

CHAPTER VII.

THE MEDIEVAL TOWN HOUSE.

The early medieval stone houses and the late timber-framed halls described in chapters IV and V may sometimes depart from the customary plan and structure of comparable buildings elsewhere, but they are recognisable variants of widespread types, common alike to town and country. The only kind of medieval building which is really characteristic of towns and virtually confined to them is that which has one or two upper storeys projecting forward beyond the ground floor; it is a type rarely found in the open countryside and only occasionally in villages. The impression gained from random personal observation and from books is that all the obviously early examples of this kind of structure are in towns.

It will be appropriate therefore to consider the special conditions of town life which may have given rise to a peculiar architectural development. First and foremost we must remember that all medieval towns which were intended to be towns - and this comprises all but a very few - were laid out according to a predetermined plan to achieve some clearly defined purpose. In the case of Shrewsbury we have seen two motives behind its early development. Defence

needs caused Aethelflaed to establish a burh with its obvious tendency in a favourable situation to attract a resident and to some extent commercial population; the tendency was carefully fostered by Anglo-Saxon rulers. The Normans saw in the market towns the opportunity to establish their civilisation more securely than was possible by military conquest alone. And in later centuries, the twelfth and thirteenth especially, lay and spiritual lords alike fostered the development of towns primarily as a source of revenue, a motive, though a subsidiary one, which had not been lacking in earlier periods. The Abbot of Shrewsbury provides a local example of such activity.

Whatever the aim behind any particular attempt at town development a plan was necessary. We have seen that even in Shrewsbury a street layout which has apparently grown up haphazardly is in fact almost entirely a creation of planning. Very many English towns have much more the air of being built to a planned street pattern, though this may not be of any formal geometrical shape like a gridiron. Accompanying the laying out of streets went the allocation to new settlers of building plots of standard widths - not necessarily of the same width throughout the town, but the same in one street, or in a market-place. The plots were usually fairly narrow, presumably with the double object of gaining a high rent value and of attracting

as many people as possible by the offer of a good central site. Examples are to be found in Salisbury, Winchelsea, the Edwardian towns of Wales, and abroad in French "bastides". Such a plan no doubt governed the development of the thirteenth century market place in Shrewsbury, where the narrowness of the original plots may still be dimly discerned on the O.S. 25-inch map. It is quite likely that some of the earlier Norman development was controlled similarly; an example was not lacking in Bury St. Edmunds.<sup>1</sup>

In any town which managed to grow and prosper, land values tended to rise. As a town increased in size, so the building plots fronting the market place and main streets became more valuable to traders and shopkeepers. This development, true of even small towns which developed from an unplanned settlement was inevitably hastened by medieval methods of town-planning. Where there was no planning but rather gradual growth or ribbon development of a street, competition for the most favourable sites would raise their value to a high level and tend to the subdivision of plots to the smallest useful size. This factor may have operated in Frankwell in the Middle Ages although the area may well have been laid out originally as a piece of town-planning. The accessibility of the

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1. Margaret E. Wood.

river was the important consideration here, so that sites on the south side of the street were more favourable than on the north, but the lower part of Frankwell near the Welsh Bridge was better than the higher ground further west. This tendency is conjectural; no attempt has been made to prove it from deeds. In any case it represents the way in which values must have altered.

One other factor contributed to raise rents and land values, the necessity of fortification. Shrewsbury was perhaps fortunate in this respect, in that the tactical considerations which governed the siting of the walls compelled the builders to enclose very much more ground within the river loop than had been built upon. Nevertheless, although building development would still have been possible had the medieval town grown to twice its size, much of the enclosed land was of little value to the trader who naturally sought space on the main streets. The building of fortifications may well have enhanced the value of sites near the gates, but since two of the approaches to Shrewsbury - Frankwell and Abbey Foregate - had other advantages besides their nearness to the town gates, it is hard to assess what development was due to this factor. The third road, Castle Foregate, may have grown up because it offered the possibility of a trading site without the heavy rents and dues associated with the town proper.

From all this it is clear that town building was frequently confined to narrow plots of ground, usually very long in proportion to their width, because frontages determined land values. This basic condition has to be considered along with the special requirements of urban tenants. Many of them were merchants, traders, and shopkeepers, requiring business premises. Their requirements did not necessitate any great architectural complexity but they would not be easily forced within the framework of the basic medieval house plan, comprising hall, solar, screens passage and service room. The type of house having a first floor hall with screens bay and solar above an undercroft, the latter used probably for storage of goods, seems to have suited the greater merchants, to judge by Bennetts Hall, and is indeed simply a transference to the town of a widely distributed plan known in an earlier rural setting at Boothby Pagnell.<sup>1</sup> Although such an arrangement served admirably on a spacious site the entrance placed in a long side made it unsuitable for the usual narrow plots which faced the street and were fronted with shops; such ample accommodation, moreover, though excellent for the great wool merchant of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was too large for the

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1. Margaret E. Wood, Twelfth-Century Domestic Architecture in England; Arch. J., XCII (1935), 198-200.

small retail trader. His more modest business required a shop or stall fronting the street with premises behind it in which the goods for sale were prepared or produced. Bakers, for instance, required at least ovens and storage space for fuel and flour. Butchers' requirements seem to have been very slight - beasts were slaughtered in the streets until 1724<sup>1</sup> - but shoemakers and tanners must have required more. The actual process of manufacture was no doubt carried on, as it still is today in small-scale shoemaking, in the shop, but tanpits and space for dressing and storing hides must have been necessary in most cases. Such needs were presumably met by the provision of separate small and simple buildings rather than by developing a more complex structure adapted to a special function. This was the usual medieval way of dealing with new architectural requirements - Henry III's directions to his architect suggest that even great palaces were usually clusters of independent simple structures<sup>2</sup> - and it was emphasised by the medieval habit of thinking of buildings in terms of bays, not of complete structures adapted to special functions. Building back from the street would normally entail provision for access from the front independent of the ground-floor premises, thus reducing

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1. Owen Anc. and Pres. State, 450.

2. Margaret E. Wood, Thirteenth Century Domestic Architecture in England; Arch. J. CV (Supplement) I, and passim.

still further the useful width of an already narrow plot. A further condition imposed by the need for natural lighting in all rooms as well as by the need for space was that building had to be upwards on the street frontage as well as away from it.

Reference has been made to shops. The word shop in the middle ages does not imply a pretentious structure but something more akin to a stall or booth. In default of direct evidence from Shrewsbury it will be relevant to quote at length the description of a shop in Burford;

"A grant of 1404 gives the dimensions of a shop in the High Street. It was  $17\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, 7 feet broad and 7 feet high. The curiously shallow depth, taken in conjunction with the separate sale of the shop, without a tenement, indicates that the shop cannot have been an entirely separate structure, and yet was part of a house proper. But being sold thus it must have had some permanence of building. If, as seems therefore likely, it was a kind of lean-to erection against the front of a house, it may be suggested that the stone-slatted penthouses, which are a feature of several houses in the High Street, represent the very early shop..... Originally they would be mere shelters on wooden uprights, just wide enough to protect a counter for the display of a tradesman's goods..."<sup>1</sup>

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1. R.H. Gretton, Records of Burford. 173.

The description indicates admirably the slight requirements of a medieval tradesman for his shop, and without assuming that the architectural expression of his needs was always the same, it will be useful to bear this example in mind. To sum up, our tradesman's needs were dwelling accommodation for himself and his family - whether for apprentices too I do not know - and space to prepare or manufacture whatever he sold; all this to be fitted into a long narrow ground plot.

Sufficient evidence remains in Shrewsbury to show broadly the architectural solution of these problems in the later Middle Ages. The solution had certainly been found elsewhere already, in such large centres as London, York, Bristol, and Norwich where the special conditions of town life had arisen at an earlier date, but it so happens that the relevant architectural evidence has either not been published or, as is the case in London, no longer exists. To that extent, therefore, the evidence derived from a group of two - and three - storeyed buildings in Shrewsbury may have a wider interest and application in so far as it shows a response to the general urban situation outlined above.

The mode of presentation will be to describe one or two houses in detail so as to show the plan and mode of construction, then to discuss variations and development



of the basic type. Despite the relatively large bulk of material as compared with earlier chapters it has been necessary to adopt this method because, so far as I am aware, no single example of such building has yet been adequately published.

MacFisheries Shop, No.19, Mardol.

Although the ground floor of No.19 Mardol has been completely gutted to form a modern shop, the upper storey is so well preserved that it gives the best general idea of the internal disposition of a small town building.

The exterior (pl.83) is not particularly striking except for the two pairs of cusped braces which connect principal posts with the first floor sill, now hidden by the fascia, and with the old wallplate. Closer inspection shows that upon the old wallplate a new beam has been laid to perform the function of a sill, upon which rest the timbers heightening the building to permit the insertion of a second floor: the sloping slots, now blocked, which received the original rafters can be picked out beneath it, marking the original eaves-level. The corner posts of the second floor frontage are obviously added; there is a break between them and the first-floor posts. It will readily be imagined that once there were more cusped braces in the frontage, dividing it perhaps into two unequal bays, each with four braces, although I have not succeeded in

tracing their pegholes beneath several layers of paint. One point about the frontage deserves notice; the two first-floor windows, eighteenth century sashes, are at different heights.

Turning now to the interior, the ground-floor, which has been rebuilt and modernised since the photograph was taken, displays no ancient features. Entrance to the back premises is gained through a door at the north end (plan, fig 23), adjacent to which on the south side once stood the stairs; they have now been removed and a ladder substituted. South of these again is a large fireplace now blocked.

The ladder gives access to the north end of the first floor, to a room almost square. It has a modern fireplace and is lit by the lower of the two windows visible in the frontage. The south side of the room is formed by an original timber partition pierced by a doorway opening into a smaller room, which is entered up three steps and is lit by the higher windows. Plate 84 shows the smaller room viewed from the larger; it shows too that the difference in floor levels is matched by the ceiling heights. The smaller room has been extended a little to the west, so that in the north wall (the partition) the full size of the old corner post can be seen (pl.85).

About half-way up its visible height it thickens out; from this point upwards there is a chamfer rising from a stop and going into the ceiling. Careful examination of the other five principal posts, normally concealed behind plaster, wallpaper, or fish boxes, shows that they are similarly treated.

Climbing into the second floor (or attics, properly) is not easy because the stairs, though in position, are inaccessible; entry has to be made by a trapdoor. It is however a rewarding experience. The chamfers on the posts at the N.E. and N.W. ends of the building rise up above the first-floor ceiling, are stopped just below the heads of the posts, and are resumed along the tie-beam which joins them (plates 86 and 87). A cusped windbrace, the only one left of the original four, is in the S.W. corner (pl.88). The partition behind the two first-floor rooms is continued up to the apex of the roof except where it has been pierced to allow passage between the two attics.

Such are the main structural features upon which interpretation of the building must be based. There is no sign that an original ceiling was intended for either of the two rooms; the chamfered decoration and the windbrace show that the roof was intended to be seen, and that the whole of the first floor was open to the ridge. The larger room is heated, the smaller one not; and unless we presume

that the building was once totally unheated, or heated only by braziers, there must always have been a fireplace in this position even though none of the present stack is probably original. So we have a large room entered at one end, with a fireplace nearer the opposite end, and a door leading into a smaller unheated room; significantly the floor-level of the smaller room is raised up three steps. It is in fact a hall and solar in miniature, raised to first-floor level and reproducing all the main features of that arrangement. The stairs correspond to the screens end, the fireplace is appropriately nearer the solar or dais end, and the solar is literally raised up on the 'sol' or beam from which it derives its name. Now the significance of the different window heights becomes apparent; it will be a point to watch for in examining other timber-framed buildings. The loftiness associated with the hall is preserved by an open roof; the solar is open also, but the complete separation of the two rooms is maintained by a fully framed partition rising to the ridge.

With this interpretation in mind we may re-examine the ground floor. The "screens passage" was doubtless at the north end; whether or not it was divided structurally from the room it served, and whether there was one or two ground-floor rooms, are questions impossible to decide with certainty. There was need for some support for the heavy

original partition in the upper storey; if a single oak beam alone provided support, there was no reason to replace it by the present cast-iron girder.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, therefore, a partition, or at least some supporting post, formed part of the original structure. Whatever may have been the case, the ground-floor, or part of it, was warmed by a large fireplace.

For further elucidation of this type of house we must turn to one which has preserved more of its ground-floor arrangements.

#### Purslow's Shop, Frankwell.

A photograph of the exterior (pl.89) shows an obvious resemblance to the MacFisheries shop with the same cusped braces and middle rail incorporated in a two-bay structure, although here the first-floor frontage is quite symmetrical.

Again the ground-floor has been altered to make a modern shop, but on the right-hand side the original passage to the back remains, its arched opening on to the street being virtually intact (pl.90). It had a shouldered lintel formed by two deep brackets chamfered continuously across the head of the resultant "Carnarvon arch". Although the ends of the brackets have both disappeared,

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1. There is, for instance, no sign in the first-floor partition that the beam ever failed.

their original form is determined by the mortises which extend inwards on the underside of the lintel; had it been a pointed arch they would have been larger. Another bracket, cusped, can be seen on the left-hand side of plate 90, rising to a projecting first-floor joist; its fellow on the opposite side of the archway completed the decorative scheme of the entrance.

Beyond the bracket in the passage some oak boards, averaging 1 ft. wide, are visible. Many have weathered to a silvery white colour and appear to form the original passage wall which still extends for about 8 ft. from the jamb of the arch. Thereafter the complete rebuilding of the wall has made it impossible to say exactly where the ground-floor was entered, save that the door led into the back half of the adjacent room. Although there is equally little sign of an original stair the present arrangement resembles that at MacFisheries, the seventeenth century stair being adjacent to and just beyond the passage.

The ground floor does not otherwise add to the knowledge derived from the MacFisheries shop. There is no sign here of a transverse beam or partition, only a longitudinal one (fig.24), parallel to the frontage, into which the exposed joists are fastened. One first-floor feature which is implicit in the MacFisheries plan is here plain to see; it is the bold jetty or projection of the

joists for 2 ft. beyond the face of the wall below, so giving the building the appearance which is characteristic of small medieval town houses.

Further hints about the layout and structure of the upper storey must be sought elsewhere.

#### Phillips's Store, Fish Street.

Behind Messrs. Phillips's grocery shop at the corner of High Street and Fish Street (pl.5) is a two-storeyed timber-framed building (pl.91) which itself fronts on to Fish Street. Without discussing actual dates it may safely be said that this store has a later look than the preceding two buildings, its close studding and moulded bressummer giving it a likeness to the several dated Elizabethan houses in Shrewsbury.

The remarkable feature here is the preservation of the first floor plan (fig.25). A ladder leads up through a trapdoor to the room lit by the nearest window in pl.91, so that the person entering faces the window. On his right is a framed partition with an original door (now blocked) at the west end, that furthest from the street. The south side of the partition (nearer the entrance) has perfectly plain timberwork; the north side shows slightly greater elaboration in that the door is chamfered continuously in the jambs and head, the latter being of a

very depressed form with a tiny ogee in the centre. This differentiation between one side of the partition and the other points to the south room as the equivalent of a screens-passage and service room, and the adjacent room as the hall. Analogies for the use of a single bay as a combined passage and service room may be found in Herefordshire.<sup>1</sup> The other interesting feature is that the mode of approach by ladder from the ground floor probably represents fairly well an original arrangement. There is no sign whatever of any alternative access in the north gable wall where the timbers are apparently undisturbed, nor in the west wall which is now occupied by a nineteenth century fireplace. It is a fair assumption that the building of the fireplace did not block the entrance, or it would have been placed elsewhere, for instance on the north wall.

In the hall is an axial fireplace; the solar lies beyond it at a considerably higher level. Plate 91 shows how the solar has been completely refaced so that it no longer presents any appearance of antiquity. Internally however the fact that the roof structure is continuous with that of the hall shows it to be part of the original building. The floor is now about four feet higher than the hall, a difference which is probably accounted for in

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1. R.C.H.M., Herefordshire, passim.



part by nineteenth century alterations.

One other aspect of these houses is illustrated here; the number and disposition of windows. The view of the frontage shows that the present window sills are later insertions for the modern windows above. Internally the peg-holes of the earlier sill can be seen at the same level as the middle rail running the length of the building. All the present wall studs are original; one has been removed to insert the shuttered opening beside the window at the right of the frontage, its bottom peg-holes standing out clearly in the photograph. The original windows were therefore of the same width as the present ones but shorter, being limited by the middle rail and wallplate. On the opposite side of the house there were probably two similar openings now concealed by later alterations. The axial fireplace permitted a relatively large amount of window space which the wall fireplace of MacFisheries or Purslow's necessarily halved.

The evidence drawn from MacFisheries shop and Phillips's Store shows how the townsmen solved the problem of accommodation for himself and his family; he simply reproduced above his shop all the features familiar in ground-floor halls. What is not yet clear is what the shop and workshop were like. We will deal with the shop or stall first.

### Two Medieval Shops.

For nearly a hundred years Shrewsbury has been famous for the possession of a fine row of medieval shops in the so-called "Abbot's House".<sup>1</sup> They were well restored in the middle of the nineteenth century but present certain structural problems which will be discussed later. Their interest to us now is that they represent a type of shop quite different from those described by R.H. Gretton at Burford (p.265). Just how many shops there were originally is not clear, but, each had at least one unglazed window, perhaps two, with a door adjacent, all the openings having four-centred arched heads (pl.101). The details of the plan behind them are not now recoverable. The openings were closed until quite recent times by shutters, which when lowered formed flaps or counters upon which goods were displayed.<sup>2</sup>

Another building in Shrewsbury displaying the same features on a smaller scale is Cockle's shop in Milk Street, the earliest part of which lies at right angles to the street, truncated by later rebuilding of the frontage.

Externally (pl.92) it is similar to Phillips's Store in having close-studded walls; it differs in having the bull-nosed joist-ends exposed. The ground floor opening

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1. Illustrated by J.H. Parker, Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages, III. Fifteenth Century, (i)
  2. See the quotation below on this subject.

which I presume to have been a shop window is seen in greater detail in plate 93 . The adjacent doorway, concealed externally by the brick outbuilding painted "black and white", is seen from the inside to have a four-centred head (pl.94). There is no proof that these openings were for a shop, indeed, the fact that they lie off the street is a considerable argument against their being so. On the other hand there is no reason to think that medieval people demanded larger windows in the ground-floor rooms than in the upper storeys, nor, if they did, were they likely to have enriched them more than the windows of the hall above. Some special purpose seems indicated, which by analogy with the "Abbot's House" was a shop counter.

A nineteenth century description is relevant at this point. "In the provincial towns....many of the shops were yet unglazed, the goods being exposed to the gaze of the passers-by on open baulks or shutters, which, swung on hinges, were turned back and screwed at night... A few of this ancient class of shops existed in Shrewsbury till as recently as 1823. There was one in Mardol belonging to a hatter, which was probably in the same condition as it had been in the reign of Henry VII or Henry VIII. It was low and dark, and its floor was paved with common tiles. The doorway was formed of massive beams of oak, and on each

side of it dangled otter and other skins". On the baulks "the hats were exposed, the only protection in damp or wet weather being a sheet of oilskin".<sup>1</sup>

The description is a useful reminder of what the medieval shop was like, low and dark, light being still further restricted by the display of goods. The small amount of space which compelled the butchers of a later period to slaughter in the streets<sup>2</sup> must have necessitated that practice from the day the shops were built.

With the exception of the Abbot's House all the houses<sup>3</sup> so far described in this chapter have been of two original storeys only. It is now time to consider those of three storeys.

Their projecting upper floors and steep-pitched roof give these buildings an imposing appearance anywhere, nowhere more so than on Wyle Cop, which has two such three-storeyed ranges admirably sited so as to close the vistas of the steep curving street (pl.95). Since the modern separation of working premises from domestic was unknown we may presume that the ground floor of most of them was occupied as in the two-storeyed building by shops, but before discussing their internal arrangements further it may be said immediately that no Shrewsbury house of this

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1. Eliza Meteyard, Life of Josiah Wedgwood, I, 206.

2. O & B., I.

3. I use the word "house" to cover buildings which have both domestic and shop accommodation.

class has preserved its original plan and structure to anything like the degree that Phillips's Store has done. All of them occupy good sites on main streets, so that it is rather their survival than their mutilation which is to be wondered at.

The upper and smaller of the two ranges on Wyle Cop will be mentioned first; it is said to be the house where Henry VII lodged on his way to the battle of Bosworth in 1485, <sup>1</sup> a plaque to that effect being fastened on the front (pl.96). This has caused it, or its S. half, to be known as "Henry Tudor House", by which name the whole will for convenience be referred to here. <sup>2</sup>

"Henry Tudor House".

The ground floor is divided into two parts by an entrance sufficiently wide to admit carts. There is no clue to the original plan of the shops on either side except that they must have been entered from the front, like the Butcher Row shops, because the walls flanking the central carriageway, which retain their original timbering, show no sign of doorways. The interior of the

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1. Owen, Ant. and Pres. State, 533.
  2. The E. half is owned by Mr. M. Davey, who has exposed and preserved as much of the original timbers as possible. The W. half is occupied by a grocery shop on the ground-floor; the upper floors by a firm of wholesale chemists (Rudge, Roberts).

E. half of the building is in an excellent state of preservation, carefully maintained as a shop with a dwelling above, so that it is often hard to see the mortises and timber joints which many more dilapidated houses show. Not, of course, that this is a matter for regret, but it follows that any account of the building rests mainly on a general interpretation, without detailed structural proofs to back it. What is said about the E. half will be true of the W. half also since they were two similar units in one building.

The ground floor (i.e., of the E. half) is a modern shop with no trace of a fireplace and with a wide modern stair at the back.<sup>1</sup> Because the house is built on the slope of a hill this lower half has an exceptionally lofty interior quite different in appearance from the normal dark medieval shop. The first floor consisted originally of two rooms, the smaller of which, at the W. end, has now been divided, part being thrown into the larger room and part into the adjacent tenement. The larger room was heated by a fireplace which projects boldly from the gable wall; the chimney stack which serves it can be seen above the ridge (pl.95). It is this room which contains at the far end from the fireplace an original window - the only medieval timber window in the town - of four trefoiled elliptical-headed lights with elaborate tracery in the head

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1. Sketch plan, fig.26.

(pl.97) composed of trefoils and quatrefoils between the bars. Mullions, jambs and head tracery are all hollow chamfered. The small lights of the head retain the only secular stained glass which has survived in Shrewsbury. (pl.98). The partition at the W. end of the room can be reconstructed sufficiently to show that it was in keeping with this highly enriched window, with big cusped braces like the one in the wall (pl.97). This was obviously the principal room in the house, the equivalent of the ground-floor hall, its window a humbler version of the great heraldic window at the dais end of the larger halls.

Upstairs were two rooms of the same size again, these being originally open to the roof; the present ceiling is clearly a later insertion (pl.99). Plate 100 shows that the large windbraces in the roof were curved and cusped to be open to view as an impressive form of structural ornament.<sup>1</sup> The cambered tie-beam was not intended to take ceiling joists, and could only be adapted to the purpose rather awkwardly. The joists cannot rest on the wallplate and instead butt against the slope of the roof, the infallible sign noted above that a ceiling was not intended. These rooms must have retained one of the characteristics of the ground-floor hall, its lofty and spacious appearance.

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1. This part of the roof is actually in the W. part of the house.

But there is more to the modern plan, and may have been more to the medieval plan, than merely a block of building parallel to the street. Alongside the passage (formerly Barrack passage) is a projecting wing of three storeys in each of which is a single room.<sup>1</sup> Now if the original stair was on the site of the present one the house certainly included the back wing, but this cannot be proved; the access to the upper storeys could have been provided by a steep ladder-like flight, or even a wooden newel stair, in the small rooms at the W. end of the street block. Unfortunately, the buildings which continue this "wing" along the passage have been so completely divested of their domestic character that their original division into tenements is uncertain.<sup>2</sup> Weighing the evidence, I am inclined to say with some misgivings that the street block was independent of the passage block, which was taken up by two separate tenements.

The house fronting the street had on this assumption a ground-floor shop entered at the W. end, with the stairs close by giving access to the first-floor hall. The small room at the W. end may have been a lobby with a door at

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1. Later alterations have borne hardly on this part of the house so that its functions are not now clear; in particular the significant points in the rear wall of the street block, which has been greatly changed to facilitate access from front to back, are all hidden by modern fittings or removed entirely.
  2. Partitions have been removed to make most of the long range into a warehouse; even so the problems might be resolved if the roof were accessible.



the S. The second floor was perhaps divided into a lobby and solar. There is no sign in the existing timbers of any distinction in the quality of the room on each floor, nothing, for instance, like the chamfered door in Phillips's Store. Despite this uncertainty Henry Tudor House establishes one important fact beyond doubt, that in such a three-storeyed house the hall was on the first-floor.

To form a picture of the number and purpose of other rooms, similar houses must be examined, the first being a building already mentioned briefly, the large imposing structure at the corner of Butcher Row and Fish Street which is called "The Abbot of Lilleshall's House".

"The Abbot's House". <sup>1</sup>

When restoration of this building took place in the middle years of the nineteenth century the mutilations of preceding centuries shown in a drawing by J.C. Buckler <sup>2</sup> were swept away and something like the original appearance

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1. Hugh Owen qualified his cautious statement that it may have been the town house of the Abbots of Lilleshall by adding that "it lacks the hall and great chamber suitable for a great family" (Anc. & Pres. State, 531-2); or for an Abbot, he might have added. H.E. Forrest said "it is generally believed to have been" the Abbot of Lilleshall's house (op.cit., 68); supporting evidence was not produced. A print of 1854 published by - Sandford called it a Guild House (B.M., Prints, 1928-12.10.49). An early illustration is in Matthew Habershon, The Ancient Half-timbered Houses of England, pl.15.
  2. Reproduced by J.H. Parker, loc.cit.,

of the ground floor re-established. In this state, apparently retaining important evidence of its early plan, the house remained until about 1937, when it was completely refitted internally to the benefit of the tenants and the detriment of architectural history. Fortunately plans of each floor were made before this happened; they appear, redrawn as fig.27.<sup>1</sup> Very few structural features are now visible internally.<sup>2</sup>

The plan is L-shaped with two wings of nearly equal length. The E. wing facing Butcher Row is divided into two shops of unequal size separated by a wide entrance to the back premises. The plans show that these structural divisions are carried up through the upper floors with the minor modification that the passage area is taken up by the end shop. It seems as if these two shops with the rooms above may always have been self-contained tenements, an early example of building upwards on a narrow plot in the manner more familiar in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This plan conforms to the bay system of the frontage (pl.101), where the principal posts are marked on the second floor by the curved wall braces springing from them and on the first floor by attached shafts with brackets

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1. I am indebted to Mr. F. Pook for his kindness in lending me the plans for copying.
  2. Examination of the building is made difficult by its subdivision into at least seven tenements, some of which are offices and can only be seen in office hours, while others are flats and can only be seen in an evening

to the jetty above.

The same structural system in the N. wing suggests that the original division there was into two more shops, one at the corner and the other facing down Fish Street; this is not certain from the plans alone because this side of the building had been extensively rebuilt and its internal partitions rearranged before Buckler's day and was therefore not restored with the rest.

What were these small vertical tenements like inside? The shops are not likely to have been subdivided because, they were already small, and there are no ceiling beams conveniently situated for original partitions. There was, that is to say, nothing corresponding to a structural screens passage, so the site of the stairs, which might be expected to have been near it, can only be guessed. First floor arrangements may be represented by the tenement at the end of the E. wing, where there were two rooms, one large and one small. This part of the house retained what were almost certainly the original stairs until c.1937. They were a straight flight up to the second floor, made of solid blocks of oak with a very narrow tread (pl.102), which were fastened to two heavy bearers.<sup>1</sup> The second floor of this shop was again divided into two rooms, both

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1. I am indebted for this information and for pl. 102 to Mr. H.J. Gornall, who photographed the stairs just before demolition.

originally open to the roof. Such a plan is impossible to trace in the other three tenements, either from the drawings or the present structure, but its probability is suggested by its close conformity to the plan of the street block of Henry Tudor House.

This tidy theory of four independent tenements, so largely based on conjecture and so little on the present structure, is open to an important objection, that the position of fireplaces as shown on the plans does not agree with it; indeed, clashes violently with it. No trace of ancient brickwork is visible to help decide the date of the various chimneys; the fireplaces themselves are all modern. Possibly the original chimneys were of timber and so when the time came for replacement in brick they could be demolished without trace and a new chimney built in a more convenient spot.

It may help to examine another of these large three-storey blocks which had a comparable plan, the long lower range of medieval building illustrated in plate 95.

65-69 Wyle Cop.

The ground floor of this block is divided unequally between Sidoli's Cafe, Bowen's tailoring and haberdashery shop, and two grocery shops, Phillips's and Morris's. The first and last of these have been thoroughly renovated,

leaving no considerable sign of antiquity internally. Morris's shop and the flat above now contain little external work of any age either. The premises occupied by Bowen's may retain something of the main timber structure under an effective disguise of plaster. We are left with Phillips's grocery shop, which has a completely modern ground-floor.

The first-floor resembles Henry Tudor House very closely (fig.28). There are two rooms in the block which fronts the street, the larger with a modern bay window, the smaller subdivided into a tiny room and a square stair well. The second floor has two equal-sized rooms divided by a partition built round the heavy curved braces below the tie-beam of the roof. Again we find a division of each of the upper floors into two rooms, but with the extra certainty that the main purpose of the smaller one was to contain a staircase; it served in effect as an upstairs screens passage. Nowhere have we noted any idea of confining the stair, which in its original form must have occupied quite a small space in a corner of each storey: the idea of a passage crossing the building was universally adopted wherever the entrance was structurally separated from a room. In the top storey of this particular house the scheme was modified only because the regular bays of the roof did not permit a structural division into two unequal parts.

So far the impression formed from the plans of the two preceding houses have been confirmed, with the proviso that only the main blocks of building facing the street are considered. Phillips's store can provide a clue about the rear block which is so puzzling in Henry Tudor House. The first floor of Phillips's has behind the main bay-windowed front room a slightly smaller room with a drop of two or three steps from front to back just as there is at Henry Tudor House. Now Phillips's rear block is of only two storeys, a difference in height which suggests that the idea of a three storey wing was at least not standard for such big houses. That some of the tenements in the range had no original back wing can be seen in the view of the end shop before rebuilding (pl.95); there is no sign of any rear block behind the front premises. The "Abbot's House" which is not much different in plan from either Phillips's or Henry Tudor House has no sign of an early back block to supplement the accommodation provided by the narrow three-storeyed tenements facing the street. Since the plan of a tall multi-storeyed front block with a slightly narrower wing behind it is found in Ireland's Mansion and other characteristic Elizabethan houses we may regard the similar wings in our medieval houses as additions to an original structure, or in the case of Henry Tudor House, a modification designed for the same

purpose of gaining extra rooms.

Having laid this down as a general rule it is necessary to consider a possible exception to it in the building under discussion. The passage between Bowen's two shops contains much exposed framing on the E. side. It has an obvious division which coincides with the back wall of the street block. I think that the framing which continues the passage wall to the S. (sketch, fig.28) is a later addition and was not intended to carry joists for a floor above the passage itself, the proof of this being found in an awkward junction between the joists and the main horizontal member on the E. side. The general character of the framing itself seems later than that which is indubitably medieval with the possible exception of a single large brace, not quite straight at the top nor yet sufficiently curved to make it obviously of fifteenth century build: it is quite similar to long straight braces in late sixteenth century work. The reason for considering this rear block later than the street blocks is the absence of an original passage ceiling here coupled with the lack of a jetty such as can be seen in the buildings behind Henry Tudor House: it is reasonable to expect one or the other in original work of this character.

