

# J. C. Buckler, Tackley's Inn and Three Medieval Houses in Oxford

By JULIAN MUNBY

## SUMMARY

*The demolition in 1872-3 of Nos. 108-12 High Street, Oxford revealed several important medieval features which were recorded by J. C. Buckler (1793-1894). They included the detached kitchen of Tackley's Inn, the hall and timber-framed front of the Swan Inn, which was built by Oriel College in 1469-72, and a 13th-century stone hall with blank arcading. These are described and illustrated from Buckler's material,<sup>1</sup> and discussed with the aid of other topographical sources.*

## INTRODUCTION

OF the handful of medieval houses now surviving in Oxford, Tackley's Inn is deservedly the best known, resurrected by W. A. Pantin as a rare example of a medieval academic hall and a type-site for the urban hall-house.<sup>2</sup> Unknown to him at the time, he had been preceded, some 70 years before, by J. C. Buckler who made some remarkable records of the demolition of the houses adjacent to Tackley's Inn, and was in some ways a pioneer in a field that was to become particularly Pantin's own. The creation of King Edward Street for Oriel College involved the demolition of Nos. 108-12 High Street in 1872-3. Buckler, in his eightieth year and vigilant as ever for architectural 'Innovations', frequently visited the site and made some 70 drawings of what he saw and wrote an (unfinished) account of his discoveries, all now in the British Library.<sup>3</sup> Although he had some curious misconceptions about the site, these were not to the detriment of the record, and with the aid of additional topographical sources it is possible to rearrange his material into a more coherent form. Thus it is possible to add several details to what is known of Tackley's Inn, and describe for the first time three previously unknown medieval houses. These will each be described and discussed separately, following an assessment of the sources and an investigation into the background of Buckler's work.

The Bucklers' severely architectural watercolours are as much a delight for the archaeologist as a matter of disdain for the art collector. Their interest and skill was with the pencil in the field rather than the colouring box at home, and at 79 J. C. Buckler had lost nothing of the ability he had from his father and exercised

<sup>1</sup> I am most grateful to David Sturdy who brought this material to my attention and gave me the photo-stats of Buckler's drawings which he had from the late W. A. Pantin; to Andrew Butcher for lending me his notes on the Oriel accounts and to Jeremy Catto for giving access to the originals.

<sup>2</sup> Pantin, 1941 etc., as note 46.

<sup>3</sup> Text: B.L. Add. MS. 27,765G, fos. 37-86; Drawings: B.L. Add. MS. 36,439, fos. 401-98, hereafter referred to only by folio number. Copyright of the British Library Board.

for most of his life. Although a few of the present drawings betray a hint of the 'picturesque' nature of the ruins, to which he refers more than once in the text, most were made for their archaeological significance, to depict important features and demonstrate their relationships. Such was his skill with the pencil that Buckler will often add circumstantial detail with a few casual lines: a masonry straight-joint or the ghost of a removed building. Some were made as scale drawings, though many were probably careful sketches with added measurements. The most striking and original illustrations are those of the timberwork, particularly the large perspective view (Fig. 10) and the sectional elevation (Fig. 15); his concern for construction details and joints is of a standard rarely found today, despite the development of their study by Cecil Hewett. It should be noted that Buckler did sometimes draw what was missing or ought to have been there, as has been shown recently in a case where he worked up a field sketch of his father's and both can be compared.<sup>4</sup>

Dates or identifications appear on most of the important drawings, which can be located from these or by description in the text, or by correlation between drawings. Only a few minor details of doors, fireplaces and timbers cannot be placed. The dated drawings all fall between July and December 1872 though some others must have been done after that date. The large number of drawings has made it impossible to reproduce them other than in line blocks. These have been prepared either from high-contrast xerox copies of photographs or from tracings of photostats. Captions have been omitted, but measurements retained.

Some 14,000 words on 'Bulkeley, or more properly Tackley Hall, Oxford' were written in the last of Buckler's thirteen volumes on *Cistercian Architecture*, in his neat and legible hand (surprisingly less archaic than his language). There seems to have been no intent to publish, as the volume was presented to the library on 13 November 1874.<sup>5</sup> The first half of the text is undated, and covers work from July to November 1872. Later sections are dated 29 November, 13 and 23 December, and 8 February 1873. General commentary and summaries are interspersed with descriptions of current discoveries; there is a certain amount of repetition and his writing is at times rather vague. A more serious obstacle to clarity is Buckler's conception of the three demolished properties and Tackley's Inn as being part of a single semi-collegiate foundation. By his interpretation, a 'Chapel' had stood over the cellars of 106-7 High Street, the 'Hall' encompassed the back of Nos. 107 and 108, whilst a destroyed street range had continued up to the western end of the site; in reality they had of course been four (at times five) separate establishments. His intention was to discover the original layout of the buildings, illustrate their original features and demonstrate later alterations.

Visits to the site were regular although the work proceeded slowly: 'there is much brought to light every day' he notes early on (f. 42), and in the 'lingering processes of destruction' he 'endeavoured both with pen & pencil to keep even pace with ye workmen' (f. 66-7):

<sup>4</sup> On the point of authorship of the drawings I thank Mrs. C. Arno for making this correction to my note: 'A Fifteenth Century Wealden House in Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xxxix (1974), 73-6, Pls. VI-VII.

<sup>5</sup> It was catalogued under an earlier year. Another appendage to the work, 'Notes on Saxon Architecture' was discovered and printed in the *Trans. Bristol & Gloucs. Arch. Soc.*, xi (1886-7), 6-81.

The writer has been unceasing in his attendance upon the destroying workmen who could scarcely remove a piece of wainscot, or a surface of plaster without uncovering some original & curious feature of the design of these houses. By long experience he has felt ye benefit of thus watching ye destruction of Timber houses of antiquity, always likely to be rewarded by discoveries of long hidden remains which serve to garnish ye few surviving facts of history relating to them. (f. 72).

Naturally he was interested in fragments of medieval stonework, though most of them only told a 'melancholy & hopeless' tale of destruction and formed 'no Museum of works of art' (f. 78). But some belonged to 'the famed style of architecture which closed ye renown of ye 13th century' (f. 42), 'when architecture could not help being lovely, & in ye highest degree refined' (f. 75). Whilst showing his admiration for 15th- and 16th-century timberwork, it was a somewhat wistful appreciation, since with the rebuilding 'innovation & injury were closely allied' (f. 64); and the 17th century 'was ye modern period of severe injury to ye Architectural Antiquities of Oxford' (f. 43). For any later age we can judge from the absence of description what he thought of its architecture. What provided inspiration for many passages was the quality of oak timber, as one example will show:

The matchless old Oak of England exhibited its strength & its beauty under ye operations of ye workmen. The material was faultless, & if ye buildings composed of it had always been cared for & protected, they would have shown no signs of decay either from age or ye weather, indeed ye former appears to (f. 53) have increased its strength. If ye timber buildings of Tackley Hall had been no more damaged by mischief & avarice than by rainwater, their original stability would not have been perceptibly diminished. The simplicity of ye artisanship favoured their durability: it accorded with ye bulk of ye several members of ye frame; & so perfect, so strong, so beautiful was found to be ye quality of ye Oak that its possession was coveted for application to modern joinery. (f. 52-3).

Although misled about the history of the site, Buckler's approach was right, in his perceiving the dynamic process of change inherent in the evidence. The 13th-century wall was retained in the 14th-century 'foundation'. Part of the stone range remained when the street fronts were later rebuilt in timber. Further alterations were made at later dates in 'paroxysms of Innovation' (f. 74), new uses being found 'in ye hands of shifty owners' (f. 75). Knowledge of these changes, to which he repeatedly refers, was derived solely from careful observation of the ruins with an ability to date features of the various periods represented there. It was an archaeological process, albeit of the above-ground variety. Such laborious analysis of timber buildings and stone ruins may seem rather out of place in the 1870s, and in several aspects it was indeed a pioneering work. But it belonged to a long tradition which may now be briefly examined.

#### THE BACKGROUND TO BUCKLER'S WORK

Interest in medieval buildings and their archaeology can be traced back to William Worcestre, who recorded buildings in the 15th century.<sup>6</sup> As in other branches of archaeology, serious work began in the 17th century, where engravings

<sup>6</sup> William Worcestre, *Itineraries*, ed. J. H. Harvey (1969).

by Hollar and King provide an invaluable record of lost buildings.<sup>7</sup> John Aubrey got a drawing made of Oseney Abbey prior to demolition, planned Rosamund's Bower at Woodstock, and recalled the Castle mound and keep for Antony Wood;<sup>8</sup> he was later to write the earliest account of the distinction of architectural styles in gothic.<sup>9</sup> Wood, as will be seen later, was not unaware of ancient domestic architecture, and he depicted the old buildings of University College before their destruction.<sup>10</sup> William Stukeley, who took so much of the earlier archaeological tradition into the 18th century, illustrated the medieval alongside earlier remains in his *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1724) and in his Stamford days drew reconstructions of medieval houses in a search for imaginary academic halls.<sup>11</sup> His demolition record of 'The Sanctuary' at Westminster, made in 1750, appeared in the first volume of *Archaeologia*, which was always to include a fair amount of medieval-building archaeology. In Oxford there is a valuable record of medieval buildings made about the middle of the century,<sup>12</sup> and drawings of the Town Hall before and during demolition,<sup>13</sup> whilst the studies of J. B. Malchair and his pupils (1760s-90s) illustrate much that has been lost.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it seems to have been the usual practice for topographical artists of that generation to take buildings as much as landscape for subjects. Judging from Gough's impassioned plea in 1788 on the unwitting contribution of engraving to demolition ('when the engraving is made, farewell to the thing engraved')<sup>15</sup> much artistic work must have been consciously archaeological. The artists as well as the writers contributed to the serious study of gothic in the closing years of the 18th century.<sup>16</sup>

An important figure, who had great influence on the Bucklers, was John Carter (1748-1817), writing from 1789 his tireless 'Pursuits of Architectural Innovation' in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in defence of old buildings,<sup>17</sup> and involving the Society of Antiquaries in the great row over Wyatt's destruction at Durham when he was the Society's official draughtsman, employed on building recording work.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the best indication of the growing interest in building archaeology from the turn of the century is provided by the attention paid to Westminster Palace. Alterations and demolition were carefully followed by antiquaries like J. T. Smith and W. Capon, culminating in the busy scenes after the fire of 1834 when at least 42 artists visited the ruins and 'made it their business to record'.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hollar in Dugdale, *St. Paul's Cathedral* (1658); Hollar and King in Dodsworth and Dugdale's *Monasticon* (1655-73). In general, see S. Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape* (1976).

<sup>8</sup> M. Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (1975), 68, 149, Pl. 10; Wood's *Life and Times*, O.H.S. xix (1891), Pl. V; T. Squires, *In West Oxford* (1928), Pl. XXXII.

<sup>9</sup> H. M. Colvin, 'Aubrey's Chronologia Architectonica' in J. Summerson (ed.), *Concerning Architecture* (1968).

<sup>10</sup> *V.C.H. Oxon.*, III, Pl. opp. p. 69.

<sup>11</sup> R.C.H.M., *Stamford* (1977), xc, Pls. 70-1.

<sup>12</sup> By J. R. Green: Bod. Lib. MS. Gough Oxon. 50.

<sup>13</sup> See Bod. Lib. MS. Top. Oxon. b14, fos. 15-19; Gough Dr. a2, 110-11.

<sup>14</sup> H. Minn, 'Drawings by J. B. Malchair in Corpus Christi College', *Oxoniensia*, viii/ix (1943-4), 159-68, Pls. XV-XIX.

<sup>15</sup> J. Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries* (1956), 191 for the full quotation.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, for the Society's contribution; in general K. Clark, *The Gothic Revival* (1950); N. Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972), chap. III.

<sup>17</sup> Collected in 'Architectural Antiquities', 2 vols. of *The Gentleman's Magazine Library*, ed. G. L. Gomme (1890-1).

<sup>18</sup> Evans, *op. cit.* note 15, 191, 207-13.

<sup>19</sup> H. M. Colvin, 'Views of the Palace of Westminster', *Architectural History*, 9 (1966); R. J. B. Walker, 'The Palace of Westminster after the fire of 1834', *Walpole Society*, 44 (1974), 94f.

John Buckler (1770-1851), the father of John Chessell Buckler (1793-1894), was a prolific topographical artist who also practised as an architect.<sup>20</sup> Upwards of 12,000 drawings by them survive in their main collection in the British Library as a monument to an industrious century spent illustrating examples of historic architecture.<sup>21</sup> It was work like this that made the Gothic Revival possible and archaeologically correct, especially when it came into print in their own publications, or those of Britton or Turner and Parker.<sup>22</sup> The traditions of J. C. Buckler's youthful milieu were maintained in his own vigorous writings, from his early attack on destruction at Magdalen College,<sup>23</sup> to his blistering reply to G. G. Scott's criticism of his work at Lincoln Cathedral.<sup>24</sup> In a milder vein he was also a frequent contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, as 'an Architectural Antiquary'.<sup>25</sup> As a practising architect, in partnership with his son Charles Alban Buckler,<sup>26</sup> he naturally built in Gothic, but by no means identified himself with its more extreme exponents, as is suggested by his reference to 'the inconsistent and eccentric ecclesiological mind', and indicated by his quietly conservative designs.<sup>27</sup> A surviving set of 'Instructions for the repair & restoration of the ancient Manor House' (at Brockhampton, Herefordshire), written c. 1871, are furthermore an outstanding example of sympathetic conservation that could scarcely be paralleled today.<sup>28</sup> This is not the place to write of their architectural works, save perhaps to note the design for the Houses of Parliament (unlike Barry's, retaining St. Stephen's Chapel) which came second in the competition.<sup>29</sup>

Excursions into building archaeology seem to have been commonplace alongside Buckler's normal architectural practice. Indeed on several occasions he entered the field of Roman archaeology with his friend R. C. Neville of Audley End.<sup>30</sup> Material was gathered on Norman Domestic Architecture,<sup>31</sup> and extensive fieldwork was carried out at Bermondsey Abbey in 1808-20<sup>32</sup> and the Hospital of St. John (now Magdalen College) Oxford, c. 1858.<sup>33</sup> Two surveys were published

<sup>20</sup> H. M. Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (1978).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, and M. W. Barley, *Guide to British Topographical Collections* (1974) for location of other drawings.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., *Views of Cathedral Churches in England* (1822), *Sixty Views of Endowed Grammar Schools* (1827); for Britton as a publicist see J. Mordaunt Crook, 'John Britton and the Genesis of the Gothic Revival', Summer-son, *op. cit.* note 9; see acknowledgements in T. H. Turner and J. H. Parker, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England* (1851-9).

<sup>23</sup> *Observations on the Original Architecture of St. Mary Magdalen College Oxford; and on the Innovations Anciently or Recently Attempted* (1823); see also T. S. R. Boase, 'An Oxford College and the Gothic Revival', in *J. Courtauld & Warburg Institutes*, xviii (1955), 145-88.

<sup>24</sup> *Description and Defence of the Restorations of the Exterior of Lincoln Cathedral* (1866).

<sup>25</sup> Collected, with other publications, in B.L. Add. MS. 27,773.

<sup>26</sup> Directories place them at 33 High Street in 1854 and 58 Holywell in 1863.

<sup>27</sup> *Lincoln Cathedral*, 61; cf. Pevsner, *Buildings of England; Oxfordshire* (1974), 155 (Library).

<sup>28</sup> B.L. Add. MS. 36,415, fos. 42-52.

<sup>29</sup> J. Mordaunt Crook and M. H. Port, *History of the King's Works*, vi, 1782-1851 (1973), 578f, Pl. 54A; C. L. Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival* (1872), 58, 110 and several 'selected examples'; some designs are in the R.I.B.A. Library and B.L. Add. MS. 36,443.

<sup>30</sup> Reports on villas in *Archaeol. J.*, 6 (1849), 14-26, 114-22 and *Archaeol. J.*, 8 (1851), 27-35 contain much by Buckler.

<sup>31</sup> B.L. Add. MS. 24,434; abridged, *op. cit.* note 17, II, 214-40; C. Brooke and G. Keir, *London 800-1216* (1975), Pls. 32-3.

<sup>32</sup> W. F. Grimes, *Excavations in Roman and Medieval London* (1968), 210-17, after A. R. Martin, 'On the Topography of the Cluniac Abbey of St. Saviour at Bermondsey', *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, n.s. 32 (1926), 192f, Figs. 1-15.

<sup>33</sup> Published by R. T. Gunther in H. E. Salter, *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, III, O.H.S. 69 (1916), App. III and Pls.



jointly with his son, those of St. Albans (1847)<sup>34</sup> and Iona Abbey (1866).<sup>35</sup> It is hardly surprising in view of all this that Buckler should have gone to such lengths to follow the demolition of 108-12 High Street; though at the age of 79, his unfailing powers were remarkable. His broad-minded concern for late medieval timber as well as 13th-century stonework certainly marked him out from his contemporaries. When the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society met in the Lent term of 1873 they noted the remains of a 'fine 13th-century archway' on the site, and a photograph was taken by Taunt 'by the direction of the Society' (Pl. VII). But for the rest, all they mentioned was the discovery of an oak buttery hatch (see Fig. 3).<sup>36</sup> Buckler, true to the traditions of the 1790s and the English topographical school, even in his eightieth year could still be at the forefront in the field and match or outshine the work of the later generation.<sup>37</sup>

#### THE SITE (Fig. 1)

The buildings lay on the south side of High Street, at the edge of St. Mary's parish in the block between Shidyerd (Oriel) Street and St. Edward's Lane (King Alfred Street). They were on four long and narrow tenement plots, Nos. SE(21)-(24) in Salter's *Survey*,<sup>38</sup> reaching almost to Little Jury (Bear) Lane. Here, in St. Edward's parish, were three small properties (Nos. SE(226)-(228)) which seem at times to have been separate holdings. St. Mary's parish was once a near-central commercial and private area, but is now largely occupied by college buildings except for this block. Apart from academic halls and some property of University College, the first encroachment onto the High Street frontage was All Souls College (1438), most of the back parts of the parish being lost to Oriel College (1326), Brazenose College (1509), the Bodleian Library (1610-30) and the creation of Radcliffe Square (1733). Although college property, these tenements remained in commercial use on the frontier between the Town and University zones. It is not appropriate on this occasion to rehearse the full ownership history of each house, though reference will be made to documentary sources for the buildings described. All of the site was in the hands of Oriel College by 1392 (effectively, through fellows' holdings, from 1369) and most of the relevant material in the muniment room is printed in *Oriel College Records*,<sup>39</sup> except for the important series of Treasurer's Accounts which are unpublished. Apart from Tackley's Inn, divided into the College tavern and an academic (later grammar) hall, the other three tenements were let out as individual shops or shops held with the main domestic part above and behind; one was an inn. Together they formed the most substantial block holding that Oriel had in Oxford, and with other properties in St. Mary's parish provided half the urban rent in 1451, though the amount collected from Oxford in that year was only 15% of the total college income.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> J. C. and C. A. Buckler, *A History of the Architecture of the Abbey Church of St. Alban* (1847).

