

An Exploration of Stylistic Synthesis in Elizabethan Country Houses

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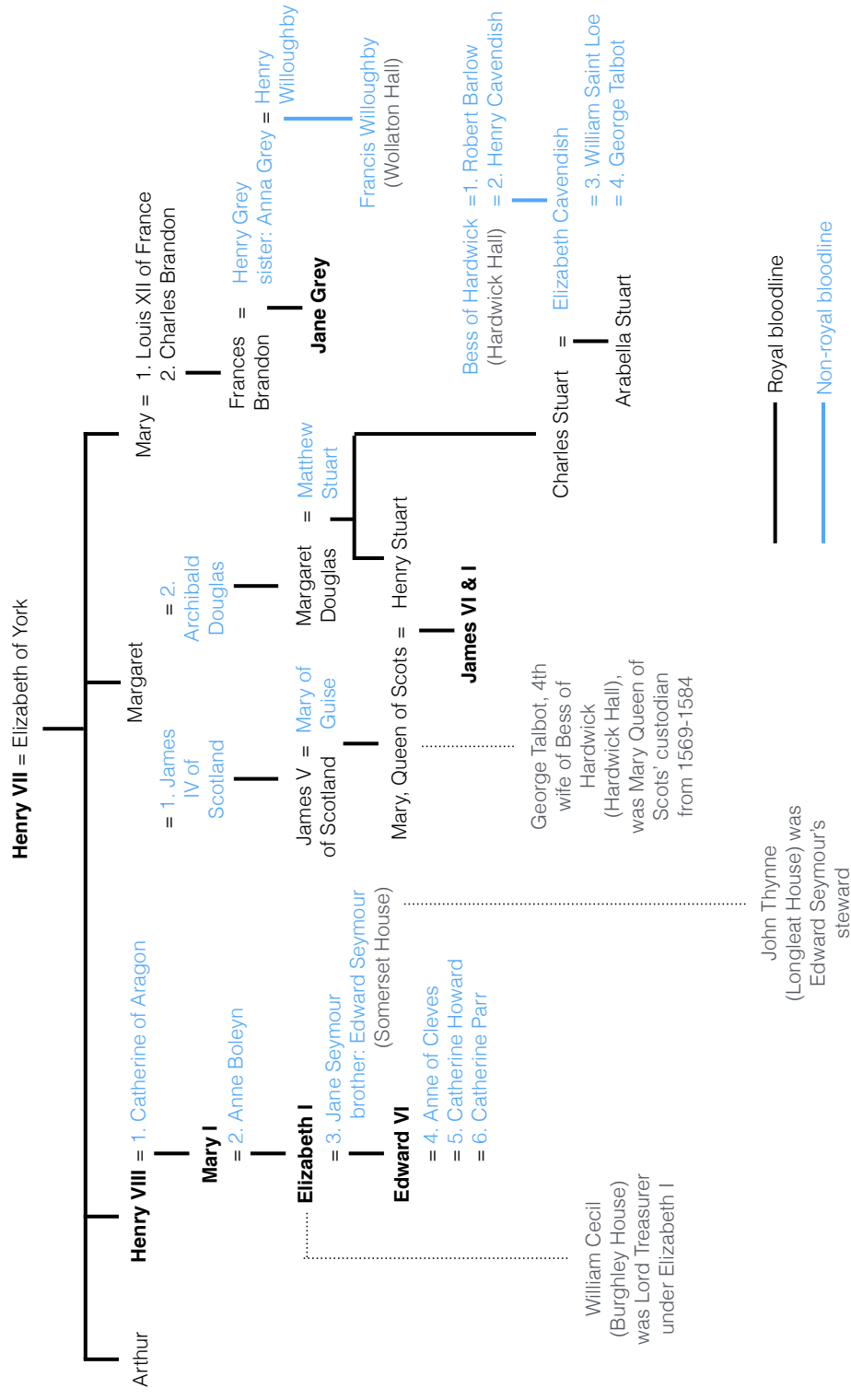
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Elizabethan Builders and the Tudor Dynasty



Introduction

The architecture of the Elizabethan era presents an intriguing stylistic conundrum defined by a unique mixing of architectural forms within individual buildings between about 1520-1620. Sixteenth-century patrons built enormous country houses around England in hopes of one day entertaining Queen Elizabeth. The houses form a coherent groups are unified by the fusion of traditional gothic elements, native to England, French and Italian classical forms, and mannerist ideas from the Low Countries. This thesis will explore, first, the unprecedented combination of architectural styles in Elizabethan manor houses, second, the ways in which these architectural choices came to be made, and finally, the impact these unique structures had on the greater Elizabethan cultural landscape at the time.

In order to fully explore these issues, it is important to understand the social, cultural, and architectural climate of the era. The building pursued under Elizabeth I (reign: 1558-1603) is distinctly different from the construction which took place under the previous Tudor rulers, her father, Henry VIII (reign: 1509-1547), and grandfather Henry VII (reign 1485-1509), in that royal building schemes were virtually nonexistent, while houses patronized by wealthy courtiers multiplied. The royal buildings erected under Henry VII and Henry VIII were numerous and like other royal art of the time, have been seen by scholars, including Simon Thurley and Roy Strong, as expressions of royal power and magnificence.¹ The idea of magnificence was explored by Sir John Fortescue in his 1470 political treatise *The Governance of England*. Magnificence was the art of being visibly wealthier and more influential than others.² For Henry VII and VIII,

¹ Roy Strong, *Holbein and Henry VIII* (London: Routledge & K. Paul for the Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art, 1967), 4.

² Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England, 1460-1547*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 11.

architecture was the ideal way to communicate magnificence to their populace as well as powerful visitors. Henry VII updated Greenwich palace in the 1480s and again in the early 1500s and rebuilt Richmond Palace into a symbol of the monarchy's elevated power and advancement in 1501.³ He also paid for the magnificent gothic Lady Chapel in Westminster Abbey, which was begun in 1503. Thurley argues that his son, Henry VIII, was the most prolific and accomplished builder to rule England.⁴ Henry VIII was very involved in the smallest details of his building projects.⁵ He contributed more funds to the upkeep and renovation of Greenwich and at least seven great building projects, including Nonsuch and the Field of Cloth of Gold, were undertaken at his request. He also seized the magnificent Whitehall Palace and Hampton Court Palace, which are precursors to the hybrid buildings of the Elizabethan era, from Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in 1529. The two kings were masters of an architectural tradition that served to legitimize Tudor rule and enforce the magnificence of the crown, and of England herself.

While Henry VII and his son built and acquired extravagant palaces and churches, Edward VI (reign: 1547-1553), Mary I (reign: 1553-1558) and Elizabeth did little in terms of building. Elizabeth's siblings who ruled before her seldom had a chance to leave their architectural mark on the nation, as they both died within seven years of ascending to the crown, but Elizabeth ruled for close to 50 years. It is unclear as to why exactly Elizabeth did not build; she may have been focused on keeping her approval levels up by avoiding expensive projects, especially in light of the religious contention and succession issues surrounding her and her sister

³ Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, 36-37.

⁴ Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, 39.

⁵ Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England*, 39.

Mary's reign. Alternatively, she may have felt that the many lavish residences built by her Tudor predecessors were satisfactory for her lifestyle.

In contrast to Elizabeth's disinterest, her subjects built over 150 private manor houses, and it is valid to imagine that Elizabeth encouraged this surge of building by embarking on annual summer progresses during which her entire court moved from one country house to another. The English Reformation and dissolution of the monasteries led wealthy Tudor families to acquire church buildings and convert them into residences. While religious and crown-sponsored construction stood still, public buildings were updated and the innovation known as the prodigy house, a house built specifically with the intention of hosting the Queen and her court, captivated private builders with new land holdings. The possibility of hosting Elizabeth was irresistible to wealthy patrons with growing economic influence. Great Elizabethan men aspired to renovate their previous holdings and/or build new, magnificent, houses in order to impress their Queen and outdo their fellow elites.

To supply these patrons with their houses, the study of architecture and the concept of architect as a profession grew to fruition during Elizabeth's reign. The term 'architect' began to be used during the reign of Elizabeth to describe men such as Robert Smythson, the architect of three of the houses which will be analyzed in this thesis: Longleat, Wollaton, and Hardwick. The use of the term 'architect' is significant because it differentiates designers of buildings from masons and others who took part in the construction of a house. Prior to the second half of the sixteenth-century, the man who drafted blueprints and schemas for buildings was considered to be a mason, not an architect.⁶ When I use the word architect in this thesis, I am applying the

⁶ Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era* (London, Country Life, 1966), 20.

modern definition of the term to Elizabethan masons, joiners, and other builders who performed the duties of an architect. Additionally, in the 16th century, many patrons were heavily involved in the designs of their houses. Manor houses resulted from the collaboration between involved patrons and their architects.

John Shute published his *The First and Chief Grounds of Architecture* in 1563. Shute travelled in Italy in 1550, where he recorded art and architecture in a series of drawings which eventually came to be included in his 1563 publication. The treatise was the first of its kind to be published in England and is a clear example of English interest in classical forms. This is not to say that because England lacked architectural publications and terminology, it also lacked native architecture. A distinct English gothic style came to exist in the middle ages, but the rules that characterize Greek, Roman, and Italian and French Renaissance architecture did not exist in England.⁷ Architecture was elevated to the status of a science in 1570, by John Dee, an Elizabethan intellectual.⁸ The emergence of classicism in England marked a turning point in the way the English thought about the field of architecture.

While Shute's *The First and Chief Grounds of Architecture* made foreign ideas more accessible to the English public, pattern books and architectural treatises from the continent made their way to into the libraries of wealthy English courtiers. Vitruvius' *De architectura*, written in the 1st century BCE, had recently been rediscovered in Renaissance Italy where new printed editions were streaming off the presses. Sebastiano Serlio's first of five architectural treatises was published in Venice in 1537 and aspired to update, clarify, and illustrate Vitruvius'

⁷ Mark Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture, Its Rise and Fall, 1540-1640* (New Haven: Yale University Press for The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2009), 138.

⁸ Nicholas Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: between Science and Religion* (London; New York: Routledge, 1988), 155.

ancient codes. Tatiana String has acknowledged the use of Serlio's publications in England by 1540.⁹ Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, a Frenchman, wrote several volumes on architecture in an attempt to make knowledge of classical architecture accessible. His first book was published in 1549 and likely influenced English architects. Some Englishmen (such as Shute) did travel to France or Italy and saw classical art and architecture firsthand, but the political and religious rift between the English crown and the Catholic Church meant that traveling was discouraged.¹⁰ Eventually, knowledge of classical forms made it to England. It is likely that treatises by Serlio, Vitruvius, du Cerceau, and others ended up in the Tudor court, as well as in the hands of the great men who were building magnificent hybrid houses. Masons and architects did travel from the continent to England, and they brought classical and mannerist ideas with them. Alan Maynard, a Frenchman, worked closely with Robert Smythson on Longleat House and contributed his knowledge of classical forms to the overall design.¹¹ The knowledge delivered to the English through pattern books, architectural treatises, and travel, as well as the expertise brought by architects from the continent, were instrumental in allowing English patrons to create their unprecedented blended houses.

The Elizabethan era saw new types of patrons and motives for building, but it also saw the development of a distinctive style of building that is singular to Elizabethan England. The traditional elements of an English gothic house came to be combined with imported architectural elements from the continent. The traditional English house contained defensive architecture. Crenelations, balustrades, battlements, corner towers, and other fortifications were typical of

⁹ Tatiana String, "A Neglected Henrician Decorative Ceiling." *The Antiquaries Journal* 76 (1996), 146.

¹⁰ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 138.

¹¹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 70.

houses built in a time when lords could expect to be attacked by a neighboring militia. Pre-Elizabethan houses also contained gothic decoration, including pointed arches, rib-vaulting, elaborate hammerbeam ceilings, and an emphasis on verticality. After the conclusion of the Wars of the Roses, nation-wide stability removed the need for defensive architecture. However, when Elizabethan courtiers renovated or built new houses starting in the late 1550s, they purposely included some of these elements for their decorative value as opposed to their practical use. Nevertheless, these houses were not gothic houses. Crenelations and towers were complemented by roundels, the tower of the orders, and Flemish mannerist decoration. By the time Elizabeth had ascended to the throne, the Renaissance had firmly taken hold and mannerism had begun to emerge. This thesis will be an exploration of the mixing of styles present in Elizabethan hybrid houses.

Among the numerous of country houses built with the hopes of entertaining Elizabeth, I will focus on four in this thesis: Burghley House, Longleat House, Wollaton Hall, and Hardwick Hall. These houses were chosen because of their unique embodiment of the fusion of Italian classicism, Flemish mannerism, and traditional English gothic that characterizes Elizabethan manor houses. These houses represent different geographic locations and patrons with varying social status and ambitions. They were all constructed between 1555 and 1597, and some had the honor of entertaining Elizabeth. Like other Elizabethan manor houses, these four case studies do not embody a single style that carries from one house to another. Each structure is aesthetically distinct, and incorporates gothic architecture, classicism, and mannerism in uncommon ways. I will focus on the history, patronage, and architecture of each house individually in the chapters to come.

As part of my research, I visited each of these houses. As a result of my visits I was able to study the individual architectural details of the exterior of each house and capture a plethora of photographs. Most of the images used in this thesis are my own. These images help fill a void of available detailed photographs of these magnificent houses, which are often photographed as a whole. Images of the houses in their entirety are stunning, but difficult to analyze. Visiting the buildings allowed me to visually analyze the details of each house as they relate to the whole, and capture valuable images of the details. Detailed visual analysis while on the site of the house and later with the assistance of the photographic evidence I acquired was crucial to the study of these four houses.

The literature on this subject acknowledges the fusion of styles that is evident in Elizabethan houses, but it does not go far enough in explaining why Elizabethan patrons sought after houses which incorporated gothic, mannerist, and classical forms. Mark Girouard has written extensively on the subject of Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture, in addition to other topics relating to English history and architecture. He presents a thorough assessment of the history of the English manor house in *Elizabethan Architecture, Its Rise and Fall*. While he acknowledges the use of classical elements in Elizabethan houses, and speculates as to how foreign architectural elements were brought from the continent to England, he does not attempt to explain why patrons choose to incorporate both classical and traditional elements into their houses, nor does he go deep enough in his analysis of architectural trends. Girouard also explores the idea of the “English classical house”:

In the 1570s a determined effort was made to create English classical houses - as opposed to traditional English houses with classical bits added. Nothing was written about this at the time; it has to be deduced from buildings.¹²

I will argue that while the manor houses built during the Elizabethan era do consciously incorporate classical elements, they also deliberately include traditional English gothic elements. Therefore, the English were not trying to create English classical houses, but hybrid houses with classical, mannerist, and traditional English features. Girouard's analysis does not go far enough in explaining the mixing of style as a definite architectural moment in 16th century England.

