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Notes on the Conventual Buildings

by T. S. Pope
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its proportions, low down in the wall, and intended more for observation than for light to the interior.

NOTES ON THE CONVENTUAL BUILDINGS.

By T. S. POPE, *Architect.*

THE upper room, now used as a granary, has a panelled ceiling of oak, with moulded ribs (*Plate VI., figs. 1 and 4*) of 15th century work. The panelling seems to extend further, and this chamber, measuring 11ft. 3in. \times 21ft. 4in., has an aperture of the form of a quatrefoil, by which persons in the upper room could see all that was taking place in the hall (*Plate VI., fig. 2*). At Little Sodbury, and other old manor houses, these apertures often take the form of masks, the hall being visible through the eyes of the mask. Under the granary is the cellar in which is the Norman shaft (*Plate VII., fig. 1*) possibly placed here to support the corn deposited above. This cellar is three steps below the ground floor level. Most probably the Norman shaft originally formed one of the supports of the cloister roof, and was removed here during one of the many alterations of the priory. In the north wall of the priory is the window figured on *Plate VI., fig. 3*, which seems to have been the key note to all the windows, etc., of the house when re-constructed and altered about the end of the 14th or very beginning of the 15th century, and is now the only perfect one remaining. The wall also merits attention. It is admirably executed with square blocks of freestone. In the corner of the cellar and adjoining the church is a small chamber in which, I am informed by those who have seen it opened, are the remains of a circular staircase, leading up to the panelled room, by which stairs, no doubt, the monks descended into the church, to say the night services. This is now walled up. Proceeding towards the south is, what appears to have been, the hall, judging from the remains of the oak trusses and carved corbels, of which five now exist. The reticulated window (*Plate VII. fig. 2*) is in this part of the house; the tracery is similar to that of a

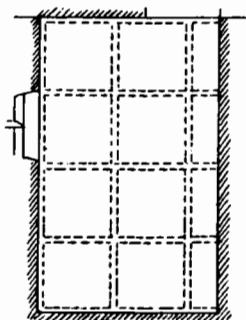


Fig. 1



Fig. 2.

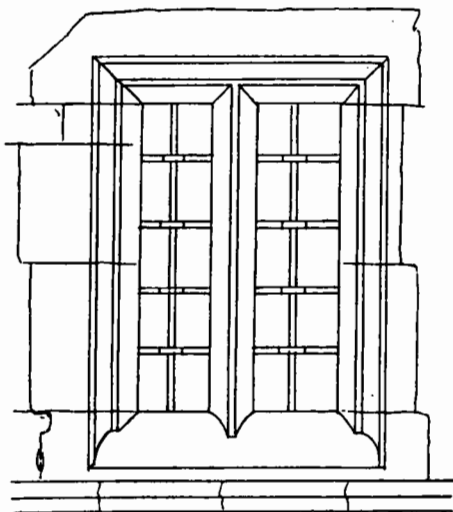
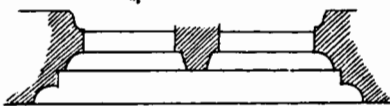


fig. 3.
Window in Cellar



Plan of Window Fig. 3.

