# SIR ROBERT, LORD CURSON, SOLDIER, COURTIER AND SPY, AND HIS IPSWICH MANSION

*by* JOHN BLATCHLY *and* BILL HAWARD

The Suffolk born and bred Sir Robert Curson was knighted in 1489 and, ten years later, made a Count of the Holy Roman Empire for his exploits under Maximilian against the Turks. He was pardoned for treason so often by the two Kings Henry that he appears to have had as many lives as a cat. His Ipswich mansion covered nearly two acres in St Nicholas parish, with a tower porch projecting into the street under which, it is said, horsemen could ride.

ROBERT CURSON[1] was born about 1460 at Blaxhall, near Saxmundham, probably the son of the Robert Curson who was Escheator for Suffolk in 1472-73. From heraldic evidence his mother was a Delves of Cheshire. Little is known of Curson before he was knighted in 1489 at the ceremonies attending the betrothal of the three-year-old Prince Arthur to Catherine of Aragon. Curson was one of the king's champions and his green and yellow knight's standard showed his crest, a dragon's head erased and the motto 'A MOY NE TIENT' meaning 'don't restrain me' or perhaps 'nothing restrains me'(Fig. 89). He wore the king's colours, the red dragon of Wales, and the queen's favour on his helmet at the Sheen and Westminster tournaments in November 1494 when Prince Henry (the future Henry VIII) was made Duke of York. The motto on his 'imprese' was 'There to we be redy'. He was sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk in 1496–97. In 1498 he married Anne (née Southill of Leicestershire) widow of Sir George Hopton (died 1490), and on 21 March of that year forcibly entered the Hopton manor of Westleton, claiming that it was Anne's for life and thus depriving her stepson Arthur Hopton of his lawful inheritance. Sir Robert was joined in this doubtful venture by several other Curson relatives named Thomas, Robert, John and Nicholas.

In 1499 he became captain of Hammes Castle in the Calais marches on his own security of 800 marks, but had to obtain other sureties for his good behaviour in the office. On 29 August 1499 he was licensed to leave his post in order to fight the Turks in the company of the emperor Maximilian I. On his way to join the emperor he visited Edmund de la Pole, earl of Suffolk at Guines Castle. Suffolk's steward, Thomas Killingworth, reported to his master that Curson had told Maximilian of the king's murders and tyrannies, and obtained an assurance that the emperor would assist a Yorkist attempt on the English crown. On 21 October 1501 Curson was (for the first time) publicly proclaimed a traitor from the pulpit at Paul's Cross with five others including the earl of Suffolk. Sir James Tyrrell and Sir John Wyndham were beheaded, and Suffolk and William Courtenay were sent to the Tower. Surprisingly, Curson was spared to be made a Count of the Holy Roman Empire for his bravery against the Turks. His baron's standard was red and yellow peppered with wolves' heads and his new crest clearly referred to the Turkish expedition: out of a ducal coronet Or a demi-archer habited Gules facings Brown turban and waist sash Argent drawing a bow to the dexter Proper. The motto was changed too: PARLES QUI VOULDRAS meant 'Speak as you will'. (Fig. 90)

Curson's name appeared next on the Pardon Roll of 5 May 1504 as a member of the royal household, and again on that of 10 April 1505, covering earlier offences, where it was mentioned that the Hopton case had gone against him. Historians from Polydore Vergil onwards have debated the reason for Curson's pardons (perhaps he was a spy, but for whom, or was he a double agent?) and much has been published on the subject. The current theory is that for a time, shaken by the judicial murder of the harmless earl of Warwick in November 1499, Curson sided with the Earl of Suffolk,

FIG. 89 – Standard for 'Sir Robert Corson', 1489, from MS 'Old Penons', fol. 135v, then *penes* Joan Corder.


FIG. 90 – Standard for 'The Lord Curson Robert', 1500, badly damp-stained in College of Arms MS I.2 and here redrawn for Walden, *Banners, Standards and Badges*, 91, and hand coloured following the original by JMB.

only to realise by mid-1502 that the Yorkist cause was hopeless, leaving him no option but to give unswerving loyalty to his monarch.

Just two weeks into Henry VIII's reign on 8 May 1509, Curson, presumably because he still had his uses, was again pardoned for treason. From 3 June his annual fee was set at £400 and so it remained until 1520, when he (or his son Robert) attended the Field of the Cloth of Gold, for some reason in the Norfolk contingent. Although he never became an English peer, his title Lord or Baron Curson seems to have been recognised at court from about 1513 when as Master of Ordnance in the Rearward he served under Charles Brandon in the French campaigns. From 1515 to 1534 he served as a Suffolk JP, and it is likely that Robert (a Norfolk JP 1531–47) and John (a Norfolk JP 1555, died 1581) were his son and grandson respectively.

