

The Recently Demolished Houses in Broad Street, Oxford

By W. A. PANTIN

THE houses on the north side of Broad Street, Oxford, recently demolished (December, 1936–March, 1937) to make way for the Bodleian extension, are interesting from three points of view. Firstly, as a group, they form a specimen of early town-planning. Secondly, architecturally, in plan and construction they reveal a well defined type of town house. Thirdly, there is the historical question of their former inhabitants and associations; precisely what sort of people lived in them?¹

In considering the group as a specimen of town-planning (FIG. 29), it should be remembered that mediaeval Oxford was divided by its streets into a series of large rectangular 'islands.'² This particular island was very deep, going back to the wall of Trinity garden, while each house had only a narrow frontage on Broad Street, though these frontages were generous compared with the shop-fronts of 6 or 8 feet within the walls.³ Each tenement therefore consisted of a very long and very narrow strip, averaging about 10 to 20 feet wide by about 200 to 250 feet long. The houses of course were built on the street end of the strip; but there remained the problem of utilizing the space at the back; this was not only used for gardens, outhouses, workshops,⁴ but also in several cases we find what seems to have been a separate 'cottage' built at the back (see FIG. 29, at the back of 46 and 47, Broad St. and 4, Parks Rd.) The result was that almost every house had to have a side passage, leading through to the

¹ In the preparation of this paper many thanks are due to the members of the Oxford University Archaeological Society who helped in the surveying, and in particular to Mr. E. T. Long; to those who supplied the photographs, namely, Mr. J. A. Daniell, Mr. H. Minn, Mr. B. W. Ottaway, Mr. P. S. Spokes; to the Curators of the University Chest and of the Bodleian Library, and to Mr. Luxton, the Clerk of the Works, for giving every facility and help on the site; to Mr. S. M. R. Gardner, of the Ashmolean Museum, for many hours work spent in rescuing finds from the site, and to Mr. W. P. Burden for help in preparing the plans.

It is hoped that the pottery and other objects found during the excavations will form the subject of a paper in *Oxoniensia*, volume III.

² Compare H. E. Salter, *Map of Medieval Oxford* (1934).

³ H. E. Salter, *Medieval Oxford* (O.H.S. c (1936)), pp. 81–2.

⁴ See the plan of Nos. 43 and 41, in 1829, in *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H. E. Salter (O.H.S. (1928) etc.), II, 589.

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FIG. 29

GENERAL PLAN OF THE HOUSES IN BROAD STREET.

Buildings down to the mid-eighteenth century are shown in heavy black ; later buildings are hatched. Scale, 1 inch=about 40 feet.

Based on the large-scale Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

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space and buildings behind. These side passages are the natural corollary of the 'island' system, and are a widespread feature in old towns, as for instance the 'wynds' and 'closes' of Edinburgh, and the 'Rows' of Yarmouth; and in Oxford itself there still survive numerous passages and entries, as in Holywell, High Street (Kemp Hall, The Chequers, the Wheatsheaf, Drawda Hall), St. Aldate's (Littlemore Court), and Magdalen Street (Friars Entry). It is to the tenements or 'cottages' at the back, reached by diving down such a side passage, that the term *introitus* or 'entry' probably applies, as Dr. Salter has pointed out.¹

In dealing with the architectural and historical aspects, it will be best to take each house separately, but some preliminary observations may be made. In the first place, although these houses were older and far more interesting than their exteriors suggested, we could find nothing that was definitely mediaeval in the structures, except for the west wall of No. 46 (see below). The houses mostly belong to a very interesting type, c. 1600-1650; this consists of a timber-framed structure (with lath and plaster filling) built round an enormous, solid stone chimney-stack, which constitutes the core of the house round which the timber structure hangs like a crinoline. The staircase, originally spiral, is placed side by side with the chimney-stack, between the front and back rooms. This type, it will be seen, occurs again and again on the general plan (FIG. 29), and a good idea of its vertical section can be got from PLATE XVII, B. The centrally placed chimney-stack seems a good test of antiquity, which might be applied to other old houses in Oxford. The diagonally placed corner fireplace (as in No. 45) seems to come later, in the early 18th century, and later still is the modern practice of placing the fireplaces in the side walls (as in No. 38 and 44).

Secondly, while the plans and arrangements of old houses are always interesting, the old houses of Oxford are important for a special reason. Contrary to the popular view, in mediaeval Oxford the colleges were small and relatively unimportant institutions, intended only for a few graduates; the great mass of undergraduates, and even the majority of graduates, lived scattered about the town in the academic halls.² Such a hall was simply a commodious dwelling-house, hired by an approved principal; the academic industry was still, so to speak, in the domestic stage, and had not yet reached the college-factory system which we now enjoy; and if one wants to picture how the average mediaeval Oxford student lived and worked, one must look, not at the old colleges, but at the old houses of Oxford. Although these Broad Street houses do not seem to go back, in their present form, beyond about 1600, they may well reproduce in essentials the sort of house inhabited by mediaeval students;

¹ Salter, *Medieval Oxford*, pp. 83-4.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 102; cp. *History*, April 1929, pp. 58-9; *Essays in History presented to R. L. Poole* (1927), pp. 421-35, 'An Oxford Hall in 1424,' esp. p. 431, for size of halls.

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and the men who built them could probably remember the time before the Elizabethan statute compelled the undergraduates to enter the colleges. This seems an important point, which should make us specially careful to preserve all the old houses that survive in Oxford.

NO. 47, BROAD STREET

STRUCTURE (FIG. 30)

(i) This was outwardly one of the least prepossessing of the houses, but in fact it was one of the most interesting, a very good example of the timber-frame and chimney-stack type described above (for plans and section, see FIG. 30). As originally built, *c.* 1600,¹ it consisted of two stories and an attic, front and back; in all, six large rooms. According to the Hearth Tax of 1665, it had seven hearths;² of these, six survived: two complete, in the attics, and four in fragments (marked X on plans). The seventh fireplace was presumably in the 'cottage' at the back, but had not survived. Except for the chimney-stack, the house was timber-framed. The stairs seem originally to have formed a half-spiral, starting from the small lobby (C), in the thickness of the chimney-stack, and leading up to a similar lobby on the first floor. Another half-spiral led from the first floor to the attics, and this survived more or less in its original form. The side passage was open to the sky, at the back (E on plan). The cellars did not extend under this passage.

The 'cottage' at the back was probably originally detached; it consisted of two stories, timber-framed except for the chimney-stack (PLATE XVII, c).

(ii) In the Window Tax of 1696 it has sixteen windows.³ In the course of the 18th century various changes were made. The whole of the side passage was enclosed: it would cease to be a thoroughfare when the 'cottage' ceased to be a separate tenement. It was then possible to alter the staircase; instead of springing from a lobby which could only be entered from one of the two ground floor rooms, an inconvenient arrangement, it was made to start from the side passage, and for this purpose the north west corner of the ground floor front room (A) was screened off. This alteration must have been made not later than the middle of the 18th century, to judge from the panelling of the front room. The staircase was further made to reach the first floor in a straight flight, instead of winding, and for this purpose the first floor landing was enlarged northwards, and two closets (C, D) were formed, all at the expense of the back first floor

¹ These dates throughout are only tentative, since they have to be based on grounds of style.

² *Surveys and Tokens*, H. E. Salter (O.H.S. LXXV (1920)), p. 206.

³ These and other figures from the Window Tax of 1696 have been kindly supplied by Dr. H. E. Salter.

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room (B). The winding flight of stairs from the first floor to the attics was left more or less unchanged. On the top floor, the front attic (A, B, C) was raised

