

Record and Analysis
The Eagle Ward, The Great Hospital
Bishopsgate, Norwich NR1 1EL
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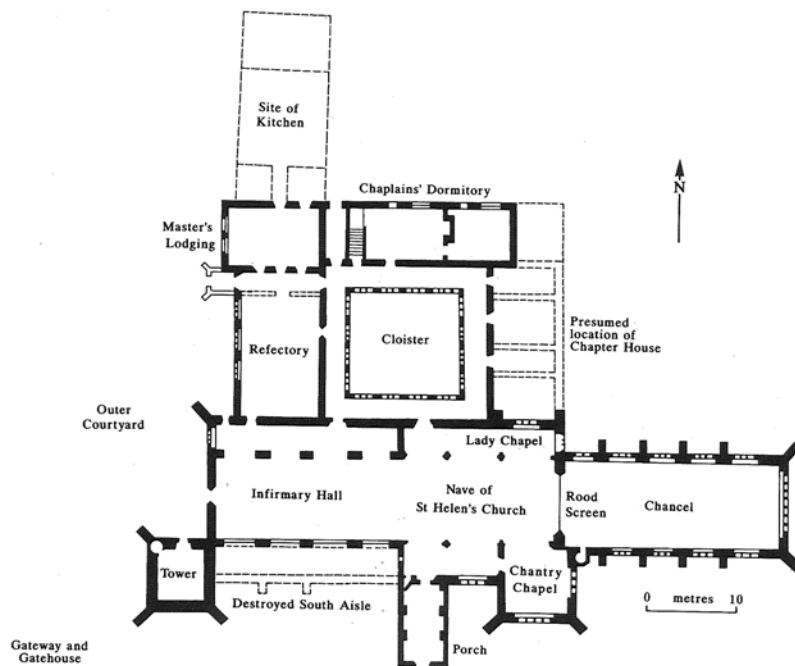


fig.1 Key Plan of The Great Hospital showing the chancel to the right hand side, the Eagle Ward is located at first floor level

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Summary

The Eagle Ward is located at first floor level in the former chancel of the Hospital of St.Giles, a Grade I listed building, grid reference TG2373309020.

The Hospital of St.Giles was founded by the second Bishop of Norwich, Walter Suffield in 1249, however the Infirmary Ward, transept, chancel and cloisters of the Hospital were practically rebuilt by Bishop Despenser in the late fourteenth century. The chancel can be quite accurately dated to 1383 as the boarded ceiling was painted with two hundred and fifty two eagles in preparation for a visit by Richard II and his new bride, Anne of Bohemia whose family emblem was the imperial eagle. The chancel underwent alterations within fifty years of completion when the east window was remodelled.

The next major phase of work was carried out after the Reformation in the sixteenth century when the Hospital was refounded under Civic Authorities and the cult of saints was abandoned. Its name was changed to 'God's House' or the 'Hospital of the Poor on Holme Street.' The chancel was stripped of its stained glass, rood screen and altar. A first floor was inserted and chimneystacks were constructed at the east and west ends partially blocking the east window and severing the chancel's visual connection with the transept. Women who had previously been excluded, were housed in the ground and first floor wards the latter becoming known as the 'Eagle Ward' in connection with the boarded painted ceiling that was left intact.

In the nineteenth century, gothic revival screens were erected to provide one and two bay cubicles with a central communal area for shared meals and two enclosed areas centred around the fireplaces at either end of the ward. It is likely that the painted wooden southern windows were installed at the same time as they are positioned further out than the original stone ones and the partition walls have been built tight up to the replacement mullions.

There is documentary evidence for repair work to the ceiling in the 1950's by Stanley J.Wearing, F.S.A, F.R.I.B.A, whose description of the work printed in *Norfolk Archaeology*, Volume XXXI, Part I, 1955, helped inform the record drawings produced for this report.

The insertion of a fire escape staircase at the east end of the ward, the introduction of electricity and radiators to the communal area and vinyl flooring over the boarded floors of the cubicles can be attributed to the twentieth century. The ward was in use until the early 1980's.

Introduction

The Eagle Ward is a Grade 1 building within a complex of fifteen listed buildings comprising the Great Hospital, formerly known as The Hospital of St.Giles, Norwich. The site is the only surviving medieval hospital with both buildings and archive in tact and is included in the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register. The Eagle Ward is fascinating as part of ecclesiastical and social history. Built to serve as a chancel to a medieval hospital whose prime function was to care for the spiritual wellbeing of the soul, it was reordered after the Reformation into a secular House of God, to care for the poor and thus minimise the risk of civic disorder.

I would like to thank the present Master, Air Commodore Kevin Pellat FCMI RAF and his assistant, Niki Tansley for opening their doors and providing information and encouragement and to Professor Rawcliffe and Dr.Elaine Phillips whose work helped me to understand the nature of medieval hospitals.

The Great Hospital archives are full of detailed information about expenditure ranging from meals to building works but one of the drawbacks has been the limited references made to specific areas. For instance in trying to date the joinery, I found reference to payments made to, 'William Bollings of All Saints, carpenter, the sum of fifty pounds as a further amount,' and would like to think this related to the installation of the wooden cubicles in the Eagle Ward however this remains speculation with no specific mention of the location.¹

While researching the history of the fittings, two unpublished reports came to light by Wilson Compton Associates produced in 2001 and 2002 documenting the Great Hospital as a whole and the east chancel window in particular. These have been very helpful in linking the window tracery with a cathedral master mason, Robert Wodehirst. Unfortunately there is no documentary evidence to support this connection, it relies on Wilson Compton's thorough knowledge of the cathedral and East Anglian window tracery in general. It has helped me to see how important it is to look for connections between styles and mouldings. The exercise of measuring and drawing profiles has provided a far greater understanding of the building.

¹ N/MC2/8, Minute Book, 1811-1826, entry 3rd September 1823

A Brief History Of the Site

The Great Hospital was founded in 1249 by the second Bishop of Norwich, Walter Suffield for the benefit of the poor, sick and homeless, shortly after he was consecrated on 25th February 1245. A group of ecclesiastical and mercantile elite helped him to purchase a site on the north east side of the city just outside the cathedral precinct and strategically close to a bridge on Holme Street which had formed a main route into Norwich since Roman times. The site was on the low-lying pasture land of Cowholme, a marginal piece of land ironically symbolic of the position of such hospitals as, 'brokers between heaven and earth.'² Medieval hospitals could be viewed as, 'a concrete expression in bricks and mortar of Christ's teachings on charity.'³ Unlike modern hospitals, they were primarily for the care of the soul and physical healing was seen as secondary. The proximity to a bridge was fortuitous, bridges were associated with scripture and with bishops in particular, 'Pontifex' an alternative name for 'Bishop,' being translated as 'Bridge Builder.'⁴

Bishop Suffield was not alone in making provision for the needy as between 1201 and 1250 over one hundred and sixty hospitals were built in England adding to network of two hundred and fifty similar institutions that generally followed monastic rule.⁵ Henry VII built the Savoy in London, which was formerly founded by his executors in 1515, based on the Florentine hospital of Santa Maria Nuova for the care of the sick employing physicians and surgeons. However this was the exception to the rule as salaries were expensive and physicians generally made visits to those wealthy enough to receive care in their own homes.⁶

The plan of many Hospitals was similar to that of a parish church. A nave like space accommodated beds for the sick and poor so that they could see the altar in the chancel and participate in worship. The Eucharist was thought to have physical and spiritual healing properties. One of the incentives to acts of charity was that it was widely believed that prayers particularly of the sick could help speed the passage of the soul of the benefactor through purgatory.⁷ In 1215, the fourth Lateran Council promoted the act of confession as an important element in the healing process,⁸ thus reinforcing the bond between the secular and spiritual.