Two original features of the entrance passage are of interest. The doorhead facing the street has a ribbed

coved canopy above a billet-moulded lintel (pl.103), with a hollow chamfer continued from the jambs through the four-centred head. It is not as elaborate as those known elsewhere, e.g., the doorhead in Jubbergate, York,<sup>1</sup> but indicates a building of considerable pretensions. On the left just inside ~~this~~ entrance is an original pointed doorhead which once gave access to a shop. This is the only door in Shrewsbury so placed; unfortunately so few doors remain in position that no deductions can be drawn from the different siting of this door and Purslow's. It may be a fortuitous variation; it may equally correspond to a particular use to which the shop was put. That is the difficulty which crops up in any of the three-storeyed houses in Shrewsbury; all have undergone such extensive alterations to adapt them to modern needs that it is hard to discover the basic elements they have in common, from which particular variants might be plotted.

Buildings partly of one and partly of two storeys.

Davey's Shop, Wyle Cop.

The examination of timber houses in Shrewsbury brought to light three examples of a hybrid type, a combination of the straightforward ground-floor hall and the jettied two-storeyed structure. It is a type already identified in

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1. J.H. Parker, op.cit.,



Oxford by Mr. W.A. Pantin, whose description and drawings of Tackley's Inn <sup>1</sup> gave the clue to the interpretation of buildings which did not in themselves provide enough evidence to make their original plan intelligible. Nor was further structural proof clear when re-examining two of them in the light of Mr. Pantin's article. In view therefore, of the element of doubt which thus inevitably exists, and of the differences between these and the Oxford house, detailed descriptions are given.

Let us begin with the shop next below Henry Tudor House, seen in pl.96 and now an outfitter's shop. <sup>2</sup> The gabled wing is modern; that end has been largely rebuilt. The passage between it and the shop is spanned by a pointed arch (pl.104), adjacent to which is a cusped bracket supporting a jetty, now underbuilt, which projected 1 ft. 3 ins. A two-storeyed block facing the street and probably of fifteenth century date is thus clearly established. That the first floor was originally of the normal open type, is proved by the sloping portion of the roof visible above the wallplate and below the modern ceiling, exactly like the top storey of Henry Tudor House. Behind this block of building fronting the street is another running parallel to it; their separate roofs can be seen from the top of

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1. Ant. J., XXVII (1947), 123-7.

2. Like Henry Tudor House it belongs to Mr. Maurice Davey, who has undertaken a careful restoration.

Henry Tudor House, with a common gutter between them (fig.29). By its structural characteristics the building at the back appears to be of much the same date as the front shop, and in fact there is no reason to think that they represent different periods despite the lack of positive proof. In the rear block a ceiling inserted at collar level leaves open to view two curved braces which support the purlins directly; the latter are on the underside of the principal rafters. The same construction, now modified to form an attic, is found in the front block.

There is only one sign that the first floor of the rear block may be an insertion. The junction made by the curved braces below the tie-beam with the principal posts from which they spring is hidden by the floor, i.e., the braces must end a foot or more below the floor. Any rail placed between these two principal posts to carry the floor would therefore make a mortise-and-tenon joint not with the principals but with the braces. But in two-storeyed medieval buildings important load-bearing rails are never tenoned directly into braces; the outside of Mac Fisheries (pl.83) shows how the braces are placed just above the horizontal member. So in an original construction, e.g., the first-floor partition inside Mac Fisheries, virtually the whole length of such curved braces can be seen from post to beam, and the floor is immediately above the transverse

beam, which carries the joists.<sup>1</sup> What seems to have happened at Mr. Davey's shop is this: the gable wall or a solid partition wall adjacent to the entrance passage had two curved braces supporting the tie-beam, with a rail below shown placed about midway up the principal posts. This rail, placed at a normal height, was considerably lower than the joists of the first floor, over the shop, which had to be above the normal height because the ground sloped down towards this end of the building. When in the late sixteenth century the upper floor above the shop came to be extended over the rear hall, the main longitudinal joists which was to be the principal support for the floor had to be placed above a secondary timber to get it to the required level, and in doing so the braces were partially concealed.

The only excuse for drawing such elaborate deduction from a simple structural feature is that there is scarcely any other evidence. It may be added that the joists seen from below have that slight sag towards the middle which frequently characterises inserted floors because they lack the cantilever effect of a jettied floor.

Drastic alterations in modern times make reconstruction of the complete plan impossible, but a few points deserve

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1. Some modification of this structural scheme has obviously been made in the solar floor, but even there the main weight is probably supported at the same level as in the hall.

notice. It is as it stands an exceptionally short building, yet the entrance passage at the E. end certainly marks the end of the original shop, and perhaps of the hall behind. The room above the shop, perhaps a solar, extended over the passage. How it was heated originally and how approached can hardly be discovered from the present structure; for answers to these and other questions we must turn to the other buildings of this class.

#### Two houses in Fish Street.

They stand adjacent to each other on the W. side of Fish Street, almost due W. of St. Julian's Church, and are now divided into five tenements, Nos. 1, 1A, 2, 3, and the "Three Fishes" public house. Nos. 1 and 1A are in a house (plate 105., left-hand side) which has a jetty underbuilt in brick and a plain plastered first floor. Plate 106 shows the exposed ground-floor facing and plastered first floor of Nos. 2 and 3, which with the "Three Fishes" formed the second house.<sup>1</sup>

The total amount of evidence for their original plan is very small. Considering Nos. 1 - 1A first, the jettied frontage shows that there were two storeys facing the street, with cellars beneath. The back of the house (pl. 107) has a vertical timber-framed wall with plain

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1. No. 1 is a ground-floor flat, No. 1A a first-floor flat. The second house is subdivided vertically. The "Three Fishes" has not been examined.

curved braces like those in the Abbot's House or 160-1 Abbey Foregate. The division into two blocks of building which is obvious inside is confirmed by seeing from the attic stair of No.2 the two separate roofs with a common gutter between them, exactly as at Davey's shop. Here it is even more difficult to show that a floor has been inserted in an original back hall, yet that is surely what the vertical rear wall implies. Not a single building in Shrewsbury of medieval or Elizabethan date has vertical unjettied walls combined with an original upper storey throughout nor, does any such building seem to be known elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Moreover the position of the fireplace, while it does not strengthen the argument, does not at any rate weaken it. There is a big central chimney stack with a ground floor fireplace for the former shop, possibly one in the room above, and another serving the rear block, the conjectural hall. The entrance passage was through the door which can be seen in both illustrations at the north end of the house adjacent to No.2; it runs straight through to the back of the house, the staircase being placed just behind the two-storeyed block, i.e., inside the presumed hall and adjacent to the entrance. The passage is the only part of the house where any of the

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1. A Herefordshire hall, Wigmore Chapel Farm, has an upstairs solar built without a jetty; R.C.H.M. Herefs., III, 208-209.

internal framing is visible (sketch, fig.30), the rest being concealed by panelling or wallpaper. It is built in two units corresponding to the basic structure of the house, each of which has two heavy curved braces connecting the sill to the principal posts, with a central stud and a rail to connect it to the braces, i.e., exactly the same structure on a smaller scale as the walls of the carriage entrance through Henry Tudor House. That the two units are contemporary is proved by their sharing a principal post into which the braces are pegged on both sides. The roof is inaccessible.

The second house has been so thoroughly altered as to leave only a general impression of its likeness to 1-1A. It has the same type of vertical framing at the back, a jetty at the front, and once had two separate roofs, which over Nos. 2 - 3 have been raised to form one high roof with attics (pl.106). An original doorway still remains at the S. end of No.2 (pl.106) opening into a passage through to the back.

Everything remains to be learned about the details of this type of house, and even adequate confirmation of their structure would be welcome. Nevertheless, whatever doubts may be felt about the original character of the rear block, particularly in the Fish Street examples, these houses by

their double structure are unlike any others so far described, and quite unlike any post-medieval building. They are a distinctive type of considerable size - Nos.1 - 1A show no sign of an original subdivision into two tenements - which is perhaps an alternative architectural solution to the problem, outlined at the beginning of this chapter, meeting the needs of the age with a large hall, a solar capable of subdivision into at least two rooms, a shop below it, and cellars for the storage of goods. A fifteenth century lease suggests a different and on the whole preferable interpretation. In 1455 Alice relict of Nicholas Clement, burgess, and Richard Warying, burgess, leased to John Lloit of Shrewsbury, esquire, a tenement in the street under le Wyle with brewhouse, oven, kiln and mill in the said tenement, reserving to the said Alice and Richard the inner house with two rooms situated near Bipstan Lane.<sup>1</sup>

The back hall in Fish Street with the fireplace at one end might well have had a solar at the other end, making just such an inner house as the deed refers to. The front ground floor in Fish Street could have accommodated a workshop with a solar above, quite independent of the hall behind.

If these buildings were, or could be, two independent tenements, the shops were larger than those in front of Tackley's Inn. The point of interest is really that both

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1. TSAS, 2s. XII (1900), 197.

lease and buildings suggest that a Tackley's Inn arrangement was used outside Oxford as a normal type of dwelling; that the use of such a plan for an academic hall is not an instance of a building designed for a special purpose, but rather a familiar type adapted.

Numbers and distribution of these house types.

We have established three main structural types of houses built specifically to meet town requirements. It should be possible by counting the houses in each type to form an idea of the wealth and importance of the town in the later Middle Ages, and to discover how far Shrewsbury had changed from a rural and agricultural borough into a town in the modern sense of the word, with a distinctive urban and commercial character. Counting will not be a straightforward task with the two-storeyed houses, all of which will require brief discussion to prove their medieval date; the three-storeyed houses are easier.

We will start with Cockle's cycle shop adjacent to the site of Shearman's Hall, on the S.E. side of Milk Street, which is usually said to have been built by George Proud in 1568.<sup>1</sup> The back wing is the oldest part of the building (p.276 above) and was truncated to build the range facing

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1. Forrest, op.cit., 78. Proud's house is more likely to be the corner block on the other side of Shearman's Hall (Hall, Wateridge and Owen) which looks like a building of the 1560's or 1570's. This fits the evidence better; cf. Owen, op.cit., 536.



the street. A glance at the back of this range (pl.108) shows that it is itself of two periods, the original build being of two storeys with a top storey added later. The large square panels divided by a middle rail are quite unlike Elizabethan work, of which there is a quantity of dated material for comparison; they resemble the panels in the present back rooms of Henry Tudor House, or in the Golden Cross Inn. The street range is therefore medieval in origin, let us say provisionally fifteenth century, no later. The date of the top storey will be discussed in another chapter. Cockle's shop is therefore a medieval house of two periods, in each of which two storeys were required.

There is the "Old House", Dogpole (pl.109) which has much the air of a seventeenth century building. The street frontage is deceptive, however, because closer inspection shows the two braces in the middle of the first floor to be cusped in the usual medieval fashion. That this part of the Old House is certainly of fifteenth century origin can be confirmed on the N. or courtyard side, where there are two big curved structural braces like those in the vehicle entrance of Henry Tudor House, and a cusped bracket like that at Purslow's, built to support a jettied upper storey (pl.110). To argue a close dating on such evidence would be futile; let us again give it a fifteenth century

date, differentiating it only from the early sixteenth century close timbering of Phillips's store in Fish Street.

A small building near the north end of Fish Street, now divided into two tenements (Nos. 9 and 10), is the next example. At first sight, it appears to be a late sixteenth century house with low rail and close studding below (pl.111). A closer look shows that the rail is not tenoned and pegged into the corner post, nor are the studs tenoned into an original sill but into a horizontal timber which has been inserted above it. The two empty peg-holes of a middle rail can be seen a foot or so above the present rail. All these alterations are shown in pl.112. Clearly there is an early frame which has been completely gutted and walled anew. What date is it? It is earlier than the close studs and low rail of the frontage which I would consider late Elizabethan (see the discussion of Elizabethan dating criteria below). The presence of a middle rail might be medieval or early Elizabethan; if the dating of the studs is correct a late medieval date is the more probable. Here, admittedly, no proof is forthcoming of the age of the house, so it may stand as a doubtful example of the class we are seeking.

The shop at the corner of Fish Street and Grope Lane (C.J.Pritchard) has an angle post to take a dragon-beam, rather like a small plain version of the one in the Abbot's

House nearby. Its bracketed jetty too must be of fifteenth century origin. The roof has been so rebuilt that a more precise dating cannot be attempted.

The long range of the Golden Cross Inn flanking a passage of that name on the S.W. side of High Street is said to be c.1480.<sup>1</sup> That may well be true; the building above S.W. (Princess Street) end of the passage is also certainly medieval (pl.113), and is perhaps earlier. At the opposite end of the passage, embedded in the N.W. wall, is part of the structure of another medieval two storey building, the two corner posts and middle post to carry the principal joist of the first-floor.<sup>2</sup> It is a structure exactly like the end wall of Purslow's shop.

In Frankwell the shop next to Purslow's displays similar characteristics; they were a pair in one range.

Lastly, there is the tobacconist's shop on the S.E. side of Pride Hill (pl.114). The two-storey bay window is a seventeenth century addition to an earlier building. Just above the transom of the first-floor bay is a very thick timber, which is really two timbers, an old wallplate upon which a new sill has been placed to permit the addition of an extra storey. The relatively wide spacing of the studs in the building is of medieval character rather than Elizabethan.

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1. Forrest, op.cit., 41.

2. Incorporated in 45 High Street.

So much for the two-storeyed houses. Those of three-storeys are either much more obvious or have been more effectively concealed behind new brick fronts. On Wyle Cop, where we have already seen two impressive ranges of these buildings, there is also a part of the Lion Hotel, and on the opposite (N) side, the Nag's Head public house. Opposite Dogpole are the Royal Vaults. In Mardol there is No.51, J.H. Jones's furniture shop (pl.115) which is an early sixteenth century building and the King's Head<sup>1</sup> a short distance below. At the corner of Roushill is a draper's shop which has had its Mardol frontage refaced in mock Elizabethan style; its Roushill frontage is good fifteenth century work (pl.116). Frankwell has a big range of close-studded timber-framing on the S. side near the Welsh Bridge (pl.117); it belongs to the period immediately before Elizabeth I, and is perhaps early sixteenth century. Two other notable houses long since demolished deserve mention. One was on the site of the present General Market at the top of Mardol (pl.118); the other at the corner of High Street and Pride Hill (pl.119).

From this survey it is plain that a remarkable number of medieval town houses survive in Shrewsbury: at least thirty can be listed, a total which includes three

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1. Obviously at least as early as the fifteenth century, but completely modernised internally and heavily restored externally. Sketch plan, fig.31.

or four ranges of building comprising more than a single tenement. Many more must have been either demolished or refronted, including some which were more impressive than any now remaining, so that now some important streets like Pride Hill, High Street, and Castle Street contain not a single known house of three storeys, and very few of two. It seems a fair deduction from this that in the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century Shrewsbury was an important town where the need for land was great enough to require building to be upwards, and on a large scale. None of the houses can be ascribed to an owner with the possible exception of 65-69 Wyle Cop which are said to have been built by Thomas Mytton about 1460.<sup>1</sup> The deed of 1455 quoted above does show that buildings of this size must have been the most important in the town, inhabited by burgesses of standing and substance

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1. Forrest, op.cit., 80.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LATE MEDIEVAL ECONOMIC BACKGROUND.

In a previous chapter on the economic life of Shrewsbury it was necessary to argue from slender documentary evidence a prosperity which could be deduced from the actual growth of the town. For the two hundred years with which we are concerned the evidence of every kind is so much stronger that without entering on disputable questions about the date of contemporary houses it is possible to show from independent sources that the second half of the fourteenth century must have been a boom period hardly equalled even in the Elizabethan age. Church building is the basis of this opinion.<sup>1</sup>

At the Abbey, for example, the parochial nave was transformed about 1360-70, and there were alterations to the transepts in the Decorated period which are in part ascribed more narrowly to the last quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The slight remains of the old church of St. Chad yield a Decorated tomb-recess and a window of the "transition to Perpendicular",<sup>3</sup> a phrase which recurs several times. Another such tomb-recess and a chapel exist at St. Giles's.<sup>4</sup>

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1. All the evidence of this nature is taken from D.H.S. Cranage, An Architectural Account of the Churches of Shropshire; no doubt this dating could be revised in the light of recent research, but not sufficiently to modify the broad picture.
  2. Cranage, op.cit., 873, 876 (nave); 810, 872 (transepts).
  - 3, ibid., 904.
  4. ibid., 916.

At St. Julian's was a large chapel, known as St. Mary's or the Shearman's Chapel, which was generally of a Perpendicular character; Cranage thought it might have been a late fourteenth century structure. <sup>1</sup> St. Alkmund's of which only an insignificant proportion of the medieval feature is left, has nothing known to be of the relevant date. St. Mary's on the other hand, where the architectural evidence still survives, can show considerable late fourteenth century work; a chapel on the N. side of the chancel was altered about 1360, a chapel on its S. side was rebuilt on a much larger scale about the same time, and a "late Decorated" upper room, was added to the porch. <sup>2</sup> Nor do the parish churches exhaust the tale of late Decorated building; the friaries too were certainly embellished during that period, one of the most notable instances being the fine window now removed from the Grey Friars' Church to St. Mary's. <sup>3</sup> When it is remembered what a small proportion of the town's medieval churches survive - nearly all architectural traces of three friaries and three parish churches are lost - the evidence of prosperity in the late second half of the fourteenth century is unmistakable.

The documentary sources are much the same as for the preceding century, gild-merchant and subsidy rolls

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1. *ibid.*, 921.
  2. *ibid.*, 925.
  3. *loc.cit.*

principally; several gild-merchant rolls covering the years 1384-1407<sup>1</sup> form a convenient starting point. About half the men listed there are designated by occupation;<sup>2</sup> among them the overwhelming preponderance of the wool and leather trades is again obvious but this time the latter are slightly greater in numbers with a total of 40 against 37 in wool.

The men concerned with leather comprise 15 corvisers, 8 barkers, 6 glovers, 6 sadlers, 4 skimmers, and a pouch-maker. Among the wool trades a change can perhaps be seen as compared with earlier periods; there are 8 mercers, 4 drapers (a new style, this), and 11 tailors, but fewer trades actually concerned with processing the cloth. Shearmen are very few (2 only), and the remaining total is made up with 5 webbers, a walker, a cardmaker, a woolman and 4 dyers.

The remaining trades are largely concerned with food; there are 15 bakers, 13 butchers, 2 taverners, and closely allied to them were the two coopers making barrels for the beer which was made in large quantities in the town.<sup>3</sup> The relative size of the metal-working group of trades has dwindled by comparison with the thirteenth century; there are three plumbers, one ironmonger, 2 smiths and a cutler.

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1. TSAS, 3s. V (1905), 35-54; I have omitted the short roll of 1412 which seems to be largely a duplicate of the preceding roll of 1407.
  2. About 150 out of 280; there may be some duplication.
  3. V.C.H. I, 421-422.



The plumbers were no doubt concerned largely with roofing. There must always have been a considerable number of smiths in the town, but the rare appearance of the trade in the gild-merchant rolls denotes that its numbers could be made up in the town itself, and that the trade was not sufficiently important to attract men from outside.

We have therefore three big trade groups, among which the leather trades are invariably the largest. Some of the entries in these rolls have both the man's trade and his place of origin, and when this is taken into account there is a remarkable difference between the leather and wool groups. For the former the place of origin is very rarely mentioned, and when it is, is usually some quite local town or village such as Oswestry. The wool trades on the other hand include some quite distant places such as Birmingham, Northampton, Walsingham and Conway. Moreover these places lie outside the area which was brought into Shrewsbury's orbit by physical geography; even Conway does not necessarily send its traffic that way, Chester being equally suitable on considerations of route alone. We can therefore fairly conclude that the wool and cloth dealers were still the more important of the two major groups.

The importance of brewing in the town in the early fifteenth century is shown by the considerable area over which the product was drunk. So powerful was the

competition in Oswestry that in 1407 the Earl of Arundel granted to that town that Shrewsbury Ale should be sold there only after payment of a fine; <sup>1</sup> this was no doubt in order to protect Oswestry brewers. Shrewsbury ale is also said to have been drunk in 1400 at a feast given by Owen Glendower at his Castle of Sycherth. <sup>2</sup> Although these statements are quoted from secondary sources, their testimony to the flourishing condition of the trade at this period is borne out by the foundation of almshouses in St.Chad's churchyard by Benet Tupton, a beer-brewer, in 1409. <sup>3</sup>

There is a second series of gild-merchant rolls covering the years 1450-1459 <sup>4</sup> which throw some light on an interesting period immediately before the prosperity of Shrewsbury began to decline. They do show that it is unwise to deduce too much from variations in the numbers of men described as following particular trades; the leather group now totals 26 only against 51 wool traders. There is obviously a close connection between the butchers and the woolmen and the hides-and-skin dealers, and no doubt a fellmonger might at different times devote the major part of his efforts either to skins or the wool which his business produced; likewise many of the butchers must

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1. S.S. & P., 8 March 1882.
  2. *ibid.*, 14 December 1881.
  3. V.C.H., I, 422.
  4. TSAS, 3s. V (1905), 35-54.

equally have been graziers, though in fact that they are not so described in gild-merchant rolls because their fines were paid not to enable them to exist by grazing flocks and herds but by killing them. The association of weavers with the town is a similar instance; their connection with weaving lay entirely in the country districts which produced the cloth that had to be sold in Shrewsbury, hence the necessity for burgess rights.

There seems to be a second change of emphasis in the gild-merchant rolls for this decade, a change in the direction of trade: but again the evidence must be treated with some reserve. Men from Chester, Wirral, Lancaster and 'Kyrkbykendale' (Kirkby Lonsdale?) appear in the lists, and there is an Oxford man. Otherwise names of Welsh origin predominate to the exclusion, save for two Derbyshire places, of all those eastward towns which formerly occurred frequently. The Welshmen are interesting; their exact place of origin is rarely specified, so that Bala is the most distant town mentioned, but there is a strong element of personal names in forms little corrupted from the Welsh, giving the impression of a relatively large migration from Wales into the marcher districts. The reason for their movement is clear from the trades they plied. Out of 21 Welshmen there were 7 drapers, 5 tailors, 2 weavers, and a shearman - 15 in all. There were

2 corvisers and 2 sadlers; 4 bakers and a barber made up the total. There can be no doubt about the significance of this high concentration in the associated trades of wool and leather (19 out of 21); Shrewsbury by this time was commanding the trade in those two most important commodities over the whole of north and central Wales, nor did it cease to do so during the trade recession which affected the town very badly in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The burgess lists for that century<sup>1</sup> perhaps give a more complete picture than the gild-merchant rolls of the area from which the wealthy Shrewsbury middlemen drew their trading profits. There are men from Wrexham, Ruabon, Chirk, and Denbigh; Oswestry and Welshpool occur more often, and were no doubt growing primary markets. The whole North Wales coast had trade links with Shrewsbury, the places specifically named including Conway, Bangor and Carnarvon, the last of which has left a memory in Carnarvon Lane at the N. end of Mardol. Mid-Wales had always been closely connected with the town, so that it is not surprising to find Dolgelly, Machynlleth and Towyn mentioned. Trade from all these places in Central Wales came up the Dovey valley to Welshpool, a fairly easy natural route to follow. Places South of the Dovey are

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1. H.E. Forrest, (ed.), Shrewsbury Burgess Roll (Shropshire Archaeological and Parish Register Society volume for 1924), passim.

not much mentioned; Llanrhayader is an exception, but otherwise Hereford and Leominster are the only points far to the south with which Shrewsbury traded. The general impression is that the marches down to Hereford and Wales north of the River Dovey were the sources from which the Shrewsbury burgesses drew their wool and their hides. Places south of the Dovey like Aberystwyth are never mentioned in the fifteenth century, and Brecon by this time has disappeared, so we may presume that trade from all the south and west parts of Wales flowed through Carmarthen and Cardiff, the two places which with Shrewsbury had been designated staple towns in 1326.<sup>1</sup>

Two further connections not adequately illustrated by the gild-merchant rolls were with London and Bristol. The evidence is mainly of a slightly later period than the one just dealt with, but both connections had clearly been established for a long time. William Wythyford of Shrewsbury in his will of 1449<sup>2</sup> describes himself as of Bristol, son and heir of Hugh Wythyford lately burgess and merchant of the said town; they presumably ran a family business with branches in the big secondary market-town and in the port from which many of its products were shipped. The London connection, mentioned before the fourteenth century,<sup>3</sup> recurs in the latter part of the fifteenth

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1. C.C.R. (1327-30), 116.

2. TSAS, 2s. IX (1897), 216.

3. Above, p.216.

century in three wills. Robert Gryme of Shrewsbury who in 1476 is described as citizen and grocer of London <sup>1</sup> was the son of John Gryme, merchant or grocer, who was admitted to burgess-ship in 1466 along with his son. <sup>2</sup> About the same period Richard Laurence and Nicholas Hagur, both of Shrewsbury, style themselves in their wills citizens and merchants of London. <sup>3</sup>

We may next turn to the subsidy roll of 1445-6 <sup>4</sup> which should tell us something about the relative wealth of various groups of inhabitants. The deficiencies of this class of record as a means of assessing real wealth <sup>5</sup> do not affect our purpose, since although the total sum demanded of the town in taxation might be far less than its real capacity to pay, the burden would undoubtedly be divided among the citizens in something like a just proportion to their individual means. There are nevertheless severe limitations in this roll; it covers only "foreign burgesses, tenses, and other men not burgesses or tenses", and a man's trade is not always noted.

There are thirteen assessments for amounts of 12d. and over. The highest is that of William Bent, glover, assessed at 2s.; next comes John Walls, shearman at 20d.

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1. TSAS, loc.cit., John Gryme was also "citizen and grocer of London"; *ibid.*, 3s. VI (1906), 380.
  2. Burgess Roll, 126.
  3. TSAS, 2s. IX (1897), 216-7.
  4. TSAS, LIII (1948-9), 68-75.
  5. cf. W.G. Hoskins, The Wealth of Medieval Devon, Devonshire Studies, : also J.F. Willard, Studies in Parliamentary Taxation.

followed by Richard Lye, weaver (16d), with two corvisors<sup>1</sup> and a glover all at 12d. The trades of the remaining seven are unspecified. Unfortunately the proportion of occupations stated decreases for the lowest assessments, so that of the 48 assessed between 6d and 11d. only one-third are known. Three mercers, a draper and a shearman represent one big group of trades, a purser and a corvisor the other. In the assessments below 6d the leather trades predominate, with 8 glovers, 6 corvisors, a barker and a sadler. Wool and cloth is represented by 5 weavers, a tailor and a card-maker. Now these figures cannot lay claim to any statistical accuracy but it is likely that they do tell part of the truth when they hint at greater individual wealth among the members of the wool trades than among the hides-and-skins group. It is the impression, no more than that, conveyed by the thirteenth and early fourteenth century records, where William le Parmenter may be the equal of almost any wool merchant, but his fellow-traders in the leather industry do not on the whole have the wealth of the Colles, the Prides, and the Sturys.<sup>2</sup>

Among other assessments are those of five bakers, 2 butchers and a cook, all at 6d or less. The largest sum due from any of the members of these trades was the 10d.

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1. One of them, Adam de Shrawardine, has no trade specified in the Roll; the Burgess Rolls supply the deficiency.
  2. pp. 209-213 above.

to be paid by Thomas Parker, a butcher. The metal workers could not compare financially with the two major trade-groups; their highest assessment was a smith's at 8d. Two goldsmiths each paying less than 6d are mentioned. It is of some interest to see that the town provided sufficient work for a glazier, John Sutton, but apparently not enough to compel him to pay taxes since his assessment is nil; there were no doubt others among the burgesses who had the major share of such glazing, both new work and repairs, as was required.

The fourteenth century provides the earliest evidence for streets named after particular trades. Cokesrewe is mentioned in 1376, Mercers Row in 1398, and Bakers Row in 1418-9. Corvisors Row (1378) and Butchers' or Fleshheweres' Row (1396) are the two best-known instances ( ).<sup>1</sup> There is no hint of how those names came to be adopted or when. Their appearance in the space of half a century might be due to regulation by the bailiffs in the interests of town planning; it might equally be that men plying the same trade concentrated their shops and stalls voluntarily near the market at which their particular wares were sold. The report on the Corporation manuscripts makes no mention of any official order on the matter but if the widened streets mentioned earlier were in fact markets at this date there must clearly have been some division between them of the various commodities sold in the town. It may have been only

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1. SPL. Catalogue of Deeds.



a broad division as between, say, cattle and wool, with the largest market (The Square) covering all the most important objects of trade.

During the second half of the fourteenth century and throughout the succeeding century nearly all the trade companies of Shrewsbury were formed.<sup>1</sup> One, of the Barber Chirurgeons, which was founded as early as 1304, may be an instance of medical men forming a professional association for self-protection in a time of prosperity, and is therefore unlike the other companies, most of which were formed in different circumstances.

The shoemakers claimed to have been founded as a company in 1387, sixty years before any other branch of the major trades could show its association by charter. It is probably significant that the shoemakers were engaged in a dispute with the tanners earlier in the fourteenth century (p.212); they may well have felt the need to band together and so prevent by regulation any large new entry into a trade which was becoming over-competitive. Such a close association would of course help them to fight the encroachment of the tanners, but as long as there was an expanding market such a step would probably be unnecessary. Perhaps this is reading something into the shoemakers'

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1. H.Pidgeon, The Ancient Guilds of Shrewsbury; TSAS, VI (1882), 183-204. Dates of company foundations are quoted from this source.

company which can be more properly deduced from the later companies.

In 1448-9 the Weavers secured a charter. They were followed in the next few years by the Tailors and Skinners (1460), the Drapers (1461-2), the Sadlers and Painters (1479), and the Mercers and Goldsmiths (1486). These five companies between them divided the wool and hides-and-skins trades which were the real basis of Shrewsbury's economic life and which were an index of the town's prosperity. The mercers' composition for their charter gives a fair idea of why and when such guilds were formed. A statement<sup>1</sup> that the former great fines upon foreigners and apprentices had been moderated by royal request is borne out by a fine of 20s. imposed in 1471 upon Edward Brown of Lincoln, "juler", on condition he shall show here in this town twice a year and at every time have licence for three weeks".<sup>2</sup> To the same end of restricting competition Geoffrey Waryng of Carnarvon was fined 20s. on his coming and dwelling in Shrewsbury in 1463-4;<sup>3</sup> the flow of newcomers into the trade might be checked if a heavy fine were inflicted upon them on entrance. Other men paid heavily to be able to practise one trade only of several covered by the Guild, so that a man might be fined for permission to trade as a

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1. Rev. W.A. Leighton, The Guilds of Shrewsbury; TSAS, VIII (1885), 260-412.
  2. *ibid.*, 302-3.
  3. *ibid.*, 302.

capper only, or as a mercer only, where presumably other members had full trading rights in all these branches of their business. As trade became more difficult fines grew; the sum of 20s. common between 1462 and 1465 is generally doubled a few years later.<sup>1</sup> Other restrictive practices were embodied in the composition. No member of the craft was to take on as master or apprentice anyone of the French, Flemish, Irish, Dutch, Welsh or any other nation "not being at truce with our Sovereign Lord the King",<sup>2</sup> but only mere English born; an obvious attempt to keep out of Shrewsbury such large numbers of Welshmen as appeared in the Subsidy Roll of 1445-6.

Although less information is available about the other companies there can be no doubt of their general purpose; it was to enable their members to make a living without having to fear too much from competition at a time of trade recession. That trade was indeed bad is proved by entries in the national records, which show that the King remitted his normal demands of taxation over a considerable period to enable the town to recover. The first sign of this is in 1484, when the Bailiffs and burgesses were excused payment of twenty marks of their annual fee farm of £30 "in consequence of the poverty of the town and for other

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1. *ibid.*, 302-3.

2. *ibid.*, 276.

causes".<sup>1</sup> A fuller statement the following year grants "release for fifty years, in consideration of the poverty and decay of their town, to the bailiffs and burgesses.... of payment of 10 marks of the fee farm of their town.... and release for ever from contributing to, or collecting, any tenths, fifteenths, quota, tallage, aid, subsidy, imposition or contributions granted or imposed by the Commons by authority of Parliament, convocation or otherwise".<sup>2</sup> The enumeration of the various kinds of taxes must not perhaps be taken at its face value, but at least it indicates a real desire to alleviate distress; there must have been some grounds for alarm when Henry VII abandoned his financial claims. A few years later in 1491 the bailiffs wrote to the King's Commissioners pleading for further remission of taxation.<sup>3</sup> In 1500 an order was made "restraining for one year buying and selling in any towns in Wales or the County of Salop except at the common fairs by the inhabitants of Shrewsbury in order to renew the decayed trade of the town".<sup>4</sup> Although the Patent Rolls covering the years 1494-1509 do not contain any further reference to the abandonment of tax claims the order of 1500 shows that Shrewsbury was still passing through a

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1. Cal.Pat.R. (1476-85), 384.