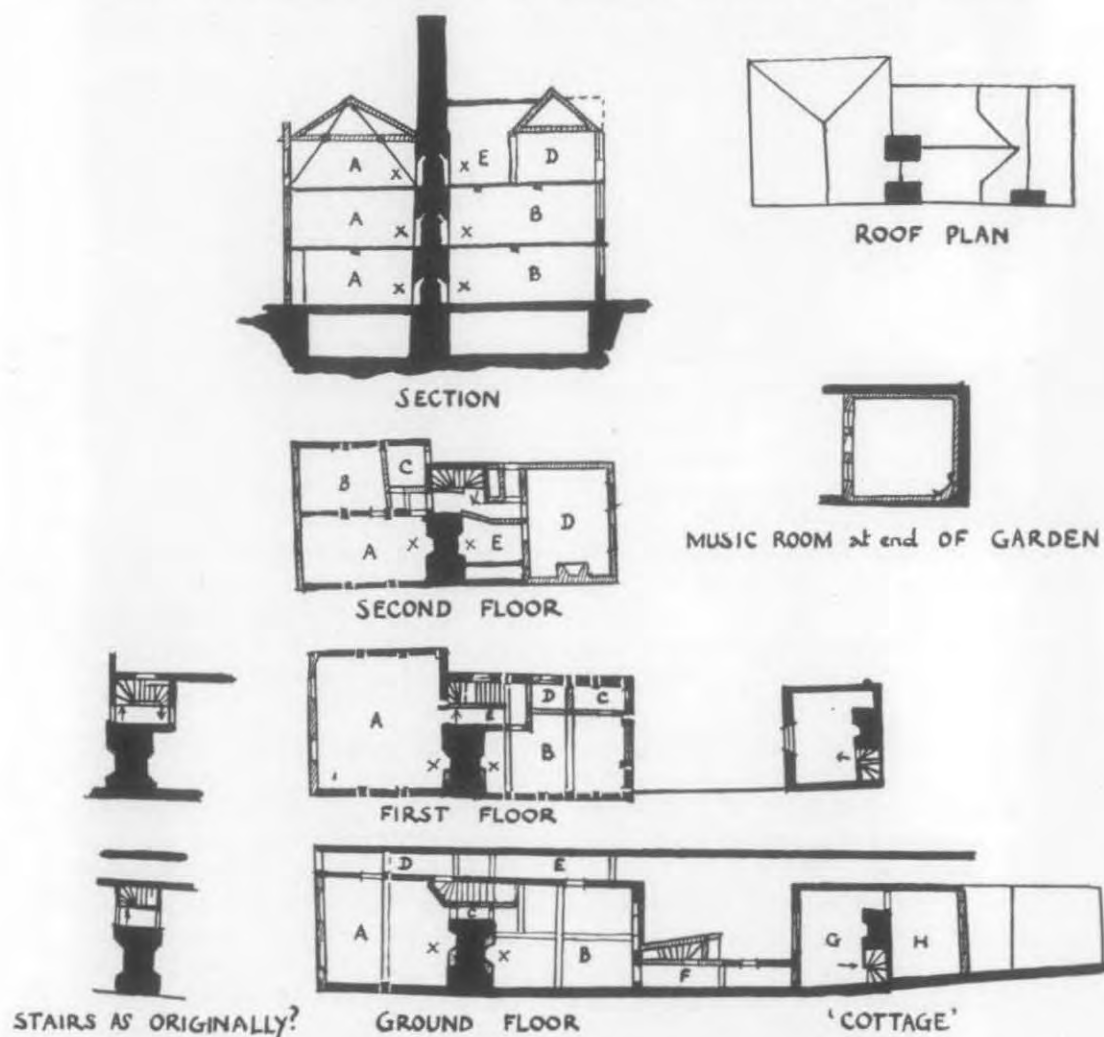


FIG. 30
NO. 47, BROAD STREET.

Scale, 1 inch = 27 feet.

and given a flat ceiling and a new roof, but the sloping timbers of the old roof still survived in the side walls, and are visible in PLATE XIX, A. At the back, the

northern half of the attic was raised to form a flat-ceilinged room (D), which was given a new fireplace in the east wall. The southern half (E) was partitioned off as a sort of cupboard, with its original line of roof preserved. This is shown, in section, in PLATE XVII, B, whereas by contrast the back view (PLATE XVI, B, extreme right) shows the effect of raising the northern part (D).

On the ground floor the street front was brought forward about a foot, to bring it in line with the originally overhanging first floor front, and indeed the whole street front seems to have been rebuilt. Throughout the house sash windows and modern fireplaces were inserted in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. The Music Room at the end of the garden seems to have been built in the middle or end of the 18th century.

FITTINGS

Ground floor.—Front room (A).—(1) Painted pine panelling with dado-rail, mid. 18th cent. (2) White marble fireplace with wood surround and fluted wood entablature with carved panel in centre, of same date as panelling; behind this, (3) mutilated stone fireplace with stop-moulded jambs and flat four-centred arch in square head (5 ft. 4 ins. by 4 ft. within outer moulding), c. 1600.

Back room (B).—(4) Behind modern fireplace, a much mutilated stone fireplace (opening c. 6 ft. by 4 ft. 3 ins.), apparently with plain chamfered flat four-centred arch, without spandrels or outer moulding; the two stones forming the arch had been reset flush with the wall, but judging from chamfers at the sides, they seem originally to have projected about 2½ ins., to form a kind of hood. There were traces of painting. This fireplace seems of quite different character from the others in these houses, and may possibly go back to the 16th cent., and belong to an earlier building (PLATE XVIII, B).

Stairs to first floor.—(5) Balustrade towards lobby, blocked up, with turned bannisters and square newels and rail, late 17th or early 18th cent.

First floor.—Front room (A).—(6) Painted plaster wall decoration, see below. (7) Behind modern fireplace, and further to east, in N. wall, right jamb of stone fireplace with stop-mould and four-centred arch in square head, c. 1600.

Back room (B).—(8) Painted plaster decoration, see below. (9) Behind modern fireplace, and further to east, left jamb and fragments of stone fireplace with stop-mould and four-centred arch in square head, c. 1600. (10) The slots in the timbers of the N. wall suggests that the original window was about 5 ft. long by 3 ft. high.

Stairs to top floor.—(11) Bannisters and newels as in (5), the N. newel having a turned pendant at the bottom (PLATE XIX, c).

PLATE XIV



A



B

BROAD STREET HOUSES, SOUTH OR STREET FRONT

- A. Left to right :—Blackwell's shop, Nos. 49, 48, 47, 46 (with two gables).
 B. Left to right :—Nos. 46, 45 (with awning), 44, 43.

Phk. H. McK. Kirkby.

PLATE XV



A

Ph. H. McK. Kirkby.



B

Ph. H. Minn.

BROAD STREET HOUSES, SOUTH OR STREET FRONT

- A. Left to right :—Nos. 44, 43 (with bow window), 42, 41, Acland House, 38, 37, 36, and 35.
 B. The corner of Broad Street and Parks Road, showing, left to right :—Nos. 38, 37, 36, and 35 (Coach and Horses), with Ripon Hall in background, right.

PLATE XVI



A



37 38 Acland 41 42 43 44 45 46 47

B

BROAD STREET HOUSES, BACK OR NORTH VIEW

- A. Acland House showing 17th century stone gable (centre), and 19th century additions (Rooms P, Q, L, M).
 B. General view, from the back (north), during demolition.

Phh. H. Minn.



A *Ph. B. W. Ottaway.*



B *Ph. G. Chaundy.*



C *Ph. H. Minn.*

NOS. 45 AND 47 BROAD STREET

- A. No. 45, Courtyard at the back, looking S., showing 17th century (?) windows on right (p. 186).
 B. No. 47, from the back (north), during demolition, showing structure, with central chimney-stack, and stairs (right) (p. 173 f.).
 C. No. 47, 'Cottage' at the back, from the S. (p. 174).

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Top floor.—Front attic (A).—(12) Stone fireplace, complete, with moulded jambs and four-centred arch in square head, c. 1600.

Back attic (E).—(13) Stone fireplace, complete, with stop-moulded jambs and four-centred arch in square head, c. 1600 (PLATE XVIII, C).

'Cottage' at back, ground floor (G).—(14) Pump with leaden spout, 18th cent. ?

Music Room at end of garden.—(15) Stone fireplace with wood surround and fluted entablature, mid. 18th cent. (16) Sash windows and glazed door. The room was said to have been formerly panelled,

WALL-PAINTINGS

In the two first floor rooms, under layers of later wall coverings (paper on canvas, and a wooden dado in the front room), we found remains of a curious decorative scheme of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, consisting of a flat plaster surface painted to represent panelling.

In the back room, the scheme left the timber framework of the walls completely exposed, thus dividing the plaster into two rows of panels, on an average about 4 ft. square. Each panel of plaster was painted to represent a mitred panel (PLATE XIX, B) composed of two kinds of heavily grained woods inlaid, a red-brown, for mahogany (?), and a grey, for walnut (?), within a border of light yellowish-brown, unidentified. The decoration continued all round the room, including over the fireplace and the outside west wall, that is to say, it was done before the two closets, C and D, were partitioned off. In the partition wall of the latter, however, was found incorporated a piece of early 17th century panelling, which was actually painted over to represent inlaid panelling, as a part of the decorative scheme described above; it had evidently been moved from some other position, probably from screening off the landing.

In the front room, the scheme made less use of the timber framework of the walls. The upright timbers were left exposed, and showed faint traces of being decorated with painted swags of flowers; but an attempt was made to obliterate or ignore the horizontal timbers, the painted design of the plasterwork being carried right across them. Thus, as regards the east and west walls, the scheme consisted of three large sections, on each wall, reaching from floor to ceiling. The plaster was painted to represent boldly moulded panelling of walnut (?) with a dado-rail about one-third of the way up, dividing the small lower panels from larger upper panels. The effect of light and shade upon the mouldings is very cleverly simulated. The painting on the lower half of the walls was very well preserved, having been protected by a later wooden dado, but on the upper part it was very much faded. Judging from the design of the panelling, the date seems to be early 18th century (PLATE XVIII, A, D).

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This painting of plaster to represent panelling was no doubt fairly popular in its time; there are traces of it in No. 46 as well. It must have been quite effective in a rather theatrical way, and it marks an interesting stage in the history of interior decoration. It served as a cheap substitute for panelling, just as the elaborate, highly coloured floral and figured wall-paintings of the Elizabethan period may be substitutes for arras. It was a precursor of wallpaper, and an ancestor of the now rather despised art of the artificial 'graining' of wood. It is specially interesting that the timbers of the walls were worked into the scheme of decoration.

Underneath this painting, in the front room, above the fireplace on the right hand side, there were a few tiny fragments of an earlier painting, apparently of arabesques, in green.

HISTORY

This house, together with No. 46, formed part of a block of houses (Nos. 46-53) originally belonging to the chantry of St. Mary in the church of St. Mary Magdalen; after the Reformation they passed into the hands of the City in 1569, and the subsequent occupiers can be traced from a series of leases.¹ From about 1581 to the middle of the 17th century this house was leased or occupied by a succession of cooks; this may mean that it was used as an eating-house,² and would account for the large number of wine-bottles, drinking-glasses, oyster-shells and clay pipes that were found in pits at the back hereabouts.

From about 1656, perhaps till his death in 1681, the occupier was William Ellis, Mus. Bac., organist of St. John's College, and Antony Wood describes the music meetings which met in this house: 'By this time (1656) A. W. had genuine skill in musick, and frequented the weekly meetings in the house of William Ellis, late organist of St. John's Coll., situat and being opposite to that place where on the Theater was built.' He goes on to describe in detail 'the usual company that met and performed their parts; there were eight amateurs, mostly Fellows of colleges; and eight professionals, 'musick masters,' including Ellis himself: 'he alwaies play'd his part either on the organ or virginal; Dr. John Wilson, 'the public professor, the best at the lute in all England. He sometimes play'd on the lute, but mostly presided the consort; Edward Low, 'organist lately of Ch. Church. He play'd only on the organ; so when he performed his part, Mr. Ellis would take up a counter-tenor viol and play, if any

¹ *Oxford City Properties*, H. E. Salter (O.H.S. LXXXIII (1925)), pp. 261-2, 263-4.

