building in which J.M. Fletcher noted a rough clasped-purlin roof. A clasped ridgepiece is visible on the south gable, which is timber-framed and plastered above the eaves level. The roof is said to be smoke-blackened and the building may have been a kitchen.

In conclusion, the fragmentary east wing appears to date from *c.* 1300. There is no reason to doubt the traditional ascription of the service wing and hall to Sir John Golafre (d. 1363) after he acquired the manor in the mid 1330s. The western extensions to the service wing are probably of *c.* 1500, and the possible kitchen in the west range may be of any late-medieval date. The hall was drastically remodelled by George White before 1584, and the east wing, altered then, was demolished perhaps in the 17th century.

PRIEST'S HOUSE

The present White Hart Inn, on the north side of the village street, is the house of the priest and almsmen of the hospital of St. John the Baptist founded under the will of Sir John Golafre (d. 1442). St. John's College bought it in 1580. It consists of a stone-walled hall range, with services in line at the east end, and west cross-wing, with a timber-framed upper storey which is jettied at the front and internally over the hall. The wing has tension-braced framing and clasped-purlin roof, with king struts on the north gable, and the hall has a two-bayed arch-braced collar-beam roof with two tiers of clasped purlins and windbraces, and king struts at the end trusses. Ashlar pieces join the common rafters to the wallplate. The services include buttery and perhaps pantry, entered from the hall through twin timber doors having four-centred heads with foiled spandrels; from the far side of the pantry a door led to a kitchen with a fireplace in the end bay. The chamber over the services probably accommodated the almsmen. The priest's accommodation was presumably in the cross wing, which has three bays. The north bay contains a spiral stair and a small room adjoining. The rest of the ground floor consisted of an unheated chamber, later a parlour with a fireplace, and the first floor had small chamber in each bay.²⁴⁶

OTHER HOUSES

No smaller medieval houses are known to survive. In 1556 the manorial lessee, Christopher Ashton, was accused of having caused the destruction between 1534 and 1554 of several tenants' houses and cottages in the manor. Most were unitary houses of two to three bays, but four had detached kitchens and one an apparently detached chamber of two bays.²⁴⁷

HAGBOURNE: DIDCOT

No medieval manor house is known. At 26 MANOR ROAD is a house with a cruck hall range and a cross wing, also cruck-built. The wing has been dated by dendrochronology to *c.* 1530, but the date of the hall remains unknown.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ *Vernacular Architecture Group Oxfordshire programme* (1987), 56; N.B.R. photographs.

²⁴⁷ Oxford: St. John's College Muniments, II 6c; *ibid.* II 5, ff. 23-6; for fuller discussion, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 146-7.

²⁴⁸ *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 44.

HAGBOURNE: EAST HAGBOURNE

No medieval manor house is known; a moated site attributed to East Hagbourne²⁴⁹ is probably that of Manor Farm, West Hagbourne.²⁵⁰

OTHER HOUSES

The village of East Hagbourne is bifocal, with farms and cottages clustered round the Upper Cross at the west end and the Lower Cross at the east, and scattered along the street in between. It was devastated by fire in 1659 or 1660.²⁵¹ The fire appears to have been most severe at the Upper Cross, the open space round which is surrounded by jettied houses in a homogeneous style of the later 17th century.

Further east some earlier timber-framed houses survive, including KINGSHOLME, a single-range cruck house of c. 1552,²⁵² and LOWER CROSS COTTAGES. The latter was in 1775 apparently a leasehold farmhouse with 50½ acres of land.²⁵³ Now two cottages, it consists of a hall range and two cross wings. The hall was rebuilt in two storeys in the later 17th century, re-using some medieval timbers. Probably at the same time the south wing, formerly of two or more bays, was reduced to 1½ bays and cut off flush with the hall at the front. It has been reroofed but retains medieval framing, with large panels having long, steep-pitched, almost straight braces, and a low bressumer marking the former first-floor level. The north wing also includes fragments of a two-bayed medieval wing, including the ceiling beam of its low first floor, some 5 ft. from the ground, and an open truss above with one post having a thick, steep-pitched bracket to the tiebeam, which may have supported a crown post. In the early or mid 16th century the wing was extended at the rear (west) end, and about 1600 the front was replaced and extended with a new jettied structure with a wider frontage.

HAGBOURNE: WEST HAGBOURNE

MANOR HOUSES

West Hagbourne manor was held from before 1086 to 1661 by the Windsor family, whose main residence was at Stanwell (Mdx.), although between 1367 and 1404 it was in possession of Clarice, widow of Richard de Windsor, and her second and third husbands.²⁵⁴ In 1367 the site was approached by a great gate on the north side and included a hall and a chamber at the west end with a solar and cellar built up against it, with chimneys and an oratory attached; a range of buildings between the chamber and the great gate; a kitchen and bakehouses, a dovecote, probably two barns, and a pond.²⁵⁵ By 1422, if not by 1375, it was ruinous.²⁵⁶ The moat is all that remains,²⁵⁷ unless the present village pond is that mentioned in 1367. The earliest part of the present Manor Farm dates from the later 17th century.

REPUTED MANOR HOUSES

The manor of Watlington, despite suggestions that it represents the Domesday holding of Walter

²⁴⁹ *V.C.H. Berks.* i, 270.

²⁵⁰ Below, Hagbourne: West Hagbourne.

²⁵¹ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 475; Bewes, *Church Briefs*, 272.

²⁵² *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 44.

²⁵³ *Berks. R.O.*, D/EC 11/2, p. 24. The tenant, William Philips, had several other holdings and the house may already have been sublet as cottages.

²⁵⁴ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 478–80.

²⁵⁵ *Cal. Close*, 1364–8, p. 394.

²⁵⁶ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 480, n. 27; *P.R.O.*, C 130/58, 9 Hen. V no. 45.

²⁵⁷ *V.C.H. Berks.* i, 270.

Fitz Other,²⁵⁸ appears to derive from miscellaneous freeholds accumulated by Edmund and Thomas Childrey in the 14th century,²⁵⁹ although courts were held for it in the 17th century.²⁶⁰ GROVE FARM, the alleged manor house, appears wholly post-medieval; it is possible, but unlikely, that the 'Chelreys' manor house in which a court for Windsors manor was held in 1375²⁶¹ was in fact York Farm.²⁶²

YORK FARM

York Farm, York Road, is so named from the 15th-century owners, who held it mainly of West Hagbourne manor, for 5s., but partly of Watlington (Bekinghams), for 12d.²⁶³ In the early 17th century it was a freehold of West Hagbourne manor²⁶⁴ and is not known to have had a court. Despite being described as a manor in the 1440s²⁶⁵ and again in 1516²⁶⁶ and 1597²⁶⁷ it was not so regarded in an 18th-century summary of common rights.²⁶⁸

Descent

The first of the York family known in West Hagbourne was John York, who held Windsors manor by the curtesy as third husband of Clarice Windsor between 1378 or 1379 and 1404²⁶⁹ and who presumably acquired York Farm during that time. Its earlier descent is doubtful, but a possibility can be suggested. The tenement of 'Brusseham' which John York held, apparently of the Childreys' manor, in Richard II's reign, may account for the later quit-rent to Watlington but cannot have been York Farm, since its abutments in 1370 were with houses to north and south.²⁷⁰ On the other hand, the freehold of 80 a. land and 1½ a. meadow which John Dickeles held of Windsors manor in 1383 and which had once belonged to Sweyn of 'Morley'²⁷¹ corresponds to the area of York Farm as recorded in 1623,²⁷² except for a small increase in the meadow, perhaps in the 15th century.²⁷³ Apart from the Childreys' holding no other large freehold is recorded in the surviving 14th-century court rolls,²⁷⁴ and no other freehold potentially corresponding to Dickeles's is recorded later.

Half of Dickeles' estate, a house and 2 yardlands (40 acres), had been sold in 1295 by Edmund and Millicent Giffard of 'Winterbourne' to Miles (Milo) of Moreton, who in 1297 settled it on his son and future heir Bartholomew and Bartholomew's wife Margaret.²⁷⁵ Since Miles was still alive in 1323²⁷⁶ the 1297 conveyance may have been part of a marriage settlement. In 1326

²⁵⁸ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 480.

²⁵⁹ E.g. P.R.O., CP 25(1)/11/60; *ibid.* 11/61; *ibid.* 11/65, no. 90; *ibid.* SC 2/154/18, mm. 2, 3; SC 2/154/29, m. 7.

²⁶⁰ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 480.

²⁶¹ P.R.O., SC 2/154/28, m. 6.

²⁶² *Below.*

²⁶³ P.R.O., C 146/10207.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.* C 142/402, no. 150; *ibid.* WARD 7/68, no. 72.

²⁶⁵ *Cat. Anct. D.* iii, C 3331 (p. 354).

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* vi, C 7259 (p. 451), C 7350 (p. 463).

²⁶⁷ *Berks. R.O.*, D/ER T 575.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* D/ER P 4.

²⁶⁹ P.R.O., SC 2/154/29, m. 2; *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 479.

²⁷⁰ P.R.O., SC 11/3, m. 3; *ibid.* C 146/9480.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.* SC 2/154/29, m. 5.

²⁷² *Ibid.* WARD 7/68, no. 72.

²⁷³ *Cat. Anct. D.* i, C 92 (p. 394).

²⁷⁴ P.R.O., SC 2/154/28 and 29.

²⁷⁵ P.R.O., CP 25(1)/9/35, nos. 4 and 8.

²⁷⁶ Magdalen College, Oxford, Harwell deeds, TS. cat. p. 186.

Bartholomew 'of Hagbourne' sold the estate to Sweyn of 'Mortele',²⁷⁷ who evidently enlarged it, since in 1367 Alice Swayne's estate was that held by Dickeles in 1383.²⁷⁸

In the 15th century York Farm descended with John York's other estate, later a manor, at Twickenham (Mdx.) to Thomas York of Hilddrop in Ramsbury (Wilts.) who arranged to sell it in 1516 but may have cancelled the sale.²⁷⁹ From the mid 15th century, if not earlier, the Yorks were absentees and sublet the farm to tenants: Thomas and William 'Alworth' in 1474²⁸⁰ and John Torold in 1512.²⁸¹ It later formed part of the extensive estates of William Dunch, who was succeeded on his death in 1597 by his son Edmund (d. 1623).²⁸² An Edmund Dunch was still recorded as owner in 1660.²⁸³ By 1684 Robert Loder was owner and occupier.²⁸⁴ By 1694 he had been succeeded by Francis Loder,²⁸⁵ who was followed by his sons John and Francis. The latter sold his share of the farm in 1750.²⁸⁶

Site documentation

In 1474 the lessee was obliged to repair all thatched roofs except a 'berne the wiche the lords corn lyeth in', the landlord being responsible for tiled roofs. That division was repeated in 1512 with the addition that the lessee was responsible for timber-framed and mud walls and the landlord for stonework.²⁸⁷ Since the house is timber-framed and was still thatched or partly so in the early 20th century,²⁸⁸ the Yorks' burden was not onerous.

Building

York Farm (plan and sections, Figs. 7-9) stands north of the road and is aligned east-west. It consists of an aisled main range, including from the west a two-storeyed service bay and a hall (27 ft. by 23 ft.) of two nearly equal bays with a central base-cruck truss; and at the east end an integrated two-bayed cross wing spanning the width of the hall, with a short staircase bay at the rear, originally a two-bayed chamber upstairs, and a first-floor jetty at the front.²⁸⁹ Much of the original timber framing remains, though 17th- and 20th-century modernization has obscured or destroyed some features, and any surviving framing in the aisle walls is concealed by modern rendering inside and out. The overall design closely resembles Upton Court, Slough (Berks., formerly Bucks.), built with timbers felled in 1319,²⁹⁰ apart from the use of a base-cruck rather than a hammer-beam open truss and the absence of a spere truss and there are several differences in detail, in which York Farm is more archaic than Upton Court.

The frame appears to have been built on padstones, of which one survives below the north base-cruck blade, and a large sarsen immediately west of the house appears to have been that

²⁷⁷ P.R.O., CP 25(1)/10/51, 20 Edw. II no. 4.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. SC 2/154/28, m. 3.

²⁷⁹ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 476; *V.C.H. Mdx.* iii, 147-8; *V.C.H. Wilts.* xii, 24; *Cat. Anct. D.* vi, C 7259 (p. 451), C7350 (p. 463).

²⁸⁰ P.R.O., C 146/10207.

²⁸¹ *Cat. Anct. D.* vi, C 7459 (p. 478).

²⁸² Berks. R.O., D/ER T 575; P.R.O., WARD 7/68, no. 72.

²⁸³ Berks R.O., D/ER E 23.

²⁸⁴ Deeds in possession of Mr. and Mrs. W. Allen, York Farm, mortgage of 22 Mar. 1683/4.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., remortgage of 26 Sept. 1694.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. deed of 18 Sept. 1750.

²⁸⁷ P.R.O., C 146/10207; C 146/7459; *Cat. Anct. D.* vi, C 7459 (p. 470).

²⁸⁸ Drawing in house.

²⁸⁹ The D.O.E. Historic Buildings List, p. 63, absurdly describes it as 'cruck-framed', the base-cruck as a 'jointed cruck', and the date as probably early 16th-century.

²⁹⁰ R. Thornes and N. Fradgley, 'Upton Court, Slough: an Early Fourteenth-Century Open Hall', *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxlv (1988), 211-21; *Vernacular Archit.* xix, 46 (felling 1319-20).

supporting the lost north-west arcade post. The position of that truss is indicated by a brace mortice in the arcade plate (Fig. 9). The bases below the posts of the aisled truss second from the west are relatively modern reconstructions; the posts may have been earth-fast. There were presumably loose timber sills between the padstones. No clearly original footings or groundsills are visible elsewhere in the house: a short length of timber sill at the east end of the north aisle wall appears connected with the reconstruction of the adjoining staircase, while a surviving length in the inner wall of the north bay of the wing seems to have been inserted as part of a post-medieval jacking-up of the wall, which caused the wing to lean outwards. The footing does not continue into the south bay.

The service bay at the west end of the house is the most altered. As already indicated, the aisled truss at the end has been destroyed and the wall was moved about a foot eastwards. The present wall suggests that the reconstruction was originally timber-framed, since the stone footings appear considerably earlier than the 18th- or 19th-century brickwork above. On the ground floor the interior of the bay has been completely modernized, and the ceiling raised; a mortice in the surviving south aisle post, for a large binding joist, reveals the original height. On the first floor the arcade plates survive in part but their braces have been removed. The roof has been reconstructed, probably in the 17th century, using several of the original common rafters; nevertheless the crown plate did not continue west of the partition truss, and the original roof, like the present one, must have been hipped (as at Upton Court). The partition from the hall, with its king strut and halved and nailed staves (Fig. 8), of a similar design to that in the analogous position at Sutton Courtenay Abbey,²⁹¹ is original, and formerly supported laths nailed across it. Soot on the west side shows that the bay was open to the hall below the tiebeam. There is no trace of the original service doorways. The aisle posts lack jowls.

The lower (western) hall bay has never had a chamber above; a modern staircase hall replaces a rough loft.²⁹² Surviving features include a square-sectioned curved brace from the arcade post to the arcade plate on the south side, a square-sectioned straight windbrace from the base-cruck to the south arcade plate, and a trait-de-Jupiter scarf joint, which has failed, in the south arcade plate. Mortices survive for braces in the north plate. The plates are unchamfered.

The central arch-braced base-cruck truss (Fig. 8) forms a continuous double-chamfered arch; the remains of a low beam across it may not be original. The blades are tenoned to the plate only, as at Sutton Courtenay Abbey and the Old Deanery, Salisbury.²⁹³ The tiebeam is jointed to the arcade plate by a lap-dovetail with entrant shoulders.²⁹⁴ Immediately east of the truss the roof has the remains of a louvre (Fig. 9). In the upper bay a dormer on the south side may replace an original one, like that in an analogous position at Upton Court, Slough, but its structure could not be examined. The west end of the arcade plates are supported by posts in the wing wall; the plates are severely distorted as a result of subsidence and the later jacking-up of the wing.

The hall roof is of crown-plate construction; there were separate lengths for each bay, but that in the east bay has been removed when the chimney was inserted. The crown plates are or were tenoned into and braced from a king strut at the west end, a crown post in the centre, and a truncated king strut as part of an incomplete partition at the wing end. All those members are made of sawn timber, but are completely plain and unchamfered; there are no lateral braces; and except at the central truss the collars are dovetailed to the common rafters, a feature common in South-East England but not found consistently in any other medieval crown-plate roof in the Oxford region.²⁹⁵ All the roof timbers are unusually light, of 3½-in. to 4-in. square scantling.

²⁹¹ Below, gazetteer, Sutton Courtenay, rectory house.

²⁹² Inf. from the owners.

²⁹³ Below, gazetteer, Sutton Courtenay, rectory house; N. Drinkwater, 'The Old Deanery, Salisbury', *Antiq. Jnl.* xlv (1964), 41-59.

²⁹⁴ Cf. the Wheat Barn, Cressing Temple (Hewett, *Eng. Historic Carpentry*, Fig. 276) and locally South Moreton Manor, west wing (below, gazetteer, South Moreton).

²⁹⁵ At Lime Tree House, Harwell (below, gazetteer, Harwell) the halved collars are earlier than the inserted crown posts. Aston Upthorpe church porch has a crown-plate roof with halved collars; it appears to be a 17th-century rebuilding of an earlier structure. Cf. also below, gazetteer, Harwell, Bayloll's Manor (Middle Farm), north wing.

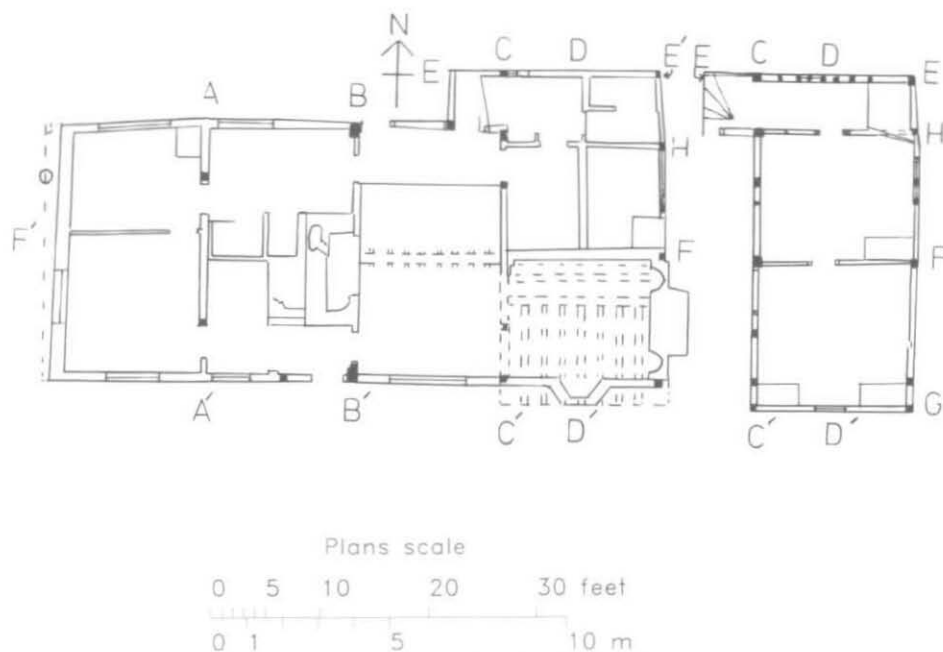


Fig. 7. York Farm, West Hagbourne: plans.

The wall between the hall and the east wing (Fig. 9) is largely concealed at ground-floor level by panelling in the north bay; in the south bay it has been reconstructed as an open partition, but the first-floor rail and the south side of the surviving stud have continuous grooves probably for planking. A steeply-pitched, slightly curved brace survives in the front wall. The lateral brick chimney on the east wall is an addition of uncertain date. Upstairs the wing walls were framed in giant panels with straight braces, which are slightly set back from the outside so that they could be concealed behind the plaster, as at Upton Court, Slough.²⁹⁶ The resulting effect is still visible on the east front. The original floor-joists survive in the south bay. The northern two were set across the bay and lodged on the rail. The next joist was similarly set, but is exceptionally heavy in order to house the tenons of the joists supporting the jetty. The arrangement can be paralleled in the apparently 13th-century service wing at Tiptofts, Wimbish, Essex.²⁹⁷ The jetty also has the same stuck-on appearance as at Tiptofts, projecting from a full-height principal post; the wall-braces of the first floor rise from that post rather than the jetty post. Nevertheless the position of the dragon-ties at wallplate level show that the jetty is not an afterthought. The north bay appears to have had its floor removed in the late Middle Ages (see below), and now has a 17th-century spine beam.

The wing has unjoined posts with upstands which do not appear to be tenoned into the ties. The ties at the gable and partition trusses are straight but that at the central open truss is slightly cambered and has curved braces from the posts. The crown-plate roof closely resembles that in the hall; the half-hip at the south end is a modern reconstruction, and it is not clear whether the gable crown post survives. The central truss has a crown post but the north partition has a truncated king strut, and an upper collar for a smoke vent in the gable. As in the hall, all the collars are dovetailed to the rafters except at the central truss.

The wing roof is heavily sooted. While smoke might have passed the incomplete partition from

²⁹⁶ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxlv, 218.

²⁹⁷ Hewett, *Eng. Historic Carpentry*, Fig. 112 (p. 127).

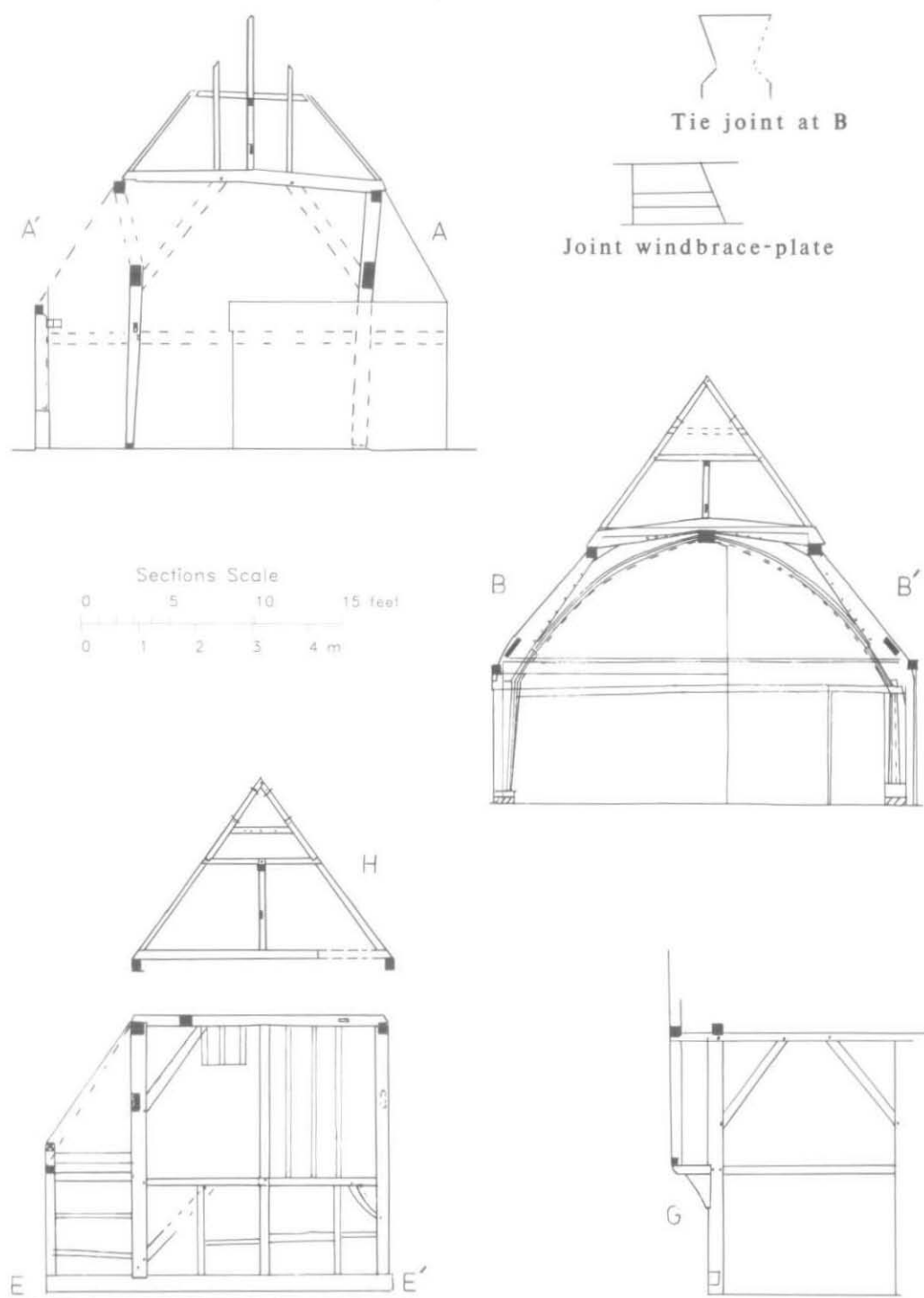


Fig. 8. York Farm: cross sections and details.

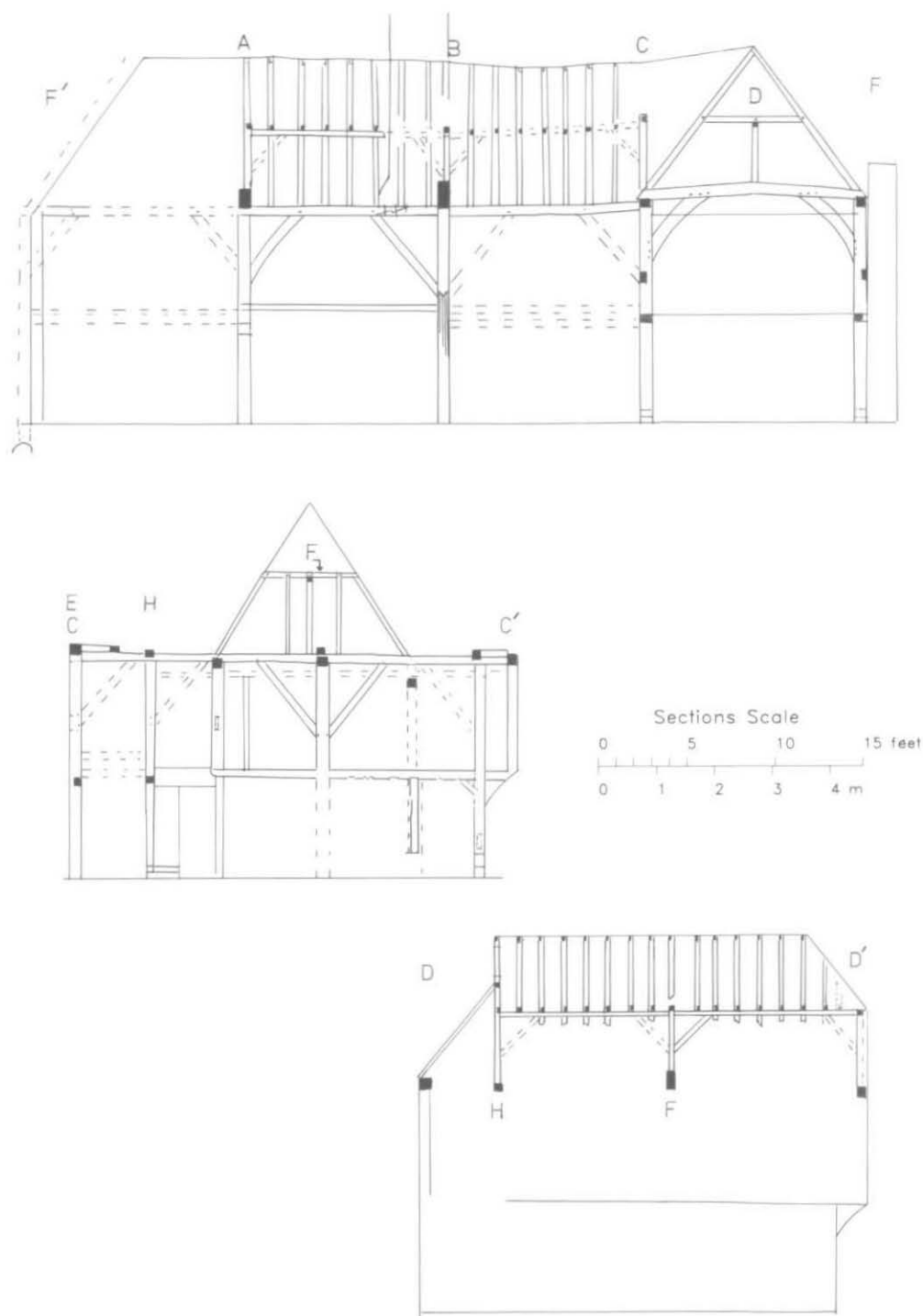


Fig. 9. York Farm: long sections.

the hall roof, that could not explain signs of sooting below the east wallplate in the staircase bay. It seems probable that the first floor of the south bay was removed in the late Middle Ages to make a kitchen, as at Lime Tree House, Harwell, and replaced in the 17th century.²⁹⁸ The eaves of the lean-to between the hall and the staircase bay were raised in the 17th century, and the present stair may date from that time; the partition between stair and chamber has also been renewed. A surviving dragon tie and sooted hip-rafters prove nevertheless that the staircase bay was original. Its north wall frame was partly subdivided in the 17th century but retains a tall central post.²⁹⁹

Also in the 17th century, probably soon after 1600, an axial stack with flanking lobby entrance was inserted into the hall, and the east bay ceiled, with transverse joints set into a spine beam supported in the chimney. Still later, the inner wall of the wing was jacked up, partly on the new groundsill in the north bay; the hall spine beam, as well as the arcade plates, was severely distorted by that change. A kitchen or bakehouse block, demolished in the 20th century,³⁰⁰ which stood south of the west end of the main range, may also have dated from the 17th century.

York Farm is the earliest complete timber-framed house to survive in the Vale, and among the earliest in England. Tree-ring samples taken in 1992 suggested that both hall and wing were built in winter 1284–5 or soon afterwards,³⁰¹ perhaps by the Giffards. The original work throughout the house is remarkable for its austerity: the only chamfering in the whole structure is that on the base-cruck arch, and there was very little use of arched timbers. In this respect, as in its date and carpentry technique, the design falls between the two phases of Lime Tree House in the adjoining parish of Harwell, a smaller building on a smaller estate. It is more advanced than the more remote Cottage, Aston Tirrold, of a year or two earlier. Its austerity also contrasts markedly with the ornate hall of Sutton Courtenay Abbey, probably of 1284–90 and also in an adjoining parish, although the two halls share certain carpentry features, such as unjowled posts and base-crucks, truncated king struts, and the design of the lower end partition walls. Sutton, however, was a grandee's house. The austerity of York Farm is also its principal difference from Upton Court, Slough, of 1319, although where there are purely technical differences – in post-head and common-rafter joints and in the jetty and floor construction – York Farm is not surprisingly the more archaic of the two.

OTHER HOUSES

The only other medieval house at present known in the township is ENARD COTTAGE, a small cruck range originally of three bays including a hipped end.³⁰² One or two other houses may retain late-medieval features internally but they have not been investigated.

HANNEY: LYFORD

MANOR HOUSES

Lyford Manor Farm, the house of the main manor in Lyford, is wholly post-medieval.³⁰³

LYFORD GRANGE has been identified as the manor-house of a smaller estate held in the 16th century by the Yate family.³⁰⁴ Despite its name the estate was not a monastic grange. It was held

²⁹⁸ Below, gazetteer, Harwell.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Upton Court, Slough.

³⁰⁰ Inf. from the owners.

³⁰¹ Two rafters from hall felled between Oct. and Mar. 1284–5; samples from arcade posts matched those rafters but lack full sapwood; wing wallplate felled spring or early summer 1283; unpublished analysis by Mr. D.W.H. Miles, pers. comm. when this paper was going to press.

³⁰² Altered in the 20th century; photographs in possession of owners.

³⁰³ P.S. Spokes and E.M. Jope, 'The Priory, Marcham', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lvii (1959), 86–97; *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 285.

³⁰⁴ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 285, 290.

of Abingdon Abbey in 1086 by an undertenant, Rainald, whose descendants the St. Helen family retained it apparently until the 14th century. The last recorded St. Helen tenant was Philip (d. 1373).³⁰⁵ In 1428 it was allegedly held by Thomas More (a member of an East Hendred merchant family) and others. Later known as More Place, it subsequently passed to John Yate (d. 1541). The Yates retained it until 1696, and their descendants in the female line, the Dunns, until 1760.³⁰⁶

Lyford Grange stands some $\frac{1}{2}$ km. east of Lyford hamlet. The site was moated and fragments of the north, south, and east sides of the moat remain. The house, noted as the place of capture of Edmund Campion, is also of considerable interest as a late-medieval attempt, not altogether successful, to combine the functions of a traditional H-plan house into a single compact range. It faces north-west; but the front will be treated as north for purposes of description. Behind the timber-framed front range are two rear wings, of brick, stone, and timber, creating a U-plan flanking a courtyard (plans, Fig. 10).

It appears that the present front range replaces, and incorporates fragments of, an earlier cross-winged house. Its west wall is 3 ft. thick and of stone, plastered externally. It is pierced by a large window with hollow-chamfered mullions and casement-moulded jambs, presumably inserted when the present front range was built. The wall continues southwards to form the west wall of the west courtyard wing. It is presumably the west wall of an earlier stone chamber block, perhaps of the 13th or 14th century.

At the east end of the main range are fragments of a service wing, possibly of three bays when built. The north and east walls here are also of stone at ground floor level, but the stonework is much thinner than the west wall and may represent a post-medieval casing, as does more certainly the brickwork on the first floor. One roof truss, with queen posts and clasped purlins, survives at the junction of the main range with the east courtyard wing behind it. The roof continued southwards, perhaps as far as a straight joint in the east wall some 8 ft. south of the front range, but it was cut off when the present east courtyard range was built or rebuilt (see below). Northwards, the purlins continue under the present roof and terminate in secret-splayed scarf joints, which probably indicate a 15th-century date.

The front range was built over both fragments, with a single roof of six bays, covering parlour, hall, and service. The roofs over the end bays are hipped. The timber-framing of the north wall is rendered, and that wall was modernized in the 18th century to form a five-bay facade with a central doorway and sash windows. The close-studded framing of the south wall is still exposed. Although the hall was open to the roof, the first-floor ceiling being clearly inserted, there is no soot on the roof timbers and the axial chimney stack at the upper (west) end is original. It also heated the parlour, which retains a fireplace with ogee and hollow-chamfered jambs, and a ceiling with two intersecting moulded beams. Above it was a great chamber, with a cornice having ogee and hollow chamfer mouldings; a wallpost in the centre of the south wall of the room has a roll moulding between two hollow chamfers. The chamber extended into the lobby north of the main chimney, and was separated from the hall by a close-studded partition on the east side of the chimney; the partition has a small window with hollow-chamfered mullions to allow those in the chamber a view of the hall below. The joists supporting the lobby have a roll moulding between two hollow chamfers. No evidence was found of exterior access to the lobby.

The surviving roof truss over the great chamber has queen struts, but the two-bayed open hall has an elaborate roof (Fig. 11) with two tiers of tenoned purlins and windbraces, all chamfered, and arch-braced intermediate trusses in both bays; the mutilated central truss appears to have been of hammer-beam type. The roof design thus recalls that at Hendred House (above, gazetteer, East Hendred).

The hammer beams had a moulding of hollow chamfer, ogee, return and hollow chamfer, and the posts had double hollow chamfers. The wallplates have edge-halved and doubly bridled scarf joints.

Mortices on the studding outside show that the upper bay of the hall was lit on the south side by

³⁰⁵ Ibid. 290, 416.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. 290. For More, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 64-5.

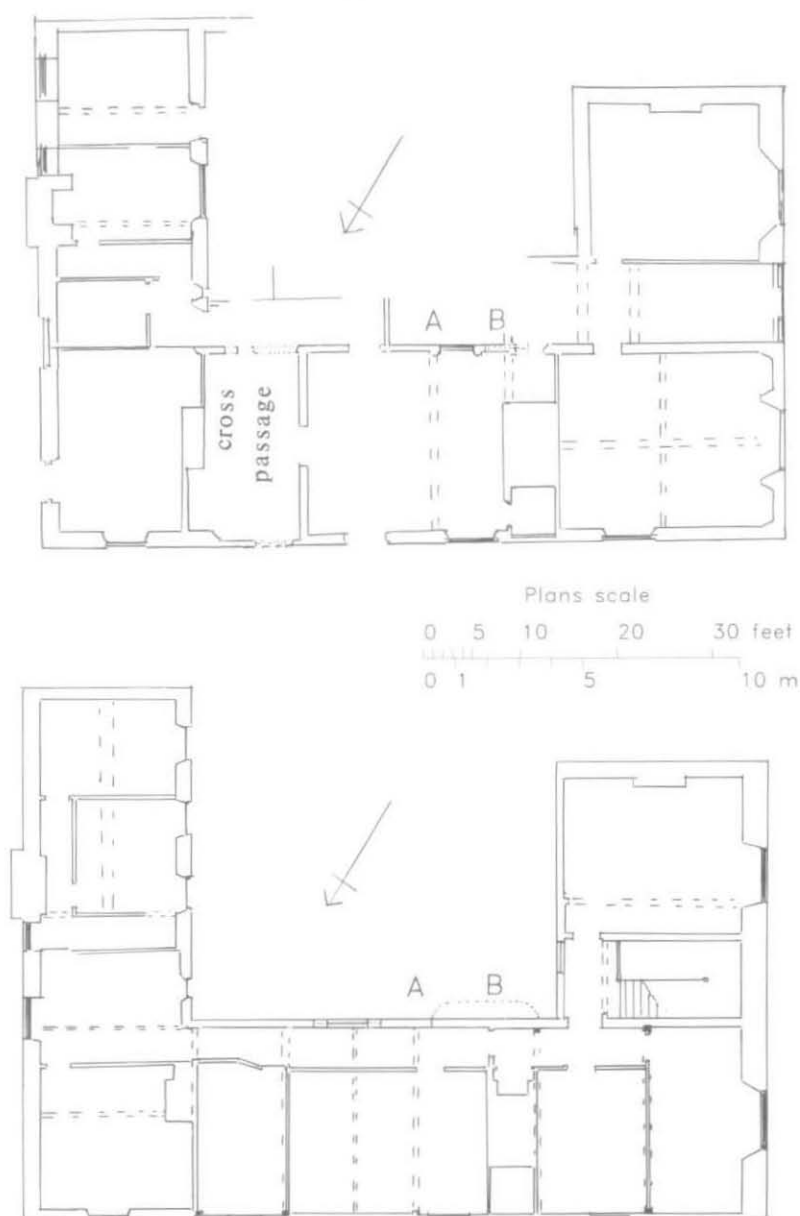


Fig. 10. Hanney: Lyford Grange, plans.

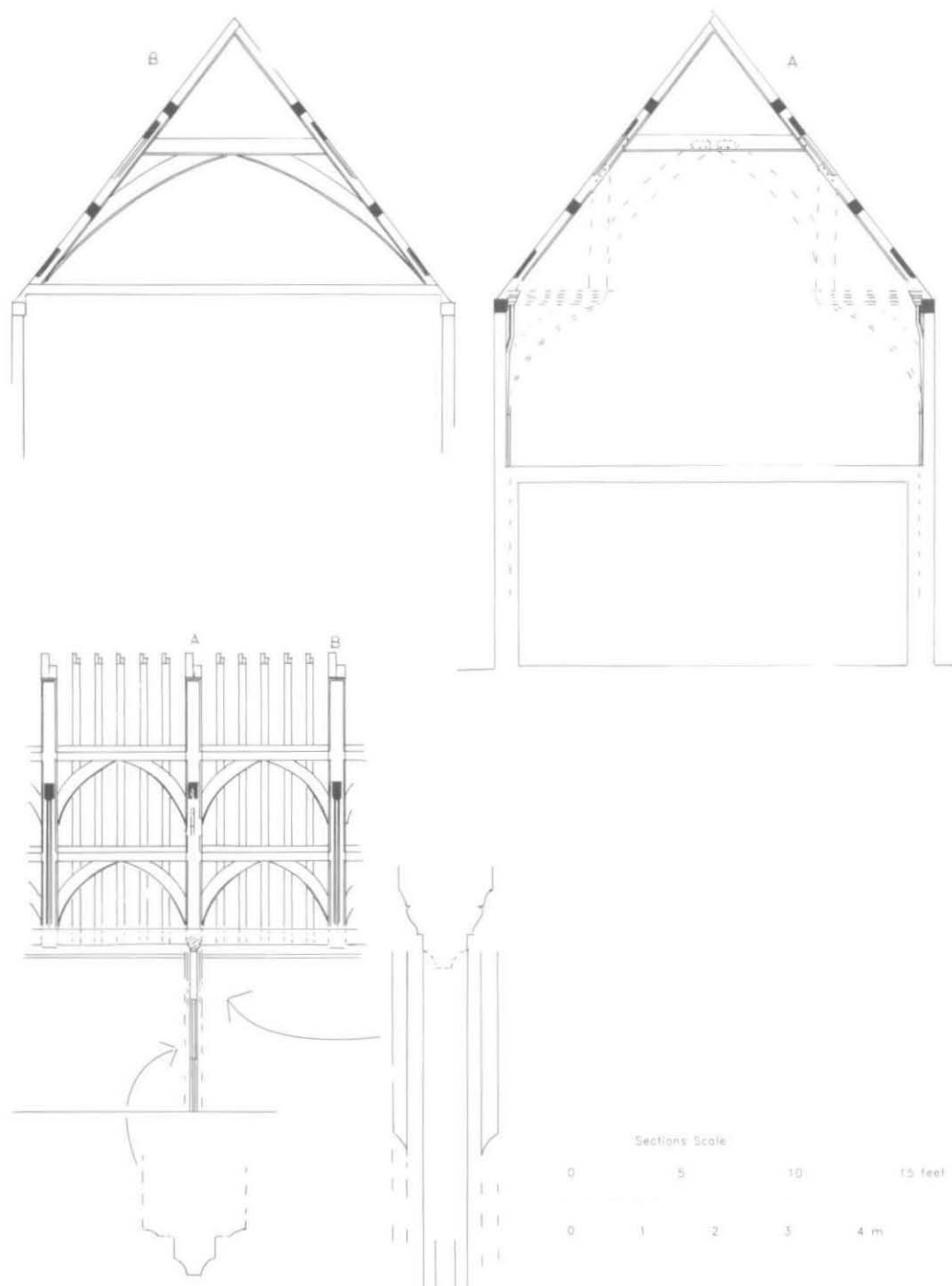


Fig. 11. Lyford Grange: sections and details.

a projecting bay window above the middle rail, with a further window below it, both now filled with false close studding. A studded partition separated the hall from the screens bay. The positions of the original doorways to the passage are indicated by breaks in the footings of the north wall and in the surviving stone plinth of the south wall (plan, Fig. 10). The service end has been modernized and an additional fireplace inserted, perhaps in the 18th century.

The west courtyard wing may have been reconstructed when the hall range was built, or a little later. Its east wall is timber-framed, with close studding visible in the north bay, although the close studding is of lighter scantling than that in the hall range.

Although Fletcher attributed the hall range to the 15th century,³⁰⁷ the absence of an open hearth and the axial position of the chimney stack make a date in the early or mid 16th century more likely; the house was probably rebuilt by John Yate (d. 1541). The plan can be compared with Church Farm, South Leigh, Oxon., which is also a long range, perhaps originally with an open hall, and an upper-end chimney stack serving both hall and parlour.³⁰⁸

The rebuilt house has no provision for a kitchen, which was presumably detached. In the later 16th or 17th century a kitchen was incorporated when the east courtyard range was rebuilt in stone, with a two-bay roof with clasped purlins and queen-post trusses, and a lateral fireplace on the east wall. It was later extended further south.

HARWELL

MANOR HOUSES AND SITES

In the 12th century the monks of Winchester cathedral priory copied three allegedly 10th-century charters relating to Harwell into the *Codex Wintoniensis*.³⁰⁹ The first, a forgery purporting to date from 956, and the second, dated 973, convey the same 7-hide estate with identical bounds to Aelfstan and Aelfric respectively. The third, dated 985, conveys a 17-hide estate to Aethelric, with a different set of bounds. Nevertheless the bounds of all three charters have been recognized as those of the modern parish. Since the 17 hides of 985 lay *segetibus mixtis*, it seems likely that the 7-hide and the 17-hide estates were not identical but that the township and its fields had already been partitioned between different landowners. In that case the 17-hide estate is probably that which, after a beneficial reduction to 15 hides, was held by the bishop of Winchester in 1066, and the 7-hide estate probably one of the two pre-conquest estates which later formed Prince's manor.

There does not seem to have been a continuous boundary within the village between the tenements held of Bishop's manor and those held of Prince's manor. It appears, however, that the only area of intermingled holdings was the High Street south of Grove Road. Although the inclosure map and award of 1804 do not record the manors from which the houses were held, they distinguish between leasehold, freehold, and copyhold estates. That permits an approximate identification of the areas belonging to the two main manors, since copyholds had been almost completely extinguished on Prince's manor by the early 17th century³¹⁰ while on Bishop's manor the great majority of holdings had been customary, later copyhold, since the 13th century.³¹¹ There had then

³⁰⁷ J.M. Fletcher, 'Three Medieval Farmhouses in Harwell', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii (1965-6), 62, 64.

³⁰⁸ *Farnacular Architecture Group Oxfordshire Programme*, 1987, p. 49; *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, 244, implying that the first floor in the hall is original.

³⁰⁹ The fullest and most recent discussion of these charters, with bounds and references, is by P.J.P. Whitehead, 'The Harwell Charters', appendix 1 of B. McIlroy (ed.), *Harwell: Village for a Thousand Years* (Harwell Millennium Committee, 1985).

³¹⁰ E.g. G.E. Fussell (ed.), *Robert Loder's Farm Accounts* (Camden Soc. 3rd Ser. liii, 1936), p. 37.

³¹¹ Cf. B.L. Egerton MS. 2418, ff. 57v.-58.

been only two freeholds on that manor, of which one was composite; but these holdings can represent at most four lengths of contiguous frontages.³¹² In 1804 the Wellshead area in the south of the village was mainly freehold with a little leasehold, while the side streets and Townsend in the north of the village were almost wholly copyhold; the few freeholds there may have been those held of Bishop's manor. It may be, therefore, that an original settlement core in the south of the village, together with a planned extension along the High Street, were allotted among the main estates when the township was first divided between them, and that there was later expansion on Prince's manor to the south-east and on Bishop's manor to the north and north-east.

BISHOP'S MANOR

Descent

The manor, whose assessment was reduced from 15 hides in 1066 to 10 in 1086, descended with the see of Winchester until the 19th century, except between 1647, when the beneficial lessee Edward Wiseman bought it, and 1660 when the bishop recovered it. At some time after 1863 the lessee, John Hopkins, bought the rights. The manor apparently remained in the Hopkins family until 1890. The farm, apparently without the manorial rights, had passed by the early 20th century to the Lay family,³¹³ who still owned it in the 1980s.

The demesne was let from 1450-1,³¹⁴ and the manorial rights separately from 1588;³¹⁵ from 1660 the two estates were normally held by the same lessees.³¹⁶ Early demesne lessees were local husbandmen; the term of the lease, normally 12 years until 1481, increased to 20 years from 1497,³¹⁷ and 60 years in 1553, when John Woodliff obtained it.³¹⁸ Woodliff or his son John assigned the lease, or a moiety of it, to Edmund Wiseman of Steventon, who was still disputing it with the Woodleys and others in 1593³¹⁹ but left it in 1605 to his widow Dorothy.³²⁰ A lease of the reversion made to Queen Elizabeth in 1583³²¹ appears to have been ineffectual, as Edmund Wiseman's son Sir Charles settled the lease in trust in 1635,³²² and, as seen above, his son Edmund Wiseman had it in 1647. All the lessees from Edmund Wiseman were absentees³²³ until Robert Hopkins obtained the lease in 1801,³²⁴ and the farm was presumably occupied by local undertenants.

Site documentation

In 1979 J. M. Fletcher suggested that Lime Tree House in High Street, which belonged to the bishops of Winchester in 1804, was the original manor house, and that the present Bishop's Manor, Townsend, was built in the 17th century after a putative change of site.³²⁵ Original leases

³¹² *Ibid.* f. 57v.

³¹³ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 485-6, wrongly stating however that Robert Hopkins (d. 1838) bought it from the bishop; Hants R.O., Eccl. 1/155053, Eccl. 1/155065.

³¹⁴ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159443 (1452/53, third year of lease).

³¹⁵ Winchester Cathedral Library, Register 6(9), f. 31.

³¹⁶ Hants R.O., Eccl. 1/155643, pp. 33, 441; Eccl. 1/155054; Eccl. 1/155041.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.* Eccl. 2/155827-155856.

³¹⁸ Win. Cath. Libr., Reg. 4, f. 100.

³¹⁹ P.R.O., C 2/Eliz. 1/K 2/50; C3/419/82.

³²⁰ *Ibid.* PROB 11/105, f.46.

³²¹ Win. Cath. Libr., Reg. 6(8), f. 84.

³²² Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MS. Wills Berks. 16, p. 407.

³²³ For the Wisemans, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 27, 328; for the rest, Hants R.O., Eccl. 1/155054.

³²⁴ Hants R.O., Eccl. 1/15055 no. 1.

³²⁵ 'The Bishop of Winchester's Medieval Manor House at Harwell, Berkshire, and its Relevance in the Evolution of Timber-framed Aisled Halls', *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi (1979), 173-92.

show, however, that Lime Tree House was Catewy's Farm, seized by the bishop in 1370.³²⁶ While conceivably the houses attached to the two farms might have been exchanged, there is no evidence of such a move. The property let in 1553 included, adjoining the manor farmstead, the 'farm close down to the stream', which cannot have been on the Lime Tree House site but is identifiable with the 10-acre close between Bishop's Manor and the stream mapped in 1804,³²⁷ and probably with the 'croft next the garden' in which vetch was sown in 1254-5.³²⁸ The 16 perches of wall between the lord's garden and the villeins' closes which were renewed in 1329-30³²⁹ were presumably on the line which divides Bishop's Manor farmstead from the former copyholds in Burr Street. No such croft, or a wall dividing the farmstead from several closes, can be identified on the Lime Tree House site. The reference to the High Street adjoining the manor house in 1423³³⁰ may indicate merely that the street name then included its extension along the present Townsend.

Although the present Bishop's Manor is post-medieval, the site includes a late-medieval barn, and accounts enrolled on the Winchester bishopric Pipe Rolls from 1209 onwards provide extensive evidence about the medieval site. Demesne leases in the 16th century, and probably earlier, required the tenant to carry out repairs, the lord merely providing great timber,³³¹ but the accounts show that in practice the lord continued to pay for repairs of any significance, at least until the late 1550s,³³² as well as for new building.

The bishops of Winchester are known to have visited their Harwell manor only twice in the 13th century³³³ and not at all thereafter – a pattern typical of many great landlords.³³⁴ The house had thus to accommodate the bailiff, and later the lessee or his undertenant, together with occasional visiting officials; not surprisingly, it does not seem to have been elaborate, and the farm buildings bulk larger in the history of the site.

That included a walled inner court with a gate facing the highway, possibly the new gate made in 1225-6; it was renewed in 1288-9, and by 1479 was a true gatehouse with a chamber over it.³³⁵ A second gate led to the farmyard, which was hedged in 1358-9.³³⁶ There were also a garden, in

³²⁶ Below, Lime Tree House. The error arose because documentary research undertaken for Dr. Fletcher by several investigators between 1968 and 1972 was not properly coordinated. Dr. Fletcher acquired the false impression that an incomplete extract of registered leases made by one of the investigators had exhausted the lease evidence, and that a full descent could not therefore be established. The present writer in turn acquired the further false impression that the descent *had* been established, but that he had not been allowed to see the evidence. When that subsidiary error became apparent shortly before the 1979 article went to press, he found himself unable to subscribe to the main paper because the problems of the descent had not been fully aired, although the circumstantial account-roll evidence for the identification of Lime Tree House as the manor house still appeared strong. That evidence, however, merely reflected a remarkable set of coincidences: below, Lime Tree House. It was only when the lease references were checked in 1985, in advance of a planned joint publication on Harwell, that thanks to the help of Mrs. Carpenter Turner, then assistant librarian at Winchester Cathedral Library, the full set of lease registrations there, and of original leases in the Hampshire Record Office, was investigated. Moreover, Beveridge's published list of Winchester Pipe Rolls ('The Winchester Rolls and their Dating', *Economic History Review*, 1st Ser. ii (1929-30), 93-113) is seriously incomplete. The later Pipe Rolls, together with the registered and original leases, provide a full descent of the leases of both estates from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The *contretemps* emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all researchers working on a joint project are kept fully apprised of the extent of each other's work.

³²⁷ Harwell Inclosure Map (in possession of parish clerk, Harwell), old inclosure 2.

³²⁸ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159296.

³²⁹ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159342.

³³⁰ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 175.

³³¹ Win. Cath. Libr., reg. 3, ff. 12v.-13; reg. 4, f. 100.

³³² Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/155895.

³³³ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 187-8.

³³⁴ Cf. Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 99-100.

³³⁵ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159280 (1225-6); /159311 (1288-9); /159338 (1325-6); /159374 (1363-4); /155841 (1478-9).

³³⁶ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159291A (1252-3); /159450 (1268-9); /159303 (1276-7); /159369 (1358-9); /159374, /159378 (1368-9); /159424 (1422-3).

which a fishpond was reconstructed in 1252-3, and a pound, both walled.³³⁷ In the inner court stood the hall, mentioned from 1218,³³⁸ and apparently aligned from north to south.³³⁹ The hall was extensively repaired in 1225-6, together with the pantry or spence and the buttery, probably at one end of it.³⁴⁰ A wardrobe attached to the hall was roofed in 1262-3.³⁴¹ In 1297-8 the 'lower roof' (*inferiori cumblo*) of the hall and the wardrobe, which was separated from the hall by a partition, was reconstructed at a cost of £8 16s. 5d.³⁴² The lord had a chamber which seems originally to have been a detached building surrounded by a wall.³⁴³ It, too, was aligned from north to south and stood 'behind the hall'. There was a wardrobe at the north end and a latrine at the south.³⁴⁴ The 'external (*forins*)' chamber' built in 1276-7 was so cheap that it was probably an exterior privy.³⁴⁵ The bishop's latrine was rebuilt in 1379-80 at a cost of 6s. 8d. (including a new wooden seat), and again in 1438-9.³⁴⁶ It is not clear whether the 'end chamber' for which boards were bought in 1246-7³⁴⁷ was at the end of the hall or of the bishop's chamber block. By 1421-2, however, the bishop's chamber was evidently attached to the hall and major repairs were then carried out on both rooms.³⁴⁸ A chamber for the bailiff occurs in 1363-4 and 1370-1.³⁴⁹ The roof of the probably detached kitchen was repaired in 1218, and repeatedly later in the 13th century.³⁵⁰ The kitchen was rebuilt in 1298-9,³⁵¹ though repairs were still needed later.³⁵²

The most important buildings, on a large farm in a predominantly arable area, were the oxhouse and the barn: by the mid 13th century the customary yardlanders were obliged to carry timber to the manor for building a barn or oxhouse, but not other structures,³⁵³ a custom perhaps dating from the 12th century or earlier. The oxhouse was reroofed in 1247-8, and repeatedly repaired in the 13th³⁵⁴ and 14th centuries; it was last mentioned in 1407.³⁵⁵ The barn was reroofed in 1218; one side wall fell down in 1232 or 1233.³⁵⁶ The barn porch was repaired in 1246-7.³⁵⁷ An alleged repair to the barn in 1251-2 may have in fact been the construction of a new one, since it cost 28s. 9d., and an old barn was rethatched at the same time.³⁵⁸ Thereafter there were two barns, the Great or Corn Barn and the Little, Old, or Hay Barn.³⁵⁹ In 1357-8 one of them was rebuilt for £9 16s. 2d.; the new barn had two large and one small doors and 46 pairs of common rafters.³⁶⁰ It was thus probably between 70 and 90 ft. long. Both barns continued in use until 1506, when a new one was built at a net cost of £31 19s. 5d.³⁶¹ That barn survives; another large barn was demolished

³³⁷ Ibid. /159291A; /159319 (1300-1); /159363 (1352-3); /159439 (1447-8).

