

THE PILGRIMS' HALL, WINCHESTER

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ABSTRACT

The substantial medieval building known as the 'Pilgrims' Hall', Winchester, merits further study than it has received to date. This paper describes not only the well-known hammer-beam roof of the Hall itself but also the concealed timber-framing of a second, adjoining hall of the same 'build', complete with service bay: a more typical medieval hall, in fact, than the actual 'Pilgrims' Hall' which is probably mis-named. This second hall formed part of the same original building as the Pilgrims' Hall but was converted into a dwelling-house in the 17th century. Its remains are of particular significance in the study of aisled-hall derivatives, for they include a hitherto unknown base-cruck truss. Also described are the remains of an early form of wainscotting. A comparison of the two halls with other related examples, together with a study of the joints employed in the framing, and the decorative details, suggest a construction date at the beginning of the 14th century.

INTRODUCTION

The 'Pilgrims' Hall' stands in the south-east corner of Winchester Cathedral Close. Its present name derives from a suggestion by an 18th-century local historian, the Roman Catholic bishop John Milner, that the hall might have been constructed as accommodation for pilgrims visiting the shrine of St Swithun (Milner 1798, 140): no evidence exists, however, to support this conjecture. There is little doubt that by 1626 the hall was in use as the 'Common Brewhouse' of the Dean & Chapter of Winchester (Crook 1981, 110–19): after the Restoration of 1660, it was adapted to serve as the Dean's stable and coach-house. The building was restored in 1959, when a 17th-century hay-loft was removed, and the floor excavated to its assumed original level: a gallery and stage were formed for the use of the 'Pilgrims' School', present custodians of the hall.

It is not immediately apparent from the Close that the Pilgrims' Hall itself constitutes rather less than half of the original building, the greater

part of which was converted into the adjoining house (now part of the school) in the 17th century. Behind its brick façade and 17th-century front wing, work that has been attributed on dubious grounds to Sir Christopher Wren, the house is considerably dependent, both in structure and in plan, on the medieval framing contained within it.

It is somewhat surprising that such a well-known building, though frequently mentioned in works relating to medieval architecture, has not been the subject of a detailed structural description since it was first studied by Norman Nisbett in the late 19th century (Nisbett 1894). Furthermore, Nisbett's account involves only half the medieval structure, for most of the timber framing incorporated in the house was then inaccessible; and he misinterpreted what little of it was then visible. One of his successors as Architect to the Dean & Chapter, T D Atkinson, mentioned the Pilgrims' Hall in a number of publications (Atkinson 1934, 41; 1942, 146–7; 1947, 114); and he is said to have drawn the attention of Nathaniel Lloyd to the hall, who thus included it in his classic work on the English house (Lloyd 1931, 358). More recently, the hall has figured in books on medieval architecture by Geoffrey Webb (1956, 189) and John Harvey (1972, 135–6). Nisbett's paper, however, remained the standard account of the structure. His elevation of the hammer-beam trusses, though inaccurate, was reproduced in J T Smith's paper on the classification of medieval roofs (Smith 1958, 123), where the building is erroneously entitled 'Strangers' Hall': it appears also in a more recent article by the same author (Smith 1970, 255). The hall is briefly described in Margaret Wood's wide-ranging book (Wood 1965, 295). An accurate set of unpublished drawings of the building was submitted to the National Monuments Record (NMR 1959/34–38) by the architect responsible for the restoration of the Pilgrims' Hall in 1959, the late



Fig. 1. Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Hammer-beam truss V and end truss VII viewed from the south. Photo A F Kersting.

Mr Wilfred Carpenter Turner. A series of photographs in *Country Life* (8 April 1922, 478–9) illustrates clearly the state of the hall before this restoration took place.

DESCRIPTION

A description of this building naturally begins in the Pilgrims' Hall itself, which Nikolaus Pevsner calls 'a hall of the mid C14 memorable

as having the earliest hammerbeam roof so far identified' (Pevsner & Lloyd 1967, 688). The area now occupied by the school stage and the room behind the modern framing above it were annexed to the adjoining house in 1739 (Crook

1981, 113): the hall originally extended as far as the wall at the back of the stage. Thus the hall consisted of a chamber 13.2 m long by 9.3 m wide (43 × 31 ft) divided by two hammer-beam trusses into three bays, each approximately

