The Landmark Trust

PEAKE'S HOUSE

History Album

Researched and Written by Julia Abel Smith, 1997

Re-presented in 2016

The Landmark Trust Shottesbrooke Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 3SW
Charity registered in England & Wales 243312 *and Scotland* SC039205

Bookings 01628 825925 *Office* 01628 825920 *Facsimile* 01628 825417
Website www.landmarktrust.org.uk

BASIC DETAILS

Leased to Landmark	**March 1995**
Landlord	**Colchester Borough Council**
Repaired	**July-October 1995**
Architects	**Peregrine Bryant and David Hopps of Peregrine Bryant Architects**
Builders	**Tendring Construction Ltd. of Wix**
Engineer	**Richard Gray**
Site agent	**Kevin Watcham**
Quantity Surveyor **Bare**	**Adrian Stenning of Bare, Leaning &**
Furnished and let	**November 1995**
Last tenant	**The Red Cross**
Listed	**Grade II**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the help I received with the preparation of these history notes from: Mrs J. Donnelly, Mrs Bedford at the Colchester Record Office, staff at the Museum Resource Centre, and Mr Richard Shackle of the Colchester Local Studies Library was particularly kind with the early history of the building.

This history is dedicated to the memory of
CHARLOTTE HASLAM
Landmark Historian, colleague and friend,
who died suddenly on 3rd January, 1997.

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Peake's House

Summary

The house that is now called Peake's House is named after the generous neighbour who bought it when it was in dire need of rescue, and gave it to the Colchester Borough Council. But it has a long and complex history. You approach it now along a street that in the late 14th century was called Calayse Street; by 1692 it was Bear Lane (from an inn on the corner of the High Street), and by 1748 it was St Martin's Lane. It seems to have become East Stockwell Street by 1841: the Stock Well was a notable watering place for cattle, horses and sheep.

At one time the site on which Peake's House stands held three houses: 30, 31 and 32 East Stockwell Street. Of the three, 31 and 32 were a single dwelling, an early open hall house.[1] Number 32, built in the late 14th century, was the oldest part: this house contained the service area and the screens passage to the hall, which stood on the site of 31 (where the drawing room and main bedroom are now). The service area comprised a buttery and pantry, where wet and dry foods were stored. The cooking was done either in the hall or in a detached kitchen in the back yard. In the 15th century a west wing, containing a parlour, was added behind 32, and to the north of it a small wing was built in the 17th century, for use either as a new open hall or perhaps as an attached kitchen. Later on, this wing was extended to form an extra room. With the extensions, 31 and 32 formed a three-sided building surrounding what is now our garden. (Now, however, the whole of 32 has disappeared, demolished in 1935 and replaced by our car parking space.)

The hall on the site of 31 was rebuilt, or remodelled, in about 1550, and was converted into the present three-storied house, with the hall replaced by the present sitting room and bedroom. This may have been a new parlour block, but it seems more likely that the building became a separate entity used as a shop or commercial premises with living and sleeping quarters above. It may have been at this time that 31 and 32 became separate houses, and if they were separately owned the businessman's (or shopkeeper's) family would have needed extra accommodation upstairs. If our main bedroom was their living room, this may explain the generously sized fireplace, with its stylised plaster flower.

Next door, another separate house – our number 30 – had already been put up, possibly by the same craftsmen that built the hall house, in about 1500 or soon afterwards; it seems to have been linked to 31 by new brickwork in the early 17th century, when the chimney stack was built. This is the house that now contains our front door, together with the kitchen, bathroom and twin bedroom. It also has a large cellar with a generous ceiling height, making it a useful working space below ground. This would not have been necessary for structural purposes (many such houses were built straight on to the ground with a brick plinth only a few courses high). Perhaps it was used for manufacturing whatever was sold on the floor above: to use a cellar in this way not only saved ground space but also provided security for stocks and tools.

The three houses seem to have changed very little until the early 20th century. In 1903 Mr J Burnby opened a general store in what is now our kitchen; the family later bought the freehold. In 1928, 31 and 32 were sold, possibly to Mr W. Peake, who carried on a successful business at 36 East Stockwell Street which eventually expanded into a fair-

[1] A hall was the communal room at the heart of the house, open to the rafters with a central hearth.

sized factory. By now all three houses were in poor condition, however, and in 1935 number 32 was pulled down, probably in the belief that it was past saving. But the tide was turning: the Colchester Civic Society was now starting to restore some of the timber-framed houses, including Peake's House (then called The Old House). In1946 Mr Peake made a generous gift of it to the Borough Council, specifying that it was to be used for social and cultural purposes only.

Restoration by the Landmark Trust

Mr Peake died in1957. In the same year Peake's House was let to the Colchester branch of the Red Cross Society, and there they stayed until fire officers pointed out that the house was, from the fire safety point of view, unsuitable as a venue for classes consisting of a number of people. Of necessity they moved out (into a house further up East Stockwell Street), and the Borough Council were faced with the need to find a new use for the house that would respect the terms of Mr Peake's stipulation that it was to be used for social and cultural purposes only. In 1994 the Council decided that, in spite of Mr Peake's wishes, it would have to be sold.

Very fortunately, the story of Peake's House came to the notice of Mrs M.J. March. Mrs March was an old friend of the Landmark Trust, and indeed had herself stayed in many Landmarks; she wrote to the Trust suggesting that this was a building that needed their attention. A suggestion was put to the Council that they should allow Landmark a 99-year lease on the property, while retaining the freehold, and this was agreed early in 1995. With generous financial help from the Council, Peake's House was repaired and restored during the following summer under the direction of Peregrine Bryant and David Hopps of Peregrine Bryant Architects, with the building work carried out by Tendring Construction of Wix.

Unusually for a Landmark, only relatively minor works were needed. In one corner of the lower bedroom there were signs of movement, so a new metal strap was fitted to secure the tie beam to the wall plate. An existing tie was supposed to hold the front of the building to the back, but was useless because at some time it had been cut; the engineer Richard Gray found a way of modifying the design to make it do its job as originally intended. The floor level in the sitting room was raised, so that one might see out of the windows. The main bedroom was open to the roof, and it was decided that the ceiling should be put back. A new kitchen was made in the old dining room, and the bathroom and the W.C. were combined, providing new airing and storage cupboards. The wiring and heating systems were renewed, and new insulation put in wherever possible.

The blacksmith made new iron hand rails for the main staircase and on the new steps up to the sitting room, as well as the curtain rods. Damaged plaster was patched with haired lime plaster, and the walls were limewashed. Some new floorboards were provided in the sitting room, and new quarry tiles were laid in the back quarters. Dutch tiles were commissioned for the kitchen; in one of these, two ladies are sitting among large piles of wool – a reference to the cloth trade that brought prosperity to Colchester in the Middle Ages; perhaps one is a 'parter', whose job it was to separate the finer wool from the coarser, while the other is holding what might be a spindle, so may be spinning.

Peake's opened its doors to its first visitors in November 1995. Once a year, the house is opened to the public. It is an exceptional experience to spend the day exploring the city of Colchester, and then enjoy the pleasures of returning to your own medieval home at its heart.

Introduction

Peake's House was first brought to Landmark's attention in February 1994 by Mrs M.J.March. She had stayed in many Landmarks and sent us press cuttings describing Colchester Borough Council's proposal to sell the house which it had been given by Mr W.O. Peake in 1946. After the Red Cross Society moved out, the Council had found it difficult to find a use for the house which respected the terms of the Mr Peake's gift: for social or cultural purposes only. We wrote to them suggesting a Landmark use, whereby the Council could retain the freehold and we would buy the lease.

This was agreed and a 99 year lease was signed in March 1995 when the Council gave us £30,000 for repairs and in return we hold annual open days. They have one week each May when they can open the house to the public and can also book two further weeks at a reduced rate for civic purposes. The repair work was carried out from July to October 1995 and the house was furnished and let for the first holiday in November that year.

The house and the parking space take up the original site of three houses: 30, 31 and 32 East Stockwell Street. The parking space is on the site of 32 which was demolished in 1935. This house, probably of the late 14th century, contained the service area and screens passage to the hall, originally on the site of 31 (the present drawing room and main bedroom). Behind 32 was a west wing (containing the parlour) added in 15th century and to the north of this was a small wing, partly of the 17th century.

The hall was rebuilt or remodelled c1550 when the present house of three storeys was built. No. 30 which contains our front door was a separate house probably built about 1500 or soon afterwards. Thus originally, on the site of 31 and 32 was an early hall house with later additions towards the back, and a separate dwelling at 30. With the demolition of 32, 31 and 30 became one house, known as 30 East Stockwell Street. Therefore what we have now, like so many Landmarks, is a fragment of a considerably larger group.

Life in the Dutch Quarter

Past owners and occupiers of 30, 31 and 32 East Stockwell Street

The area bounded by the High Street and Northgate Street is now known as the Dutch Quarter. But it was not referred to by this name until 1876 when members of the Archaeological Institute reported that they had visited the 'Dutch Quarter' referring to the Flemings who had fled there from religious persecution in their own country in the second half of the 16th century. About 1380 East Stockwell Street was called Calayse Street; by 1692 it was Bear Lane (from an inn on the corner of the High Street), and by 1748 it was St. Martin's Lane. Finally, by 1841 it was East Stockwell Street.

The parish of St. Martin is a small one lying between those of St. Peter and St. Nicholas. Peake's House is mid-way between the High Street and the River Colne, well within the ancient town walls. Now known as the Dutch Quarter, it was convenient for the medieval market which was held on the High Street between North Hill and Maidenburgh Street. The shambles (slaughter-house) were in the middle of the market outside what is now the Town Hall and many butchers lived in East and West Stockwell Street with slaughter houses there as late as 1580. But despite this, it must have been a pleasant area in which to live with its hill leading down towards the river with rural views beyond. The fullers, dyers and tanners who required water for their trades, worked along the Colne between North and East Bridges below the Dutch Quarter. Colchester's water supply was held in numerous wells which included the famous Stockwell, a watering place for cattle, horses and sheep, and gave the immediate area and nearby streets their names.

By the second half of the 12th century the area had become the Jewish Centre in Colchester. One of these, Isaac of Colchester, was one of the richest men in England. (Sir Isaac's Walk is, however, named after Isaac Rebow who was

knighted by William III after entertaining the monarch at his house near Headgate.) In 1248 Rabbi Samuel was given tenure of a house, either in East or West Stockwell Street, which may have been the Synagogue recorded in 1268. However, in 1290 all the Jews in England were expelled by royal command and their houses were taken over by the town burgesses. Maidenburgh Street was developed in the 1330s and the northern parts of East and West Stockwell Streets may have been built at the same time. It was in the second half of the 14th century that the house at 31 and 32, East Stockwell Street was probably built, so perhaps the house was relatively isolated at first. The *Victoria County History* tells us that wills from the 14th and 15th centuries show that 'the richest townspeople seem to have lived in the part of the High Street in St. Runwald's and St. Nicholas's parish, and in East and West Stockwell Streets which extended into St. Martin's parish.'