³³⁸ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 187.

³³⁹ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159310 (1287-8); /159438 (1446-7).

³⁴⁰ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 187. A buttery was again mentioned in 1369-70: Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159379.

³⁴¹ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159294.

³⁴² Ibid. /159316.

³⁴³ Ibid. /159447 (1250-1); /159318 (1299-1300).

³⁴⁴ Ibid. /159340 (1327-8); /159356 (1346-7); /159374 (1363-4).

³⁴⁵ Ibid. /159303.

³⁴⁶ Ibid. /159387; /159435.

³⁴⁷ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 188.

³⁴⁸ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2 /159423. The account suggests a rebuilding but the cost (48s. 4d.) seems too little for any wholly new work. Only 20d. was spent on timber.

³⁴⁹ Ibid. /159374; /159380.

³⁵⁰ Ibid. /159277; /159287; /159293; /159298; /159450; /159301-2; /159458 (2/2); *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 187.

³⁵¹ Ibid. /159317.

³⁵² e.g. in 1447-8: *ibid.* /159439.

³⁵³ B.L. Egerton MS. 2418, f. 57v.

³⁵⁴ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159457; /159295; /159297; /159298; /159300; /159301; /159304; /159309.

³⁵⁵ e.g. *ibid.* /159320; /159410.

³⁵⁶ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 187-8.

³⁵⁷ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159289.

³⁵⁸ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 188. The original roll was not fit for production in the 1980s.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.; Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159298; /159450; /159301; /159302-159304; /159309; /159311; /159318; /159325; /159328; /159331; /159334; /159352.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. /159368.

³⁶¹ Ibid. /155854, translated in *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* pp. 41-2.

in the 1930s.³⁶² In 1364–5 at least the hay barn was also used for storing pulse.³⁶³ A granary was repaired in 1226–7,³⁶⁴ and repeatedly in the 13th century.³⁶⁵ Eventually a new one was built in 1308–9 at a cost of about £2; it was still used in 1422–3.³⁶⁶ Besides the oxhouse, buildings for stock included at least two stables by 1267; one was rebuilt at a cost of 16s. 2½d. in 1343–4.³⁶⁷ They were later known as the lord's stable and the bailiff's stable.³⁶⁸ A carthouse on the site was repaired in 1353–4; it was perhaps the cart stable thatched in 1364–5 and 1411–12. A new carthouse was built in 1448–9.³⁶⁹ A stable for the carthorses (*stablum affrorum*) was repaired in 1441–2.³⁷⁰ A sheephouse (*bercarium*) is mentioned from 1411–12; in 1433–4 it was replaced by a new four-bay 'shepehous' costing 39s. 5d.³⁷¹

There was little difference in construction between the domestic and the agricultural buildings. Almost all seem to have been timber-framed. Stone footings are mentioned only once, in a barn repaired in 1302–3.³⁷² The hay barn, the oxhouse, the lord's stable, and the sheephouse all had timber groundsills,³⁷³ either on footings or in sill-trenches. The new barn of 1506 was properly groundsilled.³⁷⁴ The infilling of walls was normally of wattle or laths. Rods were bought for the chamber wall at Harwell in 1288–9,³⁷⁵ for that of the small stable in 1317–18,³⁷⁶ and the walls of one of the barns were repaired with laths in 1301–2.³⁷⁷ Such walls were finished by daubing with mud and plastering. The walls of hall, pantry, buttery, and granary were plastered in 1226–7.³⁷⁸ In 1357–8 the walls of the new barn were lathed and plastered,³⁷⁹ and in 1421–2 those of the hall and chamber were wattled ('bridand'), daubed, and plastered.³⁸⁰ The barn built in 1506, however, had partly boarded walls.³⁸¹

The only slate-roofed building was the porch of the corn barn, which was apparently slated with slates brought from 'Shulton' in 1367–8³⁸² and re-slated in 1396–7.³⁸³ The porch of the hay barn was tiled in 1400–1, and crested ridge-tiles bought for it.³⁸⁴ The other buildings, including the hall and lord's chamber, and the barn built in 1506, were thatched.³⁸⁵

Timber for the buildings could sometimes be obtained on the farm itself, but there was no manorial wood at Harwell. Thus in 1297–8 'the lord's timber' was used in reconstructing the hall and wardrobe.³⁸⁶ Even when it had to be bought it was a relatively small part of building costs. Timber bought at Streatley for the new barn in 1357–8 cost 31s. 4d., less than 16 per cent of the total, though further cartloads were also bought from the bishop's well-wooded manor of Witney (Oxon.). In 1506 structural timber (80 oaks) cost £4 3s. 4d. and carriage of timber £4 13s. 6d.; most of the carriage was the cost of bringing the framed timber from Hailey copse (in Peasemore) to the

³⁶² Inf. from Mr. R.H. Lay (1986).

³⁶³ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159375.

³⁶⁴ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 187.

³⁶⁵ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159291A, /159297; /159301–159302; /159309.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* /159324; /159424.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.* /159298; /159332; /159354.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* /159375 (1364–5); /159400 (1393–4).

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.* /159364; /159375; /159414; /159440.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* /159437.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.* /159414; /159432.

³⁷² Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159320.

³⁷³ *Ibid.* /159421; /159431; /159375; /159454; /159416.

³⁷⁴ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* p. 41; below.

³⁷⁵ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159311.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.* /159332.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.* /159448.

³⁷⁸ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 188.

³⁷⁹ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159368.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* /159423.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.* /155854.

³⁸² *Ibid.* /159376.

³⁸³ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159403.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.* /159404.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.* /159350; /159352; /159350; /159413–4; /159439; /159441; /155854.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.* /159316.

manor. On the other hand timber brought from Bradfield to Harwell in 1364-5 cost 21s. 8d., and the carriage only 3s.³⁸⁷ The provenance of timber used at Harwell was quite often recorded. Besides Streatley, Bradfield, and Witney, it was brought from Wash Common near Newbury in 1298-9,³⁸⁸ from Wargrave (another of the bishop's manors) in 1326-7 and 1399-1400;³⁸⁹ from Winterbourne in Speenhamland in 1371-2,³⁹⁰ from Poughley (in Chaddleworth) and from Ilsley in 1506;³⁹¹ and from the unidentifiable 'Pillynghe' in 1378-9.³⁹² Withies and laths were obtained from Wargrave, from the bishop's estate at Highclere, Hants, from Henley, and from Ashridge near Beedon on the dip slope of the Downs.³⁹³ The timber was presumably oak in most cases, but an elm post was made to prop up the corn barn in 1316-17³⁹⁴ and willow boards were used on the hall door in 1324-5.³⁹⁵

It is not generally clear whether thatching straw was local or brought by the thatcher. In 1399-1400, however, 13s. 4d. was paid for straw, and in 1506 35s. for 30 cartloads of straw for thatching the new barn.³⁹⁶ The thatch was held in place by horizontal rods secured by wooden staples or 'praves' driven into the thatch; large quantities were often required. In 1409-10, for example, a cartload of rods was needed for 'praves' in roofing the corn barn and the hall.³⁹⁷ In 1506 a total of 8s. 4d. was paid for 'bindings and spars' for thatching.³⁹⁸

Laths, used for roofing and walling at Harwell, were made cheaply at Clere in 1326-7 and 1357-8;³⁹⁹ when they had to be bought the price varied considerably.⁴⁰⁰ Considerable quantities of lathnails were needed to affix them to the structural timberwork. The largest recorded consignment bought at Harwell was of 7,000 in 1421-2.⁴⁰¹ The price rose from 9d. the thousand in 1298-9 to 1s. 2d. in the early 15th century, though 1s. 6d. a thousand was paid in 1357-8.⁴⁰² In 1506 nails were carried from the bishop's palace at Wolvesey by Winchester.⁴⁰³

Other varieties of nail are also recorded. Boardnails were bought in 1330-9, 1356-7, 1359-60, 1363-4, 1364-5, and 1392-3. The price varied from 3½d. the hundred in 1330-9 to 1s. 3½d. in 1363-4.⁴⁰⁴ 'Spiknaill' were bought at Harwell in 1357-8.⁴⁰⁵

Purchases of ironwork, for use on door hinges, locks, and the like, are frequently recorded. Items included hinge-hooks (*gunfis*, *guncis*, or *hokys*) and eyes (*vertivellis*, *twystys*) for doors and windows.⁴⁰⁶ Butt hinges were bought in 1364-5 and 1392-3.⁴⁰⁷ The bolts, hasps, and staples of doors also required replacement from time to time.⁴⁰⁸ In 1506 80 lb. of wrought iron was needed for hooks, hinges, staples, and bars on the new barn.⁴⁰⁹ Locks and keys were bought for the hall door in 1345-6, for the new barn in 1358-9, and for the buttery in 1369-70.⁴¹⁰

³⁸⁷ Ibid. 2/159375.

³⁸⁸ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi. 189.

³⁸⁹ Hants. R.O., Eccl. 2/159339; /159404.

³⁹⁰ Ibid. /159454.

³⁹¹ Ibid. /155854.

³⁹² Ibid. /159386.

³⁹³ Ibid. /159320; /159323; /159339; /159368; /159402; /159410; /155854. Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.'

p. 136 wrongly identifies Ashridge as Ashridge (Herts.).

³⁹⁴ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2 /159331.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. Eccl. 2/159337.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. Eccl. 2/159404; /155854.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. /159412.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. /155854.

³⁹⁹ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159339; /159368.

⁴⁰⁰ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' table 5/1.

⁴⁰¹ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159423.

⁴⁰² Ibid. /159317; /159404; /159423; /159435; /159368.

⁴⁰³ Ibid. /155854.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. /159338; /159349; /159367; /159370; /159374-5; /159399.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. /159368.

⁴⁰⁶ E.g., Eccl. 2/159362; /159379; /159406; /159424.

⁴⁰⁷ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159375; /159399.

⁴⁰⁸ Eccl. 2/159362; /159379; /159406; /159424.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. /155854.

⁴¹⁰ Eccl. 2/159355; /159369; /159379.

Wage costs are not always distinguished from other costs. In the construction of the new barn in 1357-8, however, where the timber was bought separately, wages took up £6 9s. 6d. (of which £5 was the wage of the chief carpenter) of a total cost of £9 16s. 2d.⁴¹¹ Wages again formed about two thirds of the cost of restoring the hall and chamber in 1421-2, and more than half that of the new barn in 1506.⁴¹²

Standing buildings

The present Bishop's Manor farmhouse dates wholly from the 17th century and later. A barn at the south-west corner of the site, however, flanking Townsend, appears to be that built in 1506. It is unaisled, of six bays. The walls were boarded below the middle rail, but wattled above, as surviving holes indicate; laths may have been nailed to the wattles. The roof, now tiled, but within living memory still thatched, is supported by queen-strut trusses with two tiers of tenoned purlins and low-pitched windbraces. There are edge-halved and bridled scarf joints in the wallplates, and the side walls have single, rather than paired, arched braces in each bay (except for the northernmost bay).⁴¹³ The barn was probably designed by John Woodman, who was paid 1d. a day more than the other carpenters in 1506.⁴¹⁴

PRINCE'S MANOR

Descent

The manor was formed by Roger d'Ivry's union, before 1086, of two pre-conquest estates.⁴¹⁵ Their combined hidage was reduced from 11 in 1066 to 5½ in 1086.⁴¹⁶ From Roger's brother Geoffrey, Harwell passed with his other holdings to John St. John and to the St. Valery family. It remained part of the honor of St. Valery, which passed, after various temporary seizures and confiscations, to the Crown, and at some time after 1230 to the earls of Cornwall. When the earldom became extinct in 1300 the escheated manor was held by a succession of grantees for life,⁴¹⁷ but passed with the rest of the honor to the Black Prince in the 1340s. The prince gave it in 1361 as part of the endowment of St. Nicholas's college in Wallingford Castle, which remained the lord until the suppression of colleges. The demesne was under direct management in the 1270s,⁴¹⁸ but had been let at farm by 1290.⁴¹⁹ In the early 1350s the bishop of Winchester was farmer. It seems probable that Wallingford college continued to let it; in the 1550s the tenant was Richard Loder. Richard's son John bought the manor from the speculators or agents to whom the Crown had sold it.⁴²⁰ The Lodgers remained owners of the manor until the late 17th century, but left Harwell in the mid 17th century. The owners in the 18th and early 19th centuries were also absentees.

⁴¹¹ Eccl. 2/159368.

⁴¹² Ibid. /159423; /155854. For wage levels at Harwell, see Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' table 5/2.

⁴¹³ Sketch of roof trusses on cover of *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.*

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. p. 41.

⁴¹⁵ For descent, unless otherwise stated, *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 486-7; J.M. Fletcher, 'Three Medieval Farmhouses in Harwell', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii (1965-6), 63-4.

⁴¹⁶ *V.C.H. Berks.* i, 361.

⁴¹⁷ The free tenants of the manor were regarded as holding directly of the Crown, rather than of the grantees: *Cal. Inq. p.m.* vii, p. 158; *Abbrev. Rot. Orig.* (Rec. Com.), i, 227, 281; Magdalen College, Oxford, Harwell deeds, H32b (TS. cat. no. 196); P.R.O., C 143/74, no. 6; C 143/134, no. 5; C 143/168, no. 5; C 143/171, no. 10.

⁴¹⁸ P.R.O. SC 6/955/2-3.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. SC 6/1095/3.

⁴²⁰ *Cal. Pat.* 1557-8, pp. 152-4, 239.

Site documentation

There was a manor house in 1300, when it was worthless,⁴²¹ and in 1349,⁴²² Dr. Fletcher supposed that the present site, east of the church, was a villein tenement in 1318, since such a tenement was then recorded north of the lane which now forms the south boundary of the curtilage,⁴²³ but it is likely that that tenement was originally separate and has been absorbed into the garden of Prince's Manor. To add to the confusion, Prince's Manor was described in 1840 as part of the rectorial glebe,⁴²⁴ but that may have been an error resulting from the long common ownership of the manor and the parsonage tithes.⁴²⁵ There is no other site in the village which could plausibly have served as the manor house.

Buildings

Fletcher published a description and drawings of the house,⁴²⁶ which will not therefore be treated in detail. The medieval part (Fig. 12) consists of a main range with a two-bayed open hall and a service room north of it, and a two-bayed, two-storied and jettied cross wing at the south end. Besides the arch-braced open truss in the centre of the hall, there is at its south end a second arch-braced truss, of the same form but of reduced thickness and chamfered on the north side only. It was clearly designed to abut a wing, probably the present one. That has a clasped-purlin roof, in contrast with the tenoned purlins of the hall range, but both buildings have similar tension-braced wall framing. The house may date from the late 15th century, as Fletcher suggested, or a little later. In either case its design, like that of the earlier Maltravers Manor, Childrey, reflects the needs of a wealthy peasant lessee rather than a resident landlord.

The farm buildings include two barns. That at the north end of the farmstead is a large aisled structure of 11 bays. The aisles, and the five northern bays, are post-medieval additions, but the southern six bays, originally unaisled, date probably from the earlier 16th century; there are several similarities to the six-bay barn at Bishop's Manor, though not enough to suggest that both are the work of the same carpenter. The smaller barn, also aisled and five bays long, appears wholly post-medieval.⁴²⁷

REPUTED MANOR HOUSE

Although J.M. Fletcher published a detailed account of BAYLLOL'S MANOR (formerly King's Manor, formerly MIDDLE FARM) in 1966,⁴²⁸ enough new information both about the site history and the structure of the buildings themselves has come to light since then to justify a reconsideration.

Descent

Fletcher showed that Middle Farm was identifiable with Brounce's Court, the chief house of an estate held in the later 14th century by Richard Brounz, M.P. and J.P. for Berkshire and sheriff of Berkshire and Oxfordshire.⁴²⁹ From Brounz it descended to his son John (d. 1437), and then

⁴²¹ P.R.O., C 133/96, no. 25.

⁴²² Ibid. E 152/81, no. 2.

⁴²³ *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii, 63.

⁴²⁴ *Berks. R.O.*, D/D1 64/1, no. 56.

⁴²⁵ Cf. *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 491.

⁴²⁶ *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii, 60-3.

⁴²⁷ For details of the barns, *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* p. 22.

⁴²⁸ *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii, 47-55.

⁴²⁹ For Brounz's career in general see Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 47-9; *Hist. of Parliament, Commons 1386-1421*, draft biogs. (TSS. in possession of Hist. of Parl. Trust).

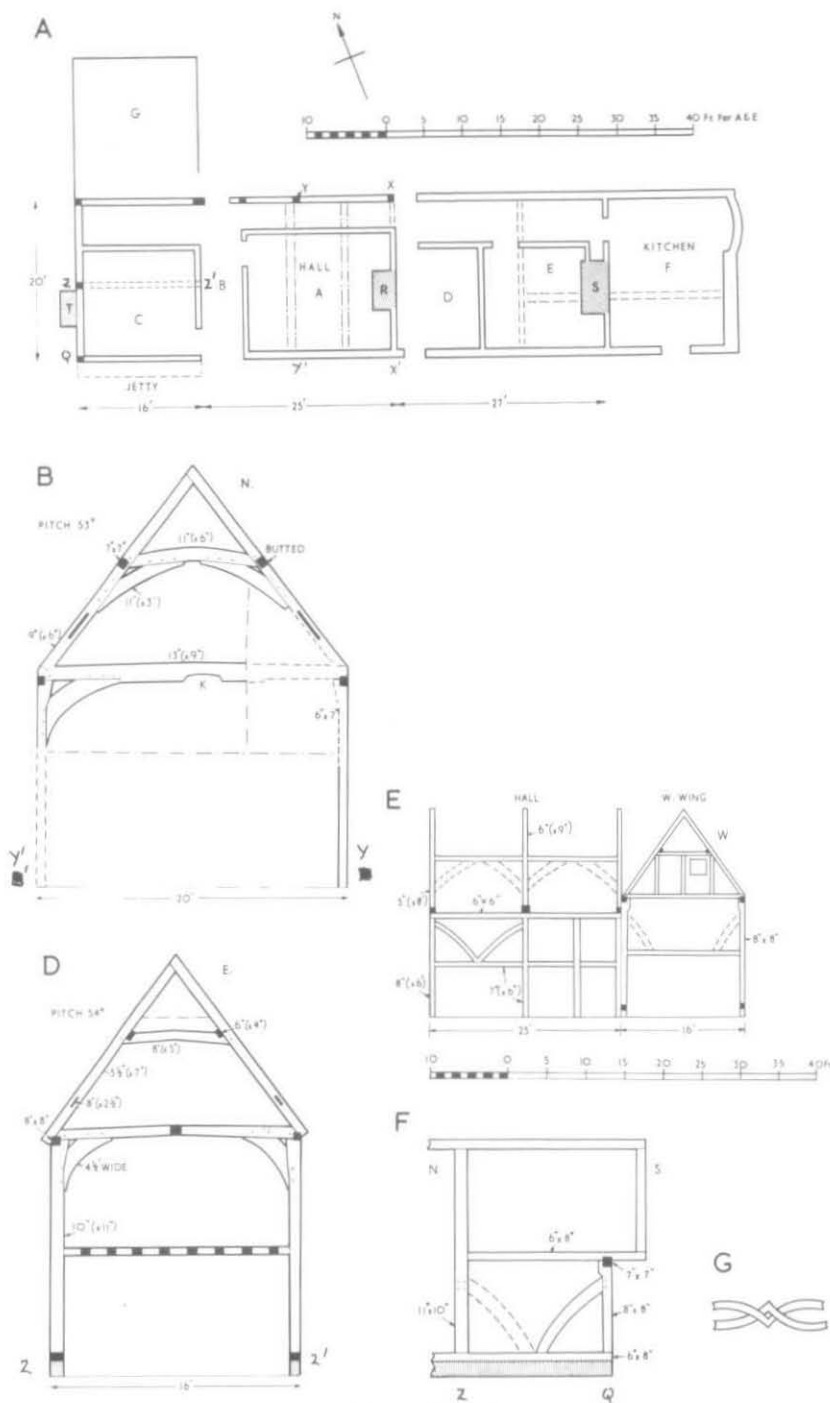


Fig. 12. Prince's Manor, Harwell. (J.M. Fletcher).

through a succession of heiresses until it was sold to trustees for William Waynflete, bishop of Winchester, who settled it on Magdalen College, Oxford. The college sold it in 1946 to the tenant, W.G. Bosley,⁴³⁰ who in the 1970s sold the farmland and farmstead separately. In 1988 the farmstead was resold in two parts, one of which, including former farm buildings on the south side of the site, was developed as offices. The other part, including the house, belonged in 1990 to Mr. and Mrs. Roger Parker.⁴³¹

The history before Richard Brounz's time is more complex and ambiguous than Fletcher indicated. His suggestion that Brounz acquired the estate formerly held by the Balliol family can be confirmed; Brounz bought it in 1355.⁴³² It was the largest freehold of Prince's manor, held by the family as half a knight's fee since before 1194.⁴³³ Nevertheless that estate, estimated in 1318 at 96 acres of land, 60 acres of pasture, and 18 acres of meadow, besides rents,⁴³⁴ was far smaller than Magdalen College's estate in the 16th century.⁴³⁵ Richard Brounz bought more property in his lifetime, including houses in the Wellshead area which later formed part of the college estate,⁴³⁶ and a small plot south of his house in 1379.⁴³⁷ He also appears to have inherited property from his brother John, and perhaps from his other brothers Thomas and Stephen. John, in or before 1357, acquired a house, 17½ acres of land, and rent from William Hughchild, who retained a life interest.⁴³⁸ That is presumably the Hughchilds' yardland which was still identifiable in the 16th century.⁴³⁹ John already held in 1345 a freehold which had belonged to Henry Wilard in 1300. The Wilards, who may have acquired land in Harwell in the 12th century as a result of a connexion with the Balliols,⁴⁴⁰ ranked second only to that family in Harwell by the early 13th century.⁴⁴¹ In the mid 13th century Walter Wilard held a hide of land and 5 acres from Bishop's manor.⁴⁴² That estate later passed to Roger Wilard, whose sister Christine of Coscote mortgaged it, with a further yardland held of Prince's manor which she had also inherited from Roger, in the late 1260s.⁴⁴³ Henry Wilard sold over 100 acres from 1296 onwards; most of it was acquired by Thomas Milis, who conveyed all but 9 acres of his estate in 1316 to his sister Cecilia. She seems to have married Richard Brounz the elder, who moved from Sutton Courtenay to Harwell about then, and who was acting as Milis's heir in 1320.⁴⁴⁴ John Brounz succeeded him between 1339 and 1345 and died in or shortly before 1361, when a house was settled on his widow. Cecilia Brounz was then living next door, but Richard Brounz the younger had acquired her property by 1377, and settled it in trust in 1377-8.⁴⁴⁵ Stephen Brounz in 1369 settled an estate in Harwell acquired from John atte Hall, perhaps the house and carucate of which a further conveyance was made in 1376;⁴⁴⁶ it is not clear whether that too ultimately passed to Richard.

In the 16th century Magdalen College's estate administration was aware of the descent of their property from the Balliols, Wilards, and Hughchilds. They had transcripts made of the entries

⁴³⁰ *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii, 47, 55.

⁴³¹ Local inf. (1972, 1985-7, 1990).

⁴³² P.R.O., CP 25(1)/11/65, 29 Edw. III Hil. no. 3.

⁴³³ *Pipe Roll 6 Richard I* (Pipe Roll Soc. N.S. v), p. 94.

⁴³⁴ *Cal. Pat.* 1317-21, p. 165.

⁴³⁵ The 240 acres attributed to Balliols in a survey of c. 1550, almost certainly copying a much earlier one (Magd. Coll. archives, 83/18), are clearly customary acres and probably include the lands of the Balliols' undertenants.

⁴³⁶ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' p. 45, n. 10.

⁴³⁷ Magd. Coll. Harwell deed 40 (TS. cat. no. 284).

⁴³⁸ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, H66 (TS. cat. no. 245). The house was next to 'Gateways', i.e. Lime Tree House.

⁴³⁹ E.g. Magd. Coll. archives, 83/18. The house had been lost to the college by the 19th century.

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Farrer, *Early Yorks. Charters*, i, 457.

⁴⁴¹ *Oseney Cart.* iv (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xcvi), p. 451, no. 415 d.

⁴⁴² B.L. Egerton MS. 2418, f. 57v.

⁴⁴³ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, 15a (TS. cat. no. 22).

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 27 c (TS. cat. no. 180).

⁴⁴⁵ For the descent from 1300, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 45, 50-3; for Cecilia Brounz, Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds 47a (TS. cat. no. 256).

⁴⁴⁶ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds 102 (TS. cat. no. 270), 37 b (TS. cat. no. 280).

relating to their Balliol and Hughchild holdings in a survey of Prince's manor,⁴⁴⁷ and of the entries relating to the freeholders in a 13th-century survey of Bishop's manor.⁴⁴⁸ Moreover in the late 15th or early 16th century a quitrent of 15s. 4d. was paid to the bishop of Winchester for the manor, as well as 4s. or 11s. to Wallingford college.⁴⁴⁹

Site documentation

No medieval accounts have been found. The house was known as Brounce's Court in 1506, when Thomas Wise fined for licence to let his own tenement on Bishop's manor while he lived in Brounce's Court for 7 years.⁴⁵⁰ It was still called Brounce's Farm in the early 17th century, when Robert Loder, uncle of Robert Loder of Prince's Manor, was the farmer.⁴⁵¹ By 1765 it was called Middle Farm.⁴⁵² In 1572 the house was severally occupied by Robert Loder and John Woodliff, but the partition agreement gives no details of the buildings.⁴⁵³ In 1511 the 'manerium vocatum Brounces ubi principale edificium est' contained two acres and was bounded by Bishop's manor land to south and west and by the highway to north and east; the roads indicate that the house was on its present site. A one-acre piece bought from the bishop of Winchester by Richard Brounz in 1379, which adjoined his tenement and on which the bakehouse (*pistorium*) stood in 1511, lay immediately to the south; Brounz was thus living in Middle Farm.⁴⁵⁴ In 1389 Brounz and his wife Alice received licence for an oratory in the house;⁴⁵⁵ the licence was renewed for Alice and for John Brounz in 1396,⁴⁵⁶ and for John and his wife Maud in 1408.⁴⁵⁷

It is not clear whether before Richard Brounz's time Middle Farm formed part of the Balliols' estate or of Wilard's. In the later 13th century Robert Balliol gave his younger son John a building plot above his garden 8 perches wide and 9½ perches long. Dr Fletcher concluded that the plot was the present curtilage immediately south of Middle Farm and that the original frontage was some 120 yards long.⁴⁵⁸ That is impossible. As shown above, the curtilage before 1379 was smaller than at present, and the land adjoining Middle Farm was held of Bishop's manor, while Balliol's was held wholly of Prince's manor; so *prima facie* the gift indicates that Middle Farm cannot be Balliol's and must therefore be Wilard's. The plot granted to John could have been reabsorbed by collateral inheritance into the main curtilage before Brounz bought the latter; but it was too large to have been originally carved out of the curtilage without doing violence to the surviving evidence of medieval buildings there. If nevertheless Middle Farm was Balliol's, a site for Wilard's can be suggested further north on Townsend, where Magdalen College owned land and buildings in 1804.⁴⁵⁹ Moreover, since in 1361 Cecilia Brounz's house, which must have been part of Wilard's, was next to John Brounz's house,⁴⁶⁰ either both of them were on the Middle Farm site or both were

⁴⁴⁷ Magd. Coll. archives, 83/18, evidently from a lost survey of Prince's manor made for the Crown between 1549 and 1557; itself probably largely a copy of a 13th-century survey, also lost.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. 124/42 (extracted from B.L. Egerton MS. 2418 when the latter, a 15th or 16th-c. copy of a 13th-c. original, was still at Wolvesey).

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. 82/56; *ibid.* 124/43. After deducting 3s. 4d. for the plot bought in 1379 (*ibid.* Harwell deed 40), the rent to the bishop was just under half that owed by the Wilards in the 13th century; *ibid.* 124/42.

⁴⁵⁰ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/155854. Wise was recorded as farmer of Brounz's manor in 1511; Magd. Coll. Archives, EP 124/33.

⁴⁵¹ G.W. Fussell (ed.), *Robert Loder's Farm Accounts* (Camden Soc. 3rd ser. liii), p. 37.

⁴⁵² Berks. R.O., D/EX 381/1, pp. 252-66, court held 22 Oct. 1765.

⁴⁵³ Magd. Coll. Archives, 124/41.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. EP 124/33; *ibid.* Harwell deeds, 40, 118 (TS. cat. nos. 283-4).

⁴⁵⁵ Wilts. R.O., Reg. Waltham, f. 95v.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. Reg. Mitford, f. 115v. or 116v. (from microfilm; foliation obscure at this point).

⁴⁵⁷ J.M. Horn (ed.), *Reg. Rob. Hallum* (Cant. & York Soc. lxxii, 1982), p. 97, no. 727.

⁴⁵⁸ Berks. Archaeol. Jnl. lxii, 55.

⁴⁵⁹ Harwell Inclosure Map, old inclosures 99-100.

⁴⁶⁰ Above.

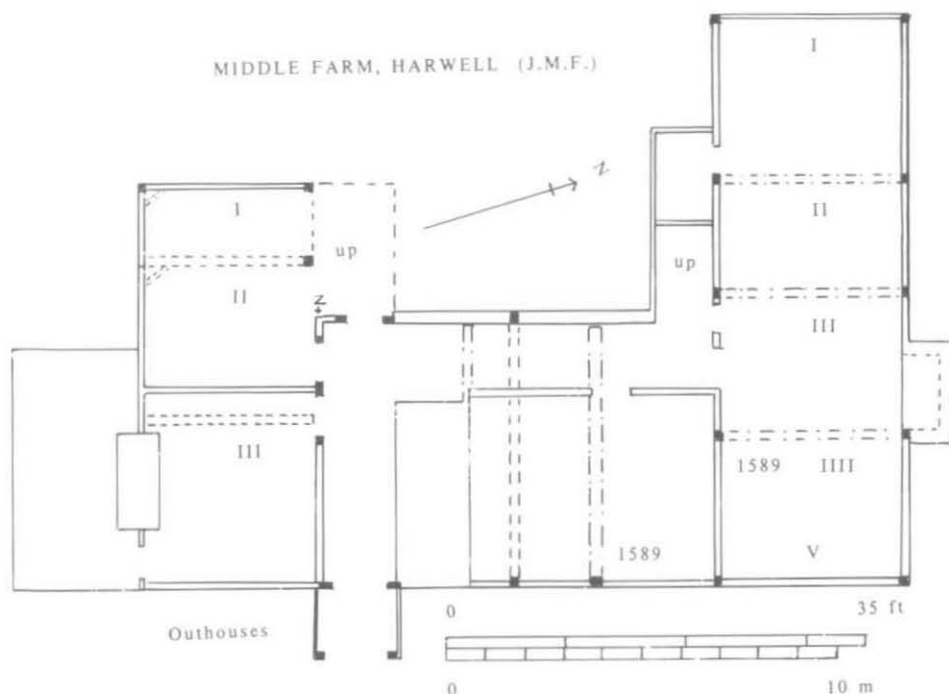


Fig. 13. Middle Farm ('Bayllo's Manor'), Harwell: plan (J.M. Fletcher).

elsewhere. A division of the Middle Farm house at that period might explain Richard Brounz the younger's rebuilding of the hall soon afterwards (see below).

Conversely the Balliols had a house at the south end of the High Street, apparently south of the lane formerly running south-west from the village to the Portway, a lane replaced by the present road between 1761 and 1804 under a succession of turnpike Acts from 1752 onwards.⁴⁶¹ The 'place' or 'plot' (*placea*) of Thomas and Agnes le Balliol, mentioned in 1323, was apparently the fourth in a row of tenements south of Lime Tree House; its immediate neighbour to the north is later recorded as abutting the highway to the south.⁴⁶² In 1804 Magdalen College had a small triangular tenement on the site.⁴⁶³ The activities of the turnpike trust in the 18th century separated it from a second triangular tenement opposite which was freehold in 1804 but was presumably part of Magdalen's property before the main road was realigned. West of it was an orchard and barn, leasehold in 1804.⁴⁶⁴ The three pieces, if originally united, would have formed a substantial curtilage.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶¹ Wallingford and Wantage Road Acts, 25 Geo. II, c. 21 and 5 Geo. III, c. 55; Wallingford, Wantage, and Faringdon Road Act, 39 Geo. III, c. xxxvii; J. Rocque, *Map of Berks.* (1761); Harwell Inclosure Map.

⁴⁶² Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. nos. 186-191, 199, 213-215, 219, 243-5; below, other houses, Lime Tree House.

⁴⁶³ Harwell Inclosure Map, old inclosure 77.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 74, 76.

⁴⁶⁵ Balliols must either have belonged to Magdalen College in 1804 or have been sold off earlier; the estate had far fewer houses and closes than in the late 15th century: Magd. Coll. archives, 82/54, listing 7 tenements and 2 barns apart from freehold quitrents. Of the other sites held by the college in 1804, that in Townsend, surrounded by Bishop's manor copyholds, can be ruled out, as can two adjoining closes in Wellshead Lane south of Prince's Manor whose descent to Richard Brounz is known: Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. nos. 177, 202-5, 210, 224, 232, 236-7, 276.

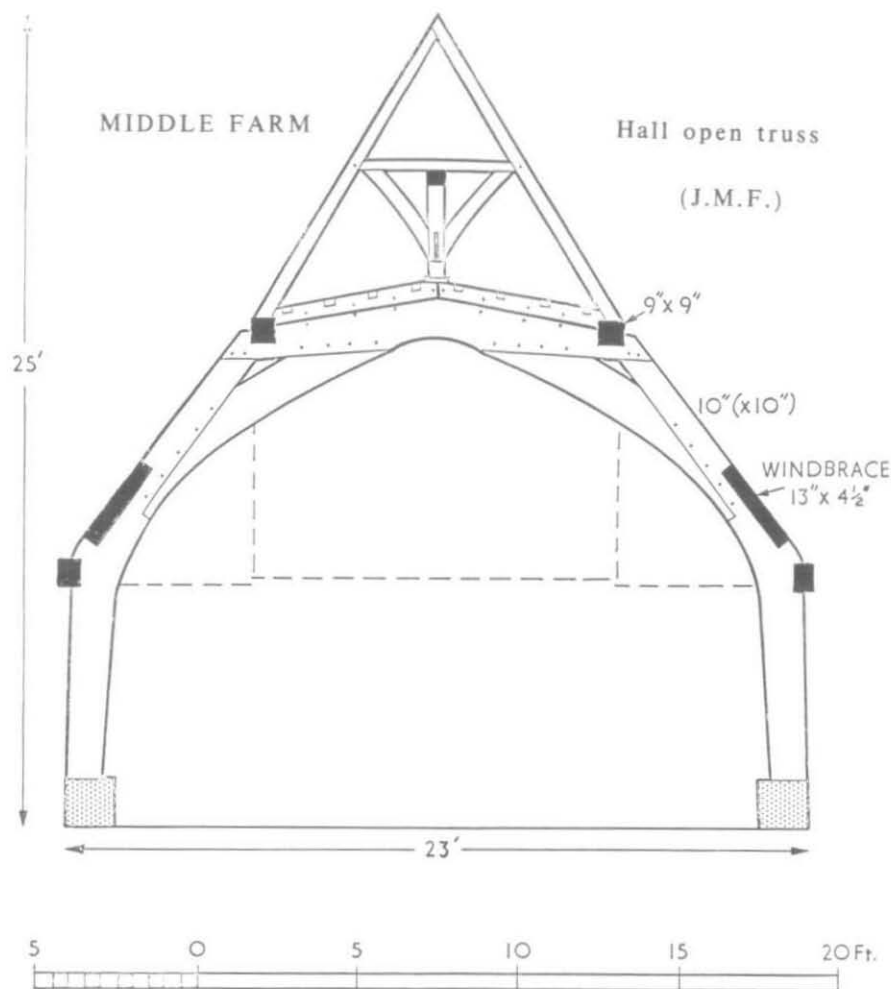


Fig. 14. Middle Farm: hall open truss (J.M. Fletcher).

On Wilard's, Thomas Milis in 1316 commissioned a new house, shortly before transferring most of his estate to his sister; the house may have been intended as her wedding present or his retirement home. Milis agreed with John Waleys of Frilsham near Newbury to buy for the large sum of 27 marks (£18), of which Milis had already paid 14 marks, a hall and oaken chamber which Waleys had under construction at 'the Welhouse', presumably in Frilsham. The two buildings (*les deus mesons*) were to be of a length and breadth agreed by Milis at a previous inspection. Waleys was to bring the timber to Harwell and find a carpenter. The terms imply that Waleys had already begun the house as a speculative venture before Milis agreed to buy it.⁴⁶⁶

Site and buildings

Middle Farm (Figs. 13–16) has been described by Fletcher and it is only necessary here to summarize its main characteristics and unrecorded features. The site is notable for the survival

⁴⁶⁶ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, no. 72b (TS. cat. no. 161); Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 144.

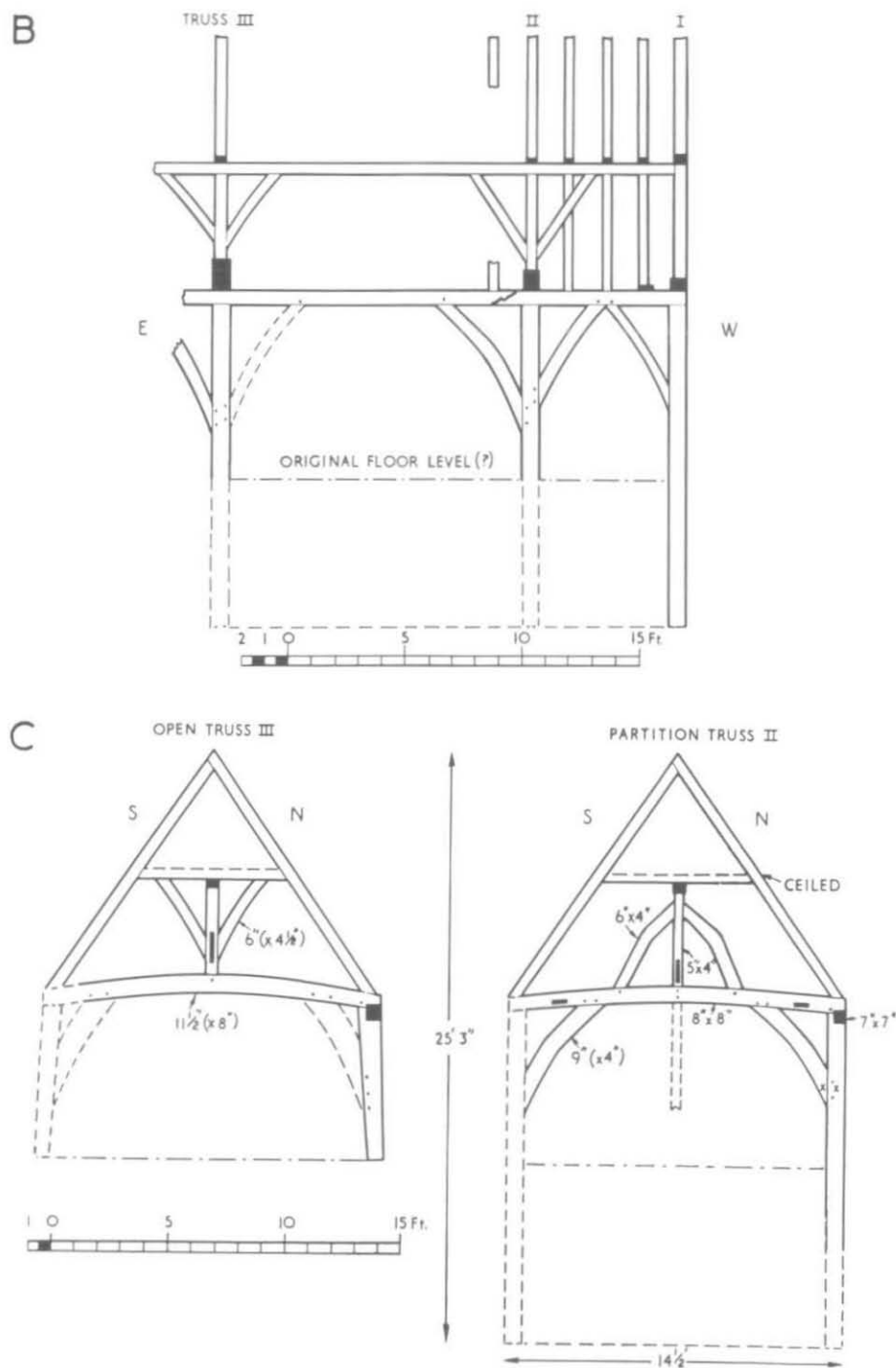


Fig. 15. Middle Farm: south wing (J.M. Fletcher).

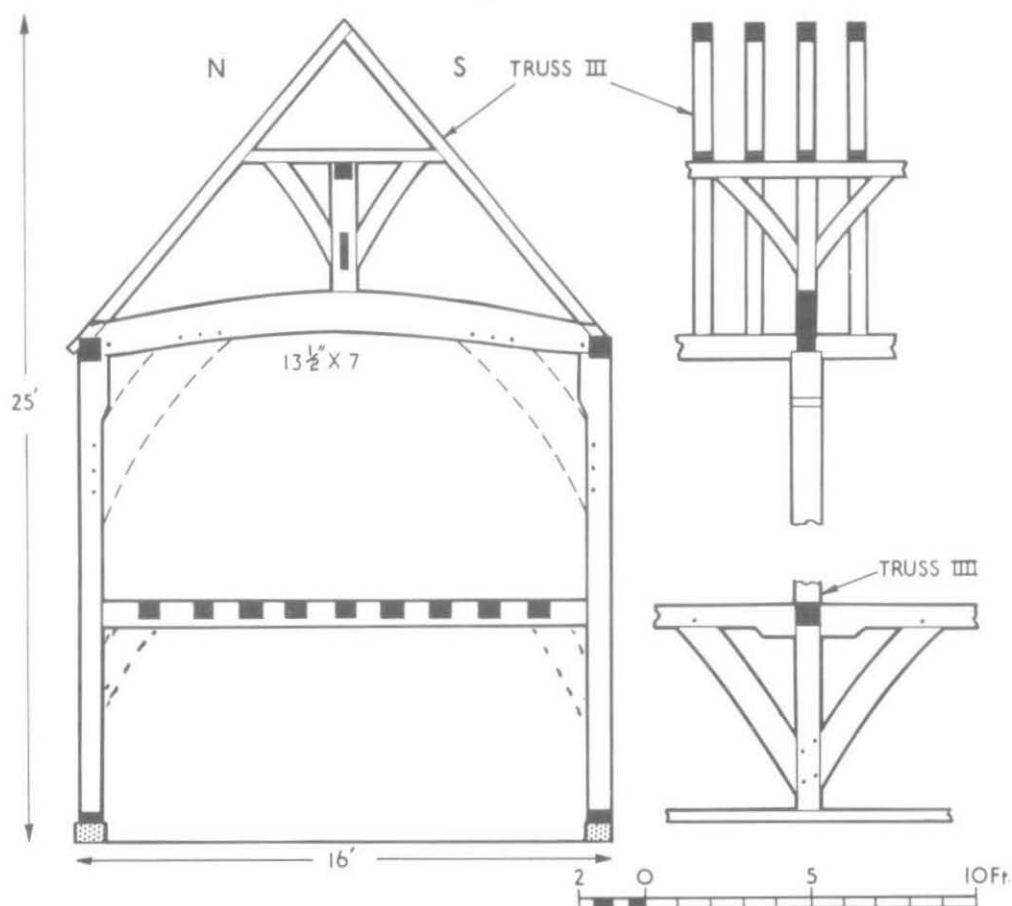


Fig. 16. Middle Farm: north wing.

not only of a medieval house but of medieval outhouses and a cruck barn. The house stands well back from the road and, before Brounz enlarged the site in 1379, would have been roughly central relative to the frontage. It has a hall and two-storeyed cross wings. The south wing is earlier than the rest. Two and a half bays with giant-panelled wall framing survive, the east bay having been truncated flush with the later hall. It is not clear whether the wing was built on continuous groundsills or on padstones, with some later underpinning; the marked tilt to the south supports the latter hypothesis. The short west bay was clearly a stairhead bay, and the north wall braces formed an arched door at the top of the stair, whose position to the north is indicated by mortices on the posts. That bay is separated by a partition truss from a two-bayed great chamber with an open truss. There are dragon ties at the partition and the east end; a spayed and tabled scarf in the west wallplate; and original septfoiled bargeboards on the west gable. The crown-post roof has mortised common collars and lacks smoke-blackening. The front room in the basement was converted to a kitchen in the 17th century.

It is not clear whether the south wing was originally a service or solar wing; if the latter, it became the former when the hall was built. Both the hall and north wing are fully framed on continuous sills. The hall range includes a cross-entry in the lower (south) bay, converted to a full passage by the later insertion of a chimney. It is fronted by a porch with an ogee-headed outer

doorway surmounted by restored cusped bargeboards, and retains the original front doorway, with two-centred head, and door. The two-centred doors to the service rooms are oddly placed at the rear of the passage, and a wall-post in the wing had to be removed to accommodate them. Yet there is no sign that they have been moved. The hall itself has two unequal bays separated by a base-cruck truss with double tie; the upper tie is in two pieces joined to each other by the crown post above and to the lower tie by slip-tenons. The apparent brattishing on the upper tie is visible on the north side only and is probably the remains of a later smoke-hood with vertical studs. At the south end is a plank truss with short principals birdsmouthed over the arcade plates and a crown post braced to the crown-plate only; at the north end, the roof plates are carried by the wallplate of the north wing, and a wallbrace in the wing serves as a short principal, receiving the windbrace to the roof plate. The crown post has curved downward braces to a tiebeam above the roof plates. The side walls have giant panels and steeply pitched arch-bracing to wallplates with horizontal jowls at the ends of each panel.

In 1589 Robert Loder ceiled the hall and put in the chimney backing onto the passage.⁴⁶⁷ The dormer with internal pargeetting on the east side may be contemporary.

That the four-bayed north wing is contemporary with the hall is shown by the integration of the two buildings and by the close resemblance of their wall-framing and crown-post roofs. It was not jettied and lacks dragon ties. The Geometric bargeboards on the west gable are original. The crown plate was butted to the crown post at that truss. The wing had a three-bayed great chamber on the first floor with two open trusses. The west bay of that chamber, at the head of the external staircase, is shorter than the others. It is separated on the west by a partition truss from a one-bayed chamber which was of inferior status, since the common couples of its roof, like the first three in the stairhead bay, are made of partly re-used timber with dovetailed collars, while those further east have mortised collars. That room may have served as Richard Brounz's oratory (see above). The basement of the wing appears to have been open throughout, with arched braces to the binders at each truss. The present partitions at trusses II and III, like the subdivided panels in the west wall, were inserted later, probably by Robert Loder when in 1589 he remodelled the eastern two bays as a parlour.⁴⁶⁸ The addition of a chimney on the north wall, which involved removing the arched braces to the binder at truss III, belongs to that phase.⁴⁶⁹

Recent tree-ring dating has shown that the south wing was built with timbers felled in 1323-4; it may therefore be a service wing added by Richard Brounz the elder to Miles's hall and chamber. The hall and north wing, which incorporate timbers felled variously in 1367, 1370, and 1371, was built by the younger Richard Brounz presumably in 1371 or 1372.⁴⁷⁰ It has by far the latest domestic example of a base-cruck with double tie in the country.⁴⁷¹ The mysterious two-bayed cruck outhouse immediately east of the screens passage was dated by radiocarbon to c. 1350 with a standard error of 50 years.⁴⁷² It could therefore have been built by Richard Brounz after he enlarged the site in 1379, but its function is still obscure. The thatched outhouse south of it, attributed by Fletcher to the 15th century, is more likely to have been a kitchen or brewhouse than the bakehouse mentioned in 1511. The cruck barn at the north-east corner of the site, originally of six bays, has been shown by dendrochronology to date from the early 15th century and was presumably built by John Brounz.⁴⁷³ It still has through-splayed scarfs to the purlins; the plank windbraces are consistent with a later date than the long thick-sectioned braces used in the cruck outhouse.

⁴⁶⁷ Inscription on ceiling bracket; for Loder, above.

⁴⁶⁸ Second inscription of 1589 exposed since c. 1980 on ceiling bracket of truss III.

⁴⁶⁹ Fletcher suggested, incorrectly as now shown by the alterations of c. 1980, that it was original.

⁴⁷⁰ D.W.H. Miles and D. Haddon-Reece, *The Tree-ring Dating of Bayllo's Manor, Harwell, Oxfordshire* (1992).

⁴⁷¹ Cf. N.W. Alcock and M.W. Barley, 'Medieval Roofs with Base Crucks and Short Principals', *Antiq. Jnl.* lii (1972), 132-68.

⁴⁷² *Med. Archaeol.* xvi (1972), 137-8.

⁴⁷³ *Vernacular Archit.* xv, 69.

RECTORY HOUSE

The history of Harwell rectory from the 13th century has been summarized by Fletcher.⁴⁷⁴ Rectors are known from the 1270s; the Black Prince granted the advowson and rectory to St. Nicholas's college, Wallingford, which appropriated it in 1360 and held it until the Dissolution. The college had in 1547 let the reversion of the glebe and great tithes for 60 years from 1563 to John Cheke,⁴⁷⁵ and they remained separate from the advowson until 1670, although John Loder of Prince's Manor was renting the tithes in 1595.

Although, as noted above, Prince's Manor was described as rectorial glebe in 1840, Fletcher showed that Wellshead Farm, later WILLOWBROOK, south-west of it corresponded with the position of the rectory house in 1318.

As Fletcher described and illustrated the house in 1966⁴⁷⁶ it is only necessary to take note of new observations since then. The house consists of a close-studded hall range of c. 1550 and a two-storeyed north cross wing of c. 1315, probably before 1310.⁴⁷⁷ The medieval wing was built with posts variously on padstones and composite bases but without continuous groundsills, and leans outwards, to the north. It contained a single-bay (stairhead?) chamber at the west end and a two-bayed great chamber at the east end, above a low basement. The eastern bay was truncated, perhaps in the 18th century, flush with the front of the south range. The crown-post roof, with mortised common collars, is smoke-blackened, either because it was incompletely partitioned from the hall or because it was used as a distillery in the 18th century. The hall was low-eaved and probably cruck-built: although the formerly internal lengths of the wallposts on the west side are chamfered, there is no evidence of seatings for arcade plates, whereas the mortice for the hall wallplate survives on the south side of the post at truss III.

The two-storeyed south range replaced the original hall; its cross passage was next to the wing, behind the chimney,⁴⁷⁸ so perhaps the previous house had been of 'end-hall' type and the wing combined great chamber and service, as at 42-42A High Street, Milton. On the first floor of the new range there was a continuous corridor.

OTHER HOUSES

Besides the manor and rectory houses, Harwell has several other medieval houses with chamber blocks or cross wings, and a few without. The most important, Lime Tree House, must be treated in detail to purge errors in earlier publications. The rest will be treated more briefly.

LIME TREE HOUSE (CATEWY'S FARM)

Descent

The house, once wrongly thought to have been the original Bishop's Manor house, was in fact the homestead of a 21-acre peasant yardland, and though freehold for most of its history may have been held by customary tenure when it was built. It was later transferred to a larger freehold estate, which the bishop acquired in 1370.

Before 1216 John le Moygne held half a yardland in Harwell, which had been carved out of the demesne of Prince's manor.⁴⁷⁹ The family had doubled its holding by 1256, when Richard earl of

⁴⁷⁴ *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii, 59-60, 63; cf. *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 491.

⁴⁷⁵ *P.R.O.*, E 315/105, ff. 202v.-203.

⁴⁷⁶ *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii, 56-8; for additional illustrations, *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* p. 22.

⁴⁷⁷ For dates, *Med. Archaeol.* xvi (1972), 137-8.

⁴⁷⁸ Not at S. end as shown *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxii, 57.

⁴⁷⁹ *Oseney Cart.* iv (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xcvi), pp. 449-50, no. 415 b.

Cornwall gave another John le Moygne a yardland which his father William had held before him.⁴⁸⁰ That grant was almost certainly an enfranchisement of customary land: while no Moygne witnessed the earliest Harwell deeds, a John le Moygne was a frequent witness from about that date.⁴⁸¹ Moreover the quitrent, 7s., is almost exactly equal to the sum of rent (5s.) and works (valued at an average of 1s. 11d.) owed by customary yardlanders on the manor in 1300.⁴⁸² A succession of John le Moygnes held the yardland until 1316.⁴⁸³ The penultimate John gave his younger son William a small plot on the south side of the curtilage, which William's brother, the last John, confirmed to William in a lease of 1310.⁴⁸⁴ In 1316 John added to the leased land the dower of his father's widow Denise.⁴⁸⁵ By 1329 the tenement appears to have been split up and the main house had passed to Walter Catewy and his wife Emma, perhaps one of John le Moygne's coheirs: in that year Maud le Moygne, perhaps another coheir, gave Walter and Emma the house on the south side of their tenement, evidently that already let to William. Walter Catewy renewed William's lease the next day.⁴⁸⁶

Lime Tree House thus became part of a larger farm, which included part of an estate held by the Robert (Roberd) family since the earlier 13th century. Robert son of William and his son William son of Robert witnessed several deeds of that period.⁴⁸⁷ William died between 1246 and 1248, when Walter Buscel, probably a tenant by the curtesy, bought the freehold of a villein yardland on Bishop's manor which William had held.⁴⁸⁸ Walter also held three other freehold yardlands from the bishop.⁴⁸⁹ By c. 1282 he had been succeeded by another William Robert,⁴⁹⁰ presumably the William Roberd who was also a free tenant on Prince's Manor in 1285⁴⁹¹ and the William son of Robert who was amerced at the honor court at North Oseney in 1290/1.⁴⁹² He died in 1299 or 1300, leaving seven daughters, and his estate was broken up. Of the Bishop's manor part, 2½ yardlands went to his youngest daughter Isabel.⁴⁹³ What may be fragments of the rest – seventh shares of property in Harwell – were purchased by Henry Crude in 1310 and Miles of Moreton in 1311 and 1314.⁴⁹⁴ In 1300, however, Roberd had been succeeded by William Catewy as tenant of a half yardland on Prince's Manor.⁴⁹⁵ In 1345 Walter Catewy held it.⁴⁹⁶ Before 1316 William Catewy had also held 1½ bond yardlands of Bishop's manor which his mother Alice had held by surrender from Maud Walrond, but which were granted to John Walrond in that year.⁴⁹⁷ Maud was perhaps Maud of Ireland, one of William Roberd's daughters,⁴⁹⁸ and Alice perhaps another daughter.

Catewy also acquired other freehold property in Harwell. In 1308 he sought licence to acquire a house and yardland from Henry le Montfort, although only for Montfort's life,⁴⁹⁹ and in 1310 he and Thomas Milis bought two houses and a yardland. Catewy's successor Walter obtained Milis's share from Milis's brother William in 1330.⁵⁰⁰ Walter had already bought another ½ yardland in

⁴⁸⁰ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, no. 1b (TS. cat. no. 12).

⁴⁸¹ E.g. *ibid.* TS. cat. nos. 14, 17, 21, 23–25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34.

⁴⁸² P.R.O., C 133/96, no. 25; E 152/8, rot. 4.

⁴⁸³ But P.R.O., E 152/8, rot. 4 gives William Moygne as tenant in 1300.

⁴⁸⁴ Magd. Coll. Harwell Deeds, no. 20A (TS. cat. no. 103).

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.* no. 53B (TS. cat. no. 154).

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.* TS. cat. nos. 198–9.

⁴⁸⁷ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. nos. 5–7, 10.

⁴⁸⁸ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159289; /159457.

⁴⁸⁹ B.L. Egerton MS. 2418, f. 57v.