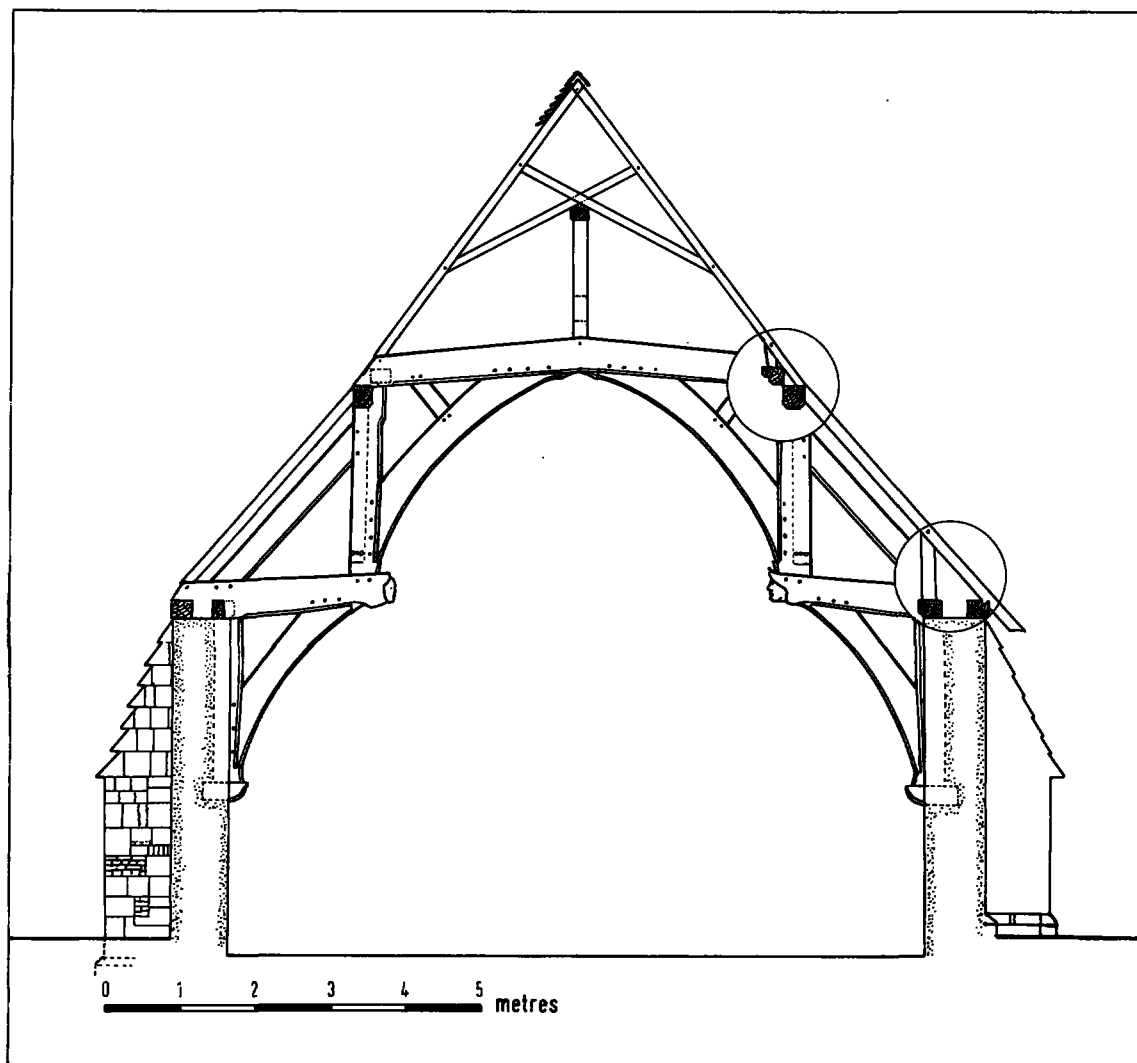


Fig. 2. Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Elevation of hammer-beam truss. Scale 1:100.

4.4 m (14 ft) in length.

The elevation (Fig. 2) shows a typical truss: the insets show the construction between the trusses. The buttresses on the east side of the

building appear to be original, but those on the west side were rebuilt in 1959 on the original plinths which were discovered at that time. The difference in level between the plinths of the east

and west buttresses must reflect the eastwards fall in ground level at the date the hall was built: the east plinths lie 20 cm below the present surface and 95 cm below the level to which the ground had risen by 1959, when the level was lowered on both sides of the building. It seems possible that the dressed stonework of the buttresses continues through the thickness of the walls; but between the buttresses, the wall consists of flint and rubble, faced with roughly-coursed flints. The occasional blocks of re-used stone are probably not original, but the result of periodic repairs to the facing. A study of the masonry of the hall is beyond the scope of this paper: suffice it to say that the walls have clearly been subject to much alteration during the life of the building, particularly on the west side. Only two lancet window splays on the east side appear to be original: other windows and doors were inserted, blocked or adapted from time to time according to the demands of the various uses to which the hall was put over the centuries.

The hammer-beam trusses of the Pilgrims' Hall offer an interesting comparison with the aisled forms from which they derive. Analogous to aisle posts are the hammer posts supported by the hammer beams themselves: the latter are arch-braced from wall posts half-embedded in the masonry and resting on stone corbels. The hammer beams are cross-halved over the double wall plate as indicated: further linking of these plates is provided by short pieces dove-tailed between the plates at irregular intervals. The triangulation of hammer beam and hammer post is completed by an inclined 'rear hammer brace' which J T Smith (1958, 123) defines as 'a successor to the large curved braces tying the wall of an aisled hall firmly to the arcade'. The hammer posts of the Pilgrims' Hall have modest jowls which, in view of the comparatively massive size of the posts, appear to be more concessions to prevailing style than functional features. Nevertheless, the jowls do contribute to the width of the upstand around the arcade plate, and thus to the length of the tenon of the post/tie beam joint.

The arcade plates are continuous throughout the whole length of the building, including the house, and are scarf-jointed at alternate trusses, close to the supporting hammer posts. The

plates are further supported by pairs of curved braces springing from the foot of each hammer post, and these braces form a vestigial 'arcade' although they do not meet at their apex. Also derived from the aisled hall tradition is the moulded cornice adjacent to each arcade plate: unlike the plate, the cornice or 'flying plate' is not continuous but made up of intermittent sections or 'cornice pieces' which are tenoned between the tie beams. These features are indicated in the perspective drawing of the assembly detail (Fig. 3).

Each tie beam is supported centrally by two large braces springing from the foot of the pairs of hammer posts in a gothic arch. A short additional strut links each brace to the tie beam, bisecting the spandrels. Much of the visual appeal of the hall derives from the echoing of structural features, and the braces repeat the form of the lower braces to the hammer beams: the four braces make a pointed trefoil arch. The tie beam supports a type of crown post which in turn supports a central purlin, but there is no kind of collar at this point. Thus the only braces springing from the crown posts are the long, scarcely curved braces from the foot of each post to the purlin in the longitudinal plane. Strictly speaking therefore the term 'crown post' is incorrect, but it is retained following J T Smith (1958, 123) and Eric Mercer (1975, 84). The scantling of posts and longitudinal braces is 'uniform', a feature which has implications for the construction date of the building. There being no upper collars, each rafter couple is stiffened by scissor braces which are chase-tenoned into the rafters and cross-halved at their intersection where they rest on the central purlin which is chamfered to receive them. While such an arrangement is clearly advantageous in preventing movement of individual rafter couples in the transverse plane, it does not appear to have been effectual in preventing longitudinal 'racking', and the apex of each rafter couple may be seen to have moved some 45 cm southwards.

It will be noted from Figs. 2 and 3 that the rafters of the upper roof triangle are housed in the upper faces of the arcade plates and further braced by diminutive, inclined ashlar pieces, with the exception of the 'principal' rafters