In contrast to Girouard's under analysis of the Elizabethan country house, Olive Cook does acknowledge and attempt to define the architectural issues presented by hybrid country houses in *The English Country House through Seven Centuries*. However, Cook's definition of the architectural fusion of the era as "baroque" is incorrect. Her argument that synthesis (Cook defines the term as "reconciliation of vividly contrasting opposites") was important to the Elizabethan era has merit, and synthesis of styles can without a doubt be identified in Elizabethan country houses.¹³ She also refers to Baroque art and architecture as having a level of exoticism; the classical in England was an exotic import from the continent.¹⁴ Baroque architecture is characterized by excess, drama, and the lack of Renaissance order and clarity. High levels of eclectic drama can be seen in some Elizabethan houses, notably Burghley and Wollaton. However a humanistic order and rationalism are also present in these structures, and houses such as Hardwick and Longleat, which lack what would be considered typical Baroque drama on the exterior. While some Elizabethan houses do share qualities with Baroque buildings,

¹² Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 172.

¹³ Olive Cook, *The English Country House through Seven Centuries* (Frome: Butler and Tanner, 1968), 99.

¹⁴ Cook, *The English Country House through Seven Centuries*, 99.

the Baroque era was a widespread movement that developed from and purposefully altered Renaissance canons. Elizabethan houses cannot be Baroque because they are utilizing Renaissance ideals for the first time. The Elizabethans did not “break” the rules of classicism intentionally; their buildings are not classically correct because their awareness of these rules was not thorough.

Elizabethan courtiers used their great country houses to communicate to neighbors and guests their masculinity, power and magnificence. As these four country houses are explored in chronological order (based on the date in which construction of each house began), I will establish connections between the builders and architects of each house through their knowledge and aspirations. I argue that Elizabethan courtiers used their houses to ‘brand’ themselves, and the choice to create hybrid houses reflects the conflicting expectations of Elizabethan courtiers, who needed to present themselves both as valiant soldiers and refined, educated, elegant aristocrats. *Nouveau riche* elites proved their mastery of the evolving political and cultural landscape of Elizabethan England, while also attempting to legitimize their newfound power through the use of backward-looking medieval trends.

Burghley House and the Collision of Defensive and Renaissance Architecture

This study of Elizabethan manor houses begins with Burghley House (Figure 1.1), built by Sir William Cecil (1520-1598). Burghley was begun in 1555, three years before Elizabeth ascended the throne, by one of her most faithful and significant civil servants. Cecil set out to alter the house, built by his father on their family lands in Stamford less than two decades earlier, into a house fit for a *nouveau riche* elite. Completed in 1587, Burghley stands today as a testament to Cecil's wealth, ambition, and dominance of the Elizabethan political landscape.

Cecil's *nouveau riche* status was gained as a result of faithful and diligent service to the royal court. He was not born into nobility, but rather to a group of respectable lesser gentry in eastern England. Cecil's grandfather, David, established the family name and his father, Richard, worked as lawyer under Henry VIII and Edward VI, while advancing the family's fortune.¹⁵ Richard Cecil also expanded the family's landholdings in and around Stamford, the site that eventually came to accommodate Burghley House. Richard stayed in the favor of Henry VIII throughout his tumultuous reign and brought his son into the King's good graces at court. William Cecil fought for the survival of Protestantism under Mary I and therefore remained a favorite of Elizabeth I. At Elizabeth I's accession in 1558, William Cecil became her Principal Secretary and therefore was intimately involved with royal affairs. In 1572, he was promoted to Lord Treasurer, and was became one of the most powerful men in England; he continued to dominate Elizabethan politics until his death in 1598.¹⁶ He shared a close personal relationship with the Queen throughout his life, advising her on countless political issues.

¹⁵ Lady Victoria Leatham, Jon Culverhouse, and Dr. Eric Till, *Burghley: England's Greatest Elizabethan House* (Peterborough: Hudson's Heritage Group, 2012), 12; B.W. Beckingsale, *Burghley: Tudor Statesman, 1520-1598* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 8.

¹⁶ Suzannah Lipscomb, *The Building of Tudor England* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2013), 210.

Cecil, who was knighted to become Lord Burghley in 1571, has been called the greatest builder of Elizabeth's reign, as he constructed three impressive houses in east England.¹⁷ Cecil's prominent position and great wealth allowed him to acquire land holdings throughout England, and Burghley House was certainly not his only residence. Cecil's other houses, Cecil House on the Strand in London and Theobalds in Hertfordshire have both been destroyed in the centuries since Burghley inhabited them. Understanding the social functions of these two other homes is useful in gaining an understanding of Burghley house. Information about the purchase and building of Cecil House is sparse; the manor was built in the years following 1561. Cecil House served as William Cecil's accommodations while he was working in London, which was probably the majority of the year.¹⁸ Cecil House embraced the new architectural style of symmetry and was complemented by pleasure gardens and orchards.¹⁹

Burghley purchased Theobalds in Hertfordshire in 1563 and spent the next ten years occupied with its construction.²⁰ It is likely that because the remodeling at Burghley was begun quite early in Elizabeth's reign, before she began her yearly progresses, Cecil saw Theobalds as a chance to develop a new space specifically for the entertainment of the Queen. Therefore, he halted his construction at Burghley, his family's old estate, with the hopes of impressing Elizabeth with a new and awe-inspiring house. Lord Burghley was successful in attracting Elizabeth I to Theobalds, as she visited an impressive twelve times. To put this number in perspective, it is necessary to keep in mind that patrons often built massive country houses

¹⁷ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture, Its Rise and Fall*, 2; Leatham, Culverhouse, and Till, *Burghley*, 12.

¹⁸ Ian Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I* (London: Cape, 1962), 168.

¹⁹ Alford, *Burghley*, 141.

²⁰ Leatham, Culverhouse, and Till, *Burghley*, 9.

specifically with the hopes of attracting the royal court, and most did not see Elizabeth once. Burghley himself designed Theobalds, but he took requests and suggestions from the Queen, altering the building to fit the needs of her and her court.²¹ Burghley enlarged Theobalds several times to accommodate the Queen's massive parties and eventually built a new courtyard to double the size of the house. The total number of visitors was probably around 150, including courtiers, members of the Privy council, and their servants.²² Burghley essentially made Theobalds an alternative royal palace.²³ At the time, Theobalds was considered to be the most magnificent manor in England, followed by Holdenby, which was modeled after Theobalds.²⁴

While Burghley House was one of Cecil's first major building projects (it is unclear whether Cecil House or Burghley House was begun first, as no definite records exist), the final version of Burghley House, which still stands today, was the last of his houses to be finished. Burghley House was built over a period of 30 years. The project began as a remodel of a respectable house built by his father in the 1540s. The house was likely begun in the early 1560s; the east and south ranges were in progress until 1564, when Cecil left Burghley to engage in the building of his newly acquired property in Hertfordshire, later to become Theobalds.²⁵ Little progress was made at Burghley until Cecil returned in 1575 and the first version of Burghley house was completed in 1578.²⁶ Mark Girouard surmises that after this round of construction

²¹ Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*, 167.

²² Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 111.

²³ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 111.

²⁴ Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*, 167.

²⁵ Leatham, Culverhouse, and Till, *Burghley*, 9; Country Life, 24

²⁶ Leatham, Culverhouse, and Till, *Burghley*, 9.

drew to an end, the structure was probably completely redesigned and enlarged between 1578-1587.²⁷ This renovation resulted in the Burghley House that stands today.

Burghley House employs classical, gothic, and mannerist architectural features in a sublime, yet confounding structure. The final design of the house is likely the result of many sources. Burghley's background, education, and relationship with Queen Elizabeth I were all important factors in the development of Burghley House. Additionally, the design was probably influenced by Cecil's masons and architects. Cecil himself was very much involved in the decision making at Burghley, and likely oversaw the development of the plan and decoration.

Cecil's prominent court position, close ties with Queen Elizabeth, and residence in London would have allowed him access to the latest architectural trends. His adoption of classical and mannerist motifs can likely be attributed to experience reading architectural treatises, building, and looking at other English residences throughout the country. While there is no specific evidence to support that Cecil read architectural treatises, the close ties he held with the royal family and other powerful and well-educated members of society would have given him access to a grand library of books sourced both locally and internationally. Additionally, Cecil likely have learned about various architectural styles and motifs from the architects he employed at Cecil House and Theobalds. Finally, his position at court would have afforded him trips to influential buildings, such as Cardinal Thomas Wolsey's Hampton Court Palace (Figure 1.2), a fortified medieval castle with conspicuous classical decoration, situated just outside of London.

²⁷ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 163.

While Cecil's own experiences and knowledge certainly influenced the decisions made with regards to the building of Burghley House, other figures had an impact on the final design as well. It is widely accepted that Cecil acted as his own architect, with the assistance of his eldest son Thomas, later to be Earl of Exeter, (who inherited Burghley, while Cecil's younger son Robert, Earl of Salisbury, inherited Theobalds), who provided input for the designs of Burghley and Theobalds.²⁸ Cecil's social status and close relationship with the Queen allowed him easy access to the greatest builders in England, including those employed in the Works.²⁹ Several builders have been credited for designing various architectural elements at Burghley. Cecil employed the architect Henry Hawthorne, who provided drawings for Theobalds, at Burghley. Hawthorne made preliminary drawings for the manor, but died soon after. Girouard argues that at least the west façade was probably based on an elevation supplied by Hawthorne.³⁰ Cecil employed master mason John Symonds to replace Hawthorne. Symonds was an experienced architect, having contributed to several buildings, including Theobalds, before arriving at Burghley. Symonds later went on to assist with the design of Beaufort Hall in Chelsea for Cecil's son Robert. Elements of the house's ornamentation, including a chimneypiece and a doorway, have been attributed to Cornelius Cure.³¹ Cure designed unexecuted funerary monuments for Henry VIII and Edward VI and was appointed master mason to the crown in 1596 on Cecil's recommendation. All of these men were English by birth; Cure was of Dutch descent, and therefore may have had easy access to Dutch architectural treatises by Vredeman de Vries and

²⁸ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 190; Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*, 172, 177.

²⁹ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 188.

³⁰ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 187.

³¹ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 188.

others. The influences of Cecil and his son, Hawthorne, Symonds, Cure, and other uncredited masons culminated in the hybrid Burghley House.

When Cecil began the final renovation at Burghley in the late 1570s, he already had two impressive houses; why did he feel the need to further renovate Burghley? At this point, Queen Elizabeth and her court had begun to make frequent stops at Theobalds. When Cecil made it back to Burghley in 1575 after working on Theobalds for a decade, he probably finished its building schemes with a visit (or multiple visits) from the Queen in mind. This is supported by the fact that Queen Elizabeth I had been en-route to visit Cecil's family house in 1566; Cecil's daughter Anne came down with a case of the smallpox shortly before the Queen was supposed to arrive; therefore the Queen had to re-plan her procession.³² Lord Burghley likely thought that Elizabeth would include Burghley on a future progress, and did not stop anything short of magnificence in finishing his country house. The idea that Cecil came back to Burghley with heightened aspirations about the future of his family house is also supported by Girouard's assertion that between 1573 and 1587 almost the entire house was enlarged and remodeled.³³ Stephan Alford, in his book about the life of Lord Burghley, asserts that the original Burghley House had been inward looking, with focus placed on the magnificent courtyard.³⁴ When he finished work at Theobalds, Cecil may have decided emphasis needed be placed on the outer façades of the house, in order to make a grand statement about his nobility.³⁵ Elizabeth I never did stop at Burghley. In addition to a desire to impress the Queen, Cecil felt a notable connection to

³² Burghley, 360° Interactive Tour (Spherevision, 2012), DVD.

³³ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 190.

³⁴ Stephan Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 229.

³⁵ Alford, *Burghley*, 229.

Burghley of his family's ties to the great house.³⁶ Cecil was known to be a family man, deeply devoted to his wife and children.³⁷ He had been born and raised in Lincolnshire. He referred to Burghley as his "principal house" and planned to have his eldest son Thomas inherit it instead of Theobalds.³⁸ Additionally, his title, Lord Burghley, came from his family's seat in Stanford, Lincolnshire. Therefore, both his desire to portray his wealth and magnificence, as well as his close connection with his family and their lands contributed to the final remodeling of Burghley in the late 1570s.

Cecil's architectural choices reflect his interest in the latest eclectic choice of fashions, which mixed classical, gothic, and mannerist elements within the same building. As a *nouveau riche* elite, Cecil wanted to demonstrate his wealth but also his fashionable tastes for the latest and most innovative designs. It seems as if innovative architecture was defined by the use of classicism and mannerism. Because it would be next to impossible to thoroughly discuss each architectural element in this thesis, the focus will be placed on the following exterior features, which are most representative of the combination of architectural styles present at Burghley: registers, emphasis on verticality, roofline decoration, and triumphal entryway. Additionally, several elements of the interior space that have not been altered since the days of Elizabeth I will be discussed: the vaulted kitchen, the classically inspired Roman Staircase, and the hammerbeam ceiling in the Great Hall.

The plan of Burghley House (Figure 1.3) harks back to traditional medieval houses. The house is rectangular with a courtyard in the center. Small, but aesthetically significant towers

³⁶ Alford, *Burghley*, 228.

³⁷ Alford, *Burghley*, 228; Beckingsale, *Burghley*, 11.

³⁸ Alford, *Burghley*, 228.

stand at each of the house's four corners. These towers are similar in appearance to medieval towers that served as look-out points for lords who may have feared attack from a neighboring landowner. However, Cecil had no need for functional towers. Therefore, this element is purely aesthetic and speaks to Cecil's desire to affiliate with aristocratic families older and more established than his.

Classicism is apparent throughout the exterior of the home. The main façades that will be analyzed in this thesis are the west (Figure 1.1) and north (Figure 1.4) façades, which contain the major entrances to the house. These façades are divided into three registers of equal height; the illusion of registers is continued through the turrets that protrude above the roofline. Registers are a common element of classical Greek and Roman architecture, with each register often housing a different order of column. In designing Burghley, Cecil and his architects included the actual division of space that registers provide, but left out the columns that typically accompany registers in a classical context. The roofline of Burghley House is decorated with sets of Doric columns (Figure 1.5). The columns are connected by an entablature and topped by small square sculptures of castles, complete with corner towers. These sets of columns are present on all sides of the house. Each set is different in the number of columns it contains, and there does not seem to be an easily identifiable rhyme or reason as to why the columns were placed in their present location. It is possible that Cecil identified desirable classical motifs and incorporated them into the design as he saw fit, without regard for the rules associated with classicism.

Although classical elements proliferate the exterior of the house, Burghley cannot be considered a classical house because gothic and mannerist elements are equally visible. Girouard states that the west front of the house contains no feudal detail, but he overlooks the tall

windows, large turrets, bays, heraldic ornamentation, and pointed arch motifs within the window panes.³⁹ While the registers emphasize the horizontality of the building, the windows contrast this visual device by drawing the eye upward and emphasizing verticality. Verticality was an important aspect of medieval church architecture, as seen in structures such as Westminster Abbey (Figure 1.6). The turrets may not be traditional square turrets with cut-out crenelations built for defensive purposes, but they are still gothic inspired. The undulating bays, of various depths and widths, are also traditionally English. Somerset House famously used bay windows on a large scale in the early 1550s. Cecil would have definitely seen Lord Protector Somerset's great house on the Strand in London, as his Cecil House was just down the street. The window panes themselves have probably been replaced since the late sixteenth-century, therefore it is difficult to know whether or not the pointed arch pattern on each window pane (Figure 1.7) was conceived by the original builders of Burghley, or by someone involved in a later reparation. The pointed arch is quintessentially gothic and again assists in drawing the eye of the viewer upward toward the top of the house.