⁴⁹⁰ E.g. Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. no. 30.

⁴⁹¹ P.R.O., E 179/242/112.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.* S.C. 6/1095/3.

⁴⁹³ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159318.

⁴⁹⁴ P.R.O., CP 25/1/9/39, no. 39; CP 25/1/9/40, no. 43; CP 25/1/10/44, no. 13b; cf. Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, no. 59b (TS. cat. no. 186).

⁴⁹⁵ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* iii, p. 479; P.R.O., E 152/8, rot. 4.

⁴⁹⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1343–5, 590.

⁴⁹⁷ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159330.

⁴⁹⁸ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, no. 59b (TS. cat. no. 186).

⁴⁹⁹ P.R.O., C 143/74, no. 6.

⁵⁰⁰ Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, nos. 111, 138 (TS. cat. 100, 201).

1326 and in 1330 acquired from Henry Crude's widow a house and 18 acres of land, with the meadow and pasture which Crude had bought in 1310.⁵⁰¹ From 1341 to 1361 Walter Catewy served Edward III as sergeant-at-arms. Although official documents call him Walter of Harwell,⁵⁰² his identity is clear from his attestation of two deeds in 1349 as Walter Catewy, king's sergeant-at-arms.⁵⁰³ In 1345 he conveyed the house to his son Walter and another trustee, and in 1346 leased all his Harwell property for sixteen years, probably because he was about to leave on royal service in France.⁵⁰⁴ In 1354 he granted all his estate in Harwell to his son Thomas in exchange for lands which Thomas had acquired in Buscot.⁵⁰⁵

All Walter's sons, Thomas, Walter, and Lancelot, had entered the Black Prince's service by 1359, Thomas being described as the prince's yeoman in 1362, when he obtained the keeping of lands in Buscot.⁵⁰⁶ He had continued to build up his estate there in the 1350s.⁵⁰⁷ By 1365, presumably after the lease of 1346 had expired, Thomas was in possession of the Harwell estate and obtained a release from his brother Walter.⁵⁰⁸ He made a settlement of the estate in 1366.⁵⁰⁹ In 1370, however, his creditor⁵¹⁰ William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester, seized the estate, on the unsubstantiated allegation that Catewy was the bishop's villein; Catewy submitted to the bishop's council. The farm was estimated at 80 acres of arable and 6 acres of pasture; the acreages were probably customary.⁵¹¹

Wykeham at first kept the farm in hand,⁵¹² but in the late 1380s it was let to William Duke and the profits were assigned to New College, Oxford.⁵¹³ After a settlement of 1392⁵¹⁴ it remained part of the bishopric until the 1840s or later, but was farmed separately from the manorial demesne. Lessees are known from 1399. The lease in the 15th century was usually for 10 years and changed hands frequently, but from 1514 to 1722 it was held by the Pope family, for long terms of years in the 16th century and for three lives from 1599. From 1738 to 1830 or later it was held by the King family and their trustees. The rent, reduced from £4 to £3 7s. 4d. in 1429-30, remained at that level, which included 8d. assize rent for the former Bishop's manor freehold, until after 1830.⁵¹⁵

Site documentation

The house was described as near the High Street in 1329.⁵¹⁶ It was known as 'Master Walter's place' in 1366.⁵¹⁷ In 1370-1 the thatch on the hall, chamber, kitchen, brewhouse, and stables was repaired; the account suggests that they were in separate ranges, if not wholly detached from one

⁵⁰¹ *ibid.* nos. 24c, 33b (TS. cat. 195, 200); above.

⁵⁰² *Cal. Pat.* 1340-3, 214, 385, 547-8; 1343-5, 92, 161, 590; 1345-8, 395-6; 1348-50, 72; 1350-4, 31, 79, 184, 275, 389, 419-20, 448, 542; 1358-61, 272, 410; 1361-4, 18, 33; *Cal. Close*, 1341-3, 369-70; 1343-6, 363; 1346-9, 412; *Cal. Fine*, 1337-47, 339, 343; 1347-56, 89.

⁵⁰³ *Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds*, no. 45 (TS. cat. 224); *Cat. Anct. D.* vi, p. 260, C 5732.

⁵⁰⁴ *Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds*, nos. 137, 66b (TS. cat. nos. 219-220); *Collections for a Hist. of Staffs.* (William Salt Archaeol. Soc.), xviii(2), pp. 88, 215.

⁵⁰⁵ P.R.O., E 40/14758.

⁵⁰⁶ *Black Prince's Reg.* iv, 300, 423, 497; *Cal. Inq. p.m.* x, p. 452.

⁵⁰⁷ *Cat. Anct. D.* i, pp. 483 (C 984), 548 (C. 1614).

⁵⁰⁸ *Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds*, no. 42b (TS. cat. no. 262); P.R.O., CP 25(1)/12/69, no. 1.

⁵⁰⁹ *Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds*, no. 54a (TS. cat. no. 263).

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.* no. 112 (TS. cat. no. 275).

⁵¹¹ T.F. Kirby (ed.), *Wykeham's Register*, ii (Hants Record Soc. 1899), pp. 102-4. The farm had only 53 acres after inclosure; Hants R.O. Eccl. 1/155012.

⁵¹² Hants R.O. Eccl. 2/159379-80; *ibid.* /159454.

⁵¹³ New College MSS. 5966-5968.

⁵¹⁴ *Cal. Pat.* 1391-6, 61.

⁵¹⁵ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159404-159443; *ibid.* /155827-155907; *ibid.* Eccl. 1/155010, /155012, /155015, /1550504, /155507, /155643; Winchester Cath. Lib., reg. 3, f. 13; reg. 4, ff. 101-2; reg. 6(9), f. 82; cf. Harwell Inclosure Award (in possession of parish clerk), old inclosure no. 81.

⁵¹⁶ *Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds*, no. 15c (TS. cat. no. 199).

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.* no. 67b (TS. cat. no. 265).

another.⁵¹⁸ In 1480-1 the first floors of a two-storeyed chamber at the north end of the hall, with a small chamber south of the same chamber, were renewed with 200 feet of oak boards.⁵¹⁹ The house in 1631 included hall, buttery, a chamber by the hall and another by the entry, and chambers over hall and entry; the kitchen is implied but not listed.⁵²⁰

Buildings

The house (Figs. 17-20) has been described in some detail elsewhere⁵²¹ and only a brief recapitulation is needed here. The first phase, dated by radiocarbon and dendrochronology to c. 1250,⁵²² consisted of a four-bayed aisled structure, apparently with cantilevered ends, and with a partition at the north end. The unheated bay beyond the partition, presumably the two-storeyed chamber mentioned in 1481, was cut off in 1912.⁵²³ The rest, of three probably equal bays, included a hall with an open hearth in the two central bays; it is not clear whether the south bay was an incompletely partitioned separate room or part of the hall proper. The collar-rafter roof had passing-braces at the central truss; there were probably passing-braces between tiebeam and wallpost at the two outer surviving trusses.

In the 1290s or early 1300s⁵²⁴ the aisled substructure was largely replaced, with a secondary fascia or lower roof plate, new aisle posts and braces at the partition and an arch-braced base-cruck truss at the centre. A chamfered crown plate and crown posts were inserted into the roof, that at the centre having a moulded cap and base and four-way braces, and a louvre was built and several rafter couples replaced. The newer couples are sawn, while the older were roughly squared with an axe or adze.

It seems probable that the original hall had a detached chamber block; if so it was replaced in the 14th century by a three-bayed cross wing added at the south end of the hall and partly replacing the hall range's south bay, which may have become a screens passage at that time. The cross wing has arch-braced wall framing, dragon ties, and a crown-post roof with two-way braces to the crown plate. That wing was presumably the chamber mentioned in 1370.

Clearly the first two phases were the work of the Moygnes before the farm was enlarged. The aisled hall was probably built a few years before the holding was enfranchised in 1256, though a slightly later date cannot be ruled out.⁵²⁵ The second phase may well have imitated the improvements at Bishop's Manor in 1297-8 (above). The cross wing was presumably built by Walter Catwey in the 1330s or by Thomas Catwey in the later 1360s; since all comparable local buildings tree-ring dated between 1340 and 1360 have purlin roofs, not crown posts, Walter is the more likely builder.

Later alterations have been summarized elsewhere.⁵²⁶

OTHER HOUSES WITH TWO-STOREYED WINGS

TIVERTON AND GABLE COTTAGE, Wellshead Lane, formerly BAKER'S, was freehold in 1804 but its descent is unknown. It consists of a mutilated two-bayed hall range, 21 ft. wide, parallel with the street, and a two-storeyed wing in front of it. Although the wing is wholly of the

⁵¹⁸ Hants R.O., Eccl. 2/159380.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. Eccl. 2/155843.

⁵²⁰ Berks. R.O., D/A/106/16.

⁵²¹ *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxxxvi (1979), 173-92; *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* p. 29.

⁵²² *Vernacular Archit.* xii, 39; radiocarbon samples BM 888-890.

⁵²³ Inf. from the owner (1987).

⁵²⁴ Radiocarbon dates, BM 891, 1070; tree-ring date, *Vernacular Archit.* xiv, 62.

⁵²⁵ The last heartwood ring on the tree-ring sample was of 1232, and two of three radiocarbon mean dates were before 1256.

⁵²⁶ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* p. 29.

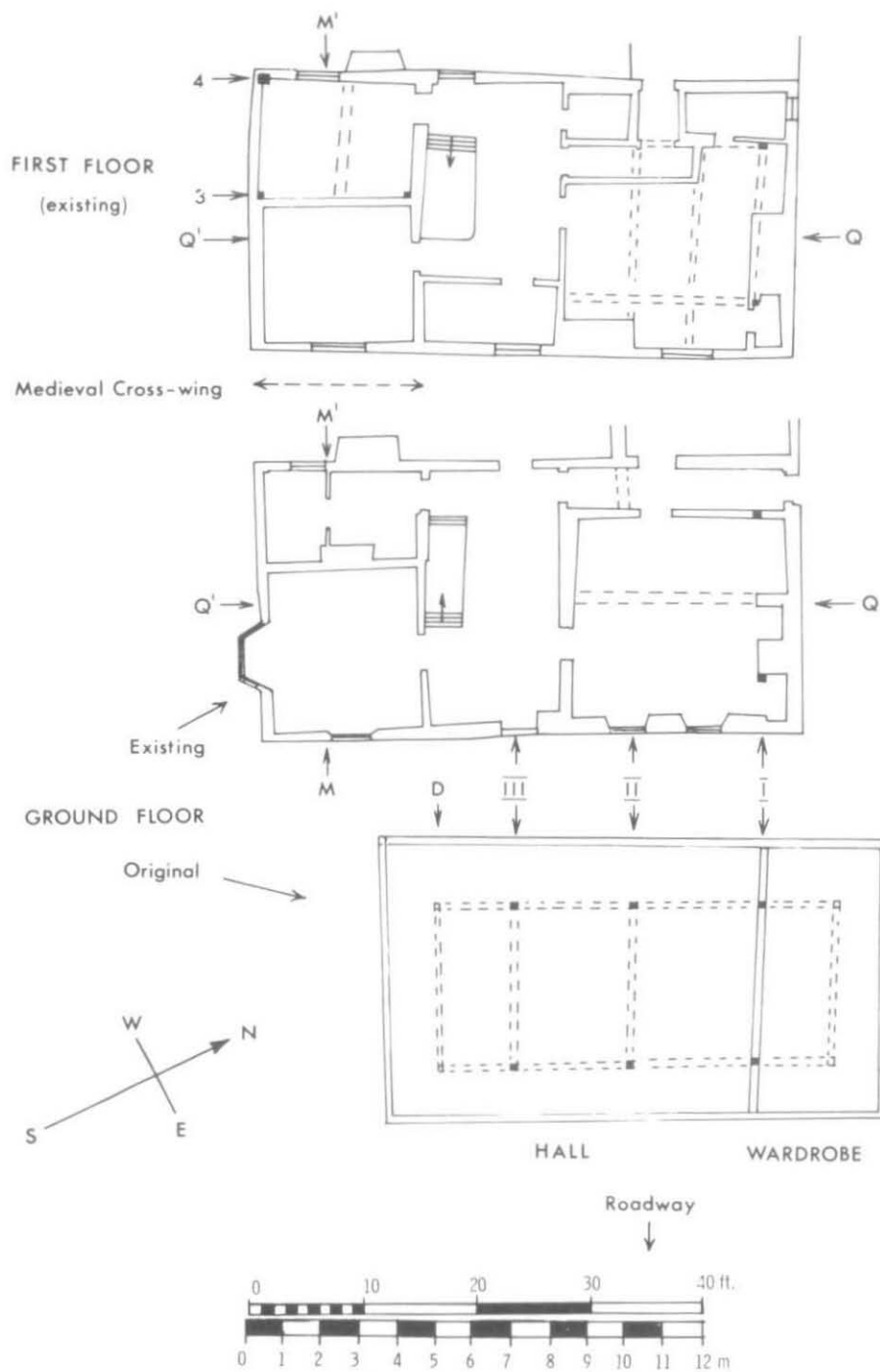


Fig. 17. Lime Tree House (Catewy's Farm), Harwell: plans.

LIME TREE HOUSE

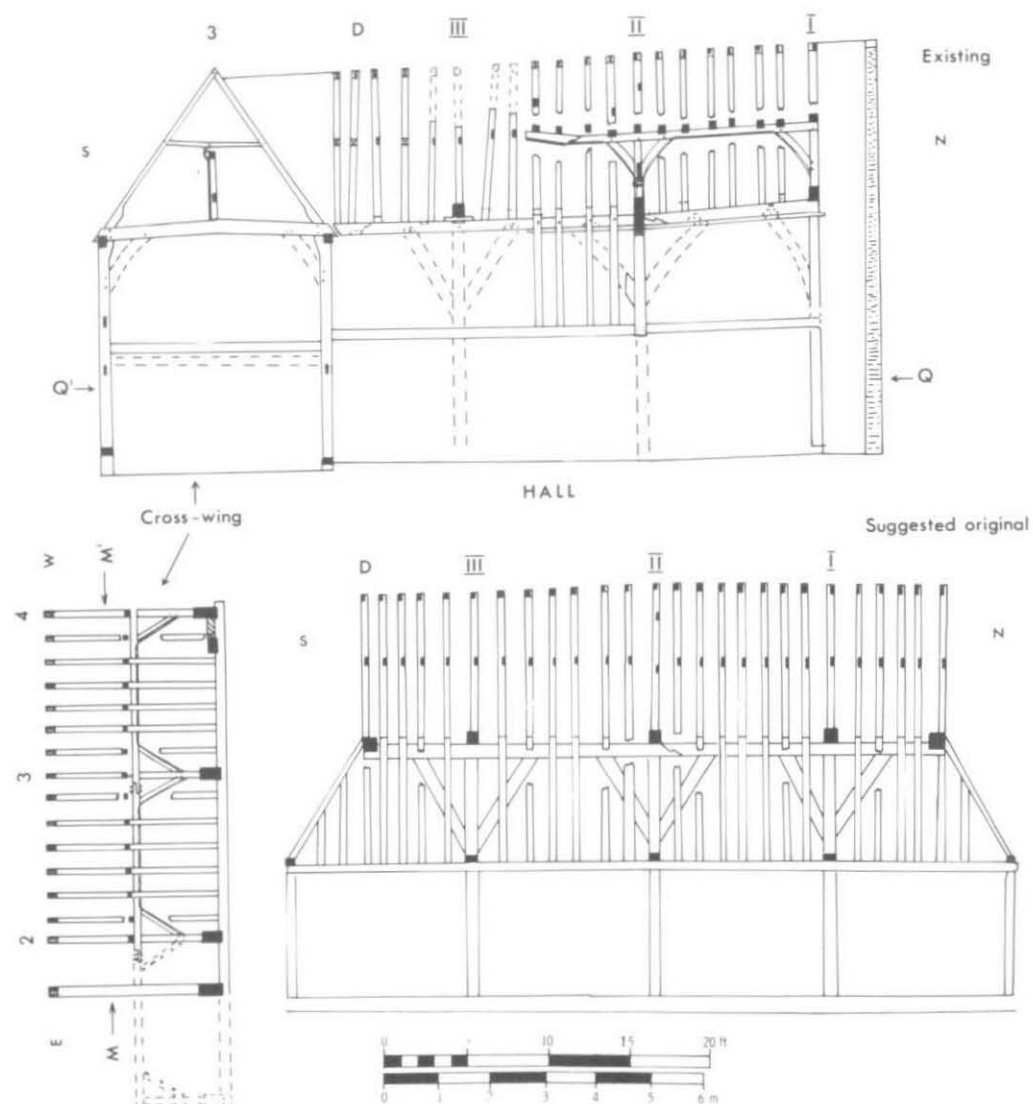


Fig. 18. Lime Tree House: long sections.

C.R.J. CURRIE
LIME TREE HOUSE
TRUSS I

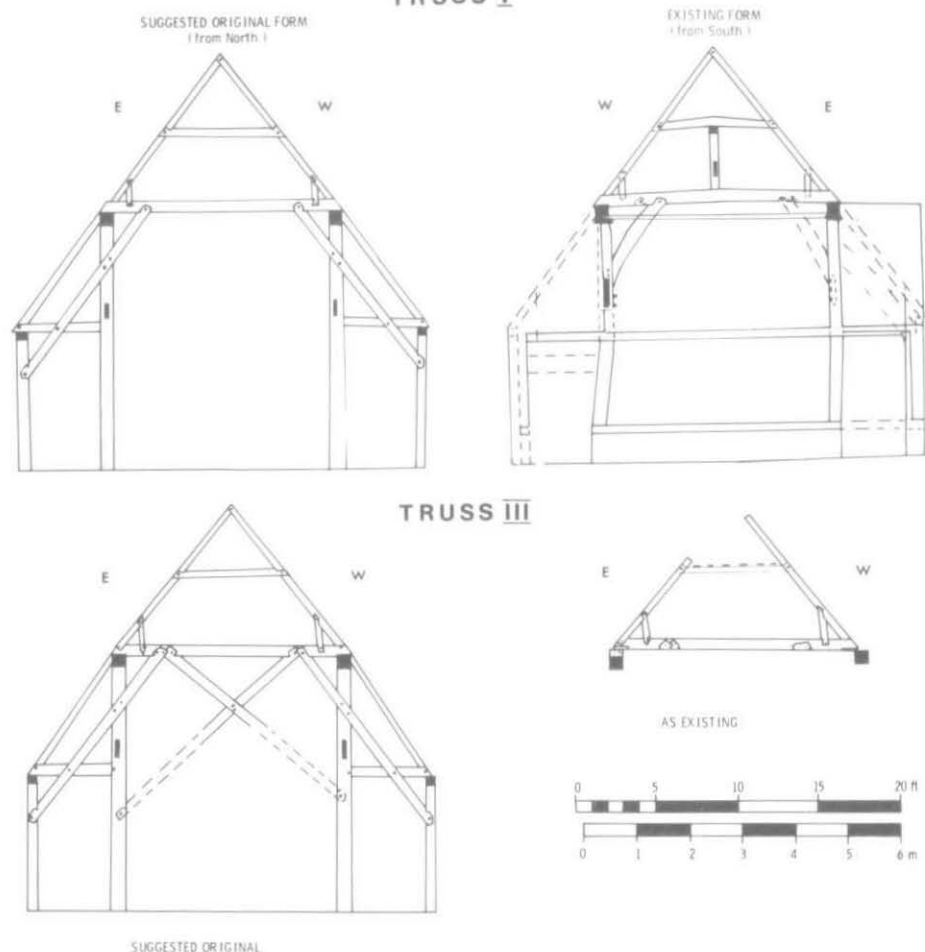


Fig. 19. Lime Tree House: hall trusses I and III.

17th century, it probably replaced a medieval chamber block, since the hall range terminated at the present southern cruck truss and the topography and foundations preclude further building to the north. The southern cruck was an arch-braced upper-end truss and probably supported a half-hip. The surviving collar of the central base-cruck truss has been shown by dendrochronology to be contemporary with the cruck; both probably date from a little after 1300, rather than the 1290s as has been previously thought.⁵²⁷

ABBEY TIMBERS, Broadway (Fig. 21) was freehold in 1804⁵²⁸ but its descent is unknown. It consists of a three-bay cruck-built range parallel with Holloway and a two-storeyed and jettied

⁵²⁷ Harwell Hos.: *Interim Gaz.* p. 24; *Med. Archaeol.* xvi, 136–42; Nott, Univ. Tree-Ring Dating Lab., initial report 25 Jan. 1990, giving an estimated felling date of c. 1311 on an assumption of 30 sapwood rings. Average for Oxon. samples taken by Anc. Mons. Labs of 18 rings would give date of c. 1299.

⁵²⁸ Harwell Inclosure Map, old inclosure 66.

LIME TREE HOUSE

TRUSS II

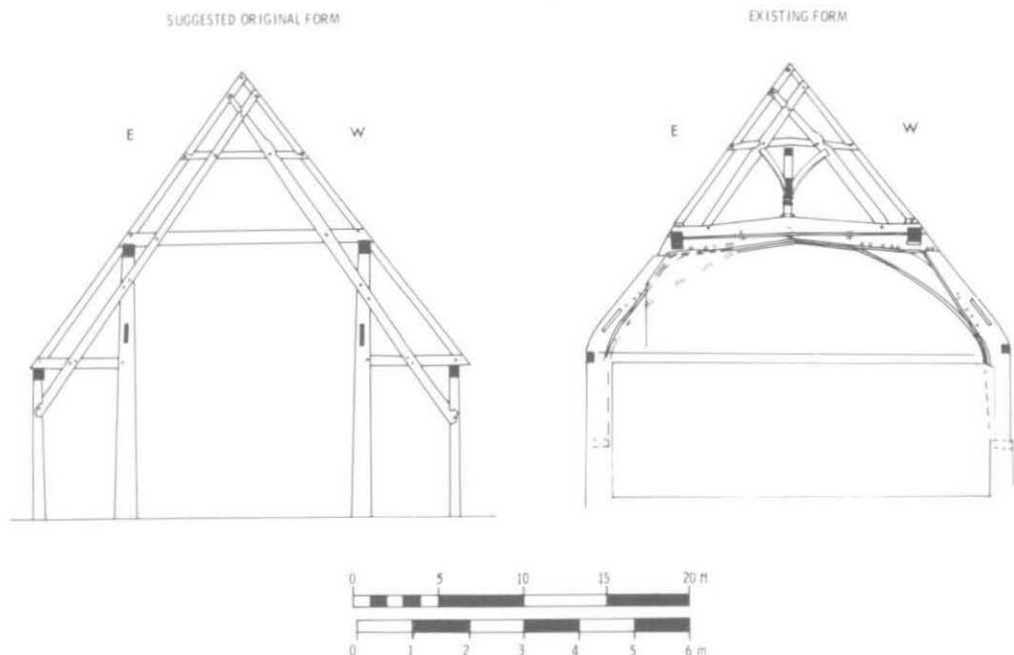


Fig. 20. Lime Tree House: hall truss II.

box-framed north-east wing in front of the north cruck bay, at right angles facing the street. The wing was originally detached from the cruck range; they were not joined until a chimney was inserted between them in the 17th century. The cruck range included a two-bay hall, with an arch-braced dais truss (mutilated in modern times, when a brick wall was built outside it), a massive arch-braced open truss, and a closed truss with tiebeam and collar separating the hall from the third bay, whose roof is heavily smoke-blackened and which was probably a kitchen. The partition above the collar has nailed staves which may be original. The southernmost truss is half-hipped and has tension-braced framing on the outside, matching that of the wing. The rest of the wall-framing of the cruck range has largely disappeared and the walls have been rebuilt in relatively modern brickwork.

The original arrangements of the ground floor of the wing are uncertain. The east bay has original joists, but those in the west bay were replaced in the 17th century when the parlour chimney stack and the outshot south of the range were added. The wing had a two-bayed chamber on the first floor, with an arch-braced open truss. The crown-post roof above is locally unusual in that there is no distinction between gable and open trusses, all having planklike braces to cambered tiebeams and squarer-sectioned braces to the crown plate. The central crown post, like the king post at the apex of cruck III, has a slightly bevelled top not observed elsewhere in the area. The scarf-joints in the hall ridgepiece and in the wing wallplates are edge-halved and doubly bridled. It seems probable that the hall and wing are contemporary.⁵²⁹ Dendrochronological sampling failed to date the wing but gave a very provisional felling date of 1399 or 1400 for the hall timbers.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁹ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* pp. 27–8; Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' pp. 186–7.

⁵³⁰ Nottingham University Tree-Ring Laboratory, Interim Report 25 July 1988.

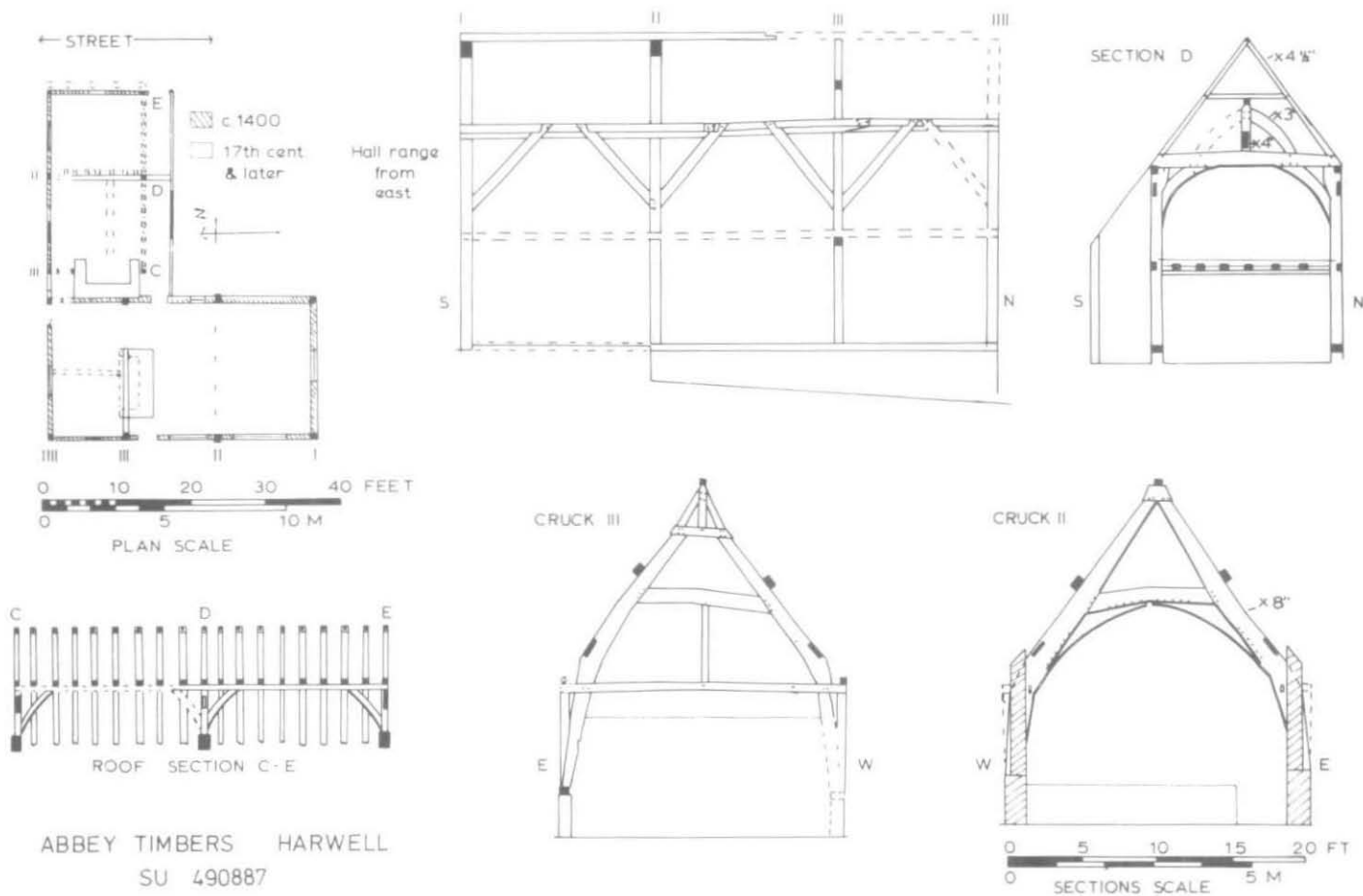


Fig. 21. Abbey Timbers, Harwell.

CHURCH FARM (LE CARILLON), Church Street, was also freehold in 1804.⁵³¹ It may stand on the site of a house west of the church, held by John Atte Hall in 1303,⁵³² but nothing of so early a date survives. The house consists of a three-bayed box-framed wing running east to west parallel with the street, and a cruck range now of one long bay running north-south behind it. The building has had as many interpretations as investigators. Fletcher suggested that the cruck range was of four bays, and had a hall intermediate truss in the present bay. Mercer confirmed that a north bay had been lost, and was able to show that it had been two-storeyed, with the space above the floor incompletely partitioned from the hall. He also argued that the absence of windbraces on the south face of the southern cruck truss indicated that the house stopped at that point. Both writers assumed that the wing was post-medieval.⁵³³ The present writer argued in 1986 that since there was no evidence on the hall ridgepiece of a central hall truss, and since the ridgepiece was cantilevered on the wing, the two buildings were contemporary. The missing bay had been a service bay, as indicated by the position of the post-medieval hall chimney, and the wing, whose east bay was single-storeyed with an open hearth, but whose western bays were two-storeyed, contained a great chamber and a kitchen.⁵³⁴ More recently Mr. Dan Miles has found evidence on a purlin exposed since 1986 that there had been an intermediate truss in the hall behind the chimney, although it did not extend to the ridge; and that the cantilevered arrangement at the south end was relatively modern. Further examination⁵³⁵ showed that the wing had assembly marks made with a tool different from that used in the hall, and that the length of hall ridgepiece projecting into the wing had pegholes for rafters.

The wing therefore appears to have replaced an end bay of the cruck range, probably not long after the latter was built. It includes re-used common rafters from an earlier, perhaps late 13th-century, building with two closely-spaced collars to each couple, one mortised, the other notched-lapped to the rafters. That building might have been a kitchen or detached chamber of John Atte Hall's time. The cruck range has been dated by dendrochronology to the 1420s.⁵³⁶ The wing remains undated.

POMANDER HOUSE, Townsend, was copyhold in 1804,⁵³⁷ so was presumably a villein holding of Bishop's manor in the Middle Ages. It includes one (upper) bay of a cruck hall, later converted to the service bay of a post-medieval building further north. The cruck bay has two arch-braced trusses with king posts; the northern, moulded on one side only, was an arch-braced dais truss clearly designed to butt against a building, presumably a cross wing, on the site of the post-medieval house; the southern, now a gable end, has evidence of a low beam and was partitioned from the hearth further south, since there is no soot on the ridgepiece although some smoke has seeped through the partition to stain the upper part of the east blade on its north side.⁵³⁸ Tree-ring dating has so far been unsuccessful.

THE DELL (Dell Cottage), Church Street, was copyhold in 1804.⁵³⁹ It has a much altered two-bayed cruck range parallel with the street and the remains of a box-framed rear wing behind, which appears to be a late-medieval addition. Radiocarbon sampling suggested that the cruck range may date from the earlier 15th century; tree-ring dating has been unsuccessful, except to show that the hall was ceiled with timber felled c. 1538.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³¹ Harwell Inclosure Map, Old inclosure no. 33.

⁵³² Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. no. 56.

⁵³³ *Oxoniensia* xxxiii, 86; E. Mercer, *English Vernacular Houses*, 18, 137.

⁵³⁴ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* pp. 14-15.

⁵³⁵ By Mr. Miles and the present writer in 1989.

⁵³⁶ *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 44.

⁵³⁷ Harwell Inclosure Map, old inclosure no. 101.

⁵³⁸ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* pp. 38-9.

⁵³⁹ Harwell Inclosure Map, old inclosure no. 48.

⁵⁴⁰ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.* p. 17; J.M. Fletcher, 'A Cruck Cottage in Church Lane, Harwell', *Oxoniensia* xxvi/xxvii (1961-2), 207-14; *Vernacular Archit.* xxii, 45.

SEYMOUR HOUSE, Jennings Lane, was copyhold in 1804,⁵⁴¹ and therefore presumably a customary tenement in the Middle Ages. The house stands on the south side of the lane and consists of an early 17th-century hall range, presumably replacing the medieval hall, and a two-storeyed two-bayed late medieval west cross wing. The wing is unusual in that the north gable and central trusses are crucks, with truncated ('type W') apexes and a clasped ridgepiece. The rear truss is box-framed, with clasped purlins, and was probably half-hipped. At the central truss the blades clasp the purlins, but at the north cruck the purlins are outside the blades. The crucks are steeply pitched to support a high wallplate. The first floor appears to have been divided into two small chambers. Radiocarbon sampling suggested a date in the earlier 16th century.⁵⁴²

DREWETT'S SHOP, a house on the corner of High Street and King's Lane demolished in 1963, contained the remains of a cruck-built hall range and successive cross wings added at the north end; one of the wings appears to have been late medieval. It was copyhold in 1804.⁵⁴³

OTHER MEDIEVAL HOUSES

HOLYWELL COTTAGE, a small freehold in Wellshead Lane, appears to have consisted only of a single cruck range, extended during the Middle Ages from two to three bays.⁵⁴⁴ A two-bayed cruck outhouse behind LOCKTON HOUSE FARM, Church Street, may have been a kitchen or a pair of undertanants' houses; radiocarbon sampling suggested a 14th-century date.⁵⁴⁵ ADNAM'S FARMHOUSE, a copyhold in High Street, is a taller late-medieval house of box-framed construction, of four bays, including a two-bayed hall, screens passage, two-storeyed service end, and formerly a chamber at the north end, which has been rebuilt. The clasped-purlin roof has, in the centre of the hall, an arch-braced jointed cruck open truss. A kitchen with an open hearth was added at the rear in the 16th century.⁵⁴⁶ Two other more fragmentary single-storeyed box-framed houses in the village may also be late-medieval.⁵⁴⁷

HINTON WALDRIST

RECTORY HOUSE

Fletcher reported the remains of a medieval hall, at the west end of the house, cased in stone and retaining two arch-braced cruck trusses. It is not clear whether the hall had three bays, as Fletcher suggested, or whether one cruck was an arch-braced dais truss. The crucks had two tiers of purlins and windbraces. A 14th-century date was suggested for the building.⁵⁴⁸

LETCOMBE BASSETT

RECTORY

The rectory farmstead east of the church is well known for its cruck barn, with four original bays having arch-braced trusses, and a post-medieval extension to the east. The barn framing gives no

⁵⁴¹ Harwell Inclosure Map, old inclosure no. 28.

⁵⁴² *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.*, p. 12.

⁵⁴³ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.*, p. 9; Harwell Inclosure Map, old inclosure no. 17.

⁵⁴⁴ *Harwell Hos.: Interim Gaz.*, p. 24.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 7–8.

⁵⁴⁸ *Oxonienia*, xxxiii, 87.

particular grounds for the early 14th-century date claimed for it.⁵⁴⁹ In 1634 it had five bays with a stable at one end under the same roof. There was also a dovecot.⁵⁵⁰

The house, of H-plan with hall and two cross wings, is also partly medieval. In 1634 it contained hall, parlour, buttery, and milkhouse. It was probably old-fashioned, with an open hall and two wings, rather than small, and the parlour and service rooms could have had unmentioned chambers over them. The kitchen and boulting house were in a separate building.⁵⁵¹ The south wing appears to have been rebuilt in the 17th century, with later alterations. The hall was reroofed in the 18th or 19th century, but retains a few cut-off rafters of its medieval roof at the north-east corner. Some smoke-blackened rafters have been re-used in the north wing, whose western end was heightened in the 18th or 19th century but which retains a roof truss with heavy cinquefoiled principal rafters, probably the central truss of a great chamber. The truss is reminiscent of work at Tudor House, Steventon, Sutton Courtenay Manor House, and Church Farm, Lewknor, and thus dates probably from the mid 14th century.⁵⁵²

LONG WITTENHAM

No medieval manor house is known, but the village includes one cruck house with a two-storeyed box-framed chamber block, CRUCKFIELD COTTAGE. The chamber block, of two short bays, is now part of a cross wing at the end of the two-bay cruck hall range, but examination during repair in 1975 showed that the rear bay of the wing was a later reconstruction and probably replaced a third bay of the cruck range; that bay had perhaps been a kitchen. Recent dendrochronological testing has been unsuccessful, but the framing of the chamber is consistent with a date in the early or mid 15th century.⁵⁵³ There are also at least eight single-ranged cruck buildings, of which three were published by Portman.⁵⁵⁴ One, TURRET CLOSE, High Street, has been dated by dendrochronology to some time after 1351, probably c. 1362.⁵⁵⁵

LONGWORTH: CHARNEY BASSETT

CHARNEY MANOR

Descent

The manor of Charney was held by Abingdon Abbey from before 1066 until the Dissolution. In 1545 the Crown granted it to William Gofen, whose sister Alice settled it on Chidioc Paulet, in possession in 1563. His son William sold it to William Dunch in 1582; it then descended through the Dunches and from 1705 the Kecks to G.A.L. Keck, who sold the estate to four purchasers in 1804. The house and adjoining farm then became separate from the manor, and passed through several 19th-century owners to Mellany Stephens, who sold the estate to William Price in 1906. Price restored the house by demolishing and rebuilding most of it to the designs of William Weir. Following further sales, which separated the house from the farm, the former passed in 1919 to a

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid. 80.

⁵⁵⁰ Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MS. O.A.P. Berks. c. 185, f. 115.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. This interpretation disagrees with that in Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 288-9.

⁵⁵² For Tudor House and Sutton Courtenay, below gazetteer, Steventon and Sutton Courtenay; for Lewknor, *Oxonensia*, xxxvii (1972), 187-91; xxxviii (1973), 339-45; xl (1975), 247-53; *Vernacular Archit.* xxi (1990), 47, 49.

⁵⁵³ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 187-8, revising D. Portman, 'Cruck Houses in Long Wittenham', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lvi (1958), 37-43. Tree-ring samples were taken c. 1988 by Nottingham University Tree-Ring Laboratory.

⁵⁵⁴ *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lvi, 35-45; N.W. Alcock (ed.), *Cruck Construction: an Introduction and Catalogue* (Council for British Archaeology Research Report 42, 1981), 141, listing 7 besides Cruckfield; a ninth cruck house was discovered during the Dept. of Environment Listed Buildings resurvey.

⁵⁵⁵ Nott. Univ Tree-Ring Lab. interim report 29 Aug. 1988.

Major Whiteley, who demolished most of the outbuildings. Since 1948 it has belonged to the Society of Friends.⁵⁵⁶

Buildings

The house, formerly known as Charney Wick (plan, Fig. 22) stands immediately north of the church and consists of a hall range and two cross wings. The hall and north wing were rebuilt by Weir; the north wing follows the ground-plan of its predecessor only approximately, while the hall was widened and an outshot wall built on the east side. The earlier hall and wing had, however, been described, planned, and illustrated by Turner in 1851.⁵⁵⁷ By that time the hall had been heightened, probably in two stages, to two full storeys, an axial stack inserted in the centre, and sash windows put in on the west (principal) front, where Turner thought that the wall had been wholly rebuilt. Nevertheless the rear wall was thought to be original, and retained the door to the cross passage next to the north wing and traces of a door at the upper end next to the south wing. The north wing was two-storeyed, and the walls lacked buttresses, except for a shallow buttress at the west end of the north wall. The upper room had a 15th-century fireplace apparently inserted into an earlier chimney. The fenestration was largely of the 16th century and later, but a small 13th-century quatrefoil window (preserved and reset by Weir) survived in the west gable, and in the upper chamber a window with paired pointed lights whose head had been cut from a single stone. There was also a curious round-headed relieving arch a little above ground level at the east end of the north wall. Similar arches remain in the putatively 13th-century range at Sutton Courtenay Manor House⁵⁵⁸ and in the mid 13th-century frater undercroft at Bayham Abbey (Suss.).⁵⁵⁹ At all three sites the arches may be related to the marshy nature of the ground.

The surviving south wing has been described by Wood⁵⁶⁰ and needs no further description here except where omissions affect the interpretation of the building. Wood's view differed markedly from that of the *V.C.H.*, which attributed the lower part of the chapel to the late 12th century, the main body of the chamber block to the early 13th, and the supporting buttresses to the 14th.⁵⁶¹ Wood, by contrast, thought that the whole structure dated from c. 1280, except for the east door of the chapel basement and the north-west door to the solar undercroft, which she regarded as 16th-century insertions, and the west wall, which was clearly 'later' (it represents a truncation of the wing flush with the front of the hall, perhaps when the latter was heightened to two storeys).

In contrast it is now contended that the wing was built in the early 13th century, probably in the time of Abbot Hugh (1189–1221), noted for his completion of the 'new building' at Abingdon Abbey,⁵⁶² and that it was remodelled at least twice later in the century, one of those phases coinciding with the addition of the hall and north wing. Those may have replaced a timber-framed hall for which the south wing served as a *camera*. In the first place the jambs and voussoirs of the east doorway of the chapel undercroft are in squarish ashlar with wide joints, typical of the 12th or early 13th century rather than the 16th as suggested by Wood; on the north side the ashlar is continued to form quoins on the ground storey only. Associated with that stonework is a low, chamfered plinth adjoining the doorway. The absence of impostes or capitals would be more consistent with an early 13th-century date rather than one in the 12th century as suggested by the *V.C.H.* There is evidence of a similar offset end doorway in a phase, apparently of the early 13th

⁵⁵⁶ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 468–9; *Charney Manor and Church* (n.d., booklet available at the house), 7–8.

⁵⁵⁷ T.H. Turner, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England from the Conquest to the end of the Thirteenth Century*, i, 153–5.

⁵⁵⁸ Below, gazetteer, Sutton Courtenay.

⁵⁵⁹ Personal observation. For date, S.E. Rigold and J. Coad, *Bayham Abbey* (Hist. Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, 1985 edn.), 20–1.

⁵⁶⁰ M.E. Wood, 'Thirteenth-century Domestic Archit. in England', *Archaeol. Jnl.* cv, supplement, 9–10.

⁵⁶¹ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 466.

⁵⁶² *V.C.H. Berks.* ii, 53, 61.

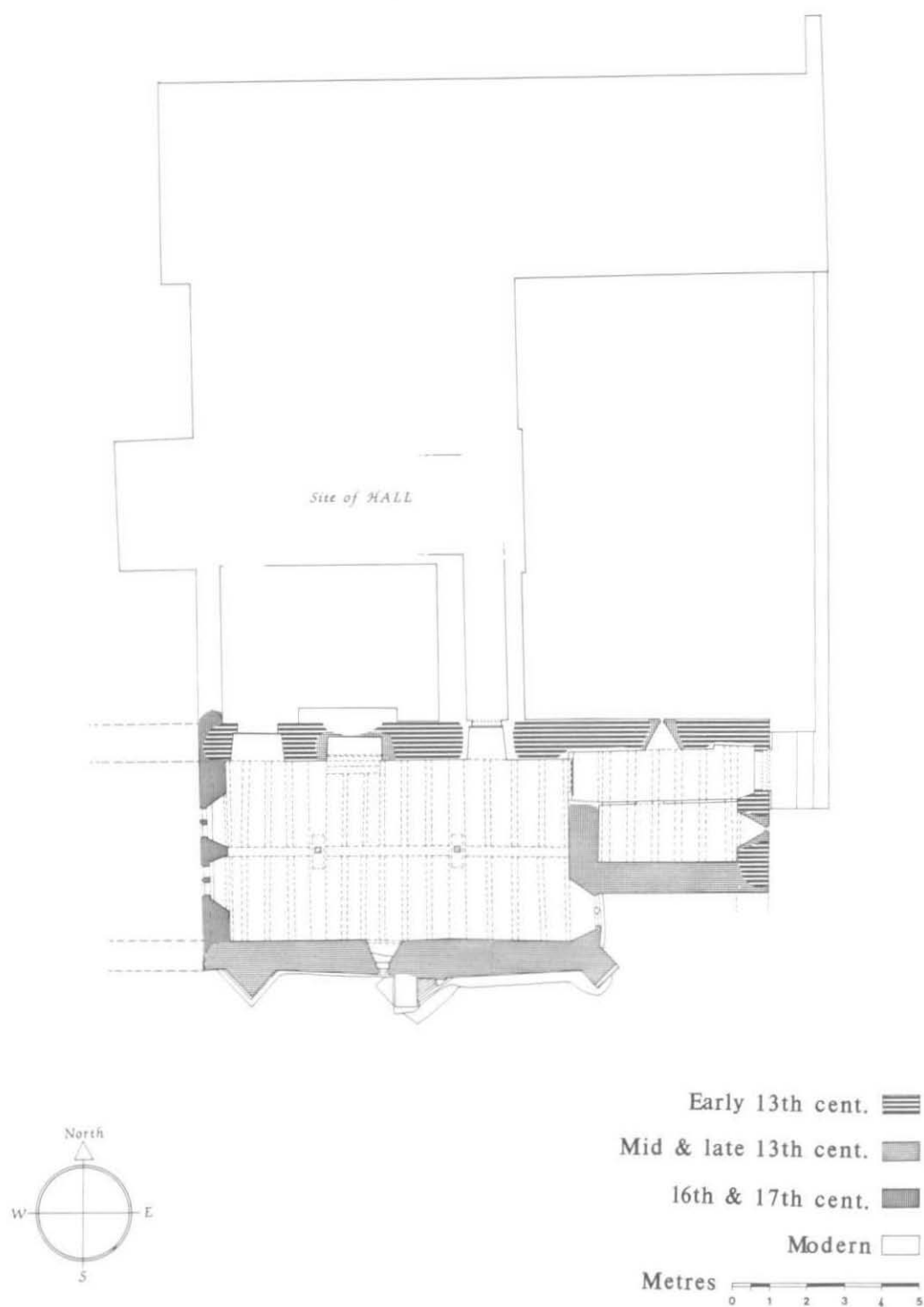


Fig. 22. Longworth: Charney Bassett Manor House, plan (E. Impey).

century, of the north range at Sutton Courtenay Abbey.⁵⁶³ Dr. Edward Impey suggests⁵⁶⁴ that the similar north-west doorway of the solar undercroft, and therefore much of the north wall of that undercroft, dates from the same phase. The south-east window of the solar undercroft, attributed to the early 13th century by the *V.C.H.* and of two lights in a round head which has lost its hoodmould, probably belongs to that phase also, although it has been re-set and its central mullion appears to be a replacement, possibly for a rounded shaft. The chapel block's south wall, which meets the east wall of the wing in a straight joint next to the window, almost obscures the jambs both of this window and of the later one above it, suggesting either that the chapel block wall was originally of timber or that the block was originally somewhat narrower than at present. It may have been a wardrobe rather than a chapel at first. (Alternatively, as recently suggested by Dr. Impey, the chapel block was originally the same width as the rest of the chamber and formed its east end.)⁵⁶⁵ In addition, there are signs of a horizontal break at first-floor level in the rubble walling of the south wall of the solar block; that may indicate a timber-framed upper wall, at least on the south side.

If so, the south wall was reconstructed and reinforced later in the century, with a plinth *c.* 2 feet higher than that of the chapel block and two V-shaped buttresses; the western one was noted by Wood, but the foundations of the eastern underlie the modern buttress. There may have been a second diagonal buttress at the original south-west corner, lost in the 16th- or 17th-century reconstruction at that end. It is likely that this reinforcement was associated with the replacement of the superstructure in stone, and that the two-light first floor window on the south side of the solar is contemporary with it. What Wood mistook for a door-jamb at the south-west corner is clearly the jamb of the rere-arch of a second window of the same type; excavations in the 1960s showed that the building extended *c.* 4 m. (13 ft.) further west.⁵⁶⁶ The window's position is the same relative to the surviving V-buttress as is that of the surviving window relative to the destroyed V-buttress. The surviving window is identical in design to the 13th-century window formerly in the north wing; the hall and north wing were therefore probably added in this phase, which might be attributable to a mid 13th-century abbot, perhaps Abbot John de Blomevil (1241–56) or one of his two successors. Also of that phase may be the tie-beams of the solar roof, which appear to be earlier than the rest of the roof structure; the western tie-beam is grooved above for a partition which has left no traces higher up. The tie-beams could alternatively belong to an earlier, partly timber-framed, phase, since although the cornice fits the tiebeams on the north side, on the south side they are sunk into the wall.

A third, and clearly late 13th-century, phase of the south wing involved the completion of the present plan, either by narrowing the east end and rebuilding it as a chapel, or by widening an existing chapel there. On the last hypothesis, it probably began with the insertion of the solar south-east window, which with its Y-tracery and hoodmould is quite different in character from the south solar window. Conceivably it replaced the earlier two-light window now set in the basement below it. Putatively the chapel block was next widened; the chapel east window, also with Y-tracery of similar character, the south chapel window with its trefoiled head and hoodmould, the chapel fixtures, and its west doorway all appear to be contemporary, as was probably the north-west (originally external) solar doorway, which, as noted by Wood, is a restoration in its present form. The openings in the chapel, as noted by Wood, have dressings partly of chalkstone, in contrast to the earlier openings. The loop windows in the basement of both buildings may belong to that phase, as probably do the soulaced crown-post roof and hollow-chamfered cornice of the solar. The crown-post braces have nailhead stops; although the transverse braces are straight the longitudinal braces are curved. The crown plate has a splayed

⁵⁶³ Below, gazetteer, Sutton Courtenay, rectory house.

⁵⁶⁴ Personal communication (1988).

⁵⁶⁵ E. Impey, 'Origins and development of non-conventual monastic dependencies in Eng. and Normandy, 1000–1350' (Oxford Univ. D. Phil. thesis, 1992), 30–2, where it is also suggested (with reasons) that the hall was more centrally placed between the wings than Turner and Parker showed, and only two 13th-century building phases are posited, the hall and north wing putatively dating from the late 13th century.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 30.

scarf, perhaps modern, over the western truss; over the eastern truss the plates are joined by the crown-post tenon. That final phase of 13th-century building is perhaps the work of the later years of Abbot Richard of Hendred (1262–89) or the early years of his successor Nicholas of Coleham (1289–1306).

The ceiling joists of the chapel undercroft, not recorded by Wood, are of heavy timber and run from the north to the south wall without supporting bridgers or binders. They probably date from the last 13th-century phase. They are charred by a fire which clearly broke out in the south-west corner of the chapel basement, according to local tradition in the late 16th century,⁵⁶⁷ and explains why the chapel was reroofed in the 17th century. The fire damaged the stonework of the east door, and the south-east window of the solar, both of which show characteristic roseation by heat. The floor of the solar is partly supported by modern samson-posts, but is fully framed, with transverse binders, lengthwise bridgers tenoned into them, and common joists tenoned into the bridgers. Although the joints are plain soffit-tenons, the work probably dates from the 16th- or 17th-century reconstruction.

A final problem of the house concerns the head and jambs of the 13th-century fireplace in the undercroft, which have a chamfer on the inner arris but a rebate on the outer, as if they had been taken out and reassembled back to front.

LONGWORTH: LONGWORTH

RECTORY HOUSE

The house apparently includes a late-medieval limestone wing, probably the solar wing, with a mullioned window with arched lights in the gable.⁵⁶⁸

MARCHAM

No medieval manor house is known, but one large medieval house requires description.

HYDE FARM HOUSE

Descent

About 1185 the Hyde at Marcham was part of the fee of Seacourt, held of Abingdon abbey by the Seacourt (Seuckeworth) family.⁵⁶⁹ It was perhaps the holding of a fifth of a knight's fee held of the abbey in the 12th or early 13th century by the daughters of William Grim. They may have included Alice and Christine, who married respectively Vincent and Henry of Marcham. Those couples held land in 'Esthida' of Robert de Linant, a subtenant of the Seacourts, which he gave to Walter of Hendred, perhaps in trust, between 1225 and 1235. Walter's nephew John Franceys of Hendred may have held it in 1236 and was recorded as the holder in 1240–1. Meanwhile Walter conveyed 'Esthide' to Alice daughter of Arnold de Linant, and John confirmed the transaction. In the 1240s Alice gave half a hide in Marcham and a rent from Esthide to William of Letcombe, who in the late 1250s gave it to Abingdon Abbey for his and Alice's soul. Finally between 1262 and 1264 William of Seacourt quitclaimed the whole of Hyde to the abbey. Possibly William of Letcombe and Alice de Linant were 'the monk of the Wodefold' and Alice of Fyfyhyde, who were later recorded as the abbey's predecessors. In 1355 Hyde was managed by the abbey's sacrist, who

⁵⁶⁷ Local information.

⁵⁶⁸ Pevsner, *Berks*, 172; Eyres, 'Trad. Dom. Archit.' 35.

⁵⁶⁹ G. Lambrick and C.F. Slade (ed.), *Two Cartularies of Abingdon Abbey*, ii (Oxf. Hist. Soc. n.s. xxxiii, 1992 for 1990–1), pp. 112–16.

owed the lignar £17 for it. The sacrist was still responsible for it in 1396-7, when it was held on lease by a farmer.⁵⁷⁰ By then the sacrist also held the 'second Hyda' which had been given by John Wythegynmulle in the later 14th century.⁵⁷¹

After the Dissolution all the abbey's possessions in Marcham were granted to a London grocer with the manor.⁵⁷² The Hyde belonged to successive John Princes from before 1652 to after 1724.⁵⁷³

Site documentation

No surviving medieval accounts give details of the buildings. In 1675 John Prince the elder devised to his wife all the rooms 'lately built and adjacent to his house at the Hyde, consisting of a parlour, chamber, and garret, a new milkhouse, a little woodhouse'.⁵⁷⁴

Building

The house stands on a formerly isolated site east of the village and north of the Abingdon road. Built largely of Marcham stone with timber dressings, except as stated below, it is L-shaped, with west and north ranges. The east end of the north range (not shown on plan) contains the parlour, chamber, and garret built by John Prince in 1652.⁵⁷⁵ Prince also cased in stone the north wall of the west bay, which was perhaps built in 1559;⁵⁷⁶ it was formerly timber-framed and retains close studding on the south side. As reconstructed by Prince, the range is virtually a separate house, with its own cross passage at the west end.

The west range (Fig. 23), however, is medieval. Its four bays of approximately equal length appear to have included a three-bayed long hall, with a sooted roof, two open trusses and a cross entry adjoining the south bay. That was partitioned from the hall and may have been two-storeyed, though the present floor appears to be a 17th or 18th-century reconstruction. There is an added outshut on the east side, north of the cross entry.

The roof is of a design unique in known English domestic architecture. There is no sign of an original wallplate, although one was inserted in the 17th century at the west side of the north bay when the eaves were raised slightly and the roof at that point partly rebuilt with a hip. The timbers are, except for the tiebeams, of relatively light scantling and nearly square cross-section. The two open trusses (Fig. 23) are both of the same form and were apparently framed from the north. Each has a pair of parallel rafters, on each side, the outer rising to the apex and the inner to the upper of two collars; there are two tiers of purlins, the upper clasped in a cut-out section of the outer rafter, the lower trapped by a blocking-piece mortised into the rafters. Two tiers of straight, steep-pitched, light (4 ins. × 2 ins.) windbraces are mortised to the inner rafters and lap-dovetailed to the backs of the purlins. In contrast at the south partition truss (Fig. 23) there is only one rafter on each side, and the purlins are clasped conventionally between collars and rafters. At all three trusses the ridgeplate is clasped by a yoke dovetailed and pegged to the outer rafters, and has a through-splayed scarf joint towards the north end. There are no transverse braces or vertical members; the south partition is formed by rectangular staves to which laths were formerly nailed

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. pp. 206-11; *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 356; R.E.G. Kirk (ed.), *Accounts of Obedientiars of Abingdon Abbey* (Camden Soc. n.s. li, 1892), 59, 61, 64-5.

⁵⁷¹ *Accounts of Obedientiars*, 61, 79, 111, 122. For Wythegynmulle cf. e.g. Magdalen College, Oxford, Harwell deeds, 57A, 3b, 30 (TS. cat. nos. 259, 276, 278).

⁵⁷² *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, xxi(2), p. 98.

