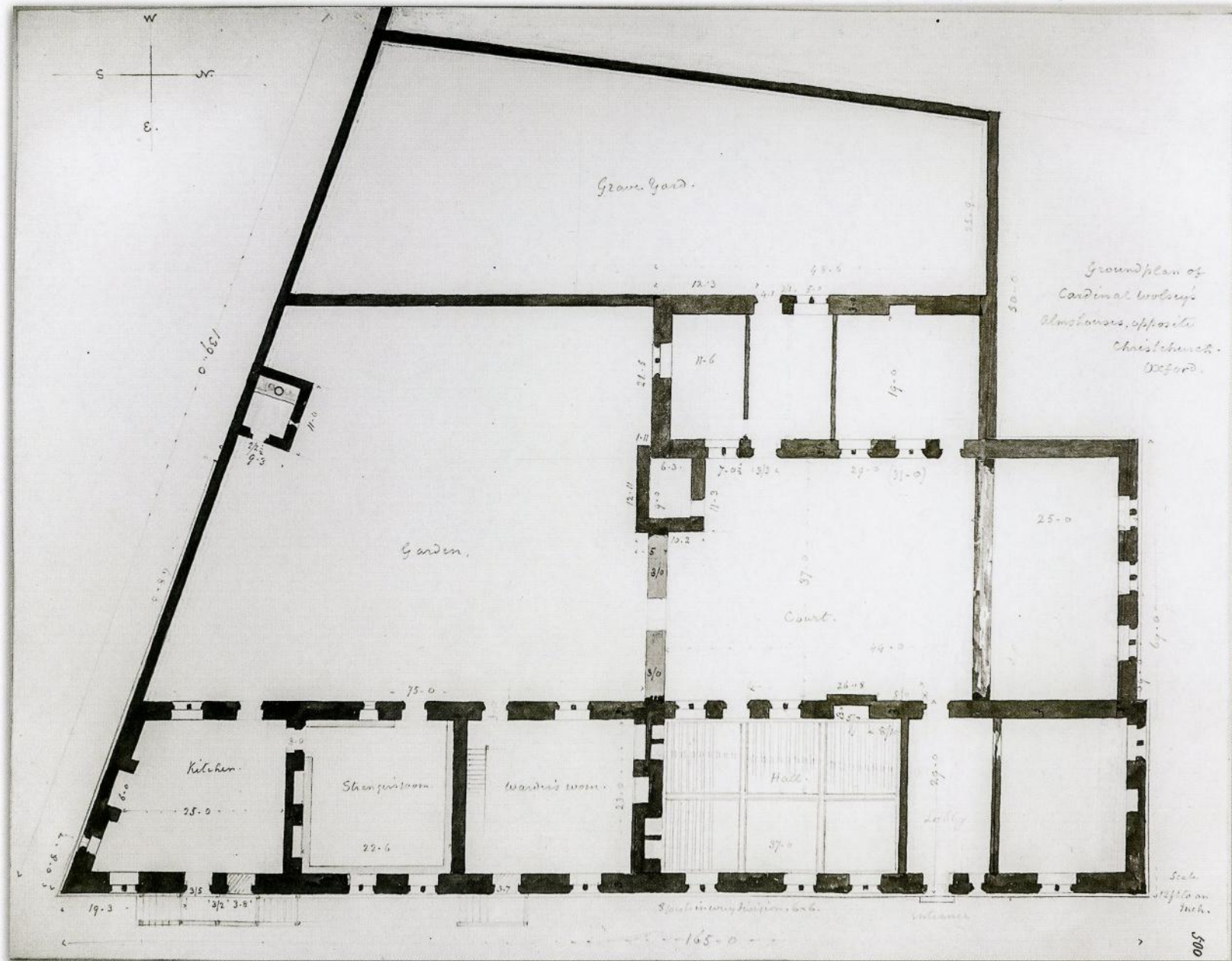


A GENTLE HISTORY OF
THE MASTER'S LODGINGS, PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD
(FORMERLY WOLSEY'S ALMSHOUSE)





(2) J.C. Buckler, "Ground plan of Cardinal Wolsey's Almshouses ..." in about 1825, drawn c.1870.

**A GENTLE HISTORY OF
THE MASTER'S LODGINGS
PEMBROKE COLLEGE OXFORD**

(FORMERLY WOLSEY'S ALMSHOUSE)

by

TIM BRINDLEY

and

BRIAN WILSON

".. gentle historians, on the contrary, dip their pens in nothing but the milk of human kindness"

Edmund Burke, A letter to a Noble Lord (1796)

First published in Great Britain 2017 by Tim Brindley (tim.brindley@pmb.ox.ac.uk) and Brian Wilson (tbjwilson@gmail.com) for Pembroke College Oxford

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Tim Brindley and Brian Wilson have asserted their moral right to be identified as the joint authors of this work.

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Front cover: St. Aldate's church, Pembroke Lane and Tom Tower, British School c.1800. The south aisle of St. Aldate's (built 1335-36 by Sir John de Docklington, a wealthy fishmonger and several times Mayor) was used as a chapel and the room above was used as a library, first by Broadgates Hall and then by Pembroke College, until the College Library and College Chapel were built in 1709 and 1732 respectively; the two-storey aisle was demolished when St Aldate's church was rebuilt in 1873.

Inside front cover: Buckler, J.C. Sketch plan of the Almshouse in about 1825

Inside back cover: Buckler, J.C. 'Room for ye entertainment of ye Indigent Travellers'

Back cover: Brindley, T.S. Photograph: the Master's Garden

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The Bodleian Library, for permission to photograph and reproduce images from their collections; Nick Millea, Map Librarian; and Colin Harris, Superintendent of the Special Collections Reading Room, for help in sourcing drawings and paintings of Wolsey's Almshouse by John Chessel Buckler and Joseph Fisher.

The British Library, for permission to photograph and reproduce images from their collections; in particular to Jeff Kattenhorn for help in sourcing drawings of Wolsey's Almshouse by John Chessel Buckler.

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Special thanks to Dr. Simon Bradley, editor of the Pevsner Architectural Guides, Yale University Press, for his personal insights into the conversion of the Almshouse into a private residence by Christ Church College.



(3) Photograph of 94 St. Aldate's, formerly Wolsey's Almshouse, in 1907, after conversion to a private residence and acquisition by Pembroke College.

Tim Brindley also wishes to record his personal thanks to College staff who have assisted with graphic design, images, proofreading and files sharing, including Nicola Barefield, Amanda Ingram, Simon Thomson, and Lucy Walters.

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Tim Brindley, BA, PhD

Brian Wilson MA (Oxon), DipAgEcon (Oxon), DTA (Trin), *huijus coll: olim commensalis* (matric. 1948)

Preface

It is my privilege, with my husband, to live in the present Master's Lodgings, where we are now in our fifth year. When the first Master to live here, the Rev. Dr. Frederick Homes Dudden, and his wife first moved into 94 St. Aldate's, in 1928, they were coming to live in a large family house with a "history ... both intricate and interesting."¹ Homes Dudden continued as Master until his death in 1955, but little is recorded of daily life in the Lodgings until the Mastership of Roger Bannister. In his recently published autobiography, *Twin Tracks*, Sir Roger recalls frequent visits by his adult children and their offspring. He and Moyra enjoyed watching their grandchildren play freely in the large house and in the garden, where he had a swing set up. Christmas saw the extended Bannister family descend on Oxford and the Lodgings seemed to accommodate them all easily. During term large numbers of students, Fellows and College guests visited the Lodgings for drinks receptions and social functions, once totalling a thousand visitors in a single year. And doubtless, like us, the other six Masters and their families, who have made this house their home in Oxford, have enjoyed both the formal and informal sides of life in the Lodgings. Today we use the Lodgings for many kinds of student and College events, including receptions for undergraduates, graduates and visiting students, regular Master's Concerts in the Oak Room, sports and academic achievement awards in the garden, judging of JCR Art Competitions, dinners and brunches, and meetings of the Master's Circle.

The history of the Lodgings does, of course, go back much further. Indeed, for some 350 years the building had no connection with either Broadgates Hall or Pembroke College, since it was founded in 1525 as an Almshouse, or Hospital, by Cardinal Wolsey. The Almshouse was started alongside Wolsey's Cardinal College, itself refounded by Henry VIII to create Christ Church College in 1546. Only since 1877 has the Almshouse been a private residence, first created for the Christ Church Treasurer, coming into the ownership of Pembroke College in 1888 and, as noted, becoming the Master's Lodgings some 40 years later. Pembroke had made previous approaches to Christ Church, seeking to acquire the Almshouse to improve its own estate, without receiving a favourable response. But Pembroke has enjoyed a close and collaborative relationship with Christ Church over the centuries, and in the

end the House (as it is known) was in sympathy with Pembroke's ambitions and the sale was cordially agreed, with the Almshouse initially rented back to a series of Christ Church tenants.

This booklet tells the history of the Lodgings in as much detail as the authors have so far uncovered, from the earliest buildings on the site, through the story of the Almshouse itself, to the present-day property which continues in use as the Master's Lodgings. The historical account has been written by Pembroke alumnus Brian Wilson (matric. 1948), with recent assistance from my husband, Tim Brindley. It complements Brian's earlier 'gentle histories' of the College Silver (2005), stained glass in the Dining Hall (2012), and the Damon Wells Chapel (2014, with Rev. John Platt). Tim is also responsible for original photography, illustrations and design, and a brief Afterword on the Lodgings today. On behalf of the College, I would like to express our gratitude to the authors for their diligent efforts to record and interpret the history of the Pembroke College Lodgings in this richly illustrated volume. We also continue to be very grateful to Brian Wilson for his personal sponsorship of this and previous publications.

Dame Lynne Brindley DBE, FRSA, FBA, MA
Master of Pembroke College Oxford
December 2017

¹ *Pembroke College Record*, 1933-34, p.25.

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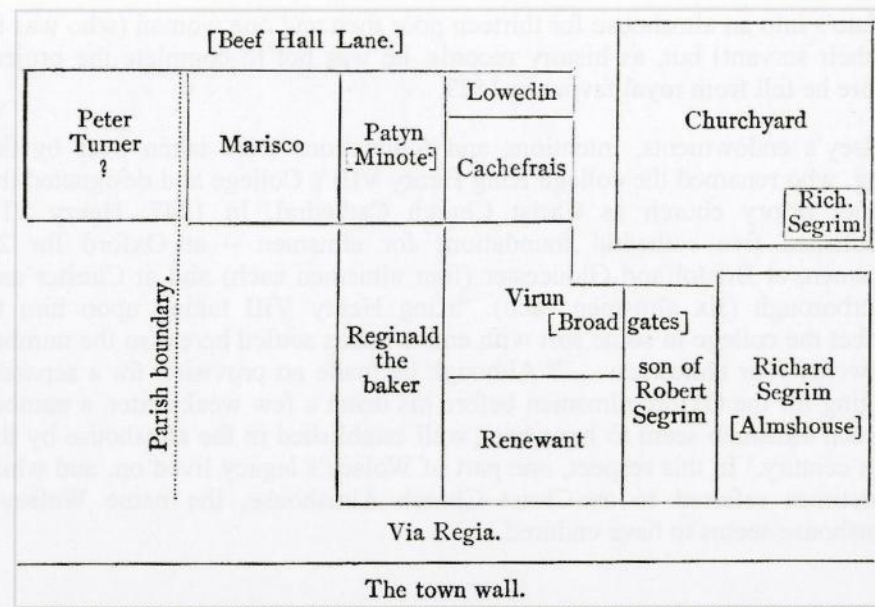
Segrym's houses

Wolsey's Almshouse was built just north of the town wall on a site originally occupied by Segrym's houses adjoining the South Gate of the medieval, walled town of Oxford, on the west side of what is now St. Aldate's. The Segryms were rich burgesses mentioned in Domesday who owned three houses in St. Aldate's "as well as the domus, the great house of Robert Segrym" adjoining the city wall.² They were among the 200 or more owners of so-called 'mural' or free houses who were exempt from paying taxes on condition that they repaired the city defence system, which comprised first a palisade, then an earth vallum and ditch, and later a masonry wall. In 1254 Richard Segrym gave the houses to the Prior and Convent of St Frideswide's Priory for them to receive him into their fraternity and to say divine service for the souls of himself and his family.³

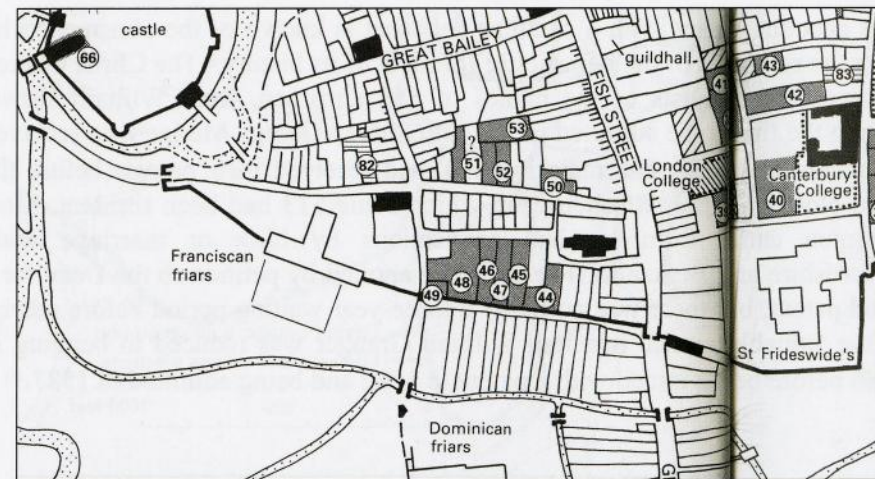
Three houses are mentioned in the title deeds register of St Frideswide's Priory.⁴ A corner house on the city wall had a quit rent of 4s. per annum in 1240 and was occupied in 1389 by Walter Bentham, fishmonger, and his wife Emma, who had paid 14d. poll tax under Richard II. A house on the lane leading to St. Aldate's Church was rented at 13½s. quarterly in 1280. In between these two, was a "messuage . . . 4s. rent at Michaelmas and Lady Day."

