

## POLLARDS, BADINGHAM.



Fig. 1: Pollards.

In the winter edition of *Eavesdropper* No. 43 in an article 'Pargeting - Another Tradition' Anna Kettle

wrote that there were two traditions of pargeting. The highly ornamental pargets like the Ancient House in Ipswich circa 1660, the Sun Inn, Saffron Walden, or the Ancient House Clare, are well known and a must see for East Anglian tourists is one, but there is a simpler parget, two, that is easily overlooked but existed in practically every ancient Suffolk village.

If you rather eccentrically peer closely at the existing plastered walls of the old cottages you will find fragments of this tradition, the odd right angle and length of beading, small areas of decoration etc. unfortunately you will also find in emulation of this tradition, concrete rendering, crudely patterned probably drawn using a pointed stick.

Around 1600, timber framed buildings were increasingly

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covered in plaster; the buildings losing the visual intricacy of exposed timbers infilled with plaster or brick-nogging, but gaining in draught proofing, internal warmth and water proofing.

I can only suppose that this caused the residents to request some inexpensive decoration of the walls to relieve the monotony of the blank plaster. Applying lime wash would have helped and it would be nice to know when the first colour pigments were used. We do however know about early internal decorations appearing to reflect a nostalgia for the timber frame, rooms painted in vertical stripes which replicate studs, in colours according to status.

It appears that externally the buildings were divided into panels taking account of the building's corners, windows and doors; typically with beaded plaster borders and plain margins to enable the work within to be carried out while the plaster was still plastic, also somewhat reflecting the timber frame beneath. The panels were then infilled with a textured decorative treatment either in a regular or a random pattern.

Earlier this year Gorniak & McKechnie (Tom and Ian) were commissioned by Mr and Mrs Collins (Jennie and Paul) to obtain Listed Building Consent for removing the concrete rendering from their house Pollards, repairing as necessary the timber frame and brickwork, replacing any holes in the wattle and daub with sheep's wool, re-rendering in lime render on Savolit wood wool boards and what is more pargeting the final surface to match an original pattern discovered on a rear wall. The material and cost of fixing wood wool board is of course less

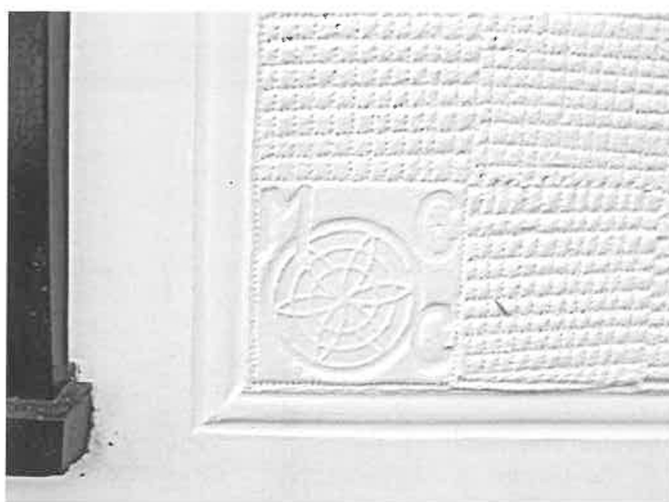


Fig. 2: Square showing monograms of the pargeters.

expensive than timber lath and it is fireproof, breathable and has an insulating and draught proofing value. However at 25mm thickness it is less flexible in taking up the contours of the building, therefore not possibly as fully accepted by conservation officers.

Through competitive tendering we employed a general builder (Seamans) to carry out the work under a JCT contract and a specialist pargeter Mike Frost to carry out and supervise the external rendering as a clients' tradesman paid directly by Mr and Mrs Collins.

The Warmcote insulated and Limecote flexible, breathable chalk/lime plasters was supplied by Martin Brown of Best of Lime.Co.UK. The lime wash was from Ingilby Paints, Sudbury, Tallow bound for the plastered and pargeted areas and Pozilime for the exposed brickwork.

**Mike Frost writes:** let me introduce you to my team: myself a plasterer with a carpentry background: Charlie Bye a plasterer and Carl Wilsea our labourer, all with an eye for the detail and the appropriate response of 'less is more' to ancient buildings. Our first job was to set out the borders with string lines to realise Ian's drawings of some 40 or so panels. Next we made wooden frames and fixed them to the undulating Savolit board - it is worth pointing out that as Ian says that although wooden lathes are a traditional material on which to hang plaster, the boards do not compromise the shape of the ancient building.

We were at Pollards to plaster the outside of the entire house except where leaving the exposed brickwork was appropriate.

We started by fixing oak base rails and beaded oak corner staff beads with weather check cambers and grooves. These beads allow expansion and movement. All joinery was protected by careful masking, since cleaning

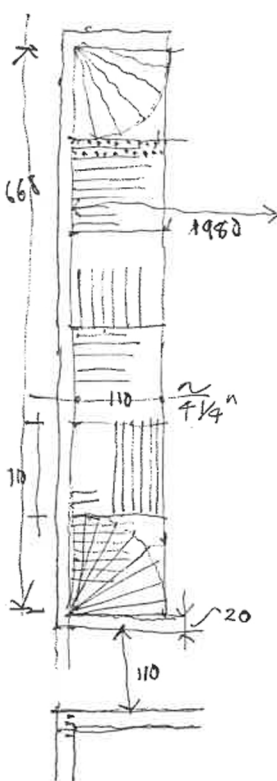


Fig. 1: Parget pattern at Pollards.

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Fig. 3: Fritillary on porch apex.

down after lime plastering is laborious and very time consuming. We glued and scrimmed all joints on the Savolit board to prevent cracking. Next we ran in the beaded borders and margins with wooden blocks using the wooden frames as a guide. After allowing a few days to achieve set we carefully removed the frames and ran in the panel infills using various saw blade combs of different lengths according to the dimensions. On the areas where we had brickwork as a substrate we dubbed out with an insulating plaster (warmcote) which is ideal as it is non-shrinking and can be used as a backing coat requiring no lathes in this instance. If the brickwork is poor, a plastic mesh can be used in

the first coat of limecote to protect cracking.

One additional feature was Charlie's modelling of a fritillary on the apex of the porch using a template provided by myself from a photo Jennie provided (fig. 3).

Lastly Kenton Brauer of Long Stratton made a beautiful steel window for the porch, glazed in 'DE-Rest' glass, which is a high quality machined glass, heat treated to give movement and distortion similar to hand made glass (fig. 4).

*Mike Murdoch Frost and Ian McKechnie*



Fig. 3: Glazed steel window for porch wall.