III.—*The west side of Westminster Hall.* By SOMERS CLARKE, F.S.A.

Read December 13, 1883.

IN this paper I hardly venture to go beyond the statement of notes made upon the site by the permission of the Chief Commissioner of Works; and a comparison therewith of such plans, drawings, or other sources of information as I could obtain access to. The information I have been able to get together has made it clear that there is yet more to be got; indeed, the evidence to be afforded by the building itself and the ground to be excavated about it has not yet been exhausted.

It is to Mr. Freshfield's ever ready interest that we are indebted for photographs of the west side of the Hall. These were taken at his instance, and are of great value, showing as they do in a most accurate manner the condition of each bay and the general appearance of the building after the side was laid bare. The photographs, copies of which are in our library, are referred to hereafter, and numbered to agree with the numberings of the bays of the hall, shown on plate II.

In vol. iii. of the collection of Sir C. Wren's drawings in the library at All Souls college, Oxford, may be found drawings relating to Westminster Hall of much value. The drawings relating to St. Paul's cathedral church are well known, but in addition to these are sundry others, showing works, projected or carried out, at Hampton Court, Windsor Castle, St. James' and Kensington Palaces, the Houses of Lords and Commons, and other public buildings. The plans nos. 10 and 11 in vol. iii. are described as of "Old Record Room, at Westminster." These plans are of considerable size and drawn to scale; the walls of Westminster Hall itself, the abutments of the buttresses, and the walls joining them, are tinted yellow to distinguish them from the more recent additions. There can be no doubt that

ELEVATION.

PLAN.

ELEVATION AND GROUND PLAN
OF THE WEST SIDE OF WESTMINSTER HALL

they both represent the first-floor level of the range of rooms abutting against the west wall of the Hall. The differences between them are slight.^a By the permission of the college exact copies of these have been made, and presented by Mr. Freshfield to our library. In addition to these drawings are others, numbered 17 and 21. These are, in fact, of greater interest than the foregoing, having on them many original notes and measurements. They are clearly the originals from which nos. 10 and 11 were drawn out. They show more completely the position of the windows, etc. in the west wall of the building attached to the west of the hall, the foundations of which are revealed by the recent excavations.

Although drawings nos. 10 and 11 are not dated, in the corner of no. 17, that forming Plate III., will be found, "Sept. 14th 1711." On this is shown the first-floor plan of the range of rooms under the buttresses, many of them lit by skylights. A note, "dore below next Mr. King's shop," gives us further evidence that we are dealing with an upper floor.

Drawing no. 16 (Plate IV.), which is to a larger scale than the preceding, bears the date "1712," and shows the ground-floor of certain rooms on the south side of the Fish Yard, and of the western end of the range of rooms before referred to. This drawing is covered with notes.

Drawing no. 21 (Plate V.), to a small scale, shows the first-floor plan of all this range of rooms; and is, in fact, so much like drawings 10 and 11, that it has not been thought requisite to reproduce them here. It bears numerous notes of considerable interest, especially with regard to the windows. Plans 10 and 11 may upon the evidence of these drawings be dated *circa* 1712. For some reason most of the windows in this range of rooms under the buttresses seem to have been closed, and numbers of skylights inserted in the roof.

Another source of information is a plan in our library. It is drawn in pencil, and on the back is written a reference to Mr. Capon's engraved plan, vol. v. *Vetusta Monumenta*. It seems that this plan is, in some respects at least, an original, from which the engraved plan is compiled. The engraved plan bears on its face a statement that it was measured and drawn between 1793 and 1823. There are also three or four pages of notes and remarks accompanying it.

^a These plans have been reproduced to a smaller scale in the "Report, Westminster Hall Restoration. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 27th April, 1885," and are numbered 18. The date of *circa* 1680, which is assigned to these plans, must be incorrect, as will be seen by the dates actually written on the fac-similes of drawings nos. 17, 21, vol. iii. Wren collection, which accompany this paper. (Plates III. and V.)

PLAN OF THE WEST SIDE OF WESTMINSTER HALL.—FIRST FLOOR.

(Wren 17.—From the Wren Collection, All Souls College, Oxford.)

PLAN OF PART OF THE WEST SIDE OF WESTMINSTER HALL.

(Wren 16.—From the Wren Collection, All Souls College, Oxford.)