² For this, cp. Antony Wood's *Life and Times*, ed. A. Clark (O.H.S. XIX (1891), etc.), I, 298, on the Presbyterians and Independents: 'They would also entertaine each other in their chambers with edibles, and sometimes (but seldome) at a cook's house that had a back-way, and be very merry and frolicsome; cp. also Wood's visits to 'Harper's the cook's,' 'Bolls the cook's,' *ibid.*, I, 213, 454, 469, 471, 474.

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person were wanting to performe that part . . . John Parker, one of the University musitians, would be sometimes among them ; but Mr. Low, a proud man, could not endure any common musitian to come to the meeting, much less to play among them.—Among these I must put John Haselwood an apothecary, a starched formal clisterpipe, who usually play'd on the bass-viol and sometimes on the counter-tenor.¹ Altogether, Wood gives us a very interesting and vivid picture of these meetings ; they probably would have taken place on one of the first-floor rooms. The existence of the 18th century Music Room at the end of the garden may be a mere coincidence, or there may possibly have been some continuous tradition of music meetings here.

From about 1683 to the middle of the 18th century there were various types of occupiers, such as painter, victualler, bookbinder, tailor, cook.

NO. 46, BROAD STREET

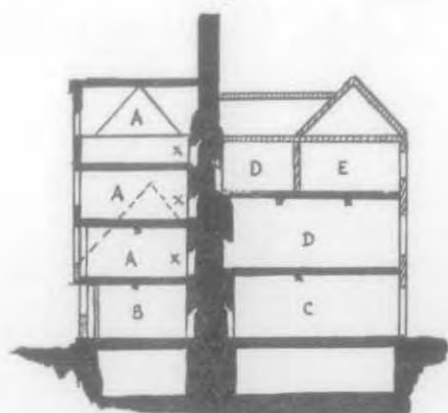
STRUCTURE (FIG. 31)

(i) This house had a more complicated evolution than most, and during the demolition was found to contain one feature that may have been mediaeval (15th century ?) namely a fine timber-framed gable-wall to the west of the front room (A). The framework included some enormously thick, curved braces, and a cambered beam across at the level of the wall plates ; above this the framework of the gable suggested a king-post roof ; the whole framework being about 20 ft. wide by about 12 ft. high at the wall plates, rising to 24 ft. at the apex of the gable. Unfortunately, being covered with layers of plaster, its full extent was not realized until it was actually being pulled down and broken up, so that it was impossible to save it or even to photograph it as a whole ; however from partial photographs and sketches it is possible to reconstruct it roughly (FIG. 31).

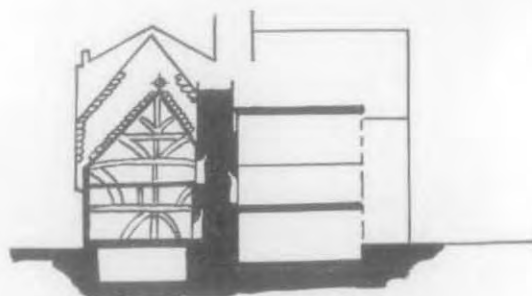
Judging from this gable-wall, the front part of the house (A and B on plan) seems to have been originally an open hall going up to the roof. The first floor seemed to be an afterthought ; it came at a level halfway between two of the horizontal timbers of the gable-wall, and the beam which supported it was not fitted directly into the framework of the gable-wall, but was supported by a small pillar resting on the lower horizontal timber. The chimney-stack may also have been an afterthought, since it encroached upon and partly buried the north end of the gable-wall framework. The first floor and the chimney-stack must however have been inserted at least by the late 16th century, on account of the

¹ *Ibid.*, 1, 204 ff. ; cp. 1, 273 ff ; see also more references to Ellis in Biographical Index, *ibid.*, v, 42-3. The meetings were first held on Thursdays, then on Tuesdays ; Wood attended regularly, 1656-61, and occasionally till 1669. Curiously enough, the meetings were adversely affected by the Restoration, *ibid.*, 1, 275.

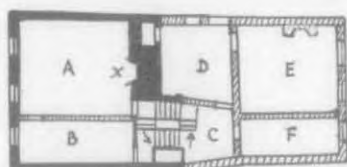
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SECTION



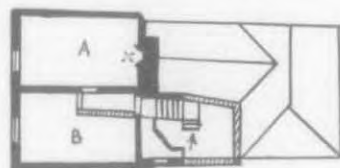
SECTION c. 1600?



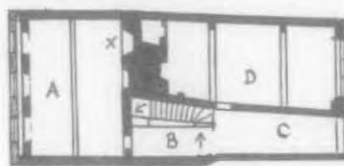
SECOND FLOOR



ROOF PLAN



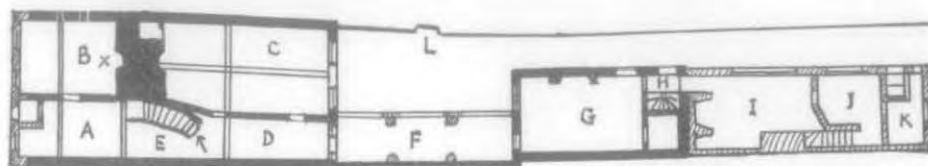
THIRD FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



'COTTAGE'



GROUND FLOOR

FIG. 31
NO. 46, BROAD STREET

Scale, 1 inch = 27 feet.

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Elizabethan wall-painting over the fireplace on the first floor (see below, p. 184); and at the same time some of the timbers of the upper part of the gable-wall were painted green and white to match the wall-pointing. The effect must have been to create a kind of attic on the first floor, which was no doubt provided with gables or large dormers on the street side.

The east gable of No. 47, as built *c.* 1600, projected above the west gable of this house at this period, and the intervening space of wall was decorated with pargetting, with a border of overlapping lobes, and a curious finial, rather like a notary's mark, at the apex of the lower gable (PLATE XX, A).

As regards the back part of the original house, what appeared to be the jamb of a fireplace was found halfway up the south wall (or chimney-stack) of the ground floor back room (C); this may mean that the back room was originally a 'solar,' raised four or five feet above the ground, over a half-underground cellar. If so, one may conjecture that the original house consisted of an open hall, with cellar and solar at the back.

(ii) At some time between *c.* 1600 and *c.* 1650, the house was largely rebuilt and raised higher; this must have been after the building of No. 47, *c.* 1600, for that house for a time overtopped this, as was shown by the pargetting described above (PLATE XX, A), and before *c.* 1650, to judge by the style of the fireplaces. In its new form the house was given three stories and an attic in front, and two stories (and an attic?) at the back, with the great chimney-stack and some form of staircase (spiral?) in between. The roof of the front part survived intact to the end; the main axis running east and west was intersected by two contiguous gables running north and south, which gave the attic plenty of head room. This use of contiguous gables or large dormer windows to transform an attic into an almost full-sized room was probably common; as used in the colleges it represents a transition between the mere cock-loft and a complete third story. It can be seen in several of Loggan's views, *e.g.* New College (S. side), Corpus (N. side), Christ Church (Canterbury Quadrangle); it survives in Brasenose, and it is really the underlying principle in the construction of the top story at Oriel.

According to the Hearth Tax of 1665, this house had then eight hearths;¹ presumably six in the main part (four in front and two at the back), and two in the 'cottage' at the back. The four in front (which included the attic) all survived, complete or mutilated. There must have been a side passage on the site of the later entrance hall (A),² and this passage, as in No. 47, was open at the

¹ *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 206.

² The cellars did not extend to the eastern boundary of the tenement, but left a strip of undisturbed earth, no doubt marking the line of this passage. The earth was also left under the side-passages of Nos. 47, 43-4, and Acland House.

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back (D), as can be seen from the fact that rough-cast was found under the painting of the 'Dance of Death' on the first floor (cp. *Fittings* (20) below), the east wall of the back rooms being thus an outside wall. The house was in fact, originally L-shaped. The 'cottage' at the back, of two rooms and a staircase, was, no doubt, detached.

As regards the street front, the main timbers on the first floor survived in a mutilated state. There were three bays, about 6 or 7 ft. wide each; four uprights, two in the middle, chamfered on the inside, and two at the ends; and the remains of a horizontal beam along the top, with a stop-chamfer, outside and inside, in each bay. There were slots in the uprights for horizontal cross-beams, about halfway up in the two outside bays, and slightly lower in the central bay, which may have contained a projecting window. According to the Window Tax of 1696, this house had twelve windows.

(iii) As usual, a number of changes were made in the course of the 18th century, some of them no doubt being the work of Alderman Fletcher (see below). At the very beginning of the century, if not before, the fine staircase was put in, which survived intact in its upper part. Later on, perhaps in Alderman Fletcher's time (see below), the side passage was enclosed, and made a sort of staircase hall, on both ground and first floor; the ground floor flight of stairs was entirely rebuilt, and the first floor flight was lengthened, the door from the landing into the first floor room (D) being apparently moved further north, judging from the way it cut into the plaster work. On the second floor the back part (D, E, F) was entirely rebuilt, on the site probably of an attic. As usual, the street front was rebuilt at the expense of the public highway; whereas hitherto the first floor had projected beyond the ground floor, and the second floor projected further still, now the ground floor front was brought forward about a foot, into line with the old first floor front, and the first floor front in turn brought forward about a foot into line with the front above. The first floor front, however, was given a double wall, the main timbers of the old front being preserved in place in the inner wall, as described above. At the back, the main block was connected with the 'cottage' by an open loggia on the ground floor and a corridor on the first floor; the latter seems at first to have had a row of 'gothic' arcading or windows towards the court. Later still, in the 19th century, the loggia was enclosed. Various offices were built on to the cottage at the back.

