

4 THE QUAY, DARTMOUTH: A DEVON TOWN-HOUSE OF 1664

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4 The Quay Dartmouth (SX 8782 5133) is the latest dated vernacular house on Dartmouth's New Quay. Built in 1664 by the mason Robert Plumleigh, it is a three-storey corner-house with a mixed construction of timber framing, stone and 'Dutch' brick. The house is described and compared with similar urban houses.

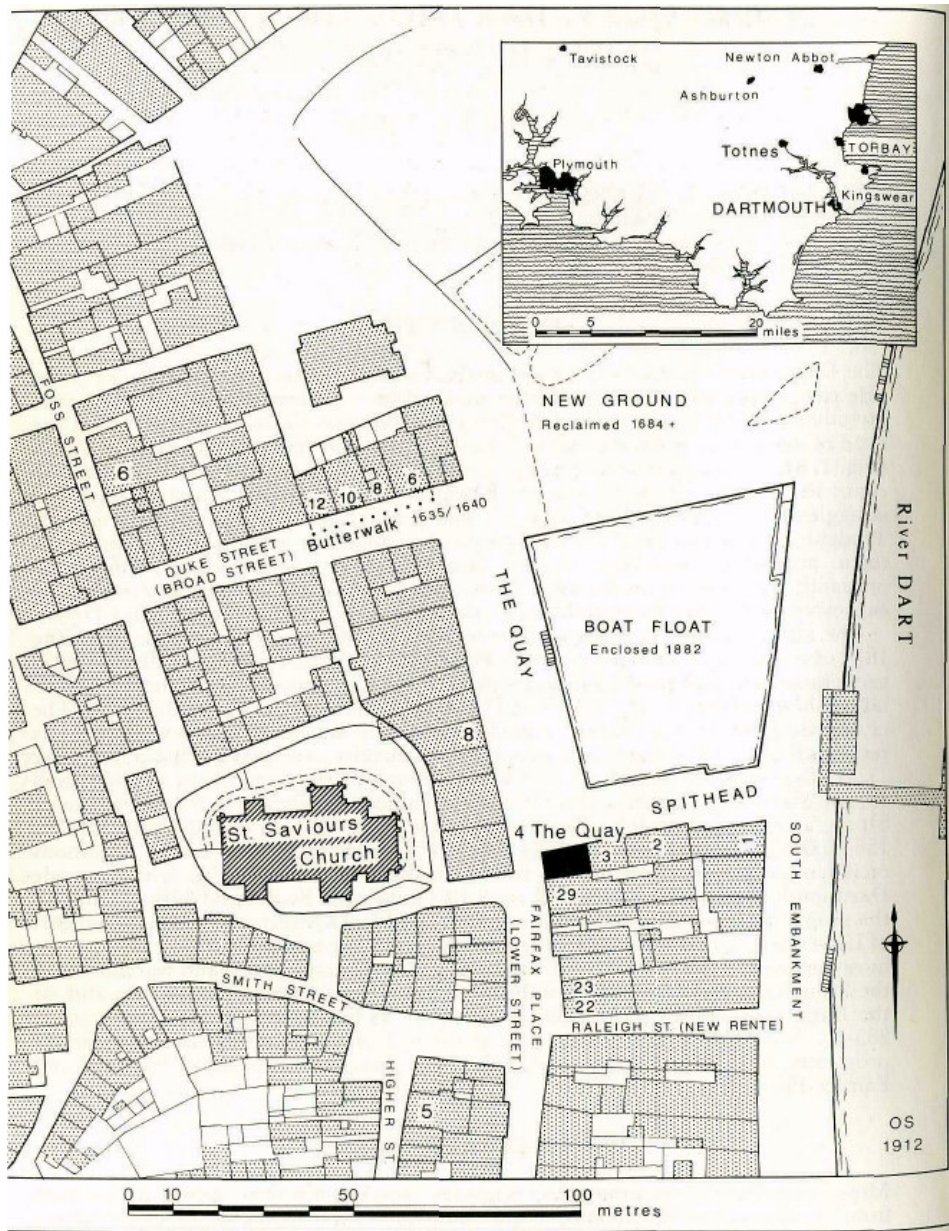
INTRODUCTION

The Dart estuary provides an excellent deep-water harbour, but the hills on either side rise steeply from the water's edge making inland communications difficult and providing little space for settlement. Since Anglo-Saxon times, Totnes (lying at the head of the estuary eight miles inland) has been the principal town of the Dart Valley (Fig. 1, inset). Dartmouth rose to a port of national significance in the 13th and 14th centuries (Russell 1950b, Chapter 1; Freeman, 1983, Chapters 2 and 3). The port straggles along the western edge of the estuary and probably grew from the amalgamation of two small fishing settlements. Clifton lay at the southern end of the town, around the old harbour, and Hardness at the northern end. They were originally separated by a tidal inlet which could be crossed at its mouth by means of a causeway (incorporating a tidal mill) along the line of Fosse Street (Fig. 1).

The fortunes of the port apparently declined in the 15th century (Russell 1950b, 18) but recovered in the 16th century. The period between 1580 and 1640 was one of great prosperity and growth, as Dartmouth merchants exploited both the Newfoundland fishing trade and the burgeoning Devon cloth industry (Hoskins 1954, 384). The cramped hillside setting left little room for expansion on land, so that new ground was reclaimed from the estuary, particularly in the vicinity of St. Saviour's Church (Fig. 1). As late as 1567, ships were still being moored to the churchyard wall (Russell 1950a, 282) but reclamation had already begun near the church to the east of Lower Street, as indicated by John Plumleigh's lease of lands north of 'Le New Rente' in 1564 (DRO DD 61340).¹ In 1584 the Corporation embarked on an ambitious reclamation scheme which was to transform the area shown in Fig. 1 and provide Dartmouth with the New Quay (Russell 1950a, *passim*). By the mid-17th century all the properties along both sides of Fosse Street and Duke Street, on the Quay and east of Lower Street, had been created from the estuarine mud-flats and had become the most fashionable area of town. Alongside the cranes, quays, shops and warehouses of the 'New Kaie' there lived most of the leading mercantile families of the day, and, as the Butterwalk houses show, their houses were as fine as any in the county (*ibid.*, 285-6). No. 4 The Quay, built right at the end of Dartmouth's second period of prosperity, lies at the southern end of the New Quay on the corner of Spithead and Fairfax Place (Fig. 1).