2. ibid., (1485-94), 118.

3. O & B. I 259; Hist.Mss. Comm., 15th Rept., Appx. X., 10.

4. Hist. Mss. Comm., loc.cit.

prolonged trade depression. Years before this a deed of 1472<sup>1</sup> mentions "the messuages now ruinous in the Heystrete", a state of affairs which can no doubt be found somewhere in any town at any time, but in this case decayed tenements in a main street are surely significant of the collapse of trade and the consequent inability to rebuild. Entries in the Drapers' Accounts about the same time refer to decayed rents, beginning in 1489,<sup>2</sup> and going on more or less continuously until 1503. An indirect allusion to this great trade depression is contained in the Taylor manuscript chronicle under the year 1522, when the death occurred of Morris Mynttoon, who "did put many poor people on work".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless after the order of 1500 there is little further sign of the trade depression having continued. An assessment to the subsidy of 1524 shows that at that time the town was certainly considered fit to pay taxes in the normal way, but by 1535-6 Shrewsbury was again in decay, being listed in that year among several places provided for by a special Act of Parliament.<sup>4</sup> It looks as if there was a return of prosperity between two slumps, one c.1475-1500, the other c.1535-45.<sup>5</sup> Is there any other evidence of this early sixteenth century revival?

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1. TSAS, 3s. VI (1906), 388.

2. TSAS, 4s. III (1913), 177.

3. TSAS, III (1880), 251.

4. Statutes of the Realm, 27 Henry VIII, c.i. (1535-6).

5. There is a second act similar in content to the first; ibid., 35 Henry VIII c.4 (1543-4).

Again we may use church-building as an index to the town's fortunes, <sup>1</sup> and this time the signs are less easy to interpret, since Perpendicular architecture is notoriously hard to date closely. Nevertheless we find that the only surviving medieval portion of St.Alkmund's is said to belong to the last quarter of the fifteenth century; <sup>2</sup> the roof of St.Giles's is late fifteenth or early sixteenth century; <sup>3</sup> and the two upper stages of St.Julian's tower are early sixteenth century. <sup>4</sup> St. Mary's naturally provides more evidence than the others. Clerestories and roofs were added to both chancel and nave in the late fifteenth century, a spire was added to the tower at the same period, and the windows of the S. aisle were rebuilt in the late fifteenth century or a little later, together with the upper room of the S. porch. <sup>5</sup> Other Perpendicular work there certainly was at St.Alkmund's and St. Julian's, but in view of the dating difficulty and the imperfect sources of information - draughtsmen and engravers before 1790 rarely give accurate tracery details - it must be set aside as of uncertain date.

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1. Cranage, op.cit., is again the source.
  2. *ibid.*, 896.
  3. *ibid.*, 916.
  4. *ibid.*, 920.
  5. *ibid.*, 925.

How all this evidence is to be interpreted is a very debatable question. We may have here the same apparent conflict that Dr. W.G. Hoskins has demonstrated in Devon in the fifteenth century, when the County was nominally in a state of financial distress at the same time as fine Perpendicular churches were everywhere being built.<sup>1</sup> I am inclined however to give weight to Cranage's dating, and particularly to his cautious remark about St. Mary's S. aisle windows; they are late fifteenth century "or a little later". We know that in 1524 the Franciscans were putting up new buildings towards which the bailiffs and burgesses twice granted sums of money,<sup>2</sup> an unlikely proceeding had their own revenues been low or uncertain through the bad trade. This isolated instance suggests there may have been a renewal of church-building when the first slump had passed, and all that can be said of the evidence from the parish churches is that it does not necessarily contradict this idea. How long this first depression lasted is hard to tell; the Drapers' Company rents are "decayed" between 1489 and 1503, and again in 1510.<sup>3</sup>

The signs of a second depression in the 1510's are nearly confined to the two Acts of Parliament previously

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1. W.G. Hoskins, loc.cit.
  2. O & B., II.
  3. TSAS, 4s. III (1913), 177-204 passim.

mentioned. The first, of 1535-6, opens with grave words: "For so much as divers and many houses, messuages and tenements of habitations in the towns of Nottingham, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Queenborough,<sup>1</sup> Northampton and Gloucester, now are and of long time have been in great ruin and decay, and specially in the principal streets there being...."; it brings to mind the mention in a deed sixty years before of ruinous houses in the High Street.<sup>2</sup> The situation apparently demanded a fairly drastic remedy. The ruinous properties were to be repaired by their owners within three years, in default of which they were forfeited to the landlord, who was to repair within three years. If he too defaulted on this obligation the Mayor and Corporation had the right to take over within three years, and to repair within a similar term. On their defaulting, the original owner could recover his property. Tudor Acts of Parliament contained such a large element of propaganda that it is hard to say how far the conditions prompting these unusual steps actually prevailed. Since Ludlow and Bridgnorth are involved in the same Act it seems as if trade was languishing in the marches; the inclusion of Northampton and Nottingham may reflect a decline elsewhere in the two staples of Shrewsbury's trade.

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1. "Quaynborowe".  
2. TSAS, 3s. VI (1906), 388.



A further hint of this is implied in the petition of the cap and hat makers of Shrewsbury demanding that the provisions of an Act of 1528-9 regulating prices of hats and caps should be enforced.<sup>1</sup>

The second Act is to the same general effect with modifications in detail. The list of towns to which it applies is different and larger: besides Shrewsbury there are Chester, Ludlow, Haverford West, Pembroke, Tenby, Carmarthen, Montgomery, Cardiff, Swansea, Cambridge, New Radnor, Presteigne, Brecon, Monmouth, Abergavenny, Caerleon, Newport (Mon); Maldon (Essex); and Lancaster, Preston and Wigan in Lancashire. Now of these only Ludlow was a primary market for Shrewsbury, perhaps even its rival in the fifteenth century. All the others lie south of the Dovey and west of the marches, i.e., they are in that part of Wales which did not look to Shrewsbury as an outlet for its woollen cloth. The inclusion of the three Lancashire towns is a further pointer to a general decline in the trade down the western coast and border of England, but the omission of all the N. Wales towns such as Oswestry, Welshpool, Conway and Carnarvon does not suggest that there was a depression on the scale affecting S. Wales.

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1. V.C.H., I, 421.

A decline in trade may perhaps be deduced also from the places of origin of burgesses who received their freedom between 1500 and 1525.<sup>1</sup> Statistical comparison with the previous century is impossible, but the early sixteenth century places are very largely in N. Wales, with relatively few distant towns. There are of course several Staffordshire towns; Liverpool appears; and the most remote is Preston-in-Kendal (Yorks). Once again an impression, rather than proof of decline is conveyed by a comparison with the wider trading range both before and after these years.

The general picture of Shrewsbury's economic situation in the two centuries under review may be summed up briefly. From the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century the earlier growth of the town continued, and it was a flourishing prosperous borough. A depression ensued, extending perhaps over a generation, c.1475-1505, followed by a revival on a sufficient scale to permit considerable church-building. A second depression, probably slighter than the first, was felt c.1510-45.

It might therefore be possible to place the late medieval houses into two groups with an interval between them corresponding to the slump period, provided they could be dated sufficiently precisely. As a very general guide the houses with cusped braces and exposed joists might be placed before 1475 and those with plain curved braces and

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1. Burgess Rolls, passim.

moulded bressumers after 1500. On this showing Henry Tudor House, 65-69 Wyle Cop, and Mac Fisheries, belong to the pre-slump period, along with all but one of the timber halls. The exception, 160-161 Abbey Foregate, along with Phillips's Store in Fish Street, J.H. Jones's shop in Mardol, the long range of early sixteenth century building in Frankwell, and the Abbot's House, belong to this second period. This division conforms with the purely architectural datings given earlier. The real difficulty about attempting such a separation is that the period of 25 years is quite short in terms of architectural dating, which here can only be expressed as the early, late or middle part of a century. Secondly, a slump does not mean the total cessation of all building activity, so that a single house from that period, itself only dateable perhaps as late fifteenth century, might throw the whole scheme out.

One conclusion at least can be safely drawn; that the timber halls belong to the period before 1475, the years of great and increasing prosperity, together with several of the big three-storeyed buildings. These houses are a fitting memorial to an era of growing wealth and the physical expansion of the town.

CHAPTER IX.

ELIZABETHAN ARCHITECTURE.

Shrewsbury is commonly described by tourists as a town full of fine old Elizabethan houses. As we have seen, there are substantial buildings surviving from earlier periods than this, but it is true that some of the most conspicuous buildings are Elizabethan, and the fact that a few are dated strengthens the impression of their number and importance.

For the architectural historian of Shrewsbury the interest of the period lies in the possibilities that buildings dated by inscriptions offer. For the first time we can pin both structural and decorative features to an exact date, thereby establishing a fixed point in the typological development of roof trusses, for instance, or framing. In one or two cases plans can be associated by inscription with individuals whose status, known from documents, will throw light on the architectural requirements of his social class.

The religious and economic changes of the sixteenth century, culminating in Elizabeth's reign, have long been studied and their details are by now well known. The social changes accompanying these developments had one important architectural consequence which is equally

familiar, the abandonment of the single-storey hall open to the roof. Nearly every medieval house in the country displays a floor inserted to modernise the hall by dividing it into two storeys in accordance with the new fashion. Nor, as has been noted earlier, was the change confined to the countryside, to the great houses of the nobility or the manor houses of the gentry; urban halls, inhabited by men of quite different stamp who acquired money by trade, not land, underwent the same change at the same time. But we have established in an earlier chapter the existence of hall characteristics in other buildings of two and three storeys, in which as many as possible of the structural characteristics of the large medieval houses were retained. What effect did these social and economic changes have upon a kind of architecture in which two or more storeys throughout were already customary, and in which a greater subdivision of the existing small rooms could be practised only with difficulty, if at all? There will be two related questions to consider. Firstly, how did the new-built houses of the period differ from those of the first half of the century? When this is answered we shall know what features to look for in asking the second question, which though interesting is less important, how were existing houses modified to bring

them into line with the new requirements?

Now the period with which this chapter is concerned is quite short, only half a century; much shorter, that is to say, than the years spanned by any preceding chapter. And since we can presume a fairly rapid architectural change within that space of time, it will be best to start on a different basis from that adopted hitherto. Dating criteria will be considered first in order to establish as close a sequence of stylistic and structural development as possible. Once that is settled the two questions posed above should be capable of fairly precise answers.

The relevant dated houses for the period, eight in number, may be divided into two groups. The first group includes only those for which the dating evidence is absolutely trustworthy, and is as follows:-

|                              |      |                                |
|------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Drapers' Hall.               | 1560 | by documentary evidence.       |
| Lloyd's Mansion (demolished) | 1570 | } by inscription on tie-beams. |
| former Cross Keys Inn.       | 1575 |                                |
| Merevale House.              | 1601 |                                |

The remaining four may be used to supplement the conclusions drawn from the first group. They are:

William Weale's house (demolished) 1578 by inscription.<sup>1</sup>

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1. (Drawing by J.C.Buckler). Engraved for O & B; Weale probably added to a house built some twenty years before, but this question is a difficult one hardly to be solved, since the building no longer exists. Blakeway, Topog. Hist. of Shrewsbury, cf. TSAS, 2s VI (1894), 377.

Co-operative Shop, Frankwell. 1576.

Owen's Mansion.

1592) by inscriptions  
which are no  
longer in situ.

House adjacent to Owen's Mansion 1595)

The first of these was demolished over a century ago, so the information it affords is not as good as that of Lloyd's Mansion, which although very inadequately recorded was photographed before its destruction c.1935. The inscriptions on the others may well be perfectly genuine, but the slight element of doubt which always surrounds such evidence once it has been moved makes it preferable to regard these houses as secondary sources. The Co-operative Shop in Frankwell is the most important of the four; its close resemblance to Lloyd's Mansion which was of almost the same date is a strong hint that the date 1576 is reliable. <sup>1</sup>

We will consider first the wall structure of these houses since it forms such obvious and conspicuous patterns. Although the frontage of Draper's Hall (pl.120) has been greatly restored, <sup>2</sup> particularly the gabled block, enough remains to make it worth mentioning here. The studding is close, divided by a middle rail in the fashion current in the first half of the century, but with the addition of

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1. Perche's Mansion in Castle Street, which has a gable. dated 1581, is not included because I think the date refers to a refronting of a medieval building; but I have not examined the house inside.
  2. In 1896; S.N. & Q., n.s., V (1896), 69.

reverse-curved braces from principal posts to a sill. The window sills too differ from earlier practice in being placed below the level of the middle rail, which is now broken to permit larger openings than confinement between rail and wallplate allowed. These two innovations do not conceal the close resemblance to Phillips's store, for instance, and the three-storeyed N. block of the Drapers Hall has much the appearance of 65-69 Wyle Cop, except that its windows are of greater height and the joist-ends are protected by moulded bressummers. The Drapers' Hall gable introduces a 'herring-bone' pattern of timber work which is not seen earlier in the town nor ever became common although houses in the neighbourhood such as Pitchford employ it in profusion. All the characteristics of Drapers' Hall occur a few years later in Lloyd's Mansion and the Co-operative Hall in Frankwell, both of the 1570's, and in Merevale House of 1601.

The Cross Keys Inn (1575) brings a departure from those four. While the side wall of the long range flanking Grope Lane continues the simple orthodox studding, part of the frontage to High Street is divided into square panels carved in a star pattern (pl.121), an Elizabethan modification of the medieval quatrefoil. The basic requirement of this decorative scheme is a double horizontal division



by rails <sup>1</sup> in place of the single broken rail found earlier. Like most houses in Shrewsbury the Cross Keys has had its timberwork restored, with the result that it is difficult to be quite certain sometimes of the original appearance. Discounting renewals it looks as if the Cross Keys represents a return to the use of a rail as a sill, this time the lower of two rails, the window still extends up to a wallplate or tie-beam; and breaks across the upper rail midway up its jambs. A complete changeover from the older practice did not come immediately; Merevale House still kept to a middle rail and dropped sill in 1601.

By the 1590's this pattern was being developed. The E. part of Maddox's High Street premises, <sup>2</sup> said to have been built in 1595 has this triple panelled division of the first-floor frontage but with different infilling; the star panels are replaced by wavy herring-bone timbers, i.e., with reverse curved timbers employed instead of straight ones. Above are smaller panels which have four short curved timbers so placed as to give the shape of a diamond with slightly incurved sides. There is another new feature

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1. The fact that the rail is actually built in such short lengths does not affect the argument; it is the decorative scheme, the apparent not the actual method of construction that is under discussion.

2. The right-hand house in pl.122; and cf. pl.123.

of this frontage which is rather puzzling; the line of very short timbers looking like flat and extremely squat balusters which extends across the full width, just above the first-floor windows and below the moulded bressummers of the gables. Further reference will be made later to this feature; provisionally we may regard it as a sign of late Elizabethan work.

Conspicuous in some of these Elizabethan houses is the carved ornament worked on the studs. The principal posts marking bay divisions may have twisted shafts with simple bases, an intermediate cap and base being provided where the shaft crosses a rail. They occur in all four securely dated houses and in the Frankwell Co-operative shop. Small quatrefoils are usually associated with them on lesser studs or on rails; the quatrefoil is set in a circle with sunk spandrels within a square. The one dated house in which none of those ornaments appear is the house of 1595 (Maddox's). The shafts can obviously trace a direct descent from the plain Gothic examples on the "Abbot's House", built about the beginning of the century. Their absence in one of the latest houses of the series may lead us to conclude that by that time a change of taste was bringing about their disappearance. Merevale House on this argument shows a late survival of the fashion.

Bj 333 missing from text -334  
Author contacted 8/1/82. but he cannot help.

inclusion in the list because none of the characteristic structural features are visible outside, although it is certainly Elizabethan. <sup>1</sup>

One more example will be considered, Gibbons' Mansion, which formerly stood behind a paint-shop on Wyle Cop just above the Nag's Head. Drawings were made before it was taken down in the hope that it may one day be re-erected.

A rapid review of these fourteen houses and the eight dated ones brings out one interesting conclusion. Three only are buildings of three storeys - the demolished Gibbons' Mansion (pl.134), Eldred Mottram's building in Frankwell, and Ireland's Mansion; the Drapers' Hall may rank as a fourth. <sup>2</sup> All the rest, even though they may be associated with some of the town's leading citizens, such as David Lloyd, are of two storeys. The contrast with the big late-medieval houses is striking; at least of their number ten survive, some of these being blocks of building quite as large as Ireland's Mansion. The incidence of demolition would moreover be expected to bear more hardly on the earlier buildings so this factor cannot account for the disproportion. It looks therefore, even by this rough analysis, as if one of the big differences between early

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and late sixteenth century building was a change from three storeys to two storeys and attics. That the change is certainly not due to any decline in the town's prosperity is clear alike from the volume of building which was going on throughout Elizabeth's reign and from the plentiful documentary evidence. It must therefore correspond to some social change which affected the architectural needs of the age in such a way that a further storey could be dispensed with in favour of humbler and less convenient attics. If this generalisation is true it may be permissible to distinguish between Ireland's Mansion which is simply an exceptionally large building of three storeys with original attics and the other two houses which are of an old-fashioned type with three full storeys and no attics; the utilisation of roof-space is the criterion to distinguish between them.

If, then, these two three-storeyed houses together with part of Drapers' Hall represent an obsolescent type of building they should display early structural and decorative features. Drapers' Hall certainly requires no further analysis because it is dated to 1560 on documentary evidence. Gibbons' Mansion is of plain and simple design, and has this in common with Drapers' Hall, that the roof space is not used for attics. Eldred Mottram's building bears a close structural resemblance to Gibbons'

Mansion; its attics are modern. Ireland's Mansion not only seems by its timberwork to be rather later than the other three of the group but is distinguished by having three storeys and attics as well, so standing in a class by itself; in any case the presence of original attics separates it off from the other three houses with their more markedly medieval affinities.

Drapers' Hall comes into a special category as the headquarters of a wealthy company of merchants. Its plan, like that of Shearman's Hall some two centuries before, may follow a contemporary domestic arrangement with little modification, but if this is so it will be better to let the fact emerge from a comparison with other buildings about which there is no such element of uncertainty rather than risk interpreting a peculiar disposition as the norm. A dated example has thus regretfully to be abandoned in favour of Gibbons' Mansion.

The Transition from the Middle Ages: Gibbons' Mansion.

The house has been demolished so we may begin by listing the material available for its study. There are the drawings (figs.32-33), comprising the frontage, the N.E. <sup>1</sup> end, and two internal partitions, together with a complete cross section, but unfortunately no plans are now available. Some remarks by H.E. Forrest and three excellent

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1. Hereafter referred to as N., and other points to suit.

exterior photographs (pl.135-7) complete the evidence. The absence of plans is serious; an attempt has therefore been made to reconstruct the general disposition of the house (fig.34).

The ground floor was divided by a partition at the N.end into at least two rooms, one of four bays 29 ft. in total length, and the other of a single bay about 7 ft. 6 ins or 7 ft. 9 ins. long. Looking now at the front (W) elevation (fig.32) we see the main doorway adjacent to one of the main joists at the S. end of a bay. A length of 29 ft. seems excessive for a single room; a logical division of the space would be at the right-hand side of the door, with a partition below the main joist (M/47). This would leave a large ground-floor room just over 20 ft. long, heated by a fireplace standing in the same bay as the main doorway, a position deducible from the chimney visible in pl.136. In the absence of a proper plan this conjectural arrangement is unsure, and another interpretation is equally possible. The fireplace may have been placed either on or near the axis of the building, facing N., with the entrance behind it. Whichever position is correct, the stairs were probably adjacent to the fireplace, and led off the entrance passage. Let us now examine the front elevation to see how that affects these suppositions. The total absence of pegholes from the timbers of the middle

bay makes it doubtful whether any of the original framing remained, because elsewhere pegs or their holes were carefully noted; but the long beam (B/19) looks like a sill for a window now blocked. (Pl.135) which shows up pegs very clearly in most places conveys no hint that a middle rail ever continued through this part of the framing, so we may suppose that a large window stood here originally, as befitted the principal room of the ground floor. The small room N. of it was lit by a window of an uncertain number of lights which used the middle rail as its sill; the stud B/9 is presumably an insertion after the sill had been cut away along with the top of the rail. The doorway is flanked by small windows. The one to the left is reminiscent of the window adjacent to the speres in the Nag's Head Hall;<sup>1</sup> the one to the right may have lit what corresponded to the medieval service room.

Considering now the first floor, the most obvious external difference between it and the ground and second floors lies in the structural divisions, the former being each of four bays, the latter of five. This must clearly reflect a difference in the internal partitioning; the arrangement desired by the owner for the first floor demanded its division at the middle and the consequent abandonment of a five-bay structure. This still leaves a

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1. P.



large element of doubt as to whether there were two equal-sized rooms or four rooms of which the two in the middle were larger than those at the ends. We can rule out the possibility of a large middle room with a smaller room at each end because a five-bay structure would have served perfectly well for that. Note that the two larger middle bays have windows of different sizes, so they did not each stand in a similar relation to the adjacent small bays, forming with them two like units. Having ruled that plan out we are left with the possibility of two units formed by a middle partition (at M/26) as the most likely solution. If this were the case the one at the south end contained a staircase and probably a fireplace, while the former was certainly unheated.

The plan of the top storey is clearer, a partition (fig.33) dividing it into two rooms of two and three bays respectively, the larger probably having a fireplace. If we could be certain that the chimney was placed axially it would be safe to infer a second partition (at T/35), so giving two rooms of two bays each and a single-storey room at the S.end.

We have so far noted one or two features which point to the medieval ancestry of Gibbons' Mansion; now we come to the crucial question, was the top storey open to the roof in the medieval tradition or was it ceiled in? The

section (fig.33) gives the answer, I think. The ground and first floors have longitudinal ceiling beams intended to carry short transverse joists, exactly like the two- and three-storeyed medieval houses examined earlier. The beam runs parallel to the apex of the roof, the joists are tenoned into it, rest upon the plates of the side walls, and project beyond them to form a jetty. There is no such beam in the top storey, implying that no ceiling was intended. This conclusion is nevertheless open to question on other structural grounds. It is arguable that in a top storey which lacked a jetty a quite different construction might be adopted which dispensed with a central beam entirely. The problem recurs in other similar buildings, because no clear-cut rebuttal of the argument is possible. The joists of this ceiling, whether contemporary or later insertions, are slotted into the tie-beams, not tenoned and pegged, so there is no obvious proof of their relation to the original structure. Photographs help in this case. Pl.136 shows very well the roof truss (R.B.) directly above the original top storey partition, where if anywhere we might expect an attic partition. We find that a doorhead (on the left hand side) has obviously been hacked into the collar-beam and that the stud nearby looks as if it had been inserted without tenon and pegs. Even now the matter is admittedly

not beyond doubt, but the absence of dormers<sup>1</sup> and the lapping of the floor-boards over the wallplate give a balance of evidence in favour of the top storey having been originally open to the apex of the roof.

Gibbons' Mansion is bigger than any of the earlier three-storeyed houses in Shrewsbury but it is still largely medieval in everything except some structural details. It lay off the main street, doubtless in a small courtyard, for so large and imposing a house can hardly be supposed to have been closely hemmed in by other buildings. It is entered like the earlier houses by the equivalent of a screens-passage with a hall to one side and a service room on the other. There is no sign of a kitchen, which was still a separate building. Bearing in mind that there is no closely comparable medieval house, it nevertheless seems likely that the first floor arrangements represent a departure from earlier plans. The greater structural freedom implied in the breakaway from a rigid bay system is surely an architectural response to changing social conditions; that is the new element in Gibbons' Mansion which we have not noted before. Just what purposes the various rooms of the house served can hardly be known by architectural research alone, but confirmation of the plan at least, and perhaps some enlightenment about function, may be gained from other buildings.

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1. I think the N. gable light shown in Forrest's drawing (op.cit., 81) was probably a later insertion, but there is no proof.

Eldred, Mottram & Co., Frankwell.

First let us look at Eldred Mottram & Co's., building opposite the north end of the Welsh Bridge (pl.130). It presents a somewhat different appearance from Gibbons' Mansion, with reverse-curved braces boldly proclaiming the solid structural partitions which now serve to divide it into two tenements. Although I have only been able to examine one of these, the larger right-hand shop premises where Messrs. Eldred, Mottram carry on their business, this will provide enough data to show the character of the whole.

The ground floor (fig.35) has been much altered and restored; its main surviving features are two heavy beams, one axial, the other transverse, which divide the ceiling into four compartments (pl.138). This structural scheme recurs in the first floor but not in the second where there are instead two transverse beams, each chamfered and stopped. But it is the first floor which holds the clue to the plan; the whole of this large room was once provided with a moulded plaster ceiling, now greatly mutilated but surviving sufficiently complete to show its original extent. Such a room, occupying about two-thirds of the whole storey, is surely the successor to the medieval first-floor hall, raised of necessity above the ground-floor shop and workshop. The medieval division of this storey into two rooms, one

large and one small, is thus perpetuated on a bigger scale, and is repeated in the stop storey. There was a big chimney-stack to the W. half of the back wall which has now been removed, and against it were the stairs adjoining an entrance passage approximately where the present shop doorway stands.

Viewed in this light the house is more directly a transitional type than the preceding one, since it conforms closely to the old mode of planning, but the reverse-curved braces, the windows, and the plaster ceiling, link it to the newer Elizabethan methods of construction and fashions and decoration. What then of its roof? Nor is the answer any more obvious here than in Gibbons' Mansion save for one small detail on the south side of the second floor (pl.139); there the joists of the ceiling may be seen to butt against the slope of the roof, not being either tenoned, slotted or otherwise fastened into the wallplate in the manner of original joists. So the attic floors were a later insertion here too, of what date we need not immediately enquire.

We have not so far attempted to fit this and the previous house into the dating scheme outlined previously in this chapter. Both unfortunately lack any of the obvious decorative features which alone could provide a fairly close date. All that can be said is that both fall early within the period, probably not before 1550 and not after 1570.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Jones's Mansion at the bottom of Wyle Cop, demolished in 1829, was almost certainly another three-storeyed house of this type: cf. Gentlemen's Magazine, 1829. Pt.II, 489, with illustration; and Buckler's drawing of the bottom of Wyle Cop, engraved for O & B., shows it in the

A Two-storeyed Transitional House: No. 9 Frankwell.

The three-storeyed house is clearly a legacy of the Middle Ages; to what degree did the contemporary two-storeyed house follow the plan and arrangements of its medieval predecessors? A house on the west side of Frankwell (pl.140) adjacent to the Wheatsheaf Inn tells us the answer.

The reverse-curved braces point to an Elizabethan date. The ground-floor has been rebuilt, but a passage to the back remains on the left of the frontage (the S.E. end). The first-floor elevation is divided like the Eldred Mottram house into two original parts; the attic storey is a later addition. The broad interpretation of the plan is now evident, that here is a side-(or screens) passage giving access to the back premises, with a door or doors into the ground-floor shop. Upstairs the first floor is divided into a large room corresponding to a first-floor hall, and a smaller, corresponding to a solar. One feature worthy of remark is the side passage; here it is emphasised as a thing apart from the house a way through to the back premises. Both the previous buildings, Gibbons' Mansion in particular, have departed further from medieval practice by incorporating the entrance passage more closely into the body of the house.

There is nothing more that can be added about the original plan;<sup>1</sup> the interior was completely altered in the seventeenth century and will be discussed under that heading.

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1. These remarks apply equally to Avery's and the adjacent premises on the N. side of Frankwell, a building of the same date and type.

We will now leave the phase of transition from the middle ages and turn to a matured Elizabethan plan, to see better what new architectural elements were required in the buildings of the period.

Park Hotel, Abbey Foregate.

This house (pl.133) stands due N. of the Abbey church and has two distinct parts, the gabled block facing the street and a brick wing. I regard the gabled block as a virtually complete Elizabethan house to which the wing was added later, but can offer no positive proof of the latter statement. <sup>1</sup>

The house <sup>2</sup> is entered by a door at the right-hand side of the frontage which leads into a passage running along the side wall. A photograph (pl.141) taken from the entrance shows on the left two doors which open into the front room, beyond them the stairs at the end of the passage, and in the background the kitchen. A common chimney stack serves fireplaces in both the ground floor rooms. Upstairs the plan is repeated exactly. Divided off from the front room is a passage-like series of three tiny rooms on the E. side, i.e., above the entrance passage; there is a single back room, and again the central chimney

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1. Although the tenant informed me there was nothing of interest in the hotel wing, H.E. Forrest implies that the house is all of one build; op.cit., 87.
  2. The gabled block, formerly a shop, will henceforth be referred to for convenience as the Park Hotel.

serves two fireplaces. The attics are the only part of the house which has been altered. There seems to have been one long room corresponding to the principal room at the end of the floors below, with possibly two small gables at the back, one covering the stairs, the other forming a small attic.

The plan is exactly like No.47 Broad Street, Oxford <sup>1</sup> except for the attics, or cocklofts as they were called (fig.47) The basic plan of two large rooms, one at the front and one at the back, served by a central chimney stack is found in modified form elsewhere in Shrewsbury and seems to be typical for late sixteenth century town houses. Mr. W.A. Pantin's use of an inventory to show what purpose the various rooms served enables us to see the change that had come over town houses in the previous fifty years. The rigid divisions of hall and solar have vanished, though the idea of a screens-passage persists in modified form incorporated now into the house rather than being a "minor thoroughfare". <sup>2</sup> The kitchen has ceased to be a separate building and became an integral part of the house, while for the first time the space inside the roof is utilised for cocklofts.

The Park Hotel, by analogy with the Oxford House, was never a shop. The front room (pl.142) was still called

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1. W.A. Pantin, op.cit., 130-1 and fig.7.  
2. ibid., 131.



the hall, with the kitchen (pl.143) behind it. The two first-floor rooms were both sitting-rooms and bedrooms,<sup>1</sup> thus taking over the dual function of a solar in the larger medieval houses. The provision of two such rooms represents a gain in privacy compared with a medieval building of similar size; that both should be heated is another improvement, at least in relation to the earlier two-storeyed buildings, none of which had an original solar fireplace. There was a large cockloft at the front (pl.145) and a similar one at the back (pl.146), neither provided with a fireplace.

There is one feature of the first-floor plan which requires discussion: it is the row of three narrow rooms, only 6 ft. wide, at the E. side of the main front room. The partition is made of late sixteenth century panelling which may well be reused, though I could see no obvious sign of it. If it were not for the considerable width of the ground-floor plan it would be easy to dismiss this feature as a late subdivision of a very large room, but it is not easy to visualise any period at which original panelling and doors would have been so carefully reused; the panels make a perfect joint with those adjacent to the fireplace. Despite absence of any analogy for such a plan.

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1. The front room is illustrated in pl.144. The aim in plates 141-146 was to depict the general appearance of these rooms, in order if possible to show pictorially the kind of house the Elizabethans wanted.

I have not seen any other building which has an exactly comparable plan, but no doubt Merevale House, built in 1601, is one such. The former Cross Keys Inn at the former corner of High Street and Grope Lane (pl.147) while it has a general similarity, displays also a few significant differences.

The former Cross Keys Inn.

The ground floor has been largely gutted to form an outfitter's shop. The first-floor (fig.36) shows that the building consists of two blocks roofed at right-angles to each other, one of which extends a considerable way up Grope Lane. Modern alterations have obscured the details of the original layout, so the following account is a very tentative reconstruction.