A map of Oxford academic halls in 1444 shows four plots fronting east onto St. Aldate's (then called Fish Street) and adjoining the South Gate. The antiquarian John Rous wrote that "afterwards or about those times, they were converted into hostells for people of a scholastik and religious conversation. Which continuing for that use till the decay of the discipline and doctrine of our University came to be the possession of the servants and retainers to the said Priory. At length Thomas Wolsey, that heroic and public spirited Cardinall, when he converted the said Priory into a College, turned also these tenements into an Hospitall to receive and have relief from it."⁵

Wolsey obtained a Papal Bull in 1524 to dissolve St. Frideswide's Priory and the next year he began to build Cardinal College under its first Dean, his friend John Higden, then President of Magdalen, incorporating Canterbury College, one of three Benedictine colleges in Oxford before the Dissolution. At the same time he began the conversion of the four Segrym properties on St.



(4) "It may have been thus: -" Sketch plan of the area around Broadgates Hall.



(5) Map of Oxford halls and colleges in 1444 (extract, after John Rous).

² Hutton, Leonard, *Antiquities of Oxford*, c.1625-30, p.114; written as a companion to Agas's Map.

³ *Cartulary of St. Frideswide's* (Oxf. Hist. Soc.), no. 288. Cf. MacLeane, D., *History of Pembroke College Oxford*, Oxf. Hist. Soc., 1897, pp.4 seq.

⁴ Wigram, *Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswyde's*, Oxf. Hist. Soc., 1894, Vol. I.

⁵ Clarke, A. (ed.), *Survey of the antiquities of the City of Oxford*, Oxf. Hist. Soc., Vol. I, 1889, p.193.

Aldate's into an almshouse for thirteen poor men and one woman (who was to be their servant) but, as history records, he was not to complete the project before he fell from royal favour in 1529.

Wolsey's endowments, intentions and foundations were taken over by the King, who renamed the college King Henry VIII's College and designated the former priory church as Christ Church Cathedral. In 1547, Henry VIII established five cathedral foundations for almsmen – at Oxford for 24 almsmen, at Bristol and Gloucester (four almsmen each) and at Chester and Peterborough (six almsmen each). “King Henry VIII taking upon him to perfect the college in some sort with endowments settled here also the number of twenty-four almsmen ...”⁶ Although he made no provision for a separate lodging for the Oxford almsmen before his death a few weeks later, a number of such almsmen seem to have been well established in the almshouse by the 17th century.⁷ In this respect, one part of Wolsey's legacy lived on, and while sometimes referred to as Christ Church Almshouse, the name Wolsey's Almshouse seems to have endured.

The Almsmen

This account begins with a summary of what is known of the almsmen, who were the residents of the Almshouse for most of its history.⁸ The Christ Church archives contain lists of the names of 863 almsmen, from William Howe, among the first to be admitted in 1547, to Sidney George Mudge who received his patent in 1978.⁹ The majority, 689, had received their patents before the 1876 closure of the Almshouse, in which some 513 had been resident. Most almsmen came from, or had connections by birth or marriage with, Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The almsmen applied by petition to the Dean for a royal patent, but there was normally a three-year waiting period before receipt of the valuable annual pension. William Granger was reduced to begging in 1580 before being issued with a patent in 1582 and being admitted in 1587.¹⁰

⁶ Clarke, A. *ibid.*

⁷ Wood, *City of Oxford*, I, pp.193-4.

⁸ This section is a summary of the extensive research undertaken by Judith Curthoys, Christ Church College Archivist.

⁹ Patents are still being issued today to almsmen, including non-military personnel and female former Christ Church staff.

¹⁰ Fifth International Conference of European Association of Urban Historians, Berlin, 2000, Ch. 2.

Almsmen were generally selected from former soldiers and sailors; many came with their service records. Jasper Lusted, “*a maimed soldier*”, admitted in 1645, was a resident until 1678. James Keats had been in the St. Bart's and Guy's infirmaries but still carried the injuries to his left leg suffered on campaign in Flanders, where Christopher Taylor, admitted in 1727, had also received wounds and “*other misfortunes.*” Thomas Brickland admitted in 1720 had received “*divers wounds*” as a corporal. Owen Hughes had been taken prisoner in Spain before being admitted in 1736. John King, admitted the same year, after serving 11 campaigns in Flanders, “*had grown ancient and incapable of further service.*” Charles Lewis (patent 1873) having served over 20 years in the 68th Regiment of the Light Infantry and having been awarded the Crimean Medal, came into the Almshouse for his final 12 years.

Almsmen had a pension of £6 per annum paid quarterly and, in return, were required under the draft Henrician Statutes of 1546 to attend *en masse* in their special *gownes* the regular services at the Cathedral, to obey the Dean, to be quiet and orderly, to be in “*your howse by viii of the clocke in the winter and ix in the Somer,*” to be of good behaviour and to do useful work. “*When ye goo in to the towne ye shall goo two together except ye goo to your wieves*” and go only to “*honest places and onely for honest purposes and be well occupied and ... at no tyme to be ydell.*”

Queen Elizabeth, as Christ Church Visitor, wrote in 1561 that the system was being abused - some of the almsmen had sold their privileges and “*Unmeete persons*” were occupying rooms. Married men were living elsewhere, their wills containing the usual domestic inventories (furniture, linen and table ware). Some outdoor almsmen lived in great style like Nicholas Padget, among the first almsmen admitted in 1547, who died in 1594, when his Will mentioned a hall, a parlour, bed chambers, a kitchen, a workroom and listed two horses and a cow together worth 60s.

During the English Civil War thirty-one men were brought in wounded from the Battle of Edgehill in October 1642 but died in the Almshouse over the following weeks. After Charles's execution in 1649, sixteen almsmen who had

been Royalist soldiers were replaced by Parliamentary ex-servicemen who, in their turn, were evicted at the Restoration in 1660, in changes which mirrored the political evictions of Fellows and Scholars at many Oxford Colleges. Before 1650 some two-thirds received a pension for less than 15 years, but the figure fell to less than half from 1750 to 1850, when over one-third held tenure longer than 25 years and three were pensioned for more than 50 years.

Discipline was often a problem. Part of the premises was sublet by the almsmen to a brewer to whom the Dean and Chapter in 1723 gave six months' notice to quit, although he was still there in 1729. This no-doubt profitable business was later taken over by some of the pensioners and in 1732 two of them were reprimanded for selling beer from the premises - John Crowheir/Crosier (who had waited three years before being admitted) and Christopher Taylor (who had waited seven); they were not expelled, the former being resident until 1745 and the latter until 1765. In the same year, 1732, the Cathedral Chapter dismissed Charles Pritchard, a pensioner, and expelled Mr Hacker, a Christ Church Commoner, to whom the former had fraudulently married his daughter. Although throughout the period there were always some outdoor almsmen, by 1830 the number of residents had fallen to only three or four.

The Cathedrals' Commission had urged Cathedral Chapters in 1852 to provide useful roles for pensioners as constables, organ-blowers and doormen. This was done in Bristol and Worcester but not in Oxford, where they were outside Christ Church walls and, apparently, its control. The almsmen appeared to be a self-governing body, under a Warden or Principal, elected by the residents from among themselves, who could levy fines for offences such as leaving open the street door or failing to clean rooms or staircases. Fines of 2*d.* were levied for breaches of the 19th century regulations that specified:

“That no Inhabitant of the House shall put down or keep any Ashes, Dust, Dirt, Rubbish or stale Slops in their respective rooms.

That No Dirt, Offal, or rubbish shall be put down in the Yard, except in the Dirt Hole provided ... and all Slops be emptied in the Sink Holes.

That the privies be kept locked ... and the place be cleaned once a week in turns.”

The money from fines or the sale of ashes was to be divided equally or expended for the benefit of all as the majority might agree. Until 1866, the pensioners also collected and kept the 1*s.* p.a. that Pembroke paid for the lease from Christ Church of the adjoining narrow wedge of land, averaging 17 ft. in width (today, the courtyard in front of the Library).¹¹

In 1867, the Dean and Chapter petitioned Chancery to re-structure King Henry VIII's Trust, since the building, which needed constant repair, housed only nine pensioners who, it was argued, would be happier in their own homes. The almsmen presented a counter-petition organised by Samuel Hodge, a pensioner for 20 years, with a demand for a rise in their £6 annual pension. They were supported by Rev. Robert Payne-Smith,¹² a former Pembroke Scholar, then Regius Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church (1865-1870), and a future Dean of Canterbury. He cited the rise recently awarded to the Professor of Greek and argued that £14 to £16 was the annual rent for Oxford tenements. The counter-petition was unsuccessful and the Chapter's counter offer of £10 was refused. The following year, an order of the High Court permitted Christ Church *“to be at liberty to pay to any of the present Almsmen who would agree to accept the same, the annual sum of £10 in addition to the original sum of £6 instead of lodgings and upon the death or resignation of the present Almsmen the Almshouse to revert to the Dean and Chapter.”* By May 1875, when an increased offer of £16 p.a. for life was made, four pensioners had died (their replacements not qualifying) and the remaining five all accepted,¹³ including Samuel Hodge who lived until 1907; they agreed to vacate the premises by March 1876. This marked the end of an era for the Almshouse, as will be seen below.

¹¹ MacLeane, D., *op.cit.*, p.33; the site was once a kitchen garden, then a bath house and is now the McGowan Library.

¹² He was a Townsend and Boden Scholar (Sanskrit); Head Master, Kensington Grammar School; Sub-Librarian, Bodleian; and author of the *Syriac Dictionary*.

¹³ They were each also given a lump sum of £50.

The Almshouse buildings

Returning to the story of the buildings themselves, as noted Wolsey began the creation of an Almshouse in 1525. It is known that the frame for a new roof was pre-fabricated at a cost of £21 in Kirtlington, but the roof may not have been installed until 1546 when a slater was being paid; in any case, building was not finished when Wolsey fell from royal favour in 1529. An Almshouse can, however, be seen in Ralph Agas's 1578 map of the City of Oxford, which showed *Christes Church Coll.* on one side of the City's *South Gate*, *Christ ch. almes houses* on the other side, and several houses in front of St. Aldate's Church, as well as *Broade gates*. To the south of the Almshouse lay *Kinges Straate, alias Slaying Lane*, then a row of butchers who had been banned in the 15th century from emptying their 'blood and filth' into street gutters within the city walls, later renamed Brewer's Street.¹⁴ A century later, David Loggan's 1675 map¹⁵ showed more clearly the Almshouse forming a quadrangle on the northern half of the site, whilst the south end was shown as a roofless building along St. Aldate's, with four kitchen-garden squares.

The Almshouse has been described as “*a building of some importance for the transition from medieval to early modern Oxford. It represents the tail-end of medieval architectural patronageand includes a fine roof which belongs to the Carow-Coke group represented by Christ Church, Corpus, Magdalen and elsewhere.*”¹⁶ The best information on the layout of the Almshouse is from the sketch plan drawn by John Chessel Buckler in about 1870 (see inside front cover). At the north end of the site, the two-storey buildings enclosed a three-sided courtyard from which doorways gave access to the residents' rooms, where the occupants of the upper floor were responsible for the weekly cleaning of their staircase. There was a large hall, with a kitchen, a 'strangers' room', and a Warden's room in the south end of the St. Aldate's frontage. The fourth side of the courtyard was enclosed by a high wall with a gate to the garden, which was “*neither to be let or sold.*” In the garden, a detached two-hole “*House of Necessity*” was built above the City wall, where the night soil was emptied into Brewer Street, via a square aperture now walled up but just about visible.