A comparison of the plans at All Souls college with that in our library shows some variations of considerable interest.

In the Crace collection at the British Museum, amongst the plans, portfolio xi. is a drawing of value, as it is dated and bears the following : "Apl. 2nd 1795. Copy of Mr. Soane's plan del^d to Mr. Harrison at the land revenue office this day by Tho^s Chawner."

This plan is in many respects the same as that in pencil in our library ; but being, as it is, partly tinted and "written to," it becomes a more valuable document.

A general plan of the buildings lying around Westminster abbey, and between it and Westminster Hall, is reproduced in fac-simile on Plate VI. from a drawing in the Wren collection, vol. iii. no. 42. This plan is dated June 8, 1716, and is drawn to scale. With the exception of the plan in Sandford's *History of the Coronation of James II.*^a it is probably the earliest-dated plan of the neighbourhood. It shows the gates leading into New Palace yard and St. Margaret's Lane, and the complete state of inclosure of the west side of Westminster hall.

There are other maps and plans which show the arrangement of the west side before the recently-demolished law courts were built, and some of Soane's, published in the most handy form in Brayley and Britton's *Westminster*.^b

There are many engravings extant which have been consulted, chiefly of the front of Westminster Hall, but I have not found any to throw much light on the part under consideration. It is clear that for a vast length of time this side has been more or less enclosed in a series of courts and back yards. Indeed there can be little doubt that it was so from the first. It seems that we are going quite away from the original intention of the builders in throwing open the whole side of the hall. Its very office as a hall, judging by the way in which we know that portion of a residence to have been used, would suggest that it was always more or less surrounded by buildings.

A good plan to a small scale is shown in Smith's *Antiquities of Westminster*, facing p. 125. It shows the general disposition of the adjacent buildings previous to the construction of the law courts recently removed.

From documentary evidence we must now pass to that afforded by the remains as they show themselves at the present moment. These remains as they stand are the more interesting, from the fact that whilst teeming with evidence of many

^a *History of the Coronation of James II.* by Francis Sandford, 1687.

^b The Parliamentary *Blue Book* before referred to contains many of these plans.

changes in the course of their existence, even the repairs necessary to maintain them in a state of reasonable stability must probably efface some pages of history. Any attempt at a restoration in the ordinarily accepted sense of the word must result in wholesale destruction and falsification.

The remains consist of a vast wall, forming the western side of Westminster Hall, and certain huge buttresses with their abutments, which help to sustain the great roof. Traces of foundations between these abutments have recently been found, and the plans to which I have referred make it evident that a long range of buildings existed against the west side of the great hall. At the north end there are evidences of walls running westward, and these doubtless formed the substructure of important buildings.^a Mr. Micklethwaite has already stated his views as to the setting out of William Rufus's great hall.

The wall now laid bare is, by its masonry and material, clearly marked as of early Norman date (Plate II.) It is built of wide-jointed masonry, and shows an intermixture of two sorts of stone. The builders seem to have valued the effect so produced, making an imperfect chequer work on their wall. A little above the original external ground-line, and some five feet below the present surface, is a plain chamfered plinth, which returns round a series of slightly projecting pilaster buttress, which are set at an average distance apart of about 17 ft.

In his alteration of the hall Richard II. did not make his great roof trusses quite to accord with this system of subdivision. He erected a series of vast flying buttress and massive abutments to resist the thrust of each alternate truss. Each division thus formed I have called a bay. The whole length of the hall as we now see it is, therefore, beginning from the north, divided into six bays.

To return to the Norman work and pilaster buttresses. It is to be noted that in the first or northernmost bay one does not appear. There is no indication that it ever was there; the plinth runs on as though the wall were intended to have an external face all along.

On the other hand, the wall at the extreme north corner is clearly Norman and returns westward. It looks on the south and only visible face like internal work. Following this wall along to the west, from A to B (Plate II.), we meet with a broad foundation, and once more a chamfered plinth appears on the north face. This plinth is 11 inches below that on the hall. The masonry does not seem to

^a Foundations of an early date have been laid bare at the southern end since this paper was written.

me to be altogether Norman. It may be Norman repaired, or later work built in part with some Norman stones.

