

*Note: the names of some of the rooms have been changed since this guide was written and the audioguide and some of the displays no longer exist. It is probably still the most comprehensive guide to Dragon Hall, with a full bibliography. 14.1.16*

# A GUIDE TO DRAGON HALL



## FOR VOLUNTEERS

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## PREFACE

This document was drafted for the re-opening of the Hall after the Heritage Lottery Fund project of 2005/06. It was intended to replace and incorporate most of the information hitherto available to guides in a variety of places. It draws on the "Unguided Tour" booklet by Ian Caldwell, previously available to the public; on notes prepared by Ann Rostron, Vic Nierop-Reading, Chris Barringer and Andy Shelley; and on work done by many experts and volunteers since the conservation of Dragon Hall started. It also attempts to use some of the wealth of archaeological and documentary information in "Dragon Hall, King Street, Norwich: Excavation and Survey of a Late Medieval Merchant's Trading Complex" by Andy Shelley, East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 112 (2005) of which a copy is currently available in the office, or to purchase in the shop.

The sequence follows that of the previous audioguide which has been, or soon will be, replaced by a new audiotour.

For existing and experienced guides, therefore, our document will contain much that is already known but we hope that it will serve as a useful, but not exhaustive, summary of the information available.

It is intended to be the main briefing document for new guides who may not have any specific local or historical knowledge but who want to get an understanding of the whole Dragon Hall site and its history from the earliest times until today. Therefore, we have tried to present the site as a journey through some thousand years of history, with the Great Hall as the focal, and almost the middle, point but as only part of a story of continuous change and adaptation up to the present day.

Wherever possible we have based our information on the most authoritative and up to date research available, and to avoid giving a too "cluttered" appearance we have only shown the references for direct quotations. Any references given refer to the Bibliography, which will provide a much fuller list for further research and reference.

This document will inevitably contain some errors and omissions, although we have endeavoured to have everything checked by experts, and we would be grateful to receive corrections and suggestions so that it can be revised from time to time.

We would like to thank all those whose work over the years has contributed to these notes.

JH/NH/RJM October 2005

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## INTRODUCTION

As for visitors with an audioguide, we start in the Gallery and provide a general introduction and some historical background to set Dragon Hall in context. The audioguide then takes visitors directly to the ground floor Display Rooms, to the cellars and then up to the Great Hall.

For new guides however we deal first with features which pre-date the Great Hall and go next to Location 1(A), the site of the C13th flint and rubble hall house, to include the south doorway from Old Barge Yard, and the Screens Passage, which – together with the boundary wall – pre-date the Great Hall itself. We also suggest that new guides then walk round the outside of the whole complex.

Perhaps the biggest single difficulty that new guides and visitors have with understanding the chronology of the building is the existence of the different levels on the ground floor and in the cellars and undercroft, all relating to different periods in the history of the complex. We recommend therefore that new guides study the ground and section plans. Visitors will also find the domestic terrace appearance of the King Street frontage misleading and will need reminding that all of the windows are from the post-Toppes era.

The information is designed to give guides a reasonable understanding of the whole complex and to provide background information, some of which may be more than the average visitor wants or needs. Guides who take tours will want to make their own selection from this information and tailor their talks and their route to the needs of specific visitors. This could include using the information for Location 1(A) at appropriate points on the tour as well as in their introduction when in the Gallery.

Similarly, some of the background information below will overlap with the displays on World Trade, Local Trade and the history of King Street etc. in the Gallery, Display Rooms 1, 2, 3 and the Old Barge Room. Volunteer Guides may want to use some of these as visual aids to their talks to visitors and therefore postpone some of the detail until they reach the relevant display. A summary of the displays is given for each Location.

The specific items and features of the building that Guides may wish to refer visitors to are shown in **bold type**.

### WHAT IS DRAGON HALL?

Dragon Hall is a unique surviving example of a C15th merchant's trading hall – a combination of warehouse and showroom – not a house or guildhall. It was built c.1430 by Robert Toppes, who exported and imported cloth and other products to and from Flanders, the Netherlands and Northern Europe. The Great Hall is the centrepiece of the tour, but the site contains more than the trading hall: it represents a kind of journey through time, from the traces of Saxon habitation, through many changes of use, re-development, sub-division, rebuilding and demolition, to C20th

residential, commercial and pub use, and then to conservation and restoration from the 1980s to 2006. Thus, it closely parallels the changing character of King Street itself.

We should note that Dragon Hall was only given its present name after the discovery of a carving of a dragon in the Great Hall during the 1980s restoration work. Toppes didn't seem to have his own name for it, referring to it in his will as "Splytte's" – Splytte being the owner or tenant of part of the site before Toppes. In conveyances from the late C15th to the late C17th the whole site is referred to as "Middy's", after the family who owned the hall house in the mid-C14th. The term "Meddyz Inn" is first used only in 1744 by the antiquarian, Blomefield.

• **NOTE ON TRADING HALLS:**

"The rarity of the Great Hall has been established by comparison with similar but not identical buildings and spaces in Britain and Northern Europe. There are examples of trading halls built by guilds such as the Merchant Adventurers in York but these were groups, not an individual trading on his own account. There are examples of non-residential urban trading houses in North Germany and the Low Countries. An example from Straslund on the North German Baltic coast ... shows features similar to Dragon Hall, a storage basement, a trading and display hall, and no residential function and probably an individual trader. Dragon Hall may have been influenced by Toppes' trading links with the continent. Its rarity is that there is no other example of this influence on a building in Britain by an individual". (Dragon Hall Conservation Plan: Revised November 1999: p.49).

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

To understand why Dragon Hall was built here, we need to know a little about its historical context and the man, Robert Toppes, who built it. To do that we will look briefly at medieval Norwich and its trade; at the history of King Street and this specific site; and at the life of Robert Toppes; and, to bring the story up to date, we will outline how Dragon Hall was "re-discovered" and restored. The Display Rooms will provide more detailed and additional visual evidence on all these topics.

• **MEDIEVAL NORWICH**

The origins of the status of medieval Norwich as a regional, national and international centre of trade, ecclesiastical power and civic government, lay in its position on the River Wensum, its role as a local commercial centre and the Normans' creation of the Castle (by 1075) and the Cathedral, founded in 1096. In the C15th it was one of the largest and wealthiest cities in England. From its royal charters of 1158 up to that of 1417 Norwich gained a growing degree of self-government.

The charter of 1404 allowed the city to have its own elected Mayor, two elected sheriffs, 24 aldermen and 60 elected common councillors. The city was divided into four wards or leets, which were sub-divided into wards or sub-leets, represented by two aldermen who were elected

for life. The wards were comprised of the various parishes which also had a role in the government of the city. Dragon Hall was in the parish of St. Julian, in the ward of South Conesford, part of Conesford leet.

From the cloth trade Norwich had acquired civic wealth and an established elite of wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs, most of whom were also powerful in its government. By 1525 - some fifty years after the death of Toppes - it was the wealthiest provincial city in the country.