There is a notable inconsistency in Buckler's drawings at the north-west corner, where the west and north ranges adjoin: in his “*Ground plan*” Buckler shows them as separate buildings, meeting only at one corner, whereas in other drawings he shows them fully connected, with a west-facing gable end and the roofs joined with two valleys (for example, compare his plan, inside the front cover, with his sketch in Illus. 37). Other plans appear to confirm that the two ranges were fully joined. Since Buckler was drawing his plan in about 1870 of the buildings prior to the reconstruction of 1834, this is a forgivable error, but it draws attention to some unanswered questions about the date and origins of the west range of the Almshouse, discussed by A.H. Lawes, former Pembroke



(6) Agas's map of Oxford (extract), 1578. View looking south showing “*Christ ch. almes houses.*”



(7) Loggan's map of Oxford (extract), 1675. View looking south showing the Almshouse, consistent with later images.

¹⁴ Brewing became a profitable trade after the dissolution of the monasteries, which had previously had a brewing monopoly.

¹⁵ Loggan, *Map of Oxenford SW II and III 1675*. Incorrectly anticipating the 1695 completion of the Old Quad, Loggan shows the Lodge and Tower in the traditional middle of the quadrangle.

¹⁶ Blair, W. J., ed. *Oxoniensia*, 1894 (Fellow in Modern History, The Queens College). Carow-Coke is a reference to Robert Carow, the Oxford carpenter of a group of roofs to the designs of Humphrey Coke, a London master carpenter to the King; Hibbert, Christopher (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Oxford*, Macmillan, 1988, p.245. See also Leggatt, Elizabeth, 'A Survey of the Extant Structural Features of Wolsey's Almshouse', unpublished notes, 1984.

College Archivist, in some notes on the history of the building.¹⁷

It seems likely, Lawes suggests, on two grounds, that the west range predates the larger, east range of the Almshouse, or at least was built on older footings. Firstly, its floor level is noticeably lower than the east range, and some 1.5 m below the Old Quad, and a blocked doorway can be seen, half-buried, in the Library courtyard. Secondly, plans from Loggan onwards show a 'tower' on the south-east corner of this range (see Illuss. 37 & 38). Buckler noted that it "*is persistently called ye bell-tower and ye chapel is also spoken of, with no less positiveness, as having been joined on to it,*" adding that it was traditionally known as "*the priest's house . . . which presents a gable facing north and it was pierced by a way to ye burial ground.*"¹⁸ This is considered to have been an extended graveyard for St. Aldate's Church, and inhumation remains were recorded during excavations for the Pembroke Library, as well as for Old Quad and North Quad.

An odd feature of the Almshouse is the blocked doorway and small window at the south end of the St. Aldate's frontage, some 1.5 m above pavement level. The exact height of the doorway above the ground varies in historic images of the building, even in Buckler's drawings, and Delamotte seems to show it at ground level. In a Buckler sketch of 1820 it is at essentially the same height as in Taunt's 1907 photograph (Illus. 3), which is the same as today. That this has been the consistent height of the doorway is further confirmed by Buckler's plan (Illus. 2), which shows a double flight of steps leading to a platform extending across the door and the adjacent small window to its right, both giving onto the kitchen (a single flight of steps is also shown leading to a door to the Warder's Room).

So was this door simply a street door to the kitchen, accessed by a rather elaborate flight of steps? Buckler implies that it may have had a further purpose: his early sketch made inside this part of the building, in a ruinous state, is labelled "*Room for ye entertainment of indigent travellers. Cardinal Wolsey's Hospital & Eleemosynary*" (see Illus. 40, also Illus. 12). The OED defines *eleemosynary* as relating to or dependent on charity, with its origin given as "Late 16th century (as a noun denoting a place where alms were distributed)." A. H. Lawes suggests that Cardinal Wolsey, on founding the Almshouse, intended to continue charitable provisions that had been made from a building on the site



(8) The Carow-Coke roof of the Almshouse 'Great Attic', c.1529. Probably built as a decorative roof above a first floor hall.



(9) J. C. Buckler, "House of Necessity ..."

¹⁷ Lawes, A.H. (former Archivist, Pembroke College), Typescript notes on the history of Wolsey's Almshouse, undated.

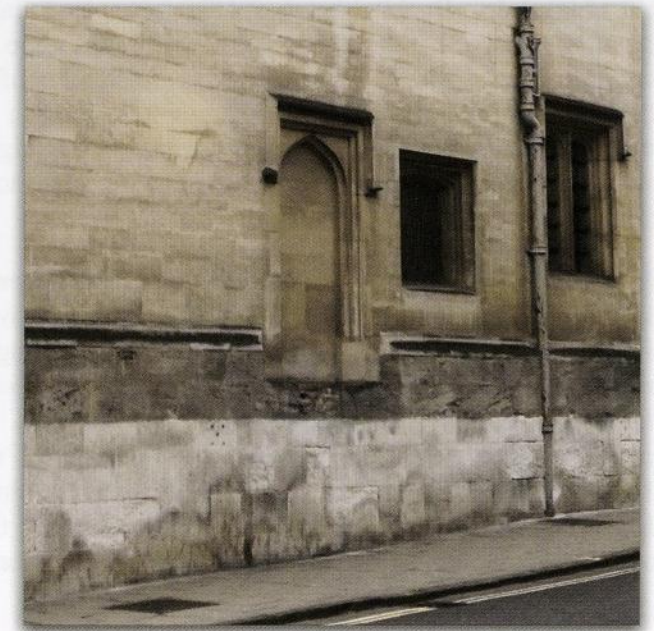
¹⁸ Christ Church Archives, MS Estates 142 f.428, cited by A. H. Lawes, *op. cit.*

when it was owned by St. Frideswide's Priory, "and that this explains the blocked entrance - known as 'the pilgrim's door' - and serving hatch that can still be seen at the southern end of the St. Aldate's street frontage."¹⁹ He quotes Buckler as stating that:

"The South Gate, which stood across ye Street at this point, opened directly upon ye foot of ye stone steps which ascended to ye door & hatch, where were bestowed refreshment to ye travelling poor", the door and hatch leading into the kitchen. This would explain the double steps and platform, permitting applicants to form a queue and receive alms from the window. While Henry VIII appears to have limited the purpose of the Almshouse to providing for a small number of resident almsmen, "it is not inconceivable that he intended that his Almshouse should dispense outdoor relief . . . to the travelling poor" - hence the reference above to 'the entertainment of indigent travellers'. While Lawes's (and Buckler's) musings on the provision of outdoor relief may be speculative, they might give pause for thought for present day pilgrims speeding up St. Aldate's on the Park&Ride bus.



(10) Half-buried door in the Library courtyard.



(11) Blocked up door and window on St. Aldate's.

¹⁹ Lawes, A.H., *op.cit.*

Redevelop or renovate

There is evidence that the building had become increasingly dilapidated in the late 18th century. A drawing by J. C. Buckler published in 1819 shows the southern part of the Almshouse as a roofless ruin, viewed from within the kitchen, with two large baking ovens and a door to St. Aldate's. Other contemporary drawings confirm this, including the Buckler views from St. Aldate's (see Appendix, Illus. 34 and 35), and an engraving by W. A. Delamotte published in Ingram's *Memorials of Oxford*.²⁰

There were proposals to widen the lane leading to Pembroke by demolishing the northern part of the Almshouse and the cottages adjoining the church along St. Aldate's Street, in order to improve the obscured view of Tom Tower from the west.²¹ At the same time, it was remarked that the complete redevelopment of the Almshouse was also being considered: *"Another grand improvement we are happy to learn is again talked of, the demolition of a few ruinous almshouses between Christ-church and Pembroke, by which the latter College may be new fronted, and the intermediate space laid down in grass. The fine façade of Christ Church could then be seen to some advantage, while at present it is nearly lost; and as these almshouses are the property of the crown and of no value to anyone, we are not without hope that this will be effected."*²²

Dr. G. W. Hall, Master of Pembroke (1809-1843), recognised the opportunity this presented. He offered to give Christ Church a plot of land in Cowley on which to rebuild the Almshouse if Crown consent to demolish could be obtained, and he proposed to rebuild the east side of Pembroke's Old Quad in the same style as the recently completed north side, planting a railings-enclosed shrubbery on the cleared site.

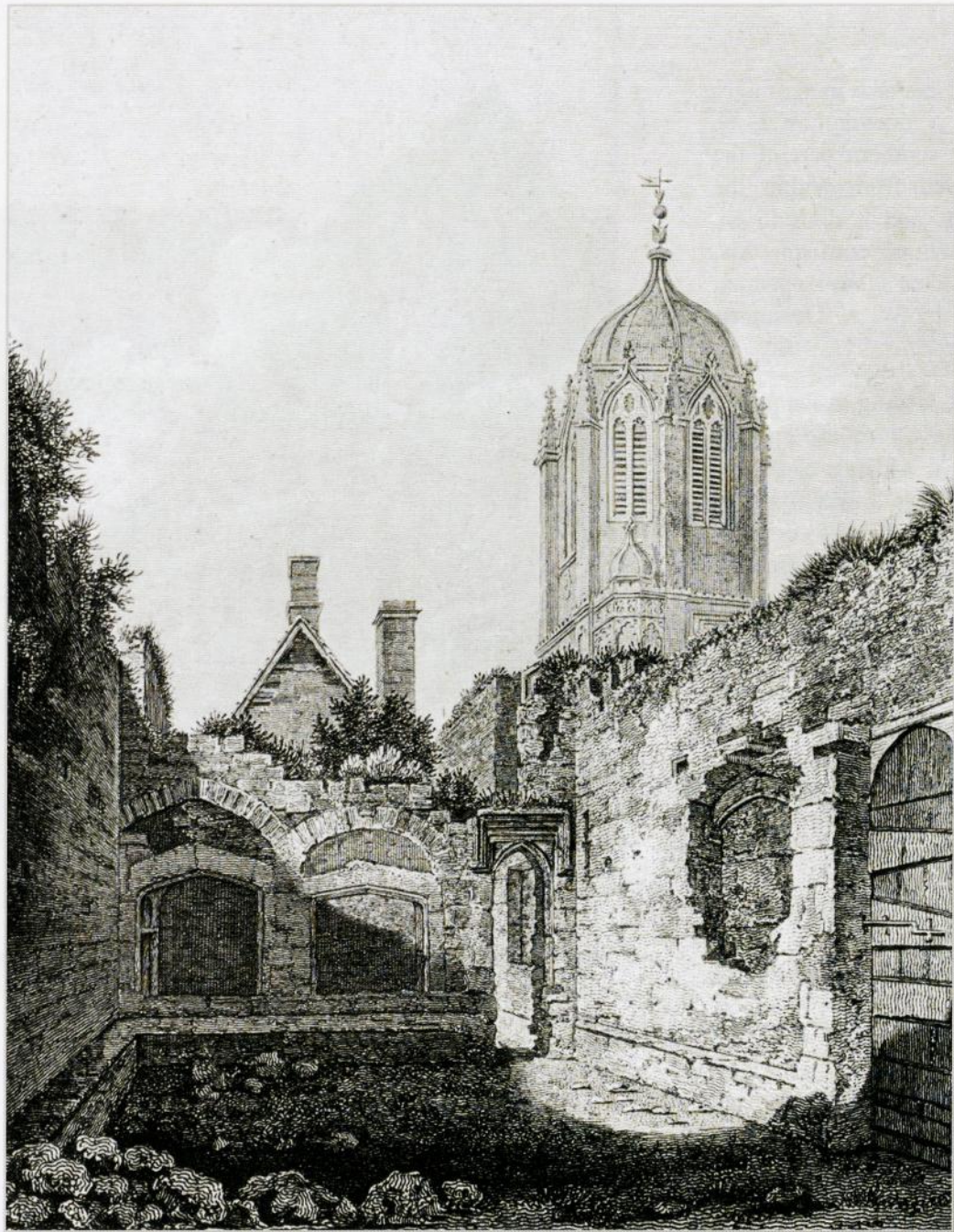


(12) J. C. Buckler, "Quadrangle of the Alms houses ...", showing the east range and the 'bell-tower', 1821.

²⁰ Ingram, J., *Memorials of Oxford, Vol. III*, 1837.

²¹ Purkiss, Diane, *The English Civil War, A People's History*, 2006, p.268.

