

NOTE ON AN OLD HOUSE, WEST STREET,
FAVERSHAM.

BY AYMER VALLANCE, F.S.A.

To provide for a southward extension of its premises the Gas Company, being owners, ordered the demolition of a row of houses on the north side of West Street. The work, entrusted to Messrs. Fuller and Sons of Stone Street, was in active progress in May 1912. The only one of the doomed houses to possess any antiquarian or artistic value was one of timber-framed construction, with an overhanging upper storey toward the street, and a tiled roof. This building appeared to date from about 1500. It had a frontage of about 30 feet wide. The ground floor comprised two front rooms running back some 21 feet from south to north, and a passage of the same length by about 6 feet 6 inches wide, situated to west of the above-named, and leading from the street to the yard at the back. Behind the front rooms lay a third room, measuring some 20 feet 6 inches from east to west by nearly 18 feet. It had the remains of a rectangular bay window at the east end. The ceilings were of massive moulded principals, the subordinate beams, or joists, being stop-chamfered. There were no dragon-beams. The overhanging front part was carried forward on brackets with carved spandrels resting on boutel shafts with moulded capitals. Only the upper portions of two of these boutels remained, the bases having all perished. Above the front rooms and passage there extended the upper floor, consisting of two rooms. The easternmost of these had originally been surmounted by a gable overhanging the street, its roof ridge having been at right angles to that of the west upper room; but this gable



Photo.]

RIDGE TILES.

[A. V.]

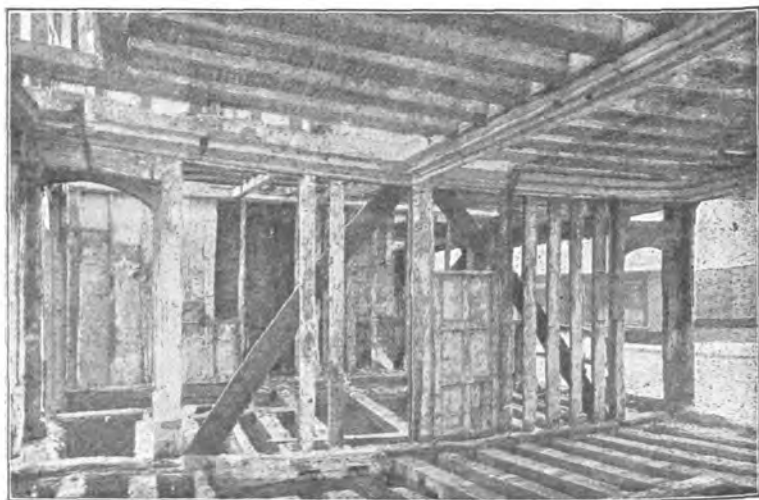


Photo.]

S.W. ROOM LOOKING E.

[W. Hargrave.]

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OLD HOUSE, FAVERSHAM.

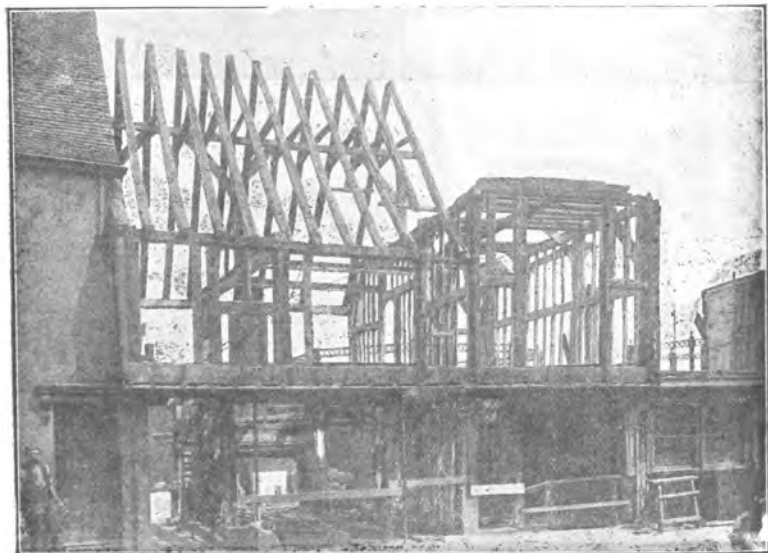


Photo.]

EXTERIOR VIEW FROM S.W.