South of the last-described wall and with the Norman plinth returning on it lies a foundation of a parallel wall, C D. We know by old prints and plans that a range of buildings stood along here. Hollar's view and plates in Smith's *Antiquities of Westminster*, etc., show us the appearance of the north front—a three-storied building with Tudor windows. It ended westward in an octagonal turret,^a the parent of that now, alas, gone. The plan in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. v. and that of 1795 in the Crace collection, bears the name of "Court of Exchequer" in this part. The court extended northward beyond the line of wall, and a row of pillars are shown as having the wall for their foundation. It is to the presence of a building against this first bay in Norman times that the absence of a pilaster buttress may be attributed.

In *Archaeologia*, vol. xxvii. Mr. Sidney Smirke's longitudinal internal elevation of the hall shows a round-headed doorway at the extreme north-east end of the wall. He implies that there was a similar one opposite. The palace undoubtedly lay chiefly on the east and south of the hall, but with screens covering the doors, as was usual. The kitchen would possibly lie to the west. These walls may mask the site of the kitchen.

In the remaining five external bays of the hall no evidence remains of Norman foundations of buildings touching its walls.

We must now examine the later work.

The letters patent of king Richard II. January 21, 1394, are extant, and direct John Godmerstone to repair the hall. The walls were to be heightened two feet. Directions are also given in connection with the internal work and roof, but our present concern being with the exterior of the building we are only interested with the roof so far as it became necessary to resist its thrust by the construction of flying buttresses and abutments.

These fortifications of the fabric were not, however, considered sufficient, but, as the side elevation of the hall shows, a curious system of arches two stories in height were set up, springing from the Norman pilaster buttresses and forming a species of thickening over the whole lower face of the wall.

The arches are in parts roughly bonded into the Norman wall-face. They

^a See plates 20, 21, 23 in the *Blue Book*. It should be noted that on my plan the foundations are presumed to lie at right angles with the hall. The plan No. 3 in the *Blue Book* shows their actual deflection.

have in some cases sunk away, to a slight extent, from the Norman work; and where the lower range has been removed the evidence of their previous existence is shown by little else than the presence of the springing stones. They bear a hollow chamfer on the angle. It may be doubted whether this skeleton was ever of much value, but a species of engineering in stone and most wonderfully ingenious was not unfrequently resorted to to strengthen already existing work. The interior of the centre tower at Lichfield, below the spire, and the lantern tower of Lincoln, are notable examples.

Whether the pilaster buttresses were originally carried upwards or whether they were raised by Richard II. is not now easy to tell. The modern recasings have obliterated this part of the history most effectually.

We now find ourselves in front of the hall with its walls two feet higher than before, its new roof, windows, wall thickening, and great buttresses.^a This, however, was not all. The abutments of the great buttresses were joined together by a continuous wall.

As soon as the abutments were exposed by the recent demolition it became clear by the marks on them that a lead roof had extended back to the wall of the great hall. The returns of the parapet were clearly to be traced, especially on the most southern abutment.

Whether the line of building parallel with the hall was in one or two stories may be questioned.

In the north bay is the jamb of a doorway, E, Plate II., at a very low level, below that of the present hall floor. It is of Norman masonry and at the original floor-level. The lower part of the first abutment, F, has some points not to be explained. The plinth seems, in part, to disappear under it. At its north-east angle is a portion of a window-jamb which appears as though it may be of earlier work than the abutment into which it is now incorporated, and this jamb seems to have undergone a much later alteration.

The doorway already mentioned and this window-jamb would lead us fairly to suppose that there was here at least a lower room, as indeed I think there was all along. A doorway also exists in the Norman foundation-wall.

We now come to bay 2.^b Here, between the abutment of the next buttress and the wall of the hall, there is indication of a descent.^c Sir C. Wren's plan shows that the wall in the foundation or lower courses of which this opening

^a See elevation, Plate II.

^b See photograph no. iv.

^c See photograph no. ix.

PLAN OF THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE WEST SIDE OF WESTMINSTER HALL.

(Wren 21.—From the Wren Collection, All Souls College, Oxford.)

GENERAL PLAN SHEWING THE BUILDINGS ROUND WESTMINSTER HALL IN 1716.