At that time, there were a number of shops in the area; at an ironmongers in East Stockwell Street in 1377, two men were charged with entering the building and spoiling the sharp end of some fuller's tongs. Adam Mustarder was charged with polluting the Stockwell by washing his clothes and dishes in it, and in 1367 Richard Packe, was accused of throwing toads and other noxious items into the well. In the 1360's, John Ball, one of the leaders in Wat Tyler's Peasants' Revolt of 1381, was a parochial chaplain in the parish of St. James and he owned a tenement between East and West Stockwell Streets.

In the Court Rolls, there are a number of cases of prostitutes plying their trade in the Stockwell area in the 14th century. This was against the law which demanded that Katherine Kytlyng, Agnes Terry and their kind, 'being common harlots', had to keep to the 'place of old appointed for such in the Borough of Colchester' outside the city walls known as 'Le Berislane', now Vineyard Street, to the south of the town.

In his book on the *Growth and Decline in Colchester,* 1300 - 1525*,* R.H. Britnell gives an inventory of an innkeeper called John Pool, made in 1458. Whilst it is unclear in what part of Colchester it was, the list illustrates the character of a tavern and its landlord's private quarters in Colchester at the time:

> *The hall, his main living room, had wall hangings of Flemish manufacture, and the seats had coverings and cushions. There was a large folding table, a cupboard and a cage for a pet bird. This room was warmed from an open hearth with an iron fender. Because of his trade, Pool needed more sitting room than most; his house contained two parlours, one large and one small, with two trestle tables in the former and a small folding table in the latter. In both rooms the seats had cloth covers and cushions, and the large parlour had a chair specially made for a child ... Some items of silver - spoons and other tavern pieces - weighing in all 2 1/4 lb. In the kitchen the fireplace had bellows, spits and trivets, and the utensils available there included three pots, four pans, a frying pan and a 30-piece set of pewter vessels. Upstairs the chamber contained the best bed, with hangings of white linen powdered with ermine. With it were two feather beds, one of them for a child, and two mattresses on which servants slept. Each bed had a pillow and a pair of sheets, supplemented with a blanket or a quilt. The chamber also contained a trestle table with two benches and a spruce chest. The best garments included a sanguine gown with fur trimmings, a green gown and a gown of musterdevillers. By past standards this all represented a very decent standard of accommodation, and yet Pool was not a man of high standing in Colchester and there were many who were wealthier than he.*

In the 14th century, large numbers of Flemings (known as Dutch in Essex) began arriving in Colchester encouraged by Edward III to help with the expanding cloth industry. In 1573 there was an inventory carried out of all the Flemish families which had recently taken refuge in Colchester from religious persecution of the Protestants, carried out by the Duke of Alva under the orders of the obsessively Catholic Philip II. St. Martin's parish had 12 families; St. Peter's had 42, whilst St. Nicholas's had four.

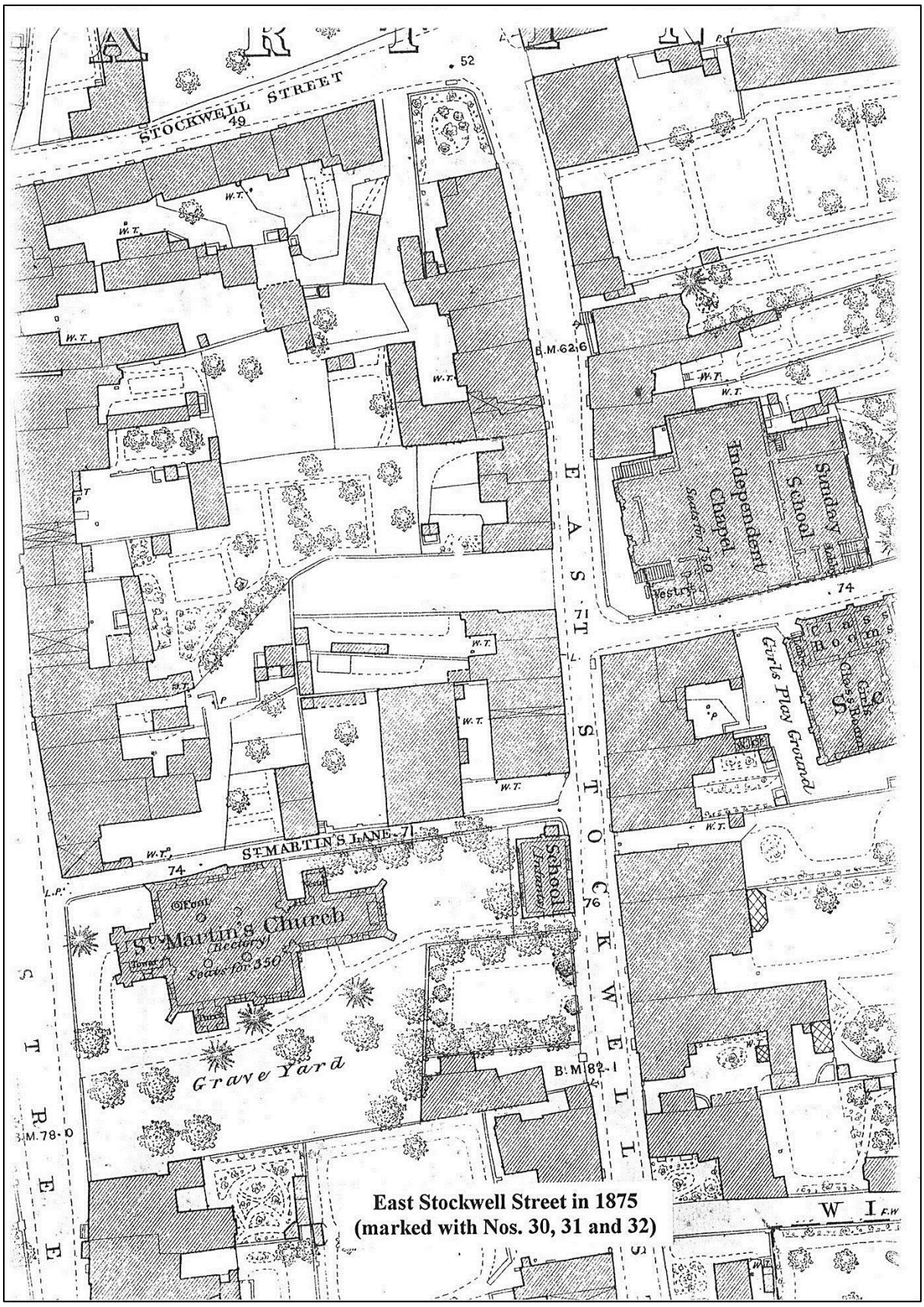
The Civil War hit Colchester badly, especially the south side of the town where the poorer members of the Dutch congregation lived. The town was occupied by a royalist army and was besieged for eleven weeks by Sir Thomas Fairfax's army firing at the town from across the River Colne. St. Martin's Church was badly damaged and the tower never recovered. In September, 1648 Fairfax imposed a

fine of £12,000 after the siege. £10,000 was in lieu of the pillage that Parliamentary forces could have committed and £2,000 was for the poor. The town authorities speedily and unfairly allotted £6,000 of this to the Dutch, perceived to be the richest group in Colchester. By the 1720's the Dutch community was almost fully integrated into the town and their own church at Head Street was disbanded. It may have been the Presbyterian traditions of the Dutch which encouraged the large number of non-conformist chapels in the Quarter whilst the established church of St. Martin was not repaired. (The former Congregational Chapel almost opposite our house, was built 1816-17 and the rather grand facade was added in 1834.) The Reverend Philip Morant, (1700-1770), vicar of St. Mary's-at-the-Walls, in his *History and Antiquities of Essex* describes the location of Colchester with evident affection:

> *The situation of it is, upon all accounts, very convenient. For it stands so near the sea, as to have all the advantages of it, excellent fish, especially soles and oyster; and water-carriage, the Hoys and Lighters coming up to St. Leonard's; or the Hythe. And it lies far enough from the sea to be free from damps and all noxious vapours. It is also an easy day's journey from London, to which a coach goes daily .....*

Monson's Map of Colchester of 1848 shows development in this part of town still neatly within the ancient city walls with a few houses straying up North Street towards, but nowhere near, the new 'Eastern Counties Railway' station. The title deeds for 30 East Stockwell Street at the Borough Council Offices date back to April 1859 when it was owned by Henry Oakley, a Professor of Music living at 20 Newman Street off Oxford Street in London. In that year we know that the house had a well and it was sold to Henry Branch who in 1910 died and left it to his children, one of whom, Alfred, was a Vet for the Ministry of the Interior in Cairo.

The invaluable *Benham's Almanack and Directory* for Colchester begins in 1885. At that time, East Stockwell Street was a street of respectable trades and businessmen: a milkseller, coalmerchant and solicitor, as well as a printing works



East Stockwell Street in 1875
(marked with Nos. 30, 31 and 32)

and two bricklayers, one of whom was B. Lissimore. Bennell Lissimore lived at 31 which he may also have owned, as the yard behind with access on Stockwell Street was known as Lissimore's Yard by 1900. (In Lissimore's Yard there were four householders, living in tenements situated around the courtyard of the old house at number 32, with the old screens passage, by then a covered passage with public right of way.) Mr Lissimore occupied Number 31 until 1909, when Mr J. Boyles moved in.

