

Notes and News

OLD HOUSES IN OXFORD

The Society's Sub-Committee for Old Houses, consisting of Mr. J. N. L. Myres, Mr. E. T. Long, and Mr. P. S. Spokes, having been requested to prepare a list of inhabited houses and domestic buildings in Oxford whose architectural interest demands that the strongest efforts should be made for their preservation from demolition or disfigurement, has drawn up the following report, which we have decided to print forthwith, as it seems eminently desirable that this considered statement should be given the fullest measure of publicity. The suggestion that the report should be drawn up came in the first instance from the Trustees of the Oxford Preservation Trust, in a letter inviting the co-operation of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society in an attempt at co-ordinating the efforts of those who were striving to preserve the amenities and the historical associations of Oxford and its neighbourhood.

REPORT

Two lists of old houses in Oxford are already in existence and these have both been useful to us in the present enquiry. They are, first the illustrated pamphlet issued by the Society, *Old Houses in Oxford* (2nd ed., 1920, price 6d.), and secondly the MS. survey prepared by M. J. H. Bunney and C. Maresco Pearce on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Neither of these, however, met the purpose for which the present report was desired, for, whereas the published pamphlet was, for reasons of expense, necessarily limited to a selection of the more obviously important houses, and thus made no reference to many others of considerable distinction, the MS. survey, which aimed at a complete enumeration, very properly included a large number of buildings which, though of some antiquity, could hardly be described as of great architectural interest. While, therefore, the published pamphlet provided us with a nucleus for our report, we have spent a considerable time in re-examining the claims of many other houses described by Bunney and Pearce. In adding some and rejecting others, our aim has been to list all those houses, and only those which, irrespective of size or situation, retain, whether internally or externally, features of real architectural distinction belonging to any period up to the end of the eighteenth century. Some are, of course, of much greater interest than others, but we believe that the destruction of any one of them would constitute a serious loss to Oxford's architectural heritage, and would be a matter on which our generation would be rightly reproached by future ages. Fifty years ago the domestic architecture of Oxford must have been of outstanding beauty and variety, and much of it has already been destroyed piecemeal; it is hoped that this report may form the basis for an agreed policy among those who realise the value of what remains, a policy designed to secure for the delight of future generations the continued existence of all the finer examples of past architectural design and craftsmanship which have been handed down to us in Oxford.

NOTES AND NEWS

' It became clear in the course of our investigations that the mere enumeration of individual houses as especially worthy of preservation would be quite inadequate to fulfil the purpose for which the present report was required. Even if all these houses were saved from demolition, their isolated survival in streets otherwise redeveloped according to present or future fashions would be somewhat anomalous, and in several instances the loss of a congruous architectural setting would to a large extent deprive a building of its present interest and charm, as has already happened with, *e.g.*, Kemp Hall. There are, moreover, several streets in Oxford whose beauty depends upon the existence of groups of houses no one of which individually could claim sufficient distinction to find a place on our first list. While, therefore, it would clearly be impracticable, and in many cases undesirable, to suggest that the immediate surroundings of the houses on the first list should be preserved as they are at present, it did seem advisable to make a second list of those groups of houses which in our opinion ought to be preserved, not for their individual distinction, but for their effect as groups, and as examples of that harmonious variety which is so admirable a feature of the older English street architecture. We have found in several instances that such groups do in fact adjoin or include one or more of the houses on the first list, and thus serve to meet the first difficulty mentioned above. We have thus included a second list of buildings which for one or both of these reasons seem to us to be especially worthy of preservation as groups.

