The Landmark Trust

PURTON GREEN

History Album
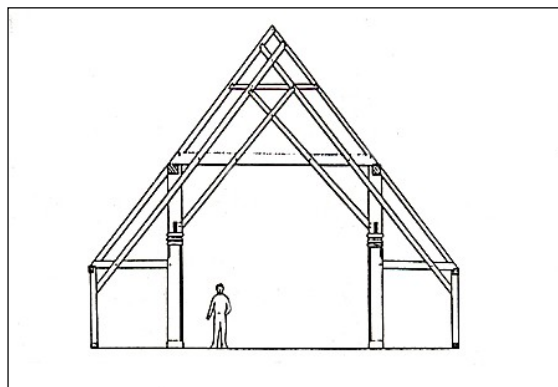
By Julia Abel Smith and Charlotte Haslam, 1992

Re-presented in 2015

BASIC DETAILS

Purton Green built	**13th Century**
Acquired by Landmark	**1969**
Architect:	**John Warren**
Architectural Consultant:	**R.T. Mason**
Builder:	**Clement Theobald and Sons of Long Melford**
Work completed	**1971**

Contents

Purton Green

Summary

Purton Green was one of Landmark's earliest acquisitions and one of which we have always been especially proud. Not only is it the sole survivor from one of Suffolk's many lost villages, it is an extremely rare survival in itself – the core of a mid-thirteenth century timber-framed hall-house. Around this, successive phases of repair and alteration have been carried out - most recently our own in 1970-71.

It was the discovery in 1970 of the arcade at the low end of the hall that puts the building among the rarest of the rare. The hall itself is dated to the 13th century chiefly by the two cross frames which support the roof with scissor-braces (or more correctly passing-braces). They were a form widely used in manorial houses between 1150 and 1300 and recorded examples, although growing in number, are still few. This is not just because of their great age, but also because around 1300, this construction method was superseded by arch-bracing and crown-posts both on grounds of taste and of greater strength. Most early halls were rebuilt, or were altered in one way or another, and survive only as fragments, as here.

To summarise what happened at Purton Green, the walls and north end were rebuilt soon after 1400, and the south end was rebuilt about 1600. At the same time, as in nearly all small medieval halls, an upper floor and chimney stack were inserted, and all signs of early origin vanished from sight for over 300 years. In 1970, these later additions were removed to reinstate the open hall. But it is one of the joys of visiting such a building to decode it for oneself, and so the main phases are given in more detail below.

About 1270-80

A new house built, possibly by Walter de Priditon, Steward to the Earl Marshal, who held the manor of Priditon or Purton Hall in 1275. The house was timber- framed, with a thatched roof, its central open hall about thirty feet long. An open truss, strengthened by passing-braces, stood half way along to support the roof. The rafters continued beyond the main posts to cover "aisles" on either side, making the hall nearly as wide as it was long. An open hearth stood in the southern half, and smoke escaped through vents at one or both ends of the main ridge of the roof. A second, "closed", truss at the north or low end of the hall formed a partition between it and a probably two-storey end bay, with pantry and buttery on the ground floor and sleeping space above. In the lower part of this partition was an arcade of six arches, three blind and three with doors. At the south or high end of the hall there may also have been private rooms for the owner's family, but evidence for them has been lost in later rebuilding.

1400-50 Outer walls rebuilt some two feet inside the old for greater height, reducing the width of the aisles, and of the outer arches of the arcade in the low end partition. North end upper floor rebuilt and extended with a jetty, and roof altered to give more headroom. Partition between low end and hall plastered, arcade mutilated and covered up, a stair built in one of the central doorways, and a plaster flue introduced above the collar to take smoke from the hall.

About 1600 Purton Green now a farmhouse, if a prosperous one. Floor inserted into the open hall, and a chimney built just south of the central truss. A new front door enters a

lobby beside the chimneystack. The entire south end rebuilt, with a parlour on the ground floor, which had a projecting oriel window. As at the north end, the first floor area was increased by means of a jetty.

18th century and later From before 1780 until the late 19th century Purton Green Farm was occupied by the Pratts. Gradual updating of interior, walls replastered, new fireplaces, front doorcase and door, windows, etc. Chimney added north end. Wing added on north-east corner is not shown on the 1840 Tithe Map, so is presumably later.

Restoration

When we began work we had no indication from the outside of the importance of the house, or its early origin. The exterior walls had been plastered over, covering the timbers, and the inside divided up. The first job was to unpick the fabric leaving only the timber frame. Discoveries quickly followed, of which the most exciting was the evidence in the low end partition for the arcade. Another was the hearth, which proved the existence of the second bay of the hall.

The front wall of the hall was so decayed, it had to be rebuilt entirely. Elsewhere, the frame was carefully repaired, reusing as much of the old timber as possible, and only using new to replace missing sections in such a way which permitted them to always be identified as replacements.

The low end itself assumed its present form in the later Middle Ages (although the base of an 18th-century chimney has been left as evidence of later changes). So little evidence exists for its earliest arrangement, that any reconstruction - of a stair on the east side for example - would have been entirely conjectural. The late medieval stair was to be rebuilt, therefore, using timber salvaged from the bell-frame of Sudbury church. This decision, in turn, had implications for the repair of the arcade.

The evidence was there for the arcade's complete reinstatement. However, it had been severely mutilated, and the doorways altered, in one case to allow headroom for the same stair that was now to be rebuilt. The solution was to reinstate the three arches which we knew to have been blank giving the posts their capitals, and restoring the plank infill; and to leave the doors in their altered condition.

The hall as found consisted of just one bay. Removal of floor and chimney stack allowed the surviving 13th-century structure to be seen complete, with the central truss free-standing.

Wherever possible, materials salvaged from the building were re-used. So the wall between hall and south end is built of bricks from the chimney stack. In the roof, smoke-blackened (therefore medieval or Tudor) thatching spars, found reused in various parts of the roof, were reused again. Window mullions found in the 19th century stair were used for a new window in the south-east corner of the hall.

The new partitions, and stair, make no pretence to be other than what they are, additions of 1971. And the open hall still plays its part in the life of those who stay here, as a space to cross, to hold feasts in, or - as in the past - as a dry place to play.

Introduction

> 'Every researcher looks forward to the excitement of discovering the heavy soot-encrusted timbers of the roof of an open hall hidden away in the attic of a much altered farmhouse.' [1]

This is precisely what happened at Purton Green Farm. In 1965, the year of the foundation of the Landmark Trust, George and Sylvia Colman investigated a derelict and apparently ordinary farmhouse, and discovered that it contained an extraordinarily early medieval hall. They published an account of the building in *The Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* and this effectively drew attention to its plight.

Having received a copy of the Colman report, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments wrote to Sir John Smith asking him if it was the sort of building that the Landmark Trust would be interested in and he visited the site in the Autumn of 1967. The next year he met Mr Slater, the owner of Purton Green, and the Trust bought the freehold in 1969 for £500. Work began in August, 1970 and at the end of 1971 the first Landmark visitors moved in.

In the 1971 Handbook, John Smith described Purton Green as 'one of the most important buildings owned by the Landmark Trust - a mid-thirteenth century timber-framed hall-house.' More pedantically, what we have here is in fact the core of that first house, within and around which successive phases of repair and alteration have been carried out - most recently in 1970-71. Purton Green is none the less important for that, and the discovery in 1970 of the arcade at the low end of the hall puts it among the rarest of the rare.

The hall itself can be dated to the 13th century chiefly by the two cross frames. These support the roof by means of what are known as scissor-braces (or more correctly passing-braces), from their criss-cross form, a method widely used in manorial houses between 1150 and 1300. Recorded examples of this type of construction, although growing in number, are still few. This is due not only to their great age, but also to the fact that around 1300, the method was superseded by arch-bracing and crown-posts both on grounds of taste, and of greater strength. Most early halls were rebuilt, or were altered in one way or another, and survive only as fragments, as here.

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[1] Richard Harris, *Discovering Timber-Framed Buildings,* 1978

Purton Green in 1969, before restoration.

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When Purton Green was opened in 1971, visitors were provided with an architectural account based on the new understanding of the building and its development as revealed during the restoration; and some details of the restoration itself, along with photographs. These notes were written by the architect for the restoration, John Warren, with help from R.T. Mason, an authority on timber buildings who acted as consultant for the work. Since then, some visitors have asked for a less technical description and history. One or two enterprising spirits took this a stage further. Wanting to find out about the previous inhabitants of the house, and a little of their way of life, they travelled to the West Suffolk Record Office at Raingate Street, in Bury St. Edmunds, and wrote up their findings in the Log Books or left them in a binder in the desk.

Apart from these researches, one or two specialists have since visited and made new observations in the light of the growing knowledge of early timber-framed houses. Most importantly, John Walker has provided the probable solution to the tricky question of the building's appearance before the rebuilding of its outer walls in the 15th century. For those who wish to understand the house fully, his account with drawings, is placed in a separate Reader Volume along with the Colmans' original report. Although now outdated in several respects, that first account is still useful and illuminating. Moreover, without it the restoration might never have taken place.

This new album of 1992, written 21 years after the restoration of the building, attempts to bring together all this available material in a manner that is comprehensible to the interested layman, while at the same time providing the building with more of a background than was previously the case.

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About 1600 Purton Green now a farmhouse, if a prosperous one. Floor inserted into the open hall, and a chimney built just south of the central truss. A new front door enters a lobby beside the chimneystack. The entire south end rebuilt, with a parlour on the ground floor, which had a projecting oriel window. As at the north end, the first floor area was increased by means of a jetty.

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1970-71 Isolated and uninhabited for many years, Purton Green was derelict and decayed when bought by the Landmark Trust in 1969. Later additions were stripped away to reveal the early structure, which was then repaired, and missing elements replaced where structurally or visually necessary. New accommodation was fitted into the Elizabethan south end, leaving the earliest parts of the building minimally restored, and open for inspection and summer use. The architect was John Warren of APP in Horsham, Sussex, while R.T. Mason acted as consultant. The builders were Clement Theobald and Sons of Long Melford, with John Partridge as foreman carpenter.

An Account of the Building

The Early Hall

It was probably late in the reign of Henry III (1216-1272), or early in that of his son Edward I (1272-1307) that the first house at Purton Green was built. Its durability and good construction suggest that the original owner was a person of some prosperity. Almost all such houses were swept away over the next two centuries, as new methods of construction became widespread. The survival of even a fragment of an earlier house is therefore a great rarity.

It takes an effort of the imagination to picture the house as it was before 1300, particularly from outside. The building, which runs from north to south, was some four or five feet wider than it is today, though probably of roughly the same length. Most noticeably, the roof would have swept down to within six or seven feet of the ground. At the north end, at least, the slope of the roof would have

ended short of the main ridge, leaving an open gablet for smoke to escape, probably through some sort of protective hood. The walls were probably of closely spaced (close-studded) timbers, not unlike the existing walls. The doors were in the same positions as now, just further out.

Once inside, the early house becomes easier to understand, because the room you enter has returned to something like its earliest state, in all but actual measurements. This being a hall-house, at its centre both physically and socially was the hall in which you are standing, open to the roof as now. This was the main living area. At the north end of the building was a low or service area and across the hall at the other end there was, very probably, a high or private family end. The low end almost certainly had a first floor, and no doubt the high end did too. The main door to the house was thus at the low end of the hall, with the service area immediately to the left and another outside door directly opposite on the other side of the house. Immediately noticeable are the two columns or posts near the present south end of the hall, with similar posts buried in the partition at the northern end. These are arcade posts, because Purton Green was what is called an aisled hall. Roof trusses (the heavy A-shaped structures supporting the roof) can only span a limited width. If a wider floor area is wanted, extra space can only be gained outside the posts that support the trusses, thereby adding two side aisles flanking the central area, or nave.

The length of a hall-house was divided by its roof trusses into bays. In the hall itself, there were generally two such bays, of roughly equal length, divided by a central open truss. This was once the case here, too: the freestanding arcade posts were once at the centre of the hall, which ran on some ten feet beyond the modern brick end wall. Although reduced now to one and a bit bays, the existence of two full bays is proved by two features. Firstly, in 1970, the original open hearth was discovered under the floor of the present sitting room, where it can still be seen under a trap door in front of the fireplace. This is exactly where one would expect the original fire to have been in a two bay hall, in the centre of

the high end. Secondly, on every truss in a timber-framed building there is an upper and a lower face. The upper was the 'show' face and was therefore more highly finished. Here this is on the southern side, as you would expect if the usual custom was followed of the master of the house and his family taking their meals at the high end of the hall. The northern bay is 15 feet long, and the southern would have been at least as long, or possibly longer. The length of the hall as a whole was therefore 30 feet or more. Moreover, on either side of the arcade posts, which are also 15 feet apart in width, the aisles extended for about another 6ft. 6in. so that the hall as a whole measured very nearly 30 foot square, and was of considerable size and dignity therefore.

Proof that the original walls were set wider than the existing ones can be found by looking at the low end partition immediately beside the west door. The middle rail has been literally cut off on the outer wall side, leaving the arch below unequal. Equally, the far right hand opening in this frame is much narrower than the four central openings.

John Warren and R.T. Mason supposed that the original outer wall had been only just outside the existing one, allowing for one complete arch. In 1970, only a few timber-framed aisled buildings had been found and studied, however, so they were very much working in the dark. As John Walker admits in his account, there are still four possible interpretations. However, he points out the disadvantages of the first suggested position, and puts forward what is a more likely theory, which allows the aisle a more normal width and design.

How the hall was lit, we cannot now know for sure, but the windows are likely to have been at the high end of the hall. It is believed that some aisled halls had an oriel, or tall dormer window, rising through the eaves. The level of light in the main body of the hall today is probably close to what it was originally, though possibly a little on the dark side.
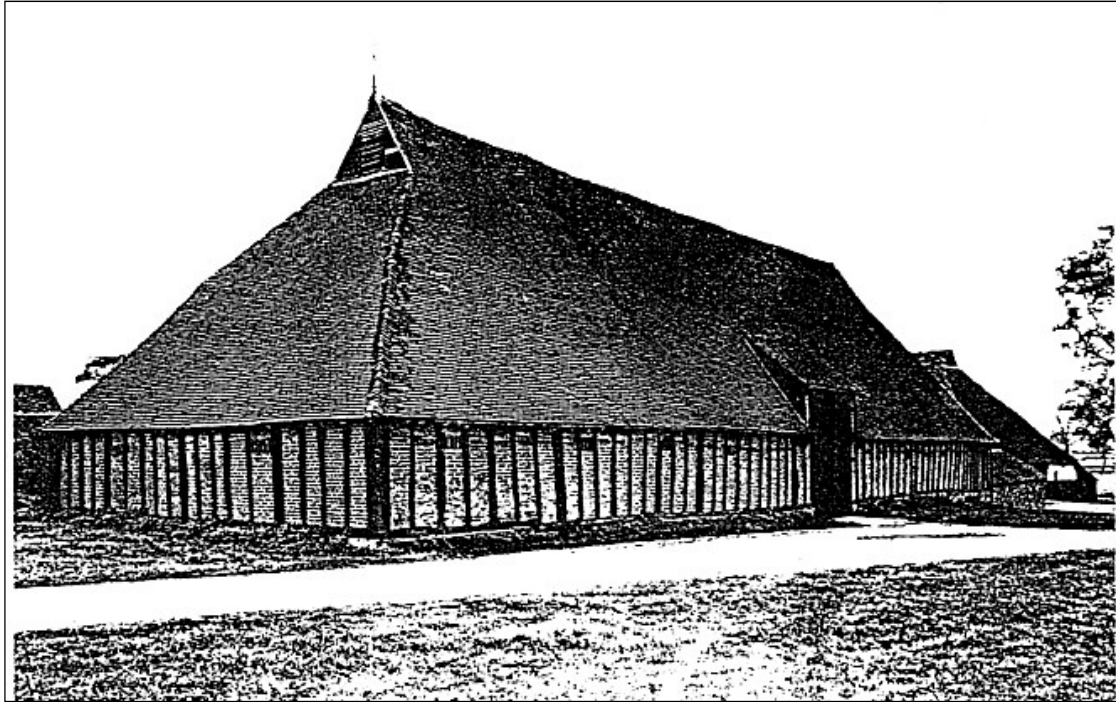
Wheat Barn, Cressing Temple, Essex, c 1255. Purton Green probably looked like a smaller version of this, with gabled roof, low eaves and close-studded walls of the aisles that surround the main structure.
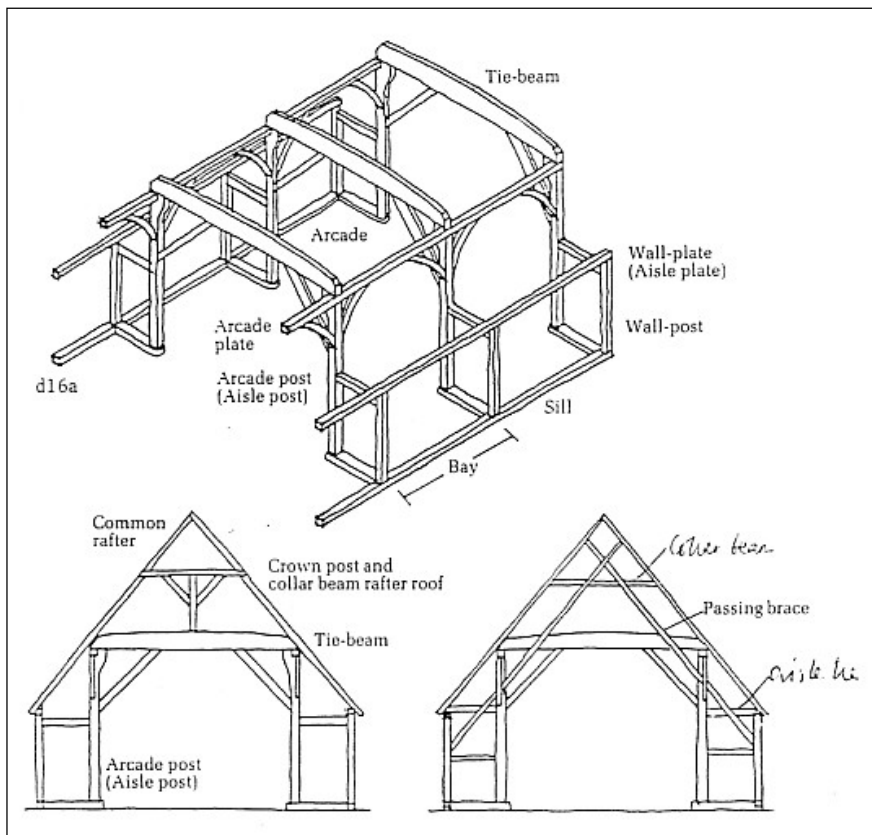
Different types of aisled building and the names of their parts, from *Timber Buildings in Britain,* R.W. Brunskill.