[*W. Hargrave.*

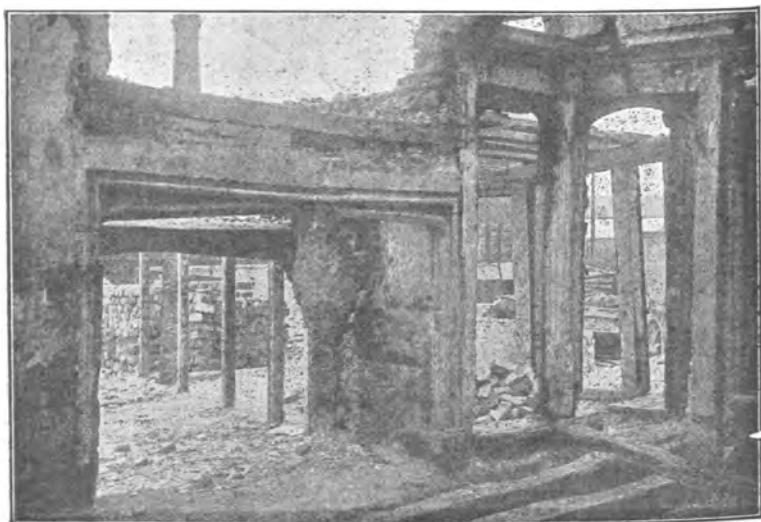


Photo.]

S.W. ROOM LOOKING N.E.

[*W. Hargrave.*

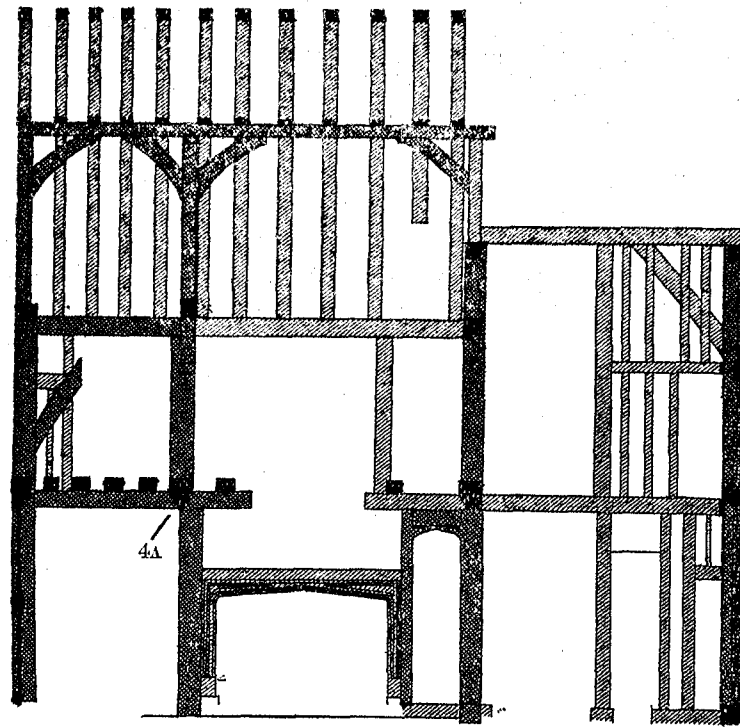
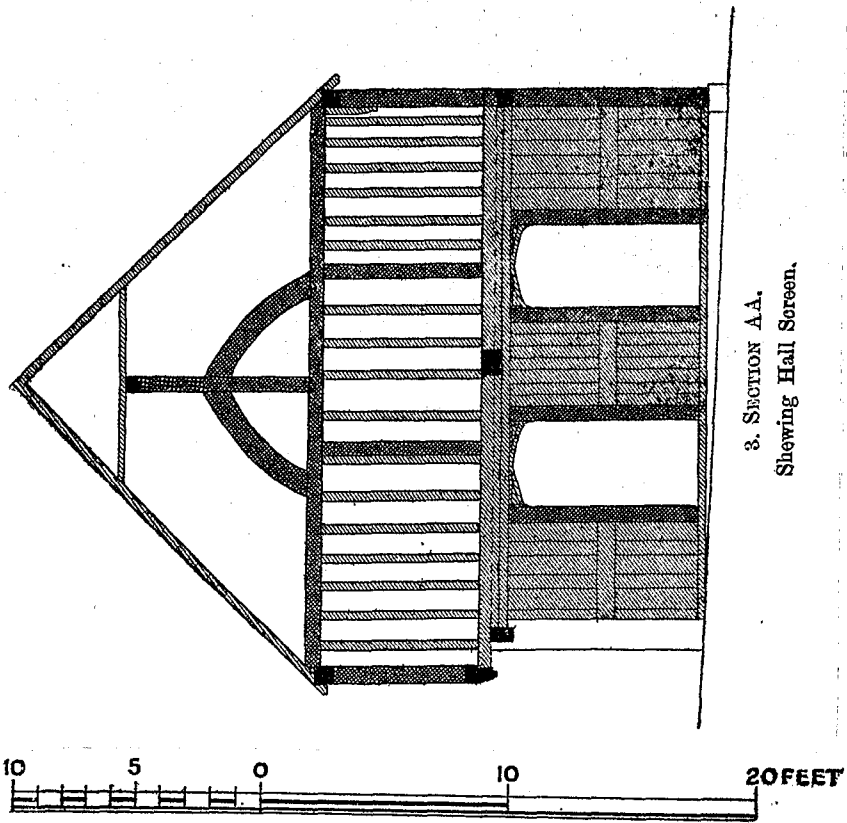
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OLD HOUSE FAVERSHAM.