2 Brian Ayers, *Norwich: Archaeology of a Fine City*, (Stroud:Amberley Publishing Ltd., 2009)

3 Carole Rawcliffe, p.5

4 Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul: The Life and Resurrection of an English Medieval Hospital, St. Giles, Norwich c.1249-1550*, (Cornwall: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1999), p.35

5 Orme and Webster, *The English Hospital*, p.11

6 Carole Rawcliffe, *Medical History*, 1984, 28, pp.9-10

7 D.H.Farmer and D.L. Doucie (ed.), *The Life of St. Hugh of Lincoln*, (Oxford: 1985), ii, pp.13-14

8 N.P.Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume I: Nicaea I to Lateran V*, (George town, 1990), pp.245-6

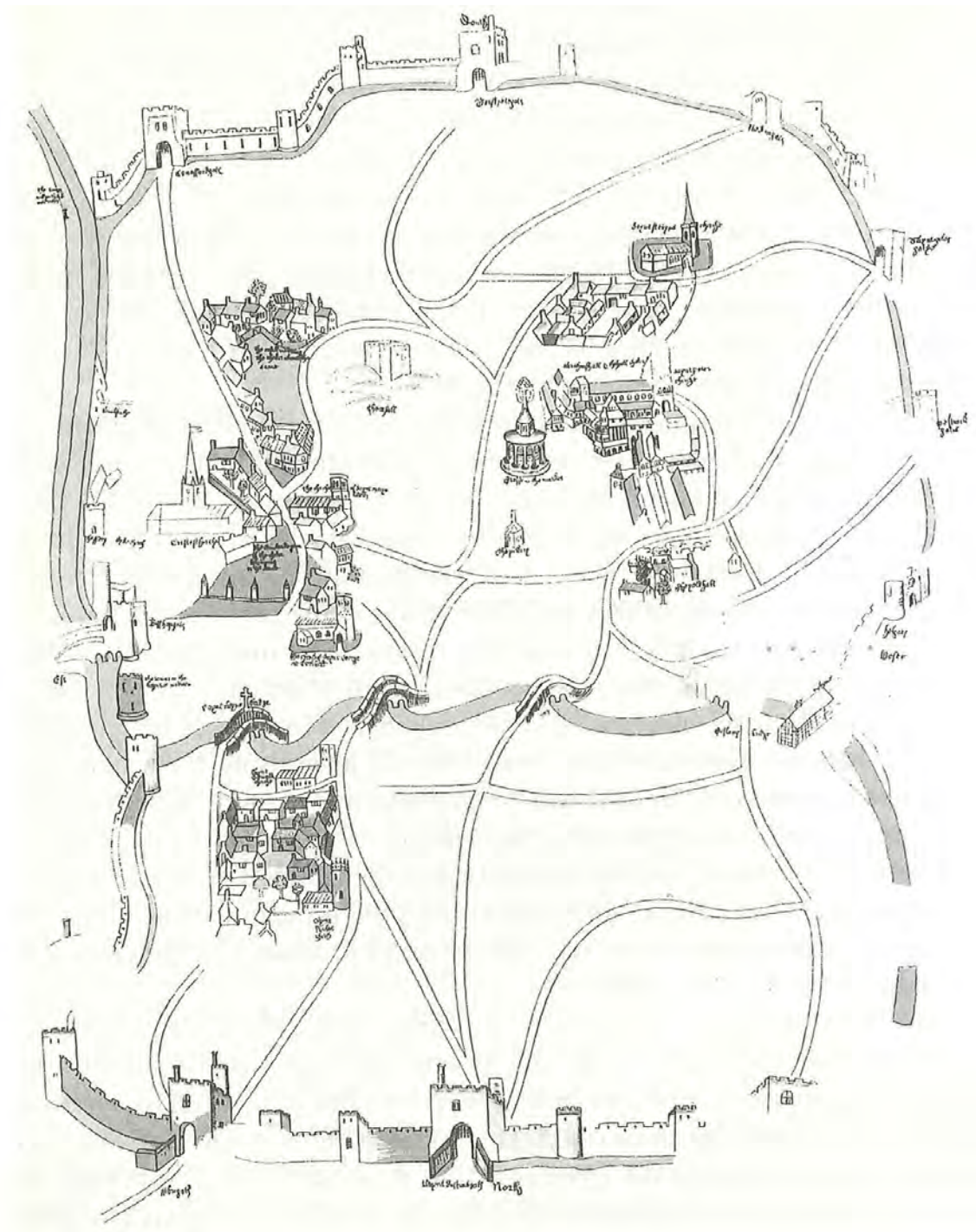


fig.4 Plan of the Medieval Sanctuary, 1541 by Kirkpatrick

Walter Suffield dedicated the hospital to St. Giles (d.710), St. Mary the Virgin and her mother, St. Anne.⁹

Originally the Hospital precinct would have been smaller and more compact than it appears today, extending from Holme Street on the south to a ditch in the meadowland on the north side and from the lane leading to the site of St. Matthew's Church and episcopal school on the west to Bishop's Gate on the east.

The Outer Precinct

The site gradually extended to the river by the piecemeal accumulation of land in the thirteenth century including the donjon near the bend in the River Wensum thought to have been constructed by the prior of Norwich Cathedral as a tollhouse. The outer precinct sustained the work of the hospital with meadows, gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, storehouses, granary, mill and brewhouse so that it resembled a small village.¹⁰ Boundary walls, a gatehouse and porch were constructed in the 14thc. to protect the sanctity of buildings dedicated to spiritual healing.

The Inner Precinct

The parish church of St. Helen originally stood opposite the Hospital within the cathedral precinct but following jurisdictional disputes it was appropriated to the hospital in 1270. The hospital began to open its doors to parishioners leading to the redundancy of the church and resulting in its demolition at the end of the thirteenth century.¹¹

The third Bishop of Norwich, Henry Despenser, embarked on a process of rebuilding the infirmary hall, nave and chancel. This followed a general trend in raising the status of hospital buildings to attract wealthy patrons. It is generally believed that he paid for a large part of the chancel as an act of thanksgiving for the collapse of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. The boarded ceiling of the chancel was decorated by two hundred and fifty-two eagles for the visit, in 1383, of King Richard II and his wife, Anne of Bohemia whose family emblem was the imperial eagle. In 1382, there was a papal mandate ordering the official observance of St. Anne's feast in England to coincide with the royal marriage.¹² The Infirmary Hall which was located on the west side of the church (in the location of the nave) was constructed over a number of years in order to spread costs. It is likely that the master mason working at the Cathedral, Robert Wodhirst carried out work at the hospital. The hall was divided vertically with wards on the ground and first floors as can be seen by the location of a small high-level traceried window in the north aisle that gave visual access to first floor level patients to the chancel and altar beyond. The south aisle was destroyed during Kett's rebellion in 1549 but would have been a mirror image of the north aisle that can be seen today.

Bishop Despenser also built a bell tower as peals of bells were thought to be an

9 NRO, NCR24B
10 Carole Rwcliffe, p.46.
11 Carole Rawcliffe, p46.
12 Carole Rawcliffe, p.118

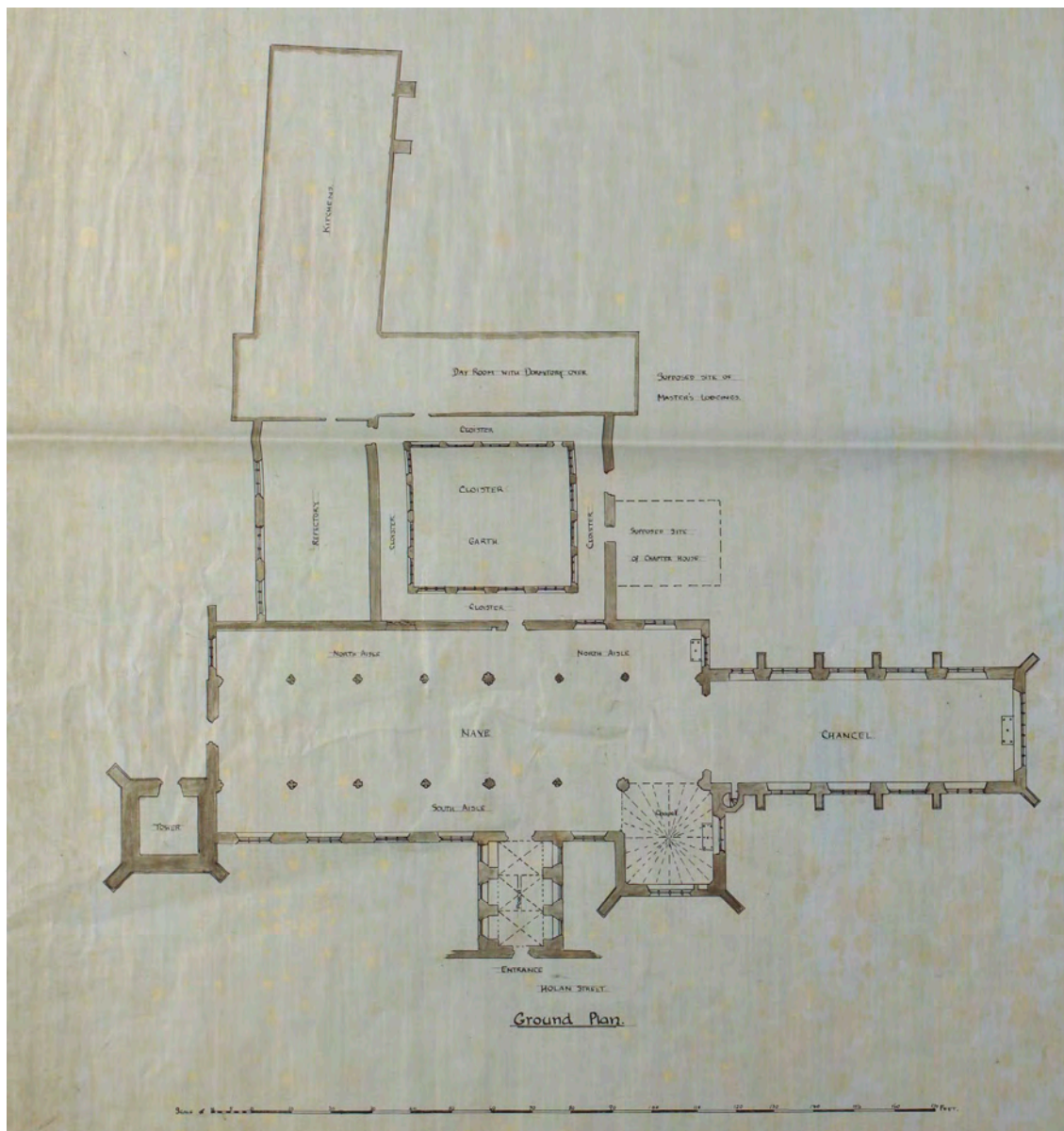


fig.5 Plan showing the 15thc. Layout, BR/35/2/18/2, One of seven plans produced in the 1870's in the Records of Edward Boardman, Architects