Staunchly conservative in religious matters, he was prominent in 1515 among those on the Cornhill at Ipswich who cut down boughs to stoke the fire under Nicholas Peke, the Lollard of Earl Stonham. Later that year he witnessed amazing scenes at Gracechurch, the chapel of Our Lady in St Matthew's parish. The twelve year-old Jane, daughter of Sir Roger Wentworth of Gosfield, Essex, suffered violent fits which only visits to the image at Gracechurch would cure. After one such she retired for the night only to summon the Bailiffs and church worthies to her chamber in the early hours for a two-hour sermon, after which she fell into another fit. Curson calmed her by thrusting his own cross decorated with a Pietà into her hands, but that was not the end of the story. He wrote a full account of this Ipswich miracle for the king,[2] which brought first Katherine of Aragon in 1517, then the king on 8 October 1522 to stay at his Ipswich mansion overnight in order to visit the chapel on the morrow. Thomas More described it as the best example of a modern miracle in England.[3]

In 1522 Curson and the Abbot of Bury St Edmunds were appointed Royal Commissioners charged with determining the Borough bounds, and with Sir Richard Wingfield and others he took part in the Morlaix raid. Curson's first wife had died meanwhile, for by 1523 he had married again, and he and his new wife Margaret were joint executors of the will of his kinsman William Curson, gentleman, of Blaxhall. The reward he received for entertaining his sovereign was a gilt cup as a New Year gift in 1524; in 1532 his New Year gift to the king was twelve swans. It is no surprise that the plaster decorations on the ceiling of the best chamber of his mansion included the badges of Henry and Katherine, and Charles Brandon and Mary Tudor alongside his own. It had two courtyards, a chapel, large gardens, ample stabling and a dovecote. Because the property abutted the college Wolsey founded in 1528 on the site of the Augustinian priory of St Peter and St Paul, the cardinal conceived the idea of retiring there to live after the manner of the provost of Eton. Curson agreed to Wolsey's request, but asked for three years' grace to find himself another home. This was shrewd, for the cardinal died in November 1530 and Curson kept his property.

Curson's last recorded task was to summon all the Suffolk Justices and take their loyal oaths to Ann Boleyn as the new queen, a mark of royal trust at a rather fraught time. In his last years, the seventy-five year-old courtier could look back on the Wars of the Roses and his Yorkist allegiance, his service to the first Tudors and the Emperor and began to discern the passing of the old religion in England. Curson died early in 1535 leaving estates at Blaxhall, Kelsale, Tunstall, and Dunningworth, and bequests to Hoxne and Blaxhall churches. In his will, witnessed by his two chaplains, he requested burial in the church of the Ipswich Greyfriars. The 1538 dissolution inventory of that house included 'a feyn herse clothe yt ley upon the lorde Cursons herse',[4] meaning the covering for a latten cradle (compare the Beauchamp monument at Warwick) over the stone tomb for which Curson had left ten pounds. His mansion soon became the residence of Thomas Manning, dispossessed prior of Butley, consecrated by Cranmer in March 1536 as the first and only suffragan bishop of Ipswich. Thereafter it was used by bishops of Norwich when visiting the southern and most troublesome parts of their diocese.

Curson's young widow Margaret married Sir Edward Green of Halstead, Essex and survived him also when he died in 1555. Her will shows that the monument for Curson and his first wife had been rescued from the Greyfriars church and moved to St Peter's, briefly the chapel of Wolsey's College but since 1537 again parochial; here she joined them in 1577 at a cost to her executors of over £10.[5] Unfortunately no trace of Curson remains in the church today; the tomb was probably swept away when the chancel was rebuilt in 1593.

## CURSON'S MANSION

*Heraldry and symbols remaining in the house from Curson's time as recorded by later observers.*
[Interpretation in *Italics.*]

Thomas Martin c.1740[6]
f. 51v 'Upon the low sell of a window at the [Elephant and] Castle in Ipswich these arms carv'd: Three martlets on a bend between three dragons' heads erased 2 and 1, the head in base crowned.'
*Curson, but the crown seems to be an augmentation of honour. 'Low sell' implies a carved bressummer below the window.*

f. 60r 'In a south chamber window [*The Parlour?*] at the Parsonage house belonging to St Lawrence church there are two coats':

1. *Southill quartering Boivile with an escutcheon of pretence, probably Byrom.*

*The marriage of the parents of Anne, Curson's first wife. Henry Southill, Attorney General in 1471 married in about 1451 Ann, third daughter and co-heir of John de Boivile, both of Stockerston, Leicestershire.*

2. Tudor Royal Arms

*Candler earlier reported a third coat in glass here: Curson quartering Delves of Cheshire for Curson's parents' marriage.*

'In a northe chamber window in the same house [the Great Parlour?] there are four coats'
1. *Bourchier, for John, 2nd lord Berners, 1467-1533, Deputy of Calais. 2. Southill,* 3. and 4. unidentified.

Samuel Pegge[7] described and had a poor engraving made of the ceiling (Fig. 91):

The ceiling painted in lozenges, with I, S, R, A, R and other cyphers (which Pegge's Fig. 92 illustrates crudely).

In the middle of the others, badge of Lord Curson,
Vive le noble roy Henri d'Engleterre.
Roses, feathers, HR, the crest of Curson and his arms.
The Royal Arms with Greyhound and Griffin supporters.

B.P. Grimsey,[8] believing that he had notes taken by Peter le Neve, Norroy (therefore perhaps c.1720) adds one more device: a demi-rose and demi-pomegranate conjoined per pale. This would signify the marriage of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon. It is interesting that the same device was carved on a windowsill of which a fragment remained in the cellar of the Rush-Alvard house in Upper Brook Street (Fig. 92) It is now *penes* Doug Atfield at the old Sun Inn in St Stephen's Lane.