Ian Dunlop notes that the roofscape of an Elizabethan building is always fascinating, and Burghley is no exception.⁴⁰ The roofscape at Burghley successfully blends classical, gothic, and mannerist motifs into one elaborate ornamentation. A pattern to decorates mannerist obelisks and strapwork adorns the roofline of the west façade (Figure 1.8). The Burghley heraldic crest, an English gothic symbol used to proudly mark a family's ownership, prominently rests above the imposing bay windows. The north façade features a unique pattern of strapwork. Long, pointed,

³⁹ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 186.

⁴⁰ Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I*, 175.

obelisks shooting upward from atop small arches alternate with miniature pediments (Figure 1.9). The pediments lay across small triumphal arches, and are decorated with obelisks. This decorative pattern is significant in demonstrating the unique mix styles present in the house. The pediments embody ancient classical monuments. Strapwork such as what is seen here was becoming popular through architectural treatises by Vredeman de Vries and Sebastiano Serlio, and is representative of mannerist styles.⁴¹

In contrast to the confusing architectural choices for the roofline, the main entryway on the north side of the house is decidedly classical (Figure 1.10). An arched doorway where visitors would enter (and visitors to the family still enter today) is flanked by two narrow arched windows on each side, which descend backward into space, further emphasizing the beautiful golden door, and therefore emphasizing the wealth and power of the Cecil family. Stacked Doric columns flank the door; the columns stand on pedestals decorated with geometric Serlian motifs. Roundels decorate the stone around the entryway. Roundels containing the faces of accomplished ‘great men’ were used to decorate Hampton Court Palace and were meant to communicate the character and education of the house’s patron. Cecil left his roundels empty.

While the exterior of the house retains its original Tudor architecture, the interior has been greatly altered by Cecil’s descendants over the past 400 years. Several areas of the interior do retain their original Tudor elements. These spaces again reflect the interesting mix of classical, mannerist, and gothic architecture present on the exterior of the structure. The original kitchen (which is today referred to as the “Old Kitchen”) built by Cecil remains largely

⁴¹Sebastiano Serlio, *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture: Books I-V of Tutte l'opere d'architettura et Prospetiva* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Hans Vredeman De Vries, *Architectura* (Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 1973); Hans Vredeman De Vries, *Variae Architecturae Formae*. (Amsterdam: Van Hoeve, 1979).

unaltered. The roof is supported by imposing rib vaults (Figure 1.11) which converge at a octagonal lantern (Figure 1.12). The lantern would have been used to ventilate the area, as smoke and fumes could travel upward and out of the space. The rib vault is an English invention first seen at Durham Cathedral, which was begun in 1093.⁴² This vaulting technique assisted in letting more light into English gothic churches, and bore the weight of the heavy stone ceilings better than their predecessor, the groin vault. Thus, in utilizing rib vaulting in his kitchen, Lord Burghley was drawing upon a long English tradition of gothic church architecture, which had more recently manifest itself in buildings such as Henry VII's Lady Chapel at Westminster Abbey (built 1503-1509). While the lantern does assist in adding some light to the space, the large pointed-arch window at the east end of the kitchen further utilizes a gothic element for its original intention, to let in light.

The Great Hall at Burghley Houses features an elaborate and traditionally gothic hammerbeam ceiling (Figure 1.13). The hammerbeam vaulting supports a pointed ceiling, therefore the hammerbeam decoration is functional as well (at Longleat House and Wollaton Hall, which will be covered in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, the hammerbeam ceilings are purely decorative). Hanging pendants adorn the ceiling. Girouard refers to this ceiling as a "deliberate piece of neo-feudalism".⁴³

While the kitchen and Great Hall lack all trace of the classical elements seen on the exterior of the house, the Roman Staircase (Figure 1.14) is a splendid example of classicism. The stairs are located directly adjacent to the kitchen and are modeled after the Scala Romana.⁴⁴ The

⁴² Henry Thorold, *Collins Guide to Cathedrals, Abbeys and Priories of England and Wales* (Great Britain: William Collins Sons & Co., 1986), 77.

⁴³ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 423.

⁴⁴ Leatham, Culverhouse, and Till, Burghley, 23.

roof above the staircase is supported by a combination of barrel and groin vaults, with the barrel vaults covering the stairs themselves and the groin vaults creating the ceilings of the landings between flights of stairs. The barrel vaults are covered with geometric designs that recall Serlian motifs. The groin vaults at each landing feature hanging pendants which are typical of earlier English gothic buildings. The coffered ceilings bear the Tudor Rose, an emblem of the monarchy. Burghley indubitably included this motif to honor Queen Elizabeth.

The Language of Classicism at Longleat House

Longleat House (Figure 2.1) is the result of an enlightened patron and his team of both English and continental architects, whose expertise came together to create a distinctive blended house, rich in both classical and English gothic detail. This chapter will explore the background ambitions of the patron, Sir John Thynne, as well as those of his team of architects, in an attempt to establish the forces at play in the creation of Longleat House.

Like Lord Burghley, Sir John Thynne's family did not gain prominence until the Tudor era; Thynne worked his way to the upper echelons of Elizabethan society through labor as a civil servant, which supplemented his fortunate ability to stay on the favorable side of the Tudor succession trials. Thynne's uncle, William Thynne, had been a civil servant under Henry VIII and sustained a successful career in the royal household. At young age, Thynne joined his uncle as a kitchen clerk in the court of Henry VIII. He eventually became a member of the household of Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford and ultimately Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector of Edward VI. He became Seymour's steward, and prospered throughout the reign of Henry VIII and Edward VI. He was knighted by Seymour in 1547, after entering battle with the Duke with hopes of securing a marriage between young Edward VII and an even younger Mary Queen of Scots. However, when Seymour was executed in 1551, Thynne came under fire as well. A testimony from his wife, who was descended from a well-respected English family, assisted him in avoiding the same fate as Seymour.

Seymour had been instrumental in advancing Thynne's career where he could afford a house as impressive as Longleat, but he also opened Thynne's eyes to the world of grand architecture. Thynne was intimately connected with Seymour's building programs, including

Somerset House (Figure 2.2).⁴⁵ It seems as though Thynne's involvement in Somerset house sparked an interest in architecture which he went on to pursue through Longleat House.⁴⁶

Longleat House itself is the result of a long and tumultuous building history. The property which Longleat now inhabits was acquired by Thynne in 1540 or 1541, when Thynne was twenty-five years old and still a bachelor. A former monastery existed on the land, which Thynne renovated between 1546 and 1553. The renovated monastery was still a modest house, without frills and with traditional decoration.⁴⁷ After 1553, Thynne became more ambitious in his renovations, adding new wings to the old house, extensively rebuilding the existing space, and adding grandeur to the project.⁴⁸ At this point in the building process, Thynne began to employ high-powered architects and designers, including: William Arnold, who Mark Girouard describes as one of the most successful Jacobean architects, Allen Maynard, a French sculptor who was to have significant influence on the final renovation of Longleat, which began in 1572, and Adrian Gaunt, a joiner from the continent.⁴⁹ While many of his architects came and went, likely due to Thynne's penny-pinching yet highly demanding attitude, Gaunt and Maynard were present for the majority of Longleat's rebuildings and renovations.

The structure resulting from this phase of building was destroyed by a fire in April 1567. Thynne took advantage of this unfortunate event and completely rebuilt the house he had devoted over 20 years of this life to. Thynne rebuilt his new house to much be larger than the

⁴⁵ David Burnett, *Longleat: The Story of an English Country House* (London: Collins, 1978), 17; Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 51.

⁴⁶ Burnett, *Longleat*, 18.

⁴⁷ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 53.

⁴⁸ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 53.

⁴⁹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 54.

previous one, and construction was completed in 1570. There is little evidence to indicate what this version of Longleat looked like, but Girouard states that it likely lacked the exquisite detail of the current house.⁵⁰ In 1568 Thynne hired Robert Smythson on the recommendation of Humphrey Lovell, Master Mason to the Queen. Longleat was Smythson's first major project, and he went on to design many Elizabethan houses including Wollaton Hall and Hardwick Hall, which are covered in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 of this thesis, respectively. What exactly Smythson added to this version of Longleat, if anything, is unclear. Gaunt is thought to have designed the plan of the new Longleat; this speaks to the lack of strict distinction in tasks between those with different titles, such as joiner, mason, sculptor, and architect.⁵¹ Therefore, it is likely that Smythson executed Gaunt's designs, and did not create the plans for this version of Longleat House.

It seems as that Thynne required an even grander house, as he began a final major renovation of Longleat in 1572. Gaunt's plan of the great house remained untouched, but the exterior façades were completely redesigned. It is unclear who designed the final exterior of Longleat. Girouard hypothesizes that the timing of arrival of Smythson and the return of Maynard (who had been absent from the project from 1566-1570) likely indicates that they were responsible for the designs; other architects and Thynne himself had been present when the previous remodel was designed, and none of them had produced the elegant blend of classicism and gothic motifs that is present in the final renovation.⁵² When Thynne died in 1580, work on Longleat was nearing completion; his son carried out the remainder of the building process.

⁵⁰ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 56.

⁵¹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 56.

⁵² Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 59.

Longleat was an early example of the influence of Renaissance ideals on domestic architecture in England. The design of the house likely came from a variety of sources, including Thynne's background and education, and the architecture expertise of Gaunt, Maynard, and Smythson. Thynne was ruthless in his demands for efficiency and high-levels of craftsmanship, and was intimately involved in even the smallest details of the design of Longleat House.⁵³

Thynne's adoption of classicism was probably resulted from experience looking at royal buildings, architectural treatises, and Somerset House. During his time in London, Thynne may have seen royal buildings of Henry VIII and Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, such as Hampton Court Palace (Figure 1.2). These men were early adopters of classicism in their residences. While evidence does not explicitly state that Thynne read Renaissance architectural treatises, his position under Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I, as well as his close relations with Seymour, suggest that he may have had access to books from the continent, including Vitruvius and Serlio. Given that Seymour's Somerset House is classically-inspired, it is safe to assume that Seymour had his own copies of these treatises, which Thynne in turn may have read. The aesthetic similarities between Longleat and Somerset House are undeniable. Because Thynne spent so many years as steward to Lord Somerset himself and was involved in the building of Somerset House, it can be concluded that Thynne drew inspiration directly from Somerset House when working with Smythson and Maynard to produce a design for the final version of Longleat.⁵⁴ The Renaissance-inspired design of Somerset had never been seen before in England, and Thynne wanted to bring the finest taste and the newest fashions to his estate. In doing so, he

⁵³ Burnett, *Longleat*, 15-41.

⁵⁴ Girouard also acknowledges that Smythson drew inspiration from Somerset House (Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 8)

let the rest of England know that he had secured his family an honorable position in society. He had risen from kitchen clerk to a powerful statesman, and he needed a stately house and household to match.

In addition to Thynne's own impact on the design of the final house, some of the many architects and builders influenced the unique fusion of classical, English gothic, mannerist elements evident in the design as well. Maynard and Gaunt brought with them to the project a first-hand knowledge of French classicism. As stated earlier, Gaunt created the plan, Maynard is likely responsible for much of the detailing on the exterior, and Smythson probably designed the impressive scheme of windows.⁵⁵ This assertion regarding Smythson's contribution is compatible with the English trend of large windows evident in the perpendicular architecture of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Girouard suggests that the "delicacy and correctness of the detail come from Maynard, and the simplicity and drama from Smythson".⁵⁶ While Smythson's influence on the design cannot be fully determined, it is apparent that the knowledge he gained from Maynard and Gaunt influenced his later projects, some of which will be explored in the following chapters.

Longleat is the most classical of all the houses examined in this essay. However, the house cannot be considered a fully classical house because the classical elements were deliberately combined with traditionally English architecture, and mannerist strapwork, thus making it a perfect case study for this thesis. Longleat's ground plan (Figure 2.3) is nearly

⁵⁵ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 70,72.

⁵⁶ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 72.

square, with a large interior courtyard. Girouard argues that the courtyard is for light, not display, and is therefore not decorated as the exterior façades are.⁵⁷

The exterior of the house is abundant in classical decoration. The entrance façade is highly symmetrical and divided into three registers; the so called "tower of the orders" (Figure 2.4), which refers to stacked Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns, is followed correctly, and announces a desire to infuse classicism throughout the exterior, as opposed to including bits and pieces of classicism here and there. Englishmen in the Elizabethan era were intrigued by the five orders; they were very exotic and therefore in high demand.⁵⁸ The classical trope of roundels containing faces of 'great men' decorate the bay windows (Figure 2.5). Cardinal Wolsey's Hampton Court Palace is an early example of the use of roundels in English architecture, and may have inspired this feature. While the roundels at Hampton Court palace are named, Longleat's roundels remain anonymous, perhaps indicating that Thynne's knowledge of classical learning was confined to architecture, or that in an attempt to copy the roundels at Hampton Court Palace, the details of the design were lost in translation. The roof-scape is adorned with classically inspired statues of 'great men' (Figure 2.6), motioning to those who approach Longleat House. In using roundels and statues of 'great men', Maynard hoped to communicate to visitors to the house that Thynne, a 'great man' himself, was inspired by and on caliber with these ancient intellectuals and rulers. The main entry is characterized by a broken pediment supported by two Doric columns (Figure 2.7). A stack of Doric pilasters positioned behind and outside of the columns creates the illusion of depth, a strategy also executed with stacked

⁵⁷ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 64.

⁵⁸ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 138.

pilasters at Burghley House. The pediment and columns are decidedly three-dimensional, jutting out from the façade. Therefore the classicism of the entryway literally engulfs visitors, alerting them to Thynne's intellect, power, and status. Despite the thorough incorporation of classical motifs on the exterior, the detail is not always correct the rules laid out by Vitruvius and Serlio are considered. For example, the pilasters in the classical orders are just that, pilasters; columns would have been a more traditionally accepted choice.

The profusion of classical motifs on the main façade of Longleat are intermingled with traditional elements. The pediment of the front entryway (Figure 2.8) is broken by a large heraldic crest, which is prominently displayed in order to alert visitors of the house's ownership. Heraldry was important in the court buildings of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Additionally, small roundels containing carved roses, the symbol of Tudor England, line the frieze under the broken pediment. The use of Tudor imagery demonstrates the Thynne family's support for the crown. Bay windows are traditionally English, and are abundant on the main façade of Longleat. Bay windows were also plentiful at Richmond Palace and Somerset House, and it is probable that Thynne was harking back to the glory of his close friend Seymour in using bay windows to decorate his house. As at Burghley House, the windows themselves play a large part in the design of the façade (Figure 2.1). Enormous windows such as these were off-trend in France and Italy, where the windows were getting smaller instead of larger.⁵⁹ These large windows were inspired by the English gothic architecture of Henry VII and Henry VIII, including Somerset House, and clearly demonstrate that the English were not concerned with making classical houses. Instead, Elizabethan Manor houses such as Longleat were deliberate syntheses of styles.