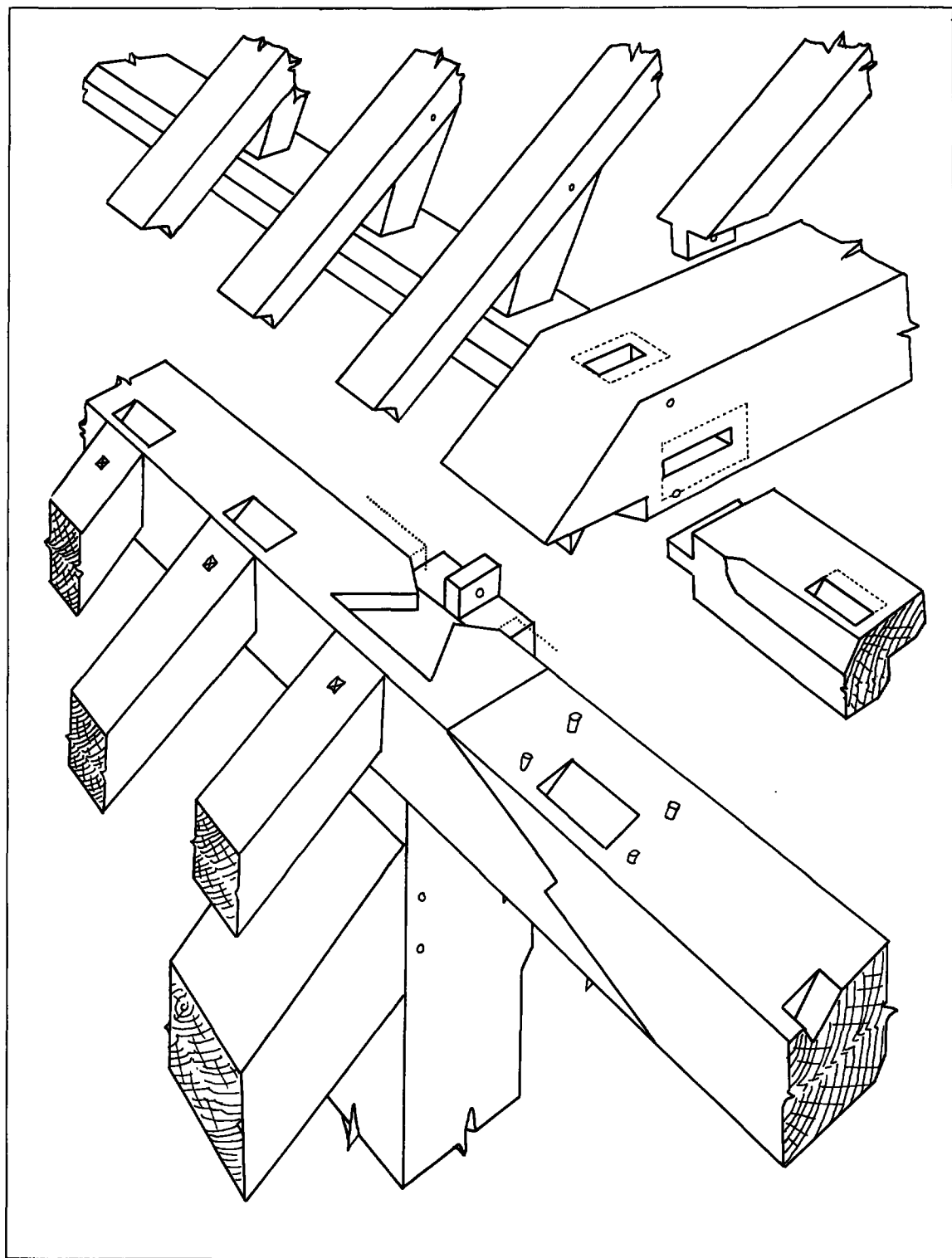


Fig. 3. Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Lap dovetail joint and rafter assembly at west end of truss III.

(which are of the same scantling as the 'commons'). The rafters of the lower roof slope, deriving as they do from the lean-to aisles of the earlier-established tradition of construction, are supported independently of the upper triangle: each rafter is spiked to the outer face of the arcade plate, notched at its base over the outer wall plate, and given further rigidity by means of a nearly vertical ashlar piece chase-tenoned into it and housed on the inner wall plate (Fig. 2, lower inset). These details of the rafter structure were wrongly recorded by Nisbett (1894, 74a) whose elevation shows the rafters as originally continuous from ridge to eaves.

Apart from the heads carved in the end-grain of the hammer beams, the decorative detail of the Pilgrims' Hall is sparse. The soffits of the main truss timbers are chamfered as indicated in Fig. 2. The 'arcade' braces from the hammer posts to the arcade plate are similarly chamfered, with the addition of a single horizontal roll chamfer stop at either end. The cornice pieces are moulded as indicated by the section in Fig. 3: the moulding is terminated by a simple chamfer stop at the end of each cornice piece. In short, the visual appeal of the hall relies on shape rather than detail: its sober simplicity is pleasing to modern eyes.

The trusses of the Pilgrims' Hall bear a clear and logical series of carpenters' marks on all their main timbers, those on the east side being distinguished by a 'tag'. From north to south, the hammer trusses are numbered V and IIII: the presence of three more original cross-frames to the south might therefore have been inferred even if no medieval timberwork had survived in the adjoining house. In fact all the trusses of the three bays now incorporated in the house have survived. Fig. 4 shows the outline of the original building and the disposition of the trusses, superimposed on a modern plan of the hall and house. The numerals III and II are visible on the surviving timbers of the next two trusses southwards: carpenters' marks have not been located on truss I, but a single chisel-stroke is naturally less easy to detect.

The numbering of the end trusses requires some explanation. The flint and rubble wall at the north end of the hall is surmounted by an

'end truss' bearing the numeral VII on various members. The most likely explanation of the apparent anomaly is that truss VI was the corresponding end truss at the south of the building. Unfortunately, little of the south end truss remains: it is possible that much of the structure was removed when the house was extended to the south during the first half of the 18th century. Nevertheless, some of the upper roof structure survived this extension; and the remaining fragments of the medieval roof, including a surviving hip rafter, show that this end of the roof was originally half-hipped. The hip rafters joined the southernmost common rafter couple approx. 60 cm below the apex, where this particular pair of common rafters is linked by a tenoned collar, thus forming a triangular gablet, possibly a smoke vent.

It will be seen from Fig. 4 that the three bays now incorporated in the house were originally divided by a closed truss into two compartments of two and one bay respectively. There is little reason to doubt that the massive flint walls still surviving in the Pilgrims' Hall formerly continued through the entire length of the building as indicated by the broken lines on the plan. A small excavation beneath the 17th-century cellarage in the south-west corner of the house has revealed the chalk foundations of a wall, at least 90 cm thick, at the point marked 'A': these remains, 25 cm below the present lower ground floor level, correspond exactly to the projected line of the original wall. It seems that the 17th-century east wall of the house was constructed in brick on the original footings. There can be no doubt that all the trusses shown in Fig. 4 are coeval: this is proved by the surviving longitudinal members (arcade plate, cornice and central purlin) which, like the scissor bracing, continue through the entire length of the building, both the Pilgrims' Hall and the adjoining house.

The three bays now incorporated in the house were separated from the Pilgrims' Hall to the north by truss III and its underlying cross-wall. The footings of this cross-wall have survived and are visible through the inspection hatch in the stage of the Pilgrims' Hall. The wall consists of coursed, knapped flints in a pinkish, chalky matrix, on a foundation of chalk blocks similar to