The large S. <sup>1</sup> block facing High Street and roofed parallel to it has its ceiling subdivided into six compartments by two beams placed lengthwise and one placed transversely. <sup>2</sup> At the E. end was a large fireplace on one side with a bay window opposite, an arrangement which is a survival of the medieval "dais end". The room has now been subdivided transversely. The original entrance was some-

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1. S.W. here = S. for convenience of description; other points to suit.
  2. The lengthwise beams are later insertions; cf. pl.147 where their ends can be seen slotted rather crudely into the beam below. A second beam laid above an original plate can be seen oversailing the latter in places.

where at the west end, where the insertion of a corner fireplace has made it difficult to restore the original plan.

Behind this front room is another, narrower and approximately square, with two ceiling beams; one of them is placed nearer the north end. The N. wall has been demolished in order to incorporate part of the yet narrower wing running parallel to Grope Lane, together with a fireplace which was inserted at the same time. But the plan leaves no doubt that this room was originally nearly square and that it was heated by a fireplace sharing a common stack with the front room. Where the stairs were placed is uncertain. At present access to the first-floor is gained by a square-well staircase in the N.E. corner of the back room, access to the attics being now provided by a second stair which blocks the first-floor back fireplace. It is not unlikely that when the N.W. corner fireplace was put in following the subdivision of the front room into two, a staircase adjacent either to the chimney or to the W. wall was removed and replaced by the present stair. On present architectural evidence it is equally possible that there were always two stairways, one intended previously to serve the main front room, the other to serve the back wing, although on general grounds such ample provision of stairs at this date is unlikely.

This wing is one of the factors which make the assessment of the Cross Keys plan uncertain. Internally it is divided into four bays by transverse (E.-W.) beams, all chamfered and some with quite elaborate stops. The chimney stack at the S. end is a late insertion; there is now no sign of an original fireplace.

How then should we interpret the Cross Keys?

The ground-floor, facing both High Street and Grope Lane, was certainly a shop, with a cellar below for storage. No other use for it can be imagined in a part of Shrewsbury which has been a centre of trade since the thirteenth century. Above it was the hall, with an oriel to distinguish it externally and to provide a well-sited window seat, an amenity popular in large medieval houses and possessing some prestige value. Behind the shop was the kitchen; behind the hall was the principal sitting-room with a fireplace. Leading off from the latter was one more sitting-room, perhaps simply a bedroom because unheated. There may have been two rooms on the first-floor of the wing, but I did not note any original partition. One of the two ground-floor rooms, that adjacent to the kitchen, was probably the 'spence' of the Oxford inventory,<sup>1</sup> containing cooking and other household utensils, together with linen

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1. W.A. Pantin, loc.cit.,

and "other lumber". Above the first-floor were the more than usually extensive cocklofts added in the seventeenth century. <sup>1</sup>

If this interpretation is correct, we have here the urban version of the Park Hotel plan, specifically urban because it incorporates a shop-cum-workshop which is one of the essential requirements governing the development of town houses. With this example in mind we may consider the largest and most splendid timber-framed house in Shrewsbury, the one above all which impresses every visitor and which is often remembered by people who do not otherwise think about architecture - Ireland's Mansion.

Building upwards in the sixteenth century: Ireland's Mansion.

This building stands on the S.W. side of High Street very near the turning into Mardol Head and Pride Hill. With its three storeys and attics it is the tallest timber-framed structure in the town. The exterior foreshadows some of the problems of its plan. The symmetrical frontage in each of the two upper storeys shows a pair of semi-octagonal bays <sup>2</sup> with a pair of square bays set between them, the latter having two original entrances placed beneath

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1. Originally the hall was certainly open to the roof; I am not sure about the wing.
  2. These bays were not unique in Shrewsbury; another stood at the back of Jones's Mansion on Wyle Cop and was of much the same date: there is a drawing of it by J.C. Buckler, engraved in O & B., I; cf. H.E. Forrest, op.cit., 85.

them. A division into two or four tenements in the fashion of the Abbot's House is what might be expected, but in fact three shops divide the ground-floor.

Inevitably such a well-situated building has been repeatedly and drastically modified to meet the changing needs of its tenants, so that the plan today may bear little relation to the first build; how, for instance, are the two original entrances to be reconciled with the threefold modern division into shops? An answer to this fundamental question will be attempted below but it must be stated quite clearly that no solution can here be offered to most of the problems concerning the detailed arrangement of rooms. <sup>1</sup>

A glance at the plans (fig.37) shows that the tripartite division of the ground floor applies to the whole structure. True, it has been obscured by the rebuilding of a stair on the N. <sup>2</sup> end between the middle shop (Adams, chemist) and the Westminster Bank, but broadly speaking the two original entrances correspond to a division of the upper storeys into a large tenement flanked by two smaller ones. This is in itself something radically

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1. I have to thank the Premises Manager and Architect of the Westminster Bank for allowing me to copy plans of their part of Ireland's Mansion. The remaining part, Cooke's shop, has been sketched in with the aid of measurements made by Mr. B.R. Saunders, F.R.I.B.A., in 1919. Any errors of detail resulting from my collation of these two sources will not affect the main conclusion.
  2. N.W. here = N. for convenience of description; other points to suit.

different from the planning we have noted previously in medieval houses, where the external bay system always corresponded closely to a structural division into tenements.

We may next consider the detailed arrangement of each of these three separate units. Their present condition is as follows. Cooke's, the outfitter's shop at the S. end and the bank at the N. end have both undergone great changes to adapt them to modern requirements. The middle shop has by comparison seen little change except that the bank has absorbed one first-floor and one second-floor room and an attic, a modification which is easy to redress when considering the original layout. It will be best therefore to begin with this shop and house, now occupied by Mr. Adams, the chemist.

The ground-floor had a quite simple plan. To the right of the left-hand entrance passage was a shop which was probably heated by a fireplace at the back. Behind the shop and sharing the same chimney stack was a smaller room. Since the stack was T-shaped, the third side could be used as a support for the stairs, which were approached directly by the main entrance passage. It is basically the plan familiar from the Park Hotel with only a minor modification in the position of the staircase. The upper floors of this house incorporate the whole middle part of

the frontage including both the square bay windows, so that they each have a total length of some 30 ft. Single rooms this size, about 30 ft. x 19 ft. are so much larger than anything we have previously met in timber-framed buildings that their possible sub-division must be discussed later. The two upper storeys, like the ground floor, have a room at the back; the attics correspond in size to the front room below.

The upstairs plan which is very much like that of the old Cross Keys Inn offers just the same problem concerning the division of the front block; were there two original rooms or one? The evidence which would really decide the question, that provided by the partitions themselves, is concealed by plaster and paint - the building is kept in excellent repair - so we must look at the other relevant features. First, the position of the fireplaces, for there are in fact two. One is at the W. wall near its S. end, that is to say near the original entrance from the stairway; the other is in the N. wall, nearer its E. side. The former is certainly original because its flue is incorporated in the main chimney stack around which the house is built. I am not sure that the latter is original because the evidence is more dubious. It involves a brief consideration of the N. tenement, the bank premises, which has a basically similar plan of one large front room and



a smaller back room on each floor. In this case the rooms do not now share a common stack, nor is there any sign they ever did. The fireplace in the back room projects about 3 ft. 3 ins. from the wall into the ground floor room, a feature which rarely if ever occurs in fireplaces of the late seventeenth century and onwards. So it is likely to be original, from which it follows that the front room fireplace is also likely to be in its original position. It does not follow that the fireplace which is our main concern is also original, it merely shows that it could be so, since it joins an original stack. We may sum up the two alternative plans. First, a big room with a fireplace on its long wall near the door. Second, two rooms, the bigger of which is rather smaller than the hall of less important houses like the Cross Keys and the Park Hotel. The windows do not help to decide the issue; they are awkwardly placed in the corners,<sup>1</sup> a bad fit in either solution. In view of the importance of this house and its owner's status (see below) I consider large single rooms on the first and second floors to be the more probable plan, but am unable to find conclusive proof.

To the incidental account of the N. tenement above there is little to add save that it has a front attic. The S. tenement has been gutted and rebuilt as a modern

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1. The window in the middle of the first-floor is a later insertion, perhaps of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

shop. At a guess I would say it had originally a main stack for the front and back rooms on all three floors, with an adjacent stair. The normal two-room arrangement can be confidently assumed, but beyond that it is not worth while trying to reconstruct the whole plan on the general principles which must be resorted to in the absence of direct evidence.

Why, then, discuss the middle tenement at such length when the evidence is so uncertain? The reasons for doing so lie not only in the imposing character of the building which in itself demands an interpretation of the plan; an equally important motive is to explain the apparent clash of the facade, with its triple division in the ground-floor and two- or four-fold division above. It is the first instance we have found where the external timber structure does not correspond closely to the plan. The Abbot's House or No. 65-69 Wyle Cop do not present the same difficulties; the fully framed partitions separating the several tenements are there marked externally by principal posts or brackets, so that whatever uncertainties remain about the detailed internal arrangements the general divisions are not in doubt. Ireland's Mansion could quite easily have been planned as four separate narrow tenements each with the standard two-room plan and a central stack. It is the desire for symmetry together

with the intention of making the middle house so much larger than the others that caused difficulties to the builder, forcing him to place the windows of the main first- and second-floor rooms very awkwardly in the corners, raising a problem about the placing of the entrances, and necessitating an extra chimney stack.

How can we account for this? We know that the builder was a member of the wealthy and influential Ireland family, mercers by trade, who had speculated in monastic lands at the Dissolution.<sup>1</sup> Their business demanded a central position in the town, their dignity a splendid house. To meet the first requirement the owner-builder planned a shop of more or less normal size in which to carry on his business; anything larger would no doubt have been pointless. But the normal arrangement above, a hall of the same size as the shop below plus the width of the entrance passage, was felt to be insufficient. Since the only way of gaining extra space was to move sideways, rearward expansion being blocked by a chimney stack, the owner's house had to extend over an adjacent tenement. This coincided perhaps, with a desire to reduce the cost of such an expensive central plot of ground, so that not one but two flanking tenements were built, each

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1. Owen, Ancient and Present State, 533; Cal. Patent R.

providing a substantial rent to offset the landlord's outlay. Given all these considerations it was impossible both to provide a symmetrical facade, and to maintain the unity of structure and plan which had characterised the larger medieval houses. Symmetry prevailed.

When Avray Tipping looked at Shrewsbury a feature that impressed him greatly about its Elizabethan timber-buildings was their Gothic character; he did not specifically refer to Ireland's Mansion as an example of it, but mentioned generally the twisted shafts, masks, and quatrefoils as ornaments whose "whole spirit is such as we should expect a century earlier".<sup>1</sup> While the statement has considerable truth in it, we can now see that the plan and structure of the medieval Gothic house changed rapidly during half a century to provide living conditions totally unlike those of the fifteenth century. In Ireland's Mansion the process is carried further; the frontage is becoming a facade, not by any means totally divorced from what lies behind it, but yet designed primarily for appearance rather than for its utility in making the interior pleasant and habitable. It is hardly fortuitous that this should occur at a time when a similar change was taking place in the building of big country houses all over England. However remote Ireland's Mansion may appear,

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1. H. Avray Tipping, Shrewsbury; Country Life, 47 (1920), 300.

not only from the great houses, but from their lesser contemporaries in Shrewsbury like Whitehall or Bellstone House, it nevertheless contains a minor manifestation of the new Renaissance spirit which informed them.

The other aspect of Ireland's Mansion not to be overlooked is its sheer size; an original build of three storeys and attics is now to be found nowhere else in Shrewsbury. The aim was not to provide a big house for the Ireland family, it was to build two others as well. Although the S. tenement is certainly smaller than its neighbour, it provided as much space as the Cross Keys Inn. It has a shop, a kitchen, a hall on the first floor and a chamber over the kitchen, all of which appear in the Cross Keys with the addition of another chamber, perhaps two, and a "spence". Our S. tenement had to set against this a large chamber equal in size to the hall with another chamber behind it. The three storeys are thus hardly inferior in the accommodation they provide to a two-storeyed house, one moreover, which must have been by reason of its situation among the larger of its kind; they give just as much living-space as the Park Hotel with a shop besides.

The four buildings so far described are the only Elizabethan houses I have examined which have preserved

their original plan without extensive additions. Merevale House and the Liberal Club would probably repay investigation; so perhaps would Timpson's Shop at the corner of Mardol and Mardol Head. Owen's Mansion and the adjacent house are literally facades; the Plough Inn has been completely gutted on the ground floor and had a third storey added in the nineteenth century, so that it is not likely to serve our purpose. But before we leave the subject of Elizabethan plans we may briefly consider two notable houses, one now demolished and the other gutted, in the light of our knowledge of Ireland's Mansion. The demolished building is Lloyd's Mansion, built in 1570;<sup>1</sup> the other, happily still surviving, is the Co-operative Shop in Frankwell, which is said, probably correctly, to have been built in 1576. Both are built on a corner with their two ranges stretching a considerable distance along the two streets. Plates 148 and 149 show that there are two separate small tenements fronting Frankwell N. of the Co-operative Shop itself, and two fronting New Street west of it. Access to the back premises is through a large arch rising to the full height of both storeys. These arrangements seem to have been exactly paralleled in Lloyd's Mansion. Coming now to the shop, the E.<sup>2</sup> elevation is divided into two unequal parts, the shorter being at the

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1. Illustrated Country Life, 47 (1920), 303; figs 150 & 151 reproduce drawings of details by William Twopenny.  
2. Property N.E.; other points to suit.

S. end. Bearing in mind that David Lloyd put his initials and a date on the tie-beam which had a position in relation to the other associated buildings corresponding to the Frankwell tie-beam dated 1576-1912 we may suppose that this, the largest tenement of the whole block, was the principal one. The larger division of the E. elevation is therefore the hall, the smaller the solar. The entrance was probably next to the big archway. The hall was differentiated from the solar externally by a small gable which seems to have been purely ornamental, placed above the larger of the two windows as an additional mark of distinction for the superior end of the hall. The upper storey was open to the roof throughout, because no use is made of the space for attics, and cambered tie-beams are still employed.

If we may project back a few years the inference drawn from Ireland's Mansion we have here two early examples of speculative building. A well-to-do Shrewsbury Draper, David Lloyd, three times bailiff, builds a house for himself in a good position at the corner of The Square and Princess Street. To provide a setting for his new mansion he builds four tenements adjacent to it, from which he draws rents to pay his building costs.

These two examples are very useful in helping to date the transition from the medieval to the fully-developed Elizabethan town house. In 1576 the best class of building

is carried out in two storeys and still open to the roof, but with its full apparatus of Elizabethan enrichment. Clearly first-floor ceilings and attics are an innovation of the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

The last stages in the development of the Elizabethan plan can be illustrated by the single reasonably complete house built between about 1580 and 1600 which has survived. This is in Frankwell (pl.152). What was one house is now divided into two tenements.<sup>1</sup> The principal change to note is that here we have a proper attic storey which is built with a vertical wall to the height of the window sill, and above that utilises the roof. It is an advance on the Park Hotel where the roof alone is used to provide quite small attic rooms, because with this new development the whole floor space below the roof could be used instead of a small part of it. The new method of construction enables the same number of rooms and the same amount of floor space to be provided within two storeys and attics as could be provided formerly with three full storeys; in fact, of course, these houses had greater space than the older type because they had a two-storeyed wing as well.

We now have an answer to the first of the two

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1. I cannot reconstruct a complete plan because access to one half of the building was inconvenient through the illness of a tenant.



questions posed at the beginning of this chapter; it remains to state briefly how existing houses were modified to meet the new requirements. The medieval buildings needed the most drastic reconstruction; floors were inserted in them, sometimes two, as at 8A, Castle Street, and chimneys built for fireplaces to replace the open hearths. Ceilings must have come later as they did for the two and three-storeyed houses which otherwise needed less modernisation. It is difficult to tell Elizabethan from early seventeenth century alterations in these latter buildings, but perhaps the back wings which raised so many problems in Chapter VII began to be added in the 1570's and 1580's, when Ireland's Mansion and the Park Hotel were built with original wings. The fairly close likeness between the medieval and Elizabethan buildings of two and three storeys gave the former a good chance of survival; they needed relatively little conversion to adapt them step by step to new architectural fashion. Wings could be added easily; ceilings inserted: that perhaps is why such a considerable number of them still stand today. The following chapter will contain a discussion of the changes made up to the middle of the seventeenth century, and in view of the virtual impossibility of distinguishing Elizabethan from Jacobean rebuilding, the answer to our second question will be given more fully there.

CHAPTER X.

THE LATER PHASES OF TIMBER-FRAMED ARCHITECTURE.

In previous chapters the development of timber-framed architecture in Shrewsbury has been traced from the earliest surviving examples to the end of the sixteenth century. By 1600 this traditional method of building, the fruit of many centuries' experience and the most important branch of the carpenter's trade had been readily adapted to the new demands of Elizabethan society. Within fifty years, little more, this great and ancient craft was virtually dead, and not only in Shrewsbury. How many timber buildings, tenoned and pegged together in the traditional manner which is a hallmark of the craft, can be found anywhere in England of a date later than 1650? In its three volumes on Herefordshire (a good county for comparison) the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments dates a few such buildings to the middle of the seventeenth century; a very small number may even be slightly later. The famous medieval halls of Lancashire and Cheshire show timber-framed additions of James I's reign, rarely later; after the Civil War changes are in brick.<sup>1</sup> Chester has some seventeenth century timber houses, some of which bear

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1. Henry Taylor, Old Halls of Lancashire and Cheshire, passim; and personal observations.

dates in the 1650's, but there is nothing after about 1662. Warwickshire and Worcestershire, counties which possess many timber-framed houses, show very little work that could be confidently ascribed to the second half of the seventeenth century. Systematic surveys of the west midland counties are lacking (except for Hereford) but it may be safely said that there the timber-framed building tradition hardly survived the Civil War. Against this wider background it is interesting to read Avray Tipping's reaction to Shrewsbury after a brief stay in the town.

"Unlike many parts of England, there was not much building activity during the first few decades of the seventeenth century.... only a few timber-framed dwellings date from within the period, and William Rowley was responsible for the only considerable Jacobean building."<sup>1</sup> Although more building work may have been carried on in the first quarter of the century than Tipping realised, it is true that scarcely a single house of Charles I's reign can be seen. One house which is conspicuously unlike any other in the town suggests a date well after the end of the Jacobean period: it is No.3 St.Mary's Place, called the Verger's House (pl.178).

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1. Country Life, 47 (1920), 334; Rowley's Mansion is of brick.

With this general survey in mind, let us see what material there is for study. Two buildings only bear dating inscriptions:-

The Council House Gateway - 1620.

"The Old Porch House", Swan Hill - 1628.

Two houses in Frankwell, Nos.113 - 114 (pl.155) and one in Castle Street, No.29 (pl.154), are of quite similar design; there is also a curious building at the corner of Mardol and Hills Lane (pl.156) which looks as if it belongs to the seventeenth rather than any other century. The Old House, Dogpole (pl.109), is for the most part clearly of seventeenth century build. A house in School Lane (pl.161) has some florid ornament rather reminiscent of the Jacobean taste in pulpits. A total of eight buildings in all, one of them merely a small gatehouse, is all that a perambulation of the town will show by way of complete structures.<sup>1</sup> Some few additional buildings like as the one already noted (pl.114) in Pride Hill show clear signs of Jacobean rebuilding.

Not all these examples have been inspected; the gatehouse, for instance, which no doubt reflects contemporary

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1. The range of buildings S. of Riggs Hall contains a fine staircase, temp. Charles I (in the B.R. (W) Offices); the whole row of houses were probably built about that time. A similar staircase exists in the building now called "Jones's Mansion"; this house, not examined in detail, seems to be a complex structure combining two or three tenements of different dates, all in some degree rebuilt; cf. Owen, Anc. and Pres. State., 525-7 with O & B. I, 420 (illus.).

design for such structures, is here used only for the dating criteria its ornament provides, since its general relation to town architecture is unimportant. We will therefore begin with the other dated building.

### The Old Porch House.

"The Old Porch House", "so-called from a fine timber porch over the entrance, which however, was removed many years ago", <sup>1</sup> differs from most of the buildings considered in the previous chapter in that it was built as a dwelling and nothing more; there is no trace of shop or workshop. It is of two storeys only, without attics. The characteristics of the framing are different in each storey; the ground floor has close studding with a low rail and long straight braces, the upper is divided by two rails into square panels. Evidently by 1628 the carved panels beloved of the later Elizabethan builders had fallen out of fashion, although the same type of framing persisted. The jetty has a very small projection, much less than in any of the sixteenth century houses.

In plan <sup>2</sup> too the house differs from any other in the town. It is more spaciouly laid out in order to provide as much room on two floors as a tenement in Ireland's Mansion provided on three with attics. A new element in

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1. H.E.Forrest, op.cit., 37.

2. I am indebted to the County Architect for the plans redrawn as fig.

it is the kind of hall not associated with town houses before this date, which is rather an adaptation from the bigger country houses of the period. Entrance was gained originally through a porch at the S.E.<sup>1</sup> corner of the hall. Opposite it was a door leading into the narrow courtyard between the two back wings, clearly a survival of the screens-passage idea. The hall presumably had a fireplace at its W. end with a large room behind it occupying the whole ground-floor of the wing, to which access was gained between the chimney-stack and the stairs. The kitchen was on the E. side of the hall; it may have been in the back room, the wing, with the front room performing some other "service" function. Upstairs there were two rooms on the E. side of the house, one in the W. wing, and perhaps two more above the hall. The W. of these latter rooms is furnished with excellent panelling on all the walls but the S.; the fireplace has also been preserved with relatively little change (pl.183). There is no obvious sign that the panelling of the E. wall has been reused, so presumably the first floor formed three rooms facing Swan Hill. The house has a plan so unlike the normal run of Shrewsbury buildings that it is hardly worth discussing in greater detail; nevertheless it may usefully

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1. The house faces S.E. which here = S., with other points correspondingly altered for convenience of description.

serve to illustrate other aspects of development.

It was built by a man named Thomas Ridley, whose initials are inscribed along with the date. Although I have not traced him he was certainly a man of substance whose house did not differ as much in size as it did in plan from those of contemporary Shrewsbury merchants. The profusion of its panelling shows how the interiors of nearly all the houses described in the previous chapter were enriched. The fact that all the windows of the frontage are original, none having been inserted or blocked, allows us to visualise the rather dark interiors which must have been typical of Elizabethan and Jacobean buildings. Elsewhere, in the Cross Keys Inn, for instance, the bay window has been enlarged to accommodate eighteenth century double-hung sashes, so making the room considerably lighter than when it was built.

We see that the attempt to make the frontage as nearly symmetrical as possible could not succeed with a hall which was placed parallel to the street and which had to be entered at one end. As it is, the disposition of the door and windows gives a clue to the internal arrangements. There is a division into two unequal parts, no longer representing the hall and solar of a century before, but the hall and kitchen or service block. A bigger blow to the hope of a fully symmetrical frontage lay in the fact

that the front door, particularly when it was provided with a porch, admitted little light at the best of times and had sometimes to be closed. Hence the necessity for two windows in the hall. The employment of gables purely for ornament harks back fifty years to their use in Lloyd's Mansion and the Frankwell Co-operative shop: that they are here three in number no doubt reflects the late Elizabethan fondness for triple gables such as can be seen in Tewkesbury at the Bell Inn and which are now represented in Shrewsbury by that monument to thorough restoration, Lloyds Bank in Pride Hill. <sup>1</sup>

After Porch House we may look briefly at the only other comparable building in the town, one which has already been noticed in Chapter VII.

#### The Old House, Dogpole.

In its present form this house is of half-H plan, built around a west-facing courtyard (pl.109). The N.W. wing was rebuilt in brick during the eighteenth century; the S.W. wing incorporates a two-storeyed medieval building. The remainder was built c.1630-40. <sup>2</sup> Again there is a long hall with stairs at the back, the kitchen (N) wing

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1. Cf. also Sherar's Mansion (pl.153); O & B., I,
  2. I have not examined this house fully, but feel fairly certain that it contains no early work other than the S.W. wing.



at one end of it and the superior chambers at the other. Although rather larger than Porch House it is generally similar, and correspondingly unlike a true town house.

The character of the timber-framing which is the justification of the date assigned above is the principal feature of interest. The W. courtyard front shows a complete absence not only of the highly ornamented panelling current in the early years of the century, but even of the heavy square panelled timbers of Porch House. Instead the first and attic storeys are built around a few posts and rails with only a single straight brace. The large rectangular panels formed by these simple means contain quite light studding, the only decoration being a panel of close baluster-like studs above the hall doorway. The ground-floor front wall of the hall has unfortunately been rebuilt in brick so that it is not now certain whether this part of the structure was jettied slightly like Porch House, or built with a vertical face from top to bottom. These evidently are the characteristics of late timber-framing; the progressive diminution of scantlings from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth continues into this last phase, not by reducing the dimensions of main structural timbers, which could hardly be pared down further, but in the guise of decreasing studs to their smallest useful size.

The Jacobean town house: new construction.

Neither of these two buildings is a typical Jacobean town house; for that we must look to a small group of far less pretentious buildings occupying sites in the busiest streets of the seventeenth century town. A typical example on the south-east side of Castle Street, now a tobacconist's shop (No.29), is one of the few survivors of a class once much more numerous. (pl.154).

The plan is a variant of a simple and already familiar type. It has on each storey one room at the front and one at the back, with two chimney stacks, one placed at the back of the shop to serve it and the hall above, the other placed at the side to serve the kitchen and chamber above.<sup>1</sup> The accommodation is completed by an attic over the hall and a cellar under the shop. There is of course no special warrant for attributing these functions to the rooms; they have been assigned in the light of the Oxford inventory of 1626 quoted earlier.<sup>2</sup>

Two other houses much like it are Nos. 113-114 Frankwell (pl.155), built as a pair with a common passage to the back premises. All these have projecting bay windows forming the main feature of the street frontage.

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1. Joseph Moxon in 1677 describes a somewhat similar plan, which must therefore have been fairly widespread (Mechanick Exercises, 133).
  2. Ant. J., XXVII (1947), 149; cf. p.349 above.

The studs of these bays are carved like balusters, this being the only ornamented timberwork apart from a single star panel in the gable above. The remaining walls are treated as a structural unit from the sill of the jettied first floor to the wallplate, so that the tripartite division found in Porch House and earlier examples now embraces a storey and a half. What looks like the upper of two rails is in fact a structural member, virtually a plate, into which the top-storey joists are fastened. So there is now once more a middle rail, and to prevent it from restricting the size of windows their sills must terminate below it.

These three houses in Castle Street and Frankwell are the only ones of the type which were new-built in that form. There must once have been more - 29 Castle Street was doubtless once one of a pair, the other having occupied the site of the narrow-fronted early eighteenth century brick house which stands adjacent (pl.154) - but unfortunately even a rough estimate of their numbers can hardly now be made. One or two are illustrated in prints or photographs,<sup>1</sup> but they are very hard to tell from earlier houses which have been rebuilt to conform to the type.

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1. e.g. Two prints, Nos. S56-68, SPL; and cf. A.W. Ward, Shrewsbury - A Rich Heritage, pl.

The Jacobean town house: rebuilds.

One of the known rebuilds is the tobacconist's shop, No. 40, Pride Hill (pl.114). The ornamental timberwork is of rather earlier type than in the preceding three houses, being closely akin to the antique shop (Dugdale's, pl.162) in School Lane. But it was not altogether easy to graft the new construction on to the earlier framework, so the first-floor beams above the new bay window had to rest above the new sill which had been placed above the old wallplate. Thus an old two-storey dwelling was converted by the addition of an attic and a bay window into a small but up-to-date house and shop.

Conversion was not always quite so easy. A house on the S.W. side of Butcher Row, <sup>1</sup> now demolished but happily drawn by William Twopeny in 1837 (pl.51), when it was still in perfect condition, shows other problems which faced the carpenter. Here the owner wished to convert a building not of two but of three storeys. It was an Elizabethan house of a type we have encountered before, having three full storeys without attics. It is unexpected to find a building of the type labelled "traditional" (Ch.VIII) with elaborate ornaments of a relatively late type in the top storey; we must consider it a retarded

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1. On the extreme right of pl.92 part of this house can be seen; this will serve to locate it exactly.

example in the sequence of Elizabethan plans but advanced in its application of star-panelling; say C.1570-80.<sup>1</sup> Whatever its date the awkward junctions made by the bay window shows with what difficulty the conversion was accomplished some forty or fifty years later. The sill of the first-floor bay could easily be placed at the same level as the dropped section of the middle rail which no doubt formed the original sill. The upper beams forming the head of the window had to rest above the sill of the second floor, a most awkward arrangement which resulted in the side panes being cut by the bressummer. A similar clash occurred at eaves-level. In both cases the longitudinal beam into which the joists were tenoned must have continued behind the bay, so that the effective size of the windows was less than the drawing might suggest. The attic was presumably long and narrow, providing a cross-shaped room with two unusually long arms. Two interesting structural features are seen in the drawing. The first is the short brace in the attic wall, exactly like the one visible in the front of the Old House, Dogpole. The second is that the bay is built upon a platform extending the full width of the frontage. Its underside has a plastered

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1. The other alternative is that the house had been built with two storeys c.1560 and heightened a generation later; I hesitate to advance this idea yet the clumsy termination of the second-storey sill does suggest something other than a straightforward construction of one period.

covering like a ceiling to conceal the structural timbers which are obviously underneath. Primarily they are straight brackets to carry the weight of the bay. The important secondary purpose, I imagine, was to provide shelter for the shop window below and for the customers doing business there. At a later date (pl.175) the platform was removed and the straight brackets substituted.<sup>1</sup> A similar function was no doubt performed by the original bays in Nos.113-114 Frankwell, but it is significant that there no brackets were needed: it was an easy matter to tie into the brickwork of the chimney two principal joists somewhat longer than the rest which provided in effect a jetty of greater projection than usual.

This phase of rebuilding was no doubt accompanied increasingly by the splitting-up of original plots into long narrow holdings with a short street frontage. There is no precedent for a pre-Jacobean two-storeyed tenement as narrow in frontage as No. 40 Pride Hill. Three-storeyed buildings of earlier periods had frontages no wider than that, but a two-storeyed building could not provide enough rooms. A house in Frankwell (No. 9, pl.132) shows a more normal plot width for the small house.<sup>2</sup> We can fairly

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1. Some of the late Chester houses have similar brackets; I think they may represent the same structural development outlined here, though in some cases the brackets are original, i.e., there was never a first-floor platform.
  2. 'Small' is a relative term. None of the houses discussed here were small by the standard of their day.

assume that most of the examples quoted were built after subdividing a larger plot of ground of much that size.

The "Jacobethan" passion for bay-windows was peculiarly suited to the improvement of small, narrow town houses. The semi-octagonal bays of Ireland's Mansion were probably the earliest examples in the town; the Cross Keys Inn copied the less useful of the novelties there displayed, the square bay. The semi-octagonal bays were much better for creating the impression of light and therefore of spaciousness which was so much needed to relieve the gloom of dark-panelled rooms otherwise lit only by quite small windows. Not that that was the sole purpose in building the Cross Keys bay; it was perhaps primarily a 'prestige' window in the tradition of the medieval oriel. Ireland's Mansion, however, had foreshadowed a new development which scarcely began on a considerable scale until the second decade of the seventeenth century when the big many-windowed bay came into fashion, and "more glass than wall" was the order of the day alike at Shrewsbury and Hardwicke.

Building upwards in the Jacobean manner: Sherar's Mansion.

No house now survives to show how this increased fondness for well-lighted rooms affected the larger new buildings of the period. Once more we are indebted to the invaluable work of J.C. Buckler for filling a gap in our

knowledge with his drawing of an "Ancient house under the Wile" which was engraved for Owen and Blakeway's "History of Shrewsbury" (pl.153). This house, later called "Sherar's Mansion", <sup>1</sup> was pulled down unrecorded about 1938.