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Figure 1 Perspective of remaining part of aisled hall at Purton Green

J L Walker

later purlin

position of end
rafter if at
same angle
as rest
of roof

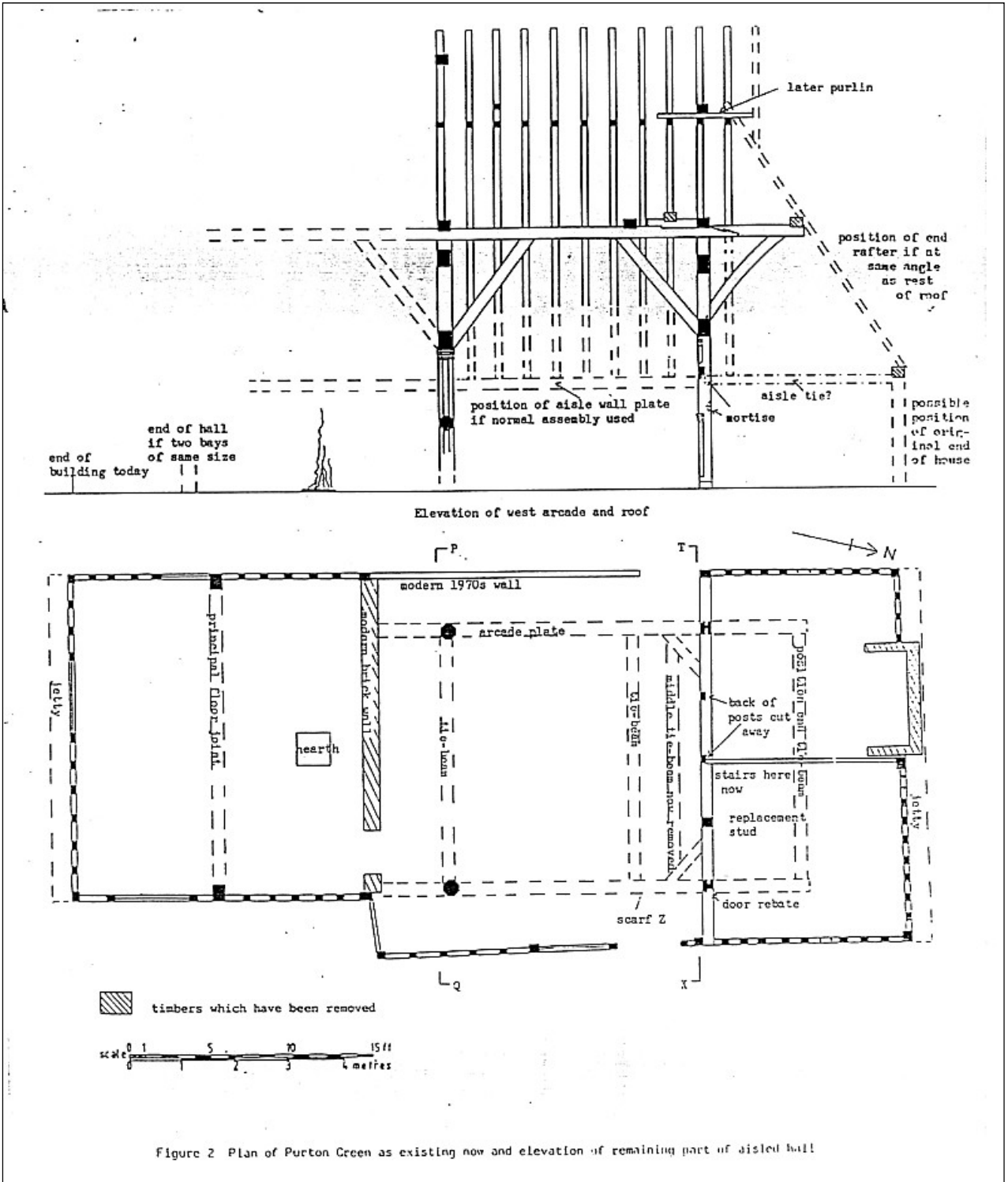position of aisle wall plate
if normal assembly used

aisle tie?

mortise

possible
position
of orig-
inal end
of house

end of hall
if two bays
of same size

end of
building today

Elevation of west arcade and roof

P

T

N

modern 1970s wall

arcade plate

principal floor joist

modern brick wall

hearth

tie-beam

middle tie-beam now removed

post 1600

post 1600

back of
posts cut
away

stairs here
now

replacement
stud

Jetty

Jetty

scarf Z

door rebate

Q

X

▨ timbers which have been removed

scale 0 1   5   10   15 ft
       0   1   2   3   4 metres

Figure 2 Plan of Purton Green as existing now and elevation of remaining part of aisled hall

J L Walker

timbers which have been removed

scale

Figure 3 Elevation of south side of central truss of aisled hall

mortise

back of
post at a   A   B   T C

timbers which have been removed

scale

openings d originally boarded with planks .
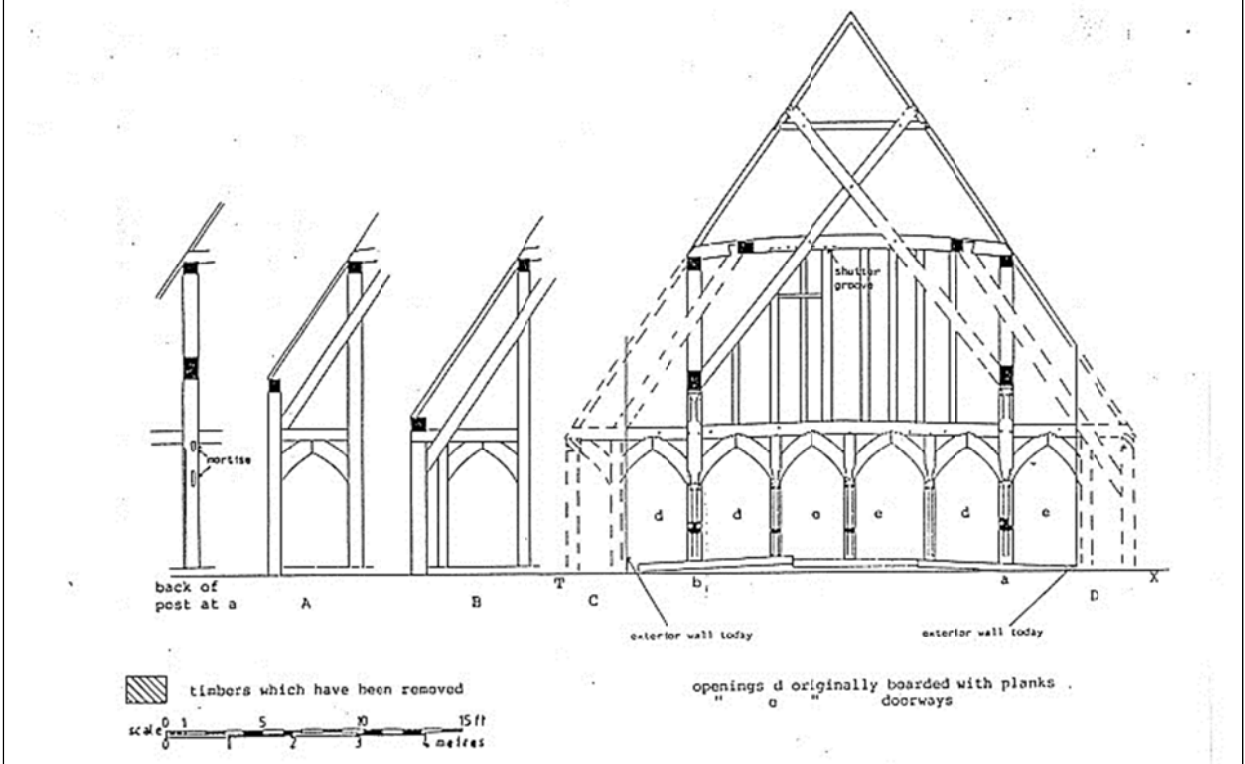   "   o   "   doorways

Figure 4 Low end partition: A to D show four possible positions of side walls to original aisled hall

J L Walker

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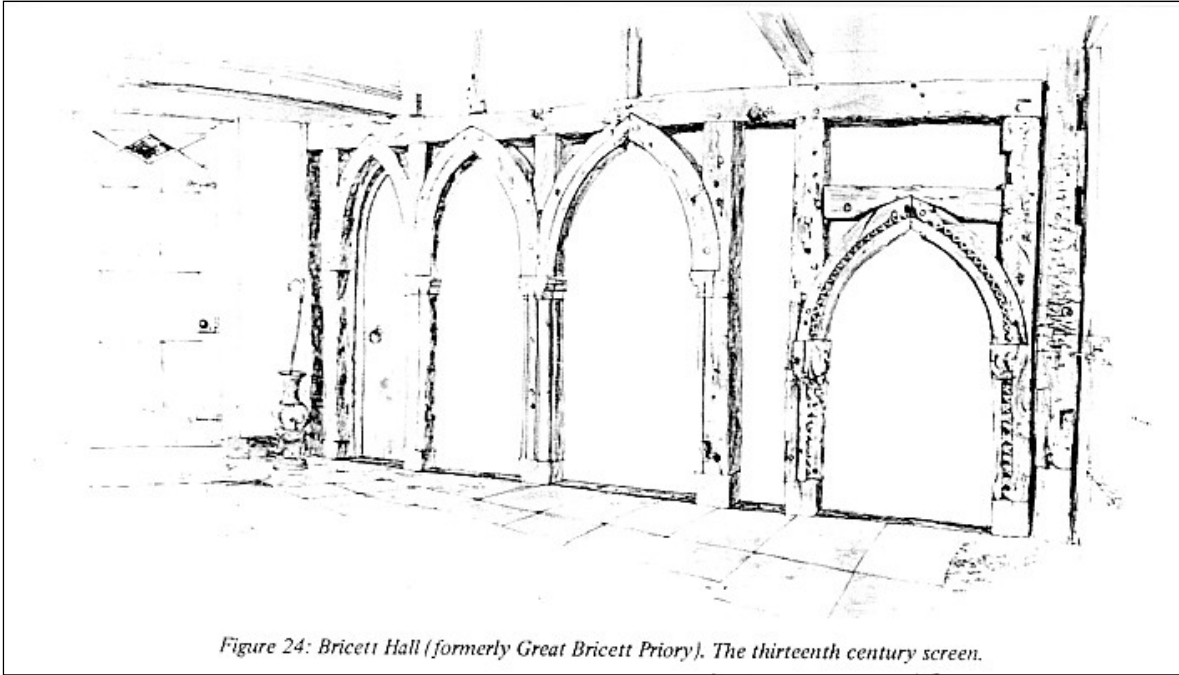
Figure 24: Bricett Hall (formerly Great Bricett Priory). The thirteenth century screen.

From Suffolk Houses, Eric Sandon
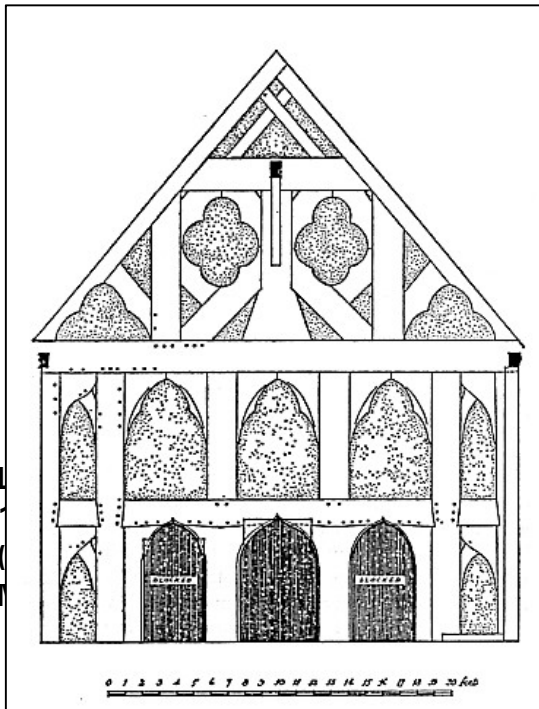
Low, or service, end partition of early 14th-century Baguley Hall, Cheshire (from *The English Medieval House*, Margaret Wood, 1965)
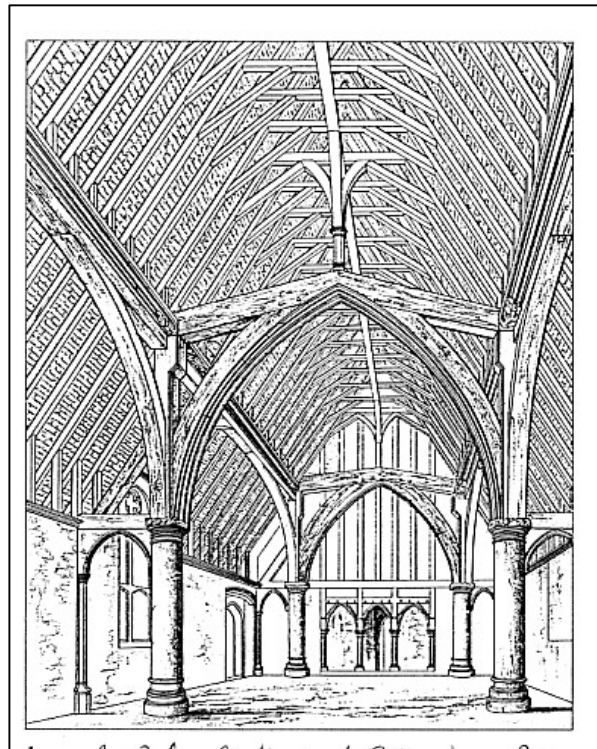
Nunstead Court, Kent, looking towards low end of the stone-walled aisled hall, before alterations of c 1837 (*Domestic Architecture in England,* Parker, 1853)

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Decoration of the hall

That Purton Green was, when built, a house of some importance is born out by the quality of detail within it. This can be seen in the carved capitals of the arcade posts, and by the complex patterns formed by the passing-braces, of which Philip Aitkens in *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk* (1989) has written in general that

> 'the decorative value of these passing-braces was used to the full: visitors to high quality halls … would have been greatly impressed by soaring geometrical patterns of chevrons and saltires.'

Even more impressive, perhaps, was the ornamental treatment of the north end partition.

Within the low end closed truss (the area between the timbers being filled in rather than left open like the central truss) evidence was found in 1970 for an arcade with six arches of equal height. The elegance and sophistication of this design, which has been partially restored (and is reconstructed fully in drawings of the hall by Messrs Warren and Mason and John Walker), was obviously meant to be enjoyed from the high end of the hall.

No other arcade quite like it has yet been found in an aisled hall, though at Great Bricett Priory in Suffolk there is a reduced version, which Pevsner described as being of the 'highest interest', and dateable by dogtooth carving to before 1300. Highly decorative low end partitions are found in halls in the north-west, however, such as Baguley in Cheshire; and at Nurstead Court, Kent, a very grand aisled hall, three doors were once flanked by two blind arches.

The Purton Green arcade might once have been even more ornate than it is now, with its octagonal posts and capitals. In John Warren's words:

> The halved joints on the posts and beam provide evidence of the Gothic arcading, which has been partially restored with plain surfaces on the arch members, although the originals may have been decorated with mouldings. Careful examination of the posts and beam shows the original chamfer and even the incised curve to which it was set.

Three of the arches were doorways, two in the middle and one next to the east wall. On the back of the east arcade post, at least, is a rebate for a door, which opened inwards. The backs of the other posts have been cut away, but the worn sole plate, forming the doorstep, provides evidence of their long use. A groove in the same sole plate, and in the rail above showed that the other three arches had plank infill, as now.

It is more than likely that these surfaces, and others in the hall as well, had painted decoration. More and more evidence is being collected to show that such buildings were not left in the plain colours of wood or stone and plaster that we have become used to, but were richly coloured in a variety of naturally available shades.

At the ends of the hall

The three doors in the low end arcade certainly did not open into fresh air, but because the area beyond has been rebuilt, it is hard to say exactly where each of them led. It is likely that the two central doors opened into two service rooms, of which there were normally two in a house of this size by the 13th century: a buttery for beer, bread and butter and a pantry for bacon, and dry household stores, such as meal and flour. It was common for these service doors to be arranged symmetrically, partly for ceremonial reasons, so that the servants bringing food into the hall could form a procession.

The third door is in the most likely position, too, for a stair to the original upper floor of the low end bay. However, you would not in that case expect the door to have opened inwards - the stair would have had to be set well back, or be little more than a ladder. It is possible that there was in fact no upper floor, as in some other early hall-houses. This door might have opened into a passage which led via a door in the north end to a detached kitchen building. Such 'outside' kitchens were common, because of the risk of fire, and would have been one of a whole complex of lesser buildings which clustered round the main hall. Again, examples

have been found in early medieval halls where a third door was definitely for a kitchen passage.

Assuming that there was a first floor, this would have provided sleeping space for members of the household. The room would have been smaller than it is now. When you are in it you can see the ends of the arcade plates, which run the length of the building along the top of the arcade posts, ending about six feet beyond the closed truss. The two ends of these plates were joined by a tie beam. This, in turn, supported the rafters of the hipped end gable of the roof, which sloped up from floor level to the collar or upper cross-beam joining the pair of rafters immediately north of the closed truss.

It was thought that there had in the earliest stage been no partition between the first floor and the main body of the hall. This was because there is smoke blackening from the open hall fire on the pair of original rafters directly north of the truss, and on the underside of the tie-beam and collar. However, John Walker suggests that there was a plank partition which distorted, allowing smoke to seep through the gaps.

We know nothing of the original high end of this building, though if there was a two-storey bay at the low end of the hall, there would surely have been a similar bay at the high end. There might even have been a cross-wing. There would have been two rooms, one downstairs for storing the owner's valuables, and above it a general bedroom and social area for the family. The concept of separate bedrooms and living rooms was unknown in the 13th century.

Discovery of the mutilated low end arcade in 1970.

Close up of arcade, in which the mortices for the arcade pieces can be seen.

The first rebuilding

In the first half of the 15th century a major rebuilding of the outer walls took place, giving the northern half of the house its present appearance. There were probably two reasons for this. The first is that by 1400, narrower halls, with tall side walls and large windows, were more popular and fashionable. The passing-braced truss had long been abandoned in favour of the arch-brace and crown post, which gave better longitudinal support.

The aisled hall, with its low eaves, was poorly lit in comparison. The owners of Purton Green may not have wanted to go to the expense of a total rebuilding, but by moving the side walls further in, they could gain some of the advantages of the later halls: the new walls were taller, and larger windows could be inserted, such as that surviving in the east wall, discovered under the plaster in 1970 complete with mullions and with a groove for a sliding shutter above it.

Another reason was purely structural. The walls of the first house rested on a number of huge timbers laid directly on the ground, with no protection from damp. Over the years these would have rotted, putting great strain on the outer walls and the trusses. The deflection of the sole plate in the low end partition, which is some four inches lower at its outer ends than in the centre, is evidence of this settlement.

The new walls were more prudently built on a brick plinth, and John Warren found evidence that they were built up inside the old ones, so that the roof was already supported when these were removed. This lies in the fact that the middle rail of the partition 'remains projecting through the wall where it was sawn off. Had the outer wall first been removed it would have been convenient to cut the plate short and build the wall past it.'

Late medieval window uncovered in east wall of hall.

Late medieval smoke blackened plaster in low end. Closed truss found in roof space above first floor ceiling.

The lower part of the north, or end, wall seems to have been rebuilt pretty nearly where the old wall was, but the opportunity was taken to extend the first floor by means of a jetty or overhang, and the floor joists were rearranged to fit. The upper room, instead of lying under the sloping roof, now had four upright walls. The early window in the north wall was found under the plaster. At the same time the roof hip was pushed out by the insertion of two further pairs of rafters.

In the closed truss, the gothic arcade was removed - perhaps it had been damaged by settlement - and the partition either panelled or plastered. A new stair was built in one of the central doorways, where the present stair is. The earlier plank partition in the upper part of the closed truss was replaced in plaster. The section between the tie beam and collar survives, with its heavy smoke-blackening on the hall side, which dates it to the time when there was still an open fire in the hall. The lower part was later replaced with the existing rather poor quality stud wall.

Above the collar beam, in the apex of the truss, a wattle and daub flue was introduced, so that the upper chamber did not fill with smoke. There may have been a greater volume of smoke in the hall by now, because in 1970 traces were found of a second hearth, perhaps intended for cooking, sited towards the east side of the northern bay of the hall.

