

# GIFFORDS HALL, STOKE BY NAYLAND

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During recent years, alterations and repairs to Giffords Hall have revealed features which bear directly on the architectural history of the building. In the light of these discoveries, the opportunity was taken to make an archaeological survey which has formed the basis for the accompanying account and plan (Fig. 23). The house has been extensively illustrated and described in previous publications,<sup>1</sup> and the present account attempts only to draw attention to new aspects; those features recently revealed and not described elsewhere are dealt with in greater detail. The parts of the building removed in 1934-5 are shown on the plan in outline, whereas the surviving walls are differentiated by symbols, to indicate their date.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Giffords Hall is an outstanding example of an early Tudor manor house, the arrangement of which has survived largely unaltered. In addition, the simultaneous use of two building techniques—brick and masonry for the gate-house, its flanking walls and the hall, and timber framing for the living quarters—typifies a late mediaeval attitude to building which is at the same time monumental and domestic. The solid walls of brick or flint, of which the gate-house and flanking walls on the approach side are built, form an impression of fortification and mediaeval stability which must have been deliberate from the start although an earlier building incorporated in the Tudor one was the likely germ of this conception. In contrast, the other ranges grouped round the courtyard have, with the exception of the hall itself, that domestic character which is associated with merchants' houses of the wool

<sup>1</sup> Charles Partridge, F.S.A. ('Silly Suffolk'), 'Mannock of Gifford's Hall' in *East Anglian Daily Times*, twelve parts, 29 May 1926—23 April 1927, also 12 April 1930. This is a detailed and scholarly history of the family.

*Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, vi (1888), 322-3.

*Country Life*, xiv, 578 (24 Oct. 1903) and LIV, 488, 524 (13 and 20 Oct. 1923).

H. Avray Tipping, *English Houses, period II*, vol. I Early Tudor 1485-1558, (London 1924).

F. A. Girling, F.S.A., 'Suffolk Timber Framed Houses', *Journ. Brit. Arch. Soc.*, Oct. 1928.

Garner and Stratton, *Domestic Architecture of England during the Tudor Period*, (2nd ed. Batsford 1929), Plate CI.

Crossley, *Timber Building in England*, (Batsford 1951), Fig. 161.

Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Suffolk*, (Penguin Books 1961).

towns. The impressive gateway was but a stage front masking the domesticity of the timber-framed buildings beyond. Alterations made in subsequent years have been mostly removed and original features reinstated. However, later sash windows and other alterations to the range on the east side of the courtyard have been retained; the present kitchen on the site of the earlier one is entirely modern. Otherwise, the building is remarkable for its adherence to a single period of construction; although the ranges round the courtyard are treated as individual self-contained blocks, they are apparently contemporary.

#### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The history of the ownership of the estate has already appeared elsewhere;<sup>1</sup> these notes concentrate on the history of the structure and are intended to be read in conjunction with the plan. The only signs of the building that preceded the present one are the areas of flint rubble walling in the south range; of these areas much exists to the full height of the range on the south side, west of the gate-house, and some in the north and east walls of the gate-house itself. The date of this first phase is unknown, but on the evidence of the mouldings of reset doorways within the present gate-house, it would be reasonable to assume a late 13th-century or early 14th-century date. In view of the similarity in its walling, the chapel to the south of the house is also relevant, but unfortunately no dateable architectural features have survived.<sup>2</sup> It seems strange that when the first building was being replaced on such a lavish scale it was thought worth while retaining such a small part of the old structure. In any case, these surviving areas of wall tell nothing of the plan of the first building except that it contained a range of the same width as that now standing on the south. This work may be associated with the Gifford family, who owned the property from 1281,<sup>3</sup> but more precise dating is impossible.

The evidence for the date of the present building rests on the interpretation of the heraldry which decorates the upper part of the south side of the gate-house turrets. These shields, in moulded brick, are probably of the following families (from W. to E.): 1, Mannock imp. Waldegrave. 2, Hastings. 3, Goldingham imp. Mannock. 4, Mannock imp. Goldingham. 5, Clopton imp. Goldingham. 6, Isle of Man. Some of these identifications, first advanced by Partridge (*loc. cit.*, 12 Feb. 1927), may be subject to correction, but on the evidence of the heraldry it can be taken that

<sup>1</sup> (*See footnote, page 183*).

<sup>2</sup> The chapel is said to have been built by Richard Constable in the reign of Henry III—cf. Torlesse, *Some Account of Stoke by Nayland*, (1877).

<sup>3</sup> Partridge, *loc. cit.*, part 1, 29 May 1926.

the builder was George Mannock, who was born 1467-68, married Catherine Waldegrave, and died in 1540 or '41. The date of this marriage is not certainly known, but may be about 1494. The style of building (both the brick ranges and the timber-framed) would suggest a date late in the first quarter of the 16th century. The Mannocks had acquired the estate some hundred years previously. The courtyard was stuccoed and generally Georgianised in the 18th and early 19th centuries,<sup>4</sup> but some of these changes have been subsequently removed.