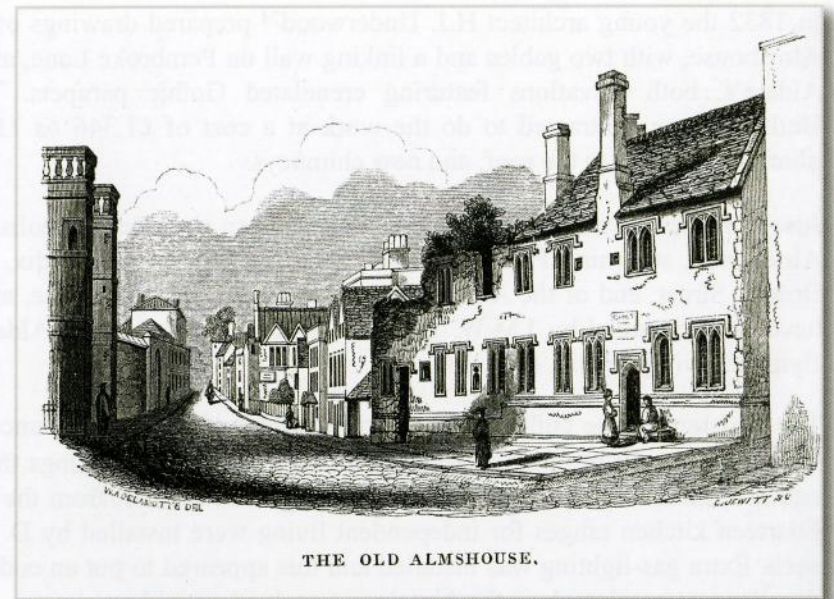
²² Cox, G.V., *The Crypt or Receptacle for Things Past*, 1829, Vol I, part 2, p.204.



(13) J. C. Buckler, interior of the ruinous south end of the Almshouse, looking north.
Engraved J. Skelton, 1819.

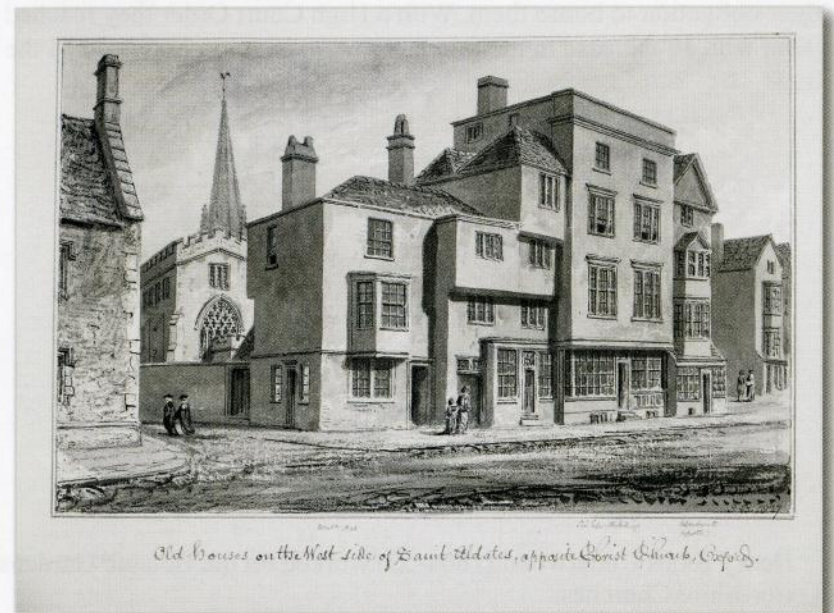
These proposals were taken up in 1831 by Davies Gilbert, former Gentleman Commoner (matric. 1785), MP for Bodmin, Secretary and then President of the Royal Society, who obtained support from John Bull, an Oxford man, newly appointed Treasurer at Christ Church. Bull found the outside of the Almshouse very dilapidated and the inside no better: “with the exception of two or three apartments all are very filthy and despite repeated orders company of very questionable character are to be found there,” and the inmates of “little use or ornament,” often drunk or “womanising.” The Dean and Canons of the Chapter of Christ Church were only too glad to get rid of an “abominable nuisance” and gave the remaining pensioners notice to quit. One of them, however, William Carrick, a Scotsman admitted in 1800, refused to leave, pointing out that he had his place “from the same source and by the same tenure as they held theirs.”²³ The Chapter was advised by Counsel that an expensive Act of Parliament would be required to dislodge them; neither college wanted that as well as the additional expense of a new building at Cowley and so the scheme collapsed.

The Dean and Chapter of Christ Church therefore decided to renovate the Almshouse, encouraged by a scheme for the general improvement of the area. Sponsored by the Oxford Improvement Commissioners, and financed by public subscription, this scheme was successful. It involved the purchase and demolition of the cottages and the demolition of the north range of the Almshouse, in order to widen St. Aldate’s and Pembroke Lane (now Pembroke Square). In addition, the high churchyard wall along Pembroke Lane was replaced with iron railings, and the footpath from St Aldate’s to the Porters’ Lodge was relaid. The total cost of all these works is recorded as £2,500.



THE OLD ALMSHOUSE.

(14) Drawing by W. A. Delamotte of the view looking south on St. Aldate’s, showing the Almshouse on the right with southern part in ruins (i.e. prior to 1834).



Old Houses on the West Side of Saint Aldate's, opposite Christ Church, Oxford.

(15) J. C. Buckler, cottages on St. Aldate’s, 1827, demolished for street widening (corner of Almshouse on left).

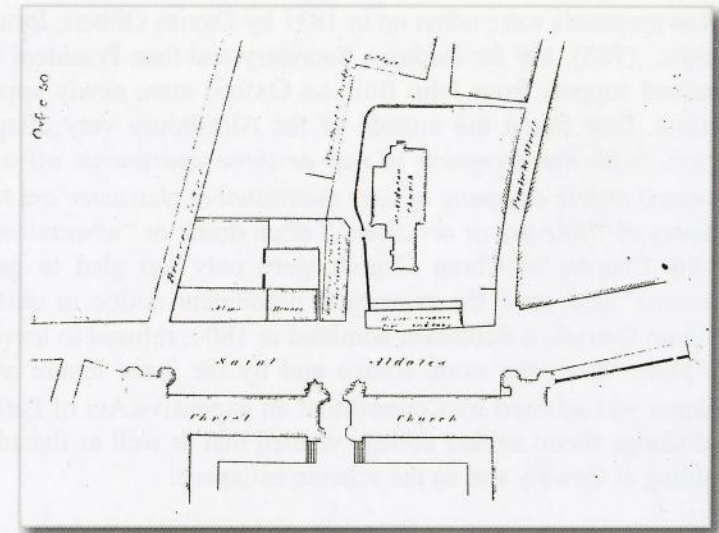
²³ Cox, G.V., *Recollections*, 1868.

In 1832 the young architect H.J. Underwood²⁴ prepared drawings of the new elevations of the Almshouse, with two gables and a linking wall on Pembroke Lane, and a revised frontage to St. Aldate's, both elevations featuring crenelated Gothic parapets. The Oxford builder John Hudson²⁵ was contracted to do the work at a cost of £1,346 6s 11¹/₂ d, which included new plumbing, repairs to the roof, and new chimneys.

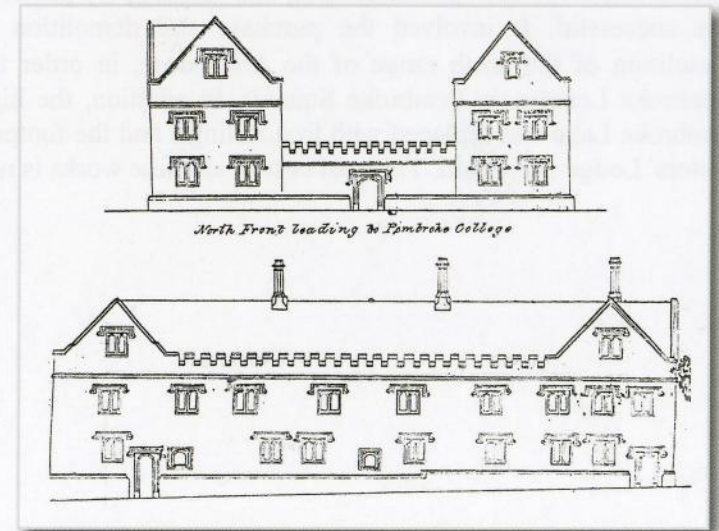
Joseph Fisher's watercolour of 1834 shows eleven workmen demolishing the north range of the Almshouse, widening Pembroke Lane by some 20 feet (Appendix, Illus. 32).²⁶ The southern, Brewer Street, end of the Almshouse was rebuilt at the same time, and work on this appears to have been recorded by J.M.W. Turner in a view looking up St. Aldate's, where some boys are flying kites (Appendix, Illus. 33).

The revisions to the building are clearly shown in the 1876 Ordnance Survey of Oxford, which shows a ground floor plan of the two distinctly separate buildings that resulted. The east range had four entrances and the smaller west range had one, all from the inner courtyard or garden. Fourteen kitchen ranges for independent living were installed by D. Stevens at a cost of £1 5s each. Extra gas-lighting was installed and this appeared to put an end to earlier womanising, but drunkenness continued, so the Almsman remained a problem.

But as noted earlier, in spite of these improvements the Dean and Chapter complained of the high costs of maintaining the buildings for just a few almsmen, and from 1867 sought to end their obligation to house them. With a High Court Order they reached a settlement to compensate them with an increase in their annual pension, and in March 1876 the last of the almsmen moved out.



(16) H. J. Underwood, Sketch plan showing section of the Almshouse to be demolished, c.1832.

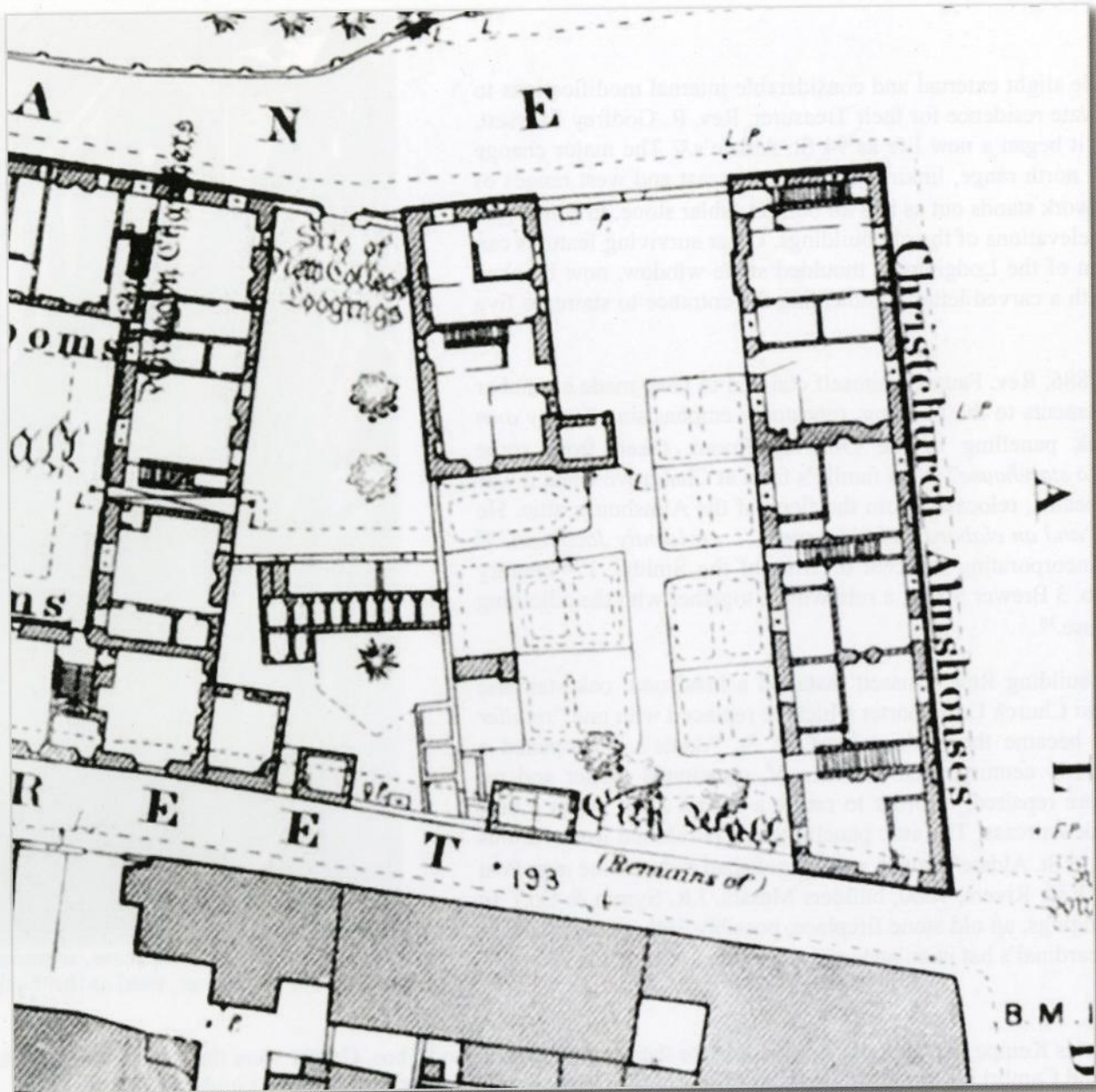


(17) H. J. Underwood, 'Elevations of proposed restoration of the Almshouse', c.1832.