FITTINGS

Ground floor.—*Hall* (A).—(1) Oil painting of Alderman Fletcher.

Front room (B).—(2) Painted pine panelling with dado rail, mid. 18th cent. (3) Stone fireplace with wood surround and festooned entablature, of

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same date as panelling;¹ behind this, (4) Stone fireplace, *c.* 6 ft. 4 ins. wide, with a flat four-centred arch, without spandrels, *c.* 1600, or earlier (? cp. No. 47 ground floor back fireplace (4)).

Back room (C).—(5) Panelling, with two rows of large panels within boldly projecting bolection mouldings, early 18th cent., with some small carved ornaments, 17th cent. (?), applied (PLATE XX, B). (6) Stone fireplace, with bold bolection moulding, early 18th cent. ?, set within (7) very wide wood fireplace with coupled double Ionic columns flanking, and projecting entablature; above (8) an overmantel made up of various carvings, including figures of the Adoration of the Magi, with inscription 'He that is mighty hath magnified me,' and figures of Faith (right) and Charity (left), and various ornamental fragments, all apparently of 17th cent., if genuine (PLATE XIX, D).

Loggia (F).—(9) Between D and F glazed screen and door, in 'gothic' style, with painted panes, late 18th cent. (?). (10) Two wooden Ionic columns, on west side, 18th cent. (11) Brackets with grotesque crouching figures, on east wall, probably from some early 17th cent. house front.

'Cottage.'—*Ground floor room (G).*—(12) Overmantel, with two double-arched panels, framed in coupled columns, and carved entablature above, very elaborate, early 17th cent. (13) Panelling round windows, early 17th cent. (14) In south window, small panes of painted glass (birds, etc.), late 18th cent.

Courtyard.—(15) 'Tudor' arch with bust of 18th cent. divine.

First floor.—*Front room (A).*—(16) To west of modern fireplace, stone fireplace with stop-moulded jambs and four-centred arch in square head, mutilated, early 17th cent. (?); above this (17) Wall-painting, Elizabethan, see below. (18) Between windows on south side, two fragments of wallpaper in the Chinese style, of English make, early 18th cent.

Stairs (B), cp. below (28).

Passage (C).—(19) Wooden chimney-piece with flanking columns and elaborately carved overmantel, with figures within and flanking arched panels, early 17th cent. (if genuine). (20) On west wall, mural painting of the 'Dance of Death,' in 40 panels, apparently a copy of an older original (16th cent. ?), probably made for Alderman Fletcher (*c.* 1787-1826) (PLATE XXI, C).

Back room (D).—(21) Modern fireplace, with surround and overmantel made up of old woodwork, comprising two flanking Ionic pilasters, fluted, with bases enriched with arched panels, 17th cent. (?); entablature including two late gothic panels, with flattened ogee arches, containing (left) kneeling figure of angel with book, (right) kneeling figure in robe and cap, with symbolic head of an ox, early 16th cent. (?) (if genuine; it looks rather like a garbled copy

¹ There was formerly a picture over this fireplace representing an 18th century book-auction.

W. A. PANTIN

of an Annunciation !); richly carved overmantel, with two arched panels enclosed by columns and architrave, early 17th cent. (cp. (12) above). (22) Remains, on east and west walls, of plaster painted to represent grained wooden panelling, with timber framework exposed, similar to work in No. 47, first floor back room (8), but less elaborate; there seems to be no representation of inlay.

'Cottage.'—*First floor room* (F).—(23) Wooden fireplace, with flanking pillars in the form of Egyptian mummies (!), supporting 'gothic' entablature with quatrefoils and ogee arches, a curious composition, probably put in by Alderman Fletcher (c. 1787-1826); above this (24) Richly carved overmantel, with rectangular centre panel, and two arched panels at sides enclosing grotesque terminal busts, and two flanking Ionic pilasters, fluted, early 17th cent.; it was obviously intended originally for a much wider fireplace, and may have been put together from several sources (PLATE XXI, A). (25) In NW. corner, panelled cupboard, with diamond-shaped ornaments, early 17th cent. (26) Carved wooden frieze round the room, with fluting, 17th cent., perhaps inserted from elsewhere. (27) North window, with square 'tudor' hood-mould outside, and some small panes of painted glass, c. 1800.

Second floor.—*Front room* (A, B).—(27) Stone fireplace with stop-moulded jambs and four-centred arch in square head (4ft wide by 3 ft. 10 ins. within the outer moulding), early 17th cent.

Stairs (C).—(28) Stairs with square moulded rail, square newels with turned finials, and turned bannisters with half bannisters against the newels, c. 1700 (PLATE XX, C). (29) Over doors N. and W. of landing, two portraits, of man and woman, unknown, early 17th cent.

Third floor.—*Attic* (A, B).—(30) Stone fireplace with four-centred arch, early 17th cent. (31) On E. side of staircase at this level, small two-light wooden window, blocked by rebuilding of No. 45 (c. 1715).

WALL-PAINTING

In the front room on the first floor, over the original fireplace, was a fragmentary wall-painting dating from c. 1600. After treatment it proved possible, thanks to the skill of Mr. E. T. Long and Mr. G. Nutt, to remove the painting from the wall, and it is now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum as a single panel, 5 feet 7 inches long by 2 feet 8 inches high. Unfortunately the lower part of the panel had been destroyed, but enough remains to indicate the design, which is most effective and rather unusual. On a white ground is an elaborate scroll design in green with an intricate centre-piece flanked by two vases filled with sprays (PLATE XXI, B). There is a broad green border, which, like the scroll pattern, is edged with black. From slight traces of similar work found



A

Ph. P. S. Spokes.



B

Ph. P. S. Spokes.



C

Ph. H. Minn.



D

Ph. P. S. Spokes.

PLATE XVIII

NO. 47, BROAD STREET

- A. First floor, Room (A), detail of wall-painting representing panelling (p. 177).
- B. Ground floor, Room (B), stone-arched fireplace (4) (p. 176).
- C. Top floor, Attic (E), stone-arched fireplace (13), (p. 177).
- D. First floor, Room (A), wall-painting on E. wall, representing panelling (p. 177).

PLATE XIX



A *Ph. B. W. Ottaway.*



B *Ph. G. Chaundy.*



C *Ph. B. W. Ottaway.*



D *Ph. B. W. Ottaway.*

NOS. 46 AND 47 BROAD STREET

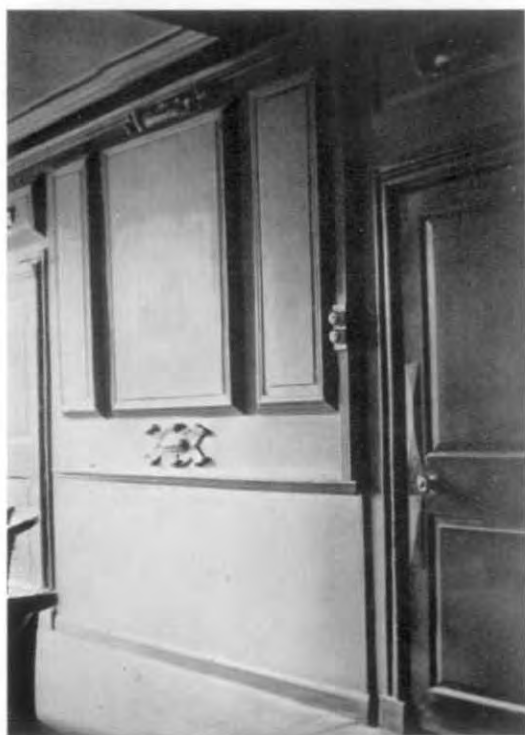
- A. No. 47, Top floor, Attic (A), looking NW., showing original roof-timbers (p. 175).
 B. No. 47, First floor, Room (B), detail of wall-painting on E. wall, representing inlaid panelling (p. 177).
 C. No. 47, Stairs from first floor to attics, looking NW. (pp. 174, 176).
 D. No. 46, Ground floor, Room (C), fireplace and overmantel (6), (7), and (8) (p. 183).

PLATE XX



A

Ph. J. Charlton.



B

Ph. B. W. Ottaway.



C

Ph. B. W. Ottaway.

NOS. 46 AND 47, BROAD STREET

- A. Parquetting on the E. gable of No. 47 (p. 181).
 B. No. 46, Ground floor, Room (C), panelling on E. side (5) (p. 183).
 C. No. 46, Stairs from second to third floor (28) (p. 184).



A

Ph. H. Minn.



B

Ph. P. S. Spokes.



C

Ph. H. Minn.

NO. 46, BROAD STREET

- A. First floor, Room (G), fireplace (23) and overmantel (24) (p. 184).
- B. First floor, Room (A), Elizabethan wall-painting (17) (p. 184).
- C. First floor, detail from wall-painting of the 'Dance of Death' (20) (p. 183).

BROAD STREET HOUSES

on the adjacent wall it seems probable that the whole room was originally decorated, though the rest of the surface may have been merely panelled out in green.