#### NOTES ON THE STRUCTURE

*The south range* consists of a two-storey gate-house with semi-octagonal turrets and a long, and lower, two-storey range on its west side. The south wall of the long range is built in flint rubble and brick, and the north wall is timber-framed. The gate-house itself is largely in brick but on the north side, east of the archway, the lower part of the wall is in flint rubble; some areas of the east wall, seen above the gable roof that abuts against the gate-house on this side, are also of flint rubble. The plan of the gateway is remarkable in that the doors are not placed beneath the outer arch but instead, about half-way between the gateway's inner and outer arches, which are without doors. The arch taking the doors has a four-centred head and continuous, flattened bowtell-like mouldings that suggest an early 14th-century date. The present linen-fold pattern doors are presumably later replacements of the 16th century. The stones forming the jambs and head may well have been re-used and augmented by others, although the strange plan might have been dictated by some survival of an earlier gate-tower. On the west side of the gateway is a reset two-centred doorway having a moulded label and mask stops of late 13th or early 14th-century date. The significance of the early walls on the north and east sides of the gate-house is obscure. At the S.E. extremity is a garde-robe. Internally, some mutilated ceiling-joists suggest that the small link between the part contained by the earlier masonry walls and the eastern range, had an overhang on its northern side, facing into the courtyard.

*The northern range* is largely composed of the hall with its solar to the west and a block, doubtless originally containing the butteries, to the east. The screens passage is entered through a two-storey porch, which is brick below and half-timbered above. The upper storey is almost entirely modern and conjectural in design. The hall is sufficiently well-known as not to call for further description, but it should be said that it is an outstanding example of a

<sup>4</sup> Sale Catalogue of 1887.

small 'showpiece' hall built at a time when there was little practical necessity for such a building; as a status symbol, it served its purpose, as did the 'fortified' gate-house. The large chimney stack is placed on the courtyard side. This is abnormal, as the oriel window, usually reserved for this side, is thereby limited in size. Perhaps for this reason, it was thought necessary to put the window so unexpectedly within the chimney stack. The screen is basically original although it has been modified by the removal of transoms and presumably tracery, in the side bays. The posts have been reduced in girth, so obliterating the mouldings. The gallery front is composed of 17th-century balusters. In the north wall, at the west end, is an original doorway which probably served a former stair to the upper room in the solar wing.

The solar wing has been considerably altered but recent changes have gone some way to restoring its original character externally. In particular, the roof has suffered a number of modifications. Old photographs <sup>5</sup> show that it acquired a sort of parapet containing a lengthy upper window. The present roof is on the same axis as the hall roof but originally it is likely to have been at right angles to it, so presenting a gable to the courtyard.

As the part of the range east of the hall has been much altered internally and externally, little can be said beyond the fact that it must have originally contained the butteries. It seems likely that the large chimney stack, now internal, marked the end of the range, and that there was a considerable space between it and the eastern range. The fact that its southern wall is not in the same alignment as that of the hall shows that there was originally an overhang, subsequently under-built, along this side. The original line of the ground floor wall is indicated by the cellar wall below.

*The east range* has been altered by the introduction of sash windows and by changes to the lower storey on the courtyard side; however, the original roof which survives shows that the length and breadth of the range is preserved. During repairs in recent times, floor joists (running E. and W.) with rounded ends were discovered on the western side at the north end, where the range now abuts on the northern range (Plate XXVII, *b*). This undoubtedly indicates an overhang which presumably continued along the whole of this side and returned for a short distance along the southern range (see under 'south range'). This overhang along the east range, having been underbuilt, is not now reflected in any of the present structure. The range must have originally appeared somewhat like that on the west. The roof, which is a particularly good example of its type, has survived largely intact. It is divided into nine unequal bays by roof trusses composed of tie beams, crown posts, collars, and collar

<sup>5</sup> Sale Catalogue of 1887.