' It should finally be emphasized that we do not regard the houses and groups of houses on these two lists as constituting the sum total of those houses which we should like to see preserved in Oxford. We have reluctantly omitted a number of buildings of great charm (*e.g.*, Bath Place and Ship Street), whose destruction we should deplore, because they did not appear quite to satisfy the rather high standards of architectural quality which we felt bound to set ourselves. We have been acutely conscious of the extreme difficulty of drawing a line which will satisfy the aesthetic preferences of all, without drawing it so low that the hope of securing general agreement to preserve so much of Oxford's architectural past would be reduced to vanishing point. To allow this to happen would be to defeat the purpose of the enquiry. While, therefore, we would be the first to consider sympathetically any suggested additions to the lists, we would emphasize that they include, as they stand, not all that we should like to preserve, but all that we think that there is any real hope of preserving. On the other hand there is nothing on either list that we should be prepared to strike out in any circumstances whatever: they are all worthy in our opinion to be defended against threats of demolition, and the grounds on which the defence could be based have been briefly noted in each case.

(Signed) J. N. L. MYRES.

E. T. LONG.

P. S. SPOKES.

October 19th, 1936.

I.—INDIVIDUAL HOUSES ESPECIALLY WORTHY OF PRESERVATION

BANBURY ROAD.

- 1 The Old Parsonage. Late XVI cent. front; early XVIII cent. panelled room on first floor.

ST. GILES': *east side.*

- 2 Pheasant Inn. XVII cent. house, well preserved; two fine XVIII cent. panelled rooms on ground floor.

NOTES AND NEWS

- 3 Black Hall. Very fine house, about 1600, with later additions.
- 4 Judge's Lodgings. Very fine house, built in 1702; excellent interior.
- ST. GILES': *west side*.
- 5 37. Well-proportioned stone house of middle xviii cent.
- 6 40. Very picturesque gabled house, partly xvi cent.; a xvi cent. fireplace on ground floor.
- 7 41. Stone house, about 1700, with unusual elevation to street and contemporary staircase.
- 8 53. Two-gabled house of late xvi cent. or early xvii cent.; contemporary fireplace on ground floor.
- HOLYWELL.
- 9 1. Interesting late xviii cent. stone-fronted house.
- 10 2. Fine early xvii cent. house.
- 11 3. Very fine early xvii cent. house with additions; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 6.
- 12 6. Fine early xvii cent. house, with xviii cent. staircase and panelling.
- 13 13. Very interesting small house, early xvii cent.; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 7.
- 14 17. Small house, late xvi cent.—early xvii cent.; xvii cent. staircase and fireplace upstairs; carved stops to front door.
- 15 20. xvii cent. house, with two early plaster ceilings, xvii cent. staircase and panelling.
- 16 35. Very fine house, dated 1626; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 10.
- 17 100. Fine stone house, about 1600; interior has xvii cent. panelling; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 7.
- CORNMARKET: *east side*.
- 18 3. This fine medieval house has been entirely wrecked except for the xviii cent. front and the painted room.
- 19 Golden Cross Hotel. Extremely important building of xv cent. with xvii cent. additions, see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 3.
- 20 26–28. The remains of a fine house of xv cent.; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 5.
- CORNMARKET: *west side*.
- 21 Frewin Hall and the gate of St. Mary's College (New Inn Hall St.) Very important house, mostly Elizabethan and xviii cent., built over a medieval crypt.
- 22 38. Once the Plough Inn. The fine xvii cent. front dated 1665 alone remains; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 14.
- 23 34–35. The remaining half of this very unusual xviii cent. stone front.
- ST. MICHAEL'S STREET.
- 24 20. Vanbrugh House. Interesting xviii cent. elevation; fine xviii cent. panelled room and staircase; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 16.
- 25 24. Fine stone gabled house of mid xvii cent.
- ST. ALDATE'S: *east side*.
- 26 6 and 7. Timber-framed house of xvii cent. which has retained its original door frame.
- ST. ALDATE'S: *west side*.
- 27 91. Interesting house, mainly xviii cent., with two good fireplaces and two plaster ceilings in the Adam manner.