HISTORY

The early history of this house is similar to that of No. 47. The leases begin in 1591;¹ from c. 1647 to c. 1717 it was occupied or leased by a succession of cooks.² From 1637 to 1773 it is described as two messuages, the 'cottage' at the back being evidently separate until Alderman Fletcher's tenancy. The house is above all associated with Alderman William Fletcher (c. 1738-1826), who occupied it from 1787 to his death in 1826. Fletcher was a very interesting and attractive personality; a prominent Oxford merchant and citizen, and a great antiquary and collector, in some ways a pioneer of the Gothic Revival; he might be compared with John Henry Parker. He came of an old Oxford family, being the son of James Fletcher, bookseller, who lived in the Turl, and he spent his childhood at Yarnton, where he was nursed by the wife of the parish clerk. He was apprenticed to William Wickham, draper, who lived at No. 34, High Street (next to Drawda Hall), and became his partner and successor in business. Together with Alderman Parsons he helped to found the 'Old Bank.' He filled various civic offices, becoming a Freeman (1765), Common Councilman (1766), Chamberlain (1769), Bailiff (1773), one of the eight Assistants (1781), and three times Mayor (1782, 1796, 1809). He collected coins and medals, ivories, monumental brasses, prints, drawings of antiquities, and, especially, stained glass, which latter he distributed in his lifetime; some pieces, in the words of his obituary notice, 'contribute to the fenestral brilliancy of our public buildings in Oxford' (some of his glass being in the windows of the Picture Gallery in the Bodleian); but the most 'curious' were given to Yarnton parish church, where 'some of his pieces are remarkably fine, and being Scriptural, very proper; some have been removed, being on subjects legendary' (!). He also presented the 15th century alabaster reredos at Yarnton. He compiled antiquarian collections about Oxford and the neighbouring counties, with illustrations (left to his nephew, Mr. Robinson), but this work was marred owing to failing eyesight and the employment of inferior draughtsmen. An antiquary to the last, he was, characteristically, buried at Yarnton, in an ancient sculptured stone coffin, dug up at Godstow, and reputed to be that of Fair Rosamund, which had been given to him by the Earl of Abingdon; and his tomb is adorned with a brass representing him in his Aldermanic robes, and the

¹ *Oxford City Properties*, pp. 262-3.

² One of these, Bartholomew Finch (d. 1668), was cook of New College, and 'Master of the Society of Cookes in Oxon,' Wood, *Life and Times*, II, 325-7 n., v, 297.

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inscription: 'Yarnton, my childhoods home, do thou receive My parting gift—my dust to thee I leave.' This must be one of the earliest attempts at reviving monumental brasses. He left various annual charities to Yarnton parish, including £10 for bread and meat for the poor on Christmas day, and £1 worth of cakes to be distributed to the children on January 4, the anniversary of his burial; he also left the parish clerk's house, to be used partly as a school-room. He was much beloved for 'his natural kindness and cheerful disposition, rendering him easy of access'; and his engraved portrait by Dighton is inscribed: 'The Father of the Corporation of Oxford. Omnibus Carus.'¹

A great many of the fittings described above must have been collected and inserted in No. 46 by Alderman Fletcher; probably this applies to (5), (6), (7), (8), (9), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (19), (20), (21), (23), (24), (25), (26), (27), (29). Some of these may have come from old houses demolished at that time. Altogether, Fletcher made his house into quite a museum; and if circumstances had allowed its preservation, this home of a civic antiquary would have made a very suitable setting for a City Museum of Oxford Antiquities.

NO. 45, BROAD STREET

STRUCTURE (FIG. 29)

(i) This house had a larger frontage than usual, about 27 ft.; but since the cellars even in the front part only extended under the western half, it is possible that the original house only occupied the western half of the site, leaving the eastern half as a wide passage or yard. According to the Hearth Tax of 1665 it only had four hearths, which indicates quite a small house.²

In the house as it lately survived, the only part that might have gone back beyond 1700 was the middle back room (D); there were no ancient fireplaces, but the leaded casement windows on the first and second floors of this part suggested the late 17th century.

(ii) The house was extensively rebuilt at the beginning of the 18th century; it is described in a lease of 1715 as a 'newly erected messuage.'³ It was then no doubt that the imposing front block was built; the plan is worth noticing, with two principal rooms on each floor (A, B) with a characteristic corner chimney-stack, and the stair-well (C) placed at the back. There were four complete stories, without an attic, and the rooms were higher than those of Nos. 46 and 47,

¹ For Fletcher, see Obituary in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 6 Jan., 1827; and *Some account of Yarnton Church and Parish*, sold by James Mealings, Yarnton, n.d. (Oxford, c. 1856).

² *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 206.

³ It may have been rebuilt as early as 1696, as the Window Tax of that year gives it the large number of twenty windows.

BROAD STREET HOUSES

being about $9\frac{1}{2}$ ft. as compared with about $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft. The back part was also apparently an 18th century addition, three stories high; the first floor was originally one big room (E), with a spiral stair in the thickness of the chimney-stack communicating with the rooms on the second floor; and there was a second staircase (F) at the further end. In the 18th century it must have been a good house. The unsightly 19th century buildings at the back were built as billiard rooms. The two ground floor front rooms were latterly used as a shop.

FITTINGS

Ground floor.—Middle back room (D).—(1) Complete painted pine panelling with dado-rail and cupboards, early or mid. 18th cent. (2) Stone fireplace with fluted wood entablature, of same date as panelling. This was perhaps an eating parlour; latterly used as kitchen.

Stairs (C).—(3) These were complete and of one date, to the top of the house; they no doubt dated from the rebuilding at the beginning of the 18th cent. They had turned bannisters, square newels and square, thinly moulded rails (PLATE XXII, A).

Back room (E).—Perhaps original kitchen; latterly subdivided. At the south end (4) some fragments of early 17th cent. panelling, re-used.

First floor.—West front room (A).—(5) Complete painted pine panelling, with dado rail and two rows of large panels with bold bolection mouldings, very fine, early 18th cent. (6) Fireplace of white marble, with rounded corners to the opening, of same date as panelling (PLATE XXII, C).

Middle back room (D).—(7) Fragments of early 17th cent. panelling, re-used, round door at NE. corner. (8) Leaded casement windows, late 17th cent. (?)

Back room (E).—Originally one big room, latterly divided into two. (9) Complete panelling, of same character as (5) above, but perhaps coarser; there was a small door in the panelling at NE. corner, now blocked, and a spiral stair in SW. corner leading to rooms above. (10) Two large three-light sash windows.

Second floor.—East front room (B).—(11) Stone fireplace with bold bolection moulding, mid. 18th cent.

Middle back room (D).—(12) Stone fireplace, like (11) above, with late 18th cent. hob-grate (PLATE XXII, B). (13) 17th cent. panelling, re-used, round door at NE. corner. (14) Leaded casement windows, late 17th cent. (?)

Third floor.—West front room (A).—(15) White marble fireplace, like (11) above.

East front room (B).—(16) Stone fireplace, like (11) above, with late 18th cent. hob-grate.

HISTORY

This tenement was known in the Middle Ages as Deep Hall.¹ About 1230 it had been acquired by one Ralph Plumbarius, and about 1235 he gave it as a marriage portion with his daughter Florentina to Robert le Rat of Godstow. About 1261-2 Petronilla de Wythulle gave the tenement to the Hospital of St. John the Baptist, from whom it passed in the 15th century to Magdalen College. It had apparently once been an academic hall; down to the year 1385 it is entered in the rentals among the *domus clericorum*, but it was not an academic hall then, nor for some years previously. It must be carefully distinguished from another, more important, academic Deep Hall in High Street. A series of leases survive; the occupants or lessees seem to be usually well-to-do persons, such as Robert Hucvale, Clerk of the lands of Magdalen College (from 1519); Robert Barnes, doctor of physic (1588); John Eveleigh, principal of Hart Hall and his widow and son (from 1604); Richard Wood, stone-cutter (1685), bailiff of the city in 1688 and mayor in 1695;² Sir Robert Harrison, Kt., (1715), draper, and mayor in 1688.³

NOS. 41-4, BROAD STREET

The houses immediately to the east of No. 45 originally formed a single tenement, known as 'Well Hall.' It had been given to Oseney about 1220,⁴ it appears in their rentals as the tenement of Robert de Matham or Well Hall, from about the middle of the 14th century,⁵ and before that apparently as the Hall of Adam de Middleton.⁶ In 1462 it is described as 'unum toftum, modo gardinum, vocatum tenementum Roberti Matham nominatum Wellehalle.'⁷ In the 16th century it passed to Christ Church, and a series of leases survive.⁸ It was never an academic hall. The tenants in the 17th and 18th centuries were various: cooks, apothecary, barber, coffeeman.

The original extent of this tenement is a little difficult to determine. Apparently it included Nos. 44, 43, 42, and 41, but it is doubtful if it included the main block of Acland House. Judging from the architectural evidence, it must have been sub-divided early in the 17th century; and in 1687 it is leased

¹ *Cartulary of the Hospital of St. John the Baptist*, H. E. Salter (O.H.S. LXVIII (1915)), II, 308-16.

² Wood, *Life and Times*, III, 277 n., 489.

³ *Ibid.*, III, 280.

⁴ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, I, 173.

⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 168, 180, 201, etc.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 111, 122, 126, 143, etc.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 331.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 334 ff.

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with 'two other tenements upon the same premises lately erected adjoining to and fronting with the first-mentioned tenement, and in 1715 there were now three newly erected tenements in addition to the main tenement.¹ Of these four tenements, two were sold by Christ Church in 1773 to William Thorpe;² these were presumably Nos. 44 and 42, since Christ Church retained Nos. 43 and 41 in 1829.³

The two houses Nos. 43 and 44, seem to have been built in the early 17th century, on the same model as Nos. 46 and 47; structurally they formed halves of a single timber-framed unit, the beams going through, from east to west; and they shared a single passage, over which their first floors overlapped and joined in the middle. There is not much to say about No. 44, as it was entirely gutted and refitted in the 18th century; the fireplaces, which probably originally occupied a central position to the west of the staircase (cp. No. 43), were moved to the west wall. Each of the three upper floors had a small projecting closet built out at the back on the NW. corner, and the back first floor window had a simple iron-work balcony, of the late 18th century.