important part of the liturgy along with requiem masses and orbits (ceremonies to commemorate the anniversary of someone's death). Relics and indulgences provided by the Pope and bishops were a means of attracting patrons.

In the 15thc. many hospitals were re-ordered on collegiate lines with quadrangles and cloisters. The Great Hospital is likely to have already taken this form, being constructed on Augustinian principles, albeit that the cloister was on the north instead of the customary south side. From 1447-79, new guest chambers, larder, and thatched refectory were constructed. The cloisters were remodeled and dormitories were built above with individual cubicles, which could be rented by priests on limited incomes. From 1370 onwards, masters tended to be more ambitious and required lodgings of a higher standard relating to their status. The master's lodgings were practically rebuilt as part of the remodeling of the cloisters in stone with tiled roofs in lieu of thatch. The Chapterhouse, now demolished, formed the venue of weekly meetings demanded by the founder and it was the place where important documents were signed and sealed and new masters elected. Ironically, it was here that the hospital surrendered to the Crown on 6th March 1547.¹³

A hospitality room for the master followed in 1477-8, which could be accessed by lay visitors from the outer courtyard without disturbing the cloisters, which remained private.

Dr.Elaine Phillips¹⁴ has analysed the effects of the Dissolution on medieval hospitals and concludes that although the role of the Dissolution should not be underplayed, other factors such as the re-emergence of the Black Death in the fifteenth century, also played a significant part in their evolution.

Parliamentary Acts of the Dissolution 1534-47 did not specifically target Hospitals but they affected the way religious houses were perceived and how they were financed. Five parliamentary statutes that were enacted 1536, 39, 45 and 47 ensured that eventually all intercessory institutions were suppressed.¹⁵

Following the Dissolution, many hospitals and particularly ones in towns, were re-founded by civic bodies so that social care could still be extended to the poor but the religious element, that had been the core of medieval hospitals, could be suppressed.

Three London hospitals for the sick survived the Dissolution, St. Mary of Bethlehem that had come under the jurisdiction of the City of London as early as 1346, St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas, which were refounded in 1546 and 1551 respectively. These were the only hospitals for the care of the sick until the emergence of the 'voluntary hospital movement,' in the eighteenth century.¹⁶

The Hospital of St. Giles became known as 'God's House or the House of the Poor on Holme Street,' when it was refounded by the civic authorities.

13 PRO, E322/178

14 Elaine Michelle Phillips, MA, Unpublished PhD thesis, 'Charitable Institutions in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1350-1600,' University of East Anglia, 2001, chapter II

15 Elaine Phillips, Appendix D & p.lix

16 Harriet Richardson (ed.), English Hospitals 1660-1948, A Survey of their Architecture and Design, RCHM, (Exeter: BPC Wheaton Ltd., 1998)

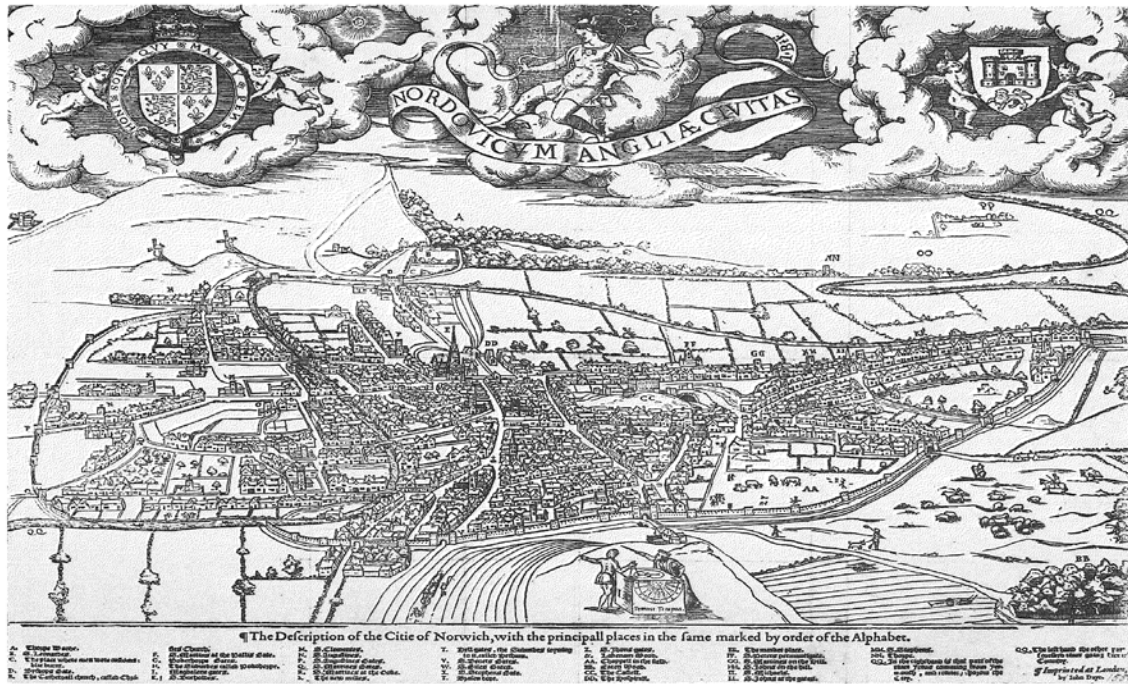


fig.6 Cunningham's Plan of Norwich, 1598



fig.7 Nathaniel Buck's View of Norwich, 1741
The Great Hospital to the left hand side of the Cathedral

On March 15th, 1549, the Assembly met to debate plans, 'concerning the quere (chancel) of the alte hospital,' these involved changing it to a grammar school or taking it down and selling off materials.¹⁷ However their plans were frustrated by an army of 30,000 rebels associated with Kett's Rebellion who formed their headquarters on the edge of Mousehold Heath in the recently dissolved St.Leonard's Priory and St. Michael's Chapel.¹⁸ The Cow Tower was badly damaged and buildings owned by the Great Hospital in Home Street including the south side of the infirmary hall were burnt.¹⁹ In May 1549, following the destruction of property owned by the hospital, the civic authorities were given power to assess what each male was able to pay towards the upkeep for aid to the poor. Redundant churches were sold off and voluntary donations were collected from philanthropic citizens and those keen to avoid further unrest.²⁰

The chancel was blocked off from the nave and subdivided into two wards for women. Chimneystacks were constructed at the east and west ends. Stained glass was removed from the windows, and wooden choir stalls and canopies were ripped out and sold by the corporation. There was still religious provision but it focused on the 'word of God,' in the form of sermons, the Ten Commandments and the creed.²¹ Residents were expected to attend church for four hours a day and to receive communion every three months.²²

God's House gradually acquired more properties that could provide an income so that the number of inmates increased gradually from forty in the 1550's to fifty four in 1600 and ninety-five in 1669. The rules for selecting inmates changed in 1622 when selection was by a free vote of the aldermen and not purely by a letter of recommendation.²³

In 1712 the running of the hospital passed from the mayor and sheriffs to a corporation of guardians of aldermen. By 1749, there were a hundred residents, a schoolmaster, master and gaol chaplain. In 1770 the hospital committee leased three acres of land so that the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital could be built.

The nineteenth century brought with it strains on the economy caused by the Napoleonic Wars. Lead was taken off the chancel and other roofs and sold. The economy in Norwich improved following Waterloo and in the 1820's, the Hospital expanded adding new wards and accommodation in the form of the 'White Cottages.' Men and women were still segregated in line with the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834. In 1839, the age of entry was raised to sixty-five and blue jackets and trousers were provided for residents so that they could be easily identified. Not till 1889 were sick wards added and married couples admitted. In 1906 a range of twelve cottages were built and these were again added to in 1937 to house married couples who were given a small allowance for food so that they could be self sufficient.