NOTES AND NEWS

- 28 Bishop King's Palace. Exceptionally fine house of XVI-XVII cent. with elaborate woodwork and ceilings; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 12.
- 29 82-3. Littlemore Court. Very important house with XVII cent. plaster ceilings; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 13.
- BREWER STREET.
- 30 1. Fine stone house, built in 1596, with contemporary fireplaces and woodwork, and an XVIII cent. panelled room.
- 31 2. This house has recently been rebuilt, but the XVII cent. plaster ceiling is preserved on ground floor.
- LITTLEGATE STREET.
- 32 Holy Trinity Vicarage. XVII cent. house with additions, with panelled rooms of XVII and XVIII cent., and XVIII cent. staircase.
- 33 10. Small stone house dated 1647, with original front door and frame.
- PEMBROKE STREET.
- 34 13 and 14. Fine house, about 1600, front much altered in XVIII cent.
- 35 17 and 18. Fine stone houses of early XVII cent.; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, frontispiece.
- PARADISE STREET.
- 36 Grey Friars. Very fine house of later XVII cent., with contemporary panelled rooms and fireplaces of great distinction.
- ST. THOMAS'.
- 37 Combe's School. Beautiful little stone building of early XVIII cent.
- OSENEY MILL.
- 38 A XV cent. building now used as a store is incorporated in this. (We would like also to draw attention to the remains of the precinct wall of Rewley Abbey. Though it is not a domestic building, it includes a medieval doorway which deserves preservation).
- MERTON STREET.
- 39 Beam Hall. Very fine house, partly medieval, with many features from XVI cent. onwards.
- 40 Postmasters' Hall. Fine house, about 1600, with contemporary panelled room and overmantel.
- MAGPIE LANE.
- 41 1 and 2. XVI cent. timber houses: the latter has a fine panelled room and fireplace of XVII cent.
- KYBALD STREET.
- 42 Kybald Twychen. Very picturesque XVII cent. gabled house; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 8.
- HIGH STREET: *north side*.
- 43 6. Narrow stone front of late XVIII cent. of unusually distinguished design.
- 44 Mitre Hotel. Medieval cellars; the structure, though much altered, retains interesting features, mainly of XVII cent.
- 45 Drawda Hall. Now part of the Queen's College.
- 46 37-38. Very picturesque XVII cent. gabled timber house, now partly incorporated in Queen's; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, frontispiece.
- 47 42-43. Fine two-gabled timber house of XVI-XVII cent. with XVIII cent. bow windows and XVI cent. carved door frames in central passage.

NOTES AND NEWS

HIGH STREET: *south side.*

- 48 86-87. Very fine house, about 1600, with panelled rooms on first floor, and contemporary plaster ceilings on first and ground floor, original floors throughout, fine xvii cent. staircase and small fireplace in attic.
- 49 90. Very fine xvii cent. panelled rooms with overmantel, now part of University College.
- 50 107. Tackley's Inn. Medieval cellars, and two tall xiv cent. windows in the back wall.
- 51 119. Narrow plastered timber front about 1700; two earlier stone fireplaces on ground floor; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 16.
- 52 126. Exceptionally beautiful and elaborate xvii cent. front with the original glass, added to an earlier house with medieval barge-boards; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 15.
- 53 130. Low gabled front of late xvi cent., with stone fireplace and xvii cent. panelling.
- 54 Kemp Hall. Very beautiful timber house, 1637; elaborate staircase, fireplaces, etc.; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 11.
- 55 Chequers Inn. This ancient house has recently been almost totally reconstructed, but its two most interesting features, the remarkable xv cent. carved stone panel over the fireplace in the bar, and the elaborate xvii cent. window on the first floor with arched head and mask on the keyblock, are untouched.
- 56 135. Fine plaster and timber house, about 1700, rather like 119, High Street, but wider; xviii cent. panelled room on first floor; see *Old Houses in Oxford*, p. 16.

ST. CLEMENT'S.

- 57 Black Horse. Very picturesque house of early xvii cent., with contemporary staircase, doors and doorways.
- 58 Stone's Almshouses. Fine stone building dated 1700.

ABINGDON ROAD.

- 59 Eastwyke Farm. Very picturesque house, mainly of xvii cent.

II.—GROUPS OF HOUSES ESPECIALLY WORTHY OF PRESERVATION

BROAD STREET.

Kettle Hall to the Bodleian extension, including Blackwell's shop.