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Most of the New Quay properties (originally 'parcels of waste') were held on lease from the Borough of Dartmouth. A large number of these Corporation leases survive and therefore the New Quay area is relatively well-documented. Positive identification of existing properties from the old leases can nevertheless be difficult.² The following documents, however, do seem to relate to those properties along the south side of the modern Boat Float i.e. next to the old Spithead Quay. In 1585 Thomas



ARTMOUTH

The New Quay Area

Fig. 1. The New Quay area of Dartmouth based on the 1912 Ordnance Survey, and, inset, Dartmouth and the South Hams.

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Sayer, a Dartmouth merchant, leased '... a message and tenement, and a plot 01 waste ground on the north side of the said tenement ... in breadth twelve feet and in length according to the length [unspecified] of the said message ... situate between the lands of John Fursman on the south, the Queen's Highway [Lower Street/Fairfax Place] on the west, the sea strand on the east, and the New Quay there on the north ...' (DRO DD 61530). The message and tenement is the modern property 29 Fairfax Place eastwards to the river bank (now 2 South Embankment); the twelve feet of waste was to be enlarged to provide the site of 2-4 The Quay and 1 South Embankment.

Some time after 1585 the whole property must have been sold into private ownership since, in 1653, the Corporation bought from a group of merchants '... the messuages in ... Dartmouth ... now or late in the several tenures of Anthony Plumleigh, John Plumleigh, William Plumleigh and Robert Plumleigh, between the lands sometime of John Fursman on the south, the highway on the west, the sea strand on the east, and the New Quay on the north, also in a watercourse from the conduit to the said messuages ...' (DRO DD 62796).

Two years later, on 6th November 1655, two 70-year leases were granted, one to Anthony Plumleigh, the other to Robert Plumleigh, both mariners.³ Each cost £160 with an annual rent of 10s. Anthony leased '... the tenement ... near unto the New Quay, between the lands of the [Corporation] feoffees now in the several tenures or occupations of William Plumleigh,

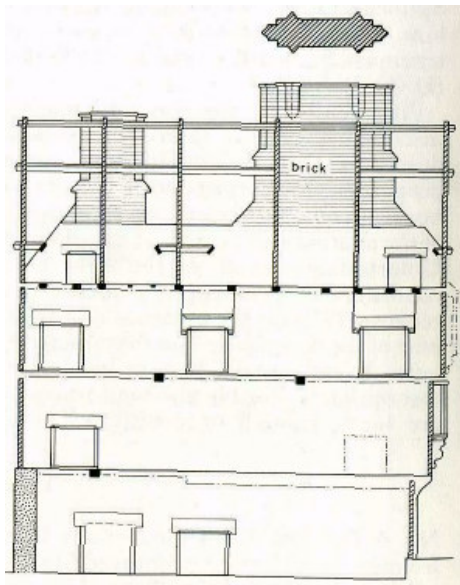
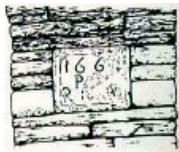
Christopher Searle, Thomas Liston and Martha Major, widow, on the north part, the sea strand of the harbour on the east, and the lands of Mary, the wife of Robert Lumley, on the south, Lower Street on the west . . . And all the watercourse . . . running from the conduit at the Pillory there unto the messuage . . .' (DRO DD 63222). Robert leased ' . . . that tenement . . . situate at New Quay . . . between the said New Quay on the north, the sea strand of the harbour there on the east, the lands of the feoffees now in the tenure or occupation of Anthony Plumleigh on the south, and the street there called Lower Street on the west . . .' (DRO DD 63221). Thus Robert Plumleigh acquired the tenement adjoining the Spithead Quay. No occupant is mentioned in the lease. In 1662 another lease gave him, for a peppercorn rent, * . . an extra two feet of ground to the north of the said tenement from end to end to enable Robert Plumleigh to enlarge his tenement . . .' (DRO DD 63117),

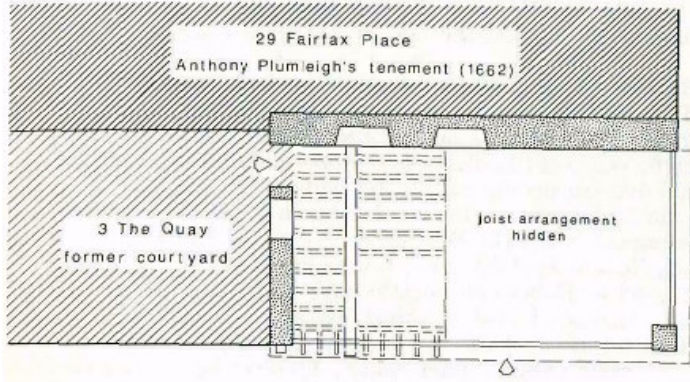
Apparently the site was now ready for the building of 4 The Quay although a discrepancy of over three feet exists between the width of the building and that described in the leases. This is not necessarily significant since few of the New Quay properties now correspond to the dimensions given in the leases. The erection of the house is commemorated by a recently discovered Beerstone plaque. It is set in the end of the southern stone wall at first floor level overlooking Fairfax Place (Figs. 2 and 3). Unfortunately much of the right hand side is mutilated but what does survive confirms the documentary evidence. It records the date 1664 (the last numeral was recut in 1979 on the evidence of a faintly inscribed cross - the remains of the lower part of the figure four - on the damaged part of the plaque). Beneath the first '6' is the letter P and, in the bottom left hand corner, the letter R. The remainder of the inscription is illegible although traces of other letters exist. Nevertheless the R and P are surely enough to identify 4 The Quay with Robert Plumleigh.