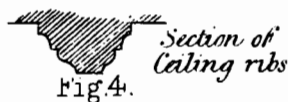
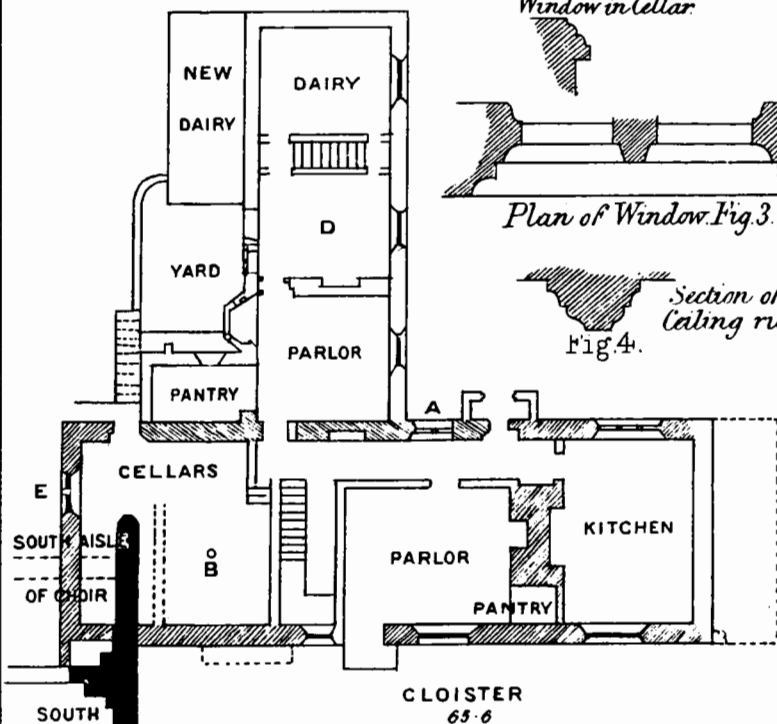


Fig. 4.



A. Reticulated Window. see detail Pl. VII Fig. 2.

B. Norman Pillar. Pl. VII Fig. 2.

C. Stairs from Solar. See Pl. I and Pl. II.

D. Eastern Wing.

Scale of Plan, 22 F. to an Inch.

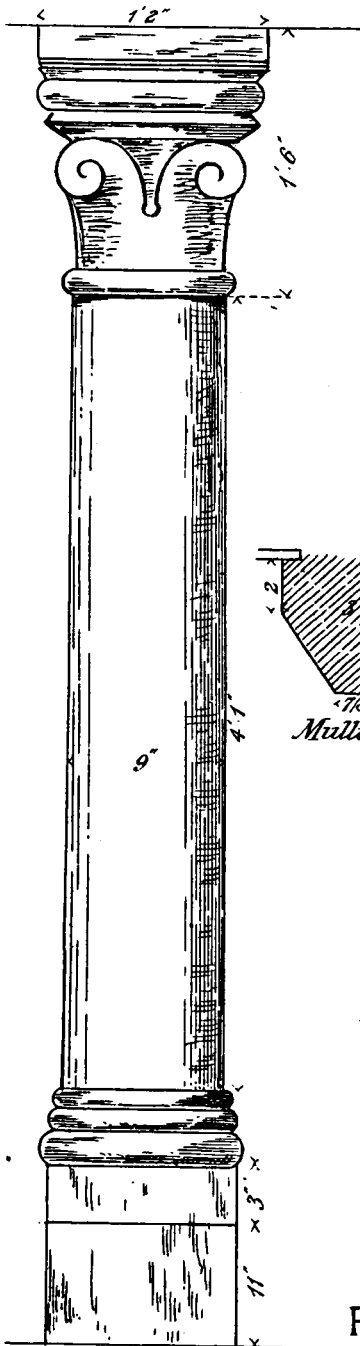
DESIGNED BY GEORGE G. BOYD

window in Clevedon Court. It has been heightened, as shewn by a dotted line across it. The corbels, which have carved heads, are of much the same date as the window, or, perhaps, a little later. At the south end of the hall are two entrances, one, now used as a pantry, into what would, from the size of the chimney, seem to have been the kitchen, but this room has been much reduced in length since Mr. Buckley made his sketch (see dotted lines) and the south wall has evidently been rebuilt see Lysons' view of the end of house with windows).¹ Lysons also shews a large gable window in the roof, now removed, which probably gave light to the hall. The long range of buildings extending eastwards and forming the north side of the inner quadrangle marked D on the *plan Plate VI.* has been entirely rebuilt, in part from the old materials, within the last half century. How it was originally occupied it is now impossible to state with any approach to certainty. Lysons, in his view of the north side of this structure, which would seem to have been of a mean character, shews a lofty projecting chimney indicating a large fireplace suitable for hall or kitchen. It is probable that this range, forming one side of the quadrangle, which would seem to have been surrounded on the other sides by the farm buildings, was appropriated to the Lay Brethren or farm servants, and that the chimney in question was that of their kitchen and dining hall. Judging from the ground, I cannot help thinking the Abbey entrance stood just where the entrance to the Farmyard now is, which would be very nearly opposite the Saxon chapel. It does not seem to me probable that the entrance would have been through the great cloister.