HOLYWELL: *north side.*

The whole. Hardly any of these houses are later than 1750, most being of xvii cent.; they include eight houses on List I.

HOLYWELL: *south side.*

61-69. This includes 65, a small house of early xvii cent. with carved brackets to first-floor windows.

ST. ALDATE'S 89-92 WITH 1 AND 2 BREWER STREET.

This group includes three houses on List I.

HIGH STREET: *north side.*

(a) The houses between Queen's and All Souls. These include Drawda Hall and 37-38 on List I.

NOTES AND NEWS

(b) 42 to the corner of Queen's Lane and up it to St. Edmund Hall. This includes 42-43 on List I.

HIGH STREET: *south side.*

(a) 83-87. This includes 86-87 on List I.

(b) 102-106 with the west side of Oriel Street. An interesting and varied group of XVII and XVIII cent. timber and plaster houses.

TURL STREET.

From the Mitre to 14 excluding the two XIX cent. houses. This includes several houses of XVII cent. of considerable interest.

PARADISE STREET.

Grey Friars to the Jolly Farmer. The whole of this group is probably earlier than 1700.

EXCAVATIONS

During the past year the following excavations have taken place in the Oxford district under the auspices of the Ashmolean Museum and of the Oxford University Archaeological Society:

1. *Linch Hill, Stanton Harcourt, Oxon.* Habitation-pits of the Neolithic and Early Iron Ages.

2. *Radley, Berks.* Bronze Age ring-ditch in Barrow Hills (see above, p. 8 and FIG. 1). A food-vessel was found eccentrically situated within the area of the ring-ditch.

3. *Yarnton, Oxon.* Habitation-site of the transitional period between the Early Iron Age and Romano-British times, west of the railway line, at Sandy Lane crossing. Ditches and pits were found containing much pottery, as well as a Roman bronze brooch of a type usually ascribed to the first half of the first century A.D. (Collingwood, *Archaeol. of Roman Britain*, type 22).

4. *Rose Hill, Cowley.* Habitation-site, Early Iron Age and Romano-British, with a potter's kiln, etc. (See above, pp. 94 ff.).

5. *Dorchester, Oxon.* The defences of Roman Dorchester have been investigated in a series of trial trenches on the west side of the town. It is hoped to publish a full account of this excavation in the next volume of *Oxoniensia*.

6. *Ibid.* A potter's-field and other remains of the Romano-British period have been found in Allen's pit, one mile N. of Dorchester village (see above, pp. 83 ff.).

7. *Woodstock, Oxon.* Excavations at the point of intersection of Akeman Street and Grim's Dyke near North Lodge in Blenheim Park were undertaken in order to ascertain, if possible, the date of the construction of the Dyke, and its connexion with the Street. A full account of the excavations and of their results is reserved for a future volume of *Oxoniensia*.

8. *Cassington, Oxon.* Romano-British cemetery. Further finds of skeletons near the junction of the Oxford northern by-pass with the Cassington-Eynsham road have brought the total of this cemetery to date up to ninety. The site is being excavated and recorded and the skeletons examined by Capt. C. Musgrave for the Department of Human Anatomy in the University.

9. *Faringdon, Berks.* Further excavation undertaken on the site of the adulterine castle at Faringdon Clump has produced extra evidence in regard to the plan of the castle, supplementing that published in the *Antiquaries Journal*, XVI, 165 ff.

NOTES AND NEWS

THE OXFORD CITY DITCH

During the excavations for the foundations of the Dolcis Shoe Co.'s new premises, Nos. 33-4, Cornmarket Street, a portion of the Oxford city ditch was excavated to its bottom, which lay about 25 feet below present street level. A portion of the ditch (perhaps the outer lip only) was also found during excavations on the eastern side of New Inn Hall Street, opposite No. 27; at this point it was apparently only about 9 feet deep. As far as could be ascertained, nothing of archaeological interest was discovered in either of these excavations.