17 NRO,NCR,16A, Norwich Assembly Proceedings

18 Carole Rawcliffe, p228

19 Brian Ayers, p145

20 NRO, NCR,24A, GH Accounts Box 1548-1556, June 1550-1

21 J.Bossy, 'Moral Arithmetic: 7Sins into 10Commandments,' in E.Leites (ed.), Conscience and Casuity in Early Modern Europe,' Cambridge, 1988, p288.

22 Carole Rawcliffe, p.235

23 John Brooks, The Great Hospital, Norwich, (Norwich: Jarrold Publishing), p15

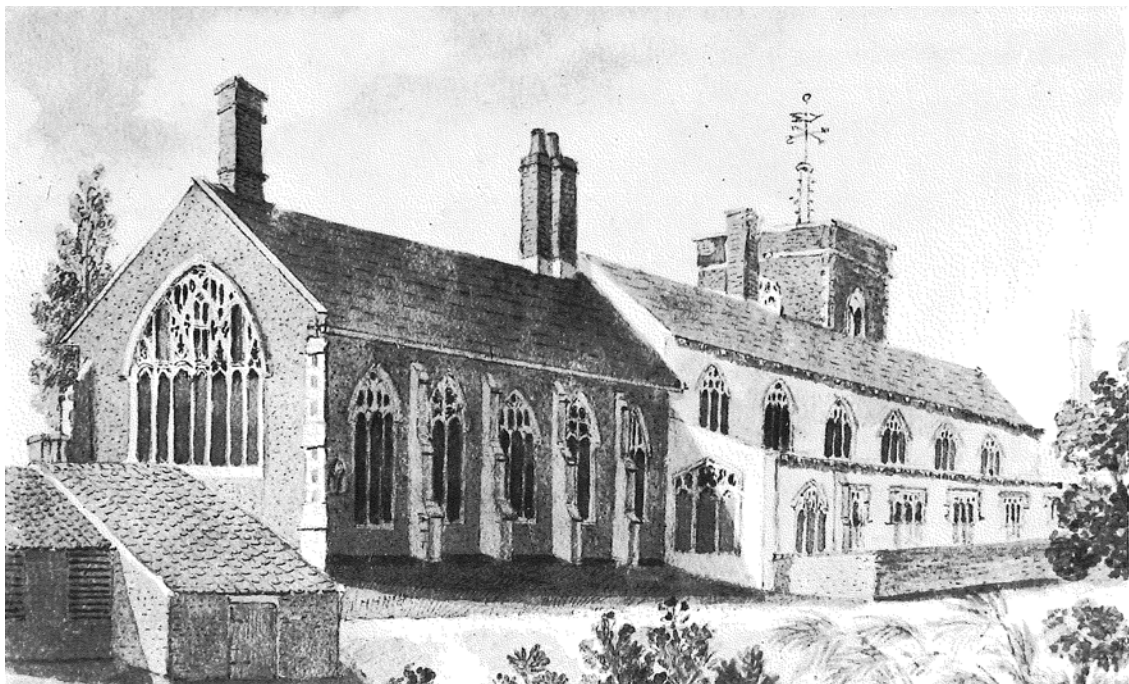


fig.8 (upper) Thomas Cleer's Map of the City of Norwich, 1669

fig.9 (lower) A View of the Chancel by James Sillet (1764-1840)

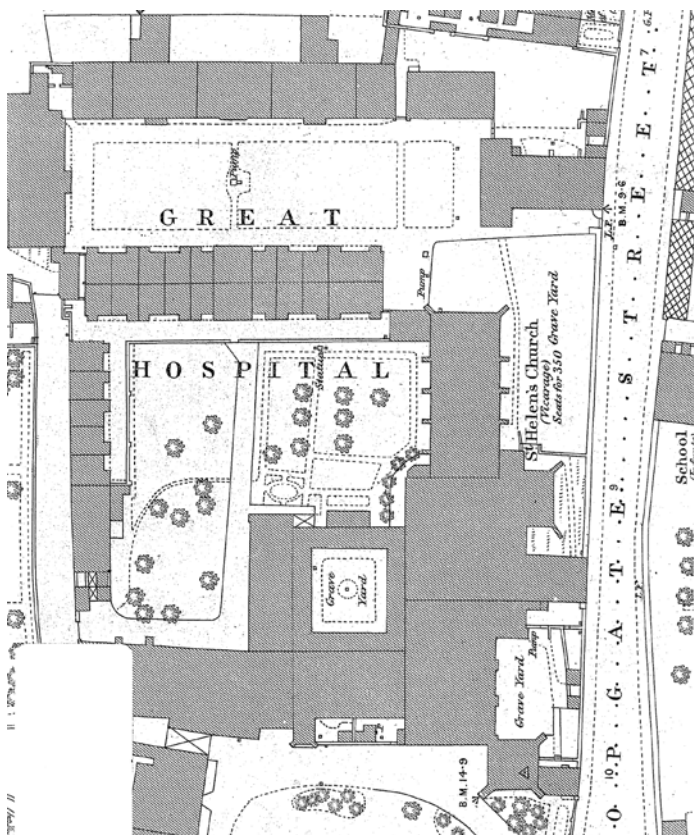
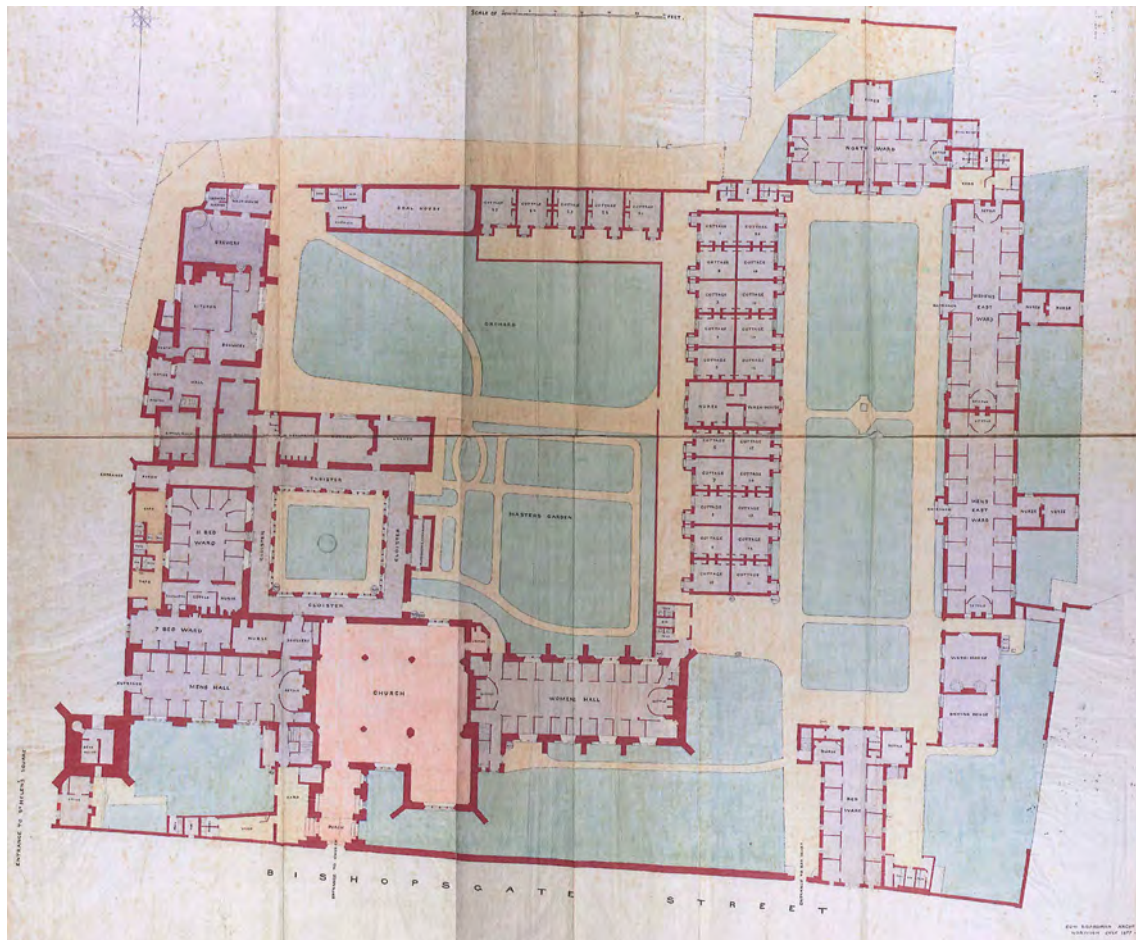


fig.10 (upper) Detailed Plan by Edward Boardman, July 1877 (BR/35/2/18) showing the ground floor layout of the Great Hospital in the 19thc. Note the cast iron posts are missing from the lower ward in the chancel

fig.11 (lower) Extract of Ordnance Survey Map, 1875, The projection for the staircase is shown to the south west side of the chancel in the position of the former vice stair leading to the roodloft

Reports after the war were critical of the accommodation offered in the wards and cottages. The ward cubicles offered less space per person than recommended by the authorities and both the cottages and wards had shared toilet facilities, in a separate block. In 1952 roof repairs were made in the Eagle Ward and St. Helen's Church, which have helped inform the record drawings, presented in this report. The Eagle Ward was closed in the 1980's but the cubicles were left as they were with their fittings and furniture. In 1972, Elaine Herbert House opened with facilities for the sick and elderly offering twenty-four hour care.