Mr. Hudd sends me the following extract :—“Bigland says (Gloucestershire, vol. i., p. 464), adjoining and communicating with the chancel are remains of the Priory, now modernised. The old inhabitants of the village describe a very spacious hall and other apartments, which formed the quadrangle, at this time (about a hundred years ago) almost in ruins.” The hall was probably the refectory which would have formed the south side of cloister garth.

¹ Gloucestershire Antiquities, Pl. LV. 2.

² Lysons' Pl. LV. 2.



Pillar in House
Fig. 1.

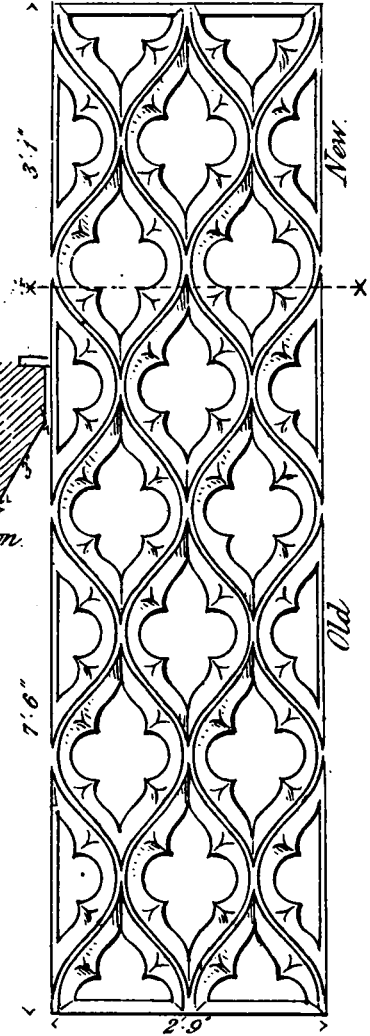
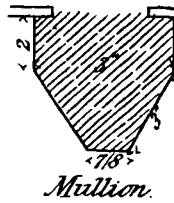


Fig. 2.

PRIORY DEERHURST.

Mr. Butterworth writes : "a very intelligent and aged man in the village tells him he well remembers the priory buildings before the last alteration made about 50 years ago. He says that at that time there was a kind of inner quadrangle. Some distance from the house stood once a pigeon-house, the columbarium, and to the eastward of the church stood a large barn."

Mr. Butterworth also states, that when improving the churchyard they found great quantities of small stones, the garden wall being 6ft. to the east of the west end of church, which Mr. Butterworth thinks, (and no doubt justly so) was the site of the buildings on the west side of the cloister garth. The soil of the churchyard is full of fragments of wrought stone, and it is not unlikely these are the remains of the guest-house and abbot's lodgings, which occasionally formed the western side of the cloister, and this, I think, was the case here. I cannot help thinking the eastern wing, above referred to was used by the Lay brothers, but in these points I must defer to others more learned in such plans than myself.

The plan of the Benedictine houses were all very similar, and very likely the plan for this house was brought from Italy by the earliest monks. Mr. Butterworth's discovery of the two triangular openings in the eastern wall of the church having been windows makes a theoretical and probable restoration comparatively easy as they were most likely clerestory windows. Mr. Buckley's plan agrees with Lysons' views.