A XVI-CENTURY FIREPLACE

A slum-clearance order having caused the demolition of No. 51, High Street, St. Thomas', an interesting XVI-century stone fireplace was discovered behind a more modern grate on the east wall of the first floor. The fireplace, of which a photograph was published in the *Oxford Mail* for 18 March, 1936, was of the four-centred Tudor type with spandrels. A fuller publication of this and other discoveries in houses recently destroyed is reserved for the next volume of *Oxoniensia*.

OLD HOUSES ON THE SITE OF THE BODLEIAN EXTENSION

At the invitation of Bodley's Librarian, the Society has appointed a sub-committee of three, consisting of Mr. E. T. Leeds, Mr. E. T. Long, and Mr. W. A. Pantin, to investigate and record any features of architectural or antiquarian interest which are contained in the block of houses in Broad Street and Parks Road that is shortly to be demolished to make way for the new Bodleian extension, and also to watch for any finds that may turn up during the demolition of these houses and the subsequent excavations for the foundations of the new building. It is hoped that a detailed report of the observations of this sub-committee, with plans and illustrations, will be published in a future number of *Oxoniensia*.

MEDIEVAL TILES FOUND AT ADDERBURY, OXON.

During some excavations beneath the floor of the vestry of Adderbury Church, Oxon., an old pavement of glazed tiles which may be of early medieval date has been found; see *The Times*, August 29, 1936.

XIII-CENTURY WALL-PAINTINGS IN KELMSCOTT CHURCH, OXON.

The Rev. W. S. Caldwell, Vicar of Bradwell with Kelmscott, informs us that the valuable remains of mural paintings in Kelmscott church, Oxon., which date from the end of the XIII century, are in urgent need of preservative treatment to prevent their total disappearance. Donations towards the cost of this work, which will amount to about £15, will be gratefully acknowledged. They should be sent to the Vicar, Bradwell Vicarage, Lechlade, Glos., who will be glad to give further particulars about the work to anyone who is interested.

NOTES AND NEWS

THE OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

An appeal on behalf of the Oxford Historical Society, signed by the Chancellor of the University, the Vice-Chancellor, the Mayor of Oxford, and others, has recently been issued. The Society started its career in 1884 with a membership of 385. At present there are considerably less than 200 members on its roll. The reputation of the Oxford Historical Society stands as high as any historical society in Great Britain, but if it is to continue in existence more support must be forthcoming. Its hundredth publication, Dr. Salter's *Medieval Oxford*, has just appeared. With the completion of volume 101 it is proposed to close the first series of the Society's publications and institute a second in a new format and binding. There is much material still awaiting publication, and a young generation of historians is ready to come forward as editors and authors. Among the works contemplated may be mentioned the earliest register of the Congregation of the University (1448-1463); the Chancellor's Registers (1498-1558); early documents and accounts of Oxford parish churches; College accounts dating from the fourteenth century; early letters, contained in various manuscripts, sent and received by the University; Chancery and Star Chamber proceedings about Oxford; and a selection from the important collection of letters addressed by ecclesiastical and literary personages to Dr. Arthur Charlett from 1692 to 1722.

Subscriptions (annual, one guinea) should be sent to the Hon. Secretary of the Oxford Historical Society, the Reverend H. E. Salter, Hon. D.Litt., Frilford, Abingdon.

THE VIGNETTE ON THE COVER OF 'OXONIENSIA'

The view of the Towers of Oxford from Elsfield, which has been adopted as the cover-vignette for *Oxoniensia*, is taken from a book-plate designed for Lord Tweedsmuir by the late Mr. E. H. New of Oxford. The Society owes a deep debt of gratitude to His Excellency Lord Tweedsmuir, G.C.M.G., C.H., Governor-General of Canada, for so graciously consenting to allow this design to be used, as well as to Mr. R. H. New, Mr. E. H. New's executor, for kind assistance in choosing it.

The Editorial Committee feel that it is particularly appropriate that a design of Mr. New's should be adopted, since Mr. New was for many years one of the most active members of the Society and of its committee, and it is quite certain that, had he lived, he would have taken the keenest interest in the Society's journal.