Whether it was really the house of the Sherar family has, I think, never been adequately proved by documentary evidence. It seems in Buckler's time to have been divided into three tenements, each with a door and window on the ground floor. In addition there was a very mean entrance (to the back premises?) at the W. end and a principal entrance with bracketed head at the E. end. There is no means of telling how old the tripartite division was; I suspect it may have been original and that here perhaps was a later variant of the kind of building so well exemplified in Ireland's Mansion. There is no obvious sign of any awkwardness such as is normally caused by splitting a big house up into tenements, and of this we may be certain, that if there had been any slight clash between new shops and an old bay-system it would have appeared in Buckler's drawing. Nor does this exclude the possibility that the Sherars lived here, as the Irelands did in their

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1. H.E. Forrest, op.cit., 83-4; but the building can hardly have been put up by the Thomas Sherar who died in 1598. Unfortunately there is no closely dated house of the last decade of Elizabeth I for comparison; lacking that, it must be said that the round headed arches, triple gable and bressummer brackets all point to a date after 1600.



handsome piece of speculative building.

The windows provide the main architectural points of interest about the house. The first and second (attic) floors are both jettied, and in each case the bay windows double the projection of the moulded bressummers. The carpenter still treats the bays as his predecessor treated the windows of Gibbons' Mansion; they are both additions to a framework. By the time Nos.113-114 Frankwell were put up the windows had been fully integrated with the framework, so that the bressummer, by now more simply moulded, was carried round the bays instead of under them.

Another Buckler drawing (pl.47) shows an earlier house, now Cockle's shop in Milk Street,<sup>1</sup> which was modernised by the addition of an extra storey and bay windows. Its present appearance (pl.163) shows better that the top storey is an addition; the old wallplate and the new sill above it can be seen as clearly as at the back (pl.108). The two diagonal timbers in each of the two N. bays are a crude form of ornament rather than a genuine attempt to strut the vertical timbers. The round-headed arches and elaborate star-panels in the gables belong to about 1620-30, a dating it may be possible to refine later. Along with the new attics and roof went two bay windows

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1. See pp.298-9 above.

which served the first floor only, unlike those we have seen previously which extended into the top storey. They apparently had baluster-studs like Nos.113-114 Frankwell. That there may have been a third window in the N. bay is suggested by the canopy or ceiling visible in Buckler's drawing, under which a bow-fronted Georgian shop window was placed. Other drawings and photographs show that the Georgian shop did not normally have such canopies, which apparently were common only in the seventeenth century. Moreover, the three gables show that the rebuilt house was intended to be symmetrical; the builder seems to have produced an up-to-date version of Sherar's Mansion. It is a pity from the archaeologist's standpoint that the interior was completely gutted some twenty years ago, even an original chimney being removed, so that there is no hope whatever of reconstructing its plan. This drawing of Buckler's, like the previous one, shows three shops. In view of the general tendency at this period to build narrow-fronted bay-windowed tenements in the busiest parts of the town we may regard this house as a conversion to meet the prevailing needs of traders and merchants; a "good central position in busy shopping quarter", mainly.

Two developments of the bay window cannot now be seen anywhere in Shrewsbury. One was the combination of a porch with a bay window above it; "the King's Arms

in Claremont Street had a large oriel window supported on posts and projecting so as to form a porch".<sup>1</sup> The only two timber porches recorded to have existed in Shrewsbury were both of the early seventeenth century, one having given the Old Porch House of 1628 its name, the other being illustrated by J.C. Buckler (pl.55). The King's Arms porch is likely to have been of this period too. It would be an easy step from the bold bays of Nos.113-114 Frankwell to place one over an entrance and provide a porch beneath. The other vanished type is the extraordinary excrescence added to the Pride Hill end of a medieval building in High Street (pl.119), of which Buckler made a more detailed sketch (pl.151). The date of its construction is problematical; the close studding with a middle rail suggests Elizabethan work and the highly unusual semi-circular period would best fit some early and experimental period before the rectangular projection became standardised.

Reroofing to provide more space.

Cockle's shop is an easy demonstration of the technique of re-roofing; when the old rafters and principals have been removed the wallplate must first be trimmed down to remove the slots cut for them, then a new sill can be

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1. H.E. Forrest, *op.cit.*, 50; there is a poor illustration of it in SPL. It was demolished when the New Market area was cleared in 1868.

placed directly on top of it, into which studs can be tenoned. The same method is used at Purslow's shop in Frankwell to make available the roof space above a medieval building (pl.89). The two beams can be seen very well in the photograph, with two pegs in the new sill for each of the studs in the gable. The timbering bears a general resemblance to that in the Old House, Dogpole, and is perhaps c.1610-30. The attics of Purslow's building are unfortunately sealed up; it would be interesting to know what kind of roof construction was successfully adapted to form rooms.<sup>1</sup> The post dividing the two attic windows is directly above a principal post of the medieval structure upon which a roof truss rested; the truss itself can hardly have been cut away completely, so it probably remains as a partition between two attics. Pailin's shop at the corner of School Lane and Castle Street was apparently a similar instance, with a dormer instead of a gable sitting on the new sill: the timbering, so far as it can be studied at all, looks of seventeenth rather than sixteenth century date.<sup>2</sup> But it was not often that a medieval roof was adapted to increase living accommodation, probably because the technical difficulties involved in altering the structural members were so great. The house at the corner

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1. This roof has unfortunately been sealed off.

2. The only evidence is a photograph taken by Mr.J.Mallinson in October 1938 just before the building was demolished: SPL. photograph 555.

of Fish Street opposite Butcher Row (pl.76) is unusual in retaining the remnant of a king-post roof which has been successfully transformed by cutting away its longitudinal braces; the two gables mark the bays in which this has been done. The date of the work may be early seventeenth century on the basis of the fairly heavy square-panelled framing (cf. Porch House); it was certainly before the second half of the century, when the N. wall below was encased in brick.

The most radical transformation of all seems to have taken place at Rowley's House, probably the least interesting of all the buildings on the Car Park area and the only one to survive the massacre of timber-framing which took place there in 1934. It incorporates a medieval house, seen under the left-hand gable in pl.158. This building had its roof ridge cut off and its walls heightened to accommodate an extra storey and attics (pl.177). At right angles to it was a three-storeyed range of uncertain date which had four large gables added to its roof (pl.158 and 182). In the angle between the two blocks an extension was added.<sup>1</sup> These changes involved for the smaller house the total renewal of its roof, a process we

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1. A.W. Ward., An Account of Rowley's House, 3rd edn., (1951) I have not examined the house in detail because restoration has been so thorough. An amusing instance of it may be seen in pl. , where two upper cruck principals have been reused; cf. Ch.XI re No.5 Hill's Lane.

have observed earlier at the Old House, Dogpole.

But it was not only medieval houses that needed enlargement and bringing up to date. The earlier Elizabethan houses were by about 1600 only slightly less old-fashioned and inconvenient than their medieval predecessors, so that in them too similar changes took place during the first half of the seventeenth century. In Frankwell a house <sup>1</sup> with the reverse-curved braces and close studding of the period c.1550-70 has been divided into two tenements, each has had a wing added at the back and the whole has been given an attic storey. The new sill into which the baluster studs are tenoned can clearly be seen in the photograph at the nearer end (pl.131). The roof was not greatly altered; the principal rafter of the E. gable is in its original position, not raised to the level of the attic window sills. In a new building of c.1610-20, when the addition was made, the beam which formed the window sills was a wall plate, but here evidently it was not thought worth while to reconstruct the roof completely.

A house almost opposite, on the other hand (No.9), has undergone the complete transformation required to modernise it . ( pl.132,174). It is the small early

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1. Now divided between Avery's shop and a watchmaker's.

Elizabethan building of transitional type which was described above (pp.343-7 ). The contrast between the timberwork added to Avery's shop and that added here shows that this is later work, perhaps done in the second quarter of the seventeenth century.

The ground floor seems always to have been divided into two equal-sized rooms by a partition corresponding to the external bay-system. What purpose the rooms served is not clear; a shop, presumably. There is now no trace of an original fireplace in the larger (E.) of the two upstairs rooms, which seems from the outside to have been the hall. The small (W.) room was on this interpretation a chamber, the successor to the solar.

In the seventeenth century a S. wing was added at the west end. The original hall fireplace and its chimney were demolished; a new one was built at the W. end to serve both the shop and the kitchen behind it. The old roof was removed, a ceiling was put in over the first floor, and an attic storey built. The E. end of the building is heated on the ground-floor by a corner fireplace, with a small wall fireplace in the room above; there is nothing to date either of them but perhaps they both form an original part of the general rebuilding.

The feature of more general interest about this house is that both the ground and the first floor of the wing were divided laterally (E-W) into two rooms, one of which in each case was unheated. The room behind the kitchen may well have been a 'spence',<sup>1</sup> but what use the upper room had is not obvious. A back stair which was built to join the two presumably dates from a time when separate stairs for the family and the servants had become usual. When this practise of full segregation came in in smaller houses is hard to say: probably not until fairly late in the eighteenth century,<sup>2</sup> so these original partitions can hardly be associated with that practice. The other point to be made in connection with seventeenth century building generally is that the thoroughness of the changes the house underwent amounted almost to complete renewal. It is a point to bear in mind when considering Avray Tipping's remark about the small amount of work done during the period.

At least two other buildings show external signs of a similarly thorough renewal and modernisation. One is the estate agents' office<sup>3</sup> at the corner of Milk Street and

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1. Ant. J., XXXII (1947), 131, 149.
  2. A house in High Street, Cricklade, owned by Dr. T.R. Thomson shows this feature in 1708; but it is admittedly larger than No. 9 Frankwell. Kingston House in St. Alkmund's Square a brick house of c.1679 has only one stair.
  3. Messrs. Hall, Wateridge and Owen.



High Street, next to Shearmen's Hall. It was built as a two-storeyed house, with a conspicuous Elizabethan herring-bone arrangement of the timbers, and has since received an attic storey and a new roof. The date of the alterations appears to be the same as at No. 9 Frankwell, say the middle years of the seventeenth century, between 1640 and 1680; internally it was completely gutted in the late nineteenth century. The other is on the W. side of Mardol and appears at the left-hand side of pl.129.<sup>1</sup>

We have dealt so far with two anomalous large houses, with a standard type of town house, and with the reconstructions; much of this building activity was going on in the first three decades of the seventeenth century, two instances only, the rebuilding of No.9 Frankwell and the Milk Street house being perhaps rather later. There is some work not yet considered which is apparently later still, but before examining it we may deal briefly with two miscellaneous buildings of this penultimate phase.

The antique shop in School Lane (pl.161) bears no more than a passing mention for the intricate panelled effect of its richly ornamented frontage. Another photograph (pl.162) supplements the body of detail carefully drawn by

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1. I have not been inside this house, but its resemblance to other seventeenth century reconstructions is obvious.

William Twopeny in 1837. One structural feature requires notice. The principal posts at the corners have thickened heads, not like those of earlier periods when they were gradually thickened towards the top, but cut sharply back from the top to the normal post scantling. This presumably was why close studding was used in the top of the three registers which form the frontage; the posts prevented a good fit for a row of panels.

It is this technical device which permits the identification of a building formerly in the Car Park area as a seventeenth century structure. It was No.5 Hill's Lane, and had just the same kind of square-cut thickened heads to its principal posts. The other point of interest about this house was its roof, built with upper-crucks.<sup>1</sup> This aspect will be considered in a later chapter.

#### The Final Phase.

The same technical detail which served to date No.5 Hill's Lane may be seen in a very interesting house at the corner of Hill's Lane and Mardol, now divided between a jeweller and a tobacconist (pl.156). The framing to the right of the square-headed post is much like that in the

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1. The best sources for No.5 Hill's Lane are two excellent close-up photographs taken by Mr. J. Mallinson, 13.5.35, during demolition, they are SPL.542 and 648. Two NBR photographs by Mr. Eldred show the building more distantly (pl.197,198).

Old House, Dogpole. A closer view (pl.163) shows a difference between it and the framing to the left; the former is tenoned and pegged into the main post, the latter is merely slotted in. We are thus confirmed in the view that the post marks the original front wall of an early seventeenth century house which has been refronted to encroach on Mardol. The roof line has been continued downwards below the old wallplate to the floor level of the original attics, where a new plate was provided. That is why the frontage has such an extraordinary appearance and suggests that it conceals a much earlier house; the roof comes low as in an Elizabethan house and is as deep as in a medieval house. The elongated baluster timbers of the first-floor are now mainly modern, and the shorter balusters below are of doubtful age. Above are two large dormers bigger than anything of the kind we have seen in earlier structures.

The date of the first period of building is confirmed by a panel (pl.164) which survives inside a cupboard on the first floor. I do not know anything exactly like it, but with the post head we shall be fairly safe in dating <sup>it</sup> at c.1600. What matters more than the date of the house is its type. It was built with two storeys and attics and small back rooms on each floor, much like No. 29 Castle Street. When it became inadequate for its owner's purpose a new

front was added, still in the tradition of timber-framed building, with the additional timbering tenoned and pegged as far as was possible. It had two large dormers - the small middle gable between them is modern - with mullion-and-transom windows much like those depicted by William Twopeny (pl.51): one of them, blocked, survives in a cupboard adjacent to the tiny middle gable.

The interest of the rebuilding lies in the fact that a house of this standard type should so rapidly have become inadequate, and was yet rebuilt while the tradition of timber-framed building still flourished. How can we date the rebuilding? The frontage itself offers little help. The first-floor front room possesses a fine and complete array of bolection-moulded panelling (pl.165) and a contemporary fireplace (pl.166). The staircase too has been rebuilt; it retains the original rail and newel posts but has had new balusters inserted (pl.167). The frontage may perhaps be of the same date as this general refitting but it will be better for the moment to reserve judgment until we know more of the characteristics of very late timber-framing.

They may be seen in the rebuilding of a house in Wyle Cop (pl.128) briefly mentioned earlier (p.333). It was an Elizabethan building, quite plain except for two reverse-curved braces, of two storeys and attics. Enlargement has

taken the form of adding another storey. The old rail and new sill can be seen below the second-floor windows; above them is a range of fairly heavy studs spaced not quite as closely as those below, and a straight brace. The addition resulted in a house of three storeys with attics which merits a more extended account.

The ground-floor consists of a single large room facing the street; it had a fireplace in the S.E. corner, removed some years ago. The entrance passage, at the right-hand side (E.) of the frontage leads, just as in the Park Hotel, to a stair, adjacent to which is a door through to the kitchen (pl.170). Rather surprisingly the kitchen has a corner fireplace. The first-floor has two rooms only, each with a corner fireplace; it is possible that the second floor had the same originally, although the front room is now divided into two, and again there are two corner fireplaces. The top storey of the front block is divided into two attics, one of them having a corner fireplace. The back attic appears never to have had any provision for heating (pl.171). The stairs up to the first floor are of nineteenth century date; to the second floor, later seventeenth century (pl.172); and to the attics, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (pl.173).

The house has thus lost its Elizabethan chimney which was undoubtedly placed between the front and back rooms.

Of what date is the diagonally-placed stack which replaced it? It cannot at any rate be later than the end of the seventeenth century, judging by the plaster cove above the kitchen fireplace. That being so, it probably belongs to the same phase of rebuilding as the middle portion of the stair; this presumably replaced a stair of the type now leading to the attics, the latter being in fact reused from an earlier and lower partition. <sup>1</sup>

Further enlightenment must be sought from the only house in Shrewsbury which is likely to have been built within the period, No.3, St. Mary's Place, the Verger's House. Its framing (pl.178) is plainer and simpler than anything else in the town; the only braces are two very long ones in the W. <sup>2</sup> wall. There is no jetty, the angle posts at the W. end rising straight from the sill to the wallplate. Above the rebuilt ground floor the frontage is divided by two rails and three posts into large rectangular panels which contain three slender studs. This, surely, is the final technical development of timber-framed buildings with more than one storey; it certainly shows

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1. I cannot produce the same kind of evidence for these assertions as was available for structural alterations in medieval houses. It is rare in these later houses to be able to say that beam A shows by its relation to post B that it is later or earlier: stylistic considerations play a larger part. This may be due to a defective method of investigation, through not knowing precisely how to detect staircase alterations, for instance.
  2. Correctly S.W.; other points to suit.

the simplest and most economical use of timber in the whole history of the craft. Internally the house has been altered so that no original partitions remain and even part of the first-floor has been removed. At the back of the house is a chimney stack serving two fireplaces diagonally placed to heat two rooms which constitute the only original division of the ground floor. Here then, we have a timber-framed house which unquestionably was built with original corner fireplaces. As a type such fireplaces are characteristic of the late seventeenth century. John Evelyn mentions their increasing use after the Restoration, even attributing their introduction to Charles II's liking for them.<sup>1</sup> Although the King's preference no doubt created a fashion for corner fireplaces, they are to be found at least a generation earlier. In Hereford there is a dated instance of their employment at Aubrey's Almshouses, built in 1630;<sup>2</sup> Nos. 47-49 Berrington Street<sup>3</sup> and 108-109 Widemarsh Street,<sup>4</sup> ascribed respectively to the early and mid-seventeenth century also have corner fireplaces. A close analogy for the type of framing seen in the Verger's House was recorded in Hereford at Nos. 38-39 Berrington Street, ascribed to the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> It seems

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1. Diary.

2. R.C.H.M. Herefordshire, I.

3. *ibid.*,

4. *ibid.*,

5. *ibid.*, and pl. . they have been demolished recently without further record.

clear that 3, St. Mary's Place is on all grounds likely to be of about that date. Other evidence of late timber-framed building in Shrewsbury is not yet exhausted. There is the remarkable house (pl.179) which was demolished in 1868 to make way for the New General Market. Its framing may be slightly heavier, the studs particularly, than in 3, St. Mary's Place, but obviously the two are very closely associated by their structural characteristics. Again there is no jetty, not even in a house of three storeys and attics. The plan is irrecoverable, but by this date, evidently, bay windows had gone out of fashion in favour of simpler, flatter openings. This house too, must have been built in the middle of the seventeenth century; it represents a very big advance technically on our last dated example, the Porch House of 1628.

Timber-framing never developed further. It had attained a point where structure was as simple and economical of timber as it could be, and technically it must have been capable of meeting all the architectural demands of the late seventeenth century. Nevertheless this was the point where the craft ended. No more complete buildings can be cited.<sup>1</sup> Additions were still being made to earlier work

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1. H.E. Forrest does not state on what grounds he considered Nos. 10-11 Mardol to be of Cromwellian date (op.cit.,51) I have examined only No.10, now largely gutted by the Warwickshire Furnishing Co.; the very scanty evidence suggested a date in the second half of the sixteenth century. The original roof retains a slightly cambered tie-beam, as if the house had been of early Elizabethan transitional type.



which may be either contemporary with this last phase of new construction or even a bit later. Above the Park Hotel, for instance, stands a curious turret (pl.133), which beneath its mask of roughcast appears as a timber structure. It is of two storeys, each with one room. The small window just visible on the left-hand side gives light to the upper of the two flights of stairs; the landing at the head of the lower flight appears in pl.168. The timbers, so far as they can be examined, show a change in the method of fastening in that they are no longer pegged together,<sup>1</sup> but beyond that it is impossible to examine the nature of the joints.<sup>2</sup> Three more turrets like this may be seen in Shrewsbury. One in School Lane, rising above the roofs of the early seventeenth century range which was refronted in brick in the "old English" style of c.1820 has none of its timbering exposed either inside or outside. Another is on the N.W. side of Pride Hill; I have not been inside it.<sup>3</sup> The fourth example not hitherto mentioned towers above a brick building in St. Alkmund's Square, Kingston House, where it is an integral part of the original structure

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1. Joseph Moxon writing about carpentry in 1677 specifies the use of pegs for all mortise-and-tenon joints, (op.cit) so the method was still in use then. I have not looked at the later books on carpentry, e.g., by Price (1733).
  2. From memory, Alcester Guild-hall built in 1641 also has unpegged framing. I have not been able to visit it before writing this, but an interior view shows no sign of pegs, only iron bolts. (Warks. Phot. Survey No.6344, Birmingham Reference Library).
  3. It is over premises which lie just below Butcher Row, near J.Lyons' shop.

with a contemporary staircase from the hall to the topmost storey. This is one of the earliest brick houses in the town after Rowley's Mansion, dateable probably to the third quarter of the seventeenth century. Its moulded brick window heads have a strong resemblance to those in the wing of the Park Hotel, with which Kingston House is probably contemporary.

Two analogies can be quoted for these curious structures. One was at Lymore, a house in south Shropshire now demolished, which is said on the evidence of an inscription to have been built in 1675.<sup>1</sup> A photograph of one of two elevations suggests that the close studding of the ground and first floors are of a different date from the square framing of the top (turret) storey, to which alone, probably, the date 1675 applies. The second analogy is to be found at the Oak House, West Bromwich, where a similar feature, once called the Prospect Room, has now been gutted to serve as a lantern to the hall below. The old name probably gives a clue to its original purpose; the date suggested for it is about 1640.<sup>2</sup>

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1. TSAS, 3s. VII (1907), 49, 38 (illus.).

2. B'ham Arch.Soc.Trans., XXII (1900). The framing of the addition is of a very rare type, using only diagonally placed timbers between the principal posts, i.e., with no beams below the wallplate. This may help to date the turret broadly; the use of such elaborate timbering points to a period when carpenters were still confidently using their material in the traditional way for structural purposes before the craft had died out and wood was used only in a simpler, more elementary fashion. I am indebted to Mr. B.R. Saunders, F.R.I.B.A. for the loan of plans and elevations of the Oak House, upon which these statements are based.

These Shrewsbury turrets may therefore be adaptations for a quite different purpose of a country-house feature, but the matter requires much more investigation. Together with the big late dormers added to earlier buildings <sup>1</sup> these are the last manifestation of timber-framed building in the town, all of them probably being dateable between 1640 and 1680, the range within which the added third floor of the Wyle Cop house also falls. That, like the other, instances of late timbering, can probably be dated by its staircase and the corner fireplaces.

These strange upper storeys I have called turrets may make more intelligible the astonishing building depicted on the left-hand side of pl.118, an early nineteenth century engraving of Mardol. The three storeyed timber house there shown appears to have in addition an attic storey above which is a row of windows above, and above that again are two gables. The building was depicted in the same way later by Thomas Shotter Boys, <sup>2</sup> an accurate topographical painter, so that it is not to be dismissed as a product of a romantic artist's imagination. How this pile of timber attics and gables was raised above the original building cannot now be known, but at least we know that it was not the only building to which successive additions were made in a way that would be equally hard to believe if only a

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1. e.g., 9-10 Fish Street and Alcock's shop in Mardol.  
2. Painting in SPL.

rather indistinct engraving of it were to be had.

Even after this survey of the evidence there is no very satisfactory answer to the question of when timber-framed buildings died out. Kingston House and its few brick contemporaries seem to mark the end of the technique, yet it can hardly have come to a sudden stop. All we can safely say is that in the first half of the seventeenth century the few brick houses that were built did not challenge the supremacy of timber. In the second half of the century the proportions were reversed; timber building must have been small in quantity and relatively insignificant. Kingston House is in a figurative sense the full stop to the story of timber-framing. A bigger contemporary brick house <sup>1</sup> once stood adjacent to the timber "skyscraper" in Mardol which also was probably built in Charles II's reign. There were certainly others of the mid-seventeenth century in Princess Street, <sup>2</sup> and here and there surviving houses or those shown in old photographs point to a considerable volume of brick building soon after 1650. The causes of this rapid decline will be found in the economic history of the period, and must be sought on a wider basis than the study of one town. One thing is quite clear, that it was no lack of skill among the carpenters that caused this major branch of their craft to disappear.

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1. It is partly visible in pl. .

2. cf. H. Avray Tipping, loc.cit.

CHAPTER XI.

A MISCELLANY OF BUILDINGS.

Five preceding chapters have dealt with buildings which by their structure, materials, ownership, or date fall into certain clearly defined groups. Their architectural history illustrates the requirements of the most significant class of people in Shrewsbury, the important traders whose activities contribute so largely to the growth of the town and gave it a character distinct from the general run of country and market towns. The buildings in these several categories may tell the essential story of architectural development in Shrewsbury throughout the period from which any houses survive, but there is more to the history of domestic architecture than that.

There is scarcely any hint for instance, of the agricultural aspect of the borough which was certainly a considerable factor in its life at least as late as the sixteenth century. The houses of the common people are likewise absent from the story. Then there are such buildings as warehouses connected with manufacturing processes and trade; although not strictly domestic they belong to this category rather than to either of the other two - ecclesiastical and military - into which pre-Georgian architecture is commonly divided. The houses built of

brick, though few in number before the middle of the seventeenth century, are worth passing reference as heralds of the new material which within the next fifty years replaced timber entirely. Stone houses other than early halls are few and anomalous; they do nevertheless throw light on the economic and social life of Shrewsbury in the sixteenth century, and for this same reason the contemporary Market Hall deserves mention. All the items of this programme will here be dealt with, some of them very summarily.

One of the medieval timber halls discussed in chapter VI conveys a suggestion that it was once a farmhouse; it is the small building now divided into Nos.160-161 Abbey Foregate (pp.249-254). There is besides a range of outbuildings in the grounds of Whitehall which are said to have been "the Monks' barn".<sup>1</sup> It is appropriate that these survivals of agricultural activity are concentrated in Abbey Foregate, the part of Shrewsbury which depended most on farming for its livelihood. There seem now to be no certain traces of barns among the outbuildings behind houses in the main streets of the town. Conversion or demolition of barns was probably frequent during the early nineteenth century industrial expansion of Shrewsbury into the suburbs of Castle Foregate, Coleham,

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1. H.E. Forrest, op.cit., 89.

and the fringes within the Severn loop, where such traces of farm buildings might be expected.

Within our period the houses of the common people were so humble that they have vanished entirely; it is doubtful if a single labourer's or journeyman's cottage could be found. Fortunately a hint of the appearance of these simplest of medieval houses, the single-cell building, has been preserved in a description of St.Chad's Almshouses<sup>1</sup> which were built in 1409<sup>2</sup> and demolished in the early nineteenth century. Each of the thirteen almshouses had just one small room,<sup>3</sup> a timber-framed hall open to the roof, with a single window. The doorways originally had lintels formed by the "eaves of the roof"<sup>4</sup> - the wallplate, that is - implying that the building was very low. Since this was a range of almshouses the tenements were repaired "probably at the close of the seventeenth century",<sup>5</sup> when some of the rooms had a loft put in, approached by a ladder. No mention is made of fireplaces, which were probably of late seventeenth century corner type replacing an open hearth.

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1. S.S. & P., II (1877), 189-90.

2. Owen, op.cit., 323.

3. St. Mary's Almshouses, founded c.1460, each had "only a single apartment, 11 feet by 8, without any outlet". Owen, op.cit., 327).

4. loc.cit.

5. ibid.,

Cottages as simple and small as these probably represent a normal standard of accommodation in the middle ages for a property-less man. Because they were very simple such structures were not worth altering to suit changing standards and so were probably replaced by small single-storeyed houses with attics. Some such very simple houses, built of brick and probably of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century date, survive in Abbey Foregate; others only slightly more pretentious but of an earlier date may be seen in nineteenth century engravings.<sup>1</sup>

Much larger than these but still smaller than the town house proper are two cruck houses.<sup>2</sup> One in Frankwell (pl.209) is a building of at least two original bays, now reduced to one; the other, of three or even four bays is Cureton's Garage in Abbey Foregate. Neither has been examined carefully because this type of construction is not of much importance for the story of town architecture, save perhaps in earlier forms which date from a time before there was much distinction between town and country architecture. They might provide a further illustration of the farming element in Shrewsbury, but there is no evidence about their owners. Both are probably fifteenth century buildings.

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1. e.g. view of Castle Gates, O & B., I., opp.39.
  2. A house-to-house search in Abbey Foregate and Frankwell might produce others; the two quoted are the only obvious cruck buildings.



Frequent reference has been made to the importance of trade in Shrewsbury throughout the middle ages and later. The only architectural expression of this activity so far noted has been the modification of dwelling-houses; the undercroft of Bennett's Hall and the shops of later periods.

There are besides these a very few buildings which seem never to have had any domestic purpose, which show not the slightest sign of fireplaces, stairs, or the normal subdivisions of a house. Some information is available about four such buildings, one of which was demolished about 1934. Since they have been identified as commercial buildings - warehouses or factories - on the basis of their architectural character, fairly extended description must be given.

The first of them is a substantial medieval structure which lies behind Nos.51-2 Mardol (J.H.Jones). The original archway in the block fronting the street (pl.115, detail pl.221) has been mutilated, but the narrow passage remains, leading down to a number of premises at the back of varying date and history. Perhaps ten yards behind Jones's shop the passage is again covered by a building; emerging on its far side we look back to see an unusual timber structure (pl.190). The left-hand post, to

the right of the drainpipe, has three peg-holes below the rail and three more, with the pegs still in, above it. The rail is itself pegged to the post, i.e. both it and the post are part of the same original structure. Examination of the lower set of three pegholes shows that the mortise is sloped at the bottom only, as for a brace down to a sill or rail. The size of the mortise and the absence of a jetty, <sup>1</sup> giving a vertical wall, immediately suggest a medieval hall-type building with large braces in the walls like those noted earlier in 160-161 Abbey Foregate (pl.56A).

With this clue to follow, we enter via Jones's shop and the nineteenth century structure which connects it to the building in question. By any standards its roof trusses are impressive (pl.191-3); the heavy timbers seen in plates 191-193 form the truss immediately above the passage, which is supported miraculously by the sawn-off principal post shown in pl.190.

There are three roof bays (fig.42); that over the passage is 6 ft. 2 ins. long, the next 7 ft. 1 in., and the last 8 ft. 11 ins. Since there is no sign of a partition in any part of the truss above the passage the building may once have extended further to the S. This is by no means certain, though, because the principal post

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1. There is another vertical post at the opposite side of the building.

(pl.190) has no pegholes to suggest there were more wall timbers on that side. The fact that the roof trusses show not the slightest sign of smoke-blackening anywhere is the reason for considering the building may have served some non-domestic purpose such as a warehouse. It is possible that the second truss from the N. is darker than the other three; I have tried to convince myself that this is so, and that it had stood above an open hearth. But a comparison of the king-post truss at 8A, Castle Street, deeply incrustated with smoke-black, and the truss of this "warehouse" in which the clean graining of the oak can be seen even on a photograph, is decisive proof that no fire could have burned for long within the latter building.

Reverting now to the passage, a beam connects the two principal posts at each end of it. Five mortises in its underside enable the original structure to be reconstructed (fig.43); there are simply two side posts and a centre post, with two braces, no doubt curved, in case of the two bays this formed, without any lesser holes for studs or wattles. Whatever these two openings may have given access to, they are quite different from the normal two or three doors leading off a screens-passage into the service wing or buttery.

Perhaps a study of deeds and inventories would throw light on the purpose of such a building. For the present it must suffice to have identified its unusual characteristics, to assign it to the early fifteenth century, and to call it a warehouse.

The clearance of the present car-park area inevitably resulted in the wholesale slaughter of interesting timber-framed buildings. Without disputing the necessity of clearing this highly congested neighbourhood, it is regrettable that no effort was made to record what was pulled down. True, Rowley's House was preserved, but without understanding its real interest. Very fortunately one or two local photographers took the opportunity of recording the scene while some of the buildings were in process of demolition, so that thanks to their efforts the architectural histories can salvage some valuable material.

Among the buildings photographed by Mr. Eldred was the one depicted in a highly romanticised way, with a picturesque old-world flavour, in a painting now in Shrewsbury Art-Gallery, reproduced as pl. 194. It is certainly a covered loading deck, cover being provided by projecting the main roof forward, not by the common method of a lesser pent roof. It was providential that Mr. Eldred's

camera recorded the appearance of the unusual construction half way through its demolition. Fig.44 is a sketch based on his two photographs (pl.195-196). The west or loading deck side was supported by principal posts which were set back at one end of the building some three to four feet behind the wallplate. Plate 196 suggests that this set-back was not constant; perhaps two or more straight bays had such a recessed support, while two more at least were occupied by a wall not running parallel to the axis, so regaining a wall face directly beneath the wallplate.

This gave rise to an unusual form of roof construction, of which the following is a tentative description. Into pairs of posts with thickened heads plates - wall-plates really - were slotted. A tie-beam, projecting at one end about three or four feet beyond the supporting post, was placed above these plates. Two straight braces sprang from inside the posts to the tie-beam. The oversailing part of the roof was further stiffened by curved braces between posts and plate. Into the ends of the tie-beams the principal rafters were tenoned in the normal way, having apparently two purlins each side with windbraces from the roof principals to the underside of each purlin.