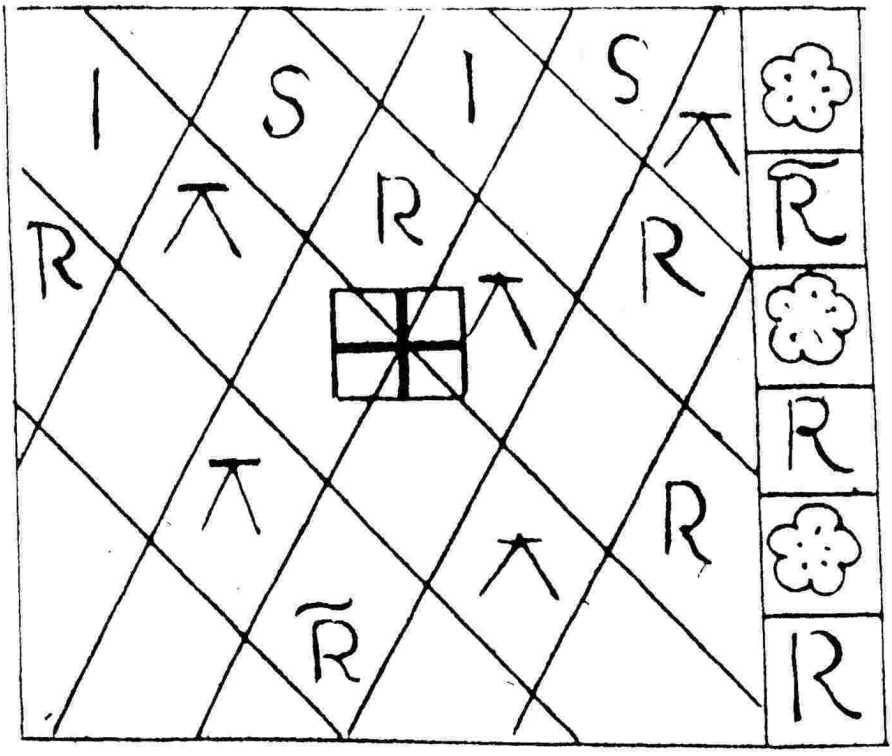

FIG. 91 – Part of ceiling of the Great Parlour, originally drawn by Isaac Johnson for Craven Ord, B.L. Add. MS 8987, fol. 14, and engraved for Pegge's *Sylloge*, 1787, Pl. XXII, fig. 3.

FIG. 92 – Windowsill from Rush/Alvard House formerly in Upper Brook Street carved with Tudor rose and pomegranate dimidiated (halved and impaled).

## ANALYSIS OF THE TUDOR PLAN

*Because the Tudor plan of Curson's mansion is very faded, we at first intended to show only Grimsey's version (Fig. 93) with extra labelling transcribed from the original. Dr Charles Tracy, however, persuaded us that we should obtain a premium digital image at high resolution. The resulting image was unavoidably too feint to reproduce, but the greyscale*