Other possible alterations in the hall at this period are shrouded in mystery. In the apex of the central truss is a small area of early plaster, heavily smoke blackened on its northern side. This might be evidence of a smoke bay in the northern half of the hall, with the open truss filled in above the arcade posts to act more effectively as a funnel. Several examples of such smoke bays are known to date from the later Middle Ages. And it just might have been combined with an upper floor inserted in the southern bay.

The jettied north end, after plaster was stripped off in 1970.
A window with original mullions emerged on the first floor.

On the other hand, there is a possibility that the smoke bay itself was in the southern bay, although the lack of smoke blackening on that side argues against this. The reasons for it, as described by John Warren, are:

> a series of deep burns in the southern side of the great central truss. Oak, particularly such old oak, burns very slowly - some 3/8' per hour - and these burn marks are therefore much more than the result of a thatch fire. It may conceivably have happened that the earlier southern section of the building burned down and in the process some roof timbers burned against the truss for several hours. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, a wattle and daub smoke bay was formed by infilling the trusses above the open fire. Burning soot could easily have started a smouldering fire sufficient to char the braces before discovery. Lack of conclusive evidence leaves the question of what really happened in the realms of enjoyable speculation.

The supposed high end bay was presumably rebuilt at the same time, with a similar jetty to that on the north, perhaps incorporating the carved dragon post which is now stored in the north chamber. This was found reused as a prop in the later stairwell, and may not come from this building at all. If it does it would have been at the south-west corner of the house, supporting a jetty which continued from the south end along part of the main, or west, front.

Also built into the stair, probably when it was itself rebuilt in the 19th century, were a number of late medieval window mullions. Some of these were used in the south-east window of the hall; the others are in the north chamber.

After this rebuilding, Purton Green would still have functioned in the same way as it did before, if rather more in line with the latest ideas of comfort. The hall was still the centre of the house, there were still two doors forming a cross-entry at its low end, and heat came from an open fire. More radical changes were still more than a century in the future.

More major alterations

It is likely that by the end of the Middle Ages Purton Green was already a house of lower social status than it had been when first built. The wealth that poured into East Anglia at that time seems to have passed it by - luckily, because it is for this reason it has come down to us. The next phase of modernisation did not take place until the very end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, around 1600. By then, it would have been seen as very old-fashioned for an owner of any prosperity, and had probably been a farmhouse for several decades.

This new alteration was radical, consisting of the rebuilding of the south end, the full flooring in of the hall and the insertion of a chimneystack, seemingly all at one go. By then, at all levels of society, open fires were considered inconvenient and chimneystacks became common. With the smoke being directed up through a purpose-made chimney and no longer having to find its way through the roof of the hall, this could be divided into two storeys, thereby greatly enlarging the floor space of the house. Very often, new chimneys were built on or near the old hearth, and this is what happened at Purton Green.

The chimneystack was built between and to the south of the central hall truss. The fireplace in the present sitting room represents its southern face; the carved lintel was discovered in that position in 1970. In the process of construction, the shafts of the two southern arcade posts were cut away just below their capitals. They were left supported by beams running into the chimneystack, a complicated arrangement which leaves it unclear why the posts were not simply left in position. Possibly the western one, at least, would have restricted the space in the new entry lobby that now lay on the west side of the chimney breast.

The new front door was better placed than the medieval door for the rearranged plan of the house, since from the lobby inside it doors opened both into the room in the lower part of the hall, probably now the farmhouse kitchen, and into a new parlour at the south end of the house.

Separated from the rest of the building by the chimneystack, the rebuilt south end was almost an independent structure. Its chief characteristic, John Warren pointed out, was that it was not as wide as the northern end:

> because, of course, it was not an aisled structure, and hence its maximum width was determined by the timbers available for ties and girders. But in order to maintain a smooth and uniform face to the green the reduction in width was accommodated by an offset of about 3ft on the east (back) side. This also meant that the ridge of the new section was off-centre by half this amount, a discrepancy hardly noticeable while the chimney stood between the two structures. Today, however it results in a distinctive quirk in the roofline. The chimney was built on the centre line of the later, southern building, fairly conclusive evidence that the two were built at the same time.

The chimneys themselves were similar to ones at Cordell Hall, a short distance to the north of Purton Green, dateable to about 1600. The framing of the south end is also typical of that date, with closely set studs and diagonal braces visible inside (although missing upstairs). Further evidence comes from the crudely carved capital of the western post supporting the main beam running across the sitting room. This is trying to show a knowledge of the Italian Renaissance, which is unlikely to have been heard of in a yeoman farmer's house before 1600 (the Colmans suggested it was carved later, but John Warren and R.T. Mason thought it original). At the same time, the carving of the fireplace lintel is unlikely to be much later than 1600.

The south end also has a jetty, and a fine set of windows. The larger, barred ones would have been unglazed, with sliding shutters, and the grooves for these are clearly visible. There are also in the south end two smaller windows on the first floor which would have had glass in them. On the ground floor there was a projecting bay window, or oriel. The peg holes for fixing this can be seen on the outside, with sockets for the brackets.

The eaves line of the south end was slightly higher than the older part, so the eaves along the rest of the west side were raised up level with it. This also made space for larger first floor bedroom windows in the centre and at the north end.

The South West arcade post cut away when the chimney stack was inserted.

At the back of the house, only small windows were needed to light the stair and a jumble of larders and cupboards, so the eaves on this side were left at the late medieval height.

With all this work, Purton Green was changed into a typical farmhouse of the late 16th or early 17th century. Then or later, the outside of the house was plastered, and the rooms and fittings changed their appearance and use to suit changing fashions. The front door and its surround were renewed in the 18th century, as were some windows, while others were renewed again in the 19th century, when the stair was also rebuilt. A single-storey extension was built on the north-east corner, probably after 1840 as it does not appear on the highly detailed Tithe Map of that year.

At one time, the parlour seems to have been equipped with a spit engine. The hole at the right hand end of the lintel was, as Jill Lever pointed out in the 1977 Logbook, for the rod that held it. Yet from the 18th century at least, when the north chimney was added, the kitchen was at the other end of the building, with a new fireplace, and the parlour returned to its proper use. Then again, in this mixed farming country, the north room, with its brick floor and outside door, might once have been a dairy. None of these changes were structural, however, and most were superficial. It was basically still that same Elizabethan farmhouse that Landmark acquired in 1969.

The High End truss before the removal of the first floor and chimney stack.

Building materials at Purton Green

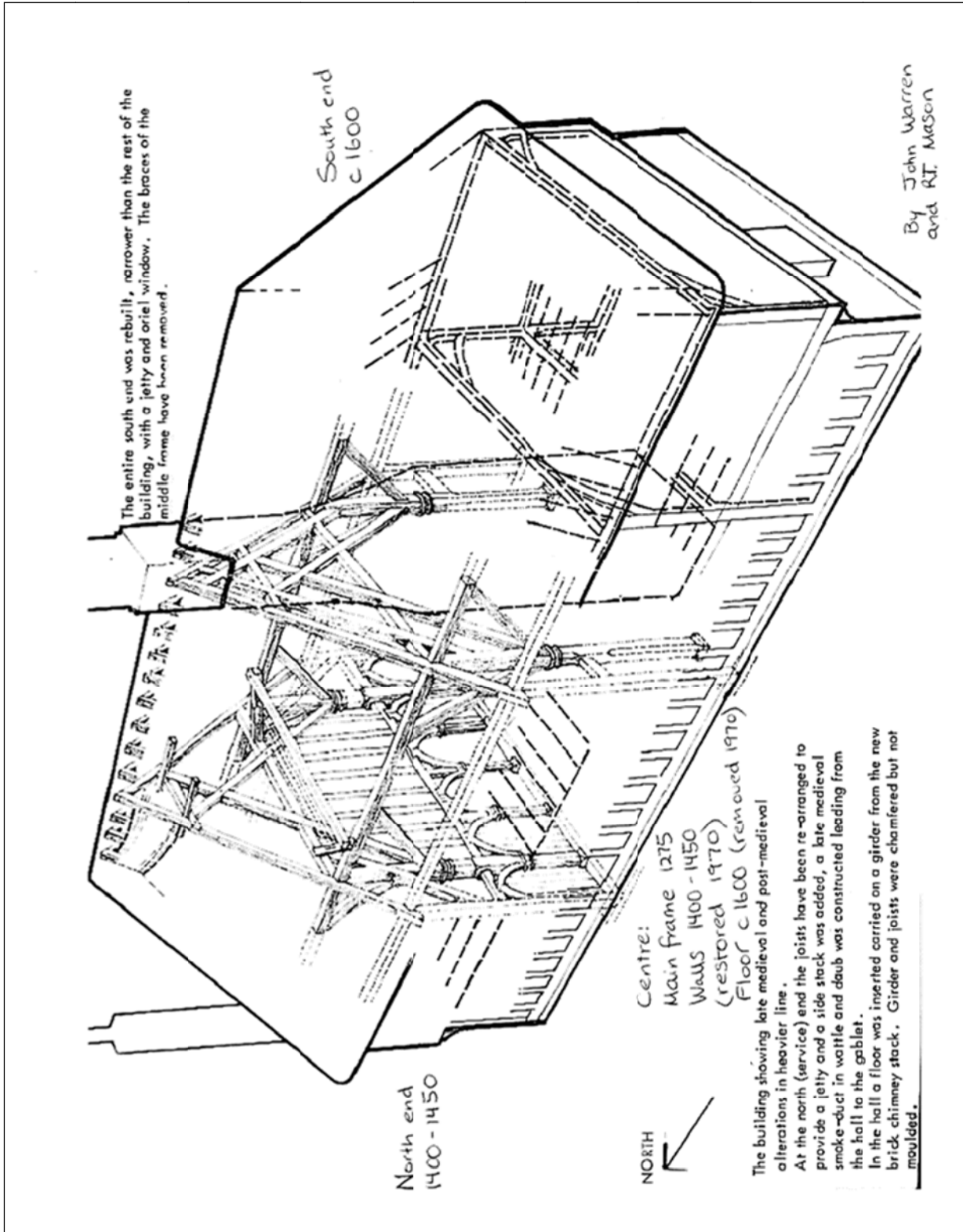In his book *Suffolk Houses*, Eric Sandon observed that:

> Suffolk builders made a domestic architecture by understanding the use of primitive materials - this achievement underlies a deep harmony between the landscape and its traditional buildings. Thus if you use the materials the local landscape provides you with, the result will be pleasing. The most usual type of timber used for building was oak. Having chosen his tree, the carpenter would arrange for the wood to be sawn up. This would be done either over a pit with one man below and one above, or on a tressle. The wood was used within a year or two of felling.

The walls at Purton Green are what we call close-studded, that is with the pieces of timber set vertically, fairly close to one another. Those that exist now are 15th-century; we do not know what the original walls were like, although they were possibly also close-studded. This form of building was universal in East Anglia and may have originated here, but by the middle of the 15th century it was in common use in towns and buildings of high status all over the country. It was expensive in timber because so many pieces were used but the spaces to be filled in between the timbers were consequently smaller.

The most common way of filling these spaces was with wattle and daub which appears to have been the method used at Purton Green. Between two close-studded timbers sharp oak staves (or small spars) were slotted at one end into a line of holes and at the other into a continuous groove. In East Anglia the staves were set horizontally and onto this frame were tied ash or hazel wattles. The wattle panel was then daubed on both sides with plaster: a mixture of clay, dung and chopped straw, well mixed and as dry as possible (to avoid shrinkage). These panels were then limewashed or painted, which protected them from damp and decay, if renewed regularly.

There is no evidence that colouring the timbers black was widespread before the 19th century. They were probably left in their natural state and were left to weather to a natural silver grey. Where paint was used to pick out the pattern, earth red or ochre seems as likely as black. The intervening panels were probably a soft ochre from an impure lime coating or pink from the admixture of sand.

The most normal form of roofing for Suffolk buildings until the 14th and 15th centuries was thatch. Reeds were not hard to come by in a county with a number of rivers and a considerable coast-line. Sedge (a type of grass) and corn stalks also provided roofing material until tiles became another popular option.

The entire south end was rebuilt, narrower than the rest of the building, with a jetty and oriel window. The braces of the middle frame have been removed.

South end c 1600

By John Warren and R.T. Mason

North end 1400 - 1450

Centre:
Main frame 1275
Walls 1400-1450 (restored 1970)
Floor c 1600 (removed 1970)

NORTH

The building showing late medieval and post-medieval alterations in heavier line.

At the north (service) end the joists have been re-arranged to provide a jetty and a side stack was added, a late medieval smoke-duct in wattle and daub was constructed leading from the hall to the gablet.

In the hall a floor was inserted carried on a girder from the new brick chimney stack. Girder and joists were chamfered but not moulded.

Purton Green in 1965, before restoration.

During restoration.

The Landmark Trust Restoration of Purton Green

It has only been in the last twenty years that conservation generally has become a burning issue. As a result, public interest in architecture has gathered strength - the Log Book comments about our restoration of Purton Green, which some have regarded as controversial, are witness to this. Twenty two years and nearly 150 buildings on, it is interesting to speculate on whether our approach to restoring the house today would be a different one.

In two ways it is possible that it might be. A younger architect, perhaps a S.P.A.B. Scholar, might have a different, perhaps less rigorous, approach to the finishes of the building - an adze might be used for shaping the new oak rather than a machine-saw. Secondly, our use of the house might not be quite the same. One of the reasons for tucking the living quarters into the south end was to leave the hall always open to the interested public, so that those other than the customers of the Landmark Trust might enjoy this particularly special room. Were we beginning work today, we might try to find a way of making it practical and comfortable to use the whole building, whilst making sure that the public could have access during Open Days.

When we began work at Purton there was no indication from the outside of the importance of the house, or its early origin. The exterior walls had been plastered over, covering the timbers, and the inside divided up. All these later accretions were in derelict, almost tottering, condition, but quite apart from the great cost involved in repairing them, there was a clear case for taking away such later features so that the original 13th-century hall - a structure of overwhelming importance - could be seen and understood clearly. Without a shadow of doubt, this is a decision that we should also make today.

The first job was to unpick the fabric leaving only the timber frame. Discoveries quickly followed, of which the most exciting was the evidence in the low end

partition for the arcade. Another was the hearth, which proved the existence of the second bay of the hall. Mortices in the arcade posts told their story of missing beams and braces. Gradually the structural history of the building became clearer.

The exterior plaster removed, September 1970.

Then began the task of putting it all together again. The front wall of the hall was so decayed, and damaged by later alterations, that there was no choice but to rebuild it entirely, using what evidence could be gleaned from surviving timbers for its original form. The opportunity was taken to extend the eaves to what had been their medieval depth, similar to that on the back of the building, which had remained unaltered. The different levels now serve to distinguish the three main building phases.

Elsewhere, the frame was carefully repaired, reusing as much of the old timber as possible, and only using new to replace missing sections. Throughout the restoration a strict philosophy was followed by John Warren, that 'where new material has been introduced, it is of a type which allows it to be readily identified and dated.' So, 'new timbers have been left with a surface which permits them always to be identified as replacements. The major timbers are machine-sawn and the joinery timber is machine-planed and sanded.'

A clear example of this approach is seen in the central (now the south) hall truss, where the arcade posts had been cut away. It had been intended to cut the replacement posts to the octagonal profile shown by those surviving in the low end partition. 'On reflection, we left them as inserted by the carpenter. Imagination must shape them down to a pristine line. The capitals, however, were repaired, and no effort is required to see them complete.'

The repair of the low end, and particularly of the arcade, raised a number of difficulties. The low end itself assumed its present form in the later Middle Ages (although the base of an 18th-century chimney has been left as evidence of later changes). So little evidence exists for its earliest arrangement, that any reconstruction - of a stair on the east side for example - would have been entirely conjectural. The late medieval stair was to be rebuilt, therefore, using timber salvaged from the bell-frame of Sudbury church. This decision, in turn, had implications for the repair of the arcade.

View of the roof to the south after removal of stack.

The evidence was there for the arcade's complete reinstatement. However, it had been severely mutilated, and the doorways altered, in one case to allow headroom for the same stair that was now to be rebuilt. The solution was to reinstate the three arches which we knew to have been blank, giving the posts their capitals, and restoring the plank infill; and to leave the doors in their altered condition. Like the hall itself, what is left is a fragment which we can understand, which amazes us by its very existence 700 years on, but which bears the scars of a long life.

The hall as found consisted of just one bay. Removal of floor and chimney stack allowed the surviving 13th-century structure to be seen complete, with the central truss free-standing. There was no question of any further reconstruction. The Elizabethan south end is both part of Purton Green's history, and a complete and satisfying whole in itself - though the kink in the roof ridge revealed when the chimney was taken down taxed the ingenuity of the thatchers. In rebuilding the wall between the two, the parlour fireplace found in the process, with its carved lintel and brick jambs, was left in place. Unfortunately, in a timber and thatch building of such rarity, the risk of a real fire is too great - another reason for not keeping the chimney.

Wherever possible, materials salvaged from the building were re-used. So the wall between hall and south end is built of bricks from the chimney stack. The hall floor is covered with the existing locally-made pammets and the floors of the two service rooms with brick, most of which were there already. In the roof, smoke-blackened (therefore medieval or Tudor) thatching spars, found reused in various parts of the roof, were reused again. Window mullions found in the 19th century stair were used for a new window in the south-east corner of the hall. Places were found for six old doors, with hinges, in the southern end, fitted with new Suffolk latches made by a local blacksmith. Other salvaged fragments, such as the carved dragon beam of uncertain origin, are stored in the upper chamber of the low end.

A number of 18th and 19th-century doors and windows were blocked up, and some late medieval or Elizabethan windows were reopened. John Warren took great care to see that 'only original openings were used to light the building.' The exception is that in the south-east corner of the hall without which it would have been very dark. There was, unfortunately, no evidence for a medieval window in the west wall of the hall.

The window in the east wall of the hall, and those in the north elevation, still had their original mullions, which had been protected from the weather behind plaster. The others were given new mullions. All but the two small windows in the south elevation were originally unglazed, so the plainest and least obtrusive of metal lights were inserted, to maintain the illusion. They were made by the same blacksmith who made the door latches. To have restored the oriel window in the south end would have involved too much conjecture, so another simple metal window was fitted instead, to the same measurements.

The new living quarters are self-contained and easily-warmed. The new partitions, and stair, make no pretence to be other than what they are, additions of 1971. Great care was taken to place the stair in an area of floor that was beyond repair, however. And the open hall still plays its part in the life of those who stay here, as a space to cross, to hold feasts in, or - as in the past - as a dry place to play. The shuttered opening outside the bathroom serves as a viewing gallery, allowing a high-level and close-up view of the rich early carpentry of the roof. On a prosaic note, its other function is to make the landing a ventilated air-space off which the bathroom opens. Much of the above information has been gained from notes made in 1971/2 by the architect, John Warren.

The East elevation before and during restoration.

The present sitting room in 1969, with a 19th-century fireplace and a door to the entrance lobby where the stairs now are.

The very decorative fireplace lintel was discovered when plaster was stripped away and has been left in situ.

First floor of the South end in 1969, then just one room.