<sup>35</sup> J. C. and C. A. Buckler, and A. Ewing, *The Cathedral, or Abbey Church of Iona* (1866); B.L. Add. MS. 36,418-19.

<sup>36</sup> *Proc. O.A.H.S.*, III (1872-80), 126-7; Photo. in Bod. Lib. MS. Dep. a25, f. 32.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. H. M. Taylor, 'J. T. Irvine's work at Bradford-on-Avon', *Archaeol. J.*, 129 (1972), 89-118, Pls. IX-XXIV; and A. Pitt-Rivers, *King John's House, Tollard Royal, Wilts* (1890).

<sup>38</sup> H. E. Salter, *Survey of Oxford*, ed. W. A. Pantin, O.H.S. n.s. 14 (1960) and 20 (1969).

<sup>39</sup> Ed. C. L. Shadwell and H. E. Salter, O.H.S. 85 (1926); hereafter, *O.C.R.*

<sup>40</sup> *O.C.R.*, 384-7, *V.C.H. Oxon.*, III, 122. The percentage could have been higher were it not for arrears.

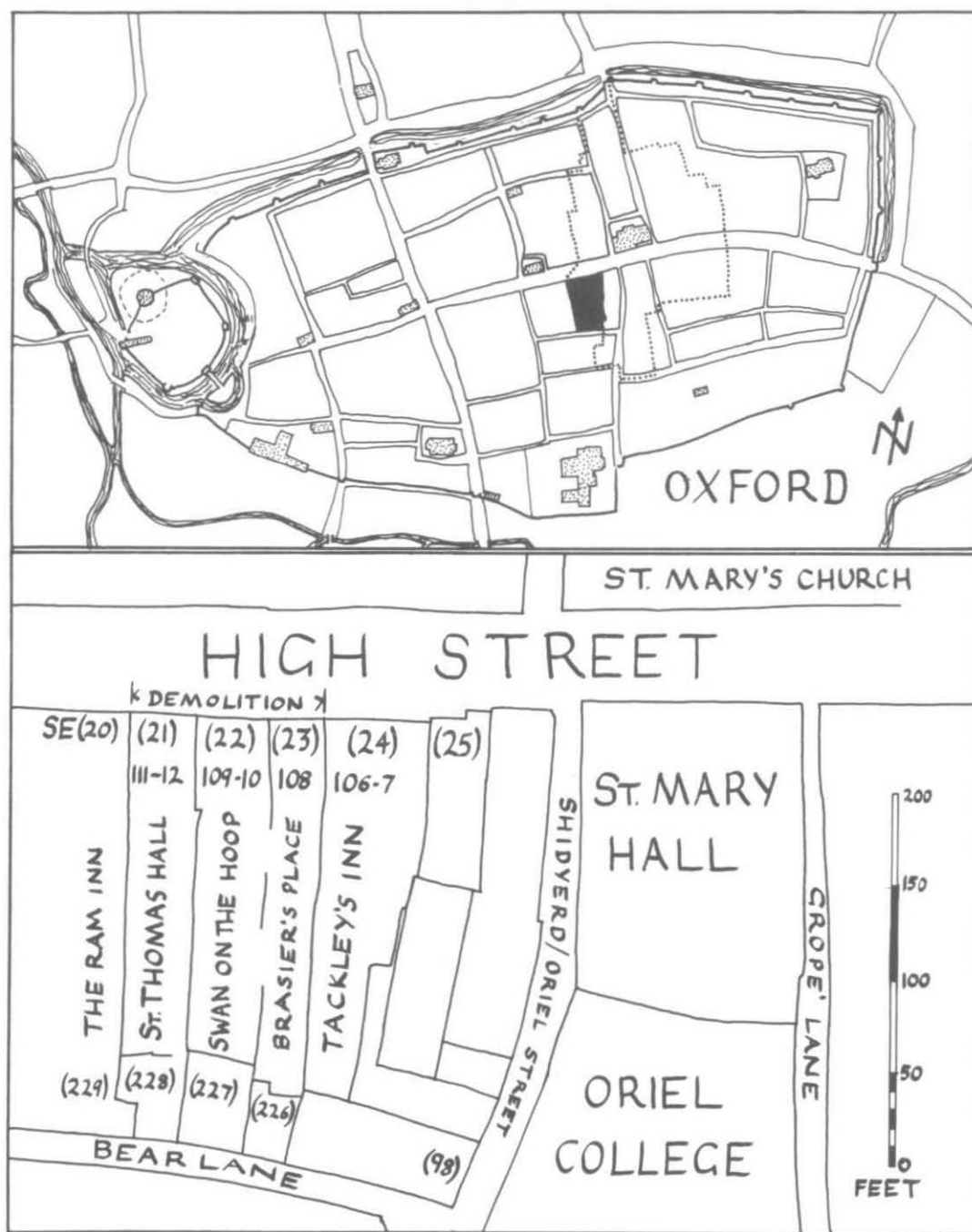


Fig. 1

Location of Tackley's Inn and 108-12 High Street in St. Mary's Parish.

For the post-medieval period the college leases are the main source for the occupants, whilst for the buildings there is a very detailed 'Plan of the Different Premises Belonging to Oriel College in the Parish of St. Mary Oxford, 1814' (Pl. VI),<sup>41</sup> which is the essential key to the understanding of Buckler's drawings. Photographic evidence is provided by a view of the High Street front immediately prior

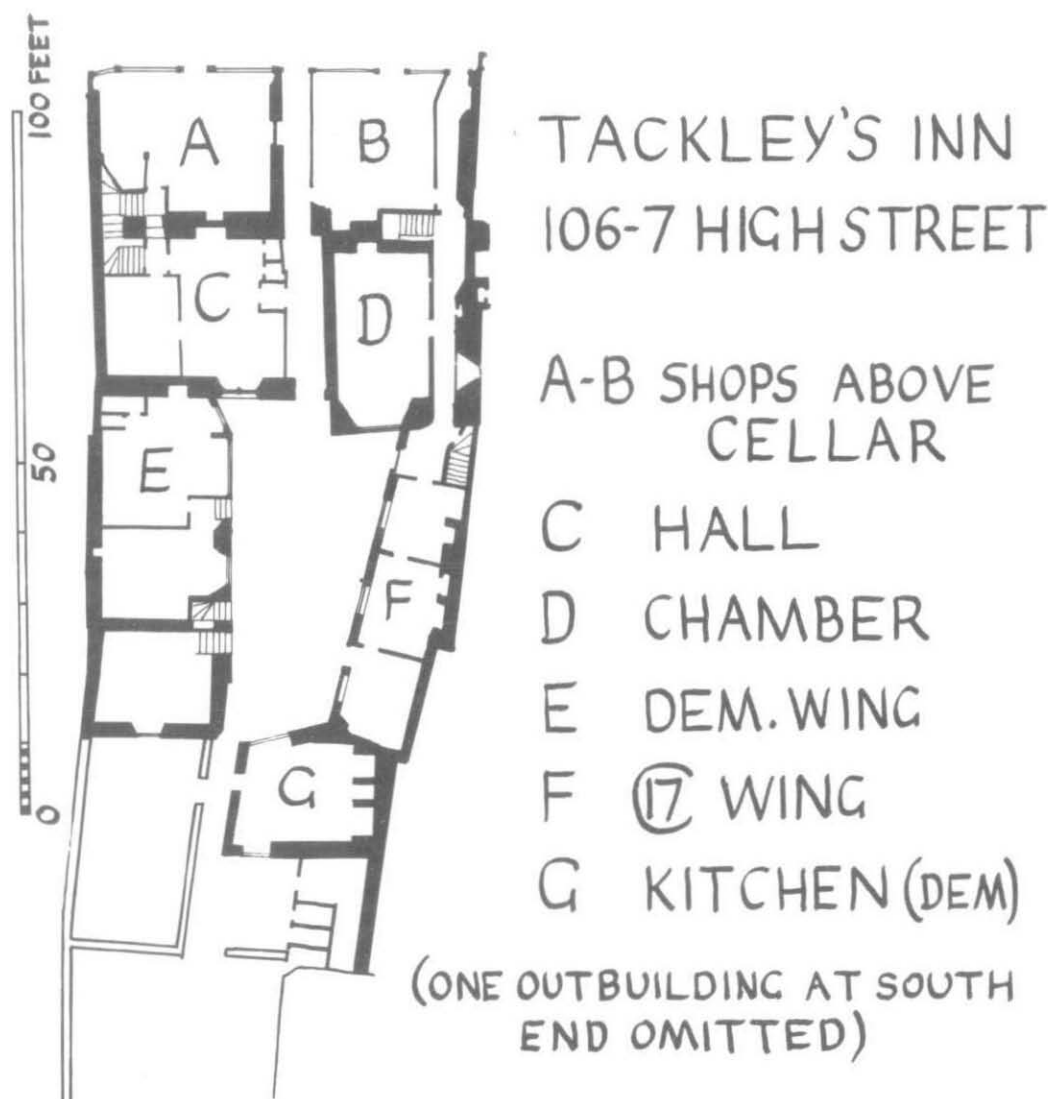


Fig. 2  
Tackley's Inn in 1814.

<sup>41</sup> O.C.R., plan at end, also H. E. Salter, *Balliol Deeds*, O.H.S. 64 (1914), opp. p. 208 and C. Platt, *The English Medieval Town* (1976), Fig. 33.



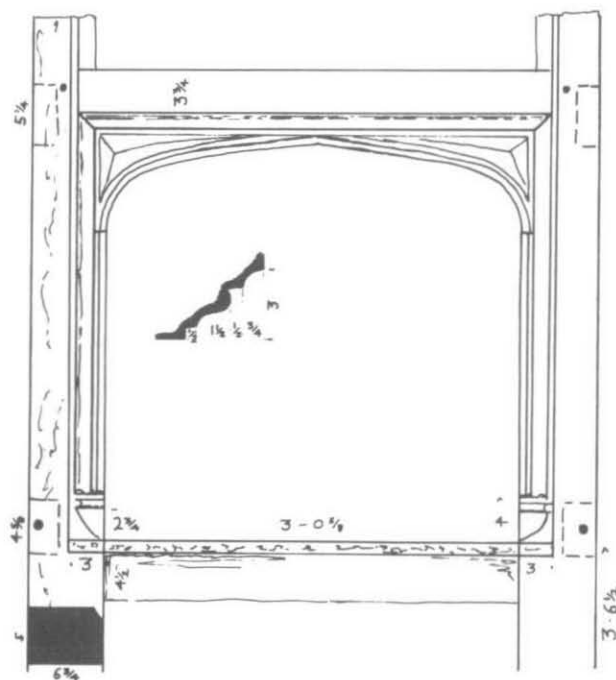


Fig. 3

Tackley's Inn: hall screen (f. 428) and hatch (f. 466).

to demolition (Pl. V),<sup>42</sup> and a single one of Swan Court.<sup>43</sup> The only purchase necessary for the redevelopment of the site was a shop belonging to Balliol College in No. 108.<sup>44</sup> Demolition began in July 1872 and continued until early in the next year; it involved outbuildings of Tackley's Inn, all of Nos. 108-12 High Street, and the subsidiary properties on Bear Lane. The undistinguished, yellow-brick buildings of King Edward Street were designed by Frederick Codd and built in 1873-4.<sup>45</sup>

The following description of the demolished parts goes in order from east to west. Like Buckler, we shall confine ourselves to the main discoveries of the medieval period, omitting the outbuildings and houses on Bear Lane for which the only evidence is the 1814 plan and documentary sources. These omissions could be studied in detail, but belong more properly to a reassessment of post-medieval domestic architecture in Oxford.

TACKLEY'S INN, 106-7 HIGH STREET (Figs. 2-6)

Salter, *Survey*, SE(24); *O.C.R.*, 163-9

Tackley's Inn was built by Roger Mareshal, parson of Tackley, shortly before 1324 when it was granted to Adam de Brome, the first founder of Oriel College. Of the commercial front part the cellar remains, though the shops and solars are no more, and of the academic hall at the back, the hall and chamber substantially survive. These have been fully described by Pantin,<sup>46</sup> and only details can be added from Buckler's work. Drawings were made of the cellar vault (f. 438) and hall window (f. 422-5), and he was present at the uncovering of the hall roof, noting the 'rich yellow colour' of its unpainted timber (f. 85) and drawing a section and elevation of it (f. 497-8). The end wall of the hall (?at the west) retained its 'original coat of cement, the usual preparation for painted ornaments', as did the side walls (f. 85). They are now bare or replastered, and the roof painted.

A wooden screen was still in position across the lower (east) end of the hall, and is shown on the 1814 plan (Fig. 2), and in an elevation drawing (Fig. 3). It had a door and two boarded-in hatches, 'very much patched and pierced' (f. 82), and a further area of horizontal boarding covering the break in the north wall for the passage to the street. He considered it to be 16th century (f. 44-5), then later referred to it as possibly as old as the 17th (f. 82); in so fragmentary a state either date would be possible. Another hatch (Fig. 3), probably from a screen, may have belonged here, its dimensions (4 ft. 2½ in. × 7 ft 7 in.) almost fitting the left bay of the screen (4 ft. 4 in. × 7 ft. 7 in.). Buckler suggested the connection, having found it 'doing duty on a staircase at a distant spot' (f. 82). It is more convincing for 16th-century work, and if it belonged to the screen could have been inserted as part

<sup>42</sup> Bod. Lib. Minn Coll. Neg. 20/40.

<sup>43</sup> Bod. Lib. GA Oxon. a102, f. 23; and J. Betjeman and D. Vaisey, *Victorian and Edwardian Oxford from Old Photographs* (1971), Pl. 12.

<sup>44</sup> *Balliol Deeds*, 204-11; cf. also *O.C.R.*, 173-4.

<sup>45</sup> Pevsner, *op. cit.* note 27, 309.

<sup>46</sup> W. A. Pantin: *Oriel Record* (1941); *Oxoniensia*, vii (1942), 80-92, Figs. 21-2, Pl. VII; *Antiq. J.*, xxvii, (1947), 127, Figs. 2-4, 8; *Med. Arch.*, vi-vii (1962-3), 217-8, Fig. 71; 'The Halls and Schools of Medieval Oxford . . .' in *Oxford Studies Presented to D. Callus*, O.H.S. n.s. 16 (1964), 38-41, Fig. 1.

of Robert Carow's works of 1512-14 on the hall which probably, as Gee argued, included the roof.<sup>47</sup> Opposite the screen towards the north end of the passage was the door to the service end or chamber, 'solidly blocked up' (f. 45), but shown as a low segmental-headed arch in the south view of the hall (Fig. 4). At the south end of the passage was the door to the court, the jambs of which survived (Figs. 4 and 5) with a plain chamfer (prob. f. 452) though the arch is clearly a reconstruction. It was presumably 14th century.

Two demolished buildings on the site add considerably to our understanding of the plan at Tackley's Inn. On the west side of the yard, opposite the surviving jettied 17th-century wing, was a stone range that came to within a few feet of the hall, with a small connecting part clearly shown on the pre-demolition drawings (Figs. 4 and 5) and the 1814 plan (Fig. 2). Buckler described it as 'a strip of buildings containing a kitchen, ye communication with which was direct from the hall by a door pierced in its wall for ye purpose. Beyond ye kitchen, and under ye same roof are ye meaner offices, & over ye whole length, sleeping chambers, ye principal one above ye kitchen, having a stone fireplace excavated in ye wall of ye Hall' (f. 44). The fireplace, with a flat pointed arch in a square head, appears in the post-demolition view, about 6 ft. above ground level (Fig. 5). It was moulded with a prominent roll and chamfer (Fig. 6). The door was more plainly moulded, with a hollow chamfer on the jambs and flattened, four-centred head (Fig. 6). Only the one drawing shows the door, and its position is not certain. The 1814 plan shows a recess near the hall window which could be a blocked door; if, as seems likely, the floor levels in the wing were lower, then the door could have been rather below the yard level and thus out of sight in Fig. 5. No features appear on the plan or are mentioned by Buckler to support his interpretation of the wing as a kitchen. The fittings just described are perhaps early 16th century; the drawings of them refer to the '15th century appendage' on the south side of the hall. Perhaps the wing itself was earlier, and the connecting section to the hall was added in the 16th century. If this wing went with the western half of Tackley's Inn when it was let separately (as Buckley's Hall), the next building probably went with the eastern half (the Tavern), though they were both held together from the mid 16th century.