²⁴ Henry Jones Underwood (1804-52) worked on the Botanic Gardens and St. Paul's Walton Street in Greek Revival style, but his work was mostly Gothic Revival, in Oxfordshire Churches.

²⁵ John Hudson was a local church architect, having first been employed as the Oxfordshire surveyor of bridges; Hibbert, Christopher, *idem*, p.276.

²⁶ Salter, H.E., ed., *Properties of the City of Oxford* (O.H.S.), App. vi, p.363.



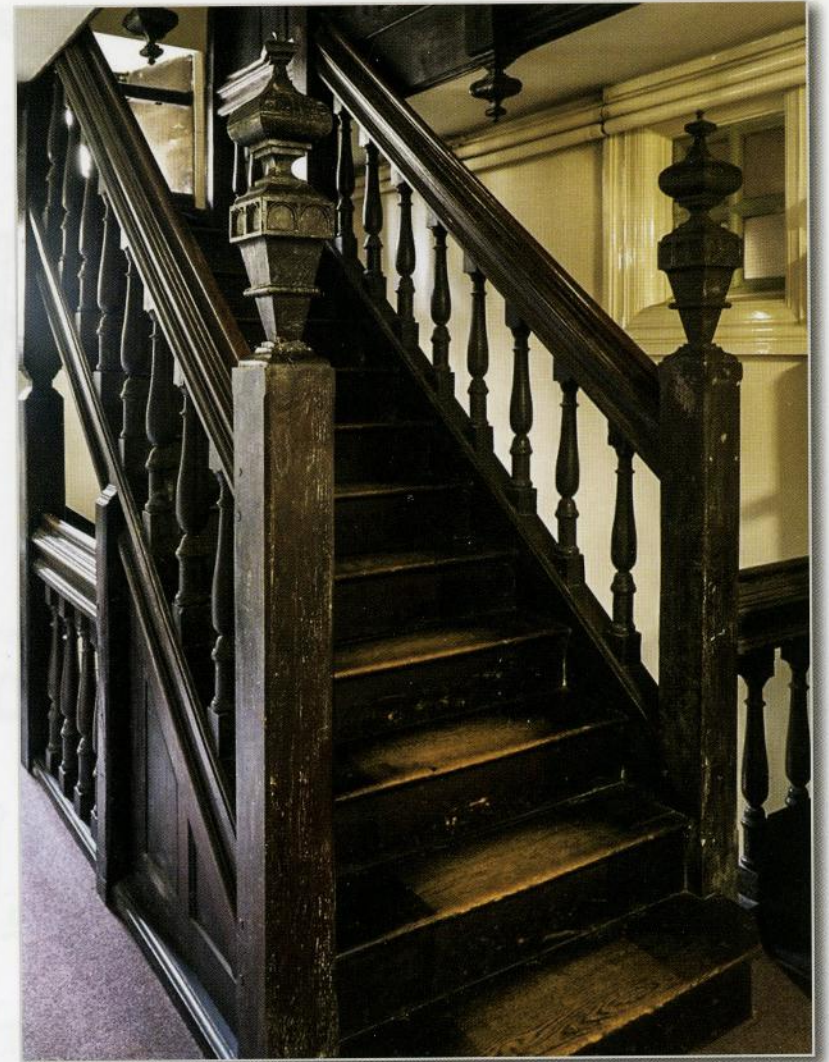
(18) Ordnance Survey plan of Oxford, 1876 (extract). Shows the almshouse after the demolition of the north range and restoration of the east range, leaving two distinct buildings.

94 St. Aldate's

From 1877 Christ Church made slight external and considerable internal modifications to convert the building into a private residence for their Treasurer, Rev. R. Godfrey Faussett, at a cost of about £2000, and it began a new life as 94 St. Aldate's.²⁷ The major change was the construction of a new north range, linking the surviving east and west ranges of the original building; the new work stands out as it is all built in ashlar stone, in contrast to the rubble stone of the garden elevations of the old buildings. Other surviving features can be found in the private kitchen of the Lodgings: a moulded stone window, now blocked up, and a blocked doorway with a carved letter V indicating the entrance to staircase five in the Almshouse.

In a personal note written in 1886, Rev. Faussett himself claimed to have made a number of substantial internal improvements to the building, repeatedly emphasising "*at my own expenses.*"²⁸ He installed oak panelling in the Drawing Room, taken from some "*dilapidated rooms ... used as a storehouse*" at his family's farm at Chalgrove when it was sold in 1876, as well as oak beams, relocated from the floor of the Almshouse attic. He acquired carved door casings "*and an elaborate chimneypiece . . . evidently Jacobean.*"²⁹ The carved oak overmantel, incorporating the coat of arms of the Smiths, 17th century brewers, was removed from No. 3 Brewer Street, a ruin which, together with the adjoining yard, had been let as a warehouse.³⁰

In the north-west end of the building Rev. Faussett installed a handsome oak staircase taken from the house of a Christ Church Underporter which he replaced with one "*smaller and more appropriate.*" This became the back stair of 94 St. Aldate's. He opened a window into the magnificent 16th century, arch-braced roof, mentioned earlier and re-discovered when the slates were repaired, in order to create a 'Great Attic', with a new access from the head of the oak staircase. The attic panelling was purchased from various places, including an old house in St. Aldate's which was demolished to build the new Post Office Headquarters (architect E.G. Rivers, 1880; builders Messrs. J.R. Symm & Co.). In what is now the hall of the Lodgings, an old stone fireplace, possibly 16th century, carries carvings of Tudor roses and a cardinal's hat in an apparent reference to Cardinal Wolsey.



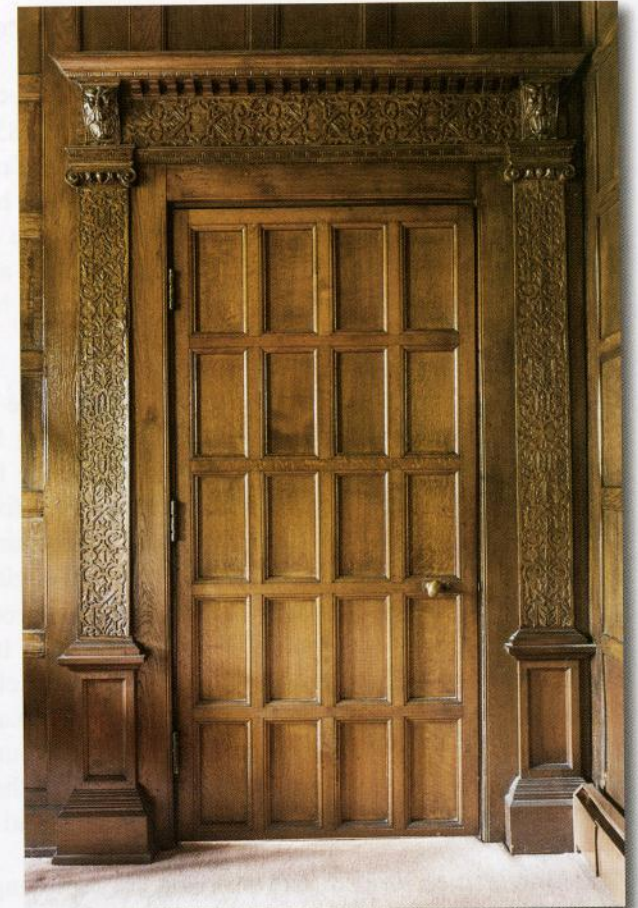
(19) 17th century oak staircase, acquired by Rev. R. G. Faussett from Christ Church College, used as the 'back stair' of 94 St. Aldate's.

²⁷ G.F. Bodley (a friend of Charles Kempe, the alumnus responsible for the Chapel interior) and Thos. Garner were the Neo-Gothic architects responsible for this conversion and many Oxford and Cambridge university buildings; Dr. Simon Bradley, ed. Pevsner Architectural Guides, Y.U.P.

²⁸ Faussett, Rev. R. J., "The Almshouse, St. Aldate's", mss. note. Christ Church Archives (MS Estates 142, f.344), Pembroke Archives (PMB/G/2/8/13-1/1); Rev. Faussett had strongly opposed the 1854 proposal to admit Dissenters to the University.

²⁹ Pevsner, N. & J. Sherwood, *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (Pevsner Architectural Guides), Penguin Books, 1974.

³⁰ The Smiths were a 17C family of brewers and maltsters who provided Oxford with six Mayors; v Hibbert, Christopher, *idem*, p. 513.



(20 above) Moulded stone window and (21 above right) doorway, both in the present-day kitchen of the Master's Lodgings, but formerly part of the (exterior) courtyard elevation of the Almshouse. Note the carved letter V above the door.



(22 left) Carved fire surround and overmantel, and (23 above) door casing in the Lodgings drawing room, removed from 3 Brewer St. The overmantel includes the coat of arms of the Smith family, brewers.

Acquisition and occupation by Pembroke

Pembroke's Governing Body, however, still coveted the Almshouse. One Fellow, Christopher Cleobury,³¹ made a Will in 1855 in which he bequeathed Pembroke £1,000 per cent. bank annuities; in a Codicil dated 1857 after his marriage, he left the residue of his entire estate on his wife's death for various purposes including purchase of the Almshouse. He died in 1863 so, when his wife died in 1882, £12,800 came to the College, and under Dr. Evan Evans (Master 1864-1892) Pembroke renewed its offer to Christ Church the next year.

Although at first opposed by Rev. Thomas Vere Bayne, Canon of Christ Church, eventually in 1888 Christ Church, facing financial problems arising from the agricultural depression, agreed to sell the freehold of 94 St. Aldate's to Pembroke College for £10,000, excluding the fixtures which were bought separately for £1,000.³² Some £6,000 of the Cleobury bequest was applied to the purchase. With some satisfaction, Rev. Douglas Maclean, the College historian and himself a former Fellow, proudly recorded, "*and thus 'Segrym's Mansions' at last were added to our House.*"³³ It may have been bought without vacant possession or with a lease-back clause, but Pembroke also needed extra income and leased it back for £250 p.a. to Christ Church for the next 40 years. Rev. Faussett continued as a tenant until 1890; the next tenants were Professor George John Romanes (1890-94), the benefactor of the annual University Lecture on Science, Art or Literature, and his widow (1894-97).

The Universities Reform Act of 1854, by removing the 1581 obligation for students to undergo a theological test or take the Oath of Supremacy, had opened the university to students outside the Church of England; the Universities Tests Act 1871, which ensured Gladstone's Liberal party the important support of the non-conformists, allowed Roman Catholics, non-conformists and other non-Christians to take up fellowships at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London and Durham.³⁴



(24) A stone fireplace in the Lodgings, with carvings of Tudor roses and a cardinal's hat. Possibly C16th, though the date is uncertain.

³¹ Tesdale Fellow, Curate of Rousham and Besselsleigh; on marriage became Rector of the College advowson at Liddiard Millicent, Wilts; donated a scholarship, prizes, £300 for a statue of Kings James I, and a silver-mounted claret jug.

³² Vere Bayne, T., Secretary to the Dean and Chapter, letter dated 15 November 1886.

³³ Maclean, D., *op.cit.*, p.439.