(Wren 42.—From the Wren Collection, All Souls College, Oxford.)

occurs was standing in his time. It does not come in a line with the abutment, but somewhat to the north. The chamfer of the plinth runs under the buttress. This may, however, be only careless work. The interior of the abutment^a is hollow. A small round-topped hole gives admission at the bottom. The hollow place extends up to some height, and shows signs of a door. It was doubtless a *garderobe*. The buttress seems to have been so constructed from the first. The structure is, in consequence, terribly shattered in every direction.

Sir C. Wren's plans, nos. 10 and 11, show the west wall of the hall, as also the parallel wall to it, all coloured yellow. It would seem that these plans were prepared so that a scheme could be made out for joining some new work to the old, coloured yellow, the new being tinted in Indian ink. In this second bay from the north the line of west wall is broken, and a large room is shown with three mullioned windows. On drawing no. 17, Wren collection (Plate III.), this is called, "Ye Chief Justices Room." Elsewhere it appears as "Queen Elizabeth's Bedchamber." No access is shown to it.

Bays 3 and 4 are, on Wren's plans, occupied by a long room. It is called, "Ye Treasury Record Room." A large external staircase is shown, leading apparently from what is known as "The old Fish Yard." A small stair leads from the hall. The Norman masonry in bay 3 is much cut about.

In bay 5 a similar stair rises from the hall. A solid wall is shown in Wren's plans (the foundations remain), separating bays 4 and 5, except in no. 17. The extreme south end of the attached building, bay 6, is marked as "Cap. Turner's," and on no. 16 (Plate IV.) is called, "Warehouse over cellar." Indications on no. 17 (Plate III.) also show distinctly that when it was made the building was in two stories. The lower part of the hall wall in the sixth bay is much cut about by insertions of various dates. A splayed jamb runs in to some distance, but to what it may belong is hard to say. The large ogee-headed doorway in the third bay^b is not shown on Wren's plans.

In a plan made by Thos. Lediard in 1740 the doorway is shown, and gives access to a large room, breaking the general wall line. It is the only doorway shown in the side of the hall. In Fourdrinier's plan, dated 1761, this building is called the New Court.

In Mr. Soane's plan already referred to, dated 1795, this room is called "Court of Common Pleas," and a circular staircase (the remains are now exposed^c) is shown right and left of the large doorway before mentioned.

^a On plate II.

^b See elevation, plate II., and photograph no. 5.

^c See photograph no. ix.

These staircases also are shown on the pencil plan in our library, but not upon Capon's plan in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. v. The doorway is of a strange style. The section of the jambs and mouldings is a travestie of classical work. In the apex of the ogee arch is a large Tudor rose, but, to use a favourite modern phrase, very freely treated.

As in the abutment between the second and third, so in that between the fourth and fifth bays, is, as may be assumed, a *garderobe*, evidently a part of the original construction.

The abutment between the fifth and sixth bay shows part of a door jamb (κ, Plate II.), but the ashlar immediately above overhangs it.

A small part of the sixth abutment has lately been revealed. This, with its flying buttress, was pulled down when Sir Charles Barry constructed the present beautiful gable which faces Henry VII.'s chapel. The plan in Britton and Brayley shows the abutment as complete.

At the time the lately-demolished law courts were built the side of the hall was very roughly treated. No less than four large doorways were pierced through the massive wall. The ogee-headed doorway was filled in and masked by fresh stonework, and a doorway was also made at the extreme north end of the wall. Mr. Smirke's plate, in *Archaeologia*, vol. XXVII. would, however, lead us to suppose that a Norman door had been here, as it also was in the east wall.

I would suggest the following as the result of the examination of the building. That at the time the hall was brought to its present form, not only were the flying buttresses and their great abutments built, but a wall, rising as high as the sills of the great hall side-windows, was also built at a distance of about 18 feet to the west, and joining these abutments. This wall enclosed a building, probably two stories high, *i. e.* a cellar or low story, and a more important one above. There is no evidence whatever to show what the wall was like.

Sir C. Wren's plans, nos. 16, 17, and 21 (Plates III., IV., and V.), show imperfectly the position of sundry windows, but give no real indication as to their antiquity. We must however fear, that by laying bare what was never intended to have been completely thrown open, a ghost has been raised which can be properly laid only by following the advice of Sir Charles Barry, and completing his beautiful building as an inclosure to the mighty skeleton revealed.