

THE CHAPEL OF THE KNIGHTS HOSPITALLERS AT SUTTON-AT-HONE.

BY P. K. KIPPS, F.S.A.

THE Manor of Sutton-at-Hone came into the possession of the Knights Hospitallers during the reign of King John. An article by Mr. J. F. Wadmore has already appeared in *Archæologia Cantiana*¹ with notes as to the original grant and additional gifts made subsequently. With these notes is also published a measured drawing illustrating the E. end of the chapel, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and details of a double piscina discovered during some repairs in 1870.

A second article by Mr. R. H. Ernest Hill gives an account of the Hill family, who were in possession of the Manor of St. John's from 1660 to 1780.²

The chapel, long since converted into a residence, is the only part of the original building now remaining above ground. Minor alterations appear to have been made during the seventeenth century and probably during the occupation of Abraham Hill (1660-1721). Judging from the character of the brickwork the northern part of the W. wing and also the lower part of the staircase projection belong to the seventeenth century.

During the period 1757-1776 the building was in the occupation of Edward Hasted. Its appearance was greatly modified by the alterations he made, especially at the W. end. Hasted speaks of "having repaired at enormous Expence the Mansion of St. John's in Sutton at hone for my residence", and in another place, under the date 1757 he says, "Returned to Sutton to St. John's Wh. I had rebuilt."³ He certainly

¹ *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. XXII, p. 255. Particulars with regard to earlier ownership and grants are to be found in the *Victoria County History of Kent*, Vol. II, p. 175.

² *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 227.

³ *Anecdotes of the Hasted Family*, by Edward Hasted, Book I. Reprinted in *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 287 and 292.

appears to have done a great deal to the building, for the interior has been remodelled and entirely refitted. The work is of comparatively simple character, elaboration being permitted only in a room on the first floor which exhibits some delicate enrichments, characteristic of the period, in the details of the fireplace and panelling.

The roofs were probably reconstructed during Hasted's ownership. He seems to have left the eastern part of the Chapel untouched. The present boarded ceiling is modern, also the floor.

Little change has been made in the structure since the eighteenth century except for the addition of a new wing and some domestic offices, both on the N. side.

The building, generally, is of flint rubble with ashlar dressings, with some brickwork introduced at later periods. The E. wall has, at each angle, a buttress with splayed offsets, and it is pierced by three lancet windows. These have two-centred heads, chamfered outer jambs and widely spaced reveals with concentric arches. Internally the windows are combined into a group with four shafts which now rest on modern corbels, the lower parts having been cut away. The moulded caps support chamfered arches of one order. The loftier centre light has had the apex of its arch squared off by the modern eaves and ceiling. In the lower part of the wall are two modern windows.

The eastern part of the N. elevation contains two lancet windows uniform with those in the E. wall but without the shafts and inner arch. Internally, the lower parts are blocked and the easternmost filled by a modern fireplace. Between these windows externally is a buttress with ashlar dressings and plinth with hollowed top course. Built on the top of the buttress is a chimney of later date. Immediately W. of the buttress is a doorway with two-centred arch built of brickwork and possibly of sixteenth century date. The bricks are two inches thick and four courses equal ten inches in height.

A modern addition has been built against the N. elevation 27 feet from the E. end and 16 feet in width.

Incorporated in its W. side is an original buttress. The N. elevation W. of this point is mostly of flint rubble, but part of the upper storey is of brickwork belonging to different periods, the lower being earlier and built of narrower bricks. A third buttress occurs in this length of wall. It also has two offsets and a plinth. Between the buttresses, but not centrally, is the blocked lower half of an original window with part of the ashlar jambs remaining. Westwards and next to the projection of the staircase hall are two pieces of ashlar indicating the former position of a similar window. During subsequent periods other windows have been cut. One in the upper storey with mullions and transom of wood fitted with leaded lights may be of seventeenth century origin.

The staircase hall projection, built of brick, belongs to two periods; the earlier, of narrower brick work, finishing about the level of the first floor. Just below this level are two courses of ashlar. In the N. side is a large eighteenth century window with a round arch and fitted with sashes.