Beyond the end of the east wing was a stone building of somewhat irregular plan built against 'an ancient wall' 15 ft. high (f. 73) which formed the tene-ment boundary. It was 'a nearly square structure traditionally known as ye "Tower"':

It is without any distinctive mark of this character of building. The front wall is 3 feet; the side walls are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick; ye back wall is ye long range above spoken of. The interior[s] of this noted building are 18 feet by 15 feet. The whole of ye back wall is taken up by a fireplace eleven feet wide, arched over with a beam of oak resting upon stone jambs, ye projection into ye room being two feet. The interior height is twenty five feet, & ye chamber over 9 feet. Both rooms are perfectly plain. The chimney shaft above ye roof was a massive square built of wrought stone, but only four feet of its former altitude are left. (f. 73).

<sup>47</sup> E. A. Gee, 'Oxford Carpenters, 1370-1530', *Oxoniensia*, xvii/xviii (1952-3), 131-3, hereafter *Carpenters*.



Fig. 4

Tackley's Inn: south view of hall (f. 416).

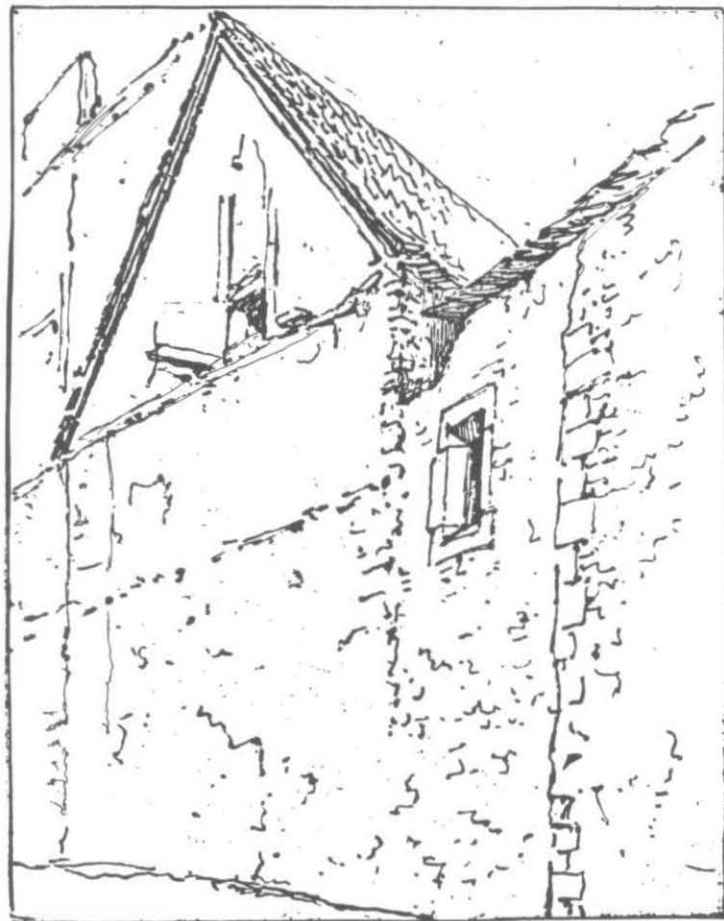


Fig. 5

Tackley's Inn: south-west aspect before and after demolition of back wing (f. 420, 418).

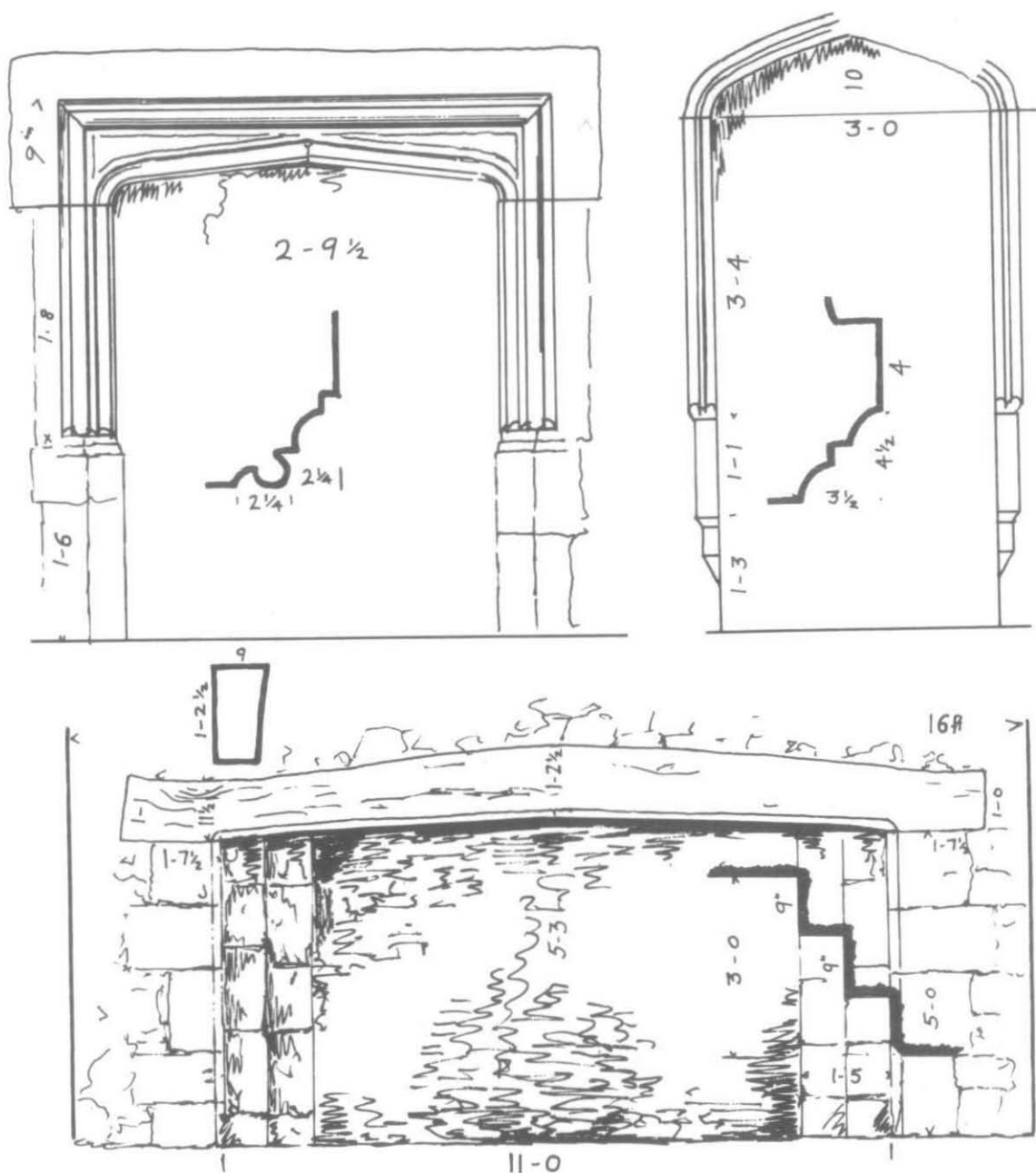


Fig. 6

Tackley's Inn : fireplace and door from back wing (f. 448-9) ; fireplace in detached kitchen (f. 437).



There does not appear to be any exterior view of this building, but the fireplace on the east wall was drawn (Fig. 6) and judging from its width and the description of the chimney stack it would seem to have been a kitchen fireplace. Being featureless it cannot easily be dated, but the site is not built over and could be excavated; 'late medieval' is perhaps the safest dating meanwhile. Domestic kitchens on this scale are rare survivals compared with the large and well-known ones. The detached kitchens suggested by Pantin for houses in Chester and Exeter are comparable in size and position.<sup>48</sup>

The street front of Tackley's Inn was not affected by the operations in 1872-3 having been rebuilt earlier. Faulkner, in demonstrating the 'split-level' arrangement of medieval shops, where steps go down to a cellar shop and up to the ground floor one, has argued for a reinterpretation of Pantin's description of this part.<sup>49</sup> He suggests that the ground floor front was set back from the edge of the cellar onto the load-bearing piers of the vault, and that the side walls were forward of this at ground level and further corbelled out above, thus providing room for a raised walkway before the shops. The side walls shown on the 1814 plan preclude any corbelling out at first floor level, and it is hard enough to read this off Pantin's plans. In any case the side walls need be no earlier than the post-medieval rebuilding of the shops. If there was a raised walkway, and this had been a regular feature of medieval Oxford, one might expect there to be some documentary reference to them.<sup>50</sup>

#### BRASIER'S PLACE, 108 HIGH STREET (Figs. 7-10)

Salter, *Survey*, SE(23) ; *O.C.R.*, 169-79 ; *Balliol Deeds*, 204-11

This messuage was always a house with three shops in front, named in the college archives after a brasier who lived there in the 14th century. There are no descriptions of the whole property but a lease of 1363 refers to a cellar and solar, 24 ft. (N-S) by 19 ft. (E-W), 'having on the north a chamber which reaches to the hall and on the south another chamber'.<sup>51</sup> They belonged to the next property on the west, SE(22), and are probably the origin of the building shown on the 1814 plan with entrances from that side (Fig. 7). The common ownership of these adjacent properties is part of a complex tenurial history which centres on a typical instance of a woman who outlived more than one husband and accumulated property thereby. John of Maidenston had SE(22) from his father William the Spicer and it passed to his widow Alice. She then married Stephen of Bautre, a bedel, and with him acquired SE(23) in 1361, the two properties passing to her third husband, Robert of Hunneston. Both were granted to fellows of Oriel in 1369 and came finally to the College in 1392. By her longevity she seems to have frustrated several

<sup>48</sup> Pantin, *op. cit.* note 46 (1962-3), Fig. 74 ; cf. also p. 218.

<sup>49</sup> P. A. Faulkner, 'Medieval Undercrofts and Town Houses', *Archaeol. J.*, 123 (1966), 129-30, Fig. 5 ; Platt, *op. cit.* note 41, Fig. 43.

<sup>50</sup> A payment of 12s. 4d. in 1462-3 *pro terra et vectura lapidum pro paviamento ante tabernam nostram* (Tr. Acc. ii, I.E. 11, p. 185) was probably for road repairs.

<sup>51</sup> *O.C.R.*, 172.

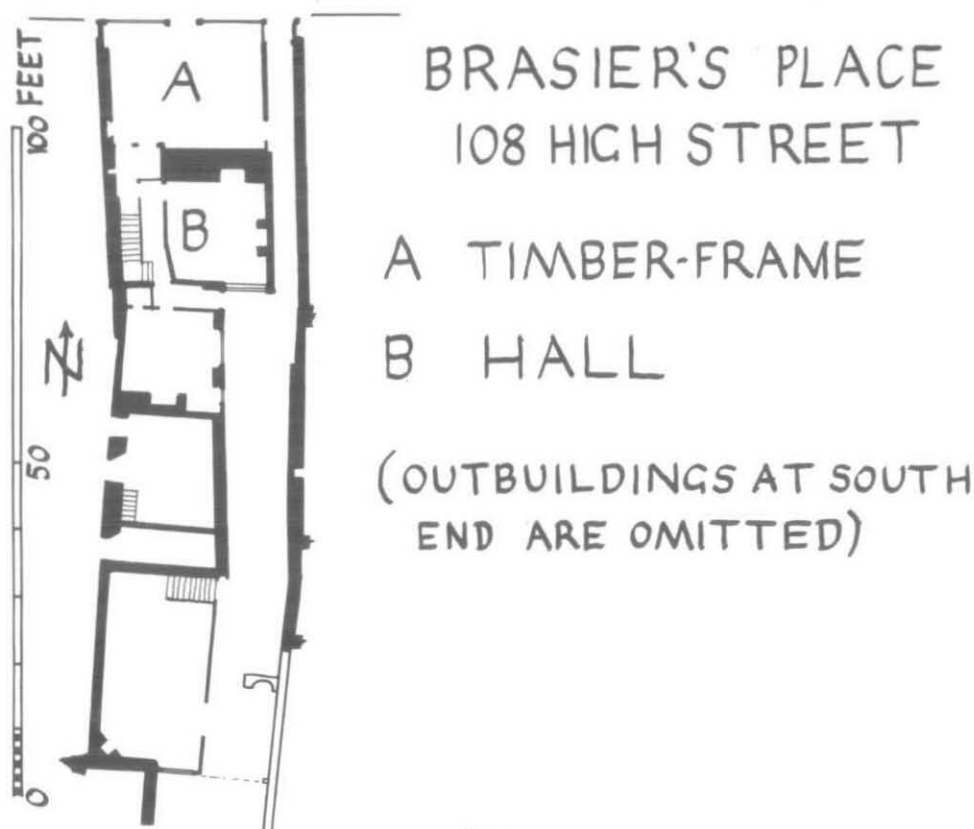


Fig. 7  
108 High Street in 1814.

attempts to unite these and the further property on the west, SE(21).<sup>52</sup> Although ownership of adjacent plots would naturally lead to the disappearance of ancient lines of division, it is striking to see how much they survived on this site despite 500 years of common ownership.

The three shops in front of the tenement had a separate descent, the two western ones belonging to the College from 1361, whilst the eastern one (cellar and ground floor, 9 ft. wide by 16 ft. deep) was only bought from Balliol College in 1872. It is not however shown on the 1814 plan and seems to have been in the same occupation as the main tenement.

The demolition of this house was under way by the time that Buckler first visited the site. The twin gables clearly shown on the photograph (Pl. V) are reported to have been 'destroyed many years ago' (f. 65), which can be explained if he arrived after they had gone and he had forgotten their previous appearance.

<sup>52</sup> From 1333 to 1345 John Shorditch held SE(21) and acquired the reversion of SE(22); John of Eyesham held SE(21) and (23) between 1348 and 1350; likewise Roger Lodelowe between 1353 and 1361 (O.C.R., 169-94).

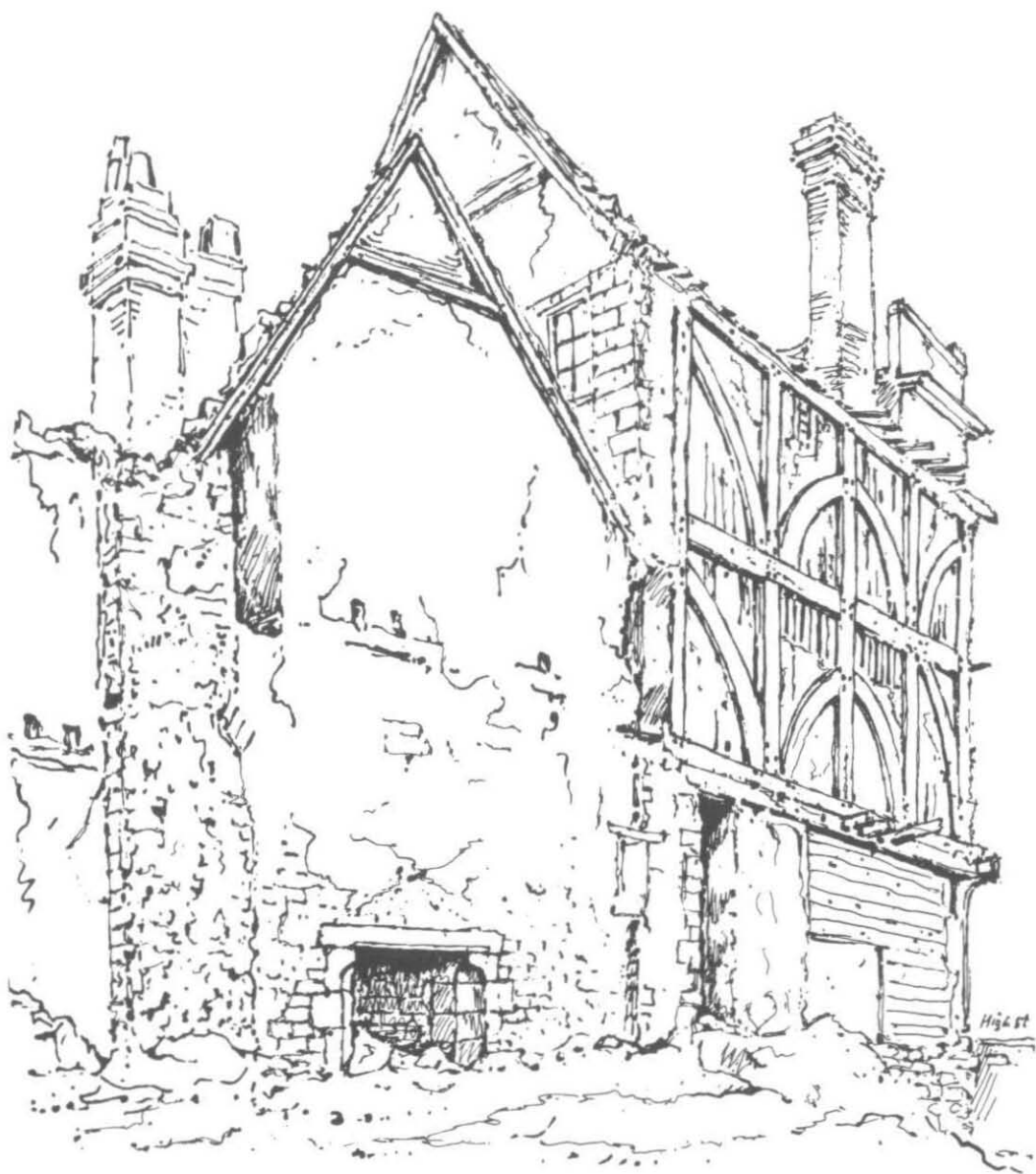


Fig. 8  
108 High Street : view to north-west after demolition (f. 426).

His first drawings were made in July and the first fully dated one was done on 17 July (Fig. 10) ; it shows the top floor and roof removed. A view of Tackley's Inn dated 'July' (f. 420, Fig. 5) can only have been drawn after the back part of No. 108 had gone, and by 3 August the whole house had been destroyed, except its west wall (Fig. 8).