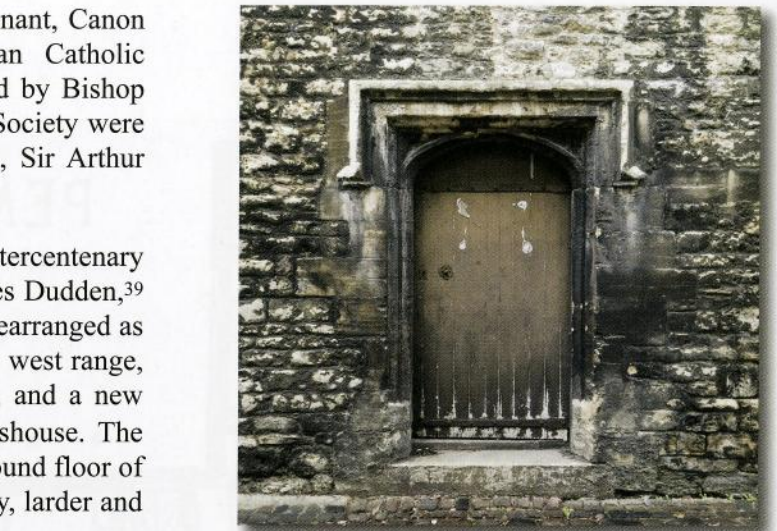
³⁴ The 1581 obligation for undergraduates to subscribe to the 39 Articles of the Church of England was ended by the Universities Reform and Test Acts in 1854 and 1871.

Roman Catholics were slow to take advantage and it was a quarter of a century before the next tenant, Canon Charles Kennard (1897-1911),³⁵ was appointed to the first Chaplaincy for Oxford Roman Catholic undergraduates, who then numbered only about thirty. A Chapel for Roman Catholics was opened by Bishop Hedley of Newport in 1897 in the 'Great Attic' of 94 St. Aldate's where meetings of the Newman Society were held.³⁶ Fr. Algernon Lang was the next tenant (1911-1914) and the last was Bodley's Librarian, Sir Arthur Cowley³⁷ (1914-1927), whose bell-panel still hangs in the former servants' quarters of the Lodgings.

The College finally took possession of 94 St. Aldate's at the end of 1927 when, aided by the tercentenary appeal,³⁸ it was able to adapt it for use as the Master's Lodgings, and the following year Rev. Homes Dudden,³⁹ with his wife, became the first resident Master to occupy the house. In the process, the spaces were rearranged as shown in the plan drawn up by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments in 1939.⁴⁰ The older, west range, was divided from the Master's Lodgings, which occupied some two-thirds of the original house, and a new staircase was created from ground to first floor levels. This section is known today as The Almshouse. The Master's living quarters occupied the major part of the east range (ground and first floors) and the ground floor of the north range. It then comprised a sitting room, library, dining room, store room, wood store, pantry, larder and a servants' hall and quarters, with bedrooms on the first floor of the east range.⁴¹

The remaining curtilage is the Master's Garden, open to the south above the city wall and containing steps down to the old well. This was the 'slaying well' which Wood mentions in 1660 and comments that "*Pembroke College payes rent to the towne for that, I think, or else for their building standing on the towne wall, viz. 1s. 5d. per an.*"⁴² Access to the well for the butchers, and later the brewers and other residents of Brewer Street, was by the carved mullion doorway still visible with its oak door at street level in the town wall.

In the west range a set of two rooms for a Pembroke Fellow was created on the ground floor, whilst on the first floor three student sets and two extra rooms were formed (later converted into guest rooms). Also on the upper floors, various offices were later created, including the Master's study, the Master's Secretary's office and the Development Director's office. Summarising the success of the new Lodgings, the *Pembroke College Record* of 1933-34 remarked that "*all who have enjoyed the hospitality of the Master . . . will agree that, with its delightful garden, it makes a beautiful and ideal house for the head of our society.*"⁴³



(25) Disused door in Brewer St., which gave access to a well in the Almshouse garden.

³⁵ Kennard was received into the Roman Catholic Church by J.H. Newman and became Monsignor to the Pope.

³⁶ Lectures were given by Benedictine monks.

³⁷ Sir Arthur Cowley began a new Bodleian printed slips catalogue for post-1919 publications, and proposed a system to manage all University libraries.

³⁸ The Tercentenary Appeal was to fund the conversion of the Almshouse into the Master's Lodgings and the former Lodgings into student rooms.

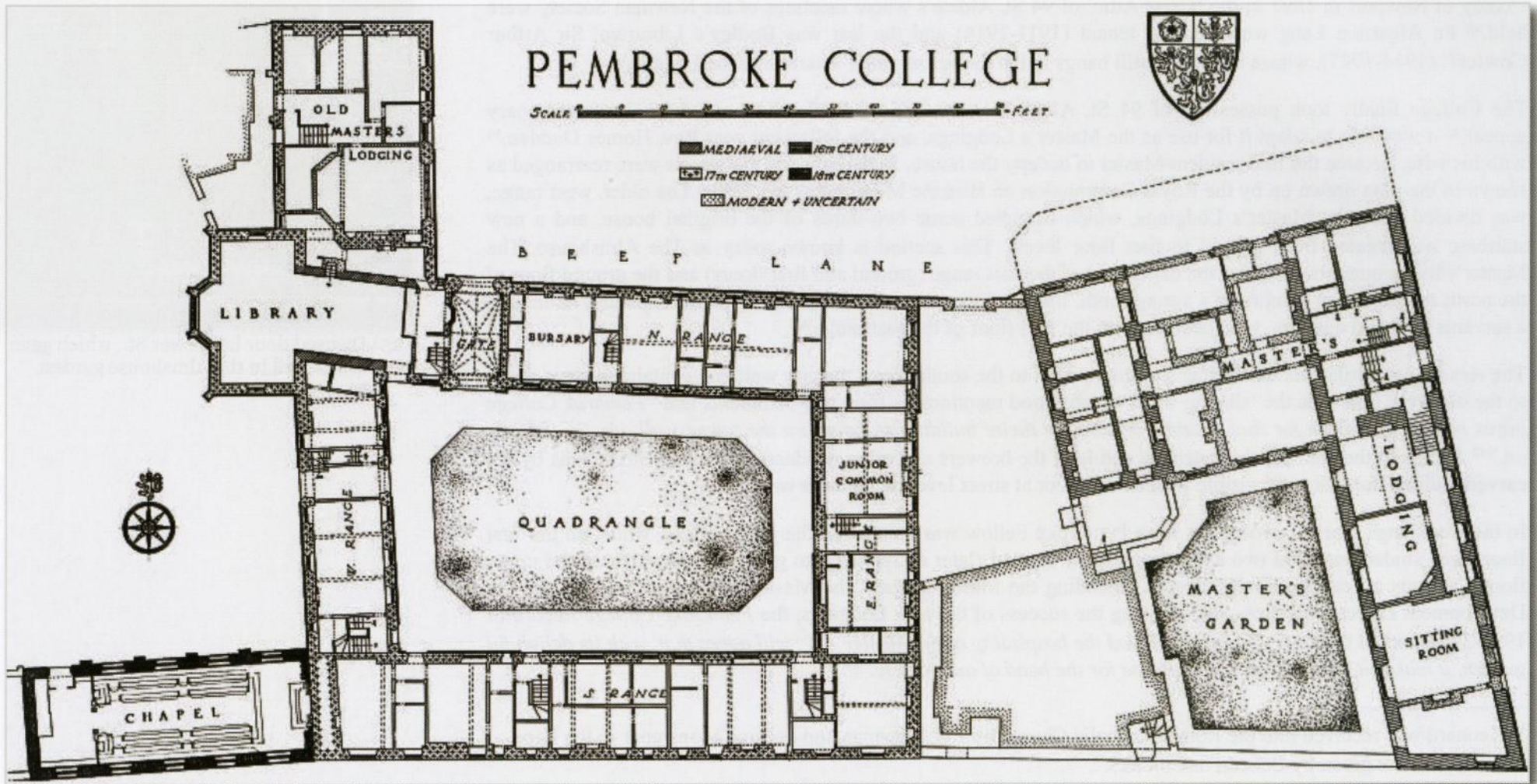
³⁹ Rev. Homes Dudden, later the Vice-Chancellor, was followed by Ronald McCallum, Sir George Pickering, Sir Geoffrey Arthur, Sir Roger Bannister, Robert Stevens, Giles Henderson, and now, Dame Lynne Brindley.

⁴⁰ This plan, otherwise accurate, omits the west range staircase leading to the College Offices and guest rooms.

⁴¹ The previous Master's Lodgings, now the Samuel Johnson Building, contains two lecture rooms and 20 undergraduates' rooms.

⁴² Wood, *op.cit.*, p.77.

⁴³ *Pembroke College Record*, 1933-1934, p.26.



(26) Ground floor plan of Pembroke College, showing the Almshouse converted into the Master's Lodgings and College offices. The dotted line shows the footprint of the original north range. RCHME, 1939.

Afterword - the Master's Lodgings today

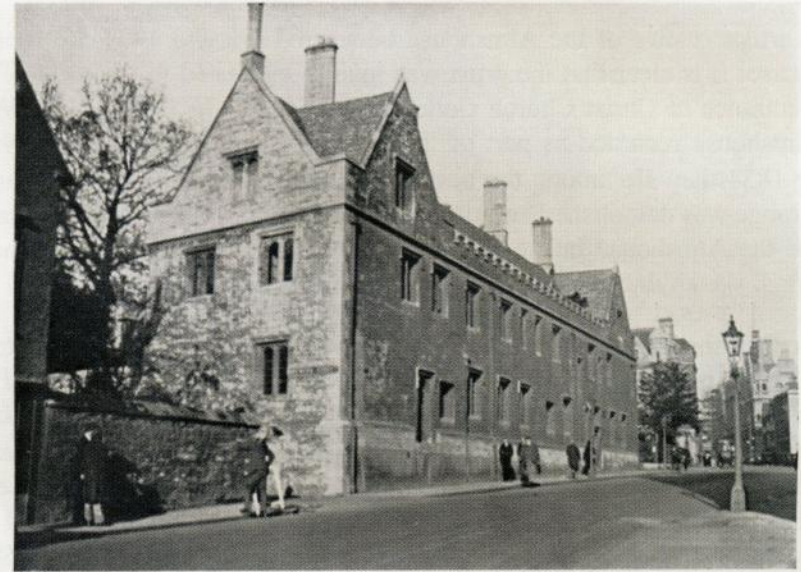
The former Wolsey's Almshouse, after many changes in structure, purpose and occupants, is now used as a private home for Pembroke's Head of House, as well as a College venue for receptions of fellows, students, alumni and VIP guests. The entrance hall of the Lodgings can be accessed through the pleasing private garden; a large dining room seats up to twelve people; and the oak-panelled drawing room can accommodate small groups for informal presentations and music recitals. College portraits in the Lodgings include those of Maud Tesdale, wife of Thomas (founder), Samuel Johnson, and John Hall, the longest serving Master (1664 to 1710).

The private living spaces for the Master's use include a small kitchen, private sitting room, and study; and on the first floor, a bedroom and ensuite bathroom, with three additional family or guest bedrooms. The Lodgings certainly remains beautiful, and provides the amenities and attractions of an historic town residence, complementing the larger-scale facilities of the College.

The imposing Gothic style of Henry Underwood's design, as seen in the adjacent photograph, has been somewhat diminished with the removal of castellations and reduction of the tall chimneys, victims of time and cost. In recent times, the impact of traffic and tourist numbers have also compromised the use of the Lodgings as a private house. Today the front door opens onto a busy bus stop in St. Aldate's, and it has not been opened for many years, so the only practical day-to-day entrances are through the service areas, either in the west range or via a small courtyard connecting to Pembroke Square. However, we should reflect that this "*way-side building*" has stood on a busy thoroughfare since the Middle Ages, and thus it remains today.

Taken as a whole, living in the Master's Lodgings has many benefits. The convenience of the city centre location is a constant pleasure, for ready access to college and university business and functions, and especially for the excellent facilities of the town. And there is the constant delight of walking through a city of architectural treasures, grand and modest, amongst which the Lodgings, nearly 500 years old, stands as a fascinating and remarkable survivor.

TB November 2017



THE MASTER'S LODGING: FROM ST. ALDATE'S

(27) Photograph of 94 St. Aldate's, after conversion to the Master's Lodgings. *Pembroke College Record*, 1933-34.