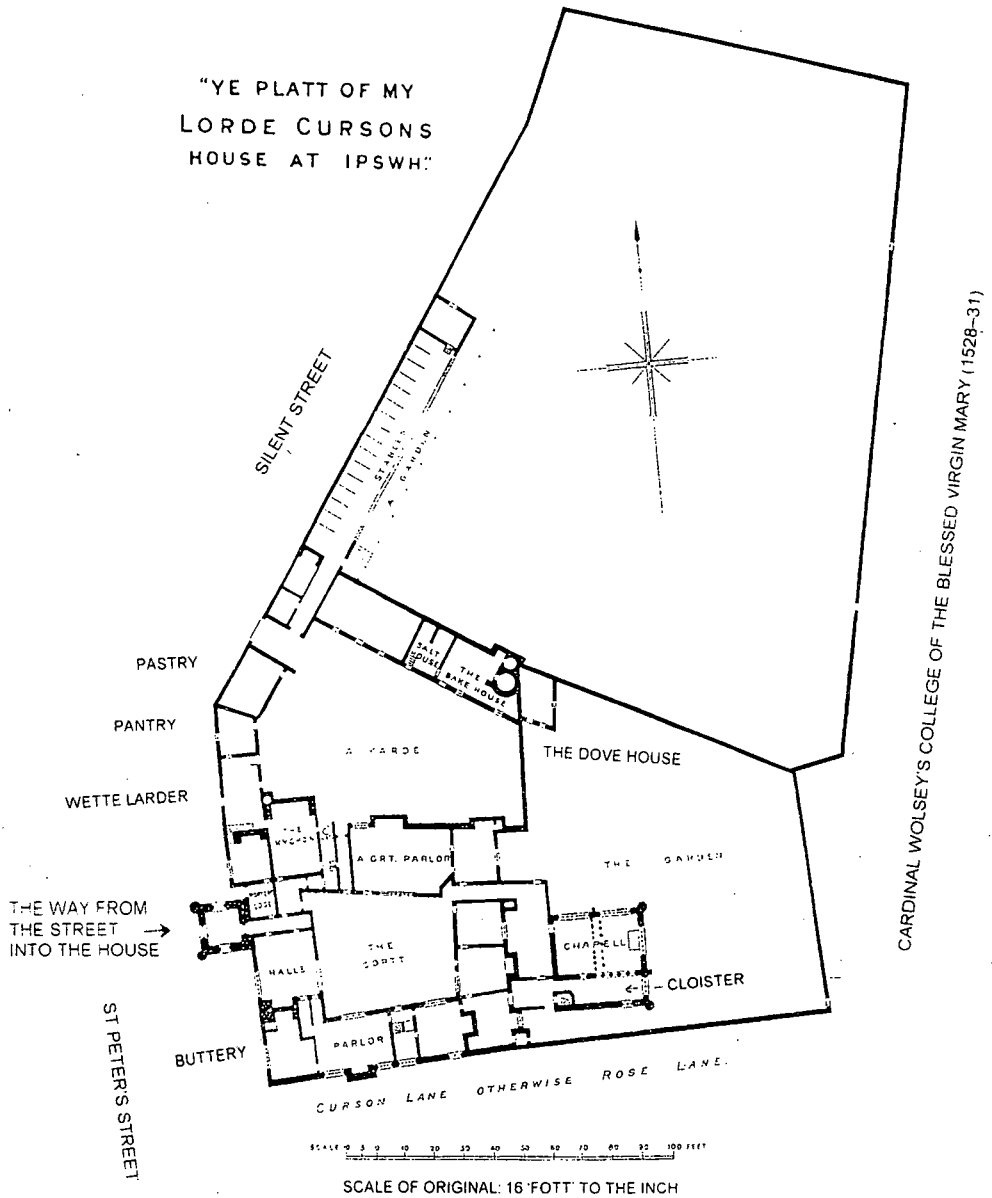


FIG. 93 – Traced copy of the Tudor plan of Curson House made to illustrate B.P. Grimsey's article in PSIA VII, with extra captions added in a larger font from labelling on the original.

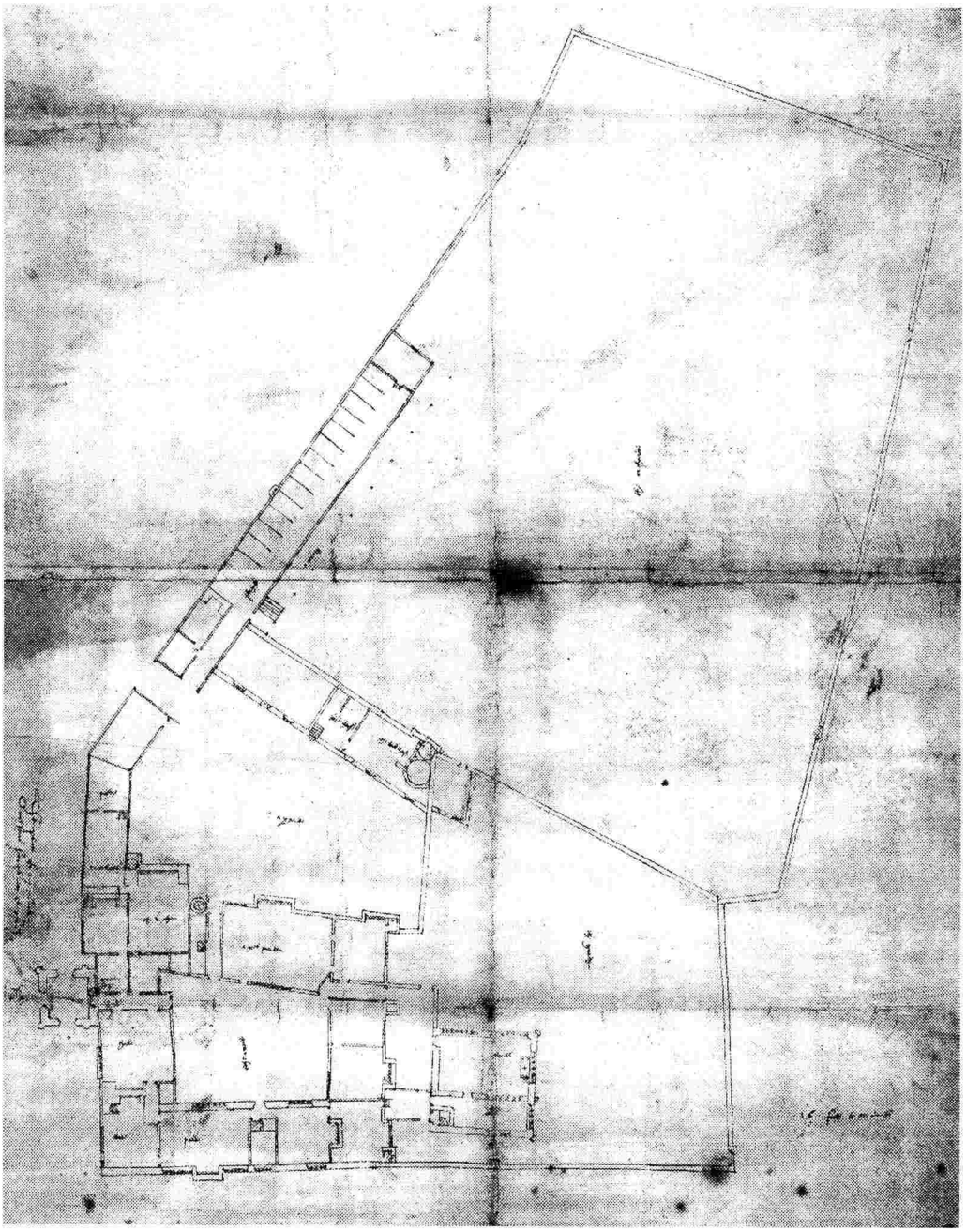

FIG. 94 – Greyscale version of a digital image of the Tudor plan of Curson House (British Library COTTON.AUGUSTUS.I, Vol. 2 No. 48), © The British Library. All Rights Reserved.