THE HOUSE

No. 4 The Quay is a three-storey corner-house presenting a 10.1 m (33.1 ft) long frontage north onto the Spithead Quay and a narrower front, 5.3 m (17.4 ft) in width, gable-end onto Fairfax Place. Like most contemporary townhouses in Devon, its construction is a mixture of masonry and timber framing. The long, southern party wall is built of the local grey slate finished with 'Dutch' brick at the top. This wall contains all the fireplaces and in its publicly-exposed western end is the Beerstone plaque described above. The wall leans northward but seems quite stable (Fig. 3). The eastern gable wall is a mixture of stone and 'Dutch' brick at ground floor level and is timber-framed above. Both west and north front walls are timber-framed and jetty at

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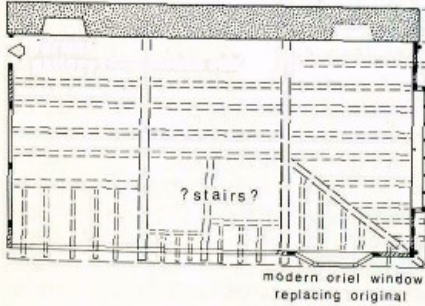


Ground Floor

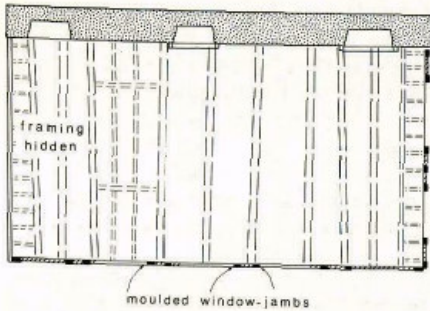
Spithead Quay

main door?

First



Second



termer
gallery?-'1] [modern stair

||=

MODERN ALTERATIONS OMITTED

Plan of brick stack

1.0
metres

Fig. 2. Floor plans and elevation of the south wall. The date plaque is not drawn to scale. first and second floor levels. The Fairfax Place front would appear to be the prestige side with its ostentatious display of carved oak. In contrast, the Spithead side is plain and severe. Inside the house the original partitions have been removed or rebuilt leaving no trace, but their positions may be inferred from the disposition of the fireplaces in the south wall (Fig. 2). There appear to have been three main rooms on each of the ground, first and second floors, and five lofts or attic rooms in the roofspace. Hence there were probably fourteen rooms in all, nine of them heated.

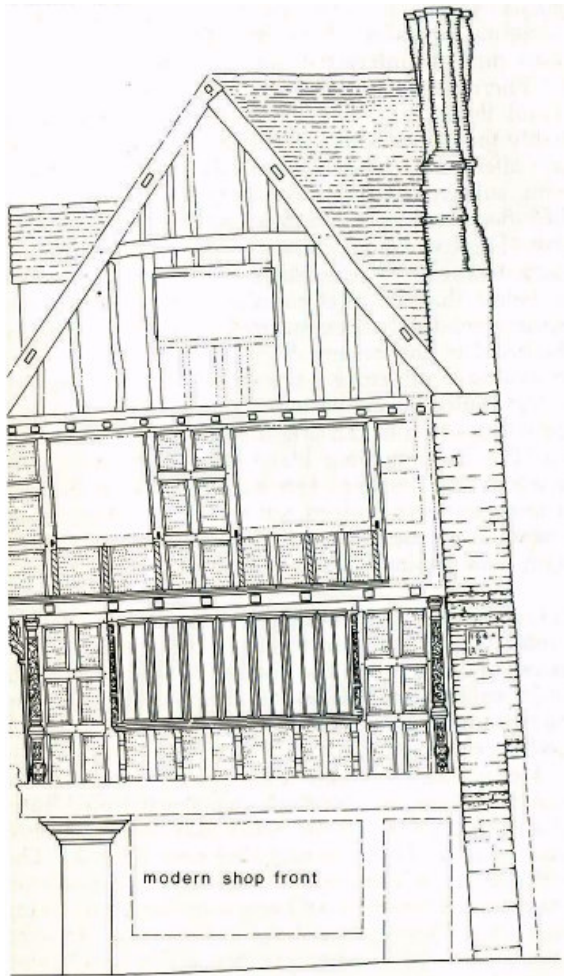
The ground floor has been greatly affected by modern alterations. As far as could be seen, none of the original framing survives at this level on the Fairfax Place or Spithead sides, and much of the first floor structure remains hidden. The unheated part of the ground floor (towards Fairfax Place) was presumably a shop or warehouse, whilst the two fireplaces towards the eastern end suggest two small domestic rooms there. It is argued below that the ogee moulding and stops on the lintel of the western fireplace indicate a relatively high status for the middle room.

Unfortunately the moulding on the lintel of the eastern fireplace is cut away. The plain sides of a blocked door and window embrasure were revealed in the eastern wall, showing that when the house was built there must have been an open space or courtyard beyond. The only clue to the position of the original stairs is provided by gaps in the joists of the second floor (Fig. 2, First Floor Plan). The stairs must have risen in the middle of the house towards the northern side through one of the two adjacent gaps. Since no newel-post mortises were noticed, some form of framed stair may be assumed.⁴ A side passage was unnecessary because of the corner site, and therefore it seems likely that the main door lay in or near the middle of the quayside front, close to the stairs.

Just enough original work survives on the first and second floors to indicate that the main domestic rooms lay there. In most 17th century town houses the first floor front room is the finest room in the house, sometimes called the 'fore-hall' (Portman 1966, 30). The first-floor room overlooking Fairfax Place has lost its original fireplace and plasterwork but the magnificent oriel window alone testifies to the high status of the room (Fig. 2; PL. 4b). Another smaller oriel overlooked the quay, but now only its ovolo-moulded side-posts remain. There was a second high-quality room at the eastern end on this floor. It was heated by a fine fireplace with an ogee-moulded lintel and was decorated with sgraffito plasterwork (Fig. 4); the wide, east-facing window (possibly an oriel) is divided into two bays by an ovolo-moulded post (Fig. 4). The nature of its modern blocking prevented close examination. Alongside this window an original door, also blocked, suggests that there may have been a gallery connecting this room to a detached block further east. The two fireplaces at this level are sited towards the outer ends of the long stone side-wall, indicating that a third, unheated room probably lay south of the stairs between the two heated ones.

On the second floor the finest of the three fireplaces served the western room. This is a handsome, hooded fireplace with oak, scroll-shaped hood corbels, and it is distinguished by the only ogee-moulded lintel at this level, a relatively ornate stop (Fig. 4) and sgraffito plaster decoration (Fig. 4, PL 3b). The other two fireplaces - a hooded one with an original moulded-plaster mantel-shelf in the middle room (Fig. 4), and a plain one at the eastern end - had ovolo-moulded lintels with bar-runout stops (the latter with an added nick). This is enough to identify the western room as the best chamber on this floor. Its ovolo-moulded cornice is the only original plasterwork in the building. Evidence was found for the two oriel windows over Fairfax Place which have since been rebuilt. There was also fragmentary evidence in the northern wall for windows serving both end rooms, and for another in the middle to light the stairs - all with ovolo-moulded mullions. At this level all evidence of fenestration in the east wall is hidden or has been destroyed.