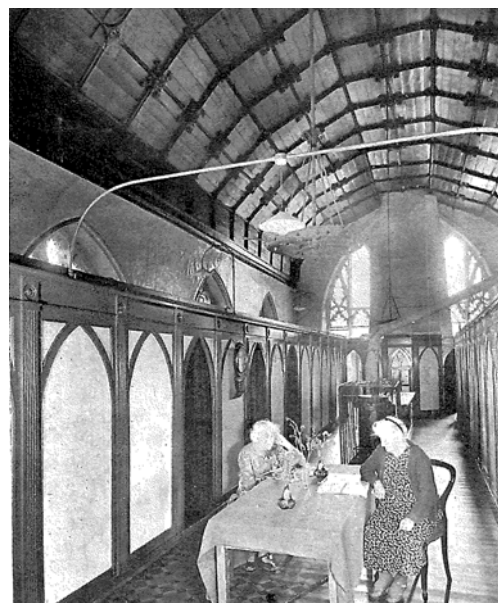
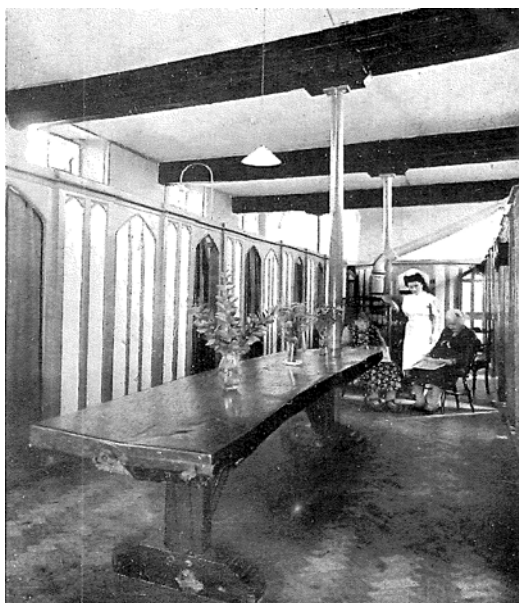
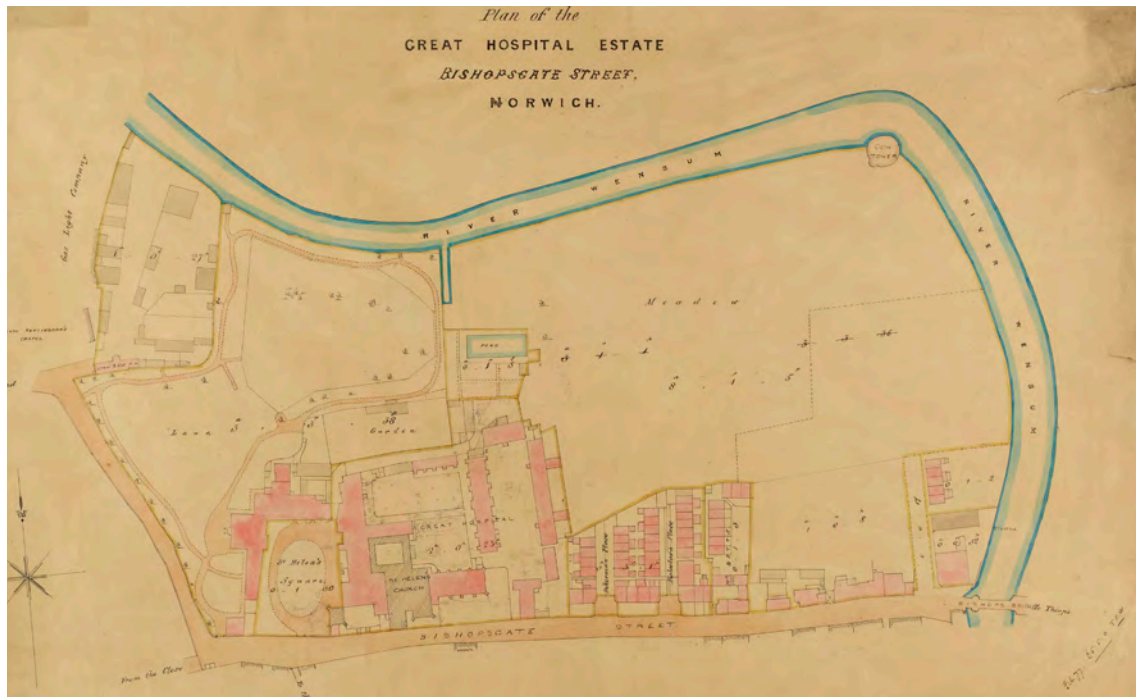


fig.12(upper) Plan of the Great Hospital Estate, Bishopsgate Street, Norwich, 1877 by C.Hornor, surveyor Norwich (NRO BR35/2/18/4)
fig.13a (lower right) The Eagle Ward, fig.13b(lower left), The Pump Ward, (both from Country Life, 1947)

Description And Analysis of the Eagle Ward

The Chancel of St. Helen's Church containing the Eagle Ward is a five bay rectilinear building with limestone dressings. It has a pitched roof with slate tiles graded in diminishing courses towards the apex. Rainwater goods are cast iron and there are two brick chimneystacks, one at either end of the roof. Each bay has a pair of buttresses comprising flint facings with stone dressings and appear to have been part of the original design. Although some of the buttresses on the south side have the remnants of a stone plinth, only a small fragment remains at the base of the main walls and appears on the south elevation at the west corner (fig.19). It is likely that the stone plinth has eroded and over the years has been gradually replaced by flint.

There is a stone stringcourse to the east gable wall and a large perpendicular traceried window above (fig.16). Brick and flint infill below the sill infer that the window replaces a larger original one though the design is perpendicular and corresponds stylistically to the early fifteenth century. While I was researching the Eagle Ward, I asked the master if the date of the internal partitions was known. He responded promptly by saying that he'd found some information that maybe helpful while looking for something else. A report on the East window by Wilson Compton Associates in 2001, preceding work to restore the tracery, dated the window to a first phase of upgrading, after the completion of the chancel. It is thought that the new composition was installed within fifty years of the original design. This would account for the moulding profile and design being slightly different from the windows on the north elevation, a rare, early example of a combination of the curvilinear and perpendicular styles.²⁴ It is likely that the work was carried out by a cathedral master mason, Robert Wodehirst whose work on the cathedral cloisters bares a resemblance to the style of the tracery (fig. 31).²⁵ The lights are leaded in a diamond configuration. Areas of blocking to the central area of the window identify the position of the chimneystack and fireplace located at the east end of the ward.

24 Wilson Compton Associates, Recording and Analysis of the Chancel East Window in Advance of Restoration, March 2001, p.20

25 Richard Fawcett in I.Atherton, E.Fernie, C.Harper-Bill and Hassell Smith (eds.), Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese, 1096-1996, 1996, pp.210-227



fig.14(upper) North Elevation of the Chancel
 fig.15 (middle) South Elevation
 fig.16 (lower) East Elevation of the Chancel

The north elevation comprises four perpendicular windows carved from limestone with subarcuated and cruciform lobing tracery (figs 32 & 33).²⁶ There are two alternating designs followed by a fifth two light window of smaller dimensions to the west end. All have stone sills and hood mouldings with no obvious infill below sill level to denote alterations to the original shape and size of the openings. Stylistically the decorated form and the state of the eroded original masonry suggest that these windows are original. They are partly glazed with diamond shaped leaded lights with areas of clear-float glass below the tracery and the same infilled areas towards the base (the reason for this becomes apparent when the interior of the ground floor area is surveyed). The south elevation has the same arrangement of buttresses framing four gothic arches as the north side but the carved stone windows jambs, mullions and transoms have been replaced by painted joinery below carved stone hood moulds (figs 15 & 18a). Areas of flint infill above the remnants of a stone sill infer that the window openings have been shortened. The concrete sills suggest that the original wooden sills have been replaced in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century with a modern utilitarian equivalent. If this work had been carried out during the 1950's repair work to the roof, I would have expected stone to be used and the adoption of the original profile of the stone sills on the north side. Stanley Wearing took great pains to repair on a like for like basis. The report on the repair work to the roof he repaired in 1955²⁷ doesn't mention the windows, which suggests that this work predates the report. Unlike the north elevation, the buttresses on the south elevation have a stone plinth. A brick addition to the west end has partly subsumed the last buttress so that only 80mm of it is still visible (fig. 18a).