*version kindly made for us by John Liffen is adequately distinct (Fig. 94). We are most grateful to Peter Barber, Head of Map Collections, for his help, and for the Library's generosity in waiving the reproduction fee. Minor inconsistencies and errors in Grimsey's copying may be discerned by comparing the two figures, but it is well worth a visit to the British Library to study the original in detail.*

The following analysis of the architectural development of the house deals mainly with Sir Robert, Lord Curson's own time. It is based on a finely drawn plan[9] in the British Library probably commissioned by Wolsey when in about 1528 he wanted the house for his own use, as well as other historical evidence and a review of similar buildings of this period.

We have been able to read more of the named spaces than B.P. Grimsey,[10] and these have been added to his figure to produce our Fig. 93. His plan is certainly worth reproducing for its labelling, but details should be checked with Fig. 94, where for example the external walls in the south wing are shown thicker.

Sir Robert Curson's wealth enabled him to build himself an Ipswich mansion covering a large central site in his home parish. Staircases are shown within most wings of this ground floor plan, confirming that this group of buildings was generally at least two storeys high (Fig. 95).

The fact that Thomas Wolsey wished to take over this house at the end of his distinguished career suggests that it had qualities which set it apart from most others in the area. This is also borne out by its subsequent use by suffragan and diocesan bishops before it declined towards the end of the 18th century.

It is unlikely that Curson could have acquired a virgin site as late as the 1490s, but nothing of the layout of the plan positively indicates earlier buildings. While the whole scheme may have been built to an original design, the additive nature of the layout suggests that it was developed in stages. Lacking further evidence, we suggest the latter.

The public frontage to St Nicholas Street may well have been adapted from an earlier building by Curson. This west wing, compared with the south wing (see below), had thinner external walls of between 9 and 11 inches suggesting a timber frame construction similar to existing buildings of the period on the corner of St Nicholas Street and Silent Street opposite.

The west wing had the typical house plan of the time. The west entrance (initially without the tower) led from St Nicholas Street into a screens passage at the end of a hall extending south, with a parlour and buttery beyond that, and the service wing (kitchen, larder, pantry etc) off the other side of the passage, to the north. This passage also led into the main courtyard, although apparently not directly. The hall could well have been a double-height space with an open timber roof (probably of hammerbeam type), evident in important houses then, with a gallery over the screens passage. Gifford's Hall at Stoke by Nayland is a fine contemporary example.

The fact that the hall was located alongside St Nicholas Street, rather than at the rear of the courtyard, which might be expected if the whole south court had been built at the same time, indicates that the west wing was probably the initial development.

The courtyard plan was also somewhat angular and disjointed for a single build. Two of the four internal corners (north-west and north-east) look contrived, with the intersection on the third (south-east) suggesting a rear addition to the south frontage. The overall character could well have been similar to the courtyard form of Gifford's Hall, but urban rather than rural in its setting.

The courtyard building form with its military and religious antecedents became popular for larger houses and colleges during this period. It enabled the various elements to be linked together, while separating the owner's family from retainers and domestic facilities. Natural light and ventilation were easily provided within these long narrow wings.

The double courtyard layout was paralleled in East Anglia at Queens' College (and others) at Cambridge and Baconsthorpe Castle as well as Haddon Hall and Knole further afield, although these prime examples are generally on a larger scale and were developed over a period. The inclusion of a porter's lodge near the entrance suggests a grander conception of the overall courtyard plan based on