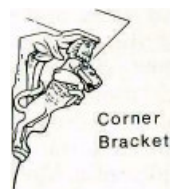
On the third floor the four trusses between the gables were closed to create five rooms of roughly equal size. They are housed entirely in the roofspace. The southern wall was built up with 'Dutch' brick around the two chimney stacks to carry two cross-roofs on that side. This gave the rooms more headspace and allowed the outer pair to be provided with small fireplaces. Each heated room was lit by a window in the gable, whereas the adjacent rooms were lit by north-facing dormers; the unlit middle room was probably the stairhead.



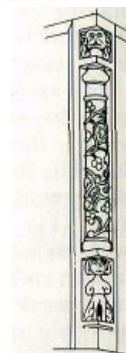
Vest Front

DETAILS

(not to scale)
Storey-post (south)



Corner
Bracket



Oriel
corner - post
(south)

Fig. 3. Elevation of west front with view of its architectural details. (The details are not drawn to scale.)

CONSTRUCTION AND DECORATION

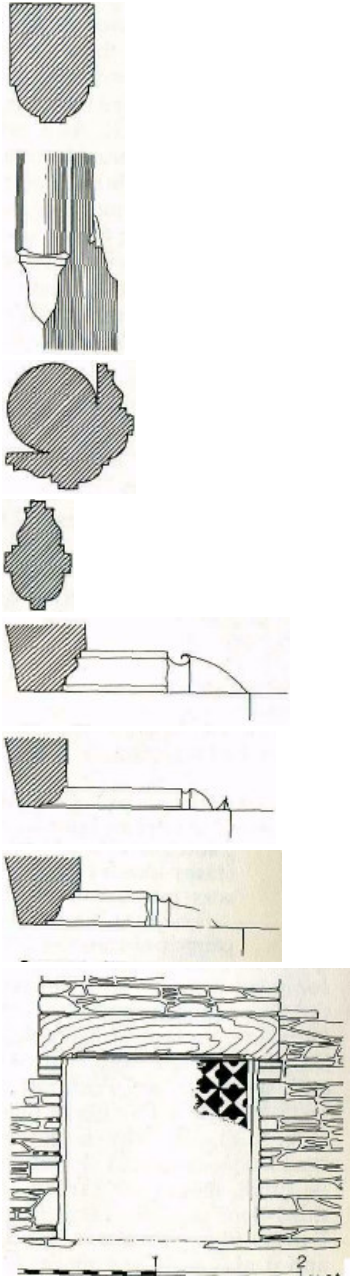
Like all jettied structures the house was erected floor by floor. Thus, on all three sides, storey-high frames sit on the ends of lower joists and support upper joists. There are no main beams carrying the second and third floor structures. Instead, a series of heavy roughly-finished joists of equal depth provides an uninterrupted base for flat ceilings. At second floor level the north-west corner is supported by a dragon-beam arrangement. The absence of any traces of the missing internal partitions implies that the room divisions had been free-standing frames with no structural function. The timbers of the side walls were never intended to be exposed internally; even the small-panel frames on the west side were covered with lath and mud-plaster (removed in 1979).

On the whole the standard of carpentry was poor. A great deal of re-used timber was employed on the northern and eastern sides. It is the west-facing front which contains most of the best carpentry and nearly all the carved and moulded decoration (Fig. 3). As a richly-decorated gable-end facade, it is a well-preserved example of what was the most common type of house front in the larger Devon towns from the mid-16th to the late-17th century. It is closely related to a group of similar facades in Dartmouth, namely 5 Higher Street (O'Neil & Russell 1951); Agincourt House, 27 Lower Street; and the Butterwalk (6-12 Duke Street) which was built in 1635 and 1640 (Russell 1950a, 285-8). The first and second floor levels in these Dartmouth houses are made up of exposed, small-panel framing. Here at 4 The Quay the lower level is moulded with an ogee and fillet whilst the less conspicuous upper level has the inferior ovolo.⁵ On the Butterwalk houses the framing is embellished with strips of vertical guilloche and horizontal strapwork. At 5 Higher Street shallow slots are present for the applied strips of decoration. Since no such slots are present at either 4 The Quay or Agincourt House it may be assumed that no decoration graced the framing of these houses. The slender unfinished uprights which fill the third-floor gable prove that it was clad from the outset - either with lath and plaster or with hung slates like 5 Higher Street and 10 Duke Street. The slate which now clads the gable was put up in 1979.

The first floor of the west front is dominated by an elegant oriel window serving the principal room. With corners square in plan, and having decorated corner-posts, the seven forward lights are divided by oak mullions moulded with an internal ovolo and external ogee (Fig. 3) - similar to those of 10 Duke Street and 5 Higher Street. Unlike the other Dartmouth oriels, including the fine examples from 6 Fosse Street which were destroyed in 1943 but known from prints and photographs (e.g. Russell 1950b, Pl. 22), the moulded sill is supported on plain brackets rather than ones carved as fabulous beasts.⁶ The whole front at this level is flanked by storey-high half-engaged Ionic columns on panelled pedestals over grotesque Bacchanalian heads. Elsewhere the decorative columns on urban house-fronts are either rusticated pilasters (e.g. 16 High Street, Totnes, Nicholas Ball's house of 1585), plain-turned (e.g. 19-20 North Street, Exeter, a mid-17th century house demolished c. 1900 but known from prints and sketches: see Portman 1966, Pl. 23), or fluted (e.g. Dartmouth Butterwalk, 1635-40). At 4 The Quay however they are richly carved with a trailing vine in fruit (Fig. 3, Pl. 5b). Matching vine decoration graces the corner-posts of the oriel which are heavily undercut to give the impression of being smaller columns (Fig. 3, Pl. 5b).⁷ A small length of carved fascia-boarding was recently discovered re-used in a third-floor partition. It is now fixed to the outside overlooking the quayside near the Fairfax Place corner. Its trailing vine decoration complements that on the west front, and it may well be a piece of original boarding used to cover the ends of the joists of each jetty.