⁵⁷³ Inscription on parlour fireplace; Cottis, 'Agrarian Change in Vale', 96, 116.

⁵⁷⁴ Cottis, 'Agrarian Change in Vale', 116, citing Berks. R.O., D/A 1 107/129.

⁵⁷⁵ Inscr. on fireplace.

⁵⁷⁶ Graffito formerly on windowsill reset on south side of Prince's chamber but removed in 1980s (from personal observation, 1969).

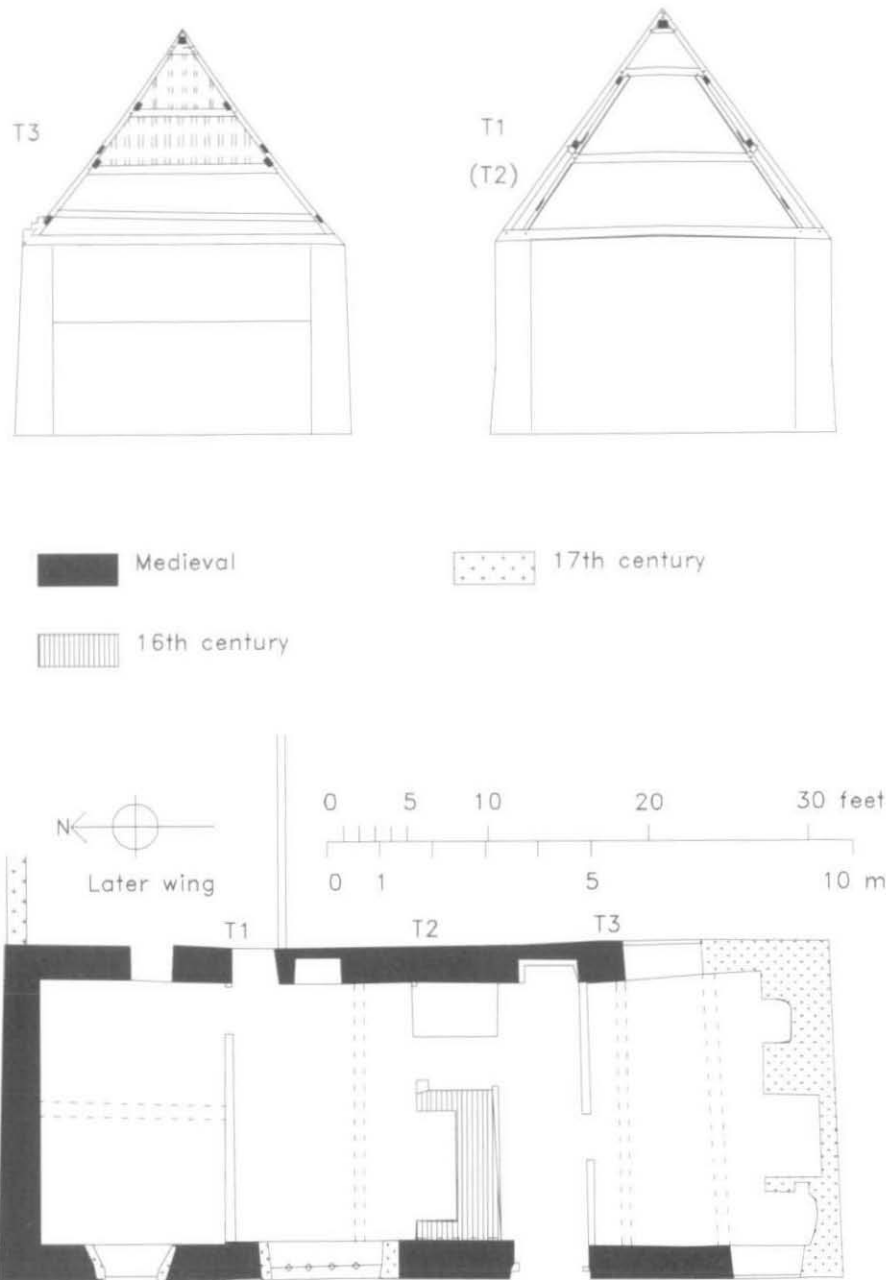


Fig. 23. Hyde Farm House, Marcham.

on the north side. Apart from the halvings mentioned, all joints are mortice and tenon. The only ornamentation consists of narrow chamfers on the tiebeams, windbraces, and purlins.

It is in principle possible that the building is the remains of an aisled hall which has had its aisles and arcade posts and plates removed. There is one peghole in the tiebeam above the stone wall at the north truss, but it is not duplicated on the opposite side or at the other trusses. Similarly there is a single peghole in the north face of the second tiebeam, conceivably for a brace, which is not repeated in the corresponding positions elsewhere. The absence of repetition, and of any sign of a lap joint below the visible end of the north tiebeam, appears to indicate, however, that the structure was always stone-built and unaisled.

The front doorway, at the west end of the cross passage, is of timber and has chamfered jambs and lintel forming a shouldered arch. It is not clear whether it is original or a replacement of the later Middle Ages.

It might be expected that the hall range had an associated chamber block, perhaps on the site of the north range. In the late Middle Ages, however, the hall was reduced to two bays and a chamber was formed in the north bay by the insertion of partitioning at the north truss. The partition was incomplete, a gap being left between the two collars and apparently below the tiebeam as well (since the north side of the partitioning is sooted). The partition above the upper collar has been removed but is indicated by wattle holes. That between tiebeam and lower collar is formed of semicircular staves, with their upper face towards the hall on the south (in contrast with the structural frame of the truss), and was finished with woven horizontal wattles, in contrast with the lathing on the original south partition. A first floor may have been inserted in the north bay at the same time, since the ceiling beam there is considerably lower than that in the hall, though the present joists are not earlier than the 17th century.

Still later, probably in the mid 16th century when the first phase of the present north range was built, the second bay, that is the north bay of what remained of the hall, was ceiled, and was separated by a partition from the last bay, which remained a smoke-bay open to the roof. Some of the smoke-bay framing remains on the ground floor as well as the sooted partition in the roof. The ceiling joists are chamfered, with stepped stops.

A chimney was inserted into the smoke bay, perhaps c. 1600, creating a hearth-passage plan. John Prince's alterations of c. 1652 included alterations to the eaves on the north side and new windows with ovolo-moulded mullions; he may have been responsible for the present hipped end of the north bay, and for the reconstruction of the south end of the building to include a kitchen fireplace.

The original structure probably dates from the late 13th or early 14th century, during the period of Abingdon's direct management. The long-hall plan is archaic; the closest parallel is the first phase of Lime Tree House, Harwell, about 1250.⁵⁷⁷ The predominantly mortised roof framing rules out a date much before 1280, but the roof is clearly more primitive than dated clasped-purlin roofs of the earlier and mid 14th century.⁵⁷⁸ The parallel rafter and trapped-purlin construction does, however, bear a striking resemblance to the upper nave roof and aisle roofs of the barn at Great Coxwell, of c. 1305,⁵⁷⁹ and to the aisle roofs of that at Middle Littleton, Worcs. (after 1315), which also has clasped purlins and a clasped ridge over the nave.⁵⁸⁰ Other late 13th- to mid 14th-century buildings with similar or related purlin treatment include the nave of Chichester Cathedral,⁵⁸¹ and the tithe barn at Bredon, Worcs. (after 1344).⁵⁸² The absence of any Gothic arcuation at Hyde Farm House could be explained either

⁵⁷⁷ Above, Harwell.

⁵⁷⁸ See, e.g. below, gazetteer, Steventon (Tudor House).

⁵⁷⁹ For design, W. Horn and E. Born, *The Barns of the Abbey of Beaulieu at Great Coxwell and Beaulieu St. Leonards* (Berkeley, 1965), 8, 21; for date, *Vernacular Archit.* xi, 34.

⁵⁸⁰ W. Horn and F.W.B. Charles, 'The Cruck Built Barn of Middle Littleton in Worcestershire, England', *Jnl. Soc. Archit. Historians*, xxv (4 Dec. 1966), 228. For date, *Vernacular Archit.* xi, 34.

⁵⁸¹ J. Munby, 'Medieval Carpentry in Chichester', in A. Down (ed.), *Chichester Excavations*, v (1981), 229-53.

⁵⁸² For date, *Vernacular Archit.* xiii, 49.

by an early date, or by a relatively utilitarian function of the house. Since it was almost certainly built after Abingdon abbey took the farm in hand, the only residents would have been *famuli*, since it is less than an hour's ride from the abbey and the sacrist or his deputy would not have needed to stay the night.

MILTON

MANOR HOUSES

The manor of Milton was held from before the Conquest to the Dissolution by Abingdon abbey, but no manor-house survives. The lessees in 1510, Thomas Eyston and Robert Hyde, were required to build a new hall on and over the manor house at their own expense.⁵⁸³ The present Milton House dates from the late 17th century and the 18th.⁵⁸⁴

OTHER HOUSES

The house now nos. 42–42A HIGH STREET, alias Thatched Cottage, Church Lane, stands on the south side of Church Lane almost opposite the church. It now belongs to the Milton estate, but in 1840 was divided between two owners.⁵⁸⁵ It was probably copyhold in the later Middle Ages; there is no evidence to identify it with the single large freehold recorded in Milton in 1538–9.⁵⁸⁶

The house⁵⁸⁷ (Figs. 24, 25) consists of a three-bayed hall range parallel with the lane and a two-storeyed three-bayed east cross wing. Apart from the north bay of the wing, which is a 15th-century extension in front of an original jetty, the house is of a single date, as is demonstrable from the way the roofplates in the hall are supported from the wing, and from the similarity of the wing and hall-range wall framing, with straight braces and giant panels.⁵⁸⁸ The two eastern bays of the main range formed the hall, with a base-cruck and crown-post centre truss; the middle bay was the upper end of the hall, and retains evidence of the northern dais window (Fig. 25). The east bay was thus a chamber, although it was single-storeyed; the present first floor was inserted in the 17th century or later. The entrance was thus originally, as now, in the short west bay next the wing. The open truss, which retains mortices for a low crossbeam, was later filled to make a smoke-bay, and still later, perhaps c. 1600, a chimney backing onto the entry was added. The interior of the wing has been completely modernized, but it retains a flat tiebeam and dragon ties at the north end, a crown-post roof with chamfered crown-plate, and at the central arch-braced truss an octagonal crown-post with double upstands and two-way braces (which contrast with the four-way braces of the hall open truss). There was thus a two-bayed great chamber upstairs. In addition, the original cinquefoiled north barge-boards, with a mason's mitre at the apex, survive in the loft; they support the hip rafters of the north extension.

The house is notable for the smallest hall in England with a base-cruck and crown-post roof; for the survival of unaltered wall-framing on the east wall of the wing, as well as original, though later subdivided, framing on the north wall of the hall range; for the survival of original sooted infill, with large staves and laths nailed to them and covered in applied daub, on the first-floor wall between wing and hall;⁵⁸⁹ for the unusual form of the hall-chamber partition truss; and for the

⁵⁸³ P.R.O., SC 6/Hen. VIII/109, m. 14.

⁵⁸⁴ Pevsner, *Berks.* 178. The cost of the 17th cent. work had to be met by land sales and mortgages: cf. *Berks. R.O.*, D/EBt 1/1B.

⁵⁸⁵ Bodl. tithe map 270, nos. 130 and 130a. The present writer in *Vernacular Architecture Group Oxfordshire Programme*, 1987, p. 57 wrongly indicated that it had been part of the manor estate since the 17th century.

⁵⁸⁶ P.R.O., SC 6/Hen. VIII/109, m. 14.

⁵⁸⁷ For further details, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 181–2 and plates 18–20.

⁵⁸⁸ Fig. 24; for hall walls, Fig. 25.

⁵⁸⁹ Some of the daub fell off before the chimney was inserted, leaving laths and staves exposed to soot, which still adheres to them.

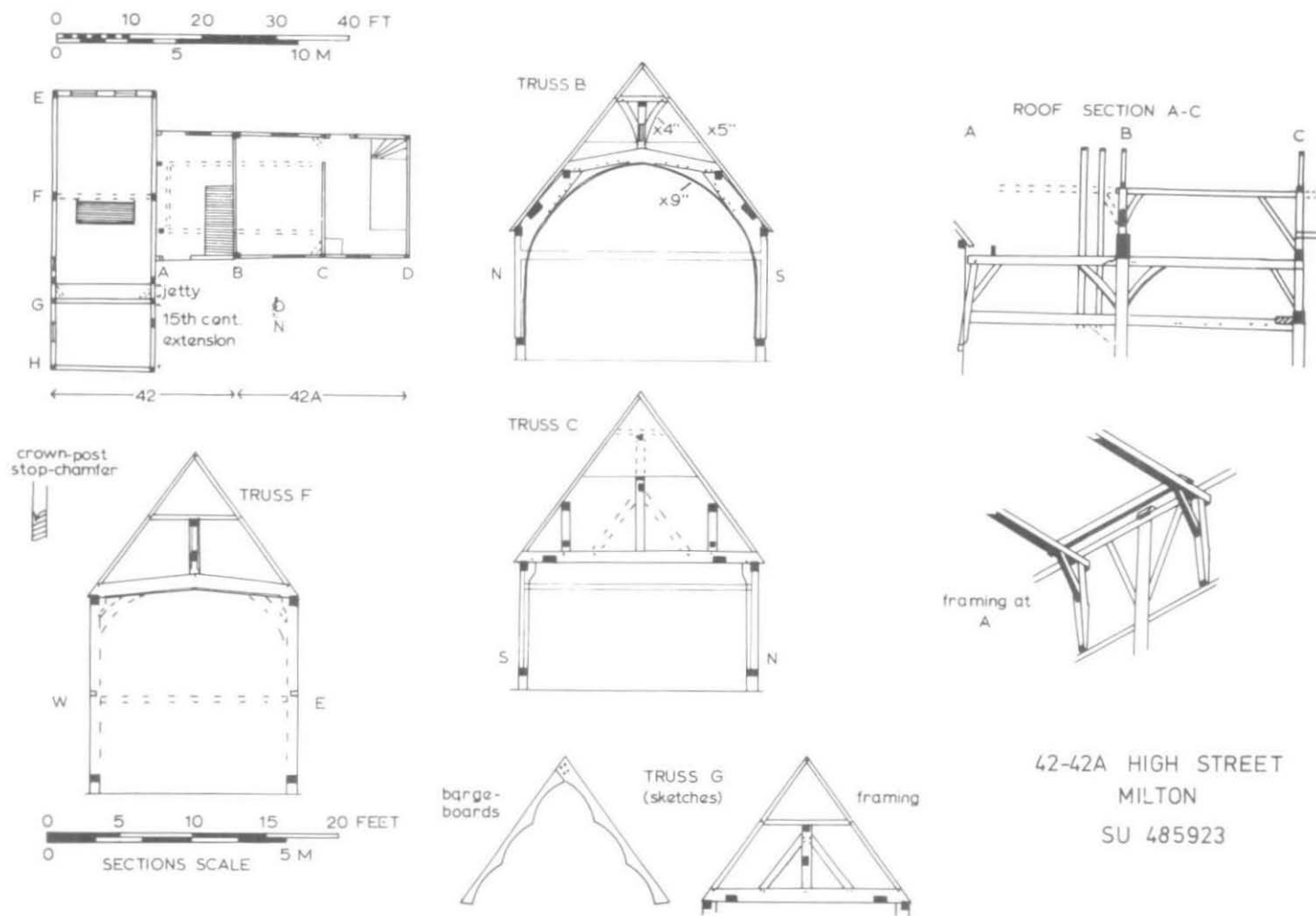


Fig. 24. 42-42A High Street, Milton.

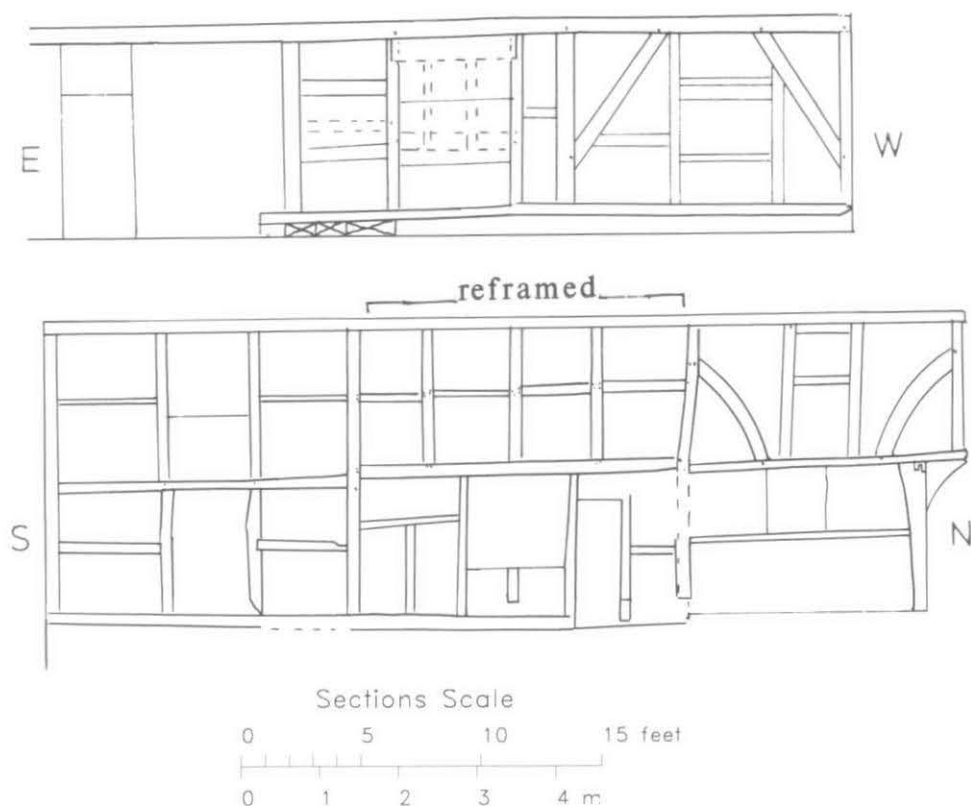


Fig. 25. Wall framing: top, 42-42A High Street, Milton, hall range; bottom, Southfield Farm, Sutton Courtenay, wing.

aisled-end truss at the junction of hall and wing, with the curved false corbels at the foot of the posts (clearly in imitation of a stone building, probably Sutton Courtenay Abbey).

The very limited use of curved braces, the extensive employment of square-sectioned timber, and the influence of Sutton Courtenay Abbey all suggest a date in the early years of the 14th century. An earlier date is probably precluded by the use of jowled principal posts and the true-jettied construction of the wing (in contrast to York Farm, West Hagbourne, of c. 1285). Nevertheless, the fact that the base-cruck blades of the central truss pass the plate and are jointed into the tie (in contrast with the single-tied trusses at Sutton Courtenay and York Farm) may indicate a later date. Nationally, this jointing design did not become common until the 1340s⁵⁹⁰ and only three other possibly earlier examples are known.⁵⁹¹ The problem could be settled by dendrochronology, but access for sampling has hitherto been refused.

Milton also contains the remains of a cruck building at MILTON MILL, and a three-bayed cruck house on the High Street.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹⁰ E.g. Leicester Guildhall.

⁵⁹¹ E.g. Bishop's Clyst barn, Devon (*Antiq. Jnl.* lii (1972), 145-6); J. Walker, 'Wynter's Armourie: a Base-cruck Hall in Essex and its Significance', *Vernacular Archit.* xiii (1987), 25-73; Marwell Hall, Hants. (unpublished; inf. from J. Crook).

⁵⁹² Alcock (ed.), *Cruck Construction*, 141.

NORTH MORETON

No medieval manor house is known.

RECTORY HOUSE

Before 1241 Gregory IX gave the advowson of North Moreton, together with a house and 3 a., to the archdeacon of Berkshire. The archdeacon was receiving the income of the rectory in 1291. By 1535 the living was regarded as appropriated to the archdeaconry, and remained so. The rectory was leased by 1562;⁵⁹³ from 1634 until 1828 the leases were for three lives for a rent of £15 to the archdeacon and a payment of £2 to the vicar. In 1862 the lessee, Miss Wasey, surrendered her interest to the Ecclesiastical Commission for annexation to the vicarage.⁵⁹⁴ The rectory house south-west of the churchyard then replaced the former vicarage house south of it as the incumbent's house,⁵⁹⁵ but has since passed into private hands and was known in 1987 as NORTH MORETON HOUSE.

It consists of a hall range and cross wing, with 19th-century extensions to the south and east. The hall range was largely rebuilt in the 17th century and later, and only one short bay of the medieval clasped-purlin roof remains, probably above the original screens passage. The wing, originally of two bays, was extended southwards by one bay in the 17th century. Downstairs it retains a parlour, whose massive transverse ceiling beam (15 ins. by 16 ins.) is moulded with a hollow chamfer and two ogees; the heavy common joists have been partly reset but appear to have been lodged originally, as their outer ends on the north wall still are. An external chimney stack on the east wall, with brick star chimneys above, provided lateral fireplaces on both floors; that on the first floor has a four-centred head and ogee moulding. The chimney is perhaps an addition, since it blocks a mullioned window on the first floor which is, however, reset. The wall-framing has long, steeply pitched arched braces. The roof has heavy principals, clasped purlins and secret-splayed scarf joints. It was formerly of queen-strut form but was converted to an interrupted-collar design when an attic, with a north gable window having ovolo-moulded mullions, was inserted in the 17th century. The wing probably dates from about 1500, though the wall-framing would be consistent with a 14th-century date.

OTHER HOUSES

OLD MANOR COTTAGE has nothing to indicate that it was a manorial site. It forms an L-plan, consisting of a three-bayed range of hearth-passage plan parallel with and north of the street, and a small projecting east wing at the front. The site slopes from south-west to north-east, so that the south and east walls are built on relatively high stone plinths, while the north wall framing has only a low sill. The two eastern bays of the main range are box-framed, of two storeys, and were built evidently in 1713, the date inscribed on the bressumer of the chimney backing onto the passage. They replaced a single-storeyed building which had had an open hall, as soot on the rear gable wall of the wing indicates. The west (service) bay remains from that medieval range; it is now of one and a half storeys, but was originally open to the roof, as the first floor with square joists and a chamfered ceiling beam having scroll stops is clearly an insertion. One cruck truss survives adjoining the passage; it was a partition, with tiebeam and collar halved to the blades, and a yoke supporting a king-post to the ridgeplate. The purlins have been reset, but are square in section and retain polygonally-ended open notch-lap joints for windbraces about 4 ins. square. The rear wall framing is partly original, with widely spaced posts and no middle rail.

The front wing, as already seen, is also medieval. It is a tiny two-storeyed chamber block, 11½ by 12½ ft. internally. The south wall panels have been reconstructed in light framing, perhaps c. 1800. The east wall was also subdivided, perhaps in 1713 when the rear range was rebuilt. The west wall,

⁵⁹³ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 497–8.

⁵⁹⁴ Lambeth Palace MS. COMM XIIa/15, ff. 45–8; Berks. R.O., D/A2 C 204.

⁵⁹⁵ Berks. R.O., D/A2 C 204/12, plan; local inf.

however, retains original framing with large panels and long almost straight arched braces. The first floor is supported by a lengthwise ceiling beam on samson posts, with the transverse common joists lodged on the beam. The roof has been largely rebuilt. It is hipped at the front and retains heavy (8 ins. by 4 ins.) purlins, and at the north end a truss with principals, tiebeam, a collar clasp the purlins, and a yoke formerly clasping a ridgepiece; the present ridge is a replacement. There are no studs between tie and collar. No evidence of dragon ties could be found.

If the purlins in the west bay are contemporary with the cruck truss, the windbrace joints may indicate a late 13th-century date for the bay; though halvings between windbraces and purlins are common in medieval and post-medieval buildings in the Vale, there is no other known example of a true notched-lap joint.⁵⁹⁶ The wall and floor framing of the wing suggest a 14th-century date, though the roof may have been reconstructed later in the Middle Ages.

SOUTH MORETON: FULSCOT

MANORIAL SITE

The manor of Fulscot, held in 1066 by a freeman, was part of the honor of Wallingford by 1300 and still in 1550. The Visdelous appear to have been terre tenants between 1086 and 1228, but in 1312 the manor was settled on Payne Huscarl; it was later held of Agnes Huscarl by William Stokes (d. 1427), and from 1427 to 1455 belonged to the Brown family, thereafter being held for a time with Adresham in South Moreton.⁵⁹⁷ Fulscot Farm, all that remains of a shrunken hamlet, was moated; part of the moat remains on the west side; it could be clearly traced in the early 20th century.⁵⁹⁸ The earliest part of the present house, the east range, retains no evidence of any structure earlier than the late 16th century.

SOUTH MORETON: SOUTH MORETON

MANOR HOUSES AND SITES

The descents of three manors, Adresham, Huses or Bray, and Sandervilles, can be traced from 1086.⁵⁹⁹ The site of Adresham was on the south side of the village street; terraces and post-medieval farm buildings survived *c.* 1907. Brays was then allegedly represented by a post-medieval house converted into cottages.⁶⁰⁰ The medieval Sandervilles manor house, now South Moreton Manor, survives, and the estate deserves further attention.

SOUTH MORETON MANOR

Descent

The manor of Sanderville was held in 1066 as 5 hides and in 1086 as 2½ hides, together with a manor in Enborne, with which it descended until 1419. The Sanderville family held it from 1199 or earlier. Niel de Sanderville was lord perhaps from 1266 and died in 1295, leaving as heir his son Thomas, aged 24; Niel's widow Alice obtained part of the estate in dower. Thomas died in 1332 and was followed by another Thomas. The escheator seems to have taken the land in hand and it was perhaps not released to Thomas until 1339. He held courts from 1340 to 1346 and died in 1349 or 1350. His widow or daughter Margaret held the manor until 1391, surviving a possible husband

⁵⁹⁶ Standard windbrace halvings are often incorrectly described as notched laps.

⁵⁹⁷ For full descent, *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 502.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 499.

⁵⁹⁹ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 499–502.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 498.

Roger Jolyf.⁶⁰¹ Thomas Rothwell held the manor in 1401.⁶⁰² He or another Thomas Rothwell settled it in trust in 1446; that Thomas's widow Isabel married John Lawley and died in 1477. From then until 1522 it was held by members of the Lenham family, the last of whom, Margaret Warren, sister of William Lenham, sold it to Sir Thomas Englefield, perhaps her uncle by marriage. It then descended with Englefield until Sir Thomas's son Francis was attainted in 1586. The Crown retained the manor until 1626, leasing it for 40 years to two tenants in 1607. From 1626 it was held by a succession of apparently unrelated grantees and purchasers until 1752, when John Sadgrove acquired it by marriage. It then descended in the Sadgrove male line until 1885.⁶⁰³ From about 1470 or earlier the demesne was let to tenants.⁶⁰⁴ The Rothwells may have lived at Tidmarsh in the 15th century. The Englefields in the 16th lived at Englefield rather than South Moreton.⁶⁰⁵

Site Documentation

Niel de Sanderville had a house, with a fishpond, in 1295. He probably resided, since the site of the family's former house at Enborne was derelict.⁶⁰⁶ In 1344 Thomas de Sanderville received an oratory licence for his house, as did Margaret Sanderville in 1388, Thomas Rothwell in 1401, and Thomas and his wife Alice in 1408.⁶⁰⁷

The Sandervilles were not involved in local politics or administration – indeed Thomas in 1337 purchased life exemption from the offices of juror, mayor, sheriff, escheator, or other bailiff of the king⁶⁰⁸ – and appear to have held no land outside the county. The income available for building the house thus came from land and rents in Berkshire. In 1295 Niel had demesnes of 224 a. arable and 12 a. meadow at South Moreton, 35 a. arable and 6½ a. meadow at Enborne, and in right of his wife 4 yardlands with 8 a. meadow and 3 a. pasture at Tilehurst, where in 1344 his grandson Thomas had a house with an oratory. A demesne farm income of at least £20 might reasonably be expected. Rents and services were worth £6 6s. 9½d. net at South Moreton and £2 17s. 0½d. at Enborne.⁶⁰⁹ Perquisites of court provided some further income, most significantly large but infrequent windfalls from tenants' entry fines, of which by far the largest was a total of 44 marks (£29 6s. 8d.) at one court in 1326.⁶¹⁰ After the Black Death such windfalls were much reduced, particularly after 1361, when many tenants fined for conversion of their holdings from bond tenure.⁶¹¹ Yet such additions to normal income are likely to have provided opportunities for building.

Site and buildings

South Moreton Manor lies north-east of the village at the end of a lane running north from the east end of the village street. The site was moated; the moat survives on the north and east, and in part on the south. It is presumably the fishpond mentioned in 1295. Differences in level of the enclosed area suggest that the part north of the house is an extension.⁶¹² The house (plan, Fig. 26) includes a former open hall and two medieval cross wings at the west and east ends. Each of the three structures belongs to a different phase of construction, though the first and last were probably separated by less than a century. The alignment of the wings provide indirect evidence of a hall of

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. 499, wrongly interpolating an additional Thomas de Sanderville (d. allegedly 1339); *Cal. Inq. p.m.* iii, pp. 153–4; vii, p. 303; viii, pp. 53 (no. 83), 151; x, p. 99; *Cal. Pat.* 1349–54, 61. For Enborne, *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 171.

⁶⁰² Wilts. R.O., Reg. Mitford, f. 147 v.

⁶⁰³ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 500.

⁶⁰⁴ P.R.O., E 210/5978, 6007.

⁶⁰⁵ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 405–8, 434.

⁶⁰⁶ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* iii, p. 153.

⁶⁰⁷ Wilts. R.O., Reg. Wyvill, vol. ii, f. 61v.; Reg. Waltham, f. 84v.; Reg. Mitford, f. 148; J.M. Horn (ed.), *Reg. Rob. Hallum* (Cant. & York Soc. lxxii, 1982), p. 97, no. 730.

⁶⁰⁸ *Cal. Pat.* 1334–8, 388.

⁶⁰⁹ *Cal. Inq. p.m.* iii, p. 153; Wilts. R.O., Reg. Wyvill, vol. ii, f. 61v.

⁶¹⁰ P.R.O., SC 2/154/43, rot. 2.

⁶¹¹ Ibid. SC 2/154/43, /44; Faith, 'Berkshire', in Harvey (ed.), *Peasant Land Market*, 118.

⁶¹² O.S. Map 6", Berks. XVI SW. (1913 edn.).

irregular plan, which preceded the present one and to which the west wing was added. That is of two and a half bays, later extended to the north; the original half bay at the north end was probably a staircase bay and had a hipped roof, as there is no evidence of a truss above the tiebeam. The remaining two bays, though now open from ground to collar level, were two-storeyed with a great chamber upstairs; the central truss retains mortices for an arch-braced floor beam. The structure was built on padstones, apparently without framed groundsills; the padstones remain below the north-west post and the west post at the central truss. The stones are surmounted by timber pads into which the posts are tenoned. A surviving post on the east side has been repaired so that the form of its original foundations cannot be determined. The side walls, now partly replaced by brick infill on the west side, had giant panels with cranked upward braces of square cross-section. There are dragon ties at the south end, though at least one is a replacement. The posts have false jowls not tenoned into the tiebeams, which are jointed into the wallplates with entrant dovetails. One crown-post roof-truss, numbered III, (Fig. 27) survives at the centre; it has an almost semicircular chamfered arch below the tie, and above, a crown post with four-way braces having nailhead stops. Below the braces the crown post has chamfered arrises with stepped stops. Many common rafters, with collars mortised to them, survive.

The east wing is taller, longer, but much more altered. It is not aligned at a precise right angle to the hall, and was of at least four bays, but probably no more. The south bay was rebuilt in brick in the 18th century, but retains a re-used common rafter from its predecessor, which had a wagon roof like the bays further north. The next bay still has arch-braced wall framing on the west, and the remains of its two end trusses, which were open and arch-braced. The southern has nothing left above the tiebeam, but the northern truss (Fig. 27) retains an arch-braced crown post, with cap and base, and curved soulaces; above the north wallplate is a cornice with Decorated scotia and quarter-round mouldings resembling that in the chancel of Sutton Courtenay church. The present north bay, longer than the others, looks superficially to be a replacement of c. 1600; the wall framing now has small panels, the first floor has been raised and the kitchen has an ovolo-moulded ceiling beam set into the chimney, while on the first floor a window with ovolo-moulded mullions is set in the north wall. Nevertheless, close examination shows that the north gable is a reconstruction of an original crown-post truss; the tiebeam retains mortices for dragon ties; and the rafters of the roof retain their mortices for collars and curved soulaces. Mortices on the north sides of the posts show that there was a further bay to the north and that the present gable was a partition. That northernmost bay was no more than 10 ft. long, since the bank dividing the two parts of the moated enclosure is less than 11 ft. from the present gable.

The wing clearly had upstairs a three-bayed great chamber at the south end and a one-bayed chamber to the north. That may have been a staircase bay, but is in an appropriate liturgical position for the oratory. The superior detail of this wing compared to the west wing shows that the latter had been relegated to a service wing, even if it was not so designed.

A new base-cruck hall (Figs. 27, 28) was later slotted in between the two wings.⁶¹³ It has two full bays and a short screens bay at the west end. There are traces of a window in the north wall in the upper bay, immediately east of the central truss; on the south side a very long, almost semicircular arched brace was formerly visible.⁶¹⁴ The proportions are taller than most local base-cruck halls, the wallplate and particularly the roofplates being set further from the ground than usual. An arch-braced open plank truss abuts the wing at each end, and the spere truss retains the southern of its two cruciform spere posts; the north post was destroyed when a chimney was inserted later. The deep, plank-like arched braces between the spere truss and the west end truss formed a two-centred arch over the entrance. The entrance doorway at the south end of the passage survives, as does the traceried upper part of the front door, now moved to the stables. The roofplates support an elaborately chamfered cornice; they have Trait-de-Jupiter scarf joints, though the north wallplate has stop-splayed scarfs. The central base-cruck truss is built on padstones, and the walls lacked a continuous sill. The heavy base-cruck tie supports the

⁶¹³ The view in Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 175 that the roofplate of the hall had been tenoned into a rafter of the east wing, and that they were therefore contemporary, was disproved on re-examination.

⁶¹⁴ Early 20th-cent. photo. in possession of the owner (1987).

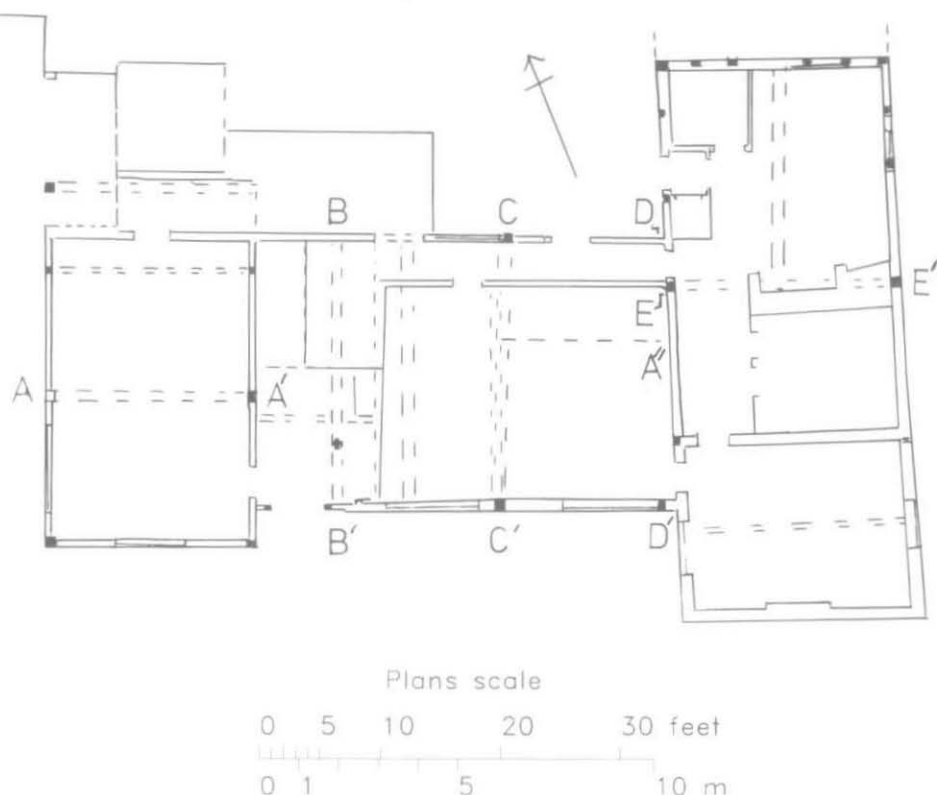


Fig. 26. South Moreton Manor (Sandervilles'); plan.

roofplates, whereas at the other trusses the tiebeam is normally assembled above the plates. There is no evidence of crown posts at any trusses. The upper roof has only common rafters with mortised collars; these appear to have been quarter- or half-sawn on the site.

In the 16th century a smoke-bay was constructed in the lower, western, end of the hall and the rest of the hall was floored, with a transverse ceiling beam inserted at the central truss. In the 17th century a chimneystack was inserted into the smoke-bay, backing onto the screens passage. Other alterations of *c.* 1600 and the 18th century have already been noted. The south end of the west wing was partly incorporated into a 17th-century farm building, and in the 20th century the screens passage was blocked and an extension built in the angle between the west wing and the hall north wall, providing a new back door.

The false-jowled posts and pyramid stops of the west wing probably indicate a late 13th-century date, and its other features are consistent with that. It may have been built by Niel de Sanderville in the 1280s or by Thomas (d. 1332) soon after he succeeded in 1295. The more sophisticated east wing was probably the most costly of the three structures with its unusual wagon roof, which can be compared with the solar block at Camoys Court, Chiselhampton, Oxon., a few miles away, licensed to be crenellated in 1318,⁶¹⁵ as well as with later and more remote examples such as Brinsop Court (Herefs.) and Maxstoke Castle (Warws.). It was probably built by Thomas de Sanderville (d. 1332), perhaps with the windfall profits obtained in 1326. The hall is clearly later than both wings; a date between 1332 and 1339 can probably be ruled out for reasons given above.

⁶¹⁵ *V.C.H. Oxon.* vii, 7; Wood, *Eng. Med. Ho.* 306.

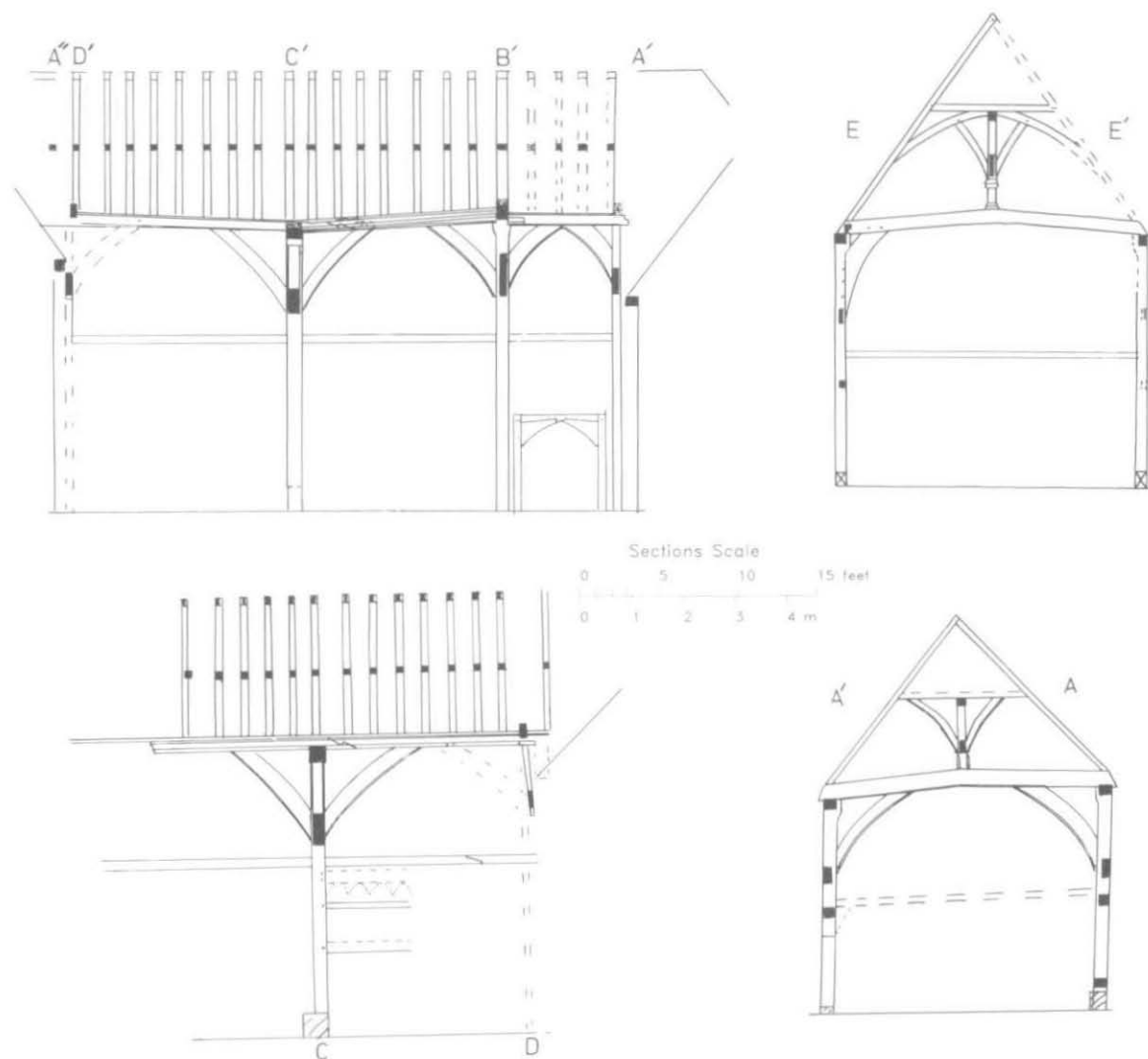


Fig. 27. South Moreton Manor; long sections.

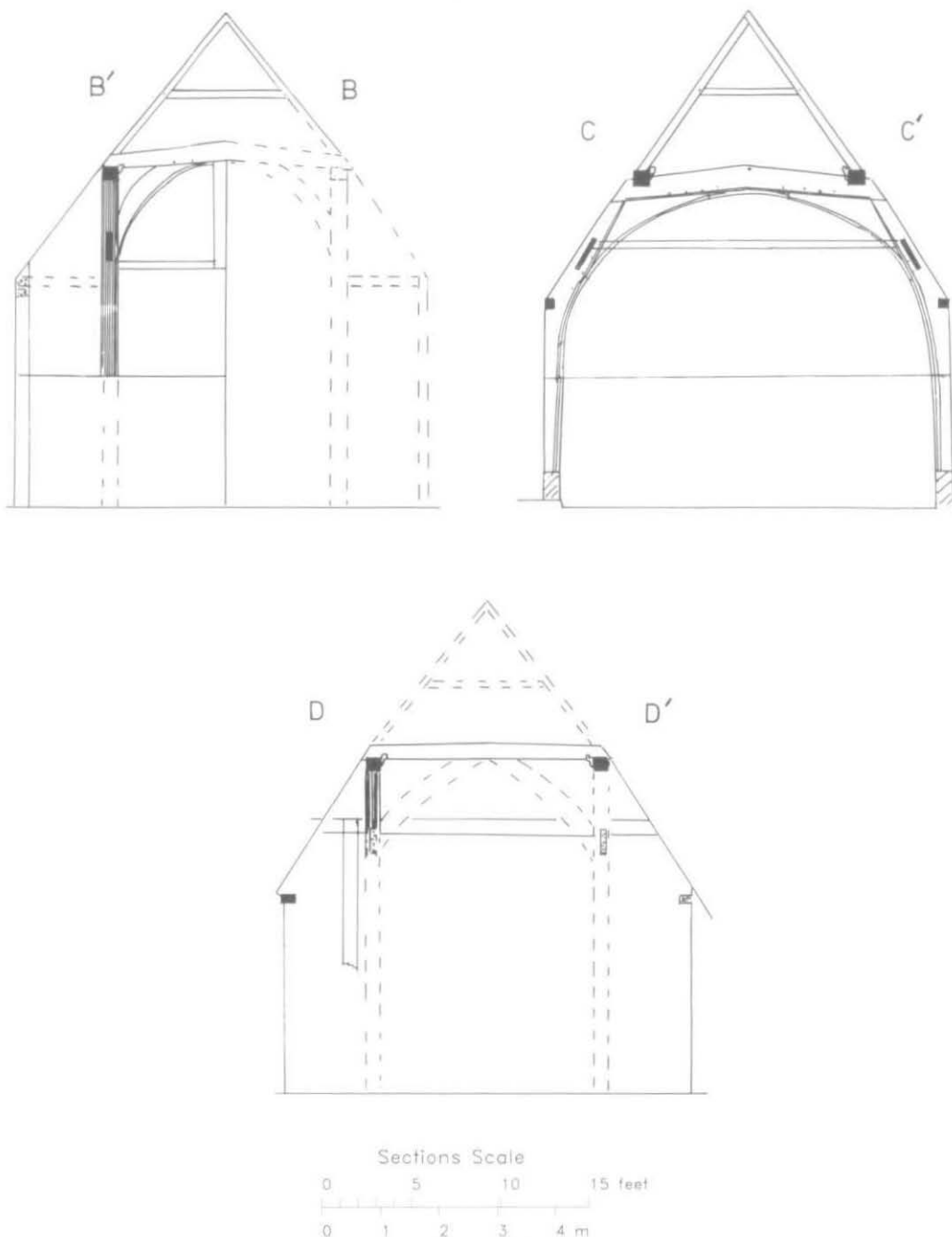


Fig. 28. South Moreton Manor: hall trusses.

The late Margaret Wood thought that the door was of *c.* 1340;⁶¹⁶ a rebuilding in the early 1340s by Thomas de Sanderville (d. 1349 or 1350) seems most likely, perhaps shortly before the first oratory licence of 1344. The absence of crown posts is surprising, but need not mean an early date; it is more probably attributable to the height of the tiebeams and the consequent relatively cramped and narrow form of the upper roof.

STEVENTON

MANOR OR PRIORY HOUSE

Descent

The manor of Steventon appears to have belonged to the ealdorman of Berkshire in the 10th century⁶¹⁷ and was held by Harold in 1066, being incorporated into the royal demesne by 1086. In 1121 Henry I gave it to the priory of St. Mary of Pré at Rouen, a cell of Bec; the priory held it until the 1380s.⁶¹⁸ A non-conventual priory was established at Steventon to manage the estate, which also included the appropriate rectory. During the wars with France from 1294 the manor, like other alien priories, was repeatedly confiscated by the Crown, and was continuously sequestered from 1337 to 1361 and from 1369 onwards. It was usually relet to the prior of Steventon at a rent which consumed most of the income, although from 1357 to 1361 the lessees were a group of prominent villagers. Sir Hugh Calveley, governor of Guernsey, obtained in 1378 a lease of the manor from Pré, in 1379 custody from the Crown, in 1385 an absolute grant from Pré with confirmation from Bec, in 1389 a mortmain licence to acquire the manor, and in 1394 pardon for having done so before the licence. Meanwhile in 1393 Calveley's trustees conveyed the manor to John Waltham, bishop of Salisbury (d. 1395) and Roger Walden, later archbishop of Canterbury. In 1399 Walden conveyed it to Richard II, who immediately gave it to Westminster abbey. The manor and rectory remained with, or was regranted to, the abbey or its successor institutions (the dean and chapter from 1542, the abbey from 1556, and the dean and chapter again from 1560) until the 19th century, except during the Interregnum when the beneficial lessee Edmund Wiseman bought them.

Westminster leased the demesne from 1416 and the rectory separately from 1451 or earlier.⁶¹⁹ Until the Dissolution the lessees were local peasants, usually termed husbandmen in the 15th century and yeomen in the 16th; most of them had already accumulated copyhold or freehold estates in Steventon. From 1476 the Hopkins family held the demesne lease; it passed by marriage after 1527 to Thomas Smalbone (d. 1558). From 1542 the main lease was held by absentee gentry, but Thomas Smalbone managed to stay on as undertenant and was followed by his son Richard (d. 1567) and Thomas's widow Joan. From the 1580s Edmund Wiseman (d. 1605), who was resident, held the lease; his son Sir Charles moved to West Hendred while retaining his Steventon lease. In the 1660s Henry and Richard Smalbone were farmers, probably as undertenants of the Wisemans.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁶ Note among J.M. Fletcher's papers in possession of the writer.

⁶¹⁷ M. Gelling, *Place-names of Berks.* iii (Eng. P.-N. Soc. li, 1976), 747.

⁶¹⁸ For details of descent, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' chapter 2.

⁶¹⁹ For leases and lessees, *ibid.* 26-8, 37-8 and references.

⁶²⁰ Hearth tax returns, P.R.O. E 179/243/25 nos. 522, 437; E 179/75/381; E 179/76/460.

*Site Identification*⁶²¹

Steventon Manor Farm, an early 18th-century house, lies south of the church; its curtilage slopes down to an irregular moat or fishpond on the east, north-east, and south-east. The traditional site of the priory buildings, however, is a large, partly medieval, timber-framed house at the west end of the Causeway, since 1843 or earlier divided between two freeholds, now Priory House and Priory Cottages. It is separated from Manor Farm by Mill Street and the moat. Since the earliest map of the manor farm in 1757 does not show the Priory or its curtilage, the traditional ascription must *prima facie* be rejected in favour of the assumption that Manor Farm replaced whatever priory house there was.

Nevertheless much evidence favours the traditional view. The hearth tax returns of the 1660s record the manor farmhouse as having variously 9 or 11 hearths, and no other house in the village as having more than 5 or 6; by that time the Priory had at least eight. Since there is no evidence of more than one manor farmhouse from the 14th to the 17th century, the identification seems probable. It requires the supposition that the Priory had been sold off when or before Manor Farm was built, at some time between the 1660s and 1757. The hypothesis is supported by the fact that the combined curtilages of Manor Farm and the Priory are almost equal in area to the manor farm curtilage as recorded in 1654. Moreover the lord of the manor was responsible for repairing Mill Street but not apparently the other streets in the village; Mill Street may have been the footpath through his *curia* which the prior received license to close in 1302.⁶²² If this is so, then the original *curia* was divided by the street and moat or pond from the barton. Two explanations can be suggested. The Priory interrupts a ring of rectorial glebe round the consolidated manor farm; the priors, therefore, may have occupied the rectory house in the 12th century, retaining the manor site for farm buildings, or they may have moved there after the vicarage was instituted some time before 1291, interrupting the right of way between the sites in 1302. Although a rectory barn was recorded in the 15th century, there was no other rectory house.

Site documentation

The medieval priory and manor farmhouse is extensively documented by inventories prepared by royal surveyors in 1324 and for probate in 1527, 1558, and 1567; by manorial accounts for most years from 1399 to 1518 and for 1540; and by repair bills of the 15th and 16th centuries. Westminster leases made the abbey responsible for major repairs;⁶²³ in practice it appears to have paid even for minor ones.

There were no conventual buildings at Steventon Priory in 1324; the accommodation was purely domestic. The prior's house consisted of his chamber, in which were his bed and sheets; his hall, with tables, chairs, and benches; and a buttery and pantry, whose contents are listed together and which presumably adjoined the hall. The larder, where bacon was stored, the kitchen, brewhouse, and dairy, may all have been detached. There is no evidence of a hearth in the hall, and there was no chapel; mass was doubtless said in the parish church.⁶²⁴

The farmers of Steventon manor in 1357 were obliged to maintain the priory house.⁶²⁵ In the

⁶²¹ For this discussion, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 33-4.

⁶²² *V.C.H. Berks.* ii, 112.

⁶²³ W[estminster] A[bbey] M[uniments], Reg. Bk. ii, f. 137.

⁶²⁴ *Jnl. Brit. Archaeol. Assn.*, 3rd Ser. iv (1939), 141-9.

⁶²⁵ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 22.

15th century the house stood in a court surrounded by a wall and entered through a gatehouse.⁶²⁶ The hall and chamber are mentioned in 1401,⁶²⁷ and in 1405 there seems to have been more than one chamber.⁶²⁸ The 'solar' whose walls were repaired in 1444-5 may be identifiable with one of the chambers.⁶²⁹ They evidently had more than one storey: a 'garret' formed part of the hall and chamber complex in 1438-9,⁶³⁰ and there was a stair to the chamber by 1462.⁶³¹ In 1463 a new chamber was added at a cost of £13 11s. 5d.⁶³² A kitchen, apparently detached, is recorded in 1438-9,⁶³³ and there was a chapel in 1405: it is not mentioned thereafter.⁶³⁴ From 1472 onwards the accounts only record totals spent by the farmer, so that detailed evidence for further alterations in the 15th century is lacking. Significant building work may be indicated by the unusually large sums of £10 in 1501-2 and £18 6s. 8d. in 1514-15 spent by the farmer, and of £25 11s. 10d. by the collector of rents in 1506-7, though the last item may have been for repairs to the mill or rectory.⁶³⁵

In 1527 an inventory was taken of the goods of William Hopkins,⁶³⁶ who as lessee of the manor presumably lived in the manor house. It lists a hall, with tables, benches, chairs, and a hearth; a chamber containing beds; a 'hye' chamber, also with beds; a buttery; another chamber with beds; and the 'myll house', which served as a kitchen and was perhaps detached, as it is mentioned last.

In 1551 the farmhouse consisted of a hall with cross-chambers at both the east and west ends and 'houses' adjoining them. This apparent reference to the complex as the 'new buildings' probably refers to the reconstruction undertaken in that year, when the farmer, Thomas Smalbone, carried out substantial repairs on both cross-chambers. The account for the east cross-chamber suggests an almost total rebuilding: the work employed several carpenters and masons for six months, and cost £39, including an item 'for the taking downe of the seid crosse chamber'. A chimney with two flues was inserted.⁶³⁷

Smalbone was still living in the manor farm when he made his will in 1558.⁶³⁸ Perhaps as a result of the work of 1551, he died in a house larger than that of William Hopkins. His inventory mentions the hall, the best chamber, the second, third, and fourth chambers, the maiden's chamber with a loft over it, the buttery, kitchen, and brewhouse. There was hardly any furniture in the hall; most of the tables and chairs had been stored in the loft, perhaps for the appraisal. Thomas's son Richard, who died in 1567, clearly lived in the same house; yet the order in which the rooms were mentioned, and some of the names given to them, differ from those in Thomas's inventory. The hall was open to the roof, from which hung five hogs and a 'lewe' of beef. The remaining rooms were the kitchen, buttery, parlour, inner chamber, high dais chamber, the next chamber, the maiden's chamber, and the pantry.⁶³⁹ The kitchen may have been in the east wing, served by one flue of the chimney erected in 1551; there is no evidence of a fire in the parlour.

The domestic accommodation at Steventon manor farm was thus much enlarged during the later Middle Ages. The single chamber of 1324 had been replaced by five chambers by 1558, including one for the maid. The kitchen had probably been brought inside. Yet the hall was still typical of a medieval house, lacking a proper chimney. The buttery and pantry were used for dry

⁶²⁶ W.A.M. 7450.

⁶²⁷ W.A.M. 7449.

⁶²⁸ W.A.M. 7454.

⁶²⁹ W.A.M. 7469.

⁶³⁰ W.A.M. 7465.

⁶³¹ W.A.M. 7480.

⁶³² *Ibid.* The repair total of £14 14s. 6d. includes work on other items. The bill states that the work took place in 3 Edward IV (March 1463 to March 1464), but the account roll runs from Michaelmas 2 to Michaelmas 3 Edward IV (1462-3), so the chamber was built in the summer.

⁶³³ W.A.M. 7465.

⁶³⁴ W.A.M. 7454.

⁶³⁵ W.A.M. 7509, 7514, 7520; cf. *ibid.* 7506, 7511-12.

⁶³⁶ Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MS. Wills Berks. 1, p. 83.

⁶³⁷ W.A.M. 7314.

⁶³⁸ Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MS. Wills Berks. 114.