The designer of the roof, if we may presume him to have outlined the solution in this way, had still to solve the problem of supporting the common rafters in the over-

hanging part. The normal method of setting their ends in notches in the wallplate was impracticable since on the one side a true plate was not there. A second plate was therefore provided in the usual place, supported by beams tenoned into the principal posts and by brackets curving up from the posts so that the end came under the plate and thus took its weight directly: upon this the lower ends of the rafters could rest in the ordinary way.

It seems as if this building, like the previous one, was single-storeyed and open to the roof. A hint to this effect is conveyed by pl.197, which shows a bay of the side wall after its infilling had been removed. At about the same level as the first floor of the neighbouring house the square end of a beam can be seen half-resting on the original stud. It has every appearance of being an inserted joist.<sup>1</sup> to relieve the upper floor discernible in pl.197. The floor thus inserted must have been considerably encumbered by the large braces from the main wall-post to the tie-beam, a feature which would certainly have been avoided in an original upper storey. Similarly the door-head in the gable truss (pl.197) is an insertion after a ceiling had been put in.

A few conjectures about the original wall-framing may be offered on the basis of the single bay visible in the

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1. cf. fig. for a similar insertion.

photographs. The wall was divided by a middle rail into two compartments (fig.45), the upper being subdivided by a rail placed below two curved braces. Studs further subdivided the bay below this upper rail. The space between either the braces or the two top rails was probably occupied by windows.

The slender evidence now available gives no reason to think the building has been rebuilt to serve as a loading deck; the photographs show no sign of reconstruction apart from the insertion of a floor, nor, probably, would the complicated yet economical arrangements of tenoned members have been possible in modifying an earlier structure. This unusual roof construction clearly dates from a time when the traditional techniques of timber-framed building were still flourishing.

If this account be accepted, the building was a warehouse of an unusually specialised kind. Its precise purpose - for wool, perhaps, or leather - is unknown.

Two structural features may be useful in attempting to date it. The profusion of curved braces suggests it was medieval; those which can be seen in the side wall have three pegholes at each end, a quite normal fifteenth century practice. The roof truss, although of no clearly dateable type, has two purlins each side, by contrast, for instance, with the single purlin in the previous building

discussed. This points to a dating late in the period, say late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, and with this we must be content to leave the matter.

With the third of these commercial buildings we are at last on firm ground. We may abandon conjecture in face of a complete structure which not only displays not the slightest trace of domestic fittings but has several positive signs of being designed as a warehouse. The building stands at the east end of Frankwell, some 30 yards off the street behind the Anchor public house, and is of three storeys, the topmost of attic type. The side (E.) elevation (pl.199) shows square-panelled timber-framing, the upper storeys being flush with the ground floor. It is constructed in five bays, four of about 8 ft. 6 ins. and one at the north end of 13 ft., giving a total length of about 50 feet <sup>1</sup> long by 17 ft. 6 ins. wide (internal measurements).

The walls of the ground floor have been rebuilt in stone and brick. This part of the building is still in such effective use as a warehouse that inspection is difficult except by crawling in a crouched position over the rows of iron and steel rods it houses. Above them the chamfered and stopped main ceiling beams are visible.

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1. The bay lengths plus truss widths: *fig. 49.*



Access to the first floor is by a stair at the S.E. corner, and thence by a ladder to the top floor. Save for the insertion of a few modern props below the principal joists and the renewal of the stair no significant structural alteration has taken place. The W. wall has a long continuous range of original unglazed windows with roughly hewn diamond mullions (pl.200,201). The E. wall may well have had similar openings which are now blocked or completely removed in rebuilding; I have not made a close search for traces of them.

The third or attic storey has low walls and roof-trusses of queen-post type; reserving its technical points for later discussion, it will be enough to note how admirably it is designed to offer the least possible obstruction to the movement and storage of bulky goods. The original windows are perpetuated by the small openings shown in pl.199. The north bay of this and the lower storeys is made larger in order to provide the normal storage space of the other bays together with room for raising and lowering goods. The wooden pulley-wheel which last performed this task (pl.203,204) is doubtless simply a replacement of basically similar original machinery; I am quite unable to date it.

There can be no doubt that this at least was a warehouse, probably for the storage of wool or cloth, the goods which by their bulk as well as by their importance in seventeenth century Shrewsbury suggest themselves as the likely contents of such a building. The early seventeenth century date is based on the square-panelled timber framing and the absence of a jetty.

Frankwell can show another building less complete than this which has equally little domestic character and can be more confidently associated with the wool industry. Inevitably, since it has been in full and continuous use ever since it was built, very few of the timber details which permit a close dating now remain, and for the same reason the original plan cannot be reconstructed.

The building stands behind (S. of) the big range of late medieval tenements W. of the Welsh bridge (pl.117), on the E. side of a yard leading down to the river (pl.205). It is of two building periods, both later than the large block which faces the street. The external framing, while it gives no clear evidence of date, shows that it was never jettied; vertical timber walls in a two-storeyed building point to a date late in the sixteenth century which other evidence does not belie.<sup>1</sup> The ground and

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1. Some of the principal rafters are reused from a late sixteenth century roof.

first floor have been very thoroughly gutted of all but the principal posts and joists, and even these have been deprived of all obvious dating criteria. It is clear from the outside that the top attic storey is a later addition, the crude junction with the old walls being very evident. The unusual roof structure, a form of cruck construction, will be dealt with in a later chapter on timber-framed technique; here it is sufficient to say that such upper crucks,<sup>1</sup> always a late development, certainly belong in this case to the second half of the seventeenth century. The date is suggested by the extensive re-use of old timber, a practice never found while the tradition of timber-framed building flourished owing to the impossibility of cutting satisfactorily the mortises and tenons required for new construction.<sup>2</sup> The timbers of the roof trusses are not all fastened with mortise - and - tenon joints. One truss, of the standard seventeenth century type in which the wallplates are well above the tie-beams,<sup>3</sup> has its components slotted together in the way the additions to Alcock's shop in Mardol were made, without tenons; that it is the only one among many such heightened roofs to be

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1. Sir C. Fox and Lord Raglan, Monmouthshire Houses I., Medieval.

2. There is certainly no Shrewsbury building before the middle of the seventeenth century in which old timbers are re-employed, except for wallplates. These and other pieces which require only slots cut in them, not mortises, are exceptions to the given rule. Rowley's House provides the only known instance where either a new tenon or a new mortise was cut in an old piece of timber, although in this case it was reused in its original position: it is the sawn-off principal rafter in pl.

3. See Ch. XIII.

built in this way bespeaks a late date. There is no sign of fireplaces, staircases, or other domestic fittings. The upper floors are reached by a modern stair designed to allow the carrying of heavy loads up and down it.

Both in its original and in its altered form I consider the building served something like its present purposes, those of the firm of fellmongers which occupies it. Unless some support is forthcoming from deeds or leases this statement is incapable of proof, but the situation of the building and the yard adjacent argue strongly in favour of it. At the river end of the yard a pair of the old doors used by fellmongers who occupied the premises in times gone by may still be seen. Some of the washing of the woolfells was done on the river bank, so that the doors were required to get them out and bring them back again for drying. The other part of the cleaning process took place in the yard, in the forerunner of the present modern tanks. The further space required to dry the washed hides was no doubt covered by lightly-built sheds much like those used today. Nearby is the building just described, where in the ground - and first-floors the wool is removed from the hides, taken upstairs into the attic and then put into sacks like those seen in the frontispiece. A photograph of the cruck principals of this wool factory had to be taken against a background of raw wool piled

ready for sacking. The yard, though modernised, still recalls the practice of distant generations of fellmongers and their special architectural needs (pl.206); with all its anachronisms it is a vivid reminder of the trade which was the foundation of Shrewsbury's prosperity and the source of the wealth which gave the town its proportion of timber buildings.

The original construction of the "wool factory", dated to the last decade or two of the sixteenth century, was roughly contemporary with the building of the Market House (pl.211) in 1595.<sup>1</sup> It is of stone, of a type found in many west of England towns, which comprised an arcaded ground floor with a room or rooms above. The original plan of its upper storey is obscured by alteration to adapt it to its present use as a Magistrates Court. In the eighteenth century the custom was for the Drapers, on the day of the wool sales, to lunch together nearby and then to return to the upper chamber of the Market Hall in order to decide on prices and purchases. Although it is nowhere stated how the ground floor was used it was probably a place where the bulky sacks of wool could be opened to display the quality of their contents to the prospective buyers meeting above. That is the building's main interest

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1. Dated by inscription on N. end.

in the present context; as a piece of architecture it is quite apart from anything else discussed previously, and indeed its only associations are with the old School buildings (the present Public Library) and the few stone houses built about the same time. Since this small group of stone buildings really belong to a quite different architectural story only their general historical will be touched on here.

The list of such buildings is short:-

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Bellstone House.  | Elizabethan. <sup>1</sup>               |
| Whitehall.        | 1576-82. <sup>2</sup>                   |
| "The Stone House" | early seventeenth century? <sup>3</sup> |
| Market Hall.      | 1595.                                   |
| School.           | Elizabethan and 1630.                   |

The last two were built of stone because of the prestige attaching to the material, which made it very suitable for important public buildings. Of the houses, Whitehall was built with stone from the choir and claustral buildings of the Abbey, and "The Stone House", standing near the E. end of St. Mary's churchyard on land which formerly belonged to the Dominicans may have re-used materials from the dissolved friary. Bellstone incorporated a medieval house. <sup>4</sup> All three were built by members of successful Shrewsbury families, men of the same background

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1. Owen, Anc. and Pres. State, 524; demolished 1934.

2. ibid., 521.

3. TSAS, 3s. IX (1909), 249-258; demolished 1908.

It may in fact have been of earlier (Elizabethan) date, but the evidence is slight.

4. pp. 173-5; pl. 44, 45.

as the Lloyds and Irelands who built big timber-framed houses. The houses show a desire to build for prestige with a superior material which for a short space of time after the Dissolution was available cheaply.

This phase was very brief. By the early seventeenth century brick had taken the place of stone for superior domestic building. In 1618 a brewer, William Rowley, built the first brick house in Shrewsbury (pl.210), an L-shaped building <sup>1</sup> of three storeys and attics <sup>2</sup> now used as a warehouse. The fact that such an important house was built in a commercially important part of the town necessitated the use of three storeys in contrast to the two which were usual in contemporary timber buildings. MacGowan's shop on Wyle Cop and the large timber-framed building formerly standing at the corner of Mardol and Shoplatch are two other instances of the same need to build upwards which by the early eighteenth century made three storeys and attics a normal feature of new construction. St.Alkmund's Vicarage is said to be of about the same date as Rowley's Mansion; <sup>3</sup> some early brickwork is visible in the wall facing the churchyard. These two are the only early brick buildings known to have been built in the first half of the seventeenth century. Evidently the material did not become popular

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1. Dated by rainwater heads now removed.

2. The building is in such poor condition internally that it would take a good deal of time and effort to reconstruct the plan.

3. H.E.Forrest, op.cit., 74.

until a shortage of timber compelled the inhabitants to turn to it. The brick houses of the second half of the seventeenth century are very hard to date, but there are one or two which are clearly earlier than the large group of buildings dated by inscription to the period 1700-1750. Kingston House in St. Alkmund's Place (No. 7), the wing of the Park Hotel,<sup>1</sup> and a house in Claremont Hill (No. 23) are three which are certainly among them; their heavy brick cornices and moulded brick pediments warrant their ascription to the 1670's or 1680's, possibly even a little earlier. With their construction the tradition of timber-framed building had come to an end.

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1. p.344 above.



CHAPTER XII.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOUND BACKGROUND FROM 1550 ONWARDS.

By the middle of the sixteenth century there was no doubt about the predominance of the trade in woollen cloth in Shrewsbury; all records of the period show that it had become easily the most important class of article handled at this great secondary market. The Elizabethan and Jacobean houses were largely built by men whose family fortunes were founded on the trade in Welsh woollens, even if some of the builders had themselves abandoned the style 'draper' for those of attorney or esquire.

The importance of the trade in Welsh cloth and the consequent dependence of Shrewsbury's prosperity upon one commodity led the drapers into an attempt to establish in their own hands a monopoly of dealings in it. This effort to crush all competition from the neighbouring towns, Oswestry in particular, is the most interesting aspect of the economic background during this period. The story has already been told at length;<sup>1</sup> all that will be done here is to summarize it and emphasise any points that have a bearing on the architecture previously described.

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1. A.H. Dodd, The Story of an Elizabethan Monopoly, 1565-1823; Economica IX (1929), 197-212: further detailed reference will not be made.

The importance of the drapers in Shrewsbury is borne out by their statement in 1565 that they had "set at work about six hundred persons of the art or science of shearmen or frizers" <sup>1</sup> who finished the rough cloth. The drapers complained that some of the people then engaged in buying cloth which would be handed over to the Shearmen for treatment were not members of their craft or mystery, not even, they said "brought up in the use of the said trade... by means whereof the said trade is greatly decayed and discredited". Foreigners they presumably kept out effectively by a corporation order of 1563, when the "sum of £5 principal besides other ordinary charges" was demanded for freedom to trade in place of 50 shillings formerly. <sup>2</sup>

The desired monopoly which reinforced these measures was granted to the drapers by the Act of 1565 but repealed after being in operation only a few years, in 1572. <sup>3</sup> Nor were the advantages of the Shrewsbury drapers' monopoly threatened solely by an increase in their numbers; individual members of the company, anxious to secure the large profits of the trade, might try to forestall their fellows in the market. This I take to be the point of a corporation order of 1583, whereby no draper was to set out for Oswestry on Mondays before 6 o'clock on forfeiture of 6s.8d. <sup>4</sup> It was probably as much a desire to limit internal

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1. Statutes of the Realm, 8 Eliz. c.7.  
2. TSAS, III (1880), 266.  
3. 14 Eliz. c.12.  
4. Owen, op.cit., 460.

competition as fear of physical danger which gave rise to the order that the drapers "should wear their weapons, all the way, and go in company"<sup>1</sup> to Oswestry, and forbade them to go over the Welsh Bridge before the clock struck six.

Oswestry however was the really serious danger to the monopoly. Rivalry between the two towns went back at least to the time when the men of Richard, Earl of Arundel, had imprisoned certain burgesses of Shrewsbury travelling to Welshpool in 1334,<sup>2</sup> an incident followed some years later by the prohibition imposed on the sale of Shrewsbury ale (p.308). Oswestry was the only one of the primary markets in north Wales and the March which was ever strong enough seriously to try to by-pass the Shrewsbury middlemen and deal directly with the London merchants. Further south, Ludlow seems to have become independent of Shrewsbury, and possibly Leominster too. The relatively rare appearance of these two towns among the places of origin of Shrewsbury burgesses points to their being free of the monopolistic grip in which other smaller places were held, so that their cloth probably went to Worcester or Hereford markets if it was not bought directly by Londoners. In 1582 the Shrewsbury drapers were successful in preventing the establishment of

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1. *ibid.*, but robbery was certainly to be feared sometimes; cf. O & B. I, 561.  
2. CCR. (1330-4).

a staple at Oswestry for the sale of woollen cloth, but these repeated efforts to crush competition could not succeed indefinitely. An endeavour to confine the sale of Welsh cloth to Shrewsbury in 1609 failed. Four years later both Oswestry and Shrewsbury men were complaining that London merchants were by-passing both their towns, buying cloth in its raw state at Machynlleth, and exporting it elsewhere for finishing. Another method of circumventing the monopoly was tried, that of using local men in Shrewsbury and Oswestry as agents for the purchase of cloth. By this means the agent exercised the advantage of membership of the Shrewsbury Drapers' Company, or the Oswestry Mercers' and Drapers' Company, without himself receiving the high profits accruing from them.

Another factor which prevented the establishment of a monopoly by the Shrewsbury men was rivalry between the two principal companies engaged in the trade, the Mercers and the Drapers. This came to light with the revelation in 1619 of a conspiracy between Thomas Davis, a merchant of London and Shrewsbury, and two Shrewsbury mercers, whereby the latter became members of the Oswestry Mercers and Drapers Company in order to buy cloth in Oswestry and sell it in London. By this arrangement profit to both the Shropshire towns was eliminated. Nor was this the only internal threat; Shearmen, knowing the large profits made by the Drapers,

demanded more money for their work. Less than two years later, in July 1621 a final blow was dealt to the Shrewsbury Drapers' hopes by a royal Proclamation forbidding attempts to confine the sale of Welsh cottons to particular places, which was followed by the Act for the Free Trade of Welsh cloth in 1624.<sup>1</sup>

The successful merchants engaged in the Welsh cloth trade were exemplified by the Irelands, who are first heard of at Oswestry in the fifteenth century. David Ireland settled at Shrewsbury, in the latter part of the century, was admitted a member of the Mercers' Company in 1490, and was four times bailiff between 1510 and 1528.<sup>2</sup> He or his father had presumably established a business in Oswestry and then came to Shrewsbury to set up as mercers in close contact with the shearmen there. Thomas the son of David Ireland, also a mercer, was wealthy enough to be able to speculate in monastic lands and to style himself 'gent'. At the Dissolution he purchased an estate at Albrighton<sup>3</sup> and became a minor country gentleman.

A glance at the descents in the Heralds' Visitation will show that connections between Shrewsbury merchant families and the country gentry were quite common. Members of county families frequently include among the younger sons

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1. 21 Jac. I, cap. 9.  
2. TSAS, 2s. I (1889), 99.  
3. ibid., 410.

one or more who is styled "of Shrewsbury", and who might in time succeed to the county estate. The Myttons were of Shrewsbury and Halston, a branch of the Onslows of Onslow (from whom the famous speaker of the House of Commons sprang) was in the town, and a more distant connection is exemplified by the Phillips family, of Caersws and Shrewsbury.<sup>1</sup>

Although few families had such distant country connections as that, there are a number listed with places in Wales. It is noteworthy that the Owens of Conover whose members were so influential in the town during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were connected with the Owens of Llunllo and Bettws, in the area whence came the woollen cloth which made the Shrewsbury branch of the family rich. Many of these prosperous merchants married daughters of well-known county families and so made alliances which brought them into different strata of society. Thomas Kynaston of Brandon Heath, one of the Kynastons of Hordley, married off his second daughter Jane to Roger Thornes of Shrewsbury, a draper. One way or another very strong ties were established, between the landowning county families, the gentry, on the one hand, and the tradesmen and merchants of Shrewsbury on the other. The Sturys were of Rossall, the Thornes of Shelvoek and Melferley, the Weales of Cotes

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1. All these examples of the connection between Shrewsbury and the surrounding countryside are taken from the *Heralds' Visitation* (Harleian Society); see under the several surnames.

and the Popes of Wolstanton, most of these country seats being within the liberties <sup>1</sup> of Shrewsbury. It may not have been a new phenomenon but the evidence for it becomes more plentiful in the sixteenth century.

With the rise in social position went an accession of honours and dignities; the progress is illustrated by the Harris family. William Harris, yeoman, of Wheathill in the parish of Condover, had a son Roger who was a draper of Shrewsbury; in the next generation Roger's son Thomas became one of James I's baronets in 1622 and had his seat at Tong Castle. <sup>2</sup> The more modest aspirations of the majority are reflected in "the names of those who were disclaimed for gentlemen by the herald in 1585". <sup>3</sup> Roger Harris, appears among them; so do David Lloyd, Thomas Stury, William Prowd, and John Perch, all belonging to influential Shrewsbury families. Two of them it is interesting to note, can be connected with particular houses in the town, David Lloyd with the now demolished mansion in The Square <sup>4</sup> and John Perche with a large timber-framed building off Castle Street. <sup>5</sup> Several among those whose claim was rejected in 1585 had been bailiffs within the previous thirty years and had perhaps taken the style of gentleman

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1. Equivalent to a Hundred. The County connections are again taken from the Heralds' Visitation.
  2. TSAS. 2s. I (1889), 411; O & B., I, 379.
  3. Heralds' Visitation, I, 2.
  4. pp. 360-labove.
  5. pp. 329 above.

then, and in some cases had assumed arms too. William Tench (bailiff, 1560), Roger Luter (bailiff 1562), William Pears (1565), Thomas Stury (1567), William Lowe (1572), John Dawes (1576), Roger Harris, (1578) and John Perche (1579) are all in this category, together with David Lloyd: others, such as John Hosyer and Richard Montgomery, were the sons of former bailiffs.<sup>1</sup>

In the reign of Elizabeth the legal profession became a fashionable and profitable opening for the sons of well-to-do tradesmen. Thus Richard Owen, mercer, who was bailiff in 1564, had a son Thomas who after being a barrister became a Judge on the King's Bench and represented the town in the Parliament of 1584. This election was contested, the defeated candidate being the Thomas Harris mentioned earlier, who was also a lawyer and eventually became a Master in Chancery. Thomas Owen's two sons were both destined for Parliament: Roger was the town's representative in 1597, became Sheriff of Salop in 1604, and duly became in every sense a knight of the shire: his brother William had a very similar career. Nicholas Gibbons, the probable builder of the house in Wyle Cop which is known by his name, and Richard Prince, the builder of Whitehall, are other instances of successful lawyers in Elizabeth I's reign. Prince had

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1. For the bailiffs see O & B., I, 531-2.



bought the lands of the Abbey and used it as a quarry for building materials. Gibbons' Mansion is more typical of Shrewsbury and gives a fair estimate of the accommodation demanded by a prosperous man acquainted with standards of living other than those of his native Shrewsbury.

One other element in the town's trade noted in the Middle Ages recurs in the seventeenth century; William Rowley is another of the wealthy brewers whose most distinguished representative in earlier periods was Benet Tupton, the founder of St.Chad's Almshouses. The "very great, vast brewhouse of Mr.Rowleyes, the "brewing vessels wherein are capable of 100 measures", <sup>1</sup> was sufficiently important to attract the attention of Brereton in 1635. From its profits Rowley built the fine brick house in Hill's Lane, but where the brewhouse actually stood and what its buildings were like is now impossible to say.

Rowley's wealth clearly came by trade, but the general impression of the Shrewsbury notabilities of the period is that for the first time a considerable number were making their fortunes as place-holders, especially the lawyers. Outside the legal profession, however, was Richard Owen, who in 1589 obtained from William Cecil the right of farm of the aulnage of cloth in the counties of Denbigh and Merioneth.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Brereton's Travels, 186.

2. Exchequer Procs. (Equity) concerning Wales..., 40-1.

It was no doubt a very profitable place, and was inherited by Humphrey Owen on his father's death. Failing to make the appropriate payments, Humphrey was ordered by the then Aulnager in the Principality of Wales to deliver up the Seals of office, which notwithstanding he refused to do and continued to collect aulnage "at a bridge called Kynleth Bridge in Co. Denbigh, across which most of the clothiers of Co. Montgomery are wont to pass when conveying their goods to markets in Co. Salop...".<sup>1</sup> These proceedings suggest that Humphrey Owen found the profits of an aulnager greater than those of a draper; the outcome of the case is not stated.

The suppression of almshouses and chantries in the 1540's brought about a change in the nature of charitable gifts, which henceforth were devoted much more to secular than to religious purposes. The Taylor manuscript chronicle<sup>2</sup> records a variety of ways in which burgesses benefited the town, most of them being public works in some form. In 1564-5 Mr. Poynter of London, merchant, who was born in Shrewsbury, gave £20 to his town towards the provision and maintenance of a lead-piped water supply.<sup>3</sup>

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1. loc.cit.

2. TSAS, III (1880), 239-352.

3. ibid., sub anno.

Two years later John Dawes, an alderman who later became bailiff (1576), built "two fair bays in the corn market" to provide protection for corn in bad weather, "which place serveth for the inhabitants and also strangers to walk in and the loft above for sundry profitable purposes".<sup>1</sup>

It seems therefore to have been a timber predecessor of the 1595 market hall; in 1569-70 three more bays were added to it by "Master Onslow", i.e., Humphrey Onslow who was bailiff four times between 1544 and 1570 and who in 1546 had carried two-thirds of the cost of rebuilding the Booth Hall.<sup>2</sup> Sir Thomas White mayor of London, whose connection with Shrewsbury is not specified in the chronicle, provided money from the Merchant Tailors' hall in London to be delivered in the town "to four young occupiers especially being clothiers".<sup>3</sup> One of the rare instances of generosity to a church about this time - apart from gifts of plate - was the building of a timber-framed north porch by Roger Clarke, grocer and citizen of London; he gave plate too.<sup>4</sup>

These public benefactions, the establishment of the school by the bailiffs in 1551, the construction of a Library, chapel and tower from 1595 onwards, and the building of the Market House in the same year all tell the same tale

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1. *ibid.*, 267-8.

2. *ibid.*, 258.

3. *ibid.*, 263.

4. B.M. Add. Ms. 21015, f.77, drawing of porch; demolished 1801.

of prosperity that can be inferred from the large number of houses built over the same period. As the preamble to the Charter of 1585 put it, "clothing and other distinguished arts did flourish:.... all the townsmen grew rich, and the limits of the town were daily extended".<sup>1</sup> Half a century later Brereton described Shrewsbury as "one of the richest towns in these parts of England, Newcastle-upon-Tyne excepted".<sup>2</sup>

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provide the earliest details about river transport in the port books of Gloucester, extant from 1581 onwards. They show the way trade was carried on; where the ships came from, what their cargoes were and for whom they were loaded. The year 1581-2<sup>3</sup> may be taken as typical of the period under discussion; the particulars given are fuller than in some later books. The ships using Gloucester came from most of the small ports of South Wales and North Devon, St. Davids and Barnstaple being the most distant, as well as from most of the towns along the Severn below Bridgnorth. The ships carrying goods belonging to Shrewsbury merchants came from only three of this score or so of ports, all being above Gloucester; Bridgnorth and Bewdley predominate, and Tewkesbury is mentioned once. It seems from this that the

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1. Quoted O & B., I, 381.  
2. Brereton, loc.cit.  
3. PRO. E190-1241-2.

flat-bottomed shallow-draught trows carried goods from the upper navigable reaches of the Severn - Welshpool to Bridgnorth - down to the latter place, rarely beyond, and there they were transhipped to larger vessels. That however is not the impression gained from Brereton's account of how he negotiated at Bristol with Richard Reeves, a trowman of Shrewsbury, for the carriage of "a great horseload" of goods by water. <sup>1</sup>

The names of the Shrewsbury shippers are often familiar from the burgess rolls or the list of bailiffs. William Herringe, draper (bailiff 1580) sent a mixed cargo consisting of 8 packs of cottons, 6 hogsheads of metheglin, 2 barrels of honey and 3 packs of ropes bound for Bristol. <sup>2</sup> William Jones appears as sending other "packs of cottons", specified once as Oswestry cottons, to the same destination. <sup>3</sup> (All the entries related to ships going downstream, none to upstream traffic). Thomas Hedley is named three times as sending wool (not cottons), once with nine "leathers", and William Herringe appears again with a second mixed cargo differing only in quantities from the first. <sup>4</sup> The remaining eleven of the eighteen entries referring to Shrewsbury men concern tanners. One man, Thomas Abeinon, tanner, whose name occurs several times, once loaded a

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1. Brereton's Travels, 186.

2. 1242/1/f5.

3. 1241/15/f3; 1242/2/f7 (Oswestry cottons).

4. Hedley: ff. 1242/2/10, 1242/4/14, 1242/5/3; Herring: 1242/3/6.

mixed cargo of hides, calf-skins, five packs of wool, and a cask of metheglin;<sup>1</sup> otherwise the cargoes are solely of leather, hides and calf-skins. It appears from this that there was a fairly big trade in skins and leather going at least as far as Bristol and perhaps to some more distant market. The "metheglin" for export to such relatively distant places may have been the "ale" for which Shrewsbury was famous; if not, I have come across no other reference to it in the borough records or in any of the numerous documents which have been printed. George Higgons (bailiff 1563, 1574) John Lewis and Thomas Lewis (bailiff 1581, 1600) are the three tanners concerned in this trade. Unfortunately the port books give no indication of the final destination of any of the cargoes. Burleigh's map (pl.15) shows one cargo being carried down the Severn, the floats or rafts of timber made up of logs cut higher up the river which came "yearly down for the commodity of the town of Shrewsbury".<sup>2</sup>

Probably only a small proportion of the cloth handled by the Shrewsbury Drapers went away via Bristol, most of it going to London. A letter dated 1601 from the Privy Council to the Sheriff of Salop says that a great part of the Welsh cloths taken to London were bought by French merchants;<sup>3</sup> although details of this trade are lacking

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1. 1241/9/3.

2. TSAS, III (1880), 266.

3. Hist.Mss. Comm. 15th Rept., Appx. X, 62.

it is fairly certain that the Shrewsbury men did not actually export the cloth themselves.

The importance of the Severn as a means of transport prompted another of the public works carried out through private benefactors, the building of Mardol Quay on the S.E. side of the Welsh Bridge by Rowland Jenks in 1607,<sup>1</sup> to permit all manner of barges to load and unload. What cargoes were brought up the river is not stated in the port books; and Brereton's mixed load of old soap, three dozen bottles, and a cloak bag is hardly representative. Corn may have been one commodity which sometimes came up by barge. In 1597 William Medlicott was sent to Tewkesbury "for the receipt of certain corn which came from Bristol".<sup>2</sup> One further point of uncertain significance may be noted; Brereton, wanting to ship his goods from Bristol to Shrewsbury, "was beholding to Mr. Bennett of Chester, the draper, by whose means it was procured carried".<sup>3</sup> This casual reference hints at Bristol being the southern end of a trade route to Shrewsbury and beyond, extending probably up to Chester, and the Lancashire towns such as Winwick and Wigan, and on as far as Kendal; all these places Chester particularly, occur as places of origin of men admitted to burgess-ship in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

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1. S.S. & P., I (1875), 86.
  2. O & B., I, 400.
  3. Brereton, loc.cit.
  4. Burgess Rolls, passim.

The William Jones and the William Herring named in the port books performed their good works by making a bargain in 1570-1 with the bailiffs, whereby they provided a further lead-piped water supply to the public conduit in return for a 10-year lease of a field behind the walls.<sup>1</sup> This repeated concern for water supply is a sign of the steady growth of population, for which, however, no numerical estimate is available before 1693, when there were said to be 7383 persons in the whole town,<sup>2</sup> i.e., probably including the liberties as well, so that the number of people in the town proper was perhaps between 6000 and 6500.

The Civil War restricted the trade of Shrewsbury so severely that Defoe many years afterwards remarks how badly it had been affected.<sup>3</sup> Celia Fiennes, who came to the town in 1698, is the traveller whose opinions have most bearing on Shrewsbury as it was in the second half of the seventeenth century. She recorded further efforts to provide adequate quantities of water throughout the town, it being the intention of the corporation to provide a new water engine.<sup>4</sup> On her departure she was impressed by the signs

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1. TSAS, III (1880).

2. Owen, op.cit., 57.

3. Defoe, Tour through ... Great Britain, II, 476.

4. The Journeys of Celia Fiennes, 227.



of a busy trade; "I went through the great fair which was just kept that day there, full of all sorts of things and all the roads for 10 miles at least I met the people and commodities going to the fair". Despite the absence of direct evidence it is clear that the town had recovered by the end of the century from its wartime setback and was rapidly becoming the "Town of Mirth and Gallantry" which Defoe admired.<sup>1</sup> Celia Fiennes noted the lawns and gardens provided for the enjoyment of the "abundance of people of quality" here, "more than in any town except Nottingham".<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter X some account was given of the decline and eventual cessation of timber-framed building, a craft whose progress has formed one of the main themes of this work. Although no clear date can be given for its end, Celia Fiennes' outlook shows very clearly the change of attitude that had taken place since 1635, when Brereton had admired the "very fair, large, spacious town".<sup>3</sup> By 1698 "its true there are no fine houses but there are many large old houses that are convenient and stately";<sup>4</sup> the houses she refers to can only be the timber-framed buildings put up for the most part during the previous century and a half, which by that time had gone completely out of fashion. The rise in the

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1. Defoe, Tour, II, 474.
  2. Journeys, loc.cit.
  3. Travels, 186.
  4. Journeys of Celia Fiennes, 227.

price of the material relative to the rise in the cost of brick was doubtless the reason for the change in Shrewsbury as in all other important towns. It is impossible to illustrate the process from Shropshire or west-midland evidence, but the figures collected by Thorold Rogers for eastern and southern districts may convey a sufficiently good idea of the change. His significant conclusion is that "in the latter quarter of the seventeenth century, timber by the load was twice as dear as it was in the last quarter of the sixteenth".<sup>1</sup> Moreover it was getting scarcer as a result of the great destruction of woods in the Civil War, so that some substitute had to be found. Brick in the Oxford and London areas certainly in price during the same period of a hundred years, but had not gone up by more than half the late sixteenth century price.<sup>2</sup> Some such explanation no doubt accounts for the great architectural change we have noted in Shrewsbury between 1650 and 1680, and which was paralleled by a social change unconnected with it. By 1698 the town was changing its earlier character of a major secondary market, commanding the trade of half Wales, into that of the fashionable though still busy county town where the people of quality demanded a new and up-to-date architecture of brick. The great days of monopoly of the Welsh trade and the fine timber houses

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1. History of Agriculture and Prices, V, 521.