The jettied second floor rests on the end of a dragon-beam supported by an oak bracket carved as a bearded man wrestling a lion (Fig. 3). The same subject appears on a jetty-bracket on the Butterwalk. It may represent the first Labour of Hercules, (killing the Nemean lion) or Samson and the Lion. Directly above the bracket, the meeting of the north and west walls produces a vertical recess. This otherwise awkward arrangement may have housed a decorated corner-post; however no mortises were found for such a post. There was evidence at this level for two west-facing oriels (now restored) and, in the gable, a smaller oriel serving the third floor (Fig. 2).

Both the northern and eastern walls have been extensively rebuilt. The remaining original carpentry is made up in general of a series of slender, crudely-finished uprights showing that these outer walls must have been clad with either lath and plaster or hung slates, or a mixture of the two. On the quay side only the second-floor frame could be examined. It includes some large finished posts, each with an ovolo mould down one side only, which seem to be arranged to break up the facade into three, storey-high, recessed panels; that is to say a wide central panel (which includes all the windows at this level) flanked by squarish panels. Thus at the Fairfax Place



Second floor north wall -

Windows

Oriel - First floor - west parlour
corner post

Fireplaces

Oak Lintels - Mouldings and stops

First floor - east

0 100
Second floor - east

500
^H mm
Second floor - west

1
'foot
Sgraffito Plaster and Hoods

First floor - east Second floor - centre . west £



Fig. 4. Architectural details.

(western) end is a post moulded on its eastern side, and 1.76 m to the east is another post moulded on its western side. The space between had been filled by a series of slender upright struts which provided the base for lath and plaster and created a large, blind, recessed panel. The next large post stands 0.46 m to the east. It is moulded on its eastern side and the intervening space was presumably filled flush to the faces of the flanking posts. The recessed panel beyond extended eastwards at least 6.3 m and included evidence for all three windows. The eastern end had been much altered but there was some evidence for a pair of large uprights 1.2 m from the eastern end post. Recent restoration of the quayside front has not taken account of the evidence for this unusual form of large framing (Pl. 4a).

The roof has five bays, each truss comprising an uncollared couple of pine principals sitting on a tic beam and held at the apex by a notched, mortise-and-tenon joint fixed by a peg. There are two sets of threaded purlins and a threaded ridge (Fig. 4).

The fireplaces deserve special mention. Seven of the original nine survive intact. All have rubble sides and oak lintels which are moulded over the hearth. The two hooded fireplaces on the second floor are the latest examples of this type known to the writer. Hooded fireplaces from the 16th and early 17th century are relatively common throughout Devon but these are unusual in having oak hood-corbels and lintels rather than ones of stone (Fig. 4, Pl. 3b), although another wooden example exists in Dartmouth at Agincourt House. All the lintels in this house have either ovolo or ogee moulds and display a variety of bar-stops (Fig. 4). These fit neatly into the local repertoire of elaborate mouldings and stops which reached their most diverse and ornate forms during the 17th century. As noted above, the ogee mould (usually with fillet) in this house is associated with the more elaborate stops and is found in rooms of higher quality. The rubble sides and pendants (backs) were obviously intended to be plastered over, and two of the finer fireplaces preserved traces of 'sgraffito' plaster decoration (Fig. 4, Pl. 3b). The evidence for this form of decoration often goes unnoticed and is destroyed when a 19th century fireplace is removed to open up an original 17th century one. The pattern is achieved by scraping through an overlay of white lime-plaster down to a base of grey-coloured plaster, as can be seen in two Devon museums: 33 St Andrews Street, Plymouth (Barber 1973) and 70 Fore Street, Totnes. A date of 1664 is consistent with the other dated examples, namely 44-46 Magdalen Street, Exeter (1659) and Rixdale Farm, Dawlish (1669). 'Dutch' bricks were used to build the chimney stacks (discussed below). The larger (western) chimney is a massive star-shaped stack; that is to say, it is rectangular in plan with narrower square projections at each end and six attached triangular shafts (Figs. 2 and 3; it can just be seen at the top of Plate 5a). The lesser stack is probably the same but the top cannot be seen. This star form is unique in Devon to the writer's knowledge. Diagonally-set chimney stacks occur at 74 High Street, Barnstaple, and 40 The Strand, Topsham (mid- and late-17th century respectively), but most contemporary brick stacks are plain and rectangular.

DATING AND DISCUSSION

The value of this study in relation to 17th-century housing in Devon lies in the recovery, under archaeological conditions, of most of the plan and assemblage of original features from a well-documented and firmly dated structure. The surviving building probably represents only the main block of a complex of contemporary buildings ranged alongside the Spithead Quay. The eastern gable wall (now the party wall with 3 The Quay) includes windows which indicate that there was a courtyard on that side, and a subsidiary block of at least two storeys is likely to have stood close by since the blocked first-floor doorway probably gave access to a connecting gallery in the manner of 54 Fore Street, Totnes (Laithwaite 1978, 36-7), 18 North Street, Exeter (Portman 1966, 84-5) and Agincourt House, Dartmouth. The 'back block' beyond this gallery may well have housed a kitchen since none of the fireplaces in the main block seems to have been designed for cooking.

Despite having two street frontages 4 The Quay must be regarded from the Fairfax Place side (Pl. 5a). It is then a house in the Devon tradition of the gable-end town-house, typical of the period c. 1500-1700 (Laithwaite 1978, 35-9). The basic plan type comprises a central stair between the front and back rooms on each floor. As usual the higher quality rooms overlook the street. No. 4 The Quay illustrates a mid-17th-century development of the basic plan: the provision of a large framed stair, squared up against the side wall and serving as the main division between the front and back rooms. The framed staircase evolved, or followed from, a tight newel or winder stair in a similar position as seen in 41 and 42 High Street, Exeter, probably dated 1564 (Portman 1966, 76-77), and 6 and 10 Duke Street in the Dartmouth Butterwalk (1635-40). No. 4 The Quay appears to be a relatively early example of this plan as is shown by comparing it to the similar houses built in London between c. 1660-80 (Kelsall 1914*r, passim*). In Devon the plan appears more commonly in the late 17th century, e.g. at 52 Fore Street, Totnes (1692), 144 Fore Street, Exeter, and 17 North Street, Exeter. Indeed many earlier town-houses replaced their newel or



Plate 4a. The Spithead front in 1982.