⁵⁹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 70.

Mannerist ornamentation is limited on the exterior of Longleat. Mannerism is apparent in the curvilinear strap work adorning the roof-scape of each bay window (Figure 2.9). In limiting the fanciful, mannerist decoration, Thynne and his architects ensured that the classicism of the home was emphasized.

The exterior of Longleat is a blend of styles, and Thynne's architects carried this synthesis into the interior of the manor house. As with most Elizabethan houses, the inside of Longleat has been significantly altered since the late 16th century, and much of it cannot be considered in this thesis. However, the Great Hall remains largely intact. The fireplace in the Great Hall (Figure 2.10) is classically inspired and its design is probably pulled from pattern books. The mantel is supported by four fluted Ionic columns. Above the mantle stand caryatids crowned with laurel leaves. The caryatid figures are anatomically incorrect and almost cartoonish; this may speak to a lack of understanding of the rules of perspective and the classical ideals of beauty. Between the caryatids, which look towards and interact with one another, are decorative architectural features including arches and pilasters, and classical putti appear within each arch. Overall, the fireplace is certainly inspired by classical forms, but the multitude of classical motifs have been thrown together haphazardly, again likely speaking to a lack of understanding of the rules of classicism.

The wooden screen (Figure 2.11), which separates the Great Hall from the grand staircase and the rest of the house, yet again was designed to include both classical and traditional gothic elements. Two classical archways flanked by ionic pilasters carved in low relief welcome visitors into the space. Three heraldic crests rest atop additional decorative arches. Large game heads also recall traditional English culture; the lands surrounding Longleat probably provided Thynne

and his guests with ample space to hunt. Above the animal heads are many more heraldic crests separated by small, carved caryatids (Figure 2.12). The screen itself recalls English church architecture.

While the fireplace and elements of the screen represent a clear choice to include classicism in the interior of the house, the hammerbeam ceiling (Figure 2.13) is a direct nod to the traditional gothic architecture of medieval Great Halls. While the hammerbeam ceiling was originally conceived as a practical, albeit beautiful, way to support the weight of the large ceilings in medieval Great Halls, the method of vaulting has been repurposed here at Longleat as pure decoration; the flat ceiling requires no supportive vaulting. Therefore, the hammerbeam ceiling has no practical use. While scholars such as Mark Girouard and David Burnett have made assumptions regarding which architects were responsible for certain elements of the exterior, there is little information available regarding who would have been responsible for the design of the interior. Whoever created the design of the hammerbeam ceiling, whether it was Thynne himself or a member of his team of architects, made a conscious decision to include gothic detail, for its aesthetic, as opposed to functional, value. Thynne and his architects are purposely holding on to the medieval gothic ceiling design. Additionally, quintessentially English gothic hanging pendants drop down from the hammerbeam ceiling. A similar pendant motif was seen in Chapter 1, at Burghley's Great Hall ceiling and also as part of the decorative scheme for Burghley's Roman Staircase. A multitude of Heraldic crests decorate the flat ceiling. As noted earlier, the use of heraldry is a distinct English tradition, and in using heraldry the designers of this ceiling were harking back to medieval gothic traditions.

The decision to hold onto artistic tendencies from the medieval era stands in stark contrast to the inclusion Serlian patterns in the ceiling. The divisions laid out by the hammerbeam ceiling are decorated with a geometric motif. Neither style is utilized for practical purposes; instead they function as deliberate aesthetic choices.

Thynne's ruthless attitude and his obsession with money and status led him to create one of the finest Renaissance-inspired houses of Elizabethan times. He dedicated nearly forty years of his life to the building and rebuilding of Longleat and the final product is not only a testament to his wealth and social position, but also to the state of architecture in England at the time. The comprehension Thynne gained of classicism and building in general through Lord Somerset, as well as the knowledge his architects and masons brought to the table, joined to create a style of Manor House that had never been seen before in England. The influence that Longleat House was to have on later Prodigy houses is substantial. Elizabeth I never visited Longleat, but interestingly there is little evidence that Thynne built his house with a visit from Elizabeth in mind. His family lived and his household worked in Longleat; the same cannot be said for other Elizabethan houses, including Hardwick, which were built with the hopes of attracting Elizabeth I, but seldom lived in. Thynne's decedents still inhabit Longleat today.

Miscellany at Wollaton Hall

Wollaton Hall (Figure 3.1) is a decorative jewel marked by its rich synthesis of styles. Built in Nottingham by the ambitious patron Sir Francis Willoughby in the 1580s, Wollaton Hall's eclectic Flemish decoration is blended with classical motifs and traditional English gothic elements to create bold and complex façades. The house was meant to demonstrate Willoughby's wealth and prestige and to attract Queen Elizabeth. The design of Wollaton is the outcome of input from Willoughby himself, the expertise of his architect, Robert Smythson, and the work of a team of talented masons. This chapter will review the social and educational histories of the patron and architect in an effort to construct a clear image of ideas that came together in the creation of Wollaton Hall.

While William Cecil of Burghley House (Chapter 1) and John Thynne of Longleat House (Chapter 2) were self-made men and *nouveau riche* elites, the Willoughby family held an important place in society since the 13th century. The family had been building their dynasty for over 300 years before Sir Francis was born, and had acquired land in Nottingham in the early 13th century. The land that was to contain Wollaton Hall was purchased between 1314 and 1319. As the family gained prominence, Nottinghamshire remained the site of the main family home, despite the acquisition of properties in Herefordshire, Lincolnshire, and Warwickshire.

The Willoughby family was well-connected and of high-pedigree. When Sir Francis' parents died when he was very young, his older brother Thomas, heir to the family estate, was looked after by Henry Grey: the Duke of Suffolk, the children's uncle (brother of their mother Anne Grey), and the father of Lady Jane Grey. Francis and his sister Margaret were taken in by

George Medley, a relative of less prestige.⁶⁰ Both Henry and Lady Jane Grey were executed in 1554 after the Duke of Suffolk tried to secure the English throne for his daughter. Even with the disgrace and death of Francis' prominent uncle and cousin, he and his siblings escaped the controversy unscathed. The three children were sought after by affluent suitors and wards. Margaret went on to marry Sir Matthew Arundel, whose aunt was Henry VIII's fifth wife Catherine Howard. When Thomas suddenly died in 1559 leaving Francis in control of the estate, Francis' protection was sold to Queen Elizabeth's cousin, Sir Francis Knollys. Thus, Willoughby grew up in the midst of wealthy and important courtiers, and in an environment of greed and ambition, which seems to have greatly influence on his demeanor later in life and possibly his motivations for building Wollaton Hall. Willoughby also grew up surrounded by intelligent, accomplished, men and women who had access to the best educational resources for Willoughby's schooling. Willoughby was an educated man; he knew Latin and Greek. This would have enabled him to comprehend architectural treatises from the continent, which is of interest to this thesis. Moreover, there is evidence that books on architecture were part of Willoughby's extensive library.⁶¹ Pamela Marshall notes that books by Jaques Androuet Du Cerceau were in Willoughby's library, and there is visual evidence, to be explored late in this chapter, that Willoughby read Vredeman de Vries and Serlio as well.⁶²

Willoughby lived with his wife, Elizabeth Middleton, and their children for sixteen years at their traditional houses around England before construction at Wollaton was begun in 1580.

Willoughby already owned several substantial residences, so why did he decide to build a grand

⁶⁰ Pamela Mashall. *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family* (Nottingham: Technical Print Services, 1999), 15.

⁶¹ Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 13.

⁶² Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 35.

new home at Wollaton? In the late 1570s, Willoughby and his wife separated. Thanks to Margaret, gossip of their bad relations circulated around Nottingham, and probably around Elizabeth's court as well. Always sensitive to the opinions of others, Marshall notes that Willoughby seems to have been quite embarrassed by the scandal.⁶³ To further his dismay, he experienced rejection from the Queen herself during one of her summer progresses. Willoughby invited the Queen Elizabeth I to stay with his family at his estate at Middleton in 1575. His houses and households were very medieval in character and therefore not fit to accommodate the Queen and her traveling court.⁶⁴ Unlike Cecil and Thynne, Willoughby was not a member of the fashionable *nouveau riche*; Girouard even goes as far as to label his household degenerate.⁶⁵ Elizabeth chose to stay with two other families in the area, but did not stay at Willoughby's medieval home.⁶⁶ Elizabeth's verdict was extremely disappointing for the power-hungry and sensitive Willoughby.⁶⁷ He must have felt that he desperately needed something to change the tone of gossip in his favor. It is likely that the scandal surrounding he and his wife's separation and rejection by the Queen sparked Willoughby's desire to build an impressive new house in Nottinghamshire. In doing so, he hoped to attract the queen and repair his damaged reputation.⁶⁸

Construction began at Wollaton in 1580 and was completed by 1588. Willoughby and his family originally lived in a substantial medieval house near the site of Wollaton Hall, which was converted into lodging for estate employees upon the completion of Wollaton. This house was

⁶³ Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 26.

⁶⁴ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 78.

⁶⁵ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 78.

⁶⁶ Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 27.

⁶⁷ Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 27.

⁶⁸ Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 27.

destroyed in 1671. Logistically, Willoughby employed a large number of laborers; administering the workforce was a huge task for Willoughby. He employed Robert Smythson, who had just finished his work at Longleat, to design his grand new residence. Before beginning work at Longleat, Robert Smythson had been a part of a project for Knollys, Willoughby's former guardian. Additionally, while Smythson was at Longleat, he also worked at Wardour Castle in Wiltshire under Sir Arundel, Willoughby's brother-in-law. It is likely that Willoughby learned of Smythson through these avenues.⁶⁹ Smythson held more responsibility at Wollaton than he did at Longleat. Smythson's drawings survive today and include plans, elevations of the façade, and exterior and interior details. A nearly accurate plan of Wollaton drawn by Smythson survives; Smythson likely created the drawing after communicating with Willoughby about his visions for the new residence.⁷⁰ In addition to interpreting Willoughby's wants and needs and working with Willoughby to create an overall plan for the house, Smythson performed various other tasks associated with running the massive operation of building a country house and generally acted as a supervisor for the project.

Smythson worked with a large team of masons and designers to create Wollaton Hall. Christopher Lovell, the son of the Queen's master mason Sir Humphrey Lovell, had also been employed at Longleat with Smythson. John Rodes, Christopher Rodes, and Thomas Accres were also part of the project and later worked at Hardwick Hall (Chapter 4). While these four masons and the men who worked underneath them were likely carving stone, it cannot be discerned whether or not Smythson was actually doing manual work, or just acting as the designer and

⁶⁹ Girouard. *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 77; Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 31.

⁷⁰ Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 33.

overseer of the grand project.⁷¹ In any case, it is apparent that these men were learning from each other, and spreading their expertise around the country as they travelled from project to project.

Willoughby built to repair his damaged reputation and employed high-powered architects and talented masons to construct his grand hybrid house. But why did he choose to create a hybrid house? The extensive use of varied architectural motifs on the façade of Wollaton is likely the result of Willoughby's desire to stay on the cutting-edge of Elizabethan fashion. His insecurities led him to embrace all of the new styles from the continent, as well as the continuing local fashions.⁷² Exotic classical and mannerist tropes signified his education and assisted in aligning him with his *nouveau riche* contemporaries. Local gothic and defensive architecture communicated his family's history and pedigree, as well as his position as a chivalrous English gentleman. While certain similarities can be identified between Smythson's work at Longleat, Wollaton, and Hardwick, the great differences in decoration indicate that the patrons each had specific ideas regarding what they wanted their home to look like, and Smythson made the patrons vision into reality.

Built on a hill overlooking present day Nottingham, Wollaton Hall (Figure 3.1) would have visible from miles away. Girouard notes that the decision to place Wollaton perched on a hill provides one of the first examples of choosing a site for a structure on aesthetic grounds as opposed to for the purpose of defense.⁷³ The decoration and size of the house invoke images of power, strength, and stability. Willoughby aspired to appear powerful in his business and personal life, and his home reflected this as well. Wollaton's imposing façade again fuses

⁷¹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 80.

⁷² Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*.

⁷³ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 79.

classical, mannerist, and traditional elements onto one solid mass, ripe with decoration. While one may not consider Burghley and Longleat to be simply decorated, when compared to Wollaton, their ornamentation seems simple. Nearly every exterior surface of Wollaton Hall is covered in some type of decoration - whether it be classical, mannerist, or gothic.

The structure and plan (Figure 3.2) of Wollaton draws from classical and traditional English influences. In contrast to the façade at Longleat, which appears to be rectangular mass, Wollaton is not quite as solid. At its highest point the house is four stories high. The middle section of the house, where a courtyard may have gone, towers above the exterior rooms, standing at the full four stories. At the top of the house is the prospect room, a sort of Long Gallery which Willoughby, his family, and his guests, used to survey the lands surrounding Wollaton and perhaps get some exercise on a rainy day. The outside segment of the house (the area surrounding the Great Hall and prospect room) is just two stories high, and each of the four corner towers rise to three stories. The differences in heights of the various sections of the home create a sense of drama and recall the structure of a medieval castle such as the Tower of London. In fact, the towers themselves are medieval and bring to mind defensive architecture of the middle ages. In this sense, Wollaton is very gothic and Willoughby is using the structure of the building to invoke the sense of power and dominance displayed by medieval lords. However, the classically-inspired, growing trend of symmetry is also reflected in the plan of Wollaton. Marshall argues that the compact, symmetrical shape with towers on each corner was inspired by the French architect, Jacques Androuet du Cerceau.⁷⁴ Wollaton's builders may have been looking to recall medieval drama, but they could not ignore the latest trends from the continent.

⁷⁴ Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 35.

Despite the quite medieval structure of the house, classicism pervades on the exterior façades of Wollaton. The use of the so called ‘tower of the orders’ (which are explained in Chapter 1 with reference to the Courtyard at Burghley House), roundels and statues of ‘great men’, groups of chimneys shaped like Doric columns, and miniature architectural features such as pediments and arcades used as decorative elements, all contribute to the classical content of the house. Wollaton incorporates stacked registers (Figure 3.3) that were used at both Burghley and Longleat. Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian pilasters line the windows. Instead of two pilasters around each window there are four pilasters; this could have been inspired by the Town Hall at Antwerp (Figure 3.4), prints of which were circulating throughout England.⁷⁵ Antwerp Town Hall incorporates classicism quite flamboyantly and also features four pilasters around each window. The pilasters at Wollaton are carved in high-relief, adding to the overall drama of the façade. The high-relief carving coupled with the large number of pilasters indicates that Willoughby aspired to create an unmistakable message of learned classicism. Roundels of ‘great men’ (Figure 3.5), some named, some left anonymous, decorate the insides of the corner towers. Niches around the corner towers (Figure 3.6) indicate where sculptures were once placed; these sculptures were likely modeled after ‘great men’ as well. As at Longleat, these ‘great men’ indicate that Willoughby was on par with and strove to emulate the prominent leaders and intellectuals of the past. The roofline of is decorated with miniature architectural motifs (Figure 3.7), juxtaposed with mannerist designs which will be discussed later in this chapter. These motifs include triumphal arches and a pedimented colonnade. Resting above the small colonnades on each tower are classical figures of women, dressed in well-rendered drapery.