Appendix 1: Artists' views of the Almshouse

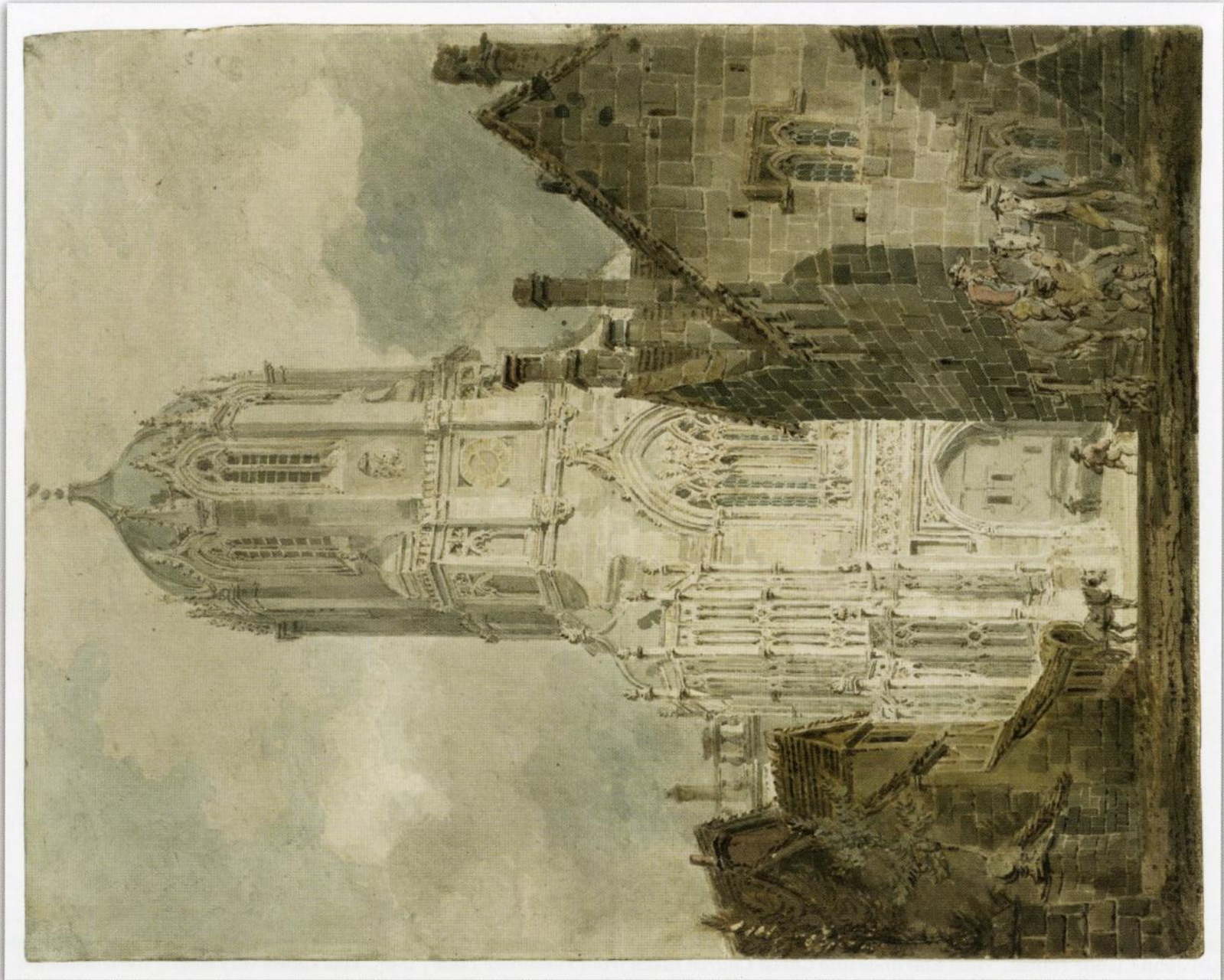
Some artists' views of the Almshouse between 1781 and 1834 are reproduced here. In some cases it is clear that the artist was mainly interested in the view of Tom Tower, the main entrance to Christ Church College designed by Sir Christopher Wren (1682), with the Almshouse recorded as part of the general scene. As most of the views were made before 1834 they are among the best images available of the 'old almshouse', before the north range was demolished and the south end rebuilt. In the Fisher and later Turner views we see the Almshouse in the process of these transformations. Also included are some additional sketch drawings by J. C. Buckler.

As the Almshouse partly obscured the view of Tom Tower it presented artists with a challenge. According to Colin Harrison, "*Malchair, for example, had emphasised the confusion and the impossibility of gaining a logical viewpoint in keeping with his preference for nostalgic medievalism. Turner, however, preferred to create order and contrast from the scene.*"⁴⁴ Malchair, when drawing his rather sombre view of "*Pembroke and Christ Church Colleges, Oxford*" in December 1781, recorded that there was "*Sunshine and remarkable fine Spring weather on Christmas Day - Snowdrippes and Acconites in blosom.*" J.M.W. Turner, in his watercolour of 1793, which he bequeathed to the nation in 1856 (Tate Gallery D00155), also showed the Almshouse but used a young artist's licence to widen Pembroke Lane. To add life to the view, he included a horse and cart, a horse and rider, an undergraduate, three other men including a Christ Church porter, and a dog.



(28) John Baptist Malchair, 'A view of the Tower build by Sir Christopher Wren . . .', (sic) 1781. Shows the north range of the Almshouse, centre.

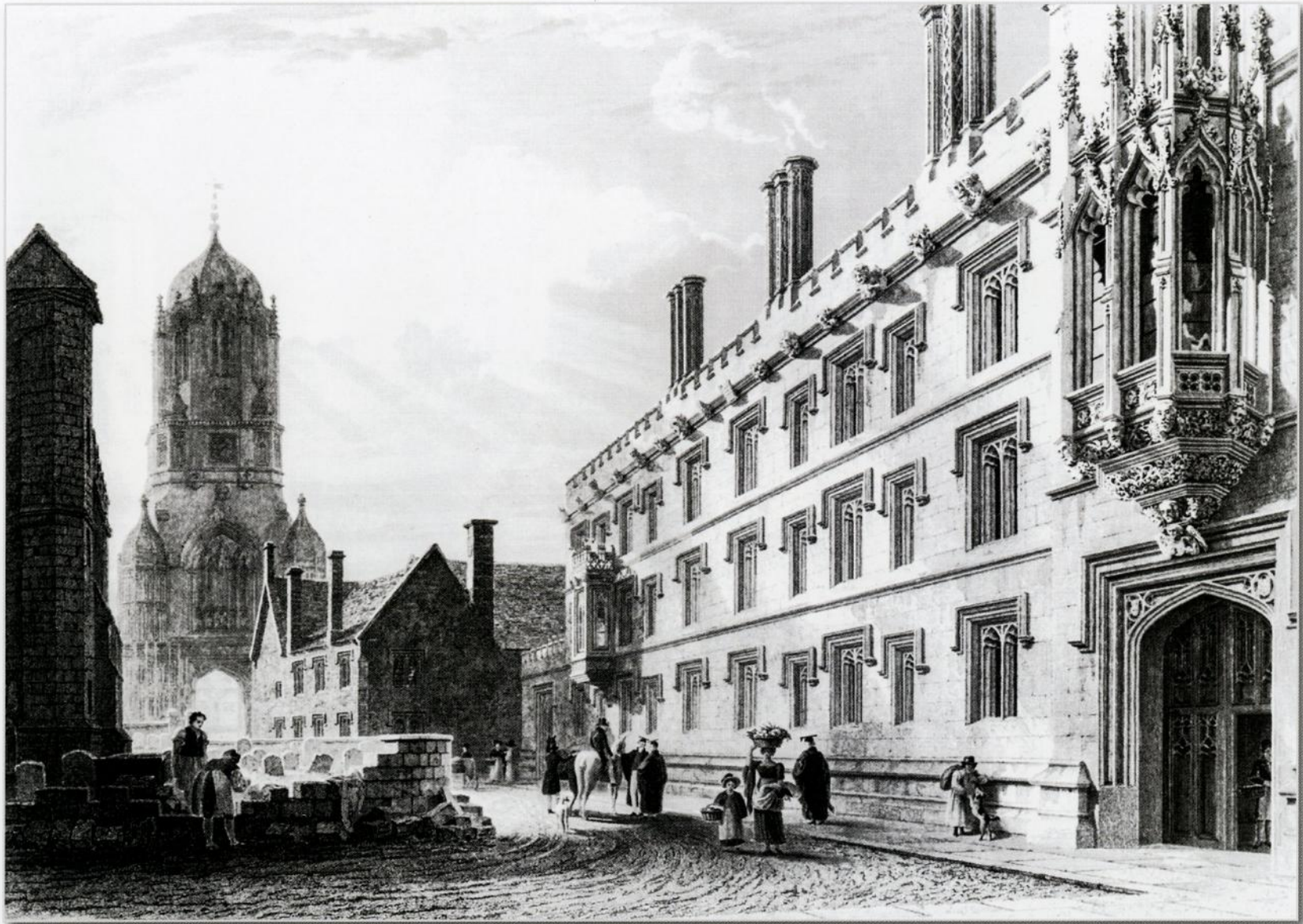
⁴⁴ Harrison, Colin, *Turner's Oxford*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford 2000, pp. 44, 45.



(29) J. M. W. Turner, *Tom Tower from St. Aldate's*, 1793. A widened perspective view showing the north range of the Almshouse, right.



(30) John Claude Nattes, 'West Entrance into Christ Church taken from Pembroke Lane', 1805. This shows very clearly the constricted access to the College caused by the high churchyard wall and the north range of the Almshouse.



(31) Frederick Mackenzie's drawing of c.1829 showing the newly refaced north elevation of the College in the Gothic revival style, with its additional storey and elaborate oriel windows, and the north range of the Almshouse. The work on the College was undertaken by Daniel Evans.



(32) Joseph Fisher, "Christ Church Almshouses, during removal of N. side in 1834, to widen approach to Pembroke College." The new Gothic façade of Pembroke College, completed in 1829, can be seen in the background, including the original tall chimneys, and Bodley and Garner castellations on the entrance tower.



(33) J. M. W. Turner (engraved Redaway), "Christ Church College, Oxford", 1834. View looking north up St. Aldate's, showing on the left the reconstruction of the south end of the Almshouse.



Engraved by J. Skelton. Drawn by J. C. Buckler. Junr.

Interior & Exterior Views of the Alms House opposite Christ Church.

Published at the Art directors, March 1. 1819 by J. Skelton, St. Aldate's, Oxford.

(34) J. C. Buckler, engraved by J. Skelton. Corner of St. Aldate's and Pembroke Square. 1819.

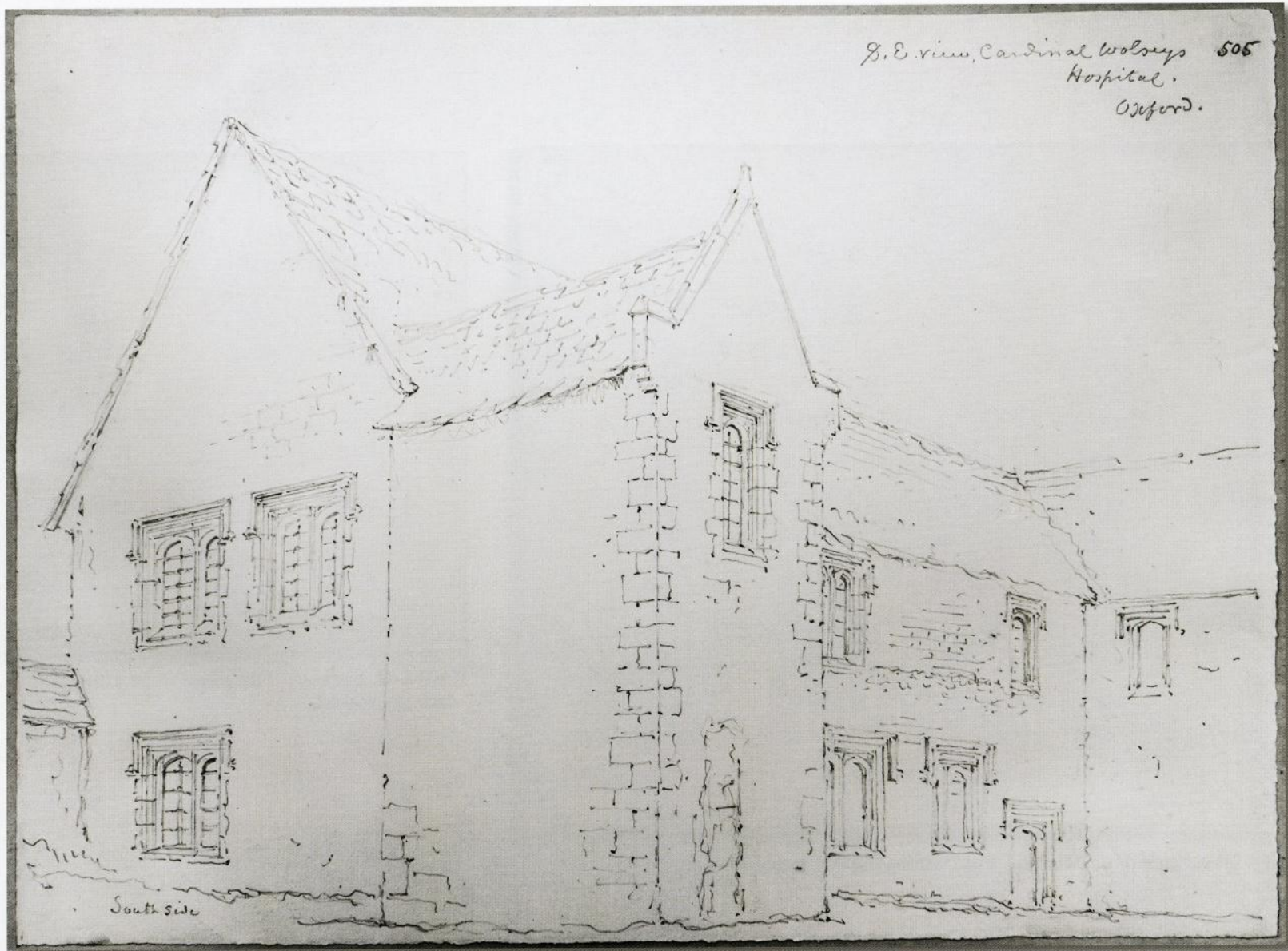


Alms Houses &c on the West side of Saint Aldate's, Oxford.