From early medieval times Norwich was a cosmopolitan and commercial city, with populations of Norman French, Bretons, Flemings and Jews - until their expulsion from England in 1289 - as well as growing international trade links via the Rivers Wensum and Yare to Great Yarmouth and thence to the Continent. The trade in wool and, later, the manufacture, weaving and finishing of cloth became increasingly important and as well as a thriving export trade in cloth, Norwich merchants also imported many products from Sweden, France, Spain, Germany, the Low Countries, and the Baltic states.

From 1300, there was a cloth market and in 1384, a "worsted seld" was established to control the trade and quality of cloth. An area of the city was dedicated to trade in madder, or red dye; hence the name "Maddermarket". By 1377 Norwich dominated the production of worsted nationally and had a thriving export trade. In 1444 and 1467, statutes empowered the Norwich Worsted Weavers Guild to regulate the industry throughout East Anglia.

Many of Norwich's mayors and members of the ruling elite were merchants, dyers and drapers who enriched themselves and built splendid new houses; they also endowed and rebuilt their parish churches, as Toppes helped to do with St. Peter Mancroft. In the C15th an increasing wealth and pride is seen in the construction or re-building of civic buildings such as the New Mills and the Guildhall - a symbol of civic and economic power - completed in 1453, the largest medieval city hall outside London.

An inscription in the window of one merchant's grand new house summarises Norwich's commercial success very well:

*"I thank God and ever shall – It is the sheepe hath payed for all".*

(in "Robert Toppes' Norwich": ed. C.Barringer and N.Sigsworth p.21)

- **KING STREET**

In many ways, the history of King Street parallels that of Norwich generally, with the cyclical nature of the city's economy. There was almost certainly a Saxon settlement in this area, possibly centred on religious institutions and/or industrial processing. King Street probably originated as the main route north to the Saxon market in Tombland, which it still follows. In the Norman period it was an early suburb on the periphery of the main commercial hub of the city. King Street was known as Conesford or Conisforth Street, after the medieval quarter through which it ran, until the late C18th.

King Street's proximity to the River Wensum for most of its length influenced both its character and development. The Normans imported stone for the new castle and cathedral via quays on King Street as well as directly to the Cathedral precinct. For many centuries the River Wensum was the chief route for national and international trade from Norwich, via shallow-bottomed keels down the River Yare to Yarmouth, where goods were transhipped for onward transit by sea. By 1225 private quays on the river appeared and in 1379 the city established the New Common Staithe, a landing platform on the riverside where people could load and unload boats for a fee. It replaced the Old Common Staithe, on Abbey Lane, which belonged to the Priory. The New Common Staithe (known more recently as Cannon Wharf, south of the Novi Sad Bridge) helped to reduce congestion up-river, put civic controls on trade and provided a useful financial income for the city.

By the early C13th there were eleven churches on King Street, including that of St. Julian from which Dame Julian took her name. In 1293 the Austin Friars founded a friary immediately to the north of the future Dragon Hall site and by 1297 the Franciscans (also known as the Greyfriars) were established at the north end of the street. By the late C13th four Cistercian abbeys from outside Norfolk also owned property along the river, probably for the purchase and processing of herring for the abbeys, although by the early C15th they had all left. One of these Cistercian abbeys was the Abbey of Woburn in Bedfordshire whose holding comprised part of the future Dragon Hall site.

The completion of the city walls in 1343, providing the "Southgate" or "Conesford Gate" at the southern end of the street, also contributed to the development of King Street as a flourishing mercantile quarter.

The areas of the street which developed early in its history became residential quarters, most notably Jurnet's House – now part of Wensum Lodge – built c.1140 and in c.1197 inherited by Isaac, son of Jurnet the Jew who was one of the richest men in England. From the C13th there was also a cluster of flint and rubble houses towards the southern end and later gentry families such as the Pastons, Boleyns, Felbriggs and Yelvertons had houses here. North of Mountergate, King Street was lined with timber buildings from the late C10th onwards.

In the mid-C15th, a community of watermen, keelmen, fishermen and reeders lived here, and there was a community of artists and craftsmen in the parish of St. Peter Parmentergate, to the north of the Dragon Hall site. From the C16th the primary occupation of King Street's residents was worsted weaving and in the C19th and the C20th brewing became prominent. From the early C19th until the Second World War this area became known for its crowded tenements and poverty, referred to as "Hard Up Street". In the 1930s many of the old buildings were demolished in an extensive slum clearance programme. During World War II, this part of the city suffered extensive bombing, including the destruction of much of St. Julian's church. Dragon Hall, however – at that time in multiple residential occupation – survived intact. The last brewery



closed in the mid-1980s. We can now see the street's recent revival as a residential quarter – and considerable gentrification immediately opposite and to the north of Dragon Hall.

- **THE DRAGON HALL SITE**

The Dragon Hall site lies between four lines of communication: to the north and south are two lanes, St. Ann's Lane and Old Barge Yard, both leading to the river. On the west side is King Street, one of the most important thoroughfares in medieval Norwich and, approximately 80 metres to the east, the River Wensum. The history of this site parallels that of King Street as a whole; its importance closely related to the proximity of the river.

In 1997/98 there was an archaeological dig which helped to reveal much about the site and its complex history. The results of this dig, including extensive documentary evidence for the whole site and an overview of its development, are available in Andy Shelley's report mentioned on page 2. Evidence was found of late C10th/early C11th (Anglo-Saxon) timber buildings on the King Street frontage and of C12th and C13th timber buildings on the east side of the present Dragon Hall. The latter were divided by a gravel path leading from King Street to the precinct owned by the Abbey of Woburn. This path was surfaced with a series of gravel, flint, cobble and organic layers. It is thought that fish was imported and smoked in these buildings, which is consistent with the Abbey's presence here to obtain a supply of fish for the inland Abbey in Woburn, Bedfordshire. From 1285/86 to 1314 the Abbey owned a flint and rubble house of some stature to the east of what became the C15th trading hall site, together with a long building possibly used as a kitchen or fish house. Probably in the mid-C14th a brick and flint boundary wall was built to separate these buildings from the King Street frontage. This wall was incorporated into the new C15th trading hall.

The Abbey of Woburn sold a strip of land to John Page in 1289 which adjoined one he already owned on the southern edge of the site, bounded by the present Old Barge Yard. This created an L-shaped holding on which he had a timber hall house with its entrance from Old Barge Yard. This was later replaced in flint and rubble, with many other improvements, including the addition of an undercroft. More detail on the development of the hall house is given in Location 1(A).

We can speculate that for a young entrepreneur - ambitious to rise in the world and join the wealthy elite of Norwich - this site, close to the river, with its gravel path; its prominent position on King Street; and the existing hall house with its undercroft, would have provided the perfect site, with, in today's language, "good potential for re-development". However, the biggest challenge would have been how to construct a unique and grand trading hall on quite a crowded site, without wholesale demolition. Enter Robert Toppes!