A hall range lying behind the front shop is suggested by the 1814 plan (Fig. 7), with an entry passage from the street on the east side. Nothing substantial is shown for the outer wall of the hall, though beyond this to the south was a wing, probably of stone, extending along the yard and partly opening to the west, as mentioned above. The oldest part of the house would seem to have been the remnant of the hall. The 1814 plan shows a thick wall on its north side, partly removed for a stair, and with a fireplace on its south face. This is not illustrated by Buckler *in situ* though the hollow-chamfer and ogee moulded jamb from the 'Stone chimney piece in ye south room, adjoining W. end of Chapel' drawn in July, probably belongs here. It was 5 ft. wide by 4 ft. deep and had lost its arch (f. 443, Fig. 9). The surviving west wall of the hall (Fig. 8) had only scars of the two side walls, and a single plain truss of the roof frame, which had been anciently destroyed (f. 46, 59). At the base of the wall was a large fireplace (f. 427, Fig. 9). Massively constructed in stone, with broad chamfered jambs rising to triangular stops and a plain keystone lintel, it was presumably medieval and could have been contemporary with the stone hall. Its position in the upper wall of the hall would have been unusual, but not unique.<sup>53</sup>

The front part of the house is almost certainly the house shown in perspective in Fig. 10. This has the appearance of being a redrawn version of a field sketch but is nevertheless useful. The house was built separately from that adjoining on the west, and where the junction is given in detail (f. 431, Fig. 9), the first house is shown further back, slightly lower and 2½ in. away from the second. It had three jetties, and if the later facade dropped from the plane of the gables, the original ground floor front must have been further back than the shop windows. The 1814 plan indicates a slight change of thickness in the west wall some four or five feet back from the street. Only the three main supports were left at ground floor level at the front, with a dividing wall down the middle, presumably of timber and plaster, which is not shown on the 1814 plan. The text adds little to what can be seen in the drawing, though it is amplified by two further sketches which probably belong here. One, dated July, shows a detail of the jetty with moulded internal and external brackets (f. 430, Fig. 9). The joist is shown with a moulding corresponding to that in an undated sketch of a beam (1 ft. 5 in. × 1 ft. 8 in.) with a hollow chamfer, roll and ogee (f. 432, Fig. 9). Buckler remarks that the first floor had lost only its windows : 'of which there had been two, oblong, & raised within a foot of ye ceiling, ye sill being four feet above ye floor' (f. 64-5). The framing of the walls was with close studding and middle rails ; the studding was closer together than in the next house. The joists at both levels had a primary member running from front to rear with subsidiary bridging joists off to the sides ; we are told that these were supported by double tenons (f. 65), as were those in the next house (*cf.* Fig. 18).

<sup>53</sup> M. Wood, *The English Medieval House* (1965), 53 ; hereafter *Medieval House*.

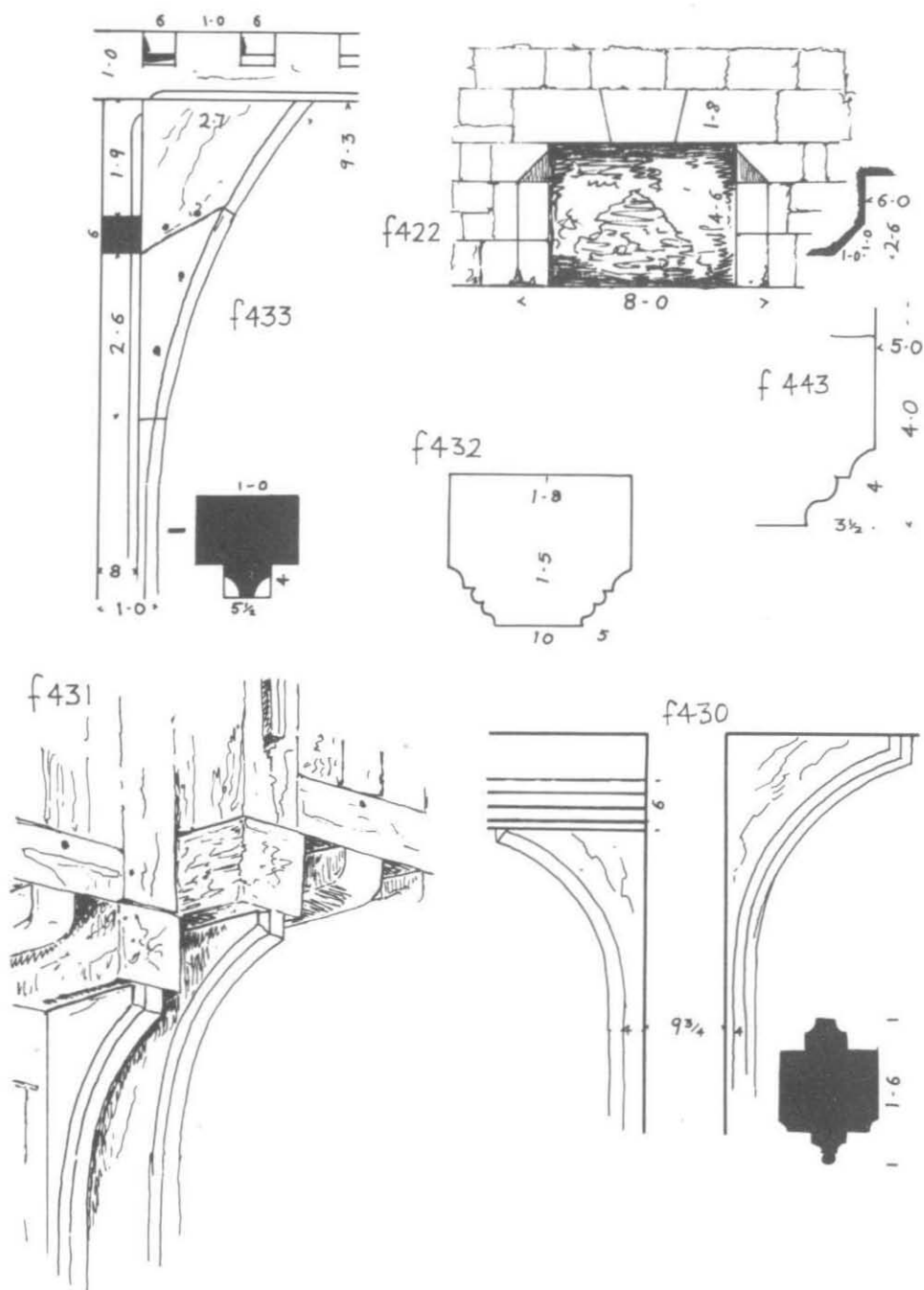


Fig. 9

108 High Street : details from the hall (f. 427, 433, 443) and the timber front (f. 430-2). (f. 427 is numbered f. 422 on the drawing by mistake).

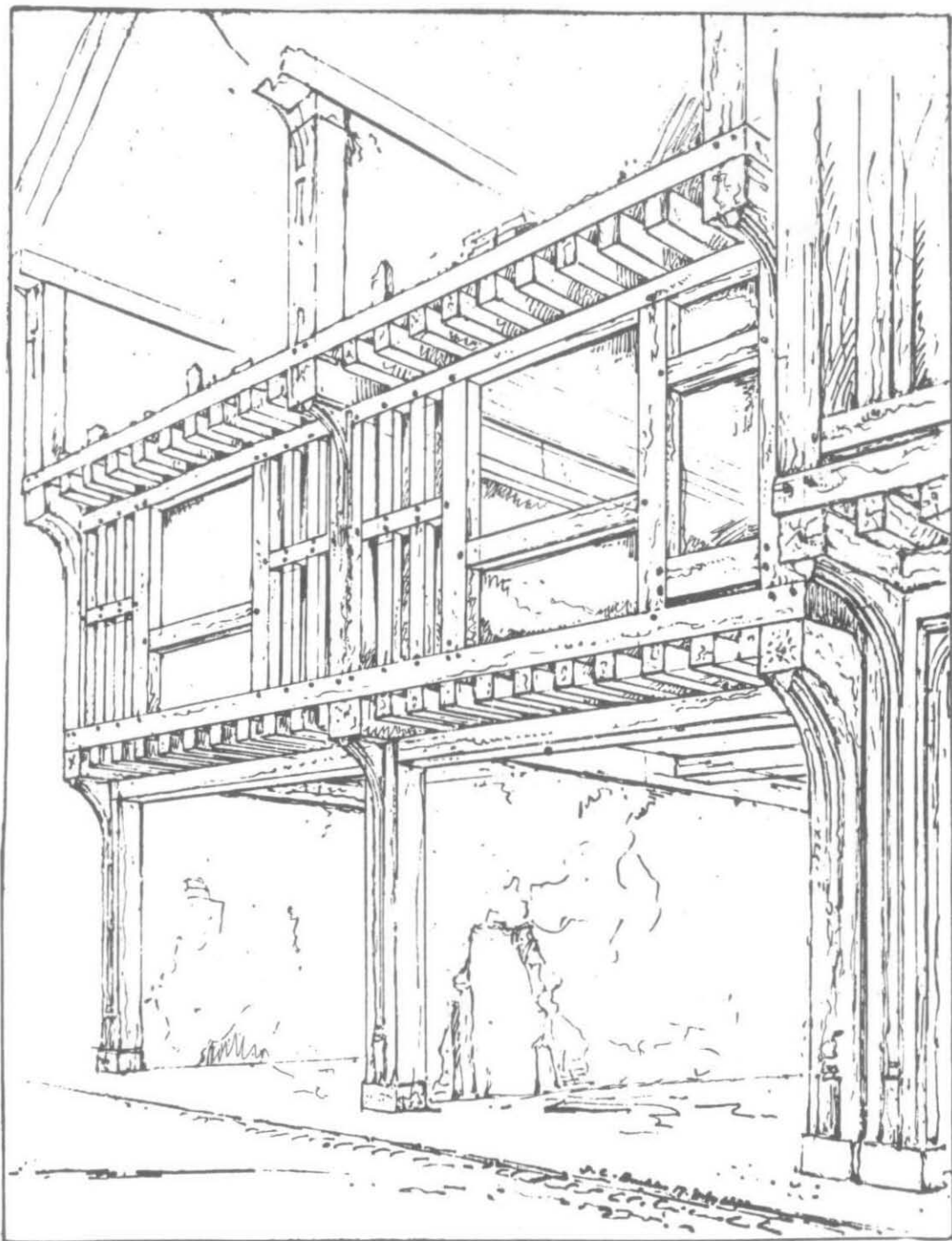


Fig. 10

108 High Street : perspective view of timber frame at front (f. 413).



Only the main posts of the second floor are sketched in on Fig. 10, and these may be reconstructions.

The frame was presumably built against the stone wall of the hall, though Buckler talks of the phase of rebuilding extending 'quite through from ye street to ye Court' (f. 64). When he refers to the 'back wall of timber' he probably means the structure replacing the south wall of the hall, contemporary with its being floored-in but not necessarily contemporary with the works at the front. The back wall had been 'subjected to frequent mutilations' and little remained to record or was visible, except the central post and principal joist (f. 65; f. 433, Fig. 9). The post had a chamfered rib broadening into a large bracket to the joist into which common joists had been mortised with barefaced soffit-tenons with diminished haunches. This could suggest a late 15th- or 16th-century date (see below p. 158). The same joint is also shown on a beam which probably came from here (f. 436). This first floor level at the back was 9 ft. 3 in. above the ground, which would seem to be too low for the marks shown in the west wall of the hall (Fig. 8) that appear to be joist sockets. They may belong to another phase.

Little else can be said of the back part, except that it would seem to have undergone the standard conversion of urban hall-houses into two-part storeyed houses with rooms of equal sizes. This may well have been done together with the rebuilding of the front part, about which we are told:

This was sturdy, & in its prosperous days an excellent specimen of carpentry, & as commodious a dwelling as a street house below ye quality of a Mansion could be looked for in ye reign of Henry VIIIth (f. 50).

The first half of the 16th century, if not earlier, would be quite a reasonable date for this part of the house.

#### THE SWAN ON THE HOOP, 109-110 HIGH STREET (Figs. 11-20)

Salter, *Survey*, SE(22); *O.C.R.*, 180-5

Oriel acquired this property in 1392 as a tenement with three shops; it was known as the 'Swanonthehope' by 1397<sup>54</sup> and seems to have been an inn until the end of the 16th century after which the inn moved next door. An extensive building campaign was carried out by the College from 1469 to 1472 and is discussed below in relation to the buildings. As was usual with medieval inns, a piece of meadow was rented out to the innholder as part of the inn, to provide fodder. Prior to demolition the street front had an 18th-century appearance with five sash windows, cornice and parapet above two shop fronts (Pl. V). On the 1814 plan (Fig. 11) the eastern shop was a narrow one next to the entry from the street and the western one took up the rest of the width of the tenement, returning to the south against the west wall of the hall. The hall clearly stood out with its thick stone walls; behind it to the south-west was a long stone range terminating in two stone ovens. They may have been constructed after the Swan moved next door,

<sup>54</sup> *O.C.R.*, 173, 453-4.

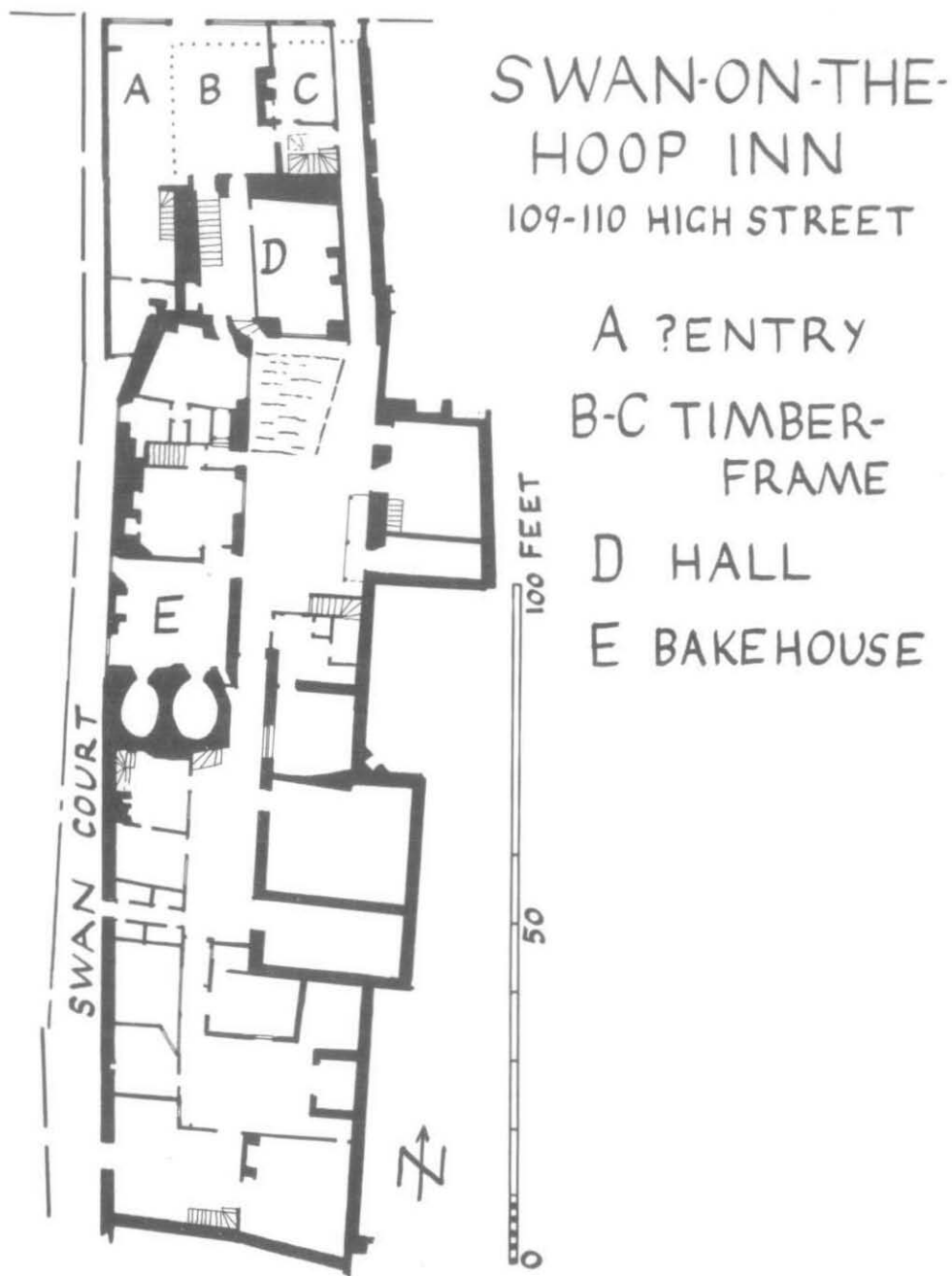


Fig. 11

109-10 High Street in 1814.