Entry to the Eagle Ward is through a carved wooden doorway with mouldings characteristic of the sixteenth century. The door surround and leaf are sufficiently worn to suggest they belong to the post reformation re-ordering. There is a small lobby area comprising high level curved boarding on the right hand side and wooden partitions on the left with access to an area marked 'village shop.' Overhead is the end of a painted moulded beam that has been built into the masonry. A second doorway opens onto a sixteenth century staircase with oak treads and risers of a gentle pitch. Square oak newel posts with stop chamfers at head and base and carved newel caps in the form of large acorns. A roll topped, oak handrail on either side is infilled with plasterwork on the free side. At the top of the staircase there is a frameless arched doorleaf in a light-weight partition wall leading into the Eagle Ward.

26 John Harvey, *The Perpendicular Style 1330-1485*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1978), pp. 244-5
 27 Stanley J. Wearing, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., *The Great Hospital, Norwich*, reprinted from *Norfolk Archaeology*, Volume XXXI, Part I, 1955



fig.17a(upper left) North Elevation window
 fig.17b (upper right) Western most window
 on north elevation (reduced in width to allow
 space for the rood screen)
 fig.18a(middle left) Western bay of south ele-
 vation showing the end buttress subsumed by
 the brick enclosure for the sixteenth century
 staircase providing acces to the Eagle Ward
 fig.18b (middle right) Detail of Newel Cap to
 the sixteenth century staircase
 fig.19 (lower) Remnant of the stone base to
 the buttresses on the south elevation

The first impression of the Eagle Ward is of a vast lofty ecclesiastical space with a beautifully painted boarded ceiling forming a faceted vault. There are two hundred and fifty two chestnut panels fitted between carved ribbing to the underside of a scissor truss roof. An open/unboarded roof of a similar design can be seen at St. Edwards Church in Cambridge and dates from about 1400 (fig.30). The roof of the Eagle Ward can be quite accurately dated by a royal visit in 1382 for which it was painted with imperial eagles, the devise of Anne of Bohemia's family. The insertion of a first floor allows a much closer view of the carved bosses that adorn the intersecting ribs than would have been possible from the floor of the original chancel of St. Helen's Church. They are a mixture of intricately carved and painted floral compositions and human heads.



fig.20 The East end of the Eagle Ward



fig.21 (upper) The west archway to the chancel blocked by the sixteenth century chimneybreast
 fig.22 (middle) Detail of the Wooden partitions
 fig.23 (lower) View into the 'snug' from the central communal area

The second remarkable feature is the huge chimneystack that partly obscures the east window (fig.20). It has taken the position of the altar and is mirrored at the west end by a similar arrangement filling an archway, which would have connected the chancel to the transept (fig.21). The chimneystacks serve fireplaces at ground and first floor levels. The stack at the east end is offset from the traceried window leaving a gap behind the brickwork to avoid heat damaging the external wall. Unplastered painted brickwork form the fireplaces at ground and first floor. These have a small arched openings appropriate for the use of coal and are likely to be nineteenth century. They have painted mantle shelves on wooden brackets.

The absence of stained glass contributes to the feeling of openness despite the space being divided by carved wooden cubicles. These have gothic revival archways hung with curtains. A note in the Trustees' meeting Book, 7th May 1826 makes reference to replacement bed and door curtains required for the Eagle Ward.²⁸ The ends of the ward with the fireplaces are enclosed with curved wooden partition walls. Unlike the individual compartments, they are fitted with outward opening, hinged door leafs and Suffolk latches and originally had separate ceilings and were know as the 'snugs' (fig.23). The partitions date from the 1820's as reference is made to them in a commemorative triglyph alongside other work undertaken by the master, Mordecai Drake (fig.29). They were inserted into the ward to provide privacy for residents. Hospitals in general moved away from small rooms in the ninth century to large infirmary wards in the twelfth century reflecting a tendency towards community living on the part of clerics and laymen. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was a growing interest in privacy by partitioning the Lord's Hall or monk's dormitory. Compartments could be created by a simple curtain or outstretched tapestry to combat draughts. By the twelfth century even St. Benedict's order subdivided dormitories. The twelfth century infirmary Hall at Fountains Abbey was subdivided into fifteen rooms judging from existing doorsills. St. Mary's, Chichester, enclosed a combined hall and chapel within the common vernacular form of a barn with low eaves so that the rooms could be easily partitioned along the sidewalls and open to the high pitched rafters. This structure was also modernised in the seventeenth century with the addition of fireplaces.²⁹

28 N/MC2/8, Meeting Notes 1826-1835

29 John D.Thompson and Grace Goldin, *The Hospital: A Social and Architectural History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), p.41



fig.24a (upper left) Interior of a cubicle on the North side of the Ward with the original stone window surrounds and decorated perpendicular style tracery. Raised ventilated cupboard for storing food
 fig.24b (upper right) Interior of a cubicle on the south side of the Ward with the nineteenth century painted replacement joinery to the window
 fig.25a (lower left) Typical detail of the boarded partiion walls that subdivide the cubicles at the junction with a window on the north side
 fig.25b (lower right) The remnants of a carved jamb to the original windows on the south side

In 1847, I.H. Parker wrote an article denouncing the accommodation, 'the revenues of this hospital now amount to above £10,000 a year yet to the disgrace of the trustees, this fine church is still allowed to be spoiled by being divided into wards or cells for the old men and women, instead of erecting a suitable building for them, and restoring the church to its proper uses.'³⁰ However by 1947, the ward system was praised by Arthur Oswald writing for *Country Life*, 'in the cubicle system of its wards you may see a happy adoption of a communal way of life inherited from the middle ages and you may also see a quadrangle of houses for old married couples erected as recently as 1937.'³¹ My impression is one of a well-used and well-loved space that residents regretted leaving for their new accommodation in the 1980's.

The floor is boarded and finished with patterned vinyl sheeting. There is a 50mm step up into each cubicle and most cubicles comprise a bedroom and adjacent living space connected by an opening in the board and muntin partition walls. The exception to this rule, are the two middle cubicles, which are fitted with a single bed in each. A raised cupboard with a mesh front is fitted in the living areas and may have been used for storing small items of food (fig.24a).

A central refectory table and chairs in the communal corridor was used for shared meals. The toilets and washing facilities were located in a separate building. There is now electrical wiring in painted conduit that runs along the top of the partition walls.

Dividing walls are positioned to coincide with window mullions and each room has an opening light in the area of modern clearfloat glazing below the leaded traceried areas.

The south side of the ward has painted joinery windows. Here the joinery has been pushed further out on the external walls than the stone surrounds on the north side. The remnants of the carved stone surrounds are still evident at low level (fig.25b). On both the north and south sides, a sloping boarded area connects the floor to the lowest transom so that the window can continue below as part of the ground floor rooms.

At the east end, there is a small modern wooden staircase with winders leading to the ground floor area below the ward and replaces a fire escape staircase constructed in the 1950's which cut into the sill of the east window.³²

The staircase passes a window on its descent to a small ground floor lobby with an external door. A small arched doorway leads to the Pump Ward directly below the Eagle Ward. This room has been altered with the removal of some of the wooden cubicles and the partitioning off of the west end to form a store. The windows have been partially blocked and it now becomes clear why there is a repetitive area of infill to the lower lights on the north and south elevations (fig.26). Large carved beams, re-used from the Bishop's Palace in 1570, connect the north and south walls at regular intervals dividing

30 I.H. Parker, 'Memoirs Illustrative of the History and Antiquities of Norfolk and the City of Norwich,' communicated to the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland held at Norwich July 1847, (London: Office of the Archaeological Institute, MDCCCLI)

31 Arthur Oswald, *Country Life*, The Great hospital, Norwich, December 19th 1947, pp.1258-61

32 Wilson and Compton, p.26



fig.26 (upper) Junction of carved oak beam thought to have been relocated from the Bishop's palace in the 1570's during the re-ordering of the chancel to provide a lower and upper ward for women

fig.27 (middle) Wooden partitions similar in style and layout to those of the Eagle Ward above

fig.28 (lower) Detail of a cast iron post inserted under one of the beams likely to date from the nineteenth century repair works (although they don't appear on Edward Boardman's plan of July 1877, fig.10.



the space into five bays. Iron columns support the underside of the beams post dating the sixteenth century re-ordering works. It is likely that they were part of a larger phase of works to upgrade the fabric of the Great Hospital in 1835. This may have included the painted interlacing windows on the south elevation as similar window from that date can be seen elsewhere on the site.