⁶³⁹ Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MS. Wills Berks. 115.

and wet stores both at the beginning and at the end of the period. One small change indicates the increasing importance of furnishings. The prior kept his table-linen in the buttery; Thomas Smalbone's was in the best chamber. Besides such minor changes in the function of rooms a change of plan may have taken place. There were two cross-wings in 1551, but there is nothing to suggest more than one wing in 1401 or 1324.

The manor farm at Steventon was a large one,⁶⁴⁰ and had several specialised farm buildings: indeed the accounts reveal more about them than about domestic accommodation. There seem to have been at least two barns at the beginning of the 15th century, as the 'long barn' was mentioned in 1400⁶⁴¹ and the 'great barn' in 1403,⁶⁴² 1437,⁶⁴³ and 1439.⁶⁴⁴ In 1403-4 one barn held wheat only, and another wheat and oats.⁶⁴⁵ A pulse barn was mentioned in 1421.⁶⁴⁶ In 1460-1 a new barn was built apparently on the site of an earlier one. The perimeter measured 144 ft. and the cost of building was £23 3s. 5d.⁶⁴⁷ There was also a granary,⁶⁴⁸ an 'horreum',⁶⁴⁹ and a hay-house (*domus feni*).⁶⁵⁰ Separate houses were of course provided for the stock. There were at least two stables in the early 15th century.⁶⁵¹ The oxhouse (*boverium*) was thatched several times between 1401 and 1438; a new door was built for it in 1405-6.⁶⁵² A piggery (*porcarium*) occurs in 1400 and in 1456-7.⁶⁵³ The most important building for the animals, however, was the sheephouse (*shepehouse, bercarium*) whose perimeter measured at least 150 feet, as that length of ground sill was repaired in 1404-5.⁶⁵⁴ The more distant pastures were served by a second sheephouse at Farthing in East Hendred.⁶⁵⁵ There were also a dovecot⁶⁵⁶ and a carthouse.⁶⁵⁷ Beer was brewed on the premises, and the brewhouse and malthouse were recorded in 1404-5.⁶⁵⁸

There was little difference in construction between the domestic and the agricultural buildings. Almost all seem to have been timber-framed, though the sheephouse at Farthing evidently had earth walls which were rebuilt by a labourer in 1467-8.⁶⁵⁹ The kitchen and barns had stone footings,⁶⁶⁰ and the barns and the sheephouse there were built on timber sill-beams set on a stone footing.⁶⁶¹ The infilling of walls was normally of wattle or laths. Payments were made in 1400 for twisting '*virgas pro splentlys*' of the barn,⁶⁶² and a cartful of rods was bought for 'breyng' in 1438-9.⁶⁶³ The walls of the sheephouse were daubed in 1406-7⁶⁶⁴ and those of the stable in 1407-3.⁶⁶⁵ The barn walls were plastered in 1409-10⁶⁶⁶ and in 1426-7.⁶⁶⁷ The walls of the solar

⁶⁴⁰ For the size of the demesne, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 28-32.

⁶⁴¹ W.A.M. 7448.

⁶⁴² W.A.M. 7451.

⁶⁴³ W.A.M. 7463.

⁶⁴⁴ W.A.M. 7465.

⁶⁴⁵ W.A.M. 7452.

⁶⁴⁶ W.A.M. 7060.

⁶⁴⁷ W.A.M. 24032.

⁶⁴⁸ W.A.M. 7451; 7455; 7457-8.

⁶⁴⁹ W.A.M. 7475.

⁶⁵⁰ W.A.M. 7451; 7476.

⁶⁵¹ W.A.M. 7452; 7455; 7457; 7459.

⁶⁵² W.A.M. 7450; 7454; 7457-8; 7460; 7464.

⁶⁵³ W.A.M. 7448; 7476.

⁶⁵⁴ W.A.M. 7453.

⁶⁵⁵ W.A.M. 7482.

⁶⁵⁶ W.A.M. 7447; 7450; 7455-6; 7458; 7467.

⁶⁵⁷ W.A.M. 7461; 7469.

⁶⁵⁸ W.A.M. 7453.

⁶⁵⁹ W.A.M. 7482.

⁶⁶⁰ W.A.M. 7465; 24032.

⁶⁶¹ W.A.M. 7453; 7471.

⁶⁶² W.A.M. 7449.

⁶⁶³ W.A.M. 7465.

⁶⁶⁴ W.A.M. 7455.

⁶⁶⁵ W.A.M. 7451.

⁶⁶⁶ W.A.M. 7458.

⁶⁶⁷ W.A.M. 7461.

were daubed in 1444-5,⁶⁶⁸ and a 'sementarius' (usually a mason but here probably a plasterer) mended the partitions (*parietes*) of the chamber in 1438-9.⁶⁶⁹ The new chamber in 1463 was also timber-framed and had walls of wattle and daub made by a labourer.⁶⁷⁰

The principal roofing materials used at Steventon were stone slates and thatch. The domestic buildings all had slate roofs, which were frequently repaired.⁶⁷¹ On the ridge of the roof were set 'crestys', crested pottery tiles, which were bought in 1400-1 and in 1438-9.⁶⁷² Tiles of that type used on the new chamber in 1463 cost 20d.⁶⁷³ The other buildings were roofed with thatch. Roof coverings of that material required frequent repairs. Sometimes repair was occasioned by wind damage, which was particularly severe in the early 15th century. Thus in 1406 the great barn, granary and a stable,⁶⁷⁴ in 1407-8 the dovecot and one of the barns,⁶⁷⁵ in 1408-9 both stables, the granary, wheat barn, oxhouse and piggery⁶⁷⁶ were damaged by the wind and re-thatched. In 1401 a man and a woman were paid 2s. 6d. for weaving straw for thatch which was used on one of the barns.⁶⁷⁷ The porch over the gate at the entry to the manor seems to have been the only building with a tiled roof, which was repaired in 1409-10.⁶⁷⁸

Large payments for timber are not recorded at Steventon. Sometimes the timber was provided by the carpenter when major works were undertaken. Thus in 1460-1 a contract covering the carpenter's wages and the timber for the new barn cost £10,⁶⁷⁹ and in 1463 a carpenter was paid £6 for timber and workmanship of the new chamber.⁶⁸⁰ In both cases the cost of other wages and materials exceeded that of the contract with the carpenter. It seems that timber was not in fact very dear. In 1404-5, for example, John Carpenter of 'Shelyngford' (Shillingford, Oxon., or Shellingford, Berks.) was paid 23s. 5d. for renewing 150 ft. of the groundsill of the sheephouse and inserting new stanchions (*stantyens*); the payment included the cost of oak used in the work.⁶⁸¹

Sometimes timber could be obtained on the farm itself: in 1551 Thomas Smalbone paid 6s. 8d. for felling trees for the work on the manor house.⁶⁸² If timber had to be brought from outside the manor, the cost of carriage could be heavy. In 1444-5 10s. was paid for timber bought for the repair of the sheephouse at Steventon, but it cost 30s. to bring it from 'the park called Leckhampstead'.⁶⁸³ Apart from Leckhampstead the source of building timber used at Steventon is unknown, though in 1409-10 'virgae' for wattling were also brought thence.⁶⁸⁴ There is no evidence that timber other than oak was used on the farm buildings at Steventon.

Wooden boards were employed both in flooring and in walling. Thus in 1446-7 12s. was paid for 300 boards used on the gable of a barn.⁶⁸⁵ In 1551 3,000 ft. of boards were sawn at a cost of 14d. per 100 ft. apparently to floor the cross-chambers.⁶⁸⁶ Presumably the boards were usually of oak, as in 1447-8.⁶⁸⁷

Considerable quantities of stone were required for the footings of both farmhouse and outbuildings. The term 'groundsill' is used as frequently of such stone footings as of the timber

⁶⁶⁸ W.A.M. 7469.

⁶⁶⁹ W.A.M. 7465.

⁶⁷⁰ W.A.M. 7480.

⁶⁷¹ See e.g. W.A.M. 7449; 7454; 7469; 7471; 7482.

⁶⁷² W.A.M. 7449; 7465.

⁶⁷³ W.A.M. 7480.

⁶⁷⁴ W.A.M. 7455.

⁶⁷⁵ W.A.M. 7456.

⁶⁷⁶ W.A.M. 7457.

⁶⁷⁷ W.A.M. 7449.

⁶⁷⁸ W.A.M. 7458.

⁶⁷⁹ W.A.M. 24032.

⁶⁸⁰ W.A.M. 7480.

⁶⁸¹ W.A.M. 7453.

⁶⁸² W.A.M. 7314.

⁶⁸³ W.A.M. 7469.

⁶⁸⁴ W.A.M. 7458.

⁶⁸⁵ W.A.M. 7470.

⁶⁸⁶ W.A.M. 7314.

⁶⁸⁷ W.A.M. 7471.

sillbeams placed on them. Thus in 1438-9 a mason was paid 12*d.* for pinning the kitchen 'groundsell'.⁶⁸⁸ The stone had usually to be brought from a distance and the carriage was expensive. In 1438-9 6*s.* 9*d.* was paid for ground sill of the long barn; six carts were employed for the carriage, each cart costing 2*s.* 6*d.* a day.⁶⁸⁹ In 1460-1 144 ft. of freestone was bought for 24*s.*; the cost of bringing it to Steventon was 16*s.* 8*d.*⁶⁹⁰ Nine cartloads of small stones were brought in 1463 in addition to the usual freestone.⁶⁹¹ No stone was accounted for in 1551, although several masons were employed for six weeks on the east cross-chamber. Evidently stone for the footings was re-used from the old buildings. Nor are payments recorded for stone used in the chimney, but the sum of 56*s.* 8*d.* paid 'in great' to Justice, the mason, for six weeks' work on it, suggests that he provided the materials.⁶⁹² Brick seems not to have been used at Steventon in the 15th century, but in 1551 nine loads were bought at 6*s.* 8*d.* each, perhaps for the flues of the chimney.⁶⁹³

Mortar, made from lime and sand, was widely employed in the Middle Ages not only for binding masonry but for plastering walls.⁶⁹⁴ At Steventon it seems also to have been used in the laying of slate roofs. A quarter of lime costing 6*s.* 8*d.* was bought for that purpose in 1400-1.⁶⁹⁵ In 1437-8 a quarter of lime was purchased for 1*s.* for roofing, and 1*s.* was paid for digging and carrying sand.⁶⁹⁶ Sand and lime were also bought in 1438-9.⁶⁹⁷ In 1551 16 quarters of lime was 'spent about both the crosse chambers w[i]t[h] the chimney'. It cost 10*d.* a quarter.⁶⁹⁸

The straw thatch which covered most of the buildings could be prepared cheaply on the spot, as in 1400-1.⁶⁹⁹ In 1460-1, however, 23*s.* 4*d.* was expended on straw and stubble (*holme*) for thatching the new barn.⁷⁰⁰ Thatch was cheap in comparison with other roofing materials. Slatestone for the new chamber at Steventon, for example, cost 36*s.* in 1463 inclusive of carriage.⁷⁰¹ The price of stone slates seems to have fallen in the early 15th century and remained stable thereafter. In 1400-1 it was 1*s.* per hundred, in 1439 about 8½*d.*, and in the 1550s 8*d.*⁷⁰² Tiles were dearer: in 1549-50 two loads cost 13*s.* 4*d.* but by 1551 the price had risen to 10*s.* a load.⁷⁰³ There may of course have been some variation in the quality of the tiles. The crested tiles (*crestys*) used for the roof-ridge in the 15th century were bought individually; their price fell from 1½*d.* each in 1400-1 to 1*d.* in 1438-9.⁷⁰⁴ It seems that they were no longer used in the 16th century. The source of roofing materials is not usually recorded, but in 1400-1 slatestone, lime, and 'crestys' were fetched from Abingdon.⁷⁰⁵ Doubtless the slates came ultimately from the Oxfordshire quarries.

The stone roofing slates were evidently secured in the usual manner, with wooden pegs or slatepins.⁷⁰⁶ In 1463 28*s.* 4*d.* was paid for 'lathing, slating and pinning'.⁷⁰⁷ The slate-pins were needed in large quantities and in 1439 2,000 were bought for 8*d.*⁷⁰⁸ In 1551 five pecks of tile-pins, which were used to peg tiles in the same way, cost 5*d.* each.⁷⁰⁹ The use of moss for bedding slates

⁶⁸⁸ W.A.M. 7465.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ W.A.M. 24032.

⁶⁹¹ W.A.M. 7480.

⁶⁹² W.A.M. 7314.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ L.F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (Oxford, 1952), 151-3.

⁶⁹⁵ W.A.M. 7449.

⁶⁹⁶ W.A.M. 7464.

⁶⁹⁷ W.A.M. 7465.

⁶⁹⁸ W.A.M. 7314.

⁶⁹⁹ W.A.M. 7449.

⁷⁰⁰ W.A.M. 24032.

⁷⁰¹ W.A.M. 7480.

⁷⁰² W.A.M. 7449; 7465; 7314.

⁷⁰³ W.A.M. 37274; 7314.

⁷⁰⁴ W.A.M. 7449; 7465.

⁷⁰⁵ W.A.M. 7449.

⁷⁰⁶ Salzman, *Building in England*, 233.

⁷⁰⁷ W.A.M. 7480.

⁷⁰⁸ W.A.M. 7465.

⁷⁰⁹ W.A.M. 7314.

is recorded elsewhere from the 13th century;⁷¹⁰ Thomas Smalbome in 1551 paid 35s. 5d. for moss, evidently for the same purpose.⁷¹¹

Laths were required for both roofing and walling. They were usually of split oak, but the accounts do not reveal what type was used at Steventon. Nevertheless 'herlathe' or 'herlathe' were used on a barn in 1409-10 and on the carthouse in 1444-5.⁷¹² They were probably made of heart of oak.

Lathnails, used to secure the roofing laths to the rafters, occur frequently in the Steventon accounts. In 1460-1 as many as 32,000 were bought for 35s. 4d.⁷¹³ but they were rarely required in such quantity. In 1463 10,000 were purchased for 11s. 0d., and another batch of 2,000 for 2s. 4d.; they were used on the new chamber.⁷¹⁴ In 1551 a total of 8,000 were accounted for in three batches; the price varied from 1s. 8d. to 2s. 4d. per thousand.⁷¹⁵

Other varieties of nail are also recorded. Boardnails were bought at Steventon in 1409-10, 1439, and 1451. The price in 1439, 6d. per hundred, is comparable with the price elsewhere in the 15th century.⁷¹⁶ Smalbome bought 2,000 'sprygge nail' for 4s. 8d. in 1551; the price suggests that they were smaller than the boardnail.⁷¹⁷ They may have been the same variety as the 'spiknail' bought at Harwell in 1357-8.⁷¹⁸ 'Sixpennynail' were bought at Steventon in 1460-1, and 'tenpenny nail' in that year and in 1551.⁷¹⁹ The names are only an approximate guide to the price; in 1551 500 tenpenny nails cost 3s. 6d. - less than 9d. the hundred. Sometimes the nails had no special name: in 1462-3 600 nails were bought for 3s. and 200 small nails for 6d.⁷²⁰

Purchases of ironwork, for use on door hinges, locks, and the like, are frequently recorded. Items included hinge-hooks (*gunfis*, *guncis*, or *hokys*) and eyes (*vertivellis*, *twystys*) for doors and windows.⁷²¹ The bolts, hasps, and staples of doors also required replacement from time to time.⁷²²

It is not always clear what proportion of building costs was formed by wages. Wage costs are not always distinguished from other costs, and in the more important ventures the principal craftsman (usually the carpenter) sometimes contracted to provide some of the materials.⁷²³ In normal repair work the craftsman might be paid at task rates (*ad tascham*) or be given a daily wage. His wage sometimes included that of an assistant: thus in 1438-9 a thatcher and his man earned 12d. a day,⁷²⁴ and in 1401-2 a slater and his boy also received 12d.⁷²⁵ In the 15th century at Steventon individual craftsmen, including thatchers, sawyers, slaters, carpenters, and masons, were usually paid 6d. a day. The difference between Harwell and Steventon wages⁷²⁶ is probably the result of estate policy, as wages on Westminster manors were generally higher than those on Winchester estates. The Steventon rates were normal elsewhere in the 15th century.⁷²⁷ In 1399, however, a thatcher was paid only 5d.⁷²⁸

⁷¹⁰ Salzman, *Building in England*, 233-5; C.F. Innocent, *The Development of English Building Construction* (ed. R. de Z. Hall, Newton Abbot, 1971), 180-1.

⁷¹¹ W.A.M. 7314.

⁷¹² W.A.M. 7458; 7469.

⁷¹³ W.A.M. 24032.

⁷¹⁴ W.A.M. 7480.

⁷¹⁵ W.A.M. 7314.

⁷¹⁶ W.A.M. 7458; 7465; 7314; Salzman, *Building in England*, 307.

⁷¹⁷ W.A.M. 7314; Salzman, *Building in England*, p. 304.

⁷¹⁸ Hants. R.O., Eccl. 2/159368.

⁷¹⁹ W.A.M. 7479; 24032; 7314.

⁷²⁰ W.A.M. 7480.

⁷²¹ E.g. W.A.M. 7480; 7482.

⁷²² W.A.M. 7448; 24032.

⁷²³ E.g. for the new chamber in 1463: W.A.M. 7480.

⁷²⁴ W.A.M. 7465.

⁷²⁵ W.A.M. 7449.

⁷²⁶ Cf. above, gazetteer, Harwell, Bishop's Manor.

⁷²⁷ Lord Beveridge, 'Westminster Wages in the Manorial Era', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, New Ser. viii (1955-6), 20; E.H. Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, 'Seven Centuries of Building Wages', *Economica*, New Ser. xxii (1955), 205.

⁷²⁸ W.A.M. 7447.

By the 16th century wages had risen further: thatchers received 7*d.* in 1547 and 1549–50,⁷²⁹ and a carpenter was also paid 7*d.* a day for mending the sheephouse in 1550–1.⁷³⁰ Labourers at Steventon were usually paid 4*d.* during the 15th century, again more than their Harwell counterparts. In 1438–9, however, two labourers earned 5*d.* a day each for 25 days' work on the barns, though two other labourers only received 4*d.* for ditching in the same year.⁷³¹ In 1551 a different system was adopted. Board and lodging were provided in addition to the cash wages and were reckoned to be of equal value. Though a week-by-week account of wages was rendered, variations in the amounts paid and the number of craftsmen employed each week prevent the calculation of the mean daily wages of the employees. It seems nevertheless that some of the craftsmen and labourers were earning 4*d.* a day; in the spring four labourers received 16*d.* a day for taking down the east cross-chamber; 7 carpenters and sawyers were paid 2*s.* 5*d.* a day from 12 January to 7 March; two sawyers earned 8*d.* for one day's work and a labourer 12*d.* for three days; two slaters received 8*d.* a day for six weeks. A mason and his servant were paid 9*d.* a day with board for 24 days.

In the account of 1551, labour costs, including board wages, formed about 58 per cent of the total expenditure. Proportionately less was spent on labour in the repairs to the west cross chamber than in those to the eastern one,⁷³² but that seems to have been because materials used on both chambers were accounted for under the western chamber only.

Buildings

The house (plans and sections, Figs. 29–33)⁷³³ stands well back from the Causeway and consists of four ranges round a small courtyard, with extensive post-medieval additions to the east. The east courtyard range and the eastward extensions are in private ownership; the western parts belong to the National Trust. The earliest part is the south-west block (Figs. 31–2, sections A, B, K), two-storeyed, timber-framed though cased in brick on the west, and originally jettied on its north front. It has and had two bays; on the surviving south-eastern post there are pegs neither for southward braces nor for a rail. Much of the original wall framing, with giant panels and steeply-pitched, straight or slightly cranked braces, remains on the east side; the door to the hall, with traceried spandrels, is late-medieval and almost certainly contemporary with the hall, but probably replaces an original one, as there are no pegs for bracing on the adjoining wall post. The opposing door on the west wall is modern. Chamfering on the rail suggests that the modern door into the courtyard may replace an original one. The ground floor is much modernized but at the central truss an arch-braced binder supports lodged joists. One and a half bays of a crown-post roof remain. The north, former gable, truss over the former jetty has a straight tiebeam, a downbraced crown post, and dragon ties; peg-holes suggest that there may have been cross bracing below the tiebeam. The open truss has an arch-braced cambered tiebeam and four-way braces from the crown post. Both the crown posts and the principal posts are jowled. All the braces are of squarish cross-section. The south truss was destroyed when the range was extended in brick and given a hipped roof, probably in the late 17th or 18th century. The chimney was added at the same time.

The building was clearly a two-bayed great chamber above an open basement. Since no new chamber was built until 1463, and that seems to have been an extension rather than a rebuilding, this one is presumably the chamber existing by 1399. It is unlikely to have been built during the period of the priory's poverty after 1337 and may be the prior's chamber of 1324. The associated hall and service rooms have disappeared, unless the latter were below the chamber. Some smoke-blackening of the roof timbers, particularly in the south bay and above the collars in the north bay, may be due to incomplete partitioning from the hall, or more probably to some later use

⁷²⁹ W.A.M. 7313; 37274.

⁷³⁰ W.A.M. 7314.

⁷³¹ W.A.M. 7465.

⁷³² The figures are 37 per cent and 69 per cent respectively.

⁷³³ See also Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.', plates 2–8.

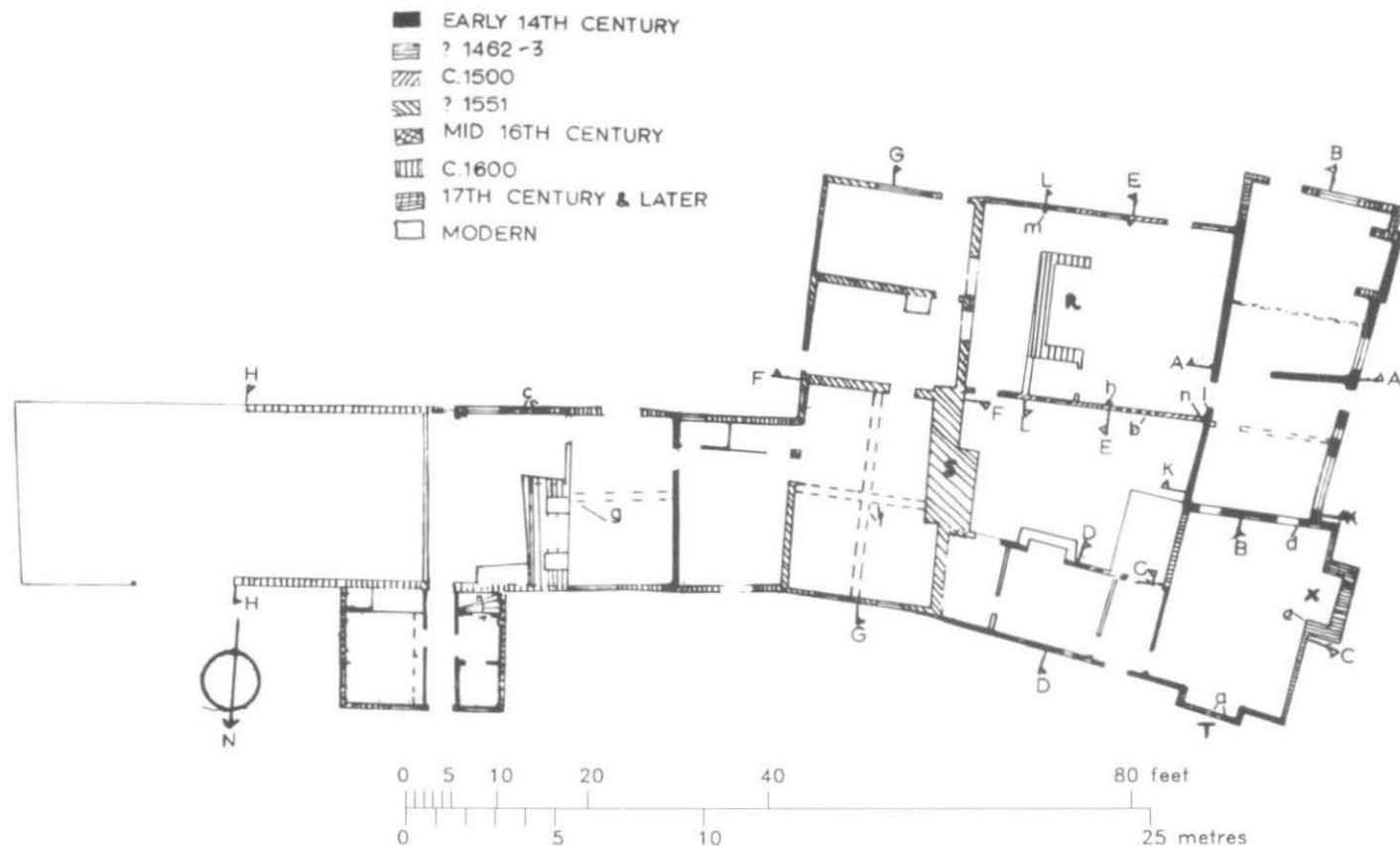


Fig. 29. The Priory, Steventon: Ground Floor plan.

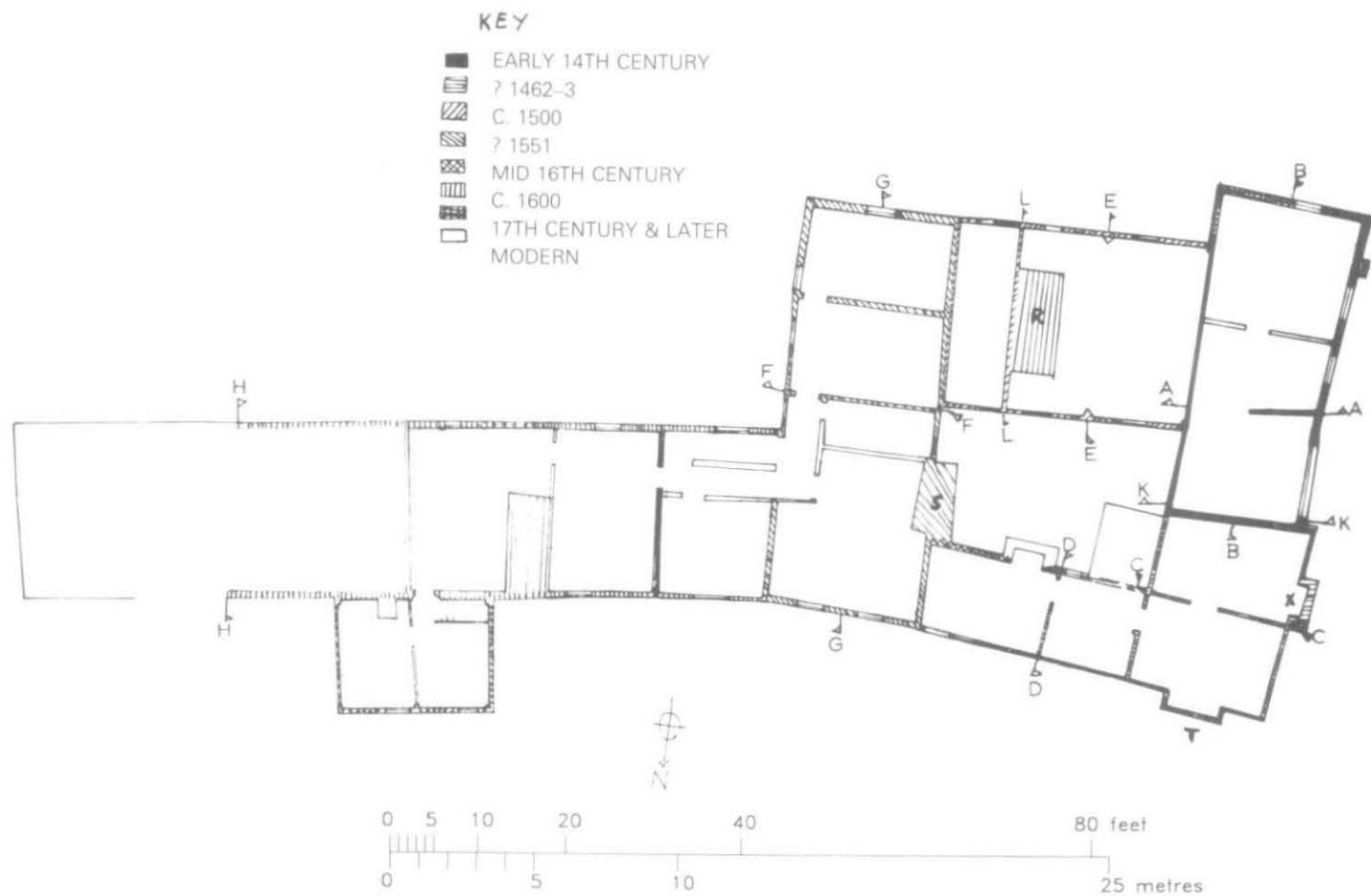


Fig. 30. The Priory: first floor plan.

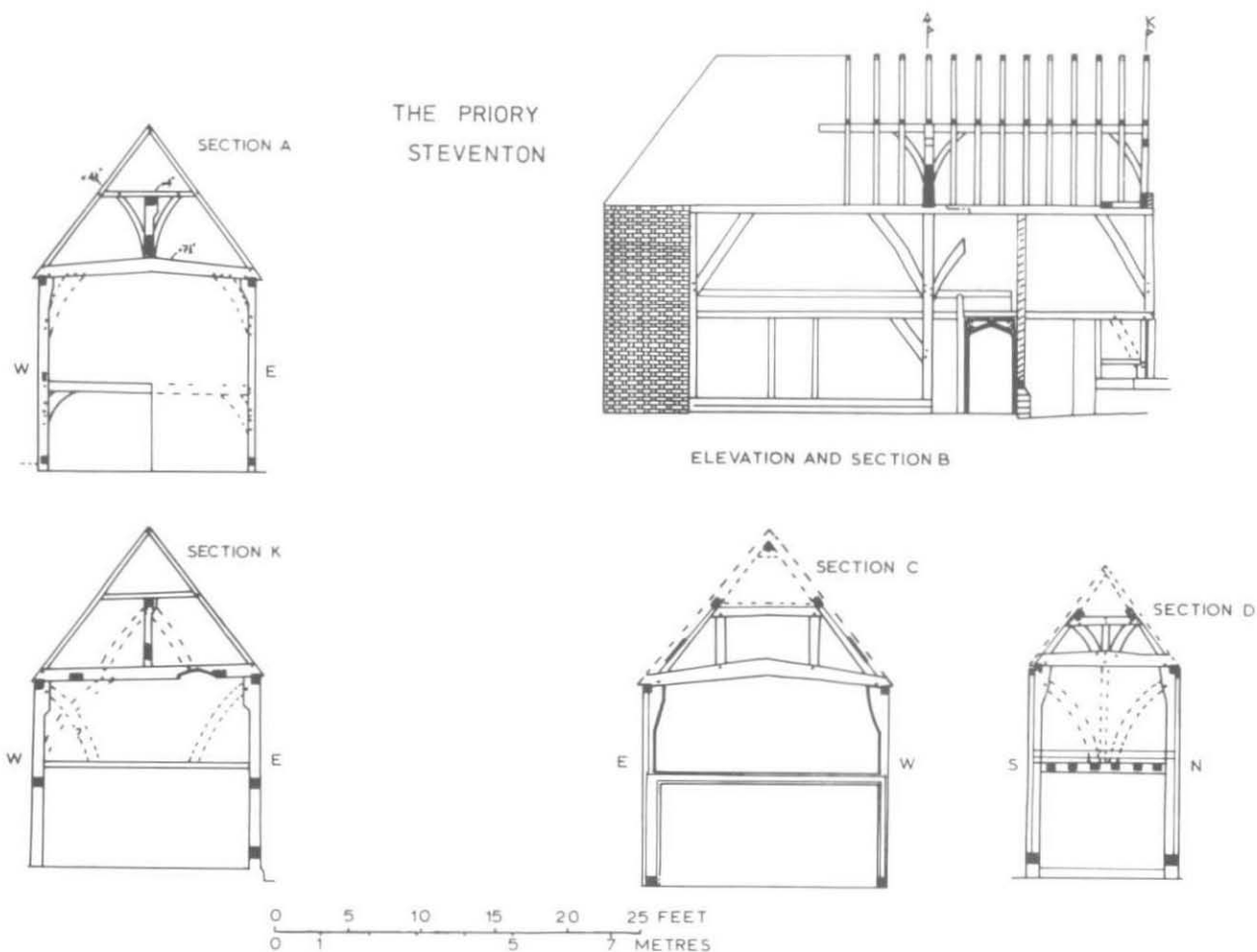


Fig. 31. The Priory: sections.

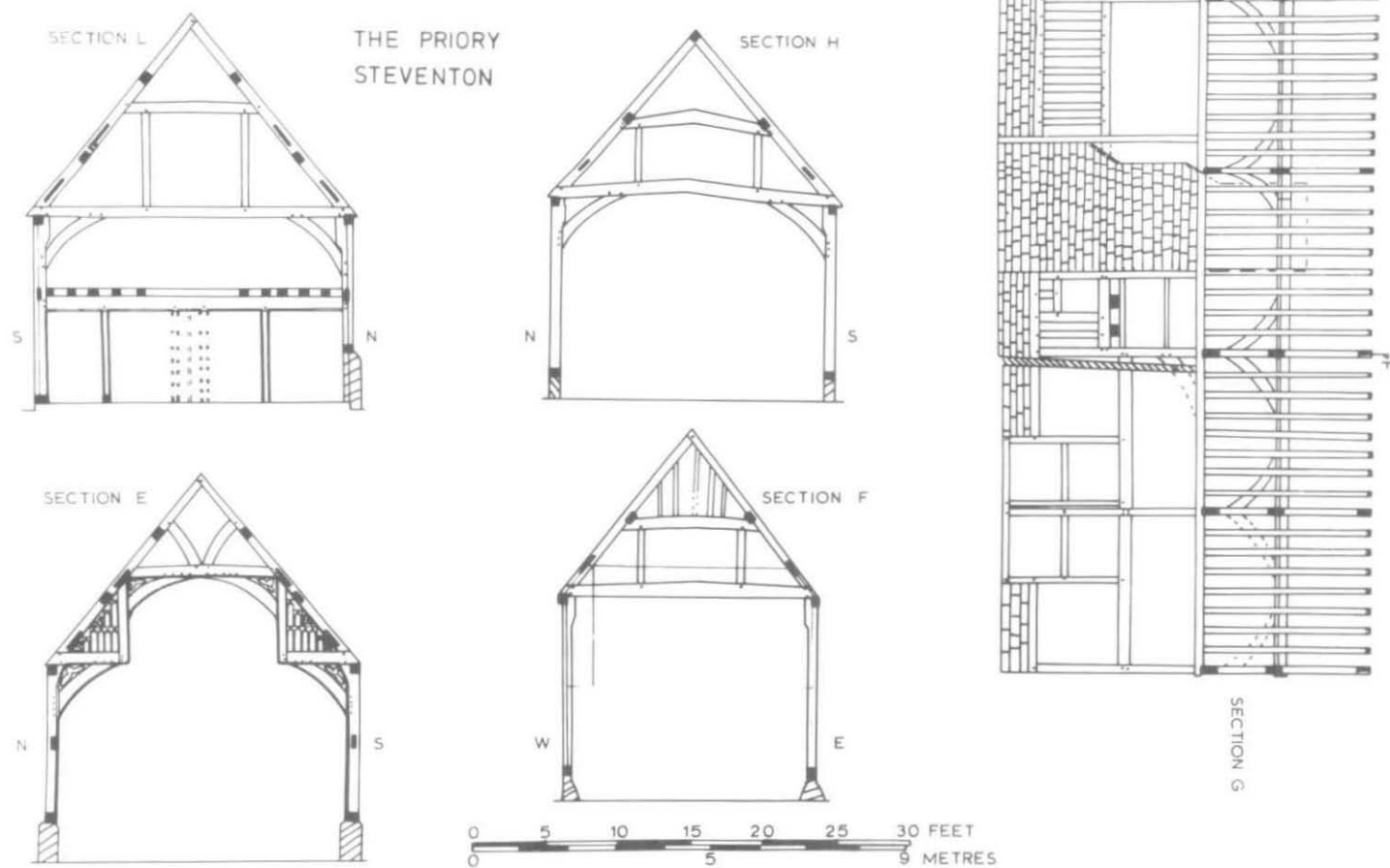


Fig. 32. The Priory: sections.

THE PRIORY STEVENTON

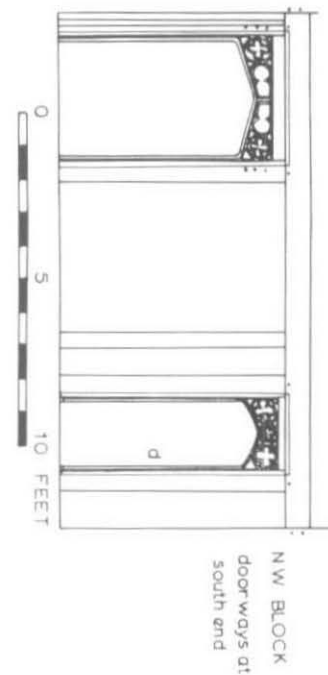
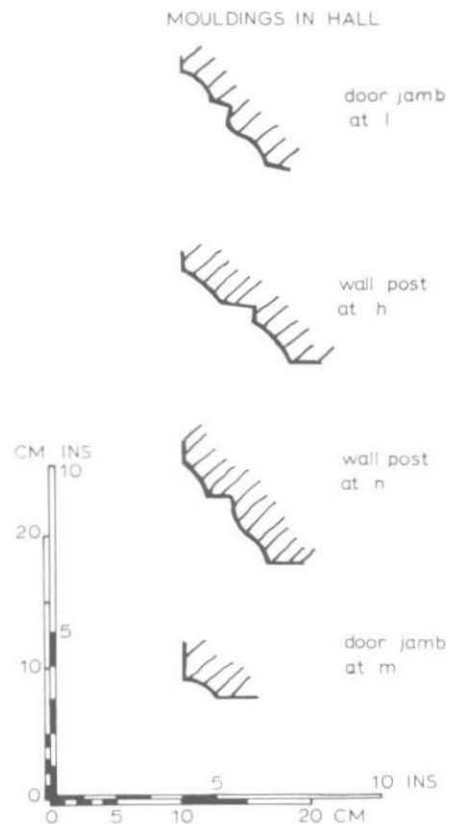
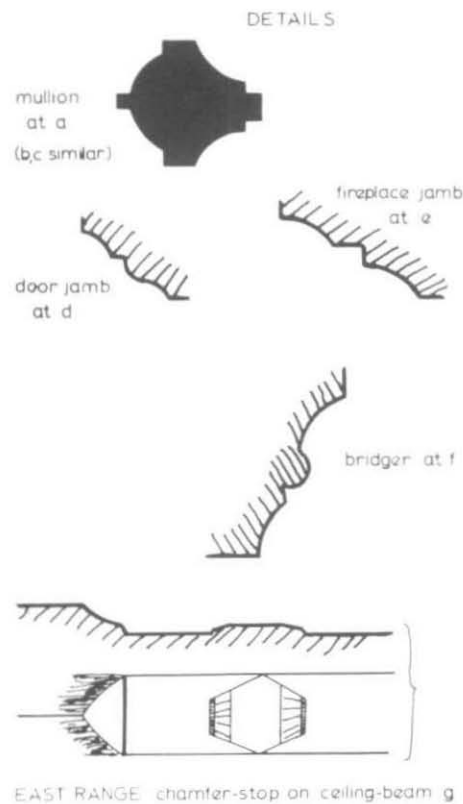


Fig. 33. The Priory: details.

as a bacon-smoking room or brewhouse; there are meathooks in the collar purlin in the north bay.

The next surviving phase is the two-bayed, two-storeyed north-west block, with the adjoining west bay of the front courtyard range (Figs. 31-3, sections C, D and details). The main block was built on the front of the south-west block, moving the north front of the house northwards. There was one room downstairs, with a chamfered transverse ceiling-beam, and one room on the first floor also, as the wallplates and tiebeams are similarly chamfered. In the south wall downstairs are two doorways with moulded jambs and traceried spandrels, leading into the south-west block. Either that block had been partitioned internally, or a staircase had been built in it, rising from the narrower western doorway. The quality of the doors suggests that the front room was a parlour. Presumably a door was made on the first floor also, though it is not clear whether the cut-out doorhead on the north tiebeam of the south-west block dates from this phase. The range is heated by an external stack on the west wall with fireplaces on both floors; that downstairs has jambs moulded with a double hollow chamfer (Fig. 33). The chamfered surround of an original first-floor window, with slots in the jambs to receive the former window-head, survives in the east wall south of the central truss. The narrow projecting bay to the west is also two-storeyed and may have been servants' rooms or housed a privy. The block is presumably the new chamber of 1463; although the bill does not mention a chimney, large payments were made for freestone and to a mason.⁷³⁴ Both buildings have open-framed walls with curved downward braces, and clasped-purlin roofs. The roof in the main range has a clasped ridge purlin, steeply-pitched windbraces, and massive cambered tiebeams with queen struts in the two southern trusses. The north gable truss is now concealed by the addition, probably by Edmund Wiseman *c.* 1600, of a bay window with ovolo-moulded mullions, a jettied gable with pendants, and ornamental framing with ogee braces. The former east gable truss of the projecting east bay has a Wessex gable treatment with central stud and curved raking struts between collar and tie, and a down-braced wall below. The original heavy joists in the projection are exposed; they are laid flat and have central tenons to the binder.

In the late 15th or early 16th century the hall was rebuilt, probably in one of the high-spending years 1501-2, 1506-7, or 1514-15.⁷³⁵ The present hall, opened to the roof again by a restoration *c.* 1949,⁷³⁶ forms the south side of the courtyard and is of two bays with a short screens bay at the east end. That was two-storeyed, probably with a gallery over as restored in 1949; some original joists remain. The remains of the screen (Figs. 31-2, section L) suggest that there was one doorway in the centre and one at the south end. A more elaborate upper-end doorway was built in the east wall of the south-west block (Figs. 31-2, section B).

The hall had windows with ogee and hollow-chamfer mouldings on the mullions and four-centred heads to the lights. There was a three-light window high up in each wall of the west bay, to light the dais; that on the north side was restored in 1949. In the east bay the north wall had a three-light window below the rail next to the central truss and a two-light one over the screens, and the south wall had a two-light window opposite the present chimney. They have all been blocked or replaced.

The walls of the hall are close-studded, with middle rails at storey level, and the roof has two tiers of chamfered tenoned purlins and touching four-centred windbraces. The central truss (Figs. 31-2) is of false hammer-beam type with moulded posts and soffits, delicately traceried spandrels, and raking struts above the collar; the end trusses have tiebeams and queen posts. The west truss is of plank type, moulded on one side only, and open below the tie. The screens bay has only one set of purlins.

The smoke-blackened roof timbers show that the hearth was at first fully open, but it was later moved against the screens and a timber-framed smoke bay was built above it. The truss over the screens was filled with daub and plaster and a new truss with false close-studding was inserted into the east bay of the hall. The present chimney was built after 1567,⁷³⁷ and a first floor put in; the seatings for the joists remain, but the rest of the ceiling was completely destroyed in 1949.

⁷³⁴ W.A.M. 7480.

⁷³⁵ Above, site documentation.

⁷³⁶ Plans by J. Macgregor in possession of National Trust.

⁷³⁷ Above, site documentation.

The screens passage presupposes that the hall was built with a service wing, the east cross-chamber reconstructed by Thomas Smalbone in 1551.⁷³⁸ The present east courtyard wing, however, cannot be earlier than that rebuilding. It is of four unequal bays. The two southern bays contained buttery and pantry, as the blocked doors from the screens passage (Figs. 31–2, section G) show; a partition in the loft shows that there were two rooms above them. In the two northern bays there was one room on either floor, heated by fireplaces in the large limestone lateral chimney stack, with two blocked flues, in the courtyard. The stack is presumably that of 1551. The quality of the ceiling beams of the front room (Fig. 33) suggests a service-end parlour, but the parlour in 1558 and 1567 was apparently unheated and the room was probably a kitchen.

The wing, like the hall, has close-studded walls, except in the screens passage and on the south gable wall, which could not be seen from the street. The roof has tiebeams, collars, and queen struts at each truss, and clasped purlins and windbraces, of lower pitch than those in the hall. There is no ridgepiece. On the south faces of the trusses are scribed carpenters' marks. A few lodged joists are visible on the west wall; they are presumably tenoned into the longitudinal bridger in the north room. In the east wall are the remains of blocked windows with chamfered surrounds and octagonal mullions. The north gable retains barge boards with tracery like that of the hall open truss; they may have been re-used from the earlier wing.

Presumably when the wing was rebuilt, the north side of the courtyard was completed with a close-studded building that may have been a gatehouse. Its first floor was reached from the north-west block and it may thus be one of the 'houses adjoining the west cross chamber' mentioned in 1551. Otherwise there is no trace of the apparently substantial repairs to the west cross chamber; perhaps there was a southern extension on the site of the brick extension to the south-west block.

The eastern extensions date from the late 16th and earlier 17th centuries, and cannot be described in detail here.⁷³⁹ They included a barn, a possible brewhouse, and what may have been servants' quarters.

VICARAGE HOUSE

The Old Vicarage, east of the Priory on the south side of the Causeway, was the vicarage house until sold to Thomas Stevens in 1841.⁷⁴⁰ There is no evidence of an earlier change of site.⁷⁴¹ Although the priors and their successors as rectors should have been responsible for the maintenance of the vicarage house in the Middle Ages, no reconstruction is recorded in the rectory accounts from 1399 onwards, and presumably none could have been afforded between 1337 and 1399, except by a rich vicar. The vicars during the period of royal sequestration of the priory were chop-churches appointed by the Crown; none is known to have resided. Robert de Plecy, however, a graduate pluralist from a local family, who was vicar from 1330 to 1357,⁷⁴² may have had the means and motive for building. In 1557 the house included only four rooms, hall, kitchen, buttery, and chamber.⁷⁴³

The structure (Fig. 34) supports the conclusion that no work was undertaken between the mid 14th and the mid 16th century. The house consists of a hall range, always two-storeyed, between east and west cross wings, which together provided far more accommodation than that recorded in 1557. The north part of the east wing is contemporary with the hall; both were clearly built fairly soon after 1557. The southern part of that wing is a 17th-century reconstruction.⁷⁴⁴ Nevertheless

⁷³⁸ Above, site documentation.

⁷³⁹ For description, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 327–8.

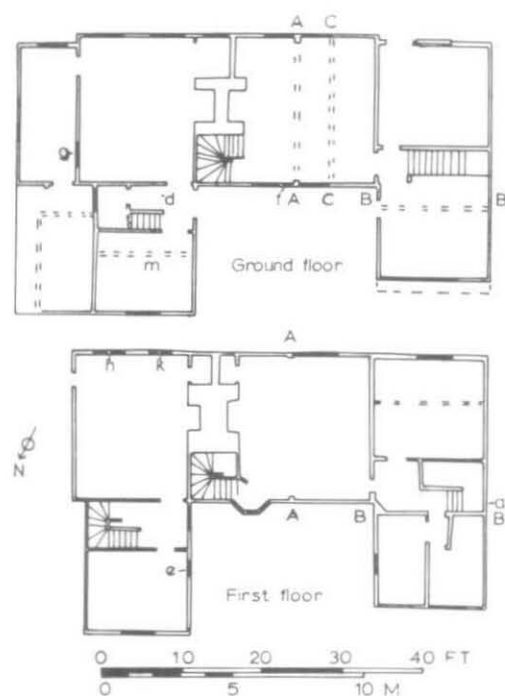
⁷⁴⁰ Deed in possession of the owner, Mr. Arthur Baylis. Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 178 gives date wrongly as 1840.

⁷⁴¹ Cf. discussion in Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 178.

⁷⁴² Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 180; K. Edwards (ed.), *Reg. Martival*, i (Cant. & York Soc. lv, 1960), 407; *Cal. Pat.* 1354–8, 527; A.B. Emden, *Biographical Register of University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, iii, 1486.

⁷⁴³ Inventory of Edw. Haylett, Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MSS. Wills Berks. 233.

⁷⁴⁴ Described in Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 323.



THE OLD VICARAGE STEVENTON
SU 467915

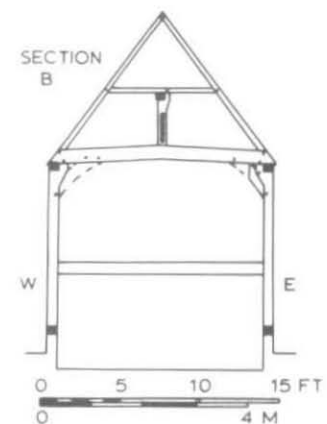
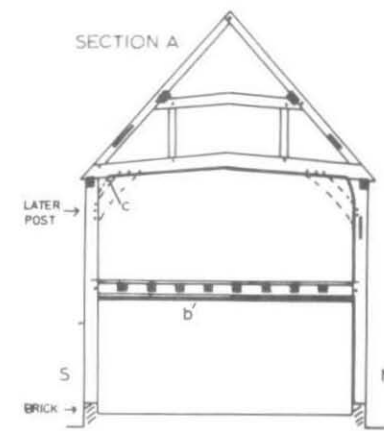
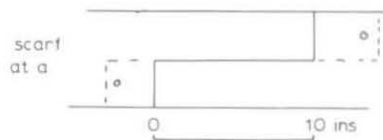
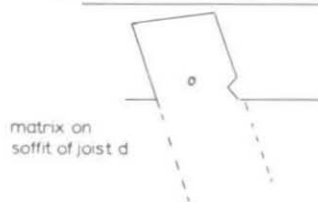
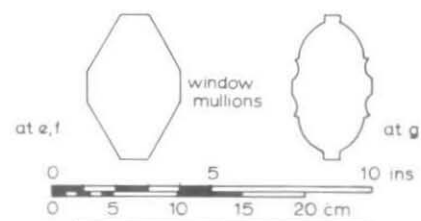
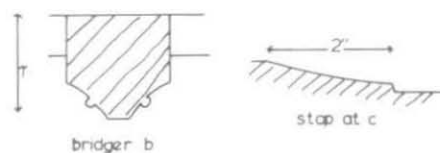


Fig. 34. The Old Vicarage, Stevenston.

re-used timbers in the east wing, including a ceiling beam with a curious angled halving and smoke-blackened joists, one with a notched-lap matrix on its soffit, may well be former roof and wall timbers from a 13th-century hall on the site. Moreover the two-storeyed west wing, lower than the hall, is medieval. It is of three bays and retains one and part of a second bay of its original frame.⁷⁴⁵ The wing, jettied at the front, retains only the north bay of its crown-post roof. The part south of the second truss was rebuilt with a hipped roof in the 17th century and again (with a south gable) in 1966. The second truss was open, and the first floor therefore included a great chamber of at least two bays. The very low-ceilinged ground floor may have been a mere undercroft without partitions. The north bay retains some original joists, about 9 by 5½ ins., tenoned into a binder at the south end and clasped between two plates at the jetty.

The north crown post has curved struts to a flat tiebeam attached by dragon ties to the wallplates; the southern crown post truss has an arch-braced and cambered tiebeam, itself a re-used timber, and a crown post braced to the collar purlin only. A length of collar purlin south of the truss, terminating in a Trait-de-Jupiter scarf joint, was removed in 1966.⁷⁴⁶ The braces to the collar purlin are deep brackets. Both crown posts are jowled.

Some original giant framing, with steeply pitched cranked braces, survives on the west wall. Peg holes suggest that there may have been cross bracing below the north gable. The east wall has an arched brace which may be a replacement. There are many-cusped Geometric barge-boards at the north gable, and an edge-halved and doubly bridled scarf in the east wallplate south of the second roof truss.

The similarity of the framing to that of the south-west block of the Priory suggests that the wing dates from the early or mid 14th century, and is probably the work of the prior or Robert de Plecy.

OTHER HOUSES

Besides the Priory and Old Vicarage, Steventon has at least 14 other houses and a former farm building of medieval origin or type. That is the more remarkable in that the great majority of tenements were held by customary, later copyhold, tenure. Only a handful of freeholds survived in the early 14th century, only one large freehold, Botleys (now no. 99 the Causeway, discussed below) can be traced from the 15th to the 18th century, and only two or three freeholds, including Botleys, in mid-16th century surveys had houses on them.⁷⁴⁷ Several houses were formerly attributed to the period of prosperity of Steventon's cloth-finishing trade in the late 14th and early 15th centuries,⁷⁴⁸ but tree-ring dates and comparative evidence suggest that very little work dates from that period. This account will concentrate on houses with medieval cross wings and treat single-range houses more briefly.

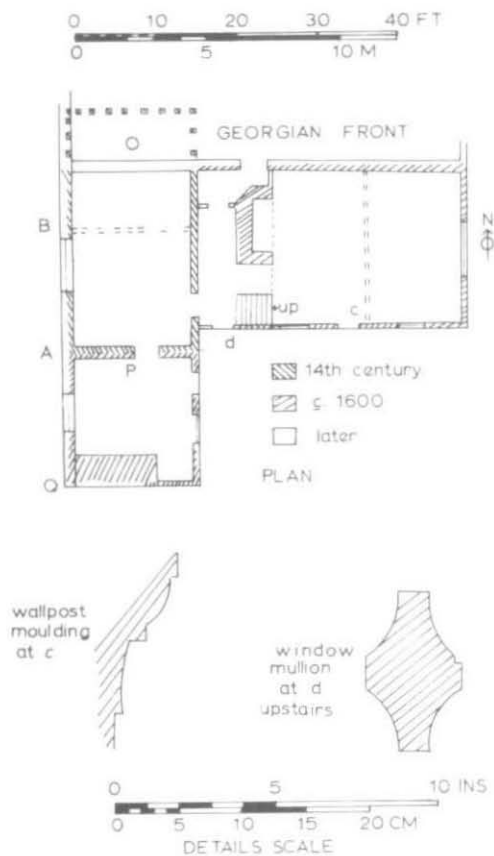
THE HOME FARM HOUSE, Milton Lane (Fig. 35) includes the remains of an L-shaped timber-framed house concealed behind an 18th-century front range. The earlier part consists of a hall range, rebuilt c. 1600, and one and a half bays of a medieval cross wing with a crown-post roof; it was largely cased in brick in the 18th century. The north bay was truncated by the construction of the 18th-century range. The first-floor ceiling was raised and rebuilt in the 17th century, but the original height is shown by a rail on the south truss, formerly the gable end. The ground floor was clearly a low basement. The second surviving truss was an arch-braced open truss, so that there

⁷⁴⁵ For the wing, *ibid.* 179; S.E. Rigold, 'The Timber-framed Buildings of Steventon and their Regional Significance', *Trans. Newbury District Field Club*, x (4, 1958), 10-11.

⁷⁴⁶ J.M. Fletcher's notes, in possession of the author.

⁷⁴⁷ For tenures in Steventon, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 66-71, 83-98; W.A.M. 7358 and 7359 (recording respectively 2 and 3 freehold messuages; one freehold in 7358 appears to be copyhold in 7359), 8034.

⁷⁴⁸ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 101-5.



HOME FARM HOUSE
STEVENTON
SU 472920

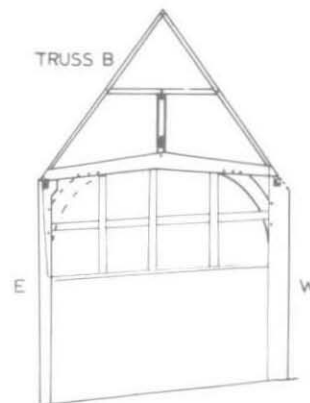
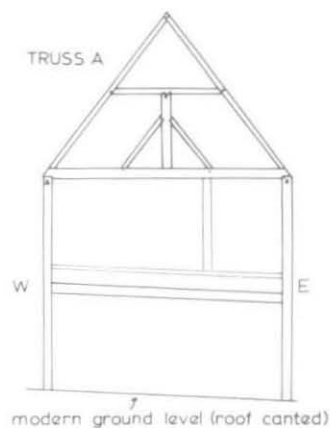
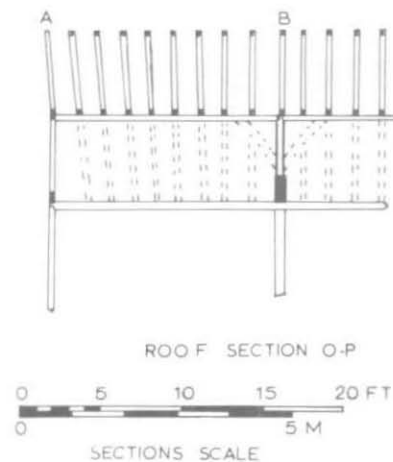


Fig. 35. Home Farm House, Milton Lane, Steventon.

was a chamber of two or more bays on the first floor. It was partitioned in the late 16th or 17th century. The hearth-passage plan of the later hall range, with a passage next to the wing, suggests that there had been a medieval cross entry in the same position and that this was a combined solar-service wing, as at 42-42A High Street, Milton. Recent investigation has shown that soot on the roof-timbers is definitely attributable to the use of the existing passage as a bacon-smoking loft, presumably after the front range was added.