In 1903 Mr J. Burnby moved into Number 30 and here he opened the General Stores in what is now our kitchen. In 1926 the Burnby family bought the freehold and in 1929 the premises were occupied by a Mr Jones. That year for the first time, Mr W. Peake's business is listed at 36 East Stockwell Street in the Directory. The year before, 1928, 31 and 32 were sold and it seems likely that Mr. Peake himself might have bought them then with a view to building up his holdings in the area of his business. The sale particulars held at the Colchester Record Office relate to a sale of a freehold block of cottage property: Nos. 31 & 32 East Stockwell Street and Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Lissimore's Yard and Stable. By this stage, the historic old house at 32 had become something of a rookery. The front part was let to Mr F. Woodrow for 1/- a week whereas 31 with Nos.1 &2 Lissimore's Yard and a stable commanded 12/- a week. A particularly poignant note tells us that:

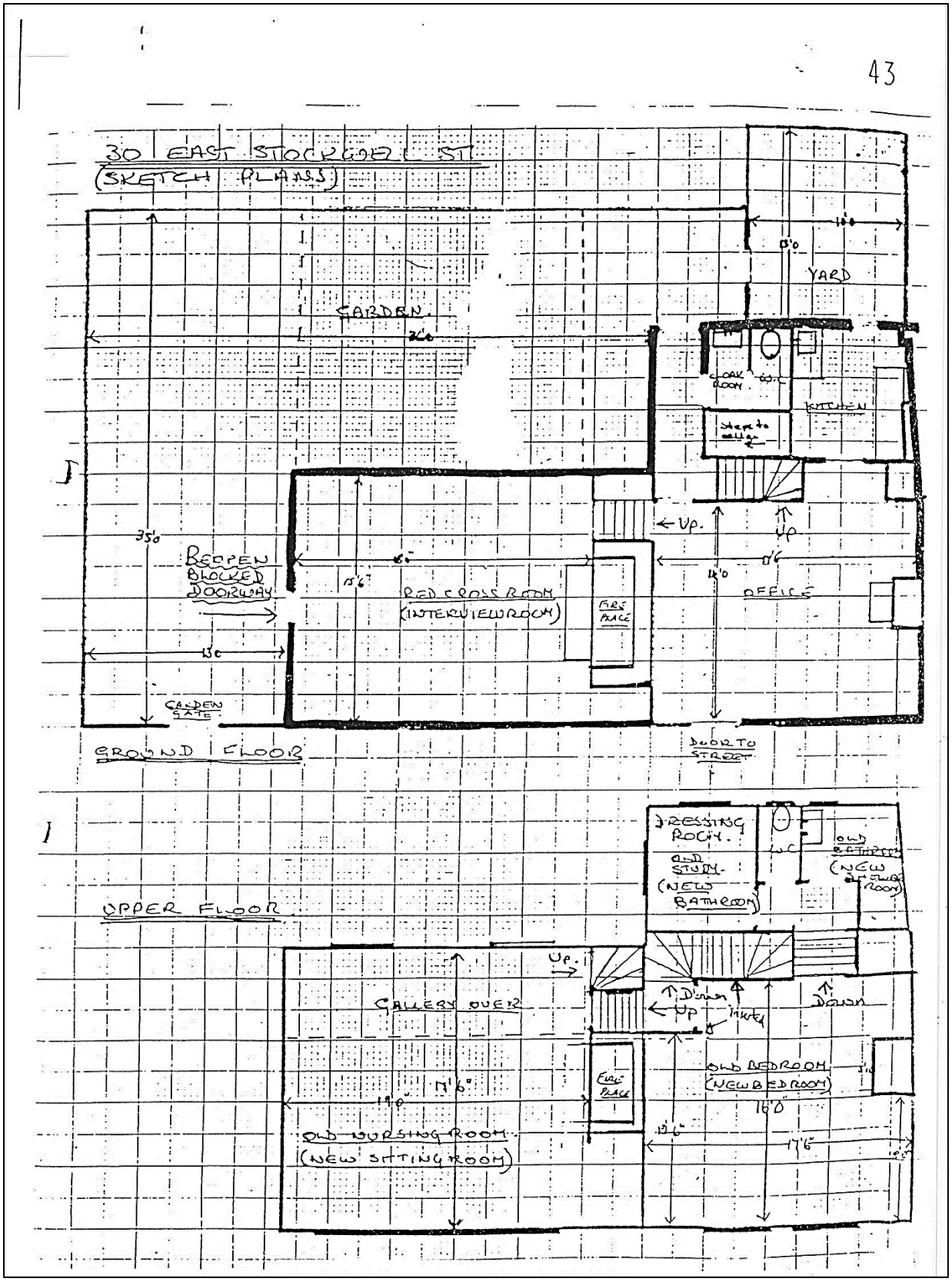
> The building of Nos. 31 and 32 is believed to be one of few remaining examples in the Borough of the 14th century and contains much old oak.

The sale took place at 4 o'clock 'precisely' at The Oddfellows' Hall, George Street but by 1937 all of Number 32 had gone, demolished no doubt because it was regarded as being beyond repair.

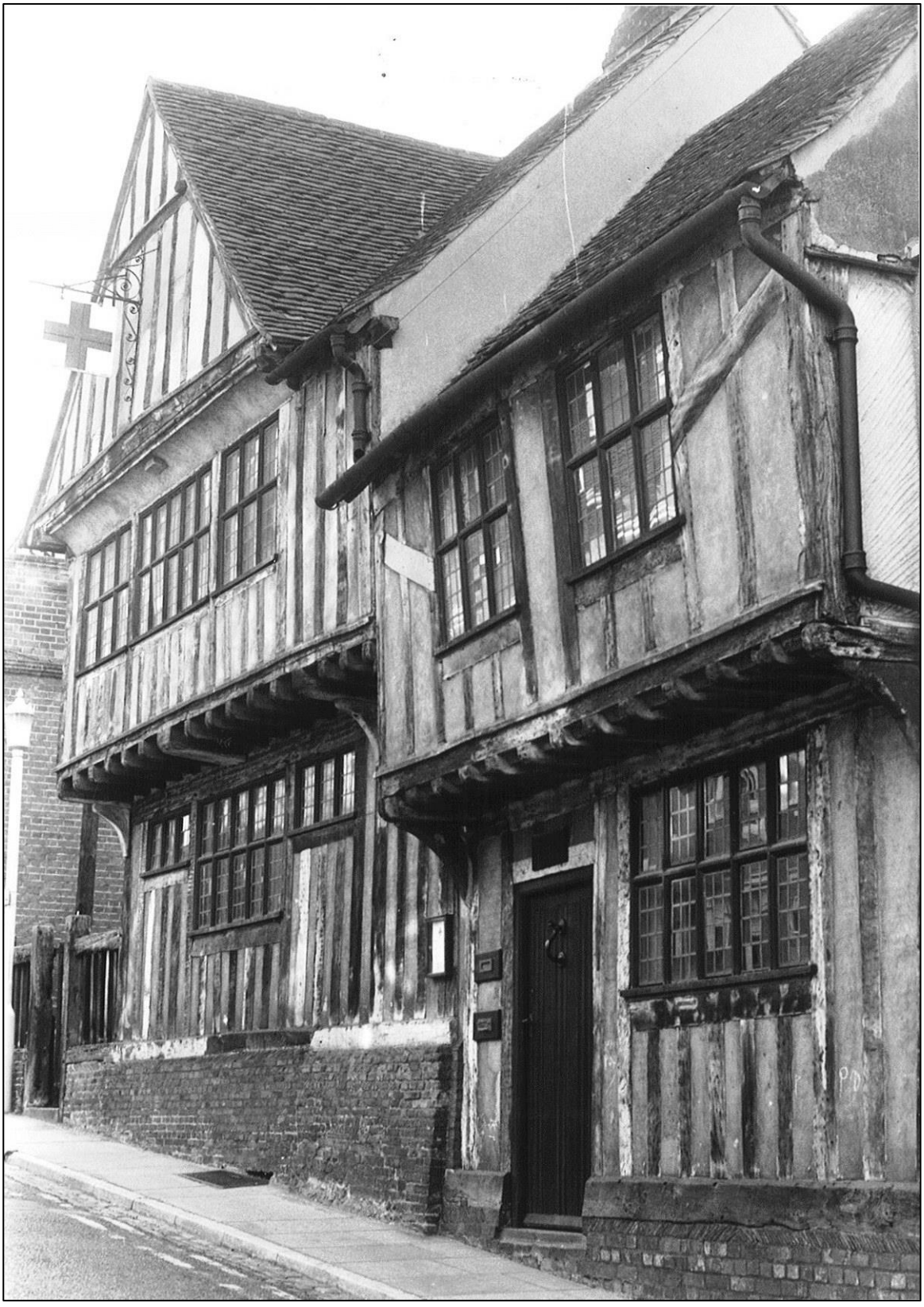
In July, 1933 the freehold of Number 30 was sold to Alice Jarmin and it continued to be let until 1936 when restoration work had begun and Mr. Peake

had most probably become its landlord. After the work had been completed 31 and 30 became one house known as Number 30. In 1944 the house was let to the Ministry of Labour Offices and in 1946 Mr Peake passed it to Colchester Borough Council as a gift. In 1953 they let it to the 8th Colchester Battalion of the Essex Home Guard, which continued there until 1957 when the British Red Cross became the tenants.

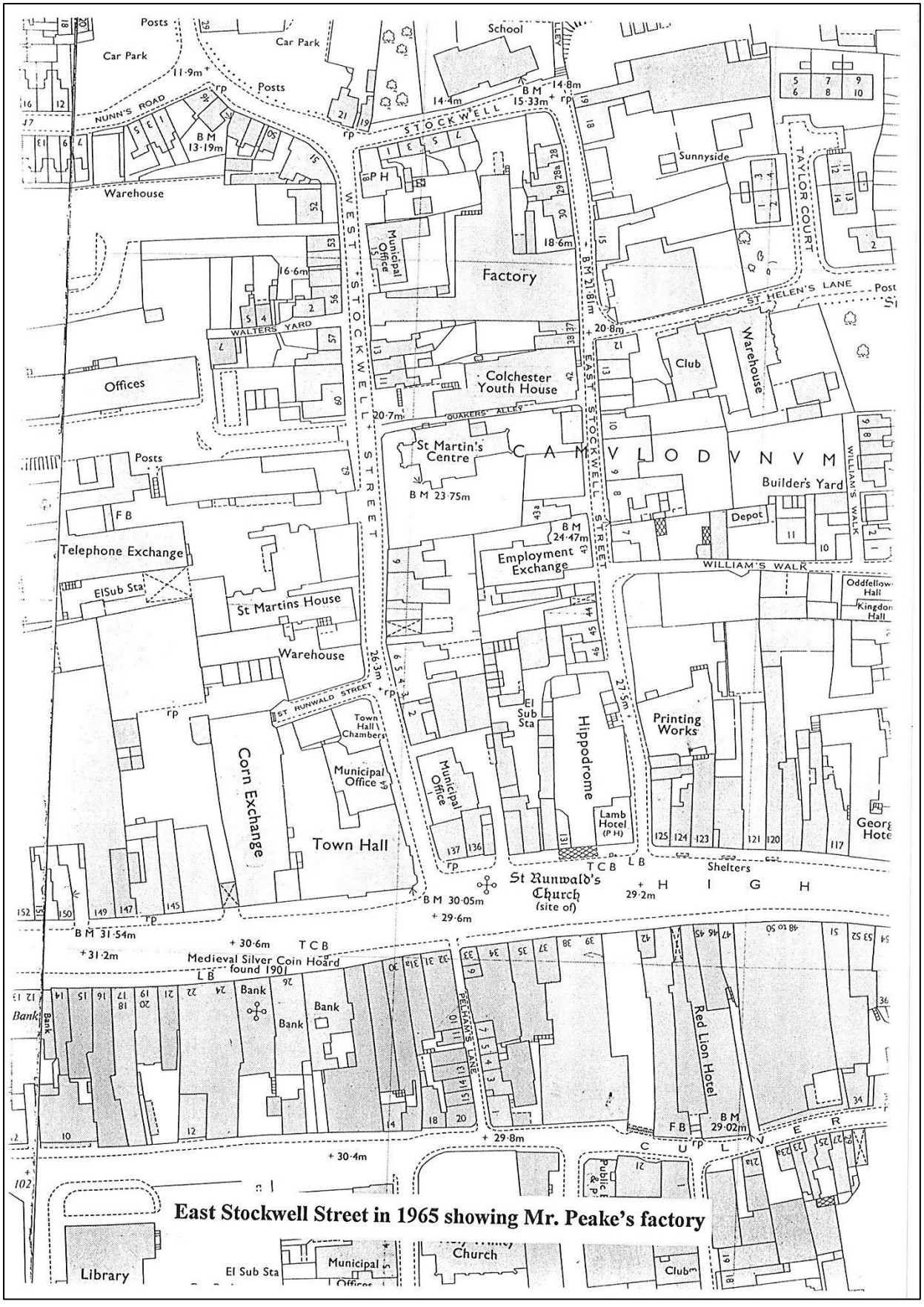
The Ordnance Survey of 1965 shows that Mr. Peake's coat-manufacturing business, *Rodex*, had greatly expanded on two sides of the house. It ran from East to West Stockwell Street and nearly as far as Stockwell itself. His company had branches in St. Albans, Leighton Buzzard and Bletchley, with offices in London. The factory has now been demolished and on its site in East Stockwell Street are the Sanderson Patent Offices. At the time of the sale of Peake's House to The Landmark Trust, one of his former employees wrote to the press, describing him as 'a good employer with hundreds of workers in his organisation.' William Oliver Peake died in 1957 at his home in Harpenden, the same year that the Red Cross became tenants of 'his' house. There they stayed until the fire officers pointed out that the house was unsuitable for classes holding any number of people and the Red Cross has now taken a house further up the street on the left hand side.