**The farmhouse kitchen occupying the ground floor of the
medieval hall, looking south.**

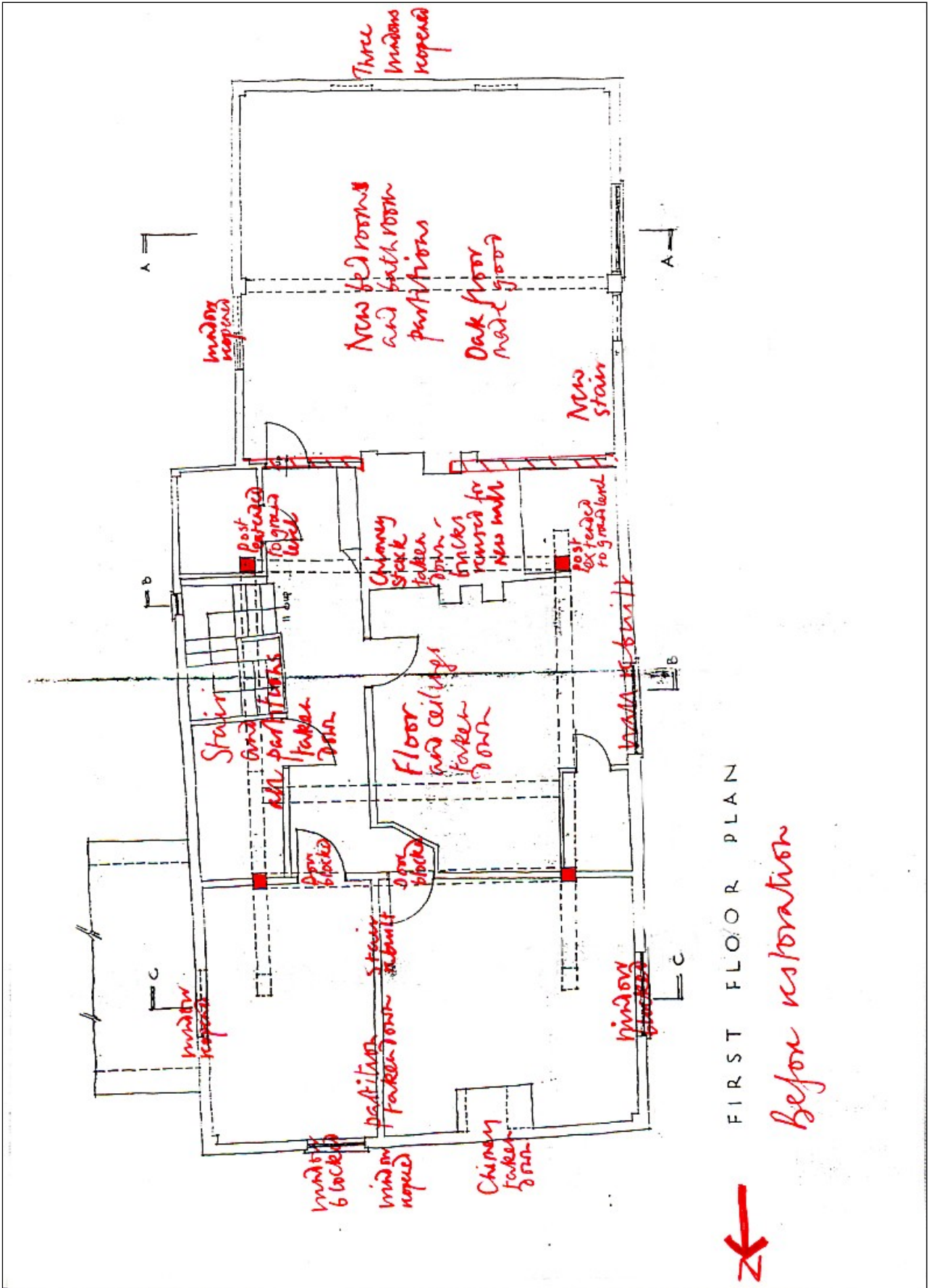**Ground floor room at the North end, looking south.**

South side of north-east arcade post, hidden in a cupboard.

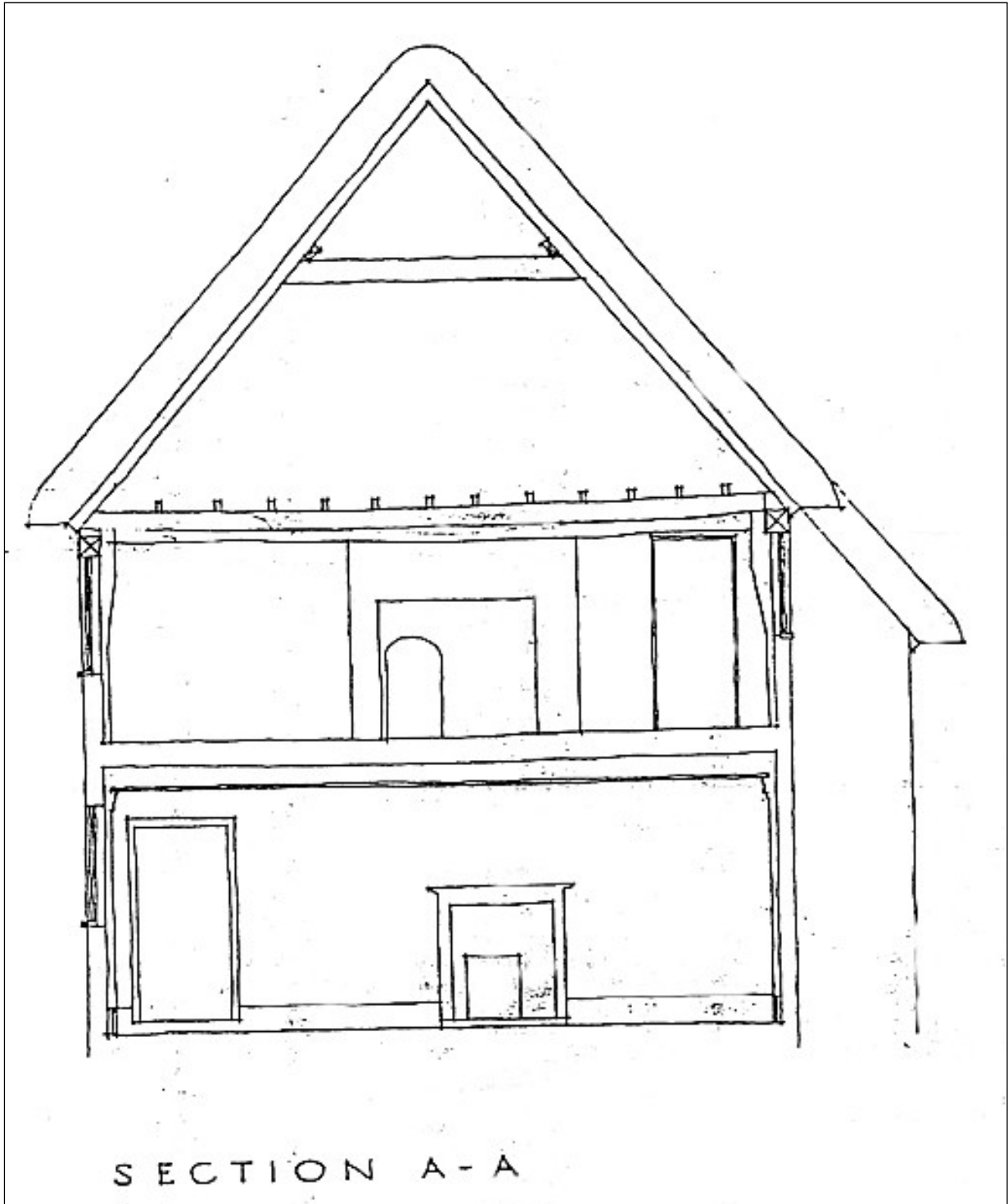**Carved dragon post built into a cupboard below the stairs.**

**North side of north-east arcade post, and arcade plate, in north east first floor room.**

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Before restoration

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

before restoration

Three windows reopened

New bedrooms and bathroom partitions

Oak floor raised (joists)

New stair

window reopened

Post extended to groundlevel

beam strengthened

Chimney stack taken down, bricks reused for new walk

Floor and ceilings taken down

Post repaired (original wall)

Stair and partitions taken down

Door blocked

Door blocked

window reopened

Stair and floor rebuilt

partition taken down

window blocked

window blocked

window reopened

Chimney taken down

SECTION A-A

Section A – A - through South end.
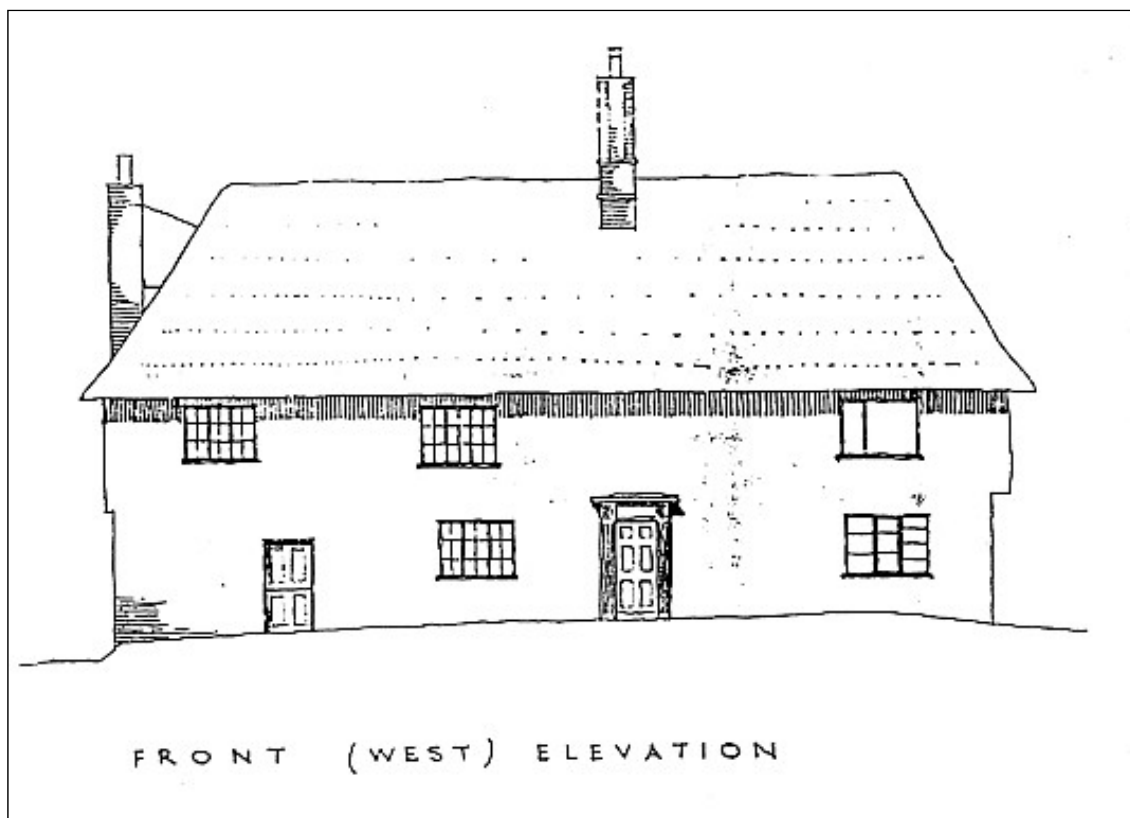**Looking North at north walls of parlour and first floor chamber.**
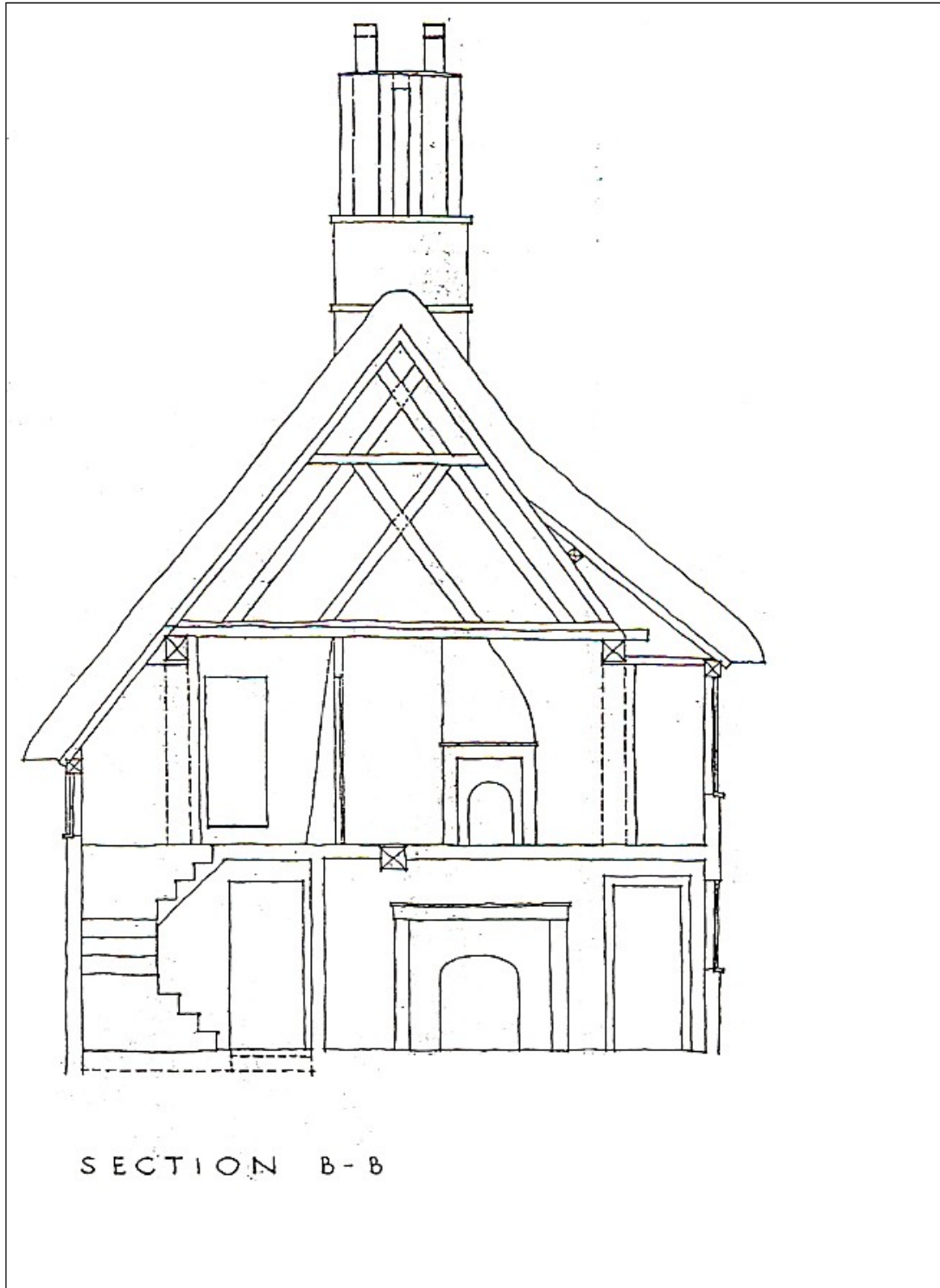
SECTION B-B

Section B-B through centre of building.
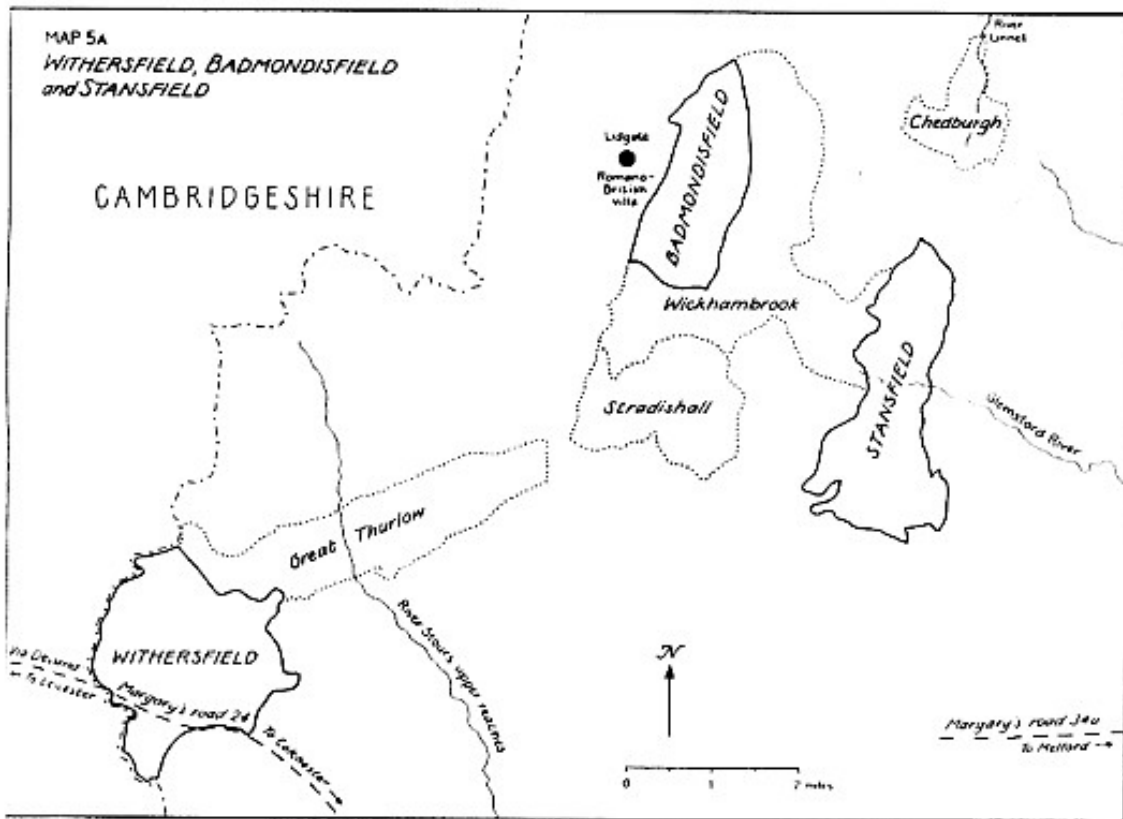**Looking South at south walls of rooms inserted into medieval hall c 1600.**
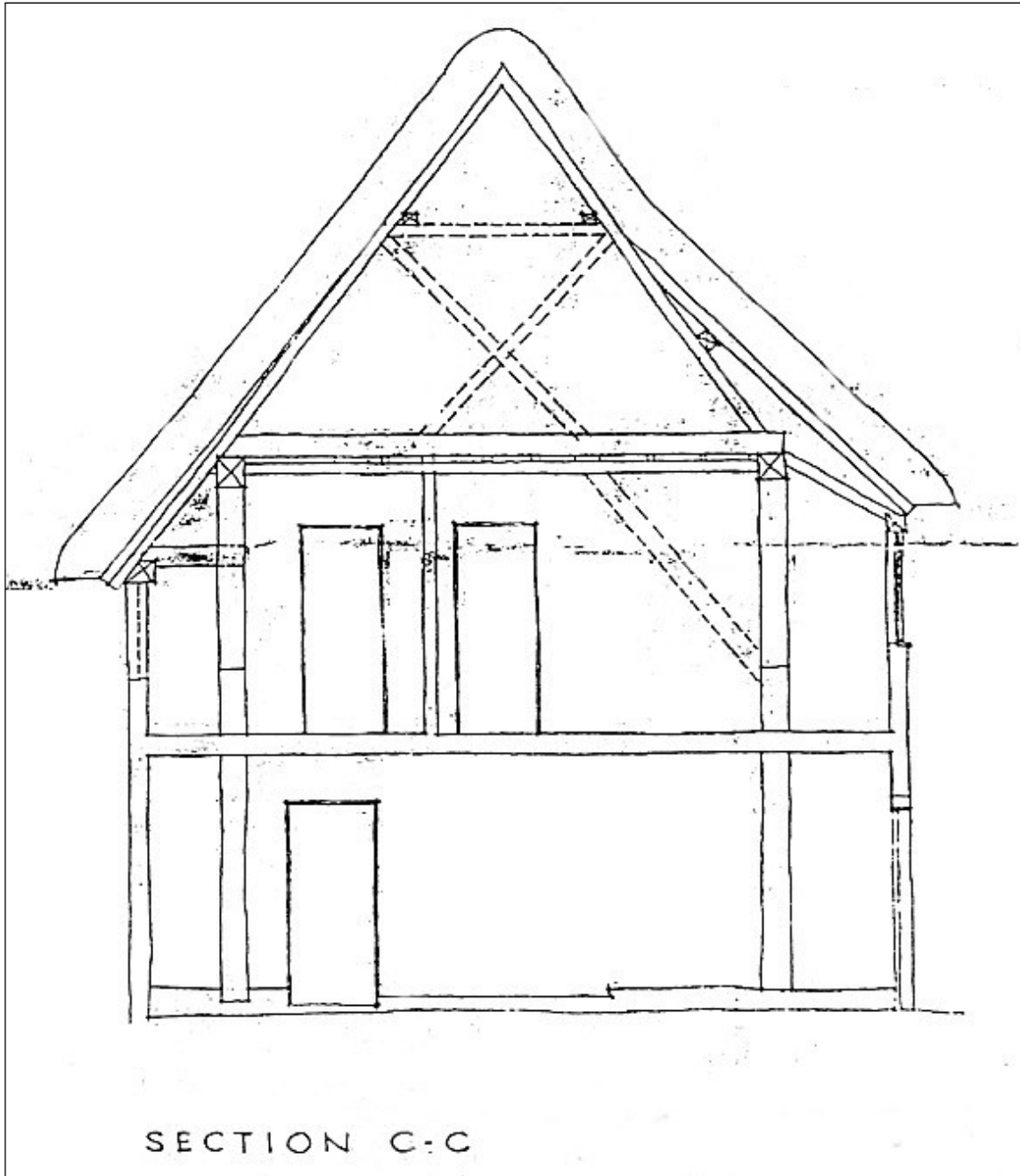
SECTION C·C