⁷⁵ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 174.

Again, Willoughby is announcing his knowledge of classicism to his visitors. The chimneys (Figure 3.8) are sculpted to look like sets of columns perched atop the stately house; replacing traditional chimneys with groups of classical columns was part of the rising fashion throughout the country.⁷⁶ It does not appear as if Willoughby and Smythson were attempting to create a classical home. Instead, the designers are throwing together various classical motifs in order to demonstrate Willoughby's intellect, power, and wealth.

Motifs inspired by architecture from Northern Europe are more abundant at Wollaton than the other three Manor Houses analyzed in this thesis. It is unclear as to who envisioned this heavy use of strapwork. Smythson's previous project, Longleat House, contained very little mannerist decoration; only parts of the roofscape are adorned in the style, and these small segments of ornamentation are much simpler than the flamboyant mannerist decoration at Wollaton. Willoughby's education may have exposed him to the architecture of northern-Europe; scholars have noted that engravings of northern-European buildings, such as the Town Hall in Antwerp, were circulating through England at this point, and it is safe to assume that Willoughby was exposed to such engravings.⁷⁷ Each of the four corner towers are topped with fanciful decorative strapwork (Figure 3.9). The curvilinear designs of the roof decoration stand in contrast to the austere, block shape of Wollaton and its towers. Almost every discernible surface of the first two stories and corner towers is covered in some sort of ornamentation, and the spaces that are not decorated with columns or roundels are decorated with northern-European strapwork. Even the columns and roundels themselves are adorned with straps (Figure 3.10).

⁷⁶ Lipscomb, *A Journey Through Tudor England*, 219.

⁷⁷ Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*, 174.

The mannerist decoration at Wollaton is very much inspired by the architectural designs of Vredeman de Vries. For example, the pedestals under each column on the second register are decorated with a rectangle surrounded by a curvilinear frame that is directly pulled from folio 13 of De Vries' *Architectura*.⁷⁸ The small lion heads (Figure 3.11) that appear on the first story come from this same folio.⁷⁹ The decoration on top of the corner towers (Figure 3.9) is very much inspired by folio 10, which features mannerist strapwork, obelisks, and a pediment on top. Smythson and Willoughby likely read de Vries. Judging from the large amount of mannerist detail that likely came from de Vries' treatises, I would venture to assume that Willoughby requested the mannerist detail for his home.

The most pervasive element of Wollaton's main façade are the large glass windows. Huge swaths of windows, such as the ones employed at Wollaton, would not have been practical during the Middle Ages. The defense of a Manor could be compromised by large, breakable windows. Willoughby acknowledging the lack of practical need for defensive measures by creating a home that would be utterly defenseless against an attack. This choice is in direct contrast to the defensive architectural style of the medieval corner towers. In her exploration of the architecture of Tudor England, Suzannah Lipscomb argues that an Elizabethan courtier was expected to have large windows covering his home.⁸⁰ Always jealous of his peers and ambitious in his projects, Willoughby ensured that the huge windows covering his home fulfilled the expectations of the wealthiest courtiers. At night, Elizabethan houses lit up the surrounding area

⁷⁸ Hans Vredeman De Vries, Hans, *Architectura* (Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 1973).

⁷⁹ Hans Vredeman De Vries, Hans, *Architectura* (Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 1973).

⁸⁰ Lipscomb, *A Journey Through Tudor England*, 219.

and were therefore called “lantern houses”.⁸¹ Wollaton would have lit up Nottingham, broadcasting the wealth and prosperity of its owner. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the perpendicular architecture of the Early Tudor years represents a distinctive English gothic style. In building his house with such an emphasis on glass, Willoughby was asserting his wealth, as glass was extremely expensive; additionally a house with so many windows would have been difficult to heat. In creating a house with walls of glass, Willoughby and Smythson were probably influenced by Longleat and Burghley, as well as other Manor Houses, as well as the trend moving towards creating these “lantern houses”.

The interior of the home reflects this same eclectic mix of styles as the exterior. Much of the interior of the house has been renovated since the late 16th century; only the Great Hall is original and can be considered in this thesis. Longleat and Wollaton have much in common in that the same elements of the interior have been preserved over the past four centuries: the ceiling, screen, and fireplace of the Great Hall. The ceiling in the Great Hall (Figure 3.12) supports the prospect room above it; in building this ceiling Willoughby and his architects decided on an experimental Serlian design. Unfortunately, the design ended up being quite unstable, and the prospect room has been undergoing extensive renovations in recent years to make the space safe and accessible again. However, the fact that the Serlian design was used provides solid evidence that Willoughby and Smythson had Serlio’s architectural treatises at their disposal, and allows us to analyze Wollaton and Smythson’s other buildings with the awareness that Serlio was indeed known to the architect. The ceiling of the Great Hall is also interesting in that it is decorated with a false hammerbeam ceiling, similar to the one at Longleat. The

⁸¹ Lipscomb, *A Journey Through Tudor England*, 219.

hammerbeam ceiling was chosen for its aesthetic appeal; the support hammerbeam ceilings typically provide is not necessary to underpin a flat ceiling. The hammerbeams have been colorfully painted to appear as they would have in the sixteenth-century. Traditional gothic pendants, which have been seen at Burghley and Longleat, hang from the beams, and wooden squares decorated with heraldic crests connect the beams to the walls. Willoughby asserts his ownership of the great home through heraldic imagery. In using these very gothic symbols, Willoughby harked back to medieval Great Halls and the traditional symbols of wealth and status that were associated with such a grand space. He is likely associating with the chivalrous qualities required of the typical medieval gentleman.

The traditional hammerbeam ceiling stands in contrast to the elaborately decorated screen (Figure 3.13), which has a classical structure and is inspired by designs in De Vries's architectural treatises. Two classical arches allow for movement in between the Great Hall and the front entry. Each arch is flanked by two columns, which support an architrave and frieze. These classical forms are juxtaposed against serpentine strapwork and ornamentation inspired by northern-European architects. Marshall argues that Thomas Accres probably carved the screen, but drawings still in existence indicate that Smythson designed it.⁸² Willoughby could not displaying his education and knowledge of the latest fashions to his visitors.

Elizabeth I never made her way to the new and improved Wollaton Hall. Despite Willoughby's inheritance and the enterprising ventures that added to his family's wealth, Willoughby died a poor man, disappointed by his life's ventures. He overspent his means in attempts to build the most magnificent and impressive house and household of all his peers. Sir

⁸² Marshall, *Wollaton Hall and the Willoughby Family*, 41.

John Fortescue's definition of magnificence, an ostentatious display of wealth and status, applies well to Willoughby. Instead of creating house that could be easily categorized, Willoughby and Smythson collaborated to create a flamboyant structure characterized by several blended styles.

Hardwick Hall and the Emergence of a Definite Elizabethan Style

Elizabeth of Hardwick's Hardwick Hall (Figure 4.1) is yet another example of the influence of Renaissance architecture in England. Hardwick's unadorned exterior is characterized by traditionally English and Northern European tropes as well as some classical Renaissance elements. Elizabeth, better known as Bess of Hardwick, one of Elizabethan England's most famous and powerful women, worked with the established architect Robert Smythson to create an aesthetically unique Elizabethan masterpiece that cannot be defined by one architectural style. This chapter will examine Bess of Hardwick's upbringing and turbulent adult life, as well as the influences of Smythson and other masons on the ultimate design of Hardwick Hall.

Bess of Hardwick, later the countess of Shrewsbury, was born to a minor gentry family, achieved an increase in prominence and wealth with each of her four marriages, and died one of the wealthiest women in England. The countess was born at Old Hardwick Hall (Figure 4.2), which now stands in ruins on the same site as Hardwick Hall, in 1527. In the 1540s she worked in the household of Sir and Lady Zouche of Condor Castle, a prominent family with connections to the crown through the Grey Family. Serving in a large household such as the Zouche household was common for children of Tudor gentry; in this role the countess would have been educated and begun to make connections with upper gentry families in an attempt to secure a husband.⁸³ Secure a husband she did; her and Robert Barlow were wed in 1543 after meeting at the Zouche residence. He died a few months later and left her a comfortable sum of money. In 1547 Bess of Hardwick married Sir William Cavendish, a very wealthy *nouveau riche* man, and

⁸³ Mark Girouard, *Hardwick Hall* (London: National Trust, 1989), 4.

achieved a considerable augment in social status. The couple had eight children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Cavendish bought the estate of Chatsworth and he and his wife built a lavish new house, which is now known as Chatsworth House. This presumably was Bess's first exposure to a great building project; she seemingly enjoyed building and then renovating Chatsworth, as she continued to work on the great house for many years after Cavendish died.

Girouard describes this marriage as a pivotal point in Bess's life:

With her second marriage she emerged from obscurity and the main aspects of her character became clear. She was capable, managing, acquisitive, a businesswoman, a money maker, a land-amasser, a builder of great houses, and indefatigable collector of the trappings of wealth and power, and inordinately ambitious, both for herself and her children.⁸⁴

Following Cavendish's death in 1557, Bess of Hardwick married Sir William Saint Loe in 1559.

This afforded her yet another improvement in position. Saint Loe died five years later, leaving Hardwick most of his land and further increasing her wealth. Her fourth and final marriage was in 1567 to George Talbot, head of one of the wealthiest families in England and Sixth Earl of Shrewsbury.⁸⁵ Talbot had a close relationship with the royal family and was the custodian of Mary, Queen of Scots, while she was imprisoned in England from 1569-1584.⁸⁶ Hardwick and Talbot's marriage began to crumble in 1574. Girouard owes their eventual separation to three factors: the presence of the controversial Mary, Queen of Scots in their home; the countess's extravagant and expensive remodeling of Chatsworth House; and a hurried and unapproved

⁸⁴ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, 6.

⁸⁵ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, 7.

⁸⁶ Mary, Queen of Scots fled from Scotland to England in 1568 after her subjects rebelled against her and forced her to abdicate in favor of her infant son, James VI (Later James I of England). Queen Elizabeth kept her imprisoned for 19 years, as Mary was next in line to the English throne, after Elizabeth herself. George Talbot was Mary's custodian for 15 of those 19 years. In 1587, Mary, a Roman Catholic, was executed as a result of many Roman Catholic plots against Elizabeth. Had they been successful, these plots would have put Mary on the English throne.

marriage in 1574 between the countess's daughter Elizabeth and Charles Stuart, 1st Earl of Lennox, and claimant to the English and Scottish thrones, in the hopes of any child of theirs having a claim to the English crown as well. Elizabeth Cavendish and Charles Stuart did have one daughter, Arabella Stuart, who was left in Bess of Hardwick's custody when both parents died, Charles in 1576 and Elizabeth in 1584. The marriage infuriated both Queen Elizabeth I and George Talbot, neither of whom had been aware of its occurrence until after the fact.

The countess' separation from her fourth husband ultimately led to the renovation of Old Hardwick Hall, her second major building project. Marital issues culminated in a dispute over who owned the rights to Chatsworth House. Bess was forced to vacate Chatsworth (her principle residence at the time) and abandon her ongoing renovations there. The countess bought Hardwick Old Hall from her brother James in 1583; the purchase probably resulted from contentions between the countess and her husband; it seems as if she wanted a place of her own to live in and renovate to her liking. In 1585 Hardwick began substantial renovations to the home she had grown up in. She expanded the house, adding two wings on each end, and doubling its size. Girouard theorizes that Bess of Hardwick acted as her own architect.⁸⁷ There is evidence that the old house was decorated with medieval parapets, and featured huge towers and bay windows.⁸⁸ All of these characteristics are typical of traditional English decoration, and it is likely that the style of the house was inherently Medieval. Old Hardwick Hall was expanded upon quite haphazardly, leading its appearance to align more closely with the old gentry castles than the *nouveau riche* manor houses. While she may have aspired to something as grand as New

⁸⁷ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 120.

⁸⁸ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, 15.

Hardwick Hall at that point, she did not have the funds, as her husband was still controlling much of her capital.⁸⁹

In 1590, George Talbot passed away, leaving the countess, at 70 years of age, free to do as she pleased with her money (her fortune grew even larger thanks to the addition of Talbot's wealth) and her lands. It seems that the new and improved Old Hardwick Hall was not magnificent enough for Bess, as she immediately started planning an extravagant home about 100 yards away. She may have had other motivations for building a grand new house besides asserting her wealth, most notably the hopes of a visit from Queen Elizabeth or that the manor would one day be a residence of a future Queen Arabella. While Arabella never did ascend to the throne, at the time Elizabeth had not named a successor, and Arabella's royal blood meant that she was a viable contender for the position of Queen of England.

Like the patrons analyzed in previous chapters, the countess had the motivations and resources necessary to build a magnificent country house. While each of the countess' marriages brought her increased wealth and power to compliment her ambition, they also offered Bess of Hardwick a chance to improve her education and knowledge of architectural forms. Owing to their position in society, it can be assumed that Cavendish, Saint Loe, and Talbot had access to architectural treatises by Vitruvius, Sebastiano Serlio and Hans Vredeman de Vries; There is no evidence stating that the countess certainly saw these treatises; however, her social and economic circumstances indicate that she would have at least had the means to study them. Her close connections with many powerful Elizabethan elites would have likely enabled her to see early examples of classical architecture in England, such as Hampton Court Palace and Somerset

⁸⁹ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, 9.

House. She certainly had the education and experiences to become a great builder, but considering she already owned several large houses, why did she want to build Hardwick Hall? Early in her life, she was exposed to fundamentals of building and grand expressions of wealth through Chatsworth House. Her close connection with her second husband's building schemes at Chatsworth undoubtedly sparked her interest in architecture and its ability to communicate power; she spent much of the rest of her life building or renovating Chatsworth, Old Hardwick Hall, and Hardwick Hall. In addition to the sheer enjoyment she got from erecting new buildings and renovating old ones, she must have seen Hardwick Hall as a chance to demonstrate the pinnacle of wealth, status, and power she had acquired over a lifetime. In the late 16th century, a man could aspire to increase his wealth through service to the royal family, and *nouveau riche* men such as William Cecil of Burghley House and John Thynne of Longleat did just that. A woman could increase her wealth through strategic marriages. Marriages at the time were certainly a business deal, and the countess' business sense allowed her to become an extremely wealthy, educated and independent woman. In building Hardwick Hall, the countess utilized architecture to communicate her prestige.

Despite acting as her own architect when expanding Old Hardwick Hall, the countess recognized the need for an established architect to oversee her building schemes. It is generally accepted that Robert Smythson was hired to supervise the project. While there is not undoubtable evidence to support this claim, Girouard argues that the connections between Smythson and the Hardwick/Talbot family, as well as evidence from Smythson's drawings indicate that he must have been the architect.⁹⁰ At this point in time, Smythson had probably built quite a name for

⁹⁰ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 121.

himself. He had worked on many manor homes for some of the most important patrons in the country, including John Thynne's Longleat House (Chapter 2, Figure 2.1), Francis Willoughby's Wollaton Hall (Chapter 3, Figure 3.1), and George Talbot's Worksop Manor (Figure 4.3).