Peake's House as used by the Red Cross



Peake's House as occupied by the Red Cross in the 1950s.
(Colchester Museums)



East Stockwell Street in 1965 showing Mr. Peake's factory

The Colchester Preservation Society and the Dutch Quarter

In the first part of this century, the Dutch Quarter was used mainly for light industry and many of the timber-framed houses were neglected, falling into serious disrepair. Before the War, the old Colchester Civic Society, under the direction of Dr. Lionel Penrose began to restore some of these, notably Peake's House as well as three huge jettied houses at the bottom of East Hill. In 1953, Dr. Kershaw, the town's Medical Officer, was forced to condemn the whole area as unfit for human habitation and the Council began demolition in a 'slum clearance' programme. Appalled by this, Mr and Mrs John Donnelly were instrumental in setting up the Colchester Preservation Society with Dr. Kershaw. It was not a social society; the members were just keen to save buildings. They persuaded the Council to reduce the houses to their timber frames and rebuild them to modern standards, to be used for housing for the aged and people with no families, a section of the population which had been a problem to accommodate after the war.

The Donnellys decided that their role must be to stop the rot in the Dutch Quarter. In 1955, they decided to put their money where their mouths were and to move into Number 15 which had no doors or windows and was to be condemned. It was a brave decision for in those days the area was by no means as desirable as it is today. In their garden they found parts of a mosaic pavement as well as lots of teazle plants, which in the medieval cloth industry were used to 'card' or comb material.

Valiantly, the Donnellys began buying and restoring houses in the Dutch Quarter. They wanted their finished houses to be appreciated so it was fortunate that the University was opening at Wivenhoe and that some of the houses were taken by members of the teaching profession. At that time, the Dutch Quarter had a village atmosphere with everyone knowing everyone else. Due to the Donnellys' work

and commitment to the area, Demolition Orders were rescinded and eventually the Council did something of a volte-face and itself restored over 40 houses in the Quarter in the late 1950's. For this work, it received a Civic Trust Award. In 1977 the Council built 47 new homes which have likewise won acclaim. Meanwhile the Civic Society grew out of the Preservation Society and about 25 years ago the Dutch Quarter Association was founded, and they have been particularly successful in traffic management.

The Cloth Trade in Colchester in Medieval Times

Although it would be convenient to do so, we cannot assume that this Landmark was lived in by a clothier, weaver or anyone connected with the cloth trade. In the 14th century, 31 and 32 appear to have been built as a home but about 1550 when the hall was rebuilt and the house was probably divided into separate dwellings, it seems very likely that the cellar (of 31, now with access from 30) was used for manufacturing or storage and the ground floor was the sales area with living accommodation on the floors above. But we do not know what they sold and/or made there.

We know from the 1935 photograph that the present sitting room windows are replacements in the style of those often found in weavers' houses, but normally on the first floor where the light was better for working at the loom. The first floor window arrangement on the street seems to have had fewer lights originally as well, but the Inspector in 1921 noted, *the only noticeable feature in the middle block* (no. 31) *is the traces of the outlines of former small windows below the wall plate of the back (West) wall.* But in this house it seems that the most likely scene of manufacturing was in the cellar - not a practical site for a loom. Although we cannot connect Peake's House itself with the cloth trade with any surety, its situation in the Dutch Quarter is so wrapped up with that business, it is useful to review the trade in Colchester at the time it was built.

The River Colne protecting Colchester on the North and East runs away towards the south passing through the Hythe, and later Wivenhoe, before opening out into the estuary at Brightlingsea and the North Sea. At the beginning of the 13th century, a group of seafarers and fishermen had formed a settlement at the Hythe, half an hour's walk from the centre of Colchester, with warehousing for merchandise awaiting shipment. Larger vessels came up the Colne between Wivenhoe and Brightlingsea with smaller boats making their way up and down

from the Hythe. By road Colchester was connected with London via Witham, Chelmsford and Brentwood, all new towns in the 13th century. To the West, two roads led to Cambridge and Bishop's Stortford.

Contrary to popular belief, Colchester was making cloth very successfully well before the arrival of the Flemings. In the mid decades of the 13th century the town had a reputation for *russets*, which were taken to other parts of the country and made into outer garments, although at this stage Colchester was not primarily a cloth town, it was better known for the preparation of skins by tanning and tawing. *Russets* were grey or brown, grey being cheaper as it required less dye. They were not fine cloth, being fulled mechanically, but they were dyed and made to a recognised standard and found a reliable market amongst the religious houses, the greys combining humility of status and soundness of quality. All Colchester cloths came in a distinctive size. The standard measure was the *decana*, which mean a length of ten *ells*, equalling 121 yards. It came in two widths: broad or large cloths (approximately 2 yards), and narrow or strait cloths. (A decana of grey russet cost about £1 4s 0d at the end of the 14th century).

In 1301 the population stood at about 3,000 and its taxable wealth was less than Bury St. Edmunds and more surprisingly, Writtle. Ipswich, not Colchester, was the more prosperous place taking advantage of international trade with ports being created at Harwich and Manningtree. Industrial activity in the textile trade was taking place more in the villages around Colchester and any increase in cloth exports benefited the textile villages further inland.

After the Black Death, apart from a number of individual Flemish inhabitants who had come over in the past, Colchester received its first large influx of Flemings. 1352-54 saw a burst of names in the records and the number of textile workers in the borough increased. In 1373 the wool market moved to the empty cellar of

the Moot Hall (on the site of the present Town Hall), which was provided with better windows and even whitewashed at the expense of the community.

In the process of cloth-making, the raw materials and woven fabrics passed through many hands and many places and it was the clothiers, like the Paycockes of Coggeshall, overseers and controllers of the whole process, who amassed large amounts of money. The wool bought in the Moot Hall cellar was washed, broken up and parted, combed or carded before being dyed and spun with spinning wheels. It was woven on looms either owned by the weavers or hired independently of an employer. Completed cloths were first washed then fulled by machinery; grain mills on the Colne became fulling mills with the increase in the cloth trade and this part of the river bank could always be seen covered with cloths laid out to dry. Sometimes clothes were stolen or damaged.

Richard Watts, in his *Concise Poem on Shepton Mallet* from *The Young Man's Looking Glass* of 1641, gives us a charming glance at the different processes involved in the cloth industry:

> First the Parter that doth neatly cull
> The Finer from the courser sort of wool.
> The Dyer then in order next doth stand
> With sweating brow and and a laborious hand.
> With oil they then asperge, which being done,
> The careful hand of Mixers round it run.
> The Stockcarder his arms doth hard imploy
> (Remembering Friday is our Market day)
> The knee-carder doth (without controule)
> Quickly convert it to a lesser roul.
> Which done, the Spinster doth in hand it take
> And of two hundred roules one threed doth make.
> The Weaver next doth warp and weave the chain,
> Whilst Puss his cat stands mewing for a skaine;
> But he laborious with his hands and helles,
> Forgets his Cat and cries, Come boy with queles.
> Being fill'd, the Brayer doth it mundifie
> From oyle and dirt that in the same doth lie,
> The Burler then (yea, thousands in this place)
> The thick-set weed with nimble hand doth chase,

> The Fuller then close by his stock doth stand,
> And will not once shake Morpheus by the hand.
> The Rower next his armes lifts up on high,
> And near him sings the Shearman merrily.
> The Drawer last, that many fault doth hide
> (Whom merchant nor the weaver can abide)
> Yet is he one in most clothes stops more holes
> Than there be stairs to the top of Paul's.

Where did the completed cloth end up? Some passed through Bruges on its way elsewhere but more often it went further afield away from local competition and to places where diplomatic relations were friendlier than those between England and Flanders. At the time Peake's House was being built, Gascony was the chief destination for Colchester overseas enterprise. It depended heavily on England for its supply of cloth and often ships that took only cloth out to Gascony came back loaded solely with French wine. The Baltic export business, established by the early 1360s was more varied: fish and wheat, wax, bitumen and timber from the East Baltic, salt and iron from Scandinavia, and line, cloth, thread and beer from Northern Germany. In exchange the Baltic ports took Colchester cloth which eventually established itself as one of the few materials to be known by its place of origin. The Mediterranean enterprise was established twenty years later and the Italian merchants of Florentine origin bought their cloth in London so had no direct links with Colchester itself. They called Colchester decane *Essex cloth* and sold it on to Eastern Spain and Northern Italy. By 1416 Essex Cloths had been exported to Damascus - they were competitively priced and made comparatively cheaply.