2. ibid., 545; Decennial Averages.

built upon it had both vanished. In their place was fast appearing the town of which Macaulay wrote that "in the language of the gentry many miles around the Wrekin, to go to Shrewsbury was to go to town".

CHAPTER XIII.

NOTES ON THE TECHNIQUE OF TIMBER-FRAMED ARCHITECTURE. 1

In the course of the preceding chapters various aspects of timber-framed architecture have been touched on, mainly with a view to establishing a few broad historical conclusions about the growth of Shrewsbury rather than to discussing the building techniques there found. Discussion of the evidence for the date and plan of a house has inevitably entailed considerable incursions into the history of this branch of the building craft, so that it may be worth while to set down a few notes on the development of technique as reflected in the surviving buildings of the town. It is obvious that a single town is a very unsatisfactory basis for general deductions about timber-framed architecture, so although to avoid repetition every remark in this chapter will not be qualified by explicitly limiting its known application to Shrewsbury, that must be understood. That is not to say that the remarks may not sometimes have a far wider application, to the West Midlands as a whole for instance; random personal observation has convinced me that many of the architectural phenomena described in

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1. Some material on roofs will be taken from stone and cruck buildings, both of which lie outside the timber-framed tradition of building.

the foregoing pages occur elsewhere, and may be found to have happened in the same sequence even if not at exactly the same dates. But random observation is not the same thing as systematic survey, and the hazards involved in drawing conclusions from the external appearance of buildings need hardly be stressed to anyone who has read the preceding pages. Nevertheless as Mr. Pantin has well remarked, "one thing that is badly needed is the compilation of a kind of 'grammar' of the construction of timber-framed buildings".<sup>1</sup> Some progress towards compiling that grammar or one of its local dialects, may, it is hoped, be made below.

ROOFS.      Tie-beam Roofs.

I. Without purlins: king-post type.

We will begin by considering a specifically medieval type, the king-post roof. By its nature it had no future once roof space began to be used for accommodation, so that any example is likely to be before 1550, or as an outside limit 1580.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the only examples in Shrewsbury are well before that date and are found only in large buildings. None has yet come to light in the big three-storeyed houses, although instances occur in Cambridge in

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1. Ant.J., XXVII (1947), 147.

2. This may not apply in Essex, where the roofs in medieval buildings seem not to have been much utilised by conversion; cf. R.C.H.M., Essex (4 vols), passim.

buildings of this type. <sup>1</sup>

There are three king-post roofs in Shrewsbury:-

8A Castle Street (pl.68 & 69).

Riggs Hall (pl. 72)

Building facing S. end of Butcher Row <sup>2</sup> (pl. 77).

The first two are notable for their heavy timbering; 8A Castle Street has a tie-beam 2 ft. 1 in. deep, by far the biggest scantling so far revealed in the town, but Riggs Hall may be of comparably massive construction. In all these cases cusping of structural members is a notable feature: the Breeze-Gornall building and 8A Castle Street must have been almost as profusely ornamented as the Nag's Head Hall.

The tie-beam <sup>3</sup> performs two functions. One is to hold the wall plates together and so counter the thrust of the rafters; the other is to support the king-post. The diagonal braces from the tie-beam to the king-post keep the latter from sideways movement; the collar-purlin keeps the whole roof from lengthwise movement. The two longitudinal braces not only stiffen the collar-purlin against the king-post, they keep it from sagging under the weight of the rafter collars. The rafters are themselves kept from

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1. Personal observation in the course of R.C.H.M. work.
  2. Divided between Messrs. P.H. Breeze and H.J.Gornall, and a flat; referred to as the Breeze-Gornall building.
  3. This description is based on No. 8A Castle Street, but applies equally to the other two roofs.

sagging by the collars. The vertical moulded struts are purely decorative. They do in fact provide support for the pair of rafters above the open truss, but since the remaining rafters which are unsupported show no sign of the sagging, the struts can hardly be necessary. Each strut is tenoned into a rafter and the tie-beam, so that apart from its own considerable weight which is sufficient to prevent movement, the strut might be said to be kept in position by the rafter. It is possible that each collar is pegged through to the collar-purlin, but no evidence of this device was found, nor is a peg visible on the underside of the collar: but the great quantity of dust made examination difficult. Otherwise there is little connection between the king-post construction and the roof proper, the framework of rafters. Only three pairs of rafters, those above the gable and open trusses, are actually fastened by tenons and pegs to the supporting structure. The former are fastened at the feet only by a tenon and one peg. The latter are also fastened to the tie-beam by means of the vertical struts. Otherwise, if the collars are not pegged to the purlin, the framework and the supporting structures are held together in a rigid relationship by sheer weight. Axial movement is prevented by a third means additional to the two already mentioned, the collar-purlin and its braces:

the wall-plates help to prevent the rafters from movement by the mortise and tenon joints it makes with them. The enormous weight of all this structure is carried by the king-posts and the wall-plates; the weight on the king-posts is transmitted mainly to the centre of the tie-beams. The tie of the open truss is supported at the middle by two heavy curved braces; an additional support for the gable truss is provided by a heavy stud or post. Further to prevent sagging the tie-beam is given a considerable camber.

#### Tie-beam Roofs.

##### II. With purlins: (A) Queen-post type.

All tie-beam roofs which employ purlins are basically similar; they differ only in the beams used to prop the principal rafters against the thrust of the roof which it is the purpose of the purlins to concentrate upon them.

Purlins perhaps originated with the aisled-barn type of building, where the rafters were supported in the middle by plates running above the arcades. A stage in development occurred when the posts of the arcade became inconvenient; a clear floor-space was felt to be desirable. In a building of moderate width, a little too wide for any alternative roof then known - those, perhaps with simple trussed rafters or king-posts - yet too narrow to permit easily of two rows of posts to carry a plate, it was



found possible to raise the posts clear of the floor on beams. This development seems to have been not too remote when Gatehouse Farm at Felstead (Essex) <sup>1</sup> was put up in the early fourteenth century. The fact that the purlins are placed square above the queen-posts instead of angularly, corresponding to the pitch of the roof, suggests their close relation to a plate. <sup>2</sup> The rare form of the tie-beam too, with a marked reverse curve from the wall-plate up towards the middle, shows a desire to prevent sag by making a shallow arch between the points where the arch-braces supported the tie. Later development of tie-beams is away from this primitive form; at Felstead mouldings gave chronological confirmation of its early position in the typological sequence.

Although no comparable roof survives in Shrewsbury there is one which has marked affinities with it at Mac Fisheries shop in Mardol. Plate 86. shows clearly the slight upward double curve of the tie-beam, much less pronounced than at Gatehouse Farm, but certainly very different from the simply curved camber to be seen, for instance, at Church Farm Cafe (fig.68 ) or the Nag's Head Hall (fig.20 ). In other respects too the Mac Fisheries

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1. R.C.H.M. Essex, II.

2. Other examples at Pilgrims' Hall, Winchester, which is a hammer-beam roof - N. Lloyd, Hist. of English House, 358; Houghton Place, Sussex, which has both king- and queen-posts - Sx.Arch.Coll., LXIII, 207.

roof is later; the purlins are not placed squarely upon a post but are supported directly by a collar, which transmits the weight directly upon the raked strut below. Still the essential purpose was maintained of strengthening the tie-beam at the point where the thrust from above was taken, so the curved braces are seen immediately beneath the struts. In this instance the very slight double curve represents a traditional method surviving in a roof where there is no real need for it; the danger of sagging was slight when the unsupported span of the tie-beam was so small. The reason why a heavy cambered collar rather than posts or struts was used to transmit the roof load is perhaps a fear that the posts or struts might be pushed inwards under the strain.

Although the Mac Fisheries roof is the only one to display kinship with really early constructional methods a later stage in the development of this type can be shown. The roof of Nos. 160-161 Abbey Foregate (pl.75 ) has lost the slightly archaic appearance of Mac Fisheries; it has a straight collar and vertical struts, here properly called queen-posts. The roof of the back wing at Cockle's shop in Milk Street is similar except that the collar is cambered. The purlins are carried no less effectively, but there is no longer such a simple and direct attempt to counteract weight and thrust. One point may be made about

these two roofs as well as about others which display the same feature: that the method of supporting purlins by members inside the truss, rather than by the principal rafters, is definitely medieval. Once roof space was to be used for living room, it became necessary to take the roof load in a manner which would suit the convenience of the occupants, rather than according to the unfettered choice of the carpenter. It was no easy matter to place a collar directly beneath a purlin and at the same time keep it high enough to permit passage beneath it. In a roof of normal town-house span the collar could not be placed high enough; it took half a century to find a solution to this problem.

Tie-beam Roofs.

II. With purlins: (B) Incurved braces type.

1. With direct support for purlins.

This kind of roof seem to have been fairly common in Shrewsbury; the following examples are known:-

J.H. Jones, Mardol - rear building.

Henry Tudor House.

The Abbots House.

65-69 Wyle Cop.

M. Davey's Shop, Wyle Cop.

Old Gullet Inn.

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1. Dogpole House has a queen-post roof which is probably of this type.

probably some of the two-storeyed and all of the three-storeyed medieval buildings not examined have this form of roofing.

In roofs of this class braces, not a collar, give direct support to the purlins, which are placed on the underside of the principal rafters. The braces are incurved for the same reason that the struts in Mac Fisheries were raked; it is a means of ensuring that the weight of the roof does not displace the supports of the purlins by giving them the most direct counter-thrust possible. The collar is retained even though it no longer performs its old function; now it is presumably needed to stay the principal rafter at its weakest point, immediately above the big slot cut in it to take the purlin.

The first of the examples listed above, Jones's back premises, is the most elaborate of them all. It has the curved braces and collar above, with a king-post to keep the collar from sagging in the middle. The collar performs a second function: two raking struts spring from the middle of it to the principal rafters. Two more braces, very slightly incurved, are placed below the main incurved braces, so that they support the principals just above the springing-point of the big curved windbraces. This was no doubt deliberate, designed to relieve the principal rafter of the weight transmitted by the common rafters to the

windbrace. The fact that this roof is of rather larger span than most of the others may have affected its design considerably. Using incurved braces it is not possible to provide more than one purlin, because one end of the incurved brace must be placed on that half of the beam which lies beneath the side of the roof the brace must support; braces cannot be crossed to support the higher part of the roof pitch, the tie-beam being too narrow for that and too heavy to permit its being widened. But if the span is fairly wide - here it is 19 ft. 3 ins. clear - there is a large area of roof to be carried by a single purlin. Windbraces must therefore be employed to transmit the weight of the rafters, which left unsupported might sag. But the distance from near the foot of the principal rafter to the purlin is considerable; if the braces are too long, and therefore too heavy, they may put too much strain on the purlin midway along the bay. So the bays must be short; yet even this conjectural explanation does not fully account for the irregularity of the baying here.<sup>1</sup> The tie-beam has very little camber. The curved braces to support it are jointed in beneath the lowest incurved braces.

Henry Tudor House (pl.100A) confirms the idea that the carpenters feared a weakness in the middle of the purlin. At the truss the collar is placed immediately above the purlin, preventing any splitting in the principal

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1. 6 ft. 2 ins., 7 ft. 1½ ins., 8 ft. 11 ins.

rafter. Midway along the roof bay another collar is provided, this time clasping the purlin much as an incurved brace does. It is significant that this should be provided in a roof which has four windbraces to a bay on each side. The collar supports both the purlin and the rafter on to which the two middle braces transmit weight from the common rafters; its use provided an alternative to a short bay system.

The roof of Jones's back premises is the largest and most complicated example of the type. The others, though they vary slightly in size, are all of the same simpler form like Henry Tudor House, almost as though the type became standardised with differences only in details.

The gable ends of Mitchenall's and 65-69 Wyle Cop show just the same slightly cambered tie-beam, two big incurved braces, a collar and a king-post. Whether the intermediate collared truss existed too I do not know; certainly a smaller roof like that of the Old Gullet did not require it.

Tie-beam roofs.

II. With purlins: (B) Incurved Braces type.

2. With indirect support for purlins.

There is only one example of this type, which is also the only dated medieval roof in Shrewsbury; it stands above the solar in the Council House, and may reasonably be ascribed to 1502.<sup>1</sup> Two purlins are here employed, not supported directly by the incurved-braces but slotted into the principal rafters. This increase in size of the principal rafters is a necessary accompaniment of the changeover from direct support. The two purlins each have cusped windbraces below them. All the support for the principal rafters is provided midway between the purlins, the incurved braces and the collar being tenoned into them adjacent to each other.

The roof has been partially destroyed. As built it had two gable trusses, one of which has been removed, and an intermediate archbraced collar truss. In each half-bay the two purlins have cusped windbraces below them so that the collar of the intermediate truss performs the same function as it does in Henry Tudor House; typologically it is a later development of it. The arch braces are held in compression by the weight of the principal and the weight of the collar. They form a butt-joint with the underside of

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1. Owen, Anc. and Pres. State, 495.

the collar, and somewhere near the wall plate a similar joint must oppose the thrust. Since the Council House is built of stone a wall-post in the room below is the logical way of transmitting the thrust as far down the walls as possible, but there is no sign in the room below that this means was employed. It would seem possible to use an arch-braced collar in a timber-framed building, forming the lower butt-joint at the head of a thickened post, but no example of this has been noted in Shrewsbury.

Tie-beam roofs.

II. With purlins: (C) With queen-post and raked struts.

A roof of this type exists in Phillips's store, Fish Street. It is clearly a later development in roof construction, both as regards date and type, than the preceding examples in houses of this class.

It has this in common with the Council House roof, that two purlins are used on each side; there is no ridge. The form of the roof permits access through the present attics, but this facility is a fortuitous, not a deliberate provision. The construction incorporates two queen-posts, no longer supporting the purlins directly; now they are in compression between the tie-beam and the collar, and are placed fairly near the centre of the truss, spaced equidistantly from the principal rafters and each other. The collar



is intended to carry the weight of the upper purlin which is slotted into the back of the principal immediately opposite the mortise-and-tenon joint formed by the collar. The thrust of the lower purlin is prevented from straining this principal rafter by a straight raked strut, which again is placed directly opposite the purlin.

The collar is very slightly cambered and the ceiling boards are a clear 5 inches (minimum) below its upper face: for these two reasons I consider the floor has been inserted, although the form of the truss itself would leave the matter in doubt. Had an attic floor been intended, a main joist would have been slotted or tenoned into the tie-beam with its top face the thickness of a floor-board below the top face of a flat tie-beam, so that when the floorboards were laid they would rest with their loads on the wall plate and be flush with the top of the tie.

This roof is of early sixteenth century date, judging by the characteristics of the contemporary framing of the walls below. This fits in well with what is clearly the end of medieval roof development. The use of two purlins each side of a roof this size is something not found at earlier periods in Shrewsbury but becomes normal practice in the second half of the century. Straight struts, strongly raked, are another characteristic not noted earlier which is taken into standard practice in Elizabethan work.

It is interesting to find that a second such roof does in fact exist in an Elizabethan transitional type, Eldred Mottram's shop in Frankwell. The arrangement of the various members has been slightly altered; the queen-posts are moved outwards so that they abut with an angular head both the collar and principal at their point of junction. The intention is very clear; to counter the tendency of the principal to sag, and to support its weight directly with as little strain on the tie-beam as possible, i.e., at one end, rather than nearer the middle. The lower purlin is provided for by a raked strut not directly opposite, but a little distance above it, presumably at a midway point between the top purlin and the wall plate in order to take the weight of all that part of the roof. This intention is plain from the framed-up gable truss, where a stud replaces the strut; it abuts the principal in exactly the same position.

Gibbons' Mansion probably had a similar roof; the drawings done before demolition show no queen-posts, but the photograph looking N. (pl.135) shows a pair of peg-holes, one for the collar and one for a queen-post, in the principal rafter at RA (fig.33 ). When the attic floor was put in and the roof divided into rooms it was felt necessary to remove as many of the structural encumbrances as possible, the queen-posts among them. This

example appropriately brings us to the problem confronting the carpenters of the 1580's, how to combine a stable roof structure with rooms sufficiently clear of posts and beams to be usable.

III. Roofs with attics: (A) Attics entirely within the gable.

Ireland's Mansion is one of the earliest buildings in Shrewsbury provided with attics; unfortunately, like so many other instances where the topmost rooms are in use, the roof timbers cannot be examined satisfactorily. The solution here is to combine a high collar and raking struts with queen-posts, between which a door could easily give access from one room to the next, while the remaining members were put out of the way by being embedded in a partition. The Ireland's Mansion front roof therefore has a collar with queen-posts placed about equidistantly from each other and from the principals; above the collar are raking struts. The upper purlin is supported by a raking strut. Two short beams are tenoned into the top of the lower raking struts and the queen posts, and there is another at the same level between the queen-posts. These beams do not serve any structural function, their main purpose being to subdivide two partition surfaces into parts of a reasonable size for the insertion of wattles or other wall material. The truss

described forms the division between two of the tenements; an intermediate truss has only a collar with the two pairs of raking struts.

The roof timbers in the front attic of the Park Hotel are entirely covered in plaster, but the photograph (pl. 133) shows that the attics are bounded by the tie-beam and two rafters. The sides of this triangular space are unusable, so they are now sealed off by a partition beneath the lower purlin. The gable must be heavily framed, because there are two collars which form the lintel and sill of the window. It seems that there is an angular-headed stud of the Eldred Mottram type to strengthen the junction of the purlins and collars. The back attic shows the same features on a smaller scale.

The attics at 165 Frankwell (Medlicott's) are formed in a similar way. The collar is high, and the queen-posts abut the parapet rafters a short distance below them, sufficiently far away to prevent the nearness of the two mortises from weakening the principal. The upper purlin is placed above the queen-post; there is no sign of a strut for the lower purlin. The carpenter may have intended the collar to take all the weight of the top half of the roof and the queen post that of the lower half, foreshadowing the later roofs which provide supports between the purlins instead of directly opposite them.

III. Roofs with attics. (B) Incorporating a half-storey.

We have noted above (Ch. X) that the early seventeenth century saw a radical change in the construction of attics; their confinement within the gable was ended by the addition of about half the normal full height of a storey, so providing very much more head room. This solution was arrived at through a new development in roof construction whereby the tie-beam was separated from the wall plate, no longer slotted into it, but placed a few feet below. Alcock's shop at the corner of Mardol and Hill's Lane is a typical example.

A heavy beam - a joist really - is the basis of the roof. Into it are tenoned two queen-posts; it is itself tenoned at each end into principal posts which carry the wall-plates at a height of 3-4 feet above the joist. A beam - a severed tie-beam, in effect - is slotted over the wallplate and tenoned at the other end into a queen-post. The heads of the queen-posts are tenoned into a collar, the ends of which are tenoned into the principals. This framework is strengthened by braces fastened to the base-joists at one end and the severed tie-beam at the other. There is also an upper collar, but the ceiling is provided at the level of the lower collar. In Alcock's shop at least, the

triangular space above this is used for an upper attic of the old type. Between the queen-posts doors can be provided. The wallplate is at the right height for the sill of a window which can be of any height the ceiling will allow; a change in the size of the dormer is all that is necessary to regulate the size of the light.

It seems to have taken about a generation or slightly less to evolve a solution perfectly adapted to buildings with two storeys and attics in place of the old three storeys. It was simplified in the course of the succeeding half-century but the basic idea, the separation of the tie-beam and wallplate, was never superseded. In the early seventeenth century warehouse in Frankwell the diagonal brace from the joist to the severed tie-beam is replaced in one bay only by a stud, tenoned at each end (pl. 202). In the Verger's House (3 St. Mary's Place) the stud is omitted, the queen-posts are moved outwards, and the severed tie-beam becomes a rail tenoned into the queen-posts and principal rafter. Here also the collar and the heads of the queen-posts are fastened independently to the principal in the different type of roof at 165, Frankwell (Medlicott's).

IV. Cruck Roofs: (A) Two crucks.

Two cruck-built houses exist in Shrewsbury; one is No.92 Frankwell, the other Cureton's Garage, Abbey Foregate. A brief examination of the former did not show any obvious departures from comparable crucks in Monmouthshire, described by Sir Cyril Fox and Lord Raglan.<sup>1</sup> Its most striking feature is an incredible profusion of pegs; each arch-brace of the open truss has twenty-two.

IV. Cruck Roofs: (B) Upper crucks.<sup>2</sup>

The only instance of this form of construction so far known in Shrewsbury was at No. 5 Hill's Lane, now demolished. It was roofed with four vestigial upper crucks which approached very nearly the form of a normal tie-beam truss (fig. 48). Each pair of crucks had a roughly-hewn segmental arched collar. The advantage of this form was that it dispensed with any other strut or post which might block the attic space.

An even more extraordinary feature was the upper cruck (fig. 48) with two incurved studs<sup>3</sup> which stood at a right angle to the main roof and appears to have been a gable. At some later date laths were nailed over the whole of it, so that it is very hard to discover pegs on the photograph, but the right-hand foot does appear to have been pegged to

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1. Monmouthshire Houses, I, Medieval.

2. For definition and full technical description; *ibid.*, 67.

3. These were used in the restoration of Rowley's House as studs (pl.225).

the wallplates. If that indication is correct the cruck-form is part of the original construction. From what has been said earlier it is certain that this roof cannot be before c.1550; the use of a gable in this way suggests a considerably later date, certainly after 1600. This fits in with the use of square-cut heads to the principal posts, so that we may perhaps ascribe it simply to the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

IV. Cruck Roofs. (C) Truncated upper crucks.

The ultimate development of the cruck roof is exemplified at Cockle's shop in Milk Street and a warehouse in Frankwell.

The latter is the simpler form (pl. 207). Two bent principals are tenoned and pegged to a collar into which two purlins are slotted. The common rafters are fastened to the wallplate, the purlin, and to each other at the apex. That is all. Not even the simplest form of tie is employed, but that a need for one was felt later is shown by the iron strap visible in pl. .

The N. bay of Cockle's shop shows a more advanced form of this structural device. The angular cruck has a collar in much the same way, but here it is fastened to the wall plate by a tie. Into it is tenoned a principal rafter which itself has a mortise to receive the collar tenon, so



that the tie is rather like a sole-plate. The lower purlin is carried just below the collar; the upper was provided with no special support. There appears to be a mortise as if for a windbrace to the upper purlin.

The purpose of both these cruck usages is plain. They possess the same advantages of height as roofs incorporating a half-storey, while permitting a freer use of floor space.

Cockle's roof is the easier to date. It is contemporary with the addition of attics to the front block (fig. ) about 1620-30. The Frankwell truss is probably a very late debased form of timber construction. The whole building is roofed with anomalous trusses, variations of other forms, which contains much reused material. The practice of utilising old timbers for new construction is scarcely ever found until the timber-framed tradition had died out, so this example may well be very late seventeenth century work.

V. Roofs without tie-beams: (A) Arch-braced collar-beam

The hall of the Council House has the only domestic roof of this type in Shrewsbury. There are no raking struts above the collar. There are two purlins each side, both with cusped windbraces, two to a bay, beneath them.

V. Roofs without tie-beams:

(B) Arch-braced collar-beams alternating with tie-beam trusses.

The Market Hall, built in 1595, has part of the upper storey open to the roof. For this part there is an alternation of arch-braced collar-trusses with open tie-beam trusses. The former have arch-braced collars with raking struts above. The two open tie-beam trusses have queen-posts placed almost vertically below the lower purlin, with arch-braces from them to the collar.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to see the open roof, by this time obsolete for all domestic work, being used for a special purpose, a court where the wool sales were held.

V. Roofs without tie-beams: (C) Hammer-beam roofs.

Buckler's drawing of Vaughan's Mansion shows a far finer roof than any of those discussed above, but since it is unique among the domestic roofs of Shrewsbury and quite impossible to relate to their general development, it is not worth while discussing it at length. It had a combination of hammer-beam and arch-brace in each truss.

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1. The roof of the Market Hall can be studied in the 4 sheets of measured drawings by A.R. Keighley, 1897, in the Spiers Collection, V & A. Museum.

ROOFS: DETAILS.

Attics. The development of attics has been outlined in chapters IX and X. First they are confined to the gable, as in the Park Hotel (pl.145) and Merevale House (pl.180A). Then extraordinarily wide gables are built, e.g., Holyoake's shop, No. 27 Mardol (pl.129), in order to get a full storey height in the attics.<sup>1</sup> The former Unicorn Inn<sup>2</sup> shows an advance on this system; instead of a single big gable three smaller ones are used (pl.232) facing the street, so that the full length of the roof is provided with adequately lit cocklofts. Sherar's Mansion is the next step; the three gables are combined with a half-storey,<sup>3</sup> resulting, probably in the maximum use of roof space before the low pitches of the eighteenth century came in.

Small gabled dormers are probably contemporary with Sherar's Mansion or not much later, but I have no reliable dating evidence. Bigger and wider dormers like those of 9-10 Fish Street (pl.111) may represent the last stage of development before the pedimented dormers of the late seventeenth century and the hipped dormers of the eighteenth century. There is a good example of a fairly wide dormer in a part of the Crown Hotel which fronts St. Mary's Place

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1. This is a most complicated building, probably a rebuild of a medieval structure; I have not made a thorough examination of it.
  2. Now part of Wales and Edwards Garage.
  3. The building in Pride Hill opposite the end of High Street (now Lloyd's Bank) had the same feature; NBR, photograph c.1860.

(fig. 218). Obviously a medieval structure has been raised by the addition of an attic; the dormer is very lightly timbered.

Rowley's House shows a development which seems to be rare in England although frequent in German timber-framing. It is the breaking-up of the roof into two portions, divided by a wall in order to gain height for the attic storey (pl.189). The purpose of this is to avoid the awkward necessity of resting a ceiling on purlins and so increasing the weight upon the roof members. In the Rowley's House instance the upper part of the roof, the gable proper, is carried upon wall plates in the normal way, their weight being transmitted by studs, which are in effect queen-posts, to the tie-beam. The lower parts of the roof are simply pent roofs.

Coverings of roofs were of four sorts, stone slabs, tiles, thatch and shingles. Stone roofs existed in the town until this century, but none now remains.<sup>1</sup> The stone used may perhaps have come from Corndon Hill,<sup>2</sup> unless there is some nearer source of rock with the same qualities. Nor does any thatch remain; it may perhaps have been prohibited from an early date by an order of the bailiffs. Since Forrest makes no mention of thatched roofs there was probably

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1. cf. H.E. Forrest, op.cit., 86, 89. Stone roofing slabs were used on St.Chad's Almshouses: S.S.& P.,  
2. I. Peate, The Welsh House, 131.

none in Shrewsbury during the twenty years before the first edition of the book in 1911. I am not certain what structural signs denote a roof built to take thatch; one of them may be a small hipped gable, to allow the rounding-off of the thatch so that the water will run off. If so, it does not appear in the town. Tiles were being used in the fifteenth century, when they are referred to in the Drapers' Accounts.<sup>1</sup> A number of roofs retain old tiles, but of what date they may be I do not know. Another item in the Drapers' Accounts is a payment "in reparation for shyngull",<sup>2</sup> presumably timber shingles for a roof.

Gable trusses usually have main members similar to those of the other trusses in the same building, e.g., the same number of collars, or in the case of medieval roofs, the same kind of braces. In the gables of Elizabethan and later buildings the raked struts of open trusses are often replaced by studs.

The projection of the gable end of a roof is now rare in Shrewsbury; at the back of Murrell's shop in Grope Lane (pl.124) is the only main gable to have the really bold thrust forward which is fairly often met with in such places as Chester and Tewkesbury. Lloyd's Mansion certainly had this feature; the S.W. gable of the roof parallel to the square projected forward on two brackets, and the lesser

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1. TSAS, 4s. III (1913), 185-6; payment for "CCCC of tyle".  
2. *ibid.*, 187.

ornamental gables facing The Square were similarly treated. Another surviving instance is the N. part of Maddox's shop (said to be of 1592), with two such gables jettied forward.<sup>1</sup>

The gable jetty at Merevale House, the Liberal Club, and Drapers' Hall is slighter, hardly more than the thickness of the beam, and certainly less than the Lloyd's Mansion gables which had the smallest projection of the first four examples.

All the instances quoted are Elizabethan. It is a feature not found earlier, e.g., the Abbot's House, and only rarely later (a gable at Old Porch House, Swan Hill 1626). Its most popular period seems to have been c.1570-80, when Lloyd's Mansion and Murrell's were built.

Principal Rafters are of quite small scantling in the roofs with underslung purlins, just big enough to allow windbraces to be tenoned in each side: in Henry Tudor House they are 7 ins. x 5 ins., compared with the 5 ins. x 4½ ins. of the common rafters. The shape and size do not change much apart from the increased depth necessary to carry purlins on the upper side; before and after that, the respective sizes remain fairly constant. One kind of principal deserves mention: above Pritchard's premises in Grope Lane is one which rises to a collar, which is pegged into it in the normal way, and above that is reduced to

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1. This is particularly clear in an NBR photograph of c.1860 (No. ; copyright E. Hopkins, 1946).

about half its depth below. It seems to have been built in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Purlins are on the underside of the principal rafters in early roofs.<sup>1</sup> Only in the early sixteenth century does an example appear with purlins on the upper side - Phillips's store in Fish Street. The changeover occurs before attics came into use; Gibbons' Mansion and the Eldred Mottram building are instances. Before 1500 all purlins are beneath the principal; after 1550 they are all above it.

Linked with this change is the increasing use of purlins, two each side of the roof instead of one as formerly.<sup>2</sup> Not until a new method of support was devised to replace the incurved brace and the collar with queen-posts could two be used: Phillip's store is again the earliest instance. Two purlins are thereafter normal, e.g., in the "transitional" buildings.

It is not obvious why purlins should have been kept beneath the principal rafters for so long, since carpenters had long been familiar with the alternative method. In these small secular roofs, however, quite small principals were used, not much larger in scantling than the common rafters. It may have been felt desirable to use principal rafters of large scantling only where they could be supported

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1. Except in arch-braced and hammer-beam roofs.

2. The Council House roof has two, but this is an arch-braced collar roof, and therefore exceptional.

by arch braces; the care taken in the Elizabethan roofs to strut the principals at each of the points where strain was expected shows that the carpenters felt some anxiety about them, so in an earlier period the direct support offered by incurved braces may well have seemed the simplest solution.

One or two details of technique may be mentioned. The purlins of the later buildings are slotted and pegged into the backs of the principal rafters, except at the gables; both the Council House solar and Gibbons' Mansion show that there the purlins were passed through the timber to anchor them firmly. The projection beyond the gable is of course to take a bargeboard. The common rafters are always pegged in to the back of the purlins.

Tie-beams are usually cambered in the middle ages and continued to be so until attic storeys were introduced c.1580: this may be a useful criteria in dealing with a reconstructed roof. Tie-beams intended to receive the support of arch braces project slightly downwards in the middle to provide a butt joint against which the braces thrust. The width of the beam is limited by their great weight; a maximum depth of 26 ins. at 8A Castle Street must make this member enormously heavy. Hence they could never be made wide enough to cross incurved braces above them and so give support to two purlins each side.