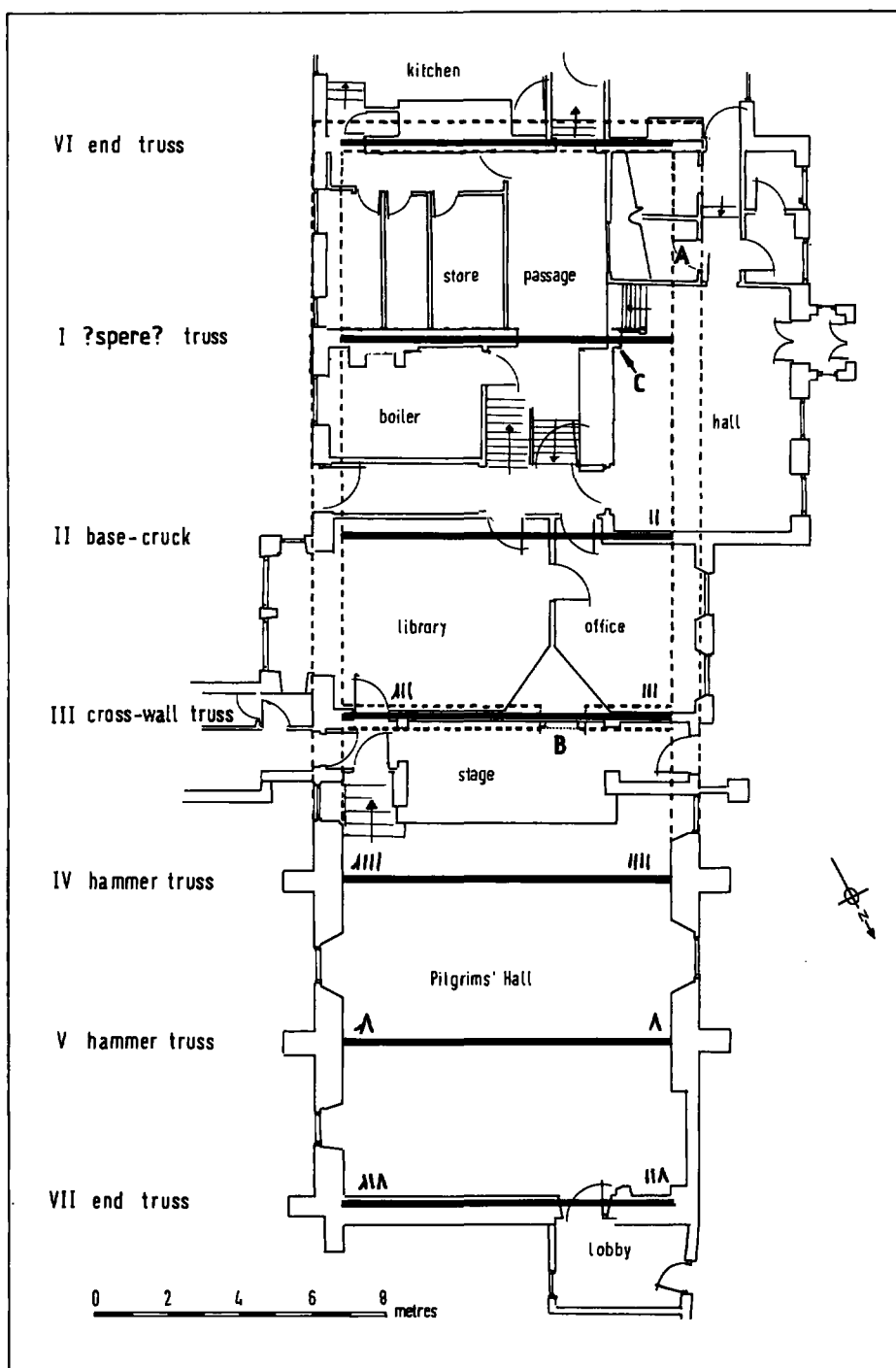


Fig. 4. Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester and adjoining house showing position of trusses and original walls. Scale 1:200.

those discovered in the excavation described above. It was on these footings that the 17th-century brick wall at the rear of the stage was built. By that date, the floor level of the hall appears to have risen to that now represented by the level of the stage: the flint wall being considered sound, the brick wall was built upon it without excavation.

One feature of this wall is the remains of an early, perhaps original doorway at the point marked 'B' in Fig. 4 (*see also* Fig. 5). Only the impressions of the jambs survive: posts measuring 18×15 cm and 90 cm apart; and also the impression of a sill (15×15 cm) whose level, 91 cm below that of the stage, corresponds accurately to the supposed 'original' floor level of the Pilgrims' Hall which was determined by excavation in 1959. It seems that this doorway was blocked at an early date (before the floor level of the hall had risen appreciably): the infill material consists of chalk rubble in a greyish, chalky matrix; and the impression of the wood-grain of jambs and sill is still visible in this matrix. Such are the sole discovered remains of any original entrance to the Pilgrims' Hall.

Most of truss III was removed in the 17th century when the replacement wall was built. This wall continues up to the underside of the tie beam; but the mortices of the timberwork which it replaced are visible in the soffit of the tie beam and imply a structure not unlike that of the north end truss VII.

Fig. 5 shows a hypothetical reconstruction of truss III viewed from the north. It is interesting to compare this cross frame structure with that of the hammer trusses in the Pilgrims' Hall. The 'hammer posts' (of which only the sawn-off tenon (east side) and the empty mortice (west side) survive) were probably identical in form to those of the hammer trusses, but, as in the case of truss VII, they were almost certainly supported on a long, transverse wall plate: a form of raised aisle construction. While the complex joint between the post, the plate and the tie beam (Fig. 3) is the same as in the open trusses, the tie beam itself is of a different profile from those of the hammer trusses: it is flat rather than cambered, and supported by a pair of almost straight braces which, as the surviving mortices

and peg-holes show, were chase-tenoned into the tie beam at a third of its length from each side. These differences might suggest that the size of the massive arch braces of the hammer trusses was determined by aesthetic as much as structural considerations, for the timbers of smaller scantling employed in truss III were evidently considered adequate for use in this closed truss where they would be less visible. It is true, however, that the transverse wall plate would have provided rigidity absent at this point in the open, hammer trusses.

A 3 cm channel cut in the soffit of the tie beam, together with the fact that the braces were set back slightly, suggests a form of partitioning between the transverse wall plate and the tie beam. This may well have consisted of vertical oak boards like those which have survived in truss I and which will be described in due course. At an unknown date, this partitioning was carried up to the undersides of the scissor bracing by means of studs of rough timber housed in crudely-cut sockets cut in the upper face of the tie beam, and nailed to the rafters or scissor braces above. Most of the studs were removed during the restoration of the hall in 1959, but two of them survive as examples. Although their workmanship is of poor quality compared to the rest of the hall, they may date from the earliest days of the building; for it is noticeable that whereas the roof timbers of the Pilgrims' Hall, and the studs themselves, show considerable sooting, this sooting is absent on the former interfaces of the studs, where removed, and the scissor braces.

The other closed truss, number I, at the south end of the two-bay chamber, is similar to truss III in its uncambered tie beam and relatively straight braces. However, as Fig. 6 shows, the posts do not appear to have been supported on a transverse wall plate, and the transverse timber bearing a superficial resemblance to the wall plate of cross-wall III is in fact tenoned into the posts themselves. There is, furthermore, no evidence of an underlying cross-wall in the cellarage of the house. There can be little doubt that the posts of this closed truss were originally full-length aisle posts, continuing down to ground level. It is unfortunate that in recent

years the construction of a chimney to the boiler-room shown in Fig. 4 involved the shortening of the east post, which is now supported by a steel girder just below the level of the transverse beam. The west post seems to have survived for a much greater length, though concealed for most

of that length behind the 17th-century oak paneling of the entrance hall where a sally in the wall to the left of the flight of six stairs leading out of the hall betrays its position, directly below the arcade plate (Fig. 4, point 'C'). The lower end of the post, identified by its width, grain and