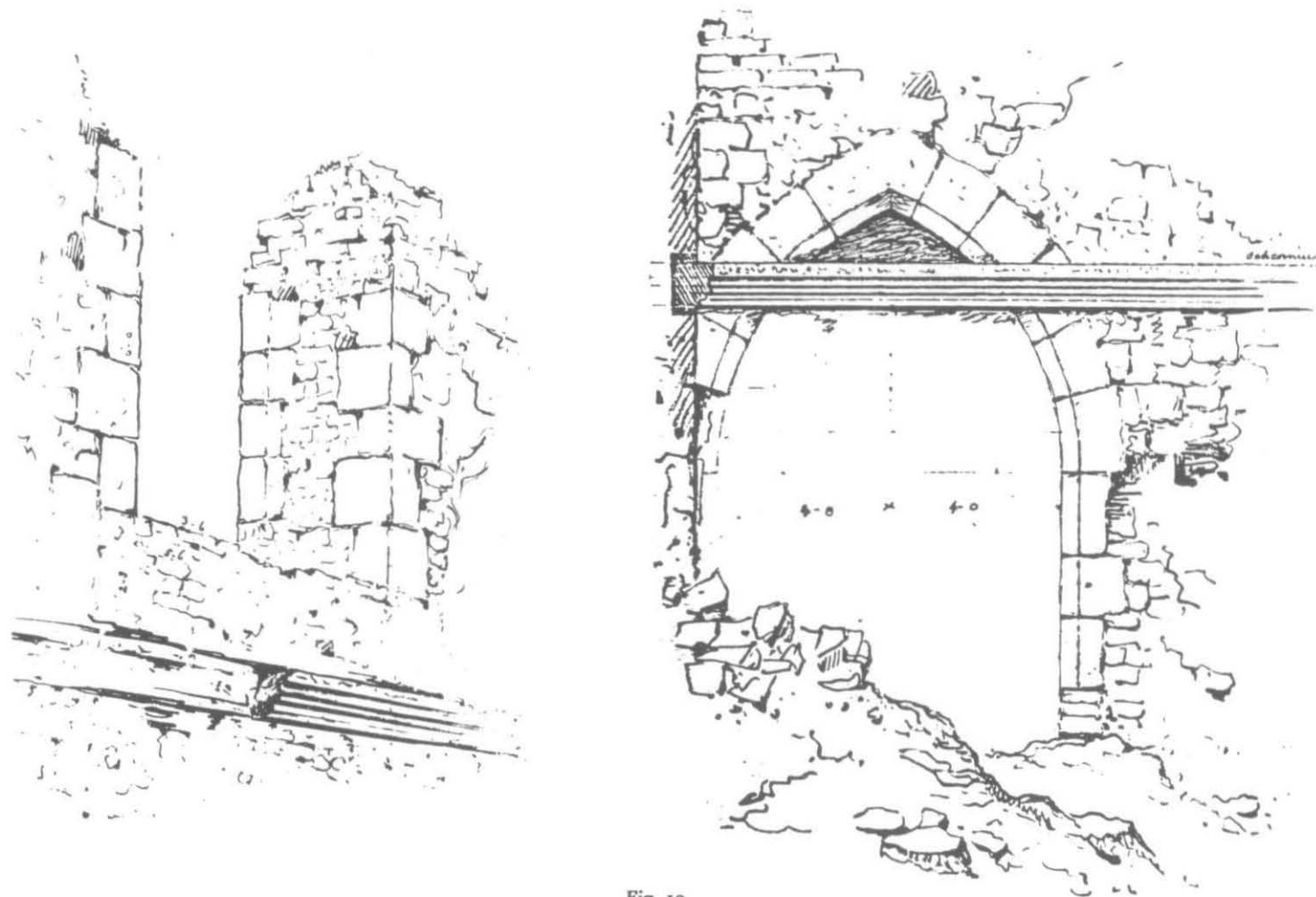


Fig. 12  
109-10 High Street : hall door (f. 471) and window (f. 405).

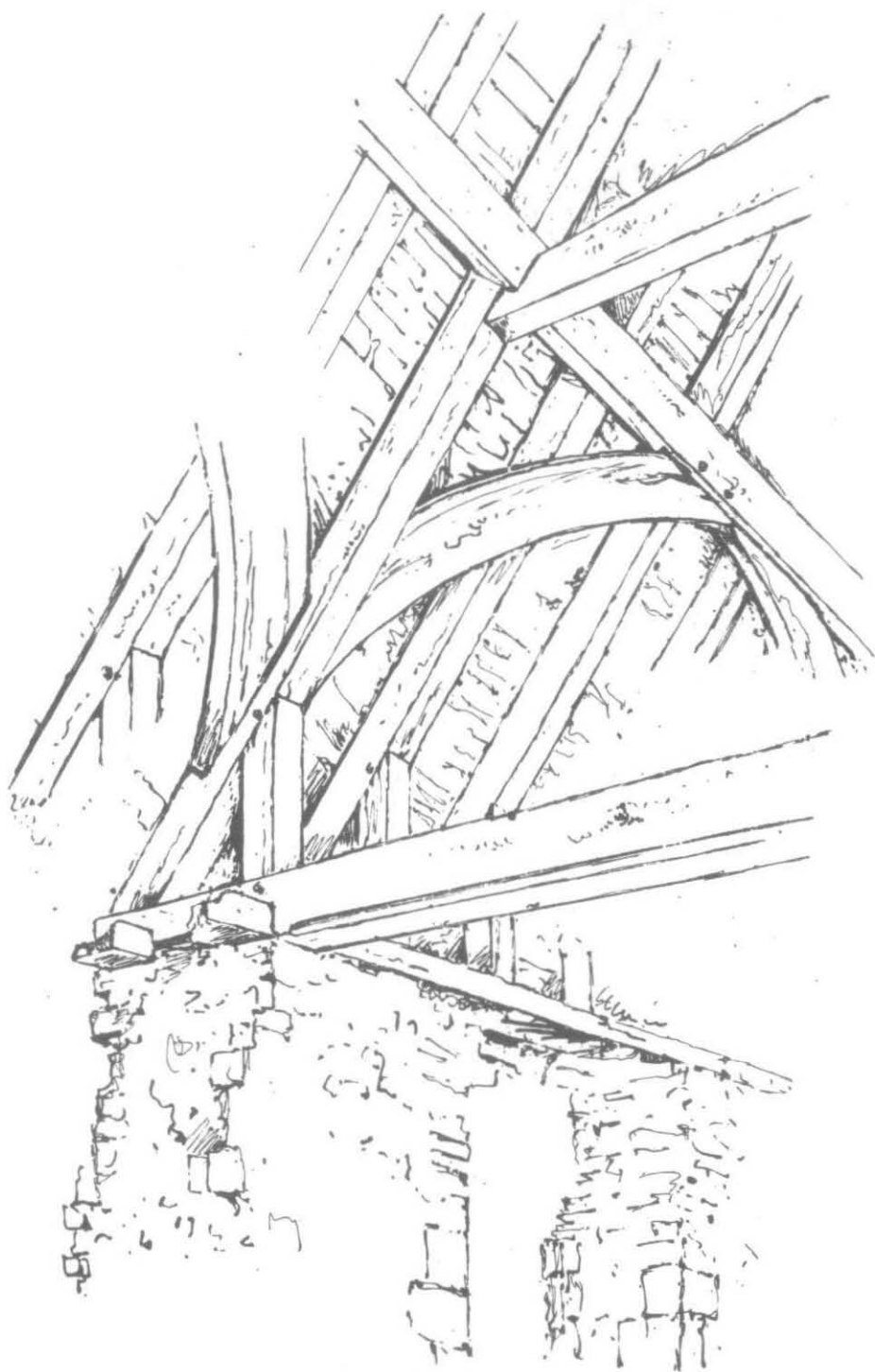


Fig. 13

109-10 High Street : hall roof (f. 457).

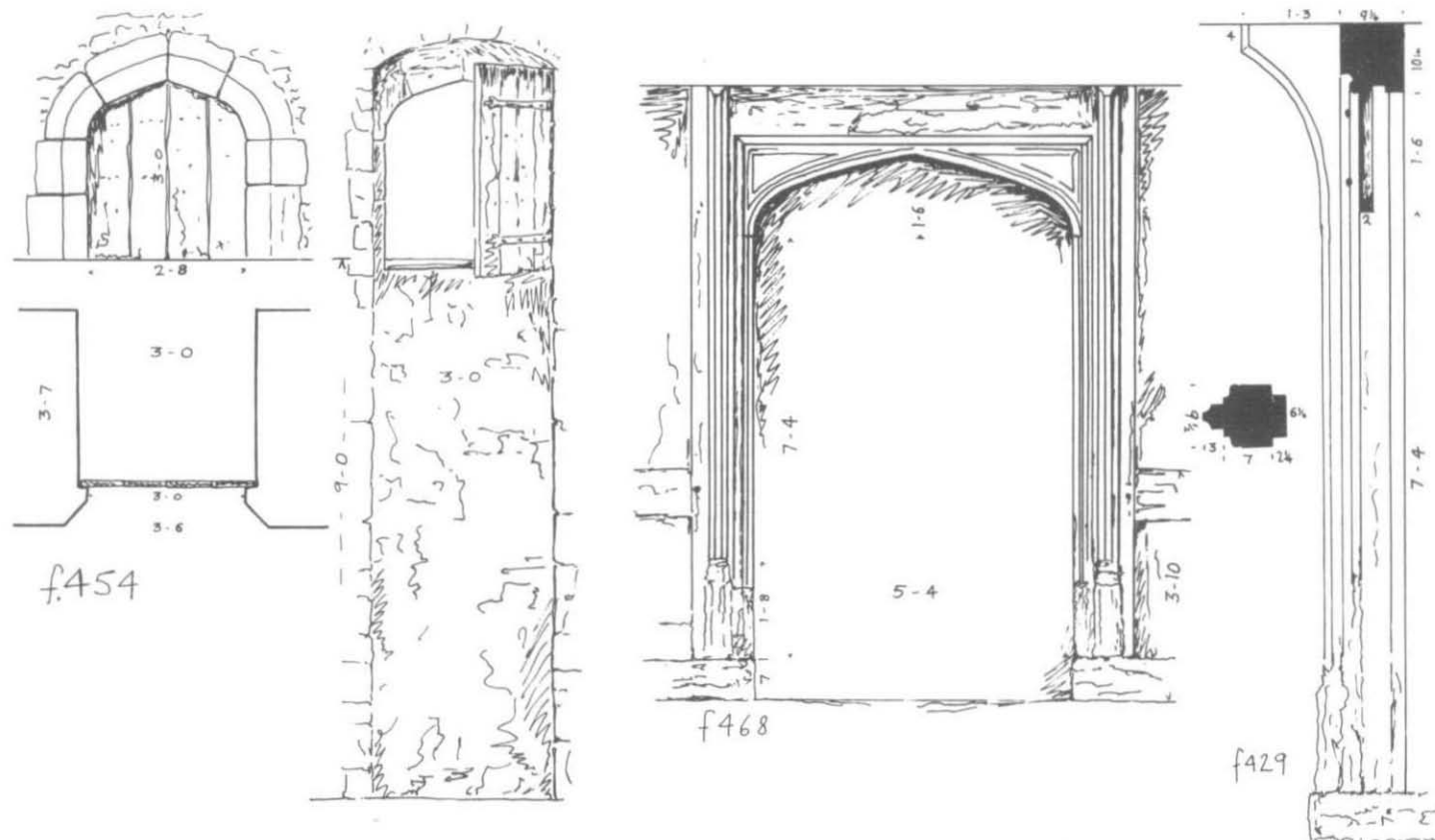


Fig. 14  
109-10 High Street : cellar door (f. 454) and door on street (f. 468, 429).

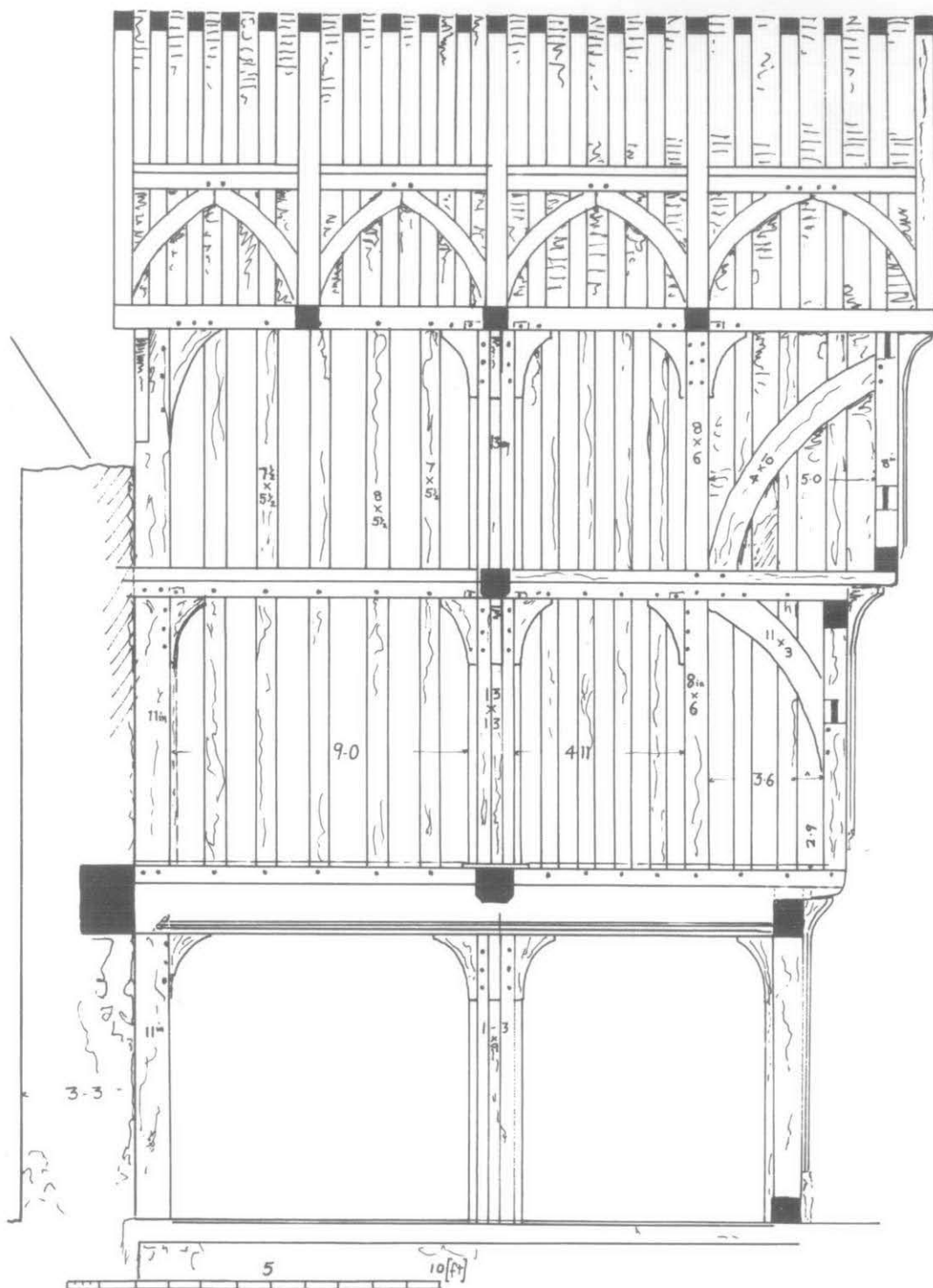


Fig. 15

109-10 High Street : middle wall of timber frame (f. 461).



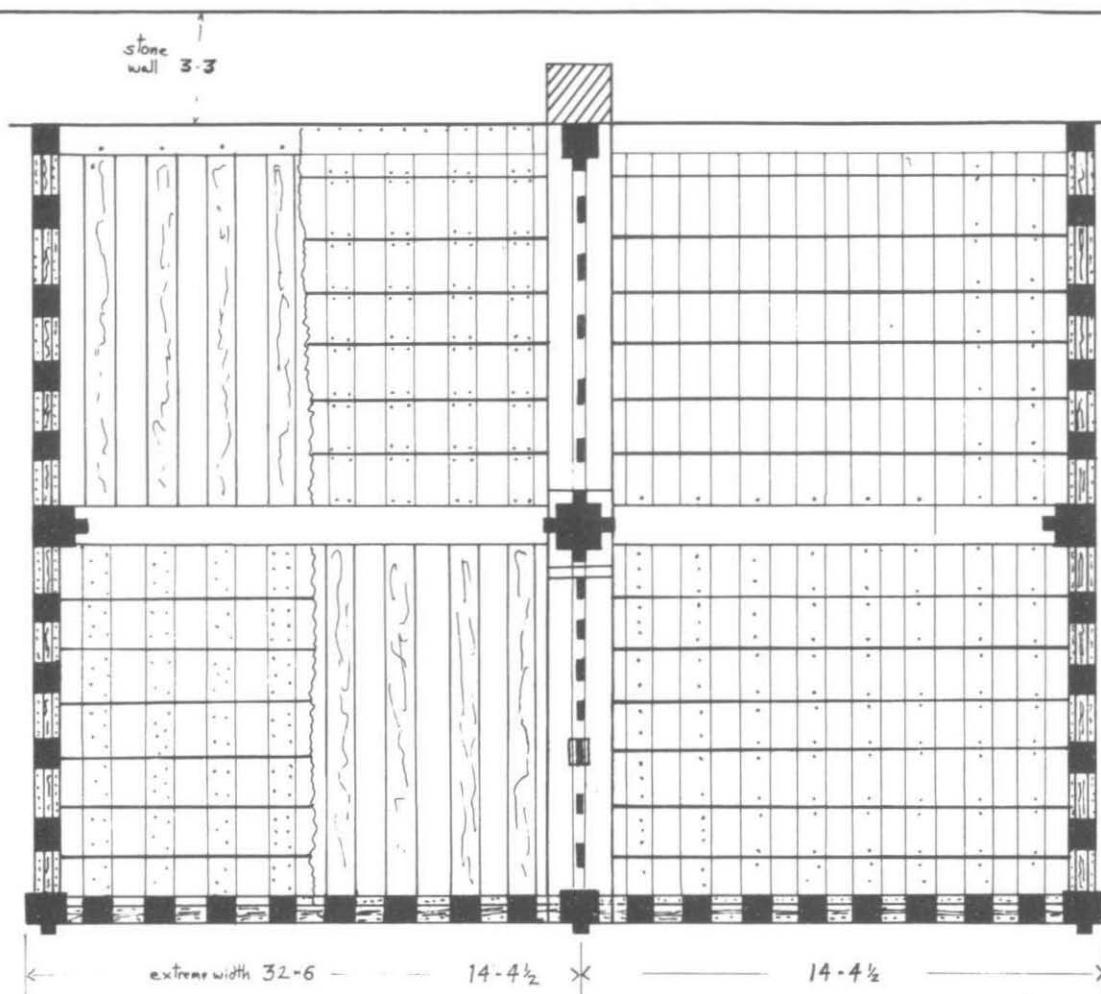


Fig. 16

109-10 High Street : plan of timber frame at first floor level (f. 459).

when the tenement was leased to bakers (from 1602 to 1660).<sup>55</sup> As can be seen from the plan, it would certainly have been in the way of a wide entry to the inn from the street on the west side. There could have been some entry from Bear Lane, at the rear, but in medieval times the tenement immediately to the south, SE(227), did not belong to the College, though the adjacent ones did. Apart from this range and the large, featureless encroachments onto the tenement on the east, the rest of the yard contained small, thin-walled outhouses. The hall and street range were standing on 3 August 1872 (Fig. 8) and most of the drawings were made in October, when the house was 'now in ye course of destruction' (f. 471).