From 1692 to about 1771, there was an encroachment of 29 ft. 8 ins. east to west by 4 ft. deep, upon Broad Street, upon which Joseph Penn, lessee of No. 44, had built the south front of his new house (c. 1692).⁴ The dimension is puzzling, for it is too wide for No. 44 by itself, and too narrow for Nos. 44 and 43 together. In any case, it implies some reconstruction of the street front of one or both houses about 1692 and again between 1771 and 1781, when the encroachment seems to have been surrendered.

The passage between No. 43 and 44 had at the street end a solid oak door, and a doorway with flanking corbels, which indicated the original front line on the ground floor.

NO. 43, BROAD STREET

STRUCTURE (FIG. 32)

(i) Externally this house looked a typical Georgian structure; internally it was substantially a timber-framed house with central chimney-stack and stairs, c. 1600-1650, of the same type as Nos. 46 and 47. It had originally three stories and an attic in front, with a high pitched roof running east and west. The back part had two stories and an attic, with a roof running north and south; this remained fairly unchanged, and the north elevation (PLATE XVI, B) with its

¹ *Ibid.*, II, 335.

² *Ibid.*, II, 336, III, 340.

³ *Ibid.*, II, 589, with plan.

⁴ *Oxford City Properties*, p. 269.

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gable gave a good idea of what the backs of Nos. 46 and 47 must have looked like. This is probably one of two houses given in the Hearth Tax of 1665 as having six hearths, the other perhaps being No. 44;¹ and of its six original

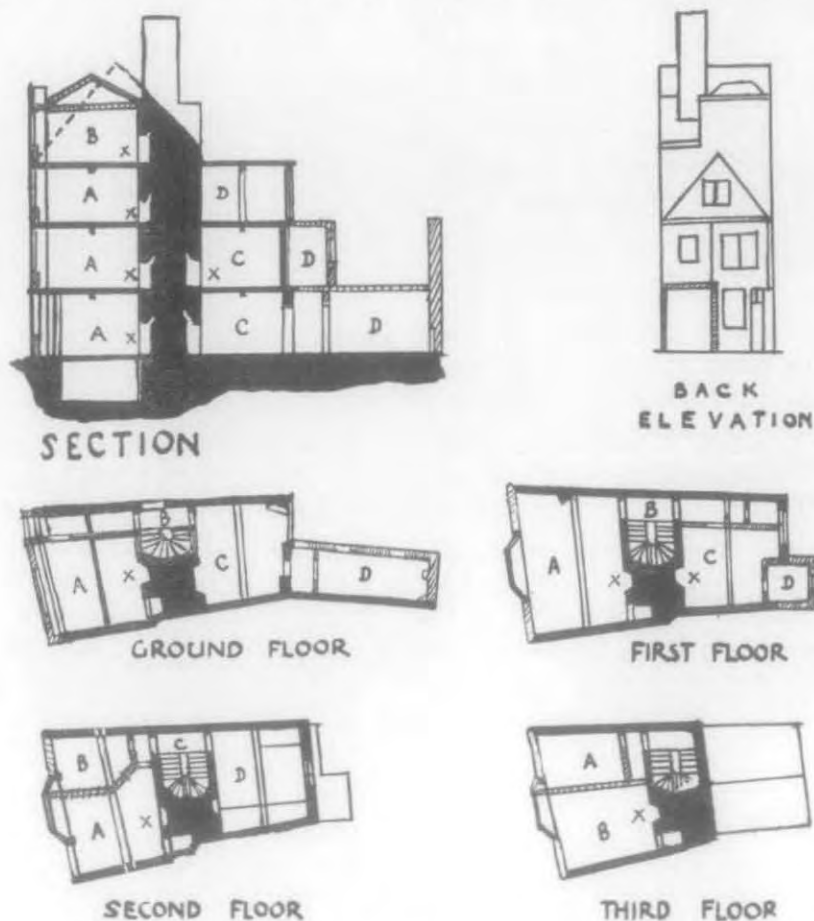


FIG. 32
NO. 43, BROAD STREET Scale, 1 inch = 27 feet.

fireplaces, five remained, hidden and mutilated, that is to say, four in the front part, and one in the first floor back room; the ground floor back (kitchen) fireplace had been destroyed, and the back attic had apparently had no fireplace.

¹ *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 206

BROAD STREET HOUSES

The stairs no doubt were spiral, in the thickness of the chimney-stack. The cellar only extended under the front room.

(ii) Various changes were made in the 18th and early 19th centuries. At the back, an outhouse was added on the ground floor, and a small closet (a powder-closet ?) on the first floor. The house was refronted towards the street, the ground floor being brought forward about a foot, and the three upper floors given bay windows. The front attic was raised and given a new, flatter roof, though a fragment of the old steep-pitched roof with its stone slates was left at the back to the east of the chimney. The staircase was rebuilt, and modern fireplaces put in. There is a plan made in 1829, which shows the collection of outhouses and workshops then existing at the back of this house and No. 41.¹

FITTINGS

Ground floor.—Front room (A).—(1) Remains of stone fireplace, of which only stop-moulded chamfered jambs remained, early 17th cent. Here, as in all the rooms of the first three stories, there were transverse beams running east and west.

Stairs (B).—(2) Stairs, going right to the top of the house, early 19th cent.

Back room (C).—(3) Corner cupboard (in NW. corner), with semicircular back and 'shell' head, and doors, 18th cent. (PLATE XXII, D). (4) Panelling, late 18th cent.

First floor.—Front room (A).—(5) Stone fireplace, with stop-moulded jambs and lintel, and traces of a flat four-centred arch, which had been cut away to give the fireplace a square opening, early 17th cent.

Back room (C).—(6) Very fragmentary remains of stone fireplace, of same type as (1) and (5) above.

Second floor.—Front room (A, B), with modern partition.—(7) Stone fireplace fairly complete, with plain stop-chamfered mould running round jambs and four-centred arch, no spandrels or enclosing moulding, early 17th cent.

Third floor.—Front room (A, B).—(8) The lower halves of the jambs of a stone fireplace similar to (7) above.

As regards the two next houses, No. 42 was entirely rebuilt in the Victorian period, and No. 41, originally a separate house (in 1829 it was the 'Duke of York' public house), was, about the middle of the 19th century, absorbed as part of Acland house and rebuilt.

¹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, II, 589.

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ACLAND HOUSE (NO. 40, BROAD STREET)

STRUCTURE (FIG. 33)

(i) What follows here applies to the main or eastern block of Acland house (A, B, C, D, E, F). Out of the labyrinth of later additions, it is possible to trace some sort of development.

The original house seems to have been a timber-frame and chimney-stack house, of about 1600, of much the same type as Nos. 43, 46, and 47, but with certain interesting differences. For one thing, it was larger, being three rooms deep, instead of only two, with two large central chimney-stacks in between; and while the side walls were timber-framed, the north gable-wall was of stone (PLATE XVI, A). The staircase (spiral ?) was probably in the same position as the modern one, next to the southern chimney-stack. As in Nos. 46 and 47, the side passage (D) was open to the sky, and the back room on each floor must have been reached through the middle back room.

The back or northernmost section consisted of two stories and an attic. The ground floor had been largely rebuilt to form part of Acland's dining room; but the two stories above were well preserved. The first floor room (C) had a three-light stone mullioned window in the north wall, and a three-light wooden window in the west wall (afterwards blocked up), also an early fireplace; the early 17th century panelling may have been brought in from somewhere else; it covered the blocked west window. The middle and front rooms went up to three stories and an attic; it is difficult to decide whether this was the original arrangement, or whether this part was originally the same height as the back part, and had been raised a story in the 18th century. The front rooms had been very much rebuilt, and all traces of ancient fireplaces seem to have been swept away; but there were ancient fireplaces remaining in the first and second floor middle rooms (D and E). There were cellars under the middle and back rooms, but never apparently under the front room or the passage.

If this can be identified as Mrs. Mary Mountford's house (see below), it had, according to the Hearth Tax of 1665, eight hearths;¹ perhaps three in the front part, three in the middle, and two in the back.

(ii) In 1694 the occupant, John Smith, was leased an encroachment on the street 24 ft. 4 ins. east to west, by about 4 ft. deep, on which he had built the south part of his new house; as no rent for this was ever paid, the encroachment was perhaps not made, but either then or some time in the 18th century the front part was rebuilt.² According to the Window Tax of 1696 there were twenty windows.

¹ *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 206.

² *Oxford City Properties*, p. 269.



A

Ph. B. W. Ottaway.



B

Ph. B. W. Ottaway.



C

Ph. B. W. Ottaway.



D

Ph. J. Daniell.

NOS. 43 AND 45, BROAD STREET.

- A. No. 45, Stairs (3) (p. 187).
- B. No. 45, Second floor, Room (D), fireplace (12) (p. 187).
- C. No. 45, First floor, Room (A), panelling (5) and fireplace (6) (p. 187).
- D. No. 43, Ground floor, Room (C), corner cupboard (3) (p. 191).