Construction at Worksop began in 1585, and there is a possibility that the countess was involved in the initial plans for the home.⁹¹ However, considering she and Talbot were separated in 1584, it is more likely that she learned of Smythson and her husband's great project without being intimately involved herself. In her exploration of the architecture of Tudor England, Suzannah Lipscomb suggests that Smythson worked at Chatsworth as well.⁹² If this is indeed the case, Bess may have become familiar with Smythson and his work through her intimate involvement with the construction at Chatsworth. John Rodes, who had been an important contributor at Wollaton, was contracted for the masonry at Hardwick.⁹³ Other masons included John's brother Christopher Rodes, and Thomas Accres the marble carver who had previously worked at Wollaton and Chatsworth. Many of the craftsmen who contributed to Old Hardwick stayed to work on New Hardwick. Because the styles of the buildings are so different, it can be assumed that these craftsmen were not involved in design, but rather executing someone else's ideas. A large number of builders contributed to the construction of Hardwick, and it can be assumed that some of the more distinguished figures may have influenced the final design.

Owing to the myriad of individuals involved in the building of Hardwick, and lack of surviving documentation, it is difficult to discern exactly who inspired what elements of the unusual plan and design. The countess had experience building both Chatsworth and Old

⁹¹ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, 15.

⁹² Lipscomb, *A Journey Through Tudor England*, 202.

⁹³ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 120.

Hardwick Hall. Chatsworth's exterior has been altered since it was built in the 1560s, and therefore cannot be analyzed in this thesis. Old Hardwick Hall is now in ruins. However, it seems to align more closely with traditional medieval homes than *nouveau riche* structures featuring multiple styles. The countess was undoubtedly engaged in the progression of New Hardwick. However, seeing as she was unable to invent a classically-inspired scheme for Old Hardwick Hall on her own, it is unlikely that she controlled the final design and plan. Smythson, on the other hand, had significant experience working with classical forms at Longleat, Wollaton, and Worksop. However, the exterior ornamentation and plan of Hardwick are quite different from those of his previous building projects. The exterior decoration is very plain when compared to Longleat and Wollaton. Additionally, the long, rectangular plan contrasts with the solid, square plans of Longleat and Wollaton. Additionally, Girouard notes that Smythson was probably not responsible for the carved mannerist details on the exterior of the house. The craftsmen building Hardwick likely directed the design and construction of this detail. Therefore, it is likely that a collaboration between Bess of Hardwick, Smythson, and leading craftsmen culminated in the final design of Hardwick Hall. Smythson took the countess' demands for an atypical home with an unconventional arrangement of rooms and produced an architectural masterpiece.⁹⁴

A stylistically unique country house resulted from the collaboration between Smythson and the Bess of Hardwick. Hardwick Hall incorporates English gothic forms, classicism and mannerism. Hardwick is the most distinctly English of all the case studies considered in this thesis. Cook goes as far as to say that the house is "as wholly English and individual as

⁹⁴ Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era*, 129.

Shakespeare's plays".⁹⁵ The plan of Hardwick Hall and its use of bays, large glass windows, and heraldic symbols demonstrate the conscious use of English gothic forms at Hardwick. The plan of Hardwick Hall (Figure 4.4) differs greatly from the plans of the other Elizabethan manors explored in this thesis. Burghley, Longleat, and Wollaton all feature a square shape and a general sense of stability and solidity. The bays and towers that adorn these houses are not dramatic enough to obscure this substantiality. In contrast, Hardwick is a long, thin, horizontally oriented rectangle with deep, imposing bays. The base of Hardwick is very compact, therefore verticality and delicacy are emphasized instead solidity.⁹⁶ The compact base translates to an overall compact house. The rooms of Old Hardwick Hall were used to accommodate the large household that could not fit in the main house; it is likely that Hardwick Hall was conceived with this use of Old Hardwick in mind. It is possible that the distinctive plan was meant recall the 'E' shaped houses that were gaining popularity as a means to pay homage to Queen Elizabeth (and hopefully entice her to visit). Montacute House in Somerset features this plan (Figures 4.5 and 4.6). Hardwick deviates from the traditional 'E' with its careful use of symmetry. Hardwick has two narrow, but deep, bays on the east and west façades and one similarly sized bay on the north and south façades. The unique placement of the bays creates a 'device' - from above the home looks like two linked crosses.⁹⁷ The plan emphasizes symmetry, as does the rest of the house. In fact, some windows are false or span two stories in order to maintain complete exterior symmetry while preserving a medieval arrangement of rooms. Both the use of 'devices' and

⁹⁵ Cook, *The English Country House through Seven Centuries*, 109.

⁹⁶ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 117.

⁹⁷ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 117.

emphasis on symmetry are typical of Elizabethan architecture.⁹⁸ The exterior of Hardwick Hall is relatively plain when compared to Burghley, Longleat, and Wollaton. The lack of decoration on the façade of the house allows the viewer to fully take in the enormous glass windows covering every possible inch of its exterior. The perpendicular architecture of the early Tudor rulers emphasized verticality and glittering glass windows; Hardwick Hall draws from both of these traditional tropes. While many great Elizabethan patrons utilized huge expanses of glass windows on their houses in an effort to assert their wealth and power (glass was expensive to produce), Hardwick took this element further than any other house, eventually inspiring the saying, ‘Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall’. Additionally, traditional English bay windows are exploited to an extreme degree at Hardwick. Deep bay windows are placed around the house. At Hardwick Hall, each bay stands one story taller than the compact structure of the house; therefore, they resemble medieval defensive towers. Finally, the craftsmen at Hardwick added bold heraldic symbols to the house. Each bay is topped with the initials ‘E,S’ (Figure 4.7), for Elizabeth of Shrewsbury. The initials are capped with crown, which likely served to honor Queen Elizabeth, Bess of Hardwick’s namesake. At the center of the roofscape is a massive heraldic crest of the Cavendish family.⁹⁹ The initials and crest proclaim Elizabeth of Shrewsbury’s power. Bess ensured that her ownership of such a magnificent and grand residence was not mistaken. The English gothic influence at Hardwick hall is unmistakable. Why did Bess of Hardwick select a native style? She seems to have been reaffirming the ‘Englishness’ of herself and her family in hopes that Arabella would be recognized as the heir to the English crown.

⁹⁸ Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, 16.

⁹⁹ William Cavendish fathered all of Bess’ children, one of whom was to inherit Hardwick Hall. This likely explains why the countess chose to identify with the Cavendish family as opposed to the Talbot family.

The exterior of Hardwick is very English, but it does utilize a few classical elements. A portico supported by classical Tuscan columns protrudes from the top of the first floor on both the front and back façades. The chimney pieces on the roof are square columns (Figure 4.8). Additionally, the roofline is decorated with a classical balustrade. All of these elements are very subtle, encouraging viewers to take in the overwhelming windows and bays.

In addition to classical and English gothic ornamentation, the exterior of Hardwick is adorned with mannerist decoration inspired by architectural treatises from the Low Countries. While this stylistic influence is most prominent on the gatehouse entryway and the stone fence surrounding the house, there are also some mannerist elements on the main façade itself. Intricate strapwork embellishes the staggered roofline of the gatehouse (Figure 4.9). Obelisks stand on the corners of the gatehouse towers and line the stone enclosure that surrounds the house (Figure 4.10). While the countess may have wanted to assert her family's English roots, she could not resist incorporating the latest architectural styles from the continent into her great house. In doing so, she is asserting herself as a fashionable, knowledgeable, *nouveau riche* woman.

The exterior of Hardwick boasts little Renaissance detail. However, many of the classical and mannerist motifs that adorns Burghley, Longleat, and Wollaton are present in the interior decoration Hardwick. Most of the interior of Hardwick has been preserved, as it was never lived in for a significant length of time. Because Hardwick is so well preserved, a plethora of examples of the hybridity characteristic of Elizabethan houses exist in the interior of the home. It would be impossible to discuss all of the hybrid architectural elements in this thesis. Therefore, focus will

be placed on the long gallery. A long gallery is a space distinct to Elizabethan houses, usually intended for leisure and exercise.¹⁰⁰

Hardwick Hall's long gallery utilizes classical and mannerist forms in a distinctly English space. The long gallery is located on the third floor of the Hardwick Hall, overlooking the lands surrounding the great manor to the east. The center point of the gallery is are several large fireplaces (Figure 4.11) placed along the wall that separates the long gallery from the high great chamber. The fireplaces are decorated with classical and mannerist motifs. Four pilasters support a decorative architrave that also acts as a mantle. Columns and other architectural details decorate the space above the mantle. In the center of this ornamentation is a roundel containing sculptures of a women and child dressed in classical drapery. The classicism of the fireplace is complemented by mannerist motifs. The pilasters are adorned with straps and a strip of strapwork lies under the mantle. Geometric motifs, likely inspired by pattern books from the continent are pervasive throughout.

Bess of Hardwick's passion for building led to the creation of several magnificent Elizabethan houses, including Hardwick Hall. The collaboration between the countess of Shrewsbury and Robert Smythson resulted in a manor house that sheds the classicism of Longleat and mannerism of Wollaton for a distinct English style. Much to Bess of Hardwick's dismay, Elizabeth I never came to visit Hardwick Hall and the great bedchamber meant for Queen Arabella was never inhabited by royalty. Hardwick Hall stands today very well-preserved and as a testament to the ambitions of its great patron.

¹⁰⁰ Rosalys Coope, "The Gallery in England: Names and Meanings" *Architectural History* 27 (1984): 447.

The English Gentleman and his English House

As this thesis has identified through the exploration of case studies, the architecture of late sixteenth-century England is defined by an unprecedented mixing of architectural forms within individual buildings. Each home features English gothic, classical, and mannerist motifs. The four buildings analyzed in this thesis, Burghley House, Longleat House, Wollaton Hall, and Hardwick Hall, are just a few of numerous Elizabethan houses that demonstrate a hybridity of design. In addition to the patrons mentioned in previous chapters, many other *nouveau riche* elites created impressive homes with the hopes of entertaining Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth never visited Burghley, Longleat, Wollaton, Hardwick, or many of the other houses built specifically with her in mind. However, on her famous progresses she did travel to similar houses, including Theobalds, Long Melford Hall, Kenilworth Castle, and Cowdray. The trend towards incorporating gothic, classical, and mannerist motifs within one space undoubtedly occurred at a national level.

A practical lineage between the development of these hybrid homes can be identified. Classical architecture was first brought to England during the reign of Henry VIII. Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor Cardinal Thomas Wolsey utilized classical decorations in his residence, Hampton Court Palace. As a Cardinal with connections to the papacy in Rome, Wolsey may have travelled to Italy and seen classical buildings firsthand. He undoubtedly would have had access to engravings and prints of classical architecture, as well as books by Vitruvius and Leon Battista Alberti. Wolsey built Hampton Court Palace with a variety of classical decoration, but he retained many traditional elements so that the palace appears to be a traditional gothic residence with classical bits and pieces added as ornamentation. Wolsey's grand architectural schemes

influenced Henry VIII and his later projects. The trend towards classicism in London must have influenced Edward Seymour, who went on to build the very classically inspired Somerset House. As discussed in Chapter 2, John Thynne of Longleat House was Edward Seymour's steward and was intimately involved in the building of Somerset House. The aesthetic similarity between Longleat House and Somerset House is undeniable; Thynne aspired to emulate Seymour's style and also his power and dominance over state affairs. A large, imposing and impeccably decorated house seems to have been the key to emphasizing one's power and position in English society. Thynne employed many talented masons including Alan Maynard and Robert Smythson. Smythson, an Englishman working in his most influential role to date, learned a great deal about French classicism from Maynard, a Frenchman. Longleat put Smythson on the map and spearheaded his long and productive career as an architect of England's great country manors. Smythson carried the knowledge he acquired from Longleat and Maynard to his next projects: Wardour, Wollaton, Worksop, and Hardwick. The influence of Sebastiano Serlio and Vredeman de Vries on Smythson's work is undeniable, and he likely worked with texts by Vitruvius, Alberti, Jacques I Androuet du Cerceau, and others. Smythson worked closely with the patrons he served to develop houses that fit their individual needs and desires, which explains why each house he created is aesthetically distinct. Burghley was complete before Smythson came to work on Longleat House. Therefore it cannot be considered part of the same lineage as the other three houses. The germ of an idea to incorporate classical and mannerist ornamentation in the house of a *nouveau riche* man, attempting to show off his education, masculinity, and power, lead to the creation of many stylistically idiosyncratic houses.

In each case examined, the patron used his or her house as a representation of magnificence, power, and the aspirations of the English gentleman. William Cecil of Burghley, John Thynne of Longleat, and Bess of Hardwick Hall were all members of this *nouveau riche* class who were emerging from the lower ranks of society during Tudor rule. Why did these individuals build? Because they did not have a large medieval castle to hold their family and expanding households, as well established elites did. These men and women were presented with the opportunity to brand their new dynasties. They did so by incorporating fashionable and exotic elements of classicism and mannerism with familiar, ‘tried-and-true’ styles. In creating these homes as grand representations of their wealth and power, patrons also had to consider the possibility of a visit from Queen Elizabeth herself. A visit from Elizabeth would have affirmed the patron’s position in society.

There are more nuanced ways of viewing these hybrid houses. *Nouveau riche* men needed grand new residences to express their wealth, but why did they choose to make hybrid houses instead of classical villas or medieval castles? One explanation may exist in the idea of the English gentlemen that evolved throughout the Tudor period to accommodate new, Renaissance trends. A medieval English gentleman prided himself in his masculinity. Portraits of Henry VIII were heavily influenced by ideas of masculinity, as evidenced by the representative portrait of Henry VIII by Hans Holbein (Figure 5.1). He stands in a wide, stable pose; the breadth of his shoulders is emphasized and exaggerated through costume. A sword hangs from his belt, echoing and calling attention to his massive codpiece. This masculinity propagated by Henry VIII was based in his ability to command a battle, as opposed to his elegance, intelligence, or aptitude as diplomat and statesmen. As the 16th-century continued, the idea of the English

gentleman evolved to include those traits.¹⁰¹ During the reign of Elizabeth, a man needed to be well-educated, a talented statesman, and of high decorum with exquisite tastes. Perhaps images of a gentlemen as both a military leader and a scholar are present in the great country houses of Elizabethan England. Medieval defensive structures alluded to the medieval gentleman, who from his fortified castle protected his vassals. In contrast, classical and mannerist motifs alluded to the humanist gentleman. Roundels with references to great men of the past allowed a patron to directly demonstrate his classical learning. The characteristics expected of an English gentlemen were as hybrid as the houses they built to display their wealth and power. A *nouveau riche* elite, whose life was not firmly entrenched in tradition like his old-money counterparts, would have been more inclined to stray from the traditional. As self-made men, they had more flexibility in how they demonstrated their wealth.