<sup>55</sup> O.C.R., 182-3.

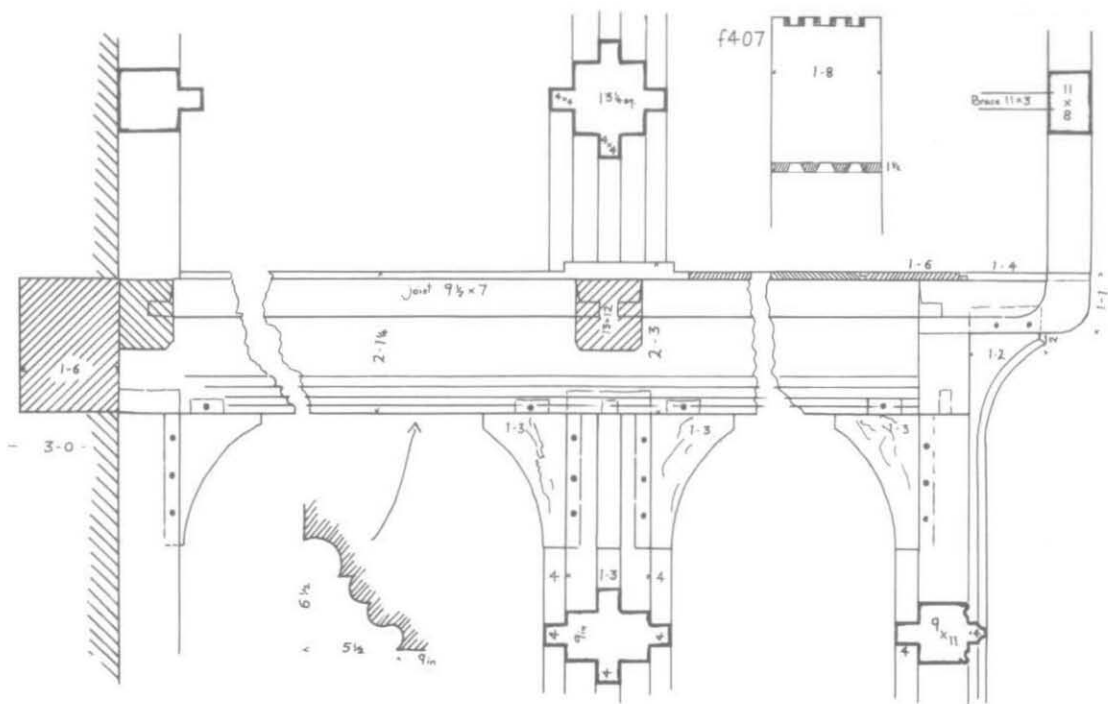


Fig. 17

109-10 High Street : the 'prodigious beam' at the first floor of the timber frame (f. 472) and detail of floor-board dovetails (f. 407).

Buckler concentrated on features of the hall and timber buildings at the front, most of his work being done on the latter ; the other buildings, which may have been demolished in his absence, were not referred to.

In the west wall of the hall was a stone door with a two-centred, plain chamfered arch, 8 ft. wide and over 10 ft. tall (f. 50 ; Fig. 12). It would appear, despite the caption, to have been in the south-west corner of the room, where the 1814 plan shows a recess. If originally open, the arch could have led through to an entry from the street along the west side of the property. In the same wall was a low opening, about 3 ft. square with a plain chamfered four-centred arch, which gave access to the cellar below the hall (f. 62 ; Fig. 14). It had an oak door opening inwards onto a recess 3 ft. wide and dropping 9 ft. to the cellar floor. Buckler thought it might have been a staircase, though it was perhaps a run for barrels into the inn cellar. In the south wall were the jambs of two windows (f. 50) ; the splayed opening of one was drawn (Fig. 12), its sill 11 ft. 5 in. above the original floor. At some time a 10 in. oak cornice with a double-ogee moulding was added to the room 8 ft. 9 in. from the floor, below the window but cutting off the top of the door arch. It survived, although damaged, on the south and west walls of the hall. Buckler associated this with the insertion of a ceiling (f. 50) and later



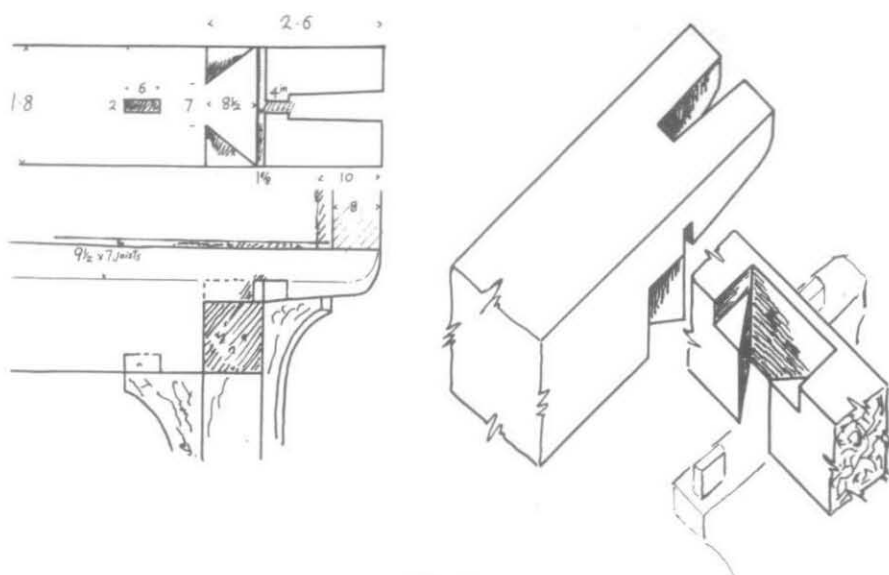


Fig. 19

109-10 High Street : jetty detail (f. 469) and reconstruction (author).

The main feature of this building was the timber-framed part at the front, recorded in great detail (Figs. 15-20). It is not immediately clear from the exterior photograph (Pl. V) where the frame was located. On the ground floor (37 ft. 10 in. wide in the 1772 Survey)<sup>56</sup> the two shops take up the eastern third and western two-thirds of the width; though the sash windows above were grouped 2:2:1. The frame of the 'second house' was coterminous with that of the 'first house', as previously shown (f. 431, Fig. 9). According to the first floor plan (Fig. 16) the 'extreme width' was 32 ft. 6 in., the frame consisting of two halves 14 ft. 4½ in. wide (*i.e.* 28 ft. 9 in. in all). On the 1814 plan we find that the width of the passage and the first shop (No. 109) was *c.* 14 ft., so the timber frame can be fitted in along the north wall of the hall, which was nearly 29 ft. long. The middle wall of the ground floor must have become the side wall of the shop, and the west wall have been removed when the other shop was extended. Twenty feet forward of the wall of the hall, where the front wall should have been, there was a corresponding change in the width of the passage wall on the east and a projection in the west wall of the first shop, as shown on the 1814 plan. This arrangement of the frame would leave about 10 ft. on the western side of the plot, which could have been an entry of the same size as that surviving at the Golden Cross Inn.<sup>57</sup>

The timber frame was built against the stone wall of the hall, with a cellar, and above the ground floor were two storeys and attics. Three jetties hung over the street front, all presenting a 'very novel, picturesque & interesting subject for observation, ye whole skeleton of the House having been laid bare, & nothing but

<sup>56</sup> H. E. Salter, *Surveys and Tokens*, O.H.S. 75 (1920), 12.

<sup>57</sup> W. A. Pantin, 'The Golden Cross, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xx (1955), 51, Fig. 13.

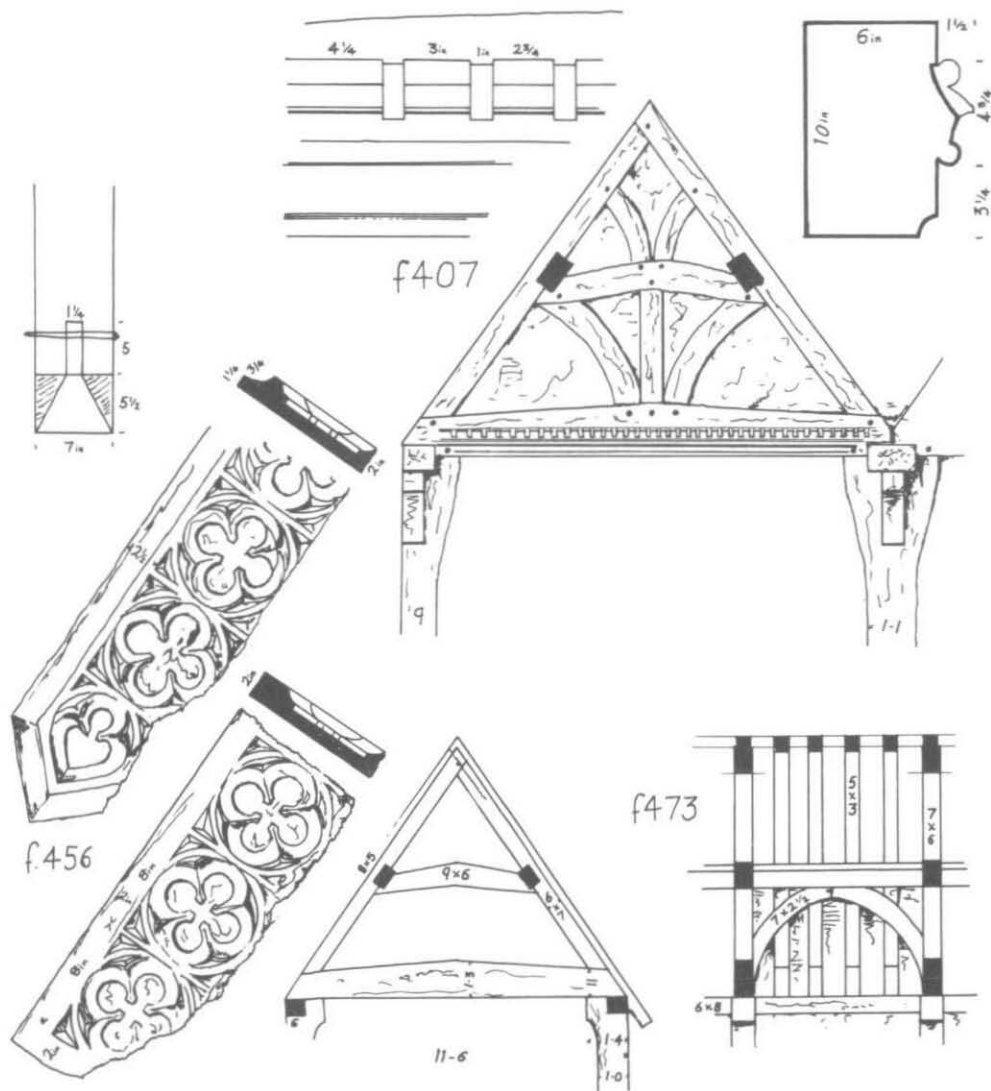


Fig. 20

109-10 High Street : one of the front gables, details of tie-beam and rafter dovetail for wallplate (f. 407) ; interior elevation and rear truss (f. 473) ; barge boards (f. 456).

ye ancient timber work to be seen piled story upon story' (f. 53). Everything was there, not a timber missing from the roof (except the barge boards) and even the original floor boards were in position. The main support for the frame was a 'prodigious beam' of some 90 cubic feet of oak across the middle at first floor level, holding the central storey post which went up to tie beam level. This great beam fascinated Buckler, who drew it from all angles and lavished many words on its description (f. 53-4 ; Figs. 17 and 18). At the south end it was sunk 1 ft. 6 in.

into the wall, and held underneath by a post and bracket. In the centre was a supporting post from below, whose foot was tenoned to a plate running along the top of the basement wall (f. 54) and whose head was bracketed in four directions to the beam and joists. At the front the great beam was dovetailed over the head-plate of the front wall, which in turn was supported by a post with brackets forward and backward to the soffit of the beam (Fig. 19). All the internal brackets seem to have been undecorated. The beam itself was 22 ft 6 in. long, 1 ft. 8 in wide  $\times$  2 ft. deep, though this increased to 2 ft. 3 in. at the centre. Both soffit edges were broadly chamfered and moulded with a hollow chamfer, roll and ogee. No mention is made of mortices on the underside of this beam, neither are any illustrated, though they could easily have been obscured. It is at least possible then that the ground floor was open for the full width of the building and not subdivided in its first state. The front door was on the east side of the property, where it had been in 1333<sup>58</sup> (f. 468, Fig. 14; cf. Fig. 10). It was 5 ft. 4 in. wide, with plain spandrels forming a four-centred arch in a simply moulded square head. On either side were bracketed posts with moulded bases extending 1 ft. 8 in. above the sill on which they rested. One of these was drawn separately (f. 429, Fig. 14). No window fittings were recorded, though a sill can perhaps be seen next to the door. At the middle of the street front the principal post was moulded with ogees at the corners and hollow chamfers on the projection for the bracket (Fig. 17), exactly as on the post by the door. A single post at the 'West angle' (f. 460, Fig. 18) seems to have been moulded only on the outer (west) side, with an ogee at the front and 2 in. rebate at the back.

Support for the first floor was elaborate: transverse bridging joists 13 in.  $\times$  12 in. were joined to the beam by double tenons, each with slightly diminished haunches, in a housed shoulder (Fig. 18). Common joists, c. 6 in.  $\times$  9 in. and 9 in. apart, formed the jetty at the front and were let into a transverse beam at the rear against the wall; in the centre the two sets were joined to the bridging joist by barefaced soffit-tenons with diminished haunches. The floor boards, 1 in.  $\times$  12 in. to 19 in., were laid across these common joists, lapped over each other, dovetailed together if too short (f. 407, Fig. 17) and nailed down (f. 55-6), as is shown in the first-floor plan (Fig. 16). The upper edges of the great beam were rebated for the boards (Fig. 18). The second floor was supported by the central storey post which rose to the tie beams from the first floor. It was let into the upper surface of the great beam in a mortice 12 in.  $\times$  12 in.  $\times$  6 in. deep, though above floor level it was increased with four 4 in.  $\times$  4 in. ribs which supported brackets to the ceiling joists (Figs. 15 and 17). At the second floor all these four joists were tenoned into the post (f. 55). They were of smaller dimensions than those of the first floor.

Only the timbers of the middle wall are shown in the section (Fig. 15). The front bays were divided with bracketed posts, associated with the arch- and tension-bracing on the first and second floors respectively; the studding in these bays was smaller and closer than in the rear bays. In the rear walls were 11 in. square posts, apparently separate ones in each storey, bracketed to the ceiling joists. The outer bays as shown on the floor plan were divided into two bays, with large

<sup>58</sup> O.C.R., 175.



bracketed posts in the centre (12 in.  $\times$  12 in.); 'those in front & on ye angles 12 in.  $\times$  10 in., braced on each floor' (f. 56). It is not clear whether the studding in the outer walls would have been visible; certainly it was substantial enough to have been made for show. No window details were recorded, apart from the mortices shown in the posts of the front wall (Fig. 15). The jetties, with brackets and ribs on their supporting posts, had bressumers resting on the ends of the joists, not mortised into them, at least on the second floor.

The roof (Fig. 20) was in two parts, with twin gables to the street. The top wall plates protruded out at the front over brackets on the heavily jowled posts which increased from 12 in. to 20 in. on the middle post (Fig. on f. 56). Two separate tie beams were dovetailed onto the ends of the top plates, each taking half of the wider plate in the middle; they were embattled and slightly cambered. A king post and two curved queen struts supported the cambered collar; the purlins were clasped between collar and principal rafters which were not diminished above this point. The protruding top plates and purlins probably carried the barge boards, which were discovered by Buckler 'among ye joists of ceilings' (f. 456, Fig. 20). They had a standard pattern of squared circles with quatrefoils in them, and a heart-shaped trefoil terminal. Further drawings show an interior bay of the roof and the south elevation (f. 464, 473). Each bay had four common rafters and curved windbraces from principle rafter to purlin. The inner and rear trusses were simplified versions of those at the front, without the king post, struts or decorated tie beam.

Few internal fittings of the building can be identified, though some of the drawings of fireplaces (e.g. f. 440) must belong here. From its context, it seems that the 'few square yards' of 16th-century panelling came from here (f. 61, f. 465). A moulded oak beam 'probably belonging to a ceiling' was drawn in October and probably comes from this house (f. 470). It was moulded with hollow chamfer, ogee and roll; there were signs of bosses having been fixed to intersections 5 ft. apart. There were no traces of the ancient stairs (f. 58). The later facade of the house is barely mentioned except in passing (f. 57) and there is no drawing which shows the relationship of the front to the timber frame, except one (Fig. 8) which is unreliable in that it omits the jetties.

#### *Documentary evidence*

Since there is no doubt that these buildings were part of the Swan Inn, it is of great interest that the Oriel College Treasurer's Accounts contain evidence for the rebuilding of the inn in 1469-72 at a total cost of over £95.<sup>59</sup> For three years there are separate accounts for the building work in *hospicio de ly swan* (1469-70), in *hospicio le Swann et in opella annexa* (1470-1, 1471-2), and the expenditure is summarized in Table 1. Nicholas Carpenter,<sup>60</sup> who did other work for the College, was fully employed for two years on a £46 contract for the *hospicium* and smaller, separate contracts for the *opella* and *aula*. In the absence of any entries for materials or carriage we must suppose that he contracted to supply all himself, as in the case

<sup>59</sup> Oriel Muniments, I.E.11, 334 (1469-70), 356-7 (1470-1), 380, 383-4 (1471-2).