In the later 14th century Colchester's population and industry both increased and this was accompanied by an expansion of every type of marketing institution. It was a period of prosperity: new shops, inns and taverns were opened but at the end of the 14th and beginning of 15th centuries, due to wars and economic depression, international trade suffered although enterprise recovered a little in

the second decade. After 1413 the decana disappears from records and a new standard in Colchester appears: the *whole cloth* measuring 24 x 2 yards, the equivalent of two decene. By 1437, trade was improving with the success of *new greys* and *murrey greys.* Colchester traded with Danzig and its cloth became a regular component of the Hanseatic trade with Russia. In the 1440's, cloth output reached its medieval peak which was chiefly due to the interest of the Cologne merchants in the cloth newer styles, but after 1450 exports decreased at the hands of both English and German merchants and the populations of Colchester fell. In the later 15th century there was a severe decline in trading activity at the Hythe. There were fewer Colchester merchant adventurers and there was a withdrawal of foreign merchants, due in no small part to the concentration of entrepreneurial activities in fewer hands. By 1524 in taxable wealth, Colchester ranked as England's 12th largest town after London, Norwich, Bristol, Coventry, Exeter, Salisbury, Southwark, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Canterbury and Reading. In Elizabeth I's reign therefore, the possibility of a corpus of hard-working Flemings, who might give the town's cloth trade a boost, was a particularly welcome one.

Strangers in Colchester

Before the discovery of the Americas, the ports on the east coast of England were paramount. Rivers which now are used only recreationally, if at all, were often navigable. Situated all the way up the coast were busy ports trading mainly with Scandinavia, Northern European and the Baltic ports, but also western France, Portugal, and some Mediterranean ports. In Medieval times wool was the main export and the trading alliance between England and Flanders flourished because Flemish cloth manufacture was almost entirely dependent on English wool. In 1301 Colchester recorded eleven Flemish dyers, and fullers (those who cleansed and thickened the cloth) working in the town. Edward III, after the Black Death in 1349, encouraged large contingents of Flemings who previously manufactured English wool in their homes, to settle in England. From that time there was a steady trickle of foreign craftsmen to south-east England, plying their different trades.

In 1551, Colchester listed about 17 *aliens* (i.e. those not born in England) who bore names from the Netherlands. But Queen Mary, on her marriage to Philip of Spain - scourge of Protestants in the Netherlands - ordered all protestant *strangers*, as they were known, to leave the shores of England within 24 days. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth I, the Privy Council reinstated the earlier privileges of the Dutch Community and gave them back the Church of the Austin Friars in London (granted by Edward VI) with two provisions which also covered other Dutch church communities in England: the church must be superintended by the bishop in whose see it was situated, and such a church must not become a *corpus corperatum politicum.*

Sandwich, one of the Cinque Ports on the Kent coast, attracted a large number of Flemish refugees or *strangers.* In the 13th century it had been the chief harbour for the export of wool, being situated on the River Stour which gave easy access

to other parts of Kent. Bucer, the Dutch minister there, wrote to the Dutch Church in London in 1562 that he would be pleased to hear about the 'Colchester business.' Edmund Grindal, the Bishop of London, was asked to use his influence in persuading the Privy Council to grant a licence so that some of the refugees could live in Colchester or King's Lynn. In 1565 11 households of 50 *strangers* arrived. In August 1570, the town authorities wrote to the Privy Council of

> the dispersed flock, of late driven out of Flanders, for that their consciences were offended with the Masse; and for fear of tyranny of the Duke of Alva, to save their lives, and keep their consciences, they came into this realm for protection and said they came from Sandwich … we cannot but greatly commend the same strangers unto you, for sithence their first coming hither, we finde them to be very honest, godly, civill and well ordered people, not given to any outrage or excess.

In March, 1571 a Licence was granted for Colchester and an order was given for the return of a census with the details of the names and trades of the *strangers*. This took until 1573 to complete and on it there is a total of 185 names: 177 Flemings, four French, and four Scots, 85 men, 53 women, 44 children and 29 servants. Of these *aliens,* there were 55 *strangers* who had been in the town sometime and were called *old strangers.* The new *strangers* brought with them the most valuable trade of *bay* and *say* (baize and serge) making, as well as other trades described in the town authorities' letters as 'such sciences as are not usual with us':

> 1 minister, 1 merchant, 1 physician, 2 surgeons, 11 makers of bays, 1 folder of bays, 1 fuller of bays, 1 comber, 1 cardmaker, 3 weavers, 2 dyers, 2 carpenters, 2 turners, 13 cordiners (cordwainers), 2 curriers (those who dress and colour tanned leather) 3 tailors, 3 brewers, 1 gardener, 6 hop-planters, 2 parchment makers, 2 neddle (needle) makers, 1 paruter (parter?), 1 glazier, 1 pot maker, and 2 labourers.

Much emphasis has been laid on the number of cloth workers coming over from Flanders at this point in history but it is worth pointing out that there were fifteen

men in the Colchester census whose trade was shoemaking and only five more involved in the cloth trade. The census notes 127 householders or heads of the family, excluding wives, children and servants. Twelve lived in St. Martin's parish and 42 in St. Peter's parish, making 53 families in what later became known as the Dutch Quarter. Colchester was not an isolated settlement for refugees: all over Eastern England there were Flemish settlements: Thetford, Stamford, Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, Norwich, and Kings Lynn. The Dutch community in Colchester agreed with the town bailiffs that they would observe the municipal laws and obtain the sanction of their by-laws. They undertook to pay an annual handsome sum for their privileges and to maintain their own poor, but they also had to pay for the English poor.

They quickly formed a company for the regulation of their own cloth trade. There were two governors and 22 assistants elected annually on 28th December. These officials then swore before the town bailiffs to discharge their office. Their's was an important body which had the power to make and alter statutes and prevent frauds. The company's Bay Hall was built on an imposing and dominant site on the High Street at the corner with North Hill, just in front of St. Peter's Church, with the exchange was on the ground floor and the Bay Hall on the floor above.

There, there were two halls: the Raw Hall and White Hall. In the former, the material in its raw state was examined and sealed and bays thus examined and duly sealed were later inspected in their completed state in the White Hall. The seal of the Dutch Bay Hall was required before any material could be sold as bays, or says and the use of this seal was reserved for the best quality cloth. Bay was a kind of course, open, woollen stuff having a long nap and made on a loom. Say was a type of serge or a very light crossed stuff, often dyed green, and often used abroad for clothes lining.

There were different sorts of bays, distinguished by seals and the number of them, attached. A rent (with both selvages rent off) had two leaden seals; a cut (one end cut sloping) had three, a crown-bay, the most common sort, had four. Of the four seals on crown-bays, one had on the one side, three crowns with the cross and inscription *Dyts Colcester Baye* and on the other side a griffin and an inscription. This was commonly called a letter seal and was fixed to all sorts of bays. The other three seals had the three crowns and this inscription *Dyts Colcester Crone Bay*e round it and on the reverse a griffin. A cross-bay, the best sort, had five broad leaden seals, one the same as those fixed to all sorts and four only to cross-bays. On cross-bays one seal was the same as the first on the crown-bay, the other four had on one side three crowns and a cross *ragule* and the inscription *Dyts Colcester 100 Cross 1571* and on the reverse there was a griffin. All the seals were marked 1571.

In 1689, 800 bays were made weekly. If the fabric was found imperfect, the cause of the imperfection had to be found, be it maker's, dyer's or weaver's fault. The fabric was then torn in half and handed back. Fines taken from Dutch manufacturers of faulty or poor bays, were paid to the poor of the Dutch congregation but any fines taken from English bay-makers were paid to the Governors of the Hall who then paid them to the bailiffs for the benefit of the English poor. The reputation for honesty was such that wherever bays were sold, the bales were unopened for inspection or measurement once the seals were examined and found to be from Colchester. The fact that the Dutch community were in a position to fine English bay makers did nothing for Anglo-Dutch relations.

The Dutch community had its own minister, but they also had to pay English church dues. The religious congregation at first was permitted to use St. Giles' Church near St. John's Abbey and later All Saints which now houses the Natural

History Museum and lies opposite the Castle. Eventually, they built their own chapel and minister's house near Head Street and St. Mary's Lane. William Ware, a 19th century local historian wrote a note about the chapel:

> The congregation had a Chapel and house for the minister on Head Street, the wooden framework of the front and other parts of which were sent from Holland, cut and made ready to put together on the window frame in front towards the street, the date 1677 appears.

This building was burnt down on December 1834 and it is believed that no drawing was ever taken. The church congregation had been disbanded in 1728 by which time, the *strangers* no longer deserved their name.

By 1584 there were 1,148 Dutch in Colchester and one of the town authorities wrote:

> Their numbers daily increased and Colchester was on the point of becoming a colony of Flemings, the congregation being unable to restrain their increase, and the bailiffs were obliged to issue a command that no stranger should, for the future be permitted to reside in the precincts of the town without their special consent.

So the overflow from Colchester settled at Halstead.

Economic depression, the result of war, caused many skilled bay makers to leave their home towns between 1575 and 1619. A number of families - the Tayspills, Van de Walles and Everetts, to name three - who played important parts in the history of Colchester in the 17th century came from Neuve Eglise, near Bailleul then in Flanders and south of Ypres. Neuve Eglise was famous for its woollen manufacture and with the nearby towns of Poperinge and Ypres, was an important centre of bay-making. One member of the Tayspill family, lived in the parish of St. Martin according to the 1628/9 Lay Subsidy Roll and his name was Daniel. He was a saymaker and an elder or deacon of the Dutch Church. Many of those fleeing Neuve Eglise were from respectable and socially important families; they did not mix with the local Colcestrians and did not encourage their kind to

do so. Daniel Tayspill was fairly prosperous as he contributed £100 to Fairfax's fine after the Civil War.

King James I continued the kindly treatment of the Flemish communities because their bay making was so beneficial to the wealth of the nation, but as he grew poorer they became good sources of taxation until it was realised that this could affect the cloth trade. Neuve Eglise, Ypres and Poperinge towns were strongholds of Protestantism in the 16th century so it was to be expected that the refugees would feel comfortable in a town with similar religious sympathies. But Charles I's Archbishop Laud made their lives difficult. It became a legal requirement for everybody to go to their own parish church and use the English liturgy. The last to accept these injunctions was the Dutch Church in Colchester in 1637. By 1639 two thousand *strangers* had left Norwich but we have no record of how many left Colchester. However, after Laud's death, the Dutch privileges were restored.

During the Civil War, many of the *strangers* went back home or to America, disliking the uncertainty of the times. Charles II continued the protection of the Flemings and their trade by statute in 1660 but five years later, Colchester was devastated by the plague when 5,259 persons perished. By around 1700 a slow decline in the cloth trade had set in and in 1728 the Dutch Congregation was disbanded and the Bay Hall closed.