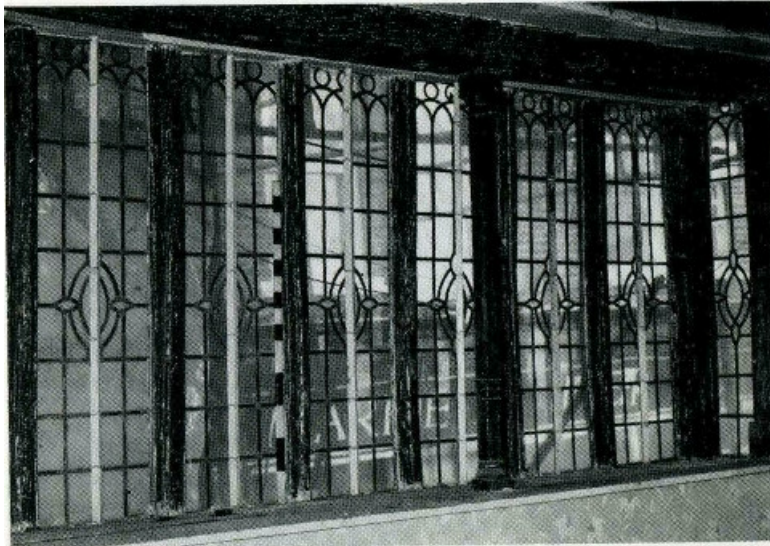


Plate 3a. The Quay, Dartmouth, looking west. Spit head lies on the extreme left.



Plate 3b. Second floor west fireplace showing 'sgraffito' plaster decoration.

Plate 4b. First Floor oriel - internal.

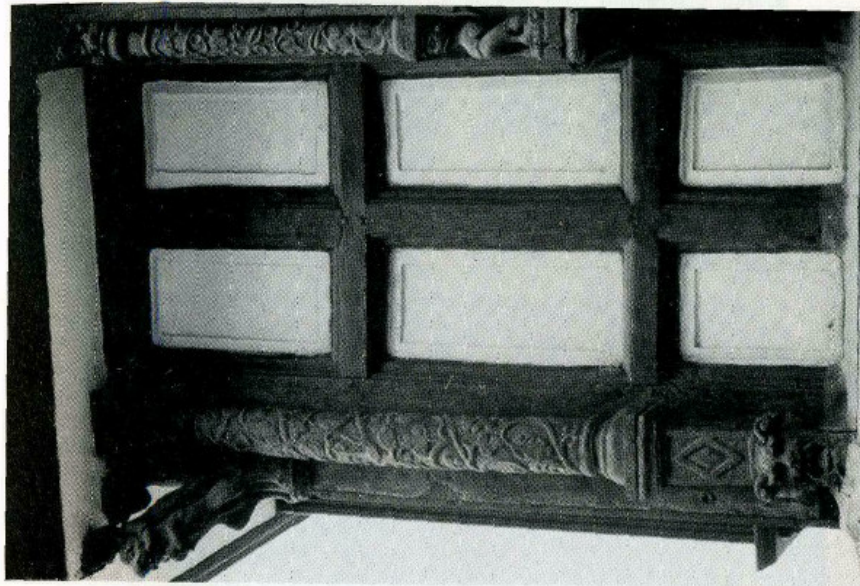


Plate 5b. Detail of the west front; first floor, northern end.

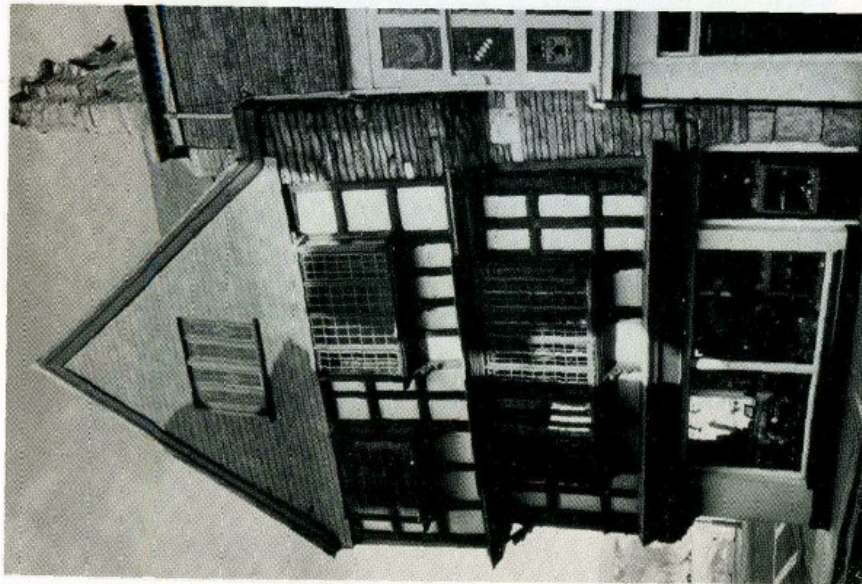


Plate 5a. The Fairfax Place front in 1982.

winder stairs with framed stairs in the late 17th century, e.g. 46 High Street, Exeter (Portman 1966, 78-80), and 18 North Street, Exeter, (*ibid.*, 84-5).

It is unusual for this plan to include a small third room next to the stairs between the front and back rooms. This arrangement occurs in Dartmouth in the well-preserved Butterwalk houses: 6-12 Duke Street (1635-40) have unlit middle rooms screened off from the stair landings. However the closest parallel to all aspects of plan comes from 3-5 King Street, Bristol (the Landoger Trow). Three members survive from a terrace of five gable-end town-houses, each comprising front and rear rooms separated by a framed stair and a small middle room. They were built on reclaimed marshland in 1664 (*ex inf.* Michael Laithwaite and Roger Leech).

Devon has no rural tradition of timber-framing (Laithwaite 1978, 31) but her larger towns abounded with timber-framed facades in the 16th and 17th centuries. These urban houses are generally of mixed stone and timber-framed construction; the timber-framed 46 High Street, Exeter (Portman 1966, 78-80) is apparently an important, lone exception. The typical 'mixed construction' house occupies the full width of a burgage plot and is timber-framed between stone party walls. Usually one of the stone walls 'belongs' to the house and includes the fireplaces and perhaps a garderobe alcove and chute. Corner houses are sometimes timber-framed and jettied on both street frontages as here at 4 The Quay and also at 13 Higher Street, Dartmouth (Russell & Evrett 1959). The ground floor back wall can be of masonry with timber framing above; other examples are known from 42 High Street, Exeter,⁸ and the demolished 72 High Street, Exeter (Reed 1931, Pl. X). Although 'mixed construction' was apparently widely distributed in Europe (*ex inf.* Michael Laithwaite), in England it seems to be confined mainly to the South West (including Bristol) with some examples in Norfolk (Laithwaite 1978, 31).