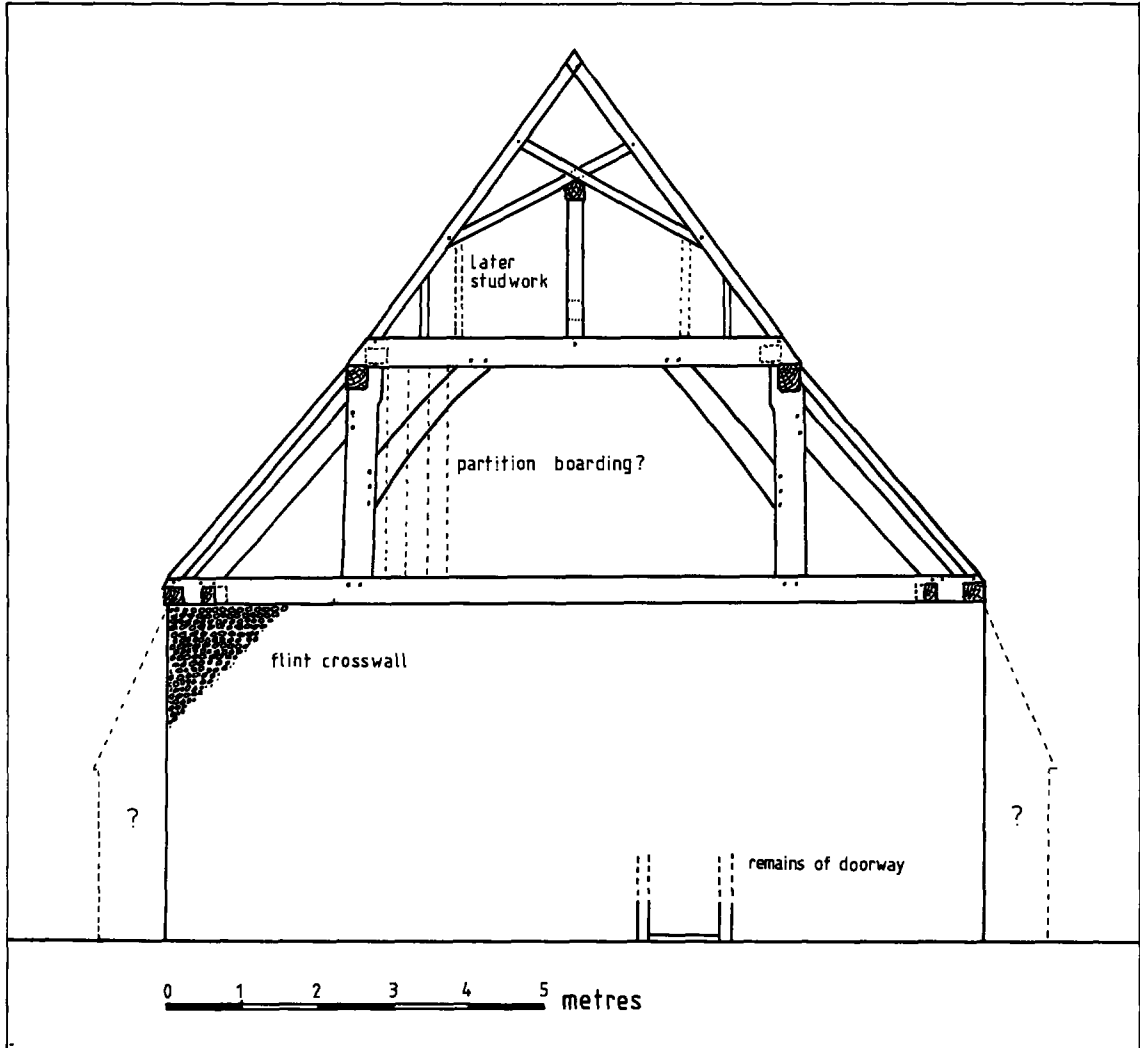


Fig. 5. Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Cross-wall truss III viewed from north. Scale 1:100.

position, is visible in the wall of the basement cupboard under the flight of stairs: it was cut short in the 17th century, some 175 cm above basement floor level, and is now supported on

the plate of a short brick wall as indicated, wedges having been driven in to ensure firm underpinning.

While all timbers west of the west aisle post

were removed during the 17th-century remodelling of the front of the house, on the east side the brace corresponding to the 'rear hammer braces' of the Pilgrims' Hall has survived. No evidence remains as to how it joined the side walls of the building.

One of the most interesting features of this closed truss is the surviving fragment of vertical oak boarding which formed the partition above

the transverse beam (Fig. 6). The feather-edged boards, 3 cm thick, are rebated into the transverse beam and the tie beam, while the rebates in the triangle formed by the aisle post, the transverse beam and the rear brace (and also above the brace) show that this partitioning completely filled the space between the two roof slopes, up to tie beam level. The rebate is proved to be original by the fact that the pegs securing the

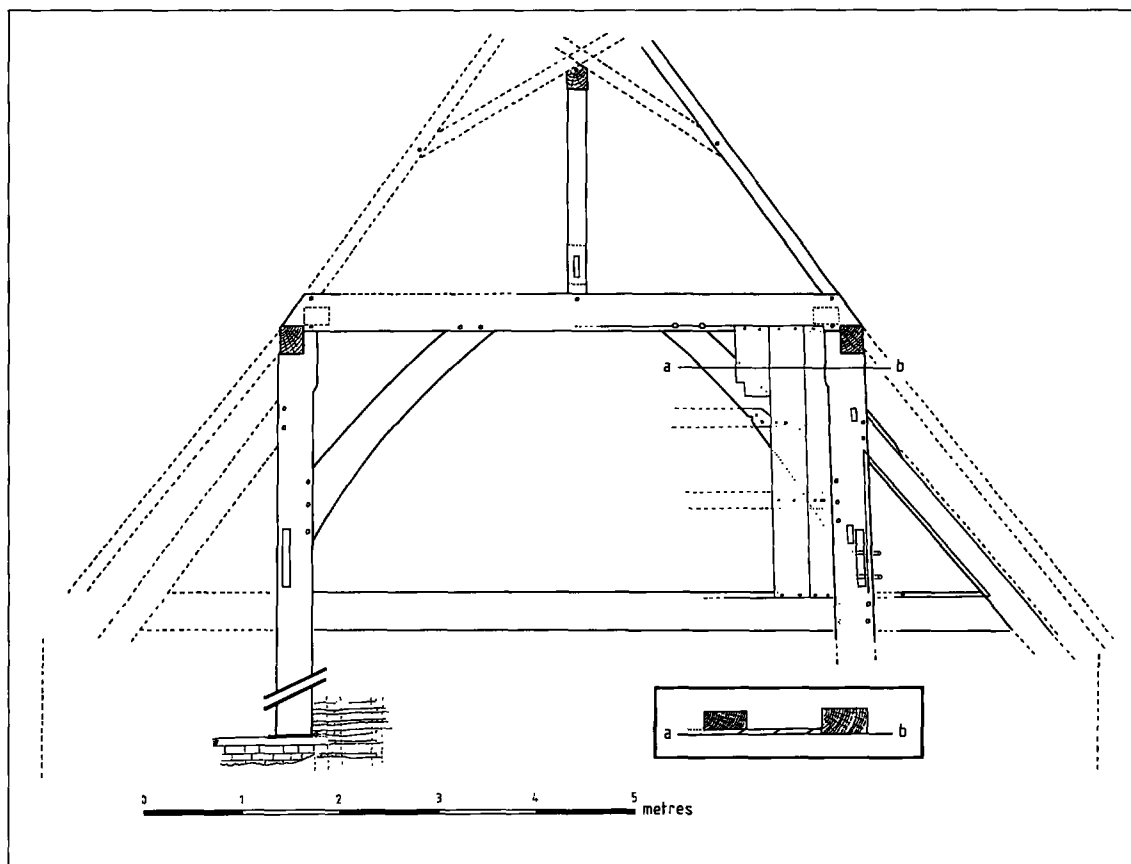


Fig. 6. House adjoining Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Closed truss I viewed from south. Solid lines indicate surviving timberwork.

brace/tie beam tenon are intact as indicated: the rebate was therefore cut before the truss was assembled. The rebates being original, it seems probable that the boarding which they were cut to receive is also original. The inset shows how the brace is set back by 3 cm so that the boarding

may lie against it. The boards were further supported by two horizontal rails, of which part of the lower one survives: these were attached to the braces by means of a crude form of nailed lap joint. The boards were nailed to the truss timbers and to the rails. They owe their survival

to the fact that they were plastered over in the 17th century: they were discovered a few years ago when the construction of the new boiler-room chimney involved some rebuilding of the cross-wall, and they now form a decorative feature of a first-floor drawing-room.