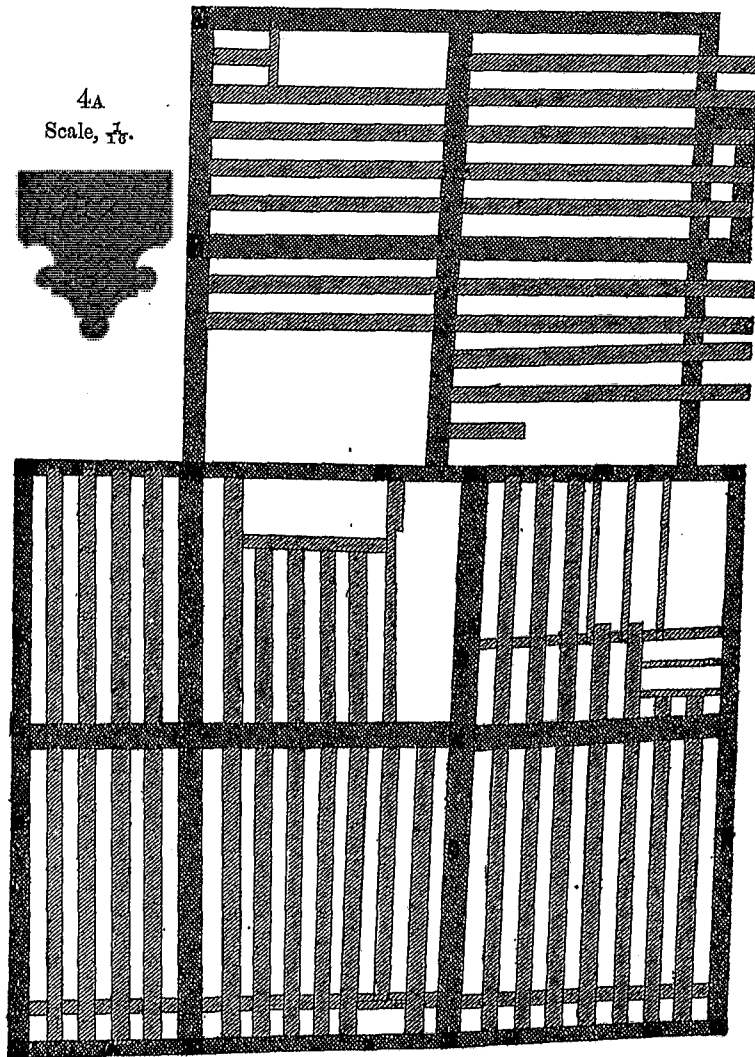
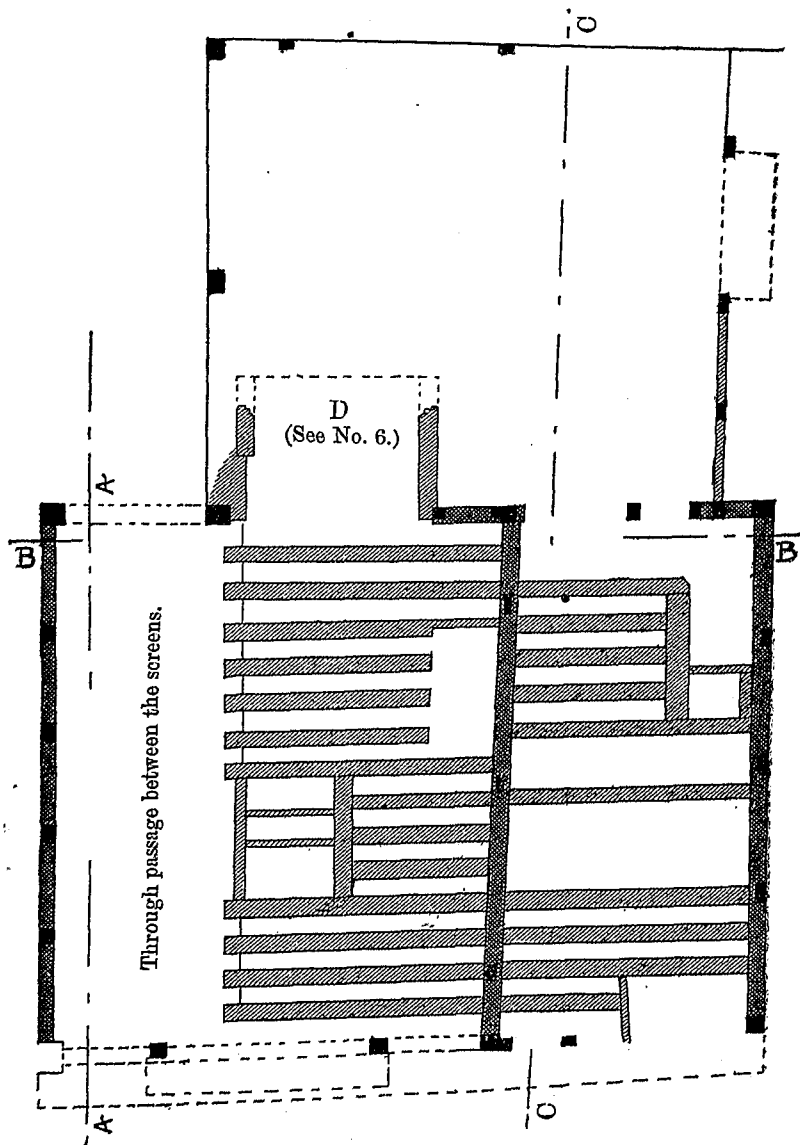
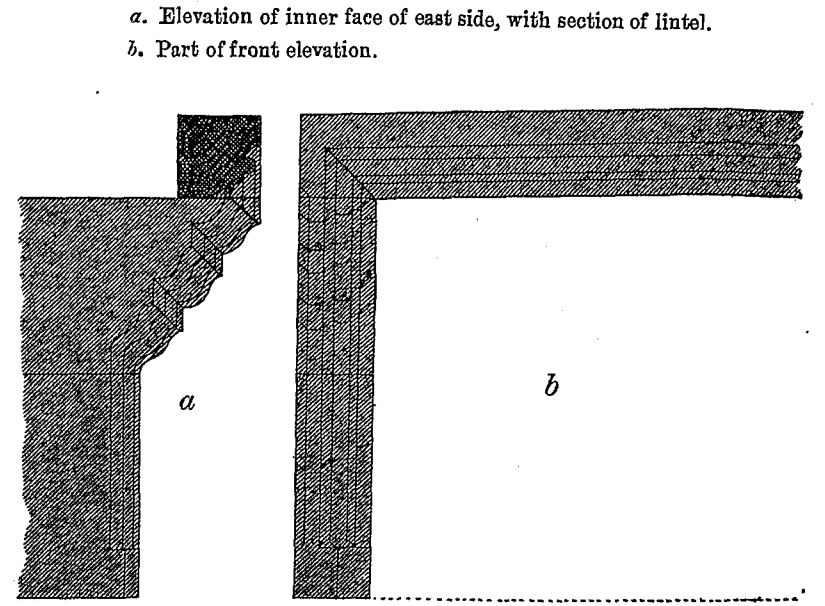
had been entirely destroyed. None of the original windows remained except in the first-floor west room, in which, during the course of stripping and dismantling, was discovered the frame of one window of two lights and four-centred heads.