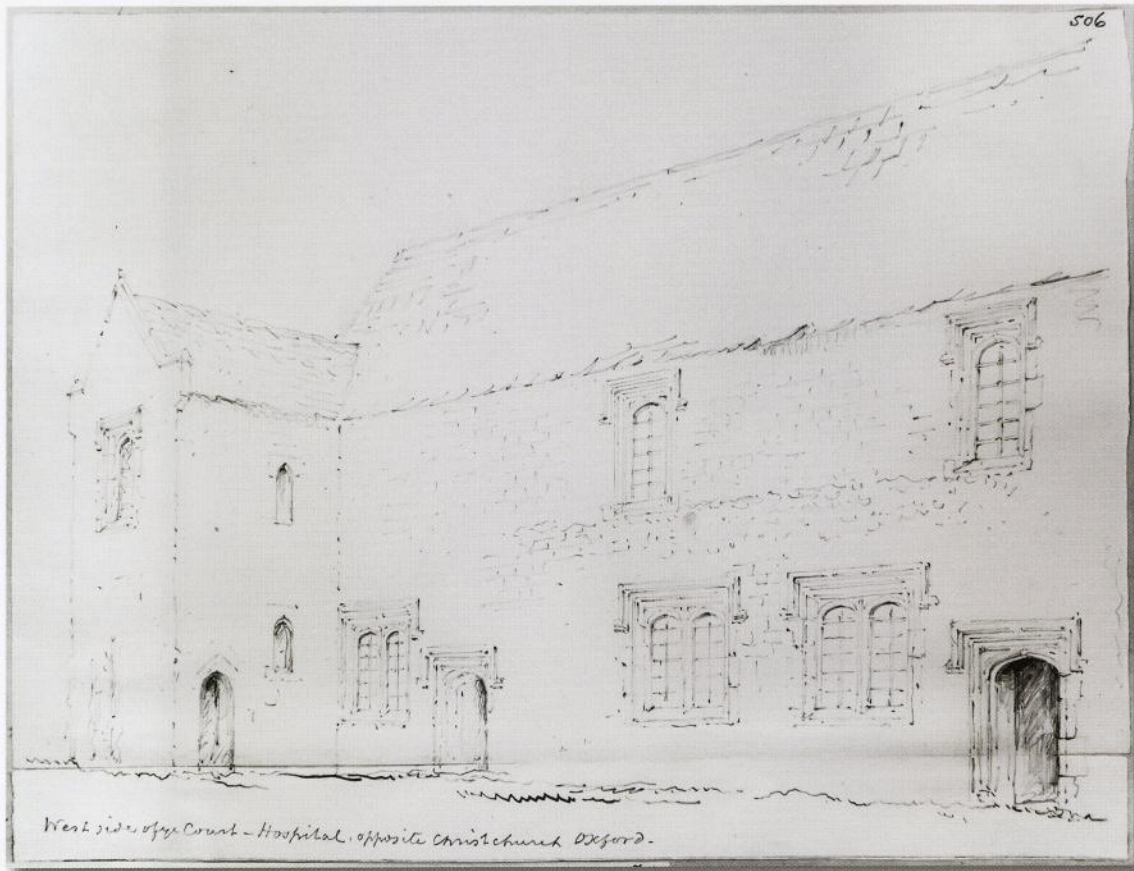
(35) J. C. Buckler. Corner of St. Aldate's and Brewer St.



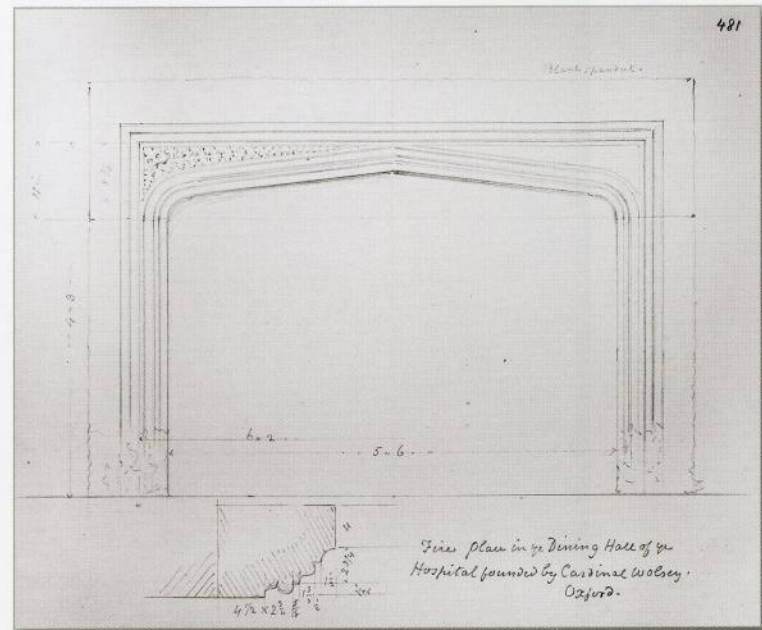
(36) J. C. Buckler. "Interior view ..." of east range from within the courtyard/garden, after Underwood's reconstruction.



(37) J. C. Buckler. "S.E. view ..." of the west range from within the courtyard/garden.

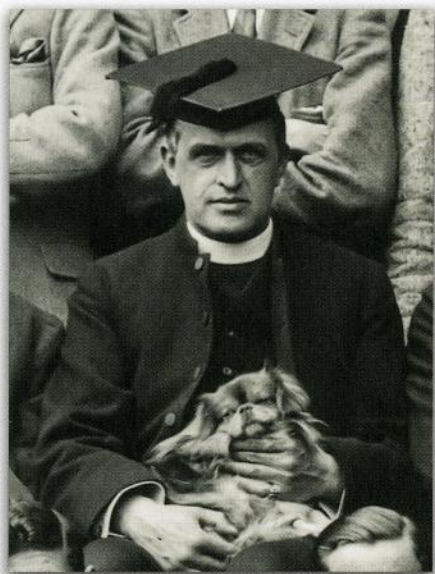


(38) J. C. Buckler. "West side of ye court ..." from within the courtyard/garden.



(39) J. C. Buckler. "Fire place in ye dining hall ..." (now in the drawing room).

Appendix 2: Masters resident in the Lodgings from 1928 to the present day



Rev. Frederick Homes Dudden (1918-55, resident with his wife from 1928) (Photo: Gillman & Co., 1921)



Ronald and Margaret McCallum (1955-68) (Photo: B.J. Harris © Gillman & Soame)



Sir George Pickering and Carola, Lady Pickering (1968-75)



Sir Geoffrey Arthur (1975-84)



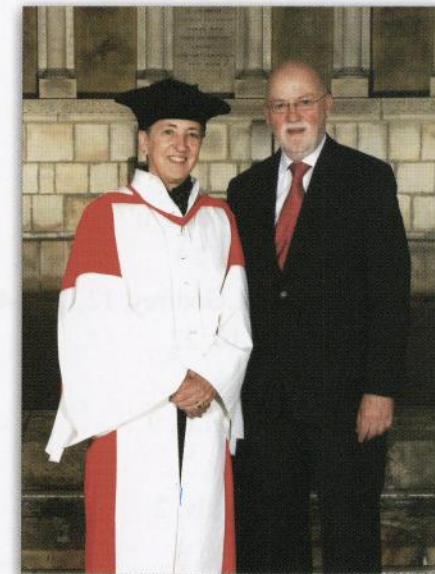
Sir Roger Bannister and Moira, Lady Bannister (1985-93)



Robert and Kathie Stevens (1993-2001)



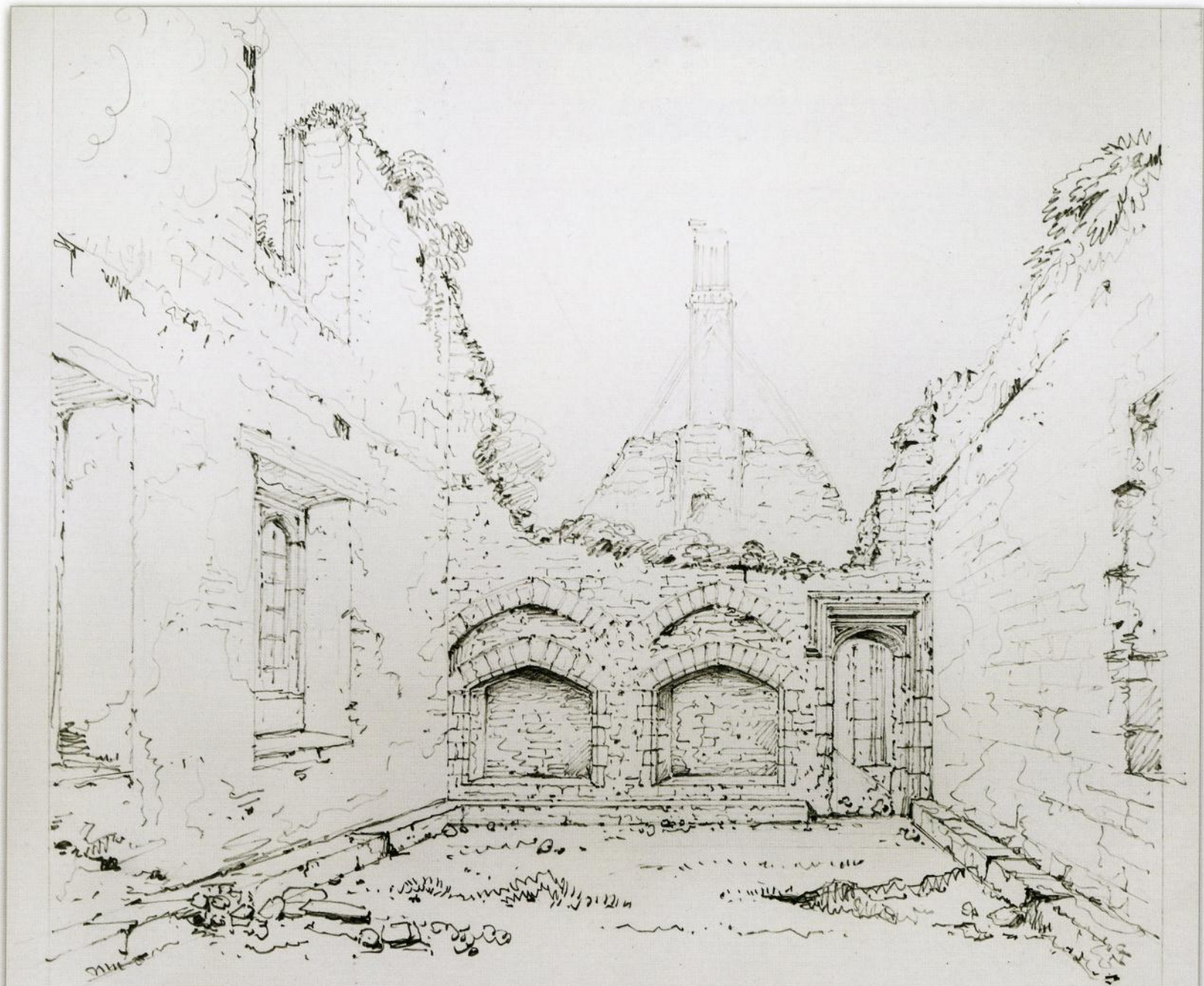
Giles and Lynne Henderson (2001-13)



Dame Lynne and Tim Brindley (2013-date) (Photo: © Ede & Ravenscroft)

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(41) J.C. Buckler, "Room for ye
entertainment of ye Indigent
Travellers."

*Room for ye entertainment of Indigent Travellers.
Cardinal Wolsey's Hospital & Eleemosynary, Oxford.*



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