**Section C-C - through North end.
Looking South at south wall of north end chambers.**

REAR (EAST) ELEVATION
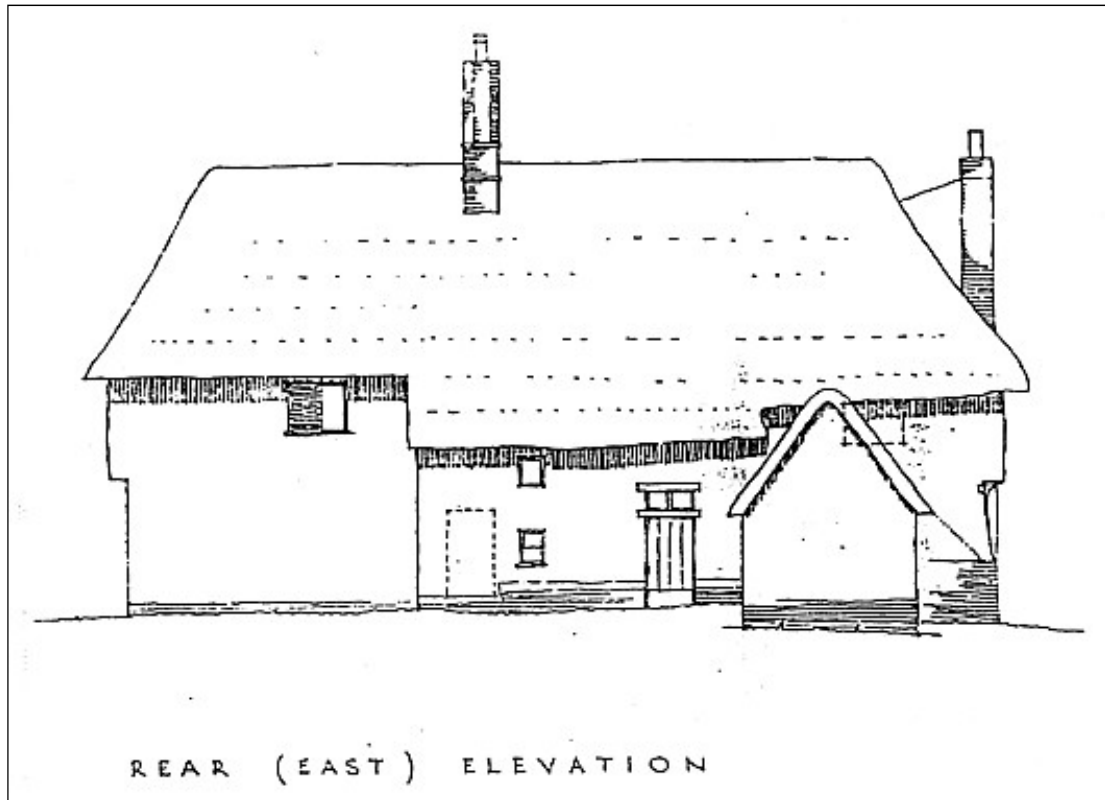
Before restoration

FRONT (WEST) ELEVATION

**From *Suffolk in the Middle Ages* by Norman Scarfe showing villages
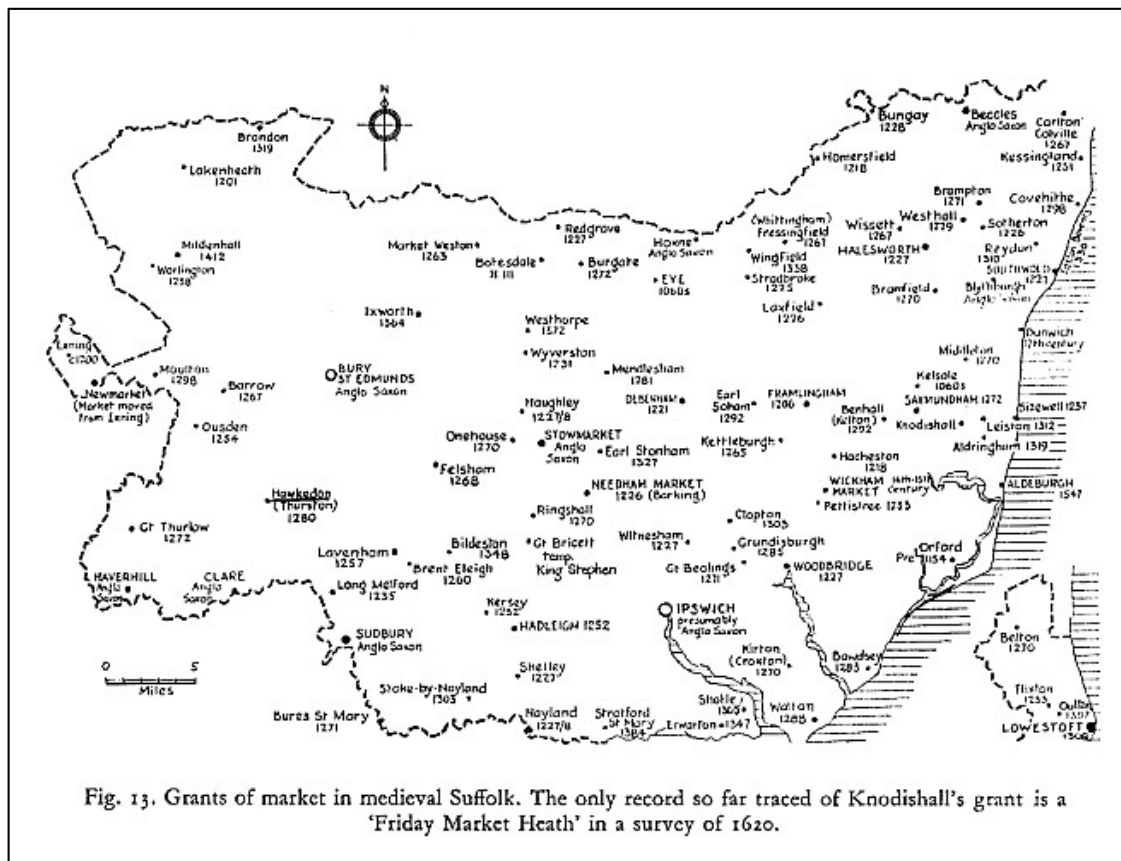with suffix 'field.'**

Fig. 13. Grants of market in medieval Suffolk. The only record so far traced of Knodishall's grant is a
'Friday Market Heath' in a survey of 1620.

Living at Purton Green

Suffolk is and always has been a land of farms. Indeed, there is evidence that the land at Stansfield was cultivated in the days of the Roman occupation. It has been shown that villages with 'wick' in their name contain the Old English word 'wic' derived from the Latin word 'vicus', a term which came to denote a Romano-British site. Wickhambrook, it seems, may be associated with the large Roman villa at Lidgate, where the wall footings are visible as crop marks on an aerial photograph.

In *The Suffolk Landscape*, Norman Scarfe develops the same theory on the suffix 'field' in a place name. In early Anglo-Saxon 'feld' meant open land which had been cleared from forest, presumably by the Romano-British. As the Stansfield local historian, Mr Trewhella, has pointed out, with a Roman road running from Long Melford via Clare to Haverhill and a Roman villa at Lidgate, it is likely that Stansfield was farm land in Roman times. In fact one field in the parish produces large numbers of Roman tiles when ploughed.

During the Middle Ages, Purton Green grew up as an isolated hamlet of the parish of Stansfield. The most common type of early hamlet in Suffolk consisted of one or two farms - larger houses with outbuildings - perhaps a few cottages, occasionally a chapel-of-ease but seldom a church. It was thus a small agricultural unit. Those hamlets known as 'Greens' are by far the most common and were to do with the pasturing and security of animals. The Green at Purton was a wide greensward running north from the ford to the other side of the house known as Purton Hall, which stood on a moated site due west of Purton Green Farm until it was demolished in the spring of 1982, after years of decay.

In and around Stansfield there were and are a high proportion of isolated halls: Purton, Elms, Stansfield, Thurston, and Swans, to name but a few. The term hall came from a common Teutonic source meaning the residence of a territorial

proprietor. The large number of halls in Suffolk may be explained by the fact that William the Conqueror's Domesday Survey of 1086 showed the county to be the most populous in England. Here lived no fewer than 7460 recorded freemen, well over half the total recorded for the rest of the country. Land enclosure began early in Suffolk with a large number of holdings available to individual freemen, with the resulting high number of halls.

The demolished Purton Hall is said to have been Tudor or Elizabethan, but this is by no means certain: we do not know when a house was built on the moated site originally. Lionel Munby in *East Anglian Studies* explains that in the main, moated sites may be dated from the 12th to the 15th century with the majority dug before 1350. There is a theory that moats are proof of early farm settlements as protection for livestock - perhaps the animals were pastured on the green during the day and brought over to the moated site at night. On the other hand, the island site might have been piled up to provide a dry platform for a house and its outbuildings.

What we do know is that Purton, or Priditon, Hall was also the name of a manor, or parcel of land, which was a later subdivision of the large early manor of Stansfield. This manor may always have been attached to a building on the moated site. Equally it might at first have referred to the early aisled hall now called Purton Green, which was certainly worthy of manorial status.

There is indeed a possibility that this house was also moated, since its site is surrounded by ponds which could be the traces of early excavations later filled in. It would be surprising if there were two such houses so close to each other in an area which tends towards scattered settlement. The likelihood is that Purton Green was the first manor house or Purton Hall, but that during the 15th or 16th century, its occupiers decided to abandon their old-fashioned home and build a new house close to it, digging a new moat in the process. The probability that

the two houses, though run as separate farms, remained part of the same freehold property until recently, supports this view.

The old hall may have been given to a junior, less well off, branch of the family, or let to a tenant from the start. Signs that it was no longer a house of high status by Tudor times have already been noticed in the architectural description. Certainly the late medieval manor house was in general a more substantial building than even the remodelled aisled hall.

Purton Green had started life at a prosperous period in the history of Suffolk, however. Scarfe has written: 'If we could imagine the towns and villages of Suffolk at the beginning of the 14th century, we should be astonished at the activity and wealth.' In every village, cottage industries of wool-combing, spinning of fine worsted yarn and hempen cloth manufacture flourished. On the farms the men of Suffolk tended their sheep and other livestock and harvested the rich corn fields.

In about 1300, the nave of Stansfield Church was built and the first recorded rector, Thomas Wycheford, was installed by 1303. In 1280 a market had been granted at Thurston just outside Hawkedon (in the garden at Hawkedon Hall there is the stump of the former village cross). To the people of Purton this must have been a great boon for it served a very wide area and would have prevented the need to travel the not inconsiderable distances to the markets then in existence at Bury, Felsham, Lavenham, Clare, Great Thurlow or Ousden. Obviously at times it would have been necessary to go to larger markets at Lavenham or Bury St. Edmunds.

Bury lies some ten miles north of Purton and was one of the most important medieval centres in Britain. Its fame and prosperity were assured when the body of the martyred King Edmund (slain by the Danes in AD. 869) came to rest at the Abbey. At Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, the great Benedictine
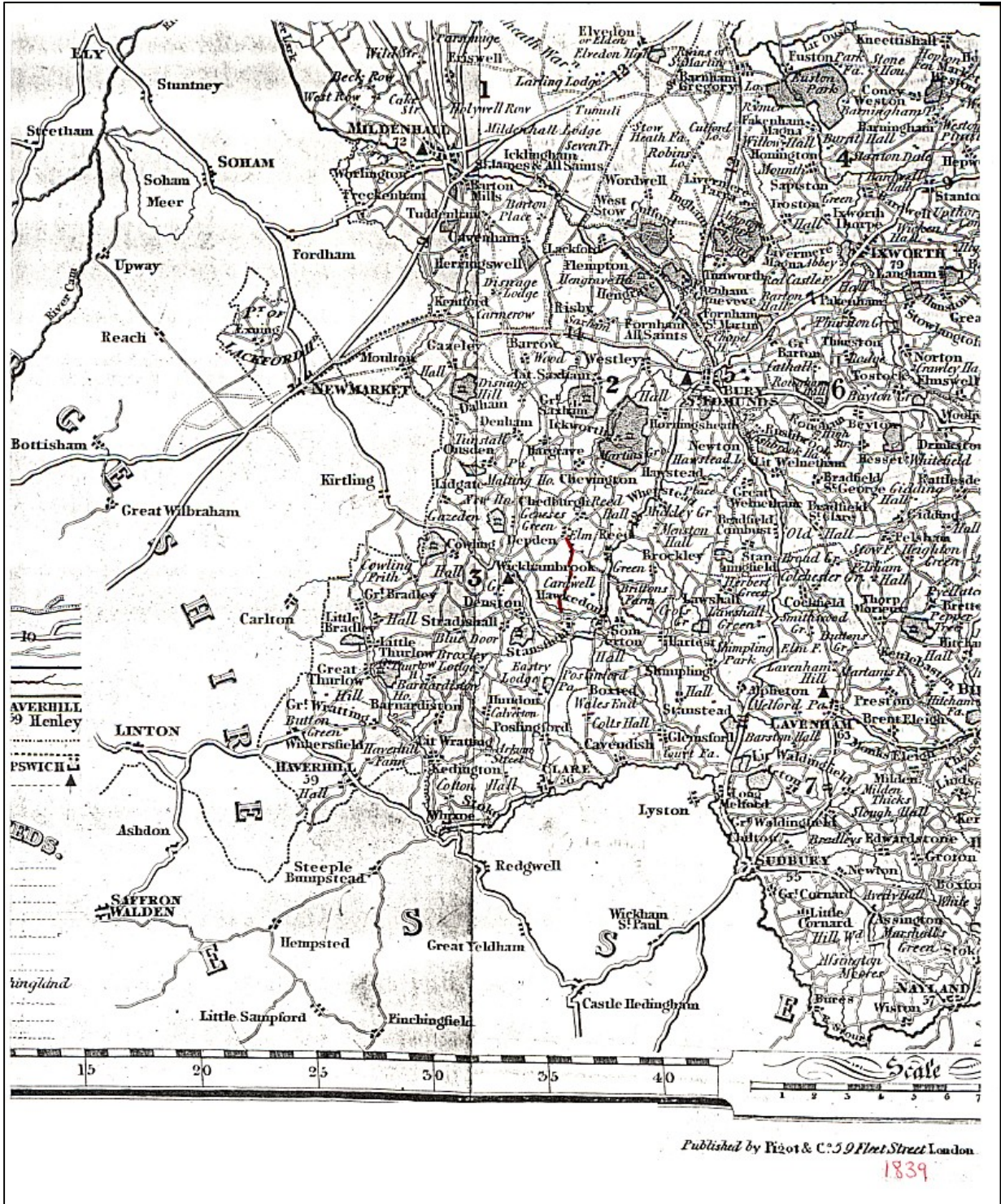
Pigot's *Directory of Suffolk* showing the old Purton road.

Abbey and pilgrimage centre was inferior in wealth only to Westminster, Glastonbury, St. Albans, Abingdon and Canterbury. It was also the principal local landowner and a place of some national importance: the Magna Carta curtailing the powers of King John was drawn up by the rebellious barons at the Abbey in 1214 (diplomatically, the Abbot absented himself from the proceedings) and not infrequently parliament was held at Bury.

The route the villagers would have taken to Bury is no longer in use. From the centre of Stansfield it ran past our house and then the site of Cordell Hall, via Elms Farm, to meet what is now the Bury to Haverhill road opposite Depden. The Colmans say in their article that 'this road was already passing out of use by the early 18th century and is recorded later as little more than a track.' However, it was still marked clearly on the county map in Pigot & Co.'s Suffolk Directory of 1839. The fact that it was not tarmacked when the other roads were means that this area retains the atmosphere described so well by John Smith in the entry for Purton Green in the 1971 Handbook:

> A car cannot be got closer than four hundred yards, and the house stands in the middle of fields with ordinary unchanging Suffolk countryside in all directions. The people of the Middle Ages have vanished in every way; we do not think or act in the least as they did, which is in some respects a pity. The atmosphere of their world is elusive indeed, but compelling and binding for those who find it. It is present in full measure here and we hope that through the hall at Purton Green, blackened by smoke and time, many will enter a world for which they have been looking.

The style of living of the original inhabitants of Purton Green was undoubtedly very different from ours. For a start the house itself was one of a group of buildings, probably standing within a fenced and moated enclosure. This was a farm as well as a manor house, so there would have been barns and byres as well as stables and a dovecote, and possibly additional living quarters. With household and farm servants, depending on the importance of the owner, there might have been anything up to forty people living here.

The hall was the kernel of medieval life, serving several purposes both social and ceremonial. The household would meet here most days for dinner after a morning's work, at 10 or 11 o'clock, and possibly later in the day for supper. Every so often the manorial court would be held under its roof, when petty and local misdemeanours were dealt with. It also provided a dry space for working on wet days, for conducting business, and no doubt for play as well.

Its walls might have been richly coloured, but the furniture was simple trestle tables, stools and benches, with food served in wooden and pottery bowls. The fire would be kept going all the time for warmth, and for cooking if there was no outside kitchen, fuelled by wood from a stack outside. There was probably a well in the yard, otherwise water would have been brought up from the ford. The windows at this period were unlikely to have been glazed but would have had shutters to keep the worst of the weather at bay.

Living was communal and gregarious, the only concession to privacy being the high end for the family. The solar, or private upstairs sitting room, was probably warmed by a separate brazier. There may have been a spinning wheel here, and a few musical instruments for evening fireside entertainment.

Early owners of Purton Green

W.A. Copinger's *The Manors of Suffolk*, Volume 5, published in 1909, states that the Manor of Priditon Hall 'was held in 1275 by Walter de Priditon, of Stansfield, steward of the Earl Marshal, and later in the reign of Edward I passed to Sir Roger de Priditon.'