In different parts of the house some five or six door-heads of four-centred form were found. That the surviving fabric was merely a portion of the original house, and that the latter must in addition have comprised a hall-place extending westward, was proved by the discovery of the timber screen with a pair of four-centred doorways in it embedded in the west wall of the above-mentioned passage. The latter was, then, the screened passage at the opposite end of the hall to the dais—a normal feature in mediæval houses—whilst one of the adjacent rooms must have been originally the kitchen. This was proved by the existence of two large open fireplaces, either of which might have served for cooking purposes, standing back to back between the front west room and the room at the hind part of the house. The fireplace in the front room was of no unusual type for its period, with stone jambs and lintel, forming a four-centred opening of about 7 feet wide by about 4 feet 8 inches. The spandrels of the lintel were very long and acutely pointed toward the crown of the opening. The fireplace at the back had stone jambs and a substantial oak lintel, forming a nearly rectangular opening some 6 feet 7 inches wide by 4 feet 10½ inches high. The design of this fireplace was remarkable, and perhaps unique. The jambs, very richly moulded, overhung in three steps or stages of ogees, of increasing projection from the lowest to the uppermost stage. The stone-work mouldings, all except the outermost chamfer, are returned along the timber lintel. The shoulder is all in one solid block 21 inches high, and the overhang is no less than 13 inches.