PLATE XXIII



A *Ph. B. W. Ottaway.*



B *Ph. B. W. Ottaway.*

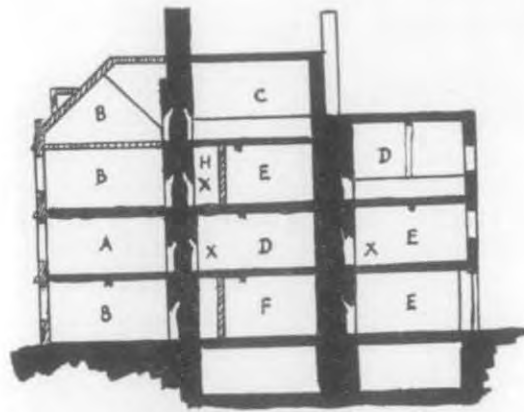


C *From a negative in possession of Mr. H. Minn.*

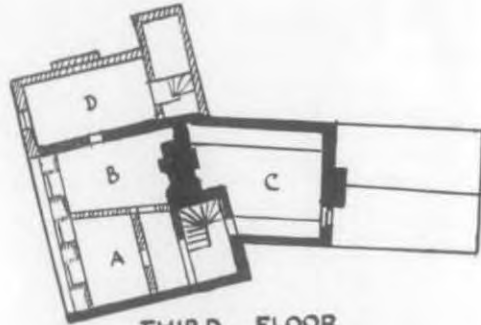
ACLAND HOUSE, BROAD STREET : FIRST FLOOR, ROOM (E), (p. 194)

- A. Timber-framed W. wall, with blocked up window, from interior.
- B. The same from the exterior (west), showing grooved mullions.
- C. Room (E) as Sir Henry Acland's bedroom, looking N.

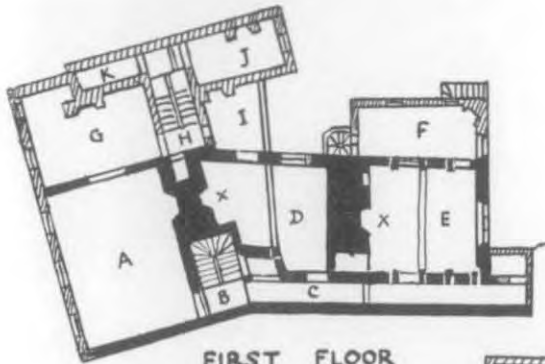
BROAD STREET HOUSES



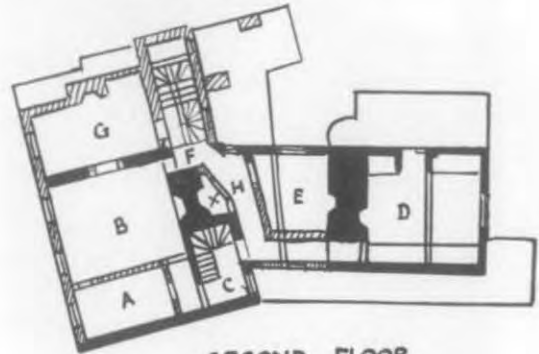
SECTION



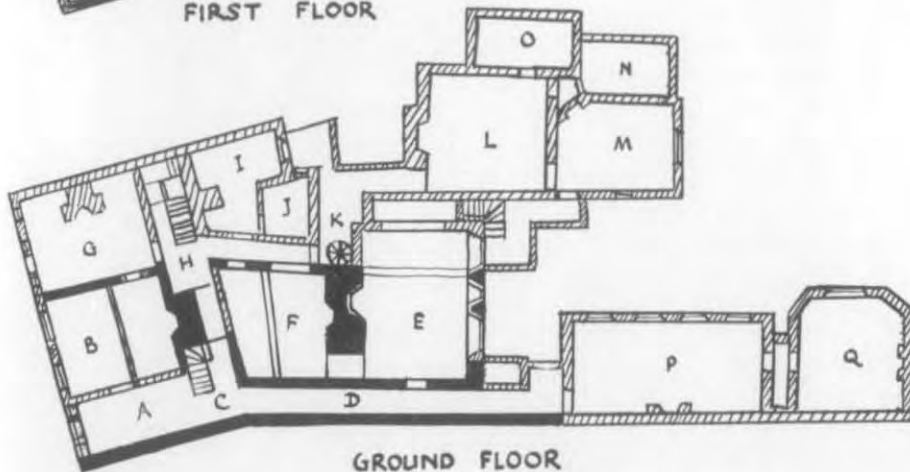
THIRD FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

FIG. 33
ACLAND HOUSE, BROAD STREET

Scale, 1 inch=27 feet.

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(iii) Extensive alterations and additions were made in the time of Sir Henry Acland (1847-1901). The adjoining No. 41 was acquired and rebuilt as an annexe of this house; the front stairs were rebuilt, and at the back were added offices, including a kitchen with a roof reminiscent of the Glastonbury kitchen (L), a study (M) and two libraries (P, Q), with contemporary decorations. The dining room (E) was enlarged, with a dressing-room above (F), which had a stair leading down into the garden. The earlier additions (*e.g.* room P) are said to have been designed by Benjamin Woodward (1815-61), the architect of the Museum and the old Debating Hall at the Union and a friend of Ruskin; and the room Q was probably added in the late sixties by his partner, Deane.¹

FITTINGS

Ground floor.—Room (M).—(1) Stone overmantel elaborately carved with floral pattern and rabbits, in Ruskinian gothic style, mid. 19th cent., by O'Shea, the well-known sculptor employed in the Museum.

Library (P).—(2) Carved stone fireplace in the same style as (1), by O'Shea.

Library (Q).—(3) Painted wooden ceiling, by Lionel Muirhead, 19th cent.

Stairs (C).—(4) Carved handrail of same period as above.

First floor.—Middle room (C).—(5) Stone fireplace, with stop-moulded jambs, and mutilated lintel, apparently square-headed opening, 17th cent. (cp. (10) below).

Back room (E).—(6) Stone fireplace with plain stop-chamfered jambs and four-centred arch, without spandrels or enclosing moulding, 17th cent., cp. (7) on second floor of No. 43. (7) Three-light stone mullioned window in N. wall, the mullions renewed, early 17th cent. (8) Timber framework, of east and west walls, with wooden three-light window in west wall (blocked up); the mullions have grooves on the outside, apparently for glazing (PLATE XXIII, A, B). (9) Paneling of early 17th cent. round the walls; this perhaps came from elsewhere, and has been made up with a good deal of modern work.

Second floor.—Passage south of middle room (E).—(10) Stone fireplace, with stop-moulded jambs and straight lintel, no arch, late 17th cent.

Third floor.—Front attic (A).—(11) Wooden corner cupboard, late 18th cent.

HISTORY

The early history of this house is obscure, but it may perhaps be identified with the house of Mrs. Mary Mountford or Mumford, 'near the Theater';

¹ I have to thank Mr. C. Maresco Pearce for this information.

BROAD STREET HOUSES

according to Wood she kept a 'victualling or boarding house' for foreigners, and died in 1689, at the age of eighty-four.¹

From 1847 to 1901 the house was the home of Sir Henry Acland, one of the most important figures in the modern history of Oxford. He was the real founder and organizer of scientific studies in Oxford, and was largely responsible for the University Museum in the Parks. Like other men of his generation, he was at once very earnest and very sympathetic; Ruskin said of him, contrasting him with his predecessors; 'To Dr. Buckland, geology was only the pleasant occupation of his own merry life. To Henry Acland physiology was an entrusted gospel.' At a time when there was a good deal of anxiety about the conflict of religion and science, Acland was a sincerely religious man, and a personal friend of Pusey. He was a friend of the pre-Raphaelites, and Ruskin stayed for some time in his house. He was also musical, and used to give musical evenings at his house in the big drawing room on the first floor, where, if conversation broke in on the music, he would point to the illuminated motto over the folding doors: 'Pour not out words where there is a musician.' These evenings would make a curious contrast with William Ellis's music meetings as described by Antony Wood. There is a description of the house and family life here in Acland's time in J. B. Atlay's biography of him (pp. 379-393). Altogether, Acland's house was the centre of one of the most interesting circle of friends in Oxford; and like Fletcher in No. 46, he made the house a kind of mirror or museum of his interests and friendships. As can be seen from surviving photographs, it was, in the way so characteristic of the period, crammed full of pictures and ornaments, gifts and memorials of his friends. Over his bed were two religious pictures, one a legacy from Pusey, the other from Jowett. On the outside end wall of the library, opposite the dining room window, an artist friend had painted a curious mural painting of two children of the Acland family, against a setting sun. The house was full of carved work, on fireplaces, on stair-rails, done evidently under the influence of Ruskin and his circle. (Cp. *Fittings*, above (1)-(4)).

One curious relic of the Acland household survived till the demolition; the names of the various rooms painted under the bell-boards in the back hall (H), as follows:

West side

Letting out bell.

Tank Room.

Little Drawing Room (=G on first floor?).

¹ Wood, *Life and Times*, II, 200, 280, III, 296, but note that Wood corrects 'over against the Theater' to 'neare,' and from *Oxford City Properties*, p. 270, her house in 1656 seems to have been in Parks Road.

W. A. PANTIN

West Room.
Captain Acland's Room.
Mr. Theodore's Room.
Front Door Visitors.

East side

Study (=Q, or perhaps M, on ground floor ?)
Sir Henry's Dressing Room (=F on first floor ?)
South Dressing Room.
Miss Acland's Room.
Sir Henry's Bed Room (=E on first floor).
Best Room.
Library (=P on ground floor).
Drawing Room (=A on first floor).
Front Door Servants.

The rooms B and G on the ground floor in front seem to have been used as a waiting room and consulting room.