- **ROBERT TOPPES (1405 – 1467)**

We know nothing of the origins or ancestry of Toppes before he bought his freedom in Norwich as a mercer at the tender age of 16, thus making himself a citizen, and therefore entitled to trade in the city. He seems to have appeared suddenly in Norwich, and he quickly made his mark with Dragon Hall. There have been various speculations about his origins: one is that he came from a local family for whom there are no records; another is that he originated in the Low Countries. We know that he had a brother, William, in London so perhaps Toppes had London connections.

Robert Toppes rose rapidly through the ranks of Norwich society: by the age of 22 he was City Treasurer; by the age of 25, when he built Dragon Hall, he was Sheriff and in 1435 he became Mayor and later Burgess in Parliament – the equivalent of MP. He served several times in both these offices: a remarkably rapid ascent through the complex politics of the Norwich elite, although this was not uncommon in larger cities of later medieval England. Toppes also held the position of Alderman of St. Giles from 1435 for his lifetime. In 1451, he was assessed for taxation as the wealthiest of Norwich's 24 Aldermen, paying customs on exports of cloth and imports of pottery and metals.

Like most of those prominent in civic politics, Toppes was a merchant and had shares in ships sailing from Great Yarmouth. He exported cloth to the Low Countries and, like most Norwich merchants, imported many other products, such as timber, German roof tiles, Swedish iron, fabrics, wines and spices. Great Yarmouth local customs records tell us that he also dealt in blanched herrings, salt and barley. He traded extensively all over Norfolk and Suffolk: his estate was owed money by 116 debtors in Norwich and 51 in Norfolk as late as 1492. We can only speculate about how much of this trade came and went through Dragon Hall as we have no records of this, but it seems likely that such a large complex was the base for most of Toppes' business and acted as both warehouse and showroom. His Great Hall must have been full of the best Norfolk cloth. Perhaps he also displayed luxury goods from the near Continent for local and foreign merchants to inspect for purchase.

We can deduce that Toppes had an entrepreneurial spirit; it is clear that he was ambitious and a "self-made" man, keen to impress – as evidenced by the way he built Dragon Hall. Certainly he became very rich; in his will he left a manor at Great Melton to his son, money to every church and religious house in Norwich, as well as many other charitable bequests. When Toppes died in 1467, he was buried in the north chapel of St. John the Baptist in St. Peter Mancroft church.

Only the wealthy could afford to be Mayor in Norwich. His status and wealth are also confirmed by his friendship with the famous Paston family. Margaret Paston wrote to her husband, John, in 1451: "I was at Toppys' at dinner on Seynt Petyr's day" (J.Fenn (ed.) *The Paston Letters Vol II*: p.42) and describes Toppes' wife as "cosyn" – a term denoting friendship rather than relationship. Toppes' second wife, Joan Knyvett, was from a county gentry family. Further confirmation of his status can be found in the panel in the stained glass window above the high

altar in St. Peter Mancroft church, donated by Toppes c.1450, which depicts Toppes and his family. He was thus typical of the powerful mercantile elite of a wealthy city.

### **RESTORATION and CONSERVATION**

For many years, the existence of the Hall was concealed within centuries of sub-divisions and changes of use. Then, during the 1970s, the true importance of the building was realised after exploration by the Norwich Survey, based at UEA. In 1979, the Norwich Brewery Company decided to dispose of the building, which was in a bad state of repair, and sold it to Norwich City Council who carried out some £200,000 worth of repairs to safeguard it. In 1983, The Norfolk and Norwich Heritage Trust was formed to restore the building and develop it for public enjoyment, which has since raised several hundred thousand pounds for its restoration. It is to the work and enthusiasm of the members and volunteers of the Trust that we owe the preservation of this magnificent Hall. More recently the Trust has raised over £400,000 to match the £1,362,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for further restoration and development of its facilities in 2005.

## LOCATION 1: THE GALLERY

DISPLAY: models of Dragon Hall and phases of building on the site from C14th hall house to the present day; the history of the site and places in King Street and Norwich; the changing faces of Dragon Hall; Toppes and the wool and cloth trade; River Wensum, transport; religious houses of King Street; Medday's hall house; details of garden; archaeological excavations and displays of fragments.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF DRAGON HALL - a brief outline

- **THE SITE IN 1430**

There were several structures on the site which Toppes bought around 1430. One was the C13th flint and rubble house on the corner of Old Barge Yard and King Street. This was built on a domestic medieval hall house plan, with a service block facing a timber open hall where the Reception, Screens Passage and the Old Barge Room are today. It was at right angles to King Street but with its main entrance from Old Barge Yard - the present entrance into the Screens Passage. (Further details are given in Location 1A).

There was also the large flint, brick and rubble wall, with a Great Arch, which had served as the western boundary between the Abbey of Woburn's property and King Street in the C13th. This ran roughly south – north, from the northwest corner of the hall house to St. Ann's Lane.

A range of timber structures or cottages ran along the King Street side of Dragon Hall. Buildings of this type were often let out to tenants; the boundary wall would have divided the "capital messuages" from the street. Toppes built his trading hall at first floor level, over these tenements as well as the Screens Passage and service rooms of the hall house and also over the boundary wall, which he used as a supporting structure at ground floor level on the eastern side. The trading hall projected beyond the line of the boundary wall so a timber arcade was built at ground floor level for further support. On the ground floor under the trading hall, Toppes had his warehouse, accessed via the arcade and the Great Arch. Thus both the hall house and boundary wall were incorporated into his new trading hall complex. In the hall house he retained the main entrance from Old Barge Yard into the Screens Passage and extended the existing undercroft, adding a new external entrance and staircase. He also created a new **arched doorway** leading from the Screens Passage into his courtyard on the north side.

- **THE BOUNDARY WALL and GREAT ARCH**

Following the restoration work of 2005, the Gallery is the main place from which the **boundary wall** can be seen clearly. We can also see the **Great Arch** which gives access through the boundary wall from the eastern or river side to the **warehouse space** underneath the trading hall. After Toppes' death this space, like most of the complex, was converted to commercial or domestic use.

The exact date and history of the boundary wall and the Great Arch are still matters of some debate. It seems likely that the wall was erected in the mid-C14th to early C15th to separate the courtyard and associated buildings in Page's former holding from the street-fronting area. The gravel path ceased to be the access from the street into the Abbey's precinct during this period, that function now being served by the forerunners of St. Ann's Lane and Old Barge Yard. After the construction of the trading hall, it is probable that the wall and the arch were used, in conjunction with the reinstated gravel path, for the unloading of goods brought up from the river, which were then taken or craned up to the trading hall above. This could have been through the present doorway into the northern end of the hall, as some of the beams here are not pegged, suggesting an original opening.

From here we can see the new **undercroft entrance** which Toppes created and the **small arched doorway** through the boundary wall which led into the area beneath the trading hall, now Display Room 3. We can also see the **squint window** dating from Page's hall house which looks through into the Old Barge Room.