Today the post of Earl Marshall ranks as the eighth of the great officers of state and is held by the Duke of Norfolk. Amongst other duties he arranges state processions and ceremonials. In the 13th century the post was known simply as Marshal and from 1270 until 1302 was held by Roger Bigod, 7th Earl of Norfolk. As steward, Walter de Priditon would have managed some of the Earl's property, probably those estates in Suffolk itself, and possibly Norfolk as well. The Earl's main castle was at Bungay.

Copinger does not quote the source of his information, but there is one aspect of it which does not quite add up. In Inquisitions held on the deaths of the de Clares, Earls of Clare, Hertford and Gloucester, in 1262, 1295 and 1314, all the estates held by them directly of the king are listed, manor by manor, in many counties of England and Wales. Among them is Priditon, as well as Stansfield and Hawkedon. This is hardly surprising, in that the family's chief manor, and castle, was at Clare, five miles to the south. They were bound to have built up an estate there, and to have rewarded their followers with grants of land or manors on it.

At the same time, the de Clares would have drawn on the knights and esquires on their estates to fill positions in their household. A Walter de Pridition, vassal, and thereby steward, to Earl Gilbert de Clare in 1275 makes sense. That a vassal of the de Clares should be steward to Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, is a much less likely combination. From 1276, it would also have been an uncomfortable one, since a dispute over property that year led to a long feud between the two earls, which finally broke out into private warfare, and caused the king to put them both in prison for a month in 1291 to cool off.

Curiously, the Rev J.R. Little in some notes on the parish of Stansfield, published in *The Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* in 1900, does give Walter de Priditon as steward of Gilbert de Clare, but also calls de Clare Earl Marshal, which he never was. He also gives conflicting dates, firstly 3 Edward I, which is 1275, as in Copinger, but also 1309. Clerical errors easily become historical ones.

Walter de Priditon does not appear in public records in these years, but Roger de Pridition does. The Patent Rolls record that in 1266 Roger de Priditon was granted one year's protection (immunity from arrest) by the king; and in 1275 Edward I ordered him and Martin de Suthmere to enquire into the fate of 'merchandise and goods of Flemings seized, by order of Henry III, during the contention between himself and Margaret Countess of Flanders, in the town of Lynn.' The two entries are perhaps connected.

The Close Rolls show that Roger de Priditon held more than just one manor. In 1275, he and others acknowledged a debt of 60 marks (a mark being 13s 4d) to one Robert Fulconis, which could be levied, if they defaulted, from their lands and chattels in Norfolk. In 1281, he transferred a manor in Suffolk called Codeham, with land in Ouseden and Shimplinge, to Philip de Clopton for 1,000 marks. The entry also notes that Roger's wife's name was Joan.

One cannot always be certain that the holder of a manor, especially one who held other manors as well, actually lived in a particular manor house, rather than granting it in turn to someone else. However, the name 'de Priditon', which was the old name for Purton, does imply that Walter and Roger, who might or might not have been his son, did actually come from there. The construction and decoration of the aisled hall of Purton Green indicates that it was lived in by someone of rank, not a great nobleman but at least a minor one, such as a knight. It is safe enough to assume that this was Walter de Priditon's manor house; he might even have been its builder.

The de Priditons appear again in the Subsidy Return of 1327, when a Peter de Priditon is recorded as having paid two shillings. This tax was raised to pay for the war against Scotland after the deposition of Edward II. The amount paid represents 20% of the payee's taxable property, which might be land, crops, livestock, rents and goods. Of the seventeen people paying tax in Stansfield (those with goods under the value of five shillings were exempt), Peter de Priditon was the seventh richest. It seems likely that he still lived in our building. However, the manor was now held by Adam Gatesbury and he paid five shillings, the largest amount in the village. The Gatesburys also held the manor north of Purton, and were large landowners elsewhere, so it seems unlikely that they lived here. Both manors were probably enfefoffed or let to tenants, beginning a long existence as small properties on estates whose owners would only have known them as entries on an agent's rent roll.

Soon after this tax was levied the Black Death came to England, in 1348. The chief effect of the loss of a third of the population was the necessary change in farming methods. With no one to work the land, Suffolk became mainly pasturage for sheep. Thereby the foundations were laid for the boom in the wool trade from which Suffolk and its buildings so conspicuously profited.

A hundred years after the Black Death the manor at Purton Hall was still held by heirs of the Gatesbury family. The name of John Twyn occurs as a feoffee or tenant. Then at the beginning of the 16th century it seems to have been absorbed back into the main manor of Stansfield, which was held by a wealthy family from Buckinghamshire, the Broughtons. Sir Robert Broughton died in 1506 possessed of estates not only in Suffolk but also in Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Cornwall and Devon.

12ᵗʰ century seat
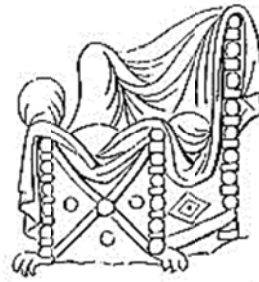
12ᵗʰ century faldstool

The simplest form of board-ended stool, with ends pierced by an arched opening, and a trestle table, drawn from a 15th century manuscript in the Bodleian Library.
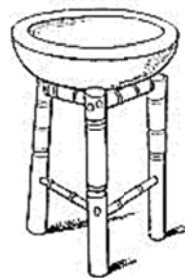
A 13th century boarded chest.

14th century clothes chest.

MEDIAEVAL
WASH-STANDS

The manor of Priditon is listed in the Inquisition Post Mortem of Sir Robert's estates, along with Denston and some other Suffolk manors, as being held of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds. It is worth £6.13.4, as against Stansfield, which was worth œ10. Gatesbury's manor, to the north, had been granted for life in the 1490s to Robert Drury (now knight then esquire). It was worth £4, consisting of 200 acres of pasture, 10 acres of meadow, and 20 acres of wood, an indication of the monoculture of grazing which still existed.

RISBRIDGE HUNDRED.   213

VILLATA   DE   STANISFELDE.

	s.	d.		s.	d.
De Alicia de Grey	iii		De Willmo ...mbold		viii
„ Willmo Snow	ii	ii	„ Roberto de Topisfeld	iii	
„ Roberto de Chelwynesbey	ii	vi	„ Xpiana Fycher		viii
„ Willmo de Hoketon		viii	„ Petro de Prydingtone	ii	
„ Nicholao Baylemond		xviii	„ Roberto Michael		xii
„ Waltero Pecok		viii	„ Willmo Michael		xii
„ Nicholao le Hoppere	iii		„ Roberto de Aldwartone		xii
„ Th...... Wybourgwe		viii	„ Johanne Michael		xii
„ Adam ......atesbur :	v				
Prob.			Summa [etc.]	xxix	vi

VILLATA   DE   HAUKEDON   CUM   THORSTANESTON.

De Margareta de Multon	x		De Petro Gilberd	ii
„ Johanne de Haukedone	vii		„ Stephano le Man	ii
„ Johanne de la Cressonere	x		„ Johanne Adam	xii
„ Willmo le Parker		xii	„ Nicholao Gobeth	xii
„ Johanne le Gardener		xii		
Prob.			Summa [etc.]	xxxv

VILLATA   DE   DENARDESTON   CUM   STRADESELE
[DENSTON AND STRADISHALL.]

De Willmo Cokerel	viii	ix	De Hugone atte Wode		xv
„ Alicia de Grey	v	vi	„ Willo Fabro		xiii
„ Willmo de Clopton	vi	viii	„ Willo Peyte		xi
„ Johanne atte Hyde	x		„ Hugone Baliolf	ii	
„ Johanna de Waldingfeld	v		„ Nicholao Baylemond	iii	
„ Henrico Garsonn		xii	„ Waltero clerico		vi
„ Willmo Monpon		ix	„ Gilberto Fabro		xviii
„ Johanne Darnel		ix	„ Ricardo Seman		xviii
„ Clement de Clopton		ix	„ Johanne de Boyton		xviii
„ Johanne atte Wode		xv			
Prob.			Summa [etc.]	liii	viii

A page from *Suffolk in 1327 being in Subsidy Return*, published 1906.

The Tudors and onwards

The Broughtons or their heirs owned the Stansfield manors until 1558. By 1564 they had passed to Henry and Jane Cheyne, but such changes of landowner or manorial title would have had little effect on the inhabitants of the parish, or of Purton. Theirs was a close-knit rural society, with the same families occupying the different farms in succession, occasionally changing places for one reason or another, occasionally rebuilding a house after a profitable year. They seem to have consisted largely of yeoman farmers, some of whom would have called themselves gentlemen, but no higher than that. The Rev J.R. Little, in his Notes of 1900, observes that 'No families above the rank of small gentry appear to have lived in the parish during the last 400 years.' This is born out by the Subsidy Return of 1524. None of the Stansfield taxpayers were worth more than £10 in goods, as against Henry Everard of Denston, for example, who was worth £160 in goods. John Golding, whose family are later recorded as living at Poslingford Hall, was worth £17 in goods. The £10 candidates in Stansfield were John Higham, gent, John Westhorp (or Westroppe) and John Butler. William Andrew, senior, and Robert Ketton were worth £8, Richard Sparrow £5.6.8 in lands, while Jane Sparrow and John Everard were assessed at £4 in goods.

One of these must have been the occupier of Purton Green, and another perhaps of the new Purton Hall, if it existed by then. Similarly, our occupiers lie hidden in the Hearth Tax returns of 1674. Here again, Stansfield is shown to have had no large house, in comparison to the neighbouring parishes of Poslingford (Mr Golding with 15 hearths) and Denston (Mr Robinson with 18). The largest house in Stansfield is Mr Kerington's, or Kedington's, with 7 hearths, which we know to be Cordell Hall. Robert Plumbe comes next with 6. He is perhaps the Robert Plume (died 1679), youngest son of Edmund Plume of Hawkedon Hall, to whom there is a memorial tablet in Stansfield church.

The houses of John Pisgoe, Edmund Man and Martin Breeke all had 5 hearths, while those of Thomas Osbell, John Flacke, William Rich and Richard Webb had 4. Purton Green Farm, as it would now have been called, would probably have been among these medium-sized dwellings, rather than the small fry of 2 hearths.

Just as the occupiers of Purton Green remain at present a mystery in this period, so from the reign of Elizabeth I until the 19th century, there is a hiatus in the records of the Manor of Purton Hall. We do, however, know a little more about Cordell Hall at this time. It is a late Elizabethan house, and it has been suggested that it was erected as the dower house for Long Melford Hall, where Sir William Cordell lived in the second half of the 16th century. In White's *Directory of Suffolk* (1844), we learn that 'The Kedingtons were formerly seated here.' This is confirmed by a plaque in the chancel of the parish church: a Robert Kedington died in 1741 aged 79. His eldest son, Ambrose (b.1700), married Mary Tweed and their daughter, Mary, (1739-1813) married Charles Bigg (1724-1798). By 1780 Mr Bigg had let Cordell Hall and its farm to a Mr Sparrow. In 1840 it was owned by Charles Hodges Ware, whose farm steward, Peter Powers, lived there in 1851. He was succeeded by John Slater, whose descendants now live in the house again, having restored it in 1978.

The Biggs were a local landowning family; Charles had acquired Gatesbury's Manor in 1770 and passed it to Bateman Bigg (presumably his son) in 1795. It is possible that they had also acquired the Purton Hall Manor and its land. Copinger and Little both mention Bateman Bigg who died 'possessed of Purton Hall' in 1825. It, like Cordell, passed soon afterwards to Charles Ware, who in the Tithe Map of 1840 is also listed as owner of Purton Hall Farm. At the same date he appears on the register of electors as owning Poslingford Hall, but is listed as being of Tavistock Place, London. He was succeeded soon afterwards by Samuel Ware, of Hendon Hall, Middlesex, who in turn left Poslingford on his death in 1860 to a nephew, Charles Cumberlege.

The Cumberleges had owned land in Stansfield in 1840, so were already established in the area, and it seems that Charles, who took the additional name of Ware in 1862, lived at Poslingford until his death in 1888. In addition to Purton Hall Farm itself, which carried with it the lordship of the manor, we learn from title deeds now held by the Landmark Trust, that he also owned Purton Green Farm, which was part of a settlement made on him for life in 1870. The deed in which this settlement is referred to does not say when Purton Green was acquired by the Wares, but very probably at the same time as Cordell and Purton Halls. There is good reason to think, therefore, that the two Purton properties together made up the single ancient manor of Purton Hall, although later divided into two farms, and let or leased to two occupiers.

There may, however, have been another owner in between Bateman Bigg and Charles Cumberlege Ware. Copinger says that the manor was 'later vested in Richard Plate, and from him passed to the Cumberlege-Wares.' Plate must in fact be Pratt, which family lived at Purton Green Farm from before 1780. In 1844, the first edition of White's Suffolk Directory states that John Pratt is the owner of Purton Hall. This must be a mistake, since the tithe records are clear that Charles Ware was the owner and Martin Slater the tenant there.

However, John and Richard Pratt certainly existed and with their sister Elizabeth farmed Purton Green, succeeding their father who was there in 1780. In the Tithe Map of 1840, Elizabeth is listed as both owner and occupier, but very often in tithe maps holders of long leases are classed as owners. If the Pratts ever did own the freehold - and Richard Pratt lived on until about 1890 - it is curious that there is no mention of it in the deeds.

It is more likely that the late 18th-century owner of the freehold granted a long lease based on the lives of Pratt senior, and one or more of his children; that on the death of the youngest of these children, Richard, the lease expired and the property reverted to the freeholder, who at the time was Charles Cumberlege

Ware. The existence of the lease, and the Pratts' long presence at Purton Green, served to confuse Copinger. The fact that the farmer of Purton Green was credited with a share of the manor serves to confirm the claim of that house to be an integral part of the medieval holding, as the original manor house.

The Tithe Map for part of Stansfield showing Purton Green Farm in 1840.

The Pratts of Purton Green Farm

A private pocket book of 1780 provides the first conclusive evidence of the inhabitants of our building, by then known as Purton Green Farm. In that year the Rev. Mr Davies, curate, was doing some tithe research for Dr. Warren, who was soon to be the incumbent at Stansfield, and he made notes on all the farms in the parish. Of Mr Sparrow of Cordell, he wrote 'an honest man with seven children'; later we find, 'Mr Pratt lives next to Mr Sparrow a land's length nearer the church. Has but 43 'acres in his possession.' The Pratt family lived at the farmhouse until the end of the last century and increased their acreage quite considerably, as shown by tithe payments of 1837 and the tithe map of 1840.

Living at the farmhouse when the tithe map was drawn up are Elizabeth Pratt (b. 1791) and her two younger brothers, John (b.1795) and Richard (b.1806). Presumably they are the children of the Mr Pratt of 1780. Elizabeth Pratt seems to be farmer in charge: it is definitely her name, rather than that of her younger brothers, that appears as owner on the list of tithe payments. In the Census Return of 1851, the household is described as farming 180 acres and employing seven men and two boys. Some of these men may have lived in Purton Hall, which had been divided into three cottages by the farmer there, Martin Slater, or in other cottages in the hamlet.

According to the map, the acres farmed as their own by the Pratts form a strip some four or five fields wide east of the old Green, running down as far as the stream. As well as some 19 fields, Elizabeth owns the then two cottages by our car park (occupied by James Root and Thomas Metcalf). In addition, the family farms 21 fields of glebe land (owned by the Church) south of the stream. The fields are divided into pasture, for livestock, and arable for grain, a pattern of mixed farming established in the area by the 17th century.

White's Directory of 1844 lists the occupations of the inhabitants of Stansfield. Apart from thirteen farmers, the parish supports a watchmaker, two shopkeepers,

The Pratts' front door.

one of whom is also the carrier to Bury every Wednesday, two wheelwrights, one of whom also runs the beerhouse, two shoemakers, one also a victualler, a curate, two schoolmistresses, a grocer and draper, a blacksmith, and the Rev. John Rutter of the Independent Church.

The Census of 1851 records 121 males in the parish and 106 females. The small community at Purton is almost entirely employed on the land. At Cordell, Peter Powers, a farm steward managing 350 acres, lives with his servants; moving southwards down the old road towards Purton, on the east side there is a pair of cottages lived in by Robert Brown, his wife Susan, a son and three daughters; and Thomas Metcalf (occupation: pauper). Purton Hall is divided into three cottages, all lived in by farm labourers. At the farmhouse, living with the Pratts are their niece, Susan Pain, a dress maker, and their nephew John Pain, a brewer's clerk.

At the cottages by our carpark there have been some changes since the Tithe record. It seems that James Root has died leaving his widow Ellen and their two sons. Thomas Metcalf has moved to the cottages between Purton and Cordell Hall, leaving it vacant for the Pain family. Ann Pain (b.1796) is the sister of the three Pratts at the farmhouse and she is now living with her husband John, a cabinet maker born in Clare, and their schoolboy son in the second cottage. Have the Pains fallen on hard times, with the Pratts housing their two eldest children at the farmhouse? In the cottages on the south side of the ford, to the west, live two more farm labourers and their families.

The next Census does not change radically. Elizabeth Pratt is now described as Housekeeper and has retired from farming leaving her brothers in charge; her sister and brother-in-law are still living at one of the cottages down the hill. In the 1871 Census John Slater now lives at Cordell Hall. (The Slaters and Pratts must have been related, because in his will, John Slater mentions 'my brother-in-law

Executor

This is the last Will and Testament of me
Elizabeth Pratt of Purton Green in the Parish of Stansfield
in the County of Suffolk Spinster I hereby nominate and appoint
William Everard of Stansfield in the County of Suffolk Farmer
and Miller Executor of this my Will I give and devise all my
share and interest in the Farm upon which I now live
situate at Purton Green in the parish of Stansfield in the
County of Suffolk with all lands hereditaments and appurtenances
whatsoever and wheresoever belonging to me at the time of my
decease and also all my share and interest in the live and dead
stock crop and implements on the said Farm and also all my
share and interest in the furniture plate and household goods
in the house in which I now reside unto and for the use of
my Brother Richard Pratt of Stansfield in the County of
Suffolk Farmer his heirs and assigns for ever subject nevertheless
to the following conditions namely the payment from and out
my aforesaid devised real and personal property all my just
debts funeral and testamentary expences and encumbrances
whatsoever and a Legacy of Four hundred pounds to my
niece Susan Pain daughter of my sister Ann Pain to be paid
unto her within twelve months next after my decease the receipt
of the said Susan Pain shall be deemed sufficient discharge to
my executor for the same And lastly revoking all former
Wills I declare this to be my last Will and Testament IN
WITNESS whereof I have to this my last Will and Testament
set my hand this fifteenth day of December one thousand eight
hundred and seventy four.

Elizabeth Pratt

Signed by the said Elizabeth Pratt in the presence of
us at the same time who in her presence and in the presence
of each other have signed our names as Witnesses.
John Slater
John Llewellyn Everard.
fo? 4.

Proved at Bury St Edmunds on the 10th
day of October 1876 by the Oath of William
Everard the sole Executor to whom Administration
was granted.
The Testatrix Elizabeth Pratt was late of Stansfield
in the County of Suffolk Spinster and died on the
23rd day of April 1876 at Stansfield aforesaid.
Under £450.
Sparke & Son, solrs, Bury St Edmunds.

Certified to be a correct Copy.