The remnants of panelling infer a similar layout to the Eagle Ward above with a snug at either end, a central corridor space for communal and cubicles for privacy either side but open to the white washed lath and plaster ceiling of the main space. This is substantiated by Edward Boardman's ground floor plan of July 1877 (fig.10). The detailing to the cubicle joinery is a simpler version of the gothic revival style of the Eagle Ward (fig.27). Areas of the boarded floor have been taken up uncovering a mixture of red floor bricks and pammments.

Conclusion

The Chancel of St.Helen's Church is a testimony to the flexibility of historic buildings in adapting to social, spiritual and political change. It has weathered periods of economic decline and been bruised by local civic unrest. At this time, the trustees of the Great Hospital are thinking about how best to utilise this area of the site. There are several plans afoot including a learning centre for early medical practices. This would enable the ground floor area to be opened up and the Eagle Ward to remain as it is for interpretation purposes.

I wonder how feasible it would be to offer shelter for the homeless in the lower ward to continue the work the founder felt so passionately about.

I feel certain that the future of the Eagle Ward will be as colourful and exciting as its past.

ILLUSTRATIONS



fig.29 Commemorative Trygliph celebrating 700 years of the Great Hospital

Fig.1: Key Plan of the Great Hospital from, John Brooks, *The Great Hospital*, (Norwich:Jarrold Publishing)

Fig.2: A Map of Norwich, c.1630 (NRO,ACC 1997/215) from Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul: The Life and Resurrection of an English Medieval Hospital, St. Giles, Norwich c.1249-1550*, (Cornwall: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1999)

Fig.3: A Map of Norwich showing the Hospital of St.Giles in context with other medieval hospitals in the city from Carole Rawcliffe

Fig.4: Plan of the Medieval Sanctuary, 1541 by Kirkpatrick, from John Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich*, (Surrey: Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1988)

Fig.5: Plan showing the 15thc. Layout, one of seven plans produced by Edward Boardman's Norwich Practice, (NRO, BR/35/2/18/1)

Fig.6: Cunningham's Map of Norwich, 1558 from John Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich*, (Surrey: Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1988)

Fig.7: The North East Prospect of the City of Norwich, engraved by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, 1741 from Alec Cotman (ed. and compiled by), *Old Norwich: A Collection of Paintings, Prints and Drawings of An Ancient City*, (Norwich:Jarrold, 1961)

Fig.8: Thomas Cleer's Map of Norwich, 1696 from John Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich*, (Surrey: Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1988)

Fig.9: St. Helen's Church and Hospital, Monochrome drawing by James Sillett (1764-1840) from Alec Cotman (ed. and compiled by), *Old Norwich: A collection of Paintings, Prints and Drawings of an Ancient City*, (Norwich: Jarrold, 1961)

Fig.10: Detailed Plan of the Great Hospital, Edward Boardman, July 1877, (NRO, BR/35/2/18/2)

Fig.11: Extract from Ordnance Survey Map, 1875

Fig.12: Plan of the Great Hospital Estate, Bishopsgate, Norwich, 1877 by C.Hornor (NRO, BR35/2/18/4)

Fig.13a & 13b: View of the Eagle Ward & View of the Pump Ward from Arnold Oswald, 'The Great Hospital,' *Country Life*, Dec.19, 1947, p.1261

Fig.14-28: Photographs. March/April 2013

Fig.29: M.J.P.Chaplin of Norwich, Commemorative Triglyph recording some of the historical events during the hospital's existence to commemorate the 700th anniversary

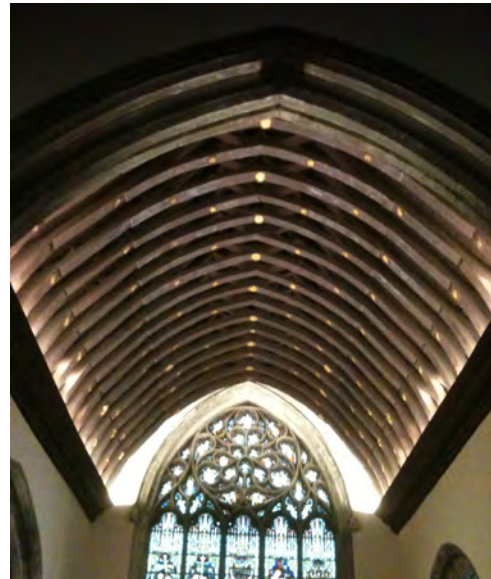
APPENDIX

fig. 30 (upper right): The Roof of St.Edward's Church Cambridge c.1400

fig.31 (lower right): Photograph of the cloisters at Norwich Cathedral, sharing similarities with the tracery at the Great Hospital

fig.32 (upper left): Distribution of Cruciform Lobing from John Harvey, *Perpendicular Style 1330-1485*

fig.33 (lower left): Distribution Map of dated Subarcuated Intersection from John Harvey