- **THE ARCADE**

We can see the great braced **timber beam** of the ground floor **timber arcade**, open to the yard area, which gave access to the warehouse. Above, we can see the original **joists** of the trading hall projecting beyond the boundary wall. The arcade follows the line of the trading hall, whereas the boundary wall veers away to the northeast and is not parallel to the arcade or to King Street. The arcade extends southwards into the body of the hall house, forming a highly moulded bressumer with arch braces above the wooden screen. The spandrels formed by these braces may have also initially contained carvings similar to those in the Great Hall.

Further details about the hall house, the Screens Passage and the south doorway from Old Barge Yard can be found in Location 1(A) below.

AUDIOGUIDE VISITORS LEAVE THE GALLERY AT THE NORTH END, ENTER THE NEW NORTH WING AND PROCEED TO THE GROUND FLOOR DISPLAY ROOMS

## **LOCATION 1(A): The HALL HOUSE (RECEPTION)**

(NOTE: Location 1(A) is part of an initial briefing for new guides only – as explained in the Introduction above – and is not in the sequence of the audioguide visitor flow.)

### **THE HALL HOUSE SITE BEFORE TOPPES**

The room we see today is mostly C17th but its origins go back to before Toppes. By 1289 John Page already owned a timber range on the Dragon Hall site, probably a hall, perhaps combined with a street-fronting service block. Page's house was built at right angles to King Street in the classic urban hall house plan, with its entrance in Old Barge Yard. Page extended his holding in 1289 by a land transfer from the Abbey of Woburn consisting of a strip of land along the street front, to the north of his house, probably as far as St. Ann's Lane.

The service block seen today and the flint and rubble phase of the hall house may have been built under Page's ownership c.1330, together with the Screens Passage, the ogee arch doorways to the service rooms and the brick undercroft. This is an early use of brick, which was first used in Norwich around 1267, but which did not become a common building material until the late C14th. These improvements were "fashionable and reflected the increasing gentrification of King Street" and were "built to impress" (Shelley 2005). Page, "a shrewd property developer" (Shelley 2005 p.56), replaced the earlier timber-framed hall with flint and mortar footings. It is probable that he was also responsible for the extension of the service rooms – now the Old Barge Room – to the north, on the newly leased land from the Abbey. Full height flint and mortar walls came later, with the timber-framed north wall of the hall possibly retained until Toppes' time.

The boundary wall may also date to this period or shortly afterwards when the whole of the Dragon Hall site came into common ownership under the Midday or the Clere families. This created the site which Robert Toppes obtained in c.1430. We can also see a small **squint window** from the Gallery, which probably dates from the C13th stone house.

The C14th hall house family would have lived in one room, probably with an open hearth in the centre of the floor and a vent in the thatch to allow the smoke to escape. There was a second room at the eastern end of the hall house. This provided a sleeping chamber, accessed through the C14th **doorway** next to the modern staircase to the first floor office.

It is interesting to note that, after two centuries of steep decline, the wheel has come full circle and in the C21st, King Street is being gentrified once again with new expensive town houses and apartments built both opposite and to the north of Dragon Hall.

### **TOPPES' USE OF THE HALL HOUSE**

Robert Toppes, a young man who was obviously out to make his mark both as merchant and city dignitary, needed to do some radical reshaping in order to create his Great Hall and particularly to make an impressive entrance for visitors and customers.

We don't know what he used this part of the hall house for after his major re-development; certainly the character and functioning of the hall house would have been greatly altered. It is thought that he installed a steward or overseer here. There is a communication window between the south end of the Great Hall and the original hall house. Toppes never lived on the site; his house was in the city centre, on the corner of Gentleman's Walk and London Street, opposite the present Jarrolds store. He also owned other properties in Norwich and Norfolk.

### **THE HALL HOUSE AFTER TOPPES**

After Toppes' death in 1467, similar to the rest of Dragon Hall, the hall house experienced many changes: the house was re-built; a **chimneystack, fireplace and oven** were inserted; a **mullion window** was created in the north wall, and a **first floor** was added, which is now the office. Most of these changes occurred in the C17th.

By 1744, a public house existed in this location, firstly "The Three Merry Wherrymen" (which may have been established as early as 1619 by Nicholas Ellyett), becoming "The Barge Inn" by 1774 and "The Old Barge" in 1802. The Old Barge finally closed in 1970; however the name continues to be used for the lane running down the south side of Dragon Hall to the river. The C19th pub **window seats** can still be seen in the reception area. The part of the house beyond the chimney was demolished in the 1930s slum clearance programme, which included many of the dwellings on the north side as well.

## OUTSIDE THE SOUTH ENTRANCE IN OLD BARGE YARD

- **The Entrance to Dragon Hall**

This was the main entrance into the original hall house. The **small inner arch** was part of Page's improvements of c.1330, giving the hall house some considerable status. The larger **outer arch** was added by Toppes in the C15th. It would be consistent with everything we know of Toppes' desire to impress his customers and visitors that this was added at the time of the construction of the trading hall, to make a more imposing approach into the Screens Passage, through his new archway and up the grand staircase to the Great Hall.

We don't know the significance of the **shields**: conservation work in 2000 removed some 50 layers of paint – samples of which were kept – but no coats of arms were found. The **outside timber door** is probably C18th century.

The **walls of the south wing** are chiefly C17th, built on the earlier walls of an older hall house. This is another example of the fact that over some 700 years, throughout the Dragon Hall site, there has been constant re-building, adaptation and change as the uses of the various parts of the site changed. Notice the C17th **window frame** in the **south wall** (to the left of the entrance), as well as the steeply sloping **roof** which was originally thatched. A C19th painting by Lound shows the thatch in some disrepair.

## THE SCREENS PASSAGE: the Service Area and Entrance Hall

- **THE HALL HOUSE BEFORE TOPPES**

We see here the layout and structure of the C14th domestic hall house that Toppes bought in c.1430, together with the rest of the site to the north. We can see the standard medieval hall house plan, with **two external doors** at opposite ends of the Screens Passage, and two service rooms accessed through the **two ogee arches**. The first, nearest the entrance, led to utility rooms, such as a buttery or pantry. The second led down stairs to the original single bay undercroft. On the opposite side of the Screens Passage there would have been a **timber screen**, with two doorways, to separate the family quarters from the service area. The present carved oak screen is a later replacement and dates from c.1500, although we don't know when it was inserted here. At the base of the archway at the north end of the passage a C14th step was found.

- **TOPPES' IMPROVEMENTS**

Toppes built a large new **timber staircase** up to the trading hall. To make an impressive approach to this he created a new opening through the western side wall of the Screens Passage, adjacent to the right hand ogee arch; he installed a large new **stone archway**, and blocked the ogee arch openings. The new archway led into the **former service rooms**, (now The Old Barge Room). The original staircase disappeared at some point during the many subdivisions of the complex and a modern one stands now in roughly the same position. The



**mullion window** to the right of the staircase provided light for the steps and a view into the courtyard area to the east.

Toppes also extended the existing undercroft, and created a new external entrance, with a new **arch and staircase**, accessed through the **large stone archway** and external door beyond the north end of the Screens Passage. This archway was part of Page's flint and rubble house and led to a courtyard beyond. Toppes' new cellar stairs have now been replaced with modern ones; half of the original brick arch remains, with the other half rebuilt in modern brick. For detail on the undercroft see Location 9.