NO. 38, BROAD STREET

This house was entirely rebuilt during the 18th century ; its most striking feature is the existence of two staircases, of equal size and importance, placed back to back. This is probably due to its having been originally two houses, Nos. 38 and 39 ; a fact which is further borne out by the existence of two sets of chimney stacks in the east and west walls, back and front.¹ This house was occupied for several generations by the Freeborn family, and a family legend explained the existence of the two staircases as follows : at one time a fortune was left between brother and sister on condition that they shared a home together ; they quarrelled bitterly, and the second staircase was built in order to permit them to retain the money without being obliged to meet ! However the Oxford Directory for 1852 gives among the surgeons, John William Sims Freeborn and Son, 38 and 39, Broad Street ; the son was Richard Fernandez Freeborn, born in 1825. When some repairs were done to the front door of No. 38, a board was discovered over the lintel, inscribed ' Freeborn, Apothecary.' At the back of the house was a long building added in the late 19th century ; on the site of this there were said to have been cottages (cp. the cottages at the back of Nos. 46 and 47) ; no doubt there was originally a side passage through the front houses.²

¹ But note that the survey of 1772 seems to give Nos. 38 and 39 as one house, 18 feet 4 inches wide, and No. 37 as two houses, 10 feet and 10 feet 6 inches wide, *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 54 ; unless the houses have got transposed in the list.

² Information about the Freeborn family kindly supplied by Mrs. M. E. Freeborn.

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NO. 37, BROAD STREET

No. 37 was entirely rebuilt in the late 19th century, apparently, except for the 18th century facade, which was preserved.

NO. 36, BROAD STREET

No. 36 had been modernized in all its fittings, but its plan, with massive chimney-stack and staircase in the centre of a timber-framed structure, suggest that the shell or framework may have gone back to the early 17th century. It had three stories and an attic, and its roof seemed to be continuous and of one piece with that of No. 35. There was a good early 17th century panel-fronted cupboard on the stairs.

NO. 35, BROAD STREET

The corner house, No. 35, the 'Coach and Horses' public house, was apparently the 'Dog and Partridge' in 1772.¹ In general external appearance it was the most picturesque and best preserved of these houses, and gave a good idea of what the others must have looked like before the alterations of the 18th century. It appears to have been a house of about 1600, of the same timber-frame, chimney-stack and staircase type as Nos. 46, 47, etc.; but it is peculiar in that it consisted only of a single cell, one room on each floor. It had three stories and an attic; the main axis of the roof ran north and south, and was intersected by two contiguous gables on the east and west sides, thus giving head room to the attic (cp. the roof of No. 46). The ground floor had been much rebuilt, and in particular the east wall had been brought forward a couple of feet, which obscured the overhang of the first floor. Above, the timber-framing remained, and in particular was visible on the first floor. All the windows seem to have been restored. The winding newel-stair remained, in the NE. corner, in the thickness of the chimney-stack. On the second floor there remained a well-preserved stone fireplace, with stop-moulded jambs, and four-centred arch in a square head, c. 1600.

PARKS ROAD HOUSES

As regards the houses in Parks Road, Nos. 2, 3, and Ripon Hall, and the houses beyond appeared to be late 18th or early 19th century. No. 4 was more interesting; it appeared to be a timber-framed house of the late 17th century, with a diagonally placed chimney-stack. The original position of the stairs is not certain. There were two stories and an attic which had been

¹ *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 54, cp. also p. 61; this survey of 1772 gives the frontage lengths of all these houses.

raised, and the street front had been rebuilt several feet in advance of the original frontage. In the roof of the cellar there were found, re-used as rafters, some moulded timbers of the early 16th century, including the jamb of a doorway, stop-moulded, and several uprights apparently from a polygonal bay window (cp. that at the NW. corner of Exeter College, in Turl Street).

At the back of No. 4, Parks Road was a small detached building, originally no doubt a cottage; the ground floor was much rebuilt, but there was a timber-framed first floor, and a roof with its axis running east and west, with a large dormer to the north; apparently 17th century.

CONCLUSION

The Rev. H. E. Salter has suggested that the three centuries *c.* 1250-1550 were a period of decay in wealth and population in Oxford,¹ and the evidence of this site seems to bear out this conclusion.

(1) As to buildings, we know that there were houses here in 'Horsmonger Street' in the 13th century, from the evidence of charters and rentals; yet these houses, as existing, did not seem to go back beyond about 1600, with the exception of No. 46.

(2) As regards the finds, pottery, etc., there was much 13th and 14th century pottery, perhaps not so much 15th and 16th century material, and then a great deal of pottery and glass from the 17th century onwards.

It is always difficult to argue from negative evidence; but the evidence does seem to suggest that there was a gap in the 15th and 16th centuries, when this site was in decay and partly unoccupied; one tenement at least, Well Hall, was described, as we have seen, in 1462 as 'unum toftum, modo gardinum.' Then from about 1600 onwards, there seems to have been busy reconstruction, and a thicker population. Here, perhaps, as in so many other respects, the Oxford that we know—or knew—is largely a re-creation of the 17th century.

As has been already remarked, these houses reveal a well defined type of early 17th century house. The most striking thing about the type is its strongly traditional, sub-mediaeval character, as reflected in its stone arched fireplaces, stop-chamfered beams, overhanging upper stories, perhaps even in its painted plaster walls. People still thought in terms of hall and buttery and chamber, as can be seen from the humbler sort of inventory and will, or from Herrick's 'Thanksgiving to God, for his House'; and the same conservatism can be seen in college architecture and college records. Judged by modern, or at any rate by Victorian standards, these houses had few rooms, only about six or eight

¹ *Medieval Oxford*, p. 87.

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on an average ; and this may throw some light on the accommodation (presumably simpler still) of mediaeval Oxford houses and even halls. From this point of view, by the way, it would be worth making a careful study of the Hearth Tax of 1665, which must include a good many houses that were once academic halls. The Window Tax returns would be more difficult to interpret. The rooms, though few, were good, and even the attics had good fireplaces, very different from the servant's-bedroom standard of later times. The Poll Tax returns of 1667 (printed in *Surveys and Tokens*, p. 267-8) give some idea of how the accommodation was used. No. 47, which had six rooms, contained only William Ellis, his wife and a maidservant ; No. 46, which had eight, probably including the 'cottage' at the back, held Bartholomew Finch, his wife, and son, two maidservants, and two other persons, perhaps lodgers, in all seven. At No. 45 (with four hearths) there was a widow with three children, and two persons of the same name, Paine ; at 43 or 44 (with six hearths) another widow (widows seem plentiful in these records as householders) with one maidservant and three other persons, perhaps lodgers. The sanitation was of course very primitive, cess-pits and wells being dug in a comparatively small area. The great change in standards of comfort and style must have come with the early 18th century ; from then on attics are raised, fronts rebuilt, sash-windows, new fireplaces, larger stairs, panelling introduced. Even the antiquary Fletcher modernizes his house. It may be noted that even for these reconstructions timber-framing and lathe and plaster are still used, and brick does not seem to be general until the 19th century.

Finally, there are some practical consideration or morals to be drawn. In the first place, these Broad Street houses are just the sort that are commonly judged by their exteriors, and dismissed out of hand, and allowed to be destroyed, as being 'of no particular architectural character.' This paper has tried to show that such houses, when properly scrutinized, will be found to contain a great deal of architectural interest and a great deal of history. This group of houses, selected for study merely on account of their impending demolition, gives one a very characteristic cross-section of Oxford history ; there is Ralph the Plumber, and Florentina his daughter ; there is the ring of ecclesiastical institutions, the great Augustinian abbey of Oseney, the hospital of St. John the Baptist, a chantry in a parish church, all leasing out the tenements that they could not as corporations occupy ; there are the cooks and apothecaries of a later time ; and it would be hard to find figures more typical of their age than William Ellis with his music meetings, Alderman Fletcher, draper and antiquary, and Sir Henry Acland. As to architecture, I have tried to show that in spite of, underneath, all the later alterations and refacings and mutilations, many of these houses remained

substantially half-timbered houses of the 17th century, buildings of the same age and even of the same class as Kemp Hall or Bishop King's Palace.

These houses have now been demolished ; but if they could have been allowed to survive, they could have been made attractive and useful by reconditioning, by the removal of later partitions and outbuildings, by opening up the gardens at the back. Old houses, as originally planned, were really very simple and spacious buildings ; it is usually later alterations and accretions that make them into insanitary rabbit-warrens.

Moreover one sees how very instructive it is to go round with a tape measure and a cold chisel and a camera. One can find, under layers and layers of canvas and paper and modern plaster, early timber framework and painted plaster ; and above all, it is remarkable how often the remains of the characteristic stone arched fireplaces of the early 17th century lie hidden behind modern grates, where only the large chimney stacks betray their presence. One begins to suspect that almost every old house in Oxford may contain one or two specimens of these : at least one of them came to light, for instance, in a house recently demolished in St. Aldate's. Of course, extensive pulling about and dissection is usually possible only when a building is on the eve of demolition, when it is too late to save its good points. The history of minor domestic architecture in this country, at any rate in the towns, is largely a martyrology. But a good deal can be done simply by inspecting and measuring, and making plans and drawings and photographs ; and one may hope in time to make a survey, a corpus of plans and illustrations of most of the old houses in Oxford, and in that way to make possible a systematic study of the development of the various types of Oxford house from the middle ages onwards. The same thing could be done for other old towns ; Thame, for instance, would make a very good subject for a complete study. But it will not be enough to take a few snapshots of the prettier pieces. These old houses deserve to be studied as systematically and as seriously, as if they were something excavated at Ostia or Knossos or Ur.

NOTE.—Some of the fittings of the houses, described above, such as fireplaces and panelling, have been acquired for future preservation and re-use. The following is a list of their present owners :

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, has from No. 47, portions of fittings (6), (8) ; and from

No. 46, fittings (1), (8), (17), (18), portions of (20), (29).

Trinity College, Oxford, has from No. 47, fitting (12) ; from No. 46, fittings (2), (5), (6), (7), (19), (21), (23), (24), (26) ; and from No. 45, fittings (1), (2), (5), (12), (16).

Worcester College, Oxford, has from No. 46, fittings (11), (12),

Exeter College, Oxford, has from Acland House, fitting (9).

Mr. J. N. L. Myres, Drayton Grange, Warborough, has from Acland House, fitting (10).