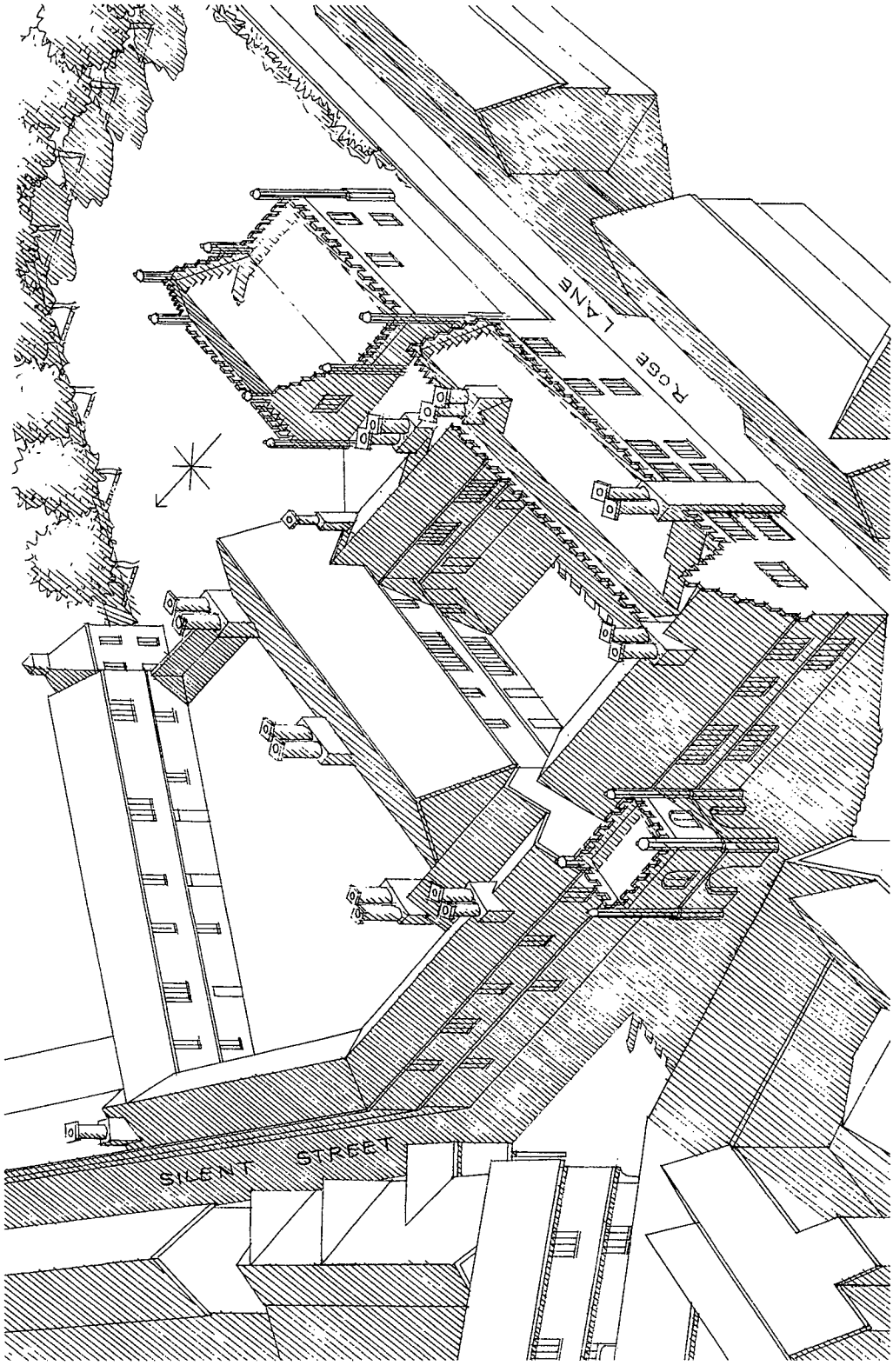


FIG. 95 – Reconstruction of Curson House in a bird's eye view from the south-west, by Bill Haward.

collegiate forms; this could have been incorporated later, but prior to 1530.

The thicker (two to two and half feet) external walls of the south wing (alongside Rose or Curson Lane) were probably of brickwork, with integral brick chimney breasts. The junction of the thicker brick south wall at the south-west corner, with the thinner timber frame wall on the west side, suggests a south brick gable wall was added here to the west wing, when the newer adjacent south wing was built. It is possible that an earlier timber frame construction of the south wing was faced with brickwork (as occurred in the later Georgian period). However, the former would most likely have incorporated a first floor cantilever (as in the similarly dated existing timber frame building opposite), which would make a brick facing impractical for the two storeys.

The south parlour ceiling was painted in lozenges with devices representing Curson and Henry VIII while their arms (and those of Curson's wife's parents) were represented in the windows. Stained glass was still quite rarely used in domestic architecture at this time, and only affordable by the most affluent. Such distinctive architectural features reinforce the idea that this wing was constructed during Curson's time.

The north wing had the great parlour, which is likely to have been a subsequent and more imposing addition (larger than the south parlour), but with limited internal access to adjacent rooms, although close to the kitchen to the west and more private family rooms to the rear in the east wing. Here there are thicker (probably brick) outer walls with integral fireplaces and chimneys, while the thinner inner walls might have been timber framed or possibly still brick.

The east wing to the courtyard had a similar arrangement of thicker outer walls (which became inner when the chapel was built to the east) and thinner inner walls, with the likely equivalent construction. The mullions of the windows were typically at about one foot centres, and were probably timber in the thinner timber frame walls (e.g. the west wing) and stone or brick within the thicker brick walls (eg south wing and chapel). Martin noted on his visit of 1740 that the Curson arms were inscribed on a low windowsill, presumably externally on the west or south sides.

Two important elements of the house, namely the entrance tower and the chapel, have thicker walls with circular (or more likely polygonal) corner buttresses shown here and, by their location. Could they be later additions? The tower is known to have been of brick and the chapel outer walls were no doubt of similar material.

One would expect these two brick structures (and possibly the south wing) to have been built after Curson returned from the French campaigns. With knowledge of the more common continental brick buildings and with the money gained in the service of the crown, he embellished his house with this fashionable, expensive and versatile material, in an area where good building stone was scarce locally. He might well have done so in preparation for the visit of Queen Katherine in 1517.

There had been some earlier fairly local examples of the use of brickwork such as Pykenham's Gateway, Ipswich (1471), and most impressively at Oxburgh Hall Norfolk (1482). The slightly later tower of St Mary at the Elms (c1500), with its polygonal buttresses, is similar to those on the Curson tower and chapel. Wolsey developed the use on a larger scale at his new palace at Hampton Court, starting in 1515.

In the 1520s brick was used more generally, albeit amongst the wealthy, and particularly in East Anglia. Notable examples locally include Layer Marney towers, Essex (1523), Giffords Hall gatehouse, Suffolk (c1520), East Barsham Hall, Norfolk (c1520), and the later Wolsey's College in Ipswich, of which only the south gateway (1528) survives. These buildings also illustrate an orthogonal and symmetrical layout, contrasting with most previous domestic architecture, which Curson House seems to reflect, subject to the above additions.