In the Screens Passage and throughout the ground floor, you can see the original floor **timbers** of the first floor trading hall. Above the screen itself, is the massive **oak beam with arched braces**, a continuation of the arcaded structure supporting the eastern wall of the trading hall. The beam and braces here are more elaborate and decorative than those in the yard and warehouse area - now the new Gallery.

### **SCREENS PASSAGE: PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION**

It should be noted that there are a number of problematic issues relating to the exact chronology and nature of the changes made to the Screens Passage, service rooms, archways etc. up to, and particularly during, Toppes' re-development of the site. These are discussed in some detail by Robert Smith (Shelley 2005: Chapt. 3.)

## LOCATION 2: DISPLAY ROOM 1

VIDEO: Robert Toppes and his world

DISPLAY: Norwich's Twin Cities: Novi Sad; Rouen; Koblenz; El Viejo

This room (Nos. 113 and 115 King Street – when they were separate dwellings or shops) and the next two display rooms are examples of how over the centuries Dragon Hall has been sub-divided at ground, first and second floor levels, with cellars dug out for domestic and commercial use. By the mid-C19th the whole site appears to have contained twelve dwellings. In the 1890s the building had three storeys and by 1935 the site included one public house and fifteen dwellings. By 1952 and up to 1979 this room was in use as "Swatman's" butcher's shop.

In the north wall is a C17th **mullioned window**. The original timbers of the floor above were all replaced because of a collapse some time after 1540. A carved stone head, on display in the Gallery, was found in the wall, which may have come from the former Augustinian Friary to the north which was demolished at that date.

In the southeast corner, to the right of the door to the Gallery, you can see the beginnings of the **Great Arch** in the boundary wall and the edge of a doorway which may have been an entry point into the north wing.

## LOCATION 3: DISPLAY ROOM 2

DISPLAY: World Trade – national and global concerns in the C15th; English woollen industry

Although the ground floor is substantially C15th, constructed of flint, rubble and brick, this room is more characteristic of a C17th interior, and has been preserved as an example of later changes to the building. The **fireplace and cupboard** both date from this period, the cupboard retaining its original **hinges and latch**. The small **alcove** beneath the cupboard could have been used for a variety of storage purposes. The fireplace is the only survivor of five former fireplaces, all later in date than the Hall. Their stacks penetrated the Great Hall above and were removed when it was opened up during restoration work in the 1980s. This is the finest of the fireplaces, many of which were C20th in appearance as a result of later adaptations. The arched brick supporting structure for this stack can be seen in the cellar beneath (see Location 7: Cellar 2).

On the beam above the fireplace we can see a number of **burns and marks**. These are believed to be ritual protection marks: the lollipop-shaped "witchcraft mark" was designed to ward off evil spirits whilst the burns protected against fire demons. We can also see on the **ceiling joists**, (i.e. the original floor beams of the trading hall above), the carpenters' marks

which number them consecutively with Roman numerals (from VII to the south to XII nearest the fireplace) made prior to the construction of the hall.

On the east wall we can see another part of the brick arch in the boundary wall. In the south wall there is a **blocked-up doorway** through to Display Room 3. This would have enabled the two rooms to be used as one dwelling or pub, and later as the Rectory.

From around 1700, malting and brewing became important industries in Conesford, with two major breweries and many associated maltings established by 1850. Youngs, Crawshay and Youngs Brewers acquired the Dragon Hall site by c.1850 and from 1760 until 1885 these rooms housed the Black Horse Pub, later becoming two separate dwellings.

This room and Display Room 3 (Nos. 117 and 119 King Street) were until recently known as the Rectory Rooms because from 1935 until 1975 they were one property and were used as the Rectory to the parish of St. Julian with St. Peter Parmentergate. The most renowned occupant was Father Seear who lived in the building from 1935 when it had neither heating nor hot water. Nevertheless, he described himself as having access to everything he needed: "beef, Bibles and beer"; a reference to the butcher's shop and the Old Barge pub at the southern end.

## **LOCATION 4: DISPLAY ROOM 3**

DISPLAY: Local trade; Guild of St. George; Civic organisation and politics

Again we can see that part of the east wall is the **boundary wall** and a glass panel covers some **remains of vegetation** – air-dried lichen which only grows on exterior surfaces - proving that it was once an external boundary wall, pre-dating Toppes' modifications.

The south wall is on the line of the original northern wall of the hall house and we can see a blocked **C15th doorway** now appearing to be very low. This indicates that it pre-dates the creation of the floor and the cellar below. It was probably installed by Toppes to give access, at the original floor level, from his warehouse and the yard at the rear to the service room area of the hall house on the other side – now the Old Barge Room.

To the east of this blocked doorway, on the south wall, are indications of an earlier **arched opening** dating from the C13th hall house; this matches openings in the Old Barge Room on the other side. This archway probably became redundant after the installation of the grand staircase to the Great Hall which mounts from the Old Barge Room beyond.

On the east boundary wall, high up in the right hand corner can be seen the **line of the original stairs** to the Great Hall, forming a stepped pattern in the masonry. There are **two blocked archways** in this wall, one above the other; the lower one is the west side of the arched doorway in the boundary wall, which was seen from the Gallery. The upper arch is probably a relieving arch inserted to take the load from above. Notice the **cross motif** in the stained glass

of the door to King Street, installed when this was part of the Rectory. **Carpenters' marks** can also be seen on the timbers of the ceiling in this room.

AUDIOGUIDE VISITORS PROCEED BACK THROUGH THE DISPLAY ROOMS, AND UP THE NORTH STAIRS TO THE GREAT HALL [North end].

## LOCATION 5: THE GREAT HALL

DISPLAY:

NORTH END: Documentary evidence of Norwich families, e.g. Pastons; symbolism of the dragon.

SOUTH END: Coins, weights and measures etc. (When school parties are visiting, the South End will be closed to other visitors.)

- **THE TRADING HALL**

This is a very large hall, approximately 26.8 by 6.7 metres (88 by 22ft). Although its size may be similar to other guild or trading halls built by groups of mercers, this hall was constructed on the instruction of one man – Robert Toppes. The hall was designed on a grand scale in order to impress the clients who came to trade and to fill them with awe of Toppes. Even after nearly 600 years, the hall is still impressive in stature.

We do not know exactly how Toppes used the Hall and we can only use our imaginations. Was there cloth on rolls leaning against the walls, or tables down the centre on which cloth could be unrolled and displayed? Would there have been sumptuous tapestries lining the walls? Would the Hall have been lit on dark days, dangerously, by candles? Why did he need such a huge hall and would he have had enough stock to fill it? Was it used only for cloth, or did it contain some of his other imports? All that we do know is that Toppes did enough business to become a wealthy and important man.