Windbraces are cusped in the earlier buildings which have roofs with purlins. They are of plain curved form later, e.g., the Old Gullet and Cockle's back wing although in the Council House roof they are still cusped. By c. 1530-40 they are straight, and remain so for a century or more, appearing in, e.g., the seventeenth century Frankwell warehouse. Many small buildings in which the roof is split up by dormers have no windbraces, but some quite late constructions show them, e.g., No. 9 Frankwell, heightened in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. The house has a windbrace for the upper purlin, as well as the lower, an unusual provision: it may be connected with the fact that the roof is a late addition.

#### THE TIMBER FRAME.

##### Jetties, Bressummers.

The early examples all have the ends of the joists exposed and rounded off into a bull-nosed shape. The summer or sill for the wall above the joists was often moulded; cf. Henry Tudor House (pl. 216), 65-69 Wyle Cop (pl. 223), and the Golden Cross (pl. 113).

Later it became usual to protect the ends of the joists against the weather with a moulded timber called a bressummer<sup>1</sup>. The Abbot's House is the first instance; the moulding

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1. cf. p. , n. above.

became more elaborate in the second half of the sixteenth century. Thereafter it became simpler again (43 Frankwell) until by the 1620's the projection, which had been steadily diminishing in Elizabeth I's reign, had become very slight; in the Old Porch House it is reduced to the minimum, and later disappeared entirely.<sup>1</sup> Rebuilding of earlier houses in the seventeenth century found a new use for the moulded bressummer to protect the junction of the old and new work (No. 9 Frankwell, pl.140): used thus it was much flatter, since there was little if any projection of the later upper storey in these instances. Maddox's shop (pl.123) has a similar use of the bressummer.

There are two anomolous instances of jetties which required further investigation. Rowley's House had heavy joints with plain square ends, no bressummer or rounding-off being used to protect them. They may be seen also in a house on the S. side of Hill's Lane which like Rowley's House is probably of medieval origin.

Sherar's Mansion must have presented to the carpenter the unusual problem of a double jetty, since the bay windows of the upper floors are jettied out immediately above the main jetty of each storey. To achieve this, the sill of the first-floor front wall must presumably have been halved into the projecting joist, i.e., dotted in above it.

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1. Joseph Moxon does not mention jetties in his Mechanick Exercises of 1677.

The weight of the wall studs would probably suffice to prevent distortion of a sill thus weakened, and at the same time would act as a cantilever for the jettied bay windows.

Finally a word may be said about the use of a cove to disguise a jetty. Both jetties of Henry Tudor House are coved; the only other instance is the coved door-head below the bressumer of a bay-window at Bowen's shop, Wyle Cop (centrepiece of Nos.65-69). This feature appears to be somewhat earlier than it is in Cheshire where Moreton Old Hall has it in the middle of the sixteenth century.

Principal Posts. (fig. 50).

The main change here is in the form of the head, which always had to be thickened to support the tie-beam and wallplate. Broadly there are four forms:

1. Medieval (early), with an angular thickening as at Mac Fisheries shop (pl. 85 ).

2. Medieval (later) in which the post thickens gradually towards the top, e.g., at Nag's Head Hall, Henry Tudor House, etc.,<sup>1</sup>

3. With a sharper curve to bring the head out to the necessary thickness; found in many Elizabethan houses (pl. 228).

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1. The presence of a post of this type, together with a big mortise, shows that Alcock's shop, Mardol, contains a fragmentary medieval timber frame; it may be like 9-10 Fish Street.

4. With an angular thickening; e.g., the antique shop in School Lane (pl.162), and Alcock's shop (pl.163).

I do not know how support for the two beams is obtained in the very late buildings; the only example noted, the Verger's House, shows in the W. end a reversion to type 3.

The fact that the back walls of houses jettied at the front were normally vertical early necessitated the provision of a seat for the main joists. This could be done either by cutting back a slot into the post or providing a projecting ledge. The former method is employed at 9, Frankwell, the latter could be seen in the Old Bicycle Shed, now demolished. I have no evidence of date for the latter method.

#### Joists.

In an Elizabethan house, e.g., 9 Frankwell, the main joists are tenoned into the principal posts at the back of the house. Earlier this may not have been so. There is the case of the "solar" floor above the passage at the Nag's Head Hall (see the discussion pp. above), where at one end the joists appeared not to be tenoned into a rail but to rest upon it, giving them the appearance on that side of later insertions. But there is a second instance of this. The back wall of Cockle's rear wing has a middle rail (fig. ) upon which the joists are laid, not tenoned into it; they

are jettied forward at the front (pl. ). I can find no other evidence whatever to suggest the house has been rebuilt and a floor inserted. Nothing else points to an earlier form of structure, since there is just the single wallplate in the rear wall, not the plate-plus-sill seen at Purslow's, and the present roof is obviously contemporary with the jettied construction. If we suppose a rebuilding to bring the house to its present form, only the back wall of the original structure can remain.<sup>1</sup> It seems likely that this method of construction is therefore original, as the problems confronting the carpenter in rebuilding are enormous even apart from the matter of joists. There is first and foremost the major difficulty of cutting mortises and tenons in standing timberwork. In the normal method of prefabrication in a yard it was easy to get mortises in exactly the right position (cf. section on carpentry details) with a standing frame a very accurate measurement would be necessary to get them right,<sup>2</sup> and scaffolding would then be necessary to enable them to be cut. If they were not cut

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1. This is rather like the rebuilding which is said to have taken place at 46 Broad Street, Oxford (W.A. Pantin, op.cit., 129); but I think there the earlier medieval house was demolished and replaced, not rebuilt. Rebuilding of a hall to provide a jettied front and two storeys seems to me technically impossible.
  2. In this connection, see Joseph Moxon's remarks (Mechanick Exercises) on the skill and accuracy required in the cutting of mortises and tenons to prevent shearing, and cf. p.479 below.

there would be great difficulty in fastening the end gable walls to the back wall of our hypothetical rebuild.

The evidence is very slight, but I am inclined to think that in medieval building joists were sometimes laid above a rail, not tenoned into it. This would not necessarily apply to principal joists, some of which were certainly fastened into the brickwork of the chimney stack. The cantilever effect of the front walls would thus be checked only by the main joists. If this conjectured mode of construction is correct, it would account for the sagging of bressummers which can sometimes be seen in timber building, e.g., Jones's Mansion (pl. 134) or the house opposite 9-10 Fish Street.

At a later period joists for other floors were certainly tenoned into the tie-beam where they were part of the original structure; where they were later insertions they were slotted into the tie-beam. Plate 228 and 230 show this difference.

About the middle of the sixteenth century two main joists were often crossed in the middle of a room, as at Drapers' Hall (1560). This is found also in the floor joists inserted in the Nag's Head Hall, the Old Gullet, and the Old Bicycle Shed.

It was not the only system employed, however. The low ceiling above the inserted first-floor of the Riggs

Hall wing (1589) has beams of considerably smaller scantling than the earlier ones. Moreover there is one beam crossing the full width of the wing; there are two beams, not one, at right angles to it, and they are not in line but staggered slightly. This is clearly because the timbers are of smaller scantling than in earlier times and so it was undesirable to have the two mortises directly opposite each other. The latter system of ceiling beams becomes more general after about 1600.

#### Studding, Wall Framing.

About medieval framing before 1500 the evidence is inadequate. A common system for a vertical wall (i.e., without a jetty) was to provide each bay with two big curved braces from the principal posts to the wallplate. Tenoned into the wallplate adjacent to the ends of the braces were two struts resting on a middle rail. This construction is found in the back wall of 1-1A Fish Street (pl.56A), the back wall of Cockle's rear wing,<sup>1</sup> 160-161 Abbey Foregate, and the Nag's Head Hall (modified by cusping of the braces).

If 1-1A Fish Street is typical, a different system was adopted below the middle rail. The middle bay of the three (pl.241) had two big curved braces from the sill to the

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1. See also p.

principal posts, and possibly there was originally a rail and a stud just like the construction of the entrance walls of Henry Tudor House.<sup>1</sup> The S. bay undoubtedly had two main struts below the rail corresponding to the two above; the N. bay is uncertain. The difference between the construction above and below the middle rail is caused by the screens passage, which prevented the use of curved braces in the N. bay.

For the walls of two-and-three-storeyed houses this system had to be modified considerably, mainly by the insertion of more studs; cf. Purslow's, Mac Fisheries, and Henry Tudor House-but the braces were retained. Later these disappeared, so that in 65-69 Wyle Cop, or Phillips's Store, Fish Street there is merely close studding into a middle rail. In the Abbot's House there is no middle rail in the first-floor, merely very close studding.<sup>2</sup> This system continued into the Elizabethan period, for which there is no need to repeat the discussion in chapter IX, and likewise in chapter X, for the seventeenth century.

One point hardly touched in chapter IX was herring-bone framing, which appears to fall within a fairly restricted dating range. It occurs in the following buildings.

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1. The passage walls of 1-1A Fish Street show this same construction, duplicated for the two blocks of building.
  2. A house which has a very marked external resemblance to the Abbot's House, but with two storeys instead of three, is the Crown Hotel, Deritend, Birmingham. There is the same corner siting, close studding without a middle rail, and a tie-beam enriched with shallow arcading.



Jones's Mansion under the Wyle (pl.134).

Hall, Wateridge and Owen's building, Wyle Cop.

Murrell's Building flanking Grope Lane.

Ireland's Mansion, semi-octagonal bay windows.

And in gables:-

Drapers' Hall. 1560

Liberal Club.

Frankwell Co-operative Society 1576.

Merevale House. 1601.

Herring-bone framing certainly never occurs outside the Elizabethan period, and nearly all the examples are early: Merevale House is again a late example in this as in other series. I am not certain if the attic storey of the Liberal Club<sup>1</sup> is original; otherwise the house has an early Elizabethan appearance, say before 1580;. Similarly, Murrell's building looks c.1570-80; and Jones's Mansion represents the transition from medieval to Elizabethan. A house with herring-bone framing is therefore likely to belong to the third quarter of the sixteenth century in Shrewsbury.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Not examined internally.

2. Hugh Owen considered that Cockle's premises in Hill St. were built in 1568 (op.cit., 526), quoting an entry of that year in the Shearmen's records, that George Proude should keep up "the gutter between the (Shearmen's) hall and his house now building." On architectural grounds it could not possibly refer to Cockle's house, but it would apply very well to the corner block, now Hall, Wateridge & Owen's offices, with its herring-bone framing. The reference to a gutter fits better, too.

Attention should perhaps be drawn to an oddity in the framing of MacGowan's shop, Wyle Cop (pl.128), in the hope that it may be recognised elsewhere. The two very short lengths of rail adjacent to the second-floor windows are presumably intended to strengthen the framing at this point, since they are tenoned and pegged into studs and jambs, but it is not clear how effective they are.

For partitions and end walls in the middle ages the use of two curved braces, one to each of the principal posts, was normal; cf. Mitchenall's (pl.116), Henry Tudor House 1-1A Fish Street (where it is duplicated), etc. The internal partition at Mac Fisheries is probably almost identical.

#### Braces and Brackets, other than in roofs.

Generally the size of curved braces decreases between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The biggest are found in 8A Castle Street: Riggs Hall must have had others as big, particularly one with five pegholes on the S. side of the E. wing. One end of the Golden Cross Inn has an unusually large brace; gradually they get smaller, e.g., Purslow's, Mac Fisheries, the Crown Hotel (pl.218), until they disappear from such frontages as 65-69 Wyle Cop and J.H. Jones's Mardol shop (fig.51-2). Accompanying the decrease in size is a decreasing boldness of their curve;

the later examples are sometimes nearly straight.

Straight braces appear mainly in seventeenth century additions to earlier buildings, e.g., 9 Frankwell (p.132) the Crown Hotel (pl.218), Hall, Wateridge & Owen, (pl. ); but sometimes in original construction as at the Old House, Dogpole (pl.109).<sup>1</sup>

Straight braces are however used in end walls though not in frontages during the second half of the sixteenth century and the first quarter of the seventeenth century. They may be seen in the passage walls of Ireland's Mansion, for instance, and at a later period were used in the end walls of 3, St. Mary's Place. In the last phase of timber construction in the mid-seventeenth century they reappear occasionally in frontages.

#### DOORWAYS AND ENTRANCES.

Several medieval doorways and doorheads survive in Shrewsbury. They include:

Nag's Head Hall: crocketed ogee-head (pl.64 ).

- " - shallow chamfered ogee-head (pl.65 ).

M. Davey's shop, Wyle Cop: bold ogee-head, chamfered.

Purslow's side passage: a form of Carnarvon arch (pl. 90).

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1. The Town Hall at Alcester (upper storey built 1641) has framing rather similar to the late Shrewsbury houses, and straight wall braces: V.C.H. Warwick, III, illus. opp. 8.

M. Davey's side passage: arch-braced lintel.  
Bowen's shop, Wyle Cop: elliptical-headed.  
Henry Tudor House: (mutilated) (pl. 216 & 217).  
J.H. Jones's, 51 Mardol: four-centred head (pl. ).  
Phillips's Stores, Fish Street: shallow chamfered ogee-head.  
The Abbot's House: 2 or 3 doorways with four-centred heads.

Most of them have already been described; one or two require further comment. Bowen's doorway is the best surviving example of a rich late medieval doorway; it has a coved canopy with ribs which are moulded with a sunk quarter-round at the angles, and stopped (pl. 219). The cove springs form a billet-moulded lintel and rises to a short moulded bressummer which conceals the joists of a small square bay-window on the first-floor. This and the doorway below must have formed an elaborate centrepiece for the long range of building giving it a vertical emphasis to break up the long horizontal lines formed by the moulded bressummers and sills.

Henry Tudor House once had a similar centre doorway. Pl. 216 shows the bottom of what must have been a very fine bracket which probably went up in three cusps to reach the moulded bressummer above. There was no bay above the entrance.

These two examples are the only ones which resemble the highly enriched doorheads formerly existing in York. <sup>1</sup>

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1. J.H. Parker & T.H. Turner, op.cit., III, pt.i, pl.opp.29.

The stone doorway in Golden Cross Passage (pl. 220) is the only one of its kind associated with a timber-framed building. It is of a white sandstone and of late fifteenth or early sixteenth century date.<sup>1</sup>

### Windows.

In early two- and three-storeyed houses these were confined between a middle rail and the wallplate. Elizabethan windows had a rail placed lower than the middle rail of the rest of the framing. Moulded sills came in slightly before this date, in the early sixteenth century: cf. the late medieval houses in Frankwell (pl. 117), which have moulded sills carried on brackets. They develop into the bay windows of Sherar's Mansion and the elaborate storeyed bays of the small Jacobean houses.

Very few old mullions survive. The first-floor window of Henry Tudor House is the only remaining medieval example. In a cupboard at MacGowan's shop (Wyle Cop) is a single hollow-chamfered mullion of uncertain date, probably medieval. Pl. 224 shows very well an early seventeenth century window with ovolo mullions which was uncovered briefly in 1952<sup>2</sup> and has been sealed up again since. The

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1. See p. Ch. IV above.

2. I did not see it, and do not know its precise position.

diamond mullions of the seventeenth century Frankwell warehouse (pl. 201) no doubt represent the continuance of a medieval type where the lack of glazing made them useful.<sup>1</sup>

On the subject of shop windows there is nothing to add to what was said at pp. above.

#### CARPENTRY DETAILS.

Pl. 228 shows how the carpenter cut his mortises in the yard. He laid the fashioned principal rafter over the tie-beam and marked on the latter its width with two chisel marks. Without measurement, simply by markings with a chisel, he could then judge the exact spot for the mortise and cut it to fit the tenon tightly.<sup>2</sup>

Pl. 229 shows the dovetail joint used for fastening a tie-beam to a wallplate. The shoulders are cut in order to rest the full width of the tie on the plate and so obviate any weakness which might otherwise develop. The same plate shows the slots cut to receive the ends of common rafters.

Pl. 226 shows the joint in a purlin. The mortise cut to receive the tenon of the other length of purlin actually goes slightly deeper than the base of the slot in

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1. There is ample evidence elsewhere for the use of diamond mullions throughout the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth century.
  2. This practice can be observed for other members of the frame, e.g., in the entrance passages to Ireland's Mansion, when it was used to cut mortises for the straight braces where they crossed studs and joined the rails.

the principal rafter; the tenon therefore has a little shoulder which would help to prevent the two parts of the purlin from pulling apart should any lengthwise strain be exerted on it.

All these photographs were taken during the demolition of an old and ruinous bicycle shed in the Old Cole Hall, removed to enlarge the bus station (1953). The dates of the building are unfortunately very uncertain;<sup>1</sup> the truss in pl.229, and the purlin, are probably late sixteenth century. The wallplate and dovetail joints are probably earlier.

This is perhaps the place to deal with pegs. In general, the number of pegs employed for any particular purpose declines from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. Mac Fisheries shop is the only instance noted where three pegs are used to fasten the tenon of the principal post into the mortise of the beam (pl. ). In Elizabethan building two are normally employed, and in the seventeenth century only one (in the Verger's House). Similarly there is a decline in the number of pegs for studs; up to at least 1600 two were usual on the top and bottom of each stud, but later (the Verger's House) only one is found. Alcock's shop shows a number of studs which are only single-pegged. Braces, both in walls and roofs,

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1. It was probably another warehouse: there were no fireplaces or stairs.

show an equally marked decrease. Three were the minimum in the fifteenth century; four were normal, five are not uncommon. The small Elizabethan reverse-curved braces never have more than two at each end. Two are used for the long straight braces in the end walls of the Verger's House.

It would be interesting to know when the use of pegged joints died out. Joseph Moxon, writing in the 1670's assumes unquestioningly that all tenons will be pegged through.<sup>1</sup>

At the outset of these researches into timber-framed buildings it was hoped to use carpenters' marks - their numerals or signs, that is - as a means of reconstructing buildings. Potentially they are very important, but in fact they were only once of any use at all. This is because the marks in any one building are such a small proportion of the original number that it is hard to be sure of their significance. What is wanted is a thorough study of a building where all or nearly all the marks are visible throughout the house; Churche's Mansion, Nantwich, would probably give the required information for an Elizabethan building.

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1. Moxon, Mechanick Exercises, section on carpentry, passim.



CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY.

Shrewsbury is a busy thriving country town which is a focal point for a large area of north and mid-Wales; the story of its physical development has been outlined nearly to the end of the seventeenth century.

It originated in the fifth or sixth century as a Welsh tribal capital and was incorporated into Saxon territory in the seventh century. At this time it was no more than a small settlement around old St. Chad's church; in the early tenth century, probably at the instigation of Aethelflaed, a new fortified 'burh' was built, within which a second church was founded. By 1066 Shrewsbury was sufficiently large to have five churches. The Normans completely transformed the town, replacing the 'burh' by a castle and laying out new streets as part of a policy of urban development. During the thirteenth century the inroads of the Welsh necessitated a refortification of the town itself by the provision of a stone wall. From this time onwards Shrewsbury market handled the trade in wool, cloth, and skins from the whole of north and mid-Wales.

The earliest known domestic buildings were stone houses normally of two storeys, ranging in date between about 1250 and 1350. Stone gave place to wood for the

second group of houses, a series of timber-framed halls built between 1350 and 1500. The considerable variations they show from the normal medieval hall plan may be due to special town conditions. In the fifteenth century the competition among prosperous traders for space compelled builders to put up houses of a kind new to the town though certainly known elsewhere a clear century before. These buildings comprised shops with living accommodation on one or two upper storeys of which the topmost was always open to the roof. Such houses persisted into the reign of Elizabeth I, when they were superseded by others which made use of the roof space; the change led to the general abandonment of three storeys in favour of two with attics. About the same time great changes took place in the characteristic plan, into which the kitchen was incorporated for the first time instead of being a separate building. From the sixteenth century onwards a few buildings are known which were designed specially to serve the needs of trade and industry. The principal contribution of the Jacobean age was the subdivision of existing houses to meet the demands of traders and shopkeepers for a favourable site; its most characteristic architectural development was the bay window. The middle years of the seventeenth century, say c.1630-70, brought technical progress which eliminated

the projection of upper storeys and simplified the timber framing.

The rapid rise in the cost of timber during the seventeenth century finally caused it to be superseded as a building material by brick, at which point this study ends. Within this space of eleven or twelve centuries Shrewsbury grew from a small tribal settlement into one of the larger towns of England, a flourishing market centre drawing to itself the trade of a large part of Wales.

APPENDIX A.

Some Late Medieval Halls:

A few examples of the type of building which were referred to on pp.255-6 have not been properly examined. The evidence for their architectural character is here set out briefly.

14 St. Mary's Street (pl.80).

This house has a front wall which shows no sign of a jetty and was therefore of hall type. In position, set well back from the street frontage tends to confirm this. The plain curved windbraces of the roof and the first-floor ceilings which butt against its pitch (as at Henry Tudor House, etc.) show that the roof was once open to the apex. In a ground-floor cupboard at the N.E. corner is a chamfered bracket rather like those below the middle rail of the spere-truss in the Nag's Head Hall. There is also a post rising vertically up into the present ground-floor ceiling, like those at Riggs Hall (p.243), as if for a single-storey hall.

2, St.Alkmund's Square.

Only the most restricted access to this house was permitted. The ground floor contains what looks like a mutilated timber arch, and in a first-floor cupboard its apex appears. It is probably the arch-brace below a tie-

beam, but I have speculated whether it might not be the remains of an aisled hall. The house is quite clearly part of a medieval hall and may be connected with 14, St.Mary's Street.

#### 14 Dogpole.

Here the difficulty was merely lack of sufficient time to study the house properly; the evidence is much like that in the previous building, a timber arch (presumably below a tie-beam) visible partly on the ground-floor and partly on the first-floor.

#### Dogpole House.

An arch-braced cambered tie-beam can be seen from the stairs; it is certainly medieval and quite likely to be part of the same medieval building as 14, Dogpole.

#### Antique Shop (Ward), Milk Street.

On the first-floor at the back of the building (i.e., N.W. side) four posts project from the wall; one of them has a mortise 3 ft. 6 ins. long with six pegholes, which can only be medieval. The building has been so altered in the interests of the antique business that fuller examination did not seem worth while. In this case, however, as in the preceding four houses, it would be interesting to see what these fragmentary remains might yield for comparison with other more complete halls.

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1. H.E.Forrest, op.cit., 73 (illus).

APPENDIX B.

List of Buildings in Shrewsbury incorporating Medieval Remains

1. Stone Halls.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Bennetts Hall                                   | c. 1250-60.   |
| Charlton Hall                                   | Undercroft walls only, early<br>fourteenth century. |
| Council House                                   | 1502 (?); or earlier.                               |
| Jones's Mansion (?)                             | -   |
| Shearmen's Hall                                 | Fourteenth century; first<br>half?                  |
| Vaughan's Mansion.                              | Late thirteenth century.                            |
| Pride Hill: buildings in<br>front of town wall: | Fifteenth century.                                  |

2. Timber Halls.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 8A Castle Street.                        | Fourteenth century; second<br>half.            |
| Nag's Head Hall.                         | Fifteenth century; early.                      |
| Old Gullet Inn.                          | " "  |
| Breeze-Gornall building,<br>Butcher Row. | Late fourteenth or early<br>fifteenth century. |
| Riggs Hall.                              | Not later than early<br>fifteenth century.     |
| 160-161 Abbey Foregate                   | } Uncertain                                    |
| 14 Dogpole                               |  |
| 14 St. Mary's Street                     |  |
| Dogpole House                            |  |
| 2 St. Alkmund's Square                   |  |
| Ward's (Antique) shop,<br>Milk Street.   |  |

3. Two-storeyed timber houses.

- Fish Street: Phillips's store. early sixteenth century.  
: No.9-10 late fifteenth century(?).  
: house opp. Grope Lane. early sixteenth century (?)
- Grope Lane : Pritchard's shop. late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.
- Mardol : Mac Fisheries. early fifteenth century; c.1400?.  
: behind J.H.Jones's shop. fifteenth century.
- Milk Street: Cockle's shop. fifteenth century and early sixteenth century.
- Rowley's House. incorporates a late fifteenth or early sixteenth century building.
- Frankwell : Furslow's and adjacent shop. fifteenth century.
- Pride Hill: Tetley's (tobacconists) shop. uncertain; probably late fifteenth century.
- Golden Cross Passage: Golden Cross Inn. fifteenth century; c.1470-80(?)
- Dogpole: The Old House: fifteenth century.

4. Three-storeyed timber houses.

- Abbot's House, Butcher Row: c.1500.
- Wyle Cop: Henry Tudor House: mid-fifteenth century.  
" " : Nos.65-69: fifteenth century; second half.  
" " : Nag's Head, p.h. early sixteenth century.
- Mardol : J.H.Jones's (51-52): early sixteenth century.

Mardol: Mitchenall's: fifteenth century, before c.1475.

Wyle Cop: fragment of Lion Hotel. undateable, but probably fifteenth century.

          : Royal Vaults: almost certainly medieval, but could be early Elizabethan.

Frankwell: Nos. 4-5. sixteenth century, first half.

5. Partly of one and partly of two storeys.

Fish Street: 1-1A:                    )  
              : 2, 3.                    )  
              : "Three Fishes"        )  
Wyle Cop: M.Davey's shop:            ) of uncertain date, probably fifteenth century.

6. Cruck Houses.

Cureton's Garage:                    )  
Frankwell House:                    ) of uncertain date, perhaps fifteenth century.

7. Buildings of uncertain date and character known to contain medieval work.

Hill's Lane: former malthouse N. of Carnarvon Lane, now motor spares depot is basically a medieval stone building.

      "      "      : the range between Alcock's and the Dermal Clinic includes part of a medieval timber framework.

Mardol      : Holyoake's shop (No.27) is probably medieval.

      "      : White Hart Inn has big cusped wall-braces.

Castle St.  : Whitfield's shop is undoubtedly a big medieval building, of uncertain interpretation

Windsor Place: Lakelin's premises, probably fifteenth century.



APPENDIX C.

Houses of Uncertain Date and Character.

Certain houses in Shrewsbury do not fit very easily into any of the categories described above. It is possible that a careful examination of their structure would simplify the problems presented by the exterior, but until that can be done a few comments are offered on them, since some are very conspicuous among the timber-framed buildings of the town.

Medlicott's shop (pl.231) in Frankwell is apparently a square corner block, possibly with a narrower wing fronting Frankwell. The gable and the moulded bressummer suggest an Elizabethan date, perhaps contemporary with the Park Hotel.

The Warwick Hotel (pl.233) is obviously of more than one build. The break in the first-floor jetty denotes two structures, both perhaps late medieval buildings. The dormers are clearly later, and if the medieval date is correct, the gable too.

The long range of timber houses in Butcher Row (pl.235) is heavily restored and at least that part of it now a cafe has been gutted internally. Since it is of three storeys it ought to be late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, but the long straight braces conflict

with this dating. The bays look as if they are later additions: the bressummers mouldings are quite un-medieval in profile. It may be another instance of complete re-timbering of an old framework, like 9-10 Fish Street.

The impressive three-storeyed range in Windsor Place (pl.236) is probably medieval, say second half of the fifteenth century. The brackets are without exact parallels but are reminiscent of some close-spaced elongated brackets which formerly faced School Lane in part of Pailin's shop. They were demolished in 1938, but were much like the brackets at Wigmore Abbey Gatehouse.<sup>1</sup> This house looks like a big three-storeyed medieval house to which John Perche made certain alterations at the front (facing Castle Street) in 1581.<sup>2</sup>

In Abbey Foregate (pl.237) is a range of square panelled timber-framed building, and nearer the Abbey is a further similar range (pl.238) now partly masked by a modern brick gable. Their dates I do not know and am accordingly tempted to put them into the seventeenth century, that convenient dustbin for every old building of uncertain age. They offer a salutary warning of the difficulties confronting the investigator of timber-framed building, since they cannot easily be fitted into the suggested outline of development.

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1. R.C.H.M. Hereford, III, pl.28.

2. H.E.Forrest, *op.cit.*, 32, inscription on gable.

Lastly, the Council House (pl. 234). The red sandstone masonry of this building is very like that of the early group of stone houses. This is rather surprising if it was in fact built in 1502, and I have wondered whether the main walls may not be those of an earlier building of the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, reroofed and refitted in much the same way as Vaughan's Mansion. Admittedly this idea fits somewhere too conveniently in the general scheme of development outlined in chapters IV, VI and VII, since no real work has been done on the question. Nevertheless, a real problem is set by this very belated stone house, said to have been put up in 1502; either it is anomalous or the date alleged does not refer to the whole of the medieval structure. Like all the other houses mentioned in this Appendix, it requires close investigation whenever that may be possible.



- Grope Lane : Murrell's back premises.
- High Street : Old Cross Keys Inn, now Bradley's  
(outfitters) shop.  
Maddox's shop (Owen's Mansion and adjacent  
building).  
Ireland's Mansion.
- Mardol : 25-26.  
27 (Holyoake's shop)  
C.J.Alcock's (jeweller) and Birch's  
(tobacconist) shops = Nos.15-16.  
Warwickshire Furnishing Co. (9-10).  
Timpson's shop (corner of Mardol Head).
- Milk Street : Hall, Wateridge & Owen's premises.
- School Lane : Dugdale's (antique) shop.
- The Square : Plough Inn (No.4) and shop, No.5.
- St.Mary's Place: Drapers' Hall.  
The Verger's House (No.3).
- Swan Hill : Old Porch House (now part of County Police  
H.Q.).

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467; 1537

478; n.d., temp. Henry VIII

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have been examined, rather less thoroughly.

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- " " " - Shrewsbury - A Rich Heritage (Shrewsbury 1946).
- Willard, J.F. - Parliamentary Taxes on Personal Property, 1290-1334 (Cambridge, Mass., 1934).



IV. Maps.

1) Old Maps.

1. Map of Shrewsbury made for Lord Burleigh; (late sixteenth century)  
(B.M. O.R.Lib., 18D, III, fol. 89).
2. Plan de Schrowesbury, by a French Artist, c.1650; -  
(B.M. Add.Ms. 11564, No.15). This is said to be drawn at second hand from Speed and is therefore not reproduced.<sup>1</sup>
3. Rocque, John - Plan of Shrewsbury, 1746.
4. Speed, John - Plan of Shrewsbury in Theatre of the World of Great Britain (edn. of 1676).
5. "The Gough Map" - An ancient map preserved in the Bodleian Library; printed by O.S.

2) Modern Maps.

- Ordnance Survey - 25" series.
- " " - 1/500" town plan.
- " " - Map of Britain in the Dark Ages:  
South Sheet.

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1. ex. inf. Mr. B.H. St. J. O'Neil, V-P.S.A.

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA.

- p. 22. There is no proof that Ordericus's father ministered at the chapel; he merely owned the living.
- pp.31,  
36. It is unlikely that the churches of St.Mary and St.Juliana were placed at the gates for defensive reasons; the statement was caused through misunderstanding the character of the late Old English borough, and I owe the correction to Prof. H.A. Cronne.
- p. 81. The front wall of Charlton Hall facing Shoplatch could be seen during building works early in 1953.
- p.153. Some of the sculptured details may be concealed by a cement rendering.
- p.179. The "house in the High Street" is perhaps the Golden Cross Inn; cf. p.478.
- p.202.  
n.2. G. Unwin, "Finance and Trade under Edward III", chapter on Grocers.
- p.206. This number was omitted during typing; the text is continuous.
- p.449. An arch-braced roof in a timber-framed house does in fact exist in Cricklade (Wilts).
- p.461. The house at the end of High Street (r-h. side, pl.119) may also have been roofed in two stages.

I N D E X.

Note Although many of the headings in this Index may appear more than once on any particular page, only one page number is given in respect of such similar headings appearing on the same page.

No attempt has been made to index common and therefore frequently recurring architectural terms; e.g., mortise, tenon, rafter, joists. Block page references are given below where any subject (e.g., rafter, joist) is discussed in the Chapter (XIII) on the Technique of Timber-framed architecture.

The names of authors of works consulted in the preparation of this Thesis have not been included, as they are given in the Bibliography (pp.495-506) and appear in the footnotes throughout the text.

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