The pronounced cant of the roof and posts, which already existed before the partition was inserted, together with the absence of evidence for a sillbeam, suggests that the frame was built on padstones, as at York Farm, West Hagbourne, and Wellshead Farm, Harwell. There are mortices for upward braces in the east wallplate. The south truss had a flat tiebeam, straight downward braces from the crown post, and mortices for dragon ties. The wallplates and collar purlin were tenoned into the wallposts and crown post respectively. The arch-braced central truss has jowled posts and a cambered tiebeam, and the crown post had two-way braces to the collar purlins, which are butt-housed into it. The crown post has roll-stopped chamfers. The common collars are tenoned to the rafters, some of which have compass-scribed carpenter's marks.

The wing was formerly attributed to the later 14th century,⁷⁴⁹ but several features – the straight gable braces, the probable use of padstones, and the butted crown plates – can be compared with much earlier wings, as at York Farm and Wellshead Farm, while the chamfer stops resemble those at 42-42A High Street, Milton. It seems likely that the building dates from the first third of the 14th century.

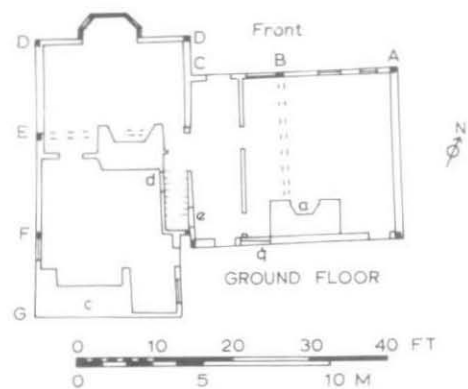
TUDOR HOUSE, 67 the Causeway, is part of a terrace at the west end of the Causeway. The tenement was copyhold until enfranchised in the 1920s; in the later 17th century it apparently belonged to the Smalbone family,⁷⁵⁰ but the earlier descent is not known. The house (plan and sections, Figs. 36-37) consists of a hall range parallel with the street and a west cross wing, which flanks nos. 71-75 on the adjoining curtilage. The former open hall is of two bays with a massive central base-cruck truss, an arch-braced principal-rafter truss of much slighter section at the west end, and at the east gable end an unusual truss with truncated blades whose feet are tenoned into a tiebeam or strainer-beam; there are queen struts to the collar. The design seems to be original, as both timber and plaster are smoke-blackened in the loft. The heavy purlins are clasped at the western truss, tenoned into the central base-cruck blades, and supported by packing pieces at the east truss. The north purlin has a splayed scarf, with the ends joined by a heavy nail, just west of the east end. There are windbraces at all the trusses. The ridge plate is clasped at the end trusses, but rests on a saddle at the centre. It is in two pieces joined by a splayed scarf; one piece, though heavily sooted, has mortices and stave-holes indicating that it is a re-used wallplate from an earlier building, apparently with giant wall panels. The central arch has an elegant ogree head, and above the collar the principals are cusped to form a cinquefoiled arch.⁷⁵¹

The main problems concern the original layout of the hall and its relationship to the wing. The fact that the high footings of the hall end at the wing, the absence of any evidence of windbraces on the west face of the west truss, and the fact that the purlins terminate in apparently original cuts, with smoke-blackened ends, just to the west of it, indicate that this truss was a plank truss of open form abutting a wing. Wattle-holes suggest former infilling below the cranked arched braces. The ridge plate, however, continues further west, but the original length ends some way east of the wing; the original arrangements here are obscured by alterations made when a chimney was inserted into the wing in the 17th century. At the other end, the scarf joint suggests that an east bay may have been demolished. In the early 20th century the front door was near the centre of the north hall wall, but it has since been moved next to the wing and a cross passage thus created. That may reflect the original arrangement: an existing dais at the east end is alleged to reflect

⁷⁴⁹ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 183.

⁷⁵⁰ Inf. (1970) from the late Dr. E.B. Evans, a former owner, who had traced the descent from deeds in his possession and from the court rolls in W.A.M. Cf. E.B. Evans, 'Seventeenth-century Painted Overmantels', *Country Life*, cxxii (Nov. 1957), 1138-9.

⁷⁵¹ Cf. Rectory Farm, Letcombe Bassett.



TUDOR HOUSE, 67 THE CAUSEWAY
STEVENTON
SU 467917

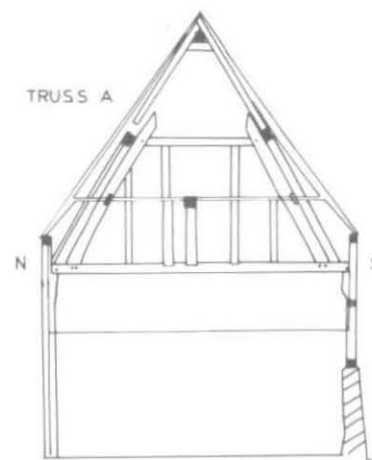
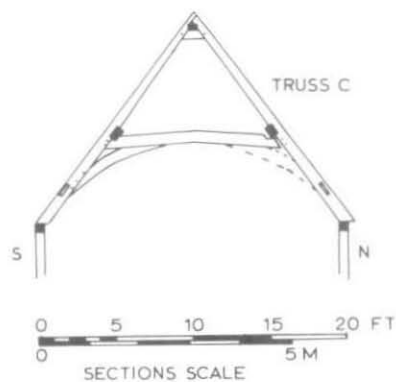
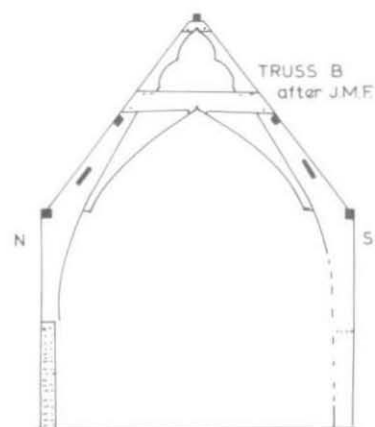
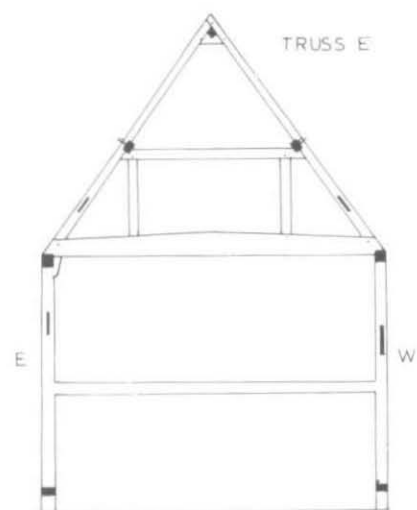
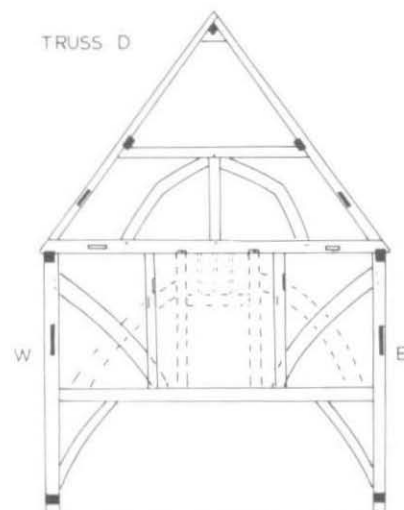


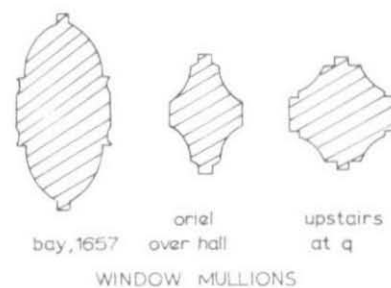
Fig. 36. Tudor House, Steventon.



0 5 10 15 20 FT
0 5 M
SECTIONS SCALE



CHAMFER STOPS



WINDOW MULLIONS

0 5 10 INS
0 5 10 15 20 25 CM
DETAILS SCALE

TUDOR HOUSE

Fig. 37. Tudor House, Steventon.

excavated evidence of an original one,⁷⁵² and the west bay is shorter than the east bay and therefore probably the lower hall bay. In that case either there was an additional ground-floor chamber at the upper end of the hall,⁷⁵³ and the wing was a service wing, or the hall was an 'end-hall' with a combined solar-service wing. Nevertheless the rough appearance of the eastern truss is more consistent with its having been at the service end of the hall, and an entry at that point, where the base of the north wall is partly of brick, cannot be ruled out.

The wing, of two tall bays and a shorter southern bay at the rear, covers the space between the hall and the tenement boundary; a 1-ft. gap separates it from nos. 71-75. The south bay is a 17th-century kitchen with a chimney at the south end; it apparently replaces an earlier kitchen which had an open hearth and was burnt down: the south end of the east purlin of the middle bay is heavily charred, and the truss at that position is a 17th-century reconstruction, using mainly original timbers on the west side, 17th-century replacements on the east. It is presumably the presence of the earlier kitchen which explains why the south-west principal post of the hall is a few inches south of the main wing's south-east corner (see plan, Fig. 36). The roof in the middle bay (the west bay of the main part of the wing) was partly reconstructed at the same time, but that in the north bay is complete, with light principals and clasped purlins having through-splayed scarf joints, steeply pitched windbraces, and a clasped ridge purlin. The central truss has jowled posts, a heavy cambered tiebeam, and queen struts, but at the north truss the posts are jowled at the front (to support former bargeboards) but with upstands only on the inner faces; the truss has a crown strut with downward braces to the straight, square-sectioned tiebeam, and a mortice for a brace to a nonexistent crown plate. There are dragon ties at the corners. The side walls have giant panels with steeply-pitched arched braces and an infilling of staves, now exposed to give a false impression of close studding. Peg-holes and halvings in the surviving studs and curved braces of the gable wall indicate scissor-bracing flanking a diamond-mullioned window. On the ground floor were arched braces to the bressumer; one such brace is visible under the plaster. The floor was reconstructed in the 17th century with medieval timbers presumably from the original floor.

A tree-ring date of 1355/6 for a principal rafter of the plank truss of the hall has been published.⁷⁵⁴ The date and the tenure of the holding rule out an earlier attribution to Sir Hugh Calveley,⁷⁵⁵ and likewise the suggestion that the house was built by a clothier in the late 14th century.⁷⁵⁶ It may have been built by one of the small group of wealthy peasants who leased the manor from 1357,⁷⁵⁷ but if so any manorial profits cannot have contributed to its cost; the holding itself can hardly have exceeded a yardland.⁷⁵⁸ The wing is structurally prior to the hall, so must be contemporary with it or earlier; moreover the north facade was clearly intended to mimic ranges with more labour-intensive crown-post roofs, such as the south-west block of the Priory. The hypothesis that hall and wing were added to an existing kitchen as part of a single phase of reconstruction seems the most satisfactory, but a tree-ring date for the north-west post of the wing suggests felling between about 1299 and 1334, with c. 1314 as most probable.⁷⁵⁹ Though that would once have seemed implausibly early for a clasped-purlin roof in this area, the parallel of the Hyde Farm, Marcham, and the likelihood that the Cottage, Aston Tirrold, had a principal-rafter roof in the 1280s⁷⁶⁰ make the date-range credible. The structural resemblances to 39 The

⁷⁵² Inf. from Dr. Evans.

⁷⁵³ As at 42-2A High Street, Milton; above, gazetteer, Milton.

⁷⁵⁴ *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 44.

⁷⁵⁵ J.M. Fletcher, 'Steventon Church and Sir Hugh Calveley', *Trans. Newbury Dist. Field Club*, xii (1, 1970), 78.

⁷⁵⁶ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 160, 183-4.

⁷⁵⁷ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 22, 99-105.

⁷⁵⁸ No composite holding of more than a yardland or two half-yardlands is recorded in the court rolls before 1400; Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 86; W.A.M. 7261.

⁷⁵⁹ Nott, Univ. Tree-Ring Dating Laboratory, initial report 25 July 1988, sample STE-B07; the last measured ring (heartwood-sapwood boundary) was of 1284, with t-values of 6 or more for matches against three reference curves. The sample came from an inner side of a post jowled at the front (opposite) side; the carpenter may therefore have removed more sapwood than usual.

⁷⁶⁰ Above, Aston Tirrold; Marcham.

Causeway, discussed below, with its Curvilinear barge-boards, suggest a date after c. 1320. Even so, it appears that the wing may have been built a generation earlier than the hall.

The 'Cruck House', 39 THE CAUSEWAY, consists like Tudor House of a hall range parallel with the street and a west cross wing. Heavily restored since the Second World War, it has been described earlier by Rigold⁷⁶¹ and by the present writer.⁷⁶² Unlike that at Tudor House, the cruck-built hall range is very small, only 15 ft. wide and 1½ bays long; the east end truss has irregular blades of light scantling; the open truss has a collar and cranked arched braces like those of the plank truss at Tudor House. The purlins are tenoned. The half-bay serves as a cross entry next to the wing. The two-storeyed wing, of three original bays and two successive rear extensions, still has some medieval crested ridgetiles. It has a facade like the original design of Tudor House, with a crown-strut in the gable having ogival downward braces to the tiebeam, below which curved scissor-braces flank a window. The bargeboards have long cusps and an ogee head, and are enriched with a quarter-round moulding. There are dragon-ties at the corners. The roof has principal rafters with expanded feet, clasped purlins with through-splayed scarf joints, and a ridgeplate clasped by morticed yokes at the trusses. The internal trusses have no struts between tie and collar; the upper floor appears to have been a single great chamber. During restoration in the 1950s a four-light diamond-mullioned window was found in the west wall, but it may not have been an original feature. The rear wall framing has curved downward braces, and the west, outer side wall has straight or slightly convex upward braces, while straight downward braces have been exposed in the wall next to the hall. The door from hall to wing, with a crude two-centred head, survives. The basement was a single room, and is remarkable for the survival of a floor lodged on a lengthwise bridger over samson posts. The bridger, like the east wallplate, has a Trait-de-Jupiter scarf joint. Probably in the later 15th century the basement was subdivided by a cross wall; the partition has a door with a four-centred head.

The number of proposed dates for the building is almost as great as the number of investigators. Hewett suggested the 13th century,⁷⁶³ Rigold the early or mid 14th century, Fletcher⁷⁶⁴ and the present writer the late 14th century, J.T. Smith 'towards the end of the Middle Ages'.⁷⁶⁵ The close parallels with Tudor House now suggest that Rigold was right about the wing at least; a date between 1320 and 1350 seems probable. The wing must have been erected before the hall, whose small size may be because the owner's ambition outran his means; it is difficult to accept a hypothesis that a grander hall was demolished to make way for the present small one.⁷⁶⁶ The added fourth bay at the south end of the wing is also medieval, with long arched braces in the side walls and steeply-pitched windbraces 2½ ins. to 3 ins. thick. It is smoke-blackened and was probably a kitchen, added perhaps only a few decades after the wing was built. The fifth bay dates from the 17th century.

The adjoining house to the east, nos. 35-7 THE CAUSEWAY, consists of a three-bayed box-framed hall range whose roof was raised in the 17th century, and a much modernized two-bayed east cross wing which may have been earlier than the hall.⁷⁶⁷ The wing formerly had a hipped front roof, like The Cottage, Aston Tirrold, and Old Manor Cottage, North Moreton.⁷⁶⁸ The gable below had one straight brace and the walls had panels variously in three or four heights; that pattern might have resulted from 17th-century alterations to an early facade of Aston Tirrold type. What remained of the roof in the 1970s, the collar and principals of a plastered truss

⁷⁶¹ *Trans. Newbury Dist. Field Club*, x(4), 8-10.

⁷⁶² Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 184-6, Fig. 7.

⁷⁶³ *English Historic Carpentry*, 263 (where it is wrongly called 34 the Causeway), 293.

⁷⁶⁴ In Vernacular Architecture Group Spring Meeting Programme, 1966.

⁷⁶⁵ J.T. Smith, 'The Dating of Buildings: Problems and Fallacies', *Vernacular Archit.* ii (1972), 19. Access for tree-ring dating was refused.

⁷⁶⁶ Cf. Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 185.

⁷⁶⁷ For a fuller discussion of the house, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 200-2, Fig. 18, and plates 23 and 47.

⁷⁶⁸ Above, gazetteer, Aston Tirrold; North Moreton.

(apparently without studs below the collar) clasping heavy purlins, the western ending in a through-splayed scarf at its south end, was clearly medieval, but the function of the wing is not clear; the purlins were smoke-blackened throughout, whereas the timber and plaster of the truss were sooted on the south side only. The south bay may have contained a kitchen and the purlins may have been re-used. The hall range, before the roof was raised, had large panels and short four-centred braces to a low wallplate; the clasped-purlin roof was reassembled with relatively little alteration. It probably dates from the earlier 16th century.

FOLLY HOUSE, 53 the Causeway, seems originally to have consisted of a four-bayed cruck-trussed range of which there are remains of three cruck trusses; the service end and cross passage was rebuilt c. 1900.⁷⁶⁹ Tree-ring sampling failed to date the cruck range.⁷⁷⁰ Probably in the later 15th century the chamber at the west end was partly converted to two storeys by superimposing a small one-bayed jettied structure on the front cruck blades. The walls retain curved downward bracing; there is a ramshackle roof truss with collar, tie, windbraces, and purlins, butted on the east and clasped on the west; some 6-in.-wide common rafters survive. About 1570⁷⁷¹ a further two-storeyed block was added at the rear to provide a parlour or kitchen with a chimney. The house underwent further alterations apparently from the late 17th to the 19th centuries, and is now largely cased in brick.

The east wing of GREEN FARM, Milton Lane, (Green Farm I) is a two-bayed, two-storeyed range, with later extensions to the south, at right angles to the lane and jettied at the front; it was formerly separated from the rest of the house by a footpath closed in 1949.⁷⁷² There were apparently two rooms in each floor, separated by a partition truss with queen posts and an inserted axial stack. The front room upstairs was lit by a three-light window, with four-centred heads, in the north gable; the southern room was lit by a now blocked window in the west wall. There is no trace of smoke-blackening on the clasped-purlin roof. The framing is in large panels. Those on the east wall have been reduced in size by later alterations. The north gable truss has four-centred braces rising from queen struts to the collar; the wall braces and windbraces are four-centred and low-pitched. The original floor in the north bay has joists tenoned into a transverse binder (chamfered with stepped stops) and lodged at their outer ends. The building presumably dates from the earlier 16th century and formed a chamber wing to a hall, long since demolished, on the east side.

At nos. 77–81 THE CAUSEWAY (Fig. 38) are the remains of two houses of similar or slightly earlier date, built as a semi-detached pair on either side of a gatehouse.⁷⁷³ By 1777 the houses, which were copyhold, belonged to John Stevens, who apparently lived in one and let the other.⁷⁷⁴ Nos. 77–9 include a hall range parallel to the street, with a cross passage and service bay next to the gatehouse, and a two-storeyed cross wing at the east end. Restoration work in the 1980s has shown that the hall was open to the roof. The lengthwise bridging beam, with scroll stop-chamfers and relatively light joists, is clearly a late 16th- or 17th-century insertion and contrasts with the heavy lodged joists in the passage and service bay and the transverse binder and heavy joists in the east wing. Nevertheless the roof timbers are not sooted, and the lateral chimney stack on the front (north) wall is original; the fireplace has a limestone surround with four-centred head, hollow-chamfered mouldings and traceried spandrels. The fireplace upstairs, also with a limestone surround and similar mouldings, must also have been inserted in the late 16th or the 17th century and interrupts the line of a former rail of which the end mortice and peg remain,

⁷⁶⁹ For a more detailed description, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 193, 324–5, Fig. 14 and plates 32–4.

⁷⁷⁰ *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 44.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, correcting Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 324, which suggested the late 16th century.

⁷⁷² For the house, *Trans. Newbury Dist. Field Club* x(4), 12, corrected by Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 189–90, Fig. 10, and plates 28–30.

⁷⁷³ Plan and section, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' Fig. 23; this acct. revises the description *ibid.* pp. 312–3.

⁷⁷⁴ Deeds in possession of Mrs. Millicent Godfrey, 81 the Causeway.

although there is no clear external evidence for the addition of the second flue. Perhaps at that time a two-storeyed bay window with ovolo-moulded mullions was added immediately east of the chimney. The wing had a large parlour in the front two bays, with the first floor above partitioned into two rooms. The southern three bays of the wing were open to the roof and are smoke-blackened, perhaps having served as a kitchen or brewhouse.⁷⁷⁵

East of the gatehouse, no. 81 is more fragmentary; it retains a service bay, blocked door to a former cross passage, and part of a hall similar to nos. 77-9, but the east end of the hall and the cross wing were completely rebuilt in brick in the 18th century and later. Enough survives of the hall roof to show that in contrast to no. 79 it had an open hearth; a smoke-bay was later built at the east end, and still later a large chalkstone stack, backing onto the former cross passage, was inserted into the sooted interior of the smoke bay.

Both houses, including the cross wing of nos. 77-9, were clearly designed by the same carpenter. Some of the trusses were numbered in the algorism, others with Roman numerals. The surviving wall framing has curved, sometimes four-centred archbracing, and the windbraces are similar. The internal roof trusses have principals, tiebeams, collars, queen struts, and clasped purlins, but no ridgepiece; the apex joints of the common rafters are halved. A Wessex gable with crown strut and raking struts fronts the east wing. Scarf-joints in plates and purlins are secret-bridled.

Of medieval houses without cross wings the earliest is the three-bayed cruck range now nos. 81-5 THE CAUSEWAY. The house, notable for its arch-braced partition truss between hall and two-storeyed chamber bay, has been described elsewhere.⁷⁷⁶ Although J.M. Fletcher's tree-ring samples suggested a date of 1305,⁷⁷⁷ recent work by Nottingham University Tree-ring Laboratory suggests that the house was built probably in 1365, truss I being re-used from an early 14th-century house.⁷⁷⁸ The house appears to be an unusual survival of a small freeholder's cottage. It was freehold from the late 17th century, when William Arnold (fl. 1686) held it; although Arnold may have had a little field land, in 1721 the property consisted only of the house and orchard.⁷⁷⁹ There is no earlier evidence of enfranchisement, and the house was presumably one of the two or three freehold houses in Steventon in the mid 16th century, perhaps the house or 'churchett' in which Richard Baker was living in 1548.⁷⁸⁰ Fragments of a cruck truss survive at the OLD FARM HOUSE, Milton Lane.⁷⁸¹ Nos. 22-4 MILTON LANE, also cruck-built, were converted in the 19th century from a barn belonging to the west part of Green Farm (Green Farm II).⁷⁸²

The remaining single-range houses with open halls are not cruck-built and have roofs with principal rafters and clasped purlins. Investigation in 1987 showed that nos. 71-5 THE CAUSEWAY had an open hall; from the west the bays were (1) service, (2) hall with open hearth, (3) ceiled part of hall or separate chamber, later partitioned lengthwise, and (4) chamber. Bays 3 and 4 had upstairs a single two-bayed great chamber.⁷⁸³ No. 87 THE CAUSEWAY was a three-bayed building with an open hall in the middle; the end bays were later much altered.

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. Maltravers Manor, Childrey: above, gazetteer, Childrey.

⁷⁷⁶ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 192; *Med. Archaeol.* xvi, 138-9.

⁷⁷⁷ *Vernacular Archit.* xii, 49.

⁷⁷⁸ Nott. Univ. Tree-Ring Dating Laboratory, initial rep. 5 Feb. 1990; the last heartwood ring from the fuller of two samples from truss I was of 1306, giving a likely felling date of c. 1336 (national sapwood estimates) or c. 1325 (Oxfordshire sapwood estimates).

⁷⁷⁹ Deeds in possession of the Godfrey family, Steventon; W.A.M. 7360 (Wm. Arnall).

⁷⁸⁰ W.A.M. 7358; cf. *ibid.* 7359, 8034. The only large freehold with a house certainly included was Botleys, discussed below (99 The Causeway).

⁷⁸¹ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 324 and Fig. 29.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.* 221 and Fig. 20.

⁷⁸³ For plan and further details, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' Fig. 21 and p. 314. The soot, cleaned from the first-floor timbers, survives in the loft.

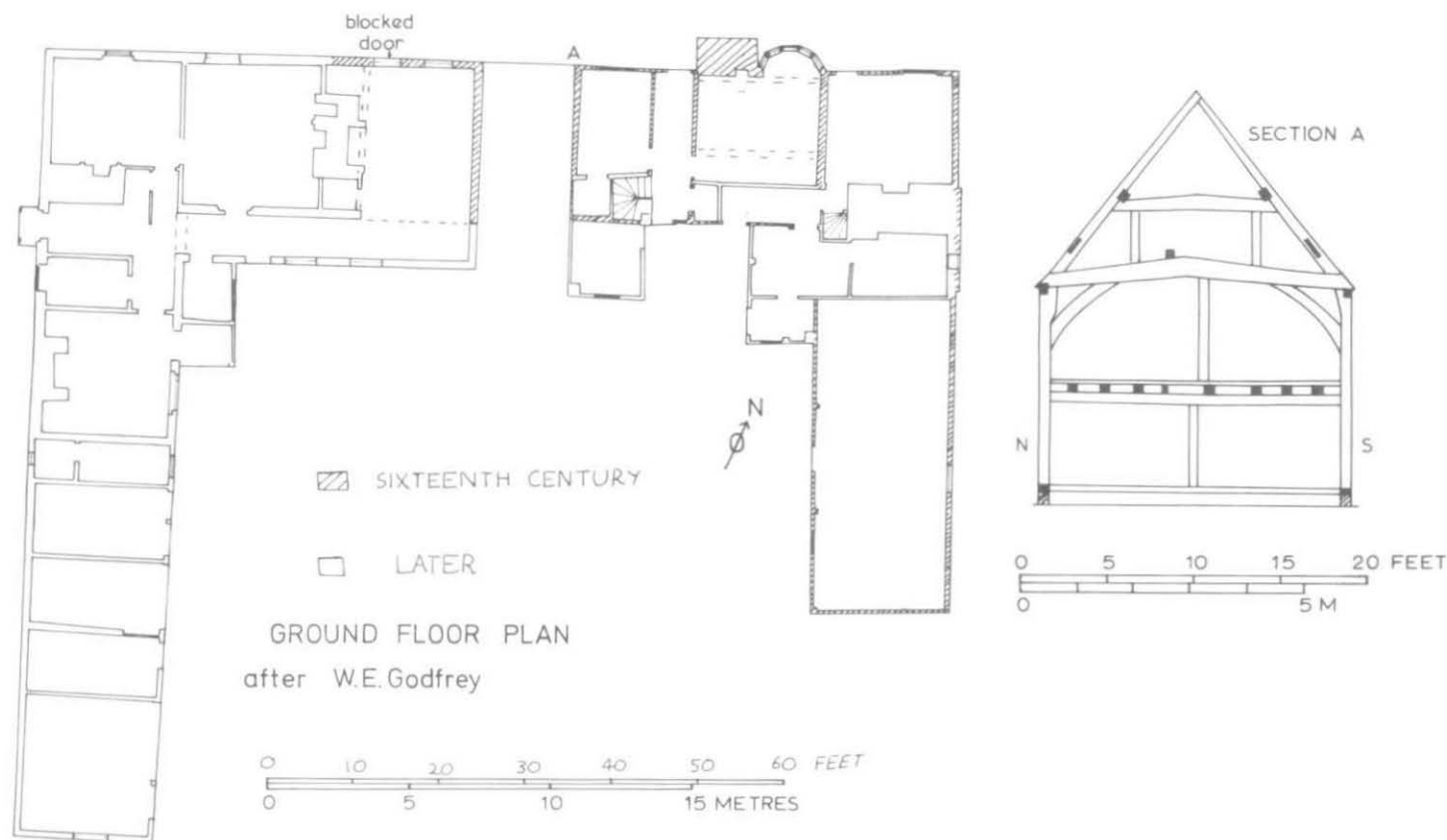


Fig. 38. 77-81 The Causeway, Steventon.

No. 12, MILTON LANE, with stone walls, originally of one and a half storeys, now has a hearth-passage plan but retains evidence of a smoke-bay, which may have predated the hall ceiling.⁷⁸⁴ No. 99 THE CAUSEWAY was of similar plan, with clearer evidence that the ceiling in the upper hall bay was inserted.⁷⁸⁵ It is now identifiable as Botleys, a 43-acre freehold whose house stood on the east side of the vicarage and which belonged in the 18th century to the Weston family. The descent is known, with gaps, from the 15th century.⁷⁸⁶ The present house was probably built by David Luckins, who first rented, then bought it from the Dormer family and who died in 1561.⁷⁸⁷

SUTTON COURTENAY

The history and archaeology of the three main medieval houses of Sutton have been bedevilled since the early 19th century by an extraordinary succession of errors committed by reputable historians and archaeologists. This account will therefore depart from the pattern in which other parishes have been treated in the Gazetteer by first placing the houses in their topographical context, reciting past errors of identification, and summarizing the descent of the two main manors before describing the houses.

TOPOGRAPHY

The village of Sutton extends for some two miles southwards from the Thames. Its heart is a triangular green towards the northern end (Fig. 39). The church stands at the north-east corner, on the east side of Church Street, which runs northwards to the river. On the north-west side are the grounds of the medieval house now known as Norman Hall, and on the south-west side those of another medieval house now known as the Abbey. From the western edge of the green the main road runs south-west, between the Abbey grounds on the south and a third large medieval house, now known as the Manor House, on the north-west. Beyond the Abbey the road divides at the Cross Trees, one road running east towards Drayton and the other southwards, forming the High Street. A back lane runs east of the village from the north end of Church Street, behind the church and the houses on the Green, turning westwards behind the southern end of the Green and southwards again behind the Abbey, rejoining the High Street after c. 200 m. In the 18th century the lane separated the village tofts from the open field to the east, and appears to have continued southward to the end of the village.⁷⁸⁸

The topography of the green was much altered by inclosure in 1804, which awarded large allotments on it to the owners of the Abbey, Norman Hall, and the Manor House.⁷⁸⁹ Before that the east and south sides of the green were long alignments of frontages at right angles to each other; to the north-west both the Manor House and

⁷⁸⁴ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 200, 314-15, Figs. 18, 24.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid. 311 and Fig. 22.

⁷⁸⁶ For the early descent, Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 69-70. For late 17th- and 18th-century ownership, Berks. R.O., D/Ebt T 13.

⁷⁸⁷ Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MSS. Wills Berks. 91; W.A.M. 7359; W.A.M. 8034.

⁷⁸⁸ J. Rocque, *Map of Berks.* (1761).

⁷⁸⁹ P.R.O., MR 50.

Norman Hall fronted it. The zig-zag boundary on that side suggests that there had been earlier intakes before parliamentary inclosure, perhaps in the 13th century.⁷⁹⁰ On the south side, moreover, changes in levels in the Abbey garden suggest that its frontage had once been a continuation of that of the houses further east, and that a small rectangular intake to the north had been made at some time before 1804. The evidence suggests a planned village layout; since, as will be shown below, the Abbey was the rectory house, the fact that it was diametrically opposite the church, rather than adjoining it, suggests that the plan dates from well before 1066 and that a house for the priest had to be allotted within an existing tenement layout.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND SITE IDENTIFICATION

In the early 19th century the Lysons noted the survival of the rectory house, which they called the 'rectory manor', and stated that it had belonged to the abbots of Abingdon, comparing it with Cumnor Place, suggesting that it looked like a monastic residence and had been used by the monks of Abingdon.⁷⁹¹ That suggestion was taken up by Parker in the 1850s, who noted that the house 'is commonly known by the name of the abbey', and claimed it as 'the manor-house of the abbey manor, and the occasional residence of the abbots, answering the purpose of a grange . . .'.⁷⁹² The description of the house as a 'grange' of Abingdon abbey was accepted by the Victoria County History,⁷⁹³ and by M.E. Wood and Fletcher and Spokes as late as the 1960s.⁷⁹⁴ In addition, J.T. Smith not unnaturally shortened Parker's description by calling the house the Manor House, creating an ambiguity which has persisted in more recent publications.⁷⁹⁵ Meanwhile the authors of the Victoria County History, writing before the First World War, traced the descent of the main manors and advowson of Sutton but failed to relate the houses to them, although the descriptions given of the houses were accurate by the standards of the time.⁷⁹⁶ The *V.C.H.* caused further confusion by publishing a photograph of what it had already identified as a fake hall at the west end of the south wing of the Manor House under the title 'The Norman Hall'. In 1931 Christopher Hussey, assuming that the Manor House had always been attached to the manor of Sutton, described the fake hall as the 'Great Hall of the Courtenays'.⁷⁹⁷

In the 1920s A.E. Preston did much to elucidate the early history of the main manor of Sutton and the rectory estate, and their relationship with each other and with Abingdon abbey.⁷⁹⁸ Nevertheless Preston's work remained unfinished, though he accumulated

⁷⁹⁰ John de Courtenay was recorded in the 1270s as having made several purprestures on roads and common land: *Rot. Hund.* (Rec. Com.), 20.

⁷⁹¹ D. and S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, i(2), *Berks.* (1813), 213, 384.

⁷⁹² J.H. Parker, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England*, ii (1853), 274.

⁷⁹³ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 371.

⁷⁹⁴ Wood, *Eng. Med. Ho.* 55; J.M. Fletcher and P.S. Spokes, 'The Origin and Development of Crown-post Roofs', *Med. Archaeol.* vi, 174.

⁷⁹⁵ E.g. J.T. Smith, 'Medieval Roofs: A Classification', *Archaeol. Jnl.* cxv (1958), 121; E. Mercer, *English Vernacular Houses* (1975), 98, 233.

⁷⁹⁶ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 370-7.

⁷⁹⁷ C. Hussey, 'Manor House, Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire: the Residence of Mrs. Harry Lindsay', *Country Life*, 16 and 23 May 1931, 648, 650.

⁷⁹⁸ A.E. Preston, 'Sutton Courtenay and Abingdon Abbey', *Berks., Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv (1920), 23-38, 94-113.

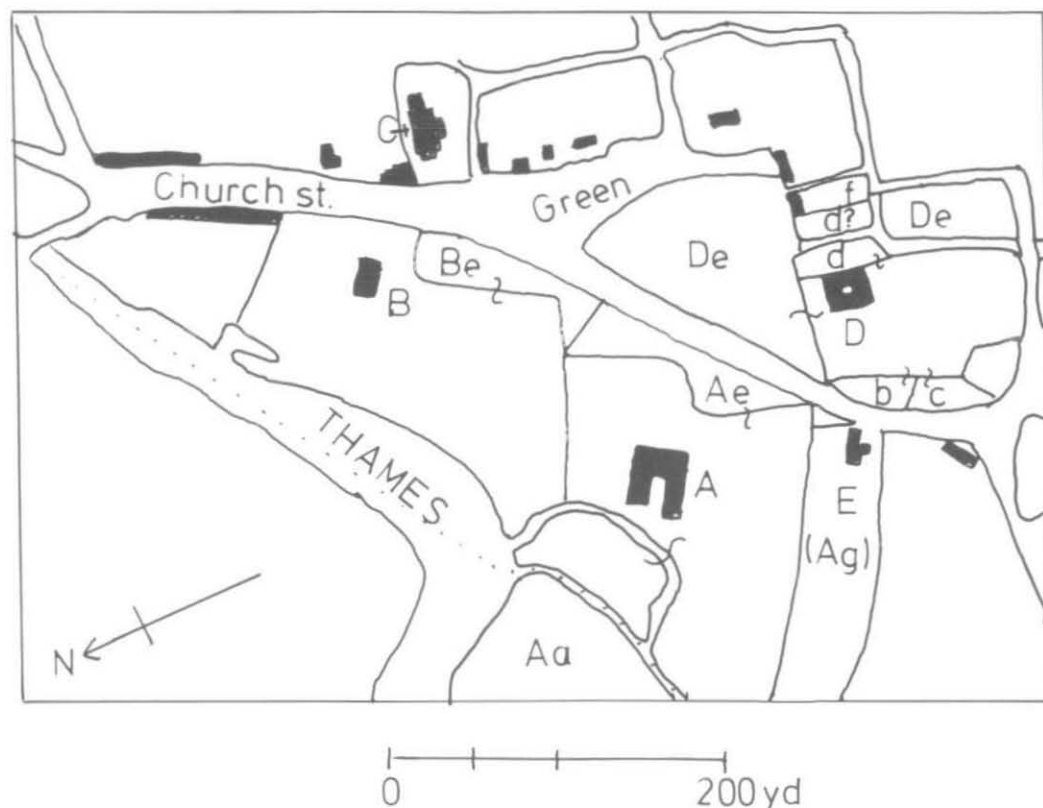


Fig. 39. Central Sutton Courtenay.

Key: A-E, sites: A, Manor House; B, Norman Hall; C, church; D, Abbey (rectory); E, Manor Cottage
a-g, dates of purchase or allotment of extensions to curtilages: a, 1230 x 2; b, 1773; c, 1785; d, 1798; e, 1804 (inclosure); f, c. 1810; g, 1902.

notes on the late-medieval history of the rectory.⁷⁹⁹ He made no attempt to relate the estates to the houses. Eventually J.M. Fletcher, a local scientist with no formal training in history or archaeology, unravelled the confusion left by professional antiquaries, building on Preston's work by combining his published and unpublished material with other evidence, particularly later surveys and the inclosure map of 1804, which had been ignored by earlier writers.⁸⁰⁰ Fletcher confirmed that the Abbey had been the rectory house and had had no connexion with Abingdon abbey after 1284. He showed furthermore that in 1804 the manor of Sutton included Norman Hall but not the Manor House, whose owner bought the manor in 1812.⁸⁰¹ He also argued that the Manor House

⁷⁹⁹ Now stored at Berks. R.O., D/EP 7/123.

⁸⁰⁰ J.M. Fletcher, *Sutton Courtenay: Personalities and Places* (Sutton, 1984); idem, *Sutton Courtenay: The History of a Thames-side Village*, ed. J.M. Cook and C.R.J. Currie (Sutton, 1990).

⁸⁰¹ Date given in Fletcher, *Sutton C.: P and P*, 3 but not in *Sutton C.: Hist.* 73. It is confirmed by deeds in possession of the Hon. F.D.L. Astor, conveyance 17 Oct. 1812. I am grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Astor for permission to consult the deeds.

had been part of the sub-manor of Brunce's Court, apparently since the 14th century or earlier. He was able to show that the meadow known as the Pools, in Culham parish adjoining the Manor House, and which belonged to it in the early 19th century, had been part of the Brunce's Court estate since the late 16th century or earlier. It was nevertheless identifiable with a piece of land granted to the lord of Sutton by the abbot of Abingdon as part of an agreement about turf-cutting between 1230 and 1232 and said to be 'opposite the court' (*contra curiam*) of Sutton.⁸⁰² Fletcher concluded that the original manorial curtilage included both the Manor House and the Norman Hall, but that the former had been sold or given to the Brounz (Brunce) family.

Fletcher was thus the first writer to place his investigation into the architecture of the houses in a documented historical context. He undertook his research in the late 1960s and early 1970s and suspended it thereafter, until a few months before his death in 1986. Partly for that reason he did not fully exploit the material at his disposal, and his account of the buildings was affected by two hypotheses, one wholly unwarranted and the other apparently without supporting evidence. The first was that the first apparent member of the Brounz family whom he had identified, Richard Bruncechapun (fl. 1212), had been the purchaser of the site of the Manor House.⁸⁰³ He therefore concluded that the early domestic buildings of the manor had perhaps been on the Norman Hall site, and that the earliest buildings on the Manor House site were 'wharfage'.⁸⁰⁴ This influenced his acceptance of Norman Hall as a hall. Yet the obvious meaning of the text of the agreement of c. 1230 is that the *curia* of the manor was on the Manor House site, which cannot therefore have been already bought by Bruncechapun.⁸⁰⁵ The second assumption was that, because William Brounz was a lessee of the rectory in the 1390s, his ancestors had been farming it for several generations,⁸⁰⁶ as had the Lewknors at Lewknor, which Dr. Fletcher was investigating at the same time as Sutton.⁸⁰⁷ Thus he ended by attributing the most important phase of construction at the Abbey as well as at the Manor House to the Brounz family.

DESCENTS OF MANORS

Sutton Manor

Ine, king of Wessex, allegedly gave Sutton to Abingdon abbey, which in 801 gave it to Cenwulf, king of Mercia, in exchange for Andersey Island.⁸⁰⁸ Thereafter it remained a royal vill until the 12th century. In the 1150s it was successively farmed by Anfrid son of Roald and Henry son of Gerald, who was succeeded in 1160 by Reginald de Courtenay.⁸⁰⁹ Between 1175 and 1179 Henry II granted it to Courtenay in fee.⁸¹⁰ Reginald was followed c. 1191 by his younger son Robert as life

⁸⁰² Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 28-9; cf. *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv, 99.

⁸⁰³ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 49.

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 15-16, 23.

⁸⁰⁵ Translation following Preston given *ibid.* 28.

⁸⁰⁶ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 58.

⁸⁰⁷ J.M. Fletcher, 'The Medieval Hall at Lewknor', *Oxoniensia*, xl (1975), 247-53.

⁸⁰⁸ This acct. is based unless otherwise stated on *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 372-3.

⁸⁰⁹ *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv, 98.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.* 99. It is not clear why Preston states that the grant was at first at pleasure, since the charter which he transcribes and approximately dates *ibid.* is clearly a gift in fee.

tenant, and Robert in 1209 by his nephew, another Robert, who died in 1210 or 1211 and was followed by his cousin, a third Robert (d.1242).⁸¹¹ Thereafter Sutton descended from father to son through John de Courtenay (d. 1273) and Hugh (d. 1292) to a second Hugh, later earl of Devon (d. 1340). It then followed the earldom until 1539, except during periods of attainder, of which the longest was between 1462 and 1485 when Walter Devereux, lord Ferrers, held it. In the 14th century and early 15th the manor was repeatedly used for dower of the countesses and for the temporary endowment, through life tenancies, of friends and relatives of the earls. After the attainder of Henry, Marquess of Exeter, in 1539, the manor was held by the Crown and its lessees, despite various grants in reversion. In 1628 Charles I sold it to Edward Ditchfield and other citizens of London, who sold it in 1630 to William, lord Craven. Except during the Interregnum, when it was sold to Samuel Wightwick, it descended with the barony, later earldom, of Craven until Francis Elderfield bought it in 1812.⁸¹²

Elderfield died between 1818 and 1820 and was succeeded by his daughters Priscilla and Elizabeth, who shared the estate. Priscilla married Thomas West and died in 1825. West then retained her share and lived in the Manor House until his death in 1857, when Priscilla's share passed to Elizabeth, by then widow of J.R. Barrett. She died in 1862, leaving her own share to her son-in-law John Basil Barrett. Priscilla's estate, however, appears to have been divided under the contingent remainders of her will. Her moiety of the manor passed to Emma Bird (née Adnam), who died in 1867 leaving as heir her son George Bird, while some land fell to Priscilla's goddaughter Elizabeth Ann Adnam (d. 1884), who married William Dewe (d. by 1874) and had a daughter Emily Elderfield Dewe. In 1877 Bird, and in 1879 J.B. Barrett, granted their shares to E.E. Dewe (d. 1882). She left the manor to her cousin William Monk, whose mortgagee foreclosed after Monk's death in 1883 and forced the auction of the estate in 1886. Lord Wantage bought the manor, the Manor House, and Hales Farm (later Norman Hall) and in 1895 leased the estate to his cousin H. E. A. Lindsay, later leaving him the freehold by will proved in 1901. Lindsay settled it in 1937 on his son P. D. L. Lindsay, who sold the manor, Manor House, and grounds to the Hon. F.D.L. Astor in 1945. Mr. Astor settled the manor on his wife in 1973.⁸¹³

Brunce's Court

A Richard Bruncechapun was living in Sutton in 1212,⁸¹⁴ and he or a synonymous successor witnessed Harwell deeds before 1250.⁸¹⁵ Nevertheless no evidence has been found of Brunces or Bruncechapuns in the later 13th century, and the connexion suggested by Fletcher⁸¹⁶ between the Bruncechapuns and the John Brounz (or le Brounz) who witnessed Harwell and Sutton deeds from 1303 onwards⁸¹⁷ seems unproven. Since John, identified from 1306 as John Brounz of Sutton, witnessed Harwell deeds with his son John between 1313 and 1317,⁸¹⁸ he must have been a mature man in 1303 and his absence earlier probably indicates that he was an incomer. If so, it may have been he who obtained the Manor House site from the Courtenays, perhaps as a reward for service

⁸¹¹ Ibid. 100.

⁸¹² For date, see above.

⁸¹³ Berks. R.O., D/Ebt F 23; deeds in possession of Mr. Astor; Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 73-4, 81-2.

⁸¹⁴ *Curia Regis Rolls*, vi (1932), 390-1.

⁸¹⁵ Magdalen College, Oxford, Harwell deeds, 16b, 57b, 4A (TS. cat. nos. 7, 8, 13). Nos. 16b and 57b were dated by Macray, TS. cat., to c. 1240-50 and no. 4A to c. 1260-70, but the names of other witnesses indicate that no. 7 is probably early 13th century and no. 13 was witnessed by William son of Robert (d. by 1247).

⁸¹⁶ *Sutton C.: Hist.* 49-50.

⁸¹⁷ For Harwell, Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. nos. 56 sqq.; for Sutton, Berks. R.O., D/EP 7/123, extracts from Courtenay cartulary at Powderham, grant by Avise de Arches to Sir Hugh Courtenay, 5 Aug. 1305.

⁸¹⁸ E.g. Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. nos. 80, 94, 100, 110, 128, 130, 171.

elsewhere.⁸¹⁹ The elder Richard Brounz of Harwell⁸²⁰ was presumably his younger son. The younger John Brounz apparently succeeded his father in or soon after 1317,⁸²¹ served as M.P. and J.P. for Berkshire in the 1330s, as well as on various commissions down to 1348, and may have been steward of Abingdon abbey.⁸²² It was probably he, or his father in old age, who was responsible for rebuilding the south aisle of the church in a late Geometric style in the early 14th century; by the 15th century it had been used as a family chapel for several generations.⁸²³ He seems to have been followed by another John Brounz, who died before 1377 when his son and heir William, recorded holding part of a knight's fee from the Courtenays, settled houses and a carucate of land in Sutton and Didcot. William, knight of the shire for Berkshire and escheator for Berkshire and Oxfordshire, died by 1401⁸²⁴ and was followed by his son Richard, still alive in 1420,⁸²⁵ and Richard's son Richard, still alive in 1458.⁸²⁶ The estate then passed through Richard's daughter Rose, wife of Richard Humfreston of Humfreston (Salop.), to their daughter Agnes, who married William Hulse and settled at Sutton. They were followed by William's son Andrew Hulse (d. 1558), who left the estate to his widow.⁸²⁷ Andrew's son Thomas, a recusant, who may have inherited the estate by 1582, in 1593 made a settlement of what was called the manor of Bruce's Court. He died in 1613 and the manor passed to his daughter Mary's husband Edmund Wollascot; their son Thomas died about 1660 and was followed by his son, another Thomas, who married in 1660 his cousin Katherine Wollascot, who resided. She died in 1722 and the manor passed to her grandson William Wollascot, who was living at Woolhampton in 1723. He died in 1757. Brunces Court may have descended with his manors of Brimpton and Woolhampton to his son-in-law Arthur James Plunkett, earl of Fingall, who sold those estates c. 1786.⁸²⁸ Francis Elderfield of Harwell apparently bought Brunce's Court after 1775 and certainly owned it in 1804.⁸²⁹ He bought Sutton manor in 1812, thus reuniting the two estates.

NORMAN HALL

Site Documentation

Evidence about the *curia* between the 11th and 13th centuries probably relates to the Manor House, but the change from a *capitalis curia* with garden and curtilage worth 6s. 8d. and two dovecotes worth 5s. in 1274⁸³⁰ to a capital messuage and dovecote worth 6s. 8d. together in 1341⁸³¹ probably reflects the shift to the Norman Hall site. In 1458 the buildings consisted of a certain old house and a dovecot and sheephous, worth 1s. 8d.⁸³² Apparently in 1531, and certainly in 1605,

⁸¹⁹ No evidence has been found in the feet of fines for Berks. of any grant from a Courtenay to a Brounz in the 13th or 14th century which might relate to the site. The Courtenays' demesne, however, was assessed at 6 carucates in 1274 but only 5 in 1341: P.R.O., C 133/6, no. 1; *ibid.* E 152/32, *dorse*.

⁸²⁰ Above, gazetteer, Harwell.

⁸²¹ Cf. Magd. Coll. Harwell deeds, TS. cat. nos. 172-3, 179, 192, 203, 219.

⁸²² Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 50 and references there cited.

⁸²³ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 50-4; *idem*, *Sutton C.: P. and P.*, appendix; History of Parliament, Commons, 1386-1471, draft biogs. (TSS. in possession of Hist. of Parl. Trust), Wm. Brouns.

⁸²⁴ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 373, which however calls Wm. the son of Jn. (fl. to 1348); *Cal. Close*, 1377-81, 76, 97; Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 52-3, calling him grds. of Jn.; Hist. Parl., draft biog.

⁸²⁵ For rest of descent, unless otherwise stated, *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 373-4; Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 53, 66-71.

⁸²⁶ P.R.O., C 139/169, no. 38.

⁸²⁷ Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MSS. Wills Berks. 7, f. 232.

⁸²⁸ *V.C.H. Berks.* iii, 445; iv, 52-3.

⁸²⁹ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 73, 75. The source for the purchase was not traced.

⁸³⁰ P.R.O., C 133/6, no. 1.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.* E 152/32, *dorse*.

⁸³² *Ibid.* C 138/169, no. 38.

the site included a thatched barn of 11 bays, two stables, an oxhouse, a stone hayhouse, a chapel of 5 bays, a sheephouse of 8 bays, and a dovecot, all bounded by the Thames to the west and north.⁸³³ A settlement of 1660 included the site of the manor of Sutton and all that mansion house called the Chapel.⁸³⁴ Local tradition claims the building as a chapel built 'when the Normans closed the churches',⁸³⁵ presumably a garbled reference to the interdict imposed by Innocent III. Architectural evidence indicates that the house was built before 1230, when, as already seen, the *curia* was still the Manor House; the identification since the 16th century as a chapel is thus entirely plausible. It may also be that Jordan the Child, who was alleged in 1278 to have been presented by Reginald de Courtenay to the church of Sutton in Richard I's reign,⁸³⁶ was in fact a chaplain of the chapel, which may have been intended for use by the tenants of the manor rather than for purely domestic purposes. Nevertheless there is no documentary evidence of such a chapel in use at Sutton Courtenay, and the building presumably fell into disuse, thus being available as a court house and centre of the manor farmstead after the transfer of the Manor House site to the Brounzes.⁸³⁷

Building

The house (plan, Fig. 40) has been described by various authors. In the early 20th century it was recognized as a chapel, but Wood and Fletcher followed Preston's view that it was a hall built in the 1190s.⁸³⁸ The chapel is constructed on an artificially levelled platform, raised at its west end above the surrounding marshy soil. The building is approximately orientated and is a simple rectangle in plan. Original features include, on the south front, fenestration corresponding to the 5-bay chapel described in 1605: there are the remains of three lancet windows east of the round-headed doorway and one west of it. The doorway is elaborate. It has two orders, the inner with engaged shafts and roll-moulded arch enriched with dog-tooth ornament outside, and the outer including colonettes having capitals of incipient stiff-leaf form, supporting imposts above which is a roll-moulded outer arch enriched with nailhead. Above that is a roll-moulded label. In the west wall is a lancet whose sill is much lower than those of the side-wall windows, and whose rerearch rises well above wall level, showing that the window was designed to light a large open room and that the roof was open in form (probably soulaced or scissor-braced). The arrangement of openings on the north side differs from that on the south. There are traces of a wide opening, perhaps a two-light window, between two lancets, while the roll-moulded doorway is further to the west than the south doorway and has no window west of it. Wood suggested that this indicated a domestic annexe, but in a hall the absence of opposed doorways and a service block would be surprising.⁸³⁹ A segmental-headed recess at the south end of the east wall serves no obvious purpose, but it may be an alteration: there is a possible break in the external stonework at its south end.

The chapel was reroofed in the later Middle Ages. The new roof has clasped purlins and windbraces supported by trusses with tiebeams, low queen struts between tiebeams and principals, and arch-braced collars. The late-medieval east window of three lights under a square

⁸³³ Ibid. LR 2/196, f. 102; LR 2/198, ff. 117v–118. Both surveys describe the demesne as held by lease of 1531.

⁸³⁴ Berks. R.O., D/Ebn T 2, deed of 2 Feb. 1659/60.

⁸³⁵ Inf. from the custodian (1988).

⁸³⁶ Berks., Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl. xxv, 107.

⁸³⁷ For similar cases at Deerhurst (Glos.) and Sinnington (now N. Yorks.), C.R.J. Currie, 'A Romanesque Roof at Odda's Chapel, Deerhurst, Glos.?' *Antiq. Jnl.* lxiii (1983), 58–63, esp. p. 60; R.C.H.M. *Houses of the North York Moors*, 20–1.

⁸³⁸ C. Lynam, 'Sutton Courtenay: Manor Farm', *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xi (1905–6), 113–5; V.C.H. Berks. iv, 371; M. E. Wood, 'Norman Dom. Archit.' *Archaeol. Jnl.* xcii (1935), 176–7 and references; Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 33–4.

⁸³⁹ Cf. e.g. Appleton.

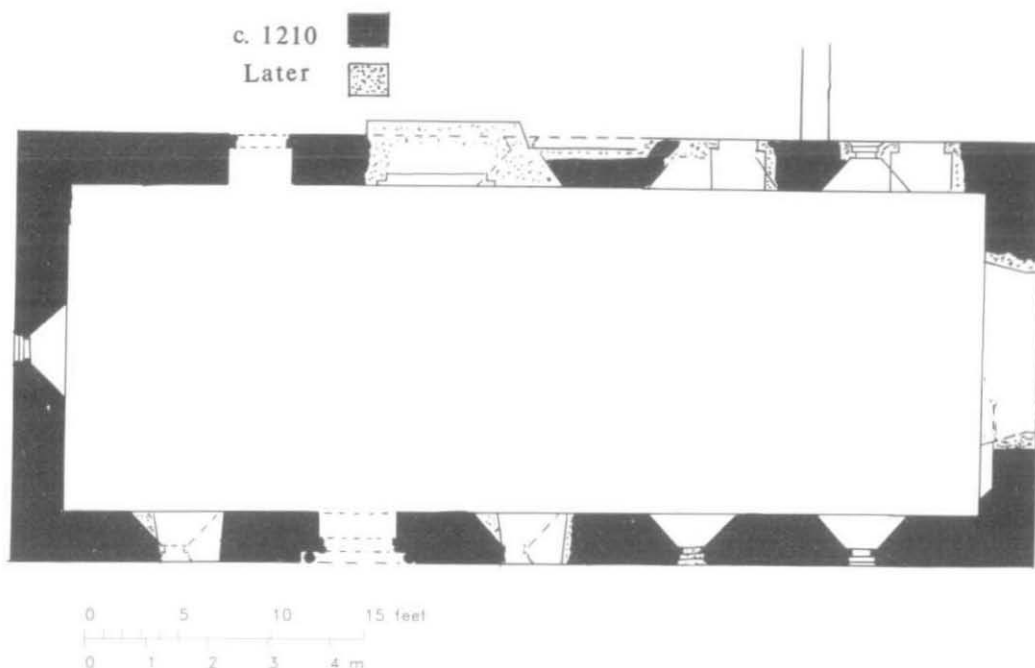


Fig. 40. Norman Hall, Sutton Courtenay (after J. Blair).

head, of which fragments were traceable before the First World War,⁸⁴⁰ has since been restored with three mullioned lights with cusped heads. After the reroofing the building was used as an open hall: the timbers are sooted and there are traces of soot on the south wall, as if an open hearth was placed there. A northern extension of uncertain date is indicated by the outline of a timber-framed and jettied structure in the stonework of the north-east corner. In 1626 a door was inserted at the east end of the north wall.⁸⁴¹ The fireplace further west in that wall may be of the same date, and presumably the inserted first floor which was removed by H.E.A. Lindsay. By the early 20th century there were also attics.⁸⁴² After 1905 a modern mock-timber house was added to the north.⁸⁴³

As Lynam observed, the style of the original building is more consistent with 'the earliest Early English' than with Norman work,⁸⁴⁴ and is thus more likely to be a little after 1200 than c. 1190. That perhaps supports the Interdict theory and rules out Jordan the Child as first chaplain, unless the stone building was preceded by a wooden one.