If you look out of the **large window** on the east wall of the hall, the River Wensum can just be seen in front of the C20th Riverside development on the other side. In the C15th, the river was the main route for transport. Dragon Hall was built near the river for convenience – to enable the easy transfer of goods being transported to and from Great Yarmouth in keels and onwards to the Low Countries or the Baltic – but it was far enough away to be above the main flood plain.

- **THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HALL**

All of the **crown posts**, the **tie beams** supporting the crown posts, the **wall plates** at the roof/wall junction, most of the **arch supports** and most of the **upright timbers** are original. Dendrochronologists have sampled the timber and suggested that they were taken from oak trees felled in the spring of 1427, which ties in neatly with the date of Toppes' purchase of the site. The timbers which can be seen clearly from the floor were made of the finest quality oak, with little infill (which was cheaper) in between. Although Toppes was anxious to impress his

clients visiting the grand hall, there was little point in using expensive timber for the outer shell and the top of the roof which could not be easily seen. Consequently, such wood was of much lower quality, containing a large amount of sapwood which would have helped to reduce costs. It also suggests that he expected the life of the hall to be relatively short. The result of this was that by the time of restoration in the 1980s, some of the timbers had rotted away and had to be replaced completely. The roof was originally thatched, as the C19th painting by Thomas Lound shows.

The hall consists of **seven bays**, each defined by a principal truss. The bays conform to a pattern, but are not equally spaced. Starting at the north gable end, the bay patterning can be described as A B B A C B C, with each letter corresponding with a certain width. Each of the principal **wall posts** has a large **arched brace** connected to the tie beams.

The spaces between the timber studwork were filled with C15th bricks, “made to exactly fit the narrow opening between the closely spaced studs with no sign of grooves or notches for wattle and daub”, indicating, “the primary use of brick infilling in the external walls” (City Architect’s Report, 1988: p.4). Alternatively, the studs could have been placed one brick’s width apart.

- **THE WINDOWS**

Only three original window openings remain in the hall from the C15th. **Two high windows** in the north gable end of the hall were likely to have been inserted to allow light in to illuminate the crown post roof, and the opening with a restored **mullion window** on the east side. The main windows in the hall would have been on the **west side**, overlooking King Street. These would have been three half-bay oriel windows in the first, third and fifth bays. All the **other openings and frames** were put in later as the Hall became converted to domestic use and the oriel windows were removed or adapted, giving its deceptive appearance of a domestic terrace on the King Street frontage.

- **THE DRAGON**

There were almost certainly carvings in each of the spandrel openings; only one has survived – the **dragon** by the large window in the east wall. It is possible that there was a dragon in each of the openings, although we cannot be certain what the other carvings may have been. We have remaining fragments of another dragon from one of the other spandrels, and the dragon is particularly appropriate to Norwich. The main guild in Norwich in the C15th was the Guild of St. George, of which Toppes was a member. The dragon is made of carved oak, still completely intact, and the colour has remained from the original stain: green and red, with gilding on the wing-tips and teeth.

The reason this dragon has survived for more than 500 years is because when the trading hall was divided after Robert Toppes’ death in 1467, partition walls and attic floors were inserted. Our dragon was hidden inside a little-used attic and was only rediscovered when the building was inspected in the late 1970s by the Norwich Survey team from the UEA, who were recording

all the buildings in Norwich dating from before 1700. The grandeur of the roof structure was identified and the full importance of the building was brought to light. This led to the City Council purchasing the site from the Norwich Brewery in 1979. Soon after, the Council started work on urgent repairs to the roof and the Trust came into existence, undertaking to restore the whole building and open it to the public.

Dragons were a commonplace aspect of C15th iconography. St. Michael and the dragon have been carved on the rood screen of St. Peter Parmentergate church at the northern end of King Street. There were also dragons in the roof-spandrels in the Master's Hall of the Great Hospital also dating from the mid-C15th. In the church of the Great Hospital on Bishopsgate, there is another image of a dragon on one of the pew ends. Dating from the early C16th, the carving depicts St. Margaret in prayer, emerging from the centre of a dragon. Also in St. Gregory's church there is a wall painting (c.1500) of St. George slaying a dragon covering the entire western wall of the north aisle.

### **THE SCREEN**

The **screen** (closed truss) dividing the hall has been reconstructed in order to show how the hall was separated during Toppes' ownership. There is evidence of slot and peg holes in the main timbers showing that a screen would have been present. It seems likely that the two areas created by the screen had different functions, as the northern part was more elaborately decorated with carvings and the crown post mouldings are more complex. This suggests that this part was designed to impress and to show off Toppes' goods to the best effect. In the southern section there is an original **squint window**, which could have allowed communication between the Hall and the hall house area.

### • **AFTER TOPPES**

In his will Toppes directed that Dragon Hall should be sold off:

*"I will ... that my messuage called Mendhamstathe and also another called Splytts be sold ... to maintain two chaplains to celebrate mass in St. Peter Mancroft for my soul".*

(NCC Wills 1468.97 Jekkys M.F. 82)

Consequently, its life as a trading hall was quite short. By 1488/89 part of it seems to have reverted to being a gentry town house and the process of sub-division soon began, as the hall was partitioned into sections that were sold off separately. The **fireplace and chimney** in the south wall were installed as early as the 1490s. By the late C15th it may have been connected at first floor level to 125-127 King Street on the south side of Old Barge Yard. An opening with a modern door which leads into this link can be seen at the south end.

At the other end of the hall, on the north wall, a series of **filled-in holes**, about eight feet above the floor, together with horizontal lines, can be seen. This is where extra joists were inserted in the C16th or C17th. Both parts of the hall had upper floors inserted by 1619, dividing the hall horizontally; each floor was then partitioned into a series of small rooms, most of which remained until the 1980s restoration work began. Indeed, several recent visitors know of or can remember relatives who lived in parts of the hall in the post-war period.

AUDIOGUIDE VISITORS RETURN VIA THE NORTH STAIRS TO THE CELLARS OR VIA THE GALLERY TO THE OLD BARGE ROOM

## **LOCATION 6: CELLAR 1** (North cellar)

**DISPLAY:** Archaeology and history of Dragon Hall and how it has been uncovered.

These three cellars were created in the C17th, when the trading hall began to be sub-divided horizontally and vertically for commercial and domestic use (for details see Locations 2, 3 and 4). Consequently, the floor of the cellars is lower than the original C15th ground floor level beneath the trading hall, and their ceilings, i.e. the floor level of the Display Rooms above, were inserted into what had once been the warehouse space.

There is very little of archaeological interest in here that cannot be seen in the other cellars. The **external walls** date from the time of Toppes' building.

## **LOCATION 7: CELLAR 2**

You can also see **post-holes** uncovered by the dig; many of these were originally part of the earliest timber buildings on the site which dated to the Late Saxon period, that is the late 10th and 11th centuries. These buildings lined King Street and formed part of an early suburb which extended south beyond the town's, or *burh's*, defensive ditch.