<sup>60</sup> Gee, *Carpenters*, 168 omits these works.



of the specimen contract for the house in Catte Street which Pantin discovered.<sup>61</sup> Stone was brought to the site by William Maior in 38 cartloads (7 in 1470 and 31 in 1471). John Swypperell was paid *pro depositione meremii*, either pulling down or laying down timber. A mason, probably Robert, was paid the large sum of £14 for work done, and Robert Mason<sup>62</sup> later received payment for two contracts, one of 21s. 8d. for making windows. Plastering was done by Thomas Mason,<sup>63</sup> and tiling by John Reede. John Philips, carpenter of Brize Norton,<sup>64</sup> had contracts for a stable and a pentise, bulke and skelyng, the timber being supplied by Thomas Dalton and roofs tiled by Abell.

The order of building can be worked out from the payments, though the evidence is not completely clear: Nicholas Carpenter must have been regularly paid for preparatory work, whereas the masonry at least was probably paid for in arrears. Taking the evidence of the final payments it would seem that the *hospicium*, *opella* and *aula* were reared in the summer of 1471 (presumably *after* most of the mason work), and were plastered and tiled in the autumn. In the spring and early summer of the next year the outbuildings were reared and then tiled through the summer.

To what buildings do these accounts refer? Nicholas' main contract for the *hospicium* must have been for the principal timber-framed buildings of the inn. The *aula* would undoubtedly have been the hall recorded by Buckler, and part of the inn, but perhaps on a different contract if the work involved roofing a new or refurbished stone structure which was not necessarily part of the timber frame. The inn was rented out for £4,<sup>65</sup> and is followed on the 1486 rental by the *opella annexa dicti hospicio ex parte occidentali*, let separately for 13s. 4d.<sup>66</sup> This shop can best be identified with the *opella* of the building accounts, where the further contract can be explained if it dealt with a distinct holding and structure. This tenement on the west appears in leases from the 16th to the 19th century, though its dimensions of 22 ft. (N-S) × 15 ft. (E-W) given in 1607 and later must refer to a post-medieval rearrangement on the ground floor, as the 15 ft. width does not allow for a 28 ft. + timber frame beside it on a 38 ft. plot. Perhaps in its primary form it was in or over the entry to the inn if, as previously argued, there was one. What then of Buckler's great timber building with its prodigious beam and triple-jettied front? There seems no overriding objection to its belonging to the campaign of 1469-72, and having been designed and built by Nicholas Carpenter (though this does have implications for the dating of timber details). It can hardly be the *opella*, if not for the reasons given above, then at least because a building on this scale would have cost more than £8. The College spent £52 on a house at Carfax in 1480-2,<sup>67</sup> though one could be built for as little as £15. We may also recall here the possibility that there were no divisions in the ground floor of the frame. Most likely

<sup>61</sup> Pantin, *op. cit.* note 46 (1947), 148 and L. F. Salzman, *Building in England* (1967), 415-16; cf. Gee, *Carpenters*, 182.

<sup>62</sup> Gee, 'Oxford Masons, 1370-1530', *Archaeol. J.*, 109 (1953), 98, 114, 120.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>64</sup> Gee, *Carpenters*, 166, 168.

<sup>65</sup> *O.C.R.*, 399 etc.; see below.

<sup>66</sup> *O.C.R.*, 401.

<sup>67</sup> *Treasurers Accounts* ii, I.E.11, 564, 584.

then, this building was the main street front of the *hospicium*. The contract for this may have included a range in the yard, though space would hardly have allowed a courtyard plan-type.

### Discussion

The timber framing of the Swan was very substantial, almost to the point of being excessive. It has been discussed in relation to 126 High Street, the only other late 15th-century frame in Oxford to have been examined (or survived for that matter);<sup>68</sup> their wall-framing and roofs can be seen as typical of central and southern England at this date, with no marked regional features. The more prominent studding in the Swan is probably just the *de luxe* version of the wall-framing used in 126 High Street. If, as seems likely, the timber frame can be dated to 1469-72, then this is definite evidence for the use of the barefaced soffit-tenon with diminished haunch in the 15th century. It became the standard post-medieval floor joint, and has previously been thought not to occur before its appearance in the western part of King's College Chapel roof, c. 1510-12.<sup>69</sup> It was also used in the north range of Magdalen College Cloister (1475-9)<sup>70</sup> and the back part of the Hall of John Halle in Salisbury (1470-83).<sup>71</sup> The double form of this joint, appearing here in the principle floor joists (Fig. 18), has not yet been noted before Wren's new Deanery of St. Paul's.<sup>72</sup> The ability to move back the date of introduction of this joint some fifty years does not in any way invalidate its use as a general dating feature, but serves as a reminder that firm dates for the introduction of new techniques can only be established when the widest possible range of examples has been collected. Furthermore, uncertainty over the use of firm dates should not be an excuse for ignoring this form of evidence altogether.

The Swan Inn seems to have been of the 'Gatehouse type', with its principal rooms in the elaborately built street range and the gate providing entry to the yard behind.<sup>73</sup> The hall was behind the street front, and there were stables and out-buildings in the yard. It was common for inns to be created as investments by corporations, though in this case, short of a full analysis of the Treasurer's Accounts, it is hard to see how the Swan Inn could have been paid for. The College's Oxford rents were collected by individual fellows who accounted separately (and usually in arrears) for the year for which they were responsible. The accounts give only the amounts handed in by them, and rentals as such have not on the whole survived, the nearest ones to the rebuilding being 1451 and 1482/3. At the earlier date the rent of the Swan was either £2 10s. or £3 6s. 8d.<sup>74</sup> In 1482/3 and thereafter the rent was £4, so the rent must have risen by at least 13s. 4d. (a mark).<sup>75</sup> During the three building years the Oxford rents collected from fellows were only a fifth of

<sup>68</sup> J. Munby, *et al.*, '126 High Street . . .', *Oxoniensia*, XL (1975), 289-90.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 290; C. A. Hewett, *English Cathedral Carpentry* (1974), 44-5, Fig. 33.

<sup>70</sup> College Gift Shop ceiling.

<sup>71</sup> For the date cf. Wood, *Medieval House*, 326, no. 92.

<sup>72</sup> This from Cecil Hewett, who has kindly discussed these joints with me.

<sup>73</sup> W. A. Pantin, 'Medieval Inns', in E. M. Jope (ed.), *Studies in Building History* (1961), 177ff.

<sup>74</sup> *O.C.R.*, 385.

<sup>75</sup> *O.C.R.*, 399.

what they could have been,<sup>76</sup> and in total were about a quarter of what was spent on the building (£95). If any conclusion can be drawn from this, it is that the urban property, let alone the improved rent of the Swan, could not have been sufficient to pay for such an 'investment', either initially, or in the immediate future.

ST. THOMAS' HALL, 111-12 HIGH STREET (Figs. 21-6)

Salter, *Survey*, SE(21) ; *O.C.R.*, 185-97

'Therein are some footsteps of an oratory or at least a refectory remaining in the hall of this place, now the Swan Inn'.<sup>77</sup> Thus Antony Wood on the last of our houses, referring no doubt to its remarkable feature that was to go unnoticed for the next two centuries ; a pair of 13th-century arches in the hall. The early history of this tenement will be discussed later, and here we only need note that it belonged to fellows of Oriel from 1361, passed to the College in 1371 and was for a while known as the Boar's Head. In the following century it was leased or rented in two parts, an arrangement still in force in the earliest surviving leases of the mid 16th century. The western part (No. 112), probably just the shop and house above was the smaller, and the eastern part (No. 111) included the other shop and most of the buildings behind and in the yard. Early in the 17th century this larger portion became the Swan Inn, which seems to have moved from next door (no licence being recorded for a new sign).<sup>78</sup> Some time before 1682 it was 'turned into various tenements and called the Swan Court',<sup>79</sup> an example of speculative infilling that shows clearly on the 1814 plan and was photographed before demolition,<sup>80</sup> but largely ignored by Buckler. As to the street fronts, the pre-demolition photograph (Pl. V) shows the two 'interlopers of modern date & of flimsy quality' (f. 48) with their similar but independent elevations reflecting their separate tenure.

Demolition of the western part of the site was prolonged, and Buckler shows the ruins in July 1872 when much had already gone (Fig. 22) and on a final view of 23 December 1872 when the last walls were still standing (f. 401). In the hall range behind the street front a pair of arches were found on the western wall, the northern one first of all in July and the southern one in November after further demolition (Figs. 23, 24). The first discovered was photographed by Taunt for the O.A.H.S. and provides valuable corroborative evidence for Buckler's drawings (Pl. VII).<sup>81</sup> The arches fitted in slightly off-centre between the remnants of the side walls of the hall, which were 5 ft. thick and about 20 ft. apart. The northernmost respond rested on the side wall, but at the south the respond was over a foot inside the return (Fig. 25). Buckler recorded that the side walls and their foundations were 'compactly united' with the western wall (f. 47), despite his wish to regard them as later walls of the imaginary 14th-century foundation abutting onto an earlier structure. The arches were two-centred, with an outer relieving arch 'of rough stone in thin

<sup>76</sup> *Treasurers Accounts* ii, I.E.11, 317, 341, 365 (£24 out of a potential sum of c. £125).

<sup>77</sup> Wood's *City of Oxford* i, ed. A. Clark, O.H.S. 15 (1889), 147.

<sup>78</sup> H. E. Salter, *Oxford City Properties*, O.H.S., 83 (1925), App. II.

<sup>79</sup> *O.C.R.*, 195 ; Wood, *op. cit.* note 77, 147, n. 9 'Swan Court, 1670'.

<sup>80</sup> See above, note 43.

<sup>81</sup> See above, note 36.

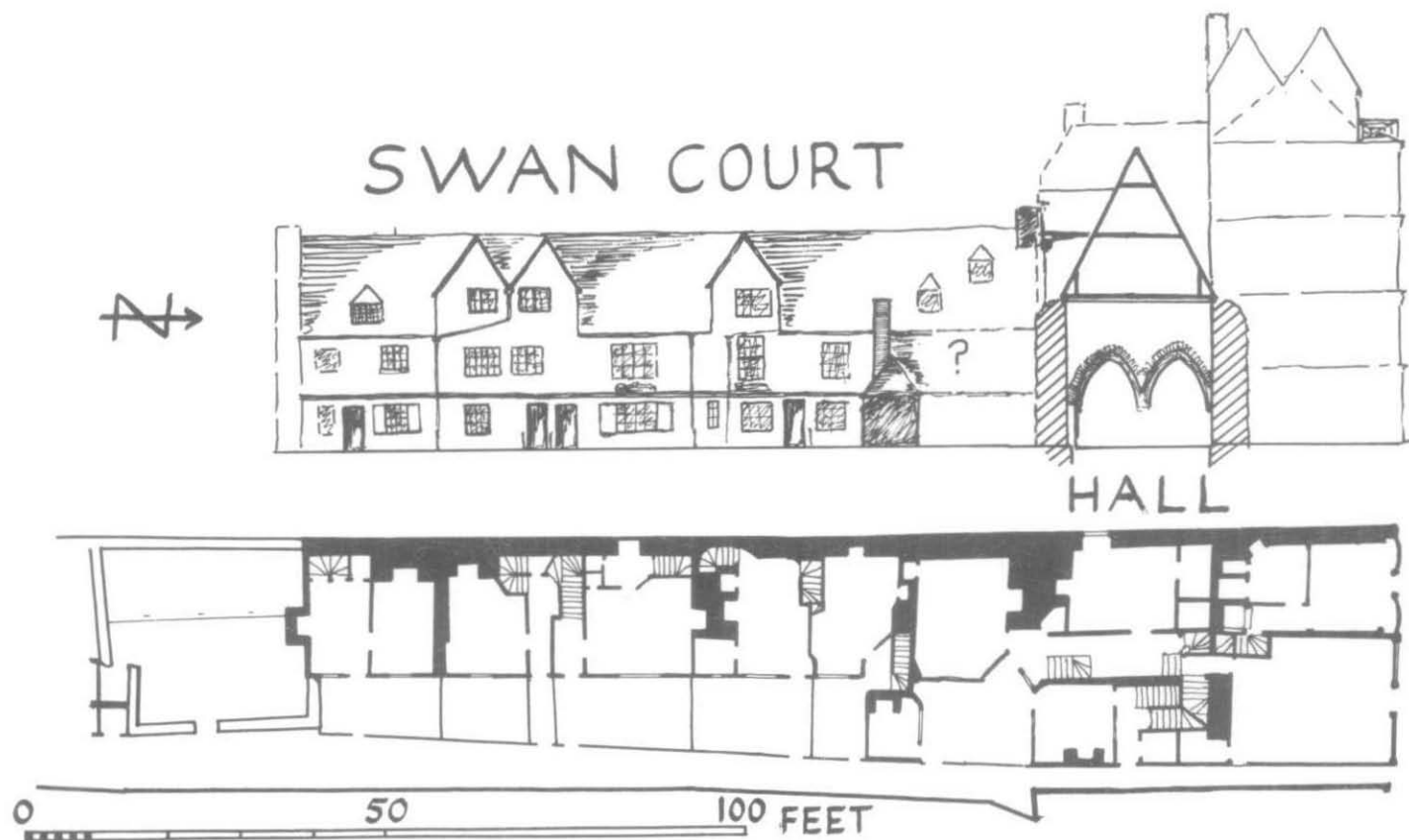


Fig. 21

111-12 High Street : plan in 1814 and reconstructed sectional elevation (author).

*View of ruins only  
Western Boundary.*

*But - Hall,*



Fig. 22

111-12 High Street : general view to north-west during demolition (f. 408).

blocks' (f. 48), a label or hood mould (only surviving in the south arch) and an inner moulded order (only surviving in the north arch). The moulding can be reconstructed from two of Buckler's drawings (Fig. 25) and is clearly visible on Taunt's photograph; the hood-mould had a half-roll with frontal fillet, undercut hollow and small roll, and it terminated in a leaf ornament. The main order was of two large rolls with marked undercutting. The northernmost respond was supported by a corbel, a fragment of which remained. The central respond for both arches was missing, and here Buckler supposed there to have been 'a cluster of pillars with





Fig. 23  
111-12 High Street : west wall of hall showing the first arch found (f. 455).

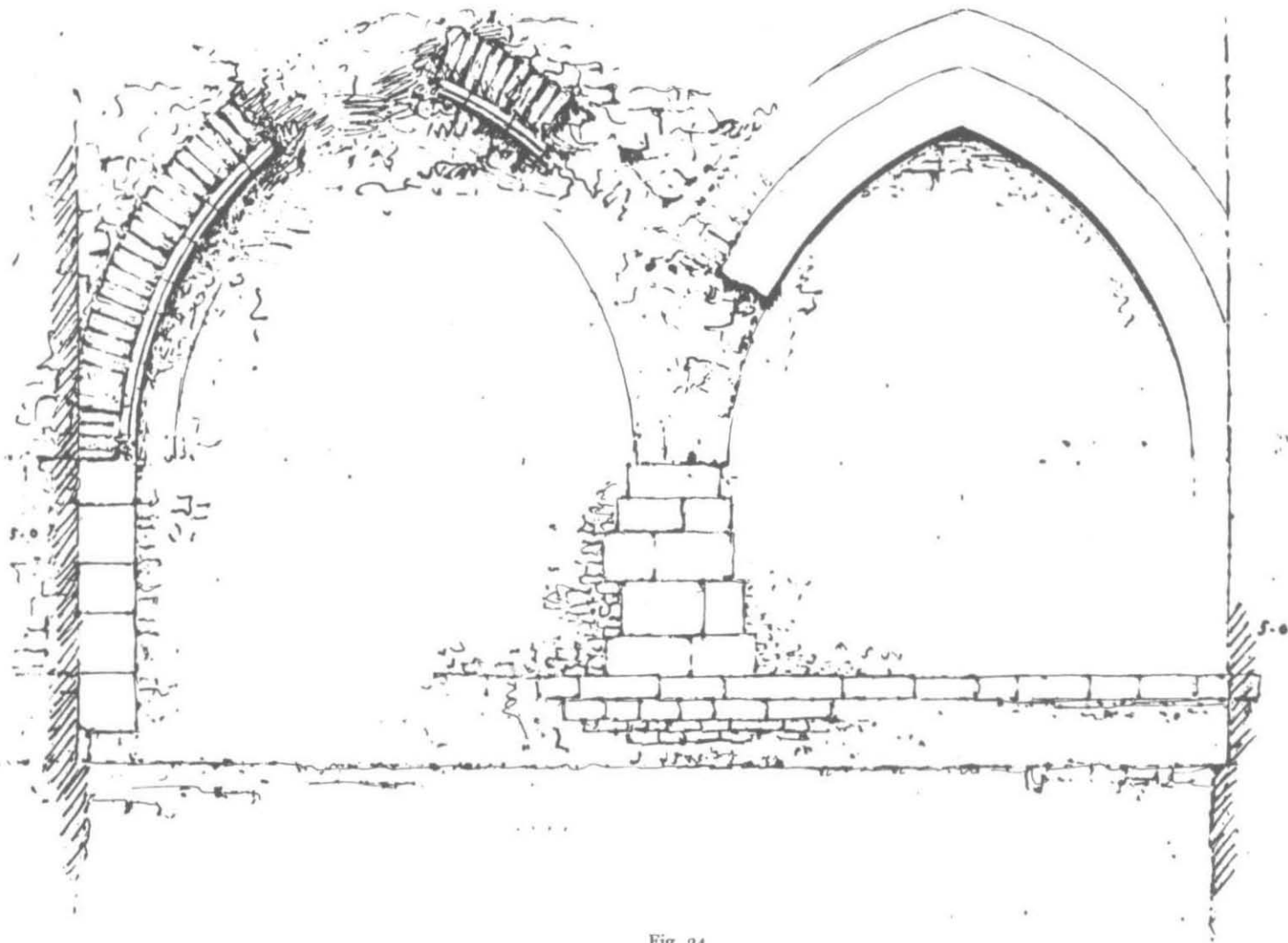
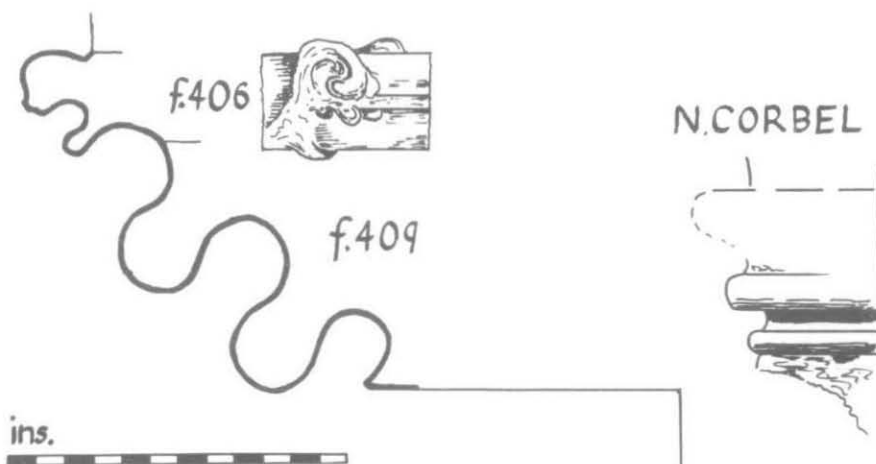
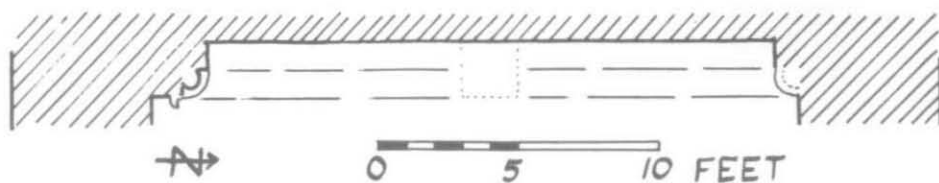


Fig. 24

111-12 High Street : elevation of second arch found in hall, with previous discovery marked in outline (f. 453).



