

Devizes, 1 St John's Court, Wiltshire

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Feature Sets (2)

- [Loose Sculpture](#)

Description

This late medieval, probably circa 1500 house in a lane between the town and St John's Church, has fragments from the demolished castle incorporated into it. NB the listing description dates the property to the 16th or 17th century with alterations from the 18th century.

History

Devizes, a borough by prescription, lies almost exactly in the centre of the county. Deemed a hundred in itself in Richard I's reign, a part of Cannings hundred in 1280, and a part of Bishop's Rowborough hundred in 1316, it has since 1592 been claimed as a liberty within the hundred of Potterne and Cannings. Speed, however, marked it (1610) within Swanborough hundred and the boundary of that hundred, as he traced it, was considered to have some authority even in 1839.

Devizes is a distinguished example of a medieval town whose defences were integral with those of the castle abutting it. At an unknown date a bishop of Salisbury, perhaps Osmund, built a castle upon certain boundaries (*divise*), which gave the castle and adjacent town their name. The fortified area, as a document of 1149 shows, was carved out of the manor of Bishop's Cannings. Devizes castle is first mentioned in 1106, when Robert of Normandy was imprisoned in it.

A town grew up below the castle walls and by 1141 was called a 'borough'. To this in course of time town lands were added. Presumably it was the combination of castle, town, and town lands that formed the lordship of Devizes, or 'manor' as it is actually called on eight occasions between 1217 and 1248.

Features

Loose Sculpture

Chevron fragment (1)



In the hall, there is an alcove that includes a reset fragment of shallow carved chevron. It measures 0.26m high, 0.17m wide and 0.20 deep.

Chevron fragment (2)



Beside the stair from the first floor to the roof there is another similar fragment. It measures 0.28m high and 0.14m wide.

Chevron fragment (3)



In the same location there is another piece of carving with two lines of chevron flanking a central fillet, with the lower chevron being set at 45 degrees to the upper one. It measures 0.39m long, 0.14m high and the chamfer cuts back 0.05m.

Fish scale fragment

The occupier of the house reported having seen a 'fish scale' fragment, presumably imbrication, on the ground floor and a fragment of chevron in the roof. These were not seen at the time of the survey.

Comments/Opinions

The fragments found in houses in Devizes seem to originate from the castle or the nave and west façade of nearby St John's. They include a lot of surface decoration, predominantly a shallow chevron pattern and an imbricated pattern, the latter being similar to the pattern found in the chancel of St John's church.

Bibliography

DCMS Listing Description

N. Pevsner, Buildings of England *Wiltshire*. Penguin 1985.

Victoria County History of Wiltshire Volume X

Location

Full screen

Site Location

Devizes, 1 St John's Court

National Grid Reference

SU 004 612

Boundaries

pre-1974 traditional (England and Wales): [Wiltshire](#)

now: [Wiltshire](#)

Diocese

now: [Salisbury](#)

medieval: [Old Sarum](#)

Dedication

medieval:

now:

Type of building/monument

[Private house](#)

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Visit Date

26 April 1996