To conclude these notes on the history and times of Peake's House, a passage from Eileen Power's book on that wealthy clothier family, *The Paycocke's of Coggeshall,* first published in 1920, seems apposite for Peake's House too:

> Domestic architecture, if it has not the grandeur of medieval military and ecclesiastical architecture, has a peculiar charm of its own - the charm of old houses, whose very walls seem to be impregnated with past lives. They take on something of the sense and spirit of

humanity, as the potter's hand is subdued to what it works in. They are submitted to a unique intimacy, by which they must perforce retain something essential of the lives which have been lived under their benevolent shelter. That is why old manor-houses, set in their gardens, old town-houses standing on a village street, are kinder things to live in than new houses, however, beautiful; ... A house is like a pipe; it needs to be seasoned. If it welcome you when you enter its hall, if its rafter re-echo gaily as though they laughed with you, if peace come dropping slow in its bedrooms, if it seem just to have stopped speaking to you when you wake, if sunlight and twilight and firelight seem equally the best light of all for its panels, its corners, its great beam - then it is a seasoned house. Years of humanity have wrought it to that pitch of sympathy.

Numbers 30, 31 and 32 East Stockwell Street

The complicated history of the site has made unravelling the building sequence rather confusing, especially as both the statutory listing building description and the entry in Pevsner's *Buildings of England*, *Essex, 1965,* mention the remains of the screens. The most likely source used for these texts was the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England inventory of *The Monuments of North-East Essex* published in 1922, before the demolition in 1935 of Number 32 with its screens passage.

The Royal Commission Inspector, Mr J.W. Bloe, visited the site on 12th January, 1921 and the following is a transcript of his notes on the Historical Development, Elevations and Interior, before being substantially edited for publication the next year:

Historical Development

The Southernmost part of the front block is probably part of a house of the second half of the 14th century, and contained the two storey Buttery -- and the screens of a great Hall which stood to the N. of it. A wing of three bays was added behind this part in the 15th century. The Hall was rebuilt or re-modelled about the middle of the 16th century or soon after, when it was converted into three storeys both the upper storeys having jettied fronts: the lowest storey is an unusually lofty one for a house of this size and was no doubt influenced by the pre-existing Hall. The N. block (No. 30) appears to have been a separate house built probably c1500 or soon afterwards. The great chimney stack between the middle block and the North block appears to be a later insertion, probably early 17th century and the filling in at the sides of the stack was probably done at the same time. A small W. wing at the W. end of the S. wing and at right angles to it

is also ancient in its S. half - 17th century or earlier - but apart from the timber framing in the E. side has little to identify its date.

Elevations: *East Front*

The second storey is jettied along the whole front, that of the middle block being higher than that on either side of it. Both the S. and N. blocks have curved brackets below the overhang, also middle block. The middle block has a further overhanging second storey with a moulded bressummer and is gabled. The southern block has an original doorway to the covered way which leads to the back: the doorway has mason's jointed chamfered posts and lintel: in the lintel are the mortices for a former head which was probably shaped like that at the other end of the same passage (see Interior): the covered way was the former screens passage. The lower room S. of it has the head of an old window or doorway perhaps 15th century with a three or four centred head, partly hidden by the later window frame, it now has a modern frame and S. of it is a modern door. Other doors and windows are modern.

The central chimney stack between the middle block and N. block is of early 17th bricks and is built beyond (N. of) the original side of the middle block which has a gable standing above the roof of the N. block.

The N. side of the back wing has an original (15th c.) window at its E. end with two diagonal wood mullions. Further w. are two late 17thc. mullioned and transomed oak windows. The small W. wing (one storey & attic) has old wide timbers shewing in the S. half of the upper storey; it has a gabled dormer in the roof. The N. half of this wing is an 18th c. or modern lengthening.

Interior: *S. block*

The passageway (probably the original screens) has exposed timber framing on both sides, of substantial construction. In the S. wall are two oak framed pointed doorways with moulded frames, part of the western doorway being destroyed for the later doorway next it, which gives entrance to a staircase. In the N. wall are the two blocked square headed doorways, the western has a 15th or 16th chamfered frame and lintel: the other is later. The doorway forming the w. entrance to the passage has an ogee head and is probably original (14th century). The room S. of the passage has no old features inside.

The middle block has moulded ceiling beams, transverse and longitudinal, and against all four walls. In the N. wall is a wide fireplace reduced for a modern grate.

The S. wing (behind the S. block of the front) has a room (workshop) taking up the two western of the three bays has a stop-chamfered transverse beam marking the division of the bays. In its end (W.) wall is a wide fireplace of the 16th century with a moulded bressummer and against it the ceiling has a square beam. The greater part of the chamber between this room and the older front block has an open timbered ceiling with wide flat joists and a heavy beam in which are mortices for a former partition running E. & W. the present partition cutting off the passage being to the N. of it and on 'the skew.'

First floor The S. wing has the remains of a 15thc. King post and central purlin roof of three bays: the easternmost tie beams have gone but a shaped post remains on the N. wall the central purlin of the E. most bay remains with mortices for former Kingposts and braces. The next tie beam to the W. is cambered and retains the southern curved brace below it. The central purlin and curved braces of the other bays remain but the beam and truss next W. have been removed. -- There is old timber framing against the W. wall and a cambered tie beam the chimney stack being beyond these.

The upper storey of the S. block has a plastered ceiling; the only noticeable feature in the middle block is the traces of the outlines of former small windows below the wall plate of the back (West wall). The Northern block (No. 30) has stop chamfered beams to the lower storey, and in the upper storey in its N. & S. walls are highly cambered tie beams with shaped brackets below their ends, but the timbers above are concealed.

The Royal Commission Inspector's Report in 1921.

B.

RECORD CARD FOR SECULAR MONUMENTS.

(N.B.—Detail of special interest is to be entered here, but described fully on a separate card.)

County. Essex

Parish. Ardleigh

Sub-Commission.

No. of Monument.

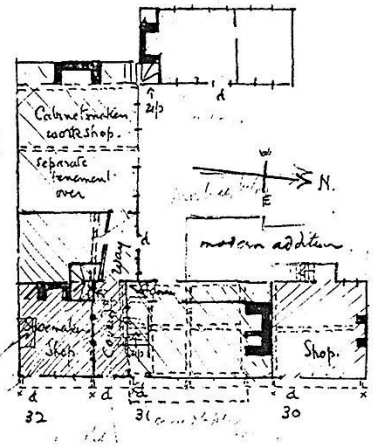
1. Name and situation of Monument (with owner's Name and Address). Nos 30, 31 & 32 Colchester Rd

2. General appearance: (a) No. of storeys. In part three next two
(b) Building materials. Plastered timber framing
(c) Roofs. Tiled

3. Historical development (with dates and small sketch plan).

The southernmost part of the front block is probably part of a house of the second half of the 14th century, and contained the two storey Battery to and the screens of a great Hall stood to the N. of it. A wing of three bays was added behind this part in the 15th century. The Hall was rebuilt or re-modelled about the middle of the 16th century a soon after, when it was converted into three storeys, both the upper storeys having jetted fronts: the lowest storey is an

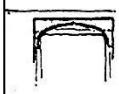
4. Special features (if any). (continued below)



5. Elevations: (Beginning with the main front, and mentioning, in the following order:—(a) Walls; (b) Gables; (c) Doors; (d) Windows; (e) Chimneys; (f) Rainwater heads and pipes.)

East front: The second storey is jetted along the whole front, that of the middle block being higher than that on either side of it. Both the S. & N. blocks have curved brackets below the overhang, also middle block. The middle block has a further overhanging second storey with a moulded bressummer & is gabled. The Southern block has an original doorway to the covered way which leads to the back: the doorway has massive jointed chamfered posts & lintel; in the lintel are the mortices for a former head which was probably shaped like that at the other end of the same passage (see Interior): the covered way was the former screens passage. The lower room S of it has the head of an old window, perhaps 16th century, with a three centred head, partly hidden by the later window frame. It now has a modern pane & S of it is a modern door. Other doors & windows are modern.

The central chimney stack between the middle block and N. block is of early 17th c. bricks and is built beyond (the N. of) the original side of the middle block which has a gable standing above the roof of the N. block.



The N side of the back wing has an original (15th c). window at its E. end with two diagonal wood mullions. Further W. are two late 17th c. mullioned & transomed oak windows. The small W. wing (one storey & attic) has old wide timbers showing in the S. half of the upper storey: it has a gabled dormer in the roof. The N. half of this wing is a 18th c. or modern lengthening.

6. Grounds: (a) Gardens; (b) Outbuildings; (c) Statuary, sundials, etc.

History (continued) unusually lofty one for a house of this size and was no doubt influenced by the pre-existing Hall. The N. block (No. 30) appears to have been a separate house built probably c. 1500 a soon afterwards. The great chimney stacks between the middle block & the N. block appear to be a later insertion, probably early 17th century and the filling in at the sides of the stacks was probably done at the same time. A small W. wing at the W. end of the S. wing at right angles to it is also ancient in its S. half — 17th century or earlier — but apart from the timber framing in the E. side has little to identify its date.

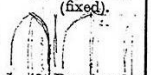
P.T.O.

(89,102). Wt.33,349—47. 500. 12/13. A.&E.W.
(97,153). „ 5621—53. 6000. 5/14. „

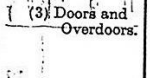
7. **Interior:** (Disposition of rooms, if original, giving fittings as they occur (see list), beginning with the ground floor, following with the basement, and working up to the attics; staircases in the same manner.)

Fittings:
(Reminder list).

(1) Ceilings



(2) Cupboards (fixed).



(3) Doors and Overdoors.

(4) Fireplaces and Mantelpieces.

(5) Glass.

(6) Paintings.

(7) Panelling.

(8) Parquetry and floors.

(9) Plasterwork on internal walls.

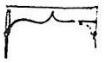
(10) Roofs and beams (internal).

(11) Screens.

(12) Tapestries.

(13) Miscellanea (*e.g.*, carving, ironwork, locks, &c.).

S. block. The passage way (probably the original screens) has exposed timber framing on both sides, of substantial construction. In the S. wall are two oak framed pointed doorways with moulded frames [illegible] part of the western doorway being destroyed for the later doorway next it, which gives entrance to a staircase. In the N. wall are two blocked square headed doorways, the western has a 15th c. chamfered frame & square lintel: the other is later. The doorway forming the W. entrance to the passage has an ogee head and [illegible] is probably original (14th century). The room S. of the passage has no old features inside.



The middle block has moulded ceiling beams, transverse [illegible] and longitudinal, and against all four walls. In the N. wall is a wide fireplace reduced for a modern grate.

The S. wing (behind the S. block of the front) has a room (workshop) taking up the two western of the three bays. Has a stop-chamfered transverse beam marking the division of the bays. In its end (W.) wall is a wide fireplace of the 16th century with a moulded bressummer and against it the ceiling has a square beam.

bressummer

The greater part of the chamber between this room and the older front block has an open timbered ceiling with wide flat joists and a heavy beam in which are mortices for a former partition running E. & W. The present partition cutting off the passage being to the N. of it, and on the skew.