## S. RESPOND

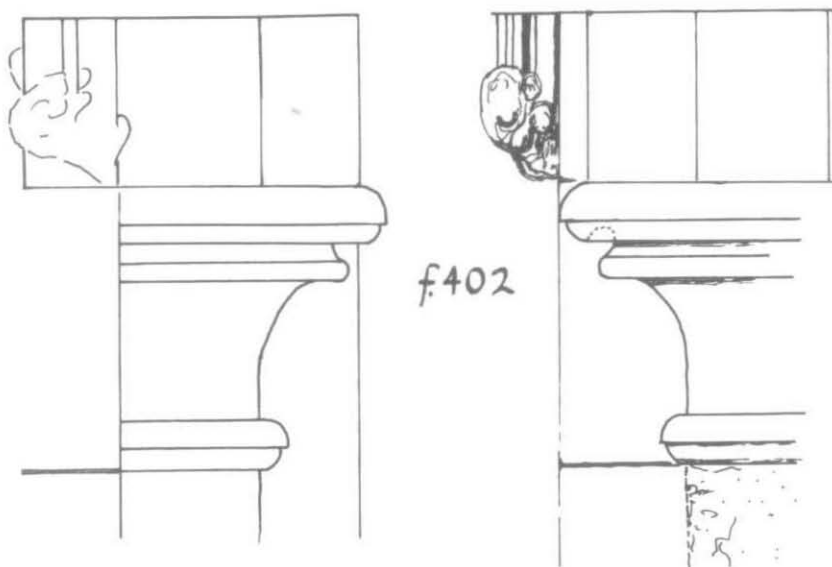


Fig. 25

111-12 High Street : hall arcade : arch moulding, responds and reconstructed plan (author).

capitals and base' (f. 69). Since he imagined that these had been open arches subsequently blocked, he did not accept the ashlar blocks shown in the centre as being original (f. 67-8; Figs. 23, 24), though they and the ashlar course beneath them must in fact have been so and would have given additional support to the predominantly rubble wall. It is highly unlikely that the arches could have been open, standing as they do on an ancient property boundary. The combined springing where the two arches met would have been almost 2 ft. wide, so capitals and pillars would probably have been necessary for support. Only on the south respond was there evidence for the equivalent arrangement at the side, which can be reconstructed from various drawings (Fig. 25). Only 1½ in. of the capital remained, and although Buckler talks of 'pillars, capitals and bases' (f. 69) there can only have been room for one of each. The capital and pillar were integral with the stones of the pier and the capital was plainly moulded, with an undercut scroll and bead for the abacus. No detail of the pillar was recorded, as only its scar remained, and of the base there was nothing left. From the offsets on the side walls it is apparent that the floor level was 6 ft. 4 in. below the springing of the arches (f. 69, Fig. 23). There was also a deep cellar beneath (f. 70). Behind the moulded arches was a plain reveal 11 in. deep, and examination of Taunt's photograph suggests that there might have been remains of the original plaster over the rubble walling.

From these details it seems clear that there was a large blank arcade across the upper end of the hall, probably dating to the late 13th century. Arcading is normally associated with seating arrangements, often in chapels, and is usually on a much smaller scale than here, but is occasionally found as part of the elaboration of the dais end of the hall.<sup>82</sup> A recent discovery in 16-17 St. Paul's Street, Stamford provides an almost exact parallel, which has also been dated to the late 13th century.<sup>83</sup> Here the arcade, built on about the same scale, has two roll-moulded arches supported on corbels. The moulded orders of the two arches combine at the centre into one respond supported on a single corbel. The existence of this other example suggests that these may not have been such unusual features as might be supposed. The historical context of the arches is further discussed below.

Other discoveries in the hall probably do not relate to the period of the arches. Two stone fragments included a single stiff leaf capital with a square abacus and swirling foliage in three clusters (f. 76, 404), and a moulded voussoir with an undercut half roll and fillet (f. 403); there is no indication that they are other than strays and the capital is probably early 13th century. A fireplace, shown in the view of the ruins before final demolition (f. 401) in the south wall towards the west end was also drawn (Fig. 26; cf. 1814 plan). It was of large ashlar blocks, 8 ft. wide and 6 ft. high, with a low pointed arch and plain chamfer all round ending on a simple stop. Although this could conceivably be contemporary with the first building of the stone hall, it is perhaps more likely to have been a late medieval addition. Two details are noted from below ground (Fig. 26). A 'recess in basement of W. Wall' (f. 421) had a flat keystone lintel and an arch behind; it

<sup>82</sup> Wood, *Medieval House*, 229-30, 234, 134-5.

<sup>83</sup> R.C.H.M., *Stamford*, no. 379, Figs. 192-3, Pls. 60, 63.

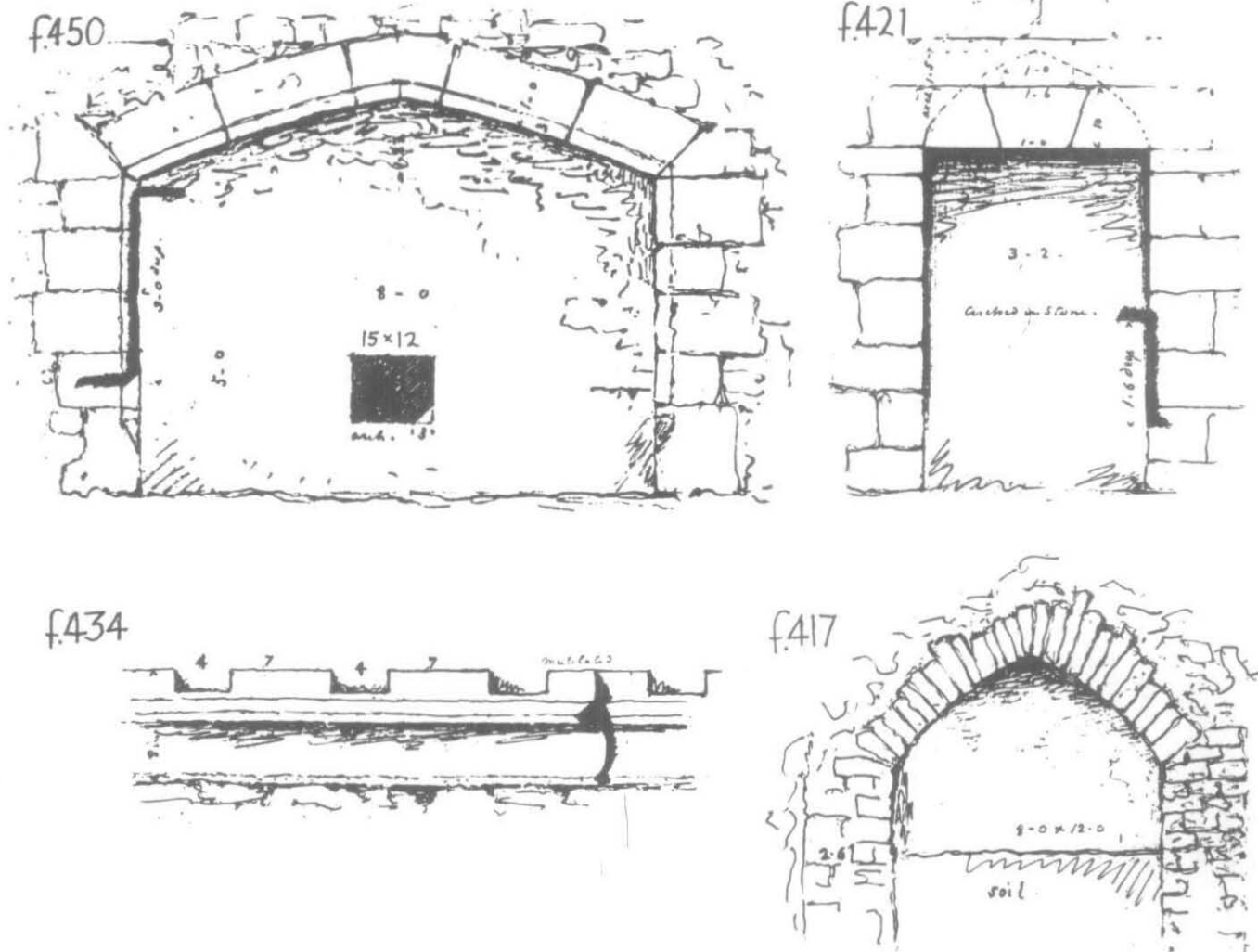


Fig. 26

111-12 High Street : hall fireplace (f. 450) and cornice (f. 434) ; below-ground features (f. 421, 417).

was 3 ft. 2 in. wide  $\times$  1 ft. 6 in. deep and of uncertain use. A 'soil pit' (f. 417) was probably the vault found next to the street, 5 ft. below the pavement (f. 84). It apparently measured 8 ft.  $\times$  12 ft. and was vaulted with rubble voussoirs in a segmental arch. This was perhaps a cesspit or more likely a well-chamber. Buckler is vague about cellars on the site, but notes that the one below the hall 'was sunk four feet deeper in ye ground than ye others, except that of ye first or adjoining room in ye west wing' (f. 70). No measurements are given for the depth of 'ye others'.

High on the west wall above the two arches was an embattled cornice on a level with the wall plates of the roof (Fig. 26). The two westernmost trusses of the roof were drawn (Figs. 22, 23); from the photograph of Swan Court it appears that most of the ancient roof-line survived. The trusses were steeply pitched and stood on a tie resting on wall plates, having ashlar and two collars, the lower of which was supported by a king-post from the tie. The two trusses appear to have been built with timbers of the same size, and no purlins are shown, though there is a hint of a mortice above the lower collar. It is possible that this was a single frame roof (*i.e.* without purlins) or was of crown-post type, its fittings having been removed before Buckler drew them. In this case it could have been contemporary with the arches; but if on the other hand it was associated with the embattled wall plate it would have been much later, probably 15th century.

Swan Court is only briefly described by Buckler (f. 79). Part of it at least had stone walls and cellars. The one next the hall has already been mentioned, and there may have been more, but they do not seem to have extended along to the south end. Two 16th- or 17th-century fireplaces were drawn which may come from here (f. 441-2). The elevation along the court (Fig. 21) is based solely on Taunt's photograph and the 1814 plan. Finally there is the street front, where Buckler found little to 'enhance ye novelty or interest of ye present inquiry' (f. 71).

#### *Documentary History*<sup>84</sup>

The ownership of this tenement is fairly well established. It was held by William Spicer the younger from about 1260 and then by his son Walter of Oxford until he sold it in 1333. William Spicer<sup>85</sup> was almost certainly the son of William of Winchester, Spicer, who may have come to Oxford from Winchester with his brother Alfred, and who first appears in 1232-3, was bailiff in 1238-9 and dead by 1264-5. William the younger, as he was known in his father's lifetime, appears in 1254-5, was bailiff in 1263-4, mayor in 1283-4 and 1287-8, and dead by 1297, when we are told that this was the tenement in which he formerly dwelt. It appears amongst his extensive holdings in the Hundred Rolls of 1279, which include what must have been his shop in the Spicery in All Saints parish. Walter, one of William's seven sons, is an interesting case of a townsman going to the University. When he became rector of St. Martin's Carfax in 1315 Walter was already an M.A. and was granted licence to study for a further period. Whether this lasted

<sup>84</sup> Material mostly from Salter's *Survey* and *O.C.R.* Biographical notes from Oxford cartularies and A. B. Emden, *Biographical Register of Oxford University*.

<sup>85</sup> It seems safe to equate le Spicer, Espicer, Apothecarius, Juvene (junior) and variant spellings with the same person.

longer than the four years he was allowed is not known, but he stayed on in the city church for over twenty years.

The name St. Thomas' Hall first occurs in 1333 when Walter granted it away; two years later it was referred to as the 'great tenement of Walter le Spicer'. Did he live there, or was it kept on with his few other holdings to provide an income additional to one of the richest livings in the town? It is conceivable that it was briefly established as an academic hall, a parallel to Tackley's Inn and its parson founder. Just as likely it was one of the places which had a 'hall' name for some other reason, perhaps because its large stone hall was a prominent feature. What is important is that given the widest date-bracket 'around 1300' for the stone hall with its pretentious blank arcading, it is likely to have been built by William the Spicer or his son Walter of Oxford (*alias Spicer*), and the social standing of each of them provides a context for its ostentatious design.

#### CONCLUSION

At this point it may be useful to summarize the principal discoveries made by Buckler, and the interpretation that can be put upon them.

*Tackley's Inn*: Behind the surviving cellar and hall was a stone range along the west side of the yard. It may have been of 15th/16th-century date and was probably part of Buckley's Hall. On the east side of the yard was a detached kitchen, probably belonging to the Tavern, which formed the other half of this tenement.

*108 High Street*: The western (upper) end of the stone hall alone remained, with a fireplace in it, perhaps contemporary with the hall. A twin-gabled and jettied timber building on the street front was not fully recorded, but seems to have been of late 15th- or early 16th-century date.

*109-10 High Street/The Swan Inn*: A stone hall which took up less than the width of the plot retained a fragment of its roof, a window, and a door leading in from what may have been the side-entry from the street. A prestigious timber-framed building onto the street survived with many original details. Both these parts can be attributed to the work of Nicholas the Carpenter and others, who built the inn for Oriel College in 1469-72.

*111-12 High Street/St. Thomas' Hall*: The upper end of the stone hall included fragments of a 13th-century blank arcade, though the roof trusses and adjacent fireplace seem to have been of later date. The original hall may have been built by one of the Spicer family, *c.* 1300. A close parallel has recently been found at Stamford.

All these were of the same 'double-range' plan as Tackley's Inn, with halls parallel to the street, but set back from it behind a domestic or commercial front.<sup>86</sup> The street ranges had all been rebuilt in the late medieval period, and the halls converted by being floored-in. These two processes, which need not have been contemporary, created the standard post-medieval 'double pile' house.<sup>87</sup> This being by means of adaptation rather than rebuilding *de novo* led to the preservation of medieval features.

<sup>86</sup> Pantin, *op. cit.* note 46 (1962-3), 203, 217f.

<sup>87</sup> *Op. cit.* note 68, 288-9.



Three more medieval houses are an important addition to the knowledge of domestic architecture in Oxford and of town houses in general ; it is entirely due to the extraordinary zeal of J. C. Buckler that we know about them at all. His work demonstrates once again not only the importance of demolition recording, but also the amount of information that can be found in the library and archive room. There are still many topographical sources that can be used to reconstruct the appearance of Oxford streets *c.* 1800, and provide descriptions of houses, with information on their owners, for a much earlier period.

A glance at the pre-demolition photograph (Pl. V) would hardly suggest the wealth of medieval remains standing behind the facades, and few would look twice at the plain front of the Abbey National Building Society, behind which stand the last vestiges of Tackley's Inn. But as 'ancient buildings are too frequently found to be in the wrong places' (f. 55), it is still necessary to examine all threatened houses, however unassuming their exteriors, and to record important features in the greatest detail. Forty years on, Pantin's lament is still true, that 'the history of minor domestic architecture in this country, at any rate in the towns, is largely a martyrology'.<sup>88</sup>

*The Society acknowledges with gratitude a grant from the W. A. Pantin Trust for the publication of this paper.*

<sup>88</sup> W. A. Pantin, 'The Recently Demolished Houses in Broad Street, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, II (1937), 200.



Houses on the site of King Edward Street, demolished in 1872.

OXONIENSIA, XLIII (1978)

BUCKLER

PLATE VII



111-12 High Street : northern half of arcade in hall.

OXONIENSIA, XLIII (1978)

Ph. : *Henry Taunt for O.A.H.S.*  
BUCKLER