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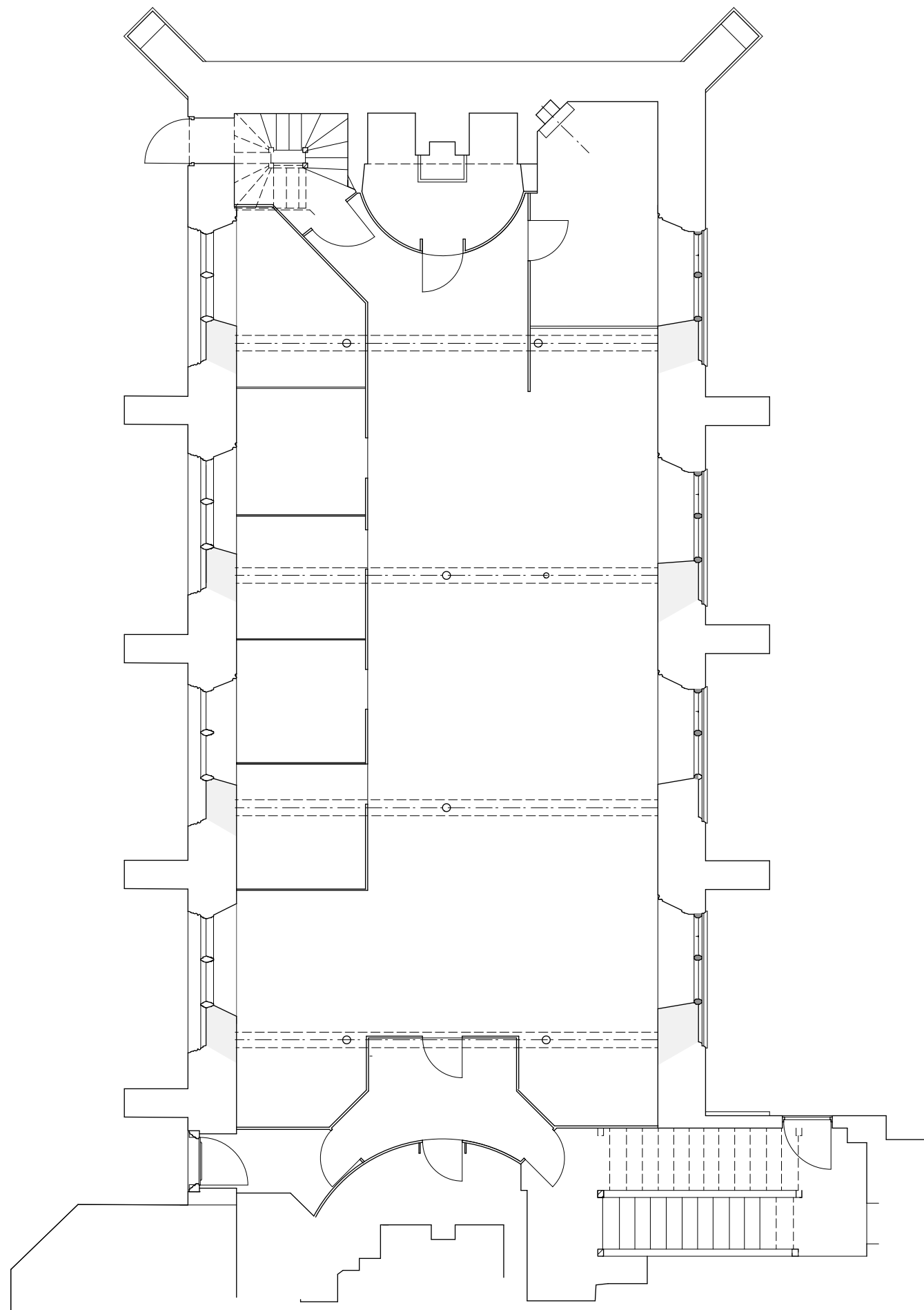
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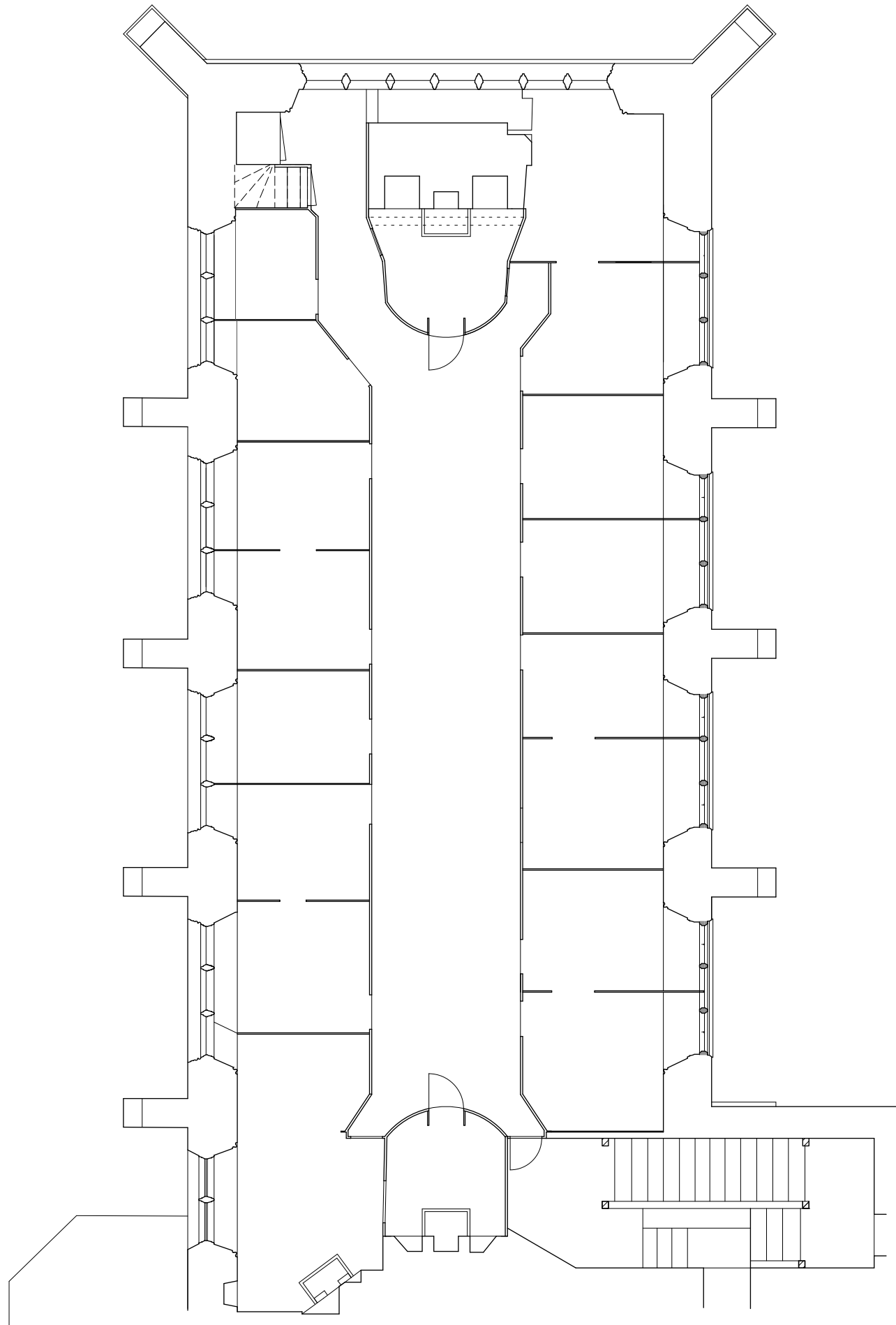
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1 0 10 METRES

GROUND FLOOR PLAN: CHANCEL/THE PUMP WARD

Great Hospital, Norwich
Surveyed: March/April 2013
Grid ref: TG2373309020
Drawn: Karen J.Lim



1 0 10 METRES

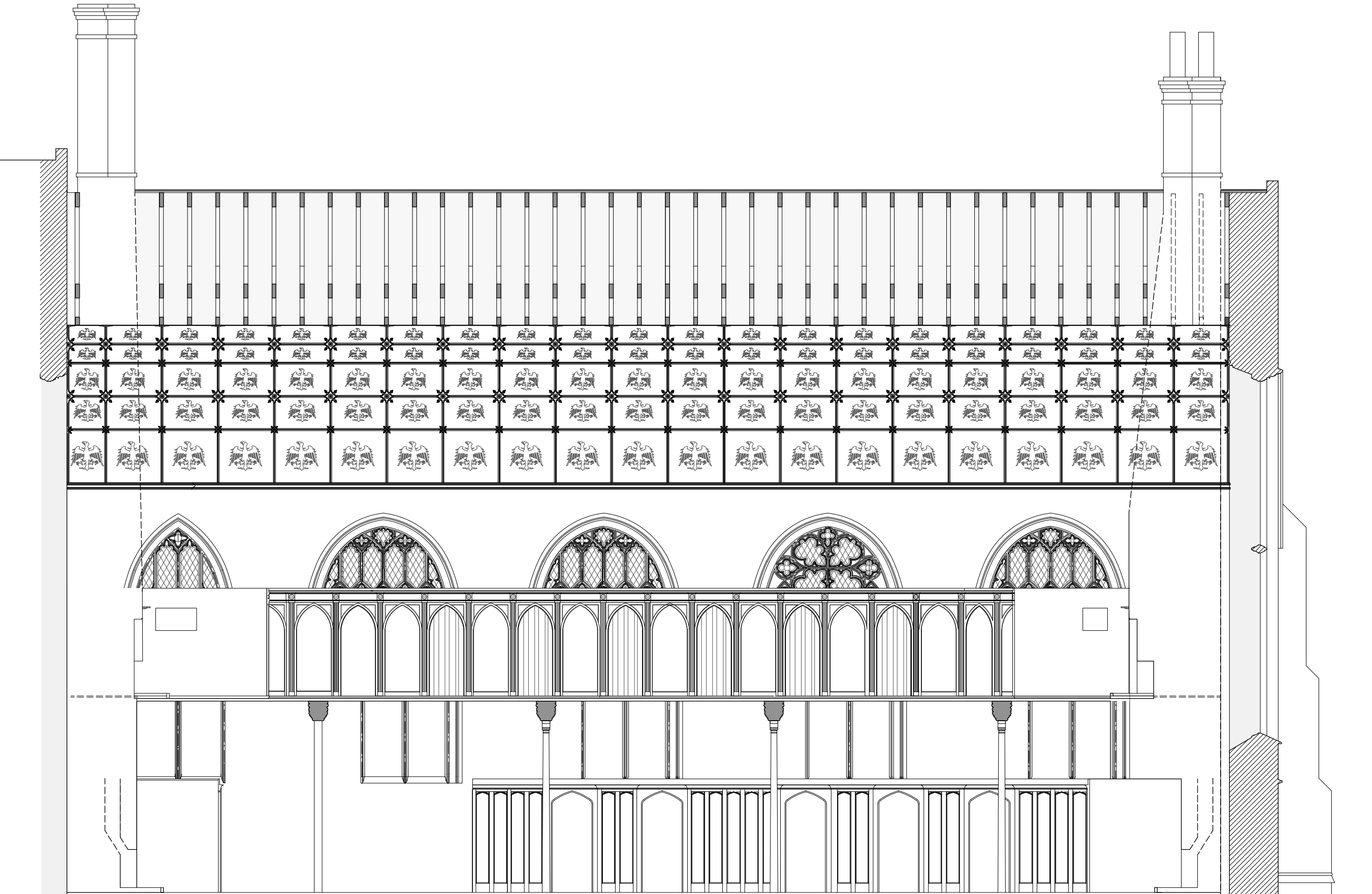
FIRST FLOOR PLAN: CHANCEL/THE EAGLE WARD

Great Hospital, Norwich
Surveyed: March/April 2013
Grid ref: TG2373309020
Drawn: Karen J.Lim



1 0 10 METRES

LONG SECTION LOOKING NORTH: CHANCEL
 SHORT SECTION LOOKING EAST : CHANCEL
 Great Hospital Norwich
 Surveyed: March/April 2013
 Grid ref: TG2373309020
 Drawn: Karen J.Lim



LONG SECTION LOOKING NORTH: CHANCEL

Surveyed: March/April 2013
Grid ref: TG2373309020
Drawn: Karen J.Lim