There is also evidence of partitioning above tie beam level similar to that of truss III: the same crudely-cut mortices are seen on the upper surface of the tie beam, and remains of the nails which attached the studs to the upper roofwork have been found on the underside of the scissor braces above.

The large, empty mortices near the base of the east arcade post shows how the longitudinal 'arcade' braces were removed, probably in the 17th century. The two smaller mortices seem to have been intended to receive rails supporting a partition wall at right-angles to the truss: it is likely that this partition was added in the first half of the 17th century when the south bay of the building was in use as a stable (Crook 1981, 116).

The two-bay chamber contained between trusses I and III formed what was effectively a second hall, 10.4 m (34 ft) long, complete with a probable service bay (possibly divided into two floors) to the south. In this respect, it is a more typical medieval hall than the surviving, wrongly-named 'Pilgrims' Hall'. A consideration of the possible use of such a 'double hall' is outside the scope of this paper.

The central open truss of the second hall is of particular interest (Fig. 7). The profile of the tie beam is similar to that of the hammer trusses IV, and V, and although the crown post has been removed, and the upper surface of the tie beam planed down as shown, the roofing assembly above the tie beam was formerly identical to that of the other trusses. However, the structure below the tie beam is quite different. The two massive braces, though superficially similar at their upper ends to the arch braces of the hammer trusses, lie at a very different angle to the tie, and are not supported by any *quasi* aisle posts. The evidence is fragmentary; for much of the west part of the truss was removed in the 17th century, and the surviving parts of the truss were concealed behind the panelling of a par-

tition wall. Only those parts of the truss indicated in Fig. 7 by solid lines are at present visible (and that with difficulty); but enough may be seen, probed and measured for the original form of this truss to be deduced.

It is in fact a base-cruck truss, as is shown by the remains of the west base-cruck blade, tenoned into the arcade plate, and the profile of the east brace and the lower end of the base-cruck blade into which this brace abuts. An unusual feature is the short post between the brace and the tie beam immediately below the cornice: its dual purpose appears to have been to provide an abutment for the upper end of the base-cruck blade and to create a more rigid joint in this part of the assembly by 'trapping' the arcade plate; for the absence of pegs in the visible portion of the blade suggests that the brace was not chase-tenoned into the blade along its entire length as one might expect by comparison with other examples of this construction. Indeed, the 17th-century builders responsible for converting this end of the building into a house appear to have had misgivings about this part of the assembly, reinforcing it with stirrup straps and forelock bolts.

When the front wing of the house was added, in the 17th century, the west brace was shortened just above the point where it butted into the base-cruck blade; but this junction may be seen on the east side of the truss: the shape of the brace may therefore be reconstructed with reasonable accuracy, even though so much is concealed by the present wall-cladding. Both brace and blade are of the same thickness (25 cm) and both are chamfered, giving the impression of a huge arch brace. It will be seen that the east brace and blade now present a misleadingly asymmetric aspect due to an anti-clockwise rotation of approximately five degrees. The joints between this pair of timbers and the tie beam appear to have held while the tenon between the brace and the tie beam has split as indicated. It seems possible that this movement was caused by outward collapse of the 17th-century brick wall which replaced the original wall, presumably buttressed, whose position is indicated in the drawing. This brick wall probably pre-dated the major alterations which

the house underwent in 1687 by some 25 years (Crook 1981, 120): it is clear that the outward movement of the base of the truss occurred before the supplementary ironwork was fitted. It is noticeable that in recent years, the brick wall has continued its outward collapse despite the buttressing effect of a 19th-century bay window.

The conjectural form of the original brace/blade assembly is indicated in Fig. 7 by broken lines completing the surviving and visible portions of the west side of the truss. The position of these timbers in relation to the projected position of the medieval walls suggests that the cruck blade was partly embedded in the wall. The cruck blades may have been supported on stone corbels like those supporting the hammer truss wall posts: if so, the truss would be described as a 'raised base cruck' (a term which Eric Mercer (1975, 97) rejects as 'a misleading oxymoron', in favour of 'middle cruck').

Although the evidence has largely been removed or concealed by subsequent modifications to the building, nothing suggests that the base-cruck hall was ever divided into two floors. It is equally uncertain whether the presumed 'service' bay to the south was thus divided before the 17th century: the carefully-formed 'wainscotting' of truss I might suggest that this was the case, but the available information is insufficient: the lower part of truss I, and possible indications, are concealed by the present wall cladding.

DATING AND PARALLELS

The medieval remains include a number of features which may assist in establishing the date of construction. In previous studies of the Pilgrims' Hall, dating has relied largely on circumstantial evidence. Thus Nisbett (1894, 77) suggested that as one of the carved heads terminating the hammer beams represents a crowned youth, it might be intended as a portrait of Edward III who ascended the throne in 1327 at the age of fourteen.

'Of the other heads,' he continued, 'one shews the hair worn as in the effigy of Edward II on his tomb. We may therefore probably assume that this roof was constructed about the middle of the

14th century.'

In the absence (as he admitted elsewhere in the paper) of comparable structures to which to relate the hall, Nisbett emphasised one of the few obviously datable features of the building. The evidence is certainly important, but not conclusive; and it is by no means certain that the 'crowned youth' is intended to represent an actual person, any more than the other heads: a peasant, an old man, and an unidentified character whose effigy has suffered the ravages of time. The stylistic details of the heads (Figs. 9, 10) will be discussed later.

Another suggested date relies partly on documentary evidence. The *Receiver's Roll of John of Merlawe* (Kitchin 1892, 230), dated 1334-5, refers to the new building of a 'grange' within the precincts of the Priory of St Swithun: *In maeremio empto pro nova grangia infra Prioratum de novo construenda xviij^o viij^o*^d. The obedientiary roll includes the cost of roofing the grange in slate, a roofing material imported from Delabole in Cornwall via Southampton, which was used extensively in Winchester from the 12th century (Wood 1965, 295). When the floor of the Pilgrims' Hall was lowered to its assumed original level, in 1959, a layer of broken slates was discovered where they had apparently been allowed to fall when the hall was re-roofed at an early date. It may be calculated that the number of slates quoted by John of Merlawe (94,000 slates) would suffice to roof the entire medieval building. The discovery of the slates was one factor which led the Cathedral Architect, Wilfred Carpenter Turner, to speculate that the building was the *nova grangia*. His findings were reported by D M Wilson (1957, 152), but the date of the Roll of John of Merlawe was unfortunately misquoted as 1325-6, an error which was perpetuated in subsequent studies (Wood 1965, 295; Harvey 1972, 136).