The entrance tower had more massive walls, with openings large enough for horses to be ridden through on all sides. Its position on plan suggests it was added on slightly later than the main building, as the existing external wall line runs past on the inside of the inner wall of the tower. It remained until demolished in 1760.

Entrance towers, either as separate structures or as embellishments to the main building frontages, were feature of large houses of this period (as noted above). They were intended to create a powerful visual impact on visitors.

The chapel, shown at the east end of the house, was attached by lesser intermediate walls, appearing as an adjunct to the main building, of a slightly later date. It had a south side extension, with a staircase leading to an upper gallery from which the Curson family could look down into the sanctuary. The rood screen approximately halved the space. The corner buttress to this extension suggests it was integral to the main chapel construction. The latter had its own buttress on the adjacent corner.

We offer the radical suggestion that the timber framed hammerbeam roof of Curson's chapel may now cover part of the east side of the Ancient House in the Buttermarket. The plan dimensions at the Ancient House and Curson House correspond closely. Two other Ipswich hammerbeam roofs have been re-employed in a similar way.[11] Curson would have used his chapel for family worship until his death in 1534, and Thomas Manning, suffragan bishop of Ipswich may also have heard mass there, but protestant bishops of Norwich may have preferred to visit churches. The removal of the roof, (likely to have been prefabricated in Ipswich originally) to the Ancient House could have occurred during the reigns of Elizabeth or James I. The detail of Speed's 1610 plan of the town offers no evidence, but Ogilby, surveyed for in 1674, shows Curson House without its chapel.

On the north side of the main house, there was a second court, known only as 'a yarde', where ancillary accommodation was located. This yard had a large entrance off what is now Silent Street, with wooden gates incorporating the Curson rebus. This entrance was almost exactly opposite the opening beside No. 7 Silent Street today. The yard had a range of buildings next to the entrance and extending along the north side, including the salt- and bake-houses. This range had quite thick walls of between 18 and 20 inches suggesting a later brick construction. An adjacent dovecote was located at the east end of this range, separated by a thicker brick wall between the yard and the garden.

Further north a large area (more than half the total), was probably grassed. Stabling for sixteen horses backed onto Silent Street, accessible from the yard. The stable block had a covered raised verandah indicated on the Tudor plan, facing the open space, where no doubt the horses were exercised and parades took place. Masonry walls marked the boundary of this area, and included a separating wall (perhaps a previous boundary) between the stables with the open space and the remaining house and garden. The latter could indicate the later acquisition of the northern site by Curson.

It is likely that a basement or cellar existed under part of the courtyard building as was typical of older houses locally, such as Christchurch Mansion and the Ancient House. It provided a cool secure place for storing provisions both perishable and otherwise. The house was built high enough above the river to avoid flooding. However, no evidence of a cellar remains.

The first floor, as implied by the disposition of staircases throughout, is likely to have provided bedrooms for the owners and their most important guests.

The roofs of the house would typically have had pitched form above each wing, possibly with gable frontages at one or more of the corners. The brick chimneys and crenellated parapet walls (e.g. south wing and chapel) are likely to have projected upwards through these roofs as distinctive shaped forms, common in larger houses at this time, particularly on the more public frontages. The entrance tower, with its thick walls, might well have been three-storeyed to add imposing height. However, by the time of Buck's view of Ipswich in 1741, nothing unusual is indicated in this area, although the tower lasted another twenty years.

We suggest that the contemporary building in Silent Street was probably the guesthouse occupied by members of Curson's retinue, doubly essential to accommodate the entourage of royal visitors in 1517 and 1522, and perhaps Wolsey on visits, especially during the building of his college on the adjacent site (Fig. 96).

Thus, while only intermittent records remain of this relatively large house, probably the biggest in the town at that time (Christchurch was built in the late 1540s, Seckford's Great Place in the 1560s), we can be confident that it impressed Curson's contemporaries and was indeed a mansion fit for the king and queen.


FIG. 96 – Early 20th century photograph of Curson Lodge from the south, restored 2006–07, and likely, with nos 1–7 Silent Street, to have been the guesthouse of Curson's Mansion.

*Later chronology of Curson's House*

1535 Curson died early that year and the house seems soon to have become Crown property; perhaps his widow sold it. Statute passed making the mansion available slightly ahead of requirement for Thomas Manning, the only Tudor suffragan bishop of Ipswich, who was not consecrated until March 1536.

1550 Bishop Thomas Thirlby petitioned Edward VI for the house 'that the bishop of Norwich might sometimes dwell in it for the better government of that part of his Diocese in Suffolk'.

1556 In May, Bishop John Hopton, one of Queen Mary's chaplains, made a visitation of Ipswich at which, Foxe tells us, 'divers and sundry godly Protestants, through the accusation of evil men, were sore troubled and presented before him'. Two years later, Elizabeth came to the throne and there should have been no more masses heard there.

1561 Bishop John Parkhurst granted a patent for keeping of the bishop's house at Ipswich to his brother Christopher Parkhurst, and gave him for his salary yearly 40 shillings. The bishop was maintaining another Christopher Parkhurst, not a son so presumably a nephew, at Ipswich School. Parkhurst was the first of three bishops (see below) to devise ways of maintaining the Ipswich house in good order to be available to him when needed.