Moreover, in utilizing feudal architecture in their houses, *nouveau riche* elites were creating a sense creating a false lineage. They lacked the impressive ancestry of their peers from well-established families. Therefore, the use of defensive crenelations, hammerbeam vaults, and large turrets may refer to a courtier's desire to legitimize his status through retrograde architecture. This neo-feudalism is optimized in the decorative ceilings in the Great Hall's at Wollaton and Longleat, where hammerbeam ceilings are used for decorative purposes. The original purpose of a hammerbeam ceiling was to provide essential structural support; with flat ceilings such as the one in the great hall at Wollaton, vaulting is unnecessary. Therefore, at Wollaton and Longleat, the hammerbeam vaulting is embraced for its aesthetic appeal as

¹⁰¹ Tatiana String, "Projecting masculinity: Henry VIII's codpiece" in *Henry VIII and his Afterlives: Literature, Politics, and Art*, ed. Mark Rankin, Christopher Highley and John N. King, 143-159. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

opposed to its practical purpose. This clearly demonstrates that *nouveau riche* men and women aspired represent their 'brand' with a sense of lineage, despite the fact that they could not actually claim ancestral power.

Both William Cecil and John Thynne were members of the *nouveau riche*, and their lives fit neatly into the principles outlined above. As a *nouveau riche* woman, how could Bess of Hardwick have a desire to demonstrate that she was an ideal English gentleman? Despite her gender, she did indeed share many of the same traits as her male counterparts. She was well-educated, ambitious, and a skilled business-woman. Her aspiration to rise to the upper echelons of Elizabethan society cannot be overlooked, and when she achieved this goal she needed a fabulous new home to communicate her status. It is also important to keep in mind that she thought she was building for royalty, as her granddaughter Arabella had a claim to the English throne through her father Charles Stuart. Therefore, in building a hybrid house, the countess was attempting to communicate that her power was equivalent to that of an English gentleman. Unlike Cecil, Thynne, and the countess, Francis Willoughby's family was well-established, but like his peers, he desired to 're-brand' himself. He built his new home following a disastrous scandal as an attempt to rebuild his reputation. Therefore, his motivations for building were not dissimilar from his *nouveau riche* contemporaries. In building Wollaton Hall and decorating it with an exuberant and incoherent mix of motifs, he was asserting his dominance in an evolving society.

Elizabethan builders used hybrid houses to communicate their wealth, power, status, and intelligence to Queen Elizabeth I, the Elizabethan gentry, and the rest of the country. Classicism and mannerism was adopted in England in the early 16th century and soon proliferated in the

grand houses of elites by way of texts from the continent, connections between patrons utilizing the new styles, and architects who mastered the design of hybrid houses. Patrons built to express their power; they deliberately chose to incorporate mixed architectural elements from different sources in an attempt to demonstrate their success as an Elizabethan gentleman (or gentlewoman). The communicative power of these buildings was harnessed by patrons who hoped to attract the Queen to their magnificent residences.



Figure 1.1: Burghley House, west façade. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.2: Hampton Court Palace. Richmond, Greater London, United Kingdom.

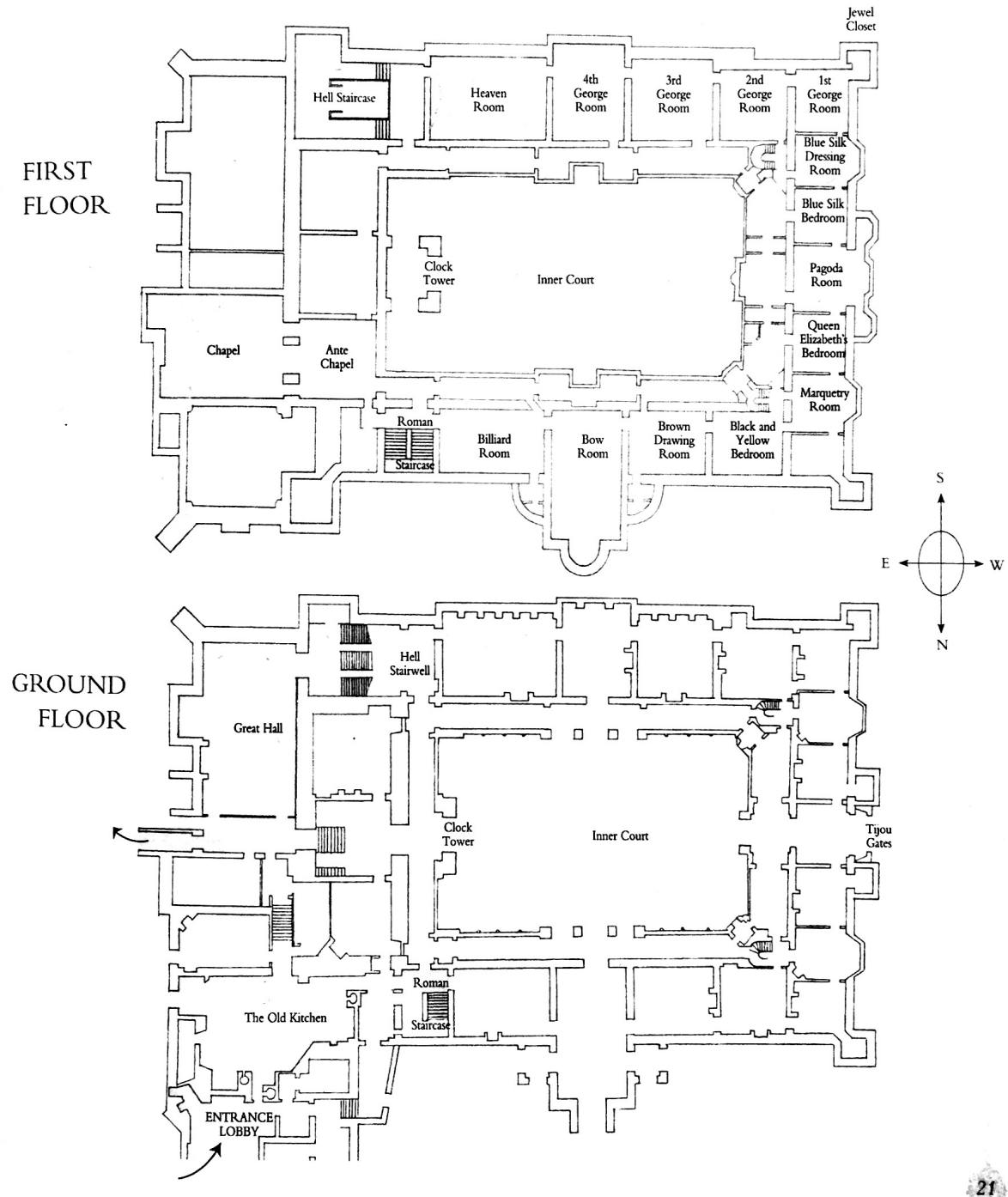


Figure 1.3: Burghley House, plan. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.4: Burghley House, north façade. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.5: Burghley House, detail of roofline, Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.6: Westminster Abbey. London, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.7: Burghley House, detail of windows. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.8: Burghley House, detail of roofline. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.9: Burghley House, detail of roofline. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.10: Burghley House, detail of north façade entrance. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.11: Burghley House, kitchen. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.12: Burghley House, kitchen lantern. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.13: Burghley House, hammerbeam ceiling. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 1.14: Burghley House, Roman Staircase. Stamford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.1: Longleat House. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.

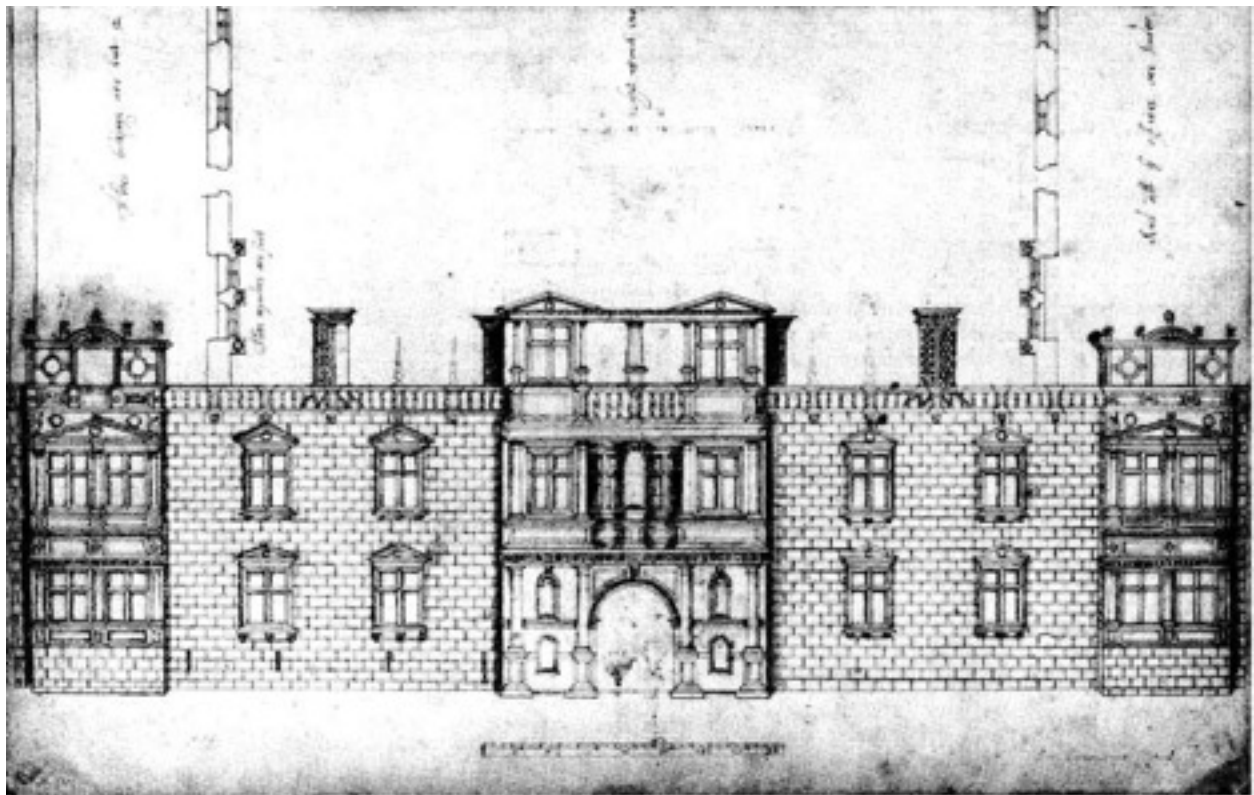


Figure 2.2: Somerset House. London, United Kingdom.

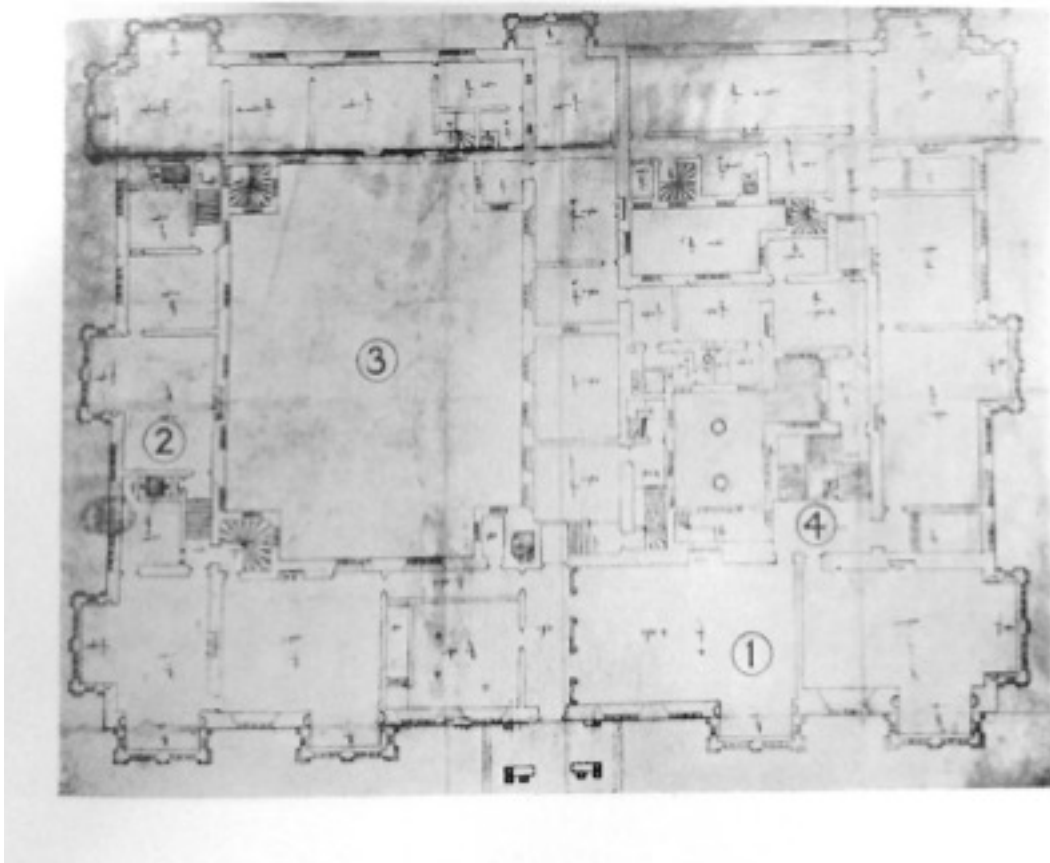


Figure 2.3: Longleat House, plan. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.4: Longleat House, tower of the orders. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.5: Longleat House, roundels. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.6: Longleat House, roofline. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.7: Longleat House, entryway. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.8: Longleat House, pediment above entryway. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.9: Longleat House, detail of roofscape. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.10: Longleat House, fireplace. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.11: Longleat House, wooden screen. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.12: Longleat House, wooden screen, detail. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 2.13: Longleat House, hammerbeam ceiling. Wiltshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.1: Wollaton Hall. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.