MANOR HOUSE

Site documentation

About 1080 Alfsi, the king's reeve at Sutton, attempted to remove a cartload of lead from ruinous stone buildings on Andersey island to the *curia* at Sutton, but was prevented by abbot Ethelhelm.

⁸⁴⁰ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 371.

⁸⁴¹ Inscribed date.

⁸⁴² *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xi, 113; Fletcher, *Sutton C.: P. and P.* 2.

⁸⁴³ Not shown on plan, *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xi, 114.

⁸⁴⁴ *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xi, 115.

On the other hand, Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I, during her stay at Sutton in September 1101 while awaiting there the birth of her daughter, the future empress Matilda (born about February 1102), agreed to Abingdon abbey's use of stone and lead from Andersey. Fletcher observed that those incidents probably indicated that stone buildings were under construction at Sutton *c.* 1080 but had been completed by 1101.⁸⁴⁵

No evidence has been found of further use of Sutton by the royal household after 1102. As already seen,⁸⁴⁶ the *curia* was still on the Manor House site *c.* 1230, but the site passed to the Brounzs probably before 1303.⁸⁴⁷ In 1341 John Brounz received licence to use an oratory built in his house at Sutton;⁸⁴⁸ the licence was renewed for John repeatedly from 1344 to 1347,⁸⁴⁹ for William Brounz in 1397,⁸⁵⁰ and for Richard Brounz and his wife in 1408.⁸⁵¹ At the death of Andrew Hulse in 1558 the house included hall, parlour, new chamber, brewing house, chamber over the buttery, inner chamber, little chamber, maiden's chamber, buttery, kitchen, and stable.⁸⁵² In 1593 Ralph Smyth held two-thirds of the chief house and the Pools meadow at farm; they had been confiscated for Thomas Hulse's recusancy. The house appears to have been let to undertenants.⁸⁵³ In 1717 the buildings included the mansion house, barns, stables, and dovehouses, all held by a tenant on a lease of 1711.⁸⁵⁴

Buildings

The house (plan and sections, Figs. 41–4) now consists of three ranges round an open courtyard facing north-west; the principal front is on the south-east side. In the early 19th century there was a fourth range on the north-west side of the courtyard, with a projection to the north-east, both long since demolished.⁸⁵⁵ For convenience of description, the convention adopted by Fletcher, treating the courtyard as facing west, will be followed here.

The earliest part of the structure is the stone-walled central part of the south range (section, Fig. 43) which is clearly separated by straight joints in the south wall from extensions to west and east. The absence of quoining at the east end suggests either that it continued further east, the eastern part being demolished when the 14th-century hall described below was built, or that it was built up against an earlier timber or mud-walled building, perhaps also a hall. During excavation in 1968 a sherd of St. Neot's ware was found next to the wall at this point some 18 ins. below present ground level.⁸⁵⁶ At the west end, excavation in 1968 revealed quoin-stones in the foundations,⁸⁵⁷ though the quoining is less evident higher up the wall. The building is two-storeyed, and the low basement is covered by a massive stone barrel vault. The floor, despite apparently having been raised in 1947,⁸⁵⁸ is well below the modern ground level and is regularly

⁸⁴⁵ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 21–3, citing *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv (1920), 95–6 and C. Johnson and H.A. Cronne (eds.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ii (1956), nos. 550, 565–7. Cf. now M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda* (1991), 9.

⁸⁴⁶ Above, gazetteer, Sutton, Historiography.

⁸⁴⁷ Above, Sutton, descent of manors, Brounz's Court.

⁸⁴⁸ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 373.

⁸⁴⁹ Wilts. R.O., Reg. Wyvill, vol. 2, ff. 62v., 67v., 78 v.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid. Reg. Mitford, f. 118.

⁸⁵¹ J.M. Horn (ed.), *Reg. Rob. Hallum* (Cant. & York Soc. lxxii, 1982), p. 97 (no. 728).

⁸⁵² *Berks. R.O.*, formerly Bodl. MSS. Wills Berks. 75, inventory of Andrew Hulse, Sutton Courtenay. The rooms in this inventory were noted in 1971 during work for another project and it has not been possible to re-examine it.

⁸⁵³ *Recusant Roll i* (Catholic Rec. Soc. xviii, 1916), 7–9. The other third may have been held by Andrew Hulse's widow in dower.

⁸⁵⁴ *Berks. R.O.*, Q/RRp 4, p. 48.

⁸⁵⁵ P.R.O., MR 50.

⁸⁵⁶ Sherd with notes by J.M. Fletcher claiming identification by Martin Biddle, in possession of the writer 1991.

⁸⁵⁷ N.M.R. photo BB68/4971.

⁸⁵⁸ Note by J.M. Fletcher on draft section drawing.

flooded in winter, presumably owing to a rise in the water table since it was built. The cellar is entered through doors set centrally in the end walls. It is largely featureless except for two small rectangular cupboard doors in the east wall, which is thinner than the other three walls and may be a 14th- or 16th-century insertion. The first-floor room has been completely modernized. On the south wall the stonework consists of narrow rectangular blocks of brown calcareous-grit rubble, of varying length, partly dressed and laid in fairly regular courses in a thick mortar matrix. The original courses rise as far as a modern first-floor windowsill in the centre, the walls above being thinner. On either side of the window the upper part of the wall is largely rebuilt but there are indications that the original coursing may have continued upwards for perhaps 1 ft. (0.3 m.). The north wall is of stone rubble up to the level of the vault's crown but above that is timber-framed, with studs 6 by 4 ins. covered by lath and plaster.⁸⁵⁹ The stonework has been refaced and recently repointed; claims that there were round-headed windows until the 1940s have not been verified.⁸⁶⁰ The wall bulges outwards (Fig. 43) and the refacing and timber superstructure may have been necessitated by the collapse of the upper part.

It is clear that the building was a chamber with cellar below. Dr. Fletcher compared the stonework with late Saxon and early Norman work in the region, although the closest parallel that he identified for the coursing is early 13th-century.⁸⁶¹ Nevertheless several points favour an early date. The massive semicircular ribless vaulting with its solid spandrels is both extravagant and inefficient. The quoining at the east end of the south wall resembles that at St. George's Tower, Oxford, of the late 11th century. In late 12th- and early 13th-century buildings at Sutton, such as Norman Hall and parts of the church, limestone was preferred to the brown grit. A chamber of that period would have had windows large enough to have left at least some traces of their removal in the surviving stonework. If the building is before the mid 12th century it is reasonable to follow Fletcher in regarding it as perhaps the result of the building works of c. 1080 inferred above. Since there is no evidence of any other Romanesque stone structure on the site, if the chamber block was indeed built before 1100 the upper chamber would have been the most secure room in the *curia* for the birthroom of the empress.

Hussey claimed that the rubble-built western extension of the south range dated from the 13th century, on the grounds of alleged traces of a 'partly burned' Gothic doorway, a tall two-light window, and 'pointed windows' of the cellar at ground level. He evidently regarded the building as a first-floor hall.⁸⁶² None of those alleged features remains visible. Photographs of 1949 show a fake Gothic window in the west wall, and a window in the south wall with a segmental-headed timber lintel.⁸⁶³ Near the centre of the south wall there survives a low, nearly semicircular bricked-up arch with stone voussoirs, perhaps one of the 'pointed windows', and conceivably either the head of a doorway to the basement or more probably a relieving arch like that illustrated by Turner in the 13th-century service wing at Charney Bassett.⁸⁶⁴ The arch, which the late W.E. Godfrey suggested might date from c. 1240,⁸⁶⁵ at least confirms that the building was two-storeyed, and presumably served as an additional chamber and cellar. The building suffered from conversion by H.E.A. Lindsay to a fake great hall, with intruded panelling, a minstrels' gallery, and a large fireplace with four-centred head on the north wall. The chimney to the fireplace was still there in 1949.⁸⁶⁶ The building was later modernized by the Astors, who converted it to two storeys and attics and removed all the 'Gothic' features. As a result of the 20th-century changes the walls are so patched and altered that no original features, other than the blocked arch

⁸⁵⁹ J.M. Fletcher's notes, 1968.

⁸⁶⁰ J.M. Fletcher's notes, referring to a now-lost drawing but contradicted by inf. from the Hon. F.D.L. Astor.

⁸⁶¹ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.*, 22, 99, referring to wall in New Coll. garden, Oxford, for date of which see *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 301.

⁸⁶² *Country Life*, 16 and 23 May 1931, 648.

⁸⁶³ N.M.R., N.B.R. Photographs, Sutton Courtenay, AA49/2744; AA 49/2799 (P.S. Spokes).

⁸⁶⁴ Above, gazetteer, Longworth: Charney Bassett.

⁸⁶⁵ J.M. Fletcher's notes.

⁸⁶⁶ N.M.R., N.B.R. photographs, Sutton Courtenay, AA49/2744, AA44/2799 (P.S. Spokes).

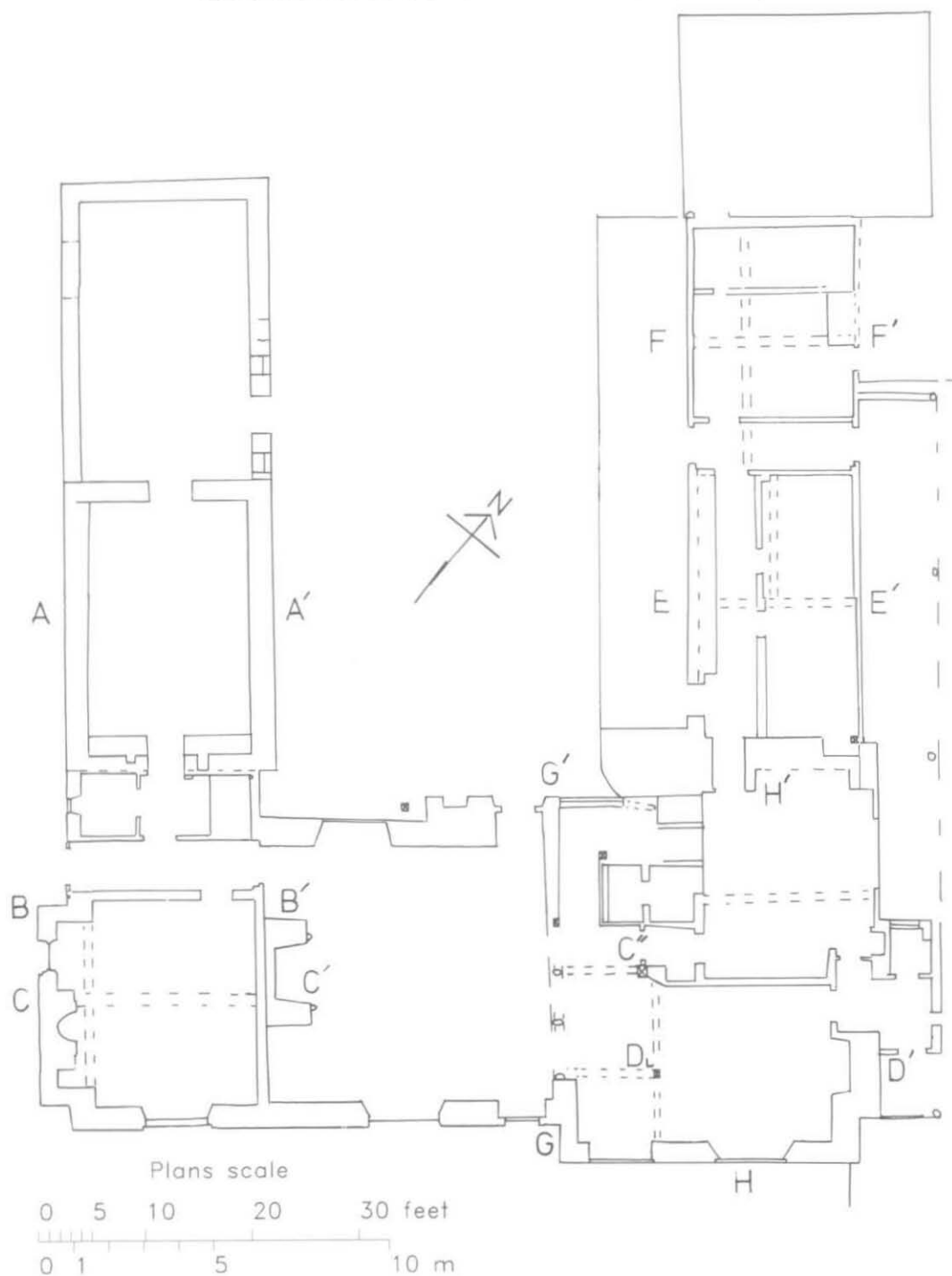


Fig. 41. Manor House, Sutton Courtenay: ground floor plan.

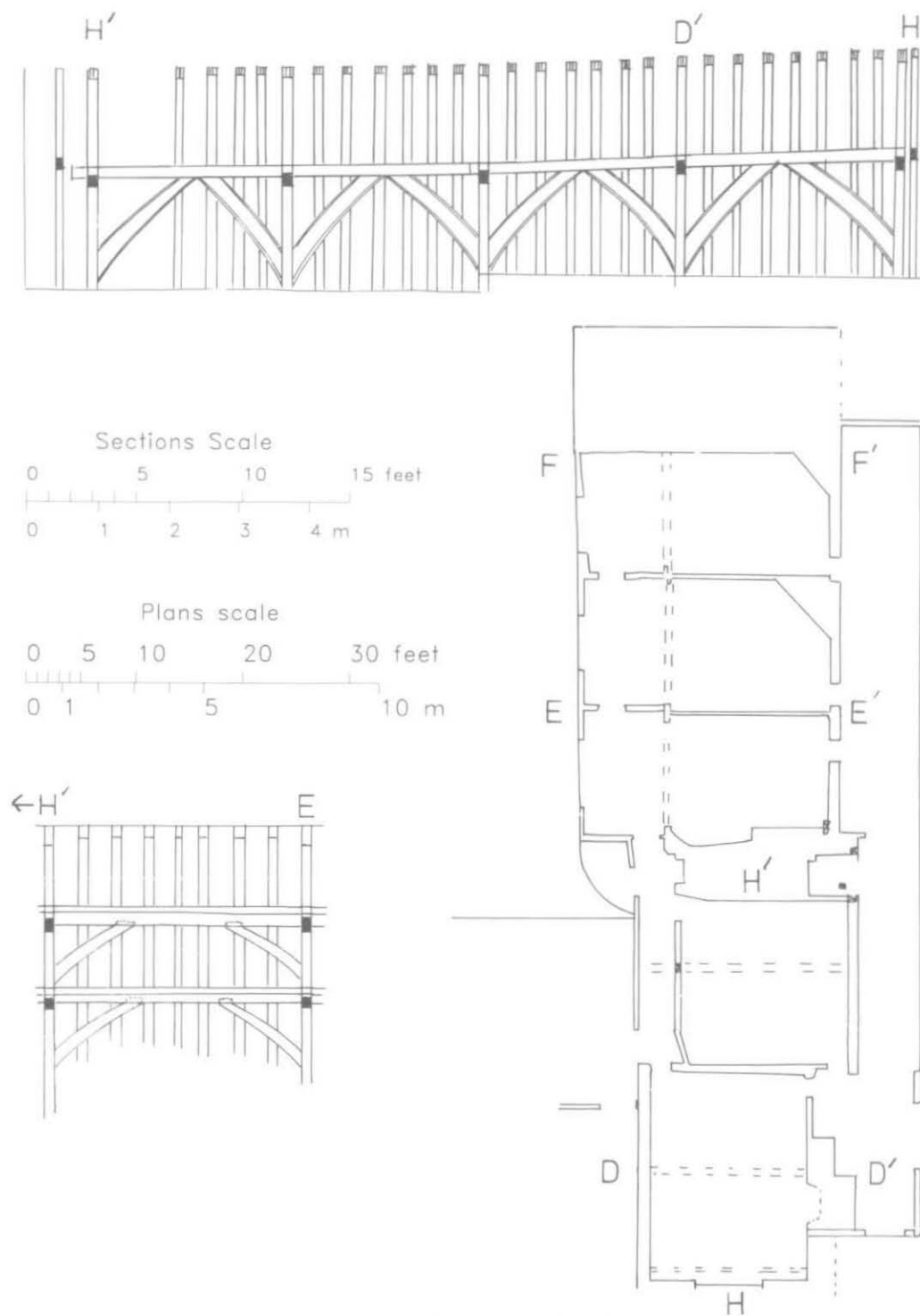


Fig. 42. Manor House, Sutton: first floor plan of north-east wing; sections.

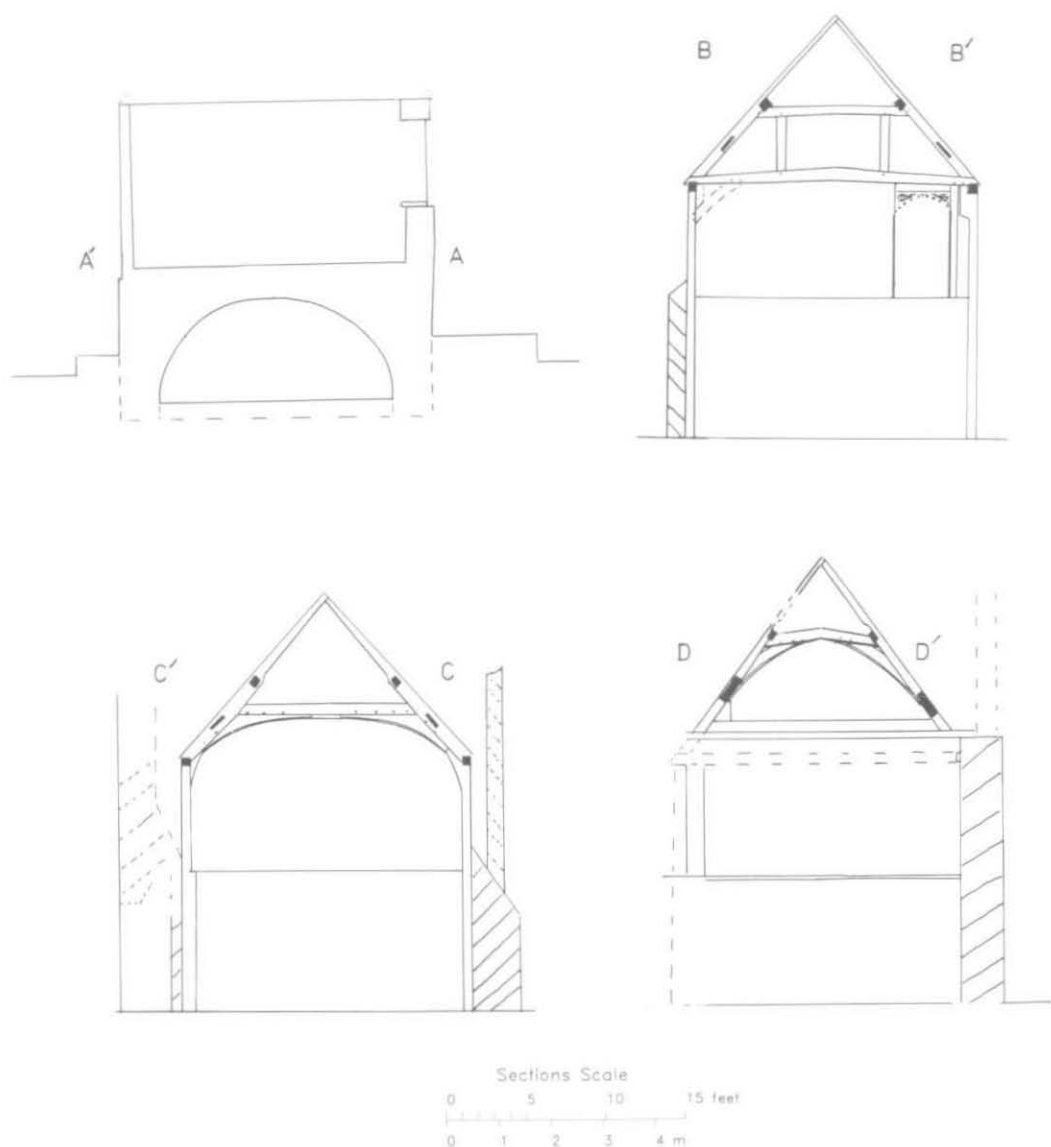


Fig. 43. Manor House, Sutton: sections.

mentioned above, can be discerned. The roof of this and the centre part of the range is of the 17th century, with principal rafters and tenoned purlins.

Lindsay's forgeries were richly ironic in that the house contains extensive remains of a genuine medieval open hall, which included all the present east range and part of the south range. The walls are partly timber-framed on the west, but of stone surmounted by timber-framing on the east; the stonework may result from 16th-century casing. There are three arch-braced base-cruck trusses (Fig. 44), all partly plastered over. The northern truss and possibly the central truss have cinquefoiled cusping below the arch, with indented spandrels; the southern truss appears from the south (in the loft) to have had a plain arch. Smoke blackening and mortices for windbraces on

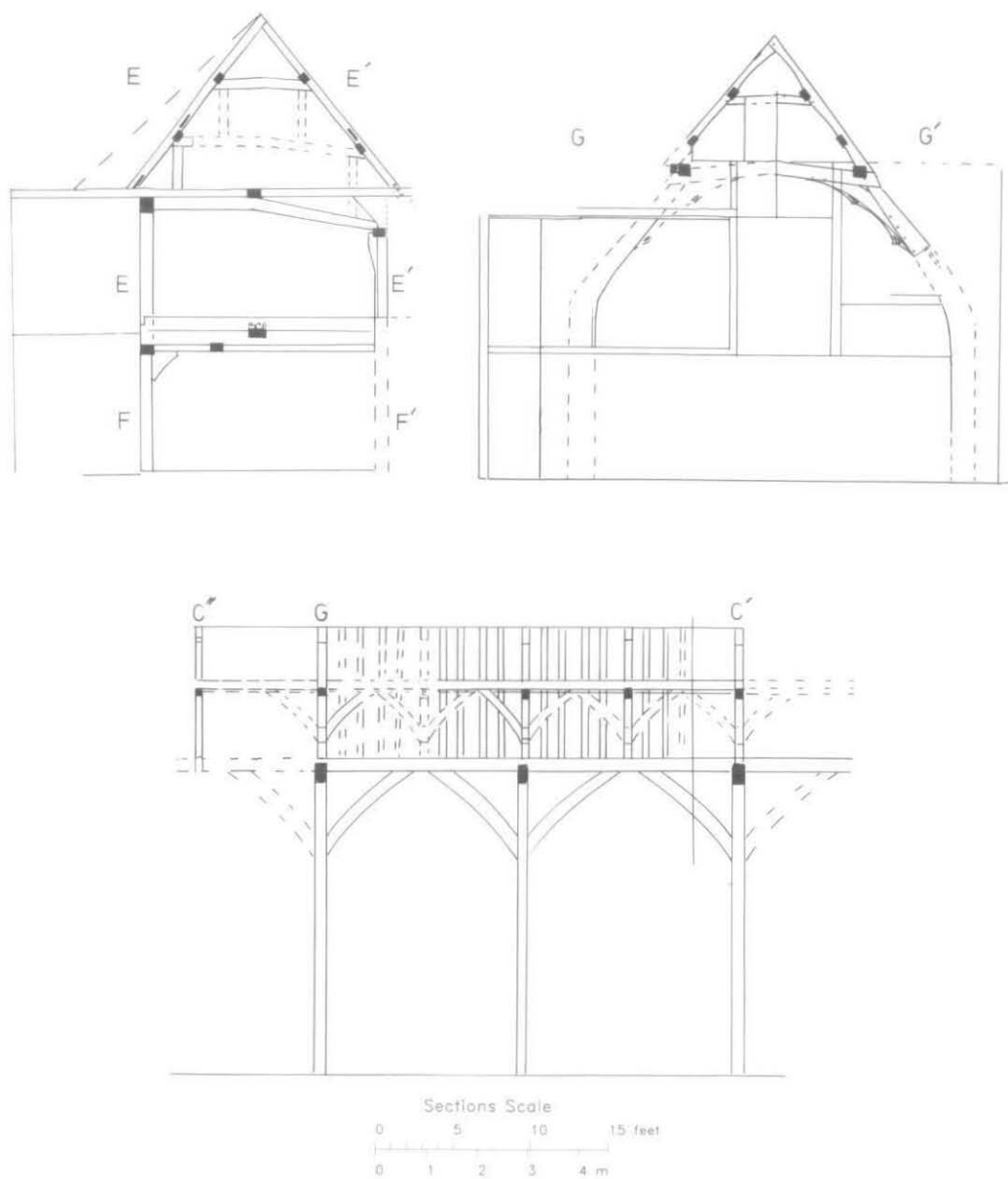


Fig. 44. Manor House, Sutton: sections.

the south face of the truss confirm that the hall continued into the present south range; a base-cruick windbrace has been re-used in the loft between the truss and the south wing's roof. Each truss has a single tie supporting the roof plate, above which was an intermediate truss, having principals shaped into trefoils with slightly curved feet, in each bay. The intermediate trusses have been damaged by the insertion of dormer gables in the 17th century. The upper roof has purlins and windbraces of thick cross-section; the purlins are tenoned at the central truss but clasped at the northern truss. At the north end of the hall is a half-bay terminating in a closed truss with clasped purlins; the principals are apparently supported on the structure of the north wing, though that is not completely certain owing to later alterations. The cross-entry was therefore at this end, and the northern base-cruick, despite its form, served in lieu of a spere truss. That conclusion was confirmed by investigations under the stairs in 1987-8, which found a break in the stonework at the expected position of the back door.

The north wing was therefore the service wing. The ground and first floors have been drastically altered from the 16th century onwards, but the medieval roof survives (sections, Figs. 42-3) and shows that the chamber upstairs was of three bays, with four principal-rafter trusses having arch-braced collars, and signs of tiebeams at least at the east end.⁸⁶⁷ There was a flying rafter-couple outside each end truss, perhaps indicating jettied gables; the weathering of the western couple can be seen in the loft. The roof has clasped purlins of squarish cross-section, like those in the hall; they have through-splayed scarf joints and the heavy windbraces, which meet in the middle of each bay, are tenoned into them. The principals are diminished by shaving above the purlins, but their uppermost lengths are again of full thickness. The common rafters in both wing and hall are of square section; many retain sawmarks.

The treatment of the roof suggests that the wing is contemporary with the hall. Fletcher attributed them to William Brounz c. 1390,⁸⁶⁸ but the closest parallels are of the mid 14th century. The Queen's Head, Crowmarsh Gifford, of 1341, includes at least one base-cruick truss and an upper roof with clasped purlins.⁸⁶⁹ The hall at Church Farm, Lewknor, built probably in 1350 or 1351,⁸⁷⁰ has an upper roof with intermediate trusses, clasped purlins, and thick windbraces much like that of the Manor House, with similar cusping below the main arch. The hall at Tudor House, Steventon, with which Fletcher himself compared that at Sutton,⁸⁷¹ has been dated to 1355/6.⁸⁷² It seems likely that the hall and wing were built by John Brounz (fl. 1317-48) perhaps about 1341 when his oratory, which may have been in the wing, was licensed.

Perhaps about 1500 the north wing was extended westwards by four bays of two-storeyed timber-framing; the extension (plan and section, Figs. 42, 44) was narrower than the older wing. Little original work is visible on the ground floor, which was unheated, but the cross passage at the east end of the second bay from the west, with a doorway at the south end having a moulded surround, may be original. The rest of the second bay and the first bay formed a single room with a chamfered binding beam on brackets at the bay division, and two longitudinal bridgers. The third bay has a centrally placed bridger. Upstairs there appear to have been four separate chambers, but that is not certain. The roof has two tiers of clasped purlins with windbraces halved to their backs; it seems to have had queen struts between upper and lower collar and three or more struts between lower collar and tie. It later subsided markedly on the north side. In the later 17th century the subsidence was corrected by inserting new tiebeams which also spanned the roof of a new corridor to the south; at the same time attics were inserted and the roof converted to interrupted-collar form. Corner fireplaces were put in then or later in some of the rooms.

The extension to the north range may have been built as, or become, the stable mentioned in

⁸⁶⁷ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 176 states absurdly that the roof has queen posts.

⁸⁶⁸ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: P. and P.* 2.

⁸⁶⁹ *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 46, 48.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.* xxi, 47, 49.

⁸⁷¹ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 100. The suggestion *ibid.* that the hall might be attributed to John, not Wm. Brounz was added by the editor on grounds of that comparison.

⁸⁷² Above, Steventon.

1558, with servants' chambers over. If so, then the large axial kitchen chimney stack inserted into the west end of the 14th-century service wing must also date from before 1558.

The parlour and new chamber mentioned in 1558 survive at the south-east corner of the house (sections, Fig. 43), replacing the south bay of the 14th-century hall and forming an extension of the Norman chamber. The block was presumably built by Andrew Hulse. It has stone ground-floor walls south and east and timber in the short stretch at the north-west corner; the first floor walls are timber-framed and, on the south, close-studded. A straight joint in the stonework of the east wall may mark the position of a window. On the south wall is a large lateral stack of coursed rubble with ashlar quoins; the fireplace heating the parlour is a replacement. A cross passage leading from the hall separates the parlour from a small anteroom next to the earlier cellar; the room is lit by a one-light window with uncusped four-centred head. Though the staircase is modern, there seems to have been an original stair here from which a door with four-centred head and traceried spandrels led into the chamber. That room is of two bays; the end trusses have tiebeams, collars, queen struts, and clasped purlins, but the central truss seems to be of jointed-cruck type, with purlins tenoned to the principals, and has a depressed arch below a collar set lower than the others. The windbraces are four-centred boards.

Since no chamber over the hall was mentioned in 1558, that room was probably still open then, and the axial chimney stack at the south end is presumably later. Remains of an Elizabethan ceiling with chamfered joists and stepped stops remain at the north end. The ceiling extends into what was formerly a stone porch added in front of the original cross passage. The rubble stone facing or casing of the hall and north wing may also date from the same time.

Extensive 17th-century alterations are probably attributable to Thomas and Katherine Wollascot after their marriage.⁸⁷³ The work included a grand staircase at the rear of the hall,⁸⁷⁴ blocking the cross passage; the insertion of attics in the east range, with two dormer gables on each side, and two others over the porch and stairs, making a row of five gables, ornamented with new bargeboards, on the east front and a row of three on the west; and the addition of a loggia to the south side of the north range, surmounted by the new corridor already noted. The corridor and staircase are lit by Ipswich windows. A new cross entry appears to have been created south of the staircase, though the screen which separates it from the stair may be Lindsay's work. Upstairs a corridor was created at the stairhead by removing part of the south wall of the north wing and replacing it by a timber-framed partition further north. Several new chimneys with brick flues and fillets, including perhaps the lateral brick-topped stone chimney on the north side of the north wing, were built. Outbuildings of the same period also survive.

H.E.A. Lindsay, besides the work already mentioned, added a second loggia on the north side of the north wing, matching that on the south. He was also responsible for inserting and reshuffling various antique fireplaces and pieces of panelling; the fireplaces described before the First World War⁸⁷⁵ have all been destroyed or moved. Between 1928 and 1931 Lindsay replaced the Jacobean panelling which he had inserted in the hall with the existing bolecion-moulded panelling and built a fireplace to match.⁸⁷⁶

RECTORY HOUSE (THE ABBEY)

Descent

Before the Conquest Sutton church appears to have been a small minster (*monasterium*),⁸⁷⁷ like many in Wiltshire and Berkshire,⁸⁷⁸ with a hide of land and chapelries at Milton and

⁸⁷³ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 101.

⁸⁷⁴ Described, *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 371.

⁸⁷⁵ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 371.

⁸⁷⁶ *National Geographic Mag.* liii (5), May 1928, 631; *Country Life*, 23 May 1931, 649-50.

⁸⁷⁷ *Chron. Mon. de Abingdon* (Rolls Ser.), ii, 28.

⁸⁷⁸ John Blair, 'Secular Minster Churches in Domesday Book', in P. Sawyer (ed.), *Domesday Book: a Reassessment* (1985), 112.

Appleford.⁸⁷⁹ Abingdon abbey later claimed to have held the hide and two thirds of the tithes,⁸⁸⁰ but the claim to tithes may be a projection backwards of later arrangements. In 1086 the hide was held of Abingdon by Alwi or Aelfwin the priest, whose father had held it. There were three bordars on the estate.⁸⁸¹ Soon after 1090 William II granted the church with its lands and tithes to the monks of Abingdon as they had enjoyed them in William I's time.⁸⁸² Alwi then agreed with the abbot that he should retain Sutton, with reversion first to his son and thereafter to the abbey, on condition of surrendering Milton chapelry immediately.⁸⁸³ During the 12th century the abbey received several confirmations of its rights in the church.⁸⁸⁴ By the mid 13th century, and almost certainly by the later 12th, the abbey took two thirds of the tithes and the rector the remaining third.⁸⁸⁵ In 1258, following a dispute, the rectory was formally appropriated to the abbey and a vicarage ordained.⁸⁸⁶ In 1278, however, Hugh de Courtenay, lord of Sutton manor, sued the abbey for the advowson; an allegedly biased jury was impanelled and in 1284 found unexpectedly for Courtenay.⁸⁸⁷ The vicarage was therefore merged with the rectory, the advowson of which descended with the manor until 1481, when Lord Ferrers granted it to St. George's chapel, Windsor.⁸⁸⁸ The Courtenays used the advowson to patronize a long succession of eminent pluralists and dignitaries, the first of whom, Solomon of Rochester, the chief justice in eyre, had presided over the 1284 hearing.⁸⁸⁹ In 1495 St. George's appropriated the rectory; a second vicarage was ordained in 1496.⁸⁹⁰

The college held the rectory estate until it passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under an Order in Council of 1867.⁸⁹¹ It had been leased in 1472 to Reginald Nutt or Mutt, chaplain of Sutton and later the first vicar.⁸⁹² The college continued to let it out, in 1514 to Richard Wyntersell, in 1538 to John Hyde,⁸⁹³ expectative leases were granted to Thomas Sackford, a master of the court of Requests, in 1562 and to John Fettiplace of Bessels Leigh in 1564, but it is not clear if they took effect.⁸⁹⁴ The lease was held from 1611 to 1631 or later by the Windsor family of Bentley (Hants), but from 1669 by the Justices of Sutton, who resided, or their trustees.⁸⁹⁵ In 1863 the lease was renewed by Theobald Theobald, a relative of the Justices, and in 1877 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners conveyed to him the freehold of the rectorial glebe in return for his surrender of tithe rent-charge.⁸⁹⁶ He died in 1884 and his widow in 1902.⁸⁹⁷ The house with 8 acres was sold to Col. H.N.B. Good. He died in 1929 and his widow sold it to Dorothy Elizabeth Pike. It passed by sale to Mrs. E.M. Berens-Dowdeswell in 1932, to Mrs. E.B. St. C. Fleming in 1941, and to the Hon. F.D.L. Astor in 1958. He let it to the Ockenden Venture in 1961. In 1978 the Astors sold the house and part of the grounds; after ownership by various property companies, the house passed in 1982 to the New Era Centre Ltd.,⁸⁹⁸ still owners and occupiers in 1990.

⁸⁷⁹ *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv, 28.

⁸⁸⁰ *Chron. Mon. de Abingdon*, ii, 27.

⁸⁸¹ *V.C.H. Berks.* i, 340.

⁸⁸² *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, i, p. 92, no. 359.

⁸⁸³ *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv, 29-31.

⁸⁸⁴ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 377.

⁸⁸⁵ *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv, 104-5.

⁸⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 106.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 107-9; P.R.O., CP 40/27, m. 19d; P.R.O., JUST 1/48, m. 1 (P.R.O. refs. kindly supplied by Dr. Paul Brand).

⁸⁸⁸ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 377; J.N. Dalton (ed.), *The Manuscripts of St. George's Chapel, Windsor* (1957), 56.

⁸⁸⁹ Rectors listed in *Berks. R.O.*, D/EP 7/123. For Solomon, *Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Archaeol. Jnl.* xxv, 109-10. Since the jury had been impanelled earlier Solomon's acceptance of the rectory was less discreditable than claimed *ibid.* by Preston (this point is owed to Dr. Brand).

⁸⁹⁰ Windsor, St. George's Chapel MSS., Denton Black Book ff. 42 v., 50 sqq.

⁸⁹¹ Deeds in possession of the Hon. F.D.L. Astor, abstract of title of Mrs. I. Milne, 1902.

⁸⁹² Dalton (ed.), MSS. of St. George's Chapel, 56-7.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.* 57.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 376-7.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 377-8; St. Geo.'s Chap. MSS., Ch. Com. Docs. 118969-118982, 238473-5, 238477, 238483-5.

⁸⁹⁶ Astor deeds, abstract of title of Mrs. I. Milne, 1902.

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.* abstract of title of Mrs. E.B. St. C. Fleming, 1947.

⁸⁹⁸ Astor deeds.

Site documentation

There was a parsonage house by 1284, used by Abingdon abbey's staff; the abbot alleged in 1290 that Solomon of Rochester had seized goods in it belonging to the abbey. He also claimed that Solomon had extorted 40 marks (£26 6s. 8d.) from the abbey for alleged dilapidations to the rectory house.⁸⁹⁹ Solomon was not convicted of any offence, and it seems likely that he was exercising the normal right of a new incumbent to claim for repairs against the old incumbent. If so, extensive rebuilding of the house between 1284 and 1290 is indicated. It is not clear how many of Solomon's successors used the house as a residence, even intermittently, though William Steele, rector in 1371, left money to each of his four servants at Sutton.⁹⁰⁰ Robert of Walsham, rector 1372-84 and dean of Wallingford, may have resided intermittently.⁹⁰¹ His successor John Yernemouth, John of Gaunt's chaplain and rector 1384-97,⁹⁰² did not reside, hired a chaplain to perform his duties, and before 1394 had let the rectory to William Brounz and two others, who had by then allowed the buildings to become ruinous and badly roofed.⁹⁰³ Walter Mitford or Medford, rector 1397-1413 and later archdeacon of Berkshire, was a native of East Hagbourne and brother of the bishop of Salisbury,⁹⁰⁴ and may well have used the house, as may his successor until 1420, Henry V's doctor Nicholas Colnet, who left money to the church and poor of Sutton.⁹⁰⁵ Thomas Bekyngton, rector from 1420, stayed at Sutton twice in 1442 and perhaps on other occasions. In that year he was accompanied by his secretary, the orator William Say, who succeeded him as rector when Bekyngton became bishop of Bath and Wells in 1443.⁹⁰⁶ In 1444 Say obtained license to celebrate divine office in the house.⁹⁰⁷ The chapel was presumably new, and not used for long, since no other licence is recorded. Reginald Nutt, lessee in 1472, was obliged to repair all thatched roofs and mud walls on the site, the repair of tiled and slated roofs and the provision of timber being the rector's responsibility, though the assessment of four parishioners was required if Nutt wanted the rector to do repairs.⁹⁰⁸ In 1497-8 St. George's college paid for repairs to the stable, barns, and dovehouse.⁹⁰⁹ Thomas Sackford's expectative lease in 1562 required him to entertain the college's steward at the mansion house twice a year for two days and two nights.⁹¹⁰ That provision was still included in 18th-century leases.⁹¹¹ In 1589 the college was contemplating legal action against Richard Hyde, son of the late lessee John Hyde, for failing to keep the house in repair.⁹¹² In 1634 the buildings included 'a very ancient parsonage house', three barns, a woolhouse, sheephouse, stable, and cowhouse.⁹¹³ In the late 18th century the Justices began to extend the original leasehold curtilage by buying the freehold of adjoining tenements. Thomas Justice bought houses flanking the road on the west in 1773 and 1785; his son Francis bought a row of three cottages immediately east of the rectory plot in 1798, 1810, and later.⁹¹⁴ In addition, as already noted, he was allotted over 2 acres on the green north of the house in 1804.⁹¹⁵

⁸⁹⁹ *Rot. Parl.* i. 58-9.

⁹⁰⁰ Berks. R.O., D/EP 7/123.

⁹⁰¹ Cf. *ibid.* and refs. there cited.

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*; Wilts. R.O., Reg. Waltham, f. 68 v.

⁹⁰⁴ Berks. R.O., D/EP 7/123; for the Medfords of East Hagbourne, C.D. Ross and M. Devine (eds.), *Cart. of Cirencester Abbey*, ii (1964), pp. 469, 478; iii (1977), pp. 1083-4, 1087-8, 1092.

⁹⁰⁵ Berks. R.O., D/EP 7/123 and refs.

⁹⁰⁶ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 60-2.

⁹⁰⁷ Wilts. R.O., Reg. Ayscough, f. 99.

⁹⁰⁸ Windsor, St. George's Chapel MS. XI.1.3.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* XV.57.14, last f.

⁹¹⁰ Dalton (ed.), *MSS. of St. George's Chapel*, 376-7.

⁹¹¹ Windsor, St. Geo.'s Chap. MSS., Ch. Com. docs. 118971 (2/2).

⁹¹² Dalton (ed.), *MSS. of St. George's Chapel*, 378.

⁹¹³ Berks. R.O., formerly Bodl. MS. Archd. Papers Berks. c. 186.

⁹¹⁴ Deeds in possession of Hon. F.D.L. Astor, abstract of title of Mrs. I. Milne, 1902.

⁹¹⁵ For acreage, *ibid.*; cf. above, gazetteer, Sutton, topography.

Site and buildings

As a result of the enlargements of the curtilage just described, the Abbey now stands in the midst of extensive grounds, and is approached by an avenue across the inclosure allotment, leading to a yard east of the house from which the building (plans, Figs. 45-6), four ranges round a closed courtyard, is entered through a Gothic archway. Although the avenue across the Green appears to have existed before inclosure – some of the trees are clearly older than 1804 – the house stood until 1798 on the eastern edge of its curtilage. The old boundary wall survives, only 6 to 7 ft. beyond the east wall of the house. Not surprisingly, the Gothic archway is an insertion of the early 1980s, replacing a narrow door. Before that the house faced westwards across what since the 18th-century acquisitions has been a wide lawn. That orientation is not later than the building of the medieval hall, still open to the roof, which now forms the west range, but it will be argued below that the house originally faced northwards towards the Green, like its fellows further east. The relatively cramped siting towards the north-east corner of a large curtilage can perhaps be explained by the presence of the three bordars on the estate in 1086, who may have occupied cottages along the Green frontage west of the house.

Although the Abbey has become a textbook example of the English medieval house, published accounts of it are best described as completely wrong. The Lysons' juxtaposition of a brief note of the house with a drawing of Cumnor Place was probably an early source of confusion. In the 1830s or 1840s Edward Blore made sketches of the interior of the hall and of the house as seen from the north-west,⁹¹⁶ which formed the basis of the engravings published by Parker in 1853.⁹¹⁷ Blore showed dormer gables like those at Cumnor Place; a view of 1848, and Parker's description, show that the dormers are an imaginative reconstruction.⁹¹⁸ Parker also published a plan, which was inaccurate in detail – failing to show, for example, significant variations in wall thicknesses;⁹¹⁹ a view of the 'solar' in the north wing;⁹²⁰ and a description which confused the north and south wings, wrongly stated that the solar roof extended through the whole south (*recte* north) wing, which completely omitted to mention late-medieval alterations in the wing, and which gave only a brief and misleading nod towards the east wing.⁹²¹ Later accounts have followed Parker in regarding the Abbey as an H-plan house of the 14th century with later extensions, although increased acquaintance with the timberwork has made authors more uncomfortable with his implied date of c. 1350. Wood suggested c. 1330.⁹²² Fletcher and Spokes, who published a partial measured survey of the hall roof, noticed that the thick wall between hall and solar suggested that the latter had formerly had an 'independent existence', and attributed it to c. 1300, a date clearly incompatible with the Curvilinear stone detail; they also suggested that the hall was a few years later but that its spere truss resembled 13th-century work.⁹²³ F.W.B. Charles showed that the central truss of the hall must be a base-cruck.⁹²⁴ Later, after investigating the descent of the house, Dr. Fletcher turned his attention to the late-medieval work in the north and east wings, which he was inclined to attribute to Thomas Bekyngton and Reginald Nutt. He rejected the implications of his earlier observations, reverting to the view that the hall and solar were of a single build c. 1325, attributing them to John Brounz, and denying that anything remained of the parsonage house as controlled by Abingdon abbey or as reconstructed by Solomon of Rochester.⁹²⁵

⁹¹⁶ B.L. Add. MS. 42017, ff. 75-6.

⁹¹⁷ J.H. Parker, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England*, ii (1853), 32, and facing p. 272.

⁹¹⁸ Cf. B.L. Add. MS. 28677, f.64.

⁹¹⁹ *Some Acct. of Dom. Archit.* ii, facing p. 272.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.* facing p. 87.

⁹²¹ *Ibid.* 272-4.

⁹²² Wood, *Eng. Med. Ho.* 63.

⁹²³ *Med. Archaeol.* vi, 174-5.

⁹²⁴ F.W.B. Charles, *Medieval Cruck-Building and its Derivatives* (Soc. for Med. Archaeol. Monograph Ser. no. 2, 1967), 34, 41-2.

⁹²⁵ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: P. and P. 5; Sutton C.: Hist.* 58-63.

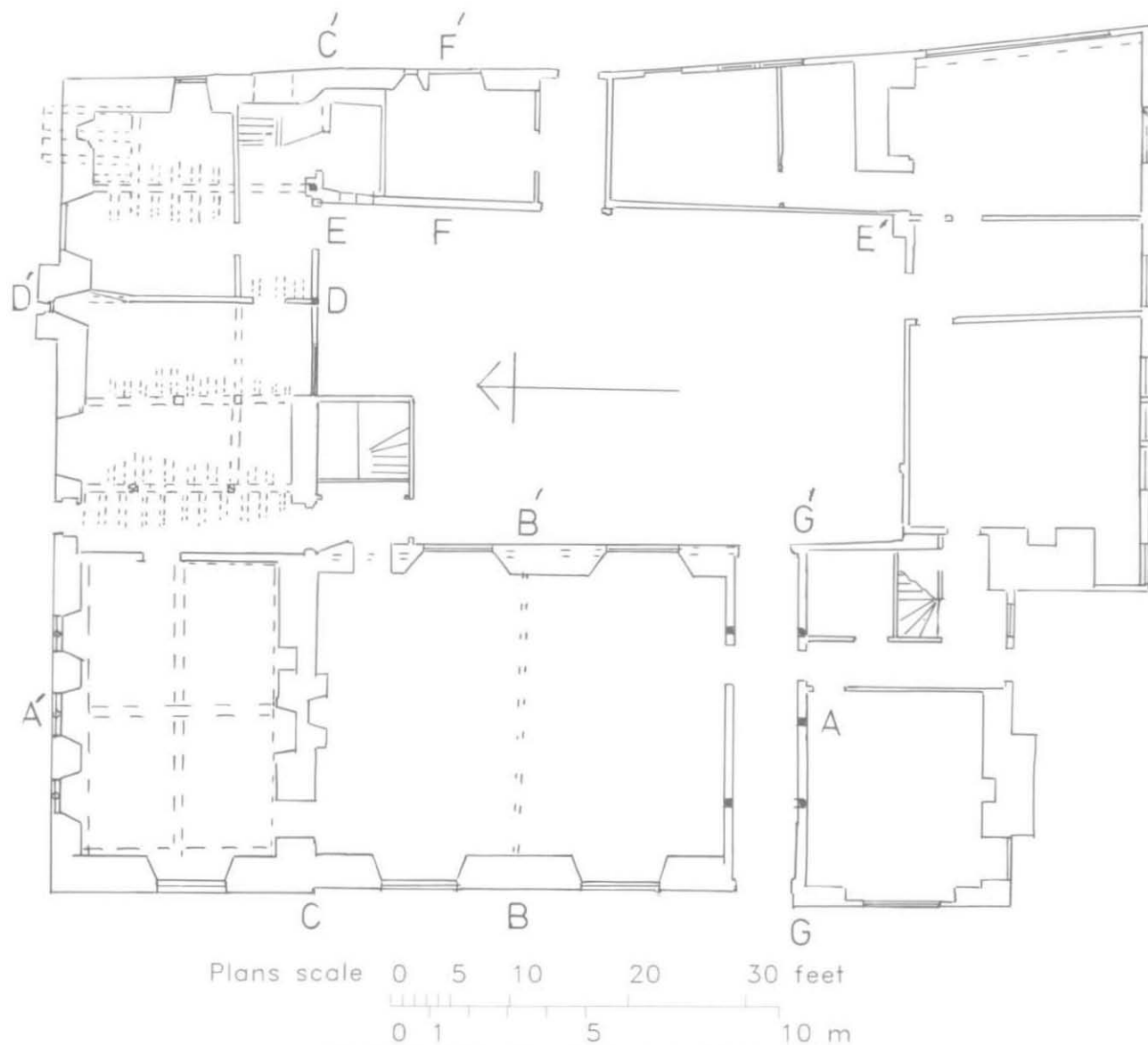


Fig. 45. The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay: ground floor plan.

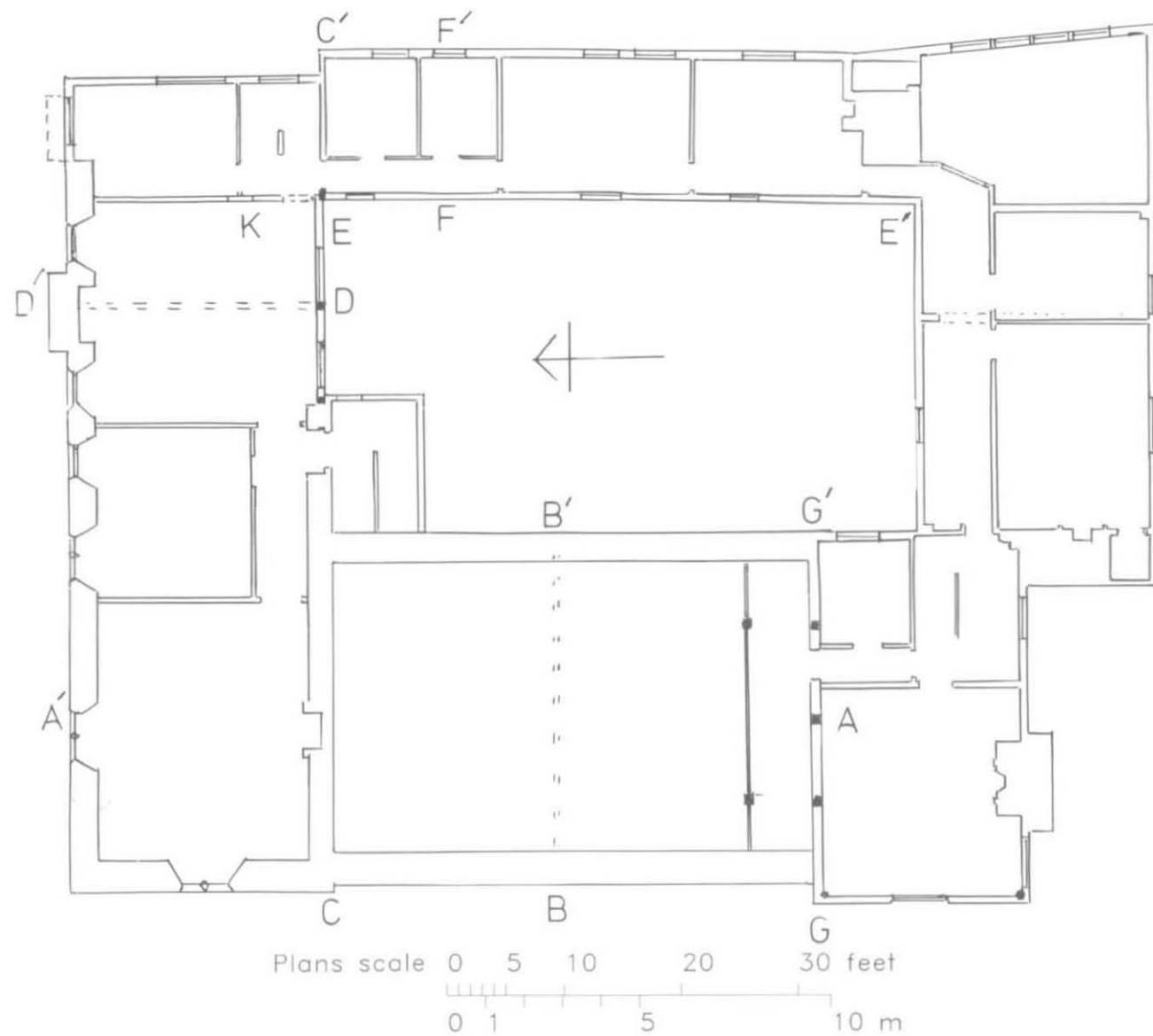


Fig. 46. The Abbey, Sutton: first floor plan.

In contrast, investigation for the present article has revealed that the medieval archaeology of the house, even without excavation or the removal of the plaster protecting the north and west fronts, is far more complex than that of any other site discussed here. The 14th-century stonework, while spectacular, now seems almost irrelevant to the development of the house's plan and functions; the main periods of medieval building and alteration were earlier and later.

The biggest problems concern the date, development, and functions of the north range, which cannot be understood until the character of the west range has been comprehended. This discussion will therefore begin with the *SERVICE WING* at the south-west corner of the building (plan, Fig. 45). Parker shows the wing⁹²⁶ as a stone structure whose east wall prolongs that of the hall in the west range, while its west wall projects slightly from the front of the hall. In fact the wing is largely timber-framed. The stone wall on the east side of the hall stops immediately west of the cross-passage doorway, and is continued by the timber wall of the wing. On the south side, the wing appears to incorporate, at the west end, the stone wall of an earlier building, into which an added lateral chimney stack has been built. The fireplaces are 19th-century. The stone wall rises only to first-floor level; above it the wall is plastered timber. The rounded corner post here may be medieval, but at the east end of the wall the panels have been reduced in size by the insertion of 17th-century small framing.⁹²⁷ The west wall is also of timber above the first floor. The thin stone wall below, largely plastered externally, proves to be the underbuilding of a jetty. The visible north ends of the large ashlar blocks suggest that that was done at some time between the 15th and the 17th century. The stonework overlaps the hoodmould of the west screens-passage doorway; the overlap is shown in the drawing of 1848. There was then a three-light Perpendicular window in the stone wall. The two-light reticulated window in the gable apparently also existed in 1848 but must have been of timber.⁹²⁸ The wing was integrated with the hall. Its north wall, timber-framed with giant panels and pegholes for long, steeply pitched braces, is also the south wall of the hall and supports the hall's arcade plates and truncated king-strut truss (Fig. 47). This truss is not weathered on its south side, and the crown-plate roof did not continue, showing that the wing and hall are contemporary. The dormer roof between the truss and the main roof of the wing has reset medieval rafters with peg-holes suggesting rafter bracing, a 13th-century technique. The wing roof itself, however, is post-medieval, with four principal-rafter trusses; the end trusses have clasped purlins, but the internal trusses have tenoned purlins and high collars, the eastern of the two also having short vertical struts between tiebeam and principals. The reroofing may have followed the lawsuit of 1589. A length of what seems to have been the original central tiebeam survives in the loft, its north end carried on the wallplate.