The ridge-tiles, of which only a few remained, had all lost their cresting, but they presented two variant designs on their sloping sides. Both ornaments took the form of a rosette, partly scratched, and partly impressed with a mould or die in the moist clay before firing. They were produced

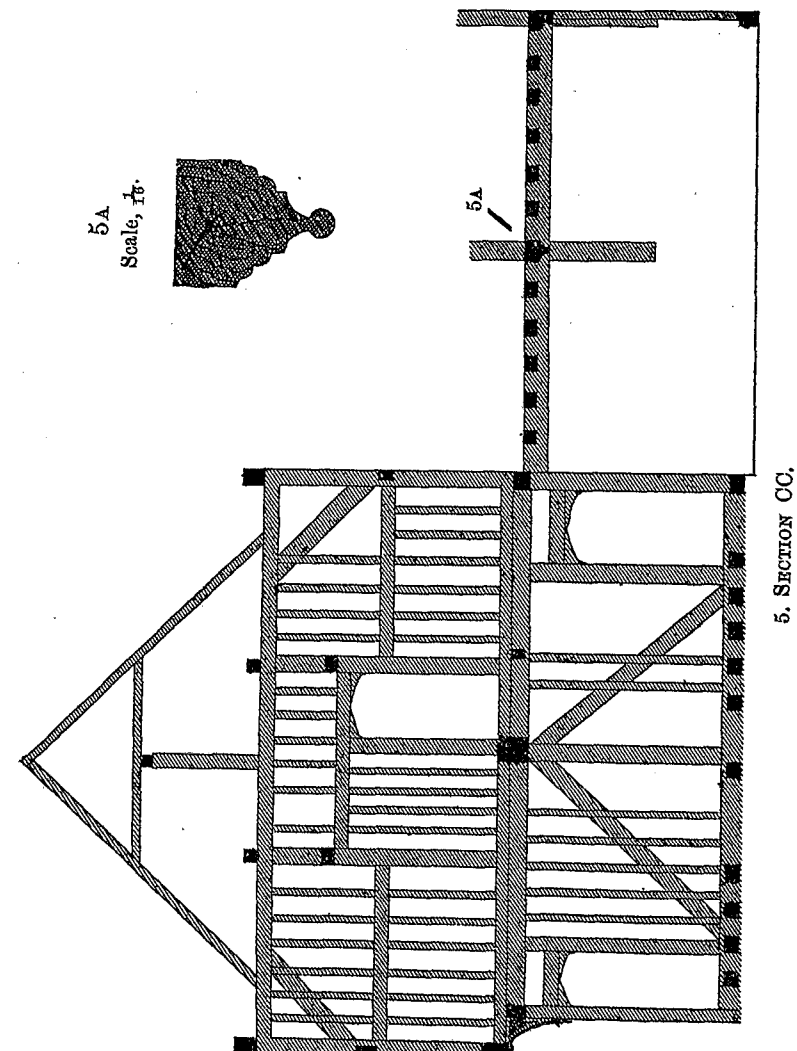


NOTE.—The part shown above the first floor is a longitudinal section of the roof (cf. cross-section AA).



[From plans by Marshall Harvey, Architect.]

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OLD HOUSE,
WEST STREET, FAVERSHAM.

possibly in the sixteenth, or more probably in the seventeenth century.

It must be added that through the timely advice of Mr. P. M. Johnston, F.S.A., architect, while the building stood but partly demolished, in skeleton, the writer was enabled to come to terms with the builders for the purchase of the ancient remains, which it is hoped may be thus saved from utter extinction, though, of course, no matter where nor with whatsoever care they may be re-erected, the historic continuity of the house is irretrievably broken.

The tiles are from photographs by the writer; the other subjects from photographs kindly supplied by Messrs. Fuller. The drawings were executed by Mr. Marshall Harvey, architect, of Sittingbourne, rearranged for publication in these pages by the Editor.