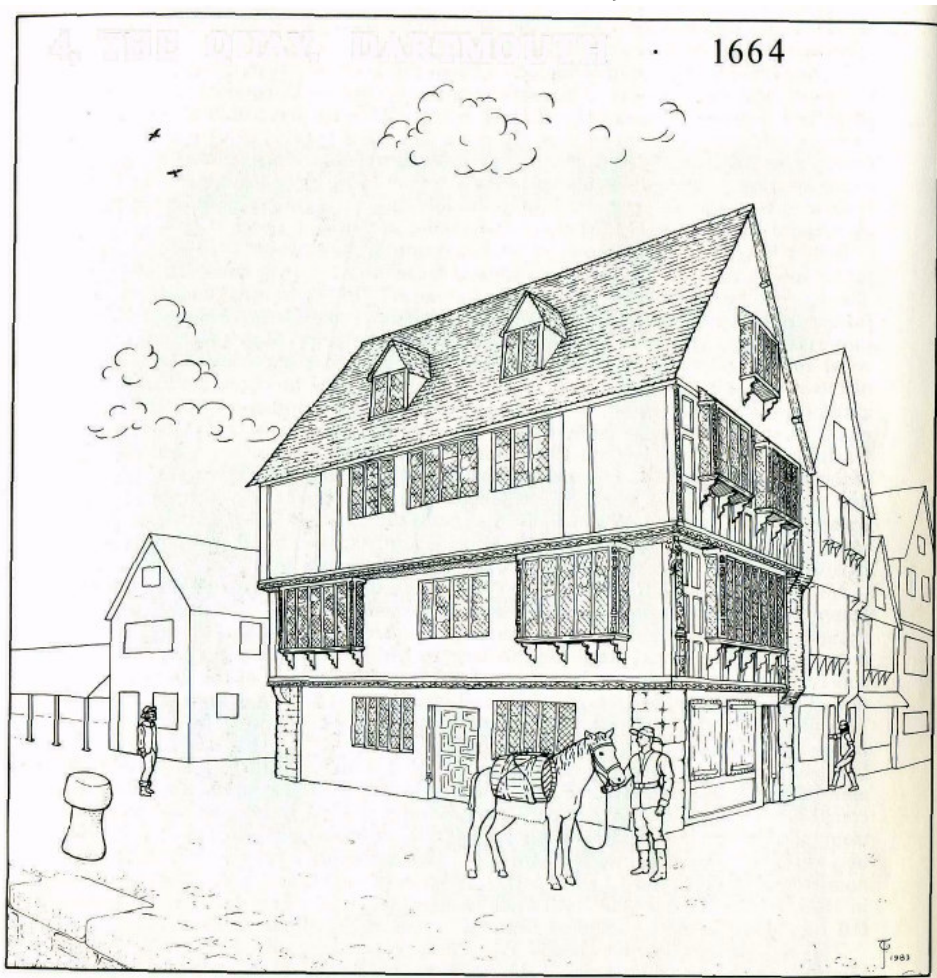
No. 4 The Quay introduced a third element to the mixed construction tradition. Imported 'Dutch' bricks were used extensively in the east wall (ground floor), and exclusively for the chimney stacks. In the former the predominant stretcher-bond indicates that the bricks were used to face the rubble wall-core. On the stacks no consistent bonding-

style can be observed, presumably because of the flue construction. The bricks used are red in colour and measure 170 X 90 X 40 mm on average. The Exeter Port Books show that Flemish bricks were imported from the 1470s through to 1752, but in greatest volume from c. 1660-1710 (Allan 1984, Fig. 135). Flemish bricks are normally ochre-coloured and it may be that these red bricks actually originated in Holland. Both were imported at the same time and are commonly labelled 'Dutch' bricks. There are other documentary references to brick from the late 16th century (Portman 1966, 59) but in standing buildings none can yet be proved to be earlier than the 17th century, e.g. the brick pentans of the two first floor fireplaces of 10 and 12 Duke Street, the part of the Dartmouth Butterwalk built in 1635. In Exeter a sizeable local brick industry must have grown up by 1650 (*ibid.*, 60) but no local brick is known from 17th-century buildings in Dartmouth.

The rich carving on the Fairfax Place front is in the tradition of the gable-end town-house. The earliest-known carved front in Devon, 46 High Street, Exeter, includes some Gothic detail but is considered mid-16th century in date (*ibid.*, 78-80). Most surviving examples in Devon (including the fine group from Dartmouth) seem to date from the first half of the 17th century. Similar facades continued to be built into the second half of the 17th century, e.g. 19-20 North Street, Exeter (*ibid.*, Pl. 23^a and possibly 225-6 High Street, Exeter,⁹ but they were being eclipsed by timber framed facades clad with undecorated lath and plaster, e.g. 17 and 4 The Close Exeter (both pre-1700), and by brick-built houses, e.g. the late 17th-century Stranc houses in Topsham.

In short, 4 The Quay has a new plan form but uses traditional materials which give the house an old-fashioned appearance. Basically one room wide and two deep on three Moors, it is modest in size compared with the 17th century houses on the main trading streets of Totnes and Exeter but very similar to those in Dartmouth.

Finally, the number of chimney pots suggest that the two stacks incorporate more flues than the nine needed to serve the house. The stacks therefore must have been shared by 29 Fairfax Place (now apparently a 19th-century rebuild). The implication



4, THE QUAY, DARTMOUTH

Fig. 5. Imaginative reconstruction of 4 The Quay in 1664.

is that Anthony and Robert Plumleigh built their houses together. Other pairs in Dartmouth such as 11 The Quay (1639) are also separated by a major stone wall. In contrast the surviving pairs in Exeter are all separated by framed walls, e.g. 41 and 42 High Street (Portman 1966, 76-77), 181a-182 Gowick Street (*ibid.*, 71-2) and 105-6 Lore Street.