1561 Headboroughs' Accounts: allowed to George Copping, parcel of the common soil behind Curson House, leaving a cartway on the east 18 ft broad, and on the south, another way, 27 ft broad, and saving the Bishop's Gate into the highway at 2s 6d rent. [Bacon's Annals, 1884, 258]

1583 Bishop Edmund Freake demised the house to Christopher Goodwyn, gent. of Ipswich, for 21 years at 40 shillings a year rent. Goodwyn had a brewhouse in the borough in 1581.

1594 Bishop Edmund Scambler granted a concurrent lease to his eldest son James for 21 years at the same rent. The lease allowed the conversion of a certain long house or houses lying from the great gate there being eastward to the garden where the dovecote now is built. The 'long houses' sound like the stables and the dove house (a rhombus in plan) is shown attached to the south east of the Bakehouse on the Platt, and still there, but detached, on Ogilby's 1674 map of Ipswich.

Sometime after 1600, on the evidence of the arms of Fitzwalter and Ratcliffe seen in glass by Candler in 1657, it seems likely that Henry Radcliff, Lord Fitzwalter and his wife Jane, daughter of Sir Michael Stanhope of Orford lived here. In April 1621, after Fitzwalter's death, his widow married Sir William Withipoll of Christchurch.

1619 Thomas Seely to pay 13s 4d for water from Caldwell Conduit or Brook at Curson House – the highest sum paid by anyone.

1626 A child lost [?abandoned] in Curson House porch maintained by the town and bound out apprentice. [Bacon's Annals, 486]

1635–38 Bishop Matthew Wren used the house when overseeing dissent stirred up by Samuel Ward and other Puritan preachers. He and his pregnant wife with their servants were chased out of the town and it is unlikely that the bishop risked a further visit.

1657 Matthias Candler visited the house and recorded the heraldry in his collections (BL Add. MS 15520, fols. 11 and 12). Abigail, widow of one Markeham alias Marchant gent., apothecary, and daughter of Christopher Cardinal gent. was in occupation here. Arms of Markeham and Cardinal, probably in glass, recorded.

1666 onwards: The house used as the King's Hospital in the Dutch Wars. Between 8 June and 8 August there were 35 burials of seamen 'out of the King's Hospitall at Cussun House', in the parish of St Nicholas.

1674 On Ogilby's map of Ipswich: Curson's chapel no long shown. The house taxed on 12 hearths that year. It may or may not have been an Inn, the Elephant and Castle (see below).

1698 The Ogilby map engraved (surveyed for in 1674) published, showing 'Mr Griggs Orchard' covering much of the site. One Adam Grigg signed Vestry minutes at St Nicholas in 1701.

1735 *The Suffolk Traveller:* Porch still standing. House belongs to the bishops of Norwich who let it upon lease.

1740 Thomas Martin visited the Curson property then in use as St Lawrence parsonage house
1750 Parish perambulation (St Nicholas) mentions a malting office behind the porch and the back land called the Elephant Orchard.

1760 Demolition of the 'strong and stately brick porch projecting into King Street, under which horsemen could ride'.

1764 *Suffolk Traveller*, second edition, 49: Porch tower 'lately demolished'. Curson rebus (dog and sun)

still to be seen on the old wooden back gate 'in Silent Street'. This may be an error for Curson alias Rose Lane, though Martin saw the rebus on a wooden gate near the tower porch. The house then in ruinous condition.

1778 Robert Trotman shown as tenant on Pennington's Map. He was six times Bailiff of Ipswich and died in 1813.

1787 Samuel Pegge for his *Sylloge* visits Mr Trotman, maltster, records heraldry still there and illustrates a ceiling surviving from Curson's time (Fig. 2).

1799 Diocese of Norwich sells the property for £263 10s to Trotman, who since 1791 has been paying ten shillings a year for the lease.

2005 The Curson House site at the corner of Silent Street and St Peter's Street has recently been developed. The new building has been misleadingly named Curzon House, implying a non-existent link with the Viceroy of India (1898–1905). The open space at the road junction is Curson Square and the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust, is currently (during 2007) renovating 45–47 St Nicholas Street renaming it, appropriately, Curson Lodge (Fig. 7).

## NOTES

1 Curson's life here elaborates on the article on Curson written by the first named author for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2003, (No. 74438) which drew on all the printed and manuscript sources given below.
2 B.L. Harley MS 651, fols 194v.-196v.
3 More 1529, 92–94.
4 Wodderspoon 1848, 16.
5 Webb 1991, 9-10; Churchwardens' accounts, St Peter's Ipswich, B.L. Add. MS 25344, fol. 68.
6 Martin, Collections for Ipswich, 1740, B.L. Stowe MS 881, fols. 51v., 52r., 60r.
7 Pegge, 1787, 93–94, and fig. 3.
8 Grimsey 1889–91, 53.
9 B.L. Cotton Aug. MS 1, vol. 2, no. 48.
10 Grimsey 1889, plan facing p. 156.
11 In 1528 part of the chancel roof at St Peter's was sold by the Dean of Wolsey's College to the churchwardens of St Mary Quay (with a bequest from Dame Elizabeth Gelget) where the chancel roof today shows all the signs of being reused. The Ipswich Shearmans' hall roof (with shears in the spandrels) was moved in the 1840s to Cholderton, Wilts.

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