Last will and testament of Elizabeth Pratt, dated 1876.
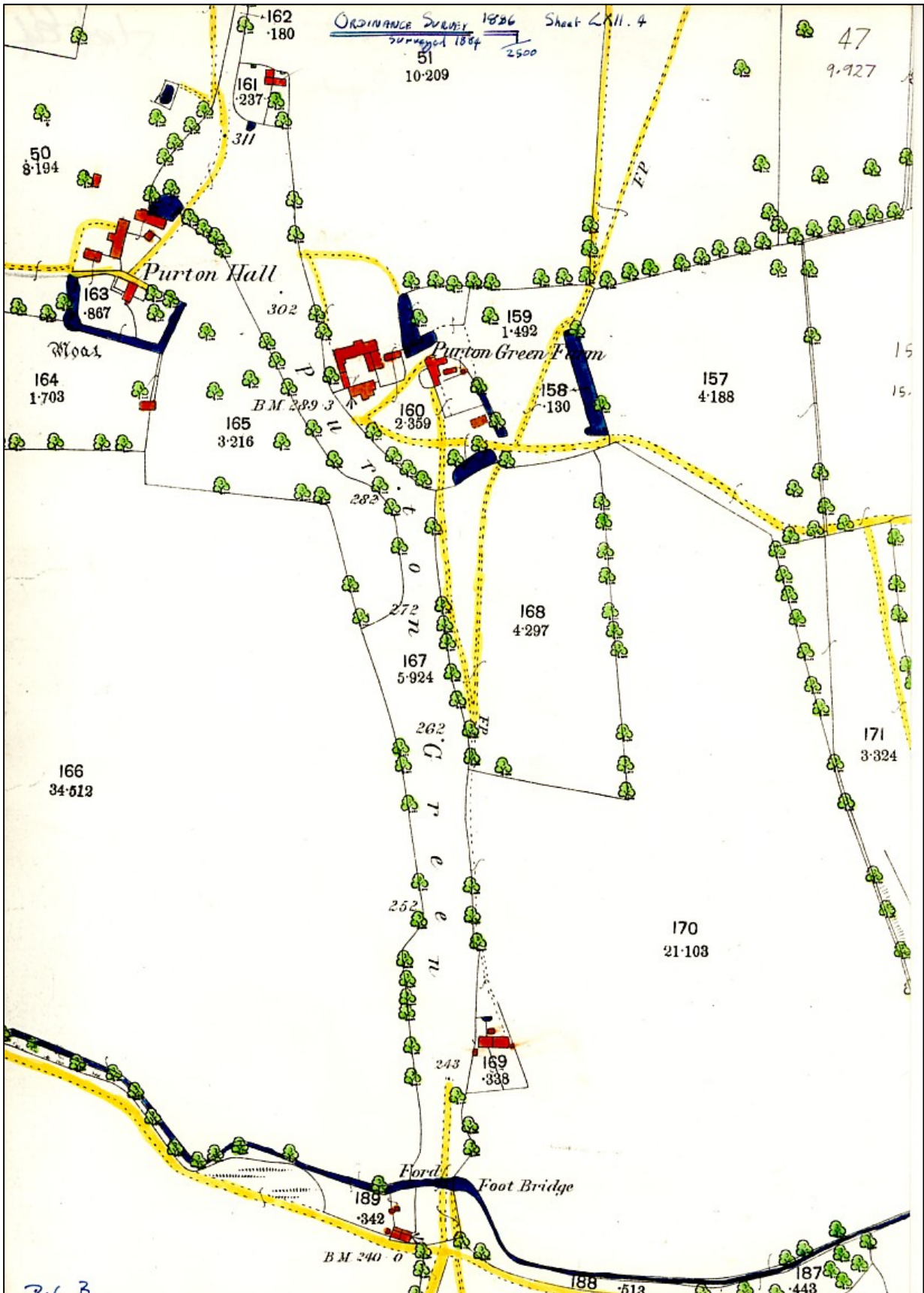
Ordnance Survey from 1886.

Frederick Charles Pratt.') John Pratt has died, and the Pratts' sister Ann Pain is now widowed and living with them.

In 1881 John Slater of Cordell Hall has married Emma and they have a little boy, Martin, aged two. At the farmhouse, Elizabeth Pratt has now died but Richard Pratt, aged 74, still lives there his sister Ann Pain and her daughter, Susan, the dress maker. He employs three men and one boy. The last Census of 1891 records ten households at Purton Green. The Slater family at Cordell is growing fast with three more sons and at the farmhouse Richard Pratt is described as a retired farmer and is looked after there by his niece, Susan, no longer young herself at 58.

In the Suffolk Directory of 1892 there is no mention of Richard Pratt or the farm. Although the Cumberlege Wares owned Purton Green Farm until it was sold to William Slater in 1961, it seems likely that John Slater of Cordell Hall took on the tenancy from Richard Pratt. In 1920 Miss Rose Setchell was born in the farmhouse and her father was Mr Slater's shepherd.

In 1941, after Mr Setchell had died, she and her mother moved to one of the cottages at Purton Hall. Miss Setchell (now Mrs Rose) visited Purton Green in 1977 and was amazed and amused by the changes: 'To think that all this was under the wall paper'! When she lived in the house the garden was surrounded by a wall and the exterior was completely covered with plaster, painted Suffolk pink. No beams were visible. She used to walk to school in Stansfield - a journey she repeated four times a day as she used to come home for lunch.

From 1941-5, Purton Green Farm was lived in by German prisoners-of-war, who helped on the Slaters' farm. After that it was left empty. The Purton Hall cottages fell empty at about the same time, as did the pair of cottages east of the track to Cordell Hall, which have vanished without a trace. Although the present Mr Slater can remember people using the old route to walk to market in Bury, the fact that

it never became a road left Purton Green stranded without access. As the Colmans wrote in their report on Purton Green:

> 'The isolated position, which evidently served in the past to preserve many of the original features of the house, is now proving its downfall.'

Luckily, this did not quite turn out to be the case. Purton Hall and the two cottages north of the hamlet, and other farm buildings, have all gone, but the farmhouse itself was sold by Mr Slater, in 1969, to the Landmark Trust. Now known by default simply as Purton Green, the first arrival has outlived all that came after it, and is still going strong.

Julia Abel Smith

Charlotte Haslam

Autumn 1992

Extract from *The Manors of Suffolk*, by W.A. Copinger, Vol 5, 1909

282   THE MANORS OF SUFFOLK.

STANSFIELD.

FOUR estates in this place at the time of the Survey were held by Richard, son of Earl Gislebert. The first consisted of a carucate of land formerly belonging to a socman, but at the time of the Survey held over him by Roger. Attached to it were 2 bordars, a ploughteam, and 3 acres of meadow. When Roger took over this socman there were 3 rouncies, 4 beasts, 7 hogs, and 40 sheep, valued at 20s., but when the Survey was taken the live stock had increased considerably—the beasts had increased to 6, the hogs to 30, and the sheep to 80, while the value had gone up 10s.

The second estate, which was held by Gislebert, consisted of 2 carucates of land, 2 bordars, 3 serfs, 2 ploughteams, 2 acres of meadow, 4 sheep, and 25 hogs, valued at 60s., formerly held by Edric Spucla, when there were 4 sheep only, and the value was 40s.

The third estate consisted of a carucate of land, a ploughteam, and 4 acres of meadow, valued at 30s., formerly held by Ulflet, a freeman, but at the time of the Survey by Robert over him.[1]

The fourth estate consisted of 60 acres of land, a serf, a ploughteam, 3½ acres of meadow, and a mill, valued at 15s., formerly held by Crow, a freeman, but at the time of the Survey by Roger. There was also a church with 15 acres of free land. Stansfield as a whole was 12 quarentenes long and 6 broad, and paid in a gelt 13½d.[2]

The Abbot of St. Edmund had one estate here. This consisted of 75 acres and 2 ploughteams, valued at 11s. 3d., the commendation and soc belonging to the abbot. It had formerly been held by seven freemen.[3]

STANSFIELD MANOR.

This was the estate of Richard Fitz Gilbert at the time of the Survey, and passed in the same course as the Manor of Denston Hall, in this Hundred, and Sudbury, in Babergh Hundred. Sir Thomas de Grey, Knt., had a grant of free warren here in 1302.[4]

We find that in 1349 Sir William de Clopton had free warren in his lands in Stansfield.[5] He married Agnes, daughter of Sir Thomas Grey, and died in 1378.

in 1403 Sir Thomas de Grey gave a part of the manor to his widow Margaret for life, and subject to her interest it devolved upon his son, Roger de Grey and Margaret his wife.[6]

The following year Margaret, wife of Roger, son of Sir Thomas de Grey, appears to have died seised of the manor.[7]

In the beginning of the 16th century the manor vested in Sir Robert Broughton, Knt.,[8] who died seised of it 17th Aug. 1506,[9] when it went to his son and heir, John Broughton, who died 24th January, 1517,[10] when the manor passed to his widow Alice (? Anne), and subject to her interest

[1] Dom. ii. 390b, 395b.
[2] Dom. ii. 390b, 395b.
[3] Dom. ii. 371b.
[4] Chart. Rolls, 30 Edw. I. 33.
[5] Chart. Rolls, 22 Edw. III. 37.
[6] I.Q.D., 5 Hen. IV. 14.

[7] I.P.M., 6 Hen. IV. 24.
[8] See Manor of Denston Hall, in this Hundred, and Manor of Stonhams, in Rattlesden, in Thedwestry Hundred.
[9] I.P.M., 22 Hen. VII. 1.
[10] I.P.M., 10 Hen. VIII. 148.

vested in their son and heir, John Broughton, who died in 1529. The widow remarried John, Lord Russell, 'and appears to have survived till 1558. Subsequently the manor vested in the Westhroppes, who had held lands in Stansfield as early as the time of Hen. VI., for we find amongst the Early Chancery Proceedings an action as to a messuage here, brought by Robert Westhorp and William Grey, executors of Thomas Westhorp, against Thomas Hinton, feoffee to uses,[1] and another action about the same time as to lands in Stansfield by Agnes, late wife of Thomas Westhorp, against Thomas Hookton and William Grey.[2] Later, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, we meet with two fines levied of the manor. The first was in 1564 by John Westhroppe against Henry Cheyne and Jane his wife;[3] the second in 1602 by Francis Crawley and others against Abraham Westroppe and others.[4]

The Manor of Stansfield has been for some years past in the Crown, but it has been stated to have been vested in J. G. Weller Poley. A manor of "Stansfield" was included in a demise made 24th April, 19 Eliz. by Ann, daughter of Sir John Wentworth, and Jerome Bettenham and James Walton for 200 years next after her decease, she being then Lady Matrevers. The lady was buried at Gosfield, in Essex, 10th Jan. 1580.

GATESBURIES OR CATESBYE'S MANOR.

In 1235 Richard de Muntfichet had the fee, and it passed to his daughter Margaret, who married Walter de Bolebee. If, however, Davy's date for the death of this Walter, namely 1187, be correct, this is scarcely possible. The manor passed to their son and heir, Hugh de Bolebee, who died in 1262, leaving four daughters—Philippa, married to Roger de Lancaster; Margery, married 1st to Nicholas de Corbet and 2ndly to William de Grimesthorpe; Alice, married to Walter de Huntercombe; and Matilda, married to Hugh de la Val. The two latter died without issue.

In 1319 Richard de Gatesbury had a grant of free warren here,[5] and in 1420 a John de Gatesbury held the manor. He seems to have left two daughters and coheirs, one married to Henry Elvedon, of Ivy Mountjoy, Essex, and the other to John Lavingham, of Gatesbury, co. Herts.

In 1506 the manor was vested in Sir Robert Broughton, Knt., who died seised of it this year, when it passed to his son and heir, Sir John Broughton, and then passed as the main manor until the death of Alice, wife of John, Lord Russell, in 1558.

In 1706 the manor was in Sir Edward Atkins, and in 1770 was in John Mavor, passing this year to Charles Bigg, who in 1795 granted the same to Bateman Bigg, who sold it to the Marquis of Bristol, in whose representative it is now vested.

MANOR OF PRIDITON HALL.

This was held in 1275 by Walter de Priditon, of Stansfield, steward of the Earl Marshal, and later in the reign of Edw. I. passed to Sir Roger de Priditon.

In 1317 the manor belonged to the Gatesbury or Salisbury family, a fine this year being levied by Adam, son of Richard de Gatisbury, against Richard de Gatisbury;[6] and in 1454 a fine of the manor was levied by

[1] E.C.P., 5 Edw. IV.; 49 Hen. VI. 31, 204.
[2] Ib. 31, 262.
[3] Fine, Easter, 6 Eliz.
[4] Fine, Hil. 44 Eliz.
[5] Chart. Rolls, 12 Edw. II. 88.
[6] Feet of Fines, 11 Edw. II. 46.

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John Notebeme, William Sheldrake, clerk, William Jerold, chaplain, Thomas Cranevyle, John Smyth, of Cavendish, Robert Hucton, of Stansfield, John Gylmyn, jun., and Thomas Pouncy, against John Jolker and Elizabeth his wife, relative and one of the heirs of Adam de Gatesbury, and Henry Elveden, kinsman and other heir.[1] Amongst the Early Chancery Proceedings we find a suit pending between Harry, son of Harry Elveden, and John Twyn, surviving feoffee to uses respecting the manor.[2]

At the beginning of the 16th century the manor was vested in the family of Broughton, and Sir Robert Broughton died seised of this manor 17th August, 1506, leaving Sir John his son and heir.[3] Robert's son, Sir John Broughton, died seised 24th January, 1517, leaving John his son and heir.[4]

In 1564 a fine of the manor, under the head " Predyngton Hall Manor," was levied by Robert Westhrope and John Sparowe against Henry Cheyne and Jane his wife.[5]

Abel de St. Martin held a third part of a fee in Priditon, according to Davy, but he gives no date, and in 1825 he enters Bateman Pigg [Bigg], gent., who died possessed of " Purton Hall," It later vested in Richard Plate, and from him passed to the Cumberlege-Wares, whose representative now holds.[6]

[1] Feet of Fines, 32 Hen. VI. 6.
[2] E.C.P., Bundle 55, 88.
[3] I.P.M., 22 Hen. VII. 1.
[4] I.P.M., 10 Hen. VIII. 148.
[5] Fine, Easter, 6 Eliz.
[6] See Manor of Poslingford, in this Hundred.

Aisled Halls, by Philip Aitkens, from *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk*, ed D. Dymond & E. Martin, 1989

Philip Aitkens

59. AISLED HALLS

In the high Middle Ages, the aristocratic household was large and lived in a cluster of buildings resembling a tightly packed village. At the centre was a Great Hall where meals were eaten, servants slept and courts were held. Local lords of manors copied features of this design in their smaller halls, of which hundreds must have been built in Suffolk during the 13th century. The hall was frequently aisled - pairs of vertical posts supported horizontal beams halfway up the sloping roof, and allowed for a much wider building. About six of these aisled halls remain reasonably intact, about 10m. long and 8m. wide, each of two bays with a pair of central arcade posts, and with ancillary rooms at one or both ends.

For centuries this very important class of early building was forgotten, until in 1958 John Smith of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments walked into Edgars Farm at Combs. During the next decade, a few similar buildings were identified, mostly in East Anglia, but by 1988 the total in lowland England was approaching 200.

Away from East Anglia other forms of construction were employed by vernacular builders in the 13th and 14th centuries, but here in Suffolk lesser men also desired the status of an aisled house - even though they were not always in need of the space provided. At Cookley (c.1200) and later at Levington, a parish priest built a smaller house of aisled form. In towns, where building sites were tighter, only one aisle might be built at the rear while the wall along the street was higher and well-windowed, as at 88 High Street in Lavenham. As late as c.1500, a peasant living beside the village green at Depden built his little house with aisles.

In the earlier halls, long overlapping braces rose from the side walls, parallel to the roof-slope, interlocking with posts and beams to form a series of strong triangles at the open truss across the centre of the hall, and similarly in the wall behind the dais. The decorative value of these passing-braces was used to the full : visitors to high quality halls like the Woodlands at Brundish and the Priory Hall at Great Bricett would have been greatly impressed by soaring geometrical patterns of chevrons and saltires.

By about 1300, the diagonal passing-braces were giving way to fan-shaped patterns of shorter curved braces, in end and side walls alike. Fashion now dictated the use of a crownpost over the centre of all open halls, while at the same time omitting the additional tiebeams seen in many earlier examples. This is well displayed at Edgars Farmhouse, the frame of which is now preserved at the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket.

The lighting of the larger halls was probably provided by an oriel - a tall dormer window - breaking the line of the aisle near the dais, but all have now gone and mostly without trace. When from the late-14th century fashion favoured taller, narrower and more dignified open halls, the aisles of earlier houses were liable to be reduced or altogether removed because of their lowness - especially at the front. Of the manor houses, only Brockley Hall retains the profile of an unaltered aisle which, significantly, is at the rear.

In fact with most aisled halls, one is only able to observe fragments. For instance, nine of the examples mapped opposite have lost their original roofs, nine their aisles, and in six the main body of the hall was almost or entirely destroyed at an early date. Some, as at Worlingworth Hall and Wingfield College, were converted into 'raised-aisles' by the introduction of a massive beam across the centre of the hall. Many later houses and barns contain re-used timbers which clearly show that an aisled house once existed nearby and has been demolished.

Aisled halls survive in the areas which were wealthier and more populous in the Middle Ages ; this excludes the Breckland and Sandlings where the poorer soils always supported fewer and poorer inhabitants. Most of the finest aisled halls are in the mixed farming belt of mid-Suffolk, but even here the scattered distribution shows the factor of chance : many must have been swept away by wealthy owners in Tudor times. Very early houses only remain when their successive owners had enough money for essential maintenance, but not enough to afford a complete rebuilding. Much of southern Suffolk remains to be searched for survivals, and the number may yet be doubled. The 25 examples so far found since 1958 are shown on the accompanying map ; they form the second highest total in England - second only to neighbouring Essex.

Notes and further details on p.153
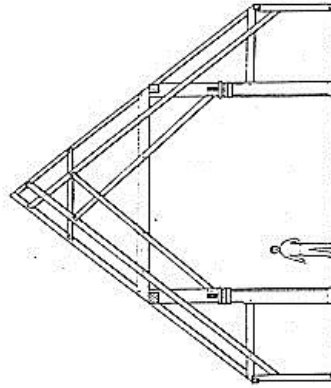
Reconstructed cross-section of the late-13th century aisled hall at Purton Green Farm, Stansfield.