SUBDIVISION OF THE SPITHEAD PROPERTY

It cannot be proved that Robert Plumleigh resided at 4 The Quay. In 1662 he also leased another New Quay property (DRO DD 63119), probably on the site of 8 or 9 The Quay, in which he had been 'in occupation' since at least 1655 (DRO DD 63209). Several later leases indicate that 4 The Quay was in dual or multiple

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occupancy from at least 1702 and raise the question of whether this had been so since 1664. A lease of 1702 (DRO DD 63700) gave the widow Catherine Sadler '... of kitchen, one shop, one dining room, three other chambers and a loft at New Quay; ...' for a rent of 3s. They were bounded by the New Quay to the north, Lower Street to the west, the sea strand and lands of the Corporation to the east, and Corporation lands to the south. In 1708 the rest of the Spithead property went to another widow¹ Catherine Sikcs (DRO DD 63747) - all the property that is except 'those several rooms high, one kitchen [etc.] ...' at the western end.

The 18th century leases¹⁰ consistently describe 'those several rooms, one kitchen, one shop, one dining room, three other chambers and a loft' at the western end of the property. The geographical details are unambiguous. They could only be referring to the front part of 4 The Quay which, as a whole, included at least fourteen rooms, therefore must be assumed that the eastern or rear part of the house went with the rest of the Spithead tenement. Thus the house was shared from at least 1702 onwards. Although it cannot be proved that Robert Plumleigh lived there (see above), it is interesting to note that he paid for only five fireplaces in the 1674 Hearth Tax (DRO DD 179/245/17/4), so if he did live there, it would seem that the house was already divided since there are nine heated rooms.

The dual or multiple occupancy of such fine houses was not unusual. For instance two leases of 1690 relate to the same Butterwalk house, probably 12 Duke Street. Caleb Barnes, a mariner, took the 'five chambers and lofts being the back part of the house' (DRO DD 63642), and another mariner, Sampson Mathews, leased 'the three higher fore-rooms and cock lofts' (DRO DD 63643). Another example comes from New Quay property (possibly 10 The Quay) where both the 1720 leases describe the division of the property by its former owner Walter Jago (DRO DD 63864 and 63877). The leases indicate that the social status of the New Quay inhabitants \ falling in the second half of the 17th century as merchants were replaced by tradesmen, widows and the like. This was no doubt a reflection of the decline of Dartmouth as a port after the Civil War (Russell 1950b, 121-9).

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NOTES

1. This is an earlier reference to the New Rente than that mentioned by Russell (Russell 1950a, 284).
2. No. 4 The Quay, for instance, according to Russell was 'the house of Robert Follett (built in 1640)' (Russell 1950a, 288), but this cannot be so; the geographical details in the lease (DRO DD 62690) do not tally with his proposed location. The lease in question granted to the merchant, Robert Follett, two adjoining tenements bounded on the west by Lower Street (now Fairfax Place), the harbour to the east, New Rente (now Raleigh Street) to the south, and the lands of the corporation in the tenure of Nicholas Roope to the north (my italics). No. 4 The Quay has the New Quay to the north, and therefore Robert Follett's property must have been further south - surely the present site of 22 and Fairfax Place and most of the Raleigh Hotel behind. The most recent study of Dartmouth states that the property was leased by Thomas Plumleigh in 1585 (Freeman 1983,;).
3. The Plumleighs were one of the most powerful merchant families in Dartmouth in the 16th and early 17th centuries, and they played a leading role in the creation of the Quay. For instance, in 1564 John Plumleigh bought two tenements near Raleigh Street and most of the area between St. Saviour's Church and Duke Street (DRO DD 614) and in the 1587 Borough rental, Thomas Plumleigh paid as much as 52s. 8d. (DRO DD 61566). Unfortunately the parish records give no indication as to the relationship

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- Anthony and Robert, or indeed of either of them to other members of the family.
4. At 38 North Street, Exeter the removal of a mid-17th century, box-framed stair left no trace save three small mortises in the floorboards below and a gap in the joisting above (Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit archive).
5. A similar distinction between the ogee and ovolo moulding has been noted on the door frames in two contemporary Exeter houses, 44-46 Magdalen Street (1659) and in the 1657 work in Cowick Barton, Cowick Lane. In both cases the ogee is reserved for rooms of higher status - the others have ovolos.
6. In Exeter similar plain oriel brackets are invariably associated with houses of the later 17th century such as 2 The Mint and 67 South Street (Portman 1966, 89-90).
7. At 10 Duke Street, 5 Higher Street and formerly 6 Fosse Street all the oriels have richly-decorated corner-posts but, unlike those at 4 The Quay, are essentially square in section. Ornate, carved corner-posts seem to be a feature peculiar to the

- Dartmouth oriels. Those known from other Devon towns are all either plain or moulded.
8. Part of the stone rear wall was uncovered during renovation work in March 1983 (Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit archive).
 9. This house has previously been tentatively dated to 1567 (Portman 1966, 80-1). However the details of its construction which were uncovered during the demolition of the rear part suggest a mid-17th century date (Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit archive).
 10. The 1702 lease of Catherine Sadler (DRO DD 63700) is quoted in the text. In 1708 the rest of the Spithead property ('... all those several messuages, tenements and dwelling houses and bakehouses...') went to another widow, Catherine Sikes, for a rent of 7s. (DRO DD 63747). The New Quay lay to the north, the sea strand of the harbour to the east, Corporation lands to the south and, to the west, '... those several rooms nigh, one kitchen, one shop [etc.] ... now in the possession of George Heath, cordwainer ...' The 1715 Corporation rental (DRO DD 63782) records payment of 7s. from 'Mr Thomas Newman's executors for three tenements at Spithead', immediately followed by 3s. for 'Widow Heath's tenement there'. (Incidentally, this is the earliest reference to 'Spithead' the writer has found.) In 1755 a lease was taken up by John Nicholls, a peruke (wig) -maker, for '... all those several rooms following (that is to say) one kitchen, one shop [etc.] ... at the New Quay ...' with the New Quay to the north, the harbour and Corporation lands to the south and Lower Street to the west '... all were formerly in possession of Catherine Sadler ... now in the possession of Mary Collins and Catherine Heath' (DRO DD 64498). The Corporation rental of 1763-4 (DRO DD 64769) and a lease of 1763 for the southern adjoining property (DRO DD 64761) explains that the rest of the Spithead Quay was taken up by Mary Rockett and her sisters and Edward Leigh. John Nicholls renewed his lease in 1783 (DRO DD 65470).

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