The date of these buildings is known from the age of the pottery recovered from the post-holes, since many contained fragments of Thetford-type ware, the ubiquitous pottery fabric in Norwich from the C10th to the C12th. The buildings would have been simple affairs, built from earthfast timber uprights and thatched roofs. The walls may have been formed from daub or, possibly, timber planks. They were almost certainly heated although in this case no hearths were uncovered. Fragments of pottery lamps were also found - a reminder that these would have been dark and airless structures.

Near the wall fronting King Street, the **foundations** constructed by Toppes to support the front wall under the Great Hall are exposed. About a metre above the foundation, a **line on the wall** indicates the level of the C15th warehouse floor. Also on the wall can be seen the levels of the C17th **cellar floor**, just above the dig and the present street level. There is also a C19th **coal chute** for the delivery of coal to be stored in the cellar for the dwelling above. The substantial **brick structure** at the north end of this space is the support for the C17th fireplace seen above in Location 3: Display Room 2. Several chimneystacks were inserted in the centuries following subdivision of the Great Hall after Toppes' death. These were removed during the restoration work of the 1980s, the fireplace in Display Room 2 and the stack at the south end of the Hall being the only part of these structures to be retained.

## LOCATION 8: SMALL CELLAR

DISPLAY: "Discovery Chests" about medieval merchants and Victorian families – contrasts of affluence and poverty.

The **modern opening** into the undercroft was created during the recent restoration work. You can see around the walls the **line** of the original ground floor of Toppes' warehouse. On the east and south walls the **bases of doorways** in the rooms above (Display Room 3) can be seen. On the west (King Street side) wall you can see another bricked-up **coal chute**. There are fragments of three different **floors**: the stone flags were probably laid in the C17th, possibly salvaged from a church aisle or similar; the bricks are probably C18th; and there is also an area of cobbles and flints, all typical of the random use and recycling of materials, making it more difficult to date structures accurately.

## LOCATION 9: THE UNDERCROFT

From the small cellar we come, via a modern opening, into the **vaulted extension** which Toppes added, presumably to create more storage space. The southern, original part was probably built by Page c.1330 as the cellar for the hall house. In Page's day it was accessed by stairs through the right hand ogee arch in the Screens Passage above.

When he created the new bay Toppes also made a new **arched entrance and staircase** from the arcade area beyond the north door of the Screens Passage. The present staircase is a modern replacement, in the same position. In the **southeast corner** is where the original steps led down from the Screens Passage. From the early C19th until 1970 from they were used by the Old Barge pub above, as the undercroft was its beer cellar; there is a drainage sump under a **cover**. There is some debate about the function of undercrofts. They may have been built for the safe storage of valuables; they certainly maintained a constant temperature which would have made them very suitable for the storage of products such as wine or wool. At a time when most domestic buildings were constructed of timber they would also have also offered protection from fire. Toppes certainly felt that he needed the extra space, and presumably for commercial rather than domestic purposes, since it is likely that he never lived at Dragon Hall.

## LOCATION 10: OLD BARGE ROOM

DISPLAY: Resource room; books and information about local history; flipbooks for those unable to visit cellars; King Street businesses, breweries etc; pub games; King Street churches. This was where the service rooms for Page's C14th hall house were located, accessed through the left hand ogee arch from the Screens Passage – now blocked. After Toppes carried out his major re-development of the site they could no longer have functioned as service rooms and instead became part of Toppes' approach to the new staircase for his Great Hall. We don't know what use he made of this space after his alterations.



After Toppes' death and the sub-division of the whole complex, this room would have been used for commercial or domestic purposes. From 1885 to 1970 it was the main bar of The Old Barge pub, which had been in existence since 1744 in the southern section of the hall house (now Reception) as The Three Merry Wherrymen, and from 1802 as The Old Barge.

The **north wall**, on the line of the northern edge of the C13th flint and rubble house, consists of a variety of different materials. In the northeast corner, under the staircase, there are the remains of an **arch doorway** and a **squint window** which looks into the Arcade area near the entrance to the undercroft. This may date from the time of John Page. At the western end of the wall you can still see the shadow of a **doorway** which probably dates from the time of Robert Toppes, and would have given access from the hall house to the arcade and warehouse area. This is the other side of the doorway which you can see in Display Room 3. The modern **staircase** leading up to the Great Hall is approximately in the place of Toppes' staircase which at some point decayed or was removed. The **lintel** next to the staircase up to the hall probably corresponds with Toppes' changes, and shows there was a mullion seven light **window** which lit the stairway.

Standing in the old pub and looking east, you can see the **back of the two ogee arches** in the Screens Passage. The one on your right would have led down steps to the Screens Passage. The history of the **arched brickwork** above and round the arches is not known. A later **doorway** to the Screens Passage can also be seen to your right, possibly related to the room's use as a bar. On the south wall there is a **small oak window** overlooking Old Barge Yard, dating from the C17th. On the ceiling beams, some fine examples of carpenters' marks can also be viewed.

AUDIOGUIDE VISTORS RETURN THROUGH THE SCREENS PASSAGE TO RECEPTION AND ARE INVITED TO VIEW THE OLD BARGE ENTRANCE AND THE GARDEN VIA RECEPTION.

## **LOCATION 11: SCREENS PASSAGE**

We are now in the original screens passage of the C14th hall house: for detail see Location 1(A) above.

## **LOCATION 12: GARDEN and EXTERIOR**

- **OLD BARGE YARD ENTRANCE**

For details, see Location 1 (A).

- **KING STREET FRONTAGE**

Notice the **corbels** on the corner of King Street and Old Barge Yard and the corner of King Street and St. Ann's Lane, also the small **jetty** created at first floor level. The variety of **doors and window frames** – some as recent as 2005 – including those for the second floor rooms,

installed at various times as Dragon Hall was converted for Rectory, house, shop and pub use give the frontage the initial appearance of a domestic terrace. You can see too the **brick infilling** in the studwork at the southern end of the Great Hall. Notice the **first floor link** to 125 King Street to the south of Old Barge Yard. 125 King Street is also timber framed at first floor level, with herringbone brick nogging dating from the C16th. It has been suggested that the structure and window arrangements of this building may represent evidence for a long gallery in which weavers once worked at their looms.

- **IN THE GARDEN**

This is the best point from which to get an overall picture of the whole complex and to imagine its appearance in 1430 – a key difference being the C19th **pantiled roof** which was originally thatched.

This is the site of the large archaeological dig undertaken in 1997/98 which added immensely to our knowledge of the history of this part of the site and of the complex generally. The display in the Gallery should assist in understanding how the use of the site developed. The report of the dig can be found in the archaeological report (East Anglian Archaeology 112: see page 2 above). This also includes comprehensive details and plans of the complex and of the changing ownership of the various plots and buildings on the site from Period 1 (late C10th to late C11th) to Period 9 (mid-C19th to late C20th).

A smaller archaeological dig was carried out in Spring 2005, after the demolition of the C20th north wing adjacent to St. Ann's Lane, as part of the major restoration project. At the time of writing the findings from this are not available.

