



Left. The Dragon Hall complex. Originally there was a road (centre) running from King Street (at the top) to the river (bottom) with tenements on either side. In the 15th century the Great Hall was built across the end of the road.

Right. Dragon Hall from the rear. The standing buildings on the left belong to the earlier hall-house.

The brick cellars in the foreground belong to 19th century tenements and have now been demolished.

Right. Plan of Dragon Hall showing the undercrofts and basement of the hall. The road to the river was cut off by the construction of the great hall.

Street closest to the river being steadily colonised by merchant and religious classes.

■ Dragon Hall

The best surviving monument of that trend is however Dragon Hall, which has recently been archaeologically investigated. This is a magnificent 15th-century timber-framed structure, with a large first floor hall, that has been totally refurbished over the last 20 years and is now open to the public.

Today the hall lies parallel to the street but in the 13th century the site was very different, consisting principally of two separate tenements with a lane between them running from the road down to the river. In

the Late Saxon period the earliest burgages here were aligned at right angles with the road and it was only in the late 12th century that they were replaced by the two properties aligned at right angles to the river. That to the south was probably the stone house of the Abbey of Woburn referred to in 1289 and the other belonged to Bartholomew de Acre, a local merchant. Flint and mortar remains of both buildings were discovered in 1998. By 1330 a third building had developed on the site and this new flint and mortared structure still largely survives as a wing of Dragon Hall (see left side of photo above). It follows the standard hall house plan: service rooms and undercroft along the street frontage, with a