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MEDIEVAL AISLED HALLS
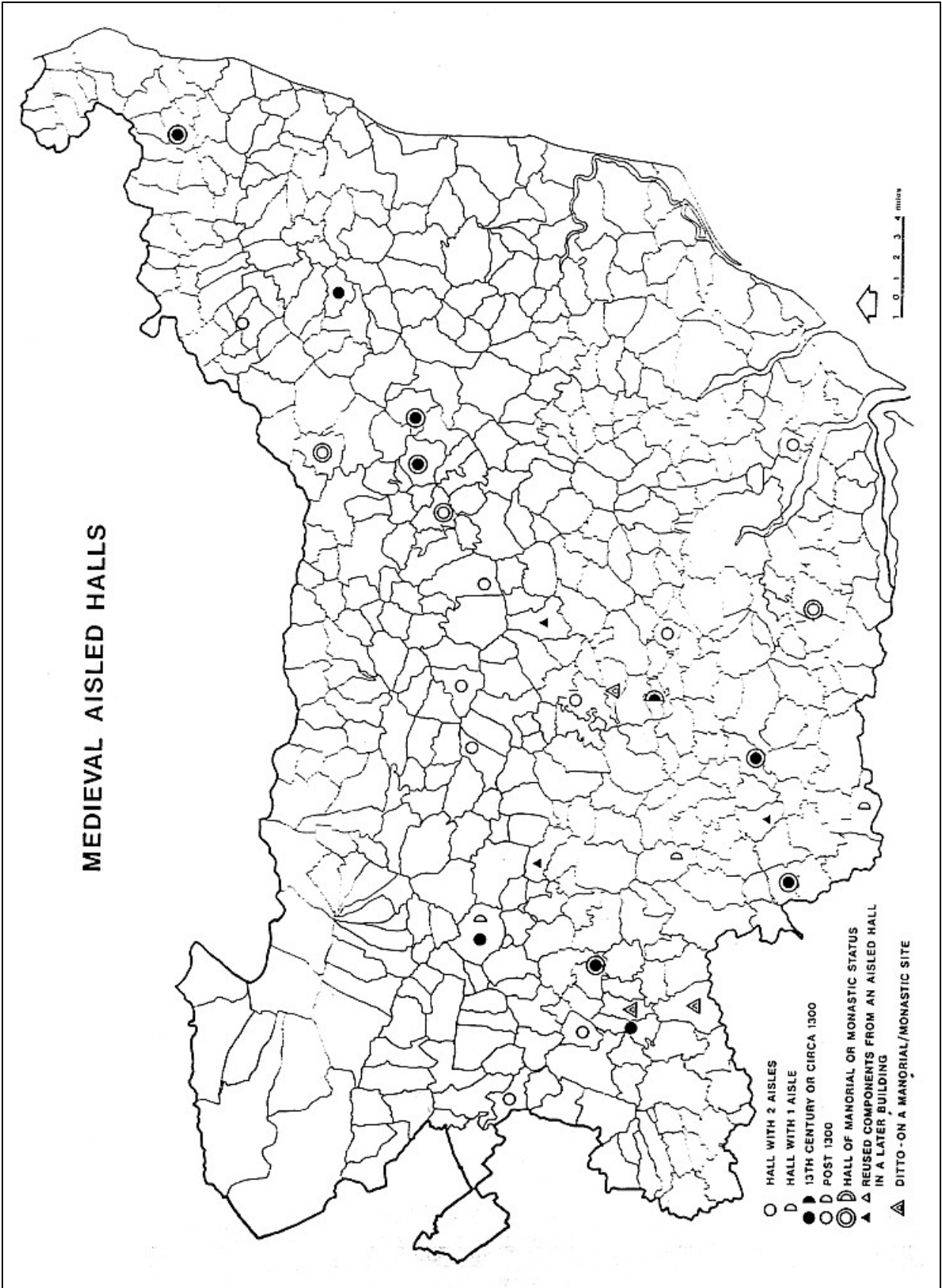
These notes are taken *Minor Architecture of Suffolk*, edited by Dexter Morand and published in 1929.

HISTORICAL NOTES

IT is not within the compass or object of this book to give a history of Suffolk, the following data are given to convey a rough idea indicative of the state of the county. Commencing with William I (1066) up to the execution of Mary (1558). Dates prior to this would be useless ; dates subsequent to this will be given in Series two. The catalogue of facts as presented here has been culled from various works consulted (see page 12). Dates and facts are given as found ; no attempt has been made to verify them ; when contradictions arise all are quoted. Data relative to churches are excluded, but monastic buildings are included. Several of these monastic buildings became converted into domestic use. It has not been an easy matter to gather this information ; some idea of the difficulty experienced may be judged when, in no fewer than four works consulted, the only event of any importance recorded at Ipswich was the Pickwick-Bardell incident in Dickens' "Pickwick Papers." A list of works consulted is given on page 12. Each work is numbered. "Source" refers to this number, the page being indicated ; thus, when the reference occurs : "Source 8, page 8" refers to Bayne : "Royal Illustrated History of East Anglia, page 8".

William I (1066-1087). William of Normandy conquers England and splits up Suffolk into 629 manors (source 8, page 8). These he divides amongst his followers. Richard FitzGilbert is given the lordship of Clare. Richard de Tonebridge (or De Clare) has Sudbury. Bungay is conferred on Roger Bigod. William Mallet has over 200 manors, including the manor of Lavenham; he is also given the Honour of Eye, and here he builds a castle. At Exning, Ralph Waher, Earl of East Anglia, plans a conspiracy against William I in conjunction with Rofer de Britolio and others. At Snape, William Martel establishes a priory. In 1070 a monastery is established at Rumburgh. Ralph de Gauder is made Earl of Norfolk (which includes Suffolk) in 1075. Almost immediately the Earldom lapses, for Ralph de Gauder plots against his king, and has to flee the country. The works of man become apparent : castles are being built in Bungay, Clare, Eye, Framlingham, Haughley. **William II (1087-1100). Henry I (1100-1135).** Roger Bigod is prominent. Gilbert FitzGilbert has built Clare Castle. The erection of monastic buildings is astounding : Gilbert Blount's priory at Ixworth in 1100, Ralph FitzBrian's priory at Great Bricett in 1110, the monastery of Hubert de Montchensey at Edwardstone in 1114, the nunnery at Redlingfield in 1120. At Stoke by Clare there is Richard de Clare's priory built in 1124. The King returns from Chartres through a violent storm, he goes to the shrine of St. Edmunds in thanksgiving for his safe arrival in 1132. William Mallet forfeits his estates (source 11, page 2). The King grants the manor of Lavenham to Aubrey de Vere. **Stephen (1135-1154).** Hugh Bigod is Earl of Norfolk. He rebels against his king and is insolent. Bungay Castle is taken from him by the king in 1140, but later restored to him. The erection of monastic buildings continues : there is William de Huntingfield's priory at Mendham in 1140. William FitzRobert establishes an abbey at Sibton (1150). Suffolk is rebellious. The king takes Ipswich in 1153. Bungay is besieged. At Bury, Prince Eustace wants the throne, demands assistance, in the form of money and food, from the abbott, which is refused. He retaliates by plundering the abbey's possessions. There is continuous internal strife in the county ; the barons have great power and are protected in their castles and fortified manor-houses. The people are maltreated and plundered. **Henry II (1154-1189).** Dondo Assini erects his monastery at Wangford in 1160, and Roger de Glanville and his wife establish a nunnery at Bungay. At Orford, the king builds a castle in 1165, and Bartholomew Glanville is constable It is the king's guard on Bigod's Framlingham stronghold. Ranulph de Glanville's Butley priory is erected in 1171. The sons of the king revolt ; Robert Beaumont, Earl of Leicester comes to their aid with Flemish men. They land at Walton in 1173 and Hugh Bigod joins them. At Dunwich they are repulsed. At Orford they are unable to storm the castle. At Haughley, Ranulph de Broc surrenders his castle. The

King's Constable and Richard de Lucy defeat them at Fornham St. Genevieve. All castles throughout the county which harbour rebels are dismantled : Walton, Bungay, Framlingham, Ipswich suffer. Hugh Bigod is powerless (1176). At Ipswich in 1177 a priory is founded. In 1182 Ranulph de Glanville's Leiston Abbey is built. Abbot Sampson establishes a hospital at Bury by the name of St. Saviour (1184). A priory becomes known at Blythburgh. At Bury in 1179* the Jews deride the crucifixion of Christ and murder a boy, Robert. At Beccles in 1183 they hang a man. The barons are virtually masters of the county and oppress the people. The king grants the manor of East Bergholt to the Knights Templar. Richard I (1189-1199). The king pays a visit to the shrine at Bury. Later he pays another visit on his return from the wars and offers the standard of Isaac, King of Cyprus. The remains of Bigod's castles are given back to him. Framlingham is rebuilt, Bungay remains desolate. Roger Bigod regains his earldom in 1189. At Bury in 1191 fifty-seven Jews are massacred, the rest banished the town. At Woodbridge in 1193 Ernaldus Rufus establishes his priory. Orford is granted its first charter. John (1199-1216). Ipswich in 1199 is granted its first charter. At Campsea Ash Theobald de Baloins establishes a nunnery. In 1201 Orford Castle is in the keeping of Robert de Grey. The king visits Bury in 1205. The Earls and Barons hold an assembly in opposition to the king at Bury. In this town the king confirms the Magna Charta. Bury is exalted. "Sacrarium Regis Cunabula Legis." Civil war breaks out. Roger Bigod surrenders Framlingham Castle to his king without resistance. Ipswich pays large sums of money to the barons at London. Henry III (1216-1272). Louis of France is invited over to England by rebellious barons. He ravages Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. In 1217 Hubert de Burgh surrenders his castle at Orford ; other castles fall. All the castles in Suffolk and Essex are held by Louis of France in 1217. (Source 18, page 58.) Louis plunders Bury and carries away the body of the royal martyr. This is denied. The manor of West Hall belongs to Robert de Burgh, Earl of Kent. The manor of Little Wenham is held by Petronilla de Holbroke. At Heveningham, the lord of the manor is Sir Philip de Heveningham. At Hadleigh, Hubert de Burgh builds himself a castle in 1231. Monastic building flourishes. At Clare, Richard de Clare in 1248 establishes an abbey. Nesta de Cokefield converts the chapel at Kersey into a priory. Roger FitsOsbert has his priory at Herringfield. Margery de Creke's nunnery at Flixton is in use. In 1264 there is conflict between the abbey and the town of Bury. In 1272 the king holds Parliament at Bury. The king dies at Bury the same year. A monastery is founded at Ipswich. Edward I (1272-1307). The constable of Orford Castle is Hugh de Dyneneton, who plunders the county. In 1281 the Earl Marshall is Roger Bigod ; he rebuilds his Bungay castle. At Orford a monastery is built, 1294. There is again conflict between the abbey and the town of Bury in 1292. At Bury in 1296 the king holds Parliament and demands the aid of his people. Robert de Vere obtains a charter for Lavenham. The king is at Ipswich in 1297. The Orford burgesses sink all Flemish ships in their port (1307). Edward II (1307-1327). The Earl of Norfolk is Thomas Brotherton, a son of Edward I. A tournament is held at Bungay in 1310. The lordship and castle of Bungay are granted to the Earl of Norfolk. In 1312 the king grants Orford castle to Nicholas de Sebrave. At Bannockburn, Gilbert, Lord of Clare, is killed, and his castle at Clare is given to his sister, Elizabeth, in 1314. Christmastide finds the king at Bury Abbey in 1326. His queen, Isabella, being dissatisfied with the conduct of the king's favourites, obtains the assistance of Prince Hainault and lands with armed force on the coast of Suffolk. Edward III (1327-1377). In 1327 the burgesses assemble at the guildhall at Bury and decide to compel the abbot of the monastery to make changes in the administration of the town's affairs and redress certain grievances ; they storm the abbey and cause great destruction. In 1328 the harbour of Dunwich is totally destroyed, and much damage is done to the town by the sea. At Bury in 1328 the abbot, Richard Drayton, is kidnapped and carried off to Flanders. In 1336 history becomes commerce : the Flemings, encouraged by the king, come to Hadleigh, Sudbury, Lavenham, Kersey, and the woollen industry is born. In 1335 Robert de Ufford is created Earl of Suffolk. It is the king's gratitude for his bravery at Poictiers. In 1338 the king is at Felixstow and sails from the Orwell to fight and defeat the French at Sluys. A vice-admiral, Sir John de Norwich, renders worthy assistance, and permission is granted him to crenellate his manor-house at Mettingham. The county is infested with brigands. At Stowmarket the church is their headquarters. In 1344 Helming Legette has royal license to fortify his manor at Hadleigh, Nicholas Bonde at Harkstead, John de Cockfield at Moulton. Ipswich obtains a license to fortify the walls of the town. In 1347 and 1348 are lean years. Furious storms, failure of crops,

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* Source 18, page 37, says "1181."

starvation and, above all, the Black Death. The living, town and royalties of Stowmarket are granted to St. Osyth's abbey (1348). In 1347 the abbey gate at Bury is completed. Matilda de Lancaster, Countess of Ulster, establishes a monastery at Bruiseyard in 1354. In 1359 Sir John de St. Philibertis, lord of the manor of Chelsworth. The monastery at Leiston, built by Robert de Ufford, is destroyed by fire in 1362. At Sudbury this year Simon Tybald establishes a college. At Wingfield Sir John de Wingfield, the counsellor of the Black Prince, establishes a college. The manor of Lowestoft belongs to John, Earl of Richmond. William de Ufford succeeds to the earldom in 1369. In 1370 Michael de la Pole erects Wingfield Castle. Richard II (1377-1399). De Norwich establishes a college at Mettingham. In 1381 Jack Straw's men commit excessive damage to the abbey at Bury. At Cavendish they plunder and burn the house of Sir John Cavendish. Sir John Cavendish is seized and beheaded. Abbot Cambridge (of Bury Abbey) is captured at Ickingham and killed. Richard de Lanham (of Lavenham), Sir John Lakenhythe and others suffer a like fate. The Earl of Suffolk barely escapes. At Barton Mills* the mob is defeated by Spencer, Bishop of Norwich. About this time the guildhall at Hadleigh is built. The abbey at Bury entertain the King and Queen in 1383. At Parliament, Westminster, William de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk, dies suddenly. Michael de la Pole is a great merchant and favourite of the king ; in 1385 he is created Earl of Suffolk. Parliament lays grave charges against him. He flees the country and dies in Paris in 1389. In 1393 Ralph Boteler is lord of the manor of Newton. Henry IV (1399-1413). In 1400 East Bergholt, due to its woollen industry, is exceedingly prosperous. In 1412 Noon is lord of the manor at Martlesham. Henry V (1413-1422). In 1415 the Earl of Suffolk is killed at Harfleur ; his son, Michael, the new earl, is killed the same year at Agincourt. The brother, William, becomes Earl. The town of Mildenhall rejoices as a citizen, Sir Henry Barton, is made Lord Mayor of London, 1416. Henry VI (1422-1461). The priory at Stoke by Clare is converted into a college in 1425 by Edmund Mortimer. Mannock buys from Gifford his hall at Stoke-by-Nayland in 1428. In 1433 the Abbot of Bury entertains the king at his grange at Elmswell. In 1446 the king holds Parliament at Bury ; fortified the town against the Duke of Gloucester. The Duke visits Bury privately, is arrested, imprisoned and dies. The Earl of Suffolk is made a marquis for his fighting services to the Crown in 1443 ; in 1447 he is made a duke. In 1447 a school is established at Ipswich. In 1448 Parliament is held at Bury. The Duke of Suffolk flees the country (on account of his share in the Hundred Years' War), is captured and beheaded in a boat off Dover in 1450. John, the son, is made Duke. Suffolk men are conspicuous in London ; these mentioned become Lord Mayor : Sir William Gregory, of Mildenhall, Sir John Mitchell, of Ickingham, Sir Richard Oteley, of Ufford, Sir John Paddesley, of Bury, Simon Eyre, of Brandon. Edward IV (1461-1483). Suffolk is extremely prosperous. The port of Ipswich flourishes ; its export trade is heavy. The lord of the manor of Framlingham is John Mowbray in 1461. Cooke of Lavenham is Lord Mayor of London in 1461, and in 1464 Josselyn of Long Melford is Lord Mayor. John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, is beheaded (1462). The king grants his castle at Clare to his tutor, Sir John Cheke. John Denston establishes a college at Denston. William Pykenham builds himself a house at Ipswich in 1471. At Brandeston, Revett builds himself a hall. Jankyn Smith presents the guildhall to the town of Bury. In 1477 a school is founded at Ipswich. The progress of the wool industry is due to the energy of the natives of Suffolk ; the few Flemings that settle here are of no material assistance to the industry. (Source 14, page 6.) In architecture, Flemish taste is apparent. Edward V (1483). Richard III (1483-1485). Henry VII (1485-1509). The castle of Framlingham is granted to John de Vere, Earl of Oxford. In 1486 the king is entertained at Bury. Kersey is prosperous, and much building is going on. William Woods founds a school at Sudbury in 1491. At Hadleigh Archdeacon Pykenham builds himself another house (1495)† The abbot and chapter of Bury Abbey is lord of the manor of Great Barton (1492). In 1506 Wolsey is rector of Redgrave. Thomas Howard erects the great tower at Framlingham Castle. Thomas Spring, the rich clothier of Lavenham, is guilty of misdeeds in making and selling cloth ; he applies for a general pardon, which is granted in 1508. (Source 10, page 11.) Henry VIII (1509-1547. The building of "halls" becomes apparent throughout the country. In 1513 Edmund, Earl of Suffolk, returns to England from exile and is executed by the king. Charles Brandon in 1514 is created Duke of Suffolk, and is granted the lordship of Henham, Huntingfield, etc. In 1524 Sir William Waldegrave

* Source 1, page 111, says "North Walsham."
† Source 12, page 172, says "1471."

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collects the Anticipation Tax for Cardinal Wolsey from the clothiers in the county. In 1525 the tax is again imposed. (Source 14, page 53.) In 1525 the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk meet at Bury and quell a formidable insurrection, due to imposition of taxes, that had arisen at Lavenham, Sudbury, etc. The castle at Framlingham is held by Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who dies in 1524, and is succeeded by his son. Richard Bayfield, a Bury monk, is burnt at Smithfield in 1532. In 1544 John Cornwallis, of Brome, is knighted for bravery at the seige of Morlaix, and is made steward of the household of Prince Edward. The Duke of Suffolk dies in 1545, and is succeeded by his son, Henry, who dies in 1551. In 1546 Kerby is burnt at Ipswich and Clarke at Bury. The priory at Ixworth is granted to Richard Codington. The monastery at Rumburgh is annexed by Cardinal Wolsey for his college at Ipswich. Tytson builds his hall at Hengrave, Tasburgh at Flixton. The Catelyns secure the manor house at Wingfield. The manors of Cookley, Huntingfield, amongst others, are granted to Anne of Cleves. Due to the war with Emperor Charles V, the export of wool suffers. Edward VI (1547-1553). In 1549 Ketts forms a camp at Mousehold Heath, near Norwich. On hearing this the peasants of Suffolk seize cannon at Lowestoft with the intention of destroying Yarmouth. The inhabitants, however, defeat them, and a great many are taken prisoners. In 1550 a school is founded at Bury. The king grants Framlingham castle to his sister Mary. In 1551 Henry Grey is created Duke of Suffolk. Croft builds himself a hall at West Stow, and Withipol at Christchurch Park by Ipswich. Mary (1553-1558). In 1553 Suffolk flares up in historic importance. Edward VI dies and Mary arrives at Framlingham castle. Jerningham and Bedingfield support her. She raises her standard and Suffolk men flock to the castle. Cornwallis, Drury, Tyrrel, Shelton, join her. 13,000 men assemble, require no pay, and ready to do her bidding. Food and drink pour in apace. Mary leaves for London and is crowned. Framlingham choked with food and drink, sells beer at 6d. per barrel. (Source 1, page 178.) The queen resumes the ownership of Clare Castle. In 1554 Framlingham castle reverts to the Howards. Winthrop is granted the living of Groton. In 1555 Rowland Taylor, Rector of Hadleigh, is burnt at Aldham Common, John Noyes at Laxfield, and Robert Samuel, Rector of East Bergholt, at Ipswich. In 1556 three persons are burnt at Bramford, two at Ipswich and two at Bury. Sulyards builds Haughley Park, the queen granting him the manor.

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED.

1. Raven : History of Suffolk.
2. Victoria County History.
3. Maxwell : Unknown Suffolk.
4. Morley : Travels in East Anglia.
5. Oliver : Old Houses and Village Buildings in East Anglia.
6. Dutt : Highways and Byways in East Anglia.
7. Pigot : Guide to Hadleigh.
8. Bayne : Royal Illustrated History of Eastern England.
9. British Museum : Pamphlet : Petition House of Commons. SIG m.l. (70).
10. Lexon-Conyngham : Lavenham Church and Town.
11. Whitehead : Lavenham, the Antiquities.
12. Gomme : Typographical History of Suffolk.
13. Dutt : Suffolk.
14. Cooper & Clark : Norfolk and Suffolk.
15. McClenagham : The Springs of Lavenham.
16. Thornhill : Historical Rambles in East Anglia.
17. Paterson : East Bergholt in Suffolk.
18. Redstone : Memorials of Old Suffolk.

No index is given ; the plates are alphabetically arranged.

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