The evidence examined so far is circumstantial. Meanwhile an attempt may be made to date the building by a comparative study of the joints used (following the lines of investigation developed by Cecil Hewett), and by comparison with other buildings of more certain date showing structural similarities to the Pilgrims' Hall.

Fig. 3 shows two relevant details from the west

end of tie beam III. First is the lap dovetail joint between the tie beam and the arcade plate. It is similar in its profile to an example, which Hewett suggests is an early form, from the Wheat Barn at Cressing Temple, Essex, which radiocarbon methods have shown to date from *c.* AD 1255 (Hewett 1980, 273). An interesting variant occurs at the east end of the same tie

beam, where the dovetail profile is modified to a form with square entry-shoulders (indicated by light dotted lines): the same modification is found at the west dovetail of truss II. It is possible that the choice of different forms reflects peculiarities of the timber used: the suggestion made by Rackham *et al* (1978, 117) to explain the variant lap-joints employed in the scissor-

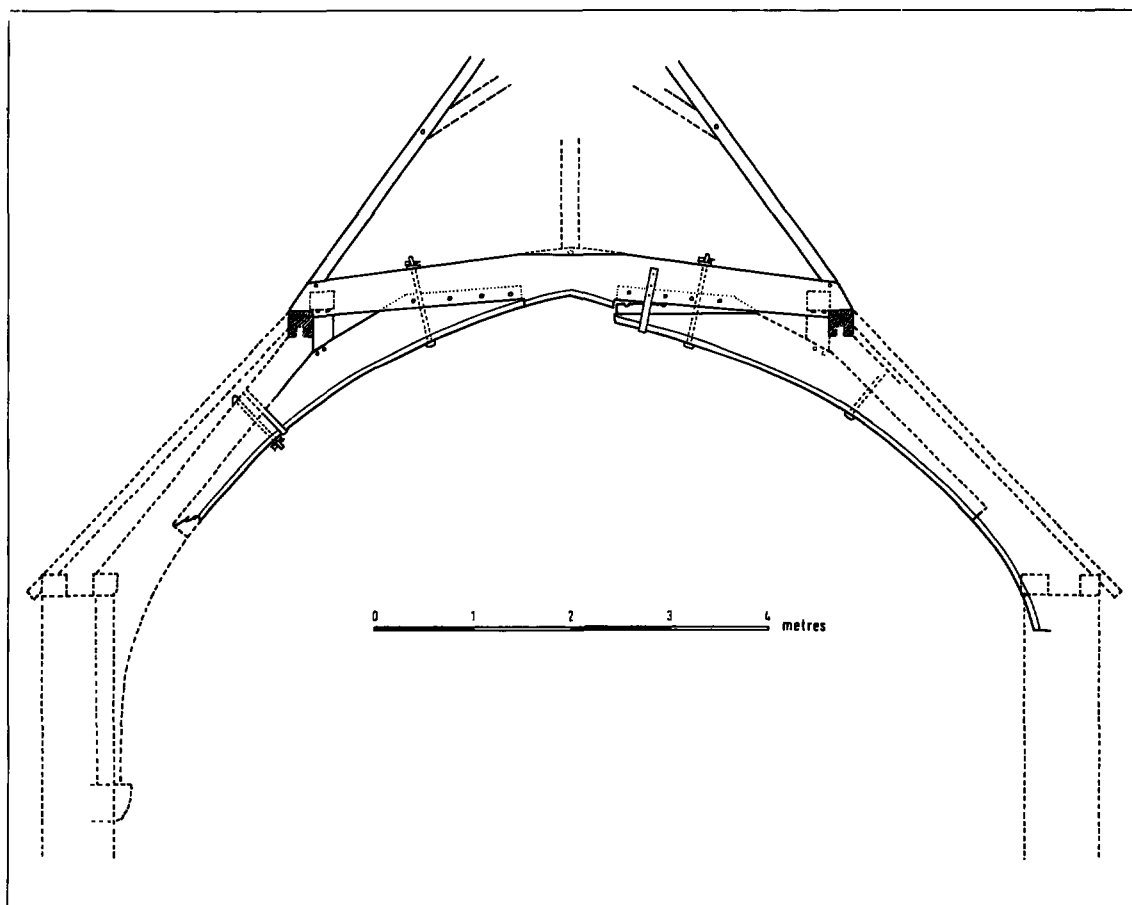


Fig. 7. House adjoining Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Base-cruck truss II viewed from south. Solid lines indicate visible surviving timberwork.

bracing of Blackfriars Priory, Gloucester. Unfortunately, it is not possible to examine closely the other tie beam joints of the Pilgrims' Hall: they are either concealed or beyond reach.

The second, and more generally accepted, 'datable' joint is the scarf joint of the arcade

plate: the central purlin is similarly scarfed. Only one type of scarf is used throughout the building: the type known as the *Trait de Jupiter* which, according to Hewett (1980, 264) was in use from *c.* 1190 until the later 13th century: examples from the 14th century are however

known in the area north of Hampshire (Currie 1972, 178–9). The *Traits de Jupiter* found in the Pilgrims' Hall differ from those illustrated by Hewett in that the splays are parallel and the pegs are at right-angles to the plate rather than to the splays. The orientation of the splays suggests that the building was assembled from south to north following the order of the carpenters' marks.

Other details of the roof structure also seem to be of late 13th century type. Scissor bracing was a method of rafter bracing increasingly common during the second half of that century: there are good examples in the church and south range of the Blackfriars Priory, Gloucester, dating from 1251–1265 (Rackham *et al* 1978, 107–8, 121). It has been shown (Alcock and Barley 1971, 140) that in the 13th century, scissor bracing, usually combined with a crown post, was sometimes associated with base-cruck construction. However the Pilgrims' Hall scissor-bracing differs from the earlier examples in that the braces are chase-tenoned into their corresponding rafters rather than lap jointed: Hewett (1980, 120), discussing the scissor bracing at St Nicholas' church, Little Braxted (Essex), implies that this particular use of chase tenons developed during the late 13th century. The scissor-braces developed during the late 13th century. The scissor-braces in the high nave roofs of Exeter Cathedral 'designed c. 1325' (*ibid*, 148) and of Ottery St Mary church (Devon) 'possibly c. 1330' (*ibid*, 148) are chase-tenoned in the same manner.

It is instructive to compare the hammer trusses of the Pilgrims' Hall with another early example of a similar technique: the 'Great Kitchen' of the Bishop's Palace, Chichester. The structure of the 'hammer' beams of the Great Kitchen is rather specialised, supporting as they do a square lantern; but viewed in section (Fig. 8), there is a remarkable affinity between the two buildings. The Great Kitchen is described in the *Victoria County History of Sussex* (Page and Rowe 1935, 151) and drawn by W Horn and E Born (1979, 276) in their comparison with the kitchen of the 'St Gall plan'; the Chichester kitchen is thought to be contemporary with St Mary's Hospital, Chichester, dated on good documentary evidence to the 1290s (Salzman 1907, 101).