The gravel path marks the course of the earlier gravel path on the Abbey of Woburn precinct, which Toppes used to take his goods to and from the river. To the left of this – looking at the Great Hall – was his private courtyard, adjacent to the hall house, and to the right was his goods yard. Access via the gravel path to the street was blocked by Toppes' building works, and the Abbey's fish house was demolished in the early 1400s in order to widen the pathway. This building was also partially replaced by another flint and brick structure which may have been residential, judging by the existence of a fireplace at the west end. The yard area, in Toppes' time, would have also contained storehouses, a crane and a staithe for unloading boats. The Abbey of Woburn's house was demolished in the late C16th, becoming gardens. Prior to the slum clearance of the 1930s this was a crowded site with many yards and dwellings. Unfortunately, this programme of demolition also removed the southern end of the hall house.

On the north eastern corner of the site is **St. Ann's Cottage** which dates from the 1890s and is the only such building to survive from the closely built area at the rear of Dragon Hall. It was completely refurbished in 1998. It has a link with the later history of Dragon Hall as it absorbed the earlier stable of The Black Horse pub, which occupied the central part of the ground floor of

the complex (see Display Room 2). It is described as “one of the very few inner-city cottages (as opposed to terrace) to survive in Norwich” (Shelley 2005 p.187).

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## GLOSSARY

- anchorage – the cell where an anchorite / recluse resides.
- anchorite /  
anchoress – a man or woman who has withdrawn from the world, especially for religious reasons: a recluse.
- arcade – a series of arches supported by piers or columns.
- ashlar – hewn or squared stone for building.
- bay – often used as a system of measurement denoting the section of a timber-framed building between frames.
- balance pan – a scale pan or dish, usually one of a pair used for weighing coins, expensive spices or jewels, or for domestic usage.
- beam – a structural member which always lies horizontally and usually transversely across a building.
- brace – a timber which runs between a post and a bam or plate to provide strengthening through triangulation.
- bressumer – a large horizontal beam supporting the wall above especially in jettied

- buildings.
- burgess – a freeman or citizen of a borough; a member of a privileged class in a town; a member of parliament for a borough; a borough magistrate or town councillor.
- burh – the area of a Saxon town within the defences.
- buttery – a room for the storage of ale and wine.
- capital
- messuage – the main or most important building owned by a person with several holdings.
- carpenters'
- marks – incised numbers or symbols used during prefabrication of frames or trusses in order to match timbers correctly during construction on site.
- chamber – a private apartment; also called a bower, camera, solar.
- circa – about or around (Latin)
- closed truss – a rigid timber framework with the spaces between the timbers filled, forming an internal partition.
- corbel – a projection jutting out from a wall to support a structure above it.
- decorated
- gothic style – a style of English architecture c.1290-1350.
- dendro-
- chronology – a method of dating timbers by comparison of patterns of tree growth rings.
- elevation – a face of a building or side of a room.
- fenestration – the arrangement of windows in a façade.
- finial – the bunch of foliage, etc. on the top of a pinnacle, gable, spire, etc. (from the Latin *finis*, end)
- foliate – decorated with leaves.
- garderobe – a privy
- guildhall – the hall of a guild (guild = medieval association providing for masses for the dead, maintenance of common interests, mutual support and protection from OE *gield*)
- hall house – traditional hall shaped house with living area with servants' quarters separate.
- hermit – a person, usually a man, who leads a solitary, religious, austere, life, denying all bodily gratifications to achieve holiness through mortification of the flesh.
- hoodmould – projecting moulding above an arch or lintel to throw off water - when horizontal often called a 'label' (as in label stop).
- jetty – a projecting structure; on a building the overhanging part of a first

- floor level.
- keels – a flat-bottomed river craft 'single-sailed and wide bellied vessels', the forerunners of the Norfolk Wherry - ideal for negotiating shallow inland waterways.
- light – a compartment of a window defined by the mullions.
- lintel – a horizontal beam or stone bridging an opening.
- loggia – an open-sided gallery or arcade, often looking out into an open courtyard.
- mercier – a dealer in textiles, esp. the more costly (from French *mercier*); a mercier differed from a merchant in that while merciers generally traded locally and nationally, merchants traded abroad.
- merchant – a trader, esp. wholesale.
- mullion – a vertical member between window lights.
- nogging – brickwork infilling between timber studs.
- ogee arch – a moulding 'S' shape or double curve, bending first one way, then the other.
- oriel half-bay window – a polygonal window, in a large bay in the upper storey of a building built out from a wall or supported on brackets or corbels, projecting slightly out over the street (Old French *oriol*, porch, recess, gallery)
- pantile – a roof tile of 'S' section.
- pantry – room for the storage of bread and other dry goods.
- perpendicular – a style of English Gothic architecture c.1335/50-c.1530.
- post – an upright timber which forms a structural part of one of the main frames of a building.
- quoin – a stone forming the outside corner of a wall or building.
- rafter – roof timber. Common rafters are uniform in size/scantling; principle rafters are larger than common rafters and may be part of a cross frame.
- revetments – retaining structures made of wicker or wattle, used to reinforce and extend the river bank.
- Romanesque – a style of art and architecture in Europe c.1000-1150 AD characterized by great churches and cathedrals.
- screens
- passage – passageway across the low end of the hall defined by opposed doorways and separated from the main body of the hall by a screen.
- seld – the sale hall and quality control centre where traders took their cloth to be sealed.
- service range – the part of a building used for cooking and storage etc.; the servants'

- domain.
- solar – a private upper room in a medieval house, accessible from the high end of the hall (OE *solor*).
- spandrel  
-openings – the triangular spaces formed where the tie beams and arched braces meet the walls.
- spindle whorl – weight on the end of a spindle: a slender rounded rod with tapered ends used in hand-spinning of wool.
- staithe – a quay or landing platform.
- staple wool  
port – a fixed point or points (at home or abroad) through which all wool had to be exported by law. In 1326, Norwich was one of 8 staple wool ports.
- stop – a plain or decorated terminal to mouldings, hoodmoulds or labels.
- stud – a non structural vertical member, used to divide up large panels to facilitate infilling.
- studs – subsidiary vertical timbers of a timber-framed wall or partition.
- tenements – houses divided into several residences; buildings of multiple occupation.
- tie beam – a beam running transversely across a building between two posts.
- timber  
-arcade – a row of wooden arches forming a covered passage.
- timber range – row of different types of buildings.
- timber  
-framed – a building technique involving no earthfast posts, i.e. built entirely above the ground, with joints which work independent of gravity.
- transom – a horizontal member separating window lights.
- truss – a frame consisting of several pieces of timber, jointed, and triangulated in order to retain its shape under load.
- undercroft – ground floor or underground room for storage or servants' accommodation.
- wall-plate – a longitudinal timber along the top of a wall which receives the ends of rafters.
- wattle-and  
-daub – interwoven hazel twigs plastered with clay, mud, cow dung and straw and covered with lime-wash, used to infill between timber studwork walls.
- Worsted – Worsted cloth is a fine fabric made from a specific type of yarn from long-haired sheep. Worsted thread is smoother and more solid than



woollen thread and produces a softer cloth.