PLATE XXVII

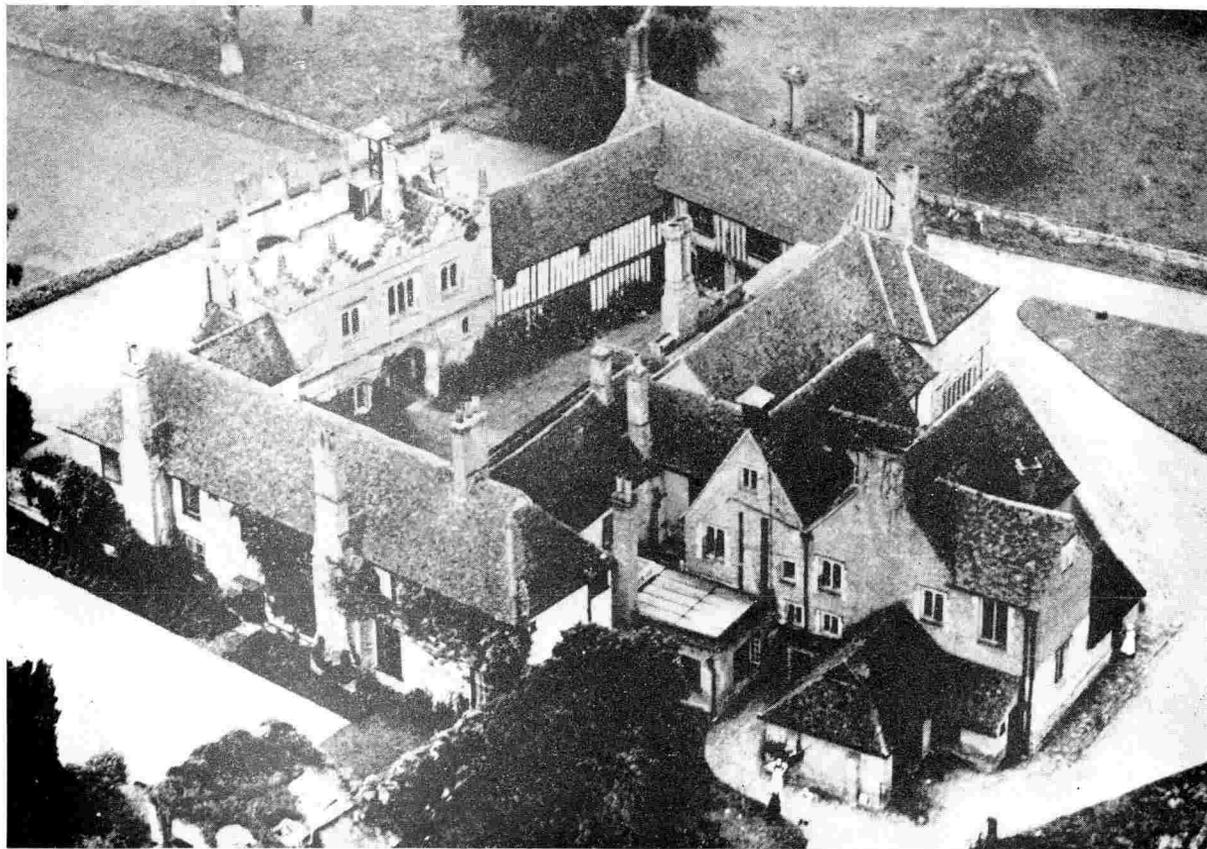


*a.* The roof-structure over the east range looking south, showing the open truss No. 7 and, beyond, the closed truss No. 8.



*b.* The ends of joists, at the northern end of the east range, indicating a first floor overhang. These joists were made visible during the repairs of 1934-5 when this photograph was taken, before being again covered over.

PLATE XXVIII



Giffords Hall from the north-east. An aerial photograph taken before the alterations of 1934-5.

purlins, with axial bracing to the crown posts. There are five closed trusses (numbered on the plan 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8, from the north). The distance between trusses 5 and 6 is considerably less than elsewhere, indicating a narrow compartment between partitions which is still reflected by the present cross passage on the ground floor; it could conceivably have contained a stair. The closed trusses are distinguished from the two open trusses by features such as mortices for studs, originally forming partitions, and by less elaborate crown posts.

The open trusses Nos. 4 and 7 on plan (Plate XXVII, *a*) have crown posts with moulded capitals and bases, four-way braces from the crown posts, and cambered tie beams, moulded on the soffits. Sufficient remains of the roof to show that some measure of symmetry was got by providing two equally sized rooms, one on either side of the narrow compartment. Each of these rooms had therefore a central roof truss with an enriched crown post. The truss numbered 2 has been mutilated by a later chimney stack and its form is not clear, but it would be reasonable to assume that it too was an open truss so providing a third two-bay room. The roof system shows that there were small compartments at the northern and southern ends of the range. This building, reflecting that on the west of the courtyard, appears to have been for secondary accommodation, such as lodgings, and was structurally separate from the more important rooms adjacent to the hall.

The buildings which stood until 1934 on the north side of the screens passage consisted of two adjacent blocks, the roofs of which were parallel. That immediately north of the hall had a number of storeys, while that beyond it contained the kitchen which seems to have been originally open to the roof, or open at least to tie beam level. There were first-floor rooms over the kitchen at the time of demolition. A bressumer from a kitchen fireplace bearing the date 1642 has been retained, but the two buildings were almost certainly coeval with the main part of the house. The buildings, subsequently encumbered by numerous lesser rooms of indeterminate character, are recorded in a photograph (Plate XXVIII) and in architectural drawings made before their demolition.

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