First floor. The S. wing has the remains of a 15th c. king post & central purlin roof of three bays: the easternmost tie beam is gone but a chaped post remains on the N. wall. The central purlin of the E. most bay remains with mortices for former king posts & braces. The next tie beam to the W. is cambered & retains the southern curved brace below it. The central purlin & curved braces of the other bays remain but the tie beam & truss next W. have been removed. &c. There is old timber framing against the W. wall & a cambered tie beam the chimney stack being beyond these.

The upper storeys of the S. block has a plastered ceiling: the only noticeable feature in the middle block is the traces of the outlines of former small windows below the wall plate of the back (West) wall.

The Northern block (No. 30) has ~~stop~~ chamfered ceiling beams to the lower storey, and in the upper storey in its N. & S. walls are highly cambered tie beams with shaped brackets below their ends, but the timbers above are concealed.

8. **Condition:** Fairly good

9. **Visited by** (with dates): J. W. Bloe 12 Jan 1921

10. **Bibliography:**

11. **No. of Ordnance Sheet** (6-in.):

12. **Signature of Investigator.** J. W. Bloe

To trace the development of what has become known as *Peake's House*, the site must been seen in three parts and for this we can use the Victorian house numbers. Number 30 is the house with the kitchen, bathroom and twin bedroom; the house with our sitting room and main bedroom is Number 31 and our car park is Number 32. In the 14th century, 31 and 32 comprised one house; later on, perhaps when the great hall was remodelled, these became separate houses. In 1935, 32 and the wings behind it were demolished and 31 and 30 became one house known as 30, East Stockwell Street.

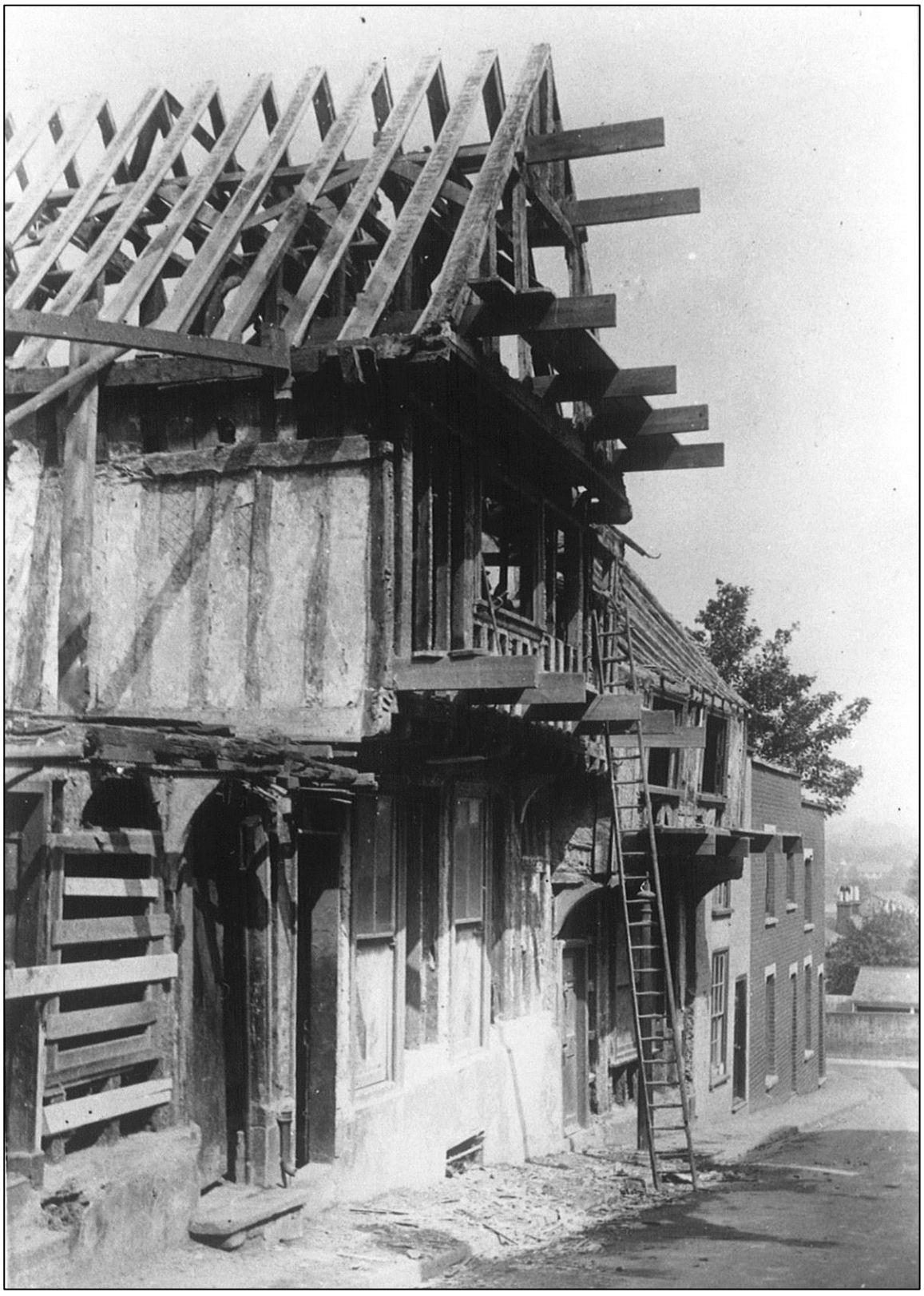
In the 14th century, there was the usual arrangement of hall, cross passage, service end and parlour. The hall on the site of our sitting room was probably the only heated room in the house. The service end and cross passage to the south of the hall were demolished in 1935 but can be seen in a photograph of that year. The rear door way of the cross passage had an ogee doorhead, which in Essex implies a date in the 14th century. The service end where the car park is now, comprised a buttery and pantry which were used for storing wet and dry foods. The cooking was done either in the hall or in a detached kitchen in the backyard.

Normally the parlour was at the opposite end of the hall to the service area but because the site was so narrow, the medieval parlour was probably behind the service end, at the back of the present car park. The R.C.H.M. Inventory of 1921 says the parlour had a crown post roof which may mean that it had been rebuilt since the 14th century. Early parlours were unheated and the fireplace was a later addition, built in the 16th century. In the 17th century, an extension was built on to the side of the parlour in the back yard. This could have been either a new hall or perhaps an attached kitchen. Later on, this wing was extended forming an extra room. With the erection of the 'replacement hall', Numbers 32 and 31 formed a three-sided building surrounding what is now our garden.

In the 16th century, the hall was replaced by the present sitting room and bed room. This may have been a new parlour block but it seems more likely that the building became a separate entity used as a shop or commercial premises with living and sleeping quarters above. A photograph taken in July, 1935, shows the street door to the screens passage and immediately to the north within the 'new' three storied house, an extremely narrow door. Unfortunately, the 1935/6 restoration was so thorough that there is now nothing left to indicate its presence. These doors, sometimes less than two feet wide, are appropriately named by local historians of timber-framed buildings in this area, as *coffin* doors and were often found in medieval shops.

In 1921 when the Inventory was being prepared, this narrow door led to stairs straight ahead with a door way to the left - the old screens doorway, the outline of which is visible at the south east corner of the house in the car park. Thus access to our main bedroom used to be up a staircase situated in the middle of the wall at the end of the sitting room. Beyond this, in the south west corner, was another flight of stairs leading down to the cellar. If the houses at Numbers 31 and 32 were separately owned, the businessman or shop-keeper's family would have needed further accommodation upstairs. If our main bedroom was their living room, this may explain the generously sized fireplace, with its stylised plaster flower.

The cellar of Number 30, access to which is now from the lobby behind the present kitchen, has original 16th century brickwork to the car park and garden sides. It has a large floor area with a generous ceiling height making it a useful working space below ground. Perhaps it was used for manufacturing whatever was sold on the floor above.



Peake's House in 1935 before restoration.

In his book on *Timber-Framed Buildings in Essex*, Harry Forrester writes:

> In cities and important towns, business premises of the 14th and 15th centuries were frequently cellars, for security and also economy in the use of ground space, and the timber homes of their owners were built over them. These cellars were of stone and vaulted, or of rubble and ceiled with heavy timbering, or, in the 15th century, of brick perhaps with brick vaulting. They functioned as factory and shop or as manufactory to a booth set up on the pavement in front. Some were warehouses only, retail trade connected with them being done in the markets, at the fairs, and overseas. Often these vaults were large in their dimensions. Partly buried underground, they were lighted by means of openings high in the walls between the roof and the ground level outside. Being unglazed, these windows were provided with iron grating and shutters for closing. Entrance from the street was by a stair down from a door or from a hinged flap let into the pavement, while an internal stair gave access from the floor above. Over the cellar was the hall, here called the solar, the chief dwelling room in the house. Service quarters were in a wing at the back of the premises. Entrance to the solar from the small inner court formed by the wings was obtained by a stair often parallel to the house for easy ascent. Over the solar floor were the bedrooms. The ample roof provided valuable room for reserve stores of corn and the provisions which were hoisted from the ground by means of a crane. Quite a number of medieval cellars remain in our ancient towns, as in Colchester on both sides of the High Street, but the timber houses to which they originally belonged have in many instances disappeared through fire or because of re-building.

If our cellar was used for commercial purposes, which seems a strong possibility, the window openings have disappeared. However, we may be sure that a timber-framed house like this had no need of a cellar like this for structural purposes. Many such houses were built straight onto the ground with a brick plinth of a very few courses.

The 1935 photograph shows Victorian sash windows on the ground floor. We do not know what was there originally but perhaps the window arrangement was similar to the shop front now part of The Woolpack Inn at Coggeshall or the late fifteenth century shop front at the corner of Lady Street in Lavenham, with what looks like the aperture for the *coffin* door immediately to the left.