The resemblance between the Pilgrims' Hall and the Great Kitchen involves their shared use of the trefoil arch, the scantling of their various elements, their use of struts in the spandrels between posts, tie-beams and braces, and the limited decorative elements (chamfered main timbers): the 'hammer beams' of the Great Kitchen are unadorned by carved heads.

A parallel to the base-cruck truss II is to be found in another base-cruck hall, as yet unpublished, the 14th-century building known as Riversdown, near Warnford (Hants), some ten

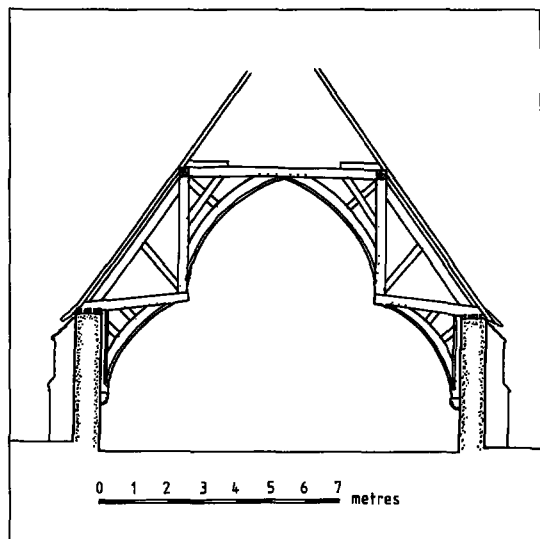


Fig. 8. 'Great Kitchen' of the Bishop's Palace, Chichester, Sussex. Simplified elevation of part of roof assembly after W Horn & E Born (1979, 276). Scale 1:225.

miles from Winchester (Nat. Grid Ref. SU 604248). This building is thought to date from c. 1336, and the decorative detail of its timberwork, notably the moulding of the cornice, might suggest a later date than the Winchester example. There is no post between the brace and the tie beam as at Winchester, and the spandrel between the brace, the base-cruck blade and the tie beam is much reduced in size. Present at Riversdown, but not discovered at Winchester, are large curved wind braces parallel to the roof slope, rising from the blades to the arcade plates. Despite these differences in decoration and

assembly detail, the profiles of the base-cruck trusses at Riversdown and at Winchester are very similar, as are the proportions and dimensions of the constituent timbers.

Also present at Riversdown is the surviving spere truss between the base-cruck hall and the former service bay (now replaced): it is possible that the closed truss I of the Winchester base-cruck hall performed the same function as a

spere truss, but little can at present be deduced about the structure of this truss below the level of the medieval side walls.

The comparisons discussed above appear consistent with a construction date at the turn of the 13th–14th centuries. There can be no objection to such an early date on the grounds of the limited general decorative detail already described; but the important evidence of the



Fig. 9. Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Crowned head terminating west hammer beam of truss IV.



Fig. 10. Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester. Head terminating east hammer beam of truss V.

heads carved in the end-grain of the hammer beams is more controversial. As we have seen, Nisbett (1894, 77) stressed the resemblance between the *coiffure* of the head at the east end of truss V (Fig. 10) and that of the tomb-effigy of Edward II at Gloucester. He may, however, have chosen this example because it was well-known. It must be said that there is a considerable difference between the stiffly delin-

eated locks and tight end-roll of the hair of the Pilgrims' Hall head and the undulating, interweaving, *bouffant* style of the head of Edward II: a difference which is not perhaps merely explained by the exigencies of the different materials used. Indeed the *coiffure* of the Pilgrims' Hall head bears comparison with earlier examples—for as Lawrence Stone (1955, 161) emphasises, the first beginnings of what he calls

'the undulating hair style of the early fourteenth century' are seen in examples dating from the middle of the previous century. Nevertheless the closest parallel is provided by the Choir stalls of Winchester Cathedral dated on good documentary evidence to 1308–10. The surviving 14th century bench-ends and the corbels of the canopy include heads showing strong stylistic affinities with those of the Pilgrims' Hall, including the detail of the crown type of the royal heads and the treatment of *coiffure*, beards and moustaches.

The evidence available seems, then, to point to a construction date early in the 14th century. This was also the view of Nathaniel Lloyd (1931, 34 and 358), for though his description of the hall is included in a chapter entitled 'The 13th century', he dated the building as '*circa* 1300'. By that date, base-cruck construction was well established, as Alcock and Barley have shown (1972, 140–1); but a date of *c.* 1300 would make the Pilgrims' Hall by several decades the earliest surviving hammer-beamed hall known: older than Tiptoft's Hall, Wimbish, by some 40 years (Smith 1958, 123). Perhaps the Pilgrims' Hall should be considered as a development of what J T Smith (1970, 254), discussing the roof of the Great Kitchen of the Bishop's Palace, Chichester, calls 'the late thirteenth-century genesis of the medieval English carpenter's finest achievement, the hammer-beam roof, which prior to the 15th century was simply a sophisticated form of raised aisle construction.' The roof of the Pilgrims' Hall is undoubtedly the oldest example to survive of the technique whose apotheosis is the outstanding roof of Westminster Hall, built by Hugh Herland nearly a century later.

CONCLUSIONS

The peculiar arrangement at Winchester, with two adjoining halls which may have been quite separate in their intended usage, provides what is perhaps a unique example of two distinct 'aisled derivative' open truss forms in a single building: a hammer-beam assembly and a base-cruck structure. Both forms derive from the older tradition of the aisled hall and were employed for

the decorative, central open truss or trusses of the hall itself. The choice of two different open truss types in the 'double' Winchester building may have been determined by aesthetic considerations: possibly the hammer-beam system was thought more suitable for a pair of open trusses, and the base-cruck system for a single truss. Another possibility is that the choice was determined by the intended function of each part of the building: for the use of hammer-beams or base-crucks in aisled derivative halls seems to have been related to notions of prestige: 'At the top of society, the aisled hall was succeeded not by the base-cruck hall but by the hall with arch-brace or hammer-beam roof' (Mercer 1975, 100). Whatever the reason for the use of different open trusses, the double hall demonstrates an assured mastery of the newly-evolving systems for roofing a wide building. The Pilgrims' Hall is particularly fascinating in that it embodies four different aisled derivative truss types in the same 'build': two hammer-beam trusses, a base-cruck truss, a 'raised aisle' truss and a closed, true aisle truss—cross-frame types which are so satisfyingly co-ordinated with the longitudinal timberwork (arcade plates, cornices and central purlin) of the aisled forms from which they all derive. The 'double' Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester, therefore deserves a significant place in the study of the development of roofs derived from the aisled form.

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NOTE

Since this paper first went to press, four samples, including two with sap-wood, from the scissor braces above the central hall have been analysed by dendrochronology by Dr John Fletcher of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology at Oxford University. He concludes that 'the tree-rings on the samples span the years 1234–1309. The likely date of felling and hence of completion of construction lies in the period 1324–30 AD.' The timbers sampled are from the last part of the building to be erected: the main trusses must date from slightly earlier, depending on the length of time required to complete the building.

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