The *HALL* has two equal bays together with the short screens bay beyond the spere truss at the south end. The stonework of the west screens doorway, with continuously wave-moulded jambs and voussoirs and an ogee-scroll hoodmould, was largely renewed in the 19th century; the less important east doorway, with a similar hoodmould but chamfered jambs and voussoirs, retains its original stonework. The four two-light Decorated windows shown in 19th-century drawings have been replaced by three-light 20th-century Perpendicular windows below an embattled parapet, and the low side window recorded by Blore and Parker and perhaps remaining before the First World War,⁹²⁹ has also disappeared. The wallhead inside the hall was altered apparently after 1915; Parker's engraving shows the stonework filling the eaves triangle and supporting the soffits of the rafters, whereas the wall is now flat-topped and surmounted by machine-sawn ashlar pieces. The junction of the west wall with the south wall of the north wing is obscured by plaster, but the east wall abuts the wing in a straight joint. The doorway towards the north end of that wall has a flat lintel and the inner part of the opening has been rebuilt in brick. The outer north jamb of the

⁹²⁶ *Some Acct. of Dom. Archit.* ii, plan facing p. 272.

⁹²⁷ Visible in a cupboard.

⁹²⁸ B.L. Add. MS. 28677, f. 64.

⁹²⁹ *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 371 describes the hall in terms which suggest that it had not been altered since Parker's time.

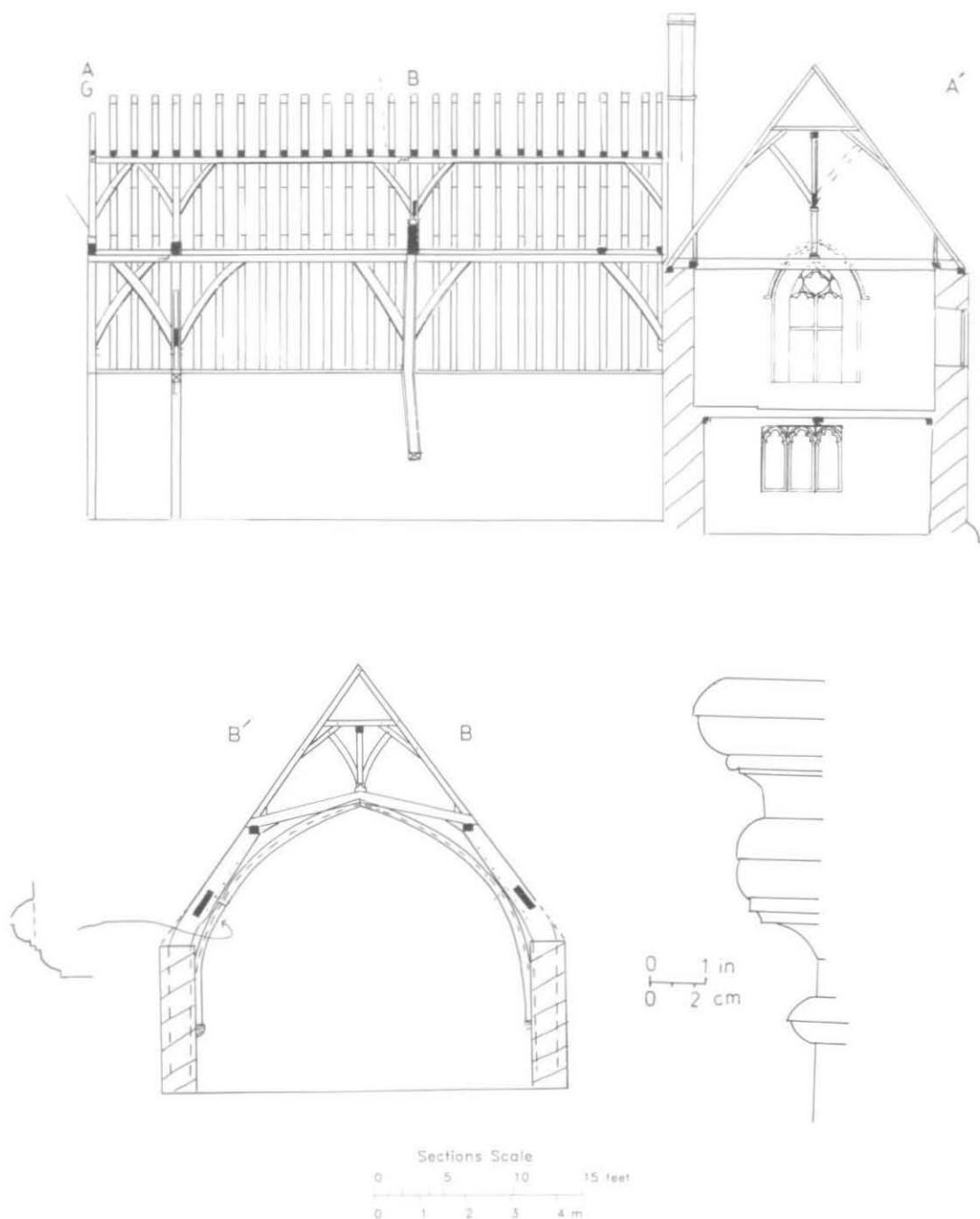


Fig. 47. The Abbey, Sutton: sections; capital moulding of hall spere- and end- and solar crown-posts.

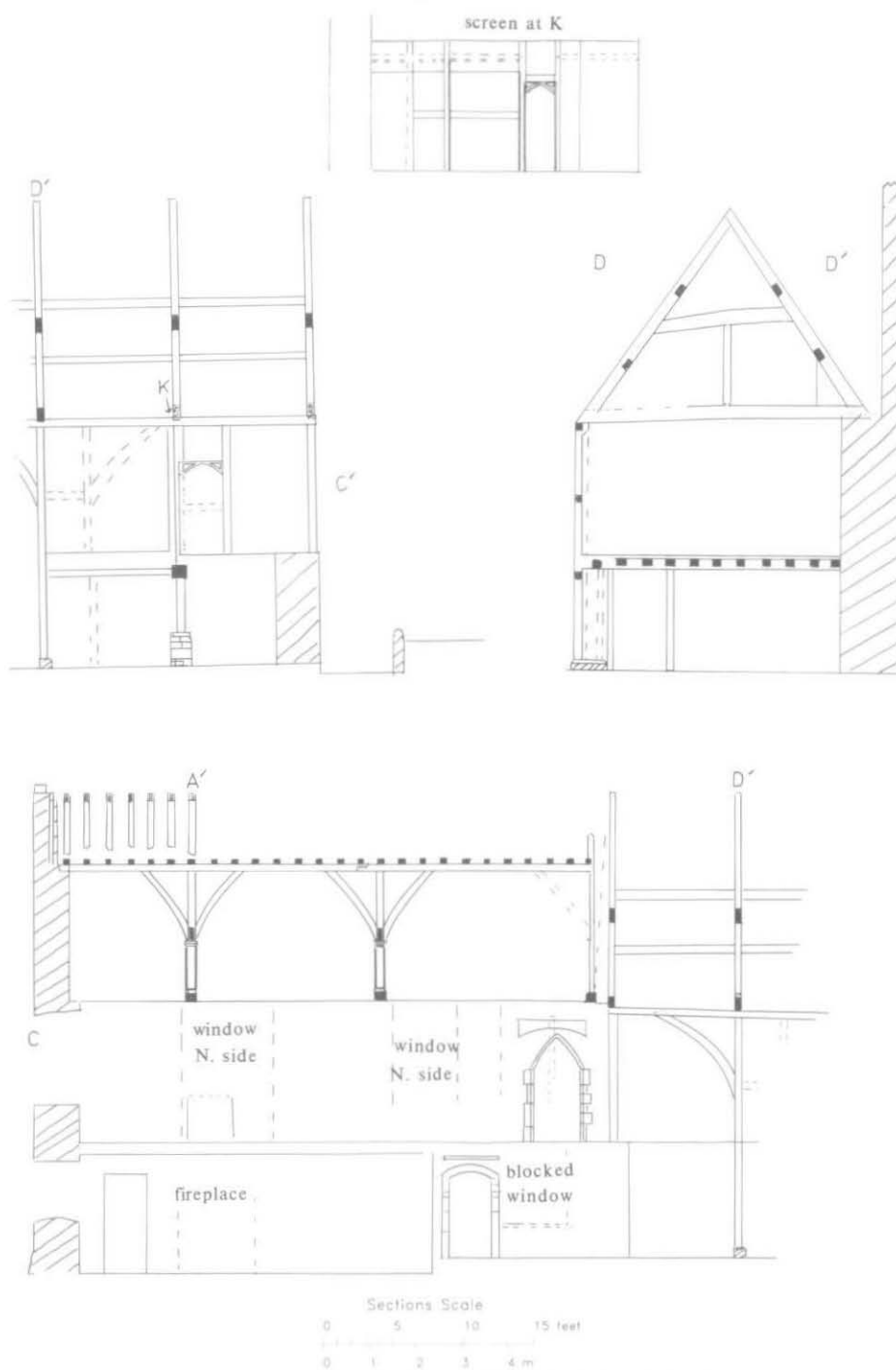


Fig. 48. The Abbey, Sutton: sections; former chapel screen.

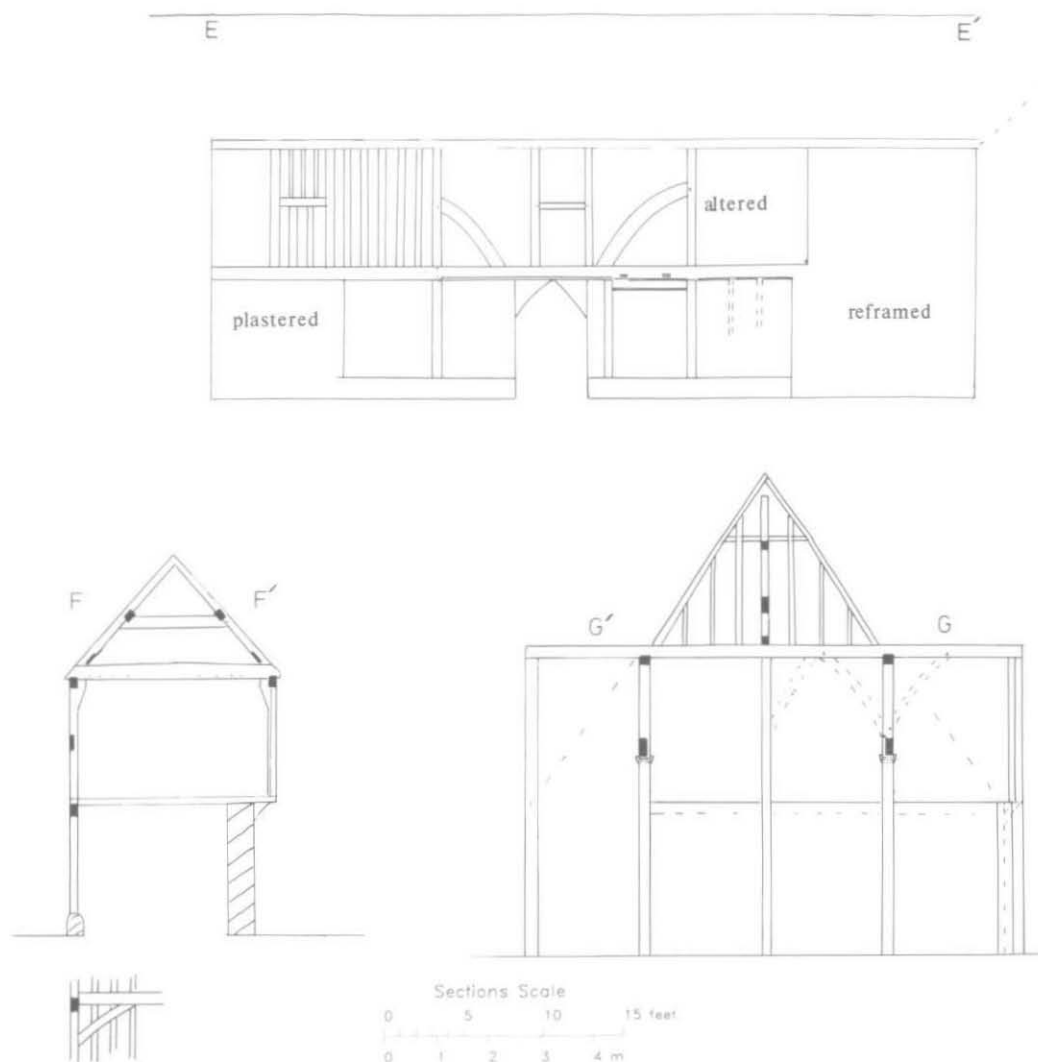


Fig. 49. The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay: sections.

opening has a wide chamfer; north of it the wall tapers curiously to avoid blocking the doorway to the north wing basement, and the chamfered quoinstones of the jamb show that this tapering was deliberate. It is shown on Parker's plan.

The timber structure is quasi-aisled and includes a western truss which forms part of the service wing wall, a spere truss, a central base-cruck truss, and an aisled-end truss on corbels in the north wall; that truss appears to be a 20th-century restoration. The workmanship, though not over-elaborate, is of superlative quality and finish; the main timbers appear to have been made from very large trees carefully sawn to avoid waney edges. Over the screens passage scissor braces rising from the end- and spere-posts form an arch on each side. Parker's engraving shows a lodged floor over the screens, but that is now concealed. The spere-posts and end-posts have elaborately

moulded capitals and responds (Fig. 47), including scroll and quarter-round elements but no ogees, and carved to an accuracy of about a millimetre. All four posts are made from the same tree, quarter-sawn. Their heads are not jowled. The aisle ties disappear into the wall below the wall-head; Parker's engraving shows that they were level with the top of the wall on the outside, but well below it on the inside. The arched braces to the tiebeam of the spere truss, with quarter-round mouldings on their soffits, are planks sawn from the same timber. The arcade braces, and the windbraces rising from the base-cruck truss, are of thicker proportions. The base-cruck arch now ends in 20th-century corbels, replacing those shown in Parker's engraving, which conceals the curious way in which the mouldings of the arch disappear into the wall (Fig. 47). The truss has a single tie, but the blades are jointed into the arcade plate only, as at the Old Deanery, Salisbury, and York Farm, West Hagbourne.⁹³⁰ The portion of the blades in the stone walls, and probably above, are racked markedly to the south (Fig. 47).⁹³¹ The arch has quarter-round mouldings. In addition, there are applied outer scroll-moulded labels on both sides, pegged to the braces and tiebeam. The labels were partly renewed with machine-sawn timber in the 19th century, but some original lengths remain. The quarter-round moulding, with stepped stops, is repeated on an inner cornice above the main arcade plate on each side. At the upper end of the hall the moulding is interrupted by a return for a tiebeam which presumably supported a dais canopy.

The upper roof, of crown-plate type, is soulaced; the end joints of collars and soulaces are mortised. Short ashlar pieces are wedged, but apparently not pegged, between the cornice and the rafters. Unlike those at the wallhead they may be original, since they are shown on Parker's engraving. At the south end is a truncated king-strut truss, with partitioning much like that at York Farm, Hagbourne (section, Fig. 49).⁹³² The strut is braced to the crown plate only, as is the undecorated crown post of the spere truss. The crown post at the base-cruck truss, much shorter than the others because of the marked camber of the tiebeam, is octagonal, with chamfered four-way braces and an expanded base with a roll moulding and below it concave curved feet serving as stops to the diagonally placed faces of the post. The crown posts are not jowled. The crown plate, which is chamfered although the arched braces to it are not, has an edge-halved scarf joint with in-line bridle.⁹³³ The same type of scarf is used in both arcade plates at the spere truss. The common rafters are spaced at 18-in. centres. Some have been replaced in the 19th century, but some aisle rafters still continue to the tops of the west windows, showing that the dormers illustrated by Blore and Parker were not demolished but were never in fact built, whether or not they had been planned.

It will by now be apparent that the hall was originally timber-framed and integrated with the timber-framed service wing, and was cased in stone in the 14th century. The structural reason for the casing was to prevent further racking of the base crucks. The racking observed below eaves level would have been virtually impossible if the crucks had been embedded in stone when they were erected. It is presumably attributable to a system of construction on padstones with no braces from base crucks to wallplates, as at York Farm, West Hagbourne.⁹³⁴ The mysterious termination of the stonework at the junction of hall and service wing, the curious placing of the aisle ties, and the straight joint and tapering at the north end of the east wall are also explained by the casing; the original timber wall would have abutted the north wing at a point proud of the basement door. The evidence for the casing was available to Parker, Blore, and their successors. They did not notice it because at most only a few decades separated the timber-framed hall from the casing, and because the stylistic differences between the timberwork and stonework, though

⁹³⁰ Above, Hagbourne.

⁹³¹ It was not possible to remeasure the inclination above the wallhead, as the hall is still open to the roof. Fletcher and Spokes were able to use scaffolding erected for repairs to the roof, but did not record the inclination.

⁹³² Above, Hagbourne.

⁹³³ Cf. Hewett, *Eng. Cathedral and Monastic Carpentry* (1985), Fig. 252 (p. 220), citing 15th-century examples in south-east England.

⁹³⁴ Above, gazetteer, Hagbourne.

clear enough on close examination, are small enough to have been fudged by architectural historians.

The two phases of the hall permit two alternative hypotheses for its dating. The timberwork, with its scroll and quarter-round mouldings, absence of visible halved joints, and generally Gothic treatment, can hardly be earlier than c. 1280. The Decorated windows and doors, and thus the stone casing, in principle could date from any time between 1320 and 1380. Yet it can hardly have been built much less than 30 years before 1394, when the buildings were 'ruinous'.⁹³⁵ Moreover the distinction of the incumbents and their royal connections suggest that they would have adopted the Perpendicular style if building after 1350. In addition, the use of scroll mouldings and a detail in the solar, recorded by Parker and discussed below, appears to rule out a date after c. 1340. Since Solomon of Rochester spent up to 40 marks on the house between 1284 and 1290,⁹³⁶ we can suppose either that the hall and service wing are his work and that the hall was cased in stone between 1320 and 1340, or that his building was completely destroyed and replaced within 20 to 30 years by a new timber hall which in turn needed casing within another 20 to 30 years at most.

In the courtyard between the west and north ranges is a timber-framed staircase outshut. The stair, which leads to a door in the first floor of the north range, is modern, and the outshut roof was repaired, probably in the 17th century, with an inserted purlin. Nevertheless it retains several medieval rafters with scalloped ends. Moreover the timber south wall disappears into the stone casing of the hall east wall, and the end rafter of the lean-to roof is embedded in the plaster of that wall. The outshut was thus probably framed with the timber hall before that was cased in stone in the 14th century.

The *NORTH RANGE* is roofed in six bays, which for the purpose of this description will be numbered from the west. The three western bays (1 to 3) form the solar roof illustrated by Parker,⁹³⁷ which does not, contrary to his claim, extend the whole length of the wing. At the west end the roof is built into the stonework of the gable; the wall, of mud-mortared rubble, is rebated at eaves level and again at collar level. The roof (Figs. 47-8) was designed by the same carpenter as the hall, using the same ruler, the same moulding template for the capitals of the crown posts as for the spere posts of the hall, the same unusual crown-plate scarf joint, and at the eastern truss the same truncated king-strut design: the king strut may be halved from the same tree as that at the south end of the hall. The scarf joint has failed and as a result the roof is markedly racked towards the east. After allowing for the racking it becomes clear that the roof was designed using statute measure, using a main module of 18 ins. and subsidiary modules of 6 and 9 ins., with a level of error nowhere more than 1 per cent. The finish of the timbers, however, is inferior to those of the hall, and there is much wane on rafters and collars. The rafters were set out at 18-in. intervals, working from their western edges. The bays are unequal: bay 3 is 15 ft. long (10 modules), bay 2 is 13 ft. 6 ins. (9 modules), and bay 1 is 9 ft. (6 modules). Behind the coping of the west gable is an additional pair of rafters not spaced 18 ins. from its fellow and with a much more eroded patina than that of the others. The slightly curved four-way braces of the crown-post trusses are based on a 3-4-5 triangle. The crown posts are octagonal between their caps and bases, but reduced to a square section above the capitals. The couples have soulaces and ashlar pieces apparently rising from a cornice which has the same moulding and stops as that in the hall.

At the east end of the roof there is no trace of a stone gable or supporting wall, or of a return for one in the stonework downstairs; the stone north wall continues without interruption into the eastern part of the range, while on the south side the stone wall is succeeded by a timber one about a foot east of the end truss, which was therefore set back from the end of the wall and moreover is not weathered. It seems to follow that the crown-plate roof was butted up against an earlier roof to the east and itself probably represents a reroofing of an earlier stone building. The unusual bay arrangement could therefore result from the need to respect earlier windows or other features in

⁹³⁵ Above (this site), site documentation.

⁹³⁶ Above (this site), site documentation.

⁹³⁷ Parker, *Some Acct. of Dom. Archit.* ii, facing p. 87.

the room below. It could conversely be argued that bay 1 had originally been of 13 ft. 6 ins., like bay 2, and that it was truncated when the present west wall was built. In that case, however, the pair of rafters behind the coping would have been re-used from the demolished part of the roof and would retain pegholes for the collar mortices, which it in fact appears to lack.

The roof was apparently still open in Parker's time but has since been ceiled, partly at eaves level and partly above. The great chamber below, now a library, is dominated by a 14th-century two-light transomed window, with reticulated tracery, in the west gable, and by a two-light transomed 14th-century window in the north wall, with a square head and ogee heads to the lights, like those formerly in the hall. The reveals of a third window also in the north wall remain. The windows have ogee-scroll hoodmoulds, like those of the hall doorways, both inside and out; below each hoodmould inside is a hollow moulding round the jambs and rere-arch. The rere-arch of the north window is lower than the window head, confirming that the window is an insertion. The present fireplace has musician corbels, attributed by Wood to the 15th century⁹³⁸ but either carved or brought here since 1853, since Parker reports the corbels of an earlier (perhaps hooded) fireplace, one with a twisted stem and the other with ballflower.⁹³⁹ That detail probably indicates that the 14th-century windows are not later than c. 1340. The chamber was entered through a door from the staircase outshot. It has a steep two-centred head with a wide chamfer continued on the jambs, and no hoodmould; the dressings are of long blocks of pale limestone or chalk, quite unlike those of the surviving hall door. The rere-arch is formed by an enormous segmentally curved block of wood, near the centre of which a socket, some 4 ins. square, penetrates to the stonework. That socket is completely inexplicable behind a doorway and suggests that the door is a modification of an opening designed for a different purpose. It was perhaps an early or mid 13th-century window with paired shafts of timber rather than stone.

The chamber was later subdivided, perhaps in the 17th century, into two rooms with a corridor on the south side of the eastern room; the staves of the west partition are nailed to the tiebeam above. The south partition was partly of framed panels and partly of stave type, apparently incorporating re-used timber.⁹⁴⁰

The basement below the chamber is more complex. The west end (bays 1 and 2) is a parlour now used as a dining room. Most of its visible detail is of the 15th or early 16th century, but not of a single phase. The walls vary in thickness (Fig. 45), the west wall being slightly thicker than the north wall and the south wall between parlour and hall much thicker than either. Through that wall, towards the west end, a crude arch has been cut, perhaps in the late Middle Ages; it is plastered and featureless. In the west wall is a three-light square-headed Perpendicular window with an external hoodmould and cinquefoiled heads to the lights. There is a similar window of two lights in the north wall. On either side of it are two Perpendicular windows of a different design, square-headed, of two lights with transoms, trefoiled heads to the lights, and no hoodmoulds. The eastern of the pair has 20th-century stonework but is on the site of a blocked window shown by Blore, while the other, which appears ancient, is not shown on his drawing.⁹⁴¹ The present fireplace is modern, and the chimney is surmounted by 19th- or 20th-century brick shafts in an Elizabethan style. Parker, however, reported the remains of a fireplace and described and illustrated an octagonal stone chimney shaft above it.⁹⁴² That shaft seems to have been identical in design with that surviving on a chimney in the eastern half of the north range, discussed below, and must have dated from the 15th-century. The parlour had a fine ceiling. Although it is now plastered, the cornices and scribed cross-beams are visible, moulded with small bowtells and hollow chamfers. The ceiling cuts into the rere-arch of the west window and is thus presumably later.

East of the parlour the floor-level rises (Fig. 48) and the thickness of the south wall is reduced. At this point is a cross passage, over which are heavy lodged joists, laid flat, perhaps contemporary with the parlour ceiling. At either end of the passage are two doors with segmental

⁹³⁸ Wood, *Eng. Med. Ho.*, plate XVIII.

⁹³⁹ Parker, *Some Acct. of Dom. Archit.* ii, 274.

⁹⁴⁰ Drawings by J. Munby from survey during restoration, 1982.

⁹⁴¹ B.L. Add. MS. 42017, f. 75.

⁹⁴² Parker, *Some Acct. of Dom. Archit.* ii, 274 and facing p. 272.

heads and a continuous wide chamfer round the jambs and voussoirs, but no hoodmoulds. The east jamb of the north door was at some time shifted westwards, and the door was later blocked and reopened only in the 1980s. The south door is that already mentioned, which the casing of the hall was designed to respect. The chamfers and dressings of these doors resemble those of the door to the chamber above; all three are presumably contemporary with the timber hall and staircase outshut. They nevertheless have features which suggest that they may be alterations of earlier openings. Instead of a rere-arch, the south door has a flat timber lintel running through the entire thickness of the wall and visible on the outside. The north door has a similar lintel, though there are traces of what may have been the springing of a rere-arch in the stonework west of the door. Above the north lintel is a rectangular loop window with splayed jambs, only 2½ ins. wide at the opening. East of the passage, in bay 3, is a lodged floor, itself supporting the joists of the passage. The joists of the lodged floor are exceptionally heavy and some 17 to 19 cm. wide; the fourth from the south is 25 cm. wide and has stave-holes for a lengthwise partition. The bearing beam at the west end of the floor, lodged into the stone walls, also has stave-holes for a similar partition, which was interrupted by mortices for a door towards the south end, showing that the bay was divided into a larger room to the north and a narrow room or corridor to the south. The bearing beam at the east end, however, has no evidence of such partitioning. The stonework of the south wall has been exposed, both inside and under the staircase outshut. The wall extends some 18 ins. further east on the ground floor than on the first (Fig. 48). Externally it consists of more or less random rubble except for a more regular stretch in the middle of the wall at its base, which consists of a course of large blocks surmounted by several courses of narrow blocks, with above them large irregular blocks. Inside, a long slab of stone, some 3 ins. deep, is bonded into the back of the jambs of the south doorway; its north end is obstructed by modern fittings. The slab was presumably the sill of a blocked window above the area of regular coursing and below the solar door. But such a window would have been redundant after the staircase outshut was built. It thus implies that the bay behind it was already two-storeyed before the timber hall and the associated doorways to the chamber and basement were built.

In the eastern three bays of the range, as in the western, the evidence becomes more complex as investigation descends from the roof to the ground floor. The roof (section, Fig. 48) will therefore be described first. It has four trusses numbered with scribed marks from the east. They have heavy principals, two tiers of tenoned purlins, deep, sharply cambered collars, all of elm, and oak tiebeams, with a single crown strut between each tie and collar. There were apparently no windbraces. The roof is now severely canted towards the south. The heavy timbers and single crown strut probably indicate a 15th-century date. Nevertheless at truss III the crown strut is intruded into an earlier mortice in the tiebeam for a crown post. The upper roof thus replaces a crown-post roof.

The first floor room in bays 4 and 5 is separated from bay 3 by a timber-framed partition with posts and rails, probably 17th-century. On the north side of the room are two 19th- or 20th-century Gothic windows flanking a large chimney with fireplace. The fireplace has a four-centred head and hollow-chamfered surround. The chimney is topped by an octagonal stone shaft much like that recorded by Parker for the parlour fireplace. On the east wall of the room a timber-framed and chamfered partition is partly exposed. At the south end of the exposed part is a blocked doorway with four-centred head, hollow-chamfered surround, and sunk spandrels. The partition was clearly a screen, presumably for the oratory licensed in 1444, which would have thus been in a liturgically appropriate position in the east bay. On the south side of the room the chamfered wallplate, with stepped stops, and the timber framing were exposed in alterations of the early 1980s. The central post (of truss III) has been hacked back to create a jowl (section, Fig. 48) and has no evidence of arched bracing; there may thus have been a partition here before the fireplace was built. Rising from the west side of the post is a very long arched brace joined to the wallplate with a barefaced tenon. The framing on the east side has been altered but mortices suggest a rail for a window, and a second arched brace rising from the stud on the far side of the rail rather than from the principal post. This framing has no local parallel, though a similar brace formerly existed on the hall wall of South Moreton Manor.⁹⁴³ In bay 6 the northern stone wall stops part-way along

⁹⁴³ Above, gazetteer, South Moreton.

the bay and is followed by a timbered and plastered section. Evidence on the ground floor⁹⁴⁴ shows that that section replaces a jettied projection. The east wall is timber-framed at first-floor level. In the south wall is a door of the same type as that in the chapel screen; although the jambs have been hacked back the east jamb retains a peg and traces of a mortice for a rail, indicating that the door is inserted, probably replacing a window. The post (II) appears to have been chamfered on both east and west sides, and lacks mortices for a partition running northwards. The chapel screen has been set immediately west of it and is not framed in. The screen is therefore inserted; earlier there was presumably an open truss at post II.

The partitioning on the ground floor is now at truss III rather than truss II, so that bays 5 and 6 are one room; bay 4 is at present part of the same room as bay 3 east of the cross passage. It has a lodged floor with wide joists whose west ends are laid over those of bay 3, so that the bearing beam is markedly deformed and is now supported by a modern samson post. The two southern joists are narrower than the others and are probably 17th-century replacements.

In the north wall, in the base of the chimney, is a small lancet window, re-set externally behind a 15th-century rectangular surround of different stonework. Internally it has deeply splayed reveals and a flat lintel and sill. The east reveal extends beyond the line of the partition at truss III, the bearing beam of which is above the window lintel; the beam must thus be earlier or later than the lintel. The modern partition bends east to avoid the window jamb. The stave holes of the earlier partition resemble those in bay 3. A mortised stud for the northern jamb of a door towards the south end of the beam disappears into the floor without a visible ground sill (between 1988 and 1992 it was given a cement base). Post III has been rebased on a stone block, with chamfered upper arris, set north-south and abutting a stud which formed the southern jamb of the door; a peghole indicates that the stud was formerly set further south on the beam (section, Fig. 48). Parker's plan⁹⁴⁵ shows doors into the courtyard here on either side of post III, but there is no evidence of a ground sill below the south wall in this or the next bay, even beyond the line of the doors. In the bearing beams on either side of the bay are mortices for a single joist prolonging the line of the east-west corridor in bay 3, and presumably serving as the head of a partition. The mortices imply that bay 4 was open to the roof before the present joists were put in. The eastern two bays were a single room, which is now divided by a modern partition from a corridor on the south side. Both north and east walls are of stone. The quoins are of ashlar and probably late-medieval. The east wall externally bears traces of repeated alterations; a partial straight joint suggests a door at the south end, where the wall is thinner. Inside, at the east end of the north wall, is a narrow blocked window, concealed by plaster on the outside, with a flat timber lintel and steeply splayed sill and jambs. The other windows are modern, between splayed reveals. At the south-east corner of the range the stone wall was formerly returned westward; the remains of the return were temporarily exposed during plumbing operations in 1987-8. The present timber south wall thus replaces a stone wall. The external stonework gives little evidence of the return, except for a slight change of direction where the east wall of the east range begins, but there is a clearly marked change in the stonework at the base of the wall. It appears therefore that the former stone south wall of this part of the north range was re-used for what is now the adjoining part of the east range. In that part, north of the modern gatehouse, is a small lancet window resembling that reset in the north wall.

The rail of the timber wall in bay 6 has stave-holes like those in the partitions further west, already discussed. It is mortised into post II, which rests on a narrow timber pad supported by a rectangular plinth of coursed limestone. That plinth did not form part of a continuous footing on any side. A chamfered bridging beam with stepped stops is both mortised into the post and lapped over its east side. The other end of the beam is set in the stone north wall. The beam lacks the eroded and worm-eaten patina of post II and may be a replacement or an insertion. The common joists of bays 5 and 6, of scantling like that of the joists in bay 3, are jointed into the beam variously with soffit tenons and rebated soffit tenons. Their outer ends, however, are lodged on the stone wall on the east side and on the bearing beam of the partition on the east side. At the

⁹⁴⁴ Below.

⁹⁴⁵ *Some Acct. of Dom. Archit.* ii, facing p. 272.

north-east corner the joists run northwards and are tenoned into the last of the eastward-running common joists, which is thicker than the others. Clearly a jettied structure projected northwards at this point.

As already seen, the east wall of the *EAST RANGE* is of stone at ground floor level as far south as the modern archway and incorporates a lancet window. South of that the wall is timber-framed, though partly infilled later with brick and rubble, as far as a chimney where it abuts the south range. The timber wall is on a different alignment to the stone wall and appears to have been intended to unite the latter with a 1-ft. thick stone wall on the east side of the south-east corner block. That wall may have been a wall round the courtyard rather than part of a building. The upper wall of the range is jettied and timber-framed, and the rear wall is wholly timber-framed. It is clear that the timberwork must be later than the stone wall. The wing has three bays, and the roof (Fig. 49), of relatively shallow pitch, has principals, tiebeams over jowled posts, collars, and purlins which are tenoned to the principals at the northern truss and clasped at the others. They have secret-splayed scarf joints. There is no ridgepiece. The southern bay is smoke-blackened and was probably at some time a kitchen or brewhouse, into which a chimney (Fig. 45) was later inserted. The west wall framing in the two northern bays has been largely preserved (Fig. 49). The western bay seems to have had an important chamber upstairs, marked by close studding and a window with ogee-moulded mullions. The middle bay has at first-floor level curved downward braces and evidence for a window between them. The more important room was downstairs, where the middle rail is chamfered externally; mortices in the rail south of the archway suggest a bay window. Below it is a beam probably inserted in the 17th century, since it is chamfered with a scroll stop. In the south bay the rail is double-chamfered and bears traces of a three-light mullioned window.

The adjoining south-east corner block appears to have been roofed, probably in the 17th century, to connect the east range with the south. Above the stone wall already mentioned the upper part of the wall, recorded in 1980, was of square panels in two heights with a short straight brace from a concealed post at the north end to the wallplate.⁹⁴⁶

The *SOUTH RANGE* could not be surveyed in detail. It is of three bays and is plastered on the south side; the north wall appears to have been built with large framing, later subdivided, and had at least one arched brace of shallow pitch.⁹⁴⁷ The roof has tiebeams, collars, clasped purlins, and queen struts, with traces of soot. The range was perhaps a kitchen or brewhouse built in the mid 16th century.

Development of the house

It is clear that some work survives from the period of Abingdon abbey's control of the rectory before 1284, but not clear how much. After that, three medieval phases can be fairly closely dated. The first is probably attributable to Solomon of Rochester between 1284 and 1290, less probably to an early successor, and includes the walls of the service wing, the timber-framed hall, the timber staircase outshut, and in the north range the solar roof and the associated doors at both ends of the cross passage and at the top of the staircase. The second, between c. 1320 and c. 1340, includes the casing of the hall in stone, the provision of new windows and the former fireplace in the solar, and perhaps a truncation of the west end of the north range and a new wall at that point. The third, presumably c. 1444, in the north range, includes William Say's chapel screen and door from the north to the east range. Almost certainly this phase includes the fireplace in

⁹⁴⁶ Drawing by J. Munby.

⁹⁴⁷ Personal observation from within; elevation drawing by L.K. Ann during restoration, 1980.

bays 4 and 5, the associated floor joists in bay 4, and the former fireplace and chimney in the parlour. It presumably also includes one of the two sets of Perpendicular windows in the parlour, and perhaps the cross-passage joists (which resemble those in bay 4) and therefore the parlour ceiling.

The remaining features cannot be conclusively related to those phases, though the dating of some relative to others is apparent. For example, the timber wall of the south range is later than its stone east wall and almost certainly contemporary with the stone east wall of the east range, with its lancet window, whether *in situ* or reset. Since its construction involved demolishing a stone wall, it can hardly be contemporary with the stone casing of the timber hall wall. It can hardly be Solomon of Rochester's work either, since if it was the crown-plate roof would have been continued eastwards over it. If the jettied projection at the north-east corner was a latrine, then the narrow splayed window below it must have been made earlier and blocked when the latrine was built. Again, the floors in bays 3 and bays 5 and 6, with the former partition-beam in bay 4, appear to be part of a single design, which must be earlier than Say's work, as must the posts of the south wall. The roofs of bays 4 to 6 of the north range, and that of the east range, are not by the same carpenter. If the first is Say's work, then that of the east range must be later and must replace a two-storeyed building (entered through Say's door) which in turn replaced a single-storeyed building overlooked by the window which Say's door replaced. If the east range timberwork is Say's, the roof of bays 4 to 6 of the north range is probably earlier. If the parlour ceiling is Say's, then two of the Perpendicular windows must be earlier. Little or no building work is likely to have been undertaken for twenty to thirty years before 1394.⁹⁴⁸ A wall on padstones such as the south wall of the north range is unlikely to have been built much after the mid 14th century, especially as stone from the demolished wall would have been available to provide a continuous ground sill. The attractive possibility that the wall was the arcade of a single-aisled structure continuing Solomon of Rochester's staircase outshut eastwards appears to be ruled out by the evidence of surviving mortices in posts II and III, though the existing framing could be later than the posts.

Four principal models can be suggested in reasonable accordance with the evidence. The *first model* proposes nine main medieval phases. It would suggest that (1) the north range was an early or mid 13th-century stone building, with at the west end a hall, fronting the green, with a two-storeyed service block east of a cross passage; the service block had windows in the south wall. The east end of the range was perhaps a kitchen, with a door to a path on the east side and a window, now blocked, on the north. There were other small lancet windows in both north and south walls. If this building was the incumbent's quarters, there may have been a second hall for the Abingdon abbey staff on the site of the present west range, with other structures to the south including the fragmentary stone wall on the south side of the present service wing. (2) Between 1284 and 1290 Solomon of Rochester converted the old hall to a great chamber with new doorways, a new roof, and presumably a new first floor in the previously open part. That floor probably had transverse joists resting on a thickened south wall, and in the centre on a bridging beam over samson posts. South of the chamber he built a timber hall and integrated service wing incorporating the earlier stone wall, and thus reoriented the house towards the west. (3) The east end of the north range was modified between 1290 and c. 1320, when the south wall of the putative kitchen was demolished and re-used as the east wall of a south annexe; the kitchen became a two-storeyed chamber with a

⁹⁴⁸ Cf. above, site documentation.

jettied garderobe, and was connected to the solar basement by a corridor or pentice passing through a bay open to the roof. The south wall of this structure included the present wall framing and there was a crown-post roof above; the north wall retained a lancet window. (4) Between *c.* 1320 and *c.* 1340, the hall was cased in stone and new windows and a fireplace put into the chamber, whose west end may have been shortened. (5) At some time the south-east annexe of the north range was heightened to two storeys. (6) In the early 15th century two new windows were put into the basement below the chamber. (7) About 1444 William Say completed the conversion of the basement to a parlour by deepening the floor to give more headroom; the removal of the samson posts necessitated a new ceiling and the receiling of the old cross passage. He added one and perhaps two more windows on the south side, and a ground-floor fireplace. Further east he reroofed the rest of the north range, built a new chamber or antechapel with fireplace and chimney, which involved flooring bay 4, removed a partition at truss II, and converted the east bay into a chapel with an new screen separating it from the antechapel and with a door to the east range. Downstairs he reset the lancet window in the base of the chimney. (8) Reginald Nutt in the late 15th century, or St. George's college after 1495, rebuilt the south end of the east range and the whole of its upper storey, and converted it to a suite of rooms with a kitchen or brewhouse, and (9) finally a further kitchen or brewhouse was built in the south range in the mid 16th century.

A *second model* would differ from the first in proposing that none of Solomon of Rochester's work survives, the timber hall and the reroofed solar replacing his house somewhat after rather than before 1300, and that the east end of the north range was reconstructed *c.* 1350 after the casing of the timber hall. The remaining phases would be as in the first model.

A *third model* proposes a much later date for the floors and timber wall in the north range. It assumes a 13th-century building there, with lancet windows including the blocked window at the north-east corner, but no early floors surviving. That building was modified by Solomon of Rochester or an early successor as in the first and second models, but the former crown-post roof of the east part of the north range, its timber south wall, the south annexe in the east range with the lancet reset in it, and the floors in bays 3, 5, and 6 date from the early 15th century and could perhaps be attributed, with two of the Perpendicular windows in the parlour, to Bekynton. The existing roof of bays 4, 5, and 6 would be a 16th- or 17th-century replacement, the unusual use of isolated crown struts in that period being dictated by the mortices in the earlier tiebeams. Say's work thus includes the reconstruction of the east range, which had previously been single-storeyed. The jettied projection at the north-east corner may have been an oriel rather than a garderobe. Nevertheless it seems most unlikely that the roof of the east range, with its relatively low pitch and early-Tudor style windbraces, can be as early as the 1440s.

A *fourth model*, a variant on the third, would reject the attribution of the chapel screen to Say, and perhaps attribute to him the work ascribed to Bekynton in the third model, supposing that the chapel occupied the first floor of bays 5 and 6. The chapel screen, the parlour ceiling, and the fireplace in the antechapel chamber would thus be contemporary with the east range and date from *c.* 1500. A drawback of this model is the lack of evidence of a chapel licence later than 1444.

None of the models satisfactorily answers the enigma of the apparently open bay 4, unpartitioned from the east end of the floored great chamber west of it. Moreover all are subject to specific objections. The first model suffers from the apparent implausibility of the use of quarter-round mouldings in the late 1280s, but is otherwise the least

unsatisfactory. To the two last models can be objected the implausibility of replacing a stone wall in the 15th century by a timber wall based on padstones (and in the case of post III, perhaps earthfast posts), the lack of 15th-century parallels for the arch-bracing of the wall, and the failure to explain why Solomon of Rochester's floors in bays 1 to 3 should have been replaced in two stages. The second model fails to explain why a stone casing of a timber building would have been rapidly followed by a timber replacement for a stone one.

The importance of the house rests first on the apparent survival of an early hall at the west end of the north range with a two-storeyed block east of the cross passage: in form, this arrangement is analogous to the mid 13th-century hall at Lime Tree House, Harwell,⁹⁴⁹ and to the late 13th or early 14th-century hall at the Hyde Farm, Marcham.⁹⁵⁰ Secondly, the evidence that the present hall timberwork and solar roof are earlier than the 14th-century stonework, and probably attributable to Solomon of Rochester, gives them a much increased significance in a crucial period in the development of English timber framing. The sophisticated treatment of the hall in particular achieved a new aesthetic synthesis which completely eliminated the remaining archaisms found in other halls of the 1270s, 1280s, and even 1290s,⁹⁵¹ and remained influential until the mid 14th century.⁹⁵²

OTHER HOUSES

Few interiors of the numerous timber-framed houses of Sutton have ever been investigated and several medieval houses may remain unrecognized. Bekynton House on the Green, a stone building used in the 18th century or earlier as a court house, may be medieval.⁹⁵³ A cruck truss was reported at Ramsey's Farm, High Street,⁹⁵⁴ and a cruck barn was recorded at Uptown Farm, High Street, although the house was not medieval.⁹⁵⁵ Two houses retain medieval cross wings.

MANOR COTTAGE, a holding immediately south-west of the Manor House, belonged in 1804 to the heirs of B. Cullereene;⁹⁵⁶ it was bought by H. E. A. Lindsay in 1902⁹⁵⁷ and thus became part of the manorial estate.

Manor Cottage (Fig. 50) was investigated and partially surveyed in 1971.⁹⁵⁸ It was severely damaged by a fire in 1990, which destroyed the thatch, and obliterated some evidence permanently; many features, however, were revealed for the first time. It has not been possible to resurvey the building. It consists of a cruck-built hall 21 ft. wide, with one and a half bays surviving, and a three-bayed two-storeyed north cross wing with a crown-post roof. The hall ends at a large chimneystack immediately east of the central cruck truss. It now appears more probable that a cross entry and service bay south of the chimney have been lost than that there was a cross entry in the present position next to the wing, since examination in 1987 revealed pegs for a

⁹⁴⁹ Above, gazetteer, Harwell.

⁹⁵⁰ Above, gazetteer, Marcham.

⁹⁵¹ E.g. West Bromwich Manor House, c. 1273 (for date, *Vernacular Archit.* xx, 41); Foulbridge, Snainton, c. 1288 (R.C.H.M. *Houses of the North York Moors*, 15-17); Quaintree House, Braunston, Ruts., c. 1298 (for date, *Vernacular Archit.* xv, 66).

⁹⁵² E.g. at Leicester Guildhall.

⁹⁵³ Fletcher, *Sutton C.: P. and P.* 6; Berks. R.O., D/EC M 149, courts of 19 Dec. 1723, 13 July 1738.

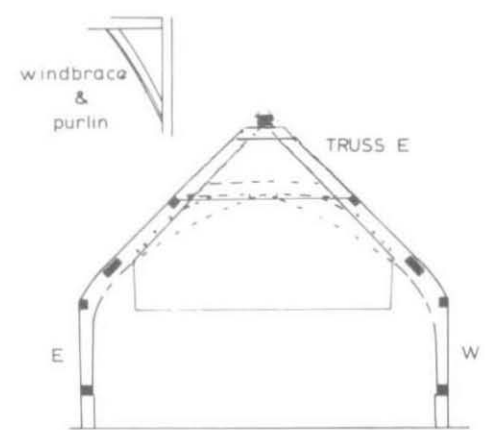
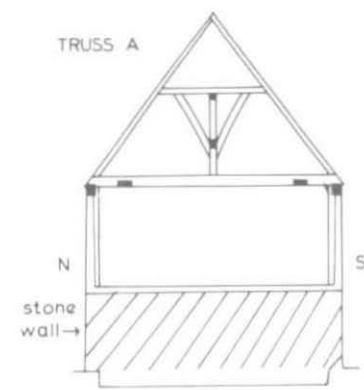
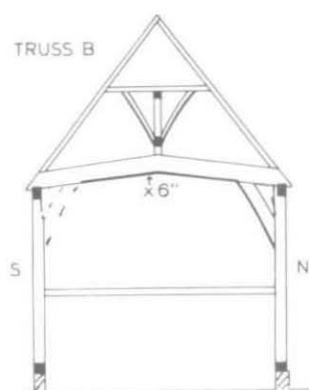
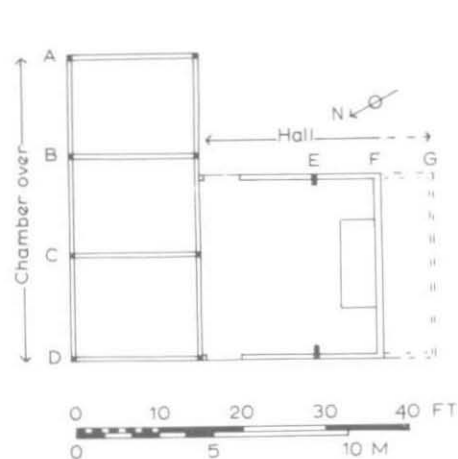
⁹⁵⁴ *Oxoniensis*, xxxiii, 83.

⁹⁵⁵ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 221 and Fig. 20; Fletcher, *Sutton C.: Hist.* 49, claiming that the farm was held by the Curtis family in the Middle Ages.

⁹⁵⁶ P.R.O., MR 50.

⁹⁵⁷ Deeds in possession of the Hon. F.D.L. Astor, conveyance 9 July 1902, Mary Goodson to Lindsay.

⁹⁵⁸ *Med. Archaeol.* xvi (1972), 197; Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 180-1, Fig. 5 and plates 16-17.



MANOR COTTAGE SUTTON COURTENAY
SU 501939

Fig. 50. Manor Cottage, Sutton Courtenay.

wallbrace at that point. The cruck truss has sharply elbowed blades of thick cross-section, terminating in a saddle that supported the ridgeplate, and had arched braces to the collar. One blade supports the wallplate on a step; the wallplates on the other side are butted to the blade. The purlins are tenoned into the blades. The chamfered and steeply pitched windbraces, thick and almost square in cross-section, are lap-jointed to the purlins. There seems to have been no truss next to the wing, and the fire has destroyed the evidence of the relationship of ridgepiece to wing. The west wallplate is crudely scarfed just before its junction with the rear south wallplate of the wing, but the scarf appears to be a patching of a timber of inadequate length rather than evidence that the wing is an addition. The walls of the hall were in giant panels without a middle rail. Posts in the north bay were connected to the wallplates by long steeply pitched upward braces, of which the pegholes remain. No wallbraces rose from the cruck blades.

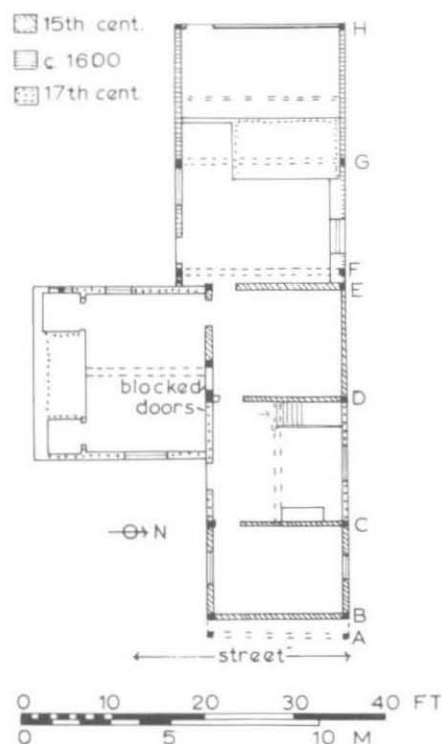
The rear wall of the wing was flush with that of the hall. The front (east) wall may have been jettied; it has been underbuilt in stone and brick. The wing appears to have had a great chamber on the whole of the first floor. The crown plates are tenoned to the crown posts, which are not jowled. There are two open trusses with cambered and arch-braced tiebeams, and four-way braces of nearly square cross-section rising from the crown posts. The principal posts have variously slight jowls, upstands, or no jowls. The east gable truss has a flat tiebeam, dragon ties, and upward braces from the crown posts, but the west tiebeam, though with dragon ties, is cambered. The crown plates and the tiebeams and braces of the open trusses are chamfered, with draw stops; the pitch and treatment of the crown-post braces is similar to that of the hall windbraces. There are trait-de-Jupiter scarf joints in the wallplates. The wall framing has large panels, with an intermediate stud in each bay, rather than the giant panels usually associated with crown-post roofs in the area. The wall posts are braced upwards to the wallplates; the braces are variously straight, with one peg on the post, or curved, with two pegs. Cracks in the posts suggest that the intermediate studs and curved braces result from a repair, and that the whole frame may have been jacked up to fit on the present north stone ground sill, which includes under the main posts some large stones that may have been padstones. An unexplained feature, that the framing of the west bay, on the south side adjoining the hall, was set on a high sill above a stone footing rising to first-floor level, might have resulted from the same repair.

Most of the features of the building are consistent with an early 14th-century date, though the intermediate studs in the wing bays, if original, would be an advanced feature for that period. Timber samples from both hall and wing, taken by Mr. D.W.H. Miles, indicate felling dates of 1317 and winter 1317-18, so the house was built perhaps late in 1317 or more probably in 1318.⁹⁵⁹

SOUTHFIELD FARM, on the east side of High Street (Figs. 25, 51), also retains a two-storeyed medieval north cross wing, attached to a hall rebuilt in the 17th century.⁹⁶⁰ The westernmost bay of the wing is a kitchen, originally with an open hearth, added in the 16th century, but the easternmost three bays are original. The wing is jettied at the street end. The east and west bays of the three have wall framing with curved downward braces; the central bay was reframed in the 17th century, when a new ceiling-beam was put in. There is a trait-de-Jupiter scarf joint in the north wallplate but a secret-bridled scarf in the south. Flat joists of the original floor, laid transversely and lodged in the rails, remain in the west bay. At the east end of the south wall of that bay, adjoining the storey post, is the chamfered surround of a doorway; a chamfer and peg on the east side of the storey post indicate an adjoining door in the centre bay. The two doors were presumably for buttery and pantry, or perhaps for buttery and staircase. The function of the ground-floor room in the easternmost bay is not clear. The roof trusses have principal rafters, tiebeams, and collars clasping the purlins, but no ridgepiece. There were originally no studs between tie and collar, except for a crown strut at the east gable truss. The second truss from the west now has three such studs, but they are clearly inserted. The western truss has light staves between tiebeam and collar. The second truss has arched braces to the tiebeam, but the other

⁹⁵⁹ D.W.H. Miles, unpublished tree-ring report (1992). The hall ridgepiece appears to have been felled c. 1195 and was therefore re-used in 1317-18.

⁹⁶⁰ Currie, 'Smaller Dom. Archit.' 188-9, Fig. 12 and plates 27-8.



SOUTHFIELD FARM SUTTON COURTENAY
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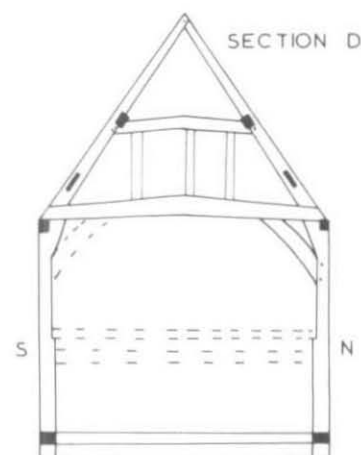
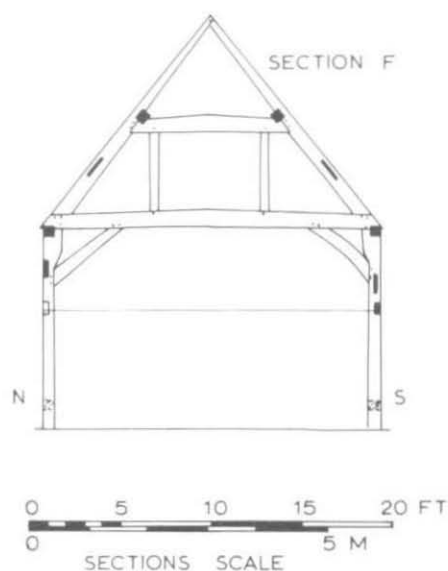


Fig. 51. Southfield Farm, Sutton Courtenay.

trusses have, or appear to have had, curved downward braces. That arrangement suggests a partitioned room in the front bay and a two-bayed upstairs chamber in the two rear bays. Nevertheless the roofs of those two bays are quite heavily sooted. The soot cannot have come from the later kitchen; while seepage from the hall is possible, it may be that the central bay was used as a kitchen for some time before the rear kitchen was added.

Most of the structural features would be consistent with any date between c. 1380 and c. 1500, but unless the north wallplate was wholly re-used the scarf joint in it can hardly be much later than 1400.⁹⁶¹ The different scarf in the south plate might result from a repair.

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John Blair kindly drew Fig. 1, and Edward Impey Fig. 22. Figs. 12, 14, 15, and 16 were drawn by John Fletcher, with minor amendments by the present author. Fig. 13 and section A of Fig. 43 were redrawn from originals by John Fletcher, and Fig. 40 from an original by John Blair.

Drafts by the following people were helpful in preparing the following drawings: John Fletcher: Figs. 26, 27 (cross-sections), 28 (section C), 39, 47 (section B, south part of section A); W.E. Godfrey: Fig. 38 (plan); J. Macgregor: Fig. 29 (east part); J. Munby: Fig. 6 (plan, part); T. Rayson: Figs. 10, 11. In all those cases measurements were checked as far as possible and the original draughtsmen are not to blame for the present form.

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⁹⁶¹ Cf. C.R.J. Currie, 'Scarf-joints in the North Berkshire and Oxford area', *Oxoniensia*, xxxvii, 177-86.