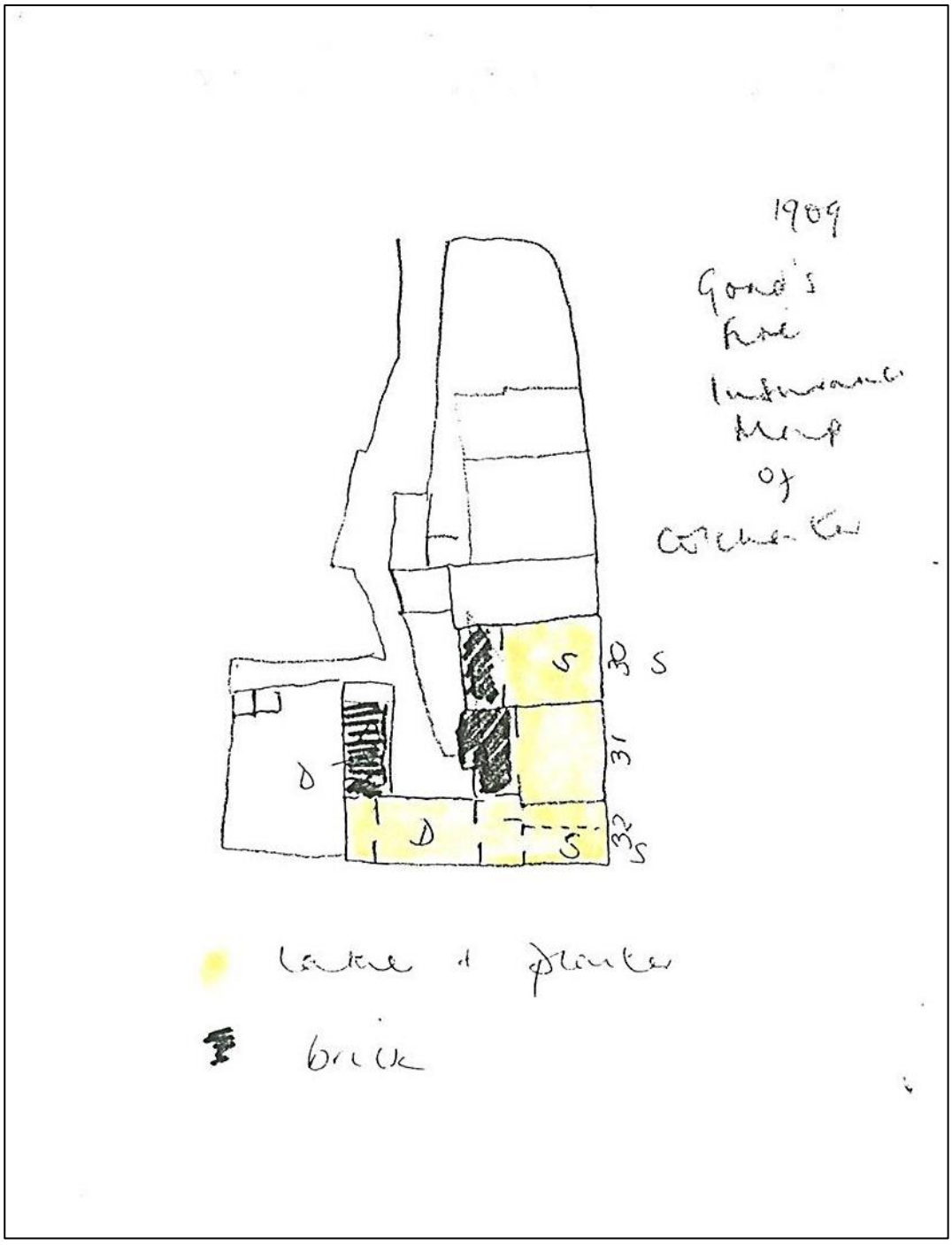
The Woolpack Inn, Coggeshall – the ground floor on the left hand side shows two shop windows and then the narrow coffin door.

The lamp sits on a later stud inserted into the coffin doorway.

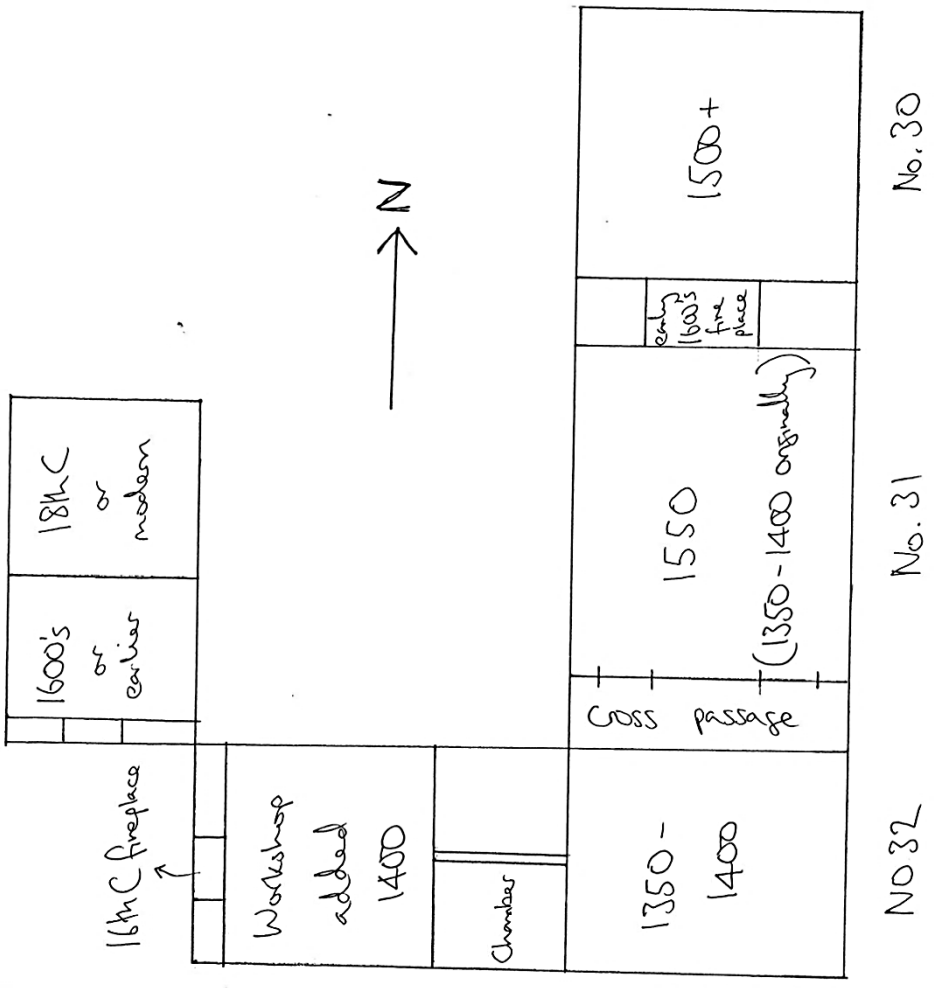
Number 31 has a side purlin roof, whereby the purlins project beyond the gable face. Sometimes, on grander houses these were masked by barge boards. Here, the side purlins and wind braces, like a large 'M', are visible in the roof in the 1935 photograph. This type of roof was more stable than a crown post roof and if it was used to sleep in, (there are stairs leading up from the side of the present bedroom door) there was more room and less chance of banging your head.

The chimney stack, constructed of early 17th century bricks, appears to be a later addition, constructed beyond the original 16th century north wall. The front and back walls were probably filled in at the same time with the gable above. If Numbers 30 and 31 were built by the same craftsmen which is a possibility, they were originally never joined.

The three houses seem to have changed very little until the 19th century when the 1909 Goad Fire Insurance Map shows us that there were three brick additions within the courtyard. That behind our sitting room has gone but the second, behind our kitchen, is on the site of the cloakroom and lobby. The third was demolished with everything else at Number 32 in 1935. It was then that the old Colchester Civic Society led by Dr. Lionel Penrose restored 30 and 31. As the plaque above the front door says, this house was presented by Mr William Peake, the owner but not occupier, to Colchester Borough Council in 1946, at which time it was known as The Old House. The lease was acquired by the Landmark Trust in 1995 and by this time it was known as Peake's House.



Goad's Fire Insurance map of 1909.



The arrangement of the main components of Peake's House.

Repair and Restoration of Peake's House

When Landmark took on Peake's House, only minor works were needed to make it ready for letting. Some of these involved reversing recent changes that we felt to be unsympathetic - raising the floor level in the sitting room to fit the fireplace and original sole plate of the timber frame, making it possible to see out of the windows; and putting back a ceiling in the main bedroom. When we acquired the house this bedroom was open to the roof with a modern gallery running along the west wall, with access from the stairs by the bedroom door. When the house was restored in the 1930's, perhaps the ceiling was in such poor condition that it was removed altogether. Our architects found the position for the timbers of the original ceiling, plastered the underside of the gallery and fitted the new joists beside it.

Other works that we did could be counted as improvements - making a new kitchen in the dining room rather than the back scullery, and combining the bathroom with the W.C. upstairs; providing new airing and storage cupboards; and making a passage at the head of the stair rather than a lobby as before. We renewed the wiring and heating system and put in insulation where possible - under floors and above the new bedroom ceiling. One light of the long mullioned window in the upper bedroom was hinged to act as a fire escape.

Minor repairs were needed to window sills and other structural timbers at the back of the house and on the corner of the building next to the gate. In one corner of the lower bedroom where there were signs of movement, a new metal strap was fitted to secure the tie beam to the wall plate. An existing tie holding the front of the building to the back proved to have been cut, and so useless, therefore the engineer modified the design to make it do its original job. The blacksmith made the hand rails on the main stair and on the new steps up to the sitting room. Plaster was missing in some places, and this was patched with

haired lime plaster. Some new floorboards were needed in the sitting room. The other floors were repaired where necessary and then simply stained dark and polished with a wax and turpentine mix. New quarry tiles were laid in the back quarters. The walls were painted with limewash tinted with umbre and yellow ochre.

Dutch tiles were commissioned for the kitchen; in one of these, two ladies are sitting amongst large piles of wool. Perhaps one is a 'parter', whose job it was to separate the finer from the coarser wool, while the one holding what might be a spindle is spinning? Curtains for all the rooms were printed with a design based on the flower above the fireplace in the main bedroom, and hung on Landmark's favoured iron rods with upturned ends.

Outside, a new parking place was provided, which meant moving a telegraph pole and streetlight. The gates copy the simple Arts and Crafts design of the previous, narrower gate. Little was done in the garden besides clearing and cutting back overgrown shrubs, and fixing some new trellis to hide the building behind. The ash tree was pruned to let in more light.

Wrong turn! Satnav leads truck driver into a £115,000 mistake

THIS is what can happen when a driver slavishly follows his satnav instructions.

Ignoring roadside warning signs, Daniel Gyongyosi turned his 30-ton lorry into this narrow lane, jackknifing on the tight corner before becoming stuck between Grade I-listed buildings.

In all, he caused more than £115,000 of damage but, remarkably, the Hungarian – who does not speak English – was let off with a fine of just £40.

Daily Mail Reporter

Gyongyosi, 47, was delivering olive oil to Waitrose in Colchester, Essex when he followed the satnav's directions in the town's historic Dutch Quarter. The bill for his error was made up of £80,000 of spilled olive oil, £15,000 damage to a 17th century house and the writing-off of the £20,000 trailer. It took 16 hours to free the HGV.

Gyongyosi admitted careless driving before Colchester magistrates yesterday. Defence lawyer Evelyn Hicks said: 'His employers in Hungary will treat him harshly potentially and his momentary lapse in concentration may result in him losing his job, despite 30 years of competent driving.'

He was fined £120 and £100 costs but because of time spent in custody after the crash last Sunday, only had to pay £40.

Dr Perkins Van-Mil, chairman of the bench, said: 'This was a very bad misjudgment on your part and it led to consequences which far outweigh what you actually did.'

Peake's near miss in 2011.