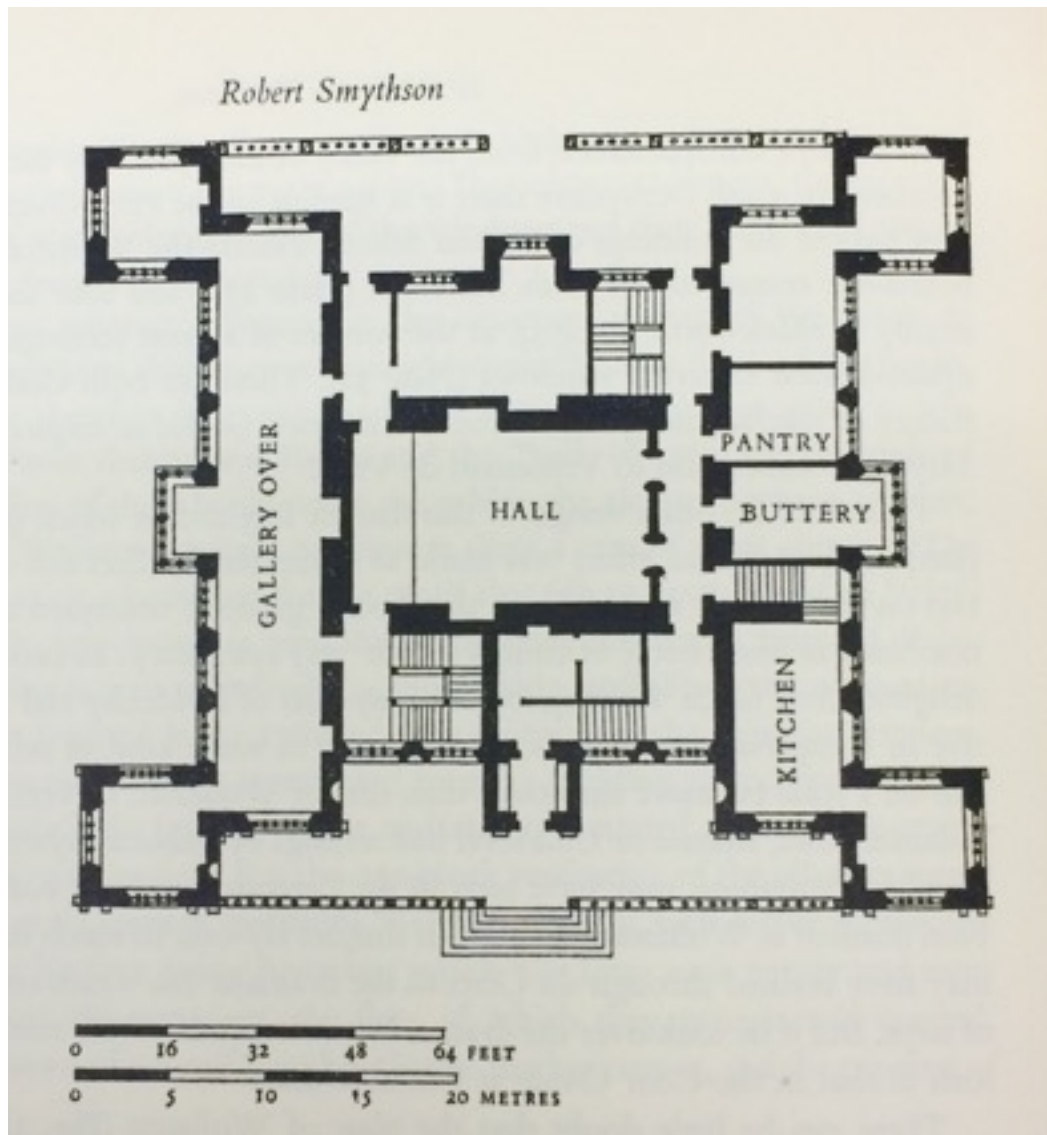


Figure 3.2: Wollaton Hall, plan. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.3: Wollaton Hall, stacked registers. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.4: Antwerp Town Hall. Antwerp, Belgium.



Figure 3.5: Wollaton Hall, roundels. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.6: Wollaton Hall, niches in corner towers. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.7: Wollaton Hall, roofscape. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.8: Wollaton Hall, chimneypieces. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.9: Wollaton Hall, corner towers. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.10: Wollaton Hall, columns decorated with straps. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.11: Wollaton Hall, lion decoration. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.12: Wollaton Hall, hammerbeam ceiling in Great Hall. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 3.12: Wollaton Hall, screen in Great Hall. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.1: Hardwick Hall. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.2: Old Hardwick Hall. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.

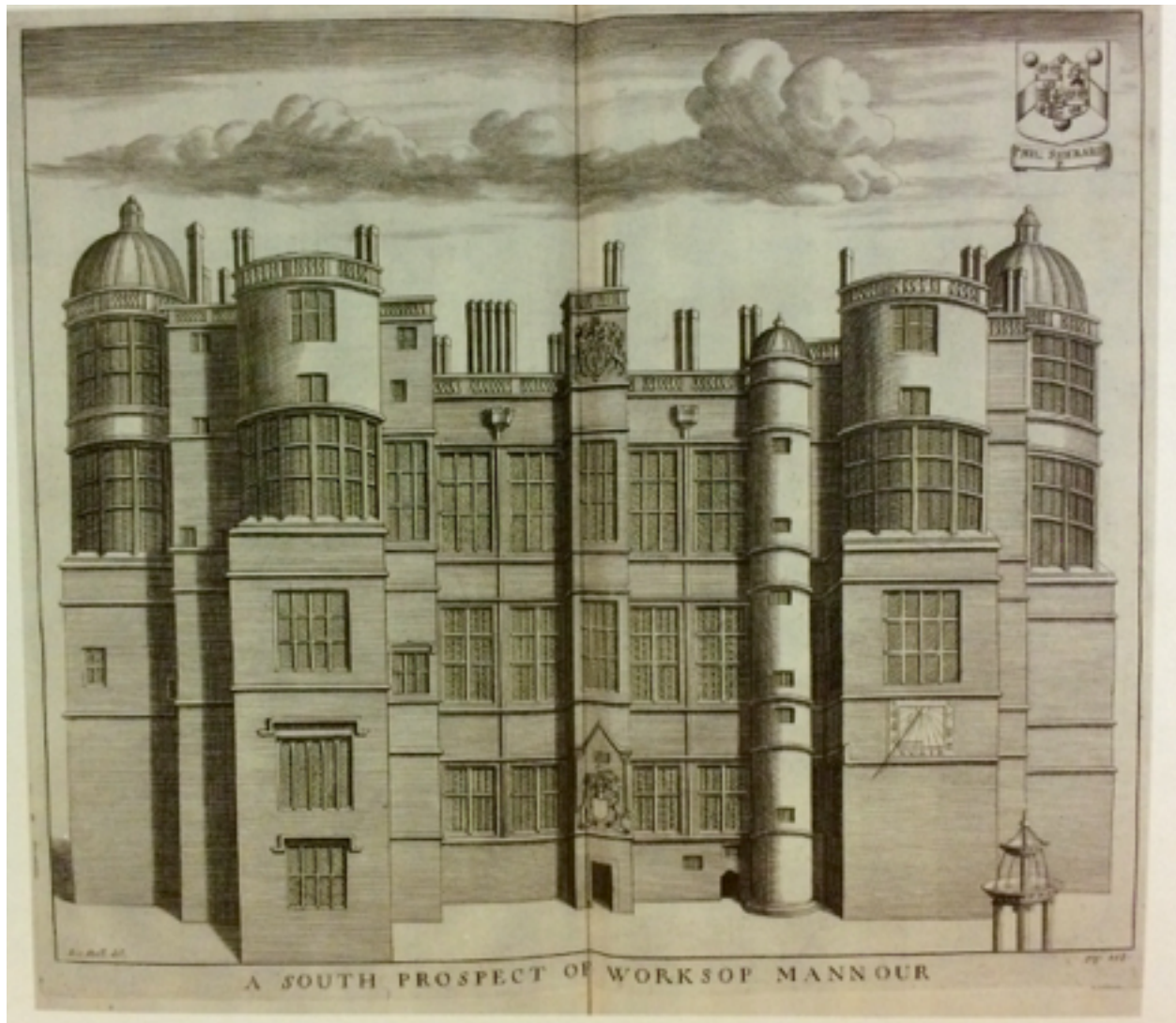


Figure 4.3: Worksop Manor. Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom. As engraved for Robert Thoroton's *The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire* in 1677.

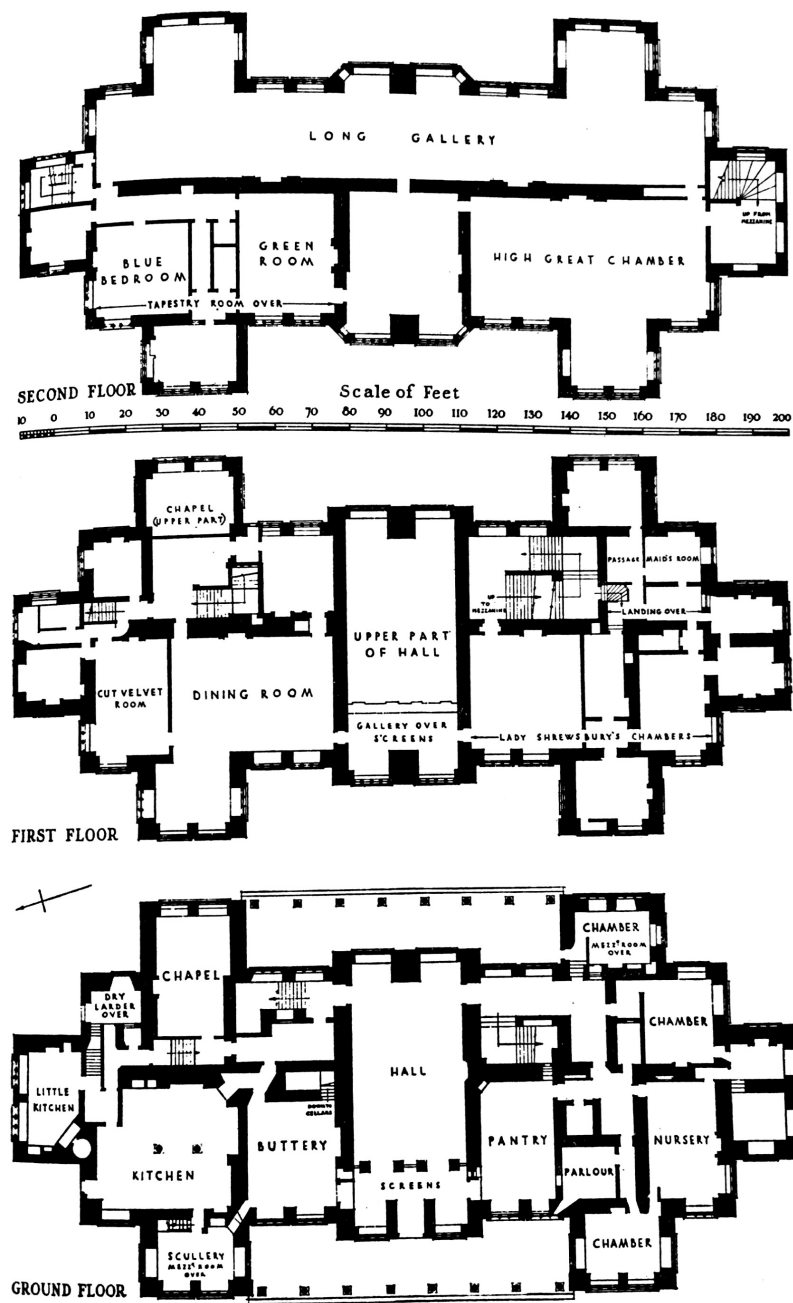


Fig. 12. Hardwick Hall. Ground, first- and second-floor plans.

Figure 4.4: Hardwick Hall, plan. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.5: Montacute House. Yeovil, Somerset, United Kingdom.

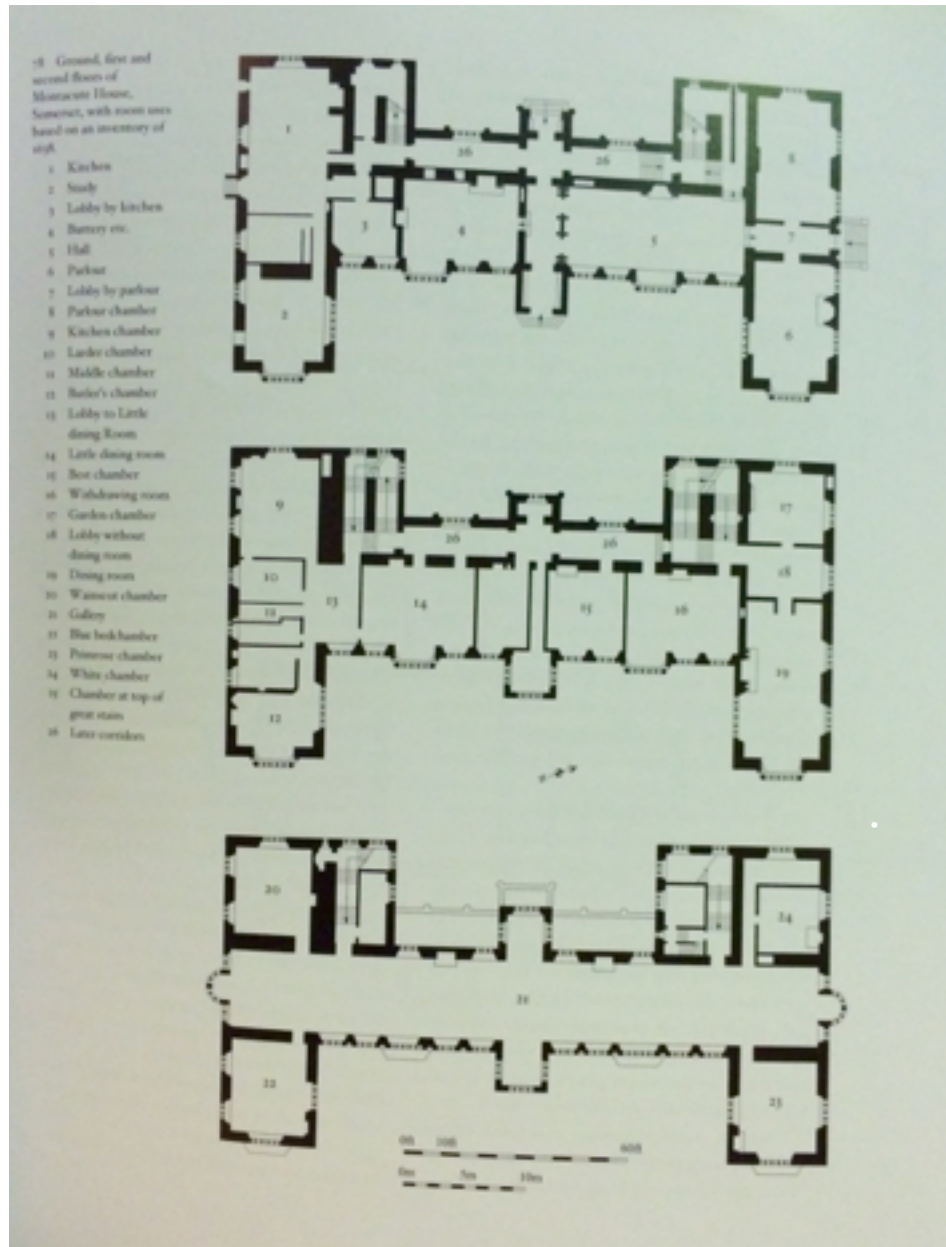


Figure 4.6: Montacute House, plan. Yeovil, Somerset, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.7: Hardwick Hall, monogram. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.8: Hardwick Hall, chimneypieces. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.9: Hardwick Hall, strapwork decoration on gatehouse. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.10: Hardwick Hall, obelisk decoration. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 4.11: Hardwick Hall, fireplace in Long Gallery. Doe Lea, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.



Figure 5.1: After Hans Holbein the Younger, *Henry VIII*, 1536-1537

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