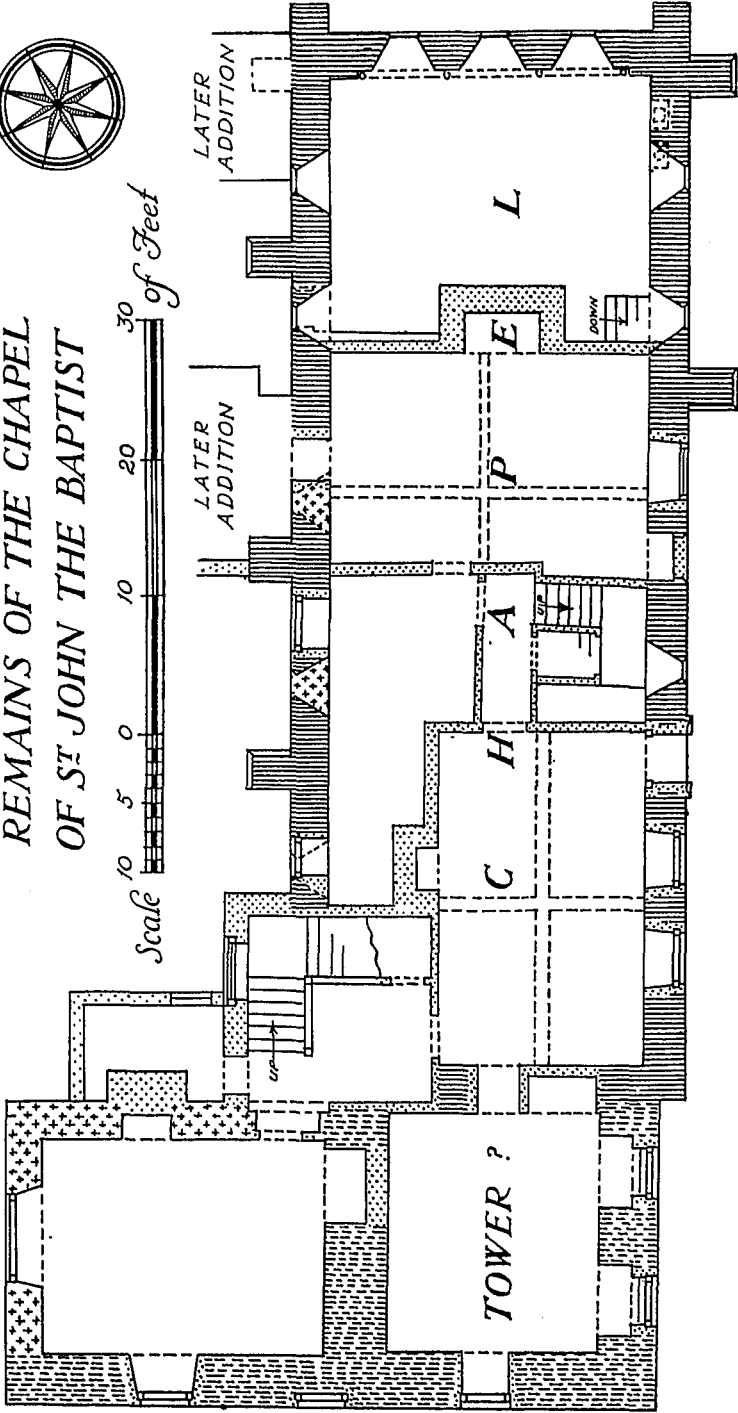
The S. elevation of the main building has in its eastern part two buttresses of detail similar to those on the N. side. Between the buttresses are two lancet windows, the easternmost of full length and uniform with the windows in the opposite wall. The other window has been cut short and a modern doorway formed below.





The lower part of the wall between the second buttress and the eighteenth century doorway is of flint rubble; the upper part is of brick. Westwards of the doorway the wall is of coursed ashlar with window quoins up to the brick-finished eaves.

West of the second buttress are two eighteenth century windows, one in each storey, the lower one has ashlar jambs next to the frame on both sides, the upper one has ashlar on the E. side only. Further W. of the buttress and 38 ft. from the E. end is an original doorway with chamfered stone jambs and two-centred arch; and remains of a relieving arch. Just above and west of it is a blocked doorway which appears to have had a three or four centred arch. The

SUTTON AT HONE KENT COMMANDERY OF THE KNIGHT HOSPITALLERS

REMAINS OF THE CHAPEL OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST



-  EARLY 13TH CENTURY.
-  WORK POSSIBLY OF MEDIAEVAL ORIGIN BUT MUCH ALTERED LATER.
-  LATE 16TH AND ALSO 17TH CENTURY
-  18TH CENTURY AND MODERN.

R.K. HIPPES
1891 & 1900

work is rough and the jambs indefinite. West again is a lancet window with two centred head and jambs as before but placed higher in the wall, the apex being about one foot below the eaves. It is probably old work reset when the secondary staircase was made. Below is a small modern window lighting the space under the stairs. About 13 ft. above the ground is a splayed string course below the level of the staircase window, but from that point westwards it has been cut back. It is interrupted by the upper doorway and reaches to the eighteenth century window W. of the second buttress.

The eighteenth century entrance has a moulded architrave with rusticated blocks all on a plain surround and three key blocks in the lintel. Above, is a moulded cornice and pediment. The wall on each side of the doorway is of coursed ashlar. Westwards are two eighteenth century windows with brick jambs. Above are two similar windows with a third over the doorway.

THE WEST WING.

During some recent repairs the walling was partly exposed and found to be of a "jerry built" character with brick and stone combined in a haphazard fashion. Although the thickness of the wall appears to indicate a medieval origin there is little doubt that considerable work of reparation was done at a later period and probably by Hasted, as may be inferred by his statement already noted.

The N., W. and S. elevations are faced with cement and finished by a modillion cornice. The E. return face, partly covered by a modern one storey addition, is built of narrow brick. In the upper storey are indications of two blocked openings. The sash windows are of eighteenth century date.

The roof of the main building is gabled and hipped at E. end. The roof of the west wing, also gabled, is hipped at the N. and S. ends. The dormer windows throughout have moulded cornices, which are returned along the sides, and moulded pediments. The chimneys are quite plain and the upper parts of the flues reduced in thickness.

INTERIOR.

The original chapel forms the main building of the house and is 72 feet E. to W. by 23 feet N. to S., the walls averaging 2 feet 9 inches in thickness. The adjoining building at the W. end, forming part of the wing, is 17 feet 3 inches by 15 feet 3 inches with walls 3 feet 9 inches thick. This was, perhaps, a tower but there are no original features visible. At the E. end of the N. wall is a piscina and aumbry, each with a two centred arch and chamfered angles.

The chapel has been divided up in a somewhat haphazard fashion into domestic offices with an entrance hall and staircase at the W. end. On the E. side of the hall is a secondary staircase. The W. wing contains two rooms separated by a thick wall, originally the N. external wall of the "tower".

In the garden are some worked stones formerly part of the building, a circular base with roll moulding, part of a jamb of a door or window with double splayed angle, and a double arch springer hollow-chamfered.

I must, in conclusion, express my indebtedness to the present occupier of St. John's, Sir Stephen Tallents, for his kindness in granting permission to inspect and note the building, also for much information and personal help.